



Finnish Center Association

# FCA News

April 2021

FOR MEMBERS OF THE FINNISH CENTER ASSOCIATION

## CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Well, spring is here with the daffodils bringing the color to our beautiful gardens. Spring and summer are so beautiful at the Finnish Center. I hope you will stop by to see what the gardeners have done. Soon there will be lilacs and all sorts of flowers to enjoy.

The ballots were returned to the FCA for the alternates to the Board. The board has now counted them and the first alternate is Ed O'Brien and second is Jerry Collins. Thank you for taking time to vote and send in your ballots.

The Finnish Center has started planning for the summer season. The Vappu and Mother's Day celebrations were initiated but due to the capricious nature of COVID and the current surge we are experiencing in Michigan we will need to cancel them. Personal safety is paramount. These events were to be part of the focus of a soft opening of the Finnish Center. I am sorry that COVID changes things. We are all in need of socializing and we are trying to make it safe for all. Summer will be outside and we do have a beautiful grounds here so let's do what Finns do best and just enjoy a good time. Please observe safe distancing and wear a your mask.

Enjoy Spring and the flowers in the air. Stay safe while doing it.

Mary O'Brien

## CALENDER OF EVENTS

May 1 - Vappu Celebration - CANCELLED  
May 15 - Mother's Day Celebration - CANCELLED

June 26  
**Juhannus**  
6 pm\*



July 16 - **Book Sale** - 12-2 pm\*

August 14 **Flea Market and Craft Show**  
10 am-4 pm\*

\*Weather permitting  
\*Masks and social distancing required

## FLEA MARKET AND CRAFT SHOW

August 24, 2021  
10:00 am - 4:00 pm

### Vendors Wanted!

This event will be held outside.

Cost is \$15 per table if you bring your own.  
Cost is \$25 per table if one is furnished by the FCA.

Deadline to register and pay fee is July 24, 2021.

Sign up by calling (248) 895-3231 or (248) 478-6939.



## HAPPY 100!

Often remarkable things happen at the Finnish Center. May 3 is a special day for one of our members. **Esther Tauriainen** will be celebrating her 100th birthday.

Esther was born on May 3, 1921, and she was a twin! Her brother and she were quite the talk of the town and the school children got let out early that day to come see the twins! Unfortunately her twin died before his first birthday. Esther still owns the farm property that was purchased from the US Government on 8/1/1883 by her Grandfather Henry Erickson Nulu. Her parents Mary and John Nulu raised 7 children on the farm house in Baraga. She graduated from Baraga High School in 1938. In 1939 she married William Tauriainen. She moved to Detroit in 1945, then moved to Redford in 1954 with her family of 4 kids. She and her husband were early members of the Finnish Center and really enjoyed the dances!

We at the Finnish Center want to wish you a happy birthday, Esther. May your day be filled with joy!



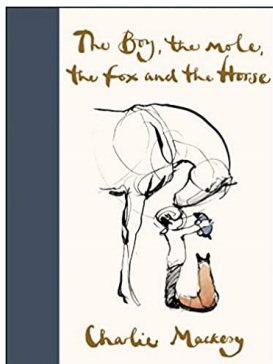
## GIFT SHOP

The Finnish Center gift shop provides products for a unique shopping experience. We carry Finnish items, such as Iittala in many colors which make special gifts. The wide selection of books includes Moomin and many other Finnish stories and cookbooks. We have Finnish candy and foods to delight you including Finn Crisp, Fazer chocolate, and a wide variety of Finnish licorice.

Be sure to check our online store at [finnishcenter.square.site](http://finnishcenter.square.site)



## THE BOY, THE MOLE, THE HORSE AND THE FOX by Charley Mackey



“Sometimes I want to say I love you all,” said the mole,  
“but I find it difficult.”

“Do you?” Said the boy.

“Yes, so I say something like I am glad we are all here.”

“OK” said the boy.

“I’m glad we are all here.”

“We are so glad you are all here too.”

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finnishcenter@gmail.com  
www.finnishcenter.org

### Officers

Mary O’Brien, Chairman  
Cynthia Haffey, Vice Chairman  
Christina Lovgren, Treasurer  
Linda Poirier, Secretary & Asst.  
Treasurer

### Board of Trustees

#### 1 Year

Cynthia Haffey, Sherrill Tedford,  
Austin Strobridge

#### 2 Year

Kathryn Hill, Mary O’Brien,  
James Lee

#### 3 Year

Irene Lamanen, Linda Poirier,  
Roger Wanttaja

### Alternates

#1 Ed O’Brien  
#2 Jerry Collins

### Financial Review

Paul Rajala  
Annikki Kurvi  
Olli Lamminen

### Committee Chairpersons

#### Building & Grounds

Roger Wanttaja

#### Cultural

Yvonne Lockwood

#### Education

Ilona Takakura

#### Finance

Mia Lamminen

#### Gift Shop

Mary O’Brien

#### Mailing

Alice Manley

#### Membership

Sherrill Tedford

#### Publicity & Publications

Ed O’Brien

#### Social

Mary O’Brien

### SENIOR CITIZEN HOUSING CORPORATION

Olli Lamminen, Chairman

#### *Tapiola Village*

Laura Fultz, Manager  
(248) 471-3802  
tapiola@ameritech.net

#### *Freedom Square*

Theresa Show, Manager  
(248) 442-7250

## HOW DID OUR FINNISH CENTER ASSOCIATION START?

Talk existed for years for a permanent place to hold Finnish activities.

A group gathered at Aira and Urho Kuusisto's home, including Saima and Erik Antilla, Lempi Helin, Laina Lampi, Joseph Moilanen, Irene and Edwin Naasko, Eunice and Noah Potti, Lisa and Harry Sandberg, Sylvia Wiitala, the Finnish Consul Harri Virjo and his wife Irene.

It was time to put talk into action. It was a joint effort of many Finns, the Pottis, along with some help from the Lampis, Dee Abersold and a few others tirelessly went through telephone books, church directories and Finnish clubs looking for Finnish names. Noah, Eunice, and their five children along with her mother, Saima Collin and others, addressed, sorted and prepared a mailing of a questionnaire to see the interest and meet to talk about coming together at a permanent facility, to over 6,000 Finns. An extremely well-attended meeting from the mailing came about and a vote on whether to proceed or not was held at the Polish Century Club. It was a success! Responsibilities were assigned (no time to waste!). Noah was elected chair. Then the hard work of many Finns began to raise money to make this a reality.

The Potti family, among other couples, hosted dinners with many interested people. Harri Virjo hosted cultural events. Noah Potti, Harri Virjo and Urho Kuusisto met with and welcomed the Finnish President, Urho Kekkonen. Many Finns volunteered by hosting lunches, bake sales, yard sales, paper drives, coffee hours and dances. Lempi Helin hosted affairs, including a fashion show, at her mansion on the lake. Laina Lampi sold her rugs, Viola Pudas gave Finnish language lessons. Aira Kuusisto sold imported Finnish goods from her home. Events also took place at Kalevela Park and church grounds. Many others gave of themselves in contributing to the development of the FCA. What a description of SISU!

Noah had a wall-sized map where colorful pins were posted for each residence to determine the best location. With tireless energy, time and effort, Noah Potti, Alfred Wanting, Saima Antilla, and Reverend Elmer Liimata chose the property for the future home of the FCA on 8 Mile Road.

Try for just a moment and visualize what the future FCA site looked like back in 1973. Only a few industrial buildings nearby and out in the grasslands in the middle of nowhere! No freeways going to the area and the roads that were there had extremely low speed limits, making it for a long drive during construction overview. In 1973, ground was broken and the FCA was dedicated in September 1974. The names of the main "doers" in making the FCA a reality was on a plaque displayed at the entrance of the FCA. Along with the Finnish American Center, the major plan included building the 92 units called Tapiola Village Senior Housing. This was part of the plan to give the older Finns the ability to walk to the center for coffee and affairs.



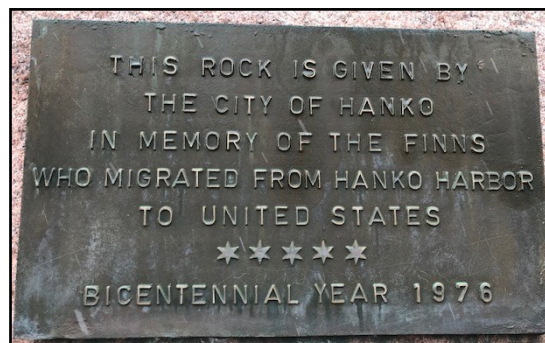
(continued on page 4)



## How Did The Finnish Center Association Start? (continued from page 3)

In 1976, Harry Sandberg, a seafarer from Hanko, gifted the large Hanko Rock (right) to the Finnish Center Association. Hanko was the port of departure for many Finnish emigrants and was their last sight of Finland. It is now proudly displayed outside near the flagpoles.

Looking back at the long road, with all the hard work and dedication of many Finns, we have much to be proud of. The FCA is an outstanding gathering place for us. Thousands of events have taken place over the years. We encourage participation, volunteering and giving so this dream will continue. Let us pray our children and grandchildren will continue to celebrate our magnificent Finnish heritage at the wonderful FCA for many years to come!



## FINNISH AMERICAN SINGERS OF MICHIGAN

The Finnish American Singers of Michigan, led by director William Gramzow, IV, is a group of amateur vocalists that love to sing with a long and active history. Based out of the FCA, and practicing Monday evenings at that location, the group prepares for two concerts each year, a Christmas concert in early December and a spring concert in early May. For many years the choir has been invited to perform at summer FinnFest celebrations all over the United States. Active for more than thirty years, the choir has sung in Oregon, Minnesota, New York, and both the Upper and Lower peninsulas of Michigan for example. Prior to FASM, many of the early members sang as the Loon Lake Singers, attending FinnFests every year beginning in 1983. Most recently, FASM was thrilled to be asked to lead the singing of the national anthems and Finlandia at the opening of the 2019 FinnFest in Novi, MI.

FASM has enjoyed longevity in their directors as well. With its origins as the Loon Lake Singers, the choir was led by Irja Connolly who eventually was helped by Eero Karinen. When the Finnish American Singers choir was officially formed around 1991, Lisa Potti was the director. Henry (Hank) Naasko succeeded her, directing for about 25 years until Bill Gramzow took over in 2018. Bill had been the choir's accompanist for many years, so is very familiar with the choir and its goals.

Dealing with Covid -19 issues has taken a toll on the choir. With our gathering and practice location closed and quarantines, not to mention warnings about singing, the group has not met to sing since March, 2020. We have gathered outside for a couple of meetings and happily celebrated the planting of an evergreen tree last fall at the Finnish Center in honor of Hank Naasko's many years of dedication to music there. More recently, many choir members sadly attended the funeral in March of our oldest member, Charlotte Lytikainen. We hope to be able to gather, if just outdoors this summer, to sing together, share updates about each other and our families, and plan for resuming practices and concerts.

The choir would love to have new members and can use all voices from soprano to bass. We do not memorize our music and sing the few Finnish ones by learning the words phonetically. Feel free to contact choir president, Katy Koskela at [kakoskela@hotmail.com](mailto:kakoskela@hotmail.com) with questions!

## SOMETHING NEW IN FINLANDIA GARDENS

Although the Finnish Center has been closed for over a year due to the Covid pandemic, Finlandia Gardens and the FCA wood shop have continued forward with proper pandemic protocols. For the first time in the last 20 years the wood shop has been open all winter due to a new propane heater provided by Tom Evans, our on-site finish carpenter. This winter we have reorganized the Wood Shop, repaired many garden items, and helped a number of residents at senior housing with needed projects. Innovations have been added to the gardens to enhance their beauty and usefulness to members and visitors. These changes include the rebuilding of the glider from senior housing and its installation in the West Gardens across the bridge. Also, a new structure with the names of cities familiar to Michigan Finns can be seen as you drive into the parking lot. A new covered gazebo is located on the deck, south of the parking lot, and will provide seating away from the weather. It also has a Little Free Library and is a great place to view the gardens and have a snack or lunch on a rainy day.

Finlandia Gardens is abound with the sounds of birds and the beauty of spring blossoms as we continue through this amazing season. Come to the gardens, forget the sadness of what we have lost in this pandemic, and find something hopeful in our gardens.

David Sharpe  
FCA Landscape Coordinator  
(248) 977-1337



Glider



City Signs



New gazebo



**FINNISH CENTER ASSOCIATION**



35200 W. Eight Mile Road  
Farmington Hills, MI 48335-5208

Prsrt STD  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Farmington, MI  
Permit NO 250

Current Resident or

**FCA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR \_\_\_\_ RENEWAL**

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant/Spouse \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Are you of Finnish descent? \_\_\_\_\_

- Annual membership, single, one vote ..... \$50.00
- Annual membership, senior\* or youth\*, one vote ..... \$25.00  
\*Senior, over 65 years, youth under 30 years of age
- Annual membership, couple, two votes ..... \$100.00
- Annual membership, family, one vote ..... \$75.00
- Life membership, one vote ..... \$500.00
- Life membership, senior, one vote (see membership for details)

Amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_  
Please make check payable to FCA and send to Finnish Center Association,  
Membership, 35200 W. Eight Mile Road, Farmington Hills, MI 48335-5108

Recommended by: \_\_\_\_\_

Visit us on “Finnish Center and Hall” Facebook page and “like” us to get the latest updates!



**FCA Senior Living**

One and two bedroom rentals  
Convenient, safe and affordable in highly desirable Farmington Hills, MI  
Contact us at:  
Tapiola Village (248) 471-3802  
Freedom Square (248) 442-7250  
[www.fcaseniorhousing.org](http://www.fcaseniorhousing.org)

**THAYER-ROCK FUNERAL HOME**

33603 Grand River,  
Farmington, MI  
(248) 474-4131  
Paul N. Potti, Director