

Finland Center Foundation

www.finlandcenter.org

| Fall 2007

Finland: 90 Years of Independence

Proud to be a Finn

You could hardly be more Finnish than Mira – born in a sauna in the town of Nokia!

When she went to London to study, her friends arranged a blind date with American medical student Paul Goldberg, and Mira wore her Marimekko dress (which she has kept), and as they say, the rest is history. After over three decades in the US, the Westport, CT. artist is now happy to have regained her Finnish citizenship.

Having found her way back into the Finnish community, Mira wanted to do something and designed a series of cards for Finland Center Foundation. They portray Finnish landscape scenery, which she and her family experienced on visits to Finland many summers in a row when their children were small.

I asked Mira why Finnish independence is important to her?

“It was very important to our family. Mother was Russian, born in St. Petersburg. She came to Finland as a young refugee. My grandfather was executed at Kronstadt. Father, educated as an engineer, fought in the Winter War. He was in the heavy artillery, and invented an instrument to calculate an accurate missile trajectory. He was proud to demonstrate it to Marshal Mannerheim. This instrument is now in the War Museum in Helsinki. I grew up with the knowledge that independence and freedom were very precious.”

“Sometimes we had dinners with the family at the Kämp, where Sibelius, Gallen-Kallela, and other artists had gathered decades earlier and inspired a nationalistic feeling for an independent Finnish nation; this all left a strong impression on me.”

“When I moved away from Finland, people often asked why I left – ‘what happened to you?’ So many

immigrants here come from situations where they are fleeing poverty or political oppression. I think we are very lucky that as Finns, we can always go back to our home country! I am only here because ‘Goldberg’ happened to me!”

Mira is very proud that her children Jason and Nina also requested and received Finnish citizenship. Now Mira’s 9-month-old granddaughter Quinn is the latest Finnish citizen in the family.

Mira wants her granddaughter to be able to visit the Finnish Center in New York when she grows up, to take part in cultural activities, taste Finnish food, and hear the languages spoken.



Quinn, happy to be a Finn!

Says Mira: “There are so few of us Finns in the world! We need to work together, in the same spirit, with *sisu*, that Finns showed when they fought in the Winter War to keep their independence.”

The Finnish national bird, the swan, inspired Mira to design the card “The Spirit of Finns”. Like the migrating swans returning to Finland when the ice is gone, the three generations of new Finnish citizens are planning a trip back home next summer.



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The Spirit of Finns



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Finland Center Foundation is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization. All donations are tax-deductible and very welcome.

Join Finland Center as a Member!

The purpose of Finland Center Foundation (FCF) is to be the meeting point of Finnish and American culture, commerce and community. FCF supports current Finnish-American organizations in the New York Metropolitan area and the creation of new ones by striving to provide physical space, and support for their activities, in the present and for generations to come.

Would you like to see a permanent Finnish Center in New York City one day? If the answer is yes, you need to join our new membership organization! Five years ago, after some preliminary surveying and thinking, a group of Finns and friends of Finland in New York decided that this goal warranted its own organization and so founded Finland Center Foundation. Today, we have a commitment from a large Finnish company with international reach, Sunborn International (Naantali Spa), to work with us on this project. Although the exact format and location of the physical Center is still subject to change, it is pretty clear that our influence in the final product will increase in proportion to our numbers.

Of course, many of you have been our supporters all this time, and we could not have come this far without you! And now, by formalizing your relationship with FCF and becoming a member, we will all begin to reap the benefits of association. You see on the back page examples of Member benefits available to you – *but only if you sign up!* We are excited that all these companies are ready to cooperate with us and encourage you to use them. And obviously, the more members we have, the better deals we can attract down the line!

By paying an extremely reasonable membership fee (which for 2008,

for simplicity's sake, is the same for individuals and families) you help ensure that the project moves forward systematically and steadily, with the help of professional staff. They, along with a committed volunteer Board of Directors, organize membership travel benefits and other value for your money, as well as keep you informed of Finnish cultural events in New York and other interesting news; and pursue the financing and completion of the physical space.

On the next few pages, you will see a gallery of people associated with this project. As you will see, we have people with many different stories and interests, but one thing we all have in common: we love Finland, want to keep its heritage and values alive on this side of the Atlantic, and encourage people from the US to go visit over there. So invite your family and other friends of Finland to join as well!

This year Finland celebrates 90 years of independence. Let's plan on having at least the 100th anniversary party in our own place!

The next issue will be a Sauna and health issue. Join now as a member to subscribe!

To All Old And New Supporters:

- 1) Go to www.finlandcenter.org
- 2) Join the mailing list (link in upper right hand corner)
Please fill out form completely, your opinions are important!
Be sure to give us your email address – paper newsletters will in the future be sent only to paid members
- 3) After you have registered/updated your information, go back to the home page and click on "buy now" button to be taken to paypal
- 4) Pay your membership fee of \$30 valid thru 2008
- 5) You will receive your password to the membership pages and soon, a membership card

If you don't have access to the internet or a credit card, please send in the form in this newsletter along with your check for \$30 to the address provided. If living in Finland, please send payment of EUR 22 to nordea 120030-50633.

Anna-Kristiina Kaappola

40 guests, a classical multicultural New York crowd, gathered at the lovely home of Dr. Anna-Riitta Fuchs on Park Avenue to listen to Met soprano Anna-Kristiina Kaappola, accompanied by Klauspeter Seibel on piano. The performers graciously donated their time and talent to support the mission of Finland Center Foundation. The guests were treated to a masterly, temperamental, and even funny display of Finnish and German songs, including favorites by Sibelius, Merikanto and Madetoja.

Thanks to the artists, Dr. Fuchs, and to everyone who came and supported, and also to Finnish UN Ambassador Kirsti Lintonen and Finlandia Cheese, Inc.!



Forró Finnish Style!

Finland reached out and touched Brazil in a true New York-style multicultural event October 23, at Nuyorican Poets' Café on the Lower East Side.

Kaiku — perfectly harmonizing vocalists Paula Jaakkola and Jaana Kantola — sang and played Finnish lyrics, both traditional and their own. They accompanied themselves on kantele, and their talented band spiced up the sound with jazzy and Latino elements. Very inventive, original and refreshing!

Kaiku was followed by **Rob Curto and his Forró Ensemble**, whose sounds of northeast Brazil and irresistible rhythms got most of the audience on their feet. Forró and many spontaneous variations on it were seen; if Finnish church volunteer and professional dancer Pauliina Silvennoinen seemed to have a good time, so did everyone else!

Thanks to Finlandia Cheese for yummy snacks and Silent Auction contributors Terhi Ketola, Polar Heart Rate Monitors and Suomi-seura for financial support!



He kantavat kortensa kekoon...

Member Spotlight

Adele Idestrom recently became a member of Finland Center. We caught up with Adele and spoke with her about her cultural heritage, how she rediscovered her Finnish roots, and her enthusiasm for Finland Center Foundation.

Adele's maternal grandparents emigrated from Finland. Her grandfather was Karelian, from Sotkamo, near Kuhmo. Her grandmother came from Teuva, close to Vaasa in western Finland. "Actually, they didn't meet over there," Adele explained. "They met in Maine and married, started a farm and had eight children. My mother never spoke any English until she went to school. She and her sisters and brothers faced strong discrimination because their classmates would point at them and say, 'They're the Finn kids. They don't speak English.'"

Adele described her mother later traveling to New York, where she met Adele's father, who had recently emigrated from Stockholm. The two married in New York City. When Adele was three years old, her parents purchased a house on a lake five miles from the grandparents' farm. "My dad fell in love with the countryside in the freshwater lake region of Southern Maine, very much like Swedish and Finnish countryside with birch trees, freshwater lakes, rolling hills, and all that," she said.

Adele's childhood memories include Saturday night as "sauna night." "Even in the winter time we would go for sauna, and come out and roll in the snow. When I think back, I wonder 'How is that possible?'" Adele's grandfather passed a few months before she was born, but she remembers spending part of her summer school vacations with her grandmother. "Muumu spoke no English," Adele recalled, "So I guess at that point, I was somewhat fluent in Finnish. And then when she died, my mother and her sisters started speaking more English with each other." She wistfully added, "The sound of the language sort of died for me."

Adele would come to New York City to attend Barnard College, which took



her away from the Finnish community in Maine. But she would enter back into the community, this time through her Swedish roots. "The Swedish community has a church at 5 East 48 Street off of Fifth Avenue. Besides the church, they offer various cultural programs. And some of the members are Finnish as well as Swedish in heritage so they started telling me about Finlandia Foundation and about the annual Finn Fests, which I have began attending in Lake Worth, Florida, where Madam President Tarja came, and also in Seattle, and Minneapolis. I am happy to have re-entered the Finnish community."

Adele enthusiastically took advantage of Finland Center's open membership this past fall. "I find it very important to have Finnish people coming together, one-on-one, and interacting with each other. We can read about Finland, or go to the movies to see Finnish films, and learn a lot. But still, it's when people gather one-on-one and interact that things happen." Adele looks forward to the time when Finland Center has a physical presence. "It will be a very important gathering point, to have a foundation that can offer a café and a library." Adele's face brightened. "And a sauna! To get people of Finnish heritage mingling and talking with each other — and connecting."

Membership in the Finland Center Foundation, with all its benefits, is just \$30 per year. Please see page 2 for more information.

Films for Finland

Michael Badalucco is one of the co-executive producers of Juha Wuolijoki's new film, *Christmas Story*. Recently, he flew to Finland for the premiere of the movie.

While there, Michael took time out of his busy schedule to promote Finland Center's goals in New York by meeting with Pekka Niemi of Sunborn International at Naantali Spa. Finland Center has an agreement to cooperate with Sunborn International as they plan to establish a 5-star yacht hotel and spa in New York.

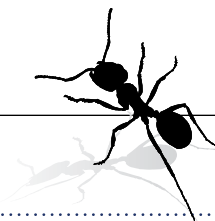


Michael Badalucco, a renowned New York actor and producer, meeting with FCF board member, film producer Hanna Hemilä.

Born in Brooklyn, Michael Badalucco is a renowned film actor who is familiar also to Finnish audiences through his role in the TV series *The Practice*. Michael has long-time connections

to Finland. He first worked with director Juha Wuolijoki in 1995. In Wuolijoki's 2005 internationally awarded *Gourmet Club*, Michael performs alongside Kari Ketonen, who is also starring in *Pelicanman*, a critically acclaimed family feature produced by Hanna Hemilä. What a small world!





And That's the Volunteer Spirit!



Finnish travelers Sarianne Pennanen and Janne Juntunen have a few things in common: they're young, talented, are staying in New York for just about three months *and* are volunteering for the Finland Center Foundation.

You're here for a short period of time, about three months. How did you get interested in volunteering for the Finland Center Foundation?

Sarianne: I thought it would be an interesting thing to do, a little bit of a change and I felt this would be a wonderful opportunity. Since I'm traveling alone, three months is a little bit too long for just a vacation. I wanted to be busy.

Janne: I actually found Finland Center Foundation from Finland before I came to New York. I went through opportunities because I wanted to find out what I could do here. Fortunately, for my case, Finland Center Foundation answered — and I got in touch with Finland Center Foundation. The rest is history, because they have made it very easy for me.

What kinds of skills are you bringing to your volunteer position?

Sarianne: I study law at Helsinki University. I have worked in a law firm in Finland now for two years. Right now, we are able to work with the DeOrchis, Wiener & Partners law firm. They have been kind enough to let me use some of their space in my work for Finland Center.

Janne: I just graduated from business school in Finland. And my major was international business, so that is really

much of what I am doing now with Finland Center. Some of FCF's operations are just starting up so there is a lot to do here. It's a very good opportunity, as well.

What have you been doing as a volunteer for Finland Center Foundation?

Sarianne: I have been doing many kinds of things. We have organized so far two cultural events and then I also went to Connecticut with Rea Nurmi to the "Finn Fun" event. We represented Finland Center there, and then we had the Christmas bazaar. I have

also started to do research about the possibility of including Assisted Living services at the Center.

Janne: First of all, Sarianne and me took part in organizing four events we had. The most important thing I've done here would probably be opening an account with PatronMail, which now operates as a place where we send our emails to our members. We moved our current database to PatronMail, so that took most of the time. There's a lot of work to be done, so I've had the opportunity to test my skills in the field.

Do you think it's exciting to have the plans for Finland Center in New York City?

Sarianne: Yes, it's nice to have something to remind you of your home country. And you can meet other Finnish people here and hear news from Finland. It would be very good to have some common place where we could gather and have these events.

Janne: I think it's a very good idea, not just for us but for future Finns as well. There isn't that kind of place here yet, so the need for it is obvious. I would really like to have a center where I could just meet other Finnish people who actually live here or are just visiting. It's a good meeting point, a "sauna" for the Finns!

Thank you, Sarianne and Janne!

If you are interested in volunteering for Finland Center, please contact president@finlandcenter.org

Heli Blum



Heli Blum came to New York in 1975 for a year as an AFS Exchange Student to study at the White Plains High School. Heli met her husband, Tom, during that year but it wasn't until

1984 that they tied the knot in Finland. After her marriage she moved to USA and worked as a teacher at the International Preschool, had the first of her now four children, and started the Manhattan Finnish Language Playgroup. The group thrived and grew and several years later merged with the Finnish School of New York.

The Finnish School meets every other Saturday, but the toddler groups, which usually have been Heli's domain, meet once a week. Heli has been active in the school in different roles throughout these years and generously given of her time to teach the children Finnish in an immersion environment, naturally, while playing, singing and doing art projects. She has also organized and assisted in countless bazaars for fundraising. On the recent occasion of her 50th birthday, Heli and Tom decided to donate some stock to Finland Center Foundation. According to Heli's wishes, this stock is meant to grow and at some point be used to secure the physical space for the Finnish School within the future Center, with particular emphasis on the educational needs of small children. Anyone who feels grateful for Heli's efforts on behalf of their children are invited to join her in this worthy cause!

<http://finnchurchny.org/suomikoulu/>



Save the Date

Saturday, March 1st 2008
for Finlandia Foundation
**49th Annual
Awards Dinner
Dance**

Cocktail Reception 6:00 PM
Dinner, Dancing and
Entertainment 7:00 PM

Union League Club
38 East 37th Street,
New York City

The 2008 honoree is **Mikko Nissinen**, Artistic Director of Boston Ballet and the Boston Ballet Center for Dance Education since 2001. Mr. Nissinen has a distinguished career as a dancer, dance educator and popular presenter at conferences.

Entertainment by **Jussi Raittinen**, Finland's legendary rock star!

For more information, see www.finlandiafoundationny.org

High-Quality Assisted Living Possibilities in Finland



Kaskenpuisto, Turku

A Finnish non-profit organization, Ruissalo Säätiö, offers the possibility for a new kind of assisted living for elderly people. The organization runs four high quality Saga Senior Centers in Finland: two of which are in Turku, one in Rauma and one in Helsinki. Most elderly people dream about being able to live at home independently and safely for as long as possible. Many would like their own space and privacy, but would still appreciate having contact with friendly people, and not being cut off from the world. In a quality assisted living house these possibilities become realities.

The apartments—studios, doubles or even triples (area: 34 m² to 68

m²)—are well-lit, spacious, and elegant. The residents are also free to furnish them according to individual tastes. The nursing services are accessible round-the-clock and for all purposes; they are organized individually to suit each resident's specific needs.

The residents choose to have their daily meals in either the Centers' comfortable restaurants or to get them delivered directly to their home. It is always possible to enjoy a cup of coffee in the provided coffee houses. During their spare time, residents exercise, play games, study, or go on walks together. The Centers also organize many different events and festivities.

The apartments and common spaces are planned with special elderly needs taken into consideration. The doors in the common rooms open automatically, there are no doorsteps, and an elevator can be taken everywhere. The Center provides indoor gardens, hobby spaces and a gym for its residents. The cost of living in one of these Senior Centers is approximately EUR 800 – 1,000 (\$ 1,150 – 1,500) per month including rent, weekly cleaning, daily meals and other basic services. A little more is added to account for extra cleaning and nursing services, etc.

More information about the Senior Centers can be found at the web sites of Ruissalo Säätiö (www.ruissalosaatio.fi).

Survey: Would you be interested in having this kind of high-quality assisted living services in United States, in New York City for example? If so, send us your feedback to info@finlandcenter.org or write to our PO Box address!



Salisbury Hotel

15% discount off standard rates for FCF members!

Great location near Central Park, Carnegie Hall and Broadway.

Spacious rooms and a bargain breakfast!

Estate Planning

Maybe you've seen it in the news – Americans are now making more and more charitable donations in the form of stocks instead of cash. Is this something you should consider? If you are planning on giving to a charitable organization that is close to your heart, giving stock makes sense if you hold highly appreciated stock. Why? Tax benefits! Not only do you not have to pay capital gains on the appreciated stock (like you would if you first sold the stock and then made a cash donation), but you also get a charitable deduction equal to the fair market value or the donated property. (Please contact your tax advisor for specific details).

We have published an informational brochure about this recently. If you did not receive it in the mail, we can send you a paper one, or we can send you one as a pdf file by email. Also think of friends you could refer. Please contact the office of email info@finlandcenter.org

Examples of current Membership Travel Benefits; for details and more offers to come, go to www.finlandcenter.org

These benefits are accessible to you *online* once you have signed up, paid your membership fee and received your user id and password for the special **Member Pages** section of the website.

Special offers from our cooperative partners:

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Luxurious Moments at the Naantali Spa Hotel

Naantali Spa Hotel has been chosen as one of the 100 best Spas of the World. We invite you to relax in the pool and sauna paradise of our Spa Hotel and to enjoy the pampering spa and beauty treatments. The evenings are spent dancing and socialising as well as savouring tasty food and quality wines in our various restaurants. Should you so wish, you can fill your days with a versatile range of activities throughout your stay. Try aqua running and Tai Chi or take part in the trips to the surrounding archipelago and nature.

For those who are interested Naantali Spa Hotel also offers time-shares for sale. For more information www.svc.fi.

Step into a fairy tale - visit Naantali Spa Hotel.
 Special offer for members of Finland Center Foundation:

Paradise Holiday - 3 nights 297 Euro/person/twin room (~409 USD)

Includes • accommodation in Sunborn Yacht Hotel or Suite Hotel • breakfast buffet and half-board • a treatment package with clay pack, shoulder massage and aroma bath or Beaute Express facial and Spa Peeling treatment • unlimited use of the sauna and pool paradise and fitness

centre • leisure programme • Single room 426 €/person. (~586 USD) This offer is valid daily until 12/30/2008 (except public holidays). Bookings must be made no later than 05/31/2008. For more information, contact Finland Center Foundation or see www.finlandcenter.org

Naantali Spa Hotel
 Sales office tel: +358 2 44 55 100





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Hyvää joulua! God Jul! Happy Holidays!