



# LEADING STAR LEDSTJÄRNAN

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## International Order of Runeberg Supreme Board President's Message

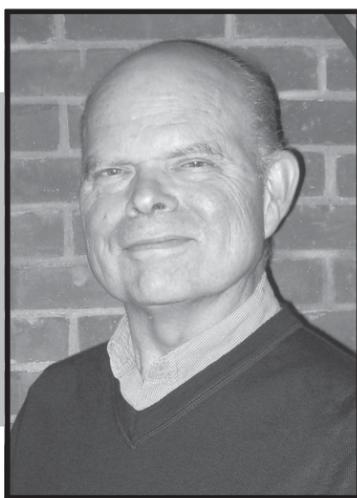
The IOR Supreme Board and *Leading Star* editors wish all Runeberg members a very

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*

You may have noticed a new page – FinnFacts & FinnPride – at our Runeberg web site, under the “Cultural Topics” menu: <http://www.orderofruneberg.org/culturaltopics/finnpridefinffacts.html> This new web page provides information on two books written by Veli Niinimaa. The books have a strong emphasis on Finnish culture.

“FinnFacts” is a handbook of North American Finnish organizations, activities, cultural pillars, and general information. The second half of the booklet introduces the reader to basic knowledge of Finland, outlining the key features, which make up the Finnish culture. The book is intended for those born outside of Finland having only limited back-

ground knowledge of the nation and its language, but interested in maintaining their Finnish heritage.



“FinnPride” is a booklet written about the many outstanding accomplishments by North American Finns and the nation of Finland and some of its leading citizens. We can be very proud of the good name that the Finnish carpenters, loggers, miners, cooks, and housekeepers established. As the good work of the silent majority is hard to record, “FinnPride” focuses on the individual achievements in many different areas such as arts, science, sports, entertainment, business, and politics. The book also highlights many

successful organizations and corporations.

There's an order form for these books that can be printed from the web page.

In the September issue of the *Leading Star* I mentioned that I'm continually impressed with Finland's news-making presence on the world stage. The above described books further confirm that very positive impression of Finland and its culture—education, health care, the arts, and music. Let's add software development to the list—you may be familiar with “Angry Birds”, the puzzle video game developed by Finnish computer game developer Rovio Mobile. “Angry Birds” has been praised for its addictive gameplay, and comical style. Its popularity has been demonstrated by 500 million downloads of the game!

Again, we wish you and your family a very Merry “Finnish” Christmas and Happy New Year 2012!

Fraternally,  
*Stew Lyons*

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### *God Jul Och Gott Nott År From the Supreme Board & Michigan Resident Agent*



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# Help us out

As we end the year with this issue of the paper, we look forward to 2012. Each year we hope to publish more news about what is happening in our 12 lodges. Next year we would like to be able to say that we have heard from all 12 lodges at least once. We know writing an article may seem difficult, but all we need are some thoughts handwritten on a piece of paper, mailed to us at the address below. We will make it into a news article for you. Pictures would be a plus if you have any available, but are not necessary. We would really enjoy hearing what each lodge is doing in the coming year. So, make it your resolution as a lodge to send in a news article in 2012.

You will find information about the scholarships in this issue. Please be aware of the must receive deadline of April 30 and allow plenty of time for your application to get there.

Let each of us think about and find a new way that we can further our Order in the year ahead.

-DH

**Please submit all news, resolutions, and articles by February 26 for publication in the March *Leading Star***

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PS Form 3526, September 2007 (Page 2 of 3)

# Genealogy Corner



June Pelo, A Dedicated Genealogist

**W**e celebrate Christmas as a special place in our hearts. It is then that families gather together; family ties are close. We give gifts to each other, eat, drink and discuss what is new, and remember the good times. It's an exciting holiday for the children. One could say it's a children's holiday because they get most of the gifts that Santa brings. It is also the only holiday when the parents can threaten the children by telling them they must be good and listen. No other holiday has been written about and sung about as much as Christmas.

This takes me back to my childhood and how we celebrated Christmas. I remember some times more than others. One memory is of going into the woods to find the best Christmas tree. After it was cut down, it was up to us small boys to drag it home. We struggled on our skis with the large tree and when we finally got it home we saw it was over one meter so that there was space for it in the house. In later years I learned to measure the ceiling height in the house and take a folding rule with us to the woods.

As usual, there was the Christmas bath in the afternoon of Christmas Eve. My mother gathered together the girls and took them to the sauna that was in the barn. When she came back to the house with the girls, she put a fire in the fireplace. Then she told us three boys it was our turn to go with her to the sauna. My two younger brothers were obedient and put clothes on for the cold walk to the barn.

## Insubordinate

I, on the other hand, defied her and said, "No, I'm not going to the sauna." I said that I would blow out the fire in the fireplace if she forced me.

"You will go to the sauna," said my mother as she went out the door with my brothers. To show my mother that I was serious, I began to blow out the fire that had nearly gone out; But when I blew, it didn't go out, it began to get new life. When my mother came back from sauna with my brothers, the hearth crackled with a full flame.

## Donald Widjeskog Remembers Christmas from Long Ago

Then my mother said, "To the sauna with you."

"No, I won't go," I said with a determined voice.

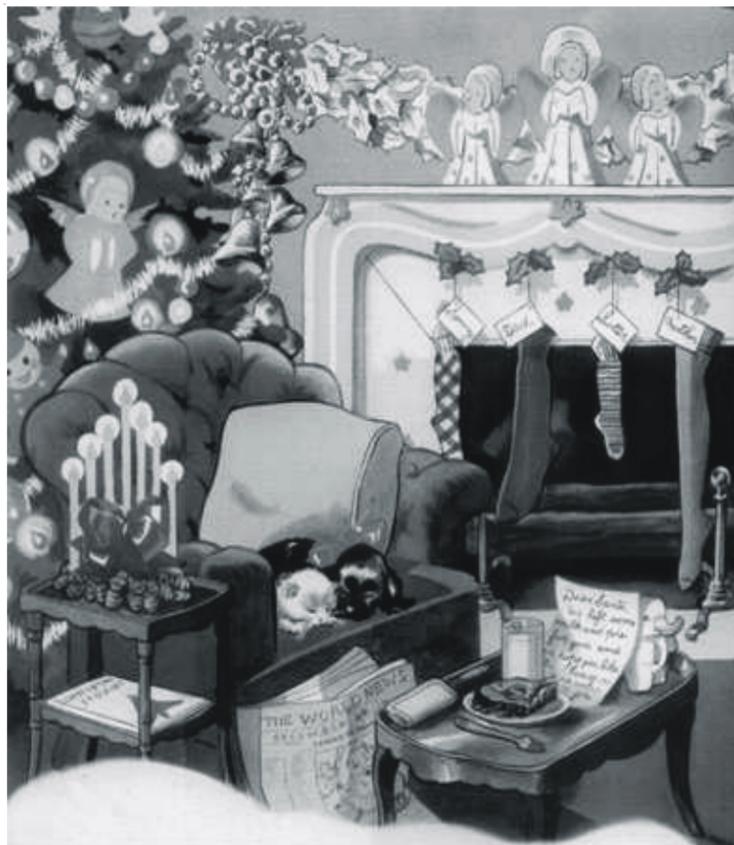
"So you won't get any Christmas presents!" she said.

That did it for me. There I trudged to the sauna in the bitter cold and dark winter evening.

Julgubben came early that evening soon after I returned from sauna. Mother had placed a large carton full of presents in the entry hall while we children waited eagerly until Julgubben came. It seemed an eternity before we heard a bell ring in the hall. Suddenly, the door opened and Julgubben came in with his Christmas goat. Both were dressed in long-haired fur. The goat crept in, dragging a sleigh that had a carton with our Christmas presents. The goat had a bell around his neck and he made such a noise that Julgubben had difficulty controlling him. My younger brothers were so scared that they hid behind our mother. When the presents were passed around, my mother gave a bag to Julgubben and a box full of goodies.

As presents, I received a mouth organ, stockings, and mittens. I wanted skis but didn't get them. After we had opened our presents, we all sat at the table for our meal. Then dessert was served—rice pudding with prune cream and whipped cream. I continued to defy my mother. I said I would not eat. My mother said, "Go without," and she gave my share to my younger brothers. I had a problem sleeping that night. All I could think about was rice pudding, prune cream, and whipped cream. That was my favorite. Never again did I defy my mother.

The village had arranged with Haldin & Roses to bus us to the Christmas church service. Our neighbor, who was the bus driver, had the bus in a garage on the other side of the road. We children looked forward to this excursion. It was bitter cold when we gathered there early in the morning for the trip to the church. The driver had opened the garage door, hopped into the bus and began to start the motor. It was



sluggish and after many attempts the battery ran down. It was necessary for the farmers to crank the motor. They took turns with the crank. For us children it was a great disappointment that the trip didn't happen. I was an adult when I later had a chance to attend the Christmas service in the beautiful Terjärv church. I remember that the night of the excursion to the church was bitterly cold with a full moon. In the still and silent night one could hear people's voices from far away. The snow creaked when we walked on it. Just as we were ready to go to bed that evening, there was a knock on the door.

## Itinerant Peddler

In stepped "Skropälgubbe", an itinerant peddler. As long as I can remember, until I emigrated, this peddler had pushed his bicycle from farm to farm through the village and peddled his merchandise. I don't think anyone knew what his name was. The name we called him—"Skropälgubbe"—probably came from his neglectful appearance. He was red-faced and his skin shed flakes from his frost-bitten cheeks. On the luggage carrier on his bicycle he usually had a little suitcase that was stuffed with all his earthly belongings. On top of his suitcase was a carton that held the wares he sold. When he came into our house, he humbly sat down on a stool near the door and took his wares out of the carton and set them on the floor. There was not much to choose from. It consisted of what mothers had a use for: buttons, needles, thread, etc. My mother always bought something from him.

Now he stood there by the door that cold winter evening with his head bent, cap in his hand, and looking at the floor as he humbly asked if he could stay overnight. Although our farmhouse was large, we only



# LODGE NEWS



## Lodge #106 Tacoma, Washington

For our October meeting on October 15, 2011, we decided to try something different by having a brunch instead of a lunch. Suggestions were to bring your favorite potluck brunch dish or try a new one that you may have been wanting to try out. Setting the arrival time for 10:00 a.m., we would try to eat around 10:30 a.m.

It really turned out great: 36 in attendance and we enjoyed the brunch dishes, including the desserts and John Sandstrom's excellent coffee!

By 12:30 we were ready to have another cup of coffee and maybe a "dab of this or that" from the dessert table and to settle down to listen to our guest speaker, author Bob Goldstein from Seattle. He would show slides and tell us about his adventures in Finland as he rode his bike from Helsingfors to the Åland Islands and on up north, up to the Barents Sea. *Riding with the Reindeer* is the name of his book, *A Bicycle Odyssey through Finland, Lapland, and Arctic Norway*. A spell-bound audience of Runeberg members en-



*Seen here is our O.R. member Agnes Warren, who lives at "Black Butte Ranch" in Oregon. "Hello to all of you. Wish I didn't live this far away from you all. I do enjoy getting the Leading Star and keeping up on your activities. My best to all of you." Agnes*

joyed his down-to-earth presentation. Another book of his, *Adventures on the Trans-Siberian Express*, keeps you reading and laughing until the end.

Visitors at our morning brunch were Greta Lindroos from Vasa, Finland; Martha Cederberg's sister, Joanne Carr from Olympia; and a friend of Carol Brittons and Bill Carlson of Seattle.

Celebrating their 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary that day were Roy and Martha Cederberg. "Much happiness on this, your special day" from your friends in Order of Runeberg.

It's amazing how fast a year goes by. We add another year to our age, and all at once you reach 70-75-80-90 and, yes, they are milestones!!

To our friends and members in International Order of Runeberg, we send our warmest greetings from the #106 members in and around Olympia and Tacoma, Battleground, Kråkeryd, Washington.

"God Jul och Gott Nytt År!"

*Marita Agnew, President  
Tom Mason, Vice President  
Monica Mason, Secretary  
John Sandstrom, Treasurer*

## Lodge #130 New Westminster, B.C., Canada

Once again we celebrated a member's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. We have celebrated three members' 80<sup>th</sup> birthdays this year. Nancy Snickars was our birthday girl—our youngest member. Nancy has been our Recording Secretary for over 25 years; a big and important job, well done by her.

The Lodge presented her with a dozen lovely roses. As hostess for the month of October, Nancy served delicious sandwiches and cake.

Nancy, with her husband Elis, came to Canada from Finland in 1955—just 11 days after their marriage. Soon after coming to Canada, they joined the Runeberg Lodge. They've been a real asset to our Lodge #130. We wish them good health and many more birthdays.

Sincerely,  
*Evelyn Carlson*

Visit our web site:  
[www.orderofruneberg.org](http://www.orderofruneberg.org)



*Nancy Snickars in the kitchen, October 2011*

## Scholarship Alert

The International Order of Runeberg awards scholarships to deserving students. PLEASE allow enough time for your application to be received by April 30, 2012. Last year two applications had to be returned because they were received after the deadline. (One was sent priority post and still it took 2½ weeks from Seattle to Vancouver.)

If you applied for a scholarship in the past and did not receive the award, you could re-apply if you are still attending a post-secondary school.

You will find information about the application form and rules in this paper.

TO BE RECEIVED BY APRIL 30, 2012.

*Lorene Mara*



# LODGE NEWS



## Lodge #205 New Haven, CT

New Haven Lodge #205 met on October 22<sup>nd</sup> for our annual Fall Walk & Potluck Dinner. This fall, as in some previous years fall hikes, we hiked to the top of Sleeping Giant State Park, in Hamden, CT. Two miles of mountaintop resembling a large man lying in repose, the “sleeping giant” is a popular feature of the south central Connecticut skyline. A 1½-mile scenic trail leads to the stone observation tower on the peak of Mt. Carmel, which provides an excellent view of Long Island Sound and the New Haven area. After building up a big appetite from hiking, we met at the home of Doug Davie and Liisa Lindholm for our potluck dinner!

Submitted by *Stew Lyons*



Left to right: *Roy Kosonen, Ruth Natzel, Liisa Lindholm, Doug Davie, Kaarina Lyons, Brenda & George Nousiainen, Inke Sunila, Stew Lyons. Additional Lodge #205 members joined us for the Potluck Dinner.*

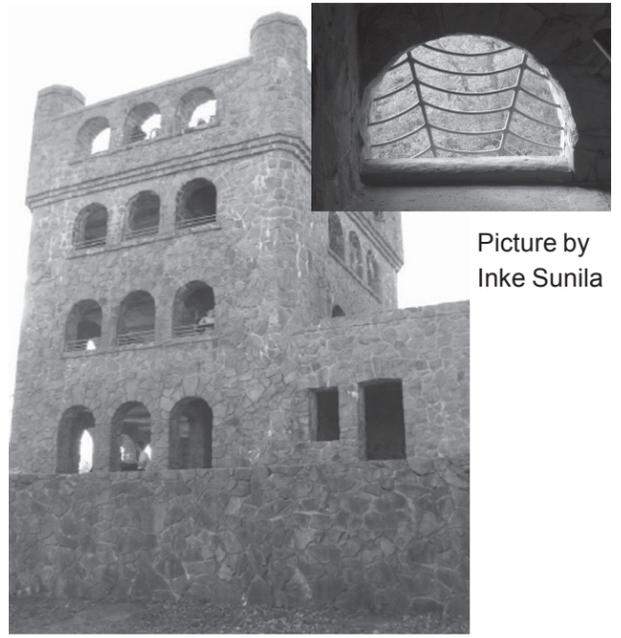


*Potluck Dinner*



*Ruth Natzel – enjoying the sunshine*

*View from stone observation tower window*



Picture by  
*Inke Sunila*

*The Stone Observation Tower*

## WASHINGTON FINNISH STUDIES PROGRAM FUTURE MORE SECURE

By *Karoliina Kuisma*

SEATTLE, Wash.—Founded in 1861, the University of Washington (UW) is one of the oldest state-supported institutions of higher education on the West Coast of the United States, and one of the preeminent research universities in the world.

In 2010 the Times Higher Education Rankings placed the UW in the 23<sup>rd</sup> place among the world’s universities, 17<sup>th</sup> in the United States and the fourth among the public universities in the U.S.

The UW is widely known in the United States for its strong language programs, with over 60 different languages offered on a regular basis, and many international “area-studies” programs. Yet, it may surprise some that Finnish has been taught on the Seattle campus for more than 20 years. Finnish-language instruction and courses on Finland in English are offered as a part of the Scandinavian Studies Department curriculum.

Over the years the program has expanded from occasional language teaching to systematic instruction on three levels, graduate-level study and research and active research by the faculty. The UW and the Finnish Ministry of Education’s Center For International Mobility (CIMO) jointly fund the lectureship.

Associate professor Andrew Nestingen has held his position since 2001. The beginning of the academic year is usually a busy and exciting time. “First of all, we organized a summer course in Finnish this past summer. Thanks to high student demand we were able to secure funding for intensive second year Finnish taught over the summer quarter,” professor Nestingen said.

“Five students got together daily with their teacher Jenni Salmi and are now a year ahead in their language study. We also welcomed a visiting Fulbright student from Finland in September, Anna Peltomäki. She is teaching first year Finnish and taking classes to fulfil her own degree requirements at the University of Tampere.

“As much as this is an excellent professional opportunity for the visiting graduate student, it is also an irreplaceable experience for the students in beginning Finnish. The visiting graduate students add a nice breath of Finnish air, both culturally and linguistically.”

Faculty have published books about the national epic “Kalevala,” Finnish folklore, cinema and literature. Professor Nestingen teaches and writes on Finnish popular culture and has recently completed a book on Aki Kaurismäki.

In addition to the professorship, there is a visiting lectureship position in Finnish, currently held by Ms. Aija Elg who was hired from Finland in 2009.

“I teach second and third year Finnish, function as the departmental Teaching Assistant Coordinator and lecture in English about Finland-related topics,” say Ms. Elg.

“In addition to that, fundraising and outreach is a big part of the faculty’s job. This year we received a major donation of \$100,000 thus doubling the program endowed funds, and that has obviously been a major step in securing the program and helping it become ever more successful.”

This spring a generous donor, Mr. Eero Tetri, made an endowed gift of \$100,000 to

support the teaching of the Finnish language at the University doubling the endowed funds supporting the program. While the program has become a success, the finances of the University of Washington have become more and more stretched due to rapidly decreasing state funding.

More and more of the cost of the program must come out of the endowed funds. In addition to his significant gift, Mr. Tetri promised to match donations made by others by the end of 2011, as well as pledges made for 2012, up to \$50,000.

“To me, it is the most beautiful language in the world. I do not want it ever to disappear. I want it to continue to delight people, in Finland and in Seattle,” Mr. Tetri says.

The Finnish program enrolls 20–30 students in language instruction annually. Department faculty teach some three hundred students about Finland in cultural courses taught in English. The activities of the program’s students, supporters and faculty have made a significant contribution to the knowledge of Finnish culture in the U.S.

A good example is a Finnish studies graduate Lola Rogers who has become a well-known translator of Finnish literature into English. Her credits include the English translation of Sofi Oksanen’s 2008 best-seller *Purge* (*Puhdistus* in Finnish).

Please visit the Scandinavian Studies website or friend us on Facebook to find out more about the program.

*Finnish American Reporter* Editor’s note: Karoliina Kuisma served as the visiting lecturer of Finnish at the University of Washington in 2004–2009. She lives in Seattle and works as a language consultant for an IT consulting and services company.

From *The Finnish American Reporter*  
December 2011



## Resolutions

### Lodge #104 San Francisco, California

It is with deep sorrow that we report the loss of

#### Ethel Ingeborg Berg

who passed away on October 31, 2011, at the age of 83. She was born on April 12, 1928, to Anders Blomqvist and Anna Blomqvist in Vasa, Finland. She emigrated to the United States in November 1955 with her husband Jakob Mateus Berg and their daughter Marie Louise. Ethel and her husband joined the Order of Runeberg shortly after they settled in Redwood City. In 1973 Ethel was preceded in death by her husband of 26 years.

She is survived by her daughter Marie Louise Griffith (Jim), two grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and four great-great-grandchildren. Ethel is also survived by many nieces and nephews both in Finland and the United States as well as many good friends. Ethel loved her adopted country but never forgot her roots. Finland always called to her.

Ethel had a great love of music. She sang with the West Bay Opera in Palo Alto. She also loved cooking and baking and the Lodge got to sample her baked goods. Her garden was a beauty to behold. She was a woman of many interests and passions.

A funeral service was held at Redwood Chapel in Redwood City, CA, on November 4, 2011.

Lodge #104 extends its deepest sympathy to Marie Louise and her family.

Resolution Committee

### Lodge #124 Vancouver, B.C., Canada

It is with deep sorrow that we report the passing of our longtime member

#### Nils Edvard Fredriksson

who passed away October 4, 2011, in Nanaimo, British Columbia.

Nils was born in Karleby, Finland, April 8, 1917. His father died when he was a baby and his mother died when he was 6 years old. He lived with relatives for 10 years. At age 16, he cycled to Lapland and worked in a sawmill, later owning a trucking business. In 1949 Nils and 3 cousins built a fishing vessel and in 1950 sailed the 60-foot boat across the Atlantic, finally landing in Halifax. He obtained work there and in 1952 his first wife, Rakel, and 3 daughters joined him. In 1952 they made their way to Vancouver Island and eventually to Nanaimo.

Nils worked as a millwright for MacMillan Blodel. He was a talented carpenter who built homes and cabins on Vancouver Island and Protection Island.

Nils joined Lodge #124 November 20, 1964. He is pre-deceased by his first wife Rakel (1978). Nils is survived by his wife Doris "Pat"; 3 daughters, Mary (Tom), Lena (Bob), and Ulla (Paul); 6 grandchildren; 6 great-grandchildren; 1 great-great-granddaughter; and sister Ina Granlund in Finland.

A funeral service was held October 15, 2011, in Nanaimo, B.C.

Members of Vancouver Lodge #124 extend their deepest sympathy to his family.

Resolution Committee

Ulla Nelson and Lorene Mara

### Lodge #124 Vancouver, B.C., Canada

It is with deep sorrow that we report the passing of our member

#### Aune Amanda Aunola

who passed away on August 17, 2011.

Aune was born in Marttila, Finland, October 5, 1918. She was the second youngest of seven. When she was 11, her mother died. She began her working life at 13 as a shop's assistant. At 16 she started her apprenticeship as a barber/hairdresser—the beginning of a career that lasted for more than 70 years.

In 1955 Aune, her husband Erikki, and son emigrated to B.C., Canada. She had her own beauty salon and in 1970 Aune and Erikki moved back to Finland for 5 years. Moving back to Vancouver in 1975, Aune bought another beauty salon which she sold in 1982. She then began working at the Finnish Rest Homes, where she finally stopped working at age 90.

Aune enjoyed traveling, music, and handicrafts. She sang in the Emmaus Church Choir and the Runeberg Choir. She joined Lodge #124 on October 14, 1994. Aune was a likable lady, always with a smile.

Aune is survived by her son Juhani.

A memorial service was held September 21, 2011, at the Emmaus Lutheran Church, Burnaby, B.C.

Members of Vancouver Lodge #124 extend their deepest sympathy to her family.

Resolution Committee

Ellen Hammaren and Lorene Mara

## 2012 INTERNATIONAL ORDER OF RUNEBERG SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION RULES

The International Order of Runeberg (IOR) has three (3) scholarships, each in the amount of \$500.00, available annually to ALL members of IOR pursuing education at an institution of higher learning or a vocational school or for further studies towards an advanced degree.

The scholarship is open not only to high school graduates but to adults and college students who meet the eligibility requirements.

**Scholarship application must be received by April 30 of the current year.**

The eligibility rules are:

1. All members of the IOR are eligible to apply.
2. Applicant must be a current member in good standing (dues paid) of the IOR and have been a member for at least one year prior to application. Verification of membership must be submitted by the Financial Secretary of the applicant's lodge.
3. An applicant may win a scholarship every two years (not consecutive years) for a maximum of three scholarships.

4. Impartial judges will be chosen by the Supreme Board each year.

5. Application must be typed or neatly written.

6. Letter of recommendation (optional) may be included from a teacher, employer, or community service supervisor.

7. Application must be accompanied with a copy of the applicant's transcript, if applicable.

8. On a separate single page, write a statement telling why you should be awarded this scholarship (must be typewritten).

9. Send completed application along with verification of membership, any letters of recommendation and transcript (if applicable) to:



Lorene Mara  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President,  
Scholarship Chairman  
2021 Palliser Avenue  
Coquitlam, B.C. V3K 1W8  
Canada

The application form is available on line at [www.orderofruneberg.org](http://www.orderofruneberg.org) or by writing to the editors at the address on page 2.

## New ambassador hits ground running



By David Maki  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

It was an eventful year for the staff at the Finnish Embassy in Washington, D.C. The area was hit with an earthquake, then a hurricane...

“And then we got Ritva,” said Markku Kauppinen, a political affairs counselor at the Embassy. “She’s the ambassador who brought new ideas and started to put them into practice—in a positive tone, of course.”

Ambassador Ritva Koukku-Ronde began her appointment as Finland’s ambassador to the United States in September. She’s the first female to hold that post, and after only a short time on the job she’s found that she enjoys everything about the position, especially one aspect.

“Getting to meet fascinating people from all walks of life is one thing that truly stands out,” she said. “The post has been just as interesting and challenging as I expected. My days are busy but never dull.”

Koukku-Ronde, who comes to Washington after serving in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for almost three decades, has worked in various positions in the foreign ministry in Helsinki and at Finnish diplomatic missions abroad. Before her posting as ambassador, she served as the Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Helsinki.

This is her first post in the United States, though she had visited several times in the past.

“I will focus on advancing the relationship between Finland and the U.S. in the areas of economy, education, security, environment, high technology and culture—just to name a few,” she said. “One of my priorities is to develop and deepen the cooperation between different Finnish entities in the U.S., (including) foreign ministry, defense forces, Finnish Cultural Institute and honorary consuls, all of which form what we call “the House of Finland.”

Ambassador Koukku-Ronde also said she’s keen to create close relationships with American entities, such as Congress, the media and cultural institutions, but she knows it won’t be easy.

“As a small country that poses no problems for the U.S., Finland has to work hard to get its voice heard,” she said. “Washington is home to hundreds of international actors all fighting for the attention of American politicians, policymakers and the general public. Our challenge is to differentiate ourselves from other actors and to offer Finland’s view on matters that are of specific interest to Americans.”

Though it’s early in her tenure, Ambassador Koukku-Ronde has the confidence of her staff already.

“Having served as Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry she has long experience and a large view of development issues,” Kauppinen said. “She has been able to rejuvenate Finnish-American cooperation in this field. Since I am in charge of development at the Embassy I have benefited from her support in my work here.”

Kauppinen says it’s that sort of work that the average citizen doesn’t truly understand.

“People tend to think the Ambassador attends and hosts various cocktail events and dinners nearly every day,” he said. “This is true, but her daily work is loaded with meetings with senators, Congressmen and Congresswomen, civil servants and representatives from business and academia. Reporting to the Ministry is an important part of her daily routine, and not to forget being the head and leader of the Embassy.”

Though her days can be challenging as they are, Ambassador Koukku-Ronde—who is married to Dr. Hidde Ronde and has two daughters, Emma and Elsa—is already looking to expand her workload.

“My job is to advance Finland’s interests here as well as present American views to decision makers in Helsinki,” she said. “I am particularly eager to establish connections with Finnish-American communities and motivate their members to help us in our work. I believe Finnish Americans and Finns living in the U.S. can serve as a great resource for Finland.”

From *The Finnish American Reporter*  
December 2011

### Highlights International Supreme Board Conference Call via Skype

October 16, 2011

The meeting got underway at 4:20 p.m. PST. All Board members and *Leading Star* Editor present.

#### Treasurer’s Report:

UBS balance as of 9-30-11 \$63,744.07. Except for the balance in the Money Market account, the rest is in CDs with staggered due dates. US Bank balance as of 9-30-11 \$4,737.43.

#### Leading Star Report:

Information for publication is light. All Lodges and individuals are encouraged to send in information.

#### Web Site Report:

The *Memorabilia of the International Order of Runeberg* is now on our web site with photos and information taken from the book published in 1968.

#### Old Business:

Information re: next Convention location ... Ballots are still being received from delegates who attended the Eureka Convention. Until all votes are received, our next Convention destination will not be decided.

As no feedback has been received regarding SFHS genealogy, no further action will be taken.

Printing of the Constitution is in progress.

Scholarships awarded = 3 for 2011. Applications must be sent in on time to qualify. Two applications were received after the due date and, therefore, could not be processed.

Contact is trying to be made with the Finlandia Lodge (Finland) with the possibility of placing their activities and information on our web site.

#### Membership:

Ideas that were generated on how to increase membership:

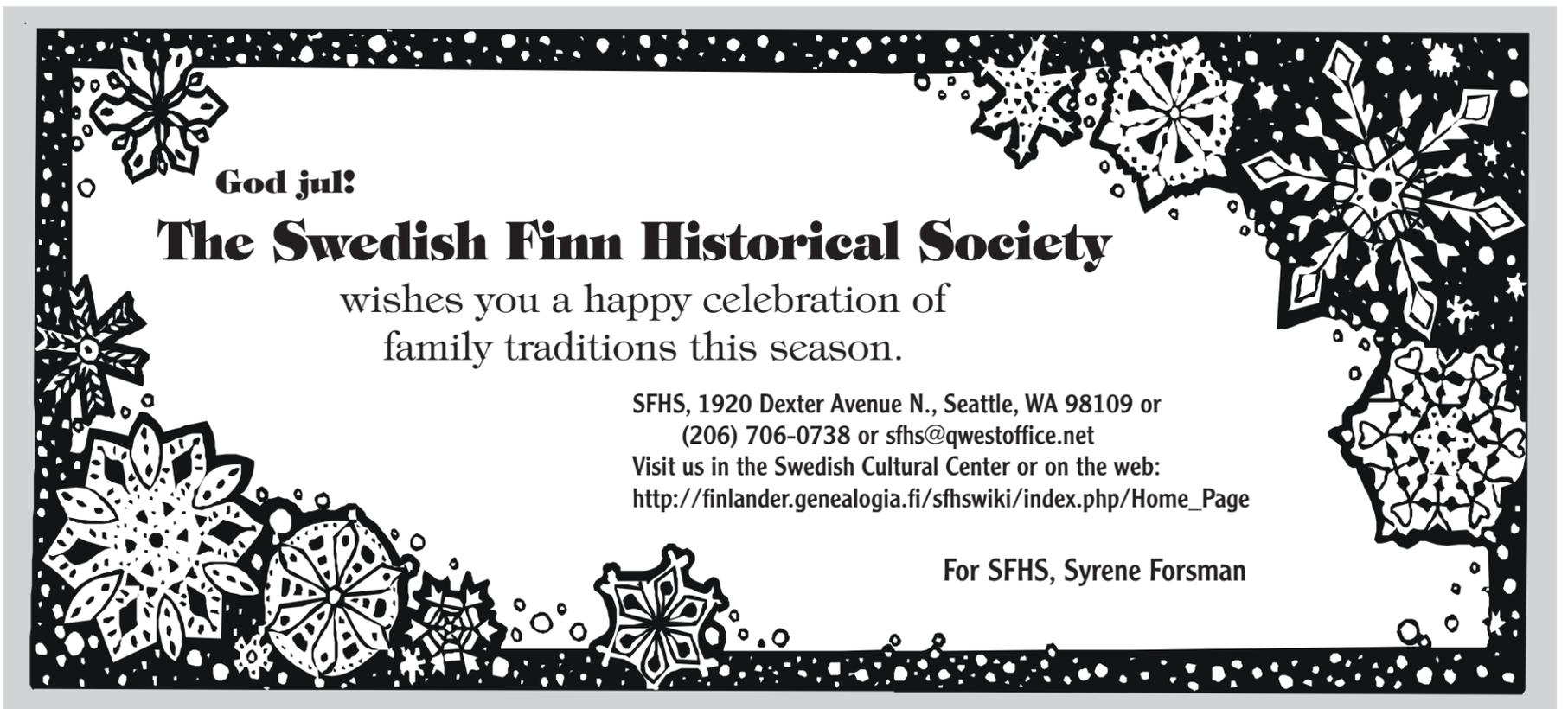
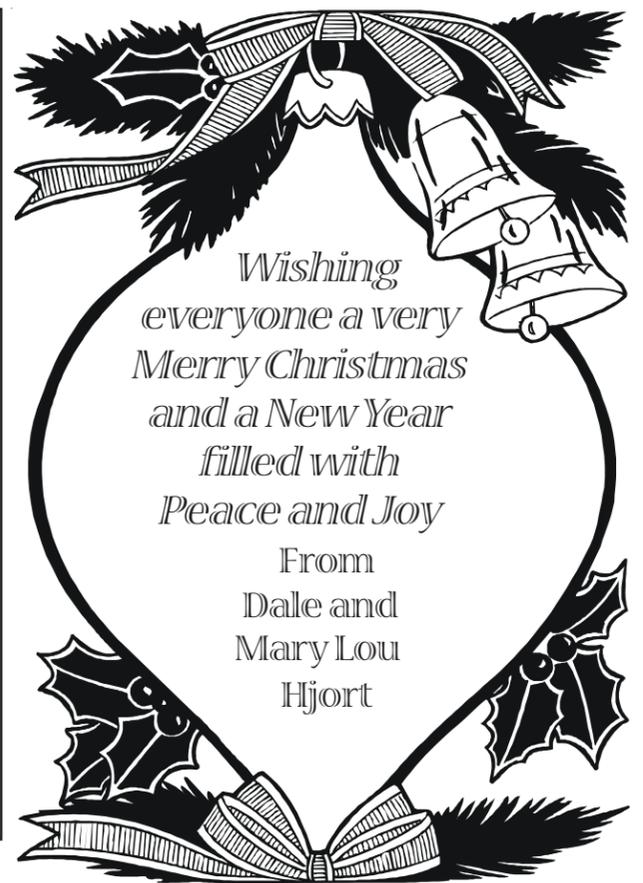
- Make contact with members who have left, encouraging them to rejoin
- Offer incentives to increase membership
- Have an idea board on the web site to post ideas for all Lodges to share
- Bring a visitor to your local meeting
- Print bumper stickers with name and logo of OR
- Use the community bulletin board to advertise OR
- Add our information to other Scandinavian web sites

#### Other:

Next Skype Call – February 19, 2012 – 4 p.m. PST

Adjourned 5:30 p.m.

Submitted by *Annabelle Kergan*



continued from page 3

## Remembers Christmas from Long Ago

used three rooms in the winter: the main room and two other rooms. It was difficult for my mother to keep the rooms warm. I slept on a wooden sofa in my own bedroom which was in the main room. All the others slept in the two other rooms. My mother looked at the peddler as he stood by the door. Good-hearted she was and she had compassion for him. She lifted the lid on the wooden sofa and dragged off my mattress. Then she spread out the straw mattress and made the bed for the peddler and me. When the fire had died down and mother had closed the damper, it was time to cover us with extra bedding.

Several times during the night I awakened when the peddler got out of the sofa. There in the moonlight I saw that he opened his luggage and took out a flask. When he sat on the floor I could see him drink from the flask. In the morning I awakened when my mother tended the fire in the fireplace. It was so cold in the house that the bucket of water on the floor by the sink had frozen

over. There over the bucket, with his head frozen in the ice was the cat, who had died. Earlier he had gotten caught between the bucket and the handle when he went to drink and had strangled or drowned when he tried to get free. My mother took the cat and threw it out. Later she filled the coffee pot and porridge pan with water. During that time the peddler gathered together his few belongings. He said his thank you and went out the door.

All that the peddler drank during the night now floated in the sofa. The house smelled of urine as well as from the awful and nasty-smelling pipe he smoked. When my mother came in from the barn, she took the straw mattress and threw it out into the snow and burned it.

On one of my home visits, after I had been in America for ten years, I stopped in the cafeteria in Terjärv for a cup of coffee. I hoped that I would bump into one of my cronies there when I got my coffee cup and "gris." I looked around but saw no known

people. To my surprise there at the table sat the peddler, my old sleeping comrade from long ago, reading a newspaper.

I sat down at his table. He put down his paper and looked at me and said in Finnish: "You are Etel's son!" We sat there over an hour and talked while we drank coffee. His eyes were clean and clear when he looked at me. He was no longer meek and humble, and his cheeks no longer flaked. He was well clad. He said he now had it good. He had a pension and had his own place in Pedersöre. As was his wont, he roamed around the Swedish area, now as a tourist. In his jacket pocket he had a bus schedule for each bus line between Jakobstad, Gamlakarleby, and Seinäjoki.

Now my family and I have established our own Christmas tradition. The family has always cut our own tree on a Christmas tree farm. Now when we come home we gather together and listen to American and Scandinavian Christmas songs while we drink "Egg Nog"!

Donald Widjeskog  
Norden 5 Feb. 2011

English translation by *June Pelo*