

## DISCOMBOBULATED

I had been the editor of the *Finnan Historical Quarterly* for the Finnish American Historical Society of the West since January of 2004. When the FAHSW was absorbed by Finlandia Foundation Columbia Pacific Chapter a year ago, I continued the newsletter for both populations. This month starts the first time that this newsletter is solely written for FFCPC members and distributed electronically only. And, I have to admit that it feels disjointed. For the first time in 15-years I don't know who my audience is; and you probably are wondering why am I getting this newsletter, that I didn't sign up for, with all this historical stuff? It's discombobulating to say the least.

So before you go looking for the unsubscribe button, let's fix that!

Let me introduce myself. I'm Andrea. I grew up in Astoria, OR and, according to 23 & Me, am 52.4% Finnish and another 44% Swedish). From time to time I've written about my family, reprinted my dad's "memoirs," and went on and on about my childhood, but enough of that.

What about YOU? I'd love to hear all about you!

What would you like to read about in this newsletter? Have you ever been to one of our FFCPC activities? Do you play sports, cook, or sew? Are you an artist? Have you read any good books lately? What activities do you like? Where are you from? Did you go to Finnic last year or to Midsommar? Don't you just love to go to ScanFair? Me, too!

Feel free to shoot me an email or send a letter to the editor, whatever is your style, anytime so we can get to know each other better.

I have a feeling we can make this work. And, just so you know...there is no unsubscribe button!

--Andrea Tolonen

## **Finnish Homes of Red Lodge Montana**

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Warila boarding house and sauna represent an important chapter in the history of Red Lodge, Montana. It was built at 20 North Haggin Street in 1894.

When the coal mines opened in the late 1880's, the Finnish people became the largest work force in the mines and comprised one-fourth of the population of Red Lodge by 1910. They brought with them the cooperative movement of boarding houses and provided a substitute for family life for the large group of single miners. Lower living costs and the camaraderie of a communal life with family-style meals among their own people gave the miners a feeling of security in a land of strangers.

Built at the turn of the century by John Honkala, a master carpenter and woodworker, this stately home remains a permanent tribute to the skills and quality of its construction. The historic home's beauty is ageless, make it one of the best examples of the Victorian period of pattern book architecture in Red Lodge. The front features gingerbread fretwork in the peak, accented by fish-scale shingles on the second floor façade. The front porch balustrades are supported by columns that are set off by half-circle ornamented brackets between the column tops and the fascia boards. Colonial Revival period doors and beveled glass windows further complement the home's grandeur.

This was one of the few privately-owned homes on the block, since the coal

company built the first saltbox-style houses on the street and many of the duplexes common to Finn Town. In the early days, coal to heat the houses was purchased at the mine site for \$2.25 a ton. Electricity was provided by a coal-fired generator at the mine. In addition to the main house are the original sauna and carriage house.

The Finns originated the steam bath known as the sauna. Mr. Honkala built this one about 1906, and it was operated by the Warilas from 1918-1953. If a customer brought his own towel, the bath cost 10-cents, and 15-cents if the proprietor furnished the towel. After the sauna closed, the building was remodeled into a beauty shop.

The family lived on the first floor of the home and as many as 15 boarders were accommodated, two to a room. Access to the daylight basement was by back and front stairs under the porches. In 1909, there was a barbershop in the front portion of the basement. In 1918, Senja and Otto Warila purchased the home from the Pumala family for \$4,800 and it has remained in the family, who continue to love and preserve this solid and stately home.

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Laughing children, weary miners and discriminating tourists have all found comfort and hospitality in the Herranen-Mero house, a gracious Queen Anne home built on South Platt in 1907.

The two-and-a-half story, clapboard house has corner windows in the steeply-pitched roof and a prominent front gable sheathed with scalloped shingles. A run-around porch originally covered the western and southern exposures. The open porch remains across the front with columns

spanned by an open balustrade. Gingerbread ornamentation and a picket fence with an archway enhance the Victorian charm.

The home was built by Otto Herranen, a Finnish rancher and carpenter. Herranen emigrated from the Pihtipudas area of Finland as a young man, coming to Michigan and later to Montana. He met and married a Finnish girl, Fiina Luoma, in Montana and they arrived in Red Lodge in the late 1800's. They had three children. Their daughter, Fiina Ford, had memories of living in the big house. As a small child, she was afraid to play in the unfinished third floor.

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### ***Annual Meeting to be Held in Finnish Classroom***

Mark your calendars and save the date of March 10, 2pm for the FFCPC Annual Meeting which will take place in the Finnish Classroom located in Cramer Hall at Portland State University.

Jodi Lippert, new Executive Director of Nordic Northwest, will be our guest speaker. Jodi came on board at NNW in October of 2018. Although she hails from Minnesota, Jodi attended the University of Oregon.

Also on the docket will be a report on the Lindgren Cabin. The Board is also looking for ideas for future growth on our organization from the membership.

The new members of the Board of Directors will be announced at the meeting.

Homemade salmon chowder will be served during the social hour along with fresh baked pulla and coffee.

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*Good friends are like bouquets of flowers  
you give to yourself.*

*--Finnish Proverb*

### **Board Activities**

Ever active, your FFCPC Board works tirelessly for the good of the organization on behalf of all its members.

Thanks to the efforts of FFCPC President Greg Jacobs, FFCPC has been awarded \$1,125 from the Clatsop County Cultural Coalition with the monies earmarked for the repair and developmental plans for the Lindgren Cabin under the stipulation that the monies must be spent by December 2019.

A separate application has also been submitted by FFCPC President Greg Jacobs to Robert Olguin in Salem, OR in an effort to get the Lindgren Cabin designated as an official "Historic Building."

Board member, Elizabeth Newton, attended a two-weekend class on the Astoria Customs House restoration. The hands-on experience provided her great insight and knowledge on the process of how to preserve the Lindgren Cabin. To start, the cabin will need a thorough cleaning. Linseed oil turns out to be the key factor in preservation of old wooden buildings. A work party is in the process of being put together to tackle the job in February. Any interested members are most welcome to join in the fun!

Board member, Larry Vargas, has been using his talents designing an upgraded version of the FFCPC website. Many new features are to be included such as being able to renew your membership online. Larry is looking at the end of the month to "go live." Larry has volunteered to be our new webmaster as well.

As a group, the board wants to take a fresh look at the four major events we host, which are Vappu, Midsommar, ScanFair and Finnic, to assess the number of participants, relevance and success. Your opinions are crucial. Feel free to make your thoughts on these events known by contacting a board member or sending a Letter to the Editor of this newsletter or shooting us an email.