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standing members, Faith Swanson, has been with The Finnish Brotherhood for 61 years.”

Enke spoke of her own connection to the lodge: “I am part Swedish, part Finnish and my grandparents emigrated here from Finland. They actually first met in Naselle (Washington) and saw each other again around Astoria. Suomi Hall personifies Uniontown. It’s an anchor for me. This place feels like my grandma’s home. I’ve cleaned carpets, scrubbed floors as many others have — we are honoring our families and heritage by continuing to take loving care of the building to ensure that we’re around for another 100 years.”

Former president Judith Lampi recalled her own memories as a child visiting her Finnish grandparents on their dairy farm in Brownsmead. “My grandmother made the best wild blackberry pies in her woodstove. I remember as a child holding her hand and walking down the hill to the milking parlor with a glass pitcher, and my grandmother would fill the pitcher up with raw milk. She would skim the cream off the top, and then we had a cold glass of whole milk. To this day I can only drink whole milk.”

The attraction to Astoria was a natural one for Finnish immigrants. “There are similarities between Finland and Astoria with Finland 70 percent forested and 60,000 lakes,” said Lampi. “Many emigrating Finns already had experience back in their home country of dairy farming, logging or fishing, and when I asked my grandfather why the family came to Astoria, he said ‘because it’s just like Finland.’”

The Finnish Brotherhood serves as a home base for networking, community and heritage. Enke explained the inner workings of the organization: “It has three major parts: the constitution, the executive committee (which includes a board of trustees) and of course the auxiliary (the members). Social hours are held on the second Monday (April to October) at 6 p.m. and Sundays before the second Monday at noon (November to March).”

New members do not necessarily need to have Finnish ancestry, Enke noted. “Membership in the



PHOTO BY DANNY MILLER

Suomi Hall underwent renovations in 2015, with the addition of a new fire escape and fresh paint on the building. The weather-beaten west side of the building is due for restoration soon.



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Historic items are displayed in the Finnish Brotherhood’s Suomi Hall in Astoria.

Finnish Brotherhood requires annual dues, participation in the lodge community and a deep interest in the preservation of Finnish heritage and culture in our area. Over the years, the lodge has managed to sustain itself through membership dues, internal fundraising among its members and events open to the public throughout the year,” she said.

The Finnish Brotherhood owns the historic Suomi Hall. “Although major renovations were done in 2015 with the addition of a new fire escape and fresh paint on the building, the weather-beaten west side of the building is due for restoration soon,” Enke said. “The lodge gratefully accepts outside

donations as well as interest in the legacy of Suomi Hall.”

In addition to its internal membership, the Finnish Brotherhood actively connects with the community by hosting regular events each year that are open to the public. These include the Laksloda Dinner, featuring salt salmon and potatoes, every October; the Lutefisk Dinner in December; and, of course, the Scandinavian Festival each June.

“This year, new exciting events will be added,” Enke said.

In the spring, the lodge plans to host local-born Finn and Portland State University linguistics professor Gregg Jacobs for a reading and discussion of ‘The Kaleva,’ an epic Finnish poem — think Finland’s



PHOTO BY DANNY MILLER

Terry Arnall gives a presentation on the art of Carl Larsson during a Finnish Brotherhood meeting Jan. 8 at Suomi Hall in Astoria.



PHOTO BY DANNY MILLER

Historic items are displayed in the Finnish Brotherhood’s Suomi Hall.

version of Beowulf and the basis of the lodge’s name. The organization also plans to hold Finnish cooking classes using historically authentic cookbooks as well as a corned beef and cabbage potluck the day before St. Patrick’s Day, as a nod to the spoof St. Urho (who supposedly chased the grasshoppers out of Finland, saving the vineyards).

Beyond the fun events, The Finnish Brotherhood also hands out scholarships for its members with Finnish heritage, provides a space to host weddings and funerals, and allows its hall to be rented out for outside events. The dates for events in 2017 have not yet been announced, and because the lodge does not currently have

a website or a presence on social media, all of its events will be listed on the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce website, [oldoregon.com](http://oldoregon.com)

“The Finnish presence is everywhere in Astoria,” Enke said. “From Columbia Memorial Hospital — which was started with help from The Finnish Brotherhood — to Tapiola Park — which is named for the Finnish God of the forest, Tapio — to the Astoria Public Library — which was designed by Finnish architects Ebba Wicks Brown and husband Ernie Brown. We want to ensure that the Finnish Brotherhood continues to promote and preserve Finnish heritage for the next 100 years.”