

for Finlandia Foundation Columbia-Pacific Chapter

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MAINTAINING ETHNIC IDENTITY THROUGH “MATERIAL CULTURE”;
FOLK CRAFT TRADITIONS IN MODERN FINNISH AMERICA – LECTURE IN PORTLAND SEPTEMBER 13**

Portland, Oregon, August 26, 2013 – You are what you make and what you treasure. The role of folk craft traditions, such as weaving, spinning, cooking traditional dishes, wood carving, in maintaining the identity of Finnish-American is the topic of a presentation by Yvonne Lockwood, Finlandia Foundation’s Lecturer of the Year, on Friday, Sept 13, starting at 7pm at Multnomah Arts Center (7688 S.W. Capitol Highway, Portland 97219). Admission is \$5.

Lockwood has been the curator of folklife at the Michigan State University Museum for three decades and is the author of *Finnish American Rag Rugs: Art, Tradition, and Ethnic Continuity*. Her lecture is sponsored by Finlandia Foundation Columbia-Pacific Chapter and Finlandia Foundation National.

“Those of us who study folklife refer to crafts and traditions such as cooking and taking saunas as ‘material culture,’” explains Lockwood. Material culture can be defined as those tangible things crafted, shaped, altered by hand, shared by others in a community.

“Material culture tells a story about its relationship to the people who create them and the ones who use them, and to the culture and history in which they are embedded. When Finns immigrated to North America in the late 19th century, they used traditional skills such as weaving, knitting, spinning, woodworking, construction and others to sustain themselves in their new environment. With time and subsequent generations, some of these skills were maintained, some are now mere memories, and some have been revived. My lecture will examine the role material traditions play in Finnish America today, and what we can learn about Finnish and Finnish- American identity and culture from material objects.”

Audience members are encouraged to bring any Finnish craft items they own to supplement the photos Lockwood shows during the lecture.

For more information, contact Chris Lazarus – publicity director for Finlandia Foundation Columbia-Pacific Chapter at chrislazarus0505@gmail.com or (503) 867-1370.

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Electronic photos attached:

Carved decorative "bird fans", "leipajuusto" or baked cheese, and weaving rag rugs on a loom are examples of Finnish-American craft traditions discussed by Yvonne Lockwood at a lecture on Friday, September 13 at Multnomah Arts Center (7688 S.W. Capitol Highway, Portland 97219) sponsored by Finlandia Foundation Columbia-Pacific Chapter and Finlandia Foundation National. Admission is \$5.