

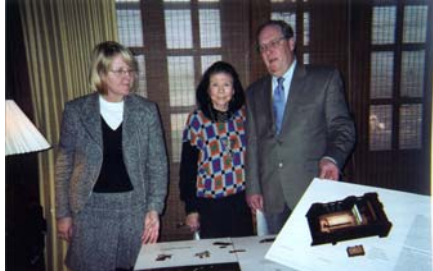
“Will students see stars in room 306?” ponders Peter Hart in his University Times article about Mika Gröndahl’s winning classroom design, *The Big Dipper*.



Based on an early Finnish smoke cottage and displaying the Big Dipper star-group on the ceiling, Mika Gröndahl’s elegant design contains the essential elements for a show-piece of Finnish culture. A Finnish Nationality Classroom based on his design will be something we can all be proud of!

Mika Gröndahl is a Finnish expatriate living in New York with his wife and three children. He recently completed his Masters Degree in Architecture from the University of Oulu, Finland and has returned to work as a graphics editor at The New York Times. His thesis project was a 35-

story Finland Center located in the heart of Times Square. Mika is looking forward to complete more design projects through the design company, Lumi 4, Inc., which he runs with his wife.



In March 2006 Professor Anna-Maija Ylimaula (left) of the University of Oulu returned to Pittsburgh with three plans that were selected as winners of the design competition. In Pittsburgh Finnish Committee members together with Nationality Rooms Director E. Maxine Bruhns (middle) and University of Pittsburgh architect Park Rankin (right) selected Gröndahl’s design for first prize.

How to Contribute

Fill-out the form below and mail it with your check or to donate with a credit card online visit: <http://www.pittsburghfinns.org/How-To-Donate-Online.html>.

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Amount: ___ \$30. ___ \$50. ___ \$100. ___ \$250. Other: \$ _____

My contribution is in memory of: _____

____ I would like to get a video of “Homelands Remembered” and will show this video to my Finnish club, family and friends, or other cultural group.

Write checks to: **The University of Pittsburgh, Finnish Room**
Mail your check to: **The Finnish Room Committee, 1209 Cathedral of Learning, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260**

The Finnish Nationality Classroom



to be built in the Cathedral of Learning at the University of Pittsburgh

Recognized far and wide, the beautiful Nationality Rooms at the University of Pittsburgh give the visitor a profound sense of the diverse ethnic background of Western Pennsylvania. The Rooms, 26 in number with eight more to be realized within the next few years, are a source of pride to each group represented.

The Finnish Nationality Classroom will be used as a classroom for thousands of students and will be seen by more than 100,000 visitors yearly through a vibrant tour program. It will reflect the culture and customs of Finland and will serve as a memorial where the relatives of early Finnish immigrants will learn about their heritage and remember the contributions of their ancestors.

Student Design Contest

A competition for the best potential design of the Finnish Nationality Classroom was sponsored by the Finnish Nationality Room Committee of the University of Pittsburgh. The design competition ended in March 2006 and was open to all Finnish students of architecture and interior design.

Architecture Professor Anna-Maija Ylimaula from the University of Oulu visited Pittsburgh to tour the available sites for a new Nationality Room and selected two potential rooms for the Finnish Classroom. Students could choose one of these rooms for the basis of their design.

Mika Gröndahl, architecture student from Oulu University, was awarded first place for his submission titled *The Big Dipper*. A view of his design which combines traditional decor and state of the art audio-visual technology is displayed to the right. Mika’s proposal will be the basis of the new Finnish Nationality Classroom.



Savupirtti Smoke Cottage

Mika Gröndahl's winning proposal is based on a Finnish smoke cottage from the 1700s, which was a common dwelling in Finland. In the middle of the room is a massive traditional wooden table. On opposite sides of the table are two long benches and benches run along the walls. The act of sitting side by side on benches signifies the solidarity of the Finnish people and their ability to get along with difficult neighbors. The



log walls blackened by smoke are interlocked with traditional 'salmon tale' connections forming a poetic rhythm of the wooden surfaces, the only decorative element in the room. The floor is made from thick planks and a tar/linseed oil finish brings an authentic atmosphere to the room. There is only a limited amount of natural light through the small smoke openings. From the smoke opening above the table, light comes from a set of LED or halogen lights forming the shape of the Big Dipper constellation.

An ascetic setting juxtaposed with modern technology

The Finns rise from life in smoke cottages to leaders in technology is demonstrated by the use of a cutting-edge computer operated projector system as a teaching tool. A Tablet-PC projector program will be used to render video signals. Instructional material in electronic format such as videos and power-point slides are transferred from a laptop computer or the internet through a wireless connection. The video images are reflected onto an opaque glass screen from behind by four projectors. The Tablet-PC program enables the screen to work simultaneously as a blackboard and video display. One can write on the video image with an electronic pen. During teaching, the middle part of the big screen can be made dark and one may also write on it with regular chalk. The standard seating arrangement will be individual chairs (left). For special occasions, the double tables can be put together to assemble one large table and the seating connected to form long benches (as depicted above). Historical Finnish scenes will be displayed in window etchings and historical documents, books and other objects will be stored in bookshelves.



A Gift to the University

The Finnish Nationality Classroom will be built as a gift to the University of Pittsburgh, which will then maintain it as part of the University's Nationality Rooms and Intercultural Exchange Programs. The Rooms are used as classrooms where students take their scheduled courses. With their ethnic artifacts and designs, they provide a way to introduce the students to other cultures in an authentic setting.

A Huge Undertaking

This is a huge undertaking for the small Finnish community in Pittsburgh. It is an ambitious goal for us to raise the money to cover all the expenses of constructing this heritage classroom. To reach this goal, we need the support of other Finns and Finnish Americans throughout the United States. It will be an accomplishment to be proud of.

We Need Your Help

- Get Involved - You can help by sharing this information with your friends, family, and local cultural organizations.
 - A complimentary 30-minute video about the Nationality Classroom program, entitled "Homelands Remembered", is available for presentations upon request.
 - This flyer is available for download at www.pittsburghfinns.org/Finnish_Room_Flyer.pdf.

Please contact Finnish Committee chairperson Seija Cohen phone: 412-372-6876 or email: seijac@aol.com.

- Let us know how you feel about the Finnish Nationality Classroom. If you have an idea or suggestion, we would love to hear from you!
- Please consider sending a contribution to support the construction of the Finnish Nationality Classroom. Contributions may be made online, by credit card or by check. For more information please read the form on the back of this flyer.

Support is vitally necessary in order to complete this project estimated to cost between \$250,000 and \$300,000. This is an exceptional opportunity for Finns to support their heritage in a meaningful and impressive way. The ethnic pride and cultural contributions of the Finnish people to the world will be highlighted in this room invoking a response in the hearts of Finns everywhere.

Sincere Thanks

The Finnish Room Committee is thankful for the generous support of the Finlandia Foundation National and the Scandinavian Society of Western Pennsylvania. More information online: www.pittsburghfinns.org or www.pitt.edu/~natrooms