

# ROCKPORT LEGION BAND TRIBUTE CONCERT

DEDICATED TO ITS 32 CHARTER MEMBERS



**JULY 21**  
**7:00** P.M.  
2019  
BANDSTAND  
BACK BEACH

FEATURING  
FINNISH-AMERICAN MUSIC  
**PAUL NIEMISTO**  
GUEST CONDUCTOR  
& GUEST MUSICIANS





## WELCOME

This evening's Rockport Legion Band concert is a memorial in sound to a special roster of musicians. It honors the first Rockporters who in 1932 responded to John "Moogy" Hendrickson's call to form a community band.

A list of the first members appears in this program. Surnames like Brown, Snow, Robinson, Scatterday, and Parady show that many original members came from established English, Irish, and French homes in Rockport. But another group turned out in record numbers. The first band was actually dominated by names like Walima, Niemi, Soini, Johnson, and Hendrickson. Almost two-thirds of the charter volunteers hailed from Finnish homes. Tonight's program is a tribute to every original member while the selections emphasize music by Finnish-American composers in recognition of the historical connection between Finns and the Band.

Louis Poole, first commander of the local American Legion, and Legion members, impressed by the prompt response of thirty-two volunteers, agreed to sponsor the band and does so eight-six years later. Under dark skies in March 1933, the month that marked the lowest point of the Great Depression, the new American Legion band rehearsed energetically, confidently making its first public appearance two months later on Memorial Day, and has continued as a legacy community band to this day.

### **The Nelson Era**

With no budget to start, the Band's first conductor, Ernest A. Nelson, searched for sheet music and for used (often well-used) instruments. As Russell Scatterday reported, an old tuba proved difficult to blow until Ernie Robinson extracted half a music stand and a baseball from its winding depths. On less than a shoestring, the Band played well-received bi-weekly summer concerts on the Legion grounds at Back Beach and at the Community House and Town Hall.

Nelson's spirit and drive held the fledgling band together as the Band raised money for the purchase of sheet music, instruments, and uniforms. The oldest Rockporters will remember stories of fund raisers at the old Town Hall, a vaudeville show, and a hose-coupling contest in which the Pigeon Cove team placed second among eight teams of firemen. Such benefits also raised money for travel expenses to Legion band competitions throughout the Northeast. Paying it forward, the Band itself performed benefits for other town organizations like the Christmas Tree Fund and Scouts.

### **The Fears Era**

A regional profile began to emerge after band members in 1935 elected conservatory trained Harrison B. Fears to be the Band's second conductor. Fears set

*Welcome continued on page 4*

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(Welcome continued from page 3)

rigorous standards for membership, held music examinations, auditioned and selected players from Gloucester, Ipswich, and Beverly. Of Fears' nearly twenty-five years it was said, "His fine musicianship and directing ability were major factors in molding the band into a first class organization."

Fears had constant Rockport help in the schools. Legion Band member Hermon Erwin, a high school teacher who founded and directed the Rockport High School band in the mid-1930s, assisted by fellow members, trained younger musicians who eventually moved into the Legion Band ranks.

Working together, the Rockport Board of Selectmen, Post 98, and the now Rockport Legion Band succeeded in obtaining Federal money to cover labor costs to build a bandstand. Materials were locally sourced, two hundred fifty-eight tons of stone. Louis A. Rogers of the Rockport Granite Company donated the polished granite slabs along the base. Nelson, John Huttunen, John Anderson and Frank Oja oversaw the bandstand's construction as volunteers. The columns and roof were built by Waino Saari and W.A. Sewell. The bandstand was dedicated on July 22, 1938, following a big parade led by the Legion Band. The ceremony was attended by residents, national, state, and town dignitaries as well as sailors and marines from the visiting U.S.S. *Mississippi*, anchored offshore.

In 1940, the Band figured prominently in the town's Centennial celebration. It took part in parades and summer concerts augmented by singers, both local and from "up the line." Fears composed a *Rockport Centennial March* for the parade and concerts.

The Band played on throughout WW II even while the call of duty diminished its ranks by twelve at one point. A Band newsletter, *The Rockport Bugle*, linked band members at war, with one another and those at home, as did gift boxes at Christmas.

## The Ongoing Finnish Connection

Many more Finns joined the band in its early decades, but players of this ancestry were not the only Finnish connection with the Band. Music by Finnish and Finnish-American composers appeared frequently on concert programs in the Band's earliest years. Some were whole band compositions; others featured quartets playing familiar Finnish folk tunes. Also, soloists including trumpet master Sylvester Ahola, Andrew Jacobson, Jacob Knuttunen, Vern Niemi, and accordionist sisters Meri and Miriam Niemi delighted audiences. Many times, they brought to life tunes of the old "Finn Hall" brass bands (like the Waino Band) and orchestral pieces of the original immigration period before the wars.

Throughout these decades, more Finns were off-stage than on. Upward of 5000 lived in Rockport, Pigeon Cove, and Lanesville then, many of them joining the crowds gathered for a free, nearby, outdoor concert. By featuring Finns playing Finnish music, the Legion Band successfully wooed Cape Ann's Finns to return Sunday after Sunday.

## A Note of Thanks

Before guest conductor Paul Niemisto raises his baton and the first note is struck, the 2019 Rockport Legion Band welcomes you to this concert. The program takes us back, as if by magic, to the Legion Band's formative years. The first thirty-two members, who built a solid foundation for the nearly three hundred men and women who have since taken their seats on the bandstand, are not physically present but their spirit and their music are in the air tonight.

The Rockport Legion Band and the Cape Ann Finns hope you enjoy the concert as much as we did putting it together.

*Debbie Walter*  
Rockport Legion Band

and

*Robert Ranta*  
Cape Ann Finns



# 2019 ROCKPORT LEGION BAND

## MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Jason Howard

## TRUMPET

Joel Swan

Bob Cannon

David Fernie

April Ferraro

Larry Lacey

John D. Hopkins, guest

## CLARINET / SAXOPHONE

Steven Niemi

Debbie Walter

Tasha Marshall

Patrick Morin

Will Altman

Walter McGrath, past member

## FLUTE

Jeannine Lynch

Jen Fuller

Kathy Claypool

Jenny Baylor

Meg Wallace

## OBOE

Bob Heineman

## TROMBONE

Paula Burns

Roger McPherson

Dan Britt

## HORN

John Bassett

Martha Johnson

David Carter

## EUPHONIUM

Connie Villanti

Steve Cooney

Eric Aho, guest

## TUBA

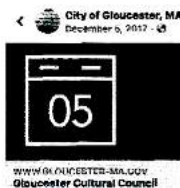
Al Bernard

Geoff Lyon

## PERCUSSION

Ron Alpert

Martina Gallo, guest



ROCKPORT LEGION BAND

JULY 21, 2019 CONCERT  
PROGRAM

Star Spangled Banner.....	Francis Scott Key
Maamme, Finnish National Anthem .....	Friedrich Pacius
Kotimaani ompi Suomi .....	Jooseppi Riippa
Conneaut March .....	J. Richard Kultti
Four Dances Suite	
Karjalan poikia (Boys of Karelia) Polka .....	Vilho Vartiainen
Puuseppä (Carpenter) Humppa .....	Jaakko Pulli
Kellot soivat (Bells are Ringing) Tango .....	Eduardo Bianco
Odotava (Waiting) Waltz .....	Herold Kittler
Comrades Club March .....	Oscar Suojanen
Impromptu alla Zingara/ Gipsy Life, Sibelius Club edition .....	Oskari Merikanto
Mustalainen Waltz , traditional.....	arr. T. Gibbens
Trumpeter's Lullaby .....	Leroy Anderson
Jason Howard, soloist	
Savo March .....	Lauri Koski
Unelma (Dream) Waltz .....	W. Syrjälä, arr. T. Gibbens
Taistojen Tielle (Battle Road) March .....	Hannes Konno
Yohli Heaver Hopsikko March .....	Charles Kleemola
Leoninmieli (young lions) .....	Jukka Viitasaari
Anchors Aweigh(Navy March).....	Charles Zimmerman
God Bless America .....	Irving Berlin

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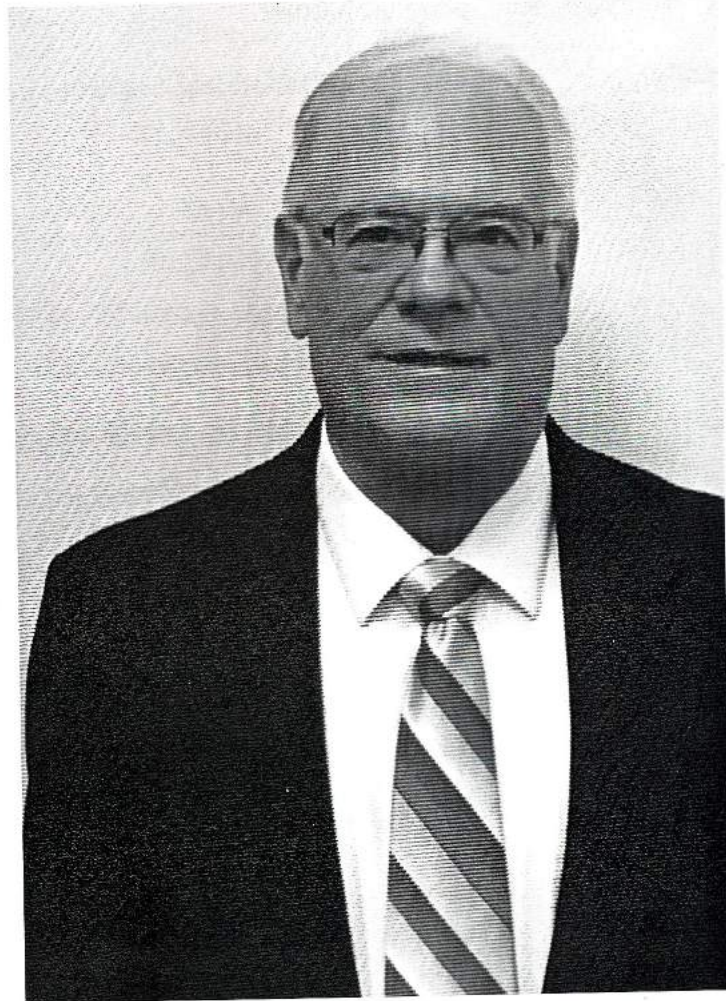
MUSICAL DIRECTOR, ROCKPORT LEGION BAND

## JASON HOWARD

Jason Howard joined the Rockport Legion Band in 1956 when his father brought him to a Thursday evening rehearsal. He, along with his seven siblings, played musical instruments in the band over the years. Jason's strong sight-reading skills and his ambidextrous playing ability have enabled him to lead the band for eighteen years and serve as solo trumpeter for over forty. His years of experience help other members master more difficult movements.

Additionally, Mr. Howard creates the band's musical programs for the eight free summer concerts at the bandstand as well as for the annual Christmas concert, Veterans Day program and visits to local nursing homes.

Jason serves as Musical Director for the Danversport Yacht Club Band and is past conductor of concert bands and symphony orchestras. He has performed with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, was a member of the Air Force Band of the West, and served as soloist and featured performer on several brass instruments from piccolo to trumpet to tuba in over forty musical groups.





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GUEST CONDUCTOR

## PAUL NIEMISTO



Paul Niemisto, professor emeritus of St. Olaf College (Minnesota), joined the music faculty in 1978 as conductor of the Norseman Band and instructor of low brass instruments. He graduated from the University of Michigan and received his doctorate from the University of Minnesota.

In 1979 he founded the Cannon Valley Regional Symphony Orchestra. In 1990 he founded Boys of America (Ameriikan Poijat) a Finnish style brass septet. He regularly performs as a conductor, on trombone, euphonium, and tuba.

Dr. Niemisto has been interested for many years in the unique history of Finnish wind music; this interest has fueled his research. In the course of his research pursuits Niemisto has presented papers at conferences of the International Society for the Promotion and Preservation of Wind Music and the Historic Brass Society. He is presently Vice President of the IGEB. For this work, he is the recipient of the Finnish Military Music Cross. In 2013 he published a book about his research: *Cornets and Pickaxes: Finnish Brass Bands on the Iron Range*.

In summer 2006 he spearheaded the now internationally known Historic Wind Music Conference and the Vintage Band Music Festival held triannually in Northfield, Minnesota. He has been a teacher in Finland of wind players, wind band conductors. He is also a member of the Great Western Rocky Mountain Brass Band in Silverton, Colorado, and a frequent player with the Sheldon Theatre Brass Band (Minnesota), and the Rochester Symphony Orchestra (Minnesota). Paul was awarded the "Living Treasure in the Arts" award by the Northfield City Council in 2013. Paul also led Ameriikan Poijat in its seventh Finland tour, observing the nation's Centennial. He recently conducted a brass septet and hosted *Finnish Music on Cape Ann* in 2018.



# 1932 AMERICAN LEGION BAND

## CHARTER MEMBERS

### CONDUCTOR

Ernest A. Nelson

### CORNET

Waino H. Saari

Hermon C. Erwin

William W. Johnson, Jr.

A. Pierce Grover

Joseph "Gene" Parady

George "Jimmy" Rantilla

George M. Soini

John Anderson

### CLARINET

Walter J. Silvonen

Uno J. Carlson

Edward E. Ranta

Burton L. Dolloff

Henry Hendrickson

Robert Elso

Gilbert M. Brown

### BARITONE

William Johnson, Sr.

Matt A. Hautala

### TROMBONE

George E. B. Stropole

Joseph P. Parady

Henry Olaf Hendrickson

John Anderson

### ALTO HORN

John E. Huttunen

E. Oscar Hakala

George E. Walima

Lawrence E. Snow

John Maki

### BASS

Ernest F. Robinson

Jacob J. Ranta

### PERCUSSION

Russell H. Scatterday

Harrison B. Fears

Harold F. Orne

### SPONSOR

American Legion

Post 98



CONDUCTOR

ERNEST A. NELSON 1889-1957



Born in Sweden to Emma and Peter, Ernie is credited with forming a cohesive band at its inception in 1932, serving as the first conductor and assuming all behind the scenes responsibilities as well. A stone mason by trade, he lived at 4 Summit Ave. and later 9 Broadway.

CORNET

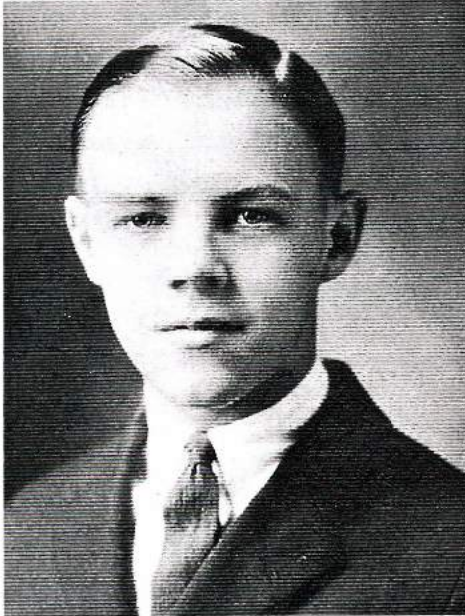
WAINO H. "SMUDGE" SAARI 1901-1965\*



Son of Kaisa and Alexander, born in Finland, Waino attended Lynn Burdett, held various positions as stone mason, carpenter, caretaker. He served as the *Taps* echo at graveside services and helped construct the Legion bandstand in 1938.

CORNET

## HERMON C. ERWIN 1908-1986\*



Born and raised in Keene, N.H., to parents Florence and James, Hermon joined the faculty at Rockport High School, and in the mid-1930s founded the school's band that fed young musicians to the Rockport Legion Band. He and his wife Shirley established the Peg Leg Inn and Restaurant in town.

CORNET

## WILLIAM W. "BUZZER" JOHNSON, JR. 1913-1988\*



Son of Mary and William, Bill grew up on Smith Street Ct. near the bandstand and took to the trumpet early. He played in dance orchestras on the North Shore, for Gerald Quinn, Gus Foley, Sylvester Ahola, Vern Niemi, and occasionally with the Cape Ann Symphony. He operated Johnson's Market on Finn Alley (10 Forest St.) in the mid-40s to late 50s, and owned the rental apartments on Finn Alley built for the Finnish bachelor quarry workmen.



CORNET

## A. PIERCE GROVER 1892-1962\*



Son of Nellie and Fred, a WW I U.S. Navy veteran, Pierce lived on Broadway, worked for many years at the United Shoe Machinery, Inc.; he spent later years crafting violins and repairing them, as well as cellos and bows. Grover played in the local firemen's band and with the Cape Ann Symphony.

CORNET

## JOSEPH EUGENE "GENE" PARADY 1915-2005\*



Gene, son of Alberta and Joseph, served in the home guard in WWII, then worked as an engineer for the New England Power Company in Salem. He later played in a retirees' band in Wakefield and could be seen on the golf links or cheering on the Bosox.

CORNET

## GEORGE ENGELBREKT "LAPLAH" RANTILLA 1911-1981



Most people knew him as Jimmy, owner of the seasonal Sunrise (or Jimmy's) across from Front Beach. Son of Mary and Elias, Jimmy grew up on Finn Alley (22 Forest St.) and was a U.S. Army WW II veteran who followed the warm weather to Sarasota, Florida, annually.

CORNET

## GEORGE M. SOINI 1915-2003\*



George (Yrjo), son of Jenny and Matti, joined the U.S. Navy at the outbreak of America's entrance into WW II. His occupation as a lobsterman put him on the waters of Sandy Bay most of his life, accompanied by his dog, Musta Poika. Later, Soini served as custodian at Town Hall.



CORNET

M. JOHN ANDERSON 1895-1984\*



Born to Einar and Sarah, John and his sisters were reared in a home that nurtured their music and artistic interests. He attended the Gloucester Public Schools and was a member of the first class to graduate from Northeastern University. Anderson worked as a bookkeeper at Cape Ann Anchor and Forge; he spent leisure time boating out of Lobster Cove.

CLARINET

WALTER J. "SQUACKER" SILVONEN 1916-1988\*



Son of Senia and John, Walter grew up on Squam Rd., served in the U.S. Navy during WW II. He worked at Ranta's Market in Lanessville, later for Blood's and Cushman's bakeries as a door-to-door delivery man. Walt worked briefly at Cape Ann Tool Company, too.

CLARINET

## UNO J. CARLSON 1913-2004\*



Uno grew up on Squam Hill Rd. with parents Ida and Michael. A WW II U.S. Navy veteran, Carlson worked as a musician and at one time a baker, moved to California, then Idaho in later years.

CLARINET

## EDWARD E. "MINNIX" RANTA 1912-1988\*



Ed, son of Alexandra and Emil, grew up on Finn Alley (8 Forest St.), later opening a grocery in Lanesville which he operated for 43 years. He was a member of the Waino Band and dance bands on the North Shore, including Julius's (Kaihlanen) Band, the Vern Niemi Band, and often played in quartets arranged by Niemi at the Valon Leimu Temperance Hall on Finn Alley.



CLARINET

## BURTON L. DOLLOFF 1904-1963



Burt, a lifelong Rockport resident who lived as a young boy with parents Florence and Gilman at 55 High St., gave private clarinet and saxophone lessons. His dramatic talent placed him in the title role in the variety show *Corporal Eagen* and later a part in *100 Local People of Rockport*. Burt was first employed by J. Raymond Smith Ice Company and subsequently was an original employee when it grew into J. Raymond Smith Lumber Company, working thirty years for the Smith concerns.

CLARINET

## HENRY HENDRICKSON 1889-1969\*



Born in Finland to Maria and Henrik, Henry Hendrickson (Pyy) and his musically-talented siblings formed a dance band popular throughout the North Shore, the Hendrickson Orchestra; he also played in the Imperial, Fears Brothers, and Waino bands. He and his family resided at 48 Curtis St. in Pigeon Cove. Henry worked at the Cape Ann Tool Company for fifty years.

CLARINET

## ROBERT "GOOBODY" ELSO 1915-1981\*



Bob grew up on Norwood Ct. with parents Josephine and Arvi. A WW II National Guard veteran, he was a warrant officer in the field artillery.

CLARINET

## GILBERT M. BROWN 1917-1985\*



Only child of musicians Ruth and E. Alan, Gilbert played in the R.O.T.C. band at the University of Maine from which he graduated; he played in and conducted the American Legion Band Post 3 for several years. Brown worked for General Electric Company for thirty years, lived in Gloucester.



BARITONE

## WILLIAM JOHNSON, SR. 1889-1966\*



Born in Kokkola, Finland, to Sofia and Frank, William emigrated to Rockport in 1893 with his parents. He was a paving cutter in the quarries, later worked at Rogers Isinglass and Glue, and served as a reserve officer for the Rockport Police Department.

BARITONE

## MATT A. HAUTALA 1911-2002\*



Matt, son of Lizzie and John, was reared on Stockholm Ave. in Pigeon Cove. A WW II veteran who saw active duty in the Philippines, Hautala graduated from Northeastern University, for many years was the Rockport town engineer and self-employed surveyor, charter member of the Ashler Masonic Lodge and American Legion Post 98.

TROMBONE

## GEORGE E.B. "STROPES" STROPLE 1873-1956\*



George was born in Guysborough, Nova Scotia, to Jennie and John H. He served in the Mass. State Guard from 1904-1907 and completed two years of college studies. He and his family lived at 4 Railroad Ave., later 6 Beach St. Strople was an insurance agent at 61 Main St. in town.

TROMBONE

## JOSEPH P. PARADY 1891-1944\*



Joseph was born to Mary and Joseph, reared in Rockport, and worked for the Rockport Granite Company. Joe enjoyed landscaping and gardening when he was not reconditioning an auto engine or repairing anything mechanical. He took his young son Gene with him to join the band in 1932.



TROMBONE

## HENRY OLAF HENDRICKSON 1891-1984



Born in Jeffersonville, Michigan, Olaf was two weeks old when he arrived in Rockport with parents Anna and Victor. He was a musician in the U.S. Navy prior to the country's entry into WW I and later settled with his family on Finn Alley (11 Forest St.) A stone cutter, Olaf later worked for the Boston and Maine Railroad.

TROMBONE

## JOHN ANDERSON



The Town of Rockport and the Rockport Legion Band appreciatively recognize the contribution of John to the band's formative years.

ALTO HORN

## JOHN E. HUTTUNEN 1907-1969\*



Son of Josephine and Julius, John also played the French horn, was a master stone mason, contributing his talent to the construction of the Legion bandstand in 1938. He lived on Curtis St., lobstered out of Pigeon Cove and was active in the Knights of Pythias.

ALTO HORN

## E. OSCAR "TAPPY" HAKALA 1912-1961



Oscar, only child of Elizabeth Hirvi Hakala, grew up on Finn Alley (Forest St.), later lived on Squam Rd. He graduated from Gloucester High School and college; Hakala served as a warrant officer in the U.S. Army, moving in the 1950s to Los Angeles, California.



ALTO HORN

## GEORGE E. WALIMA 1905-1982\*



A U.S. Navy veteran, George, son of Sanna and William, was a life long resident of Rockport. He worked as a drop forger at the Cape Ann Tool Company, at Mass. Electric in Gloucester, and lived for many years at 12 Summit Ave. He enjoyed playing sessions with his musical family.

ALTO HORN

## LAWRENCE E. "PINKY" SNOW 1904-1976\*



Born in Rockport to Lucy and James and a lifelong resident living on Broadway, Pinky was a carpenter; in 1933, he helped build the Motif #1 float for the American Legion parade in Chicago. He was from a family of musicians, coached town league baseball.

ALTO HORN

## JOHN MAKI



The Town of Rockport and the Legion Band appreciatively recognize the contribution of John to the band's formative years.

BASS

## ERNEST F. ROBINSON 1898-1957



Son of Nellie and George E., Ernie was a billing clerk for the Boston and Maine Railroad, living most of his life on Cape Ann, one time at 31 King St.



BASS

JACOB J. RANTA 1871-1946\*



Born in Finland, Jake emigrated to the USA in 1891, worked as a skilled laborer while raising a large family with his wife on Finn Alley (4 Forest St.) He gained U.S. citizenship in 1944 at age 73.

PERCUSSION

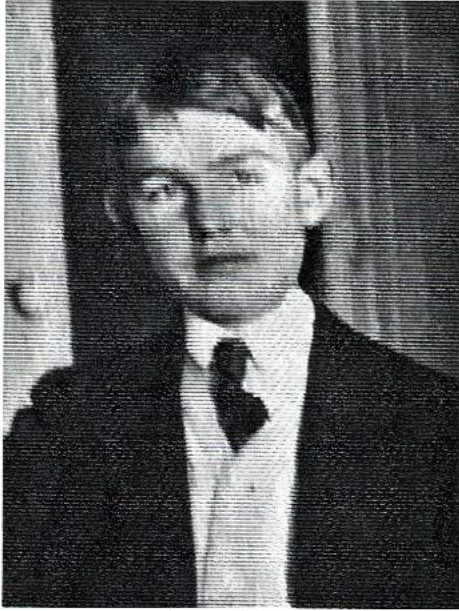
RUSSELL H. SCATTERDAY 1896-1989\*



Russ was born in Pontiac, Ill., and graduated from Northwestern University. While serving in the U.S. Navy during WW I, he played in the battalion band and later in the Liberty Bonds concert band directed by John Philip Sousa. Scatterday was a charter member of the Cape Ann Symphony and served on its first board.

PERCUSSION

HARRISON B. FEARS 1895-1965\*



Harrison was reared in Rockport by parents Sarah and Francis. A WW I U.S. Navy veteran, he played the violin in several orchestras in Boston, formed the Fears Brothers Band, and operated a music store in Gloucester. For nearly twenty-five years, "His fine musicianship and directing ability were major factors in molding the band into a first-class musical organization."

PERCUSSION

HAROLD F. ORNE 1886-1951



Son of Alice and Ferdinand, Harold, a life-long resident of Cape Ann, was a music teacher and musician who played at the Savoy Hotel (Hotel Gloucester); he later worked at the Fisherman's Institute on Duncan Street as well as for the Gloucester Public Schools.

*\*Family or relatives still reside on Cape Ann.*



## IN MEMORY / HONOR

*In Honor of*

**WAINO SOINI**

Born in Rockport  
100 Years Ago 1919

His name is on the  
Honor Roll of Rockporters  
who served in World War II.

*In Honor of the*

**NIEMI & SALO  
FAMILIES**

Dad: Emil Karl (1873-1957),  
accordion. Children: Verner, RLB  
clarinet, sax; Bill, piccolo; Lauri,  
violin; Ernest, mouth harp; Evelyn,  
piano; Martha, zither, ukulele.  
Grandchildren: Ernest, trombone;  
Steve, RLB clarinet, sax; Walter  
McGrath, RLB clarinet. Salo  
family members: accordion,  
harmonica.

*In Memory of*

**ALEXANDER &  
HEDVIG (HUMLIN)  
SAARI**

**ALEXANDER &  
KAISA (YLIMUTKA)  
SAARI**

**WAINO H. SAARI**  
*RLB charter member*

*In Memory of*

**EDWARD E. RANTA**

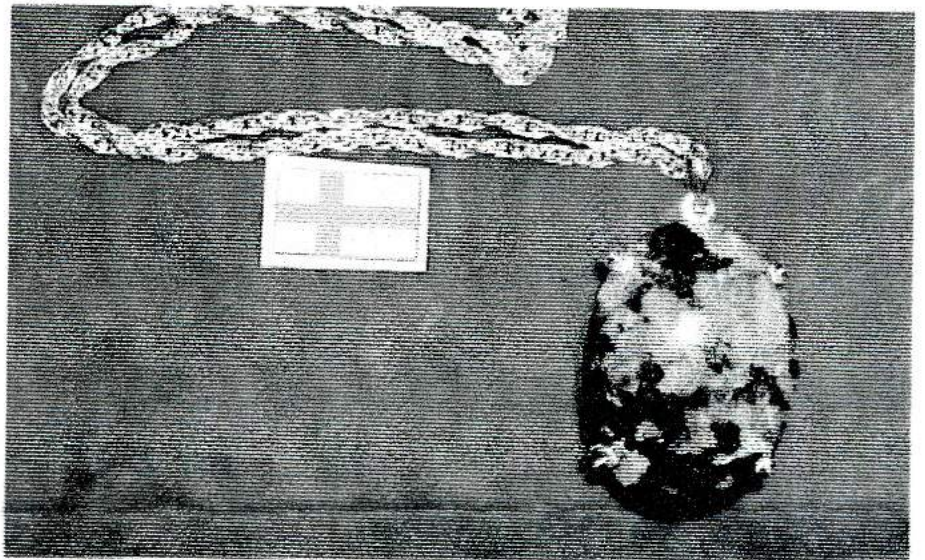
*RLB charter member*

**VIOLA K. (SAARI) RANTA**

**E. EMIL &  
ALEXANDRA (LAAKSO)  
RANTA**

**WALLENTIN &  
IDA (RAISKI) RANTA**

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**KIELINEN, JACOBSON  
& ERKKILA FAMILIES  
OF CAPE ANN.**



# ROCKPORT LEGION BAND 1937 PROGRAM

## BAND CONCERT

by the

ROCKPORT LEGION BAND

Jon Jacobson, Guest Conductor.  
August 29, 1937

March- "Colossus of Columbia"	ALEXANDERZ
Concert March Militaire- "My Hero"	OSCAR STRAUS
Transcribed by Harry Alford	
The "Angelus" from Scens Pittoresque	MASSANET
Air Varie- "Maryland"	T. V. SHORT
with variations for different instruments	
Indian March- "Pawnee"	E. FRANKO GOLDMAN
Song- "O Promise Me"	DE KOVEN
Trumpet- Wm. Johnson Jr.	
Euphonium- A. Pierce Grover	
Mazurka Russe- "La Czarine"	L. GANNE
Waltz- "Danube Waves" (By request)	IVANOVICI
Patrol- "The Night Riders"	HUFF
Russian Peasant Dance- "Kukuska"	LEHAR
Suite Espagnole- "La Feria"	LACOME
1- Los Toros	
2- La Reja	
March- "Fantastique"	FUCIK

Star Spangled Banner

With this concert the Rockport Legion Band ends its fifth year of summer concerts. Since it was founded no member of the band has received any pay for his services. All money received has been used to purchase music, uniforms and instruments for the general improvement of the band. The band hopes to celebrate its fifth anniversary by attending the Legion Convention in New York in September. There is almost enough money in our New York fund to make this trip possible. This will probably be our last request for your assistance. All contributions no matter how large will be gratefully received.

Our good friends, the Volunteer Firemen, are staging a Carnival next week to raise money for uniforms. Think of all the money you might have spent all these years in some other town buying "Firemen's Ball" tickets. Why not take some of it down to the High School grounds next Friday, Saturday and Monday and have a good time and help a good cause. The band will be on hand to help.



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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Rockport Legion Band and Cape Ann Finns acknowledge with thanks the contributions of individuals and organizations that made the tribute concert a success, double appreciation to those whose names should also have appeared here.

## GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM

Finlandia Foundation National, Awesome Rockport, Gloucester Cultural Council, Rockport Cultural Council

## MEMORY / HONOR DONATIONS AND SPONSOR

Wayne Soini; Walter and Joyce McGrath; Betty and John Erkkila; Robert, Steve Ranta, Andrea Harling; Kathy Liisa Erkkila

## ROCKPORT LEGION BAND

Paul Niemisto, Jason Howard, band members, guest musicians John D. Hopkins, Eric Aho, and Martina Gallo, families of the charter members

## CAPE ANN FINNS

Dona Shea, Nancy McKay, Mary Johnson, Elana Brink, Nikki Korkatti, Marcia and Don Ojantakanen

## TOWN OF ROCKPORT

Board of Selectmen; Public Schools, Michael Montgomery; Police Department, Asst. Chief Mark Schmink, Sgt. William Budrow; Dept. of Public Works, Richard Souza

## LANESVILLE COMMUNITY CENTER

Pharrel Wener, Valerie Nelson

## EDWARD W. PETERSON POST 98

American Legion celebrating 100 years in 2019

## TRANSPORTATION / PARKING

CATA, Robert Ryan, Smith Hardware

## PUBLICITY

Gloucester Daily Times, Joann MacKenzie, Gail McCarthy, Beth Warden; Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce, Debbie Walter; Seaside Graphics; Cape Ann Beacon, Jane Enos, Nell Coakley, Cape Ann Finns poster distributors. 1623 Studios "Nicki Talks"

## SOURCE FOR WELCOME INFORMATION

Russell Scatterday,"Rockport Legion Band – 36 years of fun and good music," Gloucester Daily Times, 13 April 1969

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CO-SPONSORS, ROCKPORT LEGION BAND AND CAPE ANN FINNS

## PLANNING COMMITTEE

PRODUCER

Robert Ranta

BAND LIAISON

Debbie Walter

COMMENTATORS

Walter McGrath, Jr., Steven Niemi, Paul Niemisto

ORIGINAL IDEA

Steven Niemi

PROGRAM/POSTER DESIGN

Jay O'Connell

PRINTED PROGRAM

Paul Niemisto

RECORDING

1623 Studios

BACK STAGE

Wayne Soini, Betty and John Erkkila, Walter McGrath, Jr.

SITE PREP

Am. Legion Band Post 98

Legion Band

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FINNISH FAMILIES AND  
**THE ROCKPORT LEGION BAND**

Finnish families emigrated to the United States in the late 1800s for many reasons. Each family had its own story. This emigration story also illustrates the historical connection between the early Finns, the majority Finnish charter members and the Legion Band.

In 1895, for fear of getting drafted into the Russian Army, a young father left his wife and first-born child in Finland and came to America.

Once established here, he sent for them in 1899. They settled in Rockport because his wife desired to live in a village similar to the home they left in Finland.

As a laborer, he got a job as a quarry worker with the Rockport Granite Company. She was a homemaker. Together they raised eight children, two girls and six boys, in their small home on Granite Street, which still stands.

A number of the immigrant Finnish families brought with them an ability to play and make music. The father in this family played a small accordion, probably a concertina.

Interest in music was passed to their children. One daughter played the piano; another, a zither and ukulele. One boy played a violin, another the mouth harp, another a piccolo and even one, the clarinet.

They formed their own orchestra, enjoyed making music, entertained each other, and friends. The family stories of music and laughter carry to this day in the memories of many, including mine.

The son who played the clarinet eventually became a professional woodwind musician: clarinet, saxophone, and flute. He first played in orchestras in the Mid-west and, in the 1930s, in music ensembles in the Boston area. Eventually, he returned to Gloucester, formed his own group and taught woodwinds to students of all ages, including a number who joined the Rockport Legion Band.

From this musical Finnish family settling in Rockport, one son and three grandchildren, four in total, became members of the Rockport Legion Band.

How do I know about this family? They were my grandparents, the parents of my father, Vern Niemi, the son who became a professional woodwind player and teacher.

—Steve Niemi





