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Edited by: Cassie Revell

# FINLANDIA FOUNDATION

*Suomi Chapter*

## FINNOVATIONS

*Promoting Finnish Heritage in Whatcom, Skagit, and Island  
Counties*

### Vol. VI - No. 2

## President's Corner

**H**APPY SPRING!! Happy St. Urho's Day!! He was the legendary Finnish hero who saved the wine grapes from marauding hordes of grasshoppers. He uttered: "Heinasirkka, heinasirkka mene taalta hiiteen!" ("Grasshoppers, grasshoppers, go to hell!") For your edification, there are no grapes growing in Finland. It is too darn cold!! The legend of St. Urho was started in Minnesota as a spoof for the Irish St. Patrick. In recent years Finland has adopted the celebration of St. Urho.



Beautiful purple Rhododendrons, Washington's state flower. Photo By Tapio Holma

A few tidbits about Finland: Another Urho, president Kekkonen, is considered as the best, or one of the best presidents during Finland's 98 years of independence. Finnair, one of the oldest still flying companies, was voted last year as the 5th safest airline in the world. This year it was rated as the 10th best in the service. Dubai Air took first place in the sky. It also has the longest non-stop route in the world. I wonder if socialism is as bad as it is considered in this part of the world? The Sustainable Development Solutions and The Earth Institute at Columbia University compiled the list of happiest countries in the world. Denmark became the top dog, followed by Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, and Finland. Sweden came in 10th, U.S.A the 13th, and Germany, Italy, and France placing in the top 20. I often wonder why melancholy Finns always rate very high on the happiness scale?

Our next big event will be our Annual Meeting and the elections this spring. We are looking for a couple of new board members, so please step in and join the fun!! Especially younger folks are welcomed to bring fresh ideas and blood for our board.

As a fundraiser, our baseball caps have been selling quite well. So far, we have sent about 250 hats around the country. They are only \$25, shipping included. There are three different colors. In addition, knitted ski caps (pipo) and a knife (puukko) are under planning for next year.

We have also been meeting with other chapters in the NW to plan for 2017, when we will celebrate 100 years of Finland's Independence. There are several ideas and events being considered.

I wish everybody the best for the spring. Don't forget that fishing season opens next month!!!

**Asko**



Above: "Suomi Neito" (Finnish Maiden). The sculpture will be revealed in connection with Finland's Centennial next year.

Cover Photo: Finnish wildflowers.  
Photo by Emma Watt  
(<http://familyinfinland.blogspot.com>).

## The Nordic Heritage Museum Receives a \$4 Million Donation

The Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle has received a major grant from one of Denmark's most significant foundations, and is now one big step closer to realizing their plans for building a new museum facility on Market Street in Ballard. The A.P. Møller and Chastine Mc-Kinney Møller Foundation has generously supported the Museum's new facility with a four million dollar commitment.

"We are extremely honored that the A.P. Møller Foundation has decided to support this important project," says the CEO of the Nordic Heritage Museum, Eric Nelson. "Direct support from Scandinavia is important for us and helps strengthen the connection between the Pacific Northwest and the Nordic Region.

This support also fortifies our position as an authentic Nordic platform here in the US.

The Nordic American maritime story is one of the key components of the museum, and with this donation, we are excited to have the A.P. Møller Foundation assist us in the future development of the museum's profile," continues Nelson.

Construction of the new building at Market Street starts later this year with an anticipated opening in early 2018.



Digital rendering of the new Nordic Heritage Museum building.

## 4 Reasons Finland's Schools Are Better

Finland recently dropped the news that it's revamping its already-unorthodox education system to teach students broad, multi-disciplinary topics. Finland is an innovative country when it comes to education and its innovation yields results. It's consistently one of the highest performing developed countries on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), an important tool for measuring education systems worldwide.

While Finland's ranking dropped to 12 in the most recent PISA ranking, it's still a lot higher than the US ranking of 36. Here are some things Finland does differently (and arguably better) than the US when it comes to education:

**1. Better standardized tests:** Finnish students only take one standardized test during their entire primary and secondary schooling. By contrast, the US, driven by No Child Left Behind and Common Core mandates, requires students in third through eighth grade to take annual standardized tests to track their performance. Critics claim constant testing doesn't make students any smarter but instead creates a "teaching to the test" environment in schools.

**2. More time for play:** Students in Finland spend relatively little time on homework. A 2014 study of 15-year-olds around the world by the OECD said that on average, Finnish students spend 2.8 hours a week on homework. This contrasts noticeably from the 6.1 hours American students spend per week. This "deficit of play" for US students may lead to additional anxiety and other mental health issues, the psychologist and research professor Peter Gray has written.

**3. College is free:** In Finland, not only are bachelor degree programs completely free of tuition fees, so are master and doctoral programs. Students pursue higher education goals without the mountains of student loan debt that many American students face.

(continued on page 4)

# Espoo – The Most Sustainable City in Europe

According to a new study, Espoo is the most sustainable city in Europe, with Helsinki and Tampere ranking among the top 10. The study measured sustainability very broadly, looking into the economic, socio-cultural and ecological sustainability of 114 European cities.

The total sustainability scores of the cities varied considerably, and the most sustainable cities were located in the Nordic countries and Germany. The study concluded that population size, demographic dynamics, geographical region, typology and competitiveness are important determinants of sustainability. Using the outcome of the study, cities can identify their stronger and weaker points, and subsequently determine whether and how these can be improved.



Espoo was also classified as a green city; this is mainly explained by the Nuuskio National Park, the Espoo Central Park, the long seashore and the abundant and easy-to-access natural environment.

The researchers developed an interactive web tool to measure the different aspects of sustainability. The study measured, for example, energy and climate, landscape, resources and waste, infrastructure and labor as well as education, health, safety and culture.

Espoo's particular strengths included knowledge, safety and nature. The city received some of the highest scores in Europe in the fields of education, income and health.

According to the Mayor of Espoo, Jukka Mäkelä, innovation and collaboration are the key elements in maintaining sustainable development.

"We promote the partnership and collaboration between the city, its residents, enterprises, Aalto University and other stakeholders in all our operations," Mäkelä said. "Being a responsible trailblazer is one of Espoo's values, and it involves the commitment to develop Espoo in a socially, ecologically and economically sustainable manner."

The study was part of the Dutch Presidency of the EU, and it was carried out by Telos, an academic center for local and regional sustainability studies at the Tilburg University in Netherlands.

Adapted from the Finland in the US Newsletter, May 2016

## Schools (Continued)

And the same goes for foreign students. Tuition is free for any student accepted into a college or graduate program in Finland. This contrasts greatly with the US, where the average student loan debt now approaches \$30,000.

**4. Elevated teaching profession:** In Finland, teaching is one of the most revered professions with a relatively high barrier to entry. Only one in 10 students who apply to teacher education programs is admitted. Teachers in Finland are treated like professors at universities, and they teach fewer hours during the day than US teachers, with more time devoted to lesson planning. They also get paid slightly more in Finland. The average teacher in the US makes about \$41,000 a year, compared to \$43,000 in Finland.

It's easy to understand why America's teachers — who are overworked and get relatively little respect — might not be as effective as teachers in Finland.

Researched and Edited by Brend Holma

# Gardening With a View

Our small city lot is on the steepish west slope of Lookout Mt. near Lake Padden. The plants and gardeners enjoy neighborhood views of South Sehome Hill and Happy Valley. The Chuckanut Mts. form a forested wall immediately south and out west, beyond usually-placid Bellingham Bay, lay Lummi Island's brooding dark mass and Mt. Constitution's proud peak on Orcas Island. On a winter sunset the snowy spine of the Vancouver Island Mountains glitters on the horizon.

Ornamental trees, shrubs, perennials, and reseeding annuals festoon our neighborhood grounds in a riot of shapes and shades year round. Our usually moist acid soils promise excellent support for many edible berries.

We haven't easily found organically grown currants and gooseberries for sale, so here's the opportunity to produce our own tangy, small-fruit bounty. We've no experience growing Ribes species, but it seemed the legal ban on growing Ribes in Washington was lifted just to encourage us. Our currants and gooseberries have grown well.

In March, warming winter rains bring currants and gooseberries awake after their long sleep. The branches and twig buds open bright green tips of tender leaves. Unfortunately this life attracts buggy pests. As our small Ribes collection developed we attracted two nasty bugs: the Currant-Gooseberry Fruit Fly (*Euphranta canadensis*) and the Imported Currant Sawfly (*Nematus ribesii*). The fruit fly appeared as small (not tiny) pale-brown flies which wandered around on all types of our developing Ribes fruit. Soon we noticed one or more marks or stings on the fruit surfaces. The stung fruit fell off before ripening, and on close inspection, each fruit contained a small pale maggot. In the end, the fruit fly spared none of the fruit. Quite disappointing. After some research, we realized no safe/organic sprays or washes could be used against this native pest of Ribes fruit. What to do?

Along with the fruit fly, we found that voracious caterpillars thoroughly stripped leaves from most of our Ribes bushes but spared the Ben Alder black currants. This imported currant sawfly infestation starts with spring leaf undersides showing tiny white eggs lining the leaf ribs. After the eggs hatch, tiny dark-spotted green caterpillars gang up to chew holes in the leaf until only the leaf skeleton remains.

Research informed us about this small wasp (not fly) imported from Europe. Turns out the Ben Alder black currant proves resistant to this foliage wasp, but not the fruit fly. Trial spraying with insecticidal soap made little difference. The eggs and green worms can be easily pinched dead by fingers when found, but one must search every leaf often in spring and early summer.

Barrier placement with mosquito netting seemed the best solution to keep both pests at bay while staying organic. But then the details of successful netting deployment: finding suitably valued tough material, timing winter to spring cover-up then removal, protection of fragile netting from tearing by sharp shrub branches/thorns or nearby fencing, netting support to prevent damage to tender new shrub growth, pests appearing inside netting material, disruptive weather forces on this light barrier and closing openings and seasonally adapting large nets over vigorously growing shrubs. Many frustrations!



Ben Alder Black Currants.

On these stormy late winter days, I see the bay lather with galloping watery heaves, the Douglas firs across the street dare the gales in grandly swaying dance, and I take another sip of hot fresh coffee with a plate of fine, tangy berry cobbler smothered by cream. Yes, worth the trouble.

By Joel Rautiola



# Finlandia Foundation Suomi Chapter Membership Form

JOIN US!!! Or RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP  
DUES: Single \$25/yr Couples/Family \$30/yr  
Supporting \$50 Lifetime \$300

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My donation to FFSC \_\_\_\_\_

Grant & Scholarship \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone/Email \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please check here if you **DO NOT** wish to be acknowledged as Donor to FFSC

I would like to see my chapter support the following: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to volunteer  New/returning member  Renewal

Dues and donations are tax deductible. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

Return this form with your dues in the enclosed envelope to:

Finlandia Foundation Suomi Chapter - P.O. Box 2544 Bellingham WA 98227



## Would You Ever Go to a Burger King-Themed Spa?

Would you like a side of fries with your facial (Um, kind of)? If so, you'll need to buy a plane ticket to Finland (and maybe question your priorities in life). In the Finnish capital of Helsinki, the world's first Burger King spa has opened in one of the chain's restaurant locations. Its sauna has red and blue accents to match the restaurant's typical colors, and it even includes a 48-inch television screen (complete with a PlayStation 4) and towels featuring the Burger King logo.



Showers, a locker room, and toilets are also available within the spa, and surprisingly, they look pretty nice. Although, if you're uncomfortable about using communal showers, this might not be the right place for you.

Now that the spa has opened, you can officially enjoy a Whopper in a sauna (yes, they offer the option to order in food), although that may not be totally appealing. No judgment here, but maybe the smell of burgers and fries wouldn't be quite as relaxing as the usual lavender scent one smells at more conventional spas. But then again, to each his (or her) own.

If you're interested in booking a three-hour session at the spa, it costs about \$282.

Adapted from an article by Julie Ricevuto (yahoo.com)

## The Sea and Archipelago Create Unique Experiences in Helsinki

One of the most wonderful ways to experience Finland's capital city Helsinki is to see it from the sea or visit one of the numerous little islands in the Helsinki archipelago. The family-owned company Fregatti will be happy to help you in exploring the area by sea.



"Our aim is to create the ultimate experience for our guests," says the CEO of Fregatti.

The company specializes in sailing cruises for both private guests and enterprises who want to go out and sail for a day outside of Helsinki. They also host events on the island of Lonna, a tiny island located off the coast of downtown Helsinki that was opened for the public only in 2014.

Fregatti operates in the greater Helsinki area all year round. In everything they do, you can see their love for the sea and the Finnish archipelago. For them, it's clearly a passion. They tailor each event to meet the specific needs of their customers, and they strive to offer good service with a relaxed attitude.

Tourism is, both in Finland and Helsinki, a growing industry. New high-quality services are constantly created, and Fregatti CEO, Ville Wäänänen, is very happy to be part of the development. He wishes that tourism would be seen as a real industry in Finland, because there is so much potential in it.

Adapted from the Finland in the US Newsletter  
May 2016

## Toroidion, the World's Most Efficient Electric Car

Pasi Pennanen has designed an interesting electric vehicle. In 1997, he graduated as Finland's first automotive designer. Soon he started developing a concept car based on his own needs and high ecological standards, as well as for comfort and speed.

Risen to world fame as a designer for Jaguar, Pasi recently introduced his work, the Toroidion 1MW Concept, at the Monaco Motor Show. His car is based on an entirely new type of electric motor and a technology for fast battery replacement. The car has four electric motors with combined power of 1,000 kW, which is equivalent to 1,341 horsepower!!! Some of the advantages of battery replacement are: flexible charging utilizing the cheapest electrical rates (in Finland, "night electricity" is much less than high demand times), avoidance of power grid overload, expanded range, and speed of charging.

The comparison of Toroidion with other electric cars in the world is in many cases futile. They all run on electricity, but otherwise their solutions are completely different. His car design is futuristic and sleek. The manufacturing has started in Finland and one can expect many innovative solutions and ideas coming from a number of automotive experts working with him.



The Toroidion 1MW was born and raised in Finland.

On April 20th, 2016, Pasi Pennanen received a 5,000 euro Ornamo Award for his work in Helsinki.

By Asko  
Adapted from the Finnish American Reporter  
May 2016



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## Juhannus - Summer Solstice

**A**nnouncing A Midsummer's Food and Music Festival: An all day celebration of the summer solstice with music honoring an age-old Finnish/Nordic tradition. This summer the festival will be held on Sunday June 26th from 10am-10pm at Lairmont Manor (405 Fieldstone Rd, Bellingham WA).

Various community non-profits are joining together to celebrate the longest day of the year and pay tribute and honor to those who have mentored music in our community. A full spectrum of musical genres will be represented. Come and enjoy the festivities, stay all day or just for an hour, to support music in our community and enjoy Juhannus in a beautiful setting with the area's finest musicians. Great Finnish traditional food delicacies will be provided by the Finlandia Foundation Suomi Chapter.

Admission is \$10. RSVP preferred. For more information: 360 715-3763 or 360 714-8600 or [ffsuomi@gmail.com](mailto:ffsuomi@gmail.com)

## Vappu Celebration!

**T**his year we celebrated *Vappu* at the Lairmont Manor. A great time was had by all. We enjoyed the usual *Vappu* Finnish delicacies – cookies, *sima*, pickled herring, assorted salads, beer, fruit, etc.



We displayed some wonderful Finnish art, handcrafts, knives, wall hangings, and antique dolls. We also got some new members and viewed a documentary film as told by the children who saw the war up close and personal. The weather was quite accommodating – beautiful and sunny!



By Brend Holma

## New Merchandise is Here!

FFSC together with Finnish manufacturers have created a few items to celebrate the Centennial next year. The blue & white hats (knit caps) are available for \$18 each, postage paid, and the Army Patrol knives with the imprint are \$75 each (this is a limited production of 100 knives only). You may order these direct from us using your credit card. See instructions in our web page.

