



FINLANDIA FOUNDATION
SUOMI CHAPTER

Finnovations

PROMOTING FINNISH HERITAGE FROM THE EVERGREEN STATE
TO THE GOLDEN STATE
Vol. IX - No. 2

President's Corner

Our chapter president, Pasi Virta, is currently visiting his home country of Finland and has requested our Vice President to cover the President's Corner in his absence.

–Tapio Holma (editor)

Here's Chet Cory in his own words:

V.P. Chet Cory comes to the Suomi Chapter via his love for Finland and through his wife, Sirpa Salminen. They have been together since 1984, traveling to Finland every three years. From Northern Lapland to Savonlinna and Rauma to Rovaniemi, they have covered the beautiful country from top to bottom. Rauma is Sirpa's home town, so he really enjoys that city the best. Being in Rauma during July's "Pitsiviikko" (Black Lace Night) is one of the best times to be in the port city. Last summer they spent three weeks in Finland before embarking on a River Cruise with Kristina Cruises based in Kotka. They started in Vienna, Austria and disembarked in Belgrade, Serbia.

Chet said the perfect July evening in Finland is being at someone's summer home on the water, enjoying a nice meal, ollut (beer) and later a sauna. Good conversation and good people make for a wonderful experience. The makkara (sausages) are the best in Finland. He also loves reindeer steak.

"I love the sauna experience, not so much jumping into the sea afterwards, but the actual sauna," he said. "Even though I have a sauna in my home, the Finnish ones are just better all around."

His second favorite city is Savonlinna where he's attended the annual Opera festival in beautiful Olavinlinna castle and currently has close friends in the popular summertime destination.

Chet currently is an Entry Specialist with U.S. Customs and Border Protection in Blaine. He also works as a Public Affairs Liaison, Peer Support Member and he chairs the Diversity and Inclusion Committee for CBP.

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Cover Photo: Summer hiking in Urho Kekkonen National Park, Lapland.

He had a long career in radio and television, starting at KAGT in Anacortes in 1972 and ended at KFWB (1983-1999). His television public affairs show called "Northwest Focus" appeared on KBCB-TV. He had many free-lance jobs during his media career including a publicist position for Skagit Speedway during the summer and the Bellingham Blazers Hockey team in the winter.

He is past president of the Mount Baker Toppers Barbershop Chorus, the Rainbow Center Advisory Board and the Bellingham Quarterbacks Club. He was also a board member for Whatcom County Amateur Hockey Association.

His goal now is to help Pasi move the chapter forward with fun and exciting events, which should attract additional members.



Sirpa and Chet enjoying a cruise in Finland.

Finland's New Challenges

On the first of June this year I had the opportunity to visit my old high school in the suburb of Helsinki on Graduation Day for the new high school students.



Of the 136,000 graduates in the whole country, more than 15% were comprised of new residents, refugees, etc from different continents who had migrated to Finland within the past twenty years. Many of these youngsters of different cultures, races and countries received stipends and scholarships for higher education, which will be a challenge for future governments of Finland.

Finland has a population of some 5.6



million and in the whole country less than 1% of folks have been born outside the country.

Therefore it was amazing to see that 25% of the graduates of my old alma mater were from Near East, Africa and Asia or other places! Colorful folks! (see the photo of the front of the steps of the school below)

These demographic changes in the general population will be noticed in the larger cities of Finland first. There, maybe soon, some doctors or lawyers helping you will be children of newcomers from Ethiopia, Syria or Afghanistan.

Interesting factors in today's world.

-By Tapio Holma



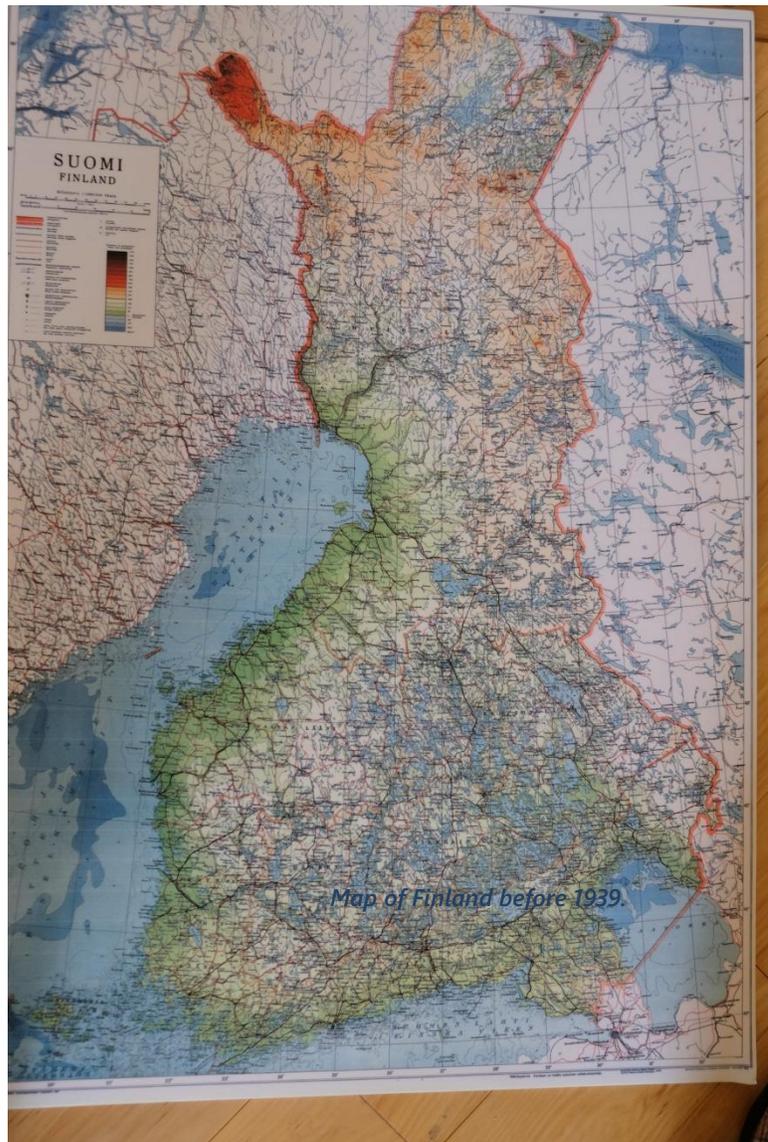
Editor's Corner

WINTER WAR 1939

This year is the 80th Anniversary of the Finnish Winter War. On the 30th of November in 1939 the Red Army of the Soviet Union attacked Finland and tried to conquer the country. As we know from history, the attempt failed and the Finns were able to keep their Independence.

The Winter War proved a tremendous drain on the vital resources of the Finnish nation. Nearly 25,000 men fell in battle, and over 47,000 returned home wounded, some 10,000 of them disabled for life. The territory Finland had to cede to the USSR according to the armistice terms contained 12% of the country's arable land and timber, nearly 20% of the railroad tracks and industrial capacity, and 30% of the harnessed homes and livelihood by voluntary leaving the ceded areas to be resettled in what was left of the country. The problem of dealing with the displaced Karelians seemed impossible to solve – but solved it was, in time, because there simply was no alternative to its solution.

The cost of the Winter War was a staggering one to Moscow, too. The estimates of Soviet losses vary greatly. In the book of reminiscences attributed to Nikita Khrushchev published in the West, the number of men killed in action is set as high as a million. The Finns claim to have shot down no less than 750 enemy planes.



Hitler was so impressed by this that he wanted to visit Finland and congratulate the Marshall Mannerheim in person on his 75th birthday.

The photo above shows the Map of Finland (The Greater Finland), which was established in the Peace treaty of Tartu, when Finland became the Grand Duchy of Russia in 1809 after the Swedes lost the Finnish territory to Russia. Those of us born before November 1939 still have knowledge of been born in the original Finland.

Tapio

Finland's Grand AI Experiment

HELSINKI — Jaana Partanen is not your typical AI programming geek.

Until a year ago, the 59-year-old dentist from the Finnish town of Mikkeli had no idea what to make of terms like "machine learning" or "neural networks." Now, Partanen spends her evenings learning the basics of coding and she is thinking about how to apply artificial intelligence to her job, either to help write up medical summaries or perform orthodontics.

"I can see it [artificial intelligence] is already here, and it serves us — very much actually," she said, adding that following the latest developments in the field has become a hobby.

She's one of tens of thousands of non-technology experts who are taking part in a grand experiment aimed at repurposing the country's economy toward high-end applications of artificial intelligence.

The idea has a simple, Nordic ring to it: Start by teaching 1 percent of the country's population, or about 55,000 people, the basic concepts at the root of artificial technology, and gradually build on the number over the next few years.

Originally started as a free-access university course, Finland's "1 percent" AI scheme is now being rolled out nationally with the support of private companies and the government.

For Helsinki, there is also a clear economic incentive to training large



numbers of Finns in the basics of AI: Doing so may allow Finland to stay competitive amid ever growing competition between China and the United States, and in the aftermath of the rapid decline of Nokia, the national mobile champion that has fallen on hard times.

As the two superpowers vie for technological supremacy, Finland knows it's outclassed on raw resources. There is no point trying to compete with Beijing or Washington in terms of developing the basic technology of AI. So Finland aspires to occupy a niche, as world leader in practical applications of AI, according to Economy Minister Mika Lintilä.

"We'll never have so much money that we will be the leader of artificial intelligence," Lintilä said. "But how we use it — that's something different."

Like many ideas in the liberal Nordic country, this one did not originate with the government. It started a short walk away from the economy ministry, in a modern building shared by the University of Helsinki's department of computer science and consulting agency Reaktor.

Originally, it was meant as a promotional sideline to a free online course dubbed

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AI (continued)

"Elements of AI." The university and the company decided to launch the course last May with the intention to "support democracy," according to computer scientist Teemu Roos, the mind behind it.



Computer scientist, Teemu Roos.

Without requiring any coding skills, the class introduces the basics of artificial intelligence, but does not intend to train a new generation of cutting-edge developers. Instead, it wants to raise awareness about the opportunities and risks of AI among people who are strangers to computer science, so they can decide for themselves what's beneficial and where they want their government to invest.

"That's how society works — if enough people say they don't like it, then we regulate it," he said.

Roos said he came up with the idea in the summer of 2017, after hearing that the

Finnish government was fishing around for help from institutions to develop "lifelong learning" — or professional training — material on AI.

Roos knew he would need help to make his material approachable for a general audience, so he teamed up with Reaktor. Together they purged his Introduction to AI course, which he had given to his computer science students for six years, of any elements that required programming and designed a slick website.

But the marketers at Reaktor were still worried that the course would stay unnoticed outside of expert circles, and so they came up with the idea to promote it by linking it to an ambitious goal: They convinced some of the country's largest employers to join them, and announced that by the end of 2018, the course — coupled with other efforts of the industry— would lead to at least 1 percent of Finland's population being trained in AI."

Quickly, the initiative gathered pace. By mid-December, over 250 companies announced they would participate in the initiative dubbed "AI challenge." Paper giant Stora Enso, for instance, pledged to train 1,000 of their employees in AI. Tech companies Elisa and Nokia said they would train their entire workforce.

"The companies participating in the challenge have pledged to train their staff in the basics of AI — with our course or with any material they see fit," said Reaktor's chief marketing officer, Ville Valtonen.



*Ville Valtonen, chief marketing officer
of Reaktor.*

In addition to the companies' separate efforts, more than 10,500 people — over 6,300 of them from Finland — had graduated from the course by mid-December, according to Reaktor.

As the initiative began to flourish, government officials took notice, and publicly embraced it.

Finland's ministry of foreign affairs and the country's tax authority both announced they would also train their staff — and when the first batches of students graduated from Elements of AI in September 2018, Finland's President Sauli Niinistö showed up at the ceremony. Among the graduates was dentist Partanen, who traveled over three hours on a bus to take part.

A Finnish language version of the course was launched in November. This, government officials hope, will boost the number of graduates from Finland even further.

The grassroots training scheme is just one element of a national plan to turn Helsinki into a leading voice on AI in the world.

In October 2017, Finland was the first EU country to put a national AI strategy into writing. In a second report released in June 2018, the government estimated that around 1 million of its population would eventually need to update their AI skills.

Helsinki's next and final strategy report, due to be published in April, will spell out how to bring small and mid-size enterprises across the country on board "who have no idea at this point that their future has to do with AI," said Ilona Lundström, a director general at Finland's economy ministry and the key architect behind Helsinki's national plan for AI.

At the same time, Finland plans to partner up with bordering Estonia and Sweden to become Europe's No. 1 "laboratory" for AI test trials, she said. And the country wants to use its voice in the European Union, where it is set to take over the council presidency this summer, to lobby for loosening some regulation.

The old churches used to have a person who's waking up everybody who is falling asleep while listening to the preacher," Lundström said. "Our role is to have the stick and kind of poke people and tell them 'Stay alert, stay awake, be focused and move forward.'"

Helsinki's plan includes pushing for "sandbox environments" to test AI technology across borders. The country is looking at experiments with neighbors to the west and the south, such as cross-border trials in autonomous shipping on the Baltic sea between Finnish or Swedish

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ports or an experiment to merge some of Finland's and Estonia's digital infrastructure.

At the same time, the grassroots AI campaign at home is supposed to have effects that go far beyond artificial intelligence, officials said.

"We are using AI as the flagship project for a bigger kind of setup of themes of digitalization," Lundström said. "If you talk about digitalization at large in the same manner, nothing happens. But if you take a special approach like artificial intelligence, things start to move."

That's been true for dentist Jaana Partanen in Mikkeli.

She has signed up for a course to learn the basics of coding in her hometown.

"It's the first time they're doing a public programming course here," she said.

Computer scientist Roos' team is working on an advanced sequel to the course, which will likely be launched early next summer and require some programming.

Jaana Partanen wants to sign up for it.

-Adapted from an article on Politico.com



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

Kyykka

Kyykka: A very old Karelian game.

Kyykka, Karelian, or "Finnish Skittles" has been played for several hundred years in Karelia, around Laatokka (Lake Ladoga). The first descriptions of the game can be found in the 1700's. At the end of the 1800's, it largely disappeared, except in a few remote villages.

Supported by our long time athletic President, Urho Kaleva Kekkonen, a movement to revitalize the game was established in 1951. Following the traditional terms and rules, a set of rules and a scoring system were created.

Karjalan Kyykka Liitto was established in 1986 as a part of Suomen Liikunta ja Urheilu, SLU (Finnish Sports Federation). The first Finnish Championship games were held in Seurasaari, Helsinki in 1951. That venue was kept for the next 10 years.

In addition to team sports, individual men's championships were added three years later. Individual women joined the sport in 1973, pairs in 1980. Men's pairs were added as late as 2005. The pentathlon category was formed in 1980. Also kids and seniors have their own rules and teams.

Kyykka has gained popularity. The National Kyykka Organization sponsors 20-30 games a year. Regional and local clubs hold numerous tournaments. Finland and Sweden battle every year for the Nordic Championship, mostly won by Finns! Since 2000, the World Championship Games are held every 3 years. Not surprisingly, we Finns have swept almost all the medals every time.



Gentlemen enjoying a game of Kyykka in the year 1900!

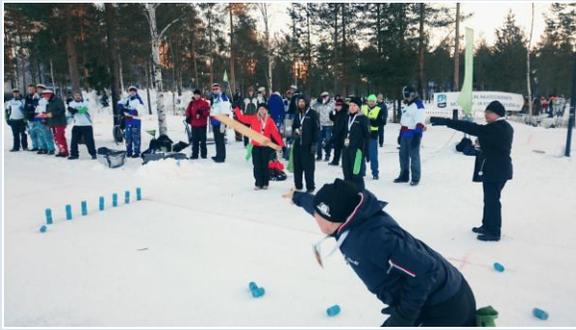
"Old" Rules:

I still have a rule booklet from my teen years!!! The game is played on a smooth and level gravel ground. In Winter, snow or ice surface is cleared. The playing field is 7 by 22 m (23' by 72'). Two squares, 5 (16') by 5 m are located 10 m (33') apart. The skittles are like very short logs: 10 cm (4") high by 7.5 cm (3"). For a team (4) competition a total of 40 blocks are stacked 2 high on the front line of the square 10 cm from the corners. For individual games, 10 pairs are placed 125 cm (49") from the corners. The bats look like logs with a short handle. The maximum length is 85 cm (33"), and the thickness is 8 cm (3.1") or less. There is no weight limit. I am sure that the bats were old "hand mangle" logs. Towels, sheet and table cloths were folded and rolled around a "bat" and rolled many times with a serrated board with a handle. My mom used this method during my childhood.

After the "towers" were erected, the first (and best) player threw his bat from the back of his square (15 m), until the first kyykka was outside the square. The rest of the throws were made from the front edge (10m).

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Kyykka (continued)



Each team player had 2 bats, so you wanted to get all the bats outside the square, not to block the skittles.

Individual competition threw 4 bats. When all the blocks were knocked out to the sides or back, the end was declared for the first half of the game. The teams changed sides and after the second round the winner advanced to the next opponent.

New Rules:

In 2005, new and very complicated rules were adopted. Points were added or taken away for missed throws, number of kyykka left, landing on the line, or front of the square, etc.

Molkky:

In 1986, a new "version" of kyykka was invented in Lahti. It is based on numbered blocks you try to knock down. Also the "bat" is very short and light. After each player, the blocks are erected exactly on the spot they landed down on the ground. The goal is to get exactly 50 points. We played this game at our Vappu Celebration in Cornwall Park.

My very old reminiscence on Kyykka:

In 1962 or '63, my late brother, Esko and I

read about this very old game. After talking to our friends, we found 2 fathers who knew how to play it. We cut the blocks (kyykka) out of long, thin "logs." We used a lathe at a nearby Agricultural School to make the bats. Soon we had 5 or 6 guys practicing the game. In a year or two, we had a team playing in the regional events. When we graduated from high school in 1965, we sent my best friend (19 years old) and my brother (21) to the Individual Championship Games in Helsinki, they placed 7th and 8th in the whole country!! We participated in several regional tournaments with varying success.

There are basically 2 approaches for the throw. The most common is the straight arm "swing." Much harder, but more accurate is the bent arm "flick." You hold the bat horizontally on your shoulder level and twist your back, arm, and wrist to knock out the kyykka.

My "career" as a kyykka player was fairly short. On August 3rd, 1969 I came to UW to do research for 1 year, so "hitting" 50 years in 1 1/2 months!!! I brought with me the rule booklet and was hoping to start the game in Seattle, but I could not find many interested players.

In my small hometown, kyykka became quite popular. The town built an official kyykka field, where an open outdoor dance "hall" used to be. About 10 years ago I stopped by the field where a lively game was going on. I played ignorant (which is natural for me), and asked how to play it. Soon an elderly gent piped up and told everybody that Esko and Asko

"resurrected" the kyykka game in Parikkala!!! My cover was blown!! I threw a few bats, but I definitely was better over 40 years ago. Unfortunately, a few years ago the field was full of weeds, and had not been used for a while. I am very happy that we were able to bring back this ancient Karelian sport.

-By Asko Hamalainen



Finland is Winland!



BRATISLAVA, Slovakia (AP) — Marko Anttila helped lead Finland to its third world hockey title, scoring the tying and go-ahead goals in a 3-1 victory over Canada on Sunday, May 26th.

Anttila tied it at 1 on a power play early in the second period and the Finnish captain made it 2-1 early in the third. Harri Pesonen added an insurance goal with five minutes to play.

"It's awesome," forward Toni Rajala said. "It's something that you know might only happen once in your life, but even before the game it felt great. They were good today, but we were a little bit better. Three goals was enough."

"It's an amazing feeling," forward Jere Sallinen said. "I don't even know how we won. It's unbelievable. We're a pretty good hockey country. Maybe it's a miracle on ice, something like that. Going back to Helsinki is going to be amazing. I think there's a lot of people waiting there for us. Anttila — he's a beauty."

"I'm very pleased with how we played," Canadian coach Alain Vigneault said. "We gave it our best shot. At the end of the day, we weren't able to capitalize on some of our plays and they were."

Finland also won titles in 1995 in Sweden and 2011 in Bratislava.

-Adapted from an article on apnews.com





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Finland's New Government Sworn In



HELSINKI — Finland's new center-left coalition government has been sworn in, with the country's first Social Democratic prime minister in 16 years assuming office along with a climate issue-focused Cabinet where women are in the majority.

Their 182-page government program pledges to make the nation of 5.5 million "a sustainable society socially, economically and ecologically" with strong emphasis on environmental and climate change issues.

Upcoming Events:

Saturday June 29th, 3-6 pm.

FF Suomi Chapter Midsummer Party at Whatcom Falls Lower Park Shelter (by the fish hatchery).

This will be a potluck. Please make some Finnish Food if you know how and bring the recipe (unless it's a family secret!). American picnic food is also "fin-tastic."

Come prepared to share a short story related to you and Finland.

Membership and Donation

To be able to offer a number of affordable, high-quality events, our budget will require more resources to keep admission costs affordable for all. We appreciate any and all donations.

You may now pay online by credit card via PayPal. Please visit our website, <http://www.ffsuomi.com> and choose the "Donate" button. Or send a check payable to FF Suomi Chapter to the PO Box listed above.