

FINLANDIA FOUNDATION  
SUOMI CHAPTER

# FINNOVATIONS

PROMOTING FINNISH HERITAGE FROM THE  
EVERGREEN STATE TO THE GOLDEN STATE



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## Independence Day Greeting from the President of the Republic of Finland to Finnish Expatriates and Finns abroad on 6 December 2019:

Dear Expatriate Finns, Dear Friends,

The year is drawing to a close and the time has come to celebrate Finland's 102nd year of independence. The past year has been eventful for us here in Finland as it must have been for all of you around the world.

The global situation is becoming increasingly unpredictable. For our part, Finland is working for international stability and cooperation. The promotion of security and global challenges – notably the eradication of poverty and prevention of climate change – call for extensive cooperation. Finland can make a valuable contribution based on its own experiences.

We also need to take care of the affairs of expatriate Finns. Next June the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, the cooperation forum of expatriates, will convene in Finlandia Hall in Helsinki. It will offer us here in Finland an opportunity to learn about the views and concerns of expatriate Finns.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Winter War. Although a long time has passed since these events, the veterans and Lottas who secured our independence always deserve our greatest respect. Their efforts have provided a sound basis for building the modern Finland.

It is of great significance that you celebrate Finland's Independence Day in all parts of the world. You represent Finland holding the blue-white flag high. Our independence deserves to be honoured. I express my heartfelt thanks to you for your participation.

I wish you all across the world a pleasant Independence Day in anticipation of the Christmas season!

Sauli Niinistö  
The President of the Republic of Finland

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## President's Message

Where do you get your news nowadays? I am one of over 200,000 digital subscribers of Helsingin Sanomat (Finland's Largest Daily Newspaper) and Suomen Kuvalehti (a 150 year old magazine, kind of like Newsweek or the Times). Anyway, it seems that I trust Finnish reporters reporting on the USA more than I trust the constant American 24 hours-per-day news machines!

I'm also enjoying the weekly Podcast from Jari Sarasvuo (the Finnish version of Tony Robbins). My favorite bloggers are Tuomas Kyro, Marko Maunula and Jouni Nieminen. I listen to audiobooks while doing yard work or driving a car. I just finished Karl Marlantes' fantastic "Deep River" (a Finnish family saga 1890-1925 set in Naselle WA and Astoria OR area).

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## Finland Qualify for Euro 2020!



Finland's national soccer team have qualified for a major tournament for the first time in their history and striker Teemu Pukki could barely believe it. Actually, the whole of Finland could barely believe it. The 3-0 victory over Liechtenstein means the Eagle-Owls will be at Euro 2020 next summer, after securing the second spot in qualifying Group J, behind Italy. Jasse Tuominen's first half strike and a Pukki double - one from the penalty spot - ended a run of 32 failed qualifying campaigns for either the World Cup or European Championship, and sparked jubilant scenes.

If you want to watch Finnish Television, Netti-TV.net works best for me. Our very own world class newsletter will be available on our little wesbite, [www.ffi suomi.com](http://www.ffi suomi.com), if you did not order the hard copy.

How do you stay connected to Finland? At every Board Meeting we talk about membership issues. How to best reach you, what's on your mind, what would make you excited to keep paying for your membership dues?

We are still looking for a membership secretary who would be in charge of writing a letter of acknowledgement to new members and for keeping track of membership dues with our Treasurer's help. We have about 30 memberships. Are you going to be the Membership Secretary of the little (but vital) Suomi Chapter of the Finlandia Foundation?

We have planned for a couple of fun events for the remainder of 2019. See page 12 for more details. I hope to see you at one or both of these events! Let's "finnish" this year strong like Lasse Viren did in the Munich and Montreal Olympics!

**Pasi Virta**

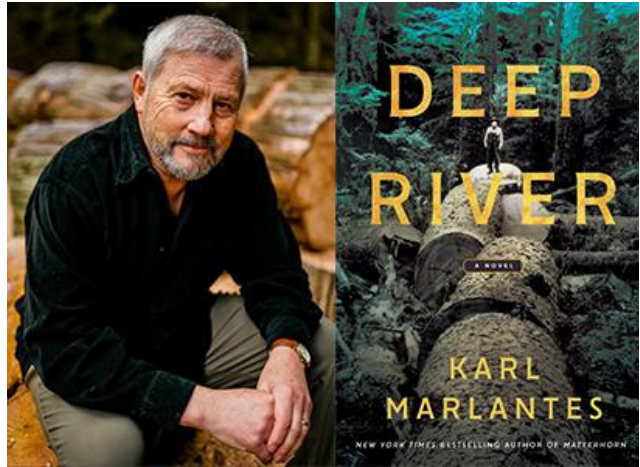


# Book Review: Deep River

## by Karl Marlantes

In his new novel, *Deep River*, Marlantes turns to the family epic to craft a stunningly expansive narrative that is no less rich and honest in its depiction of human suffering, courage, and reinvention.

Born into a farm family in late nineteenth-century Finland, the three Koski siblings—Ilmari, Matti, and Aino—are brought up on the virtue of maintaining their *sisu* in the face of increasing hardship, especially after their nationalist father is arrested by imperial Russian authorities, never to be seen again. Lured by the prospects of the Homestead Act, Ilmari and Matti set sail for America, and the politicized young Aino, haunted by the specter of betrayal after her Marxist cell is disastrously exposed, follows soon after. Not far from the majestic Columbia River and in the shadow of Douglas firs a hundred meters high, the brothers have established themselves among a



logging community in southern Washington, and it is here, in the New World, that each sibling comes into their own. Layered with fascinating historical detail, this is a novel that breathes deeply of the sun-dappled forest and bears witness to the stump-ridden fields the loggers, and the first waves of modernity, leave behind. At its heart, *Deep River* is an extraordinarily ambitious exploration of the place of the individual, and of the immigrant, in an America still in the process of defining its own identity.

Book Review From [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.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

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## Editor's Column

As of the writing of this, now almost exactly 80 years ago, the Winter War between Finland and the Soviet Union began on November 30th, 1939.

The Soviet Union claimed that the Finns killed Russian soldiers with cannon fire during an exercise on November 26th in the Village of Mainila close to the Finnish eastern border. This claim was circulated by Stalinist propaganda in order to start an attack against Finland in retaliation for Finland's refusal to give Russia some bases in Finland at the Eve of World War II. Russia has since confirmed that no shots were fired from the Finnish side.

At the time, Russia was worried that Germany would attack from the Finnish side so they wanted to establish their own bases not only in Finland but in other Baltic countries. Also the excuse was that the Finns were too close to their second largest city, Leningrad (today St. Petersburg).

The whole world watched this situation. The Soviet Union was expelled from the League of Nations because of this attack. The US Government and President Roosevelt, because of strong media pressure, gave Finland 20 million dollars to defend herself. The same kind of monetary assistance was given to Norway (15 million) and Sweden (10 million).

The threat of Communism spreading was eminent at that time. The war lasted three and a half months and ended with the Moscow Peace Treaty on March 13th, 1940. Finland lost some 11% of its territory and some Karelian territories, including the largest Lake in Europe, was given to Russia.

The total casualties were some 70,000, of which almost 26,000 were Finnish soldiers.



*The "Lightbringer" Winter War Memorial in Helsinki. Photo by Lasse Holma.*

Russian casualties were much higher, estimated to be 130,000 to 160,000 according to some Russian statistics available. This was due to the skillful war strategy directed by Marshall Mannerheim and the severe weather conditions that Russian forces could not adapt to. The outside temperature was -45F and heavy snow made it possible for Finnish forces to move fast in white camouflage on the skis in the territory they knew very well.

A lot volunteers from various countries participated to defend the Finns, among them a contingent of 300 Finnish Americans who arrived in Finland just a day before the war ended.

It is a common practice in Finland to honor these fallen heroes throughout the month of November when the relatives will place burning candles on their tombs in the cemeteries specifically established for them.

**Tapio Holma**

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## Hauskaa Joulua!

The Scandinavian Christmas Fair and the corresponding Finnish Community Bazaar and Joulumarkinnat event in Seattle were good fund raising events for our chapter.

These annual events, both here in Bellingham and in Seattle, were well received by the local folks. The Norwegians, in particular, were on the top of their products from sweaters to decorations for Christmas trees. There were also a lot of ladies baking Nordic coffee bread (Pulla), cookies, etc.



Our local FFSC was represented for the first time. With our hats, Finnish oatmeal cookies, Joulutarttu, milk, white and dark chocolates, and a couple of Mõlkky games we were able to raise funds to support our organization, our newsletter and our Baby Box (see below). The most popular items we sold were the 'snug hats', the Finnish oatmeal cookies, the 'joulutarttu', Suomi flag caps, and the personalized chapter chocolates.

Our banner was proudly displayed and we can look forward to next year participating in both events!!! Baked goodies are always a best seller, as we sold all of our baked goods and could have sold more. NEXT YEAR!!

**By Brend Holma**

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## FFSC Chocolate

Order Now For the Holidays!!

Finlandia Foundation Suomi  
Chapter Chocolate  
Package of Three:  
Milk, Dark, White

\$ 25.00 Including Postage

Check, PayPal, Visa/MC  
FFSC, P.O.Box 2544, Bellingham 98227

Support our chapter and a great local  
business, Chocolate Necessities!

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## The FFSC Baby Box

Since 1938, new parents in Finland have been sent home from the hospital with one unique, yet simple gift: A cardboard box filled with everything from clothing to diapers to toys. It's part of a government-funded program, intended to give new parents a little financial relief and all babies an equal start.

FFSC's baby box is community funded!!! We have received our first baby box – USA made and it is so söpö!!! Ben Mann, a native of Bellingham and probably the most famous local artist, has agreed to design our first baby box – we are very fortunate as Ben's work is all over Bellingham. We have also received some funds from community members towards this great undertaking.

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## The SYL

As the Secretary General of the Finnish Union of University Students, I have learned to appreciate all the great accomplishments the Union has achieved. Thanks to the government's subsidies, all students at any university can enjoy a nutritious lunch for only EUR 2.60. In addition, all health care needs are provided at steeply reduced rates and housing is heavily subsidized. Education has always been totally free below university level. There is no tuition for higher education for any EU student, only students outside the EU have been paying for their education.

Unlike the United States, European and Finnish student movements have always been well organized. The organization I am leading, is called Suomen Ylioppilaskuntien Liitto (SYL), or Finnish Union of University Students. All universities and unions are members. SYL works both at international and state levels, while local unions concentrate on local issues. Unions also work with the city governments to provide better traffic flows and opportunities for recreation.

In 2021, SYL will celebrate its 100th Anniversary. A comprehensive Centennial history book will be

produced. From its pages, one can read about how SYL was founded to deal with international issues. Later it became a force in political life in Finland. A century ago, there were only a few universities. Today they number 14.

Thanks to conscious and sustained advocacy, students and their unions enjoy a very good status and influence in Finland today. We have established good relationships with all levels of decision makers and actively participate in the development of higher education in our country. In recent years, we have invested a lot of influence at EU and have regular contacts with EU members and other agencies in Brussels.

Although the EU has no power over education, many trends and reforms in high school in achieving our Finnish success story. Active student movement has been crucial to build one of the best education systems in the world. Free education and high income jobs ensure students equal access to university. In the 2020's, SYL will continue its activities to make Finland the best place to live and study.

**By Eero Manninen  
Secretary General**

**Finland's National Union of Students**

## What Is SYL?



**The voice of students**



**Brilliant student benefits**



**Competencies for the future**



**Student wellbeing**



**Prerequisites for student life**



**Advocacy work in the  
European Union**



**Global responsibility**



**Research as a starting point  
for the advocacy work**

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## How Helsinki Built "Book Heaven."

You might say, "Yes, of course I love the library." We do, too. But I'm not sure anyone loves libraries quite like the Finns do. In a country that boasts one of the world's highest literacy rates, the arrival of the new central library in Helsinki last year was a kind of moon-landing-like moment of national bonding. The €98 million facility, whose opening in December 2018 marked the centenary of Finnish independence, has since been widely celebrated internationally as a model re-imagining of these critical pieces of social infrastructure. At the CityLab DC conference this week, Tommi Laitio, Helsinki's executive director for culture and leisure, offered his own, more personal take on exactly why this building is so important to Finland's future.



Designed by Finnish architecture firm ALA and dubbed Oodi ("ode" in Finnish), the three-level structure is a kind of spruce-clad monument to the principles of Nordic society-building. Still, Laitio opened his talk not with shots of the building's sleek interiors but with a sobering image from Finland's brutal civil war of 1918, which killed 36,000 people, many of whom perished in prison camps. "This progress from one of the poorest countries of Europe to one of the most prosperous has not been an accident. It's based on this idea that when there are so few of us—only 5.5 million people—everyone has to live up to their full potential," he said. "Our society is fundamentally dependent on people being able to trust the kindness of strangers." That conviction has helped support modern



Finland's emphasis on education and literacy—each Finn takes out more than 15 books a year from the library (10 more than the average American). But Nordic-style social services have not shielded the residents of Finland's largest city from 21st-century anxieties about climate change, migrants, disruptive technology, and the other forces fueling right-leaning populist movements across Europe. Oodi, which was the product of a 10-year-long public consultation and design process, was conceived in part to resist these fears. "When people are afraid, they focus on short-term selfish solutions," Laitio said. "They also start looking for scapegoats." The central library is built to serve as a kind of citizenship factory, a space for old and new residents to learn about the world, the city, and each other. It's pointedly sited across from (and at the same level as) the Finnish Parliament House that it shares a public square with.

Its design reflects that lofty mission. The ground floor is an extension of the public square outside—a space for meetings, free events, and informal gatherings, with a cafe, theater, and various public amenities. On the second level, a series of flexible rooms provide a host of au courant attractions and borrowables—3-D printers and power tools, sewing machines and music rooms and makerspaces. Language classes are offered for migrants; gamers get VR-equipped computer rooms. Patrons can even borrow season tickets for the Helsinki's popular professional basketball games. Only on the topmost level—in a soaring, light-filled space Laitio calls "book



heaven”—will one find actual volumes for readers, a 100,000-book collection that’s in very high demand.

Inside and out, the facility is as handsome as Finnish Modernism fans might expect, and it has proved to be absurdly popular: About 10,000 patrons stop by every day, on average (it’s open until 10 p.m.), and Oodi just hit 3 million visitors this year—“A lot for a city of 650,000,” Laitio said.



In its very first month, 420,000 Helsinki residents—almost 2/3 of the population—went to the library. The library has a “commitment to openness and welcoming without judgement,” he said. “It’s probably the most diverse place in our city, in many ways.”

In too many places, libraries are “places that many people value in principle but few use in practice,” Laitio said. “We’re losing out on their democratic potential. Libraries have this incredible promise—that you can build your future in here. You can be your best person inside this building.” This kind of devotion to the civic power of book-borrowing doesn’t come cheap, exactly. Besides the €100 million spent in building the central flagship, Finland spends another €35 million running the national system, or about €50 per resident. But to Finns like Laitio, it’s money very well spent: “I don’t think €50 for restoring people’s hope in living together is a bad investment.”

**By David Dudley**  
**[www.citylab.com](http://www.citylab.com)**

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## Pearls From History

"The number of automobiles in Helsinki, according to one of our readers, is 33. Buses are almost half: 15, and private trucks and cars are 18."

*-Jokamiehen ja joka naisen viikkolehti, 9.10.1907*

"When elsewhere in the world laws are passed to prohibit smoking by underage children, Australia is talking about smoking rooms for boys to be used during recess."

*-Mikkelin Sanomat, 17.11.1904*

"A good medicine against the worms (tape worm?) is gasoline!! It has been very popular in Rantasalmi, where immediate results have been reported. It is very toxic to the intestines, and requires a visit to the doctor, but a death is avoided!!"

*-Mikkeli, 4.3.1903*

"A woman always needs to speak at low voice. She can never let it rise above a certain level. A woman with a high voice is terrible."

*-Jokamiehen ja joka naisen viikkolehti, 23.9.1907*

"There is an energetic 140 year woman living in Baku (Russia). She lives on milk and potatoes, has never used strong drinks, and can read without glasses."

*-Waasan Lehti, 28.7.1888*

"A 'Blood wedding' took place at Ilmajoki. One was stabbed with a knife, another was shot, and the third was beaten with a big pole. Nobody died."

*-Mikkelin Sanomat, 25.8.1908*

"In a thousand years, big and very fast airships will be used to transport cargo. Every human being will be given their own airplane, which will never break down and people can play and race with clouds and wind."

*-Paivalehti, 11.5.1904*

**Collected and Translated**  
**By Iiro Tainio**

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## The Big Bang of Viipuri

According to a folk story, there was a big explosion that happened on the 30th of November 1495 to stop the attack of the Russian army, which was going to conquer the city of Viipuri.

The defense of Viipuri was in the hands of Knut Posse, who had supplied his defense team with some powerful explosive material. This caused the fleeing of the Russian forces. They saw a light phenomenon in the sky which reminded them of the Cross of St. Andrew (like a big X).



This is a typical middle age legend, which is referred to in many battlefields in different parts of Europe at that time.

It is known that Russian troops arrived in Viipuri in the fall at the end of the year 1495. They started to surround Viipuri's walls and the Castle. On the Finnish side there were only some two thousand soldiers and more were being recruited among the farmers.

The first attacks were repelled, but at the end of November the Russians were attacking with full force trying to invade the city with ladders against the wall. After that, something happened and Russian forces began to withdraw. Black powder was known then and many various weapons were available on both sides.

According to one legend, the Commander of the Castle, Knut Posse, placed powder or tar and other flammable material in big barrels under one



tower of the castle and blew it up into the air. After the explosion the Russians did not know what had happened and they got frightened by the massive light phenomenon in the sky. This was considered to be St. Andrew's cross.



The religious holiday of St. Andrew's Day fell on the last day of November and, according to legend, the sight of the cross in the sky was seen as a sign that St. Andrew was protecting the city and that made the Russians decide to flee from the area.

The Finnish national epic, *Kalevala*, and others have stories of this event as well.

**By Tapio Holma**  
**Adapted from the History of Finland**

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## Olavinlinna Castle

Olavinlinna (Swedish: *Olofsborg*; literally Olaf's Castle) is a 15th-century three-tower castle located in the city of Savonlinna Finland. It is the northernmost medieval stone fortress in Finland still standing.

The castle is built on an island in the Kyrönsalmi strait that connects the lakes Haukivesi and Pihlajavesi. The fortress was founded by Erik Axelsson Tott in 1475 under the name Sankt Olofsborg in an effort to profit from the political turmoil following Ivan III's conquest of the Novgorod Republic. It was sited in Savonia so as to lay claim to the Russian side of the border established by the Treaty of Nöteborg.



It was the first Swedish castle provided with a set of thickset circular towers that could withstand cannon fire. It is not by accident that a network of lakes and waterways forms the setting for the castle, for these would seriously impede a prospective Russian attack.

The three-towered keep was completed 1485, and the construction of the outer curtain walls with two towers was initiated immediately. They were completed 1495. The castle is roughly a truncated rhomboid with keep on the western side of the island and the curtain walls and outer bailey to east. One of the towers of the keep, St. Erik's Tower, had a bad foundation and has since collapsed.



One of the towers, the Thick Tower, exploded in the 18th century. A bastion has been built in its place.

### Military History

Olofsborg withstood several sieges by the Russians during the First and Second Russian-Swedish wars. A brisk trade developed under the umbrella of the castle towards the end of the 16th century, giving birth to the town of Savonlinna, which was chartered in 1639.

### Olavinlinna Today

The castle hosts several small exhibitions, including the Castle Museum which displays artifacts found in the castle or related to it, and the Orthodox Museum which displays icons and other religious artifacts both from Finland and Russia. The castle forms a spectacular stage for the Savonlinna Opera Festival, held annually in the summer since 1912.

**Modified from Wikipedia by Kaj Rekola**

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# Finlandia Foundation

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## Upcoming Events

**December 7th, 2019** - Ice-Skating/Ice-Hockey Party: 2:45-3:45pm, Bellingham Sportsplex, 1225 Civic Field Way, Bellingham WA.

The ice will be split in half between Skaters and Hockey Players. Skate Rental, Ice Time and Pizza is free thanks to a Finlandia Foundation Grant. This is a private, but somewhat public event. Bring your grandkids plus their friends, neighbors, co-workers etc... Santa Claus just might be there, too! Please RSVP to [ffsuomi@gmail.com](mailto:ffsuomi@gmail.com) for the pizza order.

**December 8th, 2019** - Independence Day Brunch and Annual Meeting: 1:00-3:30pm, Anthony's in Bellingham, 25 Bellwether Way.

Please be prepared to pay Chet Cory for your meal by check or cash, and Chet will pay Anthony's with one check. Please RSVP [ffsuomi@gmail.com](mailto:ffsuomi@gmail.com).

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## 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.

Alternatively, you can send a check payable to FF Suomi Chapter to the PO Box listed above left.