



FINLANDIA FOUNDATION
SUOMI CHAPTER

Finnovations

Promoting Finnish Heritage From The Evergreen State to the Golden State

Vol. VII - No. 4

President's Corner

Dear Members,

It's October and fall, my favorite time of the year when nature is preparing to sleep, showing off so many beautiful colors and we are getting ready for the holidays and ending 2017 – what a year!!!

This is our final newsletter for this centennial year. It has been busy, productive and exciting in many ways. I want to thank all of you for your contributions to our organization, your continued support of the foundation and your commitment to our goals.

Seattle, Ferndale, Bellingham, Vancouver, Berkeley, San Francisco and Los Angeles hosted major events this year including a visit from and performances by the Singing Fellows of Viipuri. These concerts gave the all male choir from Finland an opportunity to tour the five cities of the west coast, ending their visit at a reception at the consulate general's home in Los Angeles. Their concert was planned in the spirit of the Centennial and at the same time to commemorate their own 120th Anniversary of the establishment of the choir in Viipuri 1897. More on this elsewhere in our newsletter.

Many of you visited Finland this year and wrote articles for our newsletter. It is always wonderful to hear of your adventures, connecting with family and your feelings about your trip. Tapio and I were fortunate to have our children and granddaughter visit this summer for five weeks. As it was cold and rainy in Finland, our kids loved the Bellingham heat as they sunbathed daily on our deck alternating between the sun, shopping, swimming and enjoying our Finnish sauna. Not to mention the many, many, many Finnish meals they enjoyed.

As members you are always invited to attend board meetings. Just let us know in advance in case we have some business for board only. We have nine board members now and are off to a great start. Each member brings something unique and special to help further our foundation goals. We are also reaching out to our friends in the

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Nordic communities as well.

The Nordic Heritage Museum has invited our chapter members to a reception for the Finnish Ambassador to the United States, Kirsti Kauppi, and Consul General of Finland, Stefan Lindstrom. This wonderful event will be held on Friday, November 3rd at 5 p.m. at the Nordic Heritage Museum 3014 NW 67th Street, Seattle, WA. As many of you know Tapio is on the board of trustee for the museum and represents Finland.

Meanwhile please enjoy the rest of our beautiful fall colors and we'll see you later at our Centennial Reception.

Kiitos!



Brend



© Philippe Clement / naturepl.com

From the Editor's Desk

Finland's Centennial is to end later this December. Main events in many cities around the world will take place on the 6th of December, Finland's Independence Day.

According to the Finnish Government, some 4,500 various projects were planned for this Centennial and some 25,000 individual events will take place before the end of the year to celebrate. Our major event for this year was the visit of the Singing Fellows of Viipuri, which toured the five cities of the west coast this past fall.

Our own Celebration of the 100th Birthday of Finland will be held at the Encore Room of Mt. Baker Theatre on Sunday, December 3rd between 4:00 and 8:00 pm. We hope many of you can participate in our Centennial Anniversary Celebration. You will receive the invitations soon.

In our next issue in January our board will announce the program for our 2018 events.

Also, I am always looking for interesting articles from our readers and members, especially those which reflect the Finnish culture, heritage and language.

Kiitos!

Tapio

Joy, Dignity and Karaoke to Ring in Finland's 100th Independence Day

Finland's government has announced its plans for events to celebrate the country's 100th Independence Day on December 6th this year. Official descriptions of the plans indicate that they will be filled with joy, dignity — and karaoke.

Finland's centenary celebrations and campaigns have gone on all year, but they are set to culminate around the country's hundredth Independence Day on December 6th. The government published detailed plans of the festivities, with events planned featuring flag-waving, war memorials, ice hockey and even karaoke.

The whole of Finland's birthday week features an array of memorial events leading up to the big day. Among the most impressive is a series of light installations, collectively called "Luminous," which will illuminate various Finnish landmarks. The project began on New Year's Eve 2016 with the lighting of Töölönlahti Bay in Helsinki.

While Luminous is a nod to Finland's seasonal flux of sunlight (from the sun not rising at all in the far north in winter to barely setting in Midsummer), another collective campaign highlights one of Finland's favorite pastimes: singing karaoke.

Belting out a familiar tune will take on a whole new gravity on December 5th, when "all karaoke bars in Finland are invited to take up the challenge and participate in an event to join in singing well-known, Finnish hit songs celebrating Finland." Karaoke pre-parties will start at 9 pm nationwide.

YLE News



Thoughts On My Trip to Finland (Sept. 6 – 16)

First of all, I am half-Finnish. My mother was born in Michigan of Finnish-American parents. She clung to being Finnish as part of her identity, and that became part of my identity as well.

Going to Finland reinforced that concept. I feel truly connected to Finland; before going it was abstract, being names on a family tree. I adore the cousins I met for the first time. We are five generations from the ancestors who came to America and the ones who stayed. They welcomed me into the family with open arms and hearts.

The trip was an appetizer for future courses. It was too brief, too limited in its time and opportunity. I stayed with one cousin and his wife in Vantaa, close to the Helsinki airport. Markku and Anne took us to downtown Helsinki, first to a magnificent, opulent Russian church (Finland became independent of Russia 100 years ago). Filled with gold leaf and stained glass, soaring to the sky. Then to the main government building. I was struck by architecture: old buildings with ornate trim next to new, shiny buildings and American establishments like Burger King and Hard Rock Cafe. Pizza is popular.

We took a train to Rovaniemi, the largest city of Lapland. Prior to taking the train to Rovaniemi we had a layover in Oulu, where we ate lunch. I wish we could've come later as the Irish Festival of Oulu would be there Oct. 4-8. There would be some Irish bands, Altan for one and a number of Finnish groups playing Irish music. Maybe next year?



The Arktikum Museum, Rovaniemi

Rovaniemi's museum of Lapland nature and Saami life and culture, the Arktikum, is a show stopper. If you go to only one museum, this should probably be the one. Historical photographs, models, a Northern Lights viewing room where you lie on your back and look at a projection of the lights through the tops of trees. I could have stayed there forever. It was cloudy that night so we couldn't see a real aurora borealis. Drats!

A short flight back to Helsinki the next day we stayed in the middle of the city near the esplanade. There were lots of potted flowers decorating the city, geraniums, calla lilies, hydrangea among others. These are not hardy. I wonder what fills the pots in winter.

A few conversations of note, other than those with cousins. A Somali taxi cab driver who came to Helsinki as a teenager said it was difficult at first, but he felt secure now. There are about 10,000 Somali in Helsinki. Finnish is much harder than English to learn, he said. He railed against the idea that if a Muslim commits an act of terrorism, then people think that all Muslims are suspect. His opinion of Mr. Trump was low, and there was fear of his foreign policies. Another taxi cab driver in Rovaniemi said he didn't care for Mr. Trump, but also thought that as we had elected him, he deserved respect. A conversation with a German baker at the hostel: We talked about "real" bread; Angela Merkel, whom he said is called "Angie;" and, again, Mr. Trump. And, again, negatively.

Traveling on the roads was not too different than our country roads here in Whatcom County: lots of trees, dominated by birch and mountain ash, some pines and other conifers.

Home now, and looking at a colorful coffee table book of nature photographs that Maiju and her siblings gave me and at the postcards I bought that caught my eye. I realize that I missed a lot of Finland that would resonate. It is the forests, the lakes, the skies, the birds, the outdoor ambience that is deeply Finnish that I didn't get to immerse myself in. Next time.

By Mary Penttinen-King

Finland Has Figured Out How to Combat Fake News

The meaning of "fake news" has become polluted since the term became Donald Trump's preferred way of describing any piece of information that paints him in an unfavorable light. So here's a refresher: Just a year ago, "fake news" was what we called the spread of intentionally false, sensational stories on social media. This played out most infamously during the 2016 presidential election, as groups with connections to the Russian government used misinformation on Facebook, Google, and Twitter to try to sway American voters.

But "fake news" and Russian influencers aren't a uniquely American problem, so Amy Hoggart from the TBS show *Full Frontal* traveled to Finland to talk to Director of Communications Markku Mantila about how the country is fighting back.

Oddly enough, the Finnish government hired American consultants to help them combat fake

news, including Adam Berinsky of MIT's Department of Political Science. While Berinsky insists that his advice is not a cure—at best he says he can advise governments "how not to make things worse"—he did train Finnish officials to stop the spread of fake news. One strategy is to avoid repeating false claims, even when denying their veracity, because it could spread those lies even further.

Now Finland is actively combating fake news by educating the public and politicians, even teaching students how to read news critically in schools. Finland's president also spoke out, encouraging citizens to be skeptical about information found online. "So step one for America is: Get a new president," noted Hoggart. She later asked Mantila, "Do you think you're better than us?"

He replied, without even a moment's hesitation: "Yes."

By Marissa Martinelli, Slate.com

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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 \$ _____

Telephone/Email _____

Grant & Scholarship \$ _____

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

Music Knows No Borders: The Finland Centennial Jubilee West Coast Concert Tour

VIIPURIN LAULUVEIKOT. The Singing Fellows of Viipuri toured the North American west coast in late August and early September in celebration of Finland's centennial and independence from Russia. The audience at each venue enjoyed a variety of songs by Finnish composers, such as Sibelius, Madetoja and Kuula plus many American gospel and jazz melodies. After *Finlandia* the standing audience still demanded *Porilaisten Marssi* and other songs in encore.

The Singing Fellows of Viipuri Viipurin Laulaveikot choir performed in many different cities: Seattle, Bellingham, Ferndale, Vancouver, BC, Berkeley, San Francisco and Los Angeles.



The first concert was in Seattle on August 27th at the University Unitarian Church. The choir members enjoyed outings to Pike's Place Market, the space needle and museums. In Bellingham on August 28th the choir enjoyed lunch at Anthony's Hearthfire Grill and Giuseppe's with members of our board lunching with them. The evening program at the United Church of Ferndale with more than 250 in attendance was met with rave reviews. Following the performance a reception was held in the church featuring traditional Finnish foods along with a rhubarb drink and cookies provided by the ladies of the church.

While in Vancouver, BC the choir performed at the Michael J. Fox Theatre in Burnaby and enjoyed Stanley Park, Granville Island and museums.

Upon returning to the US the choir stopped in Bellingham and enjoyed lunch in the beer garden of Boundary Bay Brewery and Bistro. Next stop was San Francisco/ Bay Area what a treat!



Prior to the concert the choir enjoyed visiting China Town, Muir Woods, the cable cars, Buena Vista (home of the Irish coffee) and the Golden Gate Bridge. Going north after crossing the Golden Gate Bridge, the choir headed to wine country. In Napa the choir had a chance to wake up the early spirit of Inglenook Winery founder, Gustave Niebaum, who was a Finnish sea captain from Helsinki, Finland (the winery is now owned by Francis Coppola).

From Napa the choir went to the Sonoma wine country visiting the historic Sonoma Square where the Republic of California was established on June 14, 1846. Returning from the wine country the choir performed at Finn Hall in Berkeley and was well received. From San Francisco the choir headed south stopping on the way at Half Moon Bay, visiting the Monterey Bay Aquarium, and Hearst Castle in San Simeon. They were impressed with the beautiful coast of California and its surroundings.

Arriving in LaLa Land (Los Angeles), after their performance at Herbert Zipper Hall, the choir received a Proclamation from Mayor Eric Garcetti as a welcome to Los Angeles. On the last leg of their tour the choir visited Hollywood, Universal Studios and Disney Music Hall where performed impromptu for the locals. On their last evening a

reception was held at the Counselor General's residence and of course the choir provided beautiful songs throughout the evening. The baton of the choir was transferred from Music Director Urpo Rauhala to a new generation maestro Ilkka Aunum, who will continue Emeritus Rauhala's work for years to come.

This amazing tour was sponsored by Finlandia Foundation's West Coast Chapters. Thank you for your support and involvement in the planning, coordination and working with Finlandia Foundation Suomi Chapter!

By Tapio Holma



A Granddaughter's Journey

My grandmother, Laura Helena Hietikko was born in Ylistaro, Finland in Southern Ostrobothnia in 1887. In 1905 at the age of 18 she joined her brother and sister in America, later followed by 2 other siblings. She left behind her parents, 2 sisters and her homeland, never to see them again.

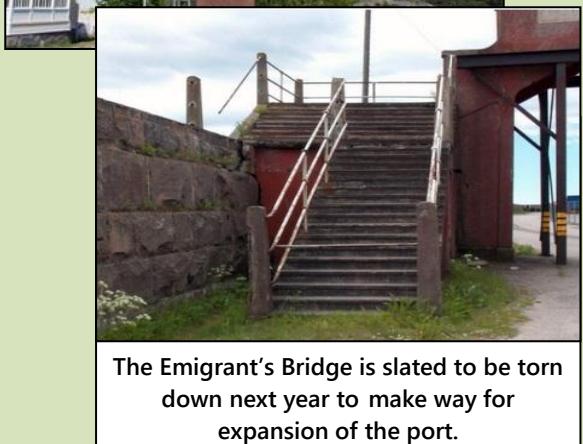


This painting was done in the 60's by Paavo Ellilo.
This is where my grandmother grew up. It has
since been torn down.

She immigrated through Ellis Island, lived in the Boston area as well as Montana, and eventually settled on the west coast in Aberdeen, WA. She married and had one daughter, my mother. Growing up with my grandmother, I always wondered about the "old country", as she called it, and what it was like where she came from. For many years I dreamed of visiting Finland. This past June, I finally made the journey.

I was fortunate to find a wonderful tour guide in Ylistaro, Airi, whom I can never repay or thank enough. She was able to provide me with church records and links to my past of which I was not aware. I visited the graves of my ancestors and met some cousins still living in Ylistaro. I was given some old family photos and treated to some delicious traditional Finnish foods.

(continued on page 8)



The Emigrant's Bridge is slated to be torn down next year to make way for expansion of the port.

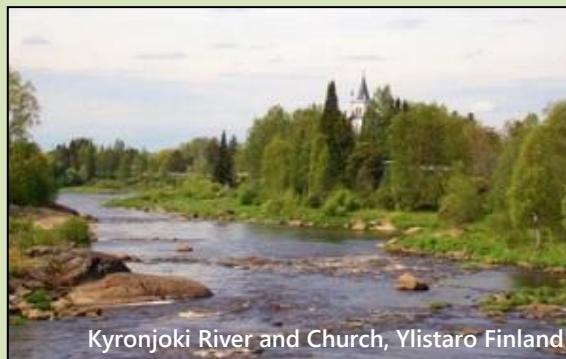
A Granddaughter's Journey (continued)

I then followed my grandmother's route down the west coast of Finland to Hanko where she boarded the steamship *Polaris* to Hull, then the *Caronia* from Liverpool to New York.



My journey was a dream come true and more than I could have ever imagined. The people of Finland were kind and generous. The country was beautiful. And I can't wait to return. Kiitos Finland.

By Stella Hardan



Finland's "First Family" Is Expecting

Finland's 69-year old president, Sauli Niinisto, and his 40-year-old wife Jenni Haukio are expecting a baby, the president's office said on Monday.

"We have been hoping for a child for a long time and have experienced many difficulties over those years. There have therefore been delicate issues related to the early days of the pregnancy, but we are able to share the news now," the couple said in a statement.



Niinisto's office said the baby is due in February 2018, around the same time that he will run for re-election to another six-year term. Polls indicate he is the clear frontrunner.

The couple was married in 2009. The child is Haukio's first and Niinisto's third.

By Tuomas Forsell, Reuters.com

Finland Celebrates Nature With a Commemorative Centenary Coin

The second commemorative two-euro coin of Finland's centenary was launched on 21 October 2017. The special coin pays tribute to Finland's nature and is a part of the Finland 100 program celebrating the centenary of Finland's independence. Like the silver Finnish Nature collector coin, the special coin will also take its design from the winning shot in the Blue and White special category of the Nature Photograph of the Year competition.

The winning photograph was shot by nature photographer Kari Auvinen. To the left you can see Auvinen's winning photograph next to the final coin design.

Viipuri Library: The First of Alvar Aalto's Many Library Designs

Alvar Aalto (1898-1976) was a Finnish architect of worldwide fame, and probably one of the best known Finns ever. Among his first famous works was the Viipuri Library. Aalto received the commission to design the library after winning first prize (with his proposal titled 'WWW') in an architectural competition for the building held in 1927.



Built from 1927 to 1935, it one of the major examples of 1920s functionalist architectural design. The library is considered one of the first manifestations of "regional modernism". It is particularly famous for its wave-shaped ceiling in the auditorium, the shape of which, Aalto argued, was based on acoustic studies.

Architectural solutions such as a sunken reading-well, free-flowing ceilings and cylindrical skylights, first tested in Viipuri, would regularly appear in Aalto's works. Wood was first introduced into an otherwise modernist setting of concrete, white stucco, glass, and steel.

World War II marked a turning point in the history not only of the library but the city of Viipuri itself, as it was ceded to the Soviet Union. Viipuri became Vyborg, the library was renamed Nadezhda Krupskaya Municipal Library, after Vladimir Ilyich Lenin's wife. The building was damaged during World War II, and remained empty for decades and fell into catastrophic disrepair.

Despite many failed attempts to restore the architectural treasure, it was finally finished in

2013. Today, the library is officially known as the Vyborg Central City Alvar Aalto Library. The final cost was around 9 million Euros, financed by Finnish and international foundations, and also by the Russian government.

Tarja Halonen, the former president of Finland, successful negotiated with then Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. It resulted in a 6.5 Million Euro grant to support the completion of the restoration.

In 2014, the restoration committee and the library received the World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize for the restoration work. In 2015 it also received the Europa Nostra Award, the jury calling the restoration "exceptionally well-researched and highly sensitive" and commending the project's transnational collaboration.

By Kaj Rekola, Adapted from Wikipedia



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Siikalahti Nature Preserve

Siikalahti (Whitefish Bay) is the best inland birding place in Finland. It is located at the halfway point between Imatra and Savonlinna, right along the Russian border. It is part of Lake Simpele, which is a big, fairly deep body of water in my hometown (since June 1950), Parikkala. The Lake has 100 named islands and one is *Nimetön* (Nameless). The town's motto says "Parikkalan piika ja Simpeleen siika, ne voille vertoja vetaa," "Parikkala's maiden and Simpele's whitefish is equal to butter."

To take advantage of the lake's fertile shores, a dam and pumping stations were built in the mid 40's to lower the water level by several feet.

Today the Nature Preserve is mostly overgrown by reeds and other water plants. Fairly small open waters are only a few feet deep. This makes an excellent waterfowl habitat.

I grew up (4 to 23 years old) fishing this Lake. From my home I could see Kukkaronlahti (Purse or Wallet Bay) just two miles

away. More than half of it was on the Russian side. For about 50 years I had nightmares about a Russian invasion across the Bay and the fields.

During my teen years, Siikalahti was by far the best duck hunting place. Hunters came from 100 miles away to shoot water fowl. About 30 years ago the Nature Preserve was established and it became part of World Wildlife Federation preserves. Today it is a very popular tourist attraction with great observation spots.

Fast forward to Summer of 2017. I spent almost 3 months in my hometown with my two sons: the younger one (33) from Washington State and my older (38) from Beijing, China.

I bought my grand parents' house from my brother's estate for them and fixed it up as a home base in Finland. They are the fourth generation. I have been living in Washington State for over 48 years. The preserve was only two miles from our house. It was just a short bicycle ride to enjoy the tranquility and wildlife.

One night my younger son camped at one of the towers and saw a female moose with a calf munching on the succulent water plants. Another evening we met a young couple from France and many from Helsinki (200 miles away). The trail from the parking lot is more than one mile long. walk connects to an island with two observation



towers and a "board tunnel" with windows to see birds up close in their natural habitat. About 250 species of birds have been recorded in the preserve. It is a major resting and feeding area in the spring and fall. We have seen, in the

past: swans, geese, bald eagles, osprey, hawks and numerous song birds. We have also seen several nightingales (*satakieli* means "100 tongues" in Finnish) singing in willow groves. Over 20 species of dragonflies and over 900 species of butterflies have also been identified there. Many rare plants are found there, too. When I lived (50-60 years ago) a few miles from Siikalahti, I saw an extremely rare bittern (stork) a few times.

Another familiar structure on the other side of the Bay was a Russian observation tower. We have been looking at each other many times through binoculars across the border!!

By Asko Hamalainen

Three Lessons From Finland's Educational System

"We prepare children to learn how to learn, not how to take a test," "We know much more about the children than tests can tell us."

Finland began the reform of its education system some 40 years ago. Today, Finland's school system is top-ranked among developed nations, as measured by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), an international standardized test for 15-year-olds in language, math and science. The most interesting aspect of their education system is that Finland achieved its success by breaking what are considered the customary rules of education.

Finnish children do not begin school until the age of seven, when they are developmentally ready to learn, and schooling is compulsory for just nine years. School days are shorter and classes are fewer. Homework is minimal. There are no mandated standardized tests. There are no rankings, comparisons or competition between students, schools or regions.

Yet 93% of Finns graduate from academic or vocational high schools, this is 17% higher than in the US. Sixty-six percent go on to higher education, the highest rate in the European Union. And Finland spends about 30% less per student than the US.

What can other countries learn from Finland's achievement? Here are three lessons.

1. Let children play. Students in Finland only have three to four classes a day. They also have several breaks and recesses during the day, which usually are held outside whatever the weather, even in winter. These 15 to 20-minute breaks allow children time to digest what they are learning, to play and exercise in the fresh air. Studies have shown that children need to let out the "wiggles," and to be physically active in order to learn. Children who sit too much lose their focus, leading to so-called "hyper" kids. Less time in the classroom also benefits teachers, who use it to think, plan and create lessons.

2. Give teachers some respect. Primary school teacher is one of the most sought-after positions

and competitive degrees in Finland. Teaching programs accept just 10% of applicants and turn down thousands of students annually. The best and brightest candidates have to pass a series of interviews and personality screenings, designed to determine their natural ability and drive to teach. In addition to top grades and a natural disposition toward teaching, all teachers must earn a Master's degree. The requirement for an advanced degree essentially confers upon Finnish teachers the same status as a doctor or lawyer.

Because only students with a gift for teaching are accepted into university programs, and teachers are so well-qualified and well-trained, they are highly respected and trusted by parents. Parents have confidence teachers will do what is in the best interest of the children. Teachers in turn are free to innovate, unfettered by bureaucracy or excessive regulation.

3. Provide as much individual attention as possible. Classes are smaller in Finland. In elementary school, students often have the same teacher for up to six years of their education. Teachers get to know their students, their individual needs and learning styles. Weaker students are caught early and given extra assistance. The Finnish system overall stresses warmth, collaboration, encouragement and assessment, with teachers doing whatever it takes to help students, rather than stress and control.

The school system in Finland can be summed up in the words of a teacher, as quoted in *Smithsonian* magazine. "We prepare children to learn how to learn, not how to take a test," he says. "We know much more about the children than tests can tell us."

The Finnish outlook not only highlights the importance and possibility of spending less and still receiving a quality education, it provides a model that every country should learn to emulate.

Original Article By Zandre Campos
Researched and Reported by Brend Hunt-Holma



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It's That Time of the Year!



FFSC offers products to its members and readers.

The current items include Suomi Centennial Ski Caps (\$18), FFSC and Finland Centennial Baseball Caps (\$25), Centennial Knives (\$160), and much more. All would make for very special Christmas presents. Pick up a few and remember the Centennial for years and years to come!

