

A vibrant field of pink tulips with a single yellow tulip in the center. The flowers are in full bloom, and the background is a soft-focus green. A semi-transparent grey box is overlaid on the bottom half of the image, containing text.

**FINLANDIA FOUNDATION
SUOMI CHAPTER**

Finnovations

**PROMOTING FINNISH HERITAGE FROM THE EVERGREEN STATE
TO THE GOLDEN STATE**

Vol. IX - No. 1

President's Corner

My four-year-old grandson thinks I am president of Finland now.

Thanks to all of the voters at the December 2018 Anniversary dinner at Giuseppe's for trusting me to be the President of Finlandia Foundation, Suomi Chapter.

I grew up in Turku, Finland playing hockey for TPS Juniors and I got a chance to come and play hockey in Bellingham during the 1976-77 season for the Bellingham Blazers Junior "A" Team (16-20 yr olds). If you do your math correctly, I was born in the late fifties.

My billeting father, Ed Squire, said when I got here: "This is gonna be the best year of your life." He was right. I spent the whole school year at Sehome High as a senior, while also traveling around British Columbia with the Blazers.

I returned to Finland to finish my school and mandatory military duty (Medical Sergeant). I continued playing hockey in the top Finnish league for 8 years as a professional hockey player. During the last three years of my career I managed to become a Fire Fighter for the City of Turku while still playing hockey.

I also managed to marry an exceptional young lady right out of Western in 1980. Bobbi lived with me in Finland for 5 years. We were busy making children, Bobbi teaching English, and me with my hockey and fireman careers.

1985 we came here for a three month summer vacation and never went back. I have been working for the Ferndale Refinery (Mobil, BP, Tosco, Conoco and

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Cover Photo: It's tulip season! Both in Finland and here at home in the Pacific Northwest. Photo by Tapio Holma.

nowadays under P66 colors) for over 30 years.

I have been a board member of Finlandia Foundation, Suomi Chapter for a couple of years. However, I am suffering from being allergic to meetings and only joined the board because Tapio Holma said I don't have to do anything.

We have not had a board meeting yet because of my traveling schedule. I am a little bit excited about being the president, because I have to start paying much closer attention.

Our Chapter money situation needs immediate attention. We want to spend your membership money as smartly as possible. We want to update our membership lists and keep you informed of what's going on. We want to hear from you, because your ideas keep us going and focused. If you don't pay your membership dues, we have less money. We have to earn your membership.

We have a bunch of energy surrounding the idea of starting a "Speaking Finnish Group." It's exclusive because it's speaking Finnish only. If you only know a few Finnish words, you can just sit in the corner and listen for them. You might learn a few new words, but this not a teaching Finnish class. If you want to learn Finnish, let us know and we'll find somebody to teach it.

You are now reading an old fashioned newsletter. Putting this together takes a lot work. Tapio Holma does it all. Send him a story and he'll be forever grateful.

Let's keep in touch.

My Best,

Pasi Virta



Mr. President enjoying some Black Sausage in Tampere, Finland.

Finnish Election: 2019

On April 14 voters will choose a new parliament and government in Finland, with 200 MPs to be elected. See page 7 to learn a new, easy way to cast your vote from abroad!

A really simple guide to the main parties:

The Centre Party is a centrist party that enjoys strong voter support in the countryside. It has liberal and traditionalist wings.

The centre-right National Coalition is an economically liberal party that is popular in cities and among higher-income groups.

The Finns Party is a right-wing populist party that is opposed to immigration and the EU.

The Social Democratic Party is a centre-left party with strong links to Finland's trade unions.

The Blue Reform split from the Finns Party after a hardliner took over as party chair in June 2017. The coalition partners objected and kicked the Finns Party out of government, but eventually accepted the Blue Reform ministers and MPs who broke with the Finns Party back into the coalition.

The Green Party is an environment-focused party founded in the 1970s with a growing supporter base among young, urban voters.

The Left Alliance is a left-wing group with roots in the Communist party and strong links to the labour movement.

The Swedish People's Party is a liberal party advocating for Finland's Swedish-speaking minority.

The Christian Democrat Party is a small, socially conservative party with links to Christian religious groups.

The Silent People

Almost one thousand peat-headed figures stand in complete silence at the edge of the forest. Stormy wind is blowing far from the Arctic Ocean, fluttering the golden hay hair of these soulless characters. The wooden bodies are covered with different kinds of winter gear, and the arms of the coats are wobbling rhythmically with the gust. When the summer comes, this mute crowd will transform their clothing into something lighter.

The Silent People were first installed in 1988 by the artist Reijo Kela. I can remember those strange and slightly frightening figures from my early childhood. Next time these peat heads saw the daylight was in 1994, when they debuted at the Senate Square, Helsinki. 700 silent people's representatives were erected on the steps of the Cathedral of Helsinki during the night's dark hours, so you can imagine what kind of attention and publicity they received when the sun rose! After two days in Helsinki, the "hay

heads" were secretly removed from the church stairs and brought back to their home in Suomussalmi, where they have stood expressionless for more than 20 years now.

I have often wondered what on earth the Silent People represent. Staid Kainuu people? Forgotten souls? Their creator, Reijo Kela, will not give the answer. Each viewer will have to draw their own conclusions. One thing you might be interested in knowing is that if the Silent People's peat-heads and clothing were completely taken away, one thousand wooden crosses would remain standing on a lonely field.

The field with its mute inhabitants is impossible to miss, even though it appears to the passer-by out of nowhere, 30 kilometers north from Suomussalmi. Silent People is a must-see place to have a pit stop if you are on your way to the magical *Hossa National Park*.

*-Adapted from an article on
Fallintofinland.com*



Photos from Fallintofinland.com (left) & Tapio Holma (right).

A Tragic Mistake:

Russian Afterthoughts on the Miscarried Invasion of Finland

My next-door neighbor covers northern Europe and the Benelux countries for Russian TV and radio. One morning when we met in our yards, he mentioned that he was driving with his cameraman later in the day up north to Suomussalmi, scene of one of the Finnish Army's most spectacular victories in the Winter War of 1939-40.

"Our ambassador is dedicating a memorial to the Red Army soldiers who fell in that battle," my neighbor said. The Finnish count of the enemy dead was 23,000. "Our own count," he told me "is 27,000." Less than 900 Finns are reported to have been killed in the battle, which lasted from the first week in December until the turn of the year. In addition, some 300 Finns were wounded or reported missing.

The Finnish commander, Colonel Hjalmar Siilasvuo, had at his disposal, after the late arrival of reinforcements, only one short division. Though greatly outnumbered and lightly armed, the highly mobile Finnish troops, many of them on skis, surrounded the 163rd Red Army Division, after five days and nights of heavy fighting, and pinned down the elite 44th Motorized Blue Division from Moscow.

The total strength of the Soviet forces that fought at Suomussalmi came, according to my neighbor's count, to 40,000 men (some sources say 48,000) – the two divisions named, numbering 15,000 each, plus a couple of auxiliary regiments and special supporting troops.

Stalin's aim was to cut Finland in two at its narrowest point and break the land connection with Sweden.

Little resistance had apparently been expected. The shattering effectiveness of the Finns' defense must have given the Soviet leaders nightmares. The Soviet Invasion of Finland was "a tragic mistake," Ambassador Yuri Deriabin confessed in his speech at the unveiling ceremony on the Suomussalmi battlefield.

Some 3,000 Red Army officers and men managed to escape over the border back to their own side. Among them was General Vinogradov, commander of the 44th Division, who seems to have made his escape with some officers in a small airplane. The commander of the other division, General Zelentsov, is believed to have fallen. But my neighbor says his body was never identified. (Could he have miraculously escaped too and, fearing to face a court martial, made himself scarce?)

Stalin promptly ordered Vinogradov to be executed. But, my neighbor says, "there's no record of the execution having been carried out – so what actually happened to the general remains a mystery."



Soviet General Alexei Vinogradov.

(continued on next page)

Mistake (continued)

By bizarre chance, the very next day after this discussion, I received a phone call from a friend of mine, Professor Leo Vuosalo, of Berkeley, California, to whom I mentioned what I had heard from my neighbor.

“As it happens”, Vuosalo said, “I know a Ukrainian scholar, now living in California, who fought in the Red Army 44th Division at Suomussalmi. He was one of the few who escaped in one piece. And he says one of his buddies was on hand when a firing squad shot Vinogradov and his officers.”

I passed this intelligence on to my neighbor, who exclaimed: “I must inform my embassy of this.”

As a cub reporter for the Associated Press (AP), I was a member of a press party taken at year’s end 1939 to the Suomussalmi battlefield. It was a ghastly spectacle. The Raate road, along which the invading troops had spearheaded their attack, was a tangled mess of broken wagons, tanks and other armored vehicles, guns and horses and men frozen stiff like statues in grotesque postures.



Part of the destroyed Soviet column at Raate Road.

One item that caught my eye in special was a huge flag with a map of Finland and Scandinavia.

A spear symbolizing the Red Army ran through the whole of Fennoscandia all the way to the Atlantic coast of Norway. Could that have been the ultimate objective of the invading divisions?

I was lagging some distance behind the press party when I spied a heap of frozen bodies in the field. One was dressed in a striking fancy uniform – he must have been a high officer – and resting on his chest was an expensive-looking leather case. My curiosity aroused. I walked over to the body.

To get close, I had to duck under a rope stretched across the field. As I reached to pick up the leather case for examination, a loud voice from the road yelled out: “Don’t touch it!” I was later told the case was believed to be a booby trap, which would have blown me to Kingdom Come had I picked it up.

I was then motioned by a guide to join the rest of the party. As I walked toward them standing on the other side of the roped-off area, I sensed that they were all holding their breath in suppressed excitement. The spell was not broken until I ducked under the rope again on the far side. There was an audible collective sigh of relief.

It was then that I learned I had walked across a minefield.

-Paul Sjöblom

Adapted from Suomen Silta magazine 1993/4 issue.

Paul Sjöblom worked for almost sixty years as a journalist, translator, and critic. He wrote various articles with a reporter’s skillful hand about the wars between Finland and the Soviet Union. He was also a master in telling Finns about who they are, what’s in their culture and the meaning of SISU. He passed away in 1997.

Finland Makes It Easier for Finns Living Abroad to Cast Their Votes

Foreign Finns are very influential voters! There are over 250,000 non-resident voters registered.

There is no need to be a mathematician to notice that Finns living abroad are a significant influential force, who - when exercising their voting rights - have decided the election of many MPs.

In many respects, Finns living abroad are influential in Finland. They are a significant resource when it comes to promoting "Finnishness" or strengthening the country image.

The Board of Directors' Expatriate Program for 2017-2021 states truthfully: "A viable and functional network of expatriate Finns benefits in many ways from the Finnish economic, cultural and political life."

This is whether living abroad is permanent or just long-term. Community and networks work. There are no Finns living outside the country that can't be considered Finnish ambassadors.

The importance of returnees is also great when they bring a lot of knowledge and know-how from abroad back to Finland. It is hoped that the importance of expatriate Finns in their different dimensions is realized in domestic decision-making, so that words and declarations become the everyday life of expatriate Finns.



Regardless of where on the globe he or she lives, a Finnish citizen with voting rights can now vote for the first time in a national election by correspondence.

Voting abroad has been difficult in the past. It was the main reason that many Finns were not exercising the right to vote. Now, in the April parliamentary elections, Finns abroad can cast their vote by mail.

Pre-voting by letter requires a little bit of effort, as the voter who wants it must subscribe to the correspondence documents from Finland and have them sent to his or her foreign address. The form is available online from the Ministry of Justice at www.vaalit.fi/kirjeaanestys.

In times of change and instability, in the world of extremism and worthless deeds, strong messages are needed for democracy. One of these is the use of voting opportunities and influencing the direction in which the home country is headed.

ELECTION DAY: SUNDAY, APRIL 14TH

*-Kimmo Kajaste
Provincial Counselor Kimmo Kajaste is a
member of the Board and Executive
Committee of the Finnish Society and a
former editor-in-chief.
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Editor's Corner: A Brief History of Bellingham

Native Americans have lived in this area for thousands of years. The first "pale faces," Captain Henry Roeder and Russell Peabody, sailed in 1852 from San Francisco in search of timber. They landed at the mouth of Whatcom Creek (called noisy, rumbling waters by the Lummis).

The forests had huge old growth western cedars and Douglas firs, and the Falls turned waterwheels to run the sawmill. The small community grew slowly and experienced many problems typical for frontiers. Fires, fights, and lawsuits plagued less than 25 families.

Soon after arriving, Captain Roeder discovered coal deposits and shipped large amounts to Seattle and San Francisco. Parts of Bellingham sit over long mining tunnels. Another large coal mine operated north of Lake Whatcom. In 1895, the Blue Canyon mine explosion killed 23 workers in one of the worst industrial accidents in Washington history.

In the 1880's, steam power revolutionized logging and transportation. Now mills and railroads could be built away from water. Victoria, B.C., was largely built by Bellingham area lumber. Forestry has remained quite an important industry. Georgia Pacific Paper and Pulp operated a large and important plant for tens of years at the water front. Most of the huge buildings have been torn down, but a few have been saved for a new development, which is several years away.

We bought our house in Fairhaven about 25 years ago and our noses could tell

clearly the northern winds!! "Ahh, the smell of money!!"

Marauding Indian tribes from the B.C. threatened the new settlers. In 1856, Captain George E. Pickett, was sent by the Army to build a fort in Bellingham to protect miners and settlers. His house is still standing and is the oldest in the State.

The concrete bridge at the Post Office bears his name. He was famous (infamous?) for leading a disastrous confederate charge at Gettysburg.

In the 1800's, fishing became a major industry on the West Coast. Fairhaven operated the largest salmon cannery in the world and the buildings were the biggest in the State. If you walk on the Taylor Dock, you can see a large brown "rock" near the shoreline. Actually, it is a large amount of metal slag dumped from the can factory on land. In the first half of the 1900's, fishing and boat building industries were the largest employers in Bellingham. Today, most of the boats head north to Alaska.

Many immigrants worked in the fishing industry. Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino immigrants did the dirtiest and smelliest jobs at the canneries. They also slept in segregated bunkhouses and sometimes racist attitudes turned violent. In 1885, locals drove out the Chinese workers and then celebrated with torchlight parades. Almost all Asians and East Indians were forced out.

In 1903, four small towns decided to join together and incorporate into Bellingham City. That is one reason the streets meet at angles or change names suddenly.

The new city was ready to face the twentieth century.

Education was always important to the settlers. The first high school was built in Sehome in 1890. By far, the most groundbreaking school was the New Whatcom Normal School to educate teachers. Most of them were young women, who needed opportunities to work in higher paying jobs. After World War II, the college boomed, mainly due to the GI bill. It has been highly ranked Western Washington University since 1977.

In the early days, Fairhaven anticipated being the terminus for the Trans-Continental Railroad, but Seattle won that fight.

During that time, the economy was booming and many landmark projects and buildings were completed. Another factor for growth was to connect Seattle (90 miles) and Vancouver (55 miles) in the 50' by Interstate 5.

From the humble beginnings over 150 years ago, Bellingham has grown to be a vibrant, cultural city. Population today is over 85,000. It offers something for every one: recreation, travel, nature, and cultural events. Once a week, you can hop on Alaska Ferry, fly out from the International Airport, or motor a short distance to British Columbia.

-Tapio Holma



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 _____
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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

Meet Marja!

Born in Helsinki, Finland, I began piano studies at age three and made my public debut at age five. I studied music at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki and the Petersburg Conservatory in Russia. My teachers have included György Sebök, whose teaching I enjoyed during seven years in Switzerland, and Susan Starr, with whom I studied for several years when I moved to Philadelphia in 1987, where I've resided ever since.

An avid chamber musician, recitalist and orchestra soloist, I have performed extensively in the United States, most actively as the pianist of Trio Excelsior, and featured on numerous radio broadcasts and major motion pictures. My musical interests go far beyond performing and

teaching. I am the co-founder of the Philadelphia Foundation for World Music and Arts, an advocacy organization promoting the arts and social harmony. Music is the one thing that can show the beautiful and wonderful side of human existence, and therefore a culture cannot survive, let alone develop without the arts.

Currently I am developing a documentary and traveling to China to discover the reasons why the Chinese are showing such a huge interest in learning to play Western classical music. There are much deeper cultural and economic implications in this trend, so stay tuned to my blogs about the subject.

-Marja Kaisla

<https://marjakaisla.wordpress.com/>

Marja Kaisla Rendezvous

Some ten years ago we had a pleasure of listening to Marja Kaisla, the Finnish Concert Pianist from Philadelphia while she was visiting Bellingham.

The program consisted of "Rapsodie in Blue" and many more Nordic melodies. This time her visit to the Pacific Northwest includes includes concerts in Portland and Seattle, where she plays Beethoven's "Emperor Symphony" and many more spring melodies.

-Tapio Holma

Please see ads on next page and back cover for more information on where to see Marja perform this May!



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**Reminder for Election Day in
Finland:**

**"There is no such thing as not voting:
you either vote by voting, or you
vote by staying home and tactily
doubling the value of some diehard's
vote." - David Foster Wallace,
Novelist (1962-2008)**

Welcome New Finlandia Members!

Tom and Carol Kauppila
Evie Makela
Joe and Sharry Nyberg
Erik Pihl
Louise Pihl
Derek and Lindsay Salminen
Iiro and Kaaren Salminen
Jyrki and Nelly Salminen
Tiina Salminen and Steve Mork
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Melissa and Sam Stoner
Markus Virta
Mikael and Michelle Virta

**Thank you for your
support!**

An Evening of Chopin And Nordic Romantic Composers

Sunday May 19th 2019 at 7 PM at Nordia House,
8800 Oleson Rd, Portland, OR

Marja Kaisla, piano
Marya Kazmierski, violin
Elisa Määttänen Boynton, violin

Suggested donation at the door \$20
Refreshments available after concert
Organized by the Messiah Finnish
Lutheran Church

More information at 503-880-4880