



FINLANDIA FOUNDATION  
SUOMI CHAPTER

# *Finnovations*

PROMOTING FINNISH HERITAGE FROM THE EVERGREEN STATE  
TO THE GOLDEN STATE

Vol. VIII - No. 1

# President's Corner

Onnellista Uutta Vuotta!!!  
Happy New Year!!!

Members and Friends of Finland,

A year of celebrations is behind us. All over the world Finland's independence was celebrated in many different ways and recalled with pride and gratitude. Our celebration events began with Vappu, watching the Finnish film "Man Without A Past" with English subtitles. A well received large event was Viipurin Lauluveikot "The Singing Fellows of Viipuri" culminating in our fabulous gala dinner held at Lairmont Manor. Thank you all so very much for your hard work, support and participation in our chapter and centennial year. We ended the year with new members, an extended board and in the black financially. It took all of us to have such a successful year. I applaud you!!!!

2 "During the course of the year we recapped the past, kept looking towards the future and, above all, felt a genuine joy of our own Finnishness. The clear message of the centenary year was that Finland's course has been successful. The theme of the centennial year was 'Together': the secret of our success and key to our future." (1)

The words above were taken from the New Year speech by President Sauli Niinisto. He was just re-elected for another six year term with 60% of the votes. He is a member of the conservative party, Kokoomus. His words were inspirational and reflected so much of what we have been doing and continue to do and feel about our small organization that I included them into my message to you.

"And so in the early days of independence we were not 'together', but very badly apart. This cannot simply be swept away. We must have the courage to be honest about history, because only honesty creates a foundation for trust. A strong society is able to face up to painful things as well. We must try to reconcile the past." (2)

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Cover Photo: Finland's First Dog, Lennu, steals the scene. See more Lennu on Pg. 8.

"Nevertheless, the question of the diametrically opposing years remains. It took decades to gain full trust in democracy. Participatory patriotism was born; I, too, am part of this, together." (3)

"These stages teach us a clear lesson: there is diversity, people have different backgrounds, convictions and goals, we have a right to disagree. This is something we must be able to respect, however differently we ourselves might think." (4)

The words in the three paragraphs above seemed to appropriately reflect the challenges we face here in the United States. This message is not about politics but about reflecting on our past and where we are presently and thinking about who we are as a people and a nation. I have been challenged by my eight months as president, but I have also been deeply grateful to serve as your president and will continue full efforts to further the goals of this organization.

At the last board meeting we talked about goals. I would so appreciate it if you would send me goals which you would like us, as an organization to pursue. Some ideas perhaps introducing Juhannus to Bellingham and Whatcom County with entertainment, a bon fire, wife carrying race and great food at Boundary Bay in the tap room. Also need some of your thoughts about how to celebrate Vappu. Celebration of a Nordic evening

would be fun, inviting all of our Nordic neighbors.

During the speech by Kirsti Kauppi, Finnish Ambassador to the United States, she spoke in depth of women's contributions to the development of Finland and how the citizens stressed equality for all Finnish people. Finland is a progressive country supporting children and families from birth, providing free education all the way through college, has strong vocational training programs, and yes high taxes but these taxes pay for universal health care, free education, public transportation and a quality of life to be enjoyed by all. These sentiments were also spoken by Hon. Consul Kristiina Hiukka, our guest speaker for our centennial celebration.

We have much to look forward to this coming year. Let's all work together as we have in the past to make this a successful and dynamic year – "Together."

Hoping you have a prosperous and healthy 2018!!!



*Brend*

Note: Quoted text is from the article "New Year Speech" by President of the Republic Sauli Niinisto on 1 January 2018. (1), (2), (3), (4) Free for publication.

## New Winter War Monument Unveiled

The monument to the Winter War, *He Who Brings the Light* by artist Pekka Kauhanen, stands in Helsinki's Kasarmitori Square.

After many years of planning, fundraising and creative process, the unveiling of the monument to the Winter War was held at Kasarmitori Square in Helsinki on November 30, the 78<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the conflict with the Russians. The foundation stone was laid on March 13, 2015, the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war.



President of the Republic Sauli Niinistö, at the unveiling of the sculpture stated, "With its multiple holes, the memorial is still standing and pays homage to the heavy sacrifice of safeguarding independence: the more than 25,000 Finns who gave their lives for their country during the Winter War. The work reflects the single person as an agent of something much larger than one individual--- the future of a whole nation, which had to be redeemed with the highest of sacrifices."

## From the Editor's Desk

Finland's Centennial celebrations are now behind us. The year 2017 stays in memories with us here. The Singing Fellows of Viipuri, the all male choir from Helsinki, toured the West to celebrate their own 120 year anniversary. The tour reached all major cities from Vancouver to Los Angeles.

This year Finland celebrates its birth as a sovereign nation among others. Finland experienced the civil war right after its declaration for independence. The Bolshevik revolution in Russia made it impossible for Finland to continue as a part of new communist Soviet Union. Some folks (the Reds) wanted to continue as a part of newly formed Russia but the majority (the Whites) demanded total independence and wanted to get Russian soldiers out of its territory. Most of them had left on their own, some joined the minority group and the civil war was a result.

The Whites won and even Russia eventually recognized Finland as an independent nation. When the "jaegers" (German word), or "jaakari" (in Finnish) returned to Vaasa after their four years of training in Germany, they suddenly found themselves in the middle of the new internal conflict. This February, Vaasa (Bellingham's sister city) is celebrating the return of the jaakarit in 1918. More on this later in the newsletter.

Today Finland continues as a free nation... and quoting our newly elected President Sauli Niinisto, the state of the nation is good. As a part of the EU it progresses as equal with others in Europe. In our present newsletter you will find articles and comments from our contributors, who as citizens of Finland can comment how privileged they are to be Finns.

*Tapio*

## Hello from Norway!

Norway is a Scandinavian country encompassing mountains, glaciers and deep coastal fjords. Oslo, the capital, is a city of green spaces and museums. Preserved 9th-century Viking ships are displayed at Oslo's Viking Ship Museum. Bergen, with colorful wooden houses, is the starting point for cruises to the dramatic Sognefjord. Norway is also known for fishing, hiking and skiing, notably at Lillehammer's Olympic resort.



Wergeland Lodge, Sons of Norway held their annual Lutefisk Dinner on February 3 at the former Yacht Club in Bellingham. There were 107 in attendance. The juices were flowing, not with milk and honey, but with butter and cream sauce. Of course the fish was the main attraction and was very well received.



Meatballs were also available for those who opted for the alternate dish. Lefse is another staple and was consumed as well. Dessert consisted of ice cream with Krumkake. Part of the program consisted of raffling off prizes. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and are looking forward to a repeat next year.

The lodge members are looking forward to attending the opening of the new Nordic Heritage Museum in Ballard in early May.

By Elaine Graddock

# The Jaeger Movement and the Finnish Civil War

The Jaeger Movement consisted of volunteers from Finland who trained in Germany as Jaegers (elite light infantry) during World War I. It was initiated by a group of university students in 1914, after the start of World War I. Its purpose was to liberate Finland from Russia by training Finns in Germany. The recruitment of the Jaeger volunteers from the Grand Duchy of Finland was clandestine and dominated by German-influenced circles, such as university students and the Finnish upper middle class. The movement was supported by Germany to enable the creation of a Finnish sovereign state. The movement was one of many means by which Germany intended to weaken Russia and to cause Russia's loss of her western provinces and dependencies.

The recruitment was, however, in no way exclusive. The Jaeger Battalion was a cross-section of the Finnish people: 1/3 were farmers, 1/3 workers, and 1/3 had attended grammar school. In all, over 1,800 volunteers are estimated to have "slipped off" to train in Germany.



Jaegers on the Russian front in 1916

The recruits were traveling via a network of safe houses to Finland's western border in Lapland or over the ice of the Gulf of Bothnia to Sweden, and continued from there to Germany. Their military training took place in Lockstedt near Hamburg where they were formed into the Royal Prussian 27<sup>th</sup> Jaeger Battalion. The Jaeger Battalion fought in the ranks of the German Army in the battles against Russia on the northern flank of the eastern front from 1916.

After Finland declared independence on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 1917, preparations for the return of the Jaegers began. The political situation then grew precarious. There were still 75,000 Russian troops in Finland. Despite the fact that Lenin had recognized Finland as a sovereign nation on New Year's Eve in 1917, he strongly believed that the October revolution would soon spread to Finland.

There was social and political unrest. A severe famine ravaged the country which triggered widespread looting and robbery. The Red Guards and White Defense Corps tried to keep law and order. Armed conflicts between those two occurred here and there as well, and the country was descending into chaos. The Senate decreed that the White Defense Corps would be in charge of law and order in the country. This was perceived as a right-wing coup by the socialists.

The situation escalated into civil war on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1918 when the Red Guards seized power in Southern Finland, and set up a People's Commissariat as the new government. It immediately issued arrest warrants for the members of the Senate. However, the members had enough time to escape to Vaasa on the west coast, which became the temporary seat of the Finnish legal government. In a short time, the Red Guards were able to seize the railway junctions and the major industrial cities in Southern Finland, often with help from Russian troops which also provided weapons and training.

In Vaasa, the legal government, the Senate appointed a Finnish nobleman, Carl Gustaf Mannerheim as the supreme commander of the Finnish White Army. He had served in the Russian Army for 30 years, rising to the rank of General. The White Defense Corps become the nucleus of the new White Army.

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## Jaeger (continued)

The Jaegers, who had endured 3 years of harsh training and fighting against the Russians on the Baltic front, were disappointed to learn that instead of liberating Finland from Russia, they were going to war against their own countrymen, and in many cases brother against brother or neighbor against neighbor. For this reason, about 300 Jaegers refused to be transported to Finland.

The journey to Finland started in Liepaja harbor on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February, 1918. The main force of 950 Jaegers arrived at Vaasa harbor on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February, 1918 in the midst of the Finnish Civil war. The Jaegers provided sorely needed leadership to the amateur White Army and were placed in command of many units. Educated as elite troops, they were also fit to assume command as officers over the untrained troops of the Civil War.



Jaegers parading in Vaasa February 26, 1918

The White Army was initially comprised of 38,000 men, all volunteers. The number of troops grew in a few months to 60,000 through conscription. The White Army benefitted from the leadership of battle-tested officers having served in the Russian army, and the Jaegers as middle and lower rank officers.

The White Army met the fiercest resistance in Tampere where the Red Guards had stationed a considerable proportion of their troops. The siege lasted three weeks, and Tampere was captured on April 6<sup>th</sup>. At the request of the Senate, the German Baltic Division landed in Hanko on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. The resistance in southern Finland started unraveling as the Red Guards

were fighting on two fronts. Helsinki was taken by the Germans on April 15<sup>th</sup> and the White Guards and the German troops met in Hämeenlinna on April 27<sup>th</sup>. The number of captured Red Guards rose to 80,000. Some were able to escape to Russia, as were the members of the People's Commissariat.



Civil War Victory parade in Helsinki May 16, 1918

The Civil War ended on May 16, 1918. It had taken a gruesome toll on the Finnish people. About 10,000 fell in battle (5,300 Reds, 3,400 Whites, 600 Russians, and 600 Germans). In addition, during the war, at least 11,800 people were executed behind the front lines. After the end of the war, of 80,000 Reds in prison camps, 13,500 died of either disease or malnutrition, as the Spanish flu struck Finland just as the war ended. Thus, the total death toll in the Civil War was 38,000.

The Civil War created a deep rift in the Finnish society for decades. Only when the Soviet Union attacked Finland in November 1939, were the Finns able to unite under the shared threat of Soviet occupation.

After the Civil War, the Jaegers formed the nucleus of the officer corps in the Finnish Defense Forces of the 20's and 30's. Many served in the Winter War and the Continuation War. Even after the war, many Jaegers were still serving in positions in the Finnish Defense Corps. The last Jaeger serving in the Defense Forces was General Kaarlo Heiskanen who retired in 1959.

By Kaj Rekola

References: [Wikipedia](#) & [History of Finland](#),  
Meinander, H. A, Oxford University Press, 2013

# Chinese Giant Pandas Unveiled to Public in Finland

Two giant pandas on loan from China have been unveiled at a zoo in central Finland and they have frolicked, galloped, climbed trees and played in the snow after a month-long quarantine.

Hua Bao, a 4-year-old male, and 3-year-old female Jin Baobao arrived in Finland on Jan. 18 and were immediately renamed Pyry ("Snowfall") and Lumi ("Snow") in Finnish. The Ahtari Zoo, 330 kilometers (205 miles) north of Helsinki, built a special Panda House annex for the pair.

China agreed to loan the pandas for 15 years as a gift to Finland, which celebrated 100 years of independence from Russia last year. China has presented pandas to countries as a sign of goodwill and closer political ties, with Finland being the first Nordic nation to receive them.

From ABC News



## Viipurin Lauluveikot, Women's Auxiliary

Viipurin Lauluveikot Men's Choir was established in 1897 in Viipuri, which was considered to be the cultural center in Finland. Last Fall the choir celebrated their 120th Anniversary with a West Coast Tour with performances in Seattle, Ferndale, Vancouver and California. We enjoyed a great concert with a larger attendance than Seattle or Vancouver!!! There were 50 singers accompanied by about 20 wives and lady friends.

The French say: "Où est la Femme?" or "Where is the woman?" Another saying states: "Behind every successful man, there is a woman." The idea about helping the young men's choir was born when a quartet performed at a socialite's birthday party and

the attendees were impressed with the quality of their voices. The word about the choir spread rapidly, when it was clear that: "Hey, these men can sing!!" Also, in the "good old days," spouses pitched in to advance their favorite causes. Women's support and help has always been crucial for the choir's 120 year success.

When Russia took over Karelia, about 450,000 people had to escape their forces and settle inside the new borders. What is amazing, that farms and families housed this huge influx of people without much help from the government. The choir members were depressed about finding a new home, finally settling in Helsinki.

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## Auxiliary (continued)

Slowly, they set their roots in a "new land" and began gaining reputation and fame. Women's support during these very hard times was essential. In 1947, the choir got its first flag, donated by the women. Two years later, the official Women's Auxiliary was founded. While men were practicing, women gathered at homes to plan their support. It was recommended that the hostess would serve "no more than three kinds of coffee breads and cookies" to avoid too much burden for the evening. Besides getting to know each other, these coffee clatches were used to plan how to support the choir financially. These included coffee concerts, sales, cultural events, and drawings, which took a lot of time to arrange. In later years, popular flea markets brought in needed funds. Income was donated in cash or tangible forms. A new flag was donated in 1982 as well as a piano.

Besides working hard for the choir, women have enjoyed a number of "perks" for their efforts: good friendships, concerts and trips abroad. In addition to numerous performances in Finland, Viipuri, and many European countries, the choir has made three tours to the USA: 1973, 1976, and 2017. Five years ago, the choir performed in Shanghai Spring International Music Festival with many other choirs.

Recently, the official Women's Auxiliary for financial support has been disbanded, but women still meet at a restaurant to discuss ways to help the choir and keep their own friendships alive. They sell tickets and CDs, and help with public relations to promote the concerts. Women working together with Viipurin Lauluveikot elevated it to an internationally recognized male choir.

Written by Benita Patosaari,  
Member of the Auxiliary since 1971  
Translated by Asko Hamalainen

## Finland's First Dog is Missed During Dull Election

HELSINKI, Finland — President Sauli Niinistö of Finland is widely seen as a discreet operator. Mr. Niinistö's pet, however, is a bit of a showboating scene-stealer, who has had a memorable first term. Finland's first dog, Lennu, a wrinkly-nosed Boston terrier with a lolling tongue, has become a bona fide celebrity in the country, and beyond.

Mr. Niinistö's posts on Twitter, done sparingly and cautiously a few times a month, typically garner a few dozen retweets. But a portrait of a grinning, naughty Lennu, being lovingly scolded by his master at a formal occasion, was reshared on Twitter more than 50,000 times and liked almost 150,000 times after it was posted by a reporter.

Despite his dog's popularity, the president resisted taking Lennu with him on the stump. "Lennu did not make a campaign appearance," said Pete Pokkinen, Mr. Niinistö's campaign manager.

Illness was a factor in Lennu's absence. During the official Independence Day celebration, a major occasion in Finland, where the president gives gifts to various national dignitaries, Lennu's vet was also noticeably present at the ceremony.



Lennu, Mr. Niinistö announced, had come down with "dog flu," worrying his many fans. Although the president later said Lennu had recovered, he added that his 7-year-old dog was taking "an election vacation." Many missed Lennu's enlivening presence during the stolid, largely uneventful campaign. Niinistö went on to win the election in a landslide, capturing 60% of the vote.

Adapted From an Article  
By Richard Martyn-Hemphill  
The New York Times



# Finland: The Innovation Champion of the World

A new global ranking has placed Finland at the top of the list of countries whose national policies are conducive to innovation. Altogether, the inaugural Consumer Technology Association (CTA) identified 13 countries for its International Innovation Scorecard.

Among other things, Finland was applauded for the extent of its individual and political freedom, along with its speed and affordability of Internet connection, percentage of its GDP spent on R&D, and the cleanliness of its water and air.

Furthermore, it was among the countries most enabling of testing and deploying drone technologies, allowing ridesharing to operate most freely, and having the best

federal frameworks for short-term home rentals.

Countries were chosen on the basis of two guidelines: the government must be able to influence public policy; and publicly available, verifiable and independent third-party data must exist and can be compared with different nations.

Finland was joined by the UK, Australia, Sweden, United States, Singapore, Netherlands, Canada, Portugal, Czech Republic, Austria, Denmark and New Zealand as the 2018 Innovation Champions.

**Article From [goodnewsfinland.com](https://goodnewsfinland.com)**  
 If you would like to learn more about the International Innovation Scorecard, please visit <https://internationalscorecard.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

# How Does it Feel to Be a Finn Today?

The sky is grey and snow is falling. The question is how do we again survive this dark period we call *kaamos* this November? The bear is ready to go to his hibernation to wait for next spring. I am ready to go to my cabin to sit down with a good book, a glass of wine and to enjoy the crackling sound of birch in the fireplace. I have been thinking about how Finland, my country, has survived all these 100 years that we are celebrating today. Our national identity is clear. We have been active in the world forum, we have acted well and we are trusted among nations so far.

The book, "Blue/White – Finland of the Past in the Future," written by Professor Timo Airaksinen is an excellent analysis of the situation and circumstances of our country and the challenges we will meet in the future. Written with ironic humor it gives a glimpse of the future of the country. Our challenges are the same as those in the States. Society goes through many changes which cannot be seen in advance. Some would like to stop this carousel; stop the refugee flood and return to normalcy as understood in the past. This is hard to manage and maintain today.

To be a Finn you feel pretty safe and secure. Social media may add some restlessness. Some folks may increase the restlessness by writing incognito articles about fanatic nature. Privacy is experienced as a lost art due to naivety. Fake news and lies make people nervous. To find objectivity you must get involved with all the problems society is experiencing.

In the Finnish democracy feedback is excellent. Freedom of speech is well maintained and expected by everyone. The nation in general is well informed and has learned new languages. The youth, in particular, follows the internet on a daily basis.

Our literature is vast and excellent, fiction and non-fiction alike. The cultural aspect of the country is well-orchestrated. Music is practiced, many choirs and orchestras are prominent and their professional status is enjoyed by large crowd, both domestic and foreign. In sport Finland has proved herself at the top of many team sports and lately, for instance, motor sport is well recognized due to many good formula drivers.

Education is equal and free from the start to the end - the envy of any country. Health care is one of the best and almost free to everyone. Men and women are treated equally. Finns are known to be very creative, critical and independent.

Part of the Finnish reputation is honesty and a trustworthy confidence. Your word is your honor and the shake of hand means SISU across the nation.

It is a privilege to belong to this nation. We belong to some of the happiest people in the world. Regardless of our northern strategic position and hard startup past, first being a part of Sweden and later a part of Imperial Russia, we have showed the world that as the Independent Country we belong to the sovereign nations of the world.

We just finished celebrating our country's centennial with very optimistic hopes for the next 100 years.

**By Simo Soininen**

Simo Soininen is a retired scholar from the University of Helsinki. His academic major was general history. His family roots on his mother's side are many immigrants who have settled in the States. His grandmother's sister, Amalia Hill, died at the age of 105 years.

# What Americans Know About Finland

“What do Americans know about Finland?” is a question I hear often in my work as Press Counselor of the Embassy of Finland. Even as my term is now ending after five years on the job, I still struggle to give a short answer to this very Finnish query. “Well,” I usually start, “It depends on who you’re talking with. Someone from Minnesota or Michigan will probably have heard about our saunas and sisu, but this may not be the case, let’s say, in Hawaii.”

Obviously, there is no simple answer to the question, as things like the location, immigration history, education and profession of any given American will greatly affect that person’s knowledge about our small and beautiful country. However, there is one topic that comes up much more often than any other.

Last spring my husband and I went on a road trip to Tennessee, and decided to visit the Jack Daniels Distillery in a town called Lynchburg. We signed up on a tour, and our guide, a man in his 60s, asked all his guests to tell where they came from. When hearing “Finland”, his immediate reaction was “I really admire your country’s education system!” I smiled happily, but was not surprised. Finland’s world-class K12 education system is our country’s strongest brand in the U.S., as well as internationally.

On the same road trip we swung also into Missouri to see the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, a fantastic architectural feat by Finnish-American architect Eero Saarinen.



This is another field in which Finnish achievements are familiar to many Americans – design and architecture. The Marimekko poppy patterns, Iittala’s glassware and the Aalto vase are design icons that many recognize, and often know are of Finnish origin.

Particularly on the West Coast many Americans are familiar with Finland’s substantial input in the tech world. The Linux operating system, created by the Finn Linus Torvalds, is a household name, and those into gaming know that the Angry Birds and Clash of Clans were developed in Finland. Finns may be amused that nowadays also the word “slush” has gained fame in Silicon Valley, as hundreds of participants have flown to Helsinki in November to participate in the annual startup and tech conference called Slush.



Here in Washington D.C., Finland is known to many as an active member of the European Union and the Nordic family. We Nordics have been arranging multiple joint events also all around the country, with our ambassadors speaking on topics such as equality, green technology, and smart cities. Our embassy is one of the most well-known embassy buildings in this city, with numerous guests visiting us to see both its magnificent architecture and to hear our story of achieving the only Platinum LEED certificate ever given to an embassy in the U.S. We are extremely proud to be recognized for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design!

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## Americans (continued)

Americans who have visited Finland are often eager to share their travel memories with us, as we have happily noted on our Facebook site, and in real life. Particularly moving are the stories of people who went to Finland for the first time to look for their relatives, and found aunts, uncles, and cousins they had never met before. Some have been surprised of how different Finland was compared to the country their grandparents had been describing. In a hundred years Finland had transformed from one of the poorest countries in Europe to one of the most prosperous ones in the world.

What I still find most important is what Americans know about us, the Finns. This has been a particular project for us this year, as Finland has been celebrating her centennial of independence. The slogan of the centennial year has been "Together," and we have been doing outreach to all corners of the country to get as many Finns, Finnish-Americans and Americans involved as possible.

Our centennial mascot, the Traveling Sauna, has been visiting numerous states, the Ambassador has traveled to many states to meet with friends of Finland, and our social media sites have been pushing out centennial messages, including a series of 100 video greetings to Finland and a story of Finland's history made for an American readership. Not to forget our campaign to find Matt Damon, that has already reached more than half a million people! I believe a lot of Americans are now also aware of the quirky Finnish sense of humor.

What I truly appreciate is the invaluable work all Finns and Finnish-Americans are doing in the United States to tell the story of Finland and Finnishness. All the events organized, the various concerts, bazaars, seminars, and parties help in telling what a wonderful country we are coming from, and yes, how wonderfully special we are as a people.

By Sanna Kangasharju  
Press Counselor  
Embassy of Finland

## The New Nordic Museum

The Nordic Museum has built a new home. After many years of planning and fundraising, we are in the last phases of construction. The modern 57,000-sq. ft. museum and cultural center is located in the heart of Ballard (on Market Street) and includes a refined layout with expanded exhibition and educational spaces.

The new museum design is organized around a linear "fjord" that weaves together stories of the Nordic region and of the Nordic-American experience. Bridges crossing the fjord intensify the experience of migration, connecting Nordic and Nordic-American exhibits. A vertically striated zinc skin wraps the building exterior; inside, fjord walls are composed of faceted white planes evoking its glacial origins. Along with the core exhibition galleries, active social areas (café,

store, auditorium, and classrooms) expand the Museum's capability to serve large audiences.

Save the date for our Grand Opening celebration: May 5 – 6, 2018.



For more information, visit:  
<http://nordicmuseum.org/future>

# The Finnish Sport of Wife Carrying

Wife Carrying (Finnish: *eukonkanto* or *akankanto*, Estonian: *naisekandmine*, Swedish: *kärringkånk*) is a contest in which male competitors race while each carrying a female teammate. The objective is for the male to carry the female through a special obstacle track in the fastest time. The sport was first introduced at Sonkajärvi, Finland.

Several types of carry may be practiced: piggyback, fireman's carry (over the shoulder), or Estonian-style (the wife hangs upside-down with her legs around the husband's shoulders, holding onto his waist).

Wife Carrying World Championships are held annually in Sonkajärvi, Finland, since 1992 (where the prize depends on the wife's weight in beer).



Eukonkanto first originated in Finland. Tales have been passed down from one person to another about a man named Herkko Rosvo-Ronkainen. This man was considered a robber in the late 1800s, lived in a forest, and ran around with his gang of thieves causing harm to the villages. From what has been found, there are three ideas as to why/how this sport was invented. First, Rosvo-Ronkainen and his thieves were accused of stealing food and women from villages in the area he lived in, then carrying these women on their backs as they ran away (hence the "wife" or woman carrying). For the second idea, it has been said that young men would go to villages near

their own, steal other men's wives, and then have the woman become their own wife. These wives were also carried on the backs of the young men; this was referred to as "the practice of wife stealing." Lastly, there was the idea that Rosvo-Ronkainen trained his thieves to be "faster and stronger" by carrying big, heavy sacks on their backs, which could have eventually evolved to a sport because of the hard labor (endurance) and muscle strengthening, which most sports ensure. Even though this sport has been considered by some as a joke, competitors take it very seriously, just like any other sport.



Wife carrying contests are now seen in Australia, the United States, Hong Kong, Estonia, the UK and other parts of the world besides Finland and has a category in the *Guinness Book of Records*.

The original course was a rough, rocky terrain with fences and brooks, but it has been altered to suit modern conditions. There is now sand instead of full rocks, fences, and some kind of area filled with water (a pool). These are the following rules set by the International Wife Carrying Competition Rules Committee:

- \*The length of the official track is 253.5 meters.
- \*The track has two dry obstacles and a water obstacle about one meter deep.
- \*The wife to be carried may be your own, or the neighbor's, or you may have found her

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# Wife Carrying (continued)

further afield; she must, however, be over 17 years of age.

\*The minimum weight of the wife to be carried is 49 kilograms. If she weighs less than 49 kg, she will be burdened with a rucksack containing additional weight to bring the total load to be carried up to 49 kg.

\*All participants must enjoy themselves.

The only equipment allowed is a belt worn by the carrier and a helmet worn by the carried.

\*The contestants run the race two at a time, so each heat is a contest in itself.

\*Each contestant takes care of his/her safety and, if deemed necessary, insurance.

\*The contestants have to pay attention to the instructions given by the organizers of the competition.

\*There is only one category in the World Championships, and the winner is the couple who completes the course in the shortest time.

\*Also, the most entertaining couple, the best costume, and the strongest carrier will be awarded a special prize.

\*While the International rules are the basis for all competitions, rules and prizes do vary for each competition.

You'll find wife carrying enthusiasts in Savo, Helsinki, Central Europe, Australia, North and South America, India, United Kingdom, Estonia and Russia in short all over the world. They are strong men and tenacious women. Most of these easy-going people seem to be characterized by placidity and happiness. Of course, with a few more serious looking devotees among them. The wife carrying is composed of humor and hard sport on a fifty-fifty basis. Everybody may choose what attitude to take towards the competition. The course is open for all to participate.



Researched and Presented by  
Brend Hunt-Holma

## Finnish Education System: Key Issues and Goals

**Students:** Finland's high educational performance is supported by system-level policies that encourage quality and equity. These can be continued and complemented with further focus on reducing recent inequities in specific groups, as large performance gaps are seen between boys and girls and between native students and students with immigrant background. Demographic changes imply a smaller proportion of younger people in Finland, and there have been some mismatches between supply and demand of study places and labor market needs.

**Institutions:** Finland aims to strengthen the capacity of school leaders and teachers to deliver quality education in all schools and to ensure that all players in the education system have the capacity to use evaluation and assessment to improve student outcomes.

**System:** Ensuring capacity to deliver high-quality education across all municipalities and improving efficiency of funding in tertiary education are key system-level goals for Finland.

(continued on next page)

# Education (continued)

## Selected Policy Responses:

\*A shift in perspective is the transference of early childhood education and care services from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2013).

\*Education and Research 2011-2016: A development plan aims to increase participation of students with immigrant background in preparatory education to improve their opportunity to participate in upper secondary education.

\*A curriculum reform is being developed from pre-primary through upper secondary education, to be implemented from 2016. The reform aims to adapt the curriculum to the new needs for skills and competences, strengthen the inter-disciplinary approach and provide educators with digital resources.

\*Efforts are being made to ensure post-basic qualification completion and employment for youth, including the introduction of the Youth Guarantee (2013).

\*The Ministry of Education appointed an Advisory Board for Professional Development of Education Personnel (2008) to examine and improve professional development and the changing needs of teachers.

\*The Osaava Program (2010-16), a national fixed-term program for continuing professional development (CPD), aims to ensure systematic CPD of staff in schools.

The program supports education providers to systematically and continually develop the skills and knowledge of their staff according to locally identified needs. Participants in Osaava and other government-funded CPD increased from 30 000 in 2009 to almost 2013.

\*Quality Criteria for Basic Education (2009) were developed to provide clear criteria, raise quality and facilitate evaluation. Starting in 2014, evaluation activities will be merged into the Finnish Education Evaluation Center.

\*Since 2013, a general reform of the Finnish municipality structure has been prepared to secure high-quality and equitable education services and to consolidate local self-government.

\*In 2013, a structural policy program was introduced to optimize expenditure, which will have implications, among others, on the provision of local governments' obligations and services, such as secondary education.

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## Happiness is a Choice: Thomas Oswald Exploring Finland in Winter

For some, three weeks alone in a snowy winter wonderland is the gateway to happiness. That's what Thomas Oswald discovered a few months ago under trial by fire, or ice rather, when he embarked on a solo SUP mission in the frozen waters of Finland. His expedition went no place in specific; his goal was to see how long he could stand the cold and loneliness, and how subjecting himself to such conditions might affect him. Faced with the raw elements and relentless cold, Oswald immersed himself for three weeks of paddling through the Finland's wilderness and returned home with a sense we all strive to achieve. To watch the first part of Oswald's journey, visit:

<https://www.supthemag.com/travel/winter-solo-expedition-finland-stand-up-paddle/>

## FFSC Merchandise

FFSC offers products to its members and readers and others.

The current items include Suomi Centennial Ski Caps (\$18), FFSC and Finland Centennial Baseball Caps (\$25), White with Blue Finnish Flags (\$8), Full White Caps with Blue Finnish Flags (\$12), and much more. All would make very special birthday, holiday and "just because" gifts. Pick up a few and remember the Centennial for years to come!



Saumoissa Suomen lippu, etiketissä Suomen lippu, etiketin printissä Made in Finland