

FINLANDIA FOUNDATION
SUOMI CHAPTER

FINNOVATIONS

PROMOTING FINNISH HERITAGE FROM THE
EVERGREEN STATE TO THE GOLDEN STATE



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Cover Photo: Mistress of the North, Louhi attacking Väinämöinen in the form of a giant eagle with her troops on her back. Painting by Akseli Gallen-Kallela, a Finnish artist who is best known for his illustrations of the Kalevala.



President's Corner

Elias Lönnrot and His Kalevala

The Kalevala, the Finnish national epic, has been published in 61 languages. The Day of Kalevala is celebrated annually in Finland on the last day of February.

It's author, Elias Lönnrot (1802-1884), was the second father of the Finnish written language. He was a pioneer of the Finnish language and the author of dictionaries. He was also the publisher and editor in chief of the first Finnish periodical, *Mehiläinen* and contributed to many newspapers. Besides his literary work, he was interested in botany, history, and medical science.

His work was based on the German philosopher J.G. Herder's thought that "every nation must have an equal position and rights in the international cooperation." To Elias Lönnrot, the national ideology must contain civics based on its own culture.

Elias Lönnrot placed himself as a mediator between peasants and the academics. He tried in his work to combine the wisdom of fundamental peasantry folks with the knowledge of those who had received European teachings.

His open-minded thoughts on the heritage and future of Finland contributed to the awakening of independence movements among Finns. It was important to him to save all of this great heritage for future generations of Finns.

His work is celebrated with two holidays: Kalevala Day on February 28th and September 4th, which is Lönnrot's birthday.

Elias Lönnrot together with J.L. Runeberg, J.V. Snellman and Z. Topelius gave to Finland her fundamental and instrumental basis for Independence. They can be called the quartet of Finnish Independence.

Finland developed with this knowledge of her culture from early 1800 until Independence and the establishment of Finnish democracy - something we can be so proud of today.

Tapio Holma



*Elias Lönnrot Monument, Helsinki.
Photo by Tapio Holma.*

Saunas, Northern Lights, and Plenty of Winter Adventure in Finnish Lapland

"PAYTYRRR, WAKE UP!!! No time for pants –let's go!!!"

Janne's mittened fist came thumping on my door like John Bonham on a floor tom, boomp boomp boomp boomp boomp. How long had I been asleep? What time was it? Where were my pants, anyway? Oh right: I'd left them in the mudroom before bed, along with my boots and five layers of Lycra and wet wool.

After a rowdy welcome dinner of fish soup and grilled reindeer steak, Janne Honkanen, my host, had coaxed me out for a midnight hike across fields of moonlit snow, followed by a soak in the hot tub, where he regaled me with tales of hunting trophies and youthful indiscretions. There had been many of both. Eventually I begged off to bed, overcome by hot bubbles and jet lag – but Janne, tireless, pressed on. Last I saw him he was headed for the forest sauna, bottle of beer tucked into his sealskin parka. Now he was at my bedroom door, giddily shouting me awake.

"It's time, Paytyrr! Au-ROOAR-aaa is here!!!"

Aurora! Time indeed. I grabbed the only clothing in reach and bolted for the door.

Which is how I came to be standing knee-deep in snow, wearing only a sweater, socks, and long underwear, confounded by the most implausible sky. It was 2 a.m. in February in Finnish Lapland, yet with all that was unfolding above me, I hardly noticed the cold.

Travelers come to Lapland to learn how insanely fun winter can be, and to see for themselves what the earth's sky can do.



Which is to say, far more than they imagined. Not only after dark, when the aurora borealis sometimes emerges, but throughout the day, as its crystalline dome shifts from violet to deep blue and back again, while a low-hanging sun sets the snow glittering like phosphorescence.

There's no finer place to watch it all transpire than at Octola, an exclusive resort that has, until now, been kept largely under wraps. The 10-room chalet sits on a hilltop overlooking 740 acres of privately owned forest, not far from Rovaniemi, the capital of Finnish Lapland.

The whole operation was created by 40-year-old Janne Honkanen, whose story is as improbable as the Nordic sky. If you happen to follow hard-core snowmobile racing, you may know the name: Janne was a teen racing phenom before a near-fatal crash derailed his career at 19. Three years later, Janne nearly died again, when doctors discovered a tumor on his brain. After surgery and a long recovery, in 2009 Janne created Luxury Action, an adventure-travel company that arranges experiences across the Arctic region, including stays in tricked-out igloos near the North Pole.

Octola was the brand's first proper resort. Since he opened it in 2018, Janne has relied on word of mouth among an elite clientele, who typically buy the place out for hundreds of thousands of dollars a week. Janne makes it clear Octola isn't for everyone. Last year he turned down an

inquiry from a famous American reality-TV family. ("I want people who can respect the power of our wilderness.")

Having passed Janne's vetting, my photographer friend Simon Roberts and I arrived at Octola last February. Janne stood waiting outside the lodge when we pulled up. He was dressed head to toe in spectacular seal fur — sealskin pants, sealskin parka, sealskin cap with fuzzy earflaps — looking like a cuddly Visigoth. Sealskin, Janne told us, is second only to reindeer hide in warmth. Actually, he clarified, polar bear fur is the warmest, but that's illegal in this part of the world. "Except in Greenland," he added. (You just know he owns a polar bear coat.)

Janne grew up in Finnish Lapland and speaks with a rrrrrrolling-R accent, pronouncing my name like my Swedish grandfather used to, but much louder. Janne is nothing if not voluble. I liked him immediately.

After a spellbound hour gazing at the northern lights in my long johns, followed by less than three hours of sleep, I awoke the next morning to snow-reflected sunlight and the strong smell of coffee. (Finns, it is said, drink more coffee than any other people on earth, and theirs is almost uniformly delicious.) In the dining room I found Janne wide awake, glugging down a tall glass of...was that milk?

"When I don't drink beer, I drink milk!" he said proudly.

I laughed, but he wasn't joking. Sonny Rollins's sax warbled while a fire crackled in the hearth. The table was laid with Pentik tableware, a pitcher of passion-fruit-and-sea-buckthorn juice, and a basket of croissants and rye flatbread. On the stove was an earthenware crockpot of overnight oats topped with cloudberries. If this wasn't the definition of *hygge*, I don't know what is.

Aleksi Kärkkäinen, the resident chef, appeared with a platter of smoked salmon and lacy fried eggs. Janne introduced our guide, Timo Haapa-aro, a Luxury Action veteran clearly in love with his home and with the outdoors. Nourished by our epic breakfast, Timo, Simon, and I set off to meet the huskies.

A mad wolf chorus greeted us as we stepped out of the SUV. Husky trainer Pekka Syrjänen's pack is relatively small, only 43 dogs, but if you've ever heard 43 dogs howling at once, you know it might as well be 500. They were comically excited to see us, licking our fur-framed faces, sky-blue eyes wide with anticipation.



In winter, racing dogs can run up to 125 miles a day. These dogs need to run; the only time they calm down is when they're hurtling headlong down a snowy track, focused on whatever's ahead. Suddenly their yapping ceases and the world goes

quiet, save for the scrape of steel rails on ice – and barreling along on a primitive wooden sled feels, somehow, strangely peaceful.

We took turns driving. Leading my team were two sturdy Siberian huskies named Darth Vader and Johnnie Walker. They seemed reliable enough. I was more worried about the two hyperactive “wheel dogs” in back, who spent the ride nipping at each other until their reins got all entangled. But they were adorable, and their energy was a plus: within minutes I was way out ahead of the others, with Pekka waving at me to slow down.

We raced across a snow scape that looked like a blown-out photograph. Light seemed to emanate from every object, like a million tiny suns. Every branch and twig was encased in ice, as if the trees were made of glass.

I slowed to a stop, intent on a photograph. My team lay down for a rest, tongues lapping at the snow. But, while fiddling with my aperture, I inadvertently let up on the brake. This was their cue. The pack burst into motion before I even clocked it, sending me tumbling off, camera flying. Within seconds the dogs were 100 yards up the track. Pekka's sled whizzed past in pursuit. After a wild chase he managed to catch the runaways. They weren't even breathing heavily.

Traveling in Lapland is a constant back-and-forth between moving very, very fast and sitting very, very still. With seven months of snow covering endless forests and frozen rivers and lakes, the region has become a playground for extreme winter sports, from snowboarding to ice climbing.

But, given the remarkably low population density (nearly one-third of Finland's land area with just over 3 percent of its people), it's also incredibly peaceful, possessed of almost eerie silence and stillness.

Our second morning at Octola found us on a 20-mile snowmobile safari, with Janne recapturing his teenage glory by driving at absurd speeds while popping exuberant wheelies. My bones were still vibrating hours later. That afternoon, Timo took us onto the frozen Ounasjoki River for a three-hour meditation session masquerading as an ice-fishing trip. (No fish, but I did get a sunburn, and some peace of mind.)

Lapland has become a pioneer in the madcap sport of "ice racing," which involves glorified dune buggies circling a frozen track at breakneck speeds. Janne, no surprise, is crazy for this. He designed his own quarter-mile course, carved into snowdrifts on the river, where guests can unleash their inner rally driver using 100-horsepower Can-Am Maverick ATVs. After a few test laps, Simon and I felt confident in our buggy, and soon we were swerving, spinning out, and slamming (harmlessly) into walls of soft packed snow, laughing all the way.

There was also snowshoeing across infinite fields; hikes in search of the elusive Arctic fox (we spotted two); more hijinks with the dogs; and, at the end of each day, a rejuvenating turn in one of Octola's wood-fired saunas.

And there was Aleksí's simple, assured cooking: sautéed chanterelles, a velvety pumpkin soup with kale fritters, pan-seared trout from the river down the hill. Even the reindeer — which can be tough

and gamy — was sensational, grilled low and slow like a buttery rib eye.

On our final day, we rode to the far corner of the property for lunch inside a handsome lavvu, the log-framed tepee used by the native Sámi people. Aleksí set to work building a fire in the stove, and the aroma of butter and woodsmoke soon filled the tent. From his cast-iron skillet came crêpe-like Finnish pancakes, which we ladled with lingonberries and clotted cream. There was more coffee — always — and a steaming wild-berry tisane, or what the Finns simply call "hot juice."



The Sámi, now scattered throughout northern Scandinavia, Finland, and Russia, are among the oldest indigenous peoples still in Europe, having settled this region some 3,500 years ago. While the population now numbers less than 100,000, with just 10 percent living in Finland, interest in Sámi culture has grown, especially when it comes to the strange, beguiling music known as joik.

"It started as a way to keep yourself company, singing to your herd when you were alone in the woods," Henry Valle told us. A fourth-generation reindeer herder, Henry joined us for lunch to share insights on his Sámi heritage, including joik, of

which he is a skilled practitioner. In flickering firelight, we sat transfixed as he sang us a haunting melody – a sound somewhere between yodeling and throat-singing, with curious, almost Middle Eastern flourishes.

Joik may have originated among lonely herders, but those wordless melodies soon became a means of storytelling for a people who lacked a written language. As Henry explained, a joik song is performed to honor something or someone, be it a lover, an ancestor, or the wilderness itself. One does not joik “about” something, but rather joiks that which they’re celebrating. Each recitation is different, for a joik is not composed so much as conjured, like free-form jazz.

If Octola is the brash, next-gen upstart, pushing Lapland’s definition of luxury, then Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort is the originator – and a fitting complement to its younger, pricier rival. A three-hour drive north of Octola, about 150 miles above the Arctic Circle and a snowball’s throw from the Russian border, this is one of Finland’s largest, most popular resorts, drawing guests from as far afield as India, Taiwan, Bahrain, and Brazil.

When Kakslauttanen opened in 1974, it, too, had just 10 rooms. The previous year, owner Jussi Eiramo had been driving home from a fishing trip when, in the middle of nowhere, he ran out of gas and was forced to camp for the night. Captivated by the beauty of the place, he acquired a parcel of land and set up a small roadside café and guesthouse. Today Kakslauttanen has expanded to 1,200 acres and 450 beds, some of them in the famous “glass igloos” that Eiramo pioneered and that have since been copied across Scandinavia.

(I found the igloos too cramped for comfort, but no doubt honeymooners will book them anyway. They are great for aurora-gazing, with just a glass roof and a cozy reindeer throw between you and the night sky.)

Then again, you’re not there for the décor. Kakslauttanen is really all about unbridled playtime. (Or bridled! Nothing beats riding a horse across fresh powder.) Simon and I ran the full gamut of activities during our three-night stay, from reindeer safaris to husky sledding, Nordic skiing to fireside joik recitals, and the obligatory nightly sauna. Most energizing of all was a post-sauna plunge in the lake – racing down the icy path from the spa in stocking feet (so as not to slip) and lowering myself into a manhole-sized opening in meter-thick ice, until I was up to my neck in what felt like a blenderful of frozen margaritas. Within seconds I couldn’t feel a thing. This made it much more pleasant.

Honestly, I’m not going to tell you much about the northern lights. I could try, and fail, and neither of us would be satisfied. I’ll just say that, as a reasonably jaded 49-year-old, I didn’t expect the aurora to move me as much as it did. But only a corpse would fail to feel that tingle down the neck, that pounding of the heart, that momentary sense of panic while standing dumbstruck, watching the sky set itself on fire.

Our first sighting would have been enough. But incredibly, we got an even better view

the next night, and another the night after that, for a total of five spectacular showings. Simon and I couldn't believe our luck: we met guests who'd been in Lapland for two weeks but hadn't yet caught a glimpse.

Each night brought a whole new set of colors, spectral flares, and undulating shapes. But our final night at Kakslauttanen was perhaps the best, since by then we had the hang of it. No more panic, no more jet lag, no more trying in vain to shoot with an iPhone. Now we could relax. All we had to do was step out into the silent night, flop down spread-eagled in the snow, adjust our eyes to the chilly dark, and let the show begin.

By Peter Jon Lindberg
<https://www.travelandleisure.com>



Forging of the Sampo from The Kalevala. Painting by Akseli Gallen-Kallela.

MASTERED by desire impulsive,
By a mighty inward urging,
I am ready now for singing,
Ready to begin the chanting
Of our nation's ancient folk-song
Handed down from by-gone ages.
In my mouth the words are melting,
From my lips the tones are gliding,
From my tongue they wish to hasten;
When my willing teeth are parted,
When my ready mouth is opened,
Songs of ancient wit and wisdom
Hasten from me not unwilling.

-First lines of The Kalevala by Elias Lönnrot, translated by John Martin Crawford.

Paavo Koli: The Youngest Knight of the Mannerheim Order

While still in high school, Paavo Olavi Koli volunteered to join the Finnish Army during the Winter War in 1939. After graduation the following year, he became an officer and a leader in the Pioneer Platoon comprised of 15 men. September 2nd, 1941 in Kiestinki, turned out to be his most important day, that day being very significant to Finland's survival and future, too. If Russia were successful, our country would be split in two.

The Red Army had surrounded about 3000 Finns in Kiestinki, on the Russian side of the border. In the wee hours, Koli was ordered to attack several hundred elite, Red soldiers, and cut off Muurmansk railroad from the Arctic Sea. Both the US and England were transporting huge amounts of aid to Russia by rail. The US was even threatening to declare a war against Finland. Germany was attacking Russia through our country.

After a very fierce 10 hour battle, over 200 Russians were killed and a few were able to escape. Koli's platoon did not lose a single soldier!!! Due to his skill and bravery, Paavo Koli was awarded the Knight of Mannerheim Order, number 81. He is the youngest recipient and the second pioneer to get this award.



The father of this article's author, medical captain, Paavo Parjanen, and a well-known author, Kalle Paatalo, were in Koli's platoon to stop the Russian attack in Kiestinki. Paatalo later authored a book about this very important battle. Mannerheim knew about the Muurmansk rail threat, but the soldiers did not. Germany demanded that Finland advance further into Russia, but Mannerheim wisely pulled the troops back. In a few days, US and Russia could have bombed our country to his knees. Finland survived!!!

Paavo Koli did not shine much in Oulu high school, but was dreaming about advancing his studies. His military career and the war changed his plans. After the war, he studied sociology at the University

of Helsinki, and finished his BA in about half the usual time. In 1948, he received his MA in political science. In addition, he became a sports teacher with the nickname kuperkeikka mestari (somersault master).

In 1949, he received a small grant to study in Huntington, West Virginia, at Marshall College (today: University). His English was quite poor, and at the age of 28, he was older than most other students. Once, he asked the professor why classic Karl Marx was not covered during the lectures. McCarthyism was running rampant, and the FBI was summoned. He was threatened to be kicked out of the College, and sent back to Finland. Luckily, the FBI inquired in Finland what level communist he was. The answer: "His level was to shoot 200 communists in Kiestinki." He became a hero at Marshall and the College President offered to pay his studies.

He did not like the lime light, however, and transferred to Chicago University. There he was the first recipient of the ASLA Stipend, which was established and funded by the War Dept. Finland was the only country to pay back its war dept.

American Sociology in the 40s to 60s was very popular, even revered in Finland. To really learn the culture and the country, Koli hitchhiked across the continent. During his many trips, he admired American optimism and taught it to his students in Finland. In Hollywood, he worked as a butler to a famous costume designer, Orry Kelly. His many jobs included: a butler, chauffeur, janitor, and in his own words: "cleaner of vomit for world famous actors."

Back in Finland, Paavo Koli founded the University of Tampere. He served as the President and the professor of Sociology.

He made many trips to the USA to visit his sister, Liisa Keranen in Seattle. Her husband, Kalle Keranen, served in the US Army and advanced to the rank of colonel. He was one of the Marttinen Men. Others were: Paavo Kairanen, Aito Keravuori, and especially Lauri Torni (Larry Thorne). Lauri Torni became a famous fighter pilot in Vietnam and was shot down. Just a few years ago his remains were found in the jungle and returned to this country. There is a movie being made about Lauri.

Asko's personal musings: I knew Kalle and Liisa Keranen very well. We visited and called each other frequently. Our kids were about the same age. Marttinen Men were mostly young men sabotaging Russians and hiding weapons for the uprising. According to a rumor, they had a cache of weapons and ammunition hidden only 200m from my home for 19 years. Kalle told me that he had barely escaped at night through Sweden to Norway, and took a ship to the USA. In the late 80s, early 90s he served as the President of Seattle Chapter, and we did many things together. He was putting a lot of pressure on me to take the crown after him. Later he became very ill and was willing to try my health advice. I was glad to prolong his life by 3 years.

In Finland, Paavo Koli's Mannerheim Knighthood was rarely spoken of. He is better known as the founder of Tampere University, and for his work there.

Paavo Koli brought back from the States many innovations and new ideas for the University.

He was very popular among young people and he complained about older teachers being stuck in their old thinking.

He advocated for equal power between professors, staff, and students. Tampere University was able to accomplish that. He was even nominated for President.

He also had a vision to establish an International East-West Relations Study Center, but his suicide at the age 47 ended that dream.

By Matti Parjanen

Translated by Asko Hamalainen

Online Learning at the Finnish School of Seattle

This fall and winter, I've had the opportunity to enroll my son, Niilo, in the Finnish School of Seattle (Seattlen Suomi Koulu). This wasn't really an option for us in the pre-COVID world, since classes typically take place in person in Bellevue (a 90-mile commute) either weekly or every-other weekend. Due to the pandemic, the Finnish School pivoted like most schools did – they switched to online classes. For my family, this was the first chance to try out the Finnish School from the comfort of our own home here in Bellingham. Since my son is still a toddler, he is enrolled in a class for kids from birth to 4 years old. You're probably thinking: toddlers in a zoom class? Not quite – the curriculum for the little kids is released on a weekly basis

to be watched (and favorites watched again and again) at your own pace. As a working mom, this format actually makes it possible for me to participate in a weekly class that is typically held in the morning every Thursday.

Using Padlet, each weekly class has separate videos for story time (viikon tarina), music school (muskari), crafts (askartelu), and educational videos (songs, short pieces about animals, Christmas, etc.). Classes for older students are held live every other Saturday and include more interactive content and grammar.



Seattlen Suomi Koulu Finnish School of Seattle

This year's theme for the curriculum is children's literature. Each class includes a video in which a Finnish book is read. Sometimes these are familiar English books (The Snowy Day, Guess How Much I Love You) that are translated into Finnish or they are books written by Finnish authors. The students then get to add another loop to their bookworm (lukutoukka), which is constructed like a

chain from rings of construction paper. The bookworm grows longer the more books we read! The Seattle Finnish School also has a library, which is located in Bellevue and is open on Saturdays for browsing or borrowing.

Each class is centered on a theme and starts and ends with a song performed by the Finnish School of Seattle teachers. Themes have included holidays (Finnish independence day, Christmas, Halloween, Valentines Day), seasonal themes (fall, winter, the seasons, snowmen), other topics of interest to little ones (baby animals, animal sounds, trains, cars), and of course Moomins. The theme connects the books read in story time with the muskari, where songs and dancing or movements are combined to tell stories related to the books read. The craft projects and related videos are also on-topic.

The crafts part of Suomi Koulu is Niilo's favorite. We watch the video demonstrations multiple times (why? Only a 2-year old knows) or immediately start in on the craft demonstrated. We have a pumpkin bursting with hattivatti (hattifatteners, the ghost-like Moomin characters) we made for Halloween, a Finnish flag flapping in a snowstorm we made for independence day, a barn and barnyard animals, and Moomins made of toiled paper rolls. The projects are creative and fun – they are definitely crafts we will repeat again and again. Since my son is so young, I do most of the crafting, so the same projects can be done again next year with a little more help from him.

I grew up speaking Finnish at home and knew Finnish before English. Now that I have my own child, I want him to grow up



Above: Some of Hanna and Niilo's handiwork.

knowing the Finnish language and being able to communicate in Finnish; especially with relatives who don't speak any English, like my grandmother. I speak Finnish to my son as often as I can, but my Finnish isn't perfect and it's hard to teach a language through a one-sided conversation (I speak English with my spouse). Hearing Finnish-language conversations among adults is important for kids learning a new or second language.

Prior to the pandemic, Finlandia Foundation Suomi Chapter hosted monthly "coffee hour" conversation groups for Finnish language speakers and learners.

I enjoyed participating in these meet-ups with Niilo, where he was able to hear a variety of conversations in Finnish and spoken Finnish from people other than his mother and grandmother. These meetings have been on hold until it is safe to gather in person again. For now, reading Finnish books and watching Suomi Koulu lessons online have provided a fun way for Niilo to keep learning and building his Finnish language skills.

By Hanna Winter

Finnish Number System Patterns

1 – yksi	11 – yksitoista	30 – kolmekymmentä
2 – kaksi	12 – kaksitoista	40 – neljäkymmentä
3 – kolme	13 – kolmetoista	50 – viisikymmentä
4 – neljä	14 – neljätoista	60 – kuusikymmentä
5 – viisi	15 – viisitoista	70 – seitsemänkymmentä
6 – kuusi	16 – kuusitoista	80 – kahdeksänkymmentä
7 – seitsemän	17 – seitsemäntoista	90 – yhdeksänkymmentä
8 – kahdeksan	18 – kahdeksäntoista	100 – sata
9 – yhdeksän	19 – yhdeksäntoista	
10 – kymmenen	20 – kaksikymmentä	

Numbers from zero to ten are specific words: nolla [0], yksi [1], kaksi [2], kolme [3], neljä [4], viisi [5], kuusi [6], seitsemän [7], kahdeksan [8], yhdeksän [9], and kymmenen [10].

From eleven to nineteen, the numbers are formed from the matching digits, adding the -toista suffix at the end, which means from the second (ten): yksitoista [11], kaksitoista [12], kolmetoista [13], neljätoista [14], viisitoista [15], kuusitoista [16], seitsemäntoista [17], kahdeksäntoista [18], and yhdeksäntoista [19].

The tens are formed by adding the -kymmentä suffix (partitive case of kymmenen, ten) at the end of the matching multiplier digit, with the obvious exception of ten: kymmenen [10], kaksikymmentä [20], kolmekymmentä [30], neljäkymmentä [40], viisikymmentä [50], kuusikymmentä [60], seitsemänkymmentä [70], kahdeksänkymmentä [80], and yhdeksänkymmentä [90]. When composed with a digit, numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine are formed by saying the ten, then the digit with no space (e.g.: kaksikymmentäviisi [25]).

Hundred (sata, plural sataa) and thousand (tuhat, plural tuhatta) are not separated from the other numbers by a space (e.g.: satakaksikymmentäyksi [121], tuhatkaksisataayhdeksäntoista [1,219]). Actually, all the numbers are written with no space at all, creating very long words.

By Brend Hunt-Holma

Justice and the Police

In recent months police brutality has been one of the top news items. After recorded and televised killings and murders of young (mainly black) people, folks of all ages and colors started huge demonstrations all around the country. The Black Lives Matter movement became a major force in politics and news. The Nordic countries, as usual, have a lot to teach the US.

Finnish Police Education Reforms

Early 1990's - Conscious development of better and more academic education. Leadership training becomes longer (3 years) and more advanced. Researchers are recruited into the Police Academy. Basic training becomes longer (2.5 years).

1998 - Police Academy is given a polytechnic status. It becomes the Police College of Finland. Research Department is founded.

2008 - The Police College and the National Police School merge into the new Police College of Finland, in Tampere. The aim: Basic training of a constable will be a B.A. level of vocational education at the polytechnic level.

The mentality and police training in the US is true Wild West!! The only requirement to become a police officer is to have your GED! There are no federal guidelines for training, which varies widely from state to state, or even neighboring municipalities. The length can be as short as 13, or up to 25 weeks. The average number of hours is only about 600. In 37 states, one can suit up and wear a badge before finishing the course. According to one study of 80 countries, the

US had the shortest training. Even Iraq and Afganistan train their police better. At the other end of the spectrum, Finland, Norway and Germany have the longest training in the world at 4,000 hours (100 weeks).

The police mentality in this country is definitely warrior/soldier, instead of guardian. Firearm training can be about 168 hours total. Mental health issues are taught for only 10 hours. By contrast, police officers in Finland have only 10 days a year at the shooting range.

Police departments in the US are run like military units with uniforms, badges, marches, and mental breaking. No wonder many retired military persons run these schools. A big part of the training is to whip up rage and how to take down a person. In this country, any company, or individual without any qualifications can start, or fund a training school. Many recruits have anger management issues, so becoming a police officer is a natural choice for them.

Another big problem is the militarization of the police force with military weapons and armored vehicles. Many municipalities spend 1/3rd to 1/2 of their budgets on their police force. It would be cheaper and better to spend more money on social services and training. The happiest country in the world, Finland, (3 years running), determined the value of taking care of her citizens.

The Nordic Countries have enormously smaller police departments and prison systems, and less violent crime, especially murders. Following their basic approach, could allow American cities to cleanse the abuse and enjoy less crime. A recent University of Helsinki study found some of the lowest murder rates in the world in

Norway and Finland.

Nordic clearance rates (the number of murders versus arrests) were as follows: Iceland-100% Finland-99%, Norway and Denmark-97%, and Sweden 83%. In the US, the clearance rate was a meager 62%.

The Nordic countries also have far less police officers per capita, and vastly fewer people in prison. These facilities run on the premise of rehabilitating prisoners and are more like "country clubs" in this country for the rich and famous. Education and work training are important parts of the system.

Undoubtedly, the main reason for low violent crime rates is the generous Nordic welfare state, which provides material security, and higher equality to most people. It was recognized a long time ago, that the main factors for crime are material deprivation and inequality.

Compared to American standards, Nordic sentences are much lighter. Non-life sentences for murder range from 10 years (Finland) to almost 14 (Norway). After serving 1/3rd to 1/2 of their time, they are eligible for parole. Prisoners with life sentences are eligible for parole after 12-14 years. In contrast, the average murder sentence in this country is about 40 years.

There are no death sentences any more in the whole EU. In the States, only 13 states have abolished the death sentence.

By Asko Hamalainen

Finland is Winning the War on Fake News. What It's Learned May Be Crucial to Western Democracy.

Helsinki, Finland – On a recent afternoon in Helsinki, a group of students gathered to hear a lecture on a subject that is far from a staple in most community college curriculums.

Standing in front of the classroom at Espoo Adult Education Centre, Jussi Toivanen worked his way through his PowerPoint presentation. A slide titled “Have you been hit by the Russian troll army?” included a checklist of methods used to deceive readers on social media: image and video manipulations, half-truths, intimidation and false profiles.

Another slide, featuring a diagram of a Twitter profile page, explained how to identify bots: look for stock photos, assess the volume of posts per day, check for inconsistent translations and a lack of personal information.

The lesson wrapped with a popular “deepfake” – highly realistic manipulated video or audio – of Barack Obama to highlight the challenges of the information war ahead.

The course is part of an anti-fake news initiative launched by Finland's government in 2014 – two years before Russia meddled in the US elections – aimed at teaching residents, students, journalists and politicians how to counter false information designed to sow division.

The initiative is just one layer of a multi-pronged, cross-sector approach the country is taking to prepare citizens of all ages for the complex digital landscape of today – and tomorrow. The Nordic country, which shares an 832-mile border with Russia, is acutely aware of what's at stake if it doesn't.

Finland has faced down Kremlin-backed propaganda campaigns ever since it declared independence from Russia 101 years ago. But in 2014, after Moscow annexed Crimea and backed rebels in eastern Ukraine, it became obvious that the battlefield had shifted: information warfare was moving online.

Toivanen, the chief communications specialist for the prime minister's office, said it is difficult to pinpoint the exact number of misinformation operations to have targeted the country in recent years, but most play on issues like immigration, the European Union, or whether Finland should become a full member of NATO (Russia is not a fan).

As the trolling ramped up in 2015, President Sauli Niinistö called on every Finn to take responsibility for the fight against false information. A year later, Finland brought in American experts to advise officials on how to recognize fake news, understand why it goes viral and develop strategies to fight it. The education system was also reformed to emphasize critical thinking.

Although it's difficult to measure the results in real-time, the approach appears to be working, and now other countries are looking to Finland as an example of how to win the war on misinformation.

"It's not just a government problem, the whole society has been targeted. We are doing our part, but it's everyone's task to protect the Finnish democracy," Toivanen said.

The Finns have a very unique and special strength in that they know who they are. And who they are is directly rooted in human rights and the rule of law, in a lot of things that Russia, right now, is not. There is a strong sense of what it means to be Finnish and that is a super power.

Not all nations have the type of narrative to fall back on that Finland does, though.

The small and largely homogenous country consistently ranks at or near the top of almost every index – happiness, press freedom, gender equality, social justice, transparency and education – making it difficult for external actors to find fissures within society to crowbar open and exploit.

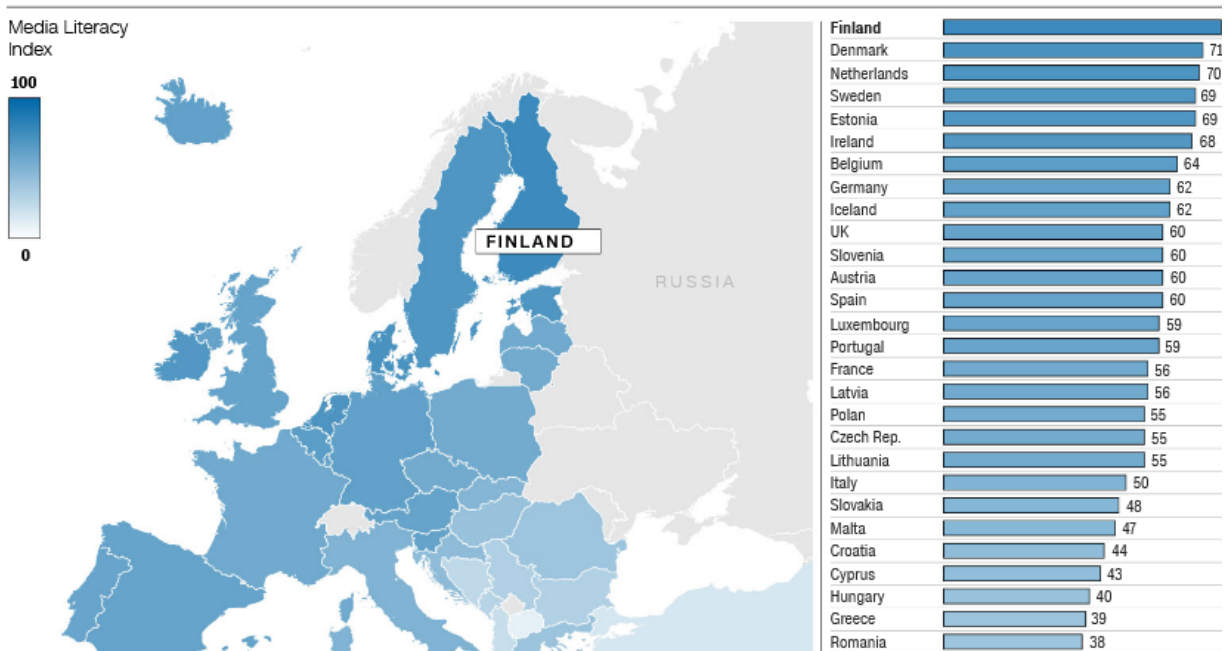
Finland also has long tradition of reading – its 5.5 million people borrow close to 68 million books a year and it just spent \$110 million on a state-of-the-art library, referred to lovingly as "Helsinki's living room." Finland has the highest PISA score for reading performance in the EU.

And as trust in the media has flagged in other parts of the globe, Finland has maintained a strong regional press and public broadcaster. According to the Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2018, Finland tops the charts for media trust, which means its citizens are less likely to turn to alternative sources for news.

Perhaps the biggest sign that Finland is

Media literacy across Europe

Finland ranked first out of 35 countries in a study measuring resilience to the post-truth phenomenon



winning the war on fake news is the fact that other countries are seeking to copy its blueprint. Representatives from a slew of EU states, along with Singapore, have come to learn from Finland's approach to the problem.

Finland's strategy was on public display ahead of the national elections, in an advertising campaign that ran under the slogan "Finland has the world's best elections – think about why" and encouraged citizens to think about fake news.

Officials didn't see any evidence of Russian interference in the vote, which Toivanen says may be a sign that trolls have stopped thinking of the Finnish electorate as a soft target.

"A couple of years ago, one of my colleagues said that he thought Finland has won the first round countering foreign-led hostile information activities.

But even though Finland has been quite successful, I don't think that there are any first, second or third rounds, instead, this is an ongoing game," Toivanen said.

"It's going to be much more challenging for us to counter these kinds of activities in the future. And we need to be ready for that."

By Eliza Mackintosh

Adapted from an article at www.cnn.com

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