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FINLANDIA FOUNDATION

Suomi Chapter

FINNOVATIONS

Promoting Finnish Heritage in Whatcom, Skagit, and Island Counties

Vol. V – No. 5

President's Corner

“RAUHAISAA JOULUA ja ONNELLISTA
UUTTA VUOTTA!”

(*MERRY CHRISTMAS and A HAPPY NEW YEAR!*)

This fall has been extremely busy time for our Chapter. Our main focus, of course, has been the Sibelius Jubilee Concert at Mt. Baker Theatre, which took place on Dec. 8th. I feel it was a GREAT SUCCESS.

As a very special guest, Ossi Rahkonen, the President of the Finlandia Foundation National, attended our Independence Reception and the Concert. At both events he spoke about the importance of Sibelius for our independence and his contributions to the music world.

The Concert started with “Happy Birthday” played behind the curtain. I could hear joyous laughter from the audience. “Porilaisten Marssi” and “Karelia Suite” by Sibelius followed and the enjoyable evening began. Some of the program highlights included: Wade King International School Singers (elementary school kids) singing four popular songs. Maria Mannisto, an acclaimed soprano performed seven songs by Sibelius and two by Edward Grieg. Our visiting violinist, Kati Valimaa (Sibelius Academy, Helsinki) played three humoresques by Sibelius. As usual, the evening ended with “Finlandia,” which is the best known music by our beloved composer.

The Mt. Baker Youth Orchestra (conducted by Sharyn Peterson) and the Wade King Singers (conducted by Trisha Norman) both gave rousing performances. The kids from Wade King sang “Finlandia” in Finnish!! They did the same at our Independence Party in 2014. I agree with many other people that last night was one of the best “Finlandia” performances ever!

Finlandia Foundation National supported about 250 Sibelius concerts this year. Ours was the only combined Sibelius concert/Independence Celebration in the whole country! In Bellingham, Sibelius' First or Second Symphony was performed in March (co-sponsored by Suomi Chapter), in

July and in November. In addition, his music was performed countless times around the country.

A few notes on Finland: Like in other European countries, the Syrian refugee crisis has reached Scandinavia, too. Finland's economy also keeps struggling. And one of the oldest still-flying air lines in the world, Finnair (founded in 1923), has the 5th best safety record.

I still remember very vividly the day of the worst accident at *Koivulahti* (Birch Bay), where 25 people perished in a DC-3 crash. As a child, I was attending a Teachers' Conference in Helsinki with my mother when it was announced. This was followed by a moment of silence.

Somewhat unexpectedly, I will spend my Christmas in Finland. My very close brother, Esko, passed away from aggressive cancer on December 2nd and I will fly to his funeral on the 14th. This will be my hardest Holidays. Please appreciate and spend time with your closest relatives! One can never tell how fast things can change.

I WISH YOU HAPPY HOLIDAYS and the BEST in 2016!!

-Asko



Above: The Mt. Baker Youth Orchestra and the Wade King Singers perform at the Sibelius Jubilee. Photo by Carol Sheppard.

Cover Photo: Oulanka National Park in Finland under heavy snow. (www.wilderness-travel.org)

Message from the President of the Republic of Finland to Finnish Expatriate Communities On 6th of December 2015

“On the sixth of December, each and every Finn can feel proud and privileged to celebrate our independence. Recent news from around the world has proven that peace, freedom and economic stability are not self-evident for everyone.

The conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as the shocking terrorist attacks, have affected us all. Violence and unrest have taken centre-stage in a dramatic way. This unrest and distress has triggered a flow of immigrants across Europe – we are still seeking sustainable solutions to this situation. However, it is clear that the fundamental solutions to curbing migration depend on achieving lasting stability in the conflict zones. Trust and a common approach by several countries will be needed in order to build peace. Recent incidents have shown that increasing cooperation is needed throughout the international community. We also increasingly need each other.

We Finns have settled in all parts of the world. Mobility around the world has been commonplace for many of us at some point in our lives.

Many Finns grow up in an international environment as a natural part of their lives and become used to the countless different outlooks they encounter around the world.

However, the Finnish identity knows no boundaries. It is an inherent part of us and our ties to Finland remain strong. You, expatriate Finns, are important ambassadors for Finland, spreading knowledge of the unique features of our identity and culture. Solidarity and integrity have been among Finland's strengths for our almost 100 years of independence. There is a continuous need for determined efforts towards solidarity – both within and beyond our national borders.

I wish you all a wonderful 98th Finnish Independence Day and restful days ahead as Christmas approaches.”

*Sauli Niinistö
President of the Republic*



Co-operation with Sibelius Melodies

This year we are celebrating the 150 year anniversary of Sibelius' birth. Sibelius is celebrated around the world, here in Vaasa, and by you in Bellingham, WA. The music of Sibelius is a very important part of our Finnish Nationality.

Vaasa City Orchestra performed many Sibelius symphonies this past autumn and in the conductor competition – which is an annual event here in Vaasa. Last week, the world famous soprano Camilla Nylund performed in our Sibelius Jubilee. Also six separate concerts were organized by the children in the Ostrabotnia area.

Vaasa is an international educational and cultural city. As a sister city, we have cooperated with you in Bellingham. Namely to share our thoughts on the teaching methods of both countries.

We will continue this work in many cultural areas. In the summer of 2017 we anticipate having your youth orchestra as our guest. Our warm welcome to your youth orchestra on their visit to Vaasa!

*Tomas Häyry
Mayor of Vaasa*

Finnish Icebreakers Sailing Through Northwest Passage for the First Time

The Northwest Passage is a sea route connecting the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans through Arctic waters via the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. The two Finnish icebreakers are returning from their summer season ice management missions in the Chukchi Sea, off the coast of Alaska.

Nordica started its journey on October 16 and was joined by *Fennica* on October 22. This journey offers the Finnish company Arctia Shipping a unique opportunity to cooperate with Canadian partners, observe multiyear ice on the route, and demonstrate the performance and operability of Finnish icebreakers even in the most demanding Arctic conditions. On board the icebreakers is an international group of scientists observing nature, Arctic fauna, as well as weather and ice conditions.

Exploring the Finnish Affinity For Coffee

Who would have guessed? The Finns are among the biggest coffee drinkers in the world, and have been for decades. Every Finn has his or her own reasons for loving coffee.

Finnish coffee is often made from light-roasted beans and tastes a bit acidic. Yet tastes have expanded, and nowadays Finnish producers and the country's booming café culture cater to all preferences, offering a spectrum from light to dark.

According to the International Coffee Association, each Finn consumes 12 kilograms of coffee per year. This makes Finland the second-largest country in the world for per-capita coffee consumption.

The love story between Finns and their *kahvi* has lasted for more than a century. Finnish novels, paintings and essays from the early 20th century all show how important the drink had already become.

However, the question remains: Why are Finns such big coffee fans?

(continued on page 6)



Finnish multi-purpose icebreaker MSV Nordica is on its way through the challenging ice conditions of the Northwest Passage

Both icebreakers are unique in a global sense – powerful icebreakers with properties ideally suited for tasks requiring maneuverability and accuracy in demanding Arctic conditions. In addition to outstanding icebreaking capacities, *Fennica* has a large working deck and an A-frame, making it useful in a wide range of research and offshore operations: from ice management to anchor handling and other support vessel functions. *Nordica's* specialty is a 160-ton crane, with an optional onboard A-frame. Just like her sister ship *Fennica*, *Nordica* meets strict EPA requirements on environment and emissions, making it an ideal choice for operations in the Arctic.

Finnish journalist Heikki Haapavaara and photographer Jarmo Vehkakoski are sailing on board *Nordica*. They both are from *Kauppalehti*, a commerce-oriented newspaper published in Helsinki. So far they have seen polar bears already three times, but have not had a chance to take pictures of these beautiful white creatures.

Those who read Finnish, can follow the daily blog of these journalists from the Northwest Passage – and the beautiful photos need no language!

www.kauppalehti.fi/kirjoittaja/heikki-haapavaara

*Adapted from the Finland in the U.S. Newsletter-
October 2015*



Finlandia Foundation Suomi Chapter Membership Form

JOIN US!!! Or RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP
DUES: Single \$25/yr Couples/Family \$30/yr
Supporting \$50 Lifetime \$300

Name: _____ Dues Enclosed \$ _____
 Address: _____ Newsletter donation \$ _____
 _____ My donation to FFSC _____
 _____ Grant & Scholarship \$ _____
 Telephone/Email _____ Total \$ _____

Please check here if you **DO NOT** wish to be acknowledged as Donor to FFSC

I would like to see my chapter support the following: _____

I would like to volunteer New/returning member Renewal

Dues and donations are tax deductible. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

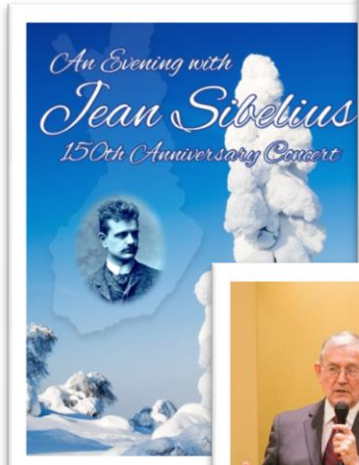
Return this form with your dues in the enclosed envelope to:

Finlandia Foundation Suomi Chapter - P.O. Box 2544 Bellingham WA 98227



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Jean Sibelius 150th Anniversary Jubilee Concert



From Left to Right:
Sibelius Jubilee Concert poster, Ossi Rahkonen speaks at the Independence Reception, Visiting violinist Kati Valimaa (Sibelius Academy, Helsinki)

Janne could not be more proud! Jean Sibelius (nicknamed Janne by his Finnish co-patriots) was born in 1865 – The same year that our own civil war ended. During the period of romanticism at the end of 1800 he composed seven *sinfonias* and many other pieces of music, becoming Finland’s most important composer of all time.

And what was most important, was that he raised music to the level that encouraged other artists to be thirsty for Independence. Finland will celebrate her centennial in 2017.

My sincere and heartfelt thanks to the Board of Finlandia Foundation Suomi Chapter, Finlandia Foundation National, Helsinki Sibelius Academy and its student union, Helsinki Philharmonic and our local community support to make this Jubilee known in Bellingham and Whatcom County.

*Tapio K. Holma
Chair, Sibelius 150th Anniversary Jubilee*

Herrankukkaro

Herrankukkaro is an old fishing village, located just 30 minutes' drive from *Turku* (the previous capital of Finland) and *Naantali*.

It features old private cottages, saunas and heated outdoor pools, as well as dozens of meeting and dining rooms. *Herrankukkaro* is open year-round for groups, companies and tourists.

Arriving at *Herrankukkaro* is like stepping decades back in time. Its nostalgic decor and relaxed atmosphere creates a perfect place for relaxation and well-being. Guests can enjoy smoke saunas (the original and "sweetest" type), heated pools, boating, swimming and hiking. In the winter time, the salt water freezes, offering skiing and skating and sometimes driving on the ice. The cuisine is home-made and local. There is wild food and, of course, lots of different kinds of fish and seafood.

One of the main attractions is world's largest *savusauna* (smoke sauna), which seats up to 124 people. Guests can take a dip in the cold or even frozen sea!

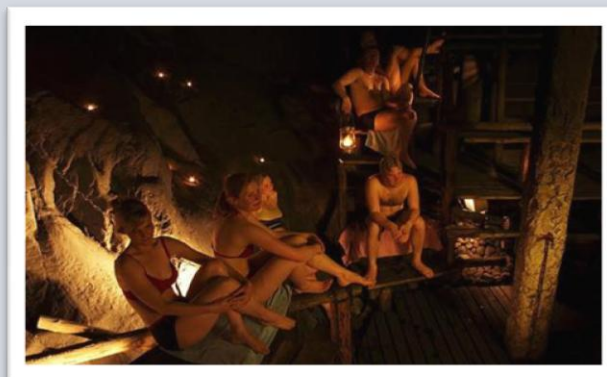
The innkeeper and owner, Pentti-Oskari Kangas, tells that this fishing village is several hundred years old. They loved to turn it into a nostalgic place, where people could enjoy peace and quietness year around. The basic philosophy behind *Herrankukkaro* is authenticity, honesty, nostalgia, and keeping Finnish traditions (especially smoke sauna culture) alive.

Kangas tells that at this time over 1/3 of the guests arrive from abroad. "If the tourists want to experience something truly Finnish, *Herrankukkaro* offers this to all senses. For example all the food is home-made and fish plays a central role at the dinner table. Our local fishers smoke, flame and broil the day's catch and if the guests want to, they can even roast their own fish over a camp fire."

Earlier this year, 47 international travel bloggers visited Finland and *Herrankukkaro* was the only

proper tour destination on the Top Ten list. They praised more general things like the northern lights, nature, local people and cuisine, but visiting the smoke sauna and preparing their own food over the campfire ranked as one of the highlights of their trip to Finland.

By Asko Hamalainen
Adapted from the Finland in the U.S.
Newsletter- August 2015



Folks Enjoying the Savusauna

Coffee (cont'd)

Lasse Vidman, an award-winning Finnish barista, says their passion for the hot beverage is hard to explain. "Part of the reason could be that we live in a cold country, so we need to drink warm, sustaining beverages," he says.

He also suggests another, more sentimental reason: "Coffee is also linked with our best memories. For instance, when I was a child, I loved to go ice-fishing in the winter, with a thermos full of good, hot coffee in my bag. I am also sure that every Finn remembers where he or she was when he had his or her first taste of coffee."

Adapted from the Finland in the U.S. Newsletter-
June 2015



Winter War Memories

We lived at *Pyhajarvi* (Holy Lake) in Karelia, where I was born. In late October, soldiers and horses were moved to border villages. My oldest brother was just starting in the army. Our house was assigned 15 men and horses, but it only had two bedrooms, a large *tupa* (all purpose room) and a kitchen. The soldiers slept on the floor.

In early November, the elderly and the very small children had to leave for an unknown destination. It was the first evacuation. All of this was done in case war should break out.

November 30th was rainy and cloudy. In the afternoon, a soldier who had listened to the radio came to our house. Russia had attacked Finland!! Helsinki and other cities had been bombed. The enemy attack came as a surprise without a declaration of war. Everyone was depressed. We spoke only in whispers and prayed silently. We had been advised that we had to be on our way within an hour after the order arrived.

On December 1st, the evening was quite clear. Someone rushed in and said: "Come and see - they are shooting with cannons!" We all rushed to the corner of the house and looked toward the Taipale River. It was probably 30 kilometers (20 miles) away. We could not see the path of the shells, but there was a flash every now and then when one exploded on the ground. It may have been our imagination, but we thought that we heard a distant roar. This was the thunder of cannon described in the tales of heroes!

Christmas was near, but what kind of Christmas would it be? The Christmas tree did not fit into the house now with all the soldiers. Candles glowed inside on the table. The windows had to be covered. We called the black-out curtains "Molotov Curtains."

On Christmas Eve the sauna was kept warm until morning, for everyone had to have the Christmas sauna.

In the evening, after a hurried day, my father brought the family bible to the table and asked a man named Ovaska, who had a clear, manly voice, to read the story of the birth of Jesus. Luckily, all of the soldiers were present.

Early on Christmas morning, the horses were hitched to the sleighs. The Christmas service began at 6 A.M. Someone had already started making coffee at home. They also made plenty of *pulla* (Finnish coffee bread) and cookies.

Mother gathered everyone together and said:

"I wish all of you a merry Christmas and a better New Year than this one. We have lived under the same roof now for two months, and it has all gone so well. We are just like one family. You are all longing to be there (home), especially Halttunen, whose little boy was born a few weeks ago. Let us trust that this war will end happily soon."

By Lempi Wilson



Helsinki, 1944

Editor's Note: The above story took place when Lempi was just 13 years old. While skiing home on December 26th, she was attacked by Russian machine gun fire. She escaped and was evacuated from Finland three days later.

Sadly, Lempi Wilson passed away in August of this year. To read more about her amazing life, please see our previous issue.



Finlandia Foundation *Suomi Chapter*

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We're on the web!
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Finland 100 USA

On December 6, 2015, Finland celebrated its 98th birthday. In just two years it will be time for Finland's centennial. The centennial will be the most significant commemorative year for a generation of Finns and people with Finnish roots all around the world.

The theme of the centennial year is "Together," and we hope that all Finns, Finnish-Americans and friends of Finland participate in the celebration in the U.S. Our goal is to arrange a series of events across the states together with all who wish to take part.

We are very grateful for all organizations and individuals who are willing to take part in making the year 2017 the best ever for Finland. We are interested in hearing your ideas and want to work together to create a memorable commemorative year.

More information: www.finland100USA.com

Adapted from the Finnish Embassy News

Support Finland's Winter War Memorial

Finland's epic struggle with the Soviet Union in 1939-40, known as The Winter War, is remembered in a striking monument that will be unveiled in 2017 at Kasarmitori Square in Helsinki.

He Who Brings the Light, a 20-foot tall soldier atop a 10-foot sphere, was designed by sculptor Pekka Kauhanen and will cost \$1.5 million, shared by the Government of Finland, City of Helsinki and the Winter War Association (WWA).

The WWA is seeking donations to help complete the project. Finlandia Foundation is acting as fiscal agent for its U.S. fundraising, and contributions to WWA may be made through the FFN. Donations of all sizes are welcome. Individuals donating EUR 10,000 (about \$11,000) and corporate donors of EUR 30,000 (\$33,000) will have their names inscribed on the wall of the Ministry of Defence facing the Winter War Memorial.

Donate online at FinlandiaFoundation.org or mail a check to FFN at P.O. Box 92046, Pasadena, CA 91109-2046. Be sure to note that the contribution is for the Winter War Memorial.



The proposed design for "He Who Brings the Light."