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FINLANDIA FOUNDATION

Suomi Chapter

FINNOVATIONS

Promoting Finnish Heritage in Whatcom, Skagit, and Island Counties

Vol. V – No. 2

President's Corner

Spring has sprung!! Along comes garden work and lawn mowing with Spring Cleaning and other chores.

The Chapter has been busy planning for our main activities for the year. I feel the biggest events are the Sibelius Jubilee concerts. The first is on March 29th, when Whatcom Symphony Orchestra plays the Second Symphony.

Before the performance, we will host a reception at Vinostrology at 1 P.M., along with banners and audio visuals about our beloved composer's life. I hope that many of our members and friends will attend.

Seattle Symphony will perform all seven symphonies. The first one was played in the middle of March. It is nice to have the musical world appreciate a Finnish composer's work.

On a more "serious note," next time you get a speeding ticket, you might thank your lucky stars for not zooming on Finnish roads. Just recently, a Finnish multi-millionaire was written up for a \$60,000 ticket. The record holder for several years has been a Nokia executive with a \$100,000 fine!!! Your "reward" for speeding is based on your income. I feel it is a fair system.

According to our by-laws, five of the Board Directors will serve one year terms, so members in good standing can vote for a new Board. All members-at-large will be elected every two years, and all current ones just started their terms this fiscal year.

On April 25th, our Annual Meeting will be held at the Cordata Co-Op Store. It is a potluck event with a Finnish movie and music. Recently, we

purchased a projector and we are hoping to start showing Finnish films.

There are a few music events in the planning for the Summer. The Bellingham Festival of Music will play Sibelius' music.

We are also hoping to get Olli Hirvonen, current POY (Performer of Year) for Finlandia Foundation National to return with his Finnish oboe player to perform in June. He had a Jazz concert here last September.

Jean Sibelius was born on December 8, 1865, so this year we are celebrating 150th Jubilee Year. On his birthday, we are planning to have a major event in Bellingham. Very likely, a young musician from Helsinki will be our soloist. Her name is Kati Valimaa. It is going to be a great finale for many Sibelius events!!!

I wish everybody a great Spring and hope to see you at our events!

Asko

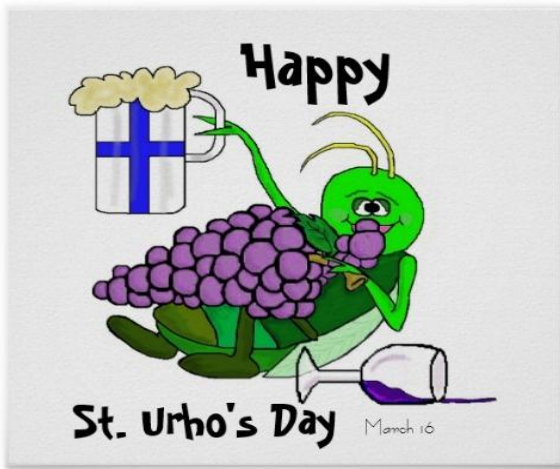


*Above: Spring Tulips, Photo by Tapio Holma
Cover Photo: Sibelius Monoment, Helsinki*

St. Urho – Legendary Patron Saint of Finland

The legend of St. Urho (Hero) originated in Northern Minnesota in the 1950's. There are two different stories of the birth of St. Urho: Fables by Sulo Havumaki or the tongue-in-cheek tales told by Richard Mattson.

It is celebrated on March 16th (one day before St. Patrick's) throughout the U.S.A and Canada, and more recently in Finland.



The legend of St. Urho tells that with a trident he chased the grass hoppers out of ancient Finland, thus saving the grape harvest and the jobs of Finnish vineyard workers. He uttered the magic words: "Heinasirkka, heinasirkka, mene taalta Hiiteen!!" Translation: "Grass hopper, grass hopper, go to Hell!!"

St. Urho and his wife, Urholiina, wear crowns and regal clothes of royal purple and lime green, decorated with grapes and grass hoppers. For 40 years the governors have proclaimed March 16th as the official St. Urho's Day. The two statues of St. Urho are located in Menahga, MN and Finland, MN.

Disclaimer: Grapes have never grown in Finland, it is too damn cold in winter!!

By Asko Hamalainen

Jean Sibelius



Jean Sibelius composed his 2nd symphony in 1902. Finland at that time was a Grand Duchy of Imperial Russia and the governor of Finland was considered an enemy of the country. During this period in Finland, the Russian language was forced on the country and many Finnish men were forced to fight in the war between the Russian Army and Japan.

In the light of these tumultuous years Jean Sibelius composed his second symphony. He himself conducted the performances of the symphony in March 1902 in Helsinki. It received a fantastic response from the folks in the Capital.

These are the sentences and statements his best friend Robert Kajanus wrote in the local newspaper:

"(Andante) gives you an idea against all wrongness, what the Russian daily political atmosphere will wrest from the light of the sun and the fragrance of the flowers...

(Scherzo) will give an idea of planning for the better life and the desire for freedom from oppression. The G-Major oboe part will speak warmly about the danger, which is close by....

(Finale) will reach a climax, which will be ideal for a listener to dream better circumstances for the future."

By Tapio Holma

Embassy of Finland is Now Platinum!

1/14/2015

Our embassy building in Washington D.C. has been awarded the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum certification. It is the first embassy in the U.S. to achieve this level of certification.

The embassy is known for its beautiful architecture and close connection to nature, and now it is even greener than before.

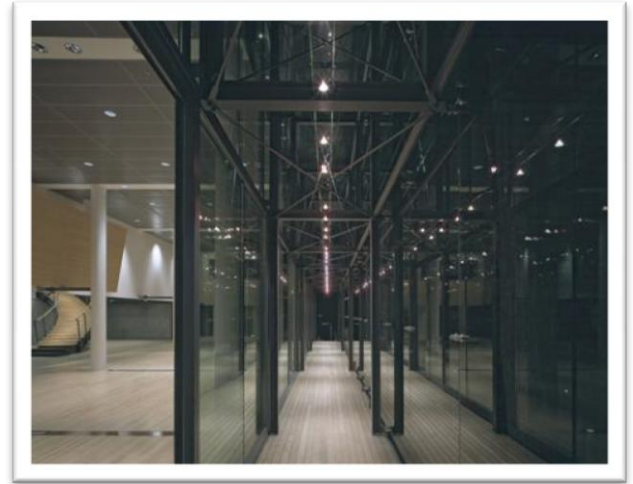
"I am extremely proud of this achievement. Our embassy has gone from Green, to Gold, and now Platinum. All this reflects Finland's strong commitment to environmental sustainability," says Ambassador Ritva Koukku-Ronde.



The Embassy of Finland is a pioneer in sustainability. It was awarded the Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star in 2008, and it was the first diplomatic mission in Washington D.C. to gain a LEED certification in 2010 (then on a Gold-level).

The embassy did not want to stop at this level, as energy efficiency is only growing in importance. When it was time to renew the Gold certificate, the embassy decided to strive for Platinum. Electricity, gas and water consumption were followed even closer than before, less waste was produced, and the embassy even bought some bikes for the staff to use.

Green thinking impacts all day-to-day actions of the embassy. It has a rigorous green purchasing policy, toilets and faucets are fitted with water-saving devices, recycling is a top priority and the staff is encouraged to walk, bike or drive hybrid cars to work. The results have been worth the effort. Currently the embassy is using 50% less electricity and 65% less gas compared to the mid-2000s.



The certification builds a unique transatlantic link with the U.S. Embassy in Helsinki - being the only other Platinum LEED Embassy in the world.

Acting on climate change is a top priority both for Finland and the United States. The U.S. Government is actively promoting green growth, and in Finland the government aims to develop the Cleantech sector into a 50 billion industry by 2020, creating as many as 40,000 new jobs along the way.

Taking this into consideration, it is only natural that the Finnish embassy in Washington D.C. and the U.S. embassy in Helsinki are making efforts to stay at the forefront in green building initiatives.

Edited and Summary By Brend Holma



Shrimp Cocktail Salad

*I discovered this at a small deli in
Lovisa, Finland*



3 cups small, cooked salad shrimp

1 cup crème fraiche (or 1 cup sour cream mixed with a little fresh lemon juice)

1/4 cup mayo

1 clove garlic, finely chopped

1 bunch freshly chopped dill

1 bunch freshly chopped chives

1 leek, finely chopped

1 apple, peeled and finely chopped (NOT red or gold delicious, preferably more of a sour apple like granny smith)

fresh ground pepper, to taste

white pepper to taste

salt to taste

fresh squeezed lemon juice to taste (about 1 TBLS)

Mix all of the above ingredients. Fold into decorative glass bowls or goblets. Garnish with fresh herbs or greens.



By Maria Bjorklund

"KALEVALA"

A professor at the University of Lapland aims to create an alternative *Kalevala* as a shamanic epic based on an ancient bear cult.

Elias Lonnrot compiled the Finnish national epic in the 19th century, selecting folk poetry that reflecting his viewpoint as a devout Christian and wanting to depict the Finns as a civilized, monotheistic people - according to Juha Penttinen, who is a professor of northern ethnography at the Institute of Northern Culture in Tomio. Penttinen also says that Lonnrot himself said that seven different *Kalevala* versions could have been made from the sources.

Penttinen feels there is a need for a new epic closer to the original view of the tellers of the tales. He plans to compile his "Alternative *Kalevala*" from original narratives that Lonnrot rejected, especially poems about bear cults which were once widespread among Northern peoples before the Christian Era. He wants to remain faithful to the original poetic wordings and the same trochaic meter which gives the *Kalevala* its rhythm.

The story will include the celestial creation of the bear, bear constellations, the animal's natural life cycle on earth, the death and burial of a bear killed by a hunter, and a mythical wedding before the bear returns to the skies.

Summary By Mary Penttinen-King from <https://www.facebook.com/thisisfinlandFB>.
"Alternative *Kalevala* in the making," by Fran Weaver, Feb. 2012, updated 2015.
Note: This is one of my favorite sites.



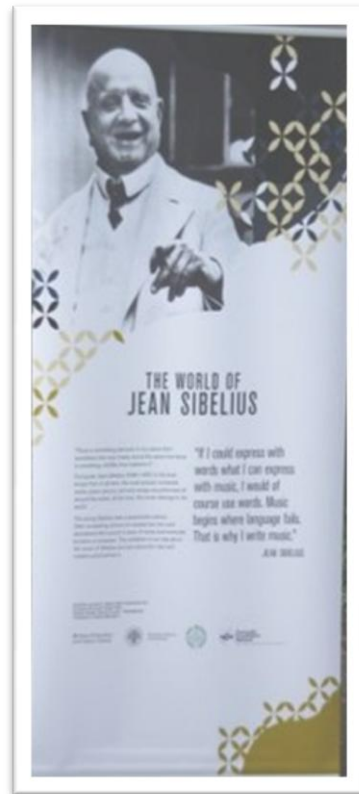
Bear Spirit

SIBELIUS 150 JUBILEE BEGINS

March started with a great Sibelius week at Seattle, where the Seattle Symphony presented all of his seven symphonies.

As a beautiful addition we also had Pekka Kuusisto from Finland visiting the Symphony to play Sibelius' Violin Concerto. The audience showed their appreciation by applauding with a standing ovation and five curtain calls. The audience was exhilarated about the performance.

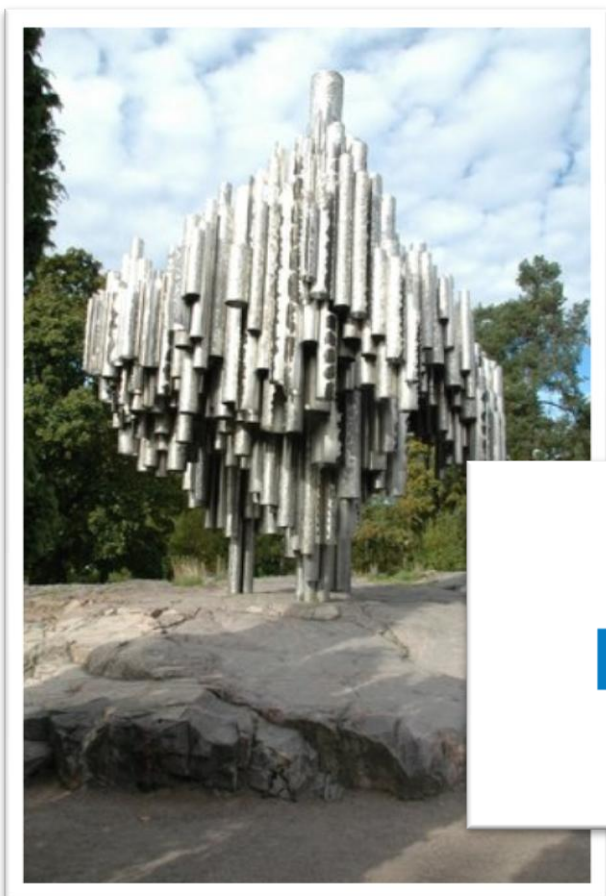
Whatcom Symphony, our own community orchestra, played Sibelius' second symphony on March 29th and the Finlandia Foundation hosted a reception before the event at Vinostrology. Also, the banners of Sibelius were erected in the auditorium lobby of the Mt Baker Theatre. The audience had the pleasure of viewing the same during the intermission.



Sibelius Banner

Later this year we will have our own concert, which we are sponsoring with Mt. Baker Youth Orchestra. For this we'll also bring a soloist from Finland and Wade King School singers will perform with the orchestra. More on this later this summer.

*By Tapio Holma
Sibelius Jubilee Chair*



Sibelius Monoment, Helsinki

SIBELIUS
150 JUBILEE
1865 2015

Finland's Parliamentary Election

The parliamentary election for the Finnish Eduskunta (unicameral legislative body) is taking place right now. Out of 2,000 candidates of 10 various parties, 200 representatives in total are elected in various voting regions. Also, those with the dual citizenships in North America are eligible to vote.

The predicted consensus is that the center will gain power this year and conservatives will hold their second position.

The government therefore is to be formed of two major parties with some smaller parties to join in, in order to get the majority in Eduskunta.

During the last Finnish Presidential Election a few years ago some 7500 Americans voted, which represented approximately 40% of all eligible voters here.

We will announce the results in our next newsletter.

KL

"Sami," not "Lapp"

Lapp n., Lappish adj. Derogatory and archaic term for Sami people and Sami subjects said to mean "outcast."

The above definition is from a glossary located at <http://baiki.org/content/glossary.htm>. Very informative by itself.

"*Baiki*" (bye-h'kee) is the nomadic reindeer herding society's word for the cultural identity that survives when people move from one place to another.

Baiki: the International Sami Journal grew out of searching for Sami connections in North America. The Sami are the indigenous people of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Russian Kola Peninsula. In the north the Sami area is called *Sapmi*, and in the south, *Aerjel Saemieh*.

There are nine Sami languages, related to the Samoyedic, Uralic, and Altaic language groups. About 80,000 Sami people live in the United States.

The Sami refer to their spiritual belief system as "The Nature Religion," whereby semi nomadic peoples organized their lives according to Nature's subsistence cycles.

Sami history parallels that of the earth's other indigenous peoples, including Native Americans in this country after contact with European cultures.

Children were placed in boarding schools, people were forced to accept Christianity, and assimilation was expected - all of which contributed to abuse of natural resources.

Today the Sami are incorporating new technologies in the revival of languages, the *yoik* (a particular sort of song singing), and other traditional arts.

The Sami have their own parliaments in Norway, Sweden and Finland, and relationships between the Sami and their former colonizers are improving.

Taken from "Baiki's History and Mission," *Baiki*, Issue #36, Spring 2013.

Recommended: www.baiki.org and <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sami-Cultural-Center-of-North-America/317519738265068?sk=info&tab=overview>.

By Mary Penttinen-King (of Finnish-Sami Ancestry)



A Sami Woman Among Reindeer

Calendar of Events

- April 25 – FF Suomi Chapter Annual Meeting at 3:30 PM at Community Food Co-Op on Cordata (For more info, see “Annual Meeting” below)
- May 1 – Vappu: Celebration of the Spring
- June 25 – Juhannus: Midsummer Festivities
- July 3 -19 – Bellingham Summer Festival of Music (Maestro Palmer will feature Sibelius Music)



Finlandia baseball hats, embroidered in Bellingham!

\$ 25.00 postage paid



Finlandia Foundation *Suomi Chapter*

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Finland: Design Environments

The Nordic Heritage Museum recently arranged a very interesting exhibit about Finland and its design world emphasizing environmental issues.

The exhibit was opened by the Finnish Ambassador to the United States, Madame Ritva Koukku Rohde.

The Exhibit is open through July for the review. The exhibit features various products from Finland where the environment is considered when manufacturing commercial products.



Nordic Heritage Museum

By Tapio Holma

Annual Meeting

We are having our annual FFSC meeting on April 25, 2015, starting 3.30PM at the Cordata Community Co-Op, upstairs board room (opposite Whatcom Community College).

Agenda:

Election of the officers and board members at large.

General topics:

Sibelius Year Jubilee activity, future programs for the foundation & independence day plans this year and for 2017 (Finland's 100 year anniversary).

After the meeting, a Finnish movie (yet to be decided from the material available from the library of our Seattle FF chapter) will be shown.

The meeting follows an early potluck dinner.

Please co-ordinate with Asko about dishes, salads, desserts etc.

Editor: Cassie Revell