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This Edition Edited by: Cassie Revell  
with Co-Editor Brend Holma

# FINLANDIA FOUNDATION

*Suomi Chapter*

# FINNOVATIONS

Promoting Finnish Heritage in Whatcom, Skagit, and Island Counties

**Vol. V – No. 3**

## President's Corner

Sunshine and nice weather are finally here! Our Chapter has been busy planning new events for the next six months. First, let me take a look back at what we have accomplished the last 11 months.

In September, the new POY (Performer of Year) Olli Hirvonen had an enjoyable concert at the Boundary Bay Brewery. He is a very talented, 25-year-old jazz guitarist.

In December, we celebrated Finland's 97th Independence Day at the Squaticum Boat House. It was well-attended and people were excited by the many Finnish delicacies and performances by local youth musicians. The highlight was "Finlandia" sung by young Wade King Elementary students in Finnish!!

In March, the Whatcom Symphony Orchestra performed Sibelius' Second Symphony. We were the co-sponsors of the event.

In late April, we had our Annual Meeting at the Cordata Community Food Co-op. All the current board members were re-elected. We enjoyed Finnish foods like *sima* and *tippaleipia*, traditional Vappu (May 1st) goodies.

Last winter we purchased audio-visual equipment and we watched *Prinsessa* (Princess), a movie based on a 1930's mental health facility. Personally, it was interesting to see the main male lead, Samuli Edelman. His dad and I went to the same middle-high school for eight years and graduated on May 31st, 1965. It is customary in Finland to invite 50-year graduates to the ceremony to be celebrated. I am pretty sure that Toni Edelman will be there!

Looking forward: The next events will be on June 11th and 12th. Olli Hirvonen and Saku Mattila will be playing Sibelius and other Finnish tunes at the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship and in Mount Vernon at Conway Muse. For the second half of the Bellingham concert, two local musicians will join them. I hope many of our members will attend these enjoyable evenings.

We are also celebrating Juhannus (Mid-Summer) at Lake Padden. It will be a potluck, so bring a dish you would like to share. We hope to have a newish game, *Molky*, to play as well as darts.

This summer, Maestro Palmer will perform Sibelius' First Symphony at the Bellingham Festival of Music. The main concert will be at the Mt. Baker Theater on December 8th – Sibelius' 150th birthday. We have been planning this event for a few months now with Sharyn Peterson. Her Youth Orchestra will be joined by a young violinist from Sibelius Academy in Helsinki and a soprano from Seattle. Pretty much the whole concert is already planned.

I wish that many people will join us in these events planned for the summer and fall. We also need articles for our newsletters, so keep your quills sharpened!

**HAVE A GREAT SUMMER & FALL!!**

*Asko Hamalainen*

“Gratitude is the fairest blossom, which springs from the soul.” - *Henry Ward Beecher*



*Above: Eight Spot Skimmer, Photo by Tapio Holma  
Cover Photo: A Quiet Finnish Lake  
(www.globeimages.net)*

# Geographic Names & Concepts

I recently had a conversation with a friend who wanted to know if Finland belongs to Scandinavia.

The short answer is no. However, very often Finland is referred to as part of Scandinavia, mainly in marketing and advertising. I have a map of Scandinavia on my wall made by the National Geographic Society where even Finland is described as a part of Scandinavia (in addition to Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland).

Scandinavia is a region consisting of Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Finland does not belong to Scandinavia, although in marketing you occasionally see the country included as a part of this territory. Even the City of Oulu has advertised itself as the center of the Scandinavian North. In the Finnish Encyclopedia, the northwest corner of Suomi (Finland) belongs to Scandinavia.

Here are some facts in a nutshell:

- > A Scandinavian person lives in Scandinavia
- > *Scandinavic* = something that is from Scandinavia
- > *Fennoscandia* is a geographic term and consists of Scandinavia, Finland, the Kuolan Peninsula and Eastern Karelia
- > The Scandinavian languages are Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Icelandic and Faerish
- > The bedrock of Precambrian time stretches to this territory
- > *Fennomaani* = A fanatically Finnish-minded person



*Like in this picture, Finland is often depicted as being part of Scandinavia, when it in fact is not*

- > *Fennougrist* = fenno-ugrish language expert
- > The Fenno-Ugrish languages are Finnish, Estonian, Hungarian (largest) and many other smaller groups found mainly in the Russian Federation.

Altogether there are supposedly some 25 million folks who speak some of these languages. Many of them, however, are dying out in the areas mentioned earlier.

As a simple solution to this purely academic discussion about who we Finns are and where we come from, just think of us as part of the Nordic Countries.

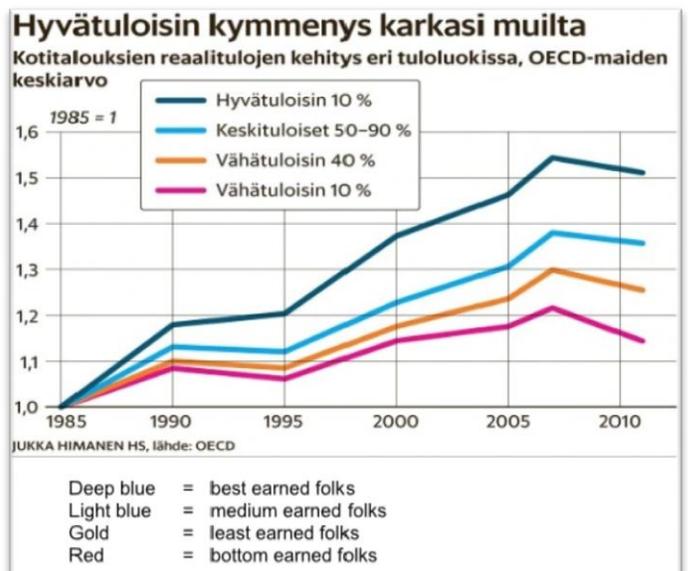
*By Tapio Holma*

# Finland's Income Differences

Finland's income distribution makes the nation one of the most economically equal in the world.

According to the latest OECD study, the distribution of income in industry-related matters puts Finland in the top seven countries in the world. On a per-capita basis, the folks in Finland enjoy a good living compared to any other European nation (as a comparison, China is in the 81st position because of a huge population where the differences between income levels vary widely).

Included is the comparison curve of the trend of development of various earning groups.



## Finland's Parliamentary Election

The Nation has spoken. Finland's recently-held parliamentary election did not have too many surprises.

The Center Party won 46 seats, which was expected in a new parliament, and is forming the government with others. Finland has a multi-party system and the winning party always needs help from the other major parties in order to have a majority in the Parliament (*Eduskunta* in Finnish).

Finland is divided into fifteen electoral districts based on the provinces and their inhabitant population. Helsinki, the capital, has its own district and the surrounding areas around the capital, Uudenmaan Vaalipiiri (Nyland electoral district) has the largest representative group selected.

Helsinki will get 21 representatives and Uusimaa gets 34. This is due to the fact that almost every fourth person in Finland lives in one of these two districts.

The Parliament (unicameral) has total of 200 representatives. The party, which gets most of the voters usually, forms the government. Of those selected to the Parliament, almost 25% are retired. There will be 73 new members. 83 members of Parliament will be women and 117 will be men.

All Finnish citizens, 18 years of age are eligible to vote. In this election 35,251 Finns outside of Finland voted in various countries. There were some 242,000 eligible voters, most of them living in Sweden. In the States, 2,481 cast their votes representing some 15% of all eligible here to vote.

*By Tapio Holma*

“Goodness is the only investment that never fails.” -  
*Henry David Thoreau*



## Sister City/Friendship City

Does your city or community have a sister city/friendship arrangement with some other city in the world? For cultural, business and other reasons many cities have developed a friendly relationship with some other city in the world from the beginning of the history of mankind.

Here in Bellingham, we have seven sister cities, the oldest of them being Tateyama, Japan. The relationship was established more than 50 years ago. Other cities such as Port Stevens, Australia, Nakhodka of Russia, Cheongju of South Korea, Vaasa of Finland, Punta Arenas of Chile, and Tsesterleg of Mongolia followed.

Many cities of Finland have established a sister city arrangement with another American city. We might mention just a few of them. Jarvenpaa with Pasadena, California; Espoo with Irving, Texas; and Porvoo with Hancock, Michigan.

Also, many Finnish cities have a twin city relationship (comparable to a sister city) with many more towns in Europe and elsewhere.

In the States, the sister city movement started during President Eisenhower's administration as a part of the "People to People" program and SCI (Sister Cities International Organization was established and is based in Washington D.C.).

The Mission Statement: "Promoting peace through mutual respect, understanding and cooperation – one individual, one community at a time."

*By KL*

## Finland in Figures:

- > Population: 6.2 million
- > Official Languages: Finnish, Swedish (3% speaks Swedish only)
- > Surface Area: 338,000 square kilometers
- > Europe's 6th largest country
- > Two-thirds covered by forest (green gold to Finland)
- > 10% water comprising 187,888 lakes
- > Parliamentary democracy, Independence in 1917

# World Traveler

We recently had a chance to visit with Jorma Karhumaa in Seattle, WA on his way to Alaska to see the whales. This delightful and interesting Finnish man (from Oulu) shared some of his world adventures with us. The most recent trip was completed earlier this year in February. He went to the Republic of South Africa, Mauritius, Somalia, South Sudan and Kenya.

“Movement in Mogadishu, Somalia was such that we sat in an SUV with gunmen guarding the truck. Tourists were so rare that the Prime Minister visited and shook our hands,” he said.

Most of the trips Karhumaa has gone on have been to Asia. According to him the world's best state is in Bhutan, the “Kingdom of the Poor” in the Himalayas. There, the most important thing is gross national happiness.



*Mr. Jorma Karhumaa with his well-travelled pack*

## Hanneke Wrome

A significant archeological shipwreck was found last year in the Gulf of Finland!

Two sailing vessels left Lubeck, Germany on November 10th, 1468. They were bound for Tallinn, Estonia, an important Hanseatic hub. The ships were about 30 m (100 ft) long and carried 200 people, along with 200 parcels of fabric, 1,200 barrels of honey and 10,000 gold coins. Due to storms, the ships sailed along the Finnish coast. Ten days later, *Hanneke Wrome* sank with all people on board. The other ship reached Tallinn safely. Further studies will be conducted this summer. It is estimated that the cargo is worth more than \$100 million!!!



*Karhumaa with a list of the countries he has visited. Space Needle, Seattle*

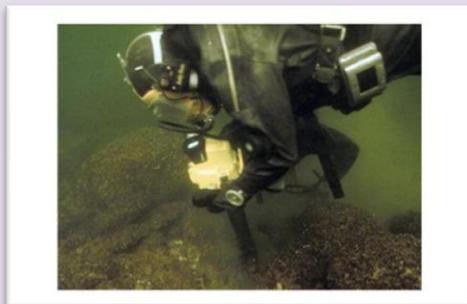
Antarctica is a pleasant nature destination. While there, Karhumaa sailed with the Russian Academy of Sciences.

“I saw 54 humpback whales, the closest coming next to our rubber boats. The penguins were in the thousands and, unfortunately, there were also a couple of Britons who behaved like the owners of the world!” he mused.

He has visited all countries in the world; one of the very few Finns (only three exists) who has, within the past three years, seen the whole globe and all sovereign countries (196 according to the last account).

He has also visited some 50 other areas which have not yet been established as independent countries - the largest of these being Greenland, which is a Danish protectorate.

*As Reported By Tapio Holma*



*Diver investigates the wreck of the Hanneke Wrome  
(www.ancient-origins.net)*

# 8 Ways Finland Gives Its Children the Educational System America Can Only Dream of

Apples and oranges - that's what it's like to compare the educational systems of Finland and the U.S. Finland's is wildly successful - consistently topping international rankings. The United States lags behind its European and Asian peers.

The numbers alone make a case against drawing lessons from Finland. In Finland, there are approximately 1.2 million total students (of all levels). That's about the same number of students in New York City's public education system. While Finland is relatively homogeneous, the U.S. is home to a diverse, multi-ethnic population. Finland reaps revenue from its large corporate taxes, cushioning its public education system while the U.S. simply does not.



*Students at Kirkkojarvi School, Finland  
(Smithsonianmag.com)*

So, why look to Finland? In short, the country has taken calculated risks. It got its million dollar question right. On the state level, the U.S. could learn a lot from Finland's unconventional moves.

In Finland, students of all different levels are taught in the same classroom. The teachers are given the same respect and social status as doctors and lawyers. Finland mandates only one standardized test, taken when the student is 16. Teachers are selected from only the top 10% of graduates and all teachers are required to have a master's degree (which is state-subsidized). School days are even shorter than in the States. Teachers spend an average of four hours in the classroom each day. Elementary school students also enjoy 75 minutes of recess each day in Finland.

To summarize:

1. One Classroom for All Levels
2. High Status for Teachers
3. More Play Time
4. All State Funded
5. Room to Experiment
6. Only One Standardized Test
7. More Teacher Investment
8. Less Time in School

In the next newsletter, we will see how Finland is changing its successful educational system.

*Original story by Marguerite Ward, February 11, 2004. Summary by Brend Holma*

*“It is easier to prevent bad habits than to break them.” - Benjamin Franklin*



*Pupils at the Meri-Rastila primary school in Helsinki take a break from lessons. Photograph: Heikki Saukkomaa/Lehtikuva*

## Finnish Farmer's Fast Food Breakfast

Serves 4

Make an omelet as follows:

Fry a small onion split into small pieces in butter.

Add 6-8 small pieces of frankfurter (*nakki* in Finland) and a few slices of smoked ham.

Break and beat four medium-sized eggs and add one and a half cups of milk. Salt and pepper to taste. Add these to the fried ingredients and simmer all for 10 minutes.

Serve with fresh fruit, toast or *pulla*.

*By KL*



# 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



Cut here

Dear Friends of Finland,

Many of you have requested that our newsletter be mailed to other chapters, particularly to those of you who do not have your own newsletter yet. Our newsletter, **Finnovations**, is now available to anyone interested in receiving it in PDF form. Our board has decided to email it to those outside of our immediate membership area. The newsletter is published five times a year and next year we intend to increase it up to seven issues.

To defray some of our editorial expenses and record keeping we'd like to request a contribution of ten (\$10) dollars or Euros and your email address where it can be sent. The hard copies of our full color issues are also available at the cost of \$20.00. This includes postage and handling.



Visit our webpage: [www.ffsuomi.com](http://www.ffsuomi.com)

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We're on the web!  
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[ffsuomi@gmail.com](mailto:ffsuomi@gmail.com)



## New Board Elected

Asko Hamalainen, President  
Maria Bjorklund, Vice President  
Hanna Winter, Secretary  
Mary Penttinen-King, Membership Secretary  
Joel Rautiola, Treasurer  
Eva Marie Gold, Member at large  
Francisco Carreres, Member at large  
Kathy Hasenjaeger, Member at large  
Brend Hunt-Holma, Member at large

## Finnish Baseball hats available to members!!



**Special: \$15 for all new members  
and those renewing by  
September 1st.**

## Jazz Concerts in June!

Dear members and friends of Finlandia Foundation Suomi Chapter:

You are invited to attend a concert (or two!) featuring jazz musicians Olli Hirvonen and Saku Mikkola.

They will be playing two concerts:

June 11, 7:30 pm at Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

June 12, 7:30 pm at the Conway Muse

We hope you can join us at one of these two great concerts!

Sincerely,  
Hanna Winter  
Secretary  
Finlandia Foundation Suomi Chapter  
PO Box 2544  
Bellingham WA 98227  
[ffsuomi.com](http://ffsuomi.com)



*Saku Mattila*

P.S. Remember to pay your dues to remain a member-in-good-standing!



*Olli Hirvonen*

## Summertime – and the Night is White Juhannus Invitation

Finlandia Foundation Suomi Chapter invites you to celebrate the summer solstice!!!

What: Potluck - bring a dish to share  
Where: Lake Padden by picnic tables  
When: Sunday, June 21 at 1:00 PM



*Traditional Juhannuskokko (bonfire)  
([www.fincamp.org](http://www.fincamp.org))*