



In This Issue:

- President's Corner – 2
- Beddit – 3
- Finns Are Happy! – 3
- Finns Make Babies! – 3
- The Land of Lakes and Rivers – 4
- Lempi Wilson – 4 & 8
- Sibelius Anniversary Concert – 5
- Membership Form – 5
- Finns vs. Russians in Alaska – 6
- Correction – 6
- Celebrating Juhannus - 7

This Edition Edited by: Cassie Revell
With Co-Editor Tapio Holma



FINLANDIA FOUNDATION
Suomi Chapter
FINNOVATIONS

Promoting Finnish Heritage in Whatcom, Skagit, and Island Counties

President's Corner

Greetings to all Finns and folks interested in Finnish culture!!

Most of the hot summer is behind us. It is hard to imagine that folks in the Evergreen State (lots of RAIN) are ready to hire rain dancers to bring in much needed relief! The whole west coast has been fighting fires (literally) for a long time. Temperature records have been shattered repeatedly.

Over in Finland, the weather has been just the opposite. As we used to say a long time ago: "Juhannus (Midsummer) did not have much snow this year!" Actually, the last snow is usually in April.

On June 11th and 12th we enjoyed a delightful concert by Olli Hirvonen (Performer of the Year for Finlandia Foundation) and Saku Mattila from Finland, who are only 25 and 26 years young, respectively. They were joined by local musicians Sharyn Peterson and Matthew Rehfelt. The first performance was at Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship and the following night they played at Conway Muse. The attendance at both concerts was quite low, possibly due to the end of schools or nice weather.

For Juhannus, we gathered at Lake Padden for a relaxing afternoon. I brought two birch tree branches to mimic an old Finnish custom of decorating the front door with two young birch trees. The leaves are young and tender, so in my youth Juhannus week was the time to make *vasta* or *vihta* to be dried and used in the sauna next winter.

We "barbied" tube steaks (hot dogs) and enjoyed a potluck picnic. Kathy's parents were visiting from out of state and were properly impressed, so they are planning to move to Bellingham.

Bellingham Festival of Music played Sibelius' First Symphony on July 7th at WWU PAC Theater. I attended this very well received concert conducted by Maestro Michael Palmer. Usually they have guest musicians from all over the country.

This festival has been one of the major music venues for over 20 years.

Our biggest event is the December 8th Concert at Mt. Baker Theater. We have been planning it with Sharyn Peterson for months. We'll have a young violinist coming from Sibelius Academy, and a famous soprano from Seattle.

Pretty well the whole program is nailed down and cemented to include mainly Sibelius and also Edward Grieg (Norway). Another attraction will be Wade King Elementary students singing "Finlandia" in Finnish! Before the concert we will celebrate Independence Day (Dec. 6) in the Encore Room. We hope that several hundred people will attend this concert, because the budget for the event runs about \$7,000. It is going to be a great performance!!

I wish everybody a peaceful and prosperous late summer and early fall!!



Asko Hamalainen

Above: Asko Hamalainen, Photo By Tapio Holma

Cover Photos (left to right from the top):

1. Fall flowers in Finland – Tapio Holma, 2. Fall colors in the Cascades – Tapio Holma, 3. Fall foliage in Finland – Tapio Holma, 4. Fall colors in the Cascades – Tapio Holma, 5. Last of summer flowers in Finland – Tapio Holma, 6. Mt. Baker in the fall – tripadvisor.com, 7. Blue hydrogenea in Whatcom Falls Park – Tapio Holma, 8. Fiskars Manor in Finland – Tapio Holma, 9. Pink hippeastrum – Tapio Holma, 10. Fall at Bay View in Bellingham – Tapio Holma, 11. Fall landscape, Kilpisjarvi, Lapponia – allcountries.org, 12. Fall colors in the Cascades – Tapio Holma, 13. Chain Lakes Trail Mt. Baker – pinterest.com, 14. Mt. Baker foothills – scenicwa.com, 15. North Cascades trail – beautifulwashington.com

Finland Tops European Happiness Equality Index

Finland ranks as number one in the Happiness Equality Index Europe 2015 report. Next in line were The Netherlands, Norway, Denmark and Iceland.

The index is based on calculations of the standard deviation of the subjective wellbeing dimension of the latest European Social Survey. Finland stands out as the most equal country in Europe with a standard deviation of 1.35. Average standard deviation was 1.92. A low standard deviation indicates that the data points tend to be very close to the mean of the set, while a high standard deviation indicates that the data points are spread out over a wider range of values.

Finland has a low standard deviation, which means that the answers to the question “Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?” is concentrated around the national average of 8.0.

The study was conducted by Danish independent think tank the Happiness Research Institute which focuses on life satisfaction, happiness and quality of life. The most unequal countries in Europe are Albania, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Ukraine, and Hungary in terms of well-being.

Article from: www.goodnewsfinland.com/finland-tops-european-happiness-equality-index/

Submitted by Mary Penttinen-King



A happy child in Finland. Photo by Kacper Pempel/Reuters.

Finland Makes Babies!

Finland has more families with four or more children than any other country in Europe. Great Britain, Romania and Ireland follow after Finland.

By Tapio Holma

Beddit

Beddit is one of the hottest start-up companies from Finland. It is dedicated to developing a smart sleep sensor that turns any bed into a smart bed for improving sleep, health and performance. In addition to an office in Helsinki, they also have one located in Silicon Valley.

The company was founded in 2006 to provide sleep trackers for medical professionals. Seven years later Beddit entered vast mass market to bring the product to the general public. The company was one of the most successful Finnish funding projects and raised 8 million dollars in a short time.

Unlike any other health and sleep monitor, Beddit automatically tracks sleep quality, heart rate, respiration, movements, snoring, as well as light and noise in the room. The ultra thin sensor is placed under the mattress, so nothing touches the sleeper. Data is wirelessly sent to a mobile device or to an internet portal, so the doctor can see the results in seconds. This is a vast improvement to my two sleep apnea studies with numerous sensors and wires!!

In the morning, a full report of sleep and wellness is available in a mobile app or in a web service. The app shows a timeline of sleep activity during the night and awards a quality score. Automatically generated coaching tips and guidance for improved sleep, wellness and performance are included. A smart alarm clock is also built into the app.

People spend 1/3 of their lives in bed but have little knowledge about their sleep and bodily functions. Good sleep is very important to our bodies, health, memory and daily functions.

Beddit has huge potential globally since who could not benefit from a better and longer sleep?

By Asko Hamalainen

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



Finland – The Land of Lakes and Rivers

There are 187,888 lakes in Finland according to a recent study of 3,712 basic map charts done by cartographers. We share 215 lakes with our neighbors (Sweden, Norway & Russia).

10% of Finnish territory is lakes. Which province has most lakes? Not in Savo but in Lapland.

Saimaa is the largest lake close to Russian territory. *Paijanne* is the deepest, some 300 feet deep. Helsinki, the capital, is getting its drinking water from this lake today. *Inari* in Lapland is the second largest of the lakes.

What is interesting is that the average depth of the lakes is only 30 feet and you would have to empty all of them 95 times to fill *Lake Baikal* in Asia.

The refreshing lake atmosphere and the closeness to the water reduce stress, which explains why so many city folks have their summer cottages and saunas built next to the lakes all over Finland.

All of our lakes are the heritage of the Ice Age. The ground is some 1300-2700 million years old and much of this original ground has spent hundreds of millions of years above the sea-level.



Lake in Finland, Photo by Tapio Holma

There are almost as many islands in the Finnish Lake Region as there are lakes in Finland - some 175,584.

In fact, Finland is the largest island state in the world. The islands of the oceans (Gulf of Finland and the Sea of Bothnia) are not sisters of the islands of the lakes but brothers and the cousins of the same.

Most islands in the oceans are of granite and *rapakivi* base and their formation in the Baltic Sea differs from the formation of the lakes.

There are also 647 rivers in Finland. Some 30 or so share water with neighboring countries. *Vuoksi* and *Kemijoki* are the two largest of them.

By Tapio Holma

Lempi Wilson – In Memoriam

Lempi Wilson was born in *Pyhajarvi* (Holy Lake), Karelia, Finland on October 26, 1926. At the age of 13, she was attacked by Russian machine gun fire, when skiing home on December 26. Three days later, civilians were taken by train to Finland to escape the Winter War. In 1945, the Continuation War broke out and her family had to escape again. She later married and had four children: Pirjo, Pirkko, Paula and son, Pekka. In 1958, the family immigrated to Australia and six years later they moved to Los Angeles, California. In 1980, she located to Kirkland, Washington.

She was a seamstress and writer/poet. Until recently, she wrote regularly columns for the Finnish Lutheran Church, Amerikan Uutiset, and Suomi Seura.

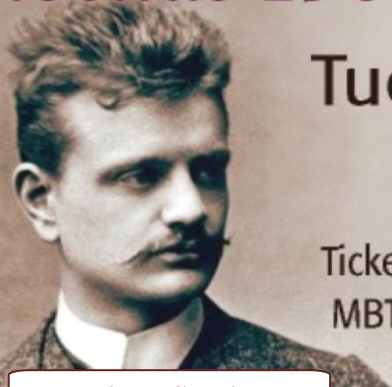
She self published two autobiographical books: *Tytto Maailmalla I* and *II*, which were later translated into *Sisu Mother*. Lempi was a life member of Seattle Chapter of Finlandia Foundation and a recent member of Suomi Chapter. She was very active in the Finnish Lutheran Church, United Finnish Kaleva Brothers and Sisters Seattle Lodge # 11, and the Nordic Heritage Museum.

Lempi is survived by her four children, 10 grandchildren, six great grandchildren, and numerous nephews and nieces. She had lots of long time friends in Washington State.

A memorial service will take place on September 22nd, 2015, 11:30 A.M. at the Finnish Lutheran Church, 8504 13th Ave. NW, Seattle, WA 98117.

(Continued on pg. 8)

Sibelius 150th Anniversary Concert



Tuesday, December 8, 7pm
Mount Baker Theatre

Tickets: \$20 / \$10.00 students & children – available at
MBT Ticket Office, 104 N. Commercial St., Bellingham,
360-734-6080 or www.mountbakertheatre.com

With a Special
Performance by the
Wade King Singers!

Sponsored by Finlandia Foundation Suomi Chapter
and Mt. Baker Youth Symphony



Kati Valimaa
Violinist



Maria Mannisto
Soprano



Sharyn Peterson
Symphony Conductor



Finlandia Foundation Suomi Chapter Membership Form

JOIN US!!! Or RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP
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Cut here

Finns In Alaska During the Russian Imperial Period

The politics of Russian colonization included converting Alaska's Native population to Christianity. Therefore a group of monks were sent to Alaska from the cloister at *Valamo*. According to the records, a carpenter who, to judge by his name, was a Finlander accompanied these monks. His name was Alexander Kuparinen and he came from *Viipuri*.



Fort Ross in Sonoma, California. Photo by Tapio Holma

Baranof, the first Governor of Russian Alaska chose in 1799 to make a daring move. He established a Russian Fort at Sitka on Baranof Island. This was dangerous because the Indians who lived on the island were warlike and not at all disposed to subjecting themselves to the white man's decree.

In the year 1802, when Baranof himself had left Sitka, the Indians attacked and massacred practically all the Whites and Aleuts who had been left there at the Russian Fort.

Two years later Baranof returned with reinforcements, subdued the Indians and moved the Russian headquarters to SITKA.



Fort Ross interior. Photo by Tapio Holma



The first windmill in California. Fort Ross, California. Photo by Tapio Holma

The next step in Russian ambitious expansion was to found a base called Fort Ross on the Sonoma Coast in California in 1812. The Russian fortification lay only a scarce 100 miles north of the Spanish Community of San Francisco (California was then attached to the Spanish domain of Mexico). The intent was that Fort Ross could provide the Russian communities in the north with provisions, but that part of the plan did not work out.

One of the seven commanders-in-chief during Fort Ross' scarcely thirty-year-history was the Finlander Carl Schmidt. Although 21 years old, he was appointed in 1820 to delicate responsibilities of running this most distant outpost, which in addition had gained a reputation as a place of exile for the colony's worst elements. It was a thankless job to lead the military command in an area where one was surrounded by Indians and where to the south the Spanish interests looked on Russian encroachment in California with anything but approval.

(to be continued in our next winter edition)

By Tapio Holma

Correction:

In our last newsletter we mentioned that the population of Finland is 6.2 million. That would be the total population of the Finns, including those who had left the country for the past sixty years.

The actual population of Finland (all the inhabitants in Finland) was at the end of last year 5,471,758 and at the end of June this year 5,481,210 (according to Finland's Population Registrar).

Celebrating Juhannus

This summer I had the pleasure to celebrate Juhannus (Midsummer) in Finland. Although I was born in Helsinki and grew up in the Pacific Northwest, my roots are in Iisalmi, a town in the Savo region of Finland. We *Savolaiset* (people from the Savo region) celebrate Juhannus like most Finns; we stay in a summer cottage with a lakefront sauna, cook sausages on an outdoor fire, swim and row on the lake, and enjoy the midnight sun.

The Juhannus celebration begins on Midsummer's Eve, the Friday nearest the summer solstice, when we watch the Juhannus *kokko* (bonfire) burn to celebrate the longest day of the year. The wood fire sauna is heated and we bring in a *vihta* (bundle of fresh birch twigs) to whack against our backs to get the blood flowing in the heat and jump in the lake to cool off between sauna sessions.

After the sauna, we relax and enjoy a post-sauna beer and conversation on the porch. Stranger than beating yourself with a branch in the sauna is the tradition of spells during midsummer; young, unmarried women can cast charms to gain insight about the man they will marry. For example, collecting seven wildflowers and placing them under her pillow to draw forth dreams of her future husband (yes, I have cousins who have tried these charms!).

Finnish summer foods also feature prominently during Juhannus celebrations: new potatoes and onion sauce, *makkara* (sausages), fresh strawberries, and freshly baked Finnish sourdough rye. More than anything, Juhannus for me is a time to socialize with relatives and friends, take walks in the beautiful Finnish countryside and woods, and celebrate the summer in good company.



Jeff and Hanna at the Juhannus cabin. Background is the sauna and Lake Itä-Kortteinen near Oravi in southeast Finland. This photo was taken at 3:00 am!

Savolaiset also have a special summer treat: *muurinpohjalettu*. These are special Finnish pancakes (like crepes) that are made from wheat and barley flour. They are large (more than a foot in diameter), thin, with a crispy “lace” (*pitsi*) edge, and are made on a specific pan.



Muurinpohjalettu with fresh berries and ice cream

A large, gently curved, cast iron griddle is heated on an open flame and the thin batter is poured onto the sizzling pan. It cooks quickly, and the result is a large, savory *lettu* that can be eaten as is hot off the pan or topped with strawberry jam, fresh strawberries, sugar, or butter. In my family, I have one aunt and one uncle who are the *muurinpohjalettu* cooks. My cousins and I practiced making these delicacies so that we can pass on the tradition; however, we need some more practice! Here is the recipe so you can practice too:

3 eggs, beaten
1L (4 ½ cups) milk
3 dl (1 ¼ cups) wheat flour
2 dl (8.5/10 cup) barley flour
1 Tbsp sugar
1 tsp salt
50 g (slightly less than ½ stick) butter (melted)

Combine ingredients in the order listed and let batter sit for 30 minutes. Cook on a hot cast iron griddle

(for smaller *lettu*, “*ohujaisia*”) or *muurinpohja* (for the large *lettu* and best, most authentic results!).

By Hanna Winter

Editor's Note: Originally, Juhannus celebrated the Finnish god, Ukko, and was called *Ukon juhla* (Ukko's celebration), but the current name for Juhannus comes from John the Baptist (Johannes Kastaja).

Finlandia Foundation *Suomi Chapter*

PO Box 2544
Bellingham, WA
98227

We're on the web!
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Finnish Baseball hats available to members!!



*Embroidered in Bellingham! \$25.00
postage paid.*

Lempi Wilson – Continued

Lempi lived with SISU!!

I first met Lempi in 1981 in Seattle. She was a very earthy and lively person. When my parents visited me the third and final time in 1986, we spent a lovely afternoon in the Finn Hill neighborhood of Kirkland with her and her second husband, who was a Boeing engineer. All four of us became very good friends. Lempi visited my parents in Finland and often wrote to each other. Most of my contacts with her were by phone or meeting at many Finnish events in Seattle. I especially enjoyed reading her articles in Amerikan Uutiset.

Last year, I met her in Seattle at the Nordic Heritage Museum, where a Canadian video about Finnish War Veterans was shown. Eric Schaad, our speaker for 2014 Independence Celebration, is compiling a similar video about experiences during the Wars. Lempi is one of many who were interviewed, and she told us about her scary life. Personally, I find her two escapes from the Russian army close to my heart. Her hometown is not very far from mine. The train track and the Border are only two miles from my home (1950-1969). When she and her family moved away from Karelia (the Soviet Union took it in 1945), herding their animals, she walked less than 100 yards from my home!!! That road goes to *Elisenvaara* train station, where 145 civilians (the largest loss ever) were killed in an air raid. Lempi was hiding in the forest there two days later.

Last Fall, Lempi moved to Bellingham, to be close to Pekka, who lives in Deming. We re-kindled our friendship. Thanks to my invitation, she started attending Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship, where most Sundays we had coffee and spoke Finnish. This Spring she had a massive stroke, but surprisingly Lempi started getting better and better and was ready to go home, when another stroke took her life on August 5th.

Lempi was a true Finnish Woman. Her life was not easy, but she was always honest, authentic, and with her roots firmly into the earth. Inside my SISU MOTHER book are the words:

Kiitos Asko Ystävyydestä
(Thank you Asko for Friendship)

By Asko Hamalainen

Editor's Note: To read Lempi's story about the Soviet bombing of Helsinki in 1944, see our forthcoming Winter issue.