



Finlandia Foundation Seattle Chapter Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2023



@Marat Galeev

FINLANDIA FOUNDATION SEATTLE CHAPTER

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through June, 2024.

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Letter from the President

The FFSC newsletter has not been published on a very regular basis in recent years, initially because of issues brought about by the Covid pandemic and later due to Nona Sheehan, our past newsletter editor, stepping down at the beginning of this year to focus on college studies. Thus, I am thrilled that Laura Galeev has agreed to become the next FFSC newsletter editor and I'm sure with her help we'll get the newsletter back on a regular schedule.

FFSC activity in general is not yet back to the level it was at prior to Covid. The following is a recap of this year's annual meeting held in May and should provide a good overview of the activities of FFSC during the past 12 months. Finnish language classes continue to be taught online by Lily Obeda, who started as our instructor in the fall of 2020. Lily has taught a beginner's and an intermediate class, which have been very popular. She has also taught shorter summer classes, which I believe is a first for FFSC since traditionally language classes have taken the summer off.

FFSC organized three events during the past 12 months: On November 25, 2022, FFSC hosted Finnish comedian Ismo Leikola for an audience of over 300. Finnish Independence Day Dinner was at Happy Valley Grange in Redmond on December 10th. With a little over 60 in attendance, we had roughly half the number of guests that attended typically prior to Covid. Nevertheless, it was great to have the dinner again after a Covid forced us to skip the event in 2020 and 2021. Music for the evening was provided by the Folkvoice duo and our guest speaker was Washington State Senator Marko Liias. His speech from that evening was reprinted in the previous issue of this newsletter.

On June 19th FFSC hosted Kardemimmit, a 4-woman kantele group from Finland, for a concert at the Good Shepherd Center in Seattle. The concert in Seattle was the final performance of their 3-week North America tour. No scholarships were awarded this year, but we did award a \$500 grant to Cathy Perry to help cover expenses of her attendance at the Finlandia Foundation Nation Joint Chapter Meeting in New York.

And finally, a new board was elected for the 2023 – 2024 FFSC term at the annual meeting. The composition of the board remained largely unchanged from the previous year except for Jaakko Piipponen joining as a new member-at-large.

I hope you will be able to join us at the Independence Day Dinner and Dance this December 2nd at the Blue Ridge Community Club in Seattle. More details about the event are elsewhere in this newsletter as well as on our website <https://www.finlandiafoundationseattle.com/>

Wishing you a happy holiday season,



FFSC PRESIDENT

BY ANU HORSMAN

CHOOSING THE EDUCATIONAL PATH

The Waldorf School of Seattle prioritizes Nordic values and offers a comprehensive education that focuses on every aspect of a child's development. This includes academic, emotional, social, mathematical, and linguistic intelligence.

I grew up in Finland in the 80s and 90s. We biked to school (even when it was -20C), spent the afternoons playing outside and somehow knew how to be home for dinner on time. Summers were spent at our cabin swimming. Winters

we skied when we could afford it. It was a simple and safe childhood, and everyone was quite content with what they had. As a teenager I would rush home from school and continue conversation with friends on the phone (landline obviously) and once we got MTV, I was glued to the TV. What was this mind-blowing big world out there. The music, the videos, the excitement. I could not wait to leave Finland and live my dream.

I spent a summer in Sweden when I was 14. I was an exchange student for a year at 16, an au pair at 18. Did an international college altering between Finland and the Netherlands for four years. Lived in Germany, Spain and then here. I completed two very important projects in 2010 and shortly afterwards found out I was pregnant. It felt like the time was right, it was meant to be. What I didn't know that from that moment on I



Melina, Kahlan, Mahparee and Mahveen.

would be thrown into a different kind of competition. Even though my child wasn't born yet, we had to get on a waiting list to get into daycare (a spot which we only got when she was 9 months old). How could that be?

My career (and stress) kept growing and more and more, I missed Finland. I kept yearning for balance, that peaceful cabin, a simpler healthier life and a smaller world in a way (not literally as we love to travel). I wasn't loving what the intense stress was doing to my mind and body. When the bundle was born, I experienced a happiness I couldn't have ever imagined. Now life was all about making sure that this little person would have a happy, healthy, and safe life. I'd listen to parents who told me how many sports their 6-year-olds were doing, and who was reading and who was doing this and that better than their age group. I felt very out of place. I had a healthy and happy child and that seemed the most important thing for me. When she was 4, I realized for her to continue living a carefree childhood in this extremely competitive society, I had to find a place

that would support that. I found Seattle Waldorf (called Steiner schools in Finland).

My 5-year-old would dress in her Finnish Reima raingear (which I of course stocked up on every Finland trip) every single day and take a two hour walk in the forest with the rest of the class. They would build forts, jump in puddles, make fairies out of leaves and sticks and play games. At school they would bake bread, paint, build things with their hands, listen and tell stories, nap, and laugh. I would drive to get her from my interesting but stressful job, and I found the kindergarten an instant refuge for my mind; the happiness of the kids and the warmth and care they got. It was a no brainer for me to continue our journey to a Waldorf elementary.

I'd drop her off at the campus every day, and I never had to worry. I knew my child would have a very interesting and a fun day. 9 years later, I still don't worry. We are still with Waldorf, and it was the best decision we have ever made living here. It has enabled a carefree and a stress-free childhood full of joy, and the ability to grow up in a supportive and loving community. The teachers stay with the class for 8 years which allows them to see, hear and respect the children as exactly the person everyone is. There isn't a mold. Waldorf educates the whole child and every intelligence (academic, emotional, social, mathematical, linguistic etc.) and as a result you see a campus full of happy and joyful students, even the teenagers. They have all learned an instrument, a foreign language (usually two), they spend a lot of time outside doing sports and working in nature. They learn to make things with their hands, along with regular subjects like math, writing, reading, history, science etc. They sing, do art, learn about cultures, do community service, and learn how to be mindful. The subjects are taught in an engaging way and as a result they become

solvers who are able to take on any challenge. The goal of Waldorf is to raise conscious human beings who have the tools to make a difference in this world. I 100% believe this will be the case.

I continue to be in awe of my teenager and her entire class. They are such capable, smart, creative, and considerate human beings. My daughter cares deeply about her community, and the world. She doesn't have social media and her phone just has texting and calling function. She has the ability to have meaningful conversations with any grownup. She walks in the world with such confidence and kindness and knows already who she is (I certainly did not know who I was at 13). We talk all the time, and she still (willingly) hangs out with us. And she is not an anomaly. I hear this from the other parents too.

The school mirrors a lot of the Nordic values. Living in a different culture, it's not always easy to conform to the other culture's demands and values. I feel grateful that we found something that felt true to us here, something that makes us feel connected to our core values.

Children are only children for a very short period. The future is not in the competition and getting access to everything at too young and starting life out stressed. It's in kids who get to be children and develop with time into their full human potential. It allows them to learn their place in this world in a safe way. If you are interested, the school holds open houses and tours. They offer a program from pre-tot all the way to high school. In case you want to talk to a Finnish person, I'd be happy to tell you more: <https://seattlewaldorf.org>.

Letter from the Editor



Laura Galeev

FFSC NEWSLETTER EDITOR

I am excited to embark on my journey as a new Finlandia Foundation Seattle Chapter Newsletter Editor! I have found it very fascinating to connect with the Finnish and Nordic community here in Seattle and explore this beautiful state of Washington. Even though I am relatively new here, it has not stopped me from starting to build my life in the U.S. I moved from Helsinki to Seattle in 2021, and it was quite a change, especially when this transition happened during the pandemic.

Moving abroad started a new phase in my life, and I was able to go for different projects. I created a Jenkkipulinaa podcast about living abroad with my friend, I signed up for volunteering in the National Nordic Museum events and I was lucky to be part of organizing the Northern Lights Auction. I organized a Study Tour for Tampere University Executive MBA group in Seattle. I am also in charge of the marketing and children's table activities of the Finnish Bazaar & Joulumarkkinat event for the second year in a row. It is very rewarding to give back to the community!

Many of you may have heard that five trolls have moved to Washington! What could be a better way to spend time together than explore the Pacific Northwest and spot the giant trolls? Thomas Dambo is a sculpture artist based in Denmark. He is considered to be the world's leading recycling artist and he has created this public art exhibition, titled "Northwest Trolls: Way of the Bird King". When visiting Issaquah we visited the Jacob Two Trees with my husband Marat. I was excited to see so many families, dogs and happy children queuing to get a picture with the giant troll. We could not resist capturing the moment too! Have you visited the giant trolls yet? By the National Nordic Museum in Ballard, you can find a troll whose name is



Laura Galeev & Marat Galeev at Issaquah, Jacob Two Trees Troll.

Frankie the Feetsplinters. At the Sakai Park on

Bainbridge Island, there is the Pia the Peacekeeper. Bruun Idun, the troll of West Seattle, plays a flute to orcas at the water's edge. In Vashon Island, there is an Oscar the Bird King. I have seen only two of them so far but good news is that the trolls will stay in Washington for three years! If you feel like taking a road trip to Portland, there will be one more troll named the Olebolle who is peering into a red house and looking for a giant cookie jar. The scene is based on a poem the artist wrote. Let's stay curious and keep exploring!



Christmas Concert

*Saturday December 9, 2023 At 4 PM
at the Finnish Lutheran Church, 8504 13th Ave NW, Seattle*



*Finnish Choral Society of Seattle
Swedish Singers of Seattle
Evergreen Kantele
Finlandia Duo
Sing along*

*Glogg and Traditional Finnish Christmas Rice Pudding and Raisin Soup Joulupuuro ja
rusinasoppa! Julgröt och russinsoppa!
Suggested Donation \$20 General, \$15 seniors, \$10 students
Please let any choir member know or RSVP to finnishchoral@aol.com*



IN MEMORIAM: KAISA LONDON

Kaisa Marjatta London (née Nieminen) died on Oct 12, 2023, at Evergreen Health Hospice Center in Kirkland, Washington. The cause of death was heart failure.

Kaisa was born in Kokkola, Finland, on March 23, 1940. Her father Tauno was at the front, fighting in the Winter War, and in her early years Kaisa and her siblings were raised by her mother Salme, her aunt Martta, and her grandmother Aurora.



Kaisa joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints as an adolescent in Jyväskylä, Finland, and in 1961 took the SS Ivernia to the United States to study at Brigham Young University, where she met her future husband, Gary London. They were wed on December 17, 1965 in the LDS Salt Lake Temple and moved shortly thereafter to Seattle.

Kaisa's lifelong love of books and reading led to a second master's degree and a late-life career as a librarian at Seattle Public Libraries, following earlier stints as a teacher and bookstore owner. She found purpose and joy working with women in religious and community service, and until the end met weekly with her LDS sisters to make quilts for those in need. Her marked affinity for mothers and refugees was shaped by her personal history as someone whose birth family had been displaced by war.

Kaisa was an early and active participant in the local Finnish community, having taught Finnish for and served on the board of Finlandia Foundation Seattle Chapter.

At about the same time, she was a member of the University of Washington Scandinavian Studies Advisory Board. In more recent years, she and Gary facilitated the "Films from Finland" series at the Swedish Club.

The two of them had also been volunteer interviewers for the Nordic American Voices oral history project at the National Nordic Museum.

Since their retirement, Kaisa and Gary lived their summers in Kaisa's homeland – she would say home – of Finland. She spent the weeks and days before her death in Helsinki and Seattle, surrounded by the love of family and friends. It was her sister singing to her in Finnish that finally allowed her to pass from this world and onto the next.

Kaisa is survived by her husband Gary, her siblings Jorma and Helena and cousin Paul (Pate), her children Eric, Kristian, and Mari, and her grandchildren Michael, Bridget, Soren, and Sloane.

A funeral service in Kaisa's honor was held on October 21, 2023. She chose to be buried in the Crown Hill Cemetery, which she said reminded her most of a Finnish cemetery. Donations in her name can be made to Mary's Place in Seattle or to the Finlandia Foundation "Save Finland In America" campaign.

ITSENÄISYYSPÄIVÄN JUHLA INDEPENDENCE DAY DINNER AND DANCE

CELEBRATING 106 YEARS OF FINNISH INDEPENDENCE 1917 – 2023

SATURDAY DECEMBER 2, 2023, 6PM

BLUE RIDGE COMMUNITY CLUB • 10040 15TH AVE NW, SEATTLE

Social Hour: 6 PM • Dinner and Program: 7 PM

Tickets: \$65 • Reservation deadline: November 24

For credit card payments and information see: www.finlandiafoundationseattle.com

For more information: idd@finlandiafoundationseattle.com

To pay by check: send this form with your check (payable to FFSC) to:

Finlandia Foundation Seattle Chapter, PO Box 5024, Bellevue, WA 98009-5024

Total # in Party _____ Total enclosed \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Name(s) _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone () _____ Email _____

The Three Questions

OLLI TUMELIUS IS A FINNISH FREELANCE PHOTOGRAPHER WHO IS PASSIONATE ABOUT VISUAL STORYTELLING.



OLLI TUMELIUS

In this column we will be interviewing fascinating Finnish minds and learning about their life in Seattle area. We asked Olli Tumelius The Three Questions and are sharing those with you.

What was your biggest takeaway when cycling 10.000 miles across Europe to Asia?

We did our bike trip between 2012-2014 and it feels like a long time ago now. First takeaway is that traveling by bike is a great way to travel. You get to see all the little places in between places. It's slow enough to take everything and just enjoy the different landscapes and vibes along the way. You can still make good progress by cycling 100+ kilometers per day if you want to.

The second thing I would say is that people everywhere are generally very nice and want to connect with you. This is not me being naive or idealistic. We were in so many places where we didn't have a common language and still met a lot of people and hung out with them. Go to Turkey for example and sit by the side of the road with some old gentlemen drinking tea and eating hazelnuts in silence and you'll know what I mean.

Can you tell us about your most exciting work/photographing project?

I like projects that include travel or problem-solving in the moment. It's also nice when you're experimenting and you land on something unexpected.

I do a lot of corporate work and that can be repetitive at times, so when I get editorial assignments where you just go to a location and figure it out when you get there is fun for me. A specific session that comes to mind is one where I photographed Steve Gadd. I was a drummer in my former life, so getting the opportunity to photograph one of my drum heroes was pretty cool.

What is the most Finnish thing at your home?

I wish I could say I have a sauna. I really want one and I've been planning to build a small sauna in my backyard for a while. We do have some Finnish design items, but I guess it's the guy that looks back from the mirror.

CLOSING OF FINLANDIA UNIVERSITY AND FINNISH AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER



Michigan's northernmost region, the Keweenaw Peninsula, was a major destination for Finns during the peak years of migration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Here in the town of Hancock the immigrants founded **Suomi College and Theological Seminar** in 1896 to preserve Finnish culture, train Lutheran ministers and teach English.

Suomi College evolved over time, becoming a liberal arts college in the 1920s and later in the 1950s separating the seminary from the college. In 2000 Suomi College changed its name to **Finlandia University** and became home to the cultural center of Finns in North America, **the Finnish American Heritage Center**. The university also hosted the Finnish American Reporter, a monthly newspaper celebrating Finnish American heritage.

Because of enrollment and financial challenges, the university closed after spring semester 2023, which put the historical archives and collection of the Finnish American Heritage Center, the Finnish American Reporter and much more in jeopardy of being lost.

Finlandia Foundation National quickly stepped in and became caretaker of the Finnish American Heritage Center and its extensive archives and artifacts, the monthly Finnish American Reporter, the Finnish American Folk School, the Art Gallery, War Museum and North Wind Books store.

Preserving these archives and collections that contain so much Finnish American history is expensive. If you are interested and able to contribute financially to the **"Saving Finland in America"** project, please go Finlandia Foundation National's website <https://finlandiafoundation.org/> where you will find more information about the project and instructions for how to donate.

FINNFO – FACTS ABOUT FINLAND



19

Number of Finns with more than 100,000,00 euros of taxable income for the period 1999 to 2021.



1

Number of Finnish women with more than 100,000,000 euros of taxable income for the same period.



74

Percentage of all Finnish youth who attend confirmation camp.



140

Number of youth from abroad attending the Partaharju confirmation camps in 2023.



1

Number of children in the Sottunga Elementary School in the Åland Islands.



4

Rank of cheerleading among most popular forms of exercise for Finnish teenage girls.



739

Number of suspected crimes committed in Helsinki by those under 21 in 2022.



1083

Number of suspected crimes committed in Helsinki by those under 21 by the end of August 2023.



56

Rank of University of Helsinki on Shanghai List of World's Best Universities in 2016.



99

Rank of University of Helsinki on Shanghai List of World's Best Universities in 2023.

FINNFO – FACTS ABOUT FINLAND


2012

Year from which Finnish girls exceeded Finnish boys on the international Pisa mathematics test.



20

Percentage by which more girls than boys attend Finnish high schools (lukiot).



54

Percentage of Finns who are not certain what racism means in their country.



60

Percentage of Finns who believe that racism exists in their country.



18

Rank of Finland among 18 countries where talking about money is comfortable.



42.6

Percentage of Finns who eat oatmeal daily.



71

Percentage of Finns who think their country should defend other NATO countries in the case of an attack.



1

Rank of Hartwall Original Long Drink Pineapple among most stolen items from the K-Market Tripla in the summer of 2023.



8-10

Number of men needed to weld shut hundreds of manhole covers during the Biden visit to Helsinki on July 12-13, 2023.



4

Number of Finnish municipalities in which not a single child was born in 2022.

Sources: All from Helsingin Sanomat. 1 and 2, 7/18/23, A12-13; 3, 8/20/23, A14-15; 4, 7/29/23, A13; 5, 8/27/23, B2-3; 6 and 7, 8/25/23, A18; 8 and 9, 8/16/23, A16; 10 and 11, 8/14/23, A6; 12 and 13, 8/11/23, A7-8; 14, 8/8/23, A25; 15, 7/9/23, B10; 16, 8/2/23, A29; 17, 8/5/23, A7; 18, 7/29/23, A17; 19, 7/29/23, A13, 20, 7/28/23, A10. Finnfo written by Gary London. Infograph by Laura Galeev.

LOCAL ART NOTES



Lovers of Finnish music and musicians should be pleased with the **“Nordic Passion”** concerts in mid-November. The featured work is the Sibelius Symphony No. 5. At the podium will be Dalia Stasevska, the Finnish-Ukrainian Chief Conductor of the **Lahti Symphony Orchestra** and Principal Guest Conductor for the BBC Symphony. When Stasevska first led the Seattle Symphony in 2022, she was praised for her skill in performances of works by Bartok and Dvorak. One critic called it “a splendid debut.

Later Seattle Symphony concerts with a Finnish connection include those on March 14 and 16 and March 21-24, 2024. In the former, the featured work is the **Sibelius Violin Concerto**, with soloist Ning Feng, who has garnered raves for his work with symphony orchestras all over the world. In the later March concert, **Osmo Vänskä** will return to the Seattle Symphony after closing out its 2021-22 season with what critic Thomas May called “a breathtaking, meticulous performance” of Mahler’s Symphony No. 2 (Resurrection). This time, Vänskä will take the baton for the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1, with pianist Simon Trpčeski, and Prokofiev’s Symphony No. 6.

Finnish-American author **Hanna Pylväinen’s** newest book, *The End of Drum Time*, is one of five finalists for the National Book Award for Fiction. The winner will have been announced by the time she comes to the National Nordic Museum on December 3 at 2:00 p.m in a “Meet the Author” live session. *The End of Drum Time* is described in Kirkus Review as “ambitious and resonant, a vivid, fascinating and moving novel.” It makes use of the non-fictional but larger-than-life Lars Levi Laestadius propel what becomes a fictional love story involving a daughter of Laestadius and the son of a Sami reindeer herder. *The End of Drum Time*, like her debut novel, *We Sinners*, reflects Pylväinen’s interest in Laestadius and in Laestadianism — an environment in which she was raised. The setting for *We Sinners* is a Finnish-American Laestadian community in which the integrity of a family is threatened by outside influences. This novel won the **Whiting Award** as well as the **Balcones Fiction Prize**. In addition to her novels, Pylväinen has written for a number of publications. She is also the recipient of many prestigious writing fellowships. She currently lives in Philadelphia.

LOCAL ART NOTES



Aki Kaurismäki's newest film, *Fallen Leaves* (*Kuolleet Lehdet*), is scheduled to open in Seattle AMC theaters on November 17. This film represents a return to more familiar ground for the Finnish director, after two very successful forays into the plight of refugees in Europe — *Le Havre* and *The Other Side of Hope*. In *Fallen Leaves*, which debuted at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival, the protagonists, played by **Alma Pöysti** and **Jussi Vatanen**, are two down-and-outers — a grocery clerk fired from her job for attempting to salvage food that would otherwise be thrown away and a construction worker with a drinking problem. Can these two souls on the fringes of Finnish society find enduring love and some kind of happiness? Kaurismäki fans, and there are many, will not be disappointed by the answer to that question. For its part, *The Hollywood Reporter* offered this simile: “(A) **tragicomedy that glimmers like a jewel in the dust.**”

Seattle's own Finnish-to-English literary translators have been busy of late. Lola Rogers' translation of Juhani Kariia's **Pienen hauen pyydystys** was published in September under the English title, *Fishing for Small Pike*. In October 5, the translator interviewed the author at Elliott Bay Books. During the conversation, Karila, who is from Lapland, described its attraction to him as a location for a story that has been described as “an audacious, genre-defying blend of fantasy, folktale and nature writing.” To that might be added “love story, crime thriller and homage to *The Old Man and the Sea*.” For her part, Mia Spangenberg also had an opportunity to be featured in a bookstore interview. On May 4, she appeared at Third Place Books in Ravenna where she was in conversation with Elizabeth DeNoma regarding Spangenberg's translation of **Pirkko Saisio's Punainen erokirja**, published in April as *The Red Book of Farewells*. Spangenberg revealed the lengthy process of finding a publisher for Saisio's work, despite her popularity in Finland. Finally, Two Line Press, which specializes in translated novels, underwrote the project and have agreed to publish the other two books in the trilogy of Saisio auto fiction. Spangenberg is at work on these translations now. Local Art Notes written by Gary London.



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