



FINLANDIA FOUNDATION
SUOMI CHAPTER

Finnovations

PROMOTING FINNISH HERITAGE FROM THE EVERGREEN STATE
TO THE GOLDEN STATE

Vol. VIII - No. 2

President's Corner

Dear Members and Friends of Finland,

It's spring and we have much to celebrate. Our Vappu celebration was fun and twice the turnout of last year. There were two short documentaries about Finnish life which we all enjoyed. They were enlightening and entertaining. As usual we shared some wonderful Finnish cuisine and visited with some new members.

We usually hold our annual meeting during Vappu in which elections for new board members occur, however, the board presented the following motion:

The Motion:

I make a motion that the present board continue to execute the administrative duties of the organization until the end of the present year (2018). Election of officers for the new year (2019) to take place by November, 2018. Bylaws to be updated as needed by the end of this year, 2018.

-Elaine

The motion was approved and the present board will continue until the end of this 2018 year.

We are increasing our membership and for all continuing members please remit your dues. Your dues along with grants makes it possible for our newsletter and supports other events sponsored by our foundation. We received a grant from the Finland Society, Suomi Seura, towards the publication of our newsletter. The Finlandia Foundation National awarded the music director of the United Church of Ferndale \$1,000. He will use his award to help finance a trip to Finland to research the choral and cultural relationship of the Finnish people. We recommended and supported this grant/scholarship.

Juhannus, midsummer day, summer solstice will be celebrated June 22-23 during the Whatcom Cultural Arts Festival in Fairhaven on the Village Green. We have reached out to the Nordic community (Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Denmark) to join us in this endeavor.

In This Issue:

From the Editor's Desk – Pg. 3

Havis Amanda – Pg. 3

Mt. Angel Abbey Library – Pg. 4 & 5

Finland Tackles Homelessness – Pg. 6

Membership Form – Pg. 6

Suomenlinna Island Fortress – Pg. 7 & Back Cover

Cover Photo: Beautiful spring blooms of *anemone nemorosa* dot the craggy Finnish countryside, just in time for Mother's Day.

Our proposal for a Nordic Food Booth was accepted and we are hoping that each country will prepare and sell food which represents their cuisine. Also we are sponsoring a "wife-carrying race" which is Finnish in origin and has gained popularity around the world. This will be the first in Bellingham and we hope for a large sign-up and a fun time. It would be great if this takes off and we can do it annually. We will need a lot of help for our food booth and the race. This obstacle race will be held on the village green.

Juhannus - *Finland*

Midsommar - *Sweden*

Jonsok - *Norway*

Sanktansaften - *Denmark*

Jonsmessa - *Iceland*

More information to follow about how we can all work together to make this a success. We're off to a good start and let's keep the positive energy going forward. Thank you all for your support and I look forward to continuing to work with you.



Brenda

From the Editor's Desk

ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS this spring!

This is about time where we take stock on the New Year's resolutions we made and whether we hit them in the first few months of the year. This is a good time to make it a point to reassess them so that they are attainable. Self improvement is a good goal, but the real progress is what breeds continued success. Do not get so down on yourself if you have not achieved them yet.

Spring is a good time to bloom (see *anemone* on the cover and below, a typical Finnish Mother's Day time blooming "Valkovukko") with new optimism, and relook at where you want to grow as the season changes, but in kindness to yourself. Goals are chief among these, as they can inspire you to make those changes.

And there are ways our community and our chapter in particular can help fulfill some of these resolutions. Whether they are new interests, travelling to Finland, more spiritual focuses, volunteering, giving back to a cause you care a lot about, or new vistas to achieve professionally. You even might have goals you set with your family about better interactions and time spent in a quality way.

Remember that we the Finns and friends of Finland want to cultivate our culture, language and heritage. Let's keep blue and white flying high. Our 100 years of Independence demands that. No matter what you choose to do or what goals you make, we hope this year is the most productive yet.



Tapio

The Crowning of Havis Amanda

Havis Amanda, the famous sculpture who has received her cap since 1932, received it once again on the evening of 4/30 at 18:01 in the corner of the Market Square in Helsinki. The Manta Crew, consisting of volunteers from the Student Union of the University of Helsinki, had the honor to crown "Manta" this year.



When the clock struck for the moment of crowning, there were loud cheers, but the pieces of streamer that had been blown into the sky during previous years, were replaced by loud smoke machines pushing a more ecological option into the air. Definitely less litter this year. But definitely more people than last year. According to the Helsinki Police Department, this year saw a crowd of 60,000 people gather for the festivities. (Last year the number was about 40,000 due to cold weather.)



Article From <https://finlandtoday.fi>

Mount Angel Abbey Library: Alvar Aalto's Last Masterpiece

Alvar Aalto (1898–1976) was one of the most influential architects in the 20th century. In a shortlist of the 25 most influential architects of modern times, he is included with his fellow Finn, the Finnish-American architect Eero Saarinen, as well as Frank Lloyd Wright, Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe, Buckminster Fuller, and Frank Gehry. In 1963, he was awarded the Gold Medal, the highest honor of the American Institute of Architects, despite having designed only one building in the United States.



4

Mount Angel Abbey was founded in 1882 by Benedictine monks in a small town called Fillmore in central Oregon with a substantial German and Swiss population. The monks came from a monastery in Engelberg (est. 1120) in the canton of Obwald, Switzerland. The town was later renamed Mount Angel (a literal translation of Engelberg).

Since its founding, the monastery which later was elevated to an abbey, was several times destroyed by fires but always rebuilt. It had a book collection of more than 20,000 volumes, but no library.

In 1953 the Abbey had hired a trained librarian, Father Barnabas Reasoner, because books and learning were essential to the Benedictine tradition. The reasoning was that a new library was urgently needed for the collection,

comprising now 50,000 volumes. It was decided to find the best contemporary architect who was to be given complete freedom to create a building worthy the Abbey's monastic tradition and the beauty of the natural setting of Mount Angel.

One day, Father Barnabas happened to see a photo of the Viipuri Library that Alvar Aalto had designed in 1927. Alvar Aalto was well-known in Europe but had only designed one building in the United States; the Baker House dormitory at MIT in Boston (1948). In 1964 Father Barnabas wrote a letter to Aalto, reminding him that "in the Benedictine tradition of excellence, we need you to design a library that will fulfill our needs in a beautiful and intelligent way". However, no immediate response was received from Aalto, raising doubts about the famous architect's interest to take a commission for a building in the sleepy backwaters of the American West. In addition, there was concern about an exorbitant fee.



Finally the maestro responded: "I am very interested in your suggestion as libraries are my favorite subject". Thus the long journey to the completion of the Mount Angel Abbey library had begun. The first version of the design was delivered to the monastery in May 1964.

To the monks' despair, it took more than three years to have a final Aalto building plan to propose for funding of the project due to regulatory red tape and many changes in the design due to budgetary issues. It also took Father Barnabas to travel to Finland and Europe to meet the Maestro personally, after which things started to roll. It is possible that the project had been put on the backburner by his staff due to more glorious projects and Aalto's failing health. In 1967, the design was finally completed and approved by the Abbey.



Now it was time to find funding. Father Barnabas contacted Howard and Jean Vollum, cofounders of a leading Portland area firm and friends of the Abbey. Previously the Vollums had turned down the Abbey's requests for building funds. This time, however, they donated one million dollars in stock for the project, and later provided additional funds for the operation.

In 1967, Alvar Aalto visited the site of his new project for the first time, which was also his last. He stood silently on the library site for a long time. Finally he said "It is like an acropolis, more beautiful than I had imagined". He noticed that a fine stand of evergreens on the east side of the site were marked for removal. "We must save those trees", he said. An aide asked "But how? They are directly in the way." Aalto replied "Move the building", and the site was shifted ten feet to the west.

The dedication was a festive event, including a blessing by the archbishop of Portland. There were addresses by the head of the Benedictine order, the Finnish ambassador to the United States, and a lecture by an Oxford historian. Concerts included a college choir, a youth symphony – and the Duke Ellington Orchestra. He had been invited by Ann Henry, a local composer and a friend of Ellington, who gave the premier performance of one of her works.

Unfortunately, Alvar Aalto could not attend the dedication. He died in 1976 without ever seeing his last library. However, in 1980, his widow, Elissa Aalto, also an architect and a close collaborator on numerous Aalto projects, visited the library. She later wrote "When I stood in the library hall and felt the combined effect of space and light, I knew we had designed a good building". Critics agreed, including Ada Louise Huxtable, who was then America's leading architectural critic. She wrote in the New York Times that the library was "a small and perfect work, representing a kind of architecture that is elegant, humane and full of sophisticated skills...Vintage Aalto – subtle, sensuous, and full of wisdom about the environment and man."

The building has changed remarkably little over the years. All details such as door handles and the vintage furniture were designed by Aalto and manufactured in Finland. A Finn easily recognizes them from public buildings in Finland designed by Aalto, as well as lamps, chairs and tables that can be found in numerous homes in Finland.

The monastery welcomes visitors: more information can be found on their website www.mountangelabbey.org.

By Kaj Rekola

References: Donald Canty: Lasting Aalto Masterwork. The Library at Mount Angel Abbey. Mt. Angel Abbey, 1992. ISBN 0-918941-04-0. Wikipedia

Finland the Only EU Country to Reduce Homelessness as Problem Grows Across Europe

About a decade ago a project called Housing First started operations in Finland. The project works to reduce homelessness across the country and over the past ten years the group oversaw the conversion of homeless shelters into low-cost rental apartments and also assisted a number of Finnish municipalities plan affordable housing solutions.

Not only was the project successful, it helped the country become the only EU state which has drastically cut the number of homeless people. Thirty years ago there were about 18,000 homeless people in Finland, but today there are about 6,500. Between 2009-2016 Finland saw its homeless population drop by some 18 percent. During the same period, most EU countries have seen homelessness increase, often exponentially.

The way Finland's Housing First began approaching homelessness in 2008 is vastly different to that of most other EU countries, but at its core is a rather simple approach.

Before the campaign, affordable housing authorities generally demanded that homeless housing seekers pull up themselves by their bootstraps and address personal problems before they were granted a place to live.

In contrast, Housing First's chief principle is that everyone has a right to a home, even those burdened with difficult issues. Once their living situations are sorted, people appear better able to seek out help and support in solving other problems in life than before they had a home.

Article From YLE News

6



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: _____
 Address: _____

Dues Enclosed	\$ _____
Newsletter donation	\$ _____
My donation to FFSC	_____
Grant & Scholarship	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

Telephone/Email _____
 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

Suomenlinna Island Fortress

Finland was the eastern part of the Kingdom of Sweden from the 1200s to 1809. In the 1600s Sweden was a European superpower. Its possessions comprised most of the lands surrounding the Baltic Sea. However, after the 7 year Great Nordic War, concluded by the Treaty of Nystad (Uusikaupunki) in 1721, Sweden lost its Baltic provinces and part of Swedish Karelia to Russia. The new geopolitical situation left the eastern border vulnerable to Russian attacks because of the lost protection of the large lake Ladoga, the ancient fortresses in Karelia, and most importantly the Viipuri Fortress that had defended the eastern border since the 1400s.



After a failed attempt to reclaim the lost territories, Sweden was forced to cede the rest of Western Karelia and Savonia. The Swedish government realized that something should be done to strengthen the defense of the vulnerable eastern border by building new fortifications. In 1748, the building of the island fortress of Sveaborg (Fortress of Sweden) began on 9 islands just outside of Helsinki. At its time it was the largest building project in Sweden. The project lasted around 40 years but was never fully completed. The building project was headed by Augustin Ehrensvärd who, at the ceremonial entrance called King's Gate, chiseled into the stone: "*Posterity, stand your ground here and do not rely on foreign aid.*" These fateful words proved to be true for Finland for the next two centuries.

Only 70 years later, without having experienced

any major battles during the 1808-1809 so called Finnish War, the invincible proud bastion of Sweden capitulated to the Russian forces. At the Treaty of Hamina in 1809, the Kingdom of Sweden lost its eastern half, Finland to Russia. Finland became a Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire until 1917, when Finland declared independence.



The Russian era lasted from 1808 to 1917. Now the tables were turned. Instead of protecting Sweden from Russian invasion, Sveaborg (in Finnish it was called Viapori) became the center of an extensive outer fortification system intended to protect the Russian capital St. Petersburg. During the Crimean War (1853-56) the allied French and British fleet heavy bombardment over two days in August 1855 caused severe damage.



After the Finnish Civil War in 1918, the victorious White Army used it as an infamous concentration camp for the defeated Red Guards. It was renamed Suomenlinna (Fortress of Finland) in May 1918.

(continued on next page)



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Suomenlinna (Continued)

It served as a garrison of the Finnish Defense Forces until 1973. The Finnish Naval Academy is still continuing the military legacy on the island. The largest sea fortress system in Europe was added to the list of Unesco World Heritage Sites in 1993. Old barracks have been modernized for residential use and several museums including the Finnish Military Museum, the Customs Museum and the Toy Museum provide interesting collections. Several restaurants and conference facilities are available to the public.

On the Internet you can find more information in English about the fortress, including virtual tours and a photo gallery of 360 degree views and zooming into the buildings. Please visit: <https://www.suomenlinna.fi/kavijalle/museot/>

By Kaj Rekola

Adapted from Wikipedia

FFSC

Merchandise

FFSC offers products to its members and readers and others.

The current items include Suomi Centennial Ski Caps (\$18), FFSC and Finland Centennial Baseball Caps (\$25), White with Blue Finnish Flags (\$8), Full White Caps with Blue Finnish Flags (\$12), and much more. All would make very special birthday, holiday and "just because" gifts. Pick up a few and remember the Centennial for years to come!

