

VERY SUPERSTITIOUS

Has your nose ever tickled? Did you know that that was because someone was thinking about you? What about a sneeze? Finnish superstition says that the first sneeze is a good thing, but the second one is bad, good fortune is coming your way on the third sneeze and should you sneeze a fourth time, well, you are just sick! These are superstitions that Finns share all over the world, wherever we are.

Why are we like this? Old sayings, proverbs and superstitions are taught to children early on. Such as, don't step on a crack—it will break your mother's back. Shared superstitions are a thread of Finnish culture that ties us all together.

When a Finn kills a spider it means that it will probably rain the next day. Must be a lot of spiders being killed in Astoria over the winter. Did you know that after seeing 99 red cars that the license plate of the 100th red car bears the initials of your future lover? Better start keeping track of those red cars that you see on the road as it could lead to a big surprise for you.

With Juhannus aka Midsummer just around the corner, bear in mind that on Midsummer's Night if you put seven different kinds of flowers under your pillow that night you will dream of your future lover. A magical Midsummer's Night's Dream may lead to a happy marriage. You never know! In Finland, Juhannus is always celebrated with a big bonfire as well. These bonfires are known to ward off all evil spirits.

It is a fact that Finns love coffee. You may see a Finn watching intently as the coffee is being poured into their cup. Why? Because should a bubble form on the surface of the coffee and the bubble moves towards the drinker it means more money is coming your way. However, if the bubble drifts away from the drinker it means that the drinker will lose their money.

Rabid book readers, Finns also take great care not to leave an open book upside down. Did your mothers ever tell you that you shouldn't do that? Your mother would have been smarter than you think, because if you do it, the information inside the book will disappear.

Around December 1st or so, Tonttu, or sometimes called Tomte by the Swedish-Finns, start appearing around your house or barn. Of course, they have been hard at work all year protecting your home and animals. They do this all for only one thing in repayment. On Christmas Eve they expect, rather they demand, that a delicious bowl of porridge be set out for them. They like it with a big lump of butter in the middle. Now if you forget to put that bowl of porridge out for them you will be in for a long, hard year ahead because they love to also play tricks on those who forget.

Superstitions in Finnish culture go way, way back in our history. They have formed many of our traditions that are celebrated both in Finland and around the globe wherever Finns gather.

So, the questions remains, do you believe in these superstitions? If not, you'd better knock on wood, just to be on the safe side.

-Andrea Tolonen

**The “It Can’t Get Any Better Than This”
Column...It’s So Exciting to Have...**

NEW MEMBERS!

Tervetuloa:

Pauline Aursland

Max Beidler

Jennifer Cavagnetto

Mark Katzenmeyer

Judith Lake

Anu & Aaron Lippert

Maarit Pulli, Aaron Mosher, &

Milena, Alina, Astrid

Maria Nikolakopoulos

Daniel Niska

Marr Riikka

Tiffany Rohani

Kalle Stauffer

Tuomo & Irene Stauffer

Claudia Valencia

Mark Ray, Karen Wilson

A Time to Honor Elizabeth Newton

As many of you know, Elizabeth Newton was a devoted board member of FFCPC and for several years she held the position of secretary. Of course, we all know about her culinary skills, especially the goodies that pertain to Finnish food, in particular pulla and luumutorttuja (prune tarts).

On Friday, May 3, at 11:00 am there will be a short ceremony honoring our dear friend Elizabeth at the Finnish Monument at Nordic Northwest. Following the tribute coffee and pastry will be served. Karen Reintzell, Elizabeth’s mother, will be in attendance.

Please RSVP Mira Riska
mira.riska@live.com by April 31 if attending.
We hope to see you all there.

President’s Message

Hei kaikki, hello all Finlandia Foundation Columbia-Pacific Chapter and FinnAm Historical Quarterly members and all our friends,

As April is winding down and many of us are gearing up towards the summer months whether it is spending time gardening, spending time outdoors, finishing plans for summer vacation with trips close and far, nonetheless, FFCPC has still events and get-togethers planned before we have our summer break in July! More on those later in this message.

Globally we continue living in interesting times! As you may know, Finland just celebrated its 1st anniversary of being a member of NATO. We are happy that Sweden finally was accepted into the alliance as well.

Finland held Presidential Elections in January. After 12 years in office for President Sauli Niinistö, it was time to choose a new one from other qualified candidates. One of the accomplishments of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament is to have the opportunity to vote via mail. Many of the Finnish citizens living abroad did that instead of having to travel to the nearest voting place. We here in Portland were lucky to have a voting place at Nordic Northwest, where we had over a hundred citizens to fill their civic duty on two rounds. We are happy to see this winter, President Alexander Stubb already actively participating in his duties. It is fun to follow him on Instagram.

Our chapter has been very busy this year so far. Nordic Northwest in collaboration with our chapter, Finlandia Sauna, and a grant from Finlandia Foundation National put together ‘Sauna is Life’ Exhibition in the hallway at Nordia

House. It was very well received. During National Sauna Week in February, we had a wood-heated Mobile Sauna on the grounds, twice actually, for Sauna enthusiasts to have a real Finnish sauna experience. We held a reception with delicious Finnish appetizers before we heard from two Seattle based architects who talked about designing and building floating saunas and more. We also had Lizzy Acker, The Oregonian reporter, tell us about her research and visits to many Portland area saunas and spas. Even though the sauna exhibition will move on to be featured in Philadelphia next year, we are already making plans for the National Sauna Week next February.

We held the Annual Meeting in February. The treasurer, auditor, and nomination committee had done a good job preparing for the meeting and the meeting went smoothly. Our guest speaker, Honorary Consul Veikko Valli, gave us an interesting view of the history of Presidential Elections in Finland.

We had three members step down from the board, David Alford, Ray Wikman, and Pete Lee, who all have served in the chapter in many ways for many years. Thank you for all you have done! In fact, David and Ray were awarded the Most Influential Finn Award. They so deserved it after having instituted the award many years ago. Thanks go to the Schulbachs for putting it together! The replacing new members are Stephanie Piering, who will be our recording secretary, Warren Bechtold, who will co-chair the Lindgren Cabin committee, and Claudia Valencia, who will be co-chairing the social media committee.

Current board members/directors are: Heli Hatanpää-Wetzel, President; Greg Jacob, Vice President; Stephanie Piering, Recording Secretary; Ellen Harju, Treasurer; Mira Riska, Membership Secretary; Renee Byrd, Webmaster; Members: Katariina Harrskog-Lehtonen, Oscar Harrskog, Jaana Beidler, Adam

Perkiömäki, Claudia Valencia, Jukka Perkiömäki, and Warren Bechtold.

We are also happy to have a number of members and fans of FFCPC who step up to help on different events and committees! For example, Andrea Tolonen keeps editing and compiling this newsletter and steer the Finnic Picnic in August.

I want to thank the board and membership for allowing me to serve the FFCPC as president now for my third year!

In February we hosted the Coffee Hour twice at Nordic Northwest. We had good attendance in both and were able to make new connections. It is a great way to meet new people in a friendly setting over coffee and share some Finnish recipes with coffee and tea.

A few of weeks ago, on Easter Saturday/Lankalauantai, we celebrated Easter as a family event at Nordic Northwest. FFCPC had a great collaborative group of organizers with NNW, Portland Finnish School/Suomi-Koulu, the German Sophie Scholl Schule, and Zeitgeist. The weatherman cooperated, and we were able to have many egg hunts outside before we ran out of candy. The coffee table was filled with goodies provided by the Germans and Finns. Suomi-Koulu volunteers were busy helping kids decorate our Palm Sunday tradition of pussy willows which then were presented to one of the volunteers with reciting the 'Virvon, Varvon'- verse to get a prize. We had 160 people in attendance. Many expressed interest in attending this again next year.

As I type, the plans and preparations for the two remaining big events before July are in place:

Vappu-Valborg Celebration, the traditional May Day event, will be held on Sunday the 5th of May. Please register for this event online at www.nordicnorthwest.org/vappu, so we have a proper number to prepare the Vappu food and coffee treats for you. There will be a no-host bar for sodas, wine, and beer. This event is organized together with

NNW, New Sweden, Portland Finnish School, and FFCPC.

The other plan is to participate in the Midsummer Festival with Helsinki Cafe which will be held at Nordic Northwest on June 28-29. More on that later in our emails and on the NNW website. We sure could use some helpers during the two days.

There will be a spring clean-up and renovation day at the Lindgren cabin by Cullaby Lake south of Astoria on May 18th starting at 11a. We will end with a picnic for the workers and family. There will be a sign-up sheet available on our website, www.Ffcpc.info. Please join us for a fun day in the fresh air while getting ready for the summer weekend open houses there. You may volunteer to host one of those weekends through our website. Bring your chairs and gloves to the work party. Mark your calendars for our annual Finnic Picnic on August 17 at the Lindgren Cabin.

Wishing you all the best this spring and summer! Please stay in good spirits and health!

I value open communication and collaboration, so please feel free to talk to me at our events or connect with me via our chapter email

finlandiafoundationcpc@gmail.com.

Respectfully Yours,
Heli Hatanpää-Wetzel
President of FFCPC

~~~~~  
*Beware of ambition, it can  
drive you into a lot of work*

*—Old Finnish Proverb*  
~~~~~

Cook's Column

By Katariina Lehtonen



MUNKKI

Finnish Vappu Donuts

Ingredients

- 13 g/21/2 teaspoons dried/ active dried yeast
- 250 ml whole milk
- 30 g sugar
- 400-500 g plain flour plus extra for kneading
- 2/3 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 50 g melted butter
- 1 egg beaten
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice (optional)
- 1 liter vegetable oil for deep-frying
- Granulated sugar for coating

Directions

1. Warm up the milk and mix the yeast with 2 Tbsp granulated sugar. Whisk until the yeast dissolves. Let stand for 5 minutes while yeast blooms.
2. Add the remaining sugar, salt, cardamom and eggs
3. Mix about 400g flour and whisk the mixture a little in the beginning.
4. Add the remaining flour and at the end the melted butter. Place dough in a

buttered medium bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Let the dough proof in a warm place until it has about doubled the size, about 2.5 hours.

5. Pull the dough from bowl onto a floured surface and form the dough to small balls (about 20 pieces).

6. Place the dough balls on the plate covered with parchment paper. Cover well with a kitchen cloth and rise them well, about half an hour.

7. Cover your fingers with flour and make a hole in the middle of the dough balls. Stretch the holes bigger by turning the balls around your fingers.

8. Heat the vegetable oil in a deep saucepan to 180 degrees Celsius. Carefully test a munkki in the hot oil. It should take about 1-2 minutes each side to turn them light golden-brown.

9. Cook the munkkis in batches. Remove and drain them on the paper towels.

10. Roll the munkkis in sugar while they are still warm so the sugar sticks to them.

The munkkis taste best directly after they are prepared.

~~~~~

*You will never know what you  
can't do  
unless you try.*

*-Old Finnish Proverb*

~~~~~

FINLAND IN APRIL



ROY SCHULBACH

PART ONE

Reference: Text of talk given as part of a panel discussion in Salem, Oregon, 1994.

When I was a young student in grade school, a fellow student posed a riddle: “Why is the Columbia River like a salmon?” The answer: “Because each has Finns on both side.”

The Lower Columbia region on both sides was indeed populated by a large number of Finnish people, as well as Scandinavians: Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes. People of many other nationalities, such as Dutch, German, Greek Estonian, Chinese and Japanese also lived in the area. Most had come to this country to escape poverty, persecution or forced military service. They sought to build more satisfying lives, to gain land, and build their own homes and to live in peaceful circumstances.

My own parents fit these formulae to one degree or another. My mother was the eldest child in a large and very poor family in Bothnian Finland. At 19, in 1909, she immigrated to the United States with just a ticket and no money to prove that she could support herself after being admitted to the US. She overcame this dilemma by borrowing from a fellow passenger enough to satisfy the immigration authorities. After being admitted, she immediately repaid the loan and found a job as a maid in a household. My father, on the other hand belonged to a relatively well-off family in Narva, Estonia. He had been impressed into the Russian army—right off the city streets. On receiving a furlough to visit his home, he told his family he wasn’t going back to the czar’s army. He instead was going to America. The family reaction was, “Not so fast! Wait for us and we’ll all go together.” After gathering some necessary possessions and all the available money, they traveled to Finland where they obtained paper by bribing the people issuing passports. Everything else they left behind.

Both my parents eventually arrived in Astoria, where they were married.

My father’s parents settled on a farm in the Lewis and Clark valley near Astoria where my grandfather farmed.

My parents at first lived in the heart of Uniontown, that section of Astoria where the Columbia River Bridge curves over the business district. Later, we moved to a home that my parents built on Alameda Avenue, one of Uniontown’s main streets.

Two of my earliest memories of Uniontown concern events that I was told I couldn’t have remembered because I was too young. Nevertheless, these strong images are present in my memory even today. The first of these is that of an alley near Helberg’s Drug Store. I remember seeing the water lapping at the pilings through the spaces between planks which paved the alley. The other concerns my mother pushing me in a baby carriage to the new home my parents were building. I still can see the image of my father shingling the roof from my baby carriage vantage point.

All of Uniontown was built on pilings in the early days. The plank streets were built on pilings; the railroads, canneries and net racks were on pilings. Later, the area was filled in by the Port of Astoria pipeline dredge. The streets were paved, and residents didn’t have to worry about falling into the river from the sidewalks.

Uniontown had grown up over a period of some 50 years before I was born. It had probably reached a population peak by about 1910, after which growth came to a standstill.

Union Fish cannery was probably the largest employer, although Columbia River Packers Assn. probably surpassed it in later years. Other canneries in Uniontown were the Sanborn and Barbee Packing companies.

There were mooring places near the canneries. Boats were fastened at each end with ropes which ran over wooden blocks. This arrangement kept the boats lined up and away from each other, and also allowed them to rise and fall with the tides. Whenever the river was rough or choppy, particularly in the summer when the blocks were dry, they protested with eerie musical notes. Hundreds of blocks combined into a melodious orchestra of sounds which could be heard all over Uniontown. Children were put to bed listening to this music.

Taylor Street businesses I can remember include the Finnish Mercantile Company, Pentilla's Dry Goods store, Puusti's Hardware, Helberg's Drug Store, Pietarila's Grocery, a pool hall, barbershop, and Youngs Bay Cooperative Dairy—the center of an unsolved explosion that once caused a lot of excitement. All of these businesses had Finnish-speaking clerks. Thompson's Monument Works made tombstones out of Finnish granite, and many a Uniontown Finn lies under one of these pieces of Finland.

Net repairs took place on net racks adjacent to the canneries, and boat repairs were carried out in building lofts into which boats were raised on hand-powered boat elevators. An interesting sidelight was that some Chinese children listening to fishermen repairing their nets gained an ability to speak Finnish.

Fishboats were built at Columbia Boat Works, plus a number of other Finnish-owned boatyards. During World War I, large wooden ships were built by Wilson Shipyards another Finnish-owned concern. Such large ships were no longer needed when the war ended, and the yards fell into decay.

In addition to the regular retail businesses in Uniontown, there were a number of boarding houses and at least three commercial saunas. Union Steam Baths was owned and operated by Kaarlo Koskela and his wife. Mr. Koskela was known to all for being an Olympic wrestling champion in the 1912 Olympics held in Stockholm, Sweden.

Much history of Uniontown has been told in publications of the Finnish American Historical Society of the West. One, *Boarding House Finns*, tells of the early boarding houses and the place they filled in Finnish communities throughout the West. Other publications cover the churches in early Uniontown, activities of Finnish halls, and the logging industry.

Taylor School was situated on the hillside above Helberg's. It was in its 1st days when I attended the newly-built Captain Robert Gray School. At these schools, each recess or after lunch period, we would line

up outside the school and march inside to a record of one of several John Phillip Sousa marches. Several children entering first grade when I did were unable to speak English. They received no special classes or attention, yet all could speak English within a month or two. As for me I can't even remember a process of learning English or Finnish. I remember we spoke English when we played with other children outdoors and I always switched to Finnish on entering our home. My mother, like many Finnish women, spoke no English.

Uniontown wasn't "big town USA." From its center to each end, it was probably less than three-fourths of a mile. The Columbia River bordered it on one side and the alder-covered hill closed in on the other. Taylor Street and Alameda Street ran its length, but on different levels. West Bond led to downtown Astoria over what we called the Bond Street hill. There were several other streets of shorter length. This was the world we lived in.

Most of the boys had an amazing amount of freedom to roam this area and to fill their days with adventure, especially in the summer. We pretty much stayed in our area unless a circus came to town. Then we went to the circus grounds in an area once known as Scow Bay. We watched the circus train unloading. We tried to get free passes by working. On one occasion my brother and I were promised passes if we would carry water to the lemonade concession. A very thirsty horse just off the train intercepted my brother, who was carrying a full pail of water. Before my brother could get free, the horse drank half the water. The rest, however, became lemonade. We didn't get our promised passes, but we did sneak into the tent.

We explored all of Uniontown—the boat moorages, the docks, the shops of Columbia Iron Works, where we watched men working with large metal lathes and transferring power from a large central jack shaft to power the drill presses and other machines. We watched can-manufacturing at Union Fish cannery and collected the narrow strips of metal discarded in the process, from which we wove baskets. We

entered the cannery floor during fishing season when the floor was covered with thousands of salmon ready for butchering by the Chinese who worked in the canneries. We would watch Finnish women hand-packing cans. The salting of salmon into large barrels left the backbones, head and tails available to anyone. We often filled a lard bucket with chopped-up pieces to take home to be turned into *kalamojaka*, a fish stew made with potatoes, onions and milk.

A frequent sight in Uniontown was the straddle trucks which transported canned salmon to the warehouses on Pier 3. The low-bedded, solid-tired, chain-driven trucks of Seaborg Transfer Co also made many trips down Taylor Street with canned salmon. There were more than a few cans that were quality-tested by neighborhood boys. I knew of one who carried a can opener just for that purpose. Some of you may have seen a film on public television called "*Remembering Uniontown.*" The part about small boys rowing about between the port dock slips in salmon boxes—which were about four feet long, possibly 18-inches wide and a foot deep—is all true. I was one of those involved. Another thing not reported on, or even recommended, was launching steam or calcium carbide rockets—at least not for eight-year olds. I won't go into the technical details of this early-day rocketry.

**Read Part Two in the next edition of
*Finnam Historical Quarterly***

REFLECTIONS OF FINLANDIA FOUNDATION NATIONAL'S REDEDICATION OF THE FINNISH AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER IN HANCOCK

By Katariina Lehtonen

Finlandia Foundation National has shown its *sisu* by taking over the Finnish American Heritage Center in

Hancock, Michigan. Finnish and American flags decorated the main street in the early spring sunshine when the rededication of the center took place.

The importance of the event was confirmed by many local inhabitants of the city. The gratitude was heard in the speeches. The president of Finlandia Foundation National, Anne-Mari Paster cut the ribbon with the support of the Finlandia Foundation National trustees and Thomas Flanigan, Executive Director of FFN, and the staff. The Consul General of Finland in New York, Jarmo Sareva, was present and congratulated Finlandia Foundation National. Many Hancock city officials attended the event as well.

The visitors were able to explore the art gallery, Finnish American Reporter, Folk school, and North Wind Books that are also part of the newly expanded FFN organization. It was said, "We have to put Hancock, Michigan on the map. We have lots of ideas. We have plans, but again we will need all hands-on-deck. This is not over. This is just beginning."

According to Anne-Mari Paster the foundation is planning to digitize the former university archives, create traveling exhibits and continue cultural programming with the folk school and the Finnish American Reporter.

The Hancock area is 3,000 miles away from everything got to feel it when flying to Hancock. The population is 35% Finnish heritage. There are still stores with Finnish flavor. The Finnishness was also very pronounced among the people, the easiness to get in contact with other people and the so-called down to earth mentality was easily recognizable. The hospitality and friendliness made the visitors feel truly welcomed.

While in the Copper Country, the visitors had the privilege of touring the local Quincy mine and to reflect on the hardship the minors had experienced in the past. After the tour it is with gratitude and pride as we can now understand what the Finns, among other nationalities from Europe, had to do to earn their income. The mine was a new beginning for the immigrants from Finland. With *sisu* they survived and moved on.

Now it is Finlandia Foundation's time to move on. If the energy and vision is of any guidance, Finlandia Foundation is up to a strong start. Using Anne-Mari Paster's quote, "That failure is not an option!" as well as "Yhdessä," together we can take care of the artifacts and build on the treasures that are now stored in Hancock and make them available to the world.

~~~~~

## What Is VAPPU?

As many of you who have attended FFCPC Vappu celebrations in the past you may come to know Vappu as a time when family and friends gather around a bonfire, drink *sima*, and have a good time. And, that would be true. However, there is much more to Vappu than you might know.

The 1<sup>st</sup> of May, also known as May Day, is a major Finnish festival celebrated in Finland every spring. It is a time for picnicking, drinking, and for students the chance to wear their white caps signifying that summer is on its way. The student cap tradition started in 1848 and was moved to May Day in the 1920's by the universities. Even Havis Amanda (Manta), a famous statue

in Helsinki, dons a student cap for the holiday. Universities take turns being the ones to give Manta her cap for that year. It is a televised event. Last year 30,000 gathered in the square to see it in person.



Celebrated before, on April 30<sup>th</sup>. It is a joyous occasion as it marks the start of springtime. There are, of course, bonfires. This tradition dates back to pagan days when it was believed the bonfires would drive away those pesky evil spirits. In today's world there may be fore spirits coming out of bottles than being driven away, but that still does remain to be seen. It's a wild time in Finland!