

## THEY SAY IT SNOWS IN FINLAND

In 1999 I took my three kids to Finland to “see the Old Country.” I had never been before either but I’d heard many stories about my grandparent’s life in Finland from my Dad. It usually involved cold weather, harsh conditions, icy rivers and snow. Lots of snow. Beautiful snow. So when I packed for the trip I added warm clothes, even though it was June, because “it’s cold in Finland.” So cold, in fact, that one of my Dad’s stories told of how the Finns had to shorten their cat’s tails so they wouldn’t have to open the door for so long when they let their cats in and out of the house. My 5-year old self thought, that’s really cold.

Well, when we got to Finland in 1999 the region was experiencing what they called the “hottest temperatures on record for the century.” What was going on? I totally wasn’t prepared for hot weather. That was not my understanding of Finnish weather.

Fast forward to 2015 (if I’m remembering correctly). Again I found myself in Finland, this time up north at the Arctic Circle. Wouldn’t you think that the Arctic Circle would be on the chilly side? After all, it’s above the timber line due to the colder weather patterns, right? I thought so, too, so once again I came prepared. Once again I was astonished when I went to visit *Joulupukki* and his reindeer and there were no reindeer. Why? Because “it was the hottest year in a decade and the reindeer had to be moved out of town due to the heat.” The temperature was in the 90’s everytime I had set foot in Finland.

This led me to believe that there really isn’t any snow or cold in Finland at all. Ever. It’s all made up. There is only beautiful sunshine and long midnight sun days forever. Wonderful. Why, then, did they always say that it snows in Finland?

I’m going to try it again next month, February 2025. This time I’m on a Bucket List mission as well as a personal “scientific” undertaking to see if those picture postcards of snow covered trees in Lapland are photoshopped or real. I will be packing my warmest sweaters and heaviest boots just in case it is real, because that’s what I always do. I will visit *Joulupukki* again because that turned out really well last time. I will “hold my thumbs” that the reindeer will be there this time around because I’d love to meet them. And, I am going to check the length of all the cat’s tails that may cross my path.

-Andrea Tolonen

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

## **NEW MEMBERS!**

**Tervetuloa:**

**ETHAN RICHTER**

## ***President’s Message***

Dear Members of Finlandia Foundation  
Columbia-Pacific Chapter,

Happy New Year 2025 to you and yours!  
Didn’t we just celebrate the holidays, and  
now 2025 and January are well on the  
way!?

In late October we received the sad news  
about one of our Chapter founders and  
long-time board member, Jukka  
Perkiomaki’s passing. It all happened so  
fast, and we could not believe it. We extend  
our heartfelt condolences to Jukka’s family,  
friends, and all those who knew him. We  
will dearly miss him.

It seems that our chapter activities were  
many and more during the last two months  
of the year. Our biannual cleaning of the  
Lindgren Cabin by Cullaby Lake on the  
coast was another successful event in early  
November. We got some helpers from  
Astoria as well to pitch in to winterize the  
cabin and clean the grounds. In late  
November we hosted Nordic Northwest’s  
Kahvi Hetki-Coffee Hour. We had several  
members provide their favorite holiday time  
goodies. Thank you to those who helped  
make the coffee hour a tasty and fun  
event.

Did you happen to go see the Fågelbo  
grounds during the Holidays? Our amazing  
board ladies had the shed all decorated with  
garlands and lights, a small Christmas tree  
and candelabras in the windows. This  
surely gave many visitors who came to see  
Ole-Bolle Troll a merry feeling.

Our biggest fundraiser, ScanFair, took  
place in the beginning of December. We  
could not have done it without the help of  
our volunteers who loaded the truck and  
transported the big displays, sled, Oscar-  
The Reindeer, and multiple boxes of  
materials to ScanFair. They unloaded the  
items, and set up the two booths,  
Joulupukki and Info booth, so we were all  
ready when the doors opened on Saturday  
at 10am. Our ladies came to the rescue  
again and over two evenings baked 400  
Finnish Joulutorttus, Christmas pastries,  
to sell at the Info booth with coffee and  
lingonberry juice. This turned out to be a  
success, as there were not many booths  
who sold coffee or did not have a long line  
to get through. We also sold many Finnish  
candy bars and licorice sticks, which we  
still have in stock and will be selling at our  
events this winter/spring.

Many of our members participated in the  
annual Independence Day Celebration that  
took place at Nordic Northwest and  
spearheaded by Eila Chisholm, the  
President of the Messiah Lutheran  
Church. She had put together a nice mix of  
music and talks to make the special day so  
beautiful and memorable.

This ScanFair, along with Midsummer  
Helsinki Cafe, are our two biggest  
fundraisers. As you may know, we have  
kept our membership fees the same now for  
several years, and we offer many free or low-  
price events throughout the year. We rely  
on the members and volunteers support  
who make it possible for our chapter to have  
so many events on the calendar. We work  
closely with Suomi-Koulu, the Finnish  
School for kids, the Finnish Conversation  
Class, Nordic Northwest, and the MLC  
Church to make all this happen.

Our board is an active participation board,  
which means that all of us try to help as  
much as our personal and work life allows.  
Our board meetings are open to  
members. We meet monthly via Zoom or  
Live usually 10 times a year, often skipping

July and December. We are always looking for new board members and volunteers for our events. Please consider joining in as a board member or a volunteer!

Our future is in the young people. If we cannot attract them to our events and activities, the chapter will slowly wither away. That happened to the Sacramento Finlandia Chapter where I last served as president and board member. Please continue bringing your children and grandchildren to our events, so they get the exposure to Finnish traditions, holidays, and customs.

We have a busy winter and spring ahead of us! All events take place at Nordic Northwest unless noted differently. We start by hosting the Coffee Hour on Tuesday, January 28, 10-11.30am at NNW. Then we hold our Annual Meeting there on February 9th at 2-4pm. The Finlandia Foundation National Sauna Week will be February 16-22 this year. We have a couple events planned for the week starting with a Finnish Sauna Night - Saunailta at SaunaGlo in Milwaukie on Wednesday 19th at 7-9pm. The FFN Lecturer of the Year, Eero Kilpi, will come to town and hold a presentation "Sauna Lost & Found: Restoring Finnishness to a Global Tradition" at Nordic Northwest on Thursday, February 20th at 6:30pm. There is also a Mobile Sauna available on Friday 21st on NNW grounds. See [nordicnorthwest.org/events](http://nordicnorthwest.org/events). All Sauna Week programming and online zooms are posted on [www.NationalSaunaWeek.com](http://www.NationalSaunaWeek.com) Check out the website!

We were not able to host the Kalevala Event last year due to snow and ice, but we are hopeful that this year the weatherman will cooperate. We have planned a great afternoon celebration of our National Epic with a talk by our own Greg Jacob who just recently was invited by the Lower Columbia Preservation Society in Astoria to lecture on the Kalevala. We will also serve Finnish Pea Soup and Oven Pancakes with coffee and pulla. This event will be on the 1st of March


from 12 to 2pm and produced together with Suomi-Koulu and Nordic Northwest.

Details on these and other events will always be posted on the website [www.ffcpc.info](http://www.ffcpc.info) under events. We also update our FB and IG pages, so hopefully you are following those. Please don't hesitate to send us an email at [FinlandiaFoundationCPC@gmail.com](mailto:FinlandiaFoundationCPC@gmail.com) if you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns.

Best regards! Terveisin,  
Heli Hatanpaa-Wetzel  
President of Finlandia Foundation  
Columbia-Pacific Chapter

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**JUKKA PERKIOMAKI**  
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**IN MEMORIAM**  
**Jukka Perkiomaki, DMD**  
*Jan 10, 1950 - Oct 30, 2024*



Jukka passed away in his home surrounded by family on October 30th after being diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer months earlier. Born to Enni and Osmo Perkiomaki of Oulainen, Finland in January 1950, his family immigrated to Astoria, Oregon when he was 11 years old. He quickly adapted to hold his own in a new country, mastering the English language and becoming a standout in athletics and academics. He played varsity football, basketball, and golf for the Astoria High School Fighting Fisherman, from which he graduated in 1969. Thriving in his new community, Jukka went on to complete his undergraduate studies at Oregon State University and Western Oregon University, and earned his Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD) degree from the University of Oregon Health Science Center in 1977.

His Portland dental practice grew quickly and ran successfully for 40+ years before selling in 2020 to Forest Park Dental Studio. Jukka's passion for dentistry and commitment to his patients were evident in every aspect of his practice. He leaves behind not only a significant impact on the dental community but also a lasting impression of kindness, compassion, and professionalism everywhere he went. Apart from his career, Jukka was a true sportsman, from water skiing to downhill skiing across the West. He enjoyed a lifetime of fishing and razor clamming with friends, was an avid golfer and tennis player, and a constant and well-loved presence in the MAC squash community.

Jukka married Judy in 1990 and they began building their family that same year in SW Portland. He embraced his role as a proud father, never missing an opportunity to be at his children's squash and soccer games across the country. His humor, positivity, and love for his family and friends will be deeply missed, but will always be remembered. He is survived by his wife Judy, son Adam (Isabella) and daughter Kaija, and sister Sirpa Whitman.

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**Cook's Column**

By Katariina Lehtonen



*In honor of Johan Ludvig Runeberg, Finland's national poet (1804-1877), people all over Finland celebrate February 5, Runeberg's birthday, with delicious Runeberg's Cakes. Runeberg's wife Fredrika Runeberg created the dessert in 1850's. Now you can make them at home and join in the birthday celebration!*

## **RUNEBERG'S CAKES**

Makes 12

### **Ingredients**

- 1.5 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 eggs
- <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cup caster sugar
- 1 cup unsalted butter
- 1 cup ground almonds
- 2 cups fine fresh breadcrumbs
- 5 Tbsp almond liqueur, punch or rum
- <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cup raspberry jam

### **Instructions**

1. Preheat the oven to 400F. Grease 12 darioles or castle pudding tins

(pans). Popover pans work if you don't have the tins.

Sift the flour and baking powder together into a bowl. Put the eggs and sugar in a large bowl and whisk together until light and fluffy.

2. In a separate bowl, beat the butter until creamy, then beat in the ground almonds and breadcrumbs. Add the mixture to the eggs and sugar, mix together, then stir in the sifted flour.

3. Divide the mixture between the prepared tins, allowing some room for the mixture to rise.

Bake in the oven for 15-20 minutes, until a skewer inserted in the middle comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tins before turning out.

4. Brush the cakes with liqueur to dampen them, and then top each with a teaspoonful of raspberry jam



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*No matter how old we get  
We will feel young inside,  
But our bodies don't get the  
message.*

*-Old Finnish Proverb*

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## **Wilhelm Basi Diary on 1898 Yukon Rescue**

By Walter Mattila



Written in September 1971

*This article translated the diary of Wilhelm Basi which he began in 1897 as a member of an American relief expedition which transported reindeer from Norwegian Lapland to the Yukon. Mr. Basi was able to serve in communicating between members of this expedition since he spoke Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish and Lapp. Later he farmed in Centerville, Washington and served as pastor there as well as at Quincy, Oregon*

Note: This article uses the outdated term "Laplanders" and "Lapp" to describe the indigenous Sami peoples of northern Norway, Sweden and Finland. The use of this terminology may offend some people, but that is not the intent in this reprint.

Also, throughout the diary you will find comments written by Walter Mattila to further describe the situation.

*(The diary begins in late 1897 when Wilhelm Basi joins an emergency American expedition in Norway. It obtained reindeer and drivers to get food to Alaska's Yukon Gold Miners believed to be starving in ice and snow)*

## **The Diary**

A journey from Norway to the United States and then to Alaska. This expedition was led by Dr. S. Jackson, Washington, D.C. and William Kjellmann of Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin. Dr. Jackson was the head Alaska herdsman. Kjellmann went to school in Norway and in America so he was able to interpret in English and Norwegian. He was born and raised in northern Norway and was familiar with the Laplanders.

**November 3, 1897:**

Kjellmann came from Alta, Finnmark, Norway, and went to Kautokeino and Karasjok to bring back for the United States government 535 reindeer. He hired 65 Laplanders who were experienced herdsman. They could hardly handle the large herd so I was drafted to come with the expedition.

**January 1898:**

Kjellmann and the Laplanders drove the herd from Kautokeino and Karasjok to the beach at Alta. The supplies were made ready. Then the emigrant ship, Manitoba, came from Trondheim. We took the harness off the reindeer to put them on the ship. As we were doing this, eight reindeer drowned. Then 65 herdsman, their women and children, of whom there were quite a few, boarded the ship.

**February 4:**

The Manitoba left Alta. The pilot boat left the ship at 11am near Loppa and we set a course due North for the open sea. In the evening we could see the peaks.

Walter Mattila's note:

*For some reason not brought out in the diary, Sheldon Jackson was known among the herders as Dr. Silmer Jackson. He was the general agent of education in Alaska, under the US Department of Interior and newly appointed moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America. No pioneer Alaskan is more honored than this great humanitarian and the Laplanders' fine friend. The Jackson count of his passengers on the chartered Manitoba was 113: they were made up of 43 native Lapp herders, 16 native Lapp women and 19 native Lapp children; 15 Norwegian herders, 3 Norwegian women and 7 Norwegian children; and 10 Finnish herders. However, the Finns were Finnish speaking residents of Norway and the native Lapps spoke Finnish more fluently than Norwegian. Kjellmann was superintendent of reindeer raising under Jackson in Alaska and had brought out seven native Lapp herders and their families in 1894 to Northern Alaska for instructing Eskimos in breeding reindeer being introduced from Siberia. Instructors from Siberia had proved unsatisfactory. Although Jackson was in charge of the 1898 reindeer expedition as the representative of the Secretary of War for providing the fastest possible relief to Yukon Gold Rushers believed to be in distress, he was at the same time lining up more instructors for the*

*Eskimos who were learning to raise and drive the Siberian reindeer. Jackson promoted reindeer for Alaska as a means of improving Eskimo living. The 539 officially counted reindeer loaded on the Manitoba were steers broken in and trained for sledding.*

#### February 5:

The next morning we didn't see any land in any direction. The course was set Southwest and the ship made from eight to nine miles per watch of four hours. The wind was from the Northeast. We have good weather and are now in the approximate area of Iceland in the North Atlantic.

#### February 9:

The wind increased in force and became a hurricane. It smashed a lifeboat and the bow of the ship. The storm lasted for six days; for three days we kept the ship standing into the wind.

#### February 16:

Some of the people were seasick in the bad weather. Life aboard this ship is nothing to brag about, the food is poor. The weather is nice now.

#### February 18:

One of the reindeer died. The others seem to be standing the ocean voyage quite well.

#### February 23:

The ship's steering mechanism went out of order and delayed us for two hours until it was repaired.

#### February 26:

Our first sight of the American coast. In the evening we anchored in New York harbor.

#### February 27:

We passed the Statue of Liberty and docked at a pier at 9am. The reindeer moss and supplies were put into railroad freight cars. The train was made into two sections; both had a cook car, sleeping car, coaches, freight cars and cattle cars for the reindeer.

The men, women, children, reindeer and the supplies were placed in the train. We did our own cooking. Each section had one cook and one waiter. I was one of the cooks. This arrangement lasted until we arrived in Seattle. There were locks on the cook cars so the cooks wouldn't be bothered until the meal was ready to be eaten and on the tables. Then the doors were opened.

#### March 1:

We left New York at 6pm.

#### March 3:

We arrived in Chicago at 4am. We passed through three towns between Chicago and Milwaukee and we met numerous trains.

#### March 4:

We are now going through North Dakota.

#### March 5:

We are going through Montana. There are big prairies, many houses and cattle. We see our first Indian.

#### March 6:

This is a region of much forest, mountains, and valleys, the Rocky Mountains. The forests are of fir and spruce. We had an accident. The locomotive and one cattle car with reindeer went off the rails. But as luck would have it, they went off the back side and not the cliff side where they would have gone into the river. That would have been the last of us.

#### March 7:

We have been going through snow for about three hours. We arrived in Seattle at 9pm.

#### March 8:

The reindeer were taken two or three miles from Seattle to graze at Woodland Park. This is where we stayed until the ship to Alaska was ready.

#### March 15:

A little Lapp boy died and was buried in Seattle. He was the only death in our Expedition.

**March 16:**

The reindeer, passengers and all the supplies were loaded on a ship. It only traveled in the spring and summer.

**March 17:**

We left Seattle. Our first stop was at Port Townsend, Washington. There we left all the women and children.

**March 24:**

We arrived on the Canadian shore and the toll station.

**March 27:**

We landed at Haines, Alaska, about 10 miles from Skagway. Here a large group of prospectors live.

**March 28:**

At Port Haines, passengers, reindeer and supplies were put ashore. This is a mission station and many Indians live here. They have some good sled dogs. Orders were given to keep all dogs tied up because they would kill the reindeer. Dogs found loose would be shot; guards were placed with the reindeer day and night. The moss from Norway is all gone. The snow is five feet deep everywhere. There is no moss to be found on the range for the reindeer Two to three reindeer die each day. When we got to Haines 20 reindeer had already died, but before we could move them to high ground pasture more died. There are only 300 left. Six men were sent to the mountain to look for moss.

**April 1:**

In the evening Dr. Jackson gave a touching farewell speech. He reminded us that when living and working among the (natives) to show a good example. Our leader, William Kjellmann, sang a song in Norwegian. He has been with us all the time. The snow is beginning to melt fast.

**April 2:**

Today was the first time Rapp and I were on watch.

Walter Mattila's note:

*The diarist may not have known that on returning from Norway Dr. Jackson stopped off at Washington D.C., to learn that the Yukon Gold Rush crisis was over. Word had come out that no miners had been faced with starvation. Still under War Department orders, Jackson was directed to send a part of the herd with an army exploration to Circle in northeast Alaska. The diarist was also likely unaware that the army did not have in Seattle a ship waiting to sail to Haines. Nor had the army even looked for moss in the Haines area. Almost all the moss from Norway was eaten during the Seattle delay. Despite the Spanish American War and the Alaska Gold Rush competing for ships, in ten days the big expedition under Jackson's direction departed from Seattle in the sailing vessel Seminole. The women and children were left at Port Townsend, Washington. Later most of the herders returned to that Puget Sound port to get on a ship which took them and their dependents to the site of a new Alaska reindeer station far north at Eaton in Norton Sound.*

**To Be Continued in the Next Edition of the Historical Quarterly. Stay tuned!**

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