

Finnish Accent

Your newsletter regarding all things Finnish in the U.S.
Brought to you by the Finnish-American Society of the Delaware Valley



FINNISH FANS at the meet 'n greet with Valteri Filppula and Jori Lehterä after the Flyers' game in February.

Despite the Devils winning 5-4 in the shootout that ended the four-game winning streak for the Flyers, the happy crowd was excited to meet with the two Finnish players, who graciously signed autographs and posed for photos with their loyal fans.

NIGHTWISH made their musical fans' dreams come true at the packed Electric Factory in Philadelphia. The famed Finnish symphonic metal band, now in its 22nd year, was on a US tour in support of their latest album *Endless Forms Most Beautiful*, making a stop in Philly on March 16.



Tuomas Holopainen, the founder of the band, explains what Nightwish is all about, "We give the listeners a place to escape to, and to create their own universes, and to simply have a wondrous time with this bunch! Nightwish is my soul image, my retreat, trash can and life's work all rolled in one. The ride will last as long as there is imagination, beauty and darkness left in the world".



And more hockey madness... Now in its 19th year, the **Haverford Hawks** hosted Helsinki **Vikingit** (Vikings) Hockey Club and many Delaware Valley youth hockey teams March 29-31 in this US-Finland Tournament.

The two teams host the tournament in alternate years in their respective countries; at least 800 youth hockey players from Finland and the US (and the same number of adults - coaches and parents) have enjoyed immersing themselves in each other's cultures while competing in the sport they love.

Something for everyone coming up in May...

**Don't
miss
this
super
fun
event!**



Ismo Leikola, "The Funniest Person in the World" 2014 will appear at the **Helium Club in Philadelphia on May 16 at 8pm**. Ismo has appeared on NBC's "Last Call with Carson Daly" and became the first Finnish comedian to perform on "Conan" in 2018. His clip on the show has been viewed nearly 60 million times!

Get your tickets at heliumcomedy.com

Mark your calendar:

On June 10 at 3pm, we'll celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the impressive Wäinö Aaltonen sculpture in Chester, PA, which depicts the Finnish and Swedish settlers journey and subsequent settlement of the Delaware Valley in 1638. Details to follow.

You are invited to

lecture and FASDV Annual Meeting

on Saturday May 26, beginning at 1pm

at the American Swedish Historical Museum,
1900 Pattison Avenue, Philadelphia, PA.

History of Finnish Independence

FASDV has invited Sharon Rahkonen, who teaches at Indiana University PA, to discuss and examine for us how a small, backward country in a remote corner of the Russian empire was able to gain independence without being crushed, and more importantly, how Finland was



able to remain independent in spite of many challenges. Besides analyzing the pathway to independence, this lecture will also discuss several factors which led to Finland's subsequent success as an independent nation.

The lecture is free for FASDV members (\$10 non-members). This is a perfect time to RENEW your membership at fasdv.org.

If you enjoy our events, receiving the newsletter and notices about other Finland-related events in the Delaware Valley, connecting with other Finnish-Americans and friends of Finland, and if you feel it is important to promote Finnish culture, history and education in our area, please consider renewing your membership now. Being a member also gives you voting rights in our annual meeting.

Membership is only \$20 for individuals and \$25 for families.

Henri Mattila's new website for political commentary

HENRI Mattila and Erich Prince were in the same graduating class at Haverford School in 2013. They struck up a friendship in People to People, a student organization to learn about people in other countries. Henri had come to the Philadelphia suburb with his family from Finland several years earlier. Henri's mother is the Honorary Consul of Finland in Philadelphia Kristina Mattila and his father Jyrki Mattila works in the pharmaceutical industry. After high school, Henri went back to Finland to serve in the military before attending Cornell University.

Henri Mattila, 24, and Erich Prince, 23, had kicked around the idea for a bit before starting Merion West in the summer of 2016 in the midst of a heated presidential campaign.

"I was following the news, what's going on, reading about all the polarization; especially the national media outlets seemed to be broken," said Henri. That's how Merion West, merionwest.com, was born. It is a website for political commentary that aims to address the lack of a centrist point of view in other media. He "met with Erich, a good friend from high school. We thought about it, mulled it over

and discussed it, and we eventually created the enterprise. No one else is going to do it."



"It was in the midst of the nastiness going on in political discourse at the time," Erich said. "The discourse on both sides was at a less than ideal place. We thought there was an opportunity for somebody to come in and try to represent both sides equally [in the media]. Not to try to eliminate bias, because we think that's neither feasible nor a worthwhile project, but rather to label it."

"Within our publication, we have people from all across the political spectrum, and we emphasize people being respectful with how they write," says Erich. "You won't [have] any Mother Jones on the left or Breitbart on the right, one-sided language. The language that our writers chose, they make sure they're engaging with the positions on the other side. And they're not coming down so

unilaterally, so monolithically that they can't even entertain the possibility. ... They're acknowledging in their word choice that there are other, legitimate positions to hold on the debate."

"Our whole shtick is we're trying to be a centrist moderate take on politics,"

"Our goal is to just have people listen to the other side, just listen to them," Erich said. "Don't get into this arrogance that my position is the only legitimate position to hold; that smart, reasonable people can see there is not one side to the story, not even two, but many sides. Just have a little bit more open mind."

Also, Merion West was rated least biased by Media Bias Fact Check LLC, Prince said. According to that group, sources rated least biased "have minimal bias and use very few loaded words (wording that attempts to influence an audience by using appeal to emotion or stereotypes). The reporting is factual and usually sourced.

Kudos to Henri and Erich for their idea and hard work to make it a reality! Check out their creation at merionwest.com.

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