



Triangle Finnish Association

Greetings Fellow Finns and Friends of Finland,

I am honored to again be the TFA President for 2024 and am thankful to Charles Hodges who has volunteered to continue as Web Master as well as taking on the Secretary duties. We thank the outgoing board members who served so well in 2023 - Treasurer Hanna Hinson and Secretary Jaana Korhonen. The TFA is doing very well as an organization, with sufficient funds in our bank account to fund our events and a growing membership. As a social organization, we encourage everyone to get to know your fellow members and share in your love and respect for Finland and its culture.

Volunteers Needed: As a volunteer-led group, we rely on our members to serve as board members. In order for the TFA to continue functioning, we have **an immediate need for a volunteer for Treasurer.** *Since we now collect membership dues and payments for activities via the TFA website (trifinn.org), the Treasurer's duties are considerably easier.* We will also need a new President next year and are looking for a volunteer to serve as President-elect. The President-elect's only duty is to serve if the President cannot and succeed the President the following year. The President-elect would be copied on board emails to understand the President's duties, how the group operates, and be prepared to take over the role next year. Please contact me if you are interested in either of these positions. Hanna Hinson can describe the Treasurer duties if you are interested.

We also rely on our members to assisting at activities. For example: when an event is held at someone's home, we need a coordinator to come early, bring any food and beverages provided by TFA, and set up for the party to minimize the effort of the person generous enough to offer their home. We often ask for additional volunteers for events, depending on their complexity.

Membership and Dues: Speaking of dues, all members need to pay their 2024 dues to continue as TFA members and participate in the group's activities. *See the link for Membership at the website trifinn.org to easily make this payment (\$25 per family or \$15 for an individual).* **Only current members** will be able to register and pay for TFA activities. Those not paying dues by May 1 will be removed from our email list.

History For those who are new to the TFA, the organization began as an informal gathering of local Triangle-area Finns in the late 1980's. The TFA became a more formalized organization in the early 1990's by establishing bylaws and a set of officers to serve 1-year terms to plan and manage group activities. While the TFA became more organized, the activities have remained much the same for 30 years. Essentially, the TFA holds several parties and picnics each year to celebrate Finnish holidays, foods, and culture and welcomes Finns, people of Finnish descent, and friends of Finland to join. There is one meeting per year, a planning meeting held in January/February, to select officers and set the dates and locations of our gatherings. We have kept a similar schedule of events for many years but are always open to suggestions for additional activities. In past years we have also had a Juhannus/Midsummer picnic and participated in the Raleigh International Festival (now on hold). The International Festival was an important community outreach for the TFA and we look forward to it returning at some point.

2023 Highlights Besides our usual activities, there were other significant TFA achievements last year. Thanks to Webmaster Charles Hodges, our website was totally remade. Even better, dues and registration/admission fees to events can now be paid via the website. Charles and Hanna Hinson deserve credit for making the payments work on the website. The TFA joined the national Finnish organization the Finlandia Foundation (finlandiafoundation.org) as an affiliate, and we are learning the benefits we can gain from membership. After much research, Tom Dunder found a facility for our annual Independence Day party (the Unitarian Fellowship in Raleigh) with rental cost in our price range (most of these facilities cost thousands of dollars for one night rental).

2024 Activities

- **“Late Laskianen” Pea Soup Party** - The Dogwood shelter at Lake Crabtree Park, Cary, Saturday, April 6, 2024, from 1-4 pm, with set up starting at noon. Group members are encouraged to bring traditional pea soup, baked goods like Laskiaispulla, pannukakku (oven pancake) or other foods associated with the Easter season. Cost will be \$5/person, children 12 and under are free. TFA will supply coffee and beverages. Pirkko Urli will coordinate.
- **Hurricanes Hockey Game** –Join us on Tuesday, April 4th at PNC Arena to see the Canes take on the Ottawa Senators at 7:00 pm. Tickets are \$101.89 (including tax) and can be purchased through this link: www.canesgroups.com/Finns. Purchase your tickets soon to assure availability. We understand the tickets are expensive, so please feel free to look for less expensive tickets at sites like StubHub and Ticketmaster. Tom and Kathe Dunder will arrive early to find a parking spot for a tailgate pre-game party; a map of the parking lot showing where the tailgate is to be held will be emailed. Bring your preferred snacks and beverages. A grill will be available if you want to bring makkara (not dogs/sausages). Come cheer for our 4 terrific Finnish players, Sebastian Aho, Teuvo Teräväinen, Jesperi Kotkaniemi, and Antti Raanta.
- **Vappu Party** – Home of Tarja Heikkinen-Gray, 5717 Crutchfield Road, Raleigh, NC 27606, May 4th, 2024. A May Day picnic celebration. TFA will supply non-alcoholic drinks and makkara and other grill food. Bring your student cap, Finnish salads or deserts, and any beverages you prefer. We need a coordinator and volunteers to help.
- **Piirakka Party** – The party will be held at the home of Pirkko Urli, 1015 Cuthbert Lane, Durham, NC 27703 at a date to be determined. A Coordinator is needed. We gather to celebrate the much-loved piirakka (pie in English but unique to Finland) in all its forms. Members are encouraged to cook traditional Karjalan Piirakat in addition to the wide variety of savory (meat, salmon, and vegetable) and sweet (blueberry) piirakka in Finnish cuisine. TFA provides coffee and beverages.
- **Itsenäisys Juhla/Independence Day/Christmas Party** – To be held at the same facility as last year, the Raleigh Unitarian Universalist Fellowship on Wade Avenue. The party will be held on Sunday, December 12, 2024, at a location to be determined. This is our biggest event of the year, and we need volunteers for the overall coordination, food, beverages, program, décor, and setup/cleanup.

There is one additional optional event, the MLS (Major League Soccer) game between Charlotte FC and Minnesota United FC in Charlotte on April 21, 2024, at 6 pm. Both teams feature a Finnish player (Jere Uronen for Charlotte and Teemu Pukki for Minnesota). This is being organized by the Suomi-Finland Club of Charlotte who has arranged group tickets. Contact the Charlotte club at sfccharlotte@gmail.com if interested. Group tickets need to be purchased by March 21, 2024.

Admission to the events where TFA provides food and/or beverages is \$5 per person (children under 12 free). The Independence Day party cost will be higher due to hall rental, food, and so forth. Note that an Evite invitation will be sent by email to all paid members in advance of each event, so be sure your dues are paid to get the invitations.

I look forward to our exciting year together, and if you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to email me at dunder@nc.rr.com. Our group thrives when we find new members, so if you meet any Finns (or hear that distinctive accent when a stranger is speaking) please tell them about the group and our website. Our group first started when the late Annikki Giggins started following cars with Finnish flag decals to meet other Finns!

Respectfully Submitted,
Tom Dunder
2023 TFA President
dunder@nc.rr.com/919-593-6592