

WASA DAILY

Nr 16 Sunday, April 20, 2025

ISSN 2965-2456

Gloria Music Fair tonight

**The Comet C/2025 can ve seen in Vaasa
Easter**

Onkilahti Traffic Park opens on May 2

Finland Streamlines Reception System

Nicotine Pouch Use Surges

WASA DAILY

Happy Easter



HERE WE ARE:

vpress.ovh

40 pages

TODAY

The Message of Easter – A Light That Carries Through the Darkness

Some holidays come and go without truly touching us. They may involve traditions, food, and a few days off, but they don't necessarily reach the deeper layers of life. Then there are holidays that speak directly to the human heart – to our questions about life and death, sorrow and hope. Easter is one of those rare moments.

At the heart of the Easter story are suffering, betrayal, and death. The innocent is condemned. Friends turn away. Hope seems lost. The God many believed would bring justice and establish a new world appears to be defeated by power, fear, and violence. It's a story we recognize – not just from scripture, but from history, the news, and our own lives.

Yet Easter does not end in darkness. Its center is not the cross of Good Friday, but the empty tomb of Easter morning. That is when the unimaginable happens: death does not have the final word. Life breaks through, just when all seemed lost.

For Christians, this is not merely a historical event,

but an eternal truth: that God is present in human suffering, and that love is stronger than death. That even in our deepest despair, there is still a path forward. That the light cannot be overcome by the dark.

So what does Easter say to us today?

First: that no one is beyond the reach of grace. No matter how lost we feel, no matter what we have done or endured, there is always the possibility of reconciliation, of new life. Easter tells the story of a God who does not abandon us but enters into our pain to lead us toward healing.

Second: that hope is not naivety, but courage. In a world full of cynicism, polarization, and indifference, Easter calls us to resist despair. It reminds us that every act of love, every word of forgiveness, every small gesture of compassion – they matter. We are not called to be judges, but companions on the journey. It is never too late to choose a different path.

Third: that we need one another. Jesus did not die completely alone – some remained by his side. And the joy of resurrection was shared in community. Easter reminds us that we are

not meant to carry life's burdens on our own. Faith is not a solo performance, but a path we walk together.

We live in a time marked by uncertainty, loneliness, and global crises. Climate anxiety, war, displacement, mental health struggles, and the flood of information can leave us disoriented. In this context, Easter's ancient message speaks powerfully: there is still hope. Life is more than achievement, consumption, or surface appearances. There is a God who chose to share

our humanity – and who offers us a future grounded in love.

Easter is not a set of tidy answers but an invitation. An invitation to believe, to hope, and to love – even when it's hard. It does not promise that life will be easy, but it promises that we are not alone in it.

So let the light of Easter shine into our darkest corners. Let its hope shape our choices, our relationships, and our communities. And let us dare to believe that love truly is stronger than death.

Photo Supplement



NEWS

EASTER

The highlight of Easter in Vaasa: The Gloria Music Fair on Easter Sunday, 20 April at 19:00 in the Trinity Church



Gloria: A Music Fair for Our Time Over a hundred singers, a backing band with six musicians and a number of soloists are united in a magnificent performance of the Gloria Mass.

The work, composed by Tore W. Aas with texts by Hans-Olav Mørk, offers a rich and multifaceted musical experience. Here, Gregorian chant, classical tones, rock, worship and gospel meet in a moving and cohesive whole. Gloria takes the audience on an emotional journey through the contrasts of life – joy and sorrow, doubt and faith.

The powerful choir consists of singers from Evangelicum and Evangelivox – both choirs within Slef – as well as from various choirs in Pedersöre parish. The participants represent three generations and convey the message of the fair with power and presence.

The conductor of the concert is Mikaela Malmsten-Ahlsved, while

Niklas Lindvik leads the backing band as conductor.

Behind the project are Slef, Vaasa Swedish parish and Pedersöre parish. The concert is free of charge, but a voluntary collection will be included.

More than just a music fair

Tore W. Aas and Hans-Olav Mørk's Gloria is more than just a music fair; It is a musical journey through joy, sorrow and hope. Created in the mid-1990s for the Oslo Gospel Choir, the work has since captured hearts worldwide with its unique blend of musical styles and powerful lyrics.

A fusion of styles:

Gloria is a testament to the musical versatility of composers. The mass weaves together elements of Gregorian chant, classical music and modern rock influences in a way that is both surprising and harmonious. The powerful choral kits are interspersed with beautiful solo

movements, creating a dynamic and engaging listening experience. Aas's composition is technically proficient, but at the same time accessible and emotionally moving.

Texts concerning:

Hans-Olav Mørk's lyrics are just as important as the music. They are not just simple songs of praise, but profound reflections on faith, hope, and human existence. Mørk, himself a prominent Norwegian priest and singer, has succeeded in creating lyrics that touch regardless of religious background. The words are poetic and rich in imagery, and they enhance the emotional power of the music.

A Fair for All:

The Gloria is not a traditional Mass in the sense that it is strictly liturgical. Rather, it is a musical meditation on themes that are universal and timeless. This makes it appealing to a wide audience, regardless of religious or musical background.

The popularity of the fair is a testament to its ability to create a sense of community and hope, something that is especially important in today's world.

A lasting legacy

Gloria has been performed by countless choirs and soloists around the world. Its popularity has made it an important part of Norwegian music history, but it has also reached a large audience internationally. The fair continues to inspire and touch, and its lasting legacy is a testament to its exceptional quality and timeless message.

Given Gloria's popularity and powerful message, we can expect to see and hear this mass performed for many years to come, and now on Sunday in Vaasa. Its ability to unite different musical styles and touch listeners on a deep level makes it a truly unique and valuable composition.

Gloria is more than just a music fair – it's an experience!

NEWS

YOU CAN READ THIS NEWSPAPER ANYWHERE



You can read this paper wherever You are. Like here in Korsnäs

VAASA

Vaasa Enhances Walking and Cycling Infrastructure for Smoother, Safer Commutes

The City of Vaasa continues its commitment to improving pedestrian and cyclist safety with targeted infrastructure upgrades this year. Key projects include:

Complete renovation of Roparnäsvägen cycle path

Safety upgrades on Teirgatan and the Paper Bridge in Metviken (tendered project)

New construction of Kronviksvägen cycle

path (this year's only new route)

Additional safety improvements will focus on crosswalks, intersections, and modernized bicycle parking featuring frame-anchoring systems for all wheel sizes.

"These investments, representing 13% of our municipal engineering budget, make active transportation both safer and more convenient," Most work will be conducted by city crews, except the competitively tendered Paper Bridge project.

VAASA

Vaasa Residents Decide How to Spend €15,000 in Participatory Budgeting – Vote for Your Favorite Idea by May 5th!

The City of Vaasa invites all residents to help decide which community-proposed project will be funded through this year's participatory budgeting initiative. With €15,000 allocated for implementation, voting is now open until May 5th among ten shortlisted ideas.

Diverse Proposals to Improve the City

A total of 258 ideas were submitted by residents during the February-March proposal period. The top ten finalists now up

for public vote include:

Loanable rowboats for Ukkokari, Onkilahti, and Vähäkyrö

A fountain in the Hovioikeus Square basin

A natural ice skating rink in the city center

An "Active Forest" adventure park at Alkula

A cold-water immersion pool at the public swimming hall

Rentable kiosk huts along waterfront trails and Old Vaasa ruins

Street art/murals on buildings or underpass tunnels

Additional outdoor gym equipment at exercise areas

Community singing events at Hietasaari

A 3 vs. 3 basketball court in central Vaasa

"We're thrilled by the diversity of proposals this year. It's particularly interesting to see winter-themed ideas gaining traction – some of which are already moving forward through other channels, like the Palosaari skating track and Öjberget trick park," says Strategy Director Suvi Aho.

How to Vote

Residents can cast votes until May 5, 2025 through:

Online: www.vaasa.fi/en/participatory-budgeting

In person:

Citizen's Info at Tammipiha (Teräksenkuja 1)

Vähäkyrö Joint Service Point (Vähäkyröntie 11)

All voters will be entered into a raffle for Vaasa-themed prizes.

Winner Announcement on May 19th

The winning project will be implemented using city funds, with progress updates shared through the city's social media channels.

NEWS

OPERA

Finnish National Opera and Ballet Unveils 2025–2026 Season: A Fusion of Classics and Innovation



THE FINNISH NATIONAL OPERA and Ballet's 2025–2026 season promises a dynamic mix of contemporary operas, timeless ballet masterpieces, and bold street dance performances.

Opera Highlights:

The season kicks off with fresh interpretations of classics, including a 1950s Italy-set *Giselle* and *Hansel and Gretel* in a new Finnish-language production. Spring brings *Morgonstjärnan* –

The Morning Star, based on Karl Ove Knausgård's novel, along with *Festen*, an opera adaptation of Thomas Vinterberg's cult film. A deeply intimate take on Duke Bluebeard's *Castle* explores dementia's emotional toll, while the season concludes with a double bill of *Luonnotar* and *Iolanta*, celebrating both Finnish and Russian operatic heritage.

Ballet and Dance:

Romantic and contemporary ballet shine with *Giselle*, the return of *Cinderella*, and the explosive street dance-infused *Pulse*, blending classical and urban styles.

Don Quixote makes a long-awaited comeback, while *The Nutcracker* and the *Mouse King* delights holiday audiences once again.

Concerts and Special Events:

The FNO Orchestra, led by Chief Conductor Hannu Lintu, continues its Musiikkitalo concert series, highlighted by a gala for the Chorus of the FNO's 80th anniversary.

A new collaboration with the Finnish Baroque Orchestra aims to expand Baroque opera productions in Finland.

Guest Performances and Young Talent:

The Almi Hall will feature independent Finnish productions, including Saaristo-ooppera's *Ihminen parhaan kykynsä mukaan*, a thought-provoking opera by Joel Järventausta.

The Finnish National Ballet's youth company takes center stage with *Shining Through*, showcasing a mix of classical ballet and street dance.

HEALTH

Maternal Exercise During Pregnancy Linked to Lower Asthma Risk in Children, Study Finds

A new study suggests that mothers who exercise regularly during pregnancy may significantly reduce their child's risk of developing asthma.

The research, published in *Medicine Journal*, analyzed data from a prospective birth cohort and found that women who engaged in physical activity at least three times per week during pregnancy had children with nearly 50% lower asthma risk compared to those who exercised less frequently.

Key Findings

Exercise frequency matters: Mothers who worked out three or more times per week saw the strongest protective effect. Potential long-term benefits: Improved fetal lung development may

be one mechanism behind the protective effect.

Why This Matters

Asthma is one of the most common chronic childhood diseases, yet prevention strategies remain limited. This study highlights a modifiable lifestyle factor—maternal exercise—that could help lower asthma risk in future generations.

"Our findings suggest that promoting physical activity during pregnancy could be a simple, cost-effective way to improve respiratory health in children," said lead author Emma-Reetta Musakka from the University of Eastern Finland.

How Was the Study Conducted?

The research team followed a large birth cohort, tracking maternal exercise habits during pregnancy and later assessing asthma diagnoses in their children.

Environmental exposures (e.g., air

pollution)

Expert Reactions

Dr. Leea Keski-Nisula, a co-author of the study, noted:

"We've known that maternal exercise benefits both mother and baby, but this study provides strong evidence that it may also protect against asthma. Moderate activities like walking, swimming, or prenatal yoga could make a real difference."

Recommendations for Expecting Mothers

While strenuous exercise isn't necessary, the study supports:

At least 3 sessions of moderate exercise per week (e.g., brisk walking, swimming, light aerobics).

Consulting a healthcare provider before starting a new exercise routine.

Future Research Directions

Further studies are needed to determine:

Optimal types and durations of exercise for maximum benefit.

Biological mechanisms (e.g., effects on fetal immune or lung development).

This study adds to growing evidence that pregnancy lifestyle choices have long-term health impacts on children. Encouraging safe, regular exercise for expectant mothers could be a key strategy in reducing childhood asthma rates.

The full study is available open-access in *Medicine Journal*: DOI: 10.1016/j.medj.2024.09.003

NEWS

MEDIA WORLD

Ilkka and Kaleva merge – local newspapers will continue, but ownership will change

tiikkona 16.4.2025

ilka.fi / numero 80 / 6. vuosikerta / ISSN-numero 2506-1000 / 247 7800. Artikkeleita 8-16



Two major Finnish newspaper groups, Ilkka-Yhtymä and Kaleva, based in Oulu, are joining forces.

The new company will continue to publish both magazines, and their content will remain independent. The Vaasa newspaper and Ilkka's other local newspapers, such as Jurvan Sanomat and Suupohjan Sanomat, will also retain their current publications.

As a result of the merger, Ilkka will remain a minority shareholder in the new group, owning approximately one third of the company. The majority share will be transferred to the owners of the Oulu region. The parties responsible for the newspapers emphasise that the aim of the merger is to provide readers with even higher quality content

and more comprehensive media services for corporate customers.

General trend: concentration and changes in ownership

This merger movement is part of a broader trend in the Finnish newspaper world, where operators are concentrating and ownership is changing. A similar development was seen a year ago, when the Swedish-language Vasabladet was transferred to the ownership of the Swedish Bonnier News. At the time, the continuation of the magazine in Vaasa seemed certain, but now part of the editorial work has been transferred to Sundsvall, Sweden, and staff reductions are underway.

The changes arouse emotions, especially when local newspapers are transferred to owners outside the municipality. The

transfer of financial income elsewhere and the possible financial problems of the newspapers may raise concerns about how strongly the new owners are committed to the local community.

Hope for the new – the Vaasa-Pohjanmaa magazine is born

Fortunately, a new player has recently appeared in the media field in Vaasa: the online magazine Vaasa-Pohjanmaa. It offers an alternative Finnish voice in the area, although for now it is only published digitally.

Mergers and changes in ownership bring both opportunities and challenges. From the readers' point of view, the most important thing is that local newspapers maintain high-quality and up-to-date journalism – regardless of who owns them.

DRIVING LICENCE

New law: Driving licence certificates must be obtained from private doctors

From 1.4.2025 onwards, Ostrobothnians will no longer be able to book an appointment for a driving licence certificate at their own health centre.

According to the new Act, these statements must now be obtained through private healthcare service providers, i.e. private doctors or private medical centres.

One may ask whether this is appropriate. For healthy people, it is hardly so important, but for a pensioner with several diseases and an incipient memory disorder - it would not be better if the doctor who knows them best, a general practitioner at the health center, wrote a driver's license certificate, because he knows the person best. However, the purpose of the decision is to free up doctor's appointments in primary health care so that doctors can treat the sick instead of writing certificates.

"This means that there are more appointments for patients who need emergency care or planned care," says Sofia Svartsjö, Director of the Wellbeing Services County of Ostrobothnia.

The exception applies to certain vocational courses that require a driving licence, such as truck and bus training. These students can turn to student health care.

Appointments booked before 1 April are still valid. In the future, anyone who needs a medical certificate for a driver's license will have to contact a private individual.

The change does not apply to specialised medical care, which is why the doctors at the central hospital can justifiably assess the patient's ability to drive. This can be especially important in neurology, for example.

NEWS

MALAX

Fitness Campaign in Malax – A Chance to Win While Getting Active!



The municipality of Malax encourages all residents to get moving this spring with its popular "Fit for Life" campaign. This annual fitness challenge runs until June 10, 2025, and everyone is welcome to join—regardless of age or fitness level.

To qualify for prize draws, participants must complete at least 40 workout sessions of at least 30 minutes each during the campaign period. All types of physical activity count—from walking, running, and cycling to gym workouts and everyday movement like gardening or cleaning.

How to Participate:

Get an activity log – Available at all local grocery stores or printable at home.

Track your workouts – Mark one box for every 30 minutes of exercise.

Submit your log – Between June 3–10, completed logs can be dropped off at collection boxes in Yttermalax Library, S-Market, Stenco, K-Market Sandström, and Bergö Ahl. Alternatively, email it to fritid@malax.fi.

Prizes to Be Won

One lucky participant will win a €100 gift card, and 20 smaller prizes will also be awarded.

– This is a great opportunity to combine health and community spirit, say the campaign organizers. So get moving—for your own well-being and a chance to win!

For more details, visit the Malax municipality website or contact the leisure department.

ELECTION

Record Number of Women Elected in 2025 Municipal Elections – Regional Disparities Remain

The 2025 Finnish municipal elections made history, with women securing an unprecedented share of council seats nationwide. Women now hold 44.9% of all elected positions – a 4.7 percentage point increase compared to the 2021 elections.

– This is a historic shift, says Marianne Pekola-Sjöblom, Research Director at the Association of Finnish Municipalities.

Uusimaa Leads, South Ostrobothnia Lags Behind
The results show striking regional differences:

Uusimaa (52.8%) and Kantahäme (52.1%) elected the highest share of women

Kainuu (38.7%) and South Ostrobothnia (33.5%) trail significantly behind

A landmark development: women now form the majority in 67 municipal councils across mainland Finland – more than double the 29 councils in 2021. Hailuoto boasts the most gender-balanced council (73.3% women), while Utsjoki has the lowest representation (just 6.7% women).

Urban-Rural Divide Persists

Pekola-Sjöblom notes that municipality size and location strongly influence gender representation. Urban areas show higher female participation,

while rural communities maintain traditional gender gaps.

Ten municipalities elected fewer than 25% women:

Utsjoki (6.7%)

Evijärvi (17.6%)

Perho (17.6%)

Luhanka (20.0%)

Party Breakdown: Greens Dominate, Finns Party Trails

Political parties show dramatic variations:

Green League: 79.4% women elected (highest)

Finns Party: 25.4% (lowest, despite 3% improvement)

SDP and Left Alliance surpassed 50% female representation

National Coalition Party saw modest gains

Only Liike Nyt regressed (31.6%, down 5.1%)

What Does This Shift Mean?

While the results signal progress toward gender equality in Finnish politics, persistent regional and party disparities highlight ongoing challenges – particularly in rural areas and certain political movements.

"This is progress, but the journey continues," Pekola-Sjöblom concludes.

ART EXPERIENCE OF THE WEEK



Robert Wilhelm Ekman - Italian Flower-Girl (1845)

EVENTS

TIKANOJA THE ART EVENT OF THE YEAR!



The exhibition covering the entire career of the masterful nature and portrait photographer Eero Järnefelt (1863–1937) will be on display until 25.5.2025 at the Tikanoja Art Museum - so there is still plenty of time.

Järnefelt is connected to Vaasa in that his father Alexander served as the governor of the province of Vaasa from 1888 to 1894. Alexander lived on Rantakatu and the family rented Tottesund Manor in Maksamaa for the summers of 1891–1892. Eero Järnefelt's sister Aino married Jean Sibelius there. The exhibition has been curated by Timo Huusko, Chief Curator of the Ateneum, and the exhibition at the Tikanoja Art Museum has been produced by the Ateneum Art Museum / Finnish National Gallery in cooperation with the Vaasa Museums.

ATENEUM

When the Ateneum opens the doors to the *Crossing Borders* exhibition on 7 March 2025, visitors will be invited on a fascinating journey through time and space. For the first time, the works of the brave women who, despite the limitations of their time, crossed geographical and social boundaries to create art are collected. Among the prominent names are two artists from Vaasa – the bold landscape painter Fanny Churberg and the skilled portrait and genre painter Alexandra Frosterus-Sältin.

STUNDARS

17.4.25

Easter walk in the museum village

Stundar Museum Area: a guided Easter walk among the cottages on Thursdays in April, at 1 pm in Swedish, at 2 pm in Finnish, and at 3 pm in English.

www.stundars.fi

STUNDARS

24.4.25 at 6 pm

The farm we inherited

Lecture: Buildings and history of the Ostrobothnian Manor

Ruusa Viljanen Rossi (architect/building antiquarian)

Ruusa Viljanen Rossi gives a lecture on the Ostrobothnian building culture and its origins. Why do our farms look the way they do? How have they developed and what buildings were traditionally on a farm?

Fee 10 € (incl. coffee service)

Registration by 22.4 on <https://forms.office.com/e/fTkTc8zQ0G> or to tel. 044 7635277

www.stundars.fi

Vaasa-Vasa Baroque

Sun / Sö 27.4 at / kl. 17.00

City Hall Ballroom / Stadshuset's festivals

Handel and Roman in London – Handel möter Roman i London

Kajsa Dahlbäck, soprano / sopranDrottningholms barockensemble (SWE)

<https://vaasabaroque.com/>

STUNDARS

1.5.25 at 12 pm

May Day at Stundars

Stundars celebrates the arrival of spring with a May Day celebration on Thursday at 12–15.

Music program outside restaurant Hemmer, with singing and orchestras of different styles.

12:30 Solf Wind Orchestra

Kl. 13:15 Wasa Gospel

14:00 Johanna Lönngren and Tryout folk music

www.stundars.fi

VAASA CHOIR FESTIVAL XXXI

22–24.5.2025

Vaasa Choir Festival is a significant international choral music event. The joyful and social closing celebration of the singing season is open to all choirs.

ILMAJOKI MUSIC FESTIVAL

"BIG Wrath 1713–1721"

6.–15.6.2025

"This powerful and topical opera brings the years of hatred and the fates of our ancestors back to the banks of the Kyrönjoki River.

Big Wrath is a shaking and nourishing story about family ties, maternal love, perseverance, and the power of cooperation during a time, when Russia's brutal war of aggression against Finland burned Ostrobothnia to black soil."

www.musiikkijuhlat.fi

AMOX REX Helsinki

12.6.25

FREE admission throughout the Helsinki

Day

www.amorex.fi

KASKINEN'S SUMMER OF MUSIC

9–12.7.25

A classical music festival in Finland's smallest town.

"The proximity of the sea, the history of the city of Kaskinen, bilingualism, the beautiful wooden house environment"

Artistic directors Anna-mari and Samuli Peltonen

LOHTAJA CHURCH MUSIC FESTIVAL

22–27.7.25

Church music from thousand-year-old traditions

www.kirkkomusiikkijuhlat.fi

NÄRPES THEATRE

"Maskinisterna (The Machinists)", a Swedish-language play about the Wickström Brothers and their engine factory, with a script and direction by Erik Kiviniemi.

World premiere 28.6.25 klo 19

Other events:

1–7 at 7 pm

3.7. at 7 pm

7.7. at 7 pm

8.7. klo 19

10.7 at 7 pm

13.7. at 5 pm

15.7. at 19

16.7. at 19

17.7. at 19

19.7. at 19

KORSHOLM MUSIC FESTIVAL

23.7.–30.7.2025

"Korsholm Music Festival 2024 and Tove Teuvalla Opera are over and autumn is approaching. Now we are already working on the Summer 2025 Music Festival. However, we want to return to the warm days and festival atmosphere of July and August."

A greeting from festival director Viktor Nygård: "I am very much looking forward to working with the Korsholm Music Festival and I have many exciting ideas for how we can continue to develop the festival. I can already promise that next year it will be a fantastic festival with something for everyone."

Korsholm Music Festival will be held next summer 23.–30.7.2025.

RITZ

25.7.25 at 7 pm

MARI PALO – TANGO

One of Finland's most sought-after sopranos dives into the world of tang.

Korsholm Music Festival

VAASA CITY HALL

27.7.25

CONCERT ROYAL

Amélie goes to Belgrade with her friends

Korsholm Music Festival

WASA FUTURE FESTIVAL

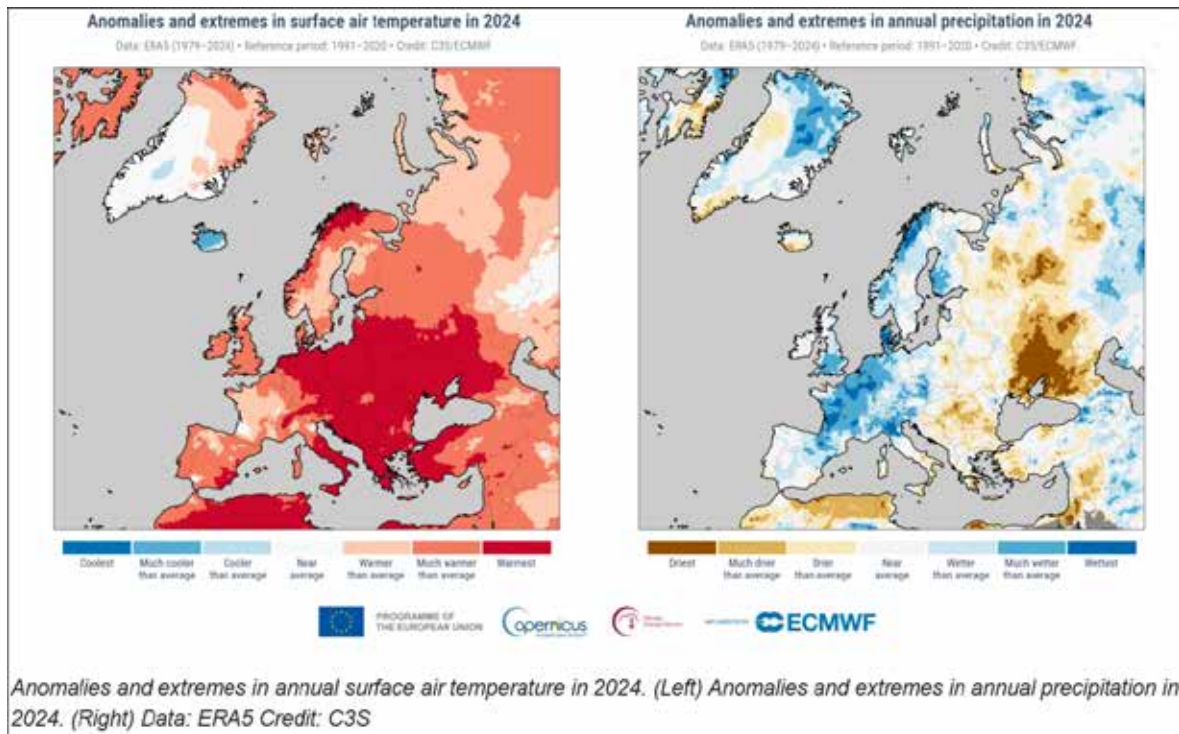
11–16.8.2025

The Wasa Future Festival 2026 is set to take place from 11th to 16th August.

This event gathers knowledgeable and motivated individuals from the business world, universities, regional decision-making bodies, and ministerial corps to focus on solving issues in Vaasa and across Finland. The event can be followed on Wasa Future Festival YouTube channel.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Copernicus: Europe's Climate in Crisis: Record Heat, Flooding, and Stark East-West Divide in Hottest Year Ever



Europe is heating up faster than any other continent, and the consequences are becoming impossible to ignore.

According to the European State of the Climate 2024 (ESOTC 2024) report, released jointly by the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), last year was the warmest on record for Europe, marked by extreme weather events, devastating floods, and a striking climate divide between east and west.

A Continent Under Pressure

2024 saw record-breaking temperatures across central, eastern, and southeastern Europe, while western regions experienced relentless rainfall and flooding. The report highlights a dramatic

contrast: the east suffered severe drought and unprecedented heat, while the west endured one of its wettest years since 1950.

Flooding was widespread, affecting an estimated 413,000 people and claiming at least 335 lives. Nearly one-third of Europe's river network exceeded high flood thresholds—the most extensive flooding since 2013. Meanwhile, heat stress reached alarming levels, with 60% of the continent experiencing more days of "strong heat stress" than average.

Key Findings from the Report

- **Temperature:** 2024 was Europe's hottest year, with nearly half the continent setting new annual records.
- **Sea Surface Temperatures (SST):** European waters were 0.7°C above average, with the Mediterranean 1.2°C warmer—both record highs.

- **Rainfall & Flooding:** Western Europe saw one of its wettest years, while storms triggered catastrophic flooding.
- **Glaciers & Ice Loss:** Scandinavia and Svalbard experienced their highest glacier mass loss ever recorded.
- **Wildfires:** Portugal alone lost 110,000 hectares in just one week—25% of Europe's total annual burnt area.
- **Renewable Energy:** A silver lining—45% of Europe's electricity came from renewables, a new record.

A Call for Urgent Action

Florence Rabier, Director-General of the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), emphasized the need for resilience: "Heat stress is rising, and floods are becoming more frequent. With 51% of European cities now having climate adaptation plans, our data is crucial for informed

decision-making." Celeste Saulo, WMO Secretary-General, warned: "Europe is warming faster than any other continent. Every fraction of a degree matters, and adaptation is no longer optional—it's a necessity."

Looking Ahead

The report underscores the urgency of climate adaptation, from strengthening early warning systems to accelerating green energy transitions. As Carlo Buontempo, Director of C3S, noted: "2024 was a year of extremes—record heat, devastating floods, and disappearing glaciers. Understanding these changes is key to preparing for the future."

With Europe's climate shifting rapidly, the message is clear: the time to act is now.

Copernicus Climate Change Service & World Meteorological Organization

ASTRONOMY

Comet C/2025 F2 (SWAN): A Fleeting Visitor Graces the Skies



A newly discovered comet, C/2025 F2 (SWAN), is currently making its presence known in the skies, offering a celestial treat for stargazers.

The comet, officially designated on April 8, 2025, was first spotted in late March using the SWAN (Solar Wind Anisotropies) instrument aboard the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO). This explains the "SWAN" in its name.

Visibility in Finland:

For observers in Finland, the window to spot Comet SWAN is relatively short. Currently, in mid-April, the comet is visible in the early morning sky, low towards the northeastern horizon before dawn. As the comet progresses towards its closest approach to the Sun (perihelion) on May 1st, its visibility from the Northern Hemisphere, including Fin-

land, will become less favorable. It will transition to the evening sky towards the northwest but will be increasingly lower and affected by twilight. After the first week of May, the comet will likely disappear from view for observers in the Northern Hemisphere.

When Will it be Brightest?

Comet C/2025 F2 (SWAN) is predicted to reach its peak brightness around its perihelion on May 1, 2025. Estimates suggest it could reach a magnitude of around 4 to 5. At this brightness, it might become visible to the naked eye under dark skies, away from city lights. However, its low position on the horizon during this time, especially for northern observers, will make it a challenging target.

Current Brightness and How to See It Now:

As of mid-April 2025, the comet is reported to be shining at a magnitude of around 8 to 9. This means it is currently

too faint to be seen with the naked eye. To observe it now from Finland, you will need binoculars (preferably with a 60-70mm aperture) or a small telescope.

Tips for Observing:

- Find a dark location: Away from city lights will significantly improve your chances of spotting the faint comet.
- Look northeast before dawn: In the coming days, scan the low northeastern horizon before sunrise.
- Use binoculars or a telescope: These optical aids are essential to see the comet at its current brightness.
- Be patient: It might take some time to locate the comet, which will appear as a fuzzy spot of light.
- Track its movement: The comet is currently moving through the constellation Pegasus and will enter Andromeda around April 13th. Star charts or astronomy apps can help you pinpoint its exact location.

What to Expect:

Comet C/2025 F2 (SWAN) has a greenish hue, which is characteristic of the presence of diatomic carbon molecules that emit green light when illuminated by the Sun. Long-exposure photographs reveal a faint tail extending from the comet.

A Once-in-a-Lifetime Opportunity:

Comet SWAN has a long orbital period of approximately 1.4 million years, meaning this is a rare opportunity to observe this celestial visitor. While its visibility from Finland is limited, dedicated skywatchers with the right equipment might be able to catch a glimpse of this fleeting beauty before it disappears from northern skies. Make the most of the next couple of weeks if you wish to observe Comet C/2025 F2 (SWAN)!

Image: Ai-generated illustration

HEALTH

THL: Nicotine Pouch Use Surges Among Young Men – 1 in 4 Under 40 Now Using



Nicotine pouches have exploded in popularity among working-age men and women in Finland.

According to the latest Health Finland survey, a staggering 24% of men under 40 now use nicotine pouches regularly or occasionally. The rapid rise in usage threatens Finland's Tobacco Act goal of reducing daily tobacco and nicotine product use to under 5% of adults by 2030.

Young Men Driving the Increase

- Usage among men doubled between 2022 and 2024: 8% → 16% (ages 20–64).
- For men under 40,

usage jumped from 13% to 24%—nearly 1 in 4.

- Daily users rose sharply among men (3% → 8%) and women (1% → 2%).

Otto Ruokolainen, a THL specialist, warns that lax regulations have fueled growth:

”Nicotine pouches have spread rapidly, especially among younger adults, and are now the most popular nicotine product among university students. This demands urgent stricter controls.”

Tobacco Control Goals at Risk – Snus Declines, Pouches Take Over

While traditional smoking and snus use remain stable, nicotine pouches have led to more men using nicotine

overall. Though total usage among women hasn't risen, pouch adoption in this group is growing.

Hanna Ollila (THL) notes: ”Pouches are reaching groups where smoking was rare, including women who rarely used snus. This undermines efforts toward a tobacco-free generation.”

How Can Finland Curb the Trend?

- THL experts recommend:
- ☐ Higher taxes – Price hikes reduce youth uptake.
 - ☐ Nicotine limits – Lower concentrations to reduce addiction risk.
 - ☐ Ban on flavors – Sweet flavors increase appeal.
 - ☐ Raised age limits – Restrict access for minors.

Survey Methodology

The findings come from Health Finland 2024, a national survey of 61,600 randomly selected adults (44% response rate, data collected Sept 2024–March 2025).

Nicotine pouches are reshaping nicotine habits in Finland. Without tighter regulations, the country risks missing its smoke-free targets as pouches attract a new wave of users—especially young adults.

(Adapted from Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare [THL] data.)

Image Wikimedia Commons. Jakubdrastich2, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0

ONKILAHTI TRAFFIC PARK

Miniature Vasa Opens Its Gates – Popular Onkilahti Traffic Park Ready for a New Season!

Get ready for fast-paced adventures and playful learning! The much-loved children's traffic park in Onkilahti is reopening its doors on the second of May, inviting everyone to a summer full of traffic fun.

Following last year's success, where the adjacent pump track already attracted a multitude of visitors, it's now time for this unique traffic park to once again welcome children and their families. From the second of May until the end of September, young road users aged 6 to 12 can zoom around the 640-meter track on go-karts or bicycles. For the youngest ones, aged 4 to 6, there's the opportunity to ride pedal cars with a supportive parent walking alongside.

But it's not just the speed that attracts. Along the track awaits a fascinating journey of discovery through a miniature Vasa. No fewer than twelve carefully recreated models of the city's iconic buildings, such as the City Hall, the Water Tower, and the Railway Station, line the route. You'll also find the market square, roundabouts, traffic lights, and level crossings – all designed to create the most authentic city experience possible on a child-friendly scale.

“The Onkilahti traffic park is like Vasa in miniature and offers both children and adults a wonderful environment to learn about traffic and have fun,” noted Service Manager Jarmo Latvala at last year's opening, and the park truly lives up to that promise.

On weekdays, the park is open to the public between 12 PM and 6 PM, and on weekends between 12 PM and 4 PM. Mornings are reserved for booked groups from schools and kindergartens, where professional staff from the City of Vasa's youth services guide the children through traffic rules and safety.

Each driving session begins with a short safety briefing, and there are departures every 30 minutes. With 36 go-karts and bicycles, and even a miniature model of the Lifti bus, there are plenty of vehicles for everyone.

And don't miss the adjacent 1000 square meter pump track, which invites you to exciting rides with skateboards, scooters, or BMX bikes!

Don't miss the chance to experience Vasa in a completely new and playful way! Welcome to the Onkilahti traffic park on the second of May!





ART

Eemu Myntti, colourful artist from Vaasa

Eemil Aleksander Myntti (27 November 1890, Vaasa – 29 August 1943, Helsinki) was a prominent Finnish expressionist artist whose art was characterized by a strong and vivid use of colour. In his works, color was not only a visual element, but served as a means of self-expression, conveying emotional and soul worlds. Mynt's handling of colour was bold and open-minded, which made him an exceptional master of colour for his time.

Eemu Myntti was born into a wealthy family where his father Juho Myntti worked as an industrialist. However, his early years were not exactly straightforward. Myntti dropped out of school after failing his matriculation examinations, and in 1910 he made a bold decision to devote himself to art. He initially studied with Arthur Heickell, but soon the road took him to Paris, the mecca of art, where he delved into cubism. The trip took place with the support of Frithiof Tikanoja, and this period was a turning point in Mynt's artistic career.

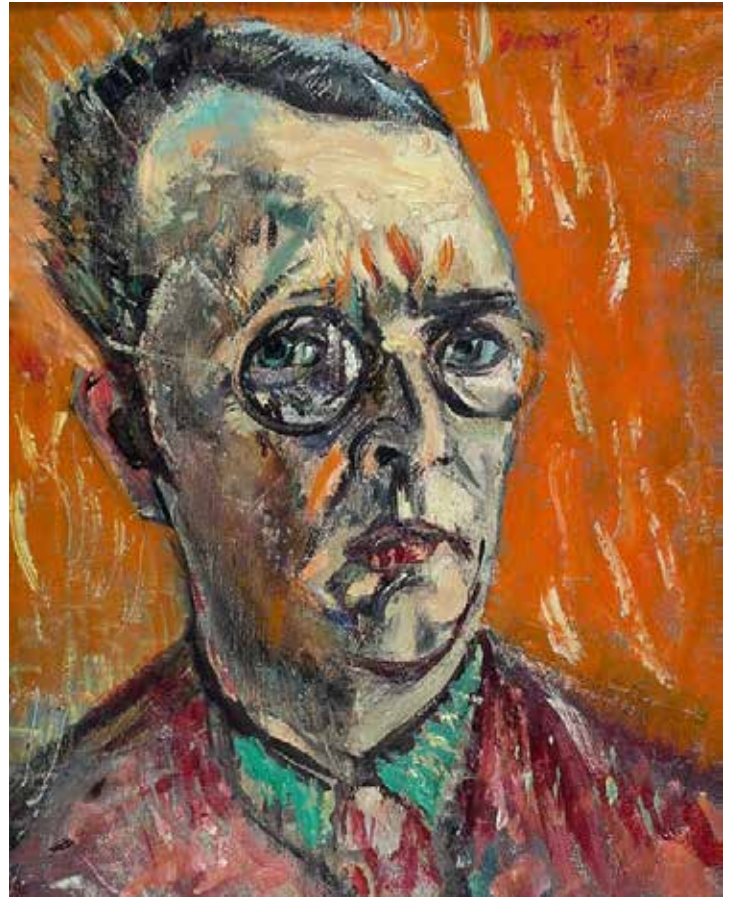
Although Myntti was influenced by French masters such as Cézanne and van Gogh, he fashioned them into his own unique style. His art reflected Cézanne's precision and van Gogh's saturation of colours, but Myntti also brought his own profound and symbolic vision to his works. The ideals of earlier masters such as Giotto were important to him, and this manifested itself in his

work as a quest for a high level of artistic expression.

The 1920s were the pinnacle of Mynt's artistic career. He belonged to cultural circles and was in close contact with the writers and poets of the Fire Bearers group. In the company of these artist friends, he found inspiration and a shared passion for creative expression. Although Myntti spent most of his career away from his fellow artists in his home country, he still had contacts with both Finnish and foreign artists, which enriched his artistic world.

Mynt's works were exhibited for the first time in 1916, and his painting style evolved, especially in the field of portrait painting. His portraits of men were strong, almost sculptural, in which every feature was carefully thought out and at the same time soulful. Female portraits, on the other hand, combined poetic symbolism and architectural creativity, which made them particularly fascinating.

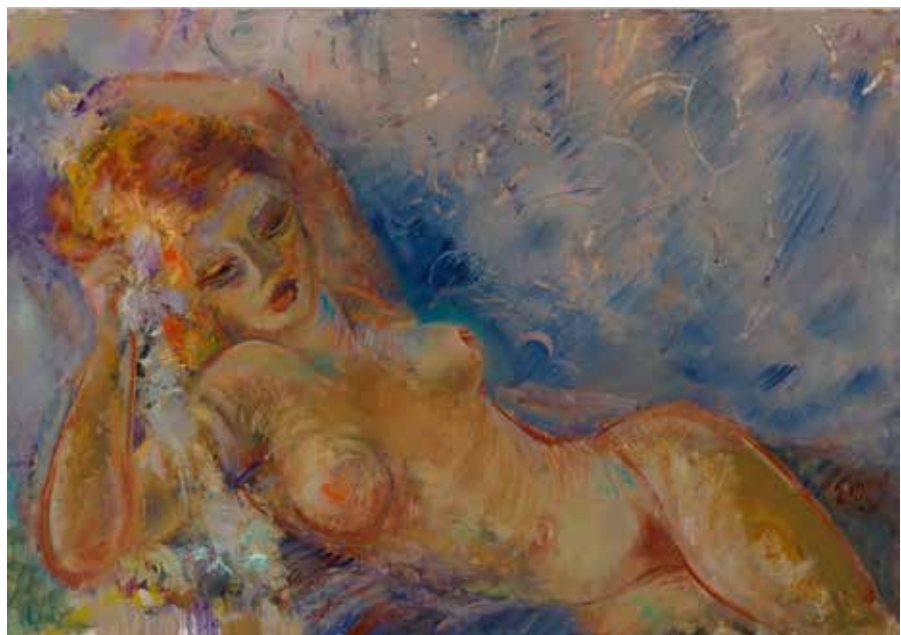
In Mynt's work, colours always evoked strong emotions. He used both oil and watercolours skilfully, and his works were diverse in both subject matter and technique. Especially the bright and fresh colours of Lapland received a new kind of expression



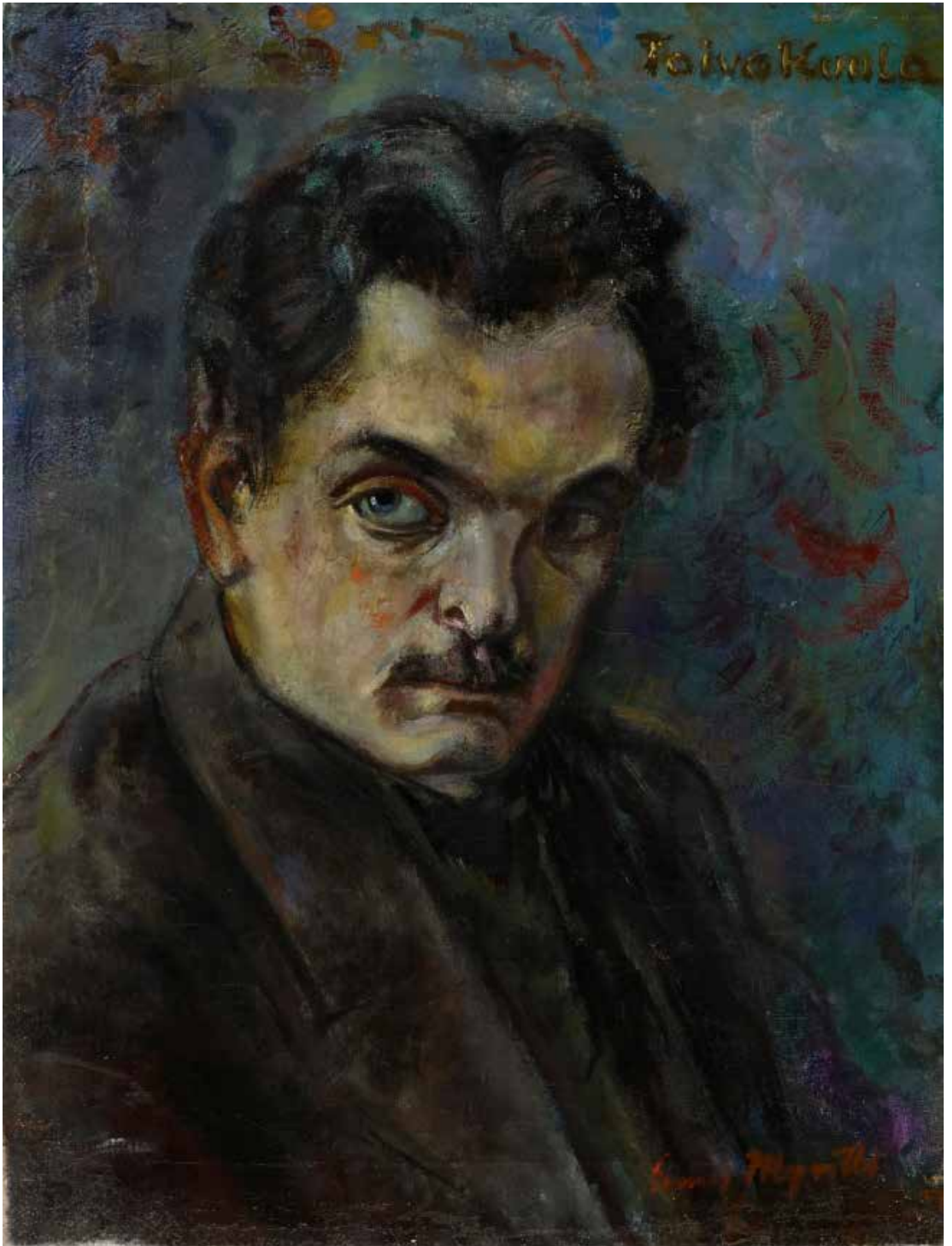
Emmu Myntti, 1931

from him, reflecting his own deep connection to nature and colours. Mynt's paintings not only presented their subjects, but they brought the viewer something new, fresh and vibrant – like an alpine sun that illuminates and refreshes.

Eemu Myntti left an indelible mark on the field of Finnish art. His bold, colourful and soulful way of dealing with colour makes him an artist whose works are still relevant and appealing.



Maija, 1938



*Toivo Kuula portrait 1937
Images: Kansallisgalleria*

HEALTH

It Pays to Be Happy and Well-being: You Don't Get Dementia

As life expectancy increases and the global population ages, we are faced with an undeniable challenge: how to reduce the growing burden of neurodegenerative diseases like dementia. Dementia, with Alzheimer's disease as its most common form, has been on the rise for decades. An estimated 139 million people worldwide are projected to be living with dementia by 2050. Alarming, over 10 million new cases are diagnosed each year—roughly one every three seconds.

However, new research provides hope and offers a refreshing perspective: well-being may hold the key to preventing, or at least mitigating, the risk of dementia. While most public health strategies focus on biomedical interventions, emerging evidence suggests that promoting mental well-being and fostering positive emotions could serve as powerful tools in dementia prevention. A Decade of Research Linking Well-Being to Brain Health

A landmark study conducted by researchers from the Well-being and Emotion across the Lifespan Lab (WELLab) at Washington University in

St. Louis, and highlighted in the 2024 World Happiness Report, shows a strong correlation between well-being and a reduced risk of dementia. This interdisciplinary research, spanning over a decade, makes a compelling case for the protective effects of well-being on the brain.

The study's findings are based on data collected from older adults in Chicago and Illinois, starting in 1997. Participants underwent annual evaluations of their cognitive abilities and provided self-assessments of their emotional states and overall well-being. The researchers found that individuals who consistently reported higher levels of well-being were less likely to develop memory and thinking impairments, even when they had the biological markers associated with Alzheimer's disease.

While the exact mechanisms behind this link remain unclear, the results strongly suggest that maintaining high levels of well-being throughout life could help delay or even prevent the onset of dementia.

Well-Being: A Buffer Against Dementia?

The research also touches on a broader question: why is there a connection between well-being and

brain health? According to Dr. Emily Willroth, Director of WELLab and one of the study's lead researchers, there are several factors that might explain this relationship. "People who report higher well-being are more likely to engage in activities known to promote brain health, such as regular physical exercise, social interaction, and mental stimulation," says Dr. Willroth. These activities have long been associated with a reduced risk of cognitive decline, but the study goes a step further by suggesting that well-being may also act as a buffer against the harmful effects of stress, a known contributor to neurodegenerative diseases. Dr. Kyrsten Costlow Hill, another co-author of the study, explains that stress can damage the brain's critical systems responsible for maintaining cognitive function. Higher levels of well-being, on the other hand, may provide the resilience needed to withstand or counteract this damage.

What Does Well-Being Look Like for Those Already Living with Dementia?

While well-being is now recognized as a potential preventative measure, it also plays a crucial role in improving the lives of

those already living with dementia. The WELLab team emphasizes that well-being interventions can enhance autonomy, competence, and relatedness, even in advanced stages of dementia.

Simple activities such as physical exercise, spending time outdoors, and engaging in social activities have shown significant benefits for individuals with dementia. These interventions not only improve mood and cognitive function but also increase life satisfaction. Moreover, methods like reminiscence therapy, where individuals are encouraged to reflect on past memories, can foster emotional stability and enhance overall well-being. Aging in place—remaining in one's home rather than relocating to an institution—has been shown to be particularly effective in boosting the well-being of older adults with dementia. By using home adaptations, assistive technologies, and maintaining social connections, individuals can experience greater satisfaction with life. Dementia villages, which provide a safe yet familiar environment, have also emerged as a model for maintaining dignity and quality of life for those affected by the disease.



The Path Forward: Acting on What We Know
Despite the promising findings, Dr. Willroth stresses that there is no "miracle cure" for dementia. However, the evidence points toward actionable steps that can be taken today to reduce the risk of this devastating condition. Public health initiatives should prioritize well-being as a cornerstone of dementia prevention. As the global population ages, the demand for strategies

that not only treat but also prevent neurodegenerative diseases will continue to rise. Incorporating well-being into daily routines is not just a matter of living a happier life; it may also be the key to preserving cognitive function well into old age. Physical activity, social interaction, mindfulness practices, and positive emotional engagement are all accessible and effective means of improving both

mental health and brain health. As the research suggests, investing in well-being pays dividends far beyond happiness—it may hold the key to unlocking a future with fewer cases of dementia. While we cannot completely eliminate the risk of developing neurodegenerative diseases, the steps we take today toward fostering mental and emotional well-being may reduce the likelihood of dementia for millions.

In a world where dementia remains one of the most pressing public health challenges, we must act now. Prioritizing well-being, both in our personal lives and through public health policies, can lead to healthier aging and, ultimately, a reduced burden of dementia on individuals, families, and society. After all, the cost of ignoring well-being is far too high—for our minds, our bodies, and our collective future.

ENERGY DRINKS

Should We Be Worried When Our Teenagers Drink a Lot of Energy Drinks?

Energy drinks have become increasingly popular among teenagers, with bright cans promising a quick boost of energy to power through long study sessions, sports, or social activities. But is this sudden surge in caffeine and other stimulants like taurine something parents and teachers should be concerned about? The short answer is: yes, there are reasons to be cautious.

The Ingredients: Caffeine and Taurine

Most energy drinks contain high levels of caffeine, often significantly more than what's found in a cup of coffee. Caffeine is a stimulant that affects the central nervous system, temporarily improving alertness and concentration. For adults, moderate caffeine consumption is generally safe. However, for teenagers, who are still developing physically and mentally, the story can be different.

In addition to caffeine, many energy drinks contain taurine, an amino acid that helps regulate water and mineral levels in the blood. While taurine is naturally present in meat and fish, the amounts found in energy drinks are much higher. Taurine has been shown to support heart and muscle function, but in combination with caffeine and other stimulants, its effects in adolescents are not fully understood.

How Much is Too Much?

The recommended daily limit of caffeine for teenagers is around 100 mg, roughly equivalent to one cup of coffee. Many energy drinks exceed this amount in just one can, and some teens consume multiple cans a day. Over-consumption of caffeine can lead to various side effects, including:

- **Increased Heart Rate and Blood Pressure:** Excessive caffeine intake can make the heart race, causing palpitations or

even arrhythmias in some cases.

- **Anxiety and Jitters:** Too much caffeine can lead to feelings of restlessness, anxiety, or even panic attacks, especially in teenagers who may already be prone to stress.

- **Sleep Disturbances:** Energy drinks consumed later in the day can interfere with a teenager's sleep, leading to insomnia or poor sleep quality, which in turn affects academic performance and mood.

- **Dependence:** Teens who rely on energy drinks may develop a tolerance to caffeine, needing more to feel the same effects, potentially leading to dependency.

What About Taurine?

While taurine is considered safe in moderate amounts, the long-term effects of combining it with high doses of caffeine are not well-studied, especially in young people. Some experts are concerned that the mix of caffeine and taurine in energy drinks can lead to overstimulation, particularly affecting the heart and nervous system. Though studies on taurine's specific risks are ongoing, it's a good idea to limit intake until more is known.

Academic Impact

Teenagers are often drawn to energy drinks to stay alert during study sessions or to perform better in school. But the temporary boost in energy is often followed by a "crash," leaving them more tired and less focused than before. Instead of improving academic performance, energy drinks may end up making it harder for students to concentrate, remember information, and manage stress.

Moreover, sleep is crucial for brain development and learning.

When teenagers regularly consume energy drinks and disrupt their sleep patterns, they may be undermining their ability to



retain information and perform well in school. Long-term sleep deprivation is linked to memory problems, lower cognitive functioning, and even mental health issues like depression.

Encouraging Healthier Alternatives

As tempting as energy drinks may be, there are healthier ways for teenagers to stay energized and focused. Encouraging a balanced diet, regular exercise, and proper hydration can provide natural and sustained energy throughout the day. Developing good sleep habits, such as going to bed and waking up at the same time each day, is key to long-term mental and physical health.

For teens who need a little extra boost during study sessions, sug-

gest drinking water, herbal tea, or a small cup of coffee within recommended limits. These alternatives provide hydration and a gentle energy lift without the extreme side effects of energy drinks.

Moderation is Key

While the occasional energy drink is unlikely to cause serious harm, consistent and excessive consumption can lead to health issues, especially in developing teenagers. The combination of high caffeine and taurine levels makes energy drinks a less-than-ideal choice for young students. As parents and educators, it's important to educate teens about the risks and encourage them to make healthier choices for sustained energy and well-being.

EXHIBITION

Riding The Radio Waves - an interesting exhibition in Tampere Vapriikki-museo



A 15 W FM-transmitter used in pirate radio in Tampere in the 80ies



Commodore, the first computer for everyone in Finland

"On the crest of the radio wave – From crystal machine to podcast" opens up Finnish radio history from the 1920s to the present day

The Tampere Vapriikki Museum opens a fascinating exhibition that delves into the roots of Finnish radio history. "Riding the radio waves – From crystal machine to podcast" takes the visitor on an enchanting journey into the multifaceted history of radio. The exhibition delves into what has made radio enchanting for creators, listeners and enthusiasts for decades, and why this magical device has maintained its position in the age of the internet and digital communication.

Although radio may seem like a transitory format in today's media storms, it is still a globally significant means of communication. Internet access, mobile networks, electricity and access to digital information are not available everywhere in the world. Radio is also proving to be a valuable communication channel in crisis situations, as its network is designed to withstand longer power outages compared to, for example, mobile phone networks.

Radio amateurs, in particular, appear to be critical pillars of communication and communication in crisis situations. The exhibition invites the visitor to think about the magic that a device hidden on the radio manages to create, from everyday listening to necessary crisis connections. This unique exhibition offers an opportunity to delve into the history of radio and understand its continued importance as a versatile and sustainable means of communication. *en jatkuvan merkityksen monipuolisena ja kestävässä viestintävälineenä.*



CLIMATE CHANGE

Copernicus: March 2025 Was the Warmest March Ever Recorded in Europe – A Climate Emergency Unfolding



A PLANET ON FIRE. Europe's Hottest March in History

The latest data from the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) confirms what many feared: March 2025 was the warmest March ever recorded in Europe, shattering previous records and deepening concerns over an accelerating climate crisis.

Globally, March 2025 was the second-warmest March on record, with an average surface air temperature of 14.06°C—0.65°C above the 1991-2020 average and a staggering 1.60°C above pre-industrial levels. While it was 0.08°C cooler than March 2024's record, it still surpassed the third-warmest March (2016) by a narrow margin.

But the most alarming revelation? This marks the 20th month out of the last 21 where global temperatures exceeded 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels—a critical threshold scientists warn could trigger irreversible climate tipping points.

Europe in the Hot Seat: A Continent Burning Up

For Europe, March 2025 was unprecedented. The average temperature over European land reached 6.03°C, a shocking 2.41°C above the 1991-2020 average. The worst-hit regions included eastern Europe

and southwest Russia, where temperatures soared far beyond seasonal norms.

Samantha Burgess, Strategic Lead for Climate at ECMWF, stated:

"March 2025 was the warmest March for Europe, highlighting once again how temperatures are continuing to break records. It was also a month of contrasting rainfall extremes—some regions experienced their driest March on record, while others saw their wettest in at least 47 years."

This climate whiplash—swinging between extreme drought and flooding—is becoming the new normal, destabilizing agriculture, ecosystems, and human settlements.

The Arctic Crisis: Sea Ice Hits a Devastating Low

While Europe baked, the Arctic suffered another devastating blow. Winter sea ice coverage hit a record low, continuing a decades-long decline. The loss of reflective ice accelerates global warming, as dark ocean water absorbs more heat—a dangerous feedback loop.

Scientists warn that without urgent action, Arctic summers could be ice-free within decades, with catastrophic consequences for global weather patterns, sea levels, and

biodiversity.

Why This Matters: We Are Living in a Climate Emergency
1.5°C Is Not a Target—It's a Limit We've Already Crossed

The Paris Agreement aimed to keep warming below 1.5°C, but we are already flirting with disaster.

20 of the last 21 months exceeded this threshold, meaning we are living in uncharted territory.

Extreme Weather Is the New Normal

Droughts, floods, wildfires, and heatwaves are no longer anomalies—they are the baseline.

Europe's wildfire season is starting earlier and lasting longer, while Mediterranean nations face crippling water shortages.

The Arctic's Collapse Will Affect Everyone

Melting ice disrupts the jet stream, leading to prolonged heatwaves and brutal cold snaps.

Rising sea levels threaten coastal cities worldwide, from Miami to Mumbai.

A Call to Action: What Must Be Done?

The Copernicus report is not just another climate warning—it is a screaming alarm bell.

□ End Fossil Fuel Subsidies – Governments still pour billions into oil and gas while renewable energy waits for funding.

□ Accelerate Renewable Energy Transition – Solar and wind must replace coal and gas within years, not decades.

□ Enforce Stricter Climate Policies – Carbon taxes, deforestation bans, and binding emissions cuts are non-negotiable.

□ Prepare for the Unavoidable – Even if emissions stop today, locked-in warming guarantees more extremes. Cities must adapt now.

The Next Decade Will Decide Our Future

We are not just breaking records—we are breaking our planet. If March 2025 is a sign of what's to come, the 2020s will be the decade that determines whether we avoid climate catastrophe or plunge into irreversible chaos.

The time for half-measures is over. The time for action is now.

NEWS

MIGRI

Finland Streamlines Reception System as Asylum Numbers Decline. Oravais will close in December

THE FINNISH IMMIGRATION SERVICE (Migri) has announced the closure of multiple reception centres, including the Oravais facility in December, as the need for asylum accommodation continues to decrease.

Fewer Arrivals, More Local Integration

The decision follows a significant drop in asylum applications—down 45% in 2024 compared to the previous year. Additionally, the number of displaced Ukrainians seeking temporary protection has steadily declined. At the same time, an increasing number of reception centre residents have successfully transitioned to permanent municipal housing, reducing the demand for centralized accommodation.

Cost Efficiency Without Compromising Welfare

To maintain a financially sustainable reception system, Migri will terminate contracts with 18 reception centres by July, saving an estimated €21 million in 2025. A further eight centres will close by February 2026.

Elina Nurmi, Director of Reception Services, emphasized that the closures have been carefully timed:

“The first centres will not shut before the end of June, ensuring school-aged children can complete their academic year without disruption. Our priority remains the well-being of vulnerable groups, particularly minors.”

Pathway to Independence

Over 2,200 current residents are now eligible to apply for municipal residency, granting them the freedom to settle anywhere

in Finland. Nearly half could relocate immediately if they choose. Those not yet ready for independent living will be transferred to other reception centres, with Migri providing tailored support throughout the transition.

“We’re committed to a smooth process,” Nurmi added. “Each case will be assessed individually, and clients retain the option to move into private housing if preferred.”

A Shift in Finland’s Migration Landscape

This move reflects broader trends in migration—fewer new arrivals and greater emphasis on long-term integration. While the closures signify a reduction in immediate capacity, they also highlight the success of Finland’s resettlement policies in helping asylum seekers establish stable lives.

What’s next?

With further adjustments possible in 2026, Finland’s reception system appears poised for a more targeted, cost-effective future—one that balances fiscal responsibility with humanitarian commitments.

This rationalization was inevitable given the sharp decline in asylum seekers. However, the real test will be ensuring that those still in the system—particularly families and unaccompanied minors—receive adequate support as they transition to independence.

The €21 million savings are a win for taxpayers, but the human aspect of integration must remain a priority.

MIGRI

Фінляндія оптимізує систему прийому, оскільки кількість біженців зменшується. Oravais

ІМІГРАЦІЙНА СЛУЖБА ФІНЛЯНДІЇ (Migri) оголосила про закриття кількох центрів прийому, включаючи заклад Oravais, у грудні, оскільки потреба в притулках продовжує зменшуватися.

Менше прибуттів, більше локальної інтеграції

Це рішення послідувало за значним падінням кількості заявок на надання притулку — на 45% у 2024 році порівняно з попереднім роком. Крім того, кількість переміщених українців, які шукають тимчасового захисту, неухильно зменшується. У той же час, все більша кількість мешканців приймальних центрів успішно перейшли на постійне муніципальне житло, що зменшило попит на централізоване житло.

Економічна ефективність без шкоди для добробуту

Щоб підтримувати фінансово стійку систему прийому, Migri розірве контракти з 18 центрами прийому до липня, заощадивши приблизно 21 мільйон євро у 2025 році. Ще вісім центрів будуть закриті до лютого 2026 року.

Еліна Нурмі, директор служби прийому біженців, наголосила, що закриття було ретельно розплановано:

«Перші центри не закриються до кінця червня, щоб діти шкільного віку могли завершити навчальний рік без збоїв. Нашим пріоритетом залишається благополуччя вразливих груп населення, особливо неповнолітніх».

Шлях до незалежності

Понад 2200 нинішніх жителів тепер мають право подати заявку на муніципальне проживання, що надає їм свободу проживання в будь-якому місці Фінляндії. Майже половина може переїхати негайно, якщо захоче. Ті, хто ще не готовий до самостійного життя, будуть переведені в

інші центри прийому, а Migri надаватиме індивідуальну підтримку протягом усього переходу.

“Ми прагнемо до безперервного процесу», — додав Нурмі. “Кожен випадок буде оцінюватися індивідуально, і клієнти зберігають можливість переїхати в приватне житло, якщо це бажано».

Зміни в міграційному ландшафті Фінляндії

Цей крок відображає ширші тенденції в міграції — менша кількість новоприбулих і більший акцент на довгостроковій інтеграції. Хоча закриття означає скорочення негайної пропускної здатності, воно також підкреслює успіх політики переселення Фінляндії у допомозі шукачам притулку налагодити стабільне життя.

Що далі?

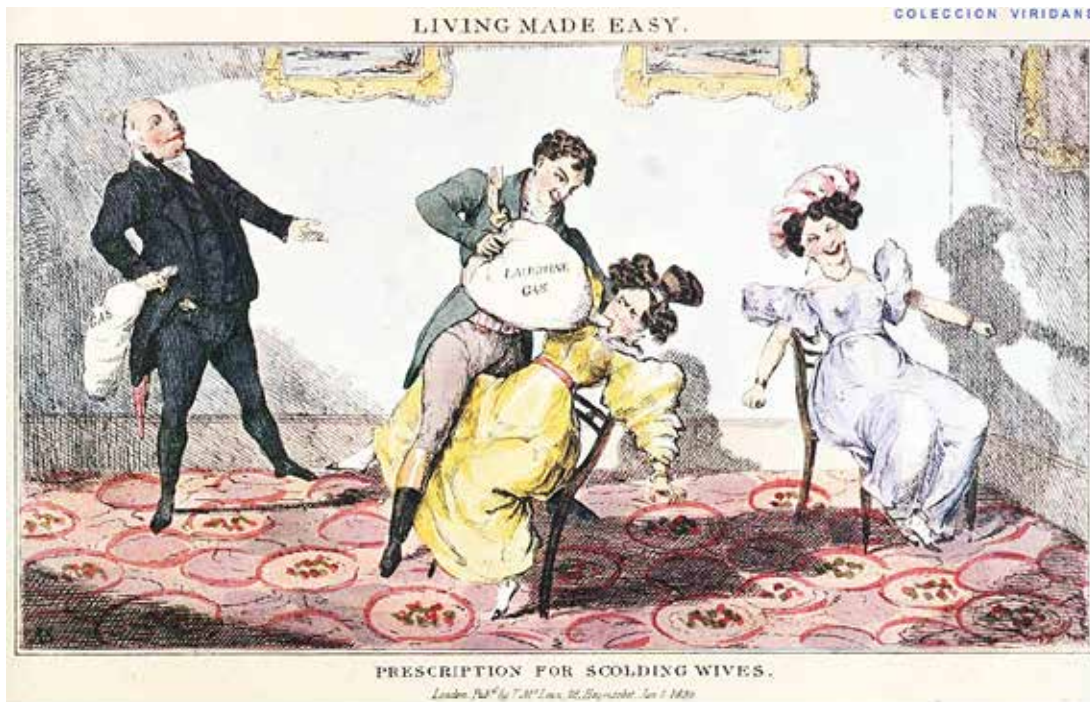
З можливими подальшими коригуваннями у 2026 році система прийому у Фінляндії, схоже, готова до більш цілеспрямованого та економічно ефективного майбутнього — такого, яке збалансує фінансову відповідальність із гуманітарними зобов’язаннями.

Така раціоналізація була неминучою з огляду на різке зменшення кількості шукачів притулку. Однак справжнім випробуванням буде забезпечення того, щоб ті, хто все ще перебуває в системі, особливо сім’ї та неповнолітні без супроводу, отримували належну підтримку на шляху до незалежності.

Економія у розмірі 21 мільйона євро — це вигравш для платників податків, але людський аспект інтеграції має залишатися пріоритетом.

PARTY DRUGS

Laughing gas epidemic: the hidden danger destroying young lives



"Living Made Easy": An 1830s satirical print depicting Humphry Davy giving a dose of nitrous oxide to a woman. Wikimedia Commons.

A SILENT BUT DEADLY TREND is sweeping through parties, festivals, and even schoolyards across the nation. Nitrous oxide, commonly known as "laughing gas," is being abused at record rates—and medical experts warn it could leave a generation with permanent nerve damage, paralysis, or even death.

The problem is already big in Sweden, and we usually follow in Sweden's footsteps here in Finland.

What Is Laughing Gas?

Nitrous oxide (N_2O) is a colorless, sweet-tasting gas that has legitimate medical uses as an anesthetic in dentistry and surgery. When used properly under medical supervision, it helps relieve pain and anxiety. However, outside the clinic, it has become a popular—and dangerously misunderstood—recreational drug.

From Medical Tool to Party Drug

Legally, nitrous oxide is classified as a pharmaceutical and should only be administered by trained professionals. Yet, it's alarmingly easy to obtain. The gas is sold in small metal canisters (often called "whippits") meant for whipping cream

in professional kitchens. These canisters are now being openly sold online and in shops, with little regulation.

The Shocking Rise in Abuse

According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), nitrous oxide has become one of the most commonly used recreational drugs among young adults in Europe, with use doubling in some countries since 2020. In the UK alone, hospital admissions linked to laughing gas have surged by 300% in the last five years (NHS Data, 2024).

The High—And the Horrific Crash When inhaled, laughing gas induces a brief but intense euphoria, dizziness, and uncontrollable laughter—hence its nickname. The effects last only 20-30 seconds, leading users to binge multiple canisters in one session. But what comes next is far from funny.

The Dark Side: Nerve Damage, Paralysis, and Death

While many dismiss it as "harmless fun," doctors are seeing an alarming spike in severe neurological damage caused by nitrous oxide abuse.

The gas destroys vitamin B12, a critical nutrient for nerve function. Without it, the nervous system begins to fail.

Symptoms of long-term abuse include:

- Tingling and numbness in hands and feet (early warning signs)
- Loss of bladder and bowel control (due to nerve damage)
- Paralysis in legs (from spinal cord deterioration)
- Psychosis and memory loss (in extreme cases)

A 19-year-old in the Netherlands was left wheelchair-bound after months of heavy use, his spinal nerves irreversibly damaged (Dutch Journal of Medicine, 2023). Another case in the UK saw a young woman permanently unable to walk after just six months of weekend use (BBC News, 2024).

A Warning to Young People: "It's Russian Roulette With Your Nerves"

Dr. Lisa Carter, a neurologist at King's College Hospital, has treated dozens of laughing gas victims. She warns:

"Young people think it's safe

because it's used in medicine. But medical doses are controlled. Recreational use is like playing Russian roulette with your nervous system. Once the damage is done, it's often permanent."

The Lethal Risk: Oxygen Deprivation

Beyond nerve damage, laughing gas can starve the brain of oxygen, leading to sudden death. In 2023, a 17-year-old girl in Germany died after inhaling nitrous oxide from a balloon and suffocating (Der Spiegel, 2023).

What's Being Done?

Some countries are cracking down. The UK recently banned recreational sales of nitrous oxide, imposing fines and jail time for possession. But enforcement remains difficult, and the black market is thriving.

Is 30 Seconds of Laughter Worth a Lifetime of Regret?

The message from doctors is clear: Laughing gas is no joke. What starts as a "harmless high" can end in a wheelchair—or worse.

If you or someone you know is using nitrous oxide recreationally, STOP NOW. The next balloon could be the one that changes your life forever.

If you are worried about yourself or someone close to you:

- Substance abuse counselling 0800 900 45

Environmental impact – not just health risks

- Nitrous oxide is a powerful greenhouse gas (300 times more potent than carbon dioxide)

SOURCES:

- EMCDDA (2024) - European Drug Report
- NHS England (2024) - Hospital Admission Statistics
- Dutch Journal of Medicine (2023) - Case Study on Spinal Damage
- BBC News (2024) - "The Laughing Gas Crisis"
- Der Spiegel (2023) - Fatal Nitrous Oxide Case

ART

HELENE SCHJERFBECK

Helene Schjerfbeck Exhibition Comes to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York – A Historic First for Finnish Art

Ateneum Art Museum | News |
April 2, 2025

A LANDMARK MOMENT in Finnish art history is approaching as the works of Helene Schjerfbeck will be displayed at The Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met) in New York from December 5, 2025, to April 5, 2026. This marks the first time a Finnish artist has been granted a dedicated exhibition at one of the world's most prestigious art museums. The showcase is the result of long-term collaboration between the Ateneum Art Museum and the Klassikot maailmalle (Classics to the World) initiative, supported by the Jane and Aatos Erkko Foundation.

A Dream Come True for Finnish Art

"This is a dream come true—not just for me but for Finnish art as a whole. The Met is in a league of its own, and it's an incredible honor that Helene Schjerfbeck's works will grace its walls," says Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff, Director of the Ateneum Art Museum.

The exhibition spans Schjerfbeck's (1862–1946) entire career, from her early academic works to her introspective late self-portraits. Over 60 pieces will be on display, including portraits, still lifes, and landscapes, featuring iconic works such as *The Convalescent* (1888), *The Seamstress* (1905), and a series of self-portraits. A speci-

Helene Schjerfbeck: Self-Portrait with a Black Background (1915). Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum, Hallonblad Collection. Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Yehia Eweis.

al highlight is *The Lace Collar* (1920), acquired by The Met in 2023—the first work by a Finnish artist to enter the museum's collection.

International Collaboration and Contemporary Art Spotlight

The exhibition will be held in The Met's Robert Lehman Wing, curated by Dita Amory, with Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff serving as consulting curator. A comprehensive exhibition catalog, including an essay by von Bonsdorff, will accompany the showcase.

Alongside Schjerfbeck's retrospective, Finnish con-

temporary art will also take center stage in New York. The *Remix the Archive* exhibition (May–June 2025) will feature generative art created using open-access data from the Finnish National Gallery's collections, including the award-winning *Loom of Reality* by Ilmo and Aarni Kapanen.

Finnish Art's Global Reach

Schjerfbeck's works have previously captivated international audiences, with a celebrated 2019 exhibition at London's Royal Academy of Arts and a 2014–2016 tour across Japan and Germany.

The Klassikot maailmalle project continues to bring Finnish masters to global audiences: a Pekka Halonen exhibition will open at Paris's Petit Palais in November 2025, following the recent Akseli Gallen-Kallela showcase at Vienna's Belvedere Museum.

Who Was Helene Schjerfbeck?

Schjerfbeck developed a distinctive modern style, stripping her paintings of unnecessary detail. Her self-portraits—painted from youth to old age—reveal a profound artistic journey. The Ateneum holds the world's largest Schjerfbeck collection, with over 200 works.



BOOKS

HISTORICAL LITERATURE

Karl August Tavaststjerna: Nobleman

A romantic in the whirlwind of hard times

Hårda tider will be published by Wasa Daily

KARL AUGUST TAVASTSTJERNA, the controversial and great star of Finland-Swedish literature, was born in 1860 into a noble family in the municipality of Mikkeli. Already in her childhood, he experienced the shadows of upper-class life, when her mother died of typhoid fever while caring for beggars during the famine years. This tragic event made an indelible impression on the young Karl August, which was later reflected in his works.

The road to school was rocky. After his father's death, he was placed under the guardianship of Colonel Constantin Ruin, and his studies at the Helsinki Polytechnic School did not inspire him much. He longed to return to the Parisian art scene, but eventually returned to Finland disappointed. After this, however, his literary career began to flourish.

Tavaststjerna was a controversial figure, a "patriot of the fatherland" who hated the intellectual atmosphere and language battles in Finland. He thirsted for international recognition and moved around in Parisian artistic circles, but at the same time he depicted the conflicts and injustices of Finnish society in his works. The novel *Hårda tider*, (Hard Times) (1891) is a brutal depiction of the famine years of the 1860s, where noble romanticism collides with grim reality.

Tavaststjernas pen was sharp and satirical. He did not shy away from depicting the dark side of society, and his work aroused much discussion in his time. He was a realist who did

not embellish reality, but at the same time he had the soul of a romantic who longed for beauty and harmony.

Tavaststjerna's book *Hårda tider* and the Finnish translation *Kovina aikoina* will be published on Wasa Daily's website.

His life came to a tragic end in Pori in 1898, only 37 years old. According to the story, instead of medicine, she was given a lethal dose of lamp oil, according to other sources, it was a nurse's mistake. This seemingly absurd death is the end of his contradictory life.

The legacy of Tavaststjerna lives on in Finland-Swedish literature. His works are timeless depictions of the role of man in difficult times, and his satirical pen continues to scratch the surface of society. He was a noble romantic who dared to look reality in the eye and describe its brutality.

His book *Hårda tider* is a milestone in Finnish literature that depicts the misery and despair of the famine years. Häme-star does not spare the reader, but shows the horrible face of hunger, disease and death. He also describes people's desperate attempts to survive and even exploit each other. The book is a harsh depiction of the time



Karl August Tavaststjerna (1860-1898) Wikimedia Commons when Finland was a poor and hungry country.

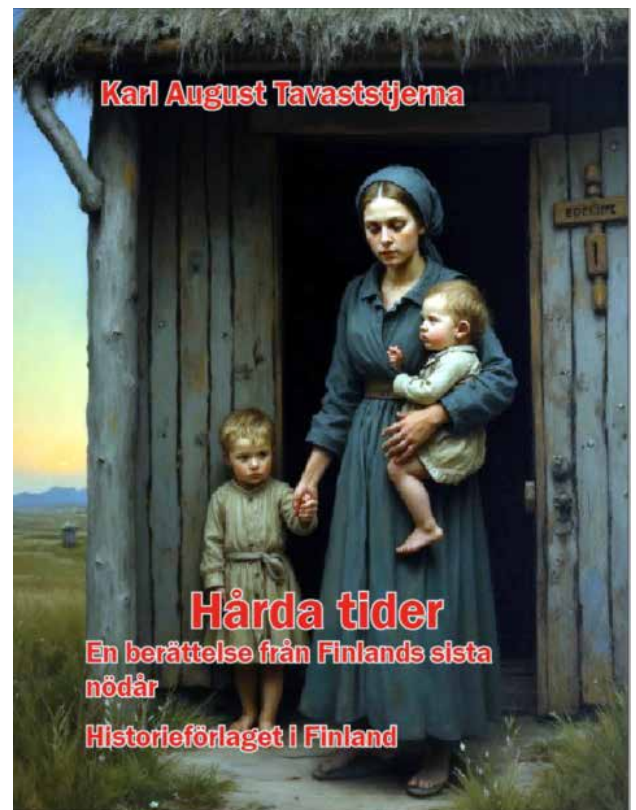
Tavaststjerna's humour was black and sarcastic. He mocked the hypocrisy of the nobility and the greed of the bourgeoisie. He did not mince words, and his works are full of sharp

observations and apt comparisons. He was a writer who dared to laugh even at serious things.

Tavaststjerna was also very talented. He wrote poems, plays, and novels, and he was also a skilled journalist. He started his own newspaper, but it was not financially successful. He was a visionary who wanted to change the world, but he also had a realistic understanding of its brutality.

Karl August Tavaststjerna was a controversial and fascinating figure who left an indelible mark on Finland-Swedish literature. His works are still relevant today, and they are still read and studied.

He was a noble romantic who dared to look reality in the eye and describe its brutality.



EXHIBITION

AMOS REX

Anna Estarriola's "Staged Circumstances and Piles of Things" – A Multisensory Journey Through Constructed Realities at Amos Rex



WHAT HAPPENS when reality is not what it seems? When the objects, sounds, and spaces around us are staged, manipulated, and deliberately arranged? The new exhibition Staged Circumstances and

Piles of Things by Catalan-born, Helsinki-based media artist **Anna Estarriola** at Amos Rex invites visitors to peel back the layers of perception and step into a labyrinth of shifting realities.

Opened to the public on April 2, this is Estarriola's largest solo exhibition to date, transforming Amos Rex's underground galleries into an immersive, ever-changing environment. Each of the 17 installations acts as a portal into a different dimension—sometimes startlingly tangible, sometimes hauntingly abstract.

Constructed Spaces and the Fluidity of Meaning

Blending sculpture, moving image, sound, and interactive electronics, Estarriola's works challenge the viewer's senses and assumptions. The exhibition's title (Staged Circumstances and Piles of Things) hints at its core themes: How do the objects around us gain meaning? Can we trust our own perception?

"Estarriola's work doesn't just tell stories—it turns the viewer into an active participant. Her installations are like intimate theatrical experiences where everyone plays a role," says curator Katariina Timonen.

Where Art and Science Collide

Drawing inspiration from quantum physics, neuroscience, and belief systems, Estarriola's practice explores how the brain processes reality and constructs order from

chaos.

"I want people to question what they see. Is what's in front of me really there? Or is it just a construct I've learned to accept?" Estarriola reflects.

Her work has been exhibited internationally and is held in collections such as the Finnish National Gallery and the Saastamoinen Foundation. In 2015, she received the prestigious AVEK Award, followed by a five-year state artist grant.

Touch, Interact, Disrupt Expectations

This is not a traditional art exhibition where visitors observe from a distance. Here, every movement, glance, or touch can reshape the experience. Estarriola's installations provoke thought, defy expectations, and leave the audience wondering: What is real, and what is staged?

Staged Circumstances and Piles of Things runs at Amos Rex from April 2 to September 1, 2025, alongside Enni-Kukka Tuomala's Expanding Empathies, offering a fascinating counterpoint to Estarriola's explorations.

Images: Anna Estarriola, System-Amos Rex-Aukusti Heinonen
AnnaEstarriola_03_Amos Rex-StellaOjala



BOOK

Rediscovered classic offers new insight into today's society

Wasa Dagblad has translated "1984"

into Swedish and the book can be read on the newspaper's website: www.vpress.ovh. The English version is also ready-

In an era marked by digital surveillance and the influence of social media, George Orwell's novel "1984" has gained new relevance. Although the book was written in 1948, long before the internet and smartphones, its depiction of a totalitarian society is frighteningly relevant.

The novel, which takes place in a dystopian future, describes a society where the state controls every aspect of citizens' lives. Through advanced surveillance and manipulation of information, the regime maintains its power and creates an atmosphere of fear and suspicion.

"It is fascinating how pinpoint-accurate Orwell was in his description of a surveillance society," says a well-known literary critic. "Although technology has developed enormously since 1948, the

underlying mechanisms for control and manipulation are still the same."

In "1984," the state uses "telescreens" to monitor citizens 24/7. In today's society, we have surveillance cameras, internet tracking, and facial recognition. Although these technologies are often justified on security grounds, they raise questions about privacy and civil liberties.

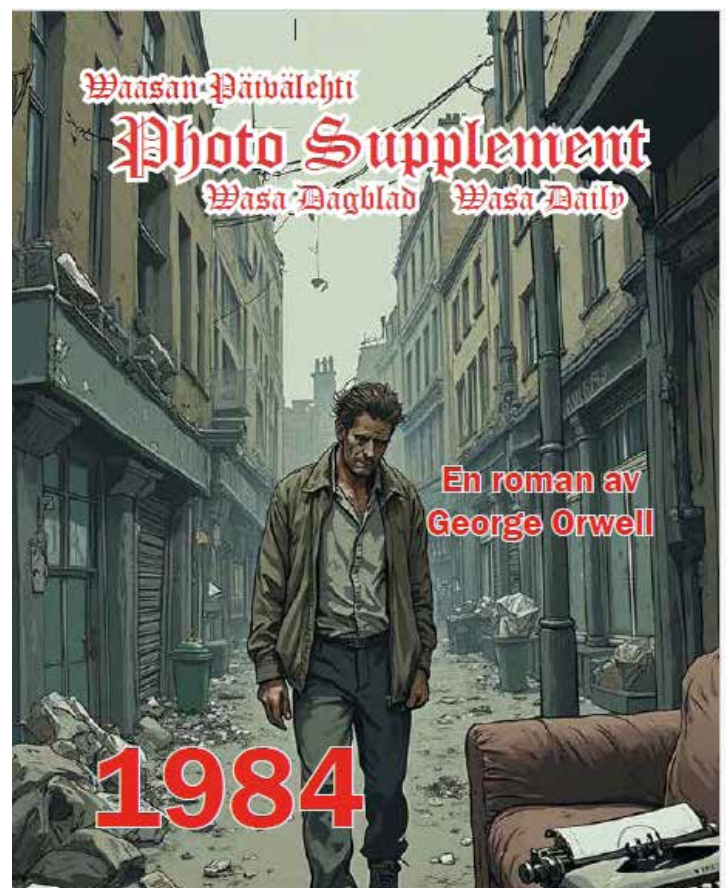
Orwell also depicts how the state uses "newspeak" to limit citizens' ability to think and control their perception of reality. By eliminating words that express opposition and criticism, the regime creates a language that makes it impossible to think "non-authoritarian" thoughts.

"It is a frightening thought that language can be used as a tool of control. In today's society, we see how politicians and the media use 'spin' and 'fake news' to manipulate public opinion. Orwell's newspeak may not be so far from our own reality."

"1984" is not only a warning against totalitarianism, but also a reminder of the impor-



George Orwell (1903 - 1950). Wikimedia Commons



tance of safeguarding freedom of expression, privacy, and critical thinking. In a time when these values are being challenged, Orwell's novel is more relevant

than ever.

'1984' can be recommended to everyone. It is a book that makes you think about our own time and the challenges we face.

RUSSIAN WAR AGAINST UKRAINE

President and First Lady Attend Events Marking the Third Anniversary of Bucha's Liberation from Russian Invaders



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RUSSIAN WAR AGAINST UKRAINE - DOCUMENTS

TASS a few days before the Russian invasion into Ukraine

TASS 20 Feb 2022, 22:56

Russia not invading Ukraine and has no such plans — Russian ambassador to US

The leadership of our country has repeatedly declared and continues to declare its readiness to continue solving outstanding problems through diplomacy, Anatoly Antonov said

WASHINGTON, February 20. /TASS/. Russia has no plans of any "invasion" of Ukraine and is not implementing it now, Russian Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Antonov said in an interview with CBS.

"There are no such plans," he said.

"The leadership of our country has repeatedly declared and continues to declare its readiness to continue solving outstanding problems through diplomacy. <...> Every state has the right to protect its territory and borders. The Russian

Federation, the United States, or any other country is no exception. Russian troops are on our sovereign territory. We don't threaten anyone. Why do other countries try to dictate to us where can we deploy our troops and how many. I would like to emphasize once again that this is our own territory. Can one even imagine that Russia will demand the U.S. not to deploy its troops in Alaska or Florida? I am sure that such a requirement would be unacceptable for the United States.," he said.

We don't threaten anyone.

The interview was aired on CBS on Sunday. The transcript released later demonstrated that the TV company has abridged Antonov's answers. The interview was not aired live.

The West and Kiev have recently been echoing allegations about Russia's potential invasion of Ukraine. Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov castigated these claims as "empty and un-



founded", serving as a ploy to escalate tensions

Ukraine would have serious consequences.

Peskov pointed out that Russia did not pose any threat whatsoever to anyone.

Peskov pointed out that Russia did not pose any threat whatsoever to anyone. However, Peskov did not rule out the possibility of provocations aimed at justifying such claims and warned that attempts to use military force to resolve the crisis in southeastern

Comment:

"Peskov warned that attempts to use military force to resolve the crisis in southeastern Ukraine would have serious consequences."

Yes. He was perfectly right. It did have serious consequences. Above all for Russia.

Image: Lexica.art

RUSSIAN WAR AGAINST UKRAINE - DOCUMENTS

Parts of Putin's speech on February 24, 2022, the day when Russia attacked Ukraina

"It is not our plan to occupy the Ukrainian territory. We do not intend to impose anything on anyone by force"

I consider it necessary today to speak again about the tragic events in Donbass and the key aspects of ensuring the security of Russia.

I will begin with what I said in my address on February 21, 2022. I spoke about our biggest concerns and worries, and about the fundamental threats which irresponsible Western politicians created for Russia consistently, rudely and unceremoniously from year to year. I am referring to the eastward expansion of NATO, which is moving its military infrastructure ever closer to the Russian border.

It is a fact that over the past 30 years we have been patiently trying to come to an agreement with the leading NATO countries regarding the principles of equal and indivisible security in Europe. In response to our proposals, we invariably faced either cynical deception and lies or attempts at pressure and blackmail, while the North Atlantic alliance continued to expand despite our protests and concerns. Its military machine is moving and, as I said, is approaching our very border.

In December 2021, we made yet another attempt to reach agreement with the United States and its allies on the principles of European security and NATO's non-expansion. Our efforts were in vain. The United States has not changed its position. It does not believe it necessary to agree with Russia on a matter that is critical for us. The United States is pursuing its own objectives, while neglecting our interests.

In 1940 and early 1941 the Soviet Union went to great lengths to prevent war

Of course, this situation begs a question: what next, what are we to expect? If history is any guide, we know that in 1940 and early 1941 the Soviet Union went to great lengths to prevent war or at least delay its outbreak. To this end, the USSR sought not to provoke the potential aggressor until the very end by refraining or postponing the most urgent and obvious preparations it had to make to defend itself from an imminent attack. When it finally acted, it was too late.

As a result, the country was not prepared to counter the invasion by Nazi Germany, which attacked our Motherland on June 22, 1941, without declaring war. The country stopped the enemy and went on to defeat it, but this came at a tremendous cost. The attempt to appease the aggressor ahead of the Great Patriotic War proved to be a mistake which came at a high cost for our people. In the first months after the hostilities broke out, we lost vast territories of strategic importance, as well as millions of lives. We will not make this mistake the second time. We have no right to do so.

We had to stop that atrocity, that genocide of the millions of people

As I said in my previous address, you cannot look without compassion at what is happening there. It became impossible to tolerate it. We had to stop that atrocity, that genocide of the millions of people who live there and who pinned their hopes on Russia, on all of us. It is their aspirations, the feelings and pain of these people that were the main motivating force behind our decision to recognise the independence of the Donbass people's republics.



In this context, in accordance with Article 51 (Chapter VII) of the UN Charter, with permission of Russia's Federation Council, and in execution of the treaties of friendship and mutual assistance with the Donetsk People's Republic and the Lugansk People's Republic, ratified by the Federal Assembly on February 22, I made a decision to carry out a special military operation.

To protect people who, for eight years now, have been facing humiliation and genocide

The purpose of this operation is to protect people who, for eight years now, have been facing humiliation and genocide perpetrated by the Kiev regime. To this end, we will seek to demilitarise and denazify Ukraine, as well as bring to trial those who perpetrated numerous bloody crimes against civilians, including against citizens of the Russian Federation.

It is not our plan to occupy the Ukrainian territory

It is not our plan to occupy the Ukrainian territory. We do not intend to impose anything on anyone by force.

We will seek to demilitarize

and denazify Ukraine

To this end, we will seek to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, as well as bring to trial those who perpetrated numerous bloody crimes against civilians, including against citizens of the Russian Federation.

I would also like to address the military personnel of the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

Comrade officers,

I urge you to refuse to carry out their criminal orders. I urge you to immediately lay down arms and go home. I will explain what this means: the military personnel of the Ukrainian army who do this will be able to freely leave the zone of hostilities and return to their families.

I want to emphasise again that all responsibility for the possible bloodshed will lie fully and wholly with the ruling Ukrainian regime.

Russia will respond immediately, and the consequences will be such as you have never seen in your entire history

I would now like to say something very important for those who may be tempted to interfere in these developments from the outside. No matter who tries to stand in our way or all the more so create threats for our country and our people, they must know that Russia will respond immediately, and the consequences will be such as you have never seen in your entire history. No matter how the events unfold, we are ready. All the necessary decisions in this regard have been taken. I hope that my words will be heard.

RUSSIAN WAR AGAINST UKRAINE - DOCUMENTS

The advance of Russia and the new world

Here are parts of an article published by Ria Novosti (a Russian news agency surely never publishing anything without Kremls permission") on February 26, 2022, two days after the start of the Russian military operation in Ukraine.

Two days after the start of the war - and Ria Novosti is declaring the victory over Ukraine. "Now this problem is gone - Ukraine has returned to Russia."

This article is also proof that the goal of Russia's war of aggression was to conquer all of Ukraine, incorporate it into Russia, and recreate the former Soviet Union."Russia is restoring its unity - the tragedy of 1991, this terrible catastrophe of our history, its unnatural dislocation, has been overcome."

"Russia is returning."

"A new world is being born before our eyes. Russia's military operation in Ukraine has opened a new era - in three dimensions at once. And of course, in the fourth, domestic Russian one. Here a new period begins both in ideology and in the very model of our socio-economic system - but this is worth discussing separately a little later.

Russia is restoring its unity - the tragedy of 1991, this terrible catastrophe of our history, its unnatural dislocation, has been overcome. Yes, at a great cost, yes, through the tragic events of a de facto civil war, because now brothers, divided by their belonging to the Russian and Ukrainian armies, are still shooting at each other - but Ukraine as anti-Russia will no longer exist. Russia is restoring its historical completeness, gathering the Russian world, the Russian people together - in all its totality of Great Russians, Belarusians and Little Russians. If we had refused this, had allowed the temporary division to become entrenched for centuries, then we would not only have betrayed the memory of our ancestors, but would also have been cursed by our descendants - for allowing the disintegration of the Russian land.

Vladimir Putin has taken upon himself - without a drop of ex-

aggeration - historical responsibility, deciding not to leave the solution of the Ukrainian question to future generations.

After all, the need to solve it would always remain the main problem for Russia - for two key reasons. And the issue of national security, that is, the creation of an anti-Russia and an outpost for the West to put pressure on us from Ukraine, is only the second most important of them.

The first would always remain the complex of a divided people, the complex of national humiliation - when the Russian house first lost part of its foundation (Kyiv), and then was forced to come to terms with the existence of two states, not one, but two peoples. That is, either to renounce its history, agreeing with the crazy versions that "only Ukraine is the real Rus'", or helplessly gnash its teeth, remembering the times when "we lost Ukraine". Returning Ukraine, that is, turning it back to Russia, would be more and more difficult with each decade - the recoding, de-Russification of Russians and setting Little Russians-Ukrainians against Russians would gain momentum. And in the case of the consolidation of complete geopolitical and military control

of the West over Ukraine, its return to Russia would beco-

me completely impossible - it would be necessary to fight for it with the Atlantic bloc.

Now this problem is gone - Ukraine has returned to Russia. This does not mean that its statehood will be liquidated, but it will be restructured, re-established and returned to its natural state of being part of the Russian world. Within what borders, in what form will the union with Russia be secured (through the CSTO and the Eurasian Union or the Union State of Russia and Belarus)? This will be decided after the period in the history of Ukraine as anti-Russia is put to rest. In any case, the period of the split of the Russian people is ending.

And here begins the second dimension of the coming new era - it concerns relations between Russia and the West. Not even Russia, but the Russian world, that is, three states, Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, acting in geopolitical terms as a single whole. These relations have entered a new stage - the West sees Russia returning to its historical borders in Europe. And it loudly resents this, although deep down it must admit to itself that it could not have been otherwise.

Did anyone in the old European capitals, in Paris and

Berlin, seriously believe that Moscow would abandon Kiev? That the Russians would forever be a divided people? And at the same time, when Europe is uniting, when the German and French elites are trying to wrest control over European integration from the Anglo-Saxons and assemble a united Europe? Forgetting that the unification of Europe became possible only thanks to the unification of Germany, which happened by Russian good will (even if not very smart). To then set their sights on Russian lands is the height of not even ingratitude, but geopolitical stupidity. The West as a whole, and even more so Europe separately, did not have the strength to keep Ukraine in its sphere of influence, much less take it for itself. Not to understand this, one would have to be a geopolitical fool.

More precisely, there was only one option: to bet on the further collapse of Russia, that is, the Russian Federation. But the fact that it did not work should have become clear twenty years ago. And already fifteen years ago, after Putin's Munich speech, even the deaf could hear - Russia is returning."

RUSSIAN WAR AGAINST UKRAINE - DOCUMENTS

What Russia Should Do with Ukraine

Published by Ria Novosti 09:15 04.04.2022

If Russia were to win the war of aggression against Ukraine and take control of the entire country, this would not mean an end to the suffering of the people of Ukraine, on the contrary, it would be the beginning of a new severe suffering for the next 25 years. This article, published in April 2022 by Ria Novosti, the state and state-controlled news agency that never publishes anything without the Kremlin's permission, shows the fate that Ukraine would be deprived of after a defeat.

Here are some important parts of this article.

RIA Novosti columnist Timofey Sergeyev shared his thoughts on what the denazification of Ukraine implies and why it is needed. "Total lustration must be carried out."

A significant part of the people are Nazis

"Denazification is necessary when a significant part of the people - most likely, its majority - is mastered and drawn into the Nazi regime's policy. That is, when the hypothesis 'the people are good - the government is bad' does not work. Recognition of this fact is the basis of the policy of denazification, all its measures, and the fact itself is its substance."

"Nazis who have taken up arms must be destroyed on the battlefield to the maximum extent possible."

No significant distinction should be made between the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the so-called national battalions, as well as the territorial defense that has joined these two types of military formations. All of them are equally involved in extreme cruelty towards the civilian population, equally guilty of the genocide of the Russian people, and do not

A significant part of the masses are also guilty

"However, in addition to the top, a significant part of the masses, who are passive Nazis, accomplices of Nazism, are also guilty."

The further denazification of this mass of the population consists of re-education, which is achieved by ideological repression (suppression) of Nazi attitudes and strict censorship: not only in the political sphere, but also necessarily in the sphere of culture and education."

"The period of denazification cannot be shorter than one generation, which must be born, grow up and reach maturity under the conditions of denazification."

"In this case, the necessary initial steps of denazification can be defined as: liquidation of armed Nazi

formations (which are understood to mean any armed formations of Ukraine, including the Armed Forces of Ukraine), as well as the military, information, and educational infrastructure that ensures their activity;

the formation of organs of popular self-government and militia (defense and law enforcement) of liberated territories, protecting the population from the terror of underground Nazi groups;

installation of the Russian information space;

confiscation of educational materials and prohibition of educational programs at all levels that contain Nazi ideological principles;

mass investigative actions to establish personal responsibility for war crimes, crimes against humanity, the dissemination of Nazi ideology and support for the Nazi regime;"

"lustration, publication of the names of accomplices of the Nazi regime, their forced labor to restore the destroyed infrastructure as punishment for Nazi activities (from among those to whom the death penalty or imprisonment will not be applied);

the adoption at the local level, under the supervision of Russia, of primary normative acts of denazification "from below", the prohibition of all types and forms of the revival of Nazi ideology;

the establishment of memorials, commemorative signs, and monuments to the victims of Ukrainian Nazism, perpetuating the memory of the heroes of the fight against it;

inclusion of a set of anti-fascist and denazification norms in the constitutions of the new people's republics;"

Forced labor as punishment for Nazi activities (from among those to whom the death penalty or imprisonment will not be applied)

This will go on for 25 years

"creation of permanent denazification bodies for a period of 25 years."

RUSSIAN WAR AGAINST UKRAINE - DOCUMENTS

Dmitry Medvedev's Rhetoric on Ukraine: A Glimpse into His Language and Ideology

Dmitry Medvedev, the former President of Russia and current Deputy Chairman of the Security Council, has once again attracted attention with a provocative and incendiary statement about the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. On August 30, Medvedev posted a message on Telegram that stands out for its harsh language and extreme accusations, revealing the extent to which Russian political discourse has escalated in recent years.

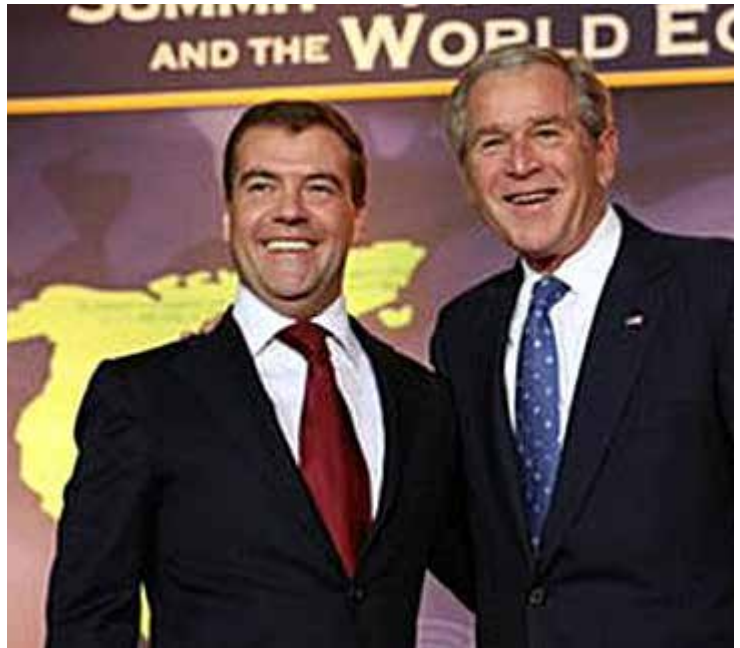
In his post, Medvedev launches into a tirade against the Ukrainian government and its Western allies, labeling them with a string of derogatory terms. He refers to Ukrainian leaders as "Kyiv neo-Nazis" and claims that they are "desperately supported" by what he describes as "rabid animals who guard the Western world today." These comments not only reflect a starkly hostile stance but also employ dehumanizing language, a tactic often used to demonize opponents and justify aggressive actions.

Medvedev goes on to make sweeping accusations about the motivations behind Ukraine's efforts to regain control over the Donbass region. He asserts that the Ukrainian leadership is driven solely by a desire for money, claiming, "The reason is banal: they need money. Cash - or money, in other words." According to Medvedev, this financial desperation stems from the alleged corruption and economic mismanagement by President

Zelensky's administration, which he describes as a "criminal clique" that has led Ukraine to "disaster."

One of the most striking elements of Medvedev's message is his use of grotesque metaphors and insults to describe both Ukrainian and Western figures. For instance, he refers to U.S. President Joe Biden's administration as "Biden's half-dead dog" and dismisses other Western leaders as "insignificant homunculi standing by a stinking trough in the so-called Baltics." Such language is unusually coarse for a former head of state, suggesting a deliberate attempt to provoke and appeal to a specific audience that resonates with such rhetoric.

Medvedev also delves into the economic aspects of the conflict, specifically focusing on Ukraine's mineral resources. He argues that Western countries are primarily interested in Ukraine because of its vast mineral wealth, particularly in the Donbass region. He notes, "according to open sources, the total value of Ukraine's mineral resource base is estimated at almost \$14.8 trillion," with a significant portion located in regions that are now controlled by Russia. This framing suggests that Medvedev views the conflict as not just a geopolitical struggle but also a resource war, with the West exploiting Ukraine for its natural riches.



Dmitry Medvedev and George W. Bush

In a particularly alarming section of his post, Medvedev accuses Western powers of having no regard for Ukrainian lives, claiming they are pushing for a war "to the last Ukrainian" in order to gain access to these resources. He writes, "The lives of ordinary Ukrainians do not matter. That is the entire cynical interest of the green meat and hairy dung flies from the Anglo-Saxon world." This vivid and repugnant imagery serves to further dehumanize both Western leaders and the Ukrainian people, painting them as mere pawns in a larger, malevolent scheme.

Medvedev's rhetoric culminates in a grim prediction for Ukraine's future, suggesting that the country is on the brink of "rapid decomposition and inevitable collapse." He argues that with much of its resource base now under Russian control, Ukraine

has little left to sustain itself and will soon face economic ruin. This apocalyptic vision is presented with a sense of satisfaction, as Medvedev concludes that the "resource base illegally obtained by Bandera's creatures at the end of the 20th century has returned to their native country."

Overall, Medvedev's Telegram post is a stark example of how the conflict in Ukraine is being framed within Russian political discourse. The use of inflammatory language, dehumanizing metaphors, and extreme accusations reflects not only the depth of hostility but also a deliberate strategy to vilify opponents and justify Russia's actions. For a former president of a global power, such rhetoric is both surprising and unsettling, highlighting the extent to which the norms of political communication have shifted in the current geopolitical climate.

CAUSERIE

Soil floor or concrete – an unexpected health issue?

We have long seen concrete floors as a sign of modernity and hygiene. But what if the old truth that dirt floors are unhealthy isn't true?

An ongoing study in Bangladesh is now challenging our prejudices about the role of flooring for our health.

The official name of the study is «Cement floors and child health (CRAD-LE): a randomized trial in rural Bangladesh» and it can be found online. The study is led by Jade Benjamin-Chung, a researcher at Stanford University in the United States.

Researchers in Bangladesh are now comparing whether small children in houses with soil floors get more intestinal infections than children in houses with concrete floors. The results of the study could have major consequences, not only for developing countries, but also for our own home environments.

What if it turns out that soil floors, with their natural materials, can actually have a positive impact on our health? Perhaps soil floors can contribute to a more balanced microbiome, that is, the billions of



bacteria that live in and on us. There is a growing body of research that shows that our gut flora plays a crucial role in our health.

If the study in Bangladesh shows that soil floors can be healthier, what does

that mean for us here in our Nordic countries? Should we start tearing up our concrete floors and replacing them with dirt floors? Maybe not fully, but it can force us to rethink our homes and our relationship with nature.

Perhaps we can be inspired by other cultures where dirt floors are a natural part of the living. Perhaps we can find ways to combine modern conveniences with more natural materials.

It's important to remember that a single study doesn't provide the whole truth. But it can ignite new thoughts and discussions. Maybe it's time to question some of our ingrained notions of what is hygienic and healthy.

So, while we wait for the results from Bangladesh, we can consider the following questions:

What advantages and disadvantages do we see with earth floors and concrete floors?

How can we create homes that are both healthy and comfortable?

How can we balance our needs for modernity and contact with nature?

Whatever the results of the study, it can contribute to an important discussion about our living environment and our health. Maybe it's time to look at our homes with new eyes and discover new ways to live more sustainably and healthily.

POETRY

Bertel Gripenberg, 1927

The Far-away House.

Far away, far away from the worlds foul fray
in the wood, in the wild, wide wood
far away, far away once my homested lay,
my lonely house once stood.

In silence and night, in sunshine and light,
in the days with the golden feet,
in darkness and frighl, in sorrow and plighl
this house was my home, my retreat.

And all my lost years, all the days I hal are gone,
still hover about thal lone house,
my far-away home, thal dreams still alone,
whcre the echos my lost years arouse.

Far away, far away now my footsteps may stray
but my thoughts and dreams linger there,
far from struggle and fray all my soul slill will slay
in that lost, that enchanted sphere.

Bertel Gripenberg: A Traditionalist Poet with a Controversial Legacy

Bertel Gripenberg (1878-1947) was a prominent Finnish-Swedish poet during the early 20th century. While renowned for his formal and technical skills, he held traditional and re-actionary views on poetry and society, making him a controversial figure even in his own time.

Gripenberg's early work, exemplified by collections like "Vida vägar" (1904) and "Galler-grinden" (1905), consisted of passionate love poetry, considered daring for its time. His subsequent period, often regarded as his strongest, saw a shift towards ethical themes, evident in works like "Aftnar i Tavastland" (1911).

The Finnish Civil War of 1918 profoundly impacted Gripenberg, inspiring works like "Un-der fanan" (1918), which glorified the war and demonized the Red opponents. This, coupled with his anti-democratic and anti-populist stance, solidified his position as a controversial figure.

Gripenberg continued to publish poetry collections throughout his career, including "Sista ronden" (1941). In 1925, he released "Den hemliga glöden" (under the pseudonym Åke Erik-son), a parody of modernist poetry that inadvertently revealed new facets of his own work.



AI

AI-Generated Podcasts: A New Era of Audio Content with NotebookLM

20 Everyday Abbreviations You Need to Know (and Maybe a Few You Don't)



**Podcast in English:
Russian disinformation**
<https://vpress.ovh/podcasts.htm>

In the rapidly evolving landscape of digital media, artificial intelligence continues to push boundaries, reshaping industries and re-defining creative processes. One of the most groundbreaking developments is Google's NotebookLM, an advanced language model with the potential to revolutionize the podcasting world. With its ability to generate human-quality audio content, NotebookLM is paving the way for a new era of AI-driven storytelling, education, and entertainment.

The Emergence of AI-Generated Podcasts

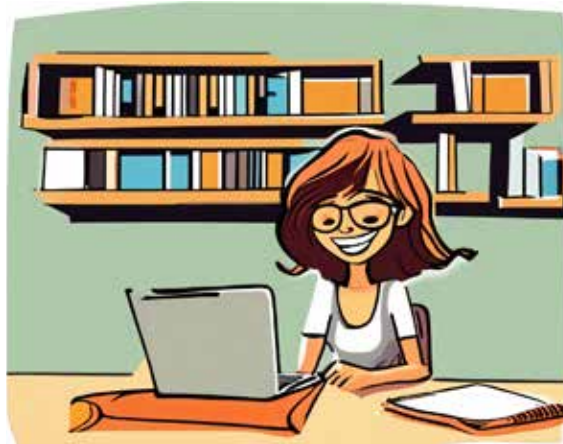
As the podcasting industry continues to grow at an unprecedented rate, content creators and media companies are always on the lookout for innovative tools to streamline production and enhance creativity. NotebookLM, initially celebrated for its ability to generate high-quality written content, has now ventured into the realm of audio. This cutting-edge

technology is capable of producing podcasts that are nearly indistinguishable from those created by human hosts, opening up exciting possibilities for the future of digital content.

The appeal of NotebookLM-generated podcasts lies in several key features that set them apart from traditional podcasts:

Natural-Sounding Voice: NotebookLM can produce audio content with a voice that mimics the natural cadence and tone of human speech. This makes it difficult for listeners to discern that the podcast is AI-generated, offering a seamless listening experience.

Diverse Range of Topics: Whether it's breaking news, current events, or light-hearted storytelling, NotebookLM can tackle a wide array of subjects. Its versatility makes it an ideal tool for content creators looking to explore different genres without the constraints of time and labor-intensive production.



Abbreviations are everywhere these days. From texting acronyms to technical jargon, those handy 3-letter (and sometimes longer) combos can be confusing if you're not in the know. But fear not, fellow abbreviation adventurer! This article will equip you with the knowledge to decipher 20 of the most common abbreviations you'll encounter in everyday life.

1. **LOL:** Laughing Out Loud (This one might already be a classic for many!)
2. **BRB:** Be Right Back (Perfect for a quick bathroom break during a chat)
3. **OMG:** Oh My God (Expresses surprise or strong emotion)
4. **IMHO:** In My Humble Opinion (A way to preface your opinion politely)
5. **** ASAP:** As Soon As Possible (Lights a fire under someone... nicely)
6. **FYI:** For Your Information (A heads-up for someone)
7. **ETA:** Estimated Time of Arrival (Lets you know when to expect someone)
8. **RSVP:** Please Reply (Formal request for a response to an

- invitation)
9. **PDF:** Portable Document Format (A common file format for documents)
10. **JPG:** Joint Photographic Experts Group (A popular image file format)
11. **GIF:** Graphics Interchange Format (Another image format, known for animations)
12. **TIFF:** Tagged Image File Format (Used for high-quality images)
13. **WWW:** World Wide Web (The foundation of the internet we know)
14. **HTTP:** Hypertext Transfer Protocol (The language webpages use to talk)
15. **GPS:** Global Positioning System (Helps you navigate the world)
16. **ATM:** Automated Teller Machine (Your friendly neighborhood cash dispenser)
17. **DIY:** Do It Yourself (For the handy folks out there)
18. **VIP:** Very Important Person (Someone who gets special treatment)
19. **TBA:** To Be Announced (Stay tuned for more information)
20. **TBD:** To Be Determined (We're still figuring things out)

This is just a taste of the abbreviation world, but with these 20 under your belt, you'll be well on your way to deciphering the everyday lingo, from casual texts to technical documents. So, the next time you see an abbreviation that leaves you scratching your head, remember this list and keep on exploring the wonderful world of shorthand communication!

Wasa Daily

A modern newspaper with a layout with features of the press of the 1870s. Back then, newspapers had only 4-8 pages. Lots of text, but no images at all, so there's a lot to read on a few pages. Our paper is one of the very few newspapers in English serving English-speaking inhabitants in the Osthrobotnia region

The magazine contains quotations from old daily newspapers taken from the National Archives (digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi). GPT3, Gemini, Aria and Monica do some of the routine editing work, such as translation, corrector reading, and short notice writing. All texts have been checked by journalists and the editorial staff is responsible for all the content of the texts.

Wasa Daily is a daily newspaper type publication, so far it is published on Sunday mornings. But our goal is for it to come out every morning in the future.

The magazine is available online for free.

Editor-in-chief Hans Björknäs.

Readers' writings are welcome!

The magazine is locally owned and will remain so. For ever!

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Helsinki editorial office: Wasa Daily, Toimen linja 9 B 36, 00530 Helsinki. Phone +358-40-5462455.

Email: wasadagblad@gmail.com



HOROSCOPE FOR APRIL 2025

April Horoscope – The Stars Are Mumblin' (And Maybe Making Some Sense)

□ Aries (March 21 – April 19)
You're full of energy and initiative, but don't pick a fight with the coffee machine – it always wins.

□ Taurus (April 20 – May 20)
Your patience will be tested this April. Maybe it's time to accept that sighing loudly won't make the check-out line move faster.

□ Gemini (May 21 – June 20)
You have a thousand ideas and zero time to execute them. Try finishing one thing before jumping to the next – or just embrace the chaos!

□ Cancer (June 21 – July 22)
April might be an emotional month, but remember: no one expects you to save the world... just to deal

with your own stuff.

□ Leo (July 23 – August 22)
You love being the center of attention, but maybe let someone else tell the joke at the coffee break – just once.

□ Virgo (August 23 – September 22)
You have a plan, a backup plan, and a backup plan for the backup plan. Breathe – the worst that could happen is... well, not much, really.

□ Libra (September 23 – October 22)
Decisions are tough. If you're spending over an hour choosing what to eat, maybe that's a sign you should just cook something yourself. Or not.

□ Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)
Your magnetism is at its peak. Use it wisely – or you'll once again find yourself at a party you don't know how to leave.

□ Sagittarius (Novem-

ber 22 – December 21)
Your adventurous spirit is soaring, but maybe start small? Like taking a different route to work before booking a one-way ticket to Mongolia.

□ Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)
Your hard work is finally paying off! Soon, you can reward yourself with something big – like an overpriced coffee, guilt-free.

□ Aquarius (January 20 – February 18)
Your ideas are brilliant, but not everyone is ready for them yet. Maybe wait a bit before suggesting that all meetings should be replaced by memes.

□ Pisces (February 19 – March 20)
You're daydreaming more than ever. That's adorable – as long as you remember to get off at the right bus stop.

□ The stars whisper – but you do whatever you want anyway! □



HUMOUR ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

MR WEST

A well-known joker once came in company into a restaurant, where he saw a familiar gentleman named Wester sitting drinking toddy.

"Listen, Wester," he exclaimed, "can you tell me what is the resemblance between the sun and a toddy?"

"No", he replied.

"Well, both go down in the west," was the answer.

WHERE THE CHILDREN COME FROM

There was a group of three flamboyantly dressed very little girls, with barks and ribbons and precious toys and neighbor dolls, and near them was playing on the sand a poor little girl of about the same age, scantily clad and with a home-made primitive doll in her arms. The three fine children discussed the interesting question of where they came from, which proved a highly interesting topic for toddler speculation.

— I come from a rose, mother said, uttered one of the little living dolls.

— And me again, interjected No. 2, I must have come from a head of cabbage.

"I, yes I was picked up by a stork," said number three. Whereupon she, who had come out of a rose, scornfully and proudly turned to the poor little scantily clad girl child, and said nobly:

— And you, there, where did you come from?

— Alas, answered little Cinderella, we are so poor, so terribly poor back home, that mother and father have to make their children

themselves.

DAMN LUCK

— Hello, my lord, cried the energetic flower seller, buy some flowers for your darling.

- I have no sweetheart, said the young man.

- Then buy some flowers for your wife.

— I have no wife.

— Well, lucky cheese, then buy some flowers to celebrate your damn luck.

THE CUCKOO

The teacher (who told about the cuckoo):
— Well, what is it in the main that you now know about the cuckoo?'

Student:


— It does not lay its own eggs.

The astronomic picture of the week:



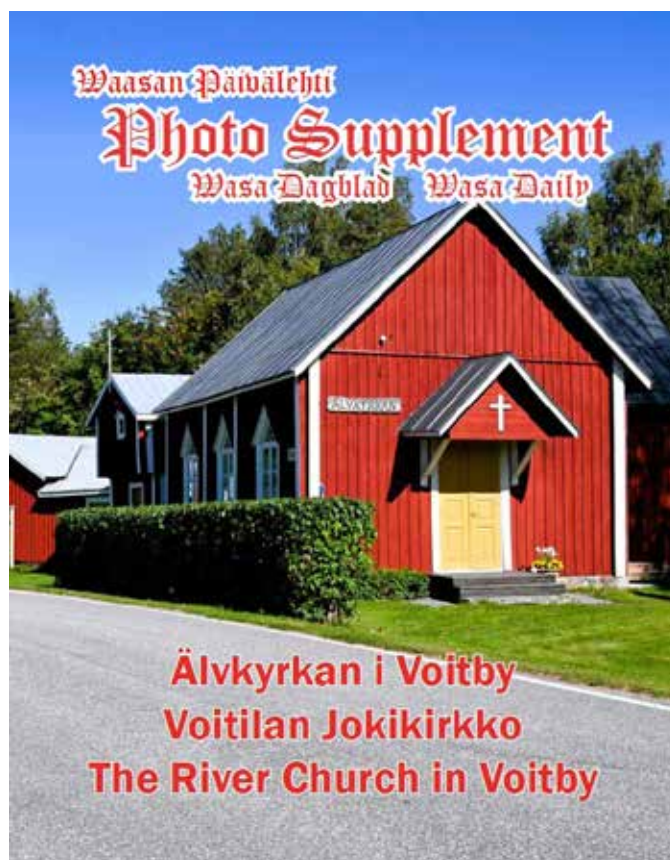
Mars Hubble.jpg

NASA's [Hubble Space Telescope](#) took the picture of [Mars](#) on June 26, 2001, when Mars was approximately 68 million kilometers (43 million miles) from Earth — the closest Mars has ever been to Earth since 1988. Hubble can see details as small as 16 kilometers (10 miles) across. The colors have been carefully balanced to give a realistic view of Mars' hues as they might appear through a telescope. Especially striking is the large amount of seasonal dust storm activity seen in this image. One large storm system is churning high above the northern polar cap (top of image), and a smaller dust storm cloud can be seen nearby. Another large dust storm is spilling out of the giant [Hellas](#) impact basin in the Southern Hemisphere (lower right).

 NASA and The Hubble Heritage Team (STScI/AURA)

 Public domain

Next week:



From our readers

We very much welcome submissions from our readers. Comments, stories, memories, debate, news from home. Probably this will be the most important part of this spring paper. But space is limited, so please write as short as possible! So please send posts to:
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