

# WASA DAILY

Nr 3 Sunday, January 19, 2025 ISSN 2954-2456



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# TODAY

## A Scorched Earth: 2024 Shatters Climate Records, Demands Urgent Action

The Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) has delivered a stark and sobering verdict: 2024 was the hottest year on record, exceeding the critical 1.5°C warming threshold above pre-industrial levels. This is not merely a scientific observation; it is a resounding alarm bell, a stark reminder that the climate crisis is no longer a distant threat, but a present reality.

The data paints a picture of a planet under siege. Record-breaking heatwaves scorched continents, while unprecedented rainfall events wreaked havoc. The relentless rise in global temperatures, coupled with record atmospheric water vapor, created a vicious cycle of extreme weather events. From devastating wildfires to the alarming decline of sea ice, the fingerprints of climate change are undeniable.

The C3S report underscores the urgency of the situation. We are witnessing the direct consequences of human-induced climate change. The year 2024 serves as a stark reminder that the window for effective action is rapidly closing. We are teetering on the precipice of irreversible damage, and the time for complacency is long past.

This is not merely a concern for scientists and policymakers; it is a matter of grave concern for



every citizen. The impacts of climate change are already being felt worldwide, from increased heat stress and water scarcity to disruptions in food production and increased displacement.

What can we do?

Demand systemic change: Support policies that prioritize the transition to a clean energy future, invest in renewable energy sources, and phase out fossil fuels.

Embrace sustainable living: Reduce our carbon footprint by adopting energy-efficient practices, minimizing our consumption, and choosing sustainable

transportation options.

Support climate-conscious businesses: Choose products and services from companies committed to environmental sustainability.

Engage in civic action: Advocate for climate action in your community, support organizations working on climate solutions, and hold elected officials accountable for their climate policies.

Spread awareness: Educate yourself and others about the realities of climate change and the urgent need for action.

The year 2024 serves as a stark reminder that the climate crisis is not a distant threat, but a present reality. It is a call to action, a demand for immediate and decisive action from individuals, communities, and governments alike. The future of our planet hangs in the balance.

### Photo Supplement



Photo Supplement - vpress.ovh

Cover picture: Sunset



**\* AI RESEARCH IN VAASA**

# A large donation supports AI research in thirteen Finnish universities, including the University of Vaasa and Åbo Akademi.

**Peter Sarlin's extensive donation strengthens artificial intelligence research in Finland: 13 new professorships at universities and the ELLIS Institute Finnish AI research takes a significant leap forward when Finnish entrepreneur and researcher Peter Sarlin donates a significant sum through his Foundation PS.**

Thanks to the donation, 13 new professorships in artificial intelligence will be established in Finland, which will be located in the country's universities and as part of the international ELLIS Institute (European Laboratory for Learning and Intelligent Systems). This is one of the most significant private investments in the Finnish scientific world.

**The ecosystem supporting artificial intelligence is expanding**

The new professorships will be located at the following Finnish universities: Aalto University, University of Helsinki, University of Eastern Finland, University of Jyväskylä, University of Lapland, National Defence University, University of Oulu, Svenska Handelshögskolan, University of the Arts Helsinki, University of Tampere, University of Turku, University of Vaasa and Åbo Akademi University. At the same time, the donation supports the Finnish ELLIS Institute, which operates as part of the European artificial intelligence network.

"In today's world, artificial intelligence is the engine of competitiveness and growth. Finland's success in this field requires world-class expertise, which we can strengthen in the areas of research, education and industrial applica-

tions. This donation is a step towards a more attractive and innovative AI environment in Finland," says Peter Sarlin.

**Excellence in Finland through cooperation**

The professorships established with the support of the donation will form the PS Fellow network, which will bring together Finland's top experts in artificial intelligence. The aim of the network is to promote research and enable the use of artificial intelligence in new areas, such as health technology, machine learning and user experience development.

"The professorships at the ELLIS Institute enable the recruitment of internationally competitive top experts. This is a significant step in building a strong AI ecosystem," says Professor Samuel Kaski, Director of the Finnish ELLIS Institute at Aalto University.

**University of Oulu's strong contribution to artificial intelligence**

Arto Maaninen, Rector of the University of Oulu, and Jukka Riekkö, Dean of the Faculty of Information Technology and Electrical Engineering, emphasize the significance of the donation speci-

# NEWS

## \* VAASA

### Recruitment campaign Vaasa Energy and cooperation attract experts to the Vaasa region



**The Vaasa region continues to be an attractive labour market despite the economic fluctuations in Finland.**

With a new recruitment campaign aimed at the whole country, the City of Vaasa, Vaasa Region Development Ltd VASEK and eight of the region's companies want to attract new labour to the region. This year's campaign focuses on energy - a theme that reflects both the region's expertise in energy technology and its positive outlook on the future.

The campaign is part of the joint image creation run by the City of Vaasa and VEVAK. It is primarily aimed at young adults between the ages of 23 and 40, with a particular focus on the Helsinki metropolitan area and other cities where the skills in demand are available. With the message of exciting career opportunities and a sustainable life in the Vaasa region, it is hoped to attract experts and their families.

**Vaasa Energy as a competitive advantage**

"Energy is an issue that we can be sincerely proud of in the Vaasa region. It makes us stand out among other cities and municipalities in Finland," says Mari Kattelus, Marketing Manager at VASEK. The region has a strong position in energy technology, with world-class expertise and prominent positions in national business and employment comparisons.

Leena Forsén, Director of Communications and

Marketing at the City of Vaasa, emphasizes that energy and happiness go hand in hand: "When we use our energy for what is important to ourselves, happiness also increases. This message is central to the campaign."

**Joint forces attract returnees**

In addition to reaching new experts in big cities, the campaign wants to attract back former Vaasa residents who have moved for the sake of jobs. A direct mail campaign is aimed specifically at these people, with the hope of arousing interest in returning to their old hometown.

"We want to show that Vaasa offers a balanced lifestyle with short commutes, proximity to nature and opportunities for leisure activities. It is our hope that this, combined with career opportunities, will be attractive," says Kattelus.

**A collaboration model that works**

The campaign is now in its fifth year and has proven to be an effective tool for promoting the region's common interests. The companies participating in the campaign - including Crimppi, Danfoss, Hitachi Energy, InMedi, TT Botnia, VEO, WE Tech Solutions and Vilpe - have a lot to gain from the joint work.

"A strength of Vaasa is that we look at the big picture and work together for the good of the region. By pooling our resources, we gain greater visibility and more benefits," says

Forsén.

Some of the participating companies have been involved since the start, while others are new. TT Botnia is participating in the campaign for the first time this year. "For us, it is important to contribute to the visibility of the region while making our own company better known. We operate in the healthcare sector and want to make it easier for families moving to the region, where many may need jobs in different industries," says Timo Ylilauri, CEO of TT Botnia.

**Sustainable financing and dissemination**

The companies share the campaign costs, while VASEK and the City of Vaasa are the main financiers and organisers. The creative partner of the campaign is the advertising agency Kind Company in Vaasa. The campaign material is distributed in Finnish and English, while the campaign website, [toihinvaasaan.fi](http://toihinvaasaan.fi), is also available in Swedish.

"It is an advantage to be able to communicate in several languages. It shows the region's versatility and our ability to welcome people from different backgrounds," concludes Kattelus.

With its strong focus on energy and happiness, the Vaasa region hopes that the campaign will not only meet companies' needs for skilled labour, but also contribute to the region's long-term development and well-being. Source: STTinfo/Vaasa

**WITH A TABLET YOU CAN READ THIS PAPER ANYWHERE:**



Like here in Amsterdam

ally for research in Northern Finland.

"The University of Oulu has a long history in artificial intelligence research. The new professorship is an important investment in the future and will bring a significant addition to the research resource base," Maaninen says.

Riekkö says: "The donation strengthens the significance of artificial intelligence in the development of research and society. We already have strong expertise in areas such as machine vision, information security and medical technology."

**Silo AI: A success story in the field of artificial intelligence**

Peter Sarlin is a co-founder and CEO of Silo AI, an artificial intelligence company. Silo AI has grown into Europe's leading private AI lab, and its sale to US-based AMD for \$665 million is one of Europe's most significant acquisitions in the AI industry. Sarlin is also Professor of Practice at Aalto University, specialising in machine learning and artificial intelligence.

Foundation PS's mission is to strengthen Finland's and Europe's position as global leaders in artificial intelligence by supporting world-class research and innovation.

**The future of AI research**

Artificial intelligence is a field that is changing society faster than many other technologies. Sarlin's donation is not only a significant investment in Finnish expertise, but also an invitation to cooperation between universities, companies and the public sector. Together we can create a future where Finland will not only follow the development of artificial intelligence, but lead it.

(Source: University of Oulu press release)

**They, who know a little more are They, who read Wasa Daily**

# GROCERY

## The fourth grocery chain comes to Finland

### Tokmanni Oy has signed a license agreement with SPAR International



**According to inside information published by the company, Tokmanni has signed a significant licensing agreement with SPAR International. The agreement gives Tokmanni the exclusive right to sell SPAR products and utilise the SPAR brand in the Finnish market.**

Tokmanni, a well-known general discount retailer, intends to leverage SPAR International's economies of scale and expertise to expand its operations, especially in grocery sales.

**Spar concept adapted to the Finnish market**  
Tokmanni is planning significant investments to bring the SPAR concept to the Finnish market. This includes revamping the current 20 fresh food departments to align with the SPAR brand. The first renovated SPAR department is expected to open next summer, with more renovations expected by the end of 2025. The renewed stores can be identified by the SPAR logo, which appears alongside the Tokmanni logo on the store facades. Tokmanni is also considering opening independent SPAR stores in the future.

#### **CEOs comment on cooperation**

Mika Rautiainen, CEO of Tokmanni, sees great opportunities in the cooperation:

"I am extremely pleased and excited about our partnership with SPAR International. Together we intend to change the Finnish grocery market. New products and competitive prices strengthen Tokmanni's position in the grocery trade."

Tobias Wasmuht, CEO of SPAR International, emphasizes the international dimension of the cooperation:

"Bringing the SPAR brand to Finland with Tokmanni offers significant growth opportunities. Tokmanni can utilise SPAR's international expertise and purchasing power, while SPAR can learn from Tokmanni's expertise in the home and speciality goods trade. This partnership will bring real added value to customers and drive growth for both parties."

#### **Tokmanni and SPAR: new opportunities for Finnish customers**

Tokmanni is known for its low prices, diverse selection and customer-oriented service. Cooperation with SPAR International provides Tokmanni with an opportunity to expand its food selection and further improve its competitiveness. Bringing the SPAR concept to Finland can bring new products and better prices to Finnish consumers.

#### **Competitive situation in the Finnish market**

The Finnish grocery trade market is currently dominated by Kesko, SOK and Lidl. However, the cooperation between Tokmanni and SPAR may bring much-needed competition, which may lead to lower prices and increased choice for customers. Is there room for a fourth player in the Finnish market? That remains to be seen.

#### **Background information about Tokmanni and SPAR**

Tokmanni Group Corporation is one of the leading general discount retailers in the Nordic countries, serving its customers with more than 370 stores in Finland, Sweden and Denmark. In 2023, the Group's revenue was EUR 1,393 million.

SPAR International is an international brand with sales of €47.1 billion in 2023. At the end of 2023, SPAR's network included 13,900 stores around the world.

#### **Impact on consumers**

For consumers, the partnership between Tokmanni and SPAR means a wider selection, better prices and new shopping experiences. This cooperation may also shake up the Finnish grocery trade field, increasing competition and bringing new opportunities to the market.

**Photo:** Spar shop in Holland. Photographed by KiekKiek, Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain

## MUSEUMS IN VAASA

# The number of visitors to museums in Vaasa remained at a high level in 2024



**More than 50,000 visitors visited Vaasa's museums in 2024, according to a press release from the museums.**

When the pop-up and touring exhibitions in the Ostrobothnia region are included, the total number of visitors rose to almost 65,000. The most popular destination was the Ostrobothnian Museum, which had 20,612 visitors.

**The popularity of museums was not weakened by a year of changes**

There were significant changes in Vaasa's museums during 2024, but visitor numbers still remained at a high level. Museum Director Elina Bonelius says that, for

example, the operations of Kunsthalle Vaasa were transferred to the Vaasa Artists' Association at the beginning of the year, and the opening hours of museums were reduced starting in the summer, as the doors remained closed on Tuesdays. Despite these changes, the popularity of museums remained strong.

"Last year's record numbers were missed by only a few thousand visitors, which shows that our museums attract audiences with their wide range of offerings. I am particularly pleased with the increase in the number of visitors to the Old Vaasa Museum," Bonelius says.

**The touring exhibitions of the regional museum reached a wide range**

In their role as the re-

gional museum, Vaasa museums produced two pop-up exhibitions and several touring exhibitions in the Ostrobothnia region. These touring exhibitions attracted a total of 14,390 visitors, which increases the reach of museums regionally.

**Seven new exhibitions in 2025**

In 2025, Vaasa museums will present seven new temporary exhibitions, the first of which will open in April-May. The offering includes local and Nordic art as well as naïveté. The Ostrobothnian Museum will also open a renewed money room, and Tikanoja Art Home will display its own collections.

In addition, the Lundgren sisters' Ostrobothnia touring exhibition tours six municipalities

in Ostrobothnia, presenting the works of three Vaasa-based artists.

**Opening hours and renovations in 2025**

As of January, only the Ostrobothnian Museum will be open on Sundays, while Tikanoja Art Home and Kuntsi Museum of Modern Art will close their doors on Sundays to save money. Bonelius describes the solution as unfortunate but necessary.

"The Ostrobothnian Museum was chosen as the Sunday opening destination because it has the widest selection and is the most popular of our museums in terms of visitor numbers," Bonelius explains.

Tikanoja Art Home will be closed in summer 2025 due to façade and roof renovations and in-

terior renovations. The museum will reopen at the end of September with new exhibitions.

**Positive feedback from the audience**

The museums' exhibitions have received positive feedback from the public. For example, exhibitions by Eero Järnefelt, Meta Isæus-Berlin, Ritva Kovalainen and Sanni Seppo have attracted a lot of interest. Many visitors have returned to see the same exhibition several times.

In 2025, guided tours will be organised on Saturdays at Tikanoja Art Home and Kuntsi Museum of Modern Art and on Sundays at the Ostrobothnian Museum. The guided tours delve deeper into the themes and backgrounds of the changing exhibitions.

# NEWS

## \* CARING CHAMPIONSHIP

### Vaasa Joins the Caring Championships – Invites Residents to Participate

The city of Vaasa is participating in the first-ever Caring Championships, set to take place in spring 2025.

The event aims to foster a culture of care both locally and nationally. The city invites organizations, churches, welfare areas, and other communities to take part by organizing "caring missions" to help make Vaasa the most caring municipality in Finland in 2025.

#### Caring Championships – Meaningful Encounters and Acts of Kindness

The Caring Championships will run from April 1 to May 31, 2025, as an open team competition. Participants will organize various caring missions, where volunteer teams can engage with groups such as children, youth, the elderly, people with disabilities, or others in need. Missions may include activities like outdoor walks, baking, music, volunteering, or environmental initiatives.

"The goal of the championships is to create meaningful encounters and foster empathy between different groups," says Vaasa's Director of Wellbeing, Virve Flinkkilä.

#### How to Join the Competition

All interested organizations, communities, and groups are welcome to register as organizers of caring missions. Registration is open until January 30, 2025, via the competition's website. Exact dates for missions do not need to be finalized at the time of registration.

Vaasa Already Embracing a Culture of Caring Since August, Vaasa has been running the campaign Talk to a Stranger, encouraging residents to connect with others and combat loneliness. The Caring Championships complement this initiative by offering new ways to engage in low-threshold activities.

"Success is a shared responsibility for all of us in Vaasa. We hope for broad participation so that together, we can highlight Vaasa in a positive way," says Flinkkilä.

For more information about the competition and registration, visit [www.valittamisensm.fi](http://www.valittamisensm.fi). The event is organized by the Caring Movement Association.

## \* WÄRTSILÄ

### Wärtsilä to supply engines for groundbreaking hybrid power plant in Kazakhstan



Photo: Wärtsilä

The technology company Wärtsilä is contributing to Kazakhstan's energy transition by supplying engines for a new 120 megawatt (MW) power plant, which is part of the country's first hybrid power plant project. The order was placed by Kazakhstan Caspian Offshore Industries (KCOI) and entered in Wärtsilä's order book towards the end of 2024.

The power plant will contain six Wärtsilä 46TS-SG gas-fuelled large format engines and related mechanical and electrical auxiliaries. The project is expected to be completed in mid-2026, and Wärtsilä will deliver its equipment as planned at the end of 2025.

Hybrid power plant to support renewable energy

#### sources

The hybrid power plant to be built in the Mangystau area will combine a conventional engine power plant, a 77 MW wind turbine and a 50 MW solar power plant. Once completed, the project will provide stable electricity to critical oil and gas facilities in the region. The purpose of the hybrid system is to balance fluctuations in electricity production due to renewable energy sources.

"This is a significant step in Kazakhstan's energy policy. The engine power plant will ensure the stability and reliability needed to integrate renewable energy into the grid," says Mirko Borgheesi, CEO of KCOI. The ability of Wärtsilä engines to start quickly and adjust frequency and tension makes them ideal for this type of hybrid environment.

#### Strengthening sustainable development

Kenneth Engblom, Area President, Energy at Wärtsilä, highlights the importance of the project in Kazakhstan's efforts

towards carbon neutrality. "This project shows how traditional technology can be used as a partner in renewable energy. We are proud to be involved in this innovative project," says Engblom.

Wärtsilä's roots in Kazakhstan go back to the 1990s. The company's previous deliveries and cooperation between countries create a solid foundation for projects of this scale.

#### Enabling renewable energy sources

Once the hybrid power plant project is completed, Kazakhstan will receive a significant increase in its renewable energy capacity. In addition to wind and solar power plants, the motor power plant ensures the continuity of energy production and helps balance the load on the grid.

Such hybrid systems represent the energy solutions of the future, combining conventional and renewable energy sources seamlessly. (Source: Wärtsilä Press Release)

# NEWS

## \* BILTEMAS FOOD TRUCK

# Biltema's food truck opened in Vaasa 16.1.25



**Biltema Food Truck Cafe will move from Helsinki to the Biltema department store in Vaasa in early 2025. The café car, which has been serving Helsinki since June, will be open on the last day on Sunday 15 December, after which it will prepare for its new location.**

**In Vaasa, it opened outside Biltema at Myllärinkatu 1-3 on 16.1.25.**



### Good meatballs

Food Trucks meatballs are delicious. That is what it claims. Just as good as IKEA's meatballs, one tester has claimed. Or better.

And in addition to being good, they are also cheap. Meatballs cost 4.50, both traditional and plant-based. And HotDog you get for 1 Euro, as well as coffee and buns.

### Job for 5 persons

Five young åersons have got a nwe job offering food for many persons in Klemettilä.

### Café car on the way due to renovation

The reason behind the relocation of the food cart, which operated in Biltema's yard in Helsinki, is the soon-to-be-started expansion renovation of the store. With the renovation, a traditional Biltema Café will be built in Helsinki, which already exists in several cities, such as Espoo, Lappeenranta and Rasio. After the renovation,

## Which meatballs are better, Biltemas or Ikeas?

Biltema Café offers a wider range and more permanent café service to its customers. Inauguration of Vaasa at the beginning of the year

The customers of the Biltema department store in Vaasa can enjoy the Food Truck Café's offerings from the beginning of the year, i.e. from 16.1.25. The coffee cart's selection is narrower than at



traditional Biltema cafés, but it offers popular products, such as hot dogs, coffee and cinnamon buns. This year's successful products - meatballs, vegetable balls and mashed potatoes - are also on the list. The relocation of the food trailer brings affordable and popular delicacies within reach of Vaasa's customers. Surely reason to try this mobile café!

### A few words about Bilte-

### ma

Biltema is one of the largest spare parts and accessory store chains in the Nordic region. Today, there are about 19,000 product titles in the extensive product range. The products are divided into nine product groups, which are automobile-motorcycle, bicycles, boat, leisure, home, office-multimedia, construction, automobile maintenance and utilities.



## THE ONION WEEK

### Onion Week 20.-26.1.2025: crying, laughter and delicious flavours in the kitchen



**At the end of January, Finland celebrates one of the real heroes of the kitchen: onions. Welcome to Onion Week, where tear ducts and taste buds get to work overtime.**

Onion, the underrated superstar on the dinner table, has earned its own Christmas season in the middle of the January darkness. According to a press release from MTK, onions are not only the cornerstone of cuisine, but also a symbol of eternal life in ancient Egypt. Nowadays, onions are a little more mundane in Finnish cuisine, but still just as important – and sometimes crying.

#### **Onion tears: Not for the faint of heart**

Have you ever wondered why you look like you've just watched all 12 episodes of the most heartbreaking season of your favorite show when you cut an onion? The reason is a bit of chemical magic: the tissue in the bulb releases gas that irritates your eyes so that the tear ducts work overtime. But don't worry - according to professionals, a sharp knife and rinsing the onion with cold water can help. (Or you can ask

your partner to cut an onion for you, claiming that you "specialize in other cooking skills.")

#### **What makes onions a superfood?**

The onion is like the Clark Kent of the food world: behind the exterior of everyday life hides a real superpower. It is full of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that fight the flu and boost overall well-being. Quercetin – the scientific-sounding ingredient – is particularly known for its ability to scare off microbial attacks. So the next time someone asks what you eat, you can proudly answer: "Food heroes".

#### **History seasoned with onions**

In the Middle Ages, onions were so valuable that they were used to pay taxes and buy gifts for wedding couples. Imagine your friends showing up at your wedding with a paper bag full of yellow onions under their arm. (Maybe not the "registered gift" you're hoping for, but you'd definitely appreciate the idea.) In ancient Egypt, onions were sacrificed with the dead – perhaps they wanted to make sure that the funeral buffet in the afterlife would have enough flavor.

#### **How to celebrate Onion Week?**

Onion week isn't just about staring at onions. It's a great opportunity to try new recipes, listen to onions to your heart's content and maybe learn to appreciate leeks. MTK's Heidi Siivonen suggests that onions can be the blinis' best friend and the secret to the depth of soup at the same time. Onion's ability to fit into all kinds of dishes – from soups to stews and salads – makes it the most versatile ingredient in the kitchen. If this doesn't inspire you, you clearly haven't tasted enough onion soup yet.

#### **Onion Week: Crying for Long Joy**

So grab some recognisable Finnish onions from the Cotyledon Leaf Brand and get ready to celebrate this mundane but awesome ingredient. You can share onion recipes, tear stories, and maybe even consider whether an onion would be a suitable gift for an upcoming celebration. If all else fails, at least remember that onions bring flavor to life – literally and figuratively.

Onion Week will be held from January 20 to 26, 2025. Keep sharp knives and handkerchiefs nearby!

Source: STTinfo/Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners MTK | Press release

# NEWS

## \* VAMK

### Applications open for English-language degree programs – 170 study places offered at VAMK

**Vaasa University of Applied Sciences offers three business and two technology degree programs in English during the first joint application round of the spring. The bachelor's level degree programs include practical course projects conducted in collaboration with companies, as well as internships in the region's numerous international businesses. Master's-level programs are carried out in close cooperation with working life and are designed to be completed alongside work.**

A total of 170 study places are available for programs starting in August 2025 in the energy capital of the Nordics. The joint application period is open until January 22, 2025.

#### **Skilled professionals for the working life**

The English-language degree program Bachelor of Engineering in Information Technology (B. Eng), trains experts in the field of IT. The curriculum covers software engineering and embedded systems, which can be applied in tasks related to energy conservation, production, and distribution. Upon graduation, IT engineers often find employment in roles such as design or product development.

The English-language Bachelor of Business Administration in International Business (BBA), provides students with expertise in international trade. The program includes diverse studies in international trade and marketing, logistics, entrepreneurship, and financial management. Graduates of the program boast excellent employment prospects in Finland's competitive job market.

Both bachelor's degree programs are highly practical due to VAMK's close collaboration with working life. Each program also includes a five-month internship in a relevant industry. Vaasa's energy cluster offers an ideal setting for the studies and graduates from the programs gain versatile, in-demand skills for the working life, making them highly sought after in the job market.

#### **Advancing careers alongside professional growth**

VAMK Master School offers three English-language master's degree programs in the current application round: Master of Business Administration in International Business Management, Master of Engineering in Project Management and Master of Business Administration in Project Management.

These flexible programs enable students to deepen and expand their expertise also while working. Master's degrees provide excellent opportunities for career advancement, preparing graduates for demanding specialist and leadership roles.

VAMK offers students different Talent and Mentoring programs to further create and deepen connections with the working life during their studies. As a result, approximately half of all the international degree students find employment in Vaasa region after graduation. Overall, 80% of all VAMK graduates find employment in roles corresponding to their field of study.

**More information regarding the degree programs can be found from VAMK's website.**

## \* TAXES

### Confectionery tax to rise in summer

**The government's proposal to increase the VAT on confectionery and chocolate is progressing.**

The Ministry of Finance has launched a round of comments proposing to increase the current reduced tax rate of 14 percent to a general tax rate of 25.5 percent. The increase is based on the goal of strengthening the sustainability of public finances, and is based on a decision made in the spring 2024 budget process. According to the proposal, the change in the tax rate would apply to products that are defined as confectionery and chocolate according to the customs headings of the Combined Nomenclature. The Ministry of Finance estimates that the increase will increase the state's VAT revenue by approximately 85 million euros per year compared to 2025. The new tax rate would enter into force on June 1, 2025. The comment period for the proposal is until February 7, 2025, and the draft is available on the Ministry of Finance's website. The proposal is likely to spark debate, as it will directly affect consumer prices and demand for sweets.

**They, who know a little more are They, who read Wasa Daily**

## \* CUSTOMS

### Low-value e-commerce orders from China on the rise – Finnish consumers order millions of goods

Finns' enthusiasm to order cheap goods from outside the EU, especially from China, has increased sharply over the past year. According to Finnish Customs, the number of online store orders worth less than EUR 150 increased by a staggering 940 per cent in January-October 2024 compared to the previous year. Most goods were ordered from China, from where as many as 97.7 per cent of all goods in this price category arrived.

#### **Chinese packages dominate**

During January-October, 22.7 million consignments of goods were ordered from China, while the corresponding figure last year was only 1.7 million. The growth amounted to a whopping 1,228 per cent. The total value of the goods was EUR 137.6 million, which is 597 per cent more than in 2023. The average price of a single batch of goods ordered from China was a modest €6.05 – significantly less than from other countries such as the United Kingdom (€28.33) or the United States (€43.19).

"Although the number of these orders is enormous, they account for only one per cent of the value of imports from outside the EU," says Olli-Pekka Penttilä, Director of Statistics at Finnish Customs.

#### **What do Finns order?**

Textiles and textile products are by far the most popular orders. One in four products ordered falls into this category, and these account for one third of the value of imported goods below 150 euros. "This year, an average of one textile product has been ordered from China for every Finn," Penttilä says.

The second most ordered items were plastic and rubber products, the third was footwear and headgear, and the fourth was metal goods. Machinery and equipment formed the fifth most popular category. Measured by the volume of goods, the single most ordered product was headgear, while women's and girls' clothing, such as jackets, jackets and dresses, became the most significant in terms of value. The average price of one such consignment of goods was EUR 12.42.

Customs declaration and VAT do not discourage ordering. Since July 2021, all orders from outside the EU have had to submit a customs declaration and pay VAT. However, this has not slowed down Finns' enthusiasm for shopping. Low prices attract consumers to order, even though product safety has raised concerns. "The increased order volumes have raised questions about product quality and safety, and these issues will also be addressed in connection with the EU customs reform," Penttilä says.

#### **Great Britain and US far behind**

Despite China's dominance, the UK and the US are also holding their own as source areas for e-commerce deliveries. In January to October, 270,000 goods consignments were ordered from Great Britain, which was 33 per cent more than in the year before. Correspondingly, 140,000 consignments of goods were ordered from the United States, but the number decreased slightly, by 2 per cent from the previous year.

#### **The low price is tempting, but what's next?**

The significantly lower prices of products ordered from China partly explain the popularity, but at the same time the question arises as to how sustainable such purchasing behaviour is in the long term. According to Finnish Customs, the EU's customs reform aims to respond to increased order volumes and related challenges.

However, Finns are eager to order for the time being – whether it is a headress, plastic item or garment, inexpensive Chinese packages have become part of everyday life. (Source: STTinfo/Finnish Customs)

# ART EXPERIENCE OF THE WEEK



**Hjalmar Munsterhjelm**

19.10.1840, Toivoniemi, Tuulos

2.4.1905, Helsinki

A Forest Landscape from Hauho, 1884

# EVENTS



**TIKANOJA  
THE ART EVENT OF  
THE YEAR!**

Eero Järnefelts exhibition opened on Nov 23, 2024

**ATENEUM  
Gothic Modern – From  
Darkness to Light**

4 October 2024 to 26 January 2025.

Medieval and Renaissance art provided 20th-century artists with emotional material and ways to deal with fundamental human feelings, as well as birth, death, suffering and sexuality

The artists featured in the exhibition include Arnold Böcklin, Lucas Cranach the Elder, Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Vincent van Gogh, Theodor Kittelsen, Käthe Kollwitz, Edvard Munch, Hugo Simberg, Helene Schjerfbeck, Marianne Stokes, and Gustave Van de Woestyne.

After its debut at Ateneum, the exhibition will travel to the National Museum, Norway and the ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna, where it will be curated by Vibeke Waallann Hansen and Cynthia Osiecki (Curators, National Museum, Norway) and Ralph Gleis (Director, Alte Nationalgalerie), respectively.

The exhibition to be complemented by a comprehensive exhibi-

tion catalogue



**VAAASA CITY THEATRE**

**TOSCA-ooppera**

Premiere Jan 12.2025

<https://www.vaasa.fi/koe-ja-nae/kulttuurivaasassa-ja-seudulla/vaasan-kaupunginteatteri/tosca/>

**Vaasa-Vasa Baroque**

Sat / Sat 25.1 at / kl. 18.00

Vaasa Church Kaustinen Chamber Music Week

Chiara Margarita Cozzolani: Vespro della Beata Vergine Earthly Angels & Floridante (EST)

Finnish premiere of this magnificent Italian work from the 1600s!  
<https://vaasabaroque.com/>

**BOTHNIA BURLESQUE: EVERYTHING THAT SPARKLES**

RITZ 25.1.2025 at 19-22

"Welcome to an evening filled with sparkle, delight and breathtaking stage art! Bothnia Burlesque once again brings a stunning setting to the stage at the nostalgic Ritz

Lady Laverna & Arona Showgirls: Olivia Rouge, Nana Lamarr & Rosie Rhyme!

[www.ritz.fi/events](http://www.ritz.fi/events)

**Vaasa-Vasa Baroque  
Fri / Fr 14.2 at / kl. 18.00 City Hall Hall of Mirrors / Stadshusets spegelsal**

Valentine's Day Baroque – Janne Valkeajoki, accordeon-Rameau & accordion hits / Rameau & dragospelshits The concert ticket includes catering

<https://vaasabaroque.com/>

**TOMMY'S: TOGETHER AGAIN**

RITZ 5.3.2024 AT 19 - 21.30

Hans Martin, Nicklas Käldestrom

<https://ritz.fi/events/>

**Vaasa-Vasa Baroque  
Sat / Sat 22.3 at / kl. 16.00 Music in Veturitalli**

Symphonies for one violin – Sonatas and Letters by Stradella Symfonier för en violin – Stradellas sonater och brev Pirkanmaa Baroque & Aira Maria Lehtipuu This concert is free of charge! Open house in Veturitalli all day, come and explore the Wärtsilä area.

<https://vaasabaroque.com/>

**VAAASA humour FESTIVAL 2025**

2-4.4.2025 Sov. Finland-Swedish cultural development

**Vaasa-Vasa Baroque  
Sun / Sö 27.4 at / kl. 17.00 City Hall Ballroom / Stadshusets festsal**

Handel and Roman in London – Handel möter Roman i London

Kajsa Dahlbäck, soprano / sopran Drottningholms barocken-semble (SWE)

<https://vaasabaroque.com/>

**VAAASA 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](http://www.musiikkijuhlat.fi)

**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 year 23.-30.7.2025.

**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.

Wasa Innovation Center

Gerbyntie 18

65230 Vaasa

<https://wasafuturefestival.fi/>

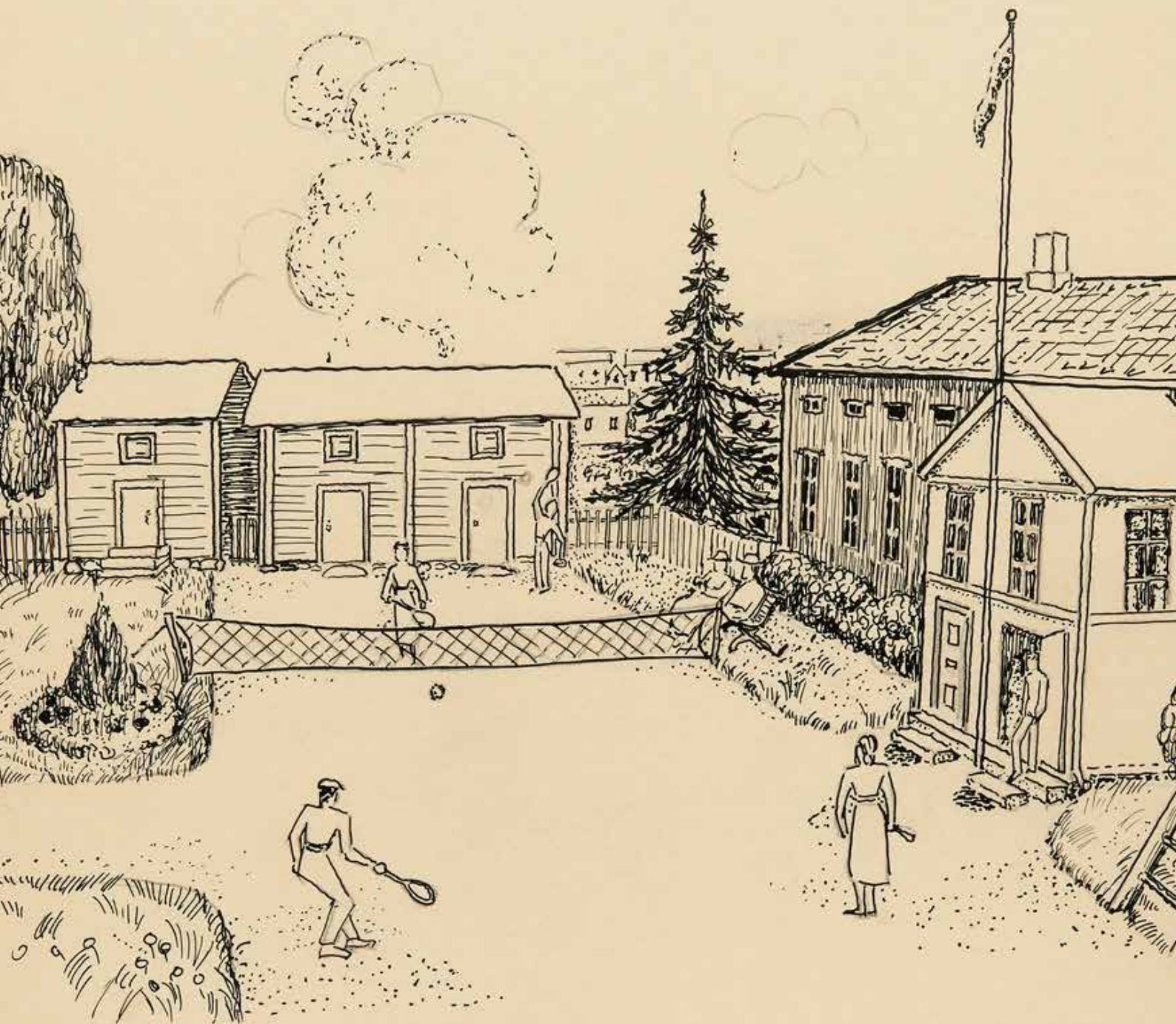


**TAITEIDEN YÖ**

14.8.2025

"Toivottavasti näemme taas ensi vuoden Taiteiden yössä"

<https://www.vaasa.fi/koe-ja-nae/kulttuurivaasassa-ja-seudulla/taiteiden-yo/>



•PIRTTIKYLÄN PAPPILAN PIHA•

TENNISTÄ PELATAAN SEKÄ

MYÖS KATSELLAAN.

MUISTISTA PIIRKÄNYT. K. 1940

ISÄ JA ÄITI ISTUVAT RAUHASSA

ILLAN SUUSSA AURINGON PAINUESSA

KIRKÖTAAKSE TAUSTALLA JYVÄMA-

KASIINI, JAUHO- JA LIHA-KALA AITTA.

# ART HISTORY

## Toini Olga Kallio: The textile artist with roots in Pörtom



**Toini Olga Kallio (born 11 July 1891 in Pörtom) was a prominent textile artist whose work has left a strong impression on textile art both nationally and internationally. Her artistic work included everything from church textiles to watercolours and drawings, with a deep connection to her homeland and its culture.**

### Family and upbringing

Toini was born into a family with strong ties to arts and crafts. Her father, the contract dean Pietari Antero Kallio (often Swedishized as Peter Anders Kallio), was vicar of Pörtom for three decades. He died in 1915, deeply mour-

ned by the congregation. Her mother, Lydia Charlotta Durchman, also helped to create a cultural and intellectual environment for the family's children. The gift of creativity lay in the family: two of Toini's brothers, Kauno and Oiva Kallio, became prominent architects. Kauno designed, among other things, Harman's House in Vaasa and the youth association's premises in Pörtom. Oiva, who was the chairman of the State Architects' Committee, contributed to many church buildings and commercial properties in Finland. Two other brothers, Sulo and Uno, also chose technical paths as engineers.

### Education and career

Toini began her artistic career with a degree from the Vaasa Voluntary Gi-

rls' School in 1906. She then continued at the Art Society's Drawing School and took a course in weaving at Wetterhoff's work school in 1930. Her education was supplemented by studies in Sweden, Italy and Paris, which helped to shape her artistic style and technical skills.

From 1913 to 1916, Toini worked as a drawing teacher at the Vaasa Voluntary Secondary School and the Girls' School. She then took a job as a textile artist at the Friends of Finnish Handicrafts. In 1923, she started her own textile agency, where she developed her unique style and created works that combined traditional techniques with modern influences.

### Artistic style and works

Toini Kallio was a versatile artist who created church textiles, tapestries, banners and interior textiles. Her art is characterized by a deep understanding of color and form, where traditional methods are combined with innovative expression.

In addition to textile art, she created watercolours and drawings inspired by her hometown in Pörtom and her later residence Ruovesi. These works often depict church buildings and nature scenes, where her technical skill and attention to detail shine through.

### **The altarpiece in Pörtom church**

One of Toini's most famous works in Pörtom is the altarpiece in Pörtom church, painted in 1913. The painting is a copy of Albert Edelfelt's altarpiece in the Trinity Church in Vaasa, adapted for the church's smaller space. The painting, titled *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, shows the baby Jesus in the arms of the Virgin Mary surrounded by devout shepherds in the stable. Inaugurated during the Midsummer weekend of 1913, it is an important part of the church's artistic heritage.

### **International recognition**

Toini's work received a lot of attention, both nationally and internationally. She was awarded diplomas at exhibitions in Milan and Antwerp and participated in several prestigious exhibitions that strengthened her position as a leading textile artist.

### **Artistic heritage**

Toini Olga Kallio has left a lasting mark on Finnish textile art. Through her works and teaching, she inspired a new generation of artists and craftsmen. Her ability to unite tradition with innovation means that her art continues to be relevant and appreciated.

As an ambassador of Finnish cultural heritage, Toini Olga Kallio is a role model for future generations. Her work is a tribute to nature and the traditions of her hometown, and her contribution to textile art will live on for many years to come.

### **A heritage preserved in image archive**

Among Kallio's surviving works are several drawings and paintings from 1968, in which she depicted her homeland from memory. These works, preserved by the Finnish Heritage Agency, are an invaluable part of the historical image archive and are available under the CC BY 4.0 license.



*Toini Olga Kallio: , Pörtom vicarage, drawn from memory 1968*



*Toini Olga Kallio: , Pörtom vicarage, drawn from memory 1968*



*Toini Olga Kallio: , Pörtom vicarage, drawn from memory 1968ndan*

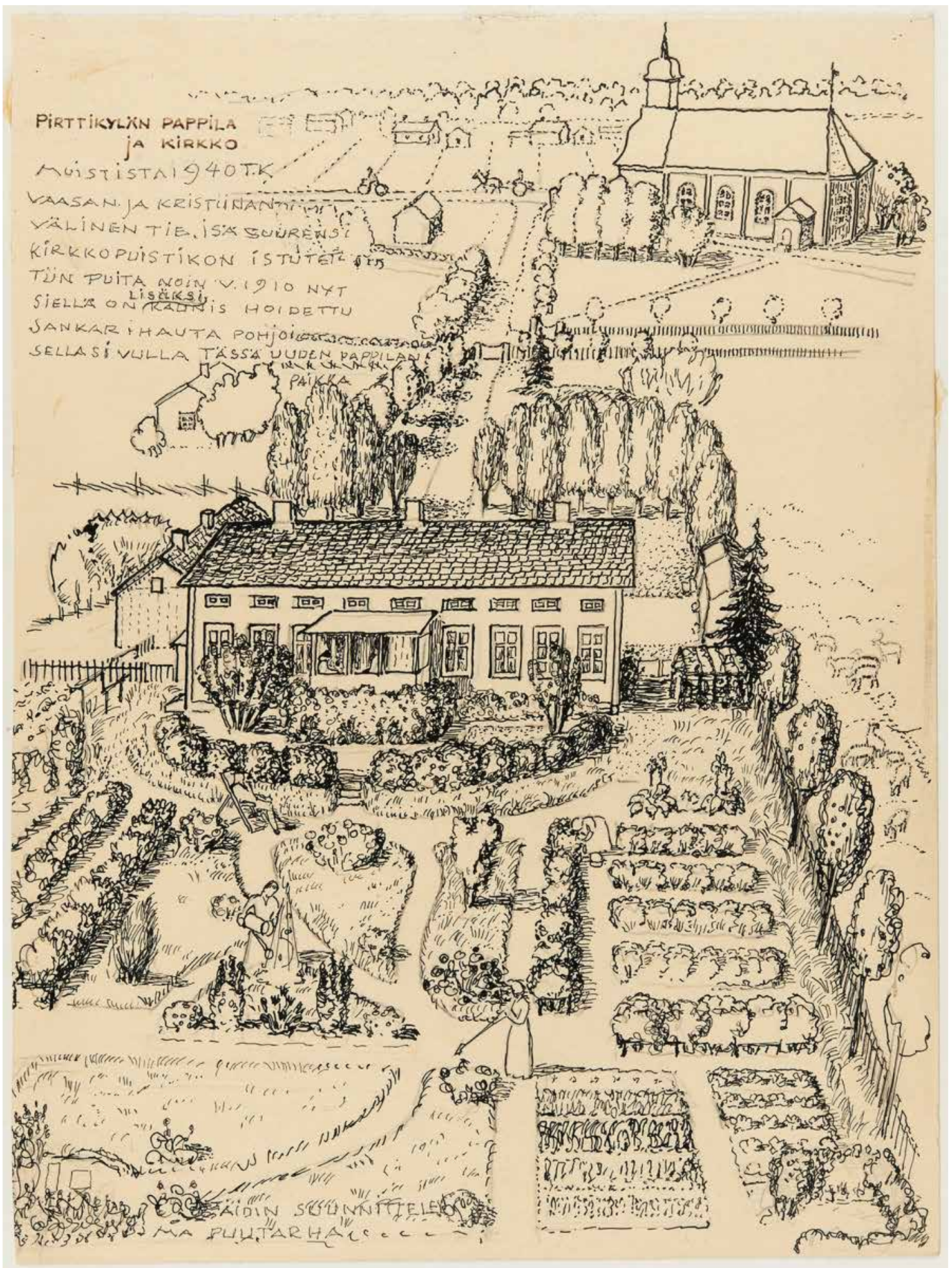


Toini Olga Kallio: , Pörtön vicarage, drawn from memory 1968



Toini Olga Kallio: , Pörtön vicarage, drawn from memory 1968





Toini Olga Kallio: , Pörtom vicarage and church, drawn from memory 1968

# OPERA in VAASA

## Tosca: A Story of Love, Betrayal and Artistic Passion in Revolutionary Rome

Vaasa City Theatre's Tosca is Puccini's opera at its most authentic, while Vaasa's version rises to a high level in opera art.

This must not be the last opera premiere in Vaasa!



**Opera: Tosca by Giacomo Puccini**

**Premiere at Vaasa City Theatre 16.1.25**

**Conductor Anna-Maria Helsing, Vaasa Philharmonic Orchestra**

**Directed by Seppo Välinen**

**Roles  
Floria Tosca as Riitta Haavisto  
Mario Cavaradossi as Mika Pohjonen**

**Baron Scarpia as Walteri Torikka**

**Vaasa Opera Association Choir**

"This work is made with love for the viewers. Cooperation with wonderful artists, a great orchestra, skilled technical staff and wonderful choir members has made it possible to create a work that will leave a warm

memory in my heart," writes theatre director Seppo Välinen in the programme leaflet.

### **So, what is this opera all about?**

Giacomo Puccini's Tosca is not just opera; it is a fascinating story of love, betrayal and artistic passion in 1800 against the backdrop of revolutionary Rome. This powerful work, with its soaring melodies and dramatic climaxes, has captivated audiences worldwide for more than a century, establishing itself as one of the most performed operas of all time.

A city on the verge of change: Rome in 1800 was a city on the verge of change. Napoleon's armies swept across Europe, and the political situation was unstable. The Pauls, once a mighty power, tried desperately to hold

power as whispers of revolution filled the air. This turbulent backdrop provides a powerful basis for the intense drama that takes place in Tosca.

### **A love story in the midst of chaos:**

At the centre of the opera is the passionate love of the fiery opera singer, Floria Tosca, and the idealistic artist, Mario Cavaradossi. However, their love threatens the merciless police chief, Baron Scarpia. Scarpia, who is in power lust for Tosca and thirsty for power, manipulates and deceives lovers, triggering a chain of tragic events.

### **Masterpiece of musical drama:**

Puccini's genius lies in his ability to weave a spectrum of emotions through his music. From the heights of Tosca's

“Vissi d’arte” aria to Scarpia’s icy “Te Deum,” the composition is a masterpiece of dramatic expression. The opera features unforgettable arias, duets and ensemble scenes that continue to fascinate audiences to this day.

**A timeless story of humanity’s struggles:**

Tosca is more than just a historical drama; It explores timeless themes such as love, betrayal, power, and man’s capacity for both great courage and unimaginable cruelty. The continued popularity of opera speaks to its ability to connect audiences on a deeply emotional level, reminding us of the enduring power of art and the fragility of human life.

**Legacy of performance tradition:**

Tosca has been performed countless times on stages around the world since its premiere in 1900. Its continued popularity is proof of its dramatic power and musical splendor. The opera continues to captivate audiences with its intense emotions, unforgettable melodies and timeless themes.

**What we can learn from Tosca:**

Tosca serves as a powerful reminder of the dangers of unlimited power and its importance in defending what we believe. It also explores the complexity of relationships, the fragility of love, and the devastating consequences of betrayal. The opera’s enduring message of courage, endurance and the meaning of the enduring power of humanity continues to resonate with audiences today.

**A masterpiece in Vaasa!**

Tosca is also a masterpiece performed in Vaasa. Performers, city orchestra, scenography,



*Reetta Haavisto as Floria Tosca*

subtitles and opera choir - all perfect! When we have such a great opera choir, the continuation of the opera tradition in Vaasa is unprecedentedly important.

And the story, it continues to fascinate and challenge audien-

ces more than a century after its premiere. Its continued popularity is proof of its timeless power and ability to speak to humanity in a profound and lasting way.

# LONELINESS

## Loneliness Affects Laboratory Values: A Deeper Dive into the Biology of Social Isolation



**A recent study published in Nature Human Behaviour has shed light on the profound biological impact of social isolation and loneliness, revealing a significant link between these social factors and alterations in the human proteome.**

This groundbreaking research, conducted on a massive scale with over 42,000 participants from the UK Biobank, provides compelling evidence for the detrimental effects of social disconnection on our physical health. The study, led by researchers from Fudan University and the University of Cambridge, utilized cutting-edge proteomics technology to analyze blood samples from participants. They identified a distinct set of prote-

ins in individuals experiencing social isolation and loneliness, many of which are implicated in crucial biological processes such as inflammation, antiviral responses, and immune system function. These findings suggest that social isolation and loneliness not only impact our mental well-being but also have a profound and measurable effect on our physiological state. Furthermore, the study employed Mendelian randomization, a powerful genetic method, to establish a causal link between loneliness and specific proteins. This robust analysis provides strong evidence that loneliness directly influences the levels of certain proteins in the body, potentially contributing to an increased risk of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and stroke.

The implications of this research are far-reaching. By understanding the biological pathways through which social isolation and loneliness exert their detrimental effects, scientists can develop novel therapeutic targets and interventions to mitigate the health risks associated with these social experiences. This research also underscores the critical importance of fostering social connection and combating loneliness as a public health imperative.

This study provides a crucial step forward in our understanding of the intricate interplay between social factors and human health. It highlights the profound impact of social isolation and loneliness on our biology and underscores the urgent need for societal interventions that prioritize social connection and well-being.

## HEALTH

# The Importance of Walking: Achieving 5,000 Steps a Day for Better Mental Health and Beyond



**Walking is one of the simplest, most accessible forms of physical activity. And walking is not expensive. While it may not be as glamorous as hitting the gym or engaging in high-intensity workouts, research consistently under-scores its profound impact on overall health.**

Recent findings published in JAMA Network Open further illuminate the mental health benefits of walking, emphasizing the correlation between daily step counts and reduced depressive symptoms. This article explores the critical role of walking at le-

ast 5,000 steps a day, drawing insights from the latest research and practical applications for everyday life.

### **Walking and Mental Health: Key Insights from Recent Research**

A systematic review and meta-analysis published on December 16, 2024, in JAMA Network Open analyzed 33 observational studies encompassing over 96,000 adults. The research revealed a compelling association between daily step counts and mental health outcomes:

- **Reduced Depressive Symptoms:** Participants walking 5,000 or more steps daily showed fewer depressive symptoms in cross-sectional studies compared

to those walking fewer steps.

- **Risk Mitigation:** Prospective studies indicated a significant reduction in the risk of depression among individuals achieving 7,000 or more daily steps.

- **Incremental Benefits:** Each additional 1,000 steps per day was associated with a lower risk of depression, demonstrating the cumulative benefits of increased physical activity.

These findings align with broader evidence linking physical activity to improved mental health, highlighting walking as an effective and inclusive strategy for mental well-being.

**Beyond Mental Health: The Holis-**



### **Key Benefits of Walking**

While the JAMA study emphasizes mental health, walking's benefits extend across multiple domains of health:

1. **Cardiovascular Health:** Walking regularly reduces the risk of heart disease by lowering blood pressure, improving cholesterol levels, and enhancing circulation.
2. **Weight Management:** A daily step goal aids in calorie expenditure, helping to maintain a healthy weight.
3. **Musculoskeletal Strength:** Walking strengthens bones and muscles, reducing the risk of osteoporosis and improving balance.
4. **Cognitive Function:** Studies suggest walking enhances memory and executive functioning, potentially reducing the risk of dementia.
5. **Longevity:** Regular walking is linked to a lower risk of all-cause mortality, making it a cornerstone of healthy aging.

### **Practical Strategies to Achieve 5,000 Steps Daily**

For many, the challenge lies not in recognizing the benefits of walking but in incorporating it into their daily routine. Here are some practical tips to reach and surpass the 5,000-step threshold:

- **Break It Down:** Divide your steps into manageable chunks, such as 10-minute walks after each meal.
- **Take the Stairs:** Opt for stairs over elevators and escalators whenever possible.
- **Walk During Breaks:** Use breaks at work to take short walks around your office or building.
- **Park Farther Away:** Choose a parking spot farther from your destination to add extra steps.
- **Leverage Technology:** Use a pedometer or smartphone app to track your steps and set achievable goals.

### **Walking and Inclusivity**

One of walking's greatest strengths is its accessibility. Unlike many forms of exercise that require specialized equipment or memberships, walking is free

and adaptable to almost any environment. For individuals with physical limitations, even light walking or stepping in place can confer health benefits. Communities and policymakers can further promote walking by creating safe, walkable spaces such as parks, trails, and pedestrian-friendly urban areas.

### **Walking as a Societal Solution**

The findings from JAMA Network Open highlight walking as a low-cost, high-impact intervention for public health. However, achieving widespread adoption requires more than individual effort; it necessitates systemic change. Employers can encourage walking by promoting walking meetings and step challenges. Urban planners should prioritize walkable city designs to make walking a viable option for commuting and leisure.

On a personal note, walking has always been my go-to activity for both physical and mental rejuvenation. Whether it's a brisk morning walk to energize my day or a leisurely stroll in the evening to unwind, walking offers a sense of connection to oneself and the surrounding environment. It is often during these moments of movement that clarity emerges, and stress dissipates.

Walking 5,000 steps daily is not merely a health goal but a step toward a more balanced, fulfilled life. The evidence is clear: incorporating walking into your routine can significantly improve mental health, reduce the risk of chronic diseases, and enhance overall well-being. Let's lace up our shoes, take that first step, and embrace walking as a simple yet powerful tool for health and happiness.

# THE JANUARYSUNDAY

## Commemoration of the January Sunday, Tammissunnuntai, in Ilmajoki on January 29, 2025



**The January Sunday, Tammissunnuntai, observed annually on the last Sunday of January, commemorates the beginning of the Finnish 1918 War.**

The term originally refers to Sunday, January 27, 1918, which is regarded as the war's starting point.

The historical backdrop of Tammissunnuntai reflects a critical moment in Finland's path to independence. Although Russia's Council of People's Commissars had recognized Finland's independence, Russian troops remained stationed in the country against the wishes of the Finnish Senate. It was under these circumstances that General Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim initiated plans to disarm Russian garrisons in Ostrobothnia.

This annual commemoration honors these efforts, particularly in rural Ostrobothnia, where the tradition remains strong. Tradition organizations have preserved the memory of Tammissunnuntai by organizing celebrations nearly every year throughout Finland's independence, with only a few exceptions in the years immediately following the war. The day holds added significance as Mannerheim, who led

the disarmament efforts, passed away on Tammissunnuntai, January 27, 1951.

### Program for Tammissunnuntai in Ilmajoki 2025

10:00 AM - Church Service at Ilmajoki Church

- Liturgist: Pastor Jussi Haavisto
- Sermon: Bishop Matti Salomäki of the Diocese of Lapua
- Organist: Tuija Niemistö
- Choir performance by Vox Ilmolensis

Following the service, wreath-laying groups will be dispatched to honor memorial sites.

11:30 AM - Church Luncheon

- Location: Jaakko Ilkka School, Ollilantie 3 C

1:00 PM - Afternoon Celebration

- Location: Jaakko Ilkka School, Ollilantie 3 C
- Keynote Address: Author Martti Koskenkorva

Attendees are requested to be seated by 12:55 PM.

### The Contemporary Relevance of Tammissunnuntai

Tammissunnuntai is more than a historical reflection; it serves as a tribute to those who fought for Finland's independence and as a reminder of the value of collective efforts. By upholding this tradition, Ilmajoki demonstrates how historical events can continue to foster a sense of unity and shared heritage over a century later.



## ASTRONOMY

# Comet ATLAS: A Celestial Tease (and Maybe a Firework Show on January 13)



**Comet C/2024 G3 (ATLAS), affectionately nicknamed "Atlas 2.0" by astronomers (because, let's face it, comets rarely live up to the hype), has been making waves in the astronomical community.**

But let's cut through the jargon and get to the juicy bits:

### **Where'd this cosmic snowball come from?**

Honestly, nobody knows for sure. Comets are like space vagabonds, born in the icy depths of the outer solar system. They spend eons chilling out in the Oort Cloud, a vast, donut-shaped region beyond Pluto. Every now and then, the gravitational tug of a passing star or planet kicks them into an orbit that slingshots them towards the sun.

### **Finnish comet watchers, rejoice!**

Yes, you might be able to catch a glimpse of this celestial visitor. However, don't expect a naked-eye spectacle. Binoculars or a small telescope will be your best bet. The best viewing window for Finland will likely be in the

early morning hours as the comet approaches its closest point to the sun., especially on Jan 13.

### **How close will it get to our fiery star?**

Prepare for a cosmic close encounter! Atlas 2.0 is expected to swing by the sun at a scorching distance, much closer than many comets dare to venture. This proximity will undoubtedly heat up the comet's icy nucleus, causing it to release a spectacular display of gas and dust.

### **Will it burn up like a cosmic marshmallow?**

This is the million-dollar question! Comets are notoriously unpredictable. Some gracefully glide past the sun, while others succumb to the intense heat and disintegrate into a spectacular (but ultimately disappointing) fireworks display. Only time will tell if Atlas 2.0 will survive its solar rendezvous.

### **160 million years? Sounds like a long wait!**

If Atlas 2.0 manages to survive its solar encounter, it will likely be flung back into the depths of the solar system, not to be seen again for millions of years. So, cherish the moment, Finnish starga-

zers!

### **Brightest comet ever? Slow down there, partner!**

While Atlas 2.0 has the potential to become quite bright, let's not get carried away. Many comets have graced our skies with their brilliance throughout history. Only time will tell if Atlas 2.0 will live up to the hype and earn a place among the brightest comets ever observed.

### **Atlas 2.0 is a cosmic enigma.**

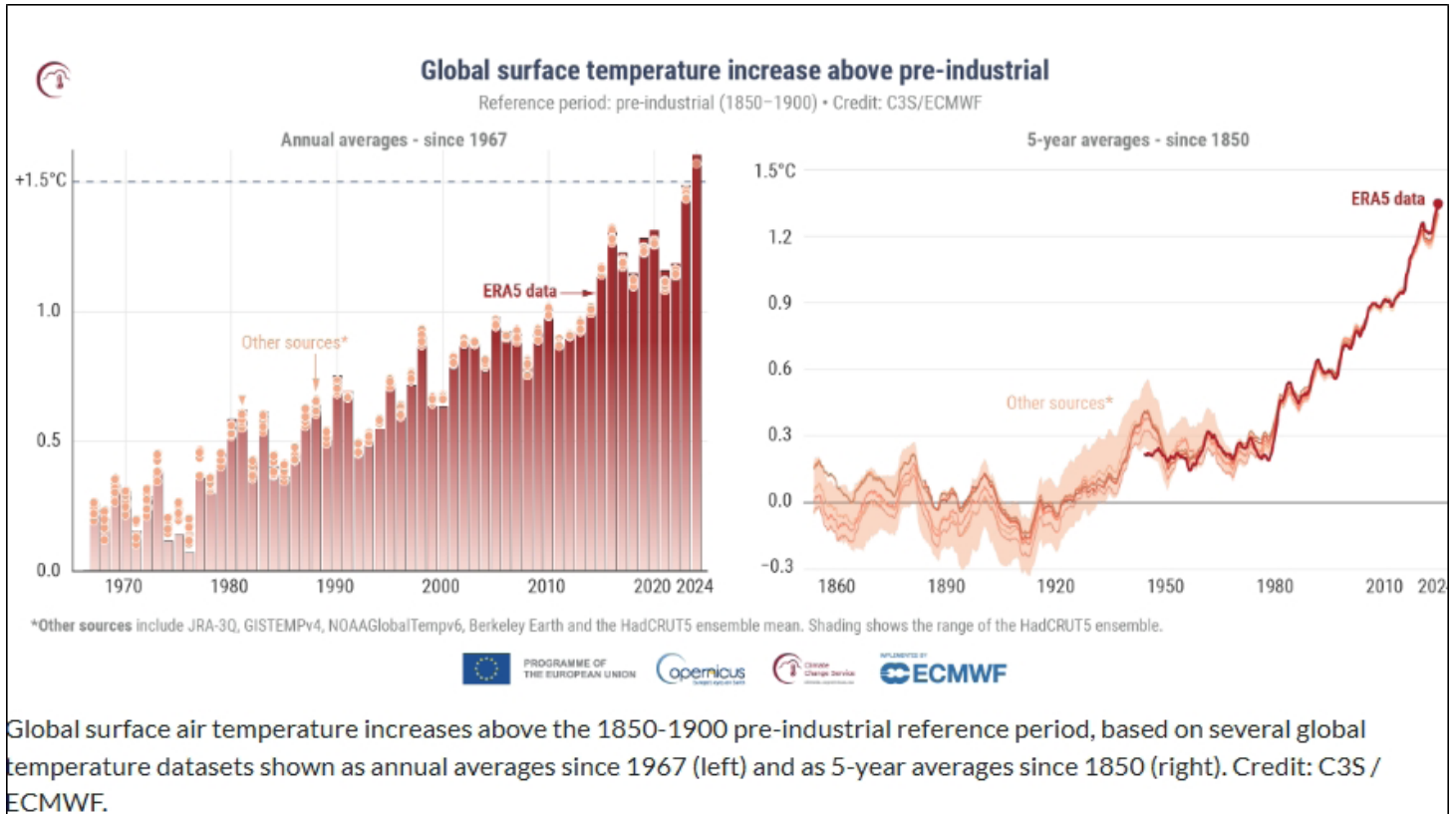
Will it be a dazzling celestial showpiece, or will it fizzle out like a damp firework? Only time will tell. But one thing's for sure: this comet is giving astronomers plenty to ponder and amateur astronomers plenty to look forward to. So grab your binoculars, find a dark sky, and keep your fingers crossed for a spectacular celestial show! Astronomical predictions are notoriously difficult, and the actual behavior of Comet Atlas 2.0 may differ significantly from these speculations.

This article is based on current information and may be subject to change as astronomers continue to observe and study the comet.



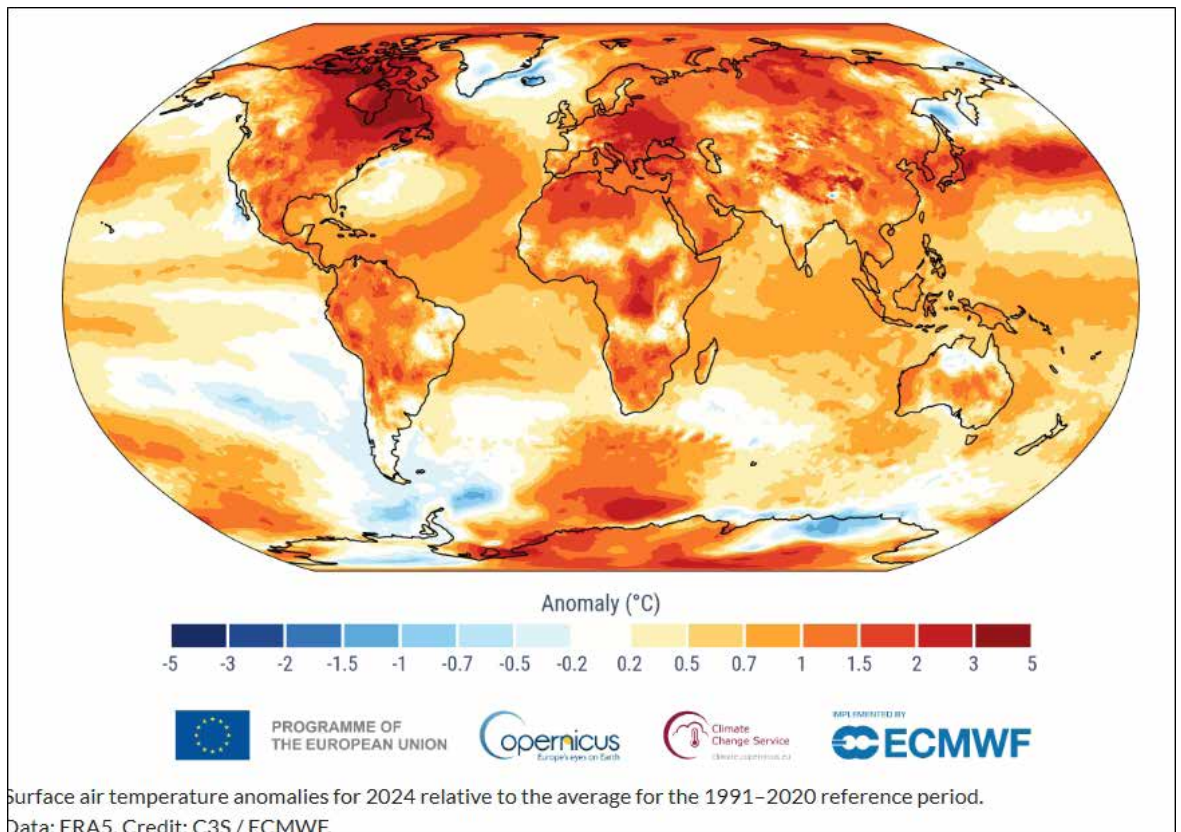
# CLIMATE CHANGE

## 2024: A Year of Unprecedented Heat, Shattered Records, and a Grim Warning



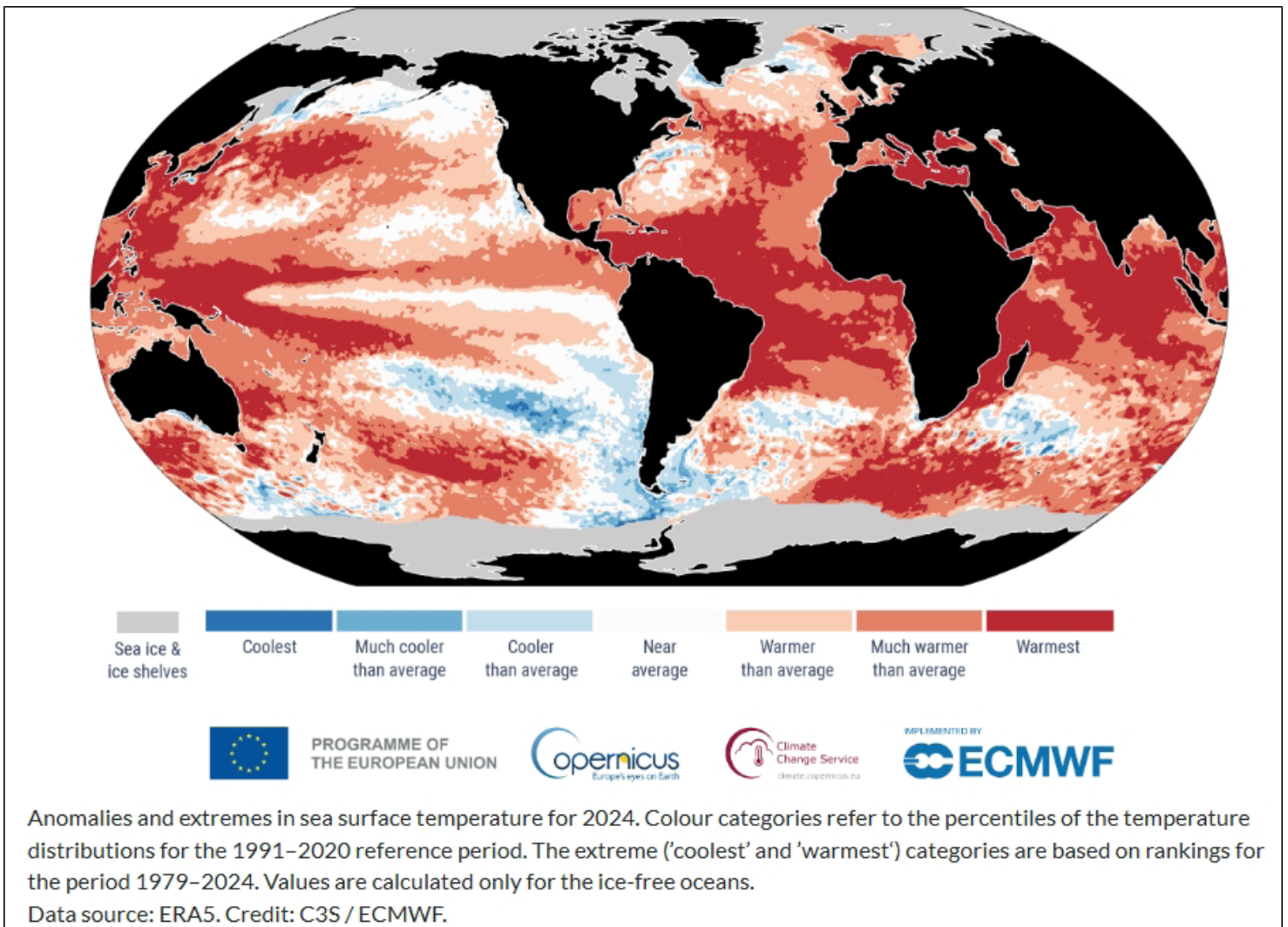
### Copernicus Climate Change Service confirms 2024 as the hottest year on record, exceeding the critical 1.5°C warming threshold.

In a stark reminder of the accelerating climate crisis, the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) has confirmed that 2024 was the warmest year on record globally. This grim milestone marks the first calendar year where the average global temperature exceeded 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, a threshold outlined in the Paris Agreement.



### A Global Heatwave:

The report paints a picture of a planet un-



der siege:

- Unprecedented Heat: 2024 shattered temperature records across the globe, with every continent except Antarctica experiencing its warmest year on record.
- A Month of Extremes: Eleven out of twelve months in 2024 exceeded the 1.5°C warming limit.
- Record-Breaking Heatwaves: Extreme heatwaves gripped many parts of the world, leading to severe heat stress and devastating impacts on human health and ecosystems.
- Water Vapor Surge: Atmospheric water vapor, a potent greenhouse gas, reached record levels, amplifying the potential for extreme rainfall

events and intensifying storms.

**Beyond Temperature:**

- The report highlights a cascade of interconnected climate events:
- Widespread Wildfires: Prolonged droughts fueled massive wildfires across the Americas, releasing significant amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.
  - Sea Ice Decline: Antarctic sea ice experienced a second consecutive year of record low extents, while Arctic sea ice also remained significantly below average.
  - Greenhouse Gas Surge: Atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide and methane reached record highs, further intensifying the climate

crisis.

**A Call to Action:**

C3S Director Carlo Buontempo emphasized the urgency of the situation: "Humanity is in charge of its own destiny... swift and decisive action can still alter the trajectory of our future climate." This report serves as a stark reminder that the climate crisis is not a future threat, but a present reality. The consequences of inaction are becoming increasingly evident, and the need for immediate and substantial action to mitigate climate change has never been more urgent.

**Deeply concerning**

This news is deeply concerning. Exceeding the 1.5°C threshold is

a significant milestone, and the report paints a grim picture of the accelerating climate crisis. The interconnectedness of these extreme events – heatwaves, wildfires, sea ice decline – highlights the complex and cascading nature of the climate emergency.

It's crucial to remember that these are not isolated events, but rather symptoms of a deeper, systemic problem. The report underscores the need for:

- Rapid and ambitious decarbonization: Transitioning away from fossil fuels and embracing renewable energy sources is paramount.

- Enhanced climate resilience: Investing in adaptation

measures to protect vulnerable communities and ecosystems from the impacts of climate change.

- International cooperation: Global collaboration is essential to address this global challenge effectively.

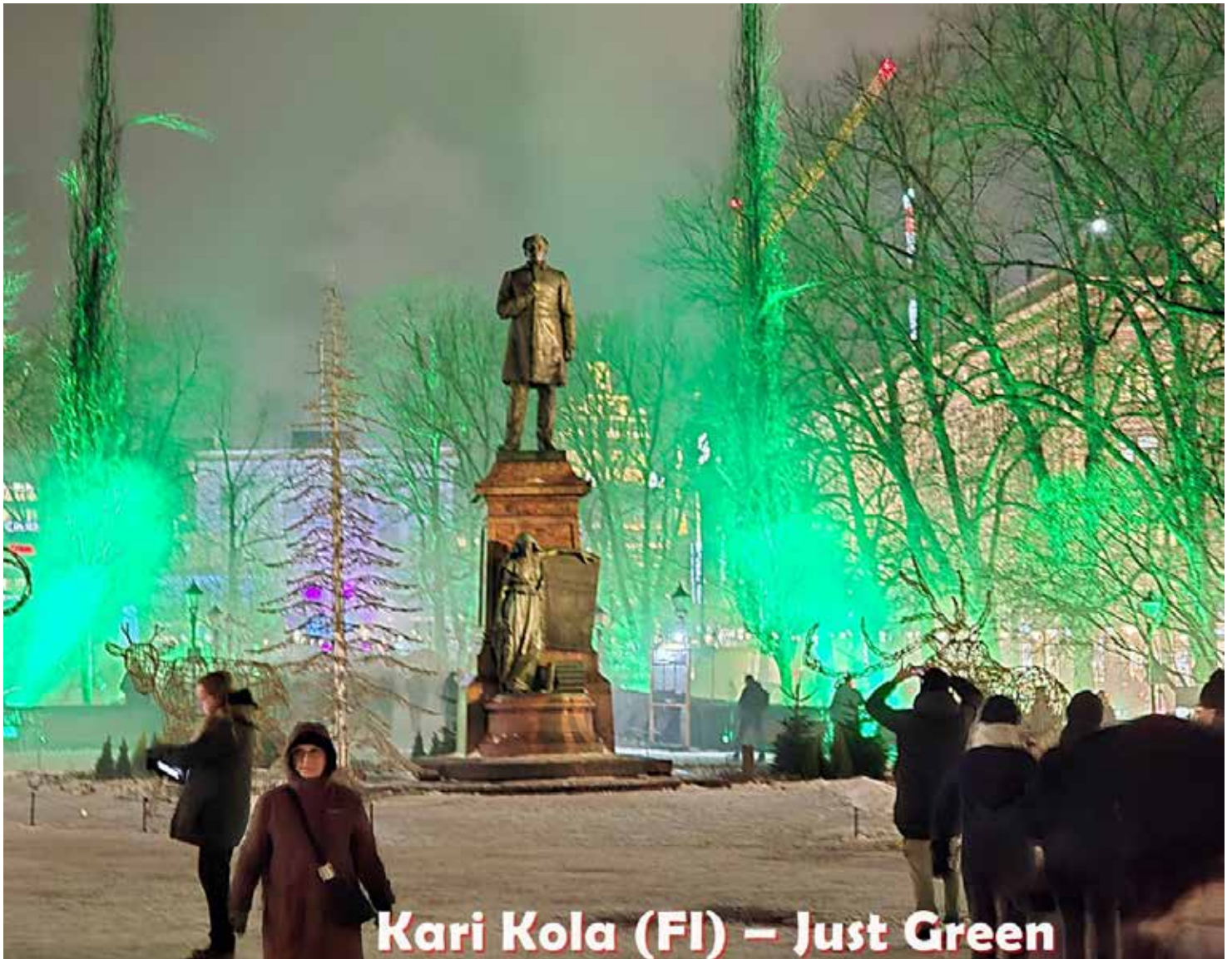
**This report should serve as a wake-up call for policymakers and the public alike. The time for complacency is over. We must act now to avert the worst consequences of the climate crisis and ensure a sustainable future for all.**



**LUX HELSINKI**  
**8-12.1.2025**

# LIGHT FESTIVAL

## Lux Helsinki 8-12.1.2025



**Kari Kola (FI) – Just Green**

As winter tightens its grip on Helsinki, a radiant contrast emerges: Lux Helsinki.

This annual light festival, which will take place this year from January 8-12, 2025, transforms the city's familiar landscape into a breathtaking canvas of light art.

Here are a few of this year's artworks.



**Studio Vertigo (UK) – End Over End**



**Kappa (UK) – Un-Reel Access**



**illumaphonium (UK) – Continuum**



**Vertigo (DK) – The Wave**

# Lux Helsinki 2024 - A few images from last years festival







# FINLANDIA-HALL

## The renewed Finlandia Hall opened to the public: The beginning of a new era



**The years of waiting come to an end when Finlandia Hall, designed by Alvar Aalto, opened its doors on Saturday 4 January 2025.**

The three-year renovation project has renovated the building both inside and out, and the building is now ushering in a new era, open to all residents and tourists. The renewed Finlandia Hall is much more than a congress and event centre – it offers a wide range of services, such as restaurants, designer shops, accommodation options and art exhibitions.

### **Experiences for all city dwellers and tourists**

According to Johanna Tolonen, CEO of Finlandia Hall, the reform has been carried out boldly and visionarily. "A whole new chapter in our history is

now beginning. Modern times require new ways of thinking and operating models. Finlandia Hall has now been turned into an everyday hangout with doors open to everyone," Tolonen says.

During the renovation project, special emphasis has been placed on the experiential nature of the building and the comprehensive experience of the customers. Finlandia Hall's new offering includes, for example, the à la carte restaurant Finlandia Bistro, the wine café Cafe&Wine and the Finlandia Shop, which specialises in Finnish design. In addition, accommodation facilities have been opened in the building for the first time.

### **Event house in a modern form**

Events and congresses will remain the core activities of Finlandia Hall, but the renewed building will provide an even better setting for them.

The building comprises 20 different spaces, including the renovated Finlandia Hall and Piazza area. State-of-the-art technology and versatile space options enable high-quality concerts, parties and meetings. In summer 2025, Finlandia Hall will also serve as the venue for the 50th anniversary of the OSCE.

Tolonen emphasises the visual appeal of the building: "Finlandia Hall itself is an experience. Its architecture and design provide cost-effective beauty for events without large decoration budgets."

### **Taste sensations and Finnish flavours**

Finlandia Bistro offers high-quality à la carte food and artisan delicacies inspired by Finnish ingredients. Under the leadership of Chef Mikko Puuronen, the restaurant is a tribute to Finnish food culture. In the bistro you can enjoy dishes in-

spired by modern Nordic cuisine as well as Mediterranean flavours. The restaurant will officially open on Friday, January 17, 2025.

Located in the same building, Cafe&Wine brings a touch of luxury to everyday life. The wine café's offerings vary according to the seasons, and on the new terrace you can admire Helsinki and Töölönlahti Bay all year round. Signature products include Finlandia pastry and Alvar sparkling wine.

### **Design and accommodation in the spirit of Aalto**

Finlandia Shop has a carefully curated selection of Finnish design. The store's unique products, such as the Finlandia Collection, attract design lovers to the nearly 300 square metre retail space. The accommodation consists of two apartments designed and restored by Alvar Aalto, Aino and Elissa. The

apartments offer the opportunity to experience Finnish design and architecture in an authentic environment. Apartments can be booked on the Finlandia Hall website and prices start from 350 euros per night.

### **Opening month program**

In January 2025, Finlandia Hall will celebrate its opening month, during which there will be a varied programme and special offers.

### **Apocalyptica**

The opening weekend will be crowned by Strauss jubilee concerts, and throughout the month the house will host a concert by Apocalyptica and an open house.

A new era for Finlandia Hall has begun. The renewed facilities and services invite everyone to explore Alvar Aalto's masterpiece and the possibilities it offers. (Source: STTinfo/Finlandia)



## Understanding Tau217: A Breakthrough in Alzheimer's Disease Diagnostics

**Alzheimer's disease (AD), a progressive neurodegenerative disorder, poses a significant challenge for early and accurate diagnosis. Traditional diagnostic methods have relied on clinical assessments, neuroimaging, and cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) biomarkers. However, these approaches can be invasive, costly, or limited in accessibility.**

The emergence of blood-based biomarkers, particularly phosphorylated tau 217 (p-tau217), represents a groundbreaking advancement in Alzheimer's diagnostics. This essay explores the significance of the Tau217 blood test, its diagnostic accuracy, and its implications for research and clinical practice, while providing context for readers unfamiliar with medical terminology.

### **The Basics: Alzheimer's Disease and Biomarkers**

Alzheimer's disease is characterized by two key pathological features:

1. Amyloid-beta ( $A\beta$ ) plaques: Protein clumps accumulating outside neurons.
2. Tau tangles: Twisted fibers of the tau protein inside neurons.

Biomarkers, or measurable indicators of these pathologies, are crucial for diagnosing Alzheimer's. Historically, these markers were identified through CSF sampling or positron emission tomography (PET) scans—effective but expensive and less practical for widespread use.

### **What is Tau217?**

Tau217 refers to a specific form of the tau protein that becomes phosphorylated (a chemical modification) at the 217th amino acid position. This modification is closely linked to Alzheimer's pathology. Researchers have found that p-tau217 levels in the blood accurately reflect brain changes associated with Alzheimer's, making it a promising non-invasive biomarker.

### **Key Findings from Recent Research**

A pivotal 2024 study published in

JAMA Neurology assessed the diagnostic accuracy of a commercially available p-tau217 blood test. The study involved 786 participants across three international cohorts, including individuals with and without cognitive impairment. Key results included:

1. High Diagnostic Accuracy:
  - The p-tau217 test achieved an area under the curve (AUC) of 0.92-0.96 for detecting elevated  $A\beta$  levels and 0.93-0.97 for tau pathology. AUC is a measure of diagnostic performance, with 1.0 indicating perfect accuracy.
  - These results were comparable to CSF biomarkers and PET imaging, underscoring the test's reliability.
2. Longitudinal Insights:
  - Over an eight-year period, individuals with  $A\beta$  and tau positivity exhibited the most significant annual increases in p-tau217 levels.
3. Reproducibility:
  - The test's accuracy was consistent across different cohorts, enabling

reliable detection of Alzheimer's pathology in diverse populations.

4. **Reduced Need for Invasive Testing:**

- The blood test reduced the necessity for confirmatory CSF or PET tests by approximately 80%.

**Implications for Diagnosis and Treatment**

The Tau217 blood test has transformative potential:

1. **Early Detection:**

- By identifying Alzheimer's pathology in preclinical stages, the test can facilitate early intervention, potentially slowing disease progression.

2. **Accessibility:**

- Blood tests are more accessible than PET scans or lumbar punctures, enabling broader screening, especially in resource-limited settings.

3. **Advancing Research:**

- Widespread use of p-tau217 tests can accelerate clinical trials by efficiently identifying eligible participants, thereby advancing therapeutic development.

**Challenges and Considerations**

While promising, the Tau217 test is not without challenges:

1. **Validation in Broader Populations:**

- Although the test performed well in the studied cohorts, further research is needed to confirm its effectiveness across diverse populations with varying genetic and environmental factors.

2. **Integration into Clinical Practice:**

- Healthcare systems must develop protocols to incorporate blood-based biomarkers alongside traditional methods.

3. **Ethical Considerations:**

- Early diagnosis raises ethical questions, particularly for individuals without immediate treatment options. Psychological impacts and decisions about disclosing results require careful handling.



**A Cautious Optimism**

The Tau217 blood test represents a leap forward in Alzheimer's diagnostics, combining high accuracy with practicality. However, its success depends on addressing the aforementioned challenges. As a society, we must balance enthusiasm for technological advances with a commitment to equitable implementation and ethical care. With continued investment in research and infrastructure, the Tau217 test could revolutionize how we detect, study, and ultimately treat Alzhei-

mer's disease, offering hope to millions worldwide.

The Tau217 blood test exemplifies the progress science is making toward understanding complex diseases like Alzheimer's. By bridging the gap between advanced diagnostics and accessibility, this innovation could herald a new era in neurodegenerative disease management. It is a compelling reminder of the power of scientific discovery to improve lives – a testament to human ingenuity and resilience.

# DRY JANUARY



## January Without Any Brandy! What a Month Without Alcohol Really Does to Your Body

The new year often brings resolutions and fresh starts, and for many, it marks the beginning of "Dry January" – a month-long commitment to abstain from alcohol. While the idea of a January without brandy, wine, beer, or any other alcoholic beverage might seem daunting, the benefits to your body and mind can be transformative. But what exactly happens to your body during this alcohol-free month? Here's a closer look at the science and the potential perks.

### Week 1: Detox and Adjustment

The first week of abstaining from alcohol can feel like a challenge, especially if you're used to having a nightly drink. As your body begins to metabolize the residual alcohol in your system, you might experience cravings, irritability, or mild headaches. These symptoms are temporary and are part of your body's natural detoxification process.

During this time, your liver, the body's primary detox organ, starts to recover. Alcohol consumption places significant strain on the liver, so even a short break allows it to repair

damaged cells and improve its efficiency. You might also notice that your sleep quality starts to improve. Although alcohol might help you fall asleep initially, it disrupts the REM stage, which is critical for restorative rest. Without alcohol, your sleep cycles normalize, leaving you feeling more refreshed.

### Week 2: Clearer Skin and Increased Energy

By the second week, many people notice visible improvements in their skin. Alcohol dehydrates the body and can exacerbate con-

ditions like redness, puffiness, and acne. Without alcohol, your skin begins to rehydrate and heal, resulting in a clearer and more radiant complexion.

Energy levels also start to increase as your blood sugar stabilizes. Alcohol can cause spikes and crashes in blood glucose levels, leading to fatigue and mood swings. With these fluctuations minimized, you may find it easier to focus and feel more productive throughout the day.

### **Week 3: Improved Digestion and Mood**

The third week often brings noticeable changes to your digestive system. Alcohol can irritate the stomach lining and disrupt gut bacteria balance, leading to bloating and indigestion. A break from alcohol allows your digestive system to reset, reducing discomfort and improving nutrient absorption.

This week also marks significant improvements in mental health. Alcohol is a depressant that can exacerbate feelings of anxiety and sadness. Many participants of Dry January report feeling less anxious and more emotionally stable as their brains adjust to functioning without the influence of alcohol. Increased endorphin production, the body's natural "feel-good" chemicals, further contributes to an uplifted mood.

### **Week 4: Weight Loss and Lower Blood Pressure**

As you approach the end of the month, the cumulative effects of abstaining from alcohol become even more apparent. For many, one of the most significant benefits is weight loss. Alcohol is calorie-dense, and its consumption often leads to overeating or unhealthy snacking. Cutting out alcohol eliminates these empty

calories and can make it easier to maintain a calorie deficit.

Your heart health also improves. Alcohol raises blood pressure and can contribute to cardiovascular problems. Studies have shown that even a short break can lower blood pressure and reduce levels of harmful cholesterol, promoting better heart function.

### **Beyond January: Sustained Changes**

The end of Dry January doesn't have to mean returning to old habits. Many participants find that the month-long challenge helps them reset their relationship with alcohol, leading to more mindful drinking habits in the future. The insights gained during this period – such as improved energy, better sleep, and enhanced mental clarity – can serve as powerful motivators to continue reducing alcohol consumption.

Is Dry January for Everyone?

While Dry January offers nu-

merous health benefits, it's essential to approach it safely, especially if you're a heavy drinker. Abruptly stopping alcohol after prolonged heavy use can lead to withdrawal symptoms, which may require medical supervision. If you're concerned about your drinking habits, consider consulting a healthcare professional before beginning the challenge.

### **The Takeaway**

January without brandy or other alcoholic drinks is more than just a test of willpower; it's an opportunity to recalibrate your body and mind. From improved liver function to better skin and mood, the benefits of abstaining from alcohol can be profound and long-lasting. So why not give it a try? Your body will thank you, and you might just discover a healthier, happier version of yourself in the process.

### **The Topsy Truth: Why Alcohol Is Not Your Friend**

You might think a glass of wine or a beer is harmless, but the truth is, alcohol can be a sneaky saboteur of your health. It's not just about hangovers, it's about long-term damage.

#### **Here's the lowdown:**

**Your Liver is a Workhorse:** Alcohol is processed primarily by your liver, which works overtime to break it down. Over time, excessive alcohol consumption can lead to fatty liver disease, cirrhosis, and even liver cancer.

**Brain Drain:** Alcohol affects your brain, impacting memory, concentration, and even your emotional control. Chronic alcohol use can lead to dementia and cognitive decline.

**Heartbreak:** While a little alcohol might seem to help your heart, excessive consumption is a recipe for disaster. It can increase your risk of heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure.

**Cancer's Ally:** Alcohol is linked to an increased risk of several cancers, including mouth, throat, breast, liver, and colon cancers.

**Weight Gain:** Alcohol is packed with empty calories, contributing to weight gain and obesity.

#### **It's important to remember:**

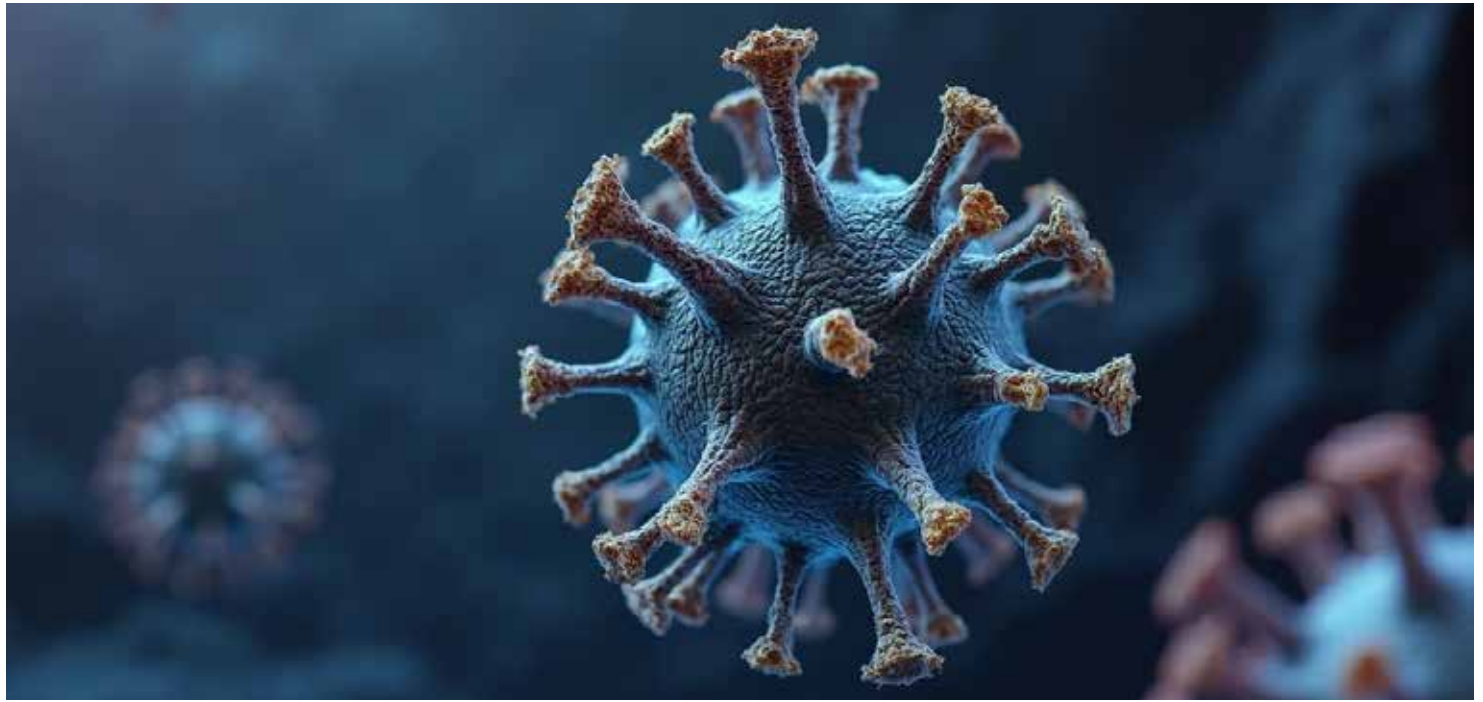
**Moderation is key:** If you choose to drink, do so in moderation. For women, that's one drink per day, and for men, two drinks per day.

**Know your limits:** Everyone has a different tolerance. Pay attention to how alcohol affects you and avoid overindulging.

**Don't drink if you're pregnant:** Alcohol can have devastating effects on a developing fetus.

**The bottom line:** Alcohol can be enjoyable in moderation, but it's not worth the risks to your health. So, raise a glass to your health and choose wisely!

# HEALTH



## The HMPV Epidemic in China: Could This Be a New Pandemic?

As China grapples with a sharp increase in human metapneumovirus (HMPV) cases, concerns are growing over its potential to spark a global health crisis. Five years after the emergence of COVID-19, the specter of a new pandemic is understandably unsettling. While HMPV is not new to virology, the current outbreak raises questions about the virus, its impact, and how we can address it.

### The Scope of the HMPV Outbreak in China

Recent reports indicate a notable surge in HMPV infections across northern China, particularly among children under 14 years old. This uptick coincides with the seasonal rise of respiratory illnesses during the winter months. Hospitals are reportedly

crowded, with many families seeking treatment for young children presenting symptoms such as fever, cough, and difficulty breathing.

Although specific numbers on the scale of the epidemic are scarce, China's National Disease Control and Prevention Administration has noted an increase in respiratory virus activity, including HMPV. The situation mirrors typical winter respiratory infection patterns, but the intensity and spread of HMPV cases have drawn global attention.

### What Is HMPV?

Human metapneumovirus (HMPV) is a respiratory virus first identified in 2001. Belonging to the Pneumoviridae family, HMPV is closely related to respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). It typically causes mild respiratory symptoms, such as:

- Cough
- Nasal congestion

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Sore throat

In severe cases, particularly in vulnerable populations such as young children, the elderly, and immunocompromised individuals, HMPV can lead to complications like bronchitis or pneumonia. Unlike COVID-19, HMPV is not a novel virus, and its epidemiological behavior is well-documented. However, there is no vaccine or specific antiviral treatment for HMPV, leaving symptomatic management as the primary approach.

### Could HMPV Cause a New Pandemic?

Pandemics arise when a virus demonstrates high transmissibility, significant morbidity, and the capacity to spread globally. While HMPV is highly contagious, it does not currently show the potential for the rapid, large-scale global transmission

seen in COVID-19. Additionally, HMPV's morbidity rate is generally lower than that of novel viruses like SARS-CoV-2.

Health officials, including China's Foreign Ministry, have emphasized that the current HMPV surge aligns with typical seasonal trends rather than signaling a new pandemic. However, the outbreak serves as a reminder of the importance of monitoring respiratory viruses and their capacity to evolve.

### **Treatment and Prevention**

#### **Treatment:**

There is no specific antiviral medication or vaccine for HMPV. Current treatment focuses on relieving symptoms, which include:

Hydration

Over-the-counter pain relievers and fever reducers

Rest

For severe cases involving complications like pneumonia, hospitalization and supportive care, such as oxygen therapy, may be required.

#### **Prevention:**

Preventing the spread of HMPV involves basic hygiene practices:

1. Handwashing: Regularly wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

2. Masking: Wear masks in crowded or enclosed spaces, especially during peak respiratory illness seasons.

3. Social Distancing: Avoid close contact with individuals exhibiting respiratory symptoms.

4. Sanitizing: Disinfect frequently touched surfaces regularly.

5. Vaccination Research: Encourage global health organizations to prioritize vaccine development for HMPV.

### **How Worried Should We Be?**



*A face mask provides some protection against this disease*

While the HMPV outbreak in China is concerning, it is not currently classified as a global health emergency. The virus's seasonal nature and its relatively mild impact on healthy individuals suggest that it is unlikely to escalate into a pandemic. However, the outbreak highlights the need for vigilance and preparedness:

**Surveillance:** Governments and health organizations must enhance monitoring of HMPV and other respiratory viruses.

**Public Awareness:** Educating the public on preventive measures is crucial to controlling the spread of respiratory illnesses.

**Healthcare Readiness:** Hospitals should be prepared to manage increased caseloads during respiratory virus seasons.

### **Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic tau-

ght us the importance of early detection, transparent communication, and global cooperation in addressing infectious diseases. Applying these lessons to the HMPV outbreak can help mitigate its impact and prevent unnecessary alarm.

HMPV is a well-documented respiratory virus with the potential to cause significant illness in vulnerable populations. While the current outbreak in China warrants attention, it is not a cause for widespread panic. By adhering to preventive measures, enhancing surveillance, and investing in research, we can address the challenges posed by HMPV effectively. The experience serves as a reminder of the constant need for preparedness in an interconnected world vulnerable to respiratory infections.

# OUR NEWSPAPERS

# Wasa Daily, Wasa Dagblad and Waasan Päivälehti two Years Old



**Wasa Daily – Your local and locally owned newspaper in English in Vaasa**

It is now two years since our city and the surrounding area received a welcome addition in

the form of three new daily newspapers: the Swedish-language Wasa Dagblad, the Finnish-language Waasan Päivälehti and the English-language Wasa Daily, which also regularly publishes material in Ukrainian.

**A unique local voi-**

**ce** Wasa Daily is not only an English newspaper – it is also one of the few completely locally owned newspapers in the region. Unlike our larger competitors, who have owners in Stockholm and Seinäjoki, we have our roots here in Vaasa. We are proud to be a magazine that reflects

the distinctive character of the Vaasa region and at the same time offers a national and global perspective.

**Why choose Wasa Daily?**

Experts recommend reading at least two newspapers regularly. In addition to, for example, Vasabladet

or Ilkka-Pohjalainen, Wasa Daily is a perfect complement. We focus on offering unique reports – news and analysis that you won't always find in other newspapers.

**Our areas of expertise include:**

Culture: We cover local and national



events in the arts, theatre and music.

**History:** We regularly publish articles that provide an in-depth understanding of both regional and global history.

**Climate and environment:** We report closely on the impacts of climate change and its significance for our future.

**Events:** In each issue you will find tips and information about upcoming events in the region.

Despite being a free newspaper, we pride ourselves on maintaining a high journalistic standard. We are politically and financially independent and our goal is to deliver factual and credible journalism.

### **AI – part of the journalism of the future**

Wasa Daily is at the forefront when it comes to using artificial intelligence in editorial work. With the help of advanced AI tools such as ChatGPT and Gemini, drafts are created for fact-checking, translations, and news compilations. All content is reviewed and edited by our journalists to ensure quality and accuracy. We take full responsibility for everything that is published in the magazine.

### **A magazine for the future**

During our two years, Wasa Daily has developed at a rapid pace, but we are not satisfied with that. Our long-term goals include starting daily publishing and launching a comprehensive paper magazine on Fridays,



# **A Happy New Year!**

with extra content that lasts all weekend. When this becomes a reality depends largely on our advertisers – and we look forward to creating an even

stronger magazine together.

### **Looking towards the third year**

As we now begin our third year of operation, we look forward

to welcoming more readers. We are grateful for the feedback we have received and hope for even more dialogue with you, our readers, to continue to

develop the magazine. Thank you for your trust – and let's make the coming year even better! Happy New Year from us in Wasa Daily!

# CLIMATE CHANGE

## 2024: On Track to Be the Hottest Year in History as Temperatures Briefly Cross 1.5 °C Threshold



The year 2024 is shaping up to be the warmest on record, with monthly global mean temperatures consistently breaking previous highs, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) reports. This alarming trend underscores the urgency of addressing climate change as extreme weather events wreak havoc worldwide, causing economic devastation and human suffering.

### A Red Alert on Climate Change

According to the WMO's State of the Climate 2024 Update, the global mean surface air temperature from January to September was 1.54°C above pre-industrial levels, with a margin of error of  $\pm 0.13^\circ\text{C}$ . This surge has been exacerbated by the ongoing El Niño phenomenon, which amplifies global warming effects.

The WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo emphasized the importance of distinguishing between short-term temperature spikes and long-term trends: "One or more years surpassing 1.5°C does not mean we have failed to meet the Paris Agreement's goal to limit warming. However, every fraction of a degree matters."

The update was released

as the UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) commenced in Baku, Azerbaijan. UN Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted the gravity of the situation: "Climate catastrophe is hammering health, widening inequalities, harming sustainable development, and rocking the foundations of peace. The vulnerable are hardest hit."

### A Decade of Alarming Records

The period from 2015 to 2024 is now confirmed as the warmest decade ever recorded. This year's average temperature is set to surpass the previous record set in 2023. Over the past 16 months, global temperatures have consistently exceeded historical norms. These findings illustrate the acceleration of long-term warming,

which is currently estimated at 1.3°C above pre-industrial levels.

### **Key Climate Indicators Greenhouse Gas Concentrations**

Atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) reached 420 ppm in 2023, a 51% increase since pre-industrial times. Real-time data for 2024 indicates a continued rise, further amplifying the greenhouse effect and driving global temperatures upward.

### **Ocean Heat Content**

Ocean heat content in 2023 reached record levels, and 2024 is following a similar trajectory. The oceans, which absorb 90% of excess heat from the Earth's system, have seen rapid warming, especially over the past two decades. This warming is irreversible on centennial timescales and has far-reaching consequences for marine ecosystems and weather patterns.

### **Sea Level Rise**

Global sea levels rose at an accelerated rate of 4.77 mm per year from 2014 to 2023, more than double the rate observed between 1993 and 2002. While El Niño temporarily intensified this trend in 2023, preliminary data for 2024 suggests a return to the consistent upward trajectory seen in previous years.

### **Glacier Loss**

Glaciers suffered unprecedented losses in 2023, with a record 1.2 meters of water equivalent ice melting—five times the volume of water in the Dead Sea. In Switzerland



alone, glaciers lost 10% of their volume over the past two years.

### **Sea Ice Extent**

Antarctic sea ice reached its second-lowest extent in

the satellite record, while Arctic sea ice remained below average. These changes further disrupt ecosystems and contribute to global feedback loops that exacerbate war-

ming.

### **Human and Economic Impacts**

The consequences of these changes are stark. Extreme weather events, such as re-

cord-breaking rainfall, devastating floods, deadly heatwaves, and raging wildfires, have displaced millions, worsened food insecurity, and undermined sustainable development. Persistent drought, exacerbated by El Niño, has compounded these challenges in vulnerable regions.

### **Urgent Call for Action**

The WMO underscores the need for immediate reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and enhanced adaptation measures. Saulo urged, "We need to strengthen climate information services and expand Early Warnings for All to protect communities from hazardous weather events." Progress has been made in this regard: 108 countries now report having Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems in place.

### **Looking Ahead**

As the world grapples with the reality of a rapidly changing climate, the WMO's report serves as both a warning and a call to action.

While the long-term goal of limiting warming to 1.5°C remains achievable, it requires unprecedented global cooperation and commitment. The stakes are clear: every fraction of a degree of warming avoided translates to lives saved, ecosystems preserved, and a more sustainable future for all.

## THEATRE

# Sally Salminen's "Katrina" is coming to Wasa as a musical



Sally Salminen in harvest rye in Sibbo 1941. Photo: B. Soldan / SA  
Creative Commons Attribution 4.0

On January 14, 2025, one of the most iconic Finland-Swedish novels, Sally Salminen's "Katrina", will be given new life as a musical at Wasa Theatre.

This reinterpretation of the classic takes place in co-production between three major theatres – Lilla Teatern, Åbo Svenska Teater and Wasa Teater – and is the result of a long-term collaboration. The musical will be performed on all three stages in 2024 and 2025 and is a unique event in the Finnish-Swedish cultural

world.

### A timeless story

"Katrina" is Sally Salminen's debut novel, published in 1936. The novel, which was written while Salminen was working as a maid in New York, was an immediate success and has now been translated into over twenty languages. The story follows the young Katrina, who leaves her home in Ostrobothnia to move to Åland with her new husband, the sailor Johan.

But her dreams of a good life are quickly shattered when Katrina discovers that Johan has exag-

gerated his social status, and she soon finds herself living in a meagre cottage, surrounded by poverty and prejudice.

Despite the difficult conditions, Katrina shows incredible strength and stubbornness. She challenges both external adversity and society's norms, and her story is a tribute to women's fighting ability and justice.

The dramatization of Kaisa Lundán and Aili Järvelä's newly composed music now gives this timeless story a new dimension.

### A tribute to Salminen's legacy

Sally Salminen (1906–1976) grew up in Vårdö on Åland as the eighth child in a family of twelve siblings. Although she dreamed of becoming a writer from a young age, she saw herself as too poor and ignorant to succeed. However, her breakthrough with "Katrina" was so powerful that it overshadowed all of her later production, although she continued to write diligently. Salminen was nominated three times for the Nobel Prize in Literature and has a unique place in Finland-Swedish literature. She managed to combine a local depiction of everyday life in Åland and Ostrobothnia with universal themes such as love, struggle and self-respect. The fact that "Katrina" is now being made into a musical in Swedish in Finland is a fitting tribute to her work and its relevance to this day.

Yle's reading circle programme discussed this book: "For me, Katrina is The Book – nostalgia and great emotions" was said in



*Sally Salminen at her desk 1940. Photo: Osvald Hedenström / Lehtikuva. Public Domain*



*Sally Salminen-Dührkop 1968. Photo: Lisbeth Medeland, Public domain*

Seppo Puttonen's online reading circle. In Åland, young Katriina faces poverty and misery the likes of which she has never experienced before. As the wife of a crofter, she is forced to work for rich shipowners in slavery-like conditions. In addition, her husband is at sea and Katriina is left completely alone. In the village community, he has become an outsider from elsewhere. How is it possible that Katriina does not break? Sometimes when I read, I was afraid that this would happen. Perhaps Katriina's strong desire for justice kept her alive as a fighter, Seppo thinks. When Katriina has children, she has to make do for them. Still, Katriina holds on to her pride. I was amazed that Katriina did not compromise on her principles even in the face of children's hunger. He refused to take the villagers' alms to buy a cow, Seppo says. The fates of Katrina's children moved the readers. One of the children dies young. "I still cry over the little girl's illness and exhaustion from it."

#### **Music and drama in focus**

The newly written musical "Katrina" offers drama, music and visual experiences in a performance that

challenges and touches. Composer Aili Järvelä makes her debut as a musical composer and describes the process as a creative journey, where one of the melodies even came to her in a dream. Set designer Heini Maara-nen and costume designer Samu-Jussi Koski contribute to creating a world that is both poetic and timeless. The musical is directed by Jakob Höglund, who highlights Katrina as a symbol of strength and resilience. Höglund, himself from Ostrobothnia with strong ties to Åland, describes the project as a tribute to women's strength and perseverance. Actress Emma Klingenberg, together with musicians Aili Järvelä, Ulriikka Heikinheimo and Senni Valtonen, portrays Katrina's heartbreaking story through a combination of song and acting.

#### **A long-awaited collaboration**

The project is the result of long-term plans for cooperation between the three theatres. "A collaboration of this kind not only extends the life of the performance, but also enriches the theatre environment through the exchange of knowledge and perspectives," says Ann-Luise Bertell, theatre director at Wasa Theatre.

The performance is subtitled in both Swedish and Finnish, which makes it accessible to a wide audience. With a total of 18 performan-

ces planned, the journey begins at Wasa Theatre before continuing to Turku Swedish Theatre and Lilla Teatern in Helsinki.

#### **A cultural highlight**

The fact that "Katrina" is now being given a new lease of life as a musical is a cultural event that connects the past with the present. Sally Salminen's story about Katrina still touches us today through its themes of love, struggle and self-respect. Through music and performing arts, even more people are brought into this gripping story, which now has the opportunity to inspire new generations. The premiere at Wasa Theatre on 14 January 2025 promises an unforgettable experience. It's time to celebrate Sally Salminen's legacy and welcome Katrina back to the stage, where she deserves to be.

Here You can read the first part of this fascinating book (In Swedish): <https://www.google.fi/books/edition/Katrina/pqWjDwAA-QBAJ?hl=sv&gbp-v=1&pg=PT3&printsec=frontcover>

# HEALTH

## Everything You Want to Know About Mycoplasma

*Mycoplasma pneumoniae* is a bacterium that causes respiratory infections, especially among schoolchildren and young adults. It is a relatively common cause of prolonged coughing and fever and can cause everything from mild colds to more severe pneumonia. Here you will get a comprehensive picture of what mycoplasma is, how it is spread, how to protect yourself and how the disease is treated.

### What is mycoplasma?

Mycoplasma is a type of bacterium that lacks a cell wall, which makes it unique among bacteria. The best-known species within this group is *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*, which infects the respiratory tract and leads to diseases such as bronchitis or pneumonia.

Infections caused by mycoplasma can occur in people of all ages, but they are most common in school-age children and young adults. These infections can occur as individual cases or as outbreaks, for example in schools, in the army or other environments where people live in close proximity to each other.

### How is mycoplasma transmitted?

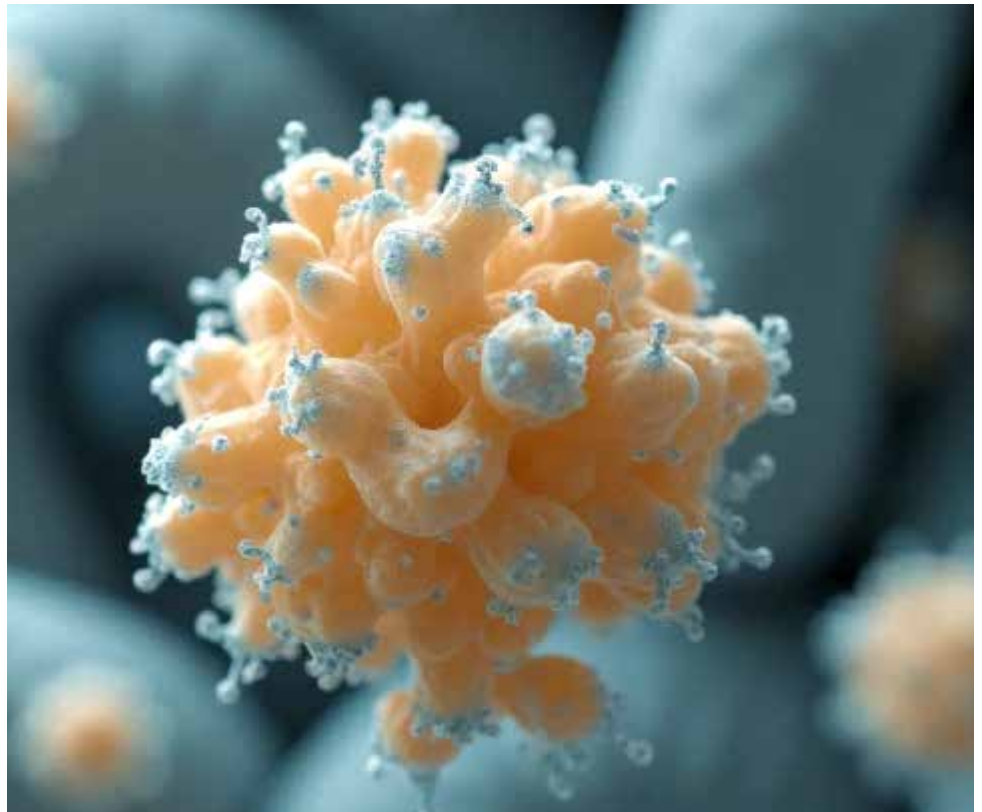
Mycoplasma is spread by droplet infection, which means that the bacteria are transmitted via small droplets from the respiratory tract – for example when someone coughs, sneezes or talks. The incubation period, that is, the time from exposure to the infection until symptoms appear, is 1–14 days. Outbreaks of mycoplasma can last for several months and often occur in cycles, with larger epidemics every three to five years.

### What are the symptoms of mycoplasma infection?

Symptoms vary depending on the individual and the degree of infection, but the most common signs of the disease include:

- Fever
- Cough, often long-lasting and irritating
- General malaise
- Headache

In some people, the infection can progress to bronchitis or pneumonia, which can lead to more pronounced breathing problems. After the acute phase of the disease, it is common to



have a persistent irritating cough that can last for several weeks.

### How is mycoplasma diagnosed?

The diagnosis is usually made based on clinical symptoms, especially during an outbreak of the disease. For more accurate diagnosis, laboratory tests are used such as:

PCR test from nasal or throat mucus: Can detect the genetic material of the bacteria.

Blood test for antibodies: Shows whether the body has developed an immune response to the bacteria. However, both PCR and antibody tests can be positive long after symptoms have disappeared, which can make the results difficult to interpret. Tests are mainly recommended for more serious cases or to identify outbreaks.

### How is mycoplasma treated?

Infections caused by mycoplasma can be treated with antibiotics, although milder cases often resolve on their own. The most common drugs are: Doxycycline Erythromycin Treatment can reduce symptoms and speed up recovery, but it is important that antibiotics are used with caution to avoid the development of resistance.

### How can you protect yourself from infection?

Since mycoplasma is spread through the respiratory tract, good hygiene is essential to reduce the spread of infection:

Wash your hands thoroughly and regularly.

Cough and sneeze into the crook of your arm or into a tissue.

Avoid close contact with sick people, especially during epidemics.

There is no vaccine against mycoplasma, so preventive measures are particularly important.

### How common is mycoplasma?

Mycoplasma is found worldwide and is a common cause of respiratory infections. Major epidemics occur every few years, and infection is most common in autumn and winter.

Mycoplasma is an important but often overlooked cause of long-term respiratory infections. By knowing the symptoms, routes of infection and treatment options, you can both reduce the risk of becoming infected yourself and help prevent the spread. So the next time a stubborn cough won't let up, it might be worth thinking about – maybe mycoplasma is behind it.

(Source: Thl.fi)

## HEALTH

# If You Are Over 70, These Drugs Can Affect Your Memory



As we age, our bodies become more susceptible to the effects of medications. For people over 70, certain commonly prescribed drugs may increase the risk of memory loss or cognitive decline, including Alzheimer's disease. Understanding these medications and their potential side effects is crucial for maintaining cognitive health in later years.

### How Medications Affect Memory

The brain's complex chemistry is sensitive to disruption, particularly in older adults. Many drugs can interfere with neurotransmitters, reduce oxygen supply to the brain, or cause side effects such as confusion or drowsiness. When these factors persist, they can contribute to memory problems and, in some cases, increase the risk of neurodegenerative diseases.

### Drugs Linked to Memory Loss and Cognitive Decline

Here are some categories of medications that may affect memory in older adults:

#### 1. Anticholinergics

Anticholinergic drugs block acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter critical for memory and learning. Older adults are particularly vulnerable to the cognitive effects of these drugs.

Examples:

Diphenhydramine (found in over-the-counter sleep aids and allergy medications)

Oxybutynin (used for overactive bladder)

Amitriptyline (an antidepressant)

Risks: Chronic use has been linked to an increased risk of Alzheimer's disease.

## **2. Benzodiazepines**

Benzodiazepines are often prescribed for anxiety, insomnia, or muscle relaxation, but they can significantly affect cognitive function.

Examples:

Diazepam (Diapam)

Lorazepam (Temesta)

Alprazolam (Xanor)

Risks: These drugs can cause drowsiness, confusion, and memory impairments. Long-term use is associated with a higher risk of dementia. And the drowsiness can cause an increased risk of accidents. If you fall at night in your home, you could suffer a hip fracture and be in a wheelchair for many weeks or months.

So, if You are old, please do not use these drugs at least not for any longer period of time, if possible.

## **3. Statins**

Statins are widely used to lower cholesterol, which is crucial for cardiovascular health. However, some studies suggest a potential link to memory issues in certain individuals.

Examples:

Atorvastatin (Lipitor)

Simvastatin (Zocor)

Risks: While not conclusively proven, some patients report memory fog, particularly with high doses. There is no scientific evidence that statins could cause dementia, only anecdotes. The claim that statins can affect memory gained traction in 2008 when Orli Etingin, then vice chairman of medicine at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, told a newspaper in USA that atorvastatin commonly used also in Finland "makes women stupid."

No evidence really, so don't

stop Your statin medication because of this anecdote,

## **4. Antidepressants**

Certain types of antidepressants, particularly tricyclic antidepressants, can have anticholinergic properties that impair memory.

Examples:

Nortriptyline

Imipramine

Risks: Cognitive effects may be mild but can worsen with long-term use.

## **5. Opioids**

Prescribed for pain relief, opioids can have sedative effects that impair short-term memory and cognitive clarity.

Examples:

Oxycodone (OxyContin)

Morphine

Fentanyl

Risks: Long-term or high-dose use can exacerbate memory issues and increase the risk of delirium.

## **6. Antihistamines**

First-generation antihistamines, commonly found in allergy medications, can cross the blood-brain barrier and affect cognitive function.

Examples:

Chlorpheniramine

Diphenhydramine (Benadryl)

Risks: Prolonged use can lead to memory fog and confusion, particularly in older adults.

## **7. Sleeping Aids and Muscle Relaxants**

Drugs used to aid sleep or relax muscles often have sedative properties that can impair memory and attention.

Examples:

Zolpidem (Ambien)

Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril)

Risks: Persistent use may increase the risk of cognitive decline.

## **What Can You Do?**

1. Review Your Medications

If you or a loved one is over 70, regularly review all medications with a healthcare provider. Ask if any drugs can be replaced with safer alternatives or if the dosage can be adjusted.

2. Be Mindful of Polypharmacy

Taking multiple medications increases the risk of drug interactions and side effects. Consolidating treatments or eliminating unnecessary drugs can reduce these risks.

3. Adopt Non-Pharmaceutical Strategies

In some cases, lifestyle changes can reduce the need for medications that impair memory:

Practice good sleep hygiene instead of relying on sleeping pills.

Manage anxiety or depression through counseling or mindfulness practices.

Address pain with physical therapy or acupuncture.

4. Stay Physically and Mentally Active

Regular exercise, a healthy diet, and cognitive activities (like puzzles or reading) can help mitigate the cognitive effects of medications.

## **The Importance of Advocacy**

As a patient or caregiver, it's important to advocate for optimal care. Speak openly with doctors about any concerns regarding memory or cognition and stay informed about the potential side effects of prescribed drugs.

While many medications can support health and well-being, some carry risks for memory and cognitive function, especially in older adults. By understanding these risks, discussing concerns with healthcare providers, and exploring alternative treatments, it's possible to minimize the impact on memory and maintain a sharp mind well into the golden years.



# HEALTH

## Eight Good Habits to Keep Your Brain Young



Aging is a natural process, but the choices we make every day can significantly influence how our bodies and minds age.

Our brain, the control center of all bodily functions and thoughts, is particularly susceptible to aging. Fortunately, research has revealed that adopting certain healthy lifestyle habits can slow down brain aging and reduce the risk of memory-related diseases like dementia. These habits, derived from the American Heart Association's "Life's Essential 8" guidelines, promote not only heart health but also the vitality of the brain.

A recent study conducted by researchers at the University of Maryland highlights the importance of these habits. By analyzing the lifestyles and MRI scans of nearly 19,000 participants aged 40 to 69, the study found that individuals adhering to these habits had brains that appeared younger than their chronological age. Each 10-point increase in their lifestyle score corresponded to a brain that was, on average, 113 days younger in terms of white matter health. White matter, which carries messages within the brain, is crucial for



efficient information processing and shrinks as we age.

Let us explore these eight essential habits that can keep your brain youthful and resilient.

**January 1 is a good day to change some habit.**

### **1. Eat a Healthy Diet**

A nutritious diet forms the cornerstone of a healthy body and mind. Focus on foods rich in nutrients, such as:

**Fruits and Vegetables:** Provide essential vitamins, antioxidants, and fiber.

**Whole Grains:** Support sustained energy and cognitive health.

**Legumes and Beans:** Excellent sources of plant-based proteins and fiber.

**Nuts and Seeds:** Rich in healthy fats and brain-boosting nutrients like omega-3s.

**Lean Proteins:** Include poultry, fish, and plant-based alternatives to support brain function. Avoid processed foods, sugary snacks, and excessive saturated fats, which can harm both heart and brain health.

### **2. Get Regular Exercise**

Physical activity is a powerful tool for brain health. Engaging in at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise (e.g., brisk walking or swimming) or 75 minutes of vigorous activity (e.g., running) per week boosts blood flow to the brain and promotes the growth of new neural connections. Exercise

also reduces stress and enhances memory and mood, which are critical for cognitive well-being.

### **3. Avoid Tobacco**

Smoking and the use of e-cigarettes harm blood vessels, reduce oxygen flow to the brain, and accelerate cognitive decline. Quitting smoking at any stage of life can lead to significant improvements in brain health and overall longevity.

### **4. Prioritize Sleep**

Sleep is essential for brain repair and memory consolidation. Aim for 7–9 hours of quality sleep each night. Poor sleep or sleep deprivation can lead to problems like impaired memory, mood disorders, and an increased risk of dementia. Establishing a consistent sleep routine and creating a relaxing bedtime environment can help improve sleep quality.

### **5. Maintain a Healthy Weight**

Keeping your body mass index (BMI) under 25 reduces the risk of obesity-related conditions that can harm the brain, such as diabetes and high blood pressure. A healthy weight also supports better mobility and energy levels, enabling an active lifestyle that benefits cognitive function.

### **6. Control Cholesterol Levels**

High levels of "bad" LDL cholesterol can lead to plaque buildup in arteries, restricting blood flow to the brain. Regular check-ups and dietary changes—such as reducing saturated fats and increasing fiber intake—can help maintain healthy cholesterol levels and protect brain health.

### **7. Manage Blood Sugar Levels**

Elevated blood sugar levels can damage blood vessels and nerves, increasing the risk of conditions like diabetes and cognitive decline. Monitoring your blood sugar and consuming a balanced diet with low glycemic index foods can help prevent these issues.

### **8. Monitor Blood Pressure**

High blood pressure, often called the "silent killer," can lead to strokes and other conditions that negatively affect brain function. Keeping your blood pressure below 120/80 mmHg through lifestyle changes and, if necessary, medication, can protect your brain from damage.

### **Why These Habits Matter**

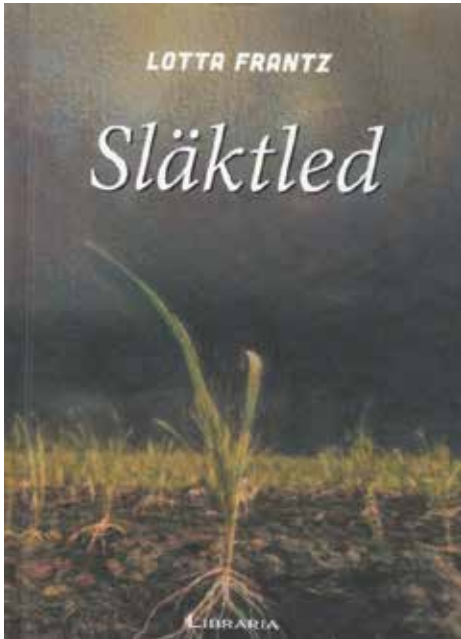
Following these eight habits not only supports brain health but also contributes to overall well-being. The cumulative effect of eating well, staying active, and managing key health metrics ensures that the brain receives the nutrients, oxygen, and stimulation it needs to stay sharp.

**By incorporating these habits into your daily routine, you can take proactive steps to protect your brain against premature aging and memory-related diseases. Start small—focus on one or two habits and gradually build from there. Over time, these changes can lead to profound benefits, keeping your brain youthful and your mind agile well into your later years. And January 1 is a good day to change an habit.**

**Your brain is your most valuable asset. Nurture it with care, and it will serve you well throughout your life.**

# BOOKS

## A few books from year 2024



Author: Lotta Frantz

**SLÄKTLED** (In Swedish)

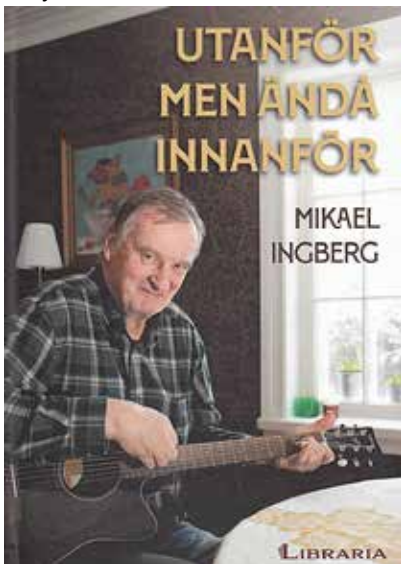
Publisher: Libraria

313 pages

**A book written by Ostrobothnian for Ostrobothnians about Ostrobothnia**

When Signe was born 100 years ago, her mother died. In this book, we follow the lives of him and his children and grandchildren over a hundred years. Those of us who are at home on the plains of Ostrobothnia recognize ourselves.

Exactly.



Author: Mikael Ingberg

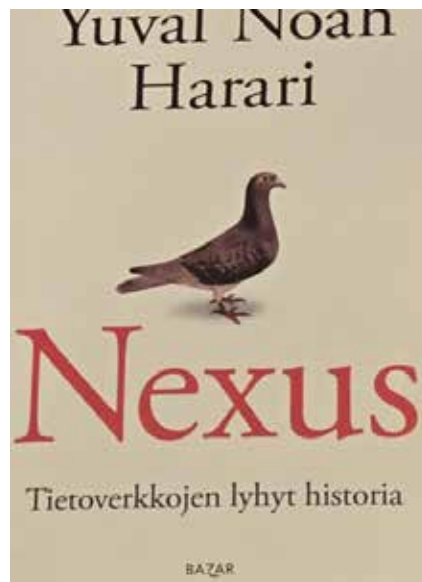
**OUTDOORS, BUT STILL INDOORS**, in Swedish

Publisher: Libraria

290 pages

**From sugar beet cultivation to sheep farmer**

But in between, a life filled with experiences in a Finnish-Swedish duck pond. In *Outside but Still Inside*, Mikael Ingberg himself speaks openly and honestly about his career and Finnish politics and business during a turbulent period in Finnish history. "Memoirs and Other Lies" is the title of the first chapter. But these are not lies. This is the truth about the history of us here in Finland.



Author: Yuval Noah Harari

**NEXUS**

Publisher: Natur Kultur

481 pages

**A brief history of computer networks from the Stone Age to artificial intelligence**

Yuval Noah Harari's "Nexus" delves into the profound and potentially transformative impact of biotechnology on humanity. He explores how advances in areas such as gene editing, brain-computer interfaces, and synthetic biology are poised to fundamentally change our bodies, minds, and even our definition of what it means to be human.

Why you should read it:

Thought-provoking: "The Nexus" forces readers to wrestle with profound questions about the future of humanity. It challenges our assumptions about free will, identity, and the essence of being human.

Vision of the future: Harari paints a vivid picture of possible future scenarios, some utopian, some dystopian, driven by the rapid development of biotechnology. This will help us anticipate and

maybe even shape the future we want to create.

Accessible Writing: Despite his treatment of complex scientific concepts, Harari presents them in a clear and engaging way, making the book accessible to a wide audience. Ethical considerations: "Nexus" highlights the crucial ethical dilemmas arising from these technological advances. It calls on us to take into account the social, political and economic consequences of these technologies and to ensure that they are developed and used responsibly.

Basically, "Nexus" is a must-read for anyone interested in the future of humanity. It is a thought-provoking and insightful study of the profound changes ahead, and serves as a valuable reminder of the importance of thoughtful and ethical considerations as we navigate this uncharted territory.



Author: Tommy Karlsson

**GHOST STORIES FROM SWEDISH-SPEAKING FINLAND** (in Swedish)

Publisher: Libraria

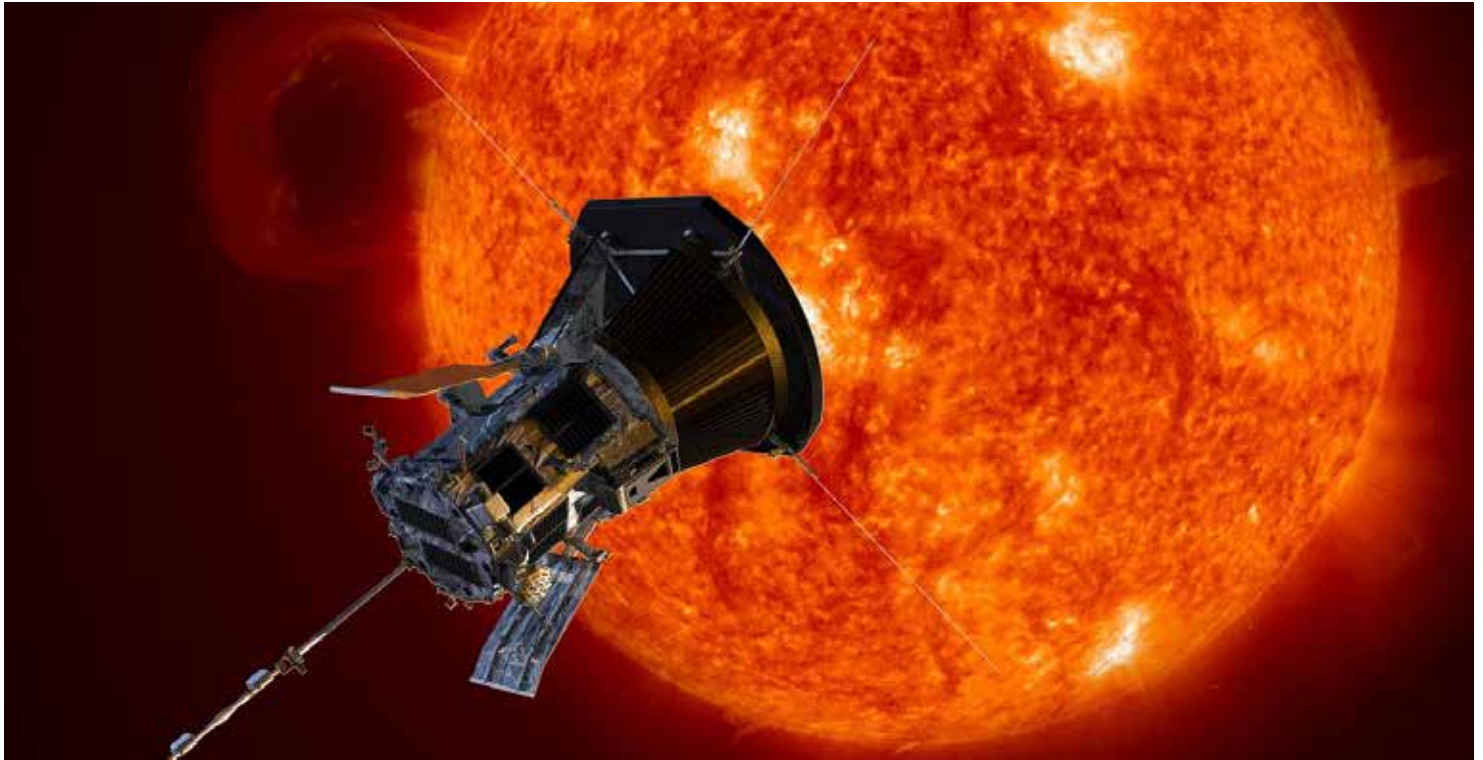
Horrifying stories about ghosts, witches and haunted farms.

In Malax, schoolchildren saw two half-meter-tall old women, in Sundom Blind Isaac is still sweeping his stairs. And a "white woman", she probably still lives in Tottesund. You can read about all of this and many other frightening events in our area.

Illustrations: Nils Huldén.

## ASTRONOMY

# Sun-Kissing Spacecraft Sends Signal, Defying Death in Solar Inferno



**In a daring feat of engineering, NASA's Parker Solar Probe has successfully completed its latest and most perilous dive on Dec 24 into the Sun's scorching atmosphere. The spacecraft, designed to withstand temperatures hotter than Venus' surface, recently skimmed a mere 3.8 million miles above the solar surface, traveling at a breathtaking 430,000 miles per hour.**

Despite facing a fiery baptism in the Sun's corona, Parker Solar Probe has transmitted a beacon signal back to Earth, confirming its survival and operational status. Mission control at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory erupted in cheers as the signal was received, marking a significant milestone in humanity's quest to understand our nearest star.

### A Journey into the Heart of Fire

Parker Solar Probe, a testament to human ingenuity, is on a mission to unravel the mysteries of the Sun's corona,

a region where temperatures inexplicably soar to millions of degrees, far exceeding the heat on the Sun's visible surface. By venturing into this extreme environment, scientists hope to unlock the secrets behind the solar wind, a continuous stream of charged particles that flows outward from the Sun and can disrupt Earth's magnetic field.

### Facing the Sun's Fury

Surviving the Sun's intense heat and radiation requires cutting-edge technology. Parker Solar Probe is equipped with a state-of-the-art heat shield, capable of withstanding temperatures exceeding 2,500 degrees Fahrenheit. This innovative shield, made from a carbon-composite material, protects the spacecraft's delicate instruments and electronics from the Sun's scorching rays.

### Unveiling the Sun's Secrets

The data collected by Parker Solar Probe during this close encounter will provide invaluable insights into the Sun's behavior. Scientists will analyze measurements of the solar wind, magnetic fields, and energetic particles to gain a deeper understanding of how the Sun

influences space weather events, such as solar flares and coronal mass ejections, which can disrupt communication systems, damage satellites, and even pose risks to astronauts.

### A Legacy of Discovery

The Parker Solar Probe mission is a tribute to the visionary work of Dr. Eugene N. Parker, the renowned astrophysicist who first predicted the existence of the solar wind. This audacious mission continues to push the boundaries of space exploration, inspiring future generations of scientists and engineers to reach for the stars.

**Image:** Parker Solar Probe artist rendering

Artist's concept of the Parker Solar Probe spacecraft approaching the sun. Launching in 2018, Parker Solar Probe will provide new data on solar activity and make critical contributions to our ability to forecast major space-weather events that impact life on Earth.

NASA/Johns Hopkins APL/Steve Gribben

Public domain



# **The Allure of Tour Skating**

## **OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES IN VAASA**

# **Finding Freedom on the Ice in Vaasa: The Allure of Tour Skating**



**Tour skating, also known as adventure skating, is more than just gliding across a frozen lake. It's an exhilarating blend of exploration, physical challenge, and a profound connection with the winter landscape.**

And in Vaasa there are a lot of areas to enjoy this kind of skating.

Whether you're traversing vast frozen seas, navigating winding rivers, or simply enjoying the serenity of a secluded pond, tour skating offers a unique and unforgettable experience.







### **The Joy of the Open Ice**

The appeal of tour skating lies in its freedom. Unbound by the confines of a rink, skaters can explore the winter wonderland at their own pace. The feeling of gliding effortlessly across a pristine ice surface is truly magical. The silence, broken only by the gentle rhythm of your own breath and the occasional crunch of ice, is deeply meditative.

### **Safety First: Essential Precautions**

While the allure of the open ice is undeniable, safety must always be paramount.

**Never skate alone:** Always bring a skating buddy or join a group.

**Check ice conditions thoroughly:** Before venturing onto any body of water, carefully assess ice thickness and stability. Use an ice auger or chisel to check at regular intervals. Remember that ice conditions can change rapidly due to factors like temperature fluctuations, currents, and snow cover.

**Wear appropriate safety gear:** This includes a life jacket or flotation device, a helmet, and ice picks for self-rescue in case of a fall through the ice.

**Carry a first-aid kit and a communication device:** A cell phone in a waterproof case or a handheld radio can be crucial in case of an emergency.

**Plan your route and inform someone of your plans:** Let a trusted friend or family member know your intended route and estimated return time.

**Be aware of your surroundings:** Pay attention to potential hazards such as cracks, thin ice, and open water. Avoid skating near moving water, such as inlets and outlets.

**Turn back if conditions deteriorate:** Don't hesitate to turn back if the ice becomes unsafe or if you encounter unexpected challenges.

### **Essential Equipment for Tour Skating**

**Skates:** Sturdy ice skates with good ankle support are essential. Consider skates specifically designed for off-ice skating, which

often have better traction and durability.

**Ice cleats:** These provide extra traction on slippery surfaces and can help prevent falls.

**Life jacket or flotation device:** This is crucial safety equipment and should always be worn.

**Helmet:** A helmet can protect your head in case of a fall.

**Ice picks:** These are essential for self-rescue if you fall through the ice.

**Warm clothing and waterproof outerwear:** Dress in layers to stay warm and dry.

**Backpack:** Pack essentials like snacks, water, a first-aid kit, and a communication device.

### **Embracing the Adventure**

Tour skating is a rewarding experience that offers a unique perspective on the winter landscape. By prioritizing safety and respecting the power of nature, you can enjoy the freedom and exhilaration of exploring the frozen world beneath your feet. Remember, the beauty of tour skating lies not only in the destination but also in the journey itself.



# ART

## Eero Järnefelt's Kaski has travelled around the world And now it is in Vaasa



Eero Järnefelt's painting *Kaski*, completed in 1893, has become one of the best-known works of the golden age of Finnish art. However, this work depicting slash-and-burn is much more than just a skilful depiction of the Finnish countryside. It has also made a remarkable trip around the world,

visiting numerous exhibitions around the world.

When Järnefelt painted *Kaski*, he could hardly have imagined that the work would become so popular and that it would be presented to such a wide audience. At that time, slash-and-burn was still an essential part of Finnish agriculture, but at the same time it was in the throes of change. The development of forestry gradually replaced traditional slash-and-burn farming, and Järnefelt wanted to immortalize this

disappearing phase of life.

*Kaski* has been exhibited in numerous exhibitions both in Finland and abroad. The work has travelled to Japan, the Nordic countries, major European cities such as London, Madrid, Barcelona and Rome. In 1900, *Kaski* was seen at the Paris World's Fair, where it was awarded a gold medal.

Exhibition trips have been a significant part of *Kaski*'s history. They have enabled the work to reach a wide audience and present Finnish art to the world. At the same time,

exhibition trips have also been challenging, as the safety of the work must be carefully taken care of. *Kaski* is protected with plexiglass to keep it in the best possible condition for future generations.

*Kaski*'s world travels tell a lot about how art can transcend cultural boundaries and unite people. The work has acted as an ambassador of culture, presenting Finnish identity and landscapes around the world. At the same time, it has also sparked discussion about the transformation of Finnish society and the

disappearance of traditions.

Järnefelt's *Kaski* is much more than just one painting. It is a work of art that has lived a life of its own and traveled around the world. It is also a significant part of Finnish cultural history, reminding us of our past and at the same time prompting us to reflect on our future. The painting's home is at the Ateneum in Helsinki.

But now this painting is in Vaasa, Tikanoja Art Home.

# ASTRONOMY

## Earth's Temporary Moon: A Celestial Oddity



In a surprising cosmic event, Earth briefly acquired a second moon this past autumn. On September 29, 2024, a small asteroid, designated 2024 PT5, was captured by our planet's gravity, becoming a temporary natural satellite.

This celestial visitor, though small, was a significant astronomical occurrence. While it was not visible to the naked eye, astronomers were able to track and study it using powerful telescopes. The exact size of 2024 PT5 is still being determined, but it was likely a few meters in diameter.

The capture of aste-

roids is a rare event, but not entirely unprecedented. However, having a temporary moon for several weeks is a unique phenomenon. The temporary moon eventually escaped Earth's gravitational pull and returned to its original orbit around the Sun.

This celestial event offers scientists a valuable opportunity to study near-Earth objects and understand their potential impact on our planet. By observing 2024 PT5, researchers can gain insights into the composition, orbit, and behavior of these space rocks.

And what a wonderful "Trivial Pursuit"-question! "How many moons did our earth have in October 2024?"

Now You know the answer. Two,

*Image: An artistic impression of earth and its two moons. To the left on astroid of the same size as PT%.*



# NEWSPAPERS



## Making a daily newspaper in the 1860s

The following rather humorous account published in Helsingin Dagblad on 12.1.1867 about what it was like to make a daily newspaper in the 1860s is worth reading.

And it can be stated, not much has changed in the newspaper editorial offices in 158 years.

"Has anyone really found out the great machinery that must be set in motion, and what a strange apparatus of the most diverse people and things must be set in motion before a major daily newspaper is ready to be distributed by the newspaper distributors?"

I wonder if you have thought about it, indefatigable readers, when you open your door in the morning and take your spiritual morning food out of the carpet, or fetch it from the safer hiding place in the drawer "for letters and newspapers," and then enjoy its very mixed ingredients together with your, as I hope, tasty coffee; when you run through the leading article with a critical eye to see if the paper's foreign politicians have the same "justified" fear as you do, that the gunpowder explosion in Helsinki will exert a noticeable influence on the price of window glass on the foreign market: when you, as a co-owner of the steamship Ettan, read that the boat needs twice as much coal as it brings in; or when your aesthetic gaze

clears when reading a critique of "the man from Eldsön"; Or when your heart beats sympathetically when you read about a horrible accident or something like that?

Perhaps you, the most gracious of all readers, have thought about it that when you with feverish speed and a crushing contempt for the events in Spain or the Prussian Parliament, "the traffic income from the canals" and the "Ship List", have plunged headlong into the basement to see what the end of Theobald was, when in the last issue he was just about to climb the bomb-proof tower in the dark hour of midnight with a blind lamp in his mouth, showing off a row of pearly white teeth, and a pistol in each of the small aristocratic,

but powerfully built hands?

Have you, all the countless newspaper-devouring individuals of the century, from the statesman on the stool to the coffee-lady in the square, have thought of this?

We dare to bravely answer no; and unless you have seen it yourself, you cannot get a true idea of the work that accompanies a newspaper until it is available to you in its final form.

It is best to visit an editorial office at 5 in the afternoon. The machinery is in full swing, as the paper's staff will certainly all attend a meeting to tell what they have produced during the morning, and to put the finishing touches on what the readers will pick up ideas for their conversations the next morning at the coffee table or in the pastry shops. The proofreader is already in his place and preparing his work.

The factor, the chief of the setters, who is called by the initials by the horrible name of "The Switcher" — a name that almost makes one think of steps and wheels — looks in to the editor-in-chief and asks: Can you get a manuscript of the first article?

He gets an affirmative answer, and hands over a couple of "menus" that are already on the table for him.

A "menu," my lordship, is quite different from this palatable list, which in inns begins with "oysters" and ends with "beetroot and pickles."

It can irritate everything except the palate, and sometimes contains such hard-digesting crow's feet, that your brain, dear reader, could easily begin to suffer from impaired digestion. The menus are those narrow strips of paper on which the pen often rus-



*This hand-printing press from the early 1800s has been in a printing house in Old Vaasa. It is likely that Vasabladet's predecessor, the newspaper Ilmarinen, was printed with this press. When Vaasa burned down in 1852, the press fell through the floor to the basement and broke all 4 legs, but the printing press could be repaired and used even after this. The printing press is now at the Printing Museum in Stundars, near Vaasa.*

hes with great haste, and which, for the sake of speed, obtain its spiritual content only on one side. When the entire staff, after well-distributed work, is in their business, a rather polite amount of such menus flies from their hands.

In addition to the articles and notices, the "Wrapper" usually receives a couple of "Publics" for the bargain, i.e., some of the essays submitted under the common heading. He now leaves in

a moment, loaded with his prey.

Now comes the mail and with it a pack of letters and newspapers. The foreign journalist hurriedly "devours" their contents, the shipping and trade reporter flies with his eyes through the long lists of all the world's ships, in order to dwell for a moment on a ship's name that seems familiar to him — he must know Finland's ship's calendar by heart as far as possible — and now notes on which sea its flag has since



*The newspaper editor's two important tools in the past - the telephone and the typewriter. The telephone and typewriter are located at the Printing Museum in Stundars, near Vaasa. Telephones probably only became more common closer to the end of the 1800s*

been visible. A third man grabs the red pen and marks the arrived leaves in the margins, and then relegates them to the insatiable typesetting staff.

The letters are opened, read, and what is to be used at once is given into the hands of the errand boy, who moves like a perpetuum mobile between the bureau and the printer; Another part of the letter is put aside until the following day, others again wander directly into the trash.

During all this, people come and go incessantly. One person picks up some notice, another asks for a "nudge," a third only wants to pass the time at the bureau until it is enough for him to go in some company.

There is writing, talking, noise — and the whole thing is wrapped in tobacco smoke. Once more the wrapper sticks his head in:

"How do we stand today?" asks the editor-in-chief.

— Sixteen columns of text and six columns of ads ! (and there are 20 in all!) he says with a sor-

rowful look, which suggests a: Sorry!

"Then we will have some "publics" deleted, for example the one about the Miss Reform.

"Is it not going in at all?"

"No, it will have to wait until the next number. The mothers could be mothers for a day longer.

Eventually, the work at the firm is over. The clock ticks until half past ten and the staff leave, one after the other.

Only the proofreader sits faithfully at his desk, surrounded by strips of paper. He declares half-loudly what he reads; Without a break, the flow of words flows forward until he stops at a phrase that even a proofreader seems too strong. It is then something straight up the walls that has crept in. He smiles and corrects, that's his only joy. J, who with so much vehemence attacks the proofreader because a letter is upside down. You should remember what a heavy job he has, to stand and correct every day from 7 o'clock in the

afternoon to 3 and 4 in the morning. It is so easy for him to turn a blind eye to one or two mistakes. But you do not close your eyes to his.

If we make a short visit to the printer's office, we find the typesetters at work in front of their castes. Not snapping or whimpering. The diligent hands pass incessantly between the special compartments in which the letters are distributed, and the texts are thus gradually handed over letter by letter into the long rows of the "ships." Thus they stand in their diligent work all night, until the morning, when their work is finished, and when the turner is left alone, to break in the last part of the slit and "adjust" the iron frame in which each side is framed. Now he too has peace, after a last scrutinizing look at the agency has been devoted to the finished magazine. It is now 4 o'clock at night.

But don't think that life at the printing house will end in this way. When the settlor has left, the printer and his henchmen enter through the door. They have enjoyed a short night's sleep and are now gathering to print the newspaper. You get ready, the paper is lined up, the molds are taken in and soon the press is started. Lucky if you can power it with a steam engine; Otherwise, a few men are used, whose dead eyes and stiffened features imply that they represent only "human power."

The voracious machine is incessantly fed with clean sheets of paper, which, after a formal acquaintance with the rollers and moulds, appear as ready-made newspapers. It goes little by little, until the edition is expressed.

The clock strikes six in the mor-

# KUOPIO TIDNING.

Printet i Kuoopio, för det äro. 1 ark.  
Af löp. för det äro. 1 ark. 10 öre.  
Såväl för det äro. 1 ark. 10 öre.  
Såväl för det äro. 1 ark. 10 öre.

1856.

Utblisningsort: Kuoopio.  
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flights of stairs up to the next house, then down to the basement and so endlessly. Down there in the cellar the people are already up, and they therefore get their paper properly, but one, two, and three floors up, where there is no special box for letters and newspapers, the leaf is deposited on the floor, while at the same time the ring-machine is put into activity, and there it often happens that the owner lacks his morning homework. He then complains to the office, and then the newspaper distributor is blamed, even though the poor thing can really be clean as snow. For, notwithstanding the cheap price at which one can nowadays keep a newspaper, there are not a few individuals who prefer the less costly method of "subscribing to the store," in other words, to borrow the leaf laid in the stairwell, sometimes for the house next door.

Such an industry has already systematically trained itself. Yes, even if the precaution is observed, when the newspaper is placed in the doorway, one cannot be sure. Some apprentice boy has begun the exciting short story in the series, he wants the sequel, and only out of the desire to read does he commit the illegal act of poking the leaf out of the doorway with a stick. To the credit of these additional subscribers, however, it may be said that they sometimes return the page to its proper place, once they have become acquainted with the contents. But when the leaf has properly landed in the door, it first makes a round through the hands of the servant, the chambermaid, and the kitchen people, until at last it comes into the hands of the gentry.

In the mid-1800s, a Swedish daily newspaper was published in Kuopio

ring, and now a relay was sent to the press ombudsman, who is to receive the paper an hour before the distribution begins.

At the same time, you hear a fast and lively noise of loud, youthful voices. The crowd of newspaper distributors flocks in to each receive the normal number of newspaper copies. The boys' fingers run without interruption over the newspaper fuse, and many minutes have passed before the most flinty has folded—that is, folded—his leaves, tucked them into his bag at the side, and is ready to set out on the ar-

duous walk of the day, which is sometimes quite arduous. But a test of patience still remains for the young mind. The clock has not struck seven, and before that no one is allowed to go out. The Press Act must be strictly observed.

But the fateful hour has finally arrived, and now it is off at a brisk pace and with singing joy, following the quarters each has been assigned to him.

The walk goes street up and down the street all over the city, the boy runs up to the third floor and down again, then again two

## HISTORICAL ART

# Bopparder Pietà: A Mirror of the Christian History of Salvation

The Bopparder Pietà, a masterpiece of late Gothic sculpture from the late 14th century, is more than just a depiction of Mary's painful encounter with the body of her dead son. It is a complex symbol that is deeply rooted in the Christian faith and takes the viewer on a multifaceted spiritual journey.

This wooden sculpture can now be admired at the Ateneum's "Gothic Modern" exhibition until 26 January 2025.

The sculpture, which can usually be admired at the Liebieghaus sculpture collection in Frankfurt am Main, depicts Mary holding the lifeless body of Christ in her lap. The two figures are united in a heartfelt embrace, an expression of endless sorrow and love. But Bopparder Pietà goes beyond this superficial presentation. The lack of references to the place of crucifixion – Golgotha – and the reduced attributes lead the viewer's gaze away from the concrete historical event to the universal themes of suffering, death and resurrection.

The designation "Vespers image" refers to the Christian evening mass, where the Way of the Cross of Christ is recreated.



The Bopparder Pietà reflects this tradition by providing believers with the opportunity to identify with Christ's suffering and share His pain. The powerful image of the dead Christ invites the viewer to reflect on his own death and accept the transience of earthly life.

But the Bopparder Pietà is not only a depiction of death, but also a symbol of hope.

The diminished image of Christ directs the gaze to his childhood and reminds us of his birth. This contradiction between death and birth underscores the central message of Christianity: to overcome death through the resurrection. The dead Christ becomes a symbol of deliverance from sin and a promise of eternal life.

Bopparder Pietà is a work of art that ap-

peals to the senses and challenges the intellect. The detailed design of the figures, the intense colours and the careful execution invite the viewer to immerse themselves in the scene and experience the emotions of the figures. At the same time, the sculpture opens up for a variety of levels of interpretation and stimulates theological reflection.

Bopparder Pietà is a testimony to people's deep faith in the Middle Ages. It is a work of art that has not lost its relevance to this day and continues to move people from all over the world. The sculpture invites us to reflect on life's big questions and find comfort in the message of Christian hope.





## Female Doctors Cure Patients Better?

In a groundbreaking study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, researchers have shed light on a fascinating trend in healthcare: patients treated by female doctors tend to have better outcomes compared to those treated by male doctors. This finding is significant, particularly as it highlights the nuanced ways in which gender can influence medical care and patient health.

### Study Overview

The study, conducted by a team of esteemed researchers including Atsushi Miyawaki, MD, PhD, Anupam B. Jena, MD, PhD, Lisa S. Rotenstein, MD, MBA, MSc, and Yusuke Tsugawa, MD, MPH, PhD, analyzed Medicare claims data from 2016 to 2019. This large-scale retrospective observational study included a 20% random sample of fee-for-service beneficiaries hospitalized with various medical conditions, focusing on outcomes such as 30-day mortality and readmission rates.

### Key Findings

The study examined 458,108 female and 318,819 male patients, with 31.1% of female and 30.6% of male patients treated by female physicians. The primary outcomes revealed that both female and male patients had lower mortality rates when treated by female physicians. However, the benefit was notably more pronounced for female patients.

**Female Patients:** The adjusted mortality rates for female patients tre-

ated by female physicians were 8.15%, compared to 8.38% for those treated by male physicians. This translates to an average marginal effect (AME) of -0.24 percentage points, which is statistically significant.

**Male Patients:** For male patients, the adjusted mortality rates were 10.15% for those treated by female physicians versus 10.23% for those treated by male physicians, with an AME of -0.08 percentage points. While this indicates a slight improvement, it is not statistically significant.

The patterns were similar for readmission rates, further underscoring the potential benefits of care provided by female physicians.

### Significance of the Findings

These findings prompt a deeper exploration into why female physicians might be achieving better patient outcomes. Potential factors could include differences in communication styles, adherence to clinical guidelines, or even a more patient-centered approach to care that female doctors might employ.

**Communication and Empathy:** Studies have shown that female doctors often spend more time listening to their patients and are more empathetic. This can lead to a better understanding of patient needs and more tailored treatments.

**Adherence to Guidelines:** Female physicians are often found to be more diligent in following clinical guidelines, which can improve patient outcomes by ensuring that the best practices are consistently applied.

**Patient-Centered Care:** Female doctors may be more likely to engage in shared decision-making with their patients, fostering a collaborative environment that can lead to better health outcomes.

### Broader Implications

The implications of these findings are far-reaching. For healthcare institutions, this research suggests that fostering a diverse workforce and supporting female physicians can have a tangible positive impact on patient care. It also highlights the importance of considering gender dynamics in medical training and professional development.

### Limitations

It's important to note that the study's findings may not be generalizable to younger populations, as the data was derived from Medicare beneficiaries, who are typically older. Further research is needed to determine if these trends hold true across different age groups and healthcare settings.

### Conclusion

The study's conclusion is clear: patients, particularly women, experience lower mortality and readmission rates when treated by female physicians. While the exact reasons behind these improved outcomes require further investigation, this research underscores the critical role that female doctors play in enhancing patient care. As the healthcare industry continues to evolve, these insights should inspire efforts to support and empower female physicians, ultimately benefiting patients nationwide.



## HEALTH

# Semaglutide (Ozempic): A Promising Tool in the Fight Against Alcohol Abuse



Alcohol use disorder (AUD) is a complex health condition characterized by persistent and problematic alcohol use. While numerous treatments exist, many individuals struggle to maintain sobriety. Recent scientific research has shed light on a potential new therapeutic avenue: semaglutide.

Semaglutide, originally developed as a treatment for type 2 diabetes and obesity, has shown promising results in reducing alcohol consumption and binge-like

drinking behaviors. This medication belongs to a class of drugs known as glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonists. GLP-1 is a gut hormone that regulates appetite and blood sugar levels. By mimicking the effects of GLP-1, semaglutide can help reduce cravings, promote satiety, and curb impulsive behaviors associated with alcohol abuse.

Preclinical studies have demonstrated the efficacy of semaglutide in animal models of alcohol dependence. Researchers have observed significant reductions in alcohol intake and the rewarding effects of alcohol consumption in ro-

duents treated with semaglutide. These findings suggest that semaglutide may have a similar impact on human behavior.

While the exact mechanisms underlying semaglutide's effects on alcohol abuse are still being investigated, several theories have been proposed. One possibility is that semaglutide may alter brain reward pathways, reducing the reinforcing effects of alcohol. Additionally, semaglutide may improve mood and reduce stress, both of which can contribute to alcohol misuse.

The potential of semaglutide as a treatment for AUD

is significant. Hospitalizations due to alcohol abuse went down by a third in one big study. It offers a novel approach to addressing alcohol addiction, targeting the underlying biological mechanisms that drive compulsive alcohol use. However, it is important to note that further research is needed to fully understand the efficacy and safety of semaglutide in treating AUD.

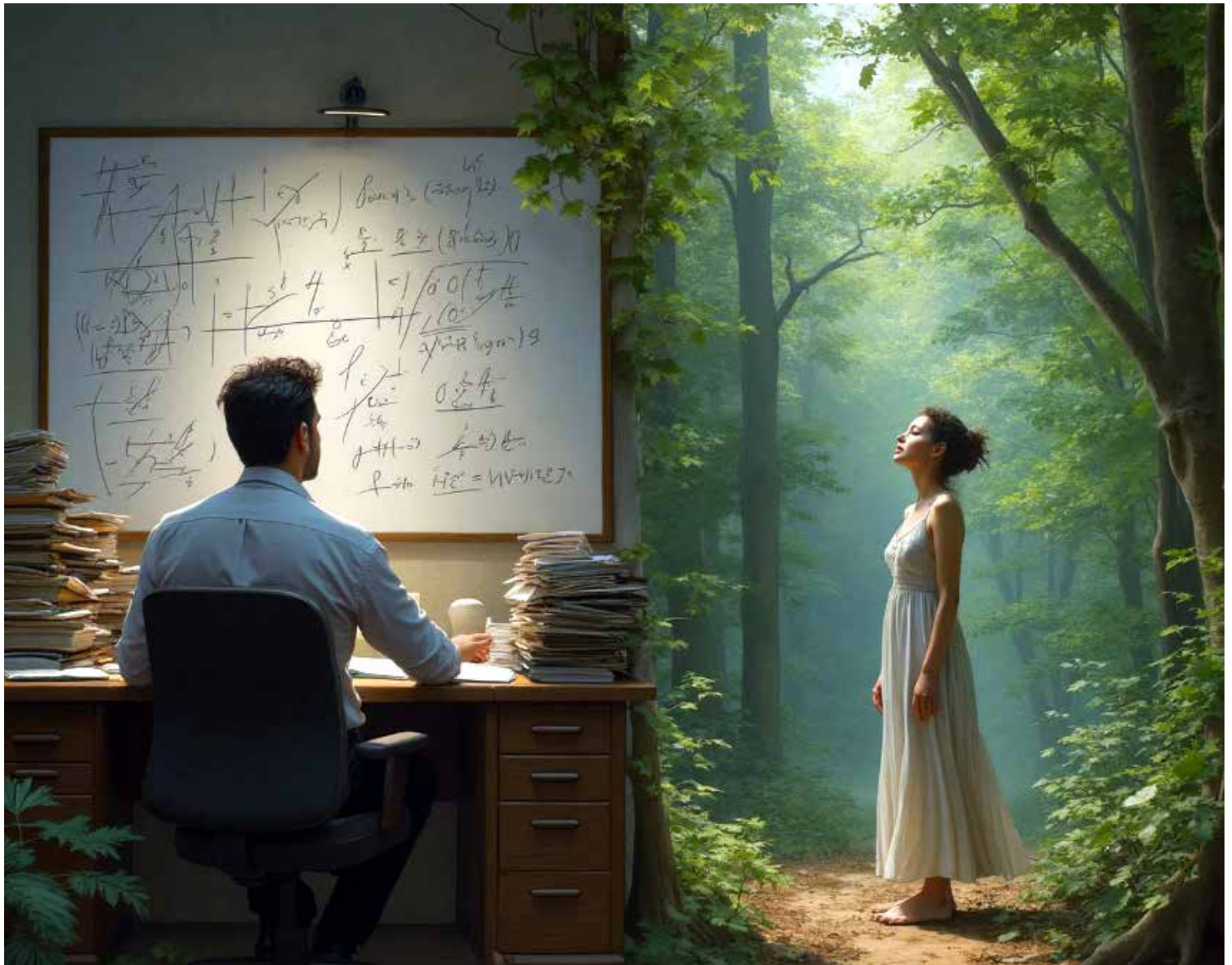
As with any medication, semaglutide may have side effects, including gastrointestinal issues such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. It is crucial to consult with a healthcare professional to determine if semaglutide

is an appropriate treatment option and to monitor for any adverse effects.

Semaglutide represents a promising development in the field of alcohol addiction treatment. While more research is necessary to fully elucidate its mechanisms of action and long-term effects, this medication holds the potential to revolutionize the way we approach alcohol use disorder.

# CAUSERIE

## Intelligence and wisdom are not the same



Intelligence and wisdom – two words that are often used almost synonymously, but are actually like two completely different dogs in the same cage.

Intelligence is the fast-paced border collie who can solve a Rubik's Cube, while Wisdom is a calm old golden retriever who knows that the cube can also support an un-

stable table. Both have their merits, but if you choose the wrong dog for the right situation, you may find yourself in the middle of a mess.

### The intelligent thinks, the wise know

Intelligence is the ability to learn, analyze and solve problems. For example, a smart person could figure out how to make a parachute out of a tablecloth and curtains if he falls from an airpla-

ne. A wise person, on the other hand, would have checked beforehand that he would not step on a plane with only one engine and the pilot had a bad day.

This is where the biggest difference between intelligence and wisdom lies: an intelligent person can survive difficult situations that a wise person never finds himself in. This explains why so many clever inventors, researchers, and entrepreneurs end up writing their me-

moirs about prison or bankruptcy – they're smart, but sometimes surprisingly little wise.

### History's greats – but which ones?

Take Aristotle and Einstein. Aristotle, that contemplator of the ancient world, was undoubtedly wise. He understood the great principles of life, such as that too much energy is not good, and therefore mostly ended up sitting and teaching others. He

missed out on stupid experiments, such as testing whether a person could jump off a cliff in Parnassus without consequences. Albert Einstein, on the other hand, was intelligent. He developed the theory of relativity and revolutionized our worldview, but was perhaps not the wisest person in practical life. He reportedly forgot his address and often had to ask for advice on how to find a home. Such situations would not have happened to Aristotle – he



would not even have left his home without a reliable guide.

### **Smart mistakes and smart avoidances**

In everyday life, the intelligent and wise often make different decisions. An intelligent person might buy an extremely complex and fancy coffee machine that requires an engineering degree to understand the instruction manual. The wise man again brews the pot coffee, knowing that the end result will be the same: caffeine in the blood and a cheerful mind.

A smart person tries to solve a marital crisis by buying his spouse's favorite car. A wise person takes his spouse for a walk and listens to what the other has to say. At this point, it's good to remember that sometimes wisdom and intelligence can also come together - that's when your spouse gets both a car and a walk, and the relationship blossoms.

### **Stupid genius and ingenious fool**

There are examples in history of people who were intelligent but not very wise. Napoleon Bonaparte, the master of the conquest of Europe, decided in winter to invade Russia. A military genius, but at the same time an insane risk-taker. A wise person might have thought twice about whether it is worth marching in the middle of the Siberian winter, when there is

already a nice kingdom behind him.

On the other hand, there are stories about people who are not particularly intelligent, but still extremely wise. Many folk wisdom and proverbs come from ordinary people who never went to school, but knew how to live their lives rationally. For example, the phrase "don't shoot a fly with a cannon" may well come from someone who realized that trying too hard doesn't always pay off.

### **Smart and wise at the same time - the best combination?**

Of course, it would be ideal to be both intelligent and wise, but since no one can be perfect in every way, one should settle for developing one's strengths. An intelligent person should learn to stop and ask whether the problem is worth solving at all. A wise person, on the other hand, would do well to try new things sometimes - such as the solution of a Rubik's Cube - just for the sake of practice.

After all, the balance between wisdom and intelligence is what makes life interesting. An intelligent person can figure out how to go to the moon, but a wise person wonders why on earth they should go to the moon, their own backyard is actually a good enough place.

## SOCIETY

# Click your way to change? About clicktivism and slacktivism



### What is clicktivism and slacktivism?

Have you ever shared an outrageous news article on social media, signed an online petition, or participated in a digital protest? If so, you may have unconsciously taken part in the phenomena of clicktivism and slacktivism.

These terms, coined by researchers Evgeny Morozov and Alice Marwick in 2017, describe a form of activism that is carried out online. It's about showing your support for a cause by clicking a button, sharing a picture, or writing a comment. It's simple, fast, and requires mini-

mal commitment.

Clicktivism focuses on the individual clicks that form the basis of digital activism, such as signing a petition or sharing a link.

Slacktivism is a more general term that refers to the perception that digital activism is often superficial and does not lead to real change.

### Why is it problematic?

Even though it can feel good to do something, no matter how small, for a thing you care about, there is criticism of clicktivism and slacktivism. Critics believe that:

It is not a substitute for real action: Clicking

a button or sharing a picture is not the same as participating in a demonstration, donating money or getting involved in political processes.

It can create the illusion of change: It can give a false sense that you have done something to change the world, even if your actions don't have much of an impact.

It can undermine more in-depth engagement: By making it so easy to be an "activist," clicktivism can make people less likely to engage in more demanding forms of activism.

It can be manipulated: Large amounts of clicks and likes can be

used to influence decision-making processes and create a false image of public opinion.

### Deliberation and democracy

Another problem with clicktivism is that it can undermine the democratic process. A healthy democracy requires an informed and nuanced debate on important issues. When we rely on simple "like" buttons and quick reactions on social media, we risk losing the ability to have deeper conversations and to absorb different perspectives.

### So what can we do?

It's important to remember that digital activism isn't completely useless. It can be a way to raise awareness of important

issues and mobilize people. But to create real change, it takes more than just a few clicks.

To contribute to a more meaningful and democratic debate, we can:

Get involved in local issues: Participate in local meetings, write to our politicians and get involved in volunteer work.

Support organizations that work for change: Donate money, become a member or spread the word about their work.

Deepen our knowledge: Read about the issues that are important to you and try to understand different perspectives.

Have critical conversations with others: Discuss important issues with friends, family, and colleagues.

# HEALTH

## All about Cutaneous Coeliac Disease

Dermatitis herpetiformis, the form of celiac disease that affects the skin, was first described in 1884 by the American professor of dermatology Louis Adolphus Duhring. He named the condition Dermatitis herpetiformis, a term still in use today, though for a long time it was commonly referred to as Duhring's disease.

In 1884, Louis Duhring published a 20-page book detailing the disease. Here is the introduction to his description:

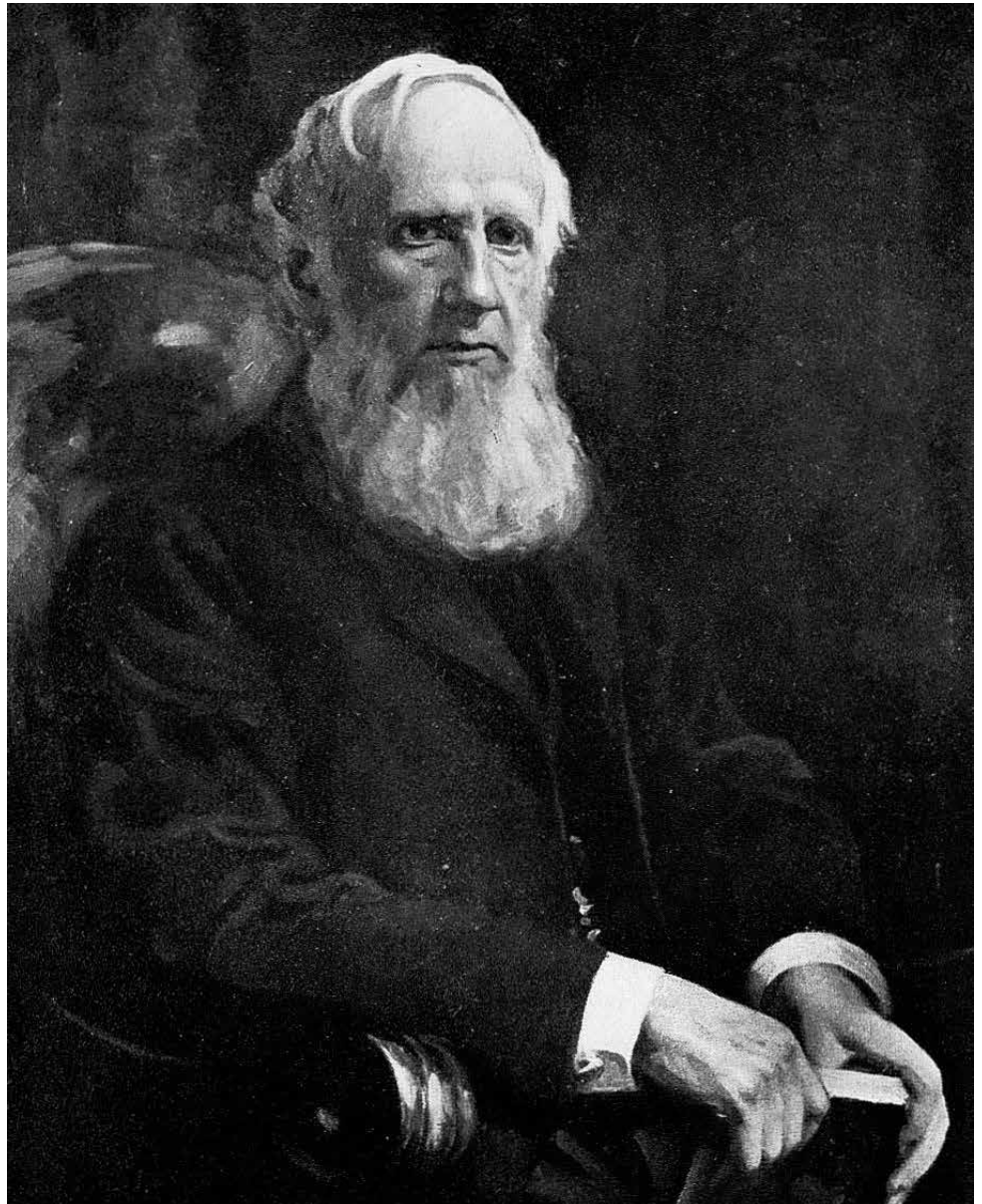
"Under the name Dermatitis Herpetiformis, I propose to group a number of cases of a skin disease I have encountered from time to time. These cases are mostly nameless, having been regarded and diagnosed either as peculiar manifestations of one or another of the more common known diseases, such as eczema, herpes, or pemphigus, or, in certain instances, as undescribed afflictions. From these remarks, it will be concluded that the disease is rare, which is, to some extent, true. At the same time, I have encountered a sufficient number of cases in the past fifteen years to justify the view that the condition deserves special description and a name. I first recognized this skin disease as distinct as far back as 1871, but with the few cases observed at that time, it was difficult to classify or handle them satisfactorily. Since then, I have encountered several other cases illustrating similar and variant forms of the disease."

Duhring also vividly described the itching associated with the disease:

"The most striking symptom is the itching. Burning is also not uncommonly complained of. However, itching dominates and is, in all cases, violent or even intense. Patients report it to be entirely disproportionate to the amount of the outbreak. Furthermore, it is persistent, causing the affected individual to scratch constantly. It usually precedes the outbreak and does not subside until the lesions have ruptured. Experienced patients, familiar with the natural course of the process, have informed me that they cannot find relief until the lesions burst. From my observation, I would say that the itching is both more severe and more persistent than in vesicular eczema. Vesicles appear slowly, taking several days or even a week to fully develop."

In the years that followed, Louis Duhring published numerous works about this disease. However, it was not until 1967 that the link between celiac disease and dermatitis herpetiformis was definitively established. Since then, a gluten-free diet has become the primary treatment for this condition as well.

### Symptoms



*Louis Adolphus Duhring (1845-1913), an American physician who in the 1860s studied skin diseases in Paris, London and Vienna, and then opened a clinic for skin diseases in Philadelphia, USA. Wikimedia Commons, Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International*

Dermatitis herpetiformis and celiac disease are essentially the same condition, with the former manifesting in the skin and the latter primarily affecting the intestines. Both forms of celiac disease, however, can cause changes beyond the skin and intestines.

Symptoms of dermatitis herpetiformis include small, red blisters that typically appear on the elbows, knees, back, and buttocks. The rash is usually symmetrical but can also occur elsewhere, such as on the neck or even the face. The itching is severe, intense, and clearly impacts quality of life. These blisters can cause significant discomfort, often disrupting sleep and leading to scarring from constant scratching.

The medical literature includes numerous vivid accounts of the itching. In *Celiac Disease: The Hidden Epidemic*, Rory Jones describes their own experience:

"\*I now refer to it as my 'seven-year itch.' The itching was so bad I wanted to scratch through to the bone. It kept me awake at night. I wore long-sleeved shirts and pants in ninety-five-degree heat to cover the outbreaks. No cream or lotion stopped the itching, which increasingly consumed my waking hours. There was a certain irony as I used both my left and right hands to scratch the mirror-like outbreaks in tandem\*"

The ultimate conclusion about the cause of my 'unexplained dermatitis' was stress. Since our



*The rash on the elbows may be insignificant at a calm stage of skin celiac disease. Despite this, the itching can be bothersome.*

skin is a living, breathing organ influenced by both physical and mental health, this began to make sense to my irritable, sleep-deprived brain. After seven years of itching, joint pain, and constant fatigue, if nothing else, I was certainly stressed.”\*

The eventual identification of gluten as the culprit transformed treatment, proving that a gluten-free diet is critical for alleviating not only intestinal celiac disease but also dermatitis herpetiformis

“\*I now refer to it as my ‘seven-year itch.’ The itching was so bad I wanted to scratch through to the bone. It kept me awake at night. I wore long-sleeved shirts and pants in ninety-five-degree heat to cover the outbreaks. No cream or lotion stopped the itching, which increasingly consumed my waking hours. There was a certain irony as I used both my left and right hands to scratch the mirror-like outbreaks in tandem”

### **Epidemiology**

Dermatitis herpetiformis is extremely rare in children and adolescents. The average age of onset is around 50 years. Men and women are affected about equally, with a slight predominance in men. The oldest patient diagnosed with this disease was over 80 years old.

In a 40-year follow-up in Finland, it was shown that the average age at diagnosis was around 35 years in the 1970s, and then gradually increased to almost 50 years. At the same time, the disease has become increasingly rare. The reason for this may be that the dietary intake of gluten has halved during this period.

Of all celiac disease patients, a little over one in ten has dermatitis herpetiformis.

People with dermatitis herpetiformis rarely have severe symptoms indicative of common celiac disease. Although the disease affects the skin, it seems to affect the small intestine to a small extent. However, if a gastroscopy is performed to obtain small intestine biopsy samples, typical villous atrophy will be seen in most dermatitis herpetiformis patients, while a smaller proportion has completely subtle changes.

### **Diagnosis**

Diagnosis of dermatitis herpetiformis can be difficult because the symptoms can resemble other skin diseases, such as eczema or psoriasis. However, the localization of the skin changes is very typical. The worst changes are often found on the outside of the elbows, knees, and buttocks.

A reliable diagnosis is obtained by taking a sample from healthy skin, which is then examined using an immunofluorescence method.

If a gastroscopy is performed to obtain small intestine biopsy samples, typical villous atrophy will be seen in most dermatitis herpetiformis patients, while a smaller proportion has subtle changes. However, since the diagnosis is already certain with a skin biopsy, it is not necessary to examine small intestine biopsies in dermatitis herpetiformis.

### **Treatment**

A gluten-free diet is also the treatment for this form of celiac disease. And the diet is lifelong. Oats are allowed, but it must be pure oats that do not contain any contamination from other grains.

However, the gluten-free diet must be followed extremely strictly. And even if the diet is followed, it can take quite a long time before the rash and itching disappear. It can take weeks or months, but after two years of a gluten-free diet, the itching and rash are usually gone.

But it is not easy to cope with itching for weeks or months, even if you follow a strict diet. Therefore, medication is often needed as a complement to the diet, at least for a while.

The medication used is called dapsone. This is a sulfonamide with antibiotic properties. Dapsone has a valuable role in the treatment of leprosy and malaria.

It is unclear why dapsone helps against the itching of dermatitis herpetiformis. But the effect is striking. After a few days of treatment, the itching is relieved. The usual dose for adults is 25-50 milligrams per day, sometimes the dose can be increased to 100 milligrams. However, as the gluten-free diet takes effect, the dapsone dose can be reduced, and often discontinued after a couple of years.

Dapsone has a number of side effects, which is why the drug should never be used unnecessarily. The most serious side effect is methemoglobinemia, that is, a change in the blood's hemoglobin that impairs the blood's ability to transport oxygen and turns the blood blue, which can cause a change in skin color and blue lips and nails. Other drugs can also cause methemoglobin, such as trimethoprim, metoclopramide, and several anesthetics.

Dapsone has other side effects such as liver inflammation.

Dapsone treatment is carried out in Finland by dermatologists. Regular laboratory tests are necessary due to the risk of side effects.

Finally, it is worth pointing out: Although dapsone is effective against symptoms caused by dermatitis herpetiformis, the drug is definitely not an alternative to a gluten-free diet.

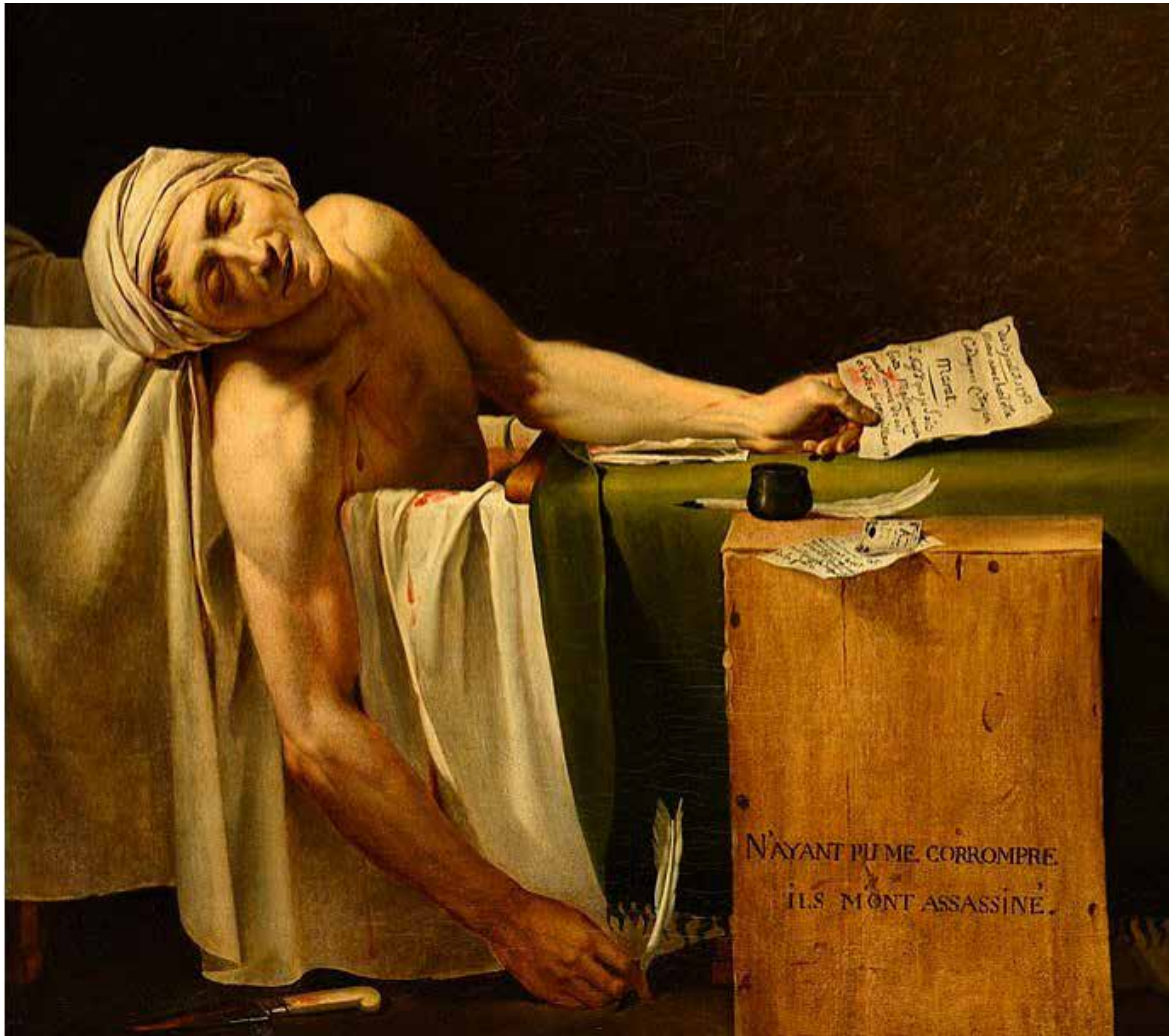
### **Prognosis**

As long as dermatitis herpetiformis is undiagnosed and untreated, it has a major impact on a person's quality of life. The intense itching keeps the patient awake, which has many harmful consequences.

But when the diagnosis of dermatitis herpetiformis has been made and a strict gluten-free diet has been started, the prognosis is good in the long term. The patient can live a normal life, the disease does not affect life expectancy, and the risk of complications is minimal. In fact, a Finnish study suggested that people with treated dermatitis herpetiformis live slightly longer than healthy people. A disease that prolongs life can be a comfort and encouragement to maintain a strict diet.

The risk of complications is minimal, but it exists. In the first few years after diagnosis (when the protective effect of a gluten-free diet has not yet taken effect), there is an





*The Death of Marat, a painting by Jacques-Louis David. Public Domain*

### **Jean-Paul Marat and Dermatitis Herpetiformis**

Jean-Paul Marat (1743-1793) was a French physician, scientist and revolutionary, one of the leading figures of the French Revolution.

During the last five years of his life, he was bothered by a violently itchy rash. The only relief he could get was in a bathtub, where he spent his last years all day long. There he received his guests, and there he wrote his revolutionary newspaper articles, which were published in his own newspaper "L'ami du peuple." He had made many political enemies, and one of them was Marie-Anne Charlotte de Corday d'Armont.

And in the bathtub, he was reading a newspaper at the moment when his life came to an abrupt and violent end. Lying in his bathtub, he was murdered by Charlotte Corday. She stuck a kitchen knife into his chest. Charlotte Corday was immediately arrested, sentenced to death, and then publicly executed by guillotine. The murder caused a period of terror in France, around 1400 people were executed, among them Queen Marie Antoinette.

The newspaper, his own "L'ami du peuple", he read is preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris. And on the newspaper there were blood stains that DNA tests were carried out. It is said that many infectious diseases could be ruled out, although not with complete certainty. Unfortunately, HLA tests were not done for celiac disease.

Marat's skin disease has aroused a lot of interest and expert doctors have spent a lot of time trying to determine the diagnosis. There is much to suggest that the diagnosis was dermatitis herpetiformis, including the appearance and location of the rash. He had also lost considerable weight, suggesting malnutrition consistent with celiac disease.

increased risk of malignant diseases, such as lymphoma.

Lymphoma, a malignant disease originating from lymphoid tissue.

Lymphoma can be a serious but fortunately rare complication of untreated celiac and dermatitis herpetiformis. The two

main types are Hodgkin's lymphoma and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, the latter of which can occur with celiac and dermatitis herpetiformis.

Celiac disease, including dermatitis herpetiformis, is an autoimmune disease, which means that people with

celiac disease have an increased risk of developing other autoimmune diseases. Such diseases include type 1 diabetes, thyroid diseases, and skin diseases such as alopecia areata.

# HEALTH

## The miracle medicine Ozempic helps for everything? No, it doesn't, but...

**Ozempic – a drug that has taken the world by storm and quickly become a topic of conversation both in medical circles and among the general public.**

Used primarily to manage type 2 diabetes, but is also associated with weight loss, improved heart health, and most recently with the hope that it may even have a slowing effect on Alzheimer's disease. This drug has raised many questions about its potential and also some concerns about its side effects and ethical implications. Is Ozempic really the miracle drug that can solve everything – or is there reason to take it with a certain skepticism?

### **What exactly is Ozempic?**

Ozempic is not just a new fad drug for weight loss. Basically, it's a drug to treat type 2 diabetes, and its active ingredient, semaglutide, is a so-called GLP-1 receptor agonist. This substance mimics a natural hormone in the body that helps regulate blood sugar levels. By stimulating insulin secretion when blood sugar is elevated and reducing the production of sugar from the liver, Ozempic helps diabetics manage their disease. Keeping blood sugar under control is crucial for avoiding long-term complications such as nerve damage, kidney problems, and heart disease. In that sense, Ozempic is a clear success.

But what really made Ozempic a talking point was its unexpected effect on body weight. A lot of studies have shown that patients who take Ozempic can experience significant weight loss. For people struggling with obesity – a problem that often goes

hand-in-hand with type 2 diabetes – this is an enticing side effect. And perhaps this is where the miracle medicine stamp came about.

Benefits of Ozempic – Not Just a Matter of Weight

Ozempic's weight-reducing effect has proven to be an added bonus, but there are more aspects to consider. High blood pressure and coronary artery disease can be positively affected by the drug, as Ozempic improves insulin sensitivity and reduces inflammation in the body – factors that can directly affect cardiovascular health. This means a significant improvement in quality of life for many, and it is no exaggeration to say that Ozempic can indeed have a big impact on the health of people with type 2 diabetes or obesity.

A weight loss of 5 kg is healthy for most of us, and with Ozempic, such a weight loss is easy to achieve. However, for the weight loss to be lasting – this can be worse and may mean that you have to use Ozempic all the time.

A more surprising discovery is Ozempic's potential effect on Alzheimer's disease. Research suggests that semaglutide may have a neuroprotective action, meaning it may help protect brain cells and possibly slow Alzheimer's progression. Of course, the idea that a diabetes drug can also have benefits for brain health raises hopes – and some skepticism.

As with any medication, Ozempic has its own side effects. One of the most common complaints is nausea and other stomach problems, especially at the beginning of treatment. More serious risks include inflammation of the pancreas, a rare but serious side effect. Perhaps the most eye-catching side effect that has at-



racted attention, however, is the "Ozempic face". This term refers to the changes in facial structure that some users have experienced after losing weight with the help of the drug.

When body fat decreases rapidly – which often happens when losing a lot of weight in a short period of time – it can lead to a loss of volume on the face. This causes the skin to become saggy and the face to have a more aged appearance. For a medicine that is supposed to improve health, this side effect may seem paradoxical: you may feel healthier, but the mirror image shows otherwise.

And it is important to know that the knowledge of Ozempic's side effects with very long-term use is unknown. What happens if you

use Ozempic for decades. No one can know that yet at this stage.

Ozempic raises a lot of questions, not only about health but also about ethics and society. An important aspect is the cost and availability of the drug. Ozempic is expensive, and for many people, price can be a determining factor in whether they can access the medication. This creates a potential inequality in healthcare, where a treatment that could benefit many people may be unavailable to those with lower incomes.

In addition, there is a risk that Ozempic is used by people without diabetes solely for the purpose of losing weight. A drug intended for a disease becomes in some circles a shortcut to a slimmer appearance, which can

lead to addiction and to side effects in healthy people. The question is whether this is a problem for society or whether it is up to the individual to decide. In any case, it reminds us of how complex medical ethics can be, and how difficult it is to draw a line between what is necessary and what is merely desirable.

Ozempic has undeniably revolutionized the treatment of type 2 diabetes and has been shown to have significant benefits for weight loss and heart health. It is difficult to turn a blind eye to the potential of this drug – not only for individuals but for the healthcare system as a whole. But miracle medicine is perhaps an exaggeration.

Ozempic does not solve everything, and it is important to understand that the medication comes with risks and ethical question marks. The Ozempic face is a reminder that all change has a downside, and the cost and availability of the drug remind us of the inequalities that still exist in healthcare.

Perhaps Ozempic is more of a symbol of the medical aspirations of our time: a powerful tool that, with the right handling, can help many, but which also reminds us of the importance of taking a step back and seeing the big picture. The future will tell whether Ozempic was a medical fad or a long-term solution to our biggest health problems – until then, we should receive this "miracle" with our eyes open and a healthy measure of caution.

Ozempic is a prescription medication. It is found in Finland but has become so popular that it can sometimes be difficult to obtain. A month's treatment costs over 100 €.

# **RUSSIAS WAR AGAINST UKRAINE**

## **Meeting of the President of Ukraine and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in Kyiv 16 January 2025**



## RUSSIAN INFLATION

# The Ruble, Hyperinflation, and Divine Intervention: Russia's Heavenly Economic Policy

When the economy spirals out of control, printing presses are overheating, and the ruble teeters on the brink, what's the solution? In Russia, the answer has proven to be as creative as it is desperate: turn to God. The Orthodox Church, under Patriarch Kirill's leadership, has taken on the task of solving the nation's economic crisis—not through financial reforms or fiscal policy, but through prayers. Yes, prayers to combat inflation, strengthen the ruble, and defeat the dollar.

### A Tumbling Economy: What Happened?

This celestial intervention has a very earthly cause. Officially, the Kremlin claims that inflation in Russia stands at 8%. Even this figure is painful for the average citizen, but behind the official narrative lies a harsher reality: some estimates suggest the real inflation rate is as high as 50%, with hyperinflation looming ominously on the horizon.

What's driving this crisis? One major factor is the relentless printing of money. Financing the war in Ukraine has demanded enormous sums, and the state has decided that the solution is simply to print more cash. On top of this, huge bonuses—

reportedly up to three million rubles per soldier—have been promised to those who voluntarily enlist in the army. These payouts, coupled with unchecked spending, have pushed prices up, devalued the ruble, and created a vicious cycle of rising interest rates and plummeting confidence in the currency.

The Russian Central Bank has responded by raising its key interest rate to 21%, with forecasts suggesting it could hit 25% by the year's end. Meanwhile, the ruble has lost 20% of its value against the dollar in just a few weeks, leaving the economy in freefall.

### God as an Economic Advisor

Faced with this dire situation, and with pragmatic solutions seemingly out of reach, it's perhaps not surprising that Russia has turned to higher powers. Patriarch Kirill, who has consistently aligned himself with the Kremlin's directives, has ordered special prayers to combat inflation. Initially, these prayers will take place in monasteries, away from the public eye—perhaps to prevent widespread panic over the scale of the crisis.

But this is only the



beginning. If these initial efforts fail, all of Russia's churches will be mobilized in the fight against rising prices. Concurrently, prayers will also be offered to "defeat the dollar" and strengthen the ruble, as if foreign exchange markets could be swayed by holy water and crossed fingers.

And if even that doesn't work? Then comes the *pièce de résistance*: a massive religious procession through the streets of Moscow or St. Petersburg, aimed at shielding the nation and its people from economic hardship.

### A Stark Contrast to Reality

It's hard not to raise an eyebrow at such measu-

res. While other nations grapple with inflation through interest rate hikes, fiscal reforms, and international cooperation, Russia is turning to spiritual remedies. Economists analyze supply chains, market trends, and capital flows, while Patriarch Kirill likely consults psalms for answers.

What does this reveal about Russia's economic state? At best, it's a symbolic gesture—a bid to instill hope in a population increasingly burdened by the crisis. At worst, it's a tragically comical admission that the government has no real tools left to address the situation.

Prayers and Processi-

ons: Inflation's New Foe

The notion that a religious procession could stabilize the ruble or curb inflation might seem absurd to most, but it reflects the deeper issues plaguing Russia. The nation's economy is so entangled in the costs of war, systemic corruption, and political instability that traditional solutions appear ineffective.

Whether prayers and processions can truly save the ruble from its freefall remains to be seen. But if even divine intervention fails to rescue it, one is left wondering—*who, or what, could?*

# RUSSIAN ECONOMY

## Is hyperinflation coming up in Russia?

### An analysis of Russia's economic crisis

Russia's economy is facing one of its biggest challenges in modern times. The economic sanctions that followed the invasion of Ukraine, combined with an increasingly isolated position in the global market, have created a perfect storm for the Russian ruble.

The drastic increase in the policy rate to 21%, with the prospect of further increases, is a clear sign that the Russian central bank is trying to fight inflation that threatens to spiral out of control.

### Official statistics versus reality

The Russian government reports an inflation rate of around 8%. However, economists and experts agree that this figure does not reflect the real situation. The rising demand for goods, especially food and other basic goods, combined with disruptions in supply chains, has led to a significant increase in prices. Many Russians testify that the prices of food and other necessities have more than doubled in the past year.

### Banknote presses run hot

To finance the war in Ukraine and compensate for the reduced revenues from oil and gas exports, the Russian government has had to print large

amounts of money. This has led to a sharp increase in the money supply in circulation, which in turn drives up inflation. Free currency trading has been abolished, and the ruble has depreciated sharply against other currencies. Although the official exchange rate is 100 rubles per dollar, in practice it is impossible for Russians to buy dollars at this rate.

### A population in panic

The economic uncertainty has led to increased anxiety among the Russian population. Many Russians are trying to protect their savings by buying physical assets, such as housing and groceries. The phenomenon of hoarding buckwheat, a staple of the Russian diet, has become increasingly common.

The risk of hyperinflation in Russia is high. Historically, countries that have been hit by similar economic crises have often experienced hyperinflation. Hyperinflation is an extremely high rate of inflation, which can lead to a total collapse of a country's economy. To avoid hyperinflation, the Russian government must take drastic measures to stabilize the economy and regain the confidence of investors and the population.

Hyperinflation can occur very quickly, at a time when the population is suffering from something that could be called mass psychosis and everyone is rushing to the shops at the same time to get rid of their almost worthless banknotes.



This is not something new in Russia. In the early 90s, Russia had a period of over 1000% inflation. In a short time, the ruble lost over 90% of its value.

The high inflation, the reduced availability of foreign currency and the increased uncertainty pose a major threat to the standard of living of the Russian population. If the Russian government does not succeed in reversing the trend, the country risks ending up in a deep economic crisis with long-lasting consequences. The worst possible consequence is hyperinflation.

### Consequences of a possible hyperinflation for the Russian population

Hyperinflation, an extremely high inflation rate, would have devastating consequences for the Russian population. Here

are some of the most likely outcomes:

Greatly reduced purchasing power: Money quickly loses its value, which means that wages and savings become worthless. Panicked buying accelerates, people buy everything they can as long as you get something for the rubles and in the end all the shelves are empty. People will no longer be able to buy the goods and services they need to survive.

Social unrest and instability: Economic crisis often leads to social unrest and political instability. Dissatisfaction with the government may increase, which may lead to protests and demonstrations.

Hunger and malnutrition: High food prices make it difficult for people to get enough food. This can lead to starva-

tion and malnutrition, especially among children and the elderly.

Loss of lifelong savings: Pensions, savings accounts, and other savings will be wiped out. Many people will lose everything they have worked for throughout their lives.

Fleeing the country: Many will try to leave the country to find better living conditions. This could lead to a mass exodus and create additional problems for neighbouring countries.

Disintegration of society: Hyperinflation can lead to a breakdown of society, with increased crime and violence.

Loss of confidence in the economic system: People will lose confidence in the economic system and the Russian ruble. This can lead to an increased use of alternative currencies or barter.

# AI

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



**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 redefining 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.

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



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 Ostrobotnia region

The magazine contains quotations from old daily newspapers taken from the National Archives ([digikansalliskirjasto.fi](http://digikansalliskirjasto.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!

Editorial office: Wasa Daily, Koulukatu 37 B 7, 65100 Vaasa, tel. +358-40-5462455.

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

Email: [wasadagblad@gmail.com](mailto:wasadagblad@gmail.com)

# Those who know a little more are those who read Wasa Daily

Wasa Daily  
Wasa Dagblad  
Photo Supplement

República's president Alexander Stubb in Vaasa 27.4.2024

**Kärlfestivali**  
detta  
vecka!

Kalevaspeleinen i Vaasa 27-30.6.2024

Kremlin gör natt av sina motsändare - 1939 liksom nu

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En IT press.  
Grunden för  
lycka och de-  
mokrati

Kommitté för utvärderingen  
djupgående konsek-  
venser för Finland un-  
der de kommande 50  
år

**KÖR-  
FESTIVALEN**

Sinebrychhoff  
konstmuseum

Kremlin gör natt av sina  
motsändare - 1939  
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Kommitté för utvär-  
deringen  
brådskande åtgär-  
der

**Pain-maja, en  
Pörtomdiktare**

Puccinis  
"TOSCA" KOM-  
MER TILL VASA  
I JANUARI

Sinebrychhoff  
konstmuseum

Kremlin gör natt av sina  
motsändare - 1939  
liksom nu

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**Sinebrychhoffin  
taidemuseo**

**Sinebrychhoffin  
konstmuseum**

**Sinebrychhoff  
Art Museum**

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**WASA DAILY**

**Pörtom kyrka  
Pirttikylän kirkko  
The Church in Pörtom**

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**WASA DAILY**

**Ihana kuofestivaali  
tulossa!**

Tasavallan pre-  
sidentti Alexan-  
der Stubb Vaa-  
sassa 27.4.2024

Jeff Goodell:  
The Heat will  
kill You first

Kaleva kilpailut  
Vaasassa 27-  
30.6

**Hylkeenpyynti  
Raippaluodossa  
1895**

Jussi Adler-Ol-  
sen

Venäjän omi-  
tuinen diplo-  
maattinen kieli

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**Hylkeenpyynti  
Raippaluodossa  
1895**

**MAA LEHDISTÖ:  
Ummellisuuden ja  
demokratian perus-  
te**

**KUORO-  
FESTIVAALI**

Sinebrychhoffin taide-  
museo

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**Puccinis "Tosca" Näin löydät tie-  
oppaan on tulos-  
on Vaasaan**

**NAISTEN ÄÄNI-  
elämäkertakirjasto**

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**WASA DAILY**

Mysterious green  
giants in the La-  
si-palatsi square,  
Helsinki

Mystical East in Ika-  
noja  
All EU-candidates

**Puccinis "Tosca" is  
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**ROAD CHURCHES**  
The Kremlin mocks  
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What a  
wonderful  
first week  
we have  
ahead of  
us! - Vaasa  
Choir Festi-  
val 2024  
2.-11.8.2024

Cycling Week in  
Vaasa this week

Climate Change's  
Profound Impact  
on Finland

Kaleva Games in Vaasa  
27-30.6

Just After-Orl-  
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**CHOIR  
FESTIVAL**

**A Free Place:  
The Hedrick of  
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**Fero Järnefelt  
(1863-1937)**

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Photo Supplement

**Wasa Daily  
Wasa Dagblad  
Photo Supplement**

**I K Inha (1865-1930)  
I Replot 1895  
Raippaluodossa 1895**

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Jussi Adler-Ol-  
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Vaasaan istu-  
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pöytä

**Hylkeenpyynti  
Raippaluodossa  
1895**

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Finland's  
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A free for everyone in  
Vaasa

**ROAD CHURCHES**

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## HOROSCOPE FOR JANUARY 2025

### January 2025 Horoscopes: Laugh Your Way Into the New Year

**Aries** (March 21–April 19): You'll charge into January like a caffeinated goat on a mountain. Just remember, not every hill is worth climbing, especially when Netflix has new releases.

**Taurus** (April 20–May 20): You're feeling stubbornly optimistic this month. Someone will suggest a kale smoothie. Resist. Your taste buds deserve better.

**Gemini** (May 21–June 20): Your double personality shines in January – you'll either join a yoga class or binge-watch crime documentaries while eating pizza. Duality is your superpower.

**Cancer** (June 21–July 22): Home is your

happy place this month. Unfortunately, so is your fridge. Remember: snacks are feelings too.

**Leo** (July 23–August 22): New year, new you! But let's be honest, the crown you bought in December isn't coming off. Keep ruling, your majesty.

**Virgo** (August 23–September 22): You've already color-coded your New Year's resolutions. Relax – you'll end up ignoring them by February anyway.

**Libra** (September 23–October 22): Your quest for balance will be tested when your couch competes with your gym membership. Spoiler: the couch wins.

**Scorpio** (October 23–November 21): You're radiating mystery this month. Or maybe it's just that you forgot to answer texts from last year. Keep 'em guessing.

**Sagittarius** (Novem-

ber 22–December 21): You're craving adventure in January. But the biggest journey might be walking to the mailbox in your slippers. Baby steps.

**Capricorn** (December 22–January 19): It's your season, goat! You'll be climbing corporate ladders and icy sidewalks with equal determination. Try not to slip on either.

**Aquarius** (January 20–February 18): The stars predict intellectual breakthroughs this month. Or maybe you'll just finally solve Wordle in two tries. Either way, genius vibes.

**Pisces** (February 19–March 20): Your emotional waves are high, but so is your charm. Use it to convince someone to shovel the driveway.





# NEWS 100 YEARS AGO



## Sunday, January 19, 1925

This is a fictional daily newspaper that contains completely authentic news from exactly 100 years ago with the aim of giving the reader an idea of what everyday life

# The court hearing is the Christmas Day murder in Jomala.

Västra Finland

**At Jomala district court on Thursday, the case against those detained for the murder of the widow Roos Antfolk and Qyllenberg.**

An extract from the criminal record established that Antfolk, who was born in 1895, in 1914 for burglary, theft and shoplifting, was sentenced to 1 year and 4 months in prison and in 1920 for theft to 1 year in prison.

Antfolk had served these sentences and then, in the spring of 1922, together with his mother and siblings, had come over to Åland. (According to an information that has not yet been confirmed, Antfolk's father is currently in prison for manslaughter.

Mikael Gyllenberg had clear papers to the extent that he had not been convicted of any crime, but had to pay a fine for drunkenness.

Then several police reports and a certificate from the doctor Edv. Nylander, who had carried out an inspection of the deceased, was read out, the prosecutor, the Crown Governor of Jomala and several parishes' districts, Fridolf Helin, explained that he brought an action against Antfolk

for the murder of the widow Josefina Roos and against Gyllenberg for instigation of the murder.

The president of the court, the mayor Baron Harald v. Hellens, now interrogated the accused Antfolk, who during the police interrogation had admitted that he had been inside Roos' cottage, but on the other hand did not want to admit that he had beaten the widow Roos.

On a serious reprimand from the judge to tell the truth before the court, Antfolk quietly admitted that he had penetrated the cottage in the manner described before, and that he had hit the widow Roos on the head with a stone. He could not recall any details at all because of the intoxicated state in which he found himself on Christmas Day.

Antfolk said that they had never before seen the widow Roos, nor had they known that she would have received money from her son in America before Christmas. As a drunk he was dazed, Antfolk himself admitted, he had a particularly difficult disposition. Since he had not known the widow Roos, he could not have held any grudge against her.

He was probably easy to persuade to do anything

when he was drunk and would not deny that he could have been influenced by some drinking companion.

After Antfolk had facilitated the investigation through his confession, it was up to the judge to ascertain whether and to what extent Gyllenberg had a part in the shocking act of murder.

But the witness Karl Lauri Karlsson, who had drunk and accompanied Antfolk and Gyllenberg on Christmas afternoon, nevertheless took his oath that "the devilish old woman should get a proper lesson".

When asked about this, Gyllenberg said that since K. had made such a statement, he must surely have made such a statement, though he could not recall it. Gyllenberg also firmly denied that he had learned anything about the widow Roos receiving money before Christmas.

How O. had spent the next few hours after he had left Rasmansböle and after he had parted from Antfolk, he could not give an account. Most likely, Q. said, he had fallen over and dozed off in some country road ditch. He firmly denied any involvement in the murder as well as that he had instigated it.

Last was heard nine-year-old Margit Lindström, who gave a clear account of the course of events on Christmas Eve and even now without the slightest hesitation pointed out Antfolk as the one who had forced into the cottage and rushed at the widow Roos.

Prosecutor Helin then took the floor and stated

the following: Due to the detained Johannes Alfred Antfolk's own confession made before the district court and in support of the testimonies. as in the case, I find it completely established that Antfolk was guilty of the murder of the widow Josefina Roos, which is why I claim against him responsibility for premeditated murder.

**FORD FORDOR**  
**SEDAN**

4-5 personers heltäckt vagn anlänst.

Aldrig har allmänheten erbjudits större valuta för sina pennningar än genom den heltäckta Ford-vagn som nu finnes att tillgå. Smakfull till sitt yttre, vackert inredd och stadigt byggd som den är, erbjuder den förmåner, som endast mycket dyrare vagnar besitta.

Den täckta Ford-vagnen är till utseendet fin, elegant formad och ståtlig. Lackeringen bibehåller singlans under obegränsad tid. Den som kör med en sådan Ford kan vara stolt i vilket sällskap som helst.

Dessa vagnar äro lätta, men starka, lätta att köra och föra i förvar, billiga, i bruk och skötsel och alltid pålitliga. Nyttiga, bekväma och vackra, uppfylla de alla anspråk, som kunna ställas på ett förstklassigt trafikmedel.

**Skönhet och nytta.**

Pris endast Fmk 38,425:— Frakt särskilt för köparens ort.  
Kom och se en provvagn!

**Vaasan Auto Osakeyhtiö**  
Hovrättseplanaden 20, tel. 8 29.

# HUMOUR ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

## VERY STRANGE

— Tell me, Dad, weren't you born in Helsinki?  
 — Yes.  
 — And I was born in Vaasa?  
 — Yes.  
 — And Mom was born in Mariehamn?  
 — Yes.  
 — Don't you think it's very strange that the three of us have found each other?

## THE FIRST LOUDSPEAKER

He: The first speaker was made from a bone.  
 She: Is that possible?  
 He: Yes, from Adam's rib.

## AS YOU SEE AND NOT SEE

Teacher: Things you see are called concrete or real, things you don't see are called, —  
 Well Lisa O-o-o-  
 Lisa: Indecent.

## PAINTER OR POET

— I don't know if I'm going to be a poet or a painter.  
 — Be a painter.  
 — Have you seen any of my paintings?  
 — No, man, I've read a couple of your poems.

## THIRTEEN AT THE TABLE

Do you mind if there are thirteen at the table?  
 — Yes, if there's only food for twelve.

## ROLLS-ROYCE

Anna: — Was it love at first sight? Dagny:  
 — Absolutely. Right when I saw him in his

new Rolls-Royce.

## WORK KILLS NO ONE

— Why don't you work? Hard work kills no one.  
 — You're mistaken, my wife. I lost both my wives that way.

## THE RUNNER-UP

— Does the boy have any special marks by which one can recognize him, the police constable asked the father whose son had run away. — No, not yet, but if I can just get a hold of him it won't be long before that is the case.

## LUNDBERG

— Do you know Lundberg? — Yes, of course! I know him so well that I don't know him anymore.

## NOT HOME

Mrs.: Here comes Mrs. Petterson, tell her I'm not home.  
 Maid: Good, madam.  
 Mrs.: Well, what did she say?  
 Maid: Thank God.

## FISHING LUCK

— Well, what did you do this summer?  
 — We've been fishing, you know. And when we fish, we always have on liter 96% with us, and for every fish we take a sip, ; and if we get a lot of fish, we go home and take another liter

## TWO STREET LAMPS

On the streets of Kemi city, there are two lamps on the same pole.  
 — Why do you have to be two?  
 — Well, you see, one

must illuminate the other.

## APPENDIX

— That doctor must have sent a rudely large bill. But it will probably be the last time he gets to operate on my appendix.

## COMMUNISM

— If you had two houses, would you give one to me?  
 — Yes.  
 — If you had two horses, would you give one to me?  
 - Of course!  
 — You have a liter of alcohol at home. Give me half a liter!  
 — You crazy, human! Never!

## IN THE BEST FAMILIES

"You see, Mrs. Eriksson, the best family is a family in which there was no such thing as occurred even in the best families."

## Difficult to choose maid

## The astronomic picture of the week:



New Hubble infrared view of the Tarantula Nebula.jpg

This new Hubble image shows a cosmic creepy-crawly known as the Tarantula Nebula in infrared light. This region is full of star clusters, glowing gas, and thick dark dust. Created using observations taken as part of the Hubble Tarantula Treasury Project (HTTP), this image was snapped using Hubble's Wide Field Camera 3 (WFC3) and Advanced Camera for Surveys (ACS). The Hubble Tarantula Treasury Project (HTTP) is scanning and imaging many of the many millions of stars within the Tarantula, mapping out the locations and properties of the nebula's stellar inhabitants. These observations will help astronomers to piece together an understanding of the nebula's skeleton, viewing its starry structure.

NASA, ESA, E. Sabbi (STScI)

Public domain

## 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: wasadagblad@gmail-com

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