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ORANGE DAYS

Orange Days 2025 against domestic violence

Every year on 25 November, Orange Days is launched — an international campaign to raise awareness of violence against women and girls and to encourage action to prevent it. The days will last for 16 days until December 10 — Human Rights Day.

Internationally, the colour orange serves as a strong symbol in the movement against violence. The World Health Organization (WHO) reminds us that domestic violence is a serious public health problem: its consequences range from physical injuries to psychological trauma and reduced well-being.

In Finland, the statis-



tics support this concern. According to Statistics Finland, 13,000 domestic violence offences were reported to the police in 2024. Of these, 9,500 victims were adults, and as many as 74 percent were women. In any case, only part of the violence is reported to the authorities — so the actual numbers may be higher.

The color orange has been chosen to symbolize hope for a better, non-violent future. The campaign is visible in many ways: buildings and monuments glow orange, and candlelight processions and public events are held in the cities. This reminds us that violence is not just a private matter, but a social problem that everyone must address.

emphasizes the official status of the campaign and increases visibility.

Many cities and organisations around Finland are participating in the campaign — lighting, events and information activities are organised in several locations. The goal is to reach a large number of people and offer low-threshold ways to participate.

Orange Days reminds us that gender-based violence is a human rights issue. The aim of the campaign is to silence shame, raise awareness, support victims, and engage society on a large scale. The 2025 campaign carries a strong message: violence is not acceptable — hope is orange light.

Events in 2025, for example, include a silent light procession in the capital from November 25. This time, the campaign's patron in Finland is Suzanne Innes Stubb, wife of the President of the Republic. His involvement

The city of Vaasa was — and is — involved in the organization of the Orange Days. The City Theatre was lit up in orange. Women's organisations have orange knitted clothes on the trees in front of the city library.

mily to enjoy the beautiful Christmas atmosphere

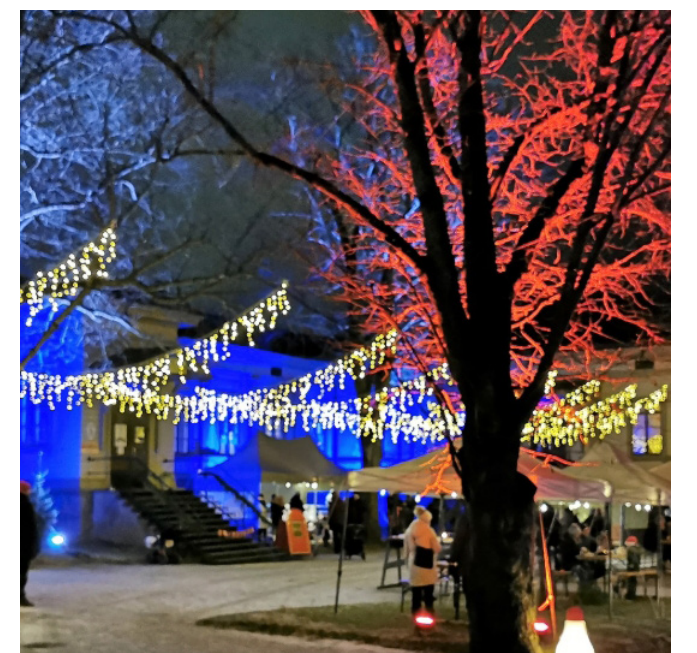
Families with children and market visitors will have the opportunity to visit the Christmas and Lucia market at Elly Sigfrids Market in Sepänkylä on Saturday, 13 December from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

On the same day at 6 p.m., the Most Beautiful Christmas Carols will be sung in Finnish in Korsholm Church. The traditional Christmas hike continues this weekend: at Sommarö Fortress in Södra Vallgrund on Sunday 14 December at 16–18 and at Stundars on Tuesday 17 December at 18–19.30.

The season will culminate in a Swedish-language event called The Most Beautiful Christmas Carols at Korsholm Church on Thursday 21 December at 7 pm. The programme offers traditional Christmas carols, atmospheric hikes and products from local artisans at the market, and invites participants to experience the warm community spirit of Christmas.

JULFILIS

Christmas mood in Vaasa 12–14 Dec 2025



Get into the holiday spirit at Julfilis @Funkkis in Vaasa

This year, Julfilis @Funkkis takes place from Friday to Sunday, December 12–14, in Vaasa. The event is hosted indoors in Funkkis (Sepänkyläntie 2). Entrance and parking are free

Opening hours: Fri 14:00–19:00, Sat–Sun 11:00–19:00. Visitors can browse handcrafted gifts, enjoy warm glögg and food, listen to live music, and take part in children's activities. Julfilis is the perfect way to kick off the holiday season with friends and family, in a cozy, festive atmosphere. Photo: Julfilis some years ago

RITZ

ABBA – Dancing Queen in Vaasa — glitter, nostalgia and disco hits on stage

On Saturday 13.12.2025, a show will be performed twice in Vaasa at the Ritz Club: at 14:00 and at 18:00.

The show takes the audience into a whirlwind of time — top Finnish talents interpret the iconic ABBA's most beloved hits, such as Mamma Mia, Dancing Queen, Fernando and Waterloo. In addition to music, the performance includes choreography, dance, circus and glamorous style, and the stage will feature singers RoosaMaria Leppänen and Isabella Lairikko, as well as dancers and a circus artist.

Tickets cost €50 (reduced between €39 and €46) and there are group discounts for groups.

This is an opportunity to experience ABBA classics in a new way — vividly, spectacularly and immersively.

BERGÖ

14.12 Christmas market at Bergö

Bergö Island Council and Bergö Youth Association are arranging a Christmas market on Saturday 14 December at 12–14 at Bergö school.

The market sells mulled wine, Christmas cakes, sausages, lottery tickets, handicrafts, pastries, Christmas wreaths, spruce twig gnomes, books, mutton, fish and this year's Bergö aanakkon 2026.

In case of bad weather, the market is moved indoors. Anyone who wants to participate as a vendor must register by December 7 to Sofia Skog (050 363 0138) or Carola West (050 363 8073). The fee for a marketplace is 10 euros, and vendors bring their own tables. The market welcomes everyone to the Christmas atmosphere and local offerings.

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Image of the week:



Independence Day celebration for students and residents of Vaasa on the square in Vaasa

UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

Virtual battery model paves the way for electric car simulations

Research at the University of Vaasa has developed a new virtual battery model that can significantly facilitate the integration of electric cars into energy systems.

The new model has been developed by doctoral candidate Seyed Mahoor Ebrahimi. According to his dissertation, the traditional way of modelling each electric car separately is computationally heavy and slows down research. In the virtual battery model, the entire parking area or car fleet can be treated as a

single energy storage. This reduces complexity and makes simulations much lighter.

With the help of the model, the charging of electric cars can be intelligently planned, and the charging needs of the car fleet can act as part of the local electricity grid. This increases flexibility and supports the growing use of renewable energy. In addition, the concept includes a cost-effective method for sharing chargers, which could facilitate the charging infrastructure even in densely populated areas.

The study opens the door



to electric cars being able to function as active parts of the electricity grid in the future — not just as a means of transport. The intention is to test the functionality of the model in pilot projects, and if they are

successful, a significant step towards a more stable, flexible and low-carbon electricity system will follow.

Seyed Mahoor Ebrahimi. Photo: University of Vaasa. Image free to use.

STUNDARS

Christmas Walk 17.12



Come in a real Christmas dream! On Tuesday 17 December from 18:00 to 19:30, Stundars invites you to an unforgettable Christmas walk in the festively lit museum village.

Bring your own lantern and let yourself be enchanted by a magical evening where the light of lanterns and mar-shawls leads your way. Wander along the illuminated path through the museum area, in search of hidden gnomes, and explore the historic buildings freely. Visit the cosy country store, feel the Christmas spirit in the farmhouse where the father of the house reads from the Christmas gospel in different languages, and step into the smithy's cottage where the smell of freshly baked gingerbread welcomes you — perhaps with a small taste to enjoy.

This is a unique chance to experience the historic Christmas spirit in a beautiful, light-filled setting. Take the opportunity — admission is free for everyone!

MALAX

The most beautiful Christmas carols in Malax

Malax parish invites you to traditional sing-alongs with The Most Beautiful Christmas Carols on 11–14 December.

First up is the gathering in Petalax Church on Wednesday 11 December at 7 pm.

On Friday 13 December at 7 p.m., there will be a Swedish-language Christmas program in Malax Church, and the following day, Saturday 14 December at 6 p.m., a Finnish-language version will be held in the same church.

The occasions offer an atmospheric opportunity to sing Christmas together, and everyone is warmly welcome to participate. The organizer is Malax parish.

KORS HOLM

Christmas spirit in Korsholm — markets, hikes and the most beautiful Christmas carols

A wide range of activities are organised in the Korsholm area during Christmas, inviting the whole fa-

EDITORIAL

December 7th, 1941 – The Day Canada Declared War Against Finland

The year 1941 was one of the most pivotal in modern history, as World War II escalated to a truly global conflict. For Finland, December 7th marked an especially surreal moment: just one day after celebrating its 24th Independence Day, the country found itself officially at war with Canada, a nation that otherwise seemed distant in geography, culture, and geopolitical concerns.

Background: Finland's Role in the Second World War Finland's involvement in World War II was complicated and driven largely by its precarious geographic position between two major powers: the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.

By 1941, Finland found itself aligned with Germany in what became known as the Continuation War. After Germany launched Operation Barbarossa, its invasion of the Soviet Union, Finland joined the offensive in an effort to reclaim lost territories and secure its borders.

December 7, 1941: A Global Turning Point

On December 7, 1941, three major events unfolded that profoundly shaped the war:

Japan Attacked Pearl Harbor: Japan's surprise attack on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor brought the United States into World War II. The attack shattered American isolationism, creating a domino effect that quickly expanded the war to new theaters.

The German Offensive on Moscow Stalled: In the East, Hitler's ambitions to conquer the Soviet capital faltered. After months of rapid advances, German troops found themselves bogged down in freezing conditions, suffering enormous casualties and logistical failures.

Canada Declared War on Finland: Amid these dramatic events, Canada, following the lead of Britain and the Allied powers, declared war on Finland. This decision placed Finland, a nation with no direct conflict or animosity toward Canada, in an official state of war with the Western Allies.

Why Did Canada Declare War on Finland?

Canada's declaration of war against Finland was not a reflection of any specific hostility toward the Finnish people but was a byproduct of Finland's alignment with Nazi Germany.

tinuation War as part of Germany's broader campaign against the Soviet Union.

When Britain declared war on Finland on December 6, 1941—Finland's Independence Day—it set off a chain reaction among the Commonwealth nations, including Canada. The declarations were largely symbolic, intended to demonstrate Allied unity against Axis-aligned nations, rather than a prelude to active military engagement.

Finland's Perspective

For Finland, this declaration of war by Canada and other Allied nations was a bitter pill to swallow. Finland had never considered itself an Axis power in the ideological sense. Its primary goal was the recovery of territories lost in the Winter War and the preservation of its independence.

The irony of being declared an enemy by Canada—a country with no direct stake in Finland's conflict—highlighted the complex realities of World War II alliances. Despite these declarations, Finland's war efforts remained focused on the Eastern Front, and there was no significant military action between Finland and Canada.

The Aftermath of December 1941

The events of December 1941 marked a turning point for all nations involved:

For Finland: The Continuation War dragged on until 1944, by which time Germany's defeat was becoming inevitable. Finland was forced to seek peace with the Soviet Union, which demanded harsh reparations and a shift in Finnish foreign policy.

For Canada and the Allies: The war declarations against Finland, Hungary, and Romania were largely symbolic but underscored the Allies' commitment to a unified front against Axis-aligned nations.

For the World: The attack on Pearl Harbor transformed World War II into a truly global conflict, with the United States joining the fight against the Axis powers. Meanwhile, the Soviet victory outside Moscow marked the beginning of a long and bloody pushback against German forces, ultimately culminating in the fall of Berlin in 1945.

Historical Ironies and Lessons

The surreal juxtaposition of Finland's Independence Day celebrations and Canada's war declaration underscores the unintended consequences of wartime alliances. Finland, a small nation fighting for its survival, found itself entangled in a conflict far larger than its own borders.

Today, the war declarations of December 7, 1941, are largely a historical footnote, remembered more for their symbolic significance than for any direct military engagement. Yet they serve as a reminder of how interconnected and complex global conflicts can become.

For Finland, the events of World War II solidified its identity as a resilient and fiercely independent nation, while for Canada, the declaration of war against Finland exemplified its commitment to the Allied cause, even when the decisions were dictated by global strategy rather than bilateral disputes.

WAR VETERANS

Speech by President of the Republic of Finland Alexander Stubb honoring our war veterans, Lotta Svärd members and representatives of the veteran generations at the Presidential Palace on 2 December 2025



Kuva: Matti Porre/Tasavallan presidentin kanslia

Honoured veterans of our wars, esteemed members of the Lotta Svärd organisation and respected representatives of Finland's veteran generations,

Eighty-six years ago, in the early days of the Winter War, many of you were barely fifteen. Our young nation faced a severe test. Finland fought against an overwhelming enemy and persevered its independence. The battle for independence culminated during the Continuation War in the summer of 1944 at Tali-Ihantala, where the Soviet army was finally halted.

Finland's 108 years of independence have been a success story. Finland has, by many measures, risen to become one of the most stable and secure countries in the world.

The success of our nation would not have been possible without your efforts during those harsh years

of war. In your youth, you were asked to shoulder a responsibility far beyond your years. The work you carried out – on the front lines, in supply and administrative duties, and in military canteens – was of immeasurable value. Few today can imagine the circumstances under which you lived your youth. You grew into adulthood serving Finland during the most challenging years in our history.

Your efforts did not end with the difficult years of war. They were followed by the reconstruction of a devastated homeland. Some of you were war orphans at that time, burdened by grief. Through your perseverance, you laid the foundations for our prosperity. The significance of your legacy is evident in two ways. First, you helped Finland maintain its independence. Second, you built Finland into a society that is always worth defending.

We are eternally grateful for all you have done for our country.

Respected representatives of Finland's veteran generations,

Your legacy has sustained an exceptionally high will to defend Finland. Your work and your sacrifices will never be forgotten. Your memories and deeds remain in our hearts. We honour the legacy of the wartime generations by ensuring the security of our country. As an example of how tradition is passed down from one generation to the next, three generations of one family are represented at this reception. With the presence of a veteran, a child, and a grandchild serving as a cadet, the chain of generations and the legacy of the war generation are clearly evident.

It is a great privilege for Suzanne and me to celebrate Finland's independence with you – the men and women of the war generations – as our guests of honour at this reception. We look forward to engaging in discussions with you and hearing your experiences and thoughts about our beloved homeland. Thank you for visiting us here at the Presidential Palace. I wish you all the best for this festive occasion and for Independence Day. Thank you.

VAASA

Sofi Djupsjöbacka is the Attitude Promoter of the Year 2025

Vaasa rewards volunteer work and working on behalf of young people with disabilities

The city has named Sofi Djupsjöbacka as the Attitude Promoter of the Year 2025 for her long-term volunteer work for disabled and chronically ill young people. Djupsjöbacka has worked by organising meetings, activity days and visits, and has actively participated in social media to spread information about inclusion to both disabled people and young people who are in urgent need of support due to illness.

According to the Vaasa Council on Disability, Djupsjöbacka's work has been significant: with her



own attitude and actions, she has given hope and encouragement to many young people who are often left on the margins of society. Her efforts to promote the rights, accessibility, and equality of people with disabilities make her a well-deserved example.

The selection was made on the basis of proposals,

and the award was announced in close proximity to the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December. Djupsjöbacka emphasises that the recognition belongs to her – but above all to all those who share the same attitude: for positivity, inclusion and equality.

Photo: City of Vaasa Source: vaasa.fi

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INDEPENDENCE DAY

Independence Day celebration for students and residents of Vaasa in the market square



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Photo Supplement



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HEALTH

Long-Term Risks of Sleep Medications – What You Should Know



Sleep problems are one of today's most common health challenges. About a third of adults experience insomnia at least occasionally, and 10–15 percent suffer from chronic sleep difficulties (Ohayon 2002). Night after night of tossing and turning takes a physical and mental toll, leading many to turn to sleep medications for fast relief. But what happens when a temporary solution becomes a nightly habit?

Recent research has highlighted the risks of long-term use of sleep medications, particularly benzodiazepines and so-called Z-drugs (such as zolpidem and zopiclone). In this article, we summarize key findings on cognitive effects, dependence, bodily risks, and safer alternatives.

How long-term use affects the brain

Common sleep medications work by enhancing the effect of the neurotransmitter GABA, which calms the nervous

system and promotes sleep onset. Short-term, this can be effective. However, studies show that prolonged use can impair memory, learning, and attention (Barker et al. 2004).

Many users report feeling “foggy” or mentally slowed, effects often unnoticed until months later. Another concern is the possible link between long-term benzodiazepine use and increased dementia risk, particularly in older adults (Zhang et al. 2016). While researchers urge caution in interpreting results, several population studies have observed this association.

Crowe and Stranks (2018) note that “cognitive residual effects can persist for months after benzodiazepines are discontinued.” This highlights that the brain does not immediately return to baseline after stopping the medication.

Dependence develops quietly

Long-term use also carries a significant risk of dependence. Tolerance—where the body needs higher doses to achieve the same effect—can develop within weeks (Lader 2011). Many users do not notice the gradual process until they attempt to reduce their intake. Withdrawal symptoms can include:

- anxiety
- worsening insomnia
- heart palpitations
- tremors or sweating

Professional guidelines therefore recommend short-term, medically supervised use. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine advises that sleep medications be used for no more than four weeks (Schutte-Rodin et al. 2008). Yet many individuals, especially older adults, use them daily for months or even years.

Daytime drowsiness, falls, and accidents

Sleep medications also affect coordination and reaction time. Numerous population studies link long-term use to:

- falls
- hip fractures

• traffic accidents
Especially in older adults, even minor balance impairments can have serious consequences. A common phenomenon is the “morning hangover,” where cognitive and motor functions remain impaired upon waking.

Effective alternatives exist

Research is clear: there are effective, long-term alternatives to medications. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) is recommended internationally as a first-line treatment (Trauer et al. 2015). Unlike drugs, it does not carry dependence or side effect risks. CBT-I typically involves:

- restricting time in bed to consolidate sleep
- breaking negative bedtime habits
- relaxation techniques
- adjusting routines and sleep environment

Studies show CBT-I is as effective as medication, with benefits lasting months or years (Morin et al. 2006).

When medication may still be appropriate

There are situations where sleep medication may be justified: acute stress, sudden insomnia due to illness or crisis, or as short-term support alongside behavioral

therapy. The key is limited duration.

Those who use sleep medication regularly should discuss with their doctor:

- duration of treatment
 - alternative approaches
 - gradual tapering
- It is also important not to increase the dose independently.

Conclusion: Knowledge is the best sleep aid

Sleep medications can provide rapid relief and may be valuable in temporary crises. But research clearly shows that long-term use carries risks that are often underestimated—for the brain, body, and overall wellbeing. Informed choices are essential. If you find yourself relying on medication multiple nights per week, it may be time to explore more sustainable solutions. Help exists, and it does not necessarily come from the pharmacy shelf. Ultimately, the most fundamental question remains: are we truly sleeping—or merely numbing our brains?

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Painting: John Collier: *The Sleeping Beauty*. 1921. Wikimedia Commons, public domain

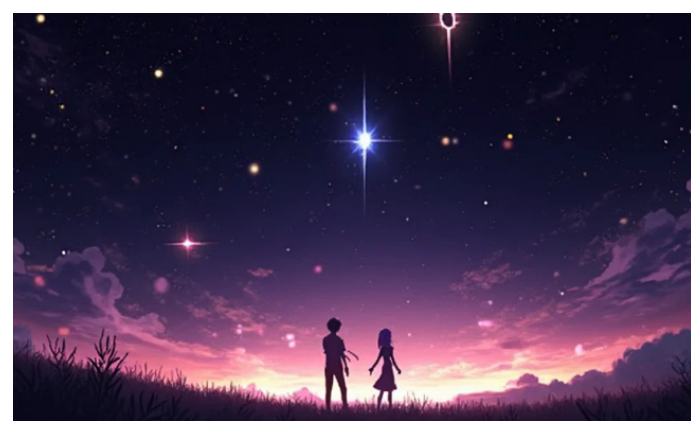
DARK NIGHTS AND HEALTH

Nights should be dark. At least in the bedroom

A landmark study made by Daniel P Windred and his colleagues in Australia published in *JAMA Network Open* reveals a striking association between night time light exposure and elevated risk of cardiovascular disease—serving as a wake up call to prioritize darkness in our bedrooms.

In the study of 88 905 adults over an average 9.5 year follow up, participants whose bedrooms registered the highest levels of light during typical sleeping hours (the 91st 100th percentile of night light exposure) faced significantly higher risks of coronary artery disease (HR ~1.32), heart attack (~1.47), heart failure (~1.56), atrial fibrillation (~1.32), and stroke (~1.28), compared with those in the darkest conditions. These associations held even after controlling for lifestyle factors, sleep duration/efficiency, socioeconomic status and genetic risk.

The mechanism is elegantly straightforward: exposure to light at night disrupts circadian rhythms, suppresses melatonin, heightens blood pressure, spurs inflammation and disturbs heart rate variability—each a recognized contributor to cardiovascular pathologies.



What makes this finding particularly sobering is that we often assume light during sleep is benign—after all, a night light, a softly lit street lamp through the window, or a bright smartphone screen may seem harmless. But this research elevates such ambient light from trivial nuisance to genuine health hazard.

What can you do?

1. Darken your sleeping environment. Invest in blackout curtains or blinds, cover up glowing electronic indicators, and avoid leaving bright over-

head lights on while you sleep.

2. Limit evening screen time and bedroom light exposures. Even moderate light emerging from TVs, smartphones or ambient room lighting can shift circadian cues.

3. Keep a consistent bedtime routine. Reduce ambient light and allow your internal clock to wind down naturally.

4. Consider bedroom layout. Position beds away from windows or light sources; switch off unnecessary lights before going to sleep.

Certainly, more research is needed—this is observational data, and causality cannot be proven definitively. The cohort was predominately White and aged over 40, limiting generalisability. *JAMA Network* Yet given the magnitude of risk and the minimal cost of implementation, the precautionary message is clear: when it comes to sleep, the darker the better.

In an era of ubiquitous screens, smart home lighting, and round the clock ambient illumination, reclaiming darkness for our bedrooms is both simple and potent. So turn down the lights, draw the curtains, and give your heart—and your health—the darkness it deserves.

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RITZ

Noora Louhimo's Christmas concert in Vaasa – a warm "Christmas moment"

Club Ritz in Vaasa offers a Christmas atmosphere when singer Noora Louhimo performs at the concert Christmas Moment on Thursday 18 December at 19.00.

“The Moment of Christmas” is an intimate and atmospheric concert in which Louhimo interprets his own songs as well as classics and Christmas carols with piano and guitar accompaniment. The concert offers an opportunity to escape the hustle and bustle and experience the peace and nostalgia of Christmas – like a moment to stop, to the smell of the tree, the light of the fireplace and Christmas memories.

Tickets cost €35 (reduced by €32) and are aimed at the whole family.

Come and enjoy the music and peace – “Christmas Moment” promises to be a warm-hearted start to the anticipation of Christmas.

CITY ORCHESTRA

Elina Vähälä interprets Shostakovich's 11.12.

Maestro violinist Elina Vähälä will be the soloist when the Vaasa Philharmonic Orchestra performs Dmitri Shostakovich's Second Violin Concerto on Thursday 11 December at Vaasa City Hall. The concert starts at 18.00 and the conductor is AnnaMaria Helsing.

Vähälä's interpretation is known for being emotional and technically of the highest quality, and he has received great international recognition for his virtuosity and delicate, colourful ringtones. Nordics+1

The program also includes Johannes Brahms' Serenade op. 11. The concert combines the weight of a classic with the sensibility of a modern interpretation – an evening that hits the heart and mind directly.

ALMA

The renovation of Kirkkoesplanadi 15 will be completed on schedule

The renovation of Kirkkoesplanadi 15 will be completed on schedule

The technology-oriented renovation of Alma's premises at Kirkkopuistikko 15, the former Arbis building, will be completed according to plan by the end of 2025. The work has been part of the City of Vaasa's re-novation programme. In connection with the renovation, the building technology has been updated and the general appearance and colour scheme of the premises have been modernised

Ventilation has been improved, and surfaces have been renewed and repaired. The dignity of the building has been increased, for example, by restoring the original ceiling height and the curved edges of the re-ading corner lobby on the second floor. The 150-year-old building was last renovated in the early 1980s.

The courses will return to the Church Esplanade from 7 January 2026. The temporary premises at Raastu-van-

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THE SECOND WORLD WAR

December 6, 1941 – the day the course of the Second World War changed

On June 22, 1941, Operation Barbarossa – the major German invasion of the Soviet Union – began. In the beginning, it went quickly; The German forces pushed forward with surprising force and success on several fronts.

By the autumn, they had reached the gates of Moscow. In October–November 1941, tanks and infantry advanced on the forested outskirts of the Russian capital. Suddenly, the main German vanguards were close to seeing the Kremlin's domes.

But the furious cold of winter and the Russian resistance proved to be overwhelming. The German soldiers, equipped for war in the summer heat, froze in their thin uniforms; frost damage and equipment that froze put a stop to further advance.

The Battle of Moscow – the turning point

On December 6, 1941, the Red Army took the initiative – counterattacks launched against the German flank and front line in sectors at Yelets, Tula, Klin and Kalinin. The battle for Moscow – and thus the entire centre of gravity of the Eastern Front – began to be

shaken.

The German offensive was stopped in its tracks. In some sectors the Wehrmacht was forced to retreat, in others the lines were held with difficulty. But the message was clear: Here – and no further. What was once thought to be invincible turned out to backfire.

Historians describe the counterattack and the subsequent Winter War as a decisive turning point: for the first time, Hitler's Ger-

man army suffered a major setback, and the balance of the whole war began to shift.

A global chain reaction

Just the next day, December 7, 1941, the Japanese Imperial Army carried out a surprise attack on the American naval base Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. With this, the United States was drawn into the war on the side of the Allies – a dramatic event that would have enormous significant-

importance for the further development of the war.

Suddenly, the old front lines of Europe and Asia were in a new light: the threat to the Soviet Union was diminishing, while an entirely new, massive force was being added – with industrial, economic, and military resources far greater than ever before. This marked the beginning of the end of the Axis advance.

The memory of a fateful

day – and the perspective of the present

On the stretch between Moscow and Leningrad (present-day St. Petersburg) – near the point where the German army came closest to Moscow – there is still a monument to this day. It is still adorned with fresh flowers every year, as an expression of respect and memory.

December 6, 1941 – and the days that followed – marks a dramatic turning point in history. For many

of us, who live in a more peaceful Europe, it is difficult to imagine the reign of terror, the cold and the suffering that prevailed. At the same time, memorials like this remind us of how close the world was to being shaped in a completely different direction.

The picture shows flowers at a monument on the main road between Moscow and Leningrad, at the point where the German army was closest to the Russian capital. The German army came here, but no further.



ALKOHOL PROBLEMS

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 rodents 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 in-

vestigated, 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. Hospitalisations 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.

From page 3

katu 33 will be taken out of use. Operations in Alma's main building at Raastuvankatu 31 will continue as normal.

Source: vaasa.fi

ALMA

Vaasa Adult Education Centre Alma: Spring term starts 7.1.2026

Adult Education Centre Alma will start its spring term on Wednesday 7 January 2026 – and there will be about 200 courses available. The list covers a wide range of hobby and skills courses, and there are also places left for several courses that have been running throughout the academic year.

At the institute, it is possible to study languages, civic education, art courses, handicrafts, well-being and many other subjects both in Vaasa and in nearby municipalities such as Likkyrö, Laihia and Isokyrö. The spring courses are open to everyone – whether you have a career, are a student or not – and the courses are suitable for both a new hobby and professional development or additional skills.

Alma emphasizes that studying can be just as much for your own enjoyment as for everyday life or working life. Registration is still ongoing, and those interested are encouraged to check out the courses and make their selections soon – spots fill up quickly.

In addition to online registration, you can also register on site or by phone at Alma's service points in Vaasa: Raastuvankatu 31, tel. 0400 868 110 (Mon–Fri 8 am–4 pm) Raastuvankatu 33 / Kirkkoesplanadi 15 (7.1. onwards), tel. 040 6299 133 (Mon–Thu 10 am–2 pm).

On Thursday 11 December at 5.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m., the open event Christmas in Alma will be held at Raastuvankatu 31. In addition to a diverse programme, you can also register for spring courses.

More information about the event: vaasa.fi/alma-Events

WELLBEING SERVICES COUNTY

The indoor air problem in the H building is a mystery



The cause of the indoor air symptoms on the sixth floor of the H-building in Vaasa has not yet been found, although the investigations continue, says the Wellbeing Services County of Ostrobothnia.

The Cancer and Blood Diseases Ward will continue to operate in temporary premises in the S building, but staying in other facilities in the H building has not been found to be harmful to health.

Since May, the studies have focused especially on ventilation and air circulation. Previously, it was suspected that carpets cause symptoms, but this has not been confirmed or ruled out. Measurements made at different times have shown variation in fibre concentrations. Next, the researchers will find out where the fibres may come from – ventilation ducts or structures.

The aim is to get the facilities in the H building in order and use as soon as possible, and the causes of the symptoms are being investigated in close cooperation with the Bothnia High 5 alliance, which was responsible for the construction. The Wellbeing Services County of Ostrobothnia emphasises that although the symptoms are still a mystery, further measures are underway to ensure a safe working environment.

LAIHIA

Nominate Laihia's laureates

The municipality of Laihia invites organisations, associations and private individuals to make proposals for the 2025 awardees and scholarship recipients.

The award winners are sought in several categories: Athlete of the Year, Decent Citizen, Posture Youth, Exemplary Youth and Veteran Athlete of the Year.

Athletes who represent clubs from outside the municipality but live in Laihia can also be taken into account. Proposals must be justified and submitted in writing by 2 January 2026 at 3 p.m. either by post to the registry of the municipality of Laihia (P.O. Box 13, 66401 Laihia) or by email to address laihian.kunta@laihia.fi, with the

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CAUSERIE

Älykkyys ja viisaus eivät ole sama juttu



oikeaan tilanteeseen, saatat huomata olevasi keskellä sotkua.

Älykäs ajattelee, viisas tietää

Älykkyys on kyky oppia, analysoida ja ratkaista ongelmia. Älykäs ihminen voisi esimerkiksi keksiä, miten laskuvarjo tehdään pöytäliinasta ja verhoista, jos hän putoaa lentokoneesta. Viisas ihminen taas olisi tarkistanut etukäteen, ettei astu koneeseen, jossa on vain yksi moottori ja pilotilla huono päivä.

Tässä piileekin älykkyuden ja viisauden suurin ero: älykäs ihminen selviää vaikeista tilanteista, joihin viisas ei koskaan joudu. Tämä selittää, miksi niin monet fiksit keksijät, tutkijat ja yrittäjät päätyvät kirjoittamaan muistelmiaan vankilasta tai konkursista – he ovat kyllä älykkäitä, mutta joskus yllättävän vähän viisaita.

Historian huippuja – mutta kumpia?

Ajattellaan Aristoteleen ja Einsteinia. Aristoteles, tuo muinaisen maailman pohdiskelija, oli epäilemättä viisas. Hän ymmärsi elämän suuria periaatteita, kuten sen, että liika reip-paus ei ole hyväksi, ja päätyi siksi ensimmäiseen istumaan ja opettamaan muita. Häneltä jäi tekemättä typeriä kokeiluja, kuten testata, voiko ihminen hypätä Parnassoksen kalliolta ilman seurauksia.

Albert Einstein taas oli älykäs. Hän kehitti suhteellisuusteorian ja mullisti maailmankuvaamme, mutta ei ehkä ollut kaikkein viisain ihminen käytännön elämässä. Hänen kerrotaan unohtaneen osoitteensa ja joutuneen usein kysymään neuvua, miten löytää kotiin. Tällaisia tilanteita ei Aristoteleelle olisi tapahtunut – hän ei olisi edes poistunut kotoaan ilman luotettavaa opasta.

Älykkäät mokat ja viisaat välttämiset

Arjessa älykkäät ja viisaat tekevät usein erilaisia päätöksiä. Älykäs ihminen saattaa ostaa äärimmäisen monimutkaisen ja hienon kahvikoneen, joka vaatii käyttöohjeen ymmärtämiseen insinöörin tunkinon. Viisas taas keittää pannukahvit, tietäen, että lopputulos on kuitenkin sama: kofeiinia veressä ja

pirteä mieli.

Älykäs yrittää ratkaista aviokriisin ostamalla puolison lempiauton. Viisas vie puolisonsa kävelyille ja kuuntelee, mitä sanottavaa toisella on. Tässä kohtaa on hyvä muistaa, että joskus viisaus ja älykkyys voivat myös yhdistyä – silloin puoliso saa sekä auton että kävelylenkin, ja parisuhde kukoistaa.

Typerä nero ja nerokas tyhmyri

Historiasta löytyy esimerkkejä ihmisistä, jotka olivat älykkäitä mutta eivät kovin viisaita. Napoleon Bonaparte, Euroopan valloituksen mestari, päätti talvella hyökätä Venäjälle. Sotilaallinen nero, mutta samalla mieletön riskinottaja. Viisas ihminen olisi ehkä miettinyt kahdesti, kannattaako lähteä marssimaan keskelle Siperian talvea, kun takana on jo mu-kava valtakunta.

Toisaalta on olemassa tarinoita ihmisistä, jotka eivät ole erityisen älykkäitä, mutta silti äärimmäisen viisaita. Monet kansanviisaudet ja sananlaskut ovat peräisin tavallisilta ihmisiltä, jotka eivät koskaan käyneet kouluja, mutta osasivat elää elämäänsä järkevästi. Esimerkiksi lausahdus ”ei kannata ampua kärpäästä tykillä” saattaa hyvinkin olla peräisin henkilöltä, joka tajusi, että liiallinen yrittäminen ei aina kannata.

Älykäs ja viisas samalla – paras yhdistelmä?

Tietenkin olisi ihanteellista olla sekä älykäs että viisas, mutta koska kukaan ei voi olla täydellinen kaikilla tavoilla, ihmisen kannattaa tyytyä kehittämään vahvuuksiaan. Älykään kannattaa opetella pysähtymään ja kysymään, onko ongelma ylipäättään ratkaise-misen arvoisen. Viisaan taas olisi hyvä kokeilla joskus uusia asioita – kuten rubikin kuution ratkaisua – ihan vain harjoituksen vuoksi.

Loppujen lopuksi viisauden ja älykkyuden välinen tasapaino on se, joka tekee elämästä mielenkiintoista. Älykäs voi keksiä, miten mennä kuuhun, mutta viisas miettii minkä ihmeen takia kuuhun pitäisi mennä, oma kotipiha on oikeastaan ihan tarpeeksi hyvä paikka.

WELLBEING SERVICES COUNTIES

Google helps with the work wellbeing services counties



The wellbeing services county of Central Uusimaa (Keusote) has announced that it will carry out a historically large-scale transition to Google technologies. More than 4,000 employees will switch to Google Workspace instead of Microsoft solutions during 2026–2027, says Keusote in its press release.

The goal is to move to a

completely cloud-based work environment, which will allow for more flexible working from any device. Keusote's Chief Information and Digital Officer Antti Ylä-Jarkko describes the decision as "significant as a change in the patient information system".

Another significant reform is the democratisation of artificial intelligence: all employees will have access to Google Gemini artificial intelli-

gence without a separate licence cost. "When artificial intelligence becomes available to everyone as part of daily tools, it opens up completely new opportunities for improving the efficiency and quality of work. Nurses, doctors and administrative professionals can utilise artificial intelligence in their daily work without having to think about budgets or licences," Ylä-Jarkko continues.

Keusote estimates that within five years, the reform will generate savings of at least EUR 10 million in licensing, support service and

workstation costs. The funds released are intended to be directed directly to nursing and the development of services.

Maria Borgström, Project Manager of the project, emphasises that the transition is not the easiest: "We are boldly going where few public sector actors have dared to go. This requires careful planning and strong change management, but we believe that this is the model of the future."

Keusote's project represents a new era of digitalisation and cloud technology in social welfare and health care – and can serve as a role model for other wellbeing services counties.

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subject line "Awardees 2025".

More information on making proposals and the rules for awarding scholarships can be found on the municipality's website. The award ceremony will be held in February 2026, when the awardees and scholarship recipients will receive the recognition they deserve. Now is a great opportunity to highlight the sporty and exemplary people of your community!

INCOME INEQUALITY

The pay gap between men and women is not narrowing



The income of Finns is now distributed differently by age group than ten years ago, but the gender pay gap has remained almost unchanged.

According to the Tax Administration's recent income tax statistics, in 2024, people aged 40 to 49 received the most income, a total of EUR 37.8 billion. Ten years ago, the highest earners were those aged 50 to 59. Ageing is clearly visible: there are more income earners aged over 70 than in 2014, and the share of wage and salary income among those aged 60 to 69 has increased due to the rise in the retirement age and the increase in work done while retired.

However, the gender pay gap has not narrowed. In 2014–2024, men's wage and salary income grew by around EUR 2.3 billion more than women's, even though the percentage growth in women's wage and salary income was slightly higher. Last year, men's median wage income was EUR 37,723 and women's EUR 32,291. According to the Tax Administration, part-time work is more common among women, which partly explains the difference, but as a whole, the pay gap has remained almost unchanged.

WAGES

Tax Administration: 40-year-olds have the highest income

The focus of Finnish income has shifted to the younger age group – people in their forties now earn the most income, according to the Tax Administration's latest statistics.

According to the income tax statistics published by the Tax Administration, in 2024, people aged 40 to 49 received the most income, a total of EUR 37.8 billion. Ten years earlier, the largest group of income earners was those aged 50 to 59, but the distribution of income has changed in both earned income and capital income.

Capital income accrued most to those aged 50 to 59, while in 2014 the largest capital income went to those aged 60 to 69. According to the Tax Administration, the change reflects both the structure of working life and the ageing of the population: there are now clearly more income earners over the age of 70 than ten years ago, and people aged 60–69 work more during retirement.

Income tax statistics include taxable earnings and certain tax-exempt items, such as fringe benefits and reimbursements of expenses. Matti Luokkanen, Senior Officer at the Finnish Tax Administration, says that the development of income reflects a longer working career and a changing age structure at the same time.

FAMILY PHYSICIAN doctor

Kainuu is the first Finnish wellbeing services county to appoint a family doctor for all its residents, according to the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL).

The model is part of the effort to increase the continuity of care and improve the quality of primary health care.

With the new family doctor model, each Kainuu resident has a designated doctor and their own care team, who are comprehensively responsible for the patient's health. The aim of the model is to reduce morbidity and mortality, improve the quality of care and patient satisfaction, and curb overall costs.

"According to international research evidence, the continuity of the personal care relationship is key to high-quality primary health care," says Sara Launio,

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BALTIC SEA

Christmas cruises to Tallinn pass through a devilish area. Report on the state of the Baltic Sea

The Baltic Sea has turned into a geopolitical "pressure cooker" in which security risks and environmental threats weaken the sea at the same time. A recent expert report warns that the Helsinki-Tallinn route, which carries millions of passengers every year, runs directly through the region, where Russia's hybrid operations create constant instability.

The report, "Operation Baltic Sea", published by the Toivo think tank and the Wilfried Martens Centre, emphasizes that passenger ships sail for an hour in the international exclusive economic zone, which Russia uses to bully host countries. This has recently manifested itself in airspace violations, GPS jamming and damage to critical undersea cables and pipes. According to experts, Russia's "boiling frog" strategy aims to normalize these low-threshold attacks and test the unity of the EU and NATO.

The "Shadow Fleet" threatens the archipelago with a catastrophe

In addition to geopolitical tension, the Baltic Sea faces an imminent risk of an environmental catastrophe caused by Russia's "shadow fleet". These often old, poorly insured tankers transport Russian oil in the Baltic Sea. According to Member of Parliament Pauli Aalto-Setälä, an oil spill from a shadow fleet vessel would be "the greatest environmental threat to the Baltic Sea", which could destroy the fragile archipelago ecosystem for up to a hundred years. For example, in January 2025,



the tanker Eventin, linked to the shadow fleet, had to be towed off Germany due to an engine failure, carrying 100,000 tons of oil. So far, however, international sanctions against shadow fleet enablers have been lacking.

Ympäristöyhteistyö halvaantunut eristyksen vuoksi

Turvallisuushkien keskittyminen on sivuuttanut ympäristökysymykset, minkä lisäksi Venäjän eristäminen on halvaantunut alueellisen ympäristösuojelun. Professori Nina Tynkkynen huomauttaa, että kun HEL-COM sulki Venäjän pois päätöksenteosta, yhteisten toimenpiteiden tehokkuus heikkeni. Venäjän valuma-alue, mukaan lukien Nevajoki, on silti merkittävä ravinne- ja öljykuorituksen lähde. Ilman Venäjän ympäristötietojen ja yhteistä seurantaa, Itämeren tilan kokonaisarviointi heikkenee, mikä vaikeuttaa koko alueen suojelua.



Ilmastonmuutos ja kotimainen kuormitus

Raportissa nostetaan esiin myös ilmastonmuutoksen vaikutukset. Meren tutkija Jari Hännisen mukaan läm-pimämmät ja sateisemmat talvet ovat tehneet Itämerestä makeamman, mikä uhkaa monien lajien selviytymistä.

Suomen ilmaston- ja ympäristöministeri Sari

Multala puolestaan korostaa kansallisten toimien tärkeyttä. Hallituksen tavoitteena on poistaa Saaristomeren alueen maatalouden ravinnekuormitus HELCOMin ns. Hot Spot-listalta vuoteen 2027 mennessä, jolloin Suomi pääsisi eroon viimeisestä saastepisteestään listalla. Multala kuitenkin

muistuttaa, että Suomi ei voi yksin pelastaa Itämeren, vaan kansainvälinen yhteistyö on välttämätöntä.

Raportin loppusanoma on kuitenkin toiveikas: kun Itämeren demokratit tekevät tiivistä yhteistyötä ja puo-lustavat merta määrätietoisesti, alueen häiritsijä saadaan kuriin. Tavoitteena on pelastaa

"ainutlaatuinen me-ri" tulleille sukupolville.

IMAGE: Sunset over the Baltic Sea Wikimedia Commons. John Samuel Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0

A tanker transporting Russian oil

USING DATA

DNA: In Vaasa, young people use data up to 14 times more than older people



DNA published a new analysis that reveals significant differences in mobile data usage between different age groups in Finland's 50 largest municipalities. Young adults (18–29 years old) consume the most mobile data, with an average daily consumption of 2,975 megabytes (MB), while those over 80 only

consume a few hundred megabytes.

Especially in Vaasa, DNA's statistics highlight a large gap: young people use a huge amount of data compared to older people. The difference can be as much as 14-fold when comparing the average consumption of young and oldest age groups.

However, mobile data use is also increasing in older age groups. For ex-

ample, according to DNA, 50–59-year-olds already have a daily data use of more than 1,000 MB in all the municipalities examined. Mikko Valtonen, Director of Mobile Business at STT Info DNA, sums up the situation: "Users can be roughly divided into three groups: young adults, middle-aged people and those approaching retirement age, whose data use is clearly lower."

There are major differen-

ces between municipalities. According to DNA's statistics, Raahen, Savonlinna, Kotka, Tornio and Imatra, among others, belong to the group of young heavy consumers: 20–29-year-olds use more than 3,700 Mt per day in these municipalities. On the other hand, in Ylöjärvi, Tuusula and Vihti, for example, young people's data use is below the national average.

Valtonen also highlights the factors behind municipality-specific differences: the age structure, use of public transport and distances may explain why mobile data consumption is higher in certain areas. STT Info In addition, he emphasises that improved devices and networks will further increase data usage: better video quality consumes more, and more and more work, entertainment and social interaction are handled by phone.

DNA's statistics are based on billable consumer subscriptions for January–October 2025. The comparison is based on average daily data usage, but it is worth noting that the average is increased especially by very heavy consumers – i.e. not all users really consume the same amount.

In the end, DNA's data highlights one clear trend: young people are leading in the data age, but older generations are also joining in. This development reflects a broader digital transformation in which the mobile network is no longer just a privilege for young people.

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Chief Physician at the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare.

Seven wellbeing services counties received additional funding from the 2025 Sustainable Growth Programme for the development of family physician models. Kainuu is a pioneer, and other regions intend to gradually expand their models to the entire population. In practice, this means that more and more Finns will be able to have a long-term personal contact with health care in the future, which will improve the quality of care and patient safety.

HEALTH

Ozempic can be dangerous for your eyes

Ozempic, which enjoys great popularity as a diabetes medication and weight loss product, and the ingredient semaglutide it contains received an important warning from the European Medicines Agency (EMA). A possible, albeit very rare, side effect of the drug has been identified as the eye disease NAION (non-arteritic atic ischemic neuropathy).

WHAT IS NAION?

NAION is a serious but rare eye disease that damages the optic nerve. It originates from a disturbance in the blood supply to the optic nerve and can lead to sudden and permanent loss of vision in one eye. Usually, impaired vision is the only symptom of the disease and is not accompanied by pain. People with diabetes, high blood pressure or elevated blood lipid levels, for example, are at the highest risk of developing NAION. There is currently no permanent treatment for the disease.

The decision was taken by the EMA's Pharmacovigilance Committee (PRAC) after reviewing available data, including small studies suggesting an increased risk in patients taking semaglutide. It is important to emphasize that this is still a very rare side effect and that the majority of people who use the drug do not have any risk of it.

What does this mean for patients?

The most important thing is to be aware of the possible

symptoms. If you experience a sudden decrease in vision, blurred vision or dark areas in your field of vision, contact your family doctor or ophthalmologist immediately. Always mention to your healthcare professional that you are taking a medicine containing semaglutide.

Finally, it can be said that all medications have possible side effects, and it is important to have regular medical check-ups and be aware of the possible risk factors in your own health. Although NAION is rare, it is essential that patients and doctors are aware of this potential connection in order to be able to act quickly if necessary.

GPS

Chief Physician Susanna Satuli-Autere from Hyvinkää has been selected as the General Practitioner of the Year

The Finnish General Practitioners GPF awarded the recognition to Susanna Satuli-Autere, in recognition of her long-term work in the development, education and patient work of primary health care.

Satuli-Autere works in the wellbeing services county of Central Uusimaa, and she is known as a versatile doctor in charge of medical care, as well as a mentor and trainer. According to his colleagues, the choice was based on his long-term career at the health centre and, in particular, on his investments in the development of care chains and training. He has been described as approachable, responsible and supportive – traits that make him a respected family doctor and supervisor. Patients praise him for being friendly, attentive and professional.

The recognition emphasises the importance of primary health care and highlights the work that doctors do to ensure the everyday well-being of patients. Satuli-Autere's selection as the General Practitioner of the Year returns to the annual tradition of allowing colleagues to nominate distinguished professionals.

WHO

WHO warns of a new wave of antibiotic resistance

According to the World Health Organization, antibiotic-resistant bacteria are spreading faster than before.

According to a recent WHO report, infections caused by antibiotic resistance increased by 15 per cent in Europe over the past three years. Especially in intensive care units, bacterial strains are found against which no known antibiotic is effective. Experts stress that a more prudent use of antibiotics and the development of new drugs are necessary to prevent a "silent pandemic" that could threaten health systems worldwide.

HEALTH

Study: Daily Walking Reduces Risk of Heart Attack

10,000 steps a day provides significant health benefits. An extensive study from the United States confirms the importance of daily exercise for heart health.

Researchers at Boston University analyzed health data from nearly 50,000 adults over a period of ten years. The effect was clear: those who walked at least 10,000 steps a day were 40% less likely to develop cardiovascular disease than those who walked less than 4,000. According to experts, short walks during the day are just as effective as a long run – the most important thing is movement, not effort.

AGING

Japan approves first gene therapy for age-related diseases

New treatment can slow down cell aging. Japan's Ministry of Health has approved the world's first clinical gene therapy targeting biological aging.

The treatment uses a virus-like vector to activate cell repair mechanisms. The first patients are over 60 years old with early signs of memory impairment. The researchers emphasize that it is not a "rejuvenation vaccine", but a form of treatment that can slow down degeneration and improve quality of life. The results are expected within two years.

HEALTH

The European Union funds a programme on mental health for young people

New digital services to be introduced in schools and educational institutions

LUX HELSINKI

Lux Helsinki 8.-12.1.2025: Illuminating the Darkest Days



As the winter tightens its grip on Helsinki, a radiant counterpoint emerges: Lux Helsinki. This annual light festival, taking place from January 6th to 11th, 2026, transforms the city's familiar landscape into a breathtaking canvas of light art.

Lux Helsinki is more than just a spectacle; it's a celebration of creativity and community. For five magical nights, the heart of

Helsinki is bathed in a kaleidoscope of colors and enchanting installations. Public buildings become luminous sculptures, parks morph into ethereal wonderlands, and streetscapes are imbued with an otherworldly glow.

The festival's strengths lie in its diversity. From immersive, interactive experiences to awe-inspiring large-scale projections, Lux Helsinki caters to all artistic tastes. Local and international artists come together to showca-

se their innovative visions, pushing the boundaries of light as a medium. Wandering through the illuminated city becomes an adventure, with each corner revealing a new marvel.

Lux Helsinki's impact goes beyond aesthetics. It fosters a sense of connection and shared joy during a time of year often associated with darkness and solitude. The festival encourages exploration, inviting residents and visitors alike to rediscover the city under a new light. It's

a reminder that even in the depths of winter, beauty and wonder can be found.

Whether you're a seasoned art enthusiast or simply seeking a magical escape from the cold, Lux Helsinki is an experience not to be missed. So bundle up, embrace the crisp winter air, and immerse yourself in the luminous heart of Helsinki. Let Lux Helsinki illuminate your January and ignite your sense of wonder.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

Jenny Nyström and her wonderful cards

Once upon a time, in the picturesque town of Kalmar, Sweden, a creative spirit named Jenny Nyström was born on June 13, 1854. Her family, led by the talented church cantor Daniel Nyström and the dedicated schoolteacher Anette Nyström, provided her with a joyful childhood.

In 1865, Jenny began her artistic journey at an art school in Gothenburg, laying the foundation for her future as a renowned artist.

Her influence echoed in the works of Finnish artists Wendelin and Koivu.

In 1887, at the age of 33, Jenny embarked on another significant chapter by marrying Daniel Stoopendaal, and together they raised a son, Curt Nyström Stoopendaal, who would also become a respected artist in his own right.



Jenny Nyström continued to share her creative spirit with the world until the age of 92, when she peacefully passed away in Stockholm in 1946. Interestingly, the same

year witnessed the departure of Rudolf Koivu in Finland, who had carved his own path in creating beloved Christmas characters inspired by Nyström's enchanting legacy.

And so, the legacies of these two artists intertwined, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts of art enthusiasts for generations to come.

UKRAINE PRESIDENT

Russia Has Violated Everything Long Ago: The Norms of International Law, the Rules of Common Sense, and All of God's Commandments – The President During the Second Military Prayer Breakfast



President Volodymyr Zelenskyy took part in the second Military Prayer Breakfast held on the occasion of the Day of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

The event brought together the heads of churches and religious organizations, military chaplains, Ukraine's defenders, and inter-

national guests. "You truly know what we are fighting for in this war. Above all, for our state, for its life, which means for independence and freedom," the President said.

"A just, dignified, and – as everyone says – honest. And in my view, it is crucial that it be lasting. And only such a peace will be blessed with the non-recurrence of this war and the non-recurrence of enemy aggression. They are who they are – we have no illusions. But we know that no one will grant this peace to us; we must win it," Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

Military chaplains said

The President thanked everyone for supporting Ukraine, for their prayers, their unity, every good deed, and every kind word.

prayers for the Armed Forces of Ukraine and all other branches of the Security and Defense Forces, as well as for the fallen defenders of our country.

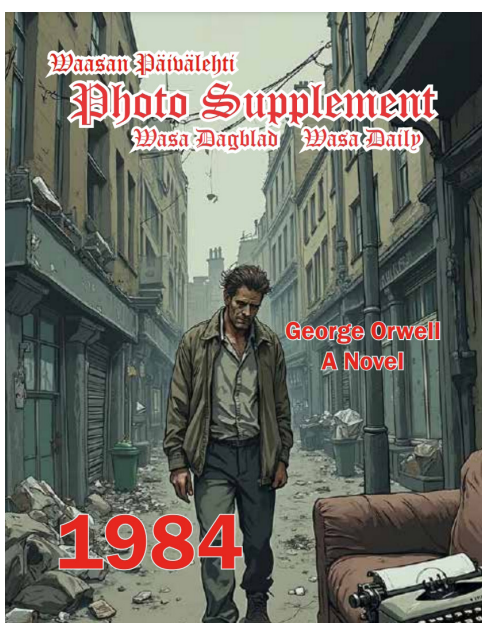
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ART EXPERIENCE OF THE WEEK



Albert Edelfelt
21.7.1854, Kiialan kartano, Porvoon mlk
18.8.1905, Haikko, Porvoon mlk
Paimenet kumartavat Jeesus-lasta, harjoitelma Vaasan kirkon alttaritauluun, 1891 - 1892

George Orwell
 1984
 10.



Winston sprang to attention in front of the telescreen, upon which the image of a youngish woman, scrawny but muscular, dressed in tunic and gym-shoes, had already appeared.

'Arms bending and stretching!' she rapped out. 'Take your time by me. ONE, two, three, four! ONE, two, three, four! Come on, comrades, put a bit of life into it! ONE, two, three four! ONE two, three, four!...'

The pain of the coughing fit had not quite driven out of Winston's mind the impression made by his dream, and the rhythmic movements of the exercise restored it somewhat. As he mechanically shot his arms back and forth, wearing on his face the look of grim enjoyment which was considered proper during the Physical Jerks, he was struggling to think his way backward into the dim period of his early childhood. It was extraordinarily difficult. Beyond the late fifties everything faded. When there were no external records that you could refer to, even the outline of your own life lost its sharpness. You remembered huge events which had quite probably not happened, you remembered the detail of incidents without being able to recapture their atmosphere, and there were long blank periods to which you could assign nothing. Everything had been different then. Even the names of countries, and their shapes on the map, had been different. Airstrip One, for instance, had not been so called in those days: it had been called England or Britain, though London, he felt fairly certain, had always been

called London.

Winston could not definitely remember a time when his country had not been at war, but it was evident that there had been a fairly long interval of peace during his childhood, because one of his early memories was of an air raid which appeared to take everyone by surprise. Perhaps it was the time when the atomic bomb had fallen on Colchester. He did not remember the raid itself, but he did remember his father's hand clutching his own as they hurried down, down, down into some place deep in the earth, round and round a spiral staircase which rang under his feet and which finally so wearied his legs that he began whimpering and they had to stop and rest. His mother, in her slow, dreamy way, was following a long way behind them. She

was carrying his baby sister—or perhaps it was only a bundle of blankets that she was carrying: he was not certain whether his sister had been born then. Finally they had emerged into a noisy, crowded place which he had realized to be a Tube station.

There were people sitting all over the stone-flagged floor, and other people, packed tightly together, were sitting on metal bunks, one above the other. Winston and his mother and father found themselves a place on the floor, and near them an old man and an old woman were sitting side by side on a bunk. The old man had on a decent dark suit and a black cloth cap pushed back from very white hair: his face was scarlet and his eyes were blue and full of tears. He reeked of gin. It seemed to breathe out of his skin in place of sweat, and one could have fancied that the tears welling from his eyes were pure gin. But though slightly drunk he was also suffering under some grief that was genuine and unbearable. In his childish way Winston grasped that some terrible thing, something that was beyond forgiveness and could never be remedied, had just happened. It also seemed to him that he knew what it was. Someone whom the old man loved—a little granddaughter, perhaps—had been killed. Every few minutes the old man kept repeating:

'We didn't ought to 'ave trusted 'em. I said so, Ma, didn't I? That's what comes of trusting 'em. I said so all along. We didn't ought to 'ave trusted the buggers.'

But which buggers they didn't ought to have trusted Winston could not now remember.

Since about that time, war had been literally continuous, though strictly speaking it had not always been the same war. For several months during his childhood there had been confused street fighting in London itself, some of which he remembered vividly. But to trace out the history of the whole period, to say who was fighting whom at any given moment, would have been utterly impossible, since no written record, and no spoken word, ever made mention of any other alignment than the existing one. At this moment, for example, in 1984 (if it was 1984), Oceania was at war with Eurasia and in alliance with Eastasia. In no public or private utterance was it ever

admitted that the three powers had at any time been grouped along different lines. Actually, as Winston well knew, it was only four years since Oceania had been at war with Eastasia and in alliance with Eurasia. But that was merely a piece of furtive knowledge which he happened to possess because his memory was not satisfactorily under control. Officially the change of partners had never happened. Oceania was at war with Eurasia: therefore Oceania had always been at war with Eurasia. The enemy of the moment always represented absolute evil, and it followed that any past or future agreement with him was impossible.

The frightening thing, he reflected for the ten thousandth time as he forced his shoulders painfully backward (with hands on hips, they were gyrating their bodies from the waist, an exercise that was supposed to be good for the back muscles)—the frightening thing was that it might all be true. If the Party could thrust its hand into the past and say of this or that event, IT NEVER HAPPENED—that, surely, was more terrifying than mere torture and death?

The Party said that Oceania had never been in alliance with Eurasia. He, Winston Smith, knew that Oceania had been in alliance with Eurasia as short a time as four years ago. But where did that knowledge exist? Only in his own consciousness, which in any case must soon be annihilated. And if all others accepted the lie which the Party imposed—if all records told the same tale—then the lie passed into history and became truth. 'Who controls the past,' ran the Party slogan, 'controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.' And yet the past, though of its nature alterable, never had been altered. Whatever was true now was true from everlasting to everlasting. It was quite simple. All that was needed was an unending series of victories over your own memory. 'Reality control', they called it: in Newspeak, 'doublethink'.

'Stand easy!' barked the instructress, a little more genially.

ART

Helene Schjerfbeck's exhibition opened in New York on 5.12.2025



The works of the well-known Finnish painter Helene Schjerfbeck are getting new recognition: on Thursday 5 December, the exhibition Seeing Silence: The Paintings of Helene Schjerfbeck opened at The Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met) — the first time a Finnish artist has had a solo exhibition at a major American museum.

The exhibition presents Schjerfbeck's career in detail, from her early paintings to her last self-portraits. The exhibition includes about 60-65 works: portraits, still lifes, landscapes, and self-portraits from different decades — including The Convalescent (1888), The Seamstress (1905), and the famous self-portraits from 1884-1885, 1915, and 1944. The Lace Scarf, painted in 1920 and acquired by The Met in 2023, will also get its share.

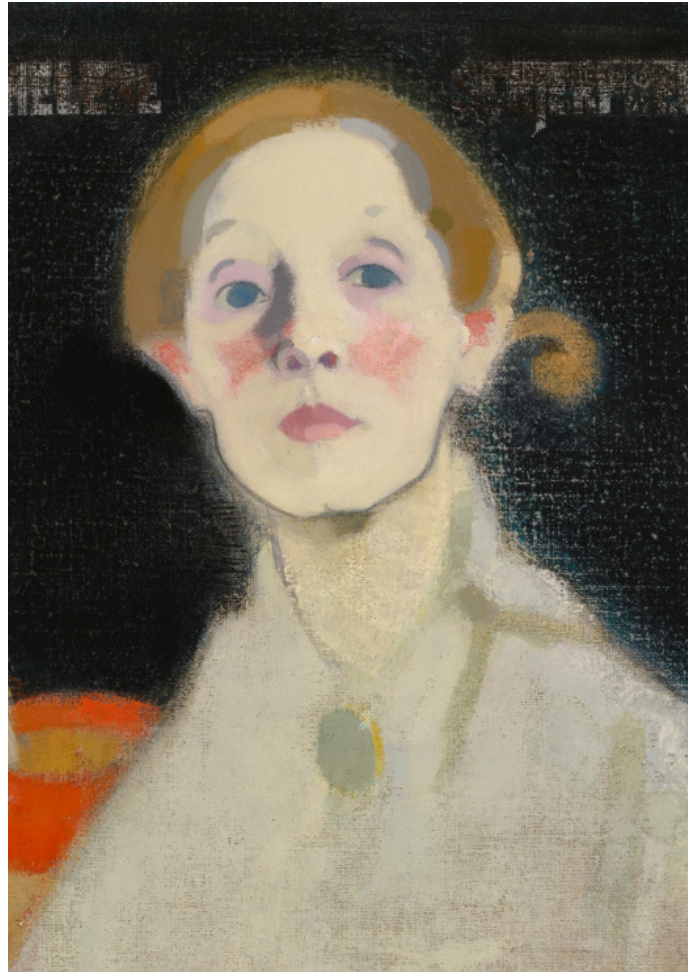
The exhibition is curated by the curator of The Met's Robert Lehman Collection, and the Finnish Ateneum Art Museum is also involved in the collaboration. The director of the Ateneum Museum has said that this is a historic moment: "This is Finland's art history — the Met is number one in the museum world, and Schjerfbeck has the honour of

being the first."

Why is the exhibition important? Schjerfbeck's art offers a unique picture of the birth of modernism in a small country, far from Europe's major art

aesthetic was published at the same time as the exhibition.

The exhibition is open from 5.12.2025 to 5.4.2026 in connection with the museum's regular entrance



centers. His style evolved from realism towards a more simple, minimalist visual language, where the subtleties of light, space and colour evoke strong emotions.

In addition to the exhibition in New York, Finnish design celebrates Schjerfbeck's legacy: a special interior design collection that draws inspiration from the works' color scheme and minimalist

ce fee. Although the doors are far from home, it is now a unique opportunity to see part of Finland's cultural heritage in an international context — and to experience how Nordic silence and inner power find a new audience at the heart of world art.

What a wonderful reason this would be to visit New York!

Images: National Art Gallery

HUMOUR ONE

HUNDRED YEARS AGO

AFTER THE LETTER.
The newlywed husband:
—But dear, little one, this pudding is full of eggshells.
The young lady:
—Yes, I have also used four eggs.
The man:
—But
Wife:
—It's not a "but" at all, because it's clearly stated in the cookbook: Then you take four whole eggs.

TERRIBLE VIEWS.
Little Greta comes to her mother one day and says that her schoolmates said that her father and mother are going to divorce and she will be divided!

are we? They saw no possibility of finding out about their place of residence. Finally it was decided to reconnoitre, and one of the somewhat dull captains was sent out to cautiously find out where you were. Long, slightly anxious wait. Finally, the researcher returns. He looks devastated. — Boys, poor animals, we have ended up in — India! — India, you're crazy, but by the way, we've always known that. — Enough, gentlemen. We are in India. —? ? 1 — Si, on a wall over there I read clearly and distinctly: — Die Toilette jenseits des Ganges!

TO INDIA

Some happy captains conducted frantic night-life studies in that city of Stettin. Over time, they gained so much experience and wisdom that they were seized with vertigo. However, they continued with their trying work and at the dawn of a new day they found themselves gathered in an unfamiliar locus. Through the window they could see a strange city. Absolutely foreign and unfamiliar. — Where are we? — Where in the name of peace

THE BOY CHILD

The young couple have been blessed with an heir, and all available relatives are assembled to witness the wonder. Among the aunts there is also a ninety-year-old diocesan virgin, who, after having subjected the contents of the cradle to an eyepiece inspection with the binoculars for a while, exclaims: — Yes, if my memory serves me right now, it is a boy.

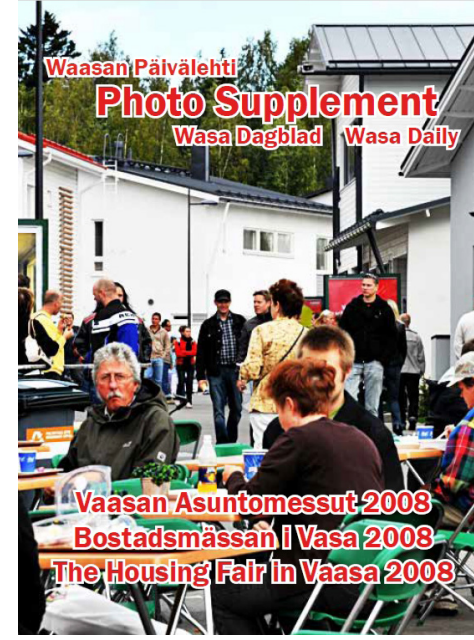
Astronomic picture of the week:

Rosette Nebula Captured with DECam



Cradled within the fiery petals of the Rosette Nebula is NGC 2244, the young star cluster which it nurtured. The cluster's stars light up the nebula in vibrant hues of red, gold and purple, and opaque towers of dust rise from the billowing clouds around its excavated core. This image, captured by 570-megapixel Department of Energy-fabricated Dark Energy Camera (DECam), mounted on the U.S. National Science Foundation Victor M. Blanco 4-meter Telescope at Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, a Program of NSF NOIRLab, is being released in celebration of NOIRLab's fifth anniversary. Credit: CTIO/NOIRLab/DOE/NSF/AURA Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

Next week:



BLOG WRITERS

Join Wasa Daily as a Blog Writer! Are you passionate about sharing your thoughts, stories, or expertise with the community? Wasa Daily is looking for enthusiastic blog writers to contribute engaging content for our readers. Whether you love writing about local events, culture, lifestyle, business, or personal experiences, we welcome your voice! Writing for Wasa Daily is a great opportunity to reach a wider audience, connect with fellow locals, and showcase your creativity. No prior experience is needed—just bring your ideas and enthusiasm! We value diverse perspectives and fresh voices that reflect the vibrant spirit of our community. Interested? Send us your blog pitch or a short sample, and let's get your words published! Join us in making Wasa Daily a platform for meaningful conversations and inspiring stories. Contact us at wasadagblad@gmail.com for more details. We can't wait to hear from you!

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 Ostrobothnia region

The magazine contains quotations from old daily newspapers taken from the National Archives (digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi). GPT3, Gemini, Aria and Monica do some of the routine editing work, such as translation, corrector reading, and short notice writing. All texts have been checked by journalists and the editorial staff is responsible for all the content of the texts. Wasa Daily is a daily newspaper type publication, so far it is published on Sunday mornings. But our goal is for it to come out every morning in the future. The magazine is available online for free. Editor-in-chief Hans Björknäs. Readers' writings are welcome! The magazine is locally owned and will remain so. For ever! Editorial office: Wasa Daily, Koulukatu 37 B 7, 65100 Vaasa, tel. +358-40-5462455. Helsinki editorial office: Wasa Daily, Toineen linja 9 B 36, 00530 Helsinki. Phone +358-40-5462455. Email: wasadagblad@gmail.com

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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AI

AI-Generated Podcasts: A New Era in Audio Content

In the rapidly changing world of digital media, artificial intelligence (AI) continues to push boundaries and shape industries and redefine creative processes.

One of the most significant advancements is Google's NotebookLM, an advanced language technology that has the potential to revolutionize the podcast world. Its ability to produce high-quality audio content that matches that produced by humans opens up new and exciting possibilities for AI-powered storytelling, education, and entertainment.

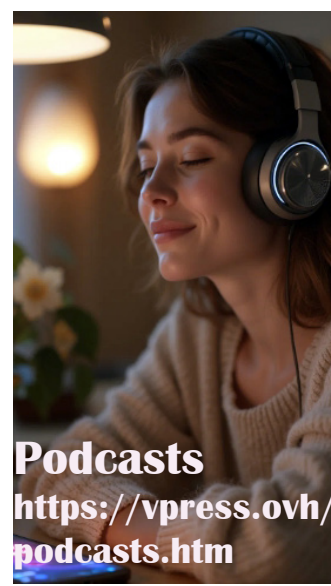
The rise of AI-generated podcasts As the podcast industry grows at breakneck speed, content creators

and media companies are constantly looking for innovative tools to boost production and boost creativity. NotebookLM, which initially gained attention for its ability to produce high-quality texts, has now made the leap into audio content. This cutting-edge technology can produce podcasts that are almost indistinguishable from human creation, opening up new possibilities for the future.

NotebookLM
The appeal of podcasts is based on a number of unique features that set them apart from traditional podcasts:

Natural sound: NotebookLM can produce audio content that mimics the natural rhythm and tone of human speech. This ensures a smooth experience for the listener, where it is difficult to detect that the podcast is generated by AI.

Variety of topics: Whether it's news, current events, or light sto-



Podcasts
<https://vpress.ovh/podcasts.htm>

NotebookLM can cover a wide range of topics. Its flexibility makes it an ideal tool for content creators.



HOROSCOPE FOR DECEMBER 2025

December Horoscope: What the Stars Have in Store for You

Aries (Mar 21–Apr 19)
Santa knows if you've been naughty or nice, Aries. But knowing you, you're probably organizing his gift list and suggesting a reindeer rebrand. Take a breath—December's all about fun, not micromanagement.

Taurus (Apr 20–May 20)
Your love for all things cozy hits its peak this month. Expect a lot of fuzzy socks, mulled wine, and arguments over whether the tree is perfectly symmetrical. Spoiler: It's not, but that's okay.

Gemini (May 21–Jun 20)
You're the life of every holiday party... unless there are three at the same time, which you'll somehow attend simultaneously. Just remember: you can't RSVP "Yes" to everything—unless you clone yourself.

Cancer (Jun 21–Jul 22)
Cancers, December is your time to shine... in the kitchen, wrapping gifts, and orchestrating heartfelt traditions. But be careful: not everyone appreciates hand-knit elf costumes for their pets.

Leo (Jul 23–Aug 22)
You're the star at the top of the tree this month, Leo. But don't hog the spotlight too much; let someone else light a candle or two. Sharing is the greatest gift, even if it's just the last gingerbread cookie.

Virgo (Aug 23–Sep 22)
Your December checklist includes organizing Secret Santa, color-coding decorations, and perfecting your "surprised" face for predictable gifts. Try to relax. Even if the bows aren't perfectly tied, the world will keep spinning.

Libra (Sep 23–Oct 22)
December has you torn between binge-watching holiday movies or handmaking snowflakes for every window. Tip: Do both. Balance is your superpower—just don't try to bake and gift-wrap at the same time.

Scorpio (Oct 23–Nov 21)
You've got strong opinions about eggnog and even stronger ones about who gets to control the holiday playlist. Channel that passion into spreading joy, not just enforcing Mariah Carey exclusivity.

Sagittarius (Nov 22–Dec 21)
Sagittarius, you're practically a snow globe of che-

er this month. Travel, adventure, and mistletoe shenanigans are in your stars. Just don't forget to text your family back between ski runs and mulled cider.

Capricorn (Dec 22–Jan 19)
You've probably planned your New Year's resolutions already, Capricorn. Take a break and enjoy the moment. Life isn't just about productivity—sometimes it's about eating your weight in holiday fudge.

Aquarius (Jan 20–Feb 18)
Your unconventional spirit makes for unique celebrations. A disco ball instead of a star on the tree? Genius. Just don't expect Grandma to embrace your "ugly sweater/dance-off" theme immediately.

Pisces (Feb 19–Mar 20)
Pisces, you're a soft-hearted snowflake this December. Embrace your dreamy side, but don't get so lost in holiday sentimentality that you forget where you hid the gifts. Hint: Check the freezer.

And - A Merry Christmas!



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