

## Finnish-Canadian Society's message

Although my family has no Finnish roots, I am proud to call Finland home, and even more proud to serve as Chairman of the Finnish-Canadian Society (FCS) here in Finland.

Before joining the Society, I was sure membership consisted mainly of Canadians. However, upon joining, I was pleasantly surprised to learn it was a mix of both Canadians and Finns, as many members have partners from the "other" country. This has made our events refreshing, and our newsletters consist of a wide variety of topics and languages.

The Finnish-Canadian Society offers a soft landing for Canadians who have found themselves in the land of the Finns, be it by studying in Finland, working for one of the Canadian or Finnish multinationals, or by playing professional or recreational hockey. We estimate there are about 2,000 Canadians living in Finland, and over 130,000 Canadians in Canada who claim Finnish heritage.

Not all Canadians resident in Finland are a member of the Society, although I encourage them to join up. During my time with the Society, I have had the pleasure of meeting many of the Canadians that call Finland home. Likely the most prominent is André Noël Chaker, who has twice been named Finnish Speaker of the Year (not for his English or French skills, but for his Finnish!). Carmen Pekkarinen (former FCS Chair) is another name that must be mentioned thanks to her tireless efforts for the Canadian community, and her entrepreneurial spirit.



*Photo: Bruno Puolakainen*

As for 2017, the highlight will most certainly be the 150/100/70-year celebrations slated for Helsinki. I look forward to celebrating the birthday of both countries!

**Mike Kempf**

*Chairman*

*Finnish-Canadian Society/Suomi-Kanada-seura*