

Hello all,

I would like to briefly introduce myself: my name is Lotta Peltola-Nelms, and I am the TFA president for 2009.

I have lived in the States for almost 11 years, originally came in 1998 to go to a flight school in South Carolina; my six-month trip has become a bit longer... I have one son, Alex, and we live in North Raleigh; my workplace is an air cargo company at RDU, where I work as a Director of Operations.

My involvement with TFA started at the Scandinavian Christmas Fair, December 2003, when Riitta Virtaranta saw my son holding a Finnish flag in his hand and came to talk to us! As more years pass by living abroad, I'm becoming more and more proud of my Finnish heritage; back when I lived in Finland, I didn't think much about it and really didn't appreciate it much either! I'm sure this is true with many other "Ulkosuomalaiset" as well. To me, TFA is an important part of life; being involved with the organization and all the wonderful people keeps my homesickness at bay! I want to thank everyone for that.



I would like to take this opportunity and challenge everyone to take part in preserving our "Finnishness" by volunteering in the TFA events – there are many different ways you can help, from baking a pie to selling raffle tickets; from playing the piano in the Independence Day Party to taking a two-hour booth shift at the International Festival once a year! If each and every one of us takes one small duty per year, we should have enough manpower for all of the lovely get-togethers and the few, active people won't get overwhelmed with organizing everything. After all, this is all based on volunteering and should be a fun, enjoyable experience!

I will see you around, the next TFA event will be Late Laskiainen, March 28<sup>th</sup> at the Lake Crabtree Park!

If you need to contact me, my e-mail address is [lottapeltola@hotmail.com](mailto:lottapeltola@hotmail.com) and my home phone number is 919-420-1945.

Have a wonderful spring,

*Lotta Peltola-Nelms*