



EANC NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

During the First Quarter of 2017, the Estonian American National Council gave financial support to:

- Sky Film's new "Singing Revolution Digital Library" (see page 3)
- East & West Coast Children's Choirs: to travel to Laste Laulupidu in Tallinn this summer
- NY 2017 Kultuuri Päevad / New York 2017 Cultural Days
- New film on Geislingen DP camp by Helga Merits
- Estonian Girl Guides & Scouts
- Nordic Press / Vaba Eesti Sõna
- Laste Suvekodu / Estonian children's Long Island summer camp
- Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC) 2017 Conference sponsor (see p. 5 "Upcoming Events")



Senate Foreign Relations Committee meeting, Jan. 2017
(photo: K. Shuey)

We continued and intensified our work in Washington DC (see Karin Shuey's Washington Update, p. 5).

WHY I JOINED EANC

By Marianne Brokaw

I am an Estonian-American, born in Germany, who grew up in a small community far from North American Estonian



organizations. Our little family of four was on its own to keep the Estonian language and customs alive. We spoke Estonian at home and attended Estonian festivals in Toronto and New York. I have visited Estonia more than 20 times, starting in 1971, and lived there for six months in 1990 with my husband and two children.

As we continue to regularly visit Tartu for work and personal needs, we bought an apartment in 2002, making Tartu our second home. Despite these strong connections, my own contributions to Estonian-American activities were mainly personal. I realized loving Estonia is not enough.

Joining the Estonian American National Council allows me to have a broader influence. The EANC gives all Estonians a collective presence and power in Washington DC and throughout the US to make the concerns and needs of Estonians widely known. We can't afford to sit on the sidelines as global power structures change. While the Estonian people have quickly moved forward since independence, fears of undue Russian domination and influence continue. The current political climate leaves many Estonians here and abroad uneasy.

We all have important roles to play in supporting and encouraging the continued existence of the Estonian Republic and even greater accomplishments by Estonians everywhere. Belonging to the EANC is one more way to make our voices heard.

EANC Executive Board/ ERKÜ Juhatus

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KOGU ME LUGU PROJECT

American students document Estonians' memories of Soviet and Nazi occupations

Kogu Me Lugu is an Estonian oral history initiative begun in 2013 to collect, investigate and share Estonian family stories about the experiences under both German and Soviet occupation and the crimes against humanity committed by these regimes during and after WW II. Last year, in collaboration with Kogu Me Lugu, Williams College and the Unitas Foundation, an Estonia-based non-profit organization dedicated to history and human rights education, launched the college course "Documenting Stories of Escape and Survival." This study program focused on recording and sharing the stories of Estonian WWII refugees and their descendants. The Estonian American National Council helped support this project.



Interviewees Kaja Parming Weeks (center) and Karl Altau (right) with the Williams College / Kogu Me Lugu team (photo: KML)

With the assistance of the Kogu Me Lugu production team from Estonia, Williams College students interviewed Estonian diaspora members in New York City and Baltimore/DC and created short films based on their stories. The interviews and video stories they created have contributed to the 80+ interviews and 100+ video stories in the Kogu Me Lugu archives, available to all via www.kogumelugu.ee.

By bearing witness to both the unimaginable losses and the resilience of the interviewees, recording oral histories of these traumatic events forced the students and their instructors to ask hard questions. "What would I have

done in those circumstances? How does the unthinkable become commonplace? What is the cost of remembering and documenting these collective and individual traumas? What is the cost of letting these memories go?" reflects

Lois Banta, coordinator and co-instructor of the course, and Professor of Biology at Williams College.

This spring, two Kogu Me Lugu teams will travel to the USA – one to Williams College to meet the students who took part in the winter course and scout for possible video interviews to be conducted with Estonians in Boston later in 2017. The other will travel to Stanford University to deliver presentations to local students and academic community on Estonian history and memory, and to conduct interviews with the Estonian community members in the San Francisco Bay Area.

– Sandra Vokk, Kogu Me Lugu Project Manager

Mis on "Kogu Me Lugu"?

Kogu Me Lugu on 2013. aastal käivitatud üleriigiline mälestuste kogumise algatus, mille raames luuakse nii Eestis kui ka välismaal näitamiseks mõeldud videointervjuusid ja lühifilme totalitaarsete režiimide okupatsioonist 20. sajandi Eestis ja okupatsioonivõimude korraldusel toime pandud inimsusvastastest kuritegudest.

Algatus kutsub ka noori üles uurima, mäletama ja talletama oma vanemate ja vanavanemate lugusid. Siin on oluline roll internetil ja sotsiaalmeedial. Ühes küljest on üleskutse eesmärgiks jagada Eesti ajalookogemust maailmaga, teisalt aga luua võimalused ja meetodid kogutud materjalide teaduslikuks ja hariduslikuks kasutamiseks, sealhulgas digitaalse videolugude andmebaasi kujul.

- Unitas Foundation

The Singing Revolution Digital Library – a new EANC-supported project

By James and Maureen Tusty, Sky Films

"The Singing Revolution" took us on a path we could not possibly have predicted when we launched the film in Estonia in 2006, followed by the U.S. release in 2007. [It] has proven to be our most wide-reaching film on so many levels. We decided last year to try and attract a new, digital audience, with a focus on Millennials. So, with assistance from EANC, we launched The Singing Revolution Digital Library in December of 2016.

Throughout the course of creating "The Singing Revolution," over 100 hours of original footage was filmed, and another 20 hours of archival footage and research materials acquired from a wide variety of sources. The very first draft cut of the film was more than four hours long! It took us over a year to cut that down to the 97-minute version that is now the film known as "The Singing Revolution." But there were many, many stories and nuances that could not be included in the final film. So we have now assembled 23 different videos with over 4½ hours of additional interview sound bites, arranged by subject matter. We identified seven historical newsreels related to that content. We



Interview with Forest Brother
Alfred Kaarmann



1987 Hirve Park Demonstration

also selected 30 relevant documents, and put together 15 maps of Europe from 180 AD until 1997 that make clear Estonia's evolving political history.

In the TSR Library we also provide a directors' commentary of the final film that explains decisions we made while crafting the story, on shooting challenges and what happened behind the scenes.

We tried to create a digital library that is user-friendly for people to easily navigate and find material that interests them without slugging through hours and hours (unless you want to!). We are proud of the cross-reference feature that identifies additional related documents and/or film clips that relate to the subject matter being reviewed.

Many elements are free to watch or read so that people can get a good sense of how the site works and access some of the material. For those who wish to dive deeper and access everything on the site, the annual subscription is \$24.95. To absorb everything that is on the site will take days, not hours.

We now could use the same support from the Estonian community that we had for the film itself to help build traffic to this digital library. Please share the news! Go to www.singingrevolution.com and click on "TSR Digital Library" at the top of the screen. Then please tell your friends about this new source of in-depth Estonian history and culture.



Since its U.S. release in 2007, "The Singing Revolution" has:

- Played in theaters in over 125 North American theatrical markets
- Was broadcast over 1,500 times on U.S. Public Television stations in 2011 & again in 2016
- Over 10,000 Educational DVD sets have been requested by middle and

high schools, which includes 25 lesson plans for use in various subject areas

- It is estimated that over 10 million people have seen the entire film
- The film has generated over 500 million press impressions
- Googling "The Singing Revolution Movie" generates over 2 million pages
- "The Singing Revolution" is regularly screened for US Embassy staff as part of their 'Estonian awareness' orientation

(Statistics supplied by James Tusty)

A New Life for Old Books

By Leif Fritzell

For many of us, the thought of simply throwing away old books seems gratuitously wasteful, leading us to donate them to a local library or charity instead. In the case of books written in Estonian however, finding a local recipient that can properly utilize them might be a tall order.

Until recently, obtaining Estonian language books was a difficult task for many Estonian-Americans, which may



partly explain why we place such high value on these works. Some of us have even inherited whole book collections from our parents and grandparents, which can

add additional sentimental value as well. Yet, ultimately these collections can take up a lot of space; space many of us do not have despite our desire to use and appreciate them.

In response to this growing issue, the EANC and Stanford University Libraries (SUL) have coordinated a solution that aims at redistributing surplus Estonian language books as

well as other materials pertaining to the history and culture of the Baltic states to research universities wanting to study and preserve them. This is especially true of small press publications and books published in exile. Dr. Liisi Esse, SUL's Assistant Curator for Estonian and Baltic Studies, has graciously agreed to assist those looking to donate books and other materials to the University's collections as well as work with other institutions to get books placed. Regardless if you have a large collection or just a handful of books, Dr. Esse is willing to work with anyone wishing to donate. In fact, depending on the situation, the cost of shipping may be covered by the University as well. In any case, it is important to coordinate ahead on any shipment, and be prepared to provide an inventory.

As Estonian-Americans, it is important that we do our part to make the story of our people known to the wider world. To do this, it is crucial that those interested in Estonia and Estonian-Americans have access to the materials that tell this story. Who knows, you may have the last piece of a historian's puzzle sitting by your armchair.

Contact Dr. Liisi Esse at: (650) 736-4724 or Liisi.Esse@stanford.edu

History of Estonians in America Well-Received by Readers

Copies of ***"Estonians in America, 1945-1995: Exiles in a Land of Promise"*** are available! The



hard-cover book has over 560 pages, and photos on the history and activities of Estonian refugees, and their descendants, who came to the U.S. after Estonia was occupied by the Soviet Union. **Here is a sampling of comments from readers:**

"To everyone involved in this book: KUDOS TO YOU ALL!!...it's an absolutely beautiful book that I am so happy I ordered. My almost 96 year old mother, Juta Jarver, lives with us and is legally blind. It has become a nightly ritual for me to read sections of the book...It was a walk down memory lane...I just had to write to thank you for all the hard work on this book and I am hoping somebody will continue from 1995-2015? Thank you again for a wonderful treasure!"

- Tiina Jarver-Ers

"It is fascinating and wonderful! Suur tänu!"

- Tõnu Kalam

"Suur töö tehtud, suur tähtsus ajalooliselt, ja suurepärase välimus... Kui see töö algas mõtlesin ka meie pere loo saata -mina saabusin siia 1960 aastal okupeeritud Eestist üksinda Detroiti, vanemad saabusid siia 1949 aastal Augsburgist. Aga hakkasin mõtlema, et see pole just perekonna raamat, on palju erinevaid teid, kuidas siia jõuti."

- Anne-Reet Pauga

"It is a remarkable book and the most extraordinary book that I've seen in a very long time. Many, many thanks to everyone involved in the project."

- Andres Wirkmaa

The cost per book is \$97.50 by check (includes regular shipping within the U.S.). Order form is on www.estosite.org. You can also pay by credit card via PayPal at a cost of \$100.50: go to www.estosite.org and click on the "DONATE" button. Expedited shipping cost is \$106.00 by check; \$110.00 by PayPal.

Contact: Linda Rink, EANC Executive Director: 215-546-5863, erku@estosite.org.

EANC UPDATE FROM WASHINGTON DC



Karin Shuey, EANC's Washington DC Director, reports:

The Estonian American National Council and the Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC) are stepping up work on Capitol Hill to raise awareness of issues affecting the Baltic region. We have already delivered more than 100 letters to new members of the House inviting them to join the House Baltic Caucus (HBC) and to returning HBC members thanking them for supporting the Baltics and highlighting relevant legislation.

Similar letters are planned for the Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus in the coming weeks.

EANC and JBANC have met with four Congressional offices. Staffers for Representatives Gerald Connolly (D-VA), Adam Schiff (D-CA), and John Shimkus (R-IL), and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee sat down with EANC, American Latvian Youth Association, and JBANC representatives to discuss legislation on topics including the Baltics, NATO, Ukraine and Russia. The offices are striving to keep a bipartisan balance of support for these issues and frame them as important to national security, a major concern for both parties.

The 115th Congress has already introduced several new bills that address European, and by extension, Baltic security. One major piece of relevant legislation is the Countering Russian Hostilities Act of 2017 (S.94). It was submitted by Senator Benjamin Cardin (D-MD) and is currently cosponsored by a bipartisan group of 19 colleagues. It proposes comprehensive sanctions legislation on Russia for their cyber intrusions, aggression,

and destabilizing activities in the U.S. and around the world. More information is available in the official press release at Senator Cardin's website (cardin.senate.gov). Senator Cardin also introduced a bill to establish an independent commission to investigate Russian cyber intrusion operations in the 2016 U.S. elections (bill number S.27). It has 23 cosponsors so far.

Representative Connolly introduced the Crimea Annexation Non-recognition Act (H.R.463) to make official U.S. non-recognition of Russia's annexation of Crimea, which currently has 13 bipartisan cosponsors. This bill is important because it shows U.S. commitment to respecting established borders as a requirement for maintaining international peace. Also in the House is H.R.830 to contain, reverse and deter Russian aggression in Ukraine. It was introduced by Representative Eliot Engel (D-NY) and has 29 bipartisan cosponsors.

Legislative efforts are also underway to support the advancing of U.S.-Baltic relations and the security of Europe through continuation of funding (currently \$3.4 billion) for the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI). This funding supports U.S. and our NATO allies' preparations necessitated by Russia's widening aggression against its neighbors. ERI is part of the National Defense Authorization Act, which is part of the 2017 continuing resolution in effect through April.

Details for all of the bills mentioned above, and other relevant legislation, are available at the Congress.gov website. House Baltic Caucus membership is listed at housebalticcaucus.webs.com.

Upcoming Events

New Realities: The Baltic Region in a Changing World—The Joint Baltic American National Committee's Twelfth Baltic Conference will take place in Washington DC May 19-20, 2017 at the Washington Court Hotel, featuring foreign policy and world affairs experts. Go to www.jbanc.org, or contact JBANC at 301-340-1954 or jbanc@jbanc.org for registration and more information.



LA LEP 2017

8/31-9/4 2017

UCLA Conference Center
Los Angeles, CA

Ütleb Renee Meriste, President, Los Angelese Eesti Selts, "Me kõik teame, kus me oleme 31. augustil 2017! – **LEP 2017, UCLA, Los Angeles!**"

Registration and other information is at <http://lalep2017.com/>.

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2077770759115496/>
Questions or ideas? Contact Renee at 818-300-6417.

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EANC NEWSLETTER - April 2017 **ERKÜ TEATAJA - april 2017**

Republic of Estonia Independence Day Celebrations across the U.S.



*Formal reception at the Estonian Embassy,
Washington DC, Feb. 22, 2017
(photo: Kairi Saar-Isop)*



*EAST COAST:
Philadelphia Estonian Society, Feb. 26, 2017 (photo: Tina Karm Koiva)*



*WEST COAST: Karin Shuey, EANC Washington DC Director, speaking to the
Seattle Estonian Society, Feb. 26, 2017 (photo: Kent Shuey)*