



HIGHLIGHTS OF EANC'S RECENT ACTIVITIES

During the first half of 2015, the Estonian American National Council participated in, or provided support to, many important activities. Here are some highlights:

- An EANC delegation attended the Estonian World Council's annual meeting in Tallinn in April. The meeting was chaired by EANC President Marju Rink-Abel and Aho Rebas from Sweden; other EANC delegates were Ülle Ederma, Eric Suuberg, Gilda Karu, and Aavo Reinfeldt. EWC also organized a symposium, "Flight and Exile," to inform high school teachers about the reasons WWII refugees fled Estonia and their lives in their new homelands, featuring presentations and personal remembrances by Aho Rebas, Marju Rink-Abel, Ivi Zajedova, Ülle Ederma and Maie Barrow. Read more about the Estonian World Council on Page 4.

- The Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC) held its eleventh Baltic Conference, "History Repeated: Baltics and Eastern Europe in Peril?", in Washington DC in April. President of Estonia Toomas Hendrik Ilves was one of the keynote speakers. At the conference, Marju Rink-Abel, EANC president and outgoing JBANC president, handed her gavel to Anita Batarags, president of the American Latvian Association (ALA) and JBANC's new 2015-2016 president. To introduce young Estonian Americans to this prestigious Baltic affairs forum, EANC paid for four young adults to attend. Turn to Page 3 to read about their impressions of the conference.



Front row: Marju Rink-Abel, EANC President, Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, Anita Batarags, ALA President.
Back row: Lya Karm (EANC representative), Ingrida Lusiis, Tiina Urv (EANC representative), Karl Altai (JBANC Managing Director), Raits Eglitis, Henry Gaidis, Ilze Garoza, Kristina Van Sant (JBANC), Alise Krapane.
[Photo: Peter Alunans]

- EANC is supporting travel expenses of two archivists from the Estonian National Archives in Tartu to Lakewood NJ this fall to help organize the collections of the Estonian Archives in the U.S. This "archival aid" project has been launched by the Baltic Heritage Network, an Estonian non-profit organization that fosters cooperation between national and private archives, museums, libraries, and other organizations collecting and studying the cultural heritage of the Baltic diaspora, and electronic access to their information.



- EANC's support has helped bring a special Baltic Diaspora Exhibit to Philadelphia this summer. From June 22 through August 30, the Free Library of Philadelphia will open an unprecedented exhibition about the Baltic diaspora, drawing on the memories, documents, photographs, and memorabilia of families and individuals who lived through the WWII experience. The creation of this exhibition reflects the collaborative effort of numerous institutions including: the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, the Latvian Folk Art Museum, the Chicago Estonian House, and the Lithuanian Emigration Institute. Funding was provided by EANC and the Philadelphia Estonian Society, among others.

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EANC Executive Board/ ERKÜ Juhatus

Marju Rink-Abel, President • Eric Suuberg, Vice President • Tiina Urv, Treasurer • Maia Linask, Secretary
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WHY I JOINED THE ESTONIAN AMERICAN NATIONAL COUNCIL

“Eesti Keeles, Eesti Meeles”

(Something taught in a number of Eesti Koolid outside of Estonia)

by Matti Prima

Times are different today. In Estonia, Tartu University now conducts its programs in both English and Estonian while Estonians move freely throughout the world in search of greater economic opportunities. In the United States, we have a large population of American-Estonians who, like me, were exposed to the Estonian language and culture from our parents, grandparents and eesti kooli õpetajad (Estonian school teachers) who came to this country to escape persecution.

As a young boy, I spoke eesti keel at home, went to eesti kool (Estonian School), and participated in rahvatants (folk dancing) and skautlus (Boy Scouts). However, my language skills did not expand beyond a basic kõõgi eesti keel (conversational Estonian), thus limiting discussions of a technical or business nature in later years. I was born an American, received my MBA and conducted all my business in English. Except for the Estonian spoken with my parents and grandparents, there was little reason for me to speak the language elsewhere, particularly as my involvement with the Estonian community diminished after I moved greater distances from my parents for university and then employment opportunities. I know that I share this experience with many of my American-Estonian contemporaries as well the offspring of other immigrant groups.

Despite the challenges, we still feel like we are Estonian and have a strong “crazy glue” bond with Eesti and

Estonians. We were raised with the geographical, cultural, historical and social background of being Estonians (tänapäev. Verder, my most memorable Estonian teacher). Yet our limited language skill sometimes discourages us from participating in discussions about the future of Estonians.

I joined EANC to work toward greater inclusion - I want to explore and find ways to include any and all those eestlased, who love their heritage and simply do not want to continue to be or feel left out because of a language impediment. Without an English language accommodation, how are we going to grow our support base? I would like to contribute toward EANC's agenda and help increase its current known address numbers beyond its current level of 4,400+. There should be no limiting factors if you are an Estonian, of Estonian background or if such a connection is through your spouse/partner. The paradox is that in order to better serve and preserve our Estonian-American community, we need to communicate in English - a common language to us all.

Eestlane olen ja eestlaseks jään, or in English: I am an Estonian and will forever remain an Estonian!



Matti Prima is an EANC Board member

SPECIAL PROMOTION: FREE VABA EESTI SÕNA SUBSCRIPTION! ERAKORDNE PAKKUMINE: TASUTA VABA EESTI SÕNA TELLIMINE

Now you can support both EANC and *Vaba Eesti Sõna*! The Estonian American National Council announces a special promotion: every person who donates \$500 or more to EANC will receive a free subscription to *Vaba Eesti Sõna*, the only Estonian-language newspaper published in the U.S.! You can choose either a free ½ year printed newspaper subscription or a full-year digital subscription. Are you already a VES subscriber? You can gift the free subscription to someone else! Make your check out to “EANC” and mail to: EANC, c/o Linda Rink, 1420 Locust St., Suite 31N, Philadelphia PA 19102. Include the form and envelope in this newsletter with your donation check.

Nüüd teie saata toetada mõlemaid ERKÜ-t ja *Vaba Eesti Sõna*! Eesti Rahvuskomitee Ühendriikides kuulutab välja erilise pakkumise: iga inimene kes annab ERKÜ-le \$500 või enam saab tasuta tellimise *Vaba Eesti Sõnale*, ainsale eestikeelse ajalehele mis on USA-s välja antud! Teie võite valida kas trükitud ajalehe ½-aastase tellimise või digitaalse versiooni aastase tellimise. Kas juba tellite VES-i? Võite tasuta tellimise kellegile teisele edasi kinkida! Tsekid kirjutada “EANC” nimele ja saata: EANC, c/o Linda Rink, 1420 Locust St., Suite 31N, Philadelphia PA 19102. Saatke lisatud vorm selles ringkirjas koos tsekiga.

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

EANC ENABLES YOUNG ESTONIAN AMERICANS TO ATTEND 2015 JBANC CONFERENCE

The Estonian American National Council sponsored four young Estonian Americans to the 11th Joint Baltic American National Committee Baltic Conference in Washington, DC on April 17-18, 2015. These individuals were selected based on their applications stating why they wished to attend the conference. They share their thoughts and impressions below.

Brennen Kelly, New York City

"For many months I had been hearing concerns from my Estonian-American family and my friends in Estonia regarding the recent unrest in Ukraine and the implications this could have in the Baltic region, so I was very interested to take part in the conference in order to learn more... Attending the various panels helped to elucidate the signs that Russia has its eye on the Baltic regions, and that it is not likely to stop at the illegal actions already taken against Crimea, as well as the pressure and undermining tactics ongoing in Ukraine. It became clear to me why Ukraine in their immediate need, and the Baltic states in their imminent need, seek support from NATO to help defend against the overwhelming power of the Russians. The U.S. should be concerned about the current situation in the Baltics, as they are our allies... I hope that the US takes these concerns seriously and does everything it can to help the Baltic regions protect their independence."

Ivan Kavoleff, Jackson, NJ

"The most interesting parts of the conference came from the panel discussions about the current situation in Ukraine and how it affects the Baltics as well. The experts' opinions on what's going on in Europe opened my eyes more to the current state of affairs and shed light on the use of propaganda and cyber warfare. The conference ended on a high note when President Toomas Hendrik Ilves addressed the conference. The president discussed the importance of NATO and how members of NATO must comply with the standards set forth to provide adequate support to defense."

Alex Hubschmidt, Philadelphia, PA

"As an Estonian-American, I have spent many of my summers attending camps as well as language classes in an effort to connect myself with what I feel is my second home in Europe. This past weekend however, was something that I have never truly experienced before. Upon arriving at the Latvian embassy for the reception, I found myself in awe not only because I was in the presence of influential politicians (I got to meet President Ilves!) but also the sheer amount of dedicated people who were just as interested in Baltic current events... The amount of insight from so many credible speakers gave me a much deeper understanding of how relevant this is to the Baltic states, and is information a student like myself could never have gathered from simply going on the internet or reading the news. Most importantly however, I was able to really broaden my familiarity with the Estonian-American community... Creating this bond with people in this community was the most important part for me because it is up to us to keep Estonian culture alive here in America."

Leili Tõotsov, Randolph, NJ (from her application essay)

"I have actively participated in Estonian cultural and language activities for my entire life, predominantly within the Estonian community in Lakewood, New Jersey... As I have gotten older...I've grown to appreciate the importance of having an understanding of the state of the nation and major occurrences abroad, particularly concerning Estonia. In September, I attended a reception at the New York Estonian House at which President Ilves spoke about the state of the conflict with Ukraine and Estonia's role in the situation, and how things could generally turn out. I think it would be fascinating to get to learn even more about the specific concerns held by the Baltic nations in general, and how they plan on responding to the issue. As this is the central focus of this year's conference, I am excited to broaden my sense of Estonia's involvement and the international stance of the Baltic nations. Attending the conference would also allow me to meet and get to know other young Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians with whom I would hope to keep in touch with in the future."



*Brennen Kelly, Leili Tõotsov, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, Alex Hubschmidt, and Ivan Kavoleff at the JBANC Conference
(Photo: Peter Alunans)*

What is the Estonian World Council (EWC)? Mis on Ülemaailmne Eesti Kesknõukogu (ÜEKN)?

The Estonian World Council is the global organization uniting Estonians throughout the world. The central organizations that belong to EWC are from Canada, USA, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Australia, United Kingdom and Ukraine. The EWC was registered in 1982 as a non-profit organization to help preserve and promote Estonian culture and language, but its beginnings go back to the 1950's, when widely-scattered Estonian diaspora organizations sought to maintain and strengthen their ties with each other. Laas Leivat in Canada is the current president of EWC. EANC, as one of the largest members, is entitled to six representatives. The Estonian World Council's primary functions are to:



Global Estonians at the Estonian World Council reception in Tallinn

1. Represent the Estonian émigré community. EWC's important role is to step up if the need arises to protect their interests.
2. Maintain contact and share information among the various member organizations.
3. Maintain relations with the Estonian Government. Until last year, Aho Rebas was EWC's representative in Tallinn. A

- replacement has not yet been named.
4. Administer scholarship funds and provide grants to Estonian students. This function was transferred to the Estonian Students Fund in USA this year.
5. Support member organizations, to the extent possible.
6. Disseminate information about its activities in order to educate the public about its mission and accomplishments.

Upcoming Events / Tulevased Üritused

LEP 2015 West Coast Estonian Days is a 5-day celebration of Estonian Culture. From traditional choral performances to lively folk dancing, to family picnics and late night speakeasies, this Festival will bring together hundreds of attendees from across North America and Estonia. August 5-9, 2015, Whistler, British Columbia.



EANC's annual meeting will take place Oct. 3, 2015 at the Sheraton Hotel at Baltimore-Washington Airport, Maryland. The public is invited to attend. Updates will be announced on EANC's website, www.estosite.org.

Book Notes / Raamatutest Märkmed

from Kristi Allpere and Mai-Liis Bartling, EANC Board members

This newsletter inaugurates a new feature, "Book Notes," in which we share books that may be of interest to our readers.

- Sofi Oksanen's new book *"When the Doves Disappeared"* is now available in English translation. She is the Finnish-Estonian author of the award-winning novel *"Purge."* Her new book also takes place in occupied Estonia, telling the story of collaborators and resisters alike. It is historical fiction with a mystery at its center.
- Check out last year's *"The Last Empire: Final Days of the Soviet Union,"* written by Harvard professor and Ukrainian expert S.M. Plokyh. It focuses on 6 pivotal months in 1991 and delves deeply into Ukraine's role.
- *"Red Notice"* by Bill Browder is a Must! A true story, it reads like one of the best criminal thrillers. Shines a light on the inner workings of business and politics in present day Russia. You won't be able to put it down.
- *"Memories Denied"* written by Estonian filmmaker and author Imbi Paju has attracted international attention. Through the story of her mother and aunt during the Soviet occupation, Imbi delves into the attempts of totalitarian regimes to destroy human memory. Highly recommended reading.

JBANC UPDATE FROM WASHINGTON DC



Karl Altu,
JBANC Managing Director

The Joint Baltic American National Committee, Inc. (JBANC), held its 11th conference in Washington, DC on April 17-18, 2015. A capstone of this timely meeting was certainly the participation and keynote speech of Estonia's president Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who thanked Baltic-Americans for their efforts to help in the restoration of Baltic freedom, the removal of Russian troops, and in securing NATO membership. Russia's revisionist policies and aggression and invasion of Ukraine have cast a dark shadow over the region, and the support of the community is needed again, although President Ilves reminded the audience that NATO members need to themselves increase defense spending in order to successfully counter the Russian threat.

Four informative panels covered topics focusing on Russian disinformation and the info war against the West, the situation in Ukraine, Russia's motivations and actions, and the western response. A Friday briefing with Deputy Assistant Secretary of State John Heffern and a reception at the Embassy of Latvia also highlighted the conference. Videos from the conference are available at: www.jbanc.org/?page=video.

A congressional advocacy day was held on the eve of the conference in conjunction with the Central and East European Coalition. The CEEC represents 13 U.S.-based national ethnic communities and over 20 million Americans. Participants visited fifteen congressional offices and discussed issues of concern outlined in the CEEC's most recent policy paper: www.ceecoalition.us/policybrief.htm.

Many of these topics are ongoing core issues for JBANC's work with the U.S. Congress and Administration, particularly support for defending Ukraine. This entails everything from providing defensive weaponry for Ukraine to sustaining the non-recognition policy of Russia's annexation of Crimea. It is important to note that July 23 this year marks the 75th anniversary of the "Welles Declaration," which began the U.S. policy of non-recognition of the Soviet takeover of the Baltic countries. It is vital that we not only support the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and push back on Putin's aggression, but that international laws and justice are upheld. We need to prevail over Moscow's push towards anarchy and a new world disorder. For more information: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Welles_Declaration.

JBANC continues to push for sustained funding for the European Reassurance Initiative, providing support for key military programs to help defend the Baltic countries, including increased training and presence.

Besides pushing for strong sanctions against Russian state enterprises with ties to Putin's regime, JBANC supports sanctions targeting human rights abusers via Global Magnitsky Act legislation, introduced in both the House and Senate. It remains clear that the Kremlin will stoop to no level to eliminate those opposed to Putin's regime. Perpetrators involved in the brutal murder of Russian human rights defender Boris Nemtsov must be brought to justice. We are also shocked by the apparent poisoning of activist Vladimir Kara-Murza, a speaker at JBANC's 2013 conference. We will also not relent in advocating for the release of Estonian security officer Eston Kohver.

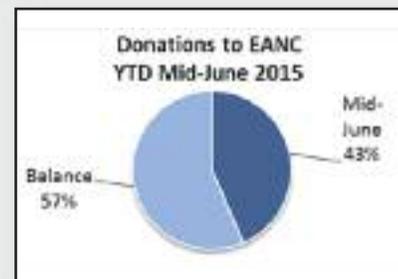
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Highlights of EANC's Recent Activities, continued from page 1

Donations to EANC also enabled us to support the following organizations and events in 2015:

- Estonian Scouts
- Estonian Girl Guides
- Järvemetsa laager fund
- Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC)
- Nordic Press / *Vaba Eesti Sõna*
- Ukraine support
- Long Island Suvekodu/ Children's summer camp
- Estonian Archives in U.S.
- Scandinavian film festival in Los Angeles

EANC Special \$200,000 Fundraising Drive Continues

In our March newsletter, we announced our 2015 fundraising drive to raise \$200,000 to fund EANC's efforts on the political front, which are especially critical because of Putin's actions in the Ukraine. Through mid-June, we've reached 43% of our goal – a good start, but we still have a long way to go. Please help us get there!



ESTONIAN AMERICAN NATIONAL COUNCIL, INC.

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EANC NEWSLETTER - July 2015
ERKÜ TEATAJA - juuli 2015



[Photo: Peter Alununs]

WE HOPE THAT TOOMAS HENDRIK ILVES, PRESIDENT OF ESTONIA, IS SAYING:
"The Estonian American National Council needs your support.
Give generously!"