



October 15, 2015

Forces of the Putin regime continue to wreak havoc globally, the latest example being Putin's escalating campaign of terror in Syria. Closer to the Baltics, Russia continues to build its military forces in occupied parts of Ukraine. Russia's Info War against the West also continues unabated. Putin's appetite for destruction still seems insatiable at this point.

Support for defending the Baltics and Ukraine is an ongoing core issue for the Joint Baltic American National Committee, Inc. (JBANC) in reaching out to the U.S. Congress and Administration. We continue to advocate for weapons for Ukraine, developing and funding a comprehensive information strategy to counter Russian disinformation, upholding the non-recognition policy of Russia's annexation of Crimea (H.R. 93). It is vital that we support the territorial integrity of Ukraine and push back on Putin's aggression. International laws and justice must be upheld. The sovereignty, stability, and prosperity of Ukraine (and Georgia, Moldova, et. al.) affect us all.

*Karl Altu,
JBANC Managing Director*

JBANC continues to push for sustained funding for the European Reassurance Initiative, providing U.S. support for key military programs to help defend the Baltic countries, including increased military training and presence. NATO must be strengthened and security assistance boosted to Baltic allies and close partners Sweden and Finland. Besides pushing for strong sanctions against Russian state enterprises with ties to Putin's regime, JBANC continues to support legislation sanctioning individual human rights abusers via the Global Magnitsky Act, introduced in both the House (H.R. 624) and Senate (S. 284).

To keep Washington informed of our concerns, JBANC has been reaching out to Congress emphatically and systematically. We've had six major letter campaigns this year alone. In September, JBANC visited the offices of over 300 members of the U.S. House of Representatives to invite members to join the House Baltic Caucus (HBC). Recently, Rep. Doug Lamborn from Colorado joined to become the 50th HBC member.

We need your help to broaden and deepen outreach to Congress. It's a great way to keep in touch with lawmakers, and to let them know their constituents care and are paying attention. Your letters and calls will make a difference! It is especially important now with Russia's ongoing threats and aggression. Interest in the Baltics is certainly there, as well over 50 Members from both House and Senate have visited Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania this year. Please see the JBANC website for more information and for suggestions in reaching out to your elected officials in the U.S. Congress.

JBANC also continues to engage with Congress together with the Central and East European Coalition (CEEC), holding a joint Advocacy Day in April on the eve of JBANC's 11th conference. On September 16 the CEEC held a congressional briefing that included overviews by Florida congressman John Mica and staff from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In addition, the CEEC is reaching out to key advisors from the various presidential campaigns to exchange views on core foreign policy issues.

JBANC and EANC met with the new U.S. ambassador to Estonia James Melville on September 10 to engage on issues of mutual interest. And for the second summer, JBANC hosted Baltic youth leaders courtesy of the Baltic American Freedom Foundation (BAFF) for a briefing on Capitol Hill with speakers from the State Department, think tank community, and Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation. We're thrilled that our 2014 BAFF intern Lita Juberte was recently appointed press spokesperson for the Latvian Cabinet of Ministers. In November we welcome our second BAFF intern - Karoline Kelder from Estonia - who will be with us until summer 2016.

For more information, you can sign up for JBANC's revamped newsletter via our website: <http://jbanc.org>. Twitter and Facebook also play a big part in expanding networks and making sure the Baltic-American voice is heard. Please stay in touch!

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ERKÜ TEATAJA - november 2015



*Black Ribbon Day at Victims of Communism Memorial,
Washington DC, August 23, 2015*



EANC annual meeting attendees (from left): Guest Cpt. Jason Molok (U.S. Army Civil Affairs), Marju Rink-Abel (EANC President), Linda Rink (Executive Director), Guest Sgt. Jacob Christian (U.S. Army Civil Affairs), Karl Altu (JBANC Managing Director)



EANC members Aavo Reinfeldt and Mai-Liis Bartling at LEP-Whistler, holding Arne Kalm's book "Baltic Musketeers" in the U.S. Congress."

EANC NEWSLETTER
ERKÜ TEATAJA

November 2015



EANC NEWS AND RECENT ACTIVITIES / ERKÜ UUDISED JA ÜRITUSED

EANC 2015 Annual Meeting

On October 3, 2015, the Estonian American National Council held its annual meeting at the BWI Airport Sheraton. In addition to the regular business agenda, guest speakers were Karl Altu, Managing Director of the Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC), who gave a briefing on recent political events in Washington DC, and Priit Vesilind, who treated attendees to a preview of the book "Estonian Americans: Exiles in a Land of Promise," scheduled to be published by EANC next fall.



*Officers, members and guests at EANC 2015 annual meeting.
Front row: Eric Suuberg, Vice President; Marki Tihhonova-Kreek, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Estonia; Marju Rink-Abel, President; Maia Linask, Secretary; Tiina Urv, Treasurer; Linda Rink, Executive Director.*

Luncheon speaker was Marki Tihhonova-Kreek, Deputy Chief of Mission of the Estonian Embassy, who arrived in the U.S. in August. A discussion about improving communications about upcoming events generated ideas for the future.

two members of the U.S. Army's Civil Affairs Division who will be deployed to Estonia in a civilian capacity in January. Captain Jason Molok and Sergeant Jacob Christian were invited by EANC to attend the annual meeting to help brief them on Estonian history, culture and affairs prior to deployment.

Also joining the group as special guests were

Rahvuskaaslaste (Compatriots) Program (RKP) Conference in Narva, Estonia

Iga nelja aasta tagant toimub Rahvuskaaslaste konverents, seekord 17.–18. septembril Tartu Ülikooli Narva Kolledžis. Osa võtsid üle 100 inimest, kaasaarvatud ERKÜ liikmed Marju Rink-Abel, Aavo Reinfeldt ja Ülle Ederma. Eesti Rahvuskaaslaste programmi üldeesmärk on välismaal elavate eestlaste side Eestiga ja eesti kultuuriga alal hoida, et nende võimalik naasmine oleks lihtne, ning et kasvaksid võimalused levitada välismaal Eestiga kohta objektiivset infot ja talletada välismaist eesti kultuuripärandit. Programmi prioriteediks on haridus ja eesti keele õpe. Uuringu tulemuste ja konverentsi tagasiside põhjal esitab programmi nõukogu valitsusele memorandumid rahvuskaaslaste programmi arendamiseks. Publiku sõnavõttudest selgus et praegune poliitika mitte toetada väliseesti ajakirjandust ei leia üldist poolehoidu. Pigem tuleks kindlustada nende ellujäämist kui tähtsaid kommunikatsiooni ja arhiivi vahendeid välisriikides.

EANC members Marju Rink-Abel, Aavo Reinfeldt and Ülle Ederma attended the RKP conference in Narva, from Sept. 16 to 18 at Tartu University's Narva College. About 100 individuals from 13 countries attended. The goals of the program are to maintain cultural and language connections with Estonians living outside of Estonia, to assist those wishing to repatriate, to enlarge opportunities to disseminate information about Estonia, and to preserve Estonian heritage

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EANC Executive Board/ ERKÜ Juhatus
Marju Rink-Abel, President • Eric Suuberg, Vice President • Tiina Urv, Treasurer • Maia Linask, Secretary
Kristi Allpere • Mai-Liis Bartling • Arne Kalm • Mirjam Krull • Matti Prima • Andres Simonson • Alvar Soosaar

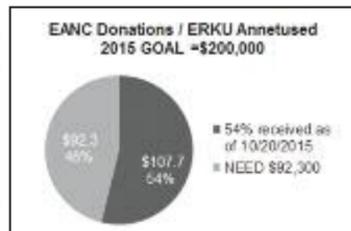
EANC SPECIAL \$200,000 FUNDRAISING DRIVE CONTINUES

The 2015 drive to raise \$200,000 to fund EANC's efforts on the political front is critical because of Putin's actions in the Ukraine. Through mid-November, we've reached 52% of our goal, but we still have a long way to go. Now is the time to make your annual tax-free charitable contribution to help us achieve our \$200,000 goal!

Eesti Rahvuskomitee 2015 a. erakordne \$200,000 korjanduse aktsioon on tugevalt edasi liikumas. Tuletame meelde, et teie annetused aitavad toetada vaba Eesti riiki ja alal hoida teie eesti pärandit järgmistele generatsioonidele. Palun annetage lahkelt!

Tasuta Vaba Eesti Sõna tellimine! Nüüd teie saata toetada mõlemad ERKÜ-t ja Vaba Eesti Sõna: 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 1/2-aastase tellimise või digitaalse versiooni aastase tellimise. Ja võite tasuta tellimise kellegile teisele edasi kinkida!

You can support both EANC and Vaba Eesti Sõna: by donating \$500 or more to EANC, you will receive a free subscription to Vaba Eesti Sõna, the only Estonian-language newspaper published in the U.S. (either a free 1/2 year printed newspaper subscription or a full-year digital subscription). You can also 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.



EANC LAUNCHES PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL

To honor our most generous supporters, EANC has launched a new initiative: The EANC President's Council. Limited to top donors of \$1000 or more, President's Council members will have the opportunity to share their thoughts on how to grow EANC's member base and resources, and help attain our goals. Look for more details on our website, www.estosite.org, and in future Teataja newsletters.

WHY I JOINED EANC

by Ave Maria Blithe

"I always wondered why somebody doesn't do something about that. Then I realized I was somebody." - Lily Tomlin

The decision to put my candidacy up for the Estonian American National Committee stemmed from a wish to participate more actively in an Estonian expatriate organization. EANC as a central organization was the ideal choice. I was honored to have received enough votes to be accepted as an EANC delegate and am now participating for the second term. In September of 2013 I also had a chance to start working as an archivist at the Estonian Archives in the U.S., which throughout its half a century of existence has remained a volunteer organization, funded solely by charitable donations from the Estonian community. Being associated with both EANC and EAUS gives me an opportunity to contribute in preserving Estonian cultural heritage in the American melting pot.



Since 1991 when Estonia regained its independence, a certain schism remains between "homeland" Estonians and the diaspora. It is our task as Estonian ambassadors to keep the dialogue going between the two schools of thought and keep co-operating in the fields of culture, science, politics and trade. The annual EANC meetings are a great platform for sharing ideas and discussing various topics important to all American Estonians.

Ave Maria Blithe is an EANC member and works at the Estonian Archives in the U.S.

abroad. The primary objective is education and teaching Estonian. Public discussion on Estonian-language newspapers generally supported their eligibility for support from the program, contrary to current policy.

Lääneranniku Eesti Päevad: LEP – Whistler Report from the West Coast Estonian Days – EKN–EANC Congress

The Estonian American National Council (EANC) and Estonian Central Council in Canada (EKN) co-hosted the August 5th Congress. It was particularly ambitious in its scope, framed by such questions as: What is Estonia to me, to us, to the world? *How do Estonians in North America cooperate with those in Estonia to advance a common and unified cultural sphere? What new opportunities, technology, and resources are available?* Dr. Maarja Lõhmus of the University of Tartu Institute of Social Studies and Media Studies moderated, asking EANC and EKN to address the essential role and contributions of exiled Estonians – both political and cultural - during the period between 1940 and 1990, and to express their priorities for preserving this heritage and taking it forward to build a global Estonian culture. EANC's response to these themes, presented by Mai-Liis Bartling, are on EANC's website www.estosite.org, menu button "EANC Activities."

An important part of the session was the participation of Anne-Ly Reimaa, who explained the Ministry's Estonian Ministry of Culture's Ministry's goals and priorities for supporting the preservation of Estonian identity and culture among Estonians abroad. A session highlight was a panel that included Anne-Ly Reimaa and the EANC's Marit Davey and Gilda Karu, and generated ideas such as



Discussion panel participants at LEP's Congress: Front row: Gilda Karu (EANC), Anne-Ly Reimaa (Undersecretary for Cultural Diversity, Estonian Ministry of Culture), Marit Davey (EANC). Back row: Professor Maarja Lõhmus, (Tartu University), Kärt Ulman (Vaba Eesti Sõna newspaper), Mai-Liis Bartling (EANC), audience participant Rein Pääsuke

a "pilgrimage to Estonia" for every young person of Estonian heritage, a common cultural calendar and a web portal.

If one thing stood out, it was the deep commitment of everyone present to participating in the cause of preserving and building a unified Estonian cultural sphere. *"If we can't be a big people in numbers, let us be a big people in culture."*

By Mai-Liis Bartling, EANC board member and session participant

Victims of Communism and Black Ribbon Day

On August 23, The Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC) and the Victims of Communism (VOC) Memorial Foundation organized a Black Ribbon Day commemoration and wreath-laying ceremony at the Victims of Communism memorial in Washington DC. Attending were members of JBANC, the Estonian American National Council, the diplomatic corps, community representatives, and the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation.

August 23 marks the 76th-year anniversary of the infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the secret protocol that divided Eastern Europe between Hitler and Stalin in 1939. It also marks the day in 1989 that over two million people from the Baltics formed a human chain called the "Baltic Way" to protest Soviet occupation. Today, the European Union, Canada, and the United States commemorate Black Ribbon Day.



Speakers from the three Baltic embassies and the VOC Memorial Foundation (left to right): Lithuanian Ambassador Rolandas Kriščiūnas; VOC Executive Director Marion Smith; Latvian Deputy Chief of Mission Ilmars Breidaks; and Estonian Deputy Chief of Mission Marki Tihhonoa-Kreek. [Photo: Marju Rink-Abel]

DID YOU KNOW? KAS TEATE?

Good news! "Estonian Americans: Exiles in a Land of Promise" will be published by EANC in Fall 2016. Edited by Priit Vesilind, the noted former National Geographic senior editor, the hard cover book will chronicle the fifty years from 1945 to 1995. Part documentary, part reference and part narrative, the 500-plus pages will tell the story of the

Estonian-Americans' "Greatest Generation," those who came to the United States after World War II via displaced persons camps. The book will capture this important history in print and photographs and will serve as a reference book for generations to come. EANC will start taking pre-orders in early 2016.

The Republic of Estonia will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2018 and will also hold the presidency of the European Union in the same year. Major celebrations are expected to start in April 2017, to mark the unification of Estonian lands into one province. The anniversary's culmination will be February 24 in 2018, but the celebrations will continue up until February 2 in 2020, the anniversary of the Tartu Peace Treaty. A special dedicated EV100 website has been launched for Estonia's 100th anniversary at <https://ev100.ee/en>

EANC's website, www.estosite.org, has added a new Menu Button at top: "Celebrating Estonia 1918-2018," which will consolidate and update information about events in the U.S. and elsewhere.



Upcoming Events

- Mark your calendars now for the 2016 EANC annual meeting, public program, and Gala awards dinner in beautiful San Francisco, on November 4-5, 2016. Details to come.
- The Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies (AABS) 2016 conference will be held at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia on May 26-28, 2016. President of Estonia Toomas Hendrik Ilves will participate. Questions about the conference can be directed to Janis Chakars at AABS2016@gmail.com.

Book Notes / Raamatutest Märkmed

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

This time we highlight a book written by EANC board member Arne Kalm.

The book "Baltic Musketeers in the U.S. Congress" (from Aade Publishers, 2015) preserves an important chapter in history, focusing on the years between 1961-66, when Baltic Americans worked together to get the U.S. Congress to back the cause of freedom for the Baltic countries. The book commends the leadership of Lithuanian-American Leonard Valuikas, and credits the many organizations who played a part, including JBANC, BAFL, BATUN, and ACA (Americans for Congressional Action to Free the Baltic States, whose Estonian section chairman was Arne Kalm). This is important history that should not be forgotten. The book is available from the Vaba Eesti Sõna bookstore, in both English and Estonian ("Balti Musketärid USA Kongressis").

In addition to books of interest, we are including film information as well. Three notable recent ones are:

- "1944," an Estonian film by Elmo Nüganen (2015), has been submitted to the Academy Awards in the foreign film category. It premiered in Berlin and has received excellent reviews. The film portrays the Estonian soldiers who were forced to fight against each other on both sides, (the Soviet Union and Germany) from Sinimäed or the Tannenberg Line near Narva to the Sõrve Peninsula in Saaremaa. It is not available on DVD yet.
- "In the Crosswinds" or "Risttuules" (2014) is a creative drama of the purge and mass deportation of Estonians on June 14, 1941 – a love story in a time of despair.
- "Tangerines" or "Mandariinid" (2013), an Estonian-Georgian film, was nominated in 2014 for the Academy Awards in the foreign film category. Set in 1992, during the growing conflict between Georgia and Abkhazian separatists in the wake of the Soviet Union's dissolution, it features Estonian farmers and orchard growers caught in a war-torn land.

