



EANC NEWS AND ACTIVITIES: EANC COMES TO THE WEST COAST

The Estonian American National Council (EANC) brought its annual meeting and festive awards gala to San Francisco for the first time on November 4 and 5, 2016. EANC council members, fellow Estonian-Americans and friends from across the U.S. gathered to celebrate Estonian-Americans for their service and excellence, explore topics of interest and urgency, and share EANC's work with West Coast Estonian-Americans.

The EANC held its annual business meeting on Friday, November 4.



EANC members at 2016 annual meeting



Amb. James Melville & EANC president Marju Rink-Abel [photo: L. Rink]

On November 5, public sessions featured plenary session speaker U.S. Ambassador to Estonia James D. Melville, and several panel discussions on topics such as transatlantic security, U.S.-Estonia relations, engaging with Estonian-American history, and EANC's strategic future. Enterprise Estonia Silicon Valley hosted a luncheon panel with local Estonian entrepreneurs and investors.



*Gala keynote speaker
Marina Kaljurand
[photo: Mark Nestra]*

In addition, editor Priit Vesilind gave an overview of the newly-published book "Estonians in America, 1945-1995: Exiles in a Land of Promise." The audience also heard from Merilin Piipuu, the director of the Tallinn Museum of Occupations, about the museum's future plans.

The gala awards dinner that evening honored five Estonian-Americans and organizations for their service and excellence, plus a new "Estophile" award honoree. Former Estonian foreign minister Marina Kaljurand was keynote speaker; her speech can be found at www.estosite.org.

"The speakers really reminded me of what a huge, really huge effect the occupation had on my family both here and now scattered all over the world. Frankly devastating, however good the U.S. has been for us... Particularly Priit Vesilind really moved me and reminded me of the realities of what occurred to Estonia and to our family. These are things I don't usually think about but they are vital."

- Nora Laasi

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EANC Executive Board/ ERKÜ Juhatus

Marju Rink-Abel, President • Eric Suuberg, Vice President • Matti Prima, Treasurer • Maia Linask, Secretary
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EANC 2016 AWARD RECIPIENTS / ERKÜ 2016 A. AUHINNA VÕITJAD



Steve Jürvetson & his mother Tiiu Jürvetson
[photo: Mark Nestra]

Outstanding Achievement Award: Steve Jürvetson

EANC recognizes Steve Jürvetson's contributions to Estonian American society and culture, especially in helping fund and produce the award-winning film *"The Singing Revolution."* In 2013 he was an organizer and keynote speaker for Innovative Estonia Silicon Valley ("IEstonia"), an event which introduced Estonian entrepreneurship and technical service developments to Silicon Valley investors. His support and advocacy helped

launch E-residency of Estonia; Jürvetson became e-resident #2.

Jürvetson has had many successes in venture capital investment, where he was an early investor in Hotmail, Tesla, and Estonia's own Skype. He was named in Forbes' "Midas List" of Tech's Top Investors for five years and Deloitte's "Venture Capitalist of the Year" in 2012.

Outstanding Contributions to EANC Award: Arne Kalm

The 2016 Outstanding Contributions to EANC Award recognizes Arne Kalm's many years of service (five terms) as an elected Council member and Board member, taking on many leadership roles, including EANC's investment and strategic planning committees. He has been a strong voice for strengthening the EANC and its role in the Estonian American community.

Kalm is an Estonian-born American businessman and finance specialist, now retired, who

has been an active member of the Los Angeles Estonian community and has held leadership positions in the Estonian League of the West Coast, including vice president in 1961-63 and president in 1997-99. In April 2016, he was honored with the Baltic American Freedom League (BAFL) Award. He is the author of the book, *"Baltic Musketeers in the U.S. Congress,"* a history of the first resolutions in the U.S. Congress seeking freedom for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.



Arne & Celia Kalm
[photo: Mark Nestra]

Friend of Estonian Americans Award: Lonnie Cline



Lonnie Cline
[photo: Mark Nestra]

This new "Estophile" award honors non-Estonians who have contributed to the Estonian American community. Lonnie Cline, who has for over 20 years instilled thousands of singers with the beauty and joy of Estonian choral music, is the first recipient.

Cline, then choral director at Oregon's Clackamas Community College, heard Estonian choral music for the first time in the early 1990's, and instantly fell in love with it. In 1996

he founded the now internationally recognized Unistus chamber choir, forging lasting ties between Oregon and Estonia, and spreading Estonia's Singing Revolution story to ever broader audiences. Unistus has performed at three Song Festivals in Tallinn, the 2000 ESTO in Toronto, 11 West Coast Estonian Days festivals, 22 Estonian Independence Day celebrations in Portland, and hosted and collaborated with visiting Estonian choirs and directors.

Outstanding Organization Award: Estonian League of the West Coast

The Estonian League of the West Coast/ Eesti Organitsioonide Liit Läänerannikul (EOLL) is awarded EANC's highest recognition for an Estonian American organization for its tremendous contributions over the past 60 years in preserving Estonian American culture and community on the West Coast, through the biannual West Coast Estonian Days festival (LEP). Many thousands of Estonian Americans have been impacted by the 32

LEP festivals held to date in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle and Vancouver B.C.

During the years Estonia was part of the Soviet Union, the LEP was at the heart of ongoing efforts to make Estonia's story public and to instill political action. More recent LEPs have celebrated new connections with the Estonian homeland, invited performers and participants from afar and encouraged new collaborations.

Distinguished Service Awards: Lehti Merilo and Liina Merilo Teose

The awards presented to the mother-daughter team Lehti Merilo and Liina Teose recognize their many years of leading the Portland, Oregon, Estonian folk dance troupe "Tulehoidjad" (Keepers of the Flame). Through folk dancing and music, they have been instrumental in keeping Estonian culture alive and have played a major role in introducing Estonia to Portland and other West Coast cities in the U.S. and Canada.

Lehti Merilo founded Portland's first Estonian folk dance troupe "Tulehoidjad" in 1950. and was its leader for 35 years (1950-1985). Ms. Merilo also taught folk dancing to children when the Portland Estonian Supplemental School started in the 1960's. Tulehoidjad performed at numerous venues including the biennial West Coast Estonian days (1953-1985) and at the Portland International Folk Festival in 1980. In 2015, Lehti Merilo received the gold badge award from the Estonian Folk Dancing and Folk Music Society.

Liina Teose, Lehti Merilo's daughter, made her debut at age 2 in the Estonian children's folk dance troupe led by her mother. In 1985, she took over leading Tulehoidjad and is in her 31th year as director. Tulehoidjad has continued performing at the biennial West Coast Estonian Days; in 1995 and 2003, Liina was the producer of the Folk Festival program for the event. Tulehoidjad performed at ESTO 1996 in Tallinn, Estonia, and in 1984 and 1996, Ms. Teose produced the folk dance portion of the ESTO programs. In 2013, Liina Teose received the Estonian Foreign Minister's Certificate of Recognition for her work in promoting Estonian culture. In 2015, Ms. Teose received the silver badge award from the Estonian Folk Dancing and Folk Music Society.



Lehti Merilo & Liina Teose
[photo: Mark Nestra]

EANC News & Activities, continued from page 1

ERKÜ aastakonverents ja Gala San Francisco: ülevaade

Eesti Rahvuskomitee Ühendriikides (ERKÜ) pidas esimest korda oma aastakoosoleku ja iga kahe aasta järel toimuva piduliku gala Läänerannikul San Francisco. Lisaks aastakoosolekule 4. novembril korraldas ERKÜ 5. novembril kohalikule eestlaskonnale mitu paneeldiskussiooni arutlemaks nii ameerika eesti organisatsioonide oleviku, tuleviku, ajaloo kui jätkusuutlikkuse teemadel.

Eraldi paneelis arutleti julgeoleku ja päevapoliitistel teemadel transatlantilise koostöö Eesti ja USA suhete kontekstis. Tutvustati mõningaid Silicon Valley's tuule tiibadesse saanud eesti päritolu idufirmasid. Lõpuks toimus ülevaade Okupatsioonide muuseumi plaanidest.

Programmi avas ERKÜ esimees Marju Rink-Abel ning Eesti-USA suhetest andis ülevaate USA suursaadik Eestis James Melville.

EANC president Marju Rink-Abel; SF Eesti Seltsi President & Gala organizer Mai-Liis Bartling [photo: Mark Nestra]

Priit Vesilind tutvustas pikalt oodatud raamatut "Estonians in America, 1945-1995: Exiles in a Land of



"Engaging with our History" panelists Kärt Ulman, Liisi Esse, Sylvia Thompson, Priit Vesilind [photo: L. Rink]

Promise," mis oli just värskest trükikojast tulnud.

Õhtuse auhinnatseremoonia ja gala peakõneleja oli endine välisminister ja praegune välisministeeriumi kübernõunik Marina Kaljurand.

Suur tänu ERKÜ liikmetele Mai-Liis Bartling, Marit Davey ja Mati Otsmaa, kes korraldasid programmi, San Francisco Eesti Seltsile ja kõikidele kes vabatahtlikult aitasid!

– Kärt Ulman, Vaba Eesti Sõna toimetaja

"EANC's weekend in San Francisco...brought together global Estonians and friends of Estonians in a collaborative, intergenerational, social environment in which many thoughtful, interesting and pertinent topics were shared and new friendships blossomed. It was truly inspiring listening to the passionate Estonian entrepreneurs on the startup panel and hearing about Estonia's growing footprint in Silicon Valley."

- Karl Grabbi

"The words of Marina Kaljurand were both heart-warming and encouraging, especially when she said that every individual with connections to Estonia acts as a good-will ambassador in their own right. Often people's first impression of Estonia is made by personal contact and this can have a more lasting and powerful effect than any efforts made by politicians."

- Andres Renss

EANC Supports Two Important New Projects



The following two projects will receive a portion of the proceeds from the November 5 Gala, as well as additional support in 2017.

- **Singing Revolution Digital Library** – a new streaming website containing the films *“The Singing Revolution”* and *“To Breathe As One”* by Jim and Maureen Tusty, plus interview segments and commentary, newsreels, original documents, and many additional video segments not in the films. The site is intended for academics, “Estophiles”, film fans, music fans and others to delve into the Singing Revolution, Laulupidu and Estonia’s Soviet Occupation.
- **East and West Coast Estonian children’s choirs’ song festival participation** – Choirs on both the East and West Coasts are preparing to attend next year’s Noorte Laulu- ja Tantsupidu in Tallinn, Estonia. EANC’s grant will help defray the expenses of families, so that more of these hard-working children and their music directors can participate.

“Estonians in America, 1945-1995: Exiles in a Land of Promise” has been published! The hard-cover book has over 560 pages, and provides details 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.



The cost per book is **\$97.50 (includes \$7.50 shipping within the U.S.)**. You can pay by check made out to “EANC” and mailed to: Linda Rink, 1420 Locust St., Suite 31N, Philadelphia PA 19102. **Please include your mailing address, phone and e-mail.** You can also pay by credit card via PayPal at a cost of **\$100.50** (to cover PayPal fees) including shipping: go to www.estosite.org and click on the “DONATE” button. Expedited shipping is available for an additional cost.

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

Upcoming Events

The Joint Baltic American National Committee's Twelfth Baltic Conference will take place in Washington DC in late spring 2017, featuring foreign policy and world affairs experts. Contact JBANC at 301-340-1954 or jbanc@jbanc.org for exact dates 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 aasta parast, 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.

The EANC Newsletter / ERKÜ Teataja is written predominantly in English for an important reason – we want to inform and engage as many Estonian Americans as possible. Due to the cost of printing, we cannot publish the entire newsletter in both English and Estonian. In the future we may consider less expensive electronic distribution, so please write your e-mail address on your donation form for inclusion in our database.



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

EANC Hosts Successful Policy Discussions In San Francisco

The EANC Gala in November included plenary remarks and a high-level panel on U.S.-Estonian policy and transatlantic relations. Special guests included Ambassadors James Melville, Eerik Marmei and Kurt Volker. Although the event occurred pre-U.S. election, the discussions offered insights that carry over into the new administration's

transition period.

As plenary speaker, Ambassador Melville highlighted the defining aspects of U.S.-Estonian relations for the next decade. He sees Estonia as a capable partner and ally to the U.S., both bilaterally and multilaterally through NATO, the EU and other international organizations. He called Estonia "...as solid a partner and ally as we have. Estonia's interests and values line up with ours exceedingly well."

next administration, including his belief that Trump's policy won't follow his campaign rhetoric and that Russia doesn't want a strategic partnership with us, even if they seem encouraged by Trump's election. He also reminded us that Congress can exercise its power to check any reckless policy proposals from the White House. Marcus Kolga, expert on the media, communications and disinformation, painted a sobering picture of the Kremlin's extensive foreign and domestic disinformation campaigns. Karl Altau of the Joint Baltic American National Committee rounded out the discussion with his recommendations for legislation we can support to send our message to the new President and Congress.

Ambassador Melville in his closing impressions echoed the speakers and reminded us that fundamental national interests don't change. He has been encouraged by the recent uptick in congressional interest in the Baltic region



"Transatlantic Security & U.S.-Estonian Relations" panelists Marcus Kolga, Eerik Marmei, Karin Shuey, Kurt Volker, Karl Altau [photo: L. Rink]

He affirmed the U.S. and NATO commitment to defend every ally's security and territorial integrity, noting that Estonia is on the front line of the West's struggle with Russia. He ended his remarks by acknowledging that the Estonian-American community has a continuing role in supporting Estonia through its external and internal challenges. Ambassador Melville's full remarks are available at www.estosite.org.

The afternoon panel featured experts on transatlantic relations, Russia's recent behavior, and advocacy in Washington. Estonian Ambassador to the U.S. Eerik Marmei began with an overview of Estonia in NATO and U.S.-Estonian relations. Kurt Volker, former U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO and expert on transatlantic relations, shared his perspective on challenges for the

and cited recent and upcoming productive delegation visits. He added that many problems have been recognized and diagnosed, which is halfway to fixing them. Now the U.S. needs to ensure that resources align with priorities to make those fixes.

Estonian-American constituents can indicate interest in getting involved help by voicing support on these issues by taking EANC's survey at <https://s.zoomerang.com/r/EANCpoliticalaction> (also linked on the EANC homepage under EANC News). EANC looks forward to providing information as the new administration's policy evolves and to working with constituents and officials in Washington to keep Estonia on the radar screen.

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EANC Gala Awards Dinner, San Francisco, Nov. 5, 2016 [photo: Mark Nestra]



EANC member & Gala organizer
Mati Otsmaa [photo: Mark Nestra]

"The thought and planning that went into the EANC meeting/gala was impressive and appreciated. I found the panel discussions thought provoking... "

- Honorary Consul Jaak Treiman

"Perhaps the most refreshing aspect of the event was a matter of demographics. Among the attendees, multiple generations of Estonian-Americans were represented. Both young and old, Estonian-speaking and non-speaking, west coast and east coast. It felt very inclusive, vibrant, and current..."

- Leif Fritzell



EANC member & Gala organizer Marit Davey;
former SF Eesti Selts President Ingrid Echter
[photo: Mark Nestra]