

DEAR GLOBAL BALTHERNET COMMUNITY!

The massive spread of COVID-19 has changed all of our everyday lives and activities. Many of us have been forced to stay away from our normal workspaces to isolate ourselves at home and work remotely. Events have been cancelled or postponed. Opportunities to move about have become limited, if not impossible.

BaltHerNet too has had to change its plans. It is with deep sadness that I announce our 2020 summer school, which was supposed to take place in Hiiumaa, is cancelled. As no one knows when this crisis will end and normal life will resume, it is complicated to try and postpone it. For many of us, participating in the summer school means international travel and unfortunately, the outlook for the coming months is poor.

We will definitely hold the NPA Annual Meeting, whether that will be online or in combination with a meeting in Estonia. We will let you know as soon as we can.

The next meeting of the BaltHerNet community will take place in 2021 with a conference in Lithuania.

Until then, let's keep in touch online. Globally, all of the memory institutions are thinking of new ways to provide services for people, so that it doesn't require physically going anywhere. Let's use old and create new digital content! Let's generate news, ideas, and solutions! Send us information about campaigns that memory institutions are launching during the coronavirus crisis. The BaltHerNet newsletter and portal are waiting for your news.

I wish you all a calm mind and good health! Take care of yourselves, those close to you, and our heritage!

Piret Noorhane

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF ESTONIA 100

Although the National Archives as an institution is young, the establishment of the national archives system started already at the beginning of the Republic of Estonia. National Archives was born directly after the end of Estonian War of Independence on 3 March 1920 when the Archives Committee's first discussions were held at the library of the University of Tartu to discuss the future of the national written heritage and the formation of our own state's archives.

It was back then decided that the Historical Archives will be established in Tartu as the holding place for historically significant institutions'



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The Baltic Heritage Newsletter is distributed quarterly, on-line. The next deadline for submissions is 15 May 2020. Please send all related enquiries and submissions to Piret Noorhane: piretnoorhane@gmail.com

The Non-Profit Association Baltic Heritage Network was founded in Tartu on January 11, 2008. NPA BaltHerNet was established to foster cooperation between national and private archives, museums, libraries, and institutions of research, public associations and organizations collecting and studying the cultural heritage of the Baltic diaspora. It aims to facilitate the preservation and research of the historically valuable cultural property of the Baltic diaspora, as well as to ensure accessibility of these materials to the public.

NPA BaltHerNet is also committed to the organising of conferences, seminars and workshops, and to developing and administrating the electronic information website Baltic Heritage Network, a multilingual electronic gateway for information on the cultural heritage of the Baltic diaspora.

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Director of Estonian Art Museum Sirje Helme greeting State Archivist Priit Pirsko.

Photo: National Archives of Estonia

records, and the State Archives in Tallinn as the keeper of records of active state agencies. Directions drawn by the Archives Committee can be considered as the first steps to offer some consistent solutions for acquisition, preservation, and usage of the archival records. Also, a relationship of trust was established between the agencies and archives at that time.

The Archives Act of 1935 strengthened the role of archives in the preservation and usage of society's valuable records. During the Soviet occupation the archives continued their work, the regional archives, which were active in larger towns, were renamed as city archives and governed by Moscow. Independent management of the archives was restored in the 1990s and the National Archives of Estonia became active on January 1, 1999, in accordance with the Archives Act passed in 1998. The years of 1999–2011 could be defined as a period of organisational development and consolidation for the National Archives, as well as, more importantly, a phase for transitioning to online archival services and establishment of digital archival management. The first decade of the 21st century completely transformed archival

management and use of archives.

Since 2012, the National Archives acts on the basis of a renewed Archives Act as well as Archival rules. As the national archivist of Estonia, Mr. Priit Pirsko has stated, the key objective of the 2011 Act was to establish optimal legal conditions for the final transition to digital record and archival management. The archival management of the current decade is perhaps most characterised by the digital transformation – the constantly growing digitization of analogue media and acceptance of born-digital content. The National Archives is visited 1.5 million times a year and 99.5% of those visits occur online. The following statement prevails in the ongoing phase of development of Estonian archival management: if the archival source is not online then it doesn't exist at all.

Further information on the recent history of the National Archives of Estonia can be found online in the overviews and annual reports of the National Archives (www.ra.ee/en). Also, the jubilee speeches given on 2 March 2020 by Mrs. Mailis Reps, Minister of Education and Research, and by Mr. Priit Pirsko, National Archivist, can be accessed at: <http://www.ra.ee/en/the-national-archives-of-estonia-100/>

- 1920 – The first meeting of the Archives Committee, the national archives' administration was born
- 1921 – Two central archives were founded: The Historical Archive in Tartu as the holding place for historically significant institutions' records, and The State Archive in Tallinn as the keeper of records of active institutions
- 1935 – Estonia's first Archives Act
- 1939 – Estonian Association of Archivists was founded
- 1940–1988 – Interruption of the former archival administration, Sovietization of the archives and closure of the archival content
- 1988–1998 – De-Sovietization of the archives, transition to a modern archival administration and disclosure of the archival content
- 1998 – Estonia's second Archives Act
- 1999 – The National Archives of Estonia was established on the basis of the former central archives
- 2011 – Estonia's third Archives Act
- 2017 – The National Archives' main building Noora was opened in Tartu

Birgit Kibal

THE ARCHIVE OF LITHUANIAN CULTURAL ATTACHÉS AWAITS ITS RESEARCHERS

A year ago, the former cultural attaché of the Republic of Lithuania in the United Kingdom, Rita Valiukonytė, handed over to the National Library of Lithuania the cultural documents of the diplomatic mission of the Republic of Lithuania in London.



A collage of documents from the archive of cultural attachés in London.

Photo: The National Library of Lithuania.

The archive covers the period from 1991 to 2016. Most of the documents were accumulated during the time served by two cultural attachés, Daiva Parulskienė (2008-2012) and Rita Valiukonytė (2012-2016).

The archive shows the development of cultural relations between the Republic of Lithuania and the UK and the efforts of the diplomatic mission to introduce the British people with the works of prominent Lithuanian artists and the achievements of Lithuanian scholars. It includes programs of various art events, presentations by artists, correspondence regarding the events, press releases, reviews and articles on Lithuanian artists, prominent Lithuanians living and working in the UK, and recent developments in Lithuanian art and history. A separate part of the archive is presentations of Lithuanian Jewish history and culture.

This comprehensive and rich archive has become part of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Unit of the National Library of Lithuania collection and is awaiting its researchers and readers.

THE CENTENARY OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF LITHUANIA

In 1919, the young state of Lithuania began creating its

main institutions. One of them was the Central State Bookstore founded on December 20, 1919 which later would become the National Library of Lithuania. The most important functions of the Bookstore in Kaunas were to collect mandatory copies of publications published in Lithuania and the books of persons who for one or another reason were no longer their owners and of former tsarist institutions. In the first year, the Bookstore housed approximately 18,000 books. Today the National Library of Lithuania has 6.5 million books.

In 1963, the Bookstore was moved to the capital Vilnius. In 1988, the Library was named after Martynas Mažvydas, the author of the first Lithuanian book. A year later, it was granted the status of a National Library. Today it is also a public science and a parliamentary library.

After the reconstruction in 2016, the National Library of Lithuania invited its readers to new spaces offering many new services. A number of repositories have been moved to the Internet so that every reader can find what he needs on his computer.

Today the National Library of Lithuania collects and preserves published documents related to Lithuania, maintains bibliographic records, gathers the national archive of published documents, compiles and publishes national bibliographies and other bibliographic indexes, compiles catalogues and databases, assigns international standard numbers, performs the functions of the National Digitization Center and develops the Virtual Electronic Heritage System. The Library also implements national, regional, and international projects, organizes exhibitions, literature

evenings and other cultural events, promotes Lithuanian culture and science abroad.

Events dedicated to the centennial were held throughout the year of 2019. On December 20th, the actual day of establishment of the National Library of Lithuania, the Library organized a special event—an evening for Library's employees. During the event, a number of them were recognized for their outstanding work, contribution, competencies and other merits. A performance by accordionist Tadas Motiečius and the Čiurlionis String Quartet followed the official part of the evening.



A special event.

*Photo: National Library of Lithuania/
Agnė Jankauskaitė*

THE SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF WORLD LITHUANIANS

On November 8, 2019, on the initiative of Vytautas Magnus University, the Society for the Study of World Lithuanians was established.

The president of the Society, Dr. Ilona Strumickienė, says that the name was chosen in memory of the Society for Aiding the Lithuanians Abroad which was active in Lithuania in 1932-1940. The Society provided aid to and maintained contacts with Lithuanians living abroad. It also contributed to the strengthening of the Lithuanian identity among expatriates. In 1935, the Society organized the first World Lithuanian Congress in Kaunas.

By following the example of the Society for Aiding the Lithuanians Abroad, the newly established society hopes to build a network of and disseminate message about Lithuanians around the world, share discoveries and research results, and help strengthening civil society in Lithuania.

The first event organized by the Society was a discussion about how Lithuanian schools receive children who have returned from emigration which took place on December 13, 2019.

A NEW PROJECT ON LITHUANIAN RE-EMIGRATION

Adolfas Damušis Democracy Studies Centre of the National Library of Lithuania started implementing a new project whose main focus is Lithuanian re-emigration. Entitled “30 Stories for 30 Years: The Experiences of Returning Immigrants and Their Contribution to the Strengthening of Lithuanian Statehood” the project draws attention to those who have returned from emigration, emphasizing the motives of both emigration and re-emigration, peoples’ experiences, successes, and failures. The story of American Lithuanians, Adolfas and Jadvyga Damušis, who returned to Lithuania in 1997, also played a role in choosing this particular topic for the new project.

To preserve the memory of emigrants and their experiences,



The participants of the first discussion.

Photo: Vytautas Magnus University

the implementers of the project plan to conduct a series of interviews with Lithuanians who returned to Lithuania and who contributed to different spheres of life in Lithuania.

A VISIT BY THE LITHUANIAN LANGUAGE STUDENTS



The participants of the discussion.

*Photo: National Library of Lithuania/
Vygaudas Juozaitis*

In January, the Academy of Education of Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) organized the Lithuanian Language and Culture winter course. Students from more than fifteen countries came to Vilnius to learn the language and get acquainted with Lithuanian culture and history.

On January 14, students visited the National Library of Lithuania. They listened to the lecture on Lithuanian diaspora and its most prominent representatives in science, politics, economy, culture, and art given by Dr. Dalia Cidzikaitė, chief researcher of the Lithuanian Documentary Heritage Department of the National Library of Lithuania. Afterwards, the students were given a tour of the library, followed by a discussion about the image of Lithuania created by foreigners studying Lithuanian language.

THE SCREENING OF A FILM BY DUTCH-ESTONIAN DIRECTOR

On 25 November, 2019 the screening of a film “Coming Home Soon: The Refugee Children of Geislingen” by Dutch-Estonian

film director Helga Merits took place at the National Library of Lithuania. The director’s latest film is about Estonian children who fled Estonia in 1944 with their parents, sometimes with only one parent or relative, and spent the war in the Geislingen refugee camp in southern Germany.

Despite the testimonies about extreme poverty and especially difficult living conditions during and after the war, Merits says that her film is also about hope and inspiration. And while the documentary tells a story of Estonian refugee children living in the Geislingen refugee camp from 1945 to 1950, it is also the history of many Eastern Europeans. The film draws parallels with the current situation of the refugees in Europe as well. “Coming Home Soon” has already been screened in 11 countries and 24 European cities.

“Coming Home Soon” is the fifth documentary film by Helga Merits. All her films tell stories about people who were forced to leave their homes and establish new lives in new and unfamiliar places.

The director was present at the screening and answered questions from the audience.



NEW EXHIBITION ON ESTO FESTIVALS

In February 19, 2020 VEMU opened a new exhibition “ESTO – The Keeper of Global Estonianness” at Tartu College. Making of the exhibition was a joint effort by VEMU and the Estonian National Museum (ENM). It portrays the ESTOs from 1972, when the first festival was organized in Toronto, to the latest ESTO that took place in 2019 jointly in Helsinki, Tallinn and Tartu. The exhibition portrays the ways in which the ESTOs have been a way of keeping the Estonian community together outside of the occupied Estonia, and how the festivals still play a role in bringing global Estonians living abroad together.

The exhibition was already shown in Tartu in ENM during the ESTO festival in 2019, however, in a shorter format – without the panel on 2019 ESTO. At the opening of the full exhibition in Toronto, Vaike Rannu, Reet and Jaanus Marley, and Andres Raudsepp, all with a long history at different ESTOs either as organizers or participants, shared their memories. All the people who helped with the preparation of the exhibition were also thanked at the event.

FIRST FUNNIEST IN TORONTO



In January we had the first ever Estonian Comedy Festival, funniEST, in Toronto. The festival was co-organized by the

Filiae Patriae Sorority (C!FP) in cooperation with VEMU, Museum of Estonians Abroad. On Friday, January 24 the Improvteater Impeerium from Estonia presented a fun Improv night with improvised sketches involving also the audience. The same actors also held a free improv workshop on January 23 where everyone could experience and try out improvised acting. The main event of the festival was the stand-up night on January 25. The headliner for the evening was Andy Valvur, an experienced stand-up comedian with Estonian roots. Andy was born in New York, grew up in Japan, went to boarding school in Switzerland and university in California and therefore, he says, stand-up comedy was the only logical career path. Andy has worked in San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York. These days he mostly spends his time in Europe performing in theatres and at comedy festivals. Andy was joined by local stand-up comedians Paul Lillakas, Tanya Henley, Liia Kajak and Helle Wichman. They all created a night full of laughter and fun! See: estoniancomedyfestival.com for more info about the festival.

TARTU NEW THEATRE VISITED TORONTO

This year Estonians living in Toronto had a great Valentine's present as the Tartu New Theatre visited VEMU and gave two performances of their monodrama “Symphony for One” (directed by Ardo Ran varres) on February 13 and 14. The intriguing play was performed by the Estonian Theatre's “Grand Old Man” Aleksander Eelmaa. “Symphony for One” is a humorous and dramatic performance which leads the audience to a journey through the cultural history of Estonia. The



play is organized around the main characters dialogue with his old radio. From this dialogue evolve different episodes that give insight into cultural events in Estonia as well as to the main character's personal history.

WINTER FILM NIGHTS AT TARTU COLLEGE

Tartu College Film Society has been showing different films during winter Sundays. Their program has included both documentaries and feature films. This winter the screenings were started by “Vello Salu – Everyday Mysticism”, on Sunday, January 19. The film won the audience award at the EstDocs festival in November 2019. It is a film about the beauty of growing old, portraying a beloved pastor Vello Salu during his last years, making his final pilgrimage and facing many personal and delicate questions.

The second film was also from the last year's EstDocs programme - “Tõnu Kõrvits. Moorland Elegies” was shown on Sunday, February 9. Marianne Kõrver's documentary about Estonia's titular famous contemporary music composer Tõnu Kõrvits whisks us away on a journey to the soul of an artist.

On March 1, a feature film “The Eternal Road” (Igitee/Ikitie) was screened. It is a co-production between Finland, Estonia and Sweden featuring the unbelievable

story based on true events of the American Finns in 1930's Soviet Union. The dream of 'worker's paradise' soon changes into a hell on earth with the Stalin's repressions. The film was selected as the Best Finnish Film in 2017.

On Sunday, March 8, two documentary films were screened showing the changes Estonia has gone through before and after regaining independence in 1991. "Rodeo" deals with the rapid ascent to high political office of 32-year old Mart Laar, the youngest prime minister in European history. Closely chronicling the innumerable ups and downs of Laar's time in public office, the film deals with the storied relationship between Estonia and the Soviet Union, both prior to and during Laar's stint as Prime Minister of Estonia. "The Year of Dragon" is a documentary from 1988 that takes a chronological view of events in Soviet-occupied Estonia. The period covered in the film is actually from St. George's Day (Jüripäev) in mid-April, 1988 to the initial declaration of sovereignty by the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR on November 16, 1988 (which was soon thereafter nullified by Moscow).

THE ESTONIAN LITERARY MUSEUM'S ESTONIAN FOLKLORE ARCHIVES AND THE ESTONIAN LIFE STORIES COLLECTIVE INVITES EVERYONE TO WRITE DOWN THEIR THOUGHTS AND ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY SITUATION

We invite you to keep an emergency situation diary, including thoughts about:

-Whether and how everyday life has changed compared to before?



On 2 February of this year, 100 years passed since the signing of the Tartu Peace Treaty between the Republic of Estonia and Soviet Russia. By signing the Tartu Peace Treaty, Russia recognized the independence of the Republic of Estonia and the War of Independence came to an end. The 100th anniversary of the Tartu Peace Treaty was celebrated at VEMU in Toronto with a lecture by Prof. Andres Kasekamp, the Chair of Estonian Studies (University of Toronto). Photo. P. Noorhani

-What you pay more or less attention to compared to before?

-How are your relationships with those close to you and friends? Have they changed? How?

-What are your fears and hopes?

Thoughts about changes in your country (the world) and how these changes have affected your everyday life are also welcome.

All emergency situation diaries (or copies) are expected at the Estonian Literary Museum's Estonian Folklore Archives after the conclusion of the emergency situation.

We also welcome diaries in other languages (Russian and/or English).

Please send your emergency situation diaries to elulood@kirmus.ee or on paper:

"Emergency Situation Diary,"
Estonian Literary Museum's
Estonian Folklore Archives,
Vanemuise 42, Tartu, Estonia, 51003.

THE ESTONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM AWAITS YOUR CORONAVIRUS STORIES

How has the coronavirus epidemic affected your life? The Estonian National Museum is collecting stories and photos about how the spread of this virus and the national emergency situation has impacted and reshaped our everyday lives, as well as how we have adjusted to this new way of life.

Let us know how you are doing! Stories and thoughts can be shared on the portal Rahvalood (The People's Stories): <https://rahvalood.ee/lood/koroonaviirus/>
Please share your photos on the site Pildiait (Photo Barn): <https://pildiait.erm.ee/>