

## BALTIC CANADIAN IMPRINTS COLLECTION INITIATIVE: COVID-19 - “WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER”

The year 2020 has become more special than ever imagined. An emergency situation has been in place in Canada and in other parts of the world for some time and the end is not yet in sight. Restrictions have changed our everyday lives and coping mechanisms.



The collaborative group known as Baltic Canadian Imprints wishes to preserve these experiences for the future. Being inspired by the collection initiatives of the Estonian Literary Museum/Estonian Life Histories' Association and the Estonian National Museum, we are calling on Baltic-Canadians to help record these extraordinary times and share their thoughts and feelings with us.

The project partners are: the Canadian Baltic Immigrant Aid Society, Estonian Studies Centre/VEMU, Lithuanian Museum Archives of Canada, the Canadian Latvian Archive and Museum and the Latvian National Federation in Canada

We are interested in the following materials, based on the emergency situation:

- Written thoughts, ideas, and challenges (incl. blogs and diaries)
- Photos and drawings
- Home videos
- Memes and anecdotes which you have created and/or shared in social media

Please share your thoughts with us:

- How has your everyday life changed?
- How has your working life changed?
- What gets your attention now more than before?
- How have your relations with your relatives and friends changed?
- What are your fears and hopes for the future?
- How has life changed in your community?
- If and how have you taken part in voluntary assistance/aid actions?
- How have changes in other countries or in the world affected your life?
- As individuals and/or society, what could we learn from our experiences during the COVID-19 crisis?

Materials can be in English, French, German, Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian.

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The Baltic Heritage Newsletter is distributed quarterly, on-line. **The next deadline for submissions is 15 August 2020.** Please send all related enquiries and submissions to Piret Noorhani: [piretnoorhani@gmail.com](mailto:piretnoorhani@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.

[www.balther.net](http://www.balther.net)

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You can also post your submissions  
on the BCI COVID-19 Facebook  
event page.

Deadline for submissions is June  
30.

Materials received will be archived  
with the organization to which  
they were sent. After we have  
conquered the COVID19, we'll  
prepare an exhibition from the  
collected materials. We hope to see  
you at the opening!

## IN MEMORIAM VINCAS BARTUSEVIČIUS (1939-2020)

**Jolanta Budriūnienė**

In April, sad news arrived from  
Germany. On April 21, 2020, Dr  
Vincas Bartusevičius, a long-time  
friend of the National Library  
of Lithuania, passed away. Dr  
Bartusevičius, a representative  
of the DP generation, moved to  
Germany with his parents in 1944  
and stayed there for the rest of his  
life. In 1959, he graduated from  
the Vasario 16-oji Gymnasium.  
He studied sociology, history and  
psychology at the University of  
Munich and the University of  
Tübingen.

For many decades, Dr Bartusevičius  
devoted his time and energy to the  
Lithuanian cause. He chaired the

Ateitis Association of Lithuanian  
German Students, was the editor  
of the newsletter Ateitin, active  
member of the Lithuanian German  
Youth Association, and the editor  
of the newspaper Jaunimo žodis. In  
1967-1974, Dr Bartusevičius taught  
at the Vasario 16-oji Gymnasium.  
He was active in the Lithuanian  
German Community, Inc. and  
served on its board. In 2010, the  
Board of the LGC awarded Dr  
Bartusevičius the title of Honorary  
Chairman.

From 1981 until his death,  
Dr Bartusevičius headed the  
Lithuanian Culture Institute in  
Germany (<https://vlbe.org/kitos-organizacijos/lietuviu-kulturos-institutas-lki/>). Through his  
efforts, more than thirty annual  
conferences were organized. He  
was also in charge of Institute's  
publications: "Suvažiavimo darbai"  
[Congress Procedures] and "LKI  
leidiniai" [Institute's Publications].

Dr Bartusevičius's field of research  
included Lithuanian diaspora,  
the Lithuanian community in  
Germany, and the development of  
Lithuania in the late 20th century.  
He is the author of five books and  
many articles.

For more than three decades, Dr  
Bartusevičius had been a devoted  
friend of the National Library of  
Lithuania. Thanks to his and his  
colleagues from the Lithuanian  
Culture Institute efforts, one of  
the first shipments of diaspora  
literature reached our Library in  
1990. In 2012, Dr Bartusevičius's  
monograph "Lithuanians in DP  
Camps in Germany 1945-1951"  
(Vilnius: Versus aureus) was  
presented at the Library.

In 2014, I had the opportunity to  
do an internship at the Institute  
and to significantly supplement  
the Library's database on the  
Lithuanian diaspora press. In  
2015, to commemorate the 70th



*Dr. Vincas Bartusevičius.*

anniversary of the Lithuanian DPs,  
the Library and the Lithuanian  
Culture Institute jointly organized  
a travelling exhibition "Lithuanian  
Publishing in Post-WWII Europe."

For his social and scientific  
involvement and activities, Dr  
Bartusevičius received many  
awards from the Republic of  
Lithuania and the Republic of  
Germany.

## VEMU OPENS ITS DIGITAL ARCHIVES AT COVID-19 TIMES

**Rasmus Rattas**

Covid-19 has changed life for  
most of us. VEMU, the Museum  
of Estonians Abroad in Canada  
is no exception here. Due to the  
need to restrict the spread of the  
COVID-19 virus, the management  
of Tartu College, our home,  
has decided to keep the G-floor  
(including the Hall, fraternities'  
rooms, the library) and archival  
depositories on B2 floor closed  
to the public until June 15, 2020.  
VEMU staff has been working  
mostly from home for the past two  
months by now.

All the events we had planned  
for this period were cancelled or  
postponed. And like the rest of the  
world, we too had to go digital.  
It fitted conveniently with the  
initiative of the Estonian Culture  
Ministry to announce 2020 as a  
Year of Digital Culture. As VEMU's



*“How to Make Kringel and Classic Pasha” with Susi Holmberg and Paul Lillakas. (2015)*

audiovisual collections are rich in different recordings of lectures, seminars, conferences, workshops, exhibit openings, concerts etc (that mostly are digitized), we started sharing our archival material online, using VEMU YouTube channel and Facebook page together with our newsletter and Eesti Elu /Estonian Life newspaper.

Since the beginning of April (and with a plan to continue until mid-June) we have uploaded 2 video recordings of our past events each week. On Tuesdays, we upload lectures on either historical or contemporary topics and on Fridays we have tried to keep it less formal by uploading lectures and workshops about cooking, handicrafts etc. These, by the way, have been the most popular uploads - the two most-viewed lectures and workshops of this period have been Nancy Bush’s “How I Found Estonia Through Knitting” and “How to Make Kringel and Classic Pasha” with Susi Holmberg and Paul Lillakas. All of the topics covered have some sort of connection with Estonia of course, but quite a few of the recordings are in English - thus

*Nancy Bush - How I Found Estonia Through Knitting (2016)*



potentially accessible to a wider audience of viewers.

Statistically, the past 6 weeks of this consistent uploading have resulted in 15 new subscribers to our channel and 1787 total views with 304 hours of total combined watch time. All of these metrics have seen over 100% increase compared to a similar length period of our regular, rather sporadic past uploading.

All of the recordings of the events were done by a group of volunteer film enthusiasts - the Estonian Heritage Society in Toronto, who during 1981 and 2017 captured over 1200 recordings (mostly life

story interviews and events) of the Estonian community here in Toronto. We would like to thank everyone who has been involved with the Estonian Heritage Society throughout the years for the incredible work they have done with building and capturing the vast collection of video recordings that form a significant part of our invaluable video archives here in VEMU.

Some examples of the recent uploads:

Hilary Bird - A Decade in the Restored Republic (2015) <https://youtu.be/x3oFvLgInno>

Susi Holmberg and Vatikiotis family - Teaching ESTOs & Greeks How to Cook (2016) <https://youtu.be/FzzQkqeH0dk>

Scott Diel - Post Independence Role for Väliseestlased (2015) <https://youtu.be/e2Cy-SUBbZA>

Kristina Lupp and Inga Paenurm on Estonian food culture (2012) <https://youtu.be/kNbrjuYDiPw>

Nancy Bush - How I Found Estonia Through Knitting (2016) <https://youtu.be/k-5Xd9e8INw>

How to Make Kringel and Classic Pasha with Susi Holmberg & Paul Lillakas (2015) <https://youtu.be/RZenUPaiLjE>

Marika Blossfeldt - Energize Your Body and Mind by Making Smart Food Choices (2013) <https://youtu.be/mPoc0a3L9OE>

For the full list of our recent and past uploads visit (and subscribe to) our YouTube channel here:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/VEMUESC/>

## TARTU COLLEGE 50TH ANNIVERSARY ONLINE QUIZ

Johanna Helin

How many floors does Tartu College have? What was the first party that took place in Tartu College Hall in 1970? How many people have helped to organise VEMU collections in the past 10 years?

These are some examples of questions in the online quiz series that VEMU is organizing in honour of Tartu College's 50th Anniversary. The quiz tests your knowledge about this important building for the Estonian Community in Toronto and the various things that have happened on its premises these past 50 years.

The quiz is organised as a game with six separate rounds. A new quiz is posted on VEMU's webpage and Facebook every Thursday starting from April 23 until May 28. And participants have time until next Wednesday to answer the questions. The right answers will be given on the following Thursday and each week some lucky winners will be drawn to receive beautiful and practical anniversary souvenirs. At the end of all six quizzes, at the beginning of June, the persons with the most correct answers will receive a special prize.

So far, we've had four rounds of the game and it is great to see quite many people taking part in the game. The knowledge level seems to be really high and there is always a tough competition for the first place. But the game is not only for those with a long history with Tartu College. As the questions are both in Estonian and English and with multiple choice answers, it is suitable for all. Come and play along and learn something new about the Estonian community in Canada!

Here you can check answers to the previous rounds and take part in the next quiz: <https://vemu.ca/index.php/en/tc50>

## ONLINE LECTURE ABOUT ESTONIAN SWEDES AT VEMU

Johanna Helin

On April 8, VEMU organised together with the Finnish Studies Programme at the University

of Toronto and the Swedish Women's Educational Association International Toronto, an online lecture about the Swedish speaking minority in Estonia. The lecture "Liberation or salvation? The Vormsi/Ormsö Estonian Swedes between Swedish Evangelism and Russian Orthodoxy 1873-1887" was given by Trond Ove Tøllefsen who teaches history at Uppsala University, Sweden, and is consulting professor in peace and conflict studies at the Free University of Catalunya. Originally, the lecture was planned to happen in the premises of Tartu College at the end of March but the COVID-19 situation changed everything.

However, as the lecturer decided to stay in Toronto, we turned his presentation into an on-line lecture. For VEMU this was the first time to organize a real-time on-line lecture in our YouTube channel, so we were a bit anxious how it would turn out. Fortunately, thanks to Rasmus Ratas' professional assistance it was a success. Some 30 people followed the talk in real-time, and the lecturer was able to take questions via chat box and give his answers directly to all of them.

Trond Ove Tøllefsen's interesting talk gave the listeners a vivid picture of the lives of the Swedish-speaking farmers on the Estonian island of Vormsi/Ormsö from the High Middle Ages to 1944. How the islanders became the subject of different cultural, religious and political battles between Sweden and Russia, Protestant revivals and the Russian Orthodox Church. The presentation was clear and entertaining also to non-historians. The good thing about on-line lectures is that the recording is still available at VEMU's YouTube Channel. So if you missed the lecture in April, you still have a chance to watch it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=va9OgEVsYA>



Zoom TLPA meeting May 7th.

## TORONTO LATVIAN PENSIONER'S ASSOCIATION – TLPA

TLPA is a non-profit organisation founded in 1972. In 1974 the Association was granted a privileged document - Charter. We use the name Latvian Senior Citizens Association in Metro Toronto for correspondence with the government. Its first location was at the Latvian House on College Street in midtown Toronto. In its present location at the Latvian Centre, it resides since 1994.

TLPA mission is to provide Latvian seniors with services and programs which are diverse, varied, rich and engaging: exercise, singing, eating, playing, socializing, learning and contributing - feeling useful.

A place where seniors can feel independent, support each other and can make new friendships. A place where they can maintain their Latvian language and culture. A place where their spiritual and social life is enriched. A place that can provide education and assistance regarding the laws of the land, medical care, pensions and aid in other pertinent matters that affect their lives. Members must be 60 years or older.

Gatherings are held once a week, on Thursdays starting 9:00 to give time



Photo: Tālis Plūdums

for various activities before lunch and entertainment and educational programs which start at noon.

Staying physically active is important for the health and quality of life. We have an exercise group who meet before the main program starts.

Staying mentally and socially engaged is also key to good overall health. We offer a number of programs to that end: singing in the mixed choir “Rota”, men’s ensemble “Pusstunda”, led by Iriša Purens, to play bingo, to knit with the handicraft working group and to just chat over a cup of coffee and a bun.

During this current Covid-19 pandemic, all of the above activities, for the time being, have been suspended. However, we have not given up. As of May 7th, we have started virtual meetings. Our first virtual meeting was a huge success, thanks to our diligent, devoted, fearless members. Despite the older generation’s classic fear of technology, over 50 people signed on. These meetings are particularly well-received by those with mobility issues. Indeed, we hope to continue zooming even when we are allowed to gather together again, live from the Latvian Centre. This week, for instance, our oldest zoomer, who still lives at home and is still of sound mind, is 102 years old. Another presenter this week, who used to be very active, will participate virtually from Welland, ON. Indeed, zooming unites the Latvian diaspora world-wide. All are invited to join.

## LITHUANIAN SCHOOL IN DC PARTICIPATES IN A COMPETITION “THE WORLD ON MY BOOKSHELF”

This April, the National Library of Lithuania invited book lovers to participate in a competition “The World on My Bookshelf” and to present their favourite books by



The cover of the book of the Lithuanian Saturday School in Washington, DC. writing a book annotation. Readers were invited to describe a book they liked and those who were unwilling or lazy to write to photograph or film their bookshelves.

In three weeks, three dozen works were received from the readers living in Lithuania and abroad. We received works in the form of videos, essays, photo collage, poems, riddles, and letters. Annotations were sent by adults and children.

The Lithuanian Saturday School in Washington, DC also took part in the competition by sending a photo of the cover of the book “Lithuanian School in Washington—An Indelible Mark in Our Lives.” The students of the school have been writing their book for five years. On its pages, students leave their thoughts and memories about lessons, the most memorable meetings, the most beautiful Lithuanian songs, concerts and performances and their summer trips to Lithuania.

## LITHUANIAN PARIS

The pandemic closed the state borders and seized the flights but it did not cancel our passion to travel. The Lithuanian Community in France came up with an idea to visit and explore significant Lithuanian historical and cultural objects in Paris virtually.



In 2012, the Lithuanian coat of arms Vytis (on the right) was restored in the Clock Tower of the Palace of Justice in Paris.

Photo by: Linas Maknavičius.

The map-leaflet “Lithuanian Paris” in a pdf format can be downloaded and used for personal use: <https://lietuviai.fr/parislslug/lietuviskojo-paryziaus/>.

## THE BOOK “THE DESCENT OF HOPE. US RADIO BROADCASTS TO SOVIET LITHUANIA”

The end of WWII did not bring freedom and liberation for all countries and nations. Central and Eastern Europe fell into the grip of the Soviets and found itself isolated from the free world. Immediately after the war, relations between the Soviet Union and former allies began to deteriorate. It became clear to the Western world countries that Soviet propaganda was a serious challenge to their national security and that measures needed to be taken to counteract this threat.

The position of the US as one of the superpowers had been particularly important. Assessing the technological possibilities of the time, soon it was realized that radio



The author of the book (left) talks to Dr. Ilona Strumickienė, director of the Adolfas Damušis Center for Democratic Studies.

Photo: National Library of Lithuania.

broadcasts penetrating through the

Iron Curtain could be one of the most effective means of ideological struggle against the USSR. The US government devoted a lot of human and material resources to organizing radio broadcasts to Soviet-controlled areas. The waves of US radio stations also reached Lithuania and contributed greatly to the spread of Western and democratic values, the rise of national awareness, and the formation of a critical position towards the Soviet Union.

A book by historian Inga Arlauskaitė Zakšauskienė, “The Descent of Hope. US Radio Broadcasts to Soviet Lithuania” published by Vilnius University Press analysis this phenomenon.

A conversation with the author of the book led by Dr. Ilona Strumickienė, director of the Adolfas Damušis Center for Democratic Studies at the National Library of Lithuania, can be found on Youtube (in Lithuanian):

<https://tinyurl.com/y7uoyvap>

## SEABROOK FARMS AND FINLAND SISTERS.

Archives are closed, travels postponed. For most of us our workdays have changed considerably. Though I experienced in the beginning of the lockdown a lot of energy, due to the fact there seemed to be all of a sudden so much more time, slowly the uncertainties about work and plans started to eat the energy away.

Though I work from home and not that much had changed, I felt I was slowing down. Then I realised I was not the only one, as e-mails remained unanswered and even whats-app messages seemed to be disappearing in a void. But then I thought: maybe it is not that bad, as most of us have been running around for so many years.

As the normal route of research is not available yet, it is now also

a time to pass on messages in a different way, on a more personal level and from the past I know this works incredibly well. For now, I have two questions I would like to pass on:

I’m working on a documentary film about Seabrook Farms, New Jersey. In the late forties some 900 Estonians and some 200 Latvians, all refugees, came to work there. There were hardly any Lithuanians, as it was the Lutheran Church which was involved in organising the sponsorships.

Though I’m interested in documents, pictures, stories etc about Seabrook, I’m especially searching for the films of Nikolai Voore. He was an amateur filmmaker and he filmed in the fifties the day to day life in Seabrook. These films were once sent to the Lakewood Archives, but we have not been able to find these there. So, in case someone has an idea where the films could be, please let me know.

Then I have another question: together with Rein Kirss we have slowly started to work on a film project about the Finnish boys. Last autumn we filmed seven interviews, as time was pressing, but now we have time to concentrate on research. Beside the stories, pictures and more general information which we are looking for, I’m also very interested to get to know more about the women who were involved. So, in case there is someone who could help me further with this, please contact me as well.

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<https://meritsproductions.com/>