



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

EANCDC – OUTREACH, VISITS, AND ADVOCACY

The first half 2019 was busy for EANC Washington, DC Director Karin Shuey. She started the year taking our message on the road – and to sea – then shifting focus in more recent months to advocacy and keeping up with high-level visitors from Estonia.

EANC was represented at several events celebrating the 101st anniversary of Estonia's independence. Karin attended the Estonian embassy's commemoration that Friday, held at the Embassy of Finland in Washington. She was the keynote speaker on Saturday at the Connecticut Estonian Society's celebration and spoke at the Lakewood Estonian House at their event on Sunday.

The embassy event was attended by over 200 Estonians, Estonian Americans and friends of Estonia from throughout Washington's diplomatic circles. The Finnish host, Ambassador Kirsti Kauppi, and Estonian Ambassador Jonatan Vsevirov gave remarks emphasizing the close relationship between their nations and stressed the importance of their partnerships with the U.S.

Karin was honored to be featured at the events in Connecticut and New Jersey, as well. A big part of her job is to make sure Estonian communities around the U.S. are familiar with EANC's mission to support Estonian American language and cultural preservation, and its advocacy work in Washington. She is available to speak at larger events or any time your community has a gathering. She also took part in the third KLENK-IEP cruise, which gave her another chance to share EANC's work with a new audience.

Estonian officials and experts are frequent guests of Capitol Hill, government agencies, and Washington's think tanks. Two highlights this year have been President Kersti Kaljulaid's visit in March and Minister of Defense Jüri Luik's in June. In addition to meetings with Congress and the Administration, the President was hosted by the Brookings Institution as part of its International Leaders Forum. In her remarks, President Kaljulaid drew parallels between the retreat of democracy prior to World War II and the current world order. She also called for more U.S. involvement in security in the Baltic region to ensure maximum credibility.



Minister Luik gave keynote remarks at the annual EU Defense Forum, held at the U.S. Institute of Peace. He noted that while "the link between the U.S. and Europe has been vital to maintaining peace in Europe," the newest generation of decision-makers has no ties to today's architecture of war and peace. He echoed former NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer's sentiment that the focus needs to be on pragmatism, not sloganism and emphasized that EU-NATO cooperation remains the bedrock of security in Europe.

So much of EANC's work is tied to advocacy. Karin supported our Ukrainian colleagues' latest advocacy day and helped organize

and lead meetings for a parallel advocacy event by the Central and East European Coalition (CEEC), both in June. The Ukrainian event saw nearly fifty Ukrainian Americans and supporters from eleven states hold over fifty meetings with Congressional offices to raise awareness on issues relevant to Ukrainian security and its struggle to regain full sovereignty over its territory. While the CEEC event was smaller, participants met with six Senate offices and two offices in the House of Representatives for productive discussions.

August brought Baltic-related events in Washington to Capitol Hill via the Baltic Way 30th Anniversary event and commemoration of Black Ribbon Day. The next advocacy day is planned for November 8th, just prior to EANC's 2019 gala. All are welcome to take part in any of these events. Please contact Karin at karinshueyeanc@gmail.com if you would like more information or to invite her to speak in your community. Hope to see you in Washington soon!

ESTONIAN AMERICAN NATIONAL COUNCIL, INC.

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@ Marriot Wardman Park
Washington, DC
Tickets: Go to www.estosite.org

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Pictured at "The Journey" wall in Pirita: EANC members honored the journeys of the more than 70,000 Estonians who fled their homeland during the Great Refugee Flight of 1944. Tragically, Estonia lost every fifth person of its population as a result of the terror brought by the occupying regime. Photo: Amelia Goode



This September EANC members attended the 75th anniversary of the Great Refugee Flight, special sessions of the Estonian World Council, and for the historic first meeting of the Committee for Global Estonian Cooperation.

Council members Sirje Kiin, Marju Rink Abel and Aavo Reinfeldt also met with the Estonian Prime Minister Jüri Ratas to discuss concerns of Estonians living in the U.S. Pictured: Council members with the Prime Minister and Johannes Merilai (Director, Office of Prime Minister)

EANC NEWSLETTER
ERKÜ TEATAJA

September 2019



LETTER FROM EANC PRESIDENT / ERKÜ PRESIDENDI TERVITUS

Dear Reader, Much has been happening recently in the Estonian American world. We try to provide highlights in our Teataja newsletter, but likely cannot cover everything that may be of interest to you. I hope, however, that you do find something that catches your attention in every issue. For instance, we try to provide information on EANC activities, events, and organizations that we support, so that over time you can see what we and the Estonian American community are engaged in. What we would like to know is whether we are meeting this goal. If you have any comments, please forward them to our new Executive Director, Leelo Linask, whose contact information is in the Teataja.



Marju Rink-Abel These past two years in particular have been full of events tied to celebrating Estonia's 100th year anniversary. I believe we can look forward to closer ties and more interaction with the Estonian government in the future. EANC was asked to name two representatives to the Estonian government's newly-formed Global Estonian committee, meeting for the first time in September. Through our council members, nationally elected by Estonian Americans and representing you, we hope to gather thoughts and suggestions on how to move forward with this exciting and historic opportunity.

I was honored to be re-elected president of the Estonian American National Council at our annual meeting last year. We look forward to continuing our successful programs while looking for new ways to better fulfill our mission. I thank you for your trust and support to EANC. We will do our best to ensure that Teataja keeps you informed of EANC's work.

With best wishes, Marju Rink-Abel

Hea lugeja! On teguderohe aeg meie ameerika eestlaste kogukonnas! Püüame teile ERKÜ Teataja uudistekirja kaudu anda ülevaatliku pildi ja tutvustada kõrgpunkte, kuid anname endale aru, et pole alati võimalik katta kõiki teemasid, mis võiksid huvi pakkuda. Siiski loodan, et leiate siit üht-teist huvitavat. Näiteks, proovime jagada infot ERKÜ tegevustest, ka üritustest - organisatsioonidest mida oleme toetanud, et saaksite ka Teie kursis olla sellega millega tegeleb ERKÜ ja ka millega on hõivatud laialdasem ameerika eestlaskond. Tahaksime ka teilt kuulda: Mida arvate? Kas oleme saavutanud seda eesmärki? Ootame meelsasti Teie kommentaare, soovitusi ja küsimusi. Palun edastage need meie värskete tegevjuhile Leelo Linask' ile, kelle kontaktandmed leiate siit Teataja-st.

Eriti tahaks kutsuda ameerika eestlasi tähistama ja korraldama üritusi Suur põgenemise aastapäeva puhul. Sellest saatuslikkust 1944.a septembrist on möödunud 75 aastat. Ühineme kaasmaalastega üleilma, ka Eestis, kes seda tähistavad.

Möödunud kaks aastat on olnud eriti tihedalt sisestatud kultuuriliste ürituste ja meie isamaa, Eesti Vabariigi 100.a. juubeli tähistamisega. Olen veendunud, et meil siin USAs on nüüd järjest oodata tihedamat koostööd ka Eesti valitsusega. ERKÜ-l on palutud nimetada kahte esindajat Eesti valitsuse äsjaasutatud globaalsete eestlaste koostöökomisjoni. Meie soov on ERKÜ esinduskoguliikmetelt – keda olete ennast esindama valinud just Teie, ameerika eestlased üle kogu USA – koguda mõtteid kuidas hästi edasi liikuda selle suurepärase ja ajaloolise võimalusega, mida osalus selles komisjonis meile annab.

Parimate tervitustega, Marju Rink-Abel

EANC Executive Board/ ERKÜ Juhatus
Marju Rink-Abel, President • Matti Prima, VP & Treasurer • Mai-Liis Bartling, Vice President • Tiina Urv, Secretary Kristi Allpere • Mai-Liis Bartling • Toomas Tubalkain • Sirje Kiin • Jüri Koll • Maia Linask • Viivianne Malmgren • Terje van Schaik

This year, in 2019, the concept of being Estonian in another nation has taken new meaning. Whether Eesti is our homeland and we feel we are just living abroad right now, or whether our homeland is another nation but our heritage runs strong – one thing is for sure – we all share and continue to thrive in a culture, a heritage, and a mindset that we call “being Estonian.”

This summer was the 12th ESTO festival since 1972, with over 60 youth delegates from 25 different countries participating in cultural immersion and discussion. I was fortunate to be able to represent the Estonian American National Council, along with Karl Grabbi, as a youth delegate at the ESTO festival. Alongside us we had other American youth delegates, Anna-Liisa Sepp, Kelker Martinson, Lili Puskar, and Tia Puskar. We came together with delegates from around the world and listened to speeches, attended creative shows and performances, participated in both the Youth Congress and the National Congress held by the Estonian World Council, and discussed one big question on so many of our minds: What does it mean to be Estonian?



EANC representatives and youth delegates Karl Grabbi and Viivianne Malmgren

We spent the first few days in Finland, learning about the history of Estonian-Finnish relations, and experiencing the overlap between our cultures. We got to hear Estonian singers and watch Estonian dancers from around the world. Next we spent several days in Tartu, starting the festivities with a cruise on the Emajõgi River, listening to cultural performances of our beloved songs, and meeting Tartu's Mayor Urmas Klaas. The next day, we came together for the meat of the trip – to participate in our Youth Congress held at the University of Tartu Museum. Before heading to Tallinn, we walked through history as we explored the Estonian National Museum, and lived our culture as New York dance group Saare Vikat performed their repertoire. Finally, once in Tallinn, we attended speeches about teaching Estonian abroad and keeping the tradition of Estonian houses, as well as attended cultural plays such as "Üks väike tuba" ("One Small Room") and "LAHUS" ("Separated"). To wrap things up, we attended the National Congress (ÜEKN Rahvuskongress) with keynote speaker President Kersti Kaljulaid, and panelists from around the world. Two youth delegates, Karl Grabbi and Juku Gold, spoke on the panels (as did EANC Executive Director Leelo Linask), and gave insight into how we viewed the future of current and coming generations. Ultimately, ESTO gave me an opportunity not only to see our culture in action, but also - as an individual and as an EANC member - take part in shaping the discussion around our future as global Estonians. Gallery of ESTO photos available at: www.estofestival.com.

- Viivianne Malmgren, council member

HELP THE NEW BOARD AND COUNCIL, WHO ARE ALL VOLUNTEERS, CARRY OUT THESE INITIATIVES ON BEHALF OF ALL ESTONIAN AMERICANS WITH YOUR GENEROUS DONATION



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The Estonian National Museum in Tartu debuted its exhibit showcasing the history of the world-wide ESTO festivals. The East Coast folkdance group Saare Vikat, supported by EANC, performed at the exhibit opening. Photo: Arp Kalm ERM

Ms. Leelo Linask, recognized for her involvement in the global Estonian community and Estonian-American youth organizations, was appointed EANC Executive Director last spring. She has demonstrated significant leadership in multiple facets in the Estonian-American community for almost two decades, and is dedicated to strengthening and ensuring its continuity for generations to come.

Leelo is known in Estonian communities for her work as an editor and translator of significant publications on Estonian history and culture, most recently *Republic of Estonia 100. People. History. Culture*. In the 1990s, Leelo worked in Estonia for over ten years as a journalist and translator. She also served as Press Officer and Deputy Head of the Press & Public Information Department at Estonia's National Defense Forces during the critical time when Estonia prepared to join NATO. Leelo's contributions to the building of independent Estonia were acknowledged with the award of the *Kaitseväe Teenetemärk* (a service medal from the Commander of the EDF).



EANC members participated at numerous events throughout ESTO 2019. Pictured: A panel discussing Estonian diaspora issue at the ÜEKN Estonian National Congress. Pictured: Eerik Nilles Kross, Riina Kionka, EKN chairman Marcus Kolga, Imbi Paju, EANC council member Karl Grabbi, EANC Executive Director Leelo Linask, and former US Ambassador to Estonia James Melville.



She is an avid scouter and volunteer, and serves as Board Member and Secretary of the non-profit Federation of Associations for Advancement of Estonian Youth, Inc. She is a language and folkdance instructor at the Connecticut Estonian School, a frequent contributor to the *Vaba Eesti Sõna*, and works closely with The Nordic Press.

Leelo is excited about the opportunities and possibilities faced by EANC. She looks forward to involving upcoming generations in the realization of EANC's objectives.

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EANC SUPPORTS CULTURAL AND CENTENNIAL EXHIBITS

Estonia Through 100 Pairs of Eyes Debuts on the West Coast The photography exhibit "Eesti läbi 100 silmapaari" opened at the World Affairs Council in San Francisco. Artists



Kaire van der Toorn-Guthan and Toomas Volkmann were on hand to introduce their project, which shares the portraits and stories of 100 Estonians born in each year from 1918-2017. A discussion between former President Toomas Hendrik

Ilves and Rainer Sternfeld followed, coinciding with NATO's 70th anniversary, and touching on recent trends in the digital economy and international affairs. The exhibit features individuals from diverse walks of life and different generations, and before it's west coast debut, had been shown at the Estonian National Museum in Tartu in 2018, as well as at other venues in Estonia, Europe, and Canada. The

exhibit was on view in San Francisco through the month of June and moved on to Lääneranniku Eesti Päevad in Portland, OR (July 31-August 4), before opening at additional venues in the US. EANC support has been instrumental in reaching new audiences with this project. <https://estonia.ee/estonia-through-100-pairs-of-eyes/>

- Linnea Bartling

Masters of Our Own Homes: Estonia at 100 Travelling Exhibit made its way around the U.S. in 2019. EANC has been a proud sponsor of helping bring this massive exhibit to cosmopolitan cities around the country, and the quick action of the newly formed Estonians in Chicago cultural society enabled a stop in the high visibility location at Chicago's Daley Square. The exhibit was developed by VABAMU, the Museum of Occupations and Freedom, in Estonia. <https://ee100.ee/>

UPCOMING EVENTS / TULEVASED ÜRITUSED

You are cordially invited...to the 2019 Awards Gala (hosted by the EANC) in Washington, D.C. Join us on **Nov. 9th** @ Marriott Wardman Park hotel for a special evening celebrating our heritage and honoring exceptional members of the Estonian-American and JBANC communities. Awards presented by EANC & JBANC. Entertainment includes a sneak peek of the Broadway-bound musical *Singing Revolution*, introduction by creator Tony Spinosa & exclusive preview by Estonian choreographer Märt Agu & dancer, fresh off their performance at the Kennedy Center!

Mix & mingle with cultural figures, policy makers, foreign policy experts, friends, supporters and community leaders. NB! JBANC hosts its biennial conference earlier that day. www.jbanc.org

Tickets: www.estosite.org. Questions? erku@estosite.org, tel: 978 397 0020. If you cannot attend, but would like to sponsor a seat or table, let us know!

Happening now: Documentary about Estonia to air on PBS! Check your TV local listings or www.estosite.org for details. EANC is proud to sponsor this multipart documentary series, filmed in Estonia this summer. The episodes will kick off the world affairs series *This is America & The World* hosted by Dennis Wholey, **this October**. Many thanks to EANC President's Circle and individual donors whose generous support made this possible. See our website for Thank You's; check local TV listing for channels /airtimes).

Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of Suur põgenemine (the Great Flight, September 1944) "I don't want to go, but I cannot stay..." Events dedicated to this painful period in history are being held around the world. While EANC president Marju Rink-Abel and many council members will be in Estonia to help mark this somber anniversary and tell the story of those refugees forced to flee, we call on Estonian communities in the U.S. to also conduct commemorative events to draw attention to this point in history that separated so many families, brought so much pain, death and hardships, and from which so many communities abroad got their beginnings.

EANC is working with the Estonian World Council (ÜEKN) to highlight this anniversary. The VABAMU museum in Tallinn and numerous others have dedicated events and exhibits to this topic. Events will continue around the world and online. We welcome you to share your stories with us on FB or on our website, by sending them to LLinask.ERKU@gmail.com.

Global Estonians Commission is Formed

EANC is among major Estonian organizations abroad that met with Estonian government members and officials in Estonia earlier this year to further unite and strengthen cooperation between global Estonians, ultimately resulting in "the Committee for Global Estonian Cooperation."



Population Minister R. Solman, (front, left)

"The newly formed commission will be the most important committee involved in working out the Global Estonians program, slated to take over the role currently held by the Rahvuskaaslate program in 2021," according to Riina Solman, Estonian Minister of Population. "The communities of Estonians living abroad...have managed through their active involvement to keep *eestlus* (the Estonian culture, language and spirit) alive in so many different

parts of the world, and have been helpful in representing Estonian interests and policy in their home countries. The Government of Estonia intends to create conditions for continued cooperation and to give Estonian communities abroad confidence and encouragement to carry forward their mission-rich work as ambassadors of goodwill for Estonia proper."

The committee will be led by the Population Minister. It will include as its members the ministers of Education and Science, Culture, Social Affairs, Foreign Trade and Information Technology, Foreign Affairs, as well as a representative of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Foundation for Integration (Intergratsiooni sihtasutus), and representatives of the Estonian Compatriots (*Rahvuskaaslaste*) program. The Estonian communities abroad will be represented by members of the larger umbrella organizations: the Estonian World Council (ÜEKN), the Estonian American National Council (ERKÜ), the Estonian Central Council in Canada (EKN) and Association of Estonians in Sweden (REL).