



BALTIC HERITAGE NETWORK

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The year during which the 80th anniversary of the Mass Flight of the Baltic peoples was commemorated worldwide is coming to a close. Our newsletter has documented many endeavours and projects which were dedicated to this dramatic historical event. Due to this event, out of a need for handling diaspora heritage in a better way, the Baltic Heritage Network founding group came together almost 20 years ago. The first brainstorming session, in which Estonian historical memory institutions that handle diaspora heritage participated, took place in Tartu on the spring of 2005. This was followed by an international conference in 2006 and the founding of the not-for-profit institution in 2008. Many of those who we started off with are sadly not with us anymore. Those who are still with us have grown older and hopefully wiser as well. New, young blood has joined us. Due to changes in the Baltic diaspora communities, BaltHerNet's goals and activities must also change. What will remain is support among colleagues and a friendly spirit. We have always had plenty of that. Thank you for this, friends! Wishing you a peaceful holiday season and a happy as well as active new year!

Piret Noorhani

Congratulations to Maarja Merivoo-Parro and Kristi Barrow!

Estonian Citizen's Day is celebrated on November 26. Every year, the Foreign Ministry awards letters of appreciation to people and civic organizations who have promoted and upheld Estonia around the world. November 26 marks the day in 1918 that the Provincial Assembly issued an edict on Estonian citizenship. Citizen's Day aims to bolster awareness of citizenship status and raise civic pride and is dedicated to the rights and responsibilities of Estonian citizens.

We are happy to announce that some of the BaltHerNet people were among the recipients of recognition this year.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs thanked and acknowledged the long time BaltHerNet board member and the leader of our youth group, historian and journalist Maarja Merivoo-Parro for the human interpretation of Estonian history. Her latest achievement is the documentary "Estonia Is in the Eyes of the Beholder: Estonian Refugees in Germany" (2024).

Kristi Barrow was honoured for her leadership in founding and advancing the Estonian Australia Media Project (AEMP), as well as for her contributions to the Estonian Cultural Foundation and the Estonian Archives in Australia. Through her efforts, she has fostered stronger connections across Estonian communities, ensuring that their cultural and historical narratives are both shared and celebrated.



Maarja Merivoo-Parro talking before the film screening at Estonian Museum Canada VEMU on November 26, 2024. Photo: Monika Siim



Kristi Barrow

The Baltic Heritage Newsletter is distributed quarterly, on-line.

The next deadline for submissions is **February 15th, 2025.**

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“Free Winds” exhibition highlights the incredible transatlantic journeys of Estonia’s and Latvia’s post-World War II refugee ships

“Free Winds/Vabaduse tuuled/Fria vindar” is available online at <https://freewinds.vabamu.ee/> in English, Estonian, and Swedish. In summer 2025, the exhibition will be displayed at Vabamu in Tallinn.

“Free Winds,” a new exhibition at Vabamu Museum of Occupations and Freedom, highlights how in the late 1940s, thousands of Estonians and Latvians secretly fled from Sweden in old, battered boats and sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to freedom.

The refugees had just escaped to Sweden during the Great Flight (Suur Põgenemine) when about tens of thousands of Balts, fearing for their lives, fled their homelands. In autumn 1944, as the Nazi German occupation collapsed and the Soviet



Army advanced across the Baltic states, refugees crowded into small boats and escaped across the Baltic Sea. It is estimated that about 27,000 Estonians, 4,000 Latvians, and 500 Lithuanians reached Sweden.

The Balts thought they were safe in Sweden but soon the Soviet Union began pressuring the Swedish government to send the refugees back. Having survived the 1940–41 Year of Terror when Soviet troops occupied the Baltic states and imprisoned, murdered, and deported tens of thousands of people, the refugees had no illusions about what would happen if they were forced back home.

In the immediate post-World War II period, it was difficult for refugees to emigrate from Sweden legally and even harder for them to enter the United States and Canada. Preferring to control their own destinies, small groups of refugees secretly pooled their savings, bought and repaired old boats, and quietly sailed as far away as possible from the Soviet Union.

“Free Winds” tells the stories of these brave men, women, and children.

According to maritime historian Jüri Vendla, about 47 Baltic ships left Sweden between 1945 and 1951. At least 17 vessels made it to the United States, 11 reached Canada, 7 sailed to Argentina, 2 landed in Brazil, and 3 reached South Africa. Estonians organized most of the unsanctioned



voyages, but Latvians also captained ships. Some of the boats didn’t make it: Several were forced to end their journeys early and others probably sank or may have been seized by patrolling Soviet ships. However, since the voyages were planned in secret, accurate figures are unknown.

The popular press dubbed the vessels “Viking boats” because they came from Sweden and because, thanks to their skillful crews, most made it across the Atlantic. “No one, except the Vikings, has come in such a small boat,” an astonished Canadian official exclaimed when the Astrid landed in Quebec in 1948 with 29 people on board.

One of the goals of “Free Winds” is to advance Jüri Vendla’s research presented in *Unustatud merereisid: Eestlaste hulljulged põgenemisreisid üle Atlandi 1940.aastate teisel poolel* (Forgotten Sea Journeys: The daring escapes of Estonians across the Atlantic in the late 1940s). “Free Winds” is based on *Unustatud Merereisid*, the only comprehensive account of the Estonian and Latvian Viking ships. When his book was published in 2010, Mr. Vendla noted that Soviet censorship had suppressed knowledge of this period of Baltic history and that further research was warranted.

Lisa Trei, a graduate student at Tallinn University, developed and curated “Free Winds” through a partnership with Vabamu, where she was a Fulbright Specialist in spring 2024 and is currently a consultant. Ms. Trei previously worked at Stanford University, which has a longstanding relationship with Vabamu through the Estonian and Baltic Studies Program at Stanford Libraries. The exhibition is hosted on Vabamu’s NoVa (Noorte



“Free Winds” homepage.

Vabamu) educational platform. NoVa is directed by Ede Schank Tamkivi, who served as a key partner on the exhibition. Listen to an interview with Ede talking about “Vabaduse tuuled” on Klassikaraadio.

The Cultural Endowment of Estonia and the Estonian American National Council generously provided seed funding for “Free Winds.” Franka and Anni Vakkum designed the exhibition, and Inga Solman developed the site. The Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs arranged for Maja Soomägi, a graduate student at the University of Glasgow, to serve as a 2024 summer intern at Vabamu, where she served as a consultant and Swedish translator.

Please contact Lisa Trei at lisa.trei@vabamu.ee with comments, corrections, and additional information. Please also share “Free Winds” with those who sailed on the Viking ships, their families and communities, and anyone interested in this under-researched period of Baltic history.

EstoCast’s Upward Flight Continues!

As the holiday season is approaching, the year is also quickly coming to a close. With the onset of colder weather, it’s the best time to sit indoors and listen to a podcast or watch your favourite tv series with a cup of tea. Season 3 of EstoCast is also coming to a close, which has seen good improvements in listenership and follower growth during the past year. If you’re just tuning in for the first time or don’t know about this endeavour, EstoCast is ideal for those who are simply curious about a multitude of topics and are in search of something fresh, exciting, inspiring, and educational to listen to. If you’ve ever wanted the latest of Estonian books, music, art, history, science, and other key news and cultural topics, but in a convenient on-the-go format,

EstoCast is perfect for you. We've had a whole variety of interesting and thought-provoking topics we've covered – from exploring cultural diversity and heritage to Tartu European Capital of Culture 2024 and how wordplay plays such an important role in music. In the second half of the season, starting in September, we've brought in a new topic of focus which was the Mass Flight of 1944. Since this year marks the 80th anniversary of that momentous occasion, we knew that dedicating a few episodes to the topic was a must. That provided



Hille Viires

for touching, eye-opening stories straight from the mouths of some of those who had to live through the atrocities and also some of their stories told through their direct descendants. We also had two wonderful Estonian musicians visit Toronto for performances thanks to Estonian Music Week, Aika Milova and Jarek Kasar, and so we invited them into our studios for some insight on their music-making and perspectives on the current musical landscape. It's been an exciting season to say the least.

So how has EstoCast taken flight this past year? Our listener base is expanding steadily thanks to collaboration on social media platforms with artists and other important figures who we've had in the studio for discussions. Yet again, we're reaching father corners of the world than we ever have before. This year, we've had around 2,000 downloads to date and gained new listeners in places such as Spain, Greece, and Ireland. Episode by episode, we're taking over the world! It's also interesting to note that what platform our listeners prefer to tune in on has changed – over 30% prefer

to use a web browser in comparison to apps such as Spotify or Apple Podcasts on the phone. That's a definite percentage increase over last year, which means that we might be reaching an increased number of age groups. We've also tried to create a better balance of topics that would appeal to younger and older audiences alike, for example, interviewing younger members of the community for a fresh perspective on what being Estonian means to them, alongside content like the Mass Flight of 1944.

What episodes have people liked listening to this year? Our top 3 episodes have been: "Navigating in a Multicultural Society with Elva Palo," "Lapsena põgenikuteele (Embarking on the Escape Journey as a Child) - vestlus Hille Viiresega," and "Argentine nostalgia, hematology, and photography with Peeter Põldre." It's clear that people like listening to content that is both engaging and educational based on the statistics, and that's exactly what we continue to strive to offer. As mentioned earlier, starting in the fall we brought some more focus to the topic of the Mass Flight of 1944. There were so many great interviews, among them Hille Viires' and Vilme Pedes touching and nerve-wracking stories of having to flee their homelands when they were young. Another interesting discussion on the music front was with owner of Psühhotek record store in Tartu, Estonia. Ahto provided insight into how vinyl records have gained so much popularity over the past few years with younger generations, what Estonian-Canadian artists he plays during his DJ sets, and even how famed Estonian composer Arvo Pärt once made surf rock. As you can see, we offer something for everyone!

We still have a couple of episodes left coming up in December, such as a riveting discussion with young Estonian musician Mart Avi about how the Brazilian city of Ubatuba influenced his latest record and more. Stay tuned for more great content in 2024!

Hosts Vincent Teetsov and Kati Kiillaspea, along with occasional guest hosts, will continue to take you through the exciting world of Estonian culture at large. You can find EstoCast here on major streaming platforms like Spotify and Apple Music, as well as at our website:

<https://estocast.buzzsprout.com/> Happy listening!

VEMU Writers' Club Turns One Year Old

VEMU Estonian Museum Canada's Writers' Club, which started up in late fall of 2023, has been busy throughout 2024. Those who gather have an ongoing interest in documenting their family histories and memoirs. Anne Rimmel, who has just launched her first book, *Two Worlds Within – A Memoir of Dual Identity*, first shared her writing experience in the workshops, where we learned how to kickstart our own writing projects and conquer obstacles, find our roots, and do research. Anne gave us tips on how to cultivate self-discipline and find a suitable form of expression for ourselves.

The spring season was productive: we wrote vignettes about our childhoods, travels, and life in multicultural Canada as well as practiced how to write descriptive portraits. Discussions were very lively since Estonian-Canadians from multiple generations, but also Estonians who have come from the homeland, take part in the club.

For our summer projects, we wrote about how the Second World War has affected us and touched our lives. Over the course of the fall, we shared some of these stories with *Eesti Elu / Estonian Life* readers. This is our contribution to the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the Great Escape.

New members joined the group in autumn. We've practiced writing dialogue and learned other useful techniques to help our texts reach our readers better.



From the left: Armas Maiste, Kristjan Randalu. Photo: Ülle Baum.

Armas Maiste 95

In spring 2024, the renowned Estonian-Canadian jazz musician and educator as well as founder of the jazz department at Montréal's McGill University, celebrated his 95th birthday. Estonian Music Week (a project of VEMU) dedicated one of Kristjan Randalu's concerts, which took place in October in Hamilton, Toronto, and Ottawa, to this occasion.

The celebrant himself was present at the concert at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Ottawa to receive birthday wishes at the post-performance reception from colleagues, family members, and the Estonian community. This musical encounter was a worthy way to recognize the contributions of the celebrant to the development of jazz in Canada, and in elevating self-awareness in the Estonian community. The Estonian Embassy in Ottawa and the Ottawa Estonian Society helped organize the event.



The delegation from the University of Tartu and graduates of the University of Tartu at Tartu College for the celebration of the 105th anniversary of the Estonian-language university. Photo: Peeter Põldre

Celebrating the 105th Anniversary of the Estonian-language University of Tartu at Tartu College

The first of December is the birthday of the Estonian national university. As has become tradition, the Rector of the University of Tartu visits Toronto every five years to celebrate the anniversaries of the university. Since the 105th anniversary of the opening of the Estonian-language university is being celebrated this year, a delegation from the university was also present, which was led, in the first time in history, by the same Rector that visited here five years ago – Professor Toomas Asser. Due to the amount of activities that are taking place in Tartu at the beginning of December, the guests arrived in Canada exactly a month before the official celebrations.

A highlight of the very eventful visit was the ceremony and reception at Tartu College on November 1st. The main organizer was Peeter

Einola, chairman of the Elmar Tampõld Estonian Studies Foundation and Canadian representative of the University of Tartu Foundation. A noteworthy amount of academic individuals, both fraternity and sorority members and non-members, were present, among them many graduates of the University of Tartu.

The Master of Ceremonies was Peeter Einola, who passed the microphone to the Chair of Estonian Studies at the University of Toronto, Andres Kasekamp, for opening remarks. This was followed up by the singing of *Gaudeamus Igitur*, which was strengthened by the voices of the Toronto Academic Mixed Choir *Ööbik*, conducted by Rosemarie Lindau.

Peeter Einola then introduced the ceremony's keynote speaker, Rector Professor Toomas Asser, a Doctor of Medicine and member of the Estonian Academy of Sciences. He became the Rector on August 1st, 2018 and was voted in again for this position this past spring.

The Rector touched upon many topics in his speech, including the role of University of Tartu as a national university in the historical and cultural contexts of Estonia as well as from the

perspective of international sciences. The University of Tartu has consistently risen in various rankings and become one of the leading scientific universities. The Rector spoke about collaboration with diaspora Estonians and expressed special recognition of the support of Estonian-Canadians to the University of Tartu, through various scholarship funds and establishing the program for diaspora Estonian guest professors. The latest outcome from the partnership between Canada and Estonia has been the establishment of an Estonian language and culture lector at the University of Toronto. Kadri Tüür from Estonia took on this position in September. The Rector personally thanked Peeter Einola and Andres Kasekamp, who have acted as successful links between Canada and Estonia. He praised the lively cultural life of Tartu, which has been especially vivacious this year as a European Union Capital of Culture, and invited diaspora Estonian youth to study in Tartu. He also touched upon a political topic that piques the interest of everyone, the Russian aggression towards Ukraine, emphasizing that Estonia, along with its university, exists on the border of two worlds. One side doesn't even adhere to the rules of war – it is the collision of humanism and barbarianism.

Following this, mixed choir Ööbik took the stage to perform two pieces: “Kanneldaja”, a traditional folk song arranged by Roman Toi, and “Ta lendab mesipuu poole” by Peep Sarapik, which always moves both singers and audiences.

In order for lively discussion to ensue at the reception afterwards, Peeter Einola introduced the Rector's delegation. He confirmed over the course of their visit, the guests had given a good overview of the high calibre of Estonian academics through their lectures and meetings at the University of Toronto. So who had come to visit? Tõnu Esko, Vice Rector of Development at the University of Tartu, who has previously worked at the Institute of Genomics and been a Professor of Human Genomics at the Estonian Genome Centre. Piret Ehin represented the field of social sciences. She is the Deputy Head of Research and Professor of Comparative Politics at the Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies. Virve-Anneli Vihman represented the humanitarian and arts fields, as the Deputy Head of Development at the Institute of Estonian and General Linguistics, and Professor of Psycholinguistics in the Estonian and Applied Linguistics department. Kristi Kerge, Head of International Cooperation at the University of Tartu, was here for the second time. Saima Tiirma Oras, Assistant to the Rector, was visiting for the first time. The Rector's wife, radiologist Dr. Karin Asser, was also part of the delegation.

The Chair of Estonian Studies at the University of Toronto was established 38 years ago. The Estonian language has been taught at the university for almost the same length of time, which has been the only university-level Estonian language course in Canada. This has been possible due to the financial support of Tartu College but more

importantly – thanks to the high calibre and dedication of teacher Marju Toomsalu, who held these lectures in addition to her main job at the Toronto Metropolitan University. Learning and teaching languages is one of Marju's true passions and loves, said Peeter Einola as he passed on a letter of thanks from the Estonian Studies Foundation, Chair of Estonian Studies at the University of Toronto, Tartu College, and VEMU Estonian Museum Canada.

This fall, Estonian-themed education reached a completely new level. The Department of Slavic and Eastern European Languages and Cultures at University of Toronto changed the structure of their program to enable post-graduate studies on an expanded basis. In order to act on this opportunity, more than one language course was necessary. Thanks to the funding of the Republic of Estonia's Ministry of Education and Research, Dr. Kadri Tüür took on her new position in the fall. In addition to the Estonian language, she also teaches our literature and, as of 2025, film. Tartu College is also contributing to the guest lector's stay in Canada by offering free accommodation.

Since Kadri Tüür was at a conference in Taiwan, we were shown a video greeting that she had recorded. University student Ethan was also included, who presented a seamless self-introduction regardless of the fact that he doesn't have a single drop of Estonian blood and he started learning the language only this September.

Following that, the Ambassador of Estonia to Ottawa, Margus Rava, brought greetings from the

Estonian Minister of Justice and Digital Affairs, Liisa Pakosta, who had just been on a visit to Canada as well. Ambassador Rava passed on a letter of thanks to Professor Mihkel Tombak for bringing Creative Destruction Lab to Estonia and also congratulated the Estonian Supplementary Schools in Toronto and the Toronto Estonian Society for their respective 75th and 80th anniversaries.

A written greeting was sent in by Andres Sutt from the University of Tartu Foundation.

Lastly, Peeter Einola and Andres Kasekamp presented gifts to the members of the delegation and the University of Tartu. A piece of artwork by an Inuit artist titled “All of Our Animals Together” was chosen as the latter gift. The present emphasized the importance and necessity of collaboration, which helps strive towards shared goals. The University was also given a copy of the book “To the New World: Estonian Architects in Toronto” which is also a symbol of successful collaboration – between the Estonian Museum of Architecture and VEMU.

Drawing the ceremony to a close, Peeter Einola thanked all of the participants and presenters, mixed choir Ööbik, and Tiit Telmet, member of the Rotalia fraternity, who designed the program for the ceremony. Susi Holmberg was also thanked, whose elaborate and plentiful table of hors d’oeuvres created a celebratory mood. A truly heartfelt thanks went to the guests from Tartu, who had taken on a long trip in order to take part in the national university’s important anniversary celebrations with us, and to refresh the ties between the local academic community and Tartu’s alma mater.

The ceremony ended with the Estonian National Anthem and a group photo, which included the Rector’s delegation and graduates of the University of Tartu, after which lively socializing ensued. It was a great night during which the two spirits of Tartu met once again. Vivat, crescat, floreat alma mater!

Piret Noorhani

High recognition to Estonian-Canadian turntablist Erik Laar



Erik Laar

In October, Toronto’s own Erik Laar received a Raadio 2 Special Award at the Estonian Folk Music Awards. ‘Etnokulp’ is what the awards are called in Estonian. The artists receive a real wooden ‘kulp’ – a ladle, which is as Estonian as an award can get.

From a pandemic-time live-stream at Estonian Museum Canada VEMU archives, through the stages of Estonian Music Week in Toronto to the stages at Jazzkaar and Tallinn Music Week this year, we are delighted to see Erik’s creations being recognized in Estonia.

Estonian Music Week team is so happy to have played a small role in Erik’s journey with his creations that mix Estonian runo songs and diaspora music with big bad beats and a whole lot of turntable magic. Congratulations!

A Century of Lithuanian Artists in Chicago

The exhibition “BeLoning: Lithuanian Artists in Chicago 1900 to Now” which opened this fall at the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture in Chicago (USA) features the art of twenty-nine Lithuanian artists. The exhibition, which has been in the making for four years, is part of the Art Design Chicago project.

At the exhibition, visitors can expect not only paintings, sculptures, ceramics, and textile works but also photographs, mosaics, stained glass windows, books, lithographs, various documents and exhibition catalogs. Slides, including ecclesiastical art and video interviews, are also present.

Victoria Kasuba Matranga, the curator of the exhibition, visited various art archives, museums in Chicago and other cities and the houses of Lithuanian collectors, looking for the works of Lithuanian artists.

Artists, many of whom came to the United States as already established artists, dominate the exhibition. Five artists from the first wave are also exhibited, i.e., those, who emigrated back in the time of the Russian tsar, as well as the work of the children of such immigrants. The four artists came to the US after the restoration of independence.

Six thematic narratives

The exhibition presents three waves of emigration. Each wave left Lithuania for different reasons: economic hardship, social issues or political tensions. At the same time, common traits were also sought: how emigrants longed for their homeland, tried to

The flyer features a painting of a city street with tall buildings and a church spire. The text on the flyer includes:

beLONING
Lithuanian Artists in Chicago
1900 to Now

Exhibition Preview & Reception
Saturday, Sept. 28, 2024, 2 - 5 PM
RSVP by 9/26:
https://belonging_chicago.eventbrite.com
Opens Sunday, Sept. 29, 2024, through
May 17, 2025

Museum Hours: Mon. to Sat. 10 - 4 PM, Sun. 12 - 4 PM
Admission: Adults \$12, Students/Seniors \$10, Children \$6, Members - Free
info@balzekasmuseum.org or 773.582.6500

Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture
6500 S. Pulaski Rd., Chicago IL 60629
<https://balzekasmuseum.org/belonging>

Artists listed on the right side of the flyer:

- PETRAS ALEKSA
- DALIA ANCEVICIUS
- YANDA BALUKAS
- RUDOLF BARANIK
- ANTHONY COOPER
- ANTANAS SKUPAS
- RIMAS CIURLIONIS
- JONAS DOVYDENAS
- ALEXANDRA V. EIVA
- KASTYTIS IZOKAITIS
- JONAS KELECIUS
- AUBRIHE KERR
- ALOIMANTAS KEZYS
- VINCENT LUKAS
- ELEONORA MARCIULIONIS
- JANINA MONKUTE MARKS
- SISTER MERCEDES
- VIKTORAS PETRAVICIUS
- MONIKA PLIOPYTE
- MIKAS ŠILEIKIS
- MAGDALENA STANKUNAS
- ADA SUTKUS
- ALEXAS URBA
- LAIMIS URBONAS
- ADOLFAS VALESKA
- KAZYS VARNELTIS
- EDWARD WALATTS
- KAZIMIERAS ZORNOVIS
- GIEDRE ZUBRAKIS

Logos at the bottom of the flyer include: BALZEKAS MUSEUM MEMBERS AND PRIVATE DONORS, DCASE, TERRA, LITHUANIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ART, Illinois Arts Council, May Stevens and Rudolf Baranik Foundation, Women's Guild of the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, LCI Lithuanian Culture Institute, and SISTER CITIES WEST COAST.

The flyer of the exhibition. Photo credit: Balzekas Museum.

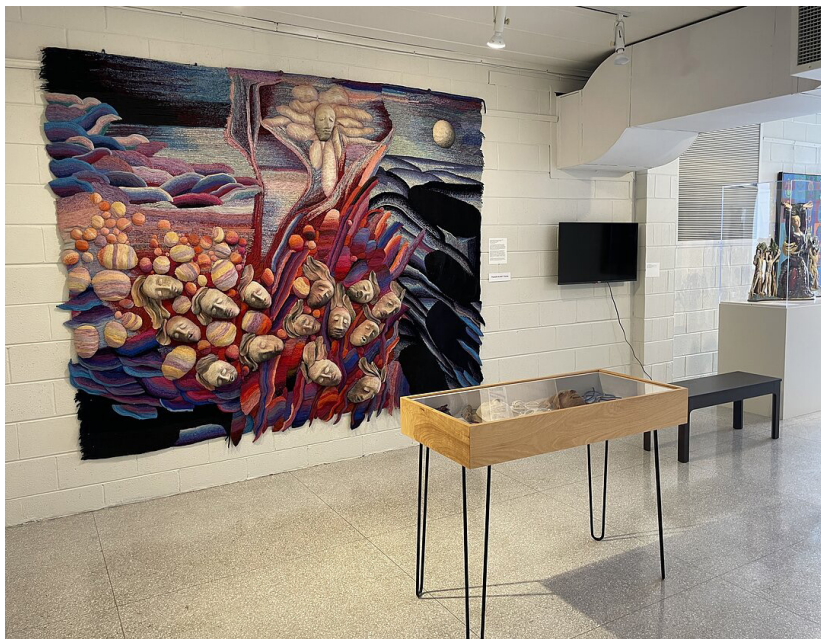
adapt in a foreign land, had to support their families, pursue professional goals and find a balance between different countries and cultures.

The available exhibition space in the Balzekas Museum also determined the size and scope of the exhibition. In total, the exhibition consists of six parts framing six thematic narratives.

The exhibition begins with the earliest available exhibit—Mikas Šileikis’s painting “Plowman” (1932). In part called “Chancing Chicago,” paintings and photography reveal the changes in Chicago and how the city has changed the artists who live and create in it.

Most of the works cover the 1940s and the 1970s, when the city was on the rise, with world-famous skyscrapers rising and artists’ careers taking off. The exhibition highlights several prints from 1936–1956, which show how Lithuanians exhibited their works in the English-speaking areas of Chicago.

Another space “Sacred Art” pays attention to church art. This part has the fewest exhibits.



The exhibition displays not only paintings, sculptures, ceramics, textile works but also photographs, mosaics, stained glass windows, books, lithographs, various documents and exhibition catalogs. Photo credit: Balzekas Museum.

Next, visitors are greeted by “Art as Activism.” In this space, they are introduced to DPs, starting with a map of Germany with marked DP camps. The most important work is by the artist who grew up in Anykščiai and moved to Chicago in 1938—“Vietnamese Child #1” by Rudolf Baranik.

The fourth part “Mythic Feminism” presents the works of members of the Lithuanian Women Artists’ Society. It is followed by the fourth part called “Designed in Chicago.”

“Even local Lithuanian Chicagoans are surprised

to learn that Lithuanians created or contributed to Chicago’s famous logos and advertising, such as the sausage ads of a famous meat factory. They did not know that Jonas Kelečius created many signs and posters by hand, even before the advent of printing presses,” Victoria Kasuba Matranga notes.

Petras Aleksa’s and Dalia Ancevičienė’s inventions for popular, everyday toys and conveniences, which have earned US patents, also surprise everyone. This part especially attracts historians and visitors from Lithuania, who ask for more information about industrial design and graphic design professions and Lithuanian achievements.

The exhibition ends with the section “Belonging,” which exhibits works by artists from all three waves of emigration. “We have selected works that reflect contemporary reflections on the human condition from the point of view of an expatriate,” the curator says. “At the same time, I had to tell about the Chicago art world and how Lithuanians fit into it and found their place.”

The exhibition will be open until May 17, 2025. The exhibition catalog will be published in 2025 and is currently being prepared together with the Lithuanian National Museum of Art.

By Ugnė Jonaitytė / LRT.lt

Stanford University Welcomes Čekanauskas’s Book Collection

Honorary general consul of the Republic of Lithuania, Vytautas Čekanauskas’s book collection has safely arrived at Stanford University, and the long and detailed cataloging process can now begin. The books will be cataloged using the Library of Congress system, contributing to Stanford’s impressive Baltic collection, which already holds over 60,000

volumes and continues to grow. The collection is accessible through the university's database at <http://searchworks.stanford.edu>.

The Baltic Studies Program at Stanford University Libraries, established in 2013 through an endowment from Olga Ritso Kistler and her husband, Walter, focuses on collecting Baltic books, periodicals, and archives. It supports research, teaching, and raises awareness of Baltic history and culture through events, seminars, fellowships, and internships, ensuring that this rich heritage is preserved and shared.

Vytautas Čekanauskas's daughter, Daiva Cekanauskas Navarrette, visited Stanford's Baltic collection.
Photo credit: Daiva Cekanauskas Navarrette



A Book Event at the National Library of Lithuania



The event was attended by the author, who currently is an associate member of Chatham House (the Royal Institute of International Affairs) in UK. Photo credits: Vygaudas Juozaitis

On November 6, the book *Lithuania Transforms the West* (Ibidem Press, 2024) by Dr. Darius Furmonavičius, historian and political scholar, was presented and discussed at the National Library of Lithuania.

The book analyzes Lithuania's liberation from Soviet occupation, accession and integration into NATO (1988–2022), and provides an overview of Lithuania's influence on international relations and strengthening security in Europe over the past three decades.

It invites to embark on an impressive journey of Lithuania's security—from the courageous liberation from the oppression of the Soviet Union to Lithuania's establishment in the ranks of NATO. The

author of the book examines in detail how this path formed the foundations in Lithuania, as well as the entire transatlantic security system. Based on rare sources and interviews, the author reveals the decisive events, especially the 1990–1991 drama, and provides new insights into Lithuania's role on the European security map.

The book is relevant today because it reveals the strategic importance of Lithuania, its efforts to strengthen international security and overcome geopolitical challenges. This is an inspiring story for anyone who wants to understand how small states can contribute to shaping the global security system.

Two Events Dedicated to Lithuanian Americans

On October 10th and 14th, two exceptional cultural events were held in the National Library of Lithuania: the evening dedicated to the Lithuanian-American poet Liūna Sutema (real name Zinaida Nagytė-Katiliškienė, 1927-2013), and a documentary film about the Lithuanian Foundation, Inc. (dir. Arvydas Reneckis).

During the first event, documentary material collected by Arvydas Reneckis, the film director, was shown. The film “Liūnė Sutema: When Dates Do Not Matter” tells about the life of a woman, daughter, sister, lover, friend, mother, nurse, and poet in the United States.

The film about the Lithuanian Foundation, Inc. presents the history of the establishment of the fund, and tells what conditions prompted the representatives of the second wave of Lithuanian emigrants in America to establish a million-dollar fund for Lithuanian causes in the early 1960s. The film provides answers to such questions as, why was the establishment of the Lithuanian Foundation so important to the war-torn and tossed-up Lithuanian refugees; what led to the fact that over 60 years, the foundation has become a focal point nurturing Lithuanian culture, history and Lithuanian education, and its activities have been successfully continued from generation to generation.



A still photograph of the Lithuanian-American poet Liūnė Sutema.

Photo credits: Vygaudas Juozaitis



Chicago-based film director Arvydas Reneckis took part in the event.

Photo credits: Vygaudas Juozaitis

New documentary about Estonian refugees in wartime and postwar Germany

In commemoration of the Great Escape to the West 80 years ago, a new documentary film about Estonian refugees in wartime and postwar Germany premiered in September. The film sheds light on the practicalities of the perilous journey against the backdrop of big politics. Special attention is given to authentic archival footage depicting everyday life in Displaced Persons' camps. Firsthand accounts are accompanied by expert insights and the author Maarja Merivoo-Parro takes viewers on a journey to discover what is left to see in the key locations of the exodus. The film was a joint project of Estonian Television, Estonian Diaspora Academy and LoveTheDoor and it was made possible via grants from the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research.

Fighting Against Enemies of Ukraine Through Diaspora Estonian Music



As a part of the 10th Psühhodisko conference which took place at the end of September in Tartu, Estonia record store and promoter of vinyl record culture Psühhotek, sold diaspora Estonian records at the international record market, the proceeds of which supported Ukraine. In total, we sold 645 euros worth of records. Working together with GRAM, a music bar in Kiev, all of the proceeds went to the purchase of a camera drone, DJI Mavic 3 Pro, which is now in use on the front line.

A big thank you to everyone who bought records and especially Estonian Museum Canada VEMU, who donated most of the vinyl records that were for sale.

Ahto Külvet

The Stories of Diaspora Estonians on Vikerraadio

A new radio series, “Abroad and Home,” started in the beginning of October on Vikerraadio. According to author of the series, Ave-Marleen Rei, it was born out of the idea of overturning

clichés pertaining to diaspora Estonians in Estonia. In each episode of the seven-part series, the listener is introduced to multiple generations of an Estonian family who have managed to keep their Estonian heritage alive in far-away Canada. “The idea for the series came largely from my personal interest in Canada and the Estonian communities that exist there. I don’t have any relatives that have made a home in Canada and so the communities there seemed all the more mystical to me,” the author of the series explains.

Estonian Museum Canada VEMU helped find the families that participated in the series. “Each episode features three generations of one family. The first generation are those that escaped from Estonia. The second generation are the children of those who fled by boat and then their children. All of these families have preserved their Estonian identity throughout three generations. Interviews featured in the episodes are all in Estonian and all of the children spoke Estonian as well; the youngest that I spoke with was 16 years old,” says Rei.

Rei visited Toronto in August 2024, but interviews were also conducted in Estonia. The series received support under the Global Estonian project and from the Department of Global Estonian and Cultural Diplomacy of the Republic of Estonia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

You can listen to episodes via Estonian Public Broadcasting’s web portal jupiter.err.ee.



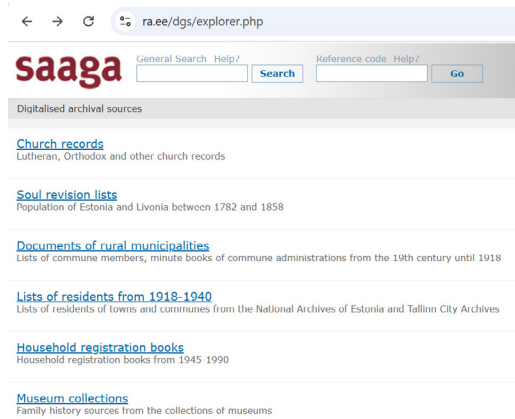
The Kütti family

The family history sources of the 20th century arriving in the online environment of the National Archives of Estonia

The National Archives of Estonia is happy to announce that the family history sources of the 20th century – civil status records and family letters – will finally arrive in the online environment of the National Archives this autumn.

In October and November, birth, marriage, divorce and death certificates drawn up in Estonia in the period 1926–2006 were added. Acts are arranged by county and can be found in the Archival Information System AIS among the archival records of the relevant county government.

By the end of this year, we will make family records kept in Estonia 1926–1949 available online to our users with a new database that allows searches by personal name, date of birth, and municipality that kept family records. It is a paper-based population register of the time, where you can find the data of persons who registered family events in that period.



The registers of family events started in the Republic of Estonia in 1926 and kept until 1944 are freely accessible. Access restrictions have been set for later civil status records to protect personal data. Thus, the 75-year limit from the creation of the record also applies to, for example, death certificates, which contain, in addition to the data of the deceased, the personal data of the family member who registered the death. To view a restricted document, an access request must be submitted in the archive's self-service environment.

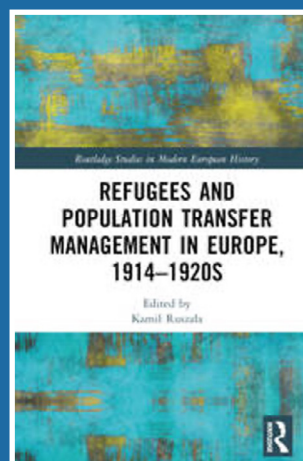
It is possible to monitor the addition of new digital collections on the Saaga webpage in the section of „New Archives“ or to search for digitized records in AIS by the time of addition.

Birgit Kibal

Refugees and Population Transfer Management in Europe, 1914–1920s

Edited By Kamil Ruzala

354 Pages



This book provides a comprehensive study of refugee movements and population transfers across Europe during the First World War and the early postwar period.

Drawing parallels with contemporary migration issues, the book serves a social and educational purpose by highlighting Europe's history of

migration and emphasizing the relevance of past experiences to current challenges. It seeks to enhance understanding, raise social awareness, and contribute to the broader discourse on war refugeeism by applying historical insights to address contemporary migration crises.

The authors discuss how issues of refugee movements and population transfers were addressed in different contexts and reflect on refugees as both war-induced migrants and political tools for authorities. The book covers a range of topics including humanitarian systems during the war and the early postwar period, refugee locations, policy influence, national issues, self-organization, and aid for refugees, as well as immigration control in time after bordering the postimperial Europe. It also addresses the composition of populations in postwar reconstruction processes and its population dynamics.

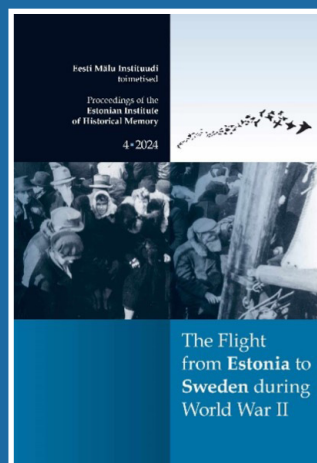
This volume will be of value to those interested in modern European history, social and political history.

Special interest on Chapter 10. Non-governmental assistance to Latvian refugees after 1918: the involvement of the Latvian diaspora, written by Kristine Bekere.

The Flight from Estonia to Sweden during World War II

Compiled by Hiljar Tammela and Meelis Maripuu

320 Pages



An estimated 70,000–80,000 people fled to the West from Estonia in the Second World War years, making it one of the largest waves of migration and one of the most important events of Estonian recent history, directly affecting the destinies of very many people.

Regarding this exodus, few traditional archival sources (lists of people departing and arriving) are available, as people mostly fled in secret on the basis of oral agreements and under conditions of immediate danger. The flight has been researched for decades relying primarily on memoirs, which provide an excellent overview of the escape journey of an individual or a family, but it is difficult to put an overall picture together out of such memories.

The seven articles in this collected work present new information, which largely originates from archival sources located outside of Estonia. Some of it has become freely accessible only in recent years. The authors shed light on various aspects of the great exodus, examining among other things the reception of and policies towards Estonian refugees in neighbouring Finland and Sweden. This is the first collection of research articles dedicated to the theme of flight from Estonia to Sweden during the Second World War.



VEMU Estonian Museum Canada's exhibition "Our Tartu: 50 Years of Tartu College" opening.
Photo Credit: Polina Piatnytsia

University of Tartu Institute of Foreign Languages and Cultures Commemorated the 80th Anniversary of the Great Escape with a VEMU Estonian Museum Canada's exhibition "Our Tartu: 50 Years of Tartu College"

On November 7, 2024, the VEMU Estonian Museum Canada's exhibition "Our Tartu: 50 Years of Tartu College" was opened at the University of Tartu Institute of Foreign Languages and Cultures, in the Humanities Building at 3 Lossi Street.

Associate Professor of Translation Studies and Director of the Institute, Terje Loogus, gave her welcoming address to the academic staff, students, and guests. The Ambassador to the Republic of Estonia, Laird Hindle, talked about the special connections between Canada and Estonia through history and culture. University of Tartu Vice Rector for Development, Professor Tõnu Esko, who had just returned from the University of Tartu Rector Delegation's visit to

Tartu College and the University of Toronto, provided insights into the significance of culture and the academic ties between the two Tartus and two Universities.

VEMU's Chief Archivist Piret Noorhani, whose work in and between the two Tartus is testimony to the close ties between the Tartu in Canada and the Tartu in Estonia, gave an overview of the birth of Tartu College as a concept and an institution as well as its development under the guidance of its architect and president, Elmar Tampõld, and his successors. Noorhani's presentation served as an excellent introduction to the exhibition and the screening of the documentary by the director Kaisa Pitsi, accompanying the exhibition and bearing the same title. The watching of the film

was followed by the reception of the Ambassador of Canada, Laird Hindle.

Participants at the opening of the exhibition were impressed by the magnitude of the work that Estonians in Canada have done to preserve their language and culture. Among the audience members there were Estonian students of diverse backgrounds as well as international students from various countries. The exhibition and the film provided much new information to all. Learning about the struggles and achievements of Estonians in Canada touched the older and the younger generation alike. Some exchange students from the Ukraine expressed the idea that since Russia's full-scale invasion, they have been thinking very much about their Ukrainian language, culture, and identity. They added that the example of Estonians gave them encouragement.

The exhibition and the film also served as a powerful way to introduce the history of Estonians in Canada and their journey from exiles to a thriving diaspora community to the students

who explored the works of Estonian writers in Canada, such as Urve Karuks, Arved Viirlaid and K.Linda Kivi, in the Autumn Term of 2024 in the Canadian literature seminar. Students emphasised that not only did they learn about the part of history that they were not very aware of, but they also realised the importance of the educational and cultural centre of Tartu College for the preservation of Estonian heritage and introducing it also to other people in Canada and abroad as well as the spirit of community and remaining connected across generations and continents.

Displaying the VEMU Estonian Museum Canada's exhibition "Our Tartu: 50 Years of Tartu College" at the University of Tartu Institute of Foreign Languages and Cultures, until January 7, 2025, is the third one in the collaboration between our institutions and like the two previous exhibitions, it has enriched, moved, and inspired us and strengthened our bonds between the two Tartus.

Eva Rein

Bartusevičius's Archive Arrived to the National Library of Lithuania

The archive of a well-known member of the Lithuanian Community in Germany, the long-time head of the German Institute of Lithuanian Culture, historian Dr. Vincas Bartusevičius's (1939–2020) personal library and archive reached the National Library of Lithuania.

Ona Bartusevičienė, the wife of Bartusevičius, donated the valuable gift to the library, this way honoring the decades-long cooperation between Bartusevičius and the Library. The cooperation goes back to the 1990s, when the opportunities opened up to send Lithuanian press published in the West



The archive reached the library thanks to the efforts of Ona Bartusevičienė and the ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to Germany, Ramūnas Misiulis. Photo credit: National Library of Lithuania / Vygaudas Juozaitis

to Lithuania. One of the first shipments of books reached our library thanks to the care and initiative of Bartusevičius, significantly contributing to the collection of Lithuanian diaspora press that was scarce at that time. Later, Bartusevičius made sure that the depositories of the library were filled with the latest publications of works by Lithuanian authors and works about Lithuania published in Germany, carefully selected copies of works published by the Lithuanian diaspora, which had been extremely important in forming a comprehensive national archival collection of published documents. Bartusevičius's competence and expertise were extremely useful for the National Library in preparing bibliographic entries of the press of the Lithuanian diaspora.