

Latvian Association of the State of Washington
Annual Membership Meeting February 23rd, 2025 at 12:00PM
at the Seattle Latvian Community Center

Board members present: Inese Graudiņa, Aleksa Overby, Andra Atvara, Ann-Marie Pētersons, Ingrīda Doherty, Monika Smiltiņa, Lauris Apsītis (Zoom)

Also present: Katrīna Kramēna (Zoom), webmaster

41 voting members present

Meeting called to order at 12:20pm

Opening:

Inese Graudiņa opens the annual meeting with a moment of silence and reading of names of members who passed away in the past year.

Inese Graudiņa was confirmed as moderator and Andra Atvara was confirmed as secretary.

Three vote counters were selected - two from the Board, and one community member.

The meeting agenda had a typo listing Portland as the American Latvian Association (ALA) Congress location in 2025 instead of Minneapolis, and the order of discussion was changed. The meeting agenda was approved with these changes.

The previous annual meeting minutes were sent out to members prior to this meeting. Inese Graudiņa confirms that the prior minutes will not be read out during this meeting and hard copies of the notes are on the tables for community members to reference.

Minutes of the February 11th, 2024 annual meeting are approved unanimously without edits.

Latvian Association General Activity Report for 2024:

Inese Graudiņa presented the general activity report for 2024. Eight Board meetings were held in 2024 on Zoom, omitting February, June, July, and August.

The Latvian Association activities from 2024 were summarized in order of occurrence. In February, the Lithuanians and Estonians celebrated their Independence Days on February 10th and 12th, and the prior annual membership meeting for the Latvian Association was February 11th.

In May, the Seattle Latvian School had two graduates on the 4th, and Trejdeksnītis had their Spring performance on the 18th. In June, a combined Baltic choir concert was on the 2nd, and in July Trejdeksnītis and the Seattle choir traveled and participated in the Toronto Song and Dance Festival. Selga Peterson's retirement was celebrated at the Pensioner's meeting on August 13th. In September, the Seattle Latvian Golf tournament was on the 7th and Seattle hosted the 2x2 60th anniversary tour on the 22nd. In October, Inese Graudiņa, Aleksa Overby, and Ann-Marie Pētersons attended the ALA Congress in Portland October 10th-13th, and that was followed by the ALA Teacher's Congress on October 18th-20th. In November, the Christmas bazaar was on the 9th-10th and the Latvian Independence celebration was on the 16th.

The Rummage Sale was the weekend of April 20-21st and was organized by Ann-Marie Pētersons. Ann-Marie thanks all the volunteers who helped out last year and notes the income difference of 2023 earning \$17,200 versus 2024 income of \$9,500. For 2025, furniture will no longer be accepted, and the event will be the weekend of April 24th-25th.

Ingrīda Doherty presents a summary of the membership reports. We ended 2024 with 242 members; 9 members passed away, 7 new members joined, and 20 members were redesignated as inactive. 213 members have paid their dues, 68 full-time working members and 145 student/retired members. 32 members still need to pay their dues.

Review of 2024 Financial Activities:

Inese Graudiņa presents the Latvian Association financial activity and budget execution report on behalf of treasurer Lauris Apsītis. The operating income was net negative this year as the Rummage Sale had a lower income and the Latvian Association portion for the maintenance of the Latvian Center increased from the prior year. Additionally, the Latvian Independence Day event kept a low entry cost to continue to be accessible for everyone and therefore the ticket cost did not fully cover the cost of the event.

The overall financial position increased greatly in 2024 as the Latvian Association portion of the remaining Sound Transit funds was transferred to the Latvian Association Chase bank account. Investments made around \$24,000 as of December 31st. The liabilities are the funds in the club accounts. The Art club remains inactive and that money will potentially be used to host the ALA Museum traveling exhibit. The choir's account is low at the moment due to the recent purchase of risers; the Sports club has the majority of the money, and it is not known what that money will be used for; the Pensioner's fund fluctuates each month based on the cost of the lunches.

After the Latvian Association budget report was presented, several community members had questions on the details of the report. Due to Lauris Apsītis attending via Zoom, the questions will be forwarded to Lauris for more detailed answers.

With regard to an audit of the treasurer's accounts, it was agreed by the membership that the Board is charged with finding an audit committee which will report its findings at the 2025 annual meeting.

2025 Budget Proposal:

Inese Graudiņa directs the membership to review and approve the 2025 budget proposal. Overall, it is similar to the actual budget execution for 2024 with a predicted net negative due to the lower income from the Rummage Sale. Currently, income is predicted to be about \$34,000, while operating expenses are at \$38,500, leaving a net operating cost of -\$4,500. Choir has been recently added to the list of our yearly standard grants and scholarships and the capital projects remain the same quantities that were previously approved. The 2025 budget was accepted, with 39 voting for and none against.

Latvian Association of the State of Washington Group Representatives Reports:

Ann-Marie Pētersons represented the Seattle Latvian Choir on behalf of Egija Claire. The choir has the widest range of ages of participants, from 16 to 90+ years old. The choir participated in numerous events in 2024: the Baltic combined concert in June, the Toronto song festival in July, ALA Congress in Portland

in October, the Latvian Independence Day celebration in November, and the Candlelight service in December. In January of 2025, the choir hosted a Raimonds Pauls birthday celebration and ran a successful fundraiser to purchase new risers. In 2025, there will be Egija's UW Masters in Choral Directing exam concert in March, and a summer concert in June is planned.

Inta Wiest represents the Pensioner's club and shares some highlights from 2024. The year ended with 64 members ranging from 69-99 years old. Five members passed away in 2024 and 6 new members joined. The pensioner meetings are monthly and include a lunch with different presentations, birthday celebrations, and other holiday themes.

Erika Currier represents the dance group Trejdeksnītis and shares a summary of Trejdeksnītis' activities in 2024. Twenty-five members performed at the annual Spring concert and 16 dancers went to the Song Festival in Toronto. In addition to the Spring concert, Trejdeksnītis hosted an Easter brunch and performed at Jāņi, the 2x2=60 event, ALA Congress, the Christmas Bazaar, and the Latvian Independence Day event. Fundraising was remarkably successful in 2024, as the goal of \$13,800 was surpassed by \$3,413.

Sarmīte Davidsons represented the culinary club and shared that their biggest contribution this year was making Jāņi cheese.

Inese Graudiņa represented the Library on behalf of Vaira Christopher, and shares that the Latvian American Shipping Line did not accept any books from the West Coast in 2024. We received a large collection of books from Vija Rauda's estate and LASL has planned to accept books for shipping in May 2025.

Archivist Jānis Rogainis shares that he worked with Charlene Jaundālderis and Inta Wiest to archive the Latvian Association newsletter "Informācija" from 2010-2020. These files were converted to the proper file type for upload through the World Federation of Free Latvians (PBLA) website, and the next steps are to upload those files.

Election of Board Members:

The three-year term for Board members expires this year for Inese Graudiņa, Aleksa Overby, and Lauris Apsītis. All three have agreed to renew their terms and the renewal was voted on. Katrīna Kramēna and Ingrīda Doherty retire from the Board, leaving 3 positions available to be filled. Agnese George volunteers to join the Board and the attendees voted on these four candidates. All were voted in with Lauris Apsītis receiving 30 votes, Inese Graudiņa receiving 35 votes, Aleksa Overby receiving 35 votes, and Agnese George receiving 36 votes.

Seattle Latvian Center Management Committee Report:

The Latvian Center Management Committee chair Eriks Rauda did not attend the meeting, and it was shared that he is leaving his role at the end of the month. The Latvian Association, the Congregation, and the Latvian Center Management Committee are searching for a replacement.

American Latvian Association updates:

The 74th American Latvian Association Congress will be in Minneapolis October 9-12th, 2025. We are eligible to send 3 delegates, based on our member numbers, and it was approved by the membership that the Board will confirm delegates representing us at the Congress.

The ALA Latvian Museum traveling exhibit will be coming to Seattle in 2026. We are aiming for two weeks in March and plan to use some of the funds from the inactive Art Club (currently \$3953) to host the exhibit. This may require groups that use the Hall to reschedule their events, and once the dates are confirmed, more details will follow.

Questions and suggestions:

A community member asks if the Latvian School is under the Latvian Association or the Congregation, and if there is a middle school. The Latvian School is under the Congregation and currently ends at 8th grade, with the summer language school, Kursā, being the next step for teenagers.

Inta Wiest asks where we are with the kitchen remodel. Aleksa Overby shares that there is a drawn-up plan and a list of certifications and contractors required, but the project stalled due to lack of oversight from the Center Management Committee chair.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00pm