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"Looking west" | Mīķeltornis, or Pizā in the Livonian language | © Uldis Balodis 2000

AABS grants support Baltic Studies

AABS offers six grants through the organization's funds and generous bequests. These grants are awarded on stringent selection criteria and support some of the newest scholars contributing to the field of Baltic Studies. We congratulate the 2016 and 2017 grant awardees!

Baumanis Grant for Creative Projects in Baltic Studies

Uldis Balodis (2016 recipient) received the first AABS Baumanis grant to document the current state of villages historically inhabited by Lutsi Estonian speakers, and conduct archival research in Tartu and Helsinki on the work of Oskar Kallas, the original researcher of the Lutsi Estonians (Lutsis).

Aina Birnitis Dissertation-Completion Fellowship in the Humanities for Latvia

Baiba Kačanova (2016 recipient) conducts interdisciplinary research (pedagogy and linguistics) on "lingvodidactics," a field that addresses questions such as how to select vocabulary for teaching, how to organize vocabulary, and methods of teaching vocabulary.

2017 recipient: Anna Auziņa AABS Dissertation Grants for Graduate Students

Indra Ekmanis (2016 recipient) focuses on banal minority integration and participation in Latvian daily and cultural life, particularly through the National and Youth Song and

Dance Celebrations.

Feliks Gornischeff (2016 recipient) concentrates on the role of Baltic German diplomats in the service and diplomacy of the Russian empire during the reign of Alexander I.

2017 recipients: Rasa Navickaite and Liina-Ly Roos

AABS Research Grants for Emerging Scholars

Pauli Heikkilä (2016 recipient) studies political emigrants from East Central Europe in the US during the Cold War, especially their international cooperation through Assembly of Captive European Nations (1954-1972).

Asta Zelenkauskaitė (2016 recipient) analyzes commenting practices in Baltic online news portals, which are both a new public sphere and also a new terrain for ideological battles to shape opinions regarding specific issues (especially controversial ones).

2017 recipient: Michael Loader

Jānis Grundmanis Postgraduate Fellowship for Study in the U.S.

2017 recipient: Zane Onckule

Mudīte I. Zīlīte Saltups Postgraduate & Post- Doctoral Fellowships

Alisa Vitola (2016 recipient) explores the lasting effects of historical institutions on contemporary economic development and societal values.

2017 recipient: Mareks Niklass

Treasurer's report: review & future planning

By Merike Henneman
Treasurer, MBA, CPA

Review of 2016

The value of our investment portfolio grew from \$3,175,641 to \$3,443,737 between 30 June 2015 and 30 June 2016. This 8.4% increase was primarily due to Baumanis bequest of \$240,056 that was received in April 2016.

Our assets portfolio produced a net return (income and capital gains) of \$98,051 or 3%, which is about 77% of budgeted investment return of \$127,026.

Membership dues and donations totaled \$26,149, exceeding the budget target of \$20,000 by 31%. *JBS* revenue of \$28,333 exceeded budget by \$2,333, or 9%.

Conference income was \$50,335 and expenses totaled to \$59,851. Total expenses and allocations of \$199,628 exceeded the budgeted total of \$192,720 by \$6,908. This is primarily due to higher cost of transitioning the executive office administration.

2017 budget

Total non-investment revenue and support for the

ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF BALTIC STUDIES		FYE June 2015		FYE June 2016		FYE June 2017	
		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
Revenue and support							
--- Recurring items ---							
Membership dues		20,000	13,055	15,000	16,771	15,000	
Donations - BSF			4,081		4,175		
Donations - Expendable		10,000	37,528	5,000	5,203	5,000	
<i>JBS</i> : Editorial revenue received from Routledge		13,900	16,000	16,000	16,080	16,000	
<i>JBS</i> : Royalties received from Routledge (12.5% of revenue)		10,000	10,242	10,000	12,253	10,000	
Conference income: registration fees/donations				5,000	50,335		
Investment returns		105,351	74,725	127,026	98,051	137,749	
Total recurring revenue and support		159,251	155,631	178,026	202,867	183,749	
--- Nonrecurring items ---							
Baumanis Bequest			572,143	15,000	240,046		
Total revenue and support		159,251	727,774	193,026	442,913	183,749	
Expenses							
Program							
Baltic Studies Newsletter		4,200	4,915	5,500	4,056	5,000	
Conference				22,000	59,851	2,000	
<i>Journal of Baltic Studies</i>		19,500	19,115	22,800	19,693	22,800	
Grants, prizes, and donations		78,000	75,500	77,000	55,555	77,200	
Other program expenses		3,990	2,430	3,990	230	3,990	
Total program expenses		105,690	101,961	131,290	139,385	110,990	
Management							
Total management expenses		50,230	47,242	58,430	56,207	68,350	
Fundraising							
Total fundraising expenses		3,000	2,753	3,000	4,036	4,000	
Total expenses		158,920	151,956	192,720	199,628	183,340	
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS		331	575,818	306	243,285	409	

fiscal year ending 30 June 2017 is budgeted to total \$46,000.

Investment returns (dividends and capital gains) are budgeted to be \$137,749. This figure represents an assumed 4.0% annual return on our beginning-of-year investment assets. The Association's investment portfolio balance was \$3,645,885.29 as of 31 May 2017. Of this total, \$1,941,741.64 (53.3%) was invested in stocks and

\$1,704,143.65 (46.7%) was invested in bonds. The investments are regularly rebalanced to maintain a target allocation of 50% bonds and 50% stocks.

Total expenses and allocations are budgeted at \$183,340 representing a 5% decrease compared to last year's budget of \$192,720. This decrease is attributable primarily to conference related costs. Fiscal year 2017 is expected to be a break-even year, with a marginal

budgeted net increase in assets of \$409.

Other matters

Peterson Sullivan, LLC conducted an audit of the association's financial statements for the fiscal year ended 30 June 2016. In the opinion of our independent auditors, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Association and the changes in the net assets and its cash flows.

New administrative executive director



Photo Author | Irena Blekys and Amanda Swain at University of Washington.

In July 2016, AABS welcomed new Administrative Executive Director Amanda Jeanne Swain. We greatly appreciate Irena Blekys' six years of service in this position and wish her the best as she moves on to other projects.

Amanda received her PhD in History from the University of Washington. Her research interests fo-

cus on the intersections of youth and national identities in Soviet and contemporary Lithuania. Recent publications include articles in *Cahiers du Monde Russe* and *Ab Imperio*. She has 15 years experience in non-profit and academic administration.

You can still reach the administrative executive office at aabs@uw.edu.

18th AABS Conference in Melbourne, Australia



By Dr. Grazina Pranauskas

VCA & MCM,
University of
Melbourne

In July 2016, Trevor G. Fennell, Emeritus Professor, Flinders University, Australia, wrote: "Since 1968, AABS has played a crucial role in furthering research into Baltic issues. *JBS* provides a specialised forum for publications, while regular conferences allow scholars to keep abreast of work in progress and strengthen ties with colleagues. Directly or indirectly, it has been the inspiration for parallel initiatives (Canada, Europe, Australia). My own contacts with AABS have been immensely beneficial — I sometimes wonder what I could have achieved without the support of this amazing organisation."

The AABS chapter in Australasia continues to thrive through our biannual conferences. On Saturday, Oct. 15, 2016, the 18th Conference of the AABS Australasian Chapter took place at the University of Melbourne. The proceedings of the Conference are reflected in my interview with Dr. Delaney Skerrett.

Grazina Pranauskas: *How many AABS conferences have you organized and facilitated?*

Delaney Skerrett: The 2016 conference was the third AABS conference I have organized.

G.P. *What distinguishes the conferences from each other?*

D.S. Each conference has its own theme that defines it in a way, although any academic contribution to the field of Baltic studies is always welcome at our conferences. The themes just set the scene for what is topical at the time. Four years ago, we spoke about multiculturalism; two years ago the new tensions in the region due to Russian aggression and the annexation of Crimea; this year we spoke about the need to continue building bridges, within and between countries. We see this as relevant because of the greater acknowledgement

in liberal political rhetoric of the need to bridge divides between peoples rather than build walls. Perhaps nowhere (except for the US!) is this more relevant than in the Baltic states given our Soviet legacies.

G.P. *How many presenters and members of the audience were you expecting this year?*

D.S. This year we had 16 presenters — a record number, and four audience members.

G.P. *Did the 2016 conference structure vary greatly from the previous ones? If yes, how so?*

D.S. For only the second time in the history of the Australasian conferences, we had parallel streams running to accommodate the number of presentations.

G.P. *Is there any provision for refereeing papers after the conference?*

D.S. While we don't publish proceedings from the conference, we are very fortunate to have our very own peer-reviewed academic journal published by Routledge, the *Journal of Baltic Studies*. The journal is run by our parent organisation (AABS in the US) and welcomes submissions related to Baltic studies from a wide array of disciplines. All members of AABS (including AABS Australasia) receive a copy of the journal as part of their membership. It's a wonderful resource. I'd like to encourage all presenters at the conference — and anyone else conducting research in Baltic studies — to make a submission to *JBS*.

When I was at the AABS U.S. conference in Philadelphia in 2016, details were presented at the members meeting regarding the global spread of AABS membership, as well as contributions to *JBS*. Australia is in the top countries for membership, but we are quite low in contributions to the *Journal*. Based on the presentations at this year's conference, I can see we are certainly underrepresented in *JBS* — there is a lot happening in the field Down Under!

G.P. *What is your personal interest in Baltic Conferences?*

D.S. I have Latvian and Estonian heritage on my mother's side, her parents being post-WW2 refugees to Australia. I was always fascinated by this side of



Delaney Skerrett, AABS Australasian Committee

my ancestry and had a very close relationship with my grandparents, though I always felt something was missing, particularly because we never spoke the languages at home. I travelled to the Baltic states for the first time in 2000. It was an amazing experience for me, but also a very sad one as it was to take my grandmother's ashes to be buried in Riga. But being there, I knew I would return to live, and within two years I was back.

I ended up living in Latvia for around one year and Estonia for more than seven. I felt like I needed close a circle in my heritage that was broken over 50 years before. Nowadays, I'm back in Australia, but I can now speak Estonian (and a little bit of Latvian!). I completed a master's degree in Baltic studies at the University of Tartu and also taught there (and continue to do so online).

I began research for a PhD on Estonian language policy before returning to Australia and received the degree from the University of Queensland in 2012. I'm pretty heavily invested in Baltic studies. It really is a passion for me, and something I'm really proud of. I've also been the Honorary Consul for Estonia in Queensland for three years. So I do feel like I've managed to close that broken circle. And that makes me happy.

G.P. *Thank you for your informative replies — looking forward to seeing you in 2018!*

#AABS2016 boded well for #AABS2018

By Janis Chakars

Former Vice President for Conferences
Gwynedd Mercy University

The AABS conference has been getting richer with every meeting and if 2016 at the University of Pennsylvania was any indication of the trend, our 50th anniversary gathering at Stanford University will be tremendous.

Philadelphia hosted 246 conference attendees representing over 110 universities in 17 countries. The location in one of the oldest cities in the United States at its first university, an early incubator of Baltic studies, was ideal (even if the weather was hot).

A speech by the well-read and reflective president of Estonia, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, "International Order Under Strain: Implications for the Baltic Sea Region," excited attendees and kept them talking throughout the conference, especially at packed panels on politics related to his topic. News media gave wide coverage of his speech as well.

Current politics and a tense security situation in the Baltic states animated the conference as did a collaboration

with the Foreign Policy Research Institute, a Philadelphia think-tank with a new Baltic-centered program. FPRI contributed not only a panel, and an information luncheon to the event, but donated the "swag bags" that attendees received at the registration table.

However, politics were not the only matters of discussion. The 17 division chairs assisting in conference organization put together stellar panels in disciplines ranging from art to literature to education to communication with the usual strong representation in history. Jewish studies continued its recent ascent at the conference and to best show how this area is part and parcel of Baltic studies those papers were mixed in with other panels in relevant disciplines. Thanks here are especially due to Ellen Cassidy.

Beyond academics, the arts were represented by a literary reading, concert by Pēdējais Vilciens (The Last Train), and a one-night Baltic film festival, beautifully curated by Jule Roze. The series of short movies presented were marvelous in both their diversity and their symmetrical relationship to

each other as a set.

Conference goers got to network and socialize at a reception, two luncheons, and a concert and dance at the Philadelphia Society of Free Letts. The spacious lobby of Houston Hall, America's oldest student union building, was the site of a book exhibit and two museum displays centered on Latvian and Lithuanian emigration, created by Latviešu Pasaulē (Latvians Abroad) and the National Library of Lithuania respectively. Tucked into the hall was even a Wiki café, where people could take their coffee and edit or post Baltic-related Wikipedia articles.

However, the greatest value of the conference came from the presentations of the latest research by participants, 190 in total. The number and quality of these research papers show the vibrancy of Baltic studies as a field. In a letter to attendees, University of Pennsylvania President Amy Gutmann called the event "truly impressive." Indeed, we had a pretty good time and are looking forward to getting together again at Stanford University next year. #AABS2018

**THE 2018 AABS CONFERENCE
AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY:
THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BALTIC INDEPENDENCE**

JUNE 1-3, 2018

<http://aabs2018.stanford.edu/>