



Latvian Association of the State of Washington (LASW)

2024 Annual Membership Meeting February 11th at 12pm at the Seattle Latvian Center

Board members present: Inese Graudiņa, Katrīna Kramēna, Aleksa Overby, Inta Wiest, Andra Atvara, Ingrīda Doherty, Lauris Apsītis, Ann-Marie Petersons

Board members absent: Monika Smiltiņa

Total of 48 Latvian Association members present.

Start: 12:12pm

Opening:

Inese Graudiņa welcomes all LASW members in attendance and begins the meeting by holding a moment of silence for the members of our community who passed away in the past year. Three vote counter volunteers were selected from the attendees, and it was unanimously accepted that Inese Graudiņa will moderate the meeting, and Andra Atvara will function as secretary for the meeting.

The meeting agenda was adopted without additions or comments. The previous annual meeting minutes were sent out and Inese confirmed that the minutes will not be read out during this meeting. The minutes were also accepted without corrections or comments.

Latvian Association Board Member Reports:

Inese Graudiņa presented the general activity report from 2023. There were nine Board meetings held in 2023, all on Zoom. It was decided by the Board to continue the Zoom meeting format, as this saves on travel time for many of the members who live further out from the Latvian Center.

Inese Graudiņa shared the list of all LASW events that were held or attended this year. Beginning from the 2023 Annual Meeting, LASW congratulated the Lithuanians and the Estonians during their February national holiday celebrations. In March, Monika Smiltiņa and Katrīna Kramēna held a Latvian citizenship seminar and there was a concert for the jazz singer, Arta Jēkabsons. Ann-Marie Petersons organized the Rummage Sale in April, and in May we had the Seattle Latvian Choir concert and a Eurovision watch party. At the beginning of June, Trejdeksnītis had their Spring folk dance concert and both Trejdeksnītis and the Seattle Latvian Choir travelled to Rīga for the Song and Dance Festival. In September, the SLGA hosted their annual golf competition. Inese Graudiņa attended the ALA Congress in Carmel, Indiana in October. In November, the Christmas Bazaar was held, with a follow-up debrief meeting, and the Latvian Independence Day was celebrated at the Latvian Center.

Ann-Marie Petersons summarized the Rummage Sale success from last year, with Inese Graudiņa sharing that the Rummage Sale is LASW's main income source, with the Christmas Bazaar being second. Due to the pandemic, this was the first time in three years that the sale was held, and Ann-Marie Petersons sincerely thanked all the volunteers for helping. The Seattle Latvian Choir and Trejdeksnītis sold coffee and food from the kitchen in addition to their individual tables. There were above average profits compared to the previous sales; \$17,250 profit and \$750 in donations.

Ingrīda Doherty shares the membership overview from this past year. There are a total of 263 members; 9 members passed away, 18 new members joined, and 7 reactivated their membership. Nine members were removed from the active roster due to being inactive, voluntarily resigning, or moving. Dues have been paid by 191 members, 58 being full-time workers and 133 being retired or other. 141 members have already paid for future or past dues, 127 of those paid for 2024 already, and 69 members have not paid. As of this meeting, Ingrīda will only be sending out receipts to members that specifically request receipts. We will no longer be asking for back dues, though membership will be changed to inactive if someone has not paid for the current and the immediate past year.

Lauris Apsītis presents the 2023 financial and budget reports. There was a \$6,000 operating profit and \$30,000 income from investment gains and donations. The total liabilities are \$48,000 and that is held in the club accounts.

Inese Graudiņa presents a proposal to dissolve the SLJA, Seattle Latvian Youth Association, as it has been inactive since 2001 and there is no director responsible for entity. The account has \$612.03, and we propose that that money goes into the Pakulis Scholarship Fund. A community member asked for clarification on what the Pakulis fund goes to and what striking the club from the list meant. The Pakulis fund is a youth scholarship fund that is used for heritage education grants and striking from the list means that the club will not be listed in the active list for donations, but can be reinstated if there is interest. The proposal was accepted with an overwhelming majority.

2024 Budget Proposal:

Lauris Apsītis shares the budget proposal for this upcoming year. Given the expenses from the prior year were low, Lauris suggests using money for events and a community member asks if extra money can be given to active groups. We share that LASW funds and stipends are given out on request and the proposals are voted on at the Board meetings. The 2024 budget was accepted, with 42 voting for, and none against.

Club Representatives reports:

The various clubs under LASW shared reports from their activities over the past year. Several active clubs did not have a representative or reports at the meeting; the Ladies Committee, the Art Club, the Seattle Latvian Choir, SLGA, and the Culinary Club.

Inta Wiest represented the pensioners' club and shared some highlights from the past year. They met for 11 lunches and had 65 members, ages 68-99. Five members passed away this year and 8 new members joined. Membership in the club costs \$10 a year and \$15 for each lunch. Starting this year, the annual membership will be \$15. The money pays for the lunches and flowers and gifts for birthdays and special events. The pensioner's club was able to donate \$1,600 to the Likteņdārzs (Garden of Destiny) in Latvia, \$600 to Larisa for Mežotne, and \$700 to Egija Ungure for her master's degree studies at the University of Washington.

Erika Currier shared highlights from the 2023-2024 dance season. With 26 members traveling to Latvia last year, the group made fundraising goals in order to provide \$500 to dancers to help with travel expenses, as well as covering costs of some of the folk dance costume pieces. During several brunches and various fundraising events, a total of \$18,000 in donations was received.

Inta Wiest spoke on behalf of Vaira Christopher regarding the library and book shipments. Through the Latvian American Shipping Line, 12 boxes of books were sent to various libraries in Latvia this past year. The

Latvian National Library sent an extensive list of specific books that were desired, so it is important that the library only takes in books that can be sent back to Latvia from that list.

Jānis Rogainis represented the Archives and shared that there is continuing work towards digitalizing and organizing the archives. The contents of 26 bankers boxes were shredded at a cost of \$349. The World Federation of Free Latvians (PBLA) has organized a website where immigrant groups of Latvians can upload their materials after digitalizing, as well as provided information on how to appraise the documents you have in the archive.

Seattle Latvian Church and Community Center management committee report:

Eriks Rauda shared the approved budget for the Center for the upcoming year. Though the Sound Transit work was set to have a final sign off for project completion, several items were still not completed and are still being finalized. The work on the roof was completed in March, but the storm system still requires work. With Selga retiring September 1st of 2024, there will be a change of management and the community thanks Selga for all her hard work.

The main rental income to the center was from Jazzercise and Contra Dance, and there was around \$20,000 in rental income this past year. For the upcoming year, there are several work items planned, including Selga's house remodel, and March 10th will be a Center clean-up day.

Election of Board members:

The terms expire for Inta, Katrīna, and Ingrīda this year. Inta is retiring from the Board to focus on the Pensioner's club, and Katrīna and Ingrīda are willing to stay on another year to help train replacements. Through email, the rest of the Board members confirmed that they will stay in their current roles through the next year. The community unanimously voted to accept the additional year of service for Katrīna and Ingrīda, and there was not a new Board member elected to fill Inta's space.

American Latvian Association Congress Motion:

Inese Graudiņa proposes a motion to allow the Board to select delegates for the 73rd ALA Convention in Portland. The hope is to send three members of LASW this year. The motion was approved, and any interested individuals should reach out if they are interested in attending.

Questions and Suggestions:

Lauris Apsītis urges the community to use the money we have on renovations and events, as LASW only can exist tax-free if the church is active. There is unfortunately no way for LASW to afford the taxes on the building and we cannot be tax-free as a 501(c)(4) non-profit. The kitchen remodel was discussed, and Aleksa Overby showed a wish list for renovations to the Latvian Center. A vote was held to allocate \$80,000 in funds for kitchen renovations and the proposal was accepted with 37 votes in favor of that budget estimate.

Meeting end: 2:34pm

