



THE AMERICAN LATVIAN ASSOCIATION LOOKS BACK ON 2013, AND MARKS PLANS FOR THE NEW YEAR

Welcoming in the New Year, the American Latvian Association (ALA) thanks its members and friends for their cooperation and support in 2013 which enabled ALA to successfully complete a host of projects. We list just a few of the major ones here:

Information and Political Projects:

- *On the eve of the ALA 62th Congress in Seattle, ALA sponsored a seminar for local Latvian organization leaders from around the United States to exchange information and success strategies*
- *ALA both organizationally and financially supported the first World Latvian Economics and Innovation Forum in Latvia, bringing together over 350 participants from 21 countries, which Latvija's President Andris Berzins in his New Year's message called one of the most important events for Latvia in 2013.*
- *ALA, in cooperation with the Embassy of Latvia in the United States, Latvia's Citizenship and Migration Department, and the World Federation of Free Latvians, sponsored a Seminar on Dual Citizenship on December 7, in Washington, D.C, for interested individuals and Latvian community leaders.*

Culture:

- *ALA provided financial support for the Latvian Cultural Society „TILTS“ to sponsor a U.S. tour by the Valmiera Theater.*
- *ALA provided financial support for U.S. Latvian choirs and folk-dance groups to participate in the XXV Latvian Song and XV Latvian Dance Festival in Riga.*

Education:

- *Beginning with 2013, the ALA Education Office regularly sent out newsletters to Latvian Heritage school leaders; this information is also available on the ALA website.*
- *The Education Division sponsored a Teacher's Conference, held at the Latvian Center „Garezers“, with around 50 participants from Latvian schools around the United States.*
- *In June, July and August, the Education Office organized four educational tours of Latvia, for Latvian school graduates and young people of Latvian heritage, as well as for adults.*
- *In October, the Education Office organized a special teacher training seminar in Los Angeles, successfully soliciting financial support for the seminar from the Latvian Language Agency in Riga.*

Cooperation with Latvia:

- *In connection with the tragic Zolitude building collapse in Riga on November 21, the ALA Board voted to set aside \$10,000, working with the Riga Technical University (RTU), to establish a competition to improve construction supervision methods and construction safety standards in Latvia. The RTU has indicated its support of this endeavor; plans for establishing this competition are scheduled to go forward in 2014.*
- *ALA's „Cooperation with Latvia“ Office continues its work to support large families and orphans in Latvia, sending \$218,355 to Latvia's Childrens Foundation in Fall 2013.*

Sports:

- *At the end of May, the ALA Sports Office sponsored the 62nd Annual U.S. Latvian Sports Championships in Minneapolis, Minnesota.*

The American Latvian Association (ALA), is working hard to organize a number of important events in 2014:**January:**

- *The ALA Cultural Office in cooperation with the cultural organization TILTS is sponsoring the „Amber String Quartet“ concert tour of U.S. East Coast Latvian centers.*
- *January will mark the completion of the project sponsored by ALAs Cultural and Education offices, in which Latvian heritage schools were invited to create a work of art using Latvian language books, to reflect the work of their Latvian school. Schools are asked to send in a project description together with a photo, the names of the school and project participants to ALA Cultural Office director Liga Ejups, 5321 Johnson Avenue, Western Springs, IL 60558.*

March:

- *On March 14. - 16, the ALA Board Meeting will take place at „Garezers“, in Michigan.*

May

- *The ALA Annual Congress will take place May 2 – 4, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.*
- *May 24 and 25, the ALA Sports Office is sponsoring the Annual Sports Championships to be held at „Garezers.“*

June

- *June 12 – 25, the ALA Sports Office is sponsoring a tour to Latvia of American Latvian athletes to compete in various events with their counterparts in Latvia .*
- *June 13 – 23, the ALA Education Office is organizing a Latvian language educational tour of Latvia („Sveika, Latvija!“) for young people 13 – 15 years old who have graduated from Latvian Heritage schools.*

July

- *July 9 – 23, ALA-sponsored bilingual educational tour „Hello, Latvia“ for adults and families*
- *July 9 – 23, ALA sponsored English language educational tour „Heritage Latvia“ for 13 – 15 year-olds.*

August

- *August 12 – 26, the ALA Education Office is organizing a Latvian language educational tour of Latvia („Sveika, Latvija!“) for young people 13 – 15 years old who have graduated from Latvian Heritage schools.*

September

- *ALA, in cooperation with the U.S. Library of Congress will sponsor the Second Conference on Latvian Diaspora Archives, Libraries and Material Culture, in Washington, D.C.*

October

- *In cooperation with the Embassy of Latvia in the United States, ALA will participate in organizational efforts ahead of Latvia’s Saeima elections in October to ensure Latvian citizens in the United States the opportunity to cast their votes.*

ALA invites you to work with us in 2014 to increase cooperation between Latvian organizations and among individuals so that together we can ensure our mutual success in the New Year and beyond!

*Anita Bataraga,
ALA President*