

NEWS IN BRIEF

MARE KÕIVA 60

On February 26, Mare Kõiva, one of the greatest authorities on Estonian folk belief and folklore, leading researcher at the Estonian Literary Museum, Head of the Department of Folkloristics, celebrated her 60th jubilee.

After finishing her literature-biased studies at Elva Secondary School, Mare entered the University of Tartu in 1973, and graduated from the Department of Estonian Philology, specialising in folklore, in 1979. As a student, she worked as assistant at the folklore section of the then Institute of Language and Literature. In 1985–1988, she undertook her post-graduate studies at the same institute, and after completion continued there as a researcher under the supervision of Ülo Tedre, defending her thesis titled *Estoniskie zagovory. Klassifikatsiia i zhanrovye osobennosti* (Estonian Incantations: Classification and Genre Specifics) in 1990.

After the defence, Mare Kõiva continued as senior researcher and head of folk belief study group at the Department of Folklore of the Institute of the Estonian Language and Literature (after reorganisation in 1993, the Institute of the Estonian Language).



Photograph from private collection.

When the folklore department of the Institute of the Estonian Language merged with the Estonian Literary Museum in Tartu in 2000, Mare became Head of the Department of Folkloristics at the museum, as well as leading researcher of the folk belief and media study group.

Mare's working capability and dedication to work are extraordinary; as she herself often says: "A folklorist is on the alert seven days a week and twenty-four hours a day." Mare and folklore are so tightly knit together that her working life cannot be separated from her private life. Besides being a mother of five grownup children, she is also an efficient folklorist, who is among the last to leave the museum before it closes late in the evening. It is quite typical of her that she also spent her 60th jubilee among the folklorists' community in the Witch's Country in Uhtjärve primeval valley, where her birthday was marked with the Estonian folklorists' 9th Winter Conference on February 26 and 27, this time under the heading "Folklore and Coherence". The conference brought together researchers from Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Finland, Hungary and Russia – Mare's good academic friends, who dedicated their presentations to the wide range of research topics that the jubilarian has ever studied. The latter involve, for instance, folk belief, folk medicine, folk astronomy, archaeology, Internet lore, culture of expatriated Estonians and minority groups, and contemporary folklore. When supervising the research of the whole department, she has always tried to be ahead of time, inspired her colleagues and encouraged them to be interdisciplinary and cooperate on an international level. Mare's spheres of interest, knowledge and methodological approaches are extensive, and she has a good eye for detecting new cultural phenomena.

During her thirty-five years of working life, Mare has shown herself as an ardent promoter of folkloristics, a courageous experimenter and initiator of numerous ideas. It was on the initiative of Mare and her colleagues-adherents that the Estonian server of folkloristics, *Haldjas* (<http://www.folklore.ee>), started to evolve, and has today become one of the most extensive and idiosyncratic folklore servers in the world, covering large databases of the lore of Estonians and other Finno-Ugric peoples, electronic publications and information about folklorists and research institutions.

Mare has assisted many colleagues in publishing their books, and established two internationally recognised journals of folkloristics – *Mäetagused: Hüperajakiri* and *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore* – the first issues of which saw the light of day in 1996 and have continued under her editorship throughout eighteen years. Mare has also initiated series of publications titled *Tänapäeva folkloorist* (On Modern Folklore) and *Sator*, and in 2011 she was at the birth of a new international journal *Incantatio: An International Journal of Charms, Charmers and Charming*. She has authored tens of researches and publications, and at the winter conference her latest collection, *Through the Ages I: Folklore as a Common Expression of Lingual, Figurative, Emotional and Mental Memory* (Sator 5), was presented, which is comprised of articles covering a wide range of topics, written by her in different time periods.

Among the highlights of her work are *Eesti loitsud* (Estonian Incantations), published in 2011 on the basis of the material of her thesis, database *Rehepapp* of folk belief and legends, database *Berta* of Estonian popular calendar festivals, south-Estonian tradition portal LEPP, and a database on lumbago. Mare has also initiated a number of extensive collection campaigns (for example, all-Estonian school lore collection competitions in

1992 and 2007) and authored numerous television and radio programmes on folklore and folk belief.

Mare is a member of many institutional (scientific) councils, editorial boards of international publications, as well as international professional associations and working groups. International cooperation fills a considerable part of her summers, which are dedicated to conferences and fieldwork, as well as writing or editing articles, usually several at a time. She has also supervised a number of master's as well as doctoral theses.

Mare's contribution to Estonian national culture is considerable; she has made endless efforts to advocate folkloristics, delivering lectures to teachers, astronomers, schoolchildren, pensioners, and others in schools, different courses and county libraries. As an eloquent speaker, she is in great demand and fails to refuse even if she has no time for it. Her colleagues admire her initiative, working capacity and scope of interests; yet, they also know that in recent decades administrative work has consumed a great deal of her energy, often at the expense of creative work.

On August 26, 1991, while on a fieldwork expedition in Torma parish, Mare wrote in her diary: "How little a folklorist needs to be happy – one really wonderful story and you already sprout wings!" May there be plenty of beautiful stories to come to instigate your folkloristic activities! We wish you all the happiness, tenacity and good health, so that you could initiate and realise all your spirited ideas!

Piret Voolaid

"FRIENDS, THOUGH ABSENT, ARE STILL PRESENT"

The ancient proverb "Friends, though absent, are still present", already known to that great rhetorician Cicero, is a perfect piece of folk wisdom to describe the deep and lasting friendship between Arvo Krikmann at Tartu, Estonia, and myself at distant Burlington, Vermont, in the northeastern corner of the United States. One might well ask how we two folklorists and paremiologists became acquainted, and yet, it is well known that scholars with similar interests are bound to find each other, no matter where they happen to live in the world. By way of discovering each other's published work, a keen interest to communicate with the respected and admired colleague arises that will quite naturally result in an epistolary relationship, an exchange of publications, meetings at international conferences, and over time a sincere friendship that is not hindered by the thousands of miles between the two residences and work places.

This kind of rite of passage certainly happened to Arvo Krikmann and me, even though it took many years for us to finally meet in person. Arvo, being five years older than I am, has always been a few steps ahead of me in age and accomplishments. It was thus quite natural that at the beginning of my professorial career he was of an immense