

## 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

influence on me. I will never forget when I came across his seminal publication, titled *On Denotative Indefiniteness of Proverbs* (1974), and its addendum, *Some Additional Aspects of Semantic Indefiniteness of Proverbs* (1974). A decade later I had the honor to republish both of them in *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship* (1984 and 1985), and the invaluable insights on the polyfunctionality, polysituativity, and polysemantcity of proverbs presented in them have influenced me and others during the past forty years. It is with so much joy and delight that I tell my folklore and proverb students that Arvo Krikmann is not only a world-class scholar, but he also happens to be my very special friend. I also explain to them that it is such deep friendships that make scholarship so special, for scholarly research without the support and interest of friends is like working in a lifeless vacuum. Of course, I also give my students Arvo Krikmann's book *Proverb Semantics: Studies in Structure, Logic, and Metaphor* (2009) as a present. I had edited this volume comprised of eight invaluable articles by Arvo as a present to him on his seventieth birthday. The book has a cover illustration that shows both of us at the Second Interdisciplinary Colloquium on Proverbs at Tavira, Portugal, in November 2008. The students have told me that this picture and my introduction have made it clear to them what friendship means in the scholarly world.

The political situation during the long period of the Cold War did not permit us to meet each other for many years, but I simply took the liberty to send book packages to

Tartu that included new paremiological publications and the annual *Proverbium* volumes. The Iron Curtain as well as the fact that I cannot communicate in Estonian and that Arvo was reluctant to use his excellent knowledge of the English language kept us from entering into a state of frequent communication with each other. And yet, both of us felt that there was a natural bond between us as kindred spirits. I know that my thoughts often wandered to Tartu when I was once again quoting Arvo in one of my books or articles. And he



*On July 21, 2014, Arvo Krikmann celebrates his 75th birthday.*

has subsequently told me that he, too, would sit at his desk wondering what Wolfgang would think of his newest publication. It is easy to imagine the joy we both felt when a package would arrive with a major scholarly achievement, to wit, the five massive and invaluable volumes of *Eesti vanasõnad* (1980–1988).

The ice was broken when Arvo sent me a letter on November 29, 1993, with the following heart-warming declaration: “Wow, when the iron curtain has ceased to exist and our shock of freedom lived through as well, it is obviously the ultimate hour for me to break the silence, to convince you that rumors about my death are strongly exaggerated, to thank you for the literature you have sent us (bibliographies, *Proverbium*, Vols. 1–10, etc.), and, also, to offer some collaboration.” And on December 10, 1993, I responded with much excitement: “Thank you so much for writing. I was always a little disappointed that you never responded to getting *Proverbium*, but I understood the political situation, of course! Now we should be able to communicate from time to time. I treasure and respect and admire your theoretical work!” With these two letters we began our correspondence, and we both treasure these epistles that have amassed to well over five hundred pages during the past twenty years. They are a lasting testimony of our close friendship and sincere interest in each other’s work.

And then, finally, another ten years later, in 2004, the time had come for us two paremiological work-horses and epistolary friends to meet in person at an international meeting commemorating the Lithuanian paremiologist Kazys Grigas at Vilnius. We were almost like two little children waiting for a big birthday or Christmas present! Almost poetically Arvo wrote to me on January 30, 2004: “Some little Lithuanian birds have chirped that you aim to fly to Vilnius and participate in the memorial conference for Kazys Grigas on March 5, 2004. Please, let me know if it is true. If it is, then I seem to have got, better late than never, a happy chance to meet you in the flesh. What a miracle, what a miracle! If we really meet, may I take with me some newer Estonian books for you, or do you prefer to get them by post?” I responded on the same day (e-mail makes it possible!), by employing Arvo’s “bird”-metaphor as well: “YES, the little bird has spoken the truth. I will indeed come to Vilnius – a big reason is wanting to meet you and some of the other dear friends from Eastern Europe. I am so much looking forward to meeting you finally. Yes, I could carry a couple of books back to America. But please remember, the suitcase holds only so much. I will see you soon, my dear friend. Who would ever have thought that this glorious day would happen? Now it is here!” Rereading these excerpts still brings tears to my eyes. My proverb students, to whom I have read a few of these letters, have told me that they helped them to understand what I meant by telling them about the importance of friendships among professors.

In July 2005, the 14th Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research took place at Tartu, and this gave me the opportunity to visit Arvo and his dear wife Luule in that beautiful Estonian city. Those summer days belong to some of my fondest memories, and I so much enjoyed my time together with Luule and Arvo in their beautiful home. Here are some touching words that my friend Arvo wrote to me on August 16, 2005, after I had returned to the United States: “All the first week of August I could not get you out of my head and mind and heart and memories. Everything I told Luule was so exclusively about you that she finally asked if everything was okay with me. Though, to be honest, she herself suffered from the same disease as well. It is very

hard for me to believe that such sunny beings can exist, without any black holes in their souls, without any skeletons in their closets, absolutely unable to do bad deeds, say bad words or think bad thoughts. Please forward to your dear Mrs. Barbara our cordial thanks for her greetings and also the very best wishes from both Luule and me.” My response on the same day echoed these feelings: “Thank you, thank you for your wonderful letter! I was so deeply touched by your kind words, expressing the same feelings that I have had ever since I saw you at Tartu. We really did spend a lot of memorable time with each other, and I feel that we have all become very close friends. I keep thinking how it would be if we could have worked together on proverbial matters for the past decades! Imagine what we could have accomplished together. We obviously have the same work ethics and the same enthusiasm for our work. There is no doubt, Kriku, that you are one of my heroes! I have so much admiration for you personally and also for your incredible scholarship. It is no surprise to me any longer that you have received many prizes and that you are one of the academy members. You deserve all of this, and I am so proud to be your colleague and friend. Barbara too has observed that I talk a great deal about both of you. I think that Kriku has taken over the role of Alan Dundes [he died on March 30, 2005] in my life. You know how much he meant to me, and I feel less lonely now that I know that you are in my life. Thank you for helping me deal with my loneliness. Here is wishing you both and your family the very best. My thoughts are often with you at Kastani 59! Barbara sends her love as well, and she hopes that she will also meet you in the future.”

Wolfgang Mieder

## **PRESIDENT'S FOLKLORE AWARD AND FOLKLORE COLLECTING IN 2013**

On February 28, 2014, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of the Republic of Estonia, handed out folklore collection awards at the Estonian Literary Museum. The best collectors were recognised for their good work with letters of gratitude and keepsakes, and a competition for the collection of local lore was announced. This year the President's folklore award went to Hillar Palamets, Ado Seire and Terje Puistaja.

Hillar Palamets, a historian and educator, renowned for his good narration skills, has authored several books and radio programmes; for example, a series called 'History



*Laureates of the President's folklore collection award with the President. From the left: Ado Seire, Hillar Palamets, Terje Puistaja, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves. Photograph by Alar Madisson 2014.*

Class', which has lasted for 18 years. Since 1991, Hillar Palamets has nearly annually visited our museum, bringing us a notebook or an envelope full of sheets of paper filled with calligraphic handwriting. He has mediated his own and his family's traditions, donating to the archives his family's personal poem collections and photographs of festive occasions.

Ado Seire has collected village and place lore in one of the oldest Estonian villages – Kareda village in Järva County – and its neighbourhood in the years 1994–2012. He has conducted interviews with 34 people, the materials of which are recorded on 68 cassettes. Part of the material is provided with detailed content descriptions and registers of place and personal names. The topics discussed involve several important events in which the inhabitants of Kareda village have participated and which are still remembered by the villagers: the Russian-Japanese War, the War of Independence, the First and Second World Wars. The interviewees also recall the history of Kareda village school and community centre, as well as the history of Esna, Kodasema, Öle, Öötla and Köisi estates, the Järva-Peetri parsonage and the church.

Terje Puistaja as a teacher of folklore and artistic production at the Estonian Folk Tradition School is in daily contact with heritage. Her studies for a master's degree are also related to folklore. Interviews conducted in Mahu village, which have been handed over to the museum, constitute a part of her studies. Terje Puistaja has carried out interviews with three generations of the same family. This family lore gives an overview of their traditions: weddings, funerals, remembrances of their kin and village people.



*Participants of the collection competition for children's games, members of the jury, laureates of the President's folklore award and other folklore collectors with President Toomas Hendrik Ilves. Photograph by Alar Madisson 2014.*

There are 415 pages of transcripts written down from recordings, which in all make up 18 hours. Although many degree candidates collect material, Terje Puistaja has been the only one to arrange and systematise it so thoroughly that it could also be used by other people who are interested in this subject. Also, she has collected stories from the people who have had to do something novel in their lives. Her interviewees include, for example, Mikk Sarv, Mall Hiimäe, Ingrid Rüütel, Ene Lukka, Malle Mutso, and others.

Although year after year the management of the Estonian Folklore Archives has become more and more complicated, the year 2013 for both the archives and many folklore collectors passed under the theme of games and play. Within the framework of the Heritage Year, a competition for collecting children's games was organised; yet, cooperation with folklore collectors continued in other spheres as well.

As a result of the efforts made by professional folklorists, university students and volunteers, the collections were considerably supplemented. The manuscript collection of the folklore archives increased by 4017 pages (61 volumes, 24 of them digitalised); the sound recordings collection obtained 343 new museals (2691 pieces altogether); the photographic collection was supplemented by 3188 frames and 64 film rolls. The Internet-based file repository Kivike currently includes descriptions of 20,613 museals from the folklore archives and 30,002 descriptions of music pieces, a third of which were added in 2013.

A major part of the incoming materials was place lore related sound recordings and digital photos from the fieldwork on Vilsandi Island and in Matsalu, and the lore of Lau village in Juuru parish, which were handed over by the place lore working group of folklore archives. Material was also obtained from Anu Korb, who carried out fieldwork at the Estonians of Krasnoyarsk Krai, and from Helen Kõmmus, who made videos at the Viljandi Folk Music Festival.

Last year another innovation was introduced by the folklore archives: the collection module called Kratt, in which contributions, photographs and video files can be entered. We hope that this will facilitate the life of folklore collectors, as after logging in one can have a look into all the contributions, continue those pending and start new ones. In the archives the collection module facilitates the archiving of materials and communication with correspondents. Currently the module also includes materials of the collection competition of 2014, which is dedicated to the stories of our homes.

The competition for children's games collection within the framework of the Year of Cultural Heritage attracted 77 participants, who sent their childhood memories and descriptions of games on 650 pages, as well as photographs, drawings, paper board games, paper dolls, etc. Memory institutions have collected game descriptions also formerly, and they have been published as well. The peculiarity of this particular competition was that the participants were asked to describe the games through their own playing experience, which especially clearly manifests the influence of the era on children's activities.

The jury members of this competition were Mall Hiimäe, Risto Järv, Kadri Tamm, Astrid Tuisk and Piret Voolaid from the Estonian Literary Museum, writer Tiia Toomet, the founder of the Tartu Toy Museum, Karin Konksi from the Estonian National Museum, and Heli Poolakese from the Tartu Toy Museum.

The jury decided to single out twelve best writers, to recognise another twelve, and award special prizes to eight participants.



*Girls-playmates in a yard in Kesk Street, Tartu. The house had a big garden with plenty of space for playing. Each girl had a doll, a teddy-bear, a doll's pram, and also a wooden horse on wheels. Photograph by Maie Erik sent to the collection competition of children's games.*

The collection competition was financially supported by the Cultural Endowment of Estonia and the Year of Cultural Heritage; the prizes came from the Science Centre Ahhaa, the Ludo board game shop, and publishing houses Hea Lugu and Koolibri.

Astrid Tuisk