

JAUNPIEBALGA

# NEWBALGA

**TO STRENGTHEN  
THE RELATIONS**

***BETWEEN THE TWO  
COUNTRIES***

**EDUCATION  
OPTIONS**



**IN BETWEEN  
TIME AND SPACE**

**HAPPY NEW  
YEAR!**



# Happy New Year!



These past years the firework shows in bigger cities have been put on hold because of the pandemic, so people have been waiting patiently for the one in our capital city Riga. Unfortunately for the people who have been waiting, this year's firework shows in multiple big cities have been cancelled. We do not wish to disturb Ukrainian refugees who have heard Russian gunshots. So, it's for a good cause.

I hope that you stick to your aspirations and goals. Happy New Year's to all!

Written by Līga Kīne

New Year's is one of the most well-known celebrations. In Latvia, we celebrate it, like most places, on January 1st. For us waiting for the new year to come starts a day earlier on "Vecgada vakars" (New Year's Eve). People gather outside and look at the sky waiting for the magnificent fireworks around them. People love to watch the fireworks with a champagne glass in hand and surrounded by family and friends. This is the time to be reminiscent and look back on the previous year set goals and, most likely, forget about them in the following days.



# Icy cold winter

It's the evening of January 7th and I am getting ready for school because the winter holiday is coming to an end. I check my phone. Our class teacher has sent a message. It says we can stay at home tomorrow because the temperature tomorrow might go below  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$  and in our country, we can legally skip school. At first, I thought: "Yes another holiday," and texted my friends. But they both are going to school, and they live further away than me. I changed my mind and decided to go to school despite the cold.



When I arrived at school there are only 7 students from our class that's less than a half. We only had two math classes and one biology. The school was quiet and empty because the younger classes did not arrive at all. In the third period, we heard a knock on the door. We recognized the visitors as journalists from one of the main news channels in our country. They interviewed some of the students and filmed the class. It was a nice experience, and in the evening, we watched the news to see ourselves and our school on TV.

Written by Gerda Johansone



# Education options

For the second year in our school, 11th and 12th grade students have the opportunity to learn more about education options from our school's last year's graduates. This year they visited us for two days because some had exams faster than others.

This time 7 girls shared their stories. Each of them is in a different study program. Catering and hotel business, dental assistant, police, conducting, computer science, and economics.

They shared stories about their first semester, the chosen program, the first exam session, the study process, how they applied, and some challenges in their studies and everyday life. It was very interesting to hear their true opinion on studies, some positive things and some negative. They introduced me and others to the real student life that awaits us in the future.

Written by Zanda Loginova





# Dance fireworks

On January 13th two Jaunpiebalgas dance collectives visited Madona and performed in concert "Dance fireworks". This concert is almost a tradition because our collective goes every year. This year 7 collectives performed, from different places. New dances from the Song and Dance Festival repertoire were performed.



For me, this was my second year when I danced in this concert, and I can say just positive things. This concert always has a good atmosphere and an even better party afterward. Judging by last year's and this year's concert I realized that in Madona I always have a great time. Also, we had some new people join our dance collective this year, so this concert and after-party was a great way to get to know them better.



Written by Zanda Ioginova



# Mono-Opera #DiToo

Me and my mom went to go see a mono-opera “#DiToo” in one act in the actor’s hall in the National Latvian theater. Libretto and music was written by Kaspars Rolšteins. And the director and actress of the play was Dita Lūriņa, someone who’s talent and work i deeply admire.

"The story is about the adventures of a twin in Papēži Ķonciems: a small settlement at the seaside of Kurzeme. Since the time when the destructive 1967 storm hit this place, its inhabitants have had a magical power: they can simultaneously live in several parallel universes and histories. One of the twins leaves the village. The myths of the outsiders about female sexuality cause many misunderstandings and awkward moments. However, it is no longer possible to return home. " - taken from National Latvian theater’s website.

I never read descriptions of what i am going to see, so i had no idea what to expect. I just had a hunch that it will be odd and something I have never seen before... I was right.



I admired Dita Lūriņa’s acting and singing skills. The actress pronounced and sang the absurd, at times hallucinatory lyrics with the highest saturation of meaning and she boldly poured a bucket of whiskey on herself.

Mostly, I didn’t know what was happening, but I didn’t mind because it felt like i was seeing a new form of art.

When it ended I felt like I was in between time and space. I had a lot of conversations with my mom about what this mono-opera was really trying to say, but all of those are just uncertain theories. This mono-opera stayed on my mind at least for a month.

Can't wait to see in the future more of Ditas Lūriņa’s career’s growth.

Written by Ance Rutka



# Musical Bank

“Musical Bank” is a rock and pop music award ceremony. It is created by a Latvian radio station “Latvian Radio 2”. It’s the biggest award that an artist can get in Latvia that is only fan-voted. The show for this award is dynamic, magnificent, and impressive because they need to not only impress the live audience but also the ones at home who are watching it on TV or listening to it on the radio. Usually, all the nominated artists show up and perform but there is always someone who already has a different place to be.

“This year's winner was the artist Dons. He performed the song “Lauzto šķēpu karaļvalsts” (Broken spear kingdom). This song is our Eurovision entry this year. Dons changed the lyrics completely for the Latvian version but the message remains the same. In second place was the band “Sudden Lights” with the song “Mēs turpināsimies” (We will continue). And this band was our Eurovision entry last year.

The show had some technical difficulties. One option of voting stopped working and the cameraman sometimes shook the camera a little too much but the production of the show and costumes was successful.



# Zelenskyy in Latvia



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy visited Latvia on the 11th of January to strengthen the relations between the two countries and discuss further cooperation in the fight against Russian aggression.

The joint press conference was streamed live, and everyone could see it on TV. In the conference, Rinkevich promised to support Ukraine until a complete win over Russia. He also made promises about more military equipment. With this support, Latvia has committed more than 1% of its product to military assistance for Ukraine.

In the conversation with the Baltic journalists, Zelenskyy accents that Europe can't show fear of Russia. He also says this truthful and beautiful quote: "We are not pessimists; we are normal people. In war, we are realists, but with such a sense of optimism, because without optimism there will be no victory."

Ieva Vārna, a TV3 journalist and a reporter, has received special attention from the Ukrainian public on the platform "X". A video posted on "X" shows Ieva Vārna asking Volodymyr Zelenskyy a question in Ukrainian at a press conference. Since the beginning of the war, she has reported from Ukraine. It shows that foreign languages can be learned if you want to.



Written by Gerda Johansone



# The Barricades



In 1991 an ultimatum was presented to Lithuania with the demand to cancel the country's independence act, and on the night of January 13, the Lithuanian parliament, radio, and television were occupied. These events in Vilnius made it clear that Riga is also threatened with a similar scenario.

Anticipating the efforts of the USSR to take over the main ways of communication, as well as the possible attempt to overthrow the government of Latvia, non-violent resistance was organized from January 13th to 26th. Around 50 thousand defenders gathered and made barricades and physical fences, blocking these approaches. The barricaders protected politically important objects.

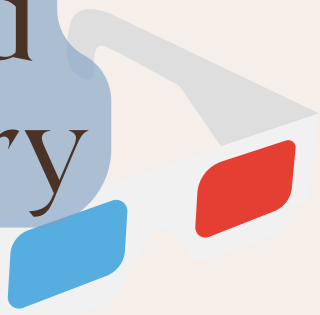
From 1990 to 1991 "Rīga OMON" cooperated with the USSR, carried out dozens of armed attacks, organized more than ten provocative explosions, and beat hundreds of civilians. On January 21st OMON attacked the building of the Ministry of the Interior of Latvia. While trying to film the attack cinematographer Andris Slapiņš was killed. The next day people gathered at Bastelkalns to place flowers in honour of his death. In 2010, Andris Slapiņš was awarded the Order of Viesturs for defending the independence of Latvia which was given to his relatives for safekeeping.






A total of 318 victims were identified, 9 people had died. Every year on January 20th Latvians remember the barricade defenders.

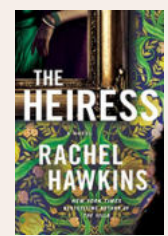
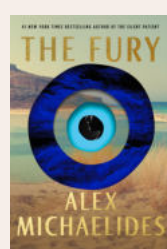
Written by Liga Kīne








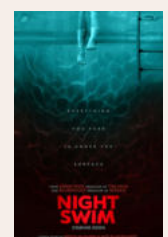
# Top 5 books and movies of January 2024



-  **House of Flame and Shadow**  
by Sarah J. Maas
-  **First Lie Wins**  
by Ashley Elston
-  **The Fury**  
by Alex Michaelides
-  **The Heiress**  
by Rachel Hawkins
-  **When the Moon Hatched**  
by Sarah A. Parker



-  **The Beekeeper**
-  **Night Swim**
-  **Mean Girls**
-  **The Book of Clarence**
-  **I.S.S.**



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