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**BRIDGES IS A NEWSLETTER, PUBLISHED BY THE LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY OF THE U.S. INC., TO RE-ESTABLISH TIES BETWEEN THE LITHUANIAN HERITAGE AND THE DETACHED, MOBILE LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN. IT FOCUSES UPON TIMELY ITEMS DEALING WITH LITHUANIAN CULTURE, CONDITIONS IN THE HOMETLAND, AND THE ASPIRATIONS OF ALL WHO SUBSCRIBE TO THE IDEA THAT LITHUANIA DESIRES TO BE AN INDEPENDENT AND FREE NATION AGAIN.**

#### A CULTURAL CENTER IN NEED

Zoning restrictions limiting structures to two-story heights forced planners to confine themselves solely to enlarging the basement area of the ALKA Lithuanian archives and museum at Putnam, Conn., next door to the Convent of the Lithuanian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, not far from the Lithuanian Matulaitis Home for the elderly, and the Marianapolis Preparatory School run by Lithuanian Marian Fathers at Thompson, Conn.

The local Windham County Observer notes: "The white cinderblock ALKA building contains the largest collection of Lithuanian literature, art objects and handicraft artifacts (over 100,000 items) collected during the past 55 years by its 87-year old curator, Msgr. Francis M. Juras. The letters ALKA in Lithuanian mean the American Lithuanian Cultural Archives. The building was erected by Father Juras in 1965 and is now so crammed full that necessity forces to expand the inside space to twice its size."

The work of doubling the space is under the auspices of the Lithuanian Catholic Academy of Sciences with headquarters in Rome. A special Building Committee was organized among American Lithuanians headed by Juozas Kapočius of Boston, publisher of the 35-volume Encyclopedia in Lithuanian and a 6-volume Lituanica edition in English. The Committee plans to raise the estimated \$200,000 in costs by donations and short term loans without interest. Nearly \$50,000 have already been secured.

In consideration of advanced age, Father Juras (who has had three heart attacks) decided to turn over the ownership of his private museum to the above Academy while remaining its curator and collector. He began the collections in 1922, while being pastor of the Lithuanian parish of St. Francis at Lawrence, Mass. He now resides as an emeritus at the Matulaitis Nursing Home but spends most of his time in his beloved museum.

Increasingly a stronger and stronger realization is growing of the absolute necessity for employing a graduate of modern library sciences, with knowledge of Lithuanian, to start on a classified catalogue of the immense riches of ALKA.

During excavation for the extra 40 by 80 ft. space several huge blocks of beautiful New England granite have been lifted out of the ground. Here a volunteer sculptor would be very welcome to create out of these formless blocks something meaningful and expressive to grace the entrance to the enlarged and renovated ALKA.

Perhaps a pair of lions would be appropriate, since numerous mention of them in the folklore tales of the Lithuanian people (the lion not being a native of historical geographic Lithuania) so fascinated the grand patriarch of the Lithuanian National Renaissance, Dr. Jonas Basanavičius, that he used the fact in creating a theory that the ancestors of present day Lithuanians originated in some country where lions were plentiful, for instance, Phrygia, or Thrace in the Balkans. This theory, on which Basanavičius spent a lifetime, found favor with his friend, the historian Dr. Jonas Šliūpas, who was a public figure among American Lithuanians from 1884 to 1916. It also attracted the author of the first bibliography of American Lithuanian publications, Rev. Jonas Žilinskas (later, Žilius), who presented it in a lecture to Europeans at the Ethnographic Museum in Paris, where a Lithuanian exhibit was shown for six months, financed by American Lithuanians, during the 1900 World Exposition. The theory did not find a wider acceptance, but the lions in Lithuanian folklore are there.

Vytautas Širvydas

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#### THE CAUSE OF LIBERTY

Surely one of the most imaginative **protests** on behalf of **Viktoras Petkus** was staged by the 100 or so young girls of **Camp Neringa** in Vermont. Singing, shouting, and crying, these girls marched through the streets of **Brattleboro, Vt.**, in an exuberant and gripping show of affection and concern for the recently sentenced Lithuanian freedom fighter. The march was led by **Marija Šulskis**, 72, mother of Simas Kudirka, who told reporters that Petkus and three Russian dissidents, all in prison now, helped them emigrate in 1974. In a dramatic gesture to symbolize the difference between the US and the Soviet Union, Mrs. Šulskis and the demonstrators made three stops — at the offices of the **Brattleboro Reformer** (where she presented a letter to the editor "designed to tell the whole world about Petkus" and gave homage to America's freedom of the press), at the municipal building, where she presented flowers to the Brattleboro Police Department (showing her appreciation of a police one does not have to fear), and at St. Michael's church — for prayer and hymns in celebration of America's freedom of religion.

This event was widely reported in the national press.

In **Toronto, Canada**, a crowd estimated as high as 1,000 rallied at Nathan Phillips Square to demand the release of Viktoras Petkus. The demonstration was noteworthy because it was sponsored by the Lithua-

nians but was addressed by Jewish, Ukrainian and other top ethnic community leaders as well as a number of high Canadian government officials, including Ontario Ombudsman Arthur Maloney and Consumer & Corporate Affairs Minister Larry Grossman, who was reported by **The Globe and Mail** (July 21) to have delivered a particularly impassioned speech against soviet barbarity.

No less than **10 deans and department heads** at Seton Hall University (South Orange, N.J.) signed a ringing letter to the **New York Times** (July 29) denouncing repression in the Soviet Union and **explicitly** mentioning both **Viktoras Petkus** individually and **Lithuanian Catholics** as a group. There have been an increasing number of letters in papers throughout the country written by persons of non-Lithuanian descent in support of our cause. Thank you!

#### THE HOMELAND

Noted British political scientist **Peter Reddaway** reports the following:

"... It is only in Lithuania that a truly mass movement has developed. Here nationalism, in its overt manifestations at least, has far surpassed what can be observed in the Ukraine. Lithuanian nationalism has been aided by its close historical relationship with the Roman Catholic Church which, moreover, set an example by beginning strongly to oppose religious

persecution in the late 1960's. Today, no less than seven<sup>3</sup> **samizdat** (i.e., typewritten underground) journals are appearing in Lithuania." (**Times Literary Supplement**, London, June 16, 1978).

Our neighbors, the **Byelorussians** (whom we call "**gudai**" in remembrance that once in ancient days their land, it is claimed, was ruled by the **Goths**), when they exaggerate, go the whole hog. A good Byelorussian academician with the fine Lithuanian first name of Vitaut, Kippel, was asked to write about the Byelorussians for **The New Jersey Ethnic Experience**, published by H. Wise and Co. Well, Vitaut Kippel wrote that the medieval Grand Duchy of Lithuania was a "Byelorussian" state with "a few" Baltic tribes like the Samogitians (**Žemaičiai**) and others. We wonder if Vitaut himself really believes this fairy tale? **Vyt. Š.**

## EVENTS

The month of **September** has been set aside by **Bendruomenė** (Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.) as a time to show appreciation and support for institutions fostering Lithuanian education. At present there are Lithuanian schools at the elementary and secondary level operating in the U.S. Most of them hold classes Saturdays (hence the popular designation **Saturday school**) in Lithuanian grammar, composition, reading, history, geography, music, and other subjects. **Bendruomenė's** Educational Council (currently chaired by **Bronius Juodelis** of Downers Grove, Ill.) provides curriculum guidance, teaching aids, textbooks, etc., as well as part of the financial support. This, in turn, would be impossible without contributions from the Lithuanian-American public at large. Therefore your participation is earnestly enlisted. Please send your check payable to Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. to national treasurer **Feliksas Andriūnas**, 155 Greenwood Ave., Wyncote, PA. 19095.

On the occasion of the 37th anniversary of the first mass-scale deportations of Lithuanians to Siberia (see the June issue of **BRIDGES**), the **Buffalo Courier-Express** carried a fine story explaining the concerns of Lithuanian-Americans in light of the political situation in their ancestral land (June 4). Accompanied by two large pictures of Lithuanian folk art objects, the article quoted remarks by **Romas Masiulionis** and **Dr. Algirdas Gamziukas**, secretary and president, respectively, of the Buffalo Lithuanian Club, and by **Dr. Julius P. Slavėnas**, professor of history at Buffalo State College.

The **Friends of the Lithuanian Front** (Lietuvių Fronto Bičiuliai, or **frontininkai** in short) held their annual **study week** at the Dainava camp near Detroit August 6-13. Catholic and progressive in orientation, this strong group of post-World War II immigrants is an outgrowth of the Lithuanian underground resistance movement during the Nazi occupation (1941-44).

The **Fifth Annual Lithuanian Studies Seminar** took place August 6-20 at the Loyola of the Lakes retreat house near Akron, Ohio. The seminar was conceived for the purpose of enabling young high-school graduates with a fluency in Lithuanian to benefit from intensive college-level instruction in Lithuanian language, literature, and history. This year students had a choice of 11 courses taught by 9 experts in their respective fields. The courses counted towards undergraduate credit at Kent State University. Tuition, including room and board for the entire period, was a low \$120.00, with financial assistance also available. The seminar was organized by the **Lithuanian World Youth Association's Relations' Center** in Chicago.

**IMPORTANT!** Mr. Jonas Jankus, our new subscription manager, has changed his address. In the July issue, we listed his old address; the new address is: Jonas Jankus, 84-55 86th Ave., Woodhaven, N.Y. 11421. Please direct all subscription and business matters to Mr. Jankus. Note that the **editorial** address is **BRIDGES**, P. O. Box 9061, Boston, MA 02114.

## SPORTS

Of all the components of this summer's **World Lithuanian Days** at Toronto, the **Games** demanded the most in terms of time and space. Lasting a full week, from June 27th through July 3rd, they took up the facilities of the Etobicoke Olympium, seven high school gyms, seven park fields, and the Toronto Lithuanian House.

It would be impossible to list here all of the events, not to mention the scores, of this unique Lithuanian Olympic Festival. Suffice it to say that there were good contests and fine sportsmanship as well as athletic prowess displayed in the areas of basketball, volleyball, soccer, table tennis, tennis, shooting, swimming, track and field, to name the most important.

The participation of so many sports clubs and individual athletes from across North America — they



These three Ivaška men of Boston, Mass., brought home six medals from the Lithuanian World Sports Games in Toronto this summer. Atty. Rimantas Ivaška (center) is a dead shot, as confirmed by his gold medal in the .22 cal. Free Pistol competition. Son Ramūnas (left) earned a gold in tennis and two silvers in ping pong, whereas the other son Darius won a gold and a bronze in tennis matches. The entire Ivaška clan with close to two dozen members is actively involved in the cultural, social, and political affairs of the local Lithuanian community as well as the community at large.

haven't given out the official count yet — revealed both the strong pull of our Lithuanian heritage and the thirst for achievement that our young people possess.

The Games were organized by a committee headed by **Pranas Berneckas**, president of ŠALFASS, the North American Lithuanian Physical Education and Sports Association.

## ISSUES

Readers of **The Baltimore Sun** recently got a good look at the preoccupations of a typically active Lithuanian immigrant family. In a sympathetically revealing article (July 11), Isaac Rehert describes the struggles of **Kestutis** and **Kristina Chesonis** of Ellicott City, Md., to pass on their Lithuanian heritage to their three young children. The task is much harder now than it was for Kestutis' and Kristina's own parents who arrived in this country just after World War II, finding and building upon compact, cohesive, thickly populated Lithuanian communities. Today, due largely to natural attrition and the pull of sprawling suburbia, most of these communities are dispersed and thinning out. Thus, "the local weekend Lithuanian school is down to just a single class, and the Chesonis parents have to transport their children each Saturday to Rockville for education in their tradition."

Nevertheless, like hundreds of other motivated young families, the Chesonises are fighting — successfully, it seems — the odds. They send their children to the Lithuanian Scouts' summer camp every year and take pains to see that Lithuanian is spoken at home. Moreover, "the Chesonis clan is active in putting on the annual Lithuanian festival downtown, and Mrs. Chesonis has in the past few years been teaching the language in evening courses at Catonsville Community College."

"You've got to be a fanatic," Kristina explains. "Everything in America today teaches children to become an average Joe. Well, we are teaching our children they have no right to become average. Maybe other kids can afford it. But ours come from a people who for hundreds of years have been longing for freedom. They come from a people that have been oppressed and persecuted, that have almost died out."

Our kids have a duty to those people: Never to forget, to keep their memory, their language and their customs alive. Now while they're young, maybe they think they'd like to be average Joes; but we their parents have to know better. Later, when they've grown up and are a little wiser, they'll thank us."

In a letter to the **Los Angeles Herald Examiner** (July 20), P. G. Pamataitis, a Bendruomenė leader from Santa Monica, Cal., expressed the sentiments of many Lithuanian-Americans when he wrote:

"The trials of Anatoly Shcharansky and Alexander Ginzburg have aroused the world's conscience. We hear the voices of protest from the White House in Washington to the French Communist Party in Paris. I hope that these flames of protest would not die too soon. On the other hand, I see a cynical attitude on the part of large and powerful nations toward the rights of smaller nations conquered by the Russians.

"One such case concerns a Lithuanian dissident, **Balys Gajauskas**, who on April 14 was sentenced to 10 years in Soviet hard labor camp and five years of internal exile for alleged anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda.

"Balys Gajauskas was an important link in the whole dissident movement in the Soviet Union. After the arrest of Alexander Ginzburg in February 1977, Gajauskas took over Ginzburg's duties to support political prisoners and their families from the Solzhnitsyn fund. Gajauskas, a 50-year-old man (who had already spent half his life, 25 years, in Soviet prisons), was picked up again by the KGB on April 20, 1977

and a year later sentenced to a combination of 15 5 years in hard labor camp and Siberian exile.

"Nobel prize winner Andrei Sakharov informed Western newsmen in Moscow about Gajauskas' arrest and punishment. "This is very serious case," said Sakharov after Gajauskas' trial.

"European newspapers wrote about the Gajauskas case extensively, though in America one could hardly find a few lines. Are the heroic fighters of small nations against tyranny less important than those of great ones"?

## PERSONALITIES

Who is the only Lithuanian-American to have earned the Congressional Medal of Honor? The answer is: **Staff Sergeant Stanley Bender** (Bendorius), who received this top honor for his heroism in World War II. France also recognized his valor by awarding him the Croix de Guerre, as did his former home state West Virginia, which granted him its Distinguished Service medal. In addition it named one of the state's largest bridges after him (it's the Stanley Bender Bridge over the West Virginia Turnpike). Sgt. Bender was recently honored by the American Legion's Darius-Girėnas Post in Chicago, of which he is a member.

Undoubtedly the most successful Lithuanian opera singer in the U.S. currently is **Arnold Voketaitis**. The tall, handsome bass-baritone, usually specializing in buffo roles, has been booked to perform the leading basso roles in Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West* (Sept. 22, 25, 29, and Oct. 4, 7, 12, 16, and 20) and Massenet's *Werther* (Oct. 25, 28, 30 and Nov. 3, 7, 10, and 13) at Chicago's famous Lyric Opera, where he appears nearly every year. Mr. Voketaitis also helps out the semi-amateur Lithuanian Opera Co. of Chicago whenever his busy schedule permits.

For the last three years **VLIK** (The Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania) has been offering summer work to young Lithuanian-Americans at its New York headquarters. This year the job was held by **Ofelija Barškėtis** of Chicago, a hard-working member of the **Ateitininkai** (Catholic youth organization), **Š.A.L.S.S.** (The North American Lithuanian Student Association) and **ALT** (The Lithuanian-American Council). Miss Barškėtis was preceded by **Rima Janulevičius** of Chicago last year and **Viktoras Nakas**, currently of Arlington, Va., the year before last.



Paul P. Dargis

Every Sunday, from 12:30 to 1:00 p.m., the **Lithuanian Hour** broadcast over Pittsburgh's WPIT (730 kc) to Lithuanians in western Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio and northern West Virginia. With a background of 45 years in broadcasting Gertrude and Paul P. Dargis know what the listeners want. Lithuanian folk and classical music is featured as well as current Lithuanian news. The Dargis' program is understood and loved by not only Lithuanians, but by other ethnic groups, as indicated by the mail from listeners.

**Paul Dargis** is national president of the Lithuanian Alliance of America, the largest Lithuanian fraternal organization in the world. He is also national president of Sandara (The Lithuanian National League of America). The Pittsburgh City Council passed a resolution honoring him "Lithuanian Man of the Year", and he has been given testimonial banquets in Chicago and Pittsburgh honoring him as "Lithuanian Man of the Year". Mr. Dargis is national vice-president of the Lithuanian American Council. He was an honorary sponsor of the recent Lithuanian Song Festival in Toronto. Mr. Dargis is an avid reader of **BRIDGES. A.M.B.**



Dr. Elona Vaišnys

The first Lithuanian ever to serve on a Presidential commission is probably **Dr. Elona Vaišnys**, Mt. Carmel, Ct. The White House just announced her appointment to the newly created **President's Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies**. This commission's job will be to conduct research and provide recommendations on problems such as alleviating the shortage of foreign language speakers in public service, training specialists toward the improvement of international relations through public and private agencies, and elevating American interest and competence in foreign languages and international affairs generally. Consisting of 21 scholars, statesmen, and public figures, the commission will report directly to the President and is funded from HEW sources. Other members include such notables as Ambassador E. O. Reischauer; Georgetown University president T. S. Healy; J. E. Reinhardt, president of the International Communications Agency (which, among other things, is in charge of Voice of America and Radio Liberty); Sen. Mark Hatfield; and Rep. Millicent Fenwick.

The holder of a Ph.D. in French literature, Dr. Vaišnys studied at Yale, in France, and in Canada.

Her multiple interests, ranging over ethnic studies, cultural pluralism, children's education, volunteer activities, energy policy, and communications, have found expression through lecturing, public service on municipal, university, and state commissions, and writing. For a period of four years she ran her own regular column in the "New Haven Register" and from time to time her articles have appeared in such prestigious publications as "The New York Times" and "The Christian Science Monitor". At present she heads the agency responsible for energy use in the state of Connecticut.

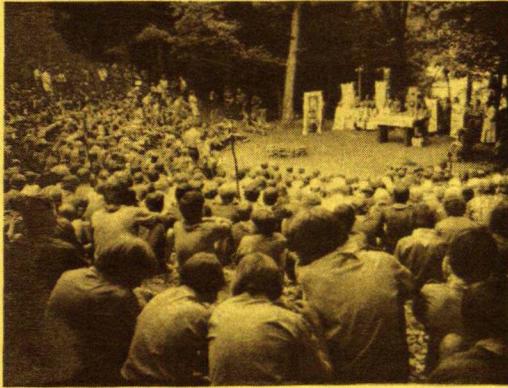
In the field of Lithuanian affairs she has hardly been less active. She has served Bendruomenė (The Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.) in various capacities, is a member of the Catholic **Ateitininkai** movement, and works strenuously as a speaker, educator, youth camp leader, and journalist. She assisted and interpreted for Mrs. Marija Šulskis, Simas Kudirka's mother, in this summer's Neringa Camp demonstration described elsewhere in this issue. One of the leading lights of the **Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies**, she currently is its vicepresident.

Dr. Vaišnienė's father is **Vytautas Marijošius**, a conductor and composer who earned his reputation in independent Lithuania and recently has been music director of the Chicago Lithuanian Opera Co. And she is married to **Dr. Juozas Rimas Vaišnys**, a noted geologist and physicist who teaches at Yale University. They have two children.



The new Executive Board of the Lithuanian World Community (Pasaulio Lietuvių Bendruomenė), elected at the Toronto Congress, and their guests. Seated from l. to r.: Vytautas Kamantas, president; Julius Mičudas, delegate from Argentina; Daina Kojelis, corresponding secretary; Bronius Nainys, former president. Standing from l. to r.: Vaclovas Kleiza, executive vice-president; Romas Sakadolskis, vice-president for information and publicity; Antanas Juodvalkis, recording secretary; Antanas Saulaitis, SJ, vice-president in charge of education; Mečys Šilkaitis, treasurer; Algis Paulius and Saulius Kuprys, vice-presidents. In addition, the Board seats Gabija Juozapavičiūtė, vice-president for youth affairs, and a vice-president for athletics and sports (to be appointed).

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The Sixth Lithuanian National Scout Jamboree, held at Paxton, Mass., September 13 - 26, drew together 1,200 boy and girl scouts and scoutmasters out of a total of 5,100 Lithuanian scouts in the Free World. They came from nearly half a dozen countries and received wide coverage in the local media. Above we see part of the camp gathered for Sunday ecumenical services, celebrated by Father Antanas Saulaitis, S.J. (middle). The Lithuanian Scouting Association is our strongest, largest, and most effective organization for Lithuanian youngsters.

Below, some more scenes from the camp. Photos by Romas Bričkus



NEW BOOKS

**For Those Still at Sea**, by Simas Kudirka and Larry Eichel, Dial Press, 226 p., \$7.95. This book, currently available at most bookstores, has received some fine reviews, including this one in the **National Review** (Aug. 18), from which we quote: "Here now, in print, is Kudirka's full story, and it is electrifying. It is for the most part concerned with the camps... Larry Eichel, a Philadelphia newspaperman, has written for Kudirka a terse, exciting, often moving saga of a freedom so precious that not even the shadow of the labor camps can obscure its light, of a slavery so grim, so demeaning, that to escape it, if not to expose and overcome it, is the duty of all good men."

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