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BRIDGES IS PUBLISHED BY THE LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY OF THE U.S.A., INC. THROUGH THIS NEWSLETTER, THE PUBLISHERS HOPE TO RE-ESTABLISH TIES BETWEEN THE DETACHED, MOBILE LITHUANIAN-AMERICANS AND THEIR LITHUANIAN HERITAGE BY PRESENTING ITEMS ON LITHUANIAN CULTURE, CONDITIONS IN THE HOMELAND, EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES IN AMERICA, AND THE ASPIRATIONS OF ALL WHO SUBSCRIBE TO THE IDEA THAT LITHUANIA DESIRES TO BE AN INDEPENDENT AND FREE NATION AGAIN.

SOVIET CITIZENSHIP LAW

A new Soviet citizenship law was put into effect on July 1, 1979. According to this law, naturalized citizens of any foreign country, including American citizens, who were born on the present territory of the U.S.S.R. are regarded as citizens of the U.S.S.R. by the Soviet Government. This includes offspring — even those born outside the U.S.S.R. — of such individuals. This statement is taken from a State Department notice issued in October, 1979, but it requires substantial clarification.

First of all, the State Department report points out that the present territory of the U.S.S.R. includes the Baltic States, at least according to the Soviets. The State Department reiterates that the United States does not recognize the forcible incorporation of Lithuania, Latvia, or Estonia into the Soviet Union. Secondly, the effect of the Soviet declaration on Lithuanians and Lithuanian-Americans must be defined. In a report prepared for the Law Library of the Library of Congress, Senior Legal Specialist for the European Law Division Tadeusz Sadowski details how the "integration" of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union was accomplished in stages, and how the timing of the incorporation affects the question of citizenship. According to Sadowski, "In the fall of 1939, the Baltic governments were presented with a demand for the immediate conclusion of pacts of mutual assistance with the Soviet Union. The militarily inferior Baltic states acquiesced, and pacts were concluded with Estonia on September 28, 1939, with Latvia on October 5, 1939, and with Lithuania on October 10, 1939. Pursuant to these pacts, the Soviet Union obtained the right to establish military bases in the Baltic countries, and on October 18, 1939, Soviet troops entered the Baltic states.

"The second stage of integration took place in June 1940. The Soviet Government in identical ultimatums, delivered to the respective Baltic governments on June 14-16, demanded the establishment of Soviet-oriented governments and complete freedom of action for the Soviet Army on Baltic territories. The freely-elected Baltic governments thus [were forced to resign], and new Communist governments [read "puppet" governments, which exist to this day — ed.] were formed in all three countries. The Baltic states were totally occupied by the Soviet Army on June 15, 1940.

"The third, and final stage followed quickly. The national assemblies in each Baltic country on July 14, 1940, met on July 21 and declared their respective countries a



soviet socialist republic. At the same time the assemblies sent to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. official petitions for the admission of their countries in to the Soviet Union. The petitions were granted promptly. Thus, Lithuania was admitted into the U.S.S.R. on August 3, 1940, Latvia on August 5, 1940, and Estonia on August 6, 1940."

These, then, are the important dates for persons concerned about when they became Soviet citizens, whether they wanted to or not. As Sadowski pointed out, Baltic citizens became Soviet citizens as of the "relevant dates of the integration of those territories into the Soviet Union." Furthermore, "the only persons who failed to become involuntary Soviet citizens by operation of the [new Soviet legislation] were former . . . Baltic nationals who were outside their respective territories at the relevant dates." Of course, those nationals who were within those boundaries at that time, and their spouses, children, grandchildren, ad infinitum, are now considered Soviet citizens.

In the State Department release, it goes on to say that "the United States Government is opposed to dual nationality as a matter of policy. However, [the U.S. recognizes] as an established principle of international law that each sovereign state has the right to decide under the provisions of its own laws who are and who are not its citizens." According to the State Department, this isn't as ominous as it sounds, since the Soviets have given the U.S. assurances that bona fide American citizens with American passports and Soviet entry/exit visas will not be prevented from returning home to the U.S. However, the cardinal rule is one which the State Department always reminds travelers of . . . be aware of the laws of the land that you are visiting, for once within that country's borders you are obligated to obey those laws or suffer the consequences.

Finally, near the end of the State Department release, the State Department urges that anyone who believes that he or she may be a citizen of the U.S.S.R. under the new Soviet law should formally renounce Soviet citizenship before visiting the U.S.S.R., a procedure provided for within that body of legislation. It should be emphasized that this does not and should not be implied to apply to past or present Soviet citizenship claims on Baltic Americans, since the U.S. has already emphasized that it does not recognize Soviet sovereignty over Baltic soil or Baltic citizens. Moreover, any Baltic American who does apply to the Soviets to have his or her citizenship renounced is in fact recognizing the authority of the Soviets to do so!

The safest course, especially in these days of heightened international tension and increased Soviet unpredictability, is to notify the State Department of all travel plans while in the Soviet Union; to notify the American consulates in major Russian cities of your arrival and itinerary; and to keep friends, relatives, your Congressman or Senator, and even your local newspaper correspondent aware of your moves while in the Soviet Union. Most importantly, be careful and be aware of the laws.

Rimantas A. Stirbys

COMMUNITY WITH A CAPITAL "C"

A **Pennsylvania Ethnic Affairs Division** has been established by executive order of Pa. Governor **Dick Thornburgh**. The official signing of the executive order took place on January 10th, 1980 in Harrisburg, the capital of Pennsylvania. Present at the ceremonies was **Anthony W. Novasaitis**, president of the Pennsylvania Ethnic Group Commission and a long-time member of the Lithuanian American Community of U.S.A., Inc.

Gov. Thornburgh has appointed Mr. Novasaitis as a member of the board of directors of the newly-formed division.

In an effort to clarify the U.S. position on the situations in Iran and Afghanistan, administration of-

officials held special conferences on January 11 and 15, 1980. A wide spectrum of Americans was represented at these conferences, including religious leaders, farmers' groups, laborers' unions, educational institutions, and ethnic groups. Lithuanian organizations seemed to be especially well-represented: the January 11th meeting was attended by Rimas Česonis, a member of Bendruomenė's National Executive Committee, Algimantas Gureckas, Bendruomenė's Washington representative, and Lithuanian journalist Vincas Rastenis; S. Algimantas Gečys, of Bendruomenė's National Executive Board, World Lithuanian Community Vice-President Dr. Kazys Ambrozaitis, World Lithuanian Engineers, and Architects, Association Vice-President Romas Bričkus, and Knights of Lithuania's Washington representative Eva Migonis attended the January 15th session.

The sessions began with White House lunches attended by Executive branch officials who answered questions from the floor. Briefings followed the lunches, conducted by National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski. Mr. Brzezinski pointed out past Soviet aggressions since World War II, mentioning the invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, but avoiding reference to the occupation of the Baltic States or making any parallels to the invasion of Afghanistan. Other administration officials pointed out that funds would soon be allocated for native language broadcasts to Afghanistan, much like those conducted on Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Voice of America. The officials added that plans are being considered to augment funds to those already existing radio broadcasts.



Rimas Česonis, a member of Bendruomenė's Public Affairs committee, at the White House being greeted by President Carter. To the left of the President is Vice-President Walter F. Mondale. Česonis is active in the re-election campaign for the Carter/Mondale ticket in Pennsylvania.

The National Executive Committee of Bendruomenė wishes to thank Joseph Lukas, Esq., of Orange, Conn.

for transmitting the following generous contributions: Muriel Boy, Orange, Conn., \$10.00; James Sansone, East Haven, Conn., \$20.00; Royce Palmer, New Haven, Conn., \$10.00; and Ann Crasklar, Southington, Conn., \$10.00.

At the same time, The Coalition to Free Petkus and Gajauskas would like to thank Eleen Bokan, of San Francisco, Calif. for her \$20.00 donation.

THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM

On January 15, 1980, *The New York Times* published a UPI news release of **Andrei Sakharov's** announcement that Professor **Vytautas Skuodys** had been recently arrested in Vilnius. Prof. Skuodys lectured in geology at Vilnius University, where he had graduated from in 1953. A week before his arrest, Skuodys' apartment had been searched three times. He had been persistently harassed by Soviet agents since August, 1979, when he had participated with the 45 Balts who signed the protest and declaration which demanded the repudiation of the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact (Molotov-Ribbentrop), the withdrawal of foreign armies from Baltic soil, and the return of independence to Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

Furthermore, it has been learned that **Skuodys was born in the United States**. According to the records of a Lithuanian parish in Chicago, Vytautas Skuodys was born in Chicago on March 21, 1929 and was baptized Benedictas Vytautas Skuodys. The records state that his mother's maiden name was Elizabeth Markevičius; his father's name is entered as Peter Scott-Skuodys. It is not yet known in what year Skuodys left America for Lithuania.

Elta Press announced that **Freedom House** Chairman and former New Jersey Senator **Clifford P. Case** sent a telegram to Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev on November 9th, 1979. In the telegram, Mr. Case demanded that **Antanas Terleckas, Gleb Jakunin, and Tatjana Velikanova**, arrested between October 30 and November 1, be released. "These individuals supported the rights of free cultural, religious, and political expression," the telegram said. These rights are recognized in agreements which were signed by the Soviet Union." Freedom House is a non-sectarian American organization whose goal is to "strengthen free societies."

On December 20, 1979, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed a Baltic resolution which stresses that the U.S. delegation to the 1980 Conference on Security



and Cooperation in Europe should seek full implementation of the Helsinki Final Act principle on self-determination of peoples, and which puts the U.S.S.R. on notice as to its new law of Soviet citizenship. This resolution, H. Con. Res. 200, was originally passed by the House of Representatives in November, 1979. The resolution must now officially be brought to the attention of the Executive Branch, since it requests specific actions on the part of the President and Department of State. *Bridges* readers are urged to write their Congressmen, Senators, the Department of State, and the President, bringing to their attention the need for implementation of this resolution.

CULTURE

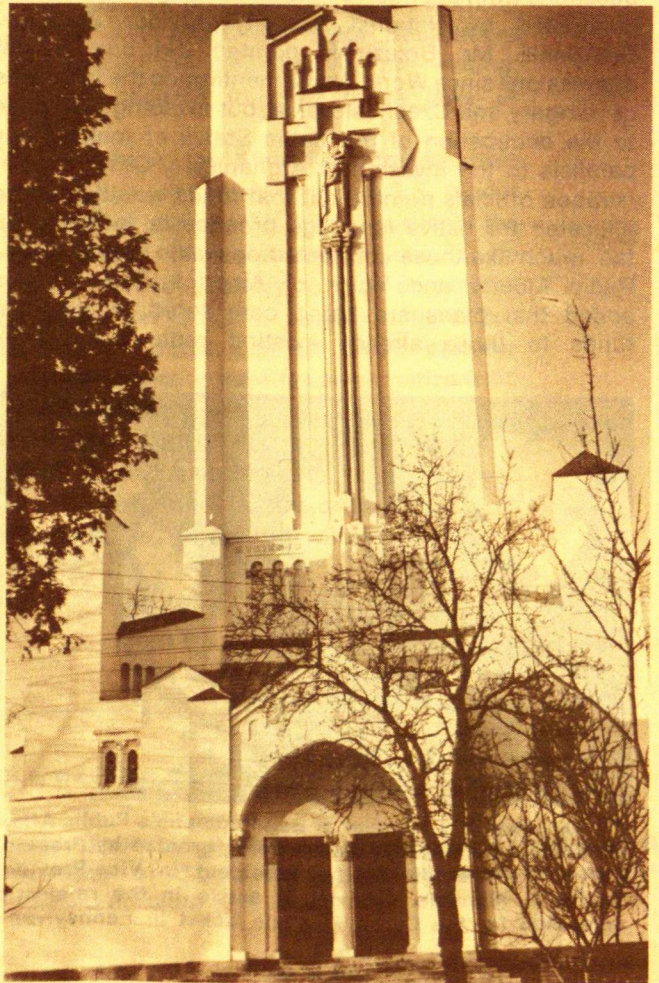
Devout Roman Catholic Lithuanians have a deep attachment to the Blessed Virgin Mary, an attachment that can be traced back through the **Miracle of Our Lady of Šiluva**. Šiluva is a small town in Western Lithuania about 27 miles (16 kilometers) southeast from the port city of Klaipėda. In 1457, Prince Petras Gedgaudas, a local landowner, built a wooden church devoted to the Nativity of Mary. Annually, during the feast of the Nativity, throngs of people from all over Lithuania would come to worship and attend the parish festival. The original wooden church burned to the ground but a new edifice was erected at the same site in 1500. When the Reformation swept over Lithuania in the sixteenth century, the Calvinists persecuted the Roman Catholics and, in 1536, destroyed the church by fire. Some of the faithful managed to save a few church vestments, an official deed to the church, and a treasured picture of the Madonna and Child, believed to be a copy of the Maria Maggiore in Rome. These were placed in a metal-covered oak chest which was secretly buried beneath a huge boulder near the church.

In 1592, after Calvinists had acquired control of the town and estate, a school was founded at the site of the old church for the preparation of Calvinist teachers and ministers. At the same time, all holdings of the Catholic church were confiscated. Around 1606, the Catholics initiated court proceedings to regain their property. However, during the course of the proceedings, an unusual event occurred. It was recorded as follows in a handwritten history of the Šiluva church, dated around 1651.

"Shepherd boys from a nearby village, while grazing their flock on church lands saw a girl with flowing hair on a large rock, holding a child in her arms and sadly weeping . . ." The children told their families and neighbors about this and the next day, a crowd gathered near the rock. A Calvinist minister

joined the group and began to berate the people for listening to the temptations of the devil. As he was lecturing, the Weeping Lady again appeared on the rock. Summoning up his courage, the Calvinist approached the vision and asked the girl, "Why are you weeping?" She answered "I am weeping because once my Son was honored and worshipped in this place, but now all that the people do is plow and sow the land."

In the late 18th century, Pope Pius VI officially proclaimed the apparitions to be true and authentic. But the story doesn't end there. Despite the miraculous appearance of the Blessed Virgin, the Calvinists didn't just turn around and give the land back to the Catholics. In 1612, a Rev. Kazakevičius, leader of the Catholic group in the court proceedings to reclaim the land, found an old blind man who claimed he knew



The chapel of Our Lady of Šiluva in Lithuania, photograph taken in the Spring of 1979.

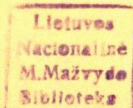
Darbininkas photo

the location of the buried trunk. The blind man led searchers to the same site where the old church had once stood, near the same rock on which the vision had occurred. As the blind man approached the rock, tales have it that his sight was immediately restored. After the searchers dug up the trunk, its contents, particularly the deed, authenticated the Catholics' claim and eventually the property was returned to them.

Since 1625, many churches have been built and rebuilt on that original site. The present church was started in 1908. World War I and the Wars of Independence interrupted construction until the building was completed in 1924. The architect was Anton Wiwulski (Vivulskis). In 1975, Pope Paul VI granted the Church of Šiluva the honorary title *basilica minor*. During Lithuanian independence, the famous Šiluva devotions attracted up to 100,000 people at a time.

Devotion to Our Lady of Šiluva made the trans-Atlantic crossing, too. The only church with that name in America was built in Maizeville, Pennsylvania in 1866. In the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C., there is a chapel that was dedicated to Our Lady of Šiluva and ceremoniously consecrated on September 4, 1966. The shrine was a gift of the Lithuanian Catholics of America and was installed under the guidance of Bishop Vincent Brizgys. Above the arch to the chapel are the words: "Mary, console the children of a land sprinkled with blood and tears."

Jonas Jurašas, the Lithuanian director who left his homeland in 1974 with his wife, Marija, and their young child, was featured in a two-page *Boston Globe* article on January 20th, 1980. The article by reporter Kevin Kelly, entitled "A Soviet Subversive," tells how Jurašas was "released" from his position as artistic director of the Kaunas State Theater in Lithuania for supposedly "subversive" activities. These activities included staging plays that had nationalistic themes. At the time, Jurašas was already internationally known as a theater director. The *Globe* article included a photograph of an advertisement for a new play being directed by Jurašas in Providence, Rhode Island. The name of the play is "The Suicide" and it is being performed by the nationally renowned Trinity Square Players and runs from January 18 through February 17. Jurašas was also featured in a full-page article in the *Providence Sunday Journal* on January 20. The article by William K. Gale was entitled "An artist in search of freedom." Adding to this welcome exposure, a local affiliate of the public television network spent a week with Jurašas, filming him at work with the play and at home with his family for a series to be aired early in April. Look for it on your local PBS station.



PUBLICATIONS

Vaikystė ir Vedybos (Childhood and Marriage), by noted ethnographer **Dr. Jonas Balys**, is the eighth in a series dealing with Lithuanian folk traditions. This book is in a very limited edition — only 300 were published — and is meant for "future ethnographers and their dissertations." *Vaikystė ir Vedybos* is about Lithuanian customs during childhood and marriage with articles written in English, Lithuanian, and German. The price is \$6.60, including postage and handling. For more information, contact Lithuanian Folklore Publishers, 1105 Chiswell Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20902.

EDUCATION

The World Lithuanian Youth Association's Communication Center has announced plans for a **two-week Lithuanian seminar for non-Lithuanian speaking students**. The seminar is scheduled for July 27 through August 1, 1980 at Loyola of the Lakes, Ohio, and will immediately precede the regular Lithuanian-language seminar to be held August 3 - 17. This is the seventh year that the Communication Center is sponsoring courses for Lithuanian-speaking students who are at least of senior high school age. The Lithuanian-language seminar typically features a choice of eight lectures daily in grammar, literature, history, and composition. These lectures, and the written assignments that go with them, are conducted by Lithuanian professors who teach at colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada. College credit for the coursework can be arranged in almost all cases. More information on both seminars will be published in *Bridges* as it is received from the Communication Center.

Due to the efforts of **Arvydas Jurašius**, the Lithuanian School in **Denver, Colorado** has been revived. The classes are being held at the home of Mr. Jurašius, a reserve Captain in the U.S. Army and a graduate of West Point. Most of the students in the Lithuanian classes also belong to "Rūta", the Lithuanian folk dancing group in Denver. Besides studying the Lithuanian language and their ethnic heritage, the students are preparing for the VIth Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival which will take place in Chicago this coming summer. Mr. Jurašius, who is credited with having a wonderful talent for motivating young people to pursue their Lithuanian roots, plans to expand the school to include younger pupils. The school is supported by the Colorado-area district of Bendruomenė.

MEDIA

Vatican Radio has announced that starting on December 1st, 1979 it would begin broadcasting a program especially oriented towards the youth of Lithuania, a good indication of Pope John Paul II's warm regards for his persecuted but faithful flock in the southernmost Baltic State. During the IVth Lithuanian World Youth Congress, held last July in England and West Germany, a Vatican Radio correspondent transmitted several 15-minute reports on the activities and events which occurred there for broadcast to Lithuania. The correspondent, Saulius Kubilius, was a delegate to the Congress and was the only representative from Italy. Kubilius, formerly from Adelaide, Australia, is seminarian studying at the Lithuanian Institute in Rome.

Vatican Radio already has a regular Saturday program which broadcasts to Lithuania each week at 8:45 P.M. (Lithuanian time) and is intended for a general audience. The new half-hour of programming will cover information that would be of more interest to Lithuanian youth, specifically high school students. In another show of strong support for Catholics in Lithuania, Vatican Radio intends to broadcast the Mass in the Lithuanian language on the first Sunday of each month, starting in 1980.

ORGANIZATIONS

The magazine *Laiškai Lietuviams (Letters to Lithuanians)* is organizing what promises to be an exciting trip through Europe for the summer of 1980. A group will leave New York on June 14th for visits to Rome, Assisi, Florence, Venice, Innsbruck, Muenchen, Oberammergau, Baden-Baden, Lucerne, Zurich, and Copenhagen. The highlights of the trip will be an audience with **Pope John Paul II** in Rome and a viewing of the **Passion Plays in Oberammergau**. The world-famous Passion Plays have been performed nearly every ten years since 1634, when the original play was staged in fulfillment of a vow made during a plague in 1633. The magazine may also organize trips to Tivoli, Capri, and other popular cities. The package, including transportation, lodging and meals, will cost \$1,700. For more information, contact Father Juozas Vaišnys, SJ, 2345 W. 56th St., Chicago, IL 60636 or call (312) 7373-8400.

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A **World Congress of Lithuanian Jews** is planned for August or September of 1980. The Congress is to take place in Tel Aviv, Israel. Letters have already been sent to the many Lithuanian-Jewish Associations throughout the world in preparation for this event.

According to V. Mišelskis, writing in *Draugas, Lithuanian World-Wide Daily*, the Congress "will demonstrate the ties between the Lithuanian-Jew and Israeli culture." The president of Israel as well as other high government officials are expected to participate. Lithuanian-Jewish artists, sculptors, writers and poets will highlight the program. Mišelskis adds that the Congress will strengthen contacts between the various local associations and the central organization in Tel Aviv, will provide a platform for discussion of topics of concern to all, and will bring together old friends who haven't met since the war.

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Nijolė Sadūnaitė was named Outstanding Lithuanian Woman and awarded an Award of Merit during the 38th biennial convention of the **American-Lithuanian Roman Catholic Women's Alliance** last August in Chicago, Illinois. Sadūnaitė, presently completing her sentence of three years compulsory labor and three years of internal exile in Siberia, was the unanimous choice of the convention delegates. Her crime, according to the court record, is that she was "found guilty according to the Criminal Code of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic, paragraph Nr. 68, of the publication and distribution of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*," an outlawed, samizdat-type publication of the Lithuanian Catholic underground.

"There will be no plaque, no public tribute — not yet," according to a recent issue of *Moterų Dirva (Women's Field)*, the official organ of the A.L.R.C.W.A. However, in fitting tribute, the Women's Alliance has decided to institute a Chronicle Fund which seeks to underwrite the \$2,000 publication cost of one issue of the English-language version of *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*. This document, translated by Rev. Casimir Pugevičius, is published by the Lithuanian Roman Catholic Priests' League of America in Brooklyn, New York.

★ ★ ★

The **Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies** will be sponsoring its 7th Conference at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. in June, 1980. The major focus of this year's conference will be the Hitler-Stalin period between 1940 and 1953. For more information on the conference follow *Bridges* or write to AABS at its executive offices, 366-86th St., Brooklyn, NY 11209.

AABS is an international educational and scholarly organization established in 1968 by the unanimous vote of scholars assembled at the first Conference on Baltic Studies, held at the University of Maryland. The purpose

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of the Association is the promotion of research and education in Baltic Studies through sponsored meetings and conferences for the exchange of scholarly views, the evaluation of research in Baltic Studies, and the publication of a quarterly *Journal of Baltic Studies*. The annual fee for membership in AABS (including a subscription to the *Journal*) is \$20.00, \$7.50 for full-time students, and \$10.00 for emeritus members. inquiries about membership or the *Journal* should be directed to the Brooklyn address given above.

PERSONALITIES

In spite of changing neighborhood in urban centers, **Viktoras Vaitkus** is keeping Lithuanian roots alive in the Brooklyn section of Waterbury, Connecticut. He began promoting Lithuanian culture there soon after his arrival in America. From 1951 to 1959, Vaitkus directed the Waterbury Lithuanian Stage Amateurs, an acting troupe that performed for local audiences and even went "on the road" to Hartford, Boston, New York, and Baltimore. For two years he broadcast the "Voice of the Lithuanian Community" live over a local radio station. The program was cut when the station converted to an automated "beautiful music" format, but Vaitkus is negotiating with another station. He owns a bookstore called "Spauda" (Press) in which he mixes culture and commerce: amber jewelry, records, Lithuanian books, original watercolors, bumper stickers, and "Kiss me, I'm Lithuanian" buttons. Mr. Vaitkus organized a folk art exhibition in October, 1979 at the Bronson Library in Waterbury, collecting Lithuanian objects made in Waterbury, New York, Detroit, and Canada. He even had some "originals" from Lithuania. In November of last year, Vaitkus organized a trip to New York to hear students from Boston's Berklee College of Music sing, in Lithuanian, original compositions by a college professor, Jeronimas Kačinskas. Vaitkus is also serving his third term on the Taryba (Board of Directors) of the Lithuanian-American Community of U.S.A., Inc.

Viktoras Vaitkus, 62, can be very proud of his achievements. Yale and Harvard Universities now depend on him for orders of Lithuanian books. They sought an alternative to the official, Soviet-approved

books they buy directly from Lithuania. But Mr. Vaitkus is not content to rest. According to Peter Coy, writing in the *Waterbury Republican*, Vaitkus is busy collecting signatures on petitions for the release of Viktoras Petkus and Balys Gajauskas. He now has 2,000 but he's set a nation-wide goal of 750,000.

IN LITHUANIA

An account in the underground Lithuanian publication *Aušra (The Dawn)*, no. 15, which reached the West late 1979, described an event that took place on February 16, 1979 (Lithuanian Independence Day). Someone had raised the tri-colored flag of independent Lithuania on the roof of the Kaunas IV Middle School. The flag hung there until 10 A.M. when the KGB arrived with ladders and removed it. While on the roof, the security agents discovered footprints from a size-39 shoe (metric measurement). Later that day, three KGB agents walked through the school and checked all the students' shoes, writing down the names of all those who wore size 39. The next day, the agents returned to interrogate students who had arrived late to school on the 16th. A yellow, green, and red flag had also been hung over Middle School No. 34 that day, but it was taken down by 9 A.M.

There is no indication yet whether the secret police ever got to the bottom of this case, but it can be assumed that if the patriotic youngsters were identified, they would have gotten more than just the boot.

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Credits

This month's contributors to *Bridges* include: F. Andriūnas, the Lithuanian American Community of Waterbury, CT, V. Musonytė, and T. Gečienė.

GERA ŠEIMININKĖ**MUSHROOM SOUP**

(Grybų sriuba)

Ingredients:

1 ounce dried mushrooms	peppercorns
3 medium-sized potatoes	bay leaf
1 teaspoon flour	1 medium onion
salt to taste	1 tablespoon butter
up to 1 pint sour cream	3 quarts, 1 pint of water

Soak the mushrooms in water, wash them, discard the water and then chop finely. Bring the required volume of water to a boil and add the mushrooms. If any "scum" should surface, remove it with a spoon. Peel the potatoes, chop them into small pieces, and boil them along with the mushrooms until the potatoes are tender (about twenty minutes). Dissolve the flour in a little water and add to the soup mixture, mixing well. Lower the heat so that the liquid mixture simmers. Add the spices and salt, to taste. Finely chop the onion and saute in butter until transparent. Add this to the soup. Simmer for a few more minutes until all the ingredients are blended. When ready, whiten the soup with some sour cream. The soup should be eaten with bread.

If fresh mushrooms are used, the same procedure but increase the quantity.

FRIED SMELTS

(Keptos seliavos or Keptos stintos)

Fried smelts are most often associated with the traditional Lithuanian Christmas Eve dinner (Kūčios) but can be a tasty dish any time of the year (either as a cold appetizer or a hot main dish).

Ingredients:

2 lbs. frozen smelts	2 eggs
4 tablespoons butter	2 tablespoons cold water
1 tablespoon cooking oil	salt to taste
1/2 cup flour	

Wash the defrosted smelts in cold water. Crack the eggs into a mixing bowl, add the salt and water, and beat to combine the ingredients. Dip the fish in the egg batter and roll in the flour. Fry the battered smelts in melted butter and oil over a moderately hot stove until lightly browned on both sides.

Hot or cold, the smelts can be served with fried potatoes and a salad. Note: these fish are small, about 3 to 4 inches long. The above recipe serves 4 as a main dish, many more if used as an appetizer.

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