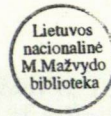


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LITHUANIAN - AMERICAN
NEWSJOURNAL

THE YEAR OF ST. CASIMIR, 1484-1984

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DANCING through HISTORY

How did Lithuanians dance in pagan times? There are records of the *vaidilutės* (vestal virgins) dancing with candles in their hands as they tended the sacred and eternal fires on the *aukuras* (altars) to the supreme god *Perkūnas* (Thunder) whose abode was on the high hillocks beneath ancient oaks. There was the vigorous *kirvis* (axe) dance for men, who would catch descending hatches thrown skyward to portray their prowess while courting a maiden.

Tacitus wrote about Lithuania the first Christian century, "Young men fling themselves and dance amongst sharp swords and the deadly points of javelins."

None of the dances of that era remains. Lithuania's conversion in 1387 took place during a period when Christian intolerance was at its height in the age of the Crusades and Inquisition. Along with the temples of *Perkūnas* and Pantheon, went also the dance.

In the earliest Christian era, dances were reduced to the circle (*ratelis*) variety, suitable for children. There were numerous circle dances done to the accompaniment of songs whose texts dealt with every creature under Lithuanian skies, flowers, bushes, fish, trees, and farm life. It is from these that the more elaborate dances developed.

The older Lithuanian dances, after their emergence from the simple play form, were sedately

slow and restrained. With the passing of years they became livelier, although they were still free of polka steps. The polka came to Lithuania from Poland, years before it was introduced to Paris by a Czech maiden, from whence it spread to the rest of the West. Danish author Age M. Benedictsen who visited Lithuania in 1895 wrote: "A dance which the young peasants of today practice is called *Blazdingėlė* — Dance of the Swallow. I saw this dance one summer evening in a little birch grove. Couple behind couple take up their position in two sets facing each other, then they swing around, bend down and pass through, quick as a flash so that really in a way it reminds one of the swallow's twisting and rapid flight." With the intensified Russification of the Lithuanians during the Tsarist regimes, a decline in the adult folk dance set in. The people suffered great hardships and persecutions. There was nothing to dance about, but they could still sing the plaintive airs of the *daina*. Lithuanian refugees from USSR brought their dances with them to nearly every corner of the world: Australia, New Zealand, Africa, almost every South American country, Canada, England, and many European countries. In the United States, the Lithuanian dances are not only very much alive among Lithuanians, but have found great favor among American folk dancers throughout this entire land.



Ann Jillian (Jūratė Nausėdaitė), scheduled to make a film this summer in England, hopes to hostess the program of the Seventh Free World Lithuanian Dance Festival July 1, at the Richfield, Ohio Coliseum. Details — page 9.

By Vytautas F. Beliajus



TRAKAI: Dancers in Soviet-occupied Lithuania perform in a historic pageant in the restored 15th century castle of

Trakai, built by Vytautas the Great. St. Casimir sojourned here with his parents.

The Kremlin Keeps Jumping on the Bandwagon

A grotesque footnote to the commemoration of St. Casimir's anniversary was provided by the Soviet government. Early in March, the USSR embassy in Washington distributed to the U.S. press a special release on the celebrations held in Lithuania to mark St. Casimir's 500th jubilee. The release, prepared by the *Novosti* press agency, says that the Catholic churches in Lithuania began holding festive services early in March. The Rev. Algirdas Gutauskas, head of the Vilnius Archdiocese and chairman of the preparatory jubilee commission is quoted discussing St. Casimir and the three-year long preparation for the anniversary.

The release also quotes his statement that the past three years were an "important period" in the life

of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, highlighted by the publication of the first of the three volumes of a missal in the Lithuanian language, of a 600-page prayer-book and of the annual "Catholic Calendar and Reference Book for 1984". The release concludes by saying that the jubilee festivities will continue in Lithuania throughout the coming spring and summer to end on August 26 in a ceremony honoring St. Casimir's relics.

The release is obviously aimed at the Western public opinion, with the purpose of demonstrating the generosity of the Soviet government and the extent of "religious freedom" in Lithuania. Here are a few important facts that the release neglects to mention:

1. The official press in Soviet-occupied Lithuania marked St. Casimir's anniversary with a series of scurrilous articles, denigrating and ridiculing the Patron Saint of Lithuania. Catholics in Lithuania have no access to the press and to the media and thus were unable to respond to those articles which were deeply offensive to them. The Catholic publications mentioned in the Soviet release have been distributed to the clergy and the faithful in very few copies.

2. While introducing the Rev. Gutasukas as "head of the Vilnius Archdiocese", the release conveniently "forgot" to mention that the actual apostolic administrator of the Archdiocese, Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius, was forced into internal exile in 1961 and has been prevented ever since from performing his duties as Bishop of Vilnius.

3. The Soviet authorities made a "special contribution" to the celebration of the 500th anniversary of St. Casimir by arresting and imprisoning two Lithuanian priests in 1983. The Rev. Alfonsas Svarinskas was

sentenced on May 6, 1983, to seven years in the camps and five years of exile. On December 2, 1983, the Rev. Sigitas Tamkevičius was sentenced to six years in labor camps and four years of internal exile. Both priests were members of the Lithuanian Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Believers' Rights. They were subjected to mock-trials and sentenced on trumped-up charges.

4. The release is totally silent about the persecution of religion in Lithuania: the coercion of religious students, the denial of the right to publish religious literature, the KGB interference into the affairs of the one existing Theological Seminary, the closing and desecration of churches, the blatant discrimination against religious believers, arrests and physical violence.

Against this background, the Soviet press release about St. Casimir's anniversary stands unmasked as another exercise in the totalitarian "Big Lie".

It is appropriately dated 1984.

Narkeliūnaitės Photo



THE VATICAN: With zest, charm and pride, the Grand-nèlè Folk Dancers from Cleveland perform in St. Peter's

Square during the pilgrimage of free-world Lithuanians to Rome to commemorate Saint Casimir's Anniversary.

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

Nelė Mazalaitė

(Translated
by Lon Laban)



In memory of the Lithuanian people who suffered the anquish of The Horrible June Days of 1941 when the Soviet invaded their country, murdered and deported thousands to Siberia, we introduce you to this short story, a classic which has been translated into numerous languages.

There had been so much talk on the earth about peace, that even in heaven they had begun to believe it.

"Perhaps," said one holy philosopher, who could not break the habit of challenge and debate even in this place of supreme happiness, "perhaps, if down below they are shouting that peace reigns, then it must be true that blood has stopped flowing in every other way except in the veins of living man. But it is queer," he muttered, "very queer, indeed. The other day I glanced down and was overjoyed to see that they were replanting the forests, yet, when I took a second look, I saw not trees, but cannon barrels."

"Just a memento of the war, brother," said another, "just a reminder of the days of punishment men brought upon themselves."

"Yes, and our wretched brethren suffered so much that even their children's children will not forget it," added another of the heavenly souls who had joined the group. "Just think of the fire and cold our newly arrived brothers have lived through before coming here. They were so bereft of everything that they do not even know where they left their bodies."

Just then, St. Peter, deeply preoccupied, passing by on his way to the fields where farmer St. Isidore was

planting new stars (God's acres are immense, you know, and the watchful eye of the supervisor is needed everywhere), overheard the last remark, turned suddenly and addressed the group:

"We shall honor our brethren who have suffered through the war. Let the body of one soldier enter heaven . . . I think that we can arrange to have the grave of an Unknown Soldier in our garden."

When the entire group, whose love for their descendants shines like the sun through all eternity, had expressed its joy, St. Peter summoned the noble knight, St. George, and said to him:

"Noble knight, you are chosen to make a trip to the earth, for you yourself were a soldier, and who better than yourself could select the body of a soldier worthy of resting here. Where is your steed?"

The charger bounded off with such graceful leaps, that much later a story was told on earth of how one little lad had seen an amazing sight in the heavens. He thought that he had seen four moons dancing in blue water.

"You won't even tire," said the knight to his mount. "The war raged so long down there, that the bodies of the dead soldiers bridge the world. We have only to descend and we will have found that which we were sent to bring back."

And so it was, for barely had the steed set foot on the ground when his foreleg touched the body of a soldier, so shallowly was it buried atop a pile of remains. But it was not the one St. George was seeking. And as he traveled farther, his search was still in vain, for none of the soldiers was deserving to rest even on the edge of the garden of heaven . . . One still clutched his vengeful weapon to himself in his grave, another something he had looted. Other hands were weighed down with gold. Under the greenward, watches ticked away, jewels sparkled. The fingers of another still clutched the hair of the woman he had ravished. One lay with his mouth full of clay, another had sunk

deep into the bowels of the earth. They had come to seize foreign soil, and this was how it now ruled them. The farther St. George traveled, the more he was horrified at what had become of men and soldiers. Losing all hope he journeyed on through deserts, over mountains and across the seas.

"So much time has passed," he thought, "that at home they may begin to think that I have decided to remain here altogether. What shall I say when I return? Will anyone want to believe that the word soldier is a curse, that he steals as he dies, and that sinning is in him stronger than his wounds?"

"I see some sort of garden," the knight spoke aloud to his mount.

The skeletons of homes stood out in the forbidding and deserted garden, but as the Saint hitched his horse to a charred birch tree he saw something. The November night was dank and dark, but one only needed eyes as bright as his to discern a stone monument and the figure of a man rising from its shadow. The stranger walked here and there about the garden, carefully picking dry brushwood and pulling a few rose buds from the dirt.

"Your horse is tired and hungry, traveler," he said as he came up, "but I can find nothing more. At one time we grew very many roses here, and each guest left with whole bouquets of them."

As he withdrew into the darkness, Saint George followed him so quietly that his spurs did not even jingle. The man unlocked the door of a massive battered building and went in. He then lit a candle and Saint George, silently following, saw how the man bowed to the walls in sign of reverence as he passed through spacious rooms.

St. George followed the man down a long arched gallery and climbed after him up the winding stairs of a lofty tower. At the edge of a parapet the man raised a flag and began to blow a trumpet. The sound awoke a bell, also in the tower, and it began its lament. It wept so plaintively that its

heart seemed to heat up as if from a flame. Though its heart was ready to break, the bell could neither move nor speak. Then the man climbed down, made his way outside to the monument built of stones, lit a fire of amber and juniper before it and began to sing a hymn. Saint George sensed that this hymn made restless and fearful the sleep of the enemy who had occupied this land.

When the fire died out, the man again went back to the shadow of the stone monument from which he had earlier risen, and it was only then that the knight, taking the man by the shoulders, inquired:

"Who are you?"

The man replied: "I am an unknown soldier of my country, the Unknown Soldier of Lithuania."

"I am so glad," said the saint, "so glad to have found you. I have been searching for one like you. Your hands are clean; you are not stained by disgrace. I will take you with me."

"No," protested the Unknown Soldier. "I can not leave my post, I am the last, left alone here. Please, Sir Knight, let me be. Just glance below the ground and you will find what you are seeking. You will see them everywhere. My country is small and we are dying day by day. Here you will find what you seek, Sir Knight."

The knight looked and saw the tragic truth. In cemeteries and ditches, in the forests and on muddy river bottoms were the dead he could take with him. They lay peacefully as if asleep. They

held their land in such a strong embrace that he dared not waken them from their deserved rest.

St. George mounted and rode up and down the entire land. He saw that peace had never reached here. Death stalked through the streets and countryside, leaving its brand on the doors of the homes. It was not a pleasant death leading to the cemetery with candlelight and chanting . . . Red and dirty, it slinked about like a rabid dog or wolf. Death preyed upon people everywhere. It tossed them about like dust, mocking them, and then returned for the kill. Soldiers, girls, children, priests, the aged; all who were born were its victims. It seemed that death had no other occupation than that of annihilating the people of this land.

The holy knight covered his face with his cloak and spurred his mount homeward. He was so tired when he dismounted that he was barely able to carry the weight of his armor.

Quietly he described all that he had seen. With a voice full of dejection he said: "I saw many portraits of myself in many churches. They showed me as the mighty protector. The dragon lies slain at my feet. But I didn't aid them at all."

"But surely you brought back the unknown soldier from there," spoke one of the saints. "In honoring him, we will honor this unfortunate land."

Saint George, with a voice barely audible, answered: "I brought back nobody. If the Lord doesn't show His mercy soon, in our garden we shall be able to bury an Unknown Nation."

SLAVE LABOR 1941

Helen Tautvaiša

For five years Lithuanian men and women slaved on Sagilakh Island to construct the Rybozavod fishing industry for the Soviet in the Arctic.

When I was informed that I had been appointed a state fisher, I did not have the slightest knowledge about fishing. I could lift my arms up only to my elbows. My joints were swollen. The scurvy sores had not yet disappeared. The health of the other women and youths was not in any better state.

My co-worker was a Lithuanian student. At least it was comforting to see that this youth who had survived the polar night was moving about briskly. I had seen him laid low by the scurvy and parasites. At that time he seemed deranged. He had lost his place on the pallet and slept curled up in a ball by the fireplace. His mother died; I saw her half-naked corpse on the pallet. She had given her bits of clothing to her children.

We were ordered to work at a fast pace. No grumbling. No complaining. Experience taught us that the disobedient would lose their bread cards. The taskmasters would say, "Give back the bread card and go where you want." Each one knew that one would not get far in the snow covered Arctic wasteland and the swampy tundra. One could not find food for oneself and one's children even during the season when the great flocks of birds flew about and when the fish were spawning in the waters. No one had to watch us; no barbed wire, dogs or guards were necessary. Escape was impossible.

We learned from the people who handled the ration cards that during the winter of 1941 alone, 600 people had died. During the following winter we buried a similar number. The construction of this grandiose Soviet settlement cost about 1500 lives. This did not include the people who died in the lumber camps along the Lena River.

Later we learned that the fishing industry in Trofimovsk was a total failure. The Bolshevik planners had miscalculated. The fishing centers were abandoned.

SOVIET SLAVE LABOR 1984

A drive to boycott Soviet cars has been launched by a Baltic Human Rights organization in Australia. HELLP Association (Help the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Peoples) has voiced moral objections to the Soviet use of slave labor as the grounds for its appeal. The vehicle in question is the *Lada-Niva* which is manufactured by the Soviets' Zhiguli plant. The Research Center for prisoners, psycho-prisons and forced labour concentration camps of the USSR in Zikhzon Ysakov,

Israel, has reported that the Soviet car industry relies heavily on components made by innocent prisoners of conscience and other captives. When *Lada-Niva* appeared on the Australian market in mid-1983, HELLP Association asked the Soviet car's Tasmanian agent to stop selling it. The salesmen's trade union was also approached. The sedan version of *Lada* (alias Zhiguli), on sale in Canada since 1978, has been the subject of constant public controversy and protests.

Old Time
New Time

D O W R I E S

Buracas Archives Photo



Two dapper

hope chest carriers

perch on the bride's

decorated

dowry chest

while sharp-eyed

bobytės stand guard.

If you could turn back in time and attend your own great grandparents' marriage, you would enjoy a lively panoramic folk drama which evolved through centuries. It lilted with merry songs and farewell dirges, with comic encounters between the suitor with his matchmaker and the girl with her family. The bride's life-long goal was to fill her dowry chest with bedding, tableclothes, towels, linens. Sometimes a very poor girl would secretly stuff rocks into the chest to make it appear heavier so that the irrepressible carriers of the chest could enhance her value among the watching community. There were hilarious scenes in which guests would "hang" the matchmaker, and tear-jerking scenes in which the bride wept and sang of the end of her girlhood and uncertainty of her future. And there were witty scenes consisting of folk drama combined with original additions, in which the groom and his matchmaker bargained with the parents over other dowry property such as land, money, cows, horses. If the future husband was to live with his

in-laws, the bargaining would take place over the kind of dowry that he would have to bring to the marriage. The wedding festivities continued several days and nights, sometimes a week, and involved the countryside.

The custom of the dowry disappeared first in the towns, then in the farming communities. But do not think the idea of a dowry, intrinsic in a marriage relationship, could die out entirely. Today, a bride and groom with a Lithuanian heritage — even third and fourth generation Americans — bring to their union a dowry of Lithuanian culture rich with thousands of folk songs and varied folk dances, folk arts and crafts, an exquisitely sensitive and expressive language, fascinating history and literature much of which is available in translation in English and other languages. And there is the inherited vision of a full life replete with love of one's people and the work ethic. And unwavering faith. And the spirit of determination to be free and let others be free to enjoy the good life.

A MAN FOR ALL TIME

ACCOLADES FOR REV. CASIMIR PUGEVIČIUS

The rich texture of Rev. Casimir Pugevičius' life which complements the extraordinary calibre of his intelligence and erudition evokes warm admiration from all who meet him. Add to these qualities his commitment to Catholicism and social action and you see an ideal leader. Last, but not least, observe the self effacement and humility which grace his power and you have a rare human being who gives of himself to others motivated by no need for recognition and kudos because his spiritual commitment rounds out and completes his being.

What other hard working individual among us would protest so vigorously against a banquet in his honor? He protested, but he got it anyway, as the apex of a weekend of political-cultural studies organized by the World Lithuanian Community, and the Lithuanian-American, Canadian and Youth Communities. The banquet proved to be one of the most spontaneously relaxed and happy affairs in our memory, inspired by Father Pugevičius' own rare spirit.

A survey of his biography is impressive. His parents immigrated to the United States from Lithuania before World War I and he was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1928. He was more than a bright student. He was brilliant. He mastered Lithuanian, English, Latin, German and French at the Catholic University of America, on a Basselin scholarship, reaping his degrees, with an M.A. in philosophy in 1949 and licentiate in sacred theology in 1953. Ordained to the priesthood in 1953, he served as assistant pastor in the parishes of St. Peter, St. Alphonsus, and St. Pius X. From 1954 - 59, he wrote a weekly column "Liturgy and Life" for the Baltimore Catholic Review, preparing readers

JOIN HIM!

Forty years of Soviet oppression in Lithuania brought changes to the Catholic Church which now resembles the Church of the Catacombs of early Christian times.

Last year thousands of dollars in direct aid were provided for the Church in Lithuania by Brooklyn's Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid of which Rev. Casimir Pugevičius is the director.

In Lithuania, there are hundreds of underground nuns who secretly carry out their ministry. An underground seminary prepares young men for the priesthood who have been denied admission to the regular seminary by the secret police. Since 1972 an invaluable underground publication *Chronicle of the Catholic Church* has been reporting conditions in the Church in Lithuania.

Father Pugevičius and his staff keep the free world informed by helping the people in Lithuania tell their own story to the media, legislators and human rights activists by way of the Lithuanian Information Center.

You too can participate in this extraordinary work and join the supporters who have been sending donations from \$5 to \$1000 and more. The contributions help provide life-saving packages for prisoners of conscience in the Gulag Archipelago. They also pay for the Vatican radio broadcasts to Lithuania, medicines, clothing for the needy, catechisms, prayer-books and copies of the New Testament smuggled into Lithuania.

Donations are tax exempt:
Lithuanian Catholic
Religious Aid
351 Highland Blvd.
Brooklyn, NY 11207

for changes promulgated ten years later by the Second Vatican Council.

Concerned with Catholic social action, he served from 1955-1962 as chaplain of the Young Christian Workers (Jocists). From 1962-64 he was chaplain general of the *Ateitis* student organization and since 1971, chaplain general of the *Ateitis* alumni. For three years he held the post of assistant director of the Family Life Bureau of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

The next nine years he served as director of radio and television for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. He was also director of the Archdiocesan Bureau of Media Information. In 1970 he co-founded EcuMedia, an inter-faith broadcasting office. For four years he was president of the Maryland Citizens' Council for educational television, and for two years president of the Catholic Broadcasters Association. In 1973 he founded the Maryland Citizens' Coalition for Cable Communications. He has produced over a thousand radio and television programs, including film documentaries on the Chapel of Our Lady of Šiluva in Washington, the photography of Algimantas Kezys, a dramatization of the trial of Rev. Antanas Šeškevičius by the communists in Lithuania, and other programs broadcasting the Lithuanian cause.

In 1974 he assumed full-time duties organizing the Lithuanian-Catholic Services (*Amerikos Lietuvių Katalikų Tarnyba*.) He is the director of the Lithuanian Information Center in Brooklyn which, under his aegis, has achieved a success which members of similar Baltic organizations tell us that they can not but envy.

Ilgiausiu metų, Father Pugevičius! *Valio!*

THE LIBERATOR

Henry L. Gaidis

On June 23, 1812, Napoleon ordered his forces across the Nemunas River into Lithuania to start the Russian campaign. The army quickly moved towards Kaunas, with the intention of liberating Lithuania and forcing Czar Alexander to sue for peace. At the outset of the campaign, Napoleon had planned to establish himself in Lithuania going no further than Smolensk for the purpose of consolidating his rule in the former Polish-Lithuanian palatinates before attempting to conquer Russia proper.

Thus the Russian campaign began without any formal declaration of war. Napoleon entered Vilnius unopposed on June 27, 1812, and was warmly greeted by the Lithuanians as a liberating hero. Farther to the east, King Jerome Napoleon of Westphalia entered Grodno on June 30, 1812, and General Louis Henri Davout, Prince of Eckmuhl, captured Minsk on July 11, 1812, with only light resistance.

The Grand Army did not engage in any major battle; however, the extreme heat, drought, and rough terrain of Lithuania took a terrible toll. Marshal Joachim Murat, King of Naples, who commanded Napoleon's cavalry, estimated that over 15,000 horses died and 50,000 troops deserted during the short forced march from Kaunas to Vilnius.

On June 29, 1812, a violent thunderstorm struck Lithuania and continued for the next five days producing continuous rain. The results were most disastrous to the French forces. Movement of troops was impeded or absolutely checked and the vast troop and supply trains on the Vilnius-Kaunas Road became disorganized. The existing roads became little better than quagmires causing the horses to break down under the additional strain. The delay and frequent loss of these supply trains caused both troops and horses to suffer. Napoleon's forces traditionally were well supplied by his transportation corps, but they proved inadequate during the invasion.

As the French army pushed deeper into Russia, the natural consequences were a shortage of food supplies

resulting in a breakdown of discipline and marauding in quest of food. The Lithuanians, whom the French forces were supposed to be liberating from Russian occupation, were maltreated and plundered everywhere by their deliverers. The water available in Lithuania was scanty in quantity and often contaminated. The combination of food and water problems caused a frightful amount of diarrhea, dysentery, and typhus for which little could be done. The sick were left behind in temporary hospital camps and thou-

sands died due to filth, starvation, and general destitution. It is estimated that only one in ten survived when stricken with such sickness. The necessity of foraging for food and water caused large detachments of Napoleon's forces to straggle behind the main body and discipline deteriorated with each mile.

Czar Alexander learned of the French invasion during the evening of June 25, 1812, while hosting a ball at Russian General Bennigsen's Zakret estate a few miles from Vilnius and immediately fled. (Courtesy LITUANUS)

An Afternoon with Mr. Folk Dance

Pamela Fraser Gilbert

I knock at the solid door of the Marion Street house, admiring embroidered folk art curtains. And here is "Vyts," as he is affectionately called, inviting me in. Soft-spoken and smiling, this is the man whose work in preserving the authenticity of ethnic customs and dance goes unparalleled and who edits and publishes the international magazine of folklore and folk dance, *Viltis* ("Hope," in his native Lithuanian.)

Recently honored in Denver with the Transcendental Society's Age of Enlightenment Award for cultural integrity, invincibility, and world harmony, Vytautas Beliajus is modest in his acceptance. He says he feels "out of place, like David among giants." Yet like David, the dancer of psalms, Beliajus leads not because he sets out to do so, but because in the process of actualizing his own talents and dreams, the good work goes forward by way of example.

A septuagenarian with amazing spirit, his way of bridging national boundaries through dance has directly affected the lively interest in ethnic dance now being experienced in Denver. Vyts started his career of teaching the dancing and cultures of many lands some 50 years ago with the Chicago Parks District. The story of his life and work unfolds for me across the table of his warm and friendly kitchen.

Already Vyts is involved with the Colorado Folk Arts Council at the Cinco de Mayo Festival and plans for the

annual *Viltis* party, which brings aficionados from all over the country to join with local folkdance enthusiasts. October 1984's party is special in that it marks the 40th anniversary of *Viltis* as a printed magazine.

Vyts' home is his office and he, is the staff. From a box containing the May issue of *Viltis*, almost ready for the printer, Vyts whisks out several items. Here are photos of Cleveland's Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival, the largest ethnic folk festival in the country. Held every four years, this summer it calls Vyts back to the gathering of his kinsfolk. Logging 6,000 plus miles a year in teaching activity across the continent has been standard for Vyts since 1938.

Now I hear how he came in 1923 from Lithuania to Chicago, escorting his grandmother. It was because the two visited two uncles in Colorado that Vyts first saw Denver. Enrolling that September in the Ebert School, he attended three months before returning to Chicago. His mother wanted him to continue his schooling and "maybe be an engineer," chuckles Vyts, with a little shrug. "I did complete one year of school here. But I have never finished grade school," he adds almost sadly.

In spite of this, Vyts speaks six languages and is a published author. His style in *Ona*, a collection of stories harking of Lithuania, has been likened to that of Isaac Bashevis Singer.

"In Chicago the Lithuanians had many choirs, but no dance groups. One

lady, organizing a children's dance group, found an old Russian, originally a dance teacher. Just as long as they dance, was the idea here." His eyes twinkle as he recounts the choreographed performance of pseudo-Lithuanian dances, in no way resembling what he as a young man had learned in the village and farm communities.

"When plans for the 1933 World's Fair were underway, I was put on the arrangements committee and organized a group. We made many appearances, and we were a hit!" Vyts was invited to work for the parks system. "I was assigned different neighborhoods to work in. There were so many groups . . . I spent weekends learning as part of the groups. Then I would teach what I had learned."

Careful observation was Vyts' learning mode. By 1937, because of his teaching and encouragement, international folkdancing was becoming a recreational pastime in Chicago. There had been cultural appreciation and study seminars previously, but this was the first time there had been participation and enjoyment to this degree. "The word spread, and we had terrific attendance. Delegates came from New York, Minnesota, and California. Many clubs were begun across the country." And Vyts was in demand to teach, to perform.

The war years brought change in the form of a new position: teaching international folkdance at the South's first free school in Faithope, Alabama. Vyts staged many programs, wrote narrative and directed tableaux involving much of the community. *Viltis* which was begun as a mimeographed letter created by Vyts to keep in touch with all his dance friends who had been drafted, became an under-cover operation when he was hospitalized with tuberculosis of the larynx under strict orders "not to lift a finger."

"In those days the treatment was fresh air — just fresh air," says Vyts. In 1943, Vyts stubbornly refused an implant to replace his lost voice. After seven years of whispering, some vocal strength returned. Then, in the early '50s, he became ill again and lay in critical condition in a Chicago hospital. It seemed a pull of fate from Denver was exerted upon his life. "A friend who had attended my class here, and

was affiliated with the Jewish Consumptive Relief Sanatorium saved my life. I was brought to Denver, so ill that they administered the last rites. But somehow the treatment worked, and I pulled out." This time Vyts was told he wouldn't dance again.

With the same faith and tenacity that he had exhibited before, he did resume his work, often returning for check-ups at the sanatorium. "The necessity of frequent trips and treatment in Denver prompted me to move from San Diego in the late '50s."

Here in front of us lies a thick binder, an autobiographical documentary of life in Lithuania before 1923. "The writing is all but finished," says the man beside me, following my glance, "but for the burdensome things, like index and glossary." Vyts is hoping to have a historian write a preface.

When I remark that it is a busy, full life for Vyts who has touched so many people, he humorously pats my

hand, assuring me that he is still touching. The phone rings. It is a folk-dance friend from New Jersey calling from Stapleton Airport.

I thank Vyts and let myself out, past the row of dance shoes, the glittering Indian headpiece on the mantle, the walls displaying various dance firsts and honorary awards, and the shelves of momentoes — gifts from traveling friends — from all over the world. Just before opening the door, I turn to see a painting of the young Vyts in a meditative pose, a lotus open at his feet.

YOU enjoyed Vytautas Beliajus' short story in BRIDGES "When the World Was Coming to an End."

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You are cordially invited to the
Seventh Free-World Lithuanian
FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL

At the Coliseum, Richfield, Ohio, south of Cleveland at the intersection of I-271 and Route 303, Sunday, July 1, 1984 at 2:00 p.m.

50 dance groups; over 2000 dancers from the United States, Canada, South America, and West Germany will perform.

OPENING OF FESTIVAL Saturday, June 30th, 7:00 p.m., Shrine of the Pensive Christ, 18022 Neff Rd., Cleveland, Ohio.

GET-ACQUAINTED PARTY will be held at the **PUBLIC AUDITORIUM**, 1220 E. 6th St., Cleveland, Ohio.

FESTIVAL'S BANQUET at Stouffer's Inn on the Square, downtown Cleveland, will be held on Sunday, July 1st, 8:00 p.m. At the same time there will be a **YOUTH BANQUET** at the Holiday Inn Independence near the Coliseum.

TICKETS TO THE FESTIVAL for \$5.00, \$7.00, \$10.00, and \$14.00 can be obtained from Mrs. Valdona Ziedonis, 18706 Kildeer Ave., Cleveland, Ohio 44119, Gifts International in Chicago and any local Ticketron office. Groups ordering at least 25 of the \$10.00 or \$14.00 tickets will receive a \$2.00 discount on each ticket.

TICKETS TO THE BANQUET at \$27.00 per person and to the Youth Banquet at \$13.00 per person can be obtained from Mrs. Ona Jokubaitis, 3000 Hodden Rd., Euclid, Ohio 44117, tel: (216) 481-7161, and from Mr. Romas Zorska, 4118 Silaby Rd., University Hts., Ohio, 44118, tel: (216) 371-0130.

CHECKS FOR THE TICKETS should be made payable to THE LITHUANIAN FOLK DANCE FESTIVALS, INC. Please enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope for return mail with your order. Tickets to the Banquets will not be available at the Festival, so please order them now.

ADMISSIONS TO THE GET-ACQUAINTED PARTY will be available at the door: Adults \$3.00, Students \$2.00.

HOTEL INFORMATION can be obtained from Mr. Vytautas Jokubaitis, 3000 Hodden Rd., Euclid, Ohio 44117, tel: (216) 481-7161.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE FESTIVAL!

THE FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

PETKUS NOMINATED FOR NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

Viktoras Petkus, as well as three other "prisoners of conscience" in the Soviet Union, has been nominated for the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize by the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Petkus, a member of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, was sentenced in July 1977 to ten years of heavy labor and five years of exile. His incarceration and maltreatment have drawn protests from all over the world.

THE 1984 FREE OLYMPIAD

A torch run from Toronto, Canada, across the United States to Los Angeles — the site of the 1984 Olympic Games — will be one of the main highlights of the 1984 Free Olympiad scheduled to be held July 5-6-7 in Etobicoke, Ontario. The organizing committee consists of representatives from the Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian communities. The first Free Olympiad was organized in 1980 as a protest of the Moscow site for the summer Olympic Games which were eventually forced to withstand world wide boycotts over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

A "kick off" of the Free Olympiad is planned for Monday, July 2 in the Molsom Summer Garden on Ontario Place. It will take the form of a cultural festival executed by the youth groups of the participating communities. The Free Olympiad Flame will be lit here at the festival in the presence of dignitaries including the Premier of Ontario, William Davis, and the Mayor of Toronto, Art Eggleton, and will then be used to ignite two separate torches. These torches will be carried by athletes from all four communities through the heart of Toronto and will eventually separate and head to different destinations. One torch will reside one day at each of the four cultural communities and on July 5 will be carried to Etobicoke Centennial Stadium to light the Olympiad Flame. The second torch will have as its final destination the Los Angeles Olympic Games. The arrival of the flame in L.A. will coincide with the opening of the Games on August 5.

The 12 runners who will carry the flame the 3000 mile distance will be accompanied by a caravan of 5 vehicles and a support staff of 4 people whose aim will also be to spread the spirit of the event to the approximately 150 communities along the route.

The caravan and runners carrying the Olympic Flame will be met in Los Angeles by the politically active group BAFL and other representatives of all the four communities. The flame will be placed in a designated location and allowed to burn throughout the Summer Olympics as a constant reminder of the subjugated nations' continued struggle for freedom.

This years' Free Olympiad Honorary Chairman is Toronto basketball ace Leo Rautins, member of the NBA's Philadelphia 76'ers, who is of Lithuanian origin.

Translating Chernenko

by Ojars Kalnins



Stueta Cartoon

What he said:	What he meant:
The 26th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was an event of paramount significance in the life of the Communist Party.	If you think we messed up at the last Party Congress, wait till you hear about this one.
"Our Party has always based its practical policy on questions pertaining to the development of our nation's economy."	We still haven't figured out how to run this country.
"It is not the tradition of the Communists to be content with what has been achieved."	This year's failures are sure to be an improvement over last year's failures.
"One of the fundamental features of our economic strategy is a fuller, more effective and thrifty use of our productive potential and resources."	If we can't buy technology from the West, we'll steal it...the black market is our lifeblood.
"Soviet society is undergoing deep-root changes...the classes and social groups are drawing closer together and the friendship among the different nationalities is growing stronger."	The natives are getting restless...if it isn't dissident scientists arousing the working class, it's the Balts plotting with Ukrainians to undermine our Russian rule.
"The dynamic development of the multi-national state has certainly given rise to new problems. All of them are being resolved in a spirit of equality and fraternity, disinterested cooperation and mutual assistance."	We shipped off another 700 nationalist troublemakers to Siberia yesterday.
"The range of affairs and concerns of the Party has no boundaries. Everything that concerns the life, work and everyday living conditions of the Soviet people is a direct concern of the Party."	With the addition of East Germany security specialists, new surveillance technology from the West and 3200 new informers, the KGB is stronger than ever.
"The life-giving force of friendship and cooperation on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, socialist internationalism and mutual trust is a weighty factor at the present stage in the development of our sister countries in the socialist community."	Let's face it, the Eastern Bloc hates us, the Third World doesn't trust us and nobody in his right mind believes all this "scientific socialism" hogwash anyway. But as long as we have more tanks and missiles than they do, we've got them over a barrel.

(The Truth, Fall 1983)

ESCAPE From a Soviet Fishing Trawler

Arifas Petras Žukauskas, a 19-year Lithuanian sailor, jumped a Soviet ship in Spanish waters last August. He recently arrived in the United States where he was granted political asylum. In his first press conference, given in Chicago, Žukauskas talked about his background and the reasons for his defection.

"After graduating from an eleven-year intermediate school", Žukauskas said, "I entered the Klaipėda technical school which trains sailors for sea duty. I completed a course for ship mechanics and motorists. The language of instruction was Russian. The students came from various republics. All had to join the Communist Youth Organization. Having graduated from this school, I was sent with eleven sailors to Spain's Canary Islands, where the Soviet fishing trawler "Seda" was docked. We had to replace the sailors there. Sailors are usually replaced every six months. I was the senior member of my group of eleven and was responsible for them. The captain of the ship was from a Soviet Asian republic. The crew numbered sixty, including a few Lithuanians.

"I felt oppressed by the Russification and various strictures", Žukauskas continued. "Some four years ago, I started thinking of how I could escape to a free country. I could not mention my plans to defect either to my parents or my friends. The only exception was a conversation with a single friend. But that was long ago.

"As soon as I arrived on that Spanish island, I started looking how I could escape. But the island was small, and I was afraid that the local police might extradite me. There were no foreign embassies there. When we reached another island, I started looking for the Western German or English embassies. I could not find the first and the other one was closed. We were allowed to leave the ship only in groups with a leader. Each of us was expected to oversee the others, and the leader was responsible for the whole group.

"On one occasion I remained all alone on board of 'Seda'. I rushed to a

Japanese ship that was docked nearby and asked them to give me shelter. The Japanese immediately contacted their embassy in Madrid and then took me to the police. I was able to make myself understood in English, which I had been learning in school and on my own. Shortly afterwards, some members of 'Seda' crew appeared to the police and asked the police for permission to talk to me. When I refused to talk to them, the police did not extradite me. They guarded me in the hotel, and whenever I would venture into town, there was someone to accompany me. The police also allowed me to keep my foreign passport. Usually, the Soviet sailors are not permitted to hold on to their foreign passports. When a ship docks at some foreign port, all passports are given to the police and are picked up upon leaving. The Soviets asked for my

passport, but the police refused to give it to them and said that it belonged to me. The Red Cross took care of me in Madrid, and then the United American Lithuanian Relief Fund took over."

In answering the correspondents' questions, Žukauskas revealed that he had never been baptized and knew nothing about religious life. He was also ignorant about the underground press in Lithuania. The American Lithuanian community, of which he had not been aware, turned out to be a big surprise.

Žukauskas also explained that, as an active member of the Communist Youth Organization, he avoided speaking about pro-Lithuanian activity or about the anti-Soviet attitudes. He tried to attain a leader's rank in the Komsomol because such individuals have more opportunity to travel to the West.

Elta



FUN TIME MEANS T SHIRT TIME! SPORT A "BALTIUKA"!

Tri-colored with Lithuanian Flag and Knight. Lettering: "Lithuanian and proud of it". Children sizes: S (6-8). M (10-12). L (14 - 16). Adult sizes: S (34 - 36), M (38-40), L (42 - 44), XL (46 - 48). \$8 each, postage and handling included.

WHERE TO GET THEM?

BRIDGES, 341 Highland Blvd., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11207.

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GERA ŠEIMININKĖ — COOKING LITHUANIAN STYLE

BAKED SPARERIBS AND SAUERKRAUT

KEPTI ŠONKAULIAI SU RUGŠČIAIS KOPŪSTAIS

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 medium onion, sliced
- 1 27-ounce can sauerkraut, undrained
- 2 1/3 cups water
- 1 medium baking potato grated
- 6 tablespoons dark brown sugar
- 4 pounds pork spareribs
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon sweet paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1/2 cup water

Cook onion in butter. Add sauerkraut with juices and 2 1/3 cups water. Stir in potato and brown sugar. Reduce heat to low and cook 15 minutes. Season ribs with salt, paprika and pepper. Separate ribs. Brown in skillet over medium-high heat, 10 to 12 minutes. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Spread 1/4 of sauerkraut mixture in bottom of baking dish. Top with 1/4 of ribs. Repeat layering, ending with ribs. Add 1/2 cup water to skillet and deglaze over low heat, scraping up brown bits. Pour over ribs. Cover and bake until ribs are tender, about 2 hours. Decrease if necessary. Serve immediately. (4 to 6 servings)

ACIŪ LABAI!

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- \$13. — Anthony Granosky, Kansas City, KS.
- \$10. — Rev. Bruno Kruzas, Brooklyn, NY.; Sister Paulette, Brooklyn, Francis Zebal, Huntsville, AL.
- \$5. — A. Blazevičius, Milford, Del.; John A. Dougal, Thorndike, MA; Joseph

A guest a Soviet cosmonaut and found only the children at home.
 "Where are your parents?" he asked the kids. "Will they come home soon?"
 "Father went on a space flight into the cosmos and will be home soon, but mother went to the store for some flour, so we don't expect her for quite a while."

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