

# Bridges

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LEONARDAS ANDRIEKUS

## Shepherds' Mass

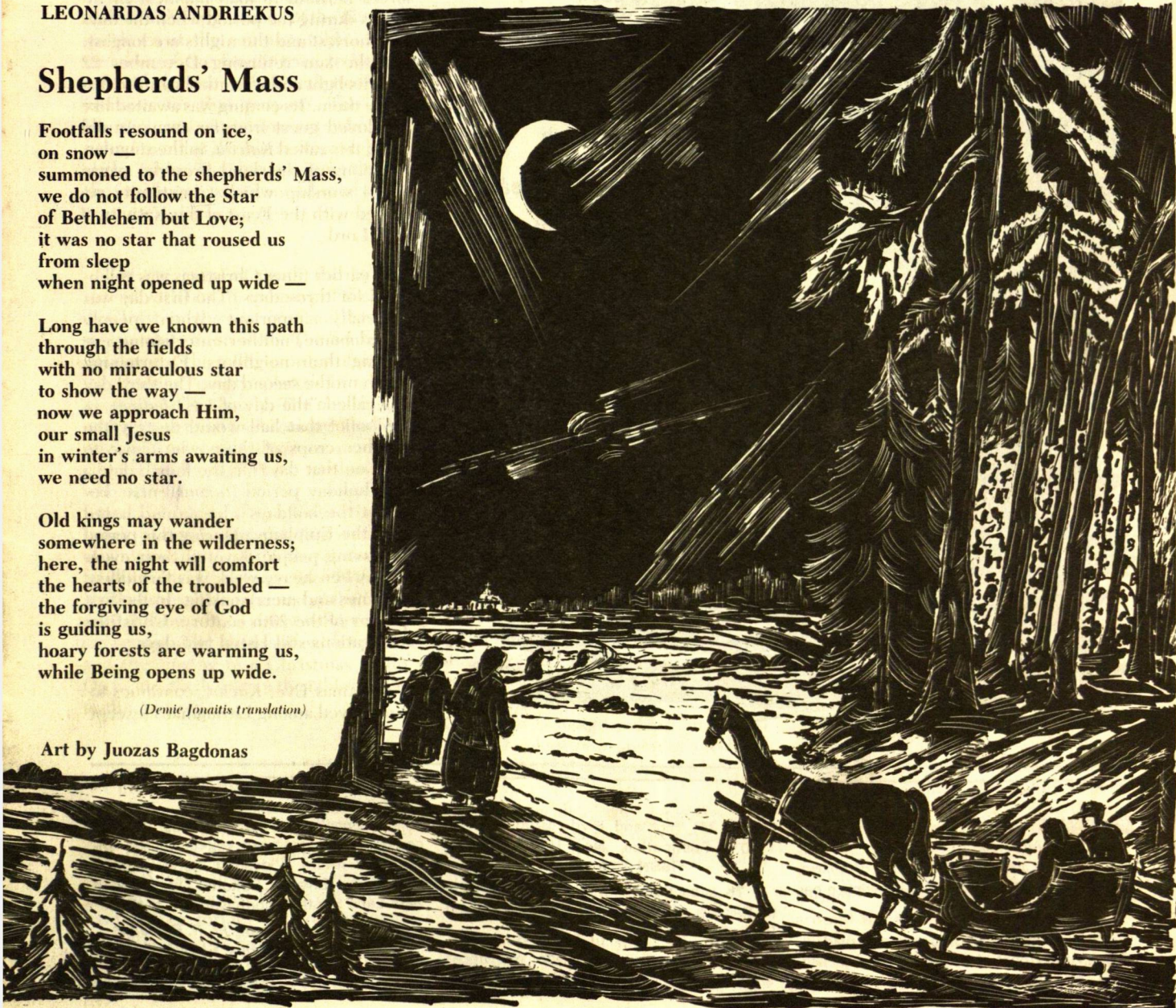
Footfalls resound on ice,  
on snow —  
summoned to the shepherds' Mass,  
we do not follow the Star  
of Bethlehem but Love;  
it was no star that roused us  
from sleep  
when night opened up wide —

Long have we known this path  
through the fields  
with no miraculous star  
to show the way —  
now we approach Him,  
our small Jesus  
in winter's arms awaiting us,  
we need no star.

Old kings may wander  
somewhere in the wilderness;  
here, the night will comfort  
the hearts of the troubled —  
the forgiving eye of God  
is guiding us,  
hoary forests are warming us,  
while Being opens up wide.

*(Demic Jonaitis translation)*

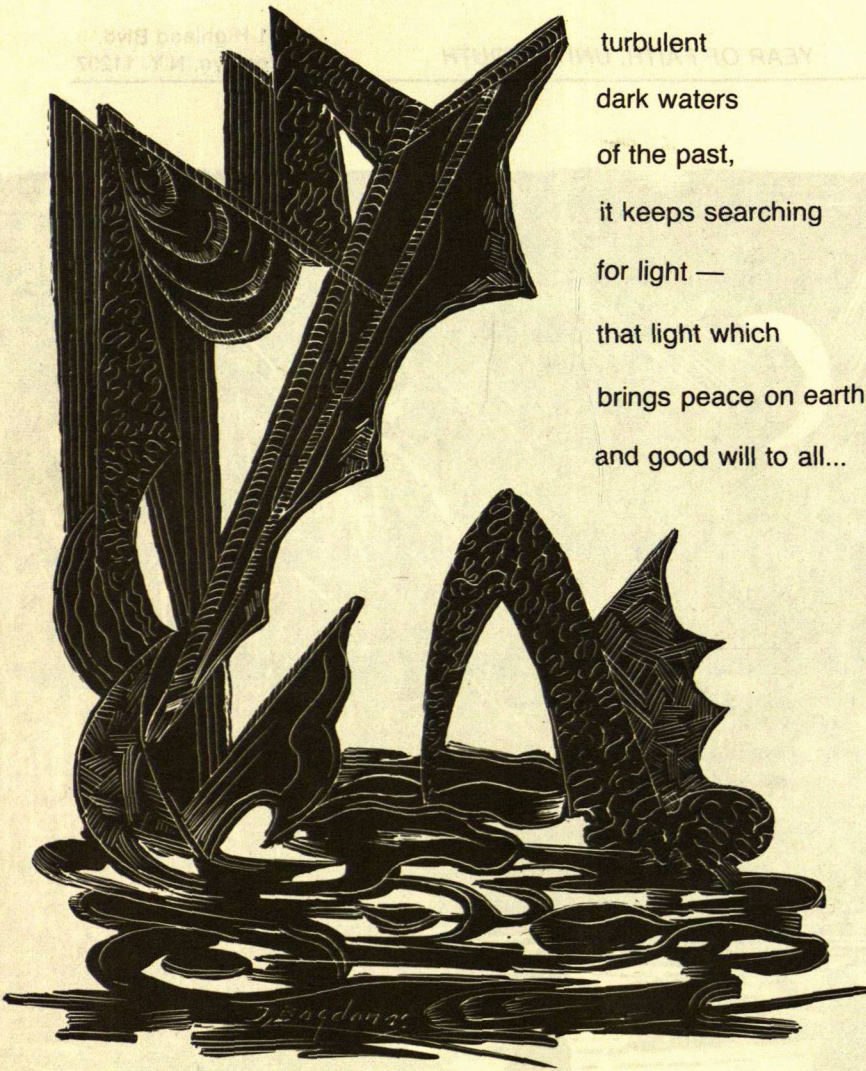
Art by Juozas Bagdonas



# Christmas Comes to Lithuania, Belated

Art by Juozas Bagdonas

As humanity swims  
out of  
turbulent  
dark waters  
of the past,  
it keeps searching  
for light —  
that light which  
brings peace on earth  
and good will to all...



In Lithuanian, the word for Christmas is *Kalėdos*. The Slavic form of the word is *Kolady*, which stems from the Latin *Calendae*. Lithuanians began to use the term *Kalėdos* in the 13th century.

In Lithuanian folklore, Christmas is generally portrayed as the return of the sun. In early times it was believed that forces harmful to man manifest themselves during the period when the days are shortest and the nights are longest, but the sun returning December 22 with its light and warmth, begins to disperse them. Its coming was awaited like a beloved guest from far away. In old song, it is called *Kaleda*, in the singular. Allusions of this kind preserve pagan sun-worship which Christianity replaced with the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord.

In earlier times Christmas was celebrated for three days. The first day was especially important when people stayed home, neither entertaining nor visiting their neighbors. Entertaining began on the second day. The third day was called "the day of ice" (*ledine*), in the belief that hail would destroy the summer crops of those who chose to work on that day. On the fourth day, a new holiday period (*tarpušventis* "between the holidays") began and lasted until the Epiphany. During this period the young people devoted their evenings, when heavy work was forbidden, to games and merrymaking. In the first quarter of the 20th century, Christmas celebrations still lasted two days.

Christmas Eve, *Kučios*, continues to be observed among Lithuanians (except

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The light of Lithuania's wayside shrines, with their Christian and pagan symbols which made the land so emotionally supportive, has been replaced by the cold symbols of hammer and sickle...

communists) as a day of family reunion with a traditional evening meal of a religious character. Formerly no food was taken during the daytime. The women scrubbed and arranged their dwelling, and the men cleaned the yard and prepared better fodder for the animals. When the day's work was done, the family bathed, dressed in their best clothes, and with the appearance of the first star, sat down at the common table. Every member of the family tried to be present. If necessary, they undertook long journeys for that purpose. The hired laborers and any travelers who happened to call at the house were welcome at the table. The deceased members of the family were also remembered there.

For the evening meal, the table is spread with hay, in memory of the birth of Christ in the manger, and covered with a white linen cloth. The household sits down at the table in order of seniority, leaving empty places for absent members of the family. The meal begins with a prayer and the breaking of wafers. The wafers (*kaledaičiai*) are made by church personnel from unleavened wheat dough, just like communion wafers. The head of the household first breaks a wafer and shares it with the other members, at the same time extending his Christmas greetings and good wishes. Then the rest of the family does the same. As a rule; twelve courses are served. The meal ends with a prayer and the singing of a Christmas hymn. On farms, the hay from the table is given to the animals.

Until recent times it was customary to leave food on the table for the refreshment of the souls of the deceased. It was believed that at midnight when Christ is born, the dead arise and come to visit their homes. This belief is a remnant of the former cult of the dead. As early as pre-Christian times the Lithuanians prepared a mush of mixed grains, which was called *kučia*. It was

eaten in honor of the dead and some of it was left for their refreshment. This early custom of the remembrance of the dead merged with the observance of the Christmas Eve vigil and fast, giving rise to the concept of a union of the living and the dead at a common table.

By its very character, the festive supper on Christmas Eve calls to mind the *agape*, the feast of love of the early Christians.

Formerly on Christmas Eve, people used spells and charms to foretell the future events, especially death, mar-

riage and harvest. Young girls wanted to know if they would marry the following year. For example they would seize an armful of wood; carry it indoors, and count the pieces; if the pieces of wood fell into pairs, a wedding would follow. If a girl ran out into the yard and heard the dogs barking, she could expect matchmakers to come later from the direction of the noise. If there were starry skies and snow on Christmas Eve, farmers considered this a good omen. After supper, farmers would bind straw around their apple trees in expectation of a better harvest. Beekeepers would lift the hives three times to increase the size of the swarms.





Was this spiritual message of angelic love in St. Peter and Paul's Church in Antakalnis transferred to Brooklyn, N.Y.?

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## Christmas in Brooklyn

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Albert Cizauskas

There are places and times that are "extra" ordinary. One of them was Christmas as it was celebrated by the old Church and its parishioners. There was a special grace to those Christmases of long ago when the holy day and the holiday respected each other's claims.

For the parishioners and their families, the preparation to observe a Lithuanian Christmas in America, a blend of old country customs and new country ways, had an excitement and pleasure of its own. For one thing, Christmas advertising was less intrusive, and we did most of our shopping in the neighborhood. Decorations were not displayed until after Thanksgiving rather than right after Halloween as now.

At the parish school, the nuns would vie with each other to have in their classrooms the school's most beautiful Christmas tree, buying and decorating the trees out of their meager funds. Small creches were usually in evidence and Christmas carols, both English and Lithuanian, were gleefully sung during school hours in place of the regular lessons. Having a Christmas tree in the classroom was very important to us; because, during the depression, old church families often went without them. I recall how my sister and I would go looking for a tree in the chilly twilight of Christmas Eve, an hour or so before *Kučios* hoping, because it was so late, to bargain the price down to one we could afford. When we occasionally succeeded, we were overjoyed, dragging the evergreen home in triumph where its sweet and pungent aroma blended with the savory smells of the kitchen. Having a Christmas tree at home was our finest present.

During the weeks before Christmas, the entire family, and especially our parents, became increasingly engrossed in preparing for the corporal side of Christmas. And nothing could be more characteristic of this aspect of the holiday than the elaborate provisions for the traditional food of a Lithuanian Christmas. For us children, the strangest of these occurred when my mother bought a fat goose, not already dressed but ready for the oven, but alive. The arrival of the holiday goose always caused a great deal of excitement, and even consternation, because my father, a large *bliudas*, or pan, in front of him, would slit the bird's throat with his razor and allow the blood to flow into the pan. The feathers were then plucked after the goose had been thoroughly soaked in hot water. The feathers were added to those from years past to be stuffed eventually into quilts, the luxuriously warm *patalai*. The blood became the basic ingredient of a dark and rich liquid with apples, plums and spices added to make a delicious and nourishing soup called *juka*. In a sense, this exotic food, which could not be served Christmas Eve because of the old laws of abstinence, symbolized the mystery of which Christmas was the beginning, a sacrifice that became our food.

For *Kučios*, the traditional Christmas Eve meal, mother painstakingly prepared a number of dishes, all without meat. She told us that, in the very old days in Lithuania, nothing with dairy products, or even fish, would be used in the food for that holy night. Two of our favorites even better when re-heated in the days to come, were *varškėčiai* or cheese dumplings, and *kugelis*, a potato pudding rich with eggs and milk (akin to American spoon bread or the English

Yorkshire pudding). Other dishes were *marinuota silkė*, marinated herring, *barščiy sriuba*, hot beet soup; and *kisielius*; a porridge made from oat flour and poppy-seed milk, the finished product of which had, for us children, the appearance and consistency of hot glue and the odor of blue cheese. None of us would touch it, to the chagrin of our parents. What fascinated us, however, was the sight of father patiently grinding the poppy seeds to extrude a thin, milky liquid, a process I have always associated with *Kučios*.

For desert, mother baked plain, semi-hard buns, which had a tasty crunchiness to them, and a *pyragas*, a yellow yeast cake mixed with raisins. It took mother hours of kneeding with her fists to prepare the dough for baking (no mixers were then to be had), but the results were well worth it. The real big delicacy was the *ausiukės*, the little ears, which we helped twist into their traditional shape on a large board sprinkled with flour, then dipped into boiling oil where the dough miraculously expanded before our eyes.

### **Kučios**

All these and more our parents prepared for *Kučios*, which, in Lithuanian families, was the holy day's central celebration, outside of Midnight Mass. It was the most memorable family event of the year, when children who had children of their own returned for this occasion no matter how far away they lived. More than anything else, it was a deeply-religious observance commemorating the Incarnation of the ancient promise made to the Israelites.

About six in the evening, our family would gather around the table. First we knelt, and father prayed in Lithuanian with all of us joining him. Still kneeling, he kissed the family crucifix, handed it to mother, who in turn kissed it and passed it on to the children in order of age. Then, seated, we broke the *plotkelės*, the rectangular wafers with Nativity scenes impressed upon them, and gave pieces to each other. Father said this sharing symbolized the unity of the family's members and their unity in turn with the Holy Family. After this, he took an apple and cut it up for us, saying that this symbolized our kinship with all of mankind through our common descent from Adam whose loss of grace involved all of us, a loss restored by the birth of the Savior. The reference to Adam provided an opening which we children happily exploited, engaging in a sexist debate, with mock earnestness, over whose fault it was that Paradise was lost. The boys contended that, after all, it was Eve who gave Adam the tainted apple, while the girls derided Adam for being such a weak-minded wimp.

### **The Christmas Visitation**

One of the highlights of a Lithuanian Christmas was the annual clerical visitation to every family in the parish, a lengthy campaign lasting from December until well into February. Undoubtedly a custom carried over from Lithuania, the visitation was a sort of parochial census. In the early days of this century, it was probably an effective means of keeping the new immigrants faithful to their religion and preserving old country ties. Later, it served to keep parishioners, as they prospered and moved away to better neighborhoods, loyal to the church.

I remember the excitement these visitations provoked weeks in advance of the great event. Mother would scour every nook and cranny of the flat and we children were compelled to adopt unnaturally immaculate habits. The night of the visitation was one of nervous anticipation, our parents pointed out to us that the priest was God's vicar and that only angelic behavior would be tolerated. We would all be drawn up, sitting in stiff poses, in the one room which served as kitchen and living room; awaiting the knock on the door.

Neighborhood kids would act as lookouts. As soon as they spied God's vicar approaching, they spread the news quickly around the tenement. Shortly we could hear the commotion on the floors below and mother would take a last look around to see that everything, and especially the children, were in place. When the knock finally came, father opened the door as the priest called out the familiar greeting: "*Lai būna pagarbintas Jezus Kristus*" ("Praised be Jesus Christ"), to which we replied "*Ant amžiy amžinyjy*" ("For ever and ever").

The priest's first act was to sweep rapidly through all the rooms, sprinkling liberal doses of holy water everywhere. Next he checked his records for the ages and religious milestones of the children (when baptized, confirmed, etc.). In the older days, the priest would even test the children's knowledge of the Catechism. If they survived the ordeal, he would leave a packet of holy pictures as reward. If not, they had to face the embarrassed wrath of their parents for days afterwards.

When these matters had been attended to, mother would offer God's vicar some earthly refreshment, coffee or tea and her special homemade *pyragas*. The visitation ended after the obligatory half-hour, mother slipping a bill or two into the priest's hands as he was leaving. When it was all over, the feeling of relief was

(Continued on page 6)

mingled with the humbling realization that the man who daily summoned down God upon the altar had been personally among us.

### Holy Night

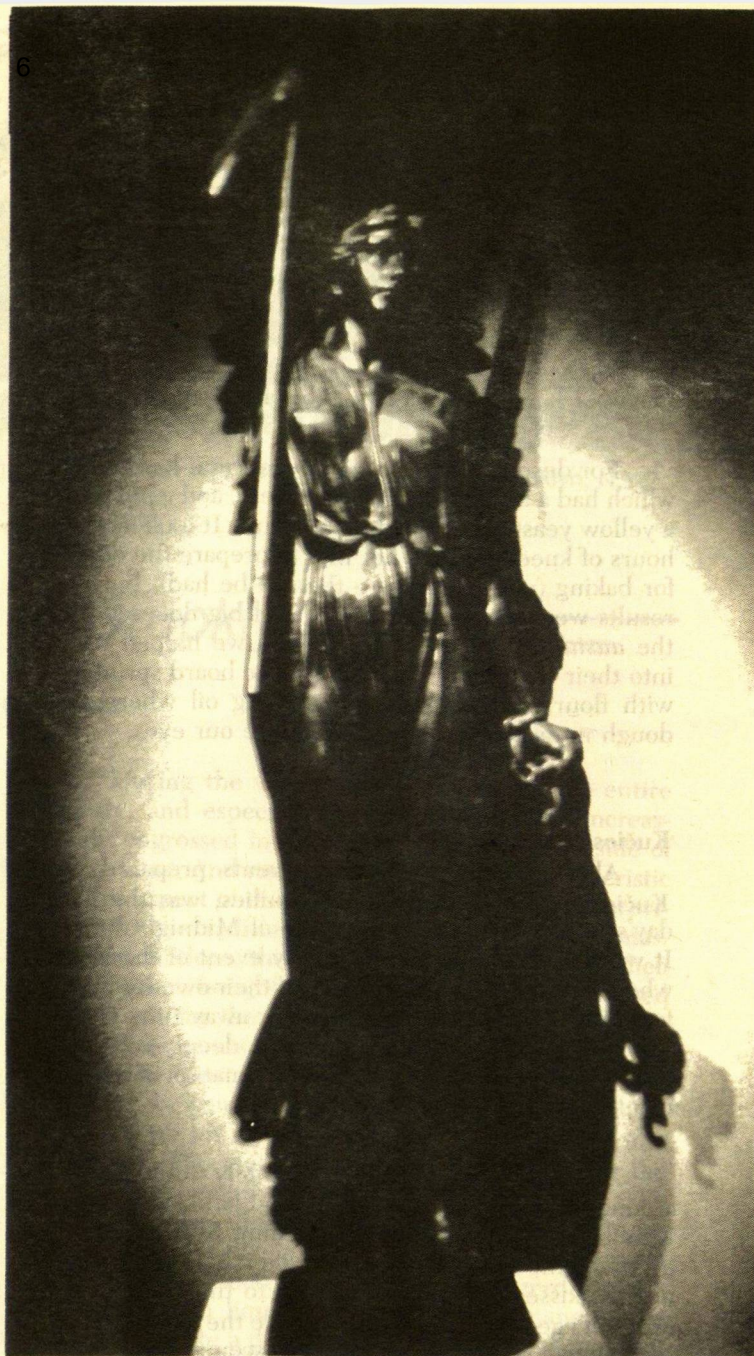
Just as Kučios was the centerpiece of a Lithuanian family's Christmas celebration, so Midnight Mass was the climax of the great feast as celebrated by the entire parish. For us younger children, it was a welcome privilege to be up so late and yet strange too, to be walking to church through the dark and quiet streets of Williamsburgh when the familiar seemed to take on an unfamiliar dimension.

When we reached our destination, we were greeted by a fresh yet familiar sight for it was that wonderful time of year when the old church took on a special glow. The main altar's gilt contrasted with the deep green-blue of the tall Christmas trees flanking it on either side. Christmas wreaths were everywhere, and even the most solemn of the many saints around the church appeared to put on an almost joyous expression. But the center of interest was a large Christmas manger, its figures of the new and Holy Family close to life-size, shepherds and the three kings joining to view the epiphany of the Infant, cows, sheep and camels anchoring this mystery firmly upon the earth, while angels over the manger proclaimed the good news with their hosannas.

At about a quarter before midnight, the first strains of "Tyli Naktis" ("Silent Night") played on the organ and accompanied by violins, broke the expectant hush in the church, announcing the imminent birth of the Savior. Then the choir, a highly-trained group, took up the simple, lovely refrains of the hymn in Lithuanian, followed by others about shepherds and a new age dawning for mankind.

At precisely midnight, the great bells of the old church pealed their joyous message while, inside, the altar's tinkling bells announced the start of the procession. The youngest altar boys led the way, dressed in white cassocks with red sashes, followed by the older boys in black and white. Then came the seminarians, the proud fruit of the parish's religious life, and finally, a company of priests of whom the last figure, the pastor, was resplendent in a brocaded chasuble adorned with scenes of the Nativity. The four weeks of Advent were at an end.

Memory sometimes plays tricks on us, blurring our remembrance of things past. But sometimes it recreates vividly places and times that meant so much so long ago like family Kučios and Midnight Mass at the old church, the happy ghosts of Christmas past.



Lithuanian Sculpture by Juozas Zikaras

This is our 'Statue of Liberty' writes Algimantas Kezys, photographer-author of *Lithuania Through a Wall*. "The statue stands in a museum that was formerly the Army Church in Kaunas. It once stood on a high pedestal near the Museum of Liberation Wars. These wars were fought on three fronts during World War I — against the Russians, the Germans, and the Poles. We won, became independent, and erected the Statue of Liberty which survived, alas only twenty years.... Being small and in the way of the mighty, we are constantly trampled..."

# CONTRASTING LIVES

## In Occupied Lithuania and the Free World

### SET FREE: TO BE RE-ARRESTED

Father Jonas-Kastytis Matulionis was released from Smolensk labor camp on June 19, but was re-arrested a few days later. The priest, serving a three year sentence for organizing an illegal religious procession, was first arrested last year on November 9. He was sentenced in January 1985 for "disrupting the public order".

According to reliable sources, his early release seems to have been largely on grounds of illness and an amnesty declared for certain prisoners on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Soviet victory in 1945.

However, Matulionis was allowed to return to Vilnius on the day St. Michael's parish was celebrating the pastor's 50th jubilee. His presence in the church, which he frequented regularly before his arrest, was at first met with disbelief by assembled parishioners.

According to the report in the underground *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*; "Many of the believers were surprised by the familiar voice of Father J. Matulionis... He kissed the ground by the altar, thanking God for his faith and priestly vocation, and the parishioners for their prayers, and began to offer Mass..." The realization that the imprisoned priest had been freed, brought the congregation to tears. Worshipers crowded around the emaciated priest, greeting him profusely after services.

Matulionis, weighing only 90 lbs.,

### OUR NEW MONSIGNOR: HIS HOBBY — FLYING

Pope John Paul II recently named Father Algimantas Bartkus a Domestic Prelate with the title of Monsignor. Fr. Bartkus was appointed Rector of St. Casimir's Lithuanian College in Rome, effective October 20, the fortieth anniversary of the college.

after eight months of imprisonment, excused himself to go register with the militia and to inform his family of his release. He promised, after a short recuperation period to see the parishioners at another time.

On June 23, Father Matulionis visited the parish of Kybartai where he had served as assistant pastor. Three days later, on June 26, two KGB agents entered Matulionis' apartment and accused him of not being registered. Though Matulionis assured them that his registration papers were being processed, they demanded he come in immediately for questioning.

According to sources close to the priest, Matulionis was taken to Lukiškis criminal prison in Vilnius for detention. After numerous queries about his fate, a KGB official revealed that Matulionis was being punished for committing a fresh crime, i.e. "organizing a demonstration". Dissident sources assert that the warm reception given to Matulionis on his return was interpreted by the state as an anti-Soviet "demonstration".

Matulionis is one of ten known underground priests in Lithuania deemed as "imposters" by the Soviets. Repeatedly denied admission to the sole official theological seminary, which is under strict government control, Matulionis entered the underground seminary. He was, like the other underground graduates, ordained secretly.

His present whereabouts are unknown.

(Lithuanian Information Center)

Algimantas Bartkus was born November 10, 1940. In 1943 his family left Lithuania, fleeing the Soviets, and lived in Germany until 1948, when they emigrated to Sao Paulo, Brazil. There Algimantas completed his elementary and secondary education, and became fluent in Portuguese.

In 1958, the family emigrated to the U.S.A., but young Algimantas re-

mained in Brazil to complete high school. That year, feeling a vocation to the priesthood, he went to St. Casimir's Lithuanian College in Rome. At the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, he earned his Master's degree in Philosophy and a Bachelor's in Theology, while perfecting his Lithuanian and learning Italian and Latin.

Ordained to the priesthood on July 11, 1965, he emigrated to the U.S. He was assigned as Assistant Pastor at St. Joseph's Parish in Mahanoy City, PA. Three years later, he was sent by his bishop to teach at Cardinal Brennan High School. In 1971, Fr. Bartkus was assigned as Assistant Pastor to Msgr. Joseph Karalius at St. George's Parish in Shenandoah, PA, then to St. Francis' Lithuanian parish in Minersville, PA, while continuing his teaching duties.

In 1972, Fr. Bartkus was assigned to St. Bernard's and St. Michael's in Easton, Pa, with teaching duties at Notre Dame High School. He also ministered to the Portuguese community in Bethlehem, PA, served as Catholic Chaplain at the Northampton County Prison, and produced the Easton Catholic Hour on radio.

In September, 1972, he was appointed Pastor of St. Casimir's Parish in St. Clair, PA. In June, 1978, he was appointed as Pastor to Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, Frackville, PA.

Father Al, as his parishioners affectionately called him, was instrumental in establishing the Knights of Lithuania Anthracite Council. He served as its spiritual advisor and provided fresh leadership to the nationally famous Pennsylvania Lithuanian Day annual picnic. He also produced weekly Lithuanian radio programs on stations WPAM and WZTA.

An exceptional parish administrator, Fr. Bartkus directed renovation of the rectory, parish grounds and cemetery in St. Clair, and the school and church in Frackville.

Fr. Bartkus became a U.S. citizen in 1970. In 1977, he obtained his pilot's license, and flying became his favorite hobby.

In October, 1983, Fr. Bartkus, with the blessing of his bishop, accepted an appointment as Pro-Rector of St. Casimir's College in Rome.



Juzė was equipped  
to fiddle and dance  
as well as work  
as a traveling tailor.

## Juze of Palanga

By

Motiejus Valančius

Bishop of Samogitia

(1801 - 1875)

**K**abaksh-kabaksh, I clumped with my wooden shoes, up hill, until crossing a rivulet, I saw a man in a garden. I told him I had fallen on ice and almost killed myself. I asked, "Couldn't I get something to eat, for money? I am a tailor from Palanga."

"Who's going to mess around for you? This is not a saloon."

"I feel faint. Couldn't you give me something to drink?"

He ordered his wife, "Give the stranger some water."

She dipped a small pot into a barrel, scooped up some water, and put the pot on the table, without a glass. Taking it with both hands, I drank thirstily, left a few coins on the table, said "Sudiev" and departed.

I found work shortly before Christmas

in Šaukenai parish with the worthy farmer Jonas Motuzas.

Then came *Kučios*. We remained hungry from morning until night. Towards evening the daughters Elze, Apolonija and Petronelė set the table first with hay, then a white cloth, and plates. Mrs. Motuzas brought forth a white plate on which lay the *plotkelės*, similar to communion wafers. The family assembled. Motuzas broke the wafers with each person saying, "Praise be to God that we have lived to see another Christmas Eve in good health. Grant us, Lord, to live to see still another."

The daughters put on the table plates with various beans, peas, barley and wheat and a sweetened broth on which floated bits of wafer. We made the sign of the cross, said our prayers

and began *put-put* to gobble the grain. Next Mrs. Motuzas brought in cabbage cooked with peas. We filled our stomachs like barrels *gurksh-gurksh*. Having eaten, we said the Our Father, then *bempt-bempt* we lay down while our stomachs rumbled.

As we slept, *girksh*, the door opened. "Children, you're sleeping. Don't you know tonight is the shepherds' Mass and we must be off to Šaukenai."

*Dzen-dzen* the bells began to ring and *smuksht* we all slipped into the church. After Mass, the peas in our stomachs subsided. Then *shveeshtu-shveeshtu* we went marching home. In the courtyard we could smell the bacon cooking. The daughters put on the table a huge pot of a delicious mixture. The tail of the suckling pig had been gnawed on. I



asked, "Why isn't that tail whole?" I was informed, "The dogs, the *biaurybės*, got a hold of it."

The mistress and master sat at the head of the table. As we ate, *traksh-traksh* there was crackling behind our ears. Our faces grew greasy. We downed some excellent beer. And since we had not slept all night, *kleksh-kleksh* we all lay down. And we didn't get up until morning.

The second day of Christmas we went to Verputėnų church again, heard Mass, and, returning home, we feasted on blood pudding and sausages. The girls bought out beat-leaf stew and we did a fine job on that too. After dinner, the mistress said, "You always eat and right away go to sleep. Enough of that. Now we'll sing the *Shepherds*." Elzikė took the hymnal *Kantičkos* and began to chant while we accompanied her, responding with "A child was born in Bethlehem." We sang the entire *Shepherds*. Finally we went out *kauksh-kauksh* to bat the ball around until it grew dark.

Soon the dogs began to bark and someone went *braksh-braksh* tapping on the window. The master asked, "Who's there?"

"Your neighbors, Blukvilčiai. We're

out carolling. Shall we carol for you?"

Four men walked in, three of them young, and one old and gray. They sang "*Sveikas, Jezau, mažiausias*". Then the old man declared, "Neighbor, we came here not to drink, not to eat, but to greet you. You are a right strong farmer, a good neighbor, a God-fearing man, as well as godfather of my child. Among us *plikiai* (poor), you can call yourself a king, like a one-eyed man among the blind. We feel very warmly about you. We've often helped one another out. Therefore, on this great holiday, we greet you, together with your wife and beautiful children. May the Lord preserve you for a long while for our happiness."

Motuzas thanked them and invited them to sit down. Again, a *tsinkt-tsinkt* at the window and more carollers came in. They too sang a little hymn and sat down at the table.

Motuzas brought forth a pitcher of beer. The older folks guzzled while we younger folk began to play a game *žiuži nešti*. We stood in a circle and one person, walking around secretly passed to someone else a "*žiuži*", at which point the receiver turned to his neighbor and began *chaksht-chaksht* to hit him and then to chase him around the circle. The beaten one, now having the *žiuži*

in his possession, secretly passed it on to someone else, who beat the one next to him, and so on until we all finally sat down, exhausted.

Out of breath, I said, "Now you, Peliks, be the wolf and Isadore will herd the sheep." Peliks, acting as the wolf was pushed into *kerečia* and surrounded by a fence of chairs. Izidore took a long *ramanta* and said to the young men and girls standing around him; "I'm herding, I'm herding the sheep. I will beat the wolf with my *ramanta*, and turn the dogs on him." He turned to the wolf, "Why are you hanging around?"

The wolf: "What do you want from me? Because of your sheep, I must act like a goat? Suppose you just watch your sheep, not me.

The shepherd: "Aren't you ashamed, you nauseating creature, to spend your whole life being a blood sucker? How come people and my sheep get along without such behavior?"

The wolf: "If that's so, then you and your sheep are no better than I am. Who devours cattle, pigs, birds, fish and those same sheep if not men? And your sheep — how many thousands of bugs living on the leaves do they chew up? So, they are good, while I, having slain only one, am a great sinner?"

It grew late, we ate, said our prayers and retired for the night. We began celebrating the third day of Christmas in the morning. Nobody was permitted to work, we didn't even go to church we sang the *Shepherds* and passed the time away just fooling around. After dinner I said to Mrs. Motuzas: "Little mother, I brought my fiddle with me. Would you allow us to dance?"

"Good," she responded. "My daughters would love that." Some neighboring young people joined us and, as I went *dzir-dzir* with my fiddle, I danced along with everyone else. We circled and dipped and jumped and kicked.

It grew late, we ate, said our prayers and went to bed. The neighbors went home.

I have become very popular with the daughters of the household. They don't want me ever to leave their house.

*Translated by Victoria Azuolas*

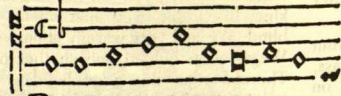
The  
hilarious  
games  
and dancing  
included  
snatches  
of  
old  
Lithuanian  
folk  
wisdom

Vytautas Jurkunas illustrated Bishop Valančius' lively tale about 19th century Juzė of Palanga who was a raconteur, folk historian and humorist

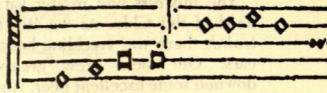
"Born — the little shepherd Jesus..." A hymn from the first printed Lithuanian book by Lutheran minister Martynas Mašvydas in 1547

**Dieime ape Berneli Jesu**

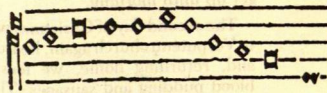
tuš gies̃t dieinas̃u Christaus ṽgim̃i  
ma pagal suguldima sinais̃ ane  
notas, Dieš̃ est̃ lektie  
Der tag der ist̃ so freideñ reič̃.



B̃ernelis̃ gim̃e mums̃, / Ich̃ ge  
Bais̃ ras̃je ir̃ lektis̃ ste bi si



pañ nas̃ c̃ist̃as̃ / Der ne lis̃ est̃i  
wi fas̃ s̃retas̃ /



diw̃ nas̃ est̃i c̃it̃ras̃ Dievas̃  
Est̃i

antique  
folk  
musical  
instruments

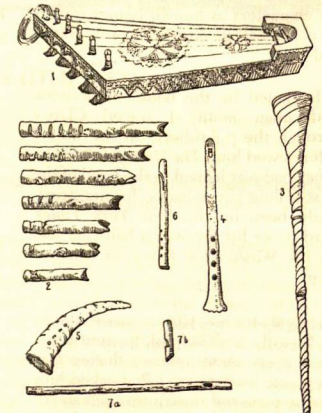
OF LITHUANIA



1925: Barefoot shepherds piped and fiddled freely in the Lithuanian countryside

(from Buracas Archives)

1985: Lithuanian folk instrumentalists were involved en masse in last summer's Song and Dance Festival in Vilnius. (Photo. from Anthony Blazis)



Ethnographers and researchers have rescued from extinction the ancient folk music instruments of Lithuania.

Some have been reconstructed and adapted for performance by folk music ensembles.

Those antique instruments are a popular part of the Lithuanian ethnic heritage.

Prime as the national instrument, the *kankles*, the only string artifact among the known folk music instruments. Other such folk items are woodwinds and wooden percussion instruments.

Folk music instruments: 1. kankles, 2. Skudučiai, 3. daudyte, 4. vamzdelis, 5. ožragis, 6. birbynė, 7. švilpa

(Courtesy of Encyclopedia Lituanica)

INTERVIEW by Albert Cizauskas

## THE STORY BEHIND A BEST SELLER

The hero of 1985' run-away best seller, *The Hunt for Red October*, is half-Lithuanian Marko Ramius, who defects to the West with the Soviet's latest ballistic missile submarine of which he is the Captain. Ramius has two motives for his action. One is identification with the down-trodden Lithuanians on whose behalf he wishes "to wreak vengeance on the Soviet Union...to satisfy the thousands of his countrymen who had died before he was even born." The other is satisfaction of a personal desire to avenge the needless death of his wife at the hands of a drunken Soviet doctor whose political connections leave him beyond the reach of justice.

How Ramius accomplishes this seemingly-impossible feat is what gives the book its unique story line, one that is packed with the excitement of a chase by the Soviet navy on a collision course with the American fleet. Its author, Tom Clancy, Jr., writes with a lean, fast-moving style and a mastery of technical detail that makes the basic premise of the story credible. Clancy also makes us care about the outcome by portraying his characters as human beings caught up in a deadly game of underwater hide-and-seek.

Intrigued by the book's underlying Lithuanian motif, I traced Clancy through the publishers. At the time I interviewed him, *The Hunt for Red October* had just leaped to the head of the best-selling paper-backs, having previously been on the *New York Times'* hard-cover list for over a half-year and on the *Washington Post's* for nearly a year.

Happily for me, Clancy turned out to be friendly and helpful, patiently tolerating my many queries during two telephone interviews. I first asked him how he managed to acquire such an accurate feel for the Lithuanian political situation, something rare in non-Lithuanian circles. Clancy explained that he is a native of Baltimore, where his earliest awareness of Lithuanians came through admiration for Johnny Unitas,

the legendary quarter-back of the then-Baltimore Colts. Clancy also read "bits and pieces" about Lithuania on his own, learning that its history "went back a thousand years," that it was once an enormous country and that its people were Western-oriented (employing, for example, the Latin alphabet in distinction to the Russian with their Cyrillic script). One of his clients (Clancy is in the insurance business) was a Lithuanian oceanographer who also filled Clancy in on past and current Lithuanian history. Then too, a Baltimore friend, attorney Mike Abromaitis, introduced the writer to some congenial Lithuanian customs, like drinking *virintas* on special occasions such as Christmas. Clancy thought the popular Lithuanian liqueur was "pretty strong but very good stuff." From all this, the author of *The Hunt for Red October* developed a liking for the Lithuanian people and a sympathetic insight into their current difficulties under Soviet tyranny which he skillfully carried over into his story.

This understanding comes through in passages like the following:

"while the elder Ramius ruled the Lithuanian Party Central Committee in Vilnius, the motherless boy was raised by his paternal grandmother... (who) kept to the old ways, going to mass every day... Ramius remembered her as a silver-haired old woman who told wonderful bedtime stories. Religious stories. It would have been far too dangerous for her to bring Marko to the religious ceremonies that had never been stamped out, but she did manage to baptize him a Roman Catholic soon after his father had deposited him with her. She never told Marko about this. The risk would have been too great. Roman Catholicism had been brutally suppressed the Baltic states. It was a religion, and as he grew older Marko learned that Marxism-Leninism was a jealous god, tolerating no competing loyalties."

### A Boost from the President

The sales of Clancy's book "really took off" after President Reagan received it as a Christmas present a year ago and expressed his enthusiasm for this exciting account of the successful hijacking of the Soviet's prize submarine. *Time* magazine heard about the President's reaction and ran a full-page story. The magazine also noted that highly-placed White House officials, like former Deputy Chief of Staff Michael Deaver and the "brass at the Pentagon," were likewise admirers of the same book. Even the Soviet Embassy reportedly bought several copies to send off to Moscow.

President Reagan in fact, liked the book so much that he invited the author to the White House last March, receiving Clancy in the Oval Office for a personal chat. Clancy said the President is a very friendly person with considerable charm but would not repeat what the President said to him because "that is a private matter." Clancy also had lunch with White House staffers and the following week he and his wife were guests at an official state dinner for the President of Argentina.

### How a Best Seller Is Written

My next questions dealt with Clancy's background and how he happened to write a book of this unusual nature. He said that he majored in English at Loyola College in his native Baltimore. Like most English majors, he nursed an ambition to become a writer but, unlike most English majors, he was interested in "thrillers," a genre often scorned by young aspiring writers.

To earn a living, Clancy took the "first decent job" opening. It was with a small insurance agency founded by his future wife's grandfather. Although the insurance business is hardly one that sustains literary ambitions, Clancy never lost his youthful dream to become a writer of thrillers. In 1976, his imagination was aroused by a curious incident. A political officer and some of the

(Continued on page 18)

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## *New Year Celebrations — Past and Present*

By Vytautas F. Beliajus

**I**t is hard to believe today that, until 1582, Christian Europe celebrated the new year on March 25, and that England continued to celebrate March 25 as New Year's Day as late as 1752!

The Roman world celebrated the New Year March 1. Hence, the reason why many Latin-named months are off count in the present calendar. September was the seventh month. October was the eighth month, November was the ninth, and December was the tenth month. January, named after the two-faced god Janus, was the eleventh month, while February was named for the cloak of the goddess Juno (*februa*), which naked men wore during the

Lupercalia fertility festival held during that time of the year.

At the time when Christianity was being introduced, two religions dominated Asia Minor and the southeastern European world — the Graeco-Roman and Mithraic cults. Mithraism was of Hindu-Persian origin. The two most important festivals of their calendar years were, for the Romans the Saturnalia, on December 17, and for the Mithraist, December 25, *Dies Natalis*, the date the Invincible Sun God (*Sol Invictus*) was born. Of the two festivals the Saturnalia was the most popular. It was named for Saturnus, the first king of Latium, who later was deified. Early

Christianity, had no chance to overcome these two pagan traditions.

Because the mountain refused to come to Mohammed, Mohammed had to go to the mountain; likewise, Christianity went to the pagans. At that time the Christians had few of their own holidays: the Feast of the Crucifixion, the Jewish Passover and the Resurrection. And even for these three observances the Christians could not agree on a date. Moreover these holidays, were cheerless occasions that couldn't compete with the Saturnalia and *Dies Natalis* (God's Birthday). So Christians adopted the popular pagan holiday

*(Continued on page 14)*

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### A \$600,000 Gift from A Lithuanian Immigrant

There's a plaque set into the marble floor of The New York Public Library's Fifth Avenue building to honor someone you have probably never heard of — Martin Radtke, a *Lithuanian immigrant* whose rise from rags to riches illustrates the enduring and enormous value of this great research library to millions of men and women around the nation and the world.

When Radtke came to the United States in 1913, he knew very little English and even less about his adopted country. One of his first stops was The New York Public Library, that vast storehouse of knowledge open and free to all.

Here he taught himself English and the fundamentals of business. Here he learned about the workings of the securities market. And by investing modest amounts, he gradually accumulated great wealth.

At his death, he bequeathed his entire estate of \$600,000 to the Library, "with the wish that it be used so others have the same opportunity made available to me."

#### Have YOU Given

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(see ad on page 15)

**BRIDGES** Subscribers in Shenandoah, PA; please note:

Last year, Father Pascal Sabas gave every Lithuanian family of St. George's parish a gift — a year's subscription to **BRIDGES**. The subscriptions expire in 1985.

Father Sabas' generosity was an expression of his love for his parishioners,

### New Year Celebrations (Continued from page 13)

under a new mask. *Dies Natalis* was converted to the Birthday of Jesus.

But what about January 1 which Julius Caesar had designated as the beginning of the new year? No problem. The Church Fathers found a solution for that, too. January 1 became their Day of the Circumcision. After all, the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph were observing orthodox Jews. If Jesus was born on December 25, then it stood to reason that eight days later, in order to be a "Son of the Covenant" (*Ben Brith*), He had to be circumcised. January 1 therefore became a solemn Christian holiday, devoid of pagan orgies.

During the litanies that commemorate the seven sorrows of the shedding of Jesus' blood, the very first set of rosary beads of that litany commemorates this first shedding of His blood. Until recent years the Catholic and Anglican (Episcopal) calendars marked the first day of January not as the "New Year's Day" but as "The Feast of the Circumcision." A young Jew's life begins once he becomes a *Ben Brith*, a Son of the Covenant between God and Israel.

Unfortunately, today, the good intentions of the early Church Fathers are falling by the wayside. New Year's Day once again is becoming a Roman Saturnalia or Mithraic *Dies Natalis*. Getting drunk has become a necessary tradition of the holidays. It is now a day for becoming an accident statistic even before one has had a chance to live the new year. What's worse, if it isn't the drunk driver who dies, then it is the innocents who did not indulge and who had a lot to live for, who die by the drunkard's act.

occupied Lithuania, and the Catholic faith which communists have tried for decades to destroy.

As a tribute to Father Sabas, won't you continue his good work and subscribe to **BRIDGES**. Please send renewal request and \$7 check or money order to Rev. Peter Baniunas, Administrator, **BRIDGES**, 341 Highland Blvd., Brooklyn, NY 11207



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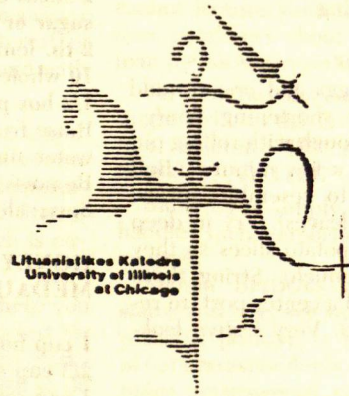
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**CHRISTMAS EVE BISCUITS****ŠLIŽIKAI**

1 envelope dry yeast  
1 tb. sugar  
1 cup milk  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1 1/2 c. flour

Combine yeast, sugar, salt and warm milk. Sift in flour. stir thoroughly. Put in warm spot to rise a little. Roll about 1/2 inch thick on floured board; adding more flour if needed. Cut into finger-wide strips, then into bits of 1/2 inch or less. Bake in 350 degree oven until edges are light brown. Serve with:

**POPPY SEED MILK****AGUONŲ PIENAS**

2 tb. crushed poppy seeds—4 tb. boiling water—1/3 c honey. Pound seeds until crushed fine, pour water over them—add honey. Pour over *šližikai* just before serving.

**ŽEMAITIŠKA EGLUTĖ  
COOKIE TREE**

3 eggs  
1 cup sour cream  
1 tsp. vanilla plus 1 tsp. sugar  
Dash of salt  
10 1/2 oz. shortening  
1/2 cup flour  
confectioners sugar

Sift flour—beat eggs and cream—add vanilla, salt, sugar, shortening, flour; knead well. Slap dough with rolling pin and let it rest for a few minutes. Roll out thin. Shape to resemble spruce branches (or tree leaves). Fry in deep fat. (Put in some potato slices so they won't brown too much). String these "branches" around a center post (to resemble tree trunk). Very festive looking.

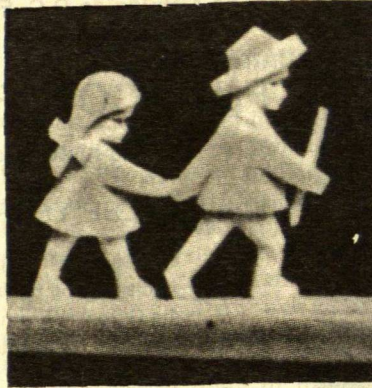
**LITTLE PARTY CHEESECAKES  
PYRAGAIČIAI IŠ SŪRIO**

12 vanilla wafers  
8 oz. softened cream cheese  
2 tsp. lemon juice  
1/2 tsp. vanilla  
1/3 cup sugar  
1 egg

1 21 oz. can cherry pie filling  
Beat cream cheese with sugar, egg, lemon juice and vanilla till smooth. Line a 12 muffin tin with paper cups. Place 1 vanilla wafer in bottom. Spoon cheese mix into cups and bake at 375 degrees

# Cooking

with Aldona Marcavage



for 12-15 min. Cool. Top each cake with pie filling. Chill.

**DRIED FRUIT COMPOTE  
DŽIOVINTI VAISIŲ KOMPOTAS**

1 box dried mixed fruit  
1/2 box dried prunes  
1/4 box light raisins  
2 sticks cinnamon  
sugar or honey to taste  
2 tb. lemon juice  
10 whole cloves  
1/2 box pears or apricots  
Rinse fruit. Boil with spice in 2 quarts water until soft. Add sugar or honey. Remove cloves and cinnamon. Cool. Serve alone or with honey cake.

**HONEY CAKE  
MEDAUS PYRAGAS**

1 cup honey  
2/3 cup sugar  
1 cup sour cream  
1/2 cup almonds  
1 tsp. mixed spices — cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, ginger, cardamon, grated rind of lemon and orange.  
2 tb melted butter  
3 c flour  
2 tsp. bkg soda  
Beat honey, gradually adding sugar and cream. Beat in eggs one at a time. Sift flour and soda. Add flour, spices and butter gradually to honey mix, beating constantly. Pour butter (about one inch thick) into a sheet cake pan. Bake 30 min. at 350. When done, sprinkle top

with sweetened water to which rum flavoring (or rum) has been added. Sprinkle with chopped almonds. May be baked one week in advance and stored cool.

**MEDAUS GIRA  
HONEY DRINK**

1 litre honey  
10 litres water  
7 oz. yeast  
7 oz. raisins  
3-5 lemons

Pour boiling water over honey and stir until it is dissolved. Put yeast into cooled (to warm) honey water and let stand 24 hours, in warm room — cover with clean cloth — until mix begins to foam. Lift off foam. Wash and dry raisins, add to honey mix. Add lemon juice. Pour into sterilized bottles — seal — let stand in cold place. This is served for holidays, weddings, or other special occasions.

**SPANGUOLYTĖ  
CRANBERRY LIQUEUR**

1/2 litre vodka — 1 cup each: sugar, cranberry juice, strawberry and raspberry syrup. Put sugar over juice and syrup and keep 24 hours. If fresh berries are used — strain this juice through a cloth. Now add vodka and hold for 24 hours. Ready to serve.

**CINNAMON SNAPS  
SAUSAINIAI**

1/4 c sweet butter, softened  
1/4 c sugar  
2 tb. molasses  
1 1/2 tsp. cinnamon  
1/4 tsp. ground ginger  
1/4 tsp. ground cloves  
1/4 tsp. baking soda  
Dash of salt  
3/4 cup plus 2 tb. flour  
1 egg yolk; lightly beaten

In a large bowl beat butter until light. Slowly add sugar. Beat in molasses, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, baking soda and salt. Add flour 1/4 cup at a time. Mix in egg yolk and work into a soft dough. Place in freezer for 1/2 hour. Shape cookie dough into a 1 1/2 inch thick roll. Slice into 1/8 inch thick slices. Place on a lightly buttered baking sheet and bake in a preheated 325 degree oven until golden — 8 minutes. (Basic recipes from *Ugenčienė's Žemaičių Valgiai*)

## thank you for your letters — but. . .

I read each issue of BRIDGES with great interest from cover to cover. In my youth, it never occurred to me that our Lithuanian heritage could be so exciting! Your newspaper certainly bridges the past and the present in our culture.

*John Blozis  
Washington, D.C.*

I'm writing you to compliment the fine work you are doing on a very needed publication in the Lithuanian community. In our own household we are separated by three generations and we find BRIDGES truly crosses the gaps and makes all aware of our wonderful heritage.

Again, Bravo!

*Kestutis Petraitis  
Cleveland, OH*

My wife and I enjoy the articles in BRIDGES, particularly those dealing with the culture and the history of Lithuania. These articles whet our interest to know more of our Lithuanian ancestry.

*Vincent W. Witkus  
Hartsdale, NY*

It is with sincere pleasure I write to congratulate you. Your publication is magnificent. You contribute much towards freeing Lithuania and I thank you for all. I haven't money to send you but please accept my humble prayer for all the Lithuanian community in the U.S. I am eternally grateful to receive BRIDGES. Believe me, your effort isn't in vain. Please if I can be of any service to you just let me know. I'll do whatever I can to assist you.

*Gerasimas Puškavas  
Buenos Aires, Argentina*

Please give your readers *more* information on *Lithuania* and not the raped and acculturated people who were and still are stripped of their self-respect and dignity by their past and present oppressors.

*Nellie L Radšvilla Perohonic  
Sunderland, MA*

BRIDGES is a welcome friend in our house. Dear Editor, you are doing a terrific job.

*Alexandra Sagys  
Lyndhurst, OH*

Your magazine is very informative. Enjoy reading it. Wish it were longer.

*Mrs Frances Barry  
Lawrence, MA*

I have enjoyed receiving BRIDGES every month; and since I made my first trip to Lithuania this past summer and met relatives and saw for myself how they live under Russian rule. I feel very eager to read and know as much as I

can about Lithuania and how proud I am to be Lithuanian but how sad I am Lithuania is not free!

*Renata Puntolillo  
North Arlington, NJ*

Enclosed is a donation to BRIDGES, which became my corridor to my heritage. It is wonderfully enlightening to read of the history of my parents but very sad to read of the "Russification" of Lithuania. I am as proud of that as I am of being an American. Your magazine has really opened up my interest and eyes.

*Florence Kohke  
Colonia, NJ*

## . . . how to solve this problem? . . .

On my desk there's a folder that bulges with letters from our readers. Some of the letters, demanding answers, are almost two years old. Let's get together about this problem.

Because of limited time and editorial staff, it is humanly impossible to answer your letters, thoroughly interesting though it would be to correspond with you.

Since BRIDGES must pursue a broad coverage of varied Lithuanian events and serve the interests of Lithuanian-Americans all over the United States, we can not print material which is circumscribed by local interests.

We can not, dear readers, help you locate a relative who has been lost for thirty years, We cannot help you find a Lithuanian wife or suggest what to do with your recalcitrant teenager and his personal problems, or persuade your cousins to spell their Lithuanian sur-

name the way you think is correct. We cannot research and dig up the recipe your great grandmother used for dark Lithuanian bread. We cannot provide proof that a certain famous golfer IS Lithuanian and win a bet for you. We cannot lecture your Lithuanian American neighbors about their unLithuanian (or unAmerican) outlooks.

For general information, our readers might write to the Lithuanian Information Center, 355 Highland Blvd., Brooklyn, NY 11207.

BRIDGES is simply not equipped to handle such important but personal matters.

Should BRIDGES grow in financial status and size, we would be in a more practical position to handle the needs of our correspondents whose letters now bulge, unanswered, in the folder on my desk.

*BRIDGES Editor  
Demie Jonaitis*



(Cartoon from Šluota, published in Lithuania)



## INTERVIEW

(Continued from page 12)

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## APOLOGY TO OUR READERS

The Christmas issue  
of BRIDGES is late  
because of circumstances beyond  
the control of the administrator and  
editor.

d.m.j.

crew aboard a Soviet frigate, the *Storozhevoy*, attempted to defect to Sweden but were captured just short of their goal and executed.

The abortive mutiny was transformed in Clancy's mind over the years into the successful defection of the submarine *Red October*. In preparation for the writing, he researched Soviet submarines in publicly-available literature as well as in a war game called *Harpoon* which had a 40-page supplement on the strategy and tactics of Soviet and US naval forces. In the *Time* magazine article Clancy is quoted as saying "I didn't get kissed by the muse. It was hard work." To me, Clancy said that he was fortunate in having a retentive memory, a faculty which undoubtedly was of considerable value in writing the 387-page story, one of whose remarkable virtues is the author's deft handling of the of modern naval technology. He also said that, it took him only six months to do the writing. He now has no recollection of when or how he did it, whether it was nights or weekends, so absorbed was he in creating his tale of high adventure far below the surface of the Atlantic.

### The Future

Did Clancy intend to follow up the success of his first literary efforts with another book? "Three," he replied calmly. The Naval Institute Press in Annapolis, his publishers, has put him under contract for all of them. Clancy had earlier written an article on MX missiles for the Press' monthly magazine. When he submitted the draft of *Red October* to the same publishers, the timing was perfect because the Press (no connection with the Naval Academy or the US Navy) had just decided to expand into fiction, provided it was "wet" (dealt with the sea).

### A Personal Note

Success hasn't spoiled Tom Clancy. I had written a letter in care of his publishers, and I received a call directly from him a short time later. My second call also reached him directly. No waiting, no fuss, no secretary screening his calls. There was only one interruption: his wife on another line but for a very short time. And as mentioned earlier,



AČIŪ

LABAI

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Joseph Shelonis, Minersville, PA; Algis Sirvaitis,  
Cleveland, OH.

Clancy responded without hesitation or  
annoyance to all my questions except  
when he considered the matter private.

Coincidentally, his fourth child,  
Kathleen, was born exactly two weeks  
before my first conversation with him.  
His other children are Michelle, age 12;  
Christine age 11; and Tom, age 3.

As one of his many fans; I will be  
waiting eagerly for his next book and  
maybe too for the movie of *Red October*  
which is said to be under negotiation.

So three cheers for Tom Clancy's  
Marko Ramius who thumbed his nose  
at the whole Soviet navy and got away  
with it.



## THINK TANK

The Arts Club Theatre presented *The Play 'The Thing'* through December 8, at the Courtyard Playhouse, N.Y.C. Authored by Ferenc Molnar and adapted by humorist P. G. Wodehouse, it is a satire of mankind, modern Europe, and the art of satire itself. *The Play's The Thing* first opened on Broadway in November, 1926 to the critical acclaim of the likes of none other than Brooks Atkinson of the *New York Times*. A major revival of the work occurred in 1948 — more acclaim by the critics. The Arts Club Theatre's performance this season is another praiseworthy revival by the "think tank" internationalist drama company, who produced *The Awakening* earlier this year.

## LAUGHTER

The communist press in Lithuania has long been struggling to court and cage gadfly Algirdas Landsbergis, Lithuanian playwright-and-writer-in-exile. Communist-serving writers can not tolerate laughter. Landsbergis, with his sly humor and wit, confuses them.

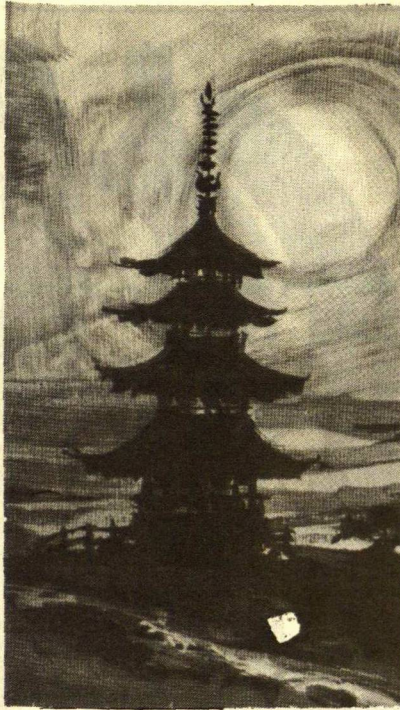
Recently, V. Kostkaitis deplored in the communist paper *Gintasis Kraštas* that Landsbergis' satirical comedy *The Face of Ona* "unfairly" criticized the "people" of Lithuania. "Emigrants," he pleads, "you are laughing at yourselves!"

Kostkaitis unfortunately does not understand what Landsbergis is satirizing. He does not seem to know that it takes a lot of *freedom* to observe, think for oneself, speak, and have the power to laugh. Especially at oneself.

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for the New Year:**

May we Lithuanians,  
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bridge all that separates us  
and strive to establish both  
unity and power  
among ourselves  
to help our people who live  
in today's Lithuania  
achieve the freedom  
for which they long.