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Dear Sir:

I really appreciate your publication, as it truly keeps me in touch with the many facets of Lithuanian life, especially in these times of the rebirth and emergence of the Lithuanian nation!

Since relocating to the Phoenix, Arizona area a year ago, (from Boston), I was amazed at the number of fellow Lithuanians who live and truly enjoy life here. We have two active Lithuanian Organizations here that offer many cultural and educational opportunities for all. The Phoenix area organizations are made up of members from around the country as well as Europe for added diversity. So, if you're thinking of vacationing or relocating here, we'll very much look forward to showing you some genuine Lithuanian hospitality!

Sincerely,
Rick Dixon
 Glendale, Arizona

To the Editor:

Hurray!
 Your new *Bridges* is wonderful. Keep up the high quality!

Blessings,
Mike Sala, SJ
 New York City

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Through the news journal, the publishers hope to re-establish ties between the detached mobile Lithuanian-Americans and their Lithuanian heritage by presenting items on Lithuanian culture, conditions in the homeland, events and personalities in America, and the aspirations of all who subscribe to the goal that Lithuania must and will be an independent free nation again.

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Saint Casimir - Patron Saint of Lithuania

Lithuania is the land of silent martyrs and saints. Even though Christianity is over 600 years old in Lithuania, and during those centuries past, to this very day, countless thousands of martyrs have died for the sake of the Gospel, Lithuania has only one person who has been officially recognized by the Roman Catholic Church as a Saint. He is St. Casimir, whose feast day is March 4th. It is this personage upon whom we reflect in this article. (This month's *Bridges* has a likeness of St. Casimir on the cover. It is a detail from a graphic by Lithuanian artist V. Ignas.)

St. Casimir was born on October 3, 1458 in the royal palace of Krakow. It should be noted that Casimir did not have one drop of Polish blood flowing within him. He is descended of the lineage of Jogaila. His grandfather and grandmother were Jogaila and Sofija Alsėniške, Jogaila's fourth wife. His father was Grand Duke Casimir I. His mother was Elizabeth, the daughter of the Austrian Habsburg Emperor Albrecht II.

Casimir's formal education began at age 9 and included the classics: Latin, Greek, history, public speaking, theology, religious doctrine, and the importance of prayer and virtuous living. Visiting dignitaries to the Lithuanian Court were quite impressed with young Casimir's knowledge, when he would appear before them and speak in a number of languages on a variety of topics. One Prussian Chronicler of the time referred to Casimir as a "very wise and virtuous young man, of which people could only speak well."



At 13, Casimir was given the command of a 12,000-man army and was dispatched to occupy the throne of Hungary, since his mother, Elizabeth, claimed the right of succession to the Hungarian throne. Casimir's true interests were farthest away from military strategy, though. Upon his return to the Court, he quickly returned to his studies which emphasized the art of Chivalry, the mastery of the art of rhetoric and the fundamentals of world literature. Also, at this time, Casimir came to a deeper love of prayer and tended toward a deeply religious life. At age 16, Casimir, the ever-obedient son, began to travel with his father throughout the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland, attending meetings of the State Council, and receptions for foreign government officials, in order to gain experience in the affairs of the state. Casimir was heir apparent to the throne. At age 22, Casimir was assigned an active part in the workings of the government, which included administrative duties, responsibilities within the judicial system, also in military and financial affairs. Casimir served as his father's delegate in Krakow during which time Casimir strengthened the financial condition of the state by saving resources, by repaying debts on mortgaged estates, and by curbing banditry in the provinces. He also improved the tone of the royal palace by removing unsuitable courtiers, and strengthened relations with the Vatican. While being engaged in and aptly discharging his duties to the state, Casimir would pray to the Blessed Virgin, through the night. Casimir had a truly special devotion to the Blessed Virgin. While praying, he would kneel outside the Vilnius Cathedral, clad in his royal robes, but underneath these garments, he wore a rough hair cloth closest to his body, the clothing of a penitent. He recited the prayer of St. Aloysius to the Blessed Virgin — Daily, Daily sing to Mary — also, Casimir would meditate on the Passions of Christ.

Although, as St. Casimir progressed in age, gaining the respect of everyone that came in contact with him, Casimir never did find fulfillment in the life of the Court. He continued to draw himself closer to God, through the Blessed Virgin. Self-inflicted penances, fasts and other acts of charity to feed the spirit and the soul became primary in his life. More often than not, Casimir declined the use of his bed, preferring rather to sleep on the bare earthen floor, with his arms outstretched in the form of a cross.

continued on next page

In late 1483, Casimir's health began to fail in a rapid decline. It is believed that because of Casimir's harsh treatment of himself, he contracted tuberculosis. The disease took its toll quickly and on the morning of March 4, 1484, the 25-year-old Casimir died of tuberculosis in his mother's arms, in the city of Gardinas. His remains were brought to the Vilnius Cathedral for burial.

St. Casimir died, not having reached his 26th birthday and also not yet having manifested his true genius, his Solomon-like wisdom and fairness and his humanity to all.

Pope Leo X canonized St. Casimir in 1521, and it is from that date that March 4th has been set aside each year in the Church's Liturgical calendar as St. Casimir's feast day.

In 1636, St. Casimir's remains were placed in a silver coffin and elevated above the altar of a special chapel that was built in the Vilnius Cathedral in St. Casimir's honor. It is said that his body was miraculously preserved for 120 years. In connection with the transfer of St. Casimir's remains, Pope Urban VIII declared St. Casimir to be the principal heavenly patron of Lithuania and all Lithuanians.

Lithuanian Jesuit missions and colleges contributed considerably to the development of what has come to be known as the cult of St. Casimir. Casimir was chosen by the Jesuits as an example for all of piety and chastity. The large baroque church erected by the Jesuits in Vilnius in honor of St. Casimir between 1604 and 1609 served for many years as the center of Jesuit activity in Lithuania. There are many Lithuanian Roman Catholic churches throughout the world which have been dedicated to St. Casimir. In Lithuania, the churches are most plentiful in the eastern provinces. Four historically Lithuanian cities have a likeness of St. Casimir in their city seal — namely Kretinga, Nemunaitis, Darsuniškis, and Kvėdarna.

The silver coffin bearing Casimir's remains was kept hidden during the first Russian invasion (1655) and during the great northern war (1703). When the Russians occupied Lithuania in 1795, the official celebrations of the feast day of St. Casimir — traditionally a three-day celebration with a fair known as Kaziuko Mugė or Kaziuko Turgus — was banned by the Czar.

During the 22 years of restored Lithuanian independence in this century, March 4th was an official state holiday as well as a religious feast day with many of the century-old traditions being revived.

During World War II, the Vilnius Cathedral, which for centuries was the center for the veneration of St. Casimir was desecrated by the Soviets and converted into an art gallery. Numerous churches which contained likenesses of St. Casimir have been axed and



torched by the Soviets, who seem to realize the significance of St. Casimir to the Lithuanians. The remains of St. Casimir contained in the silver coffin and kept in the Vilnius Cathedral for three centuries, have been plundered and desecrated. That which remained was transferred to the Church of St. Peter and Paul in the outskirts of Antakalnis during 1953. St. Casimir can then also be regarded as one who is exiled from his homeland as many Lithuanians are today. Maybe that is why St. Casimir is so real a personage to us all.

Five centuries separate us from the days when St. Casimir walked this earth, yet one can never say that the ideals he espoused are old fashioned. He is an example we should all strive to follow.

[Compiled, translated and expanded upon from the Lietuvių Encyclopedija (Lithuanian language), by Eduardas V. Meilus, Jr.]



Moscow Blocks Lithuanian Visas to Americans

Lithuanian Information Center — Eight Americans were denied permission to travel to Vilnius for Lithuanian Independence Day, reports the New York-based Lithuanian Information Center.

For the first time since the Soviet takeover of Lithuania in 1940, Lithuanians are being allowed to mark February 16, the date in 1918 when Lithuania declared its independence. Last year commemorations planned by dissidents were scuttled by Communist authorities.

This year, February 16 was declared a public holiday. The Lithuanian Reform Movement, *Sąjūdis*, extended invitations to fifty foreign guests to attend a series of cultural and political events today and tomorrow in Kaunas and Vilnius to mark the occasion.

At least two Lithuanian-Americans were granted visas, but eight others, most of whom have organizational affiliations, were rejected: Ginte Damušis (Dir., Lithuanian Information Center, New York), Algimantas Gureckas (Vice-Pres., Lithuanian World Community, Hartford), Romauld Misiunas (Author-historian, New York), Petras Molis (Pres., Lithuanian Scouts Association, Worcester), Bronius Nainys (Editor, *World Lithuanian*, Chicago), Juozas Polikaitis (Pres., Lithuanian Catholic Federation *Ateitis*, Chicago), Dr. Antanas Razma (Pres., Lithuanian-American Community, Chicago), Darius Sužiedelis (Pres., Lithuanian-American Youth Association, Washington, D.C.).

According to independent and government sources, the visas for the eight were approved in Lithuania by First Party Secretary Algirdas Brazauskas, but blocked by Moscow.

Viktor M. Chebrikov, the former head of the KGB and currently the Politburo member in charge of legal and political affairs, attacked unofficial popular movements like *Sąjūdis* for posing "great harm to our mighty, positive social movement" and condemned them for "striving to push the masses onto the road to anarchy and lawlessness, on the road of destabilization..."

In a statement issued to the USSR Foreign Ministry and USSR Supreme Soviet by some of those denied visas, the signatories declared, "one thing is for sure, all efforts to regain some semblance of independent rights for Lithuania have borne no fruit. Isn't it strange that a country that has declared a national holiday doesn't permit us to mark it..."

Sąjūdis National Assembly Calls for Democratic and Independent Lithuania

Lithuanian Information Center — The national assembly of Lithuania's largest grassroots organization has adopted a declaration calling for a free, democratic and neutral Lithuania existing in a demilitarized zone, reports the New York-based Lithuanian Information Center.

During a meeting at the Kaunas State Music Theater on the eve of February 16, Lithuanian Independence Day, the 220-member elected national assembly of *Sąjūdis* approved its most direct affirma-

tion to date of Lithuania's right to national self-determination.

The text of the declaration, dictated to LIC from Kaunas by Henrikas Sambora, manager of the local *Sąjūdis* office, traces the history of Lithuania's desire for freedom. It states that the Lithuanian declaration of independence on February 16, 1918, "expressed the Lithuanian nation's aspiration to create a democratic state." Recalling the annexation of Lithuania in 1940 by the USSR as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop

Pact, the statement says "the Lithuanian nation never reconciled itself to the loss of its state sovereignty." And, in a thinly veiled reference to continued Soviet domination over Lithuania, the Sajūdis declaration says Lithuania "to this date has opposed manifestations of state colonialism."

The carefully worded statement stops short of calling for immediate political independence for Lithuania, but makes clear that such is the long-term goal: "Sajūdis expresses the nation's determination to regain its rights through peaceful means, to live independent of any kind of dictate... Sajūdis will follow the road to legal, political, economic and cultural independence for Lithuania, to state sovereignty, without confining itself to partial achievements. Sajūdis' goal... (is) to create the conditions for free and democratic national self-determination."

And, in a further demonstration of their sentiment for national freedom, the Sajūdis delegates took a

(Full text of Sajūdis' statement follows)

Lithuania's declaration of independence on February 16, 1918, expressed the Lithuanian nation's aspiration to create a democratic state. The Lithuanian republic, successfully defended in the war for independence, received international recognition and became a member of the League of Nations. Although Germany and the USSR, through ultimate coercion and mutual agreement in 1939-40, annexed the Lithuanian state, the definitive international recognition of Lithuania's independence remains in force.

The Lithuanian nation never reconciled itself to the loss of its state sovereignty. Through various means, it resisted Hitlerite and Stalinist genocide and to this date has opposed manifestations of state colonialism. Lithuania's *Persitvarkymo Sajūdis* (Movement to Support Perestroika) expresses the nation's determination to regain its rights through peaceful means, to live independent of any kind of dictate.

Relying on the new political thinking declared by

public oath today before a crowd of 200,000 people gathered at the rededication ceremony of Lithuania's Freedom Monument in Kaunas. They pledged: "Lithuania should be such as its people desire. Our goal: a free Lithuania! Our destiny: Lithuania! May God and all people of good will throughout the world help us."

The Sajūdis delegates extend an olive branch to the republic's non-Lithuanian inhabitants, some of whom have opposed Lithuanians' campaign for greater national freedom. Their statement promises "cultural autonomy for Lithuania's national minorities in a Lithuanian state." An estimated 20 percent of Lithuania's inhabitants are non-Lithuanian.

The Sajūdis declaration is notable for the absence of any reference to Lithuania's future affiliation with the Soviet state. When Sajūdis was founded in June 1988, its explicit goal was economic, political and cultural autonomy for Lithuania within the framework of the USSR.

the top leadership of the USSR as well as on Mikhail Gorbachev's speech to the UN General Assembly on December 7, 1988, which stressed the right of nations to choose freely, Sajūdis will follow the road to legal, political, economic and cultural independence for Lithuania, to state sovereignty, without confining itself to partial achievements.

Sajūdis' goal: to struggle against depression and degeneration, to build new foundations for Lithuania's well-being, to create the conditions for free and democratic national self-determination. Sajūdis stands for social justice, humaneness and democracy, for cultural autonomy for Lithuania's national minorities in a Lithuanian state, for its traditional status of neutrality in a European demilitarized zone, for universally accepted human and civil freedoms, from which flows the general right of Lithuania's citizens independently to choose and develop their own forms of state existence. Sajūdis invites all patriotic forces in Lithuanian society to unite in raising up and fostering our native land.



BELLS AND BELLRINGERS — VARPAS & THE VARPININKAI

by Vytautas Merkys

In January, 1889, the first issue of "Varpas" (The Bell) appeared. With it began a new stage in the history of the development of the Lithuanian press. "Varpas" lasted until 1905, much longer than any other periodical in Lithuania proper.

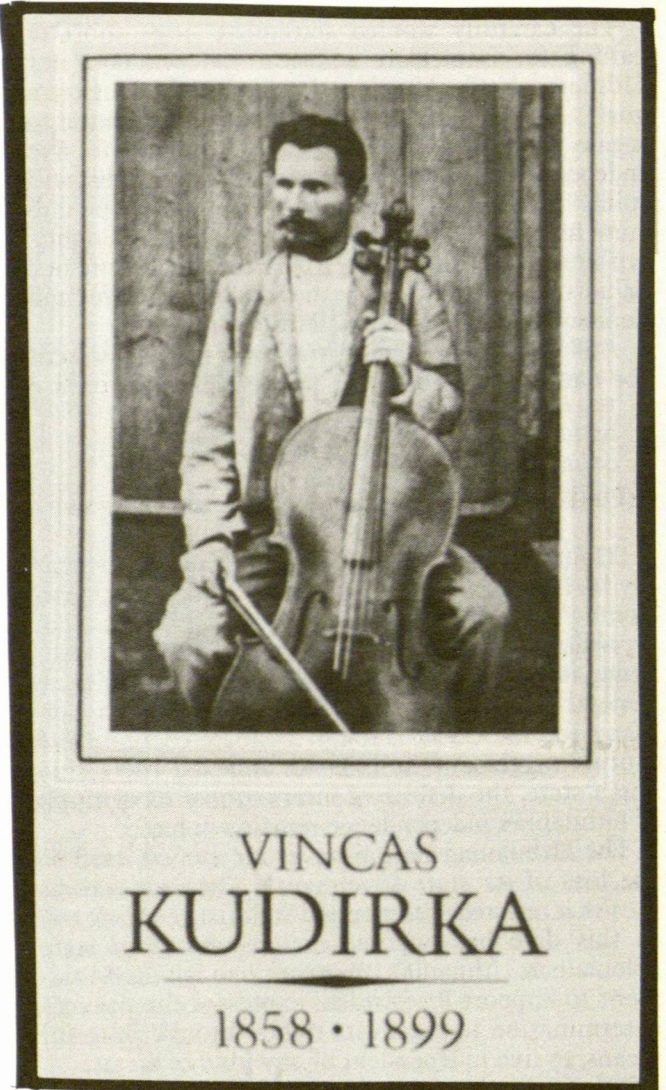
With the ceasing of the publication of the newspaper "Auszra" (1883-1886), the Lithuanian national movement lost a consolidating voice. In both portions of Lithuania, that is to say Russian and German Lithuania, as well as in the emigration, a need was felt for a nationally-oriented publication.

At that time, V. Kudirka represented a new generation of Lithuanian intellectuals. He was one of 22 members of the Lithuanian student society "Lietuva" in Warsaw, Poland. The purposes of the society were: (1) Spreading enlightenment. (2) The resuscitation and raising of the national spirit, literacy and art. (3) The improvement of the farm economy. (4) The expansion of the borders of Lithuanianism. Books and newspapers were seen as the most important means of propagating such ideas and consolidating national feelings.

On June 29, 1888, the members of the "Lietuva" Society conferred with the members of Lithuanian student organizations in Moscow in the Lithuanian town of Mariampole. This date is held as the founding date of the "Varpininkai" (Bellringers) Association. The Moscow students, however, were of no practical help and the Warsaw Lithuanian students alone found the means to publish "Varpas." The first editor of the periodical was Vincas Kudirka.

Most Lithuanian intellectuals were attracted to "Varpas." Over the years it had more than 150 contributors who generally met annually in various places in Suvalkija. The periodical ordinarily did not appear in more than 1,500 copies but was widely read.

"Varpas" was given direction by liberal, secular intellectuals. "Varpas" was tolerant in religious matters and sought to unite all Lithuanians no matter their separate religious beliefs. The periodical often teased those of strong sectarian convictions who in turn accused it of religious indifferentism and "free-thinking." It was also criticized by some of the polonizing clergy and conservatives. In time, many of the Lithuanian clergy separated themselves from the "Varpininkai" movement and began publishing their own periodicals, the Catholic "Zemaičių ir Lietuvos apžvalga" (Samogithian and Lithuanian Observer) in 1890 and the "Tevynės sargas" (Guardian of the Fatherland), in 1896, which consolidated the Lithuanian Catholic intellectual movement. In 1894, the aliena-



"Our ideal is a free, independent Lithuania, freed from foreign and native despots, in which ignorance is trampled underfoot, which, together with other nationalities, is interested in economic betterment and is moving forward."

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tion of the secular and confessional intellectuals was completed by V. Kudirka's criticism of an encyclical written by Pope Leo XIII to the faithful of Poland, in which he praised Czar Alexander III, and in which the Pope glossed over the persecution of Polish Catholics and the massacre of Lithuanian Catholics by the cossacks at Kraziai.

At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, the Lithuanian nation suffered from a dual national oppression — russification and polonization, which came from the top of society. The social structure was typified by the remains of feudalism, then being shaken by gradual industrialization. The greater number of "bajorai" or gentry, the clergy and city dwellers had become polonized. The new industrializing strata were in the process of formation in the villages. The "Varpininkai" were aware of social inequality. They believed however, that it was necessary to subordinate social and economic issues to that of the national issue.

Although "Varpas" began to publish more and more controversial articles and seemed to move to the left on social and economic questions, it was most concerned with the national question. The primary concern of each contributor was the strengthening of the national cause, the spread and use of the Lithuanian language in all spheres of life and the defense of the nation against the polonizers and russifiers. The periodical insisted on equal rights for the Lithuanian language with all other languages spoken in the country.

"Varpas" wrote much about the efforts of the tsarist administration and the measures it took against the national press, schools, the freedom of religion as well as tsarist economic exploitation. Yet "Varpas" was not chauvinistic nor jingoistic. Although it criticized foreign landlords and oppressors, it was open to the cultural values of other nations. Since there was little yet written in Lithuanian, it looked to the examples of others in the development of a national literature, particularly those of the Czechs, Hungarians, Norwegians and Armenians. It published works of other and neighboring European classical authors. It led its readers to the treasures of world literature heretofore beyond their reach in their own Lithuanian language.

Above all, "Varpas" and the "Varpininkai" agitated for sovereignty. In 1901, P. Višinskis wrote, "Our ideal is a free, independent Lithuania, freed from foreign and native despots, in which ignorance is trampled underfoot, which, together with other nationalities, is interested in economic betterment and is moving forward." These and other words written by V. Kudirka are valuable memorials from the past because they encouraged and strengthened Lithuanian culture and the winds of freedom.

*Translated, edited and condensed from **Kulturos Barai**, 1/89, (Vilnius), pp. 32-37 by Thomas A. Michalski, Ph.D.*

Dear Friends,

Exciting changes have taken place in Lithuania: Most political prisoners have been released, three main churches have been returned, the tri-color and national anthem are legal, Christmas is recognized, and the seminary boasts 124 students.

While thanking God for all this, we realize that the struggle is not over yet. With improved communications, we are receiving more requests for assistance than ever before. For example, government permission has been given for the publication of a new Catholic magazine. We are being asked to provide modern typesetting and paper.

Lithuania needs medical supplies, and the people are starving for religious and other reading material.

For twenty-seven years, Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid has been the only organization in the world helping the Catholics of Lithuania full-time. This year, three young Lithuanians from Suvalkai are studying for the priesthood in Rome. Their support amounts to \$25,000 annually. Religious Aid's long-standing annual subsidy for Lithuanian-language Vatican Radio broadcasts last year totalled \$10,000.

Widely acclaimed as the most effective agency relaying news from Lithuania, a valuable service to Lithuania, the Lithuanian Information Center last year cost Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid \$400,000! Long before perestroika, LCRA was supplying vast amounts of direct aid to Lithuania.

Cardinal Sladkevicius recently said, "We admire the concern of Lithuanians abroad for Lithuania, and we want their care not to diminish, but to manifest itself in support of all sorts."

There is no better material support to Lithuania than your tax-exempt contribution to Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid. We ask every working person to consider a contribution of at least \$100, either at one time, or spread throughout the year. If you cannot give as much as you would like, we shall be grateful for any donation. Benefactors are remembered during Mass daily.

God bless you!

+ *Paulius A. Baltakis, O.F.M.*
Bishop Paulius Baltakis, O.F.M.
 President, LCRA



Successful or Unsuccessful Demonstrations? by Rita Likander

February 16. Lithuanian Independence Day. 71 years ago, Lithuania declared itself to be a free and independent state. This period of independence lasted for only a short time, 22 years, yet there was much accomplished in terms of achievements of which we can be proud. We celebrate this day every year. As of yet, this is not a joyful celebration. Every Lithuanian prepares for it and knows that, in one way or another, the event will be commemorated. Knowing all this very well — I have to ask this question — where were the majority of the people during the Lithuanian Youth Association's sponsored demonstrations held on Thursday, February 16, 1989, at the Daley Center Plaza in downtown Chicago??? I'm not blaming only the youth for poor attendance. There weren't too many older people there either.

Preparations for these demonstrations started in mid-January. The board of the Chicago Chapter of the Association of Young Lithuanian Americans, together with a few other dedicated souls, met almost every day, discussing the details and planning the event so that everything would run smoothly. We decided that we must get the American press to pay more attention to our cause. The daily newspapers and electronic media were hit with endless press releases, personal phone calls, press packets and letters to the editor. As we explained to these journalists about our demonstrations, we would also mention how this event ties in with the events going on in Lithuania. These demonstrations are a form of solidarity to all those craving freedom and fighting for independence in Lithuania, we told them. It seems that our goal was achieved — the press was interested in our cause and sent many reporters, journalists, photographers and camera crews to cover the event. I'm not sure if the reporters showed up because it was a generally slow news day or because they felt the event was really newsworthy. Maybe it was because they got tired of our endless letters and phone calls, but that is not important. All that matters is that we succeeded in bringing them out to cover our story.

The day of the demonstration turned out to be cold, but sunny. We met at Vida Vizgirda's house at 5:00 a.m. so that we could load up the cars with the many posters and crosses that were made earlier. We also loaded up the sound system and the platform. We were on our way. We started to set up in the dark, but, as we were finishing up, the streets were coming to life with people going to work, and many Chicagoans were curious to see what was going on. We passed out close to 5000 flyers that day to interested parties. On the platform itself, we put up a lectern as well as an American and Lithuanian flag. On one side of the platform, we had lined up 49 white crosses — each cross representing a year of Soviet occupation of Lithuania since 1940. The crosses had a yellow, green and red ribbon on them, draped with a black sash as a symbol of mourning. Posters were hung at strategic locations. Many of these were in the shape of tombstones, symbolizing the year during which freedom, human rights, religion, independence, free elections, free speech, culture, sports, and the like, died in Lithuania. Some signs proclaimed "The Soviet Party does not represent Lithuania," "We Want Freedom, Not Autonomy," "Glasnost is not enough for Lithuania," "We Love Sąjūdis," "Support Sąjūdis - the Lithuanian reform movement," and many, many others.

Finally, everything was set and we were just waiting for the buses to arrive. After some time, our three buses showed up transporting young and eager demonstrators. Many of these people were dressed in Lithuanian national dress, some even had LIETUVA painted on their faces. They also brought their Lithuanian flags.

Everything was in place and we were anxiously waiting for our main speaker, Eugene Sawyer, Mayor of Chicago, to officially open the demonstrations. Eventually, we got wind of the fact that he wasn't coming — it turns out that he had a council meeting to attend. Also attending this council meeting were aldermen Roman Pucinski and Marlene Carter. These government officials were scheduled speakers. It turns out that they knew about this meeting many days before our demonstration, but they all committed themselves to speak at our event.

A question comes to mind — why promise to be somewhere, if you know all along that you can't make it? We would have been happier (disappointed, actually) if we were told at first that these officials wouldn't be able to make it, instead of cancelling out at the last possible moment, leaving us with gaping holes in our program. Mr. Lawrence Bloom, democratic candidate for mayor of the city of Chicago, pulled out of the race on the Wednesday before the event and therefore also cancelled his appearance. In a matter of 10 minutes, we had lost four of our notable speakers, and we couldn't come up with anybody else on such short notice. Finally, after juggling the program around a bit, we were ready to start. Father John Kuzinskas, pastor of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Marquette Park said the invocation. In both Lithuanian and English, he prayed that next year we would be able to commemorate Restoration of Lithuanian Independence Day in a free and independent Lithuania.



Lithuanian Youth Association Chicago chapter member Vidas Kazlauskas preparing posters for February 16th Rally, Daley Plaza Chicago. Photo by Rasa Miliauskas.

The mayor's chief operations officer Sharon Gilliam appeared on Mayor Sawyer's behalf to wish us well. Referring to the Lithuanian community's contributions to the city of Chicago, she said "Tegyvuoja Lietuva" "Long Live Lithuania," and wished us much success. Dr. Robert Vitas, Lithuanian research and study center vice-president, gave a short historical review, citing the secret agreement between Hitler and Stalin as the reason Lithuania and other Baltic Republics were forcefully annexed into the Soviet Union. Rita Dapkus, who recently came back from Lithuania and is an officially appointed representative of Sajudis reform movement here in the U.S., stressed the difference between last year's and this year's demonstrations in Lithuania.

City officials raised the Lithuanian flag on the Daley Center Plaza flagpole, while we sang the Star Spangled Banner, and the Lithuanian National Anthem. Afterwards, while singing *Lietuva Brangi*, a black wreath with a yellow, green and red sash, the words "For Lithuania's Freedom Fighters" in gold letters on the green ribbon was placed by the Eternal Flame. We remembered all those who had given up their lives for Lithuania's freedom with a moment of silence, and then singing *Marija, Marija* we came back to the platform. Rita Dapkus then read two greetings from Sajudis.

In keeping with the spirit of the demonstration, we chanted many slogans, as people walked around with our posters. Among the many that were shouted, these were the most popular: "Free the Baltic States now," "What do we want - freedom, when do we want it - now," "One, two, three, four, open up the Baltic door," "One two, three, we want to be free." Ramute Kemeza then taught everybody the song that has gained popularity in Lithuania and has been adopted as the Sajudis fight song - "*Balnokit broliai zirgus*" "Saddle up the horses, brothers." Next Dr. Antanas Razma, president of the Lithuanian American Community National Executive Committee addressed the rally. He reminded us of the fact that this year, for the first time since 1940, the state has allowed Lithuania's Independence day to be officially celebrated. Dr. Peter Kisielius, Jr., declared that everything Sajudis has thus far accomplished is only the beginning — Lithuania wants total freedom, not Soviet autonomy.

We now noticed many camera crews and photographers in the crowd and decided to bring out our element of surprise. Simultaneously, we burned the Soviet flag and raised a huge Lithuanian flag. That should give the reporters something to write about. After this, Richard Daley, Cook County States Attorney and democratic candidate for mayor of the city of Chicago, stopped by to wish us well in our endeavors.

In order to give everyone a chance to warm up, we sent the demonstrators inside to participate in Balzekas museum cultural program. As they were



Ramutė Kemeza singing the Lithuanian national anthem during the flag raising ceremonies.

coming back outside, they were greeted by Dr. Herb Sohn, republican candidate for mayor of Chicago. He addressed the rally saying, in Lithuanian, "I want to be mayor of Chicago, because I like the city." This more or less ended the afternoon portion of the demonstration. After a few more chants and songs, it was time for the buses to go back and drop off the demonstrators, thus taking with them a majority of those participating. The rest of us stayed to straighten up and pick up all the crosses that were knocked down by the wind. We took turns getting something to eat and going inside to warm up.

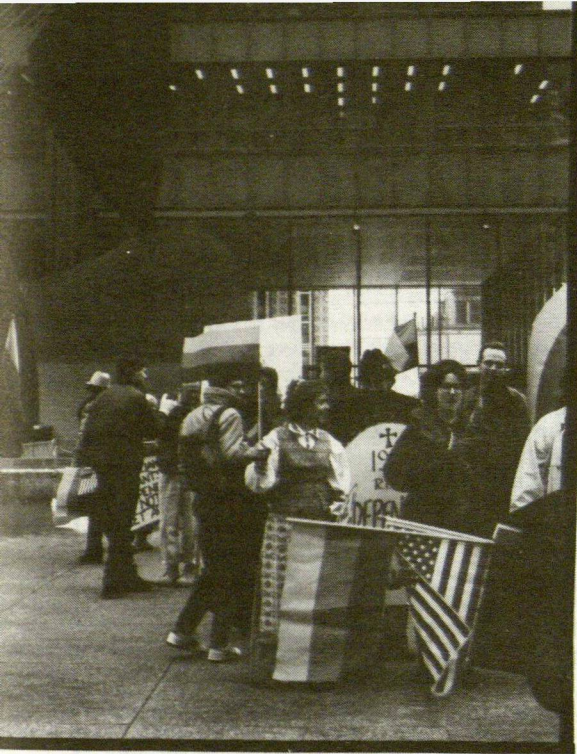
About 5:30 p.m., we started to get ready for our candlelight vigil. The candles that were holding down the crosses were all shattered, thus making them very hard to light. We were finally able to light them and keep most of them lit — the wind was working very hard against us — blowing out the candles as fast as we could light them. In the soft glow of the candles, the atmosphere was much more somber than earlier during the day. We sang touching patriotic songs and did not shout any chants. Once again, with only a handful of participants, the reporters from CBS news showed up. This time, we really gave them something to broadcast — this time we burned TWO Soviet flags to make sure that they would capture the event on film!!! They did! It appears that the press likes things like this, because our flag-burning segment made it onto the 10:00 p.m. news that night.

The evening program consisted of short speeches made by Dr. Petras Kisielius, Jr.; Rita Dapkus read the

Lithuanian Youth Association Chicago member Irena Jasulaityte making posters for February 16th rally demonstrations. Daley Plaza Chicago.

Photo by Rasa Miliauskas.





Some of the young demonstrators.

greeting and quest for freedom from Sajudis which ended with the words of the Lithuanian national anthem: "*Vardan tos Lietuvos, vienybė težydi*" "In the name of Lithuania, let unity prevail." Dr. Kazys Eringis, a representative of Lithuania's Liberation League in the West summarized a resolution passed by the League, a guest from the Youth Theater of Lithuania on this day, but he was with them in spirit, uniting with the nation. We also heard from our last scheduled speaker, Mr. Leo Kazaniwskyj, Governor Thompson's ethnic liaison. He said, being a Ukrainian himself, he can relate to our quest for freedom and knows how much complete freedom means to us. The changes Lithuania is experiencing are very good, but they are not enough — Lithuania needs total freedom. He was received by enthusiastic responses from the gathered crowd.

By the light of the street lamps and the flicker of candles, the Lithuanian flag was lowered. During this time, we sang the Lithuanian National Anthem as well as religious hymns. We also received reports on the successes of the demonstrations going on at the same time in the Lithuanian cities of Kaunas and Vilnius. Juozas Polikaitis, head of the Roman Catholic Federation — Ateitis, said a very moving prayer and the February 16th demonstrations of 1989 were coming to a close. Our many thanks to all those who braved the wind and cold weather and came out with us, not only for the vigil, but for the day's demonstrations as well.

The Chicago Chapter of the Youth Association and others who worked hard for the success of the demonstration should be congratulated and commended. Their efforts are appreciated by all of Lithuania and maybe even by all of Chicago!

Now to answer the question — were these demonstrations successful or unsuccessful? On the one hand — they were very successful, on the other — they weren't. The American press was well informed about the demonstration and its goals. The event was filmed and reported on quite completely. At the same time, these reporters kept the public informed about the current affairs in Lithuania. The media blitz was successful and all the hard work that went into it was well worth it.

On the other hand — all those that were not there should be ashamed of themselves, and should feel very guilty. How can Chicago, where the largest number of Lithuanian-Americans live, boast about a mere 300 people attending the demonstration, while, in the Lithuanian cities of Kaunas and Vilnius, where there is, as of yet, NO freedom, between 150,000 and 200,000 people attended similar rallies and demonstrations??? Next time, we won't even be able to attract the attention of the press — they'll probably say — it's not worth our time to cover this event — there won't be any people there anyway.

Fourteen hours in the cold is a long time, but we weren't asking anybody to be out there during that whole time. It was enough that the organizers were all doing that. We just wanted people to show up, at least for an hour or two during lunch or after work. I'm sure it was possible to find one hour from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. to come and support us. We must be one in faith and in spirit with our Lithuanian counterparts.



Ramutė Kemeža and Asta Spurgis carry the wreath to commemorate Lithuanian freedom fighters during the demonstrations February 16, in Daley Plaza, Chicago.



TOURS TO LITHUANIA 1989 SCHEDULE

APRIL

LITHUANIA & BELGIUM 14 DAY TOUR WITH 8 DAYS IN LITHUANIA
9 nights Vilnius, 1 Moscow, 2 Brussels
TOUR #414 April 14-27..... \$1,799 from Boston & New York
..... \$1,982 from Chicago

MAY

LITHUANIA & FINLAND 14 DAY TOUR WITH 10 DAYS IN LITHUANIA
9 nights Vilnius, 2 Kaunas, 1 Helsinki
TOUR #511 May 11-24..... \$2,109 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,292 from Chicago

LITHUANIA & RUSSIA 13 DAY TOUR WITH 7 DAYS IN LITHUANIA
4 nights Vilnius, 3 Kaunas, 2 Moscow, 2 Leningrad
TOUR #515 May 15-27..... \$2,159 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,342 from Chicago

LITHUANIA & AUSTRIA 15 DAY TOUR WITH 10 DAYS IN LITHUANIA
8 nights Vilnius, 3 Kaunas, 2 Vienna
TOUR #525 May 25-June 8..... \$2,299 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,482 from Chicago

JUNE

LITHUANIA & SWITZERLAND 20 DAY TOUR WITH 15 DAYS
IN LITHUANIA
14 nights Vilnius, 2 Kaunas, 1 Moscow, 1 Zurich
TOUR #608 June 8-27..... \$2,599 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,782 from Chicago

LITHUANIA & AUSTRIA 15 DAY TOUR WITH 10 DAYS IN LITHUANIA
8 nights Vilnius, 3 Kaunas, 2 Vienna
TOUR #615 June 15-29..... \$2,399 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,582 from Chicago

BALTIC STATES, RUSSIA & FINLAND 17 DAY TOUR WITH 7 DAYS IN LITHUANIA

5 nights Vilnius, 2 Kaunas, 2 Tallinn, 2 Riga, 2 Leningrad, 1 Helsinki
TOUR #622 June 22-July 8..... \$2,699 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,882 from Chicago

LITHUANIA, RUSSIA, SWEDEN & FINLAND
18 DAY TOUR WITH 7 DAYS IN LITHUANIA
6 nights Vilnius, 2 Kaunas, 2 Moscow, 2 Leningrad, 2 Stockholm, 1 Helsinki
Baltic Sea overnight cruise from Stockholm to Helsinki
TOUR #627 June 27-July 13..... \$2,949 from Boston & New York
..... \$3,132 from Chicago

JULY

LITHUANIA, POLAND & SWITZERLAND 22 DAY TOUR
WITH 15 DAYS IN LITHUANIA
13 nights Vilnius, 2 Kaunas, 3 Warsaw, 1 Zurich
TOUR #704 July 4-25..... \$2,759 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,942 from Chicago

LITHUANIA & SWITZERLAND 15 DAY TOUR WITH 10 DAYS IN LITHUANIA

11 nights Vilnius, 2 Zurich
TOUR #713 July 13-27..... \$2,269 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,452 from Chicago

LITHUANIA, RUSSIA & FINLAND 15 DAY TOUR WITH 7 DAYS IN LITHUANIA

5 nights Vilnius, 2 Kaunas, 2 Moscow, 2 Leningrad, 2 Helsinki
TOUR #717 July 17-31..... \$2,459 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,642 from Chicago

AUGUST

LITHUANIA, ESTONIA & FINLAND 15 DAY TOUR
WITH 9 DAYS IN LITHUANIA
7 nights Vilnius, 3 Kaunas, 1 Tallinn by boat from Helsinki, 2 Helsinki
TOUR #802 August 2-16..... \$2,389 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,572 from Chicago

LITHUANIA & AUSTRIA 15 DAY TOUR WITH 10 DAYS IN LITHUANIA
8 nights Vilnius, 3 Kaunas, 2 Vienna
TOUR #810 August 10-24..... \$2,399 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,582 from Chicago

LITHUANIA, RUSSIA & FINLAND 15 DAY TOUR WITH 7 DAYS IN LITHUANIA

6 nights Vilnius, 2 Kaunas, 2 Moscow, 2 Leningrad, 2 Helsinki
TOUR #814 August 14-28..... \$2,459 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,642 from Chicago

SEPTEMBER

LITHUANIA, POLAND & SWITZERLAND 22 DAY TOUR WITH 15 DAYS IN LITHUANIA

14 nights Vilnius, 2 Kaunas, 3 Warsaw, 1 Zurich
TOUR #905 September 5-26..... \$2,759 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,942 from Chicago

LITHUANIA & FINLAND 14 DAY TOUR WITH 10 DAYS IN LITHUANIA
11 nights Vilnius, 1 Helsinki
TOUR #914 September 14-27..... \$2,209 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,392 from Chicago

LITHUANIA 10 DAY TOUR WITH 7 DAYS IN LITHUANIA

8 nights Vilnius
TOUR #944 September 14-23..... \$1,799 from Boston & New York
..... \$1,982 from Chicago

OCTOBER

LITHUANIA & AUSTRIA 15 DAY TOUR WITH 10 DAYS IN LITHUANIA
11 nights Vilnius, 2 Vienna
TOUR #105 October 5-19..... \$2,159 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,342 from Chicago

NOVEMBER

LITHUANIA & FINLAND 14 DAY TOUR WITH 10 DAYS IN LITHUANIA
11 nights Vilnius, 1 Helsinki
TOUR #102 November 2-15..... \$1,699 from Boston & New York
..... \$1,882 from Chicago

DECEMBER

LITHUANIA & FINLAND NEW YEAR'S EVE TOUR
21 DAY TOUR WITH 15 DAYS IN LITHUANIA
TOUR #129 December 29-January 18..... \$1,949 from Boston & New York
16 nights Vilnius, 1 Moscow, 2 Brussels
TOUR #129 December 29-January 18..... \$1,949 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,132 from Chicago

BALTIC TOURS & ORBIS PRESENT THE BEST OF LITHUANIA & POLAND

16 DAY TOURS WITH 6 DAYS IN LITHUANIA
7 nights Vilnius, 4 Warsaw, 2 Krakow, 1 Zurich
TOUR #519 May 19-June 3..... \$2,059 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,242 from Chicago
TOUR #616 June 16-July 1..... \$2,159 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,342 from Chicago
TOUR #714 July 14-29..... \$2,159 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,342 from Chicago
TOUR #811 August 25-September 9..... \$2,159 from Boston & New York
..... \$2,342 from Chicago

In addition to tours, BALTIC TOURS services include: Invitation of relatives to the U.S.A.; purchase of automobiles and goods in the Dollar Stores of Vilnius, Kaunas & Klaipeda; and assistance in the purchase and the design of headstones for deceased relatives in Lithuania.

FOR BROCHURES AND INFORMATION,
PLEASE CONTACT

BALTIC TOURS
77 Oak Street - Suite 4 - Newtown, MA 02164
Tel. (617) 965-8080

"A Glimpse at Church Architecture in Lithuania"

(The following is a summary of the annual Lithuanian Independence Day talk at St. George Church, Norwood, Massachusetts on February 5, 1989. Guest speaker was retired engineer, Jurgis Gimbutas, Ph.D., the premier scholar on churches in Lithuania.)

Church construction during tsarist occupation, 1795-1915:

50 brick and 78 wooden churches or oratories, including Protestant places of worship.

Not only did ordinary laborers give donations, but there was a phenomenon, rarely seen in the United States. Many a very wealthy donor ("mecenatas") single-handedly offered the needed funds. The blueprints were the fruit of mostly Italian and German architects, though in later times, some Lithuanians became designers too.

Church construction during the 1918-1940 era:

In this brief two-decade stretch of independence, 37 new brick churches and 48 wooden ones were erected in Lithuania, exclusive of the Klaipeda region and Vilnius. This era differed in three notable ways. Funding now came exclusively from parishioners. There were no longer any giant philanthropists in the country. Likewise, a generation of native architects entered the scene. Thirdly, many more churches were erected.

Church construction in Soviet Lithuania:

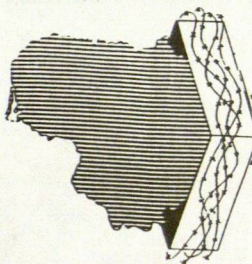
In 1940 in Lithuania, there were 721 churches and 256 chapels in service, whereas, by the late 1980s, there were only 630 places of worship in active use. As is well known, dozens were confiscated and converted to secular purposes. Others damaged by fire or simply the passage of time were left unrebuilt and unattended.

Churches in the day of "glasnost" and "perestroika":

In 1989, the hitherto somber independence day observances in Lithuanian settlements around the world have taken on the tone of "guarded optimism." Even as this notice was in preparation, word flashed around the globe that the returned cathedral in Vilnius was reconsecrated and again the scene of liturgical celebration. The exquisite church of St. Casimir has also been returned to the faithful. Yet, the few shrines that have been restored for worship represent only some three percent of such buildings. Even so, one must look with hope to the future.
W.W.V.

JAVLJS III POLITICAL SEMINAR WASHINGTON, D.C.

Friday, April 14 — Sunday, April 16, 1989



LITHUANIA TODAY & TOMORROW

Lithuania Faces Historical Crossroads

Seminar's purpose: To pass on the latest information regarding events in Lithuania, to discuss various perspectives on the future, and to decide how we, the Lithuanian youth of America, can best help our fellow countrymen behind the Iron Curtain.

Schedule specifics and registration forms will follow

For further information, please call:

Rūta Virkutis

(301) 277-7261 (home) — (202) 347-3177 (work)

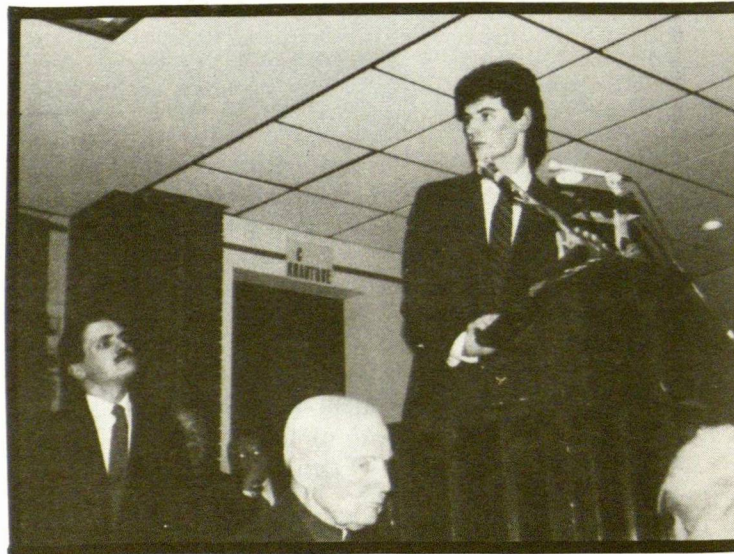
Community with a Capital "C"

The Lithuanian-American Community's Cultural Council prepared two cassettes which were sent to over 60 radio shows. Both cassettes were prepared for the celebration of Lithuanian Independence Day (February 16) which was finally permitted official commemoration in Lithuania. One cassette in Lithuanian is 7 minutes long, the other (21:30 minutes long) is in English. Since the cassettes are geared to a varied audience, they attempt to provide an overview of the present climate in Lithuania, while giving a political and historical background as well. The underlying theme revolves around the activists in "Sajudis" (the reform movement) who come from backgrounds in the arts: poets, musicians, writers, and so on. The cassettes may have lasting value beyond the commemoration of February 16.

The Lithuanian-American Community's Educational Council has been working towards expanding the traditional definition of "Lithuanian Saturday School." These days, the Educational Council addresses the issues of teaching Lithuanian to children whose parents may both not be Lithuanian-speaking. Also of interest are the adults who want to learn Lithuanian. A list of English-language publications published by the Council is available upon request. Also, persons may contact the Council for more information about Lithuanian-language lessons available in their communities.

The Lithuanian-American Community's fundraiser for Lithuania has been quite successful. Over \$130,000 has already been donated to the fund. The overall objectives of the fund are to support activities which promote freedom in and for Lithuania. A special committee will weigh each request for its scope and appropriateness. One project which already has been supported is the printing of copies of the history of Lithuania through the ages by Adolfas Sapoka. The reappearance of this book in Lithuania, it is hoped, will be an inspiration to Lithuanians, young and old, to continue their struggles as their forefathers had, in the pursuit of freedom and autonomy for Lithuania.

Various chapters of the **Lithuanian-American Community** will be helping sponsor concerts by the ethnographic ensemble "Ratilio" of the University of Vilnius. The ensemble, being invited to the United States by Romas Kezys, director of "Lithuanian World Review Radio" in New York will be visiting the United States (and, hopefully, Canada) April 2-23. Cities on the agenda include Philadelphia, PA, April 7th; New York, April 8th; Boston, MA, April 9th; Hartford, CT, April 14th; Cleveland, OH, April 15th; Detroit, MI, April 16th; Chicago, IL, April 21st and April 23rd. The ensemble, established in 1968, will tour the United States, presenting programs featuring traditional Lithuanian songs and dances. The twenty-eight ensemble members comprise only a portion of the full ensemble, which consists of students of many different disciplines. Lithuanian-American Community chapters, Lithuanian centers, radio programs, and song and dance ensembles have agreed to host the visitors during their visits. In Chicago, the host will be the Executive Committee itself, along with members of the Chicago chapter of the Lithuanian-American Youth Association and others. The glasnost winds of change continue.



Left to right. Dr. Petras Kisielius, Arūnas Degutis (Sajūdis) vakaronė at the Lithuanian Youth Center in Chicago. Photo by Petras Cinkus

Ramona Steponavičius is a vice-president of the Executive Committee of the Lithuanian-American Community. She is responsible for keeping in touch with various Lithuanian youth organizations. The vice-president, in turn, has assembled a committee with the rather amusing acronym **YOLC (Youth Organization Liaison Committee)** or (**JORK in Lithuanian**). The committee consists of representatives of the Lithuanian Scouts Association, Lithuanian Catholic Youth Association Ateitis, Knights of Lithuania, Lithuanian folk dancing groups, L.S.T. Korp! Neo-Lithuania. Also represented is the Lithuanian American Youth Association, whose president Darius Sužiedelis is automatically a member of the Executive Committee of the Lithuanian-American Community. A Chicagoan represents the Youth Association on the committee, since Darius is in Washington, D.C.

The committee will try to meet regularly in Chicago, and through the committee members, extend branches to other communities in the U.S. The committee will try to publish a bulletin (newsletter). Young Americans of Lithuanian descent who do not speak Lithuanian, who may live further from cities inhabited by large numbers of Lithuanian-Americans, who are interested in what is going on in Lithuania and what Lithuanian-Americans are doing — that is the audience the committee will try to serve. **Ramona Steponavičius** can be reached at the **Executive Committee's address, 2713 W. 71st Street, Chicago, IL 60629.**

Various letters reach the Lithuanian-American Community offices. Persons of Lithuanian descent are attempting to rediscover their Lithuanian roots — students want to write papers, mothers want to pass along their culture to their children, retirees are looking to buy flags, cassettes, even embroidery kits. The Lithuanian-American Community tries to answer all such letters in a helpful manner — referring them to regional chapters of the Community, to commercial enterprises which feature products with Lithuanian themes, even to local public and university libraries if appropriate! Lithuanian-Americans in Logan, Utah; Gambier, Ohio; and Lambertville, Michigan are seeking to network. The Lithuanian-American Community includes *Bridges* and other publications on its referral list.

FINALLY, A DEFINITIVE HISTORY OF THE KNIGHTS OF LITHUANIA

In 1988, when the Knights of Lithuania were celebrating their 75th Jubilee, their historian, the Rev. William Wolkovich, presented the organization with a most appropriate gift — he completed the history of the organization, namely, *Lithuanian Fraternalism: 75 Years of the U. S. Knights of Lithuania.*, 303 p. p.. At its end is a summary in Lithuanian prepared by Algirdas Budreckis. The work received favorable reviews from both members and non members alike. Professor Antanas Adomenas of the University of Chicago writes: "The work is a monograph on the first 75 years of the history of the Knights of Lithuania in the United States....the author....weaves a web of complex strands into one web. the strands, woven together, shed light on the issues of religion, lethnicity, nter-ethnic marriage, dual allegiance, organizational struggle, assimilation, clash with second wave Lithuanians, finances, culture and the question posed by themselves on whether they are Lithuanians or Lithuanian-Americans." "monumental task on gathering all published and unpublished data is in the finest tradition...."

In soft covers the book is priced at \$20.- (Include \$1.50 for postage) Write to: Darbininkas, 341 Highland Blvd., Brooklyn, NY. 11207.





S. Algimantas Gečys (center), former national president of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc., has been appointed by Governor Robert P. Casey to serve a two-year term on the Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs Commission. Mr. Gečys is flanked by Commission chairman Lt. Gov. Mark S. Singel (right) and Shalom Staub, Ph.D., executive director of the Commission.

Lithuanian World Center

The southwest suburbs of Chicago have long been the home of various Lithuanian activities — the Lemont Maironis Lithuanian School, the Žiburėlis Montessori School, the Lithuanian Catholic Mission Church, various youth groups (scouts, ateitininkai, etc.), folk dance groups and many other cultural and social organizations. Until recently, these groups have been like small bands of gypsies, renting space in many different locations, or meeting in the homes of their members. There was no one central place where people could congregate — no single facility that could help to unify all these separate groups into one harmonious family.

With the number of Lithuanian families steadily increasing, the need for a Lithuanian Center in the southwest suburbs became obvious. In April 1988, a group of young professionals, striving to make this need a reality, set up the Lithuanian Mission Center, Inc., a not-for-profit tax-exempt corporation. In September 1988, the corporation purchased the DeAndreis Seminary complex in Lemont, Illinois and established the **Lithuanian World Center**. The purchase price was a mere \$800,000 — truly a small sum for a facility having a replacement value of well over \$10 million. This complex consists of 15 acres upon which stands a multi-purpose building containing approximately 125,000 square feet of space — ample room to house the numerous social, cultural, educational and religious organizations of this area.

The **Lithuanian World Center** is already home to the Žiburėlis Montessori School and the Lemont Maironis Lithuanian School, the Lithuanian Catholic Mission Church, offices of Pasaulio Lietuvis magazine, Lithuanian scouts, Spindulys folk dancers, and several sports groups. Meeting and banquet rooms are in continuing use while the surrounding acreage is utilized extensively for picnics and outdoor sporting activities.

Generous donations and fundraising activities have helped to raise over \$400,000 for this project to date. However, because of the substantial size of this purchase, as well as renovation and operation expenses, contributions are constantly being solicited. Anyone interested in the **Center** can obtain more information by writing to the **Lithuanian World Center, 511 East 127th Street, Lemont Illinois 60439** or by calling (312) 257-8787. All donations are tax exempt, and every contribution of \$200 entitles a person to one vote in corporation meetings and elections.

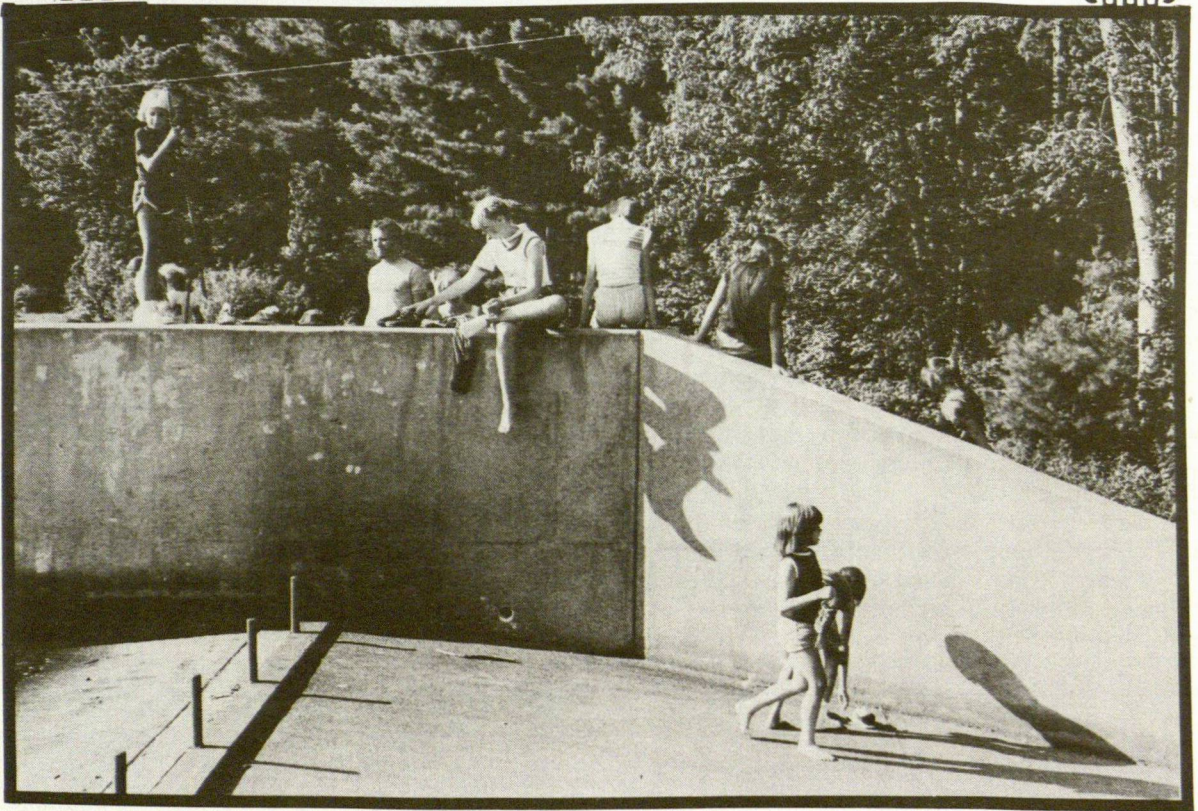
Rasa V. Poškocimas

**NERINGA CELEBRATES
20 YEARS
with a
NEW CHAPEL**

CAMP NERINGA

CAMP NERINGA (operated and administrated by the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception from Putnam, CT) provides an opportunity for children 7-16 years old to live with their age group in a Christian environment where the focus of each daily program is the Lithuanian Christian culture.

1969-1970 — 1989-1990



Camp session: July 30 - August 12, 1989

Reunion for previous counselors and campers August 12 - 13

For information/registration:

Until June 5th: NERINGA, ICC - Rt. 21, Putnam, CT 06260

From June 5th: NERINGA, Box 155C, RFD4, W. Brattleboro, VT 05301

Acceptance and participation in the program are the same for everyone without regard to race, color, national origin or handicap (according to existing facilities and circumstances.)

"Winner or Quitter? — Baseball and Life"

by Rev. William Wolkovich-Valkavičius

This story unfolds in the little anthracite village of Nanticoke, about seven miles southwest of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Though home for a large number of Poles, the town likewise once housed a few hundred Lithuanian families. By 1915, their St. Joseph Society managed to build a modest chapel named after their patron, and in 1924, they bought a cemetery.

On March 6, 1917, a Lithuanian couple in Nanticoke was blessed with a baby boy, whom the parents named Peter, known in English as the Wyshner family (probably "Vaišnora"), Peter later adopted the surname "Gray."

When he was just six years old, his attempt to retrieve a baseball cost him his right arm. He had been reaching for a ball under a farm truck, when suddenly the unsuspecting driver rolled away. A company physician was forced to amputate the damaged limb.

But, little handicapped Peter was a feisty youngster. Call it Lithuanian stubbornness or sheer determination — he desperately wanted to play baseball, not just sandlot style, but professionally. With his brother Tony as mentor, Peter learned to compensate for his disability through endless hours of practice. His muscles somehow realigned themselves so he could hit a speeding ball, swinging just one arm. His relentless ambition enabled him to play the outfield too. He learned to catch the ball, and then with extra speed — stuff his glove into his armpit, and hurl the leather sphere into the infield.

Through the early 1940s, Pete scaled the ladder of local and regional semi-pro leagues up to the Memphis club of the Southern Association. But could he advance the final step from the minors?

While many athletes were away in the war in 1945, the St. Louis Browns signed up the Lithuanian American.

He survived one season. Reichler's *Baseball Encyclopedia* (p. 914) lists his credits for 77 games. In 234 times at bat, Pete Gray punched out 51 hits, including 6 doubles and 2 triples — for a batting average of .218, and slugging average of .261. He returned for three more years in the minors, and then faded from the limelight, that is, until two years ago.

In the spring of 1986, the ABC network aired a two-hour movie made for television called "A Winner Never Quits," with Keith Carradine in the lead role. In a rare story in the Scripps Howard News Service, Gray admitted that some of the portrayal was true, but most was romantic fiction.

"The real story of Pete Gray will probably never be known," wrote the curious reporter. The fact is that the hero long ago became a recluse, answering neither door nor phone. He has only one contact — a confidante named Johnny Jay.

What happened to the courageous Nanticoke native? Gray succumbed to bitterness against the St. Louis Browns. In retrospect, he surmised that the owners brought him up to the majors to lure fans into the ballpark to see a freak. Years later, his manager Luke Sewell recalled that "it was an injustice to bring Pete to the major leagues because he couldn't play there," even though "he worked harder than anybody to get there."

So, Pete Gray, the one-arm baseball player, has spent the last forty years in the shadows of his hometown.

But wait! No one yet knows how the story will end. Gray was truly a "winner" as a human being for his extraordinary courage. But has he made himself a "quitter" in the game of life? If only every one of the 4,000 and more readers of this newsletter would bombard that tiny Pennsylvanian town with cheerful cards and letters, telling this "Lith" what an inspiration he must have been to so many handicapped people in the past, or whatever else comes to mind. "Ačiū, Petrai! Sveikiname tave." (Thank you, Pete. We hail you.) Write to Pete Gray, Nanticoke, PA 18634.