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Lithuania and Europe...New Lithuanian Publications...A Holiday Season



P E R S P E C T I V E S

This holiday season I thought that I should slow down and finally enjoy it. You see, in the past, my December days have flown by so quickly that, in some circumstances, gift buying was left to the day before Christmas Eve. It was very negligent of me, and I was very disappointed in the way I allowed the days to disappear without paying attention to them. This year is different and pointedly so.

Each morning, I reminded myself to use every minute for something purposefully constructive and productive. Christmas cheer was included.

I fared pretty well. In fact, I was ahead of schedule, and enjoying the beauty and awesomeness of the season. This "conscientious slowing down of time" allowed me also to remember the magic Christmases of the past and relay them to my children. I even pressed some of my friends and family to share their special memories with me. Two wrote them down. Their special remembrances are included on page fourteen for you to enjoy. They may jiggle those memories of your Christmases past that have been tidied away due to lack of time or ultra busy schedules. They may also jiggle those memories of other holidays, as Easter, which have special traditional meaning in all of our lives. If they do, take a pen to hand and write them down. I'd love to include them during the next holiday season.

The BRIDGES staff sends their best wishes to you and your family for an unforgettable and blessed Christmas and a wonderful New Year!

BRIDGES linki Jums ir Jūsų šeimoms gražias, šventas Kalėdas ir laimingus naujus metus!



Rasa Ardys-Juška
Editor



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Community, Inc.,
11250 Roger Bacon Dr., Suite 17C,
Reston, VA 22090.
E-mail — lacinc@erols.com

BRIDGES Consultants

REGINA NARUŠIS, President,
Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.
JŪRATĖ BUDRYS, Vice President,
Information Services.
RASA ARDYS-JUŠKA, Editor
RAMAS PLIŪRA, Treasurer, Lithuanian-
American Community, Inc., and
Subscriptions Manager.

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Address all editorial correspondence to:

BRIDGES Editorial Office, c/o Rasa
Ardys-Juška, 1212 Mohegan Road,
Manasquan, NJ 08736-1650.

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BRIDGES

4 Europe is Unfinished Business
 Valdas Adamkus, President of the Republic of Lithuania
The road to making Lithuania an integral part of Europe.

7 Books From Lithuania Available in the U.S.
 Dalė Lukas
A new resource of books published in Lithuania available in the United States.

9 Adding Color to the Simple Life
 David Faries and Diana Skarnaitė Faries
An artist from the Lithuanian country-side brings tradition scenes to life.

11 A Star — Just Beyond the Horizon
 Rimas Gedeika
A multi-talented runner trains for the Olympics.

13 Holiday Memories
 Rasa Ardys-Juška
Christmases past remind us of what we are thankful.

14 Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Lithuanian Orphan Care
 Jeanne Dorr
A collage of photos show children who have benefited from Lithuanian orphan Care's attention.

16 Lithuanian-American Community's Endowment Fund
 Regina Narušis
An endowment fund established to ensure LAC's future.

DEPARTMENTS . . .

2 PERSPECTIVES

17 CURRENT EVENTS
 ● A Special Thank You to BRIDGES Contributors.



Christmas Eve Traditions

Christmas Eve, **Kūčios**, is far richer in terms of custom and ritual than Christmas Day. At sunset, a ceremonial dinner of twelve meatless dishes is served. Hay stalks are placed under the tablecloth to forecast the people's fortunes. After dinner, the family members pull a stalk from under the tablecloth.

If a young man or woman pulls a thin, long stalk, their future spouse will be tall and slender — likewise with a short, bent straw. Married people interpret the straws to signify their wallets; thin — a lean year, thick — a prosperous year.

On the cover:

A child's view of Christmas.
 (From left) Kristina Prohaska, Alisa Prohaska, Skaidra Pliura, and Audra Pliura look forward to Christmas by the Lithuanian booth at the 1997 Holiday Fair, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Valdas Adamkus, President of the Republic of Lithuania

EUROPE

IS UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Europe is an unfinished business. Appraising the recent political developments on the European continent, one has to admit that this statement particularly applies to Lithuania and the other Baltic States. During her post-Madrid trip to Vilnius in 1997, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright clearly stated that Europe is not secure unless the Baltic States are secure. I do endorse a reciprocal link here, as we, the Balts, can build our security only within a stable and open European environment.

Former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt has once labeled the Baltic States as a litmus test for European security, Western determination and Russian position. At that time, it was very much related to Russian troops still present in Estonia and Latvia. Today the situation is very much different. However, today we still find ourselves in the center of political debate among major powers.

The ongoing NATO enlargement and invitation of the three applicant countries to join the Alliance have advanced the "unfinished European business" closer to its completion. Yet the process should continue further and must not be exchanged for a tempting complacency

with current achievements. The case brings to mind the choice of a wise businessman to invest instead of consuming his short-term profits. A series of summits planned for the next year will have much to do with running the European security business in a positive direction – NATO and the U.S. – EU [European Union] summits, just to mention a few. Should they fix the agenda, it would guarantee an eventual return in terms of stability, prosperity and development.

On the other hand, we do acknowledge that the package of the next year summits and new treaties should map the Alliance's path towards the new century without depriving the organization of its flexibility to move forward and to accommodate to present day realities. The enlargement has to affirm its process-prone nature, which would be of benefit to all countries involved, the Baltic States among them.

Regions and countries are diverse, and perhaps the Alliance's future decisions on NATO expansion will be driven by different arguments. We claim therefore that the two-dimensional Northern-Southern expansion balances out the differences. Lithuania and Slovenia, the two countries representing the northern and south-

Valdas Adamkus, President of the Republic of Lithuania, delivered this speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., on October 21st, 1998.

ern flanks of the enlargement areas, share an important principal feature. They are two small, non-problematic applicants who make apparently a minor difference to the Alliance to incorporate them, but who make an essential difference to the countries still on the waiting list to start negotiations on NATO membership.

You may possibly ask: how does Lithuania perceive itself in the current Euro-Atlantic context? What role will it play on the grand Euro-Atlantic chessboard? Lithuania faces the task to become part of a broader regional and international agenda, which I would call as determining our survival. Only the acquired quality of active and responsible participation in the global community affairs will help us voice our problems. I believe there is little argument for NATO to exclude securing parts of Europe, which through practical preparation and good neighborly relations have coped with their problems.

There is no doubt that co-existence of nations and effective co-operation among neighboring countries has a great influence on the security and stability in our continent. Being fully aware of the importance of successful development of bilateral relations, Lithuania pays a particular attention to maintaining a constructive and continuous dialogue with all its neighbors.

Mr. Brzezinski claims that "European security is the basis for European reconciliation", and vice versa. I should stress that we feel very much the same way. The unprecedented Lithuanian-Polish rapprochement has actually established the basis for our security. We have also witnessed the impact of good Lithuanian-Polish relations on the increasing stabilization

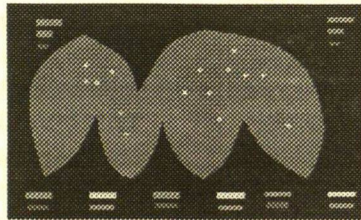
of the general situation in the region.

Close relations between Lithuania and Poland have gradually transformed into a strategic partnership. Joint Lithuanian-Polish institutions were established at the government and parliamentary levels, allowing the representatives of the two countries to discuss all important matters on a regular basis. Both Lithuania and Poland expressed their readiness to contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability in Europe by establishing a joint peacekeeping unit, LITPOLBAT. We also cooperate closely in promoting the democratic processes and stability in the neighboring countries to us.

There is, of course, a package of issues, which still demands a comprehensive solution. Yet I always remind critics the words of President Aleksandr Kwasniewski, said in Vilnius a couple of years ago: "There will be no secure Lithuania without secure Poland." Likewise Poland cannot be secure without secure Lithuania.

Therefore we spare no effort to promote our partnership. I am pleased to tell you that my route to Washington went via Warsaw, where I had a short stop and a dinner with my good friend President Kwasniewski to share our views on international issues and further cooperation. You may accept it as a good illustration of a cooperation pattern established between our nations; which, I believe will positively influence current developments in our region and Europe.

You may place a follow-up question: what are your relations with Russia? All would agree that the invitation of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to join NATO has not worsened their relations with Russia. I believe



our case will be a similar one. There is little reason to argue that good relations with Russia cannot be reconciled with our membership in the North Atlantic Alliance, and I personally always pursue this argument.

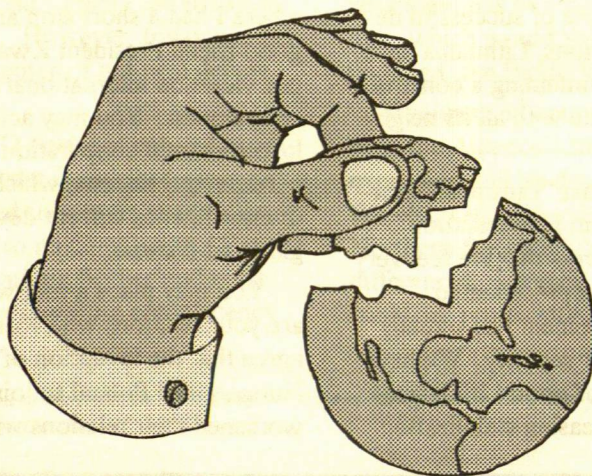
I have always maintained that present fears of Russia stem mostly from psychological background and outdated stereotypes. Stepping over such stereotypes would facilitate overcoming a number of problems. I do sincerely believe that the generation to come will be free of the stereotypes that for fifty years guided their predecessors. Then, it will be firmly established that the Baltic States are an integral part of Europe.

The crisis in Russia has clearly demonstrated that Lithuania stands "on the other bank of the river". Although trade with Russia, which accounts for 20 percent of the total turnover, was influenced by economic turmoil in Russia, our national economy has retained its vitality. Inflation has reached the lowest level since 1991 and will most probably remain under 6 percent this year. Most importantly, Lithuania's financial system remains stable. This year alone, Lithuania received USD 500 million in foreign direct investments. I think that these and other indicators demonstrate a healthy status of our

economy and its good prospects.

There are many important factors by the virtue of which we, Lithuanians, de facto belong to a different reality – the reality dominated by NATO and based on the unity of universal values. It is sufficient to mention our active participation in the PfP activities and numerous exercises on the Lithuanian soil, such as the recent Baltic Challenge '98 exercises in Lithuania's seaport Klaipėda; our intensive dialogue with NATO on a variety of issues pertaining to future membership; the development of defense structures tailored after the Western model; the lead in the Planning and Review Process while seeking interoperability with allied forces and our active participation in NATO-led peace operations in Europe. These small but concrete steps establish an underlying network that glues us back to the once-broken European mosaic.

The U.S. policy towards Europe in the forthcoming year shall put forward a question of how to make a Lithuania a jewel in it. I want to believe that the jewelers will carefully and with precision perform their state-of-the-art work. Making a European crown of security is a puzzling issue, and once you miss even a small piece, you will never be able to bring the picture to its completeness. ◆



Dalé Lukas

Books From Lithuania Available in the U.S.



I just finished editing a much needed directory, **The Lithuanian Publishers Directory**, on Lithuanian Publishers and publishing activities in Lithuania. It took me a year and two trips to Vilnius to gather the information for the directory. My study objective was to collect concise data on who the publishers in Lithuania are, what type of material they publish, and how to identify and obtain these publications. It is not a books-in-print type publication but a road map to who the publishers are, how they can be contacted and how to order from them. I had some collaborators for this project in Lithuania to help me with data gathering; they were from the Lithuanian Librarians Association, the Vilnius University Library and the Vilnius University — Book Science Department. The sponsor of this study is IREX in conjunction with ASSIST International, Inc.

While in Vilnius I attended all the book fairs, visited bookstores, book distributors, vendors, and, of course, publishers. I was pleasantly surprised and amazed at the great number of beautifully printed publications available.

During the next six months we gathered over 300 data survey forms from publishers; 50% of all the publishers contacted. I want to note that this is a very high percentage of response on any survey questionnaire done by mail; which, indicated that there was defini-

tively great interest by the publishers to expand their markets to the United States.

We had plenty of data to analyze and use for the compilation of the Directory. **The Lithuanian Publishers Directory** is at the publisher in the USA and should be published some time around February 1999. It should be a useful resource for libraries and other institutions to point them to information they wish to acquire from Lithuania.

The reason I was doing the project was because I knew, from previous visits and contacts, that there was an immensity of publishing activities in Lithuania since the early 1990. The publications were very well done, very informative, and full of previously unpublished information about Lithuania. Yet, people in the USA were not aware of this and were at a loss in acquiring such information from Lithuania.

The publishing boom after 1990 was phenomenal and a direct response to Soviet censorship. Hundreds of independent newspapers, magazines, books on every imaginary subject, memoirs, and previously unpublished literature needed to be published. In addition, textbooks had to be rewritten. This publishing activity produced chaos of unparalleled proportions for

DALÉ LUKAS lives in Maryland and an active member of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.

the libraries, the reader, and especially to foreign scholars and libraries looking for material from the newly independent countries for their collections.

The study was a necessary first step toward some form of organization and cognition of what is and has been happening in the past 10 years in Lithuania in publishing. The reason I am writing about this experience is that after analyzing the information collected, it became evident that there is a need for an organization to distribute this published information in Lithuania to the outside world, specifically to the USA and Canada. Information about Lithuania should be made available by Lithuanians themselves to others; who more often than not have little information about Lithuanian people, its long history, culture, science, industry, government, and most of all its beautiful language and its creative genius.

From the data received, it became evident that there was a lack of expertise by publishers of how to market their publications outside of Lithuania. However, within the last year, I have noticed an increase in publishers' catalogs, some in English, as well as publishers participation in European book fairs. Most publishers indicated that they would like to have a marketing source for their publications in the US. It so happens I found someone in America who actually listened and started a business specifically for the distribution of publications from Lithuania (in Lithuanian and some in English).

The new company is **The Baltic Bookshelf**, whose director is Loreta McPartland. Loreta speaks Lithuanian and also has a degree in marketing, which is a fine combination for this job. The address of her book distribution company is:

The Baltic Bookshelf
Loreta McPartland
2107 Sandy Court
Crofton, MD 21114-2132
Fax: (410) 721-3411
e-mail: balticbook@aol.com

Anyone interested in material published in Lithuania can contact her and she will search her database to offer lists of books on a particular topic. In the future, she plans to expand to the Internet and have a **Baltic Bookshelf** home page. She is also compiling a catalog, which when ready will be mailed to readers on request.

The Baltic Bookshelf staff has already made contact with publishers in Lithuania, and has received an overwhelming response with lists of books they can provide to be sold in the USA.

The first publishers to supply books in English published in Lithuania, were **TVERMĖ**, the publisher of the **Skomantas** series (English translation). These stories of Lithuanian pagan past weave the material of history into fascinating tales of adventure and romance, and provide exciting reading for young and old. The characters are very well developed and continue from story to story presenting a very good view of their ancient beliefs and customs of pagan traditions based on authentic ethnographic material. The books are published in paperback format. The three books available now are **The Captive**, **The Fen Wolf**, and the **Blood Wedding**.

The other publisher of interest is **KRAŠTOTVARKA**, who publishes all kinds of information about Lithuania, including visitor guides in both English and Lithuanian. Another publisher of great interest to computer buffs is publisher **SMALTIJA**, who publishes computer information, but of special interest is the directory called **Geltonieji Interneto Puslapiai** (Yellow Pages to the Internet Homepages) which lists over 90% of all the www home pages in Lithuania.

Contact **The Baltic Bookshelf** for additional information and to order books published in Lithuania. I hope this information will be useful to the person seeking reading material from Lithuania and about Lithuania.

David Faries and Diana Skarnaitė Faries

ADDING COLOR TO THE SIMPLE LIFE

The cows are milked, the pigs are fed, and the farm is taken care of. As the sun goes down and paints the sky a deep and drowsy red, her tired hand reaches for a pencil. She draws the struggle of her daily life. Dark shades of blues and browns tell it all: a mother, an aunt, and she, trying to survive on one small pension of 40 dollars a month.

Meet Milda Stalnionytė, an artist – self-taught and unknown. Her work is unpolished, straightforward, and elegant, exposing the difficulties and beauty of her world. She lives in Traidžiūnai, a village really, where patterns of life have changed little over the years. We have never met Milda, yet feel we have known her all our life. By accident or luck, we met Marian Abrazinskas, residing in Millville, Pennsylvania. During her trip to Lithuania, Marian met Milda and learned about her unrecognized talents.

Milda's drawings at the time were dark and gloomy. Vividly expressing her life and state of mind, those pictures forwarded the story of her family's daily struggle in a crumbling Lithuanian economy. Hoping to uplift Milda's hopes and mood, Marian suggested that she draw something for children, something purely Lithuanian.

The result is a beautiful coloring book called **A Visit to Lithuania**, compiled and published by Marian Abrazinskas. We had the great honor to be a part of this publication translating Milda's information and writing the preface.

A Visit to Lithuania contains hand-drawn pictures designed to introduce the readers to Lithuania at the beginning of the 20th century. The artist presents some of the vital features of village life in Aukštaitija, the eastern region of Lithuania, including clothing and housing styles, as well as some of the main work tools and activities. Milda Stalnionytė's Aukštaitija is truly breathtaking with its beautiful lakes, hills, and forest. She has lived there all her life, traveling to the rural towns of Zarasai, Ignalina, Utena and Molėtai. Her Lithuania is a patchwork of farms and villages.

For ages, Lithuanians have been very close to nature. Picking berries, mushrooms, and nuts remain a favorite pastime. Fishing – both during winter and summer – is still an important activity. Lithuanians love their land so much that almost every song mentions trees, flowers, grains and forests. Milda's coloring book reflects these ties to the land at the begin-

DAVE FARIES AND DIANA SKARNAITĖ FARIES reside in Carrollton, Texas. Dave is a freelancer and television producer. Diana is a native of Alytus, Lithuania. Currently, she is a legislative intern at the House Majority Whip's Office of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Diana will graduate from Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania with a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies in December, 1998.



Milda portrays a young girl with her kankles (Lithuanian zither) in the coloring book.



A young shepherd boy from times long past comes alive in Milda's drawings.

ning of this century. The simple beauty of village life, the daily rhythms of work and play, and the everyday details of village life, sometimes overlooked, become central subjects of her drawings.

In Milda's drawings, for example, you can see beehives made from aged tree trunks or wreathed with straw. In the early 20th century, shepherd's songs echoed through the hills of Aukštaitija, as they herded cows, sheep, swine or geese. In winter, families would gather together for an evening of songs and storytelling, while making ropes, carvings, knitting or spinning. We heard those echoes through the artists' sincere and unadorned voice. Milda's transformation from moody, realistic work to nostalgic children's sketches may no be permanent, but it does reveal the range of her talent and understanding of Lithuanian life. By the

way, we have yet to feel the urge to actually color her pages. They are nice simply in black and white.

Lithuanian culture is rich with its customs and traditions. Folklorists may write volumes about it, but let Milda Stalenyte forward her small contribution; let the pictures tell some of the story and take you through a day of country life in Lithuania of the early 20th century.

You can order Milda's coloring book, **A Visit to Lithuania** by writing to Stoops Manufacturing Co., 10 N. Elliot, Aurora MO 65605 or calling 1-800-235-3536. Individual books are \$6.95 plus shipping and handling of \$2.50. Case lots of 35 coloring books are also available for \$140.00 plus shipping and handling \$3.50. All profits are for Milda and her family. ◆

Rimas Gedeika

A Star – Just Beyond the Horizon



A year to go and the excitement is building rapidly. Soon the world's greatest athletes will meet in Sydney, Australia to compete for the title of Olympic Champion. To date, we have seen and heard about some of the accomplishments of several Lithuanian athletes. Each of their stories depicts courage, determination, and that never give up spirit. Here is yet another story of a truly remarkable young Lithuanian woman long distance runner named Inga Juodeskienė.

Inga was born 27 years ago in Kaunas. Like many other gifted athletes, her running talents brought her recognition at an early age. From age 14 on, she won many races, was selected to many Lithuanian National Teams. In 1988, at the age of 17, she became Soviet Union's Junior Champion in the 1500 meters.

In the early 1990's, Inga met Raimondas Juodeskis, married him, and within a few years had three lovely children. They lived happily ever after – as they say.

Ah, but her story does not end here! What happened next is truly inspirational. Inga, after giving birth to her three children (the youngest one a year ago), returned to her other great love, running. Within a year's time, she regained much of her earlier form.

In 1998, Inga won several races throughout Europe. In the Lithuanian Track and Field Championships, she won first place in the 1500 and 3000 meters. Her return was exceedingly exceptional.

What is even more unusual about Inga is that she is a soldier in one of Lithuania's finest army units: the Jegerio Batalionas, whose mission and structure are very similar to America's Special

Forces. This past March, Inga represented her Battalion in the World Armed Forces Cross Country Championships (running 3.1 miles through hills, woods, and even streams), which were held in Ireland. Being far from top form, she nevertheless took 8th place among the world's best women soldiers. Based on this performance, Inga was invited to participate in next year's Championships which will be held in Florida, February 22 to 27.

Besides training for next year's Championships, Inga is also training to qualify to represent Lithuania in the Olympic Games in either the 1500 or 3000 meters, or even the Marathon. To be able to simultaneously juggle her military obligations, her family obligations, and still be able to train at an elite level requires a great deal of dedication, courage, guts, and love. Inga has managed to do this well.

To date, Inga has been training mostly in Lithuania. This is OK, but to reach the next level of performance, she has to train at high altitudes. It has been clearly demonstrated that high altitude training is more beneficial and more efficient than merely running high mileage. This would not be a problem if Lithuania was mountainous, but it isn't. So, to train at high altitudes, Inga must travel outside Lithuania.

It was primarily through Arvydas Barzdukas and his son's, Audrius's, efforts that Joseph Vigil, one of the world's foremost long distance running coaches, agreed to accept Inga into his training camp. The camp is located in Alamosa, Colorado and is 7,000 feet above sea level. It is here that Vigil has trained the world's best long distance runners from Kenya, Nigeria, Europe and the U.S.. His runners have at-

RIMAS GEDEIKA, a marathon runner, is a regular contributor to BRIDGES and an avid Lithuanian sports enthusiast, especially track and field.



Inga Juodeskienė at the Ireland 1998 World Armed Forces Cross Country Championships. Representing Lithuania and her battalion — the Jegerio Batalionas at the closing ceremonies.



Inga and her three children.



Inga receiving her gold medal in the 1998 Lithuanian National Track and Field Championships in the 3000 meters.
All photos from Rimas Gedeika

tained phenomenal success, winning many of the world's most prestigious long distance races; anywhere from six miles to the marathon, both on the track and on the road.

Inga is the first Lithuanian runner to be accepted into such a world class training camp. She is scheduled to attend Vigil's camp from the first week of January 1999 until three days before her Armed Forces Cross Country Championships in February.

Being the first runner from Lithuania to be accepted to train with the world's best runners is a great privilege but, at the same time, it carries with it a considerable amount of responsibility. For a month and a half, Inga will be closely watched not only by Joe Vigil's staff but, also by the Lithuanian Track and Field Federation. They will see if she has the physical and mental strength to complete the rigorous training schedule set forth by Joe Vigil. Is training at high altitudes beneficial to Lithuanian runners?

Inga's undertaking is a pioneering effort on behalf of Lithuania's runners. If she does well, she will have demonstrated to the Federation that training at high altitudes produces equally high results. Thus, it will not be a waste of time and money to finance a group of qualified runners to undertake the same or similar high altitude training in 1999. Such a move will give these runners a better chance to compete against their opponents in the Olympic Games.

Inga is a courageous, mentally tough competitor. She will always give you her best. She is able to handle all the challenges that will be thrown at her by Joe Vigil and the Armed Forces Cross Country Course. Yet the one challenge she will not be able to overcome by herself is the same challenge that confronts all the other Lithuanian runners – financial support.

Inga is very fortunate that in her case she is receiving both financial and moral support from her battalion. The Jegerio Batalionas is paying for her trip to America and back. It can't cover all of her expenses. We are hoping that after reading this article, some of you may give Inga a hand and help us cover her living and training expenses which would be close to \$1,000. If you want to help Inga, mail your donations to Inga Juodeskis, c/o Rimas Gedeika, 78 Mark Twain Drive, Hamilton Square, NJ 08690.

Rasa Ardys-Juška

Holiday Memories...

Our Lithuanian traditions bind us during the holiday season. The required twelve foods on the Christmas Eve or Kūčių table consist of fish, bread, vegetable and fruit dishes. The Christmas Tree sparkles with geometric shapes made from straw hanging amid the lights. The “Bernelių Mišios” (midnight mass) brings our communities together for the blessed event of Jesus’ birth. Christmas Day finds us visiting each other merrily singing songs, sharing stories, and eating wonderful foods only served for this special day.

Yet, with all the similar traditions we carry from Christmas to Christmas, poignant events, such as these below, stand out to help us define the true meaning of a Lithuanian Christmas.

This was to be the first Christmas my husband and I would be spending with our newly adopted daughters from Lithuania. Kūčių dinner was wonderful. As always, my mother-in-law had prepared a delicious table filled with all the thirteen different meatless foods accompanied by my father-in-law’s own home-made red wine. The girls enjoyed the meal – my youngest daughter relished the herring dishes. What a little Lithuanian!

The girls were timid about asking to open presents. The custom in our family is to exchange gifts with family on Kūčios and open presents from Kalėdų Senis (Santa Claus) on Christmas morning. The girls had a blast with all their presents. They were just awe-struck at the amount of gifts and how everyone knew what they wanted.

At one point during the evening, my older daughter came up to me and asked, “Is Santa Claus coming tomorrow morning?” I told her, “Yes!” with a big smile on my face and my voice filled with enthusiasm. She just stood there with a dour look on her face.

I asked her what was wrong, and she replied, “You tell that Santa Claus to just take all those presents that are meant for us and give them to our neighbors. We don’t need any more, we already have too much.” “Well, sweetheart,” I replied, “it’s too late. Santa Claus is already working and I can’t get a hold of him.” She kept insisting, even so far as to try to convince me that Santa has a phone in his sleigh like I have in my car.

I was so touched by her unselfishness and her genuine, almost guilty, feelings of having received so much that I had tears in my eyes. This brought back a flood of memories of my Christmases past, and how on occasion I had complained about gifts I didn’t like, or didn’t get, and felt ashamed in light of this little girl’s one simple sentence, “We already have too much...”

God has his little messengers reminding us to be selfless and giving on such glorious and holy days. One little messenger is and, I believe, always will be our little (oldest) daughter Skaidra.

— Rėda Ardys-Pliūra

Christmas in the coal mining regions of Pennsylvania meant many things but most important were Kūčios and Midnight Mass. For days before, baking and cooking smells permeated the kitchen. The table was set with the required twelve dishes and the extended family from near and far was gathered. The head of the house, my grandfather, and later my uncle, who was a monsignor, broke the traditional wafer, and it was passed all around the table with each person breaking off a piece of the original wafer.

After Midnight Mass, we all gathered again around the table for coffee and dessert. But it wasn’t food; it was the people who made the memories of Kūčios. When we sit at the table this Christmas, it will be my parents, grandparents and all the other family members who are no longer with us that will possess my memories. Even though they gave me my beautiful memories of a long ago culture from a far away land, a small part of me was taken away when each one left me. But somehow, somewhere, I feel they will also be sharing Kūčios with me on Christmas Eve.

— Jeanne Dorr



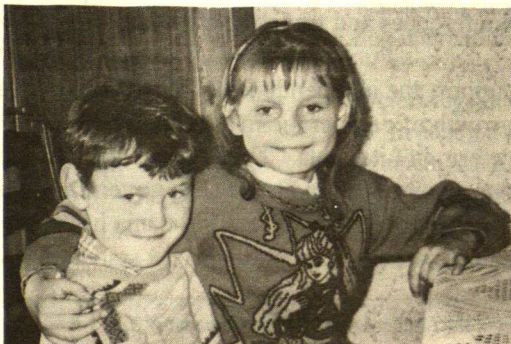
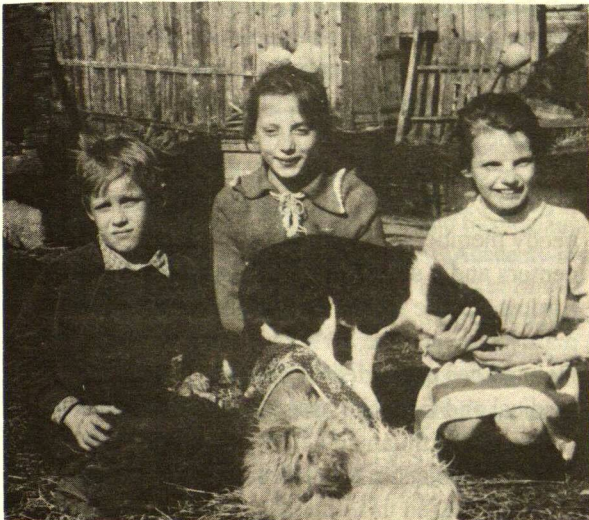
Jeanne Dorr



Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Lithuanian Orphan Care. . .



JEANNE DORR is a member of the Board of Directors of Lithuanian Orphan Care, a branch of the Human Services Council of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.



All photos courtesy of Jeanne Dorr.

From the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc....

Regina Narušis

Lithuanian-American Community's Endowment Fund

A Lithuanian-American Community Endowment Fund was created at the last Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. (LAC) Board of Directors annual meeting held on October 11, 1998 in Cleveland, Ohio. This endowment program is a time-honored method of creating a fund which is to last forever and invested to earn income. It is only that earned income that will be used to support the work of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. The principal will always remain invested in order to perpetuate the fund. It is a most effective way to ensure the continued existence of the Community.

Monies allow the Community to offer better programs and services. Presently, LAC's operating budget allows us to get by; but, this endowment fund, when funded, will allow us to fulfill our mission with the best quality programs and services. The Community serves the interests of over one million Americans of Lithuanian heritage.

The Community fosters Lithuanian culture by regularly sponsoring such events as folk dance festivals, Lithuanian language theater groups, symposiums on arts and sciences, and song festivals. It publishes books and magazines about Lithuania's cultural heritage, and provides cultural interaction between America and Lithuania.

The Community sponsors the regional Lithuanian Heritage and Language Schools, which provide classes to Lithuanian-Americans of all ages. It is LAC that publishes **BRIDGES** and **Lituanus**, a journal of arts and sciences. For the younger set, the Educational Council publishes **Eglutė**.

The Community's Human Services Council provides services for its senior citizens and needy members. It sponsors two senior citizen centers and a senior monthly magazine – **Pensininkas**. Since the re-establishment of Lithuania's independence, LAC's Human Services Council has expanded its services to provide medical and financial assistance to Lithuania's children. "Lithuanian Children's Hope" provides specialized medical treatment not available to children in Lithuania. "Lithuanian Orphan Care" allows our members to foster a child in Lithuania.

LAC's Economics' Council promotes business and investment in Lithuania. It sponsors conferences and trade shows.

LAC's Public Affairs Council has worked to support the independence of Lithuania, and the growth of democratic institutions and economic reform in Lithuania. This Council keeps you, our membership, and our U.S. government advised as to what progress Lithuania has made in each of these areas, and where it stands regard-

REGINA NARUŠIS, a practicing attorney in Illinois, is the President of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.

ing Lithuania's admission to NATO.

LAC is a non-profit community-based organization. It has 70 local chapters, including Hawaii and Alaska, in 27 states and the District of Columbia. Members participate in their own local chapters as well as in nation-wide events. Should you like to become involved, contact our national office in Reston, Virginia at 11250 Bacon Drive, Suite 17C or phone (703) 397-0950, and talk to Audronė Pakštytė.

Should you wish to give a gift to LAC, Inc. to fund this endowment program and support our work, you may do so outright or deferred. An outright gift should be sent to our LAC, Inc. Treasurer, Ramas Pliūra at 1927 West Boulevard, Racine, Wisconsin, 53403. It is a tax-deductible gift. Your one gift will turn into a legacy long into the future. You may also pledge to give each year to show your continued support and defer your gift by a bequest in a will to the "Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. Endowment Fund". Your gift will assure the future of the Community and its mission as well as enhance the quality of our opportunities to serve you. Leave a legacy for the future Lithuanian-American generations – your gift.

CURRENT EVENTS

MARIJA! A Film in Progress

From Ina Bertulytė-Bray

A gala fund raising dinner and auction was held for a film in progress on the life of Lithuanian archaeologist Marija Gimbutas on November 20th, 1998 at UBC Grad Centre Ballroom, in Vancouver, British Columbia.

MARIJA is a film about the life of the controversial archaeologist, Lithuanian born Marija Gimbutas, one of the most extraordinary women of our times, whose excavations and interpretations of Neolithic European settlements forever changed our vision of the past.

Born in prewar Lithuania, Marija Gimbutas spent her youth resisting foreign occupation and fleeing from Soviet and Nazi rule. Her love of the rich culture of her country and its myths and symbols played an important role in everything she did her whole life. She developed a theoretical picture of the origins of Western civilization in peaceful, Goddess-centered, woman-honoring culture that spanned the continents of Europe and the Middle East, and had broad ties to other areas around the world. Her controversial theories, while severely critiqued by many archaeologists, have inspired feminists, critics of culture, writers, artists and theologians.

Academy-award winning actress Olympia Dukakis, a long-time friend of Marija, has agreed to narrate the film. The producers are Starhawk and Donna Read. Starhawk is one of the foremost voices of ecofeminism, is a peace activist, lecturer and author of six books. Starhawk is a founder of the "Reclaiming Collective", an organization offering classes and training in the Goddess tradition.

Donna Read, one of the original team of women who formed and shaped the National Film Board of Canada's Studio D, is director of the Women and Spirituality series at the NFB and producer of the award winning (8 awards) for Trilogy: Goddess Remembered, The Burning Times, and Full Circle. In addition to her work as Associate Director and Editor on several NFB films, as a free-lance filmmaker, Donna has made a number of films including the acclaimed "Mask and Drum" which won several international awards including first prize at the London International Film Festival.

In 1995, Donna and Starhawk formed Belili Production. Their first project together since the Trilogy is MARIJA.

In addition to a night of good food and friends, there was great entertainment and prizes to bid on. Members of the Lithuanian community in Vancouver came in native dress. There was also poetry reading from Lithuania, both in English and in the native tongue. All money raised went to the film's production.

THE LITHUANIAN CITIZENS' SOCIETY REMEMBERS

From The Lithuanian Citizens' Society of Western Pennsylvania Newsletter, by Mildred Sukys

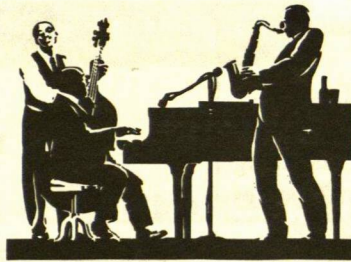
The older members of The Lithuanian Citizens' Society of Western Pennsylvania stroll down memory lane and fondly remember their beginnings. When a recent member, Frank Yankovic, passed away, their November 1998 newsletter brought up highlights of the Society's active past.

In 1911, there were three Lithuanian clubs located in the South Side of Pittsburgh. They were Feodura Narbuto, Lietuvis Pilieciui, and Auksciausias Prieglaudas. All three clubs decided to organize into one club. The charter was drawn up on January 31, 1912, and started at 2025 Jane Street in Pittsburgh. In 1927, it was organized into one club and moved to 2226 Jane Street. Members bought the club from the German Club called Birmingham Turner Hall in 1928 for \$32,000. They named the club "Lithuanian Citizens' Society of Western Pennsylvania".

The steward maintained the Club, ordered the liquor, and took care of everything. Seven stewards oversaw the operations of the Club. They were:

- Pete Margal (1928 - 1934);
- William Burdulis (1934 - 1939);
- Mary Burdulis took over after William's death until 1940;
- Benny Russlan (1941 - 1942);
- Mr. Johnson (1942);
- Benny Russlan (1942 - 1966);
- Tom Unitas (1966 - 1973).

The Club had over 1,000 members -- all men. About 100 members attended the monthly meetings that were conducted in Lithuanian, and the minutes recorded in Lithuanian. The Club was opened every day and on Sunday until 2 a.m. There were Lithuanian bartenders to serve club members during special events and regular evening hours. Wed-



dings were held every month.

There were two bowling alleys and a Lithuanian bowling league. The Club was also home to a Lithuanian Radio Program whose announcers were George Zilinskas and Eddie Navitskas.

The big nights were Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. In the Crystal Ballroom many orchestras played entertaining the Club members. Among the ones who played here was Frank Yankovic and other orchestras, as Porky Chadwick, Bobby Vinton, 4 Freshmen, McGuire Sisters, and Johnny Jones.

Every Christmas, the Club had a big Christmas party for the children, giving our gifts and donations. As Mildred Sukys said, "Yes, the South Side was the most popular in Pittsburgh."

A MYSTERY FOR THE HOLIDAYS

From The Lithuanian Citizens' Society of Western Pennsylvania Newsletter,
by John McCloskey

Do you like to read? How about a mystery by a Lithuanian-American author -- Jo Dereske based in Bellingham, Washington! Her books are light-hearted and quick reading. It's fun to see Lithuanian names in print, such as Helma Zukas (main character), Durbas, Gimbutas, Petronas; and words as kugelis, lujan, vilkas, and Lithuanian.

Ms. Dereske's books, "Miss Zukas and the Library Murders", "Miss Zukas and the Island Murders", "Miss Zukas and the Raven's Dance", and "Miss Zukas and the Stroke of Death" can be found in major bookstores.

THE LITHUANIAN OPEN

By Ed Shakalis

The annual Lithuanian Open Golf Tournament was played at the Squirrel Run Country Club in West Plymouth, Massachusetts on September 26, 1998. The Lithuanian Open was not only a fun time but, it help support the Lithuanian Children's Relief, Inc. (LRC), based in Boston, Massachusetts. The LRC earmarked the money raised for the purchase and delivery of medicine for children in Lithuania suffering with tuberculosis.

When I drove into the golf course parking lot, the first thing I saw was the Lithuanian flag flying on the flagpole. Charlie Caranci, Squirrel Run owner, bought the flag for our tournament as a surprise. Ninety-five players, young and old, men and women of all nationalities participated in the tournament.

The format was Florida Scramble best ball; which, allows all team members to contribute. It was a 9:00 a.m. shot gun start that signaled that all foursomes would start at the same time from different holes, thus finishing for lunch.



This year's Lithuanian Open winners were Peter Van Wagenen, Steve Kelley, Jack Basile, and Steve Nickerson with a score of 12 under par. Their trophy was made in Lithuania from Lithuanian oak. Bernie and Irena Zilaitis

had the trophy made in Lithuania and personally delivered it to the Open.

Second place team was John and Jerald Blaze, Chris and Bill Tillo. Third place team was Tomas Kiliulis, Keith Girovard, Kevin Blanchette and Steve Blake.

I had met the Lithuanian Ambassador, Stasys Sakalauskas, at the Baltic 80 Ball and he informed me that a golf course will be built next year in Trakai, Lithuania. Maybe the next Lithuanian Open Golf Tournament could be played there. For now, next year's tournament is scheduled on September 25, 1999. ♦

A BRIDGES SALUTE TO ITS SUPPORTERS

It's been a long and interesting year for BRIDGES. We've been working hard to bring you the latest news, human interest stories, and a variety of articles. We're already starting to work on 1999 BRIDGES issues.

Before 1998 slips by, we'd like to thank those readers who have gone above and beyond their subscription renewals or first time payments. The following people have sent also a contribution enabling us to look for better ways to serve all of your readers. A heartfelt thanks and best wishes for a terrific holiday season!

Anthony Rollis
Valerie Hannon
Mr. & Mrs. Alfred Rodgers
Rita Karrytais
Aldona Shumway
Robert Hawking

Agnes Dreven
Virgilijus Martinonis
Frank Gerulskis
Myron J. Miller
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would like to extend their sincere
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Lithuanian Foundation, Inc.
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For more information about the Lithuanian Foundation,
 contact them at:
The Lithuanian Foundation, Inc.
 14911 W. 127th Street
 Lemont IL 60439
 Tel: (630)257-1616 Fax: (630)257-1647
 admin@lithfund.org



May the blessings and joy
 of this Christmas remain
 with you throughout the
 coming New Year of 1999.

Seszelė Margarita Barzikaitė
 LAF Religious Council



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