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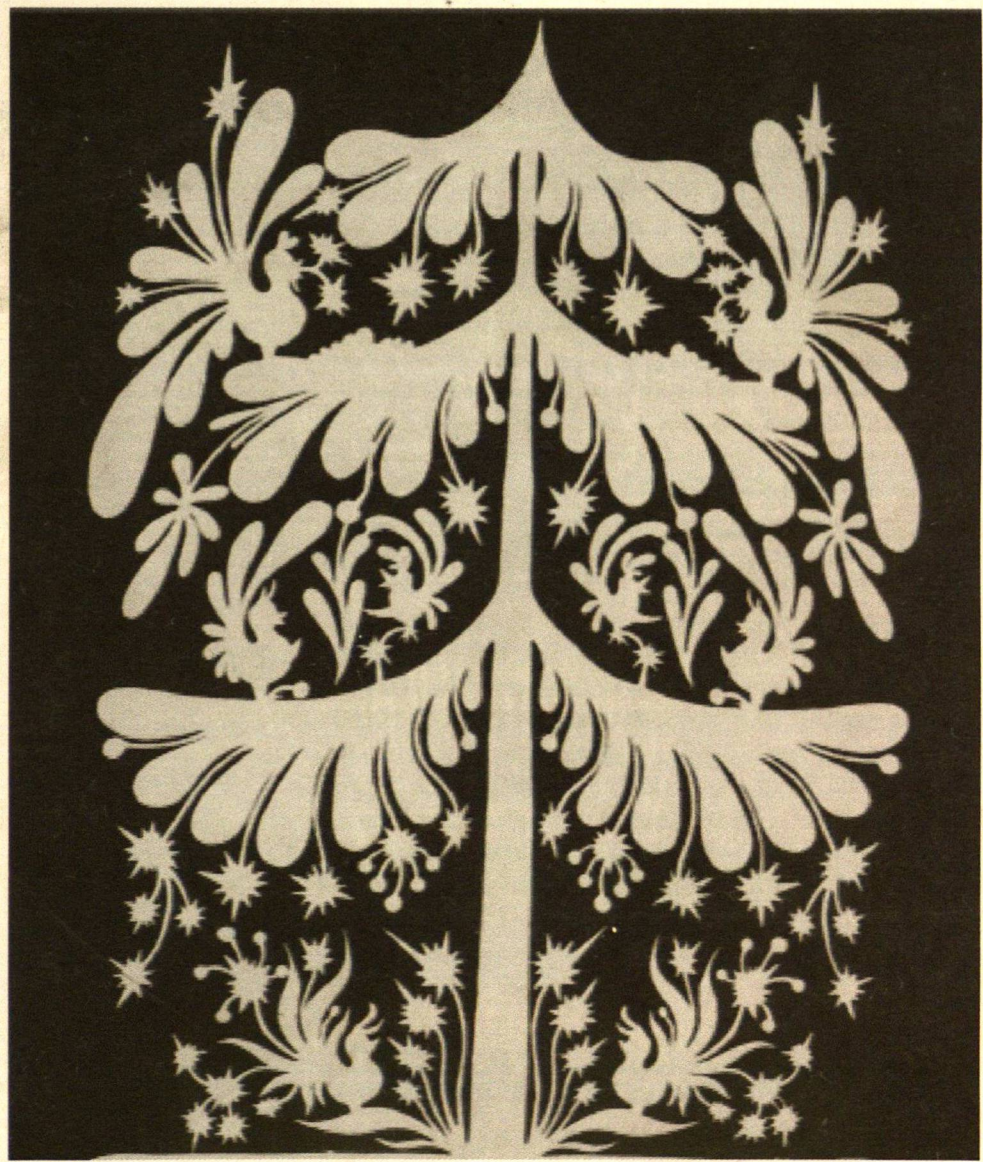
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BRIDGES

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Lithuania's President Addresses Important Issues...A Humanitarian Airlift

P e r s p e c t i v e s

Is it tradition, superstition or convenience?

After this year's Thanksgiving dinner, we walked our guests out to their car and were aghast to see our neighbor's front yard adorned with lights and sporting a huge Christmas tree in their living room. Later, these festive neighbors mentioned that decorating on Thanksgiving was a family "tradition", otherwise their Christmas would be marred by all sorts of mishaps. Plus, all the family gathered during Thanksgiving to see this tree go up.

So now, here's the quandary. Is this tradition, superstition or just plain old convenience? My bet is on the convenience. It's okay with the rest of the neighbors, but somehow it hurries and worries me that I'm missing something.

I decided to look through the Lithuanian customs and traditions books and see if I was the traditional or the convenience type. I knew that I wasn't the divination or superstitious type. I just couldn't see myself dragging a log through the streets and setting it on fire to guarantee that the following year would be easier with less work. (Simonas Daukantas). Although, that would really cause my "festive" neighbors to raise their eyelids.

Now the convenience person would probably have everything up jiminy-cricket and down the day after Christmas. The once gloriously bedecked Christmas trees lay on the side of the roads on Dec. 26th with an occasional strand of tinsel fluttering in the breeze. Definitely not us.

The thought of celebrating Christ's birth, then ushering in the New Year, and waiting for the Epiphany and the arrival of the Three Kings seems to represent a period of reverence and mystery to me. We feel "Christmasy", if it can be called that, during this time. The boys seem calmer, the new year takes on a fresh and exciting feel, and possibilities and creativity abound.

So I guess I'm traditional. My family continues the traditional Kūčios (Christmas Eve) meal, we cajole the little ones to sing or say a poem to earn their Christmas gifts, we attend midnight mass, and look for the star in the sky which heralds the birth of Jesus. The Christmas tree is quietly and sometimes sadly stripped of its adornments on Epiphany. Then it takes its place in the backyard to be a home and resting place for the winter's birds.

Linksmu Šventu Kalėdu ir Laimingu Naujųjų Metų!

Rasa Ardys-Juška

Editor

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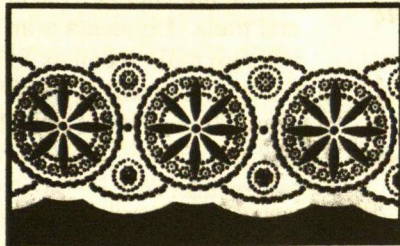
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With Only Scissors or a Knife ...

Lithuanian folk artists present animals, trees, flowers and people in involved plots and motifs in a simple piece of paper.

During the 16th century, a paper mill was established in Lithuania, and since then paper-cutting has become a popular craft. Paper cuts for interior decoration was in vogue at the end of the 19th century. They were used for decorating lampshades, shelves, picture and mirror frames, and used as window curtains.

The paper-cutting above is an example of a window curtain design by R. Sauskantienė. Many more examples may be seen at the folk life museums in Vilnius and Kaunas.

On the cover:
A paper-cutting entitled "A Serenade of Night" by R. Zaleckaitė.



Pres. Valdas Adamkus

Lithuania's President Speaks...

...The World Trade Organization's Doors Open for Lithuania ...The President's Relationship with the New Parliament

*The following is the statement made by
H.E. Mr. Valdas Adamkus on the
occasion of Lithuania's access to the
World Trade Organization,
December 8th, 2000.*

It is my great pleasure to welcome the results of the General Council's voting. Today is an historic day for Lithuania who, after complex, intensive, and often difficult work completed membership negotiations with the World Trade Organization.

Lithuania was not a party to the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs. We had lost the pace due to the legacies imposed on us by the history of occupation. Therefore accession to the World Trade Organization is one of the crucial steps toward my country's full reintegration into the world economy. Just like the European and Euro-Atlantic membership is vital to my country's security and well-being.

Today the WTO has become an instrument capable of effectively regulating international trade and streamlining its development. The fundamental principles of the WTO have encouraged further liberalization of the world markets and allowed the creation of a stable, effective,

and transparent global trade system.

My country is strongly committed to participate in the international economy and multilateral trade. Lithuania is an open economy; wherein trade accounts for 80 percent of the GDP. Being part of the World Trade Organization will secure and consolidate my country's due place in the global network of economic interdependence.

WTO membership provides us with more reliable, transparent, and predictable rules and regulations, which in turn represent better guarantees for domestic and foreign investors. Membership should also facilitate access to international financial markets.

Lithuania is finalizing its accession in the post-Seattle period. We understand that this is a far from easy period for the Organization. Worldwide integration of economies raises more and more concerns. We sometimes hear that globalization is to be blamed for contemporary evils, such as poverty, unemployment, and environmental degradation. Such an approach has pooled the opposition against the efforts to further liberalize global trade and promote investments by launching another round of multilateral trade negotiations under WTO leadership.

It is true that globalization necessitates adjust-

PRESIDENT VALDAS ADAMKUS is the president of the Republic of Lithuania. This speech was translated from the Lithuanian by the Office of the President of the Republic of Lithuania, and available at <http://www.president.lt/en>.

ments that might be difficult to accept for those on the margins of the global community. However, expanding international trade and increasing openness of national markets has consistently generated wealth and economic growth. As a result, open economies have enjoyed higher social standards. Open economy policies were instrumental in reducing poverty, raising employment, and improving conditions for public health and education.

Therefore, we welcome the efforts of the member states, the Director General and Chairman of the General Council to rebuild confidence in the World Trade Organization.

Significant success has already been achieved. The best evidence of it is the launching of negotiations on agriculture and services, the establishment of a mechanism for a more efficient implementation of the Uruguay Round commitments, and the on-going efforts to ensure transparency and effective participation of all its members in the work of the Organization. The success of these undertakings should encourage a new round of multilateral trade negotiations, which, I am convinced, will deliver benefits to all nations and the global economy.

Lithuania joins the Organization, which has contributed greatly to the upturn of the global economy, and, I am convinced, will continue to do so in the future. From the national perspective, I believe that WTO membership will further promote economic and legal reforms in Lithuania. The accession process has already played a significant part in shaping our trade regime and environment for foreign investments. Now the Government is encouraged to further eliminate the remaining barriers to trade and increase competition under bilateral and multilateral agreements.

Discussions in my country about the advantages of WTO membership have also inspired us to examine thoroughly the best practices of the world trade system and integrate them into our legal environment.

We value today's voting in the General Council as an acknowledgement of the progress



achieved by Lithuania during its decade of independence. By its vote, the General Council has endorsed the wide range of our legal and institutional reforms and has accepted Lithuania as a reliable and attractive trading partner.

Let me conclude by reassuring you that Lithuania is committed to further pursue the principles of liberal trade, as only they can bring the best output for all of us. I am convinced that membership in a transparent and rule-governed World Trade Organization will guarantee equal treatment of all nations in the complex system of international trade and, more importantly, it will provide us with the optimum outcome for our people.

The following was an address made to the nation of Lithuania on October 12th, 2000

You, the citizens of our country, elected on Sunday [Oct. 8th] the new parliament of our State. You elected to the Seimas the political forces that you trust and granted them the mandate to administer the country for four years.

Your choice has determined the turning point in the political life of Lithuania. For the first time since the restoration of independence neither of the political parties that represent you will have the majority in the Seimas. For the first time we shall have a genuine coalition government. We shall avoid the domination of one party, but shall face the other trials of democracy and the other, no less serious, difficulties. The coalition government will be more vulnerable and may be short on stability. Therefore the success of its activity will depend on the ability of the parties to work jointly, to discuss and to reach agreement.

The battles of the elections are over. Now the time has come for all the parliamentary parties to embark on one road, to form a united team of Lithuania and to score victories for Lithuania.

There is no sense to argue now who was worthier or who had to win. In politics, just like in basketball, the victory does not always favor the more experienced.

Two coalitions – a formal social democratic and an informal "new policy" participated in the elections. You, the voters, resolved the dispute of the parties by giving more votes for liberals and social liberals. Therefore I have approved the initiative of the two parties to try to form the government. My move was only a response to your will and the responsibility assumed by the leaders of the two parties. I cannot and do not wish in an artificial way to break coalitions up or to form them. Respecting the self-determination of the nation and the political parties, we have to admit an obvious truth that today Lithuania trusts the new political forces and not those who have already been in power. Let us wish them success in reaching agreement on the possible composition of the Cabinet.

I have sincerely congratulated former President Algirdas Brazauskas and the left-of-center coalition led by him. The former President has indeed performed an important job in strengthening democracy in Lithuania.

I hope that the "new policy" coalition will be able to co-operate constructively with both the Social Democratic coalition and the Conservative Party. We should not disregard a possibility of an even wider coalition of the parliamentary parties. Such a coalition based on shared commitments to the national interests and the strategic goals of the country might secure an even broader endorsement for the new government both in the Seimas and in our society.

Already next week I shall convene the first sitting of the new Seimas of Lithuania. Therefore I would like to enlarge now on the tasks that await the Seimas and the Government, and the problems that we shall have to address jointly.

But first and foremost, I would like to thank the Seimas that is about to complete its term and its Chairman Vytautas Landsbergis. Over the last four years we have succeeded in advancing on the road of the strategic development of the State: in the development of the free market economy and in integrating into the Western economic and security area. However, the Seimas

has not avoided failures and disappointing mistakes. The parties that were in power have left a number of unfinished jobs and uncompleted reforms, many of which should be continued with wisdom. But that is not enough. Our people no longer want "the reform of reforms". They want the tangible positive results of reforms.

I believe that during this term of office of the new Seimas we must rapidly advance further and break through stagnation and depression. The next four years will be essential for a qualitative leap of the country, for the modernization of the State, and for rooting Lithuania in the western community of nations. Meeting the challenges of the time ahead will require a new breakthrough policy.

I realistically assess the capabilities of the new parliament and see the possible problems in its work. Still I hope that the Seimas will pursue a policy leading to progress and will form a strong team capable to implement it.

The new ruling coalition will have immediately to undertake difficult tasks: to reconcile different positions of the parties; to fine-tune the promises made during the election campaign to the economic capacities of the State; to prepare the program of activities of the government; [and] to discuss and approve the next year budget.

Together with you, dear fellow citizens, I will demand from the new government concrete commitments. When appointing the ministers of finance and economy I shall ask what measures will be taken to reduce two-fold the number of the unemployed in four years, to achieve a more disciplined collection of all the revenues and a more efficient and targeted spending of the public funds, to ensure a successful privatization bringing benefits to the country and to secure a prudential borrowing and effective utilization of loans.

I will ask for clear answers: How and when will a simple, stable and more just taxation system be created? How and when will the energy sector be reorganized so that competition and not the state subsidies accounted for the fall in gas and electricity prices? In what ways will the down payment and the interest rate be reduced to ensure a wider accessibility to the loans for hous-

ing? How will the market relations in agriculture be developed and how can the support for those rural dwellers that are no longer able to adjust to the market be ensured?

The former governments failed to eliminate the budget deficit of SODRA [Lithuania's Social Security].

The new Cabinet will have not only to find new resources for covering the deficit, but will also have to reorganize the pension system. Only by reforming the system we can ensure the timely payment of pensions to all pensioners and a tax burden acceptable for the working population.

I await from the new government tangible results in "the sunrise of business" and "the sunset of bureaucracy". The authorities must serve the people. People in Lithuania should be defended from the arbitrary action of the bureaucrats and the business – from excessive regulations. Unavoidably we shall have to narrow the functions of the central authorities and the counties, and to strengthen the local self-government by granting to it a greater financial independence.

We have finally to create a civilian Ministry of the Interior and the independent Police Department directly accountable to the public. The State needs a truly independent Office of the Prosecutor, which is only possible if the majority of the Seimas does not appoint its head.

After the elections, Lithuania needs [a] government, which responsibly plans the future of the country rather than simply extinguishes fires. The new Cabinet will have to present to the people and foreign partners a clear-cut economic development strategy of the open Lithuania, which has a transparent, attractive, and predictable business environment, small-scale bureaucracy and a mobile labor market.

We must know distinctly how we shall create an educated information society and how we shall develop economy based on the information technologies. Apart from the other human rights, a modern state should ensure the right of each and every citizen to the Internet and access to the advantages of e-business. Access to the Internet



should be ensured at least in the public libraries of our cities and towns.

I will ask the new government what immediate steps it will take to provide at least 10 instead of 75 schoolchildren with one computer and to increase two-fold the number of IT [Information technology] students in our uni-

versities and ensure that they do not leave Lithuania upon graduation.

Just like you, I shall ask the new minister of education and science: When will our secondary schools start teaching the basics of economics? When shall we start funding the science programs important to the State and the people rather than scientific institutions? When will all students have access to credits? How long will it take to refurbish our schools?

Orientation to the West is an essential precondition for the modernization of Lithuania. I do not doubt that the new Seimas will ensure the continuity of foreign policy. And today I want to stress that the new government will have to assume the direct responsibility for a successful integration of Lithuania into the European Union and NATO and for maintaining good relations with the neighbors. Lithuania must be ready to join NATO in 2002. I am certain that all the main parties of the Seimas will support this strategic goal of our country.

I hope that the new Seimas of Lithuanian will base its work on the dialogue among different parties, mutual confidence and a clear understanding that no party in our country implements the policy of other states. Our parties represent different interests of our people and different segments of our society. If parties talk the same language, society also speaks the same language. Parties who agree on the strategic goals of the nation lay down the foundation for concord, which is essential for our common work and common success, and the future victories of Lithuania.

It is [for harmony] that I sincerely wish the new members of the Seimas and to you, dear fellow countrymen. ♦

Edward Baranauskas

A Humanitarian Airlift to Lithuania

The Stratton Air National Guard Base, located in Scotia, New York, was a beehive of activity on Saturday morning April 15th as forty-five members of the 109th Medical Squadron were preparing to board a C-130 aircraft, known as the “Hercules”, for a humanitarian aid flight to Lithuania. This four-engine turbo-prop transport can carry up to 60 people or 30,000 pounds of cargo.

Loaded on the plane was over a half-million dollars worth of medical supplies and equipment, including x-ray machines, catheters, and other sterile goods, donated by numerous local human service agencies. In addition, St. Peter’s Hospital in Albany, New York gave 65 modern computers for Lithuanian hospitals to set up a network, something they desperately needed and wanted.

The primary purpose of the 109th Airlift Wing is to provide support for the National Service Foundation at the South Pole, and it is the only military unit in the world with ski-equipped planes and a specialized crew that can land there. In addition, they regularly journey to those countries in need of assistance, including Honduras, Bosnia, and Kosovo.

This was to be their first humanitarian flight to Lithuania. Approval for it had to be cleared through legal channels, such as the Federal National Guard Bureau, the State Department, the United States Air Force, and the Lithuanian Embassy in Washington.

How did the planning for this operation originate?

Ginger Houghton, a nurse anesthetist at St. Pe-



The C-130 aircraft — being loaded for flight to Lithuania.

ter’s Hospital in Albany, New York, and a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the 109th Medical Squadron of the ANG, together with Bob Duda, a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the Massachusetts Air National Guard of Lithuanian descent, pooled their resources and sponsored a sick woman, Albina Marčiūlionienė from Kaunas, to undergo open heart surgery at St. Peter’s. While she was recovering, she made it known that medical conditions back home were not good. The mortality rate, for example, in Lithuania for heart surgery was 65 percent compared to 5 percent in the United States. An economic crisis in Lithuania had hit the hospitals especially hard.

Ginger and Bob knew very well the difficulties Lithuanian hospitals and doctors were having in obtaining modern medical equipment. They decided to pursue the possibility for the deployment of the 109th Medical Squadron to go to Lithuania in a humanitarian aid mission to work with military and civilian personnel, taking needed medical supplies, since the Air Guard had done this before in helping foreign countries. Their efforts proved successful. Chief Master Sergeant Mike Casatelli, whose grandmother was born in Lithuania, maiden name Stankevičius, rolled up his sleeves and eagerly cooperated in every way possible to make this mission a reality. He was, in fact, looking forward to visiting the land of his ancestors once the plans were approved.

The Air Guard’s contingent was made up of nurses, doctors, anesthetists, surgeons, psychologists, eye specialists, radiologists, and dentists. These professionals work one weekend a month at

EDWARD BARANAUSKAS is a regular contributing writer to BRIDGES. He enjoys following the history of Lithuanians in flight. — both here and in Lithuania.

the Air Base, and serve two weeks in the regular military service a year, but most of their time is devoted to their civilian practice. In addition, they help those who suffer as a result of natural disasters. Colonel Raul Diokno commanded the group, which would be in Kaunas for two weeks, and then return home.

Major Joe Hathaway was the pilot for this flight, assisted by a co-pilot, navigator, flight engineer and two loadmasters.

The journey to Kaunas took two days. The schedule called for a seven-hour flight to an Air Force Base, Lajes, in the Azores. Following an overnight stay to rest, the crew landed at Kaunas after an eight and a half hour non-stop flight and was greeted by Health Ministry and military officials. The next day the C-130 returned to home base with only the crew on board.

Members of the 109th Medical Squadron taught the Lithuanian military American techniques of administering first aid, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, crisis intervention, and suicide prevention. Squadron members also worked with multiple civilian hospitals to provide consultations and lectures on American medicine and conducted a mock mass casualty exercise where an accident was simulated and medical services rendered. Everybody put his or her heart and soul into this culminating exercise.

The following is a translation of a news story that appeared in the Kaunas newspaper, *Kauno Diena*, dated April 28 and captioned: "United States Military Medics Praise Lithuanians".

"Twenty American military medical specialists

worked in Kaunas hospitals for two weeks, giving lectures, assisting in complicated surgeries, and examining about a hundred patients. As for their Lithuanian counterparts, they praised the professionalism of both civilian and military doctors. Colonel R. Diokno, the commander of the American group, had a very favorable opinion about the qualifications of Lithuanian hospital technicians, commenting they are doing wonderful things with the equipment they have.

R. Duda, of Lithuanian descent whose grandparents came from the Žiežmarių region, formerly served in the United States military, knew very well the difficulties Lithuanian hospitals had with medical equipment and decided to organize this help."

During a press conference, the director of the Third Clinical Hospital, S. Gentvilis, stressed the sentiment that doctors in Kaunas appreciated the professional expertise learned from their American colleagues.

Rūta Kumetytė, a sergeant in the Lithuanian military, said these words in a telephone interview from Lithuania: "Working with the Americans was wonderful and very useful because we got a lot of knowledge. It was very interesting to exchange medical experiences and extend cooperation between the U.S. and Lithuanian military."

Kumetytė also said that she was thankful for the medical equipment that was donated because Lithuania is still a very new country, and doesn't have enough medical equipment.

A C-130 was dispatched from the Stratton Air National Guard Base for the express purpose to pick up the medical group and to bring them home, arriving on April 30th.

Although the squadron returned, members of the group will continue to assist Lithuanian hospitals in expanding their services. Donated medical supplies and computers are being stored in the expectations of going back to Lithuania in another year or so. ♦



Some members of the 109th Medical Squadron as they prepared to board the aircraft.
Photos: E. Baranauskas

Acknowledgements: This story would not have been possible without the help of Ginger Houghton and Bob Duda. Other sources included: article in *The Daily Gazette, Schenectady, New York*, on Monday, July 10, 2000; and article in the *Kauno Diena, Kaunas, Lithuania*, on Friday, April 28, 2000.

The late Povilas Burneikis
Translated into English by Zita Petkus

Under Nazi Care



The year 2000 was declared as the Year of the Displaced Persons (DPs) by the Lithuanian-American Community. *The Tulpè Times* presented an excerpt from the memoirs of the late Povilas Burneikis, written in 1958 as another record of the experiences of that generation, which suffered so much.

Like many of his countrymen, Burneikis left Lithuania with his wife and two year old son in 1944 and headed West, fleeing from the Communist invasion. Ironically, he was forcibly conscripted by the Germans to hard labor, digging trenches. By a miraculous twist of fate, at the end of the war, he was reunited with his family. His wife had given up all hope that he was alive. They immigrated to America in 1949 as part of the displaced persons wave of immigration. Here follows "a glimpse into my life under Nazi 'care'", translated into English by Zita Petkus, Povilas Burneikis's daughter.

The second half of March 1945. The Front closed in. Day by day the shooting got closer and closer. Russian planes, for whom our keepers had just one word – "Ivan" – frequently roared across the sky with no one to engage them. One "Ivan" or another would fly so close to the ground, it would seem to us the pilots, as they gazed down at us, wanted to land right there. However, they didn't shoot at us. During these incidents the German guards would take cover behind trees or houses.

Not only were we hearing the rumble of artillery, but also the staccato rattle of machine gun fire seemed just a few kilometers away, and the sky was dark from burnt gunpowder.

One day upon returning to camp from digging trenches, in the yard near the kitchen we

discovered a dead horse which had apparently been killed at the Front and then brought here for food. The cooks set about removing the horseshoes from the hoofs, skinning the carcass, and cutting it into chunks. Those meat chunks were then tossed into a huge pot to prepare for tomorrow's dinner. And that's exactly what happened. The next day I was given a half a pot of soup which reeked to me of horse sweat, and I hadn't even tasted it yet! I seasoned it heavily with salt to kill the unpleasant smell, but sadly, it made no difference. I was famished, but it still tasted bad. I shut my eyes and spooned the soup – after all, it was something.

They marched us away at midnight, taking us to the village of Grosskatze where we were put up in a schoolhouse.

In the morning we were led another seven or so kilometers to the Witzlyn forest to dig trenches.

We're at the Front. Cannons boom, tanks blast away, machine guns clatter, and rifles fire. The Reds are quite near. At times we are able to spot their fortifications, dug into hills.

At the end of the day, as we walk through Grosskatze on our way back to camp, artillery shells begin exploding around us – some ahead of us, some behind. Just as our column is overtaken by a horse-drawn German first aid wagon, it suffers a direct hit, splitting in two. The horses with the front part of the wagon stampede down the street. The other half of the wagon lies splattered across the road, along with the bodies of dead soldiers. I fling myself into a deep water-filled ditch alongside the road, sharing it with a soldier who has submerged himself in the water, only his head poking through.

We two survived, but one of the Poles in our column was severely injured and taken away to a hospital.

Back at the schoolhouse, our nerves quiet down somewhat and we start talking, even joking. The mood is ruined, however, by Vytas. He is young and smart, speaks German rather well, and is in the good graces of our guards, who have appointed him the "senior member" of the Lithuanian laborers. He is insulting us, calling us, as supporters of Smetona (the president of Lithuania), "exploiters." Further, says he, even though we saved our hides by leaving Lithuania, the bolsheviks will find us. It occurs to us now how dangerous this young man could be should we suddenly find ourselves under Red "protection."

Next morning, as once again we are marched to work in Witzlyn forest, our column is considerably spread out so as to lessen casualties should we come under fire. We are taken to a woody slope where we are ordered to get busy digging a trench among the pines. On one side, the mountain slopes upward; on the other, where the Front awaits, is a large

plain, several square kilometers in size. Three hundred meters ahead of us on the plain, encamped in a hillock, German soldiers wait for the attack.

No longer do they prod us to work quickly. In fact, we are completely ignored! It's very [clear] to us that we're not needed anywhere, but where are they going to put us? After all, we're surrounded. Jonas and I light a fire and destroy our remaining personal documents in dreaded anticipation of being taken by the Reds.

The attack gets more ferocious. An artillery shell lands in a trench full of soldiers and spews up bodies. Those still alive crawl hurriedly toward us. The moment is pivotal: we now find ourselves in the frontline of the Front.

The Reds embark on a fiery assault that continues for about two hours. Their massive artillery discharges with a frequency like that of machine guns, and the cannonade is deafening.

German artillery and tanks, about 200 meters to our rear, fire over our heads. Russian shells land mainly on German batteries, which don't always manage to return fire in their hurry to change locations. Shells spray the ground in front of us; the whole plain is filled with smoke and the stench of gunpowder. We abandon the job and dive into the trenches. Someone lights up a pipe; someone else rolls a cigarette. We wait. What next?? When will this hell ever end?

Suddenly, I feel myself flying out of the trench among dirt and various debris. When I hit the ground, there's a buzzing in my ears, and I've lost my hearing. I feel like I'm no longer myself, as if I were drunk. I'm also in pain. Looking down I realize my left arm is broken between the wrist and the elbow. My left shoulder is killing me, and blood is flowing freely from my sleeve.

I grab my left arm with my right and wobble towards the dense forest about 200 meters to the rear. It, too, has been shot up, the trees being for the most part splintered in half by artillery shells. And still the bombing continues

all around, but they don't get me, and I'm still alive. As I lurch forward I feel myself growing weak, but someone takes me by the arm. I look up –it's that Vytas. Together, somehow or other, we manage to stagger to a medic station. The doctor orders me to disrobe. With Vytas' help I try, but it feels like the whole arm is going to come off with the sleeve. There was no possible way I could remove my shirt. And so it stayed: they bandaged my injured arm with the sleeve right up against the wound.

We were taken to a field hospital near Gdynia (Poland) harbor. Here, on straw covered floors of wooden barracks writhed the wounded. Someone brings me soup but I can't even look at it, I'm in such agony from the pain in my arm and shoulder. Everyone receives a couple of cigarettes, which I gratefully smoke one after the other. My backpack lies at the site I was wounded, to be seen by me no more. I'm thinking that maybe I'm finally finished with trench digging. Maybe now I'll get out of here.

Next morning, the severely wounded are issued ship's passes. At one o'clock we're to go to the waterfront for transport to a hospital farther west. I endeavor to haul myself to the dock and reach the boarding area on my last reserves of strength. Those unable to walk are being carried aboard. At this very moment Russian squadrons fly by and shoot us up with their guns. Nowhere to hide. Luck! They missed me! I board ship and we cast off.

The ship is huge, five decks above and three below the water line, and it accommodates 9,000 wounded. I end up below decks. I can sense the water on the other side of the wall, and it makes me queasy. An unpleasant odor emanates from a toilet that has been erected at the stern. The weaker wounded get beds – the rest get the floor.

Breakfast consists of two slices of bread and a small piece of meat or margarine, and coffee. At lunchtime, ambulatory wounded are supposed to go to the kitchen for some soup. I go, too, but have to wait till all the soldiers are fed.

And so, three days later, the ship arrives in Copenhagen, where we board a train to continue on to German territory. We transfer again to a hospital train and proceed south to the Wernigerod/Hartz mountains, eventually arriving at a small station about 700 meters above sea level. A short distance away lies the town of Schierke, where our hospital is located.

Immediately on arrival we are taken to the shower room. Because of all the blood and pus, my clothes have stiffened into a hard dry board. With the help of medics I get out of my clothes, but they have to cut parts of them off me. In the morning they set my broken arm in plaster, and I start feeling better right away because the bone ends no longer rub against each other.

Two wounded Russian prisoners arrive in our ward. One of them was from the Urals, a laborer from a collective farm, and the second, Sozonov, from the region of the Caspian Sea. He was a short man with a wide face and a low forehead, black hair, narrow eyes. He spoke broken Russian, and was a Muslim. Whenever the three of us talked about Soviet Russia and I would remark that life there was hard, the two of them would immediately respond, "u nas vsio jest" (we have everything). But, when alone with Sozonov, he would open up and talk about the hardships people there have to endure.

Both russkies liked to play cards, and they would draw me into their game. Playing cards, we'd even forget our constant companion, hunger. There wasn't a day that we had enough to eat, be it a breakfast, lunch or dinner.

A young man from another ward, Antanas by name, would come by to visit. He was from the Plateliai village in Lithuania and was barely 18 years old. It had been his ill fate to wear a German soldier's uniform. His back had been seriously injured, and his elbow shattered while still in his homeland. Antanas and I would visit and talk at great length every day. We remained fast friends all our lives, despite the great distance separating us: one of us

choosing England for his exile, the other – America.

Around the middle of April, hospital administration removed maps from the walls and halted our listening to radio transmissions from the Front. We were starting to hear, albeit muffled, the rolling thunder of artillery barrages. Huge numbers of

American and English planes dotted the skies as they headed towards their German targets.

On the morning of April 18, we noticed American tanks on the mountain ridges, the barrage from their artillery starting to land in the locale of the hospital. The shelling thundered for several hours, but the rounds fell either short or long of the town. You see, the hospital roof was clearly marked with large red crosses. Even so, a fragment of a shell broke through one of the hospital walls and landed on a bed. Luckily, the inmates had been taken down to the cellar, where it was safer. Suddenly, through the narrow cellar windows we saw tanks rumbling by. The Americans had arrived!

We lived under the American flag for five weeks, and then, upon the departure of the Americans, the British occupying army moved in. The British struck us as being more dignified and standoffish than the Americans. They weren't around long either. As of July 1, they were to turn this area over to the Reds.

On July 1 at six in the morning, the hospital administration got word that as of 8 o'clock that same day, not only this location, but all of Saxony was to pass into the control of the Reds. Whoever wanted to could leave under their own power; if not, they could stay on in the Russian Zone.

All work died instantly. Whoever felt even remotely capable of walking got ready to leave. The doctors and the nurses quickly packed up their knapsacks and medical bags and stepped lively with the column of the bandaged inmates, as it followed the dust of the



British troops' transport. There was no way we, on foot, could keep pace with motorized vehicles. We were left way behind the British, but we pressed forward with a brisk step. Suddenly we saw that Russian trucks with troops were closing in on us from the rear. As they drove by they shouted and yelled and sneered at us. We pressed forward urgently, and five hours and 35 kilometers later, we had made it to the British Zone.

Antanas and I were now in a Lithuanian DP (displaced persons) camp near Braunschweig. After spending a couple of weeks here recuperating, I left for the American Zone. In another DP camp in Bavaria, I discovered my family, exactly one year after having been separated from them. My son no longer recognized me and explained that his daddy was away digging trenches. It took several days for him to finally acknowledge me as his father. Thus, when I was taken away to dig trenches, the work time which I was told would be no more than two weeks turned out to be no more, and no less than exactly one year! ♦

Ed Shakalis

The Lithuanian Open 2000

Our annual Lithuanian Open Golf Tournament was played on September 23, 2000 at Squirrel Run Country Club in West Plymouth Massachusetts.

It was nice to see the Lithuanian flag flying on the flagpole as I drove into the club's parking lot. Dave Moore, the golf pro at Squirrel Run, makes sure that the flag is displayed properly with the yellow stripe on top.

This year we had 116 players including 26 women. One of the women golfers told me that her husband always raved that he had a good time at the Lithuanian open, so she came to see for herself. As usual, we had a great group playing this year.

The format was Florida Scramble best ball, which allows all team members to contribute. It was a 9AM shotgun start – that means all foursomes started at the same time from different holes, thus finishing about the same time for Chef Dick Marsh's famous buffet.

This year's Lithuanian Open winners are: Steve Kelley, Jack Basile, Steve Nickerson and Peter VanWagenen. Their score was 18 under par, 1 eagle, 16 birdies and 1 par.

Second place: Fred Spokas, Kevin Mader, Larry Basteri and Debbie Brown.

Third place: Gaynor Foster, Sam Vessey, Matt Spaight and Marcal LeCiole.

Longest drive: Bill Bracken Jr.

Nearest to the pin: Hole 7 – Kevin Mader; Hole 13 – Steve Nickerson; Hole 17 (ladies only) –Katie McCune.

The Lithuanian Open trophy, held by Steve Kelley, was made from Lithuanian grown oak. The Lithuanian open tradition is that the trophy be held by the winning team for one year and then be



Winners hold their trophy. Left to right: Steve Kelley, Jack Basile, Steve Nickerson, and Peter Van Wagenen.

Photo: Graham Beaton

turned over to next year's winners.

I keep hoping that Lithuania would build a golf course, so that we can hold a tournament there. However, it seems that the only way Lithuania will get a golf course is for Scotland to occupy Lithuania.

Thanks to the generosity of the Lithuanian Open Hole sponsors, players, and the Lithuanian Children's Relief Charity (LCR is located in South Boston, MA.), the Rokiškis Regional Hospital will get a much-needed neo-natal fetal monitor and incubator that they requested. Daiva Neidhardt, president of LCR, is the prime mover who took care of the details for the purchase and delivery of the medical equipment. To make sure that Rokiškis Regional hospital received the equipment, Daiva requested that they send us a copy of an article and photo from a Lithuanian newspaper showing the monitor and incubator.

Isn't it a great feeling when you help a sick child?

Special thanks for making the Lithuanian Open golf tournament a success goes to Dr. Richard Shakalis, Kestutis Banaitis, Helen Suprin, Graham Beaton, and newly weds Mary Knasas-Varnel and Bill Varnel.

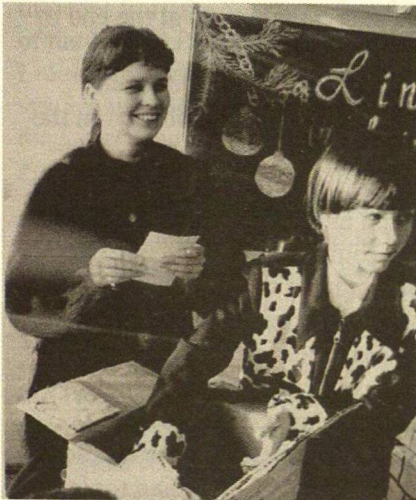
Again, I say, "The weather was good, the course was in excellent shape, plenty of good food and we had a lot of fun."

Next year's Lithuanian open will be at Squirrel Run on September 22, 2001. God willing, I'll see you then. ♦

ED SHAKALIS is a regular contributing writer to BRIDGES. He enjoys the annual Lithuanian Open and coming up with our Trivia Questions.

Jeanne Dorr

A Children's Christmas



On behalf of the Lithuanian Orphan Care Committee and the children we serve, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year. Thank you from each and every one of the Lithuanian children who in any way are benefiting from your generosity. ♦



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. She is also a social studies teacher in New Jersey. Orphan Care may be reached at: Lithuanian Orphan Care, 2711 W. 71st St., Chicago, IL. 60629.

C u r r e n t E v e n t s

Tasmania's Lithuanian Studies Society

The Lithuanian Studies Society (LSS) is a students' society at the University of Tasmania (Australia), established in 1987. The Society's main goal is to encourage an academic interest in all aspects of Lithuania. This is done in a number of ways:

- by disseminating new knowledge about Lithuania through books, periodicals, videos,
- by running a specialized Lithuanian reference library for Australian students on the campus,
- by assisting students studying Lithuania and its people,
- by acting as an informal Lithuanian information center
- by teaching Lithuanian language courses, as required,
- by offering lunchtime talks and seminars on various Lithuanian topics,
- and by teaching Lithuanian traditions, e.g., annual Easter egg coloring workshops.

LSS publishes books on Lithuania and an annual journal called *Lithuanian Papers*. The 72-page journal features original papers, in English, about Lithuania and its people. It has contributors and readers in all parts of the

world. Single copy subscription is \$7 in Australia and US\$8 in all other countries. These prices include postage by airmail. All new subscription requests should be sent by post, or e-mailed, to the addresses shown at the end of this article.

LSS's list of recommended books on Lithuania (all in English) is available from the Society also.

LSS also acts as the Lithuanian catalyst for academic research at the University of Tasmania, which is the fourth oldest university in Australia. Five graduate theses dealing with Lithuania and the Lithuanians have been completed so far. Two others are in progress now.

The Society has introduced an annual Lithuanian Honors scholarship worth \$5,000, which is awarded to the best Honors candidate writing a dissertation on a Lithuanian topic, each year.

The Society transacts all its business in English. Most LSS publications are in English, too.

Further enquiries and gifts may be directed to: LSS, P0 Box 777 Sandy Bay, Tas. 7006 Australia. or e-mail A.Taskunas@utas.edu.au.

The Lithuanian Foundation is waiting to Hear From You

The Lithuanian Foundation, Inc, a non-profit foundation dedicated to supporting Lithuanian language, culture and traditions in the United States, Lithuania and Lithuanian communities around the world, announced that they have new grant applications available for student scholarships.

Those also interested in applying for a grant concerning a special project should contact the Lithuanian Foundation offices for their new forms at:

Lithuanian Foundation, Inc.

c/o Alė Razmienė

Reikalų vedėja (manager)

14911 127th Street

Lemont, IL 60439

Or call, 630-257-1616.

Once the form is filled out, it should be sent to the Foundation by March 15, 2001. Student applications should be sent in by April 15, 2001. It is stressed that the Foundation will only consider those applicants who filled out the new forms. ◆

Lithuanian Pres. Adamkus Thanks Outgoing U.S. Senator

Vilnius-Washington, Dec 06, BNS - Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus expressed his gratitude to the outgoing US senator, William Roth, for his support to Lithuania.

An official ceremony was held at the U.S. Senate on Dec. 6th on the occasion of Roth's retirement from the Senate and as former president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. The Lithuanian ambassador to the United States, Stasys Sakalauskas, read a letter of gratitude from the Lithuanian president addressed to Roth, the Foreign Affairs Ministry reported.

The president expressed his gratitude to William Roth for his active support to Lithuania in its aspiration to join NATO and promoting further expansion of the alliance in 2002.

The president also stressed in his letter that the senator's continuous efforts to promote NATO expansion, in particular within the framework of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, have been received with warmth and heartfelt ap-

preciation by Lithuanians all around the world.

Voicing his regrets that Lithuania is losing in Congress an ardent supporter of its Euro-Atlantic aspirations. Adamkus said he was convinced that "your firm, uncompromising voice of support, as well as belief in the success of transatlantic integration, has paved the road that others will follow, until our ultimate goal of building a Europe whole and free is achieved."

William Roth has been in the U.S. Senate for 34 years where he held high-ranking posts: the U.S. Senate delegation at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the head of the Senate observers' group.

Roth was a steady supporter of the NATO enlargement issue in the Senate in 1998 and consistently defended Lithuania's right, as well as other candidates, to join the alliance.

In 1998 Roth visited Lithuania and was conferred the Order of Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas. ♦

Kuršių Marios Included In World Heritage List

Vilnius, Nov 30, BNS - The Kuronian Spit or Kuršių Marios has been included into the world heritage list together with other geographical and cultural places of universal significance.

The UNESCO World Heritage Committee included Kuršių Marios into the world heritage list as a "cultural landscape", an example of harmonious coexistence of nature and man. Lithuania's representatives said that "this achievement should add to the preservation and fostering of this unique Lithuanian piece of land".

Kuršių Marios is the second Lithuanian highlight on this list following the inclusion of Vilnius's Old City into the World Heritage list in 1994. ♦

Case Western Provides Hope

Partnership in Hope is a voluntary effort led by Case Western Reserve University's (Cleveland, Ohio) School of Dentistry to improve medical care in Lithuania. It recently established Lithuania's first-ever medical teleconferencing facility. The technology enables hospital staff there to communicate in real time with dental school faculty and other professionals who volunteer in the program. ♦

Trivia Quiz

What was the original name that won unanimous approval by the founding fathers of the organization known today as "The Knights of Lithuania"?

- Pioneers of Lithuania.
- Falcons of Lithuania
- Americans for Lithuania

Find the answer on page 22. ♦

Dear Bridges Readers,
 We are truly appreciative of your support
 and continued readership throughout this
 year.

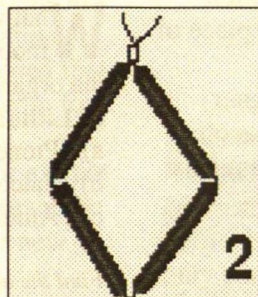
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 future Bridges publications.

We thank you all. May your holidays be
 bright and wonderful!

The Bridges Staff

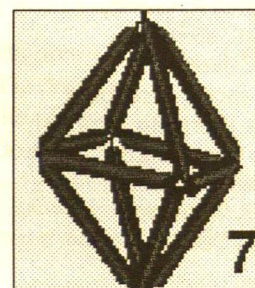
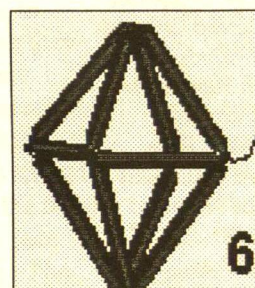
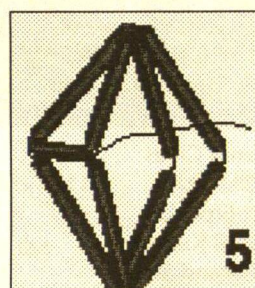
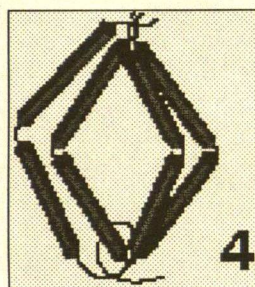
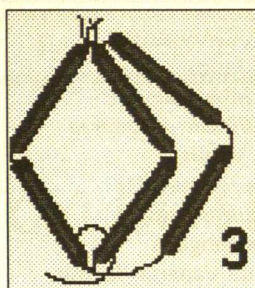
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*You ask, "How do you make
 those lovely "šiaudinukai" or
 Lithuanian straw orna-
 ments?" Cut several straws
 into equal lengths, use a
 needle and strong thread,
 and follow the pictures
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Sr. Margarita Bareikaitė

The Christian During Advent

Advent is the beginning of the liturgical New Year. The Church invites us to: Let Christ lead you! If the faithful will only consent to follow Christ through the Liturgical year, the world we live in would be different.

Christ was born of our Blessed Virgin Mary in Bethlehem. The Jews prepared for His coming in the old Law through the directions given them by the prophets. On Christmas day the Church commemorates this coming of Christ. But it is not a mere memory – there is a reality behind it. The graces of that first coming are granted to the modern world and to each of the faithful.

Three persons: Isaiah, John the Baptist and Mary knew how to wait for the Messiah, in whom they firmly believed, and therefore they appear repeatedly in the liturgy of Advent.

Isaiah is the prophet who had the clearest vision of the Messiah. He has been called the Evangelist of the Old Testament. Isaiah saw that the promised Liberator would come, in the name of Israel and in that of the whole human race. He longed for Christ's coming (Isaiah 45:8). The Church also eagerly awaits Christ's coming and uses the very prayers of Isaiah to express her desire.

The mission of John the Baptist was to prepare the way for the coming of Christ. He does it by preaching a baptism of penance for the remission of sins. He knew too that the kingdom of



heaven was at hand.

The Church could not leave out the Blessed Virgin Mary who was most closely concerned with the coming of Christ on earth. Her Immaculate Conception was the very beginning of the Redemption itself and the guarantee of the coming of the Messiah. The feast of Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is on Dec. 8th, and it reminds us that Christmas is at hand. It also preaches to us the characteristic

of the feast itself: the hatred of sin and the virtues and purity of life.

The final coming of Christ is yet another reason why we should be prepared for Christmas. As we receive Him now, so He will receive us at His last coming. This is the relationship between the Gospel of today and the spirit of Advent. At Christ's second coming not all will rejoice, but only those who knew how to receive Him when He came in humility, poverty and patience.

Anyone who hates His brother or sister walks in darkness and does not follow Christ (1 John 2,8-11). These works of darkness can be summed up in a refusal to accept Christ, who is the Light shining in the darkness (John 1,5)

Christ is the only perfect light. Outside Christ, all is darkness, heaven falls, the stars go out. Only the light of Christ remains forever. ♦

SR. MARGARITA BAREIKAITĖ belongs to the Lithuanian order of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Putnam, CT. She is also the Chairperson of the Religious Affairs Council for the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.

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Answer to the Trivia Quiz

On April 27, 1913, ten pioneers gathered in St. Francis Parish hall (Lawrence, Massachusetts) to discuss the formation, the constitution, and the name of the proposed youth alliance.

In Rev. William Wolkovich-Valkavičius's book "Lithuanian Fraternalism: Seventy-Five Years of U.S. Knights of Lithuania", the author wrote: "Though several titles were suggested, **Falcons of Lithuania** won unanimous approval."

The author also wrote: "As to the selection of a name, Norkunas and the charter members did suffer a defeat. He had received adverse mail... The name falcon was already in use by other ethnics, especially Slavs such as Poles and Slovaks. In Lithuanian history it was the steed, and not the falcon, that was held in highest esteem. A steed with a knight astride was the state emblem of the ancient homeland, argued Fr. Kaupas. Therefore the name fittingly should be that of the knight. The decision was unanimous." ◆

— Ed Shakalis

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