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# BRIDGES

• LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL •

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Volume 26

Issue 7 September 2002

## Our 25th Year!



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*Support for NATO...Coal Miners' Region Lithuanian Festival...Lithuania's youth speaks out*

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

*This was the first year that Camp Neringa in West Brattleboro, Vermont, held a camp for young students, ages 17 to 20. We all remember what it was like at that age — the opinions and friendships mean so much. What better way to continue maturing than in the presence of your lifelong friends who experience similar life events as a Lithuanian-American.*

*During the camp week, short but so productive, each teen shared their talents, points of view, compassion, and dreams with each other. During the talent night, each person gave of themselves. One student, Gintas Stirbys, a senior in a Philadelphia high school, expressed his thoughts through poetry. This particular poem seemed to sum up what every student had experienced during this first camp.*

*Untitled*

*You are what you make me feel,  
happiness.  
The name they shout at you  
from broken windows,  
the name that falls from the sky after  
the gray clouds  
gather like an audience to  
hear you laugh.  
You are what you make me know,  
time, life,  
myths of mist.  
Dancing in circles,  
until your eyes blur  
and the horizon crumbles  
into a soliloquy of miracles.*

*I believe that Camp Neringa's student camp for this particular age group will grow. This inspiring group left a wonderful sense of "all is right with the world" if such Lithuanian youth live in it.*

*Rasa Ardys-Juška*

Editor

## BRIDGES

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## BOOKS JUST FOR YOU!

WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT A SIMPLE BOOK — IN THIS CASE THE CORRECTIONS BY JONATHAN FRAZEN — WOULD SPUR A GROUP OF SEATTLE LITHUANIANS TO START A BOOK CLUB? ON MARCH 27, 2002, DONNA MIKŠYS AND ABOUT A DOZEN OTHERS GATHERED TO DISCUSS AND ANALYZE THIS CONTROVERSIAL BOOK. A BOOK CLUB WAS BORN.

SEATTLE'S BOOK CLUB MEETS EVERY MONTH TO FOCUS ON BOOKS WITH BALTIC THEMES OF AUTHORS. SOME BOOKS CHOSEN WERE:

- \* BORDER STATE BY ESTONIAN WRITER TONU ONNEPALU,
- \* DESIRABLE DAUGHTERS BY BHARATI MUKHERJEE WITH AN IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE THEME,
- \* TRANSLATION BY EVA HOFFMAN,
- \* NATIVE REALM BY CZESLAW MILOSZ.

### On the cover:

"A halo of clouds above the cross" is a watercolor by the late Rev. Vytautas Bagdanavičius.

WHAT'S YOUR PICK FOR THE MONTH? LET US KNOW AND WE'LL SHARE IT WITH OUR READERS. SEE MORE TITLES ON PAGES 20 AND 21.

## *Gallegly and Shimkus Resolutions —*

# Concrete NATO Support

**W**ashington, DC (JBANC) - Resolutions supporting the importance of NATO and its enlargement and support for Baltic NATO membership, were brought up in House committee during the week of September 23<sup>rd</sup>. H. Res. 468, sponsored by Rep. Elton Gallegly (R-CA), and H. Con. Res. 116, sponsored by Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL), were marked up together by the House International Relations committee on September 25<sup>th</sup>. Action on the measures was expected in the days immediately following the mark-up.

H. Res. 468 was introduced on June 27<sup>th</sup> by House International Relations Committee European subcommittee chairman Gallegly. Under Gallegly's leadership, that subcommittee has held a series of hearings this year regarding NATO and the enlargement process. H. Res. 468 affirms "the importance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), supporting continued United States participation in NATO, ensuring that the enlargement of NATO proceeds in a manner consistent with United States interests."

H. Con. Res. 116 specifically supports NATO membership for the three Baltic countries, and was introduced by House Baltic Caucus co-chairman Shimkus in April of 2001. The resolution currently has 54 co-sponsors.

Co-sponsors for H. Res. 468 are: Representatives Doug Bereuter (R-NE), Christopher

Cox (R-CA), Joseph Crowley (D-NY), Jim Davis (D-FL), Alcee Hastings (D-FL), Joel Hefley (R-CO), Earl Hilliard (D-AL), Tom Lantos (D-CA), John Shimkus (R-IL), Bart Stupak (D-MI), Lee Terry (R-NE), Robert Underwood (D-GU), and Robert Wexler (D-FL). The text of both resolutions is available at <http://thomas.loc.gov> by entering bill numbers in the Search field.

Congressman Gallegly spent a week in the three Baltic countries in August. Both he and Congressman Shimkus spoke at a September 4 reception in the United States Capitol for visiting Estonian Prime Minister Siim Kallas. The event was sponsored and organized by the Joint Baltic American National Committee, Inc. (JBANC), the U.S.-Baltic Foundation and the Baltic-American Freedom League. Rep. Gallegly used the occasion to announce his intention to join the House Baltic Caucus, now with 72 members. The other House Baltic Caucus co-chair, Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-OH), recently participated in the opening of the Latvian Occupation Museum exhibit in Madison, Wisconsin.

It is widely expected that Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania will be among countries receiving invitations in Prague to join NATO. Once the 108th Congress convenes in January 2003, it is believed that the Senate will begin debate on ratification of new members of the Alliance. This process may take up much of 2003. ♦

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*THE JOINT BALTIC AMERICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE (JBANC) represents the Estonian American National Council, Inc., the American Latvian Association, Inc. and the Lithuanian American Council, Inc. Contact person is Karl Altau.*

## ***NATO Updates...***

### **Lithuanian program on NATO preparation gains initial approval**

***Baltic News Service***

**A**n inter-institutional NATO integration coordination commission of Lithuania said "yes" to the draft of a national program 2002-2003 on preparation for NATO membership on Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>. The finally-approved document will be delivered to the Alliance by the end-of September.

The program centers on further reform in the national armed forces. It provides data on the involvement of Lithuanian servicemen in international operations in Bosnia and Kosovo, and the intended delegation of servicemen to UN and US military missions in Afghanistan.

The program also emphasized the continuity of Lithuanian commitment to adequately finance the development of the national defense sector.

The political chapter of the program deals broadly with anti-terror measures, cooperation with foreign partners, good relations with neighbors, the content of approved national security strategy, anti-corruption action, restoration of historical justice with respect to Holocaust victims, and protection of national minorities and their full integration into Lithuanian society. The economic chapter furnishes updated information on economic development and government policy.

Lithuania will refer to the program on preparation for NATO as it takes part in the annual cycle of NATO Membership Action Plan. ♦

### ***Washington Post* prophesies admission of seven NATO applicants**

***Baltic News Service***

**T**he US daily, *Washington Post*, published a highly optimistic report on Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> that "after months of intense but virtually unnoticed diplomacy, the NATO alliance is set to invite seven Eastern European countries to be new members, the biggest expansion in its 53-year history".

The paper wrote that invitations would be handed down to Bulgaria, three Baltic states, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

The new enlargement phase reportedly will place an additional 40 million people under NATO's security umbrella; whereas the alliance's territory will widen from the Baltic coast next to Russia as far as the Black Sea on Europe's southeastern flank.

The Washington daily also cited a favorable reaction of the Alliance to the intention of three Bal-

tic countries to send their troops to NATO's air base Manas in Kyrgyzstan.

As for the recent statement of Russian defense leader Sergei Ivanov – that Baltic countries, if they join the Alliance, will have to sign a Cold-war era treaty that limits the size of conventional forces in Europe – US officials said Russia sought to demonstrate its influence, though symbolic, on Baltic membership in NATO.

♦



## Adamkus backs construction of new nuclear reactor in Lithuania

*Baltic News Service*

**P**resident Valdas Adamkus, addressing a NATO-organized seminar "Prospects and alternatives of a new nuclear plant in Ignalina" in Vilnius on Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>, said Lithuania must already start modeling various options of possible construction of a new nuclear reactor and consider the expediency of this after shutting both reactors of Ignalina n-plant.

The state head warned that the country must carry out a thorough study on economic conditions, financial capacity of the state, and offers of potential foreign investors. He mentioned the ongoing worldwide debates on prospects of nuclear energy.

"We have to acknowledge that the experience of European countries and United States shows that nuclear plants are a powerful and reliable source of energy and meet the needs of dynamic economic development," Adamkus said.

He referred to discussions in US, France, and

Japan on building safer and more cost-effective 4th generation nuclear reactors.

"This is a future prospect which Lithuania must take into account. Therefore, the closing of currently operating reactors in Ignalina's n-plant does not deny the possibility of building in the future a new nuclear reactor in Lithuania in line with all up-to-date technical and safety requirements," Adamkus said.

The Lithuanian leader called on experts Lithuania, neighboring states, and other interested nations in the region to join debates on the issue. The Vilnius seminar, he said, would become an important part of this discussion.

Adamkus added that the seminar on nuclear energy prospects represented one more project of NATO-Lithuania cooperation. ♦

## Denmark donates armament to Lithuania's military

*Baltic News Service*

**T**he Lithuanian army has replenished its arsenal with 27 million litas (7.8 million euros) worth of artillery armament and machinery donated by Denmark's armed forces. A solemn handover ceremony took place in Klaipėda seaport on Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>.

Brigadier General Valdas Tutkus, commander of Lithuanian field forces, said the batch in question would supply a full stock to the 1st Artillery Battalion based in Rukla, and the rest would be distributed among units of eastern and western military districts. The commander said that the donated armament would last at least 10 years.

Denmark's donation consists of 130 transport vehicles, cross-country vehicles, trucks, howitzers, and ammunition. In addition, the marine forces will receive communications means, life waist-coats, waterproof wear, and other equipment. The latter package is estimated at 0.25 million litas



(72,463 euros).

The Lithuanian armed forces began formation of the 1st Artillery Battalion under a joint project with Denmark, since up to now Lithuania had not possessed such type of armament. Moreover, Denmark organized training to officers and non-commissioned officers of the said battalion in the Artillery School of Denmark.

The Artillery Battalion of Lithuania will function within the Permanent Readiness Brigade and fulfill tasks jointly with NATO forces under Article 5 of North Atlantic Treaty. The battalion is expected to be ready for this mission in the year 2004.

During the handover ceremony, Defense Minister Linas Linkevičius said Denmark's assistance was highly important for Lithuania's NATO bid, since from now on the new battalion would conform to the Alliance's standards. ♦

Jen Cox

# Coal Miners' Lithuania Still Alive:

## 88th Annual Lithuanian Days Festival

**F**or 88 years now, Lithuanian coal miners and their descendants have gathered every year in August in Pennsylvania's coal mining regions (the Shenandoah area) to enjoy the company of other Lithuanians and to celebrate Lithuanian culture.

This year, the historic Lithuanian Days festival, which takes place in the former capital of Lithuanians in the United States, and which is one of the oldest, one of the most important, and one of the most well-known Lithuanian festivals in America, took place August 10 and 11 at the Schuylkill County Mall in Frackville, Pennsylvania. The festival, organized by the Knights of Lithuania Anthracite Council 144, raised funding for Lithuanian children and their educational needs through Humanitarian Aid to Lithuania and for the Pontifical Lithuanian College in Rome.

This region in eastern Pennsylvania is the largest producer of anthracite coal in the world;



among Lithuanians in Lithuania and in the diaspora, it is recognized for being the pre-WWII capital of American-Lithuanians, an area that has had a tremendous influence on the history of both the United States and Lithuania. Lithuanian Days have long been an important part of the life of this region.

In the past, the Lithuanian Day picnic was held at Lakewood Park in Barnesville, PA, another town in the PA anthracite coal regions. Because of the importance of Lithuanians in the coal regions, Lithuanian Day used to be one of two official annual holidays of the miners' union, the United Mineworkers of America (UMWA) – the other being Labor Day! Lithuanian Day, which was always held on August 15<sup>th</sup>, the Feast of the Assumption, attracted tens of thousands of Lithuanian-Americans and others from the entire eastern part of Pennsylvania. Because of the popularity of the festival, participants had to arrive a

*JEN COX is an active member of the Philadelphia chapter of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. All pictures from Jen Cox with photographic talents of John Usalis of the Ashland News-Item of Ashland, Pennsylvania.*

couple days in advance to sleep on top of picnic tables to reserve a spot for their families.

Recently, with the closing of the coal mines and factories in the region, many of the area's young people have had to leave in search of jobs. As a result of this, the number of participants in the festival has gotten smaller over the past several decades. Nonetheless, the tradition of Lithuanian days, now held for two days over the weekend in the Schuylkill County Mall in Frackville, has continued to thrive and remains a significant event both for the entire region (Lithuanian and not) and for Lithuanian-Americans everywhere.

Hundreds of Lithuanians and members of other ethnic groups from across the coal regions gather to take part in the festival. In addition, Lithuanians with origins in the area return from all over Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Florida, even from California and elsewhere to carry on the tradition and culture of their childhoods, to speak their native language – Lithuanian, and to share stories and memories of growing up Lithuanian in coal country eighty, sixty, thirty years ago.

In Pennsylvania's mountains, Lithuanian identity has remained strong – even among the great grandchildren of the first wave of immigrants to the United States, whose families have been in America more than 100 years! Driving through the region during Lithuanian Days, it is not rare to see Lithuanian flags, tri-colored balloons or streamers hanging outside of local residents' houses or along roadsides.

During today's Lithuanian Days, Lithuanian culture and history is still the centerpiece of the festival. Homemade Lithuanian dishes, including both ones brought from Lithuania and some native to this region, are sold, and an exhibit is set up featuring Lithuanian folk art, books, and videos about Lithuania, and examples of Pennsylvanian Lithuanian culture and history.

Local Lithuanian-Americans demonstrate and teach Lithuanian folk art and crafts such as *margučiai* (traditional Easter Egg painting), *ši-  
audimukai* (straw ornaments), and woodwork.

One member of the local community, Joseph Dereskevich, is a woodworker whose work brings to mind the folkloric wood sculptures that enchant Lithuania's country roads and fields.

The weekend's program includes performances by a local children's Lithuanian folk dance group, Gintaras; by Žilvinas, a folk dance group from Philadelphia; and by the Musical McDonalds, a band formed by a local (partly Lithuanian) family. A highlight was the sing-along, led by Mary Koons and Anne Sikora, active members of the local Knights of Lithuania. The two women shared the songs with which they were raised (and which they later sang in the countywide Lithuanian choir), including folk songs brought from the old country and Lithuanian coal miners' songs native to the coal regions (and sung in Lithuanian). These songs were about Lithuania and the heartache of losing the homeland and songs about the conditions, life, and history of Lithuanians in Pennsylvania's mountains. As they sang, along with singer Michael Dura and accordionist Lynne Cox of Philadelphia, participants in the festival joined in to sing again the songs of their childhood. As oft repeated among Lithuanians everywhere, "There was always singing," is the phrase many here use to describe their upbringing.

It is an incredible thing to hear songs and conversations in Lithuanian among people whose families have been in America for more than 100 years. Just as impressive is the existence of a children's folk dance group, Gintaras, which performs every year at Lithuanian Days and at other events in the coal regions. The group is made up of the great grandchildren of first wave Lithuanian immigrants, as well as the descendants of other Eastern European immigrants. The participation of children of other backgrounds reflects the extent of Lithuanian influence on all ethnic groups in this region.

This August festival is an important part of the life of this little Lithuanian world, which has existed for four, even five generations



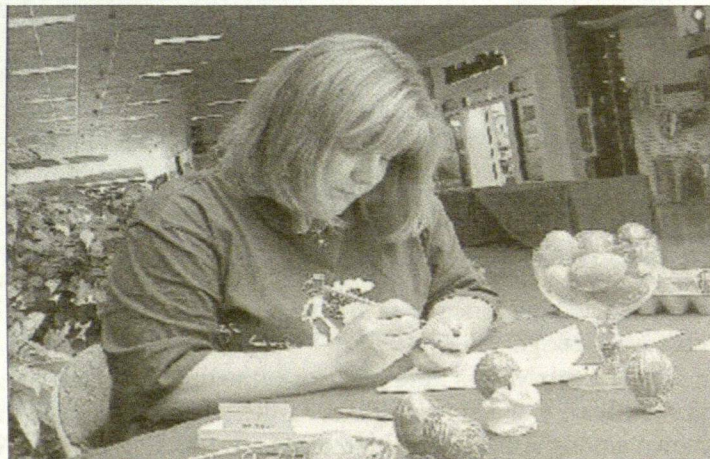
among America's first Lithuanians. First wave Lithuanian immigrants in Pennsylvania helped to build the United States – without the coal mined with the blood and sweat of generations of miners, this country wouldn't exist. At the same time, more than a century ago, immigrant miners created a small Lithuania in which the Lithuanian language and Lithuanian songs still echo to this day.

In this, the Lithuanian capital of America (and in fact of all the diaspora), the fight for Lithuania's freedom, for cultural sustenance, and for the rescue of the Lithuanian language during the years of czarist rule, was of tremendous historical significance. Since then, residents of the coal regions have continued to maintain strong support for Lithuania's struggles to be free and to thrive.

Throughout the past century and up until now, in Pennsylvania's mountains there existed and, thanks to several organizations of descendants of the first wave, continues to exist that small Lithuania – still singing Lithuanian songs, upholding the history and significance of Lithuanian coalminers both to the United States and to Lithuania, organizing the annual Lithuanian Days festival, creating Lithuanian folk art, maintaining relationships with Lithuania, and instilling a love of Lithuania in the hearts and souls of the grandchildren, great grandchildren, and even great great-grandchildren of America's first Lithuanians.

A visitor to Shenandoah,

## *Scenes from the Festival*



Frackville, and any of dozens of other cities and villages in the region has the opportunity to visit a museum of the history and culture of local Lithuanians, to attend mass in several Lithuanian parishes, to watch a children's dance group practice, to hear and sing Lithuanian songs at mass and at locals' homes, to meet a woman who makes Lithuanian folk dolls, to see another who teaches the art of making "margučiai" (Lithuanian painted Easter eggs), to speak with area Lithuanians whose parents witnessed and fled czarist massacres, and to visit cemeteries filled with gravestones written in Lithuanian. These customs have been upheld.

This Lithuanian flame has been burning for more than 100 years, among five generations, most born in the United States, many not speaking Lithuanian. It is worth also mentioning that the footprints and significance of Lithuanians in this region are celebrated not only by local Lithuanians, but in the history and life of the county as a whole. In coal country, the important role of Lithuanians in both coal-miners' history and American history is well appreciated. Aside from Lithuania and Chicago, it could well be that the Lithuanian influence here historically is the strongest and most well recognized.

Unfortunately, this little piece of Lithuania, its significance and current life is hardly known among America's Lithuanians.

So I end with three challenges to Lithuanians in America, of all immigration waves:

First, to take interest in and come to know this piece of the history of the Lithuanian diaspora and to become familiar with the region's Lithuanians and their life. In doing this, we will enrich our understanding of the history of all Lithuanians, and we will have the opportunity to learn perhaps valuable lessons about cultural sustenance. Imagine what Lithuanians who have upheld Lithuanian identity and culture and instilled it in their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren over more than 100 years have to teach us!

Second, a challenge to all of us – to follow

the example of Lithuanian coal miners and their descendants and keep Lithuania alive for 100 years, through four, five generations in America!

Third, let us support one way or another the Lithuanians of Pennsylvania coal country in their efforts to keep the "coal miners' Lithuania" alive. She is a part of all of our living inheritance, guarded for more than a hundred years by Lithuanian coal miners and their families who played a key role in Lithuania's history when it was most needed, and who created and continue to hold onto one of the strongest and longest active communities in the diaspora to this day.

Our brothers and sisters have held this little Lithuanian world in America together against all odds—against KGB infiltration and repression here in the U.S. during Soviet years, against deadly working conditions in the mines, massacres of miners by mine owners and their government allies, the loss of the region's economy and of large numbers of population, impoverishment, and the passage of time and distance in family ties to the old country.

Lithuanian life in this region, both past and present, is one of the keys to the life and history of Lithuanians, both in America and Lithuania. The loss of this culture would be a loss to the whole "tauta," the whole Lithuanian nation. We in other Lithuanian communities around the country have an opportunity, and, I believe, a responsibility to help to keep this little Lithuania alive.

Anyone interested in contacting Lithuanians in the coal regions or in visiting the area, can contact the president of the Knights of Lithuania Anthracite Council No. 144, Anne Wargo (Akliz@aol.com) or look at the web page of the Knights of Lithuania (Lietuvos Vyčiai) – link to Anthracite Council 144. To visit the museum of Lithuanian history and culture in the coal regions, located next to Annunciation Roman Catholic Church in Frackville, PA, call Eleanor Vaicaitis at (570) 874-1695. ♦

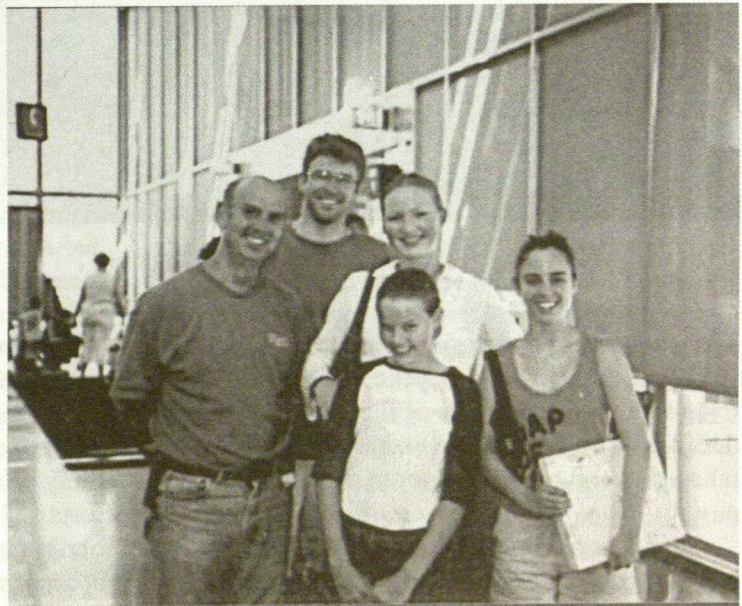
Ramunė Kubilius

# A Yearlong Lesson

**E**rnesta Berontaitė is a student at the Kaunas Jesuit High School in Lithuania. This past academic year (2001/2002), she had the opportunity to participate in a yearlong exchange program that enabled her to attend classes at the St. Ignatius College Preparatory High School in Chicago.

She lived with a Hispanic American family during the school year, and when school was out, stayed through August with a Lithuanian-American family in the suburbs of Chicago. Even though Ernesta speaks and writes English fluently, she was a bit pressed for time after the school year ended, and so here are some translated excerpts from an article Ernesta wrote before returning to Lithuania, that were published in the August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2002 issue of the Lithuanian-American daily newspaper, *DRAUGAS*. Her article was entitled “Metus trukusi pamoka” – “A Yearlong Lesson”.

**I** can still hear the voice of my Kaunas Jesuit High School director, Rev. Gintaras Vitkus, SJ, offering me the opportunity to go to Chicago and attend 11th grade (junior year) classes as a student at St. Ignatius College



Ernesta Berontaitė (in the middle) leaving the U.S. surrounded by her host family and friends.

Prep.

The offer seemed unreal – I would study at one of Chicago’s best high schools, I would live with a family chosen for me by the school, I would become familiar with American culture, I would see the world, etc. Along with these pleasant thoughts came some adjunct worries – would I, as a 17 year old, be able to spend an entire year in a strange country, far from my homeland, my family and friends, speaking a foreign language, and even getting used to and adapting to life with a strange family?

I had a number of doubts, but they were

*RAMUNE KUBILIUS* works with Grasilda Reinys and Tadas Kulbis on putting out the word about the Baltic Jesuit Advancement Program. She is also a frequent contributor to *Bridges* on many other subjects. All pictures from Grasilda Reinys.



*The Kaunas Jesuit School and St. Francis Xavier Church.*

over my essays and written homework, and even offered suggestions here and there for things to change.

During the first few days, school was psychologically difficult for me. All the same, this didn't surprise me, because when I left, I mentally prepared for this. As time went on, I had the opportunity to find some sympathetic friends, to more closely get to know my teachers, and to become used to the large number of students. I felt that the teachers regularly gave me special attention, since they knew about the challenging

overwhelmed by my desire to learn, absorb something new and never yet experienced. Even though this was one of the most difficult decisions I've ever had to make, I decided to take a risk and open the door to a new opportunity.

The view of Chicago I saw through the airplane windows upon our slow approach to O'Hare Airport, told me that I had made a good decision. It is one thing to see scenes of Chicago in a book, and quite something different to become familiar with the city at personal eye level. My new Mexican (American) host family could not stop laughing at me when I would walk with them in the city, staring up to see where the high rise buildings end.

I am glad that I ended up with such a pleasant and warm family. I became used to them even during the first few days. I felt I had a new sister in Cristina and a second brother in Andres (since my first and real brother Erikas remained in Kaunas).

With pleasure, they familiarized me with the highlights of Chicago, told me of its history, and listened as I told them about Lithuania. They always asked how I was doing in school, what marks I got, what I didn't understand. They were not too busy to run an eye

situation in which I found myself. If I didn't seem to understand, they never refused to offer extra instructions.

After some time, many mentioned that they felt my progress and they greatly valued my efforts. That happened about two to three months after the start of the school year. At that time, my marks got better, and later, I felt I truly was getting used to my new environment. I felt that my conversational English and reading comprehension got better. I was happy that I had the opportunity to learn a fourth language – Spanish. It was very useful for me that in my host family I was able to practice speaking with the grandmother who didn't speak or understand English much.

Other subjects that I studied familiarized me with American culture. I took an American History class, which was very interesting and one of my favorites. I took an American Literature class. I especially liked American poetry. Books I liked included N. Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, and M. Twain's adventure novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

I enjoyed the school-organized retreats that took place over a period of several days. They made me feel closer to others, as they felt to me, and also I felt closer to God.

If someone were to ask me what event or trip made the biggest impression on me, without thinking twice, I would say it was the volunteers' trip to West Virginia during Spring Break. Along with seven ninth graders and two teachers, we went to help those less fortunate both spiritually (by being with them, we showed we cared), and physically (we helped with building projects). The generations became very close, we prayed together, and the impoverished surroundings did not cause any concern. This trip, even after it was over, long remained in my heart and mind and that of my fellow students.

Many of my friends were interested in Lithuanian culture. There probably wasn't one who neglected to ask about my country, what young people are like, what is the difference between St. Ignatius and my school in Kaunas, etc. In three classes, instead of the scheduled lessons, I was asked to talk about Lithuania and answer my classmates' questions. I was very impressed with the firm stand students took on various issues, and with their friendliness.

The hardest thing for me was to say goodbye on the last day of classes. At that time, I understood how fast the school year had flown.

I was very happy to have had the opportunity to get to know some young Lithuanian Americans, both those who attended the school and elsewhere... I was impressed with the Kūčios (Christmas Eve) community dinner held at the Lithuanian Youth Center in Chicago.

I had the opportunity to go to both the winter seminar and the summer camp of the Lithuanian Catholic Youth Association Ateitis, in Camp Dainava (near Manchester, MI). It was pleasant after a long period of speaking only English to end up in a Lithuanian-speaking environment. I felt that not only did I teach them a few things, but that I also learned a lot from them.

I await next summer when many of them will come to Lithuania (for the Song Festival, and the anniversary of the coronation of Min-

daugas).

Even though I landed in a new school, in a new city, the educational system was not totally unfamiliar to me. The most obvious similarity is the values the schools want to instill – the analysis of Jesuit history, the way classes are conducted, Holy Mass, and religious retreats. I was very impressed that St. Ignatius College Prep deems it important that teachers spend quite a bit of time with individual students, even though the school is about twice the size of my school in Kaunas. I was very surprised to learn that each student is assigned an advisor / consultant. I also admired the fact that the school informs parents about their children's grades, sending a report to parents every month, along with teachers' comments.

I very much liked the fact that SICP paid attention not only to a student's psychological well-being, but also to his or her physical well-being as well. Almost every student participates in some sport before or after school, and during general student gatherings, the school congratulates each team on its wins.

I believe that my school in Kaunas is of a high caliber, if one compares it to schools around the world. Students are encouraged to participate in after-school activities: debate, sports (but unfortunately, athletics have not yet gained popularity), opportunities to become closer to other students, and to God. I see that my school in Kaunas is in a constant state of betterment and evolution.

For the past several years, my school has offered students the opportunity to select their own achievement levels in each of their courses. The school has also sought to improve its rules of behavior and other regulations. This year, a new system of demerit cards will be introduced, something that is already popular in American schools.

Generally speaking, I can say that my school in Kaunas is growing and going upward. We can all hope that one day, not only will students from Lithuania go to study in America, but that American students will agree to come study for an academic year in Lithua-

nia. I know that the Baltic Jesuit Advancement Fund has an important role in supporting Lithuania's Jesuit schools.

I very much appreciate the opportunity it gave me to study for a year in the United States. This past year in America was a year-long lesson in life. This lesson consisted not only of the things I learned at St. Ignatius, but it was also something I learned from every situation in which I found myself – every event, every person I met.

As soon as I return to Lithuania, the first people I will thank will be my school's director, Rev. G. Vikus, SJ and the provincial of the Lithuanian and Latvian Jesuits, Rev. A. Saulaitis, SJ. They provided me with a tremendous opportunity to see a bit of the world, to experience another culture, other traditions, and most importantly- to have the opportunity to further my knowledge base, and to gain new insights and understanding.

I think the exchange program is extremely important and necessary for high school students. I hope that this program has a positive

and maturing effect on Lithuania's young people. They are Lithuania's future. I am very proud to have had the opportunity to be one of the lucky ones to experience it all.

Thanks go to Chicago Jesuit office coordinator, Grasilda Reinyš, and Tadas Kulbis of the Baltic Jesuit Advancement Program for their help in preparing this translation. In her article, they were among the persons whom Ernesta named as being her guides and friends this past year.


For more information, read previous articles in BRIDGES on the Jesuit high schools in Lithuania. Also, more comprehensive information on the Jesuits and Jesuit high schools in Lithuania, and about the Baltic Jesuit Advancement Project can be found by visiting the website: <http://balticjesuits.org/Plan.htm> or contacting: Lithuanian Jesuits Fathers - Baltic Project Baltic Jesuit Advancement Office, 2345 West 56th Street, Chicago, IL 60636, USA. ♦



*Rev. Gintaras Vitkus, SJ., with students of the Kaunas Jesuit School.*

Jeanne Dorr

# Catching up with two Jurgitas



Over the years I have written many articles for Bridges, but the article written about four years ago still evokes question after question. I wrote the story of two girls named Jurgita and how they were the same but also very different. I would like to write an update about the girls. Because we are always receiving new subscriptions, let me explain who the Jurgitas are and why they quickly became favorites of the Bridges readers as well as two of my favorites.

I met Jurgita N. about six years ago, and on a later trip to Lithuania I met Jurgita K. They share a name. They are both raised by their grandmothers who love them and are fiercely proud of them. They both live on farms; and both have lost a parent through death.

Both girls are now in their early twenties, and both are still a part of Lithuanian Orphan Care. For those who are familiar with our organization, you know that support stops at age eighteen, but both girls have sponsors who asked to continue their support beyond the cut-off age. This is what they share, but their differences are as wide and as deep as an ocean.

Jurgita N. is a blonde with a pixie haircut. She lives with her grandmother in a spotless

farmhouse. They have a cow, some chickens, and a pig. Jurgita's hands are calloused, red, and chapped from work. However, this is not unusual for women who work on a farm.

What is unusual is that Jurgita's grandmother does not allow her to go further than the fence. This is for her own protection because Jurgita has the mind of a five-year-old. She is so sweet and so trusting that she will go off with anyone.

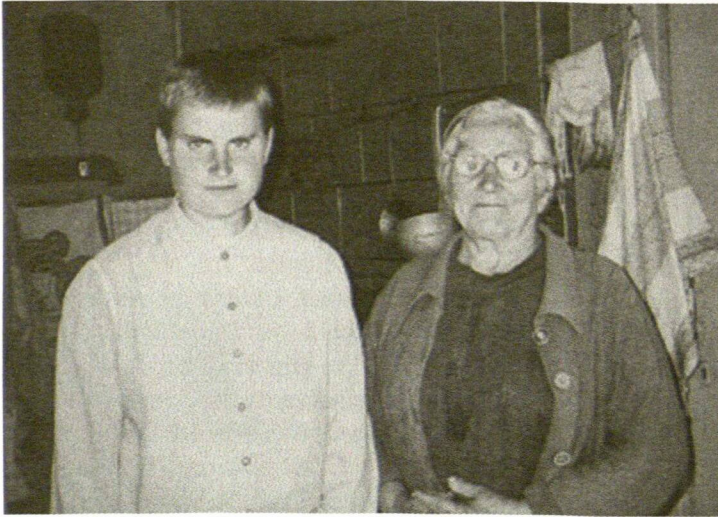
I have met with Jurgita and her grandmother on all my trips to Lithuania, because I have grown to love them both. There are never any complaints that life has not treated them fairly. The grandmother lost her daughter to death and has raised Jurgita almost from her birth. Her father has another family and has almost no contact with his daughter although he lives not far away. I doubt that Jurgita would even recognize him.

As Jurgita's grandmother was raising her, there were not too many options for her to select. She could keep her at home or institutionalize her. The latter was never an option in the eyes of her grandmother. This was her granddaughter, and she would raise her. Jurgita has had no schooling and is unable to even write her name.

Regina Svoba of Countryside Children and

---

*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.*



*Jurgita N. and her grandmother.*

I left Vilnius quite early in the morning for our visit to Jurgita. The sky was overcast and rain was a very real threat. The trip would take us more than two hours, and we spent the time chatting about many of “our” Orphan Care children. As we continued on our trip, the rain began to fall and then turned to a pelting rain with very little visibility.

As many times as we have visited here, we still have to stop at the local town hall to find out the exact dirt road to turn. There are no road signs, and a mistake could cost a lot of time as well as frayed nerves. We got soaked as we ran into the building. By the time we got back to the car, we had to change our sweaters as we were soaked to the skin.

As we continued on our way, although it is hard to believe, the rain came down even harder. We opened the gate and pulled into the yard where we encountered more mud.

Before we had left Vilnius, I remembered that Jurgita loves sweets, so I bought her a box of chocolates. Normally, I would run into a store, grab the first box of candy I saw, and go on my way. This purchase took me quite a while because I wasn’t as concerned about the candy as I was the box. It had to be a pretty box; one that Jurgita would cherish. After eliminating about a half dozen boxes, I found

the right one. It was very colorful and had scenes of Vilnius all over it. I don’t even want to imagine what the sales clerk thought about this purchase, and the time it took.

As we got out of the car in the torrential rain, I had to start routing through the trunk for the candy. Regina also brought candy bars for Jurgita, so were both soaked while rummaging through the trunk. Jurgita has no phone, so she didn’t know we were coming, but she ran to the window when the car pulled into the yard. They get very few visitors, especially someone with a car. Before I knew what had happened, she bounded down the steps

while screaming, “My aunt has come to visit me, my aunt has come to visit me.”

Jurgita grabbed me around the waist, I lost my balance, and we both ended up sitting in a mud puddle. She was absolutely beside herself with joy. At this point, her grandmother also came running out of the house with tears streaming down her wrinkled cheeks. It was quite a reunion as Regina and the grandmother hugged each other while Jurgita and I sat in the mud. It was well worth it!

As we entered the house, the grandmother insisted on fixing us a meal. We had already eaten, and it was very hard to turn down that wonderful Lithuanian hospitality. We sat in the little kitchen, since the other small room is a bedroom.

I handed Jurgita’s grandmother the gift from her sponsors. This couple are dear friends of mine who always ask me to take a gift to help Jurgita and her grandmother. I had crisp new bills, and the grandmother kept saying over and over that she could not believe these people could be so good to her. She told me how the help from Orphan Care makes such a difference in their lives; especially knowing that someone cares about them.

Jurgita was permitted to hold the American money and to look at it. She held it almost



reverently and seemed to understand that this was a wonderful gift. She asked if it was “real” money, and at that point her grandmother warned her that she must not tell anyone about the gift. She was truly scared that someone might rob them if they knew there was money in the house. Jurgita solemnly promised not to tell anyone.

Jurgita began to get fidgety about the candy. She had eaten a candy bar, but the box of candy was still on the table. She turned the box around several times marveling at the pictures and asking me to tell her about the places. She asked me if she could open the box, but I told her it was her grandmother’s decision. She accepted the “not yet” response and continued to look at the pictures. Suddenly she told us she couldn’t see the pictures; they were getting fuzzy. Her grandmother explained that Jurgita was slowly losing her sight. She had her to several doctors, but they couldn’t find the problem.

Jurgita was becoming frightened because she didn’t know what was happening, and we had no explanation. Her grandmother will continue to seek help, but she is also becoming discouraged.

After a few moments she looked at her grandmother and again, with pleading eyes, asked if she could open the box. This time she received a positive answer, and she asked for help opening it. She didn’t want to spoil her precious box. As I looked around the kitchen, I thought about my own with central heat, refrigerator, microwave, and dozens of gadgets I don’t need. How hard it is for them, but there was never a complaint. The only request the grandmother had was that God gives her the health to keep Jurgita with her.

As we were leaving, the sun started to shine. There were hugs and kisses all over, in



fact, several times over and over again. As we pulled out of the yard, Jurgita and her grandmother stood with their arms around each waving to us.

*Jurgita K.* is a tall, dark young lady. She, her grandparents, and her aunt live on a farm near the Latvian border. Jurgita’s father is dead, and her grandmother raised her almost from birth. Her mother has another family, and although Jurgita sees her, she is still her grandmother’s daughter.

The vast difference between Jurgita N. and Jurgita K. is that the latter is a very studious young lady. She will be starting her third year at Vilnius University. Her grades are so high that she does not pay for her education. She does have to pay for her room, her food, and transportation back to the farm. She loves Vilnius with all its culture, but at the same time worries so much about her grandparents.

Her grandfather is bedridden, and her grandmother and aunt have to tend the farm. Two years ago her grandmother was on the back of a hay wagon when the horse bolted. She was thrown from the wagon and suffered serious injuries. It was Jurgita’s first year in Vilnius, and she almost had a nervous break-

down worrying about her beloved grandmother. In fact, she had to be hospitalized.

Jurgita actually has two sponsors. One has continued her support since she was in high school. The other provides her with a student stipend. Once again, one sponsor asked me to take a gift to her. And once again, I wanted Jurgita to have something pretty from me. Just as I agonized over the box of candy in Vilnius, it also took several shopping trips to the local mall to find the right gift. I finally found it; a bracelet that my young neighbors assured me was the "in" kind of gift.

I didn't have time to travel so far to meet Jurgita and her grandmother. Arrangements are always difficult, as they don't have a phone. Jurgita borrowed a mobile phone, and we finally connected. She told me she would come to my cousin's house in Kaunas, but grandmother would be devastated because we couldn't meet. I knew she was far away, three and a half hours by bus.

On the appointed day, the phone rang around eleven in the morning. Jurgita was phoning from a phone booth not far away. Was it too early for her to come to visit? I threw down the phone and ran to the balcony of the apartment building to wait for her, and to my utter amazement I saw her rounding the corner with her grandmother. I couldn't believe my eyes.

I ran out of the apartment, and we met about half way down the five flights of steps. Grandmother had her arms filled with cloth shopping bags, and as soon as we got back into the apartment she began to share her gifts.

My cousin, who had already started to prepare lunch, was the lucky recipient. As grandmother found her way into the kitchen, she began to open her bags. Everything was fresh from the farm. There was honey from their bees, all kinds of fresh vegetables, bacon, and smoked sausage. For me, there was a beautiful bouquet of flowers from their garden.

Jurgita, grandmother, and I all squeezed together on the small sofa with everyone talking at once. Two years is a long time between vis-

its, and although Jurgita and I correspond, we still had a lot of catching up to do. Jurgita told me how much she enjoyed life in the big city. It seems she found every free concert, free exhibition, and anything else that was free in the city of Vilnius. She did, however, spend many long hours studying, and her hard work paid off. She did not have to pay any tuition. Her major expenses were her room that she shared with three other girls, her food that she cooked in a common kitchen, and her expenses to travel home when she had the opportunity.

Every other week her grandmother packed food for her from the farm, put it on a bus to Vilnius, and paid the driver approximately \$1.25 to bring it to city. Because there is no phone, Jurgita and her grandmother have a pre-arranged schedule, and Jurgita knows exactly what bus to meet.

We spoke of the hardships of running the farm, and the terrible toll Jurgita's grandfather's illness has taken on the family. I told Jurgita's grandmother how proud I was of her that in spite of the problems, she continued to encourage her granddaughter to study in Vilnius.

Tears welled up in her eyes as she grabbed Jurgita's hand and told me that this precious granddaughter is the only one in the family who even finished high school. What a tremendous accomplishment when the odds are against you. They both told me how none of this would be possible without the help of Jurgita's both sponsors. The cost of Jurgita's grandfather's medicine is about equal to their pensions, so that even the \$1.25 to send the food to Vilnius would be prohibitive.

We were both sure of one thing; Jurgita would make it despite everything and she would succeed because two strangers took a chance on her. They are no longer strangers because they correspond and have met each other in Vilnius. Both sponsors agree Jurgita is well worth the time and money they have given to her. She is one of the bright stars in Lithuania's future. She and grandmother were beside themselves as they opened the envelope

from Jurgita's sponsor.

I gave her the bracelet I bought for her, and she was thrilled with it. She kept touching it again and again. It wasn't expensive, but it is one of the few "pretty" things she owns. She proudly pointed to the watch on her arm that I bought her as a graduation gift two years ago.

While all this was going on, another Orphan Care family arrived from quite a distance, but that is also another story that I will cover at another time. They also brought bags of food from their farm. For those of you familiar with the old soviet style apartments, you know how little room there is in them. My cousin, who was cooking lunch, never blinked with all these people arriving; she just kept adding to the pot.

We squeezed, and I do mean squeezed, around the small table with Jurgita holding the other child on her lap. I never saw two people bond so quickly; they went from strangers to best friends, although Rasa is only ten and very shy. The table was laden with food, and I wish I could tell you the warm feelings around that table. It wasn't the food that mattered; it was these wonderful people.

Grandmother remembered she had her first and only vacation the day she visited me in Prienai two years before, and now she was having her second vacation. Someone was waiting on her and taking care of her. She figured this was how royalty lived. I looked at her work worn hands and realized that if anyone deserved a vacation, she did, even if it was only for a few hours.

The time passed much too quickly, and they all had far to travel. Grandmother and Jurgita were traveling half the distance by bus and staying with a married daughter. It was too late for them to get a connecting bus to their village. Before Jurgita left, she told me she that she never forgets the help she receives through Lithuanian Orphan Care. She has two more years to study, and as soon as she helps her grandmother, her next task will be to help another child start up the ladder out of poverty. She hopes to work for a master's degree in

journalism and thanks to her sponsors she will succeed.

After many hugs, kisses, and tears we finally said good-bye. God willing, Grandmother will have another vacation in two years when we meet again.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the three sponsors involved with these two young women. They have made such a tremendous difference in the lives of both Jurgitas and their grandmothers.

*"Some people come into our lives and leave quickly, but some stay awhile and leave footprints in our souls and we are never, ever the same."*

—Author Unknown

Thank you for allowing me to share my memories with you.

The cost to sponsor a child is \$150 a year. If you cannot sponsor a child, ANY gift is gratefully appreciated. Please don't forget the children's Christmas gifts donation. They need your help.

Tax deductible gifts may be sent to:  
Lithuanian Orphan Care  
2711 W. 71<sup>st</sup> St.  
Chicago, IL. 60629 ♦

# C U R R E N T     E V E N T S

## Remembering summer 2002...

**M**any of us remember the fall school assignment requiring us to write "What I did during my summer vacation". Though those days are long past, the post-Labor Day weeks often bring back memories.

The summer of 2002 certainly brought the usual rounds of young Lithuanian Americans in summer jobs, traveling, attending summer camps as campers or counselors. Here are a few other endeavors undertaken. The Lithuanian language newspaper, "Draugas" featured articles on these various outings.

### \* **Basketball**

The "Lituanica" basketball club in Chicago began an exchange program a few years ago to encourage friendships and understanding among high schoolers in the Chicago area and Lithuania. Members of the Šarūnas Marčiūlionis School in Vilnius came to Chicago to tour the city, play friendly games against local basketball players (of Lithuanian descent and not), and to attend a few social gatherings.

In June, a contingent of a few dozen Chicago area basketball team members and some of their families went to Lithuania. The efforts were largely spearheaded by coach Dr. Siliūnas in Chicago (with help from his wife and family). In Lithuania, the young players had the opportunity to play against teams from the Marčiūlionis School (founded by the former NBA star and run by his sister and her husband), the Arvidas Sabonis School, and others.

### \* **Pilgrimage**

About a dozen members of the Lithuanian Catholic Youth Association, Ateitis, from Chicago, Cleveland, Boston, Philadelphia, and New Mexico traveled to Toronto, Ontario, Canada in late July to attend the World Youth Days. In Toronto, they had the opportunity to meet up with young Canadian Lithuanians as well as a contingent of over 125 young Catholics from Lithuania.

The pilgrims attended the various vigils and processions throughout the city, went to Mass at the local parishes (in the case of the Lithuanians—the Resurrection Parish in Toronto), and took part at the Mass celebrated by the Pope and numerous cardinals, bishops, and priests from around the world. The combined groups of Lithuanians also visited Niagara Falls, and Canadian Lithuanian parishes in Hamilton and Mississauga, ONT.

### \* **Humanitarian Work**

A number of young Lithuanian Americans had the opportunity to travel to Lithuania with their families or alone. A number of young people and adults traveled to Lithuania to help with humanitarian-aid based projects.

Two high schoolers from the Chicago area volunteered for a month at the day center in Marijampolė, Lithuania. There, they helped the sisters of the Immaculate Conception order and volunteers by working and playing with children from disadvantaged families. The young ladies volunteered in coordination with the Chicago-based Child's Gate to Learning (<http://www.childgate.org>), which provides support to about a half dozen day centers throughout Lithuania. The Chicago group supports these already established centers that operate throughout the year.

Recent statistics have shown that all too many of Lithuania's children are growing up in asocial families, and as many as 5000 did not attend school last year. Centers such as the one in Marijampolė work with young children whose home lives are less than optimal, without positive adult guidance. At these centers, they receive help on homework, school supplies, and participate in games and activities designed to help build self-esteem and character, and providing incentives to encourage children to refrain from alcohol, smoking, and other addictive behaviors.

### \* Mark Your Calendars:

#### What's happening in 2003?

Celebrations are being scheduled in Lithuania to mark the anniversary of the coronation of King Mindaugas, who ruled Lithuania from 1238-1263. (The last visit to the Washington, D. C. -based Lithuanian Embassy web site, <http://www.ltembassyus.org/culture/welcome.htm>, did not yield any specific information yet.) Other celebrations and events will also take place in Lithuania, the summer of 2003.

#### \* The III World Lithuanian Song Festival

...in Vilnius, Lithuania, July 4-7 information is available for dancing groups from outside Lithuania that wish to participate. Contact Audra Lintakienė at the following address for up-to-date specifics:  
3603 Rosemead Ave.  
Brookfield, IL 60513 USA  
708-387-9180  
[lintakas@aol.com](mailto:lintakas@aol.com)

Information for choirs from outside Lithuania that wish to participate should contact Darius Polikaitis at:

7318 Ticonderoga Rd.  
Downers Grove, IL 60516 USA  
630-241-0074  
[ldpolikaitis@att.net](mailto:ldpolikaitis@att.net)

#### \* The XIth World Lithuanian Community Congress

...from July 7 – 11 scheduled to be held in Lithuania has information on web site: <http://pasauliolb.org/> (primarily in Lithuanian).  
Contact: Vytautas Kamantas [kamantas@aol.com](mailto:kamantas@aol.com).

#### \* The XIth World Lithuanian Youth Congress "Lithuania / Poland (Punskas-Seinai) / Germany"

...is scheduled for July 11-27. The World Lithuanian Youth Association web site is: <http://www.pljs.org/>. Lithuanian-Americans who wish to get more information can visit the Lithuanian American Youth Associate site: <http://www.javljs.com/english/javljs/index.php>. ♦

—*Ramunė Kubilius*

## Books with a distinct Lithuanian spin

It's always a pleasure to come across books whose authors have Lithuanian sounding names. Here are a few recent English language books published outside of Lithuania.

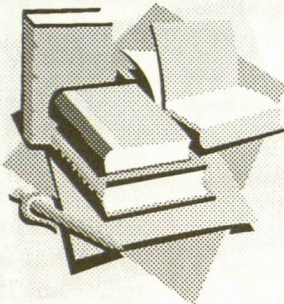
#### ***The Process of Reconciliation Within the Lithuanian Catholic Church: After the Soviet Occupation***

Rimantas Gudelis

Foreword: Robert J. Schreiter, C.P.P. S.  
Chicago, IL: *Lithuanian Research and Studies Center*, 2002

(Work from doctoral dissertation at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago)

From the "Foreword": "What has become evident in situation after situation around the world too is that skills for leadership in a time of resis-



tance do not always translate well into a new situation of reconstruction..."

This book by Father Rimantas Gudelis is a contribution to that work of reconstruction of the Catholic Church in Lithuania. Drawing upon his own experience in the concluding years of Communist rule in Lithuania, and upon the

experience of churches in other countries struggling with similar issues of remembering, healing, and reconciliation, he offers a number of things which will be valuable for the Church in Lithuania as it struggles to move forward..."

#### ***European Prehistory: A Survey***

Edited by Šarūnas Milišauskas

Series: *Interdisciplinary Contributions to Archaeology*

**New York: Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers 2002**

From the "Introduction": "The purpose of this book is four-fold: to introduce English-speaking students and scholars to some of the outstanding archaeological research that has been done in Europe in recent years; to integrate this research into an anthropological frame of reference; to address episodes of cultural change such as the transition to farming; the origin of complex societies, and the origin of urbanism, and to provide an overview of European prehistory from the earliest appearance of humans to the rise of the Roman empire..."

The Editor, who is at State University of Buffalo at New York, in his dedication, wrote: "To Rimutė Rimantienė, the doyenne of Lithuanian archaeologists, who with her classmate, Marija Gimbutas, made European archaeology much richer."

—**Ramunė Kubilius**

**Lithuania: The Bradt Travel Guide. Third Edition**

**Gordon McLachlan.**

**USA: Globe Pequot, Inc., 2002.**

One of the most recent travel guides to Lithuania was published in the spring of 2002. It is *Lithuania* by Gordon McLachlan, and is part of the immense Bradt Travel Guide series.

The first third of the book is devoted to general information about the country including a long essay about its history and shorter essays about the people, culture, and practical information needed by travelers.

The second third of the book covers Vilnius County in considerable detail. The final third covers Dzukija, Aukštaitija, and Samogitia, with longer portions devoted to Kaunas County and the Baltic Coast.

A very useful if brief appendix covers basic conversational language. A wonderful addition is a substantial annotated reading list, which goes beyond travel and guidebooks to cover history and politics, poetry and fiction, memoirs and biography, folklore, photography, culture, and useful websites for travelers.

The author, a full-time travel writer, was born

in Edinburgh but has had a long professional association with the southern Baltic region. He writes about Lithuania with affection and great regard for its long history and great beauty. American readers will surely notice that he writes with a British accent – measurements are metric and many terms are British English formulations, e.g., motorways. However, seasoned travelers will not find this distracting. McLachlan writes with authority and confidence even in parts devoted to small attractions, such as the Botanical Garden in Kaunas. It is obvious that he has walked the streets and byways, which he describes in such careful detail, since the walking tours are accurate and enjoyable.

Visitors to Lithuania will quickly learn to depend on the crisp write-ups for hotels, restaurants and attractions. McLachlan does not slight the budget traveler and includes good information about buses and other thrifty ideas. For example in his general chapter about costs, he notes, "Indeed, if visiting, say, the Aukštaitija or Samogitia National Parks, it is all but impossible (unless hiring a car) to incur travel expenses in excess of 100 Lt a day, and easy enough to spend half that or less".

At the other end of the expenses scale, McLachlan notes that in Vilnius there are two classes of accommodation for the deluxe traveler – exclusive (two hotels) and luxury (20 hotels). There are 13 hotels for the mid-range traveler and just five hotels for the budget crowd.

It is hard to imagine a better investment than to spend \$18.95 to acquire this thorough and comprehensive guide to this small but beloved country, which many of our readers call home. In addition to Lithuania, Bradt travel books cover more than 75 destinations and focus on detailed, well-written guides to unusual destinations while maintaining the company's original ethos of low-impact travel. Even armchair travelers will soon rate *Lithuania* among their most favorite titles.

—**Barbara Conaty**

**(This book review originally appeared in the ŠAUKLYS newsletter of the Washington Lithuanian-American Community, No. 23, Summer 2002.)**

# LITHUANIA 2002

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