

ajc

bridges



President of Lithuania
Valdas Adamkus and
his first lady
Alma Adamkus

september 2004

Editorial

As in the ancient Chinese proverb, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

With this September issue of Bridges I am taking my first step as an editor. I have received many years of pleasure as a writer and I plan to continue in this capacity. Working side by side with me will be Gema Kreivenas of Media, Pa. who will be the production art director. Gema is a professional whose quality work is well known to all who have worked with her.

When these positions were offered to us by the National Executive Committee of the Lithuanian- American Community we did not take the offer lightly. We knew that many, many hours of work would be involved and that it would be difficult to live up to the previous editors and art directors. After a month of soul searching we both agreed to accept this challenge and we thank the members of the National Executive Committee for offering us this opportunity and having the necessary confidence in us to continue making Bridges a successful publication.

There are so many people who have helped us through this process. Rasa Ardys- Juska provided much needed help and encouragement to us. She was never too busy to offer suggestions and we can only hope that the two of us are capable of doing the job she did alone. Likewise, Ramas Pliura answered our never ending questions. Al Dzikas walked us through many unfamiliar areas. Thank you to the organizations and advertisers who help to fund Bridges. However, it is the writers who are responsible for the quality of material covered each month. It is in this area I hope you will begin your journey with us. Terese Gecys has offered to write a cultural column, while her husband, Algimantas, loaned me his entire collection of Bridges magazines spanning more than twenty- five years. Rimas Gedeika and Larry Misevicius will keep you informed of what is happening in the world of sports. Father Peter Burkauskas has written a moving article about Our Lady of Siluva. Sister Margarita Bareikaite has shared a beautiful reflection about the Assumption. Nijole Etwiler was one of the first to respond with her Sister Cities article and the Zabias dancers. Akvile Dudonyte gives you a glimpse of the first day of a new school year in Lithuania. Edward Baranauskas has agreed to continue writing his articles so that we can have an insider's view of life in Lithuania. After reading Rimgaudas Vidziunas' beautiful poems you will long to stand on the shores of the Baltic Sea. Vaiva Vebraite's words of encouragement should set an example for all of us. Asta Banionis shows us all the work being done by the Lithuanian- American Community, Inc. Last, but not least, I want to thank my husband, Tim, for all his help with the editing, his encouragement, his patience with missed suppers and late laundry.

Each month we hope to feature a different dance group or choir. We will start with Zaibas and next month will feature Birzelis from Connecticut. I know there are many groups, so please send us your information. You deserve a round of applause for the many hours you practice and the personal sacrifices you make to spread the Lithuanian culture.

Readers, please send me your ideas for Bridges. Let me know what interests you. If you have a topic that you think might be of interest to other readers, please let me know. We welcome your letters and those of general interest will be published.

And so, with this issue of Bridges begins our journey of a thousand miles.


Jeanne Shalna Dorr

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Rimgaudas Vidziunas

bridges passage

*Cover photo is by Alfredas Pliadis from Vilnius, Lithuania

Letter from the President of the National Executive Committee

First off, aciū and a hearty 3 times “Valio!” to our retiring Bridges editor Rasa Ardys-Juska. Rasa, I thank you for your service to Bridges, which during your tenure has been a vital avenue of communication for the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. (Bendruomene for short!).

With every retirement there is a succession, and so I welcome Jeanne Dorr as our new editor. Jeanne brings energy, vision and talent to her job, but I must emphasize to all who are reading these words, an editor’s first job is to edit. I invite you, our faithful readers, to provide Jeanne with the vital raw material for Bridges, stories of your experiences, meditations on the meaning of being Lithuanian, explorations of the harmonization of heritage and modern life.

Let me be an early example. I have done volunteer work with teachers in Lithuania for many years through the A.P.P.L.E. organization. I write “A.P.P.L.E.” out of long habit, but for those of you who are unfamiliar with it, the initials stand for the American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education. This organization is about building bridges, in this case between education professionals in Lithuania and in the West, primarily the U.S.A. and Canada. We operate a teacher’s in-service seminar program every summer in Lithuania, and to date an estimated 15,000 teachers have been through our programs.

Last December, I also took on the duties of President of the Executive Committee of the LAC (Bendruomene), which publishes Bridges. This is a big job, but my earlier experiences with A.P.P.L.E. and other Lithuanian heritage and aid projects have been a great help. They taught me about common cause and teamwork, about the power of our Community to bridge divides of generations, language and geography.

The Lithuanian Dance Festival in Chicago on July 3, 2004, really brought this home. Many thousands were standing in a single space as the American and Lithuanian national anthems rang out. For the first time in history, the President of independent Lithuania, (then Arturas Paulauskas), came from Vilnius to honor the event. Meanwhile, dancers arrived from three continents and ranged in age from young children to young-at-heart great-grandparents. Spectators were as varied as a group in the U.S. may be at any cultural event, except for the one tie, one bridge among us all: our love for the land of our heritage and its people.

In the A.P.P.L.E. seminars we have a tradition: we always close with a song written by Wynonna Judd in 1990: “Love can build a bridge between your heart and mine...” True, very true...But the work that we choose to do together, our efforts on behalf of Lithuania and the Lithuanian American Community here in the States, also require lots of information and good contacts, and plenty of organizational savvy. So love is wonderful, but love is not enough.

We also need journalism. We need people who are willing to set their pens to paper and write about what is happening in our far-flung Community, so that we may better know each other, our strengths, our commitments. We need to satisfy our curiosity about each other in order to forge links that will empower Bendruomene to work for all of us. And that’s where Bridges’ writers come in. I invite everyone to try it – just write something short, something about the things that matter to you. Send it in. You’ll be helping to build Bridges too.

Vaiva Vebrate

*Would you like to learn more about A.P.P.L.E.?
Membership is just \$25 – send your check to:
P.O. Box 617, Durham, CT, 06422
and we’ll start sending you our newsletter.*

cultural tidbits

Not all BRIDGES readers may be aware of the work done by the Cultural Council of Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. The purpose of this article is to present the highlights of the Cultural activities and to arouse the readers' interest to seek out some of the future events sponsored by the Council.

2004 - the Year of the Lithuanian Book

LAC in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture of Lithuania designates each calendar year to celebrate or commemorate a particular event or anniversary in the history of Lithuania. Consequently, 2003 was the year of King Mindaugas celebrating 750th anniversary of his coronation and Lithuania's statehood. This year was the Year of the Lithuanian Book to mark the 100th anniversary of rescinding the Russian Tsar's order forbidding the printing of Lithuanian publications in the Latin alphabet. From 1864 to 1904, by Russian law, Lithuanian publications could be printed only in Cyrillic Russian alphabet. To celebrate the heroism of Lithuanian book smugglers of publications printed outside of Lithuania, the LAC Cultural Council, chaired by Marija Remiene of Chicago, organized a very special program which toured 20 chapters of LAC. Acclaimed Lithuanian actor Egidijus Stancikas and singer Mindaugas Jankauskas, through poetry and song gave their audiences a tour of Lithuanian history during the years when the Lithuanian language not only survived, but gave birth to Lithuanian awakening and laid the foundation for restoration of national independence in 1918.

Prof. Giedrius Subacius, University of Illinois, has prepared a lecture about Lithuania's inspiring book runners. His lecture will be illustrated by maps showing the routes along which forbidden books reached Lithuania. The lectures will be given this fall at the University of Texas and at other venues. For specific information about this and other LAC Cultural Council sponsored events, please go to the official LAC web site: www.javlb.or

As to which historical event will be celebrated in 2005 will be announced at the annual LAC Board of Directors meeting September 24-26 in Phoenix, AZ.

LAC Cultural Awards

Annual LAC cultural awards recognize the achievements of Lithuanian-Americans in six areas of cultural achievement: journalism, Lithuanian folk dance instruction, fine arts, music, theater and radio programming (either to an individual in Lithuanian radio programming or to a specific Lithuanian program in the United States). Award ceremonies are held every year in a different LAC chapter city. In 2003 the award ceremony was held in Chicago, hosted by the Cultural Council. The 2003 recipients were Edvardas Sulaitis (Chicago) for Journalism, Regina Reginiene (Rochester) for Folk Dance Instruction, Rimas VizGirda (Chicago area) - Fine Arts, Giedra Gudauskiene (Santa Monica, CA) - music, Julia Dantiene (Philadelphia area) - Theater, and Alfonsas Dzikas (Hartford) - Radio Programming.

The 2004 award ceremony November 14 will be hosted by the Detroit Chapter, Ramune Vilkiene Chapter president. The awards committee to choose this year's recipients will be headed by the Cultural Council chair Marija Remiene and will include Danute Bindokiene, editor-in-chief of Lithuanian daily newspaper DRAUGAS, Nijole Pupiene, president of the Lithuanian Folk Dance Institute, Magdalena Stankuniene, prominent Lithuanian artist and herself a past award recipient, Vitalija Pulokiene, journalist, Kazys Skaisgirys, music archivist and editor of "Muzikos Zinios" (Music News) and Leonas Narbutis, member LAC Cultural Council. Monetary prizes of \$1000 to each award recipient are funded by the Lithuanian Foundation.

Any person of Lithuanian descent living in the United States is eligible to nominate and to be nominated for an award. Traditionally, the cultural awards have recognized individuals for their lifetime achievements rather than for one time "big splash" on the Lithuanian-American cultural scene. However, it should be noted, that participation by a nominee in American as well as Lithuanian cultural activities adds weight to the nomination, but is not a prerequisite for winning an award. Nominations with the nominee's brief resume should be mailed to

Marija Remiene, 2841 Denton CT., Westchester, IL 60154,
e-mail mremiene@aol.com by September 15, 2004.

Briefly about cultural life in Lithuania

While there are many varied opinions about life in Lithuania, cultural offerings for all possible tastes earn only the highest accolades. Even in summer, musical festivals abound. If one has the time and money, he or she can be on a musical tour from early spring to late summer, from the Pazaislis Festival in Kaunas, to festivals in Trakai, Klaipeda, Nida, Palanga and, of course, Vilnius. That is just serious classical music! Lithuanians also are big fans of jazz, country/western as well as rock for the younger generation. No matter which genre, musical festivals attract star performers from Europe and the United States.

Lithuanian artists also travel abroad to perform. European and American audiences are familiar with Lithuanian theater thanks to directors Eimuntas Nekrosius and Oskaras Korsunovas. The latter brought a modern version of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" to New Haven this past June. A Panevezys high school drama group participated this summer in a theater festival in Omaha, NE performing Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream". The actors perform in Lithuanian with simultaneous head piece translation for American audiences.

July 21-30 Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theater (a total of 236 persons) participated in Great Britain's music festival in Nottingham Royal Theater. They performed three operas: Mozart's "Don Giovanni", Verdi's "Aida" and "Nabucco", as well as three ballets: Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet", Bizet/Cedrina "Carmen" and Minkus' "Don Quixote". This was the biggest ever foreign tour by the National Opera and Ballet theater. Lithuanian National Ballet has performed in Great Britain in 1935 and in 2002. For the Lithuanian Opera this was its first venture into Great Britain.

Terese M. Gecys

Terese M. Gecys is Fourth term member of LAC Board of Directors, 2000-2003 secretary of LAC National Executive Committee and past as well as current president Philadelphia Chapter of LAC.

Baltic Beach Dreams

I thought I heard you dream of Baltic beaches.
Walking in the evening sunset toward the cottage

That lies among the dunes.

The storm batter-ed rain on our face.
watching the storm end.

The return of the seagulls
Indicates the ending of the storm

And fly to greet us

As if saying all is well.

Knowing that inside is the warmth of a fireplace
A meal to be prepared and enjoyed.

Candles flickering in the windows. beckoning us.
Hurry home.

We see the candles.

Indicating the love and warmth inside

As if calling us home

To shelter and safe haven.

From my heart to yours.

Rimgaudas

Rimgaudas Vidziunas lives in Phoenix, Arizona.
He has many interests including writing poetry.

Bridges Passages

Bridges - March 1985

Robertas Grigas attracted world wide attention when in 1982 he refused to take the Soviet soldier's oath. The young Lithuanian was immediately subjected to persecution which included a period of "re-education" in a military stockade. The 64th issue of the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania contains a protest statement, which Grigas addressed to the editors of the daily "The Battle Flag" published by the Central Asian military district. Grigas charges the newspaper with deliberate distortion of his views and outright lies.

Madison and Vilnius: Sister Cities

Madison, the capital of Wisconsin, is an attractive city with residential areas on three lakes and a dynamic university campus, and is continuously listed as one of America's most desirable places to live. It also enjoys Sister City relationships with several communities across the world, among them the capital of Lithuania, Vilnius.

In 1987, an ecumenical group in Madison petitioned Moscow to allow them to create a Sister City relationship with a city behind the Iron Curtain. Their first choice was Tashkent, but Moscow rejected that request and suggested Vilnius instead. The satisfied organizers went on to visit Vilnius and bring back souvenirs from there to Madison, where they held a "Soviet Friendship Fest" to acquaint Wisconsinites with their prospective Sister City. Lithuanian Americans living in Madison reacted with passion and indignation when they heard that Vilnius was chosen to represent the Soviet world. Although a very small group, they worked to make their position known to the media and the municipal administration, stressing their support for a relationship with Vilnius as the capital of a captive Lithuania, but opposing the idea that the city would stand for a Soviet connection. The Jewish community in Madison entered the conflict, opposing any link as long as Soviet leaders refused to issue exit visas to Jews in Lithuania trying to emigrate to Israel. In time, the Madison City Council agreed to accept Vilnius as a Lithuanian city, with no mention of the word Soviet, conditions were met for Wisconsin organizers to deal only with Lithuanians rather than Russians, and in 1989 the charter was signed that created the Madison-Vilnius Sister City compact.

The exchanges that resulted from this historic pairing were greeted joyfully by the Madison Lithuanian community, who came out enthusiastically to meet the first groups of Lithuanian visitors: media personnel, artists, medical students and staff, legislators and educators. With the restoration of independence in 1990, exchanges grew more frequent, and Wisconsinites started traveling to Vilnius carrying medical supplies and other humanitarian donations. In return they discovered a country eager to share its wealth of culture and art.

The first boards of directors included the original ecumenical organizers, plus some of Madison's more notable residents. After a few years, Lithuanian Americans were elected to the Board, and within a few more years, new Lithuanian immigrants joined the directors. One of the present directors is the father of the previous U.S. Ambassador to Lithuania, a Madison native, John Tefft.

During its more than 10 years of operation, the Madison Vilnius Sister City organization has offered medical aid and information, sponsored cultural exchanges, aided immigrants, supported Vilnius orphans and orphan aid associations, organized home stays, hosted judges, ambassadors and professors, subsidized Lithuanian culture, organized commemorations and community events, facilitated tours of local businesses and industries, and funded humanitarian and cultural causes. MVSC participates annually in local fairs and celebrations to inform Madison's residents about their Lithuanian Sister City. Directors are happy to speak to community groups and service organizations, presenting slide shows and videos.

Among its noteworthy cultural events, MVSC was proud to host the Virgo Women's Choir of the University of Vilnius three times, as well as the famed Kankles Ensemble, the renowned folk singer Veronika Povilioniene, the folk music ensemble Armonika, and the popular music band Melodija. It was pleased to be involved in the presentation of a significant exhibit of Lithuanian carving, Sacred Wood, curated by

MVSC member Ruta Saliklis at the Elvehjem Museum of Art. It annually contributes to the funding of Wisconsin's own Lithuanian Dance ensemble, the Zaibas Lithuanian Dancers, who were chosen in 2002 to represent our state at a cultural fair in Wisconsin's Sister State of Chiba, Japan. In 2001, just one week after 9/11, MVSC sent to Vilnius a delegation of board members determined to participate in Vilnius' Capital Days while many other planned groups cancelled their trips. To become a Sister City, a community can find guidelines set up by Sister Cities

International, Inc. at:
<http://www.sister-cities.org>.

The process requires a vote of acceptance by the local council or commission, an agreement of partnership by

the top elected officials of the respective jurisdictions, and membership in SCI, Inc. Other Lithuanian-American Sister Cities are Los Angeles/Kaunas, Cleveland/Klaipeda, Moorhead/Druskininkai, and Omaha/Siauliai. There is also a partnership between Yolo County, CA and Siauliai Rajonas. The mission of Sister Cities is to "promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation - one individual, one community at a time." The membership of Madison Vilnius Sister Cities can confirm that it is also a very satisfying and enriching experience.

Nijole Semenaite-Etzwiler

Nijole Semenaite-Etzwiler is active in the Madison-Vilnius Sister Cities Program, Zaibas, and the Sauk County Historical Society.



Zaibas

Zaibas was founded in 1991, premiering at the Madison International Folk Festival, and has continued to dance at that event and other ethnic fairs and festivals throughout South Central Wisconsin. Asta Sepety, director and teacher for over a decade is the guiding spirit.

Partially funded by Madison - Vilnius Sister Cities, and loyally supported by Madison's small Lithuanian community, Zaibas annually sponsors an Independence Day Commemoration, a Kucios/Eglute Christmas Party and a summer time picnic. It is also a proud participant of three previous Sokių Sventes' (dance festivals) in Chicago and Toronto. In 2002 Zaibas was chosen to represent Wisconsin in a cultural festival in Wisconsin's Sister State of Chiba, Japan.

Although most of our dancers live in Madison, some come as far away as Appleton and Baraboo, WI, Des Plaines and Downers' Grove, IL, and Minneapolis, MN.

Nijole Semenaite-Etzwiler



Christmas in July



This seems like a strange name for an article that is neither written nor read in July. It became known as “Christmas in July” because most of the circumstances leading up to the article happened in July. After the first article appeared in BRIDGES, readers began to donate to this cause and often referred to it as a “Christmas in July” gift. Because of its success it will continue to be known by this name.

After I returned from spending the summer in Lithuania I wrote an article about children who would not have any Christmas gifts. The year was 2000 and the trip to Lithuania had its usual ups and downs. As Charles Dickens wrote, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” I saw so many improvements while at the same time I saw so much suffering.

It started with meeting a young boy in a small village near Prienai. Arturas was in the sixth grade and had been suffering from leukemia since he was a second grader. Our meeting was postponed several times because Arturas was in a Vilnius hospital. When the big day finally arrived he and his mother walked the short distance to the school so we could meet in the principal’s office. His mother did not want to meet at their house because as she later told me, she was too embarrassed by their living conditions. She was a widow and had another son. Karolas was four years old and the apple of the villagers’ eyes. They took care of him while his mother spent days and weeks sitting at Arturas’ hospital bed.

When we finally met, Arturas handed me a beautiful red rose. He wore a cap because he had no hair. I told him stories about American rock stars and athletes who actually paid to have their heads shaved. He liked that idea and took off his cap. I was very much at ease with

this personable young boy because this was the age I taught for so many years. We talked about school, sports, music, his family and his friends. There was no need to talk about the future because we both knew that short of miracle, there would be no future, I asked Arturas what he would like if he could have one material gift right now. He didn’t hesitate when he told me he would love to have a used blue bicycle. He stressed the word “used” several times because he knew his mother had no money. He really never had the strength to ride a bicycle, but if he did he would fly over the dirt roads near his house. He showed me his sixth grade class picture, He was so proud to stand among his classmates. What he didn’t tell me was that the principal carried him to school for the photo and that his classmates were supporting him on both sides. We ended the visit shortly after this conversation because Arturas was becoming exhausted. As I kissed him and hugged him I could feel his bones through his shirt. But worse, while I held her son, I could see the look of despair and fear in his young mother’s eyes. The principal drove them the short distance to their house while I stood against the door of the small school crying and unable to move. The next day he was back in the hospital waiting for his miracle.

I visited so many more families and children but Arturas was never far from my mind. Mrs. Landsbergis took me to visit seven year old twins who asked her if there was going to be a “Christmas Tree “ party in the winter. Their mother was so grateful because that was the only gift they received. I didn’t quite understand until we got back into the car and I started my twenty questions of who, what, when and where. Each year she plans a party for the children who come from the poorest neighborhoods. The focal point is the Christmas tree. Each child is given a small gift but only after they do something in return. They must sing, dance, recite a poem, or tell a story. Mrs. Landsbergis plays the piano and they all sing. Prof. Landsbergis joins his wife and often they both share in the entertainment. The children wait in great anticipation for their gifts; a small bag with a chocolate bar, some colored pencils or crayons, perhaps a sketch pad. The girls might get a set of combs or barrettes while the boys receive a small, plastic car. For many, these would be their only gifts. Christmas would be like any other day. It’s not that their parents didn’t love them or want more for their children, there was just no money. But this year was even worse. Prices were rising and there might not be a Christmas Tree party.



Children's Christmas Party

Less than a week later I was traveling with Dr. Regina Svoba, the director of Countryside Children's Fund, and she voiced the same concerns about lack of money for Christmas gifts. Her program is different as can be seen from the name of the fund. They go to the poorest country schools and give out gifts. Oh, the excitement preceding the visit. All the students help to decorate the school. Even the teenagers who are normally bored with everything get into the act by helping the little ones decorate. Songs, poems and dances are practiced until they are learned to perfection and the children could perform them in their sleep. If the weather is cooperating and there is snow, Father Christmas might arrive in a horse drawn sleigh and give out the presents. He has even been known to arrive on horseback. The anticipation grows as he enters the school with his big bags. Everyone knows Father Christmas has come a long distance so he must rest while he sips his hot tea and enjoys the program prepared by the children. After that the magic moment comes when he opens his bag. There is total silence until the first gifts are opened with great care and the "oohs and ahhs" are heard. The gifts are basically the same as the city children receive. Of course everyone knows they must give something in return and so Father Christmas' bag is once again full as he prepares to visit his next school. He has beautiful drawings, little birds and animals that have been lovingly carved from wood, and crocheted doilies that the children learned to make in school.

Both Mrs. Landsbergis and Dr. Svoba work so hard for the children. It was only July and they were both worrying about December. When they asked about possible solutions I gave them my usual answer; BRIDGES. I told them there would be no guarantees but we could try as well as hope that the readers would open their hearts to these children. At the same time I was in Lithuania my friends, Julie and Paul who live in New York, were also there. Julie had the opportunity to travel with Mrs. Landsbergis and me as we visited some Lithuanian Orphan Care families. To say she was overwhelmed by what she saw and heard is putting it mildly. She also knew about Arturas and gave me several gifts for him and his younger brother. As I unburdened all my thoughts and problems to her I told her about the BRIDGES plan to raise money. Without missing a single heartbeat she explained that Paul's birthday was in September and her gift to Lithuanian Orphan Care would save her from a shopping trip. This was an out and out lie as the woman was born with a shopping bag in her hand. She promptly handed me the first Christmas donation in honor

of her husband's birthday. Thus, "Christmas in July" was born in Vilnius. Every year since that day, Paul's birthday gift is sent to this program. Not to be outdone by Julie, I promptly donated my husband's December birthday gift to the project. Unlike Julie, I am not a shopper so this really did relieve me of the burden of looking for the right gift.

The BRIDGES readers were, as they always are, unbelievably generous.

In December of 2000 I received a Christmas card from Arturas with a letter asking me to thank all the people in



America who helped him with medicines and prayers. I still have the card and letter; it is one of my most precious possessions.

In May, as new life began to bloom, Arturas' pain and suffering was over. His miracle never happened but it was not for lack of trying. So many churches and organizations had him on their prayer lists but it was not to be. He

continuation on page 26



NOVEMBER 6-7, 2004

SATURDAY NOON TO 8 pm & SUNDAY NOON TO 6 pm

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“MUGĖ”
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Treasures Among Us

Isn't it wonderful to travel the world and gaze in awe at its magnificent treasures? They are breath taking and we marvel at how such structures as the pyramids, Taj Mahal and magnificent cathedrals were built without modern equipment. What great joy the sights of them have brought, and are still bringing to millions and millions of people.

But how much do we appreciate our own Lithuanian treasures right here at home? True, they are not of the same grandiose style of the world's great treasures. But think of how they looked and how much they meant to the people who worked so hard to plan, finance, build and maintain them. Are they any less valuable to those of us today who worship in these churches, socialize in the halls and attend the schools that so many people sacrificed to build? Because the name of this magazine is BRIDGES and it is meant to build a "bridge" among so many people and so many generations I feel it would be most appropriate for us to honor our own Lithuanian treasures in this country.

A great part of our treasures are people; the first wave of immigrants who built the churches, halls and schools and kept the culture alive. The second group who came after the war brought their own culture and maintained the treasures, and now we have a new wave of immigrants to join hands and help preserve those treasures. But let's not forget a very important group who are often overlooked. These are the non Lithuanian speakers who spend hours and hours practicing the dance steps, helping at the fairs and Kucios. Many are not even of Lithuanian descent but have joined in rolling up their shirt sleeves or putting on their dancing shoes. They deserve our gratitude.

I am hoping with all your help and commitment to give our treasures; the people and the

buildings, the praise they deserve. This is where I need your help. If you know of a Lithuanian church, school, social hall please send me the information. If you don't have or can't obtain the information, please let me know and I will try to find the needed details. Lithuanian- American Community chapters, Knights of Lithuania councils, Daughters of Lithuania, Scouts, religious, cultural, educational, sports, heritage groups and radio programs are just a few. Please let me know your history, what you are doing and how readers in your area could join you. I keep hearing over and over that organizations are always looking for new members, but sometimes a concerted effort has to be made to attract new people. Where else can you get so much national publicity? Let's not stop in the United States. If anyone outside of the U S receives Bridges, let's hear from you. Tell us about your treasures and we will make this a world effort. Impossible? Not at all. Not when you think back to all that has happened in the past fifteen years.

The dance groups and choirs bring so much pleasure to so many people, let's hear from you. I watch the Philadelphia dance groups and listen to the choirs and am amazed at their love for the Lithuanian culture and their personal commitment. They practice hour after hour and then travel at their own expense.

I am filled with gratitude to the regular writers. Without them there would be no Bridges. I am encouraging others to try their hand at writing. Share your knowledge and experiences with us. I hope to hear from writers all over the world. Remember our title - BRIDGES. Let's build the bridge for all people who are interested in Lithuania. My address and email address are on the inside cover.

Why do we keep our treasures so well hidden? Let's let the world know how proud we are of everything we have achieved, are achieving, and will continue to achieve in the future. With so many people in the world we are a very small number and yet we have done so much. Let's be proud of our Lithuanian treasures.

Jeanne Dorr

Sister Margarita Bareikaite



Mary and the Holy Spirit

The most glorious feast day of Mary is the Assumption, which is celebrated each year on the 15th of August. The Assumption means that the body of Our Blessed Mother of God was not allowed to become corrupt or to remain in this world. Her body was joined again to her soul after death and she was taken body and soul up to heaven. Mary's greatness consists in her cooperation with the Holy Spirit. She is the model of all Christians because she was always living with the Holy Spirit. We might call her truly the charismatic Christian. She mediated the Holy Spirit to others and she continues to be a presence to all who ask her to come into their lives

Regarding St. Matthew's account of Mary's conception of Jesus through the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1: 18), It is the same Holy Spirit breathing into the Virgin Mary. Our Lord Jesus becomes man through the cooperation of Mary and the Holy Spirit. St. Matthew is noted for his linking up of the Old Testament prophecies with their fulfillment in the New Covenant. "The Virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel which would be brought about by the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 1: 20).

The Evangelist, St. Luke, points out more than Matthew that Mary's relationship to the Holy Spirit is rather one of freely con-

senting to give herself completely to God's service. She merely wishes to know the direction that God's spirit is to take in her life. By this consent she is the pure channel, the spotless temple of the Holy Spirit.

As we all know, God dwells in all spiritually alive Christians but in different degrees. God abides more in one person than in another because the Holy Spirit is given more freedom by the individual.

"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word and my Father will love him-----." (John 14: 23). His words were realized in Mary's experience in the Annunciation. Possessing the Holy Spirit, Mary possesses the very love of God as His dwelling place. We note that St. Luke singles Mary out from among the other women who waited with the Apostles for the coming of the Holy Spirit. "All these joined in continuous prayer, together with several women including Mary." (Acts 1:14).

Mary sang her beautiful song under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my Savior, because He has looked upon His lowly handmaid." (Luke 1:46-47).

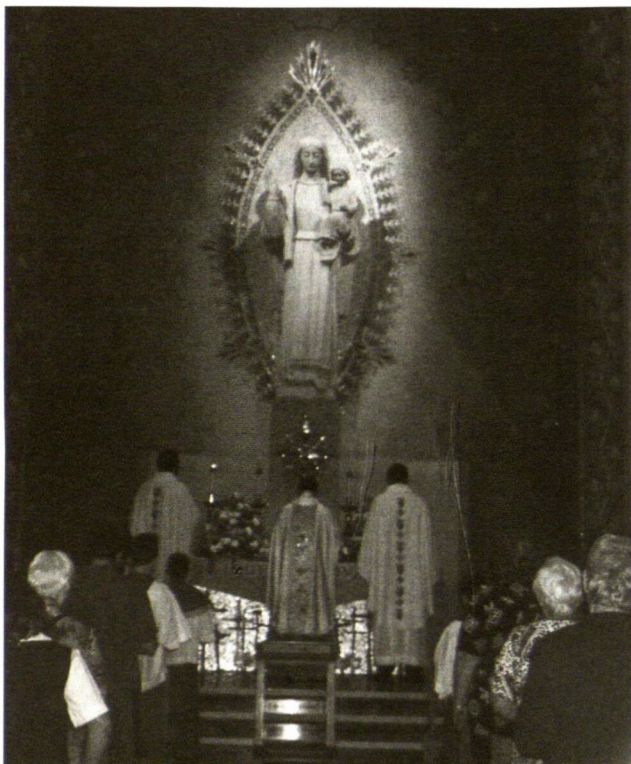
May Mary inspire us a greater knowledge and understanding of her role in our redemption and in our salvation and instill in us a greater love in our lives.

Sister Margarita Bareikaite

Sister Margarita Bareikaite belongs to the order of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a Lithuanian order in Putnam, CT. and is a regular contributor to Bridges.

Celebrating September 8th - the Birthday of the Blessed Virgin

PILGRIMAGE TO SILUVA'S CHAPEL



In 2003 Father Labasauskas and Father Poskus, both priests from Lithuania pursuing studies in Washington, joined Fr. Burkauskas at the altar of Our Lady of Siluva.

Lithuanians have been going in pilgrimage to the small town in western Lithuania to celebrate the Nativity of Mary since 1457. That was the year that the local landlord, Petras Gedgaudas, built a Roman Catholic church honoring the birth of Mary. The parish festivals held annually at Siluva on the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lady reportedly drew Lithuanians from near and far.

A miraculous appearance of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Siluva in around 1608 is recorded. Our Lady appeared weeping to children and a Calvinist catechist because the Reformation had swept over Lithuania. In 1592 a school for the preparation of Calvinist teachers and ministers had been established on the site of the former Catholic Church.

As a result of this heavenly visit from Mary, the discovery in 1612 of a hidden trunk containing parish documents and church articles led to the restoration of the property to the Catholics and in 1625 a small wooden chapel was built at the site of the apparition. The construction of a brick church was celebrated when a picture of the Holy Virgin Mary was crowned with the crown of the chapter of St. Peter's in Rome on Sept. 8, 1786. The celebration is reported to have lasted for three days, drawing together a throng of 30,000 persons from Lithuania and neighboring countries.

Through the years the pilgrims have continued to come to this holy shrine on Lithuanian soil. As many as 100,000 persons have been known to participate in the annual Siluva devotions. Among the pilgrims who have knelt to pray at the site of Mary's apparition was Pope John Paul II in September of 1993 during his historic visit to Lithuania.

Lithuanians brought their great devotion to Our Lady of Siluva to the United States as they fled under the darkening clouds of soviet oppression. At the presentation of the first funds for the proposed chapel of Our Lady of Siluva in the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. Mr. Joseph Kajeckas, charge d'affairs of Lithuania said:

"Under the title of Our Lady of Siluva, we pay homage to Our Lady as the One who channeled God's preserving mercy in a special way to the people of Lithuania. She has preserved Lithuania from the division of Christendom, consoled her people in cruel captivity and sustained them in a hope of a new day of freedom."

The inspiration for the chapel of Our Lady of Siluva and the driving force in the collection of funds and the development of design and artistic detail was the late Bishop Vincent Brizgys, the exiled Auxiliary Bishop of Kaunas, who had made his exiled residence in Chicago.

On September 4, 1966 Bishop Vincent Brizgys

proudly joined with Lithuanian priests, nuns and thousands of Lithuanians from across the nation for the solemn dedication of one of the most beautiful national chapels at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in our nation's capital.

Each year, on September 8th, Father Peter Burkauskas, the pastor of St. Andrew's and St. Casimir's Lithuanian Parishes in Philadelphia, brings pilgrims to the chapel of Our Lady of Siluva to pray and celebrate in solidarity with the pilgrims in Lithuania.

The Philadelphia pilgrims board their bus with flowers to decorate Mary's altar upon their arrival at the Shrine. They are usually greeted by Lithuanians from the Baltimore/Washington, D. C. area who have kept a vigil waiting for the Mass to begin. The chapel of Our Lady of Siluva suddenly is alive with the same tempo of emotion and faith that fills the Siluva chapel on September 8th in Lithuania. As the Mass begins, the singing of hymns in Lithuanian and English gently echoes and soars through the massive Shrine, often attracting curious visitors in the Shrine to also attend the Holy Mass.

Priests from Lithuania, studying at Catholic University, often join Father Burkauskas at the altar to concelebrate the special Mass on Mary's birthday. This is a clear sign of the unity of devotion that links pilgrims in Lithuania with the pilgrims in the chapel

in Washington, D.C.

The pilgrims who travel by bus from Philadelphia are all ages, like the pilgrims in Lithuania. Father Burkauskas tries to inspire the altar boys and students from his Philadelphia parish of St. Casimir's by including them in the pilgrimage. The older generation that has built this chapel is passing ...and a new generation needs to see what is here. "I pray" says Father Burkauskas, "that perhaps Mary will touch one young heart with a vocation to the priesthood or religious life".

"Last year" Father continued, "the nun-sacristan at the Shrine allowed us the privilege to use for our Mass the chalice that Pope John Paul II had given to the Shrine. At the elevation, as I lifted the chalice upward toward the imposing statue of Our Lady of Siluva, I felt so honored to be in union with the pilgrims who have been going in pilgrimage to Siluva since 1457 to celebrate Our Lady's Nativity, including the Holy Father himself. We are a pilgrim people and the journey of the Lithuanian nation is a pilgrimage of faith. As Lithuanians we must preserve the heritage and traditions of the past if we are to survive the future. That is why we come each year on this pilgrimage to Our Lady of Siluva on September 8."

Father Peter Burkauskas is the pastor of St. Andrew and St. Casimir Lithuanian Churches in Philadelphia, PA



The pilgrimage in 1999 included pilgrims from the 3 Lithuanian parishes in Philadelphia.

THE GREAT AWAKENING!!!!!!

Thirty years ago!!!

That's right!! Thirty years ago was the last time that a Lithuanian Soccer Tournament took place in North America. For a long time (from the early 50's through mid '70's), soccer was more popular than basketball (saying this today, would be tantamount to committing heresy). So, what happened?

There were many reasons. One possible explanation is that soccer was the only sport that was known and was popular among the Lithuanians (fathers and sons) who immigrated to the USA in 1949 and 1950. Soccer provided them the opportunity to play as "Lithuanians" against other European immigrants. However, with time, things began to change. As their grandchildren began to get more acculturated, their interests in sports became more in tune with their American contemporaries. Soccer took a back seat.

Last December (2003) three soccer fans (Virgis Anusaukas, Ausra Anusaukas and Rimas Gedeika), over a cup of coffee, began talking about the future of soccer among the Lithuanians in America. Was it really dead, as many people claimed, or was it merely hibernating, waiting for some catalyst to reawaken it? What about the "new Wave" that was coming to America? Are they all basketball fanatics?

There was only one way to find out—organize a Soccer Tournament.

Soon the letters were mailed and the phone calls were made. And then the waiting began. Several weeks later the responses started to come back. Within several months eight teams sent in their registrations — New Jersey (2), Pennsylvania (2), New York, Chicago, Washington D.C., and a combined team. (Not surprisingly, 80% of the registered players were from the "new Wave.")

Now the Tournament was a go!!!

The Tournament

This historic event, which was also dedicated to commemorate Lithuania's entrance into NATO and the European Union, took place on June 5, 2004 in Philadelphia. Although Mother Nature did not cooperate, it drizzled in the morning and by tournament time it was raining steadily, it did not dampen the players' nor the spectators' spirits. The players played vigorously and enthusiastically. The spectators cheered often and loudly as if the day was a gorgeous sunny day!!! What a little rain stop us!!! No way!!! Go team!! Go, go!!!

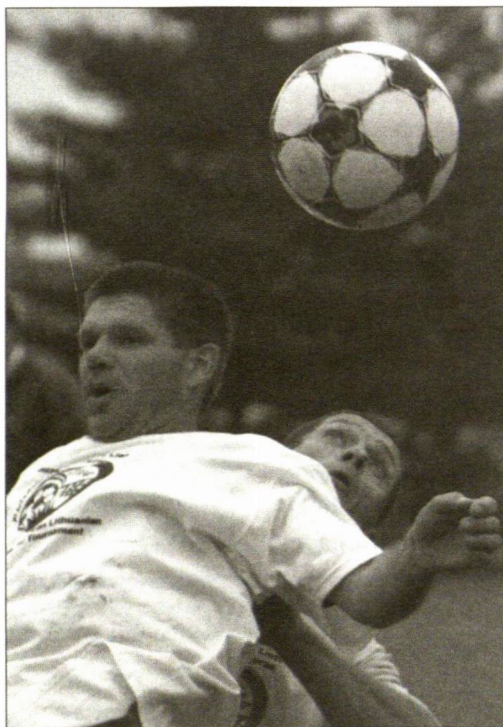


Photo by Dalia Bagdonaite

The preliminaries were played enthusiastically and aggressively. It did not matter whether the team was strong or weak. Each of the players gave their best and played hard with great enthusiasm.

The winner of the semifinals was decided only after an exciting shootout. It took nine shots for Taurus (Philadelphia) to beat Stumbras (Philadelphia). Both goalies were outstanding!!!

The final took place between the old (Chicago's Lituania) and new (New Jersey's Dainava). Lituania is not only the oldest existing Lithuanian

soccer team in America but it is also the oldest existing sports club. Its roots go back to the early 1950s. On the other hand, Dainava was formed only two years ago.

The first half ended with a score deadlocked at 1:1. Early in the second half, Lituania quickly scored three unanswered goals. The score was 4:1. Things did not look good for the new team, but — Dainava refused to give up. It scored two goals and with eight seconds remaining in the game it had a chance to tie the game. But its shot hit the upper right hand corner of the goal post and bounced harmlessly into the field. The game ended and Lituania were the champs!!

And the rain — oh, who noticed it any way!!

In the background

Although the action on the field was fast and furious; nevertheless, there were other interesting, emotional events taking place on the side lines. Players met who haven't seen each other for years, since their playing days in Lithuania. The handshakes, the backslapping, the joyous, loud greetings were something to see.

There were other players who haven't seen each other since they played in the 60's and 70's. A. Glavinskas who played for Lituania in the 50's and 60's met Dr. Giedris Klivecka and Petras Vainius who played for New York LAK. Their stories and their reminiscences were greater than your fisherman's stories. It was quite an experience to see "the old" timers exuberantly exchanging anecdotes about their winning goals and saves.

There was Lithuania's Ambassador to the U.S.A, V. Usackas kicking out the first ball before the start of the finals. Ambassador Usackas is a great supporter of all Lithuanian sporting activities. It was due to his support that basketball regained its momentum on the East Coast.

Finally, there was ATLETAS, a team composed of players from various states who

were not able to find a team but wanted to participate in the tournament. They came from Florida, California, New York and Pennsylvania. The team was loaded with some truly interesting players. It had two of the Tournament's youngest players, Petras Vainius (age 61) and Dr. Giedris Klivecka (age 58) and Lora Varnelis, the only woman player in the Tournament.

When asked why they came to play, P. Vainius said, "I never played with my son, Petras (age 26) on the same team, in the same tournament. This was a perfect opportunity to do so. Also, I wanted to see how well I could play against players 30 years younger than me. I guess I did OK. I am still standing"

G. Klivecka, who in his college days, was one of the best Lithuanian soccer players in America, and was the first Lithuanian to be selected as college All American, also stated that he wanted to play with his son, Chris (age 20). And that after 30 years".....it would be great to again play with the Lithuanians in a Lithuanian Tournament. How well did these veteran players do? One opponent limping off the field told his team mates, "Watch out, these guys play hard"!!!



Photo by Dalia Bagdonaite

Lora Varnelis, who flew in all the way from California, stated that she loves soccer and since there were no women's teams, she would play on the men's team. She said that she definitely would not be an embarrassment to the team. And she was not. With her great attitude and aggressive play she earned the respect of her team mates.

Support from Lithuania

Support for the Tournament came also from Lithuania's Soccer Federation and from the Olympic Committee. Aivaras Vyzniauskas, Soccer Federation's Vice President, flew in from Lithuania and personally presented the Federation's and Olympic Committee's awards to the players.

"Linksmavakaris"

In the "good old days" when the rivalry between Lituanica and LAK was at its peak — the teams played hard, but once the game was over — it was

over. Then it was time to have a "Linksmavakaris" - to party, dance, sing, and eat good Lithuanian food and to develop new friendships.

Wanting to continue this tradition, a "Linksmavakaris" was organized in Philadelphia's Lithuanian Music Hall — not only for the players but for everyone in the community. It was a great, fun filled evening.

It is hoped that this Tournament with its many traditions will continue to grow and prosper for many years to come.

Rimas Gedeika

Rimes Gedeika lives in New Jersey and is very active in the Lithuanian Sports Community.



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L I T H U A N I A N - A M E R I C A N N E W S J O U R N A L

Akville Dudonyte



A New School Year in Lithuania

It was a beautiful last day of summer when I realized that tomorrow I would go back to school. It's great to meet your classmates, teachers, and friends after a long, hot summer. It is really nice to come back to your old school, to those classrooms full of memories. There were good times, lucky moments, and sometimes sad moments when you didn't succeed in a math test. On that special day you see all your friends looking good, tanned, cheerful and in school uniforms with flowers in their hands. Also you see happy teachers smiling and talking with their teachers. You realize that the best times of your life are spent with your dearest friends in school. The same feelings happened to me, too.

The first of September is a special day for students and their teachers. The most important thing that a student does is to give flowers to his teacher. This is a tradition in Lithuania. The cutest view you can see this day is a little child in uniform carrying bigger flowers than he is. You just can't help smiling because you remember when you were a little pupil and carried big flowers to your first teacher.

And so the big day is here. The first of September 2003 is a beautiful Monday morning. The sun is shining outside, birds are singing, and it is wonderful. I wake up in a good temper. I am just feeling great, like never before, because I know I will see my best friends and my classmates. I really missed them during the summer. I will see my teachers who supported me, taught me, and shared their experiences and memories. I am really, really happy. I am so

glad putting on my uniform; the red skirt, the white blouse, the red jacket and those beautiful brown shoes. I take my flowers and go to school.

It takes only ten minutes to reach the school. I go directly to my classroom and to my dear teacher, Romualda, and give her the flowers. She looks really happy seeing me again. I am her favorite student and I could talk for hours with her. But I really want to see and talk to others as well. Then I turn back and run to my friends. They give me big hugs, kisses, and sweet words. I keep saying, "I love all of you." We are sharing adventures and memories. After we talk, we all go to church (this is also a tradition). We are all together like a big family once again. I am wishing that this day will never end.....

Akville Dudonyte

Editor's Note:

Akville Dudonyte and her family immigrated to the United States from Lithuania in April. At the time Akville wrote this article she had been in the United States only two months. I did very little editing because the article was written straight from Akville's heart. I have no desire to stifle a young writer's creativity. Hopefully, you will read much more written by this talented young lady as she reminisces about life in Lithuania and her move to a new country.

Akville Dudonyte lives in Philadelphia and attends a local high school. She is a member of St. Andrew's Lithuanian choir, Laisves.



Lithuanian Kitchen

Potato Pancakes

- 6 medium potatoes
- 1 egg
- 1 medium grated onion
- 3 tbsp. flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/4 cup shortening

In a small bowl beat together egg and salt. Peel and grate potatoes. Drain excess juice from potatoes and mix with egg, onion and flour. In a large skillet melt shortening and lower heat. Spoon half of the mixture into the skillet forming pancakes. Cook, turning once until golden brown. Drain on a paper towel. Recipe may be doubled. Serve with sour cream or applesauce.

Mushroom Soup

- 12 - 15 dried mushrooms or
- 1pt. canned mushrooms
- 6 cups water
- 1 onion
- 1 potato
- 1 carrot
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 cup sour cream

For dried mushrooms- soak, wash and precook. For canned mushrooms-drain and rinse in cold water. Slice mushrooms and dice vegetables. Simmer in water with bay leaves and salt until vegetables are done. Remove from heat. Stir a ladle of cooled soup into cream, blend thoroughly and pour back into soup. Keep hot but do not boil.

LOVE IS LIKE THE SEA

*And she took my hand and led me
out to sea,
It was strange her letting me out
see what I did not know before.*

*For she showed me a path.
to a beautiful view,
one that I held in my soul
and knew in my heart*

*And the waves churned out all
the dips and swells
That doubters proclaim as evidence of
What apparently it is not to be,*

*However they knew better,
for dips and swells were an indication
of the times ahead*

*For love is like the sea.
with its dips and swells.
When the sea is calm
there is no love,*

*From my heart to yours
Rimgaudas*

Author's note:

*My poetry is not meant to be that
good. In Lithuanian, it may not
make sense.*

*However, it may sound great
in English.*

*Rimgaudas P. Vidziunas
Phoenix, Arizona*

News and Views

Parishioners and friends of St. Peter Lithuanian Church in Boston have organized to save their church from closing. Their mission is to provide a Lithuanian spiritual and cultural center to Lithuanians living in Greater Boston and surrounding areas and to provide aid to Lithuanian immigrants in the area.

Their website can be visited at www.savestpeter.org.

Verslo Zinios – The Swedish company Ikea, which bought about 60% of the Lithuanian output in the previous year is to increase orders to the local companies by some 3% in 2004. The domestic furniture sector is expected to grow around 15% this year. The furniture firms which have learned to work together with the foreign company, say they use the Swedish concern as a mark of quality in their quest for new customers. Verslo Zinios quoted Viktoras Majauskas, the managing director at furniture maker Vilniaus Baldai as saying that in 2004 Ikea should buy 1 billion litas (289 million euros) worth of Lithuanian furniture.

Where is the Center of Europe?

In a recent Wall Street Journal article there are several nations claiming that honor. In Ukraine's Carpathian Mountains, not far from the border with Romania, is a white and blue marble obelisk marking the center of Europe.

A stone outside the town of Kremnica in Slovakia has a rock marked "center of Europe".

Poland has two areas claiming the honor. In 1775 it was decided that the center of Europe was in Suchowola, Eastern Poland. The residents of Kiernozia, near Warsaw believe the center of Europe is located in the priest's rectory.

In 1989, the National Geographic Institute of France calculated that the geographical center of Europe is in Lithuania, close to Vilnius.

At this point, no one seems willing to give up the honor.

American Congress to deliberate on visa fee waiving for coalition allies

Vilnius (ELTA) - A new bill brought before the US Congress proposes lifting a \$100 fee for entry visas to the nationals of the countries that contribute to US-led missions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The bill has been presented by William Lipinski and Jack Quinn, co-chairmen of the Central and Eastern European group under the American House of Representatives.

Should the Congress vote affirmatively on the bill, visa fees will be

waived for visa applicants from Lithuania.

Antanas Valionis, the Lithuanian minister for foreign affairs, said to ELTA on Thursday that Vilnius is holding consultations with both the United States and Canada on lifting of entry visas; the process however will take a long time, he said.

"The vote of the Congress to waive the visa fee would mean a positive step which, to my mind, all Lithuanian people would appreciate," Valionis said.

The bill submitted to the American legislature proposes to repeal visa fees for Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Hungary.

Lithuania's embassy in Minsk designated NATO's contact embassy in Belarus

Vilnius/Minsk, (ELTA) - The North Atlantic Alliance has designated Lithuania's embassy in Minsk as its contact embassy in Belarus. The decision to make the Lithuanian embassy in Minsk the informal NATO contact embassy for two years, starting September 1, 2004, was taken on Monday.

The NATO contact embassy is an informal representation. The main aims of a NATO contact embassy in a country are to inform the public, mass media, academic organizations and non-government organizations about the alliance's operations, its aims and goals and encourage the cooperation between NATO and the country in which the contact embassy is situated.

As a press release from the Foreign Ministry stresses, many embassies strive to be NATO contact embassies in other countries. The chance to represent the Alliance in NATO partner countries is considered a great honour.

"This NATO decision showed proper evaluation of Lithuania's long-year cooperation with its eastern neighbours. Lithuania's diplomatic representation in Minsk is preparing very hard for the functions of being a contact embassy and will put in all of its efforts in informing neighbouring countries about NATO role in spreading the spirit of safety, stability and cooperation. On the other hand, the NATO decision confirms that Lithuania's recently announced aim to be an active regional leader has been noticed and received evaluation of its allies," said Director General of Security Policy Department under the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry, Kestutis Jankauskas.

Until August 31, 2004 Turkey's embassy in Minsk remains NATO contact embassy in Belarus.

News from The Information Center for Homecoming Lithuanians

Students from Lithuania arranged a merry party at the German Bundestag. A group of young Lithuanian girls who are on practice tour in the German parliament taught the Bundestag staff to dance "Jurgelis-Meistrelis", a national folk game-dance during a presentation of the Baltic countries attended by over 100 people.

News from The Information Center for Homecoming Lithuanians

As the U.S. Congress returns from its August recess hoping to finish the nation's budgetary and other legislative business before the November presidential and congressional election, it's a good time to review those issues which were important to the Lithuanian-American Community this past year. Those issues were determined by a vote of the elected members of the LAC's National Council which meets annually in the fall to set the organization's broad-based agenda.

While meeting in their annual convention in September 2003, the LAC's National Council adopted a number of resolutions covering U.S. public affairs. Among those resolutions they urged cooperation with other Central and East European organizations such as the Lithuanian-American Council (ALT-as), the Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC), the Baltic-American Freedom League (BAFL), and the Central and Eastern European Coalition (CEEC) based in Washington, DC. The resolutions also expressed concern for recent Lithuanian immigrants to the United States and their legalization, the continuing need for RFE/RL and VOA broadcasts to Lithuania, an increase of U.S. military and other assistance programs for Lithuania, and concern over the impending oil drilling by the Russian company LUKoil in the Baltic Sea off the coast of Lithuania's ecologically-sensitive nature reserve at the Kursiu Marios (Curonian Spit). Anticipating the entrance of Lithuania into NATO, the LAC also expressed its gratitude to the U.S. Congress and the President of the United States.

There were other resolutions passed by the LAC, Inc. National Council (council) dealing with public affairs in Lithuania, but those are to be handled by the five members of the council who are elected to serve on a joint commission of the Lithuanian parliament and the LAC, Inc.

LAC, Inc. chapters across the country were asked during their Lithuanian Independence Day celebrations, whether they be held in honor of February 16th (Independence Day), or March 11th (Restoration of

Independence Day) to adopt a resolution covering these issues and send it off to their Congressmen, Senators and even to the Russian Embassy. Here's a copy of the Resolution which LAC, Inc. chapters were encouraged to adopt:

News from the Lithuanian-American Community's Public Affairs Council September 2004

RESOLUTION ON THE OCCASION OF LITHUANIA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY

We, the members of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc, of (identify chapter or city) assembled on (date) to recognize and honor the 751st year of Lithuania's statehood, and the 86th year of Lithuania's inde-

pendence as a democracy which was established on February 16, 1918 in Lithuania's historic capital Vilnius, do hereby find:

Whereas, Lithuania has made significant progress in developing a stable democracy and free market economy during the 14 years since it overthrew an illegal foreign occupation by the former Soviet Union through a peaceful democratic movement;

Whereas, the United States never recognized the forced incorporation and illegal annexation of Lithuania by the former Soviet Union in June 1940, and continued to maintain diplomatic relations with the legal representatives of independent Lithuania;

Whereas, Lithuania has received invitations and is expected to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-a defensive alliance of Western democracies - in May 2004, as well as the European Union-a common market of Western democracies;

Whereas, Lithuanian military units are serving together with American troops in Afghanistan and Iraq as allies in the war on global terrorism; and in Bosnia and Kosovo in peacekeeping missions;

Whereas, the government and parliament of the Russian Federation have consistently opposed Lithuania's re-integration with Western democracies and encumbered Lithuanian-Russian relations by refusing to ratify border treaties, demanding visa-free travel through Lithuania's territory for both civilian and military traffic, undermining Lithuania's full participation in NATO by opposing the basing of NATO

troops and equipment on Lithuania's territory, denying Lithuania's Mazeikiu Nafta oil refinery a reliable supply of crude oil, imposing double tariffs on Lithuanian imports, and accusing Lithuania, as one of the Baltic states, of discriminating against its Russian-speaking minority;

Whereas, the partially-privatized Russian oil company, LUKoil, and the Russian government refuse to open their oil drilling site in the Baltic Sea 22 km off the coast of Lithuania, known as "D-6", to international inspection, and refuse to cooperate with the Lithuanian government in developing an effective plan to minimize the effects of any oil spill, thereby threatening the environmentally sensitive coastal zone near the Curonian Spit with oil and chemical pollutants;

Whereas, the government and political system of Lithuania, particularly the Office of the President, are struggling to address and resolve a corruption scandal which threatens the integrity of Lithuania's governmental institutions and is a major test of the rule of law and democratic values in Lithuania;

Now, therefore, be it Resolved that, we, supporters of a democratic Lithuania —

- (1) congratulate the people of Lithuania on the occasion of their Day of Independence, the 16th of February;
- (2) urge the United States Congress and the legislature of our state to designate February 16, 2004 as "Lithuanian Independence Day";
- (3) thank the United States Senate for its vote last May ratifying the accession protocols for Lithuania's membership in NATO;
- (4) thank President George W. Bush for maintaining the policy begun by President Bill Clinton to support Lithuania in its effort to achieve NATO membership;
- (5) urge the United States Congress and the Bush Administration to deepen the U.S. bi-lateral relationship with Lithuania by continuing technical assistance programs in Lithuania, providing continued military assistance, and expanding trade and investment between the United States and Lithuania;
- (6) urge President George W. Bush to reverse his administration's decision to end U.S. international news broadcasts by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and the Voice of America to Lithuania, and

petition the United States Congress to restore funding for both of these vital broadcasters in fiscal years 2004 and 2005;

- (7) thank the government and people of Lithuania for joining with the United States in its war on global terrorism, and a special thanks to the men and women of Lithuania's armed forces who are risking their lives alongside American troops in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo and Bosnia;
- (8) urge the government of the Russian Federation to both end its hostility to Lithuania's efforts to re-integrate with Western institutions, and end its opposition to an American presence in Lithuania whether it be through investment or the stationing of United States military personnel as part of a broader NATO commitment; we urge Russia to adopt a more cooperative policy towards Lithuania and its ally, the United States;
- (9) urge the government of the Russian Federation and the Russian oil company LUKoil to open up its drilling site in the Baltic Sea, known as D-6, off the coast of Lithuania for inspection by international organizations and Lithuanian authorities, and to develop a comprehensive plan with Lithuania and other concerned states to deal with any environmental pollution caused by the oil drilling and production at the site;
- (10) urge government officials, the judiciary, and the media in Lithuania to address the current political crisis surrounding the office of the President in Lithuania in a forthright and transparent manner which will serve to strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law in Lithuania.

We, authorize the officers of the (local) chapter of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. and the organizers of this assembly to transmit a copy of this resolution once adopted, to appropriate U.S. government representatives, our State representatives, the embassies of Lithuania and the Russian Federation, and the national office of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.

Adopted:

(date) by a vote of ()

Signed by Presiding Officer:

The chapter which had the best success with this resolution is Waukegan, Illinois. They reported receiving back a letter from the Russian Ambassador to the

United States disputing the resolution's reference to the Russian company LUKoil's drilling in the Baltic Sea. The Ambassador claimed that Russia and Lithuania were in agreement over the drilling and there was no need to be concerned over any threats to the environment posed by the drilling. As of publication of this issue of Bridges, that statement is false, however. The Lithuanian government has not announced any agreement with Russia nor with LUKoil over the drilling site and the consequences of any oil spill, nor does there appear to be any satisfactory discussions going on between the two governments.

With the return of Valdas Adamkus to the post of President of Lithuania, Adamkus, a well-known environmentalist, has already raised the issue of possible oil pollution from the LUKoil drilling to the public agenda in Lithuania. We'll be watching closely to see if the people of Lithuania get any satisfaction from LUKoil or the Russian government as to their environmental concerns.

We hope that Lithuanian-Americans across the United States, and not just Waukegan, Illinois will raise their voices on the issue of the LUKoil's drilling in the Baltic Sea. We're looking for environmentalists and other

concerned citizens to join our task force on this important issue. If you're interested contact us at: lacinc@erols.com

Asia Bainonis

Asia Bainonis serves as the current Chairperson of the LAC's Public Affairs Council. Although a native Michigander, she is now a long term resident of Virginia

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L I T H U A N I A N - A M E R I C A N N E W S J O U R N A L



The Two Horses

Once upon a time there lived a lord's horse and a peasant's horse, and the two of them were very good friends. Whenever they met they would talk and never have their fill of talking. But one day the lord's horse came out with something that badly hurt his friend's feelings.

"Unlike me, you are a horse of a common breed," he said. "I am always harnessed to a coach mounted on springs, and you to a wagon or else a harrow. I am fed on nothing but barley, and you, mostly on straw. Just look at me! See how slender and beautiful my legs are and how spotless my hooves. Yours are all caked with mud. My neck is as arched and graceful as a swan's neck and yours is stiff and thick. My skin shines like silk and yours drips with sweat. I have a white star on my forehead and you have none. Which of us is handsome- you or me?"

"You, of course!" said the peasant's horse.

"There you are!" said the lord's horse, lifting his head proudly. "And when I run it's a pleasure to watch me. I move lightly and swiftly, drawing the coach after me as fast as the wind, and the earth itself seems to run from under my feet. You could never do it."

"No, of course not!" said the peasant's horse. "I'm not up to it."

"You certainly are not!" said the lord's horse. "It's no use even talking about it. You couldn't outrun a snail, could you?"

"No, not a snail," said the peasant's horse. "Now you are a different matter. I could outrun you easily." This made the lord's horse very angry. He began stamping his feet and snorting and shaking his mane.

"Very well," he said. "We'll see who outruns who!"

Then and there it was agreed they would run a race, circling the meadow and not stopping until one of them admitted that he could run no more.

The lord's horse threw back his head and started off at a gallop. He outdistanced the peasant's horse by a whole lap and catching up with him on the second lap, left him behind again. He gave a whinny of delight and called,

"Isn't it time for you to rest, my friend? You might get tired."

"I won't, never you fear," the peasant's horse replied.

On the third lap, the lord's horse again caught up with the peasant's horse and again left him behind. He neighed in delight and called: "Isn't it time for you to rest, my friend? You might get tired."

"I won't, never you fear," the peasant's horse replied.

On the fourth lap, too, the lord's horse got ahead of the peasant's horse, but he neighed less loudly now, calling out with nothing like his former confidence.

"Isn't it --- time --- for you --- to rest --- a little? --- You'll get tired."

"I won't, never fear," the peasant's horse replied. "But you seem all out of breath."

"It's because I hurt my foot," the lord's horse lied, galloping on.

On the fifth lap he again got ahead of the peasant's horse, but this time he neither neighed nor called out.

"Why are you groaning, friend?" the peasant's horse asked him. "I stumbled on a root," replied the lord's horse.

On the sixth and seventh laps the lord's horse could not get far ahead of the peasant's horse, and on the eighth, the peasant's horse caught up with the lord's horse and then passed him.

"Why have you fallen behind, friend---tired?" he asked. "No, I paused in order to think," the lord's horse replied. "I'm simply beset by thoughts."

On the ninth lap, the lord's horse stopped running altogether. He dropped down on the ground and kicked out with his legs.

"What's the matter, don't you feel well?" The peasant's horse asked him. "No, it's just that a horsefly is plaguing me. It's bitten me all over. I'll drive it off and then run on again, we have plenty of time."

"Yes, that we have," said the peasant's horse and ran on without stopping.

On the tenth lap, the lord's horse got to his feet and hobbled off behind some bushes to nibble on the grass. He avoided looking at the peasant's horse.

"Is it dinner time, then, Your Lordship?" the peasant's horse called to him.

"It's supper time,"

the lord's horse replied crossly. "Don't you see that the fog is rising? You'd better take a rest, too. We've plenty of time."

"I don't need a rest," said the peasant's horse. "I'm only just starting to warm up. I'll run another ten laps and then another and after that we'll see."

And from that day on the lord's horse, so shamed that he had been outrun by the peasant's horse, never turned up his nose at anyone again.

"Christmas in July" Continued from Page 10

would not be a part of his seventh grade class picture. Instead, his classmates carried his casket to his final resting place.

I was determined that this young man would not be forgotten. Although he never had his used, blue bicycle other children would know some joy at Christmas. And so "Christmas in July" is dedicated to the memory of Arturas and his valiant fight to live.

When I started writing these articles the cost of each gift was approximately \$1. However, the dollar is not as strong and the cost to buy things rises each year. Your response has been overwhelming. Countryside Children's Fund has been able to visit not only schools, but also hospitals. Readers, you have put so many smiles on so many faces that I can't possibly find adequate words to thank you. Each year I write this article I do it with great trepidation. I never take you or your generosity for granted and I explain this very carefully to both Mrs. Landsbergis and Dr. Svoba. Once again, I am asking for your generosity. We must have this money early so it can reach Lithuania as soon as possible. Gifts have to be purchased and volunteers need time to wrap them. Father Christmas has to load them on his sled, horse, or any other kind of transportation he's using for his visits.

I am greatly indebted to Mrs. Landsbergis, Dr. Svoba, the volunteers in Lithuania, and especially the volunteers at

Lithuanian Orphan Care in Chicago. I cause these people so much extra work with this project but I have never heard a word of complaint from them. Maybe I haven't heard it because I live so far away in New Jersey. But it is you, dear readers, who are the heart and soul of this program. Without you, there would be no "Christmas in July" program. For this I will be forever grateful to you

"The only real blind person at Christmas time is he who has not Christmas in his heart."

Helen Kelle

Please send your tax deductible checks with a note of **Christmas Gifts** on them to:

Lithuanian Orphan Care
2711 W. 71st St.
Chicago, IL.60629

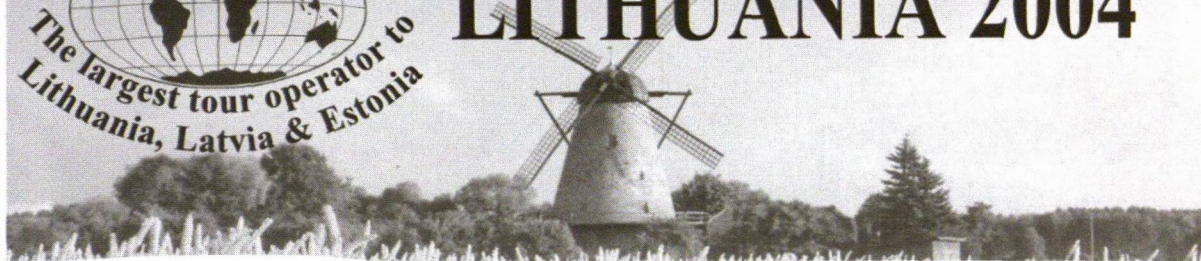
Thank you and God bless you for your kindness and generosity.

Jeanne Dorr

Jeanne Dorr is the Editor of Bridges and a member of the Board of Directors of Lithuanian Orphan Care, a branch of the Human Services Council of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.



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Calendar of Events for September and

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Please check the addresses or appropriate websites to be sure the events are still being held. October

September 18, 2004

Photography Show, 3 pm
Admission - \$5 Donation
Latvian Hall (Colorado)
www.coloradolithuanians.org

September 19, 2004

Knights of Lithuania
Mid-American District Meeting
American Legion Hall
Gary, IN
www.knightsoflithuania.com

September 24 - 26, 2004

Lithuanian-American Community
National Board of
Directors Meeting
Pointe Hilton Squaw Peak Resort
7677 N 16th St
Phoenix, AZ
www.lithaz.org or www.javlb.org

September 26, 2004

Knights of Lithuania
Annual Lithuanian Day of Prayer
Mid Atlantic District
Shrine of North American Martyrs
Auriesville, NY
www.knightsoflithuania.com

September 26, 2004

Knights of Lithuania-Council 36
"Dinner is Served"
beginning at noon
Immaculate Conception Parish
45th and South California Ave.
Chicago, IL
www.knightsoflithuania.com

October 2004, 2004

Krupnikas Lesson
Latvian Hall (Colorado)
For date and time refer to:
www.coloradolithuanians.org

October 7, 2004

Amber Roots Club
Lithuanian Sing-A-Long
Evening - 7 pm
Refreshments will be served.
Lithuanian Music Hall
2715 E. Allegheny Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19134
Downstairs in the Cultural Center
Please use side door to enter
Millie Helt 610-497-5469.

October 9, 2004

Walk-a-thon and bike-a-thon
Pig roast, evening program
Camp Neringa
West Brattleboro, VT
www.neringa.org

October 10, 2004

Knights of Lithuania
Amber District Meeting
Easton, PA
Hosted by Council 63
Lehigh Valley, PA
doloresherbert@IBX.com

October 16, 2004

Traditional Fall Ball
6:30 pm
Crown Plaza North Shore
Mundelein, IL
www.skalisius@connect.net

October 17, 2004

Knights of Lithuania
New England District
Cultural Festival
Food, Exhibits, Entertainment
Maironis Park
52 S. Quinsigamond Ave.
Shrewsbury, MA
www.knightsoflithuania.com

October 23-24, 2004

Knights of Lithuania
Mid-America District
Annual Pilgrimage Weekend
Miraculous Medal Shrine near
St. Louis, MO
www.knightsoflithuania.com

October 24, 2004

Picnic 1pm
Yavapai pavilion of
North Phoenix
Mountain Park
7th and Peoria Ave.
Phoenix, AZ
www.lithaz.org

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