

040 6.

bridges

november 2004



LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

Letter from the Editor

It seems the months are flying as fast as the leaves are falling from the trees.


I want to thank Gema for doing "extra duty" for the October issue. My husband and I spent two glorious weeks in Australia while Gema worked overtime on the issue. It was a trip that was in the "talking" stages for almost forty years- and then it was over in two weeks. A few priorities kept delaying the trip; such as children, college, and jobs. But the wait was well worth it.

As I think about Thanksgiving I am grateful that so many people have volunteered information for Bridges. This issue gives us hope for the future with three young writers. Akvile writes of her memories of her great-grandmother while Lina shows the impact of what one family working together can have on those who have no "traditional" family. Zara shares her delightful experiences of dining with royalty. How many of us ever had an opportunity like that? Congratulations to the members of the Lithuanian- American Community of Cape Cod for sending information about their community. They truly are "treasures among us." I would really like to hear from all the chapters.

Sister Margarita's words of wisdom are always inspirational and during this busy season we should pause and think about the real meaning of the season. Father Peter Burkauskas writes of the special devotion his parishioners and school children have to Our Lady at the Gate of Dawn. We can all take pride in Anna Helen's poetry and accomplishments. Speaking of accomplishments, Larry introduces us to Bette Ann Liudzius who was awarded the Lithuanian-American Roman Catholic Women's Alliance Outstanding Woman of the Year Award. A big thank you to Gloria Kivytaite O'Brien for offering to share the Lithuanian folktales she has translated into English. Keep them coming, Gloria! Ed writes about his experience with the Lithuanian Archives and here the key word is patience. If you send them the questions today and you want the answers tomorrow this is not the place for you to go. As always, Teres's article is filled with information and Leo's journey shows us that Lithuanian hospitality is alive and well.

As we enter the frantic season between Thanksgiving and Christmas let us take time to recall the real meaning of the season. Let us give thanks for all our blessings.

Happy Thanksgiving!


Jeanne Shalna Dorr

BRIDGES

Lithuanian American News Journal
USPS 017131 – Published 10 times per year
(Jan./Feb. and Jul./Aug. combined).
Address of publication is:

LAC, Inc./BRIDGES,
1927 West Blvd.,
Racine, WI 53403

BRIDGES is the official publication of the
Lithuanian American Community, Inc.,
11876 Sunrise Valley Drive,
Suite 200C,
Reston, VA 20191.
Tel. (703) 390-0498.
E-mail: lacinc@erols.com

BRIDGES Consultants

Jeanne Dorr Editor
Gema Kreivenas Design & Production
Ramas Pliura Treasurer,
Lithuanian American Community, Inc.,
and Subscription Manager.

THE INFORMATION CENTER FOR HOME-
COMING LITHUANIANS.

Collects and provides information from
Lithuania.

Copyright ©2004 Lithuanian American Community,
Inc. All rights reserved. No part of the publication may
be reproduced without written permission of the pub-
lisher. All statements and opinions, including product
claims, are those of the organization/advertiser mak-
ing those statements or claims. The publisher does
not adopt, or put forth, any such statement or claim as
his own, and any such statement or claim does not
necessarily reflect the opinion of the publisher.

Address all editorial correspondence to:

BRIDGES

Jeanne Dorr
4 Shrewsbury Yard
Riverton, NJ 08077-1038
E-Mail: Jeanneshalna@aol.com

For subscription and advertising
information, please contact:

LAC, Inc./BRIDGES,
Ramas Pliura
1927 West Boulevard
Racine, WI 53403

Subscription rate is \$18.00 annually
(US Mail serviced subscribers).
Subscriptions to other addresses are
(US \$28.00), payable in advance (US funds).
Periodicals postage paid at Racine, WI;
and additional locations.

Contact us on the Internet at:
www.javlb.org

Postmaster: Send any address correc-
tion and/or changes to
LAC, Inc./BRIDGES,
1927 West Boulevard
Racine, WI 53403

in this issue

2

editorial

Letter
from the Editor
Jeanne Dorr

4

highlights

Address to the
National Board of
Directors of LAC, Inc
Ambassador
Stephen Mull

8

human interest

A Most Unusual
Family
Lina Sestokas

10

human interest

a Night to
Remember
Zara Bielkus

12

reflections

Gate of Dawn
Rev. Peter Burkauskas

13

reflections

Spiritual
Preparation for
Christmas
Sister Margarita
Bareikaite

14

treasures

Pennsylvania Poet
Victor Stepalovitch
Hail to Our
Pennsylvania
Anna Helen McDonald

15

treasures

Lithuanian-
Americans of
Cape Cod
Eugene Uzpurvis

16

treasures

Outstanding
Lithuanian Woman
of the 2004
Laurynas R. Misevicius

18

human interest

The
Seattle-Pakuonis
Connection
Les Podgorny

19

cultural

JURA
Dance Group

20

genealogy

Historical Archives
Edward Baranuskas

24

news and views

26

baltic folklore

The Enchanted
Little Mill
Dr. Jonas Balys

27

akvile's corner

A Solemn Day
Akvile Dudonyte

28

cultural

Cultural Tidbits
Terese M. Gecys

30

food

Lithuanian Kitchen
two recipes

32

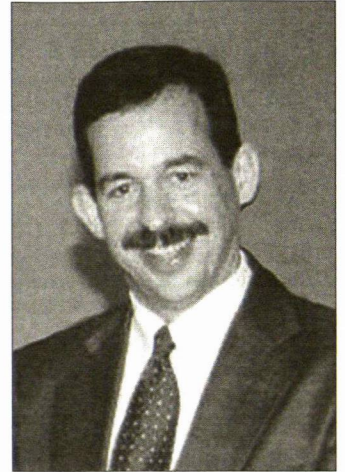
Calendar of
Events

Bridges
Passages
Page 17

*Cover: "Village with a Church/Baznykaimis" wood cut 1939 by Antanas Kucas, his summary is on Page 29.

Lithuanian-American Community Highlights

Address to the
National Board of Directors
of the Lithuanian-American
Community, Inc
Phoenix, Arizona
Saturday, September 25, 2004



President Narusis, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I want to thank you for this opportunity to be with you this evening – and for the opportunity to be in Phoenix when it feels as if winter has already started in Lithuania.

I have had the privilege to serve in Lithuania for a year now. It has been an eventful year. Lithuania formally joined NATO and the European Union. It tested its democratic processes through the impeachment of a president and emerged with strengthened institutions. Lithuanians elected a new, though familiar, president, and for the first time elected representatives to the European Parliament. They face general elections just two weeks from now. I have told many visitors to Lithuania that when I was first nominated for the post of Ambassador, my friends congratulated me by saying that after the heavy workload in Indonesia, I should be pleased to be going to sleepy Lithuania where not much was happening. They were right about my delight to live and work in Lithuania, but quite wrong about its being sleepy.

(The following two paragraphs were spoken eloquently in Lithuanian by Ambassador Mull)

My first year in Vilnius left me with many memories. I will always remember having the opportunity to congratulate Seimas upon Lithuania's entrance into NATO in March of this year, and to congratulate President Adamkus – one of the Lithuanian-American Community's most respected sons – upon his reelection to the presidency in July of this year. And, how can I possibly forget that evening when American and Lithuanian basketball teams played against each other in Athens. I learned that in Lithuania you can even lose happily. Before the start of the first game I wagered a case of America's finest wine against a case of

Lithuania's best beer as to the outcome of the games. Even though America's Dream Team lost, President Adamkus graciously sent me a case of beer. That same evening the reveling fans came to our house and brought even more beer.

Learning Lithuania's beautiful language has also given me great joy. Through daily Lithuanian lessons I have made progress, but improvement has no limits. Not too long ago, at a wedding I spoke to a Lithuanian gentlemen standing next to me and asked him how am I doing (speaking Lithuanian) and where is he from. He looked at me quite puzzled and answered, "I don't speak English very well, could you repeat what you said?"

I would like to take a few minutes here to give you my impressions of Lithuania after one year serving as the U.S. Ambassador, which has to be one of the best jobs anywhere in the world. After giving you a list of my top ten favorite things about living and working in Lithuania, I would like to share some thoughts on my Embassy's priorities and then discuss some of Lithuania's future steps as it continues to grow into its role as an important player on the European and World scene.

Top Ten

1. First on my list of why I enjoy Lithuania so much is that it is the most **pro-American environment** in which I have ever had the privilege to work. Friendship and family ties have a lot to do with that as your group can attest. Lithuanian-Americans kept the flame of an independent Lithuania burning through those dark nights of the Soviet occupation. You gave hope and material assistance to those in Lithuania. The U.S. Government policy of non-recognition of the soviet annexation of the Baltics also played a big role in the respect we still receive – even today.

2. Lithuania is a true friend of the transatlantic alliance. Lithuanians believe that the United States is an important guarantor of their security. While they are integrating into the European Union and will continue to be drawn economically into Europe, Lithuanians still want the United States to be a partner in European security. We welcome this point of view and are convinced that U.S.-EU cooperation is a keystone to the vision of a peaceful Europe, whole and free.

3. Lithuanians appreciate the fragility of freedom and the need to defend it. Some in the West seem to take liberty for granted. Lithuanians, on the other hand, cherish their freedom. They know how hard it was to earn and what they had to do to get it. As such, they are sure allies in the war on terror. When we have come asking for help, the Lithuanian government has supported us politically and with boots on the ground.

4. Lithuanians persevere. If they say they will go the distance, they will go the distance. Lithuania did not back down when things became difficult in Iraq. They worked quietly to reinforce their contingents and keep on with the job. Lithuanian-Americans showed this same perseverance as they kept Saturday schools open to pass on language skills and cultural heritage to the next generations.

5. The Lithuanian people are hard-working and well-educated. I know I'm stating the obvious here – that's why our country is filled with so many successful citizens of Lithuanian descent. But I think many European commentators seeking to decipher the so-called mystery of Lithuania's Europe-leading rate of economic growth ignore the obvious. Lithuanians comprise a highly skilled workforce that is the envy of many countries. These characteristics bode well for Lithuania finding the right niche in the European and world economies. It also means it is a pleasure to work with Lithuanian colleagues who do what they say and say what they mean.

6. Lithuania's vibrant and open democracy is a marvel to watch. There are so many moving parts and power sources that Lithuanian democracy can look very messy sometimes. BUT IT WORKS. The impeachment of former president Rolandas Paksas showed that the important concept of due process was respected even as emotions rose high over the impeachment. We all know Winston Churchill's famous line that democracy is the worst form of government with the exception of all the others. Well, Lithuania has given us another example that an open society can best deal with political turmoil while staying true to its ideals.

7. Lithuania plays a constructive role in regional stability. Friendly with all its neighbors, Lithuania strives

to maintain normal relations with all bordering states – even as border control regulations change. With Lithuania on line to become a member of the Schengen agreement sometime in 2007, this has meant particularly sensitive negotiations with the Russians who want easy transit through Lithuania to reach the Kaliningrad exclave. The Government of Lithuania handled those negotiations with care, finding a balance between Lithuanian/EU requirements and Russian sensitivities.

8. Lithuania has an activist diplomatic strategy. Like the United States, Lithuania does not wait to be told what needs to be done in the diplomatic field. The Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs routinely proposes policy initiatives not just to take care of regional infrastructure, health security and economic issues in Belarus, the Baltic Sea, or Kaliningrad but also to assist those farther afield such as in the Caucasus. Lithuania currently supports a robust exchange program with countries of the Caucasus including training military officers at the academy in Vilnius as well as the Baltic Defense College in Tartu, Estonia. This kind of outreach helps export Lithuania's successful democratic lessons to countries that can identify with Lithuania in size, and recent history. Lithuania's shining example can give hope and provide a roadmap for democratic reform to others.

9. Cultural life in Lithuania is vibrant. Nowhere in my life have I been able to so often attend such high-quality musical, dance, opera and other cultural performances. My wife, Cheri Stephan, really loves the performances and we bring our 9-year-old son Ryan with us whenever we can. We are thrilled at being able to expose him to such rich and wonderful events. All this and at the fraction of the price of cultural events back home in the States!

10. Lithuania has a pro-investment policy. Developing a welcoming investment climate is key to Lithuania's future development. Its comparative advantage in education is likely to stay with Lithuania for now, but we expect salaries to rise thus eliminating a current advantage Lithuania has versus other EU countries. As salaries increase to match expectations of a higher standard of living, Lithuania cannot count merely on what is comparatively cheap labor to help it remain attractive to business. Indeed, Lithuania is not stuck in that path. Lithuanians know that a favorable pro-growth business climate and a commitment to competitiveness are key to maintaining the dynamic growth needed to "catch up" with wealthier members of the European Union.

Five Priorities

The U.S. Mission in Vilnius has set for itself a number of

Continued on page 6

important goals to pursue in this very favorable climate. Lithuania has been a friend in need for us in the **global war on terror**. We work hard at our mission to maintain Lithuania's support in that war. We do this not only through open exchanges and policy support, but also through military education and exchange programs. At this time twelve Lithuanian cadets and midshipmen are studying at U.S. military academies. The commander of Lithuania's land forces is a recently returned graduate of our National War College. Our contact work with Lithuania's military units also helps to build a special relationship. Our Special Operations Command has given the highest of praise to their Lithuanian colleagues serving side by side in Afghanistan.

We want to work with Lithuania as it continues to **integrate itself into NATO and the European Union**. But "more EU does not mean less U.S." Indeed, our relationship has expanded because of Lithuania's membership in the EU. We now have to discuss not just issues of bilateral importance but also anything that affects U.S.-EU relations as well so we have even more on our agenda with Lithuania. We hope Lithuania's friendship means that they will consider carefully in any policy discussion how EU policy will affect Europe's relations with the United States.

Another priority is **trade and business development**. The United States is currently the fourth largest investor in Lithuania and I believe there are good reasons for U.S. investment to increase. Lithuania's booming economy and potential for continued growth suggest that Lithuania, dubbed the "Baltic Tiger," will continue to offer trade and investment opportunities for Americans. Of course, there are lots of factors that go into decisions on where to invest, but I think Lithuania merits a serious look. And to the extent we can help fill in any information gaps you might have, I would urge you to talk with us at the Embassy for thoughts on the contemporary business climate. We also try to play a **constructive role on WWII legacy issues**, and here Lithuania has already done a superb job. Holocaust awareness and education are standard now. More difficult is the issue of property restitution but the Lithuanian Government has committed to resolving the problem through a dialogue with the communities involved. We work to urge all parties to come to a conclusive settlement that will bring equitable closure to this painful chapter of Lithuania's history.

Looking to the future, we work to strengthen relations so as new international issues come up, the United States and Lithuania will see things similarly and take a **common approach to issues of key importance to us**. That

involves not only having close ties with the whole spectrum of political and opinion leaders in Lithuania, but also reaching out beyond the elites in the capital to the people to get America's message out to all our Lithuanian friends. Cultural and educational exchanges play an important role here as do family connections. You can play a key role through the Lithuanian-American Community's contacts with the old country. Keeping our links strong for the next generation is crucial and nobody can work this aspect better than you all.

What Next?

Now a few thoughts on where I think Lithuania is going and how you all can get involved in maintaining our strong bilateral relations.

Your presence here already speaks positively for your contribution to the heroic Baltic States. That you came shows your concern for Lithuania and her future. You are interested in Lithuania's democratic progress. You are particularly interested in securing Lithuania from any aggression that could ever threaten its independence again. I, too, share a concern for Lithuania's future. That is my job, but I come to work every day grateful for having that job. The outlook is bright.

We want our relationship to be vibrant. And it is. That does not make it perfect.

I have already mentioned that I think **we can do more on the investment** front and I will look for your support on this. Lithuania will have to do its best to attract investment for the long-term. This will require a commitment to policies that boost Lithuania's competitiveness and support its comparative advantages.

We also have to face the reality that **Lithuania will dedicate more and more of its attention to Brussels**, not Washington. This is to be expected. Lithuania's daily business transactions will be conducted under EU regulations. Many of Lithuania's government officials will be traveling more often to Brussels, leaving less time for our issues.

Our job is to preserve the fundamental strength of the bilateral relationship. I am confident we can do that because of our historic ties to Lithuania and, even more importantly, because Lithuania has learned it can trust the United States above all others. Especially in the field of security, there is no one whose guarantee means more to Lithuania than when the U.S. President visited Vilnius in November 2002 and stated that "Anyone who chooses Lithuania as an enemy also makes an enemy of the United States." Every interaction with the United States will help

Lithuania stay engaged with us on our issues. High-level visits are a particularly good way to keep the government focused on U.S. issues. I also continue to meet with the full range of political leaders to discuss issues of importance to the U.S. Finally, we have a proactive media shop which tries to publicize most of our activities in the country to keep our profile high.

Lithuania will hold its parliamentary elections in two weeks. It has been a very political year, what with an impeachment, presidential elections, European Parliamentary elections and now general elections. Throughout this period, stories about campaign finance scandals and other improprieties have dominated the press. Lithuania is still a young democracy, and frankly some times it shows. All friends of Lithuania, including all of us in this room, should support our Lithuanian partners in their efforts to develop a democracy that is tolerant and transparent; one that limits the potential for abusive campaign finance; and one in which state institutions, particularly in the law enforcement field, are secure from political influence.

The media in Lithuania is independent and boisterous, and many say it sometimes goes too far in editorializing on its news pages — ignoring facts that go against the editor's opinions. The media's role in a democracy is crucial in helping citizens make key decisions and serving as an important check on the powers of government. That's why we at the U.S. Mission work very closely with the press in promoting its professional development, by bringing several leading editors and reporters to make contact with counterparts in America every year. Your support of these efforts would be most welcome. The question of visa issuance has undoubtedly become more complex since the terrible events of September 11. We recently installed finger-scanning equipment in our Consular Section for visa applicants, in line with the U.S. government's plan to implement such a procedure at every Embassy in the world. This will provide security against identity theft as well as security at our borders without being too intrusive on our applicants.

Of course, as you might imagine, the biggest concern I hear from my Lithuanian friends is not about the risk of identity theft, but about their unhappiness with the numbers of visas that are refused. While more than two out of every three applicants for a tourist visa receive them in Vilnius, those who are not successful are often understandably not happy. The law puts a very heavy burden on our consular officers to determine the eligibility of every person they interview, and while those who are not successful are often not happy with the final

decision, it is my staff's and my strict policy to treat every applicant with dignity, respect and with the clearest possible explanation. If you ever believe that is not the case, I would like to know about it directly from you, and I pledge to address such cases swiftly.

Many European Union countries participate in what we call the visa waiver program. This allows travelers from a visa waiver program country to enter the USA without a visa under certain restrictions. Lithuanians naturally would like to be included in this program but the visa waiver program can only start after meeting certain conditions related to reducing patterns of overstays and illegal work in the United States. Lithuania right now does not qualify, and the program itself is undergoing a comprehensive interagency review in Washington. We remain in close contact with the Lithuanian government to hear its concerns about visa policy. For our part, we also work hard to get the word out to the Lithuanian public about the legal ways to work temporarily in the U.S. But I would also welcome your advice in how best to approach this sometimes painful issue in our bilateral relationship so that we can enforce America's laws in a way that our Lithuanian clientele will understand and appreciate.

Conclusion

I have listed some of the reasons that I have come to love Lithuanians and the stout country they so proudly represent. It is a great place to work and live and I am truly fortunate that President Bush selected me to represent him and our wonderful country.

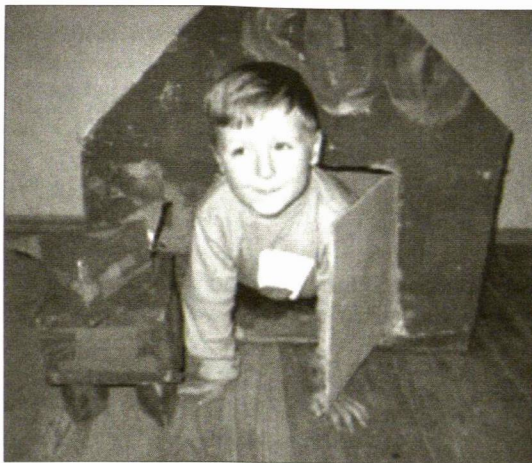
I have also mentioned some challenges that Lithuania is facing as it continues to make up for all the lost time of the occupation. It has come a long way and shows no signs of stopping. As Americans, we have no greater friend than Lithuania. Help me as I work to continue to keep our relations at such a high level.

*Ambassador Stephen Mull
United States Ambassador to Lithuania*

A Most Unusual Family

The family of Rumbonys is unconventional, to say the least. Consisting of twelve young children and six young adults, they don't always live together in one place - some of them live in Rumbonys, Lithuania, a small town outside of Alytus, year-round, but others only live there during the summer. The family's home is situated on a farm which everyone with an able body has to help maintain. The parish rectory, the building in which the family

eats and sleeps, has an old-fashioned furnace that the family uses to boil water and cook, but it does not have running water, showers or modern bathroom facilities. The family shares bedrooms, blankets and beds. Some of the young people living in this family are orphans and have no living parents to speak of. Others have parents who simply do not have the means to take care of them. They came to Rumbonys, however, because a dedicated group of spunky nuns decided they needed to take these children under their wing and give them a better life.



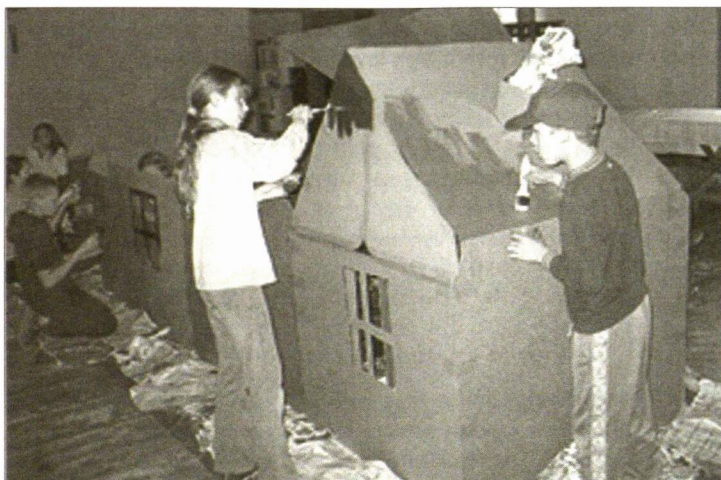
Tomas loves his new paper house and paper dog.

Sisters Danute, Elvira, Sonata and Vita, together with Father Leonas, who supervises the Rumbonys parish from his own parish in nearby Alytus, have overcome many financial and political obstacles to keep these eighteen children away from the even poorer conditions of Lithuanian federal orphanages. They continue to fight these obstacles, frequently living merely from hand to mouth, on a daily basis.

I have visited the parish of Rumbonys with my family for two consecutive years now. It has been a privilege to come to know this untiring group of nuns, the loving children and the tough group of young men and women who make up the Rumbonys family. Sesele Danute is a brave and gutsy nun with a commanding presence who directs the business of the home and farm from her bedroom, but she is the also kind and compassionate mother-figure to whom all of the children can turn with their problems. Sesele Danute has made it her life's mission to give the

orphaned and neglected children of the Alytus region of Lithuania a second chance at life. Every day, she speaks to each child individually before they go to bed. She doesn't sleep herself until the oldest young adult is safe at home. And she charges nobody rent, letting the young adults keep any money they may make outside of the farm for their future needs and wants. "Small children, small problems," Sister often says, "Big children, big problems." She tries to help every child with their problems, physical, spiritual and emotional, showing her family her love through the small crosses she makes on their foreheads with her right thumb.

Sister Danute's team is strong. Sister



Younger children hard at work painting the new cardboard house.



Onile Sestokas, first one on the left, and her daughter, Lina, in the middle with their Rumbonys friends.

Sonata has been helping her take care of these children ever since Sister Danute brought home Juozas, their first charge, to Rumbonys in 1987 (Juozas is now 22 and still works with the sisters on the farm). Sister Elvira helps Sisters Danute and Sonata out in the kitchen, making meals for the family. She keeps the farm's inventory using Excel on a donated computer. Sister Vita lives down the street from the rectory. She takes care of the Rumbonys senior citizens in the town's small nursing home. Father Leonas Jakimavicius visits the women and children of Rumbonys at least twice a week. He has taken it upon himself to coordinate fundraising efforts not only to remodel the old rectory where the children and nuns currently live and the church where they and the families from the surrounding countryside go to worship, but also to build them a new home complete with modern bathroom facilities next door. Father Jakimavicius, who, prior to entering the seminary was trained as an engineer, supervises the building efforts himself, and often personally pitches in to help with the construction work himself.

During our stay with the Rumbonys family, my family and I tried to help them as much as we could. With the young children, we unpacked boxes from a container we had sent prior to our trip that included peanut butter, spaghetti and spaghetti sauce. We also heard stories from the kids about the forty foot container whose shipping was coordinated in the spring by Boston-area students. Sister Danute told us that that container

helped not only the children of Rumbonys but 130 additional families in the area. We tried not to burden the Rumbonys family with our own material needs during our stay.

We couldn't help the family with everything. But we could provide the children of Rumbonys with love and attention, the slippery and abstract, but necessary things of which they have all been too long deprived. The young children constantly wanted to do things with us – they wanted to make the new arts and crafts projects we brought with us, they wanted to play in the relay races and sports

games we wanted to organize for them. Together we built a house out of cardboard and then painted it. Superficially, it may have only been a flimsy paper house, but the children loved it because they had built it and painted it themselves. Together we made Christmas trees out of dried pinecones and colored popcorn kernels, a project I had learned in school in the first grade, but young people as old as nineteen enjoyed the activity in Rumbonys. Rice Krispie Treats, which the children helped to make themselves, were a delicacy, savored by the whole family, the crumbs relished until completely gone.

The older children, on the other hand, although they appreciated the activities we did with the younger children, too, like building the house and

Continued on page 23



Lina with her new friends showing off their beautiful art work.



a Night to Remember

Standing at the top of a red-carpeted staircase, my palms sweat as I join the high table guests lining up to be announced by the trumpeter. 'How badly will they butcher my last name?' I question silently as I smile at the guest of honor.

"Miss Zara Bielkus, Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar-Oxford," the trumpeter announces, who then plays a trumpet salute as I cross to shake hands with the hosts. Graciously gliding into the dining hall I realize the gentlemen with tuxedos and white gloves lining the back wall are waiters and ushers, not guests. Chandeliers with real candles adorn the hall, their soft glow highlighting the gold-rimmed china. Although I had seen the seating chart in the hallway, I did not actually believe that out of 300 guests, both royal and common, that I would be seated at the high table. An usher quickly assists me to my seat, as I am still a bit dazed at the splendor of the hall. And then I realize yes, the seating chart is correct, and yes the little red crown stamped on the chart represents His Royal Highness The Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex, and yes, he is sitting directly across from me.

Trying not to stare, instead I glance at the Lords and Ladies accompanying me at the high table. Most of these people arrived by carriage; mine was an eight-wheel Oxford-London bus. To make matters worse, my laundry was actually in tow, because I had just returned from a vacation to Lithuania. My friend in London has a washing machine unlike my flat at Oxford, which does not even have a shower, forcing a daily bath before bed and taking my washings to London. My thoughts turn to the mundane, like when will the first course be served, as I am famished, and suddenly begin to question why Cinderella never faced two weeks of food deprivation in order to fit into her ball gown. Alas, but then again, Cinderella did not arrive to her ball by coach.

"I am Lady Whiterton!" and you are an ambassador from *where?*" my dinner partner seated to my right inquires.

"No I am a scholar, an Ambassadorial Scholar. It is a scholarship program offered by Rotary International, I am not an ambassador-yet," I answer in a whisper as the rest of the room raises a glass of champagne, 'to the Queen.'

"Lithuania? A Baltic state, no?" she says, seemingly proud that she not only knows how to pronounce the country but can group it geographically.

"Yes, the southernmost Baltic...deemed the 'Baltic Tiger' by *The Economist* a few months ago" I say. "I arrived at Heathrow Airport midnight yesterday from a holiday to Vilnius," I say softly.

"I did not think Heathrow allowed for air-traffic after eleven p.m." she requites. Typical. Debate is typical, if not required, of Oxford students, so I thought I should practice, even on a Lady.

"Actually my flight was delayed, we were in a holding pattern for longer than the actual flight time, no gates were open, immigration took another two hours, and-" I stop when Lady Whiterton stares, eyebrows raised, not blinking and mouth gaping. 'Oh no!' I think to myself, Ladies do not complain and they most certainly do not argue at the dinner table.

Is my concern to be correct 'Oxford training gone awry' or simply the effects of sleep deprivation? The waiter arrives at an opportune moment, allowing me to bury my face in the first course.

"The truffles are lovely..." I remark, "mushrooms grow readily in Lithuania," suddenly realizing my statement is not the *piece de resistance* I am intending.

"Could you enlighten us about how you, an American, come to travel to Lithuania, and have the opportunity to attend Oxford?" her husband, Lord Whiterton asks from across the table - the first and last words from the Lord.

Many Lithuanian's fled their homeland during the Second World War emigrating to America, Australia, Canada, Argentina, and United Kingdom; leaving mothers, brothers, or children behind, taking nothing but memories, I share with sympathetic ears. My grandparents were not an exception - they were the daily tragedy. And so seventy years later, on the brink of Lithuania joining (ironically) another union, I traveled to Vilnius to take ownership of the things that helped create the memories that my grand-

parents could take - the Poskus and Bielkevicius homelands. My family needed me to ensure all my grandparent's lands, forests, and homes were registered in our family name before Lithuania joined the European Union; so that, once again this land would not go unused-this land would no longer have amnesia.

By lowering my head slightly, it made my dining companions suddenly more receptive, laughingly I jest, "this is why, Lords and Ladies, in a land where notaries with demigod status, farmers with dirt tattooed under their fingernails, and I, a student from America with my grandmother's Power-of-Attorney, we can all sign and stamp documents together!"

At this point I decide to clarify that no, I am *not* an ambassador, but instead am an Ambassadorial Scholar of Rotary International, a service organization that provides scholarships for scholars who act as Ambassadors of Goodwill between the countries that sponsor them and the countries where their study institution is located. Rotary International is the largest privately funded scholarship program in the world. By investing in today the Rotary International creates the tomorrow we all want to experience.

"Rotary International chose me because they believe I will uphold their motto of 'Service Above Self.' Unlike with the Rhodes scholarship, where the commitment is to the US government, with Rotary, you must make the commitment to others, to the world." Rotary International is a goodwill service organization; the

scholarship is only one of its many programs, including other programs such as helping vaccinate the world against polio, or giving the opportunity of life to children around the world suffering from heart problems.

"You know," I say to Lady Whiterton, "Sir Isaac Newton knew from the very start that everyone needs support; he said 'if I have been able to see farther it is because I have stood on the shoulder of giants.'"

"Rotarians, the giants of the world?" she asks.

"Yes, Rotarians, the giants of the world," I say.

"Is this your first time meeting HRH Prince Edward?" Lady Whiterton questions as if I should know the acronym stands for 'His Royal Highness.'

"Well, in my Ambassadorial year, I met people like James Rubin, Bing West, and the head of MI6, in fact I even greeted the Queen of England at Royal Ascot week as we observed winning fillies from under our outlandish brims. But yes, this is the first time meeting HRH."

"Me too," she beams, "we are so lucky." And we are both so lucky. With or without a title we both are ladies tonight.

Zara Bielkus

Zara Bielkus is a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar at Oxford University.

¹ The name of this character was modified to protect her identity.

EDUCATION

Lithuanian Language Lessons Online

While I was in Lithuania I had the good fortune of meeting Ramona and Ramutis Zakarevicius. They were very gracious hosts, proud of Australia and proud of their Lithuanian heritage. Ramona told me of the hours and hours that were spent in trying to bring Lithuanian language lessons to those who would like to learn the language. They were successful in gaining funding from

the New South Wales Government through the Community Relations Commission for a multi cultural NSW.

You will not only learn from this site, you will also enjoy the graphics. The lessons are absolutely free. You can work at your own pace and enjoy yourself.

If you like what you see please contact them and let them know. They enjoy hearing from people all over the world.

The site is: www.slic.org.au

Click on Lithuanian Language Lessons

Jeanne Dorr



Nestled snugly into the winding and narrow streets of Vilnius is one of the most inspiring and sacred shrines of the Lithuanian nation - the chapel of Our Lady at the Gate of Dawn.

For centuries the chapel has attracted the curious, charmed the tourists and confused the atheists. But above all, it has inspired faithful believers. The tiny chapel contains a painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary believed to be miraculous.

The only source on the history of the painting is a work written in 1761 by Hilary, a Carmelite monk. He wrote that the Carmelite monks, who established themselves in Vilnius in 1620, built a monastery and the church of Saint Theresa near the Gate of Dawn between 1621 and 1650. The picture of the Virgin at the Gate of Dawn attracted their attention. When the city of Vilnius, attacked by the Muscovites, burned for 17 days in August of 1655, the painting remained undamaged. In 1671 they built a small wooden chapel over the

The Gate of Dawn

*Mary, the dawn,
Christ, the Perfect Day.*

*Mary, the Gate,
Christ, the Heavenly Way!*

ancient city gate and placed the painting in it, now adorned with a precious silver covering.

The painting of the Virgin of the Gate of Dawn became known for its reported miraculousness in the 17th century. The monk Hilary wrote that 17 miracles, sworn to under oath, were recorded between 1671-1761. From the 18th century both the Bishops of Vilnius and the Popes acknowledged the painting's miraculous character. In 1773 Pope Clement XIV granted an indulgence to worshippers at the Gate of Dawn. In 1927 Pope Pius XI allowed the painting to be solemnly crowned and granted the title of "Mary, Mother of Mercy".

The fame of the miraculous painting spread beyond the boundaries of Lithuania. Before World War II Masses were said in the Gate of Dawn chapel from sunrise until noon, and devotions were prayed and sung to Mary in the evenings. During the Masses and devotions the pilgrims filled the tiny chapel and overflowed into the street below. The street where the Gate of Dawn is located was open only to pedestrian traffic. Even during the soviet-occupation, when many churches and shrines experienced closings and desecration throughout Lithuania, the chapel at the Gate of Dawn remarkably remained opened. Today independent Lithuania preserves the tiny chapel overlooking the street

below as a national and sacred monument.



While Saint Casimir's Church in south Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is far from Vilnius, it is closely linked with daily devotion to Our Lady at the Gate of Dawn. Several years ago, I brought back from Lithuania an amber picture of

Continues on page 25

If you would like your intentions included in the daily prayers by the parishioners and students at St. Casimir's Church before the image of Our Lady of Vilnius, you may send them to:

Rev. Peter Burkauskas
St. Casimir's Church
324 Wharton St.
Philadelphia, PA 19147

A copy of the daily prayers will also be sent upon request. Any donations received will be greatly appreciated and used to keep the school open.



The four
candles symbolize the
four weeks of Advent.

The evergreen reflects life
that endures.

The circle shows that
God's presence
is never ending.

Advent Spiritual Preparation for Christmas

Advent is a proclamation of the Lord's coming as the Son of Man, as Emmanuel, God- with us.

Advent is a season of hope, repentance and joy. We know that Christ has already come, but He will come again in glory and for this we still long. Our Advent models are Isaiah who yearned for the coming of the Lord, John the Baptist who announced the presence of Christ, and Mary the mother of Jesus.

Many of Advent's readings refer to events long past. They also include some of Israel's finest poetry and its focus is not on the past, but on the future. It sees those events and persons as symbols and models for a new advent which stretches before us when God's designs for humanity and our deepest aspirations will be fulfilled.

With Matthew we celebrate Advent as missionary Christians who are aware of our roots in Judaism. Advent readings from the Hebrew Scriptures do provide religious language for both Jews and Christians, for all of us whose spirit burns with the fire of God's eternal word.

The New Testament in its time could look back to the Old Testament and see in its passages the promise of what was now fulfilled in its gospel experience. Today we see how the New Testament itself fulfilled in its daily unfolding full of surprises as its rich potential is gradually revealed.

In this liturgical cycle the Sundays of Advent are dominated by Matthew's gospel. We begin with Jesus' discourse on the coming of the Son of Man (Mt. 24:37-44), then with the work and message of John the Baptist (Mt. 3:1- 12: 11:2-11).

It is not easy to tell what the Son of Man's coming will mean. We need images and symbols which point beyond what we see and touch. As in the past, we look to the Lord's coming as a day of peace.

John the Baptist and his message help us to grasp our role as we prepare for the Lord's coming (Mt. 3: 1-12). Like John we have a mission to others. A short reading from Paul's letter to the Romans draws our attention to the person of Christ Jesus whose spirit guides us as we turn to the Scriptures in pursuit of our mission (Romans 15: 4- 9).

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

Treasures Among Us
Pennsylvania Poet



Pennsylvanian State Senator James J. Rhoades with Anna Helen McDonald

Anna Helen McDonald, a resident of Kaska, Pennsylvania, has written a poem about the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Senate Bill 1066 was introduced into the General Assembly of Pennsylvania declaring and adopting the poem "Hail to Our Pennsylvania" as the state poem of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. A copy of her book, as well as Senate Bill 1066, has been forwarded to Governor Rendell by state Senator James J. Rhoades.

Senator Rhoades presented Anna Helen with a citation for the Amber District of the Knights of Lithuania along with a framed copy of Senate Bill 1066. In return, Senator Rhoades received a Lithuanian stole for his continued support on Anna Helen's behalf.

Anna Helen is a member of the International Poets Hall of Fame and an International Ambassador of Poetry. She is an active member of the Knights of Lithuania.

*Information submitted by
 Victor Stepalovitch*

Hail to Our Pennsylvania

*The Liberty Bell, in Independence Hall, for freedom
 was rung,*

*The first American flag, in Philadelphia, was made
 and hung.*

*One if by land-two if by sea-Paul Revere's ride for
 Liberty.*

*Our State played a part in this Country's destiny:
 Valley Forge, where troops by Washington were led
 The Battlefield where "Minutemen" blood was shed
 Philadelphia, where the Country's first Capital did
 stand,*

A state full of tradition – ever so grand.

*Our Pennsylvania with ruffled grouse and mountain
 laurel.*

An array of beauty without any quarrel.

God bless this land where all abound,

A piece of Paradise on earth is found.

How many have fallen and lie in silent sleep

Leaving others their vigils to keep?

They fought battles on many foreign shores

Every one – a war to end all wars.

*The fields were strewn with blood the ultimate
 sacrifice was made*

Those that survived-freedom's groundwork was laid.

*When the final skirmish was laid to rest and
 freedom was in sight*

*Our loved ones came home-while others took the
 Eternal flight.*

*Our brave men and women were always ready to
 serve.*

*Loyalty to God and Country- their duty-freedom
 to preserve.*

*We owe a debt of gratitude to those who kept us free
 Our brave warriors in the "land of liberty."*

*Today the memories came flooding back into view
 Comrades, buddies, cherished friends-*

We salute you!

Anna Helen McDonald

Treasurers Among Us

Lithuanian-Americans of Cape Cod

The Lithuanian-American Chapter of Cape Cod was established thirty years ago. The majority of its members were retired Lithuanians who chose Cape Cod as an ideal place for retirement. Many of the original members have passed away and most are interned at the Xavier St. Francis cemetery in Centerville. The chapter is shrinking and still made up mostly of retirees. The younger generation appears to be busy building their future. Heritage, customs and past do not seem important to them.

The community's activities are limited and generally consist of helping member families to bury their loved ones and provide moral support in their hour of grief. Members visit the cemetery on Memorial Day to read the names of the deceased, pray and sing a Lithuanian song or reading and visit the grave sites.

On the brighter side we celebrate Lithuania's Independence Day with formal and artistic segments. We participate in an International Cultural Day at a local college showing Lithuanian art, literature, women's national costumes and general information about Lithuania. We participate in an annual international dinner with

program and dancing each year a different nation organizes this affair.

The two highlights of our activities are the annual meeting with luncheon where we discuss our accomplishments, goals and plans and elect new leadership. The second highlight is our fall pot luck picnic where we enjoy ourselves, have a raffle and try to raise money.

We support a golf tournament to raise funds for purchasing medical equipment for Lithuanian hospitals. We make donations to the care of orphans and other worthy causes. We actively encourage our American political leaders to support Lithuanian causes.

That is who we are and what we do. Our future activities are: Pot luck picnic in September. Independence Day celebration in February or March, retreat in March or April, Memorial Day and the annual luncheon meeting in May or June.

Our hope is to have more, especially younger members, to continue the work and propagate our customs, language and maintain our heritage.

Submitted by Eugene Uzpurvis



Treasures Among Us

Outstanding Lithuanian Woman of the 2004

Bette Ann Liudzius from
New Britain, CT

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the Lithuanian American Roman Catholic Women's Alliance organization, which was established on December 13, 1914 in Chicago, IL. Originally there were 15 chapters across the USA; today, besides Illinois, those still active are in Wisconsin, Michigan, Florida, Massachusetts and Connecticut. The organization's main goal is to work for the good of Lithuanians in Lithuania and the U.S. At present LAR-CWA is helping a Women's Union in Lithuania who run a program for homeless teenage girls to teach them how to cook and take care of themselves, go to school and learn a lot of other things. Since 1977 the Alliance decided to start awarding outstanding Lithuanian women from Lithuania, Canada and America. Some prominent names of recipients of this award have been an outstanding journalist, Ramute Bindokiene the first woman as an editor-in-chief of the Lithuanian daily "Draugas", published in Chicago (who is still holding this position), a well-known dissident movement activist Nijole Sadunaite from Vilnius, also Sr. Aloyza of Putnam who has established the American convent of Sisters of Immaculate Conception. Last year the honor was granted to Sr. Helen Ivanauskas, a member of Sisters of Jesus Crucified at Our Lady of Sorrows Convent in Brockton, MA. Sister Helen is a founder of the "Lithuanian Children's Relief" charitable organization in Brockton. The National Lithuanian American Roman Catholic Women's Alliance of Chicago, Illinois originally commissioned artist Sister Mercedes, a Sister of St. Casimir in Chicago, to design a plaque designating the honor of Outstanding Lithuanian American Woman of the Year.



Kathryn Urban presents Bette Ann Liudzius with the LARCWA Outstanding Woman of the year plaque.

On September 5, 2004 there was an award ceremony held at St. Andrew's Lithuanian Church in New Britain, CT. This time the Outstanding Lithuanian Woman's Award was presented to an all-around Connecticut lady - Elzbieta Ona Marija Raugeviciute-Liudziuviene, or Bette Ann Liudzius as some of you may know her. After a brief invocation by Fr. John Rikteraitis and proclamations of Governor Jodi Rell, as well as State Senator Donald DeFronzo and New Britain Mayor Timothy Stewart, the plaque was presented to Bette Ann by Kathryn Urban, National First Vice President and President of Hartford Chapter 17. Kathryn spoke on Bette's nomination. "I got to know Bette Ann in the early 70's when I was invited with my small son to watch her husband's father make a famous "Liudzius" Raguolis cake over charcoal fire right in the basement of their home... life comes in full circles for all of us because my son was married recently in San Francisco and we had ordered the same Lithuanian Raguolis made by Joe and Bette Ann Liudzius for his wedding reception. Our friendship with her grew over the years as I watched with amazement all the accomplishments she achieved here at St. Andrew's, the city of New Britain, our State of Connecticut and all over the world. Just like the plot of the great musical "Sound of Music" - that's what comes to my mind today, when I think about Bette Ann and her devotion to the arts, creativity and total commitment to her parish, community and family. I wholeheartedly nominated this person for our Lithuanian American Roman Catholic Women's

Alliance Outstanding Lithuanian Woman of the Year Award, and we recognize her steadfast dedication to her Lithuanian heritage, too!"

In response to her nomination and acceptance of the award Mrs. Liudzius said: "What can I say about this moment? Today it is my Christmas, Easter, birthday and winning the Olympic gold medal all rolled up into one. "Golden" honor makes me wonder now where do I begin my "thank you's". God, for the blessings of my family that I've continuously received from Him, Kay Urban for nominating me and the LARCWA for selecting me to be... can't believe what I say... the Outstanding Lithuanian Woman of the Year 2004! If you ever decided to give a similar award to a man, our Fr. John Rikteraitis would definitely be a great candidate – thanks for being there for us all, when we need you Father. I'm so grateful to all of you wonderful people to have planned and worked so hard to make this such a memorable occasion. A special St. Andrew's hug goes to all who attended the Lithuanian Mass today and especially our choir. It felt really strange sitting downstairs and listen to you singing... And I know my parents, rela-

tives and friends were smiling down from the above – a higher choir loft. It's hard to hold the tears of joy to see so many of you sacrificed this Labor Day holiday weekend to come here to join me in the celebration. Since my husband Joe has always been there, right next to me anytime and this precious moment, being my support, helper, love for over 48 years... known as the "Raguolis King", I guess I can be a "queen", even if only for today!" That's what we heard passed on by Elzbieta Ona Marija Raugeviciute-Liudziuviene, Amerikos Lietuviu Katalikiu Moteru Sajungos Iskilioji 2004-uju Metu Moteris, a true role model to follow.

Laurynas R. Misevicius.

Laurynas Misevicius lives in Connecticut and is an active member of the Lithuanian-American Community. He is also a member of the Knights of Lithuania Supreme Council and is chair of the Lithuanian Language and Culture Committee. His many activities include being the first president elect of the re-established Connecticut Lithuanian Sports.

Bridges Passages

Bridges November/ December 1981

The largest linden tree in Lithuania, estimated to be between 400 and 500 years old, is found in the Braziukai village 25 miles southwest of Kaunas. The linden tree, called Liepa Motinele (Mother Linden) is nearly 90 feet tall with a circumference of over 23 feet. Six to seven people can fit in its rotted out center. The tree has seen its share of historic events: the freedom fighters of 1863 used it as a central gathering place in their revolt against the czar, and it is said, the Russians used it as a hanging tree for the 1863 freedom fighters. The tree is adorned with a small chapel baring a stylized Christ figure (Rupintojelis) which bears the date, 1859. During and after World War II, the surrounding Kazlu Ruda forest was the site of resistance by partisans fighting the Soviets. However, with all that Liepa Motinele has seen, she is still only a child compared to the Stelmuze Oak in northwestern Lithuania, which is estimated to be 2,000 years old.

Bridges November 1979

A brief policy statement issued by the US Department of State in July, 1979 reiterated America's policy toward the Baltic Republics. The statement issued as a "gist" report by the Bureau of Public Affairs, began with this background comment: "The United States does not recognize the forcible and unlawful incorporation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into the U.S.S.R. in 1940. As a corollary of this non-recognition policy, we recognize and continue to deal with representatives commissioned as diplomats by the last three independent Baltic governments. The Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian charge d' affaires in the US enjoy full diplomatic privileges and immunities. Their role is to uphold the ideal of a free Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

The SEATTLE-PAKUONIS Connection

In September of 2001 I was on a train from Suwalki, Poland, heading for Kaunas, Lithuania to complete my journey of visiting the birthplaces of my four grandparents. Three of my grandparents were born in Poland and the fourth, my maternal grandfather, Andrius Balciauskas, was born in Pakuonis, Lithuania, in 1881. Andrius came to America in 1900 and at the suggestion of a friend; he traveled to Pittsburgh to begin his new life. He became a boarder at the home of a Polish immigrant family. The head of this household was joined by his sister in 1901 when he sent her the money to come to his family in America. His sister, Salomea Romonowska, married Andrius, the boarder, in 1903, and they eventually moved to Illinois where six of their eight children were born.

In Kaunas, through prior arrangements, I was met by Prof. Arturas Tereskinas who accompanied me during my several days in Lithuania. Arturas and I originally met the year before when he was visiting Seattle. At my request Arturas made contact with a teacher, Mrs. Onute Zmejauskiene, at Pakuonis Basic School (K-10), to give us a guided tour of the school and also the local church where my grandfather may have been baptized.

The student population was about 320, with 22 teachers. English is taught from the fourth grade. I was impressed with the well-mannered

students dressed no differently than American students of the same age. The school also has a small museum consisting of three rooms whose purpose is to remind the students of Pakuonis what life in the village was like a hundred years ago. Onute Zmejauskiene was able to convince the administration to set aside three rooms depicting "early life" of the farm people of Pakuonis. Onute approached the people in the village to donate objects from their homes and farm buildings to furnish this museum. The church also donated priests' vestments, church decorations and ornaments, crosses and objects carried during church processions and pilgrimages.

After I returned to Seattle I began corresponding with Mrs. Zmejauskiene by airmail until several years ago when the school went on-line and our correspondence shifted to email. Over this period of time my wife and I decided we would help the school build a library of books in English which would be especially helpful and encouraging for students in the fourth to eighth grades. In the next three years we sent over 200 books to the school.

This past winter I decided to visit Lithuania again in the spring, but this time with my wife, Shigeko. On a Sunday morning we traveled by bus from Vilnius to Kaunas where we were met by Onute, her son-in-law (he owned a car and volunteered his Sunday to be our

chauffeur), and Sandra Dapkute, the new English language teacher. It was a great day to spend with people who have a sincerity of hospitality which is sometimes referred to as "old world charm." On Monday morning we again traveled by bus from Vilnius to Kaunas and then by minibus to Pakuonis.

Pakuonis is a small village and the school was less than 50 yards from the bus stop. Word spread fast that we had arrived and we were met at the entrance by Principal Jonas Mikelionis, Onute, and Sandra. After a brief introduction to Mr. Mikelionis and his administrative staff, we had a tea-and-cake break. We were then ushered into the auditorium, and much to our surprise the entire student body, faculty and staff, stood and applauded our entrance. It was a very special moment that we will never forget. We were then entertained by various student groups who performed folk dances, folk songs, and folk music played on recorders. And three teachers sang a folk song for us. The climax was the entire group again standing and singing a national song for us. It was quite a moving experience for us.

After a lavishly prepared lunch in the school kitchen we were given a tour of the school. The classrooms were no different than what one would find in a Seattle school of the same grades. I was especially impressed by the arts and crafts seen in the kindergarten and lower grades. We were then taken to the

Continues to page 22



JŪRA

San Diego

Lithuanian folk dance ensemble "JURA" (The Sea) was founded by Stasys and Giedre Milasius in 1999. They continue to lead the group to this day.

Members of the group are united by their Lithuanian spirit and by their love of Lithuanian song and dance.

The main goals of the "JURA" folk dance group are to maintain the unique Lithuanian folk dance heritage and to enrich the tapestry of San Diego's multicultural community.

"JURA'S" first performance took place on February 16, 2000 at the Lithuania's Independence Day celebration event in San Diego. Later, in the summer of 2000, "JURA" dancers participated at the



XI Lithuanian Folk Festival in Toronto, Canada. Every year since inception "JURA" has performed in the National Festival organized by the San Diego House of Pacific Relations, and in 2002 and 2003 at the San Diego Nations Dance Festival organized by the San Diego Dance Alliance.

JURA'S motto—"We love our homeland through dance and not words".

For more information about JURA contact:
info@sandiegojura.org

The Lithuanian State Historical Archives

From LITHUANIA WEEKLY July 1, 2004
By Edward Baranuskas

I believe many Americans of Lithuanian descent may be wondering how they can learn more about their ancestors and roots. The wonderful adventure of searching for the past may not be as difficult as one may think, but it does require patience.

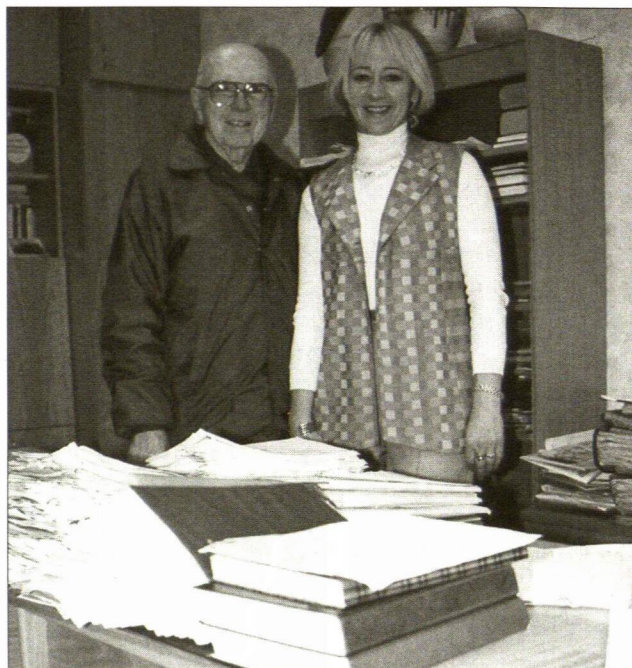
The place to start is the Lithuanian State Historical Archives (Lietuvos Valstybes Istorijos Archyvas), located on a street named Gerosios Vilties, number 10, in Vilnius. This building is the biggest depository of all Lithuanian historical documents from the 15th to the 16th centuries and on, but the most asked for requests are for records of parents, grandparents, or, a genealogical search for their family roots.

Now a resident of Vilnius, I have had several opportunities to meet and talk with the head of the Genealogical Department, Neringa Ceskeviciute. She graduated from the History Faculty of Vilnius University and works in the field of genealogical research. Anything you want to know about your roots starts in her office.

The years of Soviet occupation, from 1940 to 1991, made it difficult for foreigners to obtain any information about their ancestors. That was then, but now times have changed for the better.

Since Lithuania regained her independence, people living in Lithuania are also requesting information about their family members. In addition, Neringa receives letters mostly from the USA, Canada, Latin America and Australia. It seems Lithuanians are scattered all over the world, eager to discover their origin, for requests now come in from New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the Philippines, and recently China. Letters from outside of Lithuania are usually written in English, Polish, and sometimes Lithuanian. Each letter usually has few phrases in Lithuanian.

As a result of the amount of mail the Genealogical Department receives, Neringa and her staff of assistants are swamped with work. Every letter is



Edward Baranuskas with Neringa Ceskeviciute at work.

entered on a page in a ledger in the order it is received, with the dates, and with the information requested. Directly across from it is a page which notes the date it was answered. I was there one morning and Neringa showed me a pile of letters at least six inches, or more, in height, each one waiting to be answered. In addition to her regular duties, from all appearances, it seems she has assumed the job of a bookkeeper, too.

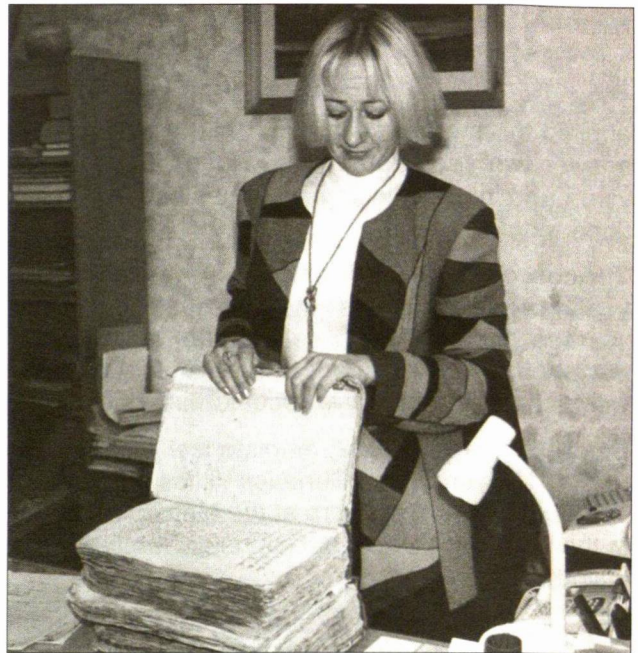
When writing for information, patience is required. If a person asks a single question, the answer may be given anywhere between one week to a month. If the letter asks for an extensive genealogical research, bearing in mind the workload facing the staff, and the painstaking research required, a wait of perhaps as much as two years may be necessary. At the moment, letters written in January-February 2002 are being answered. Remember. Patience is a virtue.

Neringa advises those who write, or come to the office in Vilnius, to give as much exact data as best

they can, and not just guess work, of the names of places, villages, or towns and their variations in spelling, including family and first names. This is extremely important as it would save the research staff a considerable amount of time. One illustration of this point were records of three gentlemen were in a readable condition. According to Neringa, the oldest church books go as far back as having the same first and last names, different dates of birth, and all were from different villages and counties. How do you answer that letter?

I am grateful to Neringa for taking the time to show me a few of the many books she uses in some of her searches, two of them were thick books that kept the marriage records in Lithuania from 1795 to 1801, and after all of these years, I noticed they were in readable condition. According to Neringa the oldest church books go as far back as 1604 and they too are in remarkable condition. Most church records in possession of the archives, however, go to the end of the 18th century. She also has available two thick dictionaries of Lithuanian surnames that show in which part of Lithuania they lived. These books of names were printed during Soviet times with only 5,000 copies, and they were given to archives, libraries, universities, some were in stores to be sold, and when these were sold out, that was it. Now, they are no longer in print.

Lithuania was a part of Czarist Russia for over a century prior to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. The occupying power divided Lithuania into three provinces (called a gubernija, in Russian), Suvalki, Kovno, and Vilno. All church records were written in either Russian, Polish, and in some cases, even Latin. As a result, first names and family names were sometimes written differently, and to make matters more confusing, were either Russianized or Polonized. Errors in ages were occasionally found, which could have been made by the priest or his secretary. Many emigrants leaving for America were issued passports by the authorities with non-Lithuanian sounding names. The name Laskauskas, as just one example, was Laskowski in Polish, and L Mkovsky in Russian. One of my relatives' family name was Svegzda, but he was listed on the passenger manifest of the ship when he arrived at Ellis Island as "Schwegdsda".



Neringa Ceskeviciute showing two thick books that contain records going back as far as 1870 and earlier.

"The majority of Lithuanians are Roman Catholic, and as a result, births, christenings, marriages and deaths are registered in church documents, which contain a wealth of information. Birth records give the date of baptism, place of birth, the names of the parents, including the mother's maiden name, and the priest involved. Some parish records even give the names of the god parent. A marriage record gives the names of the witnesses, maiden names, parent's names, living place (towns, villages, etc.). Death records give the date and its cause, including the cemetery location. However, the exact location of a grave is not listed in any parish cemetery record, and anyone who comes to the Archives bureau asking for such information, will be disappointed. In my own case, my grandmother passed away in 1918, and my relatives were able to show me where she was buried. My grandfather, on the other hand, died over a hundred years ago, in 1893, and even though he was buried in the parish cemetery none of my relatives could find his final resting place.

The amount of people asking for their family history has increased over the years. My request in

Continues on page 22

*Historical Archives**Continues From page 21*

1994 was fulfilled in about four months. When I applied for another search in 1999, I received the answer two years later. What was a trickle a few years ago in genealogical searches has become a flood today.

The cost of a search will probably vary from year to year, considering the increase in costs and postage rates. Before a search can begin, a prepayment will be required, and additional charges will be necessary for any documents requested.

Before January 1, 2002, all historical archives, up until 1915, were at the Gerosios Vilties office. From 1916 until 1939, they were at the Metriku Archyvas in the Wedding Palace, or Santuoku Rumai, as it is called in Vilnius.

This arrangement has been changed. Church records are no longer kept in the Wedding Palace; they are now at the Gerosios Vilties main archives building. Today, only civil records starting in 1940 and continuing from then on are located in the Wedding Palace at the Metriku Archyvas or Santuoku Rumai, as it is called in Vilnius. There were no church records, kept after the Soviets took over, for obvious reasons. Only marriages that took

place in the Wedding Palace were legal as far as Soviet laws were concerned. However, a couple could get married in a church ceremony, if they so desired, but only after the civil ceremony. This was a risk, too, for the newlyweds, as it would show to the Soviets who the "believers" were, and this again, would involve job problems.

For a child to be baptized in a church during Soviet times was a risk for the people involved; such as losing their good jobs, or getting demoted from their present jobs. Parents and god parent would do this in secret, and no record was kept, except in their hearts.

Some church documents may have been destroyed during the war, but most of them are now in the archives in Vilnius. A search for one's ancestors is a good investment, in my opinion. My advice is to be patient, and stay the course, for the rewards would be gratifying.

Courtesy of Lithuanian Review

Edward Baranauskas lives in Vilnius and is a frequent contributor to Bridges

*SEATTLE-PAKUONIS**Continues from page 18*

school library to be shown the special section set aside for the books we had sent over the past three years – and our photo was prominently displayed above the books. I think the last time my wife and I got this much attention was at our wedding 47 years ago!

The rest of the day was spent with Onute and Sandra doing more sightseeing, but this time it was done on our way back to Vilnius with stop-offs at Kaunas, Vytautas

Hill in Birstonas, and Trakai Castle. We said our good-byes in Vilnius. It was difficult to express our thanks and gratitude to these people who had become our friends and who seemed that they could not do enough to show their appreciation for the books we had sent.

There is a footnote to this story. A week before we left for Lithuania, I received an email from Onute in Pakuonis informing me that a Mr. Rimas Bajoraitis who lives in Federal Way near Seattle has been corresponding with her.

Mr. Bajoraitis was born in Pakuonis and his mother had been a teacher in Pakuonis. Yes, Rimas and I did meet before our departure for Lithuania. And we have met and talked several times since our return. The Seattle-Pakuonis connection lives on.

For many years Les worked in sales with an electronics company. He is now retired and lives in the Laurelhurst area of Seattle

Courtesy of Zita Petkus and Tulpe Times

A Most Unusual Family

Continued from page 9

making Rice Krispie Treats, wanted more to talk to us than to just do things with us. They wanted to hear about our likes and dislikes, about what we did at home. The girls wanted to know whether we had boyfriends. (We naturally, wanted to hear about theirs.) These young people needed somebody to listen to them more than they needed to participate in organized activities. A conversation that initially included only my mother and Arunas, a 22 year-old young man, for instance, over the course of an evening grew to include the rest of the young men living in Rumbonys-Audrius, Mindaugas and Juozas – as well. Then, my dad joined in, as did some of the girls of Rumbonys, and my sisters and I also walked over to the group eventually. Over the course of several hours that night, my parents' family had grown from only three children to more than ten. I was thrilled that such simple gifts – time and a willing ear – could go such a long way.

Even though we are now home, my family and I still think about the Rumbonys family often. We remember their joys as much as we remember their hardships. We still laugh at their jokes, but we grow somber when we think about their troubles. We recognize that although we traveled to Lithuania to teach and to help them, the Rumbonys family taught us a lot in return. And although we don't know exactly when we will be able to see them again, we do know that this summer's visit to Rumbonys was not our last. We look forward to seeing our friends again.

Lina Sestokas

Lina Sestokas lives in Pennsylvania and is a student at Harvard University.

bridges

*Christmas Gift
Subscription
Order Form*

Mail to:
LAC, Inc./BRIDGES,
c/o Ramas Pliura
1927 West Boulevard
Racine, WI 53403

Send Gift To:

Name (please print)

Address

Apt. No.

City

State

Zip

Send Gift To:

Name (please print)

Address

Apt. No.

City

State

Zip

Please send a gift of 10 issues (1 full year) of Bridges to the persons listed above.

I'll pay \$18.00 (US Mail serviced subscribers);
(\$28.00 for subscriptions outside USA)

\$18.00

*For 10 Issue
Gift Subscription*

Please enclose the subscription payment.

LITHUANIAN - AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

News and Views

Please remember to check the website of St. Peter Church. The parishioners have organized to save their church from closing. Updates are available at www.savestpeter.org

President of Lithuania suggests holding UNESCO World Heritage Committee session in Vilnius

Vilnius (ELTA) - President Valdas Adamkus, during a meeting in Spain with Koichiro Matsuura, director general of UNESCO, suggested holding the 2007 UNESCO World Heritage Committee session in Vilnius.

The state leader read an address at a UNESCO conference today while on a working visit to Spain.

Adamkus noted that under conditions of intense migration it is very important to respect other cultures and learn to live in a society united by common interests.

"I firmly believe that values such as solidarity and tolerance ... could help us understand and overcome the new challenges of the age of globalization," Adamkus noted.

Adamkus was invited to the conference as a UNESCO goodwill ambassador. He was awarded the title last year.

During his meeting with Matsuura, Adamkus reminded the UNESCO director general of Lithuania's worries concerning Russia's D-6 oil platform, which is near the Curonian Spit. The Curonian Spit is on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

The president noted that it is still unclear how damages would be compensated in case of an ecological accident and how its consequences would be cleaned up. Adamkus said he regrets that the government's agreement with Russia on cooperation in case of an ecological accident at sea is still in the preliminary stages of negotiation, even though oil is already being extracted.

Source: Information Center for Homecoming Lithuanians

Business

Lietuvos Rytas quoted a Bloomberg survey which suggested that Lithuania and Latvia led in Europe by economic growth during the second quarter of 2004. Analysts polled by Bloomberg said the growth of GDP in both Baltic States could be as high as 7 percent in the period. The two countries are expected to announce the growth figures this week. Last Friday one more Baltic State, Estonia, reported a 6 percent increase in GDP during the second quarter. According to Bloomberg, the three Baltic economies, worth a combined \$36 billion, boom on mounting consumption.

Source: Information Center for Homecoming Lithuanians

"Lietuvos Rytas"

One of the oldest universities in Europe will celebrate its 425 year anniversary without one of its unique relics, the rector's scepter, which has been in the vaults of the Hermitage, Russia's largest museum, for nearly two hundred years.

The rector's scepter, a symbol of the university's honor, power, and autonomy, was mentioned for the first time in written sources at the beginning of the 17th century.

In the early 19th century, after tsarist Russia closed Vilnius University, the rector's scepter and other relics were taken to Russia. Foreign Minister Antanas Valionis says Lithuanian diplomats know about this problem very well.

"I, as the Lithuanian citizen, would like that all historical and cultural valuables of Lithuania would be returned to Lithuania. But it is against some international regulations."

In the opinion of the diplomat, the issue can be solved only based on the benevolence of both parties.

"The return of the scepter to Vilnius University could become a symbolic step by Russia, showing good relations between our countries," he added.

Source: Information Center for Homecoming Lithuanians

Lithuanian president encourages American businessmen invest in Lithuania

Vilnius/Chicago (ELTA) - During his Friday meeting with representatives of US companies in Chicago,

Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus encouraged the American businesses to invest in Lithuania. According to the state leader, the membership in the European Union, friendly business environment, high skill professionals, closeness to the Eastern markets and good relations with neighbours make Lithuania especially attractive to foreign investors.

On Friday, the president attended a business breakfast with the representatives of some influential US companies to tell them about the business environment in the Baltic state after its entry to the EU.

The business breakfast was organised with the support of aircraft manufacturer Boeing and IT consortium of Motorola. As reported by the presidential press service, general consuls of the EU member countries residing in Chicago were invited to a breakfast too.

In his report "Lithuania: Membership in the EU and new opportunities for US business," Adamkus called on the American entrepreneurs to turn their eye on Lithuania, which can offer perfect conditions for starting business there.

The president also noted that Lithuania has successfully passed the test of the competitiveness after the entry into the European bloc and now is working in many of the EU countries.

"Lithuania has a big number of highly skilled professionals, an attractive tax system; it is politically stable and maintains good links with its neighbors; it also has experience of work in the Eastern markets. I invite you to consider investing and starting production operations in Lithuania with an opportunity to sell the goods manufactured in the East," Adamkus spoke.

Source: Information Center for Homecoming Lithuanians

NATO to patrol Baltic air space until 2006

Brussels (LETA-AFP-ELTA) - Six NATO countries have committed themselves to provide permanent air cover over NATO's three Baltic states until 2006, an official said Wednesday, the news agency AFP reports.

Great Britain has agreed to take the first six-month slot from October, followed by Norway, the Netherlands, Germany, the United States and Poland, said the official who asked not to be identified.

Currently Denmark is providing air surveillance over the skies of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, which joined the alliance in March and which do not have their own fighter jets. Danish jets took over from Belgium in July, AFP writes.

"NATO has set out a rotation schedule for the next six blocks," said the official, while adding that the planned coverage could be subject to change.

Denmark has been due to hand over to Britain on October 1, but the British reportedly refused to send their F-3 Tornado fighters, saying that the runway at the Zokniai air base in northern Lithuania was too short for the planes, AFP reports.

"The United Kingdom has agreed to take the next rotation next month," said the official.

Source: Information Center for Homecoming Lithuanians-

The Gate of Dawn
Continues from page 12

Ausros Vartai to be enshrined at the altar of Philadelphia's oldest Lithuanian parish. Each morning, as the dawn brings the light of a new day to our world, prayers are offered after daily Mass before the picture. Whether it is the parish congregation attending Sunday Mass, or the entire school at Mass

on Friday mornings, or a single class joining the daily Mass attendees, we kneel in devotion united with the people in the Vilnius chapel of the Gate of Dawn seeking Divine help and miraculous blessings.

The Feast Day of Our Lady of Vilnius, under the title of the Mother of Mercy, is November 16. It is a day of great celebration in Vilnius and at St. Casimir's

Church in south Philadelphia. In this way, we share with Lithuania, not only the recipes, dances and language, but the strong devotion to Mary which has brought miracles since the 17th century.

Rev. Peter Burkauskas

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

The Enchanted Little Mill

Gyveno du broliai. Vienas buvo labai turtingas, o kitas visiskai vargas ir vaikščiojo apiplyses.

Once there were two brothers. One was very rich, and the other, so poor that he went about in torn clothing. It was most unpleasant for the rich man to have such a brother, and embarrassing to be seen with someone who looked like a beggar. He decided to get rid of this inconvenience.

He heard that somewhere, far away, there was an abyss at the very edge of the world, where devils lived. Calling his brother to him, he said, "I am indebted to some devils for a large smoked ham, so take this to them for me." The poor fellow took the ham, and left on his errand. His journey was long and difficult, through bogs, swamps and dense woods. As he went, he came upon an old man cutting firewood. Approaching the man, he said, "Grandfather, surely this job is too hard for a man of your years. Here, let me help you." And he took the axe and chopped up all the firewood.

The old man thanked him and said, "I know, my boy, who has sent you, and where you are going. When you get there, you will be surrounded by many devils, who will want you to sell them that smoked ham. You must answer that you cannot sell it, but that you will exchange it for the little mill that stands on their window-sill."

And it happened just as the old man said. No sooner had he entered the abyss, when he was surrounded by devils entreating him to sell the ham to them. He obeyed the old man's instructions, and though the devils at first refused to part with their little mill, they finally agreed to give it in exchange for the ham. So he took the mill, left the ham, and hurried home away from the abyss. The devils quickly ate the ham, and decided to chase after him to retrieve their mill, but he was truly gone, his very footprints had frozen.

He met the old man on his way back, and asked, "What shall I do with this mill?" The old man answered, "This is a very good thing to have. Whatever you desire, this little mill will grind it out for you." And he told him how to use it. He thanked the old man and went home happy.

When he got home, he decided to use the mill to grind out some money. He just pressed a spot as the old man had instructed, and golden coins began to pour out. He stood a large bag under the spout, and it was soon bursting with money. Again, he pressed, a different spot, and the mill stopped.

In this way, he accumulated piles and piles of money, until he became a very rich man. Eventually he grew tired of the mill and left it standing on a window-sill. His brother, no longer wealthier than he, noticed the mill and begged his brother to give it to him. And he did, showing him how to press the spot that would start it up, but forgetting to tell him how to stop it. This brother was very fond of herring, and when he got home, he asked the mill to make him some herrings. Before he knew it, the mill had ground out so much herring, that the house was full to bursting with them. Frightened, he brought the mill back to his brother, who stopped it and set it back on his window-sill.

Eventually, a group of fishermen heard about the little mill. These men always needed a lot of salt, to preserve their catch. They came to see the mill, and asked that it be sold to them. They came to an agreement, the mill was sold to them, and they were shown how to start it, but again, instructions for stopping it weren't given. They set out on a fishing trip, taking the mill with them. They set it down in a convenient place, and started it to make salt. The little mill produced so much salt, that the ship couldn't hold it, and sank to the bottom of the sea. That little mill still lies at the ocean's bottom, grinding away making salt until this day. And that's why seawater is salty.

Tales compiled by Dr. Jonas Balys
Translated from Lithuanian by Gloria O'Brien

UZBURTAS MALUNAS / The Enchanted Little Mill

From "Lietuviškos Pasakos" / "Lithuanian Fairy-tales"
Published in 1951 by the Lithuanian Book Club, Chicago



This is a special day for people who were special persons for us, people, whom we loved. It is a day for all holy and deceased people. It is a day when we all remember our relatives, grandparents, parents, and friends. It is also a special day for them, who rest there, up in heaven. All loving people gather around to say "hey!" and say a little prayer for them, to tell them how they miss them and how they need them.

What I noticed, living in Lithuania, is that every year, no matter what the weather is, it always rains the night before this special day. And almost every year, it rains on this day. The day is always cloudy, no sunshine, a little bit frightening, but still, when you go to the cemetery, you just don't care about the weather. You care most about the one person in the whole cemetery, whom you loved and who is always in your heart, the person who you will never forget. I remember the last time I went to see my great-grandmother's grave. It was also

A Solemn Day

raining. I don't know why, but that day I was very sad. It was strange, because usually I am never sad. I remembered when she was making scones for me, how she was talking, how she taught me how to make them, and how she was telling me a story, when her great-grandmother was telling her how to make scones... I remembered her smile, her warm face... suddenly I felt something on my cheek. It was a tear. A tear full of memories and love. I felt something really strange in my heart, something so strong, so warm... I felt like she was by my side. The feeling was great. I didn't want that feeling to stop. It was the first time I felt something like this.

I bought some candles, a big bouquet of her favorite yellow flowers, and went to her grave to see her. I was walking for ten minutes to get there. While I was walking, I was looking at other graves with lots of candles and flowers. I was looking at people crying near the graves. Finally, I was there, at my great-grandmother's grave. I cleaned that red gravestone, took off all the leaves from it. While I was doing

that, I was talking with her; I was telling her how I miss her. I was telling her about my friends and I told her everything that was going on in my heart and my mind. I put flowers and candles on her grave. It looked beautiful. I said a little prayer. I felt so happy; I did everything with such love and respect for her. You do it not every day for those persons, for those loving people lying under the ground. They are worth the best thing in the world, which is called your love. Just imagine, after many years, someone will stand by your grave, and will put flowers and candles. Someone will tell you their biggest secrets and a story... isn't that so great? Maybe that someone will be your child, or your great-grandchild, who knows? I was on the way home, I was very happy. I smiled at all the people that I met. I felt so good because I went to see my very special person.

Akville Dudonyte

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

The Cost to Advertise in "BRIDGES"

FULL PAGE AD is \$180.00

1/3 pg. for \$45.00

1/2 pg. for \$90.00

1/6 pg. for \$30.00

1/4 pg. for \$60.00

NO MINIMUM LENGTH OF TIME FOR ADS

For Information, please contact:

Ramas Pliura
1927 West Boulevard
Racine, WI 53403

cultural (and other) tidbits

HISTORY OF LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY, INC.

Readers of BRIDGES may not be aware that in 2003, when Lithuania was celebrating the 750th jubilee of the coronation of King Mindaugas and his gathering of all Lithuanian peoples into a unified nation state, Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. marked its own significant milestone. An eight hundred page volume history “**JAV LB Penki desimtmečiai**” (loosely translated as **Lithuanian-American Community - Five Decades**) rolled off the presses in Vilnius, Lithuania

On the morning of July 4, 2003, in Vilnius, the book was introduced at a gathering of distinguished guests including President Valdas Adamkus, Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas, Ambassador Vygaudas Usackas, Vytautas Landsbergis and many other notable representatives from Lithuania and the United States.

“**JAV LB Penki desimtmečiai**” chronicles the beginnings of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. from its conception in the Lithuanian Charter (Lietuviu Charta) in 1949, to its founding act in 1951, to legal incorporation in the state of Connecticut in 1952, to the first election of the LAC Board of Directors in 1955 and eventually to the growth of more than 60 chapters throughout the United States. The volume has a detailed account of all the LAC fields of endeavor in Lithuanian culture, Lithuanian education through the founding and expanding the network of Lithuanian heritage schools (in most chapters known as Lithuanian Saturday schools), social and human services. Another very important sphere of activity was public affairs which strove to disseminate among the American public and government officials information about the Soviet occupation of Lithuania as well as to maintain Lithuania on world maps and conscience. All these efforts are presented in articles by past and current activists in the ranks of Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.

The volume also chronicles the Folk Dance Festivals, Song Festivals, Theater Festivals, Science and Art Symposiums organized under the leadership of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. Included are overviews of LAC periodicals: “**Eglute**”, “**Bridges**”, “**Lituanus**” and “**Pensininkas**”.

Histories of individual chapters were written by local chapter historians. Accordingly, they vary in length and style as well as in the number of photographs accompanying each write-up.

Some chroniclers signed their names, others omitted their authorship. While literary critics may criticize the unevenness, others may find it charming and unique. During the fifty years, some chapters have closed, others were founded, As I write this overview, many capital C Lithuanian Communities are undergoing change much as American cities are seeing demographic shifting.

The senior editor of the LAC fifty year history was **Balys Raugas** who had compiled a previous volume which had chronicled three decades of LAC. As his health deteriorated and the urgency to complete the work became too stressful, **Audrone Viktorija Skiudaite**, a journalist from Lithuania was asked to undertake the final editing. National Executive Committee of LAC under the leadership of then president S. Algimantas Gecys pulled together the remaining gaps of chapter and activity write-ups. The very apt and colorful cover was designed by **Daumantas Girininkas**.

This monumental undertaking was funded by the **Lithuanian Foundation** without whose financial assistance it would not have seen its final publication.

The book is in Lithuanian. It has Library of Congress and ISBN numbers. You may order it from LAC, Inc./BRIDGES, c/o Ramas Pliura, 1927 West Blvd., Racine, WI 53403. The cost is \$35 plus \$5 for shipping and handling. Perhaps this book could be an interesting Christmas present for someone on your list ?!

~~~~~

### *Currently on the culture scene in the U.S. ...*

The 2004 Cultural Awards Ceremony of the Lithuanian Cultural Council of LAC, Inc. took place October 30 in the Lithuanian Art Museum of the Lithuanian World Center in Lemont, IL. The award recipients were: in the field of Music - Lithuanian Choir "Dainava" (Darius Polikaitis, director), in Fine Arts - Giedre Zumbakis, in Theater - Audre Budrys-Nakas, in Journalism - Bronius Juodelis, in Radio programming - Algis Zaparackas, director of "Lithuanian Melodies" radio program in Detroit, and in Lithuanian Folk Dance - Rasa Poskocimas, the artistic director of the 12th Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival in summer of 2004.

### *...and cultural tidbits from Lithuania...*

October 7-8 in Kaunas an international academic conference titled "**Cultural Heritage, Lost Treasures and Missed Opportunities**" discussed a new serious and growing field of



contraband - theft and smuggling of antique red bricks and antique lumber from old buildings of Lithuania and other European countries. Recently, at the Lithuanian-Polish border crossing, guards discovered a disassembled Utena region manor house. Very often antique bricks are discovered on trains, seemingly abandoned, but obviously meant to be "found" by someone or group of international crime lords interested in the value of such treasures.

~~~~~

Also in early October Vilnius hosted the 15th Ancient music festival "**Banchetto musicale**". The most notable guest of the festival was the German vocal ensemble "Cantus Colln" directed by Konrad Junhaenel. The ensemble limits its repertoire to ancient, mostly religious music. It has played throughout Europe, Asia and the America's and has merited numerous prizes and worldwide recognition. This again proves our earlier statements about the richness of cultural life in Lithuania.

~~~~~

Lithuanian does not overlook youthful talent and fosters its efforts. In the context of the 100 year anniversary of the return of Lithuanian publications in Roman alphabet, 108 publishers of school newspapers came together in October to distribute prizes to winners of school newspaper journalism. In 2003 over 1000 students and teachers participated in the school journalism contest. The 2004 participants met with professionals from newspapers, radio and television. The conference was sponsored by Lithuania's Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Defense and the Committee for the observance of the 100th anniversary of the return of Lithuanian publications in Roman Alphabet.

~~~~~

Mid October saw the Children's and Youth Theater Festival unite Vilnius and Alytus. To bring cultural events out of Vilnius to the provinces, the festival was conceived to offer youth theater productions to audiences not only in Vilnius but also in Alytus. Youth theater professionals from Sweden offered workshops in theater production to both Alytus and Vilnius participants. The festival was sponsored by the Association of Children's and Youth Theaters of Lithuania which belongs to its parent international organization. Among the four year old association's aims is resolve to create a mobile theater which would encourage interest in drama arts and could visit with its productions the most remote regions of Lithuania.

~~~~~

And finally - the photography promotion "**Smile for youth**" is scheduled to last until October of 2005. The initiators' goal is to bring generations together through photography. They are inviting young photographers to photograph older people. In turn older persons are invited to recall their own youth by smiling into the cameras of the young picture takers.

Lithuania's Social Welfare and Labor Ministry will award prizes to the photographers of the best photos. This is a commendable effort to showcase smiling Lithuanian seniors, who culturally do not smile much in public and especially among strangers.

*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.*

## SUMMARY

## Antanas Kucas

is the artist of the  
COVER

"Village with a Church/Baznykaimis" 1939

Antanas Kucas, People's artist of the Lithuanian SSR, Professor of the State Art Institute, was born on January 24, 1909. In 1935 he graduated from the Kaunas Art School and immediately began his creative activity. His works of the pre-Soviet period ("Matchmakers", "Village with a Church", the first illustrations for "The Cart") indicate the painter's bent for the themes of the Lithuanian village and up till nowadays they predominate in his creative work.

During the Soviet years A. Kucas has created quite a great number of book illustrations which reveal his talent of the subtle text interpreter and splendid type designer ("The Cart" by Aisbe - 1947, "Fables" by S. Stanevicius - 1959, "Daughter-in-Law" by Zemaite - 1964).

On the basis of folk ornamentation he has acquired highly impressive, individual and original ornamental style ("Collection of Lithuanian Folk Songs" by B. Sruoga). He has created about two hundred book covers.

Landscape, often enlivened by figures of the people, predominates in his etchings ("In the Open", "Painter in the Lap of Nature"). Sometimes man and nature blend with one another producing the epic view of the Lithuanian village ("By the Niemen"). Most of all A. Kucas likes woodcut and linocut and in them he achieves great plastic freedom, dynamism and noble beauty of strokes.

The painter has created many meaningful ex-libris and some placards. Since 1944 he taught at the Vilnius Art Institute and has inculcated firm foundations of composition and technology of graphic arts, the art of print, book illustration and placard on many young artists.

A. Kucas constantly takes part at the republican and many all-Union as well as foreign exhibitions, he has held two large personal exhibitions (in 1959 and 1969). A. Kucas' immense and many-sided creative work as well as his tactful pedagogical activity have made a valuable contribution to the strengthening of the authority of the Lithuanian graphic art.

*\*This is from his Book "Antanas Kucas", Vilnia 1971.*



food



# Lithuanian Kitchen

## Kugelis

- 10 lbs. grated potatoes – Idaho are best
- 16 oz sour cream
- 6 whole eggs
- 1 lb sliced bacon

Onion salt and pepper to taste

Grate potatoes, strain, then add sour cream, eggs, onion salt and pepper. Line a large square baking pan (non-stick) with 1/2 lb. of bacon, pour in potato batter, and then cover with remaining bacon. Bake at 400 degrees for 2 hours. Cut into squares and serve.

Angele

## Red Beet Salad with Onions

- 4 medium red beets
- 2 medium onions
- 1/2 cup diluted vinegar
- 1 bay leaf
- 6 peppercorns
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- Salt to taste

Peel boiled beets and grate coarsely. Add chopped onions, pour marinade over the mixture and let stand several hours in a cool place. Add salt to taste, sugar and a couple tablespoons of oil. Mix and place in a salad bowl.

**Marinade:** Boil water with spices; add vinegar (wine vinegar) to taste, salt and sugar. Cool and pour over beets.

Beet salad is served with dark meats and herring.

United States Postal Service  
**Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                      |                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Publication Title<br><b>Bridgen</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 2. Publication Number<br><b>0 0 1 7 - 1 3 1</b>                      | 3. Filing Date<br><b>10/15/04</b>                                        |
| 4. Issue Frequency<br><b>10 per year<br/>Jan-Feb &amp; July-Aug combined</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 5. Number of Issues Published Annually<br><b>10 per year</b>         | 6. Annual Subscription Price<br><b>16.00</b>                             |
| 7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4)<br><b>Lithuanian American Community, Inc.<br/>1927 West Blvd.<br/>Racine, WI 53403</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                      | Contact Person<br><b>Ramas Piura</b><br>Telephone<br><b>262-637-3585</b> |
| 8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer)<br><b>Lithuanian American Community, Inc.<br/>P. O. Box 33464<br/>Washington, D.C. 20033</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                      |                                                                          |
| 9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)<br>Publisher (Name and complete mailing address)<br><b>LAC, Inc.<br/>1927 West Blvd.<br/>Racine, WI 53403</b><br>Editor (Name and complete mailing address)<br><b>Jeanne Dorr<br/>4 Shrewsbury Yard<br/>Riverton, NJ 08077</b><br>Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address)<br><b>Ramas Piura<br/>1927 West Blvd.<br/>Racine, WI 53403</b>                                                                                                            |                                                                      |                                                                          |
| 10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.) |                                                                      |                                                                          |
| Full Name<br><b>Lithuanian American Community, Inc.<br/>Non-Profit Organization</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Complete Mailing Address<br><b>1927 West Blvd., Racine, WI 53403</b> |                                                                          |
| 11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                      |                                                                          |
| Full Name                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Complete Mailing Address                                             |                                                                          |
| 12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one)<br><input type="checkbox"/> For-profit<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not-for-profit<br><input type="checkbox"/> Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months<br><input type="checkbox"/> Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                      |                                                                          |

PS Form 3526, October 1999 (See instructions on Reverse)

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                          |                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 13. Publication Title                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below                |                                                             |
| 15. Extent and Nature of Circulation                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months | No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date |
| a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)                                                                                                                                                                                                | 1,400                                                    | 1,000                                                       |
| (1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541. (Include advertiser's proof and exchange copies)                                                                                                               | 1,250                                                    | 798                                                         |
| (2) Paid In-County Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541 (Include advertiser's proof and exchange copies)                                                                                                                                    | 2                                                        | 2                                                           |
| (3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution                                                                                                                              |                                                          |                                                             |
| (4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS                                                                                                                                                                                                | 1                                                        | 1                                                           |
| c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 15b, (1), (2), (3), and (4))                                                                                                                                                          | 1,253                                                    | 801                                                         |
| d. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, complimentary, and other free)                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                          |                                                             |
| (1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                          |                                                             |
| (2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                          |                                                             |
| (3) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS                                                                                                                                                                                                | 3                                                        | 3                                                           |
| e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)                                                                                                                                                                          | 15                                                       | 30                                                          |
| f. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15d and 15e.)                                                                                                                                                                                         | 18                                                       | 33                                                          |
| g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15f)                                                                                                                                                                                               | 1,271                                                    | 834                                                         |
| h. Copies not Distributed                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 129                                                      | 166                                                         |
| i. Total (Sum of 15g and h.)                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 1,400                                                    | 1,000                                                       |
| j. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c divided by 15g times 100)                                                                                                                                                              | 99                                                       | 96                                                          |
| 16. Publication of Statement of Ownership (Check one)<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Publication required. Will be printed in the <b>Oct., 2004</b> issue of the publication. <input type="checkbox"/> Publication not required. |                                                          |                                                             |
| 17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner<br><i>Ramas Piura</i>                                                                                                                                           | Date<br><b>10/1/04</b>                                   |                                                             |

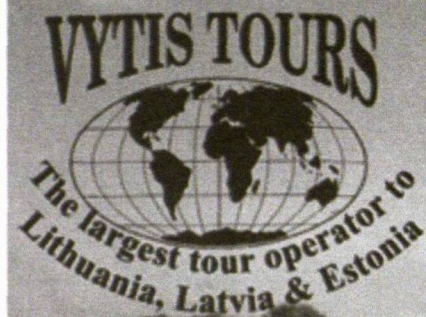
I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

**Instructions to Publishers**

- Complete and file one copy of this form with your postmaster annually on or before October 1. Keep a copy of the completed form for your records.
- In cases where the stockholder or security holder is a trustee, include in items 10 and 11 the name of the person or corporation for whom the trustee is acting. Also include the names and addresses of individuals who are stockholders who own or hold 1 percent or more of the total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities of the publishing corporation. In item 11, if none, check the box. Use blank sheets if more space is required.
- Be sure to furnish all circulation information called for in item 15. Free circulation must be shown in items 15d, e, and f.
- Item 15h, Copies not Distributed, must include (1) newsstand copies originally stated on Form 3541, and returned to the publisher; (2) estimated returns from news agents, and (3) copies for office use, leftovers, spoiled, and all other copies not distributed.
- If the publication had Periodicals authorization as a general or requester publication, this Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation must be published; it must be printed in any issue in October or, if the publication is not published during October, the first issue printed after October.
- In item 16, indicate the date of the issue in which this Statement of Ownership will be published.
- Item 17 must be signed.  
**Failure to file or publish a statement of ownership may lead to suspension of Periodicals authorization.**

PS Form 3526, October 1999 (Reverse)





PRESENTS  
**LITHUANIA 2004**

**VYTIS TOURS**

Offers the following prearranged tours in 2004:

Classical Baltic - 9 days  
Lithuanian Economy Tour - 9 days  
Grand Tour of Lithuania - 14 days  
Latvian Extravaganza - 8 days  
Estonian Extravaganza - 8 days  
The Baltic Capitals Plus - 10 days  
Baltic Explorer - 11 days

VYTIS can reserve hotels, rent cars and offers the lowest air prices to Europe out of Chicago, New York and virtually all airports in the US on Finnair and other carriers

**VYTIS TOURS**

40-24 235th St.

Douglaston, NY 11363

718-423-6161 800-77-VYTIS

Fax: 718-423-3979 e-mail: [vyttours@earthlink.net](mailto:vyttours@earthlink.net) Web site: [www.vytistours.com](http://www.vytistours.com)

**CHICAGO REPRESENTATIVES**

Rita Pencyliene..... tel: 708-923-0280 e-mail: [pencylar@comcast.net](mailto:pencylar@comcast.net)

SPECIAL: Hawaii Island Cruise - February 27, 2005

Call Rita for information and reservations

Brone Barakauskiene.....tel: 708-403-5717 e-mail: [mamabar3@aol.com](mailto:mamabar3@aol.com)

All VYTIS representatives speak English and Lithuanian !!



# Calendar of Events for November-

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

Blp (LYA) 1195  
2004, N.9

## NOVEMBER

### November 6-7, 2004

Muge-Lithuanian Festival  
Saturday 12-8 pm, Sunday 12-6 pm  
Lithuanian and American Food  
Lithuanian dancers and musical  
entertainment, Lithuanian Crafts  
Do your Christmas shopping early!  
Lithuanian Music Hall  
2715 E. Allegheny Ave.  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19134  
More Information: 215-739-4831 or  
www.phillylac.org

### November 13, 2004

Mid America District Annual Mass for  
Deceased Members  
Chapel of Holy Family Villa  
Lemont, IL  
Council 157 will be host council  
www.knightsoflithuania.com

### November 13, 2004

Holy Cross Church, at 2pm  
100 Years Commemorative Mass  
Concelebrated by Bishop P. Baltakis, OFM  
Rev. Bruce Welles, CMF, Pastor  
1746 W. 46th St., Chicago, IL.  
Reception follows, Tel. 773-376-3900  
www.hcihm.org

### Nov. 14 & Nov. 28, 2004

Roman Catholic Mass in Lithuanian  
12:30 pm-Our Lady of Guadalupe Chapel  
55th Ave, Glendale, AZ  
(one block south of Glendale Ave),  
Refreshments & fellowship follows Mass  
kvedaras@earthlink.net or  
www.lithaz.org

### November 16, 2004

Amber Roots Club at 7 pm  
Jeopardy-Test your knowledge of Lithuania  
All meetings are conducted in English  
Lithuanian Music Hall  
2715 E. Allegheny Ave.  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19134  
For information contact  
Milliemarks@aol.com

### November 20 - 21, 2004

Annual Christmas Bazaar  
Sat.- Noon to 7pm, Sun. - 8:30am to 1pm  
St. George Church, 3580 Salmon St.,  
Philadelphia, PA 19134  
For information: 215-739-3102

### November 21, 2004

BALFAS Luncheon  
St. Andrew Parish Hall  
1913 Wallace Street, Philadelphia, PA  
Immediately following 10:30am Mass  
Proceeds to benefit  
United Lithuanian Relief Fund  
For information: 215-765-2322

### November 21, 2004

3pm, Harugari Singing Society  
(German Club)  
Highland St., West Haven, CT  
Performance by Vetra folk dancers  
One act play by Vetra theater group  
Admission \$15, www.javlb.org

### November 26- 28, 2004

Lithuanian Theater Festival  
Lithuanian Youth Center  
5620 S. Claremont, Chicago, IL 60565  
Lithuanian language theater groups and  
one man shows in the US and Canada  
Sponsored by Lithuanian-American  
Community Cultural Council  
www.javlb.org

## DECEMBER

### December 5, 2004

1pm-Lithuanian Christmas Tree Luncheon  
St. Elizabeth Seton Parish Hall  
9728 W. Palmeras Drive, Sun City, AZ  
Traditional food, Christmas music,  
Christmas tree decorated with straw  
ornaments. Demonstration how to create  
straw ornaments. Arizona Chapter of  
Lithuanian-American Community  
www.lithaz.org

### December 11, 2004

Knights of Lithuania Council 3  
20<sup>th</sup> Annual Kucios  
Immediately following 5pm Mass  
St. George Church,  
3580 Salmon St., Phila., PA 19134  
For tickets: 215-739-3102

### December 11, 2004

Knights of Lithuania Mid-America District  
Meeting and Christmas Party  
Meeting at Noon followed by Lunch &  
party at Seklycia Restaurant  
West 71<sup>st</sup> St., Chicago, IL. 60629  
www.knightsoflithuania.com

### December 11, 2004

Kucios/Eglute Children's Program  
6pm at the Latvian Hall  
5500 SW Dosch, Portland, OR  
For information: Vilius Zalpys  
360-834-6988  
Zalpai999@aol.com

### December 12, 2004

Traditional Christmas Eve Dinner  
"Skautu Kucios" Sponsored by  
Detroit's Gabijos & Baltijos Tunto Scouts  
5pm at Divine Providence  
Lithuanian Cultural Center  
CONTACT: Saulius Anuzis  
sauliusanuzis@aol.com or  
Rasa Karvelis rasa@comcast.net

### December 12, 2004

Kucios  
Sponsored by Lithuanian Scouts  
Immediately following 10:30am Mass  
Church Hall,  
St. Andrew Lithuanian Church  
1913 Wallace St., Phila., PA 19130  
Tickets must be purchased in advance  
For information: laimab@aol.com

Roman Catholic Mass in Lithuanian 12:30pm  
Our Lady of Guadalupe Chapel  
55th Ave., Glendale, AZ  
(one block south of Glendale Ave)  
Refreshments & fellowship follows Mass  
kvedaras@earthlink.net or  
www.lithaz.org

### December 14, 2004

Amber Roots Kucios 7pm-9pm  
Meatless buffet; everyone is  
asked to bring a dish to share  
Lithuanian songs  
Lithuanian Music Hall  
Culture Center-enter through side door  
2715 E. Allegheny Ave., Phila., PA 19134  
For information contact:  
milliemarks@aol.com

### December 18, 2004

Kucios, 5:30 pm  
Eagle Heights Community Center  
Madison, WI  
www.javlb.org  
refer to Madison, WI under chapters

### December 19, 2004

1pm, Ziburio Lithuanian School  
Annual Christmas Program with Santa Claus  
Divine Providence Lithuanian Cultural Center  
CONTACT: Vida Pekoriene  
vpekorius@oxygen.com

Always check that the time, place  
or date has not been changed.  
Because Bridges is published  
once for January- February we  
will include a three month calendar  
in December's issue. We want to  
publish as many February 16,  
March 11 commemorations as  
possible. Organizations, please  
contact me as soon as possible  
with your events. Thank you.

LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

bridges  
VOLUME 28 ISSUE 9



PERIODICALS  
POSTAGE

Subscriptions:  
1927 West Blvd.  
Racine, WI 53403

National Library of Lithuania  
12/1/2004  
Gedimino Prospektas 51  
LT-2600 VILNIUS  
LITHUANIA