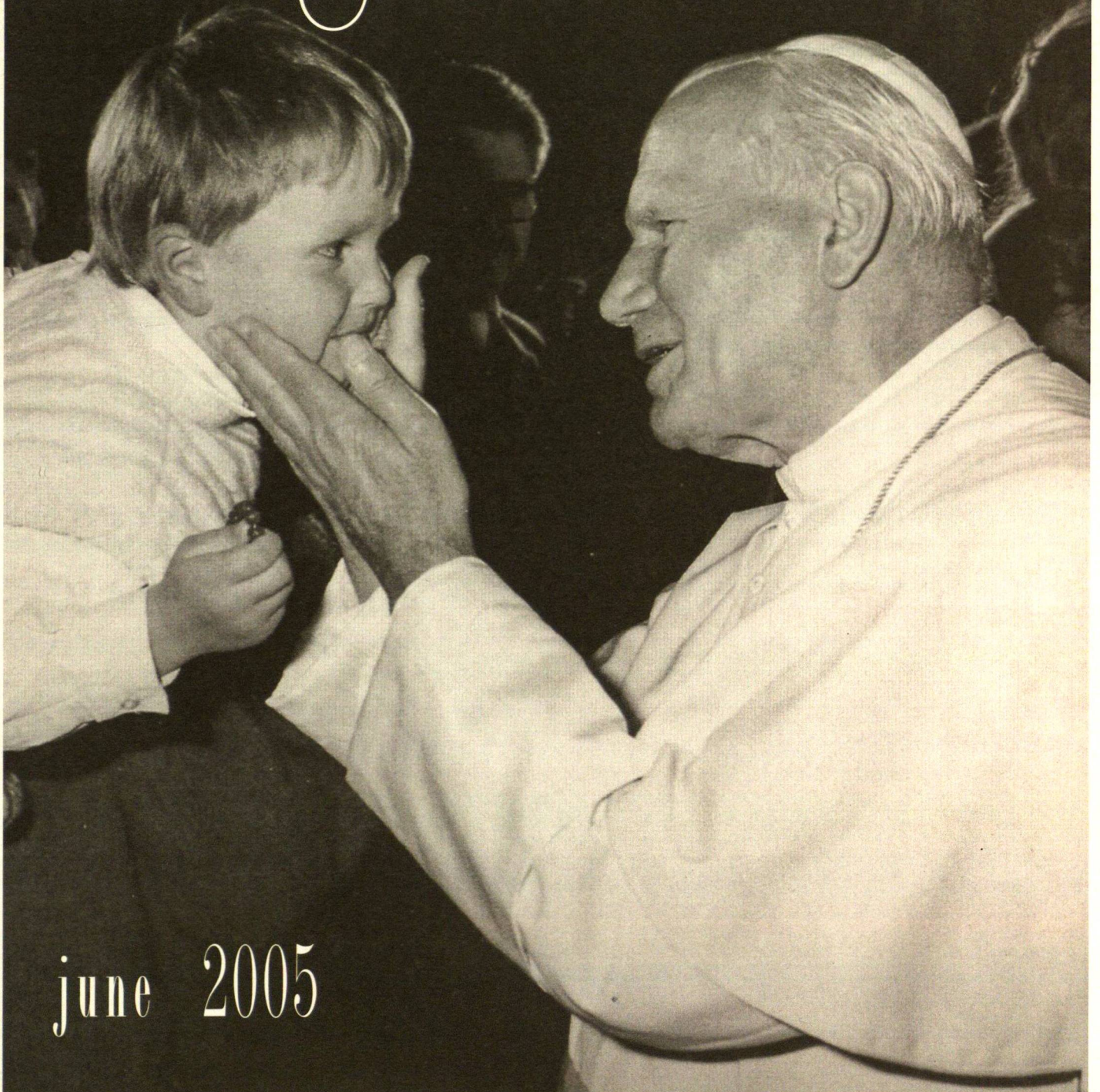


bridges



june 2005

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

Letter from the Editor

I would like to wish all of our male readers a Happy Father's Day. You don't need to be a father; you just need to love children. This is way we have dedicated this month's cover to the late Pope John Paul II. Many saw the Holy Father as a loving father and grandfather especially when he gathered the children around him or celebrated World Youth Masses around the globe.

June brings with it the bittersweet memories of massive deportations when so many lives were lost or destroyed. I want to thank everyone who contributed articles or information to this month's issue.

I am going to stray from my usual monthly procedure of thanking everyone for their articles, suggestions, comments and announcements so that I could address an article that caused many people to write and comment. I have received copies of letters that people have written to President Adamkus as well as the Lithuanian Parliament. One writer asked for my opinion of Buyer Beware; the story of Barbara and Raymond Clow who were asked to leave Lithuania. I do not have a legal background but the citizenship law has bothered me since its inception. To deliberately omit an entire group of immigrants as though they never existed is an insult to the thousands and thousands who fled life under the czar. When I visited Lithuania in the early 90's I was told by a minor bureaucrat in Vilnius that my four grandparents were Russian citizens.

In the middle 90's I was seated next to a member of Parliament during a dinner who saw nothing wrong with the law because according to him, Lithuania should not be bought up by foreigners who have money. I asked him why Lithuania did not have a citizenship law by blood such as the one in Ireland. One grandparent born in Ireland qualifies a descendant for citizenship. In some cases a great grandparent could qualify a descendant for citizenship. The gentleman was not aware of this type of citizenship and asked me to send him a copy of the law. I mailed him the law, but as expected, never received a response. The descendants of the first wave were not looking to reclaim land. For the most part their families owned very little.

I don't buy the argument that Lithuania was not independent at the time they lived there. These people didn't take a vote and they never asked to live under Russian domination. They were not given a choice. Life was just as cruel to them as those who came later. In fact, many did not have even a basic education. However, because of their love for Lithuania they struggled to build Lithuanian churches, Lithuanian schools, and Lithuanian social organization in cities around the world. These are the people, as well as their descendants, who stormed Washington and gave our leaders no peace until the US government refused to accept the annexation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union.

I heard from and about people who are trying to live in Lithuania with their own health insurance and their own money. They don't want jobs and they ask nothing of Lithuania or the Lithuanian government. Instead they are there to give back. Some have been waiting for years and are still getting the bureaucratic runaround because of citizenship.

It leaves me wondering about the law when I read in the Lithuanian papers that a millionaire is granted Lithuanian citizenship. I also have to wonder when I see who owns some of Lithuania's biggest businesses. I guess I just don't understand these events when the descendants of the first wave are considered "foreigners" who might buy up Lithuania.

As for me, I am happy to be an American citizen. This country has been good to my family, but the option should be there for the descendants of the early immigrants.

If anyone who sent me letters or copies of letters sent to Lithuanian officials receives a reply I would be grateful if you shared it with us. I also look forward to hearing from anyone in the Lithuanian government who could clarify this situation.

Jeanne Shalna Dorr
Jeanne Shalna Dorr

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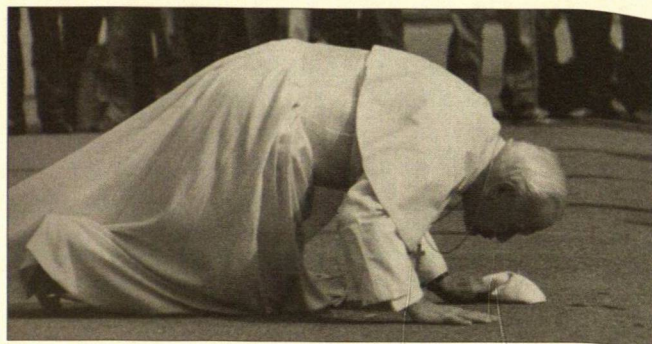
* The cover:

This photograph of Pope John Paul II was taken in Vilnius, Lithuania on
Sept. 5 1993, from a book "Jonas Paulius II Lietuvoje", Vilnius. Printed by
"Kataliku pasaulio" redakcija, Vilnius 1994.



Pope John Paul II
1920 - 2005

Telegrams and messages of condolence from the entire world.



Pope John Paul II kissing the ground of Lithuania, at His arrival in the Vilnius Airport on September 4, 1993.

LITHUANIA

Lithuania and its citizens, all believers and people of goodwill, have deeply mourned over the death of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, the great Shepherd of the Church and immense moral authority.

The Holy Father played a significant role in ensuring epochal developments all over the world during the last decades. It is my firm belief that the endeavours of John Paul II gave a strong impetus to the achievement of victory of freedom and democracy in Lithuania and other Central Europe countries. Lithuanian people, who regained independence and reestablished the statehood 15 years ago, share the particular gratitude for the unforgettable Visit of the Holy Father to Lithuania in 1993. It was the first Visit of a Pope to our Country in the history of the Church and our State, and it significantly contributed to the spread of human and democratic values in Lithuania.

ANTANAS VALIONIS
Minister of Foreign Affairs

**The Photo is from a book "Jonas Paulius II Lietuvoje."
This letter is from:

"L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO"
EDITORIAL AND MANAGEMENT OFFICES VATICAN CITY
Weekly Edition in English
N. 15 (1890)-13 April 2005

LITHUANIA

It was with deep sorrow that we learnt of the death of His Holiness Pope John Paul II. We remember his constant care and benevolence which His Holiness was giving to Lithuania from the first days of his Pontificate.

The celebration of the 500th anniversary of the death of St Casimir and the celebration of the 600th anniversary of the conversion of Lithuania to Christianity in 1984 and 1987 respectively, which were held in the heart of the Catholic Church, St Peter's Basilica, through the kind care of John Paul II, reminded the world of the persecuted Church in Lithuania and the subjugated Lithuanian people.

Encouraging oppressed nations and giving them hope, John Paul II inspired us to be yet stronger in our aspiration to restore Independent Lithuania.

During the Visit to Lithuania in 1993, His Holiness extended support to our society in its effort to achieve true freedom. With his fatherly care, His Holiness invited the people of Lithuania to follow Christian values in their lives, act in a responsible manner and in the spirit of community. The vision of Europe that John Paul II conveyed has guided our Country in its goal of full participation in building a new Europe.

The people of Lithuania will always remember John Paul II as a true embodiment of hope and faith.

VALDAS ADAMKUS
President of the Republic of Lithuania

AT THE FUNERAL OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
FRIDAY,
8 APRIL 2005

Official Delegations From Lithuania

H.E. Mr. Valdas Adamkus, President
H.E. Mrs. Alma Adamkiene, Consort of the President
H.E. Mr. Algirdas Brazauskas, Prime Minister
Hon. Mr. Vytautas Landsbergis, Deputy at the European Parliament
Hon. Mr. Edminas Bagdonas, Presidential Counsellor

**This letter and information is from:*

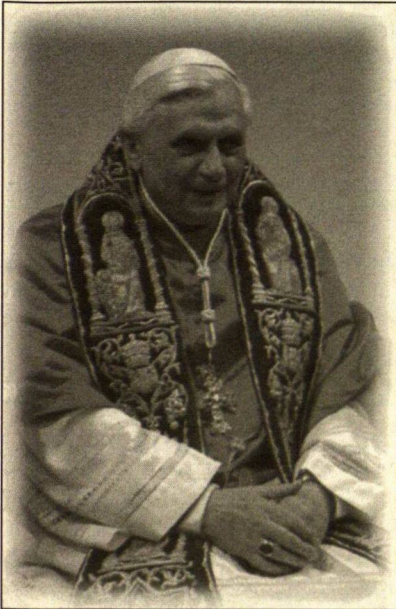
"L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO"
EDITORIAL AND MANAGEMENT OFFICES VATICAN CITY
Weekly Edition in English
N.16 (1890) - 20 April 2005

Habemus Papam!



We Have a Pope!

His Holiness
Pope Benedict XVI
265th Supreme Pontiff
of the
Universal Church



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

After the great Pope John Paul II, the Cardinals have elected me, a simple and humble labourer in the vineyard of the Lord. The fact that the Lord knows how to work and to act even with inadequate instruments comforts me, and above all I entrust myself to your prayers. Let us move forward in the joy of the Risen Lord, confident of his unfailing help. The Lord will help us and Mary, his Most Holy Mother, will be on our side.

Thank you.

*First Address of
Pope Benedict XVI
to the Faithful Gathered
in St Peter's Square, 19 April 2005*

Highlights in the life of Pope Benedict XVI

April 16, 1927 Born Joseph Ratzinger in Marktl am Inn, Germany.	1957 Earned doctorate in theology from University of Munich.	1962-65 Served as expert at Second Vatican Council.	June 27, 1971 Elevated to College of Cardinals.	Languages; German, English, Italian, French, Spanish, some Portuguese.
1945 Deserted from German army and held briefly as U.S. prisoner of war.	1958-77 Taught dogma and theology at five German universities.	1969-77 Vice president, University of Regensburg.	1981-2005 Prefect, Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.	Hobbies; Plays piano, Author of more than two dozen books translated into English.
June 29, 1951 Ordained a priest, along with his brother Georg.		March 24, 1977 Ordained archbishop of Munich and Freising, Germany.	April 19, 2005 Elected 265th pope of the Catholic Church.	

*Sources: CNS

The letter is from:

"L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO" - EDITORIAL AND MANAGEMENT - OFFICES VATICAN CITY - Weekly Edition in English - N.16 (1890) - 20 April 2005

Deportation Commemoration



The survivors of the long journey into the depths of Russia in Tolimam, Siberia. The long journey killed many of the weak and the sick, especially infants and elderly people.

This year we shall commemorate the 64th anniversary of massive deportations of Lithuanians to Siberian labor camps. These sad days in Lithuania are now called “the days of mourning and hope”.

At the start of Soviet occupation in the summer of 1940, the Soviet army already planned the annihilation of Lithuania’s intelligentsia – its politicians, army officers, educators and religious leaders, even large farm owners – the core of a civilized nation.

On the night of July 10, 1940, even before Lithuania’s incorporation into the Soviet Union, about 2,000 of its legislators, ministers and security personnel were arrested. Throughout that winter plans were being formulated for deportation to Siberia of 22,252 registered enemies of the Soviet State.

On May 23rd in Kaunas, the Soviet appointed commissar Gladkov issued a secret order No. 0037 concerning detailed deportation plans to rid Lithuanian SSR of “dangerous anti-Soviet elements”. The plan stated a need for 1,202 cattle cars each holding no less than 25 deportees.

The plan was executed on the night of June 14th between the hours of 2:00 and 3:00 a.m. as the entire country was besieged by thousands of military trucks arresting entire families even children and the elderly. The perpetrators were mostly NKVD personnel from Ukraine, Belarus, the occupying militia and local communists. The genocide of a nation was in full swing and the 50 year nightmare had begun.

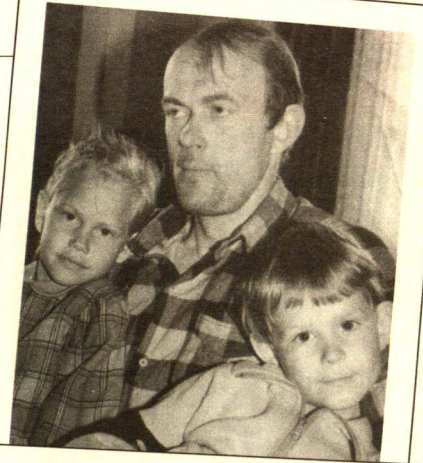
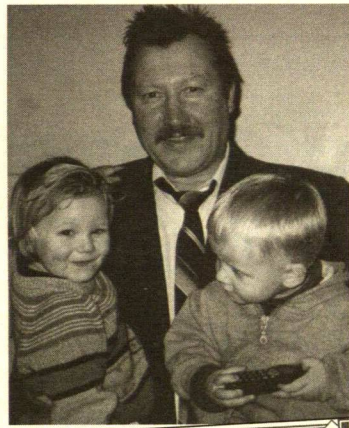
The second deportation wave was interrupted when the Nazis invaded Lithuania in 1941 breaking the non-aggression pact with the Soviets. In 1944 as the Nazis were losing the war and the Soviet front was advancing, thousands of Lithuanians fled their country realizing that the Soviets will finish their interrupted plan. The summer of 1949 proved to be fateful, as 30,000 more were deported to the Siberian Gulag, many more were arrested and tortured.

Lithuanians resisted, as 50,000 partisans – called brothers of the forest – took up arms to fight an uneven fight against the might of the Soviet army for close to 10 years. Most of them perished, over 2,000 were captured. This brave action lasting so many years disproved the allegation that Lithuania willingly joined the Soviet Union.

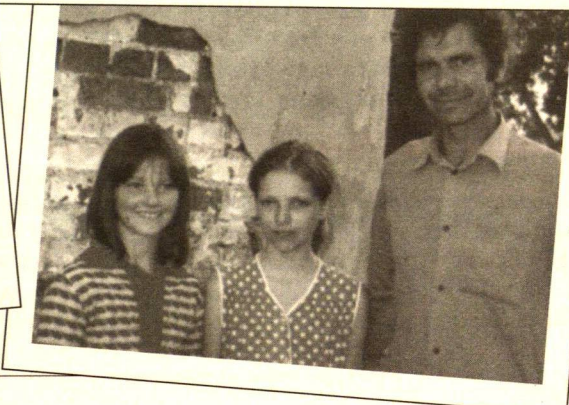
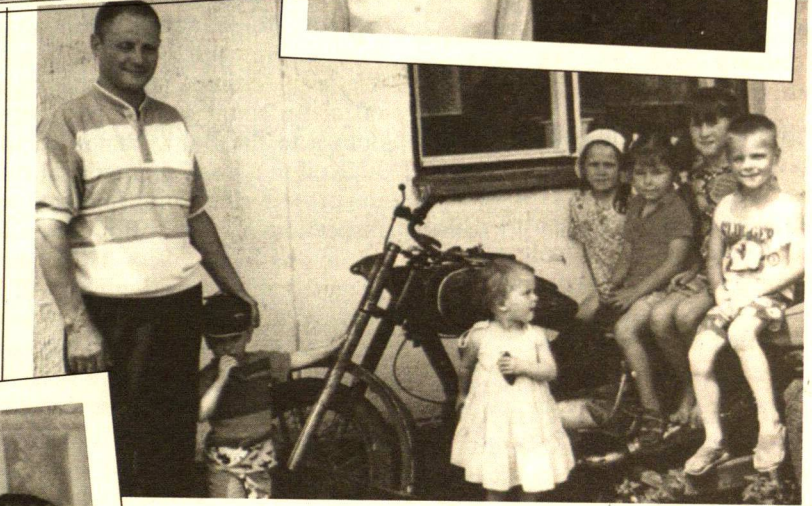
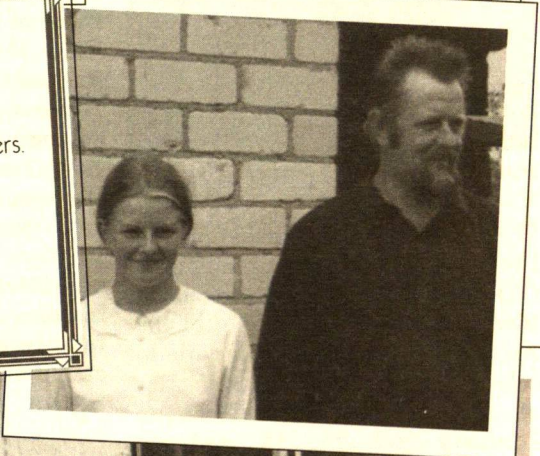
We are certain today that if not for the war with Germany and our parents’ resolve to flee to an uncertain future, most of us would have suffered the same fate in the Gulags. With a grateful heart, we should speak out for those who have been silenced, telling our children and grandchildren and the world about the Lithuanian holocaust and the hurt the nation has suffered. We can forgive but we should never forget.

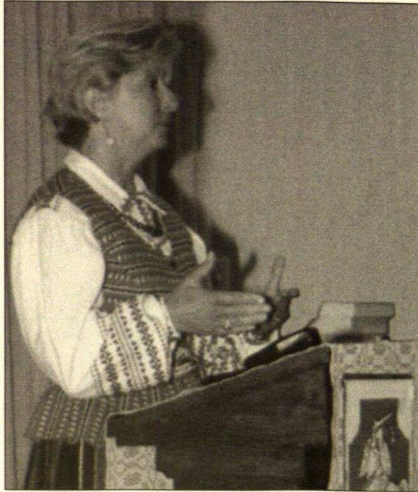
Dalia Jakiene

Information collected from the Internet and the “Draugas” daily. Courtesy of the Philadelphia Chapter of the Lithuanian American Community’s “Voice of the Lithuanian American Community” weekly
*The photo is from the book “LIETUVIAI SIBIRE” published in 1981, Chicago, Illinois.



*Happy
Father's Day*
to
Fathers. Grandfathers. Godfathers.
Uncles. Brothers
and
All Men
whose hearts are filled with
love for children.
Lithuanian Orphan Care Committee





Linda Brenneman shares her knowledge of Lithuania's culture and customs.

The members and guests of the Lithuanian American Community, Cape Cod Chapter, gathered on March 6, 2005 at Our Lady of the Assumption Church in Osterville to celebrate Lithuania's anniversaries of 87 years of independence on February 16th and 15 years of restored independence on March 11th.

Pastor Rev. Philip Davignon and Rev. Pavel A. Swiercz concelebrated the regular 12 o'clock Mass. The Mass was offered for the benefit of Lithuania and its people. Regina Petrutis and Linda Brenneman wearing National Lithuanian costumes presented Mass offerings.

After the Mass the members and guests gathered in the parish hall for the official and cultural parts of the occasion. Vida Morris, the treasurer, and Aurelija Borges, the secretary, collected dues and monetary gifts to support world wide Lithuanian activities. Persons donating one hundred dollars or more were thanked for their generosity with a small special pin.

Algirdas Dapkus, the chapter president, started the meeting with a brief comment; a moment of silence in memory of the fallen and then all sang the American and Lithuanian

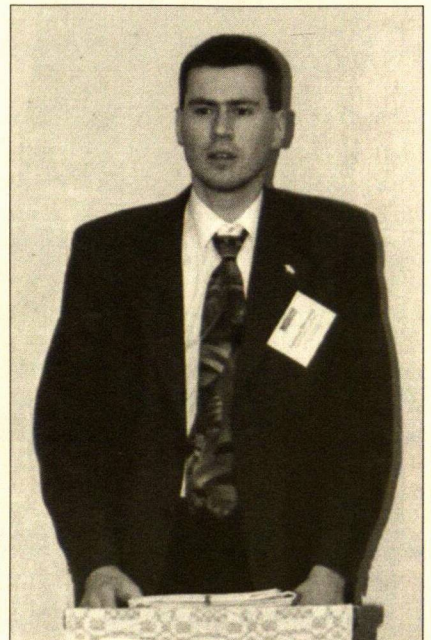
Cape Cod Lithuanians Celebrate Independence Day

anthems. Aurelija Borges read a prayer to the fallen in pursuit of freedom written by Rev. Stasys Yla. Vida Morris read Governor Mitt Romney's proclamation. Eugenijus Uzpurvis, the vice president, read a summary of the meeting's resolutions; congratulating Lithuania and its people on their independence day, thanking President George W. Bush, his administration and the legislature for past support of Lithuania's interests and asking for future economic, cultural and political support, requested the Russian Federation to accept Lithuania's relationship with NATO and other Western Nations and furthermore officially apologize for past wrong doings to the Baltic States, require LUKoil to accept international rules to protect the environment and inspection of the drilling sites for oil in the Baltic Sea. These were accepted at the meeting and will be forwarded to President George W. Bush, Senators Ted Kennedy and John Kerry, Representative Delahant, the Russian and Lithuanian ambassadors, and copies to the director of "World Heritage" center UNESCO and secretary of "Baltic 21 unit/CBSS."

Next the president introduced Regina Petrutis, our new representative from Cape Cod for the Lithuanian Foundation, Inc. She made a short statement.

The president introduced Linda Brenneman, the daughter of our honorary member Ruta Prouty and a school principal in New Hampshire. Linda presented her views, and experiences in Lithuania.

She is a member of the APPLE organization and has taught in Lithuania. She visited Lithuania several times and established professional, family and other relationships. This allowed her to gain knowledge about Lithuania; its culture and customs. She seeks to gain more knowledge about her heritage, culture and customs. She wore a Lithuanian National costume, made the presentation in English and finished the presentation by playing a song on an old folk music instrument "kankles", similar to a zither. Her presentation was very good and well received. Those gathered, some fifty people including our local priests, appreciated the knowledge and enthusiasm of Linda.



Laurynas Misevicius, the keynote speaker.

The keynote speaker was Laurynas Misevicius from Bridgeport, Ct.. He is a newcomer, has a Master's degree from a university in Bridgeport, and is a member of the Lithuanian American Community, Inc with responsibilities as a V.P. of sports activities. His accomplishments include the reactivating of the Lithuanian American Community of Bridgeport and serving as its president. He is active in the Lithuanian American press and is editor for the East Coast of the weekly "Amerikos Lietuvis". His topic was "The contributions and activities of the new Lithuanians". He started by talking about the emigrants at the beginning of the twentieth century. They were predominantly males and came to this country looking for economic opportunities, since few existed in the homeland. They lived in neighborhoods, established churches, organizations, maintained a community with their customs and language. The next wave at mid century were the DP's, displaced persons

by the Second World War. Their primary motivation was to escape from living in camps and start a normal life with a future as well as economic opportunity. Their main interest was to educate their children, maintain their culture, language and support activities to regain Lithuanian independence. After Lithuania regained its independence the third wave of young Lithuanians started coming to the land of opportunity to look for education and economic improvement. They found aged Lithuanians, churches and organizations. They are attempting to integrate into the existing Lithuanian Community by showing new strength, support and leadership. Much work needs to be done and obstacles overcome. Some questions were answered at the end of the presentation. The gathered appreciated this outlook by a patriotic member of the new generation.

The meeting ended with the usual: good food and pleasant conversation with old and new friends. The ladies supplied a variety of good food,

sandwiches and cakes. Regina Dapkus and Nijole Uzpurvis set up the table with food and coffee/tea and were gracious hostesses. Everybody appreciated his or her effort to make everyone feel at home. A big thanks from all of us.

Laurynas and his associate set up a table with Lithuanian goods and books for sale. Many took the opportunity to purchase items not available in our stores.

This celebration was a great success. It was different; it had a cultural program in English, a young, energetic speaker from the latest newcomers and we even gained a few new members. The old timers were very pleased and look forward to the next occasion and more participation by the Young and New.

Eugene Uzpurvis

Eugene Uzpurvis is the Vice-President of the Cape Cod Chapter of the Lithuanian American Community.

Bridges Passages

Bridges
June 1986

St. John's Feast - June 24

Lithuanians all over the world celebrate this holiday, in modified form, when they go partying in honor of all whose names are John or its feminine counterpart.

Lithuanians enjoy large parties, like old-time villagers who used to celebrate weddings and holidays en masse.

Festivities began immediately after lunch. The young people went out in groups to thwart witches and gather wild herbs. They sang special herb songs as they hunted. When night fell, they built bonfires, usually on hilltops, lighting up the fields. It was said that witches and evil spirits roamed that day and night, intent on harming the crops, animals

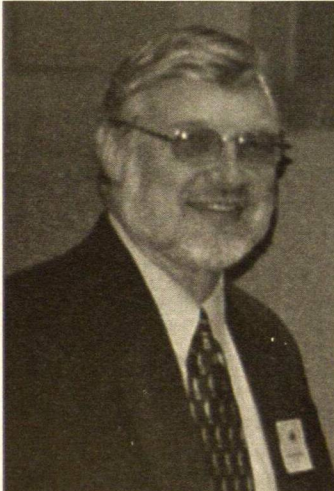
and people. The ashes of the bonfires were spread over the fields.

The young people danced in circles around the bonfires, singing special folk songs. They did not go to sleep that night, but caroused, feasted and sang and went swimming in rivers and ponds - especially the girls who expected the swim would make them prettier. Before dawn, it was customary to roll around naked in the dew to forestall all kinds of aches, pains, and skin eruptions.

The main householder, also naked, whatever his age - ran around his fields several times - or rode on the branch of a tree - to counteract any evil that might threaten his household.

MOVING THE BALTIC-AMERICAN POLITICAL AGENDA FORWARD

If you thought that after the successful accession into NATO and EU of the three Baltic countries there would be little left to do, you would be wrong. The world is changing quickly, especially in the Baltic neighborhood, and much needs to be done.



Dr. Ramunas Kondratas addresses JBANC participants

Last fall the Joint Baltic American National Committee, Inc. (JBANC) issued a White Paper outlining several program areas and specific projects with action steps for future activity. They deal with bearing witness to the legacy of communism; exporting democracy and “the Baltic experience” beyond the Baltics; engaging Russia in social, political, and economic dialogue; strengthening transatlantic integration and regional cooperation; expanding

relations and cooperation with other ethnic organizations and political groups in the U.S. and the Baltics; and providing accurate information and timely policy analysis regarding Baltic affairs in the U.S. and abroad. (The White Paper and other documents mentioned in this article can be found on JBANC’s website – <http://jbanc.org>)

This spring, March 3-5, the 6th JBANC Conference “Baltic-American Political Activity: A Vision for the Future” was held in Washington, D.C. and was structured around the five program areas described in the White Paper. Each of the five panels featured experts who elucidated in much greater depth the salient issues regarding each of the themes. They included current or former ambassadors Juri Luik, Maris Riekstins, Vygaudas Usackas (see his opening remarks in the April 2005 issue of Bridges), Keith Smith, Stephen Mull, and Juris Andarins; noted political analysts and commentators Bruce Jackson, Robert Nurick, Vladimir Socor, and Paul Goble; leading dissident from Belarus Vincuk Viacorka; parliamentarians and government officials Mart Laar, Laimonas Tallat-Kelpsa, and Laine James (Mayor of Tartu); and key NGOs such as Steve Herman of the

Maryland-Baltic European Council and Laurynas Misevicius of the Lithuanian-American Community. A summary of each of these five panel discussions will appear in the next issue of the Chronicle, JBANC’s electronic quarterly publication (available on JBANC’s website).

One of the highlights of the conference was the rousing keynote luncheon address by Rep. Thaddeus McCotter (R-MI) on the rise of Stalinism and dictatorial rule in Russia. Congressman McCotter’s talk can be found on JBANC’s website – just click on the conference logo.

There have been a number of interesting and important developments since the conference. They need your immediate attention and help. In order to bear witness to the legacy of communism we have been working with the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation to build a memorial to the victims of communism in our nation’s capital.

The good news is that after 18 months of effort and numerous hearings the Foundation has received official approval of a site for the memorial at the intersection of Massachusetts Ave., N.W., New Jersey Ave., N.W., and G Street, N.W. The site is across from the Georgetown University Law Center and only two blocks from Union Station and the Metro. There is a clear view of the U.S. Capitol and the Statue of Freedom on its top. This is important because at the heart of the Foundation’s memorial is a 10-foot bronze replica of the “Democracy” statue erected by Chinese students in Tiananmen Square in 1989 and based on the U.S. Statue of Liberty.

The next step is to secure official approval of the design concept and to finish raising the needed funds (about \$150,000). For more information about this project and how to give, please visit:

<http://www.victimsofcommunism.org>.

Another way to bear witness is to condemn the crimes of communism. JBANC has been working tirelessly on the Hill to introduce a congressional resolution condemning the crimes of communism and seeking an apology from Russia. These efforts have now born fruit. House Baltic Caucus co-chairman John Shimkus (R-IL) introduced House Concurrent Resolution 128 (H. Con. Res. 128) on April 12, asking that the Russian

Federation, as the successor state to the Soviet Union, clearly state admission and condemnation of the Soviet Union's illegal occupation and annexation from 1940 to 1991 of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Senate action is also expected soon. As of April 21, there were 12 co-sponsors of H. Con. Res. 128, but more are needed. Please help by contacting your Congressmen as soon as possible. For detailed information about what to do, please go to JBANC's website.

As you may expect, reaction from Russia was swift and strong. Pravda writes in an article "Baltic States: The truth about the Soviet 'occupation'" (03/29/05) that: the German occupation of the Baltic countries was the real occupation; that the Baltic countries were annexed to the Soviet Union at their request; that the U.S. and England consented to this annexation; and that there was no resistance to this annexation.

No mention in the Pravda article of the Soviet ultimatums to the Baltic countries; that in the case of Lithuania 50,000 joined in the armed resistance and most died; that over 300,000 Lithuanians, including the elderly and children, were murdered, incarcerated, or deported to death camps in Siberia; that religion was persecuted, and that all basic human rights were denied - no occupation, indeed. In fact, Putin in his annual report to the Russian Parliament this year stated that the collapse of the Soviet Union was "a great geopolitical catastrophe."

All of this is happening for a purpose - the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, which the Russians have proclaimed on May 9 (the Germans capitulated to the Allied Powers on May 8). Putin and the Russians want to prove to the world that Stalin and the Soviet Union saved the world from the evil of fascism. They want the world leaders to convene in Moscow on that occasion and to pay them homage. In this way Putin can further take on the mantle of Stalin, whose policies he is emulating.

But the defeat of Germany did not mean the end of the war or suffering for the Baltic countries, only the continuation of Soviet atrocities in the spirit of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. One evil replaced another, and one evil cannot justify another one. Many died and suffered from fascism and they all should be remembered and honored. So should all of those who were the victims of communism. So please support our efforts to do that.

*Ramunas Kondratas, Ph.D.
Lithuanian American Council, Inc.
Representative of Joint Baltic American Committee Board*



Dear Jeanne.

Regarding the April 2005 issue article "Buyer Beware" by Eugenija Fedosejeva. I wish to express outrage for the treatment the Clows received from the Lithuanian government. I am a third generation Lithuanian-American (my grandfather was born in Kaunas) with more than a casual knowledge of Lithuanian history. I visited Lithuania in 2003 and believe me from what I saw there, Lithuania would benefit greatly from people like the Clows!

Lithuania needs a major infusion of people whose lives were grounded in democratic traditions as well as having independent means. The Clows seem to have contributed to Lithuanian society more so than most native Lithuanians. The government should have welcomed such people with open arms.

Perhaps this article should had been accompanied by editorial comment expressing similar outrage. I would greatly appreciate a reply.

*Yours truly,
Richard A. Unish*

Hello, Jeanne,

I know this will not be constructive, but I absolutely must comment on that very distressing article in April's issue. (Great cover picture, by the way!) Is this the way our precious Lietuva is determined to treat us? Every once in a while, one hears stories like this, and it really makes me wonder - are we welcome, or is it just our tourist dollars that are welcome? You would think that they would be glad to have retired Americans living there, people who aren't taking jobs away from them, and who are doing no more than spending money.

Gloria O'Brien

Liepsna

New Jersey's Folk Dance Group



The New York World's Fair in 1964 was a tremendous event for Lithuanian Americans. Hundreds of performers from all over the U.S. and Canada traveled to perform in the World's Fair's Singer Bowl Stadium. "Ruta" Ensemble was among the performers.

The World's Fair program only listed the choir. Among the folk dance groups, two newly-formed New Jersey Lithuanian groups were listed. These were Newark's Lithuanian American Community's dance group led by Julija Vaiciunaite-Jesaitiene and New Jersey's Knights of Lithuania dance group led by Liudas Stukas.

According to former "Ruta" members, the ensemble had stopped performing by the end of the 1960s. By 1972, the Lithuanian American Community's New Jersey Region's chairman, Kazys Jankunas, and his committee decided to organize a new dance group. Marija Balciuniene and Birute Pociene, committee members, found a dance teacher, Birute Vaiciunaite, to teach the dancers who were interested in joining the group.

The group practiced for a while without a name. According to B. Pociene, the Lithuanian America Community organized a concert during which Dr. Roze Somkaite and Kazys Treciokas were chosen as the group's godparents. It was at this time that the dance group was officially named "Liepsna."

The first dance practice began with five dancers; after four years, the group was 22 members strong. By 1992, "Liepsna" had fifty dancers. That year, "Liepsna" appeared in the IX Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival with two age groups: youth and veterans. This was the height of "Liepsna's" dance achievements. It took twenty years for "Liepsna" to build up a strong and active ensemble, which loved to dance.

"Liepsna's" traveled road is colorful and beautiful to behold. The ensemble danced in seven Lithuanian Folk Dance Festivals, starting with the seventh in 1976 in Chicago. "Liepsna" also danced for the 200th American Independence Celebration in New York; the Statue of Liberty's 100th Anniversary; performed for American audiences at the New Jersey Garden State Arts Center, universities and colleges; picnics in New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and Pennsylvania; danced at February 16th Independence Day Commemorations; and performed at Lithuanian weddings.



Wherever Lithuanian immigrants and refugees settled in the U.S., they quickly organized dance and singing ensembles. Not surprisingly, the northern New Jersey Lithuanian American Community sponsored and supported two energetic and active ensembles: "Ruta" – a dance and choir ensemble and "Liepsna" – whose flame is still shining.

Ruta's first practices started 62 years ago in the fall of 1941. The chief initiator and driving force was a young idealistic man, who later became one of the most well-known Lithuanian American activists on the east coast – Prof. Dr. Jokubas Stukas.

Just sixteen years of age, Stukas started the soon-to-be popular Lithuanian radio show, "Lietuvos Atsiminimai" – "Memories of Lithuania". Even though he was hard at work with the radio show, Stukas extended his energies to organizing a 35-person choir, "Lietuvos Garsai" – "Sounds of Lithuania". This led to the start of the "Ruta" Ensemble.

The name of the ensemble – "Ruta" – came only to the forefront in 1944 when the "Ruta" women's choir was organized. The folk dance group came into being in 1945.

Both the singers and dancers were popular in the Lithuanian Communities and among the Americans. They performed in the American and Canadian Song Festivals (I and II), the "America Dances and Songs" event, the 350th anniversary of the Hudson River in Central Park, and appeared on television and in many concerts.

Randy James

Lithuanian TV Crew Filming in Waterbury

Written by Randy James
Thursday, April 21, 2005
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WATERBURY -- The Brass City will have the starring role on Lithuanian television this summer in a production titled "Connecticut's Lithuanian Capital."

A crew from Lithuania's state-run television network was in Waterbury on Wednesday interviewing residents of Lithuanian descent and filming footage of St. Joseph's Church and the Lithuanian cemetery for the program, to be called "America Unseen" and broadcast in July.

The program's producer, Andrius Tapinas, said he chose Waterbury because of its somewhat quirky practice of naming a "Lithuanian Mayor for the Day" every year, and said the fire that destroyed Waterbury's Lithuanian Club in 2003 attracted attention in Lithuania, a nation of 3.6 million people wedged between Russia and the Baltic Sea.

The crew will visit several other towns in Connecticut as well as



From left to right Larry Misevicius, Joseph Stiklius (Knights of Lithuania C-6 (Hartford) president, Waterbury Lithuanian Club president and also Lithuanian Cemetery Association), Leon Farr (J.Stiklius deputy), Andrius Tapinas (LTV producer), Peter Verseckas (Waterbury Lithuanian-American Community), Ed White (St. Joseph Lithuanian Parish) and the camera-man Viktoras Radajevas - photo by Eugenija Fedosejeva, 2005.04.20. Waterbury, CT at the St. Joseph R.C. Church.

Lithuanian communities in New York, Los Angeles and Colorado before returning to Vilnius next week.

"There's a stereotype that Lithuanians only go to Chicago, so we decided to skip it," Tapinas said. "I wanted to find Lithuanians living in small cities."

Waterbury's Lithuanian population, around 2,500, is the largest in

Connecticut, and the city is home to New England's only Lithuanian cemetery, according to Larry R. Misevicius, who edits a Lithuanian newspaper in Monroe. St. Joseph's, on Congress Avenue in Brooklyn, is New England's oldest Lithuanian parish, founded in 1894.

Reprinted with permission.

In 1994, "Liepsna" joined with Philadelphia's "Ausrine" to perform at the first World Folk Dance Festival organized by an independent Lithuanian Republic.

A host of talented dance teachers and assistants organized and taught "Liepsna".

Rasa Apanaviciene, newly-arrived from Lithuania, took over the reins in 2003. The group, numbering ten dancers, performed after two months of practice at Elizabeth's Sts. Peter and Paul Parish's Lithuanian Festival.

Dzaneta Bublione assisted Rasa in preparing the group for the XII Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival which took place in 2004. Currently her focus is on the children's folk dance group, which is affiliated with the Dr. Vincas Kudirka Lithuanian School of Elizabeth, NJ. Coincidentally, the school's initiator and director is none other than "Liepsna's" dance teacher, Rasa Apanaviciene.

*Rimgaudas Radzevicius
Translation and Photo submitted by
Rasa Ardyte-Juskiene*



Portrait of Adele Dirsyte

World Famous Prayer Book From Siberia

*Recommended by seven Cardinals of the Church.
Over one million copies in five continents.*

Of all the worst places for a prayer book to be composed was a Soviet-run hard-labor concentration camp in far-away northeastern Siberia. The prayer books there were strictly forbidden. Torture and death awaited those who possessed them. Soviet atheists hated and feared God. Those who believed in Him were considered "the enemy of the people".

And yet a fragile Lithuanian teacher composed original prayers there. She wrote them on scraps of paper, bound them together and distributed them to her companions for consolation and spiritual support. One of such prayer books was secretly smuggled through the Iron Curtain and reached the United States of America. It was immediately printed in Lithuanian in 1959, then translated and published in English in 1960. Soon it was translated in many other languages and published in fourteen countries. Within a decade (1960-1970) over one million copies were printed and distributed in Europe, North and South America, Asia and Australia.

Seven Cardinals of the Church wrote prefaces to various editions, recommending the prayer book to their faithful. Their comments revealed the rich significance of the prayers.

No more beautiful or promising document could come from a Siberian prison. It is proof, if proof is needed, that a cruel master may kill the body but never the spirit. Only souls close to God on the Cross and to His Mother of Sorrows could give expression to the resignation, charity and forgiveness in these prayers.

Richard Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston, USA

Is a human being still able to pray when his bodily, material and psychological wants are so great that he appears to be abandoned by God and man? "Mary, Save Us" is a truly great literature and a truly deep theology.

Bernard Cardinal Alfrink, Archbishop of Utrecht, Holland

Only the soul that was tried by suffering and strengthened by grace could pray and write this way. These words were prompted by lofty human and Christian inspiration.

Carlo Cardinal Confalonieri, Secretary of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, Rome-Vatican.

Written in conditions of utmost misery and hopelessness these prayers are a proof that the soul can rise far above material degradation on the wings of faith and love.

John Cardinal Heenan, Archbishop of Westminster, England

Those who were captives of the brutal might Christ made captives of His love and led them heavenward to heroic virtue, to eternal reward...

Josef Cardinal Frings, Archbishop of Cologne, Germany

I invite the young people of France to read these pages and meditate their meaning how their Lithuanian sisters in captivity were always finding God through their suffering and in the milieu of materialism, which engulfs our modern world.

Cardinal Feltin, Archbishop of Paris, France



A collection of her prayer book translations/editions. Fr.K. Trimakas

This little book of prayers contains the dynamic power of prayer that all will find helpful. Let us read this collection of prayers and share it with others. It puts to flight darkness with God's light...

Antonio Cardinal Caggiano, Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Only after the collapse of the Soviet Union the true identity of the author of this prayer book was revealed. Adele Dirsyte wrote these prayers in Kolyma, northeastern Siberia, in 1953. She was isolated, tortured, and finally liquidated without any witnesses in 1956. However, her companions who

survived the ordeal testified about her heroic life and apostolic activities in Siberia. The cause for her beatification was initiated on the eve of the jubilee year 2000.

In this fiftieth anniversary year of her death Our Sunday Visitor has published a new English edition with a new introduction by Rev. Kestutis A. Trimakas.

Please order:

Our Sunday Visitor
Book Sales Department
200 Noll Plaza
Huntington, IN 46750 USA
or
1-800-348-2440
(US\$5.95).

A 16-page booklet "A Voice from Siberia": Adele Dirsyte's Struggle against Tyranny, written by Rev. Kestutis A. Trimakas, is also published this year by Lithuanian Catholic Federation Ateitis. (US\$3). Order this publication and the prayer book:

Sister Margarita Bareikaite
Convent of the Immaculate Conception
Liberty Highway
Putnam, CT 06260 USA.

Rev. Kestutis A. Trimakas

Fr. Kestutis A. Trimakas is a priest psychologist, visiting professor teaching theology, philosophy, and psychology at various universities and priest seminaries in Lithuania. He is an author of many books on religion and psychology.

Lithuanian Mother

*You came to the burned village and
kneeling poured a handful
of burning ashes into
a linen scarf which you hid
by your heart.*

*A black falcon clawed at your heart.
Then you went home.*

Your feet touched the rocks, the river, the grass.

A wild apple tree invited you into its shade.

White ears of rye caressed your hands.

*And under your heart fluttered
a stranger to this earth still to be born, -
as you reached your home, on a high hill.*

*On a high hill,
you bowed to the East and to the West,
to the South and to the North,
you untied your linen scarf, -
a red lark soared into the sky.*

*While you went on with
the pulling of flax,
the baking of bread,
with putting your son to sleep.*

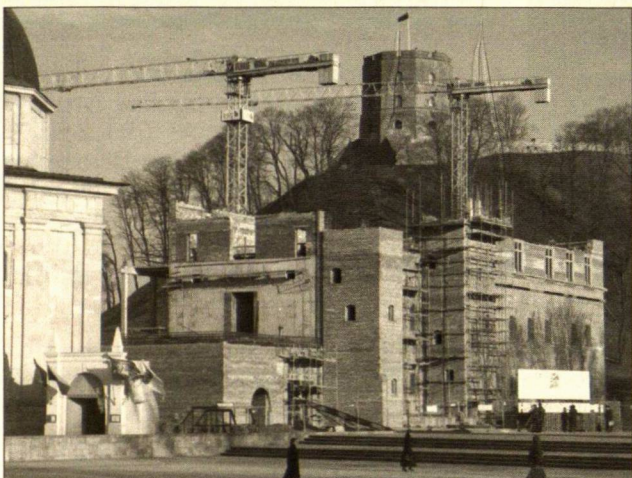
*Poem by Janina Degutyte
(1928-1990)*

*Submitted by:
Rimgaudas Vidziunas*

LITHUANIAN ROYAL PALACE

An Update

Every nation takes pride in its history. Lithuania in the year 2009 will celebrate its millennium. The first mention in the written records of Lithuania's name was in the year 1009. In the 14th, 15th and 16th. centuries Lithuania was one of the largest nations in Europe. Its borders stretched from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. During this great time in history, the rulers of Lithuania built the magnificent "Royal Palace" in Vilnius, adjoining the Cathedral. It was the cultural, administrative and religious center of Lithuania for about four centuries. In 1799 - 1801 during the Russian occupation, the Royal Place was razed by the order of the Tsar so as to destroy this the most visible symbol of Lithuania's independent existence.



Royal Palace is rising. Vilnius - spring of 2005.

Many occupations later, Lithuania having regained its independence once again, in 1990 began its plans to rebuild the "Royal Palace". The archeological research having been completed, the actual restoration began on May 10, 2002 when the official ground breaking ceremony took place. The Palace will consist of a quadrangle of four three story wings enclosing a courtyard. The total floor space is about 110,000 square feet. The estimated cost of rebuilding the structures is about 35 million U.S. dollars. Work is being done on all four of the wings. Foundations are being set in the north and west wings. The east wing is still being planned and researched as a building rests on that site. The south wing is the furthest along with all three stories being completed. It is hoped the actual construction will be done by year's end. Each year from the annual budget the government of Lithuania has been appropriating large sums of money to restore and rebuild the buildings.

It has been determined that the Palace will serve as a cultural, educational, national ceremonial center and

museum. At present the interior design plans are being formulated. Effort is being made to locate as many as possible original contents of the building that were removed by the various occupiers as the "spoils of war". To date the government has not appropriated funds for the interior restoration of the Palace.



Visitors view the model of the Royal Palace.

In August of 2000, a group of private citizens formed a Royal Palace Restoration Foundation to raise funds to aid in the restoration and refurbishing of the Palace and to publicize the project. The founders of the foundation are well known individuals living in Lithuania and abroad. They include clergy, poets, businessmen, historians, engineers, other professionals and community leaders. In the summer of 2003, a Royal Palace Restoration Committee for the U.S.A was founded. On November 19, 2003, the U.S.A. Committee became affiliated with the Lithuanian Foundation by signing an agreement with the Lithuanian Foundation to work together to assure our U.S. donors that their donations will be recognized by the Lithuanian government and to represent the interests of the Lithuanian Americans.

The United States Committee is headed by Regina F. Narusis. The Committee's treasurer is Bronius Juodelis. The Committee consists of the secretary Skirmante Migliniene, press representative Vaiva Ragauskaite, for cultural affairs Maria Remiene, for educational affairs Vida Raviene, for grant funding Milda S. Napjus and chairman of the Lithuanian American Hall commission Violeta Rutkauskiene. This Committee's fundraising efforts began December of 2003. To this date, the Committee has received \$100,000 dollars in donations. Much more is needed to furnish and complete just one hall. We would



Committee members and guest: E. Kulikauskas, President of the Royal Palace Restoration Foundation of Lithuania, V. Rutkauskiene, chair of the Lithuanian American Hall commission, S. Migliniene secretary, V. Ragauskaite, press representative, M. Remiene, Lithuanian American Community, Cultural Council president, R. Narusis, chairperson of the US Committee for the Royal Palace Restoration and B. Juodelis, treasurer.

like to have one hall named the Lithuanian American Hall. Plans are now under way to conceptually develop plans for such a hall so as to represent the American Lithuanians in the continuity of Lithuania's existence .

By agreement with the Royal Palace Restoration Foundation, which has an agreement with the Lithuanian government, every donor will be named in the Royal Palace supporters rolls that will be kept on the premises of the restored Palace. Each donor who contributes 1,000 litai (about \$400.00 at today's exchange rates) or more, will be named a "Builder", whose name will be displayed on a plaque in the rebuilt Palace. Those contributors donating 10,000 litai (about \$4,000 U.S dollars) will be listed as "Honorable Builders". Those donating 1000,000 litai (about \$40,000 U.S. dollars) will be named as "Great Builders." Donors will also be able to choose to fund specific projects, be it restoration of artifacts, acquisition of art, furniture, restoration of some part of the halls or an entire hall. The government has not appropriated funds to equip the Palace. Moneys will be needed for rugs, windows, exhibits, decorations and technology. This is where the foundation will be able to help.

The restoration of the Royal Palace is a historical heritage project of great importance to all Lithuanians wherever they live. It will stand as a permanent visible statement of our justifiable pride in our Lithuanian heritage, symbol of the survival of the Lithuanian nation as well as our hope and faith in her great and prosperous future. All Lithuanians

and non-Lithuanians are invited to become a part of this very historically significant project and to memorialize their family name as builders of the Royal Palace, the symbol of Lithuania's statehood, sovereignty and unity.

Please join us in this very important project by making your donation to the "Royal Palace Restoration Committee for the U.S.A. and sending your donation to 5600 South Claremont Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60636. Your donations are U.S. tax deductible. A receipt will be supplied by the Committee. All persons who donate \$400.00 or more will receive from the Foundation in Lithuania a diploma acknowledging their donation. Please check the Lithuanian Foundation web site www.lvr.lt for more information and a list of the U.S. Committee contributors. Won't you join us in this once in a life-time project !

*By Regina F. Narusis, J.D.
Chairman of the Royal Palace
Restoration Committee for the U.S.A.*

Regina Narusis is currently Chairman of the National Board of Directors of the Lithuanian American Community, Inc. and former President of the Lithuanian American Community, Inc. National Executive Board. She is also the chairman of the Royal Palace Restoration Committee for the U.S. A. and is member of the Board of Directors of the Royal Palace Restoration Foundation in Lithuania. Mrs. Narusis is an attorney.

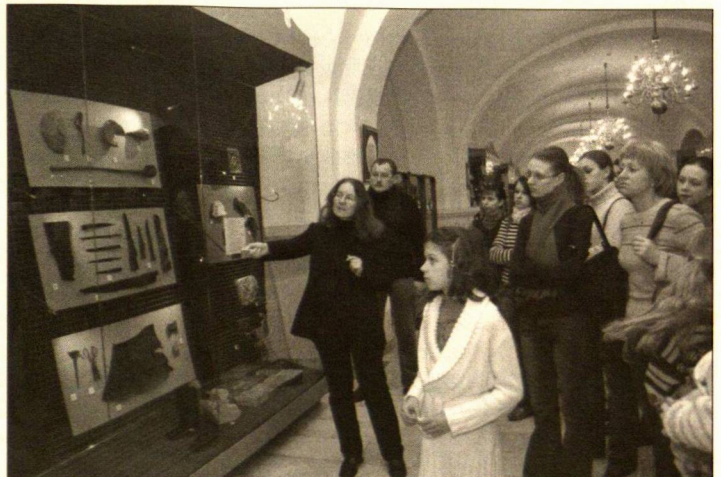


Exhibit of over 1,000 restored artifacts found during the excavation.

sports

Another Championship Team

We are so used to hearing about the accomplishments of the Lithuanian basketball national squad, our best club Zalgiris from Kaunas, and individual basketball stars, playing for many of the better known Western European and NBA professional teams, that many of us think there are no other quality team individuals in Lithuania's No. 1 sports world worth even mentioning.

Therefore, it came as a very pleasant surprise, when the Lithuanian Basketball League's team, Lietuvos Rytas from our country's capital Vilnius, won its first European title and wrote a new page in the basketball history of the Old Continent beating Alfa Makedonikos from Kozanio (Greece) 78-74. In the second round of the most prestigious-ULEB Cup final, in front of a sellout crowd of 6,500 at the Spiroudome in Charleroi, Belgium on Tuesday,



September, 2003 the Lithuanian national team became the EUROPEAN champions in Sweden and was greeted coming back to Kaunas with the Cup.

the 19th of April 2005, Lietuvos Rytas (Lithuanian morning) also earned the right to take part in the 2005-06 Euroleague. More than 1,000 fans from Lithuania celebrated the victory of the team bearing the name of the most popular daily newspaper. In so doing Lietuvos Rytas became the second sponsored team from the 3.6 million population from the basketball-crazy country to participate in the unofficial NBA of Europe alongside the more experienced Zalgiris team next season. An American "legend" Tyrone Nesby and Simas Jasaitis led the winners with 16 points each while the team captain Robertas Javtokas (later awarded MVP of the

final match) had 14 points for Lietuvos Rytas and added 5 rebounds and 2 blocked shots en route to capture the continental trophy. Tomas Delininkaitis and former Kaunas basketball club center Gintaras Einikis also played a key role for the win, each with 9 points. Vilnius led only 77-74 with 12 seconds left, but our fellow-countrymen were able to hold on with a final free throw by none other than Javtokas himself with 6.4 seconds to go, allowing his team to celebrate the victory and first-ever ULEB Cup title!

Compiled by
Laurynas (Larry) R. Misevicius, LAC
National Executive Committee,
picture from www.euroleague.net

Bridges
June 1987

The Last to Accept

The last Lithuanians to accept Christianity were the stalwart Zemaiciai of Western Lithuania. Their baptism was begun in 1413 by Vytautas the Great and Jogaila, but the conversion of Zemaitija progressed very slowly. Even as late as the 16th century, the people still practiced their pagan religion.

Their development was different from that of the rest of Lithuania. They were isolated. Their rulers granted them privileges not conferred on other Lithuanians. For two hundred years, the Zemaiciai played a central role in Lithuania's wars against the crusading Teutonic Knights.

They cultivated their own inner strength. Instead of subdued serf mentality, they developed the strength

of independence and humor. The Zemaiciai, led by Bishop M. Valancius (1875), were the first to organize an effective network of clandestine book smuggling to circumvent the Russian ban on Lithuanian books. During the 19th century it was in Zemaitija that the Lithuanian national renaissance movement found its fullest support.

From the beginning of the 17th century the Marian Shrine at Siluva gained the wide recognition it enjoys today. The countryside of Zemaitija became famous for the numerous crosses and miniature chapels erected along its roadways and in farmsteads.

ZEMAITIJA by Vytautas Ignas

Bridges Passages

Siberia Through The Eyes Of A Child

AUTHOR: Dainora Urboniene
 Panevezys (Lithuania)
 Translation: Gintautas Kaminskas
 LITHUANIAN PAPERS, NO.18/2004

For Mother, Father and Arutis.

What is exile? All former exiles will tell you much the same thing: it means broken families, hunger, cold. Degradation of human beings. That moment when they loaded you, a child, into the truck, you did not understand what degradation meant. You did not yet know that the stigma of being expelled from your own home would be with you all your life. The need to keep looking back will grow stronger, you will want to look back not just to the events of 1941, but back further in time, mentioning your parents' youth and childhood, during the nation-building period of the first Lithuanian Republic (1918 - 1940). So will be born this narrative about the family of village schoolteachers and the tragedy that befell them.

There were thousands of stories like this one; that's why I dedicate this modest book not just to those near to me, but to all the teachers of Independent Lithuania who suffered terribly.

On the evening of 13 June 1941, I went to sleep dreaming about mother serving honey-cake to guests, but I woke up on hearing a very unaccustomed racket. I got up, ran to the lounge room door, opened it, and stopped in the doorway: mother was sitting on the sofa in the lounge room and weeping. Beside her was a man with a rifle. Another armed man was leaning against the windowsill.

When mother saw me she shrieked and wanted to come to me, but the man who was guarding her roughly grabbed her by the shoulder and sat her down again. Then through the doorway I saw father being led in. He was being intimidated with a rifle shoved into his back; a soldier in Russian uniform guarded him. In the bedroom my baby brother Arutis began to cry. A soldier told me to get dressed, take the warmest clothes I had and some preserved food. I remember, I sat on the bed, shook, and didn't know what to do.

I put on a dress, the one mother had put aside for me for our planned trip to Ziliskiai the next day. Arutis was now dressed and was not crying, he just looked around, frightened. I remember the sack into which we put things: bread, a section of smoked pork: a few other things. Mother wrapped our clothes in sheets. Mother's preparations were cut short by the returning Russian soldier. He yelled at mother, who was at that moment taking a small garment out of a wardrobe. He ran up to her and angrily grabbed the garment from her, throwing it back into the wardrobe.

With our bags and bundles we were all chased back into the lounge room, where father was standing in the middle of the room. His hands were tied behind his back, a rifle barrel against his body. Two men guarded him. This scene left the worst scar on my memory. They searched us and chased us out into the yard. I asked mother why grandma wasn't going with us. She told me to be quiet, but grandmother approached the soldier and begged him to leave the children behind. When he shook his head, she pleaded for Arutis, pointing out how small he was. But the soldier pushed away grandmother with his rifle barrel, and he chased me and mother, with Arutis in her arms, into the yard.

They stopped us on the stairs. Father was already in the truck. He was sitting by the cabin, a rifle barrel shoved into his shoulder. The soldiers told the people who were helping them search the houses to put our things into the truck. When everything was in the truck, the soldiers must have thought we had too many bundles, because they started throwing our possessions out of the truck while shouting something in Russian. Mother grabbed one bag and asked them to let her take it, because it had warm clothes for the children. That one they let us take, but a portion of our possessions was left behind in the middle of the yard.

Rifles threatened us, especially the one pointed at father. But suddenly I was very sad when I grasped that we were being driven out of our own home, in which it had been so good to live. For some reason, thoughts of our well, our orchard and the lane to our house passed through my mind. I sobbed, but I looked at father and saw that he was smiling. Through tears I smiled back and fell silent.

In the railway wagon

As the truck drove through the streets of Panevezys, father asked one of the guards something in Russian. The reply was, "To the railway station." When the truck stopped and we were told to get out, I was very frightened again. Armed soldiers swarmed around the train. They herded the bundle-carrying people into the wagons. The wagons themselves were intimidating, with their wide doors and tiny windows. "Cattle wagons!" cried out someone.

I stared at the wagons and was puzzled by how they could hold all those people who just kept on piling in. Father lifted me into the wagon, then Arutis, and told me to take him into the middle of the wagon. I stood there holding my brother and didn't move. I was afraid the train would start going before my parents joined us and would take him and me away all on our own.

People were jostling all around. A Russian soldier angrily barked orders at people in Russian, which frightened me greatly. When my parents joined us, father explained that the words the soldier was saying meant "Hurry up!". Mother led us to some rough wooden structures against the walls. I found out that these were meant to be bunk beds, on which we were supposed to sleep. Some were higher, some were lower. We claimed a couple of upper bunks, right near the window.

I looked at the door, through which Russian soldiers were still pushing people into the wagon, still shouting "davay" ('Hurry up!'). I learnt a Russian sentence: "Davay bistrey po vag6nam" ('Hurry up into the wagons!'). It was hot and stuffy, Arutis was crying. Unknown people sat all about. Some were moaning, others crying, others talking, starting to get to know each other. I learnt another Russian word: "kipyatok", which is what they call boiled water. I would soon be drinking that sludgy, bad-tasting water.

As night fell the people in the wagon drifted off to sleep. It was crowded, stuffy, but we were glad to be among our own. Even though we lacked fresh air and were thirsty, we still felt rested after such a horrendous day. Arutis cheered up and began to play and laugh. Breakfast consisted of - "kipyatok" (boiled water). But our recovery did not last long. Suddenly we heard shouting outside in Russian. The wagon doors slammed open, the guards climbed in and shouted something. Father said, "They are telling us that the men have to travel in other wagons. They are telling us to take only our most important possessions."

The soldiers began to read names from a list. I heard mother start to cry as they read out father's name. I looked at father and saw how his face changed. He tried to comfort us, but his voice was trembling. For a moment the wagon was silent, but then a furore arose, and one could hear crying, and angry shouting. Crying I clung to father, grabbed his hand and wouldn't let go. I looked around and saw that all the children were clinging to their fathers.

The soldiers broke up these farewell embraces as they approached screaming and hurling insults at the men. Father kissed us all again, said we would all meet again soon, and asked me to help mother look after Arutis while he traveled in another wagon. Mother wanted to come part of the way with him, but the soldiers wouldn't let her. The next day sitting in the stuffy wagon we were all breathless, fainting from the heat. At night as I slept I shuddered and shook. Arutis cried a lot, and would only calm down when he was held.

In the morning we were awoken by the locomotive's whistle. We felt the wagon shudder, heard crunching sounds, then loud banging. At first people in the wagons fell strangely silent, but then they all got up, tried to get to a window. They started singing the Lithuanian hymn "Marija, Marija". I hounded mother by continually asking her when father would be coming back. But he did not come back, and we went on

without him.

At one station we stopped a bit longer. Someone said the station's name: it was Naujoji Vilnia. They let the women out of the wagon, so they could get some water. I looked out the window and saw mother running toward another train. I could see father looking out of one of the windows of that train. He was saying something to mother, I heard him mention my name and my brother's. Mother pointed to our train. Father spotted me and Arutis, he waved, even smiled. The women came back to our wagon. I saw how sadly mother climbed back into the wagon: crying out loud, no water, an empty dish. She climbed onto the bunk, sat down with me and Arutis, hugged us and said: "Now we have to continue our journey alone. Father is being taken to prison."

I still had hope. I remember, whenever the train stopped, whenever they let us out of the wagon, my eyes looked around for the other train, the one in which the men were traveling. Many trains went by, but never the one with my father in it. When mother and I cried, my little brother would start to cry, too.

We were very happy the first time they let us out in a wooded area. It was summer, the weather was beautiful, we could smell the pleasant smell of pastures. We didn't want to go back into the smelly wagon, we wanted to stay outside longer. We found some blueberries. We were afraid to eat them, but the soldiers told the women that the berries were edible. Arutis liked the berries very much. We ate a lot, and brought some back into the wagon.

However, that night our little one began to get an upset stomach, and he threw up. We were frightened. Who knows if the berries were responsible. Mother complained constantly that there was no suitable food for such a young child, the journey was too hard for him. Arutis really suffered because of the food. At first he greedily sucked the bread and ham, but later, from constantly eating the same thing, his stomach started to hurt.

At first he did not want to taste the porridge that was brought to the wagon from time to time. Later he began eating it. Mother was pleased that at least he was getting some warm food. At first I didn't want it, either, but I got used to it, just like I got used to the other inconveniences: for example, the hole in the middle of the wagon's floor that served as our toilet.

It was hard when the baby had an "accident". From the deteriorating food, from the dirty clothes, and from the unwashed bodies, the air in the wagon was sometimes so horrible that you wanted to chop or cut a little hole in the wall to get some air. Arutis was getting weaker. At home in Raguva he was trying to walk, he was happy, but now in the wagon he slept a lot, did not laugh much, did not always want to play. After the men were separated from us at Naujoji Vilnia, two more events upset us greatly: receiving news about the outbreak of war; and arriving at the Ural Mountains.

Mother discussed war - and possible bombardment - with the other women a lot. When the talk about war simmered down, we arrived at the Urals. The women cried and said that now we were a long way from Lithuania, no one would come to rescue us, probably we would never return. We started to learn Russian. We soon learnt quite a lot, but for quite a while we children, especially the girls, could not understand why our mothers were so reluctant to translate the Russian soldiers' swearwords.

At one station we saw a gang of beggars. We wondered where they had all come from. Later we saw more and more of them all along the roadsides. Old men and young women were begging for alms. Children, my age and younger, stretched their skinny arms toward us, repeating the word "pomiluyte" ("have pity"). Sometimes these beggars would scramble for the half-rotten food we would throw to them from the wagon, and they would eat it. We ourselves were not yet suffering too much hunger, but we would have like more hot food.

We thought about how we used to eat in Lithuania. More than once my mouth watered as I thought about our meals in Raguva. The mothers began to become fearful about the sight of all the roadside beggars. They wondered what awaited us, where they were taking us. I remember, once when I didn't want to eat some sort of swill, mother said to be more tolerant, because those waiting in the railway stations would be very happy to eat it. "Maybe we will starve in Siberia", she added sadly. We used to talk about father, where they were taking him, what he was eating, maybe he was already being starved.

Finally one morning we found out that we were approaching Bamaul, where we would have to get out. Everything there was horrible for me. There were guards by the tents and the potato fields, continual searches, as if we were likely to be concealing a bomb. Littered streets, wooden footpaths, heavily strewn with sunflower seed husks. We thought the Russians were like circus performers, the way they husked the seeds with their teeth. They throw some seeds into their mouth, husk them nimbly with their tongue and teeth, and spit the husks out wherever they feel like it.

If you are standing in a queue with them, they may spit the husks out all over you. We children tried to learn the technique but we couldn't. In any case, it's not as if we had a lot of sunflower seeds to practice with. They had to be bought, and only rarely would some Russian give me or my mother a few. Bamaul became even more horrible as winter approached. At first the sleet tortured us, then the snow and blizzards. People said that we were going to be moved somewhere. Some were happy to hear this, because the cellars we lived in were cold and damp. Others feared that our lives would take a turn for the worse.

They moved us from Barnaul at the end of November. They took us to the railway station by lorry. They told us to get out

at a spot further away from the railway station, out of the way. The weather was terrible, it was snowing, a strong wind was blowing. Sitting in the open back of the truck we got wet, and then we were thrown out onto the snow, getting terribly cold. It's just as well that we had some winter clothes, but they were not enough to protect us from the extreme cold.

We didn't have to wait for the train for too long. We then traveled most of the day. In the evening they told us to get out in Talmenka. They made us go into the middle of a field. The weather was getting worse. Tired, cold, the three of us huddled. We protected Arutis as best we could. No one met us or guarded us. All they did was tell us to get out of the train and told us where to stand with our things and wait. We sat on our bundles, wet and cold. Finally late that night a man came and told us to go to a shed not far away. It had a little fireplace, but when we lit it, it smoked so much that we were coughing from the smoke.

Arutis dozed off, he was quite pale. He wasn't eating. In Bamaul, mother had managed to get us some food for the journey by selling or bartering one of her meagre possessions in exchange for some boiled potatoes, and, if I remember correctly, some sauerkraut, a few biscuits, and little bit of flour and groats and a ration of bread. Before the trip we had made some porridge; we carried it in a little army saucepan.

To be continued.

Translated from the Lithuanian by Gintautas KAMINSKAS. Gintautas Kaminskas, B.A.Hons. (Flinders), M.A. (Monash) is a professional translator and presently lives in Montreal, Quebec.

Dainora Tamosiunaite subsequently returned to Lithuania, posing as an orphan. In due course, she grew up, received her education, became a school teacher and got married (Urboniene is her married name). She later wrote her memoirs, a 188-page book in Lithuanian. This testimony is still waiting to be translated into English - all it needs is the equivalent of the price of a good second-hand car or about \$9,000.

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Editor's Note: I read this story and was so moved I knew we had to share this with as many people as possible. Yet I was bothered by the fact that I cannot tell you when you will know more of what happened. The pros outweigh the cons and I feel even part of this story is better told than none of it. We must never, never forget what happened to the Lithuanian people.

Calendar of Events for June - July - August - September

Please verify all dates, times, and places as events are subject to change.

***Information for
Camp Neringa events:
www.neringa.org or
978-582-5592**

June

June 3, and June 5, 2005

Annual "Talka" Work Weekend
Help Neringa prepare for its
36th camping summer.
The mechanically-inclined and
people with considerable elbow
grease surpluses are urged to
attend this fun and gratifying
weekend. If you plan to attend.
Contact: Vida Strazdis
Info: www.vida@neringa.org

June 5, 2005 - 12:30 pm

Council 26 Annual Picnic
Maironis Park, Shrewsbury, MA.
Lithuanian dinner,
Baked goods, Games, etc.
www.knightsoflithuania.com

June 12, 2005 - 9:00 am

Deportations Commemoration.
Mass 9:00 a. m.
Program church hall, Holy Trinity
53 Capitol Ave., Hartford, Ct.

June 14, 2005 - 7:00 am

Mass 7:00 am- Remembrance of
the Deportations to Siberia
Our Lady of Victory Church
Centerville, MA
Sponsor: Cape Cod Chapter

June 17, - August 12, 2005

Baltic Studies Summer Institute
(BALSSI) at Indiana University,
Bloomington, Indiana
offering courses
* First and second year Estonian
* First year Latvian
* First year Lithuanian
* Baltic Cultures course
More information on Balssi 2005
homepage:
[http://www.indiana.edu/
~iaunrc/balssi/](http://www.indiana.edu/~iaunrc/balssi/)

June 18, 2005

Annual LAC Picnic
10:00 am - close at sunset.
San Dieguito County Park
1628 Lomas Santa Fe Dr.
Del Mar, CA 92014
Info: www.lithsd.org

June 19, 2005 - 12 pm

Lithuanian Mass 12 pm
St. George R.C.
Lithuanian Church
443 Park Ave
Bridgeport, CT 06604

June 24, and June 25, 2005

Annual New England District Retreat.
Franciscan Monastery,
Kennebunkport, Maine.
Make your reservations now.
www.knightsoflithuania.com

June 25, 2005

Saturday, - TBA
Lithuanian Country Club
Jefferson Hills, PA
Annual "Jonines" Celebration.
All evening and night & celebra-
tion with plenty of food & drink.
Looking for musician(s) to play
Lithuanian music & songs
www.pittsburghlithuanians.com

June 25, to 29, 2005

Neringa
Family Camp in English
Information: vida@neringa.org

June 26, 2005 - 11:30 am

"LIETUTIS"
Lithuanian Folk Dance Group of
Seattle will celebrate summer
solstice by performing at
SKANDIA MIDSOMMAR FEST.
At St. Edward State Park.
Activities begin at 11:30 am
Dancing, music, food and crafts.
Parade of performers followed by
the raising of a garlanded pole.
www.skandiafolkdance.org/Midsommarfest/midsommarfest.html

June 29, - July 3, 2005

Neringa,
Art House "Extreme Makeover"

July

July 3, - 9, 2005

Neringa
Family Camp in Lithuanian

July 10, - 24, 2005

Neringa
Childrens' Camp in Lithuanian,
Ages 10 - 16

July 17, 2005

Lithuanian Mass, 12 noon
St. George R.C.
Lithuanian Church
443 Park Ave, Bridgeport, CT 06604

July 17, 2005

Mid-America District
Summer Picnic at the Jagiella
Farm in Hebron, IN
Info:
www.knightsoflithuania.com

July 24, 2005 - 12 Noon

Picnic and Annual Meeting
with Elections
Sponsor: Lithuanian American
Community Waukegan/Lake
County Chapter Where:
Shelter A, Lake County Forest
Preserve, Half Day, IL
Info: 847 - 855 - 5294

July 24, 2005

Neringa
Putnam Picnic

July 24, - 30, 2005

Neringa,
Children's Camp in Lithuanian
Ages 13- 16
Beginners Camp in Lithuanian,
Ages 7 - 10

July 30, 2005 - Noon to 6 pm

Philadelphia
Lithuanian Music Hall
Annual Picnic
Soupy Island Park
National Park, NJ
Lithuanian food, music,
games, swimming.
Meet old and new friends.
Proceeds to benefit
hall renovations.
www.phillylac.org or
215- 739- 4831

July 31, - August 13, 2005

Neringa
Children's Camp in English
Ages 7 - 16

July 31, 2005 - 2 pm to 7pm

Seattle Daughters of Lithuania
Annual Blueberry Picnic
Year's major fundraiser.
Bring chairs, blankets,
sports equipment, beverages.
Auction, raffles. No pets.
Blueberry Acres Farm,
Arlington, WA
seattledukterys@hotmail.com

August

August 6, - 7, 2005

91st Annual Lithuanian Days
Saturday, August 6, 2005
Sunday, August 7, 2005
Schuylkill Mall, Frackville, PA
Sponsored by Knights of Lithuania
Council 144
Info: bermika@infionline.net

August 7, 2005

Annual Community Picnic
www.coloradolithuanians.org

August 7, 2005 - Sunday

Lithuanian American Community
Greater Hartford Annual Picnic
Williams Park, Neipsic Rd.
Glastonbury, Ct.

August 7, - 14, 2005

20th Annual
Lithuanian Language Course
Camp Dainava, Manchester, MI
Info: Vytautas Jonaitis
1332 Sprucewood Dr. NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
Phone: 616-453-7549
Email vjonaitis@juno.com
[http://lithuanianamerican.org/
dainava_lang.php](http://lithuanianamerican.org/dainava_lang.php)

August 7, 2005

Community Picnic. Details to follow.
Sponsored by: Colorado Chapter
of Lithuanian American Community
www.coloradolithuanians.org

August 11, -14, 2005

Knights of Lithuania 92nd
National Convention.
Hosted by Council 19
Pittsburgh, PA
Wyndham Pittsburgh Hotel.
Info: www.knightsoflithuania.com

August 14, - 20, 2005

TENTATIVE - Neringa
Continuation of Camp in English
Ages 13 - 16

Aug. 15, 2005

House of Lithuania Lawn Program
Balboa Park
Sponsored by San Diego
Chapter of Lithuanian American
Details to follow
Communitywww.lithsd.org

Aug 15, - 19, 2005

Seattle
Lankas Lithuanian Family Camp
Fun-filled week of Lithuanian
heritage at the West Coast
Latvian Education Center in
Shelton, on the Olympia Peninsula.
Camp activities include
Lithuanian dancing, singing,
language, crafts, history,
folklore, hiking, swimming,
scouting, and more!
Contact Linda Mazeika
206-522-1907
Igmazeika@comcast.net

Note:

registration deadline: August 1

August 21, 2005

Mass 12 Noon in Lithuanian
St. George R.C.
Lithuanian Church
443 Park Ave,
Bridgeport, CT 06604

August 21, - 27, 2005

Neringa
Bilingual college students camp

August 28, - September 4, 2005

Neringa
8 Art Days for adults in Lithuanian

September

September 10, 2005

Fall Ball - Dinner Dance
Miramar Marine Base, San
Diego, CA
www.lithsd.org



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Brone Barakauskiene.....tel: 708-403-5717 e-mail: mamabar3@aol.com

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akvile's corner



and another year ends

Just look through the window, can you see it? Right there! On the other side of the street, on that oak, right over there! There you go. Isn't it beautiful? A bird with its little babies and the tree is so green. I just love spring; as a matter of fact, spring is almost everybody's favorite season of the year. The sun is getting stronger, the weather is warmer and you don't have to wear those heavy sweaters and coats. Everyone wants to be outside. There is nothing better than to sit in the park or under a tree. Even better is eating ice-cream with friends. Also, spring is called the season of love. People start noticing the ones that they have never noticed, isn't that interesting? How about students? They have these feelings, too.

The same thing happens every spring. Young people stop thinking about classes, grades and especially books. Who wants to sit at home and study when the sun is shining and all your friends are outside? I guess nobody. But our parents always say, "What you learn now, you're not going to have to study again." And that's what keeps us studying. It's a hard a time for kids. But what can you do? Teachers are getting annoyed by kids asking for no homework, excuses for not doing work, and not coming to class. After all the work that you've done in school, you just want to get out of that building. "I surely understand that" my teacher always was saying, "But when I say work, that means work!" and all of us thank the teachers for their patience. After all they are the ones who care about our education. And how they are happy to see the kids finish the 9th or 10th grade.

This is my story. It was a nice, warm day in at the end of May. All the work is done except for some last tests and the final grades. I really didn't want to go to school; we didn't do much there... talking who is going where for vacation. Teachers didn't want to teach.

Every day they were assigning short essays.. And finally, the last week of school. All we had to do was to bring our books to the library and take home our "grade books" as we used to call them. Our class always had a nice tradition for the last day of school. As we were doing it before, we did it this time, too.

Morning, class tutor is not here yet, but we are! We open the doors and everybody goes inside the room. We decorate the room with flowers, ribbons and balloons. The boys always go to the store next to our school to buy flowers for our teacher. In the meantime the girls finish decorating the room and start getting the table ready for cookies, pies, and lemonade. The boys usually come back right before the teacher comes in. This time they were pretty slow. They brought the flowers two minutes before she showed up. Everything looked so good, the table, flowers, walls and the blackboard. We drew happy faces all over the board. Everybody is here. Eight o'clock. And here she comes. She is the "Best of All". Sometimes you cannot describe how happy and special a person feels when you see her smiling, hugging everybody, talking, and laughing. She was like that. We all sat together around the table, remembering the class trips, wonderful and funny moments, and the most important thing, we had a class diary. A different person was writing something in it everyday. And we never told our beloved teacher about the diary. She was surprised just the way we had hoped. And as always, she baked us a cake. This time it was like never before. It was wonderful. Then she gave us our "grade books". And finally the, boys give her a lot of flowers. And when I say a lot, I mean A LOT of flowers.

It was around two o'clock when we were about to end our "end of school year" party. Some went home, some stayed with the teacher, and some of us went to the park to eat some ice cream and be with friends.

In my own opinion, this tradition that we have is a really nice way to show our teacher how we love her, that we care about her, and she is the "Best of All".

Akvile Dudonyte

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

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