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december 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

When we are young it seems we are always waiting for the next big milestone to happen. As we get older the time and years seem to fly and so another year has passed.

I can't even begin to thank all the people who helped Bridges during 2005. The writers spent hours providing us with new and interesting information, readers sent magazine and newspaper articles they thought would be of general interest, some have brought in new subscribers to Bridges. A very sincere thank you to Vytis Tours and the organizations that help us financially. Thanks to the readers who continue to support us not by just reading Bridges, but with their kind words of encouragement. Without the Lithuanian American Community, Bridges would not exist. Please support their efforts when possible. Gema is the backbone of putting this magazine together every month. It's not unusual for her to be at her computer in the early hours before dawn. Ramas Pliura is responsible for the printing and putting the labels on by hand so that the magazine reaches you on time and also for sending you a reminder when your subscription is due to expire.

Thanks to Gražina Kriauciūnienė you can read about the events of the Lithuanian American Community's annual meeting held in Detroit. Regina Juskas-Svoba explains the work of Aid to Lithuania. I was very impressed by an article in BRIDGES 1987 and reprinted it so that it could be shared with others. It was written by Stasys Yia and translated by Rev. Anthony Jurgelaitis, O.P. This article, along with Sister Margarita's Bareikaitė's Advent article, reminds us of the true meaning of Christmas. It is so easy to get carried away by the commercialism of the season. In the same vein, Rasa Brittain writes of the rebirth and dedication of St. Andrew's Choir in Philadelphia, PA. December's issue carries the second of a three part series about poet Janina Degutyte's work. I can't even tell you about the hours Dr. Marija Gražina Slavenas spent on working with BRIDGES to condense this work. As always, with a quick email and a request from me, Gloria O'Brien opened her files and produced a Christmas Eve legend for the December issue. Once a worker for human rights, always a worker for human rights. Juratė Krokys Stirbys, a long time activist for human rights in Lithuania during the years of occupation, goes to bat for one of her students.

Thanks to Renata Kucas for explaining the meaning of the logo used in her first article. I admit I was one of the people who asked her why she was using a martini glass to represent pharmacists. The Memorial to Victims of Communism will be built in Washington, DC so that those who died will never be forgotten. Thanks to all who sent me this news and a special thanks to JBANC for sending the press release. Ambassador Ušackas' book is available with the proceeds donated to a worthy cause.

On page 14 you will find a letter sent to Father Zukas of St. Peter's Church in Boston. The letter is in response to Father's inquiry for clarification of the status of St. Peter's Church.

Please note the new LAC mailing address on the inside cover.

Hopefully, 2006 will be a year when peace is restored to so many war torn areas around the globe. Perhaps Mother Nature will take a rest from the havoc she has spread in so many parts of the world, including our own country.

I wish each of you and your families a year filled with peace, good health, and happiness.

Jeanne Shalna Dorr
Jeanne Shalna Dorr

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**THE INFORMATION CENTER FOR
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* Cover: 2004 Christmas card designed by Virgis Volertas, who was an eighth grade student at "Vincio Krėvės" Lithuanian School, Philadelphia, PA.

Lithuanian American Community (LAC) XVII Board of Directors Third Annual Session



Members and Guests.

Photo by Kazys Razgaitis

This third session of the LAC's Board of Directors took place in the Sheraton Detroit Novi Hotel during September 23-25, 2005. It consisted of nine meetings and two evening programs. Eighty registered members and guests were present. Although many Lithuanians belong to the LAC, during Board of Directors meeting only Board members may speak and/or vote. If a non-member wishes to speak he/she must have a voting sponsor. The rules regarding individual speaking time were very strictly enforced by the presiding chairperson.

The first meeting was opened by Board Chairperson Regina Narušis. First were sung the American and Lithuanian national anthems led by Antanas Polikaitis. The invocation was delivered by Rev. Jaunius Kelpšas. The "in memoriam" for the recently deceased was presented by Birutė Vindašius. She spoke extensively of our late pontiff, Pope John Paul II, whose mother was of Lithuanian descent. Also honored was V. Kutkus, former Lithuanian American Community President.

R. Narušis presented two guests of honor from Lithuania: V. Landsbergis, who as chairman of the Lithuanian Parliament fifteen years ago was instrumental in reestablishing Lithuania's Independence and A. Lydeka, a present member of the Lithuanian Parliament.

Liuda Rugienius, LAC Michigan regional chairperson, read greetings received from G. Žemkalnis, President of the Lithuanian Worldwide Community, and various greetings and well-wishes from Lithuania, Canada and the United States. Later, during a discussion regarding the agenda of the meetings, D. Skučas suggested the deletion of round table discussions about the Joint Committee of Lithuania's Parliament and the LAC's representatives. In his opinion, it is not appropriate to discuss foreign countries' business. This suggestion was met with strong opposition and after further discussions A. Dzikas, LAC's executive vice president apologized to V. Landsbergis and A. Lydeka for this apparent rudeness. Later, R. Narušis, presenting her annual report, issued an additional apology. She touched on the dissent between the Lithuanian Community and the Lithuanian Fund. "This hurt all of us. ...We should look for ways to work together in harmony... We need new guidelines for our future work."

During the second meeting Board members received hand-outs of the work done during the year by the Executive Council. These were not read during the meeting, but the focus of the presentation was on what goals were not reached. Chairperson's (V. Vebraitė) report was read by Dr. E. Vaišnys. On

one hand, the upcoming Song Festival next year is a very positive step, but we do lack funds and we lack journalists. Also, we should look for persons who can eventually replace us.

Dr. E. Vaišnys, during her own report, focused on the necessity of expanding our active membership utilizing modern methods such as e-mail and staying in touch through the telephone. Dr. S. Bačkaitis spoke about education and reported that there will be four conferences in the future where presentations will be by experts in their field.

During the third meeting, various committees gathered separately to discuss future projects.

Friday evening was a 'get acquainted' event at the Divine Providence Parish Culture Center. Here various chairpersons of the LAC chapters presented their reports about activities and accomplishments, working conditions, joys and hardships. After these presentations we feasted on 'cepelinai', wine, coffee and an assortment of cakes.

Fourth meeting Saturday morning dealt with the committee in Lithuania which is composed of eight Parliamentarians and five LAC members. This Committee analyzes LAC current problems and gives its decision-resolution to the Parliament for further deliberation. Future meetings will deal with

restitution of damage done during Soviet occupation, reinstatement of Lithuanian citizenship and other such issues. During the round table discussion which included the honorable guests from Lithuania, several subjects were raised for clarification. In Lithuania at present there is very little patriotism or love for the country. Widespread abuse of alcohol, depression, and suicide have to be dealt with. During a question-answer period a big problem came to light. Russia is spending a large amount of money to spread disinformation regarding the Soviet occupation. Does Lithuania have enough funds and know how to counter this? Also, we have to do something to encourage the youth who go abroad looking for jobs and earn money to return to Lithuania.

Fifth meeting dealt mostly with the world wide Lithuanian Community. Primarily, if this Community is incorporated in Lithuania, we might be facing a problem if our conflicts are to be solved in Lithuania. Further discussions involved how to vote for representatives to this Community's next Congress which will take place next summer. One suggestion was to put the names on the ballot of the Board of Directors elections. There was a debate regarding changing some by-laws. This was postponed due to lack of time.

Sixth meeting. A decision was reached to leave the Board of Directors as is: sixty elected members plus regional chairpersons. This was followed by long discussions regarding changing some by-laws. No definite decisions were reached, but the general consensus was that "if it's not broken, don't fix it."

Seventh meeting. At the beginning, various committees presented their decisions. The focus was on the damage done to Lithuania during Soviet occupation and present Russia's disinformation attempts.

At present there is a discussion with the United States government to permit Lithuanians to come to this country without visas. Also, the Board

urges everyone to support the new immigration laws in the making that would permit new immigrants easier legalization.

Further thanks was expressed to the United States Congress for their resolutions urging Russia to admit the USSR occupation of the Baltic States and its illegal annexation. Finally, a request was made to explore the possibility of going to court to seek restitution for those families who were deported as political prisoners for hard labor to Siberia.

Due to Lithuanian grammar, in multi-word titles only the first word is capitalized. We have been writing our Community name capitalizing the first letter of all words. This is correct according to new grammar rules in Lithuania. Unfortunately, there are people who still adhere to the old rules. It is up to us to inform and insist that the Lithuanian press capitalize Lithuanian Community (Amerikos Lietuvių Bendruomenė).

Saturday evening services were at the Divine Providence Church. The Mass was offered by Pastor R. Repšys, assisted by St. Anthony's Parish Pastor A. Babonas and visiting priest from Chicago, J. Kelpšas.

After Mass all members and guests gathered at the Cultural Center for a banquet. The guest speaker, Prof. V. Landsbergis was greeted with a standing ovation. He spoke almost an hour

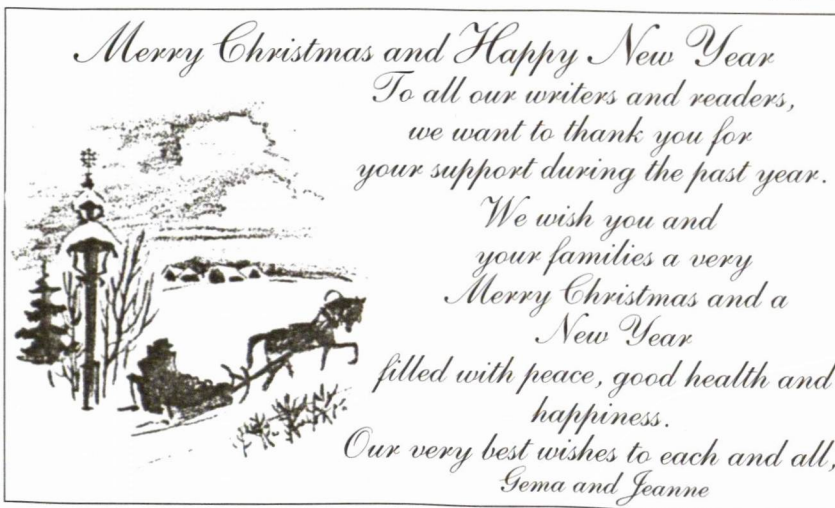
about Lithuania's situation in Europe. "Freedom is most important... The country freed itself from communism, but not its consequences... There are few rich people here, but many very poor... Moral political stagnation is huge... But there is a lot of potential here... We need to work hard in planning our future here."

After a short recess Prof. V. Landsbergis was again introduced, but this time as a musician. This year is a hundred and thirty years since the birth of the Lithuanian musician, composer and artist M. K. Čiurlionis. Prof. Landsbergis played his compositions for almost an hour without intermission. This concert was very warmly received.

Eighth meeting (Sunday morning) The beginning of the meeting was for different reports from Finance, Religious and Cultural committees. During the discussion about finances, youth congresses and get-togethers received sharp criticism for the extravagant spending on touristy trips. For example, youth get-together at Kent University cost \$140,000. A cruise on the Baltic Sea was \$40,000. Others stated that next year's Song Festival should be encouraged to bring as many youths as possible to Chicago.

Ninth meeting. After lunch the last meeting took place. First, R. Narušis

Continued on page 19



The Crucifix in the Crib

Reprinted from *Bridges-December 1987*.

Stasys Yia

Translated by Rev. Anthony Jurgelaitis, O.P.

*Our Christmas and Easter
Mysteries are, in essence, one and the same.*



The crib at St. Casimir Church in Vilnius, Lithuania. It depicts the newly born Christ Child lying on a wooden cross signifying His crucifixion for our sins.

Photo by Banga Grigaliunaite, Vilnius

Lithuanians, risen belatedly from paganism in 1387, developed a uniquely profound understanding of Christianity. On Christmas Eve, they do not prepare a crib for the Christ Child. Instead, they make a bed of hay on which they lay a crucifix, not an Infant. They conjoin the crib of Bethlehem

with the table of the Last Supper. In this long-suffering "land of Crosses", the family gathers at the table, makes room for those who are unable to be present and those who have died, and celebrates both the birth of the Christ Child and the Resurrection of Christ.

Following the customs of our Lithuanian ancestors, we gather on Christmas Eve around a common table which symbolizes the family altar. Here, we renew those deep-down, inner ties which bind us to each other and to God. This holy Christmas Eve, there is a deep silence of peace; our hearts speak out to one another in that silence. We forgive one another and express our fondest wishes for the Christmas season. Whether this be done in a poor, small dwelling or a well-to-do home, those who gather together on Christmas Eve feel something sacred and holy. Christmas Eve is a night of mystery in which the light of two worlds intermingles, the light of this world and that of the world beyond.

It is winter and the sun has crossed over its threshold and seems to be renewing the world again, shedding down more and more light, awakening within our hearts a greater joy, a stronger life, a more brilliant beauty.

The light greater than the sun, God Himself who stepped over the threshold of time that first Christmas sends forth a new ray of light: His Son, born as man Who brings into the world a spiritual renewal and, with it, peace and love.

Our family gathers around a common table, but this is not an ordinary, everyday table; because the family table on Christmas Eve has little to do with the everyday, commonplace chore of taking a meal. We do not get together this evening merely to feed bodies nor to enjoy a feast. The bread-wafers of unleavened dough, the boiled wheat grains, the fish-these are elements of a sacred meal, as are, too, the hymns sung around the family table and the prayers with which the meal is begun and ended. There is an air of seriousness and devotion. All this envelopes the Christmas family gathering with a special aura of mystery and holiness.

The Christmas Eve supper table reminds us of that other supper, the Last Supper of the Master, on the evening before He died; a supper which is unique in all human history. At that Last Supper ordinary wheat bread became the mysterious Bread which nourishes the soul more than the body. And for three hundred years after the Last Supper small groups of Christian people have gathered in their own homes, or in the Catacombs, where they sat around a common table and broke bread in a spirit of unity and communion with each other and with their Divine Master.

From the depths of the centuries, from the cradle of Christianity, this sacred family meal was transferred to Lithuania and has persisted up to the present. Many observers in the Christian Western world regret that their own Christmas celebrations, in comparison with the celebrations in Lithuania, do not have such definite ties with primitive Christian observances.

Our Kūčios, our Christmas Eve supper, is the only celebration that joins the table of the Last Supper with the Crib of Bethlehem. The bread-wafer and the hay are the two symbols which recall the one and the other.

The bread-wafer bespeaks the bread become Body, the hay speaks of the Word becoming flesh. These two mementos of God's transubstantiation lie on the Lithuanian Christmas Eve table, just as in ancient Christianity, side by side on the same altar there rested the Sacred Host and the Book of the Gospel, the living Bread and the living Word.

These two mysteries - the Christmas and Easter mysteries- are in essence one and the same. What happened at the

Christmas crib and what took place in the upper chamber of the Last Supper may be likened to the same ray of light which appears as two different colors of the spectrum when shining through a prism. Looking at the one ray of white light we cannot distinguish the two colors, but through the prism many colors become visible.

The coming of the God-Man into the world would have been like the flash of a meteor, if He had not become incarnate under different species. That which began with His Birth had to be perfected in the Eucharistic substantial change.

Kūčios is a night of mystery, and communion, Kūčios joins the two greatest mysteries of our religion: the Birth of Christ and the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

The Lithuanian Christmas Eve supper unites the hearts of men and thus forms the oneness of mankind, which is in itself a great mystery. Our inexplicable sacred force binds the hearts of men together.

The table is a visible sign of family unity. It brings together all the family members and points out to them the meaning of family hierarchy: father, mother, children. The table serves not only to set out the food to feed the body, but also serves to nourish, uplift and renew the very soul of the family.

This second aspect becomes more prominent in the family circle and thus the family table becomes a sacred altar. It is somewhat similar to the "family altar" mentioned in the marriage prayer. All the more so, the family table becomes the family altar at the Christmas Eve supper, when upon it are placed religious symbols, when around it special family prayers are recited, when the father of the family sits at the head of the table to lead in the family customs, thus becoming the family priest.

The Christmas Eve table is first spread with hay to recall the crib in which Christ was born. The hay is covered with a clean white tablecloth on which a crucifix is placed, not upright, but flat upon the table. Why the crucifix and not a crib with Christ-Child?

The Christmas crib is not a symbol, but a real representation of the Christmas event. The realistic-minded Westerners used a crib in their homes and churches; they would place a crib with the Christ-Child on the altars, and even on the tabernacles in place of the crucifix on Christmas Eve.

Was there some historical reason that kept the Lithuanians from making Christmas cribs and using them, or was there some inner sensitivity in the hearts of Lithuanians themselves that refused to make the cribs and to use the crucifix instead?

A crucifix on the hay is clearly a contradiction, a paradox, because it represents Christ's death at Christmas. However, this shows a unique understanding of the Christmas mystery among the Lithuanians. After all, Christmas was the first step in the preparation for the first good Friday and Easter. The Birth of Christ leads to spiritual renewal and

redemption which was gained by the death of Christ upon the Cross. Liturgically, these two things are inseparable, because in the Midnight Mass on Christmas Night the same Sacrifice of Good Friday is represented and renewed. So why should these two events in the life of Christ be separated in the Christmas Eve celebration?

Hay on the Table

Hay has been drenched with the sweat of man at harvest time. It is food for animals who are man's helpers. It reminds us of the flowers of the fields. It is not brought into the house at other times and placed on the table except on Christmas Eve.

Once on the table, the hay reminds us of the Birth of Christ in the Christmas crib. It is covered by the white table cloth, the color of mystery. After the Christmas meal, strands of hay are pulled out and examined. Its dried blades suggest what the future will hold for the members of the family. Different forecasts are made, depending upon whether the blades of grass are short or long, whether they are straight or broken, whether they are branched or single. Once the hay on the Christmas Eve table is blessed by the prayers, it is not discarded.

After the meal, it is carefully gathered and returned to the stable and given to the animals to eat. The animals were witnesses to the birth of the Christ Child. Their breath kept the Christ Child warm. Maybe, in their way, they understood what was taking place that night and what a great change was taking place in the world. It is said that on Christmas Eve animals talk to each other about mankind.

The hay on the Christmas Eve table reminds us of simple humility when the sincerity of the heart opens up. No one places crystalware, silver or porcelain on the Christmas Eve table. No one comes to the table dressed up in silks and finery. All the glitter and glamour with which other countries surround Christmas Eve are absent on Lithuanian Christmas Eve. Our people do not make much of decorating the Christmas tree... At least, the Christmas tree is not lit up during the Kucios supper. The festivities around tree itself are left for the following morning.

Host from Wafers

Some place in Lithuania the bread-wafer used to be called the "Christ-Child cake". The wafer, thus, is a symbol of the living Bread which became flesh. The Christmas Eve wafer used to be a single wafer which was divided among the whole family. It was always set at the place of the father, who, after he had said the prayer, took it into his hands and turned to the mother and asked her to break the bread-wafer. Then he would say: "May you live till the next Christmas. God grant you happiness and health all through the coming year, until the next Christmas holidays." In a similar way, the father would give the wafer to the children, to each according to age, asking each to break off a portion while he expressed the same prayerful wishes.

Lately, however, wafers are obtained in sufficient numbers for all the members of the family. The father breaks his wafer first, then each member of the family breaks off a portion from his own plotkele and they all share their wafer with each other.

Wheat and šližikai and Priekuciai

Two other foods have a symbolism close to the symbolism of the bread-wafer: the boiled grains of wheat, sweetened with honey, and the little pieces of unleavened bread called “šližikai” and “priekūčiai”, which are prepared from unleavened dough. There is no doubt that the šližikai and the priekuciai remind us of Eucharistic bread, which in former times was used for Holy Communion, in France. Even today, there are places where, at the end of the Mass, similar pieces of unleavened bread are cut up and distributed to the people as a reminder of the ancient agape banquets practiced long ago.

It is possible that the šližikai were the original symbol of our Eucharistic bread and the bread-wafer was a later version, which came into the Church with the custom of parish priests visiting the families before the Christmas holidays.

When the wafers became the primary form of bread used, the šližikai became one of the other twelve foods prepared, and lost some of its original significance. However, the šližikai are used again on New Year’s Eve, when the

Octave of Christmas, the Christmas meal is repeated. It is more difficult to explain the boiled wheat grains in connection with the Eucharistic symbolism. This is an exception. It is used only in Lithuania. One thing is clear: the wheat grains are the element from which Eucharistic bread is made. It is very unusual among the Lithuanians to eat this at any other time of the year. That is why some members of the family will not want to eat this, but it is the custom that everyone at least taste the boiled wheat grains. It seems that whoever refuses even to taste these grains will not be considered as one fully sharing in the joys of the newborn Christ.

“The Eden Fruit”

Among, the twelve Christmas Eve dishes which remind us of the twelve Apostles of the Last Supper is the “Eden fruit”, the apple. This Eden element in the Lithuanian customs is also found in some marriage customs where in the “tree of Eden” reminds us of the beginning of life, while here “Eden fruit” recalls the first sin and the promise that a Redeemer will come to redeem mankind and that he would be born of a Virgin, the second Eve. Christmas Eve is the liturgical feast day of Adam, so the symbolic apple relates him with the new Adam-Christ, and with the symbol which refers to Christ as the New Adam. It is that the father of the first family has a relationship to the Child of the new family of God in this Lithuanian family feast.



The motif of this beautiful life size manger is a Lithuanian cottage in Vilnius' Cathedral Square. With its life size figurines and live animals, it is guarded twenty-four hours a day. Each year the manger is blessed by Cardinal Juozas Backis and it is displayed until the Feast of the Three Kings. Visitors and children vie to have their photographs taken near the manger.

Photo by Banga Grigaliunaite, Vilnius

The element of Eden in our Christmas Eve supper, as we see, has not become too common among other Western nations which do not have a Christmas Eve supper. The Christmas tree which symbolizes the Eden tree became the sign of the entire Christmas season and hence the focal point of family reunion.

Our neighboring Slavs have, as we do, the family table as the center of Christmas Eve celebrations and it, too, is considered an altar. The meal is considered a sacred meal. But we differ from the Slavs in our Kūčia supper. We have twelve different foods, but the Slavs have one special food called “Kūčia,” which is prepared from twelve different grains. This symbolic Slavic food was adopted by some Lithuanians in certain parts of the country. However, in recent years, this “Kūčia” was little used. All the food of the Christmas Eve meal is meatless, or abstinence food.

Stasys Via

Translated by

Rev. Anthony Jurgelaitis, O.P.

Memorial to Victims of Communism Gets Green Light to Build

JBANC PRESS RELEASE:

For Immediate Release

November 4, 2005

contact: Karl Altai (tel. 301-340-1954)

Washington, DC (JBANC) --- A memorial in Washington, DC to honor the victims of communism was given final clearance by a federal oversight body on Thursday, November 3. The National Capital Planning Commission moved unanimously to approve the design for the Memorial, to be built at a location on the corner of Massachusetts and New Jersey Avenues, N.W., just off Capitol Hill.

With the decision, construction of the memorial is now expected to begin by April 2006. According to Dr. Lee Edwards, chairman of the Memorial Foundation responsible for fundraising and future maintenance of the site, the memorial would be unveiled about a year from now. The memorial will feature a Democracy statue atop a stone pedestal, within a 900 square foot paved plaza. A historical marker at the site will provide background information.

It is estimated that 100 million persons perished at the hands of various communist regimes in the 20th century.

The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation has also announced that it will hold its seventh annual Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom Awards ceremony in Washington, DC on December 13th. The event will be held at the Polish Embassy, as this year's focus is on Polish contributions to the fight to end communism. 2005 Truman-Reagan medal honorees are the Solidarity Free Trade Union of 1980, Gdansk, and noted Polish-American, retired Army General and former Ambassador Edward Rowny. Pope John Paul II will be awarded posthumously. Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo, Apostolic Nuncio in the U.S., will accept for the late Pope.

In preparation for these events, Foundation chairman Edwards was joined by JBANC Managing Director Karl Altai for a series of informational meetings in Chicago with leaders of both the Polish-American and Lithuanian American communities. Dr. Edwards also gave presentations on plans for the Memorial at October 22 events organized in Chicago by the Lithuanian American

Council in commemoration of that organization's 90th anniversary.

For more information on the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, or if you wish to contribute to the building of the memorial, please visit: <http://victimsofcommunism.org>.

JBANC represents the Estonian American National Council, Inc., the American Latvian Association, Inc. and the Lithuanian American Council, Inc.

JOINT BALTIC AMERICAN NATIONAL
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*Greetings
from*

Mrs. Grazina Landsbergis

I am grateful to you for your care, concern and financial help. From my heart I sincerely thank the people from America who sponsor children and help their families.

Lithuanian Orphan Care has helped many children, not only financially but also by giving them hope. The knowledge that people who live so far away care about them brings them great joy.

The generosity you show at Christmas allows us to buy the children small gifts and their joy and happiness is evident when they open their presents.

May God reward you for your generosity and your good works.

May He bless you and your families during this season of Christmas and throughout the New Year.

Grazina Landsbergiene

Vilnius

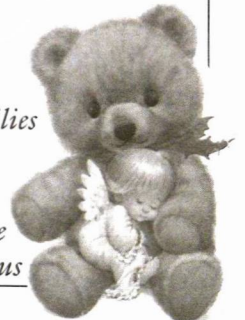




Photo by Rimas Gedeika

Philadelphia's Lithuanian Choir Reinvigorated and Reinvented

Ilona Babinskiene was not amused by my kazoo.

She had just graciously invited me up to sing the first two solo bars of the exquisite Jonas Svedas arrangement of "Anoj Pusej Nemunelio" in front of an impressive array of Lithuanian choir directors from across America and Canada as she directed them through the piece.

And on a whim I'm still at a loss to explain, I took the kazoo from my pocket and "sang" the solo through it instead. The fact that Ilona didn't smack me upside the head with her music book and merely settled the guffawing group down with a wave (and a severe glance my way) says much about her poise and focus.

To be sure, the two-day seminar in preparation for next summer's North American Lithuanian Song Festival (Dainu Svente) was frequently interrupted by jokes, gags, and levity. But it was also a serious overview of an ambitious repertoire to be performed jointly by 45-plus choirs singing as one ensemble. Every choir leader present was asked to direct selections from the program, and Ilona

impressed with her analysis of her assigned material, and her clear presentation of it (kazoos and antics notwithstanding.)

Ilona Babinskiene brought considerable musical expertise with her when she moved to Philadelphia's-New Jersey suburbs 5 years ago with her family from Kaunas. In Lithuania she had worked as a piano instructor at the Garliava Childrens' Music School while directing and performing with a folk ensemble in the Kaunas area (Ilgakiemo Kaimo Kapela.) She's a graduate of the Klaipeda Conservatory (now known as the Klaipeda Music Academy), with a baccalaureate in Lithuanian Folk Orchestra Directing, specializing in accordion.

Ilona hadn't unpacked the moving boxes before word of her talents filtered through Philadelphia's Lithuanian community, and within months she was at the keyboard for various community events.

You'll find her in photos throughout the recent history of the city's Lithuanian organizations, always with a smile and a sparkle in her eye: there she is with her accordion accompanying a group of girl scouts singing for the annual Skautų Kūčios (Scout Christmas Eve banquet)... at a portable keyboard, directing the children of Vinco Kreve Lithuanian Heritage School... on a sunny plaza, playing that squeezebox and singing with a small ensemble for American street fair audiences, the skirts of Lithuanian folk dancers swirling nearby.

Soon she was enlisted to direct a group of long-time choir members during the Lithuanian language Mass at St. Andrew's Roman Catholic Church.

"I was shy at first, but they accepted me so warmly!" Ilona recalls. "Talented, talented volunteers who from the start understood what we needed to do, working effectively to create wonderful music."

The enthusiasm was apparently mutual, and infectious: new singers started showing up in the choir loft and at rehearsals in the rectory. More Lithuanian larynxes meant Ilona could expand the choir's repertory beyond the liturgical and take the ensemble on the road, eventually under a new name.

"LAISVE – what could be more logical," Ilona says. *"Obviously we are in the city of the Liberty Bell (Laisvės Varpas) but it also means 'freedom.' When can you feel as free as when you are lifting your voice in magnificent song?"*

Tenor Gabrielius Mironas stepped up to handle administrative duties, managing the business affairs for Laisvė. "I rely on him and am so grateful to him not just for the details he takes care of," Ilona says, "but for his insights into how we take our place within the Lithuanian American community. Plus, he's a wonderful singer!"

Teodora Dudoniene keeps the singers supplied with sheet music, organizing the ever-expanding repertoire and hauling the swelling files back and forth between rehearsals.

Ilona is also gratified by the assistance of pianist Raimonda Ruksiene. "What a gift to have such an unsurpassed musician accompany us! She is sensitive not only to the music itself, her task at the keyboard, but to the nuances of my direction and the choir's response to it. She is super!" Ilona pronounces that "su-PER!!!"

Raimonda is also the director of Laisvė's girls' ensemble Atzalynas (a particularly Lithuanian expression that can mean "young wood" and "younger generation.") She prepared daughters of adult choir members for crowd-pleasing performances at Christmas season worship and Independence Commemorations.

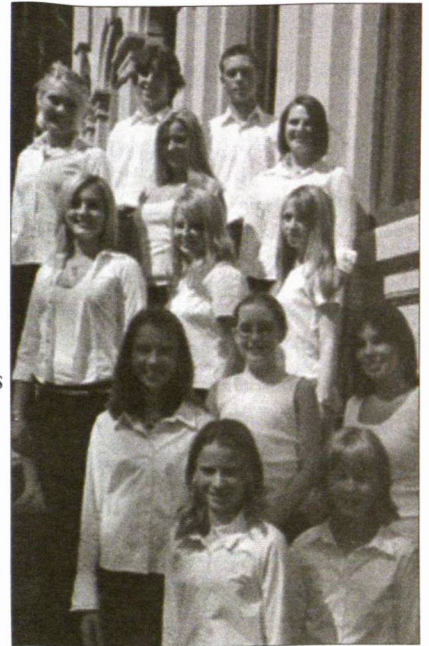
Some early career highlights for Laisve include:

- * the Baltic Festival at Ursinus College (2003)
- * a concert to celebrate the opening of the Elizabeth, NJ Lithuanian heritage school (2003)
- * the 50th Anniversary of Bendruomenės Balsas (Voice of the Community), Philadelphia's Lithuanian language radio

program (2003)

- * Lithuanian Independence Commemoration concerts in Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington DC (2003-5)

- * A joint Christmas concert at St. Andrew's Church with professional musicians and students from St. Casimir's School (January 2005)



Youth Choir.

Photo by Rimas Gedeika

Laisve has a full slate of performances

this season while gearing up for next summer's Lithuanian Song Festival in Chicago. The repertoire includes works for mixed adult choir, women's, men's youth and children's choirs, and singalongs for the public. The selection ranges from folk songs to newer ballads to specially commissioned pieces destined to become favorites.

Ilona has high praise for the organizers of the Song Festival, in particular Artistic Director Rita Klioriene, whom she met at the directors' seminar. "There is no end to what one could learn from her. She establishes such a cooperative, supportive spirit for this event – it was fascinating to work with people so clued in to the intense emotional connection and interpretation that vocal music requires. I can't wait for Laisve to experience that same wonderful vibration!"

To help defray the costs of 30-plus people traveling to Chicago next summer, Laisve will be fundraising through promotions yet to be announced. We'll try to make them fun.

Personally, I'd like to sell kazoo's!

Rasa Brittain

AID TO LITHUANIA, INC

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEET AT THE 92ND KNIGHT OF LITHUANIA CONVENTION

The annual Aid to Lithuania, Inc. Board of Directors meeting took place during the 92nd K of L National Convention on August 11, 2005, at the Wyndham Pittsburgh Airport Hotel in Pittsburgh, PA. Due to Chairman of the Board Robert Boris' absence, ATL President Regina Juska-Svoba presided over the meeting and gave a comprehensive overview of the 2004-2005 fiscal year's activities.

Since its inception in 1990, ATL sent 92 containers of medical supplies, medications and equipment, valued at over \$571,000,000.00 to our less fortunate brothers and sisters in Lithuania. The container shipment decreased significantly and the last container received in Lithuania was in 2002. Catholic Medical Mission Board in New York, the primary source of the medical supplies and medications has diverted the shipment to other countries that have suffered recent tragedies and have a more dire need for medications. As the shipments become fewer and fewer, ATL refocused its goals for the medical/humanitarian aid program.



Kūčios dinner at the Mother Teresa's Homeless Shelter for the residents and staff sponsored by/financed by ATL benefactors - 2004- Vilnius

The Vilnius Archdiocese established "Caritas" in 1989. Throughout the last 16 years, "Caritas" has flourished and established 8 charities or programs: the Betanija Soup Kitchen, Vilnius Daycare Center, Mother and Children's Center, Mother Teresa's Homeless Shelter, the "Caritas" pharmacy, Children's Soup Kitchen, Social Services Agency, and the All Saints Residential Placement Facility for youth. "Caritas" employs 26 staff, and over 130 volunteers assist wherever needed. ATL's in-country representa-

tion is deacon Balys Stankus. He is also the director over all the programs. Deacon Balys Stankus apprises ATL of the current needs and requests financial support wherever it is most needed. In the past, the local government supported the above referenced programs. However, currently the support has decreased substantially. The Vilnius Archdiocese services and supports a significantly large number of local residents, the homeless, the exploited and the vulnerable. The ongoing maintenance of the programs and expenses is ever increasing. Without financial support some or many of the programs would be limited or even cease to exist.

For the last several years ATL financially supported several of the "Caritas" Christmas programs: Kūčios dinner at the Mother Teresa's Homeless Shelter for the residents and staff, a benefit play at the Vilnius Drama Theater and the distribution of Christmas packages (toys, sweets, fruit) to the children and impoverished families and gifts consisting of toiletries, hygiene items, foods and sweets to the local prisoners.

Aid to Lithuania continues to support the Vilnius Handicraft Center (Trade School). Children and youth of dysfunctional families, the physically and mildly mentally challenged youth, homeless and children of the streets are the beneficiaries of the Handicraft Center. Vocational training and skills are offered in the fields of home-making, culinary arts, art, stained glass and furniture restoration, wood-working and carpentry by the masters of the various fields, to the students. The formal training would allow the students to become self-sufficient and gain independence. During the 2004-2005 fiscal year, \$3,000 was sent to the Handicraft Center for the continuation of the program.

The "Adopt a Seminarian Program" is reaching its goal of supporting the formation and education of young men preparing for the priesthood. The Archdiocese of Vilnius, the Diocese of Panevezys and Kaišiadorys are being served by seminarians who, since 2002, were ordained priests. To date, 14 have been ordained. Of these, 10 seminarians were ordained priests during the 2004-2005 fiscal year. On a sad note, a priest who was ordained in 2003, was tragically killed in 04/05, in an automobile accident by a drunk driver. Several benefactors who donated a total of \$12,000.00, and whose seminarian has been ordained, have expressed a willingness to adopt a second deserving young man. There are currently 80 students studying at the St. Joseph's Seminary. Rev. Robertas Salasevicius is the rector of the seminary. From 1999 until May 20, 2005, \$388,984.74, was raised for scholarships and other needs of the seminary.



1999 ATL tour group visit Mother Teresa's Homeless Shelter and meet with some of the Sisters from Poland and India. Bob Boris- 1st seated on left, Vilnius.

Mother Teresa's Homeless and Emergency Shelter, which opened its doors in 1999, is Aid to Lithuania's 4th program. The Shelter provides religious and humanitarian aid activities. It provides room, board, and meals to approximately 125 homeless people on an ongoing basis. The sisters render medical, material and spiritual assistance and guidance to the individuals. The homeless, those who are capable, can prepare their own meals in the kitchen, launder their clothing, socialize with others, read the press, watch television. The Shelter provides a warm and safe haven for the adults who have little or nothing. The social workers help individuals complete and prepare various legal documents, provide the sick with the most needed medications, assist in getting the ill hospitalized, and assist the ill in renewing their relationships with family and close friends. During the past 2004-2005 fiscal year, \$10,500.00 was donated to the Shelter. Of that sum, \$3,000 was used to defray the cost of the heating expenses.

August 2005 marks an especially important and significant year for ATL, as the ancillary arm of the Knights of Lithuania celebrates its 15th year of existence of aiding our less fortunate brothers and sisters in Lithuania. It was at the 77th National Convention, in Pittsburgh, PA, where it all began — K of L activist and Honorary Member Robert Boris stood before the delegates and planted the "seed" of creating a humanitarian aid project and program of assisting our less fortunate, poor and suffering brothers and sisters in Lithuania. And it was at the Pittsburgh convention, that the ATL committee was formally established to underwrite the cost of shipping the medicine and medical supplies acquired from World Medical Relief, Inc., a Detroit based philanthropic organization that collects used and excess medical supplies and equipment for shipment to third world nations and other deprived areas. Robert Boris' vision has become a successful reality.

ATL has established 4 sectors whereby a donor can select

an area to donate: the humanitarian fund, Mother Teresa's Homeless and Emergency Shelter, the St. Joseph's Seminary fund and the Vilnius Handicraft Center (Trade School).

The 2005-06 Aid to Lithuania, Inc.

Board of Directors are:

Agnes Mickunas,

K of L National President.

Msgr. Rev. dr. Joseph Anderlonis, STD,
spiritual advisor.

Robert S. Boris & Regina Juska-Svoba,
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Robert S. Boris, *president emeritus*

Michael Shea, *vice-president*

Saulius Kuprys, *vice-president of legal affairs*

Theresa Stasiulaitis Shea, *recording secretary/treasurer*

William Zager, *corresponding secretary*

Merri and Lawrence Hofner, *trustees*

Patricia Zyren, *sergeant-at-arms*

The next annual Aid to Lithuania, Inc. meeting will be held in August 2006 during the K of L National Convention in Lake Buena Vista, FL.

For additional and more specific information concerning Aid to Lithuania, Inc. or any of the programs that are sponsored, please contact:

Regina Juska-Svoba, ATL President,
1594 Beaupre Ave.,
Madison Heights, MI 48071-2622,

tel. (248) 547-2859 during the evenings
(313) 396-0389 during business hours
e-mail lljuskasvoba@cs.com.

Regina Juska-Svoba
ATL President

Editor's Note:

Congratulations to Aid to Lithuania on their 15th anniversary. The work they have done and continue to do has been incredible. May they have many more years of success in aiding the people of Lithuania.

If you would like to donate to a specific charity mentioned in the article, please write the check to Aid to Lithuania and mail it to Regina. Be sure to specify a charity if you have a choice. If you wish to make the donation in memory of someone or in honor of someone, Aid to Lithuania can send an acknowledgement letter to the donor and honoree or family of the deceased person.

The Lord is near – Rejoice!

“Do not let Him come suddenly and catch you asleep” Be ready, stay alert! The reign of the Lord is now to shine and be manifest through this Church gathered and living Advent-Christmas virtues: kindness, humility, patience forgiveness, justice, peace.

For many more reasons than we realize, our culture’s expectation of Christmas togetherness sharply contrasts with the experience of longings unfulfilled. And for us all there is the communal darkness of a war-torn century, clutching culture, selfishness and blindness to injustice.

Advent is a time of waiting and expectation for it speaks to us of the coming of the Lord as the Son of Man, the human being, as Emmanuel, God-with-us. It is a celebration of God’s promise that the Lord will indeed come and our task as Christians, to make ready His way. Its attitudes are joyous hope, loving trust and perseverance. Advent’s focus is not on the past but on the future and its joyful note rests on God’s faithfulness.

The figure of John the Baptist is given a special prominence in Advent, for it was his task to make way for the Savior. Our own Advent task is also to “prepare the way of the Lord”. With Advent we begin a new Church year. Our promised Redeemer came 2005 years ago, yet he always comes anew and He will come again at the end of time.

In relation to the New Testament’s gospel accounts with Matthew, we celebrate Advent as missionary Christians who are aware of their roots in Judaism. With Mark we see Advent in the context of our radical commitment to follow Christ, whatever the cost. With Luke our Advent unfolds as a work of the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah is our Advent prophet. To understand his poetry as well as other Advent readings from the Holy Scripture, it is important to realize that they provide religious language for both Jews and Christians. Today we see how the New Testament itself is fulfilled in its daily unfolding life. St. John the Baptist and his message helps us to grasp that we are called to Jesus’ mission. John’s mantle of camel’s hair has fallen on our shoulders and calls everyone to reform our lives. 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

scripture of our mission (Rom 15:4-9) Evangelist St. Luke 4:18-19, takes verses from Isaiah to summarize the Christian mission. Also Luke’s account of the annunciation (1:26-38) also articulates the mission of every Christian. According to St. Thomas, the Blessed Virgin was chosen by God to be His Mother. According to the words spoken to her by the angel (Luke 1:30-31) “Thou hast found grace with God.: behold thou shall conceive... and shall bring forth a son”.

The season of Advent has a two-fold character. It is a time of preparation for Christmas when the first coming of God’s Son to us is recalled. It is also a season when minds are directed by this memorial to Christ’s second coming at the end of time. It is a season of joyful and spiritual expectation.

Sister Margarita Bareikaitė

Sister Margarita Bareikaitė belongs to the order of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a Lithuanian order in Putnam, CT. Sister Margarita is the Chair of the Religious Affairs Council of the Lithuanian American Community and is a regular contributor to Bridges.



CONGREGATIO
PRO CLERICIS

Vatican City, 12th September 2005

Prot. N. 20051649

Rev. Stephen P. Zukas
St. Peter Lithuanian Parish
50 Orton Marotta Way
South Boston, MA 02127-2006
U.S.A.

Dear Fr. Zukas,

Further to your letter, dated 28 June 2005 regarding to the petition for hierarchical recourse against the closure of the St. Peter Lithuanian Parish in South Boston.

This Congregation can confirm that the Archbishop of Boston has for the time being reversed his decision to close St. Peter’s Lithuanian Parish and thus the object of the recourse is no longer existent and therefore this Dicastery considers the matter closed.

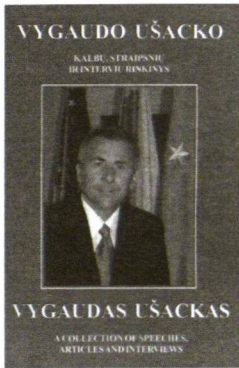
With assurance of prayers and cordial best wishes, I remain,

Yours sincerely in Christ,

✠ CSABA TERNYÁK
Titular Archbishop of Eminenziana
Secretary

New Book

By *Ambassador*
Vygaudas Ušackas



Collection of Speeches, Articles
and Interviews
NOW AVAILABLE

A new book by Vygaudas Ušackas, Lithuanian Ambassador to the US, A Collection of Speeches, Articles and Interviews, published by Lithuanian Research and Studies Center, Chicago, Illinois (in Lithuanian and English; 280 pages, with photos; \$24.00) is now available. In the book,

Ambassador Ušackas speaks from his unique and historic perspective as Ambassador to Washington, and as Lithuania's first Chief negotiator for accession into the European Union (EU), about Lithuania's foreign policy priorities between 1995 to 2005. The book includes key speeches and interviews on integration into the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The book also addresses relations with America and with Lithuania's neighboring countries. Chapters include:

- * Advancing Freedom East
- * Basketball Diplomacy
- * Thomas Jefferson, Democracy, Europe and the Atlantic Alliance
- * EU Flag Raising Ceremony at the Lithuania Embassy

Ušackas engages readers into lively discussions with new insights about the most ardent issues for Lithuania at the turn of 21st century. The book offers a rendezvous with historical events that are shaping Lithuania's political, economic and daily life today. Readers are also given a rare look at the Ambassador's skilled public diplomacy and eloquent personal arguments on behalf of Lithuania. The book contains more than 35 favorite photographs from official meetings and Ušackas' private collection.

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

"...a valuable and incisive contribution to America's better understanding of the dilemmas, challenges and dangers faced by the newly independent and democratic Baltic states." - **Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski**, National Security Adviser to U.S. President Carter

"...Ambassador Ušackas leads new Europe to peace, democracy, freedom, and the rule of law. Inspired by his study and love of Thomas Jefferson, he has championed his homeland of Lithuania and all former Captive nations. This has led to Lithuania's inclusion into NATO and the EU." **John Shimkus**, U.S. Congressman

"...Ambassador V. Ušackas' mastery to communicate and find 'common ground' with the immigrants of various generations and waves, especially with youth, is of special importance to us - Lithuanian Americans. In this matter, Ambassador's passion for sports in general and basketball, in particular, is very helpful. Ambassador's active work and attention showed to us strengthens local Lithuanian American communities and assures the continuity of Lithuanian traditions." - **Bronius Abrutis**, *Amerikos lietuvis*, Editor-in-Chief

"In your hands, Lithuania has proven that a small nation with well-measured ambitions can do more than adjust to the realities of world politics - it can succeed in changing them." - Ph.D. R. Lopata, Director of Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University

All proceeds from the book will be donated to the **Lithuanian Kaimas Fund** project, which provides young people in rural areas of Lithuania with summer camp, educational and athletic opportunities. More than 2,400 children from 10 districts of Lithuania were served in 2005. For more information on the project, co-sponsored by the American Lithuanian Economic Development Council and the U.S. - Baltic Foundation, visit www.usbaltic.org.

BOOK ORDER:

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Please make checks payable to U.S.-Baltic Foundation.

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Janina Degutyte

Poezija/Poems

Adapted from the Introduction to the book by Prof. Rimvydas Silbajoris.

Janina Degutyte (1928-1990) not only wrote about, but in a sense was, her native land. She sustains a powerful urge for a kind of osmosis with her native landscapes around her, to open oneself to the last thread of her being. The romantics in their day yearned to overcome the barrier between nature and the human being by pretending nature was like them - it could sigh, weep, dream, and have empathy with human fate. There is an element of that in Degutyte's poetry as well, but rather than imagine nature's response, she seeks an identity with it, "to live like a tree, or grass, or a butterfly," to taste the sun in a yellow apple, feel the pulse of a willow. The Soviet regime was an enemy of free imagination. Yet she writes as early as 1964 in

"INTERMEZZO":

*Through me ripple sod and sky,
Birches and the midsummer sun.
What am I in this eternal flow?*

Communication with nature for Degutyte is not a system of symbols, as in Baudelaire's Correspondances, because however much she can absorb into herself or penetrate within them - nature remains what it is: actual birds and trees lovingly observed by an actual poet. Degutyte achieves her poetic texture by means of interpenetration of inherent qualities among different things.

Her oneness with nature, however, offers solace but cannot save her from her solitude. She stands alone like a dark tree in the night, a silent witness. It is not the imaginary solitude of the

romantics. Rather, it comes from real events in our terrible century. In a country devastated by war and then subjected to strict censorship demanding ideological conformity, belles lettres must inevitably acquire a political aspect. Degutyte, as did many other Lithuanian writers, knew how to establish a political subtext in some of her seemingly unobjectionable poems. This surface compliance with state policy underlines the opposition implicit in the subtext.

At times, Degutyte does not veil her sorrow. In one poem, (*Thorn Bush Etude*) she makes a direct reference to the deportations she witnessed as a child and the double life that she and others were made to lead:

*Sealed echelons were passing by.
I hid in a fairy tale.*

.....

*As streams of fire and blood spewed
from the earth,*

*As torrential rains drowned out the last
shred of hope,*

I planted a thorn bush in my window.

Begrudging a rock I write fairy tales.

It is amazing how this poem, written in 1971, escaped the censor's pen and official punishment.

Veiling her moral courage, grief, and loyalty to all oppressed, her poems often resonated with folk tales and songs. Degutyte employed myth in the context of the bloody guerilla warfare against the Soviet regime which persisted in Lithuanian forests until about 1952. Guerillas who perished in battle are remembered in the simple form of a folksong:

High on the Hill

Nine bullets passed him by.

The tenth cut my brother down.

Where his head fell—a rose bush grows.

Where his blood was spilled—a fountain flows.

Retreating into Greek mythology, the poet speaks through Antigone's lips. In antiquity, Antigone buried her brother in secret on the pain of death, defying King Creon's orders. "Their temporary laws are not my law", writes Degutyte in Antigone's name:

"I shall return a thousand times...

To bury my brothers in the night".

This is a direct reference to history. Bodies of killed guerillas were often left to decay exposed in city squares as punishment and a deterrent to others, as King Creon had done to Antigone's brother. Degutyte and Antigone are two eternal sisters, sharing the same courage of conviction regardless of sacrifice. Degutyte plays many roles to express what she cannot do otherwise. She empathizes with the Don Quixotes of the world. She is Till Eulenspiegel, bemoaning his land of ashes after the Holocaust, or Judas, who sells himself. Or Cassandra, whose visions nobody believes. In the final analysis, she is also Scheherazade, the survivor:

Talk, Scheherazade, the shah is ravenous.

Your words flow slowly,

Like blood from an open wound.

Do not stop!

The thousand and first night is still far.

And the last handful of earth is still unpaid.

As a poetic device, the playing of roles, that is, the assumption of another identity, is similar to Degutyte's deep passion for becoming those things in nature and in her native land which she loves unequivocally and which are her reason for living ("Hamlet"). One might call this Degutyte's basic signature as a poet. She is a poet of resonances and transformations. Above all, she brings herself to her nation as a loving gift.

Degutyte's poetry is very difficult to translate into the semantic environment of another language because it contains many subtle nuances drawn from deep archaic layers of the Lithuanian language. Dr. M. G. Slavenas has been responsive to the semantic and emotional sensibilities of the original and reproduced them in the English idiom by translating not so much from lexical item to lexical item as from underlying meaning to underlying meaning, perceived primarily as an emotional event in the mind.

Seen next to each other, the poems read well in both Lithuanian and English, which is no mean achievement in the translator's trade. In adequate translation, Degutyte can stand her own among the best internationally

Renata Kucas



Last month, when I first began this column, many of you responded by asking "Renata, what is that bowl with the snake wrapped around it doing as your logo?" Well, let me explain it to you. A handful of professions are privileged to have their own symbols that are easily recognized. Physicians have the Caduceus. Lawyers have the Scales of Justice. Pharmacists have several, including the Rx sign (the Greek "rho chi" an abbreviation of the Latin *recipere*, "to take"), the mortar and pestle, and the Bowl of Hygeia. The very symbol you see at the beginning of this column.

Who was Hygeia and how did she come to represent pharmacists? In ancient Greece, Hygeia was the goddess of health and her name is the source of the word "hygiene." She and her sister Panaces, were daughters of the god of healing, Asclepius.

From the 5th century BC to the 4th century AD, devotees of Asclepius built large temple complexes around Greece which could have been the first neighborhood clinics. Throughout the period, into the era of the Roman Empire, people would visit these temples, called Asclepians, to be healed, using specially prepared ointments and herbal concoctions, or, in other words, the first compounded medications.

However, Asclepius was the son of Apollo, who was the son of Zeus, the supreme deity. Asclepius gradually surpassed Apollo as the greatest healing god. Sanctuaries and temples devoted to healing the sick were erected all over Greece. His two daughters Hygeia and Panacea aided Asclepius, and when he

was struck dead by Zeus, who feared his own grandson's healing powers would make humans immortal, the care and healing work was handed down to Hygeia. She thus became the goddess of health. This symbolism is depicted by the serpent of Asclepius twining around a staff to touch the bowl of Hygeia.

Why is a snake used to represent Asclepius? At the time, harmless snakes were found inside the temples built for Asclepius. They appeared dead but were actually dormant. When picked up and dropped, however, they would slither away. The ancient Greeks thought the serpents were brought back to life by the true healing powers of Asclepius, which caused them to become the ultimate symbol of the power of healing. Hygeia is usually depicted with a serpent around her arm and a bowl in her hand because she watched over the temple containing snakes.

Now the bowl represents a medicinal potion, and the snake represents healing. The American Pharmacists Association adopted the Bowl of Hygeia as its symbol to represent the pharmacy profession in 1964.

Hope this clears up all your questions about my logo. With that I wish all of you a Blessed, Healthy, Happy Holiday season!

Renata Kucas

Pharmacist Renata Kucas BA, BS, Rph.. has 24 years experience. She currently works at the nation's first hospital, Pennsylvania Hospital, located in center city Philadelphia. She will address current topics and at times make suggestions for improving your own approach to managing medications or addressing your personal health-care concerns.

acclaimed lyric poets of her genre. In addition to reflecting her own rich poetic self, her poetry also represents the collective experience of a period in the history of Lithuania as well as all of Europe marked by catastrophic events and an intense battle for the highest human values being crushed under the weight of warfare and political oppression.

Rimvydas Silbajoris

Editor's note: *Dr. R. Silbajoris, Professor of Slavic Literature, is the foremost authority on Lithuanian literature in emigration, especially poetry, and the author of numerous books and articles on this subject. He followed closely the trends in Soviet Lithuania, and introduced important young authors and poets to the English-speaking audiences through his reviews in World Literature Today (originally Books Abroad, founded by the late Estonian professor and poet Ivar Ivask). Degutyte's poetry caught his attention*

soon after she started publishing.

Janina Degutyte: POEZIJA/POEMS

Selected and translated by

M. G. Slavenas

Lithuanian Writers'

Union Publishers, Vilnius, Lithuania

ISBN 9986-39-297 294 pages

The book offers an introduction by Prof. R. Silbajoris and extensive comments by the translator. The English translations come with the Lithuanian original.

You can order it for \$15.00 by emailing the translator at:

slavenmg@bscmail.buffalostate.edu

or write to: SlavenMG,
PO Box 363
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You can also write to:

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e-mail vadovas@rsleidykla.lt.

Marija Grazina Slavenas is an educator, translator and researcher

and has published in English, German and Lithuanian. Her translations of Degutyte and other Lithuanian women poets have appeared in poetry journals and in several anthologies.

On the longest Night of the Year

*On the longest night of the year
she took a white scarf from her trunk,
tied it around her head
and went to the barn
where she talked to the animals
and fed each one a handful of hay.
Then she returned to the house,
placed four full plates on the table,
and four spoons,
adjusted the lamp for better light,
walked to the black window,
crossed her thin arms,
and waited.*



Children beg: *Please don't deport Tasha*

What does a little girl from Indonesia have to do with Lithuania?

She is fortunate to have a school principal who worked for human rights for Lithuanians.

Juratė Krokys Stirbys is no stranger to facing adversity. When she sees a wrong, she tries to make it right. It doesn't always happen overnight and she has great patience. She's willing to wait. What she's not willing to do is sit, wait, and do nothing. In the 1980's, before it was the 'in' thing to do, Juratė was part of the "Embassy 18". They ended up in jail after protesting Russian occupation in Lithuania. She and her husband, Rimantas Stirbys, spent hours protesting and demonstrating in the early 1990's. They both were actively involved in the Communication Center of the Lithuanian American Community during those nail biting days between 1990 and 1991. Rimantas was a former editor of Bridges and Juratė was right by his side helping him. But it didn't end there.

Shortly after Lithuania regained independence Juratė and Vaiva Vebraitė co-founded A.P.P.L.E. (American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education). The organization was founded to help Lithuanian educators enter a new era of education.

No, it didn't even end here. Juratė was a Special Education teacher in Philadelphia. She knew that the old soviet system was not a model for children with disabilities. She was a Fulbright Scholar to the Republic of Lithuania from September 1992 to July 1993. Juratė was a lecturer at Vilnius Pedagogical University and at the Teacher Inservice Center for the Ministry of Education. In addition, she worked with the Ministry of Education to deinstitutionalize special needs children. Juratė was able to take her three children with her and they attended public school in Vilnius. Rimantas stayed behind to keep the home fires burning. I wrote a two part article for BRIDGES about Juratė and the children when she returned. Life was difficult in the early years of independence. Simple things that we Americans take for granted, such as heat and hot water, were a problem. Educationally, a mindset about children with disabilities had to be changed. But despite the hardships neither Juratė nor the children would have traded the year they spent in Lithuania.

Juratė returned to her classroom in Philadelphia, entered the

Educational Leadership program at the University of Pennsylvania and eventually became the founding principal of Independence Charter School located in the historic district of Philadelphia. www.independencecharter.org

In most classrooms human rights is a term learned from a textbook. At Independence Charter the students have first hand knowledge of what human rights mean. Seven year old Angelina "Tasha" Sugianto and her family face deportation to Indonesia. If you take the last three letters from Angelina's name "angel" describes this little first grader. The family's crime? They missed the filing date applying for political asylum due to circumstances beyond their control. The Lazakar family are Catholic and ethnic Chinese. The family left East Java because the economic crash that hit Southeast Asia created significant problems in Indonesia including violent attacks by Muslim extremists towards the Chinese Christian minority, most of whom were business owners.

Juratė explained to the students that Tasha's mother was praying in a Catholic Church in Indonesia when an angry mob stormed the church and broke all the windows. Another time her father was riding in a car when the car was pelted with rocks and Tasha's uncle was hurt. The family was taunted on the street and their house was hit by firecrackers. To students and parents of a school that has many races, religions and languages among them, it was unacceptable and a grave injustice to return this family to Indonesia. Where can you find a better place to argue for human rights than the historic district of Philadelphia?

When the family was told they had to leave this country Juratė sprung into action. The staff, parents, and students of Independence Charter School were among those who got solidly behind Tasha and her family. More than 2,500 letters have been written to each of the two Pennsylvania U.S. senators, trips have been made to Washington, flyers have been printed, and rallies have been held outside the Philadelphia Visitors Center near Independence Hall. Students and parents were asking tourists to sign petitions to prevent seven year old Tasha Angelina Lazakar and her family from being sent back to Indonesia.

According to Juratė, the school has been in touch with both Pennsylvania senators. They have contacted everyone they feel could help resolve this matter. Oprah Winfrey received letters because of her influence on public opinion. Tasha's mother is most grateful for the support Independence Charter has given her family.

As one twelve year old student stated, "In Indonesia, Tasha gets harassed because she is ethnic Chinese and Catholic." This has to be very difficult for a twelve year old American child to understand. And yet, the parents and the school are teaching their children first hand what it means to care for others. There are times you have to close the textbook and do something about a problem when you see it.

Continued from page 5

LAC Third Annual Session

introduced the many press, radio and TV journalists. Also, the photographers were kept busy. Next, by an overwhelming vote, members agreed to meet next year in Philadelphia, PA for the annual session.

Dr. Audrius Polikaitis, Chairman of the upcoming USA and Canada VII Song Festival, very professionally and with the use of slides, presented plans for this festival. There will be several sing-alongs, large screens and other embellishments. So far, forty nine choirs have registered. Future plans include fund-raising and printing a special edition of the festival. Souvenir shirts were available in the lobby. They were provided 'gratis' so that recipients could wear them as an advertisement for the festival. Other announcements followed.

During the three days of intense discussion and differences of opinions, some "toes were stepped on" and/or misunderstandings occurred. At the end of this session followed several public apologies and hugs and thanks to all who helped to organize this session and made it a success. The session ended with all standing and joined hands held high singing '...in the country of Lithuania mighty oaks will grow'.

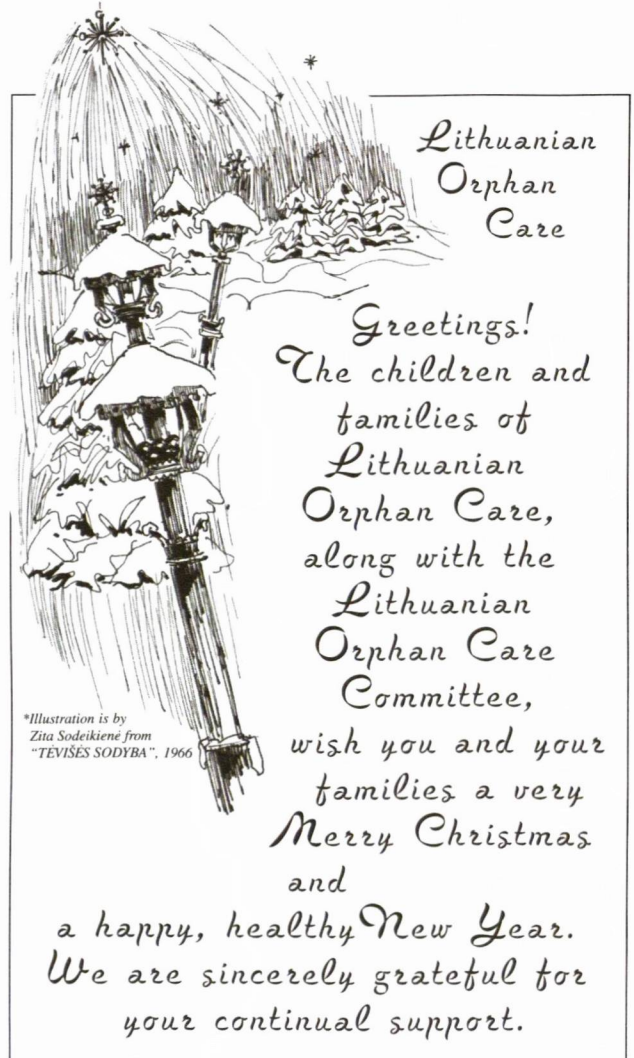
Gražina Kriauciūnienė

Gražina Kriauciūnienė has been active in the LAC since its organization in Lansing MI twenty years ago. She and her husband were 'the founding fathers', so to speak, and since held many positions including president, secretary etc. At present she is the Chairman of Financial Review Committee for the LAC Michigan region. Her interests include tent camping with her family in Alaska and other far away places. Since then she started writing for 'Draugas' about their travels titled "With tent to..." Also, for the past five years she and her husband have been the editors of the Lithuanian organization 'Ateitis' website. They also served in this organization as members of the Executive Board, organizers and writers/editors of Youth Councillors Manuals.

Please don't deport Tasha.

I asked Juratė why she took a stand on this issue. I taught for more than thirty – five years and I know that many principals would not do this. She told me that being part of the Lithuanian Diaspora provided her, and people like her, with the opportunity for leadership and human rights work that so many people devoted much of their life to. If she had not been involved in fighting for Lithuanian human rights she would not have known how to help Tasha. Although she worked for human rights in Lithuania, she believes the struggle begins at home.

Juratė quoted Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, who chaired the Human Rights Commission in its first years. "Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home -- so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends;



the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

Juratė learned as a young girl that you have to make the impossible happen. She saw what many thought of as the impossible; a free and independent Lithuania. She believes there is still hope for Tasha and her family to achieve what seems to be the impossible dream.

Jeanne Dorr

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

A Hunt On The Day Before Christmas

A LITHUANIAN LEGEND

Told by Genrikas Songinas:

KŪČIŲ DIENOS MEDŽIOKLĖ

"1847 metų įvykio Rudnikų miške atgarsiai plačiai pasklido Eišiškių-Rudnikų rajone per apylinkės kaimus....."

Talk about what happened in 1847 in the Rudnikų forest echoed far and wide around the Eišiškių-Rudnikų region and neighboring villages. People discussed the story every chance they could, often with fanciful embellishments, and citing ever-increasing numbers of named witnesses as if adding weight to the tale. If it had been any other time, the story might not have had so much notoriety, but it happened just on the day of Kūčios, Christmas Eve.

It began when Kajetonas Laukaitis, who owned a small farmstead in Karmaniškiai, agreed with Zigmus Jurgaitis, owner of a large farm in Čurancų and an experienced hunter, to spend the day of Kūčios, Christmas Eve, hunting in the woods.

"On the day of Kūčios, there's no place for men in the house", said Jurgaitis. "That day, the women are as irritable as flies, everything is no good, the men are in their way, and if anything goes wrong with something they're cooking, it's our fault! Better we should just go hunting, and let them have the house to themselves!"

So that's what they did. Early on Christmas Eve, even before dawn, Laukaitis put on his long hunting boots, checked his gun, and filled his game bag with cartridges, a length of rope, a bottle of brandy, a large piece of bread and a few juicy onions. He was sorely tempted to take a piece of dried cheese, but he resisted, since the day of Kūčios was then observed in strict fast and abstinence. He assured himself, as he closed his bag, that it was better to keep the fast and eat humbly during the day, so that the evening Kūčios meal would be even more satisfying.

As dawn rose, he heard the howls and barking of dogs from Čurancų village, telling him Jurgaitis was also ready and on his way. Taking his gun and bag, he left the house quietly, careful not to disturb his sleeping wife. As he stepped outside, he saw Jurgaitis was already waiting for him, with two leashed hounds prancing around his legs.

They decided to start their hunt along the

edges of Rudnikų forest, entering from the smaller woods and shrubbery, one on either side. As they entered the first stand of trees, the hounds, let off their leashes, ran excitedly back and forth through shrubbery, apparently tracking a hare. The hunters split up, one approaching from the fields, the other from the denser forest side. But they found nothing in that area, and passed into another small wood, where the hounds quickly came upon a fresher track. They started the chase, but it seems that this must have been an experienced, wily old hare. After a half-hour or so, the dogs lost the track and returned to the hunters. The hunt wasn't going well.

The day was cold and cloudy. An even layer of snow covered the ground, with drifts piled against fences and some larger bushes. Occasionally a strong sudden wind would carry a drift of snow, like flour, from one place to another, quickly obliterating any tracks in an open field. The hunters, already far from home, moved, imperceptibly, further into the Rudnikų forest. About noon, the hounds suddenly flushed a hare and chased it toward Jurgaitis, who killed it with one shot. Their mood changing for the better, the hunters decided to have lunch and let the dogs rest..

They sat on a log near a tall fir tree and took their food from their bags. First, they gave each dog a big piece of bread, then readied their own repast. Laukaitis, surprised, saw that Jurgaitis had taken a large ring of sausage from his bag. "How is this--" he exclaimed, "do you mean to eat sausage on Kūčios?!"

"Well, why not?" said Jurgaitis. "During the hunt, sausage is just the best thing, even on Christmas Eve. No one sees what we eat here. Last week, as I was helping my wife put our foodstuffs in order, she didn't see me take this ring of sausage and put it in my pocket instead of on the shelf. I thought it would be just the thing for today's hunt, and she never even noticed that it was missing", Jurgaitis chortled.

"But that is a sin! The day of Kūčios is a time of strict fast and abstinence!" cried Laukaitis.

"Oh, it's not such a big sin", answered Jurgaitis, while slicing the sausage. "And with a little glass of whisky, it's a snack without equal. Here, try it!"

Laukaitis turned away, and without answering, sliced one of his onions, sprinkled a good measure of salt on it, and placing it on a slice of bread, began to eat, taking an occasional sip of brandy from his bottle. He was irritated by Jurgaitis'

behavior, and it spoiled his mood. He had been accustomed from childhood to strict and conscientious observance of the laws of fast and abstinence. That had been the rule in their house, and not one of the family had ever dared to disobey. As his parents had done, naturally, so did Laukaitis.

Having eaten, the hunters decided where to continue their hunt, and releasing the hounds, Jurgaitis followed them as they ran off to the left, while Laukaitis turned right. His thoughts were troubled, and he couldn't forget about Jurgaitis's disregard for the fast. In addition to seriously sinful personal behavior on Jurgaitis' part, Laukaitis himself felt wounded for witnessing such a display of disrespect for the Church's commandments.

And even worse, the fellow had said that no one would see! But does He not see, Whose birth is commemorated this night? Laukaitis firmly believed that He sees all, and is sure to be angry with those who do not obey the religious laws.

From Jurgaitis's direction, he heard the dogs baying and barking, then a shot. It appeared that Jurgaitis had gotten another hare, as the dogs fell silent. As Laukaitis stopped to listen, he saw a fox step stealthily out of a bush. The fox, he assumed, had heard the hounds and was trying to get some further distance away from them. Laukaitis aimed, and shot. The fox leaped, turned and ran into the denser forest.

Surprised, because he seldom missed a shot, Laukaitis hurried to the spot where the fox had been. He saw that he hadn't missed, as the snow was marked by a large puddle of blood. The fox was gravely wounded and could not have gone much further. He decided to follow its trail, certain to find it quickly.

It had begun to snow. Afraid that the blowing wind would cover the fox's tracks with new snow, he walked more quickly, carefully looking at the undergrowth on each side. The snow was falling quite heavily, by the time Laukaitis found the fox, already dead, lying under a bush. Brushing the snow from it, he tied its legs together, slung it over his shoulder, and began to walk back. Darkness was falling and the wind strengthened, raising a true blizzard. Visibility was very poor, and it was much harder to slog through the deepening snow. Laukaitis had already been wading through the woods for at least an hour, and still there was no sign of an end to the forest. He stopped to have a good look around, and realized he was in a completely unfamiliar place. He had no idea where

to go, or in which direction he might find home. It was clear that he was lost.

The forest murmured as the wind whistled, carrying the fine snow, covering trees and bushes with a thick white blanket. Snow in several layers covered the ground, and plodding through it was very difficult. Laukaitis grew tired and wanted to sit down and rest, but knew that to do so in such conditions was dangerous. One could freeze to death without knowing. He kept going in that direction, where, he hoped, was home. His tiredness increased with every step, getting harder and harder to drag his feet up out of the snow, and the snowflakes fell into his eyes, sticking to his lashes. He realized that he could go no further, and was apt to drop somewhere near a bush, unable to rise again.

He found a tall fir tree with thick branches that drooped to the ground, making a sort of shelter, and crawled underneath, leaning against the tree's wide trunk. Here, it was much better, as the branches offered refuge from the frigid wind.

His chilled muscles relaxed, and welcome warmth flooded his being.

"I must not fall asleep", he told himself, "because that would be the end. I wouldn't be able to rise, and would freeze."

All sorts of thoughts passed through his mind. He remembered that it was Christmas Eve, but he would not partake of the Kūčios meal, he wouldn't get home in time. Maybe he wouldn't even be able to get to church tomorrow.

"What a thing to happen -- to get lost in the woods -- and now I can't do anything but wait for the light of dawn."

He remembered that his father had taken him to Vilnius just before Christmas, when he was about twelve years old. That was a joyful time! On Christmas Eve, they had gone to *Sts. John Church, where so many candles were burning that it looked brighter than day. The church was full of people, but they found room on a bench near the creche, and took their seats. The church was beautiful and warm, and the people's murmured prayers sounded like the buzzing of bees. The creche was covered by a red curtain, and the light of candle flames inside penetrated the curtain and threw dancing rays of red light on the faces of those standing nearby.

At twelve o'clock, the organ sighed its first big breath, the great choir began singing the Christmas hymns, and the curtain on the creche was drawn aside. He saw the Child lying in the manger, with the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph

standing alongside. The entire congregation fell to their knees. He also wanted to kneel, but he couldn't move his legs. While the choir sang, the people filed past the creche, bowing and genuflecting to honor the Child.

He wanted to do the same, and tried with all his might to stand, but wasn't able. It seemed that something held him back, preventing him from standing and taking those few steps. It was so good to just sit there, comfortable, peaceful and warm.

"Stand up! - and go, Kajetonai! Soon the curtain will be closed and you will not see the Christ Child." His father sternly admonished him.

Snow no longer fell, but it was much colder. Laukaitis understood that he had fallen asleep, and only his childhood memories and the sound of his father's voice had woken him, saving him from a certain frozen death. He remembered that he still had some brandy.

With stiff hands he took the little bottle from his bag, drew the cork, and swallowed two mouthfuls. Warmth spread throughout his body. He stamped his feet and clapped his hands, slapped his sides, and soon felt that the stiffness was passing and his muscles were relaxing. Taking his gun, his bag, and the fox, he crawled out from under the tree, and studying the stars, set off in what he thought was the direction of home. Walking was even harder than before, because of the new-fallen snow, but he kept on going without stopping. After a short while, he heard a sound coming from the west – a bell, such as those farmers tied onto their horses during wintertime. That meant someone was riding, and in that direction should be a road. Laukaitis quickened his steps, and soon, he saw a farmer with his wagon. He realized he had come out on the Rudnikų-Pulstokių road. The farmer stopped, immediately wrapped Laukaitis in a blanket, and drove him to the nearby Podborių village, which was just five kilometers from Laukaitis's homestead. The farmers there knew him, and helped to revive him and fed him, then harnessing their horses, drove him to Karmaniškis, and home.

The people of Čurancų village had been searching for the lost hunters for more than five hours. When the blizzard had begun, Jurgaitis's hounds had returned home alone, and the household knew the hunters could easily be lost in such weather. There was nothing anyone could do while the storm was raging, but when it calmed a bit, about twenty

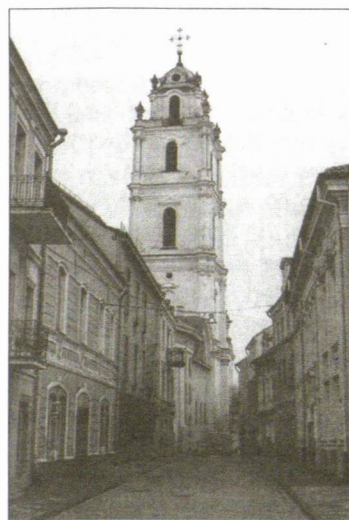
people gathered, and with torches and the hounds, went out to search the forest. Four hours later the hounds found Jurgaitis under a mound of snow, stiff and cold, but alive. But there was no sign of Laukaitis. Some people carried Jurgaitis home to be revived, but the rest remained, to continue the search for the second hunter, though hope was dwindling. After another hour, they decided to stop and go home, as they were all exhausted, and the dogs had lost all interest in tracking and were reluctantly just loping through the snow. As they returned home, the farmer with Laukaitis immediately followed.

Laukaitis remained healthy, and was able to go to church the next day, but Jurgaitis had been badly frozen and was taken to the hospital in Vilnius, where his left leg, up to the knee, was amputated, as well as the big toe on his right foot.


Rumor spread throughout the neighboring villages, that Laukaitis was saved by the Christ Child, Who instructed one star to show him the way home. According to the story, the star, dancing along the treetops, led him out of the forest and by some unexplained coincidence the farmer with his wagon had appeared on the right road at the right time, and driven him home.

Translator's note: This is actually the famous church that's attached to the University. It's named after John the Baptist and John the Evangelist. Authentication can be found in the very excellent book "Vilnius" written by Tomas Venclova.

*English translated from Lithuanian by Gloria O'Brien
Gloria is a frequent contributor to Bridges.*



**The photograph of the "Sv. Jonų" church bell tower is by Vytautas Balčytis from a book "Vilnius", 1993.*

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All VYTIS representatives speak English and Lithuanian !!

Calendar of Events for December 2005 January, February and March 2006

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

BLP(LKA)1195
2005, Iss. 10

December-2005

December 3, 2005

K of L Supreme Council Meeting
Lake Buena Vista, Florida
www.knightsoflithuania.com

December 3, 2005 - 12:30 pm - 4 pm

Christmas party and "Kūčios" table
Lake of the Forest Lodge,
west of Edwardsvell on
Hwy 32, Kansas City
Lithuanian American Community
Info: www.aidasdancers.org

December 4, 2005

Siaudinukai Workshop
Blessed Virgin of the
Annunciation Church,
259 North Fifth Street, Brooklyn, NY
Parish Lower Hall,
70 Havemeyer St., Brooklyn, NY.
Info: Vladas Sidas
SID100@AOL.COM

December 4, 2005 - 1pm

Traditional "Kūčios"
McKeon Center
Mission San Luis Rey, Oceanside, CA
San Diego Lithuanian American
Community. www.lithsd.org

December 10, 2005 - 11:30 am

K of L Mid-America District Winter
Meeting and Christmas Party
Sisters of St. Casimir Motherhouse,
67th Street and South Washtenaw,
Chicago, IL.
Meeting followed by lunch and party.
Info: www.knightsoflithuania.com
610 - 497 - 5469

December 10, 2005

"Kūčios"
Following 5 pm Mass
St. George Parish Hall
Salmon and Venango Sts
Phila., Pa.
Reservations: 215 - 739 - 3102
Sponsored by: K of L Council 3

December 11, 2005 - 12 noon

"Kūčios"
St. Andrew Parish Hall
1913 Wallace St. Phila., Pa.
Need RESERVATIONS
215 - 969 - 2117
609 - 268 - 8045
Sponsored by: Lithuanian Scouts

December 11, 2005 - 12:30 pm

R. C. Mass In Lithuanian
Our Lady of Guadalupe Chapel
55th Ave. one block south of
Glendale Ave., Glendale, Arizona.
Mass is followed with refreshments
Info: kvedaras@earthlink.net.

Dec. 11th and 18th, 2005

Homemade Lithuanian
pastries and cookies
for Kūčios and CHRISTMAS.
Pastries will be sold after
10 am Mass at OLPH
during the coffee hour from
11 am to 12 pm.
Sponsor: Lithuanian American
Community, Cleveland Chapter

December 13, 2005 - 7 pm - 9 pm

"Kūčios"
Amber Roots Club
Meatless buffet.
Culture center
Lithuanian Music Hall
2715 E. Allegheny Ave.
Phila., PA 19134
Milliemarks@aol.com

December 18, 2005

"Kūčios"
Following the Noon Lithuanian Mass
St. George R.C. Church
443 Park Ave., Bridgeport, CT 06604
K of L Council - 141
Info: pbschmidt@optonline.net

December 18, 2005

"Kūčios"
Following the
10:00 am Lithuanian Mass
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church
275 N. 8th St. Brooklyn, NY 11211
Sponsored: Parish, Scouts and
Maironis Mokykla
Contact:
Pat or Vladas Sidas 203-762-9726
Vida Jankauskas 718-849-2260

December 25, 2005 - 12:30 pm

R. C. Mass in Lithuanian
Our Lady of Guadalupe Chapel
55th Ave one block south of
Glendale Ave in Glendale, Arizona.
Mass is followed with refreshments
Info: kvedaras@earthlink.net.

January - 2006

January 8, 2006 - 2 pm

Christmas Concert dedicated in
memory of January 13, 1991
Massacre of Vilnius Defenders
St Andrew Church
1913 Wallace St., Phila. PA.
215- 765- 2322

January 14th - 19th, 2006

Lithuanian Athletic Union of
North America (LAUNA) invites to a
ski vacation/competition, and the
American Lithuanian Medical
Association (ALGS) or
its annual seminar, in
beautiful Telluride, Colorado.
Everyone is invited.
Info: Al Bielskus 440-833-0545

January 15, 2006

TV Tower Commemoration
Blessed Virgin of the
Annunciation Church
259 North Fifth St., Brooklyn, NY
Parish Lower Hall
70 Havemeyer St., Brooklyn, NY.
Hall is across the street from
the church.
Info: Vladas Sidas SID100@AOL.COM

February 2006

February 4, 2006

The members of the
Mid-America District will host their
46th Annual "Memories of Lithuania"
Banquet at the Sabre Room
Info:
www.knightsoflithuania.com

February 25, 2006 - 6:30 pm

Celebration of
February 16 and March 11
OLPH Auditorium
Speaker: Lithuanian Ambassador
Vygaudas Usackas
Program: Grandis, the Chicago Youth
Folk Dance Ensemble
Sponsor: Cleveland Chapter of the
Lithuanian American Community

February 26, 2006

Lithuanian Independence Days
February 16 and March 11
Celebrations 10:30 am Mass
St. Andrew Church
1913 Wallace St., Phila, Pa.
Program at 2pm
Lithuanian Music Hall
2715 E. Allegheny Ave., Phila., Pa.
Sponsored by:
LAC Phila. Chapter
Phila Chapter of Lithuanian
Youth Association
Info: 215-938-0783
www.phillylac.org

March - 2006

March 11th, 2006 - 7:30 pm

Independence Day Concert
featuring renowned opera
soloist Virgilijus Noreika
St Casimir Parish Hall
(3855 Evans St)
Sponsored: Los Angeles
Chapter of the
Lithuanian American Community

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