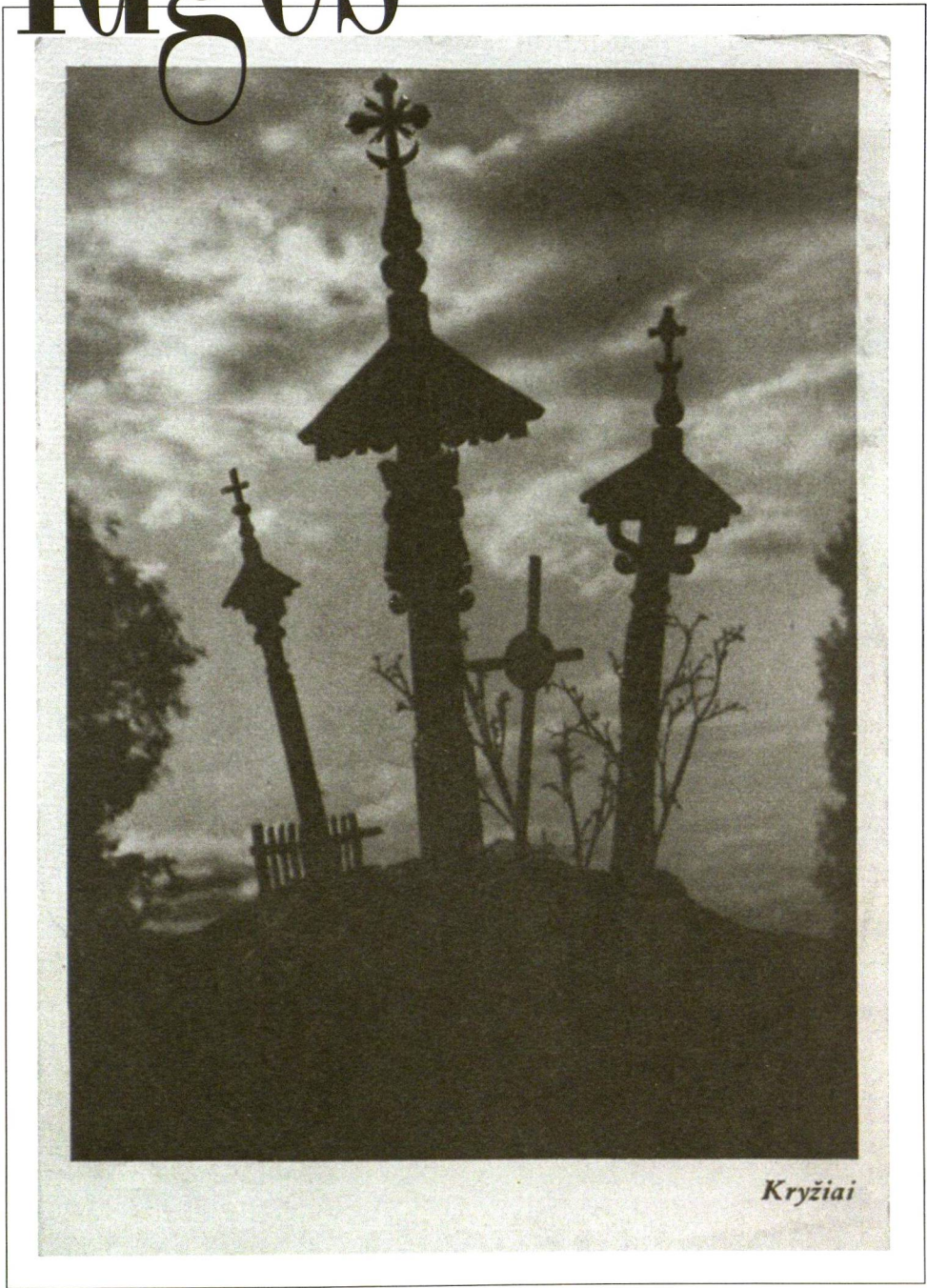


bridges

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Kryžiai

june 2006

LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

Letter from the Editor

You might wonder why this issue has so many articles about the partisans and deportees. As I was thinking about the June issue, probably around Christmas and long before it reaches your homes, I realized we are coming to the end of an era. As a young girl I remember reading about the deaths of civil war veterans. Although they were children who were drummer boys during the war, they were, nevertheless, civil war veterans. And now that era has ended. Then it hit me that the numbers of deportees and partisans are dwindling and another era will be over. When I was in Lithuania I spoke with a friend's father who was a partisan. He told me at their last meeting they were told there were 360 partisans still living. I doubt that we, in our comfortable lifestyles, could ever match their sufferings, courage, and the gift of themselves that they gave to Lithuania. There is no such thing as giving them too much praise or too much space in BRIDGES. In moving forward, we must never forget them or the sacrifices they made for others. How sad that most never lived to see what they fought for the most; a free Lithuania.

As I traveled through Lithuania I saw many changes. Wherever I walked in Vilnius there was heavy construction equipment and scaffolding. The city is beautiful and is gradually being restored to its former glory. As always, most of my time was spent in the rural areas with the children and the elderly. Here there is still much work that needs to be done. I don't have the answers, but I do know that more time, energy, and money have to be spent in these areas. I have so many interesting things to tell you about in future issues. As always, it was a wonderful trip. If you have any thoughts of making a trip to Lithuania, I urge you to do so and not wait. To walk in the footsteps of our ancestors is a feeling that cannot be duplicated anywhere else.

I apologize if you received your BRIDGES a little later than usual this month. I thought we could finish this issue before I left for Lithuania, but there wasn't enough time,

Happy Father's Day to all fathers, grandfathers, godfathers, brothers, uncles and all men who have made a difference in the life of a child. To you I dedicate this quote: "The greatest gift I ever had came from God, and I call him Dad!"

Anonymous


Jeanne Shalna Dorr

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HOMECOMING LITHUANIANS.*

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*Cover: This art work is a Photo by B. Buracas, printed in Lithuania by "Spindulys" as a Post Card before World War II. Looking at this post card, you can see the foresight of the future, the dark days for Lithuania. Mailed from Kaunas on July 25, 1940 by Levonas Peczukewicz (Seminarian Peck) to his brother in Philadelphia, PA. Received on September 18, 1940.

Siberia through the Eyes of a Child

Part II

LITHUANIAN PAPERS ANNUAL JOURNAL OF THE
LITHUANIAN STUDIES SOCIETY AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA
Volume 19 - 2005

In our last issue, Dainora, a young Lithuanian girl, described her forced journey to Siberia. What was her life like afterwards, in this icy exile? Dainora continues:

We were cold and hungry. My mother had managed to get us a little food, by selling or bartering one of her meagre possessions, in exchange for some boiled potatoes and a few other foods, in Barnaul (a town in Siberia).

There was a rumor around that tomorrow they would be taking us to Shipitsyn. However, when the morning dawned, they took us nowhere, and we continued to freeze in the shed. Finally they came for us around midday. Some horse-drawn wagons arrived at the shed, and one open-backed lorry. The trip was terrible. We shuddered from cold, as our clothes still hadn't dried out. We lay on the floor snoozing, huddled together to protect my baby brother Arutis from the cold.

The truck stopped. The driver got out and told us that his truck had a mechanical problem and that we would have to walk to the next selo (village) or else stay here and wait for the horse-drawn wagons to arrive. I felt awful. The cold was really getting to me and just wanted to lie down somewhere and sleep. Finally the wagons arrived and Arutis and I were able to ride with the other children, while the women had to go on foot.

The Unforgettable Trip

We spent the next night in some sort of barracks in a forest, in a building similar to a barn. There were no beds of any type: neither bunks, nor koika (hammock) to be seen anywhere, just a few old mattresses placed beside the walls. The mattresses were ripped and rotting - just lumps of dingy - coloured cotton stuffing. As mother put Arutis down, she said, "Here the bed-bugs will bother us again." They did, but we were used to them by then, or maybe we were just too tired to feel anything.

On that horrible journey all the barracks were similar: old, rotten, draughty. Some of the exiles stayed in them only overnight, others for longer periods. Nobody knew our plans.

I can no longer remember every detail of the trip from Barnaul, but I will always remember the final stage until the end of my days. It was a warm evening and my baby brother and I were sitting on our bags of clothes on a sledge being pulled by a small horse. The horse was struggling, but the irascible driver kept hounding the poor nag. Every time the tired old hack faltered, the driver cursed loudly and cracked the whip, which flicked me and Arutis. I was afraid, I protected Arutis, but I said nothing.

Mother looked so sad and tired as she trudged along beside the sledge that I did not want to bother her by telling her about the whip. In front of us, and behind us too, were other sledges in this never-ending convoy, with children and old people blue from the cold sitting in the sledges, while the poor old mothers plodded along behind, barely able to drag their feet.

At times I dozed off, but the whip woke me again, and I did my best to protect my baby brother Arutis. He was very quiet that evening, mostly sleeping. I became very afraid.

For some reason, it seemed to me that here, on this road through great forests, we were all going to die. It was the first time I had this thought. Maybe I was affected by the adult talk, or maybe it was because I had heard the news that old Mrs. Aleknavičienė was probably going to die, because she had become very sick on this trip for lack of proper winter clothes. Now, thinking about Mrs. Aleknavičienė's condition and possible impending death, I became very worried for Arutis. I called out to mother and told her that Arutis was very pale. She asked the driver to stop. She climbed into the sledge, took the child into her arms, and looked long at his little face. Then, in tears, she sobbed, "Arutis is ill." I huddled with them, held them both, and kept quiet. I looked at the sun. It was gently slipping down and disappearing into the fearful dark forest. I have forgotten much of that horrible experience, but every time I see the pale winter sun on a freezing day, I am reminded of that wan Siberian sun. I remember that nightmarish journey, and suddenly I feel very cold indeed.

It was getting dark. The driver said that we had arrived at "Barracks No. 60". As we approached I saw that it was yet another big cold building like all the others we had been in, with a fireplace in the middle and bunk beds around the walls. We could only get a sleeping place further from the fireplace. Late that night Mrs. Aleknavičienė died. In the morning some men dug a hole and buried her. "Barracks No. 60" became her graveyard.

Helpless

In the morning a white-coated lady appeared who we hoped might be a doctor, but she was probably just a medical orderly, because she didn't even tell us what Arutis was suffering from. She gave us some powder for Arutis, looked at a few other sick people, and left. Mother dissolved the powder for Arutis to drink and for a while he slept soundly, breathing more easily.

I fell asleep for a while, and when I awoke mother was at the fireplace talking with the other women. They were boiling potatoes, as none of us had eaten anything yet, we had only drunk some boiled water. Mother brought some potatoes over and as Arutis was awake again we offered some to him first. He nibbled at one a bit, then sat for a while and said "Give me". The women gathered around were glad, saying that Arutis must be getting better.

However, after lunch and toward late afternoon, Arutis became restless in bed, he cried and whined, he must have been in pain. It got worse that evening. He kept crying in a strange gargling sort of voice.

Around midnight Arutis began whimpering in his sleep. I saw him suddenly open his eyes and look at me. I was happy for him, and started to talk to him. But he just wailed strangely and began to pant heavily, restlessly. Mother ran over, picked him up, carried him around, with me walking alongside. I held his hand and kissed it, always believing that soon he would settle down, fall asleep, start to get better. But these sweet hopes were suddenly dashed by mother's screams.

I felt that Arutis' hand was getting heavier in mine. Mother was crying out loud. I saw that Arutis' eyes were open, and I was going to say, "Don't worry, he's looking"... But I remained silent. Arutis seemed to look at mother with a strange calmness. His little hand in mine became ever colder. Mother and I kissed his cold little body.

In the morning some men brought in a little coffin made from rough wooden boards. Mother dressed Arutis in the best clothes she had kept for him: a white shirt and a little blue suit.

Starvation

Finally they dumped us out at Barracks No. 82 and said that here is where we would live. We inspected the area: a courtyard with a few buildings around it, surrounded by forest.

After a few days mother had to start work. Sometimes she worked far away and came home very tired. At night her back hurt, she even complained in her sleep. Once when mother collapsed at work because of the pain, they let her off hard labor for a month. Then she started to work closer to the barracks.

Deportees who worked got a bowl of soup at the mess-hall. They also got a ration of bread. Mother could have brought home our combined ration of bread, but instead she told me to come and get my ration at lunch time. This way she could ask them to give me some soup, and if they did, we could both eat. But they didn't always do it. When mother shared her cucumber or cabbage soup with me I was sad for her, because I knew she must be going hungry.

At first, when we still had some groats and flour, we made a sort of buiza. With bread it was quite tasty. But our supply ran out.

When mother was assigned to lighter work or was not working at all, her bread ration went down to 150 grams, the same as for me, a child. When doing heavier work she got 400 grams. The bread wasn't just given to us: we had to buy it. Mother earned very little from her work: it was barely enough to buy bread. When she was not working and not getting that meagre income, we had to get by on what little money we still had from selling a few things in Barnaul.

Eventually the time came when we no longer had any food reserves. When we brought some bread home, we discussed how much we would eat that day. Mother used to spread on the table the two scarves that she had brought from our home in Raguva (Lithuania). She used one as our tablecloth, and the

other one to wrap the bread in when she put it back on the shelf. She used to slice the bread very carefully, so that the loaf didn't crumble. We used to lick our fingers and press the crumbs on the tablecloth with our damp fingers to pick them up and eat them.

At night in bed I tried so hard not to think about the bread sitting on the shelf. But sometimes I couldn't stand it and I had to get up and beg mother to slice me a little piece. If we could possibly afford to take an extra slice, she would let me have it. But there were many other nights when there was only a tiny bit of bread left.

Mother thought of a way to get some more bread. She started knitting scarves which she took to Shipitsyn to sell to the Russian women who liked them very much. For the few kopeeks she earned, we were able to buy a little more bread. But in March, as we were waiting for spring to arrive, it started to snow heavily, and blizzards came. No one could deliver any bread to the mess hall, neither by tractor nor by horse and sledge.

The women wondered what to do, how to get to Shipitsyn. They tried to walk there, but they gave up and came back when they saw the extent of deep snow drifts covering the roads. But we were running out of food. We had only a few potatoes left. Since we didn't know how long the terrible weather would last, we had to go easy on the potatoes. I suggested to mother that we count them and decide how many we could consume each



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your seat
number?**

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day. At first mother laughed at my suggestion, but she soon accepted it and followed it.

I pulled the bag of potatoes out of its place by the wood stove, and I carefully counted them: 63 potatoes. At first, while we still had a little bit of bread, we said we would eat three potatoes a day. When there was no more bread, we cooked four, or if we couldn't stand the hunger pains, five. But we realized that at this rate the potatoes would soon run out. And they did. We had no more food, only water. We became so desperate we started examining the little bits of potato with sprouting eyes that we had put aside for seed potatoes in the spring. There was very little to be had on them, but we shaved a few tiny bits off and boiled them up in some water to make a very weak consomme. When we could no longer do even that, we just drank boiled water. We tried to move as little as possible to conserve our strength. We lay around, taking naps, talking. We became so weak that it was a major effort even to light a fire.

I remember that starvation very well. We lived on just water for at least five days, maybe a week. Amid my naps, half asleep and half awake, I pondered that I may never see Lithuania again, may never go back to school there. With my eyes shut I could see visions of the school at Raguva, the classroom, the children, exercise books and textbooks. Then it all became jumbled, as Arutis entered the classroom and took a seat next to me. When I told mother about these dreams or visions, or when I complained about wanting to go back to Lithuania, she comforted me, or just sat silently, thinking all sorts of thoughts herself, or perhaps half asleep from exhaustion. One time she said, "A few more days of this starvation and we will be in a very bad way, because we are already bloating." I don't know whether I was bloated, but when I looked at mother I could see that she had changed.

Tragedy

Oh, how we waited for the berries of spring and summer and the mushrooms of autumn! Even though we were living so poorly, we used these gifts of nature to help us observe the festivals of Easter and Christmas. One day we heard some good news: we found out where father was. An old crippled man arrived at our Barracks No. 82 and he said, he had been at the barracks of Reshoty, somewhere beyond Krasnoyarsk, but he had been moved on because of his age and condition. He had been with the men who had been separated from the women at Naujojii Vilnia. He told us the address of the Reshoty Barracks and the women set to writing letters, including us.

The old man advised us not to complain in the letters, and to keep them short, so as to stand a better chance of getting past the censors. Mother wrote about Arutis' death, and about us, that we were well, that we were living in barracks in a forest. I wrote that I missed him very much.

We got a reply back fairly quickly. We were so happy. We thought now we would find out everything about what was happening to father. But his letter was short. He just said that

he was in good health and was doing forestry work. He asked about me, Dainutė (little Dainora), whether I was well and whether I had learnt much Russian. Not a word about little Arutis.

We were very surprised. But the old man who had given us the address said, father had probably been prevented by the censor from writing anything about the death of his son. Nevertheless, we were happy to have heard even that much from him. We cried with happiness, although we were told that we could not see and hear father. We wrote a reply the same day.

Again we waited. But no other letter ever arrived. Just some horrifying news. I remember the sunny, warm May day. It was at Pentecost. We children were playing our favorite game outside: "hidey". So many good places to hide around there: the barracks, the other buildings, the forest, the shrubs. That day I came out a little later than the other children and I asked whether we were going to play hidey. However, the other children walked around uneasily and looked at me in a curious way. Then I heard the voice of our neighbor, Mrs. Gontautienė, calling me to come into the barracks.

As soon as I came in the door of the barracks, I could hear mother crying. I saw women standing around the room and mother sitting on the bed crying. On the table was a letter. When I walked up to mother she stood up, hugged me, and told me that father had died. At first I couldn't believe it. I looked around the room to see the expressions on the other women's faces. Mother took the letter from the table and read, "...Many men died this spring of pneumonia, including Juozas Tamosiunas from Raguva"...

Mrs. Gontautienė took the letter, folded it up, and she and the other women left the room. We were alone. We sat on the bed, talked about father, and quietly cried.

Translated from the Lithuanian by Gintautas Kaminskas.

Dainora Urbonienė (nee Tamosiunaitė) survived her ordeal and is now living in Lithuania.

Gintautas Kaminskas, B. A. Hons. (Flinders), M.A. (Monash) is a professional translator and presently lives in Montreal, Quebec.

LITHUANIAN PAPERS' EDITOR'S NOTE:

It is a great pity that the English-speaking world knows next to nothing of Dainora's plight or of the suffering thousands of other Lithuanian children had to endure. The remainder of Dainora's 188-page book, written in Lithuanian, is still waiting to be translated into English.

For a free copy of Lithuanian Papers please contact:
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Lithuanian Independence Day Celebration at NATO HQ in Norfolk Virginia.

On February 15, 2006 it was a great pleasure to participate at a Lithuanian and American Flag Raising Ceremony which took place at the NATO HQ Supreme Allied Command Transformation (SACT) in Norfolk, VA. The Allied Command Transformation high ranking officers from the 26 NATO nations, staff and guests celebrated Lithuania's Independence Day in front of the of the command's headquarters. During the ceremony Lithuania's National Liaison Representative to SACT Lt. Co. Gintaras Sadaitis

spoke about Lithuania's rich history, saying; "that although Lithuania may not be the world's greatest power or have the most resources, they are people who stand strong for peace and freedom." Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Transformation British Royal Navy Adm. Sir Mark Stanhope made the following remarks in his impressive speech; "Lithuanians have learned to endure; learned to bend like trees in the wind remain true to themselves. Lithuania's heart has never been in doubt. Today, Lithuania is among friends. And like

true friends, they offer their support rain or shine. Lithuania is supporting her friends by contributing to the International Assistance Force in Afghanistan, leading a provisional reconstruction team. She assisted in the Pakistan relief efforts and also has forces deployed in NATO operations in Iraq and the Balkans. She is strongly represented in the NATO command structure. Lithuania is also offering leadership to other aspiring NATO members, such as Georgia and the Ukraine by showing them how she



In front of the NATO HQ Amb. Vygaudas Usackas and Adm. Sir Mark Stanhope review the color guard.

prepared for this complex and difficult task."

Then Adm. Stanhope presented a gift to Ambassador

Usackas. Ambassador Usackas' speech included the following; "Our history has taught us that freedom can never be taken for granted. It has to be constantly cherished and fought for. We have lost our freedom several times during 1,000 years of Lithuanian history. That's why we take our obligation of membership in NATO the collective defense organization of the 21st century."

The beautiful flag raising ceremony was led by the playing of United States and Lithuania's National Anthems by the

U.S. Atlantic Fleet Band. A tribute to Lithuania followed by performing "The boat is floating" a march "Plaukia sau laivelis" by the Lithuanian composer Jonusas.

Following the ceremony, a reception took place in the NATO HQ building, which was attended by military and civilian NATO personnel, representatives of the Lithuanian American Community and other guests.

Audrone Pakstys



Lithuanian participants in front of the flags of the 26 NATO countries: Maj. R. Zorys, Lt. Col. G. Sodaitis, Maj. A. Giniotiene, R. Ikomonn, A. Pakstys, Amb. V. Usackas, Lt. Col. Leika, Dr. M. Pakstys, Col. R. Petkevicius.

ROYAL PALACE RESTORATION COMMITTEE FOR U.S.A

The Royal Palace Restoration Committee for U.S.A. was formed in mid summer 2003. The Committee is an affiliate of the Royal Palace Restoration Foundation in Vilnius, Lithuania. The mission of the Committee is to educate the Lithuanian Americans regarding the history and greatness of the Royal Palace in Vilnius and to raise funds to aid in the restoration and the furnishing of the Palace.

The Royal Palace ground breaking ceremonies took place in Vilnius on May 10, 2002. The reconstruction work has been proceeding carefully and expeditiously. The construction of the large south wing is now almost completed. It is expected that the stucco overlay of the exterior walls of the south wing of the Royal Palace will be done this summer. The west wing, which borders the back of the Cathedral, is also well along to being completed. The east wing will incorporate the still standing building walls of the old Palace. The north wing, which will house the large hall for theatrical and concert presentations, will be the last to be constructed, because of the need to have access to the courtyard. It is planned that a visitor reception center, including a cloakroom, souvenir shop and auditorium will be located under the interior courtyard of the Royal Palace, where visitors will also be able to see original parts of the Palace basement.

The interior work began in the east wing last year. The impressive gothic arches in four of the halls on the first and second floors have been completed. Plans are under way to determine the interior details of the Palace. Historians and archeologists are continuing to research from the archeological artifacts recovered at the Palace site what kind of window, door, ceiling, floor and fire-place styles were in each Palace area in order to duplicate them as much as possible.

It is expected that the construction of the Royal Palace building will be completed in 2008, whereupon the interior work will commence. The Palace is scheduled to be totally completed and opened to the public on July 6, 2009, in time for Lithuania's millennium celebration.

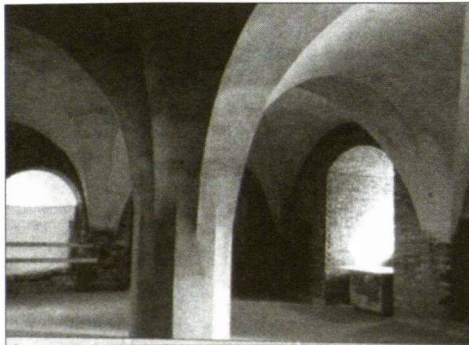
The Royal Palace Restoration U.S. Committee has prepared projects for the Lithuanian Saturday morning schools; written in the Lithuanian press, including "Bridges", about the history



The south wing of the Palace on which the stucco will be applied this summer.



Construction site from Gedimino Hill.



Gothic arches on the first floor of the east wing.

and occupants of the Palace and work of the U.S. Committee and the Lithuanian Foundation in Vilnius; has prepared and handed out flyers about the Royal Palace and distributed them at various Lithuanian events; and has secured some advertising. The U.S. Committee has formed a subcommittee to prepare a plan for a Lithuanian American hall in the Royal Palace, with which it is hoped to persuade the Lithuanian government to allow Lithuanian Americans to show to the world their contribution to the statehood of Lithuania. Such a plan has been created and published in the Lithuanian daily "Draugas" and the weekly newspaper "Amerikos Lietuvis". It is this Committee's hope to present the contributions of all three Lithuanian immigrant waves, Czars time, soviet times and present times.

Needless to say, the U.S. Committee has worked hard to raise funds. As of December 30, 2005, the Committee has in its treasury the sum of \$139,592.00. All of the funds are held here in the United States on deposit at a bank or invested in Certificates of Deposit. The only funds the Committee has spent so far have been for stationary, postage stamps, expenses in connection with bank and investment expenditures and an advertisement in the "Song Festival" program in Chicago on July 2, 2006. Most expenses, particularly such as for travel and telephoned personally by the Committee members.

phone calls, have been

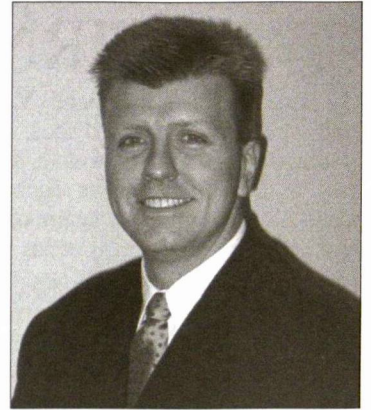
Last fall the U.S. Committee was advised that a Lithuanian American named Ona White of Florida had died and left her entire estate to the Royal Palace Restoration Committee for the U.S. A. Her estate is now in probate in Florida. It is hoped that distribution of Ona's estate to the U.S. Committee will be made by the summer of this year. These additional funds will be a good beginning to furnishing a Royal Palace hall in the name of the Lithuanian Americans.

Persons desiring to make a donation for the restoration of the Royal Palace, may do so by making out a check payable to the Lithuanian American Community, "Valdovu Rumu" account

With a Song in His Heart

Audrius Polikaitis is the Chairman of the Eighth Lithuanian Song Festival. Audrius grew up and currently resides in the Chicago area where he has been an active member of the Lithuanian community since his early years. Audrius has organized numerous summer camps, seminars, and retreats for the high school group of the "Ateitis" Catholic Youth Association, has served on the Board of Directors for "Ateitis", as well as currently serves on the Board of Directors for Camp Dainava. He is a member of the Dainava Choir in Chicago as well as the Dainava Men's Ensemble. Formerly, he was a dancer and musician in the Grandis Folk Dancing Ensemble.

Audrius has a PhD in electrical engineering having performed research in the automated analysis of cardiac signals. Currently, Audrius is employed at the University of Illinois Medical Center in Chicago directing the Project Management Office of the Information Services organization.



Audrius Polikaitis, Chairman of the Eighth Lithuanian Song Festival.

The Ellis Island Oral History Program

The Ellis Island Oral History Program is a 25 year old project that records the memories of people who came to the US through Ellis Island in the years it was the premier federal immigration processing center from 1892-1954. It also interviews people who worked for the various federal agencies that functioned on the island as well as the US Coast Guard and Army, which had a presence on both Liberty and Ellis Islands over the years.

The Program would be interested in interviewing people from Lithuania and other Baltic Republics about their lives in the old country, the trip to America and their becoming Americans, adjusting to a new language, culture and, in many cases, a new political system. We are also interested in how

the immigrants kept up with their roots in the old country by celebrating their religion, home culture and family traditions.

Interviewees can be of any age when they entered the US. We have interviewed people who were just babies when they entered. In cases like this we talk about things the child may have heard growing up and their personal stories of having one foot in the old country and one in the new, so to speak.

Kevin Daley

Transfiguration Parish Bulletin:

Kevin Daley, an official with the National Park Service at Ellis Island, wants desperately to interview Lithuanian people who came to the US via Ellis Island. His archive has a BIG gap where the words of Lithuanian immigrants belong. Can you help? Do you know someone whose memories should be preserved for posterity?

Contact him at 212-363-3206 x152 or
by e-mail at Kevin_daley@nps.gov.

Sources: Transfiguration Parish Bulletin and Kevin Daley

ROYAL PALACE

and sending it addressed to the Lithuanian American Community, Valdovu Rumai, at 5600 Claremont Ave, Chicago, Illinois 60636. The donation is tax deductible. Our Committee treasurer, Gediminas Damasius will send each donor a receipt for the donation and in time the Royal Palace Restoration Foundation in Lithuania will post the donor's name and gift on its web-site, which is www.lvr.lt. For every gift of \$380.00 the donor will

receive a testimonial certificate as Builder from the Royal Palace Restoration Foundation in Lithuania, however any donation is welcome.

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

Regina Narusis is Chairman of the National Executive Board of Directors of the Lithuanian American Community, Inc. and former President of the National Executive Board of LAC. She is an attorney at law.

bridges

New Subscription Prices

Bridges has held the line on subscription rates for the past fourteen years. During that time both printing costs and postage have increased several times.

As of JUNE 1, 2006 the cost of a subscription will increase by \$2. The new rate will be \$20 per year for domestic mail. Subscriptions to other addresses will be \$30 per year.

THE SIBERIAN JOURNAL

My father's cousin's husband, V., a man in his seventies, long white hair, dignified face, spent almost ten years in Siberia (nine years, ten months, and twenty-six days, as he puts it). Now, in his own backyard on the outskirts of Kaunas, a free city once again, on a summer afternoon, he reads to us from the pages of his Siberian journal.

The yard, like most in Lithuania, is eighty percent vegetables and fruit trees. The rest is taken up with V.'s experiments in making his own building blocks out of various materials: cement and pebbles, clay and bark, cinders, ashes and straw. We, the American and the local relatives, sit in chairs and benches hand-made by our host. Not the least of what he learned in his long exile was how to make almost anything out of almost anything else. He reads to us, his head bent forward, a swathe of long white hair obscuring half his face, he reads what I recognize as an old-fashioned Lithuanian prose—dignified, resonant cadences, the tone reserved and ironic, the irony of one who has suffered so much he knows he can't possibly recreate it for us so has to distance himself and bring us in by means of indirection and understatement:

"A typical day's bounteous nourishment consisted of Mr. Stalin's famous leaf and tree bark soup, occasionally supplemented with a single delicious floating mushroom or, perhaps, a thoroughly moisture-free slice of aged bread."

On he reads, and it's fascinating, though the language is sometimes obscure or difficult, but then I notice my own father beside me – also of V.'s generation and no slouch himself in the suffering department – is nodding off! I give him a gentle elbow in the side and he starts and smiles wryly and elbows me back as if to say, "Yes, the man suffered, no doubt about it. But so did we all. There can be only so much tolerance for the story of another's sufferings. I'm an old man, have seen and done much, and here and now, in this pleasant yard under the dappled shadows of the apple tree, the droning of the bees and the hum of this man's self-conscious prose is simply too much, and sleep tugs insistently at my sleeve."

V. continues in his ironic mode:

"Food was in such abundance, that once we even had a special delicacy for our single work horse, a handsomely slim fellow who kept himself that way through the exercise of pleasant long hours of work each day. Yes, we were able to treat him once with a delicious straw broom, which he gratefully ate down to the wooden handle. He might have continued with the handle, but enough is enough; indulgence we can live with, over-indulgence – never!"

He has been reading now for fifteen minutes, still about

food, to an audience of some twelve people: his relatives by marriage, his own son who holds his two-year-old son on his lap, his son's wife, his own wife, cousins, and the nieces and nephews of those cousins, pilgrims from America, met for the first and possibly only time, and the truth is we are starting to get bored and restless; the truth is we, sitting in this pleasant yard, stomachs full after an abundant and truly memorable meal, are suffering – of course, not the suffering of exile, of hunger, of unspeakable privations, but suffering nonetheless: the boards of the bench are uncomfortable, the sun on the back of our necks is too much, that fly pestering our ear, the belt now too tight around our waist, the little two-year-old starting to squirm and complain. Finally, his own wife, A., a survivor of three years of Siberian exile herself, speaks up, "V., that's enough already. I think they get the idea."

With great dignity and with the economical movements of a Zen master, V. closes his note book and tells us that he hopes he's been able to at least capture for us a small part of what it was like in Siberia as comrade Stalin's guests. He has. I've been moved to tears, and impressed by the indomitable human spirit, and glad I've been so-far spared such trials – and envious, too, I must confess, like any writer, always with an eye out for material.

Reprinted with permission.

Al Zolynas was born in Austria of Lithuanian parents in 1945 and grew up in Sydney, Australia and Chicago. His poems have been widely published and translated into Lithuanian, Spanish, Ukrainian and Polish – the last by Czeslaw Milosz. His books include The New Physics, Under Ideal Conditions, and The Same Air. With Fred Moramarco, he is co-editor of two poetry anthologies, most recently The Poetry of Men's Lives: An International Anthology, University of Georgia Press, 2004. He teaches writing and literature at Alliant International University, San Diego.

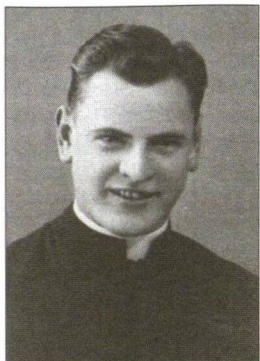
Happy Father's Day

The greatest gift I ever had came from God, and I call him Dad!

Anonymous

Happy Father's Day to all fathers, grandfathers, Godfathers, brothers, uncles and all men who have made a difference in the life of a child.

The strength of our Lithuanian parishes is vanishing... VOCATIONS!



As a young seminarian at the Seminary of Vilkaviškis, Lithuania. From 1936 to 1940.

who faithfully attended Mass and financially supported their places of worship.

At one time, there was such an abundance of Lithuanian priests in the United States that there was a surplus of clergy! Bishops, recognizing their zeal and talent, utilized their vocations in non-Lithuanian parishes and assignments. Many of these priests were the sons of proud Lithuanian immigrants who had inspired in their offspring a love for God and their Lithuanian heritage.

Pastors and curates have guided generations of Lithuanian Catholics to a



CARDINAL DOUGHERTY HIGH SCHOOL. October 24, 1958. Father Leon Peck instructs the first meeting of the Russian Club in the pronunciation of the letters of the alphabet.

sacramental life of grace as they befriended immigrants and parishioners in the loving embrace of parish life. The priests of the Lithuanian parishes were a strengthening presence and as they slowly pass from our midst, the character of once vital Lithuanian parishes and its communities weakens!

Decades ago, Catholic parishes flourished in our Lithuanian communities because of two key ingredients: an abundance of vocations to the priesthood and religious life and Lithuanians who were dedicated to practicing their faith. It was the leadership and dedication of Lithuanian clergy that founded, built and guided parish churches for Lithuanians

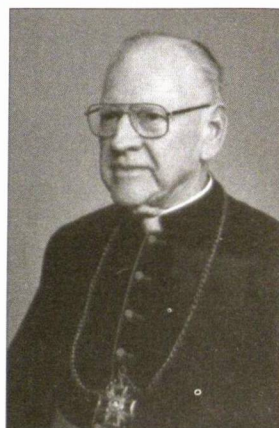


The cherished medallion from the Diocese of Vilkaviškis that Monsignor Peck proudly wore as an Honorary Canon of the Lithuanian Diocese.

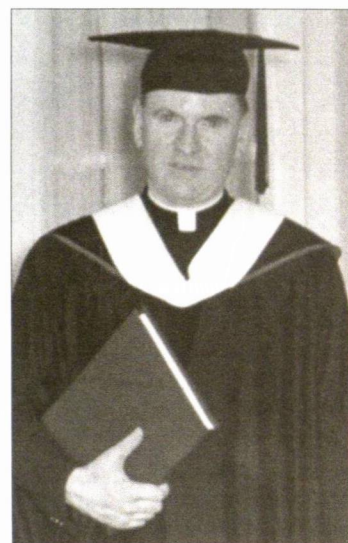
Certainly, we took them for granted. Somehow we thought priests would always be there - as "spiritual Fathers" who would keep the doors of our churches opened. Now, in the vocation crisis that plagues the entire Church, our Lithuanian parishes struggle or collapse without them. It is important to remember our Lithuanian priests, and to pay our debt of gratitude by praying for their souls and cherishing their memories as the unspoken heroes of our Lithuanian communities.

In the city of "Brotherly Love" such a vocation came to the son of Lithuanian immigrants, Petronella and William Peciukevich, who had settled in the Port Richmond section of the city. Leon Peck was born the fifth of nine children on April 12, 1915 and was baptized in the Lithuanian parish of St. George in Philadelphia. After attending local Catholic grade schools, he graduated from Marianapolis Junior College (Class of 1936), located in Thompson, Connecticut. It

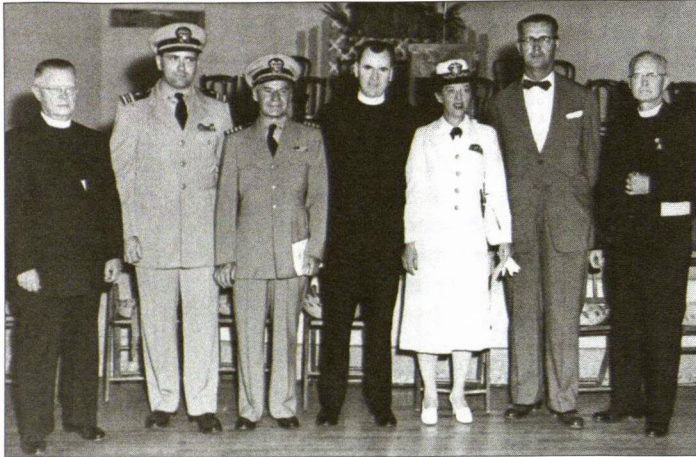
was in this Lithuanian environment that his youthful enthusiasm took flight and he left the comforts of the states to begin his studies at the seminary in the austere Seminary of Vilkaviškis, Lithuania. From 1936 to 1940 he experienced seminary life in Lithuania. As the darkening clouds of World War II began to surround the freedom of Catholic Lithuania his future plans became uncertain. During his studies, he not only devoted himself to preparing to become a priest, he also perfected his command of the



Rev. Msgr. Leon Peck elected to the Chapter of Canons for the Diocese of Vilkaviškis, Lithuania. September 5, 1999.



*UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA
206th COMMENCEMENT
MAY 21, 1962
Master of Arts degree in
Russian studies.*

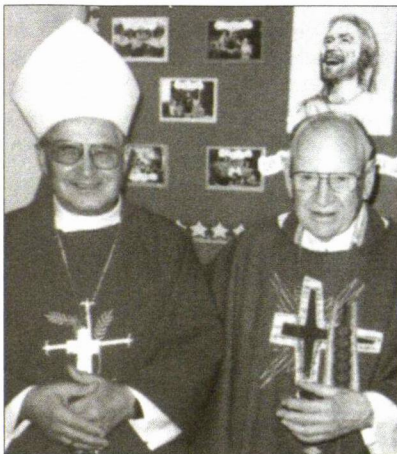


MAHANAY CITY, PA, FRIDAY, AUGUST 16, 1957

Pictured above are officials and speakers for the 43d annual Lithuanian Day program held at lakewood Park. Reading from left to right are: Rev. P. C. Chesna, town, honorary president; Lt. Cmdr. A. J. Froggett, U.S.N.R., Hazleton; Capt. John J. O'Neil, U.S.N.R., Lansford; Rev. Leon Peciukevich, town, master of ceremonies; Cmdr. Ann A. Bernatitus, of Philadelphia, principal speaker; Dr. Anicetas Simutis, of the Lithuanian Consulate, New York City, and Rev. Casimir J. Rakauskas, New Philadelphia, president of the Lithuanian Day Committee.

Lithuanian language. His exciting days in Lithuania helped him develop a love for his heritage which would never leave his priestly heart. He was studying French in Paris in 1939 when the Germans invaded France early in World War II. He fled, by way of Scandinavia, back to Lithuania.

The aggressive invasion of Lithuania forced Leon to flee the land of his parents and head back to his birthplace - Philadelphia. He continued his studies for the priesthood at St. Charles Seminary and was ordained by Cardinal Dougherty on



Bishop P. Baltakis and Msgr. Leon Peck.

May 30, 1942 in the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul in Philadelphia, PA. The following day, the newly ordained Lithuanian priest, Father Leon J. Peck (Peciukevicius) celebrated his First Mass in St. George's Lithuanian Parish in Philadelphia, PA. The Lithuanian community celebrated a new Priest! The journey of his priesthood took him to actively

serve the flocks of Lithuanian parishes in Frackville, Philadelphia, New Philadelphia, and Mahonay City.

He later taught and acted as disciplinarian at Cardinal Dougherty High School, and although he later served as Pastor of three non-Lithuanian parishes (Immaculate Heart of Mary in Chester, P A., All Saints, Phila., and St. Joseph's, Warrington, PA), he always remained active in the cultural and spiritual life of the Lithuanian community.

In 1986 the title of "Monsignor" was conferred on him by Rome and in 1999 he was elected as an "Honorary Canon" for the Diocese of Vilkauskis, Lithuania. Diocesan "canons" are

common in Europe and are similar to the bishop's priest-consulters. Through the years, he maintained links with the Lithuanian Diocese where he had been a seminarian. In 1991, when Lithuania regained its independence, he generously supported his former seminary as it reopened. He also donated the main altar in memory of his parents in the Cathedral of Vilkauskis when the cathedral church was being rebuilt.

Recognizing the need to help Lithuania, he assisted the work



One of many visits with the Holy Father. October 2000. Rt. Rev. Msgr. Leon Peck with Pope John Paul II at canonization of Mother Katharine Drexel.



Msgr. Leon Peck never hesitated to help Fr. Peter Burkauskas. Many times, he was the one to ask, if his help was needed. Fr Burkauskas and Msgr. Peck, partak at the annual "Skautų Kūčius"

of Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid by preaching at various parishes to collect funds for their work to help the persecuted faithful in the land where he had begun his studies for the priesthood. During his retirement years, he accompanied Bishop Baltakis in his visitation of the Lithuanian communities from Siberia to South America, Australia to Italy. He was fluent in numerous languages, including Lithuanian, Polish, Italian, French and Russian.

On June 13, 2005, the Feast Day of St. Anthony of Padua (the patron saint of the Diocese of Vilkauskis), Msgr. Leon Peck celebrated his last Mass in the chapel of the Priest's Retirement Home of Regina Coeli in Warminster, PA. where he resided. Returning to the sacristy after celebrating Mass, he collapsed and died still wearing the vestments.

And so, one by one, these wonderful priests, dedicated to their vocation and Lithuanian heritage, are leaving us after active and fruitful lives of dedicated service. The tragedy is that no



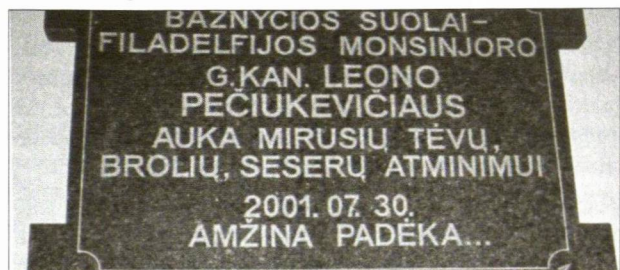
At the funeral Mass, women in Lithuanian dress cover his coffin with the white Pall.

one is taking their place. An even greater tragedy, however, is that we would forget them and all they have done for us!

Reverend Peter Burkauskas, Pastor of St. Andrew's and St. Casimir's Parishes in Philadelphia, PA



After the dedication of the newly build "Our Lady Help of Christians" church in Alytus, Lithuania. Pastor Rev. Leonas Jakimavicius, His Excellency Bishop J. Zemaitis and Msgr. Leon Peck taking time out to celebrate. August 26, 2001



If you ever visit this beautiful, newly build "Our Lady Help of Christians" church in Alytus, you will see this plaque displayed proudly on the wall inside the church. "Forever we are thankful", inscription reads. The generosity of Msgr. Leon Peck the church has pews, in memory of his parents, brothers and sisters.

REV. MSGR. LEON J. PECK
BORN: APRIL 12, 1915
ORDAINED: MAY 30, 1942
HONORARY PRELATE: DECEMBER 18, 1985
DIED: JUNE 13, 2005

The Maspeth Knights of Lithuania
Council 110
is paying tribute to honor
VYGAUDAS USACKAS
AMBASSADOR, REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
SUNDAY, JUNE 25TH
AT A SPECIAL MASS AT 11:30 AM
TRANSFIGURATION CHURCH
with a
RECEPTION IN THE PARISH HALL.

Federal, state, and city officials along with dignitaries from the Lithuanian community have been have been invited to honor the ambassador who is leaving for the United Kingdom assignment. Tickets are \$10 for members and \$20 non-members.

Checks should be made payable to
K OF L C-110
87-28 97TH STREET, WOODHAVEN, NY 11421
FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION,
CONTACT DR. P. M. KAZAS 718- 849-5725

*Dievas neapleidžia smilgos palaužtos
Ir benamio paukščio ištikto audros
Neapleis ir mūsų tėviškės mielos
---- Čia Marijos žemė ir vaikai mes jos.*

*God does not neglect the bent and the broken,
Or homeless birds overtaken by the storm.
He will not neglect our dear fatherland.
---- Here is Mary's land-- And we are her children*

Author unknown



*Blessed Virgin of the Annunciation
Parish Church, Brooklyn, NY **

A parish is a community of believers, part of Christ's Mystical Body. Pope Pius XII, in a special Constitution, provided for ethnic parishes to meet the spiritual needs of Catholics around the modern world. An ethnic parish, like the parish of The Blessed Virgin Mary of the Annunciation, Brooklyn, New York, unites those of common language and tradition in the movement toward Christ.

Church in Maspeth, NY, is celebrant, since Annunciation at present does not have any resident priest to serve the parish. Vytautas Čereška serves as Eucharistic Minister. HE Bishop Paulius Baltakis, OFM, regularly celebrates the Christmas Eve, Bernelių Mišios, and the Easter Resurrection Mass at Dawn, Prisikėlimas. This Easter nearly 300 people attended, many having breakfast in the parish hall afterwards.



*Aušros Vartų - Our Lady of the Dawn Gate - shrine.**

The existing church, at 259 North 5th Street, was built by German speaking people in the Lombard Romanesque style. The cornerstone bears the date of 1863. Brooklyn Bishop McDonnell suggested that the Lithuanian speaking community buy the rectory, church, and school from the Germans. In 1914 the sale was executed and Annunciation Church's new life as an ethnic Lithuanian parish began.

From the beginning, Annunciation's parishioners showed their concern for the strengthening of the Catholic faith and for the preservation of Lithuanian culture. Within 10 years the parish became the largest and most active Lithuanian Catholic parish in greater New York, and remains so today. In the wake of WWII, Annunciation became a spiritual and cultural home for hundreds of Lithuanians displaced by the war.

The parish is served by two trustees, Vida Jankauskas and Juozas Rudis. Vladas Sidas chairs the Lithuanian Affairs Committee. A committed group of men serve as ushers, who take up and count the collections and help with seating and distribution of programs. Annunciation has a full complement of lectors who read at all the Lithuanian Masses. There are, at present, two altar servers, Julie Jurgela and Matas Šližys. The Kavinė Committee prepares the hall and sees to it there is coffee and cake after Mass every Sunday when there is not another event scheduled.

The commitment to the Gospel has never wavered at Annunciation, even in the face of the current priest shortage. Mass is said every Sunday, in Lithuanian, at 10:00 am. Rev. Vytautas Volertas, visiting priest from Transfiguration

Annunciation was among the first parishes in the diocese to have a parish council. At the direction of now retired Bishop Dailey, the parish council was absorbed by the Mt. Carmel Pastoral Council. Since the retirement of Rev. V. Palubinskas in 2000, the parish has been administered by the pastor of Mt. Carmel parish, currently Rev. Joseph Fonti.

Due to the shortage of priests the 9:00 am English language Mass was suspended in 2006. Some English speaking parishioners come to the 10:00 am Mass, where English Missalettes are available for them. Mass is celebrated in Spanish at 11:30 am by a rotating group of Spanish speaking priests.

At present Annunciation School is rented to a private organization that provides special education services to preschool children. The upper floors of the rectory are rented to the Sisters of Mercy who run a home for the handicapped, and the school's parking lot spaces are rented to local residents.

Babies are baptized at Annunciation, weddings celebrated, and, sadly, funerals take place. Each year a parish "retreat" is organized. Priests from Lithuania usually preach the retreat. First Communion classes for Lithuanian speaking children are organized, and this year, on May 14, Bishop Baltakis will confirm several Lithuanian speaking candidates, who are preparing for Confirmation under the tutelage of Dr. Milda Palubinskaitė.



*Main Altar, Annunciation Church,
decorated for Christmas**

The Sacrament is carried to the sick and shut-ins by Vytautas Čereška. The sick of the parish are regularly remembered with prayers at Mass. Men and women serving in the US Military are recognized on a special bulletin board at the Sacred Heart altar.

During the school year, on the first Sunday of the month, Dr. Palubinskaitė, assisted by her husband Rani Chakar, conducts a Children's Liturgy. On the First Sunday of December a workshop is held to teach children and adults how to make traditional straw ornaments, šiaudinukai, that are used to decorate one of the trees in the parish hall for Christmas. On Passion Sunday a workshop for children and adults is held to make traditional Lithuanian style "palms", verbos, for use on Palm Sunday. On Palm Sunday instruction is provided for children of "all ages", in coloring and decorating traditional Easter eggs, margučiai. This year's Easter egg decorating event was reported in the lead article in the 2006 Easter issue of *The Tablet*, the weekly newspaper of the Diocese of Brooklyn. On page 3 the headline was, "Lithuanian Easter Egg Tradition lives in Williamsburg" included pictures of parishioners decorating eggs.

Parish children, often dressed in national costume, take part in the processions for "Shepherd's Mass" Christmas Eve, for Palm Sunday, and Easter Sunday. On May 14, 2006, the Maironis Lithuanian Saturday School will again hold its Mother's Day celebration at Annunciation, using the larger hall at neighboring Mt. Carmel as it has outgrown the parish's hall. Every December, the parish in conjunction with the Lithuanian Scouts Association, and Maironis School sponsors the traditional Christmas Eve meal, Kučios, at the Mt. Carmel Hall. Last year over 200 people took part in this beautiful tradition.

Annunciation Parish has a long and distinguished history as a center of musical activity. Today the parish has a 20 member choir, under the direction of Asta Barkauskas, organist and choir director. Ms Barkauskas is also an accomplished kanklės player. The choir sings in 2 and 4 part harmony in

Latin as well as in Lithuanian. The parish organ, installed in 1911, is a 2 manual, 35 "rank" Austin Pipe Organ, Opus 288. Vilma Taraskevičiūtė occasionally assists at the organ.

The parish is home to the newly founded New York Lithuanian Choir, under the direction of choral conductor and teacher Gintarė Bukauskas. This 23 member chorus rehearses Friday evenings in the parish hall. This year the Choir will sing at the Lithuanian Song Festival, in Chicago, on July 2.



Verbos (Palm) making workshop, 2004.

Photo by Raimundas Slizys

The New York Lithuanian Athletic Club (LAK), that last year celebrated 100 years of existence, has returned to its Brooklyn roots and practices table tennis in the parish hall Friday evenings, and basketball at the nearby St. Vincent's School gym. LAK hosts a Halloween dance every October and a New Year's Eve dinner dance each year in the parish hall.

With the closing of the Lithuanian Cultural Center, Annunciation has once again become the locale of organizations' meetings. The New York District Lithuanian American Community Council, the Brooklyn-Queens LB Chapter, Lithuanian Athletic Club, Tautos Fondas, Lithuanian Scouts Association, Lithuanian Citizens Club are some of the organizations that hold meetings in the Parish Hall. Last year a Lithuanian Theatre group held rehearsals on Saturdays in the parish hall.

The coffee hour, kavinė, started by the late Petras Sandanavičius, has developed into the Lithuanian speaking community's regular gathering place. Parishioners and guests drink coffee, visit with friends, hold informal meetings, make announcements, seek and share information about employment, housing, etc. Name days and birthdays are regularly celebrated. Newcomers are welcomed, and guests from Lithuania greeted.

Annunciation Parish publishes two bulletins weekly, one in Lithuanian and English, and a second for the Spanish Mass. Modern communication with sometimes far flung parishioners is accomplished through an e-mail newsletter, ZINIOS,

Putting Others First

Congratulations to Leona Sawka who was a recipient of the St. Joseph Medal in Hartford, CT. Leona was one of 156 people who received the award in the Cathedral of St. Joseph.

The medals were awarded to those who worked among the poor and those in need. They comforted the sick, the grieving and the lonely. These are people whose parishes would be hard pressed without their services. Pastors are

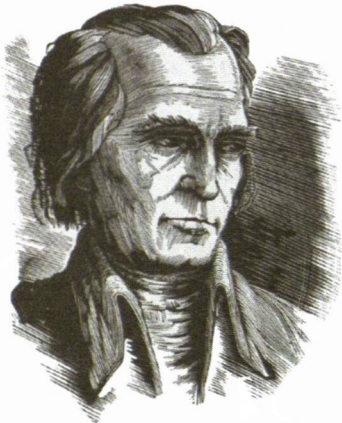
asked to nominate those who work tirelessly in the service of the Church.

Each recipient received a bronze medal. The front side of the medallion shows a likeness of St. Joseph with the Infant Jesus. The opposite side bears the crest of Archbishop Henry J. Mansell.

Submitted by Florence Morkus

Leona is a parishioner of Holy Trinity Church in Hartford, CT.

Editor's Note: Thank you, Leona, for a job well done.



Kristijonas Donelaitis

Congratulations

to the Washington

K. Donelaitis Lithuanian School.

This year the school is celebrating its

45th anniversary.

The K. Donelaitis Saturday school serves the needs of the Lithuanian community in the greater Washington, DC area.

The purpose of the school is to help preserve, maintain and spread the knowledge about our Lithuanian heritage.

In recent years K. Donelaitis school has experienced a steady growth.

Currently there are classes for children up to 14 years old, as well as Lithuanian language classes for adults.

Information: www.dclac.org

Annunciation Parish Church, Brooklyn, NY

named for an earlier version of the parish's weekly bulletin. Future plans include creating a parish website. A publications "share" table is available every week at kavinė, where parishioners can obtain free of charge recent newspapers and local publications, and purchase copies of latest issue Lithuanian newspapers like Amerikos Lietuvis and Emigrantas.

Traditional Catholic and Lithuanian cultural events are a regular part of Annunciation parish life. Among those commemorations are: memorial for those killed in defending the Vilnius TV tower, on January 13, 1991, Lithuanian Independence Day, Mothers Day and Fathers Day, and Lithuanian Army Day. The parish commemorates the Day of Sorrow and Hope in June, Darius and Girėnas' tragic deaths in July, Žolinės in August, Our Lady of Šiluva in September, and Vėlinės, All Souls Day, in November.

In September the parish holds a picnic, the largest and most profitable parish fund raiser. Last year well over 200 people attended. In November, the Sunday after Thanksgiving, the parish hosts a Thanksgiving Feast. The feast is sometimes the first introduction recently arrived people from Lithuania have to this great American tradition. For parishioners who may not have family nearby, sometimes it serves as their Thanksgiving dinner. Takeout meals make it possible for some "shut in" parishioners to celebrate "Turkey Day" too.

The neighborhood of Annunciation has changed drastically

since 1914. Far fewer Lithuanians live in Williamsburg now than there were in the period from 1949 to 1955. After that there was a period of decline the neighborhood, and many parishioners moved away. Williamsburg is now bursting with new stores, apartment construction, loft conversions, art galleries, boutiques, restaurants, neighborhood pubs, and coffee houses. Gentrification of the area is a double edged sword as rents are on the rise, making it difficult for longtime neighborhood dwellers. Parishioners, led by Father Palubinskas, and more recently, Father Fonti, at public hearings and forums in Williamsburg, have been advocates for affordable housing in the neighborhood.

Annunciation Parish is alive and well in Brooklyn. The gospel is preached, the sacraments are celebrated, Lithuanian religious and national culture is preserved. Lithuanian way crosses stand silent sentinel in front of the church, bearing witness to the faith and culture of the people. The music of Lithuania sounds from its choir loft and from its Parish Hall. Children in national costume take part in its traditional processions, and the sound of the oldest of Europe's living languages is heard as "Mary's Children" come to her Son's house to praise His holy name!

--- Čia Marijos Žemė ir vaikai mes jos.

*Compiled by V. and P. Sidas
from parish archival material*

**Photo by Frank Ulcickas*

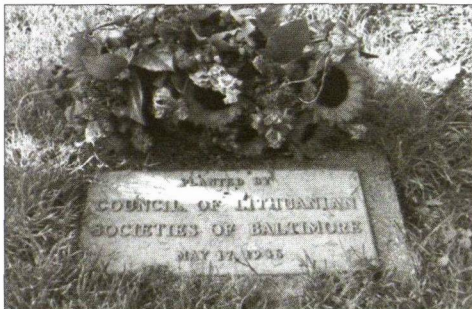
Tragic June - 2005

June is the month of mass deportations which subsequently would lead to hundreds of thousands of Lithuanians being deported to Siberia. Below are examples of how communities in two cities commemorated this event.

Annapolis, MD

June 14th, the Black Day of our Nation, A Remembrance Day, was held at the Lithuanian Oak in Annapolis, MD.

A group of Lithuanians from the Baltimore area met a group of the Washington Lithuanian Embassy representatives to lay a bouquet of flowers at the foot of a "Lietuviskas" oak which was planted by the Council of Lithuanian Societies of Baltimore on May 17, 1936, on the grounds of the state house in Annapolis, MD. This was done to commemorate the 1940 June 14th deportations of Lithuanians by the Soviets to Siberia.



Marker donated by Council of Lithuanian Societies of Baltimore on May 17, 1936.

Vytautas Brazauskas
Photos by
Vytautas Brazauskas



The beautiful Lithuanian Oak stands proudly on the grounds of the State House in Annapolis. The Lithuanian Oak now commemorates the deportees.



Parishioners and friends of St. Joseph's Lithuanian Church, Waterbury, CT. pay homage. From left: flag bearer Albinas Zelvis, center Eugenija Fedosejeva-Misevicius and flag bearer Leonas Savickas is on the right. Both men are members of the Lithuanian American Community of Waterbury, CT.
Photo by Laurynas Misevicius

Waterbury, CT

Parishioners and friends of St. Joseph's Lithuanian Church, Waterbury, CT celebrated Mass and paid homage to the thousands of Lithuanian people who were torn from their homeland and sent to live in exile in Siberia.

The program was organized by the Waterbury Chapter of the Lithuanian American Community in conjunction with Lithuanian American Roman Catholic Women's Alliance.

Submitted by Laurynas Misevicius

TRIVIA QUESTION

(No. 4)

In the early Lithuanian religion (before Christianity), who was known as the god of the underworld and protector of the dead?

(a) Bangpūtys (b) Vėjopatis (c) Velnias

Answer to Trivia Quiz
on page 18

“Families at the 2005 Lithuanian Adoption Picnic.”



“Families at the 2005 Lithuanian Adoption Picnic.”

3rd Annual Lithuanian Adoption Picnic!

This summer, we will be holding the third annual reunion picnic for families who have adopted children from Lithuania, are thinking of adopting or are in the planning stages. Come meet other adoptive families, make new friends and enjoy a beautiful weekend in Central Pennsylvania!

The picnic will take place at a farm owned by one of the adoptive families in Mill Hall, PA on Saturday, August 5, 2005.

For further information, please contact:
 Gina Pollock (717) 399-9288
 rmprrp@yahoo.com,
 James Tomalonis
 cedar@suscom.net,
 Ruta Skucas (301) 987-0322
 RutaKS@aol.com.

Answer to Trivia Quiz

TRIVIA QUESTION ARE ON PAGE 17

In the book, OF GODS & HOLIDAYS, edited by Jonas Trinkunas, he wrote:

“In early Lithuanian and Latvian religion, Vehrias is the god of the underworld and protector of the dead. In historical sources he is also associated with agriculture, hunting, trade and crafts. Sometimes he acts as protector of righteousness. But not infrequent are cases when Velnias harms people in various ways - he mocks them, misleads and pesters them, makes attempt on their lives, tempts them to commit sin, enters into their souls and tries to seduce them.

The root of the name Velnias, that is Vel-, is the same as Vėlė, the spirit of the departed. Velinas is the most popular god in Lithuanian folklore.

The partial transformation of Velnias to the antipode of God, that is, to the Devil or Satan, took place after the introduction of Christianity”.

By the way: (b) Bangpūtys - Lithuanian and Prussian god of winds (kin to Vėjopatis)

(c) Vėjopatis - Lithuanian god of wind

*Submitted by Edward Shakalis
 Edward Shakalis is a retired Electrical Engineer and
 a ham radio operator. He enjoys playing golf.*

SPORTS

*Graham Wicas,
 Epee Fencing World Champion*

Congratulations to Graham Wicas who won the Cadet Men's Epee (age 17 and under). This is the first time a U.S. man has won an epee World Championships in any age group.

Graham is sixteen years old and is a junior at the Shipley School in Bryn Mawr, PA.

U.S. cadet fencers won both of the day's gold medals plus silver & bronze at the 2006 Junior & Cadet World Championships in South Korea.

The Lithuanian Partisan War

1944-1960's(?)

For some, watching a foreign hoard calling itself an army enter their homeland, rape their women, murder their community leaders, and destroy their property – for some, a feeling stirs that could only be satisfied by clutching a gun, raising it to the heavens and crying out a solemn vow “Over my dead body!” Such were the feelings that rose in the hearts of many Lithuanian men and women when the Russians again reoccupied Lithuania in 1944.

Having already experienced Russian bestiality during their first occupation 1940-1941 and having resisted German enslavement 1941-1944, Lithuanian men and women were more than willing to fight for a free and an independent Lithuania. However, Lithuanians were not the only ones who knew of Russian barbarity and blood lust. Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Latvians and Estonians also experienced Russian blood baths, but it was only the Ukrainians and the Lithuanians who had the resources to mount and sustain an effective Partisan War against the Russians.

While WWII was still in progress, some American and British leaders felt that once the Nazis were defeated the Russian communists would have to be dealt with in short order. Even some Nazi generals thought that Hitler should be deposed, that peace be made with the British and the Americans and that a united war against the Russian communists be undertaken. It was in such a political climate that Lithuanian men and women took up arms against the Russians. And for every Lithuanian partisan who took up arms, at least ten other Lithuanians remained in civilian life providing the partisans with food, shelter, intelligence and acted as couriers between partisan units. Lithuanian partisans eliminated communist operatives and disrupted Russian pillaging and the abuse of farmers and villagers. They raided communist jails and party offices freeing political prisoners and destroying hit-lists of Lithuanians selected for arrest, torture and deportation.

Lithuanian partisans had every hope for a timely end to this Russian occupation. ‘Voice of America’ and ‘BBC’ broadcasts urged the partisans to continue their struggle. American and British intelligence services trained some of the partisans and parachuted them back into Lithuania. L. Beria, Chief of the Russian Secret Service, in his May 8, 1953 top secret report says that between 1949 and early 1953, the Americans and British had made 13 parachute drops of partisans back into Lithuania. Finding similar Russian reports of the partisan situation in Latvia, Estonia, Byelorussia and Ukraine would be most valuable. War finally did come between the West and communists in the form of the Korean War. It is possible/probable that Stalin instigated this war to preoccupy the West and deflect their attention from the cries for freedom from the peoples of Eastern Europe and their Partisan Wars.

But no matter how outrageous the Russian bestiality was that drove so many Lithuanians to seek vengeance by joining the partisans, and no matter how morally justified these Lithuanians felt, they innately knew that a higher social structure than the individual's

own feelings had to be served - they understood that vigilante action would be of limited value in the long run. Consequently, the Lithuanian partisans quickly organized themselves into a military command structures with former Lithuanian military officers assuming leadership responsibilities. They defined their areas of operation. There were three Districts (*Lith. pl.* Sritys) each having its own autonomous central command headquarters. Each District was further subdivided into Departments (*Lith. pl.* Apygardos) and in each Department, a number of Detachments (*Lith. pl.* Rinktinės) operated. Lithuanian partisans began to organize themselves as early as 1945. Still, a need for a centralized unified command and co-ordination structure was sought. Simultaneously, a number of efforts were initiated.

Jonas Degsnys, an anti-Nazi activist during the German occupation, retreated to Sweden at the start of the second Russian occupation and appointed himself liaison with the West for all anti-Russian resistance in Lithuania. Most unfortunately, during one of his clandestine trips back into Lithuania he was captured by the Russians and compromised*. He was permitted to return to Sweden and acted as a double agent simultaneously for Lithuanian partisans, Russian, Swedish, British and American intelligence services. How much good and how much damage he did for the partisan cause is still being assessed. Concurrently, University of Vilnius anatomy professor Juozas Albinas Markulis (Ažuolas, Erelis) appointed himself central coordinator for the unification of the partisan movement in Lithuania. In fact, Markulis was working for the Russians. Markulis's many betrayals caused great harm to the partisans of eastern Lithuania. Fortunately, the partisans quickly unmasked his treachery and the Russians had to hide Markulis in St. Petersburg (Leningrad) to protect him from the partisans.

At the same time, former Lithuanian Army Artillery Captain Jonas Žemaitis (Vytautas) began organizing partisans in western Lithuania. The result of his work was a Congress of partisan commanders convened on February 2, 1949 in the Radviliškis District where a provisional government was formed. Jonas Žemaitis (Vytautas) was elected Chairman of the Congress and elevated to the rank of General. Adolfas Ramanauskas (Vanagas) was elected First Deputy and promoted to the rank of Colonel. Juozas Šibaila (Merainis) was elected Second Deputy and also promoted to the rank of Colonel. Leonas Grigonis (Užpalis) was elected Third Deputy and was promoted to the rank of Major. Petras Bartkus (Žadgaila) was elected Secretary of the Presidium and promoted to the rank of Major. Vytautas Šniuolis (Svajūnas) was elected Chief of Publicity and was promoted to rank of Captain. Antanas Liesis (Žiedas) was elected Chief of the Civilian Political Section and was promoted to the rank of Captain. Viktoras Šniuolis (Vytytis) was elected adjutant to Juozas Šibailis (Mierainis) and promoted to rank of Senior Lieutenant. The Congress laid down and documented a unified Code of Conduct for all partisans in Lithuania and the partisan movement was given the name ‘Lietuvos Laisvės Kovos Sąjūdis (LLKS)’-‘Union of Lithuanian Freedom Fighters’. Finally on February 16, 1949 a Declaration of Independence was issued stipulating that the Partisan Congress and the LLKS are the only legitimate inheritors of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and that until a freely elected legislature of Lithuania is

seated, the Chairman of the LLKS Congress is the Provisional President of the Republic of Lithuania and his staff will assume the various governmental posts.

Though the Lithuanian emigres in the west were attempting to set up a provisional Lithuanian government in exile, Lithuanian partisans successfully convinced the emigre activists to recognise the partisan provisional government as the only Lithuanian 'government in exile'. The political shrewdness of the partisans is clear. It becomes much harder for the Russians to slander the partisan movement by claiming that it is directed from abroad if the 'government in exile' is in-country and the Partisan War is indeed a 'peoples' movement.

Meanwhile, the elected President of the Partisan Congress and head of the Lithuanian Provisional Government, General Jonas Žemaitis successfully commanded the partisan movement till 1951 when he was wounded and partially paralyzed. Žemaitis was forced to relinquish his command responsibilities to Colonel Adolfas Ramanauskas. Although Colonel Ramanauskas in 1952 ordered the cessation of an armed resistance in favor of passive resistance, to what degree this order was disseminated is not known. Colonel Ramanauskas and many partisans could not, or would not, return to civilian life. Ramanauskas remained in hiding till 1956 when he was captured, tortured and murdered. Many partisans continued fighting on as long as they could get the support from the Lithuanian population.



Partisan General Jonas Žemaitis (Vytautas), Chairman of the Partisan Congress convened in February 1949, President of the Provisional Lithuanian Government 1949-1956, Commander-in-Chief of and Commander-in-Chief of Lithuanian partisans 1949-1951.

As already alluded to above, an integral aspect of the Lithuanian Partisan movement and the formation a centralized command structure were the continuing contacts with the West across the Iron Curtain. Since contacts with the West did produce real military aid, Juozas Luška (Skirmantas, Skrajūnas, Daumantas) crossed the Iron Curtain a second time in 1948 and traveled to Sweden, Germany and France to meet with members of the pre-war Lithuanian diplomatic corps stranded abroad, Jonas Degsnys as well as with Swedish, American, British and French intelligence officers desperately asking them for military assistance. Lithuanian



Partisan award ceremony, Dainava Department. Partisan Colonel Adolfas Ramanauskas (Vanagas) is standing next to the table with his back toward the camera.



Photograph taken October 3, 1950, after Juozas Luška with two other partisans were parachuted back into Lithuania. From left to right: Juozas Luška (Skirmantas, Skrajūnas, Daumantas), V. Vitkauskas (Saidokas), P. Naujokas (Kietis) and the other two partisans who returned to Lithuania with Juozas Luška, B. Trumpys (Rytis) and K. Širvys (Sakalas).

partisans distrusted the British intelligence service. Later, their suspicions proved correct in the person of Kim Philby and his gang. Luška also sent a message to the Pope to inform him of the Partisan War. During his second crossing of the Iron Curtain, Luška stayed in the west for two years during which time he documented the partisan struggle in his book 'Partizanai' and married Nijole Bražėnaitė. 'Partizanai' was translated into English under the title 'Fighters for Freedom, Lithuanian Partisans against the Soviet Union'. Extracts of his accounts were also published under the title 'Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast'. All three books have appeared on e-bay. The partisans left a good record of their war, and now with Lithuania again free, many books about them are being published in Lithuanian as well as in English.

Meanwhile, after spending two years in a bunker and having partially recovered from his wounds, General Jonas Žemaitis in 1953 tried to resume command and make contacts with the leaders of the various partisan departments. But once contact with the outside was attempted, he was betrayed*, captured and tortured. Not able to extract information from him, the Russians took General Žemaitis to Moscow for additional torture and interrogation. Not being any more successful in Moscow, the Russians shot General

Žemaitis in 1954 at Butyrk Prison. In view of General Žemaitis's capture in 1953 and Colonel Ramanauskas's order to cease armed resistance, most Lithuanians consider 1953 to be the end of the Partisan War. However, the Genocide and Resistance Research Institute of Lithuania is studying all material that is available related to the Lithuanian Partisan War. It is possible that a later date for the end of the Partisan War will be determined. On reading personal accounts of partisans, but especially L. Beria's May 8, 1953 Top Secret report, it seems that a 1953 date for the end of the Lithuanian Partisan War is premature. Further, since the start of the Partisan War is taken to be when Lithuanians took up arms against the Russians, not when the first groups of partisans organized themselves, it follows that the end of the struggle should be considered when the last partisan hid his machine gun for future use, and not when the formal unified command structure became ineffective.

The Lithuanian Partisan War is but another example of Lithuanians taking on a seemingly invincible aggressor. The first was the Teutonic Order, the greatest military power in medieval Europe. After 200 years of genocide against the Prussian, Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian peoples, the Teutonic Order was soundly defeated militarily during the 1410 Battle of Tannenberg and politically broken during the 1414-1417 Church Council of Constance and with the 1420 Treaty of Melno. Later, Lithuanians revolted in 1831 and again in 1860 against their Czarist occupiers. In the 20th century, Lithuanians were the first people oppressed by the Czarist Empire to declare their independence after WWI. Later during WWII, Lithuanians formed a provisional government and chased the Russians out just as the Germans attacked in 1941. Thus, the Germans found Lithuania in Lithuanian hands, not in Russian hands, when they started their second front in the east. Though the Nazi Germans disbanded the Lithuanian Provisional Government and subjected Lithuania to martial law, Lithuanians were not



Squad of partisans commanded by Juozas, Gegužis (Diemedis), standing in the center, Šarinas Detachment, Dainava Department. later Juozas Gegužis (Diemedis) will command all of the Dainava Department.



Orders of the day being read to partisans of the Maironis detail, Prisikelimo (Resurrection) Department under the command of Juozas Paliūnas (Rytas), first from the right. Later Juozas Paliūnas (Rytas) became the commander of all of the Prisikelimo (Resurrection) Department partisans.

posthumously the Cross of Vytautas, the highest Lithuanian military decoration for combat valor. Monuments to partisans are going up all over Lithuania. The partisans were the Lithuanian people's heroes against Russian criminality, colonialism and genocide then, and partisans are the heroes of the Lithuanian people now! Their names and memories of their deeds will live forever in Lithuanian hearts!

* The methods Russians used to compromise people and produce collaborators need to be studied and documented not only for their own historic value but also as studies into individual and collective pathological/sadistic/criminal aspects of human psychology.

Aleksandras Radžius

Aleksandras Radžius is Director of The Knight, the official publication of the Lithuanian Numismatic Association. He is also the founder of the Lithuanian Partisans Living History Group and is a member of the 1812 Living History Group of Fort McHenry.



A platoon of partisans led by Jonas Stoškus (Eimutis), seated second from the left.

Lithuania Rejected for Euro Monetary Conversion

Excerpts from M & C News from Google Alerts:

Lithuania has been rejected on the grounds that consumer prices in the small Baltic state have overshot the strict inflation target for nations seeking to join the euro.

But while the ECB stepped back from making a formal recommendation on euro membership, the Commission was more forthcoming.

EU monetary affairs chief Joaquin Almunia said Lithuania's high

inflation rate meant it could not enter the eurozone next January.

Lithuania's bid to join the eurozone made in March this year could not have a 'positive' answer, Almunia told reporters, adding: 'We consider all criteria have not been fulfilled.'

The real impact of rejection, however, might be felt by the Lithuanian Government in Vilnius.

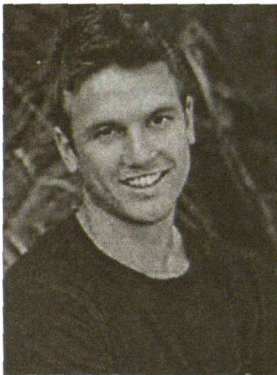
'The political effects could be more of a problem than the economic ones,' said Vidmantas Saferis, head of

economic research at Hansabank Lithuania. 'The government has claimed it is expecting the introduction of the euro.'

While the ECB acknowledged that Lithuania's deficit and debt ratios fell within the fiscal parameters for euro membership, Lithuania's inflation averaged 2.7 per cent during the 12th-month review period. This is just a tad above the 2.6 per cent benchmark rate used by both commission and the ECB.

Aras Baskauskas, Santa Monica, California, is the latest winner of the CBS television series "Survivor".

Aras was selected by
a jury of his peers and won the
\$1 million prize.



Aras Baskauskas Winner of
CBS Television's Survivor
05/14/06

New 'Survivor' Castaways:

Excerpts from the official
CBS website:

Aras is a former professional basketball player, having played briefly in Lithuania. After leaving the court he moved to Capetown, South Africa where he opened a donation based yoga studio.

He completed his undergraduate studies in three years and he has an MBA from UC Irvine Graduate School of Management. In 2003 he was named UC Irvine's Most Eligible Bachelor. He is a yoga instructor in Santa Monica, CA and his hobbies/interests include meditation, golf and surfing. Aras believes he is outgoing, compassionate and genuine.

Aras is 6' 4" and is twenty four years old.



Sunday, July 23rd

at

Immaculate Conception Convent

600 Liberty Highway

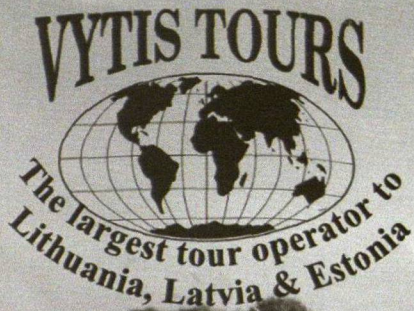
PUTNAM, Connecticut

ANNUAL PICNIC

Lithuanian Friendship Day

- 11:00** **Concelebrated Holy MASS**
- Main celebrant:
Monsignor Edmundas J. Putrimas
- 12:00** **LUNCH, activities, sports**
- 3:00** **PROGRAM by Neringa CAMPERS**
- 4:00** **DRAWING of Gifts**

*Spend an enjoyable day with us -
bring along your neighbors and friends!*



PRESENTS

LITHUANIA 2006

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Offers the following prearranged tours in 2006

- Classical Baltic - 10 days
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All VYTIS representatives speak English and Lithuanian !!

Calendar of Events for June, July/August and Sep

Please verify all events as places and times are subject to chan

BLP(LKA)1195

**FOR ALL NERINGA EVENTS,
PLEASE GO TO
WWW.NERINGA.ORG
call 978-582-5592**

June, 2006

June 10, 2006

St. Casimir's Parish Hall
3855 Evans St.
Dance troupe "Retro"
presents its 20th performance.
Three year retrospective
Drinks & dancing to follow
Tickets: \$20, children 12 & under
free. Sponsored by L A LAC
Info: www.losangeleslb.com

June 11, 2006-10:00 am

Mass in memory of
Lithuanian deportees to Siberia
St. Andrew Church
1913 Wallace St., Phila., PA

June 11, 2006-2 pm

Concert "Saules" Ensemble
Lithuanian Music Hall
2715 E. Allegheny Ave., Phila., PA
Info: 215- 938- 0783

June 11, 2006 - 12:00 - sunset

LAC LA Beach Party, Playa del Rey
Invited to join for food, games,
volleyball tournament. Culver Blvd
to Playa del Rey Right on Pacific
Behind dunes, between lifeguard
stations 41 & 42.
Sponsored by LA LAC
Info: www.losangeleslb.com

June 15-17, 2006

20th Conference on Baltic
Studies. Association for the
Advancement of Baltic Studies
(AABS)The George Washington
University, Washington, DC.
Re-Imagining the Baltic Region
Perspectives on the Past, Present
& Future

June 16 - Aug. 11, 2006

2006 Baltic Studies Summer

Institute (BALSSI), Indiana
University, Bloomington
Info: <http://www.indiana.edu/~iaunrc/balssi/>

June 17, 2006-10:00 am

Saturday, Annual LAC, Inc.
SD Chapter Picnic "Geguzine"
San Dieguito Park
1628 Lomas Sante Fe Drive
Del Mar, CA 92014
Sponsors: San Diego Chapter LAC
Info: www.lithsd.org

June 17-23, 2006

Neringa-College student
camp(17+)

June 20, 2006 - 7pm

Amber Roots Heritage Club
Meeting, Culture Center
Phila. Lithuanian Music Hall
2715 E. Allegheny Ave.
Phila., PA 19134
Milliemarks@aol.com
610-497-5469

June 24-28, 2006

Neringa - Heritage Family
Camp in English

June 24, 2006

St. Johns Picnic.
Atlanta Lake Lanier.
Info: www.lietuviatlantioje.org

June 25, 2006

K of L - Maspeth Council is
paying tribute to Hon.
Vygaudas Ušackas Ambassador,
Republic of Lithuania
Mass 11:30 am
Transfiguration Reception
in the Parish Hall
Tickets: \$10 for Members \$20 for
Non-Members. Checks payable to
K OF L C-110 - 87-28 97th St.
Woodhaven, NY 11421
Info: Contact Dr. P.M. KAZAS
718 849-5725

JULY, 2006

July 2, 2006

8th Lithuanian Song Festival
University of Illinois
Chicago Pavilion
Tickets are on sale now
* Welcome Reception
* Celebration Banquet
Tickets are \$22-\$32 for adults
\$12-\$22 for children under 12.
Tickets can be obtained through:
Ticketmaster (800-277-1700, in
Canada 416-870-8000) Info:
www.lithuaniansongfest.org/tickets

July 2-8, 2006

Neringa-Family Camp in Lithuanian

July 9-23, 2006

Neringa-Lithuanian-speaking
children's camp ages 7-16

July 16, 2006

Darius & Grienas Commemoration
Annunciation Parish, Brooklyn, NY
Sponsored by: LBBQ &
Annunciation Parish
259 North 5th Street,
Brooklyn, NY 11211
Info: LCRA@earthlink.net or
SID100@aol.com

July 23, 2006

Annual Picnic
Lithuanian Friendship Day
11 am Mass - 12 pm Lunch,
activities, sports, 3 pm Program
by Neringa Campers
4 pm Drawing of Gifts
Immaculate Conception Convent
600 Liberty Highway, Putnam, Ct

July 23-29, 2006

Neringa-Continuation of
Lithuanian-speaking children's
camp (ages 13-16)

July 23, 2006 - 2:00 pm

Sunday, House of Lithuania
Lawn Program, Balboa Park

San Diego, CA
Info: www.lithsd.org

July 29, 2006 - Noon to 6 pm

Phila. Lithuanian Music Hall
Annual Picnic, Soupy Island,
Thorofare, New Jersey
Lithuanian food, music, games &
swimming. Meet friends.
Info. & Directions:
www.phillylac.org or
215 - 739 - 4831

July 30 - Aug. 12, 2006

Neringa-Heritage Children's Camp
(ages 7-16)

August, 2006

Aug. 3-6, 2006

K of L 93rd National Convention
Grosvenor Resort Lake Buena
Vista, FL.
www.knightsoflithuania.com

Aug. 6-13, 2006

Lithuanian Language Courses for
beginners, intermediate &
advanced speakers
Camp Dainava
Manchester, MI
Lithuanian Educational
Council of the USA
Info: Vytautas Jonaitis
1332 Sprucewood Drive NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
Phone: 616 - 453 - 7549
vjonaitis@juno.com

Aug. 12-13, 2006

92nd Annual Lithuanian Days
Frackville, PA - K of L C-144
More information to follow.

Aug. 12-19, 2006

Neringa-Continuation of Heritage
Children's Camp (ages 13-16)

Aug. 18-19-20, 2006

ETHNIC ENRICHMENT FESTIVAL
Swope Park in Kansas City, MO.
Come to "Tower of Gediminas"

2006, Iss. 5

Performances of AIDAS Folk
Dance Group & Ai
(children's) Group
<http://www.kclith.o>

Aug. 20-27, 2006

Neringa-Adult art
Lithuanian (21+)

Aug. 21-25, 2006

2006 Lankas Fami
Lithuanian dancing
language, crafts, h
hiking, swimming,
more! Parents and
members needed t
more classes durir
to help with cookir
www.javlb.org/seai

September

Sept. 2, 2006 - 11a

Annual picnic, Will
Neipsic Rd., Glastc
Rt. 2, East, Exit 8,
Neipsic Rd. Ground
only 1/4mile. Lithu
goods from Lithua
sing-along, etc. Fre
Info: 860-657-906;
danuteg@juno.com

Sept. 16, 2006 - 6

Saturday - Annual
Sponsored by San Diego
Chapter of LAC
www.lithsd.org

Sept. 17, 2006

Annunciation Parish Picnic
Brooklyn, NY
Info: SID100@aol.com

LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

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PERIODICALS
POSTAGE

