

bridges

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july-august 2006

LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

Letter from the Editor

It seems the June and July /August issues came flying into our faces back to back. I hope that by the time this issue reaches you that you are enjoying the beautiful days of summer regardless of where you live.

You will find two reprints from earlier issues of BRIDGES in this issue. No, I am not becoming lazy. There are times I want to mark special anniversaries in certain issues and I just can't find better written articles than those that have already been printed. I don't like to print articles with cold, hard figures and facts that show little or no emotion. You can find those in any encyclopedia. I prefer the BRIDGES readers to have more personal articles. Therefore, when Ed Baranauskas suggested a reprint of his Felix Waitkus article along with some updates, I did not hesitate to agree. As for my own article about the terrible tragedy at Medininkai, I turned to my own interview. How much more personal can you get than an interview with the wives whose husbands were so brutally murdered? This year marks the 15th anniversary of the terrible tragedy. It is sometimes over looked and forgotten because it has been over shadowed by the tragedy of January 13.

I want to thank all the writers who always work so hard to bring a variety of topics to you each month. They are really unsung heroes because without them BRIDGES would not exist.

Since our last issue there have been resignations in the Lithuanian government. We have to hope for the best.

A very sincere congratulations to the Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC) on the occasion of their 45th anniversary. They have accomplished much and continue to help the Baltic countries with the rebuilding process after fifty years of soviet domination.

Whether you are enjoying your back yard or traveling around the world, have a wonderful summer!


Jeanne Shalna Dorr

JBANC

45th

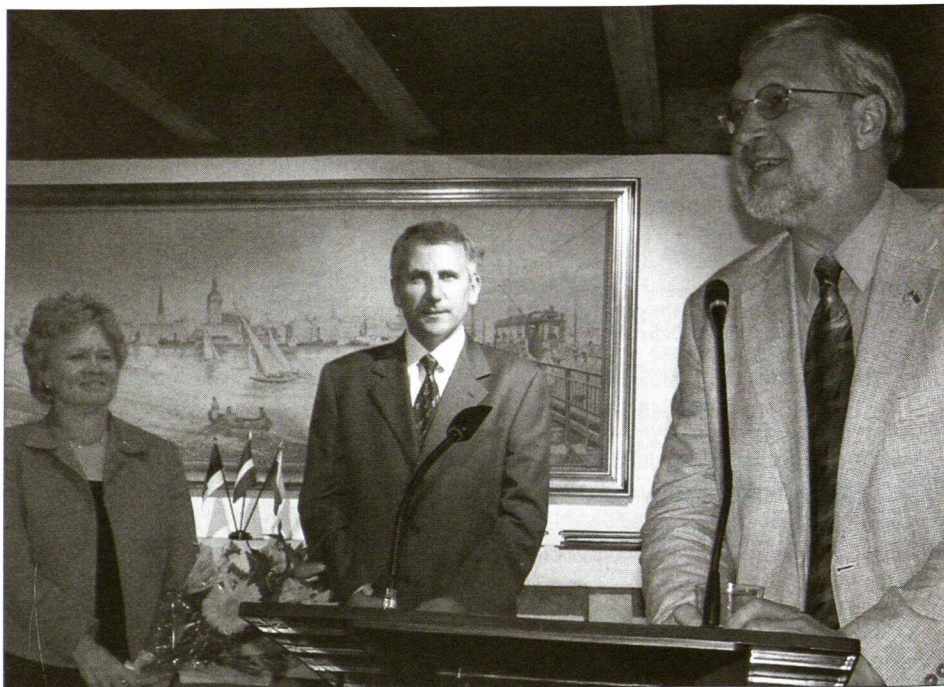
ANNIVERSARY Reception

JBANC honored nine of its past Directors and/or Board Members for their years of dedicated service. The three Lithuanian American Council honorees were Dr. Jonas Genys who served for many years in all capacities during the 1970's to 1990's. He is a distinguished scientist and retired Professor from the University of Maryland. Dr. John Rackauskas is the President of the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center

in Chicago and was directly responsible for establishing the currently quarterly meetings with the Ambassadors of the three Baltic Embassies. He served with JBANC from 1998 to 1999. Algis Rimas served from 1996 to 2001 after a long and distinguished career with the U.S. State Department. Algis died of cancer while serving at this post and was awarded the Order of Gediminas by the Lithuanian Government shortly before he passed away.

All three of the Ambassadors were present and spoke at the event. Each recounted various events and highly commended the work done by JBANC over the years as having been indispensable to their three countries.

Submitted by Henry Gaidis



Ramunas Kondratas of JBANC says a formal farewell to outgoing Lithuanian ambassador at JBANC's 45th anniversary reception held on June 2 at the Latvian Embassy in Washington DC. JBANC Board member Lya Karm looks on with a bouquet of flowers for Ambassador Usackas.

Photo by Raits Eglitis of the American Latvian Association.

The Joint Baltic American National Committee, Inc. 45th Year Anniversary

June 2, 2006

The Embassy of Latvia
Washington, D.C.

Dear Americans of Baltic Heritage and Friends of the Balts,

This year, the Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC) proudly celebrates its 45th anniversary. On April 27, 1961, the Presidents of three Baltic American organizations met in Washington, D.C. to establish this new organization for Baltic cooperation. Those three far-sighted leaders were Julius Kangur of the Estonian National Committee, Peteris Lejins of the American Latvian Association, and Leonard Simutis of the Lithuanian American Council.

The launching of this new organization was not just a symbolic act, but rather the laying of a firm foundation for future Baltic cooperation and activities. While it is true that the various Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian communities throughout the United States had on prior occasions worked together, the foundation of JBANC was truly an unprecedented effort to unite the three groups formally for a common cause.

Forty-five years ago the world was a different place. We were in the midst of the Cold War and the Baltic peoples were suffering under the illegal yoke of the Soviet Russian regime. The U.S. Government's non-recognition policy regarding the Soviet occupation and annexation of the three Baltic countries gave us encouragement and sustenance to carry on our campaign. And even in these darkest days, the native Baltic inhabitants never lost their perseverance and will for freedom, and represented the cutting edge of dissent in the USSR.

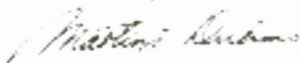
Over the years, many Baltic Americans, from youths to seniors, have had the opportunity to work for JBANC in some capacity and to gain knowledge and experience in Baltic affairs. JBANC has also provided a forum through such events as conferences, workshops, and Congressional receptions, for members of the Baltic organizations to meet and learn from each other how to plan and carry out tasks in a united manner. In 1991, freedom and independence were at long last regained by the Baltic countries whose steadfast, unyielding drive for sovereignty was a major cause of the dissolution of the Soviet Russian Empire. This triumph was a cause for real celebration and great joy. JBANC can proudly look back at its record - we never wavered in our fight for the cause of freedom in the lands of our heritage.

We wish to thank the Estonian American National Council, the American Latvian Association, and the Lithuanian American Council for their generous support of JBANC. We wish to thank Baltic American groups such as the U.S. Baltic Foundation, the Baltic American Freedom League, and the Lithuanian American Community for their steadfast support.

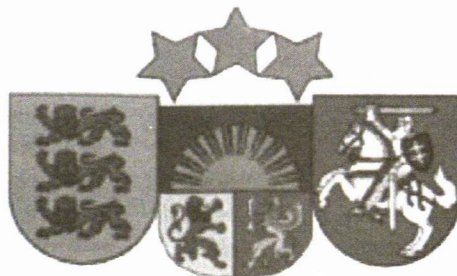
Even though the Baltic countries are independent again, our work is not done. Fifty years of Soviet occupation have left deep scars and these countries continue to need our help in the difficult rebuilding process. Gaining membership in NATO and the European Union constituted major strides in the areas of defense and economic security.

We wish JBANC continued success in its future endeavors!

Sincerely,



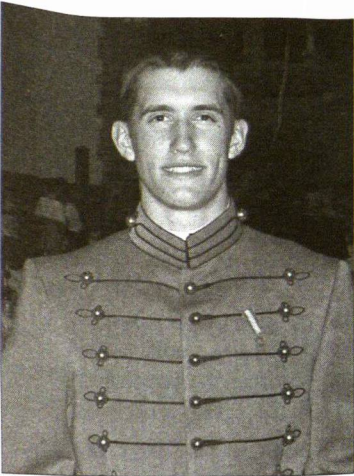
Martins Duhms
JBANC President



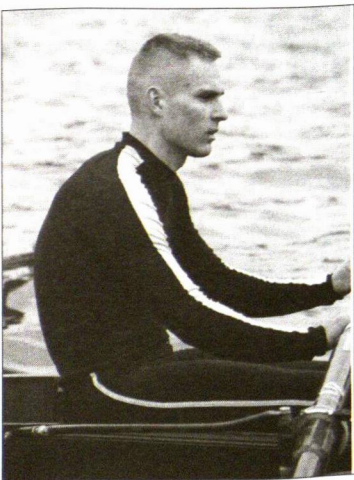
The Long Gray Line



Paul Padegimas



Andrius Mazeika



Arturas Vanagas

The Long Gray Line. It has been marching year, after year, after year. For over 200 years it has been doing so on the plain of West Point. Throughout its long and illustrious history, it has produced some of America's, "Best and Brightest." It has produced such military greats as Generals Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant (18th president) (Civil War), General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing (WWI), Generals George Patton, Douglas MacArthur, and Dwight Eisenhower (34th president) (WW II), and more recently, General Norman Schwarzkopf (Desert Storm).

It has also produced some great athletes – football players, Doc Blanchard and Glen Davis, better know as "Mr. Inside and Mr. Outside", and Pete Dawkins. They are the only Heisman Trophy winners that West Point has produced to date. It has also produced two the country's best coaches – football coach: Earl Blaik, who guided Army to two National Championships (in 1944 and 1945) and the legendary basketball coach, Mike Krzyzewski.

In its ranks the Gray Line had many notable foreign cadets. Its first foreign alumnus graduated in 1889, and since that day, there have been many foreign cadet graduates who have attained top positions in their countries. Three of the graduates became presidents of their countries: Anastasio De Bayle – President of Nicaragua, Fidel Ramos, President of Philippines, and Jose Figueres, President of Costa Rica.

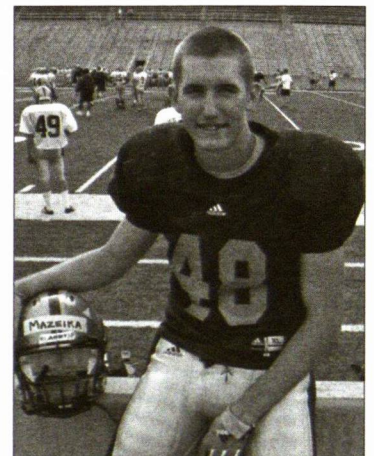
Lithuanian Cadets

Lithuania began sending its prospective cadets to the United States Military Academies in 1995. Since then, 25 Lithuanian cadets have attended all four Military Academies. Today, there are 13 cadets – three at West Point, three at Annapolis, three at Colorado Springs (Air Force), and four at New London (Coast Guard). Two of the 13 cadets are women – one is attending the Naval Academy and the other the Air Force Academy.

To enter any of the military academies is very competitive. It is even more competitive for the Lithuanian applicants. For starters, the applicants must become fluent in English for they have to do well on both the SAT and TOEFEL tests. If they qualify academically, then they must take a series of demanding strength and endurance tests. Once they have successfully passed those two tests they must then go for an interview with the representatives from West Point. When they have successfully passed all the entrance requirements, they are then admitted into the Academy. Upon graduation the newly commissioned Second Lieutenant must serve in the Lithuanian Army for five years.

Six West Point Cadets

Presently there are six Lithuanian cadets attending West Point – three from Lithuania and three from the Lithuanian American Community.

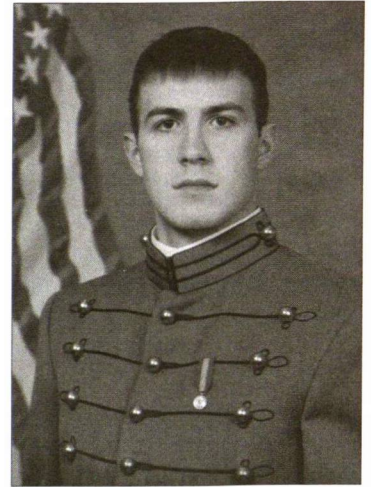


Andrius Mazeika



Aurimas Metrikis

The Lithuanian cadets are: Cadet Aurimas Metrikis, a yearling (2nd year student), is from Kaunas. He attended Lithuania's Military Academy prior to entering West Point Plebes Arturas Vanagas (from Klaipeda) and Edgaras Varnelis (from Vilnius) were the only ones to be accepted this year from 12 applicants Both Cadets Metrikis and Vanagas are members of West Point's rowing team. Cadet Varnelis was selected to represent West Point in the Stanhope Games – a grueling, one day military competition (running an obstacle course, marksmanship competition, running cross

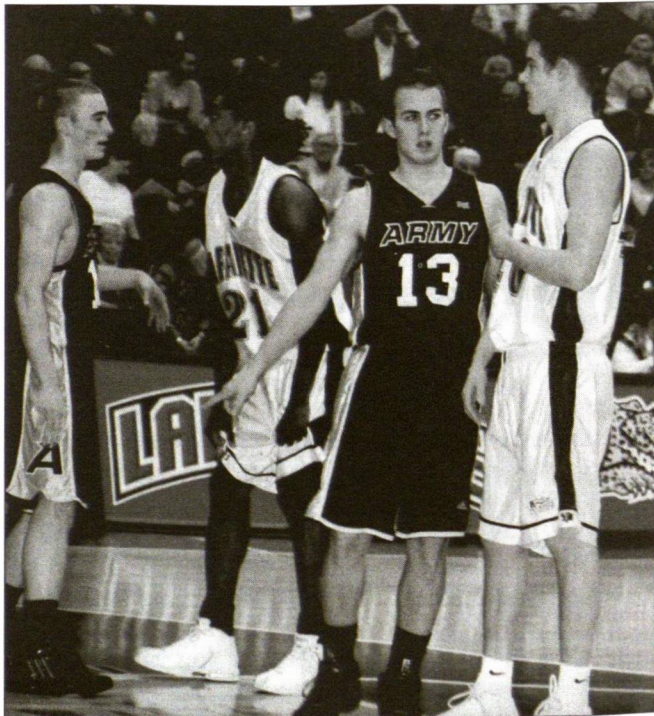


Ryan Hodgson

country, etc) involving cadets from England and Canada.

The three American Lithuanians are third generation Lithuanians. Ryan Hodgson, a yearling, is a member of West Point's basketball team. He comes from a very athletic family (his father played football and basketball at Penn State, his two older brothers have played college basketball. Rob, his oldest brother was a Big East All Academic/Athlete All Star). The entire Hodgson family is very greatly involved with the Lithuanian Community.

Andrius Mazeika, also a yearling, is a member of Army's football team. His father was a staunch activist for Lithuania's independence in the mid '60s. Mr. Mazeika is best known for having organized many independence rallies to D.C. and at the United Nations. However, his greatest achievement was organizing the massive independence rally at New York's Madison Square Garden where over 14,000 Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians gathered for a rally and march to the United Nations.



Ryan Hodgson- he's #13

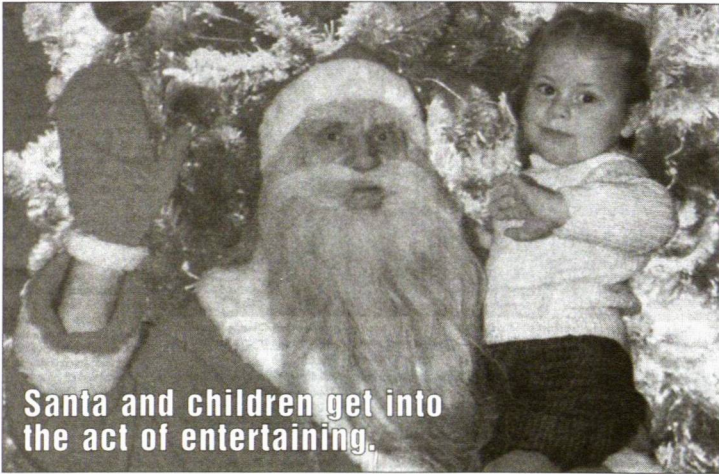
Finally Paul Padegimas, another yearling, is member of the football team. He is also a third generation Lithuanian who was born and raised in Connecticut. At the time of writing this article I was not able to obtain any further information about Paul.

Since 1995 twenty-five students from Lithuania have been accepted into the Military Academies. These young people are bright stars in the future of America and Lithuania. May their stars shine brightly and may the long gray line continue between our two countries.

Rimas Gedeika

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

Christmas in July



Santa and children get into the act of entertaining.

Photo is a courtesy of Valstieciu laikraštis.

I can't remember how many years I've been writing this article, but I do know I always write it during a heat wave. It really is very difficult to concentrate on Christmas when it is 93 degrees outside.

The "Christmas in July" articles were started because of a young boy I met in Lithuania during one of my trips. Arturas was diagnosed with leukemia when he was in second grade. I met him when he was thirteen and near the end of his valiant fight. He was brought to my attention by the principal of his school. Courage such as Arturas' had not been seen or experienced and he was an inspiration to his teachers and classmates. His joy at being alive each day kept their spirits lifted, when in reality, he should have been leaning on them. These same classmates would carry his coffin from the school to the cemetery before Arturas finished his thirteenth year of life on this earth.

When I arrived at the school Arturas and his mother were waiting for me. He had no hair and we joked that he looked like a professional athlete with a shaved head. But that's where the resemblance ended because the young boy was so thin I could feel his bones through his clothes when we hugged good-bye. And we really knew this was good-bye and not "until we meet again." There was no sadness in his voice or eyes, just tiredness and exhaustion. But one only had to look into the eyes of his young mother to feel her pain. Her sad eyes never left her beloved son's face. She knew what a short time she had to look longingly at his face.

We spoke of many things from what life was like for teens in America to sports and music. Needless to say, I knew very little about the music that teens enjoy. Christmas was another topic that we talked about. I can't imagine why since it was only July. Arturas stressed that if he could have one present it would be a used, blue bicycle. But by Christmas

Arturas was bedridden and in May his classmates walked one last time with him to the village cemetery.

Arturas' mother had many difficult times in her life. She was a widow trying to raise two sons, one of them with a fatal illness. She agonized that she had to leave Arturas' young brother with neighbors while she sat beside her older son's hospital bed day and night. She was overwrought that she was not getting her son the best medical care available. One of the doctors from Vilnius who lost her own child at Deborah Hospital in New Jersey assured her that everything that could be done had been tried. We kept in touch over the years and life was still difficult. In all my visits I heard only one complaint. The mother worked during the summer from sunup to sundown on a farm so that she could earn more money to buy Arturas a monument. After several weeks of waiting to be paid the farmer decided he would pay the workers with

whiskey. The poor woman was almost distraught. I happened to see her the following week and she told me her story as the tears streamed down her cheeks. She wanted that monument so badly for her son's grave. To be honest, I was almost as distraught as she was after hearing the story. At the end of my trip I decided I didn't need any more amber or linens and my family and friends could do without gifts from Lithuania. I emptied my wallet; and I do mean emptied it. I left the money with the principal of the school and asked him to help her buy the stone so that she would not be taken advantage of again.

Life became overwhelming for the young widow and she attempted to take her own life last year. Her younger son was put into foster care, but now she has recovered and he is home again.

This year one of my first stops was to visit Arturas' grave. The stone is simple and beautiful. I placed a candle and flowers on the grave as is the Lithuanian custom. I also wondered how a brief encounter I had with a young boy could have had such an impact on so many people; especially you, the BRIDGES readers, who have opened your hearts to the Christmas project.

This past May before I went to the village to meet with Arturas' mother and younger brother I made a mad dash to one of the huge stores in Kaunas. Sometimes I have to pinch myself when I remember what shopping was like before independence. The mall I was in was beautiful. I bought the younger brother, now a third grader, a kg. of mixed chocolates and a battery run car with some extra batteries. I spent less than fifteen dollars. When we arrived at the school the children were outside drawing on everything available with colored chalk. There really were some

lovely scenes; especially animals and nature. At that moment I thought about how little it takes to give these children joy and to make them happy. All they had were several boxes of colored board chalk. There were several mothers waiting to ask for Orphan Care help. After I finished talking and taking information I was able to meet with Arturas' mother. She seemed better than on our previous visits and was taking a course to learn to sew. Hopefully, this will lead to a full time job. When school was over and the other children left for

the day I called the younger brother to the car. When he saw the bag in the car with the chocolates and the toy car his hands began to tremble and his voice cracked as he reached up to hug me. So much joy for such a small price.

After Arturas' death I wanted to do something to keep his memory alive and so "Christmas in July" was born to help both city and village children enjoy Christmas. After all, we all have the spirit of Christmas. During this time of year we are all children at heart.

"Christmas in July" is funded entirely by BRIDGES readers. It receives not a cent from anywhere else. You have made this program the success that it is today. You have also brought the joy of bringing a Christmas present to a child who might not receive another gift. The money is divided between Dr. Regina Svoba of Countryside Children's Fund and Mrs. Gražina Landsbergis' Orphan Care program. Every cent you donate is sent to them. Why in July? Because they have to plan, they have to know how many children they can provide for, and the money has to reach Lithuania before Christmas. Over the years the value of the dollar has fallen, but these two women still know how to maximize what they receive from you. No, their Christmas gifts won't be like the ones most children we know will receive. They will not be elaborate; just some candy, crayons, perhaps a comb and hairbrush. The gifts will actually cost between two and two and half dollars.

Each year the two women ask me about "Christmas in July" and each year I give them the same answer. I tell them the entire program is in the hands of you, the BRIDGES readers.

You have always been generous and once again I ask for your help. For the person who has everything, this is a per-



Santa and children get into the act of entertaining.

fect gift. Organizations, perhaps you can get together and send a group gift. **Please make a note on your check that the money is to be used for Christmas gifts.**

I have brought back from Lithuania more than fifty names of children who are now waiting for sponsors. The cost to sponsor a child is \$150 a year. Nothing is more precious than giving the gift of hope.

Please accept my sincere thanks for supporting this program. On Christmas Eve when everyone is outdoors looking for Santa Claus in the sky, look up in the sky not only with your eyes, but also with your heart. You just might see the boy on the blue, used bicycle streaking across the sky.

God bless you for your generosity.

Tax deductible made be made to :
Lithuanian Orphan Care
2711 W.71st St., Chicago, Il. 60629

Unless we make Christmas an occasion to share our blessings, all the snow in Alaska won't make it "white".

Bing Crosby

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.

The 50th Anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood of Rev. John Edward Rikteraitis

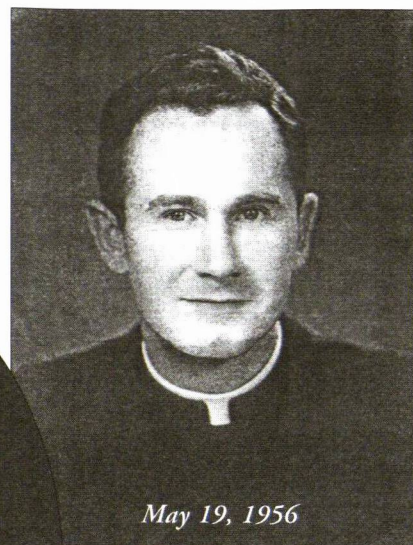
On this notable day of May we come together to celebrate the retirement of Father John E. Rikteraitis. To tell a little of what he has accomplished would require a book but...we try.

Father John, a native of New Britain and a "son" of St. Andrew's Parish, served in the U.S. Navy from 1943-1946, went on to St. Thomas Seminary, Hartford, CT, 1946-1949, and then to St. Mary Seminary, Baltimore, MD., 1950-1956. He was ordained a priest May 10, 1956. From 1956-1964 he served as assistant pastor at St. Casimir Church in New Haven, CT; from 1964-1969 as assistant pastor at St. Francis of Assisi, South Windsor, CT; from 1969-1971 as assistant pastor at Holy Trinity Church in Hartford, CT; and in 1971 he came to St. Andrew's as co-pastor, then pastor in 1976.

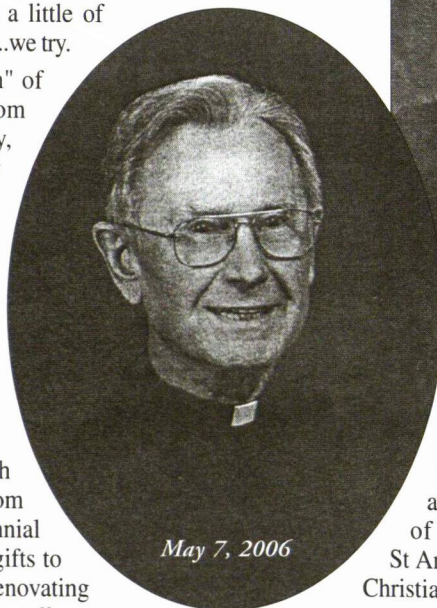
Father John has been with us for 29 years. Much has happened at St. Andrew's over those years from parish anniversary celebrations to our Centennial Celebration (which included the presentation of gifts to Pope John Paul II). We had projects such as: renovating the church, Parish Hall and Friendship Center as well as new sidewalks, purchasing the parking lot (and paving it), the new church roof, new reconciliation rooms, church carpeting and more recently Rectory Spruce-up. These are just a few of the projects he has accomplished.

In addition he has initiated special services such as an Annual Mass for Deceased Parishioners, Anointing of the Sick, Wedding Anniversary Mass, Tenebrae, regular TV Masses and more. As a community we have St Andrew's Month, Tag Sales, Pasta & Races and Dinner Club.

Father has not limited his involvement just to St. Andrew. In 1977 he was elected president of the Lithuanian Roman Catholic Priests' League of CT; also in 1977 he was elected vice president of the Lithuanian Roman Catholic Priests' League of America and recently its treasurer; in 1984 he was elected to the Board of Directors of the Lithuanian Roman Catholic Religious Aid Society and helped initiate the formation of the Connecticut Lithuanian Catholics (CLC) and has been its president all but two years. He was instrumental in the erection of the Lithuanian Wayside Cross on the grounds of St. Joseph Cathedral in Hartford where the CLC has organized a Day of Prayer for Lithuania for the past ten years. He worked to return the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Lithuania which was crowned by the Pope John Paul II at Šiluva. He has taken several crosses from the USA to be erected on the Hill of Crosses, the unique



May 19, 1956



May 7, 2006

shrine in Šiluva. Here at St. Andrew a Kopyltstulpis—an elevated shrine—was erected in the parking lot (in memory of his parents, Mary & John Rikteraitis).

There isn't any project he would not accept if it would promote the welfare of the Church, the Archdiocese, St Andrew's Parish, all people, especially Christians and, yes, Lithuanians.

His exuberance and work ethic puts him in a special class. Father, you are above all a priest of God. Your love of the Mass and service to his people show in all you do.

We are fortunate to have had you in our lives.

Have a glorious and happy retirement.
You deserve the best.

Synopsis of the day:

Rev. John E. Rikteraitis, beloved Spiritual advisor celebrated the 50th anniversary of Ordination (1956- 2006) on Sunday, May 7 at St. Andrew's Church, New Britain, CT. Celebrant was REV. JOHN E. RIKTERAITIS and concelebrants was Most Rev. Paul A. Baltakis, O.F.M., Msgr. Albert J. Contons, Rev. Augustine Giusani, Rev. Albin Gurklis, M.I.C., Rev. Harold Heinrich, Rev. John T. Moskus and Rev. Donald Smith. One of the altar servers was Brian Daigle (Council 6) who also did the two readings. Reception and dinner was held after Mass.

Speakers were Gene Ziurys former President of Knights of Lithuania Co. 6, Cathy Salka who organized the event and a Co. 6 member and Most Rev. Paul Baltakis, O.F.M.

A good time was had by all.

Submitted by Florence Morkus

Editor's note: *BRIDGES would like to add our congratulations and best wishes to Rev. Rikteraitis.*

Jeanne Dorr

News and Views

LITHUANIA'S GOVERNMENT FALLS AMID INVESTIGATION

Lithuania's three-party government collapsed with the withdrawal of a key coalition partner that is being investigated on corruption allegations.

Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas announced after an emergency meeting with his ministers that the Baltic country's government was stepping down.

"I don't see any possibilities to carry on my duties, and resign together with the cabinet," said Mr. Brazauskas, who had led two successive governments since 2001.

The move came after the Labor Party, which held 31 seats in the 141-seat Parliament, dropped out of the coalition, leaving the government well short of a majority in the assembly.

Mr. Brazauskas, 73 years old, a former Lithuanian Communist Party leader, was the ex-Soviet republic's longest-serving prime minister. He was also its first president after the nation regained independence in 1991.

The ruling coalition, Lithuania's 13th government in 15 years, was already shaky after another member, New Union, withdrew in April to protest the ousting of its leader, Arturas Paulauskas, as Parliament speaker.

The Labor Party said yesterday that it too would withdraw its five cabinet ministers after two of them were accused of misusing public and party funds.

"It's impossible to work under these conditions anymore," Labor lawmaker Jonas Jagminas said. "We have decided to withdraw from the ruling coalition."

Political scandals are common in Lithuania, which like neighboring Estonia and Latvia was occupied by Soviet forces for nearly five decades.

Former President Rolandas Paksas was impeached and ousted from office in April 2004, and a court convicted him of leaking state secrets to one of his chief financial backers, a Russian businessman.

Two of Labor's cabinet members, Culture Minister Vladimiras Prudnikovas and Health Minister Zilvinas Padaiga, are being investigated by the security police. Mr. Prudnikovas is suspected of misappropriating state funds to send his wife and daughter on international excursions, while Mr. Padaiga acknowledged earlier this week that he received payments from Labor Party coffers. Many speculate the payments were illegal. President Valdas Adamkus said he could no longer trust them.

<http://www.omnitel.net/ramunas/>

LITHUANIA GOVERNMENT COLLAPSES AMID CORRUPTION ALLEGATIONS

PRIME MINISTER QUILTS MAKING FRESH ELECTIONS IN THE FORMER SOVIET STATE LIKELY, SAYS DAVID IBISON.

The government of Lithuania collapsed yesterday after the largest member of the ruling coalition withdrew amid corruption allegations, forcing the prime minister to resign.

The coalition was in power for nearly two years and its fall ends the longest serving administration since Lithuania secured independence in 1991.

The crisis casts a shadow over the Baltic state that has developed a responsible presence in Europe, culminating in its membership of NATO and the European Union in 2004.

It is a double blow for the country that, last month, was denied permission to join the eurozone after narrowly missing an inflation target set by the European Commission.

Tensions between the coalition partners came to a head on Monday when Valdas Adamkus, the president, said he had lost faith in two Labour party ministers accused of corruption.

He accused the Labour party of "deliberate and cynical confusion of private and public interests" over the alleged use of funds for personal expenditure. The Labour party denied the allegations.

The Labour party held 31 of the government's 61 seats in the 141-seat parliament alongside the Social Democrats and the Peasants party, and its withdrawal made the coalition untenable. "There was no choice," Algirdas Brazauskas, the outgoing prime minister, said in a live television broadcast.

Mr. Adamkus can now select a new prime ministerial candidate but his choice would have to be approved by parliament. Academics said finding an acceptable candidate was unlikely and described the developments as the "most serious political crisis" to hit the former Soviet state since 1991.

"Everything is in flux," said Professor Mindaugas Jurkynas at the Institute of Political Relations and Political Science at Vilnius University. "There is no viable coalition, meaning there will have to be an election."

Ricardas Kasperavicius, head of the Ministry of Finance's department of macroeconomics in Vilnius, said the economy was robust enough to weather the storm.

"The economy is demonstrating strength and flexibility. Our exchange rate has been fixed to the euro since 2002 and we are already in effect functioning as a member of the eurozone."

Gross domestic product grew by 7.5 per cent last year.

Prof Jurkynas said the outcome of any future election was difficult to gauge. He added that recent polls in the capital revealed the popularity of the Labour party had fallen from 28 per cent to 12 per cent following the corruption allegations.

<http://www.omnitel.net/ramunas/>

the duties of social and labor minister, as acting head of the Government.

It is expected that Adamkus will sign a decree concerning the dismissal of the Government today.

Continued on page 15.

Spring Concert On the way to the 8th Lithuanian Song Festival

May 13, 2006
Philadelphia, PA



**AK

Song is such an integral part of our heritage, not to mention our hearts and souls.

During the 8th International Lithuanian Song Festival in Chicago, our own Ilona Babinskiene will be one of the main conductors during the festival's program. We are very proud and extremely happy for Ilona for this memorable accomplishment, and we are very fortunate to have her be part of our community, part of our family.



In 2002 St. Andrew's Parish Choir "Laisvė", whose name means freedom, was founded. The newly established choir's base and leading singers were members of the former "Viltis" choir. Newly arrived Lithuanians have joined the choir helping the choir to grow and improve. "Laisvė" was founded by Ilona Babinskiene. The choir's accompanist is Raimonda Ruksiene and the administrator is Gabrielius Mironas.



**PV



**PV



All three of the choirs will be representing our local Lithuanian American community at the 8th International Lithuanian Song Festival, held in Chicago, on July 2, 2006



**PV

Vytas Maciunas

The Vincas Kreve Lithuanian School Choir in Philadelphia is made up of students from grades 4 thru 8. The choir is taught and directed by accomplished musicians and active members of our community - Rasa Brittain and Vytas Maciunas. The choir has performed in local events and can always be counted on to provide an enthusiastic performance. This year in particular, we practice in anticipation of our trip to the 8th Song Festival in Chicago.



**PV

Rasa Brittain



At the end of the program, the youngest member of the School Choir, Kristukas Akerley presents a big bouquet of flowers to Ilona Babinskiene.



The Lithuanian word "Atžalynas" describes the seedlings from trees that make up the next generation of a forest. It is fitting that this youth choir bears this name, since most of their parents sing in the choir "Laisvė". Late last year the youth choir expanded with new members. "Atžalynas" is lead by Raimonda Ruksienė and has performed in various Lithuanian concerts. Without a doubt, "Atžalynas" has blossomed from little seedlings to a vibrant, fun and energetic youth choir.



The Men of "Laisvė".

This would not be possible without the support and inspiration set upon us by our dear mentor and pastor of St. Andrew's Lithuanian Parish, Petras Burkauskas. Without his support, we would not be here tonight, we would not be rejoicing in this celebration of song, and we would not be rejuvenating our hearts and souls with the words and music of song.



The Ladies of "Laisvė".

For this we are grateful to Father Burkauskas, and dedicate this song, performed by all three choirs.

In completing this beautiful evening of song, everyone in the hall joined hands in singing together with the choirs the final song, "Dainuokim, Dainuokim".

The announcers for the evening were Rasa Avellino and Algis Salciunas.



Raimonda Ruksienė and Ilona Babinskiene.



Accompanied by George Akerley.

*Photos by * Antanas Krusinskas
** Petras Vaskys*

"TODĖL NESIBIJOSIME, KAD IR ŽEMĖ DREBĖTU"
 "Therefore,
 We Will Not Fear, Though the Earth Tremble"

From "Čia Mūsų Žemė" (Here Is Our Land) by A. Vilainis
 Published by "Nemunas" Book Publishers, Cicero, IL 1950

anthill. Seven parishes have joined in this procession..... and uncounted numbers of individuals have arrived on foot or in rattling rustic wagons.



The faithful enter the church.

Photo by Gloria O'Brien

Banners flutter. White, violet, green and red. Pendant white ribbons, golden fringe and tassels, sway in the air. Small shrines and crosses sparkle and shine atop staffs and banners. A procession slowly makes its way down a dusty road. It passes through green fields, forests and farmsteads. The throng is motley and weary. They have already traveled over several miles of Žemaitija (Samogitia). The procession has many times been greeted and escorted by the peal of village church bells. They pray and sing, their sonorous hymn echoing through field and forest:

"Therefore we will not fear, though the earth tremble and the mountains fall into the sea".

The sun is already setting as the procession draws near to the valley of "Žemaitijos Kalvarija" (Samogitian Calvary). Here, the banners, crosses and church bells again join together. And the lines of the same great hymn sound even more strongly:

*"Therefore we will not fear,
 though the earth tremble....."*

A deep faith is visible on each face. They have faith, that Heaven will hear their prayer and preserve them from all misfortune. The fields of ripening rye and spring crops will soon mature and yield their harvest. All of Žemaičių Kalvarija is now in motion, like an

flaming light flows from hill to hill. The Way of the Cross at Žemaičių Kalvarija had its beginnings in the 17th century, thanks mostly to the then Bishop of Žemaitija, Jurgis Tiskevicius. He had himself visited the Holy Land, and walked the Way of the Cross. Upon his return, he arranged the same at Žemaičių Kalvarija (1637-1642), erecting nineteen chapels in and among the hills. A small stream running through the area was renamed after the Brook of Cedron (which runs from Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives). The hills were also named after holy places, beginning with the Mount of Olives, and ending with the Hill of Golgotha.

It is said that the bishop himself paced off and determined the distances between one chapel and another. The entire Way was sprinkled with soil from the Holy Land.

An order of monks was invited to settle at the site and supervise devotions at the Way of the Cross. Large numbers of pilgrims began to visit Žemaičių Kalvarija. When the monks began to build a fine and beautiful church, visitors donated generously. The church was completed during the last years of the Lithuanian Republic. And now, it is known as the last monument of the former Independent Lithuania.

This sanctuary still adorns the land of Žemaitija. The monks have resumed their service to pilgrims and their care and maintenance of the shrine.

After midnight all is quiet here. But when daybreak glimmers, and the sun rises, church bells again begin to peal. The breeze tosses white banners, violet, red, and green. The notes of the mighty hymn again fill the air and its echoes rise to the blue heavens:

*"Therefore we will not fear,
though the earth tremble...."*

Psalm 46 – "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth tremble and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging."

*"Čia Mūsų Žemė" (Here Is Our Land)
by A. Vilainis*

Translated by Gloria O' Brien

Gloria Kivytaite O'Brien is a frequent contributor to Bridges. She grew up in Brooklyn, Annunciation Parish. Gloria can be contacted at Senaboba@aol.com.

news and views – *Continued from page 11*

Statement of the Lithuanian Government

Vilnius, June 1 (ELTA) - With the opposition parties in the Seimas escalating political instability, the President of Lithuania recently expressed his doubts about the confidence of the Seimas and the people of Lithuania in the Government and suggested that the Government verifies the confidence of the Seimas. We are therefore forced to declare the following:

First, the Seimas has recently expressed its trust in this Government by approving the activity report of 2005. Yesterday it also approved the Strategy for the Use of EU Structural Funds of Lithuania for 2007 presented by the Government.

Second, the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania clearly defines the constitutional requirements concerning trust in the Government... The Seimas expresses its trust by approving the program of the Government and by granting it authority to act. The Seimas has a constitutional obligation to express its lack of confidence in the Government.

Third, the Government disagrees with the denial of national achievements. The economic and social progress of Lithuania in the recent years is obvious. Economic growth has enabled the Government to better solve the social problems of the people. The activity of the Government has guaranteed social and political stability.

Fourth, recently we have succeeded in solving the complicated problem concerning Mazeikiu Nafta. It has become possible to fulfill obligation of the State to the people, i.e. to return deposits and compensations for real estate and to fulfill other obligations and promises.

Fifth, splits in parties and groups in the Seimas have resulted in an unpredictable situation in passing major solutions. Our efforts to maintain economic, social and political stability have not gained support. It has become evident that due to the irresponsible political hindrance of the opposition and other politicians we will be prevented from implementing the program of the Government. The prime minister does not see any possibilities to continue his work and therefore resigns. His resignation is followed by the resignation of the entire Government. Responsibility for the outcome of the present situation falls on the politicians who failed to realize the importance of stability in the state.

Information Center for Homecoming Lithuanians

Brazauskas submits resignation letters of Government

Vilnius, Jun 1 (ELTA) - Having announced his withdrawal on Wednesday, Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas on Thursday morning presented letters of resignation for the entire Government to President Valdas Adamkus.

Brazauskas also presented a recommendation to appoint Finance Minister Zigmantas Balcytis, who is currently also performing Brazauskas said he got the impression that the president would appoint Balcytis temporary prime minister and would commission him to form the government.

After leaving the leading position in the Government, yet retaining his seat as the head of the Social Democratic Party, Brazauskas is planning to focus on publishing his book and some "household tasks".

As the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania declares, the president accepts the resignation of the Government and, if necessary, charges one of the ministers to exercise the duties of the prime minister until a new Government is formed.

The president has 15 days to nominate a new prime minister. After getting the approval of the Seimas, the president appoints the prime minister, gives him the task of forming the Government, and later approves its composition.

The prime minister, within 15 days of his appointment, presents the Seimas the Government that he has formed and has been approved by the president. This is accompanied by the presentation of the government program to the Seimas for consideration.

A new Government receives its authority to act after the Seimas approves its program by a majority vote of the MPs participating in the meeting.

Information Center for Homecoming Lithuanians

Social Democrats and Union of Farmers to form new coalition

Vilnius, June 1 (ELTA) - The Social Democrats and Union of Farmers on Thursday morning signed an agreement to form a new ruling coalition.

Other parliamentary groups are also encouraged to join these two political forces in forming the coalition.

The cooperation agreement of the two parties was signed by

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The Man From Red October



Marijona Venslauskaitė Boyle

Photo by John Hughel

"Few dared risk their lives at the height of the Cold War as did Captain Jonas Pleškys of the Soviet Navy in his defection to the Swedish island of Gotland in 1961. As prototype for Tom Clancy's fictional hero in 'The Hunt for Red October', the story of Captain Pleškys confirms the adage that the truth is stranger than fiction". This quote is from the introduction of the book on the dust-jacket.

The book portrays a man who grew up under the Soviet rule in occupied Lithuania. His parents were deported to Siberia, but to the surprise of many, he was allowed to enter and graduate the elite Leningrad Naval Academy. He was given a command of a ship in the Baltic submarine service. However, the ship was not a submarine, but a large barge used to dump chemicals into the Baltic Sea.

The book details his defection to Sweden in 1961 when he was only 25 years old. While seeking freedom, he lived in fear of the KGB until his death in California in 1993. He was 58 years old. His own sister Eugenija Pleškytė-Gaines noted that he searched for freedom all his life but was unable to find it. "He was constantly worried that the long arm of the KGB might reach him... I am happy that this story can finally be told".

The book essentially is a biography, with the main focus on his training in the Soviet navy, his defection to Sweden and his life thereafter. The book is divided

into twelve chapters and dramatically starts with the defection to Sweden.

"The heavy barge listed with the swells. Its cargo shifted. Most of the young and inexperienced crew took turns sleeping or being sick. Their quarters below were cramped and stuffy. Above deck, no signs of shore in any direction". These are the very first words of this book full of high drama, intrigue and action. It is well-written so that the reader is locked into staying with it until the very end. Only the author of this book knew where this book was going. Having seen the movie "Hunt for the Red October" only intensified the tension. A happy ending was expected, but it never came. This fellow, Captain Jonas Pleškys, supposedly was the prototype for John Clancy's fictional hero.

Subsequent chapters tell us about his youth, his family, his education, jobs, never being too far from his eventual escape. The author noted that his story is unusual not only because he risked what few would dare, but also because he lived to tell the tale. That could be enough for a happy ending, but there was no happy ending.

His life mirrored historical events of World War II, the Nazi and Soviet occupations, Stalinist terror, the Cold War years, and the collapse of the Soviet Union. After Lithuania redeclared its independence in 1990, documentary evidence of his escape and death sentence by military tribunal eventually became accessible. Before his death, Jonas Pleškys was able to visit Lithuania and reunite with his family. A step closer to a happy ending? Not really.

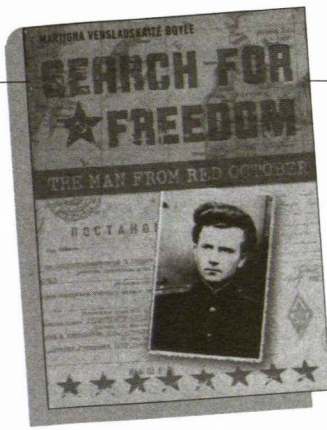
In researching the story, the author interviewed relatives, friends, and witnesses who were reluctant to share all they knew. The fear of KGB lingered on. She traveled to various locations in the US, Lithuania, Latvia, Sweden, and Guatemala in search of her material about Pleškys. Pleškys himself left almost no paper trail, most likely on the advice of the CIA which arranged for him to come to the US. CIA records, even after years of trying to access them under the Freedom of Information Act, were not available to her. CIA kept talking about the need to

protect the national security. In contrast, the author could have obtained KGB files on him, stored in Moscow, for about \$4,000.00, but did not have the funds to do it. She did obtain significant amount of these records that was left behind by the KGB in Vilnius, Lithuania.

Marijona Venslauskaitė-Boyle was able to find letters to friends and relatives. Even there, Pleškys did not reveal himself too much. "During the acquaintance in the last three years of his life, I witnessed elements of sadness and tragedy in his demeanor. I captured signs of a sensitive human being that contradicts much of the way others described him. From him, I heard disjointed bits and pieces of his childhood, of his life in the Mexican hills with the Mayas, of a daughter living in Guatemala. At that time I had no idea that he had been a Lieutenant Commander in the Soviet Navy and that he was a captain of a ship when he defected in his search for freedom in 1961" (p.11).

The book can be considered an informal introduction to the post-WWII events and history in Lithuania. While the focus remains on the defector Jonas Pleškys, she skillfully ventures into giving the reader a better understanding of the major events in that country, such as the secret Molotov-Ribbentrop Act of 1939, the subsequent occupations by Soviets, Germans, and Soviets again. The armed resistance movement is presented in favorable and true light. Mass deportations of Lithuanians to Siberia in Stalinist times are pointed out on a number of occasions. Finally, came the Sąjūdis, the Singing Revolution, the redeclaration of independence, and the Bloody Sunday in Lithuania.

While the defection was primarily a political act or event, the KGB did everything they could to make it look like it was the result of his unhappy love affairs. Needless to say, Jonas Pleškys was under a tremendous pressure to return and/or to be returned back to the Soviets. "We know that the paths where his search for freedom led him were not easy or happy. The stress of always having to be on alert for signs of the KGB would take its toll.



Marijona Venlauskaitė-Boyle.

Search for Freedom:

The Man from Red October.

Eglės leidykla (www.egles-leidykla.lt),

Klaipėda, Lithuania,

2005. 290 p.; illustr., hard-cover.

Price: \$25.00.

Being on the run for many years disturbed him psychologically. During the last three years of his life, fatal illness caused much physical pain... His search for freedom was a long and difficult one. He had escaped to freedom in a political sense, but much of his life remained unsettled with fear as his only companion" (p. 244). He died from a brain tumor, but consis-

tently refused medical help. He had been dead at least one week before his body was discovered in his apartment.

During the height of the cold war, the CIA was very much interested in any defector from the Soviet Union., especially the ones with possible military secrets. At the same time, it was also very suspicious about possible moles that could be planted in the West. Needless to say, he underwent rigorous debriefings both in Sweden and the US. Because of lack of cooperation from the CIA, Pleškys' involvement with it and its operations can only be suspected. We do know that Pleškys was working at times in Guatemala City under contract with the United States Agency for International Development (US AID). "As is well known, diplomatic posts as well as jobs with AID were frequent covers for work with the US security agency" (p. 158). Few if any have heard about Jonas Pleškys until this book came out. Now it is being translated into Lithuanian and should be published soon. Not too many people know the book's author Marijona Venlauskaitė-Boyle. The information

provided on the dust-jacket about her is very brief. It states that she has been a life-long student of languages, Russian history, and the life and times of the Soviet Union. "Having taught languages for many years in Swarthmore, PA, she now enjoys living at Rose Villa in Portland, Oregon." She is a freelance writer, in 1998 has helped Lithuanian filmmakers in the production of a documentary film tracing the life of Jonas Pleškys. She also is a member of the Lithuanian American community of the Portland/Vancouver area.

I have ended up some of my other book reviews by noting that a particular book would be a good plot for a movie. In the case of the book just described - Search for Freedom: The Man from Red October - such suggestion is no longer needed.

Romualdas Kriaučiūnas, Ph. D.

Romualdas Kriaučiūnas, Ph. D., Clinical Psychologist. Executive Vice President of the National Executive Committee, Lithuanian American Community, Inc. (2000-2003). Recipient of the 2005 Award for Journalism, given by the Cultural Council of LAC. Editor of www.ateitis.org web site.

news and views — Continued from page 15

Juozas Olekas, the head of the Social Democratic group in the Seimas, and Aldona Staponkiene, the leader of the Union of Farmers group.

These two political groups have thirty-three members.

Kazimira Prunskiene, the minister of agriculture and chairwoman of the Union of Farmers told journalists on Wednesday that the Union of Farmers and the Social Democratic Party see each other as the most trustworthy partners in the possible new coalition government and that the Government program should not undergo any major changes.

The leader of Union of Farmers does not reject the possibility of early parliamentary elections, but in her opinion new elections would not help to consolidate the political spectrum of Lithuania or make it easier to create a stable Government supported by the Seimas.

Olekas thinks that it would be rather difficult for the two groups to agree to form a new coalition with the Conservatives.

Andrius Kubilius, the head of the Homeland Union (Lithuanian Conservatives), also claims that there is no possibility for them to cooperate with the Social Democratic Party, Labor Party, or Liberal Democrats. According to the leader of opposition, a rainbow coalition is also not worth establishing, because it would be doomed to be a short-lived coalition.

Information Center for Homecoming Lithuanians

President invites politicians for talks

Vilnius, Jun 1 (ELTA) - Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas early

Thursday gave President Valdas Adamkus letters of resignation for the entire Government, the thirteenth since the restoration of the independence of Lithuania.

The head of state thanked the prime minister for his many years of service to the state and added that the activities of Brazauskas are of particular importance not only in the Government.

"Your significant contribution will remain evident in the political life of our country and I hope that the historians will duly assess your contributions in the history of the creation of a new state," Adamkus said.

Brazauskas also presented a recommendation to appoint Finance Minister Zigmantas Balcytis, who is currently performing the duties of social security and labor minister, as acting head of the Government.

In the context of the fall of three-party ruling coalition and the Government and with political forces having started negotiations on the creation of a new coalition, Adamkus invited politicians for a talk about possible cooperation.

The first politician invited for a meeting with the president after the resignation of the Government was Andrius Kubilius, the opposition leader of the Seimas and the head of the Homeland Union.

Social Democratic Finance Minister Zigmantas Balcytis is scheduled to speak to the president at 2:00 pm.

An hour later, the president will hold a meeting with Seimas Speaker Viktoras Muntianas.

Information Center for Homecoming Lithuanians

The Legacy of the Medininkai Border Guards

REPRINT from BRIDGES May, 2001



Ceremony at Antakalnis Cemetery honoring the fallen men.

July 31st is a date that probably doesn't mean anything to most people reading this article. It's important to me because it is my wedding anniversary, but since 1991 my special day has been tainted. It was on that day that a brutal crime was committed on Lithuanian border guards and customs officers. It was on that day that I first heard and read the word "Medininkai". It was impossible for me to know then that nine years later Lithuania would be free, and I would be meeting with some of the widows and children left behind by that heinous crime. It was crime that would take away forever the sons, husbands, and fathers of these families.

Times were chaotic in Lithuania: jobs needed to be filled and people had to be trained for these positions. It was a time of renewal, not only for a nation but for her people as well. Newspapers were running advertisements for these new jobs, and people were eager to fill them. Today you will read how the course of these families' lives was changed because an ad was answered in the paper. Lithuania needed people to become Customs officers on her borders, and many people answered the call. The candidates were interviewed and carefully scrutinized. Few people were actually chosen for these positions.

I often go through the lists of children that Lithuanian Orphan Care supports. I have to admit that I'm not a person who pays attention to details. However, over and over I kept seeing the word "Medininkai" on the list. I

thought it was rather strange that all these children lived on the same street but gave it no further thought until I got to Lithuania. What I learned from Regina Svoba, director of Countryside Children's Fund, was that Medininkai was not a street, it was a word that signified that these children were on our list because their fathers were murdered on their jobs in Medininkai.

Regina asked me if I would like to meet with these families, and of course I agreed. The meeting was scheduled to take place the next day at the apartment of one of the mothers in Vilnius. She would get together as many of the other mothers as she could on such short notice. The next afternoon was spent with the partisan I wrote about in an earlier issue of BRIDGES. We were quite late getting back to Vilnius and looked like two wet shaggy dogs by the time we arrived at the apartment. To add insult to injury, we were not only wet, but also we were wearing dirty jeans and sweatshirts - not exactly your average dinner clothing.

We arrived at a fairly new complex in Vilnius where two young gentlemen greeted us at the door. I have to admit this was only after ringing three wrong doorbells in the apartment building. Eleven year-old Justinas and nine year-old Šarūnas welcomed us and took our wet coats. They were such gentlemen that they showed no shock or reaction to what we looked like. We were greeted by several women, and it is their memories of that terrible day that I would like to share with you.

We were in the apartment of Genutė Orlaičienė, and you could see the pride she had in her two sons. The boys made the appetizers and also served them. Each of the women brought a dish from home. The food was delicious, and the conversation was lively as we sat in Genutė's living room around her coffee table that was laden with food. In some ways, I think we were all trying to prolong the enjoyable conversation so that we could avoid the tragic subject of my interview.

During our meal, I learned that one of the women was present because her husband died as a result of the January 13 siege of the television tower. Elena Mačiulskienė's husband, Stasys, was not listed as one of the "official" deaths of that night because he died three months later. But have no doubts, he died because he was protecting the television tower.

Stasys was a thirty-eight year-old factory worker. When he heard the call for the people to come out and protect the

tower, he went. He was injured in the neck and also suffered head trauma. He was taken to the hospital that night along with the hundreds of others who were guarding the tower. Later he came home but was in the hospital more than he was out. Surgery was performed on Stasys and a short time later he died - another cruel statistic of the Soviet troops. He was a statistic that did not have to happen. It happened because the Lithuanian people wanted what rightfully belonged to them, a free nation.



Genutė with sons Šarūnas and Justinas.

Photo by Jeanne Dorr

Stasys left behind his wife Elena and two young sons: Bronius was barely five years old and Stasys was not yet three. Bronius, who was always with Stasys, missed his father and could not understand why he wasn't coming home. He stopped talking, and Elena was beside herself with worry. Both children became ill, and many nights she walked the floor with them until dawn. At one point she felt she could not go on living, and she tried to kill herself by taking an over dose of pills. Life was just too much to bear without her beloved Stasys. Bronius still misses his father, but Stasys was too young and so he was robbed of even the memory of a daddy.

Elena is working now, but the memories are still there and she and the other women of January 13, as well as the women of Medininkai, seek out each other's company. As hard as we try to understand their pain, we can't. We didn't suffer their horrible nightmares, and only they can help each other. All we can do is listen and try to understand.

Alytė Musteikienė's husband, thirty-three year-old Antanas, was not a man to give in to fear. He especially did not fear death. He always felt the need to help Lithuania. When the Parliament building was surrounded in January, he guarded the inside, armed with only a homemade Molotov cocktail.

In December of 1990 he became a customs officer after answering the newspaper ad. He had previously been a construction worker and was so proud of his new job. In February, he was transferred to the border post of Medininkai. Alytė became more and more fearful, not just for Antanas, but for her seven year-old daughter, Kristina, and her almost two year-old son, Justinas. Antanas would tell her about the tanks that would circle the customs post. It was a time of broken windows, burning buildings, and gunshots. Her worst fears were when he worked nights. The hours seemed to be endless

until he returned home.

Then the nightmare began. A passing truck driver found the bodies on the morning of July 31". Six men were dead, and two were badly injured. The killers presumed the two men were also dead. One man would die two days later, while the lone survivor was moved from hospital to hospital and guarded by Lithuanians for fear of reprisals. He was, after all, the only witness to that terrible night. The information was being released

in dribs and drabs. Alytė was trying to telephone everywhere she could think of for information and received no answers except "wait and see." The women hoped against hope, and yet all believed their husbands were alive.

The worst part was the waiting, there were no names released until noon and in those few moments the lives, hopes, and dreams of these families came crashing down among them. Alytė begged to see her husband's body, but permission was denied. The men were almost unrecognizable. She continued begging, she had to see him just one more time. She was an operating room nurse, and she could tolerate blood and smashed bodies, but again she was refused.

Now, she was a young widow with two small children. Little Kristina cried constantly for her father. When her teacher mentioned that Kristina's father died as a Lithuanian hero, she cried all the way home from school. She didn't want her classmates to know her father was dead; all she wanted was to be normal. When Alytė tried to tell her she was fortunate that she still had four grandparents, Kristina cried out, "How can you say I'm fortunate when I don't have my father?" As she wrote in her school essay, all they had left of their fathers are their portraits, their spirits, and their graves. Antanas was another statistic in the fight for a free Lithuania that we must always safeguard.

At this point, I turned off the tape recorder because I felt I could not continue with the interview. I was emotionally drained. This was the only time this ever happened to me. Readers, you had to be in this room to feel the pain and love of these women. None had remarried, and all are raising their children alone. Yet they gathered around me and told me how difficult it was for them to tell their story for many years, and now they were ready to talk. It is only through their encouragement and patience this interview continued.



From left: Elena, Alytė, Genutė, Rūta

Photo by Jeanne Dorr

Rūta Jononienė's husband was one of two policemen who lost his life that night. Because of the problems at Medininkai and because the customs men were unarmed, two policemen were assigned to the night shift. They each had a pistol and an automatic. For one policeman, it was his final day on the job before he would retire. He never made it. But the other policeman, Juozas Janonis, was only twenty-eight years old when he died. He would never be there for his two year-old son, Evaldas, to comfort him or to laugh with him. He would never be there to see Evaldas grow up.

Rūta begged her husband to change jobs, but he loved his work. Juozas always told her, "What will be, will be." That day Juozas took his wedding ring off for the first and only time since he was married. He left it at home in case "something might happen".

Rūta told me the worst times of the year for her are holidays. Nine years have gone by, but she can't get past the holidays without Juozas. She said that Evaldas seems to have quick flashbacks of his father, such as sitting on his lap and "driving" the car while it was parked. Rūta works as a policewoman while she is raising her son alone. One more tragic statistic of July 31.

Genutė Orłavičienė was our gracious hostess for the evening. Honislovas Orłavičius was a thirty-six year-old customs officer. Like the other men, he answered the ad in the newspaper, and like the others, he was proud of his new profession. The test and the background check were comprehensive. It was during this background investigation that he found out that his grandmother's brother had lived in America, something he never knew. Like most of the men, he worked only six months at his new job before he was killed. He started his job on February 4th,

and there was such joy in their house.

The evening before, he had taken Genutė to the hospital, and that morning their son Šarūnas was born. Could life get any better for Honislovas? How many people could boast of the birth of a new son and the start of a new career on the same day? He was sure it was a good omen, not to mention that he already had two year-old Justinas who was his pride and joy.

Genutė had mixed emotions. Every day she would stand near their window and watch and listen for his car. Only then could she relax. As is the tradition of many Lithuanian families, they moved to the village for the summer. Genutė usually walked to a small hill to wait for her husband to return. In fact, a neighbor chided her for being so nervous and urged her to relax. She waited and waited, but there was no

husband to greet. He told her that he might attend a meeting after work. She wanted to believe with all her heart that he was there. The village house had no telephone so there was no way to communicate. After she returned to the house, a neighbor ran to her and told her of a problem at Medininkai. They immediately turned on the radio, but again, it would be many hours until she heard the grim details.

For a long time Justinas would look at every man on the street or in the park. He was so sure he would find his daddy, but daddy would never come home again. Genutė supports herself and her sons by working as a cashier in the customs department. One more widow and two more fatherless children because of July 31.

Dr. Giedrė Žilinskienė was also present for the dinner. She is a medical doctor and a good friend to all the children and the mothers. Dr. Žilinskienė was and is a proponent of children's rights in Lithuania. She has been the rock for these mothers so many times at all hours of the day and night. She is still there for them whenever they need her, whether as a physician or as a friend.

The sole survivor was Tomas Šernas. Tomas switched working days with someone else so he could have extra time off for his wedding. Genutė's husband jokingly told him a few days earlier that they would celebrate the following week after the wedding. How could they know that for Honislovas there would be no next week and for Tomas there would be no wedding? Tomas was beaten senseless and left for dead. The wedding did take place two years later, but Tomas' friends from Medininkai were not there with him. Tomas is the proud father of a beautiful daughter, but the joy is mingled with sadness. He will never chase his little girl or run with her through

a field because Tomas is confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life. Tomas is another statistic of July 31st.

The mothers shared the "official" photographs with me. They had to fight long and hard to obtain copies of them, but they had to have some kind of closure. Readers, I am not going to go into details here. All I will tell you is that at that moment I became physically ill. These men were not murdered, they were slaughtered. Their blood covered the walls and floors. I have never seen and pray I will never see such photographs again. These murders were not the work of human beings; no man could do this to another.

Although Justinas and Šarūnas did not see the photos, they put their heads down on the table. The room was totally silent, and all I could do was give the pictures back without saying a word. For all intent and purposes, the interview was over. At this point, I didn't know if I could or would ever write this article.

In a few short hours, I formed a very strong bond with these women. As I was leaving, they asked me if I would attend the cemetery ceremonies and the Mass for their husbands on July 31th. There was no way that I could refuse them such a small favor. In fact, I was honored that they asked me. I did not tell them that July 31st would be my 35th wedding anniversary.

That day is always long and difficult for them. Each year they and their children leave Vilnius before dawn and drive to the Medininkai border so they can have some private moments where the tragedy happened. They place flowers and candles on the spot, each representing personal memories and questions that will never be answered. They have protested and demonstrated that the criminals be brought to justice. Their cries have fallen on Moscow's deaf ears.

July 31st was a working day for me. It was probably the strangest wedding anniversary I will ever have. I was spending the entire day with Gražina Landsbergis and the children she had recommended to Orphan Care. I phoned her and told her I would have to shorten the schedule because I needed to be at the cemetery at noon. She told me she would go with me, and so Gražina, my husband, and I set out for Antakalnis Cemetery in Vilnius. We were a little late and got there as the priest was speaking.

The three of us stood together in the crowd as I watched the families who seemed solemnly lost in their own thoughts. Suddenly I felt a tug on my sleeve. Sarunas had made his way over to me and started whispering. As I bent down to hear him, he told me the mothers wanted me to stand with them for the ceremony. I was so moved and so honored, I couldn't even answer as he put his

hand in mine and the crowd parted as he led me to them. Each one of us embraced, lost in our own thoughts. The guns saluted, and each thunderous roar brought out raw emotions. Both the customs officers and the police took turns standing as honor guards.

As Professor Vytautas Landsbergis slowly walked to each grave, paused, and placed flowers on them, there was not a dry eye in view. Even the biggest and strongest young men stood silently with tears rolling down their cheeks. I couldn't help but wonder what went through Tomas' mind as he sat apart from everyone else in his wheelchair. People stopped and placed flowers in his hand, and he graciously thanked them.

I was scheduled to meet with Tomas earlier in my trip, but his father had died and we never had that interview. As I approached him, my eyes began to fill up. I took his hand and for a moment said nothing - what can you say to someone who has suffered so much physically, mentally, and emotionally? He thanked me for the help he receives from Lithuanian Orphan Care for his daughter.

The mothers asked Gražina, my husband, and me to join them at a reception after the cemetery, but this was a working day. We had appointments to keep with Orphan Care children.

Later that evening, we returned to Vilnius Cathedral for a Mass that was said for the men. As I looked around the cathedral that was filled to capacity, I wondered how many people really understood the impact that one brutal act had had on these families? The men lost their lives, and the families lost their hope.

As the mothers and I said good-bye for the second time that day, I knew this was not a final farewell. Our bond will stay as strong as it was the moment we met.

I would like to thank the Lithuanian Citizens' of Western Pennsylvania for sponsoring all the children who were left behind by these terrible acts. There is no end to the generosity of these fine people. I also want to thank the sponsor of Tomas' daughter. Lithuanian Orphan Care provides a vital service to the children of Lithuania. Please help us continue to serve these families through your generosity. The cost to sponsor a child is \$150 a year, but all donations are gratefully appreciated. Your tax-deductible checks can be sent to:

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

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 Second Lithuanian Try Across the Atlantic

I am sure most of us know about the non-stop transatlantic flight the two Lithuanian flyers, Darius and Girenas, attempted to make from New York to Kaunas in July of 1933. The flight ended in a forest in Germany, only four hundred miles from Kaunas, when their airplane, named *Lituanica*, crashed, killing both of them.

But how many of us know there was another non-stop transatlantic flight attempted from New York to Kaunas, two years later, in 1935? Do we remember who the pilot was and whether or not this flight reached a successful conclusion?

A few months after the *Lituanica* tragedy, some prominent members of the Chicago Lithuanian community discussed the possibility of another transatlantic flight; this idea was approved with much enthusiasm. Several weeks later, the American Lithuanian Trans-Atlantic Flight Association (ALTAFA) was founded and incorporated in the state of Illinois as a non-profit organization. These were the years of the "Great Depression" and the United States was still struggling with very high unemployment and a shaky economy. Still, the idea of a second flight was greatly supported by Lithuanians everywhere and ALTAFA branches were organized in many Lithuanian communities.

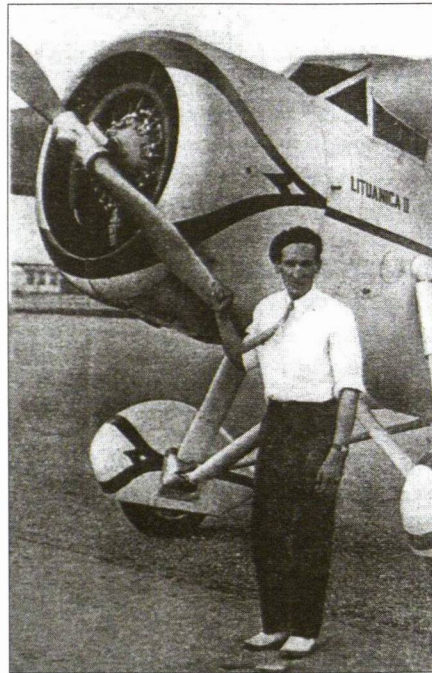
The manager and organizer of the flight was Dr. Pius Grigaitis, chief editor of the Lithuanian language newspaper in Chicago, *Naujienos*. The main office of ALTAFA was located in the newspaper's building.

By the end of January In 1934, ALTAFA's treasury had sufficient funds to negotiate the purchase of a much faster and more modern airplane (as compared to *Lituanica*) called the Lockheed Vega, from the Lockheed Aircraft Corp. It was christened *Lituanica II* on Sunday, April 22, 1934.

When the pilot originally selected to fly *Lituanica II* resigned unexpectedly in the spring of 1934, the Board of Directors of ALTAFA turned to Felix Waitkus and he accepted the challenge to fly to Lithuania.

The parents of Felix Waitkus (Vaitkus) came from Lithuania in 1904 and settled in Bridgeport, a Lithuanian neighborhood in Chicago, where he was born on June 20, 1907. He enlisted in the army in 1928 and after graduating from advanced pilot's training school, was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Air Corps. He was a first lieutenant at the time he was decommissioned and returned to civilian life in 1931.

At first, it was hoped that the flight would take place sometime during the summer of 1934, but the date had to be changed to 1935. Modifications were needed to strengthen the aircraft structure in order to accommodate a bigger and more powerful engine and the extra fuel tanks.



Winging to Lithuania

Felix Waitkus, American born Lithuanian, is shown in front of his Lockheed-Vega monoplane, in which he took off from Floyd Bennett Airport for a flight to Kaunas, Lithuania. He is out to set distance and speed records for a non-stop solo hop. He's speeding over the Atlantic at 170 miles an hour.

Unfortunately, weather conditions during the summer months in 1935 were very unfavorable along his planned route. He was in constant touch with the chief meteorologist in New York, hoping for a break in the weather. On the evening of September 20th, Waitkus was informed that the weather along his route had improved to the point where the conditions were average with no major changes predicted in the next 24 hours. Waitkus decided to fly.

On September 21st at 6:45 in the morning, New York time, *Lituanica II* lifted off the ground at Floyd Bennett Field and hoped to follow the trail made by Darius and Girenas two years before. Unfortunately, he encountered very bad weather over the Atlantic. For the next twenty-two hours he fought the worst possible weather conditions, flying through rain, fog, head winds and icing conditions. With his gasoline supply falling low and his physical strength exhausted, Waitkus knew he could never make it to Kaunas and decided to land in Ireland. As luck would have it, all the airports were fogged in and he had no choice but to land in a pasture. The right wing plowed into the ground and the landing gear was torn away. Waitkus was fortunate to come out of the ordeal alive and without a scratch. The farmers near the town of Ballinrobe welcomed him.

Responding to the instructions given by the Aero Club 01

Lithuania, *Lituanica II* was crated and shipped to Klaipeda for repairs. Waitkus received an invitation to visit Lithuania as an honorary member of the Club and arrived in Kaunas on October 2nd. He was greeted by an enthusiastic crowd of about 40,000 people who were waving Lithuanian and American flags. He was literally buried under mounds of flowers. His wife Martha arrived from the United States on October 5th and joined him in all the receptions.



The stamp was issued by Lithuania in 1936 to celebrate Waitkus' solo flight.

When all the repairs were completed on *Lituanica II* it remained at the Kaunas Airport and later went to a military base near Siauliai. After the Soviet Army marched into Lithuania in June of 1940, *Lituanica II* disappeared from the Lithuanian scene and nothing is known of its fate.

Felix Waitkus was called back to active duty in 1940 with the Air Corps, and was assigned as the chief test pilot with the Boeing Aircraft Co. in Seattle, Washington. He test flew hundreds of B-17 and B-29 bombers. At war's end, his military service ended temporarily until he was recalled once again during the Korean War. He was stationed in West Germany where he died of a heart attack on July 25, 1956 at the age of 49. His body was shipped home and interred in his wife's family plot in the Kohler Cemetery in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. At the time of his death he held the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Even though Felix Waitkus did not reach Kaunas, his ultimate goal, his name is entered into aviation's record books as being the sixth pilot to fly solo across the Atlantic, joining such distinguished company as Charles A. Lindbergh, Amelia Earhart Putnam, James A. Mollison, James Maltern and Wiley Post. He was the only pilot to cross the Atlantic in 1935.

I was appalled in 1985 when not a single Lithuanian newspaper made any mention of the 50th anniversary of his flight. Felix Waitkus is most certainly a hero in every respect and should not be forgotten.

Ed Baranauskas

Editor's Note: The following article is based on an article written by Edward Baranauskas and published in the July/

TRIVIA QUESTION

(No.5)

What was the burial custom of the early Lithuanian religion believers?

- (a) Mummify (c) Bury standing up
(b) Cremation (d) Under a pile of stones

Answer to Trivia Quiz
on page 25

August issue of *BRIDGES*. A reader from Ballinrobe, Ireland went through great lengths, including contacting the *BRIDGES* office earlier this year to find Mr. Baranauskas. I have reprinted the letter but omitted the sender's name for privacy. Felix Waitkus has not been forgotten in Ireland and he should not be forgotten by Lithuanians on either side of the Atlantic.

Correspondence received
by Mr. Baranauskas from Ireland:

January 15, 2006

Dear Mr. Baranauskas,

I read with great interest your article in Bridges (July/August 2000) on Feliksas Vaitkus and his solo flight across the Atlantic in 1935. I am fascinated by the flight and wonder why more is not made of this great achievement in my own town of Ballinrobe where the plane landed in Ireland. I have a few photographs taken by my father which you might be interested in seeing. I am in touch with a student pilot from Lithuania who is also very interested in the history of the flight. Have you got any press articles or photos from the papers at the time? If so would it be possible for me to see them. I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards.



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!**



Regina F. Narusis, J.D.

ONA WHITE AND THE ROYAL PALACE

Ona Gineitis was born December 9th 1918 to Juozas Pranas Gineitis and Julija Gedvilaitė Gineitis in Kentzinė, Lithuania. She had three sisters, Filomina, Irena and Alvira. Ona White married Dr. Jurgis Svideravicius in 1966, who died in a tragic automobile accident in 1968. She lived in Lithuania until 1975. Not being able to live under the Soviet occupation in Lithuania, she bought her freedom by paying off a Soviet official to obtain permission to visit the United States. So on October 26, 1975, she made her long journey to the United States. Here she lived in Massachusetts, Indiana and finally Florida. In September of 1982, she married Chester White in South Bend, Indiana. He too died in an automobile accident in 2000. She never had any children. On January 22, 1988, Ona White became a United States citizen. She died on July 11, 2005 in her home in Venice, Florida.

The last five years of her life, she lived alone in her lovely home in Florida. She enjoyed gardening and reading. Ona White never went to college, but she educated herself. She was well read. Ona spent her days tending to her garden of roses, dahlias, asters. She liked to swim in her beautifully landscaped pool. Ona dreamed of visiting Lithuania, but her health grew weaker and her hopes of such a visit ended. Her remaining wish was that, after her death, she be cremated here in the United States and that her ashes together with those of her late husband would be returned to Lithuania and left near the Royal Palace. That was her way of permanently returning to Lithuania. The Royal Palace Restoration Committee for the United States saw to it that her wishes were kept.

Early in the year 2005 she made out a will leaving her entire estate to the Royal Palace Restoration Committee of the United States. She loved Lithuania very much and felt that by leaving her entire estate to the Royal Palace



Ona White - with her parents and three sisters in Lithuania.

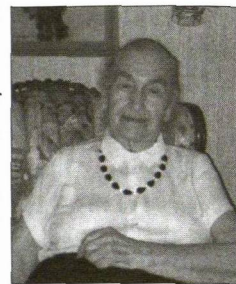
Restoration Committee for the United States she would accomplish something she wanted to do the most—return to Lithuania and become a part of the nation's restoration. To her, as to most Lithuanians and Lithuanian Americans, the rebuilding of the Royal Palace is a symbol of Lithuania's survivorship, continuity and proud history. She believed no foreign occupier ever has or ever will destroy Lithuania. The Royal Palace Restoration

Committee for the United States is most grateful to Ona White for her generous gift.

Ona White's estate contains many lovely pieces of jewelry. The Committee has decided to hold an event to remember her and her life and auction off her jewelry in order to maximize on the funds. The auction was held at the World Lithuanian Center in Lemont, Illinois on April 2, 2006.

Ona White's name will be permanently inscribed in the records of the Royal Palace as a "Great Builder".

Should any reader desire to bequeath funds or assets to the Royal Palace Restoration Committee, as did Ona White, please contact the Committee so that it can assist your attorney in the proper documentation of such bequest. One may donate in memory of some family member whose name will be posted in the Royal Palace. All contributions



Ona White - March, 2006 in her home in Florida.

should be made payable to the Lithuanian American Community Inc., "Valdovu Rumu" account and sent to the Royal Palace Restoration Committee of the U.S. A., at 5600 South Claremont Ave., Chicago, Illinois. 60636. If you have any questions regarding a donation, you may call Regina Narusis, Chairman of the Committee at 847-639-3630.

All donations are tax deductible. Donors will receive a receipt for their donation and the Royal Palace Restoration Foundation in Vilnius will post the donation on its web-site in Lithuania and eventually in the Royal Palace by agreement with the Lithuanian government. The web-site in Lithuania is www.lvr.lt. With a donation of \$380.00 one will receive a testimonial certificate as a Builder, with a donation of \$3,800.00 one will receive a testimonial certificate as an Honored Builder and with a donation of \$38,000.00 one will receive a Great Builder testimonial certificate. The Royal Palace Restoration Committee for the United States welcomes a donation in any amount. Please give and have your family name recorded at the Royal Palace in Lithuania.

Regina F. Narusis, J.D., Chairman of the Royal Palace Restoration Committee for the United States of America

The art work on the cover is by
Domicelė Tarabildienė

1912 - 1985

Domicelė Tarabildienė; engraver, sculptor, wife of Petras Tarabilda, born in Andrioniškis, county of Utena, on April 26, 1912. After graduating from Kaunas Art School (1935), she continued studying in Paris (1937-39). At the Paris World's Fair (1937), she won a grand prix for her Lthuanlan dolls and a gold medal for her illustrations. Up to the present she has illustrated more than 100 publications, a sizeable portion of them for children. Her work for *šimtas liaudies boladžių* (A Hundred Folk Ballads, 1940) won the Lthuanlan atate prize. Other books illustrated by her include Jadvyga Člurllonytė's *Letuvių liaudies dainos vaikama* (Lthuanlan Folk Songs for Children, 1948), Žemaitė's *Raštai* (Writings, 1949), and Maironis' ballad *Jūratė ir Kastytis* (Jūratė and Kastytis). She has also executed thematic compositions, such as *soulė* (The Sun, 1967) and *žuvelė* (The Little Fish, 1967), as well as portraits (Jonas Jabronsls, Kristijonas Donelaitis, Žemaitė) and sculptures. The list of her individual exhibits is impresslve. She was well-represented in a number of museums behind the Iron Curtain. Her engravings are colorful and show a keen sense of rhythm and the influence of folk art.

* This information is from "ENCYCLOPEDIA LITUANICA".



Domicelė Tarabildienė: *Girl with Dove*. Linoleum-cut
 11½" x 9½" Lithuanian Graphic Art Series No. 63-41/16
 Gabija Publisher Printed In USA.

Answer to Trivia Quiz

TRIVIA QUESTION ARE ON PAGE 23

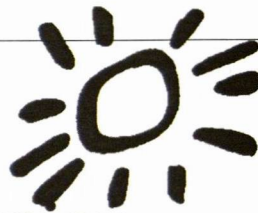
My reference is the book OF GODS & HOLIDAYS, edited by Jonas Trikunas. Let us look for the answer in the chapter, REIGION AND MYTHOLOGY OF THE BALTS, by Marija Gimbutas (a noted Anthropologist), in which she wrote:

.. The custom of cremation persisted long after the introduction of Christianity and was abolished only as a result of a fierce struggle against the practice by Christian missionaries. Lithuanian kings and dukes were cremated with great pomp until the end of the fourteenth century. Algirdas was cremated with 18 horses in 1377 in a forest north of Vilnius. He was cremated with the best horses, clothes resplendent in gold and girdled with a gilded silver belt and covered with a gown of beads and gems.

Algirdas' brother Kęstutis was interred in a similar manner in 1382 and splendidly could be seen a deep pit in man's length full of ashes-and nothing there escaped death: horses, clothes, weapons, etc., all were consumed by fire: hunting birds and dogs were cremated with him. The historian Dlugosz, writing at the beginning of the 15th century, mentions that Lithuanians had hearths in holy groves, each family and house its own, where they cremated their relatives and closest friends, along with horses, saddles and costly clothes. The sacred groves where the cremation rites were performed were usually on a hill or elevation called ALKA."

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

Neringa



Intensive Lithuanian Language Courses

Adult-oriented instruction

September 1-5, 2006



Neringa Is: a Lithuanian cultural camp founded by the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in 1969. As an extension of the mission to creatively foster understanding and love for Lithuanian heritage, Neringa is hosting intensive adult Lithuanian language courses for the first time this year.

Lithuanian language instruction will be oriented toward adults and mature older teenagers (please see notes regarding minors in .Student family needs. below). Classes will take place every day for 4-5 hours (split across the morning and afternoon) for a total of about 20 hours of instruction. The courses are being designed and led by Galia Narkevičienė, who has taught Lithuanian as a foreign language at Vilnius University, the Boston Lithuanian School, and on an individual basis. Depending on enrollment, a beginner and intermediate level class may be offered. Class size maximum is set to 15 students. Courses may be canceled due to under-enrollment (tuition will be refunded).

Enrichment of the Lithuanian experience will be fostered through cultural evening programs for all participants. Also, certain parts of the day may be designated as "Lithuanian only" times for a fun and creative way to use what students have learned. The Neringa grounds are filled with Lithuanian cultural artifacts and books, which can be admired and used for enhancing the cultural component of the courses.

Student family needs may be addressed, if needed, by hiring childcare to benefit parents attending classes. Students may also bring a spouse or other adult family member to enjoy the natural beauty of Neringa or to care for children while a family member is engaged in language studies. Given that Neringa cannot assume 24-hr. supervision of attendees, all minors enrolled in the courses must have an adult chaperone on site with them.

Registration forms and down payments are due by July 24. Under-enrolled sections may be cancelled (down payments will be returned to students). Students will receive a refund less \$25 if they cancel their registration before August 18, 2006. Payment in full for the courses is due by mail August 18, 2006. No refunds will be issued after August 18, 2006 as well as if a student is asked to leave the courses because of inappropriate behavior. See the registration form for payment amounts and information.

LITHUANIAN LANGUAGE COURSES SPECIFIC INFORMATION

ARRIVAL-DEPARTURE: Classes begin on Friday, September 1 at 9:30am. The courses end after dinner at about 6:30pm Tuesday, September 5.

TELEPHONE: In the event of an emergency, calls should be made to the cafeteria 802-254-9819.


A FEW THOUGHTS ON WHAT TO BRING:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| * Lithuanian-English dictionaries | * Sleeping bag and pillow | * Musical instruments |
| * Notebooks | * Mattress cover | * Comfortable summer clothing |
| * Pens and pencils | * Towel | * Warmer clothing for cool evenings |
| * Laundry bag | * Toiletries | * Rain gear |
| | | * Sports equipment |



DIRECTIONS TO NERINGA: 1-91 to Vermont exit 2. Follow Rt. 9 west for 7 miles until you see the sign for Neringa. Turn left onto MacArthur road and in less than a mile you will see the Neringa driveway on your right. Neringa's address: 147 Neringa Road, Brattleboro, VT 05301.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Camp Director, Vida Strazdis, vida@neringa.org or 978-582-5592 if you have questions.

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PRESENTS
LITHUANIA 2006

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CHICAGO REPRESENTATIVES

Rita Pencyliene..... tel: 708-923-0280 e-mail: pencylar@comcast.net

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

All VYTIS representatives speak English and Lithuanian !!

Calendar of Events for July/August and Sept

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

BLP(LKA)1195
2006, Nr.6

For all Neringa events,
please go to
www.neringa.org
call 978-582-5592

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, 2006

Aug. 20, 2006

Sept. 10, 2006

Summer Picnic

After 11:00 am Mass
Lithuanian World Center Yard
14911 127th Street
Lemont, IL 60439
Info: zvilimas@speedsite.com
Sponsor: LAC Lemont Chapter

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 St., 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.lihtsd.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

August 5, 2006 - Saturday

3rd Annual Lithuanian Adoption
Picnic 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 & 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
For further info., please contact
Gina Pollock at (717) 399-9288 or
rmprhp@yahoo.com, or
James Tomalonis at
cedar@suscom.net, or
Ruta Skucas at (301) 987-0322 or
RutaKS@aol.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. 6, 2006

Community Picnic

Please bring your own
refreshments and food. We won't
have the group wine and beer this
year. Don't forget to bring your
summer vacation photos &
stories to share with everyone.
Games and music will be
provided. Glass containers are not
allowed in the park. Time: 1 pm
Admission: \$2.00 for adults
(16 years of age and older)

Location:

Dekoeverd Park-Shelter C.
6301 S University Blvd
Centennial, CO 80121

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 Festiva
Swope Park in Kansas City
Come to "Tower of Gedim.....
booth for Lithuanian
delicacies - torte, bacon buns, art,
amber, & breads from the
Lithuanian Bakery from Omaha,
NE. Performances of AIDAS Folk
Dance Group & Aidas Vaikai
(children's) Group.
<http://www.kclith.org/calendar.html>

Aug. 20, 2006

Summer Picnic
After 11:00 am Mass
Lithuanian World Center Yard
14911 127th Street
Lemont, IL 60439
Info: zvilimas@speedsite.com
Sponsor: LAC Lemont Chapter

Aug. 20-27, 2006

Neringa - Adult art camp in
Lithuanian (21+)

Aug. 21-25, 2006

2006 Lankas Family Camp
Lithuanian dancing, singing,
language, crafts, history, folklore,
hiking, swimming, scouting, and
more! Parents and community
members needed to teach one or
more classes during the week and
to help with cooking. Info:
www.javlb.org/seattle/events.html

Aug. 26, 2006

Sisters of St. Casimir
100th Anniversary
Opening Mass 9:30 a.m.
Sisters of St. Casimir
Motherhouse, 2601 W Marquette
Rd, Chicago, IL 60629
Celebrant:
Most Rev. Gustavo Garcia Siller,
Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago
Concelebrating: All former &
present SSC Motherhouse
Chaplains

language courses.
For info. & registration form
www.neringa.org

Sept. 2, 2006 - 11am-6pm

Annual picnic, Williams Park,
Neipsic Rd., Glastonbury, Ct.
Rt. 2, East, Exit 8, left on
Neipsic Rd. Grounds on left
only 1/4mile. Lithuanian food,
goods from Lithuania, raffle,
sing-along, etc. Free admission.
Info: 860-657-9067 or
danuteg@juno.com
Sponsors: LAC of Greater Hartford

Sept. 10, 2006

Summer Picnic

After 11:00 a.m. Mass
Lithuanian World Center Yard
14911 127th Street
Lemont, IL 60439
Info: zvilimas@speedsite.com
Sponsor: LAC Lemont Chapter

Sept. 10, 2006

Pottluck Picnic

Traditional end-of-summer
get-together.
195 Fuller Road, Centerville, MA
Additional info. will sent by mail.
Cape Cod Lithuanian American
Community

Sept. 16, 2006 - 6:00 pm

Saturday - Annual Fall Ball
Sponsored by San Diego Chapter
of LAC www.lihtsd.org

Sept. 17, 2006

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

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