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LK

bridges



june 2007

LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

Letter from the Editor

I have to admit I am getting a certain longing in my heart. It seems everyone I'm meeting is telling me about their summer plans to visit Lithuania. This year is an "off" year for me so I guess I'll just have to enjoy everyone else's memories and adventures.

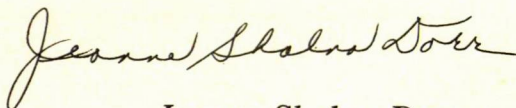
The calendar pages are flipping rapidly, it seems more rapidly the older we get. Last month was Mother's Day and we celebrated the First Communions of five beautiful children in our Lithuanian church of St. Andrew in Philadelphia. As we move to June many are preparing to journey to the song festival in Lithuania which will be in early July. But you don't have to go to Lithuania to attend a Lithuanian event. Please check the Bridges calendar as there may be a picnic or an event near you. There are times local ethnic festivals have a Lithuanian booth or table. Please give these people your support in their efforts to spread the Lithuanian culture. Invite your friends and neighbors to join you. You don't have to be Lithuanian to enjoy the culture, the food or meeting new people.

We cannot let a June issue pass without remembering the terrible deportations that took place during that month. How many lives were destroyed and how many families were broken forever? How many people were scarred forever even after they returned to Lithuania and were "rehabilitated?" Watching the recent riots in Estonia makes one wonder if the past is really past.

Many people provided material for this issue. And as always, I am grateful to you.

Whether you are traveling around the world or enjoying your back yard this summer, please be safe and enjoy this wonderful time of the year.

Thank you for reading Bridges.



Jeanne Shalna Dorr

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**THE INFORMATION CENTER FOR
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*Cover: Storks near the church in the village of Rumbonyas.
Photo by Msgr. Leonas Jakimavicius.

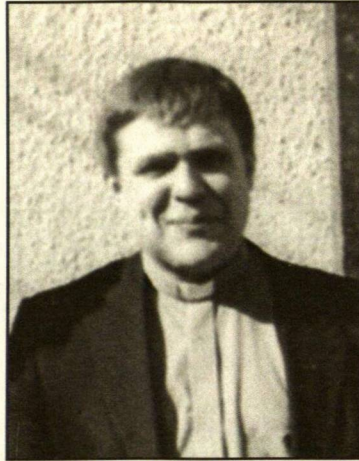
Father to Many

Never let it be said that Bridges is a sexist magazine. Since I wrote about the work of some of the sisters in Lithuania for Mother's Day, I decided to dedicate my Father's Day article to Father Saulius Kalvaitis and his work. I met Father Kalvaitis on my last trip to Lithuania. Once again, traveling with Sister Dolorita Butkus, we pulled up to a typical Lithuanian church. Standing in front of Ascension Church in Utena and waiting to greet us was a young priest with a smile as big as Lithuania. I'm always amazed at the personalities and the sense of humor the people who help others possess. You would think that after dealing day after day with what seems to be no end to other people's problems that they would be depressed. But I found the opposite is true. Another thing that totally amazed me was the church grounds and rectory were bustling with activity. It seemed everyone had a purpose and most of it was helping someone else.

Our first stop was the rectory where boxes and boxes of food staples were lined up against the steps. The food is bought in bulk to save money and then divided into smaller lots for distribution. Father Kalvaitis didn't seem to mind that he practically had to maneuver his way around the hall of his own house. Perhaps this is where his youth pays off.

Father was ordained in 1994 in Christ the King Cathedral in Panevezys. According to him, "God's greatest gift is for one to be called to the Priesthood, to serve God and His People in His Name and for His Love's Sake." He serves God and he certainly serves God's people. His dream is to help all in need.

Father to Homeless Men



Father Saulius Kalvaitis

Most people don't have a problem dealing with babies and small children, but for others having to work with homeless men might seem to be less than a perfect situation. But Father saw a great need to help these men. Their stories, experiences, and problems are as varied as the men themselves. Like a good and caring father he has a great sense of humor, but he has rules and regulations that each man must follow. The men have single beds and the rooms are dormitory style. Each man must make his bed and keep his space clean. There are eight beds available, but during emergency situations room has been made

for eleven men. At this time the men range in age from thirty to sixty. Father counsels them about their problems believing you have to find the root of the problem before you can find the cure. He makes sure they have help with their medical problems. Then he helps them find jobs. Even more difficult is to be sure they keep their jobs. This in itself can be a monumental task.

Every man must share in duties around the grounds and rectory. Their meals consist of hearty, nutritious food. His ideal would be to have them either back with their families or living on their own after a six month period. In a perfect world this would be the case. Do they ever fail? Of course they do, but there are no recriminations or accusations. He just starts all over with them. These are men who have many, many problems including addictions. They are treated with dignity and respect. To date, thirty seven men have been housed. I wonder where these men would be today without Father Kalvaitis' help? I wonder how many would even be alive today? How do you thank someone who has given you your life back, along with your self respect?

Children, Children Everywhere

Although the church houses the Food Pantry where food is distributed once a month, Father Kalvaitis had a gnawing feeling when it came to the local children. During the school year and during the week they received a meal once a day. But what happened to them on weekends, holidays and during the summer when the schools were closed? Each and every one of these children came from socially poor and disadvantaged families. So Father started helping a few of them. But like the "Pied Piper" they kept increasing in numbers. Now there are twenty to thirty children who have a meal when the schools are closed. It isn't fancy food, but like the men's menu, it is hearty and nutritious. Father really hopes to feed at least

fifty children during this summer. But it's not only food for the body these children are receiving. They are receiving food for the heart and for the soul. Someone cares about them, someone worries about them. And someone is there to listen to their problems and dry their tears. At the same time they are receiving instructions without even knowing they are being taught. They learn you don't grab the bread from someone else, you speak in a normal tone and you wash your hands before coming to the table. Of course, you thank God for the food in front of your place. Education and good behavior in school are stressed. As for the older children, without knowing it, they are learning to be volunteers, something that is sorely needed in Lithuania. After fifty years of communism and the "every man for himself" mentality they now feel good about helping the younger children. Who knows how these young people will grow up? Perhaps one of them will find the cure for cancer. But to have any future, they have to be given a chance.



Father Kalvaitis has the time and the patience for his programs. His dream is to expand them to help even more men and children. But lack of money is always facing him. His parish is in a poor area. The parishioners donate what they can from their gardens. This is a great help during the summer, but as we all know, summer is short in Lithuania and children have to eat all year.

Father Kalvaitis is not a man who seeks honors or publicity, but he is a realist. He knows he can't do this on his own and after seeing the good work he does, I once again come to you, the Bridges readers, as I have so many times in more than fifteen years of writing.

This would be a wonderful and meaningful way to honor a father, grandfather, uncle or brother. Again, not to sound sexist, it is a beautiful way to remember and honor anyone. I know that many people are hesitant about sending checks to Lithuania so once again I have

imposed upon Sister Janet Gardner who never hesitated for a moment to help.

Checks are tax deductible and should be written to:
Sisters of St. Francis

You must write LITHUANIAN MISSION –
Father Kalvaitis on the memo part of the check.

Please mail to:

Sister Janet Gardner
Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God
3603 Mc Roberts Road
Pittsburgh, PA. 15234

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.

From last unpublished Poems

*With horror-wide eyes
we saw foreign tanks,
saw foreign feet
trample our land,
heard a foreign tongue....
Through floods of tears we watched
in the old Kaunas railroad station
trains with cross-barred doors,
heard sobs and screams.*

*Then came the long nights
when we lay fully dressed
and listened to the roar of engines
on our quiet suburban streets
winding toward the Nemunas
(which back then was still
a clean and happy river).*

*We lay fully dressed
by a bundle of clothes and bread.
Fully dressed,
by a bundle of clothes and bread.
Waiting.*

Was it our turn?

This is how my childhood ended.

Janina Degutyte

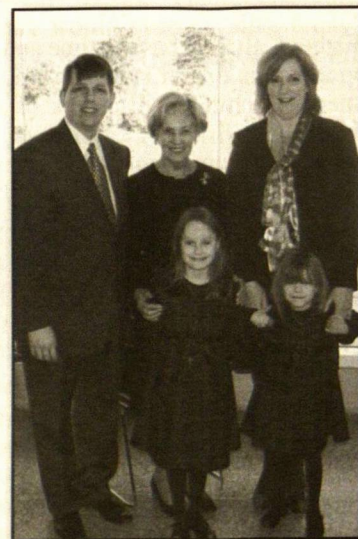
Poezija/Poems

Selected and translated

M. G. Slavenas

(Lithuanian Writers' Union Publishers, Vilnius, 2003)

Adopted Children Meet Mrs. Alma Adamkienė



In February, Mrs. Alma Adamkienė accompanied her husband, Valdas Adamkus, the President of the Republic of Lithuania to Washington, DC. During the morning of February 10th, Mrs. Adamkienė visited the K. Donelaitis Lithuanian School in Rockville, Maryland. After this visit, she was invited to the home of Tomas and Rūta Skucas to meet families who have adopted children from Lithuania.

Since international adoption has gotten very negative press in Lithuania, my friend, Rūta Kalvaitis Skucas, and I wanted to take this once in a lifetime opportunity to show Mrs. Adamkienė how loved these children are, and how well they are doing. After many phone calls and e-mails between the adoptive parents, the Lithuanian Embassy in Washington and some other contacts, Rūta pulled off an impossible task. Mrs. Adamkienė attended a reception at the Skucas home in Darnestown, Maryland. Attending the reception were thirteen families who have adopted from Lithuania. Each family had the opportunity to introduce themselves and tell the First Lady of

Lithuania how our families were formed through the miracle of adoption from Lithuania. My husband, Paul, and I introduced our daughters, Lina and Sonata. We told Mrs. Adamkienė how grateful we were to the Lithuanian government and everyone who had a part in helping us complete our family. We told her how lucky we are to be the parents of such kind, sweet and loving little girls. To that she smiled the smile of a woman who truly loves children. She was pleasantly surprised at how hard the parents work to maintain the Lithuanian heritage, traditions and language for our children. She also was told that we have a vested interest in keeping the children connected and the great lengths many of us have taken to make sure that happens. As an example, Tomas and Rūta's son, Daumantas, and our daughter, Sonata were crib mates at the "Lopšelis" orphanage in Kaunas, Lithuania and that has led to a continued relationship

for them but it has also created a strong friendship between our two families.

Our family was doubly lucky that weekend. On Sunday, February 11th there was a Lithuanian Independence Day Celebration hosted by the Washington Lithuanian American Community at Catholic University that we were able to attend. Not only did we get another chance to speak with the First Lady but we were able to meet President Adamkus as well. I was struck by how kind he is but, especially, by his gentle nature when speaking with Lina and Sonata.

It is our hope that when there are negative comments in regard to international adoption, that President and Mrs. Adamkus will say that they have witnessed first hand how these children, who would have otherwise lived a life without the love of the family, are thriving. And we parents – celebrating all of the joy, love and laughter that our children have brought into our lives.

By Barbara Weingarten



Just the kids at the 2006 picnic.

SATURDAY:

Family picnic, including food, fun, crafts, and photo ops galore!

Teen Evening Activity

Organizational Meeting for LAPAS (Lithuanian Adoptive Parents Association)

SUNDAY:

Breakfast on the Farm

Group attendance at the Knights of Lithuania Festival in Frackville, PA

Further information is available by contacting Gina Pollock-

rmprhp@yahoo.com

James Tomalonis-

cedar-springs@comcast.net or

Ruta Skucas - RutaKS@aol.com

Group shot of everyone at the 2006 picnic.



4th Annual Lithuanian Adoption Gathering

The Fourth Annual Lithuanian Adoption Picnic will be held August 10-12, 2007 in Mill Hall, PA at the Tomalonis family farm. Events run from Friday evening through Sunday afternoon, including:

FRIDAY:

Pizza and Pool Party for Dads & Kids at the Tomalonis Farm
Mom's Night Out



Timothy (Titas) Pollock at the 2006 picnic.



Darius Skucas at 2006 picnic (OK, he's not adopted but it's a cute picture w/chocolate face :-)

Officers' preacher on patrol 50 years

April 30, 2007

JOLIET -- Each morning before Mass, the Rev. Vytas Memenas has breakfast with a feisty group of women known as The Breakfast Club at St. Anthony Catholic Church, where he is pastor.

He also spends a lot of time fraternizing with people in uniform as chaplain for the Will County Sheriff's Department and Illinois Fraternal Order of Police.

Memenas, 78, has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for the poor and homeless, makes frequent hospital and nursing home visits and has been recognized for his missionary efforts.

Memenas is a pastor to many in the area, having served at churches in the Joliet Diocese since 1957.

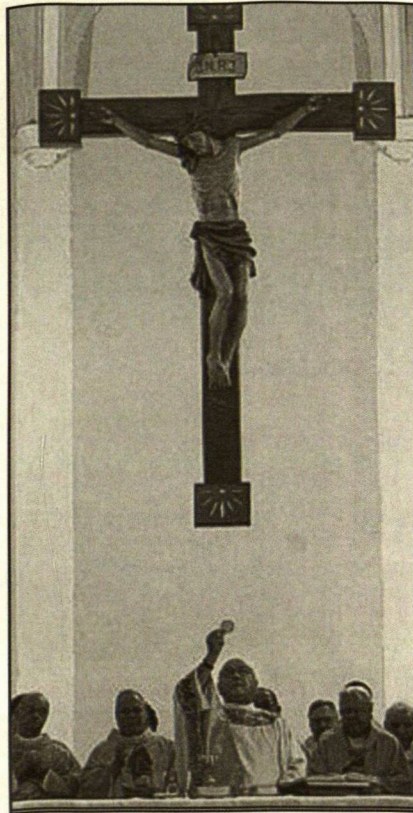
On Sunday, his friends gathered at St. Patrick Catholic Church to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his ordination, an event that included an honor guard of Will County sheriffs and Joliet police and a buffet lunch.

Besides his generosity for the less fortunate, Memenas is known for his passion for life and liberty.

"He's very patriotic," said Dorene Martello of Frankfort, a friend and former parishioner. "He knows that freedom is not free."

Shadows of Hitler, Stalin

Born in Lithuania in 1929, Memenas was a teenager living under the dictatorships of Joseph Stalin and Adolph Hitler. In



The Rev. Vytas Memenas (center) celebrates Mass and his 50th anniversary in the priesthood on Sunday at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Joliet.

(Scott A. Taras/Staff photographer)

1944, Memenas' family fled Lithuania, crossing by train into Germany where they lived in a refugee camp for five years.

In 1950 his family moved to America without Memenas, who had a scholarship to study at the Gregorian University in Rome to become a Roman Catholic priest.

He was ordained April 28, 1957, and joined the Joliet Diocese.

Memenas served as pastor of St. Mary Church in Mokena from 1972 to 1978, St. Patrick Church in Joliet from 1978 to 1990 and St. Anthony Church in Frankfort from 1990 to 1999. He has been pastor of St. Anthony Church in Joliet since 1999.

"He's quite a guy. He's a pretty amazing guy," said Mike Goode, a St. Patrick parishioner. "He's a straight talker. He doesn't pull any punches."

The St. Anthony Breakfast Club ladies noted his compassion for the elderly, sick and dying. Others noted his compassion for those in the line of fire.

Memenas has a soft spot for police and those in the armed forces. His father, George, was a police officer in Lithuania in the 1940s until he was fired and targeted for deportation by the communist government.

While he didn't follow in his father's career footsteps, Memenas served as chaplain for the Joliet Police Department from 1979 to 1995, and as Frankfort Police Department chaplain from 1994 to 2004.

Now, along with his chaplain duties, he serves as a member of Joliet's board of police and fire commissioners.

When Joliet Police Chief Fred Hayes was a patrolman he took Memenas for a few ride-alongs in his squad car. "Always" comes through "Vytas has been an inspirational leader for the men and women of the Joliet Police Department for many years. He has always come through for us," Hayes said. "We still consider him a member of our chaplain team."

Will County Sheriff Paul Kaupas said when he was elected he asked Memenas to serve as the department chaplain.

"He told me, 'I'm going to ride along with your people, but don't expect me to tell you what they say. I'm not a tattletale,'" Kaupas said. "He's a great guy. I wouldn't



On Sunday, friends of the Rev. Vytas Memenas gathered at St. Patrick Catholic Church to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his ordination, an event that included an honor guard of Will County sheriffs

(Scott A. Taras/Staff photographer)

trade him for anything."

Leonard Hohisel, a retired Joliet firefighter and city motor maintenance supervisor, serves with Memenas on the police and fire board.

"He's got good insight and wisdom. He wants the best that there is for the fire and police, he doesn't cut any corners," Hohisel said. "You know he's a priest, but he's also a wonderful man."

Contact Janet Lundquist at
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Special thanks to Janet Lundquist.

Bridges congratulates Father Memenas on this happy occasion.

TRIVIA QUESTION

(No. 15)

Back in prehistoric times, who do you think dominated the culture in Lithuania?

- (a) Men (b) Women
(c) Children (d) In-Laws

Answer to Trivia
on page 13

News and Views

Lithuanian Honorary Consul in U.S. Jurgutis passed away.

Vilnius, - Jurgis Jurgutis, Lithuanian honorary Consul in the State of Michigan (U.S.), died on April 30 in the United States of America.

"Lithuania and the U.S. Lithuanian community lost a bright man, a patriot who worked for the merits of Lithuanian nation and was representing the interests of the Republic of Lithuania in the State of Michigan from 2001," a letter of condolence from Lithuanian Foreign Minister Petras Vaitiekunas to the family of the honorary consul reads. 72-year-old Jurgutis worked as the Lithuanian honorary consul since 2001.

President calls on to focus on employment

Kaisiadorys (ELTA) - In our society too little of attention is paid to the opportunities of safe leisure and meaningful activities for youth, which subsequently brings serious problems such as alcohol and drug addiction, President Valdas Adamkus stated on Tuesday during his visit to the educational and cultural establishments of Kaisiadoriai municipality where he vested interest in the issues relating to employment of young people.

When stressing the role of municipalities in organizing spare time of young people, the head of state highlighted that after school activities is an important assistance to families and a necessary condition for successful integration of young generation into modern society.

"It is necessary to draw up youth employment programs and the Government should be more active in implementing this task. We must deal with this issue as it is bringing up new problems to our society, which require great resources," Adamkus explained.

When speaking about the quality of youth development, the Lithuanian president emphasized that youth employment programs should be attractive to all and should include not only gifted children from rich families.

The leader of state also met with the pupils of primary schools at the Rumsiskiu Folk Art Museum.

The president stressed the importance of close cooperation between local authorities, schools, cultural centers, non-governmental youth organizations and the communities in the field of youth employment.

We will decisively defend rights of our state - Adamkus

Vilnius, - In the light of the forthcoming elections in Russia, the information attacks and pressure experienced by Estonia may spread to other Baltic states. Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus claims that in this case Lithuania would decisively protect its rights of a sovereign state.

"If we speak about Lithuania, I think we will decisively and strongly defend the rights of our sovereign state, especially in the light of our membership in the EU," Adamkus claimed to Ziniu Radijas.

The president stated that the present day conflict with Estonia should force the EU to speak more strictly with Russia.

"I am sure that the example of Estonia will not allow the EU leadership to prolong this time and this matter will be made public," said Adamkus.

"The EU should strictly and clearly tell Russia: make a decision, any further similar actions close the doors and abandon any cooperation with the EU member states," said the head of state to Ziniu Radijas on Tuesday.

Prestigious U.S. university awards Adamkus a degree of honorary doctor

Vilnius, (ELTA) - Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus on Wednesday will leave for the United States of America. At the Commencement ceremony to be held on Sunday, the Lithuanian President will receive an honorary doctor's

Continued on page 19

MOTHER MARIA KAUPAS

*MOTHER MARIA KAUPAS
AND THE SISTERS OF
ST. CASIMIR*

CHICAGO MOURNS ITS SECOND CABRINI, read the headlines of the city's prominent newspaper in April, 1940 upon the death of Mother Maria Kaupas, foundress of the Sisters of St. Casimir. The young Casimira, an immigrant from Lithuania, would have been shocked to see herself so described. To her, her life story was a sincere response to the Lord's call and her desire to help a hurting humanity as she witnessed it in the lives of the Lithuanian immigrants coming to the US at the turn of the 20th century. In reality, she had done what Mother Cabrini had done for her people. The most significant parallel of resemblance was their zeal manifested particularly in bringing help to the poor and needy.

Upon her arrival to America in 1897 to Scranton, PA, as a 17 year old housekeeper for her priest brother, Father Anthony Kaupas, the young Casimira, witnessed the plight of the Lithuanian immigrant parishioners at St. Joseph Church and the surrounding vicinity. Here in America, she recognized the danger in this time of change. She knew the material influence would steal from their children's souls the faith and language of their fathers. The Priests' League in Pennsylvania was earnestly in search of ways to counteract this and assist their parish children.

While here in the US, during her brief stay Casimira experienced a culture shock and so after four years she returned to her homeland seeking the prayerfulness of her parish and family and also to contemplate her life's meaning. In Scranton she

had seen Sisters for the first time and was deeply attracted to their way of life. She finally resolved to return to the United States and enter a religious community.

Before returning to America to enter a religious community, Casimir wrote to her brother and a priest friend, Rev. A. Milukas studying in Switzerland, telling of her intentions. Her brother and Father Milukas responded by saying the Priests' League would like her to establish a religious congregation to teach the youth in the schools they would build. Casimira with great trust in the Lord agreed to this. After schooling and religious training with the Sisters of Mercy in Ingenbohl, Switzerland, in 1905, she and two other young women went to Scranton, PA to further their studies for religious life and ministry under the direction of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. With the help of a few priests and most especially the support of Bishop John Shanahan of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania these three young women began to lay the foundation for a new religious community. In 1907, Casimira Kaupas, Judith Dvaranauskas and Antanina Unguraitis became known as Sister Maria, Sister M. Immaculata and Sister M. Concepta and thus the Sisters of St. Casimir were established to educate both in faith and knowledge this growing generation of Lithuanian children.

The young Congregation began to grow in numbers with young American, Lithuanian girls entering from the east coast and the Midwest. Within two years there was a need to build a Motherhouse and Chicago was chosen as the site for it was here the largest concentration of



Lithuanian immigrants were living and working. Construction plans began in 1909 and in January 1911 Sister Maria and a few of her companions moved into the first Motherhouse. Here the Sisters were housed and in September a school known as St. Casimir Academy was opened. The school was under the direction of Mother M. Gabriel, IHM, of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters from Scranton for two years, because the new Congregation was too young to govern itself according to Canon Law. In 1913, Sister Maria was elected to be Mother Maria, the Superior General of the Sisters of St. Casimir. She was repeatedly elected to govern the Congregation for the next 27 years until her death.

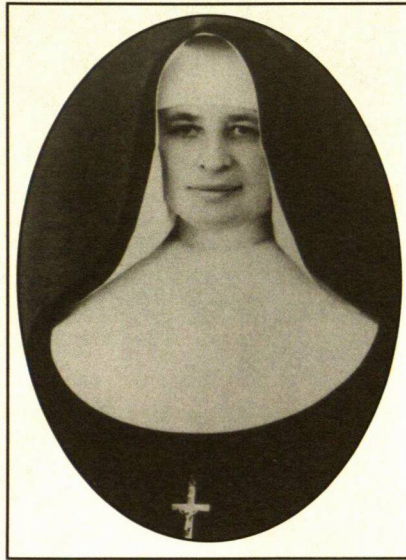
Within ten years of the Motherhouse's construction, nine Lithuanian parish schools were opened in the Chicago area and were staffed by the Sisters of St. Casimir. During this period of rapid building and growth of parishes and schools in the early 1900's within the Chicago Archdiocese and other dioceses, Mother Maria, as General Superior, faithfully visited

the parish schools, seeing to it that classes and the total organization of the school were of the highest standards. As long as she was able, she acted as the Congregation's School Supervisor. As the Community grew in size and number she appointed Sisters for this important role in Catholic education.

Soon the needs of healthcare began to attract Mother Maria's attention. In 1918, during the influenza epidemic gripping the nation, Mother Maria wrote to one of her teaching Sisters in Pennsylvania:

A... in Chicago about 200 people die daily from that sickness. Those of us here are envious of you, for we are unable to act as nurses, as we must teach. The services of the teaching Sisters are not yet required for the sick. So we see that things are better with us in Chicago, than for you. But, you see the eagerness of the Sisters; they would like to help the entire world if they could!

In 1928 responding to growing health needs, Mother Maria prepared her Sisters as nurses to staff Holy Cross and Loretto Hospitals in Chicago. Later the congregation staffed five hospitals throughout the Midwest. Under Mother Maria's leadership the Congregation began to grow in size and numbers. Many schools were staffed throughout the United States from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast. Under her direction Sisters were sent for further education in music, art, and languages. The Sisters brought their education to fruition by writing religion books, and Lithuanian and English reading books for the elementary grades. Sister M. Bernarda composed a Mass which was performed by the Chicago Symphony and under the direction of several Sisters of St. Casimir Art



teachers the high school students won many awards for their presentations.

In 1937, upon the special request of a Franciscan Father, Mother sent her Sisters to the Chicago archdiocese's home missions in New Mexico and they subsequently served in 5 schools there. Life was difficult for the Sisters teaching in the poorer sections of the towns, yet they radiated joy, as they used orange crates as dressers for their clothing and put up with other inconveniences. In her wisdom Mother Maria encouraged the Sisters to teach the children where they were in life and not try to impose a new culture upon them. Mother Maria had a true missionary heart and thus she was planning to send Sisters to Argentina, South America in 1939 to work among the Lithuanian immigrants there. This however, only became a reality in 1941 shortly after her untimely death on April 17, 1940 at the age of 60.

In 1943, three years after her painful death from cancer, with the approval of Samuel Cardinal Stritch, a prayer card was issued praying for the beatification of Mother Maria Kaupas. Along with her great accomplishments in both education and health-

care, her heroic virtuous life was greatly noted during her life time by so many people. In the midst of caring for her Sisters and their mission, she nurtured and reflected the Lord truly alive within. On June 3, 1986, Mother Maria Kaupas was named, A Servant of God. In 1999, a 706 page book known as the *Positio* was completed by Sister Margaret Petcavage, reflecting Mother Maria's life historically and presented in light of her life of heroic virtue. The *Positio* is currently under review in Rome by the Office of the Congregation of Saints.

Today the Sisters of St. Casimir continue in the apostolates of health care and education as well as pastoral ministry. They sponsor three institutions, Holy Cross Hospital and Maria High School in Chicago and Villa Joseph Marie High School in Holland, Pennsylvania. In addition to sponsoring and staffing these three institutions, the Sisters of St. Casimir continue to work in the cities of Buenos Aires and Cordoba, Argentina.

Providence has a way of directing events, and though we do admit that the Lord is the One controlling the destinies of nations, we continue to be amazed as to the generous response of the young Casimira Kaupas, her zeal to sacrifice everything, her home, her country, her personal advantages to help the Lord's poor and needy. Known as a "A Woman of Hope" Mother Maria continues to instill this hope in the hearts of all with her daily lived conviction that, God is within us, and all that He grants or permits flows from the love He has for us.

*Sister Margaret Petcavage, SSC
Sisters of St. Casimir*

Continued on page 13

WILHELM KARL
HERZOG VON URACH
**THE MAN
WHO WOULD
HAVE BEEN
KING**

Though most Lithuanians are immensely knowledgeable and proud of their ancient royal leaders such as Mingaudas, Kestutis, Algardis, and Vytautas, few are aware that the nation in 1917-1918 had considered the re-establishment of a monarchy. Self rule in Lithuania ceased to exist when Russia, Prussia, and Austria partitioned and abolished the old Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795. Though the Lithuanians tried to regain their independence fighting in Napoleon's Legions and during insurrections in 1831, 1863-1864, and 1905, Russian rule was firm when World War I commenced.

Though the war raged along the eastern front during the winter of 1915, the German Army had succeeded in driving the Russians from Lithuania. A German military administration was imposed upon the country and all public life suppressed. Even the Russian ruble was withdrawn from circulation and replaced with an Ostmark printed in German, Lithuanian, and Latvian. With continued German victories on the eastern front it appeared that Russia would soon be defeated.

As nationalist movement began to grow in the former Russian occupied east, the Germans attempt to organize their own local representational governments. When a German sponsored State Council of Poland was established, Lithuanian patriots quickly sought similar independence and struggle to avoid being attached to a new Poland. Without waiting for German permission the Lithuanians managed to call a conference in Vilnius to discuss their independence from the Russian Empire. Such an effort was looked up with favor by the German military believing that the new nation would quickly move for annexation to the German Reich.



When the Council of Lithuania (Lietuvos Taryba) issued the Lithuanian Declaration of Independence, on February 16th, 1918, the Germans attempted to take advantage of the situation. Not making any mention of the Lithuanian Declaration of Independence, Kaiser Wilhelm II issued a writ of recognition which closely bound the Lithuanian State to Germany. The Reich hoped that such an act would result in the establishment of a Lithuanian Kingdom which would seek union with German State similar to the Kingdoms of Prussia and Saxony. The Kaiser even promoted the candidacy of one of his sons to the Lithuanian royal throne.

Realizing the fragile nature of its existence, the members of the Lithuanian government sought ways to work with the German military that still controlled the nation. Reserved support for the establishment of a Lithuanian Kingdom was acknowledged while the Lithuanians attempt to make such a decision as a drawn out process as possible. To curtail the German effort to link the new Lithuanian state to the Kaiser, the Lithuanians tendered the crown of Lithuania to Wilhelm Karl Herzog von Urach the son of the King of Wurttemberg.

For many, Prince Wilhelm was a perfect choice. The Royal House of Wurttemberg could directly trace their ancestry to ancient Lithuanian King Mindaguas and unlike the Kaiser's family were Roman Catholic. He was the son of Wilhelm Herzog Von Urach and Florestine Grimaldi Princesses de Monaco. Wilhelm

was born in Monaco on March 3, 1863, and raised as a monarch. His wife was Princess Amalie Maria Herzogin of Bayern and they had nine children fully eligible for royal succession.

In July 1918, the Lithuanian Taryba officially offered the crown of Lithuania to Wilhelm Karl Herzog von Urach who accepted and announced his intention to rule as King Mindove II in honor of his ancestor. All available sources indicated that Wilhelm was looking forward to his reign and had commenced learning the Lithuanian language in anticipation of his crowning.

Though Prince Wilhelm was willing and apparently fully capable of becoming the King of Lithuania it was not to be. Though the Czar had abdicated and the Russians had withdrawn from the war, the German war effort in the west had turned against them. With America's entry into the war, Germany was doomed to defeat. With the loss of the war, the great plans of the Kaiser for an expanded German state in the east ended. Not only would there not be a King Mindove II of Lithuania, but the Kaiser himself was forced to renounce the German throne. On November 2, 1918, the State of Council of Lithuania revoked its tender of the crown to Prince Urach and declared that a universally elected assembly would determine what form of government the nation would have. One can wonder what kind of state a Kingdom of Lithuania would have been, but such a dream ended with the fall of the royal houses of Europe.

"Though not actually proclaimed the King of Lithuania, Wilhelm proudly continued to use this title for the rest of his life. He died after a long and productive life, on March 24, 1928, in Rapallo, Italy, as the man who would have been the King of the Kingdom of Lithuania. His blood line still runs strong and his decadence can still be found among the prominent royal house of Europe."

Henry Gaidis

Henry Gaidis is a contributor to Bridges. He is a member of the Board of Directors of JBANC and among his many interests is military history.

Continued from page 11

MOTHER MARIA KAUPAS

Vice Postulator

2601 W Marquette Road, Chicago, IL 60629

Tel: (773) 776-1324

Editor's Note: Save the date:

Sisters of St. Casimir

100th Anniversary Celebration. September 8, 2007

Mass of Thanksgiving at

Nativity B.V.M. Church

6812 S. Washtenaw Ave.

Chicago, IL.

Francis Cardinal George, Celebrant

6 pm -

100th Anniversary Banquet

Drury Lane - Oak Brook, IL.

Information: Contact Sister Margaret Petcavage

If you are unable to attend and would like to help the Sisters with their work, please consider sending them a financial gift. In their hundred years of service and dedication they have helped thousands of people. Your donations are needed to help them continue the work started by Mother Maria Kaupas. Bridges congratulates the Sisters of St. Casimir and wishes them God's blessings. Thank you for your dedication and service to others.

ANSWER TO TRIVIA QUESTION

Trivia Quiz

on page 9

In the book,

LITHUANIAN CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

by Danute Brazyte Bindokiene, she wrote:

"Since earlier times, the Lithuanians have had a highly developed family structure. It is believed that in prehistoric times Lithuania had a matriarchal culture, that is, the right of inheritance went from mother to daughter. A married woman, wife and mother, was always held in high esteem and honor. For example Lietuvos Statutas (Lithuanian Law) published in 1588 states that the penalty for murdering a wife-mother was twice as severe as for killing or injuring a man.

The married woman owned and managed the family's property. The welfare of the homestead and family was determined by her industriousness and talents. The Lithuanian woman's kindness, piety, loyalty to her country and family was widely lauded in copious folklore and honored in written literature".

Edward Shakalis is a retired Electrical Engineer and a ham radio operator. He and his son Rick run "The Lithuanian Open" golf tournament.

SIBERIA

A general name applied to the northern part of Asia extending from the Altai Mountains in the south to the Arctic Ocean in the north, and from the Urals to the Pacific on the east. It comprises a vast area of 15 million square kilometers with a population of 57 million. In the narrow sense (excluding Soviet Central Asia and Kazakhstan), Siberia is the designation for an area of 12 million square kilometers, with 26 million inhabitants. An immense but sparsely populated region rich in natural resources, it began to be more intensively colonized after World War I under the Soviet regime. The exploitation of mineral and energy resources, the cutting of timber forests, the construction of roads and new cities, and other projects required manpower, which was provided by so-called "enemies of the people" from various nations. Due to the arduous work, the extreme climate, and enforced hunger most of these modern day slaves died before their time, giving Siberia the name "cemetery of nations."

For Lithuanians Siberia is not merely a geographical name. It is a word synonymous with the genocide begun during the period of Tsarist rule. Since the end of the 17th century Siberia had been used as a place of exile for criminal and political offenders. Some of them were exiled by order of the administrative organs, others by decision of the law courts. The former remained free but had to settle in a designated location; this was called *sylka* (banishment). The latter were sentenced to hard labor and were often kept in chains; this was known as *katorga* (forced labor). The first Lithuanians to experience banishment to Siberia were the leaders of the 1794 uprising precipitated by the second partition of Lithuania in 1793 (see Partitions). A larger group met the same fate after the insurrection of 1831. Having served the prescribed ten year term, some of the exiles returned to their homeland, others remained in Siberia.



Map of forced labor camp for Baltic deportees in Siberia.

Still larger numbers of Lithuanians found themselves in Siberia because of the 1863 anti-Russian uprising. In quelling the insurrection the authorities burned entire villages (Ibėnai, Mišikaičiai, Užpaliai), and their inhabitants were marched to Siberia on foot. Many of them died along the way. Mikhail N. Muraviev (q.v.), governor general of Vilnius, indicated in his report that 1,427 persons were deported on his direct orders alone. Other governors doubled that figure. Except for those sentenced to *katorga*, the exiles were allowed to settle freely in the assigned locations, mostly in the provinces of Tobolsk and Tomsk in western Siberia; a small number was taken to the Krasnoyarsk and Irkutsk regions in eastern Siberia. However, priests and monks were subjected to much harsher treatment. In 1866, some 200 Catholic priests from Lithuania, Poland, and Russia were herded into the Tunka concentration camp in eastern Siberia and guarded by special Cossack units. The names of 50 Lithuanian priests have been discovered in various sources. In 1876 they received permission to move to other regions of the Russian Empire, excluding Lithuania. Throughout the forty-year period of the Press Ban (1864-1904), when not only the Lithuanian

press but any kind of cultural and organizational activity was suppressed by the Russian government, arrest and deportation were used to discourage the smuggling of books and newspapers from abroad, the teaching of Lithuanian in clandestine village schools, participation in illegal organizations, evasion of conscription into the Russian army, and other acts of resistance to the Tsarist regime in Lithuania. The revolution of 1905 called forth the last wave of mass deportation, but individuals continued to be exiled up until World War I.

Most of the persons exiled in connection with the 1863 uprising returned to Lithuania after fifteen years, but there were those that had acquired land in Siberia and chose to stay. Subsequently other Lithuanians came to settle in Siberia voluntarily, mostly farmers who had been drawn by rumors of good farming conditions. Thus several sizeable Lithuanian communities formed in Siberia, the largest of which was in the Tomsk province, where the settlers, clustering in groups, named the localities after the villages they had left behind in Lithuania, for example, Baisogala, Bemava, Šeduva. Lithuanians at the University of Tomsk, established in 1880 as the first such institution in Siberia, had their own society and an amateur acting

group. In the town of Spassk (now Kuibyshev) a Catholic church was built in 1885 through the efforts of Lithuanians, of whom there were some 1,500 in the parish. At the time of the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, begun in 1891, many Lithuanians from all walks of life settled in the newly arising and already established towns along the entire route. From 1900-25 Rev. Juozas Demikis served as pastor and vicar apostolic of the Catholic parish of Tomsk, which extended over the entire province (700,000 sq. km). Smaller Lithuanian settlements were located in Omsk, Tiumen, Tobolsk, and elsewhere. In eastern Siberia Lithuanian communities existed in Krasnoirsk (ca 200 people) in Irkutsk (ca 100) and in Chita near the Manchurian border. Individual Lithuanian families lived scattered throughout all of Central Asia, but the largest concentration was in Tashkent. Rev. Justinas Pranaitis (q.v.), who resided in the city from 1900-17, ministered to the spiritual needs of 18,000 Catholics spread over an area of 5 million sq. km. At the time of the 1917 Russian Revolution Siberia became the home for masses of refugees fleeing the Bolsheviks. A great many Lithuanians came to the Omsk, Novo-Nikolavsk (now Novosibirsk) and Tomsk regions. In 1918 the Lithuanian Central Committee was organized in Tomsk to represent the Lithuanians of Siberia and to provide aid to refugees; it published the newspaper *Sibiro Lietuvių Žinios* (Siberian Lithuanian News, 1919). Lithuanian soldiers who were serving in the Russian army formed their own company in 1918, in the southeast Urals; it consisted of 116 soldiers and 2 officers. In 1919 the unit was reorganized into the Vytautas the Great battalion, which included 600 soldiers and 20 officers. During the retreat of the Allied troops from Siberia, the battalion boarded a train for transport to Vladivostok, but at the Cherepanov station it was surrounded by the Bolsheviks.



Lithuanians working in Siberian forests.

On Dec. 9, 1919, in the village of Cheremushkin, five officers and two soldiers were hacked to death with swords. By 1922 all of Siberia as far as the Pacific was under Soviet control. Following the reestablishment of independent Lithuania, most of the refugees returned to their homeland.

Soviet Russia not only continued the Tsarist policy of using Siberia as a penal colony, but also took more drastic colonization measures by forcibly resettling large segments of the Russian rural population. From 1929-33 alone more people were exiled to Siberia than during 200 years of Tsarist rule. The population increased from 10.4 million in 1914 to 22 million in 1939 despite the fact that in the first years of exile from 20-30% of the newcomers would die from cold, famine, and difficult work conditions. As in Tsarist times, some deportees were allowed to settle freely, others were confined in concentration and forced labor camps across Siberia from the Urals to the Bering Strait. During this same period the Supreme Administration of Labor Camps (*Glavnoe Upravlenie Lagerei* = GULAG) came into existence. The Russian author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who had been incarcerated in concentration camps, used the name of that agency

in the title of his book *Archipelag Gulag* (1969), which refers to a network of slave labor camps where millions of people suffered and died. The *Gulag archipelago* was replenished considerably by the inhabitants of countries annexed during World War II and the postwar years.

The deportation of Lithuanians to Siberia was already foreseen by Moscow in 1939, when Lithuania was still independent. After the Soviet army invaded Lithuania on June 15, 1940, some 2,000 Lithuanians prominent in politics, the media, education, commerce, and industry were immediately arrested and imprisoned. Arrests of individuals continued throughout the year and involved an additional 10,000 people. The arrested were sentenced without trial, and most of them were deported to Siberia. During a year's time the plans were laid for mass deportation according to the model that had already been tested in the Soviet Union. This purging of Lithuania took place from June 14-20, 1941, when over 34,000 persons of various ages and professions were deported. Subsequent planned deportations were checked by the outbreak of Russian-German hostilities (June 22, 1941). The greater part of the deportees (ca 20,000 persons) were transported to the Altai region (Barnaul,

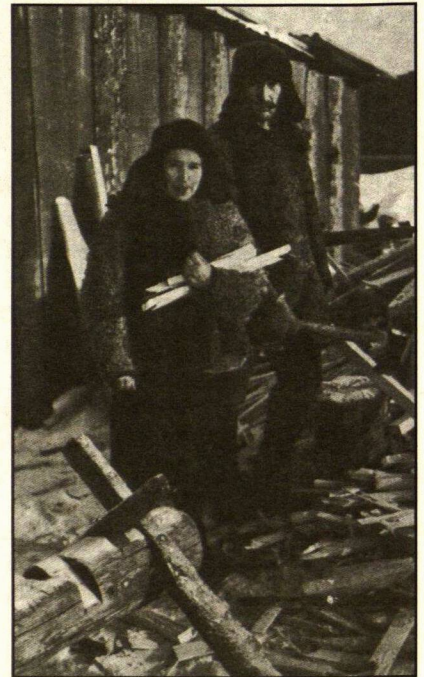
Biisk, Novosibirsk). After a year the weakest inmates, among them many women with small children, were weeded out from the Altai camps and taken to camps in arctic Siberia, where they were unable to long withstand the extreme rigors of climate and hard labor. In this way the GULAG administrators consciously rid themselves of unproductive prisoners.

After World War II with Lithuania remaining under Soviet occupation, thirteen additional directives for mass deportation were carried out between 1945-50 (see Deportation). It is believed that about 350,000 Lithuanians were deported from their homeland. The majority of them were dispersed throughout more than 100 Siberian camps. Each of these was a central facility administrating smaller units designated by numbers. For example, Magadan in the Far East was a regional center for a group of camps in the Aldan and Kolyma ranges, the most important gold mining districts of Soviet Russia. The conditions in the gold mines were so difficult that the first two years of work would take the lives of more than half of the slave labor force.

The greatest number of Lithuanians were imprisoned in the camps of eastern Siberia, which has a permanently frozen subsoil. Forced labor was used extensively in the exploitation of coal and iron ore, for clearing projects, for building roads and railroads, digging canals, drilling all wells, constructing new factories, cities, and ports, as well as for work in various industrial enterprises and some sovkhoses. Taishet in Krasnoiarisk was a regional center for 54 camps, ten of which held Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian women working in saw-mills and felling trees. The camps by the Lena and Ienisei rivers and on the coast of the Arctic Ocean were infamous for their extreme conditions. In the Lena delta on the small island of Trofimovsk was a fishing base, where some 1,000 Lithuanians worked under conditions of polar night; in the first years there, hundreds of older

individuals and children died. In another nearby camp, Mys Bykovskii, of several thousand inmates only several hundred remained alive after a few years. There was high mortality in the neighboring Tiksi and Tit-Ary camps. Near the lower reaches of the Ienisei river and in its delta larger camps were found in Igarka, Norilsk, Ust-port, Karaul, and Dickson on the Tamir peninsula. In Igarka a polar port was built on the banks of the Lena; 25,000 prisoners, among them 500 Lithuanians, worked on the project. Norilsk, the northernmost town of Soviet Russia with a population of 130,000 (1967), was built entirely by forced labor. The town began as a labor camp for Ukrainians (1932), and it grew up on the bones of the camp's inmates. According to the testimony of Joseph Berger, a former prisoner at Norilsk, about 500 Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian army officers, who were deported after the occupation of the Baltic States in 1940-41, were annihilated there. The greatest number of exiles from the Baltic countries was brought to Siberia in 1945. Under the worst conditions (the temperature in winter drops to -60°C) they mined nickel, cobalt, uranium, platinum, gold, and coal. There is information that in 1953 in three specific camps there were 5,200 inmates. In that same year Norilsk gained distinction for a strike by its prisoners; they refused to work in protest of brutal treatment by the camp's administration. The camps were surrounded, and 200 inmates were executed. Some 80,000 Lithuanians were held in camps throughout western Siberia.

From 1941-49 tens of thousands of Lithuanians were brought to Kazakhstan for coal mining, road construction, and work in heavy industry. The Kazakhstan region occupies third place in coal production in the U.S.S.R. The most deplorable conditions were endured by prisoners working in the coal mines, of which Vorkuta (q.v.) in the northern Urals is the most famous example. Having

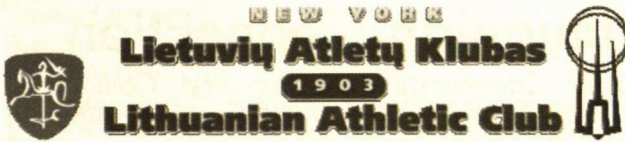


Husband and wife compelled to settle in the Siberian taiga.

served out their sentence, Lithuanians were forcibly settled near larger industrial centers and on collective farms. In 1954-56 the conversion of the uncultivated steppes into fertile farmland was undertaken. In pursuit of this Virgin Land Campaign the regime enlarged the number of exiles with so-called "volunteers" recruited mainly from among the ranks of malcontent youth. According to official Soviet statistics 25 ethnic groups are represented among the people of northern Kazakhstan. Through such "volunteers" and earlier deportations the population of Kazakhstan from 1939-59 was increased by 53%, eastern Siberia - 34%, the Far East -70%.

In 1956, three years after the death of Stalin, Krushchev denounced his predecessor's deportation of national minorities and proclaimed a general amnesty for the exiles. About a million deportees were allowed to return to their homelands. Nevertheless, many Baltic peoples have been forced to live in Siberia or in

Continued on page 22



New York Lithuanian Athletic Club (Lietuvių Atletų Klubas - LAK) was started in 1901 by 20 new immigrants from Lithuania living in Brooklyn, NY area. The Club was incorporated and received a charter on March 9, 1903. The charter was signed by Pius Wysniauskas, Jonas Liutkauskas, Jonas Palkauskas, Jonas Masilionis, Jonas Sumskis and Anupras Simonavicius. At that time the membership increased to about 200. The first president of the then LAK in NY was Jonas Palkauskas. The Club was located at 81 Metropolitan Ave.

The most critical years for the Club were 1906 and 1907. During this period Bill Welton (Osipauskas) rendered invaluable services to the organization by training boxing, wrestling and other sports. The early LAK survived and distinguished themselves in baseball, boxing, wrestling and weight lifting. Antanas Kundrotas, known as the "Lithuanian Lion", was a well known boxer. Juozas Zukauskas (aka Jack Sharkey), the heavyweight boxing champion of the world in the year of 1932 had been named the honorary member of the Club.

After World War I the LAK purchased a house at 168 Marcy Ave. in Brooklyn, NY. When Lithuania gained its independence the LAK provided financial support to the freed country of its ancestry.

The LAK founder Pius Wysniauskas was still active in the LAK organization when a new wave of immigrants arrived after World War II. After 1945 the new immigrants took over the LAK. Basketball, table tennis and chess became the major activities. In 1960 the New York Lithuanian Sports Club, which was a predominantly a soccer club, joined with the LAK, and until 1970 soccer was the main LAK activity. Our teams successfully participated in a German-American soccer league and won three North American Lithuanian soccer championships. In 1978 the LAK won gold medals in soccer during the first Lithuanian World Games, held in Toronto (Canada). But after the seventies the LAK activities turned to basketball, table tennis, tennis and volleyball. During this period the LAK regular member tennis superstar Vitas Gerulaitis became prominent. From 1972 to 1990 the NY LAK contributed \$500,000 for the building and upkeep of the Lithuanian Cultural Center in Brooklyn.

After Lithuania regained its independence once again in 1990, the LAK membership has increased significantly because of the third wave of immigrants. The LAK was in the forefront to establish relationship with the homeland. It formed a sister club relationship with Kauno "Pluo_tas" club and in the same year invited them to participate in the North American basketball, tennis, swimming and chess championships.

The NY LAK is a basketball empire among the Lithuanian clubs in the United States and Canada. It has won 12 North American men's basketball championships, more than any other Lithuanian club in the USA. It regularly holds practices at St. Vincent's gymnasium in Brooklyn every Friday.

All sports enthusiasts of Lithuanian heritage from Greater New York area are encouraged to join the Club and actively participate in not only athletic but various social events, organized by its board.

The Lithuanian Athletic Club (Lietuvių Atletų Klubas - LAK) is conducting a fundraiser right now. The organization, established more than 100 years ago, has been a unifying force in and around Greater New York for youth of Lithuanian heritage. The LAK currently holds basketball practice once a week in Brooklyn, NY (please check its website www.nylak.com for more details). The Club relies only on social functions, membership dues and fundraisers like these to finance our activities.

The LAK is a member of ŠALFASS (North American Lithuanian Physical Education and Sport Association - LAUNA). Each year LAUNA holds a North American multisport event consisting of basketball, volleyball and other sporting contests.

If you would like to help the club, please make checks payable to:

Lithuanian Athletic Club and send to:
 NY LAK Treasurer
 Attn.: Juozas Milukas
 21 Edgewood Road
 Darien, CT 06820

We extend our sincerest gratitude to all of our supporters. It is through all our combined efforts that Lithuanian events will continue to thrive in New York City.

Sincerely,
 NY LAK Sporting Games Organizing Committee
 Submitted by: Laurynas (Larry) R. Misevičius

The Seattle-Tasmania Lithuanian Connection

Off the southeastern tip of Australia, almost as far as you can get from Lithuania, lies the Island of Tasmania. But even on this distant edge of that Continent, Lithuanians have settled and then found ways to maintain their heritage. A case in point is the Lithuanian Studies Society at the University of Tasmania. In 1987 one of its students, Algimantas Taskunas, was instrumental in founding this Society, and then for years worked to achieve its stated goal of "encouraging academic interest in all aspects of Lithuania".

A variety of programs emerged: a yearly scholarship of \$5,000 was established in 1997; four dissertations on Lithuanian topics were defended; books were published; an annual journal, *Lithuanian Papers*, edited by A. Taskunas, is now in its 25th year of existence. And, to further augment resources for academic research, in November of 2005 the Society officially opened a library of materials on Lithuanian subjects.

We in Seattle recognize full well the significance of a strong library collection. With that in mind, in the fall of 2005, our Lithuanian American Community of Washington State shipped off some 60 lbs. of selected books and magazines either in Lithuanian, or in other languages on Lithuanian topics, material incidentally that already exists in our University of Washington Library. With this donation we were expressing our support for the Society's momentous work but also remembering their monetary contribution in the early 1990s for our own fledgling University of Washington Baltic Studies Program. The books and magazines, contributed by several generous members in our Community, have now arrived safely in Tasmania, as Dr. Taskunas writes:

Dear Mr. Miksys, in the name of the Lithuanian Studies Society, again I would like to thank you personally as well as your Lithuanian Community for your support in strengthening the Lithuanian Resource Library at the University of Tasmania. That is the first such library (ed. note: in Australia,) dedicated solely for books and magazines about Lithuania and Lithuanians.

Your Community was the first Community worldwide that donated an enormous shipment of books and also covered the mailing expenses. We are deeply grateful.

Perhaps you could give these kind donations wider publicity in the United States? It might be beneficial for all Lithuanians to know how fellow-Lithuanians helped spread the name of Lithuania in far-off Tasmania. Possibly other Communities might contribute to the strengthening of this Library? Thank you again. Dr. Algimantas Taskunas, OAM, A.Taskunas@utas.edu.au.

A library collection perpetually seeks growth. That is true for the Lithuanian Library at the University of Tasmania, as well as for our own Baltic Library at the University of Washington. Your donations always will be anticipated and valued.

Postscript

*In a recent email, A. Taskunas writes: Dear Ina, you've probably heard by now that your university library has sent us about 30 books; in thanking them, I reciprocated by shipping them a box with rare publications from this side of the world.**

Ina Bertulytė Bray

Ina Bertulytė Bray was president of the Lithuanian Community in Washington State for 12 years and has also served on the National Advisory Counsel of the Lithuanian-American Community. Her article first appeared in the May 2006 issue of "Tulpė Times."

93rd Lithuanian Days

AUGUST 11-12

Schuylkill Mall

Saturday 11am to 6 pm

Sunday Noon to 4:30 pm

Fun and entertainment for all!

**Schuylkill Mall is located at
intersection of Rte 61 & I-81
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**Sponsored by
Knights of Lithuania C-144**

News and Views

Continued from page 9

degree of the prestigious University of Notre Dame in the State of Indiana (U.S.).

Established in 1842, the University of Notre Dome awarded honorary doctor's degrees to nine more persons well known in the U.S. and around the world.

At the festive ceremony, the honorary doctor's degree will also be awarded to the following persons: Jeffrey R. Immelt, chairman of the board and chief executive officer of General Electric, second largest company in the world; Raniero Cantalamessa, O.F.M. Cap., preacher to the Papal Household of Pope John Paul II and the current Pope Benedict XVI; Elias Chacour, three-time nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize Archbishop of Galilee of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church; Mary Sue Coleman, president of the University of Michigan; Dr. Paul Farmer, American professor and physician, most recognized for his fight against AIDS and tuberculosis; Kenneth Hackett, president of Catholic Relief Services; Richard Hunt, one of the most prominent US sculptors, and others.

Among the graduates of this university are the following well-known person: Jose N. Duarte, former president of El Salvador; Ernesto Perez-Balladares, former president of Panama; Condoleezza Rice, U.S. secretary of state; Alexander Haig, former U.S. secretary of state; advisors of President Ronald Reagan and President George W. Bush, several U.S. congressmen, other famous people from science, culture, business, media, politics and sports world

Moral security of nation is based on historical memory - Adamkus

Vilnius- The state leader highlights that when celebrating the Partisans' Commemoration, the Army and Public Unity Day we have to understand that the Lithuanian Army is a place not only for physical and military, but also general intellectual and cultural development.

"I think that historical heritage is an integral part of such development, therefore patriotic ideas should be developed in young

people by different means. We should look for ways to transfer the topic of liberation fights to schools, books and the media more often. Everything what was defended by arms in the post-war years should be secured in creative works and, most important, in our memory," President Valdas Adamkus declared at the state awards ceremony.

According to the president, today's meeting witnesses respect and gratitude to all freedom defenders: Lithuanian soldiers and officers, volunteers and dissidents. The tribute was paid to all whose belief in truth and morality was stronger than fear of the world's mighty and who sacrificed their health, fate or life for that truth.

Adamkus emphasized that March 11 and the Lithuania's return to the family of independent countries proved that freedom defenders were idealists and realists at the same time. He stressed that the situations when public ideals and fundamental interests of a nation coincide are frequent and the aspiration to realize the freedom of a nation and defend human dignity follow one road.

"We should feel satisfied that today we do not need to defend the liberty of our homeland and human dignity with arms and that our armed forces belong to the strongest military structure in the world, which means true security of Lithuania, President Adamkus added. "However, apart from military and political security, moral security of the nation based on historical memory is always of no less importance. Therefore I ask: does today's Lithuania remember, evaluate and take a lesson of its history? Are not too rare the cases when the memoirs of partisans, historical works and patriotic creation become a part of youth's educational programs?" the president stated.

The head of Lithuania thanked all who defended the values of the nation with arms and blood several decades ago, and who today devote their time, efforts and talent to honor and memorize the fights for freedom.

*News Source: Information Center for Homecoming Lithuanians
Jeanne Dorr*

NEW!



FAMILY HISTORY TOURS

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Lithuania

www.LithuaniaVisits.com

TELEPHONE
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(VILNIUS)

Lithuanian Wedding Traditions

From the Lithuanian website
"Virtualus Kalendorius"

"Giminystės papročiai"
<http://day.lt/gimines>

According to ancient Lithuanian tradition, weddings were composed of several phases:

Žvalgytuvės, Piršlybos,
Sužieduotuvės, Mergvakaris,
Vestuvių puota.

Reconnaissance, Matchmaker's
Offer, Engagement,
Girls' Evening,
Wedding Banquet.

Žvalgytuvės

The young man and the *piršlys* (matchmaker) rode to the young lady's house to "have a look". While the prospective bride and groom furthered their acquaintance, the matchmaker negotiated with the young lady's parents, about her dowry. In the old days, it sometimes happened that the *Žvalgytuvės* was the first time the young pair set eyes on each other, after the groom's parents had decided it was time for him to marry. Other times, the fellow had already selected a girl, and knew in advance, where they were going for *Žvalgytvių*. Whatever the cir-

cumstances, it was the matchmaker's responsibility to draw up an agreement that would be beneficial to the groom and his parents. The Bride's *kraitis* (dowry or hope chest) was made up of the maiden's handiwork - woven and embroidered items which she accumulated from adolescence; the wealth or property which her parents had saved for her; and sometimes even some domestic animals.

Piršlybos

This was the second visit by the groom and matchmaker to the bride's home. Its specific purpose was to make the match - to ask the bride's parents for her hand. Members of the bride's household arranged a series of trials for the groom and matchmaker. They



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would be tested with various riddles and puzzles, which they were required to answer. The *piršlys* in his turn would praise his client, the groom, as a "man of stature and vigor", swearing that his home "ran with rivers of honey", that "tree branches were bowed down with the weight of sausages hung to dry", etc., etc. Later, the *piršlys* would sit down with the parents and again discuss the dowry. If all was in agreement, a date would be fixed for the *Sužieduotuvės*.

Sužieduotuvės

The parents of both bride and groom gathered for the *Sužieduotuvės* (Engagement). The *piršlys* matched the pair, then put the engagement ring on the girl's finger, confirming the agreement. Gifts were exchanged. The groom often gave the bride a towel rack or decorative spindle that he had carved himself, or, perhaps, some pretty ornament - a necklace or a pin. The bride gave items of her own work - woven sashes or neckties, embroidered handkerchiefs, a saddle blanket, etc. In this way, the pair demonstrated their industriousness to each other and their families. The parents also received gifts. The bride would give her mother, and her future mother-in-

law (*anyta*), woven towels, embroidered scarves, aprons or pillowcases, or other handiwork. Her father and future father-in-law (*uošvis*) would be given knit stockings, gloves or sweaters, etc. Having exchanged all the gifts, everyone would sit around the table to discuss the wedding plans, singing and simply enjoying themselves.

Usually, in modern times, the young man alone will press his suit with his intended, and himself put the engagement ring on her finger. Sometimes, he will address her parents, asking for her hand. Only rarely, will a young man ask a friend to act as his matchmaker. But more often, these days, the pair will make their own plans and later inform their parents.

Mergvakaris

This evening, the bride bid farewell to her girlhood, and her friends gathered to see her off to her new life. Her closest friends would be there, her bridesmaids, and sometimes all the girls of the village. The bridesmaids brought cakes they had baked themselves. The most popular of these was the "kasos pyragas" (braided cake), symbolizing the young bride's farewell to her childish plaits. The senior, or maid of honor, was responsible for organizing the evening. She led the girls in singing *mergvakaris* songs, consoled the bride, and taught some dances. She, and possibly, all the bridesmaids, wove wreaths of *rūta*, (rue) and the best one was chosen as the bridal wreath. The wreath of *rūta* was the symbol of the maiden's innocence and purity, and folk songs touched on this theme often: "*Bernelis sutrypė rūtų darželį*" (My sweetheart has trampled my garden of *rūta*) "*Man rūtelė tik viena, o bernelių daug yra*".... (I have only one dear little *rūta*, but of sweethearts there are many), etc. The finished bridal wreath of rue was placed on the bride's head, and each girl in turn spoke of her sadness that she would part from them, and consoled with the bride on the hard new life she was preparing to enter.

During *mergvakaris*, the girls would enjoy circle dances, discuss the bridesmaids' outfits, and prepare gifts for their escorts (*pabroliai*).

The bride would give each of her friends a farewell gift - a colorful sash that she wove herself. In olden days, sashes were widely used, and every young girl would weave as many as she could. Both men and women wore them tied about their waists, infants were swaddled in them, and they even decorated horses. It was considered a sign of great honor, to bestow a sash of one's own making on a guest. As the evening came to an end, the bride symbolically bid goodbye to her flower garden, which she had tended all through her youth.

Vestuvijų puota

Earlier, weddings were usually celebrated in the bride's parents' home. Careful and thorough preparations were made for the reception, and the house was decorated. The horses chosen to transport the young pair were hung with jingling bells, and their manes were combed. The *piršlys* and *svočia* were distinguished by their dress. The matchmaker usually wore a fancifully-decorated high-crowned hat. The *svočia* (elder hostess) carried a large woven wicker bag holding gifts. These two individuals conducted the entire wedding celebration.

First, the bride and groom had to undergo various tests. For example, the bride was required to peel a potato, and the groom had to chop up some fire-

wood. The *piršlys* and *svočia* were the young pair's teachers. To verify that a bride was sound, the *piršlys* carried the *svočia* across. The groom would then carry the bride across that bridge. The "teachers" gave the bride and groom "lessons" on sleeping together on a narrow bench, and on how to kiss.

These days, the *piršlys* and *svočia* function as witnesses, signing the wedding document confirming the marriage, which takes place either at a "wedding palace" or in a church. But they still organize the activities of the evening's wedding reception. Their duty is to entertain the gathering. Many of their traditional tasks and tricks have survived to modern times, though their forms have changed to fit the current day.

The traditional "hanging" of the matchmaker takes place on the second day of the wedding celebration. A group of guests, suspecting that the matchmaker has chosen a bad husband for their friend the bride, seize the fellow, deciding to hang him. At first he attempts to justify himself, but then he reads aloud a humorous "last will and testament". He is saved from hanging by the bride, who ties her sash around him, as a sign of her respect and gratitude. Earlier, the *svočia* was likewise punished, when a group of guests "stole" her from the matchmaker and tried to drown her in a large bowl or trough. The bride saved this lady as well, by looping a sash around her shoulder, and tying it at her waist. While the bride and groom were occupied helping the *piršlys* and *svočia*, their table is taken over by a pair of imposters (*persirengeliai*). Often, it is a man dressed as the bride, and a woman dressed as the groom, who contend that this is indeed their wedding party. The young bride and groom find that they must prove that this is THEIR wedding party, by paying ransom to regain their seats. In this they are helped by the *svočia*, who digs into her big bag to produce the required "bribes", rescuing the entire celebration.

English translation by Gloria Kivytaite O'Brien
By permission of the Webmasters in Lithuania

Translator's Note: While we can lament the loss of age-old traditions and the closeness of Lithuanian village life, it's good to know that many of these customs survive and are still observed, even in a modern wedding celebration. I speak personally, having viewed a very interesting and entertaining family video of a cousin's wedding, which took place in Panevezys. Among a greatly expanded repertoire of very amusing tricks and jokes, I recognized many of these same traditions, which brought a smile to my heart.

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.



Poison Ivy/Oak/Sumac Dermatitis

Anyone who has ever had an allergic reaction to poison ivy, poison oak, or poison sumac will agree that immediate relief of the itching, burning and pain associated with exposure is top priority. Approximately 50 million individuals annually experience reactions from poison ivy/oak/sumac.

Initially individuals with mild-to-moderate cases may attempt to use various nonprescription preparations to assist in alleviating the pruritis and inflammation associated with this condition. Topical hydrocortisone is the most widely used product. Other nonprescription preparations include topical antihistamines, topical anesthetics, and other antipruritics. Individuals also may use topical astringents. Topical preparations are available in several dosage forms, such as creams, ointments, sprays, lotions and gels. Selection of the appropriate dosage form is dependent on several factors, such as the severity of the dermatitis and the presence of vesicles (dry or weeping). In order to avoid infections, patients should not apply ointments to open lesions. Patients should also be aware that the use of topical antihistamine and anesthetic products may cause additional inflammation in some areas. Always seek the advice of your doctor in the following cases:

- *Fever is present
- *Rash covers a large portion of skin
- *Swelling occurs around areas of the eyes or mouth
- *Blisters appear infected
- *Rash worsens and is not responding to treatment
- *Examples of nonprescription preparations

Product	Active ingredient
Aveeno Maximum Strength anti-itch crea	Hydrocortisone 1%
Aveeno anti-itch cream with oatmeal	Calamine 3% Pramoxine 1%, camphor 0.47%
Aveeno bath treatment	Colloidal oatmeal 100%
Benadryl Maximum strength 2%	Diphenhydramine 2% (available as cream and spray)
Caladryl Lotion	Pramoxine 1%, calamine 8%
Caladryl clear anti-itch lotion	Pramoxine 1%, Zinc acetate 0.1%
Cortaid, spray or cream	Hydrocortisone 1%
Cortaid poison ivy care	Pramoxine, Zinc acetate (0.12%)
Cortizone 10 Maximum strength	Hydrocortisone 1%
Domeboro Astringent solution	Aluminum acetate
Gold bond maximum strength cream	Menthol 1%, Pramoxine 1%
Itch-X spray	Benzyl alcohol 10%, Pramoxine 1%
Lanacane Maximum strength cream	Benzethonium 0.1%, benzocaine 20%
Lanacort cream	Hydrocortisone 1%
Sarna Lotion	Camphor 0.5%, Menthol 0.5%

Renata Kucas

Pharmacist Renata Kucas BA, BS, Rph. comes to us with 25 years experience. She currently works at the nation's first hospital-Pennsylvania Hospital, located in center-city Philadelphia. She will address current topics and at times make suggestions for improving your own approach to managing medications or addressing your personal health-care concerns.

Continued from page 16

SIBERIA

other eastern regions of the Soviet Union. What is more, those that returned to their native homes could not obtain work or residence permits, especially in cities. Many were harassed in such a way for a long time, and some went back to Siberia. There is no real

information as to how many Lithuanians remain in Siberia. Soviet statistics for 1926 indicate ca 4,000 in the Barabinsk and Tomsk areas, in all of Siberia in 1959 - 12,100, in 1970 - 14,200; there is, however, no way of corroborating these figures.

From *ENCYCLOPEDIA LITUANIC* - 1976

Bib.: D. Treadhold, *The Great Siberian Migration*, Princeton University Press, 1957; A. Slide, *The Profits of Slavery*, Stockholm, 1958; B. Armonas, *Leave Your Tears in Moscow*, New York, 1961; S. Rūkienė, *Vergijos kryžkelėse*, Cleveland, 1968; H. Tautvaiša, *The Cemetery of Nations in the Siberian Tundra*, London, 1968; A. Amalrik, *My Involuntary Journey to Siberia*, New York, 1971; J. Berger, *Nothing but the Truth*, New York, 1971; E. Juciūtė, *Pėdos mirties zonoje*, New York, 1974. S. Suž.



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

Calendar of Events for June - July/August - September, 2007

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

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2007, iss.5

JUNE

June 3, 2007 - NEW DATE

LAC Cape Cod Chapter Annual Meeting 1 pm - Annual elections for the current year's chapter board. Meeting will begin at 1 pm and conclude at 3 pm at the Old Country Buffet, Festival Mall, Route 132, Hyannis, MA 02601 Contact Algirdas Dapkus at alisdapkus@aol.com

June 8-10, 2007

TALKA WORK WEEKEND Neringa's handy and hard-working fans are invited to come help prepare the campsite for the summer. In addition to the great company, you will be able to feel good about helping Neringa in a very concrete way. If you will be able to attend, please contact vida@neringa.org or 978-582-5592

June 10, 2007 - 10:30 am

Mass in memory of Lithuanian Deportees to Siberia St. Andrew Church, 1913 Wallace St. Philadelphia, PA 19130

June 10, 2007

Gedulos ir Vilties Diena Memorial Mass at 10:00 am, Commemoration following in Annunciation Parish Lower Hall 70 Havemeyer Street Sponsored by the NY Lithuanian American Committee District Council and Apylinkes

June 14, 2007

Day of Sorrow and Hope Mass at 9 am Our Lady of Victory Church, Centerville, MA LAC Cape Cod Chapter members will honor those brave Lithuanians who perished in the Soviet Union Gulags. For more info: Algirdas Dapkus alisdapkus@aol.com

June 17, 2007

Commemoration of the Deportations Holy Trinity Church, 53 Capitol Ave. Hartford, CT. 9 am Mass and short program afterwards. Contact: danuteg@juno.com

June 17, 2007

Party in honor of fathers following 10:00 am Mass (Parish Lower Hall) Annunciation Parish 259 North 5th Street Brooklyn, NY 11211 Hall is 70 Haveneyer Street Corner of North 5th Sponsored by the ladies of the parish.

June 24 - July 1, 2007

Lithuanian Language Courses at Camp Dainava For more info: Mr. Vytautas Jonaitis at vjonaitis@juno.com or call 616-453-7549

June 24, 2007

"Jonines" (Summer Solstice) picnic at Lake Lanier near Atlanta, Georgia Contact: Juras Palukaitis jurasjuras@hotmail.com

June 25 - August 17, 2007

Baltic Studies Summer Institute. The Center for World Languages at the University of California, Los Angeles, will host the Baltic Studies Summer Institute in the summer of 2007 and 2008. Exciting news! The BALSSI UCLA is pleased to announce that a limited number of partial scholarships for Summer 2007 intensive study of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian have been made available through the generous contributions from the UC Consortium for Language Learning and Teaching and UCLA Summer Sessions. If interested, please visit the website for more information and an application. Note that anyone age 12 and up is welcome to participate in this 8-week summer program. For more information, contact the 2007 Director, Johanna Domokos or visit the BALSSI website Info: <http://seattle.lietuviu-bendruomene.org/events.html>

AUGUST

August 2 - 5, 2007

Knights of Lithuania 94th National Convention Brockton, MA. Hosted by Council 1 www.knightsoflithuania.com

August 5, 2007 - 1:00 pm

Community Picnic DeKovend Park, 6301 S. University Blvd. in Centennial - Shelter C (the one by the rec center). Cost is \$2.00 for adults. Please bring your own refreshments and food. Don't forget to bring your summer vacation photos and stories to share with everyone. Games and music will be provided. Glass containers are not allowed in the park. Call Arv Jarašius at 303-439-2089 with any questions. See you on the volleyball court. Lithuanian American Community of Colorado

August 10-12, 2007

Fourth Annual Lithuanian Adoption Picnic will be held August 10-12, 2007 in Mill Hall, PA at the Tomalonis family farm. Events run from Friday evening through Sunday afternoon: Further information is available by contacting Gina Pollock rmprhp@yahoo.com, James Tomalonis cedar-springs@comcast.net Ruta Skucas RutaKS@aol.com

August 11-12, 2007

Lithuanian Festival Held in the Schuylkill Mall Sponsored by: Knights of Lithuania Council #144

Saturday morning. Camp performance Friday evening Fees TBD. Location: West coast Latvian Education Center Shelton, WA. RSVP by June 1 to nomeda@msn.com

SEPTEMBER

September 8, 2007

100th Jubilee Celebration Sisters of St. Casimir Mass of Thanksgiving 2 Nativity BVM Church 6812 S. Washtenaw Ave Chicago, IL Francis Cardinal George Celebrant, Archbishop of 100th Anniversary Banquet Drury Lane Oak Brook 100 Drury Lane Oakbrook Terrace, IL Reservations: Sister Margaret Petcava 2601 W. Marquette Road Chicago, IL 60629 (773) 776 - 1324

September 9, 2007

Autumn Picnic Lithuanian American Cor of Atlanta, GA Contact: Juras Palukaitis juras@hotmail.com

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