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LK

# bridges



july/august 2007

LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

*Letter from the Editor*

*I can't believe that it is time for another Christmas in July article. Remember when we were very young and always waiting for the next step in life to happen? Now it seems I'm no longer stepping to each month; I seem to be sprinting.*

*This issue has something new that I know you will enjoy. Our own Gloria O'Brien who does such a fantastic job translating the folk tales has made a puzzle for Bridges readers. I can't imagine how long it must have taken her. There is so much history and geography in this puzzle and you won't even feel like you're sitting in a classroom while you're learning.*

*While we're talking about learning (I can't help it if retired teachers never stop teaching) we have a rather long article about Mindaugas. For those of us who never had the opportunity to attend a Lithuanian School, it is another painless history lesson. If you are fortunate enough to be in Lithuania on July 6 you will know that it is the coronation of Mindaugas as King of Lithuania and a national holiday. I have to admit that I learned so much from reading this article.*

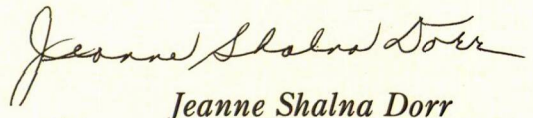
*You will also see on the calendar that although it is summer and everything seems to slow down at this time of the year, there are still some special events taking place. Perhaps there is a picnic or a festival in your area. Please try to support these events. While I'm at it, please support your local Lithuanian parishes. They need your support all year long, not just Christmas and Easter.*

*For those of you who will be traveling to Lithuania this summer, I wish you a happy and safe trip. If it is your first visit, I know you will return again. After twenty trips there are still places I have not visited. It is a very special country. If 2007 isn't your year to visit, I hope you will consider 2008 as the year you visit the birthplace of your ancestors.*

*To all who contributed articles and photographs, a very sincere thank you.*

*I know the work and effort involved.*

*Happy summer and God willing, we'll see you in the fall!*



Jeanne Shalna Dorr

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of the

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\*Cover: The artist of this beautiful black and white graphic is unknown.

# Christmas in July

*I usually write this article during a heat wave.*

*This year, according to the weather man, I'm going to beat the heat by one day.*

For our new readers, this annual article started after I met a young boy in Lithuania who was dying from leukemia. Arturas was already quite weak when we met and he had no illusions about his future. He was a sixth grade student, but at this point was being tutored at home when he wasn't in the hospital or too weak for his lessons. He had been diagnosed in the second grade with this dreaded disease and it was now in its fourth year. His mother was a widow and had another son who was four years old. They lived in a small village and everything was twice as difficult for her. She was alone, she had a small child, and her beloved older son was suffering beyond belief. She was torn, heartbroken and guilt ridden as she spent hour after hour sitting by Arturas' bedside in the Kaunas hospital. There wasn't an option of driving home for a few hours of rest because there wasn't a car. On the other hand, she was plagued with guilt for leaving Karolis with neighbors for several days at a time.

We met in the village school. I was later to learn this was because the mother was too ashamed of where they lived. As we became friends I would visit her home often and I told her there was absolutely nothing I haven't seen in Lithuania that would shock, surprise or embarrass me. On that first visit we sat in the principal's office and I felt so at ease with these people who were no longer strangers, but new friends. I knew my friendship with Arturas would be short lived, but some time was better than no time at all. At this point he had lost all his hair and was very, very thin. Since I was a sixth grade teacher he had so many questions about young people his age in America. We finally got around to talking about Christmas. He said if he had one wish for a gift it would be a used, blue bicycle. He stressed the word "used." There was barely enough money to buy wood to heat the house during the approaching



cold Lithuanian winter, never mind a used, blue bicycle. I guess I'm naïve enough to believe there is always hope, and in my mind, if there was a miracle, I would buy Arturas his used, blue bike.

When we parted I hugged him and could feel his ribs through his shirt.

His mother looked on and I could see the tears welling in her eyes. Even

though I always have something to say, this time there were no words.

It seemed all my work and travels that summer were pointing to Christmas. It was only July, but the two people I work most closely with already worried about Christmas. To be honest, Christmas was the furthest thing from my mind. It was only July and I was in Lithuania. I was lucky if I gave Christmas a thought by the middle of December. Dr. Regina Svoba, who heads Countryside Children, was worried about where the money would come from to visit the children in some of the rural schools, especially areas where there was a high unemployment rate. She and Father Christmas would arrive at the school and the entire school felt the excitement and anticipation. Just waiting for the visitors to arrive was exciting. Everything had to be dusted and scrubbed in the classrooms, Christmas songs and poems were rehearsed and teachers baked cookies. After all, the visitors were coming all the way



from Vilnius and we all know about Lithuanian hospitality. The children performed for them and the guests were given gifts. One girl might crochet a table scarf while a boy might whittle something from wood. The little ones would proudly present the guests with drawings or an original poem. Then came the moment for the children's gifts. The children received a small gift depending on their ages. There might be a small gift bag with crayons or colored pencils and perhaps a chocolate bar. The older ones might receive a barrette or a comb and brush. For some, it would be their only Christmas gift.



A few days later I was visiting a mother and her twins with Mrs. Grazina Landsbergis. They lived in housing that was typical during the soviet era. They had a single room with a couch that pulled out for sleeping at night. They shared the bathroom and kitchen with the entire floor of other residents. Her story was one we heard a hundred times; the children's father was an abusive alcoholic. The mother had to go to court to have him legally removed from the premises. She cleaned offices at night when she was able to get the work; which was not often. The children, a boy and a girl were adorable. They sat quietly on the couch with us and never interrupted.

As we were leaving, the little girl gently tugged on Mrs. Landsbergis' sleeve and asked her if there would be a Christmas party. She was assured there would be a party again. The mother told us it was the only gift her children received that year. Once we were back in the car, like Dr. Svoba earlier, she expressed the same concerns. The spirit was willing, but when or where would the funding come from? That's when I decided to ask you, the Bridges readers, for help. Since I have been writing this article everything has been in your hands. And as always, you never disappointed the children.

When we started this program, a dollar was worth four Lithuanian litas. Now it buys approximately two and a half litas. Why "Christmas in July?" The event happened in July and we have to collect and send the money to Lithuania in time for planning and buying the gifts.

As for Arturas, I never had the opportunity to buy him the used, blue bicycle. Instead I bought the monument for his grave on my next trip to Lithuania. Today he would be nineteen years old, but in my mind he will always remain the bravest thirteen year old I ever met.

Readers, you have always been generous to this program. This is strictly a Bridges program through Lithuanian Orphan Care. Please continue to share your blessings with Lithuania's children.

### The Joy You Give

"Somehow, not only for Christmas  
But all the long year through,  
The joy that you give to others  
Is the joy that comes back to you.  
And the more you spend in blessing  
The poor and lonely and sad,  
The more of your heart's possessing  
Returns to you glad."

John Greenleaf Whittier

*Please send your tax deductible checks to:*

**Lithuanian Orphan Care**  
2711 W. 71<sup>st</sup> St.  
Chicago, IL. 60629

**You must write Christmas gifts on the check.**

*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.*

### TRIVIA QUESTION

(No. 16)

In ancient Lithuania,  
which insect was considered  
SACRED?

- (a) Horse Fly                      (b) Honey Bee  
(c) Wasp                              (d) Butter-fly

Answer to Trivia  
on page 13

# Rural life in Lithuania

Photos by Jeanne Dorr



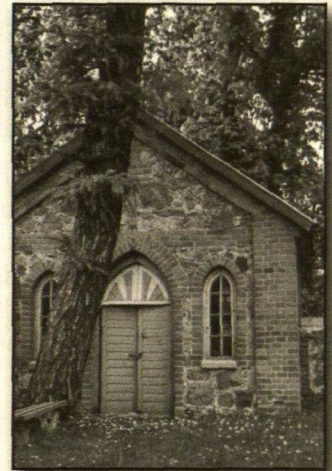
Farm house with small country orchard



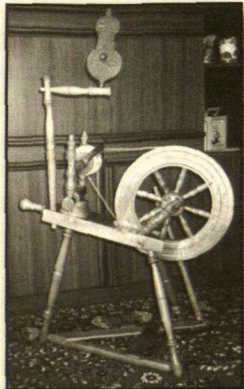
Typical wayside cross



Two ended farm house - one end for family and one for guests



Small country chapel



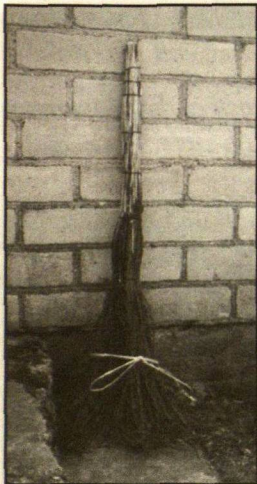
Spinning wheel



Sheets blowing in the wind



Everyone needs a best friend



Birch branch broom



Garden tub to gather rain water



Drying utensils



Beauty has no borders



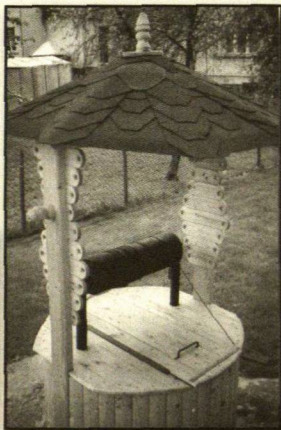
Wayside shrine



Peaceful scene

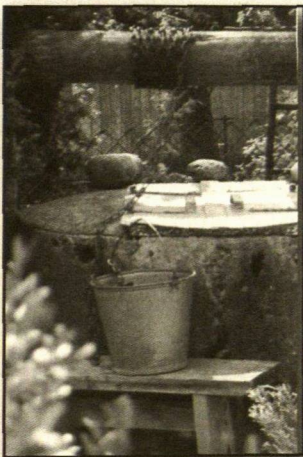


Milking buckets drying in the air

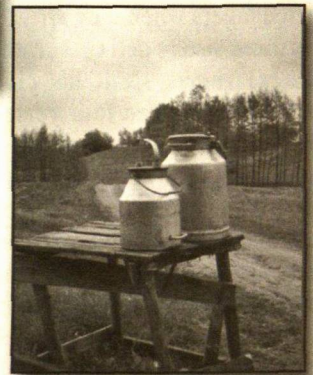


Typical farm scene

Decorative well



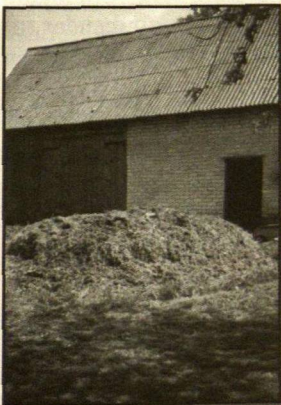
Well for drawing drinking water



Full milk cans out for the pick up



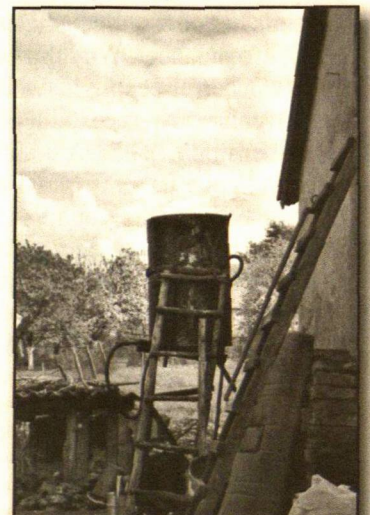
Equipment for hauling



Natural fertilizer



Water is drawn from lake and stored for later use on the farm



Sun heats water which is then used on crops

## USA Navy Commander Tomas Alksninis goes to serve in Lithuania

Isn't it really nice to hear the success story of one of the people of the same (Lithuanian) origin we have? I would like to introduce you to the man who achieved so much while serving in the US Navy. Now he will be serving in Lithuania for three years, where he will be a US attaché to Lithuania.

Tomas Alksninis is the youngest of his family of five children. Tomas's parents were born in Lithuania, his mother Dana is from Lazdijai, and father is from Šakiai. With their families, they left Lithuania in 1944, and met as teenagers when they arrived in New York City. Tomas, his three sisters and two brothers were born in the United States. Tomas spent his childhood in Brockton, MA, where he attended four years of Lithuanian school until the age of eleven. Then his family moved to Daytona Beach, FL. However, Tomas didn't forget the language because his parents were keeping it alive by speaking Lithuanian at home. Later Tomas Alksninis attended college at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (NY) where he studied engineering. While attending college, Tomas was a midshipman in the Navy. He joined the Navy because his father was also a naval officer and the Navy offered to pay all Tomas's college education expenses. In return for this, he owed them just four years of service. Tomas Alksninis has now served nineteen years and reached the rank of Commander. Why did he stay so long? Because of the wonderful people he worked with, the extraordinary adventures he has experienced, and the most important responsibilities he has been entrusted with. Tomas's father and grandfather inspired him with the great patriotism to both of the countries, the United States and Lithuania. Tomas is very proud of his Lithuanian descent. He even has a red "Vytiš" symbol (Lithuanian symbol – knight on the horse) sewn to his military jacket. Tomas had the opportunity to fly Naval attack aircraft carriers and live and work in such places as Washington DC, Spain, Greece, Bahrain (the Gulf), Japan, Italy, Germany, and now he is going to the native land of his parents - to Lithuania.

In 1991 the squadron of our hero American Lithuanian officer was sent to the war in the Gulf, fortunately Tomas wasn't participating in the open fighting. As our pilot



*U.S. Navy Commander Tomas Alksninis with his sister Rūta (left) and his wife Beverly (right) at the Washington, DC - USBF Gala event, 2007.*

Photos by Eugenija Misevicius

mentioned he was flying over all the world's regions. From 1994 until 1997 he served as a Linguist/Analyst for the National Security Agency, Ft. Meade, MD. In 1997 Tomas transitioned to the EP-3E electronic reconnaissance aircraft and was assigned to Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron TWO (VQ-2) in Rota, Spain from 1997 to 1999. In 1999 former President Bill Clinton awarded Tomas Alksninis the Navy bronze medal for his mission in Yugoslavia. From 1999-2002 he was reassigned to Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron ONE (VQ-1) based at NAS Whidbey Island, WA. Also, in March 2003 Tomas Alksninis graduated from the Naval Command and Staff College at the Naval War College in Newport, RI with a Master's Degree in National Security and Strategic Studies. He was designated a Europe/Eurasian Foreign Area Officer in May 2003. In 2005 Tomas was assigned as Chief, Joint Contact Team Program (JCTP) for the U.S. European Command (EUCOM). JCTP is a tool for the Commander of EUCOM to assist militaries of developing countries in Eastern Europe and Africa in their transition to democracies with free market economies. The JCTP was instrumental in helping Lithuania with the transition to a Western/NATO-style military through the immediate introduction of U.S. tactics and training methods. As Chief, JCTP, he managed the operating budget of over \$5 million. EUCOM conducts over 400 events annually. Tomas Alksninis awarded two Air Medals (Individual) and (Strike/Flight), the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, two Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medals, and two Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medals in addition to numerous unit awards.





## VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM MEMORIAL

On Tuesday, June 12, 2007 Lee Edward's dream of having a memorial dedicated to the victims of communism became a reality. After more than 15 years of overcoming legislative, bureaucratic and financial obstacles the memorial was dedicated on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC.

Lee Edwards' dream began 29 years ago when he and his wife decided that the world must not forget the victims of communism oppression. To this end an international memorial must be erected to show the horrors of communism's atrocities.

The one million dollars required to build this memorial was collected solely through private contributions. The largest contributors were the Northern Vietnamese (\$100,000), the second largest were the Baltic States of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

### *Dedication Ceremony*

The bronze statute was based on the Statue of Democracy which was erected by the Chinese students in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989

The dedication took place on a beautiful, warm Tuesday morning. President Bush gave the keynote address.

June 12 was selected for it was on this day 29 years ago that President Reagan, during his famous Brandenburg Gate speech, said, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"

Attending the dedication were diplomats, politicians and freedom fighters. Other notables attending were Tom Lantos, Lithuania's Ambassador to the United States, as well as other ambassadors from

*Continued on page 12*

He is thrilled that he received an appointment to serve in Lithuania in July of this year. His official title will be Naval Attaché and he will be living in Lithuania's capital, Vilnius. Tomas has already been to Lithuania three times. The first time was in July 1999 when he was there with his wife and parents and visited Vilnius, Trakai, Kaunas, Nida, Klaipėda and Šiauliai. The second time, in 2003, Tomas escorted his superiors from the U.S. European Military Command from Stuttgart, Germany. They were there to discuss U.S. military assistance and met with high-ranking officials in the Lithuanian Defense Ministry, including the Chief of Defense General Jonas Kronkaitis. At that time, Tomas was in Vilnius for only for 24 hours, but he made such a good impression on his superiors that they personally worked to ensure he would return to work in Lithuania as an attaché.

Tomas Alksninis is very happy that he is going to work to Lithuania. He is honored to be given the opportunity



*U.S. Navy Commander  
Tomas Alksninis*

to use his language skills in his work for the U.S. Navy and for the United States. His is also very excited for this opportunity. Tomas will work for the American Ambassador as his advisor on all naval issues involving the U.S. and Lithuanian military. He will work closely with the Lithuanian military and help coordinate the militaries' bilateral activities. In addition, he will be expected to represent the U.S. Secretary of Defense, the Chief of the U.S. Navy, and various other military officials at ceremonies and other diplomatic functions.

Tomas, his wife and children will live in Vilnius for three years where the children will attend school. Tomas's wife, Beverly, was born in Williamsburg, VA and at this time she is studying Lithuanian at one of the Diplomatic schools in Virginia. Their children are six year old daughter Kelly and two year old Algirdas. Let us wish them good luck in Vilnius!

### *Eugenija Misevicius*

Eugenija Misevicius is a graduate of the University of Bridgeport, Bridgeport, CT. Eugenija is a member of the Board of Directors of the Lithuanian American Community. She is also a member of the Bridgeport Chapter of the Lithuanian American Community and of the Knights of Lithuania. She was recently elected secretary of the Lithuanian Journalist Association. Eugenija freelances as a court interpreter. She and her husband, Laurynas, participate in many Lithuanian events.

June 2007

Dear Friends of Aid to Lithuania, Inc.:

*The Officers and the Board of Directors of Aid to Lithuania, Inc. (ATL) would like to take this opportunity to once again thank you for your continued generosity in meeting the needs of our developing homeland, following the many years of domination by foreign nations. Over the past 17 years, we have witnessed Lithuania develop into a viable republic in the European Union by contributing in so many ways to the people who suffered for so long.*

*Aid to Lithuania, Inc. was established as a working committee of the Knights of Lithuania nearly 17 years ago (August 1990), and our sole mission was to underwrite the cost of shipping donated medical supplies, medications and medical equipment to the recently liberated republic. These donations came to us from relief organizations, medical facilities and offices and from the efforts of so many friends and volunteers, many of whom had family roots in Lithuania. Without your support, the medical community would not have achieved the success they have today in meeting the medical needs of their nation.*

*Over the years, other needs were brought to our attention by "Caritas," the Catholic coordinating group in Lithuania. ATL's assistance was sought in establishing the Vilnius Trade Center/Handicraft Centre to teach the young, and, in many cases, the physically and emotionally challenged citizens, the basics of learning marketable skills. The Centre is now considered a leader in the European community in art restoration. In addition, carpentry, plumbing, electrical, sewing and culinary arts are a vital part of the curriculum at the Vilnius Trade School.*

*ATL learned that the Church in Lithuania had been severely restricted during the Soviet occupation and priests were needed to shepherd the faithful back to active participation. Generous donors contributed to the St. Joseph's Seminary in Vilnius and continue that support to this day. To date, 34 young men have been ordained priests as a result of the support.*

*ATL currently supports the activity of a homeless shelter of the Sisters of Mercy, sent to Lithuania by Mother Teresa; as well as supports the Betanija Soup Kitchens, Vilties Angelo (Angel of Hope) Daycare Center, Mother and Childrens' Center, and family relief communities. Your ongoing generosity and monetary support has brought relief in many ways and will continue to be sought in the future.*

*ATL will soon phase out of the active coordination role we have shared with you for nearly 17 years. We will work with other organizations in America that continue to seek your contributions and ask that you share your blessings as you always have. As we phase down Aid to Lithuania, Inc., the Officers, Board Members and the many volunteers who responded when called upon to assist, THANK all of you and send our blessings to you and your family.*

Sincerely,

Regina Juska-Svoba, President  
Aid to Lithuania, Inc.

## LITHUANIAN/AMERICAN CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

### LITHUANIAN CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS AID, INC.

(Aid to Lithuania, Inc. was modeled after this organization)  
*Lietuvių katalikų religinė šalpa (LCRA)*  
c/o Bishop Paulius Baltakis, Director  
64-25 Perry Ave. Maspeth, NY 11378  
Vida Jankauskas, President  
(718) 849 - 2760 home  
E-mail: lcra@earthlink.com

### BALFAS

(United Lithuanian Relief Fund - Bendras Amerikos lietuvių fondas)  
c/o Maria Rudis, Director  
4545 W. 63rd St., Chicago, IL 60629  
(773) 767 - 3401  
(773) 767 - 3402 facsimile

### Child's Gate to Learning

(Vaikų vartai į mokslą)  
c/o Rita Venclovas  
507 Longfellow Ave., Deerfield, IL 60015  
(847) 940 - 0233 and (847) 945 - 4854  
E-mail: venclovas@aol.com

### Lithuanian Children Relief Services, Inc.

(Lietuvos Vaikų Globa)  
c/o Sister Helen Ivanauskas, President  
261 Thatcher St., Brockton, MA 02302  
(508) 588 - 5070 ext. 361  
(508) 580 - 2495 facsimile

### Lithuanian Children's Hope

(Lietuvos Vaikų Viltis)  
2711 W. 71 St., Chicago, IL 60629  
(773) 476 - 0664  
(773) 436 - 6909 facsimile

### Lithuanian Mercy Lift (LML)

c/o Ausrine AE Karaitis, President  
P.O. Box 88, Palo Heights, IL 60463  
(708) 636 - 6140  
(708) 388 - 2059 facsimile  
E-mail: LithuanianMercyLift@yahoo.com

### Lithuanian Orphan Care

c/o Dana Bazis  
2711 W. 71<sup>st</sup> Street, Chicago, IL 60629  
(773) 476 - 2655

### Sister Dolorita Butkus & Sister Michele Garas

St. Clare's Hospice Center  
Utana, Lithuania  
c/o Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God  
Sister Janet Gardner, General Minister  
3603 McRoberts Rd.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15234

## Youth orchestra records forgotten Lithuanian maestro

Edmonton Journal

EDMONTON - A group of young Edmonton musicians is giving the works of a bypassed composer another lease on life.

A 60-piece orchestra comprising members and former members of the Edmonton Youth Orchestra and University of Alberta Orchestra have recorded compositions by Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, a Lithuanian composer who has unjustly fallen into obscurity outside his home country.

In Lithuania, Čiurlionis is viewed not only as that country's most revered composer but also as an uncommonly gifted painter who in his short life -- he died in 1911 at age 36 -- produced many great works. Much of his music is still performed in Lithuania, but with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and state-run Melodija Records, most studio recordings have vanished.

That's where 18-year-old Archbishop MacDonald student Taddes Korris and his friends come in.

"He's been unjustly ignored for too long, and it would be wonderful for people in the West to know Čiurlionis's music," says the bassist for the Youth Orchestra, who took on double duty as an orchestra member and organizer of the recording project. "His feel is very much like Dvorak, very romantic. When we first played the one recording we could find for the musicians, they instantly got excited."

Whirlwind rehearsal sessions late last week led to recording over the long weekend at the University of Alberta's Convocation Hall, the results of which will eventually be released by Arktos, a local classical label.

Korris is particularly pleased to have recorded the symphonic tone poem *Miske*, viewed by many as his masterwork, but unfortunately unavailable in recorded form since 2000.

"It translates to 'in the forest,' " explains Korris, who is a member of Edmonton's small Lithuanian community. "The premise is the Lithuanian landscape, which is in many ways like the Alberta landscape, which is why we feel it's perfect for this. The music evokes the ancient feeling of the Lithuanian forest, the beauty of nature, pagan gods and mystery."

"It's very emotional music," agrees concertmaster Ewald Cheung, a 17-year-old Vimy Ridge Academy student. "I find it is very deep -- you can express so much within each phrase of the music."

"The first time I heard him I knew he was a great composer," he adds. "This project is a great way to promote and put his music in the mainstream repertoire. They're works of genius that deserve to be recognized as such."

With the help of a provincial government grant given to the Canadian Lithuanian Society of Edmonton -- whose president and Taddes's mother, Nejolla Korris, is spearheading the project -- the ensemble, under the baton of Michael Massey, also put the composer's *Theme and Variations in B minor* for String Quartet to tape.

It's a fairly big step in getting the word out on Čiurlionis, and an important one. Copies will be donated to university and public libraries throughout Canada.

"It's been no small task," admits Korris of the process of putting together an orchestra as well as juggling everybody's busy schedules. "People will call at the last minute to say that this day or that doesn't work; all sorts of problems crop up."

"It's been quite the balancing act organizing this. Now I know what it's like to be a personnel manager for an orchestra," he laughs.

"But once you see the enthusiasm that everyone has put into this, it all becomes worth it."

*Reprinted with permission of the Edmonton Journal with special thanks to Tom Murray.*



*M. K. Čiurlionis*

*Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis was a Lithuanian painter and composer. During his short life he composed about 250 pieces of music and created about 300 paintings. The majority of his paintings are housed in the M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art, in Kaunas, Lithuania. His works have had a profound influence on modern Lithuanian culture.*



President Bush addressing the crowd at the memorial statute

the Baltic and Eastern European countries as well as hundreds of others.

In addition, there were two freedom fighters invited from Lithuanian -- Sister Nijole Sadunaite who was kept in prison by the KGB for years and who formed the underground "Catholic Chronicles" and Monsignor Svarinskas who was in prison in Siberia for over 20 years.

After the official dedication ceremony was concluded there followed many interviews by international



Sister Nijole Sadunaite, Msgr. A. Svarinskas and Ramunas Kondratas

*Continued from page 9*

television crews. I was surprised at the large number of foreign correspondents who wanted to interview the two Lithuanians.

There were many memorable moments from this dedication ;among them was the fact that when I was growing up and attending similar dedications and rallies - at that time most of the attendees were from the Baltic States and from other eastern European countries. Today, the scene was the same but the participants were different. Today more than one third of the attendees and program participants were from Asia; North Vietnam, Korea, and China. There were also attendees who represented Cuba.

#### ***National Guard Association Memorial and Museum***

The dedication ceremony was concluded and after all the interviews were given, the participants were invited to a reception. During the reception freedom fighters from various countries were invited to say a few words. Among those asked to come to the podium was Lithuania's Monsignor Svarinskas.

Additionally, one of the speakers invited was the granddaughter of Andrei Sakharov.

#### ***Heritage Foundation***

After the reception the visitors moved to the Heritage Foundation to hear freedom fighters speak about "The Victims and Crimes of Communism" Here the Asiatic freedom fighters echoed many of the same concerns and sought help from the same sources as did the Baltic States during their resistance against communism. On the other hand, the Eastern European countries who



Part of the Lithuanian delegation standing with Ambassador Bruza

were successful in overthrowing the communistic dictatorship cautioned everyone present that we should not become complacent. They reiterated the fact that imperial powers still



Valdis Paviovskis-Latvian representative, Christopher Cox, chairman of SEC, Harry Wu long time Chinese freedom fighter

have their eyes on regaining their lost territories; this time, in a more subtle way - via economic ploys and utilizing energy scarce resources. Some of the panelists served over 20 years in prisons. One wonders how



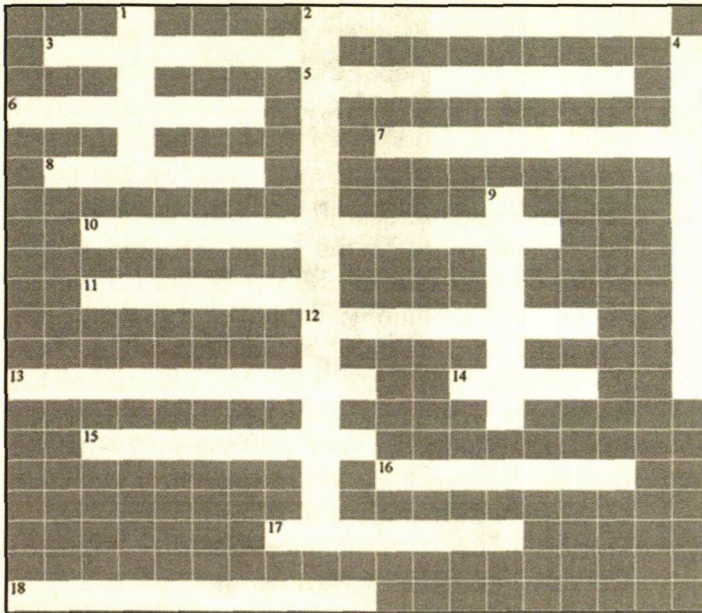
Msgr. Svarinskas meets Russia's Nobel Peace Prize winner Andrei Sakharov's granddaughter

they were able to survive and manage to function rationally after their release.

*Continued on page 19*

Gloria Kivytaite O'Brien

# Crossword Puzzle



Answers are on page 26

## ACROSS

2. Lithuania's favorite sport
3. Baltic Sea port city
5. Outdoor museum of country life
6. Lithuania's capital city
7. King of Lithuania
8. Lithuanian river, famed in song
10. "Gates of Dawn" shrine
11. Composed Lithuanian National Anthem
12. One of Vilnius' main streets
13. Lithuanian genius, artist & composer
14. Baltic beach resort - home of Great Dunes
15. Lithuanian Grand Duke, "The Great"
16. Lithuanian favorite - potato pudding
17. Important Lithuanian river
18. Patron Saint of Lithuania

## DOWN

1. Lithuania's second largest city
2. Lithuanian beauty, Queen of Poland
4. Health resort in south Lithuania
9. World-famous Lithuanian poet

| Word          | Hint                                      |
|---------------|---|
| Vilnius       | Lithuania's capital city                  |
| Kaunas        | Lithuania's second largest city           |
| Klaipėda      | Baltic Sea port city                      |
| Šešupė        | Lithuanian river, famed in song           |
| Barbora       | Lithuanian beauty, Queen of Poland        |
| Čiurlionis    | Lithuanian genius, artist & composer      |
| Kudirka       | Composed Lithuanian National Anthem       |
| Vytautas      | Lithuanian Grand Duke, "The Great"        |
| Mindaugas     | King of Lithuania                         |
| Didžioji      | One of Vilnius' main streets              |
| Aušros Vartai | "Gates of Dawn" shrine                    |
| Nemunas       | Important Lithuanian river                |
| Basketball    | Lithuania's favorite sport                |
| Maironis      | World-famous Lithuanian poet              |
| Rumšiškės     | Outdoor museum of country life            |
| Kugelis       | Lithuanian favorite - potato pudding      |
| Kazimieras    | Patron Saint of Lithuania                 |
| Nida          | Baltic beach resort - home of Great Dunes |
| Druskininkai  | Health resort in south Lithuania          |

## ANSWER TO TRIVIA QUESTION

Trivia Quiz  
on page 5

In the Encyclopedia Lituanica, under Apiculture, it states:

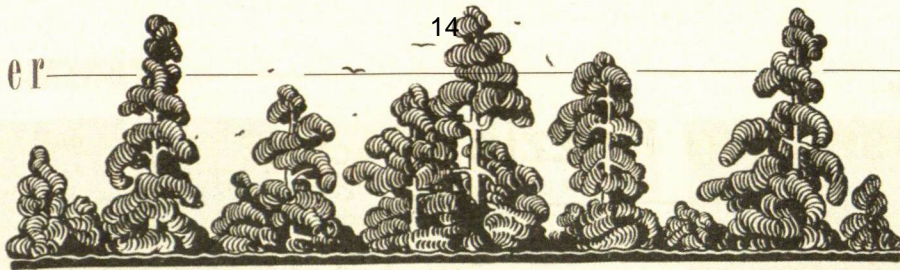
"In ancient times, the bee was considered a SACRED insect. Even the trees which the bee favored as living places (e. g., the oak, ash, linden) were deemed holy.

Mead, the alcoholic beverage produced from honey, was held to be a drink which the gods themselves enjoyed.

The bees were venerated so much that they were neither bought nor sold; they were given or acquired as a present, inheritance, or dowry, or in similar ways,"

Submitted by Ed Shakalis

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



## ***This and That in the Life of the Chapter...***

Cape Cod entered the annals of history as the site of the Pilgrims' landing in late fall of 1620 in what is now Provincetown, the tip of the Cape. Their stay was short lived. As harsh winter weather began to set in, the Pilgrims decided they needed more hospitable surroundings and launched the so-called discovery trips to finally find and permanently settle in Plymouth.

We don't have accurate information as to when the first Lithuanians arrived on the Cape. But we do know that the first of the "second wave" (those who came to the United States after the Second World War) to acquire a summer cottage in West Hyannisport in 1953 was Mrs. Valerija Norvaisiene – the late mother of our much admired Regina Petrutis. She called her property Nida, after the beautiful resort village on the Baltic. Word spread quickly that Nida provided hospitable vacation quarters, with delicious Lithuanian food. As more and more Lithuanians along the Eastern seaboard discovered the charms of Cape Cod, other compatriots acquired properties to accommodate them. Among the better-known such properties were: Banga owned and operated by the Pakstys and Slepavicius families; Audrone by the Jansonas family; Meska by Lusiai; and a number of others. None of these survives today and almost all of their owners are gone, too.

When the summer visitors as well as the first American-born generation from among the early immigrants (or the "first wave") started to reach retirement age, a number of them decided to make the Cape their permanent home. At first, in the late sixties and early seventies, the migration was slow (about 30 people had linked up as being of Lithuanian ancestry who were living here year round in 1972-73). By the fall of 1974, Mykolas Biliunas, who is relat-

ed to the renowned Lithuanian writer Jonas Biliunas, and who with his wife were among the first to retire to the Cape, thought it was about time to form a chapter of the Lithuanian American Community. To that end the organizing meeting was held on September 26. Thus the chapter was born, with Mr. Biliunas at the head. He was succeeded three years later by Ernestas Bliudnikas and starting in 1980, for the next 23 years the leadership chair was held by Vladas Zidziunas and Alfonsas and Regina Petrutis. The current chairperson, Algirdas Dapkus, has been in that position since 2003.

As with the chapters in Florida and to some extent Arizona, the membership of the Cape Cod chapter, at least until recently, consisted primarily of retirees. In the past several years, some of the recent young arrivals from Lithuania, the "third wave", have augmented our ranks. But it's hard to say whether we'll ever flourish to the same extent as in the period between the early eighties and the mid-nineties when the membership reached some 150-60. On the other hand, if one opens the Barnstable County telephone directory, Lithuanian surnames can be found on almost every page. The great majority of these are descendants of the earliest Lithuanian immigrants to this country. One of them, Gary Blazis, was recently Council President for the Town Barnstable, the highest elected municipal official.

Currently there are 120 members on the Chapter's rolls, but only less than half of them are active in the various functions initiated or supported by the group. Noteworthy annual events include: the commemoration of Lithuania's Independence Day (February 16) combined with the restoration of independence in 1990 (March 11); participation in the

Multicultural Festival sponsored by the Cape Cod Community College as well as in the International Club activities; visiting and praying at the grave sites of deceased members on Memorial Day and, more recently, on All Saints Day, when candles are lit at dusk; attendance at Mass in mid-June in remembrance of those deported to Siberia. Perhaps the most popular and best attended activity each year is the picnic in early September. It provides an opportunity for convivial, informal socializing while partaking of the delicious member-provided food, and for testing one's luck in a raffle. Last June, for the first time, the younger generation organized Jonines, a tradition-laden Lithuanian celebration honoring those who bear the name John or its feminine equivalent, Joan, and its many variations. The festivities were held at the National Seashore, complete with bonfire and various folkloric activities normally associated with this event.

Since 1979, the Chapter has published annually an informational bulletin, this year's being the 29<sup>th</sup> edition. A couple of years ago, the committee printed up a brochure for use in acquainting prospective members with the work of the Chapter. We also subscribe to *Pasaulio Lietuvis* and to *Bridges*, which surveys Lithuanian activities in English. Our Committee is in contact with the Lithuanian Global Genealogical Society and participates in the Cape Cod International Club.

The local Chapter maintains various archival materials related to its activities, including photo albums and a register of member deaths. All are available for perusal by contacting the chairperson. Among other noteworthy material, you might find that for long, meritorious service or exceptionally generous financial support to the Lithuanian Community, Ceslovas Mickunas and Ruta Prouty have been designated honorary members. Certificates of thanks for years of selfless leadership were issued to the late Alfonsas and to Regina Petrutis, Irena Jansonas and Vladas Zidziunas.

The Chapter's main sources of income are the proceeds from the annual picnic, a percentage

of the dues returned to individual chapters by the National Executive Committee and the generosity of individual members whose donations are designated for local use. Out of these proceeds, on behalf of the membership, we make contributions to Lithuanian publications, LAC's Educational Affairs Council to further the study of Lithuanian language, the Lithuanian Foundation, the Lithuanian Open Golf Tournament (organized annually by our own Shakalis family), and through the Lithuanian Orphan Care Committee toward providing for the welfare and well being of an orphan in Lithuania.

We can be rightfully proud of the Chapter's accomplishments thus far. And we look hopefully to the future in the expectation that new, younger and stronger hands will materialize to complete any unfinished tasks.

*A free translation by Vida Morris of a report to the LAC Boston Regional meeting presented by Algirdas Dapkus.*

September 13, 2007

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Greater Hartford's  
Lithuanian Radio Hour  
\*\*\*\*\*  
**"Tėvynės Garsai"**  
"The Sounds of Homeland"  
Fiftieth Anniversary  
1957 – 2007

*The Lithuanian Radio Hour "Tėvynės Garsai"*  
*"Sounds of The Homeland"*  
is heard weekly on WWUH, 91.3 FM,  
Sundays from 5 to 6 PM.

It is dedicated to broadcasting Lithuanian music, segments on Lithuanian culture, local news, parish announcements, special events programs, interviews, and commentary on various political and cultural subjects.

The first Lithuanian radio program was heard in the late 1940's and early 50's; it originated in New Britain and was produced and aired by Vytautas Žalnieraitis who relinquished the show to Vladas Plečkaitis in 1954. The program closed in early 1957 and gave way to the "Tėvynės Garsai" - "Sounds of the Homeland" Lithuanian radio hour, which, 50 years later still airs weekly.

The Hartford area based Lithuanian radio program was born at the home of Joseph Belazaras of South Windsor. He, with the assistance of Barney Vedeikis, gathered a group of individuals, with whose financial support "Tėvynės Garsai" first



*The entire Lithuanian radio staff, left to right: Algis Simonaitis, Lionė Simonaitienė, Saulius Dzikas, Dalia Dzikienė, Birutė Bernotienė, Raminta Nenortienė, Lionginas Kapeckas, Asta Nenortienė, Sigita Lančinskienė and program director Alfonsas Dzikas.*

aired on March 17, 1957 on station WPOP. It has been on the air for over 50 years, producing over 2,800 programs during that time period. The program is incorporated in the State of Connecticut as a non-profit organization.

The first program director was Vladas Plečkaitis then a resident of New Britain; he was succeeded by Jurgis Pelkaitis in July 1958. In 1960 Jurgis invited Algimantas Dragunevičius to assist him in the production of the "Tėvynės Garsai" programs. Mr. Dragunevičius assumed the helm of the



*Musicians with company: Zita Rossi, Florence Morkus, Alfonsas Dzikas and Joseph Liudzius.*



*The cutting of the "Raguolis": Birutė Bernotienė, Alfonsas Dzikas and Asta Nenortienė.*



Lithuanian program in 1961, and remained its host for 27 years, when in 1988 due to failing health, he turned over the responsibilities of the show to its current host, Alfonsas Dzikas.

During the fifty years of its existence "Tėvynės Garsai" has aired its programs from five local Connecticut radio stations:

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| 1957 to 1964    | WPOP-AM Newington, CT                                |
| 1964 to 1968    | WBMI-FM Meriden, CT                                  |
| 1968 to 1970    | WKSS-FM Hartford, CT                                 |
| 1970 to 1991    | WRYM-AM Newington, CT                                |
| 1991 to present | WWUH-FM University of Hartford,<br>West Hartford, CT |

During this 50 year time period a group of dedicated individuals have served as announcers: in the late 50-s and early 60-s Vladas Plečkaitis, Jurgis Petkaitis, Algimantas Dragunevičius, Juozas Benešiūnas, Nijolė Rūkaitė, Gene Tijūnėlienė and Lionė Simonaitienė. In 1962 Mrs. Žita Dapkienė joined the staff and remained its integral part until she moved to Florida in September 1994. The program's current director, Alfonsas Dzikas, joined the staff in 1963, followed by Lionginas Kapeckas in 1966, Leonas Adamkevičius in 1987, and Lionė Simonaitienė in 1994, Evaldas Malinauskas in 1999 and Tomas Nenortas in 2001. Algis Simonaitis serves as the program's administrator.

The current production and announcing staff consists of:

|                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Alfonsas Dzikas,         | Director since 1988  |
|                          | Announcer since 1963 |
| Birutė Bernotienė        | since 1996           |
| Saulius Dzikas           | since 1988           |
| Dalia Dzikienė           | since 1995           |
| Asta Nenortienė          | since 1998           |
| Raminta Nenortienė       | since 2001           |
| Lionginas Kapeckas       | since 1966           |
| Sigita Lančinskienė      | since 2006           |
| Lionė & Algis Simonaitis | Administrators       |

A reception was held at the University of Hartford 1877 Club – Harry Gray Center. The reception was sponsored by Radio Station WWUH-FM and the Lithuanian Radio Hour.

A letter of congratulations was received from President Valdas Adamkus. The President wrote of the great accomplishments and value of Lithuanian radio programs abroad.

Greetings were also received from Vytas Maciunas, President of the Lithuanian American Community Executive Committee and Dale Lukienė, Chair of the Cultural Committee of the Lithuanian American Community.

Bridges wishes "SOUNDS OF THE HOMELAND" many more years of successful broadcasting.

*Source of Information: Fiftieth anniversary program submitted by Florence Morkus.*

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## The Grand Dame of Allegheny Avenue

Philadelphia, PA



The Lithuanian Music Hall in Philadelphia's Port Richmond section once served as the center of the Polish-speaking community that populated the area at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Photo by Rimas Gedeika

*This article was written from excerpts of an interview given by Lithuanian Music Hall Business Manager Lisa Blanco to the Metro newspaper as well as added material by Jeanne Dorr.*

There aren't too many Lithuanian organizations in this country that can boast of 100 years.

Lithuanian Music Hall Business Manager Lisa Blanco recently gave an interview to the Metro newspaper in Philadelphia and spoke about the renaissance of the hall. It is located in the Port Richmond section of Philadelphia on Allegheny Avenue. The entire area is enjoying the renaissance and is in the redevelopment spotlight. The Music Hall itself is a tall, imposing red brick building that can be seen from I-95. Three historic Catholic churches also grace the area. Architects and planners have offered suggestions including a design for a continuous lighted walkway down Allegheny Ave., while at the same time preserving the Old Philadelphia charm of the neighborhood.

The building was constructed between 1908 and 1909 by Lithuanian immigrants for the sum of \$32,600. The architect who designed it is unknown. The building was erected to preserve the cultural heritage of Lithuanian Americans as well as a meeting place for the immigrants.

The three story structure boasts a Grand Ballroom with a stage which is currently used by the Port Richmond Theatre Company as well as a doll house size dressing room.

A smaller Middle Hall on the first floor once had frescos and paintings on many of the wall panels.

But the Hall also has some illicit history. There is a large kitchen with a back stairway where the steps were once hiding places for "hooch" and playing cards during prohibition. To this day the "hooch" and the playing cards remain inside the steps as a reminder of the Hall's past.

The basement "rathskeller" is a large inviting room. Blanco named it the Speakeasy because the bar was built in the 1920's, complete with a spittoon and urinal along the base of the bar which was refurbished by volunteers.

New walls, ceilings and lights were installed and three layers of old floor were removed. Fire exits were added and the Speakeasy now hosts many events.

The building has many stairways making it difficult for the elderly to attend events. Lisa joked that if they win a million dollars they will install an elevator and build a balcony. She also discussed how four years ago the city inspected all the clubs along the Delaware River. Half of them were shut down and the Hall was held to the same rules as the clubs. Fire exits were not a priority in 1909 so today's safety standards had to be met.

For decades the Lithuanian Music Hall was the epicenter of lavish New Year's Eve balls, weddings, conventions, dances and dinners. But in the 1960's this began to change.

A lack of activities and rentals precipitated a period of neglect and decline. Structural deterioration nearly brought about the sale of the building, but in 1974 an extensive renovation project was planned. Over a period of years the projects were successfully completed and new ones were added.

The Grand Dame of Allegheny Avenue has been restored to her original beauty and once again enjoys the position she so rightfully earned over the years. Thanks to the many, many volunteers and people who supported the projects over the years, she now looks forward to her next hundred years.

A gala celebration to mark the anniversary is being planned.

*Sidenotes:*

*The Lithuanian Music Hall and the Lithuanian American Community work in cooperation with each other.*

*The Lithuanian Music Hall has been home to many groups. During the struggle for Lithuania's Independence*



Lithuanian representatives after the reception at the National Guard Association Hall

*Continued from page 12*

### **Gala Banquet.**

The day's celebration ended with a banquet attended by over 450 people. During the course of the evening we heard Senator Lieberman, Congressman Kemp and Ambassador Audrius Bruzga. William Buckley and Senator Scoop Jackson (posthumously) received the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom. The keynote speaker was Elena Bonner, wife of the soviet dissident and Nobel Laureate Andrei Sakharov.

The entire day was a very moving experience for this writer. And the words inscribed on the statute, *"To the more than one hundred million victims of communism and to those who love liberty"* describe the feeling that prevailed the entire day. It was a very sobering experience and one which described the horrors of repression.

*Rimas Gedeika*  
Photos by Rimas Gedeika

*Rimas Gedeika lives in New Jersey and is a member of the National Executive Committee of the Lithuanian American Community. He is also active in the Lithuanian Sports Community*



Friends from different parts of the world meet at the memorial - Danutė Gedeikienė and Sister Nijolė Sadunaitė



President Bush greeting flag waving Lithuanians



Ambassador Audrius Bruzga (seated front row center) recently met with members of the National Executive Board of the Lithuanian American Community. Vytautas Maciunas, President of the Lithuanian American Community is on the Ambassador's left.

*Photo: Courtesy of the Lithuanian Embassy*

*in the early 1990's it served as the Communication Center.*

*The Lithuanian Cultural Center is housed in the Hall.*

*The Hall is used by the Lithuanian dance groups and musical groups in the area.*

*Amber Roots holds their meetings in the Hall.*

*Feb 16- March 11 commemorations are celebrated here each year.*

*The Lithuanian American Community's National Executive Committee meets in the hall.*

*The first weekend in November a Lithuanian Fair is held here.*

*The Lithuanian Music Hall has hosted concerts, dignitaries, cultural programs and a myriad of other events.*

*The halls and meeting rooms are available to rent.*

*The Lithuanian Music Hall is truly the home of the Lithuanian American Community.*

*The Hall is located at:*

*Lithuanian Music Hall  
2715 E. Allegheny Ave.  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19134  
Tel. 215 - 739 - 4831*

# Mindaugas

Source: *ENCYCLOPEDIA LITUANICA*

**MINDAUGAS (1236-1263).** King of Lithuania. mentioned in historical sources under the names Mindowe, Mindovg, Mindoh, Mendog and other variants. Nothing is known of his origins or of his youth. The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle (1295-97) relates that his father was a powerful ruler (*ein konic groz*) who had no equal in Lithuania. The Lithuanian Chronicles (16<sup>th</sup> century) mention a Ringaudas (Ringgold, Rinkolt) as the father of Mindaugas, but the name does not appear in any other source. The first reference to Mindaugas is found in the Volynian or Ipatiev Chronicle. This chronicle in its enumeration of the Lithuanian princes who were signatories to the Volynian Treaty lists Dausprangas (Dovsprunk) and his brother Mindaugas among the five princes greater in authority than the others. Mindaugas became supreme ruler of Lithuania; Dausprangas is not mentioned elsewhere. But his two sons, Tautvilas and Eidvydas, did later vie with their uncle for control of Lithuania.

**Unification of Lithuania.** Historians often speak of Mindaugas as the founder of the Lithuanian state. In fact, however, a more or less organized Lithuanian state existed earlier. It was centered around the part of the Highlands (*Aukštaitija*) between the Nemunas, Merkys, and Neris Rivers and included the later known fortresses of Kernavė, Trakai and Vilnius. The designation *Lietuva* of this area was extended to the whole country, which was ruled by individual regional princes. Even though they were relatively independent, they did have a common bond, as is evident from the frequent, well-organized and not insignificant military campaigns of the Lithuanians of that time against the neighboring countries. When the Teutonic Knights began to attack Lithuania, they were severely beaten in the battle of Saule (Šiauliai) in 1236. It is not clear whether Mindaugas played



Sculpture by V. Kasubas

a part in this Lithuanian victory, but he alone negotiated with Volynia in the same year. Around 1240 he united into a single realm the whole of the Highlands (*Aukštaitija*), eastern Samogitia (*Žemaitija*) and certain lands of the southern region of Lithuania. Mindaugas conquered Slonim and Volkovysk, cities founded by the Slavs, to the south of Gardinas (Grodno) and the Nemunas River in the ancient Yotvingian territory. The important fortress of Naugardukas (Novogrudok) in the southeast along the upper reaches of the Nemunas River was part of his domain, entrusted to his son Vaišvilkas.

In the process of unifying the Lithuanian lands Mindaugas first had to overcome his internal enemies, the regional princes and the pretenders to the throne of Lithuania. Some of these lost their lives in the struggle, others were assassinated or exiled. Mindaugas seized the land and possessions of his two nephews and their uncle, the Samogitian prince Vykintas, and dispatched them to fight against the Russians. The chronicler Matthew Strykowski (16<sup>th</sup> century) writes that Polotsk, Vitebsk and Smolensk were captured. However, their military expedition lasted only a few years, because in a short time all three rebelled against Mindaugas. The Samogitians, led by Vykintas, rose up against him, as well as the Livonian Knights of the Sword and the Volynian prince, Daniel, who was married to the sister of Tautvilas. Tautvilas sought refuge in Riga. While there he was baptized and thus was able to strengthen his position vis.a.vis his pagan uncle, because as the Christian pretender to the throne of Lithuania he had the support of the Archbishop of Riga and the Livonian Order. The Volynian Prince Daniel began a war against Mindaugas by taking the cities of Slonim and Volkovysk in 1249-50. At the same time the Knights of the Sword under their master, Andrew of Stirland, invaded Lithuania. The Knight devastated the land of Nalšia



Mindaugas, King of Lithuania, as depicted in medieval chronicles

and reached a fortress of Mindaugas somewhere in the Highlands (Aukštaitija), to which Vykintas, Tautvilas and Eidvydas had brought their military units. Mindaugas successfully defended this formidable fortress. The Volynian Chronicle calls it Voruta. However, it is highly improbable that any fortress where Mindaugas was surrounded by enemy forces in 1250 could have been so named (*see* Varuta). Mindaugas further eased his difficult situation by negotiations for peace with the Livonian Order and by the promise to accept baptism.

**Baptism and Coronation.** The exact date and circumstances of the first Christianization of Lithuania are unknown. Andrew of Stirland, the Livonian Land master who was charged with the baptism and coronation of Mindaugas, came to Lithuania with a not unpretentious retinue towards the end of 1250. In the same year, or more probably early in 1251, Mindaugas accepted baptism together with his wife, two sons and a number of his courtiers. Later Pope Innocent IV wrote that a multitude of Mindaugas' pagan subjects accepted baptism (*numerosa paganorum multitudine... sibi subdita*) These reports were, without doubt, brought by Mindaugas' delegation to the pope in Milan. The pope was requested to take Lithuania under his protection, to establish a bishopric and to grant Mindaugas a royal crown. The six letters of Innocent IV, written during the summer of 1251 to Mindaugas or to others with reference to him, indicated the favor of the Holy See toward Lithuania. Nevertheless, the regulation of ecclesiastical affairs and the arrangements for the coronation were not without complications and were protracted until 1254. Mindaugas was forced repeatedly to turn to the pope for protection of Lithuanian interests, which were at cross purposes with the expansionist aims of the Teutonic order in the Baltic lands.

The diocese of Lithuania (*diocesis Lethoviensis*) was created by decree of Pope Innocent on July 17, 1251. Christian, a priest of the Teutonic Order, was consecrated bishop; it is probable that he also baptized Mindaugas. The Archbishop of Riga accepted his oath of fealty, so that the diocese of Lithuania would be part of the metro-



*The Pope Innocent IV bull regarding Lithuania's placement under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome, Mindaugas baptism and coronation.*

*Painting by A. Vrnas*

politan See of Riga. When Mindaugas complained to the Holy See, that oath was cancelled in 1254 and another in the name of the pope was pronounced. In this way the Lithuanian diocese was made to depend directly on the Holy See. Mindaugas granted lands in Samogitia to Bishop Christian Mindaugas' authority was not strong in

that part of Lithuania. Therefore Bishop Christian ceded part of the donated lands to the Livonian Order to have its protection. This, in fact, made him a vassal of the Order. When Bishop Christian saw that even with the aid of the knights he could not survive in Samogitia, he left for Germany in 1259 and did not return. A second diocese was established in southern Lithuania in 1253 with the episcopal consecration in Masuria of the Dominican friar, Vito. Mindaugas also assigned lands to that bishopric, but Bishop Vito never took possession of his See. The organized conversion of the Lithuanian nation came to a halt.

By the same decree in which he established the bishopric of Lithuania, Pope Innocent IV also acceded to Mindaugas' petition that he be crowned king of Lithuania. The coronation took place two years later (1253). According to custom Bishop Henry Heidenreich of Kulm presided over the ecclesiastical ceremonies and the crown (*regni diadematem*) was conferred by Master Andrew of Stirland in the pope's name. Andrew had promised to obtain the honor for Mindaugas. By the conferral of the crown Mindaugas was acknowledged as the equal of the other Christian kings. In 1255 Mindaugas obtained the right to crown his son as the heir apparent. However, there is no indication that this second coronation ever took place or even which of his sons was destined to inherit the throne.

Mindaugas was obliged to recompense with land grants the order for its sponsorship of his baptism and coronation. Six such donational acts of Mindaugas from the years 1253-59 are extant. The first, issued in the year of Mindaugas' coronation, is not questioned; the other five are considered by most scholars to be forgeries of the order. By the donational act of 1253 Mindaugas ascribed to the Livonian Order and to Bishop Christian lands in

POPE INNOCENTUS IV  
HE AUTHORIZED THE CROWNING  
OF MINDAUGAS

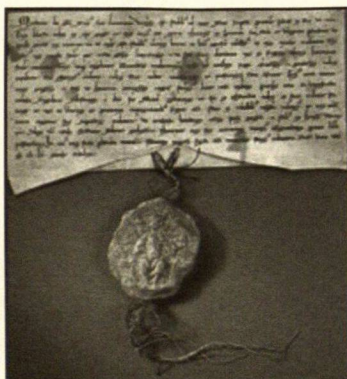
Samogitia, namely the districts of Raseiniai, Betygala, Ariogala and Laukuva, to be divided equally among the two. The remaining documents purportedly ceded to the Order certain border lands in western, north, eastern and southern Lithuania. Some of these were not yet under the rule of Mindaugas.

**Kingdom of Lithuania in 1253-1263.**

With an assurance of peace from the Livonian Order and with the considerable prestige which he gained from his royal title Mindaugas could now turn his attention to his Eastern policy. In the southeast one of his most dangerous enemies was Prince Daniel of Volynia, who had assisted the revolt of the princes against Mindaugas. In 1253 Daniel, too, had been crowned king in the name of the pope. Mindaugas was contesting Daniel's claims to the ancient Yotvingian lands, called Black Rus'. Under the leadership of Mindaugas' son Vaišvilkas, Naugardukas was successfully defended against the attacks of Daniel and the cities of Slonim and Volokovysk were retaken. The Peace Treaty of 1254 assigned the principality of Naugardukas to Daniel's son, Roman; another son married Mindaugas' daughter. Vaišvilkas accepted baptism in the Eastern Orthodox Church, abdicated his titles in Black Rus' and entered a monastery. Relations with Volynia worsened again in a few years when Daniel and his brother Vasilko allied themselves with the Tatars and in 1259 devastated the eastern part of Lithuania. The Tatars, pressed by the main Lithuanian forces, withdrew without a decisive battle. The fact that he was able to stop the Tatar advance to the West was to have an important bearing on Mindaugas' further expansion into Russian lands. The Russian princes of Pinsk in the Pripet River basin sought protection from the King of Lithuania and recognized Mindaugas as their suzerain. Mindaugas expanded his rule to the Chernigov and Briansk areas, east of the Dnieper River. In 1255 Tautvilas was reconciled with his uncle and returned to Polotsk on the upper reaches of the Daugava. Vykintas and Eidvydas had already faded from the political horizon. Consequently, when King Daniel became an obedient vassal of the Tatar khan (ca 1260), Mindaugas was temporarily free of any major enemies. Mindaugas' efforts to attract to his rule the peoples along



the Lithuanian borderlands were less successful. The eastern Yotvingians, who were fighting the Poles and the Order of the Cross, were made well disposed by his gifts (silver), but they avoided any firm commitment. The western Samogitians (Žemaičiai), whom the Livonian Order, relying for justification on the donational acts of Mindaugas, was seeking to subdue, stubbornly resisted. The Order occupied the coastland of the Nemunas River. It was called Memel (Lith. *Klaipėda*) and its purpose was to prevent the Samogitians from receiving goods and arms by sea. The order constructed more and more fortresses along the borders of Samogitia and thus provoked continuous clashes with the local inhabitants. The massive military expedition organized by the Teutonic Knights and directed against the Samogitians ended in a stinging defeat in the battle of Durbė (q.v.) in 1260. The Livonian Knights were forced to withdraw immediately from the forts built along the Samogitian border. The defeat was compounded by the revolt of other nations, Couronians, Zemgallians and Prussians, held in subjection by the Teutonic Knights.



*The act granting Selonia, marked with Mindaugas' seal*

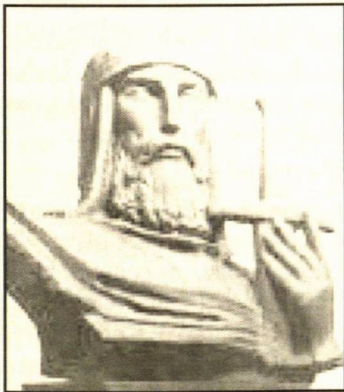
The leader of the Samogitian resistance was their newly emerged and energetic prince Treniota, perhaps the son of Vykintas. The sources speak of Mindaugas' relations with Treniota during the years 1258-59; Treniota had visited and had stayed in Mindaugas' fortress. Some sources give rise to speculation that Mindaugas secretly supported the Samogitian resistance to the Livonian Order, but after the battle of Durbe he declared open war. The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle relates that it was the Samogitian envoys and Treniota who persuaded Mindaugas to sever relations with the order and to join

forces with the resisting nations. In 1262 a military coalition was formed to oppose the Livonian Order. This coalition included Alexander Nevsky, prince of Great Novgorod, Tautvilas, the nephew of Mindaugas and prince of Polotsk, and Constantine, his son, prince of Vitebsk. These three allies, unfortunately, delayed and thus the planned combined operations did not succeed. The Lithuanians reached the Wenden (Cesis) fortress, headquarters of the Livonian Order, a good distance to the north of the Daugava River, but they had to return

*Commemoration of 750 years  
of Mindaugas' Coronation*

without any significant gain. The following winter Treniota advanced across the whole of Latvia to the Estonian coast and dispersed the Livonian Knights, who sought to cut off his return at the mouth of the Daugava. The Rhymed Chronicle notes that Mindaugas was displeased with these military operations because neither the Latvians nor the Estonians joined the Lithuanian revolt. Judging from his earlier policies which involved his baptism and the negotiations with Volynia, Mindaugas was not averse to peaceful diplomacy, something which Treniota was not disposed to undertake. The latter preferred the destructive tactics of military operations. Campaigns of this nature, supported in part by Mindaugas, were also organized into Poland and Prussia in 1262, where a major revolt against the Teutonic Order was in progress. Mindaugas' policies were considered to be harmful to the Lithuanian cause because his attention seemed to focus more on the annexation of Russian lands than on the support of the revolt in Prussia. Of 33 major military campaigns conducted during the reign of Mindaugas (1237-63), 20 were directed to the East.

**Apostasy and Death.** Did Mindaugas also lapse from the Christian faith when he broke with the Livonian Order? There is no clear answer. One version claims that the King of Lithuania remained a Christian; it is founded on the regret expressed by Pope Clement IV in 1268, that Mindaugas of happy memory (*clare memorie Mindota*) was slain by malicious sons. A second version



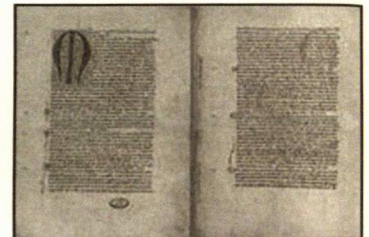
has him an apostate; this is based on an assertion by Pope John XXII in 1324 that Mindaugas lapsed into his former error. The Volynian Chronicle and Hermann de Wartberge (14<sup>th</sup> century) write in a similar vein. But both of these sources are partial to Mindaugas' enemies. There is a possible third version: as a neophyte Mindaugas had not yet matured as a Christian, but as an astute statesman he could have refrained from public avowal of his apostasy. The Rhymed Chronicle indicates



that Mindaugas confronted Treniota with having tricked him into breaking off his peaceful relations with the Master of Livonia. It was the bitter antagonism between Mindaugas and Treniota which led to the plot to kill Mindaugas.

In 1263 Mindaugas dispatched his huge army to Briansk, beyond the Dnieper River. Daumantas, the Prince of Naššia, deliberately returned unexpectedly from this campaign, and together with Treniota surprised Mindaugas, and killed him and his two sons Ruklys and Rupeikis.

Ultimately the reason for the plot was the instigated opposition to Mindaugas' policies and the rivalry for the throne. In the years following Mindaugas' death this rivalry for power in Lithuania brought about the assassination of four princes in succession, among them Mindaugas' eldest son Vaišvilkas. The Volynian Chronicle ascribes Mindaugas' death to the fact that, after the death of his own wife



*Six Letters from Pope Innocentius IV  
to King Mindaugas.*

Martha (q.v.), he detained her sister, the wife of Prince Daumantas. If this be true and Daumantas took revenge, then he also had another reason to oppose the centralization of Lithuania which included his own domains in the Highlands (Aukštaitija), where Mindaugas was most strongly entrenched.

Up to the time of Mindaugas little was known of Lithuania. Mindaugas abruptly appeared as the one who unified the Lithuanian state, the one who first Christianized the Lithuanian nation and the one who was crowned its first king. Not all his hopes were realized, but there remained a definite cultural bias toward the Christian West and a political expansion to the East, but most important, there was formed the strong nucleus of a Lithuanian state, which survived the internal dissensions following upon Mindaugas' assassination until the new dynasty of Gediminas came into power (1295).



## Former POW John Gudaitis dies; spoke to local scouts March 13<sup>th</sup>.

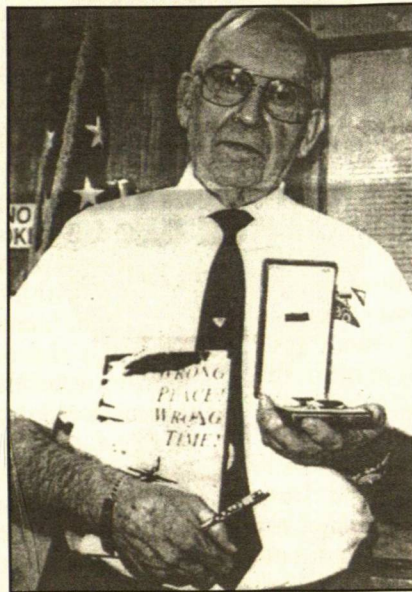
From  
"Forest City News",  
Forest City, PA  
By Peggy Brager

Staff Sgt. John Gudaitis, of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force 305<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group and 366<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron, told his story of being seriously wounded after a bombing run, and then taken as a Prisoner of War by the Gestapo and SS Troops to a group of a very interested Cub Scouts and their parents at the American Legion Hall on Tuesday, March 13. Mr. Gudaitis spent 584 days in captivity and received the Prisoner of War Medal, in addition to two Purple Hearts, a Bronze Star, Air Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Overseas Service Bars, and the European-African-Middle Eastern Ribbon, all of which he proudly showed to the scouts.

Mr. Gudaitis' story is told in a book entitled "Wrong Place! Wrong Time!" written by George C. Kuhl. Scout leader Peggy Brager showed her copy of that book, which John had autographed for her, but all agreed that hearing the story in his own words was truly a great privilege. He spoke continuously for more than an hour, and you could have heard a pin drop, as the scouts and their parents listened intently. Everyone was amazed as the WW II hero recalled his story with such detail after all those years.

Scout leaders set up display tables of war memorabilia and collectibles from the Revolutionary War, Civil War, WWI, WWII, Korean, Vietnam, Gulf War and the war in Iraq, all from the collection of their scout leader. The scouts tried on helmets and clothing and were fascinated with all the things on display.

A special guest, a young soldier named Cpl. Kenneth Dimick, who had been in



*John Gudaitis, former POW, proudly shows war medals to scouts.*

Iraq for a year, also talked to the scouts who were full of questions for him. Cpl. Dimick is the uncle of twins Chris and Joe Lee. He handed out dog tags to each of the boys.

Scouts received a flag heart with a cross on purple and gold ribbons in memory of Sgt. Andrew Brown, the Pleasant Mount soldier who lost his life in Iraq in 2004.

Mr. Gudaitis gave each boy a flag pencil, along with his picture and a brief history about himself, as he shook the hand of each scout. Cpl. Dimick helped the boys polish their bullet pencil holders after they had their names engraved on them.

The scouts, leaders and parents presented Mr. Gudaitis with several tokens of their appreciation - a white leatherette pouch with the American flag on it, a blue zippered American Legion coin case, which he said he would carry his rosary in, and a custom made bullet with genuine turquoise key chain, in addition to a lovely card that

each boy had signed.

Mr. Gudaitis concluded his remarks with the POW Pledge of Allegiance, which none of us every heard before:

### **The Prisoner of War Pledge of Allegiance**

#### **I pledge allegiance to the flag..**

I am an American. I was a Prisoner of War. I have served my country. I need no one to tell me what allegiance I owe to my flag, to my country, to my home.

#### **Of the United States of America..**

This is my country. I have fought for it. I have been imprisoned for it and many have died for it.

#### **And to the Republic for which it stands..**

This flag stands for me, for love of my country, for love of my family, for love of my friends. I did not forsake it when I was starved, when I was beaten, or when some were killed.

#### **One nation under God, indivisible..**

I am one man. I have one country. America. I worship one God. Under God I was captured; under God I was saved; under God I have no fear.

#### **With liberty and justice for all..**

My allegiance is to liberty, to justice. My flag represents the best of myself, my effort, my home, my country. I will pledge allegiance to the flag. I will pledge under the love of God. It is my right, my privilege, my duty. I have earned it. Tell me not how. I have given you much. I am an Ex-Prisoner of War. Take nothing more from me.

*I pledge allegiance to the flag of my country.*

*Note: On a sad note, Mr. Gudaitis passed away peacefully on Friday morning, March 16.*

*Submitted by Betty Kwader*



## THE GODDESS WIFE

Told by Dr. Jonas Balys in "Lietuviškos Pasakos"  
English translation by Gloria O'Brien.

### ŽMONA DEIVĖ

"Kitą kartą buvęs vienas medžiotojas. Jis vaikščiojęs vaikščiojęs po mišką ir užėjęs miške tokius gražius namus....."

Once there was a hunter, who walked and walked through the woods, and came upon a beautiful manor. Entering the yard, he saw a handsome steer tied to a fence. Continuing further and entering the house, he saw a woman gowned in silk. She beckoned him further, into a lovely chamber. He walked in, and looking through the window, he spied a group of young maidens, all beautifully dressed, advancing towards the house. Each one held a strong birch rod, and struck the steer as they passed him. And the steer shuddered with each blow.

And the woman gave each maiden instructions about their duties for the next day:

"You must strike down this animal, you that other; you will strike down this person, you that other," and so on.

After they had been instructed and sent away, he again looked out the window, and saw the last and most beautiful maiden of all, who strode up to the steer and struck him such a blow that he fell dead. When she entered the room, the woman said to her:

"Tomorrow it will be your task to strike down this hunter."

The man was almost paralyzed by fear, unable to decide whether he should stand or run. Dismissing the maiden, the woman led him out of the chamber and asked:

"Did you hear what that beautiful maiden must do to you tomorrow?"

"I heard" - he responded fearfully.

"Do you still possess all of your mother's wedding clothing?"

"I believe so", answered the hunter.

"Then, when you go out tomorrow to cut the rye, take with you all of your mother's wedding clothes. Tie twelve thick birch rods together, and take all of that with you, leaving it all close at hand near your workplace. When you have cut the third row of rye, you will see a serpent. With your mother's wedding handkerchief, grab it, wring it by the throat and commence to strike it with the birch rods. Though it will writhe and twist, even coil around your arm and body, it will not bite. You must continue striking the creature, until it changes into that maiden, whom you saw today. You must quickly tear off all her clothing and dress her in your mother's wedding clothes. Then be sure to burn the silken finery that you have taken from her."

Having said all that, she let him leave the manor, with a final warning:

"Do not forget to do everything as I have told you."

"Yes, yes -- I will not forget!", he answered.

The next day, he gathered all of his mother's wedding clothes, including the handkerchief, tied twelve birch rods together, and went out with the others to cut the rye, carrying everything with him and putting it down at his workplace. He cut two rows, and upon cutting the third, he saw a serpent. He immediately grabbed the creature with his mother's handkerchief, taking it by the throat and pressing with all his might. Taking a rod, he struck the snake repeatedly until the rod broke, then took another and continued, over and over. The snake coiled itself around his arm, over his shoulder, writhing and squeezing, but he remained fearless and continued to strike, over and over. Each rod shattered, one after the other, and the struggle raged on. The rods were being used up, but still the

## folk tale

maiden did not appear. As he began to strike the creature with the twelfth and last rod, it changed into the same silk-clad, beautiful maiden he had seen the day before. She pleaded with him:

"Let me go, and I will kiss you!"

He immediately tore off her silken finery and dressed her in his mother's wedding clothing, then set her to the work of tying the sheaves of rye: he would cut, and she would tie.

They married right after rugiapūtė (the rye-cutting season) and lived happily for a long time. He was going to burn those beautiful silk clothes he had taken from her, but decided it would be a pity to do so. Instead, he brought them home and hid them under the floorboards in his granary.

Though they lived well, she, as if remembering something, would sigh heavily: for her, it was not so good here, as it had been there.

Once, she began kissing him over and over:

"Oi, oi, oi -- she said -- if only someone would give me back my clothes, how good I would be to them!"

"Do you really need them that badly?" -- he asked.

"Oh, I need them, how I need them!"

He lifted the floorboard in the granary, and gave her the silken clothing. She dressed herself, then pakšt - gave him a smacking kiss in farewell. He fell dead, and she changed back into a serpent.

Gloria Kivytaite O'Brien

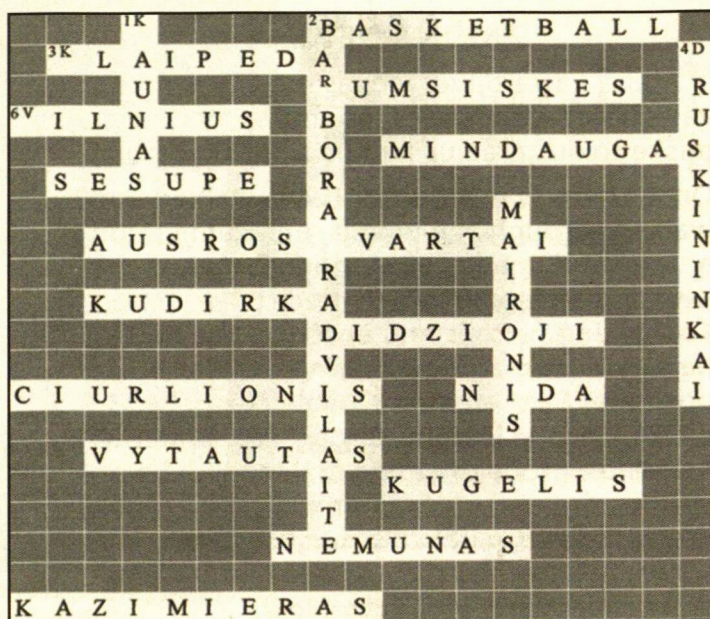
Gloria Kivytaite O'Brien is a frequent contributor to Bridges. She grew up in Brooklyn, Annunciation Parish. Gloria can be contacted at [Senaboba@aol.com](mailto:Senaboba@aol.com).

### Correction

The April issue incorrectly listed the address of Child's Gate to Learning on page 3. The correct address is [www.vvm@childgate.org](mailto:www.vvm@childgate.org). Please note that the middle letters are v v m.

## Answers to the Crossword Puzzle

for page 13



**Sunday, July 22nd**

**Immaculate Conception Convent**

600 Liberty Highway

**PUTNAM, Connecticut**

## ANNUAL PICNIC

**Lithuanian Friendship Day**

**11:00 Concelebrated Holy MASS**  
- Main celebrant: the convent chaplain  
**Reverend Kęstutis Kėvalas**

**12:00 LUNCH, activities, sports**

**3:00 PROGRAM by Neringa CAMPERS**

**4:30 DRAWING of Gifts**

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

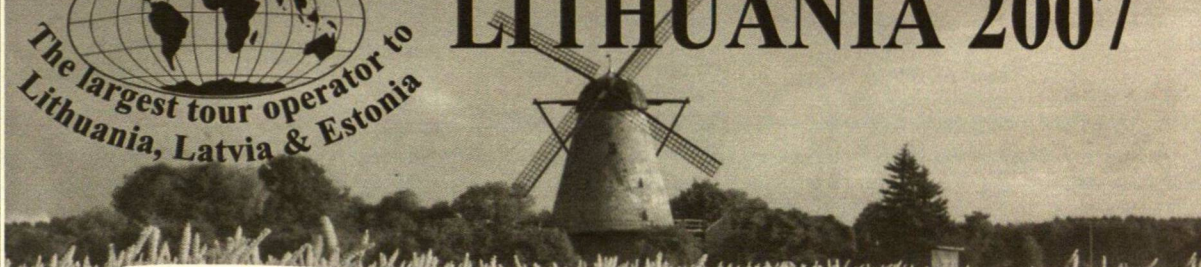
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Rita Pencyliene..... tel: 708-923-0280 e-mail: [pencylar@comcast.net](mailto:pencylar@comcast.net)

Brone Barakauskiene.....tel: 708-403-5717 e-mail: [mamabar3@aol.com](mailto:mamabar3@aol.com)

# Calendar of Events for July/August - September, October 2007

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

For all Neringa events please see [www.neringa.org](http://www.neringa.org).

## JULY

**July 1-7, 2007**  
Camp Neringa  
Family camp in Lithuanian

**July 8-22, 2007**  
Camp Neringa  
Children's camp in Lithuanian  
Ages 8-16

**July 15, 2007**  
Commemoration of the heroic flight and tragic deaths of Darius and Girienas Memorial Mass, 10:00 am  
Blessed Virgin of the Annunciation Church  
259 North 5<sup>th</sup> St., Brooklyn, NY  
Program following Mass in Parish Lower Hall, 70 Havemeyer St.  
Wreath Laying at Lituanica Square (Union Ave., Brooklyn)  
monument follows program.  
Contact:  
Vida Janauskas, president, Lithuanian American Community  
Brooklyn-Queens Chapter  
LCRA@EARTHLINK.NET.

**July 22, 2007**  
Lithuanian Friendship Day  
Putnam Picnic  
Mass 11 am  
Festivities following Mass  
Immaculate Conception Convent  
600 Liberty Hwy., Putnam, CT

**July 22-28, 2007**  
Camp Neringa  
Continuation of children's camp in Lithuanian  
Ages 13-16

**July 29-Aug. 11, 2007**  
Camp Neringa  
Children's camp in English  
Ages 7-16

## AUGUST

**August 2-5, 2007**  
Knights of Lithuania  
94<sup>th</sup> National Convention  
Brockton, MA  
Hosted by Council 1  
[www.knightsoflithuania.com](http://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  
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  
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  
Saturday 11am to 5 pm  
Sunday noon to 4 pm  
Held in the Schuylkill Mall, PA  
Lithuanian dancers, music, singing, Partisans, ethnic food, displays, demonstrations and vendors.  
Info: .bermika1@verizon.net  
Sponsored by the Knights of Lithuania C-144.

**August 11-18, 2007**  
Camp Neringa  
Continuation of children's camp in English  
Ages 13-16

**August 19-26, 2007**  
Camp Neringa  
Art camp for adults in Lithuanian

**August 20-24, 2007**  
Seattle Lankas Family Camp  
Arrive Sunday 6 pm. Clean up Saturday morning. Camp performance Friday evening  
Fees TBD. Location: West coast  
Latvian Education Center, Shelton, WA.  
RSVP by June 1 to [nomeda@msn.com](mailto:nomeda@msn.com)

## SEPTEMBER

**September 8, 2007**  
100<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Celebration  
Sisters of St. Casimir  
2 pm Mass of Thanksgiving  
Nativity BVM Church  
6812 S. Washtenaw Ave.  
Chicago, IL  
Francis Cardinal George, Celebrant  
Archbishop of Chicago  
100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Banquet 6 pm  
Drury Lane Oak Brook  
100 Drury Lane  
Oakbrook Terrace, IL.  
Reservations:  
Sister Margaret Petcavage  
2601 W. Marquette Road  
Chicago, IL. 60629  
(773) 776- 1324

**September 9, 2007**  
Autumn Picnic  
Lithuanian American Community of Atlanta, GA  
Contact: Juras Palukaitis at [juras@hotmail.com](mailto:juras@hotmail.com)

**September 9, 2007**  
Our Lady of Siluva  
Commemoration Sunday  
Annunciation Parish  
259 North 5<sup>th</sup> St., Brooklyn, NY  
following 10:00 am Mass.  
For more info. contact V. Sidas  
SID100@AOL.COM

**September 13, 2007**  
(Thursday)  
Third Annual Autumn Gala  
Dinner, Silent Auction,  
Grand Prize Raffle  
Proceeds benefit  
Sisters of St. Francis of the

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Pittsburgh, PA 15204-2998  
Phone: 724-333-7232  
[info@osfprov.org](mailto:info@osfprov.org)

**September 23, 2007**  
ANNUAL PARISH  
Blessed Virgin Mary  
Annunciation Parish  
259 North 5<sup>th</sup> St.,  
following 10:00 am  
"Kugelis" Lunched  
entertainment, Pa  
Books drawing, lo

**September 28-30, 2007**  
LAK Flea Market  
Parish Lower Hall,  
Blessed Virgin Mary  
Annunciation Parish  
70 Havemeyer St.  
Brooklyn, NY  
For more specific info  
Flora@optonline.l

**Sept. 29, 2007 - 8:00 pm**  
Nationwide Celebration  
of the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
of Lithuanian Founding  
With a concert by the  
"KERNAGIS" from  
Cocktail at 7:00 pm  
Philadelphia's Lithuanian  
Music Hall  
2715 E. Allegheny  
Phila., PA 19134  
For info: 610 - 539 -  
See Ad on page 2

## OCTOBER

**October 5-7, 2007**  
Camp Neringa  
Neringa Walk-a-Thon

LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

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