

bridges

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LK



november 2008

L I T H U A N I A N A M E R I C A N N E W S J O U R N A L

Letter from the Editor

Thanksgiving traditionally seems to herald the start of the holiday season. At least it used to be, but I have to admit I have seen stores decorated with Christmas decorations in October and I had yet to buy the Halloween candy. I do confess I only buy the candy I like just in case we don't get too many children knocking on the door. While I'm on the topic of Christmas, please consider a subscription of Bridges as a gift for someone on your Christmas list.

Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday because it doesn't require cards, buying gifts, exchanging them, and running around from party to party. The only thing it requires is gratitude. Perhaps it's a good thing that we have a day to remind us to be grateful. And we have so much and so many things to thank God for every day, not just one day in November.

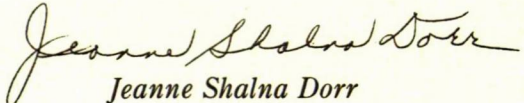
Lithuania has the beautiful custom of "vėlinės" or All Souls' Day. Can you imagine seeing an entire cemetery glowing with candles? Can you picture the people coming with their families, often in bad weather, to visit the graves of their loved ones? If you ever find yourselves with a few minutes to spare on a visit to Lithuania, find a cemetery and walk around. It's not morbid, but rather a very moving feeling to see the beautiful, well tended graves and the lovely stone markers.

Speaking of Lithuania, starting with the New Year we will be having more photo album pages that will enable you to visit this beautiful country, if not in person, at least vicariously. I would love it if each of you could visit Lithuania in person during the celebration of the millineum in 2009, but I understand that many cannot go for various reasons. So instead we will bring a part of Lithuania to you each month. You'll visit big cities, small towns, and villages so tiny that you won't find them on a map. We will be bringing as much of Lithuania as we can into your homes. After all, it's not every day a country celebrates its millennium and we need to be proud and grateful.

Thank you for sharing your homes with us this month. To all our veterans and those serving our country, thank you. I wish you and your families a Happy Thanksgiving Day.

"To educate yourself for the feeling of gratitude means to take nothing for granted, but to always seek out and value the kind that will stand behind the action. Nothing that is done for you is a matter of course. Everything originates in a will for the good, which is directed at you. Train yourself never to put off the word or action for the expression of gratitude."

Albert Schweitzer


Jeanne Shalna Dorr

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2715 E. Allegheny Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19134
Tel: 800-625-1170
Fax: 856-428-6014

E-mail: Lithuanian USA@yahoo.com

BRIDGES Consultants

Jeanne Dorr Editor
Gema Kreivenas Art Director/Production
Rimas Gedeika Treasurer
Lithuanian American Community, Inc., &
Subscription Manager.

**THE INFORMATION CENTER FOR
HOMECOMING LITHUANIANS**

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Address all editorial correspondence to:

BRIDGES

Jeanne Dorr
4 Shrewsbury Yard
Riverton, NJ 08077-1038

E-Mail: Jeanneshalna@aol.com

For subscription & advertising
information, please contact:

LAC, Inc./BRIDGES,
Rimas Gedeika
78 Mark Twain Dr.
Hamilton Sq., NJ 08690

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*Cover: Lithuania celebrates the 400th Jubilee of the apparition of
Our Lady of Šiluva.

**Photo is by Algirdas Kazla
Algirdas Kazla lives in Kaunas, Lithuania. He graduated from Kaunas Technological
University with a Master's Degree in computer science and has always been interested
in photography. He is a freelance photographer specializing in nature photography and
public events. Algirdas works as a computer systems analyst.*

here at home

LITHUANIA'S CITIZENS WILL TRAVEL TO THE USA VISA-FREE

On 17 October, the President of the United States George W. Bush received Lithuania's Ambassador to the USA Audrius Brūzga at the White House in Washington and informed him about the decision to remove the visa requirements for Lithuania's citizens travelling to the United States as of November of this year.

During the conversation with Lithuania's Ambassador, the U.S. President expressed once again his satisfaction concerning the bilateral Lithuanian-U.S. relations that are especially successful and stated that Lithuania fully complied with the requirements for the countries of the U.S. Visa Waiver Program.

With the help of joint U.S. and Lithuanian efforts, the percentage of



President George Bush, Lithuanian Ambassador Audrius Brūzga, and Estonian Ambassador Väino Reinart at the recent signing of the Visa Waiver Program in Washington, DC.

Photo is courtesy of the Lithuanian Embassy

rejected visa applications by Lithuanian citizens was reduced from 40% in 2005 to less than 10% in 2007. The latter figure corresponds to the admission requirements, implied by the United States concerning the waiving of visas.

"The Visa Waiver Program is a powerful instrument which strengthens mutual trust and friendship between nations. The people of Lithuania now have a 'window' wide open to the USA and I am certain that our tourists and businessmen will get to feel the advantages of these changes and will respect them", Ambassador A. Brūzga said at the meeting.

Using the opportunity, Lithuania's Ambassador invited people from the United States to visit Lithuania and to get acquainted with the riches of our country's cultural heritage, to develop business projects and to join us in celebrating the millennium of the first mention of Lithuania's name in the documents. The celebrations will be held in 2009.

Visa-free travels to the USA will apply to those Lithuanian citizens who travel for tourism, business and other personal purposes. The travellers will have to present biometric passports issued after 28 August 2006. The duration of the visit will have to be no longer than 90 days.

Lithuanian citizens travelling to the USA will have to use the Electronic System for Travel Authorization.

As of November of this year the U.S. visa requirements will be removed for travellers from 7 out of 13 countries that participate in the Visa Waiver Program – Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, South Korea, Slovakia.

Courtesy of the Lithuanian Embassy Liutauras, Bauza, First Secretary, Press and Public Affairs

Alfonas S. "Nesi" Dzikas

Alfonas. "Nesi" Dzikas, 70, of West Hartford, CT died October 12. He was born in Kaunas, Lithuania, son of the late Stasys and Tekle (Bernotas) Dzikas and had lived in West Hartford for over 40 years.



He was a graduate of Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute where he received his BS ME degree and his MBA from the University of CT. Al worked in sales marketing for Stanley Tools, New Britain for 19 years. He had previously worked at Colt Firearms and Pratt & Whitney Aircraft. He was a U.S. Army Veteran. Al was a longtime communicant of Holy Trinity Church; and a member of the Lithuanian American Community where he served as President of the Hartford Chapter as well as on the national level as Vice President; he was a member of the Knights of Lithuania Council # 6. Al was the Director of

the Lithuanian Radio Hour, presently on WWUH FM for 20 years, and announced programs beginning in 1963.

His interests were photography, family, UCONN basketball, the Red Sox and his summer vacations with his family at Kennebunkport, Maine. He was the beloved husband of Dalia (Minkunas) Dzikas. Besides his wife he is survived by a son and daughter-in-law, Alex S. and Irene Dzikas of Bristol, and a daughter and son-in-law, Rima T. and Captain John Gallagher of Suffolk, VA., four granddaughters, Danielle and Sara Gallagher, Anastasia and Sophia Dzikas. A funeral Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at Holy Trinity Church in Hartford.

Contributions in his memory may be made to:

The Lithuanian National Foundation,
307 West 30th Street, New York, NY, 10001

or

Holy Trinity Church,
53 Capitol Ave. Hartford, CT 06106.

Editor's Note: Bridges extends our sympathy to the Dzikas family. During his time on the National Executive Board of the Lithuanian American Community, Al was very involved with Bridges. It was our pleasure to work with such a true gentleman.

PROFESSOR, ATHLETE, PATRIOT

14th World Lithuanian Symposium for Arts and Sciences

Prof. Rimas Vaicaitis, a well known Aeronautical and Astronautical scholar and a world class track and field athlete will chair one of eleven plenary sessions that will take place at the 14th World Lithuanian Symposium for Arts and Sciences. The Symposium, which is sponsored by the Lithuanian American Community, will take place during the Thanksgiving holiday (Nov. 27-30) in Lemont, Illinois.

The plenary session is entitled "Higher Education-World and Lithuanian Perspective." Among the panelists will be: Dr. B. Juodka, President of Vilnius University, Dr. R. Šiaučiūnas, President of Kaunas Technological University, Dr. Z. Rudzikas, President of Lithuanian Academy of Science, and Mr. A. Žalys, Vice President of the Lithuanian Ministry of Education.

Among the issues that Prof. Vaicaitis and his panel of experts will discuss are: obtaining funds from the government, inflation, "brain drain," comparing Lithuania's educational system with America's, the impact of the European Union on the exchange of faculty members, sharing experiments and equipment, grants and the impact of the internet.

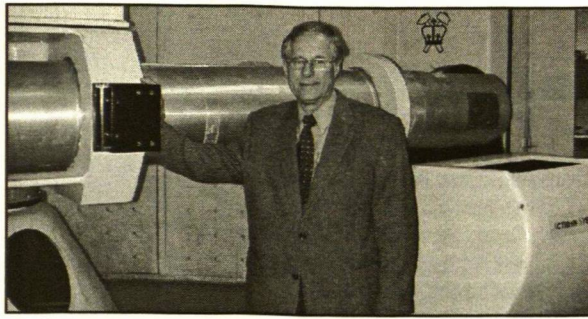
The four day Symposium will include nineteen areas of interest, such as, the physical and natural sciences, media communications, ethics and morals, history, politics, psychology, sociology, environment, law, medicine, art, music, literature, just to name a few.

The Athlete

Rimas Vaicaitis was born in Lithuania and immigrated to Chicago, Illinois in 1960. During his first four years



USA National Championships 15km. Ron Zinn (1st place), Rimas Vaicaitis (3rd place), Ron Laird (2nd place)



Prof. Rimas Vaicaitis in front of the geotechnical centrifuge -- one of the largest on the East Coast

in Chicago he finished high school, completed one year of Community College (to become more proficient in English) and joined the Chicago Running Club, an elite track and field club. His specialty was race walking, specifically, 20km and shorter distances.

During his brief athletic career, Rimas Vaicaitis was awarded three bronze and two silver medals at the AAU Championships. In 1963 he was ranked among the top three race walkers in the United States. In 1964 he qualified for the Tokyo Summer Olympics and would have been invited to represent America had he been a citizen at that time.

The Scholar

Upon entering Illinois University, Rimas Vaicaitis gave up track and field in order to devote his energies to his studies. He received his undergraduate as well as his Master's and Doctorate degrees in Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineering, specializing in structural dynamics and aeroelasticity from Illinois University. Soon after graduation, Rimas Vaicaitis began a very successful teaching career at Columbia University. In 2000 he became Chairman of the Civil Engineering and Engineering Mechanics Department.

His "Other World."

In his "other world" - the Lithuanian World, Prof. Vaicaitis participated in sports and was very active in the Lithuanian American Community and devoted many, many hours helping Lithuania's universities.

When he moved to New York City, Prof. Vaicaitis became actively involved in New York's Lithuanian Community. For fifteen years he trained the New York Lithuanian Athletic Club's Women's Volleyball Team, was involved in the Lithuanian Saturday School as a member of the parents' association, was a member of New York's Chapter of the Lithuanian American Community and for two terms was a member of the Lithuanian American Community's National Executive Board of Directors. In 1988 Prof. Vaicaitis, together with Dr. Stasys Backaitis, organized the VI World Lithuanian Symposium for Arts and Sciences.

Continued on page 21

Another First For DUKE UNIVERSITY!!

Several months have come and gone since the XIII Šokių Šventė (Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival) became a page in our history books. Yet, its many wonderful images are still alive and kicking in my "ole gray cells." Many memories have been etched in my memory bank, but the one that stands head and shoulders above the rest is seeing a group of eight students dancing with such great enthusiasm, with such great joy, feeling the true spirit of the dance.

So, you say to yourself, "What else is new?"

Well, here it is!! All eight students were from Duke University. Of the eight, six were not even of Lithuanian descent. But all six of them danced as if they were guided by the ancient Lithuanian spirit of dance. Their steps were precise, they did not miss a beat, they danced with enthusiasm, with joyous expressions written all over their faces. You could see it in their eyes that they were enjoying themselves. I know, for I was one of the photographers on the dance floor. They fit perfectly with all the Lithuanian dancers.

What prompted these young people to make time in their daily schedule of studies and work to practice hour after hour dance steps that were foreign to their feet? And then to travel thousands of miles clear across the country, and participate in the XIII Šokių Šventė!!

The answer is Laura and Rima Šestokas, twin sisters from Philadelphia. Always active in the Lithuanian Community life, the twins loved to folk dance -- oh, how they loved to dance !!!



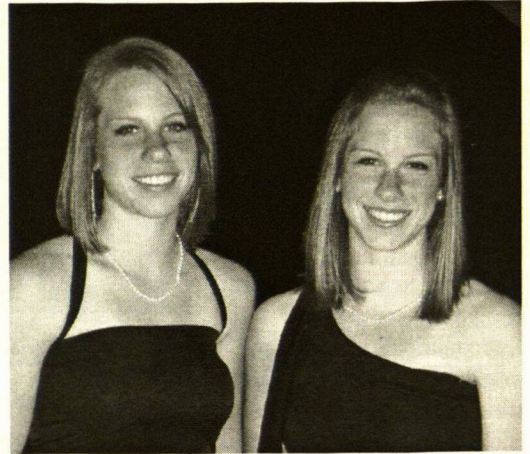
Duke University dancers in action

Photo by Rimas Gedeika



Looking great, DUKE !!!

Photo by Kazys Razgaitis



Rima and Laura

Photo by Antanas Krusinskas

Thus, when they entered Duke University in 2005, they immediately sought to establish a Duke-Lithuanian Folk Dancing Club. To get started they convinced Professor Rytas Vilgalis to help them complete whatever requirements were necessary in order to be recognized as an official club of Duke University.

After this was accomplished they proceeded to recruit students to join their club. Their tactics were quite simple -- they scheduled themselves into a student hall and invited their new and old friends to a polka party!! The attendees had such a great time and enjoyed learning the different kinds of steps to a polka that they all agreed to come the following week and learn some actual Lithuanian folk dance steps.

Thus, the DUKE-LITH Club was born

The sisters patiently started to teach the group the various intricate Lithuanian dance steps. Their ultimate goal was to prepare the group to attend the XIII Šokių Šventė in 2008 in Los Angeles. Soon the Club became quite known on campus. When Duke University was hosting their International Day Festival the club was invited to participate in the festival.

The sisters had the dance group well prepared for its first public appearance. They danced the *Malūnas* (Windmill) -- and as expected this lively foot stomping, fast moving, skirt flying dance captivated the audience. After this event came other invitations -- one of which came from the University of North Carolina to take part in its own International Dance Festival.

Like the old saying goes, "Success breeds success." In its second year the group was even more successful - more appearances, more requests.



*Duke University dancers together with Rūta Lee
Photo by Laura Šestokas*

This year, their third year, the Club decided to add something new to their repertoire. They got together with North Carolina's Lithuanian American Community to organize a Lithuanian Day at Duke University. During that day there were presentations about Lithuania's history and culture. There were plenty of Lithuanian foods to be tasted, such as *kugelis* and *kaldūnai*. Songs were sung and folk dances were danced. After the dance group performed their folk dances they invited the audience to join them and learn a few Lithuanian steps. The entire day was a great experience for the Club and for the audience who got a slight flavor of what is to be a Lithuanian. Next year's show promises to be even better.

And now the focus was to be on the XIII Šokių Šventė. Eight members of the group decided to participate. Rehearsals began in

earnest. Everything was going according to plan, except for one thing-it is expensive to travel to LA and Duke University was not funding any portion of their trip. What to do?

Neither Laura nor Rima let this "minor" problem discourage the Club's plans to participate in the XIII Šokių Šventė. After considering various options, the sisters decided that the best solution was to obtain sponsors. This they did in their usual Lithuanian persuasive manner. Everything was now set. "Los Angeles, here we come!!"

On July 3, they landed in LA. The following days, July 4 - 5 a general rehearsal was held for the 45 groups comprised of 1,100 dancers from all over the USA, Canada, and Lithuania. On July 6 the USC Galen Center was electrified by the all dancers performing as one beautifully woven tapestry. Being part of the loom, the DUKE-LITH Club danced, smiled and enjoyed every minute of the two hour program.

When asked why they undertook this very time consuming endeavor, the sisters replied that it gave them great pleasure to have their Italian, Dominican Republic, and Irish friends decide on their own that they would like to experience our Lithuanian culture through dance. "This is why it made it more worthwhile to us."

Isn't it great to have such enthusiastic Lithuanian students spreading the "good word" about Lithuania, her culture and traditions to students and to faculties of some of the best American universities? This is a first for DUKE; this is the first for Šokių Šventė.

Nice going Laura and Rima. Continue the good work!

Rimas Gedeika

Rimas Gedeika lives in New Jersey. He is a member of the National Executive Committee of the Lithuanian American Community serving as Vice-President for Special Projects. He is also active in the Lithuanian Sports Community and is the administrator of Bridges.



The entire DUKE-LITH CLUB is dancing

Photo by Kazys Razgaitis

The Day For CELEBRATING The Dead



LITHUANIAN CUSTOMS AND
TRADITIONS
(a.k.a. VĒLINĖS) – November 1st.

In Lithuania, remembrance of the dead took place during all annual feast days. Come autumn, when all work was done, Lithuanians carried out special rituals honoring the souls of their dead ancestors.

J. Długosz (15th century) and M. Strijovskis (16th century) wrote that this ritual took place in the month of October and continued from St. Michael's, September 29th through St. Martin's, November 11th. Other sources state that the time for honoring the dead was end of October and beginning of November. In ancient writings this ritual is called "Ilgės", pangs of love or longings. The name comes from the fact that this ritual went on for a long time, long ritual. In Eastern Lithuania, this ritual was called "Dziedu" days, old men's days. This

name was related to beggars who are asked to pray for the souls of the dead. The ritual traditions of the dead were directly related to peoples' belief that on that day the souls of the dead return to earth, to their homes. Therefore the souls of the dead were graciously received and treated according to rituals of the ancestors. All 16th and 19th century writings single out hospitality shown to the souls of the dead. According to M. Strijovskis, during this feast people gathered in cemeteries, where women sobbed and lamented over their men, remembering their valor, honesty and good habits. Afterwards the women prepared plentiful suppers. The Kuronians, Ziemgals, Prussians, remembering their dead would go straight from church to a tavern, where they brewed beer, women brought baskets filled with cold, cooked and baked fish, which was eaten without knives. Portions of food and drink were poured under the table. M. Pretorijus writing about traditions of Westernmost Lithuania said: "the soul of the dead cannot rest if the table is not set". Historian T. Narbutas, writes in the 19th century that on the eve of the Day of the Dead, father gathered the family around the table and recited this prayer: "dear souls of the dead, you are still remembered by the members of my family, you are most worthy of our perpetual remembrance, especially you, my grandparents, my parents, also our relatives, children and everyone whom death took away from our home. I invite you to this annual feast. We wish that this feast is agreeable to you, just like memory of all of you, is to us". After a short silence, father asks everyone to sit at the table and eat. Food was eaten in silence.

At the beginning of the 19th century, in the district of Noëia, county of Lyda, Lithuanians prepared twelve different dark foods. People gathered around the table quietly. It was believed that the souls of the dead partook of the meal

together with the living members. Even at the beginning of the 20th century, in some parts of Lithuania, an assortment of foods was brought to cemeteries at the beginning of November and left there. Upon returning home from the cemetery, all family members went to wash in the bathhouse. Supper of seven different foods of meat, grains and eggs was prepared and the table was set in a room with windows and doors open wide. The oldest person picked up a candle, circled it around his head and three times around the food then lit it and set it on the table. Everyone spilled a portion of his drink, where no one sat at the corner of the table, saying, "this is for you, dear souls". An assortment of foods was also placed on that corner of the table and then everyone began to eat.

In the Dieveniškės region, still at the beginning of the 20th century, on October's first Saturday evening, the souls of the dead were feted. Everyone washed up in the evening, started a fire in the cook stove and cooked traditional foods, beet soup, buckwheat porridge, meat, also baked a buckwheat cake. These foods were eaten after midnight, after everyone had taken a nap. The eldest family member poured three tablespoons of beet soup under the table for the souls of the dead. Family eating was begun after this pouring. A portion of each food was placed in a basket and was taken to the beggars. The buckwheat porridge, baked in sheep's stomach and hen's or rooster's right leg or left wing were taken to church as an offering.

In 1998, Mrs. M. Dvynelienė, born in 1900 in this region, told about the autumn of her youth, when all work was completed then celebrations took place. Nine bowls with different foods were set on the table, while a tenth bowl was set at the head of the table, into which three spoonfuls from each of the nine bowls were poured.

Then the contents of the tenth bowl were mixed with buckwheat flour and using the mixture, rolls were baked for the dead souls. The number of rolls equaled the number of dead family members. The rolls were given to the beggars, so that they would pray for the dead family members. It was found out from D. Poška, that in 1823 food allotted to the dead souls is given away to the beggars.

At the beginning of this century, on All Souls' Day (a.k.a. Vėlinės), special bread rolls were baked for the beggars. Giving the rolls to the beggars, each roll was assigned a name of a dead family member, with a request of prayers for the dead. Others would dispense the bread rolls to the dead souls, before putting the rolls into the oven. The first roll went to mother's soul, second to grandfather's and so on. A special roll was baked for a soul which no one remembered. In other regions a cross was scratched on the top of the roll.

In northern Lithuania, in the forties a Feast of the Graves, (a.k.a. Kapūventis) was celebrated, an autumn holiday by the entire village. A part of donated money was given to the parish priest, and with the remaining money, ritual food was prepared for the priest. Everyone prepared for this feast, invited family and friends. A table covered with a white tablecloth, topped with a burning candle was set in the cemetery.

In Lithuania, the belief that souls of the dead came for a visit during All Souls' Day, lasted a long time. Some said that the souls visited their family homes, others said that they came to cemeteries and even others that the souls congregated in churches.

The most ancient version is that the souls return home. In the towns of Kupiškis and Panevėžys, on the eve of All Souls Day, everyone expected visits from the souls of dead family members, therefore white and soft beds were prepared. Blessed candles were placed and lit on either side of the pil-

low and the family knelt near the bed awaiting the arrival of the soul of their dead family member. They would hear cracking in ceilings or floors, which meant that the dead souls had arrived.

The Samogitians had a long standing belief that on the Eve of All Souls Day, all souls of the dead were released from Purgatory and away from suffering. Thus all roads to churches are traveled by the souls, to pray there, or the souls return home to visit their families. Seeing flickering candles, the souls gathered and prayed near wayside crosses. Souls of dead children, those buried in diapers and unable to walk, roll on the church floor.

Traditions of honoring the dead took shape in the middle of 19th century: joint visits to cemeteries, decorating of graves, lighting of candles, prayers and support of beggars. In the region of Varėna, it is known that candles were burning in churchyards around 1880 – a symbolic grave was laid and covered with burning candles. After the parish priest blessed all the candles, people carried them away, placing a candle on their family grave. It was thought that those souls who did not ascend to heaven, roam about in perpetual darkness and for this reason lighted candles were placed on grave sites to light the way for them.

In the forties, in several Lithuanian churches celebrations of the dead took place during eight days. From 1966, after publication of the traditions, the eight day practice became a national commemoration octave in all the Lithuanian dioceses.

In the village of Margonys, region of Varėna, today on all eight nights bonfires are lit in cemeteries and all country folk pray for the dead buried in that cemetery. On All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, year after year, Lithuanian gravesites are decorated with most beautiful flowers and burning candles.

The beliefs of All Souls' and All Saints'

Days are:

- 1 - On the day of All Souls, the souls of the dead come to visit the living, asking that the living pray for them.
- 2 - One time before All Saints' Day, a homemaker swept the house and sprinkled with sand. In the morning sees the floor covered with small footprints, but there are no small children in the house. Therefore she understood that souls of dead children had come into the house.
- 3 - If mother went to the cemetery at midnight on All Souls' Day, she would see her dead children.
- 4 - On All Souls' Day, churches are filled with souls of the dead. That day, the souls are not burning in hell. They are happy. However some, whose mothers are wailing, these souls arrive wet, soaked by earthly tears. No need to cry for the dead.
- 5 - On the Eve of All Saints' Day, one does not go visiting or walking through villages because all roads and the country side are filled with souls of the dead. There can also be some mean souls.
- 6 - On All Souls' Day and in the evening no ashes or garbage should be taken out, because the souls can be witched by these items.
- 7 - If it rained on the night of All Souls' Day, there will be numerous deaths the following year.
- 8 - If the sun did not shine on All Saints' Day, the following year will be filled with misfortunes.
- 9 - If on All Saints' Day, trees are still fully covered with leaves, it will be a year of black death.
- 10 - If a child is born on the eve of All Souls' Day, when in life he attends a funeral meal, he will see evil souls.

Source:

LITHUANIAN CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

<http://ausis.gf.vu.lt/eka/customs/velines.html>

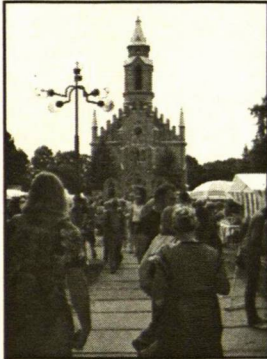
Photo is from the above site

Compiled by Nijolė Marcinkevičienė

Translated by Giedrė Ambrozaitienė

Kernavė's Living Archeological Festival

A Must See!



Kernavė's church and flea market



Teutonic knights' last laugh



Lithuanian knights discussing strategy



Polish knights aid the Lithuanians



Battle of Grunwald



The Neris Valley at Kernavė

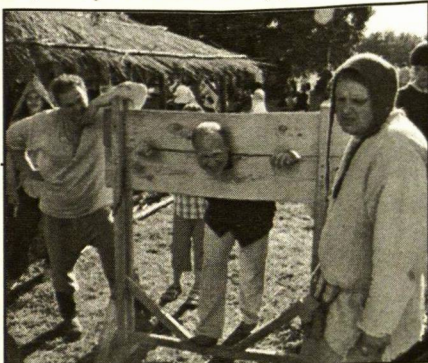
Kernavė is the first capital of Lithuania. It is located 35 km from Vilnius in the beautiful Pajauta Valley along the Neris River. Archduke Mindaugas and his son Archduke Traidenis resided here. Later, Archduke Gediminas moved his residence to Trakai Castle and then to Vilnius, leaving his son Manivydas to rule Kernavė. But long before the Middle Ages and Lithuania's beloved archdukes, people have been living in the Pajauta Valley even as early as the stone and bronze ages as evidenced by various uncovered archeological artifacts. Because of its historical significance and its natural beauty, together with five man-made hill forts (the forts are long gone -- only the hills remain), Kernavė has been named one of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites.

Kernavė is famous for celebrating every year the coronation of Archduke Mindaugas on July 6th. On that weekend a festival is held, where medieval life is re-enacted. Craftsmen display their wares, Lithuanian and Teutonic Knights battle each other in war games, and folk music is performed all day long on stage. The craftsmen and knights come from all around the Baltics as well as neighboring countries. While in Lithuania this summer, our family paid a visit to Kernavė's "Living Archeological Festival" and we were pleasantly surprised by what we saw...

We began our visit to Kernavė with a stroll amongst the hundred or so blue-colored tents housing merchants selling farm fresh honey, baked goods, ceramic artifacts, wooden crafts and folk art, jewelry, antiques, organically grown herbs, food, beer, and the like. Once through this very interesting and eclectic gauntlet of merchants we arrived at the village church – Švč. Mergelės Marijos Škaplierinės (Blessed Virgin Mary of the Scapular) Church. Inside the neogothic church over the center altar hangs a picture of a Madonna dating back to the 19th century. On one side of the church resides the rectory, with a statue of an iron wolf in the front (like the one Gediminas saw in his dream of Vilnius) together with an unusual Lithuanian wayside cross in



A friendly traditional sack fight



In the stockade for bad behavior



Busy weaver



The pottery maker



Hand-dyed woolen yarn of all natural colors

which the hands of Jesus are missing. Over the cross is the inscription: "You Are My Hands." On the other side of the church is the paid entrance to the festival. Once through the gate, a panoramic view of the Pajauta Valley unfolds with the five man-made hills fully visible together with the ever-winding Neris river. One can picture how the valley looked like in the time of Mindaugas with five wooden forts overlooking the river and houses below.

Once inside the "Living Archeological Festival", one strolls along all of the primitively constructed wooden booths housing various artisans and musicians from long ago. We witnessed how food was cooked, how people dressed back then, how they isolated oil for lamps, how they made clay pottery, how they dyed their yarn and wove their clothing, how glass beads and metal were made in primitive furnaces, how dried frogs and other herbs/animals were used for medicine, how they made music, how they distilled alcohol. The kids enjoyed the staged battles between the Lithuanian and Teutonic Knights who hurled German insults at the Lithuanians and turned their posteriors towards them (no previous knowledge of German is necessary to understand that insult!). Naturally, the Teutonic Knights paid dearly with their heads for their uncivilized behavior-to the delight of the cheering Lithuanian audience.

The artisans and craftsmen take their jobs very seriously. We saw very nice artifacts which were made using primitive tools: Clay pottery, leather shoes, silver rings, glass beads, wooden furniture and the like. The kids enjoyed their hand-made wood-fired clay whistles that look like tiny teapots. One pours a little water into them and when blowing into the "spout", out comes the sound of a very happy chirping canary. There were plenty of these "chirping canaries" running around Kernavė that day, including our own.

The official name of the Kernavė festival is "FESTIVAL OF EXPERIMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY -- DAYS OF LIVE ARCHAEOLOGY IN KERNAVĖ".

For more information, please vis:

http://www.kernave.org/reng_en.htm

Next year's festival will take place July 4-6, 2009.

It's definitely a must see for the whole family!

Dr. John Vytautas Dunčia

Dr. John Vytautas Dunčia works as a research scientist at a major pharmaceutical company in New Jersey. He is a member of the organizing committee of Balticum Organicum Syntheticum (www.BOS06.ttu.ee) which hosts biennial international organic chemistry conferences in the three Baltic states. Dr. Dunčia and his family are members of St. Andrew's Lithuanian Roman Catholic Church in Philadelphia, PA.



A cozy, one bedroom stick house



Wrapping clay pottery with birch bark

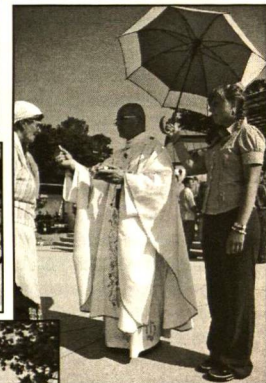
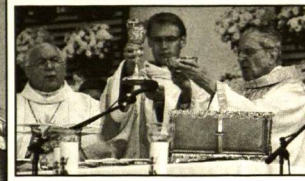
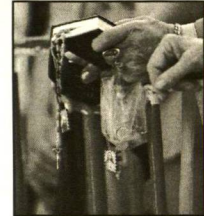
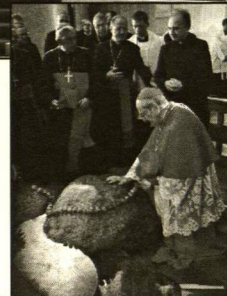
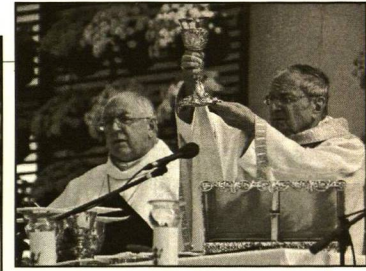
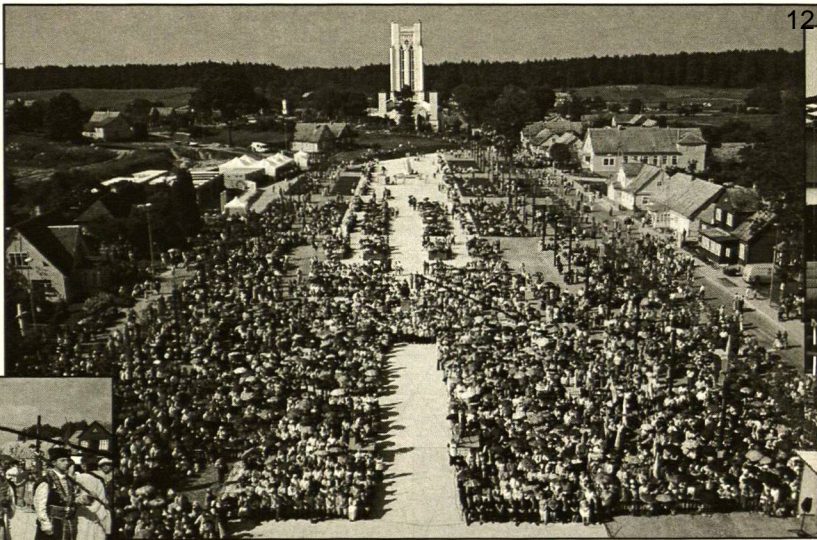
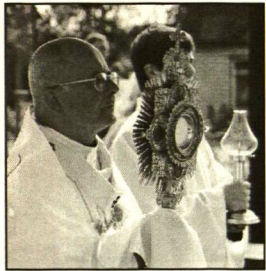


Blacksmithing in the Middle Ages



Summoning the alarm by horn

* Photos by
Dr. John Vytautas Dunčia



Šiluva

We are very grateful that we have the opportunity to share these beautiful photographs of Šiluva with you. A most sincere thank you to Algirdas Kazla from Kaunas, Lithuania who so generously provided the photographs.



*The Celebration of the 400th Jubilee of the apparition of Our Lady of Šiluva took place September 6th to September 15th, 2008

'Lithuanian excursions: Memories of Erasmus in Vilnius'

Editor's Note: One of my goals is to encourage people to study in Lithuania. Since the Lithuanian Foundation provides funding for students, I asked them for help in locating those who partook of programs offering these experiences.

Although Erik studied in Lithuania three years ago, his descriptions of Lithuania and his experiences are just what some might need to give foreign study some serious thought.

Introduction

I travelled to Lithuania in August of 2005 to participate in the Erasmus Intensive Language Course (EILC) which took place at Vilnius Pedagogical University (VPU). This program is part of a wider European Union student initiative for cultural exchange between nation-states within Europe. I found this experience to be a wonderful introduction to Lithuanian culture, as well as a tremendously informative experience in regards to my own research at the time: in September of 2005, I commenced a M.Sc. in Nationalism Studies at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland with a dissertation topic concerning Lithuanian nationalism; I completed this degree with the support of a scholarship from the Lithuanian Foundation in Lemont, Illinois. The summertime spent in Lithuania helped to shape this dissertation project, but I find the memories of Lithuania to be much more valuable to me than the production of the dissertation on Lithuania itself. In this article I will talk about some of these memories.

The language/cultural program at

VPU afforded an extensive exposure to the capital region of Vilnius. There were also many excursions that permitted the opportunity to see a Lithuania outside of Vilnius. Firstly, I will approach some of my memories of Lithuania through a discussion of Vilnius. This discussion of Vilnius will then be followed by a recollection of group excursions to three places that have held particular resonance in my memory: Trakai, Nida and Kernavė. All of these places will be attached to my impressions of these locales/experiences presented in the form of first person recollections outlined in italics; these impressions will be placed before an elaboration upon them in standard text as read now. In conclusion, I will talk about why I look forward to returning to Lithuania again someday.

Vilnius

The father laughs as his little girl comes running around the corner into a room with bookshelves covering most of the space on the walls. Her long blonde hair bobs up and down as she runs. She is

wearing an oversized t-shirt that drags on the floor behind her that says 'Erasmus Intensive Language Program: Vilnius'. The adult size fits more like a night shirt, but she seems happy with the gift. The father comes back into the kitchen and says 'thank you'. 'thank you'. I respond and say 'you're welcome'.

An early impressionable experience that I had in Vilnius occurred during my time spent with a family of Lithuanian citizens that are also ethnically Russian. I arrived early in Vilnius, so my accommodation was not yet available at the student residences at VPU. For this reason it was necessary to find a place to live outside of the university for a few days. The Lithuanian-Russian family that I became familiar with lived right near the banks of the river Neris, which winds its way through the developing landscape of the centre of Vilnius.

The family was small: the family included a mother, her son, and the man's young daughter. The mother had a kind voice, and she was an avid reader. The thick black glasses she wore complimented her pensive expressions. Her son was an amiable man, and was always quick



Erasmus Boys

to embrace with a kind look. The young girl was approximately six years of age, and was both adorable and energetic.

This particular family gave me free access to their home, and their kindness still embarrasses me when I reflect on it. The idea of Vilnius for me is still very much entwined with my memory of them due to their hospitality. I stayed with this family for an enjoyable week at the commencement of the Erasmus program before I could access my student accommodation at VPU for the remainder of the month's instruction.

VPU is located just outside of the senamiestis (old town), which possesses UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation) world heritage site status. I recall feeling regret that I could not remain longer with the family that I met early in my Vilnius stay, but I also remember looking forward to moving into accommodation with the rest of the university group. The following is an impression of mine from a moment spent at the VPU student accommodation with some of students that I came to know through Erasmus.

High up from the ground, Charlene (Ireland), Deniz (Turkey), Szilvi (Hungary) and I look out from a shared balcony from our student accommodation at Vilnius Pedagogical University. It is night time and the sky is clear. The Vilnius television tower is illuminated in the distance. We are listening to Deniz play his guitar and we are talking casually about some of the day's events and tomorrow's plans. As I look out at the Vilnius television tower, my thoughts wander. I



Erasmus Dancing

begin to think of the occupation of the tower in the early 1990's during the last Lithuanian independence movement, as this was part of our course work earlier in the day. Szilvi taps me on the shoulder to ask me if I would like some more wine and my imagination quickly halts. I accept.

The music from Deniz's guitar sounds through the cool air of the night. Szilvi pours some wine into my glass, and we all decide to raise a toast to nothing else aside from our own cheer. I don't understand what Deniz is singing in Turkish, and somehow it doesn't matter as I watch his fingers pluck the guitar strings mechanically. The cityscape shimmers and blends complimentary with the smoothness of the guitar sound.

The Erasmus program that I was a part of, and the people involved with it, has left me with a good deal of fond memories that I reflect on often. When we first arrived at the university we were greeted by our course leader Vilma; I do not recall Vilma ever being without a smile. The composition of the group included students from all over Europe: approximately ten from Germany (the largest contingent), other students from Austria, Italy, France and the Czech Republic just to name a few.

To understand the mood or 'the feel' of the group, a quick reference

to a French film could be helpful in understanding the context described: *l'auberge espagnole* (the Spanish hostel) is a thoughtfully constructed film, and it entertainingly communicates the life of a similar Erasmus group learning the language and culture of

Catalonia in the 'host city' of Barcelona in Spain. The Erasmus program is not only a new cultural experience for select students in Europe, but it is also a time that provides a very unique context to celebrate youth while engaged in intense study utilising the language of the sponsoring site. The group that I was a part of would go on to spend the rest of the academic year together, building upon the relationships forged during this summer induction period that I was fortunate to be a part of as a soon to be postgraduate in Edinburgh.

At the conclusion of my stay in Vilnius, I returned to the United Kingdom to commence my masters at the University of Edinburgh. Recalling the time spent walking the streets of Vilnius with the Erasmus group always generated a feeling of happiness while I was working my way through my own challenging/rewarding university program in Scotland. I enjoyed very much my time in Lithuania's capital region, and some of the other major cities visited, but the group excursions outside of the city centres, for me, provided rich experiences that make Lithuania so attractive to remember.

Excursions

In this section, I will talk briefly

about three excursions outside of Vilnius that we had during the Erasmus Intensive Language Program (EILC): Trakai, Nida, and Kernavė. Although I have talked about some of my impressions attached to the capital region of Vilnius, the experiences that I had during these three excursions in particular came immediately to mind when I commenced writing this article. There are several other impressions that could be discussed in their place, and it is difficult to say why I have chosen these three, as it was rather instinctual. Unpacking why I immediately thought of these experiences is not straightforward, but thinking of the people associated with these memories of place, again, has helped in this regard. I discuss next Nida, Trakai and Kernavė as connected to locative impressions of people via shared social experience.

The dunes of Nida: the Curonian Spit

Vilma, a professor of languages at VPU, contemplates visiting the sand dunes of Nida as part of an improvised addition to the day's itinerary for visiting the Curonian Lagoon (Spit), but it is starting to get late. She smiles widely as she says, 'Yes. We shall go.' The bus lurches forward and we are off to the dunes of Nida. We arrive, disembark from the bus, and set our feet in the unsure footing of the warm sand. There is a wooden walkway ahead that can take us further up towards the dunes. The walkway eventually disappears, and we are left to climb the sand dunes to the top. Two children of an accompanying adult race past me to scale the dunes: the mother yells vakai! (children!) as they get too far away; her concerned expression is somehow louder than her voice.

At the top of the dunes, I watch the



Baltic Sea

sun setting to my right, and the moon rising to my left over the Baltic Sea. Although a familiar exchange is taking place, both celestial bodies are 'up' simultaneously for what seems to be an eternity. I grip the sand in my hands and feel the coarseness of the grains in my palm. I let the sand run between my fingers so as to do whatever I can to help myself remember this truly remarkable sight.

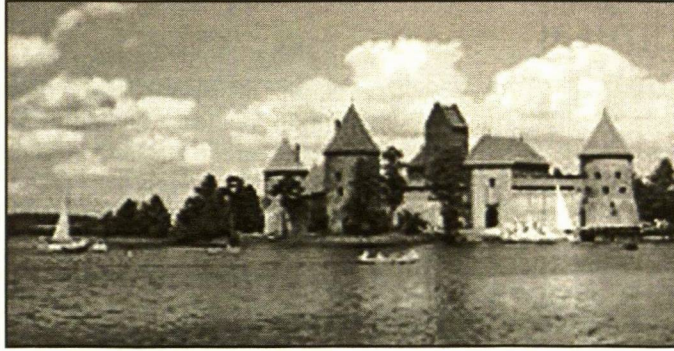
I do not watch this alone: Dagmar from Germany, Karen from Denmark, Anna from Estonia, Koos from the Netherlands, Marcin from Poland, and Margarita from Spain are all sitting on the dunes taking in this same beauty. We are dotted about the landscape, and knowing that we are watching this together makes me softly content.

As we descend the dunes, our laughter hangs in the air like the birds that fly above us. Tomas and Margarita are walking near me as we form another small group within the larger collective. Our conversation is warm like the last rays of sunshine that tickle my neck as the sun slowly disappears for the day.

The Curonian Spit, like the Vilnius senamiestis, is also an UNESCO world heritage site, and it is shared between the Russian territory of Kaliningrad (the southern portion) and Lithuania (the north). This peninsula permits the existence of the Curonian Lagoon, in tandem with the encasing borders of the Lithuanian and Russian mainland. The Dunes of Nida are located within the town of Nida, which is one of four separate locations within the larger collective of the Lithuanian Administrative region of Neringa.

During our visit to the Curonian Spit, shortly before the impression that I shared above in Nida, I remember walking in a nearby park area with Sascha (Germany) and Pauline (France); we stopped for awhile to look at the Russian territory of the Curonian Spit off in the distance. Sascha drew a line in the sand and jokingly began jumping back and forth between one side and the other, repeating 'now I'm in Russia, now I'm in Lithuania, now I'm in Russia, now I'm in Lithuania' and Pauline laughed.

Sascha's joke made me think of the malleability of borders, and how the concept of a border is related to cultures. For example, the concept of the Russian-Lithuanian border, such as the one near the Curonian Spit, can be conceived of as a more 'removed' distinction constituting what it means to be Lithuanian



Lake Galvė is a lake in Trakai Lithuania. It has 21 islands, and one of them houses "Trakai" Island Castle. Trakai Peninsula Castle is located on its southern shore. There are ruins of the little Orthodox church in "Bažnytėlė" Island.

as borders are often not directly tied to personal experience: yet 'physical borders' that are politically conceived still remain a definitive cultural marker that demands respect.

This same rationale can be applied to a more intimate conception of the more interactive 'borders' of social interaction that are manifest with Lithuanian identities. Being Lithuanian can be described in contrast to what a Lithuanian is sometimes conceived not to be: as indicated by the sometimes uneasy relationships between ethnically diverse families that live in Lithuania, much like the Russian family that I became familiar with in Vilnius, and the overarching power of the popular imagining of what Lithuanian culture indeed is, or what some may think it traditionally should be, in a normative sense.

Trakai

He gazed at her with an explicit joy. Her eyes returned a sparkle that mirrored the reflections of the sun in the waters of Lake Galvė behind them. Their wedding picture and the emotiveness of the moment is captured by an image taken by a photographer who needed not at all to orchestrate the genuineness of the moment. The brightness of the

orange stone castle of Trakai, perched on its island foundation in the distance, would indicate in a future picture frame that theirs was a Lithuanian wedding.

Having wedding pictures taken at Trakai has become known as a Lithuanian tradition. The castle at Trakai that I mention as the backdrop to this wedding photo being taken on the banks of Lake Galvė was completed by the Grand Duke Vytautas in the fifteenth century. The castle and the surrounding parkland has become a popular tourist destination in Lithuania since its reconstruction after the Second World War.

I was able to steal some time away from the Erasmus group and walk about this lovely park area surrounding Lake Galvė: I recall thinking about my grandmother during this time. My grandmother was born to Lithuanian parents, and due to her experience of growing up in a Lithuanian household in Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania, much of my research interest in Lithuania derived from my extensive contact with her growing up as a child.

The power of this familial transfer of Lithuanian culture is evident in that my grandmother and I still talk

about Lithuanian culture when we visit together even though she has never actually been to Lithuania herself. She told me once that her father had a picture of Vytautas the Great in a frame: upon thinking of this during my walk in Trakai, I found it to be a welcome parallel when I stumbled upon a nas-

cent Lithuanian family having their wedding pictures taken in front of a castle that Vytautas Magnus apparently had a hand in building, as I was thinking of my own, however remote, familial connections to Lithuania by way of my grandmother's own 'Vytautas story'.

As for the newlyweds that I came across at the end of this walk, I recall my silent wish of happiness for this couple being intertwined with their voiced expressions as they spoke to each other in Lithuanian. Similarly, amidst their joyous and nervous laughter, my wishes for them were followed by more inquisitive thoughts: I wondered where they might be from in Lithuania; if they were perhaps born somewhere else instead; and if they would choose to remain in Lithuania forever.

Kernavė

The tree was not overly big, and it welcomed you with its low branches, poised like arms ready to cradle youth: firm yet gentle in their presentation. We were told to touch the tree, to sit in it if we would like, and to make wishes. The bark was as thick like well spoken conversation, and the upper branches reached out towards nothing in particular.

Continued on page 20

Rear-Admiral Peter M. Moncy United States Navy

*Lithuanian American
Naval Hero*



When one thinks of World War II, images of infantry troops assaulting the beaches of Normandy, aircraft fighting in the skies over Europe, or ships firing salvos at some island in the Pacific frequently come to mind. In each case, the central character pictured will resemble some John Wayne like movie hero struggling to preserve freedom and liberty for the

world. Still, in real life the daily struggle during World War II came down just trying to survive and do one's duty to God and country.

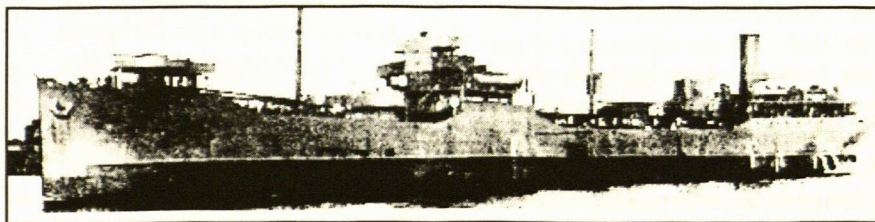
An excellent example of this situation is the story of Peter M. Moncy. Peter was born into a Lithuanian American immigrant family on June 2, 1898, in Brockton, Massachusetts. The family name had been shortened from its original Lithuanian ancestral version of Moncevičius to Moncy so the name might be easier to pronounce and facilitate their assimilation into American society. He grew up and attended grade and high school in Brockton where he excelled in both sports and studies. As a result, he received an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy in 1917 as the First World War was still raging in Europe. Moncy graduated from the Naval Academy in 1921 and received the traditional appointment as an ensign in the U.S. Navy. Thereafter he served with distinction in various assignments with the Atlantic, Asiatic, and Pacific Fleets.

From 1924 to 1929, he served as a submarine officer with a brief assignment in 1926 as an instructor at the U.S. Navy Submarine School in New London, Connecticut. During

the 1929-1930 period, Moncy was assigned to the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C., which included the additional duties as a naval aide to President Herbert Hoover at the White House. Moncy then went on to serve aboard various vessels on the west coast. In 1940, Moncy was serving as the Superintendent of Production at the U.S. Navy Yard, Charleston, South Carolina, when the war started with the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

With hostilities ongoing, Moncy was assigned to command the oil tanker ship U.S.S. Laramie (AO-16) operating in Atlantic waters. On August 23, 1942, while part of a convoy of vessels delivering vital war supplies to troops serving in the Atlantic, the U.S.S. Laramie was torpedoed. For his extraordinary heroism during the torpedoing of that vessel, Commander Moncy was awarded the nation's second highest combat decoration, the Navy Cross. He later served as commanding officer of the hospital ship U.S.S. Relief and as Chief of Staff for Task Force 24 of the Atlantic Fleet which was responsible for escorting troop and supply convoys across the German U-Boat infested Atlanta Sea to the European theater. Moncy was cited for his service in the Atlantic Theater with a citation reading "...made important contributions to the organization and coordination of Task Force 24 activities. Under his leadership and supervision, communication facilities in the Iceland area were improved and operated in greater efficiency. His keen perception and accurate foresight aided materially in the formulation of plans which led to successful operations against the enemy in Northeast Greenland and to the organization of an efficient North Atlantic Weather Patrol..."

During the postwar years, Admiral Moncy served in numerous distinguished assignments including



The U.S.S. Laramie (AO-16) commanded by Admiral Peter Moncy during the winning of the U.S. Navy Cross during World War II

as commander of the U.S. Naval Station, San Juan, Puerto Rico, as a United Nations observer in Palestine (Israel) – 1948 and as Chief of the U.S. foreign aid mission in Costa Rica – 1954. At the time of his retirement in 1952, Rear Admiral Moncy was assigned Chief of Staff for the First Naval District, Boston, Massachusetts.

Although Admiral Moncy's military career was outstanding, probably his greatest moment did not directly occur in combat, but in a heroic struggle to save his ship and crew. During the early part of World War II, Moncy, while commanding the U.S.S. Laramie which was transporting liquid and dry cargo from Boston, New York, Sydney, and Nova Scotia to Greenland spied a German U-Boat infesting the North Atlantic shipping lane. His mission was not to engage the enemy, but in every way possible seek to avoid any contact so that his vital supplies could be delivered.

On August 26, 1942, the U.S.S. Laramie departed Sydney for Greenland in a convoy formation with other vessels. She was loaded with 361,000 gallons of aviation gasoline, 55,000 barrels of oil, and general cargo which included depth charges. The first few days passed by uneventfully, but still produced a constant feeling of concern for all knew that German U-Boats were operating in the area. On the evening of August 27, 1942, the U.S.S. Laramie was torpedoed off the eastern end of Belle Isle Strait. The fired German torpedo struck the forward port side of the ship and tore a 41 by 34 foot hole in the vessel. The blast had demolished the forward crew's quarters killing four men. The ship immediately began taking on water and began listing to the port causing the ship's bow to drop some 37 feet below the water line. To add to the problem, the blast ruptured the port gasoline tank which began spraying the ship with volatile liquid and explosive fumes.

Despite imminent danger of flooding and explosion, Commander Moncy immediately formed and directed operations to save the Laramie. Although gasoline ran ankle-deep over the forward gun platforms no fire broke out. The ship's steam smothered protection system held and prompt pumping of liquid cargo soon corrected the list and reduced the forward draft. Due to the efforts of Commander Moncy and his crew, the U.S.S.

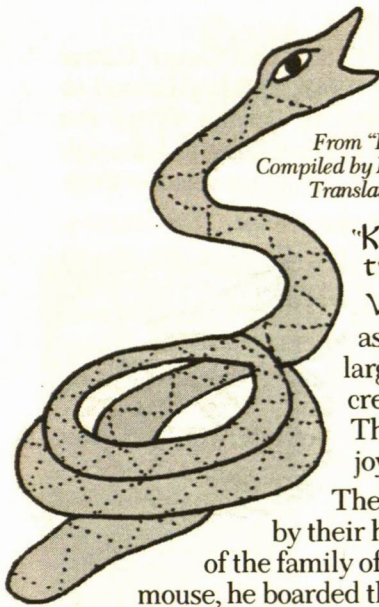
Laramie escorted by the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Mohawk, on August 30, 1942, safely returned to Sydney. She then steamed to Boston where the repairs were made from September 2 through September 5, 1942 and the vessel returned to duty.

Commander Moncy never saw the enemy. However, for his outstanding effort in the saving of the U.S.S. Laramie, he was later awarded the Navy Cross. Commander Moncy's Navy Cross reads: The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Navy Cross to Peter M. Moncy, Commander, U.S. Navy, for extraordinary heroism and distinguished service in the line of his profession as Commanding Officer of the Fleet Oiler U.S.S. LARAMIE (AO-16), in handling his ship and crew when that vessel was attacked and damaged on 28 August 1942 during operations in the Atlantic Ocean. Commander Moncy ordered all hands to battle stations the instant he observed the attack was imminent, thereby preventing numerous casualties. He also maneuvered clear of the formation, at the same time capably directing damage control organization in correcting list and trim. By his thoroughness of preparation, skill and leadership, he was able to abandon the area of the attack and bring his ship safely into port. Commander Moncy's inspiring leadership and the valiant devotion to duty of his command contributed in large measure to the outstanding success of these vital missions and reflect great credit upon the United States Naval Service.

Admiral Moncy is typical of the great Americans who have served their country and who continue to service their country to this day. He was a proud Lithuanian American who never forgot his duty or heritage. The pride that the Lithuanian American Community took in Admiral Moncy was clearly demonstrated in 1956 by his selection as the Knights of Lithuania "Man of the Year" recipient. Like many of our honored World War II heroes, Admiral Moncy died on May 4, 1978, in Bedford, Massachusetts. As a nation we are truly blessed to have such patriots among us.

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.



ŽALČIO UODEGA The Serpent's Tail

From "Lietuvių Sakmės" - "Lithuanian Tales"
Compiled by Pranas Sasnauskas
Translated from Lithuanian by Gloria O'Brien

"Kai prasidėjo pasaulinis
tvanas....."

When the Great Flood began, Noah, as the Lord had instructed, built a large boat, and with all the world's creatures, sailed out to the ocean. They sailed and sailed, and all took joy in the Lord's benevolence.

The devil, seeing this, was displeased by their happiness, and decided to get rid of the family of man. Turning himself into a little mouse, he boarded the boat and gnawed a hole in its hull. Soon, water began to pour in, and the boat would certainly have sunk, had it not been for the serpents. These worthy creatures plugged the hole with their tails until the waters receded.

In thanks for their help, the Lord told the serpents He would allow them to choose whatever creature they wanted, for their daily food. The serpents, not knowing which creature's blood would be tastiest, enlisted the help of the mosquito. The mosquito tasted the blood of every creature and found that the sweetest was that of man. As he flew to tell the serpent, he met a swallow. They fell into conversation, and the mosquito informed the sparrow of his mission, whereupon the sparrow suddenly grasped the mosquito's tongue and pulled it right out! Now the unfortunate mosquito couldn't say a word -- just "ZZZZZZ".

He flew to the serpent and tried to shout -- "ZZZZZZ!!!". But he could not be understood. Just then, the swallow arrived and told the serpent: "Why, he is saying that the tastiest blood is that of the frog".

The serpents believed him, and from then on, they feed only on frogs.

And the swallow, the friend and helper of man, has not left his side even until now -- he builds his nest under the eaves of people's houses, and throughout the summer, flies this way and that around their farmsteads, filling the air with his gay twittering.

Gloria Kivytaité O'Brien

Gloria Kivytaité O'Brien is a frequent contributor to *Bridges*.

She grew up in Brooklyn, Annunciation Parish. Gloria can be contacted at Senaboba@aol.com.

Continued from page 17
'Lithuanian excursions:
Memories of Erasmus in Vilnius'

I start to climb and smile. I make five wishes. Vilma, our course leader, took us to this tree located in Kernavė on what was a hot and sunny day. Kernavė is designated as yet another UNESCO world heritage site found in Lithuania, much like the senamesitas of Vilnius and the western Curonian Spit previously mentioned. Kernavė is described as being a former capital of Lithuania, as well as a unique site in that it contains several hill forts that serve to attract both scientific and popular interest. The tree described in my impression above is located on one of the hill forts, and this particular tree held personal significance for Vilma.

Although this tree was a personal object to Vilma, she made it 'ours' for a moment by inviting us to act out a tradition that clearly generated meaning for her. I never asked her what wishes she made herself at the tree. Nor did I ever ask her if any other past wishes that she made in the presence of the tree were ever fulfilled. I just admired her smile, and chose rather to wonder instead as I sat in the shade of the tree.

Conclusion

I discovered much in Lithuania. In only a few weeks time my insight broadened significantly. The experience still serves to inform when I reflect about where I am, where I've been, and where I might like to be: Lithuania gave me a place to formulate wishes that continue to shape my life, and I look forward to returning to that tree in Kernavė one day so I can climb it, and make new wishes to replace the old. Although I can never relive the rich, albeit brief, time spent with the people of Erasmus in Vilnius except by the memories I have, it is comforting to know that Lithuania remains never too far away.

Erik Lyman

Erik lives in Scotland and works as a doctoral student in Sociology at the University of Edinburgh. He is also employed as both a teaching assistant in Sociology at Edinburgh, and as a crisis worker in the city's mental health field. Erik a triathlete.

**THE
KANSAS
CITY**

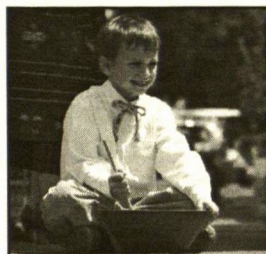
KANSAS

LITHUANIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY



Ian Morgan and Mia Porterfield model Lithuanian national costumes at the 2008 Ethnic Enrichment Festival Fashion Show

Jonas Pultinevičius takes a break before performing with Aidas Dance Group



Wyatt Morgan stirs the pot as the Kansas City Aidas Children's Dance Group performs Virė, Virė Košė

Photos by Jurgita and Darius Lukosevičius

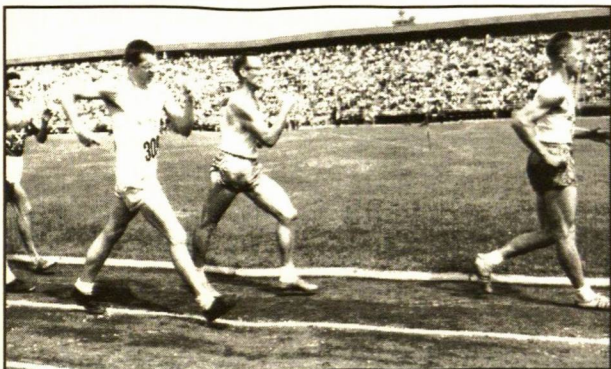
Ian Morgan and Mia Porterfield took part in the Ethnic Fashion Show which is a highlight of the Ethnic Enrichment Festival. Our Lithuanian community has a strong presence at the festival. We've been participating since its inception in 1982. The Festival Chair, Dick Horvatic represents Lithuania on the Ethnic Enrichment Council as one of two Commissioners with his wife, Charlotte Žemaitis Horvatic.

Sally Žemaitytė Dannov

Continued from page 5, PROFESSOR, ATHLETE, PATRIOT



Prof. Rimas Vaicaitis (2nd right) and his staff at Columbia University Labs.



Rimas Vaicaitis winning the 2 mile race at Randalls Island, NY.

**All photos are from personal album*

In addition to the above, Prof. Vaicaitis did not forget the academic world in Lithuania. For many years he sent books, magazines and equipment to Vilnius University and to Kaunas Polytechnical Institute. Since 1990 Prof. Vaicaitis has traveled annually to Lithuania to teach courses in his area of expertise, present papers and assist students who were in financial need. He established scholarships for students studying mechanical engineering and developed a program enabling students from Lithuania to study at Columbia University.

Prof. Vaicaitis, one of only several foreign scholars, was recently inducted into Lithuania's National Academy of Sciences. Last year Lithuania's Ministry of Education awarded Prof. Vaicaitis and two other Lithuanian scholars living outside Lithuania its first annual award for excellence in academics. He is truly a man of many talents.

For more information regarding the 14th World Lithuanian Symposium for Arts and Sciences, please visit www.mks14.com.

Rimas Gedeika

Rimas Gedeika lives in New Jersey. He is a member of the National Executive Committee of the Lithuanian American Community serving as Vice- President for Special Projects. He is also active in the Lithuanian Sports Community and is the administrator of Bridges.

Calendar of Events for November, December, 2008

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

NOVEMBER

November 1-2, 2008 - Noon - 6pm - **"MUGĖ"**
Lithuanian Festival Entertainment,
Lithuanian dancing & music, Lithuanian
food, arts, crafts & many vendors
Lithuanian Music Hall
2715 E. Allegheny Ave
Phila., PA. 19134 Info:215-739-4831

November 14-15 - 2008 - Christmas Craft Sale
Friday: 1pm-4pm - Saturday: 10am-2pm
Sisters of St. Francis of the
Providence of God
3603 Mc Roberts Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15234 www.osfprov.org

November 15, 2008 - 10am to 4pm
"Margarita's MUGĖ" Lithuanian Holiday
Marketplace Lenexa Community Center
13420 Oak Street
(2 blocks north of 95th & Pflumm)
Dine in our European cafe or pick up
some take out food. Enjoy the Aidas
Lithuanian Dancers. Have your photo
taken with Father Frost. Lithuanian
imports including Baltic amber jewelry,
wood carvings & hand-woven linens.
Shop for gifts made by a variety of local
crafters. Traditional Lithuanian Kitchen,
Aidas Dancers, Visits with Father Frost,
Lithuanian kitchen.
Sponsors: Aidas Dancers, Kansas City
http://www.aidasdancers.org

Nov. 27-30, 2008
The Fourteenth World Lithuanian Symposium
on Arts & Sciences will take place over
the Thanksgiving Day weekend in
Lemont, Illinois
Sponsor: Lithuanian American National
Executive Committee

November 30, 2008 - 1pm
Lithuanian **"EGLUTĖ"**
Christmas Tree Luncheon
St. Elizabeth Seton Parish Hall
9728 Palmeras Drive, Sun City, AZ.
(few blocks north of Bell Road on 98th Ave)
For info. contact Mark Shoban -
mashoban@yahoo.com
Sponsor: Arizona Chapter of the
Lithuanian American Community

DECEMBER

December 7, 2008 - 12-3pm
Christmas Party,
Davis Hall, Wyandotte County Lake
91 Street & Leavenworth Road
Kansas City, KS
Lithuanian sausage, kraut, beer & dessert
will be provided. Please bring a side dish
to share. "Aidas" folk dance group will
perform. Santa Claus will make an
appearance, gift shop for kids.
All are welcome www.kcliith.org

Dec. 7, 2008 - 2:00 pm
Lithuanian Traditional **"KUCIOS"**

McKeon Center, Mission San Luis Rey
4070 Mission Ave.,
Oceanside, CA 9205
http://www.liithsd.org/

December 7, 2008 - Christmas Party & Andrius' Mamontovas Concert
2:00pm - Christmas Party
5:00pm - Concert Admission:
Christmas Party: \$5
(seniors \$3, students under 18 free)
Concert: \$30 Adults; \$15 for children
(15 and under)
Location: Fraternal Order of Eagles Hall
1151 S. Galena Street
(just west of Mississippi & Havana)
Denver, CO 80247
For info: Romas Zableckas
http://www.coloradolithuanians.org

December 9, 2008 - 7pm to 9 pm (Tuesday) - **"KUCIOS"**
Please bring a meatless
Lithuanian dish, if possible.
Lithuanian Music Hall
2715 E. Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia, PA
(Use side door on Tilton St.)
Lithuanian Amber Roots Heritage Club
Info: milliemarks@aol.com

December 12, 2008 - (Friday)
Holiday Shoppers' Lasagna
Take - Out Dinner 4pm-6pm (pick up only)
To place your order, call 412-885-7232 by

Monday, Dec 8.
Sisters of St. Francis of the
Providence of God
3603 Mc Roberts Road,
Pittsburgh, PA 15234 www.osfprov.org

December 20, 2008 - 3:00pm - ???
"KUCIOS"
University of St. Thomas
4000 Mt. Vernon
Houston, Texas 77006
Jerabeck center - Scanlon Room
Day of event contact:
Evelina 832-275-9946
Park on the street or for \$2, at the Moran
Center parking garage across from the
Jerabeck center. Please wear something
Lithuanian! A sales booth of Lithuanian
goodies will be set up for your
convenience. You will be able to pay by
cash or check. Registration & RSVP
forms will be mailed and/or uploaded here
in the fall. Please check back at a later
date or contact us at
http://www.houstonlithuanians.org
Houston Chapter of the Lithuanian
American Community

December 31, 2008 - 8pm
2009 NEW YEAR & 100 YEAR JUBILEE of
LITHUANIAN MUSIC HALL
Info. & ticket 215-739-4831
lmha@verizon.net

CORRECTION

*In the
October issue
the dance group
on page 12
was incorrectly
identified as
Aušrinė from
Philadelphia.
The dancers in
the photo
represented
Malūnas
from
Baltimore, MD.*

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A New Bridge

This is a new bridge to help those who live in Lithuania who are suffering after fifty years of religious repression by the communists of the Soviet Union. The purpose of this offer is to show how Lithuanian Americans can help their relatives and friends in Lithuania develop a relationship with God.

In 2006, my wife and I collected approximately \$8,000 in donations from Lithuanian Americans to support projects in Lithuania. We both decided to use some of the funds to buy bibles and subscriptions to Žodis Tarp Mūsų for teachers of English whom we first met in 1992 when we were teaching in Siauliai. Žodis Tarp Mūsų is the Lithuanian translation of The Word Among Us – bimonthly

publication that provides commentary on Bible readings.

Seventy-six teachers accepted the free bibles and one-year subscriptions to the commentary. Some of them complained it was too much to read. We told the teachers that the daily assigned readings were short; that the required reading in the Bible would take only five minutes and the commentary would take another five minutes. We explained that if they did these readings faithfully every day for three years, they would have read and understood the most important parts of the Old and New Testaments. The teachers began to read the Bible and the commentary and loved it.

According to recent statistics, 90% of Lithuanians say they are Roman Catholic. However, only 16% report that

they attend church on a regular basis (www.nationmaster.com/country/lh-lithuania/rel-religion). This means that many Lithuanians are Catholics in name only and very few have a deep spiritual understanding and relationship with God.

Fortunately, there is an easy and inexpensive way for Lithuanian Americans to help their loved ones. By completing the attached form and sending a check for \$60, a Lithuanian-translated Bible and a one year subscription to Žodis Tarp Mūsų will be sent directly to your specified relative or friend living in Lithuania. A 100% of your gift goes to the purchase of the Bible and the subscription. You can make an important difference in bringing God into their life.

Albert J. Gustaff

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Your Name: _____

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Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

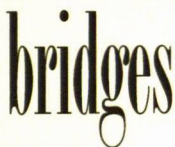
Price

Žodis Tarp Mūsų	\$30
Bible	\$30
Total	\$60

Checks should be made out to:

Lithuanian Human Services Council
2711 W 71st St.
Chicago, IL 60629-2005

Attn: Bibles and Commentaries for Lithuania
* For additional recipients, please make and complete photocopies of this form.



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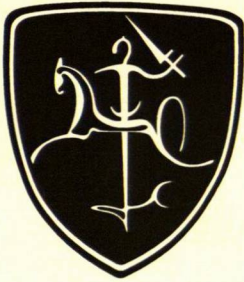
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Gala Banquet: Saturday, November 29, 2008
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