

bridges

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january/february 2009

LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

Letter from the Editor

This issue marks several important events. On February 16 Lithuania will celebrate 91 years of independence. It's a day to be celebrated with solemnity and joy. We also remember the tragic events of January 13, 1991 when it appeared that a reestablishment of independence would not happen. But the Lithuanian people persevered and triumphed. As an editor, it is very difficult to find ways to bring these events to the readers year after year without repeating the same articles over and over. Mainly, these dates are brought to you so that we can be reminded that freedom often comes with a high price.

As promised, we begin 2009 by taking you on a visual trip to Lithuania and we will continue to do so throughout the year. Hopefully, you will see Lithuania this year for yourselves during this Millennium year. But if you can't, I hope you enjoy your visit, even if it's vicariously, through Bridges. A very special thank you to Dr. Banga Grigaliūnaitė from Lithuania and Julie Skurdenis who resides in New York, when she is not traveling the world. They have graciously shared their photos with us.

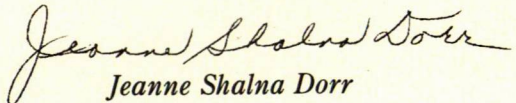
The Lithuanian American Community has lost a friend with the death of Vaiva Vebraitė. When Gema and I started to work for Bridges in 2004, Vaiva was the president of the Lithuanian American Community. She was always ready with a word of encouragement when we needed it or quick to respond to any problems we encountered. She will be sorely missed both here and in Lithuania.

Henry Gaidis, a frequent contributor to Bridges, has shared a beautiful love story for Valentine's Day. As always, I thank Henry and all the writers for their efforts.

Congratulations to Lithuanian Melody Times, the radio program which keeps listeners abreast of functions and events in the Baltimore - Washington area. January marks the 61st year of nonstop week to week programming. The program can now be heard on the Internet at www.lietuvis.net Listeners may access the programs which are basically music and news at anytime.

Please find an independence celebration near you and also try to support your local Lithuanian American Community Chapter.

As always, thank you for sharing your homes with us.


Jeanne Shalna Dorr

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**THE INFORMATION CENTER FOR
HOMECOMING LITHUANIANS**

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*Cover: Painting of "Aušros Vartai in the winter, Vilnius, Lithuania"
by Š. Miškinis 2006 and Coat of arms - City of Vilnius



The House of the Signatories

February 16, 1918 Legacy

The Act of February 16 proclaimed the re-establishment (atstatymą) of the Lithuanian state, making it the successor to the Lithuanian historical state, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.^[34] In this respect the Council deviated from the resolution adopted by the Vilnius Conference which called for establishment (sudarymą) of a Lithuanian state.^[3] However, it was made clear that the new state would be quite different from the old Duchy: it was to be organized only in ethnic Lithuanian lands and was to be governed by democratic principles,^[3] as opposed to the multi-ethnic Duchy that had been ruled by aristocracy. The termination of the ties binding Lithuania to other states was addressed to Germany, Russia, and Poland, all of which had their own plans for the country.^{[34][7]} Even though not addressed

directly, the Act renounced any attempt to resurrect the former Polish-Lithuanian union.^[11]

The Act of February 16, 1918, is the legal basis for the existence of present-day Lithuania, both during the interwar period and since 1990.^[3] The Act became one of the key elements during the restoration of Lithuania's independence from the Soviet Union in 1990.^{[35][5]} A paragraph in the Act of the Re-Establishment of the State of Lithuania, delivered on March 11, 1990, stated:^[5]

“The Act of Independence of 16 February 1918 of the Council of Lithuania and the Constituent Assembly (Seimas) decree of 15 May 1920 on the re-established democratic State of Lithuania never lost their legal effect and comprise the constitutional foundation of the State of Lithuania.”

This formulation emphasized the continuity of the two legal Acts. The Act of February 16, 1918 and its successor, the Act of March 11, 1990, are regarded as two of the most important developments of Lithuanian society in the 20th century.^[4]

February 16th in Lithuania is now an official holiday.^[36] On this day various ceremonies are hosted all across Lithuania, but the main commemoration is held in the House of Signatories in Vilnius where the Act was signed in 1918. During this observance the Flag of Lithuania is hoisted, and Lithuanian cultural activists and politicians deliver speeches from its balcony to the people gathered below. Special masses in churches and cathedrals are also delivered. Honoring the Act's legacy, the President of Lithuania hosts a reception for the signatories of the Act of March 11, 1990, in the Presidential Palace.

In 1992, an award was established in honor of Jonas Basanavičius, who led the Council of Lithuania when the Act of February 16th was signed. The Jonas Basanavičius Prize is bestowed for distinguished work within the previous five years in the fields of ethnic and cultural studies.^[37] The prize is awarded in the House of Signatories, in homage to its history.

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- Source:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Act_of_Independence_of_Lithuania
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1991 01 13 - 2009 01 13



Chronicle of offenses committed by USSR Armed Forces on the territory of the Republic of Lithuania

January 13, 1991

As you go about your busy lives please take time to pause and remember that fateful night of January 13 when the world watched in horror as soviet tanks and armed soldiers stormed the television tower and Lithuanian radio and television building in Vilnius. There were thirteen civilian deaths and more than five hundred injured. The number of people who suffered trauma from those events will never be known.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to the Lithuanian people who surrounded the Parliament Building day and night, who stayed in bitter weather praying and singing.

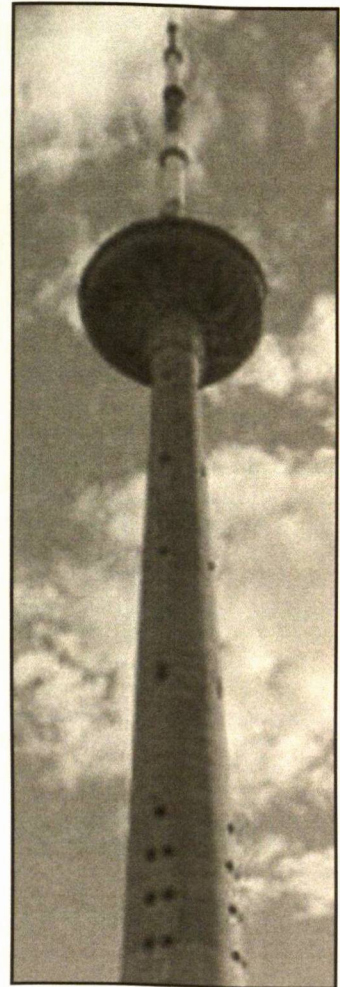
To those who paid the highest price at the Television Tower, they have not died in vain. May they rest in peace and may their names be remembered:

Loreta Asanavičiūtė
 Virginijus Druskis
 Darius Gerbutavičius
 Rolandas Jankauskas
 Rimantas Juknevičius
 Alvydas Kanapinskas
 Algimantas Petras Kavoliukas
 Vidas Maciulevičius
 Titas Masiulis
 Arvydas Matulka
 Apolinaras Juozas Povilaitis
 Ignas Šimulionis
 Vytautas Vaitkus
 Vytautas Kancevičius
(died February 18 of gunshot wounds)

Jeanne Dorr

The Photos at the top are from:

www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w5_show?p_r=4073&p_k=2-7k



Vilnius TV tower; the main site of January's events

This photo is from:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/January_Events



Medal of January 13

The Medal of January 13 was issued to commemorate the tragic events that took place in Vilnius on 13 January 1991 and to honour persons, citizens of Lithuania and foreign nationals, for outstanding performance in defending the freedom and independence of Lithuania in January - September 1991.



Reverse of the Medal January 13

The Medal of January 13 is the first distinction instituted in the restored State of Lithuania. Compared to the other state decorations of Lithuania, Medal of January 13 is the most frequently awarded distinction. During the nine years around three thousands Lithuanian citizens and foreign nationals received this award.

For a strong support to the cause of independence of Lithuania the Medal of January 13 was conferred on the first President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, in 1991. The recipients of this Medal include other foreign politicians who supported and contributed to the independence of Lithuania.

The Medal was designed by sculptor Pivoriunas. The badge of the Medal is minted by the Company "Gurtana". The ribbon for the Medal was at first produced by the Lithuanian Textiles Instituted; now it is manufactured in Denmark.

Source:

http://adamkus.president.lt/ordinai/s13amedalis_e.phtml



*Birutė Bublienė
founder of the
Lithuanian-American
Internship Program*

Introduction to LISS

The Lithuanian Internship program, known as Lietuvos Išeivijos Studentų Stažuotė (LISS), was established in order to provide internship opportunities to college/university students of Lithuanian descent living beyond the borders of Lithuania. The immediate goal of this program is for the university student to travel to Lithuania and intern in their chosen area of professional specialty. The students will not only gain concrete experience and skills in their area of studies, but they will first hand experience Lithuanian culture and improve their Lithuanian language skills.

The LISS program benefits both the student and the employer: The student will gain professional experience, and the employer will gain fresh ideas and will familiarize themselves that much better with Lithuanian university students living beyond its borders.

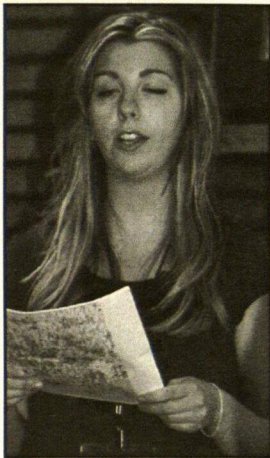
The LISS program had its beginning four years ago in the form of a pilot program, initiated by Birutė Bublienė in 2004. This pilot program was started, when Birutė Bublienė saw the need for such a program for Lithuanian/American university students and organized students to travel jointly to Lithuania together, to live together, and work together in their area of competency. Up to this point, many students had traveled individually or thru other organizations to do internship programs, if they had connections to get such internships. However, they felt

lonely and had no support group when they had problems in a foreign country, dealing with their internships and living arrangements or bureaucracies of that country. B. Bubliene not only organized such internships for an entire group, but traveled with them and provided counseling and weekly seminars during their stay in Lithuania, lending support and familiarizing the group with everyday living and transportation in Lithuania and educating the students with customs and traditions of Lithuanian culture. With time, more and more people started to hear of this successful program and the amount of students interested in doing internships in Lithuania increased. With the mounting interest in the internship program, Birutė Bublienė decided to make this pilot program into a more formal and lasting one. The opportunity provided itself in the spring of 2008, wherein LISS was invited to become a part of JAV LB (Lithuanian American Communities). Having heard about her private initiative with internship programs in Lithuania, she was invited by Vytas Maciunas, JAV LB Executive President to become the JAV LB Executive Vice-President, in charge of Lithuanian Youth Programs and liaison between JAV LB and the Lithuanian churches abroad. Birutė Bublienė gladly accepted the position and immediately started working in integrating the student internship program as part of the JAV LB structure.

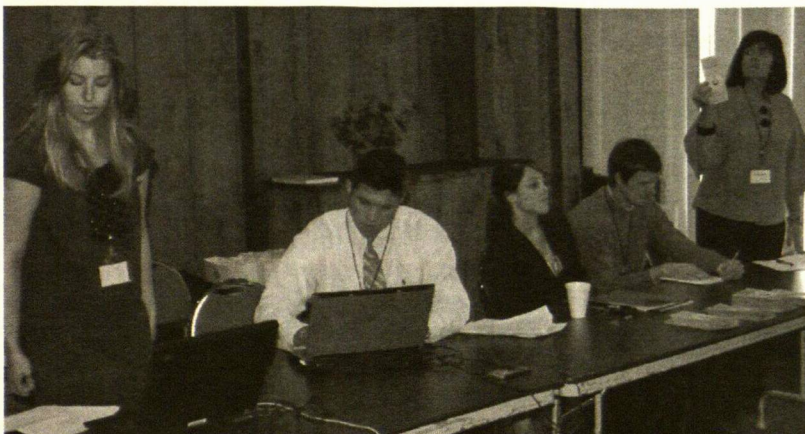
Her first mission was to get an enthusiastic team together to help her with the ever-growing demand of the internship program.

Immediately a great and enthusiastic team joined her efforts in organizing a great presentation for its "coming out program" during the 2008 Mokslo ir Kurybos Symposium in Chicago: Lina Bublys administrating the internship program, Daina Kasputis and Vaiva Rimeika in charge of marketing and graphic design; Vilija Gulbinaitė in creating a website

www.LIstudentustazuote.com or
www.lithuanianinternships.com



*Lina Bublytė presenting
her Lithuanian Internship
experience at the World
Lithuanian Science and
Arts Symposium*



Preparing their presentations



Symposium's audience eagerly seeking more information about the Internship Program

Tadas Kasputis creatively produced an informative video about Lithuanian internships. Lina also has successfully put a "YOU TUBE" video online and posted a brochure on Facebook.com for all students interested in internship programs and wanting to register for the program by March 1st of each year.

Birutė Bublienė and her creative team will continue their work and look forward to making LISS flourish into a successful, exceptional program for years to come!

The following qualifications exist:

- * The student must be an 18-29 year old college/university student.
- * The student must speak Lithuanian
- * The student must register, submit all significant paperwork, and write an essay in Lithuanian: Why do I want to be part of this internship opportunity, by March 1st
- * Of each year.

Why would a student want this opportunity? The answer is simple. For many years now, Lithuanian youth living in the U.S. has voiced the desire to go back to Lithuania and give back to its community. Just as many of their grandparents who immigrated in the past, many of the Lithuanian youth feel Lithuania is their homeland. With this in mind, LISS was created to grant this desire in the form of a unique experience centered on professional goals. Students will taste independence in this flourishing country, grow in their Lithuanian language skills both with the common vocabulary and the professional one, form professional relationships and create a profitable professional and social network, invest in political, cultural, and academic issues and grow to know the country that is Lithuania.

Lina Bublys

Photos by Rimas Gedaika



Vaiva Radasta Vebra Gust of Durham died December 13, 2008 from complications related to a recurrence of breast cancer. She was born in New Haven, CT on August 24, 1954. Her parents, Juozas Vebra and Genovaitė Zidonis Vebra, were political refugees from Lithuania.

At the time of her death, Vaiva was Counselor for Education Matters to the President of Lithuania, Valdas Adamkus, and she served as Vice Minister of Education in Lithuania from 1998 to 2001. Vaiva was interred in Vilnius, Lithuania. Throughout her life Vaiva provided charismatic leadership to the Lithuanian-Americans living in the U.S., founding and leading a variety of educational and cultural organizations, from Saturday schools to folk dance groups. February 16 is the anniversary of Lithuanian independence, and for many years Vaiva was a much-sought speaker around the country for these commemorative events. From 2003 to 2006 she served as President of Lietuviu Bendruomine (the Lithuanian-American Community), where she focused on drawing a new generation of Lithuanian immigrants into the activist fold. Perhaps Vaiva's single most notable achievement was the co-founding, with Jurate Krokys of Philadelphia, of a private voluntary organization to promote relationships between education professionals in Lithuania and the United States after Lithuanian independence was restored in 1990. Dubbed the American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education (A.P.P.L.E.), the organization sponsored in-service professional development summer seminars in Lithuania, staffed and taught by American teachers donating their time to boost the stature of Lithuanian educators, improve the education of Lithuania's children, and so facilitate Lithuania's successful return to the western world. Thousands of Lithuania's teachers have participated in the A.P.P.L.E. courses over the years. Vaiva received her B.S. from MIT in 1975 and her M.S. from Yale University in 1980. She was an avid reader, gardener and gourmet cook. A dedicated, creative and loving wife and mother, Vaiva is survived by her husband of 31 years, James Gust; sons Aras Vebra, Lokys Gust and Sirvydas Vebra and daughter Liepa Gust; her daughter-in-law Renata and her granddaughter Adrija; and by her half-siblings Silvija, Evaldas and Aristidas in Lithuania. The funeral was held December 20 followed by a Mass of Christian Burial in Holy Trinity Church. Burial was in Vilnius, Lithuania. The family requests that in lieu of flowers donations should be made to:

Lithuanian American Community, Inc.
Democracy Development Fund
2715 East Allegheny Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19134

Editor's Note: Bridges offers our sincere sympathy to Vaiva's family. She will be remembered for her enthusiasm and her love for Lithuania.

When I Open My Eyes and Ears

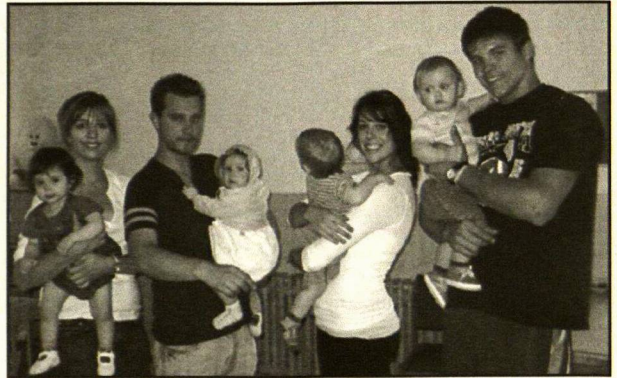
I can still see their faces in my thoughts and dreams: Their laughter, their love, and their hope for a brighter day. It is so sad that someone would abandon such beautiful children. It is a shame that love is not enough to complete this world and make it enough to survive. I had a very meaningful experience this past summer when I was in Lithuania. It is an experience that I will never forget and it has already shaped a new plan for the future. It tugs at my heart and I am forever changed...

I am happy that I have just graduated from nursing school with a bachelors in nursing, have my nursing license and am ready to embark on new adventures in the nursing world. I plan to work in the states for the time being, yet I have an active goal to go back to Lietuva (Lithuania) in the near future. What I saw and experienced there was more than I could ever explain in a few simple words.

Two summers ago, I decided to go to Lietuva to volunteer my time for a better cause. It is something I always wanted to do and due to the fact that I am studying nursing, I thought it would be a very meaningful experience. One of my jobs was to volunteer my time at the University of Vilnius Hospital as a nurse's aide. I got a very busy job at the mother/baby unit. I also decided to spend some time at a day camp working with older children. This day camp served as an escape for children who were plagued with unfortunate situations such as abuse, alcohol, drugs, financial burden, etc. I was really excited for my summer and couldn't wait for all the experiences I would have along the way. But never did I expect the experiences that faced me when I finally did arrive to Lietuva.

A few days after my arrival to Lietuva, my mom decided to show me around Vilniaus Senamiestis (Vilnius Old Town) and show me the exact path I would take for work every morning. The actual building that I was supposed to be working at was closed, so we walked into the next courtyard to look around. We were intrigued to see the sign, which warmly welcomed people off the street. It appeared that in this building resided a center for teen moms and their babies. This center's purpose is to take in girls that have been kicked out of the house because of their pregnancy and give them a place to stay. This center not only teaches them to be mothers, but to seek job opportunities and seek goals for the future of her baby and herself. Upon hearing this, my heart melted and I immediately felt the need to be a part of this feat.

The weekend caretaker kindly showed us the facility and explained the goals of the program to us. She was happy to hear of our interest to help and told us to come back to talk to her manager. But as my mom and I walked the



Lina, unidentified staff member, Daiva, and Paulius at the Antakalnis Center for Orphans and Infants with Special Needs.

halls, we couldn't help but be disturbed by the crying that was echoing throughout the building. The longer we were there, the more intense and unsettling the cry became. When we inquired about the baby's cry, the weekend caretaker explained that she did not know what to do- the mother of that child had left earlier that day with the intent of going to a party. She had left the baby and she had also taken the only key that could unlock that door! Not having a spare key, the weekend lady was dazed and just hopeful that the mom would come back. We also found out, the mom had taken another mother with her, who had also left her 6-month-old daughter behind. We were shocked that such a thing would happen - both girls had been without food and without attention all day and the only thing between us was a wooden door. We encouraged the lady to resolve this immediately and stayed until she was able to get to the babies. We instilled in her the sense of urgency to rescue these babies, and with that she was motivated to find help immediately. Other single mothers applauded the joint effort and rallied to help take care of the infant girls. We left with the promise of checking on them the next day.

The next day turned into over 6 weeks of grueling experiences. The babies were sent to Pediatric Hospital of Vilnius University and Santariškės Hospital (baby having had an infectious disease). My mom and I were in tow, knowing that the girls had no one else to care for them. For in the short time we had spent in the pediatric hospital it was clear, that this was only a mere sliver of puzzle that surrounded Lietuva's challenge with child abandonment. What we found was that most hospitals take in abandoned children until they have room at the orphanage, yet they have little means and staff to take care of such a heavy responsibility on top of all their other responsibilities. Often times, I was at my job searching for gloves, or at the pediatric wing searching for diapers or diaper rash ointment. Often times, I asked where the diapers were - and the nurses would tell me that they would only change a diaper if it had stool because they didn't have

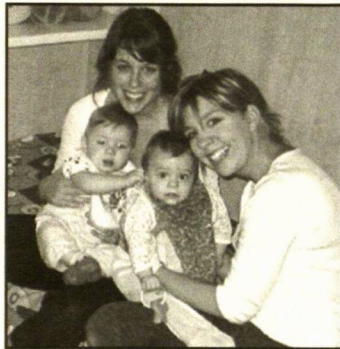
enough diapers in supply.

I scrambled around Vilnius dedicating much of my time to the girls in the Pediatrics wing, interning at the Mother/Baby wing, and attending the day camp on the weekdays. After 3 weeks, however, a new task emerged. The abandoned baby girls were sent to the local orphanage in nearby Antakalnis. There I found hundreds of other children abandoned in the same exact way these girls were. Though it was clean and beautiful there, it was still obvious that essential supplies were missing. Objects such as diapers, ointment, shoes and practical infant gear (carriers, high chairs, swings) were insufficient. This orphanage also was one of the only that accepted children with special needs and crucial medical supplies were scarce, too.

It was at that moment I decided to shift gears and give half of my time to the orphanage. It was clear, that they not only needed extra hands, but they needed another brain and another source of nursing expertise. Working with the manager, my mother and I formed an active plan to recruit some of other students visiting Lietuva for the summer to lend their helping ways. Each of my friends had a unique background and unique areas of knowledge. I knew that recruiting them would be an adventitious outcome for the children. We spent 4 weeks, working with the children, gathering essential supplies and spreading the word to others about the dire situation facing the abandoned children of Lietuva. We also continued to spread the word upon our return, constantly advocating for organizations to aid in providing supplies for the orphanages in Lietuva. I still hold a high responsibility today and continue to try to strike relationships with diaper manufacturers and medical supply companies to donate products.

Due to the fact that I was finishing my studies this past summer, I could not go back to the orphanage with my mom to work with the children. Yet, I still remember the experiences I had during my time there. I am there in spirit knowing that if no one is to care for these orphan children, then they will truly fall through the cracks. I chose and promised to be their voice. Now with a finished degree I can go back and educate the youth of Lietuva. I will dedicate time to the mothers who need support and I will work with the orphans to give them the love and attention they deserve. I vow to be an advocate for them and to let their voices be heard.

I really do think God works in mysterious ways. I always wanted to have a greater cause in life and strive to make a difference. Had we not been walking around Old Town that day, we may have never found or heard the cries for help. We would have never known that two beautiful and smart babies were sitting in a hospital looking for love and atten-



Daiva and Lina with children from the Antakalnis Center.

tion. I have now learned to open up my eyes and ears to the many opportunities life gives and to strive to live life with a greater purpose. I am not defeated and this is only the beginning to my long journey in life. I have new goals and new outlooks that I have never had before. I am excited, because I have turned a new page and last June marked the start of a new life for me. I encourage everyone to open your eyes and ears to the many opportunities in life. I am beyond proud that my mom has established a Lithuanian student internship program in which students can go back to Lietuva and work in both pro-

fessional and culturally relevant spectrums. One may find that they came to Lietuva to achieve one purpose, but they may leave Lietuva having achieved much more!

For more information about this unique student internship program, please find us at:

www.lithuanianinternships.com
write to birutebublys@comcast.net

Lina Bublys



Lina, Daiva, and Paulius with the staff members of the Antakalnis Center.

TRIVIA QUESTION

(No.26)

(Loanword)

Which of the following is a Lithuanian word of foreign origin?

(a) Dievas (God) (b) draugas (friend) (c) gatvė (street)

Answer to Trivia Quiz on page 22

CHILD'S GATE TO LEARNING COMMEMORATES ITS 10th ANNIVERSARY

PART 2

"Bridges" has featured articles about the U.S.-based humanitarian aid organization, "Child's Gate to Learning"... Now commemorating its tenth year of work for Lithuania's children, the organization recognizes that support is still needed...

Part 1 provided an overview on the organization, "Child's Gate to Learning" (Vaiko vartai į mokslą), which was founded in 1998.

The organization was started by a small group of Lithuanian-American educators and social workers who were concerned about reports they were hearing from Lithuania about the numbers of children who were not attending school. The initial group grew into an organization whose stated mission is to help the neglected children of Lithuania - by creating an appropriate environment for the pursuit of education and character building...

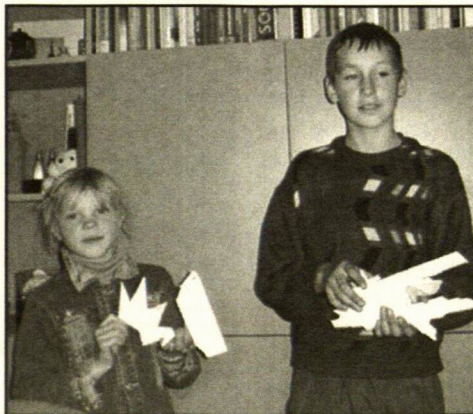
Now, more about the work in Lithuania, the children, the character building programs...

The children and volunteers

The children and youths who attend the center are sometimes stigmatized at school, called "stinky", because their home lives are not always conducive to good hygiene, so centers, as soon as they can afford it, install shower facilities and washing machines, provide toothbrushes and combs... Center directors often have had to purchase school supplies for the children, from lists obtained from the schools the children attend. "Child's Gate to Learning" supporters have purchased and knit slippers for the children to wear so they can remove their street shoes upon arrival at the center... Through the generosity of Seneca House, various groups, and individual donors, centers have been able to purchase sewing machines, traditional Lithuanian and other musical instruments, working computers (and even Internet connections). One benefactor envisions that music may impact

the children of Lithuania, the way it has Venezuela's children. There a nation-wide music program was the brainchild of Venezuelan conductor José Antonio Abreu, who in 1975 envisioned classical music training as a social service that could change the lives of lower-income, at-risk, and special needs children. (By 2005, nearly 400,000 children passed through Venezuela's state-funded classical music program). All of these "extras" come after food has been purchased, heating bills have been paid... Supported centers often try to include parents in the celebrations of birthdays, holidays... Sometimes, one of the parents, often the mothers, agree to get help for alcohol abuse problems and find work. Then, as program coordinator, Jolanta, of "Žemaičių Kalvarija" wrote, the children "shine like suns", emphasizing what an important role mothers have in their children's lives.

Centers in larger cities may be the training sites where Lithuanian university students do a course-related practicum in social work or education, for example. Some students continue volunteering at the centers even after their coursework requirements are completed. For several years, as college students, Nerijus and Lina were among the 35 mainstays at the "Vilties angelas" center in Vilnius where volunteer training and appreciation events are high priorities. There have been volunteers from other countries, such as Christophe from France, who volunteer at the Vilnius center for a year long stint (or sometimes two), who learn Lithuanian in the process. They tell people that really, at the core, there are no differences between children in Lithuania and children in France. Even the centers in smaller cities and towns sometimes are lucky in finding and training motivated, trustworthy volunteers, so, yes, volunteerism in Lithuania is slowly growing. In "Žemaičių Kalvarija", Žilvinas, who is in high school, joins in all of the activities with the children, but serves as an inspiration to them as well. He is a motivated student in school, good in mathematics, a role model. He serves as the center's photographer, has helped create the center's website. Since he has a knack with computers, he serves as a computer skills tutor as well. Some of the children and youths have learning disabilities and behavioral problems. In school, there aren't enough computers or perhaps teachers with patience to teach them,



Winged "creatures" serve as symbols in the beginning exercises of the "Sparnai"(Wings) character building program, prepared by "Child's Gate to Learning" for its supported centers.

and certainly these children don't have computers at home. Žilvinas is also a dedicated center volunteer. Rather than take the school bus ride to his outlying home village where he lives with his mother, he instead rides his bike to school, so that he could stay at the center later to help out afterwards. (Some financial support from "Child's Gate to Learning" benefactors helped him get a newer bike, when his previous bike broke down...) Jolanta, the program coordinator at the center in "Žemaičių Kalvarija", has written "Child's Gate to Learning" officers, that episodic well-meant donations or good deeds may make donors feel pleased with themselves, but, in the long run, the children respond best to those who work with them on a regular, long-term basis. Volunteers can help. As one Lithuanian-American volunteer, Audrė Budrys Nakas noted, volunteers can assist center staff by providing one-on-one attention to the children.

Throughout the past 10 years, a number of Lithuanian-American high school, college age and adult volunteers have gone to Lithuania to work in one capacity or another at one of the supported centers. Some shared their experiences afterwards. For example, Audrė Kačinskas wrote about her experiences, together with Žiba Šaulys, in the March 2003 issue of Bridges, about their volunteer work at the "Šaltinėlis" center in Marijampolė. (In 2006, Lina Jarašius and Nida Vidutis volunteered there as well.) After arrangement with "Child's Gate to Learning" and a supported center in Lithuania, the volunteers have been prepared for their work with these children and youths from at-risk families because preparation means they will have better insights and understanding. Preparation of volunteers is taken seriously...

In the late spring of 2007, Lina Aukštuolis and her friend, Kristina Quinn, volunteered at the after-school center, "Vilties angelas", in Vilnius. This was one poignant observation made by Lina in a blog that she shared with her friends and family:

When we want to get to know someone better, we usually ask them questions. Who knew that we could get to know someone through the questions they ask us?

"Do you live in a house? How many rooms do you have? Do you drive a Ferrari? Do you live with your parents? Do you get along with your parents?"

"Do your parents beat you?"

A painful reality. These children could not understand that my parents have never laid a hand on me for the sake of discipline. All these children have ever known is physical punishment for acting out of line.

"If your parents don't beat you, how do they discipline



Music teacher Veronika and youths from the "Vilties vėrinėliai" center in Žemaičių Kalvarija play "skudučiai", a traditional Lithuanian folk instrument, purchased with "Child's Gate to Learning" benefactors' support

you? Please tell me. I want to raise my kids without beating them."

The girl asking these questions is 12 years old.

Programs

"Child's Gate to Learning" formed an editorial committee that since 2000 has produced five character building programs for use in the centers. The committee's members, primarily teachers and social workers by training, have produced thematic programs (lesson plan ideas) that can be used for activities with the children, after they complete their homework, eat, do arts and crafts, sing or play in the fresh air outside... The programs, through games, discussion, activities, emphasize topics and their positive solutions, attributes. The first program presented simple concepts of friendship, politeness, neighborliness, etc. The second program, called D.R.A.S.A. (Dare to resist smoking, alcohol, and mind-altering drugs) was featured in one of the three documentary films the group has funded. In it, a group of young boys seated around a poster board, outline the things they can purchase if they don't buy cigarettes, a suggested D.R.A.S.A. program activity. (As "Child's Gate to Learning" members have come to know from experience at the centers, their participating children as young as 8-9 years of age take up smoking). In preparation for the fifth program, completed in 2008, "Sparnai" (Wings), children prepare for the program by visualizing what has wings. Photographs sent by one center depict origami paper birds hanging from a room's ceiling as that center's chosen activity. The program covers some very difficult themes - loss (including suicide), being an outsider... The program ends on a positive note as children



A good deed. Two girls from the "Vilties vėrinėliai" after school center in Žemaičių Kalvarija carry firewood to the local senior citizen's home, helping create a stockpile for the winter.

and the centers' trained personnel discuss positive, meaningful life enhancing moments and events, the overcoming and surpassing life's obstacles and problematic moments.

Why did "Child's Gate to Learning" undertake the preparation of these programs? The teachers in the organization recognized that besides the after-school care of at-risk children - meals and help with homework, the Lithuanian centers can play a role in providing the children with life skills as well. A number of the organization's members have themselves lived through difficult times- early loss of parents and loved ones, family members with alcohol and drug abuse problems. There was a desire to professionally help colleagues in Lithuania working at the centers. The editorial committee was formed from members who have many years of pedagogical, social work and other life experience, they decided to create workbooks with "lesson plans" as a gift to the centers... One center program coordinator wrote - "I like to lead the activities of the "Sparnai" program because those themes are important and it is nice that the material has been prepared, so that what remains is for us to use it creatively." The after-school centers are run by directors with a shoestring staff and volunteers. The centers increasingly now have their choices of many programs from many countries, but it could be said that the gift of "Child's Gate to Learning" to the centers is its programs, practical ideas and activities, interwoven with Christian and Lithuanian themes....

Are the centers and "Child's Gate to Learning" still necessary?

In 2006 a report was issued in Lithuania by the Social Economics Institute (SEKI), that examined the reasons for school delinquency and dropout problems in

Lithuania. Probably to no one's surprise, among other things, it confirmed that one of the best school delinquency prevention measures is after-school activity. After the re-establishment of Lithuanian independence, a new nationalized system has yet to be organized. However, as "Child's Gate to Learning" has experienced, there are "grassroots" organized Lithuanian after-school centers and temporary shelters that sincerely work in this arena and the centers seek to do more. Founded by schools, religious orders, parishes and local community activists, each of the supported centers has its unique characteristics, but what they all have in common is that they promote school attendance and character building in children and youths whose families, due to a variety of social and economic problems, are not adequately meeting those needs. In 1996, Hillary Rodham Clinton published a book, *It Takes a Village: And Other Lessons Children Teach Us*. That phrase, "It takes a village" is featured in book titles before and since then, and has been said to be derived from an African proverb. Wherever the saying originated, it resonates anywhere in the world. Ideally a child's first "line of defense" should be his or her family, but the surrounding "village" (geographic or by other connection) can and should supplement the family's care and concern, hopefully in a positive way. "Child's Gate to Learning" through the years has used the phrase "Norime, galime ir turime padėti vaikams" (*We want to, can, and must help children*)... In the past 10 years, the organization has relied on the goodwill and financial support of many individuals, various organizations, and foundations in the United States, Canada, and in Lithuania. Thanks to organization support groups in Cleveland, Detroit, Philadelphia, Sunny Hills (Florida), and Washington, D.C. Thanks in particular to the Lithuanian Foundation and to one family's fund, Seneca House—their generous support over the past few years has helped fund more than one "Child's Gate to Learning" project... To all of those who share the organization's vision and its responsibilities, the organization's founders, officers, and the supported centers are grateful!

Young volunteer Lina Aukštuolis, in her 2007 blog, wrote about a discussion she and fellow volunteer Kristina Quinn had after an afternoon in the park playing with the "Vilties angelo" (Caritas) center children of Vilnius:

During dinner, Kristina nor I could stop talking about the afternoon at the park. Some of the children we are working with have undergone more traumatic experiences than Kristina or I have ever or will ever have to undergo. Why is it that some children are exposed to such hardships? Every human being is capable of the most cruel

Continuing on page 25

HERO OF MONTE CASSINO

2nd Polish Army Corps General Wladyslaw Anders,
A Lithuanian from Žemaitijai

*Free and abbreviated translation by
Vytautas J. Sliupas, P.E. Jan.*

The following story appeared in the
Lithuanian language weekly
VORUTA, Dec. 18, 1999:

POLISH GENERAL V. ANDERS A LITHUANIAN ŽEMAITIS

At the start of World War II Polish Army general Vladislovas Anders was in charge of the Naugardukas cavalry brigade. When the Red Army entered Vilnius district, he was interned and shipped to the USSR. When in 1941 Polish émigré government premier Gen. V. Sikorski signed an agreement with the USSR, Gen. Anders was released from internment and charged with organizing the Polish Army in the USSR, which later became an Army Corps and fought with the Allies in the West. After the War, the general did not return to Poland but remained in the West. He was a strong anti-Communist.

Until now very few people in Poland have even heard that this well known Polish military leader was a Lithuanian from Žemaitija.

The Lithuanian daily Draugas of Chicago, in its June 9, 1970, Nr. 134 issue, published a story by Bishop V. Brizgys: "About Gen. Anders' Lithuanian Origin" in which the author revealed a story heard from the General himself:

"In 1952 early June there was a Eucharist Congress in Barcelona. Some forty-five Lithuanians attended. From England came General V. Anders with a group of Polish officers and the flag of their Corps.

One morning, while gathering for a Mass in the square, I was

approached by Archbishop Joseph Gawlina, with whom I was acquainted from earlier meetings in Rome, and by Graf Potocki, the Ambassador of Free Poland to Madrid, whom I also had met earlier in 1951. They suggested I meet with General Anders who was here in the square with his officers.

After greetings the two of us remained together for a good hour, because the Eucharist Congress was always one to two hours late. We spoke in French. I asked him if there was any truth in the rumor, which I heard from several of his soldiers, that he could speak Lithuanian.

The General very simply and openly told me that he was born in Žemaitija, Lithuania (I believe around Kelmė, but cannot be sure today - V.B.), and that his true name was Andriejauskas. At home they spoke only Žemaitiskai. In the British Zone of Germany, later in Britain, now I do not know where, lives his brother who only speaks Lithuanian since he does not know any Polish.

"In 1914, as Adriejauskas, he served in the Russian Czar's cavalry regiment in Žaliakalnis, Kaunas. When World War I started his regiment was sent to East Prussia. In 1915 he was moved to Russia and during the Revolution he was in Siberia. There various national groups started organizing their own military units. With many other fellow Lithuanians he joined the Polish brigade, and was successful in reaching Poland. That way he became a member of the Polish Army. Later he changed his name from Andriejauskas to

Anders. Admitted that even now he could speak the Žemaičių dialect of Western Lithuania, but did not have any opportunity to learn the true Lithuanian which is generally spoken today. These were the words of General V. Anders.

"Where and when he went to schools I did not learn as we were interrupted by the Mass. The second and the final time we met was in 1965 at the funeral of Archbishop J. Gawlinka, during the Vatican II Conference, Fifth Session. Archbishop J. Gawlinka was the principal Chaplain of the Free Poland Army, who left Poland in 1939 and lived in Rome. For that reason Gen. Anders came to his funeral. Archbishop Gawlinka was well known to the Lithuanians of Rome, was very friendly towards us, thus there were many Lithuanians at his funeral. After the Mass in Rome, in the Basilica of Twelve Apostles, his body was taken to the Monte Cassino Polish Military Cemetery. Later, there was buried General V. Anders-Andriejauskas".

Bishop V. Brizgys was not the first to reveal the Lithuanian origin of V. Anders. In the 1953 issue of Lietuvių Enciklopedija vol. 1, p.162 it is stated that: "Anders (formerly Andrzejewski) Vladislovas was born in 1892 in Lithuania..." It is interesting to note that during World War II even his close associate officers did not know his true nationality. As an example, his former adjutant J. Klimkowski claims that: "General Anders was a son of a German nobleman, educated in Russian schools..."

From his book:

I was Gen. Anders's Adjutant,
Russian Language, Moscow, 1991, p. 98

Source: www.angelfire.com/tx/LABAS/2000/feb/hero.html



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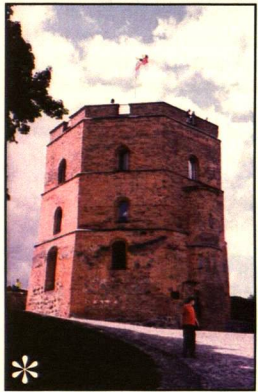
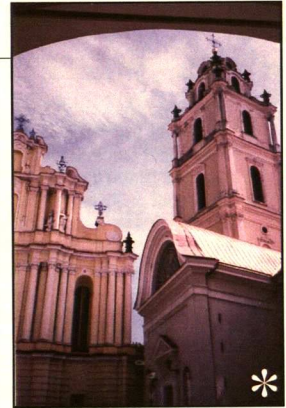
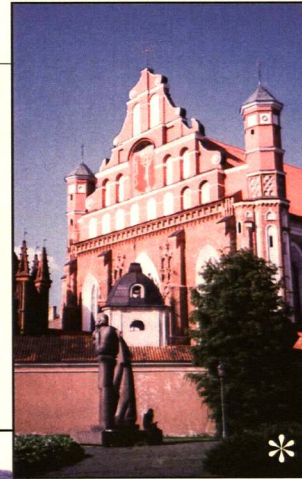
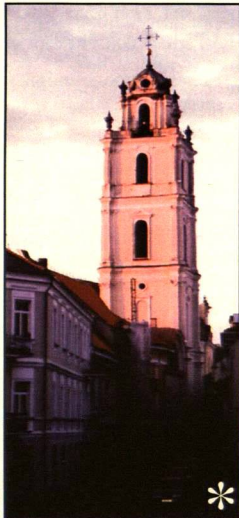
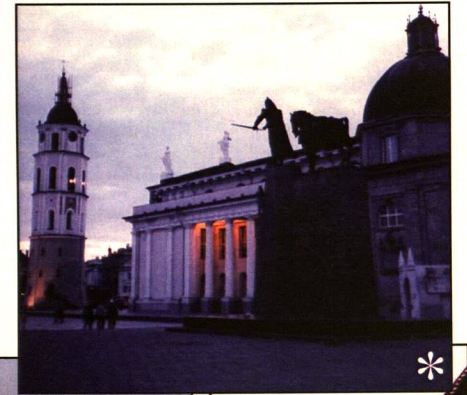


Photo Album
of
Vilnius,
Lithuania



Photos by:
* Julie Skurdenis from Bronxville, NY
** Dr. Banga Grigaliūnaitė from Vilnius, Lithuania

Letter

Dr. R. Šomkaitė

Dear Friends,

Religious instruction and instilling of ethics and moral values is in a catastrophic state in the Lithuanian schools. These studies are included in the curriculum but not implemented. The majority of state schools do not provide their religion or ethics teachers with proper tools to teach, i.e. literature, tape recorders or video equipment. The available funds are first distributed to the "more important" departments such as physics, mathematics, computers and English. By the time the religion and ethical education department's turn comes around, there is often nothing left.

Is it surprising that the students are beginning to consider religious or ethical education as secondary and unimportant?

What can be done to change this situation? We, the Lithuanian National Foundation's Committee to Assist Lithuanian Schools, have acquired experience in these matters. With your help and generosity \$50,000 was collected, nine books relating Lithuania's struggle for freedom were purchased and then distributed to schools in Lithuania. This was accomplished in only two years.

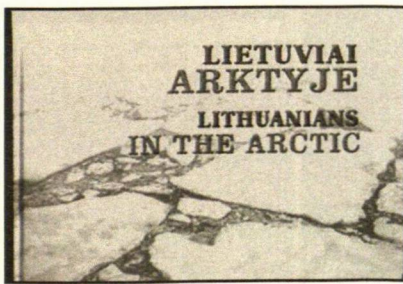
We have already begun our new project to help religious and ethics education in Lithuanian schools. With the help of a publisher in Vilnius, a list of 41 books suitable for young adults and children has been compiled. As soon as funds become available, this list is sent to a school and they select \$100 worth of books (approximately 17 - 20 books) for their library. After their selections are received, the books are purchased and delivered to the school. We are determined to provide this much needed assistance to as many schools as possible.

However, we cannot do this alone. Your help and assistance is needed. We invite you to join with us in this truly worthwhile and exciting project. Help us to extend a guiding hand to the youth of Lithuania.

Please send your checks to: Lithuanian National Foundation, Inc.
c/o Dr. R. Šomkaitė
386 Hillside Avenue
South Orange, NJ 07079

Your tax exempt donation will be recorded, the schools will be selected and all the information sent to our central office. We hope to hear from you soon.

Gratefully yours, Project managers
Rozė Šomkaitė, Dr. Nijolė Bražėnaitė Paronetto



"Lithuanians In The Arctic"

Submitted by Dr. Rozė Šomkaitė

A new book "Lithuanians in the Arctic" has been published in 2008, written both in English and Lithuanian by the Brotherhood of

the Laptev Sea Exiles. It is dedicated to those who did not return and is an accurate history of the many banished to Siberia.

Memoirs of former exiles who lived on Trofimovsk Island in the Laptev Sea, the northern most part of Russia, are presented with drawings and maps. Soviet genocide is exposed in testimonies of the few exiles who survived this most cruel camp. It is an excellent resource book containing 140 pages with a hard cover. It can be ordered online from Karyl Arnold at radzievich@aol.com. at a cost of \$20.00 which includes shipping or by sending a check to:

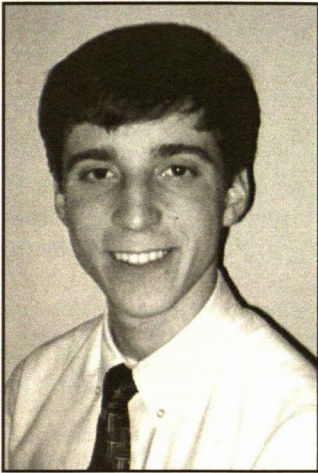
Lithuanian Foundation, Inc.

c/o Rozė Šomkaitė
386 Hillside Ave.
South Orange, NJ 07079

Editor's Note:

Although I do not write book reviews I must tell you how moved I was by this book. The personal accounts of the people who endured this horror were very detailed and the art work was excellent. The passing years have a way of diminishing the importance of many events. We must never allow the sacrifices of these people to be forgotten.

MEET OUR YOUNG WRITERS...



Holes

I woke up to an aluminum bat jabbing at my ribs. Three men in Soviet style infantry uniforms ordered me out of bed and told me I had two minutes to pack all of my belongings. I unzipped my suitcase when they blindfolded me and dragged outside. There were no good-

byes, no showers, I couldn't even brush my teeth; just silence as I fumbled in the dark. I stumbled over the door steps and was thrown into a truck with what felt like twenty other people. The air in the truck tasted like sour milk. One of girls thrown on top of me complained how she lost an earring, how unfortunate. It was a bumpy ride. For thirty minutes, we were tossed like salad, thrown up into the air and mixed until we were all just a pile of limbs. The truck stopped. My chin slid across the floor of the truck as they hauled us into the woods. The officers sat me down on the dewy brush of the forest. Two pieces of bread were placed in my hands and a cup full of water was dropped in my lap. My blindfold was taken off and I looked up to see many of my friends, my brother, and my cousin. The sun drew lines on their faces as the light broke through the trees. The officers then came back with shovels, handed them to us, and ordered us to dig a hole ten feet wide and four feet deep. For three hours the twenty of us dug and moved dirt. No one spoke. By two o'clock, they gave us more bread and told us to refill the hole we just labored over. For the rest of day we transplanted dirt from one place to another until we realized our lives were meaningless.

This is History Day at Camp Neringa. Each year I attend a three week summer sleep away camp in Vermont called Neringa. It was founded by the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in order to preserve Lithuanian heritage and foster Christian values. By no means do nuns go around ordering teenagers to dig holes at the crack of a whip; but on History Day, the greenery of Vermont transforms into a flashback of his-

toric Lithuania. In years past, Neringa has become a Lithuania about to be invaded by Teutonic Knights, a Lithuania trapped in the midst of World War II, or in my case, a Lithuania suffering under the deportations to Siberia. This is a day where counselors pose as Soviet soldiers. Campers are challenged with smuggling Lithuanian books into camp. Passports are issued and Soviets "arrest" you with a cold shower and a cup of flour in your hair. This day is meant to help us understand what our ancestors experienced because they were Lithuanian in a country under Soviet occupation. During the deportations, men, women, and children were taken from their homes with nothing but a knapsack. They were packed into train cars for months at a time where the only toilet was the floor. If they survived the train ride, they mined for diamonds and dug meaningless trenches in Siberia while living off of sporadic Red Cross aid supplies. But I often wonder why I press pause on my life and return to a camp each summer to learn Lithuanian songs, folk dances, and a language spoken by only a few million people. It is because this is my heritage; and it's in my blood. I am proud to be a Lithuanian. I am proud to be from a country that has survived centuries of political turmoil, but still remains on the map. But I think it's more than that. I return to camp each year because my experiences at Neringa have truly allowed me to discover who I am. I have an awareness of my heritage that I feel so many people neglect. Neringa has reassured me that I am not just another suburban boy who loves a game of baseball or a weekend movie. My life is defined by more than three numbers on an SAT score or a list of activities on a resume. I am a seventeen year-old who carries the perseverance of my parents and grandparents; and take pride in my work-regardless of the endeavor.

As I observe those around me who try so hard to express themselves whether it be through their clothing, their music, or even their facebook profile page, I have come to believe that before we choose our path in life, before we even begin to make a difference in this world, we must first understand who we are and where we come from - even if it means digging holes.

Harry Rogers

Harry Rogers is a high school senior from Bucks County, PA and has attended Neringa's Heritage Camp for the past nine summers. This essay reflects the personal experience he has had and its impact on him as he attends University next fall. For over 30 years Neringa has served children and families with the mission to foster understanding and love for Lithuanian heritage. As a non-profit organization it seeks contributions from the Lithuanian communities for support www.Neringa.org

Mission of Love

In the short time since Lithuania regained independence many people have worked with their hearts and souls to help the country reestablish itself. It was not an easy road as it appeared everything and everyone in Lithuania needed help. Where do you start when a country has been under soviet domination for so long? What do you do when a country has been broken or destroyed over fifty years? You start at the very beginning—in the early days of the long road to independence. The Philadelphia Lithuanians held many protests and rallies in Washington, D.C., St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York and at Philadelphia's Liberty Bell. En route to one of these rallies to Washington, D.C. I met Joe and Marija Majauskas. It seemed that these rallies would go on forever. Finally, the day that everyone hoped and prayed for arrived and now the real work would begin.

But before I get ahead of myself I would like to introduce you to Joe. He was born in Liudvinavas in the Marijampolė area of Lithuania. Joe lost his younger brother during childhood. Like thousands of others, his family fled to Germany and while in the displaced persons' camp death struck another cruel blow and took his father when Joe was six years old. He was raised by his mother and they immigrated to America in 1949 and settled in the Inkerman section of Pittston, PA. where they had relatives. Mother and son eventually moved to Paterson, New Jersey. After graduating from high school Joe worked at various firms while attending Farleigh Dickinson University at night.

He married Marija Kaulinytė and the young couple moved to Philadelphia where Joe found a new position and continued his education at night at St. Joseph's University, graduating with a BA and MBA degrees in Business Administration. The couple currently



Juozas ir Marija Majauskai on Oct.1, 1995 at the Balfas Humanitarian Awards/Cultural Program in Phila., PA

resides in New Jersey. They were involved in Lithuanian organizations. Joe was president of the New Jersey Chapter of the Lithuanian American Community, a member of St. Andrew's parish committee, served as the director of the United Lithuanian Relief Fund of America Inc. of the Philadelphia Chapter and as General Secretary of the United Lithuanian Relief Fund of America (Balfas) for 10 yrs.

It was his work with Balfas that made Joe stand out. It appeared to some that Joe actually had taken on a second full time job with his charity work. For the readers who were involved in sending charity shipments to Lithuania, you know exactly what I mean. For those who are not familiar with these massive projects it seemed there was no end to the problems; paper work, logistics, volunteers, packing, checking and keeping records of addresses and phone numbers on the boxes, getting the boxes loaded on trucks to go to the dock, getting them loaded off trucks at the dock, listening to the complaints of missing boxes, being sure the recipients in Lithuania received the boxes. It takes time and patience to coordinate efforts involving two continents. And on and on it went. But Joe kept at it while Marija was his right hand helper. It was decided, with the blessings of Fr. Peter Burkauskas, that St. Andrew's Lithuanian Church in Philadelphia would be the anchor for these massive

projects. St. George's and St. Casimir's also had representatives coordinating the projects from their parishes. Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid and Dr. Rožė Šomkaitė sought Joe's help to coordinate their shipments to Lithuania.

I well remember packing more than 40 boxes at home and looking at them when the thought hit me like a lightening bolt. Now what do I do with them and how do I get them to Philadelphia? But one phone call to Joe and I no longer had the problem. Joe took the headache from me and the following weekend arrived with a good size truck. What amazed me was that he was in such good spirits about the entire episode. I was actually angry with myself that I had given no thought to getting these boxes to Philadelphia before I packed them. I remember walking into the church hall the next day and there was no room to move, just boxes, boxes and more boxes as far as your eyes could see. Packages were not just sent to those in need. Individuals had the opportunity to send packages to their families for a fraction of the cost that agencies would charge.

Joe and the Philadelphia Chapter sent 22, 40ft. containers to Lithuania. You name the item and it was sent; clothing, shoes, books, medicine, walkers, stretchers, canes, peanut butter, pots, pans, and whatever else you can think of - someone in Lithuania received it at one time or another. Lithuania was in need of everything. Since Joe worked for Tyco Toys Inc. he was able to obtain one container of Lego Blocks from the Company. They were quite the rage in Lithuania. Imagine the joy of those children who received them. Small rugs and furniture found their way to schools, orphanages, former political prisoners, and the Lithuanian Association of the Blind. Computers were sent by Balfas to the Vilnius



Container being packed at St. Andrew's parish hall by volunteers. From left, Ukrainian students, V. Vienažindis, J. Misoni, Z. Masaitis. Center: Pastor P. Burkauskas, J. Majauskas, G. Labutis, A. Masaitis and J. Trakimas. In the container A. Staples. In the background the skyline of Phila., PA

School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. This gift paved the road for the founding of the Computer Technical Center at the Vilnius School for the Blind. Because of Joe's efforts on their behalf he was asked to be their representative in the United States. He served in this capacity for three years. But none of this would have been possible without the help and generosity of many, many volunteers to make these projects so successful.

It didn't stop here. Joe and Marija hosted five students and two teachers from the Overbrook School for the Blind in Philadelphia. All were from Lithuania except one young man who was from Hungary. This was a program of total commitment. It meant having a representative from Overbrook School visit the home and checking to be sure there were no obstacles in the way for the students to navigate around the house. It meant

driving to Philadelphia every Friday night through traffic in all kinds of weather. On Sunday evenings the process was reversed and the students were returned to their school. The students were overjoyed to have the opportunity to spend the weekend in a real home with a family, have home cooked meals, and speak Lithuanian. I believe the most important thing was for them to know that someone cared about them, worried about them, and would always be there for them. It took very special people to give a year of their lives to this program every weekend and all the holidays.

But to Joe and Marija, all this was a mission of love. Declining health has curtailed his humanitarian work but he is still helping his family or anyone that may need his help. Most recently he worked as a care giver to help an elderly couple from Philadelphia. With his help they were able to realize their dream of returning to Lithuania to live out their remaining days. Congratulations on a job well done.

"The best work never was and never will be done for money." John Ruskin

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.

News and Views

Year of 2009 proposed to be announced year of 20th anniversary of Baltic Way

Vilnius (ELTA) - The Baltic Assembly invites the Lithuanian, Estonian and Latvian parliaments and governments as well as the Baltic Ministers' Council to announce the year of 2009

the year of the 20th anniversary of Baltic Way.

This is proposed in one of the resolutions passed on at the assembly of the Baltic Assembly in Estonia on December 4-6.

According to MP Rytas Kupcinskas, this resolution has been passed having considered the spiritual and emotional importance of the Baltic Way in the development of the independence of the Baltic states. According to the MP, joint festive events will be held in the

occasion of the anniversary.

Economy

The New Year started with a real havoc on the labor exchanges. There are so many jobseekers that there is not enough time to register them. There are almost no vacancies and if any appear they are taken the same day. More people in districts are expected to be employed in spring when seasonal work begins. REPUBLIKA

Information Center for Homecoming Lithuanians

SIGISMUNDUS & BARBARA

A
LITHUANIAN ROYAL
ROMANCE



Traditionally a royal wedding arranged especially involving the future ruler of a nation is planned in every detail by the bride and groom's parents. Sigismundus Augustus' (Sigismund Augustus, Zygmunt) first wedding was such an arranged affair. Still he could not have expected more since his father was Sigismundus I the King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania and his mother Bona Sforza the Italian born Queen. His paternal great grandfather was Wladyslaw II Jogaila, who with his grand uncle Vytautas the Great, led the combined Polish-Lithuanian Army that decisively defeated the Teutonic Knights at the famous Battle of Tannenberg in 1410. His grandfather had been Casimir IV Jagiellon who reigned as King of the Poland-Lithuanian Commonwealth from 1447 to 1492 and his mother had been Elizabeth of Austria. His father had succeeded to the throne in 1506 after his brothers Jan I Olbracht (1492-1501) and Alexander (1501-1506) died without male heirs. His mother Bona Sforza d'Aragona was the Princess of Bari and Princess of Rossano. She was born in Vigevano, Italy and raised in a life of luxury. On his maternal side, her grandfathers had been Sigismund the Holy Roman Emperor and Albert IV the Duke of Austria. Her father was Prince Gian Galeazzo of Sforza and her mother Isabella of Naples. An aunt, Bianca Maria Sforza, was married to Maximilian I the Holy Roman Emperor. His mother, who was raised in travel among all of the royal houses of Europe, was sophisticated and well educated. Queen Bona is credited with having brought Italian culture and cuisine to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Sigismundus' father had been a successful ruler and respected by all the royal heads of Europe. His parents married in 1518 after his father's first wife died unex-

pectedly. Sigismund was born on August 1, 1520 in the royal castle at Krakow, Poland. Since his birth, his mother was constantly involved in all things related to her son's succession to the throne. Although largely a formality, the throne of the Polish-Lithuanian State was not hereditary and complicated by the constant squabbling between Polish and Lithuanian nobles over who would be their next ruler. Frequently the Lithuanian nobles sought to control the situation through their selection and coronation of a Grand Duke of Lithuania, prior to the death of the reigning monarch, forcing the Poles in turn to elect their candidate king in order to hold the Commonwealth together.

Two years after his birth, Queen Bona had succeeded in obtaining the tentative recognition of the Lithuanian Lords for her son's succession and he was officially coroneted as Crown Prince on February 29, 1530 in Wawel Cathedral in Krakow, Poland. In 1543, these Lithuanian nobles suggested the twenty-three year old Crown Prince be deputized as the ruler of Lithuania and in the following year he was officially proclaimed the Grand Duke of Lithuania. He is said to have grown into a dashing young man. Well educated, cultured, and loved by his subjects. Sigismundus soon became known as a poet, humanist, and champion of religious tolerance. Although his father retained control of Lithuania's treasury and foreign affairs, Sigismundus moved to Vilnius and begin his reign over the country.

With his succession to the throne assured, Queen Bona quickly turned her attentions to finding her son a suitable consort. As the sole heir of the Jagiellonian dynasty it was crucial that Sigismundus produce a male heir to continue the link between the Polish and Lithuanian State. After an exhaustive search, Elizabeth, the seventeen year old Princess of the House of Habsburg, was selected to be his consort. She was the daughter of Ferdinand I, the Holy Roman Emperor and Anna of Bohemia and Hungary was Sigismundus' paternal cousin. She was selected for these reasons and because their marriage would not only lend prestige to the family, but a great political alliance. The arranged marriage between Sigismundus and Elizabeth took place on May 5, 1543 and the couple settled down in their loveless marriage. Sigismundus engrossed himself in court activities and took a special interest in the arts. The young Prince took a special interest in embellishing the Royal Castle. He purchased exquisite Flemish tapestries to decorate the palace walls and added a theater, choir, and art gallery. Sigismundus also constructed a zoo which contained lions, bears, and camels and his stable was said to have been second to none. Noblemen from across the commonwealth were soon traveling to Vilnius to take part in the festivities of his court.

During his loveless marriage, Sigismundus met and fell in love with Barbara Radziwill (Radvilas, Radvilaitė). Barbara was a young widow from one of the oldest noble families of Lithuania. Her parents were Jerzy Radziwill a powerful magnate and hetman of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Barbara Kola and her deceased spouse Stanislaus Goštautas the Palatine of Trakai. Chronicles have described her as having been slim and shapely with blonde hair and sparkling white teeth and being one of the most beautiful women in Europe. She reportedly had a fond interest in fashion and cosmetics using perfumes and face powder. Barbara was not only beautiful but intelligent. She spoke Lithuanian, White Russian, and Polish and could read and write in White Russian, Latin, and Polish. She was well versed in history and political affairs of the realm. Soon after they met during some court functions, Barbara became the constant companion of the Grand Duke.

As their love bloomed it was learned that Elizabeth was an epileptic and that illness could be passed to her children. The situation was soon rectified when Elizabeth fell from a horse and died of her injuries on June 15, 1545 barely two years after her marriage. She was buried with full honors in the Cathedral of Vilnius. In some circles there was talk that the Italian born Bona may have been involved in her death as her illness jeopardized the throne.

There was no question that Sigismundus, as the sole male heir of the Jagiellonian dynasty, would have to marry again. The situation escalated with the death of his father on July 26, 1548. As the 81 year old King was buried in Wavel Cathedral political pressure mounted in the Polish court for the young monarch to find a queen. Unknown to the court, Sigismundus had done the unthinkable and secretly married his beloved Barbara in Vilnius more than a year earlier. When Sigismundus' marriage to Barbara was revealed the Polish court, abetted by his mother, was strictly against the marriage as Barbara, being a mere Princess, was not a fit peer for the King. She was cast as being a woman of easy virtue and her reputation was drug through the mud. The situation was further compounded by the fact that Barbara had been raised a Calvinist and his mother and the royal Polish court devout Catholics. As a result, during the King's first session with Parliament (Sejm) in 1548, the deputies threatened to renounce their allegiance if he did not divorce his wife. Sigismundus remained resolute and advised the Polish court that he was united to his Queen through the holy sacraments of the Catholic Church and could not violate his marriage vows. With Sigismundus steadfast refusing to divorce his wife and accusing the



BONA SFORZA

Parliament during their second session in 1550 of attempting to diminish the legislative prerogatives of the crown their opposition to his marriage ceased. Although their hostility subsided, the Dowager Queen Bona avoided meeting her daughter-in-law and retired to Masovia.

After more than two years of bitterness and intrigues, the Poles finally yielded and Barbara was crowned Queen in Krakow Cathedral in 1550. Although the royal couple dreamed of returning to Lithuania in full regal splendor, that was not to be. Just five months after her coronation Queen

Barbara became stricken with an unknown malady. The distraught King did everything in his power to save his bride, but to no avail. Barbara succumbed to her illness on May 8, 1551 in the royal Polish Castle at Wavel. Although the Dowager Queen had remained uncompromising during Barbara's illness, she had relented just before her death. Bona expressed a desire to recognize her daughter-in-law. Legend holds that Sigismundus prevented their meeting fearing for Barbara's life. On her deathbed, Barbara asked that her body not be laid to rest in Poland where she had suffered so much. Honoring that request, Sigismundus escorted her body from Krakow to Vilnius while riding or walking the whole distance beside her bier. Barbara was interned in a crypt in Vilnius Cathedral. With her demise it is said that Sigismundus wore black for the rest of his life.



Zigimantas Augustas with his dying wife Barborą Radvilaitė
Painting by Józef Simmler

history

Rumors again arose that Queen Bona may have had a hand in Barbara's death and historians to this day have repeated that charge. If that were the case, her despicable act went unrewarded. Sigismundus' love for Barbara continued after her death. Although Sigismundus agreed to remarry in the interest of the state there was no personal happiness in his life. His third marriage to Catherine of Austria, the sister of his first wife, was again arranged by his mother. Catherine's first marriage to Francesco III Gonzaga Prince of Mantua ended after just four months with his unexpected death from unknown causes. Although Catherine succeeded in becoming pregnant she had a miscarriage. As a result, the King lost hope of having children by her, believing their marriage was cursed and vainly sought to have it annulled. The Polish Primate, on bended knees, is said to have attempted to persuade the King to try again, but he has lost all interest. With the King's failure to produce an heir, Queen Bona lost favor in the court and returned to her native Italy. The Dowager Queen of Poland died in Bari, Italy in 1557, reportedly having been poisoned by her private secretary acting on behalf of King Philip II of Spain who wished to avoid repaying sizable debts which he owed her. Queen Catherine also left Poland in 1566 and retired to Linz where she died in 1572. During their loveless marriage, Sigismundus sought comfort from Barbara Gizanka and Anna Zajaczkowska, two of the most beautiful women in Poland. The Polish Parliament, in desperation for an heir, did not object to his philandering and even expressed their willingness to legitimize any male child that might be born to such a liaison. However the King remained childless.

Sigismundus' love for Barbara had left a lifelong impression upon the monarch who remained mournful for the rest of his life. Sigismundus finally retired to Knyszyn Castle where he surrounded himself with astrologers and quacks and ordered all of the palace's walls to remain draped in black in her memory. From a Lithuanian prospective Sigismundus' greatest contribution was the granting of the Second Lithuanian Statute of 1566 and from the Polish prospective the Treaty of Lublin in 1569 which officially joined Poland and Lithuania together as one nation. Still, he is most remembered for his ill fated love affair with Barbara. Sigismund II August, the last Jagiellon king of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania, died there on July 7, 1572, thinking of his beloved Queen. Since that time the ill fated love story of Sigismundus and Barbara has inspired legends, paintings, literary works and film rivaling that of Romeo and Juliet.

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.

* Foot Note of names:

Battle of Tannenberg	- Lithuanian: Žalgirio mūšis (Battle of Žalgiris)
Royal titles, in Latin: "Sigismundus Augustus"	- Lithuanian: Žigimantas Augustas
Sigismundus Augustus (Sigismund Augustus, Zygmunt)	- Lithuanian: Žygimantas III Augustas I
Wladyslaw II Jogaila	- Lithuanian: Jogaila Algirdaitis
Casimir IV Jagiellon	- Lithuanian: Kazimieras Jogailaitis
Sigismund I the Old	- Lithuanian: Žygimantas II Senasis
Barbara Radziwill	- Lithuanian: Barbora Radvilaitė
Jerzy Radziwill	- Lithuanian: Jurgis Radvila
Jagiellons	- Lithuanian: Jogailaičiai
Jan Gostautas	- Lithuanian: Jonas Goštautas
Stanislaus Gostautas	

ANSWER TO TRIVIA QUESTION

Trivia Quiz
on page 9

ANSWER

Source: "The Lithuanian Language" (page 43-44)
by Alfred Senn

"In the seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth century the Lithuanians came in contact with the Swedes who may have some influence on the Lithuanian vocabulary. The word "gatvė" (street) is of foreign origin and its geographical distribution points toward the north as place of origin. It may be Swedish.

Modern Lithuanian is not completely free of foreign elements, but neither is any other language. Moreover, loanwords which are retained look so characteristically Lithuanian that it is difficult to detect their foreign origin. We thus witness an amazing vitality of this conservative language, a vitality enabling it to assimilate completely even recent acquisitions.

Lithuanian is most of all a youthful language, a fact which is usually overlooked because the scholars are overawed by a few striking archaic features."

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

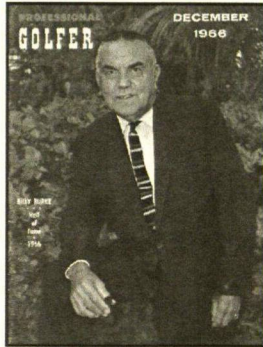
Freedom

He smoked hand-rolled cigarettes
well beyond his prime.
When I knew my grandfather,
he would smoke and rock,
and gaze at the steeple of a church,
until kids would come —
like Charlotte, Sonny, me —
and wiggle in his lap.
He was a speaker of four languages,
who never spoke too much,
and sometimes when asked,
he'd tell a tale in foreign brogue
of long-gone Tsarist days:
but not before he'd spit.
The escapades of youth
salted by selective shanghai:
to drive a pack mule train
in eastern lands to the Yalu.
The Russian bear took flight,
and he stopped thinking
about Yingkou, Port Arthur, Mukden
and trudged home to Kaunas:
a city steeped in nothingness,
his family in Siberia.
Revolution sparked the air,
but he turned a back
on the pain of warring more,
and split to gather golden things
that never came to him,
scratching for bread aside
the pasta and shamrock sets.
It was his sons who
found their place

Michael Lucas

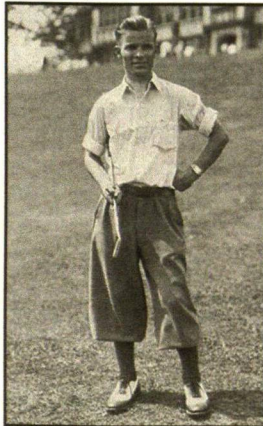
LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN GOLFERS WORTHY OF REMEMBRANCE

Sons of Lithuanian immigrants were the first to break through the ethnicity line of English heritage dominance in American golf.



Cover: Billy Burke is the latest golfer to be elected to Golf's Hall of Fame. Burke served for 28 years as club pro at the Country Club in Cleveland, OH. Burke gathered numerous titles during his tournament career and won the 1931 USGA Open after a 72-hole playoff. In 1972, he passed away in Florida.

*Photo: Cover of the December 1966 Golfer magazine.



U.S. Open Champion Johnny Goodman. A portrait of Nebraska native Johnny Goodman, the 1933 U.S. Open champion, the last amateur to capture the title.

*Photo is from <http://photos.usgamuseum.com/USOpenChampionJohnnyGoodman.aspx>

THE LITHUANIAN TIGER WOODS - My grandparents, after arriving from Lithuania, married on Jan. 27, 1902 in St. Joseph's Lithuanian Church in Waterbury, Connecticut. Never would they have imagined the careers that their 3 sons would follow - all 3 became professional golfers! In Naugatuck where they settled, the boys became fascinated with the Golf Course. The caddie master at the Golf Course, desperate for an able-bodied lad to fill a shortage of caddies, saw the boys and said to my uncle Billy, "Come with me." By that simple twist of fate, the 15 year old son of Lithuanian immigrants became a golfing legend, winner of the 1931 United States Open golf championship. He was my uncle and Godfather and the home that I grew up in was bought for his Lithuanian parents from his winnings. Like many names, Burkauskas was mistaken for Burkowski at immigration, and my uncles all went by the name Burke. My father was their fourth and youngest son who loved golfing, spoke Lithuanian, and went on to college - but unlike his 3 brothers, never became a golf pro.

Perhaps that was a blessing for our family which strengthened my Catholic faith and led me to the Priesthood! In tribute to my Lithuanian heritage I changed my name back to Burkauskas and am now the pastor of two Lithuanian parishes in Philadelphia, PA.

Rev. Petras Burkauskas

Johnny Goodman (Lithuanian name unknown) came out of the meatpacking district of Omaha, Nebraska to become the last amateur to win the US Open (1933). He won the US Amateur in 1937. His picture is on the cover of the June 6, 1938 edition of Time Magazine. It is a little known fact that on the evening prior to playing in a tournament he dined on "naminės dešrelės su kmyną padaže" (homemade sausage in caraway sauce). His life story is depicted in a recent book by Michael Blaine - The King of Swings: Johnny Goodman, the Last Amateur to beat the Pros at Their Own Game.

Michael Lucas

Michael Lucas is a third generation part-Lithuanian & PGA professional living in Charleston, SC. He was the first PGA professional from the US to conduct a golf clinic in Lithuania. Michael has been writing poetry for two years under the mentorship of Richard Garcia. Two poems have received Honorable Mention in Poetry Society of South Carolina contests, eight poems have been featured on the University of South Carolina

Poetry Initiative website. "Puck's Apologia" appears in the Kakalak Anthology of Carolina Poets 2008, two poems have been selected to appear in the 2008 South Carolina Chapbook Anthology and will soon be viewable on the USC Poetry Initiative website. His poem "Shoeless" Joe appears on the members page of the official Joe Jackson website:

www.blackbetsy.com.

Just One Degree of Separation

People are often astonished at how relationships interconnect, how people seemingly so distant can in fact usually find common friends well within the oft quoted six degrees of separation. This is the story of just the single step that was needed to bring a US multimillion dollar children's hospital to Kaunas.

It starts back in the US. Sanford Health is a midwest American health network that has operated for some 200 years. While it is a regional network it covers the largest area in the US with around 200 hospitals, clinics and other medical facilities. They are headquartered in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and employ over 10,000 people. Sanford also has affiliations with the world renowned Mayo Clinic.

T. Denny Sanford is a benefactor of the organisation and he felt a need to help improve medical services throughout the US and the rest of the world, so he donated US \$400 million to that end.

Sanford chose to concentrate on children's health because it is an area that has been underserved and much neglected over the years. Child health is not a money-making area, as children themselves do not have the political clout to demand better attention and service.

Sanford has been quite successful with the mini-hospital and mini-clinic concepts which they pioneered in the US. These are specialty hospitals which concentrate on particular health sectors such as pediatrics, which is the model they want to send further through America and around the world.

The aim of the grant was to establish sustainable institutions. It is one thing to build a facility, but a major emphasis on this initiative was sustainability, they look for local partners to help in providing land and other infrastructure, so more of their resources can be directed towards establishing an ongoing facility. They look to build and support it for the first seven years, and then it is expected to run itself.

The next step in this story is Henry Carlson Construction, a building company that is contracted to build many of the hospitals and facilities of Sanford. It turns out that Elenora, the wife of the owner Henry, is a second generation Lithuanian-American. Her mother was the eldest of 19 children and the only one from her family to migrate to the US before World War I. The family are good friends with the Sanfords as well as fellow business colleagues.

Then comes Michael Saba. Mike was brought into the



Dr. Mike Saba, Ginger Houghton and Bob Duda at Vilnius Airport awaiting members of the Carlson family who are helping to fund the clinic project

project in November 2007. He was working at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, which is the largest children's cancer facility in the US. He is now the Executive Director for Development of Sanford Children's Clinics. St. Jude Hospital is renowned for finding a cure for juvenile leukemia. The fatality rate for children with leukemia in the 1960s was 90% and now the cure rate is 92%.

Sanford Health is now working on juvenile diabetes, and they hope to find a cure. While it is not as fatal as leukemia, it is still a very serious illness that affects many children. We hope to have similar success with juvenile diabetes.

"I have worked in El Salvador where we found that only children who could afford to leave the country could hope to be cured of leukemia. Now in 15 years a 50% cure rate has been established," Mike said when we caught up with him at Vilnius Airport just as he was leaving Lithuania after a three day visit and inspection.

So in his new Sanford Health job Mike was looking for an intern, and as it happened Elenora and Henry's granddaughter, Anna Carlson, applied for the position. It turns out that Anna had leukemia when she was seven years old and was the first person treated at Sanford Hospital. It was a devastating time for the whole family, and after treatment and another setback of a stroke, she was eventually cured, and it is an understatement to say that this made a great impact on Anna's, as well as her family's life.

Anna came to work with Mike and helps them reach out to the whole world. A large part of her work is to find additional partners for the Sanford project. She is working very hard at the moment to get the US-based Lithuanian basketball players involved as well.

So three months ago at the opening of the new Carlson offices, Elenora and Henry got talking to Mike, who mentioned that they were looking for new countries where they could establish these children's clinics and hospitals, when the Carlson's mentioned their Lithuanian connections.

They did some research and found out about the Rugutė Foundation (which we featured in Lithuania Today issue 4 2008). Then Henry Carlson rang and said that he had read an article by Bob Duda (also well known in these pages) and his hospital connections in Lithuania seemed the perfect place for them to head with possible funding for one of the multimillion dollar children's hospital facilities that they want to establish outside of the US.

They contact Bob, and as Bob is never one to let opportunity slip by, before the Carlson's or Mike could say another word, he had arranged meetings and inspections in Lithuania, and within a few weeks they were in serious discussion with the authorities in Kaunas.

Over three days in Lithuania and many intensive visits, Lithuania made a great impression on Mike. Because this visit was so quickly arranged Elenora and Henry did not have the time to make the trip, but Mike hopes to bring them with him next time, so they can at last meet their many relatives that still live here, meet some of them for the first time.

Mike says they also looked in countries like Norway, Ireland and Germany because they were the largest ethnic communities in the Sanford region. There are 65 different nationalities in the area, so it is incredibly culturally diverse. The whole community is very involved in supporting this international initiative with money as well as volunteer physicians who are providing their services.

"Health care is pretty good in Lithuania, but as elsewhere, the health of children is not as good as it could be. Children can't advocate for themselves, and we see so often that hospitals that are built with 20 percent of their space allocation put aside for children, over the years that percentage falls to 15, then 10 then five.

"Children's health is just as important as any other area, but there is no profit there. And pediatricians are the lowest paid of physicians.

"I've been doing this job for 20 years and have seen many well-meaning projects that never get off the ground. But with the enthusiasm and contacts we have here I can't see it being a problem.

"Our goal is 10 international and 10 domestic American installations or hospitals over the next 10 years. The speed at which this is done depends on the local community, but from what I've seen at the moment, Lithuania and Ireland are the top candidates for the first international project.



Dr. Michael Saba, executive director of Sanford Children's Clinics development

"Even if we can't do as much as we'd like directly, there is still a great range of contacts and expertise that can help. It all comes down to interaction and connections which we have already established here," Mike said.

"But from what I've seen so far, Lithuania is well ahead. The help and enthusiasm I've encountered here from all levels of society from government through to individuals has been very impressive and I have little doubt that we will have something on the go very soon."

So you see - it helps that those damn Lithuanians are everywhere.

Reprinted with permission of Lithuania Today. My very special thanks to Editor Ray Vyšniauskas. He is not only the editor of an

excellent magazine but he never ran out of patience with my myriad of questions. Also thanks to Bob Duda for all his efforts on behalf of Lithuania's children.

Lithuania Today may be seen at www.LToday.lt

CHILD'S GATE TO LEARNING - *Continued from page 12 and the most heinous actions, just as he/she is capable of the most peaceful and the most gracious actions. What makes us choose one side over the other? How can we make sure that people choose the just and righteous side?*

"Child's Gate to Learning" maintains a website, www.childgate.org, which contains more information and a photo gallery. At the XIV Lithuanian Symposium on Arts and Sciences (held in Lemont, IL, November 26-30, 2008), group officers shared the organization's experience and continued a dialog with Lithuanian and Lithuanian-American professionals. The paper, entitled, "Five educational programs and collegial support of "Child's Gate to Learning" for its supported after school centers and temporary shelters in Lithuania", is a glimpse backwards at the path already taken. At the same time, the organization and its supporters move forward, at least for another 5-10 years, to new projects on behalf of Lithuania's children and youths, to help them enjoy a more peaceful childhood and to help them learn to look beyond hardships, to a more hopeful future...

Ramunė Kubilius

Ramunė Kubilius is an academic medical librarian by profession. She has served the Lithuanian-American Community's Executive Committee in the past, is currently active in several other Lithuanian organizations and she dances with the Lithuanian folk dance ensemble, "Grandis". She writes for the Lithuanian language press in North America and has contributed to "Bridges" over the years.

Child's Gate to Learning Update "Where are the centers? Vilnius (2), Kaunas, Marijampolė, Kazlų Rūda, Užpaliai, Rubonys, Žemaičių Kalvarija, and Naujoji Akmenė. Also, beginning in 2009, "Child's Gate to Learning" will support a tenth center in Druskininkai."

Calendar of Events for December 2008 – January/February, March 2009

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

JANUARY

January 22, 2009 - 7:30 pm
Vilnius String Quartet
 Performances of Schubert & Balakauskas string quartets as well as a Brahms piano quintet featuring pianist Dainius Vaicekonis.
 Latvian Hall, 11710 3rd Ave. NE, Seattle, WA. Reception will follow.
 For info: <http://www.vilniusquartet.com/>

January 25, 2009
Annual LAC Meeting
 Hartford, CT
 After the 9:00 am Mass
 Holy Trinity Parish Hall
 53 Capitol Ave., Hartford, CT
 Sponsor: Hartford Chapter of the LAC
 Info: Viktoras Kogelis, Chair
danuteg@juno.com

January 25, 2009 - 7 pm
Gintaras Abarius & "Baltic Ave. in concert 595 North"
 Event Venue & Lounge,
www.595north.com,
 next to Georgia Tech University
 Atlanta Chapter of the LAC

January 29, 2009 (Thursday) - 8:30 pm
Vilnius String Quartet
 Great Hall, Jonathan Edwards College
 Yale University
 68 High St., New Haven, CT 06520
 Sponsor: Jonathan Edwards College & LAC New Haven Chapter
 Contact: Sigita Rosen,
ssimkute@comcast.net

FEBRUARY

February 7, 2009 - 4:30 pm
Lithuanian Independence Day Celebration
 Latvian Hall
 11710 3rd Ave. NE, Seattle, WA
 Info: <http://seattle.lietuviu-bendruomene.org>

Seattle Chapter of the LAC

February 7, 2009 - 9:00 am - 6:00 pm
Third Annual Heritage Festival
 Van Andel Public Museum
 272 Pearl St. NW, Grand Rapids, MI.
 The Grand Rapids LAC will have a stand with exhibits & will also participate in the national dress "Fashion Show".
 Admission: Free. Info:
[Grazina Kamantas, Grazinak@aol.com](mailto:Grazina.Kamantas@comcast.net)

February 8, 2009 - 3:00 pm
Open Stage Jam Session. Bring your instruments, lyric sheets - let's have a great time! The PA system will be provided. Admission: \$10.00
 Location: Latvian Community Center
 10705 W Virginia Ave., Lakewood, CO
 Info: [contact.Romas.Zableckas](mailto:contact.Romas.Zableckas@comcast.net)

February 22, 2009
Lithuanian Independence Day Commemoration, Mass 10:00 am
 Annunciation Church
 Luncheon, Commemoration follow Mass
 Parish Lower Hall
 Mt. Carmel Lower Hall
 Havermeyer at North 8th., Brooklyn, NY

February 22, 2009
Lithuanian Independence Day Program
 following 9 am Mass, Holy Trinity Church Hall, 53 Capitol Av. Hartford, Ct.
 Featured speaker - Laurynas Misevicius
 Info: 860-657-9067.
 Hartford Chapter of the LAC

February 25, 2009 (Ash Wednesday)
Lenten Soup Take Out 2-6 pm
 (pick up only)
 To Order- 412-885-7322 by Feb.20
 Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God
 3603 McRoberts Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15234

MARCH

March 1, 2009 - 12-3 pm
Lithuanian Community Independence Day Celebration
 Potato Pancake light brunch, Speaker, Dancing. Wyandotte County Museum in Wyandotte County Park,
 126th & State Ave., Bonner Springs, KS
 Sponsor: Kansas City Chapter of LAC

March 1, 2009
Lithuanian Independence Day
 Philadelphia, PA
 Details to be announced at a later date
 Please refer to: www.phillylac.org
 Sponsor: Philadelphia Chapter of LAC

March 7, 2009 - 2:00 pm - 8 pm
Independence Celebration Mark the Millennium of Lithuania! There will be a new board election. Guest of the evening Jurate Miliauskaite & Sekmadienis.
 Location: Fraternal Order of Eagles Hall
 1151 S Galena St. (just west of Mississippi & Havana)
 Denver, CO 80247
 Colorado Chapter of LAC
 Info: [contact.Romas.Zableckas](mailto:contact.Romas.Zableckas@comcast.net)

March 7, 2009 - 5:00 pm
Lithuanian Independence Day
 Latvian Hall,
 5500 SW Dosch Rd., Portland, OR
 Speaker to be announced.
 Entertainment - Aitvaras Lithuanian Folk Dancers - Community Potluck. Please bring a main dish, dessert & drink.
 Sponsor: Portland Chapter of LAC

March 8, 2009 - 1 pm
Lithuanian Independence Day Celebration
 St. Elizabeth Seton Parish Hall
 9728 Palmeras Drive, Sun City, AZ
 Info: Mark Shoban mashoban@yahoo.com
 Sponsor: Arizona Chapter of LAC

March 8, 2009 - 3:00 pm
"Gratulationes Lithuaniae" A concert celebrating Lithuania's first appearance

in the annals of history one thousand years ago. The concert features pianists Sonata & Rokas Zubovas from Lithuania and Chicago's own "Dainava" Lithuanian Chorale directed by Darius Polikaitis. The Harris Theater for Music & Dance 205 E. Randolph Drive at the north end of Millennium Park in downtown Chicago.
 Sponsors: The "Dainava" Lithuanian Chorale & the Consulate General of the Republic of Lithuania (both in Chicago)
 Info: Harris Theater:
<http://www.harristheaterchicago.org/current>
 Dainava: info@dainava.us; www.dainava.us

March 21-28, 2009
Ski Trip
 Siaures Amerikos Lietuviu Fizinio Auklejiimo & Sporto Sajunga (SALFASS) aka Lithuanian American Athletic Union of North America & Amerikos Lietuviu Gydytoju Asociacija (ALGS) Heavenly Mountain Ski Resort in South Lake Tahoe, California. The Lithuanian World Ski Championships, organized by Pasaulio Lietuviu Kalnu Slidinejimo Federacija (PLKSF), are being held during that same week in conjunction with SALFASS & ALGS. General questions can be directed to Ed Mickus (edmickus1@aol.com)
 Jonas Prunskis (jvp@illinoispain.com)
 Dr. Vytautas Saulis (vsaulis@sbcglobal.net)
 For questions relating to the ski race competition, contact the Race Chairman Algis Juodikis @ 408-893-2650.

March 25, 2009 (Friday)
Lenten Soup Take Out 2-6 pm
 (pick up only)
 To Order- 412-885-7322 by March 16
 Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God
 3603 McRoberts Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15234



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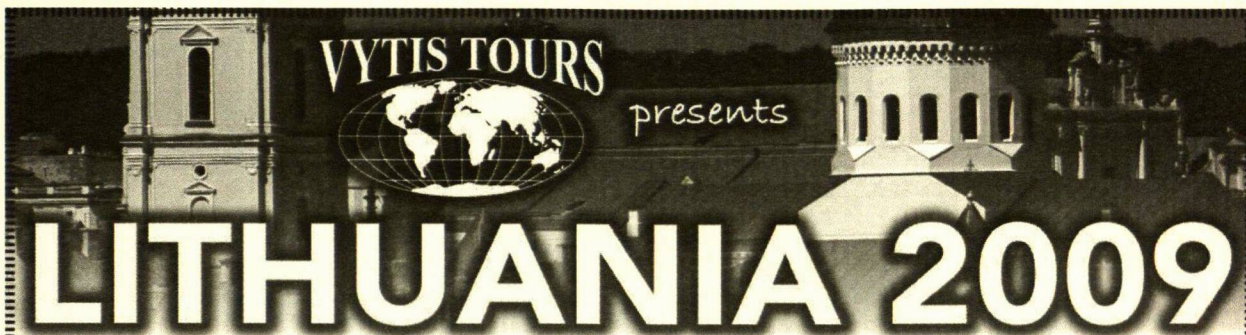
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Lithuania's 1000 Celebration and Festival Tour, June 28-July 9, 2009
For informacion please call Rita Pencyla 708-923-0280

CHICAGO REPRESENTATIVES

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Lithuanian-American Community



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January 1- New Year's Day, January 13- Defenders of Freedom Day

January 19 - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday (Observed)

February 14 - Valentine's Day, February 16 - Lithuanian Independence Day

February 16 - Presidents' Day (Observed)