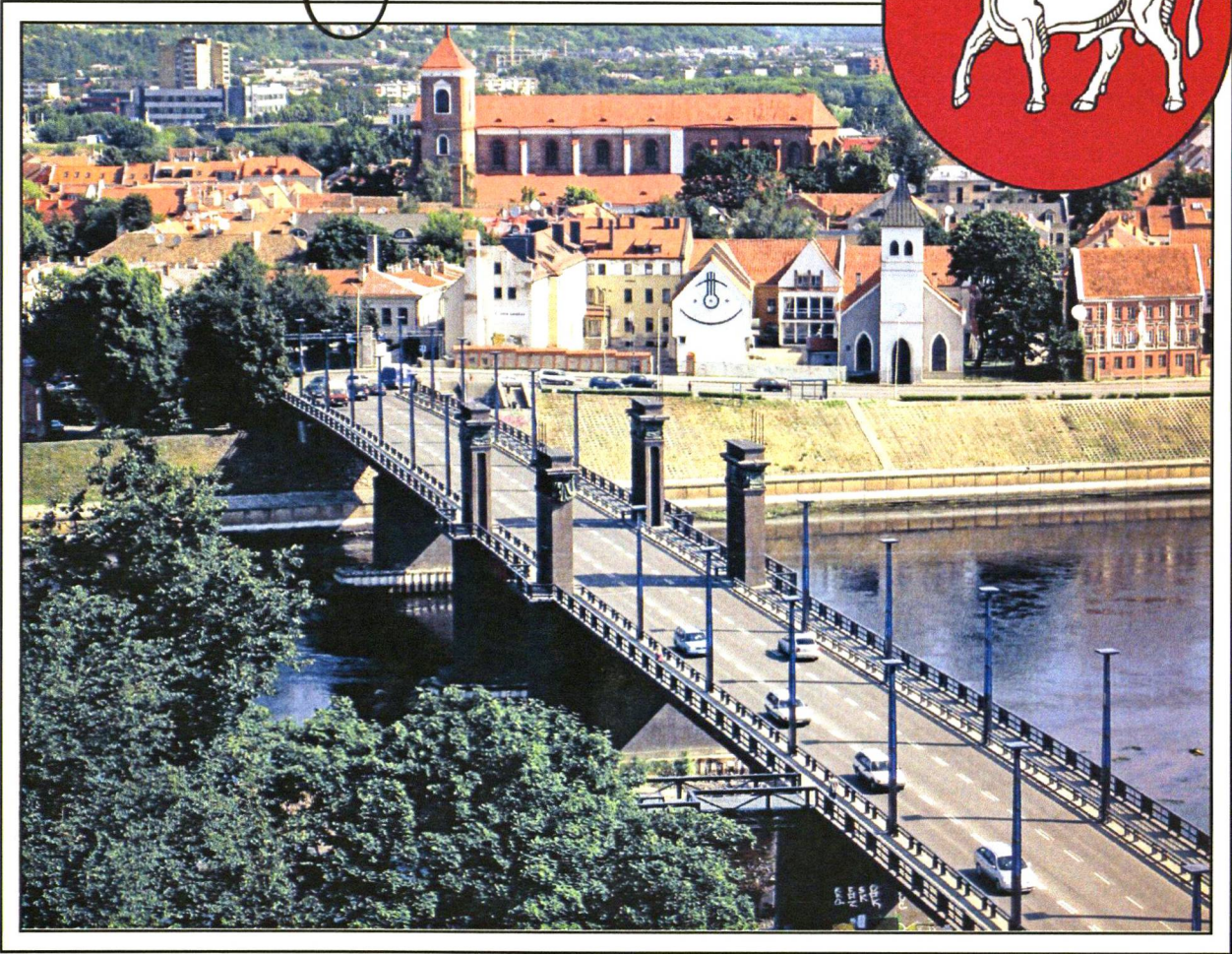
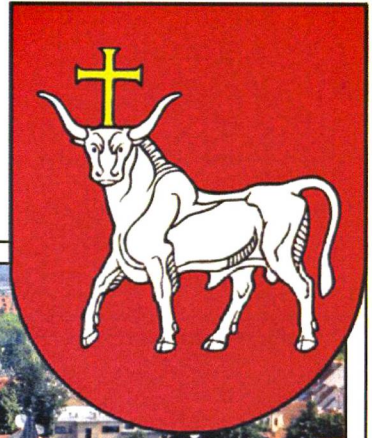


2009

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march 2009

LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

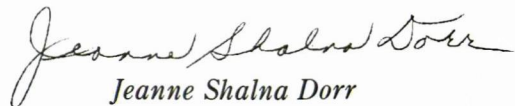
Letter from the Editor

For many of us it seems the winters are getting longer and longer so March 20 should bring a ray of hope with the arrival of spring. Perhaps that what was one of things on the minds of the Lithuanian people when the news rang out on March 11, 1990 that Lithuania would now be free and independent. It would be the rebirth of independence and a time of renewal and hope. As we all know, it was not an easy road with blockades, threats and fear. The road still isn't easy as the small country faces all the problems that are faced throughout the world, especially the world financial crisis. And yet so very much has been accomplished in less than twenty years.

As always, my sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed articles or information for this issue. Very special thanks to Joyce and Kestutis Lukas from Pennsylvania and George Akerley and his son, Christian who reside in New Jersey. Their photographs of Kaunas are just marvelous. Many of you took the time to let us know how much you enjoyed the "new look" of Bridges in the last issue. Most people commented that they especially enjoyed the photographs of Vilnius, our featured city last month. As promised, we will feature a different area of Lithuania each month. If you are unable to see these places in person, you can visit them through Bridges. It is our small way of congratulating Lithuania on its 1000th anniversary.

Thank you for sharing your homes with us this month .

Spring is God's way of saying, "One more time!" - Robert Orben


Jeanne Shalna Dorr

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

E-mail: Lithuanian USA@yahoo.com

BRIDGES Consultants

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

**THE INFORMATION CENTER FOR
HOMECOMING LITHUANIANS**

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Address all editorial correspondence to:

BRIDGES

Jeanne Dorr
4 Shrewsbury Yard
Riverton, NJ 08077-1038

E-Mail: Jeanneshalna@aol.com

For subscription & advertising
information, please contact:

LAC, Inc./BRIDGES,

Rimas Gedeika
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*Cover: *The photo of Kaunas, Lithuania taken by Christian Akerley. Christian is the 12 year old, son of Dr. Gintarė Gecys and George Akerley. He attends 7th grade at Vincas Krėvė Lithuanian School in Philadelphia, PA at which he continues to learn Lithuanian language and culture. The family took a two week tour on Lithuania in summer of 2008.*

March 11, 1990

Supreme Council (Reconstituent Seimas) 1990-1992

Elected on February 24, 1990

141 representatives were elected

Vytautas Landsbergis

Chairman of the Supreme Council (Reconstituent Seimas) and Head of the State (February 24, 1990 November 25, 1992)

Beginning with the reforms of Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union in the late 80s, the nucleus of the national reform movement Sajūdis was formed in Vilnius which, having spread all over Lithuania, later had a profound effect on the crucial decisions of the Supreme Council (Reconstituent Seimas) elected in February 1990.

In 1988, Sajūdis grew into a universal movement, with the citizens of Lithuania demanding that first economic and then political relations should be changed. The Constituent Assembly of Sajūdis was held on October 22-23, 1988. The prospective objective - the independence of the Lithuanian economy and, finally, its political independence, so that Lithuania should not be bound to other countries by any obligations restricting its sovereignty, was discussed in the lobby and even in official speeches of the participants of the Assembly. The Sajūdis Seimas was elected, and the historic name of the Lithuanian state power was brought back in this way. The Sajūdis Council was formed, and on November 24, 1988, Vytautas Landsbergis (a musicologist, a specialist on creative work of M. K. Čiurlionis, a member of the initiative group of Sajūdis) was elected the Chairman of the Council.

By setting consistent requirements to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and its representatives in Vilnius (the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party) - from the freedom of speech on TV to the declaration of the sovereignty - Sajūdis was nearing the elections to the Supreme Council of 1990.

As the elections to the Supreme Council of February 1990 approached, two political blocs took shape in Lithuania: Sajūdis, uniting the consistent supporters of independence, and the independent Lithuanian Communist Party (LCP). The essence of the Sajūdis program was based on the historical link of the re-established Lithuanian State with the former Republic of Lithuania, which existed from 1918 to 1940. The Supreme Council, elected in universal, free and democratic elections, was to formulize this continuity in appropriate legal, political and historical acts. The LCP proclaimed a popular but abstract electoral slogan: "A

Lithuania without sovereignty is a Lithuania without a future!"

The Supreme Council elections of February 24, 1990, ended in the resounding victory of Sajūdis candidates: it received 96 out of 141 deputy mandates. On March 11, after the powers of the Supreme Council have been confirmed, Vytautas Landsbergis was elected Chairman of the Supreme Council (91 votes "in favour"). Chairman Vytautas Landsbergis was also authorised by the Seimas to act as Head of the State. The main item on the agenda was the re-establishment of the Republic of Lithuania. The Sajūdis candidates set such a goal to themselves at the beginning of the election campaign on January 20 by issuing a statement "Concerning the Political Situation and the Independence of Lithuania."

Among the first laws enacted by the Supreme Council was the Law on the Name and National Emblem which officially promulgated the country's name as the Republic of Lithuania, and reintroduced the historic emblem depicting a mounted knight Vytis. At 10.44 p.m., March 11, 1990, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania adopted an Act embodying the expectations and hopes of the nation "On the Re-establishment of the Independence of the Republic of Lithuania" which solemnly proclaimed the end of the period of occupation by a foreign government and the beginning of a new era of statehood.

SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

ACT

On the Re-establishment of the State of Lithuania

The Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania, expressing the will of the nation, decrees and solemnly proclaims that the execution of the sovereign powers of the State of Lithuania, abolished by foreign forces in 1940, is re-established, and henceforth Lithuania again is an independent state.

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

The territory of Lithuania is whole and indivisible, and the constitution of no other state is valid on it.

The State of Lithuania stresses its adherence to universally recognised principles of international law,

recognizes the principle of inviolability of borders as formulated in the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe in Helsinki in 1975, and guarantees human, civil and ethnic minorities rights.

The Supreme Council of the Republic Lithuania, expressing its sovereign power, by this Act begins to realize the complete sovereignty of the State.

124 delegates vote in favor of the Act, 6 abstained and no votes were cast against the Act. The Act confirmed the continuous and unbroken link of the re-established Lithuanian State with the Act of Independence of February 16, 1918, and the Resolution of a democratic Lithuanian Government, passed by Constituent Assembly (Seimas) on May 15, 1920. With this Act the Council committed itself to carry out the functions of the highest authority, the Lithuanian Parliament, which expressed the will of the absolute majority of population. The Supreme Council terminated the validity of the Constitution of the USSR of October 7, 1977, and the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR of April 20, 1978, declaring the nominal validity of the Constitution of May 12, 1938, within the territory of Lithuania. The Supreme Council announced that the Constitution of 1938 was in force: this fact signified the continuity of the rights of sovereignty of the Lithuanian State. However, to really regulate the life of the state the principal Provisional Law was passed shortly and the validity of the said Constitution was terminated.

The leadership of the USSR reacted to the re-establishment of the Lithuanian State with extreme antagonism. The Congress of People's Deputies declared the Act of the re-establishment of the Lithuanian State "null and void", and President Gorbachov issued an ultimatum demanding that the sovereignty of the USSR be re-established on the territory of Lithuania and that the country abide by the provisions of the Soviet constitution. When Lithuania rejected the ungrounded and illegal demands of the foreign government, the USSR resorted to a policy of threats, blackmail and intimidation. Soviet military control over Lithuanian state borders was strengthened, foreign citizens' access to the country was limited, and the Soviet military units stationed in Lithuania behaved as they pleased.

Beginning with March 13, 1990, after the March 11th Act on the Re-establishment of an independent Lithuanian State was promulgated, the USSR started applying political and social sanctions against Lithuania. From April until June 1990, it imposed an economic blockade. Later, in order to break the will of the Lithuanian people, the government of the USSR began an open military aggression. Unarmed Lithuanian citi-

zens, encircling the strategically important objects, including the Parliament buildings, guarded them day and night expecting to avoid aggression. In front of the Parliament buildings barricades were set up bearing different slogans and graffiti reflecting the chief aim of the defenders - to defend the re-established statehood of Lithuania. On January 13, 1991, brutally using force against the unarmed population, Soviet troops stormed the state television and radio buildings in Vilnius: 14 people were killed and about 600 civilians were injured. A wave of indignation rolling throughout the world and the determination of the Lithuanians to defend the Parliament of Lithuania stopped the atrocities of the aggressors.

During the days of barricades the Parliament was called "the heart of Lithuania", from 1990 till 1992, it was a political centre of the Lithuanian State. New legislation, which should decide economic and cultural growth of the Republic of Lithuania, as well as Lithuania's international recognition in the international community of states was related to the work of the Parliament. In other words, the objectives of the Supreme Council were similar to those of the Constituent Assembly (Seimas) of 1920. For this reason the Supreme Council later was given the name of the Reconstituent Seimas.

On account of those aggressive actions, on March 24 the Supreme Council (Reconstituent Seimas) adopted the decision to transfer its powers, in case its rights were restricted, to Independent Envoy of the Republic of Lithuania in Washington and at the Holy See Stasys Lozoraitis. The United States of America were among the few countries which did not only refuse to recognise the occupation of the Republic of Lithuania and its annexation in 1940 but also allowed the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania to function. On March 22, 1990, the Supreme Council (Reconstituent Seimas) passed the Law on the Government and the first Government of the re-established Lithuanian State was formed (the 22nd Cabinet of Ministers in the history of the Republic of Lithuania). On March 24, 1990, Kazimira Danutė Prunskienė was appointed Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania and during her visits abroad was received by US President George H. W. Bush, Prime Minister of Great Britain Margaret Thatcher, President of France F. Mitterand, Chancellor of Germany Helmut Kohl.

Provocative actions of the Soviets lasted, in fact, till August 21, 1991, when the communist putsch in Moscow failed. After the failure of the putsch, Lithuania became fully independent of the USSR. The Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova was the first from

the USSR to recognise the independent Republic of Lithuania on May 30, 1990, and this was the sign to the authorities in Moscow that the Soviet Empire was breaking up. On February 11, 1991, the Independent Republic of Lithuania was recognised by Iceland. On September 17, 1991, Lithuania joined the United Nations and became a full member of a number of other international organisations. At the 86th Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union held on October 7, Lithuania became an IPU member. On January 24-26, 1992, the Secretariat of a new parliamentary organization - the Baltic Assembly - was established. On September 6, 1992, the USSR recognized the Independence of Lithuania and on September 8, 1992, a treaty was signed with Russia in Moscow in which it was agreed that Russian troops would be pulled out from the territory of Lithuania by August 31, 1993. During the said period the main concern of the Parliament was not only to restructure the planned economy that was inherited from the Soviet times by adopting new laws, taking into account complicated and threatening conditions but also to prepare the draft of the Constitution and submit it for the referendum of the Lithuanian citizens. Like members of the Constituent Assembly (Seimas) of 1922, members of the working

group of the Supreme Council (Reconstituent Seimas) put efforts to consolidate themselves at the close of the activities of the Supreme Council (Reconstituent Seimas) when Sąjūdis representatives were already divided into several factions. The working group coordinated different proposals, and drafted the final version of the Constitution. The Lithuanian Supreme Council (Reconstituent Seimas) completed its historic mission by ratifying on October 25, 1992, a new Constitution, approved in a popular referendum, and by adopting the main fundamental law of the Republic of Lithuania on November 6, 1992.

Before expiration of their term of office, deputies of the Supreme Council (Reconstituent Seimas) established the following Parliamentary Groups: Joint Sąjūdis, Polish, Liberal, Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party, Moderate, Reformed Nationalist, Sąjūdis Centre, Sąjūdis Union and National Progress Groups. During the tenure of the Supreme Council four governments were formed led by Kazimira Danutė Prunskienė, Albertas Simėnas, Gediminas Vagnorius and Aleksandras Algirdas Abišala. By the end of its term, the Supreme Council (Reconstituent Seimas) had also enacted the Law on Elections to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. *Source: Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania*



1458-1484
Saint Casimir
Patron Saint of
Lithuania
Feast Day, March 4.

The Prince who had suffered the hardships of a military campaign and was hardened by defeat survived in history not only as a thoughtful heir to the throne of Poland and Lithuania, but also as a soldier. In a 1629 engraving by an Italian artist the Saint holds a cross and lilies in his hands, but under a royal mantle he wears armour. It is this image that here is called 'The Prince's true image'.

**From the book "Saint Casimir" by Vytautas Ališauskas*

ANSWER TO TRIVIA QUESTION

Trivia Quiz
on page 11

"Source-TED (Trade and Environment Database)

The Baltic Sea, the largest body of brackish water (brackish water is slightly salty water) on Earth.

The Baltic Sea, when stable, is a mix of freshwater from the rivers of Europe, and saltwater from the North Sea which flows through the straits around Denmark.

The nine countries which line the Baltic coast are: Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Poland, Germany, and Denmark.

The catchment area includes Norway, Belarus, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, and the Slovak Republic.

Ed Shakalis

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

An Interview with Marijona Venšlauskaitė Boyle

Can you tell us about your background?

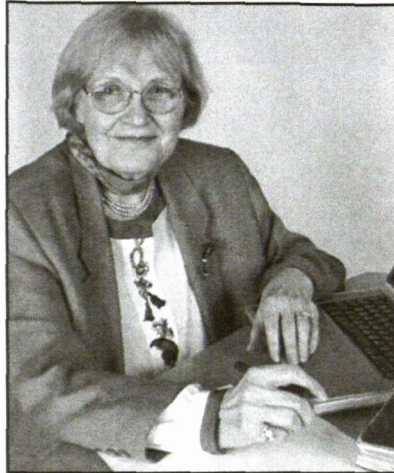
I was born in the anthracite region of Pennsylvania in Minersville at the height of the depression. My father had emigrated from Lithuania in 1914, as many others at that time, to escape the Czar's army. In short order my father became a miner, married a young lady from the fast growing Lithuanian community and started a family.

I attended St. Francis of Assisi School built in 1928 and staffed by the Sisters of St. Casimir, who were wonderful teachers. Social life revolved around the activities of the Lithuanian community, school and the parish. Lithuanian was my first language, many sermons in church as well many school activities were conducted in Lithuanian. Looking back, it seemed that my school was a castle on the hill, next to a beautiful convent and church. The parish was established in 1895, but the dedication of the church building was not until 1909. The building of the church succeeded literally by the sweat and tears of my grandfather's generation as well as the sacrifice of a number of their golden wedding rings as a donation to complete the church.

After finishing Pottsville Catholic High School, I completed undergraduate and graduate work at the Penn State University in the area of history and international studies. Later, I studied German at the University of Pennsylvania. I spent many years as a teacher and finished my career teaching German and as coordinator of foreign languages at Swarthmore, PA high school.

In 2005 your book "Search for Freedom" was published. It was about the life of Captain Jonas Pleškys, Why did you choose this topic and where did your research take you?

At the end of 1990, a letter from a first cousin in Lithuania reached me by a circuitous route. The cousin who wrote me was the daughter of one of my father's sisters. I was appalled to know that her family had spent a number of years in Siberia, as had many other Lithuanians. I



Marijona Venšlauskaitė Boyle, author of Search for Freedom.

was able to translate the letter myself but my Lithuanian was too rusty to answer in that language. It happened that my son David suggested that I might get some help from a Lithuanian colleague with whom he worked at American President Lines in Oakland, California. My son explained that Jonas Pleškys was "some" sailor who had jumped ship in Sweden. He seemed to have no friends and lived alone. Jonas helped me write a number of letters to cousins in Lithuania.

I was very grateful to have uncovered my Lithuanian roots, so invited Jonas to have Sunday dinner with our family in June of 1991. His sister Eugenija Pleškytė, a renowned actress from Lithuania, was visiting him at that time. I was fortunate to meet her as well and become her friend before Eugenija had to leave for Lithuania. She was very upset before she left because she had just learned that her brother had an inoperable brain tumor. My husband and I lived in Lafayette, CA, not too far from Jonas' apartment in Oakland. We promised his sister that we would keep our eye on him, invite him out, and especially have him visit us on all the holidays. Jonas was a special family friend for three years before his death, and I wrote his sister about the progress of his health.

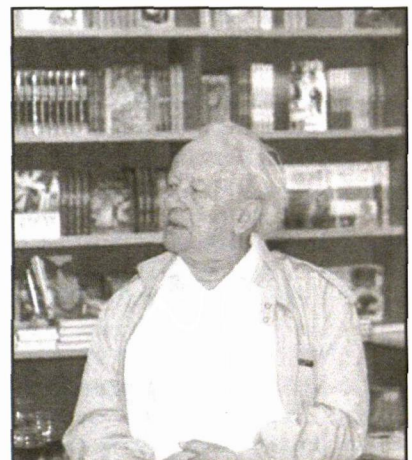
I would like to share with you an incident about about New Year's Day, 1991

which Jonas spent with us and our Estonian friends from Tallin. This was after the March 11, 1990 declaration of independence, so to speak -- yet before "Bloody Sunday" which I wrote about in the book. He was always still afraid that the Russian tanks would move in and take Lithuania over, and all his family with it. Of course, the tanks did move in as you know, and his medical records indicate that his doctor had to give him tranquilizers because of how upset he became at that time.

Another really quirky thing is that the defection was on the night of April 6-7, 1961 and the best estimate of his actual death is April 6-7, 1993, 32 years later.

I had no idea that Jonas was a Captain in the Soviet Navy when he defected to the west at the height of the Cold War in 1961. When I read his obituaries in the Oakland and San Francisco papers, in April, 1993, I was also surprised to learn that he was the prototype for Tom Clancy's hero in his best seller, "The Hunt for Red October." By this time, his sister Eugenija was a good friend of mine, and I invited her to come to the United States. She was depressed not only about her brother's death, but also about the demise of the state theaters and the Lithuanian film studio.

Eugenija shared a lot of family stories



Professor Jonas Kubilius, rector emeritus of Vilnius University, spoke about Search for Freedom



The author at the lighthouse in Klaipėda, Lithuania. It is the one from which Capt. Pleškys sailed, and the locals call the coast area Melnragė.

with me about her brother and I wrote an article for Lithuanian Heritage magazine based on this anecdotal material. Eventually, after many trips to Lithuania in the 1990's, I got hold of the KGB criminal case file from the Lithuanian Special Archives (some 800 pages in Russian). This file would lead me to many people, whom I would eventually interview. I found his first love, Paula and met their daughter Sondra in Latvia. I traveled to Guatemala to meet another daughter Jennifer. Jennifer's mother married Jonas in San Francisco. In Lithuania, I met most of the members of Jonas' family members, and friends who helped me with photographs and letters. In Kaunas, I found a Lithuanian eyewitness to the defection, who had been a young sailor when Jonas fooled his crew and took his ship to the Swedish island of Gotland. Eventually I traveled to Gotland to see the lighthouse where Jonas Pleškys first stood on free soil, and from which he was whisked away by our CIA to share information with us about the Soviet Navy and its new nuclear submarines. I worked about nine years until I completed the book, which was first published by Eglės publishing house in Klaipėda at the end of 2005. It was a great honor for me to be able to present

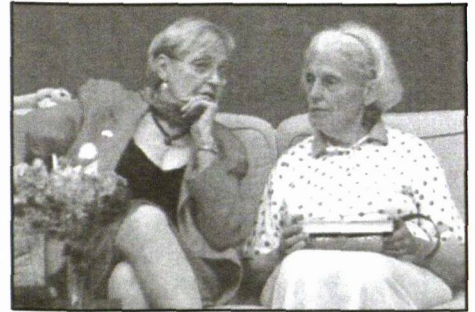
the Lithuanian translation, "Laisvės beieškant" at the impressive Martyno Mažvydo National Library in Vilnius in July, 2006.

I know that you are working on another book. Can you share some details with us about this book?

My new book will be a memoir entitled "Whistles and Bells: Growing up in Coal Country." This book will include information about the early Lithuanian immigrants to the anthracite region of Pennsylvania, as well as my family members who were part of that story. A good bit of the book will be devoted to the mining industry and the difficulties of the immigrant miners, including my male family members, all of whom died of Black lung or mine accident. It retrieves another time and place, which many may remember from their youth. It also concentrates on our Lithuanian community and St. Francis of Assisi church with its wonderful church bell which regulated our lives. The shrill breaker whistle from the mines was a sharp counterpoint to the melodious church bells in our town. I have included a number of family stories, some of which have been published as short pieces in Bridges and Litanus.

Please tell us about your research for this book. When will your book be released?

The research for this book took me to the anthracite mining communities of Pennsylvania this summer. I am searching for documents and records of my own family history as well as the statistics of the department of mines at that time. The book will include a number of archival family photographs, as well as recent photographs from the coal region, including one existing breaker from the old days, Lithuanian cemeteries, and historic sites like the old train station in my old home town of Minersville. I expect that the writing of the book will be finished by the coming spring. I am going to publish this book in the United States, so will be checking for publishers in Pennsylvania. The earliest I can imagine



Marijona and Emilija (Jonas Pleškys' sister) taken July 2006 at the book presentation in Klaipėda.

a completed published version would be late in 2009.

I know you are very active in promoting Lithuania, but what do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I enjoy attending the Oregon Symphony in Portland, as well as other cultural events like the theater and museums in our area. Looks like writing is almost my only hobby at this time of my life, because I also enjoy writing poetry.

Jeanne Dorr

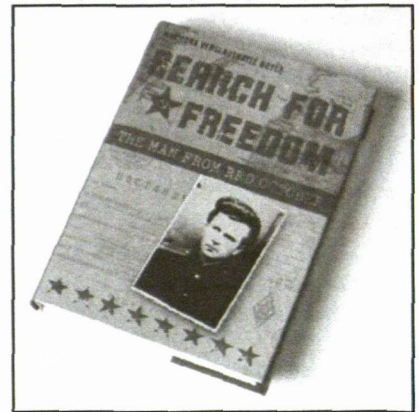
Jeanne Dorr is the Editor of Bridges and is a member of the Board of Directors of Lithuanian Orphan Care, a branch of the Human Services Council of the Lithuanian American Community, Inc

Editor's Note:

Search for Freedom may be purchased in Lithuanian or in English by contacting the author at bmarijona@comcast.net.

My deepest gratitude to Marijona for the many hours she spent on this interview and for sharing her many experiences with the Bridges readers. We wish her the very best with her new book.

**Photo of Jonas Pleškys was from a family album*



Search for Freedom book jacket. Cover designed by Matt Warner.

Sister Margarita Bareikaitė

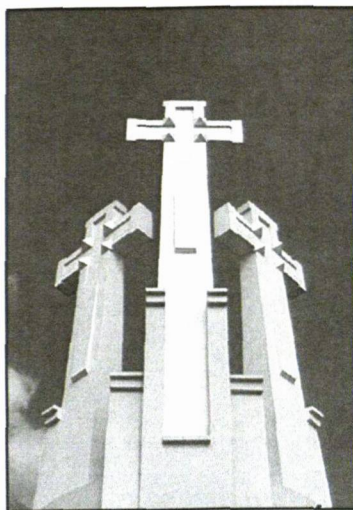
Return to the Lord

The Lord is calling all of us to come back to Him with confidence for He is gracious and merciful. The season of Lent this year falls on February 25th and we call it ASH WEDNESDAY. It reminds us that we need to concentrate on the fundamentals once in a while. We need to get back to basics. We have to take another look at our priorities, and perhaps rearrange them. The intention is to get us to reform our lives. It's not an easy thing to do, but when we all do it together it is easier. Lent is the season that calls us back to an honest appraisal of ourselves as followers of Jesus.

In our lives there are special days or events which we look forward to and want to celebrate. These times may be a birthday, a wedding, a First Communion, a graduation, etc. These are days that are so special that we usually take time to prepare for them.

In the history of salvation, the greatest event that ever happened was the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. By His resurrection we are freed from the darkness and death of sin. We are given new life, new hope and reason for rejoicing. This event is so important the Church has set aside six weeks to help us prepare to celebrate Easter fully and joyfully. It has given time for us in this life to think over our past and future, how well we have responded to God's love and of renewing our own faith and life in Him. Lent is a time for maturing and for growing deeper in the faith we profess.

The Holy Bible tells us there are three important things for good preparation: fasting, almsgiving and prayers. For Catholics it is important to remember to fast and abstain on ASH WEDNESDAY and GOOD FRIDAY. Fasting does not have to be limited to food. The concept of fasting includes the discipline of giving up some things. It can be a sign of our sorrow and repentance. We remember that sin is the reason that Jesus died and how much He loves us and we are sorry that we so often turn from Him. Almsgiving is a specific form of charity in which we help others who are in need. Lent is not just a negative time of giving up things. It is a time for becoming involved and doing something positive. It is a time



"Triju Kryžių Kalnas"
The Hill of Three Crosses
Vilnius, Lithuania

for getting involved in our Lithuanian parishes, schools, visiting sick or lonely elderly people, helping them to write letters and expressing that love in visible ways to others.

Prayer and reading the Holy Bible every day is also an essential way to prepare for the coming of Easter. The Scriptures remind us of the sin of Adam and Eve, the promise that God made to Abraham to be the father of a great nation, the covenant God made with his people on Mount Sinai and the way God fulfilled His covenant through Jesus. Through prayers and the participation in the Sacraments our relationship with God grows and deepens.

God's desire is to become closer to everyone.

Sister Margarita Bareikaitė

Sister Margarita Bareikaitė belongs to the order of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a Lithuanian order in Putnam, CT. Sister Margarita is the Chair of the Religious Affairs Council of the Lithuanian American Community and is a regular contributor to Bridges.

*Photo is from the Internet

LENTEN RETREATS IN PUTNAM, CONNECTICUT

At Immaculate Conception Convent and
Spiritual Renewal Center

March 28, 2009 - Day of Spiritual Renewal
(English) directed by Rev. Arvydas Žygas
9:30 am to 4:00 pm

April 3-5, 2009

Weekend Retreat/Savaitgalio rekolekcijos
(Lithuanian) directed by Rev. Arvydas Žygas
Friday 6:30 pm – Sunday 1:00 pm

REGISTRATION

at least one week before the retreat:

Immaculate Conception Convent

600 Liberty Highway
PUTNAM, CT 06260-2503

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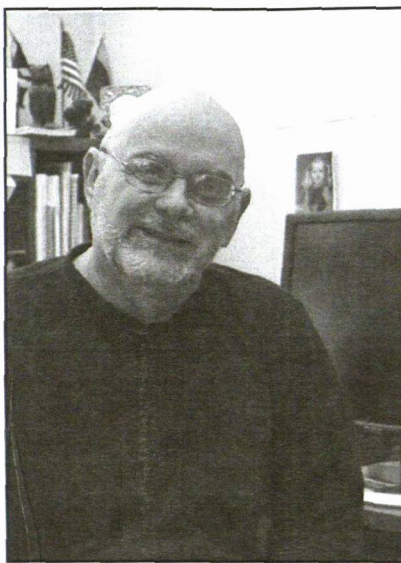
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THE TEN MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS IN LITHUANIAN HISTORY?

1009-2009

Historian's Note: When choosing the ten most important events of the last thousand years in Lithuanian history, the obvious problem concerns the criteria. Any list will necessarily be subjective and will certainly evoke criticism, perhaps, even consternation from some people, whether they be the most erudite scholars or non-specialist readers. This might be interesting, however, and even a little fun: what has been missed and who has "better" choices? My own criteria: what events have most impacted the Lithuanian people during the last millennium? I can only hope that more than three decades of a professional career in history will lend some weight to these choices, although as a historian of the modern period I probably have less appreciation for the medieval past.

Several caveats are in order. First, this is not simply a "feel good" list of great achievements, but rather events of significance, some of which were painful tragedies of enormous scope. Second, not all historical happenings are singular, that is, battles, uprisings, proclamations; a number occur as a more or less lengthy process, but are, nonetheless, easily identifiable as unique events over time. I have not chosen the 1009 mention of Lithuania in the Quedlinburg Chronicle: most Lithuanian-speaking tribes of the time probably had no clue that their region had a published name or were aware that they constituted a single people. Neither do I think that the coronation of Mindaugas ranks among the top ten – the Christianization of the state was abandoned and the July date taken today as the Celebration of the State is, at best, highly speculative. The



Saulius Sužiedėlis Professor Emeritus of History, Millersville University of PA; Director, Millersville University Annual Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide

celebrated battle of 1410 did not expel Germanism from the Baltic nor did it affect the Grand Duchy's historic decision to choose Catholicism over Orthodoxy for ethnic Lithuanians, that is, Western over Eastern Christianity. (Had the decision been reversed would we not be writing our language in Cyrillic?) A list:

1. **1386-1387-1569:** Jogaila's dynastic alliance with Cracow and the decision to accept the Latin (Western) form of Christianity; the failure of Vytautas to obtain a royal crown (all this culminating in the Union of Lublin and the historic cultural relationship with Poland).
2. **The First Lithuanian Book** by Pastor Martynas Mažvydas in 1547 which also signified the acceptance of Lutheranism by the people of East Prussia.
3. **The Muscovite sack of Vilnius**

during the 1654-1667 war, the Swedish invasions, and the failed attempt to solidify a dynastic union with Sweden (Union of Kėdainiai, 1655).

4. **The Great Northern War** (1700-1721) and the accompanying plague of 1708-1711 (a decisive demographic disaster for the Lithuanian-speaking people, particularly in East Prussia). These events spelled the eventual end of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1772-1795) and the incorporation of most Lithuanian-speakers into the Tsarist Russian empire.

5. **The birth of Bishop Motiejus Valančius** (1801) without whose ground-breaking work none of the following would be imaginable: secular Lithuanian literature, a Lithuanian national movement, the growth of national consciousness among the peasantry.

6. **The Great Emigration** before 1914 as nearly a third of Lithuanians left for the New World and other destinations, creating a diaspora which would later play a critical supporting role in Lithuania's struggle for independence.

7. **February 16, 1918, Vilnius:** no comment needed.

8. **1938-1940:** The period of the three ultimatums and the loss of independence by the First Republic which initiated the most disastrous demographic consequences for the Lithuanian people since the Great Northern War, including the death and deportation of hundreds of thousands of innocents.

9. **Holocaust (1941-1944):** The destruction of Lithuania's Jews, the most important minority community which had been an important economic cultural presence for 700 years and

the memory of which still reverberates around the world.

10. 1989-1991: Little comment needed: the liberation of the Lithuanian nation from a half-century of foreign occupation which created the conditions for the country's reintegration into the European (EU) world as well as its new-found place within the trans-Atlantic security structure (NATO), assuring the framework for the people to decide their own future.

Saulius Sužiedėlis

Saulius Sužiedėlis is Professor Emeritus of History, Millersville University of PA; Director, Millersville University Annual Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide.

His most notable publications:

The Sword and the Cross: A History of the Church in Lithuania (1988)

Historical Dictionary of Lithuania. (1997) Selected as an Outstanding Academic Book of 1998 by Choice magazine.

With Christoph Dieckmann. *The Persecution and Mass Murder of Lithuanian Jews during Summer and Fall of 1941* (2006).

Author of numerous articles and studies in both Lithuanian and English.

Activist with Ateitis; president of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies (2002-2004); editor of the Journal of Baltic Studies, 1994-1998

Member of the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania; Member, Editorial Boards: *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*; *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis* (Lithuanian History Annual) since December 2000; *Genocidas ir rezistencija*; delivered numerous public lectures on history in Lithuania since 1991.

In his leisure Professor Sužiedėlis enjoys aviation as a private pilot.



Dear Mrs. Dorr,

Some off-the-cuff thoughts on gen. Anders' Lithuanian heritage. First, it should be of no surprise to anyone,

since most (and I do mean it literally) prominent Poles have a connection to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. My father remembered Anders very well, since when he was a teenager in St. Petersburg, Russia, Anders was a frequent visitor in their home. He would come to see my grandfather's first cousin, Julia Grudzinskaitė, who was very beautiful and attracted a lot of male attention. It was always my understanding that his family had Lithuanian or Latvian roots; the latter probably because he was Lutheran. However, he was not known in those days as Andriejauskas (Andrzejewski), but Anders. (Swedish: Anders - Polish: Andrzej). Checking quickly the directory of "Poles" in St. Petersburg in 1916, there is a Janina Anders and the listing of members of St. Catherine's (Catholic) Church in St. Petersburg shows a Elizabeth Anders, who was his mother (she had a German maiden name). So the claim that he later changed his name from Andriejauskas to Anders is most likely false. However, it is possible that members of his family were called Andrzejewski (belonging to Andrzej or Anders). In college I read Anders' memoirs (in English), which I remember as a very worthwhile book.

By the way, Julia's brother, Antanas Grudzinskas, was in the Polish 1st Division which liberated Holland and was the commander, who took Wilhelmshaven, NW Germany. He was decorated by the Dutch government, but was later killed in London. The suspicion was that it was the deed of the Polish KGB.

Regards,
Tadas Stomma

Editor's Note: As always, thank you Mr. Stomma for sharing your knowledge with us. I appreciate the time and effort involved to share these personal memories with the readers.

TRIVIA QUESTION

(No.27)

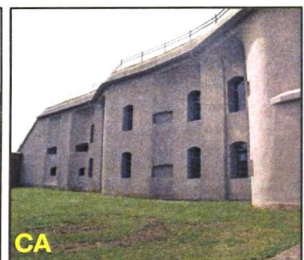
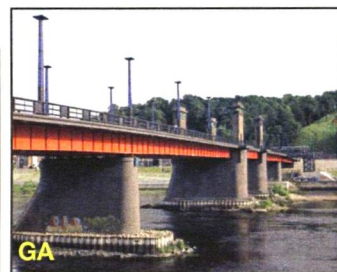
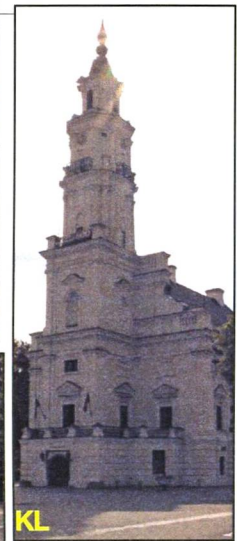
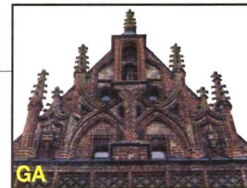
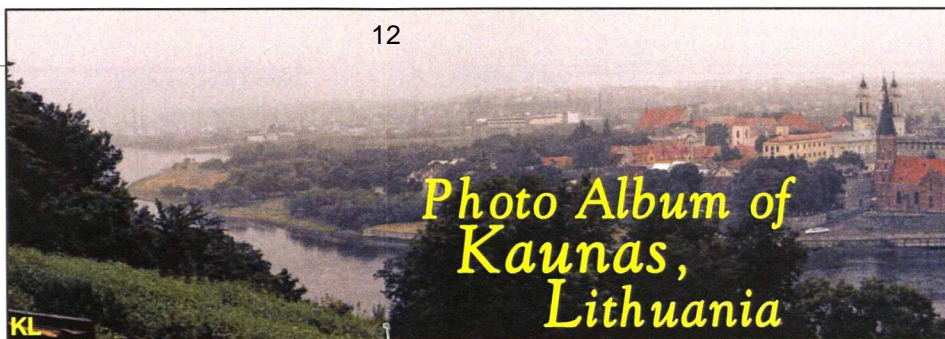
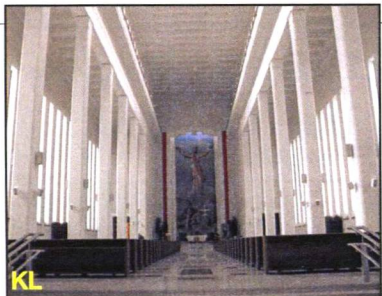
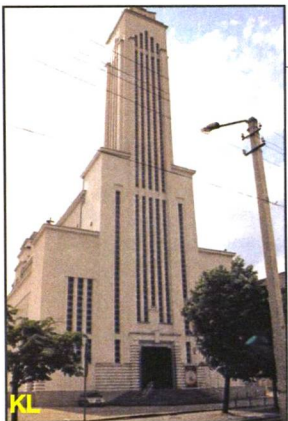
If you vacationed in Palanga, you probably swam in the Baltic Sea.
What kind of water is in the Baltic Sea?

(a) FRESH (b) BRACKISH (c) SALT

Answer to Trivia

on page 6

Photo Album of Kaunas, Lithuania



Photos by:
*CA-Christian Akerley *GA-George Akerley
*JL-Joyce Lukas *KL-Kestutis Lukas



News and Views

Plunge to be Lithuanian Capital of Culture in 2009

Plunge has taken over the title of the Lithuanian Capital of Culture from Zarasai. This Samogitian town defeated 16 Lithuanian cities and towns in the national competition "Lithuanian Capital of Culture 2009".

The evaluation commission for the competition gave 91.82 points out of maximum 100 points for the project "Plungės Kultūrinio Turizmo Maršrutai - Nuo Savitumo Iki Gobalumo" (Cultural Tourism Routes of Plungė: From Individuality to Global World). The second place was captured by Anyksciai.

First Lithuanians settle down in Silicon Valley

Vilnius - App store provider GetJar created and managed by Lithuanians has opened a new Silicon Valley office in the U.S.A. GetJar has become the first Lithuanian company to establish a bureau in world "cradle" of innovation and IT in California.

The administration and sales bureau in Silicon Valley is expected to speed up the world expansion of GetJar, which was highly successful in 2008 - last year consumers downloaded mobile phone applications from this portal 170 million times, an increase of 200 percent compared to the previous year.

"Having established our central bureau in Silicon Valley, we hope to develop business quicker, because our strategic business partners such as Google, Sun, Microsoft and Adobe are settled here and Nokia is also establishing a mobile services branch.

GetJar also has bureaus in Lithuania and Great Britain.

Parents give 7 minutes of attention to their children on average in Lithuania

Vilnius - In Lithuania, parents give their children 7 minutes of attention per day and the youngest residents of our country feel the most unhappy in Europe, a research conducted by UNICEF reveals.

According to Social Security and Labor Minister Rimantas Jonas Dagys, Lithuania was pre-last (28th place) at the conference "Indicators of Child's Welfare" held in Florence in Italy. According to Dagys, such results of the Lithuanian children's sur-

vey only confirm the necessity to implement purposeful family policy and to strengthen the family institute in the country.

"No where else, only growing in a family a child can feel safe," Dagys said.

The minister believes that once the Social and Labor Ministry (SADM) announces the results of the aforementioned survey, the number of skeptics claiming that the family policy is not needed in the country will decrease.

SADM will present thorough results of the research conducted by UNICEF to the public on Friday.

We will not strive to borrow from IMF - Kubilius

Vilnius

We manage to control the financial situation in the country and if needed we will make additional decisions and will not strive to borrow finances from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius said at the Government hour in the Seimas.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister Algirdas Semeta delivered a brief lecture to MPs on the cases when a country needs to borrow finances from the IMF. The minister highlighted that IMF is granting loans to countries to solve problems in solvency.

For example, the loan granted to Latvia is being used to restore the solvency of Parex bank and to balance the state budget and finances. "A loan from the IMF cannot be used for the revival of business," Semeta underlined.

According to him, Lithuania has a business revival plan and "our opinion regarding it matches that of the IMF", therefore we do not need to borrow finances from the IMF.

Kubilius explained that the Irish and Polish governments rush to deny rumors about borrowing from the IMF once they appear. The IMF loan is granted provided that "a country confesses that it is in a financial hole."

The prime minister assured that "we can normally solve our problems," and those decisions that were made before Christmas helped to retrieve trust.

However, "the risk of the financial system in our country is evaluated worse on the international markets compared to that of Germany and France." "If we manage to prove that our risk is small, interest rates will become smaller too," Kubilius assured.

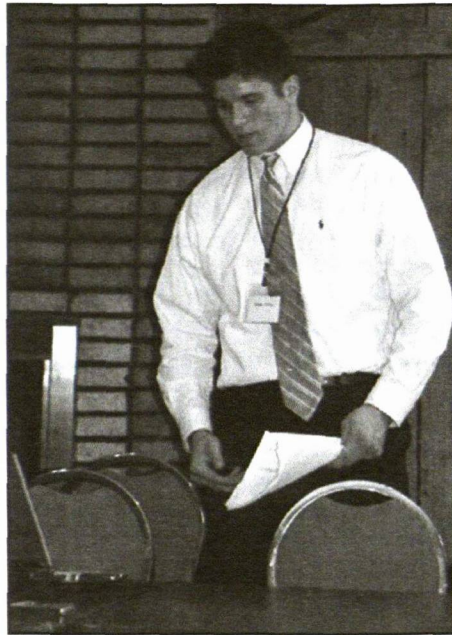
Information Center for Homecoming Lithuanians

Paulius Riškus

PURSUING A DREAM

During my life, I had always considered becoming a doctor and had been interested in the medical field. Having doubts about the long and hard road that the medical field requires, I was hoping for an experience that would help me decide my future. My time working in Lithuania definitely presented this opportunity to me, and resulted in giving me a passion in pursuing the medical field. Along with this, I gained an understanding of the medical system in Lithuania, learning about the positives and negatives from the patients, doctors, and nurses. Most importantly, I made an impact on the lives of the people I worked with, giving them companionship and offering help with their physical problems. My experience in Lithuania made me realize that the current medical situation in the country has potential, but could use assistance from students and professionals from the United States, who have skills in medicine and in dealing with patients. There are many individuals like this in the states who have pride in being Lithuanian and a desire to help others. An internship program would result in Lithuanian professionals wanting to work in Lithuania. Their efforts would improve the medical system while changing the lives of others who need their help.

Last year, I was lucky enough to get to know Birutė Bublienė, a Lithuanian American who lives in Detroit. We spent some time together in Lithuania that summer, and she asked me if I would be interested in volunteering to work in Lithuania the following year. I told her of my interest in the medical field and she said that I would have the opportunity of working in a hospital and in other areas related to the Lithuanian health program. She explained that she really believes that Lithuanian Americans can make a difference in the health care system of Lithuania, and that forming an internship program would be the best way to do this. During the summer of 2008, I was fortunate to be part of a pilot program. Birutė Bublienė introduced me to the many connections that she had in Santariškės Hospital, and I was able to work there, having a truly rare experience that many would love to have. I am very grateful for all that she has done for me,



Paulius Riškus making a presentation at the 2008 Science and Arts Symposium.

Photo by Rimantas Gedeika

and truly believe in the I Internship Program.

I worked in the Oncology Department in Santariškės Hospital in Vilnius. This department does major surgeries dealing with the removal of various cancers, in the areas of gynecology, urology, neck and spine, breast, lung, and others. I had the unique opportunity of witnessing many of these operations, working personally with patients in the hospital, and questioning the doctors and nurses about their work and opinions. Through these experiences I learned a vast amount of information about medicine in general, and about its current status in Lithuania.

The operations I observed really interested me, and it seemed to me

that these procedures are comparable to operations in the United States. While I had never seen an operation in person before this trip, I had seen some on television and had seen pictures from the hospital where my mother works. The operating room seemed comparable to the ones in the United States. It was very clean, and the nurses and doctors were very conscious of keeping everything sterile. They taught me the proper way to wash my hands, and also carefully explained to me what I could and could not touch. They were kind enough to explain to me the details of the operations, telling me about the specific procedures that they were performing. They were happy to answer any questions that I had about something I did not understand. During my time in the operating room, I learned information about anatomy, different cancer surgeries, terminology, the medical field, and many other related things. Perhaps the biggest positive about the hospital was the attitude of the doctors and nurses. Grossly underpaid, the hard working doctors and nurses had reason to complain or be disappointed with their situation. While many of them had disagreements about pay or a certain element of the medical system,

this did not stop them from working to the best of their ability. The treatment of their patients was outstanding. They went out of their way to help them, taking time to answer any questions they had. Most doctors and nurses even spoke several languages, including Russian, English,

and Polish and used them to communicate with patients who had trouble speaking Lithuanian. I talked to many patients the doctors and nurses went out of their way to help. Their enthusiasm and passion for their jobs inspired me every day I came to the hospital.

While the patient treatment and general attitude of the hospital was above average, there were still many improvements the hospital itself and the medical system in Lithuania must make. The hospital has many minor things that could use improvement, one of these being patient privacy. For example, most rooms in the hospital had four patients and there was no wall or curtain separating them. Curtains could easily be put in, and this would offer more privacy. Patients could also be offered a variety of different meals and TVs or radios in their rooms. The structure of the hospital could also use improvement. While the operating rooms were nice, the rest of the hospital's walls, floors, and rooms could be renovated. The doctors and nurses complained about old or dull tools that should be replaced. All of these problems are minor, and can be fixed with money, money that the hospital does not have. Apparently, Lithuania does not put enough money into medicine and this is a key flaw in the country's medical system.

From my experiences it seems that one of the biggest issues in Lithuania's medical system is that its nurses and doctors are underpaid. When I asked about their salaries, I was shocked to hear that the majority of the doctors made close to \$15,000 and nurses even less. For the amount of time spent going to school, and the high level of skills that these medical professionals offer their patients, their salaries are unbelievably low. The average wage in Lithuania is lower than many other countries, in comparison to other occupations in Lithuania. Many of the doctors and nurses I talked to live in apartments, drive modest cars, and some even work second jobs. When I asked if they wanted their children to follow in their footsteps, they all replied that they did not. They love what they do, but admit that going through eleven years of school and then earning such a low salary is a hard road to take.

My question, if the doctors' children won't become doctors, who will? I fear that if the medical system doesn't change there will be a shortage of doctors and nurses in the future. While today's doctors are passionate about their jobs and want to help people, they are becoming frustrated with their financial situation. They have reason to be frustrated, and something needs to be changed. The health and well-being of the people of Lithuania should be the main priority of the country. How can the country advance in medicine, or even continue at the

pace it is going, if there will be a shortage of doctors and nurses in the future?

I feel privileged to have been exposed to such a vast amount of experience at the hospital. The amount of information I gained about anatomy, patients, how a hospital works, and other related areas will be extremely beneficial to me in my future studies. The advice that I received from these skilled medical professionals has furthered my decision to pursue and achieve my goal --- that of becoming a doctor

I observed many things during that summer. In my opinion the one thing that stands out the most is that there are areas in the Lithuanian medical system that need to be improved. There are many less privileged people who need medically skilled individuals to help them, there is a shortage of Lithuanians in the health care profession, and a great risk of an even bigger shortage in the future.

I felt that during my month in Lithuania, I accomplished many positive things, not only from the knowledge I gained, or the relationships I made, but by helping others. I dealt with many different patients and did my best to give my assistance, and to render companionship to them. One of the goals of my trip was to help or change an individual's life for the better, and I believe I was fortunate enough to accomplish my goal.

In addition to working in the hospital I also worked at a nursing home located in Vilnius. These institutions primarily focus on the elderly needing assistance. In addition, it is also a rehabilitation home. Here I met Vladas, a 55 year old man paralyzed from his shoulders down.

I was introduced to Vladas by a priest who volunteered at the nursing home. The priest told me that Vladas had been learning English the last few years, and would be thrilled to have someone to practice the language with him. I was happy to help. While practicing English was a priority, we spent much time with each other, becoming good friends and enjoying each other's company.

One day, when I was telling him about my aspirations of becoming a doctor, the topic of ethical stem cell research was brought up. Vladas said that when I do become a doctor, I should do research on stem cells so that I could help him with his condition. Immediately, a light bulb went off in my head, as I remembered a specific conversation I had with a couple during the Lithuanian Dance Festival in Los Angeles. Earlier in June, I had participated in this festival and was fortunate enough to meet Mr. and Mrs. Budreika,

Lithuanian Americans in the medical profession. Mr. Budreika is a doctor who does ethical stem cell research along with other colleagues, found a new product that helps use stem cells to repair damaged organs of the body. His wife helps him with his work, keeping in contact with his patients, and helping him with this new product. This product has shown great results for individuals with problems.

Vladas and I sat down together one day and wrote a long, detailed email in Lithuanian and English to Mr. and Mrs. Budreika, explaining his condition and expressing interest in the research that they were doing. Vladas got an immediate answer from Mrs. Budreika, and they would continue to keep in touch. Mr. and Mrs. Budreika have spent a great deal of time during the last couple of months, informing Vladas about their new product and how it could possibly help him. While this product is not yet available in Lithuania, Mrs. Budreika helped Vladas order it online. He has been using it for the past month, and its results have been great. His bowel movements have improved, he has experienced more movement in his fingers and in other areas of his body, has been sleeping better, and overall is in a better mood. This new drug

has done great things for him mentally and physically, and, most of all, has given him new hope.

Vladas's situation is a perfect example of Lithuanian Americans using their connections, knowledge, and inspiration to do what they can to help a less fortunate person. I worked in Lithuania alone this summer, and was proud of the impact I made on those who could use my help. Imagine the impact that a large group of individuals, all eager to help, could have on the medical stage in Lithuania. A future internship program would result in many more cases similar to Vladas's, where Lithuanian Americans with a background in medicine and a will to help others could change the lives of those who need their help.

One person CAN make a difference

Paulius Riškus

Editor's Note: As part of Paulius' presentation during the Science and Arts Symposium in Chicago in 2008--a computer video/telephone hook up was arranged to speak directly to Vladas. It was quite an emotional moment hearing/seeing Vladas conversing with Paulius over the air waves. One could feel the great bond of love that has developed between Vladas and Paulius.

THE XIV WORLD LITHUANIAN SCIENCE AND ARTS SYMPOSIUM

What follows is a brief presentation of the XIV Science and Arts Symposium that took place in Lemont, Illinois in November 2008. This narrative plus the photographs that follow will give the reader an overall picture of the numerous events that took place during the five day Symposium.

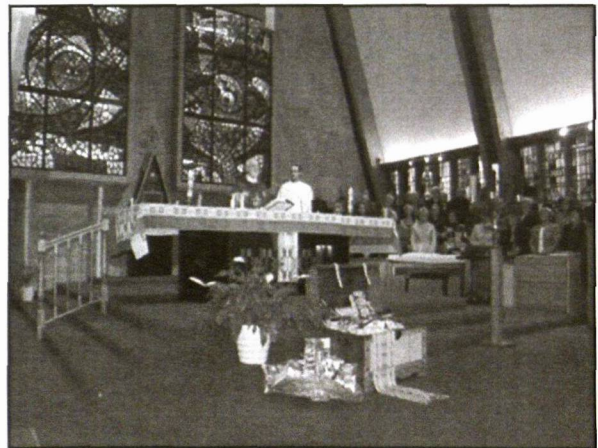
The participants came from various European countries (Ireland, Germany, Belgium, France and Lithuania). Not surprisingly the greatest number came from Lithuania. Of the one hundred and thirty participants from Lithuania, two were former Ministers of Education, one a former Prime Minister, three Rectors from three different universities, five Vice Rectors from five universities, the Ambassador to America and Mexico, as well as many well known scientists, engineers, educators, and social scientists. The total number of attendees was close to four hundred.

Throughout the five days there were thirteen plenary sessions and twenty-one other sessions dealing with various topics in the social sciences, physical sciences, architecture, arts, religion, medicine and law. One of the best attended plenary sessions was on "Internship in Lithuania." (For an in depth presentation, please refer to Bridges JAN/FEB issue, this issue and the forthcoming APRIL issue.)

The photographs that follow show the various happenings that took place during the XIV Science and Arts Symposium.

Rimas Gedeika

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



Time for spiritual reflection



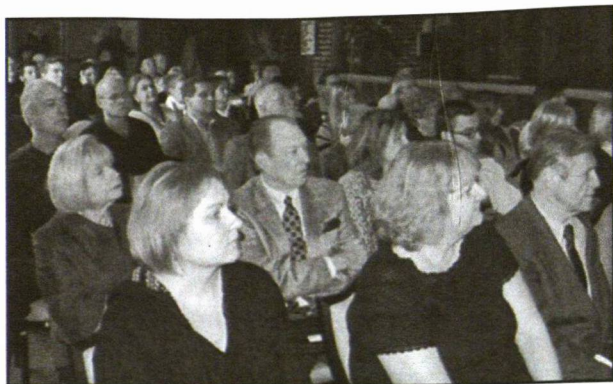
Preparing to travel to ITT, Northwestern and Argonne Labs



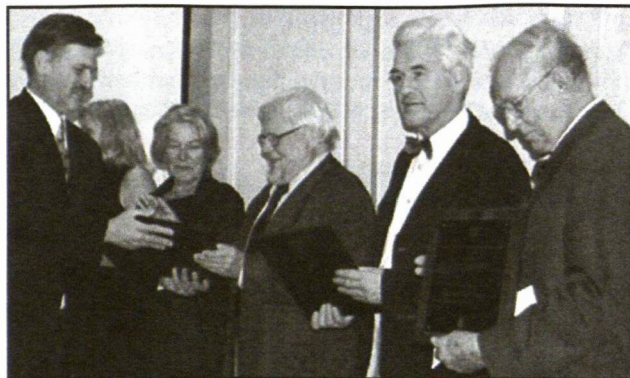
Moderator Prof. R. Kriauciunas



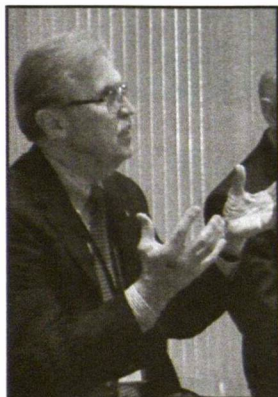
Prof. Avizienis, co-chairman of the First Science and Arts Symposium, opens the XIV Symposium.



Audience during the session on "Internship in Lithuania."



V. Maciunas, president of LAC, presenting awards to Symposium organizers past and present



Many discussions took place



Excellent home made Lithuanian food was served during lunch.



Physics Nobel Prize winner (1988), Prof. L. Lederman and Dr. D. Matulis.



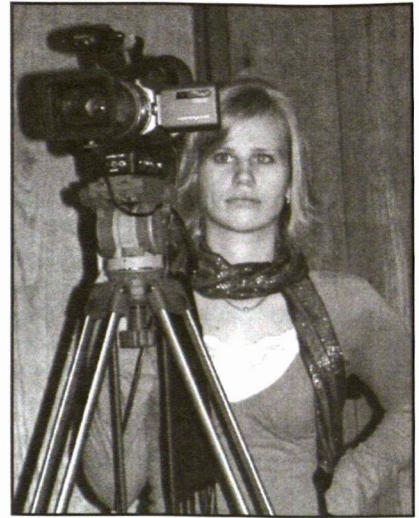
More than 200 guests attending the banquet



Danguole Varniene receiving the 2008 Artist of the Year Award from D. Lukiene and V. Maciunas.

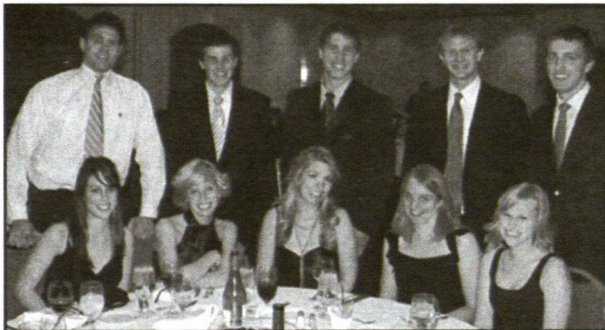


K. Prunskiene, Lithuania's first Prime Minister presenting award to V. Maciunas

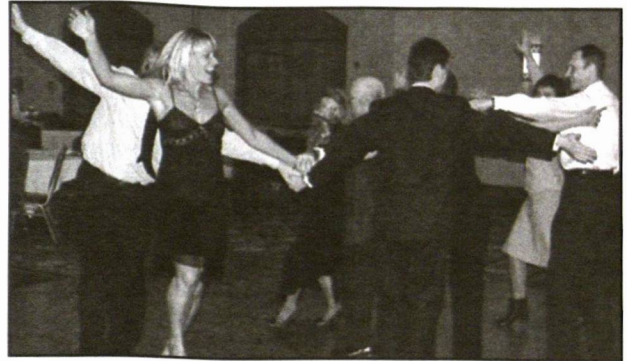


Lina Maciunas and company recording the events for Internet, www.mks14.com

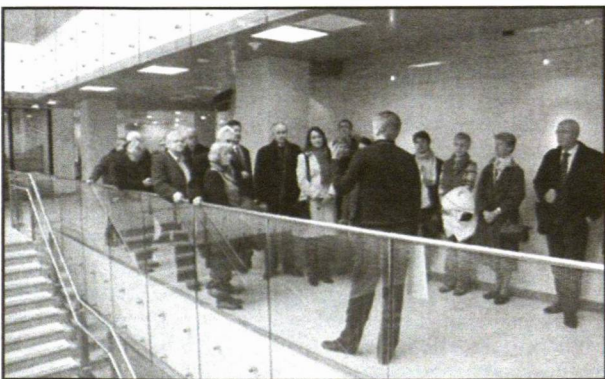
* All photos by Rimo Gedeika



Future scientists and educators



Dancing the night away



Visiting ITT's Engineering Labs



Attendees and guests were entertained by the Lithuanian Ensemble, "Gabija"

A Centennial Celebration of Baltimore's Lithuanian National Library

Baltimore has been the home of Lithuanians for over one hundred years. Late 19th and early 20th century immigrants built the Lithuanian Hall which is located on Hollins Street near the Old Hollins Street Market, the Inner Harbor and two sports stadiums. The Lithuanian Hall houses the Lithuanian National Library and a Museum. On November 16th, 2008, many came to celebrate and honor the library's one hundred years in the Maple Room. A room, once a bowling alley with wooden maple floors, now has golden walls adorned with Lithuanian art. A centerpiece table displayed treasured artifacts of books and photographs from the Library.

Jaunutis Burbulis, Chairman of the Library welcomed everyone and presented the guest speakers. The accomplishments of early Lithuanian immigrants was presented by Dalė Lukienė, Chair of Cultural Affairs for the Lithuanian American Community. Genė Buračaitė-Vasaitienė shared her Lithuanian poems of growing up near the Lithuanian Hall, while Rita Bradūnaitė, the granddaughter of poet Kazys Bradūnas, read a poem he wrote about the gatherings after Lithuanian Mass. Rita even mentioned in the poem, pleading to be taken to McDonalds! Kazys Bradūnas lived in Baltimore before moving to Chicago. He and his wife presently reside in Lithuania. Local soprano, Janina Brasauskienė, read the poetry of Stasė Surdokienė-Šakytė. Writer Antanas Vaičiulaitis, who died in 1992 and is buried in Vilkaviškis was represented by his daughter, Joana Vaičiulaitytė Buivienė who reminisced of her father's recent 100 year celebration and ongoing projects. On June 23rd, the eve of Joninės and the writer's birthday, young and old gather to share their written creations at the homestead, which is now a national monument. Daina Buivyte, hostess of the 60 year old Lithuanian Melody Time, a cultural Lithuanian program of

music and news, on the internet at www.lietuvis.net, lovingly recited 'My Mother's Face' by poet Alfonsas Nyka-Niliūnas, who resides in suburban Baltimore. Aleksas Radžius read his father's Aleksas Radžius' poetry, written in a Bavarian DP (Displaced Persons) camp, when hope of returning to their homeland, was crushed by the Iron Curtain. Aleksas, along with his family, came from that very DP camp in 1950. The celebration ended with songs by the folklore group Jorė.

The primary caretaker of the library for the past seventeen years is Marytė Patlabaitė, to whom the torch was passed by her mother, Valė Patlabienė. She has devoted herself to keeping the library open. From the library's beginning up until the mid-twentieth century, the library had about two hundred visitors monthly. Now, there are only a few visitors, some exploring their Lithuanian heritage.

Baltimore's Lithuanian history has spanned over one hundred years, over several generations of descendants who have left their treasure in our care. It is up to the present Lithuanians, a melting pot of recent arrivals in the past two decades, descendants of early immigrants, first generation WW2 (World War II) babies, their children and parents, to preserve the bountiful treasures found in the Lithuanian culture in Baltimore, MD. This 100 year celebration was in honor of those who began the Library and to all the generations who cared. Undoubtedly, there are many unsung heroes in our various Lithuanian communities, like Marytė Patlabaitė, who keep the flame alive. To them I say,

'VALIO' and 'AČIŪ'!

Joana Vaičiulaitytė Buivienė

Editor's Note: Congratulations to Baltimore's Lithuanian National Library. May they continue to serve Baltimore's Lithuanians for many years to come.



Participants: (Jorė members, dressed in folk costumes), from left to right: Dalė Lukienė, (behind) Jaunutis Burbulis, Jorė member, Jorė member, Janina Brasauskienė, Marytė Patlabaitė, Aleksas Radžius, Jorė member, Jorė member, Daina Buivyte, Joana Vaičiulaitytė Buivienė, Rita Bradūnaitė.

The Stork's Travels

GANDRO KELIONĖS

"Lietuvių Sakmės" - "Lithuanian Stories"

Compiled by Pranas Sasnauskas

Translated from Lithuanian by Gloria O'Brien

Senai, senai, kuomet žmonės buvo dievobaimingi ir geresni, išėjo ponas Dievas pažūrėti.....

Long, long ago, when people were still devout and good, the Lord Dievas went out to see how folks were getting along on Earth: their lives, their work, their worries and joys.

The Lord descended to earth from Heaven, and began to wander around the villages, fields and forests, stopping everywhere to watch the working people.

As He walked around He noticed that people were very much bothered by mosquitoes, flies and other nasty creatures. He sat down on the grass, and, head in hand, began thinking about what He should do, to ease people's existence.

A stork saw the seated Dievulis and approached Him, bowing humbly.

"Honor to thee, radiant Lord! You look very worried. May I help you in any way?"

"I am just trying to decide how I may help these people. They are greatly disturbed by mosquitoes, flies and other harmful creatures."

"Well, then, let us birds do what we can to help the people."

"Very well" -- the Lord agreed -- "Go ahead and help them!"

The stork flew over to the meadow, called all the birds together and told them of the Lord's worries. Naturally, all the

birds agreed to help. Some of them immediately began to catch flies; others, mosquitoes; and the rest, other unfavorable insects. The stork busied himself destroying serpents.

After a short while, the numbers of harmful insects and other creatures had greatly diminished. The Lord Dievas, seeing this, said to the stork:

"You and your helpers have done a very good job. Now it's time for you all to rest. Soon it will be Winter, with frost and snowstorms. Call all the storks together, and fly to the tropics, where you can all rest well in the warmth of the sun's rays. And when you have rested, return once more to your homeland, to raise your young, and continue to help the people."

"But what about all the other birds?" - asked the stork.

"Let those who wish, fly along with you. There is plenty of room for all in the tropics."

"How will we find the right road?"

"Don't worry about that", replied the Lord. "I will lay a bright path across all of heaven, to be known as the "Birds' Path" ("Paukščių Takas" - the Milky Way). Fly along this Path, and you will never lose your way."

The stork gave thanks to Lord Dievas for His consideration, and soon, as Autumn drew near, he headed for the tropics. He invited all the other birds to join him.

"What shall I do there? I am happy right here." -- said the crow.

"Cir, cir, I don't want to fly to the tropics either. It's much nicer for me to spend the winter in a farmer's barn." -- said the sparrow.

Many other birds agreed with them, though a larger number decided to fly along with the stork. They had no fear of losing their way, following the bright road laid down by the Lord.

As Spring arrived, the stork and the rest of his friends headed home. Soaring over the sea, he heard someone calling:

"Help me - I cannot continue flying -- I will fall into the sea!"

He saw a tiny wagtail nearby, just barely able to move his little wings. Moving quickly, he sat the little fellow on his back and carried him back to his homeland.

And so the stork with other birds flies to the tropics to pass the Winter season, and returns in the Spring, carrying the wagtail on his back. That is why they both come back at the same time.

Gloria Kivytaite O'Brien

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

*The art is from the book "Tėvų Nameliai Brangūs



Calendar of Events for March, April & May, 2009

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

MARCH

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

March 1, 2009 - Lithuanian Independence Day noon Mass (in English) Our Lady of the Assumption church, 76 Wianno Ave., Osterville, MA 02655. After Mass assembly in the church hall. Part of the program will consist of the showing of a 2008 documentary film by Ken Gumbert "Red Terror on the Amber Coast" (English language) about the Soviet occupation (1939-1993) & Lithuanian resistance. Refreshments & opportunity to socialize. At the beginning of the commemorative event, it will be possible to donate to support the LAC, Inc. Those who would like to make a donation to LAC and/or pay their annual dues (solidarity fee of \$10) are asked to write checks payable to: Lithuanian American Community, Inc.
Sponsor: LAC of Cape Cod

March 1, 2009 - 10:30 am Mass Lithuanian Independence Day St. Andrew Lithuanian Church, 19th & Wallace Streets, Phila. PA 19130 Holy Mass for Lithuania will be offered by Bishop Joseph R. Cistone - Program: 2:00 pm Lithuanian Music Hall. Greetings by Amb. Jonas Pasiuskas, Consul General of Lithuania in New York. Entertainment, refreshments following the official program.
Sponsor: Phila. Chapter of LAC

MARCH 7, 2009 - Independence Celebration Mark the Millennium of Lithuania! There will be a new board election. Guest of the evening - **Jurate Miliauskaite & Sekmadienis**. Time: 2:00 pm - 8 pm - (Concert-5 pm) Fraternal Order of Eagles Hall, 1151 S. Galena St. (just west of Mississippi & Havana) Denver, CO 80247
Colorado Chapter of the LAC - Info: 970-310-3170

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 the LAC

March 7, 2009 - 10 am to 4 pm

Multicultural Festival of Cape Cod Cape Cod Community College, 2240 Iyanough Rd. (Route 132) West Barnstable, MA 02668

March 8, 2009 - Lithuanian Independence Day Celebration 12 pm Mass celebrated by Father Franklin Bartel parish church. 1 pm - St. Elizabeth Seton Parish Hall 9728, Palermas Drive, Sun City, AZ Program & entertainment, traditional Lithuanian dishes will be served, & vegetarian dishes available. Ragoulis cake be served, bring a favorite dessert for all to share.
Info: Mark Shoban at mashoban@yahoo.com
Sponsor: Arizona Chapter of the 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. Featuring pianists Sonata & Rokas Zubovas from Lithuania & 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 8, 2009 - 2:00 pm - Lithuanian Independence Day Oceanside Senior Center 455 Country Club Lane, Oceanside, CA
Sponsor: San Diego Chapter of the LAC

March 8, 2009 - 5 pm - Concert Jurate Miliauskaite & Sekmadienis. 44 Coconut Row, Palm Beach, FL 33480
Info: 561-309-6708

March 13, 2009 - Concert Jurate Miliauskaite & Sekmadienis Lithuanian Hall, 851-853 Hollins St. Baltimore, MD 21201
Info: 410-685-5787

March 14, 2009 - 8 pm Concert Jurate Miliauskaite & Sekmadienis Sts. Peter & Paul Church Hall 216 Ripley Pl., Elizabeth, NJ 07206
Info: 203-895-7174

March 15, 2009 - 5 pm Concert Jurate Miliauskaite & Sekmadienis Aleksandros Kazickienes Lithuanian School Grace Episcopal Church Hall 573 Roanoke Ave., Riverhead, NY 11901

Info: 631-204-1329 or 631-902-8923

March 20-21, 2009 - Concert - 8 pm Jurate Miliauskaite & Sekmadienis Two Rivers Restaurant 10997 S. Archer Ave., Lemont, IL 60439
Info: 630-25-8178 or 630-669-4055

March 21-28, 2009 - Ski Trip Siaures Amerikos Lietuviu Fiziniu Auklejojimo ir 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 Slidnejojimo Federacija (PLKSF), are being held during that same week in conjunction with SALFASS & ALGS. General questions can be directed to either **Ed Mickus (edmickus1@aol.com)**, **Jonas Prunskis (jvp@illinoispain.com)**, or **Dr. Vytautas Saulis (vsaulis@sbcglobal.net)**. For questions relating to the ski race competition, contact: **Race Chairman - Algis Juodikis 408-893-2650**

March 21, 2009 - 12 Noon - Lenten Day of Recollection. Sacrament of Reconciliation followed by a Mass in Lithuanian. Assumption Church in Osterville, 76 Wianno Avenue, Osterville, MA 02655

March 21, 2009 - 7 pm Lithuanian Heritage Night with the Phoenix Suns. Celebrate our Lithuanian Heritage with the Phoenix Suns as they take on the Washington Wizards & native Lithuanian Darius Songaila.

March 21, 2009 - 2 pm - CONCERT CLASSICAL MUSIC BENEFIT Neringa's benefactors & music lovers are invited - Immaculate Conception Convent, 600 Liberty Hwy., Putnam, CT 06260 Concert of classical music, violinist Edita Orlyniute. Proceeds from the event will benefit Camp Neringa.

March 22, 2009 - 12:30 pm - Concert Jurate Miliauskaite & Sekmadienis Divine Providence Church Hall, 25335 W. 9 Mile Rd. Southfield, MI 48033
Info: 248-854-6677

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

March 27, 2009 - 7 pm Concert Jurate Miliauskaite & Sekmadienis Verdi Restaurant, 6275 Spalding Dr. NW. Ste. E-1, Norcross, GA 30092
Info: 770-634-4331

March 28, 2009 - 8 pm - Concert Jurate Miliauskaite & Sekmadienis St. Casimir Parish Hall, 2718 St. George St. Los Angeles, CA 90027
Info: 310-801-6123

APRIL

April 24-26, 2009 - ANNUAL WOMEN'S WEEKEND Dr. Kristina Maciunas & Kerry Secrest once again invite Neringa's women to camp for spiritual renewal. For a number of years this team has prepared a meaningful program where women slow down and take a fresh look at the world.
Info: www.neringa.org

April 26, 2009 - Spring Convention Knights of Lithuania, New England District St. Casimir's Church, 41 Providence Street, Worcester, MA
Hosted by Council 26 of Worcester, MA.

MAY

MAY 3, 2009 - 3:00 pm Mother's Day Celebration & Pancake Supper Fraternal Order of Eagles Hall 1151 S Galena Street (just west of Mississippi and Havana) Denver, CO 80247
Info: Romas Zableckas
Sponsor: Colorado Chapter of the LAC

May 15-16, 2009 - JBANC 8th Baltic Conference Focus will be on Baltic security issues. The President of Latvia Valdis Zatlers has been invited to give the keynote address at the conference on Saturday, May 16. The main conference venue will be the Renaissance M St. Hotel located at 1143 New Hampshire Ave., Washington, DC A briefing & reception with the U.S. Congress or Administration is also planned for
Info. & registration: http://jbanc.org
Contact JBANC: jbanc@jbanc.org 301-908-2579

May 30-31, 2009 - 11 am - 6 pm 37th Annual Lithuanian Festival Catonsville Armory, 130 Mellor Ave., Catonsville, MD This year's theme - One Thousand Years of Culture Local ethnic dance groups and entertainment, jewelry, arts & crafts. Historical exhibits - Delicious Lithuanian food. Admission: \$4 per person, children under 12 free
Info: Maryte Patlaba 410-646-0261

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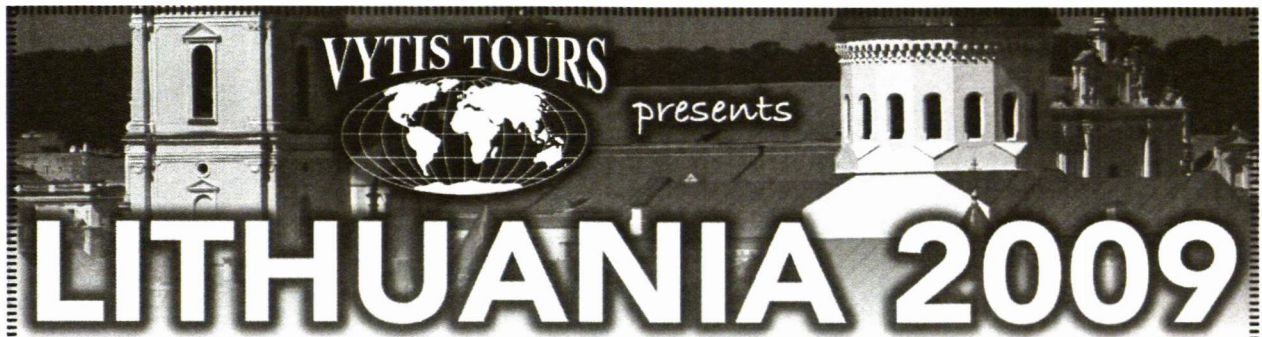
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For informacion please call Rita Pencyla 708-923-0280

CHICAGO REPRESENTATIVES

RITA PENCYLA — 708-923-0280 — pencylar@comcast.net
BRONE BARAKAUSKAS — 708-403-5717 — mamabar3@aol.com

Lithuanian-American Community



CONTACT INFORMATION:

WEBSITE

WWW.LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN.ORG

TELEPHONE

800-625-1170

LAC, Inc. NATIONAL ELECTIONS

May 9-10 and 16-17, 2009

For more information, contact your local LAC chapter or
the national election commission by email at

tarybosrinkimai2009@gmail.com

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SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Rimas Gedeika
78 Mark Twain Dr.
Hamilton Sq., NJ 08690

PERIODICALS
POSTAGE

March 4 - St. Casimir's Day
March 11, 1990 - Re-establishment of Lithuanian Independence
March 17- St. Patrick's Day
March 19 - St. Joseph's Day
March 20 - Spring Begins