

# bridges



Volume 14, No. 2

MARCH 1990

## LITHUANIA DECLARES RESTORATION OF INDEPENDENCE



MARCH 11, 1990

LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

march 2010

*Letter from the Editor*

*"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" - Charles Dickens. Where were you on March 11, 1990? To many of us the date is fixed in our minds, never to be erased. My husband and I were going to dinner with friends from Philadelphia and I was so nervous my stomach was churning. Fortunately, the friends were sympathetic as they had family in Croatia where another crisis was brewing. Questions kept swirling through my mind. Would Lithuania take the big step and declare independence or would something happen to stop them from going forward?*


*It was the best of times because it was an exhilarating time. Every day the media was covering Lithuania. Sąjūdis was taking bolder and bolder steps, the rallies were growing larger and larger. The Lithuanian flag was seen flying over some buildings. The talk was of freedom and prosperity. In the late 1980's I remember sitting in a tiny church outside of Kaunas when the priest said that Catholicism and Communism could not exist side by side. They were contrary to each other. I thought I misheard him and if I wasn't sitting in the middle of the pew, I probably would have fallen out of the seat from shock. I asked my cousin if I heard him correctly and she answered in the affirmative. There was hope after so many years.*

*It was the worst of times because just how much would the soviets tolerate? I started to travel to Lithuania in 1979 so I was familiar with the system first hand. I saw the people who were beaten down by oppression. The buildings were gray, the flag was not Lithuania's flag, and the people seemed to whisper so nothing would be overheard. Eventually Sąjūdis was formed. The people became more and more emboldened. Should they listen to what Mikhail Gorbachev called the "voice of reason" and work out a plan that would take years before they could leave the USSR? Or should they seize the moment and the momentum and continue their fight for independence? I once heard a Lithuanian political figure say that with every so many generations one group would emerge who could no longer tolerate oppression. Would this be the generation to regain Lithuania's freedom? There was no manual to follow and there were no guarantees. A republic had never left the Soviet Union. What would happen if everything failed? What would happen to the leaders of the movement and their families? What would happen to Lithuania? The answers were frightening. Where were Europe and the United States in all this? It didn't look too promising despite fifty years of rhetoric about feeling the pain of the captive nations. Afraid to rock the boat of Glasnost, their silence was deafening.*

*On March 11, 1990 at 10:44 pm Lithuania proclaimed to the world there was no turning back. One hundred and twenty four members of the Supreme Council, with its chairman, Vytautas Landsbergis, voted to formally declare the re-establishment of the State of Lithuania. Independence was officially declared.*

*The road ahead would not be an easy one. There would be blockades, military intervention and death. But the Lithuanian people would once again be the masters of their own fate.*

*In an interview after January 13, 1991, Prof. Landsbergis quoted the battle cry of a 14th century Lithuanian hero when he told columnist Jack Anderson, "Iron will turn to wax and water will turn to stone before we retreat." And there was no retreat.*

  
Jeanne Shalna Dorr

**BRIDGES**

Lithuanian American News Journal  
USPS 017131 - Published 10 times per year  
(Jan./Feb. & Jul./Aug. combined).

Address of publication is:

**LAC, Inc./BRIDGES,**

3906 Lakeview Dr., Racine, WI. 53403

**BRIDGES**

is the official publication of the  
Lithuanian American Community, Inc.

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Subscription rate is \$20.00 annually, 2 full years for \$38.00 (US Mail serviced subscribers). Subscriptions to other addresses are (US \$35.00), payable in advance (US funds). Periodicals postage paid at Racine, WI & additional locations.

Contact us on the Internet at:

<http://www.lithuanian-american.org>

Postmaster: Send any address correction  
&/or changes to:

**LAC, Inc./BRIDGES,**

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

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\*The cover and the photo below are reprints from a special issue of *Bridges* printed in March of 1990.

**LITHUANIA FREE AT LAST!**

February 16, 1990 demonstration participants in Manhattan, N.Y. The event was organized by the New York Lithuanian Youth Association.

Photo by L. Tamosaitis

## 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 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.

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, recognises 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 realise the complete sovereignty of the State.

## Sajūdis

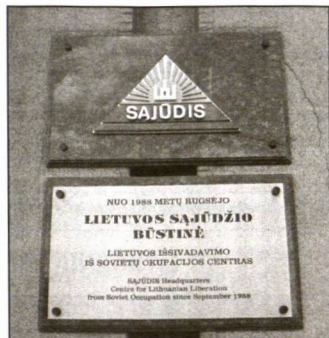
*Editor's note: The following is an excerpt from Wikipedia. Sajūdis From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*

**Sajūdis** initially known as the **Reform Movement of Lithuania**, Lithuanian: *Lietuvos Persitvarkymo Sąjūdis* is the political organization which led the struggle for Lithuanian independence in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It was established on June 3, 1988 and was led by Vytautas Landsbergis. Its goal was to seek the return of independent status for Lithuania.

### *Historical background*

#### **Main article: Singing Revolution**

In the mid 1980s, Lithuania's Communist Party leadership hesitated to embrace Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost. The death of Petras Griskevičius, first secretary of the Communist Party of Lithuania, in 1987 was merely followed the appointment of another rigid communist, Ringaudas Songaila. However, encouraged by the rhetoric of Mikhail Gorbachev, noting the



*Plaques at Sajūdis Headquarters*

strengthening position of Solidarity in Poland and encouraged by the Pope and the U.S. Government, Baltic independence activists began to hold public demonstrations in Riga, Tallinn, and Vilnius.

#### **Forming Sajūdis**

At a meeting at the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences on June 3, 1988, communist and noncommunist intellectuals formed Sajūdis Initiative Group (Lithuanian: Sajūdžio iniciatyvinų grupė) to organize a movement to support

Gorbachev's program of glasnost, democratization, and perestroika. The group composed of 35 members, mostly artists. 17 of the group members were also communist party members. Its goal was to organize the Sajūdis Reform Movement, which became known subsequently simply as Sajūdis.

On June 24, 1988 the first massive gathering organized by Sajūdis took place. There delegates to the 19th All-Union Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union were instructed about Sajūdis goals.

About 100,000 people in Vingis Park greeted the delegates when they came back in July. Another massive event took place on August 23, 1988 when about 250,000 people gathered to protest against the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and its secret protocol.

On June 19, the first issue of samizdat newspaper "Sajūdis News" (Lithuanian: Sajūdžio Žinios) was published. In September Sajūdis published a legal newspaper, "Atgimimas" (English: rebirth).

In total about 150 different newspapers were printed supporting Sąjūdis.

In October 1988 Sąjūdis held its founding conference in Vilnius. It elected a 35-member council. Most its members were members of the initiative group. Vytautas Landsbergis, a professor of musicology who was not a member of the communist party, became the council's Chairman.

#### *Sąjūdis activities*

The movement supported Gorbachev's policies, but at the same time promoted Lithuanian national issues such as restoration of the Lithuanian language as the official language. Its demands included the revelation of truth about the Stalinist years, protection of the environment, the halt to construction on a third nuclear reactor at the Ignalina nuclear power plant, and disclosure of the secret protocols of the Nazi-Soviet Non-aggression Pact, signed in 1939.

Sąjūdis used mass meetings to advance its goals. At first, Communist Party leaders shunned these meetings, but by mid-1988 their participation became a political necessity. A Sąjūdis rally on June 24, 1988, was attended by Algirdas Brazauskas, then party secretary for industrial affairs. In October 1988, Brazauskas was appointed first secretary of the communist party to replace Songaila. Communist leaders threatened to crack down on Sąjūdis, but backed down in the face of mass protests. Sąjūdis candidates fared well in elections to the Congress of People's Deputies, the newly created Soviet legislative body. Their candidates won in 36 of the 40 districts in which they ran.

In February 1989, Sąjūdis declared that Lithuania had been forcibly annexed by the Soviet Union and



*Vytautas Landsbergis*

that the group's ultimate goal was to achieve independence. Lithuanian sovereignty was proclaimed in May 1989, and Lithuania's incorporation into the Soviet Union was declared illegal.

On 23 August 1989, the 50th Anniversary of the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, a 600-kilometre two million strong human chain reaching from Tallinn to Vilnius focused international attention on the aspirations of the Baltic nations. This demonstration and the coordinated efforts of the three nations became known as The Baltic Way.

In December, the Communist Party of Lithuania seceded from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and agreed to give up its monopoly on power. In February 1990, Sąjūdis representatives won an absolute majority (101 seats out of 141) in the Supreme Council of the Lithuanian SSR. Vytautas Landsbergis was elected Chairman of the Supreme Council. This led to the declaration of independence on March 11, 1990.

#### *After independence*

Today, Sąjūdis is still active in Lithuania, but it has lost almost all its influence. The popularity of Sąjūdis lessened as it failed to maintain unity among people with different political beliefs and was ineffective coping with the economic crisis. The Democratic Labour Party (DLP; the former Communist Party of Lithuania) was victorious in the Seimas elections of February 1992.

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en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sąjūdis



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**TRIVIA  
QUESTION**

(No. 34)

What year was the First Lithuanian Postage Stamp issued?

(a) 1775 (b) 1918 (c) 1921

Answer to Trivia Quiz  
on page 18

## The President's Engagements: New Challenges Every Day

"I want to see Lithuania demonopolized, with transparent and equal justice for all, a well-managed energy sector, the euro, new investment opportunities, and a secure and civil society. This special critical period requires the President to take prompt and decisive steps to set the most urgent actions into motion. Therefore, every day brings new challenges and intensive work," the President says.

The President comes to work at 7 a.m., one hour before the official start of the working day.

She begins her working day by meeting her chief advisers and discussing the agenda and the visits scheduled as well as the topicalities and issues raised by citizens.

Every month the Office of the President receives over 1,000 letters from residents and various institutions. People approach the President about such matters of concern as law and order, land surveying, local municipalities, health care, children's rights, and even postal work. They also write about issues related to energy, public procurement, citizenship, renovation of apartment houses, taxes, and business environment.

"Essential decisions are gradually taken in all areas of importance to the people. My team knows my standpoint: We came here to serve the people and find solutions, not to boss around," the President said.

President Grybauskaitė focuses on the country's internal problems, searching for vital solutions and addressing priority objectives: demonopolization of the



*Greeting Tomas Cernas, survivor of the Medininku border guards who were attacked July 31, 1991*

energy sector, judicial reforms, economic and national security, and structural reforms in health care, education, culture, and social welfare.

She maintains that changes expected by society depend on interaction between the Office of the President, the Seimas and the Government. Therefore, she holds regular meetings with parliamentary and governmental leaders, members of the Cabinet and representatives of political groups in parliament. National security is on top of the President's agenda. The President heads the State Defense Council and is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces

Building civil society is one of President Grybauskaitė's top priorities. She believes that only such society will help overcome the current economic, moral and spiritual crisis. To bring people together and encourage their civil

mind-set, the President has frequent meetings with prominent public, cultural and art figures, athletes and sporting hopefuls, members of youth organizations. The President finds time for each person. On Teacher's Day, she congratulated her school teacher. On the Guardian Angels Day, she thanked police officers. On September 1, she presented first-grader passports. She meets with people whose talent and endeavors promote Lithuania in the world, visits new exhibitions, celebrates together with the people events of utmost national importance.

The President tries to clearly, openly and immediately inform the public of her decisions. Therefore, meetings with representatives of the local and foreign media are also part of her daily agenda.



*The President meets and encourages the Boy Scouts*

*\*Article and photos provided by the President's Office Press Service*

## THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF MARCH 11, 1990

*Romualdas Kriaučiūnas, Ph.D.*

The Soviets annexed and occupied Lithuania in 1940 in accordance with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. During the Soviet occupation Lithuania lost 780,000 of its citizens. The Soviet government killed or deported to Siberia 120,000 to 300,000 people. 28,000 to 35,000 political prisoners were killed or died of the hardships in the penal camps or gulags. 30,000 Lithuanians lost their lives in the guerrilla fight against Soviet oppression. Some 60,000 Lithuanians chose to go into exile to the West.

In the 1980s, when "perestroika" (restructuring) and "glasnost" (openness) were the buzz words in Moscow, Lithuanians saw their chance to regain independence. By the fall of 1988, protest demonstrations were organized to demand sovereignty. These demonstrations included one in the Vingis Park in 1988 that emphasized the determination of people of Lithuania to achieve independence. In the mid-1988 under the leadership of intellectuals "Sąjūdis" was formed – the first official Lithuanian pro-independence movement. The program of democratic and national rights was declared and won nation-wide popularity.

On October 7, 1988, 100,000 gathered in Vilnius to witness the raising of the now legal Lithuanian national flag over the tower of the historic medieval castle on Gediminas hill. We arrived to Vilnius a day after, but experienced a similar euphoria the following day in the City of Kaunas where the flag was also raised while thousands sang the national anthem. On August 23, 1989 – the 50th anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact about one million Lithuanians and another million of Latvians and Estonians formed a "Baltic Way". It was a human chain that stretched 370 miles and connected all three Baltic capitals as an act of symbolic protest and unity. Also that year in Lithuania February 16 – the anniversary of the 1918 proclamation of Lithuanian independence – was declared a national holiday. On November 20, 1988 "Sąjūdis" declared the "moral independence" of Lithuania, and that "henceforth only those laws will be honored which do not limit Lithuania's independence".

On Sunday, March 11, 1990 at 10:44 pm 124 members of the Supreme Council of the State of Lithuania (105 of them "Sąjūdis"-backed), with its chairman Vytautas Landsbergis voted and formally declared the reestablishment of the State of Lithuania.

I want to quote a translated excerpt from a brief article, written by a young man who was in Vilnius on that day. "While I was born and raised in the US, on this historic day I was

in Vilnius. At that time I was lecturing at the University of Vilnius. I also worked at a small company. I was 22 years old at the time. That decisive evening I was in a dorm and together with others from far-away places like Germany, Italy, Vietnam and elsewhere watched the TV. That night in my diary I made the following notation: 'On March 11, 1990, at 10:44 pm Lithuania declared its independence.' There is little to be added to it. My parents waited some 45 years for this day. We, the children of diaspora, dedicated our lives for this day. It was an unexpected event. Danutė and I went downtown, but everything was empty, even though it was only 1:00 am. Are they really afraid of the tanks? It's not clear. Landsbergis was elected Chairman of the Supreme Council. The world was stunned. Now we are waiting to see what Moscow will do. Will we have oil or bread? What kind of blockade will it be? Is my visa still valid? Now I live in the Republic of Lithuania. We regained what has been taken away from us."

The article went on to note that Danutė that was mentioned was Danutė Petruševičiūtė from the Detroit area. "She and I attended 'Žiburys' Lithuanian School and camped at the Lithuanian Youth Camp 'Dainava'. It is significant that we were together in Lithuania. When I think of that day, I remember the feelings of joy, surprise and concern". These were some of the observations made twenty years ago by my son Aldas.

Lithuania had overestimated Gorbachev's intentions. The Soviet leader was willing to let communist governments in its eastern European satellites fall to democratic movements, but this policy did not apply to the republics of the Soviet Union. The Soviet government responded harshly to the Lithuanian declaration of independence and issued an ultimatum: Renounce independence or face the consequences. On March 17, 1990 the Lithuanians gave their answer, rejecting the Soviet demand and asking that democratic intentions grant them diplomatic recognition.

The Soviets had not been bluffing. Gorbachev called the Act of Independence illegal and the USSR demanded revocation of the Act and began applying sanctions against Lithuania, including an economic blockade. The Soviet government insisted that it still controlled Lithuania. Gorbachev issued economic sanctions against the rebellious nation and Soviet troops occupied sections of the capital city of Vilnius. On January 13, 1991, the Soviets launched a large-scale military operation against Lithuania. The Soviet troops attacked the Vilnius TV Tower, killed 14 Lithuanian civilians and injured some 700 more.

Following these attacks, on January 27, 1991, the Soviet troops also attacked and burned border posts in Medininkai and Lavoriskės. Later that year, on July 31, 1991, there was a massacre when seven officers were killed at Medininkai. At least seven unarmed customs officers were shot in the head, execution style. On May 19, 1991, there was another border incident at Krakūnai where a border guard was killed. Many in the United States were horrified, and the US Congress acted quickly to end economic assistance to the Soviet Union. Gorbachev was incensed by this action, but his powers in the Soviet Union were quickly eroding. In December 1991, 11 of the 12 Soviet Socialist Republics proclaimed their independence and established the Commonwealth of Independent States. Just a few days after this action Gorbachev resigned as president and what was left of the Soviet Union ceased to exist.

Iceland was the first to recognize Lithuania's independence on February 11, 1991. After the failed August coup in Moscow, it was followed by the United States on September 2, 1991. President George H.W. Bush announced that if Russia were to use armed force against Lithuania, the US would react accordingly. Finally, on September 6, 1991, Lithuania's independence was recognized by the Soviet Union. The recognition of Lithuania's independence was quickly followed by several countries, including Hungary, Bulgaria, Italy, Canada, Poland, Malta, San Marino, Portugal, Romania, Ukraine, Latvia and Estonia. On September 17, 1991, Lithuania was welcomed as a member of the United Nations, along with Estonia and Latvia. This was happening while there were Russian troops in Lithuania. The Russian troops finally left Lithuania on August 31, 1993.

Later, in 1994, Lithuania joined the NATO and European Community. Since Lithuania declared independence on March 11, 1990, it has kept strong democratic traditions. The Lithuanian head of state is the President, elected directly by the voters for a five-year term. He or she may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. Dalia Grybauskaitė, the current President, is the first female president of the country. The President appoints the prime minister and on the latter's nomination, appoints the rest of the cabinet as well as a number of other top civil servants and judges for the court.

Lithuania's parliament is called the "Seimas". Its 141 representatives are elected for four-year terms. In order to be represented in the Seimas, political parties need to achieve at least 5% of the votes. That is not an easy task since there are over a dozen formally recognized political parties in the country.

With independence Lithuania expanded the possibilities for the country's financial, cultural, scientific, and political

growth and development. As a result, Lithuanian citizens have basic rights of free speech, democratic representation and movement. Now they can come and go as they please. The continued exodus of Lithuanians from the country is well known, but less well documented. Various estimates place the figure at around 500,000 emigrants from Lithuania to other countries. Many are considered "economic emigrants". The concern about so called "brain drain" is also real, and the current economic situation is not helpful to stop it or at least to slow it down.

As calculated by French scientists, a spot near Vilnius has been established as the geographic center of Europe. As if to echo this discovery, Vilnius was declared as one of two cultural capitals of Europe for 2009. Lithuania continues to be a destination for tourists and their numbers are steadily increasing.

***In conclusion, "Happy 20th anniversary to Lithuania and Lithuanians wherever they may be!"***

*Romualdas Kriauciūnas*

*Remarks made on 02/28/2010 at Wayne State University*

*Romualdas Kriauciūnas, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist, Executive Vice President of the National Executive Committee, Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. (2000-2003), Recipient of the 2005 Award for Journalism, given by the Cultural Council of LAC. Editor of www.ateitis.org web site.*

## KAUNAS LANGUAGE COURSES Summer

Lithuanian language courses will be offered in Kaunas, Lithuania at Vytautas Magnus University (Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas).

The courses will take place  
July 5-16, 2010

The Registration deadline is  
April 1, 2010.

### Information:

[www.iseivijosinstittas.lt/index.php?cid=664](http://www.iseivijosinstittas.lt/index.php?cid=664)

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## "I am the Song"

"I am the song" 9th song festival to be hosted by Toronto-Lithuanians in 2010; the celebration of the songfull spirit of a culture

Andrea Benotas

A song from my mother accompanied me as I drifted off to sleep in her arms as a baby. A song from my grandmother comforted me after I fell off my bicycle, wiping the dirt off my clothes, my knee scraped and bleeding. A song from my sister as we climbed into bed arranging our stuffed animals, ready to go to sleep. A song at home; a song at school; a song every Sunday at church, and every summer at camp.

With song I have conquered many fears, surpassed some of life's hurdles, celebrated friendships and successes and mourned bitter losses. With song I have become who I am. Through song, I find meaning. Through song I exist. I am the song.

Indeed, Lithuanians are a people who, for generations, have lived their lives depending on folk songs to accomplish such everyday tasks as sowing and harvesting crops, courting a maiden or luring a suitor, or greeting the dawning sun and rising moon. It is perhaps no surprise that we have a three day song festival tradition dating back to the 1920's where Lithuanians from around the world convene and celebrate the one seemingly greatest constant that defines us all as a culture - our songfulness. And in just a few short months, on July 4th, this tradition will be coming to Toronto for the first time in thirty two years.

The very first song and dance festival originated in Lithuania back in 1924 when the very first song festival was organized. This tradition has been upheld for over eighty six years now, during which seventeen song festivals have been organized. In 2003, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) proclaimed the tradition of the Song and Dance Festivals of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania as masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

Since many Lithuanians emigrated to other continents during the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries and reside outside the mother country, the Lithuanian diaspora in North America was large enough that it could keep the song festival tradition alive by hosting its own iteration of the festival abroad. Since Lithuanian communities in the United States make up the largest part of this diaspora, with as many as one million Americans able to claim Lithuanian descent, the first song festival abroad was

organized in 1956 in Chicago, and has spanned an impressive fifty four years and counting. All of the eight song festivals abroad have taken place in Chicago, except for one which took place in Toronto in 1978. Now, after a thirty two year hiatus, the 9th song festival will again return to Toronto in July 2010.



Dalia Viskontas and Rita Cysaite-Kloriene

The festival will span from July 2nd-4th and will be filled with meetings, social events and rehearsals for the 1,102 (to this day) registered choristers ranging from age five to eighty five. The culminating point however, is the concert on July 4th at The Hershey Center in Mississauga when all participants and choirs will come together to perform songs they have been rehearsing for months, some even years. Most of all, these three days will be spent surrounded by fellow Lithuanians, celebrating our common love for song and homeland Lithuania, and perfectly embody the chosen name for the song fest. "I am the Song" represents the beautiful and unique ability of song to sustain and nourish our souls, and to unite us all, so far from our homeland," says the artistic director of the much-anticipated festival, Ms. Dalia Viskontas - a longtime active leader in the Toronto-Lithuanian community and head of countless youth and adult choirs.

So until July 2nd, 2010, hundreds of choirs across the globe will continue to feverishly work away at the chosen song set for the festival, including traditional Lithuanian songs, and even six new pieces that were specifically composed for the event. Perhaps most importantly however, we look forward to a time when we can all come together and celebrate the instances of song that have truly shaped us into the proud Lithuanians we are today.

Andrea Benotas

Andrea Benotas is a Toronto-born Lithuanian actively involved in the preparations for the upcoming Lithuanian song festival in Toronto. She will participate in the festival as a singer with the Toronto-Lithuanian Youth Choir. She is also involved with media exposure for the festival, and co-designed and launched the official website for the event -

[www.lithuaniansongfest.org](http://www.lithuaniansongfest.org).

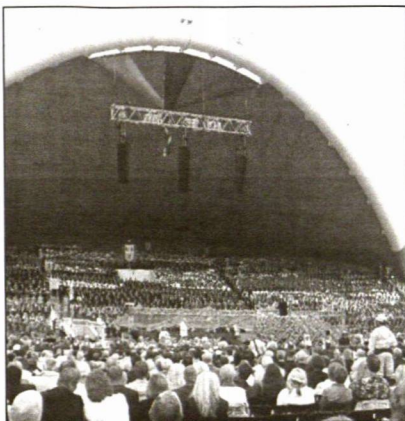
## Songs of the Musical People:

Stories from a summer doing ethnomusicology research in Lithuania

*Emily Daina Saras*

When preparing for my independent research trip to the European Capital of Culture 2009, Vilnius, Lithuania, this past summer, I had become convinced that the folk music of Lithuania was a key to the nation's cultural past. Even early in the twentieth century, scholars such as E. J. Harrison noted that "the Lithuanians are a musical people," and the national and ethnic stereotype of "hyper-musicality" pervades in Lithuania's culture today. Lithuania has officially established its independence twice in the last century alone. After over one hundred years of occupation under the Russian Empire, Lithuania reestablished its independence by signing the Act of Independence in the wake of World War One. Yet after the Soviet Union forcibly took control of Lithuania under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Lithuania was not able to regain independence until 1991, despite the efforts of a civil war for independence. During both of these establishments of independence, Lithuania folk music was an integral part of the display and assertion of Lithuanian national identity. But in my interviews with teenagers in Vilnius during my eight-week ethnographic fieldwork trip, I discovered that music-making in Lithuania is more dynamic than is internationally recognized. Folk music is important to young people and their conception of their heritage, but musicians are adopting a multi-genre, multicultural attitude as they construct Lithuania's musical future. While abroad as a young adventurous anthropologist-in-training, I was able to explore the pluralism of performance traditions in urban Lithuania, where a young generation is using new trends in music to break down the stereotype that their nation is "stuck in the past".

Lithuania's political climate has been changing rapidly since it separated from the Soviet Union in 1991. The nation became a member of the European Union in 2004, and this summer, I attended the inauguration of the country's first female president, Dalia Grybauskaitė. The military band that played throughout the ceremony at the Presidentūra (Vilnius' equivalent of the White House) featured orchestrated versions of old folk songs, several Classical Western pieces typical of any solemn ceremony, and even a jaunty rendition of "Seventy-six Trombones" as a finale. The mixture of song traditions played at the ceremony mirrors the struggle in Lithuanian modernism between representing (and glorifying) Lithuania's past, present, and future. Several of my teenage informants in Lithuania expressed their own struggle to understand their nation's post-Soviet identity.



*Song Festival at Vingio Park in Vilnius*

The young collegiate Lithuanians who are my age have no memory of life in Lithuania under Soviet occupation. Dainos (folk songs) seem to function as Lithuania's "cultural time capsules" during the Soviet occupation from 1939 to 1991. Through periods of Soviet-sponsored cultural manipulation, Lithuanians continued their tradition of singing dainos, which preserved the elements of Lithuanian heritage embedded in song melodies and texts. Ethnologists and musicians, employed by the government, pressured Lithuanians to abandon "backward" folk music for "advanced" Russian songs and the "complex" Western classical tradition, but during the nationalist "Singing Revolution" of the late 1980s, protesters sang traditional folk music in solidarity as they resisted the Red Army. Young people today in Lithuania join in the tradition of making folk music, thus culturally inheriting the memories of the difficult past they never personally experienced.

Lost in a specially designed song-festival stadium, amid an audience of thousands at Dainų Šventė, the annual Lithuanian folk music festival, I realized just how important the cultural display of dainos is in the construction of Lithuanian identity. In my personal communication with Dr. Rūta Slapkauskaitė of Vilnius University, I learned that most Lithuanian ethnomusicologists flock to the countryside in order to study the isolated, unadulterated folk song tradition. The structure and harmony of these dainos is unlike that of any other folk song tradition. Sutartines, for example, are especially unique dainos that are part of linen-making rituals, known for their long, overlapping vocal lines that weave together in continuous



Street musician in Vilnius

dissonance. Song preservation efforts today are supported by Kultūros Ministerija of Lithuania and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and such projects are urgent as the number of surviving members of the older generation of rural folksingers is dwindling. Yet I question the emphasis that these Lithuanian scholars place on the authenticity of the dainos performed today – do they truly and only exist, as argued by the scholars, in a form unadulterated over the hundreds of years they have been sung?

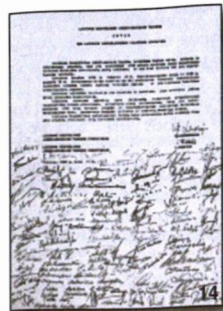
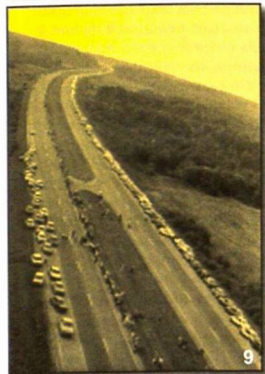
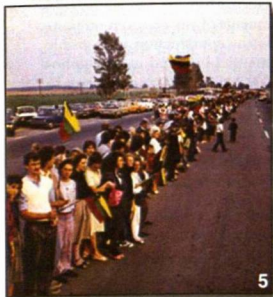
I found people my age to talk with me – and sing with me. I organized formal interviews with some informants over coffee or beer, and had prepared questions that I asked within casual conversation. In many cases, my interviews were spontaneous with street musicians or with audience members at concerts. Making friends in the field and following them to the concert gave me the honest views and opinions I was looking for. Without them, I probably would not have found the eccentric events such as the standing-room-only Symphonas Rokas concert during the Kristupo Summer Music Festival in Vilnius, where I heard opera soloist Ieva Prudnikovaitė sing an orchestrated version of Nirvana's Smells Like Teen Spirit. Coffee house bulletin boards featured advertisements for acid jazz bands that performed variations on folk song themes, and I attended a sold-out silent film festival in which such a band improvised the accompaniment as Charlie Chaplin slipped and slumped all over the screen. I saw two Claudio Monteverdi operettas in which life-sized marionettes, manned by nationally-recognized puppeteers, provided comic relief for an audience that was mostly dread locked teenagers. Clearly, young people are combining trends of their past and future, and many of these innovations are occurring within the world of music.

The breakthrough in my anthropological research in Vilnius, Lithuania this past summer occurred when I finally stopped following the crowds. Like the hundreds of Lithuanians gathered in the city center, I had also come to the opening night festivities of Dainų Šventė to hear Lithuanian dainos (folk music). The concept of strangers unabashedly and publicly performing together astounded me. I thought I was experiencing the authentic Lithuania my grandfather, a refugee during the Soviet Occupation in the late 1930s, had described in the stories he told me when I was a child. Elements of my research on post-Soviet nationalism and identity construction were visible all around me. For a moment, I believed in the homogeneity of the spectacle. Yet before the choirs began to sing for both the live audience and the thousands of Lithuanian viewers glued to their television sets at home, I broke away from my informants in the event seating area to follow a sound I had not heard since I had been back home in the United States – a saxophone. Keeping an eye on the growing masses behind me, I walked about a hundred yards away from the crowd into Kalnų Parkas, the wooded, hilly area behind the city's famous cathedral. There, I found the boom-box, the break dance mat, and eleven twenty-somethings jamming to what in this context had become an exotic noise to me: funk music.

As the troupe members rotated on and off the mat, singing along with the distorted saxophone melody line, I interviewed the leader, asking why they were dancing to heavy funk instead of attending the national festival in the square. He pointed back over at the crowds and shook his head. Over there, he explained to me, was not the music he identified with. "Funk and dance, not folk song, is our life, our lifestyle... Funk is our music." For the first time, away from the media publicity surrounding "Vilnius, European Capital of Culture 2009" events, I had come into contact with artists whose musical identities are on the margins of Lithuanian musical culture. Dainos are certainly symbols of Lithuanian identity, but many Lithuanians base their conceptions of their musical selves in other sounds and styles. Pluralism was right there in front of me, even on the night all Lithuanians were supposed to come together in song. At the end of the final Dainų Šventė concert, the orchestra began the finale: Not a folk tune, but a pop song. "Kaip gyven? Hei, gerai!" (How are you? Hey, great!) sang the audience members as two of them grabbed my hands and shook them in the air. We had never spoken to each other before, and yet all of us were dancing together, sharing in a friendly moment in which even I, the American outsider, felt included and welcomed.

Emily Daina Saras,

*Emily Daina Saras is pursuing a double major in Anthropology and Music. She expects to graduate in May 2010 from Wellesley College in Wellesley, MA.*



1)-Slogan "FREEDOM FOR LITHUANIA" on February 16, (Lithuanian Independence Day) in the 1980's on the building in Vilnius which became the Museum of Genocide when Lithuania regained its independence.

*Photo from "Genocido" museum*

2)-A meeting at the Supreme Council building. A young girl holds a poster with the letters "LTSR" (which stand for Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic) the letters for "Soviet Socialist" are crossed out.

*Photo from the National Archive of Lithuania*

3)-Sąjūdis Meeting, summer 1988.

*Photo from Internet*

4)-Demonstration in 1989 organized by Lithuanian Freedom League demanding the condemnation of the consequences of the 1939 secret pact between Germany and the Soviet Union.

*Photo from the National Archive of Lithuania*

5)-People holding hands along the "Baltic Way," summer 1989.

*Photo by A. Viranka*

6)-The Baltic Way brought important changes to the history of the world.

*Photo from Internet*

7)-People of Lithuania demanding the withdrawal of the Soviet army, summer 1990.

*Photo by H. Guicevskis*

8)-On the day Gorbachev came to Lithuania to squelch the independence movement, a demonstration was held in Vilnius Cathedral Square in support of Lithuanian independence. Gorbachev did not make a stop in Cathedral Square during his visit.

*Photo from the National Archive of Lithuania*

9)-The Baltic Way or Baltic Chain was a peaceful political demonstration that occurred on August 23, 1989. Approximately two million people joined their hands to form a human chain...

*Photo from the National Archive of Lithuania*

10)-Lenin monument demolition in Vilnius on August 23, 1991.

*Photo from the National Archive of Lithuania*

11)-In defiance, students in national garb in a yard of Vilnius University.

*Photo by K. Driskis*

12)-Taking time to ask God to help the Lithuanian Nation

*Photo from Internet*

13)-Families with the children participating in the Baltic Chain

*Photo from Internet*

14)-The proclamation by Lithuania's Supreme Council (Parliament) re-establishing Lithuania's independence

*Photo from the National Archive of Lithuania*

# Photo Album of Lithuanian Independence

The movement for Lithuanian independence was not a whim. It was planned and each step was carefully executed. The photos below show some of the steps taken to reach this historic moment. From the Baltic Way's human chain across three nations in 1989 to the Act of Independence in 1990 signed in defiance of the Soviet Union we have tried to highlight the path taken by the Lithuanian people. Families, children, teenagers and the elderly participated in many different ways and in this album we hope we can reconstruct the "road to independence." In our small way we hope to show our gratitude to the people of Lithuania for their courage and bravery.

## Part I

**LIKE A SHOT EAGLE**

Chicago Lithuanian Opera - revisited

By Vytautas Kupcikevicius

Last weekend we traveled to our summer cottage in Union Pier, MI from our home in Oak Lawn, IL. It is about 1:15 hr. drive, long enough to listen to one CD. Since we both are opera fans, we usually listen to opera arias or opera choral recordings. It makes the drive short and pleasant. But this day we had a special treat, our friend Dana Stankaitytė had loaned us a newly issued CD of Algirdas Brazis' opera arias recorded during the Chicago Lithuanian Opera performances, and Lithuanian songs and hymns. We had been waiting a long time for this recording. Everyone in the Chicago Lithuanian community called him Mr. Al. Mr. A. Brazis had a long and distinguished singing career. He sang in the Chicago Lyric and NY Metropolitan Operas. In 1956 he returned to Chicago and became one of the major stars of the Chicago Lithuanian Opera Co. He sang in 26 operas and 81 performances. Listening to his beautiful, rich voice made my mind wander back to the days when the C.L. Opera began. Who started it? Where was the beginning of this amazing organization which is still active, after 53 years of staging operas, operettas and concerts?

My choral singing started a long time ago, when I joined a choral group in 1944 in Dresden, Germany. The group was formed to sing on Sundays during Lithuanian mass in a convent chapel. In the winter we started to prepare for our first concert - a Lithuanian Independence celebration on February 23rd. But the concert never happened, the city was destroyed February 12th and many chorus members were probably killed.

I sang in the church chorus during my 4 years in the DP camp. Since it was a small camp, it had a small church and a small chorus. In 1947 an attempt was made to organize a male chorus, but there were not enough men with singing voices and the attempt failed. In 1947 I had my first and last solo singing experience, it was comical and disastrous. The camp authorities decided to start the Christmas holidays with a concert. Since the camp was home to 3 Baltic nationals, Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians, the concert celebration would be international. After a short program 3 Santas, one for each nation, were to distribute gifts to the children, provided by the IRO. Someone convinced me that I should be the Lithuanian Santa. All I had to do was dress like Santa, go on the stage, and start singing a Lithuanian Christmas carol. Then everyone would join the singing and that would have been the end. A long, red housecoat, a red cap and some cotton for a beard was glued to my face and

the Lithuanian Santa was ready. I picked up the sack of IRO presents, stepped out on the stage and started singing. No one joined me and I somehow finished the carol. I distributed the presents to the children and left the stage running. When I regained my breath I noticed that I had one present left in the sack. I inspected it and to my great surprise it was addressed to me! Santa gave a present to himself! The IRO considered everyone under 18 to be a child, and since I was 17 I also received a gift. There was a lesson to be learned, but at that time I did not see it. I almost got into a fight with my friends for conning me to be Santa and then not helping me sing the carol, but it was soon forgotten.

The strange DP camp life went on. In 1948 the DP Camps started to change, immigration began and single men and women left for Canada and Australia. No one wanted families until the United States opened its doors. In December 1949 my parents and I arrived in Chicago IL. In the beginning, there was no time to look for any additional activities, work, eating and sleep consumed all my time. Life improved and in 1951 I heard that a men's chorus had been organized and was meeting in Marquette Park. I found them in the Putis tavern on west 69th street. My voice was checked and I became a member of Chicago's Lithuanian male chorus, Vytis. My stay with the chorus was short; I was drafted and left Chicago to serve in the military. I returned to Chicago in 1954 and rejoined the chorus. A new conductor, the former opera soloist V. Baltrušaitis was in charge and the chorus was preparing to celebrate its 5 year anniversary with a concert. We all liked Mr. Baltrušaitis and worked hard to be ready for the concert. With the chorus' help we purchased tuxedos. During the first part of the concert we wore white jackets and during second part black. We looked better than we sang. After the concert our girlfriends told us that the concert was a disaster. There was nothing we could do but hope that the concert would be forgotten. A few months later we repeated the concert in Hamilton, Canada. This time we did much better. The public was satisfied and we returned to Chicago in a better mood. But our conductor told us that we had much to learn before we could really sing.

Summer vacations came and we started hearing rumors that our chorus committee was planning to stage an opera. We were a democratic organization, chorus members elected a committee responsible for planning all chorus activities. In the fall a meeting was called and we were told that opera Rigoletto was proposed for the following spring. I pointed out that just a month ago we were told that we did not know how to sing and now we were planning to sing a complete opera! I was told that I did not know what I was talking



1957

Vytautas Kūpcikevičius was born in Kaunas, Lithuania.

He holds 51 US Patents in the food packaging field. His hobbies are art water colors and drift wood sculptures.



1958

about, and the proposition to stage an opera was placed for a vote. Everyone voted yes so I changed my mind and voted yes. The vote was unanimous and our work began. We already had most of the artists needed to sing Rigoletto. A. Kuciunas was available to conduct the opera, a stage director and artist were found, but the Lithuanian tenor S. Baras was in Italy and not available. A Latvian tenor was found who agreed to sing the opera in Lithuanian. Work began, we started learning the musical score, attended acting classes and were instructed how to paint our faces. When I told my father that we were staging an opera, he shrugged his shoulders and said that we were nuts. But work went on and in the spring of 1957 we were ready. Maria High School's auditorium was rented which had a capacity of 1200 and an orchestra pit. Three performances were scheduled and sold out. Saturday night came and we were

on stage dressed in funny costumes and a little bit shaky, but ready. I had learned the Rigoletto opera completely. I knew my part, all the soloists' parts and the orchestral music. The curtain opened and we were on our way for an experience which lasted over 50 years. The opera performance was a success, even my father liked it. One pessimist was converted.

My father on April 3, 1958 in his memoirs wrote:

*"The Chicago men's chorus Vyts up to now under the direction of V. Baltrušaitis for unknown, strange reasons attempted to stage operas. They chose Rigoletto and it turned out to be passable production. I have to admit that the opera Rigoletto was a success. Apparently encouraged by the success the men aimed to stage a second opera, Faust. I can say that the second opera was even better"*

My father's comments were typical, representing Chicago Lithuanian thinking. They were skeptical, but gave us a chance to show what we could do. Their continuous support insured that the Opera survived 50+ years and is still active.

*Continued next month...*



*Present of God,  
Mother Maria Kaupas*

#### Mother Maria Kaupas

*The Sisters of Saint Casimir received good news from Rome in November. The book Sister Margaret Petceavage had written about the holiness of their Foundress, Mother Maria, and sent to Rome in 2000 was reviewed by nine theologians and they gave a unanimous positive vote. Within the next five months a committee of Bishops will review it and cast a vote. If their vote is also positive it will go to the Holy Father and he surely will then declare her "Venerable." All of the materia for the miracle is also completed. It took two years to gather the information and it too, is waiting to be reviewed. When that is completed she will then be declared "Blessed." Won't that be a day for rejoicing!*

## In Search of Words

Jacquelyn Vincenta McShulsksis

The children who live around the courtyard on Žemaitijos gatvė in Vilnius are some of my favorite Lithuanians. Aged about 6 to 13, they were always friendly, seeming glad to see me whenever I entered at the iron sidewalk gate and passed them as they played on the concrete. From the beginning they knew that I was American. They'd say, "Hello, how are you?" With perfect pronunciation and sly smiles. Once in a while I self-consciously tried out "Laba diena," and they obliged me by responding in kind – beyond that, communication in their language was hopeless for me.

But I love Lithuanian – the way it sounds in speech and song, the way it looks on paper, and in spite of my long tongue, I love the way it feels to speak the words. I want to be able to hear and understand it, and to someday speak with the people of Lietuva. That concept seems not only like a fantasy, but also one without a logical purpose: I don't have relatives in Lithuania that I am aware of, and there are many countries in the world with beautiful languages but more people to speak with. In Kalamazoo, Michigan, where my home is, there are rumored to be a scattered handful of Lithuanians, but I haven't met them. The Lithuanian language would be useless to me unless I could return often to its homeland, and then what would be the point, really? I have been told it will take years to learn to speak it without sounding ridiculous. And yet, there is this pull of wanting to possess the language within me that I speculate this may be woven into my DNA.

So last winter I enrolled in the four-week beginner's summer Lithuanian course at Vilnius University, rented an apartment in the Old Town for six weeks, and made plane reservations. It seemed to satisfy people's surprise about these plans when I told them that my great grandparents on my father's side came from Lithuania and that I'd had a growing curiosity about the country since childhood. "Ah!" They nodded and expressed encouragement. However, for me, I think my lack of a more concrete answer – the mysterious nature of it all – helps draw me to Lithuanian's basic sounds, its grammar, and on into its poetry, fiction and histories.

For the year preceding my journey I owned two "beginner" Lithuanian books that I worked with every few days, reading aloud, looking up words, listening and responding to companion recordings, and trying to understand the basics of how this extremely different language works. On several fundamental points I got stuck in the early pages of both books: I didn't comprehend "declensions," could make no sense of changes to forms such as the plural, found few words in the dictionary, and could only shake my head at certain brief explanations of grammar for which there were no parallel concepts in my mind from English or the romance languages I was familiar with from



*Relief of educator Daukantas on an arch between two of the twelve courtyards*

school. I often glared bitterly at the word "beginner" on the books' covers.

But that interest and confusion sparked the determination I needed to enroll in the Vilnius University course, in spite of doubts about my ability to even sit still in a chair for more than half an hour. Having visited Lithuania for the first time in 2008, a few months before, I had connections and knowledge that made some of the arrangements easy. For instance, I'd found an apartment owner through online research, deciding to live in that attic studio loft instead of renting a dorm room or staying with a local family, both of which are options the University helps to arrange. I previously made acquaintances whom I could meet with during my time there, a nice occasional option to complete solitude. I knew where important things such as stores and banks were located. I didn't need a car, and I had borrowed a cell phone suitable for Europe from a friend in Michigan. Lots of potentially irritating details were taken care of. But there were touchier subjects around being a student again: Would I be able to concentrate in a classroom? To attempt conversation in Lithuanian, sounding foolish in front of strangers from all over the world? At this point in my mental life, could I remember anything longer than a phone number? I believed I might completely fail at these aspects of



*Vilnius University Bookstore*

college academics that I'd been away from for thirty years. However, I considered that perhaps there wouldn't be much in-class conversation – I liked imagining myself among other quiet, middle-aged students, writing phrases silently until they magically clicked. But this vision – and my fears – did not fit with the rich reality of my four weeks at Vilnius University.

I arrived at the bus station from Riga, Latvia on the evening of June 28, the night before the first day of class. I had landed in Stockholm about a week before, visited that beautiful city for a few days then taken an overnight ferry across the Baltic to Latvia, where I enjoyed its capital city for approximately 48 hours. A seven-hour bus trip took me to the train and bus station in Vilnius that was less than a mile from the southwestern edge of the Old Town where I lived. I collected my luggage and walked the rest of the way.

After I hauled my luggage up four flights of stairs to the same cozy attic apartment I had stayed in the previous fall, I realized that I had not brought an alarm clock or a watch, and both of these items are impossible to find on foot in Old Town Vilnius on a Sunday night. But I dug out another electronic device to fill in, assembled my pens and paper, and reviewed the map for a route to the main University court-



*Fresco 'Tree of Life' in the Philology Hall*

yard – the only one that is unlocked – off Universiteto gatvė. I planned to withdraw some litas for lunch from my US checking account the next morning at an ATM machine. The apartment owner had left me coffee, bread, and yogurt – I was set for the next 24 hours or so.

Fifty students enrolled in the Lithuanian Language Summer Course and we gathered for that first day in an old, elegant lecture room capable of holding a hundred or so. Far from being a sedate group of middle-aged bookish types, the group was incredibly diverse and lively, representing 24 countries and ranging in age from 18 to over sixty. Sitting in those well-worn wooden 'pews' it was impossible to tell who I would end up spending time with, in class or out. As it turned out, that much cultural and age variety scrambles preconceptions so much that socializing with my classmates was probably the easiest and most rewarding aspect of the entire course, which is saying a great deal.

There were four or five teachers and administrators present and they started off with general comments in English, interjecting some phrases uttered only in Lithuanian. These apparently included humorous remarks in response to which many of us gazed blankly around at our chuckling linguistic superiors. There were about twenty complete beginners,



including people like me who were not even sure how to say hello, along with some who had exposure to the language at family gatherings, "Saturday school," and the like. Instruction went up to Level Six, and for those most capable, meetings after that first day did not include any English at all. Otherwise, the language of instruction was English, a situation that made me feel simultaneously spoiled and inferior, for every student whose first language was Finnish, Italian, Spanish, German, Japanese, Croatian, Bulgarian, etc. Was performing the unimaginable as far I was concerned: Learning Lithuanian in yet a third language, their native tongue put aside entirely for four weeks.

It seemed to surprise and delight everyone on the afternoon of that first day that we were immediately welcomed to Vilnius University and our studies with a bountiful party. White linens were spread on tables in the courtyard of a restaurant backing up to University's labyrinth of property, and white taper candles, platters of gourmet foods, wine, columns of beer on tap, and coffee awaited us. This beautiful gift was repeated at the two-week mark (when some students departed), that time accompanied by traditional Lithuanian musicians and dancers, and then again on the last day of the full 4-week course after our formal graduation ceremony. Elegance and generosity were indelibly linked with the Lithuanian language for me.

From those earliest moments, the environment of Vilnius University felt like one of high academic standards. I have read comments about the University from others' experiences there during the Soviet era when shortcomings such as unavailable texts and failing restrooms apparently dominated its personality, but the overall feeling for one visiting as I was for a short time in 2009, was of excellence. In 1979 it celebrated its 400 year anniversary, centuries that have seen VU students led by Catholics, Russians, Soviets, Poles, and, today, an international staff of instructors. To walk the halls, observatory, classrooms, church, libraries, and thirteen courtyards is an intriguing, inspiring activity.

*Continued next month.....*

Jacquelyn Vincenta McShulskis

Jacquelyn Vincenta McShulskis is a free-lance writer and novelist living in Kalamazoo, Michigan, with American-Lithuanian roots in Kearny, New Jersey. When she is not traveling or writing, she is focused on family, friends, and non-profit work in the areas of civil liberties, community, and the environment.

If you have questions about the program please contact Jacquelyn at [JVMT@Yahoo.com](mailto:JVMT@Yahoo.com).

## ANSWER TO TRIVIA QUESTION

Trivia Quiz on page 5

Answer: Source, Postage Stamps of Lithuania, by the Lithuanian Philatelic Societies of New York and Toronto.

"The first Lithuanian postage stamps were issued December 1918. The first set of 10 and 15 Skatikas (pennies) stamps of Lietuvos Pašta within a rectangle, was setup and printed by typesetter Jonas Strazdas, in the printing shop of the first Postmaster General, Benediktas Tamoševičius. The first edition was limited to 5000 sets and a larger second edition was printed in December 31, 1918. The first color stamps were designed by Tadas Daugirdas and Kazys Šimonis and were printed in Berlin on February 17, 1919, followed by several more issues."

### FIRST VILNIUS ISSUE

December 27, 1918



#### Thin Figures

Provisional Issue inaugurating the Postal System of Independent Lithuania.

- \* Type set design by Juozas Strazdas.
- \* Text in 4 lines within a vertical rectangle of 8 x 10 type circles.
- \* Printed at the Martynas Kukta printshop in Vilnius.
- \* Sheets of 20 stamps (5 x 4), approximately 110mm x 115mm.
- \* Unwatermarked, buff colored book paper. No gum.
- \* Line perforated 111/4. Edges of sheet not perforated.

1. 10 skatiku, Black Quantity 5,000
  - a. Inverted "h" for "u"
  - b. Inverted "n" for "u" (pos. 9)
  - c. Horizontal pair imperf. between
  - d. Offset on reverse side
2. 15 skatiku Black Quantity 5,000
  - a. Inverted "h" for "u"
  - b. Inverted "n" for "u" (pos. 9)
  - c. Missing "L" in "Lietuvos" (pos. 17)
  - d. Offset on reverse side

Edward Shakalis

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

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## Hammer Museums Forge International Agreement

A Lithuanian museum and an American museum have formed an alliance. Now sister museums, both share a common mission to preserve the history of man's first tool, the hammer.

Antanas Kibickas of Linkmenys, Lithuania, is a publisher and hammer enthusiast. In 2006, he opened what he thought was the world's only museum dedicated to hammers. Then he discovered his American counterpart in Haines, Alaska. The Alaskan museum was founded in 2002 by Dave and Carol Pahl. Their museum became a non-profit educational facility in 2004.

In August, Antanas and his friend, Professor Algimantas Grigelis, made the long trip to America to visit the Pahl's and to study museum operations at the Alaskan museum. Algimantas served as translator for Antanas who speaks very little English. In spite of the challenging language barrier, both parties had an appreciation and mutual understanding of the importance of preserving the history of the hammer and its significance to cultural and industrial development. To that end, a mutual agreement was signed to further cement the sister museum relationship. The agreement addresses possible collaborations, including sharing digitized collection and research records, student exchange programs, and creation of a hammer reference book. "Bringing two museums together from opposite sides of the globe to share a common goal is a great thing" says Pahl. The signing ceremony on August 22, 2009, was also attended by board members and others associated with the Alaskan Hammer museum.

*Submitted by Dave Pahl*

*For additional information, contact*

### The Hammer Museum,

PO Box 702, Haines, Alaska 99827

ph. 907-766-2374

Email -hammermuseum@aptalaska.net

### CAPTIONS FOR THE PHOTOS

1. The Hammer Museum in Haines, Alaska
2. This little hammer was carved from Baltic Sea amber, and presented to Dave Pahl by Lithuanian museum founder Antanas Kibickas.
3. Dave Pahl signs the agreement
4. Museum supporter Lori Dudzik applauds. Dave Pahl and translator Algimantas Grigelis in background.
5. Hammer museum founders Dave Pahl and Antanas Kibickas



## DUKE RADVILA'S ROOSTER

From "Vilnius Legendor"

Compiled by Stasys Lipskis and published by "Žvėdra" in Lithuania, 1998

English Translation by Gloria O'Brien

*Vilniaus pašto rūmai priešais Šv. Jono bažnyčia XVII šimtmetija buvo Radvilų nuosavybė .....*

During the 17th century, the palatial Vilnius postal building across the road from St. Johns' Church was the property of the Radvila ducal family. The Radvilas had broken away from the Catholic Church to follow Calvinism, becoming that group's enthusiastic adherents. They built a kirke (chapel) within this palace, where Calvinist worship was held.

Mykolas Radvila, known as "The Black", Vilnius' vaivada (district governor), especially distinguished himself for his combativeness against the Catholic religion. He persecuted Catholics, slandered priests, despised churches, incited funeral or memorial processions. And, in a deliberate act of desecration, he ordered that piles of manure be heaped against the walls of St. Johns' church, and that a gallows be erected in front of the church's main doors.

When Mykolas Radvila, "The Black", died, the palace property was inherited by his four sons, who unsparingly followed in his footsteps with sly and treacherous ruses and contempt against the Catholics.

Once on Good Friday, as all Catholics observed a complete dry fast in mortification, and gathered in St. Johns' Church in fervent prayer before Christ's tomb, the Radvilas held a great feast in their own palace across the road, inviting many guests, of the same Calvinist persuasion.

Rivers flowed of wine, beer and mead, tables bent under a variety of meats and other delicacies. There seemed no end to idle talk and foul language, silly jokes and boisterous songs, as the hosts and guests alike roared with laughter at vulgar tales about the Catholic Church's ceremonies, priests, prayers and fasts.

Servants brought in a huge silver salver of roasted fowl and game: Grouse, pheasant, and a peacock with his iridescent, many-colored tail feathers spread widely. And a roasted rooster - with his feathers so artistically restored and arranged, that he seemed to be absolutely alive. The guests welcomed this rooster with great joy, and couldn't get over their admiration for the cook's resourcefulness, praising his culinary ability.

The eldest son, Mykolas Radvila, proud to employ such an unusual cook, exclaimed to the rooster:

"We greet you, good creature! Apparently, you are not a Catholic nor a papist, since on Good Friday you are found on the Radvila table!"

He had barely spoken those words, when the rooster stirred on the platter, stood up, spread his wings, stretched his neck and raised his head, with all his voice screamed:

**"Ku-ka-rie-ku-u!"**

The guests, thoroughly frightened, quit the table and ran to the doors, escaping as quickly and wherever they could.

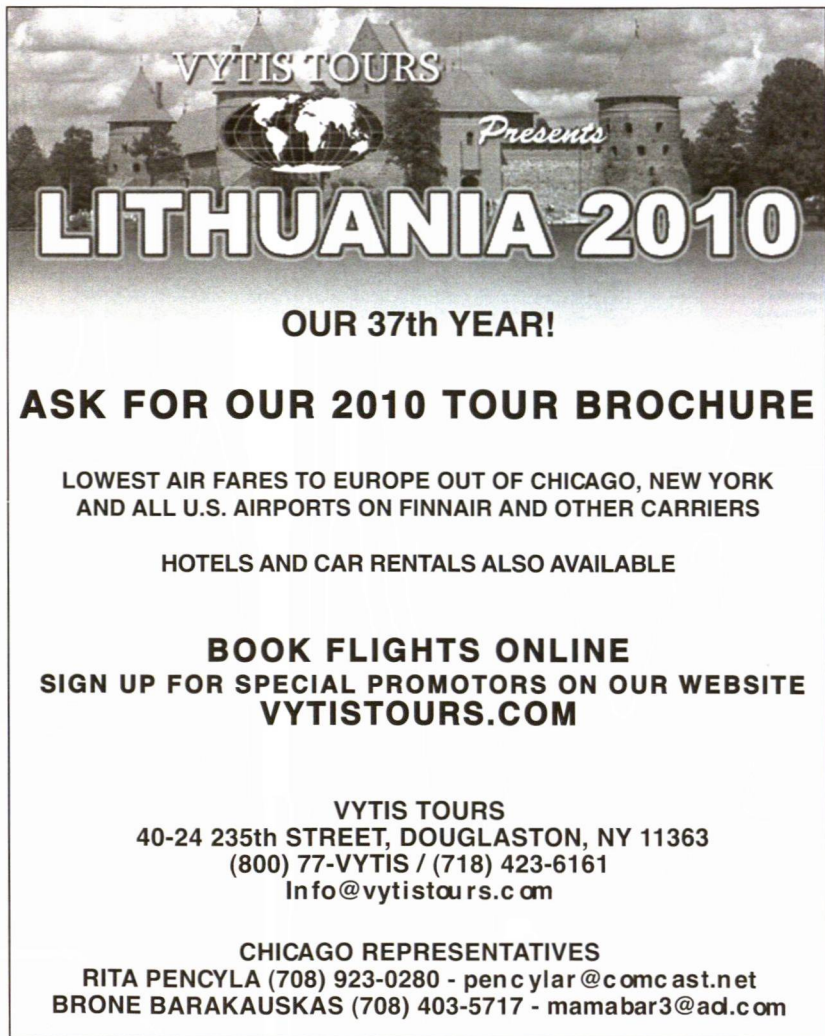
This event so affected the Duke Mykolas that he shortly afterward converted and returned to the Catholic Church. The other brothers followed the eldest. Jurgis, Albertas and Stasys Radvilai all, from great persecutors of the Church, became zealous Catholics. Jurgis became famous as the Bishop of Vilnius, even for a while being a possible candidate for the Papal throne. His honor as a cardinal eventually gave the name of the "kardinalija" to the Radvilas' palace.

Gloria Kivytaitė O'Brien

Gloria Kivytaitė O'Brien is a frequent contributor to Bridges.

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





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# Calendar of Events for March, April and May 2010

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

## March

**March 7, 2010**  
**LITHUANIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION**  
 St. Elizabeth Seton Parish,  
 9728 W. Palermas Drive, Sun City  
 Sponsor: Arizona Chapter of the LAC  
<http://www.lithaz.org/>

**March 7, 2010 - 2:00 pm**  
**COMMEMORATION OF LITHUANIAN INDEPENDENCE.**  
 Lithuanian Hall  
 851 Hollins Street  
 Baltimore, MD 21201-1003  
 Sponsor: Baltimore Chapter of the LAC

**March 7, 2010 - 2:00 pm**  
**INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATION**  
 We will be showing Lithuanian films with English subtitles, serving dinner consisting of Kugelis prepared by the board members, and topping it off with dancing with music provided by Kolorado Vabalai. Admission: \$10 for dues paying members; \$15 - for everyone else. Discount for seniors & children under 16.  
 Location: Fraternal Order of Eagles Hall  
 1151 S Galena Street  
 (just west of Mississippi and Havana)  
 Denver, CO 80247  
 Info: [www.coloradolithuanians.org](http://www.coloradolithuanians.org)  
 Sponsor: Colorado Chapter of the LAC

**March 24, 2010 - 3 pm**  
 Dr. Dainius Vaicekonis performs & lectures "The Beethoven Piano Sonatas Cycles" Brechemin Auditorium, School of Music, University of Washington, Seattle

**March 28, 2010**  
**PALM SUNDAY PANCAKE BREAKFAST**  
 with the Latvian Community. Please join us for Palm Sunday Church services followed by a Latvian & Lithuanian Easter cultural exchange. Enjoy traditional Latvian & Lithuanian foods and workshops featuring Latvian & Lithuanian Easter crafts. Please bring traditional Lithuanian Easter food to share. Time: 9:30 am  
 English Language Church Services, Pancake Breakfast following church - approximately. 10:30 am, Admission: Donation  
 Latvian Community Center  
 10705 W Virginia Ave., Lakewood, CO  
[www.coloradolithuanians.org](http://www.coloradolithuanians.org)

## APRIL

**April 9-11, 2010**  
**WOMEN'S WEEKEND**  
 Join Dr. Kristina Maciunas & Kerry Secrest for a weekend of renewal, introspection, & companionship. For info, on this lovely Neringa tradition-as well as to register-please see [www.neringa.org](http://www.neringa.org)

**April 17, 2010**  
**BALTIC FOLK FESTIVAL**  
 Lithuanian Hall  
 Baltimore, MD  
 Details to follow. <http://lietuvis.net>

**April 24, 2010 - 2pm**  
**BENEFIT CONCERT for Neringa Sisters' Convent**  
 600 Liberty Hwy, Putnam, CT 06260  
 This year's performers are the highly regarded members of the Toronto Lithuanian choir VOLUNGE  
[www.neringa.org](http://www.neringa.org)

**April 22-24, 2010**  
**AABS Conference**  
 (Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies)  
 Held at the University of Washington in conjunction with the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies.  
 Info.: <http://seattle.lietuviu-bendruomene.org>

## MAY

**MAY 9, 2010, - 2:00 pm**  
**MOTHER'S DAY CELEBRATION**  
 featuring a puppet play by a Lithuanian artist Ona Puckoriute-Zalensas from Cleveland followed by a pancake supper.  
 Admission: \$15 for dues paying members; \$20 - for everyone else.

Discount for seniors and children under 16.  
 Fraternal Order of Eagles Hall  
 1151 S Galena Street  
 (just west of Mississippi and Havana)  
 Denver, CO 80247  
 Contact: For further information:  
[www.coloradolithuanians.org](http://www.coloradolithuanians.org)

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21 - Klaipėda Coffee Mug - \$ 10



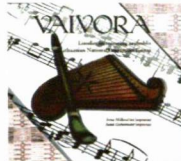
22 - Marijampolė Coffee Mug - \$ 10



5 - CD by Jurga "Instrukcija" - \$ 20



6 - CD by Jurga "Aukso Pieva" - \$ 20



7 - CD by Vaivora (ethno-cultural music) - \$ 20



8 - Vytis decal approx (3" x 3") - \$ 3



23 - Exploring Lithuania & Exploring Vilnius (2 set DVD with 3 hour total viewing time) - \$ 45.



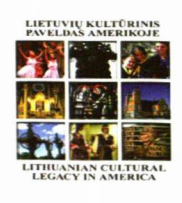
24 - Baseball Hat - \$ 25



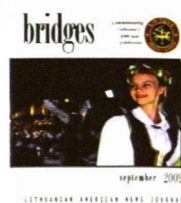
12 - "LIETUVA" scarf (4" x 52" long) - \$ 25



13 - DVD or 13th Folk Dance Festival at Galen Center of USC \$20.00



14 - Cultural Legacy Book (hardcover, 224 pages) \$45



15 - Bridges subscription \$20 for 10 issues



16 - Set of 6 DVD's of XII Theatre festival (in Lithuanian) - \$ 45



17 - Car license plate holder \$12



18 - LT sticker (4" x 9" approx) - \$ 4.



19 - LIETUVA decal (1" x 2.5") - \$ 3

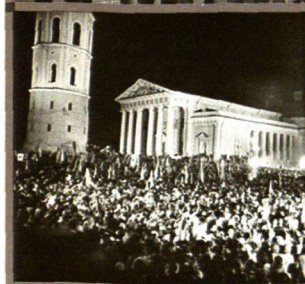
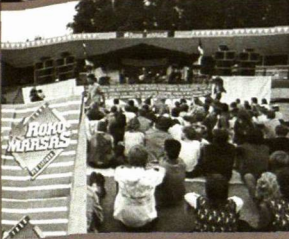
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VOLUME 34 ISSUE 2

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## Lithuanian's "SAJŪDIS", the Road to Independents

Photos are courtesy of "Lietuvos centrinis valstybes archyvas" (LCVA) from National Archive of Lithuania

- 1) - Bicyclists demonstrate around Lithuania starting at the Cathedral Square, Vilnius, July 20, 1988  
*Photo by Eugenijus Masevičius. LCVA. 0-93395*
- 2) - Lithuanian Freedom League meeting at Cathedral Square, Vilnius, February 6, 1989  
*Photo by Eugenijus Masevičius. LCVA. 0-95701*
- 3) - Sajūdžio meeting in "Kalnių" Park, Vilnius, August 22, 1989.  
*Photo by Jonas Juškevičius. LCVA. 0-101719.*
- 4) - "Roko maršas" Concerts throughout Lithuania (July 28 to October 7, 1988). Concert in Šiauliai.  
*Photo by Virgilijus Usinavičius (ELTA). LCVA. 0-103256.*
- 5) - Meeting and Lithuanian national entertainment at the Cathedral Square, Vilnius, October 22, 1988.  
*Photo by Algimantas Žižiūnas. LCVA. P-21948.*
- 6) - Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia beginning the "Baltijos Kelias" (Baltic Way), starting at the "Žaliuoju" bridge, Vilnius. August 23, 1989.  
*Photo by Jonas Kernagis. LCVA. P-22490.*

*\*Special thanks to  
Gražina Landsbergis, Vilnius,  
for her assistance.*

**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**