

# bridges

1

september 2010



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

*Letter from the Editor*

*I was privileged to have the opportunity to interview Greta Lukšytė. Rimas Gedeika covered her basketball skills when he wrote about several young women from Lithuania who were playing basketball in the States in an earlier issue of Bridges. He asked me if I could host Greta and her parents for a few nights. Her parents were in the United States from Vilnius for her college graduation and were interested in seeing as much of the country as possible. Rimas and Danutė Gedeika were tour guides while I did the breakfast and late night shifts. I love to cook for Lithuanians because they thoroughly enjoy eating. When they returned home after a long day of sightseeing they were filled with stories about where they went and what they saw. Their enthusiasm was contagious. Three strangers entered my life and three friends departed when they left my house.*

*A very special thank you to Gloria O' Brien who will be sharing the translations of "The Lithuanian's Home" by Angelė Vyšniauskaitė with us. If you feel you will never have an opportunity to visit Lithuania, these translations are just what you need to transport you there vicariously. If you have traveled to Lithuania, the translations will bring back fond memories.*

*This year marks the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II. The "Greatest Generation" sacrificed in so many ways during the war years. Many Americans of Lithuanian descent contributed to the cause of preserving freedom. Their sacrifices should not be forgotten and we have several readers who have offered to share their memories with us of events as they remember them. We will also hear from Lithuanians who were in displaced persons' camps during that time.*

*Very special thanks to Julie Skurdenis for her many, many beautiful photographs of Lithuania that we are privileged to share with you in this issue.*

*This month Orlando, Florida will be hosting the annual meeting of the Lithuanian American Community. We wish the delegates successful and productive sessions.*

*Thank you for sharing our homes with us this month.*

*Jeanne Shalna Dorr*  
 Jeanne Shalna Dorr

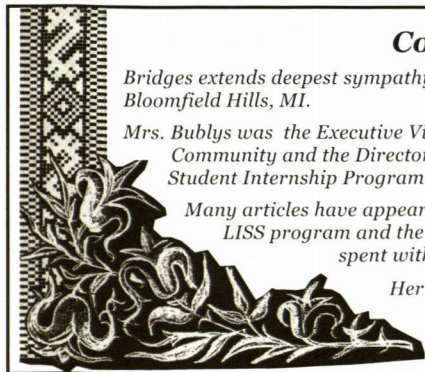
## Condolences

*Bridges extends deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Birutė Bublys of Bloomfield Hills, MI.*

*Mrs. Bublys was the Executive Vice President of the Lithuanian American Community and the Director of the Lithuanian American Community Student Internship Program.*

*Many articles have appeared in Bridges written by participants of the LISS program and the successes they enjoyed during their time spent with Mrs. Bublys in Lithuania.*

*Her spirit and dedication will be missed.*



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\* All Photos: Front Cover, Back Cover and Photo Album are from Palanga, Nida, Juodkrantė & Šventoji, Lithuania by Julie Skurdenis, Bronxville, NY

## Lithuanian American Community Education and Heritage

The program was started by the Lithuanian American Community National Executive Committee under the guidance of LAC V.P. and LISS Director, Birutė Bublėnė. It began with six internists and this year the number has risen to fifty six participants.

There are three programs. For the Lithuanian speaking, reading and writing group--we have twenty eight students in all professions, including political studies. They work in Seimas and in all the Ministries.

For the non speaking Lithuanian Heritage students we have intense Lithuanian language and culture classes in the morning at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas. In the afternoons these students are working in Kaunas in their area of studies--there are seven students in this program.

The third LISS program is for humanitarian volunteers who volunteer to spend time in orphanages, senior citizens' homes, and hospitals, etc. There are fourteen students in this program.

The LISS Heritage and LISS Lithuanian speaking programs are two month programs. The students are registered with Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas. They are required to submit a project at the end of their internship programs and will receive five credit hours and certification from their place of employment. They work both in Vilnius and Kaunas.

The humanitarian volunteers will receive a certification from the Lithuanian American Community Organization, stating that they have volunteered for a month doing humanitarian work.





## Orientation Day

Luke Murphy

Labas from Kaunas,  
Lithuania!

In its first year, seven students, including myself, comprise LISS' new Heritage Study/Internship Program, which gives its interns the ability to learn Lithuanian language and culture while working in a profession that coincides with their home university studies. The students must also design and complete a "project" related to their work or studies in Lithuania, which they will present at the end of the program. When addressing us during our orientation at Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) on Monday, June 28, LISS director Birutė Bublienė, reminded us that we agreed not only to learn and work in Lithuania, but also to "live as locals." To Bublienė this meant meeting Lithuanian students and taking advantage of the opportunities offered by VMU and the city of Kaunas.

During our orientation at VMU, Professor Aukse Balčytienė told us about the university's founding in 1922 when Kaunas was the temporary capital of Lithuania, and about VMU's unfortunate closing in 1950. Now, twenty years since the university's reinstatement, it boasts a liberal arts curriculum with over 25 languages offered and almost 9,000 students. Balčytienė stressed VMU's efforts to become an international university and how her staff would accommodate all of our program's needs, which was proven by the 20+ people who arrived at our



The Heritage Group meeting with Leader of Scimas, I. Degutienė (center in white) in her office.

Photo by Birutė Bublienė

orientation to explain their role throughout our time in Lithuania.

In Kaunas, LISS is partnering with The Lithuanian Diaspora Academy and Refresh in Lithuania, two already established university programs, to compliment the LISS Study/Internship Program with a series of lectures and trips to notable historical places in Lithuania. I am especially looking forward to Refresh in Lithuania's excursion to Trakai and my classes in Lithuanian language. I am sure once I learn more advanced sentences than "Mano vardas Luke" and "Kur tualetas?"—my most useful phrase thus far—I will have an easier time communicating to local Lithuanians in the city.

In the afternoon we met our peer mentors, who led us through a series of team-building exercises before getting dinner in the city. These Lithuanian students allowed us to experience Kaunas as its youth do, and I look forward to spending time with them in the future. I am highly grateful to LISS for giving me this opportunity to learn and work abroad, and I look forward to starting my work tomorrow. Ačiū ir iki!



LISS outside Vytautas Magnus University with Professor, Aukse Balčytienė, LISS Director, Birutė Bublienė, and LISS Administrator, Rasa Juskiene.

Photo by Aušra Vinciniene



LISS Orientation meeting with Vytautas Magnus University's Professor, Aukse Balčytienė.

Photo by Aušra Vinciniene



## Steel Wolf Rocks Camp



### Giraitė Opening

Mark Vyta Adamaitis

If two encore songs and many rows of smiling people are any indication, you could say that Steel Wolf's unplugged performance that melded rock 'n' roll anachronisms with a Lithuanian piquancy at the inaugural Camp Giraitė in Ashford, Connecticut on the weekend of May 14-16, was a success. One thing's for sure: A crackling laužas (bonfire) certainly puts huge grins on the faces of musicians and their audience.

Having taken the band's name from Lithuanian folklore in 1982, the New York-based Lithuanian-American rock band, Steel Wolf (Geležinis Vilkas), now comprised of Paul Naronis on lead guitar and backing vocals, Algis Kezys on drums and vocals, Gregory Szlezak on bass guitar and myself on lead vocals and percussion, opened the highly-anticipated outdoor concert with several songs - "Shoplifting Bananas", "Hazardville Headlines" and the semi-autobiographical "My Grandma's Advice" - from our latest compact disc, *Embracing Mainstream Success*. One understandable omission from the new album was "Himnas 2010" (which has been played on the Lithuanian language program on WPAT-NYC), Paul Naronis' electrifying lead guitar re-working of the Lithuanian National Anthem. Although Steel Wolf performed the song successfully on an electric keyboard earlier in the decade at Camp Neringa in Vermont, Paul felt his version just wouldn't translate well here on an acoustic guitar. Other locales that Steel Wolf has performed acoustically have been Forest Park (Queens) in 1986 and 1987, Floral Park (Long Island) in 1999 and the erstwhile Lithuanian lounge, Krezo 2, in Williamsburg (Brooklyn) in 2003.

The loudest cheering at the inaugural Camp Giraitė gig was undoubtedly for our newer material, however, I personally have a warm spot for the second half of the show, which was generally comprised of Steel Wolf classics, including "Exploring Uranus" and "Rapid Descent Into Oblivion", for we were once again reunited with two founding members of the band. First, toting his hand-held mini keyboard, Andrius "Lanaked" Lileika joined the band for his composition "Alice's Bearded Clam." Second, Edvardas Kezys joined us for several numbers on rhythm guitar. It was delightful to bear witness to the metamorphosis that took place as Ed found a way to switch hats from viršininkas (camp master) to all out rock 'n' roller. By the concert closer, he had even grabbed the microphone and became lead vocalist.

My favorite song of all was the audience participation number "A Complete Breakfast (Ko Tu Nori Pusryciams?)". During the number, the microphone is passed around and willing audience members get to share their favorite morning foods. I believe I recall someone yelling "Kugelis!". I didn't have to explain the procedure to the crowd at all because they were very familiar with the number due to the life this song has lived outside the band. The song was written and recorded back around 1985 when our most-frequented haunt was Židiny's, the Lithuanian Cultural Arts Center located in Brooklyn. However, as our songwriting matured, the tune was dropped from our set lists. Twenty years later, when our children were Lithuanian scouts attending the camp in Bolton, Massachusetts, Ed and I witnessed a performance of the song in Lithuanian by a group of young campfire leaders. We were dumbfounded! When we approached the teens about how they had gained knowledge of it, we eventually learned that the song has been performed for decades at many different Lithuanian camps all over the Northeast and Canada. By Steel Wolf performing "A Complete Breakfast" at the first-ever Camp Giraitė, I hope it will live on for another twenty years at least.

- For more information on Steel Wolf please go to: [www.myspace.com/steelwolfrocks](http://www.myspace.com/steelwolfrocks)
- To purchase Steel Wolf compact discs see the inside back page of Bridges.
- Steel Wolf performs annually at the New York City Marathon.

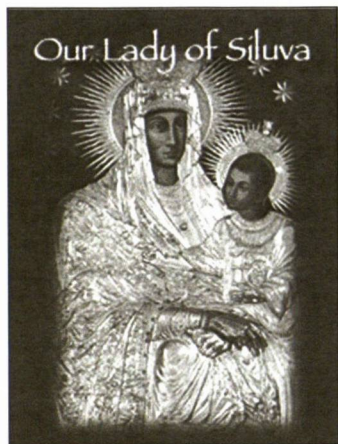
\*Photo of Mark Adamaitis and his Steel Wolf Band, is from Personal Archives.

## MARY, MOTHER OF GOD & Of ALL PEOPLE

Sister Margarita Bareikaitė

Many times throughout the year we express our love for blessed Mary. We begin New Year, January first, celebrating Mary as the Mother of God and in the last month of the year, on December 8th, Mary's feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Mary has been honored throughout history with many hymns, songs and prayers. Many churches have been dedicated to honor her, as the Mother of God. It is said that there have been over ninety thousand reported visions and apparitions of our Blessed Mother. The Catholic Church has always been cautious about the authenticity of supernatural phenomena and carefully investigates each claim. As we know, the apparitions are private revelations and not doctrines of faith. However there are some apparitions that have been approved by the Church and have become popular pilgrimage sites, enriching the faith of the people.



In 1608 the apparition of Our Lady took place in Šiluva - Lithuania. It is supposed to be the first apparition of the Virgin Mary in Europe. Besides, it was the unique case in the history of Christianity, when She appeared and talked to the person of non-Catholic

cohesion, i.e. a Calvinist. After the apparition of the Blessed Virgin the Catholic faith revived in that area, and the veneration of the Mother of God considerably increased. As we all remember, on September 7, 1993, Pope John Paul visited the Marian shrine of Šiluva and prayed for Lithuanian families.

In 1531 Mary appeared near Mexico City to Juan Diego, an Aztec Indian in Mexico and directed him to go to the bishop and ask him to build a church on that spot. Mary asked to "call my image Santa Maria de Guadalupe". Catholics are not required to believe in any such private apparitions. However, there are elements to this story that should be considered.

The actual painting still exists, Mary looking exactly as Juan described her. The cloak that the painting is on is woven from the cactus plant and has an extremely rough surface that could normally never hold paint. The cloth is made from a plant, it should have deteriorated by now in the Mexican climate. The picture remained intact with no covering for about three hundred years. It was subjected to fires and battles and to touches of millions of peoples. Later on it was put under glass. In 1921, a bomb planted at its base to destroy it, blew the marble altar below it to pieces, but the picture remained in place, completely unharmed. Within fifteen years of Mary's appearance at Guadalupe, more than nine million Mexicans were converted to the Catholic Church. Mary, as Our Lady of Guadalupe, has been declared as Our Lady of the Americas.

Religion is a community duty as well as a personal duty. Men cannot expect civic virtue to flourish or a nation to be strong unless they pray for the strength that comes only from God. The recognition of our dependence on God is part of the American heritage. America needs Mary in this hour of crisis.

*Sister Margarita Bareikaitė belongs to the order of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception 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.*



## A WW II War Story

"It might spoil the film in your camera." In 1945, I was stationed on the Philippine Island of Mindanao when the war with Japan came to an end. Some of our most experienced radio operators were being sent home and the Col. gave me the job of training replacements. What qualifications do you look for that will make a good radio operator? I studied the 201 files of our enlisted men looking for people with a musical background and a sense of rhythm hoping they can differentiate between a DIT and a DAH to learn Morse code quickly. Since we were leaving for Japan shortly, it was obvious that the training of these men would have to continue on board ship.

Thank God for the Sergeants who were the teachers. By the time we arrived in Japan, about five of the ten students were doing about ten words a minute of Morse Code which they learned in about six days.

Upon arrival in Japan, Col. Jim Purcell ordered me to start a school for radio operators. I needed Morse code practice equipment and had to go to a Signal Supply Depot to get it. I received travel orders dated November 7, 1945, to pick up the equip.

I arrived at the 4025th Signal Service GP. located near Kyoto and was greeted by Lt. Al Snyder, a former classmate from OCS at Ft. Monmouth, NJ, who said, "Are you the one who wants this equipment? Well, you have two of them, LET'S PARTY" In addition to some local trips, Al drove me to Tokyo. The first thing that caught my eye on the highway entering Tokyo was a soldier standing near a large sign that read (paraphrased), "YOU ARE ENTERING TOKYO THANKS TO THE FIRST CAVALRY DIVISION." Al said the soldier was guarding the sign to keep other soldiers and marines from tearing it down.

This was not the first sign installed by the First Cav. Div. Soldiers from other Inf. Divisions resented the 1st Cav. Div. for taking all the credit.

In Tokyo, while looking at the moat that goes around the Imperial Palace, we heard a commotion and saw Japanese children with American flags in their hand, lined up on each side of stairs outside a gray building. All of a sudden lights came on, the door opened and Gen. MacArthur appeared. Yes, there was a cameraman taking pictures of the "MAN" just like in the movies. After the Gen. left we went inside the Japanese Parliament building and were surprised to



Lt. Ed Shakalis, Hiroshima, November 1945

find the Parliament, (Dai Ichi) in session.

After a couple of days of sight seeing I told Al that I needed to get back to my outfit. As the (C-47) approached our destination, the pilot told us to look out the window to see Hiroshima, where the first bomb was dropped. Our plane landed at the HIROSHIMA airfield. We were told Hiroshima was off limits and to get on the truck that will take us to our destination. As I was heading for the truck, I heard a familiar voice say, "Hey Ed, want to ride with me?" It was a classmate from OCS who came to pick up the mail. We took off heading for Kure, which was our destination about 20 miles, away. My friend asked, "Do you want to go to Hiroshima and see

what the bomb did?" I advised him that we were told that Hiroshima was off limits and that I was concerned the radiation was still active and dangerous. He said, "IT MIGHT SPOIL THE FILM IN YOUR CAMERA ..." Looking back, BOY, WERE WE STUPID!!!

The first structure we saw was a POW prison. Riding along we came to a bombed out bridge that had a sign nearby, "FOR HIROSHIMA AIRFIELD." As we got closer to ground zero I noted a concrete building still standing but had the windows blown out. As we drove away from Hiroshima the wrecked buildings looked like damage you would see caused by a hurricane. It was several miles from Hiroshima before we saw houses still standing.

It was one experience that I will never forget. Throughout the years, I have often thought about the long-term effects of radiation

WOW! HORRENDOUS, DID ONE BOMB DO ALL THIS?

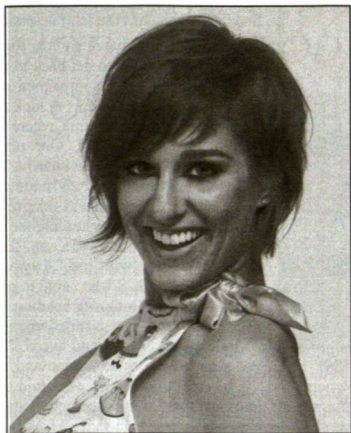
By Ed Shakalis, Class 38-44

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



Results of Atom bomb, Hiroshima, November 1945 Photo by Lt. Ed Shakalis





## Milda Bublys

Deimantė Dokšaitė

I was raised in the suburbs of Michigan, and, like my heritage, owe a lot of my fashion influence to my immediate family. My father is a fiercely modern architect and closet history buff. He knows a little about everything, and although lovingly curmudgeonly, I'm only recently understanding and appreciating the fact that he forced so much (non-fashion) reading and culture into my life at a young age. All the more reason for me to ponder the origins of the Lithuanian language to Sanskrit as I sew on a button to a new creation.

My mother, never without a wink and a gimmicky idea, had always been a Jane-of-All-Trades and taught me to be tremendously resourceful. She's also contributed her wardrobe (willingly and sometimes not) to my growing fashion archive.

My sister, Lina, really the sweetest and funniest girl ever, has a heart made of solid platinum and has supported me since I was making clothing for her Barbie dolls. She still buys my full-size human clothes today.

My grandmothers were really always supportive of my art and in fact I just had a piece of my Grandma Stases' furniture sent to me the other day. It's a plain coffee table on the outside, but on the inside back of the table top is where I used to do my first fashion sketches in crayon when my grandma wasn't looking. She pretended to be stern when she saw what I had done, but always laughed it off and encouraged me to draw more.

American Lithuanian Milda Bublys is currently

working as a teacher at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, which is also where she studied for four years.

Milda says she loves working with students as this is where it all begins - the excitement, the energy and fresh ideas - not jaded by the negativity of the fashion world. It can be very energizing for her. "The remainder of my time is split," - adds Milda. One half of her time is spent crafting one of a kind pieces for discerning clients with her clothing line at: [www.mildabublys.com](http://www.mildabublys.com) and also working on a new collection of wearable art/jewellery with the painter and her partner, Sarah Schrift: [www.sarahandmilda.com](http://www.sarahandmilda.com)

"Everything I do is very special, handmade and using resources that are repurposed, vintage or donated. Not only do I feel better about what I am doing for the earth, but it removes a lot of clutter from my studio and my life when scraps of fabric become embellished appliques on a new necklace," explains Milda.

Recently Milda spent a couple weeks in Lithuania. "LiTnews" asked her to share her impressions about Lithuanian clothes, to compare them with New Yorkers' style and to give us some tips about original style and what to wear during the spring season. We also wanted to know how her Lithuanian background influences Milda's work.

***You visited Lithuania recently. What could you say about Lithuanian clothes? Can you compare Vilnius and New York?***

I grew up in Michigan, going to Lithuanian school and hearing all about my heritage via history books and drawings of the old Lithuanian farm life. So I had a very different picture in my head - I seriously thought that every girl in Lithuania dressed like the olden days - in long skirts with aprons, heavy linen blouses and vests, all from rough-woven cloth. Not so as it turned out!

I've visited over a dozen times over the years, what I've noticed is that Lithuanian women have a wonderful knack for bringing specialty and craft into their everyday wardrobe. Whether it's a special hand-sewn stitch, some embroidery, or a pin and scarf that changes up their every day look, it looks like it has a handmade touch.

New Yorkers are a special lot - as our city is really and truly a melting pot, the average fashionista here dresses like a UN representative - with a little influence of two cultures or more in her everyday look. Take for instance my choice today - I'm wearing an H&M top from NYC, amber necklaces from Lithuania, jeans from Italy, and a scarf I picked up in Bali!

***It was quite a long time between this and your last trip to Lithuania - do you see any changes in the Lithuanian look?***

Yes, but sadly, I think it's due to mass consumerism. Though Lithuanian women are more trendy and fashion-forward than I remember previously, what I find more of here is disposable fashion. I feel like there used to be more of a market for carefully crafted clothes. Girls couldn't afford much, but the one piece they bought sustained them for a long time and they invested in it, just accessorizing it differently everyday. Now I feel like places like Zara have invaded individual tastes and made them look more like everyone else.

*Maybe you got some inspiration from your visit here?*

I'm a huge fan of the Baroque churches in the Old Town. Particularly Sv. Onos, which looks like a big pink Barbie cake with white icing to me. The other thing I found amazing was the graffiti everywhere - so colourful and decorating the bleak winter landscape like little coloured gems tossed into the snow.

*What are your impressions of the Lithuanian fashion industry?*

Some years ago, I attended some fashion shows and it seemed that there was a small, burgeoning industry. The designers are most certainly very creative, but I think it's difficult to prevail here as it's geographically quite isolated. I had some relatives in Kaunas who were furriers for some years, so I came to know it, and I think Lithuanians really do this best.

As a country that is shrouded in ice for the better part of the year, I believe the inclination to create great outerwear that keeps you warm, but can still look amazing, is key. On my recent trip to Vilnius I kept chasing down women on the street to take pictures of their furs - from herringbone designs to coloured collars, it's been the most interesting I've seen.

*Who are some Lithuanian fashion designers who in your opinion could compete in the world's fashion market?*

I've heard quite a bit about Juozas Statkevičius, and it seems he's quite the favourite. My sister told me that he is a neighbour of ours in Vilnius! I'm a fan of his clothing and a big, big fan of his fragrance. I also love Ramunė Piekautaitė - she really understands the drape of cloth and creating beautifully constructed clothing.

*New York is one of world's fashion capitals. I guess that means that there are plenty of opportunities for fashion designers, but on the other hand does this also mean that there is a lot of competition?*

New York, by definition, is extremely competitive. Even when you ride the subway you are competing with people for a seat, in the café to be served first, at the grocery to get the freshest produce. You're always fighting for something. The fashion industry here is quite the same way - which gets tiring over the years. I think it's

important to find your voice as a designer and keep at it. What I've been trying to do is carve out my own niche and make specialty items that please me, and hopefully appeal to a small group of women as well.

*You were born in the USA, but grew up in a Lithuanian family. Are there any links to Lithuania in your creations?*

As much as I have tried, my culture is always a part of me. There's a beautiful storytelling in Lithuanian, particularly its pagan fairy tale past and the legends of Archduke warriors that dot history. Also the crafts like the egg-painting (margučiai) and things made of straw and pottery have always intrigued me. Things that I am working on now involve the beautiful patterns of my grandmother's margučiai on clothing and jewellery.

*Spring is already here. What would you recommend for those who want to follow the latest fashion trends?*

I'm not a trend person at all! But what I do recommend is that you wear colorful clothing, something that brings out your inner sparkle and makes you confident and happy. If you want to follow what the magazines are telling you, take those ideas and make them your own. There's much more pride in being able to love and be yourself!

*Am I right in thinking that for you personal style is more important than fashion?*

Certainly personal style! Fashion is ever-changing and is wonderful as you can put a new 'hat' on everyday. There's so much visceral beauty in these items that we wear, but you have to be careful not to take anything too seriously or we end up looking like a cookie-cutter stamp with an expiration date.

This can be expensive and exhausting - what is a better devotion of energy is to pick things that look flattering on you, with colours and details that speak of your personality. Sometimes it's even better when you get it all wrong - accidents make the best inspiration to try again and get it right the next time.

*Reprinted with permission of www.litnews.lt*

## Corrections

The following names were incorrectly spelled in the Ateitis article that begins on page 12 of the July/August, 2010 issue of Bridges. **We apologize for the errors.**

**Page 13**

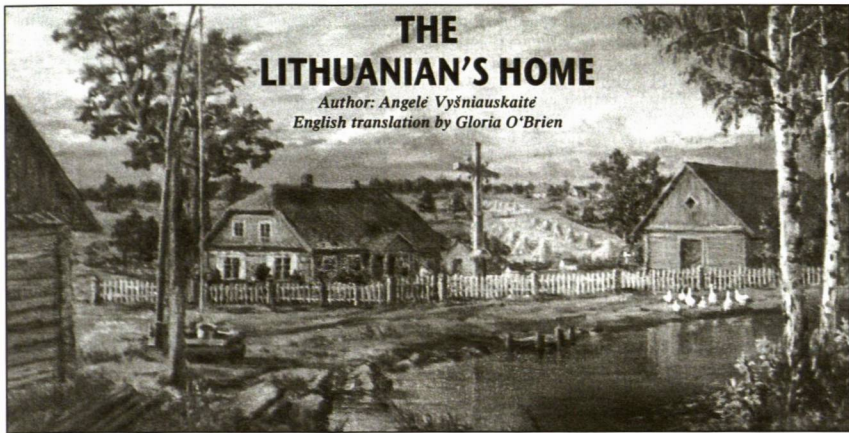
Corrected names are: Dr. Adolfas Damušis  
Prof. Dr. Justinas Pikušinas

**Page 14**

Bottom left photo caption should read: Danguolė Kuolas

# THE LITHUANIAN'S HOME

Author: *Angelė Vyšniauskaitė*  
English translation by *Gloria O'Brien*



The Lithuanian, from ancient times, has thought of his home (namai) as sacred: His dwelling, the place of his own birth and that of his children and his children's children; his homestead, that supported his way of life; his kaimas, where his neighbors were settled; and finally, Lietuva-Tevynė.

The complex of farm buildings and the surrounding trees, fences, and orchards was known as the sodyba, and was the center of his universe. Throughout all of history, the Lithuanian has fought and struggled to defend the home of his parents and forefathers, his Teviškė (native land).

Owing to the disastrous effects of forced collectivization under Soviet communism, many people now returning to Independent Lithuania are not coming back to their remembered homes. At best, there might be one or two old trees or possibly some sort of ramshackle farm building still standing. A shudder passes through the heart at the sight of these empty homesteads. Here amongst these ghosts can be felt the fading embers of the ancestors' spirit, which brought family members to join together at one hearth, to sit at the family table, and join young and old in one group. The Lithuanian's home was his fortress and his place of worship. However humble, it was his. Here, his spirit was at peace.

## Gyvenvietės - Settlements

Over the centuries, several different kinds of settlements developed. The oldest was the kaimas, groups of homes built near rivers or forests. In time, royal land reforms parceled out land to peasants and at the same time, changed the orientation of the kaimas. Reforms of the 16th century produced the so-called gatvinis kaimas (roadside villages). Cottages and outbuildings were ranged along a straight road, with communal buildings, such as barns, grain storage, as well as several saunas (pirtis), built crosswise at the end of

Lithuanian "Sodyba" in the summer by Česlovas Janušas the road. The roadside kaimas held property in common, such as fields at riverside where grass grew high. At haying time, farmers shared the work of cutting, then shared out the haystacks amongst themselves.

Land was apportioned beginning in 1557, by the Valaku reforms, to families according to their ability to prosper, and the number of working members in the family. As usual, the individual prosperous farmer continued to run his sodyba (vienkiemis) in a spot that suited him. Regardless of varying types of land reform, until the convulsions and upheavals of the middle of the 20th century, the old friendly relations amongst neighbors were preserved. All were ready and willing to join in talka (collective farming assistance), mutual help in haying, harvesting, flax-pulling, mowing, or flax-breaking. And as we all know, each activity was accompanied by its well-loved folksongs.

*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](mailto:Senaboba@aol.com).*

## 100th Anniversary

Congratulations to

Rev. Dr. Valdas Ausra and the parishioners of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oak Lawn, IL.

The church will celebrate its 100th anniversary on October 10.

Zion Church was established in 1910 by Lithuanian Lutheran immigrants in Chicago; due to new immigration after the Second World War, in 1950 a German service was added and finally, in 1972, an English service was also added.

May God bless all of you!





# Immigration Memories Relived

Kestutis V. Lukas

Sometimes memories and experiences converge and combine the present with the past in a surprising, exciting, and gratifying way.

World War II was over. My family had escaped the Russian reoccupation in Lithuania, and had been living in various displaced persons camps in Germany for almost five years. I was just approaching my fifth birthday at that time, but I still have some flashbacks and memories of those days. I remember some place names in Germany, such as: Kassel, Butsbach, Wiesbaden, Bremen, and Bremerhaven. I can't remember everything in every sequence, yet, certain events seem to stand out. Some of my favorites were: going mushroom hunting in a little woods somewhere at the edge of the town of Kassel. Then, there was a model airplane glider event on a little hill in a field just in front of those same woods. I still remember watching the men and boys winding up by hand the rubber band driven propellers and then sending them off from the hill. What a thrill to see model airplanes glide so far. Since then, I always wanted to build one myself.

Then there were the discussions as to where we were going next. It seemed that we were scheduled for Australia. I remember my brothers coming back from school and singing the Australian song that they learned: "Kukabura sits on the old gum tree....." I remember feeling a bit disappointed about going to Australia because that Christmas we received a package from our Uncle Eddie in America, and in it was a little red toy metal car for me, with wheels that actually rolled and I could push it around. I definitely wanted to go to America - the place where such cars came from, and perhaps real full sized ones, too. Well, one evening I remember my parents opening a letter and announcing: "Guess what, we're going to America." It was great news. I didn't know anything about it at the time, but apparently the sponsorship initiated by our Uncle Eddie had taken some time to come through, and we finally got it. In those days after World War II, immigrants to the U.S. needed a sponsor who would vouch for them that they would have a place to stay and also have a job lined up. Our Uncle Eddie could do it because he was a U.S. citizen. So, I packed the little red car into my little red toy suitcase, and I was ready to go to America.

When the time came to actually depart from Kassel, for me it was just a series of fuzzy images and events: First, it was being loaded onto army trucks in the middle of the night (or probably the early morning) with all suitcases and anything that could be carried. Then it was a series of truck rides, train rides, and processing center

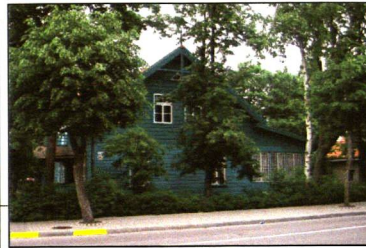
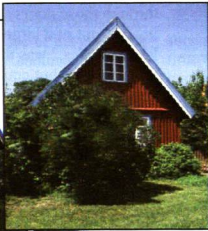
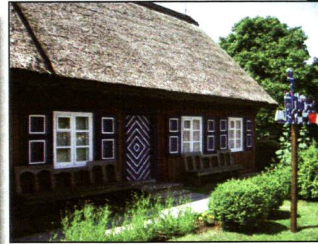
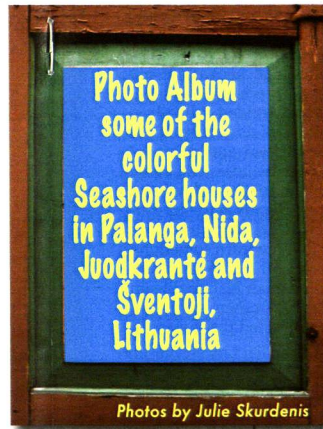
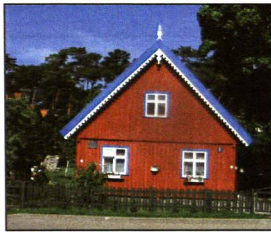
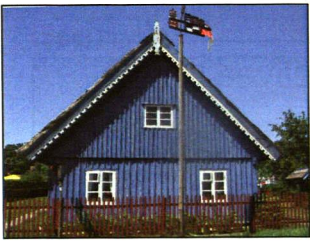
stopovers. I think that the last processing center was Hamburg. I remember asking where we were going, and the answer was always "To America." "Are we actually going to take a ship there?" I'd ask. And the answer was "Yes." "So, where is the ship?" I thought to myself. It was just a seemingly endless ride on trucks and trains, and somehow always at night.

Then, one day, we were all on a train with all our suitcases and baggage, when the train finally came to a stop in what seemed like a huge totally enclosed train station. Everybody got off the train. As I looked around, I saw other trains stopped there, too, because all of the tracks coming in ended at a long platform, like the end of the line. Off that long platform was a continuous line of doors leading out. Crowds of people with all of their suitcases and bags were getting off the trains and heading towards that long line of doors along the length the platform. And we, too, pushed on with the crowd. Suddenly, we were through those doors and found ourselves on a dock standing in front of a large ship. "Is this the ship to America?" I asked. "Yes," was the answer. And I tried my best to see it end to end, but couldn't because of the crowds and my small size. Then, before I could get myself oriented, we were going up the gangplank. Again, I tried my best to see the front and back of the ship, but it was just too big. The next thing I remember was standing at the rail on board the ship as it slowly pulled away from the dock. The dock was empty now except for a few workers handling the lines, and I could easily see the long line of access doors along that dock, which opened into the enclosed train station where we had just arrived. Before long we were headed out to sea, and all I can remember is a bunk to sleep in and everybody being seasick. Some days later I remember asking to go on deck to try to see some whales, but the Atlantic Ocean was just too cold and rough, so there was not much time out on deck. It was late March or early April 1949.

After about 10 or 11 days at sea our ship arrived in the U.S. and docked at Boston. All I can remember then was: everybody packing their suitcases and belongings, going down the gangplank onto the new docks, going through the processing stations, and back onto a train again for a seemingly all day ride. Then, by night time, we changed onto another train. Later that same night, which seemed like forever to me, the train came to a final stop. We were finally getting off. It was the last train, at the last stop, onto the last platform, at the end of the line. We piled onto the platform with all our baggage and belongings. We were the last passengers to get off.

*Continued on page 14*







It seemed like the middle of the night. There on the platform, was Uncle Eddie waiting for us. After many hugs and greetings, he loaded all of us and our baggage into his waiting car, a Studebaker. I couldn't believe it: I was in America and in a car with the same uncle who sent me the little red car for Christmas, which I was holding in my hand because I had to show it to him. He remembered it. And, the best part of all: He turned on the car radio as he drove us to his home just outside of Doylestown, PA. I was awed by the fact that a moving car could actually play a radio, too. You see, at that time for us, listening to any radio anywhere was a treat. While riding in my uncle's car with it's radio playing I remember thinking to myself "I'm really in America now."

About 15 years later I found myself on a troop ship in the Atlantic Ocean on my way to be stationed for a tour of duty in Germany. I was an infantryman in the U.S. Army. I was anxious to see and experience Germany again because those were my last memories of Europe. I made sure I was on deck as the ship passed the cliffs of Dover and into the English Channel. Soon the announcement came over the intercom for everyone to pack his gear because we would be docking at the port of Bremerhaven soon. I made sure that I was on deck as the ship started to approach the docks. I couldn't believe it. Unfolding in front of me, to my great surprise, there reappeared that exact same dock which I had left as a little Lithuanian refugee boy, with that same wall of doors lined up in a row leading through to a series of train tracks. It was an instant flashback - a *deja-vu*. Suddenly, for a moment, I was five years old again reliving that same time so long ago. I felt honored to be coming back as a soldier in the U.S. Army. It was like a repayment, because it was the U.S. Army which rescued and saved us in the first place. So, I proudly went down the gangplank onto the same docks, and went through the same row of doors, to the accompaniment of the Army marching band welcoming us. I boarded a train in that same train station, and it took me to Augsburg, Germany, where I was then loaded onto an Army truck which then took me to the army base where I was posted. I had just completed an amazing journey - a full circle - leaving Bremerhaven for America, and coming back to Bremerhaven as an American. I felt honored and proud.

*Kestutis V. Lukas*

*Kestutis V. Lukas grew up in Philadelphia, presently lives in Wyndmoor, just outside of Philadelphia, and recently went back to Lithuania for the first time. There he was able to actually find the place where he was born, and see the places that he heard stories about while growing up.*

## On Her Own, *Greta Luksyte*

Interview by Jeanne Dorr

*I know you come from an athletic family. Please share your background with us.*

My mother was a Pro handball player and my dad was a Pro volleyball player. Since I was little I used to chase handballs in my mother's practices and was spiking balls while my dad was playing volleyball. Also, I had a chance to watch some of my brother's basketball games. My mother and all her friends wanted me to play handball and dad, of course, was trying to convince me to be a volleyball player. I said no to them and kept asking my mom to take me to basketball tryouts when I was ten. I liked something about this sport and decided to be a basketball player. I was taking an hour bus ride every day to basketball practice. I never complained and don't remember missing a practice when I was little. Yes, every single day I was following the same routine-school and basketball. I loved it. I made many friends at the basketball practices, I liked my coach and I liked the competitiveness of this sport. I was willing to learn something new everyday and it was enjoyable for me. When I was fourteen I was invited to the Lithuanian National team camp, made it and have been playing for them until now. I was very excited about that and decided that I want to play this sport in the future as well.

*You left Lithuania alone at a very young age to complete high school in the United States. Where did you study and what were your feelings when you enrolled in the school? What were the differences between education here and in Lithuania?*

As soon as I turned seventeen I received an opportunity to come to the United States and play basketball here. I came to Virginia, to Walsingham Academy. I lived with the host family and these people were amazing. We keep in touch with them till this day. The beginning was not easy because I had to deal with a different language, new people, different academics and all of this together was hard to handle at this young age alone and in the foreign country. With help of my family at home and my new host family in Virginia I learned to live on my own. I had to do housework, take care of myself, make new friends, go to basketball practices and everything that most every teenager does, but basically on my own. I am glad my parents raised me well and I had the ability to take care of myself. I know that many of my friends could not survive this lifestyle and went back to Lithuania. It was not easy, but I handled it and now I love this country and especially the many people who helped me through all these years to reach my dream.

High school was a little bit different here in the United States than in Lithuania. Here I went to a private school where we had to wear uniforms. I had never



experienced that before. Also there were more rules and regulations than in Lithuania. I had to take subjects that I never even heard of in my home country and all of this being in a foreign language made it even harder on me.

I played three sports at Walsingham Academy; volleyball, soccer, and of course basketball. We won the State Championship both years when I was at this high school. I was very honored to get two rings for basketball and also in my senior year we won State Championship in volleyball as well, so it made my dad very happy!

**Why did you select the University of North Carolina Wilmington as your college of choice? What is your major?**

I wanted to continue my basketball career in college. I received an invitation to play for UNCW. I went there on my official visit and fell in love with the school. I love the beach so it was great area to go to school—only ten minutes from the Atlantic Ocean. What can be better than that? I came to the United States so I could get a good education and also be able to play basketball at the same time. It would have been difficult in Lithuania since Universities are not for both it is mostly for education. Sports are not big parts of Universities in Lithuania. I am very glad I just graduated with an International Business degree and reached some basketball accomplishments while I played for UNCW.

**What is the special day you and your family share?**

I was twenty three years old June 18. Yes, June 18 is a special day in my family, because my mom, my dad and I, all three of us were born on this special day. My brother was the only one who was left out. We



Greta and her proud parents Ramune and Ricardas. Her parents came from Lithuania to attend her graduation.

are very close and maybe it is because we were born the same day and are Gemini as a zodiac or maybe it's because the entire family likes sports.



Left to right: Greta Luksyte with her roommates who were also her basketball teammates: Candace Walker and Casey Sawhook.

**What was most difficult?**

This life story sounds great but I had to deal with many differences which I was not used to when I was at home. Celebrations were a hard part. I haven't spent Christmas with my family for the last six years. I have not been home for my parents' birthdays and also my brother's birthday for most of the time. I tried to handle this homesickness which used to get to me the most during family celebrations or other events when I used to see other families together or other parents coming to my friends' special events. Thanks to my host family they were there when I needed them the most. I only came back home for the sum-

mer for a couple of months. The hardest part was coming back home and getting attached to family and new friends and leaving again. This lasted over and over again. This is why I am ready to go back to Lithuania and start a new chapter. To be closer to home and hopefully be able to spend celebrations together and especially Christmas which used to be our family's favorite celebration because we all were always together on this day. I made many great friends in these six years and I will never forget the people who helped me here. It's been a great journey but I am looking forward to what is waiting for me next and can not wait for more challenges in my life.

**What are your plans for the future?**

Since I love basketball so much I will try to play this coming summer for the Lithuanian Women's basketball national team and later, hopefully, I will find a team in Europe where I could succeed as a basketball player. I love travelling and hopefully when I am done with basketball one day I will be able to use my International Business degree and travel around the world.



Greta proudly points to her name as Jeanne Dorr "models" Greta's basketball jersey.

## Part III

# IN THE DEATH-CAMPS AND BANISHMENT REMINISCENCES

Author: JONAS KREIVENAS

*In Part 2 Mr. KREIVENAS wrote of the terrible struggle to reach the camp and the horrors they encountered along the way.*

Physically strong prisoners were assigned to build the railroad, which was being extended from Koshva-Petschora to Workuta. We had to cut the trees, rip out the stumps, remove the top soil, and dig the ditches. Labor quotas were set very high and we had to struggle up to 14 hours a day to meet them. Work was very dangerous and many prisoners were killed or injured in accidents. Many others were shot and killed by the guards, and nobody investigated the reasons why. Along the planned railroad route were established similar KZ camps, spaced approximately two to three miles apart. We carried railroad tracks and ties on our shoulders. All hard work was done with the sheer force of human muscles. The camp had no water wells. Only once in every two or three months were we taken for a bath. The problem of lice was unbearable.

Approximately one third of the prisoners were criminals, and two thirds - political. The camp administration gave the criminals all kinds of priorities and privileges. The most frequent victims of this privileged class were political prisoners from Baltic countries. The criminals stole anything these prisoners had and took away their better clothing.

I had a pair of long leather boots, which my wife had brought me during her visit in Marijampole prison. For two weeks I slept with the boots on, so the criminals would not steal them. One night I decided to give my feet some rest and took the boots off. As a sun thing, the next morning the boots were gone. Two days later I saw one of the guards wearing them. Even my warm sweater, which I had brought from Lithuania and which was my life-saver in this cold climate, was taken away from me by the camp's officials.

When war between Nazi Germany and Bolshevik Russia broke out, the guards and other members of the camp administration were replaced by criminal prisoners. A real anarchy started. Thefts and killings by the criminals skyrocketed. If a service dog died, an autopsy and investigation were conducted, and a detailed statement was written. When a prisoner died or was killed by the guards, nobody inquired about the circumstances of his death. His

name was crossed off the list and his body was simply thrown outside the camp limits. It stayed there unburied in the snow or mud.

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At the beginning of August, 1941, 35 political prisoners from the Baltic countries were sent to granite quarries at the foot of the Ural Mountains. The air was thick with small black flies and mosquitoes. For protection we wore gloves and face-nets. Among us were two young brothers, students from Finland. When one of the brothers collapsed and fainted, the guard kicked him and ripped off his clothes. Within a few minutes, black flies and mosquitoes thickly covered his body and sucked his blood. To the satisfaction of the sadistic guard, the young student was dead in a few hours, and we were not allowed to help him.

Unable to walk from exhaustion and starvation, we crawled on the ground, trying to fulfill very high quotas of labor. After a month we were returned to Camp 23.

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In the summer of 1941, when the German armies were pushing the Russians to the east, many Soviet prisons in European Russia were evacuated and prisoners were shipped to the north. From the middle of September through November, these prisoners were brought by trains to Koshva. From there they walked in convoys towards Workuta, along the route of the future railroad. From sunrise till sunset, we saw thousands of them walking silently every day. Their heads bent, they moved in rows of four, followed by the armed guards and dogs. We were strongly warned not to talk to them.

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At one spot our railroad had to cross a swampy river bed. We poured hundreds of wheelbarrows of soil into the swamp, but the results were futile. The soil would sink into a seemingly bottomless hole and disappear.

One high official from Abez arrived to inspect the progress and suggested a very unique plan. He proposed to put a pot with a reward basket, consisting of a loaf of bread, some sausage, and a bottle of vodka, in the exact middle of the swamp. The prisoners were split into two brigades, each working from the opposite banks of the swamp. The brigade who reached the pot first was to merit the reward.

His idea worked miracles. The political prisoners quickly filled the wheelbarrows and pulled them by the rope to the swamp. The criminals held only at the handles and steered. This way many political prisoners were pushed into the swamp and perished. Others, excited by the spirit of competition and having somewhat weaker nerves, jumped like lemmings into the swamp and disappeared under the surface. Approximately 50 political prisoners lost their lives

in this triumph of insanity and were buried under tons of the filler soil.

Seeing this madness, I intentionally stuck my foot under the wheel. Badly injured, I was put aside. The swamp was finally filled, and the reward was divided among the criminal prisoners only. My life was saved by an injured foot.

The camp's administration received from the American (or International?) Red Cross 18 sets of metal beds, mattresses, pillows, sheets, blankets, and basic medicaments. One little building was assigned to serve as a dispensary and hospital.

In one larger room all 18 beds were assembled, but only for show purposes to fool the international inspector, in the event she would arrive to inspect the camp. The smaller room was used as a dispensary. Because of my foot injury, I was unable to work at the railroad and was assigned to live in this room as a medical assistant in charge of the hospital's inventory. Our physician was Mrs. Goldberg, a political prisoner herself, who lived outside of camp limits.

My duties were to measure the temperature of the sick and to bandage their wounds. We did not have any internal medicine or pills. Through the dispensary's window every morning I could see the prisoners being inspected at the gate and lined up for the day's work. A musical band of two or three prisoners was playing happy tunes, while others, starving and dressed poorly for Arctic temperatures, looked more like scarecrows than human beings.

After 12 to 14 hours of work under incredibly cruel conditions on the railroad, every evening hungry and exhausted prisoners would return to their dark, damp and cold barracks. Every night, regardless of weather and temperature, they would be lined up outside for roll-count and inspection. This routine sometimes lasted for hours, since most of the guards were inexperienced in arithmetic. There were no Sundays or holidays for resting. With every passing day prisoners grew weaker and died in large numbers.

I was very thankful to the Almighty God for being able to work in a warm room, and felt like a mouse under a broom. Every calorie in the form of food could extend a prisoner's life, therefore I learned how to boil zink ointment and add its fat to my soup.

Dr. Goldberg started borrowing hospital's blankets, and in six months twelve blankets were gone. One night in June, somebody broke in through the window and stole the rest of the blankets. After an investigation, the hospital was closed, and I was returned to the barracks to work on the railroad.

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Due to inhumane living conditions, malnutrition, and a lack of vitamins and minerals, prisoners would get specific

sicknesses and diseases.

The most common illness was "cinga", or scorbutic sickness, which is caused by lack of vitamin C and affects the teeth. The next most common sickness was "chicken sightness": every afternoon the victim would become blind and stay so until the next morning. Many prisoners had skin diseases, which made the skin turn into small fishlike scales and which shed like a powder.

The deadliest of them all was "white diarrhea". Nobody survived for more than three days, and all victims died with no exception.

The most dreadful and painful disease was "water sickness". In a matter of a few days the patient's body would swell with water and inflate like a balloon. The skin would crack open and water would run from the wounds. Without any medical help the chances of survival were slim.

The barracks were full of sick prisoners. There was no doctor or medicaments, and nobody could help them. Every barrack had a lean-to for a morgue, where the naked bodies of the deceased were temporarily stored. Every morning the bodies were loaded on the sleighs or carriages, taken outside camp limits and dumped without any graves or markers. Most likely their skeletons are still lying there today.

From our group of 20 Lithuanians, only three survived. For several months I worked on railroad construction, but, due to malnutrition and physical exhaustion, I got very weak and could not walk without a cane. About that time the camp's administration organized several workshops. I was assigned to the tailor shop, where we had to patch up cotton-stuffed clothing.

\*\*\*\*

One day we were working in a shed outside the camp and sorting old clothing. On a nearby road, a horse collapsed and died while pulling a sleigh. An investigating committee conducted an autopsy to determine the cause of the horse's death.

When our guardsman came to see the committee's work, he was presented with the horse's lungs. Through a crack in the wall I saw the guard hide the lungs in the snow. At a convenient moment I ran outside and threw the horse's lungs to my Lithuanian friends, who were working on the other side of the fence. When he realized that the lungs were gone, our guard shouted and swore, but none of the prisoners disclosed who did the job. That very same evening we had a feast. Never in my life had I eaten a better tasting soup.

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*Continued next month.....*

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## Jūratē And Kastytis

### "The Origin of Amber"

**Seoni, Seoni, Labai Seoni!**

Long ago, long ago, so very long ago, mighty Perkūnas, the God of Thunder, ruler of all the Gods and the Viešpats (sovereign ruler),

over all the people, presented the waters of the Baltic to his daughter Jūratē to rule over as her domain. Jūratē was the consort of Dievsvietis, who was the god-king of the oceans, while she was the queen of the Baltic. She lived in a magnificent palace deep under the blue waters of the Baltic. The walls were made of the purest milk-white amber; the threshold of amber of the color of shining gold, the floors of amber like the color of bronze, the window panes of diamonds while the roof was made of sea shells with fish scales and was studded with pearls.

One day Jūratē sent all the pikes with messages to summon all the nymphs and mermaids as far as the Jūra (a river in central Žemaitija - Samogitia) for a counsel at her amber palace. When all the subjects were present the Queen of the Baltic thus addressed them:

"Dear little sisters, dear little friends, dear little play-mates of mine, you are well aware that the father of mine, Praamzīs (Ever-lasting Perkūnas), the Lord of Heaven, the Earth and the seas, has given unto me the Baltic waters to reign over. Not the smallest minnow or tiniest worm has had any cause for complaint. No one dared to take anyone's life and all has been peace and happiness in my domain. But now I bear the distressing news that an audacious fisherman, Kastytis by name, from the borders of my domain where the Šventoji River yields its homage, has dared to disturb our universal peace and order. He is casting nets around Palanga, destroying our friends, the fish, imprisoning them in his nets and killing them. I myself would not presume to catch a single fish, even the flounders to which I am very partial I eat only the half and cast the other half into the sea again. (This is to explain the crooked shape of the flounders). What say you, how shall this bold youth be punished?"



"Boats await us, dear sisters, dear friends. Let us sail to the shores of the Šventoji. He is casting his net at this moment. We will lure him to the bottom of the sea with our singing and dancing and smother him in our embraces, and his beautiful eyes, which now bewitch all the maidens of the Žemaitija, we will blind with sand and seaweed."

Jūratē and her court set out in a hundred boats of purest white amber and purple silk sails for the mouth of the Šventoji River, where Kastytis was at that moment mending his nets, to mete out their cruel revenge.

Bewitching and enchanting was the song of Jūratē and her mermaids. The pine forests of deep verdure vibrated with the echoes of their song. From the distance they beheld their foe, Kastytis, young as the new clover in bloom (Dobilēlis), handsome as the rising sun (Saulėlė beaštantis), sturdy as the well grown oak (Ažuolėlis). High was his white forehead, curly was his flaxen hair, deep blue like the waters of the Baltic were his eyes. With contentment in his heart and a song on his lips he pursued his mending.

Kastytis heard the enticing song. Raising his eyes he discovered the hundred of glittering boats manned by hundreds of maidens rowing amber oars. Every siren was of entrancing beauty, but amongst them was one of unsurpassing pulchritude with crown on head and a sceptre of amber in her white hand, Jūratē, the Queen and Goddess of the Baltic.

Slowly the boats put to shore and the mermaids alighted. Holding each other by the hand they encircled the unsuspecting youth. They began a slow... and rhythmic dance, accompanied by their song. Kastytis was astounded by the sight. Jūratē, the most stately of them all, fascinated him. He could not take his eyes off her. She exerted a hypnotic power over him. At last, bewitched by her treacherous charms, Kastytis arose and threw himself into the arms of the goddess, but the Queen gave a signal to cease the dance.

Jūratē was about to speak and tell Kastytis the terrible punishment that was to be meted to him. But the words

stuck in her throat, for the youthfulness and proud beauty of Kastytis made her want to gather him in her arms. She had not the heart to consider Kastytis her enemy. After a long moment of silence she said.

"Halt, thou thoughtless youth. Thy sin is great indeed and thou deserves the severest punishment. Cruelty and wantonly hast thou caused the death of many of my friends and subjects, the fish. But thy youth and thy beauty have appeased my anger. I will commute thy punishment and forgive thee on one condition-if thou wilt swear to love, to be mine and mine only. In my arms thou shalt find happiness and thy misdeeds will be forgotten. But shouldst thou refuse the love of Queen Jūratė, thy destruction is assured. Choose then!"

Kastytis, already under her spell, needed no urging. The youth knelt and uttered, "Beloved, I cannot believe my good fortune." He vowed he would love her forever. With an imperious gesture, Jūratė waved her retainers away and enfolded the young Kastytis in her arms.

"Now thou art mine forever. Every evening will I come sailing to thee, and meet thee on this hill which shall be called after thee." She then held out her sceptre, the oars splashed and she vanished.

Thereupon, for a year following, every evening at sundown the Queen of the Baltic would alight on the sands, from her boat of pearl and amber with the purple sails of silk, where Kastytis was already waiting; every morning she would return to her amber palace below the waves of the Baltic, sad at heart because she could not have Kastytis always at her side.

But such happiness could not last. A jealous nymph, who envied Jūratė her incomparable beauty, left the palace secretly to report to Perkūnas that his daughter had committed the unpardonable sin of falling in love with a mortal. Perkūnas unwilling to believe the report, sent trustworthy messengers to see if the nymph had spoken the truth. Alas, it was the truth; every evening Jūratė kept a tryst on the beach with Kastytis-every morning she unfurled sail and returned.

Perkūnas was exceedingly wrathful that a goddess should love a mortal. Jūratė had just returned from a night with her lover. She reclined upon the pearl couch dreaming of her beloved Kastytis when Perkūnas flung a flash of lightning from the clouds which cleft the



waves of the Baltic. He unleashed the tempests and caused great storms to arise. Black clouds gathered, the waters became turbulent and dark. The whole sea was a seething whirlpool. Amid this howling storm a terrible thunderbolt struck the Queen's palace of amber, killing her and shattering the palace into thousands

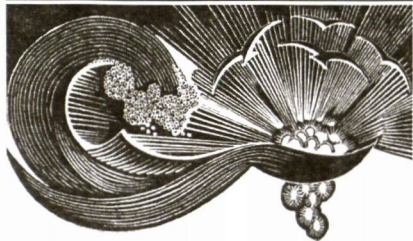
of pieces. The youthful fisherman, Kastytis, was chained by the Eternal One (Pramžis-Perkūnas) to a rock at the bottom of the sea, and the body of his beloved Jūratė was cast before him. He was eternally compelled, with eyes fixed upon her, to bemoan his unhappy fate, while the waves carry the fragments of Jūratė's palace far and wide.

You may still find the fragments of amber if you walk on the white sands of the Baltic shore. The waves will bring pieces of amber, milk-white, the color of gold and of dark bronze, and strew them at your feet. At sundown, or when the sea agitates and winds are rising, one can still hear the distant moans of the doomed youth, the sorrowful plaint of lost love.

\*\*\*\*\*

It is said that, when the winds whip up raging storms in the Baltic Sea, one can still hear Kastytis moaning and, afterwards, one can still find small pieces of Jūratė's amber palace washed out on the Baltic shore. But some others believe that Jūratė's tear drops are amber pieces washed ashore and one could hear her sad voice in a stormy sea.

Jūratė and Kastytis is one of the most famous and popular Lithuanian legends and tales. For the first time it was recorded in 1842 in the writings of Liudvikas Adomas Jucevičius. Since then it has been adapted many times for modern poems, ballets, and even rock operas. The authenticity of the entire story is questioned due to the possible influence of popular contemporary romantic tale.







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# Calendar of Events for September, October & November, 2010

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

## SEPTEMBER

**September 12, 2010**

**"Farewell to Summer"**

Picnic  
Noon - 5:00 pm  
San Diegoito Park -  
Lower Level  
1628 Loma Santa Fe Dr.  
Del Mar, CA  
Good food, raffle, games  
& great company!  
Sponsor: LAC of  
San Diego Contact:  
Regina Lisauskas,  
regis@pacbell.net

**September 16, 2010**

(Thursday) **Autumn Gala**  
Benefiting the Sisters of  
St. Francis of the  
Providence of God  
3603 McRoberts Rd.  
Pittsburgh PA 15234  
Info: 412-885-7232 or  
info@osfprov.org

**September 19, 2010**

**PARISH PICNIC!**

**BE THERE!**

Parish Lower Hall  
FOLLOWING 10:00 am  
MASS. Parking Lot of  
Annunciation School  
Church of the  
Annunciation  
259 N.5th St.  
Brooklyn, NY

WWW.ANNUCIATION-  
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**September 19, 2010**

**DCLAC's ANNUAL**

**FALL PICNIC**

Washington, DC LAC  
picnic 12pm - 5pm  
Seneca Creek State  
Park, MD - Blue Jay  
Picnic Shelter \$20 per  
person (members get a  
\$5 discount), \$10 for  
seniors and students,  
and \$5 for kids.  
Park Info:

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/central/seneca.html>

**NOTE:** Picnic will take  
place Rain or Shine.  
Park entrance fee of  
\$2/person; Out-of-state  
residents add \$1 to all  
day use service charges.  
Featured at the Picnic:  
Lithuanian beer,  
Homemade Lithuanian  
sausages & sauerkraut,  
Lithuanian music, Games  
for children & for the  
adults - volleyball  
Seneca Creek State Park  
11950 Clopper Road  
Gaithersburg, MD 21561  
301-924-2127

**September 21, 2010**

(Tuesday) 7-9 pm  
The Philadelphia  
Lithuanian Heritage  
Club, Amber Roots  
Lithuanian Music Hall  
2715 E.Allegheny Ave.  
Phila.PA.

Please use the left side  
entrance and proceed  
downstairs. After the  
program, refreshments  
will be served. All are  
invited to attend. For  
info: call Millie at  
610-497-5469 or email  
milliemarks@aol.com

## OCTOBER

**October 3, 2010**

**Annual Fall Picnic,**  
Wyandotte County Park,  
Shelter J,  
Bonner Springs, KS.  
Lithuanian Community's  
Fall Picnic is a tradition  
that was started many  
years ago by our  
community's first  
families. Gather at  
**Wyandotte County Park**  
to play games, eat &  
meet new & old friends.  
631 North 126th St.  
Bonner Springs, KS

**October 8-10, 2010**

Neringa Walk- a Thon  
[www.neringa.org](http://www.neringa.org)

**October 10, 2010**

**Holy Trinity parish  
Celebrates 110 years!**  
9:00 am

Msgr. Edmond Putrimas  
will be the celebrant  
Holy Trinity Church  
53 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT  
Let us gather from far &  
wide to pay our respects  
to the thousands of  
Lithuanians who have  
drawn spiritual  
sustenance & nurtured  
their Lithuanian heritage  
in the Holy Trinity parish  
for 110 years. Sponsor:  
LAC of Hartford Contact:  
Danute Grajauskienė  
Danute@juno.com

**October 19, 2010**

(Tuesday) 7-9 pm  
The Philadelphia  
Lithuanian Heritage  
Club, Amber Roots  
Lithuanian Music Hall  
2715 E.Allegheny Ave.  
Phila., PA  
Please use the left side  
entrance and proceed  
downstairs. After the

program, refreshments  
will be served. All are  
invited to attend.  
For info: call Millie at  
610-497-5469 or email  
milliemarks@aol.com

## NOVEMBER

**November 6-7, 2010**

**Lithuanian Festival**  
(Muge)  
Lithuanian Music Hall  
2715 E. Allegheny Ave  
Philadelphia, PA  
Lithuanian food, music,  
vendors & much more.  
Details to follow.

**November 16, 2010**

(Tuesday) 7-9 pm  
The Philadelphia  
Lithuanian Heritage  
Club, Amber Roots  
Lithuanian Music Hall  
2715 E. Allegheny Ave.  
Phila. PA  
Please use the left side  
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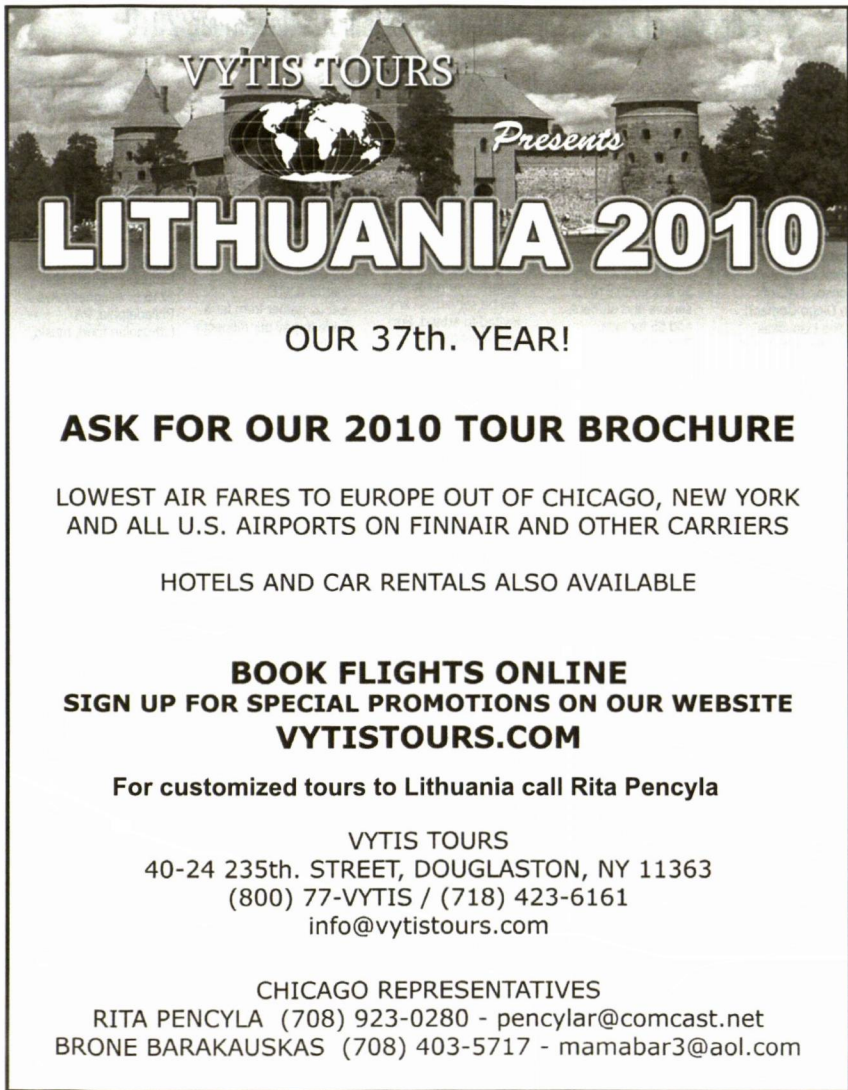
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20 - Amber necklace &  
bracelet - \$ 30



27 - CD by Exultate / Rita  
Klioriys, director - \$ 15



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



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



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



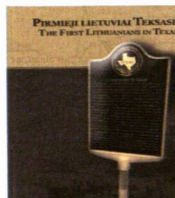
7 - CD by Vaidotas (ethno-  
cultural music) - \$ 20



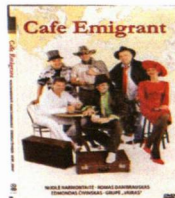
8 - Vytis decal approx (3" x  
3") - \$ 3



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



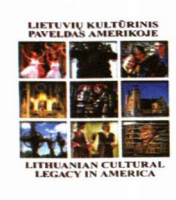
25 - Frist Lithuanians in  
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28 - Café Emigrant DVD -  
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13 - DVD or 13th Folk  
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Theatre festival (in  
Lithuanian) - \$ 45



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x 2.5") - \$ 3

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## Weathercocks in old village Nida, and Juodkrantė, Lithuania (Weather Vanes)

Photos by Julie Skurdenis

Weathercocks: Wooden, colorful, ornamented, patterns. A weather vane, also called a wind vane, is a movable device attached to an elevated object such as a roof for showing the direction of the wind.

