

bridges



LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

OCTOBER 2012



"Lithuanian Customs and Traditions"

98th Lithuanian Days, Frackville, Pa.



Clockwise from top left: Two sisters play in borrowed headpieces from the national costume (photo: Joanne Antanavage). Singer Augis, the Dura brothers, the Lithuanian Partisans Living History Group and the Kaimo Kapela band join in song (photo: Rimas Gedeika). The director of Philadelphia's Žilvinas folk dance group gets audience members on their feet (photo: Rimas Gedeika). Malūnas dancers from Maryland (photo: Joanne Antanavage). Gintaras Children's Dance Group from Mahanoy City (photo: Joanne Antanavage). Partisans History Group and Knights of Lithuania Anthracite Council members open the event (photo: Rimas Gedeika).

bridges

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Cover: The birches flaunt their fall foliage in Pennsylvania's coal country. We can imagine that these trees were reminders of home for the many Lithuanians who settled in this region in the early 1900s. Photo: Joanne Antanavage

Back cover: Laura Asadauskaitė celebrates her gold-medal performance in modern pentathlon at the London Summer Olympics. Photo: Alfredas Pliadis

from the editor

The Gift of Heritage

My brother and I grew up in a household where our elders casually mixed Lithuanian and English into conversations, and rarely addressed us solely in Lithuanian. We learned enough to be quiet when my grandmother commanded, "Tylek!" or finish our dinner when she told us, "Pabaik!" We blessed ourselves in Lithuanian before saying grace in English. We blew out our birthday candles to cries of, "Pusk!" And we didn't hesitate to call each other "sena boba," the epithet my grandmother reserved for those who crossed her, though it hardly fit our tender ages or, in my brother's case, gender.

It was a different story for our parents, who were immersed in the language from birth. Though U.S.-born, they lived in largely Lithuanian neighborhoods in Philadelphia and grew up speaking the language at home.

My mother told me that she started first grade equipped only with the little English she had picked up from her neighborhood playmates. My dad grew up a half block from a Lithuanian elementary school that he attended for eight years. In the mid-1930s, my mother went to a then-new high school, founded and run by Lithuanian nuns, with an almost-exclusively Lithuanian student body. I can only imagine the financial hardship it was for her parents to send her to a suburban boarding school at the height of the Great Depression.

Our older cousins, displaced persons who came over in the 1950s, were required by their parents to speak nothing but Lithuanian at home. One of my cousins told me that her brother liked nothing more than to tattle on her if she addressed him in English even when their parents weren't around. Another cousin, born and raised in Philadelphia, was sent to Saturday school to learn how to read and write Lithuanian.

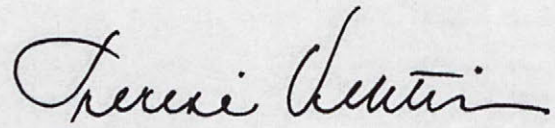
In retrospect, I wonder why my parents didn't make more of a concerted effort to teach us the language. Maybe they thought we'd pick it up from hearing it now and then. Maybe they thought it wasn't necessary. Or maybe it just wasn't convenient.

Mom and Dad moved us to the suburbs right after I finished first grade. We were more than an hour from the city and the closest Saturday school. Mom worked most weekends; Dad used his days off for yard work, home maintenance and tinkering with his car. I eventually went to the same high school my mother attended, but by that time—the late 1970s—Lithuanian language was no longer taught and Lithuanian names were in the minority at roll call. I took Latin and Spanish instead.

Now as I endeavor to learn Lithuanian as an adult—no easy task—I think what a gift it is for young people who are fortunate enough to have a Lithuanian heritage school in their backyards. You'll read about one such school on page 10. The Seattle Lithuanian community shares what motivated them to start a school and the effort it took. The results speak for themselves. The students of the new Linas Lithuanian School can't wait for their weekend lessons.

Heritage schools teachers and administrators, take note: there is also information about an upcoming professional development week for educators and grants available to start and support heritage schools.

How does your community or your family share the gift of heritage? Drop me a line at bridges.terese@gmail.com if you'd like to share your story.



Teresė Vekteris, Editor

an apology

I must extend our sincerest apologies to our readers, our photographers and everyone pictured in the September issue of Bridges. I was heartsick when the magazine arrived at my door and I saw how poorly the photographs reproduced inside the publication. What was worse was knowing that we disappointed you. You expect a certain quality with every issue, and it's our duty to deliver a publication that meets—and exceeds—your expectations. I'm so sorry that we let you down. We are making every effort to correct our printing problems, and I hope that you will see visible improvement beginning this month.



Ateitininkai is a Lithuanian Catholic organization with roots in Lithuania. When the Soviets occupied Lithuania and banned the organization, the Lithuanians who fled to the West continued Ateitininkai, first in Germany and then in America.

Ateitis Week in Kennebunkport, Maine, started about 50 years ago as an August get-together for Ateitininkai at the lovely Franciscan Guest House. At the time, the main guesthouse was still a boy's high school. The original program included one concert, a candlelight procession and various guest speakers.

Ateitis Week has evolved into a week-long program for all Lithuanians, young and old, those who speak Lithuanian and those who don't. Guests range in age from 3 to 93. It is a great opportunity to immerse oneself in Lithuanian culture while enjoying the beaches, sights, boat trips, kayaking, bike riding, fishing, golfing and even great shopping in town and at the outlets. Some families come every year, not only to participate in Ateitis Week, but also as a family reunion. Concerts are advertised locally and are open to the surrounding community.

We were delighted that so many guests came to Ateitis Week 2012. It was great to meet Astra Butkus and Audrone Overas, both members of Brooklyn's Annunciation Choir. Lithuania's Consul General in New York, Valdemaras Sarapinas, also came for the first time and gave a short announcement Sunday morning before Lithuanian Mass. Father Aurelijus Gričius, our chaplain, said our opening invocation on Saturday night and we sang the American and Lithuanian national anthems. That evening, Frances Covalesky started our concert series. On Wednesday,

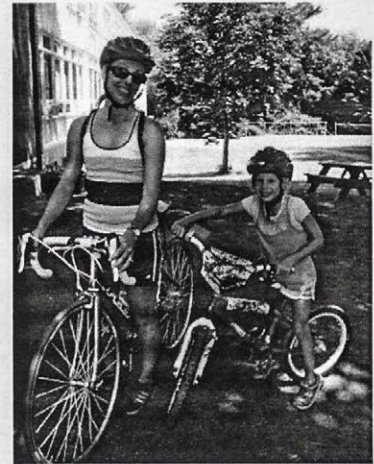


two young pianists, Darius Shubertas and Chris Staknys, performed. Chris also played his own composition. For Friday's grand finale concert, Ginta Bistras accompanied mezzo soprano Danutė Mileika and tenor Antanas Meilus.

Our guest speakers included Dr. Andrius Kazlauskas, author Laima Vince Sruogenytė and architect Julija Minkunaitė-Banionienė. Please take a look at Julija's presentation at vimeo.com/47776769.

Alex Lileika coordinated sports day and Dalia Dzikas produced the simulated radio program. A candlelight procession to the Lourdes Shrine was followed by a lobster dinner. Aldona and her Lithuanian staff outdid themselves with fabulous breakfasts, dinners that included both American and Lithuanian food, and lavish refreshments after the concerts. We also celebrated the 90th birthdays of Vldas Barius from Connecticut and Florida and Mecys Palunas from Ohio.

We are now planning next year's program. We hope that all the Eastern Seaboard Ateitininkai—and all Lithuanians—come for a few days or the entire week.



Laima Lileikiene Shea was born to Lithuanian parents in Germany and came to the U.S. as a young child. She grew up in Brooklyn and Queens and spent most of her married life on Long Island. Laima and her husband, Frank, live in Florida where she is a tax accountant. She enjoys reading, traveling and taking photographs.

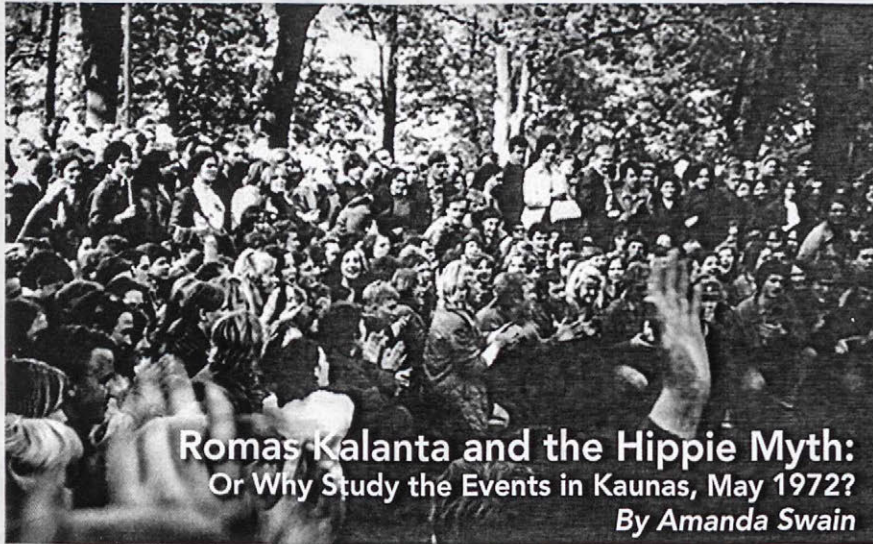
Save the date

Ateitis Week 2013

August 3-10

Franciscan Guest House, Kennebunkport, Maine





2012 is the 40th anniversary of Romas Kalanta's self-immolation in Kaunas

On Sunday, May 14, 1972, at noon, 19-year-old Romas Kalanta set himself on fire in the small park in front of the Music Theater on Laisvės Alėja in Kaunas.

On Thursday, May 18, the day of his funeral, approximately 500 people gathered in front of the Kalanta home for the 4 p.m. funeral. When they learned that Kalanta had been buried two hours before the planned funeral, one young man climbed on the hood of a truck and shouted, "Let's go to the place where Kalanta died!"

The crowd walked approximately three kilometers from the Viliampolė neighborhood to the city center, where they joined another group that had already gathered in the small park. There the crowd swelled to 2,000—mostly young people in their teens and early 20s. When a rumor spread that Kalanta's father had been arrested, the crowd decided to go to the police headquarters to demand his freedom. As they headed toward the opposite end of Laisvės Alėja, they were met by police carrying rubber truncheons in the square in front of the former church turned sculpture gallery. The police dispersed the crowd, although altercations between police and young people

continued late into the evening. Four hundred and two people were arrested for disturbing the public order.

The next day, Friday, May 19, at 3 p.m., young people again began to gather in the small park where Kalanta had immolated himself. The crowd quickly reached at least 1,500 people. On the second day, the authorities brought in troops from the military barracks outside of Kaunas to suppress the street demonstrations. Kaunas was closed to all travel in and out for several weeks; a curfew and a ban on young people congregating in groups as small as three people continued through the summer.

Although official public accounts of the events were strictly limited, news of the popular unrest in Kaunas spread throughout Lithuania. Today these events appear in newspaper articles each May and are included in Lithuanian history textbooks. The events can be recounted easily, but why they happened and what they meant are not always so clear.

As I researched the May 1972 demonstrations, I discovered that hippies are everywhere in stories of what happened in Kaunas in May 1972. KGB reports accused hippies of instigating riots on the day of Kalanta's funeral. Communist Party officials denounced hip-

pies and their corrupting influences on Soviet Lithuanian youth. Young people who participated in the demonstrations had heard rumors that Kalanta's suicide was part of a hippie pact.

After the Lithuanian declaration of independence in 1990, a series of articles in the journal *Nemunas* referred to the events as Lithuania's version of the musical "Hair," while a YouTube video produced in 2008 compared the Kaunas events to Woodstock. When I talk to people about what happened in Kaunas 40 years ago, the conversation almost always includes references to rock music and young men with long hair.

While I was in Kaunas conducting interviews in 2011, I realized that I needed to talk to some of these hippies. Although the hippies were everywhere in the descriptions of the events, I had not actually met a hippie from 1972. With help from Lithuanian colleagues, I was able to make connections with several people who had been part of the hippie movement in Kaunas in the late 1960s and early 1970s. When I talked to them—the "real" hippies—I learned that the connection between Romas Kalanta's self-immolation, the ensuing demonstrations and the hippie movement is a myth.

Individual hippies did participate in the demonstrations, but the unrest was spontaneous and was not instigated by the hippies. Romas Kalanta did wear his hair long, listen to rock music and hang out in the city center (as did many young men at that time), but he was not active in any of the hippie groups, and the hippies that I talked to had not known him. Yet this idea that hippies were an important part



Protest in Kaunas in May 1972



Amanda with one of her interviewees, Kristupas Petkunas, at an exhibit about the Kaunas hippies at the Adamkus Library at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas in May 2012.

of the events in May 1972 continues to be very strong in popular historical memory in Lithuania. And, in fact, the “hippie myth” that is interwoven into narratives of 1972 speaks to the importance of studying what happened 40 years ago in Kaunas. Understanding why hippies play a prominent role in narratives of May 1972 can help us understand more about Lithuania in the Soviet Union, Lithuania’s independence movement and Lithuania in the European Union today.

First, by studying how Lithuania existed socially, politically and economically in the Soviet system we can better understand its post-communist transitions. Most research on Lithuania in the Soviet Union focuses on national resistance and dissidents; yet most Lithuanians were not actively involved in dissident activities. The young people on the streets in 1972 had been born within a year or two of Stalin’s death. They were the first real “Soviet generation” in Lithuania, having gone completely through school in the post-Stalinist Soviet Union. These young people were also the first generation to grow up in a more “liberal” Soviet system, yet they still demanded more freedom. They wanted personal freedom—to make their own lifestyle choices—as much as they wanted political freedom.

Young people’s expectations of freedom in 1972 were shaped by the Soviet promises of a modern standard of living as much as by ideas from the West. Even though they were tiny in number, the hippies in Kaunas were a very public and

visible example of young people resisting Soviet values and refusing to follow Soviet expectations of what was proper behavior for Communist youth. Not surprisingly, the authorities assumed that the hippies were involved in this incident of mass popular unrest by young people. Importantly, the young people who were on the streets themselves on May 18 and 19 saw their actions as part of a youth demonstration. Shouts of “freedom for hippies” and “freedom for youth” accompanied shouts of “freedom for Lithuania” on the streets, demonstrating this mixture of personal and political freedom.

Secondly, young people who were 20 years old in 1972 were 36 years old in 1988 when Sąjūdis [the political organization that led the struggle for freedom in the late 1980s and early 1990s] was formed. Of course, only a few thousand young people participated in street demonstrations in Kaunas in 1972 and the vast majority of Lithuanian young people did not openly oppose the Soviet system. Yet the same generation that was on the streets in Kaunas in 1972 was actively involved in the independence movement in the late 1980s. This raises interesting questions. For example, what about this generation’s experience growing up in the Soviet Union made them ready to take advantage of the changes that happened under Gorbachev so that Lithuania could become independent again? The “1972 generation” is now in positions of leadership and influence in Lithuanian politics, economics, education, culture and society. Political scientists and sociologists in Lithuania are currently researching the Sąjūdis movement. I expect that we will continue to learn more about this exciting period of Lithuanian history.

Finally, commemoration of the past tells us more about the present than the past events being remembered. Studying how May 1972 is remembered in Lithuania today reveals important contemporary political and social issues. Of course, the events of May 1972 can be remembered as a nationalist, anti-Soviet protest. However, two other interpretations have also been evident in commemorations of

Kalanta’s self-immolation and the ensuing popular unrest.

In 2002, at the 30th anniversary these events, the Seimas declared May 14 a national memorial day called “Civil Resistance Day.” The Seimas chose not to use the originally proposed name “Romas Kalanta’s Sacrifice Day.” The decision was made, in part, because of concerns about honoring someone who committed suicide in a country with the highest suicide rate in Europe. The change in title



Amanda working in the KGB archives reading room in winter 2009.

In the spring of 2007, during my first year in the Ph.D. program, my adviser and I were discussing possible dissertation topics on Lithuania in the Soviet Union when she asked, “What do you know about the young man who immolated himself?” “Well, nothing really,” I replied, “only that it happened.” That question was the catalyst for a research journey that included an eight-month stay in Lithuania in 2009 and a second one-year stay in 2010-2011. Over the course of nearly two years of research in Lithuania, I studied hundreds of pages of documents in the KGB, Communist Party and Kaunas Regional Archives, read newspaper articles from the 1960s through the early 2000s at the Kaunas Public Library and the Lithuanian National Library, formally interviewed 50 people and talked to dozens more about Romas Kalanta’s self-immolation on May 14, 1972, and the two days of popular unrest that followed his funeral.

Who Was Romas Kalanta?

Excerpted from "The Young Man With the Mezmerizing Eyes," by Jeanne Dorr (Bridges, May 1999), based on a personal interview with Romas Kalanta's younger brother, Arvydas.

Revolutionary? Hippie? Patriot? Psychotic? Who was Romas Kalanta? What drove him to set himself on fire in front of the Music Theater in Kaunas on May 14th, 1972? What could possibly cause a 19-year-old such pain that he could no longer endure life? Was he a hippie on drugs, as the communist government quickly spread the word around Kaunas? Was he mentally disturbed as his mother was forced to sign a letter that was released to the newspapers? Or was he a young man who could no longer live under a system that denied him not only freedom of thought but freedom of spirit?

The Kalanta family could have been considered average. It consisted of working parents and four sons. Romas was next to the youngest. Although Romas' father had joined the communist party, his mother saw to it that her sons received their first communion.

Romas was quiet and kept to himself at home. He enjoyed playing his guitar and drawing. He and other young people would gather in Kaunas' Freedom Boulevard, sitting in the park or in the coffeehouses and playing their music.

When Romas was in the 11th grade, a teacher gave an assignment to write about what they would like to do with their lives. Romas wrote that he wanted to enter the seminary and become a priest. He didn't realize what this answer would cost him. His parents were called to the school and admonished for permitting their son to have such foolish ideas. After that, Romas dropped out. He decided to get a job in a factory and go to night school. Eventually the factory job ended, and Romas seemed to lose interest in night school.

On Sunday, May 14, 1972, Romas took a 3 liter glass bottle and told his mother he was going to buy a popular Lithuanian drink that was sold on the street corners. Instead, he went to a friend's house and asked for some gasoline. He said he needed to clean something at home.

Romas went to the center of town and sat on a park bench with three or four other young people. The others got cold and left. Romas took off his jacket and left it on the bench. Then, he proceeded to douse himself with the gasoline.

At the hospital, Mrs. Kalanta saw her son in indescribable agony, his body covered with burns. The staff was doing everything in their power to keep him alive so that he would not become a martyr to Lithuania's young people.

While the family kept vigil at the hospital, the police searched their house, looking for anything that would prove Romas was a troublemaker, but they found no drugs, no anti-Soviet literature.

Romas died the next morning, but there was no time to grieve. His parents were taken to police headquarters for questioning. They were told to write a release for the newspapers saying that Romas was mentally ill. They would have to say this was not a political act; it was the act of a disturbed young man. They reminded the Kalantas that they had three other sons to consider. Mrs. Kalanta wrote five or six drafts but none suited the authorities. Finally, she put down the pen, either out of grief or exhaustion or both, and told the authorities to write a statement that she would sign.

After the events surrounding Romas' funeral, the subsequent demonstrations, and the shutting down of transport into and out of Kaunas, life eventually returned to normal for the Kalanta family—except for constant police surveillance at their house and Romas' grave. The police presence waned only as independence neared.

Was this a spur of the moment act? No, it wasn't. Before Romas set himself on fire he took off his jacket and set it aside. Inside was a note with his name and address. Part of the note that he left said, "What should I live for? For this system to kill me? It would be better to kill myself at once..."



also provided an opportunity for the parliament to demonstrate that Lithuania shared a universal value of civil resistance to oppression—comparisons were made to Gandhi and other instances of civil resistance—in the context of accession to the European Union.

On the other hand, newspaper and journal articles, films and YouTube videos have described the events in Kaunas as an example of youth protest and youth counterculture similar to 1968 in Western Europe and the United States. This version of "Kaunas Spring," as it is called, emphasizes that Lithuanians—especially the generation that is now most influential in politics and society—had a common experience with their colleagues in other European countries. They listened to the same rock music; they also wore their hair long; they even had street protests. This gives Lithuania a common European experience and not just a Soviet experience. In this interpretation of the 1972 events, the existence of hippies in Kaunas (and in Vilnius) helps establish that Lithuania experienced a "Sixties" counterculture even if it was behind the Iron Curtain.

There really were hippies in Kaunas in 1972, but their role in Kalanta's self-immolation and the ensuing popular unrest is mostly a myth. However, history is more than just what happened, it's about how societies interpret the past. In this case, the "myth of the hippies" can help us understand more about Lithuania in the Soviet Union and today.

Amanda Swain is a doctoral candidate in the Department of History, University of Washington, Seattle. She is currently completing her dissertation and expects to receive her Ph.D. in History in December 2012. Amanda received a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Award to conduct research in Lithuania in 2010-2011, as well as a Foreign Language Academic Scholarship and a Chester Fritz Fellowship from the University of Washington for the 2009 research trip.



Nurturing Friendships, Making New Acquaintances

By Regina Juska-Svoba

Knights of Lithuania Hold 99th National Convention

The Knights of Lithuania (K of L) holds its national convention at a different state site each year. Council 152, East Long Island, N.Y., hosted the organization's 99th convention at Seven Springs Resort in Seven Springs, Pa. from August 2-5, 2012. Approximately 100 delegates, clergy, guests and nine K of L juniors participated in daily Mass, meetings, cultural activities and a banquet celebration.

Thursday, August 2

Opening Mass was celebrated by the Knights of Lithuania's spiritual advisor, Rev. Msgr. Joseph Anderlonis, STD. The Mass was offered for the K of L organization, the success of the convention and the host council.

We opened the first session by introducing the Supreme Council officers and singing the Lithuanian and K of L anthems. National President and Honorary Member Bernice Aviza gave a state-of-the-organization report and National Treasurer Deborah Martin-Rudmin gave the financial report. Greetings from several honorary consuls, religious orders, American Lithuanian organizations and publications were received and read.

We did not have far to travel for the cultural program, as the resort had a vast variety of activities. We enjoyed a delicious barbecue at the Foggy Goggle. Later, Julia Schroder, C-152 president and convention coordinator, led a sing-along of heartwarming, traditional songs in English and Lithuanian. Members, friends and guests enjoyed the rest of the evening relaxing, reminiscing about past conventions and sharing family stories. It was a good time to renew friendships and meet new members.

Friday, August 3

Rev. Msgr. J. Anderlonis, Msgr. Petras Siurys and his brother, Msgr. Juozas Siurys, concelebrated Mass prior to each day's plenary session. Honorary Member and composer/musician Faustas Strolia provided organ music for all daily Masses. Honorary members Ann Marie Kassel and Theresa Strolia led the delegates with hymns in English and Lithuanian.

During the second plenary session, Andrew Berczelly, second and membership vice-president, announced that 52 new members joined the Knights of Lithuania in the past year and that no councils closed. Current members were asked to recruit at least one new member by next year's Centennial Convention. An

Standing: Msgr. Petras Siurys and Msgr. Juozas Siurys. Seated: New Supreme Council President and Honorary Member Regina Juska-Svoba and Supreme Council Spiritual Advisor and Honorary Member Dr. Rev. Msgr. Joseph Anderlonis.

ad-hoc committee will examine technological means to attract new members.

Irene Ozalis, president of the Knights of Lithuania Foundation, an ancillary arm of the K of L, reported that in the 2012-2013 fiscal year, \$11,900 will be donated to Lithuanian Children's Relief, A.P.P.L.E., Christmas gifts for Orphan Care, "Saulutė," to sponsor an orphan for one year, larger stipends for K of L juniors, the Baltic Jesuit Advancement Project, the K of L official magazine—Vytis, and the Mid America District for their 100th anniversary project.

This year's K of L Foundation essay contest topics were "What can the K of L do to improve our next century?" or "What event in K of L history has left the biggest impression on you?" First-, second- and third-place winners were Carol Ann Luschas, Frackville, Pa.; Andreja Deksnis, Lakeshore, Ind.; and Susan Gudaitis, Hartford, Conn.

Georgiana Macke, Ritual chairperson, announced that four members were approved to receive their 4th degrees. Though none of the new candidates could attend, three who were approved in 2011—Jeannine Perutis, Debbie Martin-Rudmin and Kenneth Rudmin, all of C-16, Chicago—would be elevated to the 4th degree on Sunday.

Rev. Edward Schmidt, SJ, gave an insightful presentation about the history of the Jesuit arrival in Lithuania in 1569 and advancement of the Baltic Jesuit Project, including the Vilnius and Kaunas Jesuit School communities. Information about the Project can be found at www.balticjesuits.org. An exhibit, "400 Years of the Jesuit Province of Lithuania," familiarized members with the Jesuits and their school programs, art, artifacts and documents.

The 100th Anniversary Committee co-chairs, Honorary Member Robert A. Martin, Jr. and Phyllis Gendreau, presented a detailed program for the K of L Centennial Convention and announced



Supreme Council President and Honorary Member Bernice Aviza (r) presents Sister Ignė Marijosius a gift of appreciation: the K of L history book.

a motto contest. Each district was encouraged to celebrate the anniversary in a special and meaningful way. Plans are well under way and various committees have been formed to make the centennial a success.

Honorary Member John Mankus, president of St. Casimir's Guild, another ancillary program, reported on activities in support of St. Casimir's Pontifical Lithua-

nian College in Rome, Italy. During the past year, the Guild received donations of \$4,520 and 1,008 Mass requests. Last year's project to install windows on the third floor of the College was successfully completed for \$15,000. The Guild received a generous bequest of \$417,000 from the estate of former C-3 Philadelphia member Theresa Mazeika.

Msgr. Petras Siuryis, rector of the Pontifical Lithuanian College, thanked the Knights for "adopting" the College and for their steadfast and consistent support. John Mankus presented Msgr. Siuryis with a \$2,500 check for Mass stipends and a \$100,000 check to further the College's continued projects.

Sister Ignė Marijosius of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary gave a fiery and dynamic presentation about Blessed George Matulaitis. The Lithuanian Bishops declared 2012 as the year of Blessed George Matulaitis—the 25th anniversary of his beatification by Pope John Paul II in August 1987. We fervently pray that he will be canonized soon.

Saturday, August 4

After Mass, Honorary Member Robert A. Martin, Jr., standing in for Rev. Anthony Markus, president of Our Lady of Šiluva Fund, Inc., another K of L ancillary organization, gave a comprehensive update of the Fund's activities.

The history of Our Lady of Šiluva continues to be promoted on its official website, www.ourladyofsiluva.com, which is being translated into Polish and Spanish. The website also sells religious items and gifts. The K of L Mid America District (MAD) plans to erect an Our Lady of Šiluva memorial statue at St. Casimir Cemetery in Chicago in 2013 in honor of the K of L 100th anniversary. To raise the \$21,000 needed, MAD is selling raffle tickets, T-shirts and sweat jackets, and plans a fund-raising luncheon.

John Mankus, honorary member, Council 72, Binghamton, N.Y. gave an interesting and informative presentation about the evolution of Lithuanian writing commencing with the letters of Gediminas to Pope John XII in 1322. He shared short biographies of several Lithuanian writers, journalists and poets.

During the 2012-13 Supreme Council elections, Honorary Member Regina Juska-Svoba, Council 102, Detroit, Mich., was unanimously elected president.

Rita Zakarka-Johnson, on behalf of her husband, Brian Johnson, third vice-president, summarized the junior K of L members' activities. This year, nine junior Knights participated in the National Convention. The juniors had a pizza/pool party and conducted their own juniors meeting. They took advantage of numerous resort activities, including bowling, golf, kayaking, bicycling, rock climbing

The Knights of Lithuania

is a national Roman Catholic organization consisting of men and women of Lithuanian ancestry. Its motto is "For God and Country." The Knights of Lithuania's primary focus is to foster, maintain and nurture an appreciation of the Lithuanian language, customs, traditions and culture among its members. It further stresses the importance of the beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church. The Knights are actively involved in programs to assist their less fortunate brothers and sisters in Lithuania. There are three active charity groups within the organization: K of L Foundation, St. Casimir's Guild and Our Lady of Šiluva Fund.

The Knights of Lithuania organization was founded by Mykolas Norkunas on April 27, 1913 in Lawrence, Mass. Currently there are 46 councils in the United States with nearly 1,600 active members.



K of L juniors (front row, from left) Genevieve Thorpe, Jason Muldowey, Gabriella Pant. Back row, from left, Tristan Pant, John Thorpe, Liza Macke, Alexandra Rudmin. Not pictured: Brian and Justin Johnson.

and bungee jumping. The juniors engaged the adults in a fun and informative "K of L history trivia" game. Each junior Knight received a convention stipend and certificate, an additional stipend from the K of L Foundation, a book entitled "Hello, Lithuania" and a resort T-shirt.

The formal sessions concluded with the singing of the Vyčiu hymn.

Celebratory Banquet

To mark the completion of working sessions and elections, approximately 150 delegates, guests and family celebrated at a formal banquet. The evening's hostess was Julia Schroder, convention chair. Rev. Msgr. Anderlonis said the invocation.

After a delicious dinner, outgoing Supreme Council President Bernice Aviza recognized Council 152 for organizing a great convention. She thanked the Supreme Council for its support during her three-year tenure and wished everyone continued involvement in the future of the K of L organization.

Incoming Supreme Council President Regina Juska-Svoba thanked convention delegates for the trust and faith placed in her to lead the K of L into its centennial year. This next year will be exciting—the continued planning and preparation, the beginning of the centennial celebrations in the districts and local councils and, finally, the culmination—the grand 100th anniversary celebration in Quincy, Mass., next July! Regina encouraged everyone to fully participate in the various K of L celebrations, as few organizations with such longevity are still active. We continue to exist because we are a multigenerational organization with loyal, dedicated, committed and talented members.

Rita Sussko, Honorary Membership Committee chair, announced the 2012 honorary member, Elena Nakrosis, C-90, Kearny, N.J. Part of K of L since her youth, Elena has held many positions in the organization, including Supreme Council president. She is currently the Supreme Council recording secretary. She is active at council and district levels, in her church community and in social clubs.

Rita Zakarka-Johnson, K of L Scholar-

ship Committee chair, announced this year's financial awards to 11 members: Alexander and Andreja Deksnis, C-158, Lakeshore, Ind.; Danielle Savitsky, Jennifer Cox and Annie Domalakes, C-144, Frackville, Pa.; Stephen and Stephanie Couitt and Liudas Jagimines, C-103, Providence, RI; Gediminas Daciola, C-158, Lakeshore, Ind.; and Amanda and James Distin, C-72, Binghamton, N.Y.

After the formal portion of the banquet, musical entertainment for dancing livened the rest of the evening.

Sunday, August 5

We enjoyed a farewell brunch before attending the convention closing Mass. Members who earned their 4th degrees gave the oath and received their medals. The Supreme Council elect gave their oath of office.

The 2012 National Convention and sessions were productive and fruitful. It was good to see and nurture special friendships with members known for many years and to establish new acquaintances and contacts. It was a special time of sharing and catching up.

The 100th Knights of Lithuania National Convention will take place at the Boston Marriott Quincy Hotel in Quincy, Mass., from July 25-28, 2013. Mark your calendars and save these important dates!

Hope to see everyone there!

Save the Date

Knights of Lithuania Centennial Convention

July 25-28, 2013

Boston Marriott Quincy Hotel

July 25, 2013

Opening Mass

Honorary Members luncheon

Lithuanian picnic

July 26, 2013

Cultural night

July 27, 2013

Formal banquet

July 28, 2013

Closing Mass

Brunch

Registration: \$300

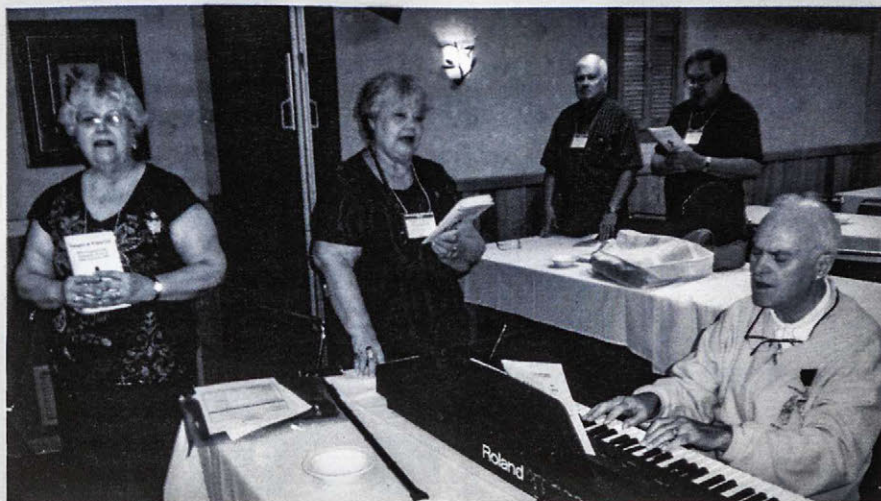
Pre-convention Duck tour: \$50

Post-convention activity: TBD

More information:

knightsoflithuania100thanniversary.org

Regina Juska-Svoba is K of L Supreme Council president, honorary member and K of L public relations chair. She is a member of Council 102 in Detroit.

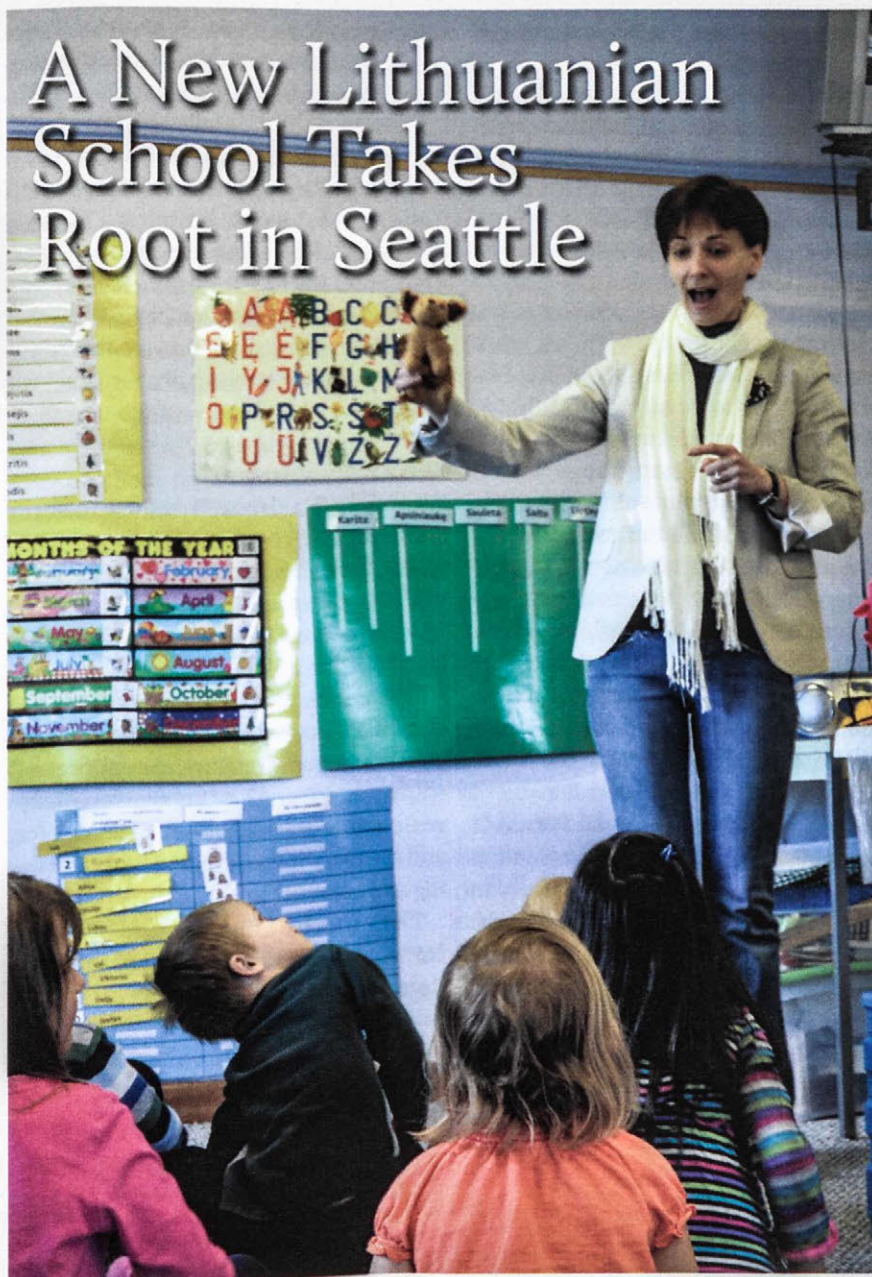


During the Convention Masses, composer and Honorary Member Faustas Strolia provided the organ music, while his wife, Theresa Strolia, and Ann Marie Kassel, honorary members, led the hymns.



Lithuanian immigrants established Lithuanian parishes and elementary schools in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th century, primarily in the major urban centers of the Northeast. For example, Maria High School in Chicago was established in 1911. St. Casimir's Elementary School in Worcester, Mass., was founded in 1924.

A new influx of Lithuanians after World War II took advantage of the existing infrastructure or established additional



Principal Inga Dabasinskaitė (above) also teaches the 3 to 6-year-old students

schools. Classes were taught in English to prepare children to assimilate into the American way of life but these full-time schools also devoted an hour or more each day to Lithuanian language, history and culture. "Saturday schools" sprang up for children who did not attend the Lithuanian schools or because a Monday-to-Friday Lithuanian school did not exist in their town or city. DPs (displaced per-

sons) of WWII had an extra motivation to keep Lithuanian traditions alive—the forcible incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union in 1944 stirred fears that Lithuanian culture and language would be eradicated.

Lithuanians did not reach Seattle, Washington in the far northwest corner of the country in any significant numbers until the second half of the 20th century. Even in the early 1970s there were only one or two dozen DP families residing in the Seattle metropolitan area. These parents had the same concerns about preserving language and culture and would organize small dinners, play dates for children, celebrations of Independence Day, camping outings, etc.

By the 1980s more Lithuanians arrived to work for Boeing, Microsoft or the University of Washington. In 1991, Valerija Sparkis, a transplant from Chicago, started a short-lived language class. After Lithuania regained its independence, a new wave of immigrants started arriving directly from Lithuania. In the years that followed, parents would often bemoan the fact that Seattle did not have a Saturday school. They held a meeting or two but nothing concrete materialized.

Sowing the Seeds

In February 2012, a small group of parents were standing around at a rehearsal of Seattle's Lithuanian Independence Day celebration and the conversation swung around to the lack of a Saturday school. Inga Dabasinskaitė, a parent of a 5-year-old, was especially emphatic that we needed a school—now. She even volunteered to teach, and she was highly qualified. The Lithuanian Community's chairman, Rimas Mikšys, was taking this all in and invited the parents to his home to discuss the establishment of a school. That meeting affirmed that there was a nucleus of parents and potential teachers who could make the dream a reality.

A call was issued to all interested parents to come to an organizing meeting on March 17. At the meeting, parents formed a committee consisting of Inga Dabasinskaitė, Zaneta Noreikaitė, Rūta



Berger and Rima Kelertas to govern the new school. It was named "Linus" Lithuanian School (Lino Lituanistinė Mokykla). [ed.: "linas" is flax, a historically important Lithuanian crop.] Although the end of the academic year was approaching, it was decided to start classes on April 14 while interest and enthusiasm were high. A short spring session would also serve as a learning experience from which the teachers could draw lessons on how classes should be conducted when the full academic year began in September.

In reflecting on the establishment of the school, Inga Dabasinskaitė recalled the words of Mikalojus Daukša: "Nations survive not because of their soil's fertility, the diversity of their clothing or the strength of their cities and fortresses, but primarily by preserving and using their own language which increases and sustains a common foundation, harmony, and brotherly love."

The school was organized into three classes: "Aukštaičiai," 3-6 years old; "Dūkai," 7-10 years old; and "Suvalkiečiai," 11-17 years old. The classes were taught by Inga Dabasinskaitė, Irena Blekys and Romutė Barkauskaitė, assisted by Rima Kelertas, Rimas Mikšys, Rūta Berger, Ingrida Sanders, Ieva and Paulina Gaurys and Reda Snapkauskienė. The first session of the school lasted only eight Saturdays, but judging from the comments of students, teachers and parents it was a huge success.

Reaping the Rewards

The school principal and teacher Inga Dabasinskaitė reported: "The children were fully engaged in all school activities.



Their enthusiasm, goodwill and dedication to learning to speak Lithuanian were contagious. It motivated all the teachers to think about how they could create a richer and more interesting lesson for each Saturday.

"All students made an earnest effort to speak Lithuanian. In the beginning some expressed their thoughts and opinions freely; others could only shyly utter 'Labas.' But in short order I saw them all making academic progress. The little ones learned to say hello/goodbye. The two older groups began to speak more Lithuanian among themselves and began

Heritage Schools Teachers Have a Place to Nurture Their Skills

By Neila Baumilienė

Next summer, from August 4-11, 2013, Camp Dainava in Manchester, Michigan will welcome teachers, administrators and everyone who values the work of Lithuanian heritage schools to the 41st professional development week in the US. The heritage schools operate under the guidance of the Lithuanian Educational Council of the USA (LEC). For more than 40 years, LEC has provided instructional material, organized professional development conferences, helped newly formed Lithuanian Heritage Schools in the USA and provided financial and curricular assistance to existing schools.

During this same week, adults who wish to improve their Lithuanian language (beginner through advanced) will also have an excellent opportunity to take classes, which run parallel with the professional development seminars.

Are teachers born or made?

There is no argument that exceptional teachers have a combination of personality characteristics that makes them effective at teaching. However, these characteristics need to be enriched by a lifetime of favorable nurturing. Discussions with students reveal that one of the characteristics of their best teachers is the use of a variety of methods of instruction. Meanwhile, those methods keep changing and developing. No matter how gifted, every teacher could benefit from training in pedagogy, the art and science of teaching. Just like professional singers have voice teachers and major league baseball players have batting coaches, teachers require continuing education.

Experience and footprint of more than 40 years

Some of us have been founders of new Lithuanian heritage schools; many of us have been supporters of existing schools and developers of recently formed ones. Let us take over the knowledge, experience and wisdom that previous generations of educators and administrators acquired through relentless work and devotion in Lithuanian heritage programs.

First footprints were made in summer 1967 when LEC organized teacher training courses at Camp Dainava. The courses were funded by the Lithuanian Foundation (Chairman Dr. A. Razma) and Lithuanian-American Community (Chairman J. Jasaitis). J. Ignatonis, head of LEC, asked Mr. J. Kavaliūnas to organize a week-long training course for the teachers. Documents and material pertaining to the event, meticulously kept and preserved by Mr. Kavaliūnas, show issues that are relevant to this day. The work done obligates us to continue it. The path is laid out, direction given. Let us leave our footprint for the generations to come.

More information on the 2013 teacher education courses at Dainava can be found on the LEC website, www.svietimotaryba.org. Let us know if you would like to help: donavickas95@hotmail.com.

Neila Baumilienė is director of the Alexandra Kazickas Grant Program at the Kazickas Family Foundation in New York City and principal of the Alexandra Kazickas Lithuanian School in Aquabogue, NY.



to express their thoughts in Lithuanian more freely.

"It was evident the children wanted to come to school. During the week, parents constantly heard the same questions every day: 'Is it Saturday yet?' 'How many more nights before I go back?' 'When will Saturday come?' I would be remiss if I did not mention the funniest-sounding phrase the children all learned at snack time—'kukurūzų spragėsiai' (popcorn)."

Teacher Romutė Barkauskaitė chimed in: "I am so grateful for all the goodwill and generous support the community gave to this remarkable project we call the "Linās" Lithuanian School. But we couldn't have done it without Inga's enthusiasm and hard work as the principal of the school. I'm indebted to her for the opportunity she gave me to work again at what I loved most in Lithuania before I immigrated to America nine years ago."

Rimas Mikšys noted that the school library was named the Valerija Sparkis Library to honor her early efforts to educate the community's children. Valerija passed away unexpectedly this year and her sister Nijolė donated a trove of books and teaching materials to the school.

The spring session enrolled 25 students and more are expected when school resumes this fall. It means that the seeds have been sown not only for students of the Lithuanian language, but also for future campers, dancers, singers and community leaders of tomorrow.

Inga Dabasinskaitė, Nomeda Lukoševičienė and Rimas Mikšys of Seattle's Lithuanian Community contributed to this article.

Varpelis Children's Choir Celebrates 10th Anniversary

By Valentinas Šernas



The Varpelis choir with alumni (back row) at their 10th anniversary concert. Right, choir director Birutė Mockienė.



The Varpelis children's choir at Sts. Peter and Paul parish in Elizabeth, N.J., was founded by Birutė Mockienė in the spring of 2002. Eight children, ages 4 to 12, attended the first rehearsal. As time went on, new members joined and some older ones left, but the total complement always hovered around 20.

In addition to singing at Masses, the choir branched out to sing Lithuanian songs at the annual Lithuanian Independence Day celebration, and to hold its own Mother's Day celebrations at the parish hall. Every year for the past four years, the Varpelis choir was invited by the Lithuanian Consul General in New York to represent Lithuania in song at the New York Times Travel Show at the Jacob Javits Convention Center. The choir also participated in the last two Lithuanian Folk Song Festivals, held in Chicago in 2006 and in Toronto in 2010. All these performances required extensive preparation, which was only made possible through the tireless efforts of the choir's director, Birutė Mockienė, and the devoted help of the parents.

On May 20, 2012, the Varpelis choir held its 10th anniversary concert in the parish hall with a choral program followed by a full Lithuanian meal. As the guests assembled in the parish hall, they were treated to a slide show put together by Paulius Murauskas showing the choir's activities over the past 10 years. The concert's master of ceremonies was Aušra Covalesky, assisted by Lina Mockutė. They reminded the audience of the choir's numerous activities over the past 10 years, and then invited the choir to ascend the stage to perform their first four songs: *Anksti rytą* (Early in the morning), *Dainelė apie lietų* (A song about rain), *Vabaliukų dainelė* (A song about little bugs), and the favorite, *Mamos suknelė* (Mother's dress).

Twenty one choir members took the stage dressed in sky blue T-shirts displaying the stylized "Varpelis" name in front and "Elizabeth, New Jersey" on the back. The T-shirts had recently been made in preparation for the Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival in Boston, which 11 members of the choir were getting ready to

attend. The children performed the four songs beautifully with added hand and body motion to illustrate the words. Accompanying the choir on piano was Eric Houghton, who has been an accompanist for many of the choir's previous performances. In recognition of Eric's contributions, he was presented with one of the new Varpelis T-shirts.

Next, the dancers of the choir performed two dances they had just learned for the Dance Festival. The dances seemed quite complicated for such young dancers, but they performed them very well, thanks to the efforts of their dance teacher, Monika Murauskas. The program continued with five Lithuanian folk songs: *Į mišką ėjau* (I went into the woods), *Žalias linas* (Green flax), *Mano tėvelis* (My father), *Augo putins* (A viburnum bush grew) and *Pjoviau šieną* (I cut hay). These songs were accompanied by Julius Veblaitis on violin, and again illustrated with gestures and rhythmic movement.

For the last part of the program, former members of the choir (also in the new T-shirts) joined the group for the remaining four songs. First came *Lietuvos vaikai* (Lithuania's children) accompanied on saxophone by Antanas Mockus, and on piano by Frances Covalesky. Then followed *Viešpaties lėlija* (The Lord's lily) and *Mes ateitis* (We are the future). For the concluding song, the choir's director picked a favorite, *Žemėj Lietuvos* (On Lithuanian soil), and asked the audience to join in.

After the performance, the choir and its director received many congratulatory wishes and symbolic gifts, including those from the Lithuanian Consul General in New York, the Vinco Kudirkos Lithuanian School of Elizabeth, the Lithuanian-American Community of New Jersey and the choir's parents. Everyone then enjoyed a tasty Lithuanian meal freshly prepared by the choir's parents in the parish's kitchen.

Lithuanian Heritage Schools Receive Grants

By Neila Baumilienė

On July 25, 2012, Kazickas Family Foundation president Jūratė Kazickas announced awards to 23 Lithuanian heritage schools in the U.S. for a total of \$114,200 through the Alexandra Kazickas Grant Program (AKGP). These grants will provide support to schools in 14 states with almost 2,000 students and 350 teachers and staff members.

AKGP honors the memory of Alexandra Kazickas (1920-2011), the late wife of Dr. Juozas P. Kazickas and the mother of Jūratė, Joseph, Alexander (d. 1976), Michael and John. Alexandra was deeply committed to the preservation of a Lithuanian identity for young people growing up in the U.S. Her generosity in 2006 enabled the founding of Long Island's first heritage school, the Alexandra Kazickas Lithuanian School in Riverhead, N.Y.

AKGP's mission is to support the work of the 36 Lithuanian heritage schools in the U.S., operating closely with and in accordance to the regulations of the Lithuanian Education Council. The program grant is for \$100,000 a year for the three years (2012-2014), with a maximum grant of \$10,000 per school for those that wish to apply.

These non-profit schools help preserve Lithuanian language and culture for the benefit of individuals, communities and society. They vary in size: some with only a dozen students to one

with 550 and a waiting list of 50. When in partnership with local organizations and academic institutions, heritage schools provide students with multiple ways of learning through educational and enrichment experiences and opportunities.

For the past two decades, with increased immigration from Lithuania to the U.S., Lithuanian heritage schools have been growing and are in need of greater financial support. Before the launch of AKGP in spring 2012, the main supporter of the majority of U.S. Lithuanian language schools for 50 years was the Lithuanian Foundation (Lemont, Ill.) Funding is an ongoing challenge, with most coming from tuition. Other contributions come from foundations, private donors and local fund raisers. While the government of Lithuania through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs does provide some schools with books and other teaching materials, its financial support is not significant.

"We would like to set an example for others to support our Lithuanian heritage schools," says Dr. J.P. Kazickas. "Understandably, financial support allows for more freedom of action and achievement of higher academic standards. Lithuanian education is very important to the Kazickas family."

For more information, visit www.kff.lt, email infoakgp@kff.lt or call 212-213-6993.



Carol Luschas at Lithuanian Heritage Museum display. Photo: Rimas Gedeika.

98 Years and Going Strong

"Lithuanian Customs and Traditions" was the theme at this year's Lithuanian Days in Frackville, Pa. The event is the oldest consecutively running ethnic festival in the United States. The festival took place August 11 and 12 at the Schuylkill Mall.

The festival opened Saturday with music from "The Sensations" and a procession of U.S. and Lithuanian flags carried by the Lithuanian Partisans Living History Group and members of the Knights of Lithuania Anthracite Council No. 144, which sponsors the event.

In short order, festival-goers began enjoying two days of Lithuanian dance and music, homemade food, vendors of Lithuanian goods, and the two-room Lithuanian Heritage Museum in an area bedecked with the Lithuanian flag colors of yellow, green and red.

Folk dance groups Malūnas, from Maryland, and Žilvinas, from Philadelphia, along with Gintaras Children's Dance Group from Mahanoy City, performed their repertoire and got the audience up on their feet to join in.

Philadelphia's Kaimo Kapela band entertained. Lynne Cox and brothers Mike and Tom Dura led sing-alongs of Lithuanian folk music. Lithuanian pop and folk singer Augis performed original and contemporary pieces.

Activities included talks by genealogist Thomas Saduaskas and a quiz on the 2012 London Olympics by Laurynas Misevičius. Members of the Spins and Needles Guild demonstrated the art of making thread using spinning wheels.

The food court could barely keep up with the demand for the homemade Lithuanian delicacies kugelis, balandeliai, koldunai, kielbasi, šaltibarščiai and more.

The festival's second day ended with all of the musicians joining together to sing a few hauntingly beautiful Lithuanian Partisan songs.

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Lithuania Savors Olympic Victories

Lithuania had the last word at the summer Olympics when Laura Asadauskaitė took the final gold medal of the Games while setting a new Olympic record in women's modern pentathlon.

The grueling event combines fencing, swimming, horse riding, and biathlon-style shooting and running, all in a single day.

Asadauskaitė was third after fencing, and fourth after swimming. She gave a solid performance in the riding phase, knocking down just one fence. In the finale, she proved quicker at hitting her targets with the laser gun than her opponents, and crossed the finish line with a comfortable lead. Great Britain's Samantha Murray took silver with Brazil's Yane Marques coming in third.

Asadauskaitė, 28, is married to two-time Olympic medalist Andrejus Zadneprovskis. She missed competing in 2010 following the birth of her daughter, but regained her world champion title in May prior to the summer Games.

Several Shining Moments...

The 2012 Olympic Games were quite successful overall for Lithuania. More than 50 athletes competed, bringing home five medals—independent Lithuania's greatest total number and the greatest number of gold medals (two) in a single Olympics.

Lithuania's first medal went to 15-year-old Ruta Meilutytė, who won an unexpected gold in the women's 100-meter breaststroke to capture a place in history.

Aleksandras Kazakevičius, 26, won bronze in a final match of men's Greco-Roman wrestling (74kg), beating Denmark's Mark Overgaard Madson 3-0. The medal was independent Lithuania's first in wrestling. The gold went to Russian Roman Vlasov and silver to Arsen Julfalakyan from Armenia.



Jevgenijus Šuklinas sprints to silver.
Photo: Alfredas Pliadis

Sprint canoer Jevgenijus Šuklinas, 26, claimed a silver medal in the men's canoe C1 200-meter with a time of 42.792. Ukraine's Yuri Cheban won the gold and Russia's Ivan Shtyl won the bronze.

In men's lightweight (60kg) boxing, Evaldas Petrauskas, 20, defeated Italy's Domenico Valentino to get to the semifinals. While he was defeated



Evaldas Petrauskas takes lightweight boxing bronze. Photo: Alfredas Pliadis



A jubilant Laura Asadauskaitė crosses the finish line to capture the gold medal in women's modern pentathlon. Photo: Alfredas Pliadis

by South Korean Soonchul Han, his bronze medal victory gave Lithuania its first-ever Olympic boxing medal.

Asadauskaitė's pentathlon victory on the last day of the games capped off the Lithuanian successes.

...And a Few Disappointments

The summer Olympics were disappointing for some expected contenders.

Discus thrower Virgilijus Alekna, who already had two golds (2000, 2004) and a bronze (2008) to his name, had hoped to medal again. The 40-year-old Alekna remained in the second spot up until the fifth round, when he was edged out of the bronze medal spot by Estonian Gerd Kanter.

The Lithuanian men's basketball team had its worst showing in 20 years. Despite throwing a scare into the American team in a 99-94 game, they did not make it to the quarterfinals.

Austra Skujytė, 2004 silver medal winner, had a heart-breaking heptathlon. In second place until the very last event, she ran out of steam in the 800m run and finished eighth.

The Lithuanian Paralympics goalball team, a gold-medal favorite going in, opened with a decisive 11-1 victory over Great Britain but lost to Brazil in the semifinals and was defeated by Turkey for the bronze.

Lithuanian Olympians who placed first through eighth, along with their coaches and team members, will share a bonus pot of 3.3 million litas provided by the Lithuanian government's Department of Physical Education and Sports.



Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė with the Lithuanian Paralympic team. Photo: D.Labučio/ELTA

a taste of lithuania

Secrets of the World's Greatest Potato Pancakes Revealed

By Christiana Noyalas

Lithuanian bulviniai blynai are among the most famous Lithuanian heritage foods. Served with a dollop of sour cream and a spoonful of applesauce, these hot potato pancakes are simply delicious.

The Philadelphia Lithuanian Music Hall Association shared their Lithuanian blynai recipe with me last fall. Every year, during the first weekend in November, they host their annual Mugė (Festival) where they serve the "World's Greatest Lithuanian Pancakes" and other traditional Lithuanian foods and libations.

Several of us volunteered last year to help prepare for the two-day festival. We peeled 500 pounds of russet potatoes for these best-selling potato pancakes. In the end, it took 12 of us about two and a half hours to prepare 40 gallons of blynai batter. Don't let the enormity of our project scare you away—we scaled down their recipe from 500 pounds to a more manageable 4¼ pounds of potatoes!

At the festival, a serving size was four potato pancakes. When planning your menu, note that just two or three might be a good serving size for most people.



Lithuanian Bulviniai Blynai (Potato Pancakes)

Recipe courtesy of the Philadelphia Lithuanian Music Hall Association

Yield: about 10 blynai (pancakes)

4¼ lbs russet potatoes	1 crushed vitamin C tablet or ½ teaspoon ascorbic acid powder
1 egg	Canola oil for frying
½ small onion	Sour cream for garnish
2¼ teaspoons salt	Applesauce for garnish
2½ tablespoons farina	

Peel the potatoes and remove any dark spots. Finely grate the potatoes with a food processor or box grater. Place the grated potatoes in a mesh sieve and allow them to drain above a bowl. Save the water that collects in the bowl, as you will reuse the potato starch that settles at the bottom. Continue this process of grating and draining until all of the potatoes are processed.

After the potatoes have had a chance to drain, empty them into a large bowl. Sprinkle them with the crushed vitamin C or ascorbic acid powder. Mix thoroughly to distribute the vitamin C/ascorbic acid powder evenly throughout the potatoes. This prevents the mixture from turning gray.

Add the onion, egg, salt and farina to the potato mixture and mix until well combined. Carefully pour off the potato water from your collection bowl, but be careful to save the potato starch that settled at

the bottom of the bowl. Add the potato starch to the potato mixture and stir until well combined.

If you are making this potato batter ahead of time, cover it with one sheet of paper towel and then with a piece of plastic wrap. Place both the paper towel and plastic wrap directly on the potato mixture to keep any air from reaching the batter. Refrigerate this batter up to two days before using it.

Heat ½ inch of canola oil in a large frying pan. Test the oil temperature by dropping a small amount of batter in the oil. If it sizzles, then the oil is hot enough. Drop about ¾ cup of potato batter into the oil for each pancake. Make several blynai at a time, but be sure to leave enough space in your pan so that the blynai do not touch each other. Fry until the bottom is golden brown and then use a spatula to flip the blynai. Fry the other side until golden. Remove from the oil and place on paper towels to drain.

Serve these Lithuanian blynai hot with a dollop of sour cream and a little applesauce. You'll soon understand why they call them the world's greatest Lithuanian potato pancakes!

Gero apetito!

Christiana Noyalas (Naujalis) is a marketing professional with a passion for cooking and genealogy. A resident of southeastern Pennsylvania, Christiana serves on Philadelphia's Lithuanian Music Hall Association board. She test drives cookware and shares recipes on her blog, www.toolsforkitchens.com.



Tips for Taking a Genealogy Tour

By Michael P. Lukas



Mike at the grave of his great-grandfather, Dominykas (Domas for short) Lukoševičius, and his wife and children.

Once you're a little further along on your genealogy research and have identified the cities or villages where your ancestors lived, you might want to consider visiting Lithuania to supplement your efforts with a little hands-on sleuthing.

Early in August, several members of my family and I took a two-week trip to Lithuania. We used a travel agency to set up the trip. The first part of the trip was a standard tour to Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipeda and other typical tourist destinations. The second part of the trip was a custom tour for which we hired a driver and bilingual guide to take us to the back areas of the country where our grandparents came from.

We stayed two nights in Panevėžys, the main city in the area of interest to us, and then we took day trips to four different churches where our grandparents were baptized and/or married. The churches were in Sidabravas, Grinkiškis, Gudžiūnai and Vaškai. We also drove through the little towns where our grandparents were born and raised: Jokubaičiai, Kubiliūnai, Vabaliai and Grūžiai.

What we learned as a result of this trip:

1) You can get by without knowing the Lithuanian language in the major cities and tourist destinations. Most of the younger people speak English and even the menus are in multiple languages in those places.

2) If you plan on traveling off the beaten track, into small villages, plan on communicating in Lithuanian, as English is rare in those locations. Even the priests in the churches we visited did not speak English.

3) It helped to have a driver and bilingual guide who could navigate to the small villages we wanted to visit. Even with detailed maps, to find these villages they needed to use "Lithuanian GPS," namely sticking their heads out the window and calling out to passers-by: "Laba diena, kur yra...?" (Hello, where is...?) Road signs are almost nonexistent along the back (mainly gravel) roads. An actual GPS may have helped, but the one in our van was not working.

4) It helps to plan ahead and have a good idea of which churches and towns you want to visit and figure out where they are ahead of time. I used the website www.maps.lt/en to get detailed maps of the towns. I could even locate some of the cemeteries by clicking on the "ortho-photo" icon to switch to an aerial view (instead of map view) and zooming in as much as possible. You can pan around and see plots of land that look like cemeteries (and they turned out to be the cemeteries we were looking for).

5) It is very difficult to find the actual graves of relatives who died more than 50 years ago. Many headstones have worn away or disintegrated (especially if they were wooden). There are no written records of burial sites; only the relatives literally "know where the bodies are buried." However, we lucked out and found the graves of two sets of our great-grandparents. In some cases the family members have paid to resurface and re-inscribe the markings on the older gravestones.

6) Even if you cannot find a really old gravesite, you may be able to find gravestones of relatives with the same last name who have died more recently. We placed notes (written in Lithuanian) in plastic baggies on

several graves with promising names. Within a week I received emails from two different relatives who had found those notes and responded! Quite thrilling! We have been corresponding back and forth and sharing information on relatives in both of our countries.

7) If at all possible, try to locate relatives in Lithuania well in advance of your trip there. You can try sending letters to people with the same last name by looking through online phone books. One is such resource is <http://118.zebra.lt> (click on "EN" for English, then "resident search").

8) Another idea is to send letters to the priests in the parishes you intend to visit. We did that, and received responses from two out of four parishes (but they did not know any of the families we were looking for). If you can tell the priests when you plan to arrive, it is more likely that they will be available to open up the church for you (they are usually locked). You can find the names and addresses of the priests and parishes on the Internet if you Google the Lithuanian name of the church you are looking for. Note that you will increase your chances of getting a response if you can write the letter in Lithuanian rather than English.

I hope these suggestions help someone!

Michael P. Lukas is a retired computer systems engineer who grew up in the Lithuanian neighborhood of Marquette Park in Chicago. He now lives with his family in Eastlake, Ohio (a suburb of Cleveland). He is documenting his family history to let future generations know about the valiant efforts of previous generations to make a life in a new country.



Mike at the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Grinkiškis.

current events

Teddy Bears Spark International Incident

A Swedish PR stunt strained relations between Lithuania and Belarus over the summer.

Belarus was angered when a Swedish public relations firm dropped almost 1,000 teddy bears carrying pro-democratic messages from a light plane that took off in Lithuania and violated the Lithuanian-Belarusian border in July.

Belarus subsequently expelled the Swedish ambassador and threatened to punish Lithuania, saying that Lithuanians should be held accountable for the illegal border crossing.

The incident not only triggered a diplomatic crisis, but also raised questions about Lithuanian airspace security. Lithuania is a border state of both the EU and NATO.

In response to Belarus' request for legal assistance in the investigation of the violation, Lithuania's President Dalia Grybauskaitė said Lithuania would fulfill its international obligations. Lithuanian prosecutors are carrying out the investigation.

Lithuania to Welcome New U.S. Ambassador



President Barack Obama recently nominated Deborah Ann McCarthy as the next U.S. Ambassador to Lithuania, replacing Anne E. Derse, who completed her three years of service in September.

McCarthy is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, and currently serves as principal deputy assistant secretary of state for economic and business affairs. Previous positions with the Department of State include deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Athens, Greece from 2008 to 2010, special coordinator for Venezuelan Affairs from 2006 to 2007, senior advisor for Counter Terrorism from 2004 to 2006, and deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement from 2002 to 2004. McCarthy has also had overseas assignments in Canada, Nicaragua, France and Haiti.

Departing Ambassador Derse received Lithuania's National Defense System Medal for Meritorious Civilian Service on September 5 from Minister of National Defense Rasa Juknevičienė. The minister thanked Derse for close cooperation as a strategic partner in the defense sector. Derse was also honored on September 13 by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania Audronius Ažubalis, who thanked the Ambassador for her contribution to strengthening ties between Lithuania and the United States, support for the establishment of the NATO Energy Security Center of Excellence in Vilnius and efforts to secure the extension of the Baltic air policing mission.

World Lithuanian Symposium Held in Vilnius

The 14th World Lithuanian Symposium, held August 7-10 in Vilnius, brought together more than 190 Lithuanians from around the world to discuss relations between Lithuania and Lithuanian emigrants as well as to address the questions of emigration, dual citizenship and the future of the Lithuanian World Community (LWC). LWC organized the event, which is held every three years.

At the opening ceremony, Speaker of the Seimas Irena Degutienė emphasized the importance of organizations like the LWC and the need for unity and cooperation between Lithuanians living in their own country and abroad.

In Board elections, California's Danguolė Navickienė was named chairman, replacing Regina Narušienė, who had served as chair for six years.

Following the conference, Navickienė and the representative of the community in Lithuania, Vida Bandis, met with Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania Asta Skaisgirytė Liauškienė. They discussed strengthening cooperation between the Ministry and LWC, how to implement the idea of Global Lithuania, increased LWC representation in Lithuania and implementation of educational and cultural projects.

Yeltsin Awarded Posthumous Decoration

During a ceremony at the Presidential Palace in August, President Dalia Grybauskaitė presented the Grand Cross of the Order of the Cross of Vytytis, awarded posthumously to former Russian President Boris Yeltsin, to his widow, Naina Yeltsina.

Yeltsin received the state decoration for his contribution to strengthening Lithuanian statehood and promoting bilateral relations between Lithuania and Russia.

Yeltsin was a proponent of democracy and national self-determination, and he supported independence for the Baltic countries. During the January 13 events, Yeltsin condemned the use of military power. During his presidency, in 1991 Lithuania and Russia signed the bilateral treaty recognizing Lithuania as a sovereign state. Later, he supported the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Lithuania in 1992 and the Lithuanian-Russian border treaty in 1997.

The Grand Cross of the Order of the Cross of Vytytis is awarded to the leaders and citizens of Lithuania and foreign countries for exceptional merits to the Lithuanian state.



Naina Yeltsina (left) and President Dalia Grybauskaitė. Photo: M. Kulbis

Business

...Standard & Poor's affirmed Lithuania's BBB debt rating with a stable outlook, in recognition of budget policies promoting sustainable economic growth and progress in consolidating public finances.

...Lithuania faces a shortage of qualified IT professionals due to an influx of large foreign companies. Business leaders are working with Kaunas University of Technology to meet demand.

...Retail clothing chain H&M established a branch in Lithuania and plans to open two stores in 2013. H&M is expected to compete with Lithuanian retailers, especially in the children's clothing sector.

...Ikea is building a flagship store with parking for 1,000 cars near the Vilnius airport. The store, which opens in June 2013, is expected to attract shoppers from Belarus, Latvia and Poland, and stimulate other commercial development in the area.

...After declining sales in 2008-2009, demand for electronics and home technologies is recovering in Lithuania. In response to trade indicators, Elektromarkt opened its first new store in three years.

...Biotechpharma is opening a biopharmaceutical research center in Lithuania to service U.S. and Western European countries in need of research studies and protein production services.

...A survey by job search portal CVbankas.lt revealed that 45 percent of workers had at some point received an "envelope salary" (off the books), while another 10 percent said they did so regularly.

...Unexpected turnoff of a Russian electrical power transmission line in August forced Lithuania to rapidly up its own power production, though at three times the cost. The costs are unlikely to hit consumers, as most suppliers buy electricity at a fixed rate.

...While industrial production fell 0.6 percent overall in the EU in June compared to May, Lithuanian production rose 18.6 percent.

...GECO Investments is finalizing construction of a \$7.5 million, 20 megawatt biofuel power project in Kaunas, funded solely by local investors. The company plans a similar project in Jonava.

...Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia proposed a merger of Latvia's "air-Baltic" with "Estonian air" to create a new, cooperatively managed airline that can operate more cost effectively.

...In a recent workplace poll, 69 percent of Lithuanians ages 18-35 said they would like an international career, with 43 percent expressing preference to work for a Scandinavian company.

Economy

...Profits from state-owned enterprises in Lithuania, such as the railways and post office, were 246.6 million litas in 2011, 3.5 times more than 2010.

...Lithuanian banks report that new home loan rates are down to 3.1 percent, the lowest since the collection of data began in 2004. Inflation is down to 2.9 percent from last year's 4.6 percent. Household bank deposits increased 2.1 percent. The number of housing loans increased 10 percent.

Nation

...According to a recent survey, 48 percent of Lithuanians intend to vote against the construction of a new nuclear power plant at Visaginis, while only 19 percent plan to support it in October voting.

... In Bloomberg Rankings' list of healthiest countries in the world, Lithuania ranked 81 of 145, below Latvia (79) and Estonia (57).

...A 10-year analysis of Lithuanian dietary habits shows rapid changes. Consumption of beef fell by half while poultry consumption doubled. Consumption of potatoes dropped while other vegetables increased. Fruits and berries are being replaced by sugar. Consumption of dairy and eggs remains stable.

...The Lithuanian government is considering a law to increase the size of its armed forces with additional professional troops, compulsory basic military service personnel and other active reserve soldiers each year through 2018.

...The recently published "Index of Religiousness and Atheism" showed that 69 percent of Lithuanians see themselves as religious—above the world average of 59 percent—while 22 percent say they are not religious and 1 percent claim to be atheists.

...In August, Vilnius' historic Town Hall opened its doors to wedding ceremonies. Marriage signing acts take place the final Saturday of each month, or other days with city council approval. Ceremonies, which include drinks and food, cost 250 litas.

People

...Lithuanian literature professor and critic Irena Veisaite received this year's Goethe Medal for her "contribution to reconciliation and cultural dialogue with Germany, her independent spirit, her political courage, and her creativity." Veisaite's early love for Germany's language, culture and literature guided her career despite her treatment as a Jew under the Nazis and the Soviets.

...Leader of Lithuania's Socialist People's Front, Algirdas Paleckis, has been found guilty and fined \$4,000 for "denying Soviet aggression against Lithuania and its people." He is the first to be charged under Article 170 "On Denial of Soviet Occupation" for comments during a radio interview about the January 1991 events, when he said, "As it turns out, our people fired upon our own people."

...Vilnius teen Motiejus Valiūnas won Lithuania's first gold medal in the 6th International Olympiad on Astrophysics and Astronomy held in Brazil in August. Two other Lithuanian high-school students won bronze medals and two received commendations.

... Julius Kvedaras, Lithuanian Football Federation president, has been suspended for six months. He is being investigated for possible financial crimes, including illicit enrichment by taking money allocated to Lithuania by the European Football Association.

...Tenor Virgilijus Noreika retired after 55 years, giving good-bye concerts in Lithuania's major cities. The 77-year-old maestro has prepared over 50 roles and given more than 700 solo concerts.

continued on next page

current events

continued from previous page

Education

...Children of Lithuanian emigrants across the world attend school in Lithuania online. Of 1,000 students in Oz's Gymnasium, 570 attend class remotely via Skype, recorded lessons and email. The school's e-learning program has more than 7,000 virtual lessons.

...The "Lithuanian Home," a secondary school for Lithuanian-origin students from abroad reported an extremely high number of admission applications for the 2012-2013 school year. Students, many of whom are children of the émigré population, receive free education, room and board.

... The University of Houston and Vilnius Gediminas Technical University have formed an academic partnership. Houston's executive MBA students will visit Lithuania, and its professors will attend the Life Sciences Baltics Forum 2012 in Vilnius.

...Norway increased support for the European Humanities University (EHU) from 3 million to 5 million kroner per year for three years. EHU was shut down by Belarus in 2004 after resisting encroachments on academic freedom but re-opened in Vilnius in 2005.

International

...The U.S. Embassy in Lithuania streamlined application for U.S. non-immigrant visas via a new, simpler website. The process requires completing a visa application form (DS-160) and paying the consular fee before signing up for an interview.

...Lithuania continues to seek an environmental impact assessment from Russia for its planned Kaliningrad nuclear power plant project, including reasons for site selection, seismic data, cooling, safety, environmental impact and emergency preparedness plans

...An EU antitrust probe into Gazprom could benefit gas consumers in Lithuania. The Russian supplier is under investigation for alleged anti-competitive practices: abuse of dominant market position by restricting free flow of gas, preventing diversification of supply and unfair pricing.

...Sweden has invited Lithuania to join the elite Nordic Battlegroup in 2015 along with troops from Norway, Finland, Ireland and Estonia. EU battlegroups consist of military units deployed for six months on a rotating basis. Up to 2,000 troops can be deployed quickly to a crisis area.

...The European Social Fund is giving a Lithuanian Labor Exchange initiative €5.8 million to help 5,000 young people under 29 to develop skills and find employment. Youth unemployment in Lithuania is almost 30 percent. The year-long project offers employers grants to pay 50 percent of salary and insurance costs for each employee.

...Latvia and Lithuania have "good chances" to become the 18th and 19th members of the eurozone, according to a Swedbank special report. Latvia has targeted 2014 for euro adoption. Lithuanian has yet to name a date.

...The Invisible Front, a documentary on the Lithuanian Partisan Resistance's armed struggle against the Soviet Union from 1944 to 1953, premiered in July in New York.

... In 2012, the instance of illegal labor increased three times compared with the same period last year. Illegal work is most often used in construction and agriculture. Long-distance drivers and welders from Belarus and Russia also come to Lithuania for illegal jobs.

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NOVEMBER 2012

November 3, 3 p.m.
Vėlinės (All Souls' Day)
Roslyn Cemetery, Roslyn, Wash.

November 3 & 4, 12-6 p.m.
Mugė - Philly LAC Annual Fair
Lithuanian Music Hall, 2715 E. Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia
Come taste the world's best potato pancakes!

November 5, 11:30 & 2:30
"Night Herders"
Washington, D.C.
Coming-of-age tale of a 10-year-old boy in a Lithuanian village.
Info: www.kidseurofestival.org

November 10, 5-11 p.m.
Rudens Balis/Fall Ball
Latvian Naimai, 425 Hofman Avenue, San Francisco. Info: facebook.com/SFLithuanians

November 10
Lithuanian Citizen's Society of Western PA 100th Anniversary Celebration
Lithuanian Hall, South Side, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Info: www.pittsburghlithuanians.com/events.htm

November 15-18
Indianapolis Internat'l Festival
Indianapolis Fairgrounds
West Pavilion. Visit Indianapolis LAC's booth. Folk dance ensembles will perform. Info: www.familyevents.com/event/204/

November 17, 1 p.m.
Christmas Ornament Workshop
Balzekas Museum
6500 S. Pulaski Road, Chicago
\$12 members, \$15 nonmembers, \$6 children under 12
Info: www.balzekasmuseum.org

November 17, 1-3 p.m.
Amber Roots Philadelphia Lithuanian Heritage Club
Lithuanian Music Hall, 2715 E. Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia
Open to all. Bring a dish to share. Use side door, go downstairs.
Info: milliemarks@aol.com, 484-231-8532

November 24, 6-9 p.m.
Kalėdų Vakarų/Christmas Party
Cedar Creek Club House, Olathe, Kans.
Info: 913-205-8787, facebook.com/KansasCityLithuanianCommunity

November 28, 12 p.m.
We Are Here: Memories of the Lithuanian Holocaust
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Ellen Cassidy speaks about her new book. Info: www.loc.gov/today/pr/2012/12-157.html

December 14, 7 p.m.
Book Talk: Julija Šukys, author "Epistolophilia: Writing the Life of Ona Šimaitė"
Balzekas Museum, Chicago
\$8 members, students and seniors; \$5 nonmembers
Info: www.balzekasmuseum.org

DECEMBER 2012

December 7, 7:30 p.m.
Opening of Ona Birutė Surdokienė's papercutting exhibition, "Touch"
Čiurlionis Gallery Youth Center, Chicago

December 7
St. George Parish Vyresniųjų Kalėdiniai Pietūs (Senior Christmas Dinner)
Lithuanian Heritage Society of Rochester. Info: www.lhrs.org

December 9, 2 p.m.
Lithuanian Citizen's Society of Western PA Kūčios
Pittsburgh, Pa.
Info: www.pittsburghlithuanians.com/events.htm

December 15, 1-3 p.m.
Amber Roots Kūčios
Lithuanian Music Hall, 2715 E. Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia
Meeting in English. Open to all. Bring a meatless, preferably Lithuanian, dish to share. Use side door, go downstairs.
Info: milliemarks@aol.com, 484-231-8532

December 15, 2 p.m.
Kalėdų Sventē/Christmas Festival
Latvian Community Center, Indianapolis, Ind.
Info: IndyLithuanianComm@gmail.com

December 16
Traditional Kūčios & Eglutė
Lithuanian Heritage Society of Rochester, N.Y.
Info: www.lhrs.org

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PERIODICALS
POSTAGE



Olympic gold medalist Laura Asadauskaitė. Story page 15. Photo: Alfredas Pliadis