

bridges



LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

\$5

January/February 2015

this month in history

January and February Anniversaries

745 years ago

February 16, 1270

The Battle of Karuse, or Battle on the Ice, was fought on between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Livonian Order on the frozen Baltic Sea between the Island of Muhu and the mainland in what is now Estonia. The battle, in which the Lithuanians achieved a decisive victory, was the fifth-largest defeat of the Livonian or Teutonic Orders in the 13th century.



500 years ago

February 4, 1515

Mikalojus Radvila Juodasis (Mikolaj Radziwiłł "the Black") was born in Nesvizh (now in Belarus). A member of one of the most influential families in the history of Lithuania, Radvila held the positions of grand hetman of Lithuania, chancellor of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL), and palatine of Vilnius.

Radvila was considered the most powerful magnate in the Grand Duchy at the time. Even Sigismund II Augustus, the king of Poland and grand duke of Lithuania, who was married to Radvila's cousin Barbora, would stand to greet Radvila.

Although he contributed to the ongoing Polonisation of the Grand Duchy, influencing Lithuanian nobles to adopt Polish culture, Radvila staunchly opposed political union with Poland (the Lublin Union), instead backing the cause of Lithuanian sovereignty. He negotiated the union of Livonia and the GDL in 1562.

A Calvinist who promoted the Reformation, he sought to realign Lithuania with Protestant Sweden. With his influence, the rights of all Christian nobles were equalized in the Lithuanian Sejm.

315 years ago

February 22, 1700

Augustus II, king of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, with the Saxon army, attacked Swedish-controlled Riga, setting off the Great Northern War (1700-1721). The war proved disastrous to the Commonwealth and allowed Russia to strengthen its influence.

230 years ago

January 20, 1785

Teodoras Grotusas (Theodor Grotthus), the first Lithuanian physical chemist, was born in Leipzig, Germany. He is known for establishing the first theory of electrolysis in 1806 (the Grotthuss mechanism) and formulating the first law of photochemistry in 1817.

180 years ago

January 17, 1835

Roman Catholic bishop and poet Antanas Baranauskas was born in Anykščiai, Lithuania. His 342-line poem *Anykščių šilelis* (The Forest of Anykščiai), one of the most widely read and popular works of Lithuanian literature, marks the beginning of Lithuanian narrative poetry. Written in East High Lithuanian dialect, it describes the former beauty of a pine grove near his village and how it was despoiled under Russian rule, depicting in symbolic form the plight of Lithuania under the tsarist regime.

Baranauskas studied the development of the written Lithuanian language, and wrote the first scholarly attempt to distinguish different Lithuanian and Samogitian dialects. His work served to re-legitimize the Lithuanian language at a time when Polish and Russian were considered the region's only "respectable" languages.

145 years ago

February 13, 1870

Renowned piano virtuoso and composer Leopold Godowsky was born to Lithuanian Jewish parents in Žasliai. By age 5, the largely self-taught Godowsky was composing and becoming proficient on piano and violin. He gave his first concert at age 9.

One of the most highly regarded international performers of his time, he is best known for his 53 Studies on Chopin's *Études* (1894–1914), among the most difficult piano works ever written.



135 years ago

January 6, 1880

Mother Maria Kaupas, founder and superior general of the Sisters of St. Casimir, was born Marija Kazimiera Kaupaitė in Ramygala, Lithuania. She founded the order in Scranton, Pa., in 1907 to serve the immigrant Lithuanian population, then moved the Motherhouse to Chicago in 1911. She died in 1940, and was named venerable in 2010.

130 years ago

February 26, 1885

Alexander Stulginskis, the second president of Lithuania, was born at Kutaliai. He died September 22, 1969, in Kaunas.

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Front cover: To commemorate Lithuania's Independence Day, floral wreaths are carried to the graves of the signatories of the February 16, 1918, Act of Independence of Lithuania. Photo: ©Robertas Dackus, courtesy of the Office of the President of Lithuania

Back cover: The Christmas season officially ends in Lithuania with the coming of the Three Kings. To mark the day, people chalk the tops of their doors with the letters +K+M+B (for kings Kaspar, Melchior and Baltazar). In addition to the annual Trijų Karalių eisena (Three Kings procession), it also is the day that most Lithuanians take down their Christmas trees and decorations. Photo: ©Alfредas Pliadis, pliadisfoto.com

from the editor

25 Years On

This year marks the 25th anniversary of re-establishment of Lithuanian independence.

On February 24, 1990, the first democratic elections to the Lithuanian SSR were held. Lithuanian Reform Movement candidates won an overwhelming majority in the elections to the Lithuanian Supreme Council, setting the stage for the March 11, 1990, signing of the Act on the Restoration of the Independent State of Lithuania.

But the path to independence stretches well back beyond 25 years—all the way back to 1939, and the moment it was taken away after an all-too-brief 20 years of freedom from tsarist oppression after World War I.

The Lithuanian spirit never gave up along the hard road to regaining independence, enduring through the effects of 1939's Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the 1940 occupation and annexation of Lithuania by the Soviet Union, the 1941 invasion by Nazi Germany and the second brutal Soviet occupation in 1944.

From the underground "war after the war" that Lithuanian freedom fighters waged into the 1950s to the nonviolent actions of the Sąjūdis reform movement in 1988 and 1989, Lithuania never lost its focus on freedom.

In this issue, we examine some different aspects of Lithuania's tumultuous journey to independence. Ellen Cassidy relates how Lithuanian and Jewish women lived in relative harmony in the 19th century, both dreaming of an end to tsarist oppression, and afterward in the inter-war period of independence, until inter-ethnic tension began to rise on the eve of World War II. In her diary, the late **Rožė Kriaučiūnas** chronicles the dark days after freedom slipped away during World War II, when she and her family fled occupied Lithuania, fearing for their lives. Dr. Dovilė Budrytė brings to light a little-known "dangerous art"—**vizitėlės**—**created by Lithuanian women imprisoned in Soviet gulags and prison camps**, and introduces us to a woman who was a courier for the partisans and established a museum in their memory. We meet Sigita Šimkuvienė, president of the Lithuanian American Community, Inc., who grew up in Soviet Lithuania and strives today to instill an appreciation of independent Lithuania among youth living in the United States. And finally, the Portland Lithuanian community runs to remember the lives sacrificed in order to achieve independence.

Long live a free Lithuania!



Teresė Vekteris, Editor

bridges

Vol. 39 No. 1 / January/February 2015
Bridges is the English-language publication of the
Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.
lithuanian-american.org/bridges

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BRIDGES (ISSN: 87508028) is published 10 times per year (Jan/Feb and Jul/Aug combined) by Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. The known office of publication is located at 78 Mark Twain Dr., Hamilton Square, NJ 08690. The editorial office is located at 6125 McCallum Street, Philadelphia, PA 19144. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, IL and additional locations. Vol. 39, No. 1. POSTMASTER: Send address corrections and changes to LAC, Inc./Bridges, 78 Mark Twain Drive, Hamilton Square, NJ 08690. SUBSCRIPTIONS: For subscription questions or address changes, write to LAC, Inc./Bridges, 78 Mark Twain Drive, Hamilton Square, NJ 08690. Subscription rates are: US: \$30 per year or \$58 for two years.; International: \$55 per year payable in advance in US funds. COPYRIGHT: ©2014 by Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of the publication may be reproduced without written permission of the publisher. PRINTING: Printed in Chicago, USA by Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.

readers respond

Football Footnote

After reading Mr. Domalakes' interesting article "American Professional Football Stars of Lithuanian Descent" in *Bridges* December 2014 issue I offer two more NFL players for inclusion in that category:

Fritz (Francis) Barzilauskas was a guard from 1947 to 1951 for the Boston Yanks, N.Y. Bulldogs and N.Y. Giants. Fritz was born on June 13, 1920, in Waterbury, Conn., and died on November 30, 1990.

Carl Barzilauskas played DT for the N.Y. Jets (1947-1977) and Green Bay (1978-1979). Carl was born on March 19, 1951, in Waterbury, Conn. His nickname when he played for the Jets was "Brontosaurus Barzilauskas."

Best Regards,
Kestutis Bileris, via email

Through Mother's Eyes: The Diaspora Diary of Rožė Kriauciūnas - Part 1



Rožė Kriauciūnienė. Photo taken in Rebdorf DP Refugee Camp, Bavaria, Germany, 1949.

Prologue

By Romualdas Kriauciūnas, Ph.D.

This is a story of one and a story of many. Of one, because it is a very personal diary that reveals a woman's innermost thoughts and feelings and experiences. Of many, because this excerpt from the life of one family uniquely also reflects what many Lithuanians experienced when they had to flee their homeland during World War II.

Already new generations have grown up and are growing up with no idea of what it was like. This is a record of difficult days on the road, the uncertainties, the wartime dangers and bombings, the relief at the end of the war, the life in the refugee camps—all seen through the sensitive eyes of my mother, Rožė. I have

been told that her diary can be read on many levels, among them, as a suspenseful story, as history, as a psychological study of a family under great stress.

We found my late mother's diary in 1986. It consists of 39 entries, dated February 16 to December 25, 1945, detailing the events, thoughts and feelings from the start of our journey on July 21, 1944. Only with great effort and dedication was my wife, Gražina, able to decipher eventually the faded Lithuanian words, handwritten in pencil and to word process them. They were thus brought back to life and were shared with family and friends in 2003.

Rožė Šukytė was born in 1905 in Debeikiai, district of Utena, Lithuania. After attending the Panevėžys teacher's seminary, she was certified as a grammar

school teacher in 1927, and was the sole teacher at the Gustonys village school until she married Mykolas Kriauciūnas in 1931, Mykolas, also born in 1905, in Pakalniai, near Panevėžys, Lithuania, was a graduate of the Panevėžys teachers' seminary. He first taught in Švainikai, and then from 1932 until 1944 he was the principal and also taught at the Gustonys elementary school. They had three children, Elvyra, Romualdas and Vitalija, who were 11, 8, and 5 years of age, respectively, in 1944 when the family fled from the advancing Soviet Red Army.

I wish to express my gratitude to Cheryl Paul, a professional colleague, who insisted that my mother's memory should be kept alive and that her diary be made public. When it was published in Lithuanian, she still persisted, wanting to see an English translation. She wanted to meet my mother! Nijolė Gražulis, editor and translator, and a long-time friend from college days, equally touched by my mother's words, readily agreed and I am most grateful to her. This printing in *Bridges* is the first time the diary has appeared in English.

After the last entry, the Epilogue will hopefully answer any remaining questions. Meanwhile, you are invited to travel with us in our horse-drawn wagon from farm to farm, from town to town, and then struggle onward by train farther and farther from our beloved birthplace. Imagine that it is wartime and that you are fleeing to stay one step ahead of the Red Army. That is bad enough, but then things get worse...

Part I

Translated by Nijolė Gražulis

February 16, 1945

Gotenhafen [Gdynia, Poland]

Independence Day. For many a year the dawning of February 16 was greeted with joy. Many a year our tricolor yellow, green, and red flag waved in the breezes at our front door in commemoration of the birth of an independent Lithuania [February 16, 1918]. It was there to remind



Romualdas Kriaučiūnas. Photo taken in Rebdorf DP Refugee Camp, Bavaria, Germany, 1949.

everyone that Lithuanians are masters of their own fate in their own country, their own homes and plots of land. That ours are the fields and the forests.

Today too is our Independence Day. Alas, Lithuanians are no longer free to celebrate or enjoy their independence. They are even forbidden to sing their national anthem. Lithuania has been overrun by a fearsome enemy, the Russian Communists—Bolsheviks—who are arresting, torturing, and killing thousands. They are deporting Lithuanians to Siberia, perhaps even my only brother and my sisters.

But though their clutches are far-reaching, they cannot touch me. I fled from them. I left the people I know, left my dear relatives, and fled. My home, the country school at which I taught—I left it all.

For many years I had taught my dear little pupils how to write, and at the same time, to love their homeland. I encouraged them to be loyal and noble-hearted Lithuanians. It was all in vain. My homeland is now being ravaged by hordes

of fanatical devotees of communism. Lithuanians are enduring a terrible occupation by a foreign power.

I began the journey from the land of my birth on July 21, 1944. I left with my family: my husband, Mykolas, and our children, Elvyra, Romualdas, and Vitalija. On August 2 we crossed the then Lithuanian-German border.

I remember how sad it was to look, perhaps for the last time, at the Lithuanian homesteads. My eyes filled with tears, my heart felt a sharp pang. I wondered if I was leaving my homeland forever. No! Words of protest were practically bursting from within me. It would be just for a short time, only for a few months, only until the Bolsheviks would be driven out of our country. They cannot possibly stay in Lithuania for long. Lithuanians cannot once again be enslaved!

A long column of war refugees trudged down the well-maintained German-ruled roads heading away from Lithuania. There were many Lithuanians among them. Many young men kept pressing onward, farther and farther. Not far from the town of Pagėgiai [Lithuania; then under German rule] German refugees caught up with us. They too were fleeing, because the Soviet Red Army was approaching German territory. Abandoned cattle wandered in the fields belching, as if they too sensed the danger, as if they felt sorry for the farmers who had left them behind.

It was almost evening when we approached Pagėgiai. No one sought shelter for the night. No one dared to go near the foreign houses. We Lithuanians stopped in a forested area. Some spent a restless night on their wagons, others on bales of straw. Our hearts were full of sorrow. We all missed the accustomed Lithuanian hospitality.

As soon as it dawned we headed toward Tilsit [East Prussia; now Sovetsk, Kaliningrad Region, Russia], which came into view after we crossed several long bridges. Tilsit had been severely damaged by bombers. Many houses were in ruins. We were directed to a certain courtyard, where the men were pressured to

quickly form ranks and were led away to nearby army barracks. Those who were not joining the ranks were ordered to go back where they came from. We were all frightened and angry. Would we be made to return into the clutches of the Bolsheviks again? Would we not be allowed to stay here?

After enduring several anxious hours we were able to proceed again—in the direction of Kuckerneese [East Prussia; now Yasnoye, Kaliningrad Region, Russia]. Once past the town we stopped at a farmhouse, and our group was dispersed among the farms in the neighborhood. Our family was assigned to the Naujirs farmstead. We were provided with living quarters together with some Russians or Poles. When I heard them speaking in Russian, I again became frightened. We were running from the Russians, but they were here. I cried and cried sitting in our wagon. But we were in luck, for the next day we were sent on to the Damašas family. A haughty woman met us and put us all to work right away, even Elvyra and Romualdas, who were sent out to herd cows. In this foreign land, for the first time they too were affected and friendless. They could not just play as they wanted but had to do as they were told.

Mykolas had to work in the fields doing strenuous physical labor. He labored from morning till evening to the constant accompaniment of the command “Schnell!” [faster].

The food here too was not that to which we were accustomed. There were no Lithuanian pancakes or boiled meat-filled dumplings. Every morning there was only the black, unsweetened coffee and a slice of bread thinly smeared with some topping.

Mykolas was not used to daylong physical labor. It pained me to see him working so hard and to hear him moan because his body was sore. And it was all for a foreigner, not for our own good. The dreary days passed joylessly.

After a month we had to move on to another farmstead, that of Penschuk. He gave us a small room with a bed, and we felt slightly more comfortable. We

worked, we struggled, all the while thinking that this would not last long, that soon we would be back in our homeland.

On the morning of September 18, we were told that Mykolas was being conscripted by the Germans to dig fortification trenches for three weeks closer to the front lines. That was sad and disturbing news, but we firmly believed that it would not last long, just for three weeks. He left for an unknown destination.

Those first autumn days were all alike and passed monotonously. Mykolas was gone, we knew not where, Elvyra and Romualdas were out in the fields herding cows, and I was left alone with little Vitalija.

Meanwhile the war was continuing. The Red Army was attacking relentlessly. A fierce battle was waging near the town of Vilkaviškis [Lithuania]. People were saying that it was time to move on. My mind was full of conflicting thoughts. My husband was not with us, having been taken forcibly from us to dig trenches somewhere. Should I go away with strangers to an unknown fate? How will my husband find me? How can I do this alone? I went to see a Lithuanian friend, Jesevičius. Everyone there was getting wagons ready, gathering belongings [illegible text]. Penschuk was planning to stay. What should I do? I could not possibly go by myself. Should I stay here until the Bolsheviks come? No, no, a thousand times no! O my God, how can I possibly decide? In the evening when it got dark, the children ran over to see what was happening where Jesevičius was, only to report back that everyone there was ready and would probably move out at 4 a.m.

I was totally unprepared. I was not used to hitching up horses to a wagon. I didn't know how. My young nephew, Zenonas, said he would come along with us. Penschuk was saying I should wait. Once again my mind was filled with somber thoughts. The children were crying, asking me to at least see Jesevičius again that night and then we could travel together with him in the morning. I went to see Penschuk to ask for my wages and advice but could only mumble incoherently



Elvyra Kriaučiūnaitė. Photo taken in Rebdorf DP Refugee Camp, Bavaria, Germany, 1949.

through my tears. He finally succeeded in calming me down, saying that his other workers also will be leaving later and that we could travel together.

Everyone awoke quite early on the morning of October 5 and rushed out to see where matters stood. I was told to get the wagon ready, for we were all leaving at about 10 a.m. All at once I felt relief and peace at last.

I quickly woke the children, and in great haste we got ready for the journey into the unknown. Mykolas was not with us so there was no one to prepare the wagon properly. At 10 a.m. all the horses were harnessed, and four wagons set off from the Penschuk farmstead.

The road was in bad shape. Our little horse could barely pull its load, and soon we had fallen behind the others. But when we reached a better road, we caught up with Penschuk's group and then continued together. After we had gone about 20 miles, we stopped at the Kektis farmstead for about 10 days. We were all thinking that we could still go back. Then one day everyone with children was told to move on. Penschuk decided to return home. He advised me to return also, after all, I could not keep

going alone, and, too, my husband might still show up there. Once again my heart was torn. I imagined the worst possible outcome: Bolshevik gangs would attack me and my children, all alone in a strange land, and torture us in every imaginable way. The children wanted to keep going. Zenonas was going back to stay with Penschuk. Finally, I decided to keep going, to keep fleeing farther and farther, even if I had to do it all alone with my children.

As soon as it was light, everyone got up and prepared to move onward. Zenonas decided to come with us. Again four wagons moved out of the farmyard. Then Penschuk turned in the direction of his homestead while my wagon and two others filled with people who had worked for Penschuk set off in the other direction.

Wagon followed wagon down every big and small road. Everybody was rushing, without knowing where. I too kept up the pace. Sad and anxious thoughts kept going through my mind. Mykolas' unknown fate gave me no peace. Had he been captured? Had he returned to Lithuania? Or was he searching for us? On the way I met many men returning from the frontline trenches they had been forced to dig. I would stop and ask

if they had worked together with Mykolas. One man told me that those who had been digging near Tilsit had been taken to Gumbinè [East Prussia; now Gusev, Kaliningrad Region, Russia] or Insterburg [East Prussia; now Chernyakhovsk, Kaliningrad Region, Russia]. I knew it was unrealistic to hope that I would meet up with Mykolas, but my eyes scrutinized every traveler, looking for him.

For two weeks we kept going farther and farther. My “friendly” fellow travelers were not especially considerate. Some were angry that I was tagging along (the big shots would often refer to me as “that crazy Lithuanian”). I kept my tears to myself and could not seek solace from anyone. Eventually my little horse became ill from eating too many oats. One morning he leaped up on three legs and tried to bolt out of the barn when we went to get him. Another problem for us! I was told he would not be well for at least a month, which meant I would have to be separated from my fellow travelers,

who, though they were not close friends at least were people I knew. We began to walk the horse, and he recovered somewhat and was able to pull the wagon while we all walked alongside. Little Vitalija tired quickly and was able to get a ride in another wagon. After a while the horse began to move more normally.

Near Neuhausen [East Prussia; now Gurjevsk, Kaliningrad Region, Russia] we came across many soldiers. One of them recognized our Lithuanian-style harness and bid us “Good day” in Lithuanian. The words cheered me. As we talked I learned that many of the soldiers were Lithuanians, and that someone I knew, K. Mikšys, was among them. The soldier promised to tell Mikšys that I was here and that we would be stopping nearby for the night. Sure enough, after moving forward a quarter of a mile, the column of refugees stopped. Some German officials began to question those who wanted to spend the night there. Noticing our Lithuanian-style harness, they ordered us to go back

into the forest for the night. We turned off the road into a small clearing. From the remains of old campfires it was clear that many others had spent the night here. We stopped near some bushes. Ours was the only wagon. Apparently, there were no other Lithuanian refugees. It was a cold autumn evening, and I was afraid that the night would be even colder. I lit a fire using green twigs and then waited a long time for the coffee, which smelled of smoke. After we ate we got our bedding ready for the night near a tree stump. My heart was so sad, so grief-stricken. Now we really felt that we were among strangers, far away from our homeland, and without friends or even acquaintances. Our fellow travelers, Germans, made fun of us as they passed, boasting that warm beds awaited them. At long last a Lithuanian friend, Reklaitis, came to see us. He said we should say that we were of German descent, and he wanted to take us to the refugee sleeping quarters. I was about to protest, but then I thought that it might be too cold for the children, so I allowed myself to be convinced. We went back to the refugee housing. Zenonas, who was traveling with us, would spend the night in the wagon, whereas the children and I went inside and were greeted by a very friendly nurse, who directed us to our sleeping accommodations. We made our beds and lay down. The nurse even brought some apples and candy for the children.

After a little while, through my sleep I heard the greeting “Good evening” in Lithuanian. I opened my eyes, and Mikšys and Vldas Paliulionis were standing before me. What a joyful surprise! They were students from my village of Gustonys. My very own people had shown up just when my need was the greatest. They had much to tell. They said that refugees from Gustonys had passed this location just several days ago. But none of them had any news of my Mykolas. They promised to keep on asking everyone they saw and to let me know as soon as they had any information. They gave me their address and the address of a Lithuanian organization in Berlin [Germany] that



Vitalija Kriaučiūnaitė. Photo taken in Rebendorf DP Refugee Camp, Bavaria, Germany, 1949.

was keeping lists of Lithuanian refugees. Most Lithuanians were registering. We chatted some more, and they left after promising to come again the next day.

Incoherent thoughts were slipping in and out of my mind. One moment we were living in our own beloved country, and the next, a heartless German official was confronting me. I kept thinking that now I would find Mykolas. It was not possible that I was fated to remain alone and so utterly miserable in a foreign land. It could not be that the children would never again see the father they love so dearly. No, such thoughts must be rooted out. The good Lord will not forsake us. I said a prayer and tried to sleep.

When I awoke I went back to our wagon and we quickly got ready to continue our journey. Mikšys came by again, bringing some writing materials, a blanket, and other useful things. I promised to write to him as soon as we arrived at our destination. After we had wished each other good luck, we set off again. Our horse had been hard to rouse, ate little, and had difficulty moving his legs. I was afraid that he would not be taking us much farther, and we had a long distance to go from Neuhausen. All the refugees were hurrying to register. Our wagon could not keep up, and we fell farther and farther behind. We began having problems with the wagon wheels, and the pace of the horse was very slow. Too, this was a hilly region. Down one steep hill the horse began to gallop so quickly, as if startled, that I thought he would crash into a roadside post and kill us all. Luckily, without any such unfortunate incidents we managed to catch up with our "friends." Around noontime we reached Neukuhren [East Prussia; now Pionersky, Kaliningrad Region, Russia]. We were happy to hear that we were going to be allowed to stay here.

Life was quite good for a week. We were provided with good food, and we slept atop piles of straw in a warm classroom. We were even able to buy needed shoes. We had forgotten that we were among strangers. The Germans were very considerate of their refugees, and it was assumed that we were Germans. Then,

since I had no more money, I had to see a German official to ask for assistance, and was soon in big trouble because my German was so poor. Right away the official took away my identity card, which was meant for Germans only. He was amazed that we alone had managed to intermingle with the German refugees. Then he called the authorities in Königsberg [now Kaliningrad, Kaliningrad Region, Russia] to ask what should be done with us. He was told to allow me to proceed with the German refugees. The official explained all this to me quite politely and said that I should now proceed to Zimmerbude [East Prussia; now Svetly, Kaliningrad Region, Russia], because new refugees who had no horses were already arriving.

Early in the morning of October 8 we and other refugees set off in the direction of Zimmerbude. We traveled all day. It was raining, we were cold and hungry, but we hurried onward toward our goal, reaching it only late in the evening at 8 p.m.

We were awaited. There was warm and tasty soup. We slept in a classroom on straw. On the next day the process of assigning refugees to families in the area began. Most hurried off to their new living quarters, and soon only our wagon remained. I always ended up last.

After all, I am a foreigner. I cannot pick and choose, cannot demand, and there are five of us, including Zenonas, so it is hard to get lodgings. Timidly I asked the person in charge what I should do. He thought for a moment and then asked me to show him my family. They all lined up quickly before him. When he saw Elvyra, he hesitated and walked away, but soon he returned and told us to come with him to see an available room that possibly could be ours. It was cold and wet as we all started to follow him. He took Romualdas by the hand, and they walked together, endearing himself to me by this action. He did not discriminate against us because we were Lithuanians but helped willingly. We walked up to a small house. He knocked and our potential landlady appeared. He explained that we were looking for a place to stay. We

were shown a large, airy, and quite clean room. Without hesitating, we said we would like to stay here. It was already late, so we agreed to come back with the wagon in the morning. After breakfasting for the last time on what was provided for refugees, we arrived at our new quarters. Soon we had carried all our possessions into the house and began to settle in. Our landlady offered us coffee, but we were still full. Later she also served us dinner. Everything was in place as evening fell, and we could rest.

We rose quite early in our new home. It was a Sunday. Our landlady was a minister's wife. Her husband had been reported missing in the war, and now she often performed the minister's duties herself. Today she had to conduct the religious worship at the Evangelical church because an ordained clergyman had not arrived. She gave me a large hymnal, and we went together to the church. It was a small church, but even so there would have been room for more worshippers. Everyone sat and prayed or sang hymns together. My landlady gave a rather nice sermon mentioning the difficulty of the times we were living in. She spoke of families torn apart by the war, of the many fatherless and some motherless children. She spoke with compassion of the war refugees. At that point I could bear no more and began to cry together with the Germans. Had I not endured even more? I had had to leave my beloved homeland, and then my husband vanished in a foreign land. Where could I find consolation? Who could I turn to? In her sermon my landlady reminded us that only God is almighty and that we must ask Him for His help. How true. Only God knows my family's fate. Only God can return my husband, and the children's father, to us. I prayed most sincerely that God would help us in our most difficult situation. If we are deserving, He will not forsake our beloved father and husband. He will not forsake our children. Nearly every Sunday I was to go to the Evangelical church, and only there did I seek peace and consolation.

That evening I quickly wrote to K.

Mikšys asking him to reply as soon as possible whether he had any news of Mykolas. Mikšys knew where the other people from my village of Gustonys had relocated, and it would be so nice to get news of people I knew. It was lonely here among persons of a different nationality, especially because I was not yet fluent in the German language.

The days dragged. They were all the same. We did not have to work here, but I helped our landlady with the housework and the darning. It would have been worse with nothing to do, even sadder. Too, my worries gave me no peace. I had spent our last cent. What now? We had to buy food, and I had no income. I waited for two weeks for Mikšys to reply, and then I wrote to V. Paliulionis, and later to Lukoševičius, asking each why I had not heard from Mikšys. Finally, I wrote explaining that I had no money and asking for a small loan in German marks. I wrote that I thought I could get a job

eventually and pay it back. Soon a postal order arrived from Mikšys for 50 Reichsmarks. It bothered and saddened me to have to accept the money, but at the same time I was pleased that I was not forgotten in my time of trouble but that he had helped me. Several days later I received the first letter from Paliulionis, in which he wrote that the money had been sent by both him and Mikšys. He wrote about our fellow Gustonians, who were now living in the refugee camp of Dirschau [now Tczew, Poland]. He wrote that there had been no news of my husband. I was so sad, so disheartened that the long awaited letter had no information about Mykolas. Still, it was comforting to feel no longer completely alone. I now had the address of Gantautas and wrote to him soon. Thus, gradually I began to correspond with several persons I had known in Gustonys, and always reminded them to keep inquiring about Mykolas. Oh, how I waited for their letters! What a

treasure each letter written in Lithuanian was in those days. Mikšys would also send me issues of a Lithuanian newspaper. It listed many places where Lithuanian refugees were now living. I wrote to some of these seeking information about Mykolas. There was a Lithuanian organization in Berlin with which many Lithuanians had registered their addresses. I wrote a letter and waited. A week later the replies arrived—all negative. Gantautas too replied that he knew nothing about Mykolas, Zupkus, or Martinaitis. Even more gloomy thoughts were now besieging me. It was not possible that all three of these men were dead. Had they been killed? But how? They had not been at the front lines. My speculations were contradictory. I felt that I was going to be alone, all alone, always. I often dreamed of Mykolas, but he always seemed sad and somber.

To be continued in the March 2015 issue.



Mykolas Kriaučiūnas is fourth from left in this photograph taken in pre-World War II Lithuania. Unknown location.

We Were Neighbors:

Women of 19th Century Lithuania *By Ellen Cassedy*



Map showing the population of small towns in Lithuania before World War II. The purple parts of the circles represent the Jewish population. Courtesy of the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Soviet and Nazi Occupation Regimes in Lithuania.

In the days of our foremothers, in the small towns and villages of Lithuania, women of different cultures lived side by side in relative harmony.

The 19th century was the heyday of the Lithuanian small town (miestelis in Lithuanian or shtetl in Yiddish, the Jewish vernacular). In these towns, the lives of Jewish and ethnic Lithuanian women were inextricably intertwined. Although in some ways their cultures were strikingly different, in many respects Jewish and ethnic Lithuanian women had much in common.

Peaceful multicultural coexistence was the order of the day. Pogroms—the violent anti-Jewish rampages common

in other parts of Europe—were rare in Lithuania. Living under Russian czarist rule, with their daily lives controlled by the Polish noblemen who owned much of the land, these women milked cows, churned butter, and made sour milk and cheese. They gardened, cooked and baked bread. They cared for chickens and ducks. They spun wool and flax, knitted, sewed and looked after their children. In both cultures, it was not uncommon for two or three families to live together in one house.

Yet there were significant differences in the daily lives of Jewish and Lithuanian women. The biggest difference was that most Lithuanian women worked in the

fields alongside the men, while most Jews did not work the land.

Julija Beniuševičiūtė-Žymantienė (1845-1921), who took the pen name “Žemaitė,” is considered the greatest of Lithuania’s realist writers. Her short stories illuminate the daily lives of common people in the 19th century, especially women.

“A line of hired hands scythed up the slope,” she wrote in *The Devil Captured*. “A woman followed each man on her knees, rocking to and fro to gather the sheaves. ... Each followed her man, dragging herself along. ... They had left their children at home alone, and now hurried to their day’s work.”

At potato-digging time, working con-



Historic photo of Lithuanian writer Julija Beniuševičiūtė-Žymantienė (Zemaitė)

ditions became even worse. “The earth is so deeply soaked that the diggers cannot crawl on their knees, they must bend, standing. The sacks become soaked, and to carry them one must wade through mud halfway up the leg. ... After sunset the men and women splash homeward, mud covered to the waist.”

Up until just before World War II, a majority of the population in small towns tended to be Jewish. (Overall, Jews constituted 7 percent of the population of prewar Lithuania.) The distinctive traditional Jewish houses—with storefronts facing the street and living quarters in the back—can still be seen in Lithuanian towns across the country.

Jews occupied a position between the most powerful, the landowners, and the least powerful, the agricultural workers. But at the same time, Jews were vulnerable as what anthropologists call an “island culture,” a minority embedded within the ethnic Lithuanian majority.

Under Russian rule, Jews were subject to special restrictions, including a more onerous military draft and restrictions on where they could live. Jews were not allowed to own land. A quota system known as *numerus clausas* (Latin for “closed number”) restricted the number of Jewish professionals.

In rural areas, some Jews—women as

well as men—were granted franchises by the Polish aristocracy to manage a farm, an orchard or an inn.

For example, my great-grandmother, Asne Levin, was the manager of a dairy owned by a Polish landowner in a village not far from Rokiškis (Rokishok in Yiddish). She kept track of the cows and the dairy workers—while raising nine children. She died young, probably of tuberculosis caused by overwork.

Asne’s life was made more difficult by the typical Jewish family structure. The Jewish woman was expected to support the family while the man devoted himself exclusively to reading holy books.

Many Jewish families, however—perhaps most—could not afford to have their men study all day. And so most Jewish men worked as tailors, cobblers, blacksmiths, tanners, hatters, tinsmiths, barbers, haulers or millers. Their wives ran tiny businesses out of their homes or in booths in the market square. On the weekly market days, Lithuanian farmers drove their horse-drawn wagons into town to trade food products for the goods and services provided by Jews.

As for food, both cultures were sustained by a diet suited to the cool northern climate—barley, beets, sorrel, cucumbers, mushrooms, dairy products, and pickled or cured fish. The two cuisines have similar versions of dumplings, doughnuts, and *blynai* or *blintzes*.

Because Jewish women cooked with *schmaltz* (chicken fat) instead of lard, and used more garlic than Lithuanian cooks, it was said that a Jewish home smelled different from a Lithuanian home.

Jewish dietary laws meant that a Jewish woman could not stop into a Lithuanian woman’s house for a cup of tea. A traditional Jewish home was required to have two sets of dishes, one for meat and one for dairy. On Friday night, the beginning of the Sabbath, the table was set with a white tablecloth and embroidered napkins, silver goblets and candlesticks, and the braided egg bread called *challah*.

You could tell Jewish and Lithuanian women apart at a glance by their clothing.

Jews dressed in dark, drab colors. A

married woman cut her hair and covered her head with a kerchief or *sheytl* (wig). On the Sabbath, Jewish women who could afford to wore black silk and jewelry, sometimes a lace scarf. They walked behind their husbands on the way to the synagogue at a slow, dignified pace.

Lithuanian women’s festive clothing included a white kerchief, a white linen blouse with a decorated bodice, a flowered skirt, an apron, and sometimes a shawl or headdress. Each region had its own costumes and textile patterns, and decorative sashes were woven in patterns passed down from ancient times.

Though women of the two cultures prayed to the same god, their religious practices were different. They observed the Sabbath on different days, prayed in different houses of worship, buried their dead in different places, and celebrated a different set of holidays on different days.

At the same time, they shared common folk beliefs in the evil eye, evil spirits, amulets and curses. In an emergency, Lithuanians would sometimes send for a Jewish woman to cast out an evil spell, while Jews would send for a Lithuanian woman.

Jewish and Lithuanian women spoke different languages. Yiddish was the everyday Jewish language, derived from German and written in Hebrew characters. Hebrew and Aramaic were the languages of religious observance, much as Latin was for Catholics. Lithuanians’ main language, of course, was Lithuanian. Russian, Polish and German were also heard. Most people had at least some familiarity with more than one language.

Jews were known as “the people of the book.” Jewish boys began school—called a *cheder*, located in the home of the teacher, called a *melamed*—at the age of 3. Some girls, too, attended school, where they learned to read and write a little Yiddish and some Hebrew. Their lessons were kept short, however, as they were needed at home to do housework and take care of younger children.

“I did not like housework,” wrote a Jewish woman named Bella Lown in *Memoirs of My Life: A personal history of a*



Jewish women in a Lithuanian small town or shtetl.

Lithuanian shtetl. “I preferred to walk out to the meadow, hide in the high grass, and read there the entire day. The town had a fine library stocked with Russian, Yiddish, and Hebrew books. I lived and suffered with the heroes and heroines of those books.”

Throughout the 19th century, in contrast, 99 percent of Lithuanian peasants were illiterate, and it was the intent of the Russian regime to keep them that way. Between 1864 and 1904, it was illegal for parents to teach their children to read and write in Lithuanian.

Many Lithuanian mothers defied the ban, however, and in an example of interaction between the cultures, Jewish book peddlers were involved in the underground movement to circulate Lithuanian books.

Needless to say, some Lithuanian women yearned for education.

One Woman’s Life is a memoir of Ona Kartanas, crafted by her granddaughter, Irena Praitis. “I wanted school,” Ona said. “I didn’t mind the walk. I liked the hard benches, the time inside, the neat books, this other world words offered up. Here spun a world all for me. I longed to travel there.”

Ona earned the money she needed for school supplies by climbing trees to remove eggs from the nests of crows and hawks. Farmers paid her by the egg for her help in keeping the birds from stealing their crops.

“I found a way,” she said, “coin by coin, to pay for what I wanted.”

In addition to wanting an education, Lithuanian and Jewish women also dreamed of freedom from hunger, class mobility, an end to Czarist oppression, Zionism, Socialism—and America.

Again, here’s Bella Lown, the Jewish memoirist, at the turn of the 20th century:

“On warm summer evenings, a group of boys and girls would gather and go off to the nearby forest, and the entire area would resound, not only with Russian romantic songs or Yiddish folksongs, but also revolutionary songs, and through these songs we expressed feelings of hope for a better and more beautiful world.”

By this time, the world of the shtetl was on the wane. Most Jews, along with hundreds of thousands of Poles and Lithuanians, moved to the cities or to America. The small towns emptied out, and those people who were left behind became dependent on remittances, money sent back by their relatives.

By the 1930s, inter-ethnic tensions and Nazi sympathies were on the rise. The relatively harmonious multicultural world of the Lithuanian small town came to an end, and an era of extraordinary tumult and tragedy took hold.

In 1940, Russian tanks rolled in, followed by German tanks the next year. During World War II, the Jews of Lithuania were massacred with a swiftness and

thoroughness that was unusual even for that terrible time. Hundreds of thousands of Lithuanian towns have a pit in the forest, not far from the market square, where Jews were assembled, shot and buried in mass graves. The peaceful coexistence of the past was no more.

Nor did the end of World War II bring peace to Lithuania. Between 1940 and 1952, historians say, hundreds of thousands of people in Lithuania—Jews and non-Jews alike—were lost to massacre, war casualties, deportations, executions and emigration—a massive disruption of society, which inflicted deep social scars.

Today, only 4,000 Jews live in Lithuania, 2,000 of them in the capital city of Vilnius. Many small-town Lithuanians have never met a Jew.

How did centuries of relative harmony give way to oppression and mass murder? Scholars and others have struggled to understand.

“Lithuanian and Jewish neighborhoods were close and familiar,” writes Linas Vildžiūnas, a Lithuanian tolerance leader, “but at the same time separated by a wall of different traditions, a lack of understanding, and superstitions.”

A Holocaust educator, Snieguolė Matonienė, agrees: “We lived neighbor to neighbor for centuries,” she said, “but even so, it is hard for Lithuanians to think of Jews as ‘ours.’ Jews were ‘others.’”

In seeking out the truths of the past, today’s historians do not focus solely on the history of generals and kings. They also turn for answers to the daily lives of ordinary women. Examining the texture of woman-to-woman neighborly existence in bygone Lithuania may well teach us valuable lessons—about tolerance, about trauma, and about how we can build a better future.

Ellen Cassidy traces her Jewish ancestry to Rokiškis and Biržai in the northeast corner of Lithuania. She is the author of We Are Here: Memories of the Lithuanian Holocaust (University of Nebraska Press, 2012), a personal account of how Lithuania is encountering its Jewish heritage. www.ellencassedy.com

Leadership With an Eye to the Future

An Interview With Lithuanian American Community President Sigita Šimkuvienė



LAC President Sigita Šimkuvienė

Sigita Šimkuvienė took the helm of the Lithuanian American Community, Inc. (LAC) in October 2012. Her presidency is historic, as she is the first head of LAC from the “third wave” of Lithuanians to come to the United States, following the re-establishment of Independence in 1991. LAC—the largest Lithuanian diaspora organization in the world—was established in 1951 by the “second wave,” Lithuanians who came to the U.S. following World War II.

LAC’s mission is to preserve Lithuanian cultural identity for future generations, as well as to foster the growth of democratic institutions of the country of our heritage and to assist Lithuania in numerous other ways. LAC is part of the Lithuanian World Community, an organizational network embracing Lithuanians in more than 41 countries.

In this interview, we learn more about Sigita and the issues around which she has focused her presidency.

Tell us a little bit about yourself.

I grew up in a big family, with five siblings, in the Anyksčiai district in Lithuania. In school, I was always active in extracurricular activities—poetry, drama, writing for the school newspaper, basketball, soccer, ping-pong, mountain climbing.

I finished Troškūnai high school, for two years attended Vilnius school for teachers, and then graduated from Klaipėda University with degrees in preschool education and school psychology. Then I spent my years working with children in preschools, and I became a preschool principal and school psychologist at Jovaras high school in Tauragė.

Then, I left Lithuania for the United States 13 years ago, and I worked for a construction company for three years. For the past 11 years, I’ve worked part time at the Yale Law School early child education center with professors’ children. And five years ago, I started working full time at Davis Street magnet school in New Haven, with preschool children ages 4 to 5. So, I work 10 hours a day with children, and then volunteer for associations.

How did you learn about the Lithuanian-American Community? What has your involvement been over the years leading up to your presidency?

I am so appreciative of the New Haven chapter of the Lithuanian American Community, where I met Jurgis Kisielius, who drove me around to Lithuanian events in Connecticut. I met many interesting people at these events, and started writing articles for the Lithuanian-language newspapers *Draugas* and *Darbininkas*. One day at the Lithuanian church in New Haven, I spotted someone I recognized—it was Vaiva Vebraitė, the former director of the APPLE program in Klaipėda, where I attended in-service seminars in school psychology some 10 years earlier! It was a sign from heaven that I had arrived in the place I was supposed to be.

Around this time, Lithuanian American Community President Algimantas Gečys and his wife, Teresė, saw my articles in the newspaper and decided to call me up and involve me in local events. I was then invited to travel to Camp Dainava in Michigan in 2002 for a young community leaders’ seminar, led by Dr. Romualdas Kriaučiūnas. I learned a lot about the structure of the Lithuanian American Community, and made friends from Los Angeles, Boston, Chicago and Washington, D.C. Then a few months later, I went to the first Lithuanian American Convention in Washington, D.C. President Algimantas Gečys appointed me to govern youth affairs, and I went on hold many positions in the organization, under subsequent leaders. Under Vaiva Vebraitė’s presidency, I was vice president of youth affairs, then I served as the vice president of all of LAC’s chapters, and

finally under Vytas Maciūnas, I was vice president of organizational affairs. At the same time, I was president of the New Haven chapter, and I became the president of the whole Connecticut district.

What do you feel are the biggest issues facing the Lithuanian American Community today, and what you see for the future?

The Lithuanian American Community has existed as an organization for 63 years, and it needs new faces, new blood, new leaders. My goal is to train new leaders who will be able to take over for me and for all the current activists leading the organization.

For this purpose, we are working with Saturday and Sunday schools to teach students about LAC, its structure and opportunities for active engagement.



LAC President Sigita Šimkuvienė speaks at the “graduation” ceremony for the 2014 Lithuanian International Student Services interns.

What has been your main focus so far during your term? What do you consider your most important initiative? What are you most proud of accomplishing so far?

My team and I have been visiting local chapters, visiting local leaders and talking about the organization’s structure and its future. I’m always looking for new activists and leaders for events. We have participated in various organizations’ events, and we have worked to ignite young people’s passion for Lithuanian heritage.

My main focus has been with young people; for example, with the LISS [Lithuanian International Student Services] student internship program, which brings Lithuanian-American students to Lithuania for summer internships, for six years now. This summer we had 29 college students and five high school students working in Vilnius and Kaunas as volunteer doctors, social workers, psychologists, accountants, computer scientists, historians, veterinarians. We have partnered with Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, and last year we spoke with Klaipėda University to partner for this summer. The LISS pro-



From left: LAC National Executive Committee Vice President of Information Loreta Timukienė, the late Vice President of Archives Dalė Lukienė, President Sigita Šimkuvienė, Lithuanian Ambassador Žygimantas Pavilionis, Vice President of Economic Affairs Angelė Kavakienė and Public Affairs Chair Danelė Vidutienė. Photo: Ludo Segers

gram strengthens the students’ Lithuanian language skills, it connects them to employers in Lithuania, it helps them contribute to growing industries there, and it provides opportunities to visit relatives to reconnect to Lithuania—maybe to think about moving there full time, to influence local Lithuanian students, or to keep networking in Lithuania long-term. Our students work with local Lithuanian young people, who learn how to volunteer and become more civically active in society.

People talk about the gap among the three waves of immigration—that the third wave has different issues and needs than the second wave and its descendants, or the descendants of the first wave. To what extent do you feel this is true?

The first generation’s impetus to emigrate was economic, the second political, and the third again economic—but they still have the same needs and goals in the U.S.—everyone needs to work, everyone needs to have a place in the world. There are active and inactive Lithuanians from each generation—first, second and third. The third generation is unique in that we grew up in the Soviet Union, and have only lived in the U.S. for short periods... sometimes you need to leave Lithuania in order to love and understand and appreciate it.

How can the readers of *Bridges* help LAC reach its goals?

Invite your families and friends to Lithuanian American Community events, support special projects and activities such as the LISS program, and don’t miss the song and dance festivals!

To learn more:

Lithuanian American Community: lithuanian-american.org

LISS: lithuanian-american.org/m/intershipsliiss/programs

2015 Lithuanian Song Festival: dainusvente.org/en

2016 Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival: sokiusvente2016.org

Vizitėlės: Women's Stories About Trauma and Resilience

By Dovilė Budrytė, Ph.D.



Display in Tauras District Museum of Partisans and Deportation in Marijampolė, "Handmade artifacts by women political prisoners and deportees in prisons and gulags."

During "Atgimimas," the time of national revival in the mid- and late 1980s, Lithuanians were introduced to history that was remembered secretly but silently during the Soviet times. Painful stories about forced deportation to the Soviet far north and resistance fighting against the Soviet regime after World War II flooded the public sphere. In addition to the avalanche of memoirs written by the former deportees, certain objects—images of trains and camps in Siberia, rosaries made of bread or photographs with the tortured bodies of partisans—have become parts of the memory aesthetic associated with trauma and displacement in post-Soviet Lithuania.

The stories about the suffering before and shortly after World War II were well-known in the West, where the members of the Lithuanian diaspora started using the term "genocide" to make a political point about the Stalinist regime. This was not the case in Soviet-occupied Lithuania, where, by and large, memories about these periods were banished to the

private sphere. The deportees who were able to come back to Lithuania from the places of deportation hid their memoirs and other "relikvijos" (relics)—objects from prisons and places of deportation that included rosaries made of bread, embroidery or family photographs—in secret places, sometimes even burying them in jars or keeping them tucked away in old socks.

When the Soviet Union started to disintegrate in the late 1980s, there were many attempts by former deportees and political prisoners to establish museums telling their story of "fighting and suffering" (depicting the postwar years as a heroic fight against the Soviets and the Stalinist deportations as genocide). Nine museums established by former deportees and political prisoners survived until 2014. Seven of them still function as "Kraštotyros muziejai" (museums of local history). The remaining two are supported by private funds. In addition, there is one government institution, Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezisten-

cijos tyrimo centras (The Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania), which since 1993 has documented stories about postwar resistance and deportations told by the former deportees and political prisoners. The Center has produced numerous publications on the mass deportations and resistance movement in Soviet-occupied Lithuania. It revealed the scope of losses in Lithuania resulting from the two (Soviet and Nazi) occupations. According to the Center's website (genocid.lt), in 1940-41, 23,000 residents of Lithuania were imprisoned, killed or deported during the first occupation by the Soviet Union. In 1944-53, during the second occupation by the Soviet Union, 186,000 residents of Lithuania were imprisoned, 118,000 were deported, and 20,500 partisans and their supporters were murdered by the regime. During the Nazi occupation (1941-44), 29,500 residents of Lithuania were deported to the concentration camps and 240,000 people (200,000 Jews) were killed during the Holocaust.

These horrifying statistics have become part of post-Soviet Lithuania's official history, taught in schools and remembered during the national days of commemoration. However, official stories can become dry and repetitive. In addition, official narratives tend to focus on heroism and suffering, often excluding the experiences of women and other vulnerable groups. To be communicated to future generations and beyond Lithuania's borders, narratives about collective traumas must find ways to appeal to individuals who have not experienced the brutality of the occupation regimes first hand. As works on historical memory demonstrate, collective traumas require a lot of cultural work, and only those who develop a

strong emotional appeal survive the test of time. The stories of survivors (that is, their personal testimonies) are one way in which collective traumas gain emotional currency and transcend time.

Despite criticism and even ridicule in the public (often a pejorative term "megztosios beretės," or "knit berets," is used to refer to politically active former deportees and political prisoners), a handful of women who were directly engaged in postwar partisan warfare and suffered deportations became active "memory entrepreneurs" in post-Soviet Lithuania. The term "memory entrepreneur" was used by Elizabeth Jelin, a political theorist, to describe those "who seek social recognition and political legitimacy of



A photograph of Aldona Vilutienė taken on June 13, 2013, in her home in Marijampolė

one (their own) interpretation or narrative of the past." These actors are engaged in various activities, including politics, to gain that recognition. They are likely to share their personal stories with the public.

In summer 2013, I met Aldona Vilutienė (née Sabaitytė), a former resistance fighter and deportee, and a memory entrepreneur. She created a museum called Tauro Apygardos Partizanų ir Tremties Muziejus (Tauras District Museum of Partisans and Deportation) in Marijampolė, a provincial town in Lithuania, in 1993, and served as its director until 2000. Aldona wrote three books, including, most recently, *Laiko dulkes nužėrus* (*Having Removed the Dust of Time*), in which she openly describes her political fight to establish a museum to commemorate her fellow fighters, and the resistance of the local authorities to her memory project.

Her life story is briefly covered in her books, and the museum is focused on partisan fights and deportations. She had experienced both. As a teenager, Aldona started serving the Lithuanian partisans as a courier, the role that many women played. She was betrayed by another partisan, caught and, in 1949, imprisoned in Marijampolė and Leningrad, and then forcefully moved to the prison camp in Inta (approximately 60 kilometers away from the North Pole) and Lemju prison camp (part of Vorkuta camp system until 1952, also located in the north of Komi



A "relic"—vizitėlė with religious symbols—from Tremties Muziejus (Museum of Deportation) in Kaunas



Vizitėlė from the museum in Marijampolė reads, “Dear mother, we were separated by prison, but not by death. Alytė”

Republic). The climate in both places was very rough, with winter lasting for almost eight months. Both in prisons and the places of deportation, women from Lithuania made embroidery and other pieces of art.

Aldona introduced me to a relatively obscure part of the traumatic history of the postwar era—vizitėlės, or pieces of embroidery that often include short poems dedicated to family and friends. Currently vizitėlės can be found in personal collections and deportation/resistance museums in Lithuania; they are also described in memoirs written by former deportees and former resistance fighters. These items are called *relikvijos* (relics) by the former partisans, deportees, their descendants and memory entrepreneurs. This term signifies the perceived sacredness of these objects, and demands respect from those who see them.

Vizitėlės are usually very small, made on dark pieces of material, and they imitate postcards. The images, many of which include floral motifs, are colorful, made with thread acquired from scarves and other pieces of clothing.

Justinas Saujaskas, Aldona Vilutienė’s successor as the director of the museum in Marijampolė, has described vizitėlės as “dangerous art,” referring to the fact that similar activities required needles that were difficult to obtain in prisons.

According to Sajauskas (2011), the owners of the “dangerous art” usually hid vizitėlės in their coats; some carried them in these locations for at least 10 years as a memory of someone loved. The entries on vizitėlės include congratulations with name days, expressions of love and calls to remember the author of the embroidered piece.

The art of embroidery was very popular in Lithuania prior to World War II, and most women practiced it. Women who make embroidery are mentioned in Lithuanian folk songs, and those who were able to achieve mastery in this art were respected in the villages (Milašius 2013, 83). Every region had its own style of embroidery. Traditionally, the most popular colors were brown, blue and red; each color was associated with a certain meaning (Milašius 2013, 85). In addition, “*atminimai*” (remembrances), or short poems, usually quatrains, written by young men and women to their friends in albums or notebooks, were very popular during the interwar period in Lithuania. According to Vita Ivanauskaitė-Šeibutienė (2013), high school and university students, and even soldiers, created quatrains with various texts, including best wishes, requests or vows to remember. Resistance fighters wrote *atminimai* as well. These texts were usually collected in notebooks or albums. Vizitėlės are part of this tradition.

In 2011, during the 70th anniversary of mass deportations dating back to June 1941, vizitėlės emerged from relative public invisibility. Although they could be found in the displays in the resistance and deportation museums, vizitėlės were virtually unknown to the public. In summer 2011, there was an exhibition in the Vincas Kudirka library in Kaunas, devoted entirely to vizitėlės, which the following year was housed in Seimas (the parliament building), together with another exhibition entitled “*Tikėjimo ir vilties ženklai*” (Signs of faith and hope) featuring postcards from deportation camps and stamps used in displacement camps after World War II. These exhibitions portrayed vizitėlės as strategies of resistance and braveness (pointing out that embroidery with needles was forbidden in prisons) and expressions of patriotism. Aldona’s testimony, however, reveals several more nuanced aspects of vizitėlės.

Most vizitėlės were made in prisons, not in deportation camps, because, according to Aldona, “there was more time to kill” there (when compared with her memories about Inta and Lemju gulags where she and other deportees had to work long hours). Making something beautiful was one way to escape the suffocating prison reality. Although needles or any other sharp objects were forbidden in prisons, Aldona remembered that she was able to get needles via parcels. Needles were hidden in dried honeycombs. In addition, women prisoners sometimes hid needles in their mouths. According to Aldona, the guards were afraid that the prisoners might bite off their fingers, and did not search their mouths.

The background of vizitėlės was usually dark, and it was made from threaded material from parcels. Color threads were torn from scarves and other personal objects, including even underwear and socks. According to Aldona, in gulags (unlike in prisons) women were not punished for making embroidery per se, but for other things, such as using “state property” (e.g., sheets) for making vizitėlės or for including Lithuanian national symbols. Perhaps most impor-



Vizitėlė from the museum in Marijampolė reads “Antosiuk, remember that we met behind the iron grid.”

tantly, making vizitėlės was another way to communicate with each other and their family members, hoping that one day they would reach the intended recipient. Consequently, texts embroidered on vizitėlės (such as short poems and wishes) resemble texts found on postcards or in atminimai (remembrances) albums, and express love for girlfriends, family members or spouses.

Aldona remembered taking many vizitėlės with her to Lithuania when she was allowed to return after Stalin’s death and giving them to the family members of her fellow deportees. This helped her to establish several life-long relationships with the families of deportees; however, there were those who did not want anything to do with their deported relatives. Viltienė’s narrative about delivering vizitėlės in Soviet Lithuania revealed the pain of rejection of deportees by some members of society that continues even today. (Many deportees and political prisoners could not obtain profitable jobs or enter colleges, and it was very difficult for them to achieve important positions in Soviet Lithuania.) She thinks that only those who went through similar experiences (imprisonment, torture and deportation) and those who “reflect on the past” can understand the true value of vizitėlės. Aldona recalls, with pain, that even some people who came to the museum in Marijampolė referred to vizitėlės as “sku-

duras” (a rag) and had no idea how much emotion and pain went into making them. Perhaps at least partially this lack of understanding can be explained by the simple presentation of these objects in a museum that relies on volunteer labor and lacks the “professionalism” associated with the museums presenting traumatic history in the West. At the same time, Aldona’s story about her life and vizitėlės raises important questions about the meaning of traumatic experiences associated with the World War II and postwar generations to the current generation, both in Lithuania and abroad. How are similar stories transmitted from one generation to the next, and do they maintain their emotional strength during such transfers? Who will serve as memory entrepreneurs, interested in telling personal stories when those who witnessed and experienced the traumatic events first hand are gone? It appears that under the conditions of globalization and continued migration, the future of these stories will depend on their emotional power and ability to transcend national borders.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Justinas Sajauskas for allowing me to use images from Tauras District Museum of Partisans and Deportation and Ingrida Vėgelytė for introducing me to Aldona Viltienė.

Dovilė Budrytė, professor of political science at Georgia Gwinnett College, was born in Vilnius. She earned graduate degrees in international studies from Old Dominion University in Virginia, and has taught history and political science since 1999. Her interests include historical memory, gender studies and nationalism. Her publications include articles about the Baltic states and three books, Taming Nationalism? Political Community Building in the Post-Soviet Baltic States, Feminist Conversations: Women, Trauma and Empowerment in Post-Transitional Societies, and Memory and Trauma in International Relations: Theories, Cases and Debates. In 2014/15, she received the University System of Georgia Excellence in Teaching Award.

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“On the Road of Life and Death” in Portland

U.S. Lithuanians Organize January 13 Commemorative Run

By Laurynas R. Misevičius Photos by Darius Kuzmickas



Lithuanians in Portland organized a 9K run to commemorate the January 13, 1991, events in Vilnius.

When an email from Vilnius came with an invitation to join the annual run “On the Road of Life and Death,” we were in Portland, Oregon, listening to Brahms’ piano concerto performed by a student of the prestigious Rice University in Houston, Texas, Lithuanian pianist Rūta Kuzmickaitė. Rūta was born five years after the historic events of January 13, 1991, which this run commemorates, and she had returned to her family in Oregon for the holidays.

Amid this enchanting music, an original idea was born—perhaps U.S. Lithu-

anians could join the more than 4,000 participants of this traditional run in the homeland, if only symbolically?

Faith, sacrifice and freedom—these words are of growing importance as we commemorate the Day of Freedom Defenders, irrespective of where we live. We honor the lives of those who made the ultimate sacrifice the night that Soviet tanks rolled toward the TV Tower in Vilnius into the peacefully gathered protesters.

Unlike run participants at Antakalnis Cemetery in Vilnius, the U.S. Lithuanians were not greeted by Lithuanian or local government officials at the start line in Portland. However, three people stood out from the crowd gathered at Willamette Park: Russians Andrey, who grew up in the Siberian part of Kazakhstan, and Misha and Sasha, who were also born in distant Siberia.

“You, the Lithuanians, did not lose your unity even when you lived with us, in the Land of Eternal Frost,” said Mikhail from Irkutsk, who married Lithuanian Rūta from Rokiškis in the U.S. in 2007. He proudly accepted a Lithuanian tricolor from the author of these lines in order to pass it over, nine kilometers hence, to Inga, the leader of the group of runners whose husband Andrey comes from

Semipalatinsk (now Semey). The offspring of both “Soviet” families—Tomas, Maksimus and Dominique—attend the Lithuanian “Atžalynas” school founded last year, while Andrey and Misha earnestly work on the school’s parents’ committee. In liberal Portland, Russians support the local Lithuanian community, admiring its patriotism and efforts to stay one big family even in emigration.

The run in Portland, just like the one in the Lithuanian capital, was cheered on by many people who came to encourage the runners in the early hours of Sunday. Even though the Vilnius TV Tower does not stand in Oregon’s biggest city and Russian tanks never rode along its streets, freedom-loving people of Portland cheered flag-bearing Lithuanians who were running to pay tribute to one of the key events in their nation’s recent history.

The “On the Road of Life and Death” run is spreading to other European cities. The previous weekend, Lithuanians of Belgium and their friends from various EU countries took part in the run, attended by some 50 people, for the second time. Lithuanians from around Portland joined the tradition this year and we hope that people from other major U.S. cities will join us next year.



Dr. Eugenijus Urnežius (left) and his son, Kostas, also joined the symbolic run.

Obuolinis Sūris (Apple Cheese)

By Jana Sirusaitė Motivans, Bridges food editor



Happy New Year! The first issue of the year is a good time to try something new. I have a beautiful cookbook that I bought in Vilnius a few years ago entitled *Lithuanian Traditional Foods* published by Baltos Lankos in 1998. In the book, there is a photo of obuolinis sūris (apple cheese) that has long intrigued me. This is something completely new to me yet I kept coming back to this photo every time I opened the cookbook.

Obuolinis sūris combines two vivid memories of my Močiutė Elena. My parents and grandparents used to own an old farm in Kingwood Township, N.J. My grandparents lived at the farm, and my parents, brothers, sister and I lived in a small town nearby and spent our weekends at the farm. We had a large vegetable garden, cherry trees, apple trees, grape vines, cows, chickens, dogs and cats. For a while, there were even pigs. My grandfather, father and brothers had a tree and landscaping business. There was always a lot to do on a farm!

My Močiutė Elena used to make Lietuviškas sūris (pressed Lithuanian cheese) using a special pressing device my Senelis Jurgis made for her. He took two wooden boards and attached

a hinge, and then found a heavy rock out in the fields. The soft, fresh cheese would be wrapped in cheesecloth, placed between the two boards, and weighed down with the rock. The whole setup was placed in the bathtub in the bathroom near the kitchen. In my memory, it seems that every time we went to the farm, there was always cheese in the bathtub.

Močiutė Elena also used to make dried apples. She did this in the most simple way. She would just peel and core the apples, then slice them into thin rings and spread them out on a board in front of a very sunny window and let the sun dry them out. So, take these two memories of Lithuanian cheese and dried apples, put them together and you have apple cheese! No wonder I kept coming back to that photo in my cookbook.

The process of making apple cheese is similar to making Lithuanian cheese. The apples are slowly simmered with sugar and cinnamon, then wrapped in cheesecloth and pressed to eliminate the liquid. The apple cheese is then unwrapped and dried before being sliced and served. Give the recipe on the next page a try!

a taste of lithuania

Obuolinis Sūris

(Apple Cheese)

INGREDIENTS

- 3 pounds apples, preferably local apples (I used Lobo)
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

PREPARATION



1. Peel, core and slice apples. Place in a large bowl and mix in sugar. Cover with plastic wrap and set in a warm place for 24 hours to allow the apples to release their juice.
2. Pour the juice into a large pot and set the apples aside. Add the cinnamon to the juice in the pot, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until the liquid is reduced by half.
3. Add 3/4 of the apple slices to the liquid in the pot, and cook for 45 minutes, stirring frequently, until the apples are dark brown and no juice remains.



4. Add the remaining 1/4 of the apple slices to the pot and continue cooking for another 15 minutes, stirring frequently. This second addition of apples will give the apple cheese a nice two-toned appearance. Continue cooking and stirring until the liquid has evaporated, being careful not to burn the apples.



5. Carefully pour the hot apple mixture into a wet cheese-cloth. Wrap it up carefully and place it between two cutting boards. Place a heavy pot on the top board and press overnight.



6. The next day, reposition the apple cheese and wipe off any liquid from the bottom board. Place a heavier pot on the top board and press overnight again.



7. The following day, unwrap the apple cheese and let it air dry to remove any remaining moisture. Alternatively, dry it in a low-temperature oven (200°F) until the surface is dry.

Lithuanian Author Visits Stockton College

Lithuania's Laurynas Katkus, poet, fiction writer, translator and essayist, recently completed a three-week residency as Richard Stockton College of New Jersey's fall 2014 International Writer-in-Residence.

As part of his residency, Katkus gave a reading in the School of Arts and Humanities Visiting Writers Series on November 17, 2014, on Stockton's Galloway, N.J. campus, as well as a reading and talk on Lithuanian literature on November 18, 2014, at Dante Hall in Atlantic City, N.J.

"About 60 people came to the on-campus event, an unusually strong turnout for literary events at Stockton, while the Atlantic City event drew a smaller, but equally enthusiastic audience of writers from Philadelphia and South Jersey," according to Stockton associate professor of writing, Judith Copeland. "Katkus also brought an international perspective to our creative writing classrooms by participating in a fiction workshop ... and a literary translation workshop."

Katkus is the author of the 2012 novel *Judantys šešėliai* [*Moving Shadows*], the essay collection, *Sklepas* [*The Basement*] (2011), and the poetry collections *Balsai*, *Rašteliai* [*Voices, Notes*] (1998), *Nardymo pamokos* [*Diving Lessons*] (2003), and



Už septynių gatvių [*Behind 7 Streets*] (2009). His writing has been widely translated.

His participation in the program was made possible by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.

Study Lithuanian at Pitt

For the fourth straight year, The University of Pittsburgh's Slavic, East European, and Near Eastern Summer Language Institute will be hosting the Baltic Studies Summer Institute (BALSSI). This upcoming summer, BALSSI will offer intensive beginning and intermediate-level Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian languages courses.

Students who choose to study the Lithuanian language at BALSSI can expect to cover approximately one academic year's worth of coursework during a single summer. In addition to intensive grammar, reading, listening and, of course, speaking practice, students will attend lectures, films, cooking classes, ethnic picnics and St. John's celebration with the local Lithuanian community.

The intensive six-credit courses will start on June 8, 2015, and continue through July 17, 2015. Classes will meet Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Scholarship deadline is March 6, 2015.

For more information, visit www.sli.pitt.edu.



Last summer's Lithuanian language students prepared cold beet soup (šaltibarščiai).

Pennsylvania Lithuanian Church Torn Down

The Holy Trinity Lithuanian Church in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., underwent demolition in January so that the Scranton Diocese can sell the property. The church was closed in 2010 in a consolidation of three area churches.

Holy Trinity's congregation dates back to 1893, started by Lithuanian immigrants needing a place to worship. The present church was built on the corner lot of East South and South Meade streets in 1911.

Apply by March 1 to Intern or Volunteer in Lithuania



LISS interns on a visit to Seimas (Parliament) in Vilnius. Photo: Algis Norvila

LISS (Lithuanian International Student Services) invites college and high-school students of Lithuanian heritage to participate in this summer's internship and volunteer programs in Lithuania.

In 2008, the Lithuanian American Community, Inc., began to sponsor LISS, which assisted American and Canadian university students of Lithuanian heritage with short-term summer internships. In 2010, Birutė Bublys, former LISS director, signed an agreement with Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas to work together with LISS and to provide educational and professional support, as well as grant all LISS university students five university credits for completing their internships.

LISS has two programs for college students and one for high school students.

The Student Internship Program for Lithuanian-speaking students allows college undergraduate and graduate students to work in a field of their chosen profession, improve their Lithuanian language skills and become familiar with day-to-day life and culture in Lithuania. The Student Internship and Studies Program for non-Lithuanian speakers allows college undergraduate and graduate students to work in a field of their chosen profession and also study Lithuanian language, history and culture. Only students who declared their major/concentration will be accepted.

A new volunteer program, "High School Students for Lithuania," is for teens who want to get acquainted with Lithuanian daily life and culture and benefit Lithuania with their volunteer work. During this program, students will have the opportunity to study Lithuanian language, history and culture at the World Lithuanian University in Kaunas or at the Language School at Klaipėda University. Students must be at least 16.

The programs run from June 28, 2015, to August 8, 2015. The application deadline for all programs is March 1. Students will be notified of acceptance on March 15.

For additional information, please visit lithuanian-american.org or email Ina Stankevičienė, LISS program coordinator, at liss@lithuanian-american.org.

March 3 Deadline for ExCEL H.S. Exchange Program



American high school students now have the opportunity to apply to spend a year in Lithuania as an exchange student through ExCEL Abroad.

ExCEL Abroad is the reciprocal extension of Exchanges for Culture, Education, and Leadership (ExCEL), which brings Lithuanian high school students to the United States. The first group of American high school students participating in ExCEL Abroad will travel to Lithuania for the 2015-2016 academic year.

Program participants will serve as "youth ambassadors" of the United States. By forming lasting relationships within their

host community, participants will promote mutual understanding between the U.S and Lithuania. Students will live with a host family, attend a local high school and engage in activities to learn about Lithuania's people, culture and values. Such activities can be through the host high school, through community organizations, through an independent study project and through community service, in which participants are expected to take part.

ExCEL Abroad is made possible by a three-year grant from the Kazickas Family Foundation.

Participants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents born between June 30, 2000, and January 1, 1997, and currently enrolled in high school (including home school) at the 9th, 10th or 11th-grade level. Applications must be received by Tuesday, March 3, 2015.

For more information, visit americancouncils.org/programs/excel-abroad-program or contact Skye Wallace Henry at swhenry@americancouncils.org or 202-833-7522.

The ExCEL Abroad application is available at ais.americancouncils.org/excel.

Donelaitis Celebration in Hartford



From left, LAC President Sigita Šimkuvienė-Rosen, LAC Cultural Chair Rūta Pakštaitė-Cole, Dr. Elona Vaišnienė and LAC Treasurer Juozas Kazlauskas.

On the evening of November 15, 2015, at Holy Trinity Church in Hartford, Conn., a large number of Lithuanians gathered to mark the 300th birth anniversary of Kristijonas Donelaitis, watch a video of a commemorative concert-performance held earlier in the year in Chicago, and enjoy traditional Lithuanian food.

During the event, Lithuanian American Community Inc. President Sigita Šimkuvienė-Rosen presented the Žalgiris medal to Dr. Elona Vaišnienė and Dr. Rimas Vaišnys for their active participation in Lithuanian life and their work on behalf of Lithuanians.

LAC Cultural Council Chair Rūta Pakštaitė-Cole was also recognized for her work over the past two years to promote Lithuanian cultural life in the U.S. She was awarded with the book, *Lithuanian Cultural Heritage in America*.

Remembering Dalė Lukas

The Lithuanian American Community mourns the loss of Dalė T. Lukas, chair of LAC's Archives Committee, and former chair of its Cultural Council, who passed away on December 11, 2014.

Born in Marijampolė, Lithuania, in 1937, she immigrated to the U.S. with her family in 1951. After obtaining an undergraduate degree in chemistry and a master's degree in library science, she worked for the National Library of Medicine.

Dalė Lukas was a tireless advocate for the preservation of Lithuanian archives in America and worked with libraries, organizations, churches and individuals to catalog historic documents, photographs, books and other materials for posterity rather than allow them to be lost. A member of the board of the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center, she also worked closely with museums and archives in Lithuania, and just last year organized an international archival seminar in Chicago.

NASDAQ Salutes Lithuanian Euro Adoption



Photo courtesy of the General Consulate of Lithuania in New York.

On January 5, 2015, the NASDAQ Stock Exchange, the largest securities trading and information technology services provider in the world, congratulated Lithuania on becoming a member of the eurozone. The electronic screen in Times Square glowed with the Lithuanian tricolor and the message, "NASDAQ celebrates Lithuania introducing the Euro currency January 1st, 2015."

New York Lithuanians gathered in Times Square and welcomed NASDAQ vice president David Wicks, who recalled his Lithuanian descent. The event was also attended by Lithuanian Consul General in New York Julius Pranevičius, NASDAQ representative Marius Vilemaitis, LAC's New York City District Co-president Rasa Sprindys, Long Island District Chairwoman Ramutė Žukas, other representatives of the Lithuanian community and New York City residents.

Pranevičius Named Consul General in New York

Julius Pranevičius has been appointed the new consul general staffing the General Consulate of the Republic of Lithuania in New York. He replaces former consul general Valdemaras Sarapinas, who returned to Lithuania in 2014 to accept the post of chief security advisor on President Dalia Grybauskaitė's staff.

Born in 1977 in Ukmergė, Lithuania, Pranevičius received his undergraduate degree in political science and master's degree in European studies at the Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University.

Pranevičius has worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania since 1999, and most recently headed the ministry's European Union Department and EU Council Presidency Department. He received the Medal of Order for Merits to Lithuania in 2004.

The diplomat, who speaks Lithuanian, English, French and Russian, is married and has two young children.



Julius Pranevičius

Three Honorary Consulates Open in U.S. in Last Year



From left, Lithuanian Ambassador to the USA Žygimantas Pavilionis, Honorary Consul Jackie Clarkson, New Orleans Mayor Mitchell Landrieu, Honorary Consul Jonas Prunskis and Dean of the Louisiana Consular Corps and Honorary Consul of the Netherlands Constance Willems. Photo: Ludo Segers

Lithuania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has recently established several new honorary consulates in the United States, and three in just the last half of 2014. Those holding the position of honorary consul have responsibility for spreading Lithuanian culture and encouraging business, trade and tourism between Lithuania and the U.S. regions they represent.

Former New Orleans Councilwoman Jacquelyn "Jackie" Brechtel Clarkson was inducted on December 15, 2014, as Honorary Consul of the Republic of Lithuania for the State of Louisiana. Clarkson's grandmother left Lithuania in 1914 as a stowaway aboard a ship to the United States, where she met Clarkson's grandfather at Ellis Island. The couple settled in New Orleans, living most of their lives in the French Quarter. New Orleans has a sister city relationship with Klaipėda, Lithuania.

On October 13, 2014, Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Linas Linkevičius opened the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Lithuania for the State of Wisconsin, naming businesswoman, philanthropist and public figure Leslie Liautaud as honorary consul. Liautaud runs the restaurant chain Jimmy John's together with her spouse, an entrepreneur with Lithuanian roots. Their company recently joined the expanding American-Lithuanian Business Council.

Earlier in the year, Kerry Secrest of Brattleboro, Vt., was appointed Honorary Consul of the Republic of Lithuania for the State of Vermont. Secrest is a fourth-generation Lithuanian-American who grew up attending Camp Neringa in Vermont every summer, first as a camper and then as a counselor. She lived in Vilnius for two years after graduating from college in 1991, returning to the U.S. to work for the new Lithuanian Embassy in Washington, D.C., as adviser for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Secrest is a leadership coach for individuals and organizations with her company, Watershed Coaching.

There are now 23 honorary consuls in the United States. Find an honorary consulate near you at www.honoraryconsuls.lt.

Last Year Generous for LRSC

Last year was a generous one for the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center (LRSC) in terms of guests, valuable archives received and exhibitions organized.

Our funds were enlarged by an archive important to Lithuanian emigrants' history of music, acquired in memory of Vytautas Radžius, one of the founders of Lithuanian opera in Chicago, as well as its long-time president and member. A special place also is taken by the Algimantas Kezys Archive, which contains many years of painstaking work in the form of photographs, negatives, artwork, clippings about artists, programs – everything associated with emigrant artists.

Together with the Lithuanian American Community's Archival Affairs Committee and the Office of the Chief Archivist in Lithuania, the LRSC organized a seminar to discuss archival management and preservation, as well as collaboration with archives in Lithuania.

In conjunction with the Consulate General of the Republic of Lithuania in Chicago, we held an exhibition at the Lithuanian World Center in Lemont, dedicated to the Consulate General's 90th anniversary. We loaned archival material to the Balzekas Museum for its exhibit "No Home to Go to: The Story of Baltic Displaced Persons, 1944-1952" and to the art exhibit "Seasons (Metų metai)" event at the Čiurlionis Art Gallery in Chicago, dedicated to the 300 year anniversary of the birth of Kristijonas Donelaitis. In October, we held our annual book sale.

In 2014 we organized and recorded newly acquired Lithuanian American Community (LAC) archives. We began to scan the old photographs and to record the negatives repositied in the Budrys Lithuanian Photo Archive. Much attention was paid this year to one of the LRSC's oldest and richest divisions – the Žilevičius-Kreivėnas Musicology Archive. We continue to collaborate with Lithuania's educational and research institutions and archives and with the Endowed Chair in Lithuanian Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Chair of the Humanities Faculty's Lithuanian Literature Department of Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) and VMU's Lithuanian Emigration Institute Associate Prof. Dr. Dalia Kuiziniė, returned to the LRSC in November for a visit. Analyzing Lithuanian cultural life in Western Europe in 1945-1950 in her work, this time she was interested in the archival material of Germany's DP camps Eichstadt and Freiburg. Another returning guest was the Department of Lithuanian and Comparative Literature Associate Professor of the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (LEU) and LEU Lithuanian Philology Faculty Dean, Dr. Žydronė Kolevinskienė. This time she collected material for a study on the Lithuanian Writers' Union (LWU) in the U.S. in 1950-1990, with a special interest in letters of the LWU archive.

Another guest was president of the Vladas Putvinskis-Pūtvis Club of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union (LRU). Recipient of the Order of the Knight's Cross, Stasys Ignatavičius was interested



Seated, from left: LRU Vladas Putvinskis-Pūtvis Club President Stasys Ignatavičius; VMU Humanities Faculty's Lithuanian Literature Department Chair, VMU Lithuanian Emigration Institute's Senior Researcher Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dalia Kuiziniė; LEU's Department of Lithuanian and Comparative Literature Assoc. Prof. and LEU's Lithuanian Philology Faculty's Dean Dr. Žydronė Kolevinskienė; artist Magdalena Birutė Stankūnienė. Standing, from left: LRSC Executive Vice President Kristina Lapienytė and LRSC Vice President Loreta Timukienė. LRSC photo.

in our LRU archives; we gifted him with publications we had on the LRU and duplicates of Lithuania's history, as well as a set of Karys (Soldier) magazines.

Not long ago we were visited by Chicago resident Dr. Gražina Baliūnaitė Austin, who is writing a novel set in 1939-1944 Vilnius. We trust that the future book's plot will make use of the material about that time period's events found in our archives.

We take pride that our archives are sought out by Lithuania's researchers of history and culture, as well as representatives of various Lithuanian organizations. Not a day passes without an inquiry by e-mail or telephone about the diverse material in our archives and we are glad we can let others use the documents, photographs, audio recordings, books and other publications we have at the LRSC. Truly, the goal of the LRSC is to make our archives accessible, for them to serve in the most possibly thorough historical writing about our nation and state.

Ever since 1946 when the World Lithuanian Archive was established, Lithuanians abroad were accumulating historical material. We believe this is important today as well, and sincerely hope that together we can all preserve and enrich the archives of Lithuanians abroad. How can we do this? Every one of you can contribute by your monetary donation, or by the donation of your organization's or your own personal documents, letters, photographs, things, etc., as well as by including the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center in your will. The Center's success is difficult to imagine without the support of its patrons – for this we are sincerely grateful. We plan to make a donors' plaque, which will list the names of generous donators. We are also grateful to the Lithuanian Foundation, which contributes monetary support to the management and preservation of the LRSC archives every year.

Submitted by LRSC Vice President Loreta Timukienė. Translated into English by Dr. Indrė Antanaitis-Jacobs

21st LAC National Board Elections Scheduled for Spring

An interview with head of the LAC Election Committee, Algirdas Grybas, by Irena Nakienė Valys.



New York district and National Election Committee chair Algirdas Grybas.

The election for the Lithuanian American Community, Inc. (LAC) National Board of Directors will take place in spring 2015. One of the main objectives is to attract new and active candidates with a positive attitude who care about the Lithuanian community in the United States and its future. It is the chapters and districts that are responsible for finding and recommending candidates.

Recently, we have seen many changes within the Lithuanian American Community. Well-respected board members leave and need to be replaced with new ones. "Who will replace them and what will happen to the organization?" asks the President of the Lithuanian American National Executive Committee, Sigita Šimkuvienė Rosen.

I am interviewing the chairman of the New York District of LAC and the head of the LAC Election Committee, Algirdas Grybas.

Please tell us a little about yourself and how you got involved in the Lithuanian-American community.

I came to the United States for school, seven years ago. After completing my studies in Pittsburgh, I moved to New York City but knew no Lithuanians, unfortunately. My ties with Lithuania are very strong, so I started a search to meet other Lithuanians in New York City but it took a lot of effort until I found some signs online of an active and populous community. I came to conclude that the Lithuanian-American community lacks presence online, which led me to develop a website, www.nyl-lithuanian.org, three years ago. This website now is the main source of information for Lithuanians living in New York and in the tri-state area.

The election for the 21st LAC National Board of Directors will be held May 1-15, 2015. Why are the elections important and why should they matter to Lithuanians living in the United States?

The Lithuanian-American Community is an organization that is more than 70 years old and is the only organization that connects Lithuanians and their family members living in the United States. It supports Lithuanian schools, organizes cultural and sports events; supports song and dance festivals as well represents Lithuanians living in the U.S. at the Global Lithuanian Community. The National Board is a decision-making vehicle that sets up the rules for the Community to follow. Therefore, it is crucial to have a talented pool of people as elected officials because their decisions will affect all Lithuanians living in the United States.

The Board consists of 70 members. Sixty of them will be elected during the elections in May and the other seats go to chairmen from 10 districts. Members get elected by people from their own districts, and the number of seats each district gets depends on how many people vote in each district. The more people who vote in your district, the more representatives from your district will get elected to the Board of Directors. Therefore, I encourage you all to run for the National Board of Directors as well as to vote actively in the upcoming elections.

Accountability is the recipe for successful elections. What is your vision and what would be your advice on the upcoming elections?

It's impossible to have a successful election without a strong and experienced team. I have already reached out to all chapters and district chairs and asked them to start thinking about forming election committees that are capable to perform tasks throughout the entire election process. Moreover, on November 17, 2014, the Executive Committee approved our new Election Committee, which consists of very active and talented people with extensive experience in elections and NGOs. I believe that this committee will do a great job and will work well with chairs of districts and local chapters.

I want to ensure that people receive the information they need about the upcoming elections. We plan on reaching out to them through different information channels such as community centers and parishes, and district and chapter websites. We will do everything we can to make sure that news about the upcoming elections reach all Lithuanians living in the United States.

In addition, along with election committees from different districts, we will make a significant effort to have as many candidates as possible. During the elections in 2012, some districts

had the same number of elected members as the number of candidates, which I don't think is normal. We need to make sure that information about elections reaches every Lithuanian living in the United States so that more people can run for the Board. For that purpose we have developed a website, www.rinkimai2015.us. If people have questions, they can email our team at info@rinkimai2015.us.



LAC National Elections Committee, from left: Justinas Krugelis, Eglė Redikaitė, Algirdas Grybas, Aurelija Šešelgytė, Gelmina Zidelytė and Edgaras Pantelejevas.

As a former Board member, can you tell us how you were involved and what part you played in LAC's decision-making process?

Sure. I was a member of the Regulatory Committee. Along with the chair, Arvydas Barzdukas, we renewed the organization's rules and regulations, which were approved by the Board of Directors. Moreover, we have worked on a format and have developed its electronic version, which is a huge accomplishment. We also are working with Tomas Girnius on creating an English version of the document and plan to have it completed before next year's annual meeting.

Recently, there have been many discussions about districts and their role as a whole in the Community. During the Annual Board of the Directors meeting in Los Angeles last October, I had an opportunity to give a presentation about districts and what role they may play in the future, which was received very well. It was great to see that members have open minds, appreciate new ideas, are willing to discuss and are ready for some changes.

The annual Board of Director's meeting is also a great opportunity to meet with high-ranking government officials from the U.S. and Lithuania and to make connections with professionals from different fields as well as spread the word about our Community. I had some great discussions about the organization's finances and how to better utilize its budget with various specialists from the finance world. Those people are great resources that are very well needed for the organization to succeed and continue its legacy.

You meet people from other communities. What are the main issues and concerns you have noticed?

I am not only a member of the National Board of Directors; I am also the chair of the District in New York. In the past three years there have been many changes within Lithuanian community in New York. The Brooklyn-Queens and Manhattan-Bronx-Staten Island chapters have merged into one and now are called New York City chapter. A new Eastern Long Island chapter has been created. The Rochester chapter, which once belonged to Ohio District, is now a part of New York District. At the beginning of 2014 I had a conference call with officials from New York and other neighboring chapters and districts where we discussed their new responsibilities. We also invited the chair of the Regulations Committee, Arvydas Barzdukas, along with organization's legal counsel, Rimas Domanskis, to join the call, which helped answer many questions. The recording of the call was shared with other chapters, and has been distributed and discussed in other communities across the country.

Do you have any recommendations about the annual meeting? What in your opinion can be improved in the future?

Given that the annual meeting is only one weekend long, there will always be far more information and worthy topics than amount of time to discuss them all. Therefore, I would like to see priorities and aims of each annual meeting clearly reflected in its agenda, and that decisions that are directly related to the organization be discussed and completed by Saturday night. During the two annual meetings that I attended, I have noticed that amendments to rules and regulations, which is the main legal document of the organization, were discussed on Sunday when a majority of attendees had already left the conference. I very much value all attendees' presentations but if decisions that are crucial for the organization's existence are not discussed by all members we may eventually have no one to attend the conference.

I am also concerned about the mediocre attendance of the annual meetings. There are multiple reasons for that. Some members lack accountability, there is a lack of communication among members after the annual meetings and the cost of attending the meetings can be high. Therefore, we need to make sure that candidates are active, accountable to their own constituents and the Board, and are competitive. I was pleased to learn that Austėja Sruoga, vice-president for Organizational Affairs, is planning to have calls with district chairs on a regular basis to keep conversations going between them and the National Executive Committee members.

What do you think LAC needs to ensure its existence and legacy?

People are the engine of every organization. For them to work willingly, actively and creatively, activities of the organization must be interesting to them, with clear and impactful results.

our community

The times when simply mentioning the word “Lithuania” could attract throngs of volunteers are long gone. Lithuania is changing, Lithuanians’ view of our national identity is changing with it, and so we need to change too, to adapt to the new reality. In order to ensure longevity of the organization, we must emphasize objective reasons, why its activities are beneficial and important for its members; we must set clear goals and regularly evaluate our performance. People should want to become a member not only because they identify themselves as Lithuanians but also because they see value in being a part of this organization and the Lithuanian community as a whole.

How can we attract young generation to be more involved in the Lithuanian community?

Firstly, the younger Lithuanian generation is very diverse within itself. There are young people who were born in the United States, while others came here as teenagers. Those who migrated young differ among themselves, too. Some of them work illegally or in low-paying jobs, while others are graduates from the top universities in the country and work for prestigious companies. Considering those facts, their view toward Lithuania and their identification as Lithuanian cannot be the same and is very different from Lithuanians who were born in or migrated to the United States years ago.

Secondly, the younger generation is technology-savvy and stays connected with Lithuania even while in the U.S. Their

connection to the country exists but is different and more modern, I would say. There is no urgent “need” for them to get involved and show their support here as opposed to their ancestors who came here during Lithuania’s occupation. However, it does not mean that the young generation lacks patriotism. Lithuanian community is important to them but is no longer their main focus. As an organization, it is our responsibility to find a way to show its value in order to attract them. I believe that we have been doing a great job by utilizing social media, such as Facebook, which have already reached many of them. Forms of communication and types of activities, however, still need much work. I believe that live-casting of sports tournaments at local bars, organizing camping trips and sports events, and holding discussions and talks on various hot topics may attract many young people. For a young person, it’s difficult to be excited about an organization when all they see is masses at parishes and requests for donations.

There are many active board members who should continue their work, but we all should focus on the time we have left before the upcoming elections to ensure we have great candidates. We can’t allow community members to say that they “don’t have anyone to vote for.”

I thank Algirdas Grybas for the interview and wish him good luck with his great work.

Contribute to the LRSC Sports Exhibit

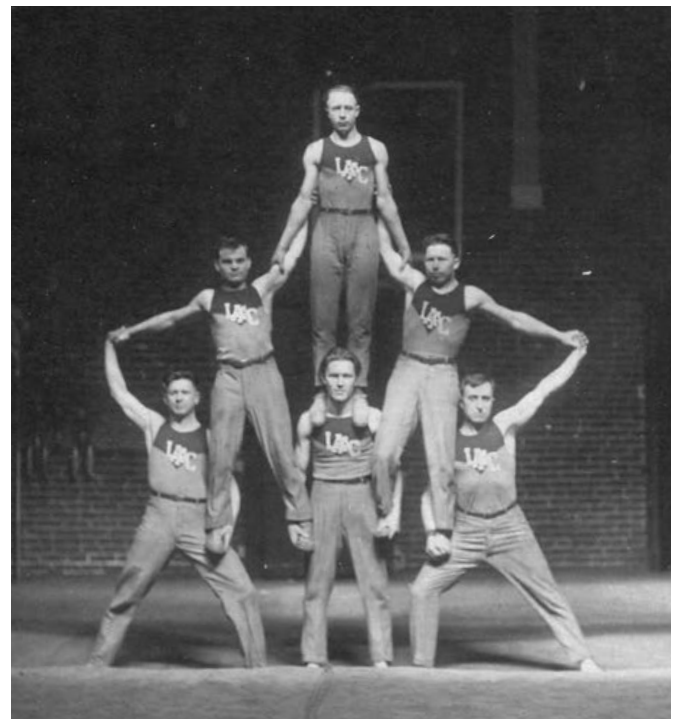
Sports activities have always been and still are an important part of Lithuanian emigrant public life, helping to strengthen not only physical health, but also ethnic pride.

This year, the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center (LRSC), which has a wealth of archival material on the lives of American Lithuanians, is preparing an exhibit on Lithuanian sports activities in the United States. The exhibit will display interesting documents, photographs and sports awards, starting from the beginning of the 20th century and ending with the present.

The LRSC is asking U.S. Lithuanian athletes and representatives of athletic organizations, as well as anyone who has interesting material about American Lithuanian sports, to share that material to help them present the rich life of Lithuanian athletics in the U.S. more thoroughly and extensively.

If you have any material that you think could be part of this exhibit, please email info@lithuanianresearch.org or call 773-434-4545.

Submitted by LRSC Vice President Loreta Timukienė.



Baltimore Lithuanian Athletic Club gymnasts, 1911. Photo: Vincent Velzis

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current events

In the EU and Eurozone

... Lithuania officially became the 19th member of the Eurozone on January 1, 2015. Prime Minister Algirdas Butkevičius was the first to withdraw euros from an ATM in central Vilnius shortly after midnight. Actors depicting historic personalities that graced the retiring litas notes—writer Žemaitė, aviators Darius and Girėnas, poet Maironis and national anthem composer Vincas Kudirka—also made withdrawals at the ceremony.

... Since January 1, there has been a strong increase in the proportion of Lithuanians who think that their new currency will have positive consequences for their country. A Eurobarometer survey revealed that 63 percent think the consequences for Lithuania will be positive and 54 percent see positive consequences for themselves personally, an increase in of 19 and 17 percent respectively compared with a September 2014 survey.

... Lithuania's changeover to the euro has been smooth and successful, according to a European Commission survey. By January 15, when payments were no longer taken in litas, nearly nine out of 10 citizens has already been making cash payments in shops in euros only, and two-thirds said they carried only euro cash with them. Banks, post offices and retailers were coping well with the extra workload caused by the changeover process and parallel handling of the two currencies.

... In just over two months, 46,000 visitors from all over Lithuania visited the Euro Exhibition at the National Museum Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania. Visitors were introduced to the design, production and security features of the euro banknotes as well as the destruction of worn-out money. Tour participants learned to differentiate a genuine banknote from a counterfeit and got acquainted with the coins of all of the euro area countries.

... According to the winter forecast from European Commission, Lithuania's economy is expected to grow by 3.9 percent in 2015, leading the Eurozone, which has a predicted growth rate of 1.8 percent.

... Lithuania's neighbor, Latvia, has assumed the EU presidency for the first six months of 2015. Latvia's presidency of the Council of the European Union will not be "anti-Russian," according to Latvia's minister for foreign affairs, but will focus on competitiveness, the digital economy and EU external relations.

In the World

... On January 1, 2015, Lithuania assumed presidency of the Baltic Assembly, a group that addresses complicated international problems and aims to improve the geopolitical situation in the region. The presidency's theme is "For a Growing and United Baltic Region."

... On February 2, 2015, a Russian court released the Lithuanian trawler it seized in September 2014 after imposing a 4 million ruble (EUR 53,000) fine. Russia had accused the vessel, the *Juros Vilkas*, of illegally fishing for crabs. Lithuania initially denied the claim, and the EU demanded the vessel's release, but the boat's owners said it had unknowingly entered Russia's exclusive economic zone, blaming the regional fisheries body for not informing it of boundary changes after Russia and Norway signed a new bilateral fishing agreement.

... Lithuania's bishops visited Rome to meet with Pope Francis on February 2, 2015. The Pope called Lithuania's clergy "heroic" in defending the Church in times of persecution and invited them to engage in "constructive dialogue with all, even those who do not belong to the Church or are far from the religious experience." He encouraged them to provide pastoral guidance and support to help strengthen families, to pay special attention to vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life, and to serve the poor, unemployed, the sick and young people.

... Lithuania sent more than EUR 40,000 worth of humanitarian aid to Ukraine in early February. Most of the shipment was made up of medicine and medical equipment, including new types of antibiotics and equipment for the collection and transfusion of blood. Accompanying the aid were four Ukrainian soldiers who had received medical care in Vilnius.

... The Institute of World Policy once again ranked Lithuania's President Dalia Grybauskaitė among Ukraine's 10 most influential promoters in 2014. In announcing the ranking, the *Kyiv Post* said, "While the Euromaidan Revolution became a symbol of Ukrainians' fight for dignity, Dalia Grybauskaitė has become a symbol of advocating their dignity on the international stage. There is a huge difference between the global community cutting down Russia to its size and tiny Lithuania doing the same."

... Ukraine's parliament has ratified the agreement among the governments of Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine on the establishment of a joint military brigade.

... Lithuania and the Sultanate of Oman have signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of information technologies and a joint communication recognizing the importance of developing cooperation between the two countries. Oman was invited to open an embassy in Lithuania, which would be the first embassy of a Persian Gulf state there.

... Lithuania's delegation to the World Health Organization has agreed to aid the development of the Maldivian health care system. Lithuania will provide training, expert advice and technical support as recommended by a team of neurosurgeons from the country who visited the Maldives last year.

... NATO defense ministers agreed on February 6 to establish international military staffs in the Baltic States, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria. The Lithuanian staff will be based in Vilnius.

... Lithuania has risen to 19th among 28 NATO member countries in defense spending after increasing its defense budget. Until now, Lithuania had been next-to-last. Lithuania's 2015 defense budget is EUR 425 million, or 1.11 percent of GDP.

... On January 27, 2015, a delegation led by Lithuania's President Dalia Grybauskaitė and Minister of Foreign Affairs Linas Linkevičius attended the ceremony marking the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland.

... Lithuanian director Alante Kavaitė has picked up the Sundance World Cinema Drama prize for directing "The Summer of Sangailė." The film was one of 12 features selected to compete in the Sundance world cinema dramatic competition from over 2,000 submissions. Starring newcomers Julija Steponaitytė and Aistė Diržiūtė, the film is a teen romance about two girls who together overcome the challenges of adolescence.

... Lithuania was featured on the Travel Channel's "Booze Traveler" in an episode titled "Loopy Lithuania," in which the show's host sampled Lithuanian beer, mead, bitters and krupnikas, did some hot-air ballooning and keg-tossing, and learned about the country's pagan past.

... The BBC began filming a six-episode adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's literary epic drama War and Peace in Latvia, Lithuania and Russia in January.

... Lithuania has received numerous recognitions as a travel destination. It was named one of *USA Today's* "Affordable Dream Trips for 2015," one of the "World's 10 Best Ethical Destinations for 2015" by Ethical Traveler, *Forbes'* "#3 Top Travel Destination for 2015" and No. 3 in Lonely Planet's "Best in Travel 2015" list. Out Traveler, however, named it among "The 10 Places LGBT Travelers Should Never Visit," citing anti-gay sentiment.

... Lithuania took the top prize in the 25th International Snow Sculpture Championships in Breckenridge, Colo., with its entry, "The Wind of Eternal Change." The piece was designed to represent the various forms that water can take—clouds, rain and snow. The four-person Lithuanian team created the sculpture in four days using only hand tools.

In Lithuania

... The Lithuanian government raised the level of terror attack threat from "lowest" to "low" on February 4, 2015. Officials said the decision was based on a recommendation from the State Security Department, motivated by current events in Europe.

... Lithuanian news portal Delfi received a letter containing a threat to launch a Charlie Hebdo-style attack on its journalists, prompting the evacuation of its employees. The letter, written in Russian, also threatened the editor by name.

... A bomb threat hoax interrupted gas supply on January 28 from Lithuania's recently inaugurated liquefied natural gas import terminal. Bomb threats also prompted the evacuation of two large shopping centers in Šiauliai earlier in January.

... In mid-January, Lithuania's Defense Ministry distributed a how-to manual to citizens and soldiers explaining what to do in the event of a foreign invasion. The 98-page manual, "How to Act in Extreme Situations or Instances of War," is intended to prepare Lithuanians for the possibility of invasion and occupation. "Keep a sound mind, don't panic, and don't lose clear thinking," the manual says. "Gunshots just outside your window are not the end of the world."

... A Lithuanian activist group called the "Modern Guerillas" has been labeling Russian food products in Lithuanian stores with stickers depicting the Colorado potato beetle, a voracious potato crop pest. The striped orange markings on the beetle are similar to those on the St. George's ribbon, a Russian national symbol. The activists are calling on Lithuanian residents not to buy food and household products from Russia.

... Lithuania's finance minister, Rimantas Šadžius, says that Lithuania has already recovered from the main shocks it suffered due to the downturn of the Russian economy. Lithuanian companies have been redirecting their exports and adjusting manufacturing capacities, so further deterioration of the Russian economy should not hit the Lithuanian market any harder.

... In 2104, Lithuania harvested a record amount of grain—5,324,100 tons, 16.6 percent more than in 2013—of which it exported 3.1 million tons, mostly wheat (2.5 million tons).

... Vilnius District Court heard the cases of two alleged Belarusian spies in early February, both of whom are also under investigation for ties to Russian intelligence. Andrejus Ošurkovas, 28, is accused of collecting classified information about Lithuania's armed forces, spying on the NATO mission in Lithuania, and trying to turn other military personnel into double agents. He is suspected of been employed by the Belarusian air force as early as five years ago. Romualdas Lipskis, 57, is suspected of spying on Lithuania's defense forces by acquiring access to classified information through his work at Lithuania's air-surveillance and traffic monopoly Oro Navigacijos. Lipskis has allegedly been sending Lithuanian state secrets to Belarus for more than three years, and may also have aided Russian intelligence. Lipskis and Ošurkovas could each face up to 15 years in jail.

current events

... The Lithuanian Prosecutor General's Office has opened an investigation into a Facebook page titled "The People's Republic of Vilnius," for suspected crimes against Lithuania's independence, territorial integrity and Constitutional order. Prosecutors are working to identify the administrators of the Russian- and Polish-language account, which seems to advocate seceding from Lithuania. Founding of anti-Constitutional groups or organizations is a criminal offense in Lithuania.

... Lithuania marked the 24th anniversary of Freedom Defenders' Day on January 13, commemorating victims of the Soviet aggression in 1991. In the morning, all schools, state institutions and embassies lighted candles in memory of the victims. During a solemn sitting of Seimas (parliament) Polish dissident editor-in-chief of the daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* Adam Michnik received the Freedom Prize. After a flag-hoisting ceremony on Independence Square, the freedom fighters were honored at Antakalnis Cemetery.

... The population of Lithuania on January 1, 2015, was estimated to be 2,921,000, a 0.7 percent decrease from 2014. According to Statistics Lithuania, while the birth rate increased in 2014, there were 8,900 more deaths than births. There was little change in the emigration rate, which has been improving since 2011 as more people decide to return to Lithuania.

... Lithuania has adopted amendments to its Law on Tobacco Control to regulate electronic cigarettes. The amendments restrict sales of e-cigarettes and refill containers to minors. Those under 18 are prohibited from smoking/consuming and holding e-cigarettes or refill containers.

... India has opened an honorary consulate in Vilnius, a step toward opening an embassy there. The Indian ambassador to Lithuania currently resides in Warsaw.

... According to January 1 data from the Lithuanian Labor Exchange, Lithuania's unemployment in 2014 among people from 16 to 29 years old fell from 7.8 percent to 5.6 percent.

Business

... The majority of the winners in Lithuania's first-ever "Top Employer" awards, held in Vilnius in February, were foreign investors. Of the more than 300 companies nominated, the overall winner was Western Union Processing Lithuania, with CSC Baltic second and Girteka group third. Ikea Lietuva won in the trade category, Swedbank in finance, TEO in IT, Lithuanian Railways in transport and Coca-Cola HBC Lietuva in industry.

... Lithuania's state-controlled natural gas supply and trading company LITGAS has entered into two agreements to provide Estonia with natural gas supplies. LITGAS will begin to supply gas to Reola Gaas in February and to Eesti Energia in March from its new LNG terminal at Klaipėda seaport.

... Anva Polytech, a rubber component producer from Sweden, is setting up a production facility in Biržai, with the aim of creating 50 new jobs in the next five years.

... Phillip Morris has announced plans to significantly expand its production facility in Klaipėda. This year's expansion is part of a new EUR 40 million investment project by the international tobacco company, reports BC Invest Lithuania.

bridges

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January/February 2015

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

MARCH 2015

March 6-15

No Home To Go To: The Story of Baltic Displaced Persons 1944-1952

Consulate of the Republic of Lithuania, 44 Coconut Row, #T10, Palm Beach, Fla.
Info: www.balzekasmuseum.org

March 8, 11 a.m.

Verbos-Making Workshop

Annunciation Church, 259 N. 5th Street, Brooklyn, N.Y.

March 8, 1-5 p.m.

Independence Commemoration and "Invisible Front" Screening

200 Mosier Hall, Miami University, 1601 University Blvd., Hamilton, Ohio
Info: sallyzdannov@gmail.com

March 8, 2-4 p.m.

Independence Day Celebration

Wyandotte County Museum, 631 N. 126th St., Bonner Springs, Kans.
Info: sallyzdannov@gmail.com

March 11, 5:30-9 p.m.

Lithuanian Cultural Evening at Stanford

Cubberly Auditorium, 485 Lasuen Mall, Stanford, Calif.
Talk by Dr. Violeta Davoliūtė-Uppenorth and screening of "The Other Dream Team."
Info: liisi.esse@stanford.edu

March 14, 6:30-9 p.m.

Lithuanian Quizzo

Lithuanian Music Hall, 2517 E. Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia
Info: lithuanianmha.org

March 15

Film Premiere: "Arvydas Sabonis 11. Visa Galva Auksciau"

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., New York, N.Y.
Info: 732-939-5334 / 630-464-5000

March 15, 3 p.m.

Dainava Ensemble Concert, "Iš arti ir iš toli" (From near and from far")

McAninch Arts Center, College of DuPage, Fawell & Park Blvds., Glen Ellyn, Ohio
Jazz pianist Arturas Anusauskas and soloists from across the U.S.
Info: dainava.us

March 19-22

Women's Weekend

Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.
Info: neringa.org

March 29, 9:30 a.m.

Easter Celebration

Latvian Hall, 10705 W. Virginia Ave., Lakewood, Colo.
Info: coloradolithuanians.org

March 29 - April 5

ŠALFASS/LAUNA/ALGS Annual Lithuanian Ski Trip

Snowbird Ski Resort, Utah
Reservations: linda@ski.com, 1-800-525-2052, ext. 3329.
Identify yourself as part of the Lithuanian Ski Group trip.
General info: edmickus1@aol.com or vsaulis@sbcglobal.net

APRIL 2015

April 3

2015 Sporto Sventė**Pre-registration Deadline**

Send pre-registration info to ptitas@hotmail.com and to primary contacts below:
Basketball: ptitas@hotmail.com
Volleyball: rytasroo@gmail.com
Table tennis: ecapas@hotmail.com

April 11, 2 p.m.

Benefit Concert for Neringa

600 Liberty Hwy., Putnam, Conn.
Featuring Eglė Jarkova on violin
Info: neringa.org

April 11, 6-11 p.m.

2nd Annual Kugelis Cook-Off

Lithuanian Music Hall, 2517 E. Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia
Info: lithuanianmha.org

MAY 2015

May 1-15

Lithuanian American Community National Congress Elections

Info: agrybas@nylithuanian.org

May 9, 6 p.m.

Grandis Annual Folk Dance Concert

Lithuanian World Center, 14911 127th Street, Lemont, Ill.
Info: grandis.vadova@gmail.com, 630-254-4953

May 9-10, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.

43rd Annual Baltimore Lithuanian Festival

Catonsville Armory, 130 Mellor Avenue, Catonsville, Md.

May 12, 6:15 p.m.

Between Shades of Gray: Reading by Rūta Šepetytė and U.S. Premiere of Piano Compositions by Gavin Mikhail

Nashville Public Library, 615 Church St., Nashville, Tenn.
Info: nashvillepubliclibrary.org/nashvillereads

May 22-25

Song Festival Youth Seminar

Camp Dainava, Manchester, Mich.
Info: liudaslands@gmail.com

May 29-31

Joninės Traditional Longest Day of Summer Celebration

Acorns Resort, Milford Lake, Kans.
Join for the whole weekend, or come for a day.
Info: renata.bakelyte@gmail.com

JUNE 2015

June 5-7

2015 Sporto Svente

Cleveland, Ohio
Pre-registration deadline April 3.
Basketball: ptitas@hotmail.com, Volleyball: rytasroo@gmail.com, Table tennis: ecapas@hotmail.com, Chess: TBA

June 6-7

Talka Work Weekend

Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.
Help get camp ready for summer.
Info: regina@neringa.org, 978-582-5592

June 8 - July 17

Lithuanian Language Course

University of Pittsburgh
Info: sli.pitt.edu

June 20-27

Detroit Lithuanian Scouts Camp

Camp Dainava, Manchester, Mich.
Info: dainava.org

June 27 - July 1

Heritage Family Camp - English (younger children)

Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.
Info: neringa.org

JULY 2015

July 1-5

Heritage Family Camp - English (older children)

Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.
Info: neringa.org

July 3-5

X North American Lithuanian Song Festival

University of Illinois at Chicago Pavilion, 525 S. Racine St., Chicago
Info: dainusvente.org/en

July 5-11

Family Camp for Lithuanian Speakers

Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.
Info: neringa.org

July 6-18

Moksleivų Ateitininkų Stovykla

Camp Dainava, Manchester, Mich.
Info: mesmas.org

July 12-26

Children's Camp for Lithuanian Speakers ages 7-16

Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.
Info: neringa.org

July 18-26

Jauųjų Ateitininkų Stovykla

Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.
Info: ritarack@gmail.com

July 26

Lithuanian Friendship Day "Putnam Picnic"

600 Liberty Hwy., Putnam, Conn.
Info: neringa.org

July 26-August 1

"Third Week" Youth Camp for Lithuanian Speakers ages 12-16

Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.
Info: neringa.org

AUGUST 2015

August 2-9

Lithuanian Heritage Camp

Camp Dainava, Manchester, Mich.
Info: rimapolikaitis@aol.com, dainava.org

August 2-15

Heritage Children's Camp in English ages 7-16

Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.
Info: neringa.org

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VOLUME 39 ISSUE 1

LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

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