

# bridges



LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

\$5

April 2015

# this month in history

## April Anniversaries

### 415 years ago



#### April 18, 1600

Birth of General Kazimieras Simonavičius (or Semenavičius), a gunsmith, military engineer, artillery specialist and pioneer of rocketry. Born in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, he studied mathematics, mechanics, hydraulics,

architecture, optics and tactics at Vilnius and Amsterdam universities. Simonavičius participated in several battles for the army of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and for Frederick Henry of Orange as an engineering expert in artillery and rocketry.

His 1650 book, *Artis Magnae Artilleriae (The Great Art of Artillery)*, provided pyrotechnic formulations and standard designs for creating rockets, fireballs and other pyrotechnic devices. The book was translated into French, German, English, Dutch and Polish, and remained in use for more than two centuries in Europe as a basic artillery manual. Kazimieras Simonavičius University (formerly Vilnius Academy of Business Law), is named for him.

### 295 years ago



#### April 23, 1720

Birth of Rabbi Elijah Ben Shlomo Zalman, known as the Vilna Gaon (genius of Vilnius), considered one of the greatest Jewish intellectuals of modern times. He was considered a prodigy as a child, and was renowned as an authority on the Talmud and Jewish law by the age of 20. In addition to his mastery of rabbinic

literature, he composed works on mathematics, geography, science and grammar. He shunned public activities in favor of study, and never accepted an official rabbinical post.

His biggest contributions are thought to be his authoritative corrections on the Talmud and all major works of Jewish scholarship. His opposition of Hasidism, while unsuccessful, was credited with turning the movement away from extremism. His method of intense analytical study became a model for the yeshiva movement, or formalized higher education.

### 255 years ago

#### April 19, 1760

The first Lithuanian periodical, "Kurjer Litewski" (Lithuanian Courier), was published. The four-page, Polish-language newspaper was first published weekly by the Jesuit Academy of Vilnius, and covered local and national news, politics and social life. It remained in print, with a some breaks and changes of ownership, until 1840.

### 115 years ago

#### April 17, 1900

Birth of Steponas Garbačiauskas, Lithuanian athletics pioneer and diplomat. Garbačiauskas established and presided over the first sports organization in Lithuania in 1919, "Lietuvos sporto sąjunga" (Lithuanian Sports Union). He became editor of *Lietuvos Sportas (Lithuanian Sports)* in 1922.

At the 1924 Paris Olympic Games, he led the Lithuanian athletes' delegation, captained the football (soccer) team and was a sports journalist. He played football with two Lithuanian teams from 1923 to 1928 and broke track records in the 60m, 100m, 200m distance and 4 × 100m relay race between 1921 and 1925.

After 1925, Garbačiauskas worked at the Argentinian consulate in Kaunas and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and became Lithuanian vice-consul in Zurich in 1936. After WWII, he was a representative of the United Lithuanian Relief Fund of America in Switzerland.

### 105 years ago

#### April 17, 1910

Birth of Vladas Mikėnas, considered one of the most outstanding chess players from the Baltics prior to World War II. Mikėnas played for Lithuania in several international Chess Olympiads from 1931 to 1939, and played in Soviet championships under occupation. He was awarded the International Master title in 1950 (the year the title was instituted) and the Honorary Grandmaster title in 1987. He refereed the World Championship match between Anatoly Karpov and Garry Kasparov in 1985. He invented two chess moves that bear his name: the Mikenas Variation of the Modern Benoni and the Flohr-Mikenas Variation of the English Opening.

### 95 years ago

#### April 14-15, 1920

The Constituent Assembly of Lithuania was democratically elected, as formation of state institutions and infrastructure progressed following declaration of independence in 1918. Voter turnout reached 90 percent in the election of 112 representatives. Only eight representatives were older than 50. Five were women.

### 70 years ago

#### April 21, 1945

Start of the first deportations to Siberia after World War II. This round of deportations, targeting families of partisans and individuals of German origin, lasted through May 2, 1945. A second round occurred between May 17 and September 3, 1945.

3



6



19



20



# bridges

April 2015

LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN  
NEWS JOURNAL

3 A Trip for the Generations  
*by Chris Wohl*

6 Scratching Eggs: Honoring and Evolving a  
Lithuanian Easter Egg Tradition  
*by Christine Luschas*

9 Through Mother's Eyes:  
The Diaspora Diary of Rozė Kriaučiūnas, part 3  
*translated by Nijolė Gražulis*

12 The Singing Twosome  
*by Jolanta Urbetienė*

## Special Section

25th Anniversary of Reestablishment of Independence

The Long Road to Freedom: Milestones and Memories

14 **An Unforgettable Year**  
*by Vitalija Dunčia*

## Departments

c2 **this month in history**

2 **from the editor**

Make Your Voice Heard, *by Teresė Vekteris*

2 **readers respond**

17 **a taste of lithuania**

Grybukai: A Nature-Inspired Easter Dessert  
*by Jana Sirusaitė Motivans*

19 **sports**

On the Feet of a Lithuanian Fireman: Aidas Ardzijauskas  
Claims Victory in New York's Ultramarathon  
*by Deivis Pavasaris*

**our community**

20 U.S. Lithuanian Communities Celebrate Independence

22 Second Meeting of New York Lithuanian Professionals

23 Omaha Lithuanians Join CultureFest 2015

24 **current events**

27 **reader survey**

29 **calendar**

**Front cover:** Etched Easter eggs (margučiai) by Christine Luschas. See page 6 for article and how-to. Photo: Christine Luschas

**Back cover:** At the finish line of the Self-Transcendence 6 and 10 Day Race, left to right, Lithuanian Consul General in New York Julius Pranevičius, 10-day ultramarathon winner Aidas Ardzijauskas, support team member Valdas Buožys, 6-day third place winner Rimas Jake-laitis, support team member Aušra Buožiene and Lithuanian Athletic Union of North America Northeastern Region Chair Deivis Pavasaris. See article on page 19.

## from the editor

### Make Your Voice Heard

It's always a good thing when you can make your voice heard. This month, you have two opportunities to exercise your opinion.

From May 1-15, 2015, Lithuanian-American Community members vote for their representatives on LAC's National Board of Directors. LAC is the only organization that unites all Lithuanians and their families living in the United States. The organization's activities are very diverse: it supports Lithuanian schools, organizes cultural events, song and dance festivals, sports tournaments, scientific symposiums; and represents U.S. Lithuanians in the Lithuanian World Community. The National Board is the most important branch of the LAC, determining the organization's directions and goals.

If you registered online or by mail in April, you've already received voting instructions. If you haven't registered, or aren't yet a member of LAC, it's not too late. You can vote in person in some communities, and can become a member on election day. For more information on voting, visit [rinkimai2015.us/vote](http://rinkimai2015.us/vote). Scroll down for English.

We also want to hear from you about *Bridges* through our reader survey, which you can mail in or take online. We want to know what you like and don't like about the magazine. What are your favorite sections? What kind of stories do you want to see more often? Do you have any suggestions for improving the magazine?

The reader survey is at the back of this issue. Simply cut it out, fill it in, pop in into an envelope and mail to the address provided. Or, if you'd like to save a stamp, take the survey online at [surveymonkey.com/s/8R3DVSX](http://surveymonkey.com/s/8R3DVSX).

We can't wait to hear from you!

Teresė Vekteris, Editor

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## readers respond

### Small World

My family made an interesting connection because of one of the [November 2014] articles. Ramūnė Zinkutė Cobb, who translated her father's memoirs, mentions a teacher her father had in Lietuva who was p. Sirusienė—my grandmother! My grandmother's brother (last name Nakutis) also emigrated to Australia and was mentioned in last month's [December 2014] article. Small world we Lithuanians share!

Jana Sirusaitė Motivans, Montreal, Canada

### 11 March 1990

My Mom just sent me a copy of the article in *Bridges* [March 2015] by Tadas Alasevičius. In it he explains the importance of 11 Mar 1990.

It would be appropriate to remind your readers that it was Ronald Reagan that made that day possible.

I know... I was there... I was on active duty in the intelligence forces in those days.  
Captain Tom Kapurch (Kapočius), US Navy Retired, via email

### What an Article!

I have to take a break from reading Daiva Venckus' article "Witness to History" [March 2015] because I am crying too much. Thank you for publishing that!

Nijolė Semėnaitė Etwiler, via email



Chris (center, striped shirt), his travelling family and his aunt Juratė and part of her family.

My mother, Birutė (then 10 or 11 years old), and grandmother Izabelė, fled Lithuania on foot in 1944 or 1945 (most likely 1944, as that was the window of opportunity). My grandfather was separated from them. I'm not sure where he was but he stayed in Lithuania and the family thought they would be reunited soon. That never happened. They likely expected to return as soon as the war was over and Russia retreated, which didn't happen.

I had heard stories from my grandmother of a large group of people travelling together through field after field, praying



Chris located the house his mother grew up in before she left Lithuania.

that they were not seen and would be safe. They were travelling toward Germany. They ended up in a displaced person's (DP) camp there—Camp 91-261 in Seligenstadt. The details of how they got to the camp are not known to me.

They came to the United States in 1948 through a sponsorship and took up residence in Brooklyn, New York.

I was born in Port Jefferson, N.Y., in 1960, the first from my mother's side of our family to be born in the U.S. My father was not Lithuanian. For a time in my life (3 years old until 8) we lived in an apartment building with my Lithuanian grandmother and her second husband, Jonas. My grandmother had met Jonas while they were in the DP camp. I spent a lot of time with my grandparents and came to know Lithuania from them. It was very clear to me that my family really missed Lithuania. I enjoyed many Lithuanian dishes and other traditional Lithuanian foods that could be found in New York, which I try to cook today. Kugelis is my favorite but I really enjoy other dishes too, like cepelinai, although I find them difficult to prepare.

My family never taught me the Lithuanian language so that they could talk about adult things without worrying about me knowing what they were saying. When I was older, a young teenager, my mother tried to teach me, but she was confused by all the rules of the Lithuanian, German and English languages that she had known, and she gave up.

While growing up, I heard many stories of how beautiful Lithuania was and how much my family missed it. My grandmother and I would go mushroom hunting and she would tell



Tiszevičius Palace and Amber Museum in Palanga. Photo: Chris Wohl

me stories of her mushroom hunting adventures in Lithuania. Those were very special times for me. When she spoke of Lithuania, she would get very melancholy and I could really see her heart was still in Lithuania. I always wanted her to go back but she never made it. She passed before Independence. I think my appreciation and love for Lithuania comes from her.

#### A Dream Revived

I had always wanted to visit Lithuania, too, but never thought I would have the opportunity. I had all but let it slip away. A couple of years ago, I went to the Indianapolis International Festival in November, not realizing that there would be a booth representing Lithuania. When I saw the booth I got excited and made it a

point to stop and talk to the person manning the booth, Sigita [ed.: Sigita Nusbaum, president of the Indianapolis Chapter of the Lithuanian American Community]. She told me about the Indianapolis Lithuanian community and invited me to the Christmas Party. I went. I was welcomed and enjoyed the traditional Lithuanian foods I had not enjoyed in a long time.

Fast forward a bit. Going to several Lithuanian events, I learned of the Indianapolis Lithuanian School, where I joined the adult class. My teacher Daiva teaches many things: not only language, but culture—and even the traditional Easter egg-decorating methods. Once I became a part of this community, I got the courage to start planning a trip.

It would be the trip of a lifetime—three generations going to Lithuania for the first time. I knew I had an aunt through marriage in Lithuania. While going through my mother's effects, I was also reminded of my mother's half sister, whom she met during her only trip back to Lithuania in 1995. So I had family to



Cathedral Square in Vilnius. Photo: Chris Wohl



The restored Trakai Castle on Lake Galvė. Photo: Chris Wohl

meet and was excited to meet them. I had the address for one of my aunts, and she helped get the address for my other aunt. I contacted both aunts and they seemed eager to meet me, my wife, daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter. We were excited to meet them and a bit nervous because they did not speak English and I was still learning Lithuanian.

### The Trip of a Lifetime

What an incredible trip we had! My travelling family and I saw a lot of Lithuania and we had a wonderful visit. We travelled around most of the country and tasted many Lithuanian dishes. We visited many well-known places including Trakai Castle, the Hill of Crosses, the Amber Museum in Palanga, Nida, Kaunas and—best of all—met my aunts in Marijampolė and Alytus. We were greeted with open arms and felt right at home in both of their homes.

The first aunt (Viktorija) we visited put out a wonderful spread of meats, cheeses, breads, pastries and so much more. It was really wonderful being greeted like this. My other aunt (Juratė) also put out a spread for dinner that made us feel so welcome. At both houses we talked for hours with the help of an interpreter, who helped so much. I hope the next time we meet we won't need a translator.

A funny thing happened when we arrived at one of my aunt's residence—it turned out to be an apartment building, but all I had was a street address, with no apartment number! The building had many apartments but I did not know which one was hers. I asked a lady walking her dog but she did not know my aunt. We were ready to go door-to-door looking when we found several ladies talking and one asked if my aunt was a piano teacher. I said yes and the lady pointed up at a part of the building and said "third floor." We got there and knocked. We were greeted with hugs. We were guided into the living room and then my aunt ran out of the apartment! This seemed odd, not knowing what was going on. She returned a few minutes later with a friend's daughter who was going to interpret for us. Whew! That made it so much easier. We spent hours talking. My aunt showed me where my mother lived and where she was christened. Did I already say this was an amazing trip?

There is so much more to tell but these were some of the highlights.

I had heard stories that, before World War II started, my grandparents were opera singers. Now I am planning on singing in the Lithuanian Song Festival in Chicago this July. It seems like I am paying homage to my grandmother and honoring my family heritage.



Chris made this cross, which he left at the Hill of Crosses. Photo: Chris Wohl



Dipping a toe into the Baltic Sea. Photo: Chris Wohl.



Chris Wohl with his travelling family and his aunt Viktorija and her son.



The Lithuanian egg scratch method is used to create “margučiai,” meaning decorated eggs. This is an ancient custom that spans Eastern Europe. Traditionally in Lithuania, eggs were hard boiled with onion skins, giving the egg an orangey brown hue. Other natural dyes, such as plant leaves, were used to obtain various colors. Today, commercial dyes are used to obtain a wider variety of colors with richer hues.

I started scratching eggs more than 14 years ago. My family is very connected to our Lithuanian heritage. When my older sister decided to do a school project on a Lithuanian Easter including food and traditions, our family decided to try our hands at egg etching. I was not very good on my first attempt at the art. However, my stubborn side took over and I did not give up on etching eggs. Soon, I loved scratching eggs every Easter. I started to make my own designs in addition to using traditional themes. Now I have my own online shop and each year I make new designs for my family and the shop.

Most traditional Lithuanian egg designs reflect either nature or religion. Lithuanians were originally pagans with strong connections to the land they farmed and harvested. Traditional symbolism derived from that strong and enduring relationship with nature includes trees,

flowers, mushrooms and wheat. Christian symbols were added to egg designs once Lithuania adopted Christianity. Wayside crosses are another wonderful representation of both nature and religion.

Eggs are a universal symbol of rebirth and prosperity during the Easter season. Lithuanians have several other egg art techniques, such as “drop and pull” with melted wax and straw cutting. Games are also played with the decorated eggs. Hardboiled eggs are decorated by family members and used in egg-cracking games. Players take turns using their egg to hit another’s egg. The egg to survive the attack without cracking is considered the winner. The final survivor is the egg champion for that year (and the winner of the eggs for an Easter treat).

*Christine Luschas is the youngest of three daughters, and is the family’s egg crafter using the scratch method. She and her egg art have been featured on Martha Stewart. Her sister Carol makes traditional foods and is an avid student of Lithuanian history and language. Their mother, Elaine, creates straw ornaments that are treasured on many Christmas trees. Elaine also is an expert egg crafter using the “drop and pull” method, artistically placing melted colored wax on the egg shells to make unique and colorful designs.*

## Symbolism of Colors

- Red (raudonas)** - Beauty, love, passion, enthusiasm
- Orange (oranžinis)** - Endurance, strength, power
- Yellow (geltonas)** - Spirituality, youth, light, purity, happiness, wisdom
- Green (žalias)** - Youth, growth, renewal, freshness, hope
- Blue (mėlynas)** - Endurance, strength, power
- Purple (purpurinis)** - Patience, power, royalty
- Black (juodas)** - Eternity and death
- White (baltas)** - Purity, birth, virginity, innocence
- Brown (rudas)** - Earth

## Symbolism of Designs

- Deer** - Wealth, prosperity
- Leaves and flowers** - Life, growth
- Circles** - Protection and everlasting life, continuity and completeness, as well as the sun
- Sun** - The life-giving, all-embracing, all-renewing nature of God
- Stars and roses** - Purity, life, the giver of light, divine will of God, God’s love for humanity
- Wheat** - Bountiful harvest
- Plant symbols** - Rebirth and nature
- Leaves** - Immortality, eternal or pure love, strength and persistence
- Flowers** - Beauty and children
- Eight-pointed star** - Ancient symbol of Jesus Christ
- Dots or small circles** - Mary’s tears or the sun
- Spirals** - The mystery of life and death, as well as divinity and immortality
- Cross** - Jesus’s crucifixion

Want to learn more about Christine’s egg art?

E-mail Christine at [christine.luschas@gmail.com](mailto:christine.luschas@gmail.com)

Online egg shop: [artbythedozen.etsy.com](http://artbythedozen.etsy.com)  
 Blog: [lithuanianeggart.blogspot.com](http://lithuanianeggart.blogspot.com)  
 Easter traditions: [kofl144.weebly.com](http://kofl144.weebly.com)



# How to Make Margučiai Using the Egg-Scratching Method

By Christine Luschas



## Tools for Egg Dying

- **Eggs**  
(white works best, but you can use any color egg before dying. Different colored eggs will create a slightly different egg finish once the etching is complete)
- **Straight pin**
- **Round file**
- **Egg blower**  
(I use Aunt Marge's Egg Blower)
- **Egg dye**  
(I purchase my dye from [polishartcenter.com](http://polishartcenter.com) )
- **Vinegar**
- **Tongs**
- **Rubber band**

## Step 1 – Prepare Your Eggs

1. **Prepare the dye**  
Follow the instructions on your dye packet to prepare your dyes. Once your dye preparation is complete and at room temperature, it is time to dye the eggs.
2. **Hollow your egg**  
Prick a hole in the top and bottom of the egg with a straight pin. Use your round file to enlarge each pin prick. Use your egg blower to pump the contents from the egg into a bowl. You can save these contents and use them later for baking.
3. **Wash and dry the egg**  
Rinse the inside of your egg with warm water. Once again, use the egg blower to empty all contents from the egg. Allow the egg to dry.
4. **Dye the egg**  
Once the egg is dry, insert it into the dye. I use a set of tongs with a rubber band around the handle to keep the entire egg submerged as long as required for an intense color.
5. **Dry the dyed egg**  
Once the color on the egg reaches an intensity of your liking, remove the egg from the dye bath with the tongs. Place the egg on some toweling or on an egg pegboard to dry. Make sure you place the egg down with one hole on the bottom. This allows the egg to dry on both the outside and inside.
6. **Repeat the process**  
You may repeat this process with as many eggs as you wish. The egg dye is very strong and I dye several eggs with one dye. You may also cover the dye with an air-tight lid and reuse the dye later. However, over time, the dye will lose its potency.



## Tools For Egg Etching

- Dyed hollow egg
- Pencil
- Box cutter
- Eraser
- Towel

## Step 2 – Etch Your Eggs

1. **Prepare your work surface**  
Once the egg is completely dry, it is time to begin etching. I use two tea towels as my working surface. This surface provides a buffer against cracking the egg as you apply pressure during the etching process.
2. **Select and sketch your design**  
Choose a design you wish to etch. In the photo, you can see that I decided to etch three daisies. Use a pencil to draw your design onto the egg prior to etching. You'll erase the pencil marks later. You can divide your egg into different sections, based on your design. The Internet is a good source for suggestions on designs should you need some creative ideas.
3. **Position your box cutter**  
Once you've drawn your design outline on the egg, hold your box cutter like a pencil, as shown in the photo. Holding the box cutter in this fashion allows you to scrape the egg for a clean line.
4. **Begin scratching**  
Glide the box cutter across the egg along the lines of your design to remove color, being sure not to dig into the shell. Vary pressure on the blade depending on whether you want your lines to be light and thin or more white and thick. Lighter strokes will produce a shading effect, wonderful for petals, etc.
5. **Remove pencil marks**  
Once you have finished scratching, use an eraser to remove any leftover pencil marks from your sketch. Do not press too hard or you may remove some of the dye from the egg.
6. **Admire**  
Congratulations, you just etched your first egg!

# Through Mother's Eyes: The Diaspora Diary of Rozė Kriaučiūnas Part 3



B-17 Flying Fortresses from the 398th Bombardment Group fly a bombing run to Neumünster, Germany, on April 13, 1945. On May 8, Germany surrendered, and Victory in Europe Day was declared.

April 1, 1945

I awoke early on Easter morning. I had been dreaming of pleasant people dear to my heart. I dreamt of Mykolas and our fellow Gustonians and of some soldiers and many Lithuanians. Unexpectedly, for the first time I dreamed that Mykolas, whom I have not seen for eight months, returned. We greeted one another and kissed as tears of joy flowed down our cheeks. His hair had thinned, but otherwise he did not look too bad. I asked him where he had been these past days, and he replied that he had been herding the sheep of Pietenfeld and was living very well. I would have had so much ... [illegible text] but a barking dog shattered the dream. I was so angry at the dog, so sorry that the dream ended unfinished.

Maybe Mykolas really is somewhere close by and is also unhappy and worried about us? Being all alone, he naturally must be worse off and even sadder than I

am. I can at least talk to the children and share my feelings, and the time passes more quickly. Why has God punished him by separating him from his family, which he loved so much, and which loved him? True, many times he was too harsh with me. He often found fault and said things that hurt me. At times he did not even trust me. He considered me too stingy, disorganized, and perhaps even messy. I don't think that I am like that at all. I am always ready to help the less fortunate or a neighbor in trouble. Yes, I do try to economize and am as careful with others' belongings as I would be with my own. He did not know, or perhaps did not want to know, my innermost being. He did not understand me and never consoled me, though I do believe that he did love me. It pains me to think of all those unhappy days of my youth. Yet I am not angry at him but long for him to come back. Perhaps this separation will change him,

and together we can create a new and better life.

April 4, 1945

Daily, the sounds of the artillery are growing louder. Every day larger flocks of birds of steel fly overhead, scaring the peaceful inhabitants and destroying their homes. Ingolstadt [Germany; about 15 mi. from Eichstätt] has been burning all day today. Who knows, maybe tomorrow or the day after, the British bombs will be falling on our village? Maybe then my longing for my husband will cease, and I will never see my homeland again. More than one Lithuanian may find eternal rest here in Bavaria.

April 8, 1945

The forces fighting Nazi Germany keep advancing. Once again we are about to come face to face with another army, a new government. Perhaps here too there

will be battles, and some of us who live here may not survive them. The specter of death looms ever nearer. Three of us have not had a chance to go to confession in Germany. There is a Lithuanian priest in Eichstätt, and today we went there to confess. We arrived quite early by train. The Lithuanian Mass was at 9 a.m. It was very cold. Today happened to be the occasion of the children's First Holy Communion. They were all dressed in white and lined up near the altar holding tall candles. The bishop said Mass, gave a sermon, and distributed Holy Communion. From the young hearts of the children resounded a beautiful hymn to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Many years ago I too was a little child. I too waited to receive Jesus for the first time into my heart. Today I am preparing to receive Jesus for the first time in a foreign land, but He is the same as always. The people gathered, the priest came out of the sacristy to say Mass, and the students of the Lithuanian seminary began

to sing the Lithuanian hymn "Let Us Fall on Our Knees." I felt as if I were back in Lithuania among my own people. Not for long, however. As I walked out of the church, I again saw only strangers and heard just the sounds of a foreign tongue.

April 14, 1945

It is already spring here. In Lithuania it is only toward the end of May that it gets to be this warm. Here the fields are already green, and the grass is quite tall. It's warm and beautiful. But it is impossible to rejoice in the beauty of spring because as soon as the droning sounds of the bombers are heard overhead, all thoughts of spring vanish, and everyone looks up with fear at the ominous shapes in the blue.

Today those "birds" visited our village. They began to strafe people traveling on the road and working in the fields. We all ran to the barn. My landlords were very frightened. They wept and cried out for God to help them. I was calm at first but

before long also began to tremble in fear. Elvyra and Romualdas were still at the school, and the planes were flying ever closer. They finally came running during a lull in the bombing, and together we all ran to take cover in the barn. People came rushing back from the fields with their cattle and reported that several oxen and horses had been hit. One man was dead, and one car was burning. It wouldn't have taken much more for us too to have perished. How terrible it would be to be laid to rest in this hilly foreign land forever.

The front lines are nearing daily. Each day we face the possibility of a more terrible fate. Will we survive the gunfire? Will we face starvation? Such anxious thoughts keep recurring in my mind, and nightmares torment me at night.

Last night I dreamed that Mykolas had returned and began to scold me. I can still recall vividly his harsh words from the past. It is not surprising that even now in my dreams he reproaches me without cause while I cry and cry... I woke up all



Soldiers of the 55th Armored Infantry Battalion and a tank of the 22nd Tank Battalion move through a smoke filled street in Wernberg, Germany.

cried out with an uneasy heart. For a long time memories of our past life kept going round and round in my mind. All those hours spent crying. And now we have been parted by Fate. Perhaps temporarily, perhaps forever.

The cataclysm of war will end. Lithuania's scattered sons and daughters will return to their homeland and once again strive to rebuild their beloved country from its ruins. I believe that we will survive, and together we can start again to live a good life based on the principles of love of God and of neighbor.

April 25, 1945

We could hear the artillery all night long. The street resounded with the rumbling of various motor vehicle engines, one louder than the other. I did not sleep much. The gunfire sounded closer toward morning. There were not many German troops in our village, and they began to retreat. Ordinary people were trying to decide what to do with their possessions and waited anxiously for the arrival of the anti-German forces.

We too had gathered our possessions and awaited the uncertain, and thus terrifying, outcome. People were saying that many villages had been set on fire by the gunfire. It was clear that we would be seeing the victors today. Some Lithuanian refugees came running and asked me to prepare some small identifying badge-like symbols consisting of our national colors, but no green fabric was available. I found some yarn and began to knit the tricolor badges for them and for us. Bombshells were now exploding very close. Villagers carrying their valued possessions were running to seek shelter in basements. It was impossible to tell which place would be the safest, which house would be spared by the bombs. My landlords ran to a neighbor's basement. Without lengthy considerations, we too decided to go there in a little while.

When we began to eat, the bombshells began to explode almost upon us. We took off for the neighbor's basement but stopped abruptly when there was an explosion very close. Little Vitalija began



Soldiers of the U.S. 3rd Infantry Division in Nuremberg on April 20, 1945.

to cry. When she calmed down, we ran to the basement. There were people there already. We chose a part of the basement that was farther from all the Germans and waited for either death or better days. It was 12:30 p.m. The gunfire was so intense that it seemed as if our village had become hell itself. People began to pray and say the rosary. I too silently called upon the Blessed Virgin Mary to help and protect us. Vitalija was so frightened that she kept repeating, "I'm scared! I'm scared!" The hellish noise lasted an hour or more. Finally, there was silence.

The bolder ones among us went outside to take a look and reported that the church and several houses had been damaged and that the village was burning. The fire was not near our house. We were still safe. Then shots rang out again, sounding even more frightening. The terrified people were shouting out loud the words of the "Hail Mary," and the children were screaming. When the gunfire ended and we went outside, we saw new fires, this time close by.

The men ran off to try to extinguish the flames, but new gunshots sent us all back to the basement. The third round of gunfire lasted longer. We all thought that the bombshells would hit us and maybe

start a fire. I imagined all sorts of terrible things. Could it be that we were fated to die among the ruins of this house? All this time little Vitalija kept shouting, "I'm scared!" I tried to console her, but now I too was afraid. Once more we heard the sound of planes overhead. This was followed not by the sound of exploding bombs but of approaching tanks. The men soon reported that American tanks were on the road.

We ran outside rejoicing and still unable to believe that perhaps we would no longer have to tremble in fear. Soon the first army jeep turned into the village. The people tied on white scarves and ran to meet them. The American soldiers climbed out smiling and stepped forward very tentatively. Apparently, elsewhere they had been greeted with bullets. No one in our village put up a fight. Soon many more military vehicles arrived. The soldiers looked very good and well-to-do. They stopped and began to snack on expensive cookies, chocolates, and oranges. They did not rush off to seek food like the German soldiers. Our house was soon commandeered by several soldiers. They left one room for our landlords and us.

*To be continued in the May issue.*

# The Singing Twosome

Introducing the smallest choir registered for the 10th North American Lithuanian Song Festival



Len Barcoucky and Vytas Mickus, the twosome who will represent the choir "Bočiai" in the 10th North American Lithuanian Song Festival.

*By Jolanta Urbietienė Translated by Rita Giedraitienė*

This summer, on the weekend of July 3-5, the 10th North American Lithuanian Song Festival will take place in Chicago. A record number of choirs (64) have registered to participate. "Volungė," from Toronto, Ont., has the distinction of being the choir bringing the most members, more than 80 strong. It is

also celebrating its 40th year in existence. However, not all participating choirs can claim similar numbers. For some, this Song Festival is their first experience singing in such an arena. Still other choirs comprise a dozen members ... or just two.

The choir "Bočiai" ("Forefathers") piqued my interest when I noticed on the Song Festival's website that they were the smallest choir registered to participate. Specifically, this choir from Pittsburgh, Pa., led by Len Barcoucky and Nancy Binkney, will have only two of its members singing at the Festival. In my quest to learn more about the choir, I initially searched the almighty Internet, but came up empty. Next, I contacted Len, the choir's manager, and before long he and the other Festival participant from "Bočiai," Vytas Mickus, graciously agreed to tell me about this unique choir, young not only in years of existence but, most importantly, in spirit.

In my search through the archives of past Lithuanian Song Festivals, initially known as Song Days, I found that in the early 1900s attempts were made to regularly organize gatherings where Lithuanian songs were to be performed, though results of such efforts were inconsistent. Lithuanians in Pennsylvania, however, were successful in organizing "musical gatherings" more often than other Lithuanian "colonies" in America. This coal-mining area attracted many early immigrant Lithuanians, who worked tirelessly for their wages under difficult conditions, yet were determined to maintain their Lithuanian identity and culture. Often, it was through singing songs in their native language that many such immigrants hoped to keep the connection to Lithuania alive. This fact came up in my conversation with Len and Vytas as they related how "Bočiai" was born.

Since the middle of the 20th century, Lithuanians living in Pittsburgh had participated yearly in a local folk festival that showcased various cultures. Not long ago, though, the Pittsburgh Lithuanian community realized they no longer had a folk group that could sing or dance and proudly represent this tiny Baltic nation in any festival. "For many years," said Len and Vytas, "the Lithuanian Citizens Society of Western Pennsylvania supported the folk dance group 'Neris' (named after a beautiful river in Lithuania), which was composed of a children's group and an adult group. But when both groups disbanded, one for lack of interest and the other due to aging dancers, we realized that the longstanding tradition of participating in Pittsburgh's cultural festival was in serious jeopardy."

And so Len Barcoucky came to the rescue. An active volunteer in the Lithuanian community who, according to wife Barbara, has "no musical talent but loves music," Len took the initiative to organize a singing group in 2012 with the support of the same Lithuanian Citizens Society of Western Pennsylvania. In May, 2012, this small singing group, which had named itself "Bočiai," performed in Pittsburgh's folk festival in place of the dance groups, and the participation tradition remained intact. This spring, "Bočiai" will celebrate its third year in existence.

Len and Vytas have been part of "Bočiai" since its inception.

Today, the choir has about 20 members who come to rehearsals from Pittsburgh and surrounding areas; of these, 12-15 perform at various functions. Though the average age of its members is about 50 years old, “Bočiai” has, or has had, retirees as well as teenagers among its ranks. Asked if any of the most recently arrived immigrants from Lithuania, known to many as the “third wave,” have joined the choir, Len and Vytas state that there are few in the area and none are currently members. Most choir members are the grandchildren or great-grandchildren of immigrants who came during the last century or after WWII. In light of this, the language of choice for communication among choir members is no longer Lithuanian, though they are quick to point out that improving their language skills is very important. “We try to take advantage of different opportunities to speak Lithuanian, whether it is by singing Christmas hymns or belting out songs at a bonfire, attending organized Lithuanian community events or participating in language classes.”

The song repertoire of “Bočiai” is varied. Many songs have been passed down from generation to generation, such as “Lietuva Brangi,” “Buvo Gera Gaspadinė,” “Ko Liūdi, Berželi?” and “Pjoviau Šieną.” The latter song is especially popular and eagerly awaited during choir performances, as audience participation and theatrical gesturing is involved. Songs learned for the 10th North American Lithuanian Song Festival this summer will now become part of the performance repertoire as well. The choir’s conductor and primary accompanist is Nancy Binkney, with assistance from choir members Bill Količius and Maryanne Best. And, though some members have sung in church or school choirs and play an instrument or two, all are, according to Len and Vytas, “enthusiasts who love music and the Lithuanian language.”

Neither Len nor Vytas has a profession related to music. Len was born in Pennsylvania and is a journalist; he worked for 43 years in Pennsylvania and New York in his field and has written two books about the history of the city of Pittsburgh. Vytas was born in Chicago, grew up in Cicero and attended Lithuanian school on Saturdays. He was part of the children’s choir that performed in the 1971 Song Festival in Chicago and the 1978 Song Festival in Toronto. After graduating from the University of Illinois-Chicago (which, incidentally, is where this year’s Song Festival will take place), Vytas moved to Pennsylvania for a job with Westinghouse. Here he works as a mechanical engineer and consultant in the area of nuclear reactors. Nevertheless, music has always been an important part of Len’s and Vytas’s lives. Len stated that he will always remember his grandmother Rozė’s voice as she prayed and sang. Vytas said that music helped him survive tragic events in his life; during the span of one year he buried his wife, daughter and father. He found solace and strength in prayers and hymns and songs. “That’s how Lithuanians are molded—singing is part of our being,” he says. “I remember songs resonating at almost every family gathering as I was growing up.”

Thus, on July 5, 2015, at the University of Illinois-Chicago Pavilion, Len and Vytas will join more than 1,500 singers as they participate in the Song Festival. It makes no difference that only the two of them will represent the choir “Bočiai” from Pittsburgh. On that day they will be part of a bigger Lithuanian family: a family united by song, a family that will continue the singing traditions passed down through generations, a family that embodies the spirit of Lithuania.

*Jolanta Urbietienė provides media relations for the 10th North American Lithuanian Song Festival.*



Pittsburgh’s “Bočiai” choir.

# The Long Road to Freedom

## Milestones and Memories

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### An Unforgettable Year

By *Vitalia Dunčia*

It is a very daunting task to remember all of the events that occurred 25 years ago. But 1990 was an unforgettable year for every Lithuanian.

In 1990, I worked as a pediatrician-neonatologist in Lithuania. The routine in the hospital was pretty much the same: there was a lack of medical gloves for the staff; there were not enough drugs for the patients; we kept strict control over how much toilet paper was dispensed, as it too was in short supply; and all of the rooms were cold. But outside the hospital walls, one could sense changes in the air. People under Soviet occupation (including those in the Eastern Bloc countries as well) started to regain hope about becoming free of Soviet occupation and influence.

Just a few years before, the Communist party controlled every part of our lives: the government was the sole employer and it controlled the news media. There was a wide net of spies, which made it easy to intimidate and control people who stepped out of line. The lack of everyday living necessities made people into slaves with a subservient mentality. For example, my hospital would from time to time receive from the local government authority a “talonas” (a voucher enabling one to buy a commodity such as a sofa, an iron or a bike) and the hospital administration would decide which person had earned the privilege to buy the “luxury” item. People used to laughingly recite these lines of poetry:

Ačiū partijai, tėvynei,  
už taloną patalynei!  
Jei dar rankšluostėlį gausiu—  
visą amžių jai tarnausiu!

English translation:

Thank-you Party and Soviet Union,  
for a bed sheet voucher!  
If, additionally I were to receive  
a towel—  
Then I will serve you for the  
rest of my days!

Of course, they would only recite this amongst friends, since one could end up in prison for saying this.

Those who openly wished for Lithuania’s freedom or dared to show the flag of pre-war Lithuania were jailed or sent as psychiatric patients to special hospitals where they were given mind-altering drugs for their “condition.” And sometimes people would just disappear without a trace and nobody would dare to ask any questions.

But around 1987 we started to see from Moscow one radically different TV program. We could not believe that the creators of this show were not jailed the next day. At that time, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev wanted to demonstrate to the world that he was introducing more democracy in the USSR. In the beginning people wondered if those programs of “introducing democracy” weren’t created with the intent of provoking people into taking action, to later on be framed and arrested as “enemies of the people.”

Despite initial suspicions, the bravest souls went forth into the streets of Vilnius with Lithuanian flags and began singing the prewar Lithuanian national anthem. And nothing happened to them! When people felt that the state had loosened its grip on the populace, they became even more encouraged and started to dream and outwardly talk about freedom. People

organized the movement called “Sąjūdis.” New political parties were created as well as newspapers, TV and radio programs. Every Lithuanian city organized its own chapter of “Sąjūdis.” Most people became part of the “singing revolution.” Lithuanians elected new representatives who promised us to vote for independence.

On March 11, 1990, Lithuania declared independence from the Soviet Union and officially resurrected the State of Lithuania. It looked like an unbelievable miracle had just taken place and the people were so happy. Many of them shed tears of joy in disbelief—almost nobody believed that such a miracle was possible in their lifetime.

However, in a few days, the Soviet Union announced that Lithuania’s declaration of independence was invalid. The Soviet Union started an economic blockade against Lithuania: shortages of gas, oil, drugs and food became very acute. Factories and public transportation came to a halt. The Soviet Union was trying to teach Lithuania a lesson via economic deprivation and the secret police were working overtime to incite racial hatred amongst the different ethnic minorities. They were trying to return Lithuania to the status quo. However, the Soviets miscalculated: the Lithuanians were prepared to suffer for their freedom.

As mentioned earlier, all news was still controlled by the Soviet Union; we did not know what was going on in other parts of the USSR. In 1990, somebody secretly smuggled into Lithuania a video from Georgia, showing how on April 9, 1989, Soviet troops broke up a peaceful demonstration at the government build-



Photographs from the exhibition  
"To Freedom" by Vytautas Daraškevičius.

### April 1, 1990

While senior Soviet leaders assured Lithuania that military force would not be used, more Soviet military vehicles rolled through the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius, a day after Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev warned the Baltic republic to annul its declaration of independence.

### March 11, 1990

Vilnius. Removing Soviet symbolism from the building of the Supreme Council after the adoption of the Act on the Restoration of an Independent State of Lithuania.



### March 17, 1990

At the rally in support of independence of the Republic of Lithuania next to the National Library.



### April 2, 1990

In a conciliatory gesture, the president of Lithuania invited Kremlin officials to discuss the republic's secession drive.

### April 3, 1990

A delegation from Lithuania met with an advisor to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

### April 4, 1990

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker met in Washington with his Soviet counterpart, Eduard Shevardnadze, for three days of talks on the Lithuanian crisis and arms control.

### April 7, 1990

More than 3,000 people attended a rally in support of Lithuanian independence at Vingis Park in Vilnius.

### April 8, 1990

Soviet paratroopers unsuccessfully tried to seize the Spaudos rūmai (Press House).

### April 13, 1990

Mikhail Gorbachev and Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers Nikolai Ryzhkov issued an ultimatum that required Lithuania to rescind its declaration of independence within two days or face economic blockades.

### April 17, 1990

President Bush warned the Soviet Union against carrying out an economic blockade of Lithuania, hinting at "appropriate responses."

### April 28, 1990

Vilnius police academy established.

### April 11, 1990

Kazimira Prunskienė led the new government in the oath of allegiance for the first time since the declaration of restoration of independence.

### April 14, 1990

Lithuanian officials acknowledged that the economic blockade threatened by the Kremlin could result in huge layoffs.

### April 18, 1990

The Soviet Union shut off a crude oil pipeline to Lithuania's Mazeikiai refinery with crude oil, beginning the economic blockade

### April 19, 1990

The Soviets extend the economic blockade, severely reducing the flow of natural gas to Lithuania.

### April 1990

Vilnius. Rally in Vingis Park against economic blockade.



ing in Tbilisi. It vividly showed how Soviet troops killed women and children with their trowels. Twenty Georgians were killed and hundreds wounded or poisoned. After watching this secret underground video, some Lithuanians realized that Soviet "democracy" did not change much. Lithuanians began to contemplate if there was some sort of "surprise" awaiting them also in the months ahead.

Lithuania experienced so many changes in a matter of only a few years. I am very grateful that I was able to live during those tumultuous years in Lithuania, which witnessed such a dramatic change in the course of its history.

*Vitalia Duncia lives in suburbs of Philadelphia with her family and works in the healthcare field.*

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## Grybukai: A Nature-Inspired Easter Dessert

By Jana Sirusaitė Motivans



Easter is a special event in Lithuania. As in other largely Catholic countries, the period of Lent preceding Easter was a very solemn time, filled with prayer and self-reflection. The Lenten fast was strictly observed, meaning that no eggs, no meat, nor any rich foods of any kind were allowed.

The Easter feast was eagerly anticipated, not only as the celebration of the Resurrection, but also as a celebration of nature's coming back to life after a long, dark winter. In Lithuania, our pagan traditions are often intertwined with our Catholic ones.

The Easter meal is a lavish one, intended to help people "recover" from Lent. The meal usually includes ham or lamb, maybe some sausages, sauerkraut and cabbage with mushrooms, potatoes, beets and, of course, eggs. Easter is also a time to enjoy a variety of nature-inspired Lithuanian desserts, such as beržo šaka (a cake shaped like a birch log), grybukai

(mushroom-shaped cookies) or ežiukas (a cake shaped like a hedgehog).

For our Easter table, I prepared an ežiukas and grybukai. The ežiukas cake can be made with any recipe for chocolate cake and frosting. Simply bake the cake in a round cake pan, then cut out an oval shape. Use the scraps to build it up on top for a slightly rounded hedgehog-like shape. Frost the cake with chocolate frosting and use almond slivers for the quills, and chocolate chips for the eyes. Very cute and not very difficult.

The grybukai, on the other hand, take some time and effort, but the results are well worth it. This is a wonderful family project to prepare for Easter. The cookies look charming and keep well. The recipe on the next page comes from Joana Adomonis, a friend of mine in Montreal.

*Jana Sirusaitė Motivans is Bridges' food editor.*

# a taste of lithuania

## Grybukai (mushroom-shaped cookies)

Yield: about 40 cookies

### DOUGH INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup butter, room temperature
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 4-6 cups flour

### ICING INGREDIENTS

#### White icing

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 3 teaspoons lemon juice
- 3 teaspoons milk

#### Brown icing

- 2 cups chocolate chips
- 3-4 tablespoons milk

Additional ingredient: poppy seeds

### TO MAKE DOUGH:

1. Using a mixer, cream butter and sugar together in a very large bowl.
2. In a small bowl, pour in 1/2 cup honey and add the cloves, cinnamon, ginger and lemon juice. Mix well, then add this to the butter/sugar mixture in the large bowl. Mix together.
3. In another small bowl, mix 1/2 cup sour cream and the baking soda. Mix well. Add to the large bowl and mix together.
4. In a third bowl, mix 1 cup of flour with baking powder. Mix well. Add to large bowl. Mix all ingredients together.
5. Add flour 1 cup at a time, mixing with a wooden spoon. After about 3 cups of flour the dough will become very thick and too difficult to mix. Transfer the dough onto a clean counter that has been dusted with flour. Add flour a handful at a time and knead it into the dough until the dough does not stick to your fingers or counter top. The dough should be a workable consistency to be able to shape it into mushroom caps and stems. Depending on heat and humidity, the amount of flour varies. I used 4 cups when I last made it.
6. Wrap dough in plastic and refrigerate 2 hours or overnight.

### TO MAKE THE MUSHROOMS:

1. Take the dough out of the refrigerator and unwrap. It should be cold and firm.
2. Start by making the mushroom caps. Take a small piece of dough and flatten it into a circle. Keep it somewhat thick, not too thin, and indented on the bottom. Make it look like a mushroom! Make about 35 caps, and then make the stems. The stems should also be somewhat thick and not too long. Short and squat stems keep their shape while baking better than long, slender ones, which tend to flatten as they bake. Make an equal number of stems and caps.
3. Place the shapes on a baking sheet that has been lined with parchment paper. Bake at 350°F for 10-15 minutes, depending on the size of your shapes.
4. While the cookies bake, make the white icing by mixing the powdered sugar with the lemon juice and milk. The icing should be smooth and somewhat thick—it should not drip. Once the baked cookies are cool enough to handle but still soft, make an indent in the underside of the mushroom caps using your finger or a spoon. Glue the stems into the caps using the white icing. Carefully arrange them in egg cartons or along the edge of a baking sheet and let them dry.
5. Make the brown icing by melting the chocolate chips in a double boiler or the microwave, adding enough milk to make a smooth mixture. Again, this icing should be somewhat thick and not drippy. When the cookies are firm and the icing “glue” has set, carefully dunk the top of each mushroom cap into the chocolate to cover it smoothly. Set the mushrooms down carefully in the egg cartons or along the edge of a baking sheet to dry.
6. When the chocolate caps have dried, the last step is to decorate the stems. Use the white icing to coat each stem, then dip the bottoms lightly into a small bowl of poppy seeds. Let the mushrooms dry again in the egg cartons or along the edge of a baking sheet.
7. When the icing has completely dried, arrange the grybukai in a basket and admire them. They will look beautiful on your Easter table, and they taste good too!



# Beneath the Feet of a Lithuanian Fireman

Aidas Ardzijauskas Claims Victory in New York's Ultramarathon

By Deivis Pavasaris



Ardzijauskas' final result – 667 miles in the 2015 10-day New York Sri Chinmoy ultramarathon. Photo: D. Pavasaris

Every spring in April, for 18 years now and counting, Flushing Meadows Corona Park in New York welcomes the famous Sri Chinmoy Self-Transcendence Ultramarathon. This April, the 10-day race was challenged by Vilnius fireman Aidas Ardzijauskas, who first entered the American world of running by conquering the cross-country L.A. – N.Y. route last summer, while legendary ultramarathon runner Rimas Jakelaitis, now living in New York, entered the six-day run.

Ardzijauskas had a really strong start. On the very first day, he ran 86 miles. He attempted to keep the same pace on day two as well, despite a heavy downpour and enormous winds. Eventually though, the bad weather took its toll and put him behind with a few injuries. Due to swelling in his right foot, Ardzijauskas tried to favor it by putting more pressure on his left leg. That, however, resulted in excruciating left knee pain. There were moments when the runner thought his race might be premature over. He was forced to reduce his speed and change his strategy to allow his body to get more rest. Competitors took advantage of the situation, and by day three Ardzijauskas had fallen to 11th place. It took enormous strength and determination to continue the painful fight. On day six, stress and injuries forced Czech runner Atmavir Spacil—who was in the lead and favored to win—out of the race. Although he had successfully completed seven 3,000 km+ mile ultramarathons in the past,

Spacil managed to take a mere 16th spot at Flushing Meadows.

Ardzijauskas gained great benefit from the experience and advice of a fellow Lithuanian, Rimas Jakelaitis, who holds multiple ultramarathon trophies and records. Jakelaitis made a last-minute decision to enter the six-day race after learning about Ardzijauskas' participation. Back in 2001, Jakelaitis completed this same Sri Chinmoy race and achieved a record 901 miles; he continues to hold the record to this day.

A systematic approach enabled Ardzijauskas to rise from the ashes and attack the race. He kept increasing his distance with every remaining day. On day six, he achieved 62 miles; day seven, 70 miles; day eight, 77 miles; and day nine, 78 miles. The determined Lithuanian managed to make up for the lost time. On day nine, he caught up with Baladev Saraz of Slovakia and started to build up a safe distance ahead of him. With six hours of the ultramarathon remaining on day 10, Ardzijauskas was 20 miles ahead of the closest competitor. There was no doubt who was about to become the winner of the race. His final result—667 miles!

As Ardzijauskas emphasized to the American press after the race, he attributed the win to team effort and support. Without the strong Lithuanian team behind him, Ardzijauskas would not have won the race or achieved the result he did. The runner expressed his sincere gratitude to all team members and especially to Jakelaitis, who not only ran the six-day ultramarathon for a third-place win, but also became Ardzijauskas' coach, trainer and strategist. Ardzijauskas also thanked the local Lithuanian community members Valdas and Aušra Buožiai as well as Lithuanian Athletic Union of North America Chair of the North-eastern region Deivis Pavasaris, who hosted and took care of him during the race and his visit to U.S. this time.



"Coach" Rimas Jakelaitis (left) and Aidas Ardzijauskas. Photo: D. Pavasaris

# our community

## U.S. Lithuanian Communities Celebrate Independence

### San Francisco



The San Francisco community gathered for performances by the children of the Genys Lithuanian school, a screening of the film "The Invisible Front," and a workshop and cartoons in Lithuanian for the children. Photo: Jurgita Mažeika



### Kansas City

Elizabeth Woods, a member of Aidas, the Kansas City Lithuanian Community's folk dance group, shares a smile at the Independence Day celebration at the Wyandotte County Historical Museum in Kansas.

### Chicago



Čikagos Litanistinė mokykla (Chicago Lithuanian School) celebrated Lithuania's "birthday" and Valentine's Day together, with the children waving hearts in the Lithuanian flag colors, then holding hands and marching to the hall for a gala concert and birthday cake.



### Palo Alto

During the Lithuanian Cultural Evening at Stanford University to celebrate 25 years of independence, historian Dr. Violeta Davoliūtė (Vilnius University) gave an overview of the various ways Lithuanians resisted Soviet rule during the second half of the 20th century, highlighting how basketball was one of the forms of cultural resistance. Other guests included Marius Markevičius, who spoke after the screening of his film, *The Other Dream Team*, and Lithuanian honorary consul Dennis Garrison.

### Nantucket



The Nantucket Lithuanian community gathered for the first time to celebrate Lithuania's two independence days.

### Seattle



Seattle's traditional Lithuanian Independence Day Celebration was held in the city's Latvian Cultural Center. Photo: Ingrida Misevičienė

### Philadelphia

Philadelphia *Inquirer* Worldview columnist Trudy Rubin was keynote speaker at the Lithuanian Independence Celebration on March 1, 2015, at the Lithuanian Music Hall in Philadelphia. Participants braved a snowstorm to attend the event and enjoy a pre-program cepelinai lunch and live music by the Laisvė choir.



## Toms River

The Central New Jersey Lithuanian Community hoisted the tricolor over the Ocean County administrative building in Toms River, N.J. After singing the national anthem the group escaped the cold in the Ocean County Library, enjoying the Vytautas Landsbergis movie "Trispalvos," about the Lithuanian partisans.



## Elizabeth



The Lithuanian community in Elizabeth, N.J. marked the anniversary of independence in with a Mass and special visit from Lithuania's Minister of Foreign Affairs Linas Linkevičius.

## Central New Jersey



The Central New Jersey community welcomed Lithuanian Consul General in New York Julius Pranevičius to their Independence celebration. Dance group Viesulas and children's ensemble Spindulėlis performed.

## Long Island



On Saturday, February 21, 2015, the Eastern Long Island district of the Lithuanian American Community held a basketball tourney and Independence Day celebration to kick off the Kazickas Family Foundation and NBA project, "The Power of Basketball," which aims to help Lithuanian children, to promote employment, to reduce hatred, violence and bullying, and to help athletes with disabilities.

## New York

On March 10, 2015, at New York's Saint Peter's Church, U.S. Secretary of State's Special Advisor on Baltic Affairs, Paul Goble, spoke about how March 11, 1990, changed the world. Lithuanian Consul General in New York, Julius Pranevičius, noted Lithuania's achievements over the last 25 years and the role the Lithuanian American Community played in the liberation of Lithuania and the creation of a modern state. Pianist Andrius Žlabys played works of Mozart and Čiurlionis and opera singer Kristina Malinauskaitė sang works by Lithuanian composers accompanied by maestro Christopher Fecteau.



## Brooklyn



Annunciation of the Virgin Mary parish celebrated Independence on February 21, 2015, by highlighting the 10th North American Lithuanian Song Festival, to be held in Chicago in July. Their concert featured a jazz ensemble from the Berklee College of Music fronted by Lithuanian singer Simona Minns.

# Second Meeting of New York Lithuanian Professionals Hosted by Design Republic



Econophysics expert Prof. Vygintas Gontis from Vilnius presented an analysis of the recent economic development of the Baltics.



Guests included "The Invisible Front" producer Vincas Sruoginis (second from right) and Kazickas Family Foundation president, Juratė Kazickas (right).

The Lithuanian-American Community (LAC) New York District organized the second gathering of New York Lithuanian Professionals (NYLP) on March 10, 2015, at architecture and design firm Design Republic. The venue was provided courtesy of Inga Krulienė, a successful Lithuanian professional and a partner at Design Republic.

The meeting featured a discussion with an econophysics expert Vygintas Gontis on the topic "Economic Development of the Baltic States Confirms Benefits of Euro." Prof. Gontis is a principal investigator at the Institute of Theoretical Physics and Astronomy of Vilnius University and president of the Lithuanian Scientific Society. Through a scholarship of Baltic-American Freedom Foundation, he is currently conducting research at the Center for Polymer Studies at Boston University.

"It is very important to understand how we should value Lithuania's economic development and how we should predict its development over the next 10 years," Gontis says. "It's not only crucial for our individual choices, but also for our common actions, trying to preserve our nation and country." Gontis presented his analysis of the economic development of the Baltics between 1995 and 2013 in the regional and global context. For more information about econophysics and Gontis' research in Lithuanian and English, visit his website, [gontis.eu](http://gontis.eu).

The event was attended by distinguished guests Juratė Kazickas, a journalist and president of the Kazickas Family Foundation, as well as Vince Sruoginis, a producer of the film "The Invisible Front."

In his welcoming remarks, LAC NY District Chairman Algir-

das Grybas reviewed feedback received after the inaugural meeting in December 2014 and emphasized the significance of such events for the entire New York Lithuanian community. "We are highly delighted that, while still at its humble beginnings, the initiative has already received recognition and support from such renowned individuals as the former U.S. Ambassador to Lithuania Anne Derse, the president of the Kazickas Family Foundation Juratė Kazickas, the head of news at Yahoo! Studios Tony Maciulis, the New York City Mayor's scheduling coordinator Stefan Grybauskas as well as successful companies such as Design Republic," he said.

Grybas also announced a newly created NYLP LinkedIn group and an upcoming event on April 21, 2015, organized in collaboration with Global Lithuanian Leaders, a non-profit platform of Lithuania-connected international professionals building global opportunities for the Lithuanian economy. For future announcements please join the NYLP LinkedIn group at [nylp.nylithuanian.org](http://nylp.nylithuanian.org) and visit the LAC NY District website at [nylithuanian.org](http://nylithuanian.org).

A series of meetings of New York Lithuanian Professionals is a new initiative run by the LAC NY District. It aims to provide Lithuanians living in the New York metro area with networking opportunities and to encourage high-quality, topic-based discussions and exchange of professional experience and insights within the group as well as with experts in Lithuania. The events are attended primarily by individuals who have developed areas of professional expertise and can significantly contribute to the project's long-term success.

*Submitted by Sonata Brokevičiūtė*



## Omaha Lithuanians Join CultureFest 2015



(Left to right) Irena Matz, Aldona Tanner and Kristina Jonyka at the Omaha Lithuanian Women's Club display table at CultureFest 2015.

The Omaha Lithuanian Women's Club participated in CultureFest 2015 at the University of Nebraska at Omaha this year for the first time. The February 22 event was sponsored by the university's Service Learning Academy. Ethnic, student and humanitarian groups exhibited and performed.

"We were excited to showcase our Lithuanian culture," said Aldona Tanner, club president. "Our display included amber, East



Club members Sue Mehaffey (left) and Pat Fitzgerald with the Omaha Sister Cities Association display. Šiauliai is Omaha's Lithuanian sister city.

ter eggs, carved Lithuanian cross, straw ornaments and art work."

The club had brief write-ups on Lithuanian Easter egg (margučiai) decorating and the Lithuanian Christmas Eve dinner (Kūčios) table. To commemorate the January 13 Defenders of Freedom Day, the group distributed forget-me-not seed packets with a brief history of the events from that day in 1991 on the back of the packet.

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The program will be presented in both Lithuanian and English.

## current events

### In the EU and Eurozone

... The European Transport Safety Council reports that Lithuanian highways have become safer over the last decade. Lithuania tops the EU ranking for the annual reduction of highway deaths between 2004 and 2013. Lithuania had averaged 11 highway deaths annually in 2011 to 2013, compared to 48 annually in 2004 to 2006. Reductions are attributed to the widening of acceleration and deceleration lanes, reconstruction of crossroads to roundabouts and removal of dangerous objects. The EU has earmarked €1.45 billion for the Lithuanian transport sector for 2014 to 2020.

... The latest results from the Health Behavior in School-aged Children study, published recently in *The European Journal of Public Health*, revealed that Lithuanian youth are bullied at school more often than their Eastern or Western European counterparts. Lithuania recorded the highest rate of overall bullying for girls, at 52.8 percent, while the lowest was in Italy at 8.4 percent. The highest rate for more frequent bullying of boys was in Lithuania, at 28.5 percent, while the lowest was 3.9 percent in Sweden. For girls, Lithuania also recorded the highest rates of more frequent bullying at 23.4 percent while Italy had the lowest at 2.9 percent. Data for the study are collected every four years, and the new analysis spans the years 2002 to 2010.

... Lithuania's economy will grow more slowly than expected this year, partly due to recession in Russia, the International Monetary Fund said in a new forecast on April 1, 2015. It predicts that Lithuania should see growth of 2.8 percent this year, lower than the previous forecast of 3.1 percent.

... According to a Eurobarometer survey on gender equality, 49 percent of Lithuanians agree that gender inequality is widespread in Lithuania (54 percent among female respondents). The survey revealed that 76 percent of EU citizens and 72 percent of Lithuanians think that tackling inequality between men and women should be an EU priority. Of Lithuanian respondents, 64 percent said that violence against women needed urgent attention. The survey also showed that 94 percent of all Europeans agree that equality between men and women is a fundamental right, compared to 80 percent of Lithuanians.

### In the World

... In its spring 2015 special edition on unique sites and adventures, *National Geographic* named Trakai Castle among 100 unexplored destinations worth visiting. Trakai is singled out as a special tourist sight in Northern Europe for travelers interested in history.

... Lithuania and Oman have initialed an agreement on investment promotion and mutual protection aimed at creating favorable investment conditions in both countries.

... The Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian ambassadors to Sweden have attended a founding meeting of a parliamentary Baltic Network group at the Swedish Parliament. The group will exchange information about political and security processes in the Baltic States and will work to engage parliamentarians from Eastern Partnership countries.

... A new Polish-Lithuanian Chamber of Commerce has been officially launched, with the goal of helping businesses of the two countries establish and strengthen business ties and promote cross-border cooperation, trade and investment.

... According to a Reuters report, Lithuanian prosecutors have reversed their earlier decision not to restart an investigation into allegations that state security officials helped the CIA run a secret jail to interrogate al Qaeda suspects. A U.S. Senate report last year detailed a secret CIA facility that matched reports about a site in Lithuania. This is the first known case where the Senate report has resulted in an official investigation.

... A group from the U.S. House Armed Services Committee met with Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė on April 2, 2015, and pledged support to the Baltic country. William McClellan Thornberry, chairman of the Committee, and four other members went to Vilnius to discuss military, economic and energy cooperation between Lithuania and the U. S. and the current security situation in Europe and Ukraine.

... As of April 8, 2015, Lithuania has temporarily suspended granting asylum to Ukrainians seeking to escape the conflict in the country's east, anticipating that Kyiv will soon be prepared to allow displaced citizens to be resettled in safer regions of Ukraine. Seventy Ukrainian citizens applied for asylum in Lithuania in 2015 compared to about five requests in previous years. About 770,000 refugees have sought asylum elsewhere.

... Despite earlier reports that Germany had refused to sell tanks to Lithuania, the two countries are now set to negotiate the acquisition of a dozen Panzerhaubitze 2000 self-propelled artillery systems, according to Lithuanian Minister of National Defense Juozas Olekas, following a meeting with German Federal Minister of Defense Dr. Ursula von der Leyen. Von der Leyen also confirmed that Berlin would support Lithuania's bid to buy Boxer armored transport vehicles from the manufacturer.

... The Agency for Science, Innovation and Technology in Lithuania has launched a competition for students for a four-month internship with NASA Ames Research Center in Palo Alto, Calif. During the internship students from all over the world will work on projects and contribute to research and space technology development. Students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics may participate.

## Russian Relations

... Russia's top natural gas producer, Gazprom, said on April 3, 2015, that it was dropping an arbitration case it had launched against Lithuania in 2012, as it has since sold the assets that were the subject of the court case. Lithuania has limited the Russian company's ownership of gas transportation and production infrastructure in line with European Union regulations.

... Russia has launched LNG terminal and underground gas storage projects in Kaliningrad to minimize dependence on transit of Russian gas through Lithuania, according to Lithuania's Ministry of National Defense, while a nuclear power plant project there has been put on hold. Russia had earlier criticized Lithuania's goal to build an LNG facility and interfered with Europe's efforts to create a diversified natural gas market.

... Lithuanian police and border guards briefly surrounded two railway stations in Vilnius and Naujoji Vilnia on March 19, 2015, after receiving a tip suggesting that Russian troops might be heading to the country by train. Document checks revealed the passengers to be a group of maritime academy students, who were permitted to proceed to Kaliningrad.

... According to the Lithuanian State Security Department's activity report for 2014, Russia's intelligence services are using Russian journalists and representatives of non-governmental organizations to spy on and discredit the Russian opposition and to monitor visits of the Kremlin's critics to Lithuania. The report also alleges that one-third of Russian diplomats in the Baltic country were working for spy agencies and that Lithuania ousted three Russian spies last year.

... Lithuania has banned a Russian TV station for three months, saying it continues to air Kremlin "propaganda" despite repeated warnings. The Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania said RTR Planeta had violated a law that "prohibits war propaganda, hatred and inciting discord." Some Russian TV programs had been banned from being rebroadcast previously, but the April 8 ruling was the first time a station was ordered off the air completely.

## In Lithuania

... A recent SEB Lithuanian Macroeconomic Review says energy resource prices are pushing Lithuania toward deflation for a 2015 inflation forecast of -0.4 percent, and a 2016 forecast of 0.3 percent.

... The municipality of Vilnius, which owns Air Lituania, has said it can no longer sustain the airline. The Lithuanian Government has said it will not fund the airline but says having a national airline is in the interest of the country. A private investor is being sought.

... Swedbank says that residents of Lithuania last year borrowed €2,317 on average for their consumer needs, with 40 percent using the loan for household purchases or repairs and 30 percent borrowing to buy a vehicle.

... Lithuania plans to raise the minimum monthly wage by €25, from €300 to €325, beginning July 1, 2015. Currently, the minimum salary in Lithuania is the lowest of any of the three Baltic States. The minimum monthly wage in Estonia is €355; in Latvia, €320; and in Poland, €397.

... In April, a month ahead of the May 11 date that military conscription will once again begin in Lithuania, more than 200 citizens, including nine women, have already volunteered to serve their nine-month military service. Volunteers receive priority to choose their desired place of service and are entitled to 25 percent higher cumulative benefits than regular draftees.

... During the first three months of 2015, Lithuanian Customs seized smuggled and illegally carried goods worth more than €11 million. Tobacco products valued at €10.8 million accounted for the largest portion of the smuggled products. Other items seized included 220 kg of hashish at the Polish border, a dagger similar to a Japanese wakizashi, antique coins and eight tortoises. Customs officers reported 105 cases of attempted bribery.

... Lithuanian Prime Minister Algirdas Butkevicius says that draft amendments to the country's Labor Code will make the labor market more flexible and attractive to foreign direct investment. He noted that Lithuania now ranks 124th in the world in labor relations and lags well behind its neighbors. Proposals include transferring restrictions on dismissal of employees and guarantees from the Labor Code to national collective agreements, reducing the minimum period of notice on termination of employment and reducing legally required severance pay to one month's salary.

... "Kino Pavasaris," Lithuania's two-week-long film festival, celebrated 20 years during the weeks of March 19 to April 2. More than 110,000 people attended 250 screenings and events in Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai and Panevėžys, setting an all-time attendance record.

## Business

... For the sixth year in a row, Lithuania has retained its leading position in Europe in fiber-optic Internet network penetration, prompting The Next Web to call it "Europe's secret tech powerhouse." A new Rural Area Information Technology Broadband Network project, funded by the European Regional Development Fund, plans to connect 950 Lithuanian towns and villages to the network so that 100 percent of all households will have new generation Internet access by 2020.

# current events

... Reuters reports that Lithuania is considering re-exporting liquified natural gas to global markets during summer when local demand declines. Since Lithuania's LNG terminal opened, Gazprom has cut the price of gas supplies to Lithuania by 20 percent to maintain market share, while Lithuania has signed a deal to buy LNG from Norway's Statoil. Russia's price cut means LNG is no longer more expensive than pipeline gas, creating an opportunity to resell Norwegian LNG for profit to other buyers.

... Google, the global web search and digital marketing giant, has opened a sales and marketing office in Vilnius. It is their first office in the Baltics.

... Argentina recently okayed the import of dairy products from Lithuania. Previously, Chile was the only South American country importing Lithuanian dairy products.

... In February 2015, Enterprise Lithuania hosted its annual Startup Lithuania Overview, which recognized entrepreneurship in 2014. Social network Plague was recognized for the best Start of the Year. Toyze, a customized 3D game-figure printing platform, was named Breakthrough of the Year. The Hardware Solution of the Year award went to Integrated Optics for its small but powerful lasers.

... Volvorii, a startup in Lithuania that uses e-ink technology, has created a "smart shoe" that can change its colors and patterns via a smartphone app. The iShuu features panels of flexible electronic displays — the kind found on "e-paper" tablet screens and smartwatches — sewn onto the body of the shoes. The shoes are expected to retail for \$500.

... Invest Lithuania says that German firms are the largest foreign direct investors in Lithuania's manufacturing industry, contributing about €400 million to the oil, chemical, pharmaceutical and automobile sectors. There are currently 325 companies located in Lithuania with German parent companies, and around 1,200 German corporations represented in Lithuania in some way.

## Sports

... Ultramarathon runner Gediminas Grinius claimed victory at Transgrancanaria, the third event in the UltraTrail® World Tour series. Not only did he win the 125K event including 8,500m of elevation gain, but he set a new course record of 14hrs, 23mins and 41secs. Grinius had placed third, fifth and fourth respectively at Lavaredo, UTMB and Raid de la Reunion in 2014.

... Domas Sabonis, son of Lithuanian basketball legend Arvydas Sabonis, helped Gonzaga University defeat UCLA to reach the Elite Eight during March Madness, where his team fell to Duke University. The American-born Domas, 6'10" and 231 pounds at the age of 18, turned down a reported \$630,000 contract with a top European club in Spain to play American college basketball. Sabonis is Gonzaga's leader in rebounding (7.1 per game) and field-goal accuracy (67.5 percent).

... Following her March victory in the Modern Pentathlon World Cup, Olympic champion Laura Asadauskaitė of Lithuania surged to a dramatic victory in the third women's International Modern Penathlon Union World Cup event of the season in Rome. She was 59 seconds behind the leader and in 20th place going into the run-shoot stage, but powered past the competition, gaining a total of 1,349 points to secure a first-place finish.

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April 2015

# Bridges Lithuanian-American News Journal Reader Survey

Thank you for taking the time to tell us about your experience with *Bridges* and helping us improve the magazine to better meet your needs.

1. When did you or your ancestors first come to America from Lithuania? (select one)

- Before World War I                       Between World War I and World War II  
 Between World War II and 1985         After 1985

2. How long have you subscribed to or read *Bridges*? (select one)

- Fewer than 3 years       3 to 9 years       10 or more years  
 Not currently a subscriber, but have subscribed or read it in the past

3. If you subscribe to *Bridges*, please tell us why. If you don't subscribe, tell us why not.

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4. What other American Lithuanian publications do you read? (check all that apply)

- Balzėkas Museum Review*                       *Lituanus*                       *Draugas News/Lithuanian Heritage*  
 *Vytis* (Knights of Lithuania)                       *Pasaulio Lietuvis*                       *JAV Lietuviu Bendruomene Naujienos*  
 *Draugas* (Lithuanian language)                       *Skauto Aidas*                       *Amerikos Lietuvis*  
 *Pensininkas*                       None                       Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. How would you describe *Bridges* to someone who asked you about it?

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6. How likely is it that you would recommend *Bridges* to a friend or colleague? (circle one)

Not at all likely      0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10      Extremely likely

7. Please tell us which sections of *Bridges* you read and how often.

	Always	Sometimes	Never	Have Never Seen This
Feature articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Taste of Lithuania (recipes)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This Month in History	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
From the Editor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Current Events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our Community (formerly LAC News)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The List	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Book Reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Calendar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trivia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Genealogy Tips & Tricks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Let us know what kind of content would you like to see more of or less of – or if we’re currently publishing the right amount.

	I'd like to see more	Amount is just right	I'd like to see less
History before 20th century	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contemporary history	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Current events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recipes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Genealogy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Book reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Book excerpts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Politics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life in modern-day Lithuania	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human interest / personalities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trivia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education and youth activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arts and culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lithuanian-American community news and events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Calendar of events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Do you have any suggestions for improving *Bridges* or anything else you would like to tell us?

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10. If you would be okay with us using your comments in the magazine or in marketing material, please tell us a little bit about yourself. (Optional)

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

**MAY 2015**

Through May 24  
**"Storylines" Exhibit by Ray Bartkus**

Leonard Pearlstein Gallery,  
Drexel University, 3401 Filbert  
Street, Philadelphia, Pa.  
Gallery open Tuesday through  
Sunday, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
Info: facebook.com/  
leonardpearlsteingallery

May 1-15  
**Lithuanian American  
Community National Board of  
Directors Elections**  
Info: rinkimai2015.us

May 15, 6:30 p.m.  
**Judita Leitaite Concert**  
1014 North Shore Rd., Lake  
Oswego, Ore.  
Info: portlandlithuanians.com/  
events

May 16, 7 p.m.  
**Reminiscences of a Journey to  
Lithuania, film by Jonas Mekas**  
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette  
Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y.  
Info: nylithuanian.org/  
renginiai/753

May 20, 7 p.m.  
**Concert "Dovana Mamai"  
featuring Judita Lietaitė and  
Rūta Mikelaitytė-Kašubienė**  
2718 St. George St., Los Angeles  
Info: la.lithuanians.com

May 22-25  
**Song Festival Youth Seminar**  
Camp Dainava, Manchester, Mich.  
Info: liudaslands@gmail.com

May 23-24, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
**Chicago Lithuanian Basketball  
League's Children and Youth  
Basketball Tournament**  
Lithuanian World Center, 14911  
127th St., Lemont, Ill.  
Three-point shootout contest at 5  
p.m., disco at 7 p.m. on May 23  
Info: clkball@yahoo.com

May 29-31  
**Joninés Traditional Longest Day  
of Summer Celebration**  
Acorns Resort, Milford Lake, Kans.  
Join for the weekend or for a day.  
Info: renata.bakelyte@gmail.com

**JUNE 2015**

June 5-7  
**2015 Sporto Svente**  
Radisson Hotel And Suites, 35000  
Curtis Blvd., Eastlake, Ohio  
Basketball: ptitas@hotmail.com,  
Volleyball: rytasroo@gmail.com,  
Table tennis: ecapas@hotmail.  
com, Chess: vidas@generalre-  
modelinggroupp.com

June 6, 4 p.m.  
**Bardų Festivalis/Bard Festival**  
35885 Bassrock Rd., Agua Dulce,  
Calif.  
Info: richardshow@yahoo.com,  
323-360-7786

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 13, 9 a.m.  
**Lithuanian World Community  
Charity Golf Tournament**  
Old Oak Country Club, 14200  
South Parker Rd., Homer Glen, Ill.  
Info: admin@lcenter.org

June 20-27  
**Detroit Lithuanian Scouts Camp**  
Camp Dainava, Manchester, Mich.  
Info: dainava.org

June 27  
**Omaha Lithuanian Community  
Joninés Celebration**  
Info: omahoslbt.blogspot.com

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  
**10th North American  
Lithuanian Song Festival**  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
Pavilion, 525 S. Racine St.  
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  
**Jaunuųjų 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

August 7-9  
**Knights of Lithuania 102nd  
National Convention**  
Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista,  
Orlando, Fla.  
Info: knightsoflithuania.com

August 9-16  
**LTSI Dance Course for 15th  
North American Lithuanian  
Dance Festival**  
Camp Dainava, Manchester, Mich.  
Info: lttsi.org, netz@g2a.net, 608-  
356-6549

August 15-16  
**101st Annual Lithuanian Days**  
Schuylkill Mall, Frackville, Pa.  
Info: kofl144.weebly.com/101st-  
annual-lithuanian-days.html

August 15-22  
**"Third Week" Youth Camp in  
English ages 12-16**  
Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
Info: portlandlithuanians.com

August 16-21  
**Lankas Lithuanian Camp**  
West Coast Latvian Education  
Center, Shelton, Wash.  
Info: lankostovykla.com

August 22-30  
**Meno8Dienos Adult Art Camp in  
Lithuanian**  
Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
Info: neringa.org

August 28-29  
**Portland Lithuanian Community  
"Hood to Coast" Run**  
Timberline Lodge to Seaside, Ore.  
Info: portlandlithuanians.com/  
events

**SEPTEMBER 2015**

September 19  
**Omaha Lithuanian Community  
Golf Outing Fundraiser**  
Info: omahoslbt.blogspot.com

September 12, 12-5 p.m.  
**Portland Lithuanian Community  
Picnic**  
Rooster Rock State Park (shelter A),  
Exit 25, highway 84, Corbett, Ore.  
Info: portlandlithuanians.com/  
events

**OCTOBER 2015**

October 9-11  
**Iškyla/Walk-a-Thon**  
Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
Info: neringa.org

# bridges

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