

# bridges



LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

\$5

September 2015

# this month in history

## September Anniversaries

### 625 years ago

**September 16, 1390**

Death of Karigaila, son of Algirdas, Grand Duke of Lithuania, and his second wife, Uliana of Tver. He became the ruler of Mstislaw (in current-day Belarus) after he captured it from the Principality of Smolensk in 1377. During the second Lithuanian Civil War (1389-1392) between his older brother Jogaila and his cousin Vytautas the Great, Karigaila commanded the defense of Kreivoji pilis (Crooked Castle), part of the Vilnius castle complex, and was killed when the castle fell to the Teutonic Knights.

### 580 years ago

**September 1, 1435**

Pabaisko mūšis (Battle of Pabaiskas, also known as the Battle of Vilkomir, Ukmergė or Šventoji) in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, in which the forces of Grand Duke Žygimantas Kęstutaitis soundly defeated Švitrigaila and his Livonian allies.

The battle ended the Lithuanian Civil War of 1431-1435, which began when Vytautas the Great died without an heir. Lithuanian nobles elected Švitrigaila, Jogaila's brother and Vytautas' cousin, as the new grand duke without consulting Poland, violating the Union of Horodło. Žygimantas Kęstutaitis deposed Švitrigaila in a coup in 1432, after which Švitrigaila rallied supporters from Slavic lands of the Grand Duchy. At Pabaiskis, Švitrigaila commanded forces of approximately 15,000 to 30,000 Lithuanians, Orthodox Ruthenians, Livonian Knights, Tatars from the Golden Horde, and some Teutonic Knights and Hussites. Žygimantas Kęstutaitis led an equal number of Lithuanian and Polish army troops. Švitrigaila escaped to Polotsk with about 30 followers.

### 410 years ago

**September 27, 1605**

The Battle of Salaspilis (Battle of Kircholm), the biggest battle of the Polish-Swedish War. Lithuanian forces in Latvia, led by Field Hetman Jonas Karolis Katkevičius-Katkus (Jan Karol Chodkiewicz), defeated a much larger Swedish army led by King of Sweden Charles IX, preventing the Swedes from taking Riga. An estimated 6,000 Swedes died and Charles was wounded.

### 150 years ago

**September 6, 1865**

Lithuanian press ban began, with Russia forbidding the use of Latin letters in Lithuanian-language publications. Books in Cyrillic were permitted but not accepted by the people. Secret book couriers smuggled in Latin-lettered books until the ban was lifted in 1904.

### 140 years ago

**September 22, 1875**



Artist and composer Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis was born in Senoji Varėna in southern Lithuania. Although he died at only 35 years of age, he composed nearly 400 musical works and created approximately 400 paintings and etchings, in addition to literary works, poems and art photographs.

Active in the Lithuanian national movement, he was a founding member of the Lithuanian Artists Union, and organized and participated in the first three exhibitions of Lithuanian artists. He also organized and directed Lithuanian choruses in Warsaw, Vilnius and St. Petersburg.

Employing musical techniques in his visual art, Čiurlionis assembled his early sonata paintings into series resembling a sonata in music and based his later paintings on intricate musical compositional techniques that were unprecedented at the time. He has been called a romantic, a symbolist, a modernist and even the first abstract expressionist.

Nearly all of his original paintings are housed in the M.K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art in Kaunas.

### 130 years ago

**September 30, 1885**

Birth of Jeronimas Pečkaitis, a Franciscan monk who founded the first Lithuanian beekeepers society in 1918. In addition to establishing branches in 22 towns and villages, the renowned beekeeper wrote extensively about beekeeping, established a hive workshop, issued a beekeeping tutorial and organized courses for beekeepers.

### 80 years ago

**September 21, 1935**



Feliksas Vaitkus (Felix Waitkus, 1907-1956), an American-born Lithuanian pilot, flew the Lituania II across the Atlantic in an effort to recreate the flight of Darius and Girenas to Kaunas. Although he was forced to land in Ireland due to bad weather and a dwindling fuel supply, he became only the sixth pilot to make the crossing solo, and was afforded a hero's welcome in

Lithuania. Vaitkus served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II and in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War.



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**Cover:** Benches along Gedimino prospektas in Vilnius. Photo: Sergey Galyonkin

**Back cover:** Lithuanian International Student Services interns met with architect Algimantas Bublys in Vilnius during the summer. Bublys spoke about his life and profession, and enjoyed hearing from the students about the program, which his late wife, Birutė Bublienė, founded in 2007. Photo: Ina Stankevičienė

from the editor

## Lessons From the Road

I've just returned from my trip to Lithuania refreshed and with tales to tell. I'll write about some of the places I visited in future issues, but for now I'll leave you with a few little lessons I learned while on the road.

**Don't balk at the back roads.** It's often tempting to choose highway driving for efficiency, or because of fear of getting lost in the countryside, but the back roads are often more rewarding. On a suggestion from staff at an information center where I stopped for a map, I took the aptly named Pušyno gatvė (Pine Street) through the large pine forest of the Kintai botanical reserve on my way back to Klaipėda for the night, which proved a beautiful, quiet and calm alternative to the highway. I encountered a mere handful of cars and bicycles on the winding dirt road, and felt as if I had the forest to myself. I stopped and got out of the car just to breathe deeply of the pine-scented air and marvel at the late afternoon light filtering through the airy evergreen spires.

**Go native.** Call me cheap, but I don't like spending a lot on a room that I will use sparingly for sleeping and showering. For the final eight nights of my two-week trip, because I planned activities that would let me home base in Vilnius, I chose to rent an apartment there rather than stay at a hotel. For a price less than half of the average hotel room, I got living space easily three times as large—plus a washing machine and the ability to cook my own meals if I chose. And I got to live like a resident of the city rather than just a visitor.

**A wrong turn can lead you to the right place** (even if it's not the one you intended). I can't tell you the number of times that I took the wrong route from point A to point B, either because I didn't believe the GPS, or because I didn't have an exact address so I would just land in an approximate vicinity and have to figure it out from there. It's how I discovered the little river village of Minija in southwestern Lithuania, the Japanese Garden (Japoniškas sodas) in Mažučiai, the Baltic Mythology Park (Baltų mitologijos parkas) in Sausdravai and the Vilnius University Botanical Gardens in Kairėnai. None of those places were on my itinerary, but all turned out to be wonderfully worthwhile diversions along the way to my ultimate destination.

**Speak the little Lithuanian you know.** I certainly know more Lithuanian than I did when I first visited the country in 2008, but I'm far from fluent. However, I didn't let that stop me. While it's true that English is spoken at most hotel reception desks, at many restaurants and shops in larger cities, and by many young people, I found that beginning a conversation in Lithuanian when it wasn't expected would usually evoke a surprised and delighted smile—and forge a connection that might otherwise never be made.

Hoping your journeys are as enlightening as mine,



Teresė Vekteris, Editor

# bridges

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## What Was It Like?

I thoroughly enjoyed reading your magazine for several years. Well I particularly enjoyed the recent [June 2015] issue about our efforts to free Lithuania. I think several issues written about what life was really like in Lithuania during the occupation would be fascinating. Additionally most of us are entirely ignorant of the politics and the politicians involved during the dark time. I think a few issues devoted to the subject would be incredibly interesting reading!

*Daktaras, via email*

## Non-Recognition Omission?

I read the interesting article on non-recognition [Preserving the U.S. Policy of Nonrecognition of the Soviet Occupation and Incorporation of the Baltic States Into the U.S.S.R.] in the June 2015 issue of *Bridges* by my friend S. Algimantas Gečys.

By no means do I want to belittle the great work done by Mr. Gečys and his group, but sadly there was no mention of the contributions to the non-recognition by many others between 1940 and the mid-1970s. Arguably, these earlier efforts made a more significant impact than the later ones. As an example, the testimony and documentation to the Kersten Committee of the U.S. Congress in 1954 of how Lithuania was taken over and incorporated into the Soviet Union solidified the legal basis for the non-recognition. The article does not mention continuous efforts by Lithuania's Diplomatic Corps, which was the only entity recognized as a legal representative of Lithuania by the U.S. and other Western powers. Considerable documentation was provided to Sen. Dodd of Connecticut in 1968 when he was researching Soviet imperialism.

I was disappointed that these important activities by others to maintain the non-recognition were not even mentioned in the article.

*Respectfully,  
Putinas V. Mašalaitis*

## The author replies:

Mr. P. Mašalaitis notes that the article did not mention the contributions to the non-recognition policy by many others between 1940 and the mid-1970s. Frankly speaking, there was no real need to tweak the non-recognition policy. The non-recognition policy came about as a White House decision, with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt directing acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles to issue a press release on July 23, 1940. Future United States administrations that followed never saw a reason to question President Roosevelt's decision. The State Department officials continued to oversee the non-recognition policy's implementation and

it was in effect for half a century, until restoration of Lithuania's independence in 1990. Occasional deviations from the policy (such as American diplomats' travel to the Baltics, or errors in featuring the Baltic States in governmental maps) were successfully challenged by the Lithuanian American Community and in most instances were corrected by the Administrations.

It must be noted that the policy of non-recognition functioned with the Department of State dealing directly and solely with Lithuania's Diplomatic Service (LDS) headed by its chief, Stasys Lozoraitis, Sr. The issues and tasks of maintaining and funding Lithuania's legations (in the countries that did not recognize Lithuania's incorporation into the Soviet Union) were decided in a highly confidential manner between the officials of the Department of State and the LDS. To the Lithuanian organizations in the Free World, formed to advance Lithuania's independence, the diplomatic issues for a long time were off limits. A lengthy estrangement between LDS and the Supreme Committee to Liberate Lithuania (VLIKas) did not help. VLIKas officials also were not privy to the dealings between the Department of State and the LDS. Among Lithuanians there was a saying that "... LDS holds its cards close to its chest and so does the Department of State." Now that LDS archives are beginning to be researched, we gradually learn which events influenced the shifting of LDS' personnel between countries, how the Department of State helped sell Lithuania's gold bullion to provide LDS with funds, who were the diplomats receiving wages and pensions. Time is still needed to be able to draw firm conclusions about the workings of the Department of State and the LDS.

Mr. Mašalaitis feels that the U.S. House of Representatives' Kersten Committee hearings of 1954, pertaining the the Soviet occupation of the Baltic Republics, deserved a mention. Perhaps? Since they dealt primarily with events that brought about the Soviet occupation, I felt that Committee's findings had no visible effect on the already-in-force non-recognition policy. During the many years of Lithuania's enslavement there were numerous important Congressional hearings and their conclusions would require another lengthy article.

*Respectfully,  
S. Algimantas Gečys*

## Have Something to Say?

Tell us what you think about *Bridges*.

Address your comments to Editor, *Bridges Lithuanian-American News Journal*, 6125 McCallum Street, Philadelphia, PA 19144.



# LISS Interns Gain More Experience



LISS interns Darius Šablinskas, Žygimantas Kataržis, Lina Mockutė, Aleta Juozelskis, Daniela Šablinskas and Almantas Palubinskas on an outing in Trakai. Photo: Ina Stankevičienė

Lithuanian International Student Services (LISS) assists American and Canadian university students of Lithuanian heritage with short-term summer internships. Since the late Birutė Bublys founded the program in 2008, more than 200 young people have participated.

The six-week internship includes an introductory week, Lithuanian language courses and cultural events. Participants do internships in various fields, including finance and econom-

ics, politics and international relations, medicine and social work, communication and public relations, marketing, advertising, technology, law and engineering. After successfully completing the internship and defending their final thesis, the students receive university credits.

Read the following stories to learn more about the experiences of two of this year's LISS interns.

The LISS Summer Internship Program is made possible by its sponsors. Special thanks to the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc., Lithuanian Foundation and Kazickas Family Foundation.

For more information about LISS, please visit [lithuanian-american.org](http://lithuanian-american.org), and click on "Internships/LISS" at the top.

## LISS: The Best Decision of My Life (So Far)

By Aleta Juozelskis

It's not common to be given the opportunity of a lifetime: the chance to work as an intern in Lithuania. Over the past few years, LISS (Lithuanian International Student Services) has created opportunities for students to work an internship within their field of study in various cities of Lithuania: Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda.

Being the daughter of two Lithuanian parents and having grown up in America, I never thought I'd ever work abroad in Lithuania, especially as a nursing major. Having finished my first year of school, I hadn't had much experience or knowledge of working as a nurse. What hospital would take in a nursing intern with no previous experience? I decided to give the LISS program a try after my older sister and a few friends went through the program and promised me that if I were to ever do it, it would be the best decision of my life. Turns out, they were right.

I arrived in Lithuania and expected to feel homesick after a few days. However, that homesick feeling never surfaced. The group of students I met already felt like family after a few hours of getting to know them. I had no idea it was possible to connect with other students so quickly. We all became the best of friends in such a short amount of time.

After a week of orientation and getting accustomed to daily life in a foreign country with new currency, I began working at Respublikinė Vilniaus Universitetinė ligoninė (Vilnius University Hospital) with Daniela Šablinskas and her brother, Darius Šablinskas. We were all assigned to different departments of the hospital—Darius with Physical Therapy, Daniela with Neurology, and I with Orthopedics. I also had the opportunity to join the Neurology department.

The weeks working at the hospital flew by. I expected to only shadow the nurses in my departments, and take everything I learned through observation and apply it to my studies once I got back to America. Not only was I able to observe the work ethic of nurses in the hospital setting in every situation, I was encouraged to practice what I learned as well. Through the LISS program, I was able to begin working in my field long before I'd be able to in America. I shadowed a team of nurses over the course of a month, seeing and attending to patients of all kinds. I think the hardest part about working in the hospital was that more than half the patients we tended to throughout the day were from other nationalities (mostly Polish and Russian). The only languages I'm confidently fluent in are English, Lithuanian and some minimal French, so I had to find different forms of communication to get through to the patients who didn't speak Lithuanian (a definite learning experience).

Whenever there was a lull between shifts, I had the chance to visit Daniela and Darius in their respective departments. Daniela was assigned to shadow a doctor, and on a few occasions we were able to join the team of doctors on their rounds to see



Aleta Juozelskis, Daniela Šablinskas, President of LAC National Executive Committee Sigita Šimkuvienė, Director of Respublikinė Vilniaus universitetinė ligoninė Dr. Algimantas Pamerneckas, Lina Mockutė and Darius Šablinskas at the hospital. Photo: Ina Stankevičienė

different patients and discuss their situations and solutions. As a neurology major, Daniela absolutely loved shadowing a doctor. She said herself that the best parts of her day were when the doctors asked for her input on patients' diagnoses and when she was able to watch brain surgeries. When I had the chance to visit Darius in his department, he was always busy with a patient, often telling the patient how to do his/her leg exercises. Darius took every opportunity to see more patients. Not only did he work in his department for physical therapy, the people he worked with brought him to other departments to do physical therapy on bedridden patients as well. As Darius worked, he also studied and researched new exercises he could give his patients. He said himself that through this program, he felt he was able to learn more and apply his studies to the working field—not something he could have easily done at home.

When we weren't working, LISS students had the opportunity to go on excursions outside of Vilnius, and we took full advantage of it. One weekend, a handful of students and I went to visit Kernavė, a Lithuanian archeological site and the old medieval capital of Lithuania. On a different weekend, we went to Trakai Castle and another weekend, we took the train to Klaipėda to celebrate Jūros Šventė (the sea festival)—the possibilities were endless. While abroad, there was always spare time to spend with extended family and make new connections around us.

The LISS program did so much more for me than supply me with a place to work; it granted me the opportunity to become immersed within my Lithuanian culture, strengthen my language skills, learn to live on my own (without my parents' cooking) and also allowed me to explore and find myself along the journey. While in Lithuania, I was able to connect with my family's homeland, all while working ahead in my major. I was able to further explore the culture and did my absolute best to make every second count. I met my best friends along the way, having the most memorable trip of my life, deeming my decision to participate in the LISS program the best decision of my life (so far).

## The Experience of a Lifetime

By Samantha Grigas

When I first began my search for a Lithuanian-American community to reach out and connect with, I never imagined I would find something like the LISS program. Growing up I never had the opportunity to be a part of such a community and I hoped to find some way to remedy that. I found the LISS program by complete accident and, after working up the nerve to do so, I applied. Soon after, I received my acceptance email, and not long after that, my job assignment. I was to be working at the Anthropology and Histology laboratory at Vilnius University. This chance to gain hands-on experience in my field while simultaneously experiencing the culture and the people that I had been searching for was more than I could have asked for.

Throughout my experience in Lithuania, there were challenges to overcome, the main one being that I had little to no experience with the language itself. What I found in my time there was that the people are friendly and happy to help. Even when struggling at times to pronounce or remember the right words in a store or restaurant, I was met with smiles and patience that were very much appreciated and encouraging. I quickly found myself comfortable, even when alone, and eager to try new foods and visit new places.

Being based in Vilnius during my time in the beautiful country of Lithuania I had the chance to see so many amazing things from museums and churches to art exhibits and festivals. Everywhere I went I was surrounded by history and pride. Lithuanians have been through so much and fought hard to gain the independence they now enjoy. Where other countries would rather forget the trials and troubles of the past, I feel a widespread sense of joy from Lithuanians, choosing not to brush the past aside, but to remember what they have been through and the adversity that they were able to overcome.

In my time spent in the lab at Vilnius University I made some amazing friends. I am especially appreciative of my supervisor, Justina Kozakaitė, for not only making my work experience a positive and educational one, but for also taking the time to show me around Vilnius and share with me the rich history and culture of Lithuania through the eyes of someone who has lived it. She made going to work something to look forward to.

As a primarily culturally and archaeologically focused anthropology major at University of Southern Maine, I had no experience in the field of physical anthropology. I admit I was nervous at first when I realized I would be working with

skeletal remains in a field I was unfamiliar with. I had only the most basic knowledge of skeletal anatomy and none at all when it came to identifying pathologies. With Justina's guidance I gained skills, knowledge and confidence in a branch of anthropology that may have otherwise been left completely unknown to me.

My days were filled with the cleaning of bones, followed by assembling the skeleton and finally analyzing the remains to uncover any evidence of injuries or illness left in the bones. I'll admit I was nervous at first when handling the remains, and some may find the work less than appealing, but with confidence in my work came a deep respect not only for the work being done, but for the people being studied. Their remains are well cared for by those in the lab and continue to tell their story long after they lived their lives.

The LISS program provided me the best opportunity I could have asked for. Not only did I get to experience the very country from which my cultural interests stemmed, but I got to do so with some amazing individuals that I will not soon forget. I made some fantastic friendships and professional relationships that will enrich both my life and my professional and academic career in the future. I experienced new foods and places, seeing shows at the Grand Duke's Palace, climbing the clock tower belfry and the tower at St. John's Church, and taking in the beautiful scenery that is Lithuania. I am forever grateful to the LISS program for giving me this opportunity, with a special thanks to Ina Stankevičienė for the support she provided, to Vilnius University, especially Justina, for the job placement, and to VMU for being the partners who made this internship a possibility for me. This has been the experience of a lifetime and one of the best decisions I ever made.



Samantha Grigas in the Vilnius University anthropology lab. Photo: Ina Stankevičienė



## An Eye-Opening Summer Experience Volunteering With At-Risk Children and Youth in Lithuania

By Marija Čyvas



Some of the children and youth with whom volunteer Marija played team games and sports, did crafts and went on outings. At left is Sister Onutė, who oversees the activities of šv. Kryžiaus (Holy Cross) center. Marija is in red shorts near the beach ball. Photo: Daina Čyvas

To see a 6-year-old child riding the bus by himself in downtown Chicago would be concerning. To see a 6-year-old riding the bus by himself in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, would be very normal. Sadly, it is a very common occurrence.

After that 6-year-old, let's call him Jonas, gets off at a bus stop, he will wait four and a half minutes until bus number eight comes around the corner and he will hop onto it as if he has been doing it for years. A short ride later, the bus stops at Cathedral Square and Jonas walks the remaining three blocks until he reaches a small orange building next to a little fenced-off yard. This little building is the day center that Jonas comes to every day of the year. This is the day center I worked at for all of June this past summer.

Monday through Friday, kids just like our fictional friend Jonas travel by foot

or using public transportation to make their way to the day center. These kids are considered "at risk," meaning that their parents may be alcoholics, abusive, drug abusers or in financial trouble. Some had very young mothers and many didn't even know their father. In other words, these children are growing up in unideal living and family situations. Many of them come to the day center each day wearing the clothes they wore the day before. These children are city kids who know the streets, the bus routes, which bus stop to get off at, where the corner marts are, how to cross the street and where everything is in the city.

Not only do these kids know the layout of the city, they also know the language of the city. Every third word that came out of their mouths was a swear. Most of the kids were half Lithuanian and half Russian, and almost every one of them

spoke Russian. They always spoke Lithuanian to me but Russian to each other. I didn't know any Russian at the time but I quickly picked up on some words—the swears.

The children were aggressive and short-tempered. They grew up too quickly, being exposed to so many things at an early age. Despite knowing every swear in the book and trying to get what they want by aggressive means, they are still just kids. Their eyes lit up when they saw the new Uno deck I pulled out of my bag for them. The squealed and giggled when we played catch with the giant inflatable ball that I had brought from the magical land of America.

America. Where I grew up as a third-generation Lithuanian. I had never really felt like a true American or particularly patriotic. I always loved sharing about my culture and how I was "100 percent



The three volunteers who worked at two different centers in Vilnius. Marija is in the center.  
Photo: Daina Čyvas

Lithuanian.” February 16, Lithuania’s Independence Day, was always a bigger deal than the Fourth of July. I could never wait until the weekend when I would get to see my Lithuanian friends, even if it was at Lithuanian Saturday School early in the morning.

Although I had learned so much about its geography, history and literature, I had never been to Lithuania until this past summer. I was not going for vacation, but rather with a mission. I volunteered in a day center, located right in the city. Although I was with my two best friends, I worked by myself in one day center while my two friends worked together

in another. Altogether I had about 15 kids, but not all of them came every day. The youngest was about 8 years old; the oldest, 16.

When they interacted with each other they behaved aggressively, hitting each other, swearing, and they had a difficult time sharing things. They were, for the most part, kind to me. Not necessarily respectful, but kind. They asked me questions about what America is like. “Do you have buses there? What about TV? Are people happier there? What is Chicago like?” They thought of America as a magical place. After asking me questions, they would turn to each other and

immediately lose the kind tone they had just had. What left a lasting impression on me was how my kids said good-bye to each other. No matter how much they fought and hit each other during the day, they always took the time to say good-bye to each other in a very nice way, because they didn’t know what would happen that night when they got home. They didn’t know if they would be back the next day. They were unsure and scared for the future.

How did I end up with this volunteer position? In 1998, my grandmother, along with a few of her friends, started an organization called Child’s Gate to Learning, dedicated to helping children from at-risk and financially challenged families. Almost every summer, a group of American Lithuanian teenagers, all fluent in the language, fly over to Lithuania, through this organization, and split up among several cities to work in various day centers. The purpose of these day centers is to integrate at-risk kids into society by offering them cultural and learning opportunities to help them develop healthy life and social skills.

The head of the day center where I worked was a very tough nun who had been working in that position for a while, so she really knew how to deal with the kids well. My typical workday started around 12 and ended in the evening. Almost every day started with a few long rounds of Uno, which we played in a small room that consisted of a table, about 12 chairs and book shelves full of crayons, books, balls, paper, crafts and games. We would play until all the kids showed up. On most days we spent a lot of time outside in the yard. We played with the soccer balls, volleyballs and giant inflatable ball that I had brought for them.

Fortunately, we were able to go on field trips a couple times a week, as we were located in the city. We often walked to our destination as a group or took the bus. Unlike in America, where adults are always monitoring their kids as they travel through a city, it was no big deal if a kid wandered off a little bit because they always came right back to group or



took their own route to get there. We visited the Vilnius Television Tower, Trakai Castle, an outdoor museum that featured real tanks from the Soviet times and a couple of parks. We even went for a few bike rides. If we were out on a field trip we would pack a picnic and find a spot somewhere under a tree to eat lunch. Our lunches always consisted of little sandwiches with cheese and cucumbers, little cheese desserts and tea. If we stayed at the center for the day we would set the table for lunch together, set out food, say our prayer and after the meal we would clean up the dishes together. These are some of the life skills we try to instill in the kids that they don't experience at home.

Working with these kids was a very eye-opening experience, especially the summer before starting college. Not only did I get to live on my own for a month, but I also learned a lot about working with kids from a different part of the world and with very different living situations. I learned how to be patient. I learned what a child who receives little love looks like and I learned how to make up for the love they never received. I realized how lucky I am to come from a "normal" family that is financially stable.

Although my primary reason for traveling to Lithuania was for this volunteer opportunity, I took full advantage of

every weekend to explore this beautiful little country of mine. I saw where my great-grandparents were buried, visited with family, spent time in the countryside, zip-lined over the largest river in Lithuania and visited the Hill of Crosses in Šiauliai. Every day I saw something new, learned something new and experienced something that left an impact on me.

Working with those kids, my kids, was the most impactful part of my summer, but a close second was the way that the older Lithuanians would refer to the Soviet times and its lasting impression. Lithuania only regained its independence 25 years ago and its people still feel the weight of the occupation every day. Pedestrians on the street don't smile as much and the cashiers in stores are not nearly as friendly as they are here in the States. The culture of "keep to yourself" from the Soviet times still remains and has been inherited by the younger generation. I was often asked if we feel happier, more free, in the States. I would respond, "But aren't you happy here? It's so beautiful!" To this they would reply, "We've seen a lot in the past 50 years." This little country of mine has been through too much, just like the kids I worked with every day.

**Marija Čyvas** was one of 15 young Lithuanian-Americans who spent this past June in Lithuania, volunteering at five (of the 11 total) after-school centers supported by the volunteer, non-profit U.S. organization, Child's Gate to Learning. Each volunteer was enriched by different experiences, insights and memories.

Since 2000, the organization's officers have helped coordinate more than 75 Lithuanian-speaking volunteers, primarily high school upper classmen and college students, and helped prepare them for voluntary work with at-risk children and youth who attend the centers in Lithuania supported by Child's Gate to Learning.

Thanks to travel support from their families, this year's volunteers from Illinois, Michigan and Pennsylvania worked with the center's adult coordinators and the children at centers after the school year ended in Vilnius (two centers), Varėna, Kazlų Rūda and Žemaičių Kalvarija.

For more information about Child's Gate to Learning, please visit [www.childgate.org](http://www.childgate.org).



At the end of June, all 15 volunteers gathered again in Vilnius before departing for home. Photo: Daina Čyvas



# Our Unique Trip to Lithuania This Summer Whirlwind Book Tour Brings New History to Light

By Putinas V. Mašaliatis



At the presentation of *Gyvenimas Lietuvai. Vincas Mašalaitis ir jo darbai* at the Istorinė Prezidentūra in Kaunas. From left, author Prof. Alfonsas Eidintas, moderator Prof. Egidijus Aleksandravičius and Putinas Mašaliatis. Photo: R. Mikalajūnaitė

The trip we took to Lithuania in mid-June was very special, because the purpose was for my wife, Ani, and me to participate in introduction activities of a book about my father, *Gyvenimas Lietuvai. Vincas Mašalaitis ir jo darbai* (*Living for Lithuania: Vincas Mašalaitis and his works*). As our son, Vytautas, wrote on his Facebook page: “What a unique and once-in-a-lifetime father’s day present—my father in Lithuania introducing a book about his father, my grandfather, Vincas Mašalaitis and his contributions to Lithuania.

The publisher arranged several events. The first and main book introduction was at 5 p.m. on June 18, 2015, at the Historical Presidential Palace (Istorinė Prezidentūra) in Old Town Kaunas, which was Lithuania’s temporary “White House” during the time (1920-1939) when Vilnius was occupied by Poland. It is a grand, neo-baroque building, built around 1860 and is the location where my father worked with Lithuania’s presidents and ministers between 1919 and 1940.

The presentation was held in the main hall, to a large, standing-room-only audience. The presenters were Prof. Dr. Alfonsas Eidintas, the author of the book; Prof. Dr. Egidijus Aleksandravičius, chairman of the Lithuanian Emigration Institute (Išėivijos Institutas) at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas; and I. Prof. Aleksandravičius was the moderator and spoke about the contributions the exiled community played through-

out history, but mainly after the two World Wars. Prof. Eidintas, who was Lithuania’s ambassador in Washington, D.C., during the mid-1990s and is currently the ambassador to Greece, Albania and Cyprus, spoke about the contents of the book and the many roles my father had in Lithuanian activities. I spoke about my father, his archives and how the book came about. The reaction of the audience was very positive, and all the copies the publisher brought to this event were sold out halfway through the program. I met with many people I had not seen for a long time, some relatives I did not know existed and even the son of a family that permitted my father to hide during the first Russian occupation in the early 1940s. My right hand was worn out from signing many copies of the book.

The next day there was an afternoon presentation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Užsienio Reikalų Ministerija) in Vilnius. The host was Vice-minister of Foreign Affairs Andrius Krivas, with historians Vytautas Plečkaitis and Dr. Česlovas Laurinavičius, Prof. Eidintas and me. Dr. Laurinavičius pointed out that the book is not a novel, but a thoroughly researched academic textbook that contains archival material previously not known to even the most thorough historians and researchers.

Prof. Eidintas remarked that what made this book possible is that my father kept all correspondence he received and copied

by hand each of his responses into a notebook. Without this foresight, continuity would have been lost. He said that going through the archives was extremely interesting (“pasiutiškai įdomu”). He found information about the minister assigned to produce the documentation needed to install the litas as Lithuania’s currency in the early days of the republic that revealed the minister was working for several months but making very little progress. So the then-prime minister, Ernestas Galvanauskas, and my father, working together only after hours and well into the night, successfully completed the work in several weeks.

Historian Vytautas Plečkaitis mentioned my father’s special interface with and attention to the Klaipėda region, its difficulties integrating into Lithuania and how the activists considered him the “Grey Eminence”—the person not at the forefront, but the one who “pulled all the strings.” Of particular interest to him was my father stating in 1950 or so: “Neither Lozoraitis [a Lithuanian diplomat in Washington, D.C.] nor any other exile will bring freedom to Lithuania. Only Lithuanians in Lithuania can win the fight for its freedom.” He said the book contains an enormous amount of information about specific events previously not known, which must be studied and delved into deeply.

I remarked that the initiation of the book was serendipitous. In early 2013 I received an email from Dr. Ingrida Jakubavičienė of the Historical Presidential Palace in Kaunas. She found out from Audronė Škiudaitė, who had been told by our good friend Julia Dantienė that I had material from my father that she might be able to use for an exhibit she was assembling about Lithuania’s intellectuals between the two World Wars. During our correspondence, Dr. Jakubavičienė mentioned in passing that they hosted a presentation of a book by Prof. Eidintas about President Antanas Smetona and that my father is mentioned a number of times in that book. I was able to obtain a copy and read it, along with an earlier Eidintas book about Smetona published in 1989. As I had been looking for the right person to take a look at my father’s archives for some time and after reading the books, giving it a lot of thought, I concluded that Prof. Eidintas was the right person to review this material. He was thoroughly familiar with the nuances of Lithuanian history in the first half of the 20th century and, as Lithuania’s ambassador to Washington, he had considerable contact with exiled Lithuanians in the United States. In June 2013 in Vilnius, during a trip to introduce our children and grandchildren to Lithuania, I turned over my father’s archives to Prof. Eidintas.

Monday, June 22, was the busiest day of our trip. The publisher had arranged a live interview with *Labas Rytas, Lietuva* (Lithuania’s version of *Good Morning, America*) of LRT television station in Vil-



Author Prof. Alfonsas Eidintas and historian Benjaminas Mašalaitis in Marijampolė. Photo: A. Katilienė

nius for the 7:50 a.m. slot for Prof. Eidintas, Ani and me. For the first time in my life, a professional cosmetologist powdered my nose and made sure we all looked good enough for national TV. The interview lasted 10 minutes. I was impressed with how much the young interviewer already knew about the book and asked good questions.

After the interview, we drove to the passport bureau to renew our Lithuanian passports and to find out how our sons and grandchildren can obtain theirs. The next book presentation was scheduled for 3 p.m. in the Prienai city public library. The publisher knew that the Mašalaitis family homestead was nearby and wanted to visit and take pictures prior to the presentation. So our hosts at the library, the publisher’s group, Prof. Eidintas,



On the set of *Labas Rytas Lietuva*. Ani and Putinas Mašalaitis and Prof. Alfonsas Eidintas being interviewed.



Ani and I made a quick visit. My cousin Algimantas and his wife, Janina, greeted us with fresh country cheese, just-picked cucumbers from their garden, honey fresh from their hives and a big bowl of strawberries. Delicious! Since the Soviets communalized the farm and tore down all buildings, Algimantas explained how he rebuilt the extant buildings, showed us where the original homestead buildings were located, which trees existed prior to the Soviet occupation and pointed out the closest neighboring farm, which happens to be the homestead of Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas, perhaps the best-known Lithuanian author of the 20th century.

We rushed back to the Prienai library for the presentation of the book. The moderator this time was Irena Stankevičienė, director of the publisher, Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos centras. Also present were the editor of the book, Judita Mačiokienė, the artist who created the cover for the book, Albertas Broga, Prof. Eidintas, Ani and I. After the presentation we were greeted by the assistant mayor of Prienai and the director of the library. All present were entertained by violinist Augustė Lyberytė.

The next stop was Marijampolė, less than an hour's drive away from Prienai. This time the event was at a newly built, very modern, spacious and beautiful cultural center. As we entered, we were approached by a crew of the local TV station for another interview. The presentation started at 6 p.m. with the same presenters as in Prienai. Judita Mačiokienė, the publisher's editor, expressed a deep attachment and admiration for my father, as a person who did not need praise, recognition or fame. His greatest acknowledgement to himself was the knowledge that his entire life was devoted to working for his country. She said this book is about a true, selfless patriot and is a must-read, especially for young Lithuanians.

Because it was a very long day (we had gotten up at 5:15 a.m. to get to the TV studio in time) and it was past 8 p.m., I invited the presenters, as well as our two drivers, to dinner at a nearby country restaurant to celebrate the successful completion of the presentations. We had great food with a proper amount of liquid refreshment to facilitate digestion. Despite the fact that it was near summer solstice, it was quite dark when we returned to our hotel.

Of course this trip to Lithuania was not totally devoted to the book. We spent time with my cousins, visited friends in Ukmergė and saw the beautiful resorts of Birštonas and Druskininkai. On the way we stopped at the 150-year old church in Daugų Ežeras, where I was christened. We returned home tired, but pleased that everything went well during our trip.

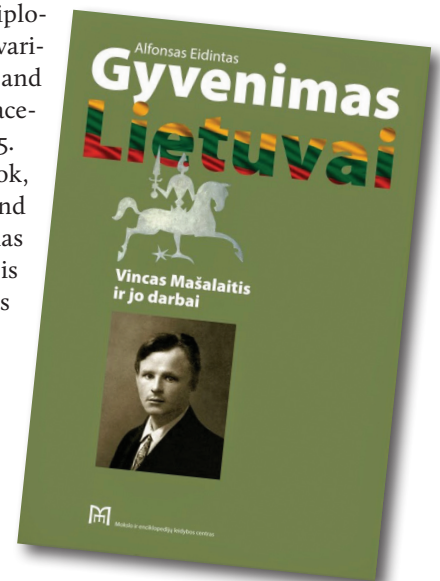
A little bit about the book, *Gyvenimas Lietuvai. Vincas*



Rapt attention of the audience at the Prezidenūra. Foto: R. Mikalajūnaitė

*Mašalaitis ir jo darbai*. It has a soft cover, is 519 pages and is primarily in Lithuanian. The list of contents, my father's testimony before the Charles Kersten Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives in 1954 and the summary of the book are in English. There is a short biography, which includes his studying in Lithuania at the family farm in Pilotišķiai, when this was forbidden by the tsarist government until 1905, his studies in Marijampolė gimnazium and then at the University of Moscow. There is an extensive portion devoted to the two "final meetings" on June 15, 1940, describing the discussions between President Smetona and the ministers, and his evaluation of the two primary possible responses to the Soviet ultimatum. But the bulk of the book is about the archives my father collected in Germany and the United States after fleeing Lithuania in late July 1944. It is most interesting to see the deep infighting among the various organizations in exile, the diplomatic corps and the political parties. The book contains direct quotes from private correspondence between my father and most of the leaders of organizations, the diplomatic corps and the various political parties, and his efforts to be a peacemaker. He died in 1975.

To order this book, visit [manoknyga.lt](http://manoknyga.lt) and search for "Gyvenimas Lietuvai." The price is approximately 28 euros plus shipping.





# Through Mother's Eyes: The Diaspora Diary of Rozė Kriaučiūnas, Part 5

Translated by Nijolė Gražulis



Despite being far from home, separated from loved ones and uncertain about their future, residents of the displaced persons camps in Germany tried to maintain as normal a life as possible, creating schools, celebrating national holidays and holding cultural programs. Photo: Deutsche Fotothek

*When we left the Kriaučiūnas family in May 1945, they had just been taken to Eichstätt, Germany, after the American Army came through Pietenfeld, and were being held in a temporary refugee shelter in a crowded schoolhouse.*

*Like any mother, Rozė was worried about what would happen next to her children, Romuladas, Elvyra and Vitalija. Summer has come and gone, and she is still worried ...*

September 8, 1945

Summer is drawing to a close. How quickly it is passing! But, alas, I have not been able to appreciate its wonders or to enjoy it, as have the happy people around me. How I would like to forget, at least for an hour or two, all my troubles and my worries and feel the true beauty of summertime in my heart! It is a

beautiful morning. Pleasant dreams put me in a good mood. I had a vivid dream that Mykolas was on his way back to us. He was walking with Antanas, both of them carrying large bundles of their belongings. Not far from me he suddenly collapsed, exhausted, in the field to rest. He was gray-haired and looked pale and worn out. When I walked up to him, I was not even sure that it was he. Then I heard his sincerely spoken words, "Don't you know me anymore?" I fell weeping into his arms. Two hearts filled with longing rejoiced in their happiness. But not for long. I awoke and again saw that same iron-shod door and the small window of our room. Gone was the person dearest to me, and no sweet words could be heard. But I was still left with a nice feeling. For a long time I thought about my dream. I thought it had to come true soon. The person we love and long

for has to come back to us. How can the good Lord not answer my sincere prayers, which I have been offering up for so long? I believe, I truly believe in all that's holy that he is still alive and will return. My faith grows stronger as the husbands of other women are reunited with their wives.

In the afternoon there was a commemoration of the Lithuanian National holiday [scheduled coronation of Grand Duke Vytautas on September 8, 1430]. Many Lithuanians gathered in the hall, decorated nicely for the occasion. The Lithuanian refugee high school principal gave a good, informative speech, mentioning our homeland and the people we left behind. Most of those present had tears in their eyes. My tears flowed especially freely since I am alone, all alone, among strangers in a strange land. I have no close friend, not even an acquaintance, to whom I could tell my troubles. Oh, how I sometimes wish I could confide in someone, could reveal the most secret recesses of my soul and hear in return a word of consolation. But in whom, dear God? To whom can I tell all my feelings, and when? When will I be able to transfer my life's difficult burdens to Mykolas' stronger shoulders? And what if he comes back totally debilitated? Just let him return, and his still-beating heart will be enough for me, and his glances. Then I will find new strength and will be able to bear everything more easily.

September 9, 1945

I woke up exhausted. I had spent a restless night and slept little. All night long down in the basement of this building Lithuanian youths were raising a ruckus with the help of shot-glasses filled with whiskey. They were shouting and making noise until 5 a.m. Disturbing thoughts occurred to me as I listened to the commotion. So this is how our countrymen and their invited foreign guests were topping off the celebration of our national holiday. These are the men on whom depends the future rebuilding of our country. God, how low they have fallen. They are animals in human form. How thoroughly whisky can ruin a human being and destroy his life, both here on earth and for eternity. They will fail their nation and their families. Then ... [illegible text] new generations will be born from such alcoholic and immoral parents. There are so few of us. Only persons strong in body and character will be able to meet the challenges posed by the future rebuilding of our country. There are so few of the good and the strong.

September 13, 1945

This day passed without leaving a mark, as so many others. The same daily chores and worries took up my time. It is good that there are things to be done. It keeps me from thinking too much and disturbing myself with my thoughts.

It was almost evening when I heard that Antanas had returned. The news was like a stab through my heart, for I had expected him to return with Mykolas. He had promised to bring Mykolas back here as soon as he found him. But he had only been saying nice words to me, as many do. He had not really been searching

for Mykolas. He had only gone to acquire what he wanted and came back with a clear conscience. For what is Mykolas to him? Just someone he knows a bit better than the others. Antanas isn't really interested in helping me find my husband, and my children their father. He wouldn't get rich from that. It's such a shame that even now for most people the acquisition of more and more possessions is their purpose in life. What an unhappy creature man is! How much he desires and how little each of us truly needs.

Our brief stay here on earth could be so pleasant and happy if people loved their neighbors more. What a beautiful "thing" love is, and how little there is of it in our lives. True, people often speak of love, but that is mostly love of the body. Whereas true love ... [illegible text] of one's neighbor and ... [illegible text] of a human being has been forgotten. In our lives we all feel the lack of true and sincere love of one's neighbor. There are so many unfortunate people here. So many families without a father or a mother. So many families ripped apart by the war. How comforting it would be to hear just one sincere word of consolation, but most people have hearts as hard as ice. They would sooner just shove you aside.

September 15, 1945

Each day there are new worries, new problems. My life now is like a goblet filled to overflowing with poison into which still more toxins are being poured. O my God, my consolation, grant me, I pray, greater spiritual strength! Grant me the physical strength to bear all my present and future crosses. It is nearly a year now that I have been among foreigners. I have received no consolation, no support from them. However, my heart does not ache because of that, for strangers will be strangers. But now, my long-awaited brother-in-law has arrived, the one who even promised to help me materially, although I did not believe that. Still, I was looking forward joyously because I would have someone to lean on and tell my troubles to. And there have been so many heartaches! What a disappointment it has been! I don't know what displeased him, but he has not come back, neither yesterday nor today. Perhaps it's because I didn't treat him as an honored guest and did not receive him properly. Or had he expected to find in me a willing lover? What a repulsive and degrading thought. Even if the most difficult life awaits me, I am determined to carry on without accepting the kind of help or support that would besmirch the honor of my family. The Almighty has not forsaken me yet, and I firmly believe in a chaste future for myself. It is possible that our dearest Mykolas, the head of our family, is alive and well. Many men who were missing have been reunited with their families. Perhaps for us too that day will come. If it was his destiny to perish in this war, I will bear my burdens alone. God may so arrange the events of our lives that even without him the four of us will not want. Just a little more patience!

My eyes are full of tears, my heart is breaking—when will we all be together again? Dear God, it is so hard today! Help me to

calm myself. Grant me the necessary strength. These days we all need good health even more than before. Who will mother, who will take care of my precious children if I get sick?

September 18, 1945

Sometimes I wish I could unburden my aching heart to someone and reveal all my heartfelt grief. When and to whom will I be able to do so?

It is exactly one year since my beloved husband, my heart's consolation, was torn from me. Who would have thought that we would be separated for so long? We thought we would all be together again in a month to bear together our misfortunes and troubles in a foreign land. Alas, Fate was most unkind to us. This sad and painful anniversary is breaking my heart. My eyes no longer have any tears left. Yet no one can see my immense sorrow. There is no one to comfort, to console me. The silence of the cemetery reigns in our room. Little Vitalija is sleeping peacefully, but I cannot find peace till half the night is over.

As I look at the faint moonlight shining through the window, many memories come back to me. This very same moon shone on the two of us as we wandered in the fields of Gustonys when we were young. This same moon laughed at our love. This self-same moon also witnessed our arguments and our fights. And there were quarrels—many of them! It could have been otherwise, for we loved one another most sincerely. How little human beings should worry about earthly possessions, yet how much time, health, and even happiness is wasted on them. If only the past could return, I think I would know now how to change our lives for the better. If only my dearest Mykolas would return, how I would love him! I have always loved him, but I also had to endure a lot. I could not open my heart to him. He could not or did not want to understand my inner world. I have a kind and sensitive heart, but I did not know how to express this. Sometimes I was severely criticized and was truly misunderstood. Is that why Fate separated us? It is past time for this cruel punishment to end. Now we would know how to live, and our love for each other would be evident everywhere and always. Our thoughts and our desires would be as one and would lead us throughout the rest of our lives right up to the threshold of eternity.

September 28, 1945

The cloudy and rainy days of autumn are here. It has been raining for the past three days. For three days all I have done is sit in our room and ponder the tragic fate of our family.

All kinds of rumors are circulating about our unfortunate homeland. No, the news is not good. It is still occupied by a terrible enemy. Yet we hear constantly that we might be repatriated. Although I do not believe this will happen, still it is unpleasant to keep hearing this. No one knows for sure what will be the future of Lithuania or what will happen to those of us who left it.

One of my most important concerns is the fate of our fam-

ily. Can this unbearable situation continue to torment us much longer?

Today I was visited by Mr. Zukas. He travels a lot, and wherever he goes, he always inquires about Mykolas. He has been to the British zone of Germany but did not find Mykolas there. People there were saying that in January Mykolas had been in Pilau [East Prussia; now Baltiysk, Kaliningrad, Russia]. O my God, how close he was to us! Zimmerbude is only a dozen miles from Pilau. We ourselves were in Pilau on February 1. Was Mykolas there then too? Where, oh, where did he go, since no one can find him anywhere? Could he have perished while searching for us? No, no, he is still alive! I must find him. But how? Dear God, You know I can't leave this refugee camp. How can I leave my children all alone? If Antanas were more caring, he could look after them. Neither can Bronius be entrusted with such a responsibility. All he cares about is whiskey and the ladies. There are many people in this refugee camp, but I do not know even one truly good person. They are all egoistic, jealous, and deceitful. So all I can do is keep waiting, keep on enduring patiently. How this waiting will end, I don't know. Perhaps joyful days, perhaps total disaster lies ahead. Dear God, please keep me in your care and protect me. This terrible uncertainty is tormenting my soul. When, oh, when will I feel again at least a hint of earthly joy?

September 29, 1945

Today is a special day for our family. Yesterday Elvyra picked a small bouquet of the loveliest wild flowers in anticipation of her beloved father's name-day. Of course, she was able to present them to him only in her imagination. Where he is and who is presenting him with flowers and greeting him today is for us an unsolvable mystery.

It is already his second name-day without him. He is not with us, and perhaps never again will be. But maybe he is already not far from us? O my God, how wonderful it would be if he came back soon!

I just came back from a concert. It was a lovely performance of works of Mozart and Grieg on piano and violin. True, I am no musician, but I could feel that it was very nicely done. At times the violin wailed, lamenting our misfortune, at times it protested stormily. My heart also wept silent tears. While listening to the now mild and now tempestuous music, I remembered the best days of my youth. There were many happy hours then, and there were days laden with sorrow. That is how this short life passes—through blossoming fields and through thorny thickets.

The music I heard is still resounding in my ears. My soul is at peace—content. I have forgotten all my troubles. At this moment there are no complaints in my soul. I am thinking that in a little while Mykolas will come back to us, and we will be the happiest people in the world. But when, oh, when will this happy day dawn?

*To be continued in the next issue of Bridges.*



# a taste of lithuania

## Two Apple Cakes

(Du Obuolinių Pyragai)

By Jana Sirusaitė Motivans



Apples are very popular in Lithuania because the climate is very suitable for apple trees to grow and produce generous quantities of fruit. Apples are stored to last throughout the winter, are preserved by slicing and drying, or are made into applesauce. Fresh apples are wonderful to bake with, and there are many different versions of apple cake in Lithuania. Most are rather simple and not too sweet, perfect for dessert or an afternoon treat with coffee or tea, or even for breakfast.

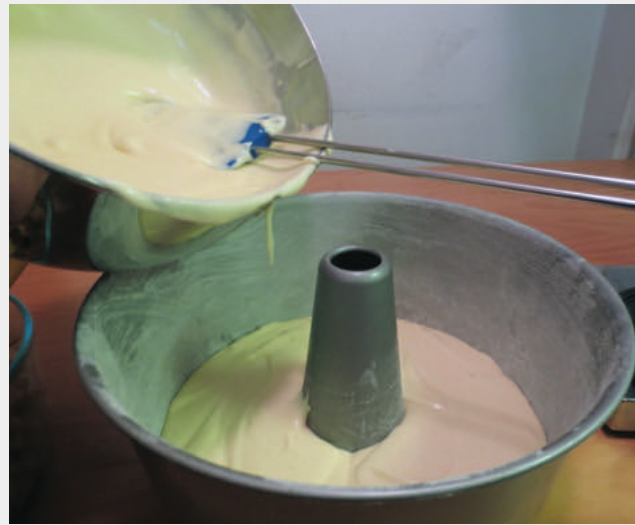
This month I will share two apple cake recipes, one from

each of my močiutės (grandmothers). Both recipes are very similar, but the difference is in the presentation. Močiutė Sofija chopped up her apples into chunks, made a thick batter and then layered the apples and batter in a tube pan to make a classic coffee cake shape that is served in slices. Močiutė Elena sliced her apples, made a thinner batter and baked the cake in a flat baking pan. The apple slices are layered on top of the cake and the finished cake is cut into squares to serve. It is delicious served warm with ice cream.

## Močiutė Sofija's Apple Cake (Obuolių Pyragas)

### INGREDIENTS

- 5 cups peeled and chopped apples (approximately 5 medium-sized apples)
- 2 cups sugar, divided into 1/4 cup and 1 3/4 cups
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 cup canola oil
- 4 large eggs
- 3 cups flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 2 teaspoons vanilla



1. Butter and flour a 10-inch tube pan. Preheat the oven to 350°.
2. In a medium-sized bowl, combine the chopped apples with 1/4 cup sugar and the cinnamon.
3. In a large bowl, with an electric mixer combine the oil and the remaining 1 3/4 cups of sugar and beat the mixture for two minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after adding each.
4. In another medium-sized bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder and salt.
5. Add the flour mixture to the oil mixture in batches, alternating with the orange juice. Beat in the vanilla. The batter will be somewhat thick.
6. Pour one third of the batter into the prepared pan. Arrange half of the apple mixture on top of the batter, and then pour half of the remaining batter over the apples. Arrange the remaining apple mixture over the batter, and then pour the last of the batter on top. You will have two layers of apples sandwiched between three layers of batter.
7. Bake the apple cake on the middle rack of the pre-heated oven for 50-60 minutes or until it has pulled away from the pan slightly and a tester comes out clean. Let the cake cool in the pan on a cooling rack for about 30 minutes, then turn it out of the pan onto the rack and let it cool completely.



# a taste of lithuania

## Močiutė Elena's Apple Cake

(Obuolių Pyragas)

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups peeled and thinly sliced apples (approximately 3 medium-sized apples)
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup canola oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 1/3 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- pinch of salt



1. Butter and flour an 8" x 8" baking pan. Preheat the oven to 350°.
2. In a medium bowl, combine the sliced apples with the brown sugar and cinnamon.
3. In a large bowl, using an electric mixer, beat eggs until light and fluffy. Add sugar, oil and vanilla. Continue beating until well combined.
4. In another medium-sized bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder and salt. Add to the egg mixture, and mix at low speed until blended.
5. Pour half of the batter into the prepared pan. Add half of the apple mixture, using your fingers to spread it evenly over the batter. Top with the remaining batter. Arrange the remaining apple slices on top in neat rows. If any juice remains in the bowl, drizzle it lightly over the apple slices.
6. Place the apple cake into the pre-heated oven and bake for 40-45 minutes or until a cake tester inserted into the middle comes out clean. Transfer the pan to a cooling rack. Serve warm or cool.





## In the Distant Northwest, We're for Lithuania, Too!

Lithuanian team takes part in Portland's epic "Hood to Coast" relay race.

by Laurynas R. Misevičius

Photographs by Ingrida Misevičienė, Andrey Kozhevnikov, Rytis Umbrasas and Alex Pervov



Lituanica's participants and volunteers in the 2015 "Hood to Coast" marathon, left to right: Kantautas Žalpys, Javier Avilla, Romanas Zontovičius, Millana Momgaudytė-Koroteev, team captain Inga Sadaunikaitė-Kozhevnikov, Rytis Umbrasas, Svatlana Fabbro, Rima Bačkienė, Andrey Kozhevnikov, Rolandas Bačkys, Giedrė Babarskienė, Vilmantas Babarskas, Agnė Babarskaitė and David Ponce

While Jonas Kazlauskas, the senior strategist for the Lithuanian national basketball team, was still puzzling over and arranging his team for Eurobasket 2015, Inga Sadaunikaitė-Kozhevnikov, the unofficial leader of the Portland Lithuanian running club, was confident in her choice of a dozen sports enthusiasts selected to compete in the "Hood to Coast" relay race. While we were visiting our homeland and, in a crowd of thousands, singing our national anthem before the basketball matches in Šiauliai Arena and in the legendary Kaunas Sports Hall, and when together with all our countrymen we were screaming "We're for Lithuania" at the top of our lungs, across the Atlantic our team was preparing for an equally important mission "also for Lithuania" in Portland.

Aided by a few "legionnaires" from Mexico and Russia, our fellow Lithuanians (most of them from the states of Oregon and Washington) trained intensively for the 34th Annual Portland Marathon, which always takes place at the end of August. The first 198-mile (318.65 km), 32-hour race was organized more than three decades ago and saw contestants run from Mount Hood to the town of Seaside, Oregon.

Competing for the second year in a row, team Lituanica got its name in 2013, when it was christened by Ingrida Misevičienė, the regional chairwoman of the Lithuanian Community of Portland, in honor of the anniversary of Darius and Girėnas' flight across the Atlantic. This year, the team of overseas Lithuanians was joined by two great sports amateurs from the Homeland, orienteers Rima and Rolandas Bakčys, who arranged their holiday in North America to accommodate the "Hood to Coast"

marathon. Sadly, firefighter Aidas Ardzijauskas, whose seemingly superhuman feats include running from Los Angeles to New York and winning this year's 10-day ultramarathon in the Big Apple, was unable to participate in the relay race and had to put off this intention for another time. At the last minute his place was passed on to San Francisco's Romanas Zontovičius, formerly from Kaunas, who was delighted to join his northern countrymen.

Tension arose on the eve of the marathon when for a while it seemed that a year's training might have been in vain and the running enthusiasts' dreams may be shattered. An unexpected opponent to more than a thousand teams of 12 members each, the weather, having been generous all summer long,



Inga Sadaunikaitė-Kozhevnikov from Portland put together the team running "for Lithuania" and completed the hardest leg of the marathon in the mountains.



Vilmantas Babarskas is our only fellow countryman to have participated in the unique "Hood to Coast" marathon for three years in a row. This year he persuaded his relative Rolandas from Vilnius, along with his wife Rima, to join the team.

suddenly turned: the sky armored itself with steel clouds, while the coastal winds raced at the destructive speed of 112 kilometers per hour. The organizers cancelled all the events that usually take place at the finish line in Seaside, including the final concert, but on Friday afternoon the relay race commenced as planned on the slope of Mount Hood.

The title of a Czech detective film about football, "The match will take place regardless of the weather," is one many of us remember from childhood. It also came to the mind of Inga, the team captain, who had to run the most physically trying leg of the marathon (over 10 kilometers uphill) in the least favorable weather. After a sleepless night, the runner set off at dawn and, as if in a dream, saw the sierra towering before her with colorful lightning strikes bouncing and rolling downhill; she even saw the pagan god Perkūnas, and was, ultimately, soaked to the skin. It's with good reason that the longest and most famous Portland marathon is also seen as the strangest. However, Inga would do it again without a second thought, as would almost 13,000 crazy runners from 36 countries and all 50 U.S. states. As soon as the registration for next year's "Hood to Coast" marathon begins, these sports enthusiasts don't hesitate to give up the last weekend of August that could be spent relaxing with one's family for the surreal world of people happily insane for a day and a half.

"We've never seen anything like this" said Rima, a professional tour guide in Lithuania and Europe, and her husband, Rolandas, a property manager for Swedbank. They currently live in Vilnius and both have been active in the world of sport since adolescence. "This marathon was defined by a fantastic, all-pervading, beating energy; the enthusiasm of thousands of participants, and the goodwill of the helpful volunteers. Our

almost entirely Lithuanian team enjoyed a delightful atmosphere of mutual understanding and cooperation. In general, the American Lithuanians surprised us with their patriotism, friendliness and plenitude of events. We would love to return and participate in such a unique marathon sometime in the future."

While Inga, Millana, Giedrė, Rima, Rolandas, Kantas, Rytis, Vilmantas, Romanas and Andrejus, as well as the "legionnaires" Javier from Mexico and Tartar Svetlana from Russia, were battling fatigue and trying to fit in the self-set time limit of 28 hours and 30 minutes, the representatives of the Lithuanian Athletic Union of North America (LAUNA) awaited the team with pre-prepared commemorative medals on the windy beach in Seaside. Soon Lituanica's Giedrė Babarskienė, who ran the final leg of the marathon, was greeted by a crowd of supporters that included her daughter, Agnė, and her boyfriend, David, both of whom had been volunteering in Seaside all day long. So, we can all rest assured that our tricolor flag will flutter in the winds of Portland for many more decades, and in a crowd of runners in the colorfully mad City of Roses we're bound to spot Lithuanians as well.



See you next time in Portland ... but for now we wish the Lithuanian basketball team good luck in the European championship!



## To Lithuania

by Aldona Middlesworth

There are no stamps, commemorative or par avion,  
to affix to an envelope that will travel back  
to the last century and reach your native son

Joseph standing outside with his wife  
in their dooryard watching a stork  
brood near the warmth of their chimney  
that early March morning.

No red stamp in snow  
that morning to warn them  
as they unwrap the package

of Hershey's sent to them  
with the fifty-dollar bill  
hidden in cocoa. Not a glimmer

as they cook, made to  
first by one side  
coming to their farm  
in daylight

then by the other side  
who come  
in the night. No alert

that next day at gun point  
they will be forced  
to sit all day long in the village square  
on bodies shot dead.

Nor even then a stamp  
to promise  
them that, truly they will  
return to you, soon after ten years

with their own  
children frozen in exile  
Baltic faces as engraved as  
the Siberian glacier.

No stamp  
quite like that.

*Aldona Middlesworth was born in Chicago to parents who had emigrated from Lithuania. Other members of her large family remained in Lithuania, where many still reside. Her grandparents, aunts and uncles were exiled in Siberia for 10 years before being allowed to return to their native Lithuania. Aldona is a professor in Philadelphia with Temple University's Intellectual Heritage Program.*



## Lithuanian Tent Attracts Lowell Folk Festival Crowds

Two Lithuanian events enhanced the annual Lowell Folk Festival, held July 24 to 26, 2015, in historic Lowell, Mass., at a popular site along the Merrimack Canal. The center of the Textile Traditions pavilion sported a tent beautifully decorated with Lithuanian weavings, woodcarving, metalwork and a farmhouse window painted with floral motifs. The brilliant colors of the dramatic woven patterns caught all eyes, and the Lithuanian tent attracted a robust audience throughout the three-day festival.

Folk artist Jonas Stundžia created the inviting Lithuanian tent, which stood among representatives of a dozen other ethnic groups. The focus was on two types of Lithuanian weaving: pick-up (or tied) weave, producing small-scale fabrics known as *dimai*, and the overlay (or *kaišytinis*) weave. Fabrics for the family's needs were produced on small looms known as backstrap looms, which the weavers literally fastened to their bodies by wrapping a cord or belt around their backs. The backstrap loom has the warp set into a rigid heddle. Weavers sit while using backstrap looms, begin their vast array of patterns in their laps and inch forward as the design comes to life. Backstrap looms are easily portable and can be used anywhere.

Jonas displayed three backstrap looms at the Lowell Festival. One contained a completely finished design. The second featured a partially completed pattern of purple stylized tulips, which Jonas was in the process of weaving and used for demonstration throughout the festival. The third loom was set up



Irena Malašauskienė and Jonas Stundžia at the Lithuanian tent at the Lowell Folk Festival. Stundžia holds a backstrap loom with an example of Lithuanian pick-up weaving.



Jonas Stundžia with a visiting Lithuanian in front of the Lithuanian tent.

for visitors to try their hand at both types of weaving. Visitors were frequently seduced from the dancing and music to watch the weaving demonstrations against a folk music background.

Spinning and weaving were an integral part of a woman's domestic work until the end of the 19th century. Thin linen was used to weave cloth for blouses, kerchiefs and shawls. Shirts for children and men were often made from less fine linen. Everyday clothing and household articles were made from tow cloth. The *dimai* make it possible for the weaver to be more creative and incorporate words and pictures into the pattern.

Jonas is a board member and president of the Boston chapter of the Lithuanian Folk Art Institute (LFAI – Lietuvių Tautodailės Institutas), as well as a board member of the Lithuanian Catholic Academy of Science. Jonas has long been active in preservation issues in his community with a special focus on immigration and ethnic heritage. In addition to the crafts displayed in his tent, Jonas had the opportunity to share with many attentive visitors the political history of Lithuania and its rich culture.

At the Traditional Foodways pavilion, Irena Malašauskienė demonstrated how to make Lithuanian-style dill pickles with samples for all. Jonas shared his grandmother's recipe for kidney soup with half-sour pickles. When summer guests arrive at your house, you may invoke the ancient custom for welcoming a visitor with a treat of fresh cucumber spears drizzled with clear honey.

Thank you to Irena and Jonas for representing the Lithuanian community so well during the 2015 celebration of ethnic heritage in Lowell!

*Submitted by Milda Richardson*

*Photos courtesy of Jonas Stundžia's archives*

## 2017 World Lithuanian Games to Be Hosted by Kaunas

Sports may be one of the areas that best enables Lithuanian communities abroad to develop and expand, thus strengthening Lithuanian roots and customs.

This was highlighted when representatives of Kaunas City Municipality met with President of the Lithuanian Athletic Union of North America, Laurynas Misevičius, to discuss preparation for the upcoming 2017 World Lithuanian Games, which will be held in Kaunas.

According to Sigitas Šliažas, deputy director of Kaunas Municipality Administration, the World Lithuanian Games are important for fostering Lithuanian identity. They enable world Lithuanian communities to maintain close ties.

"Coming from Kaunas, I am pleased that the 10th World Lithuanian Games will be held here," said Misevičius.

The first World Lithuanian Games were held in Canada in 1978. Lithuania's team participated in the games only after a decade, in 1988, in Adelaide, Australia.



LAUNA President Laurynas Misevičius (second from right) with Kaunas Municipality officials during World Lithuanian Games discussions.  
Photo: Evaldas Virketis

## Survey for Lithuanians Living Abroad

The Lithuanian Foreign Ministry, with public opinion research center Vilmorus, is now conducting its third annual survey of Lithuanians who are living outside of Lithuania. The goal of the online opinion poll is to understand the needs of Lithuanians in diaspora and to strengthen ties with them.

All Lithuanians over 18 years of age who have been living abroad for at least six months are asked to participate. Each person completing the survey will be entered for a chance to win one of 10 Lithuanian souvenirs. The questionnaire is available at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/3CCFQT3](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3CCFQT3).

## Balzekas Museum Digitizes Genealogy Archives, Needs Volunteers

The Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture in Chicago has a robust archive of material about Lithuanian-Americans. The Genealogy Department of the museum holds descriptions of family histories (many written in English), photographs and family trees that in some cases cover centuries. The archive also holds numerous issues of Lithuanian-American newspapers, some dating back to their founding in the early 1900s, many of which are no longer published.

In addition to the important information about Lithuanian public life contained in the newspapers—association activities, names of churches, cultural events, etc.—there are also death notices that are often a boon to genealogical researchers. In addition to obituaries from Lithuanian-American newspapers, the archive also collects them from Lithuanian and American newspapers.

The museum's Genealogy Department has begun digitizing the death notices printed in the 1914-1970 issues of the *Naujienos* newspaper in their collection. Because the newspaper has a large format and the issues are bound, they are photographing the obituaries and will then archive the photographs by the deceased's name and year of death.

One of the museum's volunteers, Vida Baliutavičienė, has already photographed the *Naujienos* death notices from 1914 to 1937. However, the museum is looking for additional volunteers to help photograph the remaining obituaries, begin photographing notices from other papers, put the periodical files in order and scan the alphabetized obituaries.

If you would like to help, please contact the director of the Genealogy Department, Karilė Vaitkutė, at 773-582-6500 or visit the museum at 6500 S. Pulaski Road in Chicago.

## our community

### Land of Songs to Premiere in U.S. in October



Land of Songs, a documentary by sister-brother filmmaking team Aldona and Julian Watts that focuses on the singing grandmothers of the Dainava region of Lithuania, will have its U.S. premiere during the Margaret Mead Film Festival in New York. The film is a contender for the Margaret Mead Filmmaker Award.

The screening will be on Friday, October 23, 2015, at 4 p.m., at the American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, New York, N.Y. Tickets may be purchased at [www.amnh.org/explore/margaret-mead-film-festival/films/land-of-songs](http://www.amnh.org/explore/margaret-mead-film-festival/films/land-of-songs)

### 2016 Dance Festival Hotel Rooms Now Available

Hotels for the 15th North American Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival (Šokių Šventė) have begun taking reservations. The four festival hotels are within a four-block walk of the Royal Farms Arena, near Baltimore's Inner Harbor, where the festival will take place. Festival events span from July 1 through July 3, 2016, culminating with the folk dance festival on Sunday, July 3.

Room rates at all of the hotels are \$139 per night + tax, single/double/triple/quad. Large room blocks have been set aside for Šokių Šventė at the Hilton Baltimore, Baltimore Marriott-Inner Harbor, Holiday Inn Baltimore-Inner Harbor and Days Inn Inner Harbor. Reservations must be made through the Visit Baltimore Housing Bureau to get the festival rate. The hotels will not accept reservations from individual call-ins for the group block. Please do not contact the hotels directly for reservations. All

online reservations can be accessed through the Visit Baltimore Housing Bureau at: <https://aws.passkey.com/event/14104583/owner/290/landing>. To reserve by phone, please call 1-410-837-4636 or toll free 1-800-282-6632.

L. Linas Orentas, chairman of the festival Organizing Committee, stated, "The theme for the folk dance festival is 'A Journey Calls You There,' which comes from a poem by the famous Lithuanian poet, Bernardas Brazdionis. The Lithuanian American Communities of Baltimore and Washington, D.C., are ready and waiting for dancers and guests from around the world to make their journey to Baltimore and experience a dynamic, unique and memorable Šokių Šventė in 2016. See you then!"

For more festival and hotel information please visit <http://sokiusvente2016.org/en/hotels/>

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September 2015



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

**ONGOING****Through December 31  
No Home To Go To: The Story  
of Baltic Displaced Persons  
1944-1952**Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian  
Culture, 6500 South Pulaski Rd.,  
Chicago  
Info: balzekasmuseum.org**Every Friday, 2-10:30 p.m.  
Fish Fry Fridays at the  
Rockford Lithuanian Club**716 Indiana Ave., Rockford, Ill.  
Open to the public.  
Info: rockfordlithuanianclub@  
hotmail.com or 815-962-9256**OCTOBER 2015****October 18, 12-5 p.m.  
Exploring the Baltics - celebra-  
tion of community heritage**Holy Trinity Roman Catholic  
Church, 53 Capitol Ave., Hartford,  
Conn.**October 18, 2-5 p.m.  
Ona Puckoriūtė's puppet  
theater performance  
"Undinėlė" (Mermaid)**Latvian Hall, 5500 SW Dosch Rd,  
Portland, Ore.  
Performance will be done in both  
Lithuanian and English.  
Tickets: \$5 for kids, \$10 for adults  
(discounts for families of 4+  
people). Please bring a dessert to  
share. Soft drinks and tea/coffee  
will be provided.  
Info: pasakeles.com/category/  
undinele-little-mermaid-  
andersenas-juros-karalaite/**October 23  
Land of Songs U.S. Premiere**Margaret Mead Film Festival,  
American Museum of Natural  
History, Central Park West at 79th  
Street, New York, N.Y.  
Info: amnh.org/explore/margaret-  
mead-film-festival/films/land-of-  
songs**October 24, 6 p.m.****Lithuanian Oktoberfest**  
Lithuanian World Center, 14911  
127th St., Lemont, Ill.  
Info: lcenter.org**October 25, Noon  
Pokštininkai Theatre Group  
Debut Performance**Lithuanian World Center, 14911  
OLMC Parish Lower Hall, 275  
North 8th St., Brooklyn, N.Y.  
Freewill donations accepted.**October 25, 12:30 p.m.  
Child's Gate to Learning Fall  
Harvest Fundraising Lunch**Lithuanian World Center, 14911  
127th St., Lemont, Ill.  
Info: vvm@childgate.org**October 25, 4 p.m.  
Virginijus Barkauskas Organ  
Recital**Cathedral of the Incarnation, 50  
Cathedral Ave., Garden City, N.Y.  
Info: virgilbarkauskas@gmail.com**October 31, 12:30-2 p.m.  
All Souls Commemoration and  
Concert with Vilnius University  
Pro Musica Choir**Annunciation Church, 259 N 5th  
St., Brooklyn, N.Y.  
Info: 347-415-6379 or zybuokle@  
gmail.com**NOVEMBER 2015****November 7, 2 p.m.****Film Screening: Mes  
Dainuosim/We Will Sing**  
Anthology Film Archives, 32  
Second Ave., New York, N.Y.  
\$12; students \$10  
Info: 347-415-6379 or zybuokle@  
gmail.com**November 7, 5:30 p.m.  
Lithuanian Foundation Annual  
Fall Gala**Lithuanian World Center, 14911  
127th St., Lemont, Ill.  
Artistic program performed by  
Edvinas Minkštimas (piano) and  
Tadas Korris (double bass). Tick-  
ets: \$75 (open bar); \$50 (under  
21). RSVP before October 26.  
Info: lithuanianfoundation.org,  
630-257-1616**November 7 and 8  
Philadelphia Lithuanian Fair**  
Lithuanian Music Hall, 2715 E.  
Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia  
Info: lithuanianmha.org**November 14, 6:30 p.m.  
San Francisco Lithuanian  
Community Fall Ball**  
Elks Lodge, 450 Post Street, San  
Francisco, Calif.  
Tickets: \$85 individual, \$160  
couple before October 31.  
Info: sflithuanians.typeform.com/  
to/gRY3YB**November 21, 1-3 p.m.  
Lithuanians in San Diego  
Rudens Balius/Fall Ball**  
MCAS Miramar Officers' Club,  
Building 4472, Anderson Ave.,  
MCAS Miramar, San Diego, Calif.**November 21, 6 p.m.  
Amber Roots Heritage Club**  
Lithuanian Music Hall, 2715 E.  
Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia  
Everyone welcome. Use side  
entrance on Tilton Street. Bring a  
dish to share.  
Info: milliemarks@aol.com**November 28, 8 p.m.  
Andrius Mamontovas Concert**  
Copernicus Center, Chicago  
Info: copernicuscenter.org/  
mamontovas**DECEMBER 2015****December 5, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
December 6, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
LWC Holiday Craft Fair**  
Lithuanian World Center, Riskus  
Hall, 14911 127th St., Lemont, Ill.  
Info: lcenter.org**December 5, 5 p.m.  
Portland Lithuanian Christmas  
Eve and Children's Program**  
Latvian Hall, 5500 SW Dosch Rd,  
Portland, Ore.**December 6, time TBA  
Omaha Lithuanian Community  
Christmas Program**  
Sts. Peter & Paul, Omaha, Nebr.  
Info: omahoslbt.blogspot.com**December 12, 5 p.m.  
Kansas City Lithuanian  
Community Christmas Party,  
Potluck Dinner and Kučios**  
Cedar Creek Clubhouse, Olathe,  
Kans.  
Info: kclith.org**December 12, 1-3 p.m.  
Amber Roots Lithuanian  
Heritage Club Kučios**  
Lithuanian Music Hall, Philadelphia  
All welcome. Please bring a tradi-  
tional, meatless dish to share.  
Info: milliemarks@aol.com**December 14, 7 p.m.  
Lithuanian-American Com-  
munity Night with Denver  
Nuggets / Pre-Game Meet and  
Greet with Arturas Karnisovas**  
Pepsi Center, Denver, Colo.  
Info: nuggetstix.com/arturas1214**FEBRUARY 2015**February, date TBA  
**Poker Tournament to benefit  
Versmė Lithuanian School of  
Kansas City**  
Info: kclith.org**MARCH 2016**March, date TBA  
**KC Lithuanian Community  
Independence Day Celebration**  
Info: kclith.org**MAY 2016**May 26-28  
**Association for the Advancement  
of Baltic Studies Conference**  
University of Pennsylvania,  
Philadelphia  
Info: aabs-balticstudies.org**JULY 2016**July 3  
**15th North American  
Lithuanian Dance Festival**  
Royal Farms Arena, Baltimore  
Info: sokiusvente2016.org**OCTOBER 2016**October 9  
**Golden Jubilee of Our Lady of  
Šiluva Chapel**  
Shrine of the Immaculate Con-  
ception, Washington, D.C.  
Info: siluva50usa.org

# bridges

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