

# bridges



LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

\$5

March 2016

# this month in history

## March Anniversaries

### 630 years ago

**March 4, 1386**

Jogaila was crowned King of Poland. Following his coronation, Jogaila returned to Lithuania and began to eradicate all pagan practices. He persuaded Lithuanian nobles to convert to Catholicism in exchange for eternal ownership of their lands and possessions, and freedom from work for the Grand Duke.

### 615 years ago

**March 13, 1401**

The first Samogitian uprising took place against the Teutonic Order when Lithuanian Grand Duke Vytautas refused to return 4,000 Samogitian refugees who had fled to Lithuania, as he was required to do under the Treaty of Salynas. The Order had instituted a system of forced labor on the formerly free peasantry, causing much discontent, and Vytautas claimed the Samogitians were not serfs but freemen who were not covered by the agreement.

### 560 years ago

**March 1, 1456**



Wladyslaw Jagiello, grandson of Jogaila, was born. He went on to become king of Bohemia in 1471 and then king of Hungary in 1490, after which he lived the remainder of his life in the Hungarian city of Buda. His official titles were King of Hungary, Bohemia, Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia, Rama [Bosnia], Serbia, Galicia, Lodomeria, Cumania and Bulgaria; Prince of Silesia and Luxembourg; and Margrave of Moravia and Lusatia.

### 185 years ago

**March 25, 1831**

The Lithuanian uprising of 1831 began when Lithuanians disarmed 600 Russian soldiers stationed in Raseiniai and set up an interim government. Long discontent with prohibitions on freedoms, limits on pursuit of knowledge and demands to abandon their national identity, Lithuanians drew inspiration from the revolutions in France and Belgium. Soon the whole country was in revolt, with only Vilnius and Kaunas remaining under tsarist control.

The revolt was short-lived due to leadership disagreements that gave the Russians time to send reinforcements and quell the rebellion by July 1831. Many former rebels, with foreign help, made their way to France. Those unable to escape were treated harshly. All cultural institutions, including many schools, were closed, property was confiscated, children were taken, and numerous families were deported to Siberia and other Russian lands.

### 155 years ago

**March 18, 1861**

Birth of writer and political activist Gabrielė Petkevičaitė, who used the pen name Bitė (Bee), on the Puziniškis estate in Panevėžys district. Despite poor health—a damaged spine—she looked after her five brothers following her mother's death, graduated from a girls school, took beekeeping courses and assisted her physician father. She secretly tutored peasant children in violation of the Lithuanian press ban and distributed smuggled books to her father's patients.



She began her writing career contributing to Varpas (The Bell), focusing on issues of social inequality, and her subsequent literary works often contained social commentary and patriotic themes. In 1893 she established and headed Žiburėlis (Little Light), a relief society to teach and support poor school children of both sexes.

Petkevičaitė was one of the organizers and chairwoman of the first Congress of Lithuanian Women in 1907 and co-founder of the Lithuanian Women's Association in 1908. From 1911 to 1913, she edited a women's newspaper, Žibutė (Violet), which published many articles demanding political rights for women.

She was elected to and chaired the first sitting of the Constituent Assembly in 1920, was a Seimas member from 1922 to 1926 and ran for the presidency of the Lithuanian republic in 1926, receiving just a single vote.

As a teacher in Panevėžys from 1919 to 1924, Petkevičaitė taught students about the history and culture of other nations, encouraging friendship, respect and tolerance. Her classroom notes on world literature were published as a two-volume textbook.

### 120 years ago

**March 13, 1896**

The first telephone station began operating in Vilnius, with approximately 150 subscribers.

### 60 years ago

**March 1, 1956**

Birth of Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė in Vilnius.

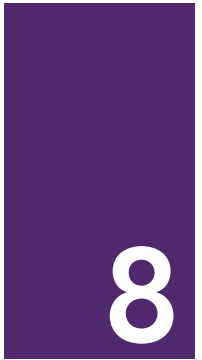
### 25 years ago

**March 7, 1991**

Vytautas Landsbergis received the Norwegian People's Peace Prize for his role in the restoration of Lithuanian independence. With the 2,850,000 kroner prize, he established a non-profit, charitable organization for the care and education of handicapped children and young performing artists.

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**Cover:** Egg decorated by Christine Luschas especially for Bridges using traditional Lithuanian etching method. Photo: Teresė Vekteris

**Back cover:** March is the month when the storks return to Lithuania after wintering in Africa. Photo: astudio | Shutterstock

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from the editor

## The Value of a Book

Knygnešiai is an interesting word that doesn't have a literal translation in English, or in any language for that matter. It's a Lithuanian portmanteau of sorts, a word made up from two different words: knyga (book) and nešti (to carry or to bear). It technically means book carrier, and is more often translated as book smuggler, but its meaning is even more nuanced than that—it is the name for the citizens who risked their lives and livelihoods so that their countrymen could read and learn in their native language written in the Latin alphabet.

The knygnešiai were a movement unprecedented in the world during the tsarist era, operating between 1865 and 1904. Lithuanians placed great value on their language and on learning. They chafed at the tsar's backwards policies that devalued education and mandated Russification. Hundreds joined underground associations that published and transported books, newspapers and magazines in secret from abroad to occupied Lithuania. Thousands more were recipients of these gifts, and taught their children in secret at home.

If you're anything like me, it would be difficult to imagine a world without free access to books. As soon as I learned the alphabet, I was hooked. Once I opened the pages to a new world, I was all in. I would check out the public library's limit of 10 books on Saturday morning and usually be finished by Sunday night. During the week I would haunt the school library and read on the bus home and after supper, sometimes at the expense of homework. I rarely put a book down until I was finished, even if it meant reading late into the night by the dim light of my desk lamp and going to school bleary-eyed.

These days, though, reading is a luxury limited by time. Picking up a book and reading cover to cover (I still haven't learned how to put an unfinished book down to read later) means other things don't get done. And going to work bleary-eyed isn't an option.

I was at a conference recently in Austin, near where one of my cousins lives. She moved there more than 20 years ago, and we hadn't seen each other since, so I ditched the opening reception and had dinner with her and her family instead. In addition to catching up, I also met her now-teenaged daughter for the first time. The conversation turned to a recent illness the teen had, and how the only thing that made her feel better was reading.

"Books make everything better, don't they?" I observed. She nodded in assent. Her mother agreed. It's obviously genetic.

While waiting for my flight home from that conference, I recalled my dinner conversation and it dawned on me that a book would be a perfect way to pass a few hours. I logged onto airport wireless, did a quick search for a novel that I'd recently heard about and was pleased to find it available as an e-book. I purchased and downloaded a copy right before my boarding group was called.

By the time we were wheels up, I had been drawn into quick-moving tale of a contemporary marketing professional whose name and ancient soul had been inherited by generations of Lithuanian women before her. The novel, Barbara Chepaitis' *The Amber*, chronicles the passage of heroine Austėja's spirit to her present-day body through pivotal points in Lithuanian history while weaving in the lore of trees and bees, memories of a pagan past, a mystery surrounding a valuable violin and even a bit of redemption for a devil.

The time, quite literally, flew.

  
Teresė Vekteris, Editor

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# Šiluva Chapel: Golden Jubilee Will Celebrate 50 Years of Devotion

By Paulius Klimas and Victor Nakas



Image on the Šiluva prayer card, which may be ordered at [siluva50usa.org](http://siluva50usa.org).

On October 9th of this year, a solemn Mass will be celebrated to commemorate the golden anniversary of the dedication of the Šiluva chapel at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. Monsignor Edmundas Putrimas, the Lithuanian Bishops' Conference Delegate for the Lithuanian Catholic Apostolate Abroad, initiated the establishment of a Jubilee committee, which has been working for more than a year to prepare for the anniversary. The committee has been gathering historical material about the chapel and is disseminating information about upcoming Jubilee events.

Monsignor Rolandas Makrickas, counselor at the Apostolic Nunciature (i.e., Vatican Embassy) in Washington and one of the initiators of the Jubilee committee, visited Lithuania last summer and publicized the work being done in preparation for the Jubilee. Giving an interview to the online (Catholic) newspaper *Bernardinai.lt*, Msgr. Makrickas familiarized readers with the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception as well as with the history of the Šiluva chapel and some of the events planned for the upcoming anniversary.

Makrickas pointed to the special connection that the Jubilee has to Lithuanian history: "The main event of the Jubilee—the solemn Mass of Thanksgiving on October 9, 2016—calls to mind the significance of the times we live in. The Chapel was built 50 years ago, a timespan encompassing 25 years of Soviet occupation followed by 25 years of independence for Lithuania. We are at a beautiful crossroads, and the chapel in its own way reflects Lithuania's spiritual and historical journey." The

full interview from September 8, 2015, can be found on the Šiluva Chapel Jubilee website, [siluva50usa.org](http://siluva50usa.org). During his visit to Lithuania, Makrickas also met with representatives of the online Christian cultural journal *XXI Amžius* (XXI Century) and Marijos Radijas (Mary Radio).

Interesting historical material connected with the Šiluva chapel, mostly related to its establishment, can be found on the Jubilee website. Among other things, there is a recording of the chapel's founding organizer, Bishop Vincentas Brizgys, and his repeated pleas to Lithuanian-Americans 50 years ago, asking them for financial support of the chapel. (It was necessary to raise \$325,000 over several years for the building of the chapel.)

In addition to the bishop's recordings, which the Jubilee committee acquired from the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center in Chicago, the website has a copy of a letter signed by Pope Paul VI on September 4, 1966, in which he congratulated Bishop Brizgys and all Lithuanians, conferring on them an apostolic blessing. Since the blessing of the chapel occurred on that day, it is likely that the letter, or a part of it, was read to the large congregation of Lithuanians who attended the dedication ceremonies.

The website also contains the August 1966 newsletter of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. The newly built Šiluva chapel is depicted on the front cover and is the focus of one of the articles. Those who are interested in the history of the chapel can also find the October 13, 1991, Silver Jubilee program on the website.

The Jubilee committee is not limiting itself to the website to generate interest in the upcoming festivities. In June 2015, the committee ordered 10,000 copies of a 3.5" x 5" prayer card depicting the Šiluva chapel. The reverse side of the card has information in Lithuanian and English regarding the date of the Jubilee Mass and also about an exhibit organized by the Basilica, which will be open to the public from June 30 to October 17, 2016. A third of the prayer cards have already been distributed by Committee members at various events, including the Lithuanian Song Festival in Chicago, Lithuanian Days in Frackville, Pa., Lithuanian Friendship Day (Putnam Picnic) in Connecticut, the Lithuanian-American Community Council session and the Knights of Lithuania convention. Free prayer cards may be ordered via the Jubilee website, [siluva50usa.org](http://siluva50usa.org).

The work of the Jubilee Committee is supported by the Lithuanian Foundation, Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid and the Lithuanian Catholic Mission in Washington, D.C. The committee is very much in need of additional financing and is accepting contributions from individuals. Tax-free donations can be sent to Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid, 64-25 Perry Ave., Maspeth, NY 11378-2441. Please make the check out to Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid and on the check memo line write "Šiluva Chapel Jubilee."

More information:

[www.siluva50usa.org](http://www.siluva50usa.org) and [facebook.com/Siluva50USA](https://facebook.com/Siluva50USA)

## Four Choirs to Take Part in Šiluva Chapel Celebration

By Kristina Nakas

The Šiluva Chapel in Washington 50 Year Jubilee Committee announces that the following four Lithuanian choirs will take part in the celebrations at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in October: Dainava from Chicago, Exultate from Cleveland, Laisvė of Philadelphia, and Volungė of Toronto.

Chairman Victor Nakas expressed the committee's pleasure at having received a positive response from all four choirs invited to participate, adding that "the talented musical director of the choir Exultate, Rita Čyvaite Kliorys, has accepted the role of artistic director." Nakas noted, "Fifty years ago at the blessing of the Šiluva Chapel, choirs from various Lithuanian enclaves in North America took part in the ceremonies. The present committee hopes to ensure that liturgical music will also enhance the jubilee celebrations this fall."

Monsignor Edmundas Putrimas, Lithuanian Bishops' Conference Delegate for the Lithuanian Catholic Apostolate Abroad and coordinator of liturgy for the jubilee, remarked on the

chapel's symbolic importance: "The Šiluva chapel in Washington reflects the persevering efforts of hundreds of thousands of Lithuanian immigrants in the U.S. and Canada to maintain their ethnic and religious identity as they built churches and established their own communities. Church choirs and other musical groups played a central role in their spiritual life."

Artistic director Rita Kliorys stated that the positive response from all the invited choirs speaks to the significance of the upcoming jubilee. She described her hopes for the jubilee Mass: "In selecting the hymns, our greatest wish was to ensure that the whole congregation could actively participate in the liturgy and that our singing would make the jubilee even more meaningful. To have the whole basilica echo with Lithuanian voices, we consciously picked traditional Lithuanian hymns or those composed by Lithuanian composers. The congregation will be invited to sing well-known pieces, while newer, less familiar, compositions will be sung by the choirs. Special prominence will be given to Marian hymns."

Following is a brief sketch of the participating choirs:

### Dainava

Darius Polikaitis, Director



The Lithuanian artistic ensemble Dainava had its start in 1945 in the displaced persons camp in Hanau, Germany. Many of its members having emigrated to the U.S., the ensemble was reborn in Chicago in 1950. Since 1988, the choir of more than 60 members has been directed by musician Darius Polikaitis. Although the main purpose of the ensemble is to propagate Lithuanian choral art, the choir has performed major works in Latin and other languages. Modern Lithuanian major compositions continue to be added to the choir's repertoire.

### Exultate

Rita Kliorys, Director



Exultate began in 1982 as a church choir at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Lithuanian parish in Cleveland. The choir currently has 45 members. In 2007, the choir and its director, Rita Kliorys, were the recipients of an award granted by Lithuania's Folk Culture Center, recognizing the choir's role in fostering Lithuanian ethnic culture and the tradition of Lithuanian song festivals. Exultate has three musical recordings to its credit.



## Laisvė

Ilona Babinskienė, Director



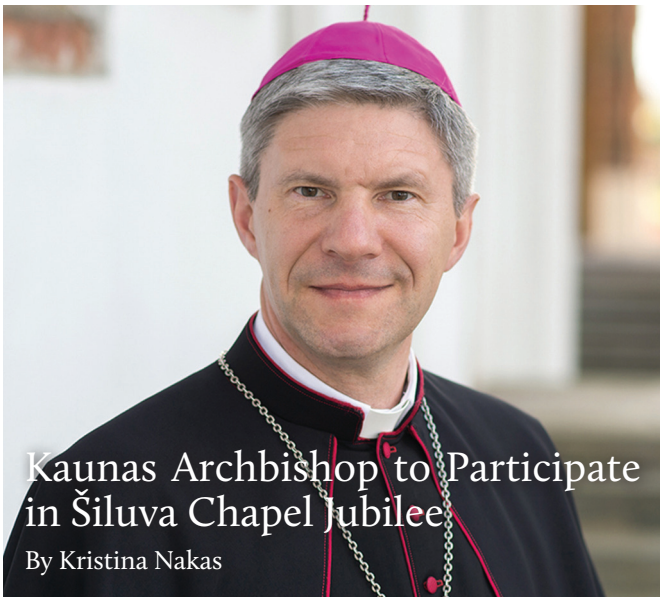
Philadelphia's choir, Laisvė, directed by Ilona Babinskienė, sings every Sunday at St. Andrew parish church. Established about 10 years ago, the choir organizes annual concerts at Christmas and in commemoration of Lithuanian independence. It has also performed for other Lithuanian communities.

## Volungė

Dalia Skrinskaitė Viskontas, Director



Volungė, based in Toronto, Canada, started out as a female octet in 1975. By 1980 it had grown into a 45-member mixed choir. The ensemble, under the directorship of Dalia Skrinskaitė Viskontas, has performed countless programs, drawing from its repertoire of folk, classical, liturgical and modern works.



## Kaunas Archbishop to Participate in Šiluva Chapel Jubilee

By Kristina Nakas

Metropolitan Archbishop of Kaunas, Lithuania, Most Rev. Lionginas Virbalas, S.J.

The Metropolitan of the Archdiocese of Kaunas, Lithuania, Most Rev. Lionginas Virbalas, S.J. has agreed to participate in the October 9, 2016, jubilee marking the golden anniversary of the dedication of the Šiluva Chapel at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington,

D.C. The archbishop will be a concelebrant at the official Mass of Thanksgiving.

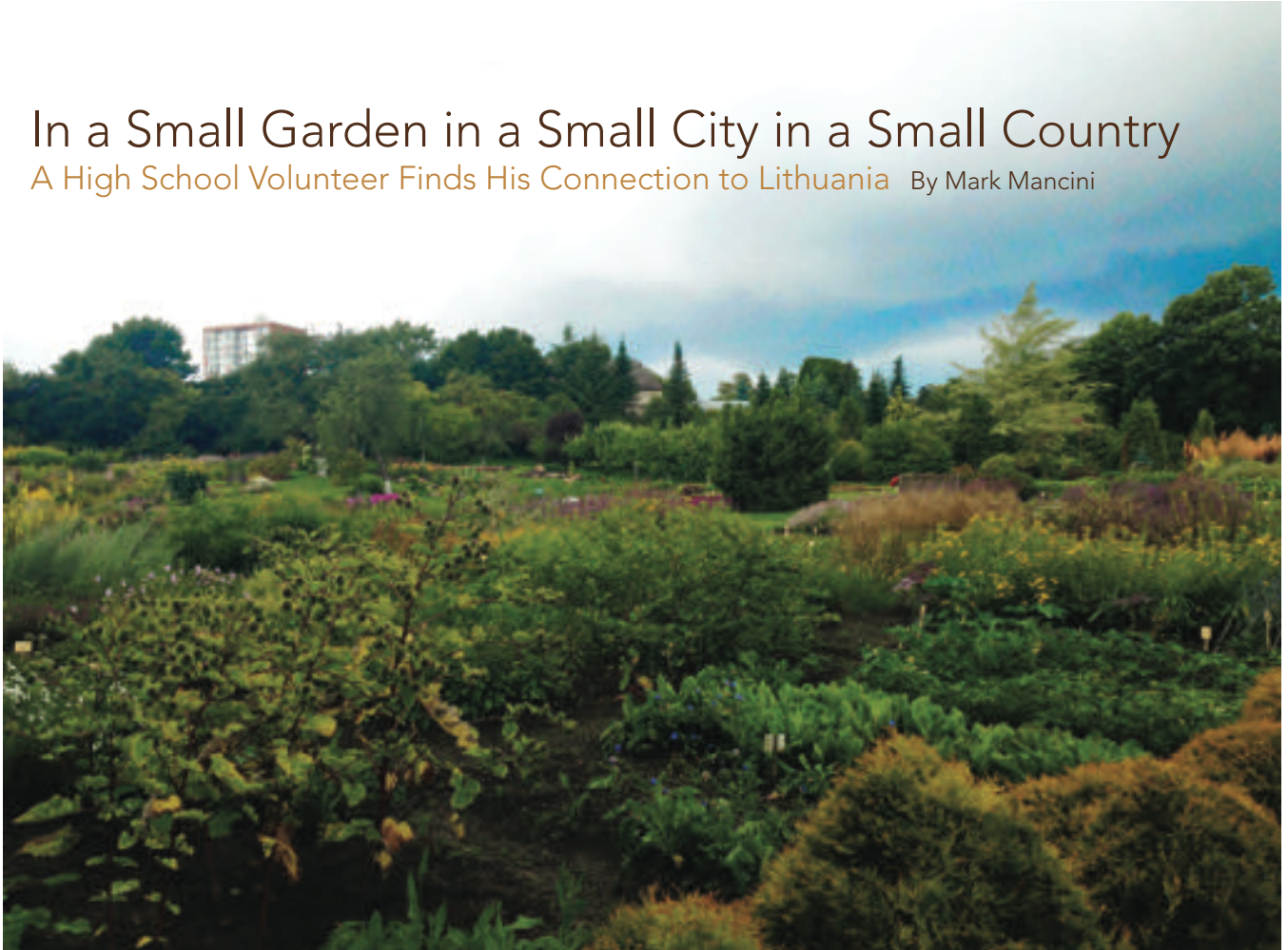
Archbishop Virbalas was born in 1961 in Biržai. Having begun his theological studies in the underground seminary during Soviet occupation, he was later admitted into the Kaunas Seminary and was ordained in 1991. During his studies, he entered the Society of Jesus—the Jesuits. Archbishop Virbalas earned a licentiate in sacred theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He taught at the theological seminaries in Kaunas and Vilnius. In 2013, he was appointed Bishop of Panevėžys. The following year he was elected vice president of the Lithuanian Bishops Conference, and since 2015 he has held the office of Archbishop Metropolitan of Kaunas.

The town of Šiluva is located in the Archdiocese of Kaunas. In his letter accepting the invitation to Washington, Archbishop Virbalas noted: “Mary of Šiluva has become a preeminent guardian of the [Lithuanian] nation. She has been and continues to be a wellspring of comfort and mercy to the faithful during various times of trial. The chapel proclaims her maternal care, which has helped Lithuanians far from their homeland to endure in trust and faith. It is symbolic that the chapel's jubilee is being celebrated during the Jubilee Year of Mercy.”

Archbishop Virbalas ends his letter of acceptance with a pastoral blessing, expressing the wish that Mary of Šiluva herself guide the work of the Jubilee Committee.

# In a Small Garden in a Small City in a Small Country

A High School Volunteer Finds His Connection to Lithuania By Mark Mancini



The University Botanical Garden in Klaipėda

“Welcome to Klaipėda” said the European street sign, as our bus passed it and soon pulled into the dormitory complex. There were seven other high school kids in the Lithuanian culture and volunteer summer program sponsored by LISS (Lithuanian International Student Services). Before this trip, I did not know many people outside of the United States. I was excited to broaden the people I knew. My dormmate’s name was JohnPaul; he was from Puerto Rico. John and I are now good friends and still keep in touch, and plan to visit each other in the future.

The reason I wanted to go to Lithuania was because my family has heritage there and I felt the need to get to know my origins. I choose the University Botanical garden for volunteer work. When I got to there, I found out that only one of the workers there spoke English, a woman about 30 years old. The rest of the workers were elderly women who could only speak a small amount of English. I found myself worried about the impending language barrier. When I entered the small wooden building I instantly heard running coming from the other room; it was the woman who could speak English, along with two other workers who were much older. I stood there in near fear. What if she

spoke to me? What if I needed to communicate something? She took my wrist, and into my open palm put a small axe, saying that I was to “cut down tree.” I was led to my worksite at the edge of a forest. The trees to be cut down and stumps dug up were pointed out to me. After I looked over the trees for a few minutes, I turned around to find no one there. The worker that brought me down had left to do her own work. I began.

I had never cut or stumped a tree before; I quickly learned how. After about two trees in about two hours, the heat started to hit me, the bees started to annoy me, and the whole world around me was turning against my work efforts. Even the trees seemed to get harder and harder with every swing of the axe. The axe itself seemed to be gaining weight with every attempt to swing it back up after striking the wood. I was about to quit, go home; it was too difficult and I was too tired to do anymore work. I heard someone making their way through the garden behind me—it was one of the women I first saw, with water and an apple for me.

The woman’s name was Aurelija. She told me her life story; how she returned to Lithuania after the Soviet occupation



ended. Lithuania was ruled by communist Russia until 1992. Many people were forced to flee. The Soviets would separate families to send to work camps. Aurelija fled during her childhood before they got to her family. She returned as an adult. Aurelija found her way to the University's Botanical Garden because of her love for gardening. When Aurelija sat down to tell me all of this, I could have said I needed to go back to work, or told her that I couldn't speak Lithuanian, without giving her the chance to talk to me. However, I felt a connection. She came here to do the same work I am doing now. Who was I to say that this was too difficult or too tiring; she chose this because she loved it, and returned to her country because she loved it here so much.

I was in this country, working, sweating—in a small garden in a small city in a small country. I realized that this woman is my connection to Lithuania; her story is what I can take home with me and keep forever. Whenever I feel that something is too tiresome, too hard, nearly impossible, I remind myself of her story. Aurelija was the person who would show me that I am here to learn about a different world and to meet new and interesting people in the process.

*Mark Mancini was born in Boston in 1998. He attends Xaverian Brothers High School in Westwood, Mass. He has two younger brothers. He runs track, and plays soccer and rugby.*

### About Lithuanian International Student Services (LISS)

Founded in 2008, LISS assists American and Canadian university and high school students of Lithuanian heritage with short-term summer internships and volunteer opportunities. LISS helps students enrich their lives, so that they can be an integral part of Lithuania's future.

For more information about LISS, please visit [lithuanian-american.org/m/intershipliss/about-liss](http://lithuanian-american.org/m/intershipliss/about-liss).



From left to right: Krista Angeliadis, Deana Pileikaitė, Sarah Radtke, Olivia Marcantonio, Mark Mancini (author), John-Paul Pecinkas, Gabe Žibaitis and Seamus Thomas. The students were attending a meeting at Klaipėda University at which representatives from many different countries came to talk about their cultures.



The LISS high school volunteer group at the Amber Museum near Palanga.

# In Memory of the Book Smuggler

By Janina Adelhardt



Dr. Irena Kubilienė, president of the Lithuanian Book Smuggler Society, with a representation of the book smugglers oak.

Back in 1999 when my family and I spent a vacation in Lithuania, my cousin Eurika requested that her friend and colleague, Dr. Irena Kubilienė at the Vilnius University Botanical Garden, take my family for a private tour of the gardens because Irena spoke very good English.

We delighted in the tour and Irena would not accept any payment for her service to us. I have kept in contact with her through these years and have learned so much more about her incredible background.

Last March (2015), Irena answered one of my e-mails, explaining, "...At present I am engaged in my 'book smuggler' activities as March 16th is celebrated in Lithuania as Book Smuggler Day [Knygnešio diena]. This means that members of my society will go to schools and share their knowledge and reminiscences about their grandparents' and great-grandparents' activities in the times when we had ban on the press in Latin characters. This ban was imposed by the Tsarist Russia after the revolt against Russia in 1863 and lasted until 1904. Book smugglers were brave people who illegally crossed the border to then Germany [Lithuania Minor, where Lithuanian books were printed] and risked their lives to bring books for Lithuanians. My grandfather [Mykolas Račkus] was one of them. It was thanks to those people that we still speak Lithuanian, one of the most ancient Indoeuropean languages, akin to Sanskrit. Now we have streets named after them, museums and other memorial places."

I was fascinated by Irena's remarks and so looked a bit more into information about the Lithuanian Book Smuggler Society. I have since learned that not only is Irena a member of the society, she is president of the society!

Now I will "fast forward" to earlier this year, when Irena sent me another email: "Two days ago a member of [the Book Smuggler Society] passed away, a wonderful person. I was expected to attend the funeral, to make a speech ... But with a running nose and sneeze I gave up the idea. Instead I wrote a page of kind words about her, putting all my heart into it. ...

"There are bigger things to do—we are trying to promote two members who had written encyclopedic books on book smugglers to be awarded a distinguished prize of FELICIA for fostering Lithuanian heritage and language. All the documentation must be presented in due time—beginning of March. For this I have to contact a number of people of our academic society—historians and linguists—and ask them to write recensions for those encyclopedias.

"All this takes much time although no one is guaranteed that the prize will be given ... BUT, I have already got an award for my activities. I simply suggested to my alma mater that one of the study-rooms might be called a book smugglers room, where I will leave all my exhibits for students—that makes more than 50 photopictures of monuments for book smugglers, original books and prayerbooks about 150 years old, copies of the book smuggler weekly which was edited by me and my friends for over 10 years, lots of correspondence, reports, etc."

I could share so much more about this amazing, 78-year-old Lithuanian woman, but today I will share the Vytis and the tribute she referenced in her note. She writes it as if her grandfather were speaking to the deceased about his fellow book smuggler, Juozas Masiulis. In 1905, soon after the press ban was lifted, Masiulis opened his own bookstore in Panevėžys. This store is still open, and a chain of bookstores operates in Lithuania under his name.



Dr. Irena Kubilienė with Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė. Photo courtesy of the Office of the President of the Republic of Lithuania



What will one former booksmuggler say to the other today?

Jurgis Bielinis: King of the Book Smugglers



January 23, 2016 Panevėžys

Great appreciation to Mr. Juozas Masiulis.

I had a great pleasure in dealing with your trustworthy and impressive bookstore.

Thanks to your care the J. Masiulis bookstore published not just a single book, calendar, card or painting.

It was only in 1920 that I, Mykolas Račkus, had the pleasure to report to the Kaunas region chief of staff about the opening of my own bookstore in Kaunas, at D.22 Vilniaus Street. In 1921, in Germany, together with my friends Anatanėlis Baltrušaitis and Antanas Kniūkšta, we published the first edition of A. Žmuidzinavičius' VYTIS.

Therefore, it was only through your bookstore as well that this VYTIS spread around Lithuanian offices and schools, strengthening hope that Lithuania's Independence is and will remain the greatest national treasure.

Today, I am honored to present this Lithuanian national symbol to your bookstore that is celebrating its 110 year anniversary. In doing so, I honor your granddaughter KAROLINA MASIULYTĖ-PALIULIENĖ, who returned from abroad to revive the bookstore of Juozas Masiulis.

I oblige my granddaughter, IRENA KUBILIENĖ, to pass this gift on to you on behalf of the Lithuanian Book Smuggler Society (and my, Mykolas Račkus') name.



One hundred and seventy years ago, on March 16, 1846, Jurgis Bielinis was born to a peasant family in Purviškiai, near Biržai, in Lithuania. In 1873, he joined Bishop Motiejus Valančius in distributing banned books, newspapers and magazines at the dawn of the Lithuanian National Awakening.

Over his 31 years as a book smuggler, Bielinis created the largest secret distribution networks at the time, which are credited with illegally bringing about half of

all Lithuanian books from East Prussia (Lithuania Minor) into Lithuania during the press ban. His organizations also delivered banned Latvian books to Latvia.

Bielinis was captured five times, but always managed to escape, and had a hefty bounty on his head. For his prodigious activities, he is remembered as "knygnešių karalius" (king of the book smugglers).

Bielinis died in 1917 while walking to the Vilnius Conference to participate in the process of establishing a Lithuanian state based on ethnic identity and language that would be independent of the Russian Empire, Poland and the German Empire. He is buried in the cemetery in Suostas. His birthday is now celebrated in Lithuania as Book Smugglers Day.

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# Sabonis Victorious

Domantas Sabonis and the Gonzaga University male basketball team crush the Portlanders

By Laurynas R. Misevičius

Translated by Gabija Barnard

Photographs by Ingrida Misevičienė, Darius Kuzmickas and Edis Jurčys



Lithuanian supporters with Domantas Sabonis after the match at Portland University.

When Domantas, the youngest son of Arvydas Sabonis, was born in Portland in 1996, neither father nor son could have imagined that 20 years later Domantas would return to the City of Roses as the leader of the Gonzaga Bulldogs male basketball team from neighboring Washington State.

The year 1996 also marks a surprising, incredible milestone in the history of the University of Portland: in May, the university's basketball team destroyed the seemingly invincible Bulldogs and were awarded a place in the NCAA's first division final. However, on February 11, 2016, the young Sabonis and other representatives of Gonzaga stayed in the lead for the duration of the match and easily claimed their 20th victory in the West Coast Conference Men's Basketball Tournament. Domantas scored 13 points for his team and with 11 rebounds reached

his seventh double-double this season. Another valuable asset to the team was Lithuanian-American Kyle Dranginis, who scored 16 points including four three-pointers. On the whole, on February 11, the Bulldogs shot a total of 15 three-pointers and defeated the University of Portland at 92-66.

While Domantas and his teammates may have been confident in their victory upon their arrival in Portland, they probably didn't expect to attract such a crowd of fans from the other side of the world. Even Arvydas Sabonis himself, having played with the Trail Blazers in the NBA for seven seasons, is hardly likely to have gathered as many organized Lithuanian supporters as his youngest son did in the University of Portland Chiles Center.

One of the Lithuanians who on February 11 came to support Domantas and the Bulldogs, Edis Jurčys, was also well



Domantas Sabonis in the foreground, Kyle Dranginis in the left corner of the background.

acquainted with Sabonis senior. In 1991, the young cinematographer moved from Los Angeles to Portland where he enrolled in an international translating school. That's how the Trail Blazers found him—they had been searching for an English-Lithuanian interpreter for the Lithuanian basketball legend. Edis worked with the Sabonis family for five years. He not only helped the Lithuanian family—then living near the Portland Zoo—with their day-to-day business, but also recorded the early years of the children, as well as taught their father the basics of photography. The photographer brought some pictures of the Sabonis children at their childhood home on Canyon Road to the Gonzaga-Portland match, but he could no longer tell which of the children was which. Domantas, on the other hand, instantly recognized himself and left Edis an autograph as a memento.

At the short press conference after the game, the Bulldogs' long-time coach Mark Few highlighted the input of the Portland Lithuanian community in supporting their neighbors from Washington State. He also praised his team for their accuracy in the longer-range shots—at this game, the Spokane representatives scored 15 out of 26 three-pointers, thus swiftly overtaking their rivals in the second half of the game.

At the beginning of the match, Domantas had trouble scoring points, as the

strong defense of the Portland Pilots had him surrounded; at times as many as three opponents were blocking him. After the break, however, the Oregon representatives' energy started running out. "I would be very interested to see Domantas play in the U.S. Olympic team," was Few's only slightly sarcastic response to the Lithuanian journalists. "However, I know of a very tall [Lithuanian] man who would never allow it..." I, too, can't imagine Domantas daring to do such a thing, not even in his dreams.

Both in the official prospectus of his university and on the Gonzaga Bulldogs website, Domantas ensured that Kaunas, not Portland, was listed as his hometown, even though the first six years of his life were spent in the latter. Domantas admits that, as beautiful as the natural world of the West Coast is, Spokane is a little too quiet for his liking. For now, he doesn't have a girlfriend but he knows that when he's ready, only a Lithuanian girl will do. Everyday life can become boring—luckily, Domantas is often visited by his older brothers Žygimantas and Tautvydas, who last flew out to see him at Christmas time. Domantas will also see his parents soon: Arvydas and Ingrida are meeting their youngster in Las Vegas, where the Gonzaga Bulldogs have been invited to participate in a weekend tournament.

As we said goodbye to the surprisingly sincere and down-to-earth son of the Lithuanian basketball legend, we promised to see him soon in Spokane. As for Arvydas and Ingrida Sabonis, we would like to thank them both on our behalf and that of most other Lithuanians: regardless of the strong pressure and the various opportunities open to them, they raised their son a true patriot who is only starting to bring fame to Lithuania. The sapling has grown to impressive heights, which means we can silence the critics and feel more at ease with the future of the favorite sport of Lithuanians all over the world.



Domantas with Lithuanian Athletic Union of North America Chair Laurynas R. Misevičius on the left.





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## Sauerkraut and Fresh Cabbage With Mushrooms and Onion Skin Dyed Eggs

By Jana Sirusaitė Motivans



The period of Lent preceding Easter used to be a very solemn time in Lithuania, as it was in other Catholic countries. It was a time for 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 return to life after a long, dark winter. In Lithuania, pagan and Catholic traditions are often intertwined.

The Easter meal is a lavish one, intended to help people "recover" from Lent. The meal usually includes ham or lamb, sausages, sauerkraut with cabbage and mushrooms, potatoes, beets and, of course, eggs.

This month I am sharing two recipes with you, one for sauerkraut and cabbage with mushrooms, and one for dyeing your Easter eggs with natural onion skin dye. I hope you will add both of these to your Easter celebration. Linksmų Velykų!



## Sauerkraut and Fresh Cabbage With Mushrooms

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds sauerkraut
- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter
- 1 pound fresh mushrooms, cleaned and sliced
- 6 slices bacon, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 onions, peeled and diced
- 2 garlic cloves, finely minced
- 2 large tart apples, peeled, cored and cut into thin slices
- 1 small head green cabbage, cored and finely sliced
- salt and pepper

1. In a colander, rinse the sauerkraut under cold water. Drain and set aside.
2. In a large skillet, melt 6 tablespoons of butter and sauté the mushrooms over low heat for 20 to 30 minutes until they become deep brown. Remove the mushrooms from the skillet and set aside.
3. In the same skillet, cook the bacon until crisp. Remove the bacon and drain on a paper towel.
4. Sauté the onions and garlic in the bacon fat for a few minutes, until slightly softened.
5. Add the drained sauerkraut and apple slices. Cook for about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.
6. Meanwhile, in a large pot, melt the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter and sauté the fresh cabbage for a few minutes, tossing until just tender.



7. Just before serving, combine the fresh cabbage with the sauerkraut, mushroom and bacon mixture in the skillet. Season to taste with salt and pepper, if needed.



## Onion Skin Dyed Eggs

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 big handfuls of yellow onion skins
- Fresh white eggs
- White vinegar

To make the egg dye, put the onion skins in a large metal pot and cover with water. Add 2 teaspoons of vinegar. Heat the water until boiling. At this point you have two choices—take the onion skins out or leave them in.

Option 1: To produce an all-over even color on the eggs, remove the onion skins by pouring the liquid in the pot through a strainer. Return the dye to the pot. Place the raw eggs in the pot, and cook until hard-boiled. The eggs will color evenly.



Option 2: Leave the onion skins in the pot, and then nestle the raw eggs inside the skins and cook until hard-boiled. This method will produce a mottled effect with uneven patches of color.



Both methods produce beautiful eggs - try it both ways! Remove the eggs from the dye and let them dry propped up on empty egg cartons. Once they are dry, you can polish them lightly with a drop of vegetable oil. My močiutė used to polish hers with butter!



## **In Lithuania**

... In late February, almost 10 percent of pre-school and elementary school teachers in Lithuania went on strike for greater salary and benefits, and the walkout lasted into March. Full-time pay averages 825 euros/month but one third of the teachers are scheduled for only part time because of decreased enrollment in rural areas.

... During the first weekend in March, the annual Vilnius Kaziukas folk and craft fair, dating back to 1604, for the first time to had a Jewish area featuring food and music. The fair in Vilnius drew 500 stand operations from 16 countries.

## **International Relations**

... On February 16, 2016, the third Honorary Consulate of Lithuania in India was officially opened in Kolkata, India, on the occasion of the Day of the Restoration of the State of Lithuania. The Honorary Consulate is headed by businessman Arvind Kumar Sukhani. On February 15, 2016, an Honorary Consulate of Lithuania was also opened in Lohja, Finland, and will be headed by Managing Director of Savo Consortium for Education Esa Karvinen.

... Lithuania sentenced an army paramedic to three years in jail for providing Belarus with information on military equipment and troops, and also sentenced a civil aviation official to three years for providing Vilnius airport documents to Belarus. In 2014, Belarus sentenced two citizens to 8 and 10 years for spying for Lithuania.

## **Business**

... Cognizant, a 220,000-strong U.S. business-technology company, is setting up operations in Vilnius. As part of this expansion, it has purchased 66 percent of Norwegian Storebrand Groups's Baltic service center. Over the next five years it plans on adding 4,000 employees in Europe with some working in Vilnius to support the Eastern European and Nordic markets in financial services, health-care, life sciences, manufacturing-logistics and communications.

... The 14,000-strong Swedbank will be relocating some operational functions from Sweden to Vilnius. It will initially employ 140 and plans to add about 400 new employees by 2018. They will service clients in Sweden, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

... The Foreign Policy Research Institute reports that the European Commission has approved the planning for the "Rail Baltica" project, which will be the largest infrastructure project in the Baltics. It will establish standard EU-gauge rail links from Europe through Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to Finland. The Poland-Lithuania route bypasses Russia's Kaliningrad Oblast and Belarus. The link between Tallinn and Helsinki is via ferries. In general, wider Russian railroads have gone to Moscow and St. Petersburg. This project will link the Baltic countries without the need to go through Russia. Construction is set to begin in 2020 and be complete in 2030.

... U.S. glassmaker Corning signed an agreement with Lithuanian company Altechna R&D to use their patented laser cutting systems to fabricate Corning's Gorilla Glass products used in smart phones, smart table tops and car windows. Altechna plans to expand their research and science capabilities into wider industrial markets. It was supported by a 33,000 euro investment in 2015 by the Lithuanian Agency for Science, Innovation and Technology (MITA).

## **Energy**

... The Wall Street Journal reports that liquefied natural gas (LNG) is being shipped from the U.S. Gulf Coast (Louisiana) to the Independence, the gas storage and regasification vessel located at the port of Klaipėda.

... The prime ministers of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania voiced opposition to the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline through the Baltic Sea to Germany because it will increase Europe's dependence on Russian gas, which has been used for political and pricing pressure.

## **Defense**

... Klaipėda is the temporary home of 100 U.S. Army soldiers who arrived in February and who will participate in military exercises until April as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve in Europe.

... Britain will send five warships into the Baltic as part of the Maritime Group, Mine Countermeasures Group and BALTOPS (Baltic Operations) exercise.

... Lithuania plans to increase its defense budget by 35 percent to cover increased personnel and added weapons including Javelin missiles from Raytheon and Lockheed Martin for defense against tanks and armored vehicles. The \$644 million expenditure represents 1.5 percent of GDP, up from 1.1 percent in 2015, as it moves toward the NATO goal of 2 percent of GDP for members.

## **Entertainment**

... Leo Tolstoy's novel *Where Love Is, God Is* is being shot in Vilnius by the U.S. company Kaleidoscope Pictures and Baltic Film Services (Baltijos Filmu Paslaugos). Vilnius has substituted for Russian sites because of lower costs.

... Cinematographer Emmanuel (Chiuo) Lubezki won his third consecutive Oscar for his work on the movie *The Revenant*. He received previous Oscars for *Birdman* and *Gravity*. His grandfather was a Lithuanian born in Alytus in southern Lithuania (a current sister-city of Rochester, N.Y.). He is a very experienced professional with 64 cinematography credits, most notably *Ali*, *Meet Joe Black* and *A Little Princess*. He was director of photography for *A Walk in the Clouds*.



## Wedding Provides Unique Practice Venue for Dance Festival

By Rimas Gedeika



The long-anticipated XV Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival will take place in Baltimore during this year's Fourth of July weekend. The festival occurs every four years, and attracts folk dance groups from all over the world. This year, dance groups will come from six countries—Lithuania, USA, Canada, England, Sweden and Israel—with more than 1,800 dancers.

All of the dance groups have been practicing the festival's assigned dances since last fall. As the festival date gets closer, practice intensity increases. Philadelphia's Žilvinas is no exception. The dancers, under Ramunė Cobb's leadership, have been spending many hours practicing the designated dances for the past several months.

Practice is practice, but appearing before a live audience is a horse of a different color.

Last December, Linas Gineitis, who was born in Germany of DP (displaced persons) parents and grew up in Boston, wanted to surprise his daughter by adding something Lithuanian to the wedding reception. To allow the guests—the majority of them non-Lithuanians—to experience a small part of Lithuanian culture and to feel the Lithuanian spirit, he invited Žilvinas.

Žilvinas performed five lively dances, two of which they will dance at the festival, delighting the wedding guests.

This was truly a win-win situation. Žilvinas got a chance to perform their new dances in front of a live audience, see their

reaction and work out the kinks. The wedding guests got a chance to become familiar with Lithuania and one, small part of its rich culture. And Linas got a great big thank-you kiss from his daughter, Kristina!



For more information on the XV Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival, please visit [sokiusvente2016.org](http://sokiusvente2016.org).

## Meeting Rūta: Author of Salt to the Sea Conducts National Book Tour

By Vingra Lucia Steponkevičiūtė

Rūta Šepetys, now an international best-selling author, has a degree in finance and has worked in the music industry and on TV shows such as American Idol. She was accustomed to asking “stars” to share their background and stories ... until one time, the question of one’s origin was turned around on her by a rocker. She responded, “I’m Lithuanian,” to which he replied, “I’m sorry,” thinking it was a disease or something horrible. Šepetys added, “My father was a Lithuanian refugee; I am Lithuanian.”

This conversation sparked a new interest in her to research more about her dad’s harrowing journey and what war-displaced persons underwent. Thus came to be the international best-seller, *Between Shades of Gray*, a young-adult book read by all ages. *Salt to the Sea* is Šepetys’ third book, a work of historical fiction, which exemplifies the power of hope, dedication and courage—and the will to persevere, despite how disastrous or petrifying the present situation might be.

During a Barnes & Noble meet-the-author event in Yonkers, N.Y., Šepetys spoke about how, post-WWII, Lithuanians were stripped of their country’s name, language, heritage and flag. War-torn, they were forced to start anew to rebuild their culture and creativity—whether in art, dance, music or literature—having the driving force to accomplish something incredible.

Šepetys is now wrapping up a national book tour that has



Left to right: Vida Lanys-Anton, *Salt to the Sea* author Rūta Šepetys and Vingra Lucia Steponkevičiūtė.

allowed more of us to hear her speak, get to know her and gain understanding of how the idea for this beautiful, moving book was birthed. This talented Lithuanian-American and most interesting author was honored with presentation of The Cross of the Knight of the Order by the current president of Lithuania. Šepetys is as passionate about research and history as she is about writing.

## Learn Lithuanian This Summer at Camp Dainava

Lithuanian language courses at Camp Dainava, Manchester, Mich., will take place August 7-14, 2016.

These one-week intensive courses, the Lithuanian Educational, are designed for beginner, intermediate and advanced students, or those just wishing to refresh their Lithuanian language skills. The courses are taught by experienced instructors in vacation-like surroundings and a relaxed atmosphere. There are no limitations regarding age or formal education.

The courses are student-centered, and tailored to individual needs and interests. Each student will be able to choose the level at which they are most comfortable. Because the courses are an adjunct to a camp for Lithuanian Heritage School teachers from across the country, in addition to classroom study, students will have an opportunity to interact with Lithuanian-speaking people and will be invited to take part in many common activities.

For more information please contact Aušrelė Sakalaitė, 1388 Overton Dr., Lemont, IL 60439; phone 630-243-6302, email



Previous language course participants.

Ausreles@comcast.net, or search the web for Camp Dainava Lithuanian language courses. Additional information and registration forms are available online at [svietimotaryba.org/newsite/stovykla-e.htm](http://svietimotaryba.org/newsite/stovykla-e.htm). Space is limited; discounts are available to those who register and pay in full before June 1.



# N.Y. Lithuanian Professionals Learn About 'Enterprise Lithuania'

By Algirdas Grybas



On February 25, 2016, New York Lithuanian professionals met with the Vice-Minister of Economy of Lithuania Rasa Noreikienė and representatives of Enterprise Lithuania—General Manager Rūta Pentiokinaitė and Project Manager Donata Mauricaitė—at the Lithuanian Consulate General in New York during their week-long visit to the United States.

The meeting was also attended by the Lithuanian Consul General in New York Julius Pranevičius, Second Secretary Jolanta Vitkauskaitė and about 30 finance, law, medicine and marketing professionals as well as business owners working in the greater New York City area.

Vice-Minister Noreikienė provided an overview of the current state of Lithuania's economy and noted that the Lithuanian economy has been growing for five consecutive years, and its current rate of growth is the highest in the European Union. In 2015, Lithuania attracted 32 foreign direct investments, nine of which came from the United States—the largest number coming from a single country.

Despite the EU economic sanctions on Russia and Russia's embargo of food products, Lithuanian exports grew 1.7 percent in 2015. This year, Lithuania has designated the U.S., Israel, China and Japan as key markets for growth of Lithuanian exports.

Enterprise Lithuania's Mauricaitė introduced Life Sciences Baltics, a conference to take place on September 14-15, 2016, in Vilnius, Lithuania, and provided an overview of the life sciences industry in Lithuania. Lithuania currently has more than 350 manufacturers active in this field, which from 2009 to 2013

almost doubled. Most products are exported to Germany, U.S. and the UK. Enterprise Lithuania is organizing the Life Sciences Baltics conference for the third time in Lithuania. It attracts more than 1,000 participants from more than 40 countries, over 50 companies, start-ups and universities.

Presentations were followed by an active discussion about Lithuania's competitiveness in the region and globally, about opportunities to grow its exports and attract further investments. New York Lithuanians shared their experiences and insights while attempting to bring investments to Lithuania, and analyzed challenges for Lithuanian production to enter the U.S. market. Participants expressed interest not only in the quality of Lithuanian goods and services, but also had questions about the tax system, rigidity of its legal base and labor code when creating new work places, which lead to difficulties and higher costs of starting or maintaining business in the country.

New York Lithuanian Professionals is an initiative run by the Lithuanian-American Community New York 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.



## Three Congressmen Join Baltic Caucus



From left, new Baltic Caucus members Congressmen Adam Kinzinger, Gregory Meeks and Robert Latta.

Congressmen Bob Latta (R-OH), Gregory Meeks (D-NY) and Adam Kinzinger (R-IL) announced earlier this year that they have joined the House of Representatives Baltic Caucus.

The Baltic Caucus, established in 1997, now has 53 members who share a common interest in the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The caucus works to advance Baltic freedoms, with the goals of maintaining strong relationships with the Baltic States, promoting healthy democracies free from terrorism, and assisting them in strengthening free market economies in their countries.

The caucus is currently co-chaired by Representatives John Shimkus (R-IL) and Adam Schiff (D-CA).

Congressman Latta represents Ohio's Fifth Congressional District and is currently serving his fifth term in the U. S House of Representatives. He serves on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which has wide jurisdiction on legislative matters, including energy policy, telecommunications, food and drug safety, public health research, and interstate and foreign commerce.

Throughout his tenure, Latta has advocated for the interests of the people of Northwest and West Central Ohio, while also promoting policies that further economic prosperity and job creation throughout the country. His top priorities include balancing the budget, reducing the national debt and working toward commonsense government reforms.

Congressman Meeks represents the people of New York's Fifth Congressional District and is currently serving his 17-year

tenure in the U.S. House of Representatives. Meeks sits on two important and prominent committees in the House: the Financial Services Committee and the Foreign Affairs Committee.

He serves as a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee where he is the Ranking Member on the Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia and Emerging Threats. Meeks seeks to promote poli-

cies that strengthen America's economic and national security and build relationships with other nations in a more globalized world.

Congressman Kinzinger serves as the Representative for the Sixteenth Congressional District of Illinois and is a member of the House Energy & Commerce Committee. In addition, he served on the House Foreign Affairs Committee during the 113th Congress. As a member of the Energy & Commerce Committee, Kinzinger's top priorities include strengthening U.S. energy policy and making our nation less reliant on foreign resources. Having served in the Air Force in both Iraq and Afghanistan, another priority for Kinzinger is national security. Kinzinger continues to serve his country as a pilot in the Air National Guard, balancing his service with his busy schedule as a Member of Congress. He is a member of the House delegation to NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

During his time in the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Kinzinger sponsored H.Res. 758, a resolution condemning Russia for its policy of political, economic and military aggression against neighboring countries. The legislation called on Russia to reverse its illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and remove its military forces and equipment from Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. Additionally, H.Res. 758 encouraged NATO allies and U.S. partners in Europe to suspend all military cooperation with Russia. The resolution passed the House 411 votes to 10.

For more information on the House Baltic Caucus, please visit [housebalticcaucus.webs.com](http://housebalticcaucus.webs.com).

## Encourage Your Representative to Join the Baltic Caucus

The Joint Baltic American National Committee, Inc. (JBANC) is engaging with offices of House Baltic Caucus members to discuss the current agenda and world affairs. JBANC recently launched a new initiative to help inform members of Congress on the security issues of the Baltic countries and to invite them to join the House Baltic Caucus.

JBANC has drafted a letter you can send to your Congressman to invite him/her join the House Baltic Caucus. An example, plus downloadable letters (to print and fill in by hand or to fill out in Word and print) are available at [jbanc.org/?page=blog&v=2&id=80](http://jbanc.org/?page=blog&v=2&id=80).

# our community

## Sadauskas Joins JBANC Board



Tomas Sadauskas is the newest Lithuanian representative to the Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC) board of directors. He is a native of Connecticut and grew up attending church in a Lithuanian parish (St. Andrew Roman Catholic Church). All four of his grandparents were

born in Lithuania as well as his father, Adomas, who emigrated to the U.S. in 1949 as a displaced person. Sadauskas grew up

learning to speak Lithuanian from his grandparents, who lived with his family. He remembers that he always spoke Lithuanian with his grandparents and never English.

His education includes a BS in accounting from the University of Connecticut, an MBA in health administration from the University of Chicago and a CPA certificate from the University of Illinois. Sadauskas has served in the U.S. Air Force as a healthcare administrator and later worked as a health IT consultant. Currently, he is a civilian employee in the Department of Defense supporting the Military Health System and is an occasional contributor to Bridges on the subject of genealogy research.

## Lithuanians Take to the Slopes



Over Easter weekend, Lithuanians from California, New York, Colorado, Ohio, Illinois and even from Lithuania enjoyed the annual Lithuanian Athletic Union of North America (LAUNA) and Lithuanian American Medical Association ski trip.

After skiing, participants painted Easter eggs and enjoyed the good snow, blue skies, and warm, sunny days of Heavenly Valley, California.

In the LAUNA women's ski competition, Natalija Bagdady took gold and Irena Majauskaitė-Bagdady won silver. In the men's competition, the gold went to John Prunskis, silver to Austin Bagdady and bronze to Kazys Bagdady.

The 2017 trip will be in Telluride, Colorado.

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Open to the public.  
Info: rockfordlithuanianclub@  
hotmail.com or 815-962-9256

**MAY 2016**

May 20-22  
**Women's Weekend at Neringa**  
Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
Info: kriscon@frontiernet.net or  
kerry@watershedcoachingllc.com

May 21, 1-3 p.m.  
**Amber Roots Heritage Club**  
Lithuanian Music Hall, 2715 E.  
Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia  
Info: milliemarks@aol.com

May 26-28  
**Association for the Advancement  
of Baltic Studies Conference**  
University of Pennsylvania,  
Philadelphia  
Info: aabs-balticstudies.org

**JUNE 2016**

June 4-5  
**Talka Work Weekend**  
Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
Info: neringa.org

June 5, 9 a.m.  
**Ateitinkai Family Celebration**  
Blessed G. Matulaitis Mission,  
14911 127th St., Lemont, Ill.

June 5, Noon  
**Ateitinkai House Outing**  
Ateitis House, 1380 Castlewood  
Drive, Lemont, Ill.

June 11, Noon  
**LWC Charity Golf Tournament**  
Old Oak Country Club, 14200  
South Parker Rd, Homer Glen, Ill.  
Info: lithuaniangolf.com

June 11, 12:30 p.m.  
**Grandis Concert**  
Lithuanian World Center, 14911  
127th St., Lemont, Ill.  
Featuring dances from the  
upcoming XV Lithuanian Folk  
Dance Festival in Baltimore.  
Info: grandischicago.org or  
grandis.vadovai@gamil.com

June 18, 1-3 p.m.  
**Amber Roots Heritage Club**  
Lithuanian Music Hall, 2715 E.  
Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia  
Use Tilton Street entrance.  
Everyone welcome.  
Info: milliemarks@aol.com

June 25  
**Omaha Lithuanian Community  
Jonines – St. John's Day Picnic**  
4435 S. 184th Plz, Omaha, Nebr.  
Info: facebook.com/OmahaLB

June 25-29  
**Heritage Family Camp  
in English**  
Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
Info: neringa.org

**JULY 2016**

July 1, 6 p.m. - 2 a.m.  
**All Roads Meet in Baltimore**  
Hilton Baltimore  
Baltimore block party, concerts  
by The Morrison Brothers and  
headliner Jurgis Didžiulis, local  
cuisine, specialty food trucks,  
face painters, games, artisan  
marketplace, polka dance-off and  
late-night socializing.  
Adults (13+) \$37; children \$17.  
Info: sokiusvente2016.org

July 2  
**Saturday Night in Charm City**  
Hilton Baltimore  
Lithuanian buffet dinner with folk  
music, 6-9 p.m.: \$52  
Lithuanian poetry presentations,  
7:30-9:15 p.m.: free  
Dance party, 9:30 p.m.-12 a.m.:  
Adults (13+) \$20, children \$10  
Info: sokiusvente2016.org

July 3, 1 p.m.  
**15th North American  
Lithuanian Dance Festival**  
Royal Farms Arena, Baltimore  
Info: sokiusvente2016.org

July 3, 7 p.m.  
**Post-Šventė Galas**  
Hilton Baltimore  
Klumpė Klub Jazz Gala (21+): \$92  
Mystery Evening (15-20 yrs.): \$47  
Creativity Island (families): Adult  
(21+) \$92, child (2-14) \$22  
Dance only: Adult \$25, child \$10  
Info: sokiusvente2016.org

July 4-9  
**Family Camp for Lithuanian  
Speakers**  
Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
Info: neringa.org

July 10-24  
**Children's Camp for Lithuanian  
Speakers 7-15 years old**  
Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
Info: neringa.org

July 24  
**Lithuanian Friendship Day  
(Putnam Picnic)**  
600 Liberty Highway,  
Putnam, Conn.  
Info: neringa.org

July 24-30  
**"Third Week" Youth Camp for  
Lithuanian Speakers ages 12-16**  
Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
Info: neringa.org

July 31-August 13  
**Heritage Children's Camp in  
English, ages 7-16**  
Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
Info: neringa.org

**AUGUST 2016**

August 5-7  
**Knights of Lithuania National  
Convention**  
Doubletree by Hilton,  
Binghamton, N.Y.  
Info: knightsoflithuania.com

August 7-14  
**Lithuanian Language Course**  
Camp Dainava, Manchester, Mich.  
Info: ausreles@comcast.net

August 13-20  
**"Third Week" Youth Camp in  
English, ages 12-16**  
Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
Info: neringa.org

August 21-28  
**Meno8Dienos Adult Lithuanian-  
Language Art Camp**  
Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
Info: danguole@kuolas.com,  
781-383-6081

**SEPTEMBER 2016**

September 11  
**Omaha Lithuanian Community  
Fundraiser (Sausages and Cab-  
bage)**  
Sts. Peter and Paul School gym-  
nasium, 5912 S. 36th St., Omaha,  
Nebr.  
Info: facebook.com/OmahaLB

September 25,  
9 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.  
**Divine Providence Lithuanian  
Church Parish Picnic**  
Info: divineprovidencechurch.com

**OCTOBER 2016**

October 7-9  
**Iškyla/Walk-a-Thon**  
Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
Info: neringa.org

October 9  
**Golden Jubilee of Our Lady of  
Šiluva Chapel**  
Shrine of the Immaculate  
Conception, Washington, D.C.  
Info: siluva50usa.org

**NOVEMBER 2016**

November 5  
**Omaha Lithuanian Community  
Fundraiser Bowling Tournament**  
Immaculate Conception Hall,  
2708 South 24th St.,  
Omaha, Nebr.  
Info: facebook.com/OmahaLB

**DECEMBER 2016**

December 11  
**Lithuanian Scouts Kučios**  
Divine Providence Lithuanian  
Catholic Church,  
25335 West Nine Mile Rd.,  
Southfield, Mich.  
Info: divineprovidencechurch.com



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