

bridges



LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

\$5

October 2016

this month in history

October Anniversaries



515 years ago

October 2, 1501

Lithuanian Grand Duke Aleksandras Jogailaitis (Alexander Jagiellon) was elected king of Poland. Grandson of Jogaila, and the fourth son of Casimir IV Jagiellon and Elisabeth Habsburg of Hungary, he was elected grand duke of Lithuania upon the death of his father in 1492 and king of Poland upon the death

of his brother John I Albert in 1501.

Deprived of control of the mint and with his royal powers curtailed by the Polish senate and szlachta (nobility), Alexander was unable to defend Lithuania against incursions by the Teutonic Knights or the Grand Duke of Muscovy. He mediated a truce with his father-in-law, the Tsar, after the Battle of Vedrosha, but ended up having to surrender about a third of Lithuania's territory to the expanding Russian state.

360 years ago

October 8, 1656

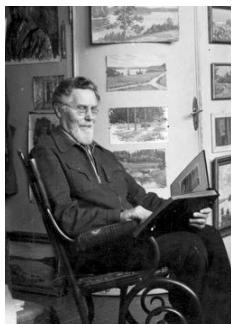
The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, aided by a unit of Crimean Tatars, defeated allied Swedish and Brandenburg forces in the Battle of Prostki in the Duchy of Prussia.

320 years ago

October 17, 1696

Birth of Augustas III Saksas, king of Poland and grand duke of Lithuania from 1734 until 1763. Son of Augustus II and Christiane Eberhardina von Brandenburg-Bayreuth, he was also Elector of Saxony in the Holy Roman Empire from 1733 until 1763.

Augustas III expressed little interest in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, spending fewer than three years of this 30-year reign in Poland. He delegated most of his responsibilities to his advisor, Heinrich von Brühl, who in turn left Polish administration chiefly to the powerful Czartoryski family. His rule deepened the anarchy in Poland and increased the country's dependence on its neighbors, marking one of the greatest periods of disorder in Commonwealth history.



140 years ago

October 31, 1876

Birth of Lithuanian painter, art professor and collector Antanas Žmuidzinavičius. Together with Lithuanian painter and composer M.K. Čiurlionis and other prominent Lithuanians, he organized the First Exhibition of Lithuanian Art. He was a co-founder of the Vilnius Art Society in December 1907.

His house in Kaunas is now the Žmuidzinavičius Museum, also known as the Devils' Museum (Velnių muziejus). His collection of 260 sculptures has grown to more than 3,000 carvings, painting and other depictions of devils.

120 years ago

October 23, 1896

Birth of Kęstutis Bulota, engineer and multi-sport athlete who participated in the 1928 Winter Olympics in speed skating. Lithuania's first winter Olympian, he placed fifth in the 10,000 meter event.



In 1922 and 1923, Bulota played for the LFLS Kaunas football (soccer) club. He held Lithuanian national records in racewalking, triple jump and relay sprinting. He was also one of the pioneers of ice hockey in Lithuania, along with Steponas Darius.

After the Russian occupation of Lithuania, Bulota was arrested on June 14, 1941 by the NKVD and was sent to a Siberian gulag. He was killed a short time later trying to escape.

75 years ago

October 7-8, 1941

There was a massacre of more than 3,700 Jews over a two-day period near Švenčionys, Lithuania. Vincas Valkavickas, a prison guard during the massacre, emigrated to the U.S. in 1950 and was forced to leave in 1999 for concealing his wartime service.

October 28, 1941

"The Great Action," the largest mass murder of Lithuanian Jews, took place at Ninth Fort in Kaunas.

The Jewish inhabitants of the Kaunas Ghetto were assembled on Democrats Square and all those fit for work were allowed back into the Ghetto. The others—2,007 Jewish men, 2,920 women and 4,273 children—were marched to the SS execution center in the Ninth Fort and there, stripped of their clothes and in the freezing cold, they awaited their fate. In groups of 200, they were stood on the edge of large pits, dug previously by Russian POWs, and were systematically machine-gunned to death, all in a single day.

25 years ago

October 7, 1991

Lithuania joined UNESCO.

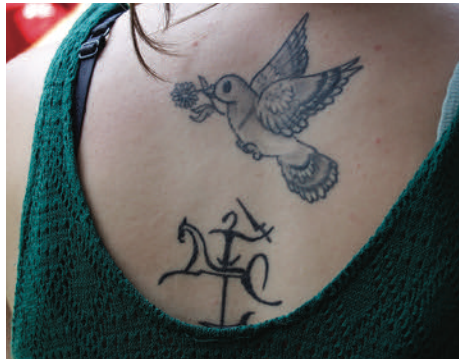
10 years ago

October 16, 2006

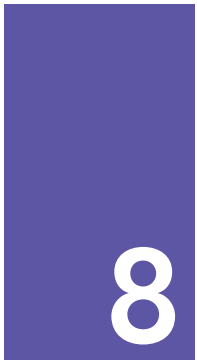
Queen Elizabeth II kicked off her first-ever visit to the Baltic states. Lithuania's Prime Minister Gediminas Kirkilas welcomed the British monarch to the northern European region.

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Cover: Cottage in the small resort town of Pervalka, on the Curonian Spit, in autumn. Photo: Yevgen Belich

Back cover: King Mindaugas' name day is celebrated on October 14 in Lithuania. This monument to Mindaugas is in Vilnius. Photo: Teresė Vekteris

from the editor

Family Ties

So, I recently found out that I'm kind of related to Gediminas, grand duke of Lithuania from around 1315 until his death in 1341. However, lest you think I actually have a claim to royalty, I must advise you that the relationship is by marriage (five of them) rather than blood. According to the family trees I've been able to connect with on Geni.com:

"Gediminas, King of Lithuania is your first cousin once removed's ex-wife's first cousin's husband's great aunt's husband's great nephew's wife's husband's 19th great grandfather."

It's still something, right?

And as I try to wrap my head around that convoluted web of familial relationships, the bigger question might be, why does it matter? Because often as we examine our identities, try to figure out just who we are, we can sometimes cling to the most tenuous of claims as we search for meaning.

For some growing up, Lithuania was everything, as M. M. De Voe explains beginning on page 3. For others, Lithuania was nearly unknown, as Phyllis Edwards relates beginning on page 8. Common to both stories, as it might be for many of us, is the impact that our families' expectations have in guiding, and sometimes inhibiting, our personal journeys. What's most important, though, is that we begin to write our own stories.

Two young women—one in high school, the other fresh out of college—have begun to do just that, thanks in part to the Lithuanian International Student Services (LISS) program. You can read about how their summer volunteer and internship experiences in Lithuania have reshaped some of their assumptions about the country and about themselves.

Wishing you well on your path to discovery,



Teresė Vekteris, Editor

PS: While we're on the subject of family, let me introduce you to some new Bridges family members:

Beginning with this issue, we welcome our new advertising and subscription manager, Laura Vidžiūnaitė. Welcome, Laura! Laura takes over for Rimas Gedeika, who has served in the role for almost 15 years. We are indebted to Rimas, as he was much more than an administrator—he was also one of our contributing writers and photographers, not to mention a good friend and our biggest cheerleader.

With our January 2017 issue, you'll also see a new name at the top of our masthead. Karilė Vaitkutė will be taking over for me as editor of Bridges in the new year. Those of you who receive the Lithuanian Museum Review may be familiar with Karilė as editor of that publication, and I am thrilled that she will be bringing her considerable experience to the helm of Bridges. Please extend her a warm welcome! I know that she is looking forward to your submissions and feedback as she puts her creative stamp on the magazine. You can write to her at kariledalia@yahoo.com.

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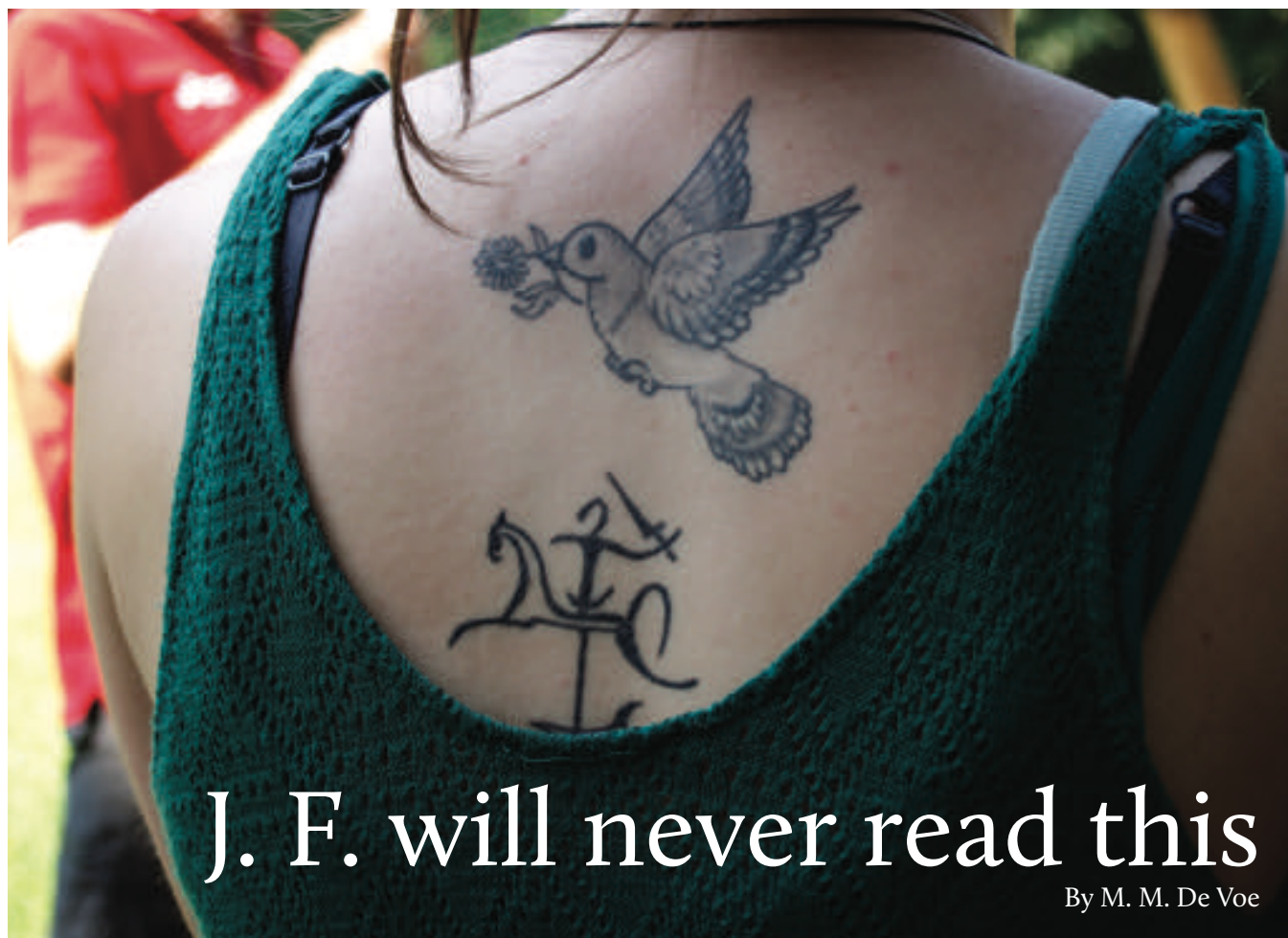


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J. F. will never read this

By M. M. De Voe

Lithuania's future was the central and most important issue in our lives ... we worried about how we were going to meet, marry and mate with another Lithuanian. Photo: Teresė Vekteris

A boy with an eight-syllable first and last name and I were making out in the dark because we were both Lithuanian. It was 1988. His parents, like mine, had spent three weeks in the steerage portion of a ship when they were kids—and never let us forget it. This was all we had in common, he and I. I had just turned 19; he was 20. It was late, and so dark I could barely see his face. I can't recall (past the traditional Baltic blond hair and blue eyes) his features. He lived in Chicago. I was a college student waitressing for the summer at the Neringa Restaurant, hoping to earn enough money to go to Australia for the International Lithuanian Youth Congress—but since cepelinai at five bucks a plate were the most expensive thing on Neringa's menu, and people often made lukewarm compliments about my legs

or sketched art on the paper placemats rather than leaving cash, I didn't have a shot, really. The boy kissed my neck, murmuring something in Lithuanian. It was stupid, really. He could have been anyone. Anyone Lithuanian.

Lithuania: Small Eastern European country just north of Poland on the Baltic Sea. Same country that Jonathan Franzen insulted in writing his ultra-famous book, *The Corrections*. The publishing industry allows for one book set in or near Lithuania every two years. This is not a scientific survey. It is based on the rejection letters I get asking me to write stories that are "more American" or that are "less foreign."

Current population: 2,842,702 as of Friday, September 30, 2016. That's down a million from 15 years ago, when I started

this essay while still in graduate school working on a writing degree at Columbia.

My parents were born there. And their parents. And their parents' parents. And so forth, back to the pagan nomads of the 12th century, none of whom had ever heard of Jonathan Franzen. If you know a Lithuanian, he is probably my cousin a few times removed. Or at the very least we went to the same summer camp in Michigan. And, if he's not an actual relative, I've probably made out with him.

Native language: Lithuanian. Which is nothing like Russian, and no, it's not Slavic either, though Jonathan Franzen doesn't care about such details. Caring about such details is part of what makes the Lithuanian people a laughingstock. I, myself, had learned the word Baltic, and could recite the treatise on the old-



I was a college student waitressing for the summer at the Neringa Restaurant hoping to earn enough money to go to Australia for the International Lithuanian Youth Congress.

est spoken Indo-European language (directly descendent from Sanskrit, its only linguistic relatives Latvian and Old Prussian) by the time I was 9 years old. Only linguistic scholars were actually impressed. The kids on the playground searched for puddles to push me into.

Note the following: *Ishtar*, *The Story of Us*, *Seascape with Sharks and Dancer*, *Gang War in Cyberspace*, *Eddie*, half the movies Billy Crystal ever made, the latest Hannibal Lecter movie ... what do these works of "art" have in common? All of them have goofy, weird, creepy or otherwise oddball characters that are from (you guessed it!) Lithuania. If there were ever a book called the *Hidden Hollywood Writers' Guide for Scriptwriters and Other Unemployed Dreamers*, Lithuania would be defined as: "An arcane place where people are eccentric and overly serious. Cheap laugh."

Do you think Jonathan Franzen cares that he insulted an entire country? The

Lithuanian ambassador made a public statement to that effect. News blurbs about the story were disparaging and humorous, describing the ambassador's "hurt expression" and his "ridiculous" invitation to Mr. Franzen to actually visit the country. *Publisher's Weekly* even reported the story with this lead-in: "You have to laugh..." Sure. Laugh.

Lithuania is the largest of the three Baltic nations, and should in point of fact be leading the others economically, though it's not. Estonia is ranked six countries higher in the World Economic Forum's growth competitiveness list. Why? Because big companies like Hewlett Packard and Deloitte & Touche initially targeted Estonia's capital thinking, "Oh, a tiny, poor ex-Soviet nation; we'll exploit the cheap labor," and then the execs got to Talinn, and instead of a cute exploitable country, they found art, architecture and technologically savvy, hard-working people. Same thing in Riga, Latvia. Easy

to spell. Easy to say. Well, in Vilnius, the people are also beautiful, savvy and hard working; the architecture is unspoiled 14th to 16th century; overhead costs are low; and cellphone towers and DSL lines are as common as meat dumplings with sour cream. Additionally, the locals (ridiculously beautiful, tall, blond types) tend to speak English fluently. So why is Lithuania ranked so low? Because, honestly, who wants to tell their American, Scottish, Argentinean, Japanese boss, "Hey, Boss, what say we open a branch in Vilnius, Lithuania?"

The very statement is a punchline, easily exploitable by writers. Like Jonathan Franzen, for example.

My entire life, whenever someone asked me where my name was from, I said, "My parents gave it to me." Why? So people would laugh at my little joke and not my heritage. I learned this when I was about 6—the first time I responded, quite seriously, "It's Lithuanian," and the family friend who'd inquired got that glassy oh-my-god look in his eye before succumbing to an eruption of snorty laughs. For the rest of the church potluck supper, he kept repeating "Lithuanian!" and snorting back giggles, as if the word itself, like some sort of Novocain-laced yogurt culture, kept his hysteria active.

Right, so: several years before his lips found mine in my grandmother's dark foyer, this boy and I had met at a Lithuanian boarding school in West Germany, the only one in the free world. I was 15. The American-born at the school met every Friday in a graveyard; drank a case of Pilsner with six, eight or 10 other Lithuanians our age (Brazilians, Argentinians, Germans); and raised our young drunken voices in multipart harmony, slurring national Partisan songs from the 1920s. Of course, back then we had no idea that the language we had "preserved uncorrupted" from our parents' parents sounded like Al Capone's gangster jive to anyone currently living in the country. We had never met anyone our age who had actually been born there: it was a Soviet-occupied nation, and as far as our parents had taught us, anyone who had

not escaped in the 1940s or had not been sent to exile and certain death in Siberia was by default a Communist. Instead of obtaining visas to visit the old country and discover the place we kids of these immigrants insisted we loved, we built illegal bonfires on free soil, held hands with other Lithuanian émigré kids—from Australia, Switzerland, Mali—and dreamed of the day when the tricolor flag would fly over our true homeland again. Then we stood guard for each other as we puked in the nettle bushes.

Why does this matter, you ask?

Ah.

Well, eight thousand dollars worth of therapy later, I can tell you with great assurance, I have no idea. It was how we were raised. “To preserve the culture and language of our homeland.” Lithuania’s future was the central and most important issue in our lives—even day-to-day, at the ubiquitous PTA bake sales in our very American public school cafeterias—we worried about how we were going to meet, marry and mate with another Lithuanian. Preferably not a first cousin.

Other kids brought brownies, and we brought three-dimensional gingerbread mushrooms we’d made from a grandmother’s recipe, using poppy seeds to simulate soil on the white-frosted stems. Other kids watched cartoons on Saturdays; we attended Lithuanian school, learning declensions, gerunds and the effect of the Crusades on our great-great-grandparents’ farmland. Our neighbors came home to Gilligan’s Island and Oreos; we were shuttled to Lithuanian Scouts, where we learned the lullabies we’d be singing to our tow-headed children, soon as we managed to generate them. Perhaps we, too, might eat a McDonald’s hamburger for lunch, but for dinner we were sitting down to a potato kugelis garnished with bacon fat and sour cream while our father read aloud the obituaries and births from the Lithuanian daily.

After the Chicago-summer fling, eight-syllable boy and I had nothing to say.

Because there it was, we really were only messing around to begin with because he was Lithuanian and so was I, and my grandmother happened to live next

door to his father’s new wife, and I had seen him mowing the lawn that morning and had remembered him from the cemetery in Germany, and he’d remembered me from the folk dance group, and so we decided to stop by 69th Street and grab a beer or two, which turned into six because the bartenders on 69th Street always served underage kids who asked nicely in the mother tongue.

And then he had to walk me home, of course, because even though this was the Lithuanian Quarter, it was still on the South Side of Chicago, one of the roughest neighborhoods in the city. Don’t believe me? Read Stuart Dybek. There’s a guy who knows his immigrants. He does not make fun of Albanians, nor Uzbeks, nor even Lithuanians, nor does he treat them as Jonathan Franzen might. To Jonathan Franzen, Lithuanians are only one flavor of literary jelly-belly: i.e., exoticism for the sake of itself; i.e., identifying details are for shock value only; i.e., who in their right mind actually chooses to eat a popcorn-flavored candy?

And there we were. Nothing to say.



What do these works of “art” have in common? All of them have goofy, weird, creepy or otherwise oddball characters that are from (you guessed it!) Lithuania.



Several years before his lips found mine in my grandmother's dark foyer, this boy and I had met at a Lithuanian boarding school in West Germany, the only one in the free world.

Happy to have done our bit for Lithuania. He thanked me. I smiled demurely. He asked if I would see him again. I smiled demurely. Something rustled in the direction of my grandmother's bedroom and I quickly shoved him out the front door. He turned back to wave, and found me, yes, still smiling demurely.

Trying to hide the fact that something, truly, was wrong.

Back in the time of that boy and waiting tables for cheap Lithuanian men, Lithuania was my life. I donated a hard-earned dollar during the Lithuanian Mass on Sundays, and bought bacon buns at the Lithuanian bakery.

I never saw that boy again.

Let me repeat: I never saw him again. He was a bead in a very long chain of amber, each less meaningful and more flawed than the last, until I started actually searching to find the ones that had "stuff" in them: The random antlike nervousness, the twitchy spiderlike fear of commitment, the filthy habits of a house-

fly. I messed around with them, dumped them (or was dumped), and dutifully moved on to the next. Very methodical.

I live in Manhattan now, and my grandmother is long dead, and Lithuania is free of Soviet rule, and my family moved to a more distant Lithuanian suburb of Chicago. So you might ask: What's it to me that an author chooses Lithuanian as the flavor-of-the-month?

What's it to me that *Dear Fang, With Love* was a national bestseller and featured a Jewish dad bringing his daughter to Vilnius to show her around? What's it to me that *Between Shades of Gray* came out at the same time as a porn book with a similar name and everyone read it and now it, too, is being made into a movie despite having character names like Mr. Table and Miss Mushroom?

Well, I'll tell you. It wasn't precisely that I didn't like myself—though my expensive therapist would be delighted if I gave in on that point. No, it was more of a search, if you will. The goal that my parents and grandparents had set for me as they tottered off the boat to be sprayed by foamy white chemical hoses, and once sufficiently clean for America, enrolled in schools where the nuns planned to smack them into obedience over dual and often conflicting loyalties. This was the message of my entire youth: YOU ARE THE FUTURE OF YOUR COUNTRY.

By the time I moved to Manhattan, I had

given up on marriage. I decided instead to become a writer, figuring that even if I never became a good Lithuanian mother, at least my parents might still be a little bit proud of me if they saw my name on a book jacket. Foolish American Dream. Writers are never employed. Writers who write about Lithuania, even less. They receive letters of rejection that say things like: "Your writing is SPECTACLAR (sic). Please write something more American and get back to me!" (This, from a big agent in reply to a novel—because at least to the publishing industry, immigrants are currently un-American.)

But this isn't about my writing.

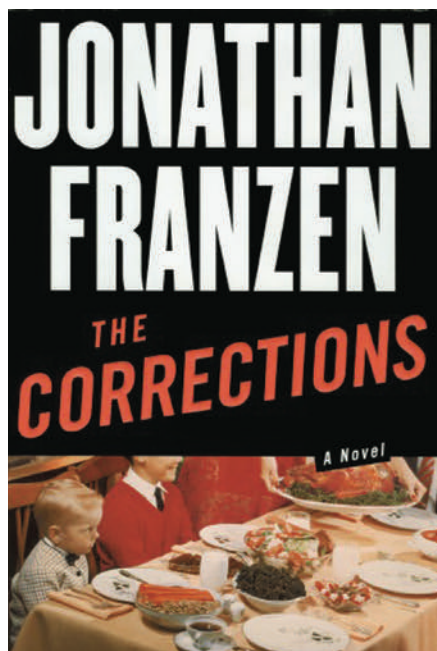
Twenty-five years have passed since Lithuania was freed.

I don't have Lithuanian friends and I haven't spoken the mother tongue for years. I write in English, about American themes. I write about racism, identity, personal crisis in the city. And then, one day—perhaps in a cynical postmodern backlash against the Franzen media hype (an unemployed classmate of mine had attended my Halloween party wearing little other than thick pseudo-intellectual glasses and an "I hate Oprah" T-shirt)—I finally purchased a copy of *The Corrections*.

I loathed the opening sentence—I generally pass on novels that open with a weather report, no matter how turgid and expensive the vocabulary, but despite my better judgment, I kept reading, sucked



The wheels of Air Force One touched the heirloom soil and I watched via that same miraculous internet that plays such a large part in JF's blockbuster book. ... My America had acknowledged my Lithuania at last: a birth-mother reunited with an adopted child. I was proud to be a witness.



Secretly, I wonder this: Is my irritation at Jonathan Franzen guilt at not having accomplished more by exploiting my own weird immigrant-kid life?

in by the promise of parentally induced angst and of course, who can put down a work of literature that describes vaginal tang so tastily? So I read forth, and then, slouched halfway down page 88 as if waiting in a dark alley amid a pile of forgotten tires, my culture is violently assaulted by the casual slap of “the deputy prime minister of Lithuania—a small Baltic country...” And to inflict further pain, the author had done some internet research. His statistics are meticulously correct. Paraguay gets an honest mention. Vilnius, Baltic thunder, even “Mrs. Misevicius” sounding idiotic enough to make a bride keep her maiden name—all are true true true. Hurtfully, painfully, invasively true.

I enjoy the novel. I can’t put it down; it’s disastrous. I suffer as my eyes eat the next page and the next. I have to ask myself: Why does Jonathan Franzen get to write this novel? Why does this man, who chose my country out of a raffle-hat, get to bring home the prize that he didn’t even care to win? He could as easily have chosen the Ukraine and stomped on the tentatively extended toes of Jonathan Safran Foer.

But no.

I read on, loving the language, holding up the text at each misinformation and shouting at the walls of my empty apartment, “See? That’s sortof, kindof not really exactly right!” And secretly, I wonder this: Is my irritation at Jonathan Franzen guilt at not having accomplished more by exploiting my own weird immigrant-kid life? Could I (I wonder as I throw back a shot of ice cold Zyr vodka) extract revenge by writing a novel about a glasses-wearing ex-seismologist living in New York who innocently and much to his personal chagrin pens an accidental best-seller? My head gets dizzy from the vodka. I know he’d never even bother to read it, much less get angry.

I can only keep my pride hidden, shrouded like a precious statue in a safe deposit box. I can (when drunk) take it out and look at it, hoping someday to be brave enough to display it. When Lithuania was invited to join NATO, the leaves were changing to brown in the park near my apartment. My family and oldest friends emailed frantic joyous notes to each other, of the “where-were-you-when” type generally relegated to assassinations and wedding announcements. Did you hear? We are joining NATO. Cousins, uncles-removed, people I’d slept with. Everyone was part of that “we.”

The wheels of Air Force One touched the heirloom soil and I watched via that same miraculous internet that plays such a large part in J.F.’s blockbuster book. I hadn’t voted for Dubya. I don’t admire him. I can’t even say that I particularly tolerate his ear-bookended vapidity. But when he waved (vacuously) and smiled (blankly) at the top of the red-carpeted stairway and descended the dozen-some steps alongside Adamkus, the Lithuanian president, down down down to the Vilnius tarmac, my heart thudded and my breaths came shallow, as if I really were in a Lithuanian porn flick. It was this exact victory for which I’d struggled years and years ago. For this moment had I sung patriotic songs, carried splintery homemade placards, crushed my love of cheeseburgers and learned to eat her-ring. My America had acknowledged my

Lithuania at last: A birth-mother reunited with an adopted child. I was proud to be a witness.

Would there come a day when I’d be openly proud of my heritage again? Lithuania has joined NATO, has joined the EU. She has her letters. She had her first woman president before we did! But still she remains a girl to be trotted out for a laugh.

One day, a novel will be written in which we are not laughing, not sneering and certainly not pitying—a novel more like *Dear Fang*, *With Love* and less like *The Corrections*. I am waiting for the novel in which Lithuania shines in all her glory. Or better still, in which the country is a landscape and not a minor character.

M. M. De Voe is the founder and executive director of Pen Parentis, Ltd. She also co-hosts the monthly Pen Parentis Literary Salons with its current curator. An award-winning and internationally published short fiction writer, De Voe established Pen Parentis as a fiscally sponsored public art project in December 2009, after running a year of successful Pen Parentis readings in Lower Manhattan along with a former Columbia University classmate. Three Pushcart nominations, two Editor’s Prizes, a few arts grants, two children, and several publications later, De Voe continues to seek balance between family and writing career, most recently signing with agent Barbara Braun and simultaneously obtaining federal non-profit status for Pen Parentis, Ltd. She holds an MFA from Columbia and is a former actress. De Voe still does occasional voice-over work—you can hear her as the Lithuanian voice of OnStar in your rental car. See www.mmdevoe.com for links to De Voe’s writing and recent author news. And if you have an extra minute, follow her on Twitter @MMDeVoe and like her on Facebook: facebook.com/mmdevoe.





Lost Memories

By Phyllis J. Edwards (Kriaučiūnas)

Phyllis at her vendor table at Lithuanian Days in Frackville, Pa., in August 2016.

The autumn sun warmed my face as it streamed through the maple tree standing tall beside the driveway. I reached out and opened my car door. After climbing into the driver's seat, I sat there for a minute contemplating the thoughts swirling around in my head. Today was my final appointment with my psychologist. The next steps to self-discovery were up to me.

Up to this point I had never questioned authority and was obedient beyond measure. I tried to meet everyone's expecta-

tions and became whatever I was expected to be. Obedience can be good, but, taken to the extreme, unquestioned compliance can leave individuals grasping for self-identity as they mature. I imagine I was like an onion. When I peeled away all the layers of others' expectations, there was nothing left. That was a scary thought. I had a great desire to connect with my roots and find out what I was all about.

I am the oldest of three children born to the son of Lithuanian immigrants and the daughter of a Louisiana family whose

ancestors can be traced back to English roots, including two passengers on the Mayflower. My father met my mother shortly before World War II while he was stationed at Camp Polk in Louisiana.

Understanding my maternal heritage was not too difficult because for several hundred years those ancestors lived in America. Additionally, my great aunt had compiled a large, hardback book containing her extended family history. She collected not only facts but anecdotes and stories as well. I was able to read about the hardships of their pioneer life, firsthand accounts of several wars, indiscretions and tales of everyday activities. This publication is a priceless possession but I wish that I had been more inquisitive when my mother and her parents were still alive.

This past year, my father was cleaning out the drawers of an old desk and he discovered a spiral notebook containing some of my mother's writings. He mailed the notebook to me. I was overwhelmed with joy. She had written a very short summary of her life after marriage. She described her train ride to Baltimore, where she lived with her husband's family until after the war. He was stationed at Fort Indiantown Gap in Pennsylvania at the time, enabling him to visit her quite often before shipping out to England and then on to Normandy and the Western Front. I was actually born a couple of months before D-Day.

I am grateful for the knowledge I have of my mother and her ancestors. I admire my mother for the courage she had as a young Southern Baptist from Lake Charles, Louisiana, who left her southern home for the first time and traveled by herself by train to the northern city of Baltimore to live with devoted Lithuanian Catholics.

I imagine it was quite stressful for my mother to have her first child while her husband was a medic on the front lines of World War II. I did find out from her writings that she almost died during childbirth and was retained in the hospital for two weeks after I was born.

Unfortunately, other than the book and

my mother's short journal, I have very little information about her childhood. She really didn't talk much about her early life. What was her childhood like? Her school? Her friends? Did she have good relationships with her two brothers and four sisters? Why did her parents separate but live on the same piece of land? How did she spend her free time as a child? What was it like meeting my father for the first time? What was her mother like? Her father? What was served at their family meals? What were her teenage years like? My mother died of a brain tumor in 1997. More of her memories and answers to these questions died with her and are lost forever.

Although I learned some details about my mother and her family, that was only half of my story. I wanted to know about my Lithuanian heritage. I could never remember my father's family sitting around and talking about their childhood or their parents. My father was only 2½ when his mother died and not quite 7 when his father passed away. He was the youngest in the family. His older sister raised him, so he never really talked about his parents until just recently. I didn't even know my grandparents' names until I located their graves and saw the inscriptions on their stones. Soon a fire began burning inside of me, gradually becoming a powerful flame that could only be quenched by learning more about the legacy left to me by my Lithuanian ancestors.

I joined a local genealogy group and began learning how to research my Lithuanian family. Well, it didn't take long for me to become frustrated. Only one generation before mine had been born in America and records were difficult to track down. Finally, by accident, I located the 1901 passenger list for my grandmother's arrival to Baltimore, Maryland, at the age of 18. Her name had been transcribed incorrectly and was not even close to the actual. I soon discovered the Lithuanian name of her brother and his village of birth, Gruzdziai, Lithuania. At the time it was ruled by Russia.

I located Gruzdziai on a map and stuck



Phyllis' Lithuanian grandmother, Jadyga Vaitkutė.



Phyllis' Lithuanian grandfather, Nicodemus Kriaučiūnas.

a pin on it. This was my grandmother's birth village also. I suddenly felt connected, especially after I located the names of her parents. It was then that I decided to write a book. I wanted to preserve any details I discovered about my Lithuanian heritage. Because I knew very little about Lithuania, I spent many months researching the country's history, culture and traditions.

What I learned was both heartbreaking and inspiring. I was in awe of the exceptional courage of the Lithuanian people as they stood as one against the iron rule of Russia to protect their heritage and language. In spite of Russia wiping Lithuania off the political map, the people stayed strong in their hearts. They held their resolve for many decades until finally, in the 20th century, they became independent again and an equal partner among the world's nations.

My book—*The Invincible Heart: The Story of the Lithuanian Heart of a Mother, a Daughter, and a Country*—details this amazing history in an easy-to-read fashion. I wanted to share my research with my family and other Lithuanian-Americans who have a desire to know more about their homeland.

The book is also inspired by my grandmother's life and, although I learned what life may have been like for her through historical research, I have many questions I wish could ask her. As a child, what were



Phyllis' father at age 2½ when his mother died.



Phyllis' father in Third Armored Division (Spearhead Division) of the Army in World War II.



Phyllis' father with his four brothers and two sisters.



Phyllis' father and mother, Lennie Faye Dennis, in 1941.

her thoughts, fears, dreams and favorite things? What did she do in her free time? How did she know my grandfather? He paid her passage to America. Had she met him before that? There was a book distribution center in Gruzdžiai during the ban on Lithuanian literature. Were her parents active in distributing smuggled books? Did she know her grandparents? What were her feelings as she said goodbye to her parents, her family, her friends and her country, knowing she would probably never see them again? She was only 18, travelling to America alone. What was it like for her in steerage? Was she scared? Did she make a friend? Was it difficult adapting to married life in the city of Baltimore after living in a small Lithuanian village? I have many more questions that cannot be answered by records and documents. My grandmother died during the Spanish flu epidemic in 1918. My grandfather died in 1923. Their personal memories and answers to my questions died with them and are lost forever.

I am fortunate. My father is still alive and doing very well. He celebrated his 100th birthday on May 1, 2016. I always have a pen and pad nearby when I call or visit him. Our conversations are a gold mine of information. Every time we talk I learn something new about his life. He was the youngest of the five boys and two girls in his family.

My father is the only one left, after his sister Ida died at the age of 107 in 2015. She lived in an assisted living facility until she was 105, at which time she moved into a long-term care facility. I intended to visit but I was busy with my ailing husband and kept postponing the trip until it was too late. I attended her funeral and was intensely moved. Copies of a typed 16-page memoir were given out. Typical of the tenacity of Lithuanians, Ida's resolve to share her story did not fade. Her mind was still sharp so, lying in her bed, she dictated her memories to her daughter-in-law, who later typed them up for distribution. What a priceless legacy to leave her family! Reading her story generated many questions, but the answers to those questions and additional memories in her life are lost forever.

My family moved to Elkton, Maryland, when I was very young, but we visited relatives in Baltimore quite often. I am saddened because I did not encourage my aunts and uncles to share stories of their past. There seemed to be a clear line of separation between children and adults, preventing young ones from being participants in adult conversations. By the time I realized how important their stories and memories were, it was too late. I am currently trying to glean information from their children, but like me they did not preserve many details about our com-



Phyllis' aunt Elsie quit school and took care of her siblings after the death of both parents so they would not be sent to an orphanage.

mon ancestors. Every tiny bit of information they share with me is like a precious jewel that I carefully record so that it will remain and not be lost forever.

My father was in his 80s before he gradually began to talk about his time in the army during World War II. I made sure I wrote down everything he said even if it was just a sentence or two. I researched his stories on the internet and was able to not only find verification, but also additional information and photos. In 2015 this collection allowed me to write a short publication, "A Veteran Shares Memories of WWII."

I am currently working on a memoir for my father entitled, "A Hundred Years of History – A Lithuanian-American Shares His Story." His mind is still excellent and each phone call is like opening a gift, both for him and for me. He loves talking about his past and I treasure every word he discloses. He shared how amazed he is with advances in technology. When he was young he had to run to the corner grocery store to use a phone and now he has a phone that talks to him. He elaborated on what it was like before indoor plumbing or electricity was available in his home. He told me about how once a week he would walk to the public showers on Washington Street in Baltimore.



Phyllis' father, Philip John Kriaučiūnas, at age 100 cutting his grass.



Phyllis and her aunt Ida at her 100th birthday celebration.

He said the showers were like car washes for people. He paid a nickel and the shower would run for a certain number of minutes before shutting off. Imagine if we had to do this today. I am so thankful that I have my father still alive and telling me what it is like to experience 100 years of changes. He is quick to share events that happened, but not as quick

to share his emotions. Occasionally I ask, "Well, how did that make you feel?" and most of the time he will tell me. I write everything down so that when he leaves this earth his memories will be preserved indefinitely.

Genealogists often focus on the past, but what about the present? Fifteen years ago, my husband and I began sending

out a monthly newsletter to family and friends. The newsletters documented our activities and entertainment, struggles and successes, and battles through dialysis, transplant, cancer and stays at medical facilities. Readers could learn about the birds that visited our feeder, new friends we met on vacation, what flowers were blooming in our garden and how many times the great blue heron came and ate our goldfish. They are full of stories of happy times and challenging times that we overcame. My husband passed away in 2015 and I continue to document my life through the newsletter. I feel so blessed to have preserved more than 15 years of my life in writing and photos.

My next project is to write my memoir covering my first 58 years. Fifty years from now I don't want my grandchildren saddened because details of my life have died with me. With the breakdown of the family unit in today's world, these writings

may help maintain an important connection and assist those who follow in their path to self-discovery. Writing our stories not only informs others of events in our lives and how we felt about those events, but it unveils our values. Connecting to our family's past can serve as an anchor as we are tossed about by worldly circumstances as we try to figure out who we are.

I passionately urge each reader to take this to heart and begin writing down some family history—not just facts that can be found in documents, but stories and feelings and dreams. You don't have to be a "professional" writer. We are all storytellers, whether we realize it or not.

You don't have to get every date and time perfect and you don't have to write one large narrative. Break your writing tasks into smaller, manageable pieces. Create a timeline that highlights key personal and historical events. A timeline helps place you and your ancestors in his-

torical context, which can be very useful. Don't worry about the final product—just begin writing.

Our Lithuanian ancestors suffered much to preserve the culture, traditions and language of the country. Is it too much for us to take the time to write down our family stories so, in our own small way, we can preserve our inheritance? We must take up the mantle against family members being reduced to names and a couple of dates on a genealogy tree. They are too important. We are too important. Our heritage is too important.

Memories not written down will be lost forever. Don't allow the legacy passed on to you to disappear. You have the blood of Lithuanian ancestors running through your veins. Rise up and accept the challenge.

If you do not record the stories, who will?



Phyllis and her father in 2010 in Louisiana.

A Golden Celebration for Our Lady of the Pine Woods



The organizing committee invited four choirs to come together to form the joint choir for the jubilee celebration of the Šiluva Chapel at the Basilica in Washington, D.C.: Dainava (Chicago), Laisvė (Philadelphia), Exultate (Cleveland) and Volungė (Toronto). Photo: Rimas Gedeika

In 1251, Lithuania was the last European nation to accept Christianity. Shortly thereafter, it slipped back into paganism again until 1387.

In 1608, in the village of Šiluva, in western Lithuania, a group of children tending livestock reported seeing a beautiful woman weeping and holding a baby near a large rock in the field. Villagers, including the local Calvinist pastor, went to the field to investigate what the children reported. When the minister asked the young woman why she wept so bitterly, she responded that her son had once been worshipped on this sacred land, which was now used for raising crops and grazing animals. She then vanished. A Catholic church had been located on the site but had been torn down after the property was illegally confiscated during the Protestant Reformation.

According to one story, after news of the incident spread throughout the country, villagers led a blind man of more than 100 years old to the site. Around 1569, he had helped the last remaining priest, Fr. Jonas Halubka, bury a chest filled with liturgical vessels and vestments beside a large rock before the church was destroyed. As soon as he reached the spot, his sight was restored and he was able to point out where the chest had been buried. In 1627, a small wooden chapel was built around the rock where the apparitions occurred. A larger chapel was built in 1924.

This apparition of Šiluvos Marija (Our Lady of Šiluva, or Our Lady of the Pine Woods) was one of the first Vatican-confirmed Marian apparitions in Europe—investigated and approved for public devotion by Pope Pius VI in 1775—much earlier than either Lourdes or Fatima. The apparition greatly strengthened

a tradition of devotion to Mary throughout Lithuania. Šiluva became a popular European pilgrimage destination until Russian and then Soviet occupation limited access. Since Lithuania regained independence in 1991, tens of thousands of pilgrims have gone to Šiluva in Lithuania annually on September 8.



Chapel of Šiluva in Lithuania. Photo: B. Gliwa

Commemorating Šiluva in America

On September 4, 1966, thousands of Lithuanians gathered in Washington, D.C., for the dedication of the Chapel of Our Lady of Šiluva in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. The founding of the chapel was made possible through the efforts of Lithuanian-Americans throughout North America under the leadership of Most Rev. Vincentas Brizgys, auxiliary bishop of Kaunas in exile.

Decorated with the work of three prominent Lithuanian-American artists, the worship space commemorates Lithuania's deep Marian affection and its religious history, as well as its suffering under Russian oppression and the hopeful journey of Lithuanians to America.

This year, 2,000 pilgrims gathered on October 9, 2016, to



The chapel's statue was created by Lithuanian sculptor Vytautas Kasuba. The symbol of Šiluva, the pine cone, is prominent in the mosaic border. The altar frontal portrays the hill of crosses upon which the Lithuanians upheld their Christian identity in the wake of communist oppression. The arch above the altar (not shown) offers a further reminder of the sorrows experienced in the country with the inscription, "Mary, console the children of a land sprinkled with blood and tears."

commemorate the golden anniversary of the dedication of the Šiluva Chapel at the Basilica and to give thanks for 26 years of restored religious and political freedom. Among those attending were members of the Lithuanian diplomatic corps and members of the Lithuanian community from throughout the United States and Canada. The occasion was marked by a solemn high Mass in the Basilica's Great Upper Church, followed by a reception in the Edward J. Pryzbyla University Center at The Catholic University of America, which adjoins the Basilica.

The Mass was concelebrated by the Most Rev. Joseph E. Kurtz, archbishop of Louisville and president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; the Most Rev. Lionginas Virbalas, S.J., metropolitan archbishop of the Archdiocese of Kaunas, where the town of Šiluva is located; the Most Rev. Barry



Among those attending the jubilee Mass were Sigita Šimkuvienė-Rosen (second from right), president of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc., and Dalia Henke (right), president of the Lithuanian World Community. Photo: Rimas Gedeika



Msgr. Putrimas, Archbishop Pierre, Archbishop Kurtz, Archbishop Virbalas, Msgr. Rossi and Msgr. Makrickas after the jubilee Mass, at the conclusion of the religious procession to the chapel. To the right is the banner that the Archdiocese of Kaunas commissioned from artist Silvija Knezekytė for the celebration. Photo: Dana Rene Bowler

Knestout, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Washington; and the Most Rev. Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio of the Holy See to the United States of America and titular archbishop of Gunela. Kurtz, who was principal celebrant and homilist, and whose Polish maternal grandparents came to the United States from the Vilnius region in 1907, has said that the Šiluva chapel is one of his favorite shrines.

The beautiful voices of four choirs added to the solemnity of the Mass. The joint choir was composed of Toronto's Volungė, led by Dalia Viskontas; Chicago's Dainava, led by Darius Polikaitis; Cleveland's Exultate, led by Rita Čyvas-Kliorys; and Philadelphia's Laisvė, led by Ilona Babinskiene. Čyvas-Kliorys was the music director for the jubilee Mass.



Archbishop Kurtz accepts a gift from Lithuania—a wood carving of the Rupintojelis (worried Christ)—from Bishop Virbalas. Photo: Rimas Gedeika



The pre-jubilee exhibition showcased memorabilia and artifacts that highlight the religious, cultural and national history of Lithuania; depictions of modern-day Šiluva, Lithuania; as well as photos and other material that trace the establishment of the Šiluva chapel in the Basilica. Photo: Dana Rene Bowler

Pre-Jubilee Planning and Events

Msgr. Edmond J. Putrimas, Lithuanian Bishops Conference delegate for the Apostolate of Lithuanian Catholics Abroad, and Msgr. Rolandas Makrickas, counselor of the Apostolic Nunciature (the Vatican's Embassy in America), initiated the formation of the organizing committee for the jubilee celebration. The committee chair was Viktoras Nakas. Months of careful planning and a number of smaller special events preceded the October anniversary celebration.

On June 30, 2016, the Basilica hosted a reception to celebrate the opening of a special exhibit, "The Chapel of Šiluva: 50 Years Later," in anticipation of the jubilee. The reception was the joint effort of the Šiluva Chapel in Washington 50 Year Jubilee Committee and the Lithuanian Embassy in Washington.

The exhibit was organized by Jubilee Committee members Dr. Jūratė Maciūnas Landwehr and Msgr. Makrickas, and was curated by the Basilica's archivist and curator, Geraldine M. Rohling, Ph.D., M.A.Ed. The exhibit featured traditional folk costumes and dress, wayside crosses, artwork and devotional items. Lithuanian religious and cultural artifacts were loaned by the Lithuanian Embassy, the Baltimore Lithuanian Museum and individual donors.

Among the more than 100 guests were a number of Lithuanian dignitaries who were visiting the U.S. on official business, including Speaker of the Lithuanian Parliament Loreta Graužinienė, Foreign Affairs Minister Linas Linkevičius and Minister of Culture Šarūnas Birutis. The guest list also included Lithuanian Ambassador to the U.S. Rolandas Kriščiūnas, General Consul of the United Kingdom David Hunt, representatives of the embassies of the European Union and Slovakia, a contingent from the Apostolic Nunciature of the Holy See (Vatican Embassy) and former U.S. Congressman Bill Sarpalius.



Committee members and special guests at the exhibit opening reception. At front, from left): Dr. Saulius Naujokaitis, Lyra Puišytė-Bostroem, Šarūnas Birutis, Dr. Geraldine Rohling, Loreta Graužinienė, Dr. Jūratė Maciūnas Landwehr, Linas Linkevičius, Msgr. Rolandas Makrickas, Angelė Bailey and Msgr. Edmond J. Putrimas. At rear, from left, Diana Vidutis, unidentified guest, Bill Sarpalius and Viktoras Nakas. Photo: Dana Rene Bowler



On August 21, Bishop Kęstutis Kėvalas (center) celebrated Mass in the Šiluva chapel. He visited the chapel exhibit with Msgr. Rolandas Makrickas (right) and Jubilee Committee Chair Victor Nakas (left).

Graužinienė pointed out the symbolic importance of the Šiluva chapel during the years of Soviet oppression in Lithuania as well as during the reestablishment of independence. She wished the jubilee committee every success in attaining its goals and shared her personal experience in having her prayers answered after recourse to Our Lady of Šiluva. Linkevičius and Birutis noted the political and cultural significance of the chapel in uniting Lithuanians in their native country with those abroad.

Kęstutis Kėvalas, auxiliary bishop of Kaunas in a free Lithuania, returned to the Chapel of Our Lady of Šiluva to celebrate Mass.

On the day before the 50th anniversary of the dedication of the Chapel of Our Lady of Šiluva, the jubilee organizing committee hosted a talk by one of its members. Dr. Jūratė Maciūnas Landwehr's topic was "A Conversation About the History and Art of the Šiluva Chapel in the National Shrine." The talk took place at McGivney Hall Auditorium on the campus of The Catholic University of America, approximately 100 yards east of the Šiluva Chapel.



Dr. Jūratė Maciūnas Landwehr gave a talk on the history and art of the Šiluva chapel the day before the anniversary celebration.

Rohling spoke with great insight about the artistic features of the Šiluva chapel. Referencing St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, she compared the National Shrine with its multi-ethnic chapels and oratories to the one Body of Christ with its many members. Landwehr briefly described the history behind the building of the chapel and focused on the Lithuanian artists and sculptors who contributed to its design.

At the end of the official program, the audience was delighted by a group of children representing the two Washington-area Lithuanian Saturday schools singing the hymn "O Mary, Bless Us," led by music teacher Viktorija Zaborienė.

The Šiluva chapel was founded under the leadership of Most Rev. Vincetas Brizgys, auxiliary bishop of Kaunas in exile. On August 21, 2016, just two weeks before the 50th anniversary of that solemn dedication in 1966, Most Rev.

The Artistry of the Chapel of Šiluva

There are more than 80 chapels and oratories in the National Shrine dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Crypt Church—the heart and soul of the Shrine—was the first part of the Basilica to be completed, along with 15 chapels surrounding the apse. The first Mass celebrated there was on Easter Sunday, April 20, 1924. The first chapel constructed outside of the Crypt Church was that of Our Lady of Lourdes in 1931.

The Lithuanian chapel, dedicated in 1966, belonged to the post-World War II Cold War period, when most chapels were donated by Eastern Europe immigrants. Others of that era include the Chapel of Czestochowa (Polish), dedicated in 1964, directly across from Šiluva, and the Mother of Sorrows (Slovakia) Chapel, its immediate neighbor, dedicated in 1965.

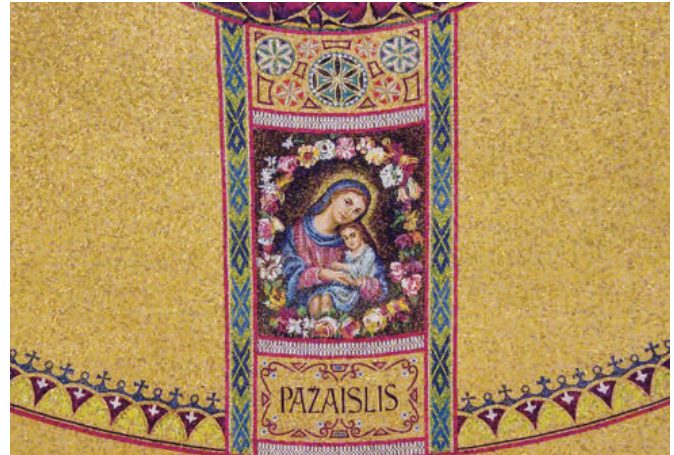
Each chapel has a unique ethos, providing visitors a new and different spirituality and ethnicity. Dr. Geraldine M. Rohling, archivist and curator of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, describes what sets the Šiluva Chapel apart:



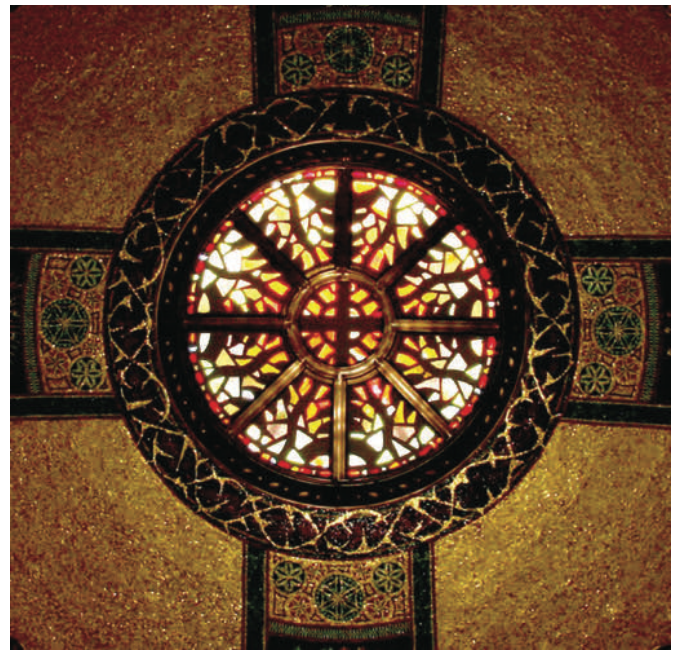
The mosaic surrounding the Madonnas in the chapel all feature elements of traditional Lithuanian textile patterns. Photo courtesy of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

When entering the Chapel of Šiluva, the Hill of Crosses featured on the altar frontal and the Madonna, which dominates the reredos (the ornamental screen covering the wall at the back of the altar), immediately catch one's attention.

Even though these are the dominating images, the mosaics are the most impressive and culturally reflective part of the chapel. Fabric art—weaving and needlework—is a very distinctive element of Lithuanian folk art. Designs used in Lithuanian folk costumes and dress ornament the pendentives (the spherical triangular walls at the upper corners of the room that support the dome) and the outer ring of the dome. The Madonna in the chapel is also attired in Lithuanian folk dress. The two side mosaic panels, by artist Vytautas K. Jonyas (1907-1997), are interesting because of the scenes depicted and also because, even in stone, they manage to maintain the textile element that “weaves” in and out of the chapel. The mosaic panels have a “patchwork” backdrop. Touching the stone used in the mosaic gives one a sense of “home spun,” a scene that is also depicted in the mosaic.



Our Lady of Pažaislis is one of the four Madonnas in the Šiluva chapel dome, each made of glass mosaic luxuriant and reflective with gold and silver tesserae. Photo courtesy of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception



Designs used in Lithuanian folk costumes ornament the mosaic surrounding the chapel's dome window. Photo courtesy of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

The four Madonnas in the dome—Our Lady of Trakai, Our Lady of Vilnius (Aušros Vartai), Our Lady of Pažaislis and Our Mother of Sorrows—are glass mosaic luxuriant and reflective with gold and silver tesserae. Not only are they a feast for the eyes, but they also do what mosaics were originally intended to do—reflect light—helping to brighten the chapel symbolically and practically.

The Šiluva Chapel is packed with much symbolism amid all of its artwork; its rich and compelling story will compel being anyone spending any time in the chapel to learn more about Lithuania, its history and its Marian devotion.

Jubilee Hymns: A Musical Feast for the Soul

In preparing music for the anniversary Mass, music director Rita Čyvas-Kliorys worked with Msgr. Edmond J. Putrimas to discuss what and when in the course of the Mass various hymns should be sung. A conscious decision was made to limit the hymns to those written by Lithuanian composers and traditional Lithuanian hymns sung over the ages. In addition to selections sung by the choir, the organizers chose hymns that could be sung by all participants using printed handouts.

Msgr. Putrimas asked that the Lithuanian Marian hymn “Marija, Marija” be sung, as well as “Pergalės Kristui III” (To Christ, Victor III), the well-known melody of which is from Beethoven’s 9th symphony. The words of the earlier versions were written by Nijolė Kersnauskaitė in the 1980s before Lithuania had regained its independence. So the Mass could end on a joyous note, the author was asked to write words that were uplifting and fitting for this event.

The repertoire incorporated traditional hymns that have been sung throughout the past and have become staples in the Lithuanian-American choirs’ repertoire, including “Sveika, Marija” (Hail! Mary) and “Malda už tėvynę” (Prayer for Our Homeland) by Jonas Dambrauskas. To select newer hymns written in the recent past, Čyvas-Kliorys invited the directors of the choirs forming the joint choir (Dalia Viskontas, Ilona Babinskienė, Darius Polikaitis), as well as colleagues in Lithuania, to offer their suggestions. Bernardas Vasiliauskas, organist at the Cathedral of Vilnius, offered much help

The music of all of the hymns was sent to the directors of the four participating choirs in February 2016. Because the choirs were distant from one another, coming together as a joint choir and performing the music in a unified way presented challenges. There would be only one chance to rehearse together in the Basilica, so the choirs had to arrive having learned the music in as similar a way as possible. To that end, recordings of each hymn and voice parts were created. The women’s voices were recorded by Kristina Kliorytė, the men’s by Martynas Matutis. Other contributors to the recordings include Aleksandras Stankevičius and Čyvas-Kliorys.

The composers whose compositions were sung at the jubilee were Leonidas Abaris, Jonas Dambrauskas, Jonas Govėdas, Rita Čyvas-Kliorys and Česlovas Sasnauskas.

Five works of Leonidas Abaris, who resides in Vilnius, Lithuania, were chosen to be sung before and during the course of the Mass: his five-movement “Magnificat,” “Viešpatie, pasigailėk”



Choir directors, from left: Rita Čyvas-Kliorys, Dalia Viskontas, Ilona Babinskienė and Darius Polikaitis. Photo: Rimas Gedeika

(“Lord, Have Mercy”), “Garbė Dievui Aukštybėse” (“Glory to God in the Highest”), “Aleliuja” before the Gospel and “Leiski būti man arti” (“Allow Me to Be Close to You”), written in memory of the late composer Faustas Strolia.

The “Šventas” (“Holy, Holy”) and “Dievo Avinėli” (“Lamb of God”) were from a Mass that Čyvas-Kliorys wrote based on Lithuanian folk tunes. The tradition of using folk melodies as well as the rhythms and harmonies inspired by them has long been used by composers. “Folk songs contain all the aspects of people’s lives,” said Čyvas-Kliorys. “We come with these joys, accomplishments, sorrows, disappointments and offer them to God as we attempt to become better people.”

“As children of Lithuania, also known as the Land of Mary, we thought it’d be fitting to compose a special hymn dedicated to this 50th anniversary event,” she added. “Having discussed this possibility with colleagues, together with Nijolė Benotienė we saw this project through to the light of day.” “Šventa Mergele, Šiluvos Marija” (“Holy Virgin, Mary of Šiluva”) was sung following the end of Mass, when the procession made its way from the main altar of the Basilica to the side Šiluva Chapel. “The words and melody were simple to allow all to join in,” Čyvas-Kliorys explained.

Victor Nakas, Kristina Nakas, Rimas Gedeika, Geraldine M. Rohling and Rita Čyvas-Kliorys contributed to this coverage of the golden anniversary of the Chapel of Our Lady of Šiluva in Washington, D.C.

Every Day Was a Memorable Experience

By Evelina Varnas



When I was first accepted into this program, I had not expected to gain all of the experience, friendships and knowledge that I did through only four weeks in the Lithuanian International Student Services (LISS) “High School Students for Lithuania” program. An extremely large and grateful thank you goes to the Lithuanian Foundation, the Kazickas Family Foundation and the Lithuanian American Community, Inc. for making this possible for all of us students. From volunteering in a children with disabilities daycare in Vilnius, to visiting the museum of the famous Lithuanian poet Antanas Baranuskas in Anykščiai and much, much more, I have been able to make so many memories and have been well equipped to always stay deeply rooted in the homeland—Lithuania.

Although almost every day was a memorable and important experience, there were a few events that have really stuck with me and changed me as a person. One of those experiences was going to Pilaitės malūnas on the second night of the LISS program. That night a wonderful woman taught us how to make verbos (otherwise known as Easter palms) made from different dried flowers and plants, like wheat. As we made them, she also explained to us the importance of being familiar with the old culture of Lithuania. In correlation with this, a Lithuanian

Learning to make verbos: Evelina Varnas (left) and Neringa Liutikaitė (right). Photo: Ina Stankevicienė



High school students enjoy breakfast at the home of Nijolė and Algis Milauskas in Tauragė.



Evelina and other students volunteered at the Vilnius home for children with developmental disabilities. Photo: Ina Stankevicienė



By the Vilnius city municipality administration building (from left): Isabella Altman, Ilona Altman, Evelina Varnas, Neringa Liutikaitė, Zita Kirvaitis (program coordinator), Lukas Smidt and Emilija Dooling. Photo: Ina Stankeviciene



A well at the Horse Museum in Anykščiai. Photo: Emilija Musteikytė



Students got a chance to ride at the Horse Museum in Anykščiai. Photo: Emilija Musteikytė



LISS high school students at the Valstybės pažinimo centras (Center for Civil Education) museum at the Presidential Palace in Vilnius. Photo: Ina Stankeviciene

folk band came and sang traditional Lithuanian folk music, as a traditional Lithuanian dance group performed for us and then taught us how to dance. Already from that night I started to think about how I would love to live in Lithuania, and so my love for Lithuania continued to grow as I wanted to learn more.

In the city of Tauragė, we met a group of other Tauragė residents our age, and spent a week with them in Camp Veringa in Visbarai. I did not think we would all get along or become friends, but surely this has been one of the most welcoming groups I have ever met, as diverse as we were. I was especially surprised because I made a special friend there that I would have never thought that we would have become friends. It helped me learn that we are so much more than our appearances and the stereotypes we are given. I still talk to a few of them to this day.

While we were in Tauragė, we also had the chance to meet the city's mayor, Sigitas Mičiulis. I loved how he spoke so genuinely and showed compassion and care for the less fortunate and suffering of the city as he told us of his contributions to a suffer-

ing family in Tauragė. After our meeting ended and we were leaving, I shook his hand and thanked him for his kindness, as there are many people who are in authority who may abuse their power or neglect those that need help, and he is definitely not one of them.

Overall, this program has enlightened me so much; the value of it is sky-high. I probably wouldn't be so interested to learn so much more about my Lithuanian background, history and culture had it not been for this program. I used to immediately not even take a moment to think about ever living in Lithuania when I'm older; it seemed so impossible. But now I feel as though it really isn't impossible if I really want it. My summer of 2016 will always be unforgettable to me for all that I was able to see, do and learn.



Evelina Varnas.

Opportunities Not Otherwise Possible

By Margarita Swissler



LISS intern Margarita Swissler (seated) at the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science with colleagues from the Preschool and Primary Education Division (standing, from left): Chief Specialist Ilo-na Grigaravičienė, Division Head Laimutė Jankauskienė and Senior Specialist Gintarė Vasiliauskaitė.

Last spring, having just finished college and my teacher certification program, and already having a job lined up in France to teach English in the fall, I was unsure what my summer would hold. Would I stay in Maryland where I went to school? Would I go home to Wisconsin? I did not know. Thankfully, a family friend forwarded my dad information about the LISS program. I thought that it sounded like the perfect summer plan. It would give me the opportunity to return to Lithuania for the first time in 11 years plus give me experience in an education-related internship.

LISS provided us with many opportunities that would not have been possible if I had traveled to Lithuania alone. For instance, as a group we met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Linas Linkevičius, as well as with President Dalia Grybauskaitė at the Prezidentūra (Presidential Palace). Some of my other favorite outings with LISS included attending the Pasaulio Lietuvių Jaunimo Susitikimas (World Lithuanian Youth Conference) and traveling to Kaunas to see the Lithuanian men's basketball team defeat Spain in overtime in preparation for the Olympics.

While we had all of these fun extra activities, there was also the more serious day-to-day work at our internships. I was fortunate enough to work at the Ministry of Education and Science. My time was split between two divisions: first in the Division of Education Support (which is Special Education in

U.S. terms) and second in the Preschool and Primary Education Division. As an elementary/special education major, I found it nice to spend time in divisions that related to both parts of my degree.

In the Division of Education Support, I worked closely with information from the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As something that Lithuania has ratified, they received feedback this year from the U.N. on how they are doing as a country to meet the needs of people with disabilities. I focused mainly on the educational aspects of the convention. My project supervisor asked me to review the feedback and, for the areas in which Lithuania still needs to improve, explain what the United States does. They hope to use my suggestions and explanations to improve special education policy in the country.

For the Preschool and Primary Education Division, I had two projects. The first was to look at how different countries around the world teach civics—and particularly democracy—in elementary or primary schools. Their hope is to take some of these ideas and create democ-

cracy-focused projects in the primary schools this year. My second project focused on the implementation of information and communication technologies in a preschool setting. Again, I researched how different countries around the world use technology in preschools, so that Lithuania can begin to implement more technologies as well. At times, it seemed as though I was underqualified to be doing what they asked, but I hope that my knowledge of the American education system and my research will benefit the Lithuanian educational system in some way.

Working where I did meant that I was at the heart of Senamiestis, or Old Town, every day. As a result, I could easily access many of the wonderful sights and attractions Vilnius has to offer. My roommate, Ieva Černevičiūtė, and I would spend many of our afternoons visiting churches and museums, and simply wandering the winding cobblestone streets of this beautiful city. Because of these afternoons, we were able to truly immerse ourselves in the history and culture surrounding us.

As my time in Lietuva came to a close, if there was one thing that I have learned for certain, it is that I do not want to wait another 11 years before returning again.



Margarita Swissler.



Apply Now for Lithuanian International Student Services 2017 Programs

Student Internship and Studies Program for College Students



This program allows students to work in a field of their chosen profession, improve their Lithuanian language skills and become familiar with daily life and culture in Lithuania.

- This program will be held from June 30, 2017, to August 11, 2017.
- Application deadline is March 1, 2017.
- Only students who have completed two courses and declared their major or area of concentration will be considered.
- The application consists of a cover (motivation) letter responding to the question, “Why do I want to participate in the LISS program?” and a curriculum vitae. The application may be submitted in either Lithuanian or English via email: liss@lithuanian-american.org
- On March 5, 2017, all applicants will be notified individually if they were accepted as participants. Students are selected by the Program Coordinator and the LISS Committee.
- LISS program charge for students is \$600 (\$500 program charge plus \$100 non-refundable application fee).
- All students must fill out and submit the medical form and release form by March 15, 2017.
- At the end of the program, students who meet all program requirements will get five university credits from Vytautas Magnus University (www.vdu.lt). Every student should contact their own university to check if they will honor these credits and inquire what form, if any, must be filled out.
- LISS students are provided LISS-sponsored dorms/apartments for free. The program will also provide various opportunities to engage in cultural trips around Lithuania. Based on the type of internship and availability, students will live in Vilnius, Kaunas or Klaipėda.
- Students are responsible for their own expenses, including flight tickets, food, personal trips and other entertainment.

For additional information, please contact LISS via email: liss@lithuanian-american.org

Volunteer Program “High School Students for Lithuania”



This program was developed for high school students who want to get acquainted with Lithuanian daily life and culture and benefit Lithuania through their volunteer work. During this program, students will have the opportunity to socialize with peers, study the Lithuanian language and support their Lithuanian teachers.

- This program will be held from June 30, 2017, to July 28, 2017.
- Application deadline is March 1, 2017.
- Students must be at least 16 years old.
- The application consists of a cover (motivation) letter responding to the question, “Why do I want to participate in the LISS program?” and a curriculum vitae. The application may be submitted in either Lithuanian or English via email: liss@lithuanian-american.org
- On March 5, 2017, all applicants will be notified individually if they were accepted as participants. Students are selected by the Program Coordinator and LISS Committee.
- LISS program charge for high school students is \$500 (\$400 program charge plus \$100 non-refundable application fee).
- All students must fill out and submit the medical form, release form and parents’ approval form by March 15, 2017.
- LISS participants are provided LISS-sponsored dorms/apartments for free. The program will provide opportunities to engage in cultural trips around Lithuania. Based on availability and location of volunteer opportunities, students will live in Vilnius, Tauragė or Klaipėda.
- Students are responsible for their own expenses, including flight tickets, food, personal trips and other entertainment.

For additional information, please contact LISS via email: liss@lithuanian-american.org

Security

... Lithuania has printed a third version of a guide for resistance to a theoretical Russian invasion. The first two guides explored non-violent defense; the most recent is entitled "Guide to Active Resistance." Thirty thousand copies of the 75-page survival manual are aimed to transform an ordinary citizen into a novice guerilla fighter. The government has launched a telephone hotline to report anyone they suspect of being a spy.

... Russia has installed nuclear-capable Iskander missiles in the Kaliningrad enclave between Lithuania, Poland and the Baltic Sea.

... The Associated Press reports that Lithuania's Joint Chief of Staff, Major General Vitalijus Vaiksnoras, said that the U.S. long-range anti-aircraft and anti-missile Patriot system is under consideration for installation in Lithuania.

... Since 1993, the U.S. Department of Defense has fostered a partnership between state National Guard units and the newly independent former Soviet republics. The Pennsylvania National Guard (PANG) was paired with Lithuania. In 2017, 45 training events are planned between PANG and Lithuanian forces. Recently, Lt. General Jonas Vytautas Žukas, chief of Lithuanian Defenses, and Lithuanian Ambassador Rolandas Kriščiūnas met with PANG Brigadier General Tony Casselli to review the unmanned aerial vehicle fleet and tour the Advanced Joint Terminal Attack Training System at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa.

... One of Germany's 16 E-3A Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) planes visited Lithuania's Šiauliai airbase.

... Lithuania has increased its defense spending percentage more than any NATO member in 2014 and 2015. It spent 575 million euros or 1.5 percent of GDP. The 2017 budget increase the expenditure by 25.8 percent to reach 1.8 percent, which is closer to the target of 2.0 percent of GDP.

... U.S. Ambassador to Lithuania Ann Hall accompanied U.S. Representatives Bill Flores (R-TX) and Andy Harris (R-MD) in a visit to American troops at Lithuania's Land Defense Base in Rukla.

Politics

... The center-right Lithuanian Peasants and Green Union (LPGU) party won 54 seats in the 141-member Seimas (Parliament) in Lithuania's October 2016 election. Before this election, the LPGU had only one seat in the Seimas. They will attempt to form a coalition with the center-left Social Democrats who have led Lithuania and the center-right Homeland Union. The LPGU is led by former national police chief Saulius Skvernelis, who was successful in anti-corruption efforts in the force. The party is expected to keep Lithuania within NATO, the EU and the eurozone, while addressing a shrinking population caused largely by economic migration.

... LPGU chair is Ramūnas Karbauskis, a wealthy agri-businessman who advocates monopolizing alcohol sales, establishing a state-owned bank to compete with commercial banks and creating housing incentives to encourage workers to stay in Lithuania. Karbauskis owns Agrokoncernas, a farm services and products company with sales of 400 million euros. He has transformed his hometown of Naisiai into an idealized village with public gardens and a 30,000-seat grass-covered amphitheater, and sponsored a prime-time TV series about village life in there. Since 2010, Naisiai has hosted a music festival that notably bans alcohol.

... Current Prime Minister Algirdas Butkevičius' ruling Social Democratic Party came in third place in the recent elections.

... The vice chairman of the Seimas, Kestas Komskis of the Order and Justice Party, had his re-election from Šilutė in western Lithuania nullified by a vote-buying scandal that employed alcohol, cigarettes and cash.

... Lithuania's 34-year-old Health Minister Juras Požela passed away at the Santariskės Clinic in Vilnius of biliary (gallstone) pancreatitis. He was chairman of the Youth and Sports Affairs Committee and member of the Vilnius City Council. He was hospitalized in mid-August with an acute gastrointestinal disorder and abdominal pain. He is survived by his wife and son. He was given a moving state funeral at St. John's Church in Vilnius, which can be viewed online.



Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė (right) greets new Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid prior to their first official meeting. Photo: R. Dačkus

... Estonia elected Kersti Kaljulaid as president for the next five years. She garnered 81 votes of the 98 members of Parliament. A trained biologist in genetics, she holds an MBA and has worked as an investment banker, power plant manager and economic advisor to the Prime Minister. Estonia's first female president and its youngest at age 46, she has four children and is a grandmother.

current events

Transportation

... The Vilnius airport runway will be totally rebuilt between July 14 and August 18, 2017. The majority of flights will be diverted to Kaunas and others to Palanga for these 35 days. In anticipation of the diversion, Kaunas is reconstructing its passenger terminal with additional departure/arrival spaces and adding an additional parking lot. The director of Vilnius Airport, Artūras Stankevičius, said that the dominant airline, Wizzair, will move to Kaunas for this period and that other airlines (Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, Finnair, Lufthansa, LOT Polish Airlines and SAS) are also making changes.

... Ryanair, the low-cost Irish carrier, is expanding its maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facility at Kaunas International Airport with an investment of 250,000 euros and a 30 percent expansion of specialists to 140. By 2020 they will be supporting 500 aircraft. They have partnered with Kaunas University of Technology and the Aviation Engineering program, where students can take their third year as an internship and meet the European Aviation Safety Agency licensing requirements.

... The European Investment Bank has issued an initial loan of 40 million euros to reconstruct the road from Vilnius to Utena with connections to Kulionys, Molėtai and Riešė. The road, which carries 7,000 vehicles/day, will be widened to three lanes. Utena is north of Vilnius and is the least populated of Lithuania's 10 counties.

Business and Economy

... Lithuanian biotech companies are showing strong profitability. Sicor Biotech UAB, a Vilnius division of TEVA Pharmaceuticals, is a prime example. It supplies recombinant biopharmaceuticals used in a variety of prescription and over-the-counter medicines plus insecticides, repellants and medical devices. TEVA, headquartered in Israel, employs 300 in the Baltics and 46,400 worldwide in 60 countries.

... The Vilnius Tourist Information Office was visited by 150,430 people in 2015 (26,007 in August and 5,156 in February). Poland accounted for the most visits with 15,066 (up 12 percent); Germany was second with 14,425 (up 16 percent); the United States was 10th with 3,393 (up 13 percent). Of the top 10 countries, all had increases over the previous year except Russia, which recorded a 27 percent decrease to 13,588.

... The 700 megawatt NordBalt power link between Lithuania and Sweden has gone off line about once per month for various reasons and for various durations. The 550 million euro, 453 km undersea cable was manufactured and laid by Sweden's ABB in 2015.

... The business daily Verslo Žinios and financial services group Nordea named Janis Meikšans, general manager of Sicor Biotech/TEVA Baltic, as CEO of the Year 2016 during the Lithuanian Business Leaders Awards.

... China's International Business Settlement (IBS) Limited plans to establish a financial clearance center in Lithuania to serve business dealings between China and the EU, which is China's biggest trading partner at approximately 520 billion euros per year. This exceeds the trade between the U.S. and China. Settlements will be made in euros, U.S. dollars and Chinese yuan. IBS will request a license from the Bank of Lithuania. IBS plans to also open a settlement center in the U.K. They plan on using block chain technology, a distributed database with a high level of security. In Lithuania

... Recently declassified CIA reports indicate that the Lithuanian State Security Department helped the CIA establish a "black site" known as "Violet" near Vilnius in 2004. Alleged September 11 mastermind Khaled Sheikh Mohamed was held there between October 2005 and March 2006. After his transfer to Guantanamo Bay in 2007, he told the military tribunal of his stay in Lithuania: "There was a bigger room; food was better; it had a gym. But still we were never allowed to see the sun."

... Lithuanian biochemist Virginijus Šikšnys of the Institute of Biotechnology at Vilnius University was recently one of five scientists to receive Harvard Medical School's Warren Alpert Foundation Prize. He discovered that the bacterial CRISPR-associated Cas9 protein can be used to easily edit DNA to genetically modify organisms and treat genetic diseases.

... The Associate Press reports that Ramzis, a 3-year-old Belgian shepherd serving as a Lithuanian police dog, was killed by cigarette smugglers near the Kaliningrad border. He was given an official burial, including a volley salute by the state border guards, in the southwestern Lithuanian town of Pagėgiai. The brother of the vice chairman of the Seimas, Arvydas Komskis, was arrested for the killing.

In Russia

... Dmitry Zakharchenko, the head of Russia's anti-corruption agency, was arrested after \$122 million in cash was found in his Moscow home. Also found were Swiss bank accounts at Rothschild Bank and Dresdner Bank held by his father, Viktor, which totaled \$336 million. The money was thought to have come from NOTA Bank, whose license was revoked by the Russian Central Bank in November 2015. At the time it was one of Russia's top 100 banks by assets. Russia has more than 700 banks. The central bank, headed by Elvira Nabiullina, has been revoking licenses to stem large-scale capital flight and risky lending.

... A Russian military court began the trial of five men from Chechnya for assassinating Boris Nemtsov on Moscow's Bolshoy Moskvorosty Bridge near the Kremlin on February 27, 2015. Nemtsov, a former deputy prime minister, was planning a rally opposing Russian intrusion into Ukraine.

Žagarėliai

(Little Twigs)

By Jana Sirusaitė Motivans



Žagarėliai are also known as ausytės or ausiukės (little ears), or sometimes as krustai.

Žagarėliai are delicate pastries popular in Lithuania and other Eastern European countries. Basically, they are fried dough covered with powdered sugar. Throughout the years, I have eaten many of these pastry treats. Some were light and crunchy and delicate, and some have unfortunately been thick and heavy with oil. Done correctly, žagarėliai are delightfully light and airy, and melt in your mouth.

I have been enjoying delicious žagarėliai lately at Aušros Vartų Parapija (Aušros Vartai Parish) in Montreal, made by Aldona Morkūnienė, one of our dedicated choir members. Her žagarėliai are the most delicate I have ever tasted. When I complimented her, she very graciously offered to teach me how to make them—an offer I was very happy to accept!

When I arrived at her home, she had everything ready and we set right to work. One of the first things that I learned is that the ingredients are very simple—just flour, eggs, sugar, sour cream and some brandy. While researching other recipes, I discovered that most stick to these basic ingredients but quantities vary

greatly from one recipe to another. Some use whole eggs, some use only the yolks, some use butter or cream in place of the sour cream, and most use much more flour than Mrs. Morkūnienė does.

After we prepared the dough, I learned the real secret to Mrs. Morkūnienė's delightfully airy confections: instead of rolling the dough by hand with a rolling pin, she uses a pasta machine. Using the pasta roller, she is able to roll her dough so that it is extremely thin and even. Interestingly enough, I have another friend who uses a pasta machine when making koldūnai (dumplings) for the same reason—to easily roll dough out thinly and evenly. It seems that there is a place for a pasta machine in a Lithuanian kitchen!



After the dough is rolled, cut and formed, the next step is frying. Mrs. Morkūnienė had good advice for this process. First of all, the oil must be very hot. If it is not hot enough, the dough absorbs oil and becomes heavy. It also takes a careful eye to watch the dough and fry the žagarėliai until they are a light golden brown, and then quickly flip them to brown the other side. The good news is that this is not difficult to learn. It is mostly a matter of paying attention and not getting distracted. The dough puffs up and fries very quickly.

While the pastries cooled, we went to the dining room for a cup of tea (and, of course, a little brandy!). Mrs. Morkūnienė told me that žagarėliai are known as *les oreilles des roi* in French (the king's ears) and were very popular in France during Mardi Gras, when people enjoyed rich foods and laughter before the solemn Lenten fast began. Apparently there were jokes about chewing the king's ears! She thinks these pastries came to Lithuania with Napoleon, along with the cake we know as Napoleonas. That would explain why they are called ausytės or ausiukės (little ears), after the French name.

a taste of lithuania

Žagarėliai

(aka Ausytės, Ausiukės or Krustai)

This recipe makes approximately 55 pastries, and can be halved to make fewer.

INGREDIENTS

- 12 egg yolks
- 4 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons sour cream
- 4 tablespoons brandy
- 2 cups flour
- Canola oil (for frying)
- Powdered sugar

1. In a large bowl, use an electric mixer to beat the egg yolks until they are fluffy. Add the sugar and continue beating until well combined. Add sour cream and brandy and mix well. Add about 1/3 cup of flour and continue to mix with the electric mixer. Add another 1/3 cup flour and mix well. Continue to add flour until the mixture is too thick to use the electric mixer, using approximately one cup total.
2. Turn the dough out onto a well-floured surface and continue to knead by hand and continue adding the second cup of flour in small increments. Knead the dough thoroughly until it is smooth and the ingredients are evenly distributed. Wrap the dough in waxed paper and refrigerate for four hours.
3. Take half the dough from the refrigerator, and prepare a large surface for working the dough by sprinkling it with plenty of flour. Use a rolling pin to roll the dough as thinly as possible. Alternatively, use a pasta machine to press it thin.
4. Use a sharp knife or a pastry roller to cut the dough into thin strips, approximately 1 inch wide. Cut the strips on the diagonal into lengths of about 4 inches, and cut a slash in the middle of each piece.



5. Use your hands to tuck one end of the piece of dough through this slash and twist the dough. Place the twisted pieces on wax paper, and cover with another piece of wax paper to keep them from drying out. Continue to prepare all the dough in this manner.



6. When you are ready, pour oil into a large wide frying pan, to a depth of about 2 inches. Heat the oil to between 350° F and 375° F. If you do not have a thermometer, you can test the oil by dropping in a small scrap of the pastry dough. If it immediately rises and puffs up, the oil is ready. If the oil is too hot, the pastries will quickly burn; if it is too cold, the pastries will absorb oil and taste heavy.
7. When the oil is ready, quickly add four or five strips of dough. Do not crowd them in the pan. They should very quickly puff up. When the pastry is starting to brown, use a knife or fork to flip them. Let the other side brown and then remove the pastries from the oil, holding briefly over the pan to let any excess oil drip off, and place on paper towels to cool.



8. When all the pastries are fried and cooled, arrange them decoratively, stacked in a pyramid, on a large platter. Dust with powdered sugar.



9. Žagarėliai also may be stored in a wax paper-lined container, at room temperature, for one week. Sprinkle with fresh powdered sugar before serving.

Looking Forward to New Heights

By Regina Juška-Švoba



The theme of the 103rd Knights of Lithuania national convention was "Looking Forward to New Heights."



Pre-conference tour.

The Knights of Lithuania (K of L) 103rd National Convention, themed "Looking Forward to New Heights," was hosted by Council 72 (C-72), Binghamton, N.Y., from August 5-7, 2016. The DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel was the home base for the annual convention, with 70 delegates, clergy, guests and junior Knights in attendance. The convention's three days encompassed meetings, cultural activities, daily Mass and a banquet celebration, along with an optional pre-convention tour on August 4.

The Knights of Lithuania organization was founded by Mykolas Norkūnas in 1913, in Lawrence, Mass. Currently there are 45 councils in the United States with nearly 1,200 members, 30 of whom joined or re-joined the organization since the last convention. The Roman Catholic organization focuses on fostering, maintaining and nurturing an appreciation of the Lithuanian language, customs, traditions and culture among its members.

Learning About Lackawanna and Scranton

Early Thursday morning, August 4, 2016, 40 eager K of L travelers embarked on a pre-convention tour to nearby Lackawanna, Pa. The day-long excursion took us to a noteworthy anthracite coal mine that opened in 1860. We descended in a mine car and entered the old Slope #190. We reached the "foot" and were able to explore almost 300 feet below the earth. The miner/tour guide explained the history of deep mining, various methods used and types of efforts involved in completing the job.

The participants then took the Scranton Limited, a steam-powered train, from the Museum Core Complex for a round trip through the rail yards. We crossed the Lackawanna River and

passed the historic Radisson at Lackawanna Station Hotel and stopped at the University of Scranton.

We visited the Pennsylvania Anthracite Heritage Museum, which is located in McDade Park in Scranton, Pa. We viewed the vast regional collections, all of which represent facets of work, life and values of the region's ethnic communities. It gave us insight to the coal mining and textile industries and the immigrant culture of northeastern Pennsylvania. This museum is administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and is supported by the Anthracite Heritage Museum and Iron Furnaces Associates.

The next stop was for a hearty buffet lunch at Cooper's Seafood House. Then we boarded the bus and travelled to a local winery, where we sampled various wines produced in the region, followed by free time to explore the city of Scranton.

Convention Highlights

After the opening Mass, Barbara Miller, C-72 president and convention host, welcomed all delegates and friends to New York and wished everyone a good and memorable stay in the Empire State. The convention presidium was elected and consisted of Michael Petkus, C-96, Dayton, Ohio, chair; Elena Nakrosis, co-chair; and Marytė Bizinkauskas and her daughter Vilija Bizinkauskas, C-1, Brockton, Mass., secretaries.

K of L National President and Honorary Member Regina Juška-Švoba gave a comprehensive state of the organization report. Special prayers were said in memory of those who passed away in the preceding year. Irene Svekla, C-3, Philadelphia, was unanimously approved by the delegates for hon-



Delegates of the 103rd National Convention and friends.

orary membership, which will be bestowed during next year's convention.

Scholarship Committee member Robert Domasauskas announced that Nathan Fletcher, C-96, Dayton, Ohio; and Emilija Lapas and Guoda Daciulaitė, both of C-158, Lakeshore, Ind., would receive 2016-2017 scholarships totaling \$5,000.

Each year, the K of L Foundation sponsors an essay contest. This year's topics were "How do we save or make money for the K of L?" or "How can the K of L promote awareness of Lithuania to non-Lithuanians?" This year's winners were Stephen Walinsky Jr., C-26, Worcester, Mass. (first place, \$150); Ronald Voveris, C-143, Anthracite, Pa. (second place, \$100); and Maryclaire Voveris, C-143, Anthracite, Pa. (third place, \$50). This year there were two winners in the Junior category: Tristan Pant, C-96, Dayton, Ohio, and Mackenzie Mooney, C-16, Chicago, who each will receive \$75.

Becki Pataki, Ritual Committee chairperson, announced that 12 members were approved to receive their fourth degrees: Brian Daigle, C-6, Hartford, Conn.; Benedict Aponavičius, Evelyn Harryn and Adolf Klova, C-63, Lehigh Valley, Pa.; Rev. John Mikalajūnas and Ralph Sadauskas of C-72, Binghamton, N.Y.; Susan Binkis, C-112, Chicago; and Carol Luschas, Elaine Luschas, Antoinette Panceralla, and Dorothy and James Setcavage, all from C-144, Frackville, Pa.

This year, four junior members attended the National Convention. The junior Knights conducted a meeting and discussed methods of helping Lithuania. They had an excursion and traveled to Trucksters and enjoyed ziplining and bungee jumping. The youth designed T-shirts and made traditional Lithuanian straw ornaments from plastic drinking straws. Each of the Juniors gave a short summation of their activities and impressions, after which they each received a \$100 stipend from the K of L Foundation.

First vice-president in charge of special projects, Robert Petkus, gave a presentation about the newly established Social Membership Exploratory Committee. As the number of members decreases, new methods are sought to attract and bring in new members, including those who are of non-Lithuanian ethnicity and of non-Catholic religious backgrounds. After a discussion, the delegates passed a resolution instructing the Exploratory Committee to proceed with the process of inclusion of Auxiliary Membership into the K of L National Constitution.

In elections for the 2016-17 Supreme Council, Regina Juška-Švoba, Council 102, Detroit, Mich., was unanimously re-elected as president of the K of L organization for a fifth term.

Keynote

Karl Altau, managing director of the Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC) and active defender of the Baltics for the last 20 years, gave the keynote address about the current situation in the Baltics. He gave a brief history of JBANC, which recently celebrated its 55th year of service, as well as speaking about its current activities.

Three leading national Baltic organizations—the Lithuanian American Council, American Latvian Association and Estonian American National Council—formed JBANC in 1961. JBANC played a crucial role in the effort of the inclusion of the Baltic States in NATO and EU. It has organized 11 high-level Baltic Conferences in Washington, D.C., the next of which is scheduled in spring 2017. The conferences have helped to bring together Baltic-American leaders with the policy and academic community in Washington.

Altau listed important dates that continue to be commemorated in Washington, DC: June 1941 and March 1949, marking the massive deportation of Baltic citizens to Siberia; August 25, 1991, the 25th anniversary of Latvia and Estonia's independence from Russia; August 23, Black Ribbon Day; and March 25, 2016, the 76th anniversary of the Welles Doctrine, among others.

Altau spoke of current events related to Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Russia. He addressed threats to the Baltic nations from Russia and warned that these countries should be vigilant. He encouraged the membership to write letters to their senators and congressmen requesting continued support of the Baltic nations.

At the closing banquet, Altau would receive a \$1,000 check from the K of L in gratitude to JBANC for its good works on behalf of the Baltic countries.

Charitable Activities

The Knights support three charity groups within their organization: K of L Foundation, St. Casimir's Guild and Our Lady of Šiluva Fund. Each group provided an activity report.

Irene Ozalis, president of the Knights of Lithuania Foundation, announced that during the 2016-2017 fiscal year, approximately \$10,000 in donations will be made for the following: the council hosting the 104th National Convention, continued support of an orphan through the "Saulutė" organization, stipends for junior members who attend and participate in the convention, shipping the Our Lady of Šiluva statue that was housed at St. George's Church in Philadelphia, Pa. (where K of L National Spiritual Advisor Rev. Msgr. J. Anderlonis was pastor for 33 years) to the St. Casimir Pontifical Lithuanian College in Rome, reimbursement for the purchase of specially woven juostai (sashes) used at the Our Lady of Šiluva Chapel jubilee celebration, and other financial donations approved via resolutions.

The Our Lady of Šiluva Fund promotes the history of Our Lady of Šiluva via the official website, ourladyofsiluva.com, in English, Spanish and Polish. The website is being transferred to the K of L website. Delegates were reminded about the 50th anniversary of the Our Lady of Šiluva Chapel at the National Shrine in Washington, D.C., in October and were encouraged to attend.

During the last year, St. Casimir's Guild gave \$20,574 to the Lithuanian Pontifical College in Rome for completion of the patio project, building maintenance, boiler project and Mass requests. This year's proposed project is the renovation of seven rooms (including private bathrooms), corridor, new windows and doors on the fourth floor, and a roof renovation, all at a cost of \$304,100. The Lithuanian Bishops' Conference approved \$100,000 toward the project; the U.S. Bishops' Conference, \$20,000; and private benefactors, \$84,000. St. Casimir's Guild will provide the balance of \$100,000.

Rev. Audrius Arštikaitis, rector of the Pontifical Lithuanian College and the director of Villa Lituanae, thanked the Knights for adopting the College and for their consistent support over the years. Arštikaitis updated the delegates on last year's successful project of replacing the College's diesel boiler with a gas-fired boiler to meet the city of Rome's air pollution regulations. A second project in progress is renovation of the College's damaged facades and the sisters' living apartments.

Donations to various other charities were collected during the course of the convention. A total of \$4,175 will be distributed to the St. Casimir's Guild scholarship fund, Our Lady of Šiluva general fund and Shrine, Knights of Lithuania general fund, K of L Foundation, Vytis-The Knight magazine, Father Jutt Fund and Juniors.

The Financial Review Committee announced that there were requests for donations to the four religious order congregations: Sisters of St. Casimir, Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Sisters of the Jesus Crucified and Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God; Draugas, Draugas News and Amerikos lietuvis newspapers; a symbolic gift/donation to Balzekas



Junior Knights after receiving their \$100 stipends from the K of L Foundation. From left: Lexie Rudmin, third vice-president in charge of the Juniors; Mackenzie Mooney, C-16, Chicago; Justin Johnson, C-19, Pittsburgh; James Riley, C-152, E. Long Island, N.Y.; Jason Muldowney Jr., C-90, Kearny, N.J.; and Irene Ozalis, president, K of L Foundation.



St. Casimir's Guild President John Mankus presents Rev. Audrius Arstrikaitis with checks of support to the St. Casimir's Pontifical College in Rome.



Karl Altau, managing director of JBANC, received the K of L "Friend of Lithuania" award.

Museum of Lithuanian Culture in honor of the museum's 50th anniversary; and JBANC. A total of \$2,500 was allotted for the donations.

Convention Celebrations

Friday evening's picnic took place at Mountain Top View Park with traditional foods, songs and dancing. Participants had the opportunity to play "Lithuanian trivia" and vie for prizes, and could enter a raffle for various baskets of goodies and champagne. A truly fun-filled, entertaining and enjoyable get-together evening was had by all.

On Saturday evening, C-72 Convention Committee Chair Tom Miller welcomed approximately 90 delegates, guests, clergy and families to the K of L 103rd Convention closing banquet. National President Regina Juška-Švoba thanked attendees for



K of L Supreme Council.

their participation and extended special thanks to Barbara and Tom Miller, their committee, and John and Grace Mankus for doing an exceptional job in organizing the convention.

Juška-Švoba encouraged everyone to continue to fully participate in K of L activities, and attributed the organization's longevity to its multigenerational, loyal, dedicated, committed and talented members. Urging those present to never forget their roots and heritage, she recited the poem "Draugystė" (Friendship) by pre-eminent 20th century poet Salomėja Neris.

After the banquet dinner, Lithuanian Affairs Committee Chair John Mankus announced the "Friend of Lithuania" award recipient Karl Altau, managing director of JBANC. Altau was due to receive the award in 2015, but, due to a family emergency, could not attend last year's convention. Altau humbly accepted the "Friend of Lithuania" award, thanking the K of L organization for waiting a year to present this special award to him.

Honorary Member Committee Chair Robert A. Martin Jr. presented the newest Honorary Member—Julie Zakarka. Zakarka thanked her family, the K of L and guests for being present when she was elevated to Honorary Membership status.

After the formal portion of the banquet concluded, musical entertainment for dancing continued until midnight.

Farewells

The closing Mass was celebrated at Church of the Holy Family in Endwell, N.Y. Prior to Mass, the fourth-degree candidates gave their oaths and received their fourth-degree medals and certificates. The Supreme Council-elect gave their oath of office. After Mass, the Knights gathered for a farewell luncheon in the parish social hall. The junior Knights collected \$225 for Lithuanian orphans by selling raffle tickets for the specially designed T-shirts and Lithuanian straw ornaments they had made and decorated.

The 2016 National Convention and sessions were productive and fruitful. It was good to see and nurture special friendships of members known for many years and establish new acquaintances and contacts. It was a special time of sharing and catching up. May this organization continue to live and work by our motto: "For God and County—Dievui ir Tėvynei!" Valio Vyčiai, ilgiausių metų!

Save the Dates!

The K of L 104th convention will be hosted by Council 96 of Dayton, Ohio, from July 27-30, 2017, at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Dayton. In 2018, the 105th National Convention will be hosted by Council 1, Brockton, Mass.

Regina Juška-Švoba is K of L Supreme Council president, honorary member and K of L public relations chair.

After 40 Years of Procrastination—Finally a Book

By Romualdas Kriaučiūnas, Ph.D.

Phyllis J. Edwards (nee Kriaučiūnaitė). *The Invincible Heart: The Story of the Lithuanian Heart of a Mother, a Daughter, and a Country*. Copyright 2016 Phyllis J. Edwards. 2016. 162 pages, soft-cover.

It's a long title for a short book! On internet, the publisher is given as BookBaby, but it does not appear anywhere in the book. Amazon Best Sellers Rank is #961,710 and it is listed at \$12.99. Another source noted that the book has 30,560 words. If true, that comes out to about 189 words per page. The main text takes up 142 pages and is spread over 25 chapters, thus averaging about six pages per chapter. So much for introductory statistics.

In the epigraph, the author presents the essence of her motivation for the book. "To all the beautiful Lithuanian countrymen and also those who have blood of the invincible heart of Lithuanian ancestors running through your veins: May you carry on that heart with its values, determination, and courage for generations and generations to come. Long live Lithuania!"

It's not a book that was conceptualized, written and published overnight. The author thought about writing a book for about the last 40 years until she attended a genealogy meeting a couple of years ago and caught "the bug." She found herself doing much more research than writing and became obsessed with learning more about the wonderful country. The *Invincible Heart* would have two main characters—her grandmother Jadvyga Kriaučiūnienė and her homeland Lithuania.

The author's grandparents had seven children. One of them, the author's father, Philip John Krausman (formerly Kriaučiūnas), is still alive and celebrated 100 years in May of 2016. He is described as healthy, with a quite alert mind. However, the focus in the book is on grandma Jadvyga. This is a historical novel. A historical novel is a novel having as its setting a period of history and introducing some historical personages and events. According to the editors of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, a historical novel attempts to convey the spirit, manners and social conditions of a past age with realistic details and fidelity to historical facts.

Chapter 1 starts with the glaciers of the Ice Age and in a few pages comes to 1795 when the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was erased from the political map until the 20th century. Next is a chapter on the Lithuanian book ban, during which time Jadvyga was born in 1883. Eighteen years later, she emigrated to the United States. The book depicts the wedding of Jadvyga's parents and the challenges and events that followed. The village life of Gruzdziai, with only 239 inhabitants, depicts life at that time, including education behind closed doors. It touches on the politics and periodicals, and Lithuanian educators as well as

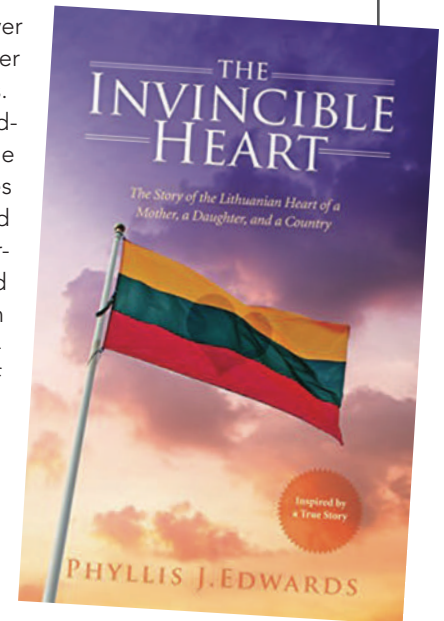
clergy. Separate chapters cover Lithuanian Mardi Gras, Easter and the 12 days of Christmas.

Chapter 12 can be considered the critical chapter in the book because it describes Jadvyga's leaving home and heading to Bremen in Germany, where she will board passenger/cargo ship Kolin sailing to Baltimore, Maryland, USA. The voyage itself was very difficult. While Jadvyga had experienced much in her life, nothing was like the conditions on the ship, which should have been condemned as unfit for the transportation of human beings.

Chapter 14 is titled "Land, Land, America!" While still at the port in Baltimore, Jadvyga is approached by three well-dressed men who welcome her to Baltimore. One of them kisses her on the cheek and introduces himself: "I am Nicodemus Kriaučiūnas, your bridegroom." The other two men were his brothers. The he adds, "I borrowed a horse and a wagon from a friend so that we can go to a nearby church and be married today. Then you can go to my place and recover from your long and dreadful journey."

They got married at Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church and she became Jadvyga Kriaučiūnienė. The addresses of the church and the boarding house are given. It's not clear if these are fictitious or real addresses. I had to remind myself that this is a historical novel, not a documentary presentation. Hang on to your hat. "Two months later, on April 22, 1901, Jadvyga and Nicodemus are remarried in a Catholic church. This does not seem unusual to them because back in Lithuania couples are required to have two separate ceremonies" (p. 88). Really? Before their children are born, Nicodemus chooses the more American-sounding name of Krausman.

The Great Baltimore Fire of 1904 engulfed the whole Chapter 16. The following year, in Chapter 17, Nicodemus suffered a stroke that left him partly paralyzed. Life became very difficult for Nicodemus, but he continued to work as a tailor out of his home, using a treadle-operated sewing machine. By 1907, the 24-year-old Jadvyga had borne four children. Next chapter, almost out of place, jumps to the Democratic National Conven-



book review

tion of 1912 and leads to the description of city life, with horses, taxis, streetcars and markets. In the meantime, the family with its Lithuanian friends loved to celebrate traditional weddings described in the book. Also mentioned are Christening, First Communion and Confirmation events. The author notes that All Saints Day in November was the time to visit the graves of family and light up candles. Actually that day should be the All Souls Day—Vėlinės.

World War I starts in Chapter 21. In the next chapter, Lithuania declares independence on February 16, 1918. Great celebrations take place in Lithuanian homes in Baltimore. A few months later, the Spanish flu pandemic breaks out in Baltimore. By the end of 1918, the city had nearly 24,000 reported deaths caused by influenza. This pandemic killed about 500,000 Americans. Chapter 24, near the end of the book, was aptly called "Death." The angel of death knocked on Jadvyga's door and she died on October 17, 1918, at the age of 35. The family was unable to have her funeral services at St. Alphonsus Roman Catholic Church due to restrictions on public gatherings because of the Spanish flu. Instead, Jadvyga was laid out in the parlor of her home on West Lombard Street. Later the casket was taken to Holy Redeemer Cemetery at 4430 Belair Road in Baltimore. This painful chapter ends with Philip, Jadvyga's youngest son (and the book author's father-to-be) who was 2 ½ years old at the time. "Not understanding what is going on, he cried: 'Where's mama?' He goes from one person to the next, pulling on their sleeve and asking: 'Where is mama?' His godfather reaches down and hands him a dollar. He looks at the dollar and throws it to the floor. He wants his mother. Finally Philip goes to his

father, who picks him up and hugs him. His sister Elsie comes over and tries to comfort him. He clings tightly to his father, sensing that something is very wrong" (p.138).

The book ends with an appendix containing family names, a historical overview of timeline for Lithuania, Lithuania Quick Facts, a glossary of Lithuanian terms used in the book and references. The timeline covers important historical events, starting with 2000 B.C. I noticed one significant omission, namely, there is no mention of the Lithuanian armed resistance by partizanai. It lasted from 1944 to about 1953 and planted the will to fight for freedom in the years to come. During that time, more than 500,000 Lithuanians were deported, forced into exile, jailed or shot by the Soviets.

Another issue that needs to be mentioned and corrected are references to marriage. Chapter 3 describes a wedding of Rokas Vaitkus and Elzbieta Tamašauskaitė that took place in the 1880s. "Couples, however, were obliged also to have a non-religious wedding performed at a Soviet-established 'wedding palace' because Russian law did not recognize church weddings" (p. 11). In reality, there were no Soviets back then and the wedding palaces were established by the Soviets much later.

The Invincible Heart is a product of a loving heart that guided the creation of a book filled with admiration for the Lithuanian people. It allows the reader to travel with Jadvyga and to relive the victories and defeats in the Old Country and the New World. The author admits that to her this was one of the most emotional and rewarding journeys that she has ever taken. Now the readers are grateful to the author for taking them along on this journey. "Long live Lithuania!"

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October 2016

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

ONGOING

Through April 22, 2017
Daily Life: Photography from Lithuania Exhibit
 The Print Center, 1614 Latimer St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Free and open to the public
 Tuesday through Saturday
 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.
 Info: printcenter.org,
 215-735-6090

Most Fridays, 4:30-7:30 p.m.
Friday Fish Fry at the Rockford Lithuanian Club
 716 Indiana Avenue, Rockford, Ill.
 Open to the public. Weekly specials vary. First Friday of the month—Lithuanian dumplings.
 Info: lithuanianclub.org,
 815-962-9256

Every Sunday,
 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
All-You-Can-Eat Lithuanian Brunch Buffet
 Lithuanian Club and Gintaras Dining Room
 877 E. 185 St., Cleveland, Ohio
 \$15 per person; \$6 kids 6-12
 Info: lithclub@gmail.com,
 216-531-8318

First Sunday of the Month,
 12-4 p.m.
Lithuanian Brunch
 The Avenue Restaurant, 71-22 Myrtle Ave., Glendale, N.Y.
 Reservations strongly recommended.
 Info: 347-725-3853

First Sunday of the Month
Rockford Lithuanian Club General Membership Meeting
 716 Indiana Avenue, Rockford, Ill.
 Open to all members.
 Info: lithuanianclub.org,
 815-962-9256

Every Third Saturday,
 Mar-Jun & Sep-Nov, 1-3 p.m.
Amber Roots Lithuanian Heritage Club
 Lithuanian Music Hall, 2517 E. Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Use Tilton Street entrance.
 Bring a dish to share.
 Info: milliemarks@aol.com

FEBRUARY 2017

February 11
Poker Tournament to Benefit Versmė Lithuanian School of Kansas City
 Cedar Creek Clubhouse, 25775 W. 103rd St., Olathe, Kans.
 \$45 ticket includes \$3,150 in chips, dinner buffet, soft drinks and Lithuanian snacks.
 Info: Renata Nantz, 913-271-3422

February 24-March 4
Lithuanian Snow Ski Trip
 Aspen Mountain Resort, Aspen, Colo.
 Sponsored by Lithuanian Athletic Union of North America and Lithuanian American Doctors Union. Skiers, non-skiers and families welcome. Race schedule TBA. Travel and accommodations: linda@ski.com, 800-525-2052 x3329 or 970-925-9500 x3329.
 Identify yourself as part of the Lithuanian Ski Group.
 General info: edmickus1@aol.com or vsaulis@sbcglobal.net

February 26, 4 p.m.
Annual Aspen Lithuanian Independence Day Celebration
 809 South Aspen Street, Aspen, Colo.
 Special guest Rolandas Krisčiūnas, Lithuanian Ambassador to the U.S.
 Info: dmb@aspenconsul.com

MARCH 2017

March 3-6
17th Annual Florida Lithuanian Open Golf Tournament
 Info: LTConsulFlorida.com,
 727-895-4811

March 17-19 (new date)
Women's Weekend
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.
 Group discussions, exercise, art, cooking, and spiritual and personal rebirth.
 Info: kerry@watershedcoachingllc.com or kriscon@frontiernet.net

March 17-20
Vyresnių Skaučių + Gintarių Lithuanian Scouts Jamboree
 Agatha A. Durland Scout Reservation, 1 Clear Lake Road, Putnam Valley, N.Y.
 Registration: via Facebook: Vyr. Sk. + Gintarių Suvaziamas 2017 or Skautai.net
 Info: djmattis@gmail.com or vaiva.rimeika@gmail.com

March 25
Ethnic Heritage Mass
 St. Peter and Paul Basilica, Philadelphia, Pa.
 Choir "Laisvė" will sing at the Mass

APRIL 2017

April 1
Benefit Concert for Neringa
 600 Liberty Hwy., Putnam, Conn.
 Info: neringa.org

MAY 2017

May 13-14, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.
45th Annual Baltimore Lithuanian Festival
 Catonsville Armory, 130 Mellor Avenue, Catonsville, Md.

May 19-21
Counselor Retreat
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.
 Info: neringa.org

JUNE 2017

June 3-4, 2017
Talka Work Weekend
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.
 Info: regina@neringa.com,
 978-582-5592

June 5 – July 28
Baltic Studies Summer Institute
 Indiana University Bloomington Campus, 107 S. Indiana Ave., Bloomington, Ind.
 Six-week intensive beginning Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian language courses.
 Application deadline for Title VIII Fellowships is February 1, 2017.
 Info: indiana.edu/~swseel/balssi

June 9-11
New England Chapter Knights of Lithuania Retreat
 Franciscan Guest House,
 26 Beach Ave., Kennebunk, Maine
 Info: 207-967-4865

June 24-29
Heritage Family Camp in English
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.
 Info: neringa.org

JULY 2017

July 2-8
Family Camp for Lithuanian Speakers
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.
 Info: neringa.org

July 9-23
Children's Camp for Lithuanian Speakers 7-16
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.
 Info: neringa.org

July 23
Lithuanian Friendship Day/ Putnam Picnic
 600 Liberty Hwy., Putnam, Conn.
 Info: neringa.org

July 23-29
"Third Week" Youth Camp for Lithuanian Speakers, 12-16 Years Old
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.
 Info: neringa.org

July 27-30
Knights of Lithuania 104th National Convention
 Holiday Inn Hotel, Dayton, Ohio
 Info: knightsoflithuania.com

July 30-August 12
Heritage Camp in English, 7-16 Years Old
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.
 Info: neringa.org

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