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Front Cover: Decorated Easter eggs by Odeta Tumėnaitė Bražėnienė.

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## from the editor

Dear Readers,

This year's April was especially joyful as we learned of the news regarding the finding of the original Lithuania's Independence Declaration in the German Archives. I am very much familiar with the feeling people get when the birth and baptism records of their ancestors are found in old church books that are kept in the archives. As a rule, they are overjoyed and delighted over the findings. Lithuania's Independence Declaration is like the "birth certificate" of our country, and now it has been found. It is especially joyful because the Declaration was discovered by an independent researcher, a professor, a citizen who cared enough. It proves that one does not have to belong to a government institution and have huge funds allocated in order to do great things. How inspiring it is! All of us can do similar things. The finding also made me think about the importance of archives and preserving items, documents, artifacts, photos, stories, and other "witnesses to history" for future generations. I like to think that Bridges is also contributing to this work of Lithuanian American history preservation for future generations. I therefore urge everyone of our Readers to collect stories about Lithuanian Americans and, if possible, send them to Bridges to be published. You can always reach me at kariledalia@yahoo.com.

Wishing You a beautiful and joyful spring,

Karilė Vaitkutė  
Editor

## erratum

In Sigita Šimkuvienė's address to the community published in the March issue there was a mistake made. We wrote: "In 2016 we participated in an especially beautiful event – the 10th North American Folk Dance Festival in Baltimore." Instead, it should have been "the 15th North American Folk Dance Festival in Baltimore."

# bridges

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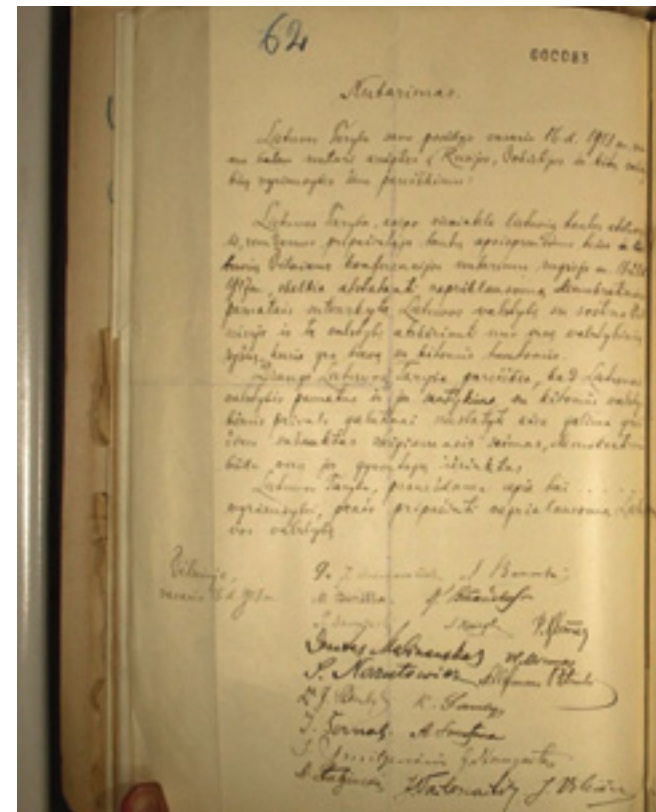
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## The Original of Lithuania's 1918 Independence Act Found in Berlin



The original document of the Lithuanian Independence Act signed on February 16, 1918 was discovered in Germany's Diplomatic Archives in Berlin on March 29, 2017 by professor Liudas Mažylis of the Vytautas Magnus University.

"The Lithuanian version of the resolution with all 20 clearly visible signatures was included next to the German version in the case," the professor said.

In his words, the piece of paper is folded in four, which confirms the conclusion that it had traveled by mail. The act was included in the case in March of 1918, the following month after signature of the historic document. Presided by Jonas Basanavičius, the Council of Lithuania signed the Independence Act in Vilnius on February 16, 1918.

Mažylis said it was the approaching 100-year anniversary of Lithuania's statehood that encouraged him to search for the document.

"Lithuanian scientists were seriously and consistently interested in the German line, however, their efforts were probably insufficient. I decided to look at the German archives and to see how accessible they are. It turned out there were no special restrictions. I wrote an email to Germany's state archives and said I was interested in the period, notifying them of my field of interest. I received a list of cases I could look at more

thoroughly, and I did this. It took me two days," said Mažylis.

Liudas Mažylis is described by his colleagues and students as a professor who loves details and is a passionate collector.

A chemist by profession, Mažylis, 62, joined the Lithuanian liberation movement Sąjūdis in the early 1990s and in 1997 began to teach political science at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas.

Born to a prominent family of Kaunas intellectuals, Mažylis returned to his native city after earning a diploma in chemistry at Vilnius University in 1977 and conducted scientific work at the Institute of Cardiology until Lithuania regained independence from the Soviet Union.

Mažylis was elected to the City Council of Kaunas in 1990 and later ran in several elections on the Christian Democrats' list.

Mažylis collects old postcards, stamps and books, as well as flyers and advertisements related to Sąjūdis' activities in Kaunas. He is married and has two daughters. He is a cycling enthusiast.

Lithuanian and German foreign ministers agreed that an original copy of Lithuania's 1918 Act of Independence that was found in Berlin's diplomatic archives will be put on display in Lithuania and that the possibility of handing the document over to Vilnius will be discussed in the future.

On behalf of the Lithuanian people and on her own behalf, President Dalia Grybauskaitė expressed sincere gratitude to Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier for the fact that Germany had preserved the Act of February 16, 1918 – a document of profound importance to Lithuania – throughout the last turbulent century.

The President underscored that the document was a true reflection of the love for freedom of the Lithuanian nation. It is a birth certificate of the Republic of Lithuania, a testimony to our statehood and to the will our people to build a free and independent nation. The discovery of this landmark document is one of the best things that could have happened to Lithuania as it prepares to celebrate the centenary of statehood.

"We are very grateful to Germany for preserving this only known authentic copy of the Act of February 16 throughout the historical turmoil of the last century," the President wrote in her letter.

The founding document of Lithuanian statehood was discovered in Germany – one of our closest allies and partners.

The President expressed hope of cooperating closely with Germany on the possibility of handing the Declaration of Independence to Lithuania. It would be the best gift to the Republic of Lithuania marking its 100th anniversary.



Prof. Liudas Mažylis

## "...There is Meaning Within Challenge, Hardship and Suffering..."

Interview with Ruta Sepetys

By Vingra Liucija Steponkevičiūtė



Book-signing event with Ruta Sepetys at Barnes & Noble in Yonkers, New York. From left to right: Vida Lanys-Anton, Ruta Sepetys, and Vingra Liucija Steponkevičiūtė.

Previously having met the compelling and passionate, historical young-adult author, Ruta Sepetys, at a book-signing, I was so grateful for the opportunity to interview her. Indeed, the author intrigues with her incisive and thought-provoking responses. Her impending and much anticipated movie, *Ashes in the Snow*, based on *The New York Times* bestseller, *Between Shades of Grey*, just finished production and will be in theaters next year. Hopefully, Ms. Sepetys' other two amazing works (*Out of the Easy* and *Salt to the Sea*) will reach cinematographic status, as well.

**VLC:** Faith has played a major role in our Baltic State heritage and value system, particularly among Lithuanians. It is a daily, necessary light required to get through the misfortunes and dark times of the tunnels of life. The main characters in your very moving and beautiful books seem to hold the belief that with faith, all is possible. Darkness can be pierced and conquered. And with that warrior spirit and groundedness, your characters, indeed, overcome unimaginable obstacles. What place does faith hold in your life?

**RS:** For me, faith is the constant reminder that there is meaning within challenge, hardship and suffering. Faith reminds me that I should not demand immediate answers, but instead, as the poet Rilke said, I should "live the questions." By giving quiet thought to questions, we develop a rich inner landscape, con-

sider all possibilities, and realize that our journey of questions will eventually lead us into the answers. But that requires faith. So faith is the constant reminder of how much I don't yet know but can learn.

**VLC:** You are a voice for the Baltic States via the powerful, historical fiction that you write. Do you think that more people are aware of what our culture has gone through, as a result of your sensitive, literary efforts?

**RS:** I hope that's the case, but I believe it's much bigger than any single person. Yes, I'm writing books about underrepresented history, but my publishers distribute the books, booksellers and librarians recommend the books, teachers use the books in schools, and ultimately, the reader brings the story to life. My work over the past ten years has not only been writing novels, but building friendships around the world with those who are more knowledgeable and experienced than I am. We are bringing history out of the dark—together.

**VLC:** Would you ever collaborate on a book?

**RS:** Yes, I would! I love creative collaboration and being part of a team. I've been part of the same writing group for over a decade. Currently, however, I'm under contract to Penguin Books for several more novels so it would be many years before I could start a collaborative project.

**VLC:** Would you like to see *Salt to the Sea* and/or *Out of the Easy* come to life cinematically and be made into a movie?

**RS:** Some authors prefer that their work not be adapted to film. I understand that. But in my case, I'm writing about hidden history. Film and television could bring greater awareness to the time periods and topics I'm trying to share. As you know, the film adaptation of *Between Shades of Grey* (titled *Ashes in the Snow*) will debut in 2017. Although I can't share details yet, I hope very soon to share exciting news about *Salt to the Sea* and *Out of the Easy*!

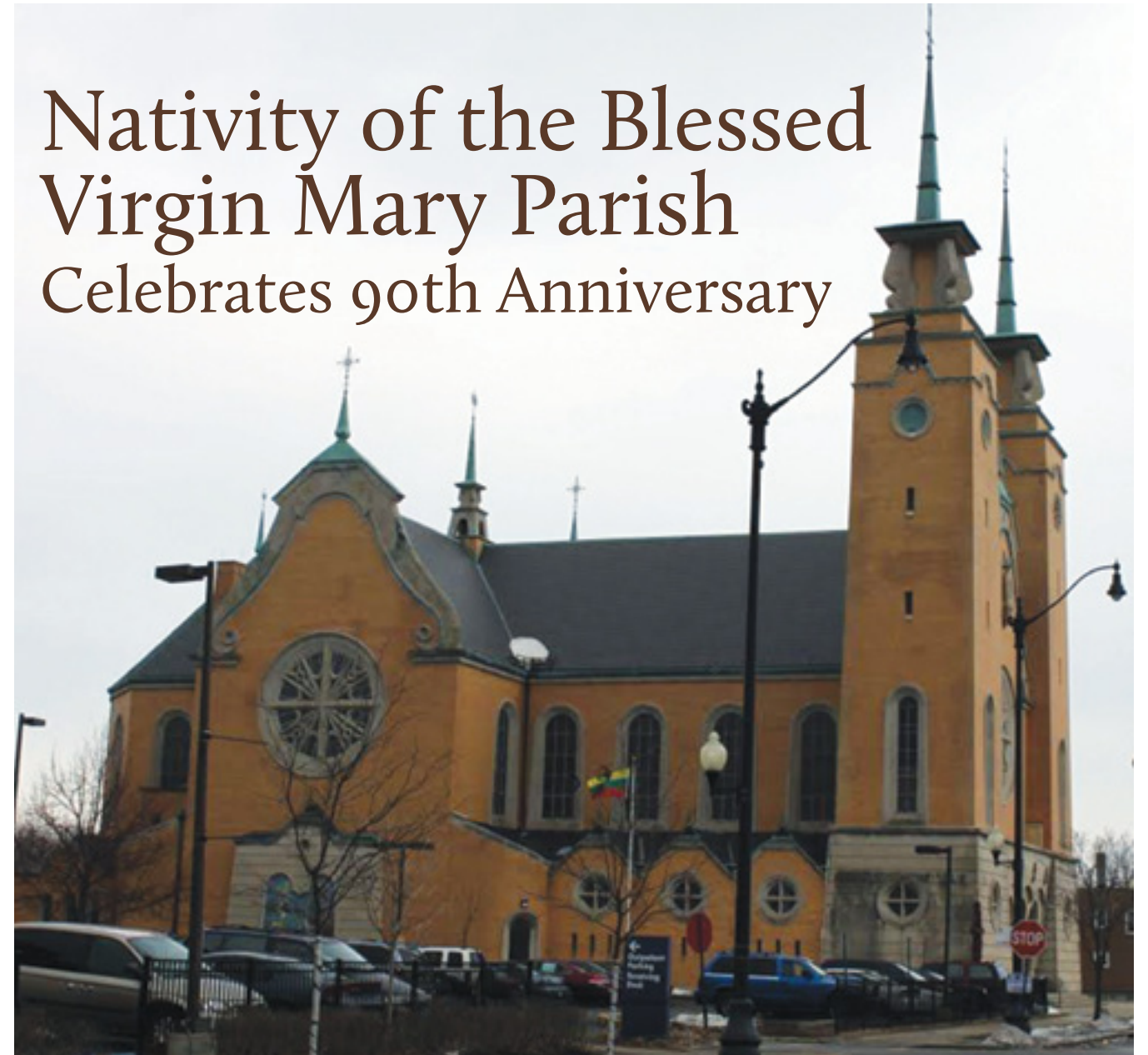
**VLC:** Who are your favorite authors?

**RS:** There are so many writers I admire. Nabokov and Rod Serling for rhythm, Daphne DuMaurier and Shirley Jackson for suspense, Truman Capote for characterization, Rilke for wisdom, Edith Wharton for setting.

**VLS:** What inspires you?

**RS:** Solitude. Being alone for extended periods of time provides incredible creative nourishment for me. Unfortunately, my touring schedule is quite demanding so I don't have as much time for quiet reflection and creation these days!

## Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish Celebrates 90th Anniversary



Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary church in Chicago, Illinois

Nativity B. V. M. Church in Chicago's Marquette park neighborhood was founded in 1927. After World War II, a massive influx of émigrés from Soviet occupied Lithuania arrived in Marquette Park, and in 1957, a new church was built.

On November 5, 1953, the *Chicago Tribune* published an article in which the history and the circumstances of the building of a new church were described. Here are excerpts from the article.

Turn Ground for \$1,000,000 Lithuanian Style Nativity B. V. M. Church

Lithuanians, with nostalgia for their beautiful homeland, will

recreate an important part of their old life in a new one million dollar Catholic church at 69th St. and Washtenaw Ave.

Parish of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary church, with its 1,500 families, began construction of the Lithuanian Baroque structure last week. Ground was broken by the Rev. George Paskus, pastor of the present church at 6820 Washtenaw Ave.

DP Design Church

Design for the church has been drawn by Architect Jonas Mulokas, 3334 W. 66th St. Mulokas' collection of wooden carvings of Lithuanian crosses and shrines were made while he lived in a displaced persons camp in Germany. Carvings by Mulokas of



A page from the Chicago Tribune of November 5, 1953.

traditional Lithuanian symbols will be echoed in decorative touches throughout the church.

The wayside crosses which profusely dot the countryside in Lithuania will find a Chicago expression in a monument to World I and II dead which will stand alongside the church. The stone and marble shaft will be a replica of a wayside cross with one exception. The fence which enclosed the original will be removed and instead short steps will lead up to the monument. Buried under the monument will be a box containing soil from their native land brought here by persons who fled Russian oppression in Lithuania.

On the church exterior will be the Lithuanian sunburst cross which combines the symbolism of Christianity with the sun worship of paganism. Another historical reminder will be a stone relief of the crowning in 1253 of King Mindaugas first Lithuanian ruler to embrace Christianity.

#### 45 Foot High Altar

Of yellow face brick and cut stone, the building will be varied with 35 stained glass windows. Towers, 150 feet high, will house bells and clock. Inside, much Italian marble will be used. Marble pillars will support a 45 foot high altar which will have a horse-shoe shaped balcony where private seating accommodations are planned in the manner of some European cathedrals. The main body of the church will seat 1,100.

A high vaulting ceiling deco rated with large angelic figures will create a spacious feeling. Terrazzo floors, marble stations of the cross, arches, a glass enclosed room where mothers with infants may take part in the service and a choir balcony for 250 singers are part of the plans.

Mulokas worked with several other architects and engineers in drawing the blueprints. Colleague on the artistic designs is Vytautas Jonynas, prominent Lithuanian artist now in New York City.

#### Present Church 26 Years Old

The church will be ready for Easter, 1955. In the meantime, Father Paskus will travel to Italy this winter in search of Italian marble. The present church, which is 26 years old and seats 650, will become a social and recreation hall. The rectory at 6812 Washtenaw eventually is to be converted into a convent, and a new rectory is to be constructed.

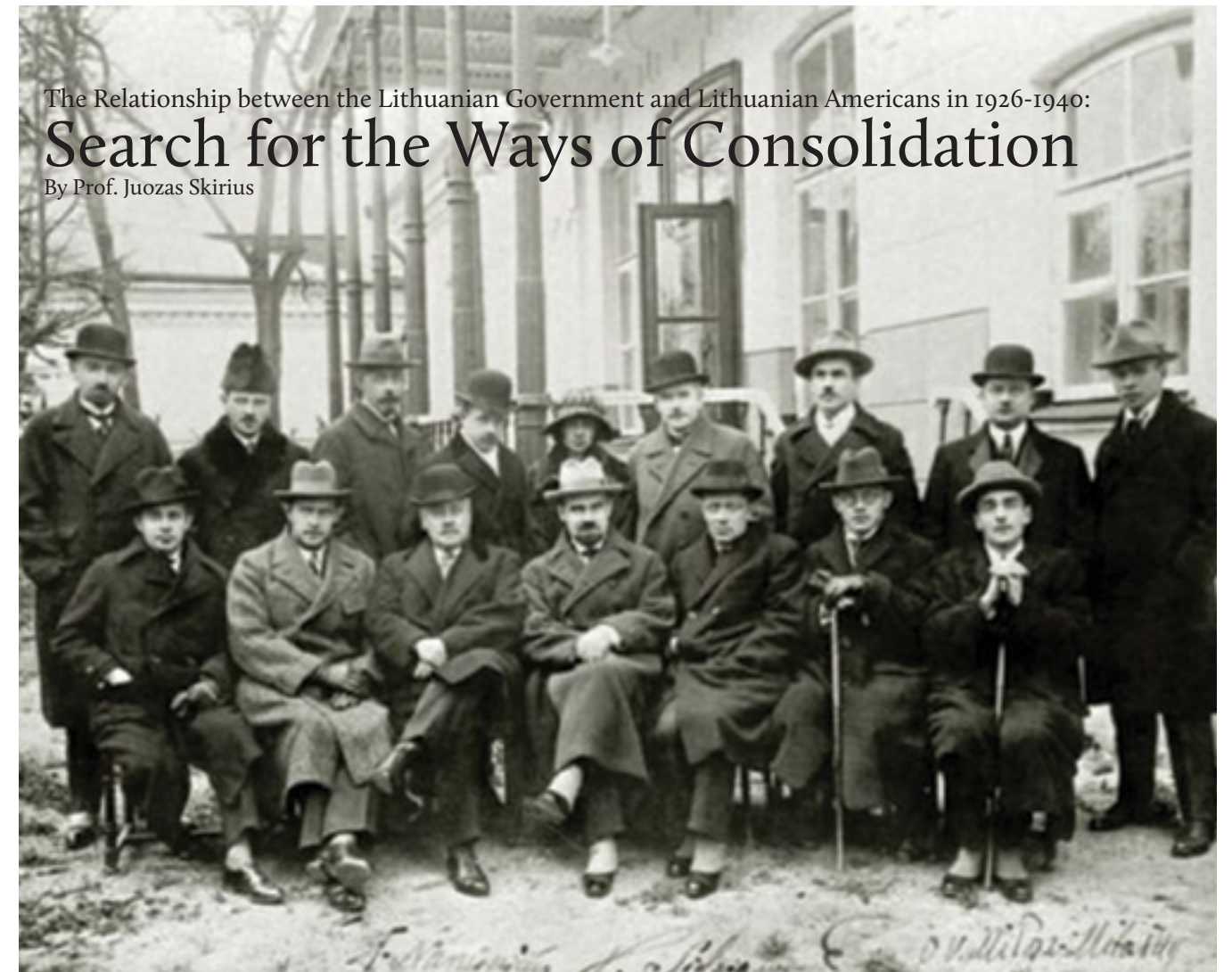
Completion of the church will be a final touch to a Lithuanian community which already has Holy Cross hospital, the new Maria High school, St. Casimir College and convent, and the Darius- Girėnas monument in Marquette Park which honors two Lithuanian-American heroes.

Model of proposed million dollar Lithuanian Baroque church for parish of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin' Mary is studied by Jonas Mulokas (left), 3334 W. 66th St., architect, and Anthony J. Rudis, 9339 Oakley Ave., building chairman.

Mulokas carved shrines, such as are found on trees, posts, and inside homes in Lithuania, while in displaced persons camp in Germany.

Distinctive Lithuanian symbols, such as sunburst cross, will echo in decorative touches in church. Cross combines Christian symbolism with sun worship of paganism.

Replica of wayside cross, common sight in Lithuania, was carved by Mulokas. Similar cross will be repeated in large monument to war dead outside church.



The Relationship between the Lithuanian Government and Lithuanian Americans in 1926-1940:

## Search for the Ways of Consolidation

By Prof. Juozas Skirius

The Conference of Lithuanian representatives abroad. Sitting, from left: Kazys Bronius Balutis, Dovas Zaunius, Tomas Norus-Naruševičius, Ernestas Galvanauskas, Jurgis Baltrušaitis, Petras Klimas, Oskaras Vladislovas Mīlašius. Standing, from left: Valdemaras Vytautas Čarneckis, Pranas Dailidė, M. Lisauskas, Jonas Aukštuolis, Magdalena Avietėnaitė, Vaclovas Sidzikauskas, Ignas Jonynas, R. Karuža, Ignas Jurkūnas-Šeinius. Kaunas, November 12, 1923. Photo credit: LCVA.

#### The Position of Lithuanian American Political Groups Regarding the Coup d'état in Lithuania

The coup d'état of December 16-17, 1926 was met with a negative response from the majority of Lithuanian émigrés in the USA. Living in a democratic country, they were convinced that a democratic system of government would also be perfect for Lithuania and its residents. They could not imagine a dictatorship in their native country. However, a fraction of nationalists in the Lithuanian émigré community did support the new government in Lithuania. From the very beginning, the editor of the Vieniybė newspaper Juozas O. Širvydas, the editor of the Dirva newspaper Kazys Karpis, and a public figure in the Chicago Lithuanian community Kazys Drangelis demonstrated their loyalty to the organizers of the coup. Meanwhile, left wing nationalists (sandariečiai) that flocked around the weekly news-

papers Tėvynė and Sandara criticized this regime by expressing their favor to democracy. In the daily Naujienos and weekly Keleivis, socialists called for the immediate restoration of democracy and the power of the Constitution as well as the re-establishment of the former government. The Lithuanian Alliance of America, an organization uniting a considerable number of Lithuanians in emigration, was pervaded by an identical way of thinking. Lithuanian American communists also argued in favor of the overthrow of the "fascist government". The opinion of the leaders of the most numerous part of the Lithuanian émigré community, the Lithuanian American Catholics, was rather controversial. Some of them were very critical, others upheld a rather moderate position, yet others remained neutral. The position of the Catholic community of Lithuanians in emigration was shifting depending on the domestic situation



President Antanas Smetona, Kaunas, 1928.

in Lithuania. In his articles in the Catholic press and during his visits to the USA, a former figure of the émigré community, professor and priest Fabijonas Kemešis made an attempt to explain and justify the coup d'état by focusing on the efforts of the new government to strengthen the state of Lithuania. The diverging views intensified the disagreements between the political groups of Lithuanian Americans resulting in the criticism between and within the groups. During 1926-1940, the approach of the political groups of the Lithuanian émigré community towards Lithuania and the economic and cultural policy of the Lithuanian government eventually became milder even though the leaders of the Lithuanian American Catholics and socialists did not under any circumstances accept the government of President Antanas Smetona, and the criticism for the regime continued until the catastrophe of the state of Lithuania in 1940.

#### The Lithuanian Government's Policy Regarding Lithuanian Americans in 1927-1930

The nationalist government had to cope with a challenging task of re-establishing the broken and fragile relations with the Lithuanian émigré community, to neutralize a rather hostile position of Lithuanian Americans, and to win over their support. In fact, in order to win their future financial and political support, a new policy towards Lithuanians in emigration was required. The first period in the relationship of the new Lithuanian government and Lithuanian Americans (1927-1930) was a preparatory stage that coincided with the rise of the Lithuanian economy in 1926-1931. Those resolutions adopted by the

nationalist government in 1927-1929 that were favorable to the émigré community (e.g. concessions for acquiring real estate, issues of citizenship and emigration, permission for the émigré press to enter Lithuania, broadening of the activities of the Lithuanian legation in Washington, D.C., etc.) and the continuous encouragement of Lithuanian Americans to cooperate in the economic sphere, visit Lithuania, and so on, mitigated the criticism of the émigré community towards the Lithuanian government and laid the foundations for potentially useful cooperation. Starting 1929, Lithuanian public authorities began publishing articles in the Lithuanian American press on Lithuanian economy and investment possibilities. Besides, national unity was extensively promoted with a lot of hope resting on the joint celebration of all Lithuanians on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Independence of Lithuania in 1928 and the anniversary of the death of

Grand Duke Vytautas in 1930. These two events should have consolidated all Lithuanians. The economic crisis that hit the USA in 1929-1932 had a tremendous effect on the émigré community motivating it to pay more attention to Lithuania and contemplate the idea of re-emigration, transfer of their capital to Lithuania or search for some acceptable activities in their native country.

By not appointing its ambassador to Washington, D.C. until July 1, 1928, the Lithuanian government as if deliberately "forgot" its relations with the émigré community for the time being this way giving time for political passions among Lithuanians in the USA to settle down. The appointment of Kazys Balutis to the position of the ambassador in Washington, D.C. (1928-1933) was an excellent decision made by the Lithuanian government. Kazys Balutis previously lived in the United States. To him, Lithuania had always been above the affairs of any political parties. Kazys Balutis followed the principle of increasing the Lithuanian American community's interest in Lithuania's economic affairs and paying as little attention to politics as possible. This principle gave positive results. He was categorically against compatriots who were arriving from Lithuania in order to raise funds for their political parties and unavoidably criticized the opposing parties and continued to divide the society. The Lithuanian government took it into account and sent its activists to the USA. In 1930, the government prepared and made public a rather in-depth program meant to strengthen the relations between Lithuania and the Lithuanian community in emigration. The principles of the program were followed until 1940.



Professor Mykolas Biržiška

#### Professor Mykolas Biržiška Visit Lithuanian Americans in 1931 Regarding the Issue of the Return of Vilnius

After the Lithuanian government and its representatives in the USA, especially Consul General in New York Povilas Žadeikis, began the search for specific ways of strengthening the relations between the Lithuanian émigré community and Lithuania, in 1930 more attention was paid towards the occupation of Vilnius, a sensitive issue for the whole emigrant community. The affairs of the liberation of Vilnius in the Lithuanian American communities were the most optimal way to united Lithuanians and their political movements as well as to raise financial support for Vilnius residents and draw Lithuanians in emigration closer to Lithuania. It was also an integral part of the plan undertaken by the representatives of the Lithuanian government to revive and strengthen Lithuania's relations with the émigré community.

Weak organizational activities on the issue of the liberation of Vilnius among Lithuanian Americans necessitated sending an authoritative activist to the USA who would be accepted by different ideological movements, capable of drawing the attention of the Lithuanian community, activating the idea of the liberation of Vilnius and encouraging the Lithuanian compatriots in each colony to establish organizations for liberation of Vilnius and to unite them into a single organization similar to the Association for the Liberation of Vilnius that was established in Kaunas. The candidacy of Mykolas Biržiška was selected as the most appropriate one. Not only he had the authority among Lithuanian Americans but he was also known among Jewish Americans descending from Lithuania and well as Ukrainian and Belorussian Americans.

In the face of the economic crisis in the USA, a wise decision was taken to refuse traditional ways of fundraising. Instead, people were to be asked to subscribe to the *Mūsų Vilnius* magazine whereas the collection of donations was put into the hands of the Lithuanian Americans themselves. Seeing the absence of a single approach among the Lithuanian American public figures and even Lithuanian consuls towards the organization of the liberation of Vilnius, in his lectures to the Lithuanian American community, Mykolas Biržiška drew on the example of the Union for the Liberation of Vilnius in Lithuania and its connections with society, noting that the issue of the liberation of Vilnius had to be coordinated between Lithuania and Lithuanian Americans in order to establish closer relations between Lithuania and the Lithuanian immigrant communities. Biržiška's activities in America marked a breaking point both in consolidating the émigré community (Lithuanians organized meetings with Biržiška in most of the colonies irrespective of their ideology) and in the organizational matters for the liberation of Vilnius (the committees or divisions for the liberation of Vilnius were set up and their number increased each year: 6 in 1931, 17 in 1932, 27 in 1933, 51 in 1934). The approach of the émigré community towards Lithuania changed. Lithuanian Americans started being more determined about maintaining contact with Lithuania, regardless of what was its government.

#### The Delegation of the Union for the Liberation of Vilnius Led by Professor Fabijonas Kemešis Visits Lithuanian American Colonies in 1934

In the period 1933-1934 when the Lithuanian Government's attention towards the Lithuanian émigré community increased, the relations with Nazi Germany deteriorated and the relations with Poland did not seem to ameliorate, the leadership of the Union for Liberation of Vilnius (hereinafter – ULV) sought even greater consolidation with Lithuanian émigrés in the USA. Its principal aim was to raise more funds and to spread the idea of the liberation of Vilnius by raising the Lithuanian community's interest in it. It was resolved to promote the idea of the Vilnius Iron Fund (hereinafter – VIF) among Lithuanian émigrés on a broader scale. From May 1st to June 20th of 1934, the vice-chairman of the ULV, the chairman of the VIF and a professor at the Dotnuva Agricultural Academy, Fr. Fabijonas Kemešis, together with a ULV employee and an associate professor at the Dotnuva Agricultural Academy Balys Vitkus as well as a representative from the ULV, the Association for Support of Lithuanians Abroad and a man of letters Petras Babickas visited the Lithuanian American colonies and gave speeches.

The aim of their trip was announced in the newspapers of the Lithuanian émigré community: to give lectures and to deliver reports on Lithuania and the situation of Vilnius, to distribute the literature of the ULV and the logos of the VIF as well as Vilnius passports, to promote the prescription to the magazine *Mūsų Vilnius*, to establish the ULV divisions and the VIF committees. They were against the collection of donations

but asked Lithuanian Americans to provide accommodation, food and transport to them when traveling from one colony to another. The delegates avoided politics and party talks and associated their mission with patriotic and national speeches. The selection of candidacies for the mission proved to be right as they were more or less acceptable to the Lithuanian émigré community. Even though Fr. Kemėšis, a former active Lithuanian American Catholic figure, had an authority among Lithuanians in emigration, some Lithuanian American priests saw him as an agent sent by the Lithuanian nationalist Government and not everyone was willing to admit him to their parishes, despite the fact that he had the support of Lithuanian bishops. Furthermore, Lithuanian American communists completely dissociated themselves from the delegates as did the socialists who found it more relevant to organize the Lituanica's second flight across the Atlantic.

The Lithuanian American Catholic leadership took a rather unfavorable position on the issue of the liberation of Vilnius. The Lithuanian American Roman Catholic Federation (hereinafter –LARCF) decided to organize the routes of delegates across Lithuanian American colonies separately and to hold the meetings of the delegates and Lithuanian compatriots in the parishes which were largely ignored by the supporters of sandariečiai and socialists, not only nationalists. The members of the mission had to agree to such a decision of Catholics, even though it divided the Lithuanian community itself, and the results attained were not as good as they could be. The Lithuanian American press of various ideologies wrote about half-empty auditoriums; about auditoriums where the members of the mission could not get in time; about moderate numbers of distributed Vilnius passports and VIF logos as well as a poor number of subscribers to Mūsų Vilnius.

The members of the mission, in particular, Fr. Kemėšis focused on the Lithuanian American youth and the problem of

Lithuanian assimilation. Certain Lithuanian American priests (Fr. Pakalnis), seeing that the youth was quick to lose its nationality and nearly abandoned the Lithuanian language, did not denounce it; according to them, it was most important to preserve the Lithuanian spirit. Fr. Kemėšis strongly criticized such a position, noting that the young generation of Lithuanian Americans, intellectuals in particular, clearly demonstrated the Lithuanian national revival which they were excellent at combining with well-understood American patriotism. He provided the activities of Lithuanian American students as an example; they were united into the Lithuanian American Catholic student organization bringing together about 900 members who gathered into 23 branches in various Lithuanian colonies. It was the very core of the youth which had to be supported by all means in order to promote their Lithuanianism.

Kemėšis' report shows that the delegates visited a total of 52 places where they gave 136 speeches. The Lithuanian émigrés were informed about the Vilnius Iron Fund; Vilnius passports and logos were distributed during the meeting. It was noted that more of them were distributed in America compared to 1932 and 1933. The greatest aspiration expressed by the delegates was for all Lithuanians in emigration to become the members-sponsors of the VIF, and the distribution of Vilnius passports and logos would be the principal support for the liberation of Vilnius. The Lithuanian community was also explained the importance of The Golden Book of the Vilnius Iron Fund for the idea of liberation of Vilnius. The book was intended to record the organizations and persons of the greatest merits to the fund who purchased logos, affixed them to their passports and worked a lot in the activities of the fund over a period of three years. An important achievement of the mission was a more active support of the LARCF leaders to the idea of liberation of Vilnius. However, the delegates failed to set up the common center of Lithuanian Americans for the liberation of Vilnius.



Map of Lithuania. Vilnius Region is under the Polish rule.

#### Rapolas Skipitis Visits Lithuanian Americans in 1935

The visit of Rapolas Skipitis, the chairman of the Association for Support of Lithuanians Abroad, to the USA and his meetings (April 3 – June 29, 1935) with Lithuanian Americans encouraged the convening of the first World Lithuanian Congress in Kaunas. It was the way to ensure the support of the Lithuanian émigré community, in particular, the Catholics. Lithuanian American nationalists, sandariečiai and socialists welcomed Skipitis and his idea of the congress, while Catholics and communists were cautious and more critical of it.

The success of the visit was first guaranteed by the position of the Lithuanian Catholic Church in favor of the idea of the World Lithuanian Congress. The recommendation given by the representatives of the Church to Skipitis inspired most of Lithuanian American Catholic leaders to accept Skipitis; they also resolved to participate in the World Lithuanian Congress and organized meetings with members of Lithuanian parishes from Lithuania.

The views of those leaders of Catholic organizations who did not accept Skipitis and the Lithuanian government were the results of the restricted situation of the Catholic Church in Lithuania and the absence of democratic rights in society. They believed that the Lithuanian government sought to use the World Lithuanian Congress to consolidate and validate its regime.

Through participation in the World Lithuanian Congress, the leaders of Lithuanian American Catholics sought to express the wish for more rights given to Lithuanian organizations and society, to establish closer relations with Lithuanian parties that shared a similar ideology as well as to stop the denationalization of Lithuanians in emigration. Leonardas Šimutis, a representative of two most known organizations, the LARCF and the LRCAA (Lithuanian Roman Catholic Alliance of America), and the editor of the daily paper Draugas was assigned the chairman of the Lithuanian American Catholic delegation to the Congress.

#### ULV Representative Vincas Uždavins Visits the USA in 1936–1937 and 1938–1939

The political pressure of the Polish government on Lithuania and the restriction of the rights of Polish Lithuanians, primarily in the Vilnius Region, strengthened starting 1936. This forced the members of the ULV to shift their attention to Lithuanian Americans hoping for their financial support. The key goal that had to be achieved in America was establishing branches of the ULV across all Lithuanian colonies in the USA and uniting them under one leadership. This was to be achieved through increasing propaganda and a more active collection of funds for the Vilnius Region (by selling Vilnius Passports and logos as well as by distributing information). The editor of the Mūsų Vilnius newspaper, Vincas Uždavins, was sent to the USA. During his over-a-year stay in America (1936–1937) he paid visits to nearly all Lithuanian American colonies and established 20 new branches of the ULV; however, he failed to establish a center because the Lithuanian émigré community was strongly divided. Uždavins came up with an idea to offer the Lithuanian government to send its representative to the USA with a special mission – to do a propaganda job by drawing Lithuanians from the left-wing ideology and uniting them on non-political grounds, i.e. the liberation of Vilnius. Uždavins saw himself in the position of such a representative.

During his second trip to the USA (1938–1939), Uždavins arrived as the correspondent of the Pasaulio Lietuvis magazine. He traveled through colonies, gave lectures, distributed Vilnius passports and logos, raised funds and urged Lithuanian émigrés to unite into a single center. In the meetings with Lithuanian Americans, he tried to draw left-wing Lithuanians towards the side of the national identity by raising the Vilnius issue. When the ULV was closed in Lithuania on November 25, 1938, Lithuanian Americans had to assume the crucial role on the issue of Vilnius. The possibility to draw together the Lithuanian émigré

community with the aim of establishing a joint cultural-type Society for Support of Vilnius Residents was strong. He proposed to rename the Lithuanian American branches of the ULV into the Societies for Support of Vilnius Residents. The idea was also supported by the Lithuanian Government led by Prime Minister Mironas. However, Uždavins failed to bring his idea to life prior to his leaving the USA. Furthermore, the opinions on the issue diverged among the Lithuanian émigrés themselves. Uždavins' work in the émigré community laid foundations for future joint activities in support of Lithuania and fighting for its independence.

Summary from Lietuvos valdžios ryšiai su JAV lietuviais 1926–1940 metais: suartėjimo kelių paieškos by Juozas Skirius.

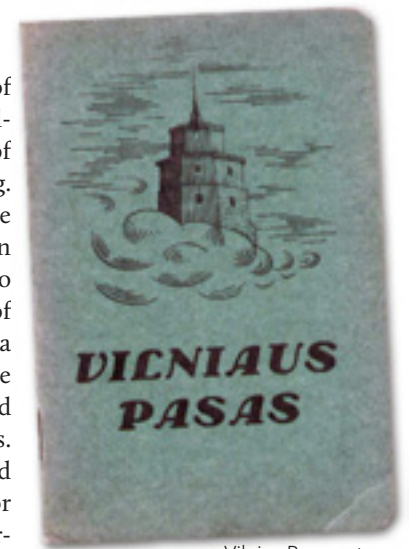
Dr. Juozas Skirius is Dean of the World History Department of the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (LUES), the LUES Senate Member, Members of the Vytautas Magnus University Department of Humanitarian Sciences Committee, Chairman of the Editorial Board of the LUES History Department's multi-volume publication *Historia Universalis in Lithuania*, and members of many other boards and organizations.



Prof. Juozas Skirius

Dr. Skirius has published: *Lietuvos istorijos chrestomatija 1861–1990 03 11* (1993), *Naujausiųjų laikų istorijos chrestomatija 1918–1945* (1994), *Iš Lietuvos teisės ir valstybės istorijos* (2001), *Lietuvos užatlantės diplomatija 1918–1929 m., Istoriniai asmenys ir jų epocha 1918–1945, Lietuvos užsienio reikalų ministrai 1918–1940* (1999), *Amerikos lietuvių tarybos kūrimosi 1939–1941 m. atspindžiai dokumentuose ir spaudoje* (Chicago, 1998), *U.S. Government Policy Toward Lithuania 1920–1922* (Chicago, 2000), *Amerikos lietuvių tarybos veikla 1945–1948 m.: išėivijos pastangos dėl Displaced persons act priėmimo* (Chicago, 2001), *Lietuvių visuomenininkas ir diplomatas Bronius Kazys Balutis (1880–1967): Tėvynei paaukotas gyvenimas* (2001), *Julius J. Bielskis (1891–1976) Gyvenimas Amerikoje tarnaujant Lietuvai: JAV lietuvių veikėjas ir diplomatas* (Chicago, 2004 and Vilnius, 2008)

He earned his Ph.D. degree in history at the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences. He advanced his studies in Great Britain (1994, 2002), Poland (1991–1994, 2006), Germany (1993), the USA (1998, 2000, 2003, 2008), Stockholm (Sweden) Institute of International Relations (1993), and Izrael (2011).



Vilnius Passport.



# Folk Dance Group Surprised the Audience with a Folk Rock Concert

Interview with “Suktinis” Folk Dance Group Director Giedrė Elekšytė Knieža  
By Karilė Vaitkutė

From left, directors Daina Miežlaiškis, Ilona Čiapaitė, Giedrė Elekšytė Knieža, and Jūratė Grabliauskienė. Photo by Andrius Sprindys.

**KV:** “Suktinis” was established twelve years ago in Chicago. Who were the founders and who were the dancers initially?

**GEK:** The founders and the first group directors were Salomėja and Vidmantas Strižigauskas. There were 8 original dancers and four of them dance till now. They are: Linas Umbrasas, Greta Germanaitė, Ramūnas Paulauskas (he came back after a break), and Giedrė Elekšytė Knieža who became the group director in 2009.



The dance of the Midsummer Eve. Photo by Andrius Sprindys.

**KV:** Twelve years ago there were other Lithuanian folk dance groups in Chicago. Why did you want to start a new group and not go dance with the existing groups?

**GEK:** There were folk dance groups back then and now but we wanted something different, something bigger, something more passionate, something that would touch other people’s hearts. “Suktinis” was always driven by passion and that’s how we won over people’s hearts and became the most popular group in Chicago area.

**KV:** What are the goals of your group? What is the most important thing for the dancers? What are you trying to achieve?

**GEK:** Our goals are very simple: do what we like and show that folk dance can be fun, interesting, and lovable. As for the dancers, they like to get together and be challenged with new projects that seem impossible at the beginning. Simply put, folk dance group “Suktinis” is a lifestyle and we dedicate all of ourselves to the group.

**KV:** What were the highlights of the twelve-year long performance career? What was (or is) the hardest to do?



Soloists Linas Sprindys and Kęstutis Nevulis. Photo by Andrius Sprindys.



Soloist Jeronimas Milius and Suktinis dancers. Photo by Andrius Sprindys

**GEK:** There were hundreds of highlights throughout those years. There were many concerts, trips, personal celebrations, and even more hard practices. During all these years, we grew together as a family. All of the dancers have their actual families, and it is really hard to cooperate between those two. However, all of the dancers somehow manage to do it.

incorporated non-folk music and non-folk elements. Whose idea was it to perform together with rock and opera singers as well as non-folk dancers? Why did you want to do it?

**GEK:** This is who we are. We like to be different, we like to challenge ourselves and go above and beyond. I always wanted something different and being on the Board of Directors of the Lithuanian Opera Company in Chicago I always pushed the idea of a rock opera. Sometimes it is easier to do it yourself and

**KV:** This year you presented us a different kind of show. It was not just a folk dance concert. It was a performance, a show that



Soloists Nida Grigalavičiūtė and Judita Butkytė. Photo by Andrius Sprindys.



that is exactly what happened. One of our dancers, my soul mate and my right hand, Daina Miežlaiškis, suggested the theme of “Velnio nuotaka” (Devil’s Bride), and we took off with it.

**KV:** What did your group gain performing together with professional singers, the stars of Lithuanian rock music Povilas Meškėla and Jeronimas Milius as well as other professional singers?

**GEK:** Lithuanian folk dance group “Suktinis” has been performing with Lithuanian Opera as choreographic group for the last 10 years, so this is not the first time working with the well known performers. It is always beneficial to work with professionals, to learn from them since folk dance is just a hobby for all of us.

**KV:** How will you surprise the Chicago audience next year?

**GEK:** Well asked, it is a surprise! We are already working on that.



Soloist Linas Sprindys. Photo by Andrius Sprindys



Suktinis Folk Dance Group. Photo by Andrius Sprindys



Jurgis Kunčinas (1947-2002) was a prolific writer and translator whose work includes poetry, novels, essays, short stories, and children’s books. His works have also been translated into German, Latvian, and Estonian and are particularly popular in Russia; a number of his works have been translated and there is even a fan site (in Russian), [kuncinas.com](http://kuncinas.com).

The unnamed narrator of Jurgis Kunčinas’s *Tūla* is our picaresque tour guide through the infamous poverty-stricken bohemian quarter of Vilnius known as Užupis (literally, “beyond the river”), describing life on the fringes of society, including his journeys through various institutions for alcohol treatment. On the way we meet a number of curious inhabitants of this unique district, everyone from a chemistry professor with an exhibitionist problem to the descendant of a 15th-century Lithuanian hetman obsessively carving wooden masks all night long. It’s a place where you’re likely to encounter people walking both sides of the moral line, where one is just as likely to run into great kindness as unfeeling evil, and where the complex history and mix of cultures that make up the city of Vilnius constantly intrude into the present. But at the very heart of the narrative is the narrator’s tragic love for the equally misfit *Tūla*, a love the narrator carries with him, both figuratively and literally, throughout his chaotic existence. The action, which sometimes takes the form of the narrator’s visions of visiting his love in the guise of a bat, includes a hitchhiking trip through Ukraine and Crimea, and takes place over a number of years spanning a good part of the late Soviet era.

Considered a modern-day classic of Lithuanian literature, *Tūla* won the Lithuanian Writers’ Union award for the best book of 1993 and is now in its third edition in Lithuania. It has previously been translated into Russian, Swedish, and Polish.

## Excerpt from *Tūla*

by Jurgis Kunčinas translated from the Lithuanian by Elizabeth Novickas

In the old days, when I awoke in the night and slurped some flat beer, all I would see out Aurelita Bonopartovna's window was the calm and gentle silhouette of the Blessed Virgin Mary the Consoler Church—the very tip of the spire and a part of the graceful tower. Aurelita Bonopartovna slept in the other room with her young daughter Ewa Gerbertovna, while at night in the kitchen their mother and grandmother Helena Brzostowska would drink red wine thinned with boiled water, listen to Penderecki and Vivaldi records, and sit up until dawn carving ritual masks out of blocks of linden, masks that were full of evil fantasies—of Mardi Gras, Japanese, and Užupis inhabitants. But no, maybe I made it up. Only one thing is for sure: awaking in the night, I'd immediately see the little triple-nave church's tower—apparently I knew it was a triple-nave. It was vivid even in the darkest sky. I knew a lot more—it had been a long time since the old lady Daszewska lived next to the Virgin Mary the Consoler, with her slutty daughters and crazy son Tadek who went nuts the day he was bested at the open ring final in Philharmonic Hall—it wasn't just his fiancée Angonita Brandys who abandoned him, but all of his friends and drinking buddies. That happened in 1956, right after the 20th Communist Party Congress—when talking about this event to me and my colleague Teodoras von Četras, pani Daszewska always mentioned the Congress. She was in the Hall herself at the time, so it's not surprising that every time she remembered her beaten-to-a-pulp son (when the fight was over, someone thrashed him in the locker room too), the old lady's voice trembled. Zofia, a suburban letter-carrier and a great one for nookie, understood her brother's insanity completely differently: listen, Tadek went crazy from eau de cologne and acetone glue in jail; you can see for yourself how puny he is, what a puke pack he is! But young Maria, who used to get me and Teodoras cheap socks from her Sparta factory, the beautiful Mariana, with whom we would dance at the Arklių Club, the dreary dance hall belonging to the Interior Ministry, avoided talking about her little brother entirely. The biography of pani Daszewska, widow of a legionnaire chorąży or ensign, in "our" time already a wrinkled and slovenly but still energetic and crazy old lady, would perhaps be worth further study, even though I don't doubt that most people would much rather read the spicy memoirs of the late letter carrier Zofia—no, no, not about the tiresome delivery of letters and newspapers, not about the mean mutts of Filaretų and Olandų Streets—what else then, but her never-ending, dangerous, and breath-taking adventures in bed! Actually, Zosia in her youth was as pretty as a church painting—the pictures prove it!—but to us, Almae Matris Vilnensis liberal arts graduates taking shelter in one corner of the Daszewska den in the fall of 1967, she no longer, unfortunately, looked as charming and

seductive as she had, for example, to the Soviet cadets of 1949, or to the boxing trainer who, they say, talked Tadek into fighting with the trained soldiers in the garrison's club. Zosia liked to stop by our little room, separated from the stinking kitchen by a width of flowered cotton, sit on the creaking stool and, puffing on a cigarette, start reminiscing. Četras and I tried to fix her up with Francas, a well-fed French student who was always desperate for a woman, but when he saw Zosia, Francas vanished backwards from the door, and he practically never stopped by our furnished hole anymore, even though Zosia always asked: nu, gde vash tot usach—well, where's your bewhiskered one? I had already lost Tūla (did I ever have her?) when I discovered, quite unexpectedly, that in this very same tiny little room where I with my colleague Četras once wasted pleasant days of half-starvation with the alley cats, the rats scurrying under the floor, and Tadek wailing one minute and cackling the next, yes, in the very same den, in 1907 I believe, Mikalojus Čiurlionis once lived, the one and only officially recognized (even by the Russians!) genius of our nation. When I found this out, I got the urge to find von Četras, buy a bottle or two of some more decent wine, and go to that courtyard—all of the Daszewski family, excepting maybe Mariana and her kids, had died out already—to glance once more at the black window frames and the copper door handle that had survived through some miracle, and at least try to imagine the genius's silhouette in the gateway or pressing that handle... wine helps, doesn't it? But as it turned out, Teodoras was away in Vienna—I guzzled down the wine under the Daszewski windows with some scabby guy. When we finished, he started demanding more, and I barely managed to escape. Once more I turn in circles, just so I won't have to immediately reveal everything about Tūla, about THULLA with two l's. Tūla, whose name I wrote in six-foot letters of green paint on the narrow wall of the Bernadine shrine, not far from the Great Altar...

I had managed, back then, to write only one German word, of my own invention, "VOLKSHÜTTE," on pani Daszewska's wooden, never-locked door with the copper handle. It was supposed to mean something along the lines of "The people's shack." I thought it sweet and pretty. Pani, I remember, got upset immediately—hey, this word seemed to prove our pretensions, or even intentions, of taking over her dwelling! The old lady calmed down only when Uncle Hans, a theoretical physicist and Teodoras's uncle, stopped by on his usual visit. I don't know if I've ever met a nicer person. A politician, a gentleman with a terribly sharp tongue who knew all of Vilnius's elite and demimondes. Uncle Hans took pani by the hand, led her into our tiny little room, poured her a brimming cut-glass tumbler of wine as bluish as potassium permanganate, with his wet lips smacked her dirty little hand, and immediately con-

vinced her that the khlopchiki, that is, we rascals, were just joking, no one had any intentions on her mansion! The old lady backed down at once—dobrze, dobrze—fine, fine! After another glass, she started giggling unattractively and hanging onto Uncle Hans as if she were sixteen instead of seventy. Uncle rather discreetly remarked that there really were people who wouldn't like that sign at all, but he himself laughed aloud, treated everyone to wine and Tresor cigarettes, and asked us to bring some real babes over—he was going to show them—in the dark!—some completely new conjuring trick he had just learned. The theoretic physicist wasn't indifferent to the arts; if he had as much as suspected that Čiurlionis had penned his fugues or painted his cosmos under this smoky vault the cockroaches fell from, he would have immediately written to the newspapers, or even brought some musician friend of his from the Neringa Restaurant over—look, Vaclovas, now what's this? But, like us, he didn't suspect it. Besides, if the genius really did live there, then it must have been in the big living room, where, in our time, pani Daszewska, her daughters, and strange men with tattooed chests slept on mattresses laid on the floor, along with the cats and the filthy children, and where sometimes Tadek, the unfortunate boxer from 1956, returning briefly from jail or the madhouse, would rave a while.

I had the chance to bring Tūla to this yard: I showed her the low window nearly even with the floor, through which cats streaked onto our study table—they would defile the place and escape outside again. And the girls? Tūla narrowed her eyes, but I snorted: What for? The doors were open night and day anyway; I'd frequently find completely strange men and women there, even in my little bed: pani would say, it's just for a little while! And if you want to know, I told Tūla, the only ones who came to visit us were three singing English majors—Athos, Porthos, and Aramis—quiet, decent girls. We'd drink natural apple wine, sometimes beer; they would sing "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean," "Delilah," and maybe "Brave Abdullah the Dreadful Robber." Or else we'd just listen to Vanda Stankus's little songs—and then off they'd go!

At night, smoking under Aurelita Bonopartovna's pink window, I'd wander back many years; living in a city for nearly a quarter of a century, your glance, your footsteps, your dust and your residue remain in almost every little corner...

But the churches! The churches are paramount; at least they



Jurgis Kunčinas, 1993

force you to turn your head upwards, and upwards there's always the heavens—low, ashy, grim, but the heavens all the same. When I see this bellowing neighborhood, flowing with blood, full of rats and people—a neighborhood of drifters, the poor, the sick, the disabled, the soul-starved (we're just feeble creatures, Uncle Hans liked to emphasize, there's no need to be ashamed of our weakness, physiology, or the flaws we've inherited from unknown ancestors!)—my neck flushes, my head starts spinning—no, no, not so much as a ray of sunshine! That's why there's churches. If they didn't force me to kneel and fold my hands in prayer, then at least, like I said, they lifted my eyes upward; in those days that was a great deal, to me at least.

*Elizabeth Novickas is a graduate of the University of Illinois with a B.A. in Rhetoric from the Urbana campus and a M.A. in Lithuanian Language and Literature from the Chicago campus. She has worked previously as a bookbinder and fine printer in Urbana, Illinois; as a newspaper designer and cartographer in Springfield, Illinois; and as editorial system administrator at the Chicago Sun-Times. Besides translating classic Lithuanian literature into English, she has worked as editor of the journal Lituanius.*

*She was the recipient of a 2011 translation fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts for the translation of Frank Kruk (Pica Pica Press, 2016). In the same year, she won the St. Jerome Prize from the Association of Lithuanian Literary Translators for her translations of Vilnius Poker (Open Letter, 2009) and Whitehorn's Windmill (CEU Press, 2010). Upcoming works include a translation of Ričardas Gavelis's Sun-Tzu's Life in the Sacred City of Vilnius.*

*Her translation of Jurgis Kunčinas's Tūla can be purchased online from [www.picapica.press](http://www.picapica.press) or any major online bookstore, as well as ordered through your local retail bookstore.*

## April Anniversaries

### 655 years ago



Kaunas Castle

On April 16, 1362 the Teutonic Knights destroyed the Kaunas Castle. Kaunas Castle is a medieval castle situated in Kaunas, the second-largest city in Lithuania. Archeological evidence suggests that it was originally built during the mid-14th century, in the Gothic style. Its site is strategic – a rise on the banks of the Nemunas River near its confluence with the Neris River. At the beginning of the 21st century, about one-third of the castle was still standing. The precise construction date of the first Vilnius Castle is known. Archaeological data suggests that a stone castle was built on the site during the middle of the 12th century. Situated on an elevated bank near the river junction about 100 kilometers (62 miles) from the capital city of Trakai, it served as a strategic outpost and guarded nearby cities as well as trade routes.

A written account states that in 1361, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights Winrich von Kniprode issued an order to gather information about the castle, specifically the thickness of its walls, as preparation for an assault on the castle. In March–April 1362, the castle was besieged by the Teutonic Order. During this attack, the Teutonic Knights constructed a siege tower and erected wall-penetration machinery; primitive fire arms might have been used, since gunpowder technology was emerging in Europe. At that time, the castle walls were over 11 meters (36 feet) high, when its firing galleries are factored in. According to Wigand of Marburg, the castle's garrison consisted of about 400 Lithuanians soldiers, commanded by Vaidotas, son of Duke Kęstutis. After three weeks, the Knights managed to breach the castle's walls, and soon afterwards the castle was taken. On Easter Sunday in 1362, the knights conducted a Mass at the castle to commemorate their victory. Apparently, of the castle's defense force of 400, only 36 survived. Questions remain with regard to the castle's defenders' lack of support from outside during the siege. In any event, Kęstutis soon regained and rebuilt Kaunas Castle, but it remained a point of contention between Lithuanians and Teutonic Knights for many years.

### 470 years ago

In 1547, the Voklo Reform began. On April 1, 1557 it was made a law. The Voklo Reform (Lithuanian: Valakų reforma) was a 16th-century land reform in parts of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

The reform was started by Grand Duchess Bona Sforza in her possessions to increase the revenues of the state treasury but soon was expanded statewide and was copied by other nobles and the Church. The reform increased effectiveness of agriculture by establishing a strict three-field

system for crop rotation. The land was measured, registered in a cadastre, and divided into voloks (land unit of about 21.38 hectares (52.8 acres)). Voklo became the measurement of feudal services. The reform was a success in terms of the annual state revenue that quadrupled from 20,000 to 82,000 kopas of Lithuanian groschens. In social terms, the reform and the accompanying Third Statute of Lithuania (1588), promoted development of manorialism and fully established serfdom in Lithuania which existed until the emancipation reform of 1861. The nobility was clearly separated from the peasants which severely limited social mobility.



The division of land after the Voklo Reform.

### 460 years ago



Leonas Sapiega

On April 4, 1557 Leonas Sapiega, a nobleman and statesman of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, was born. He became Great Secretary of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1580, Great Clerk of the Grand Duchy in 1581, Court Chancellor in 1585, Grand Chancellor from 1589 until 1623, Voivode of Vilnius in 1621, Great Lithuanian Hetman in 1623 and governor of Słonim, Brest and Mogilev. Sapiega is considered as a great political figure of the Commonwealth. A rich and powerful magnate, he was known for his wisdom as a statesman, lawyer and military commander, he was one of the greatest leaders of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania at the times of the Duchy's highest cultural flourishing. He was born in Astrouna, near Vitebsk. He was educated in Leipzig and worked in the royal chancellery of King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania Stefan Báthory under direction of Jan Zamoyski. Raised Eastern Orthodox, in his youth he converted to Calvinism and founded a number of Calvinist churches in his former estates. In the 1570s he turned to Unitarianism. Disillusioned by the squabbles within the Protestant camp, in 1586 he converted with his first wife to

On April 4, 1557 Leonas Sapiega, a nobleman and statesman of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, was born. He became Great Secretary of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1580, Great Clerk of the Grand Duchy in 1581, Court Chancellor in 1585, Grand Chancellor from 1589 until 1623, Voivode of Vilnius in 1621, Great Lithuanian Hetman in 1623 and governor of Słonim, Brest and Mogilev. Sapiega is considered as a great political figure of the Commonwealth.

Roman Catholicism of which he became a zealous defender. After the Union of Brest he enforced conformity on the unwilling Eastern Orthodox.

He supported a political union with Muscovy in 1584–1600 and led the diplomatic mission to Moscow in 1600 that proposed the union to czar Boris Godunov, who declined the proposal. He also participated in wars with Muscovy under rule of Steponas Batoras (Stephen Báthory) and King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania Žygimantas (Sigismund III Vasa). He became an advisor of Sigismund III and supported his radical plans to take over the Muscovite throne.

As Chancellor he was the main editor and publisher of the last version of the Statute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. He laid grounds for the establishment of the Law Faculty in the University of Vilnius, which was created in 1641.

He was co-initiator and a participant in the military expedition to Moscow in 1618 by King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania Władysław IV.

As Sejm Marshal he led the ordinary Sejm in Warsaw from October 4 to November 25, 1582. He was a benefactor of many catholic churches in the Grand Duchy. He established the long-term power and wealth of the Sapiega family.

Sapiega died on 1633 and was interred in the cellars of the Church of St. Michael the Archangel in Vilnius, which he himself has commissioned. His tomb remains there to the present day and is still the largest piece of art of its kind in the territory of Lithuania.

### 315 years ago

Swedish army seized Vilnius on April 5, 1702. The Battle of Vilnius took place on April 16, 1702 in Vilnius, the capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, during the Great Northern War. After having seen the city early seized by the Swedish army, the grand notary of Lithuania, Ludwik Konstanty Pociąg launched a surprise attack with 3,000 men, although some sources state as few as 2,000 and others 4,000 men. They were equally matched by the Swedes with 3,000 men under Carl Gustav Mörner stationed inside the city, although due to intense sickness it was realistically closer to 2,500. The city remained in Swedish control until Mörner left it with his army in order to reinforce Charles XII in his battle against Augustus. It was later recaptured by the Swedish general Carl Gustaf Dücker in 1706.

### 110 years ago

On April 7, 1907 the founding assembly of the Lithuanian Scientific Society (Lithuanian: Lietuvių mokslo draugija) took place. The Lithuanian Scientific Society was a scientific, cultural, and educational organization that was active between 1907 and 1940 in Vilnius, Lithuania. It was founded on the initiative of Dr. Jonas

Basanavičius. The founding assembly elected Jonas Basanavičius as chairman, Stasys Matulaitis and Povilas Matulionis as vice-chairmen, Jonas Vileišis as secretary, Antanas Vileišis as treasurer, and Antanas Smetona as librarian. Other members of the organization included Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas, Juozas Bagdonas, and Petras Vileišis. Jonas Basanavičius served as its chairman until his death in 1927.

The Society conducted research on the Lithuanian language and its dialects, along with anthropological, archaeological, and other historical research. It operated a library, an archives, a reading room, and a museum, and was involved in the publication of Lithuanian textbooks. The Society also published the scholarly journal *Lietuvių Tauta* (The Lithuanian Nation). In 1911 the Vilnius city magistrate began a proceeding to demolish the city's Upper Castle, and use the hill as a water supply reservoir. The Lithuanian Scientific Society, under the direction of Jonas Basanavičius, initiated a protest and was successful in preventing the planned demolition. The remains of the Castle were spared. The Society also worked to preserve the Lida and Trakai Castles.

The Society was based in the Vileišis Palace. In January 1938 the Society was banned by the Polish government, when Vilnius was part of Poland. The Society resumed its activities in January 1939 under its new name, The Lithuanian Society of Friends of Science (*Lietuvių mokslo mylėtojų draugija*). After Lithuania was ceded the city in late 1939 by the Soviet Union as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the property of the Society was transferred to the Institute of Lithuanian Studies in 1940, and later to the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. Most of the exhibits were later transferred to the Lithuanian Museum of History and Ethnography; the numismatic collection went to the Lithuanian Art Museum.



Members of the Lithuanian Science Society in 1912. Left to right, first row: Jonas Jablonskis, Žemaitė, Petras Kriaučiūnas, Jonas Basanavičius, Liudvika Didžiulienė, Jonas Dielininkaitis; second row: Vincas Palukaitis, Antanas Vileišis, Baltramiejus Čepulis, Adomas Sketeris, Gabrielius Landsbergis-Žemkalnis, Jonas Ambrozaitis; third row: Juozas Kairiūkštis, Jonas Spudulis, Mečislovas Silvestraitis, Mikalojus Kuprevičius.

## Easter Eggs

By Jana Sirusaitė-Motivans



Easter is not only a celebration of Christ's Resurrection, but also a celebration of nature coming back to life after a long dark winter. Eggs are symbolically an important part of Easter. In Lithuania, dyed and decorated eggs are used both as gifts and as good luck symbols. Eggs are decorated mostly with designs based on nature, such as trees, leaves, flowers, wheat and the sun. Eggs can also feature Christian symbols, such as crosses. There is meaning to all the symbols and colors used. For example, a commonly used method for coloring eggs is boiling them with onion skins. The beautiful shades of tan and brown represent the earth. Other natural colors are achieved by using flowers or vegetables to dye the eggs.

There are also many superstitions and customs involving Easter eggs. In earlier times, the head of the household often buried an egg by the front door to keep the family inside safe from harm. Decorated eggs were also buried in fields, stables and orchards to ensure a good harvest and healthy animals.

A variety of games are played with Easter eggs. The best known one is a simple contest where each person at the table selects an egg, and holds it in their fist so that only the tip is exposed. One person hits the exposed end of their egg against another person's egg. The winner claims the broken egg, and proceeds to challenge another player. Both sides of the egg can be played, but match top-to-top and bottom-to-bottom. The game continues until there is one champion surviving egg.

Another game is egg-rolling. A long narrow chute made of wood or bark (or cardboard or Styrofoam) is set at an angle to the ground, and a circle is drawn at the bottom. An egg is placed in the middle of the circle to start the game. Players take turns rolling an egg down the chute, attempting to tap another egg. If they succeed in hitting another egg, they claim both eggs. The player with the most eggs at the end of the game wins.

This game can also be played without a chute, using just a large circle. The players sit or kneel on the ground and take turns rolling their eggs in, sort of like marbles. For this version of the game, it helps to have some kind of barrier or enclosure, for example a large plastic hula-hoop.

After all the fun and games, what is to be done with so many hard-boiled eggs? Here are two suggestions. The first is a very Lithuanian version of egg salad called pikantiška mišrainė (savory mixture) which includes grated cheese and garlic. This mixture can be served on bread, on sliced tomatoes, or stuffed inside whole tomatoes.

Another creative way to use hard-boiled eggs is to dress them up as musmiriai (toadstools). This idea comes from the well-loved cookbook *Popular Lithuanian Recipes* by Josephine Dauzvardis, originally published in Chicago in 1955. These would look great on any Easter table.

## Pikantiška Mišrainė (savory mixed salad)

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
- 3 hard-boiled eggs, grated or chopped
- 1 teaspoon finely minced garlic
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill

Combine all ingredients. Serve on bread, on sliced tomatoes, or stuff mixture inside whole tomatoes.



## Musmiriai (Egg Toadstools)

Hard-boil eggs. Peel. Slice off enough of the heavy end of each egg to permit removal of yolk, and to allow eggs to stand upright. Prepare yolks as for devilled eggs. Stuff egg whites. Stand the eggs upright on a bed of parsley or lettuce. Cap each egg with a slice of tomato cut from the smooth round side and slightly scooped out. Dot tomato sparsely with very finely chopped egg-white to resemble toad stool markings.



\*The above recipe is the original in *Popular Lithuanian Recipes* by Josephine Dauzvardis, Chicago, 1955. I altered it slightly by leaving the eggs whole, and not removing the yolk and then re-stuffing the egg with a devilled egg mixture. I also used a toothpick and dabbed drops of mayonnaise onto the tomato slice to make the white dots.

## AABS 2018 at Stanford

The 2018 AABS Conference at Stanford University: The 100th Anniversary of Baltic Independence  
June 1-3, 2018



Stanford University

The 2018 AABS Conference at Stanford University will celebrate two important milestones – the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies (AABS) and the 100th anniversary of independence for the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

We now welcome paper, poster, panel, roundtable, and workshop proposals.

### Call for Papers

The 2018 AABS Conference at Stanford University will celebrate two important milestones – the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies (AABS) and the 100th anniversary of independence for the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

The conference will bring together scholars interested in Baltic studies from all over the world and foster collaboration between Baltic and Stanford researchers. The three-day program, to be held on Stanford University campus on June 1-3, 2018, will feature panels, roundtable discussions and workshops on 16 broad topics. The conference will also include numerous additional events, such as keynote talks by leading Baltic scholars, evening receptions, film screenings, exhibits, and tours of Stanford's Baltic collections.

The conference is organized by the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies (AABS) and the Stanford University Libraries (SUL). AABS is the world's premier scholarly society for research on Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Its global membership includes scholars and supporters from North America, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Australia, Great Britain, Russia, Israel, Japan, and elsewhere. The Stanford University Libraries is considered one of the top academic libraries in the United States in terms of the size and strength of its Baltic collections. The library not only holds one of the best Baltic collections in the country, but also actively engages in

supporting Baltic projects and activities, and enhancing Baltic studies at Stanford and beyond.

### Divisions

The 2018 AABS Conference's program is divided into 16 broad divisions. The divisions represent a wide spectrum of subject areas, each focusing on a set of topics currently relevant to corresponding fields. A detailed overview of questions each division will address can be found below.

1. AABS 50
2. AESTHETICS AND THE ARTS
3. ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY
4. ARCHAEOLOGY
5. BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
6. COMMUNICATION, DISINFORMATION, AND THE MEDIA
7. DIGITAL HUMANITIES
8. EDUCATION
9. HISTORY AND MEMORY
10. JEWISH STUDIES
11. LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES, MUSEUMS
12. LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE STUDIES
13. MUSICOLOGY
14. POLITICAL SCIENCE AND REGIONAL SECURITY
15. RELIGION
16. THE BALTIC SEA REGION AS AN EMERGING TECH POWERHOUSE

### Contact

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Stanford University Libraries

Vice President for Conferences, AABS

## The Baltic Studies Program

at the Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for Information and Area Studies at Yale



Yale University

### Grants and Fellowships

Yale University's Baltic Studies Program is pleased to call for applications for Joseph P. Kazickas Post-Doctoral Fellowship for citizens of Lithuania

Yale University's Program in Baltic Studies invites applications for a post-doctoral fellowship of variable duration (four to nine months during the 2017-18 academic year) in the following fields: law, economics, business and finance, environmental policy, political science, international relations, and history.

The Fellow will be expected to be in residence in New Haven, to participate in the activities of the Yale Baltic Studies Program, and to make at least one public presentation at Yale during the period of the fellowship. The stipend for 2017-2018 is expected to range between approximately \$3,600 and \$4,000 per month, plus benefits such as medical insurance.

### QUALIFICATIONS

Only citizens of Lithuania may apply. Applicants should have completed their Ph.D. before November 2017 and at the time of application must be working in, or affiliated with, a university or research institute in Lithuania.

### APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

The review of applications will begin on 1 April 2017 and will continue until the position is filled. Only on-line submissions will be accepted. Yale University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer. Applications from women, members of (underrepresented) minority groups, protected veterans, and persons with disabilities are particularly encouraged.

### Application Materials Required:

- All application materials must be submitted in English
- Cover letter, including proposed duration of the fellowship (between four and nine months), indicating clearly what months of the year and the rationale for the proposed period.
- Curriculum vitae
- Research statement (no more than 1000 words)
- Two reference letters, one from the applicant's academic supervisor and one from an additional faculty member or appropriate administrator at the university or institute at which the applicant is affiliated. The reference letters should address the applicant's research and the broader significance of this research for higher education and research in Lithuania. These letters are to be submitted by the reference writers through the Interfolio site.
- Proof of English language proficiency such as TOEFL score, IELTS score, or transcript from a previously-attended institution where the primary language of instruction is English

For inquiries regarding this fellowship or application process, please contact: marianne.lyden@yale.edu

<http://balticstudies.macmillan.yale.edu/joseph-p-kazickas-post-doctoral-fellowship-yale>

## Chicago Sister Cities International Hosted First Annual Reception

Membership event celebrated citizen diplomacy and highlighted upcoming 2017 programming

By Jessica Wiltse



Vilnius-Chicago Sister Cities Committee with Consul General Marijus Gudynas.

Chicago Sister Cities International (CSCI) and World Business Chicago (WBC) hosted their first annual reception, Celebrating Citizen Diplomacy, on Thursday, April 6 at the Chicago History Museum. The reception recognized the impact of more than 600 volunteers and citizen diplomats who work tirelessly to promote global peace and understanding.

More than 200 guests attended the annual event including Chicago's international community leaders, business executives, members of the Chicago Consular Corps and City of Chicago officials. The event speakers included City of Chicago Deputy Mayor Steve Koch, CSCI Chairman Samuel C. Scott III and CSCI Executive Director Leroy Allala.

"We are proud to honor the citizens who promote Chicago as a global city and work to spread global understanding through public diplomacy," said Samuel C. Scott III, the Chairman of CSCI's Advisory Board. "It's people from all around the world who have made Chicago their home, that contribute to our communities and continue to make Chicago a place that thrives."

The reception previewed 2017 programming that will advance CSCI's mission to promote Chicago as a global city, develop international partnerships and share best practices through citizen-to-citizen connections. Some of these include: second annual Global Youth Ambassadors Leadership Summit, a week-long education program for adolescent girls to help grow a new generation of global leaders; Chicago Riverwalk series, a new program in July and August highlighting our sister cities through entertainment, food and drink; Chicago Consular Corps Gala, honoring the over 80 consuls general in Chicago; and more.

"CSCI is committed to providing innovative programming that fulfills our mission of connecting people around the world to better understand each other," said Leroy Allala, CSCI Executive Director. "Our first annual reception celebrated citizen diplomacy and the importance of Chicago's sister cities, especially the eight anniversary cities, with whom we have worked so hard to build strong ties. We look forward to this exciting year of great programming and great partnerships."

Chicago Sister Cities International (CSCI), a division of World Business Chicago (WBC), provides leadership to develop, manage and coordinate comprehensive programs with Chicago's 28 sister cities in the areas of cultural arts and tourism, global education, government relations and international business. CSCI expands Chicago's global reach for the benefit of the City of Chicago, its residents and businesses. [www.chicagosistercities.com](http://www.chicagosistercities.com)

Chicago's 28 sister cities include: Accra, Ghana (1989); Amman, Jordan (2004); Athens, Greece (1997); Belgrade, Serbia (2005); Birmingham, United Kingdom (1993); Bogota, Colombia (2009); Busan, Republic of Korea (2007); Casablanca, Morocco (1982); Delhi, India (2001); Durban, South Africa (1997); Galway, Ireland (1997); Gothenburg, Sweden (1987); Hamburg, Germany (1994); Kyiv, Ukraine (1991); Lahore, Pakistan (2007); Lucerne, Switzerland (1998); Mexico City, Mexico (1991); Milan, Italy (1973); Moscow, Russia (1997); Osaka, Japan (1973); Paris, France (1996); Petach Tikva, Israel (1994); Prague, Czech Republic (1990); Shanghai, China (1985); Shenyang, China (1985); Toronto, Canada (1991); Vilnius, Lithuania (1993); and Warsaw, Poland (1960).

Vilnius is Chicago's Sister City Since 1993. Mayor Richard M. Daley and the Honorable Vytautas Jasulaitis, Mayor of Vilnius, signed a friendship city agreement at the Chicago Cultural Center in July of 1993. Mr. Stanley Balzekas, founder and director of the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, was named Chair of the Chicago-Vilnius Sister City Committee.

For the past year, the Vilnius-Chicago Sister Cities Committee's activities were as follows: On March 16, 2016, the Vilnius Committee of Chicago Sister Cities International and the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture hosted a Traditional Lithuanian Easter Egg Decorating Workshop to learn the ancient art of decorating eggs using the etching technique; on March 21, 2016, the Committee sponsored a post-screening reception with Lithuanian food and drink after the Lithuanian film Land of Songs during the 19th Chicago European Union Film Festival, of which CSCI is a sponsor; on May 14, 2016 the Chicago Sister Cities International hosted a Eurovision Song Contest viewing party at Old Crow Smokehouse. Since 1956, the Eurovision Song Contest has been one of Europe's most popular television programs and one of television's longest running music shows. Over 200 people came to cheer on their country.



Deputy Mayor Steve Koch addresses the 2017 Chicago Sister Cities International Membership Reception.



Shannon Rovers Irish Pipe Band performs at the CSCI Annual Membership Reception.



Chicago Sister Cities International Chairman Sam Scott addresses the 2017 Annual Membership Reception.

## Folk Art Creations to Adorn Easter

By Odeta Brazeniene



Odeta Tumėnaitė Bražėnienė teaches paper cutting at the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture in Chicago.

In April of 2017, a folk artist from Lithuania, Odeta Tumėnaitė Bražėnienė, visited the Lithuanian American communities presenting her paper cut art and decorated Easter eggs. She had several workshops in which she taught paper cutting and egg decorating.



### Security

... Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius visited the U.S. and met with Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Bob Corker (R,TN), Speaker of the House of Representatives, Paul Ryan (R,WI), the Secretary of Commerce, Louis W. Rosi, Jr. and the National Security Advisor, Herbert McMaster. In Chicago he visited a Lithuanian school, the Vydunas Youth Foundation and recorded a 15 minute interview with WBEZ 91.5 on March 24.

... In September 2017 Russia and Belarus will have joint military exercises called Zapad (West) 2017 which are estimated to involve 90,000 troops, 2000 pieces of hardware and approximately 25 Russian aircraft. Preliminary staging has already begun: railways have been alerted; paratrooper aircraft readied; ground transports and fuel supplies are stockpiled and reserve units have been called up. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko invited NATO observers to the maneuvers. It remains to be seen if this invitation will be withdrawn because of recent protests in Minsk and the arrest of 400 that were blamed on armed militants that Lukashenko claims were trained in Belarus, Ukraine and "most likely" Lithuania and Poland. The unrest in Belarus is caused by an "unemployment tax" to fine those who have not paid income tax covering at least 183 days of employment per year. If a person does not meet certain exemptions, a fine of \$250 is imposed which is followed by more fines, jail and community service. The tax is reminiscent of the "parasite" tax of Soviet times. The Russian and Belarus economies are closely tied together and linked to the price of oil and have been in recession since 2015.

... For the first time in 20 years Sweden has held war games in response to Russia's actions, election interference and fake news. One concern is Russia stirring up Russians living in the countries that border Russia much like its support of separatist living in the eastern part of Ukraine. Sweden, which is not a member of NATO, is reinstating the draft of possibly 4,000 and increased its defense spending 11% last year. The 4,000 nineteen year olds will be drawn from the 13,000 males and females born in 1999. The period of service is 9-12 months. The Times of London also reports that Sweden has placed troops on Gotland Island in the Baltic. Gotland has a population of about 57,000 and is 1,156 sq. miles (about the size of Long Island) and is 81 miles west of Latvia.

### Politics

... The Deputy Speaker of the Seimas, Mindaugas Bastys, has resigned since he was denied top security clearance because of his ties with a former KGB spy. The security service also cited his relationship to the Kremlin controlled energy company, Rosatom, which is building a nuclear power plant in Belarus despite Lithuania objections over safety concerns. He has also been linked to Gazprom, the Russian gas monopoly and to the Russian state television. He is facing impeachment proceedings to remove him from the Seimas.

... In another Seimas related issue, Rolandas Paksas desires to run for the Seimas with the backing of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). He had been President and Prime Minister of Lithuania but was impeached in 2004 for helping a Russian campaign contributor obtain Lithuanian citizenship and barred from seeking the presidency for five years. He appealed his barring and on retrial the Constitutional Court of Lithuania held that anyone who had violated the constitution could never again hold public office that required an oath. In 2011 the ECHR ruled that this lifetime ban was excessive and is considering penalizing Lithuania for inaction on reducing this ban. The Seimas is considering an amendment to reduce the lifetime ban to 10 years. If the amendment passes his ban would have expired in 2014.

### Business

... Harbortouch- an Allentown, PA based market leader in point of sale (POS) payment systems will establish its first non-US facility in Lithuania where it is expected to employ 60 IT specialists in product development. The touch screen displays are used in retail, bar, restaurant and spa facilities and process cash, credit, debit, and gift card payments. Founded in 1999 as "United Bank Card, Inc." it currently employs 400 and has 300,000 customers. It currently processes \$12 billion in transactions. Recently it partnered with Ron Taffer of "Bar Rescue" to develop a "smart" POS system which likely will be one of the new IT projects.

... AF, the Swedish engineering consulting firm, is working with a joint venture between Fortum and Lithuania Energy to build a cogeneration facility in Kaunas. This facility will annually use 200,000 tons of municipal waste to provide 70 MW or 40% of the heating needs of Kaunas while generating about 24 MW of electricity. Construction will start in autumn 2017 and be completed in 2020 after an investment of 160 million euros. AF has 8,500 employees and current projects in 100 countries.

... Dutch grower Harm Valckx is planting 20 hectares of blueberries in Lithuania with a possibility of expanding to 80. Lithuania is at the northern limit for growing but the Dutch feel that their techniques will enable them to provide fresh blueberries to Europe during September when the European supply is diminished and the South American quality is unsatisfactory. With blueberries considered a super healthy fruit, consumption has increased 20-30% per year and is 600 grams per capita in the UK and 1100 grams per capita in the US.

... Lithuania was the official guest country at the Leipzig Book Fair in late March. Whereas usually only 2-4 Lithuania books are annually translated into German, this year 26 books were translated. Because of limited demand (an average print run is about 1,300) most Lithuanian authors have second and third jobs to support themselves.

... Lithuania's Foreign Development Agency, Invest Lithuania, has appointed Gediminas Koryzna head of the Investment Promotions Department. His previous experience at I.L. was as a senior investment advisor and eventually head of the team responsible for investment in the manufacturing sector. Lithuania is now ranked 4th worldwide as a "high growth location" with companies such as Schmitz Cargobull, Mars, and Pleiko. Prior to joining I.L., he was an advisor at Earnst & Young and a project manager at EPS LT, a financial technology firm. Mr. Koryzna has a Bachelor's degree in Management from Vilnius University and Masters in Marketing, Globalization and Communications from the University of Southern Denmark.

**General**

... Emigration continues to be a problem in Lithuania. In 2015 an estimated 40,000 left; in 2016 an estimated 50,000 departed for various reasons but mainly economic. The Kaunas University of Technology interdisciplinary migration study group traces four recent waves of exit beginning with Lithuanian independence (~1991) when borders opened. The second wave occurred when Lithuania joined the EU (~2004) and a third wave occurred with the open passport policy of the Schengen Area and the (~2008) global economic recession. The latest wave (~2015) follows the conversion to the euro and increased local prices and search for higher wages, greater professional development and a more tolerant society. Unlike earlier waves the latest wave has seen more men than women leave. The reinstitution of the draft may be a driving force. On a positive side Lithuanian women are having more children and Vilnius has recently implemented a 100 euro monthly stipend to pay for kindergarten. Improvements in medical care are projected to increase life expectancy and to stabilize the population.

... With pharmaceutical prices in Lithuania being substantially higher than Poland, there are substantial cross boarder purchases. The disparity is cause in part because of the difference in size of the market with Poland having roughly ten times the population of Lithuania and the substantial cost of government approval and licenses to market. A third factor in the cost structure is that the Value Added Tax on medicine is 8% in Poland versus 21% in Lithuania. One strategy that Lithuania is testing is to jointly purchase drugs with another country; e.g. Lithuania has solicited bids to purchase over 300,000 doses of pneumococcal vaccine to be shared with Latvia.

... During repair work on the Gediminas Hill which was damaged by landslides in 2016, workers uncovered 4 skeletons which could be some of the 21 Lithuanian, Polish and Belarusians insurgents that were executed by the Russians in 1863 in central Vilnius. At that time the Hill was a military fortress under control of the Russian empire after the annexation of the Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth in 1795. The investigation continues. The Lithuanian National Museum anticipates that the Hill and Castle Tower will reopen in April.

... The 22nd Annual Vilnius International Film Festival runs March 23-April 6 with the presentation of over 200 films with accompanying special events and workshops. The festival's website, www.kinopavasaris.lt can be followed for future events.

... This year's Eurovision song contest will take place in Kiev, Ukraine during May 9-13. Lithuania will be represented by the Band Fused-marc with its song "Rain of Revolution". Ukraine has banned Russia's representative, Julia Samoilova, because she traveled directly from Russia to Crimea in 2015 after it was annexed by Russia. They would not have banned her if she had traveled from Ukraine to Crimea.

**ONGOING**

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

**MAY 2017**

May 13, 6 p.m.  
**"Grandis" Annual Concert**  
 Pasaulio Lietuvių Centras in Lemont, IL  
 Info: grandis.vadovai@gmail.com

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

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

May 21, 1 p.m.  
**Farewell Reception for Consul General Marijus Gudynas**  
 Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture  
 Info: info@balzekasmuseum.org or 773-582-6500

**JUNE 2017**

June 3, 6 p.m.  
**Kestutis Nakas will present his book When Lithuania Ruled the World**  
 Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture  
 Info: info@balzekasmuseum.org or 773-582-6500

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

**AUGUST 2017**

August 12-19  
**"Third Week" Youth Camp in English, 12-16 Years Old**  
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.

August 5-11, 2017  
**Ateitis Annual Lithuanian Cultural Week**  
 Franciscan Guest House, 26 Beach Ave., Kennebunk, Maine  
 Concert and lecture series with accommodations available.  
 Info: 207-967-4865

August 20-27  
**Meno8Dienos Adult Art Camp in Lithuanian**  
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
 Info: neringa.org

**SEPTEMBER 2017**

September 16, 1-3 p.m.  
**Amber Roots Heritage Club**  
 Lithuanian Music Hall, 2715 E. Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia  
 Everyone welcome. Use side entrance on Tilton Street.  
 Bring a dish to share.  
 Info: milliemarks@aol.com

**OCTOBER 2017**

October 6-8  
**Iskyla/Walk-a-Thon**  
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
 Info: neringa.org

October 21, 1-3 p.m.  
**Amber Roots Heritage Club**  
 Lithuanian Music Hall, 2715 E. Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia  
 Everyone welcome. Use side entrance on Tilton Street.  
 Bring a dish to share.  
 Info: milliemarks@aol.com

**NOVEMBER 2017**

November 18, 1-3 p.m.  
**Amber Roots Heritage Club**  
 Lithuanian Music Hall, 2715 E. Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia  
 Everyone welcome. Use side entrance on Tilton Street.  
 Bring a dish to share.  
 Info: milliemarks@aol.com

**DECEMBER 2017**

December 9, 1-3 p.m.  
**Amber Roots Heritage Club Kučios**  
 Lithuanian Music Hall, 2715 E. Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia  
 Everyone welcome. Use side entrance on Tilton Street.  
 Bring a dish to share.  
 Info: milliemarks@aol.com

**GOT EVENTS?**

Let us help you spread the word! Please send your event notice to kariledalia@yahoo.com two months in advance of the month in which you would like to see it listed.



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