

bridges



LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

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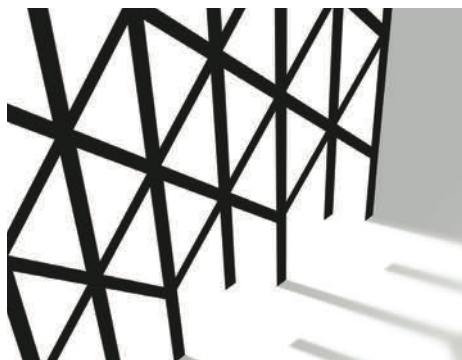
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EDITOR
Karilė Vaitkutė

ART DIRECTOR
Daniel P. Craig, Jr.

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR, FOOD
Jana Sirusaitė-Motivans

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR, CURRENT EVENTS
Alan J. Stankus, P.E. (ret)

ADVERTISING & SUBSCRIPTIONS MANAGER
Laura Vidžiūnaitė

Editorial Office

139 Willow Blvd., Willow Springs, IL 60480
kariledalia@yahoo.com

Subscriber Services and Advertising
spauda@javlb.org

Facebook

[facebook.com/
BridgesLithuanianAmericanMagazine](https://facebook.com/BridgesLithuanianAmericanMagazine)



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LAC, INC. NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD
43 Anthony Street, New Haven, CT 06515
Phone: 203-415-7776, Fax: 703-773-1257
admin@lithuanian-american.org

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from the editor

Dear readers,

The front and back covers of this issue of Bridges have photos of Easter eggs and spring flowers blooming in the woods of Illinois. I would like to share some reminiscences I have from my childhood that are related to Easter and spring. I grew up in Lithuania and Easter eggs, as well as those tiny violet flowers, were the two sure signs telling me that spring once again was coming. I spent a lot of time with my grandparents who lived in Kaunas. I remember how a week or so before Easter my grandmother would go to the main market in Kaunas and would buy a dozen or so little glass bottles with colorful dyes in them. I don't know what the dyes were made of but they resembled nail polish. We would take wooden matches, wrap some cotton around their heads, dip them in those dyes and decorate our eggs. I think that decorating Easter eggs in this particular way must have been fashionable in the city at the time I was growing up. To tell the truth, I did not like the "finished product" that much. The other way of decorating the eggs seemed to be much more fascinating. It was also done by my grandmother with me mostly watching. She would take onion skins and wrap around an egg. In between the skins, she would sprinkle some dry fabric dye of different colors. Then she would put the egg in a nylon stocking and knit a knot so that the egg would not move inside the stocking. Then she would proceed to the next egg. This way she would make a "necklace" of eggs ready to be boiled. And then the most magical time for me would come: grandmother would take the boiled eggs out of the water, cut the stocking and take the dyed eggs out. I would watch different shapes and colors on dyed eggs in amazement. It was like a miracle to me, a real joy that every spring and every Easter brought.

Another traditional thing to do in spring in Lithuania was to go into the woods and pick žibuoklės or žibutės. Those little violet flowers (their English names - liverwort, kidneywort or pennywort - do not sound romantic at all) were the most beautiful things you could find after a long, harsh colorless winter. I remember even skipping school on some Saturdays in order to go pick those beautiful flowers. When I first came to the United States I could not believe that the tradition of žibutės-picking would have to be cut short as there are no žibutės in Illinois. After many years living a life deprived of žibuoklės, once, quite accidentally, walking in a forest preserve I stumbled upon žibutės. I was mesmerized. The color of the petals was not as intensely violet, it was diluted but they were still žibutės! The tradition of the early spring flower-picking came alive, and I felt as if I received part of my childhood back. It was a gift. I hope that every spring brings you a gift of joy, hope, and happiness as well.

Happy Easter! Happy Spring!

Sincerely,

Karilė Vaitkutė
Editor

Representing Lithuania in the United States of America



Interview with Ingrida Bublys,
Honorary Consul in Cleveland, Ohio

By Karilė Vaitkutė

Honorary Consul of Lithuania Ingrida Bublys.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts with our readers. I would like to start by asking about the history of your family. When did you and parents come to the United States and what were the circumstances of their immigration?

I came to the USA with my parents and sisters in 1950. The circumstances of immigration were to escape the possibility of being captured by the Soviets and then exiled to Siberia.

Did your parents tell you about Lithuania when you were a small child? If yes, what did they tell about Lithuania? What did they tell about your ancestors' home?

Of course, our parents shared information about Lithuania. Even while in a displaced persons camp we went to elementary school and learned everything in Lithuanian, history, and culture. We sang Lithuanian songs and danced traditional dances. Later all that was continued when we came to the USA through the Lithuanian parish. We continued Saturday schools, folk dance groups, ensembles, Scouts, Ateitininkai as well as youth camps.



Ingrida with her parents, Henrikas and Stefanija Stasas in DP camp in Depholtz, Germany. Ingrida's sister Teresė is pictured first from the right, and her sister Matilda is in the buggy.



Ingrida Bublys with her husband Romas and children: Tauras, Vija, Aida, Rama, and Gaja.

Did you visit Lithuania when it was still under the Soviets? If so, what are your most prominent reminiscences of those times?

Yes, I did visit Lithuania in the last years of Soviet occupation. The first time I went with my mother in law. That year I chaired the Lithuanian Culture Board for the Lithuanian American Community of USA. I still remember how I was followed everywhere. Though given permission to go to Šiauliai, my birthplace, and visit my mother's parents' graves as well as Kryžių kalnas (The Hill of Crosses). That was a special privilege granted to me.

What was your road to becoming an honorary consul?

I was the first Honorary Consul for Lithuania granted that honor in the USA when Lithuania became a free country. It was probably because my many years of active involvement in the Lithuanian community not only locally but also nationally as well as government and business contacts not only in Ohio but also in other states.

What are the goals that you seek in your work?

The goal is to represent Lithuania through my business and government contacts in the States of Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky, to participate in various organizations where opportunities exist to speak about Lithuania, to attract business and investment to Lithuania, as well as to promote tourism, and to create bilateral cooperation in spheres of education, science, and culture.



Honorary Consul Ingrida Bublys raising the Lithuanian flag in Columbus, Ohio in front of the Capitol on February 16.

What were your major achievements during the years of your service as an honorary consul?

Not to brag, but many. I initiated various memorandums of cooperation with ministries and universities between Lithuania and USA. I was instrumental in saving the Lithuanian Trade Center "Litexpo" so it would remain a business card for Lithuania. I organized IT video conferences with Lithuanian and the US IT companies. I assisted Lithuanian companies to enter the USA market. I was instrumental in bringing cultural groups to the US.

What would be your advice to Lithuanian citizens all over the world who want to help Lithuania be successful in the world? What are the major challenges and problems in Lithuania that you see?

We in the USA have various contacts that could be beneficial for Lithuanians in various industries. The challenges in Lithuania are the same as in every country. Thus we have to remember that Lithuania is a young country and still has some hoops to jump over. Lithuania today needs more investments to create jobs and positive attitudes of Lithuanians all over the world.

What is your advice for the young generation of Lithuanians and Lithuanian Americans as far as the relationship with Lithuania?

They should be proud of their Lithuanian heritage, visit Lithuania, and get to know Lithuania better. If opportunity lends itself, they have to contribute with their talent and financial support.



Honorary Consuls in Lithuania after a meeting with President Dalia Grybauskaitė. Igrida Bublys is third from left.



Honorary Consul Ingrida Bublys with Congressman John Shimkus and Michael Dreutzler.



Honorary Consul Ingrida Bublys with Zbigniew Brzezinski, a Polish-American diplomat and political scientist who served as a counselor to President Lyndon B. Johnson from 1966 to 1968 and was President Jimmy Carter's National Security Advisor from 1977 to 1981.



Honorary Consul Ingrida Bublys receiving Lithuanian Business Confederation Award, 2013, Vilnius, Lithuania. From left: President of the Business Confederation Valdas Sutkus and Prime Minister of Lithuania Algirdas Butkevicius.



White Shroud

Antanas Škėma
translated by **Karla Gruodis**



White Shroud (Balta drobulė, 1958) is considered by many as the most important work of modernist fiction in Lithuanian. Drawing heavily on the author's own refugee and immigrant experience, this psychological, stream-of-consciousness work tells the story of an émigré poet working as an elevator operator in a large New York hotel during the mid-1950s. Using multiple narrative voices and streams, the novel moves through sharply contrasting settings and stages in the narrator's life in Lithuania before and during World War II, returning always to New York and the recent immigrant's struggle to adapt to a completely different, and indifferent, modern world. Strong characters and evocative utterances convey how historical context shapes language and consciousness, breaking down any stable sense of self.

As in other major modernist works, Škėma uses language and allusion to destabilize. Narrative, voice and language shift continuously, capturing the anti-hero's psychological and cultural disorientation — the complexity of experience in a modern world where, in Yeats' words, "the centre cannot hold." Like the author's, Garšva's frame of reference is vast — quotes from French arias, Kafka and American culture collide with visceral memories of archaic Lithuanian folk song. Garšva's use of poignant and comical émigré slang in his interactions captures the ironies and absurdities of the immigrant's situation. By the end of the novel, further grammatical and linguistic disarray mirrors the final unraveling of Garšva's mind as he descends into madness.

Like all powerful fiction, this novel draws the reader into an intimate, culturally and historically specific world to explore universal human themes of selfhood, alienation, creativity and cultural difference. This English translation promises to appeal to various audiences: readers of modernist and world literature, scholars of Baltic literature and refugee studies, and members of the Lithuanian diaspora unable to access this novel in Lithuanian. Written from the perspective of a newcomer to an Anglophone country, White Shroud encourages readers to better understand the complexities of immigrant life.

Extract from Chapter 12

“From Antanas Garšva’s Notebooks I was twenty-one, living in Kaunas, studying literature, making some extra money playing billiards.

Laisvės alėja was being modernized. (1) The round cobblestones and tracks for horse-drawn trolley buses disappeared. The street was paved with big-city asphalt. The now wealthy government erected elegant almost skyscrapers. Red buses softly rocked bouncy-hipped ladies and pointy-whiskered, romantically inclined gentlemen with tailored shoulders as sharp as icebreakers. Artists just back from Paris tossed around French names at Konradas Café and spent hours drinking a single cup of coffee. (2) Bookstore windows displayed current art albums, magazines and books. The State Theatre experimented with lavish productions and announced famous touring performers every week. A jaded mulatto sashayed sexily at the Versalis Hotel and a well-known engineer overpaid for a night with her. (3) Dandies drank and boasted, wearing loud neckties for which they had also paid too much, as they had with the mulatto

Asphalt ringed the mature linden trees. The most handsome policemen in the Baltics strode down the boulevard, white-coated hot-dog vendors smoked phlegmatically, and famous opera singers paraded by as though in a scene from Othello. Numerous beer halls opened, complete with slot machines and the clamour of second-rate artists, writers, functionaries.

And amid the sparkling of the bright lights, new houses, asphalt, linden trees, policemen, hot-dog vendors and dandies, a new Juozapota, a half-mad old woman, known as Madame Kukureku, no longer paid any attention to “how many gentlefolk, how handsome they are,” but shuffled along, talking to herself. (4)

And when it got dark, and lanterns lit up the dark halos of the linden trees, groups of streetwalkers poured, like believers on a church feast day, on to the sidewalks, their teeth flashing the price of temptation. And high school students loitered on the sidewalks, greedily inspecting them. And the icebreaker-shouldered lovers, escorting their coiffured and fashionably Western mistresses or potential wives to American films, pretended not to notice them.

And a long-haired poet sauntered along the boulevard, his head thrown back as though he were trying to divine the mystery of the stars. The ends of his professional cravat waved rhythmically on his unwashed shirt front, and he had stuffed cardboard into his shoes because the soles had long since worn through. In his imagination sweep-poles rose and fell, cockerels announced the dawn, and the flowering linden trees along Laisvės alėja were as fragrant as they’d have been at the edge of a field.

I was happy that evening. A few dozen litas jangled in my pocket. (5) I had found a victim from Panevėžys and really

milked the little bald landowner – first losing, then cautiously and insecurely doing a bit better, then disastrously losing again, until, after a few successful rounds and admired by a lot of swearing bystanders, I stuffed the money into my pocket and left the bald landowner slurping his beer with trembling lips. (6)

I took a deep breath as I walked along Laisvės alėja. I had two or three days to myself, and I held my head high, savoring my success. My fingers had slithered along the green baize, my eyes measured the distances accurately, my cue had struck with precision, and impossible shots dropped into the pockets.

Suddenly I felt something new. A faint tremor rolled in waves down my spine. I felt dizzy. A strange thought crossed my mind – “Am I changing?” I paused by the cinema. “Is Laisvės alėja changing?” I leaned against the glass. The waves were still rolling down my back. “I must be tired from playing,” I thought to myself, and then noticed Ženia. Small, clean, conscientious, a cheerful little tramp on a workday. I grabbed her by the arm and pulled her into the shadows of an alleyway.

“So you won today?” she asked probingly.

“I won,” I replied.

“Do you want me?” Ženia asked further. I didn’t reply.

“I think that first of all you need a drink,” Ženia decided.

“You’re right. Wait here. I’ll run into the store. Tonight we’ll drink red krupnikas. (7)

“I like you. And not just for the red krupnikas, as you know,” said Ženia frankly.

“You’re unpretentious, and you don’t swear when you’re drunk. You’ll be my first today. I’ll make you happy, honey.”

I fished in my pocket and pulled out a two-litas coin.

“Take it, in case I forget. I’ve owed you for two weeks. Thanks.”

Ženia tossed the coin into her purse.

“No problem, honey. I’ll always lend you some if you need it.” She spoke these words in a warm, familiar way, and I ran my fingers through her fluffy hair.

I was back on Laisvės alėja. The strange new feeling had passed. I went into a grocery store and purchased vodka, krupnikas, cigarettes, sprats, ham, butter, bread and chocolate.

I remember that night. The fragrant linden trees, my light steps, Ženia’s hand which I clasped like a fiancée’s, the slim museum tower, the sky, the moon, the stars, my neighborhood Žaliakalnis, and the key with which I unlocked the door. I made love to Ženia, and that night I loved Ženia fleetingly. This contradiction didn’t bother me. I had moved to another room and was lying to Jonė: I told her I was living with a respectable family and couldn’t invite her over. We would make love in the countryside or my friend’s room. I deceived Jonė because I was young, strong and confident. I was alive. I was sincerely happy. It wasn’t the ecstasy I had experienced in Palanga – that had been diluted with a heavy dose of acting. This was youth. And tonight – in the company of the hustler Ženia.

I woke at ten the next morning. Ženia had left. She was good about leaving in time. A blend of odors hung in the room: alcohol, leftover food, exhaled breath. I stretched my limbs in bed.

The slight pungency of copulation. I jumped up and opened the window. The sweet smell of the linden trees floated through the room and washed away the night. I grabbed a chair and pulled myself up. My wrists were shaking slightly. "Everything's fine," I thought to myself. I tidied up, shaved, bathed, put on a light grey suit and went out into the street.

I have trouble recalling the final steps. I once again sensed that the world was shifting. First I was overwhelmed by details: the dirty handle of the funicular car, the woman seated facing me, something in the corner of her mouth – a breadcrumb, here a single linden blossomed alone among thousands, a bus trundling along with a piece of newspaper stuck to one of its tires, and that man used black polish on yellow shoes. And it felt strange that I had locked my room, that the key was in my pocket, that I had got into and out of the funicular. And that those several minutes were no more than the sudden burst of a passing instant.

I was standing on *Laisvės alėja* by the window of the *Maistas* grocery store.

Zoori! Give me zoori! My wallet is full, I'm nicely dressed, shop girls smile at stylish young men like me. It's a beautiful day. I'll buy myself a book. I'll crack it open in the park and then continue to get to know it in my room. Today's lectures are in the afternoon, and I don't need to play pool tonight. I'll go to the cinema with Jonė. A few more steps to the bookstore. It's right there.

Zoori! Is this the world – is this what they call the Earth? This polished glass? These houses, trees, the *Soboras*, the policemen, the people, are they all real? (8)

I let out a muted cry. The short sound escaped and passers-by might have thought that a young man was belching after a big night. I clenched my fists, my teeth. I could feel my facial muscles twitching. I wanted to raise my arms and scream from the bottom of my lungs. To break back into the old world.

But I was leaning against the *Maistas* storefront. I could see my face in the glass. Its vague contours, grayish color, mechanical twitching. Is this what it was like a million years ago? The sea murmurs, giant turtles crawl, my sharp nails scratch at the damp sand. An awareness of what death will be like: death is only a door to an even more horrifying world. Where there is no more body, only nightmares created on Earth live there.

Zoori! Zoori, rescue me! I almost ran along *Laisvės alėja*, passing pedestrians, shoving them without apology. Zoori, zoori, the word penetrated me. Fine metal arrows whizzed in my ears. They chased me. Go, go. Details flew past me, important as in a dream. A girl's blue eyes, a stuffed briefcase. Both the eyes and the briefcase frightened me. As though I had seen ghosts I would be forced to live with forever.

The psychiatrist was the most famous one in Kaunas. I sat before him in a leather armchair. I was questioned, tapped, poked. I awaited his verdict. The psychiatrist's Jewish face exuded a mysterious foreignness. He twirled his pen and had yet to write out a prescription. This pause was filled with sounds

from beyond the window: car horns, pedestrians shouting, a factory whistle travelling all the way from *Aleksotas*. (9) "The overture," I thought to myself. I shifted in the armchair.

"Do you still feel unwell?"

"Something keeps squeezing my throat, then releasing it."

"It will soon pass. The medication has not yet taken full effect."

The psychiatrist tapped his pen on the table.

"I imagine you would like to hear my diagnosis?"

"Yes."

"It is not as terrible as you imagine. We are no longer in Ibsen's times, and something you have inherited needn't destroy you. Of course, you will have to live moderately, I must emphasize that, but I do not believe that you will lose your mind or die. You are a neurasthenic."

"Will I recover?"

The pen rested quietly in his fingers.

"It's difficult to say. I'm not a practitioner of rose-coloured diagnostics. But we'll try. What you've told me leads me to speak openly. Your disease is not yet fully understood. You know, the nervous system – these are labyrinths in which we are still quite lost."

He mumbled something in Latin that I didn't understand. Then he said, "You die and are risen again from the dead."

The psychiatrist grinned, probably pleased with his clever description of the disease.

"A passing nightmare," he added. And began to write out the prescription. The music from beyond the window continued to play. The now quiet whistle from the factory in *Aleksotas* still buzzed in my ears. Two men stopped outside the window.

"You're wrong – *Banaitis* is no good."

"I don't believe it. Yesterday he..."

The psychiatrist closed the window and I missed the rest of the conversation. I put two banknotes on the table.

"I want to get married," I blurted out.

"I would not advise it. You'll be a burden on your wife. If you need a woman..." and he grinned, like before.

"I understand, Professor. Thank you and goodbye."

"Come back in a month. Goodbye."

I went back out on to the street. I held the verdict in my hand. A white prescription. I studied the words. Some kind of bromide. The injection was working. I felt sleepily calm. Objects and people no longer frightened me. At the drugstore I received a red-capped bottle. I had lunch at the fancy *Metropolis* restaurant. And, when I returned home, I slept the kind of sleep that is free of dreams.

When I woke up it was evening. My date with Jonė was in half an hour. I felt oppressed by the scent of the linden trees, the lights starting to flicker on the slope of *Aleksotas*, the cool evening air, the muffled rattling on the streets, my stiff muscles, Jonė's kind eyes, those fateful words: "I will marry you."

I shouted out louder than I had earlier in the day by the *Mais-tas* store. I slammed the window shut. I took the bromide. I

moaned into my clenched fists in the twilight. Until the sedative washed over me.

...Now she's walking, stopping by the post office, glancing at the arms of the clock. Two minutes past nine. He's a little late, she thinks to herself, finds a shoe store, takes a look at the latest style from Switzerland. Fifteen minutes past nine. Jonė walks slowly, every man is the one she is waiting for. Twenty minutes past nine. Maybe he's sick, she would go and visit him but doesn't know his address. Exactly half an hour. Jonė goes home...

It's over, Antanas Garšva. You'll sleep with Žėnia or some other one, when you need a woman. You'll play much more pool. You'll sit in bars with talkative friends. You'll study literature more seriously. Of course, if you start thinking, "I can't live like this," you could kill yourself. But... you have a strong will to live, toned muscles, a healthy heart, clean lungs, good digestion. It's over, so start again, Antanas Garšva.

I was sentimental that evening. I felt sorry for myself. And I wrote Jonė a letter. I wanted to break up because I was bored to death with her.

A few weeks passed and I wrote a poem. It was my twentieth or so, and I timidly went to Konradas Cafė, where I hoped to meet a critic I knew. The critic was sitting by himself in a corner of the cafė, reading a French newspaper. We had met at Versalis and I had once asked him to take a look at my poems. When he gave them back to me I had detected an ironic sympathy in his expression. The critic was bent from consumption, wore spectacles, reddish shadows stretched across his grey face. That time he had said, "You want to be a poet?"

"I do," I replied.

"None of this is yours. You're searching for a 'classical' image, meter, rhyme. It's artificial, young man. You're different. I wouldn't recommend this rubbish to any serious magazine."

He noticed my disappointment. "I'm not saying that you can't write. Try. But... don't depend merely on technique. Poetry is a demanding mistress. She despises con men and impotents. You're probably good at billiards, right?"

"Quite good," I boasted.

"That's what I thought after reading these," and the critic handed back the sheaf of papers.

Today I approached him quietly. I pulled up a chair, the critic stirred, the glass of his spectacles flashed, and he put his newspaper on the little table.

"Sit down."

I sat down, crumpling the single poem in my pocket. His glasses were searchlights pointing at the hand in my pocket.

"You've done some more writing?"

I pulled out the sheet of paper.

"Only one?" he said in feigned surprise. He took the sheet, carefully straightened it out, and started to read. He read much longer than I had expected, as the poem wasn't very long. And, when he had finished, he asked me in a warm, pleasant voice, "What is the matter with you? Are you ill?"

I felt my lips tremble, tears gather in my eyes. "An incurable disease," I replied. "It's not a bad poem," said the critic. "I'll try to get it published."



Antanas Škėma.

(1) Laisvės alėja or Freedom Avenue: a 1700-metre pedestrian boulevard running through the centre of Kaunas, from the Old Town to the Church of Saint Michael the Archangel (popularly called the "Soboras", a variation on "Sobor," the Russian word for a Russian cathedral. The large, square neo-Byzantine church was built as a Russian Orthodox garrison church in 1895, when Kaunas was still part of the Russian Empire.). With two rows of linden trees, planters and benches, and many shops and restaurants, it was the social and business hub of the city during the interwar period, when it was also Lithuania's temporary capital while Vilnius was occupied by Poland.

(2) Konradas Cafė: an interwar artists' cafe on Laisvės alėja.

(3) Versalis Hotel: a posh interwar hotel and restaurant on Laisvės alėja

(4) Juozapota: a character in A Sad Story, a novella by Jonas Biliūnas (1879–1907).

(5) Litas: the Lithuanian currency during the interwar period of independence

(6) Panevėžys: the fifth largest city in Lithuania.

(7) Krupnikas: a spiced Lithuanian honey liqueur.

(8) See note (1)

(9) A suburb of Kaunas on the left bank of the Nemunas, across from the city centre.



Will the Hill of Owls Be Restored to Its Pre-War Glory?

Interview with Modestas Mastavičius, Head of the Hill of Owls (Pelėdų kalnas) project in Lithuania
By Karilė Vaitkutė

What is the Hill of Owls?

During the third decade of the 20th century, the Hill of Owls was the center of Lithuanian arts and intelligentsia. It is our wish to restore the historical importance of this area. We also want it to become the place of meetings of Lithuanian from all over the world. The hill is in the very center of Kaunas, in Žaliakalnis, at the confluence of the Neris and Nemunas. It has an amazing panoramic view of the city. Since it is located in the highest point of the city, in old times warriors used it as a place to observation of the surrounding area. In the Czarist Russia times, a battery was built on the hill. Later on, it was demolished and the bricks were used to build other buildings on the hill.

In the past, a large number of oaks grew on the hill and it was called the Hill of Oaks. Artist Vladas Didžiokas and his wife, Barbora Gorochova-Didžiokienė, painter Jonas Šileika, and

sculptor Juozas Zikaras built their homes on the picturesque oak hill. When independence was proclaimed in 1918, Lithuanians wanted to open an art school. Artist Vienožinskis was asked to find a suitable plot of land for the new school in Kaunas. It was decided that the school would be set up on the Hill of Oaks. In 1922, the school building was built according to the project drafted by architect Vladimiras Dubeneckis. This art school is still in existence today. It was the first object in Kaunas, built using the funds of an independent state. A place for the city flag was set up on the hill as well. In 1922, the members of the Constituent Seimas and President Antanas Smetona planted memorial oaks, one of which survived to this day.

The hill is famous because of the first Lithuanian School of Arts that was founded on its territory and because of the first Lithuanian museum building -- the temporary M. K. Čiurlionis Gallery -- that was opened here in 1925.



Čiurlionis Gallery.

Why is it called the Hill of Owls?

The hill received its name in 1924 after one of the most famous Lithuanian sculptors, Vincas Grybas, decorated the park's fence with spectacular owl figures. The owls were used as symbols of knowledge and wisdom.

A movie "The Hill of Owls" directed by Audrius Juzėnas was released recently. How is it related to the Hill of Owls project?

The film tells about our nation's unwavering desire for freedom and the lives of people broken by the Soviet occupation. Most of it was filmed on the Hill of Owls and its surroundings, in the very center of Kaunas, the cradle of Lithuanian intellectuals and free thinkers during the interwar period. The main characters of the film are the inhabitants of the Hill of Owls. They are the students of the Art School, their parents, and friends. The film is about one part of the history of the Hill of Owls.

Who came up with the idea to restore the Hill of Owls?

As we were preparing to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Lithuania's statehood, an idea came up to do something that would have a long-lasting value. The idea to restore the fence of the Hill of Owls and its sculptures, to explain the historical significance of the hill to the public, and to increase the popularity of the hill came to the Žaliakalnis community, the Kassel Lithuanian community in Germany, and the Kaunas College. They all started working together in order to achieve their plans.



Žikars Museum.

The Lithuanian American Community also has shown interest in supporting the project. How would the collected funds be used?

The project was presented to the LAC National Board, and due to its historic significance, considerable interest was shown. At the moment, the ways in which the US Lithuanian Community could contribute to the project and become a partner of the project are being discussed. Future funds are planned to be used for the promotion of the Hill of Owls, the restoration of the fence, and the installation of an observation deck.

What are the near future plans for the Hill of Owl project?

It is planned to have an observation deck,



Vienožinskis Art School.

a place for the representative flag of the city. The initiators of the project hope that the hill will become a place for meetings of Lithuanians who live all over the world at the time they visit Lithuania. Here they would be able to hold exhibitions, concerts, seminars, and so on. We hope that if funding is secured, in July of this year, we will have a Smetona-era party for representatives of the world's Lithuanian communities. Participants of the event would have an opportunity to immerse themselves in the authentic atmosphere of the time and experience entertainment of that age with craftsmen, tradesmen, dishes, an improvised concert of interwar stars, and a show of antique cars.

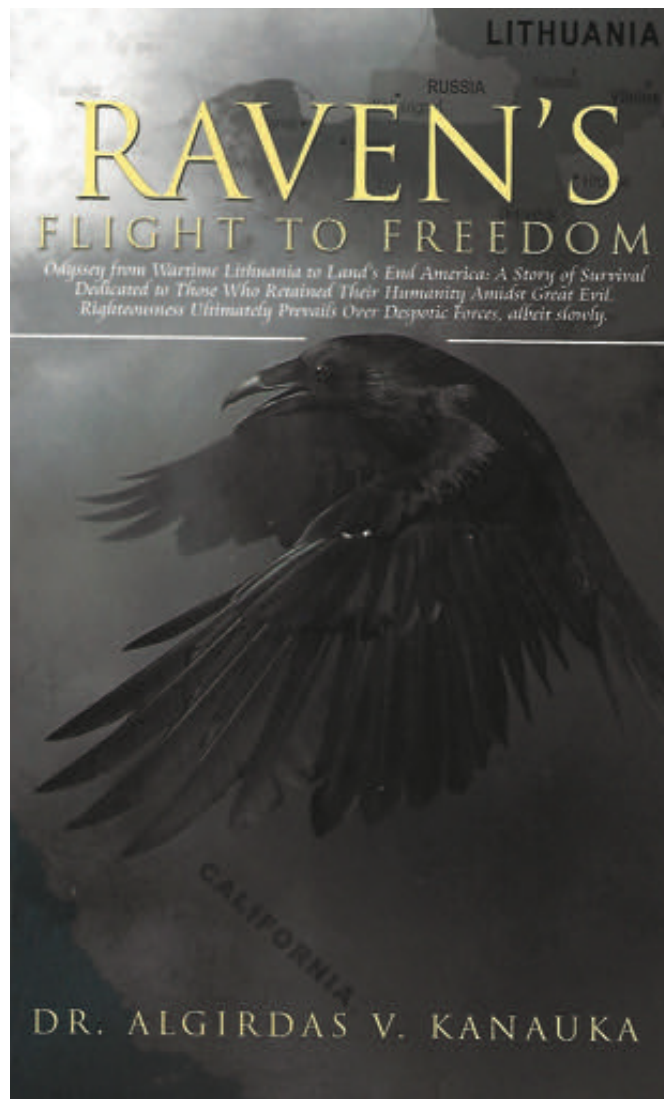


Vienožinskis Art School.

Raven with a Foreign Accent

ROMUALDAS KRIAUCIŪNAS

Dr. Algirdas V. Kanauka. *Raven's Flight to Freedom*. Xlibris, 2017. Softcover, 361 pages.



The book's subtitle: "Odyssey from Wartime Lithuania to Land's End America: A Story of Survival Dedicated to Those Who Retained Their Humanity Amidst Great Evil. Righteousness Ultimately Prevailed Over Despotism, albeit slowly". In Author's Note, he states that this book is a memoir, not a documentary. It is a collection of memories and perceptions as he remembered and interpreted them. It also includes some stories related to him and his friends and family members. "The basic theme of the book: survival or demise, depending on the humanity of those who retained it, while evil powers were on a rampage during more than half of a century".

Who is the author, identifying himself with a raven? At the end of the book is given a biographical sketch that is elaborated in the book. Algirdas Vincas Kanauka was born on March 10, 1931, in Kaunas, Lithuania. His father was a surgeon and professor. His mother was born in Riga, Latvia. During the mid-1920s, she worked in the Lithuanian embassy in Berlin. For several years he attended high school in Kaunas, and later, after WWII, graduated in the displaced persons camp in Kempton, near the Alps in Germany. He immigrated to the US in 1949 and attended Mississippi State College where he studied aeronautical engineering. In 1951 he transferred to The Citadel, Military College of South Carolina, and graduated in 1954. He sought a career in the U.S. Air Force and his first operational assignment was in Hawaii with a Weather Reconnaissance Squadron. Later he served with the Strategic Air Command and Systems Command as navigator/electronic warfare officer in B-52, B-58, and RC-135. In 1976 he retired from the Air Force with the rank of Major and worked for in private industry until the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. He frequently traveled back to Lithuania and worked there as a consultant to the General Staff of the Lithuanian Armed Forces and other entities. Academic credentials: BS in Electrical Engineering, The Citadel, 1954; MBA, University of Dayton, 1971; MS in Systems Management, University of Southern California, 1982, and Doctor of Public Administration, University of Southern California, 1988.

The book is divided into 12 chapters: Life in Lithuania before WWII; Russian and German Occupations; Leaving Lithuania; Surviving in Wartime Germany; Not All Survived; Life in the Displaced Persons Camp; Off to America; Cadet at The Citadel; Service in Cold and Hot Wars; From the Air Force to Aerospace; Paying My Debt to the Old Country; and New Ideas from Old Memories. Of course, there is also an Epilogue.

In the Foreword the author zeroes in on a guardian angel as a protector and source of good luck. He learned about it from his nanny named Barbora who, during weekdays, would take him to a private kindergarten that was quite popular in Kaunas. It was owned by the family of an artist whose last name was Varnas (meaning Raven in English). His wife Varnienė ran the place. "I mention this because ravens were symbols that had a remarkable presence in my life, and you, my dear reader, will meet them again in this 'magnum opus'" (p. XII). At this point I want to insert more information and my thoughts, bordering on mini-insights. The artist was Adomas Varnas who became famous as an artist but worked closely with his wife Marija, who in 1922 opened a Montessori-inspired kindergarten in their home on Kestutis Street in Kaunas. The Montessori method focused on

developing child's creativity, self-reliance, courage, independence, confidence and similar values. I believe that it was those values that the book's author absorbed and cultivated during the rest of his life. Amazing, and I don't think it was just a coincidence.

What is the evidence? It starts in the second paragraph in "Introduction": "Life is great for a retired warrior, which I am. I sort of see myself as a guy whose trail of war extends from the amber shores of wartime Lithuania through Western Europe, the Americas, the Far East, and finally, the Pacific Coast of California. (...) Although my behavior in retrospect appears to me as if I asked for trouble, my guardian angel shielded me with the spread of his wing, and I came through my ordeals like Odysseus on the way home to Ithaca, undefeated and never despairing. Maybe my angel was saving me for something in the distant future, but so far, no complaints" (p. XVI).

Now we come to the main course of the book – "the meat and potatoes", an autobiography of a retired warrior. It is presented in a chronological order in a very readable style, amply illustrated by dozens of photos that help to connect events and names with sites and faces. Even the print-size was reader-friendly! As I was reading it, I was unable to detach myself from my own childhood experiences in Lithuania, subsequent life in displaced persons camps in post-WWII Germany, and early years in the US. However, his early life was more exciting, more daring, more adventurous, and more focused. The Montessori influence?

In the US he entered The Citadel, a military school in South Carolina, located in Charleston. I have heard of it in passing, but now the reader is taken inside it for a grand tour. What a remarkable institution! In time, but not without bureaucratic hardship and drama, he becomes US citizen and receives a commission as Second Lieutenant in US Air Force. That's the first rung on a ladder of military progression, leading to First Lieutenant, Captain, and Major before retirement. About one hundred pages of the book are devoted to his services in Cold and Hot Wars. That's the centerpiece of his book, of his life. While his Guardian Angel kept an eye on him, he went to Hawaii, Japan, survival training, prison-like experience, etc. Finally, he joined the World's Greatest Nuclear Combat Force. You just must read it before your head gets dizzy.

After 22 years of service, he retired from the US Air Force and joined the aerospace industry for the next ten years. Professional life was not over yet, and he ended up returning to his native Lithuania as a military consultant, educator, and mentor. This section of the book was very interesting because it

revealed all kinds of interesting plans that set the tone, stage, and direction for Lithuania's subsequent military development. The last chapter reflects on the relations of Lithuanian people vis-a-vis its neighbors as well as minorities living in the country. Very convincingly he argues that the Baltic states ought to form at least a confederation for greater economic and military strength. This could be extended to include Finland and other Scandinavian countries. He also has specific observations pertaining to Poland, Russia, Latvia, Belarus, and Germany. In his discussion, he returns to the Nazi tentacles in Lithuania and the fate of Lithuanian Jews.

I saved a couple of observations about the book for the end of the review. One comment pertains to his own family. While he wrote about his parents and their parents, he was very brief about his own wife and their three children. I must take it partially back. He did include seven pages of a first-person account, told by his son Fernando (he calls him Fergy) who was flying combat as a helicopter pilot. Perhaps the guardian angel also covered him. I did not keep a tally of the number of references that he has made in his book, but two topics are worth noting. One is a frequent mention of his "foreign accent" that got unwarranted attention during his military career. Based on the stories, it was not an asset, even though his knowledge of a number of foreign languages was a plus. He accepted the reality as it was and developed a certain sense of humor about his "foreign accent". Independent of that, the other issue was a repeated mention of various celebrations involving champagne and/or cognac. Drinking, increased courage, and battles are historically intertwined but should be placed on the back-burner of memoirs of a retired warrior, a raven with an accent. Į sveikatą!

His parting words on the back cover of the book: „Finally I retired to cool my heels in the warm waters of the Pacific Rim in Southern California's Rancho Palos Verdes as a freelance writer". Yes, keep us posted!



Algirdas Vincas Kanauka.

Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture Opens a New Exhibit



Visitors at the new exhibit

On March 10, 2018, an exhibition entitled "For Freedom: Lithuanian American Support for Lithuania's Independence and Recognition" was opened at the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture.

This exhibition explores the political, financial, military, and cultural aspects of the passionate support which energized the Lithuanian Americans in the cause of independence and recognition for Lithuania. Using photographs, documents, publications, and other historical artifacts, the exhibition begins with an overview of Lithuania's fate as a subjugated part of the Russian Empire and with a brief portrayal of the Lithuanian American community. But the exhibition's central focus is the vital role played by Lithuanian Americans as their native land seized a unique and complex opportunity to end its 125 year subjugation by the Russian Empire. The exhibition demonstrates that Lithuanian Americans reveled in the achievement of independence and then continued to support and fight for the continued freedom of Lithuania throughout most of the twentieth century.

It is a story line that links Lithuanians in America with those in Lithuania itself, revealing how the unique commitment and involvement on this side of the Atlantic yielded strategies and persistent support, aiding in the restoration of Lithuania's freedom from the Soviet Union in 1990. This exhibition shows that the Lithuanian Americans never wavered in their support for freedom in their native land. Most importantly, the exhibit uses historical documents (resolutions, memoranda, correspondence, and presidential statements) to show that this century-long struggle for freedom was powered by ideas and ideals expressed in words and actions. The exhibition demonstrates that humble-looking typewritten pages and written words are dynamic artifacts, reflecting the debates, conflicts, and the eventual triumph of an unquenchable commitment to freedom.

Exhibition team: Curator: Irena Brokas Chambers; Curatorial Assistants: Rita Janz and Karile Vaitkute Design: Riggs Ward Design Research/historical and resources advisor: Stephen Goodell Research assistance: Barbara Conaty

THE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN OF LITHUANIA BEGAN TO PURSUE JUST AND NOBLE GOALS ON THE 16TH OF FEBRUARY, 1918. WE REAFFIRM OUR SUPPORT AND ADMIRATION FOR THE LITHUANIAN PEOPLE AS WE RECALL THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THAT DATE TODAY—THE 72ND ANNIVERSARY OF LITHUANIAN INDEPENDENCE.

— President George Bush’s proclamation on Lithuanian Independence Day, February 16, 1990



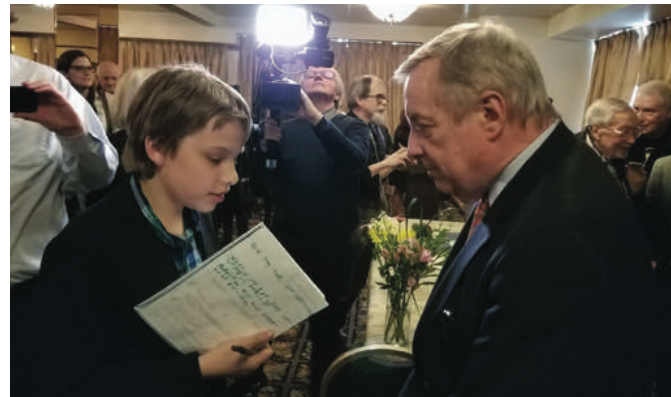
From left: Consul General of Lithuania in Chicago Mantvydas Bekešius, Museum President Stanley Balzekas, Jr., U.S. Senator from Illinois Richard Durbin, Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives Michael Madigan.



From left: exhibit designer Bob Riggs, exhibit curator assistant Karile Vaitkute, exhibit curator assistant Rita Janz, exhibit curator Irena Brokas Chambers, Senator Richard Durbin, Museum President Stanley Balzekas, Jr., Eileen Mackevich, Robert Balzekas.



Austėja Sruoga, Chair of Arts and Culture Council of the Lithuanian American Community (left) with Museum Director Rita Janz (right).



Kajus Nakas interviews Senator Durbin.



Senator Durbin gives interview to Arvydas Reneckis for the Lithuanian TV program "Pasaulio lietuvių žinios".

our community

Lithuania's independence Celebrated at the Lithuanian Consulate in Aspen



On February 25 the 100th anniversary of Lithuania's independence was celebrated at the Lithuanian consulate in Aspen, Colorado.

The Lithuanian Consulate in Aspen is the only diplomatic mission to be approved by the U.S. State Department in Aspen. Mayor pro tem Ann Mullins presented Hon. Consul Dr. John Prunskis the proclamation from the city council and mayor's office of Aspen.

Also in attendance were the Lithuanian Hon. Consul from California Daiva Navarrette and the Lithuanian Hon. Consul from Atlanta Dr. Roma Klicius, Olympic medalist Chris Klug and many other distinguished guests, friends and neighbors.

Consul Prunskis, the highest ranking European Union Diplomat on the western slope, and Mayor pro tem Mullins each said a few words regarding the friendship between Lithuania the United States and the importance of the Consulate of Lithuania in Aspen both to Aspen and to Lithuania.



Lietuva, Tėvyne Mūsų

By Evelyn Naujokas, senior at Caledonia Mumford High School



Evelyn with her grandparents in Vilnius.



Evelyn in Trakai.

Sitting in the overcrowded restaurant waiting for our food, I looked out the glass walls and noticed it was starting to rain. Everyone was talking so loudly, filling up the room with a million stories. My family sat at the table with me discussing the day we had, and I continued to stare out into the roads focusing on the mass number of Lithuanian flags that were being paraded down the street.

My grandfather grew up in Lithuania until the Second World War forced him to escape to the United States. My siblings and I lived a very cultural life from going to Lithuanian school every week and making pasta with my grandmother so going to the place where my grandfather's life began was an incredible opportunity.

Back in the restaurant with the numerous conversations going on I began to think about how a country like Lithuania has endured so much over the years and that all of these flags being carried around weren't just for show, but they were a colorful symbol of the privilege of freedom. Freedom that has been withheld from this country for years and finally restored.

Just as the sounds of people's voices grew louder there was a sudden break in the noise and the television above my head displayed the street I was looking out at except now there was a flood of people and a rainbow of yellow, green, red. Everyone got up from their seats and my family and I, being in another country and not understanding traditions, rose with them. I was confused as to what was happening until I heard "Lietuva tėvyne mūsų", the first three words of the Lithuanian national anthem, being sung by the packed restaurant and the hundreds

of people in the street. Remembering the words from my years at Lithuanian school I sang along as I looked around.

I saw my grandfather proudly standing and belting the melody out with tears in his eyes. "With truth and light guiding our steps forever". I saw children on their parents' shoulders waving flags and chanting the words. "Let the love of Lithuania burn in our hearts". I saw waiters stop in their tracks and cooks put down their utensils to sing the beautiful song. "In Lithuania's dear name, we shall stand together!"

The day we left the United States for our trip was the fourth of July. Sure there was more red, white and blue being displayed than normal, however, it was nothing compared to what I was seeing through these glass walls in this restaurant. There was so much passion being expressed in this moment, all for their country which they loved. I found myself being moved and reflecting on the United States. Where was this love in our country? Where has the pride gone? Have we forgotten the price that was paid for this freedom?

Looking around I felt as if my country was missing out on such patriotism and passion. As the song came to close strangers hugged and kissed as some had tears in their eyes and others with smiles on their faces. Taking my seat in this crowded restaurant I felt as if I had a new purpose and mission. I wanted to be a part of reintroducing this love and unity to my country. The proud people of Lithuania who waved their flags and cried out the song were my inspiration for my own homeland, the United States.

Baltic American Freedom League



CALL TO ACTION

February 22, 2018

Dear Friends and Members of BAFL,

You have always responded to our calls to defend the freedom and sovereignty of the Baltic nations. You have made enormous contributions to our effort to assure United States support for the Baltic nations. I hope you will also follow through this time as well.

Please contact your Representative to urge him or her to join the House of Representatives Baltic Caucus!

I can think of no better way to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the declaration of independence of the Baltic nations than to grow the Baltic Caucus to 100 members.

Make no mistake: Russia will continue to do all it can to weaken the freedom, sovereignty and independence of the Baltic countries. Friends and supporters in the U.S. Congress are critical.

The Purpose of Congressional Caucuses

Congressional Caucuses are formed to provide a forum for issues and legislative agendas. The Baltic Caucus is an important and practical channel through which the Baltic American community can inform the members of Congress of their concerns, request legislation and bring other matters relating to the Baltic nations to the attention of lawmakers. The advantage of a Caucus is that instead of going to each individual Representative in Congress, we can work with a group of Representatives who are interested supporters of the Baltic nations.

The more members a cause or organization has, the stronger their voice in Congress. Since its establishment the Baltic Caucus has introduced some twenty bills and resolutions directly affecting the Baltic nations and has actively endorsed, supported or opposed scores of Baltic related legislation introduced by other members of Congress.

Caucuses provide interest groups, such as BAFL and the Baltic American community, a way to get their message out to bipartisan congressional members interested and committed to their issues.

The purpose of the Baltic Caucus was founded on one single irrefutable principle: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have a fundamental right to be free, independent and sovereign.

Options and Opportunities Provided to the Baltic Community by the House Baltic Caucus:

- To work with members of Congress to propose and support or oppose issues and legislation of interest to the Baltic American community;
- To encourage and strengthen relations and cooperation of the Baltic nations with the United States in matters of trade, defense, cyberwar, terrorism and extremism;
- To inform members of the House of the threats and abusive actions directed to the Baltic nations by the Russian Federation;
- To provide an arena for cultural exchanges between the United States and the Baltic nations;
- To create opportunities for political dialogue among the legislators of the United States and the Baltic countries and to encourage exchange visits;

- To encourage business-friendly and pro-market policies, legislation and opportunities between the United States and the Baltic nations;
- To provide members of the House with greater grass roots access to the Baltic American community and the people of the Baltic nations.
- Talking Points When in Inviting Congressperson to Join Baltic Caucus

The three Baltic nations are loyal, staunch and trustworthy allies of the United States. They are committed to contributing to the war on terrorism beyond NATO borders. Baltic troops are still in Iraq and Afghanistan serving shoulder to shoulder with American troops. Together the three Baltic countries have participated in 26 NATO and OSCE military missions in eleven countries.

The Baltic nations have showed the world that the love of freedom is stronger than the will of tyrannical imperialism. Countries can emerge from deadly tyranny and become thriving democracies.

The Baltic nations are bound to the United States by common values. Since regaining their independence, they have made huge progress in implementing strong, effective and stable democratic governments, the rule of law, respect for human and civil rights, free market economies and strong, transparent, civilian controlled militaries.

To Join the Baltic Caucus

We have posted instructions and protocol for contacting congresspersons, as well as sample letters on our web site WWW.BAFL.COM. You can also find the current list of members of the Caucus there. I recommend that in your contact with a congressional member, the first thing you should state is that you are a constituent in the Congressional district. Chairpersons of organizations should state that they represent members of their organization.

The Baltic nations have successfully integrated in the international community of democratic nations and are active members of NATO, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations.

They have complied with NATO recommendation that member nations spend two percent of their GDP on national defense.

The credibility and commitment of NATO members to Article 5 is tied to United States and NATO member response to Russian aggression against the Baltic nations. If the American and NATO response is not nimble and strong, Article 5 will lose its credibility and NATO will be out of business as military alliance.

A large membership in the Caucus will resonate a clear message to President Putin that the Baltic people have friends in the Congress. It will also strengthen the credibility of the deterrence policy by NATO and the U.S.

The Baltic nations are experiencing threatening times. In Russia democratic freedoms are in rout, the economy is in trouble, corruption is widespread, ultra-nationalism is rampant and saber rattling by President Putin grows louder with each day. By joining the Baltic Caucus, the House sends a clear and strong message to President Putin that the United States stands with the Baltic nations.

You should also inform the Congressperson about who to contact if they want to join. The Caucus has two Co-Chairpersons. The Republican Co-Chair is John Shimkus (IL). His staff contact is Mr. Flavio Cardon Flavio.a.caardon@mail.house.gov, Tel: (202) 225-5271, Fax: (202) 225-5880. The Democrat Co-Chair is Adam Schiff (CA). The Baltic Caucus staff person is Ms. Karen McBride Karen.mcbride@mail.house.gov, Tel: (202) 225-4271, Fax: (202) 225-5228.

IF YOU BELIEVE THAT THE BALTIC CAUCUS IS IMPORTANT FOR BALTIC LEGISLATION AND ISSUES, THEN YOU SHOULD GET YOUR CONGRESSPERSON TO JOIN THE BALTIC CAUCUS.

Thank you. I hope you will join our campaign to increase the number of friends and supporters in the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,
Valdis V. Pavlovskis
Executive Vice President

The Baltic American Freedom League's programs are designed to assist the development of democracy and market economies in the Baltic countries, to assure the security of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania from outside aggression, to increase awareness of Baltic history and culture and to promote strong, friendly and effective bilateral relations and policies between the United States and the Baltic countries.

our community

Lithuanians on the West Coast Celebrate Lithuanian's Independence

Photos by Consulate General of Lithuania in Los Angeles, Darius Kuzmickas, Giedrė Babarskienė and Ingrida Misevičienė



Prof. Liudas Mažylis in Portland.



Young Lithuanians of Portland were interested in the "LT Identity" t-shirt design classes.



Prof. Liudas Mažylis visited Los Angeles Lithuanian community upon the invitation by Lithuania's Consul General Darius Gaidys.



After the lecture, Prof. Mažylis presented an autographed copy of Lithuanian Independence Declaration to the Lithuanian American Community.



„LT Identity” designers Ieva Ševiakovaitė and Jolanta Rimkutė as well as historian Dr. Norbertas Černiauskas visited Oregon and Washington for the first time. They were fascinated by unique folk art of American Indians.



Four hundred Lithuanian Americans and friends of Lithuania came to celebrate Lithuanian Independence to one of the fanciest hotels in Los Angeles, Millennium Biltmore.



By Prof. Biržiška's final resting place in Los Angeles Calvary Cemetery.

this month in history

April Anniversaries

765 years ago

On April 20, 1253 the name of the town of Kretinga was first mentioned in historical sources. Kretinga is one of the oldest cities in Lithuania. It was first mentioned in 1253 as castle Cretyn under the charter of Bishop Heinrich of Courland. In 1602 Jan Karol Chodkiewicz built the first wooden church in Kretinga and established a Benedictine monastery, which became a great success. After about ten years a new brick church with an impressive organ was built. In 1610 a church school was opened. In 1609 Jan Karol Chodkiewicz announced that he would establish a new city next to the old village and would grant the new city Magdeburg rights. The new city adopted a coat of arms depicting the Blessed Virgin Mary with the baby Jesus in her arms. Kretinga's patron saint remains the Blessed Virgin. In 1621 the Sapieha family gained control of the city; they changed its coat of arms to represent Saint Casimir. In 1659 and 1710 the church and monastery were destroyed by Swedish armies. The Sapieha family helped to rebuild and improve it. In 1720 the city came under the jurisdiction of the Massalski family. Ignacy Jakub Massalski opened a university preparatory school in 1774. The city lost its municipal rights after the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The city prospered during the 19th century as part of the Russian Empire. In 1882 the first telephone line in Lithuania connected Kretinga with Plungė and Rietavas. In 1875, Count Tiškevičius decided to establish his family estate in Kretinga; he purchased and rebuilt an old palace. Following the fashions of the Victorian era, the family landscaped it lavishly and built a greenhouse featuring exotic flowering plants and tropical fruits. In 1890 they installed electricity in the manor. During World War I, the Germans built a railroad connecting Bajorai, Kretinga, and the Latvian city of Priekule. In 1924 Kretinga regained its municipal rights. During the interwar period, the village of Kretingsodis, on the other side of the Akmėna River, was incorporated into the city. Kretinga gained greater importance after another railroad was built in 1932 that connected it to Šiauliai.



470 years ago

On April 1, 1548, Žygimantas I Senasis died in Krakow, Poland. Žygimantas I Senasis (Sigismund the Old) was of the Jogailaičiai dynasty, reigned as King of Poland and also as the Grand Duke of Lithuania from 1506 until 1548. A successful monarch and a great patron of arts, he established Polish suzerainty over Ducal Prussia (East Prussia) and incorporated the duchy of Mazovia into the Polish state, securing the nation's wealth, culture and power. Žygimantas I, the fifth son of Casimir IV and Elisabeth of Habsburg, had ruled Głogów, Silesia, since 1499 and became margrave of Lusatia and governor of all Silesia in 1504. In a short time his judicial and administrative reforms transformed those territories into model states. He succeeded his brother Alexander I as grand prince of Lithuania and king of Poland in 1506. Although he established fiscal and monetary reforms, he often clashed with the Polish Diet over extensions of royal power. At the Diet's demand he married Barbara, daughter of Prince Stephen Zápolya of Hungary, in 1512, to secure a defense treaty and produce an heir. She died three years later, however, leaving only daughters. In 1518 Žygimantas married the niece of the Holy Roman emperor Maximilian, Bona Sforza of Milan, by whom he had one son, Žygimantas II Augustas, and four daughters. His daughter Catherine later married John III of Sweden, from whom the Vasa kings of Poland were descended. In 1521 Žygimantas made peace with his nephew Albert, Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights, a paramilitary religious order that ruled East Prussia. Albert became a Lutheran and converted the Teutonic state to Protestantism in 1525, defecting from both the Papacy and Holy Roman Emperor and agreeing to do public homage to Žygimantas in return for being granted the title of secular duke of Prussia and Ducal Prussia coming under Polish suzerainty. Žygimantas, influenced by his wife, brought Italian artists to Kraków and promoted the development of the Polish variety of the Italian Renaissance. Although a devout Catholic, he accorded religious toleration to Greek Orthodox Christians and royal protection to Jews. At first he vigorously opposed Lutheranism but later resigned himself to its growing power in Poland.



635 years ago

On April 15, 1383, Jogaila and Skirgaila – still Lithuanian dukes at that time – granted a favorable privilege of trading with Lithuania to inhabitants of Lublin. Lublin played a significant part in the negotiations over the marriage of Jadwiga of Anjou to the Lithuanian pagan ruler Jogaila.



470 years ago

On April 17, 1548 Barbora Radvilaitė was officially introduced as the wife of Žygimantas Augustas in Vilnius. Barbora Radvilaitė

was Queen of Poland and Grand Duchess of Lithuania as consort of Žygimantas Augustas, the last male monarch of the Jogaila dynasty. Barbara, a great beauty and already widowed, became a royal mistress most likely in 1543 and they married in secret in July or August 1547. The marriage caused a scandal; it was vehemently opposed by Polish nobles, including Queen mother Bona Sforza. Žygimantas Augustas, assisted by Barbara's cousin Mikalojus Radvila Juodasis and brother Mikalojus Radvila Rudasis, worked tirelessly to gain recognition of their marriage and to crown Barbara as Queen of Poland. They succeeded and Barbara's coronation was held on 7 December 1550 at Wawel Cathedral. However, her health was already failing and she died just five months later. Even though it was brief, her reign propelled the Radvila family to new heights of political power and influence. Her contemporaries generally viewed Barbara in a negative light, accusing her of promiscuity and witchcraft. Her life became surrounded by many rumors and myths. She was a heroine of many legends in a wide range of literary works. From the 18th century, the life of Barbara became romanticized as the great tragic love affair. It has been used as an example of "love conquers all" with Bona Sforza often acting as the chief villain. It caught public imagination and has inspired many artists to create poems, plays, films, and other works. That made Barbara Radvilaitė one of the best known and most recognized women in the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Kingdom of Poland.



100 years ago

On April 19, 1918, the colors of the Lithuanian flag were determined. The birth of the yellow, green, and red tricolor occurred during a drive by other European republics to change their flags. One example that gave life to the idea of the tricolor was the French blue, white and red flag adopted after the French Revolution. The only tricolor that existed for Lithuania before the yellow, green and red flag was a green, white and red flag used to represent Lithuania Minor. It is not known who originally suggested the yellow, green and red, but the idea is usually attributed to Lithuanian exiles living elsewhere in Europe or in the United States during the 19th century. These three colors were frequently used in folk weavings and traditional dress. At the Great Seimas of Vilnius of 1905, this flag was favored over the Vytis banner as the flag of the Lithuanian nation. The Vytis, strongly advocated by Jonas Basanavičius, was not chosen for three reasons: the first was that as part of the drive for national identity, the Seimas wished to distance itself somewhat from the flag of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which also encompassed now-distinct nations such as Belarus, and Ukraine. The second issue was the choice of the color red by revolutionaries who aligned themselves with Marxist or Communist causes. And finally, the flag with Vytis would be too complicated and could not be easily sewn. Debates about the national flag occurred again in 1917 during the Vilnius Conference. Two colors, green and red, were chosen based on their prevalence in folk art. Artist Antanas Žmuidzinavičius decorated the conference hall with small red and green flags. However, the delegates did not like the design as it was too dark and gloomy. Then Tadas Daugirdas suggested adding a narrow strip of yellow (to symbolize the rising sun) in between the red (clouds lit up by the morning sun) and green (fields and forests). However, the delegates decided that the matter should be settled by a special commission, composed of Basanavičius, Žmuidzinavičius, and Daugirdas. On April 19, 1918, they submitted their final protocol to the Council of Lithuania. The flag was supposed to be a tri-color (yellow at the top, green in the middle, and red at the bottom) with Vytis in the upper left corner or in the middle. The Council accepted the proposal.



Medaus Tortas and Tinginys

Two desserts for the modern Lithuanian baker

By Jana Sirusaitė-Motivans



Medaus Tortas, also known as Medutis, is a torte made with thin layers of honey-flavored cake held together with a sour cream-based frosting. It is similar in appearance to the better known Lithuanian Napoleonas, and the time-consuming process needed to make each is comparable.

The first step is to prepare the batter for the cake layers, which must be chilled overnight. The next day, the dough is rolled into very thin layers, and baked until crisp. The cooled layers are then sandwiched between layers of frosting. The finished torte needs to rest overnight for the layers to soften and the flavors to meld. The whole process takes three days and the results are well worth it, but not everyone is willing or able to put in the required time and effort.

While searching for Medaus Tortas recipes I came across a remarkable suggestion. On a site called "Let the baking begin", I found a recipe for a no-bake honey cake which replaces the time consuming home-baked layers with store-bought honey graham crackers. What a clever idea! The home-baked layers are in fact honey-flavored and crisp and do taste like graham crackers so this suggestion is not as far-fetched as it might

seem. Intrigued, I decided to try it. I must admit, the results were spectacular. The resulting torte was delicious!

I combined parts of three different recipes to make my version of Medaus Tortas. As mentioned, the graham cracker idea came from "Let the baking begin". The frosting is from a recipe for Russian Honey Cake in "The Smitten Kitchen", and the honey-walnut topping is from a recipe for Latvian Honey cake found on Allrecipes.com.

I urge you to give this a try. I love to bake and do not usually take shortcuts, but was very pleased with how well this turned out.

This made me think about another Lithuanian recipe which uses graham crackers and condensed milk. Tinginys translates as lazybones, and that should give you an idea of the simplicity of making it. Graham crackers are mixed with melted butter, condensed milk and cocoa powder then shaped into a log and chilled before being sliced and served.

There it is: two dessert recipes for the modern Lithuanian kitchen. One is fancy, one is simple. Both are easy to make and delicious. Skanaus!

Medaus Tortas (no-bake version)

INGREDIENTS

- 2 boxes Honey Graham crackers (14.4 ounces each)
- 4 cups sour cream (32 ounces)
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk (14 ounces)
- 1 ½ cups chopped walnuts
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 4 tablespoons honey
- 3 tablespoons sugar

First, prepare the frosting by mixing the sour cream and condensed milk together in a medium-sized bowl. Put a dab of frosting across your serving plate. Make a row of four graham crackers on top of the frosting. Cover this first layer of crackers with ½ cup of frosting, and make another row of four crackers on top. Continue stacking the layers of four crackers, covering each with ½ cup of frosting until you have seven layers. Use two spatulas to push the layers into shape if they begin to slide. Use the remaining frosting to cover the top and sides of the cake. (You will have left-over frosting and graham crackers). Chill overnight in the refrigerator.

Prepare the nut topping. Melt the butter in a small saucepan. Add the honey and sugar and stir together until melted. Add the walnuts and stir to coat them with the honey mixture. Allow the nuts to cool slightly before spreading them on top of the torte.

Use a sharp knife to slice, dipping it into hot water between slices.



Tinginy's ("lazybones")

INGREDIENTS

- 1 box graham crackers (14.4 ounces)
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk (14 ounces)
- ¼ cup unsalted butter
- 4 tablespoons cocoa powder

Place the graham crackers in a large bowl, using your hands to break them up into smaller pieces.

Melt the butter in a small saucepan. Stir in the sweetened condensed milk. Add the cocoa powder and stir until smooth.

Pour the warm liquid over the graham cracker pieces and stir it all together until the pieces are evenly coated.

Place a large piece of plastic wrap or parchment paper on your counter. Spoon the graham cracker mixture onto the wrap and use your hands (moistened with water to prevent sticking) to shape it into a log. Wrap the plastic wrap around it and chill in refrigerator or freezer. Slice and serve.



Lithuanian Research and Studies Center News

By Loreta Timukienė, LRSC Vice President of Community Affairs
Translated by Dr. Indrė Antanaitis-Jacobs

Several events took place in Greater Chicago the second week in January this year to honor the Lithuanian freedom fighters who died on January 13th. Art Gallery "Siela" within the World Lithuanian Center in Lemont opened a photo exhibit comprised of photos from LRSC's archives as well as a photo exhibit from the material of photographer Jonas Kuprys's archive. The former features moments of the bloody events of January in Lithuania, the latter – responses of Lithuanian Americans to the events in the homeland. Visitors had the opportunity to see a short film put together by the students of director V. V. Landsbergis called "The Second Generation from January", to share memories about the fateful events of that time, and to sing Lithuanian songs together with pianist Vilma Meilutytė. The exhibits and film also were seen by students of the Maironis Lithuanian School, who additionally had the opportunity to touch their country's history and hear their cohorts' opinions about January's events, about freedom, and about Lithuania.

The Lithuanian Alliance of America celebrated its 130-year anniversary in New York on September 15th. Loreta Timukienė participated in the festivities and presented the organization's representatives with LRSC written congratulations and LRSC Christmas ornaments. We take pride in the friendship LRSC has established in recent years with this oldest and still active association of US Lithuanians. Last year the Center's archives were enriched by notably valuable periodicals and microfilms from the Lithuanian Alliance of America.

LRSC is continuing its collaboration with the Bazilionai Center in the Šiauliai district of Lithuania. Our librarian, Enata Skrupskelytė, has sent many shipments of books from LRSC's Duplicate Fund to the Romualdas Ozolas library within the Bazilionai Center. (Romualdas Ozolas was a signatory of the Act of the Re-Establishment of the State of Lithuania also known as the Act of March 11.) Our funds are consistently supplemented with publications from the Romualdas Ozolas Foundation, which supports the LRSC. More than once we, too, have helped this organization's workers collect archival information for their publications and research. Recently, we received the latest edition of Romualdas Ozolas's history and culture journal "Padubysio kronikos (Chronicles from along the Dubysa River)," which features Audronė Kiršinaite's article about journalist, editor, Lithuanian armed forces volunteer, and public figure Stasys Butkus. The article contains photographs from our photo archive of the "Karys" journal.

On October 22nd, Dr. Robert Vitas presented a talk "The Role of Scholarship in the Lithuanian Community and the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center" to the Los Angeles Collegiate Division of the Lithuanian Scouts Association. Dr. Vitas spoke of how important it is for us to be professionals, how we have an obligation to preserve our culture's past for our future, and how being a professional and being a Lithuanian go hand in hand in presenting Lithuania on the world stage of scholarship.

Even Australia now knows about the LRSC. You can find information about us and our activities in the most recent edition of "Lithuanian Papers" which is an annual journal of the Lithuanian Studies Society of the University of Tasmania. It is edited by University of Tasmania's Professor Emeritus, Lithuanian-born educator and Lithuanian studies popularizer Algimantas (Al) P. Taškūnas. Please see "The Largest Research Center Outside Lithuania" by Dr. Indrė Antanaitis-Jacobs at <https://lithuanian-papers.com>.

Last year the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary parish celebrated its 90th anniversary (1927-2017). For the occasion, the parish prepared an exhibit that utilized photographs from the LRSC archives.

The "Gutauskas, Elskus, Kezys" Photo Exhibition opening occurred on November 19th at Chicago's Čiurlionis Art Gallery which utilized photographs of Chicagoan Jesuit Vaclavas Gutauskas taken by Albinas Bielskus-Elskus and Algimantas Kezys and found within the LRSC's funds. Father Gutauskas's enthusiasm, industriousness, and sagacity played a major role in the establishment of the Lithuanian Youth Center or "JC's" as it often is called – short for "Jaunimo centras." The exhibit was dedicated to the 60th anniversary of this hearth of Lithuanian activity – the same Center which houses the LRSC. Father Gutauskas, SJ is fondly remembered as being greatly dedicated to JC's financial matters, collecting donations for both its construction and maintenance. The exhibit's organizer, Dr. Audrius Plioplys, and Dr. Robert Vitas spoke about Father Gutauskas. Renowned artist Elskus's granddaughter Ashley also shared recollections of her grandfather's life and creative work.

Security

...Three Lithuanians were arrested for spying for Russia. One suspect who lives in Siauliai in northern Lithuania formerly worked for the Air Force. Another suspect with a Russian residency permit received the money. Siauliai is the site of NATO's Baltic Air Policing Airbase. The USAF had four F-15C Eagles based there in 2017. In a separate case a third Lithuanian was paid to provide information on the Navy. If convicted they face up to 15 years in prison.

...The Lithuanian government has approved the Defense Ministry's request for tighter regulations on drones because of increased spying and security threats against its military areas and army exercises. The rules would allow both military action and a 500 euro fine. The rules await approval by the parliament, Seimas.



...Lithuania is preparing legal proceedings against Kaspersky Lab, headquartered in Moscow, supporting its decision to prohibit its software in all Lithuanian institutions. The Defense Ministry had evidence that Kaspersky's antivirus software had holes that can allow takeover of computer networks, servers and specific computers. The Ministry is compiling a "black list" of dozens of prohibited products for the same concern. In December 2017 the U.S. Department of Homeland Security banned the use of its products within the U.S. government.

...The German government confirmed that they were hit by a cyberattack in December which infiltrated the Foreign Ministry and Defense Ministry. The Russian group APT28 also known as "Fancy Bear", is associated with Russian military intelligence and was implicated in an attack on the German parliament, Bundestag, in 2015 which forced the replacement of its entire IT infrastructure. The recent attack was on the Berlin-Bonn network which was specifically designed to be isolated from public networks to add a layer of security. The malware may have been active for up to a year. The Interior Ministry does not know how much data was intercepted.

...The U.S. based consulting firm RAND Corporation reports that NATO would have a difficult time repelling a Russian conventional attack on the Baltics. NATO has been focused on counter-insurgency activities in Afghanistan, Iraq and Mali and have not been involved in a conventional war since 2003 in Iraq. The report says NATO has 32,000 troops in the Baltics versus Russia's 78,000 in

Kaliningrad, etc. while NATO has only 129 tanks against Russia's 757. Under Putin Russia armed forces have achieved significant improvement in quality and mobility achieved through large scale operations in Ukraine and Syria.

Business

...Speaking of cybersecurity, the U.S. based Arxan Technologies has established a branch in Vilnius with 10 people and supplemented with contractors from Vilnius and Kaunas plus paid interns from Vilnius University. They plan to add up to 40 employees within the next two years. The company is able to inject security features directly into clients' application code to repel attacks from within the app itself. They protect more than 1 billion app instances around the world. Founded in 2001, Arxan is headquarters in San Francisco and has 6 offices in the U.S. and 1 each in the UK, France, Germany, Sweden, Japan, Korea and now Vilnius. The security techniques include code hardening, tamper-proofing, key security and node locking. The software is able to detect attacks and react with alerts and repairs.

...Last year the Danish organization Danske Bank increased its employment level from 2,011 to 2,500 in Lithuania. It provides banking services, global service center and IT services. This year it plans on adding 400 employees. It grows its own specialists by offering training programs in new functions such as detecting money laundering and financing terrorism. It estimates that it has hired about 150 to 200 Lithuanians who have returned home after working abroad.

...Last year the number of financial technology firms increased 43% in Lithuania. The report, Lithuanian Fintech Report 2017, covers 117 firms of which are 35 startups. According to Invest Lithuania, a co-author of the report, Lithuania ranks high because of the large pool of talented people, hassle-free regulations, flexible banking infrastructure and the ability to access 512 million customers and 23 million small and medium businesses in Europe. Registering a company only takes 3 days and it only takes 3 months to obtain an Electronic Money Institution license. Financial technology firms are regulated by the Bank of Lithuania.

...The Director General and Director of IT for Vilnius University Hospital Santaros Klinikos have been arrested on suspicion of solicitation of bribes in exchange for contracts worth 2 million euros.. The Special Investigative Services has searched the hospital, private companies as well as the suspects' cars and homes. The hospital is co-funded by the Health Ministry and Vilnius University

...One of Latvia's largest commercial banks, ABLV Bank, is accused of participating in money laundering with non-residents from Russia, Ukraine and Azerbaijan. The European Central Bank announced that ABLV would be liquidated since its continued existence threatens current and future investments in Latvia. In 2016 the banks paid

current events

22 million euros in taxes to Latvia. In liquidation its 800 employees will lose their jobs.

...The President of the Bank of Latvia has been detained on suspicion of extortion for bribes and his office and home searched.

General

...Lithuania celebrated the 100 –year anniversary of the restored statehood hosted by President Dalia Grybauskaite with festivals throughout the country including visits by the presidents of Germany, Poland, Ukraine, Latvia, Estonia, Finland , Iceland and Georgia plus Sweden’s Crown Princess Victoria and top-ranking officials of the European Union. Statehood did not come without effort to resist Russian bolsheviks and Polish troops during 1918-1920.

...The first independence leader, Vytautas Landsbergis (March 1990 to November 1992) was unable to attend the festivities because he was hospitalized with the flu.

...During Polish President Andrzej Duda’s visit he raised concern over education problems with the 200,000 people of Polish origin and the associated teaching and examinations in the Polish language.

...The Vatican has confirmed a visit by Pope Francis to the Baltic nations during September 22-25 with visits to Vilnius and Kaunas in Lithuania, Riga and Aglona in Latvia and Tallinn in Estonia. It will mark 25 years since the visit by John Paul II, then Pope now Saint, in September 1993 shortly after the breakup of the Soviet Union.



...The Ball brothers are surviving their basketball experiences in Lithuania and their contracts have been extended to the end of the season in June. They are profiled in a feature story in Bleacher Report Magazine which indicates that they are racking up their playing time and best numbers playing second rate and amateur competition. LeMelo is quoted as complaining of the frequent meals of pork, cabbage and potatoes in contrast to his normal teenage Southern California fare. He also dislikes the winter darkness and the need to scrape ice from his rented Toyota Corolla in contrast to driving his ice free black Lamborghini which he received for his 16th birthday in Chino.

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April 2018

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

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

Exhibit "For Freedom: Lithuanian American Support for Lithuania's Independence and Recognition"
 Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture
 www.balzekasmuseum.org

APRIL

April 15, 2018 at 12:30 p.m.
Sunlight Orphan Aid for Lithuania Charitable Event
 Loreta Janulevičiūtė concert
 Lithuanian World Center, Lemont, IL

April 21, 2018 at 6:30 p.m.
Charity Gala "Kites of Hope"
 Lithuanian World Center
 www.chicagomothersfoundation.com

April 27-29, 2018
Women's Weekend at Neringa Camp
 Kerry Secrest and Dr. Kristina Mačiūnas are planning a special program and a variety of activities including group discussions, exercise, art, cooking, spiritual and personal rebirth.
 For more details please contact Kerry at kerry@watershedcoachingllc.com or Kristina at kriscon@frontiernet.net

MAY

May 11-13, 2018
Counselor Retreat at Neringa Camp
 We invite current and former Neringa counselors, who are over 18 years old, to come to the Neringa Counselor Retreat. Get together with counselors of all ages to reflect on how Neringa has and continues to impact their lives. Retreat coordinators are: Jessica Zikaras and Rebecca Liudzius.

May 12, 2018, 1 p.m.
Madison Vilnius Sister Cities, Inc. presents Restored Lithuania: Celebrating 100 years of Lithuanian Independence, a choral concert featuring The Singing Revolution by Kestutis Daugirdas & Rugilė Kazlauskaitė. At Wisconsin State Capitol. Free admission. For info go to www.madisonvilnius.org

May 12, 2018, 6 p.m.
Madison Vilnius Sister Cities, Inc. annual banquet
 with Prof. Guntis Smidchens speaking on The Power of Song, and music by Agnė Giedraitytė.
 For reservations see www.madisonvilnius.org

Saturday May 19, 2018 8:00 P.M. – 9:30 P.M.
Mission Siberia 2006 & the Lithuanian deportations to Siberia
 Participant Justinas Riškus will discuss the Lithuanian deportations to Siberia and his experience in preserving the memory Carnegie Library
 300 Beechwood Avenue - Carnegie PA 15106
 More information: www.pittsburghlithuanianschool.org
 pghmokykla@yahoo.com
 412-613-5582

JUNE

June 1-3, 2018
American Association of Baltic Studies Conference
 Stanford University, Palo Alto, Calif.
 Info: aabs-balticstudies.org

June 2-3, 2018
Talka Work Weekend at Neringa Camp
 As every year, Neringa is awaiting volunteers who can come and help prepare the campsite for the upcoming summer.

June 16, 2018 at 12 p.m.
LWC Charity Golf Tournament Old Oak Country Club
 14200 S Parker Rd, Homer Glen, IL 60491
 www.lithuaniangolf.com

June 30 – July 6
Dainu Svente: Lithuania's Centenary Song Celebration
 Vilnius and Kaunas, Lithuania
 Info: dainusvente.lt/en/programme/

June, 2018
Jonines/Summer Picnic Event
 Kansas City Lithuanian Community
 More info to be announced

AUGUST

August 17-19, 2018
Kansas City Lithuanian Community Ethnic Enrichment Festival
 Swope Park, KCMO

NOVEMBER

November 24, 2018, 4PM
Kansas City Lithuanian Community Christmas Party
 Cedar Creek Clubhouse, Olathe, KS

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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