

bridges



LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

\$5

June 2018

2



bridges

June 2018

LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN
NEWS JOURNAL

2 Mstislavas Dobužinskis's Efforts to Revive
Lithuanian Historical Symbols
By Jurgita Kristina Pačkauskienė

6



6 A Twentieth Century Miracle:
Lithuania's Transition From World War I
to Independence
By Robert A. Vitas, Ph.D.

11 Interview with Birutė Putrius,
author of "The Last Book Smuggler"
By Karilė Vaitkutė

11



1 from the editor
By Karilė Vaitkutė

22 a taste of Lithuania
Močiutės pyragas (Grandmother's cake)
By Jana Sirusaitė-Motivans

24 current events
By Alan Stankus

our community
26 Lithuanian Research and Studies Center News
By Dr. Indrė Antanaitis-Jacobs

26



c3 calendar

Front Cover: Chicago Lithuanian Saturday School Graduation. Photo by Viktorija Šileika.

Back cover: St. John's Day Celebration in Rumšiškės, Lithuania.

bridges

Vol. 42 No. 6 / June 2018

Bridges is the English-language publication of the
Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.

lithuanian-american.org/bridges

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 & SUBSCRIPTION 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)



Our thanks to
LITHUANIAN FOUNDATION
for its support of this magazine.
www.lithuanianfoundation.org

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

All statements and opinions, including product claims, are those of the organization/advertiser making those statements or claims. The publisher does not adopt, or put forth, any such statement or claim as his own, and any such statement or claim does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the publisher.

BRIDGES (ISSN: 87508028) is published 10 times per year (Jul/Aug and Nov/Dec combined) by Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. The known office of publication is located at 2711 W. 71st Street, Chicago, IL 60629. The editorial office is located at 139 Willow Blvd., Willow Springs, IL 60480. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, IL and additional locations. Vol. 42, No. 6. POSTMASTER: Send address corrections and changes to LAC, Inc./Bridges, 208 Linden Ponds Way, Unit 403, Hingham, MA 02043. SUBSCRIPTIONS: For subscription questions or address changes, write to spauda@javlb.org. Subscription rates are: US: \$30 per year or \$58 for two years.; International: \$55 per year payable in advance in US funds. COPYRIGHT: ©2018 by Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of the publication may be reproduced without written permission of the publisher. PRINTING: Printed in Chicago, USA by Lithuanian American Community, Inc.

from the editor

Dear readers,

The month of June is here. In Lithuanian, it is called birželis. The name originates from words biržė and biržyti. Biržė means a small branch of a tree and biržyti means to mark with a biržė. In Lithuanian, most names of the months show the work that was being done during that month. June is the time for sowing. After sowing their crops, farmers had to mark their fields in order to remember where and what crops they sowed. This marking was done by sticking small branches (biržės) into the soil and it was called biržijimas.

However, birželis was not the only name for June Lithuanians used. In Jonas Bretkūnas's "Postilė" written in 1591, June is called sėjinis. This word also originated from the verb sėti (to sow). In 17th century, June was called sėmenija, sėmenius, and kirmėlius. In the 18th century, it was called pūdymas, sėjimas. In the 19th century, Lithuanians called it by the names of biržis, sėja, visjavis, and jaunius. Visjavis is a compound word that comes from two words: visi (all) and javai (crops). Jaunius comes from a Lithuanian word jaunas which means young. It was an attempt to adopt the Latin name Junius for June. Being the first month of summer, June was a young month.

The main festival of June is of course Rasos or Joninės (St. John's Day). It falls on the longest day of the year and the shortest night of the year. This festival is unimaginable without bonfires and picking bunches of wild flowers. Those bunches of flowers were called kupolės. They had to consist of various flowers picked from three fields that would be used to make a wreath. Those wreaths were used to guess the future by throwing them on high poles, by letting them sail in a lake or a brook or by putting them under a pillow in order to have a prophetic dream.

Jumping over bonfires and picking wild flowers from three different fields is not always an easy thing to do in the United States. Here, the ancient Lithuanian festival in many Lithuanian communities is adjusted to be just another gathering with Lithuanian food and music. I hope you will have a chance to spend some time in a meadow during the longest day and the shortest night of the year and at least admire some wild flowers and remember the ancient traditions of our forefathers.

Sincerely,

Karilė Vaitkutė
Editor



Mstislavas Dobužinskis's Efforts to Revive Lithuanian Historical Symbols

III



Jurgita Kristina Pačkauskienė

Researcher at the Rare Books and Manuscripts Division of the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania

The Commission for the Creation of the State Coat of Arms was active in 1929-1934. It initiated the creation of a version of the coat of arms of the Republic of Lithuania that would be acceptable to all. Lithuanian coat of arms design No. III created by Dobužinskis in 1934. From the collections of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Division of the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania.

The Martynas Mažvydas National Library's Rare Books and Manuscripts Division houses a significant part of the works created by artist Mstislavas Dobužinskis (1875-1957). They are creative works, correspondence, manuscripts of the artist and his family, and various publications. A separate large group consists of the documents by Dobužinskis that are attributed to the field of heraldry and cover the period of

1921-1939. On the occasion of the centenary of the restoration of the state of Lithuania, the National Library published Dobužinskis's entire textual and iconographic material (a total of 114 pieces) on www.epaveldas.lt this way displaying the artist's contribution to the history of the heraldry of the Lithuanian state. In April of 2018, the National Library organized an exhibition "Heraldry Is Not Just Science But Also Art", covering M. Dobužinskis's research on state symbols and presenting a wider look at his work in the field of heraldry.

What prompted Dobužinskis, a person whose life and creative geography cover Europe and North America, to study the heraldry of Lithuania, a small state, and to use Lithuanian patriotic motifs in his works? Let's look at the biography of this "roaming enthusiast", as Dobužinskis ironically called himself.

The names of landlords Januškevičius-Dobužinskis (coat of arms of Lubičius (1)) were mentioned for the first time in 1532 in Lithuanian sources (2), therefore the Dobužinskis considered themselves as the descendants of an old family of Lithuanian nobles and thought of Lithuania as their historic homeland. Mstislavas's father, Valerijanas Dobužinskis (1841-1921), was a Russian army general: the family's life was not a quiet one, especially after the insurrection of 1863, when Valerijanas was moved from one place to another because of his Lithuanian origin. His son, Mstislavas, was born in Novgorod in 1875. The relationship between parents was complicated and, when the child was almost five years old, the family split up (3). Mstislavas moved with his father to St. Petersburg, where he began to "munch on student's bread".

The very first time that Dobužinskis visited Vilnius was during Easter in 1884. The impressions of this city left a significant imprint on young Mstislavas's soul: "... after the geometrically rigorous streets of St. Petersburg, I suddenly saw narrow curved streets with multicolored houses, steep roofs covered with red tiles, above which there were high towers and church towers. <...> From the very beginning,

during all the years spent in this city, it was dear to me <...>, this feeling remained throughout my life." (4)

On April 6-7, 1889 (5) Mstislavas and his father moved to Smėlynė, a suburb of Vilnius near the Great Pohulianka (at the beginning of present-day Švitrigaila Street). Back then it was just a developing suburb, where "a few beautiful wooden and stone houses with gardens around them" stood (6). Mstislavas studied in the busiest place in Vilnius, in the 2nd Boys' Gymnasium on Pilies Street, in the long wing of the Vilnius University building. Donaldas Strikulis, one of the first researchers of the heraldic heritage of Mstislavas Dobužinskis, wrote that it was then that Mstislavas became interested in the heraldry of Lithuania: in the artist's sketches, the researcher found several drawings of Vytis (7). Unfortunately, the author did not indicate where the aforementioned sketchbooks are stored.

Dobužinskis wrote in his memoirs that while living in Vilnius, he was interested in the architecture of buildings, the heraldic signs that decorated the buildings, among which was Vytis: "<...> I began to notice the magnitude of architectural proportions, the charm of empty planes, that were enlivened by an occasional cartouche or coat of arms <...>. The living legend was the worshiped by all miraculous image of the Mother of God of the Gates of Dawn in Vilnius: in the chapel above the city gate with the Lithuanian coat of arms, a galloping knight with a raised sword." (8)

In 1895, Dobužinskis graduated from the Vilnius Second Gumnasium and entered the Law Department in St. Petersburg. But he did not become a lawyer. The eve of the 20th century was a turning point in Dobužinskis's life. He turned his attention to the world of art: art studies in Munich (1899-1901), a trip to Paris, the Mecca of arts (1901), and intensive activities in the Society of Art World (The World of Art) (since 1903 (9)). In 1907 Dobužinskis becomes a decorator in St. Petersburg and Moscow theaters, in 1918 - a teacher in former Štiglicas school and the Petersburg Academy of Arts, and in 1922 he acquires professor's title. It should be noted that the issues of Lithuania were always of concern to Mstislavas, even when he was traveling in the vast territories of Russia. For example, in 1907 he became one of the founders of the Vilnius Society of the Friends of Science (10).

Dobužinskis lived in several cultures, the Orthodox and later the communist Russian on the one hand, and Western values-based European societies (frequent exhibitions and other artistic activities in Paris, Berlin, Brussels, Rome, Leip-



Heraldic Flag. Dobužinskis created a flag using the colors that corresponded to the colors of the state coat of arms and the emblem (Gediminaičiai pillars) that would be Lithuanian. 1938.



While working in the State Theatre, Dobužinskis created set designs for several dozens of operas and dramas.

zig), and those cultures formed his multifaceted personality and a broad vision that would soon become apparent in his historical homeland, Lithuania.

In 1924 Prof. Dobužinskis immigrated from Soviet Russia to Lithuania. After the first highly acclaimed set design created by Dobužinskis for the State Theatre (Piotr Tchaikovsky's opera "The Queen of Spades", 1925), the artist was granted the Lithuanian citizenship. However, he did not stay in Kaunas for long. He felt the secret envy and distrust of his colleagues, and it was painful to him (11). Dobužinskis traveled deep into the West and worked in various European cultural centers. Even while he was living abroad and working intensively, he did not forget Lithuania. It was the 1920s that he began to actively show interest in Lithuanian heraldry. While working abroad, M. Dobužinskis collected material from the largest European archives, libraries and museums, exchanged letters and consulted with well-known heraldry experts. Dobužinskis had the idea to publish a studio about Lithuanian Vytis.

A little later, Dobužinskis began creating the Vytis emblem, the coat of arms of the Republic of Lithuania. The artist chose the oldest Gothic coat of arms variant. On the red background, a silver rider on a silver horse is depicted (in designs, white color corresponds to silver). In his right hand, the rider holds a raised sword, in the left hand, he holds a red shield with a golden double cross. Some researchers say that Dobužinskis did not succeed in solving the color issue of the coat of arms (the author of the current emblem of the Republic of Lithuania Arvydas Každailis used blue color for

the shield, the saddle, the bridle, and the belts). However, as rightly pointed out by D. Strikulis, the coat of arms created by Dobužinskis was much more archaic and more historically justified than the version of artist Antanas Žmuidzinavičius used to date.

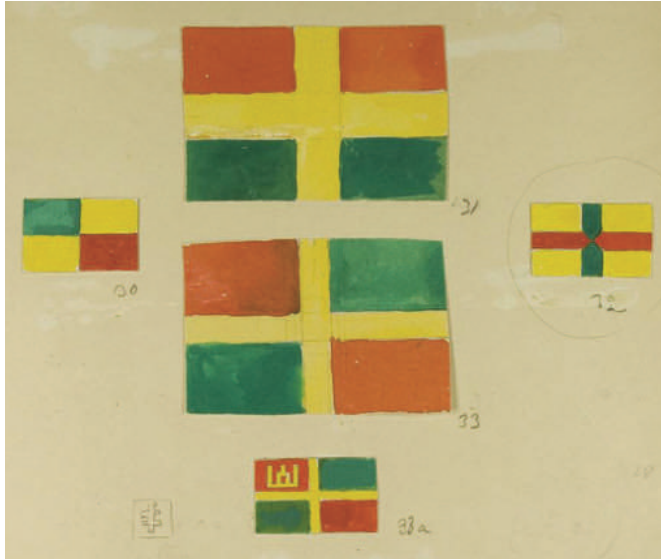
In about 1926, Dobužinskis started collecting material about the Lithuanian flag. The artist based his concept of the state flag on the heraldry studies and the aesthetic analysis of the flag, and thus he sided with the critics of the yellow-green-and-red national flag that was adopted in the Constitutions of 1922 and 1928: "It is high time to get concerned with the correction of our flag." (12) The professor said that the flag of Lithuania disregarded the main principle of heraldry: if the coat of arms is older than the flag, the flag should be created using the colors of the coat of arms. Thus, according to Dobužinskis, the colors of the flag approved by the Constitution are non-heraldic, the choice of colors is ungrounded, and their layout is not harmonious. In 1933 Dobužinskis gave President Antanas Smetona a rather critical opinion on the national flag. On May 8, 1940, the State Emblem Commission presented Dobužinskis's flag design to President Smetona (the combination of yellow, white and red colors was in accordance with the colors of the coat of arms that the artist created): on one side of the flag the national coat of arms was depicted and on the other side the pillars of Gediminaičiai were depicted. The first Soviet occupation stopped all further work.



Dobužinskis's Lithuanian passport.



Post stamp designs by Dobužinskis.



Lithuanian flag designs by Dobužinskis.



Design of a stained glass window with Lithuanian coat of arms by Dobužinskis, c 1939.



(1) The Lithuanian version of Polish name of the coat of arms Lubicz was created by Edmundas Rimša. In: Kojalavičius-Vijūkas, Albertas. *Šventasis Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštijos bei jai priklausančių provincijų giminių ir herbų vardynas*, Vilnius, 2015, p. 758.

(2) Dirsytė, Rima. *Kultūros vandenynuose nepasiklydęs: Mstislavo Dobužinskio archyvas Nacionalinėje Martyno Mažvydo bibliotekoje*, Santara, Nr. 129/130 (2016, Fall), p. 122.

(3) Andrijauskas, Antanas. *Amžiaus dvasią pažinau būtent čia: Mstislavas Dobužinskis ir jo įnašas į Lietuvos dailės raidą*, Metai, 2003 Jan. 1, p. 119.

(4) Добужинский, М. В. *Воспоминания* / подготовил Геннадий Иванович Чугунов. Москва: Наука, 1987, p. 50, 93.

(5) This transfer date and exact travel time, no less than 30 hours by train, are recorded in Dobužinskis' school book. Rare Books and Manuscripts Division of the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, F30, pp.1-2206, p. 14

(6) Kirkoras, Adomas Honoris. *Pasivaikščiojimai po Vilnių ir jo apylinkes*. Vilnius: Mintis, 2012, p. 163.

(7) Strikulis, Donaldas. *Mstislavas Dobužinskis ir Lietuvos Respublikos herbas Vytis. From: Mstislavas Dobužinskis ir Lietuva: tarptautinė konferencija*. Vilnius: National Research Center, 1998, p. 57.

(8) Добужинский, М. В. *Воспоминания* / edited by Г. И. Чугунов. Москва: Наука, 1987, p. 93–94.

(9) Some sources point to 1902.

(10) Andriulytė, Algė. *Dar kartą Dobužinskis*, *Knygų aidai*, 2006, Nr. 4, p. 22.

(11) Andrijauskas, Antanas. *Amžiaus dvasią pažinau būtent čia: Mstislavas Dobužinskis ir jo įnašas į Lietuvos dailės raidą*, Metai, 2003 Jan. 1, p. 127.

(12) Dobužinskis's article *The Issue of Our Flag*. *XX amžius*, 1938 May 25, p. 3.

This article first appeared in Lithuanian in the *Tarp Knygų* magazine, 2018, no. 4, p. 23-26.

It was translated into English by Karilė Vaitkutė.

A Twentieth Century Miracle

Lithuania's Transition From World War I to Independence

Robert A. Vitas, Ph.D.
Chairman of the Board
Lithuanian Research and Studies Center
Chicago, Illinois



Lithuanian National Council



Augustinas Voldemaras, first Prime Minister of Lithuania (November 11, 1918 – December 26, 1918), Minister of Foreign Affairs (November 11, 1918 – June 19, 1920), Minister of Defense (November 11, 1918 – December 24, 1918).

To comprehend Lithuania's actions at the conclusion of the First World War, we must consider the German occupation of Lithuania from late-1915 until 1918. For at least a decade, Lithuanian political activists had been seeking various state characteristics for the Lithuanian nation, including autonomy and even independence. Due to the vicissitudes of the war, the Germans allowed to organization of the Vilnius Conference, hoping it would proclaim that the Lithuanian nation wished to detach itself from Russia and establish a closer relationship with Germany.

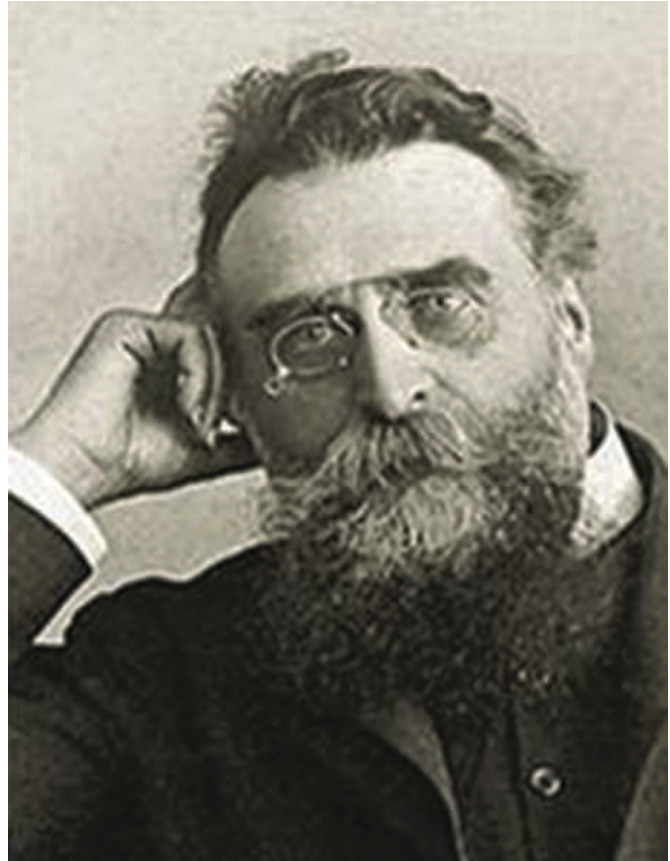
214 Lithuanian delegates gathered in Vilnius on September 18-23, 1917. Their deliberations resulted in a call for an independent Lithuanian state within ethnic frontiers with Vilnius as its capital. The conference elected a National Council of Lithuania consisting of twenty individuals. The president of the Council was Dr. Jonas Basanavičius, a physician, political activist, and previously publisher of the *Aušra* newspaper. He has gone down in history as the Patriarch of the Lithuanian Nation. The Council declared the nation's independence on February 16, 1918. Germany, though, did not allow the Council to establish a Lithuanian military force, police, or other civic functions.

The general armistice of November 11, 1918 formally ended the war between the Allies and Germany. Efforts were now made to form the first national government led by Dr. Augustinas Voldemaras under the Council's auspices. Dr.

Voldemaras was a Ph.D. in history and a brilliant, albeit arrogant, scholar. He was a professor of history and classics and had authored a number of substantial scholarly studies. He served as the first Prime Minister of Lithuania in late-1918. Throughout the course of the 1920s and 1930s he would prove to be a thorn in the side to various Lithuanian political leaders. Though initially an ally of Antanas Smetona, he would also try to depose Smetona from the presidency on at least two occasions during the 1930s. He was sentenced first to internal exile, then later exiled to France. He inexplicably returned to Lithuania several days after the Soviet occupation began on June 15, 1940. He was arrested by Soviet authorities at the border and died in a Moscow prison in 1942.

Voldemaras and subsequent prime ministers oversaw Lithuania's wars of independence. These wars delayed international recognition of independent Lithuania and the formation of civil institutions. The first was the war against Bolshevik forces from December 1918 to August 1919. Though a signatory to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on March 3, 1918 wherein Soviet Russia ceded Lithuania to Germany, the Russian Bolsheviks attacked Lithuania from the east in late-1918 attempting to prevent its independence. The communist party of Lithuania under Vincas Mickevičius-Kapsukas formed a revolutionary government in the capital city of Vilnius on December 8, 1918. The Germans retreated from Vilnius on December 31. The Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, Soviet Russia's armed forces, took Vilnius and advanced further to the west. German volunteers arrived in Lithuania, took up positions along the Gardinas-Kaišiadorys-Kaunas line, and helped Lithuanian forces stop the Red Army advance near Kėdainiai. Joint Lithuanian and German forces captured Šėta and forced the Red Army to retreat on February 10. By the end of August, the Bolsheviks were defeated near Zarasai.

As Lithuania waged war against the Bolsheviks, it was called to wage yet another war against the Bermontians. They were formally known as the West Russian Volunteer Army consisting of Russian prisoners of war released by the German empire after promising to fight against the Bolsheviks in the Russian civil war and Germans stationed in Latvia and Lithuania at the time of Germany's defeat. The official goal of this army was to fight the Bolsheviks, but its actual agenda was the retention of German



Dr. Jonas Basanavičius (November 23, 1851 – February 16, 1927), Patriarch of the Nation, activist and proponent of the Lithuanian National Revival, member of the Council of Lithuania.



West Russian Volunteer Army flag.



Pavel Bermond-Avalov, Major General of the Imperial Russian Army, promoted in 1918; Leader of the Bermontians; formed the West Russian Volunteer Army in 1919. Honors and Awards: Knight of the Order of Saint George IV class, Order of St. Anna. Imprisoned by the Nazis in 1936 and deported



Antanas Smetona, first President of Lithuania (April 4, 1919 – June 19, 1920), and last President of Lithuania (December 19, 1926 – June 15, 1940), First Vice-Chairman & Chairman of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Relief Society during World War I, Chairman of the Council of Lithuania (1917 – 1919), Signatory of the Act of Independence of Lithuania.



Józef Klemens Piłsudski, Chief of State of the Second Republic of Poland (November 14, 1918 – December 11, 1922), First General Inspector of the Armed Forces (August 27, 1926 – May 12, 1935), 7th Minister of Military Affairs (May 16, 1926 – May 12, 1935), 16th Prime Minister of Poland (October 2, 1926 – June 27, 1928), 21st Prime Minister of Poland (August 15, 1930 – December 4, 1930).



Lucjan Żeligowski, leader of the Republic of Central Lithuania (October 12, 1920 – March 24, 1922), General of the Polish Army (1919), promoted to three-star general in 1923, ordered Żeligowski's Mutiny in October 1920, Polish Minister of Military Affairs (1925).



William II of Württemberg, last King of Württemberg (October 6, 1891 – November 30, 1918). Monarchy abolished. Lithuania -- On June 4, 1918 German prince Wilhelm, 2nd Duke of Urach was invited by the Council of Lithuania to rule the Kingdom of Lithuania. He was elected on July 11, 1918 and accepted, taking the name of Mindaugas II, King of Lithuania.



Aleksandras Stulginskis, one of the founders of the Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party, second President of Lithuania (June 19, 1920 – June 1, 1926), Signatory of the Act of Independence of Lithuania. Arrested by the Soviet NKVD and deported to a gulag in the Krasnoyarsk region in 1941. Released after Joseph Stalin's death in 1956.

he chaired the Lithuanian Relief Society which assisted Lithuanian refugees who had fled to Russia as the Germans occupied Lithuania. Smetona was also a signatory of the Act of Independence. He later served another term as president from 1926 to 1940 following a coup d'état.

A curious episode during the wars of independence and the construction of a democratic republic was the establishment of a short-lived constitutional monarchy due to continued German occupation when the Council was yet unable to form effective state institutions. The Lithuanians hoped to preserve their independence by offering the Lithuanian throne to German prince Wilhelm, Second Duke of Urach on June 4, 1918. This was a controversial move which divided the Council and did not achieve the desired results. Wilhelm was formally elected on July 11 and accepted, taking the name of Mindaugas II, King of Lithuania. The new royal name referenced the first and only king of a separate and independent Lithuanian state in the thirteenth century. Wilhelm even began learning the Lithuanian language and was preparing to move to the country to assume the throne. As German defeat loomed and Germany's imprimatur was no longer necessary for independence, Lithuania suspended its decision to invite Duke Wilhelm on November 2, 1918, thereby ending his short reign.

The formation of Lithuanian state institutions and infrastructure began in earnest as the wars of independence wound down. The National Council promulgated a law describing procedures to elect, and the powers of, a Constituent Assembly on October 30, 1919. 112 representatives from across the country were elected during April 14-15, 1920. The election law reserved 108 seats for the Vilnius region and nine for the Klaipėda region. Those seats remained unfilled because of the continued Polish occupation of Vilnius and French occupation of Klaipėda under France's League of Nation mandate to administer the territory. Lithuania regained Klaipėda when an insurrection by the region's Lithuanians backed by Lithuanian military units evicted the French in 1923.

The first meeting of the Constituent Assembly took place on May 15, 1920 in Kaunas, the provisional capital. Aleksandras Stulginskis was elected as the chairman and de facto second president. Stulginskis was one of the founders of the Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party, signed Lithuania's Act of Independence, and served as second president of Lithuania from June 19, 1920 until June 1, 1926. He was the only president who did not flee the country during the Soviet occupation and was deported to Siberia in 1941 until he was released and allowed to return to Lithuania in 1956 following Josef Stalin's death. The Constituent Assembly promulgated Lithuania's Third Constitution and passed approximately 150 laws, laying the foundations of the future political, economic,



Republic of Lithuania. Constituent Assembly of Lithuania (1920). Law describing procedures of electing and powers of the Constituent Assembly adopted October 30, 1919; April 14-15, 1920: 112 representatives elected. The population of the Vilnius region, under Polish control, and that of the Klaipėda region, under French control, could not take part in the elections. However, the election law reserved 108 seats for the Vilnius region and 9 for the Klaipėda region. Constituent Assembly of Lithuania (1920). May 15, 1920: First meeting in Kaunas, the provisional capital. Aleksandras Stulginskis was elected as the chairman and de facto president. June 10, 1920: Third and final draft of Constitution.

social and cultural life of Lithuania. Lithuania joined the League of Nations on September 23, 1921, followed by de jure recognition by other states.

Whereas, Poland fought its battles in a much larger territory with greater manpower, the Lithuanians fought three opponents nearly simultaneously in a much smaller area with poorly equipped volunteers. It is utterly amazing to recount Lithuanian tenacity and military performance when it was outnumbered and outgunned. Hence, it is truly no less than a miracle that Lithuania defeated multiple enemies and successfully implemented its Declaration of Independence.

Interview with
Birutė Putrius
author of “The Last Book Smuggler”



Author Birutė Putrius

Karilė Vaitkutė: Could you tell a little bit about your family?

Birutė Putrius: My family is from Žemaitija. They had a farm in Petrikaičiai and my father was Kretingos apskrities seniūnas. He had been a volunteer in the battle for Lithuania’s independence and had been captured by the Poles and taken prisoner of war. He escaped and then walked all the way home to Žemaitija. My parents met at the Pavasarininkai meetings. She was the secretary. They were invited to go to the Stulginskis farm for meetings. At the end of the war, they fled Lithuania with my two brothers and sister during the Soviet takeover. I was born in a DP camp in Dillingen, Germany. When the camps closed we immigrated to the US.

We lived in Chicago where I was a sea scout and went to camps in Rakas and elsewhere. I went to Lithuanian Saturday School and graduated from Maria High School. Later I graduated from Roosevelt University and got my Master’s degree from California State University in Los Angeles.

KV: On the back cover of “The Last Book Smuggler”, it is written that the book is based on your grandfather, who was a book smuggler. Could you tell us about your grandfather’s book smuggling activities?

BP: My father, who was a great storyteller, told me about an incident when he was very young, about a time his father took him to East Prussia with him in his cart. Only after they returned home did my grandfather tell his son that they had been carrying contraband — not just smuggled Lithuanian books, but also some liquor and tobacco to sell. My father thought he might have been about six or seven at the time, but it made a big impression on him. The story made a big impression on me too. And my mind wouldn’t let it go. My imagination kept wondering about that jour-



Author's grandparents pictured on the right side.

ney, and the more I learned about book smuggling the more I became intrigued. It seemed like such a hopeless cause to go up against the might of Russian Empire. Lithuania had already disappeared from the world's maps and now the tsar had decided on a draconian Russification policy, saying to Muravyev, "the hangman," "Give me a Lithuania with nothing Lithuanian in it." So to imagine that ordinary farmers, many illiterate, would risk beatings, jail, Siberia, even death to bring Lithuanian books across the border from East Prussia in order to keep their ancient language alive is so incredibly inspiring and noble that it seemed an incredible story of courage and faith.

The problem was that there wasn't much information available to me in those early years before Lithuania regained its independence. I had to rely on the history books and encyclopedias available to those in exile. So my father gave me novels to read and I'd ask him a million questions about farm life and so on.

This novel started with a story my father told about an aunt who returned to her family from Russia. She had brought a "domovoi" with her and the whole family was aghast at its antics. I thought the story was charming and

wrote a bit about it, imagining such an aunt, but then thought not much more about it.

This novel was begun in 1988 and written over a number of years and then put into a drawer because I had no time to rewrite it as I was raising two children and working full time as a high school teacher. There is a sequel to this novel and it was written first. Now that I have retired, it's such a pleasure to return to these first

drafts and work on them.

KV: In the book, you vividly describe the life in the village, the surroundings, and the characters of grandfather Viktoras, the book smuggler, his granddaughter Ada, Russian captain Malenkov, broke Lithuanian nobleman Modestas Bogdanskis and others. How did you create such lifelike and detailed descriptions? What was your source? Was it the stories told by your family members or books?

BP: Some of these characters come from stories told by my father like teta Kotryna and her domovoi. The character of Viktoras I've based on my father. The rest are simply alive only in my head.

But I did a tremendous amount of research in order to get a feel for the times in 1902 Lithuania. I read novels, histories, and reached out to Jonas Balys, who lived in Baltimore, for his books on Lithuanian folklore traditions and customs. He kindly sent me all his books.

KV: How did you pick the names for your characters? I would assume that Viktoras is "victorious"; Malenkov derives from a Russian word "malenki" which means



A group photo of the Pavasarininkai where the author's mother is the secretary sitting on the left of the priest and the author's father is sitting to the left of the mother (2nd row, 2nd from the left with the bow tie).

“small”. What about the others? Are there any hidden meanings in them?

BP: No, I never knew that Malenkov is from the Russian word for "small," but it delights me to think about that. I tried to choose names that were appropriate for that time period. I'd look at the Draugas calendar for inspiration since it seems many were named for saints in those years.

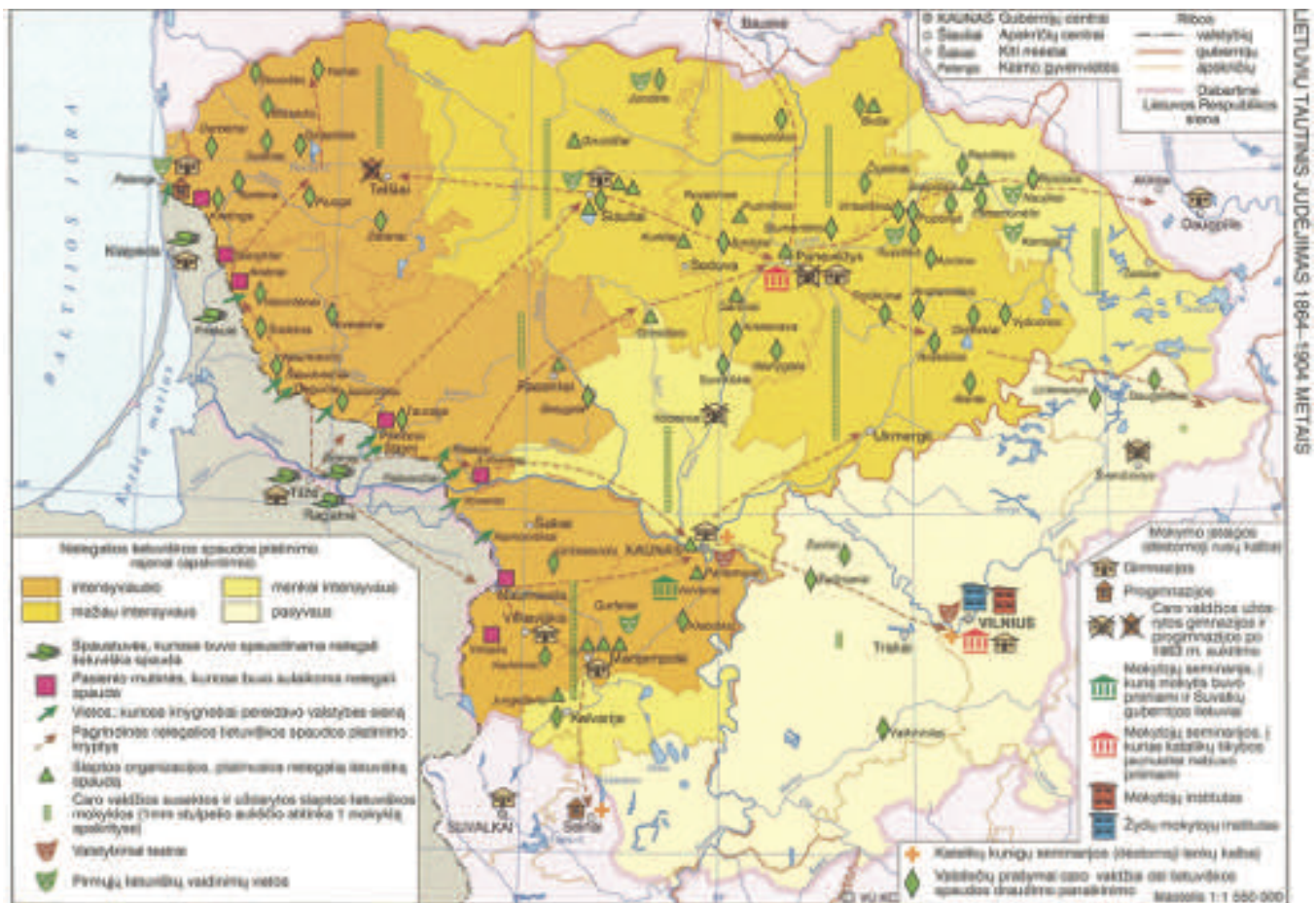
KV: In Lithuanian, a book smuggler is “knygnešys” (book carrier) and the word does not carry any implication of illegal activity. In English, smuggling is usually associated with something not only illegal but bad for the society - drug smuggling, alcohol smuggling, tobacco smuggling... “book smuggling” must be an unusual concept to the American society. Did you encounter any comments about that from anyone not familiar with the Lithuanian history?

BP: Only from my American writing group who was fascinated by the idea of book smuggling. In fact, they were fascinated by all the customs and the life of Lithuania at that time. It is all unknown history in a little-known

country, so they were very curious.

KV: You wrote about the life of Lithuanian immigrants in Chicago in your book, “Lost Birds”. Your own family was a family of displaced persons. The stories of your grandfather and father are tragic and heroic. Your father was not a book smuggler but a “people smuggler”, he helped people escape from Lithuania to East Prussia. Could you share that story with the readers?

BP: In 1940, when the Soviets took over Lithuania, my parents' farm became part of a group of safe farms, like an underground railroad, for getting those on the deportation lists to Siberia to safety, across the border into East Prussia. Their farm was the last one, only 3 kilometers away from the border, so my father took teachers, judges, lawyers--whoever was on the list--across the border. He did this for many people until one night his neighbor stopped him on the way home and told him not to go home because the NKVD was waiting for him. My father fled to join a band of anti-Soviet partisans in the woods. Meanwhile, my mother and grandfather (the book smuggler) were arrested and questioned about the whereabouts



A map of book smuggling activities in 1864-1904.

of my father. My grandfather told the Soviets that my mother knew nothing and asked to let her go. So after three grueling days of questioning by the NKVD, they let my mother go, but they beat my grandfather to death and buried him in a mass grave. To this day we don't know where it is. It's a heart-breaking end for such a noble and courageous man.

KV: What are your impressions of Lithuanians today?

BP: I think that the generation that grew up under the Soviets is still in the process of healing. There was so much trauma during and after the war. Scientists are now finding that trauma is inherited in the DNA. I think those things take generations to heal. And yet we live in a world where Russia is still threatening her neighbors. It's a dangerous neighborhood.

And yet, I see that the young people in Lithuania are hungering for something new, something positive and nourishing. That's hopeful.

KV: Do you think they are still strong enough to resist occupations like your grandfather's and your father's generations were?

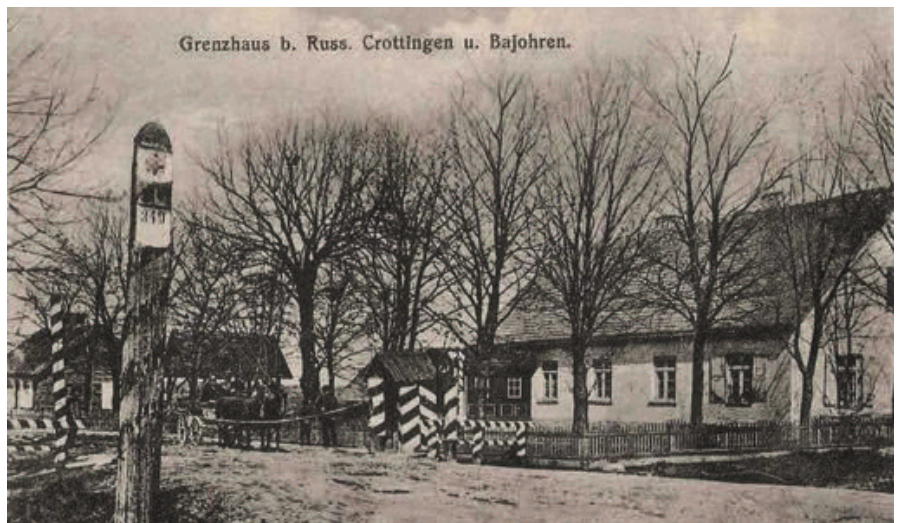
BP: I think none of us know how strong we are until the time comes when there is a need to fight for freedom.

KV: What do you think of the situation of the Lithuanian language today? Is it in need of defending and preserving?

BP: I think our language always needs defending and preserving. Ours is one of the oldest spoken languages in the world. And after all that our ancestors went through to defend it, you would think the language would be sacred by now.



The town of Kretinga on a market day prior to World War One.



East Prussian border post in Bajorai Village.



Border with East Prussia in Kretinga.

THE LAST BOOK SMUGGLER



Birutė Putrius

Chapter Seven

Death Comes to Call

The following Saturday the north wind whistled through the cracks in the buildings of the Varnas farm, making the cows uneasy in their shed. The dog curled up in a ball and the white geese huddled together behind the well. It rattled the window in Viktoras's bedroom, causing him to turn over and moan in his sleep.

In the village of Sapanai, it was generally said that the northern people were a hardy stock, with a great respect for the four winds, but that night, when the north wind blew with such a mournful howl from the marshes into Sapanai, it unsettled even the bravest of souls. Some villagers said the demons, banished by the priests and witches, had returned. Others claimed it was the lonely moaning of the last of Napoleon's soldiers, whose spirits still wandered the wetlands searching for the way home to France. Still others heard the cries of Northern Crusaders reenacting the bloody baptism of Lithuania, the last country in Europe to become Christian. Or perhaps the ghosts of the Golden Horde were thundering in from Mongolia on their small horses.

As the north wind forced its way through the loose boards of the cottage, Viktoras half-woke with a shudder, rubbing his eyes, hooded by a slight Mongolian fold, a genetic remnant of that horde. He had been dreaming he was dancing with his late wife, Emilija. His friend Balys played the concertina while he kicked up some dust with her in the warm sunlight of the farmyard. His wife whispered in his ear, a stinging plea to bring his estranged daughter back home.

He heard the wind whistle and trembled, feeling something cold brush against his cheek. "Come, Viktoras," a voice whispered so soft and inviting, calling his name pleasantly, yet with such insistence. "Come," she repeated, implying something myste-

Cover of "The Last Book Smuggler", a novel by Birutė Putrius

rious and hard to resist. When he realized it wasn't his wife, he pulled the eiderdown over his head and squeezed his eyes shut, hardly breathing, the hair on the back of his neck standing on end.

It was the raven hour just before dawn when Death came trailing her tattered white dress like a faceless bride. The hour when she plucked souls like withered flowers hanging loosely on their stems, gathering them for their last journey. All they had to do was answer her seductive call.

Was this the end of his long life? Viktoras wondered. Was he to die alone in his bed tonight? He kept his eyes shut tightly, not wanting to see her terrible, eyeless face. In truth, he had been expecting her long before she showed up at his bedside. For many nights, he had felt her drawing near, listening for the rustling of her dress and dreading the feel of her cold breath on his cheek.

He lay very still, stubbornly refusing to answer death's call. Even though he had lived a long life, outliving two wives, he wasn't ready. There were things left undone, important things, and he would resist with all that was in him until they were done. He couldn't die before his daughter Kotryna forgave him. Steeling himself, he waited, barely breathing.

Outside his window the wind howled through the bare linden tree while Viktoras muttered silent prayers to God, Mary, and the tribe of saints in heaven to protect him until this night was over so he could be delivered safely into the hands of dawn. The wind moaned and the marshes seemed to be calling, summoning him, as if the whole unseen world was agitated. The dead were visiting the living while demons howled in harmony with the wind.

He prayed to see his Kotryna once more. It squeezed his heart, remembering her as a young girl—the way she would run with all her might like the wind, or hug him around the neck fiercely. In the other room he could hear his son-in-law snuffling and snoring, while his daughter let out a whimper. This wind was agitating them all, their sleep disturbed, their dreams troubled.

His family was away in the land of sleep while he waited for the cocks to crow. If he lived to see the light break the darkness, he vowed he would send his daughter a letter this very day.

The lonely night seemed endless, yet he held on until Death finally seemed to fade away with the darkness, though he knew she would return again. Raising himself on one elbow, he parted the muslin curtain to look outside as the stars paled. He sat up, quietly waiting, resolving not to sleep, waiting with only a sliver of a moon to keep him company.

When the cock finally crowed, he felt reborn. Suddenly he felt like crying when he saw that first light pierce the

darkness. The night had been brutal, but when the sky lightened to a soft gray, the four winds dispersed to other parts of the world to do their mischief.

The old patriarch rubbed the stubble on his face as if to prove he was still there. Sniffing loudly, he wiped a drop from the end of his nose with the back of his hand, relieved that Death had only played with him the way a cat will sometimes scare a mouse, holding it for a while, only to let it go again.

When the light sifted down, solidifying the vague dark shapes outside his window into the familiar landscape of his farm, he heard someone rustling inside the house. A door closed and the cows softly lowed, waiting patiently with their full udders.

Outside his window, he could see Ada, her face still puffy from sleep, her thick blond braids to her waist, as her clogs crunched through the farmyard. He only hoped when the time came for Ada to marry, she would choose a better man than Bogdanskis. Perhaps this was only a slight flirtation that would pass like a faint breeze.

He watched Ada stop for a moment with her milk buckets to look out over the melancholy orchard. The trees were bare, the kitchen garden harvested, and the farther fields lay quietly, resting until awakened again in spring. After the blustery night, the mysterious stillness of the land and the ancient pine forest beyond felt like a reverent prayer.

The horizon brightened, glowing in pinks and gold as the sun rose in all of its splendor. Viktoras stood at the window to greet the sunrise. Though his joints ached and he felt stiff and creaky, he was grateful to have survived the night. It seemed grand to be alive, watching Ada go about her ordinary chores, slipping into the cowshed, disturbing the doves, which began to murmur, lifting their wings and preening their feathers. Outside the window stood the maple tree he planted when Ada was born, and next to that, the birch tree he planted when Kotryna was born. His two favorite women—one absent.

His breath left a cloud on the cold window. A thin mist was rising in the empty fields. Would he live long enough to see the pale green buds unfurl in the spring or see the storks return to their nests, or taste the wild strawberries of next summer? The same earth that fed him would soon embrace his bones.

Now he could hear the others tending to their chores, so he dressed and went into the kitchen to light the stove. Then he sat at the table, staring at his hands, wide as paddles, thinking about the things left undone and the little time left to do them.

Soon Ada came through the back door, kicking off her clogs and placing the milk buckets down, her sleep-softened face reminding him of his late wife. "Praised be," she said gaily.

"Forever and ever," he answered.

"What is it, Grandfather? Is something wrong? Did you not sleep well?" She seemed to read his mood in an instant.

He turned his hands over and examined them. "Look at how old these hands are, but how well they've served me all my life."

Ada looked at his face, "Are you feeling well?" He shrugged dismissively. "Ach, I'm like that old oak tree outside. We both creak in the wind."

His face was lined and weathered like the old wooden planks of the barn. He had once stood tall and stout but had shrunken now and only stood a head taller than his granddaughter, though he still prided himself on his full head of silver hair.

"Were you able to sleep with that wind howling?" he asked.

"It was a terrible night," she burst out, "as if all the devils in the world were loose." She looked wide-eyed. "But this morning I had such a vivid dream about you. You were young and dancing with Grandmother in the sunlight while Balys played his concertina."

He studied her, wondering at the coincidence. "That's curious. I had the same dream. Your grandmother, may she rest in peace, must be trying to tell us something."

"Really? But what?" She frowned, putting a kettle on the stove. "What do dreams mean? And why is our village named after dreams?"

The old man scratched his ear. "I remember a widow, the last of her family who had the gift of divination by dreams. Once, many had it, but the church forbade such pagan ideas. I say if you scratch a Lithuanian, you'll find a deeply reverent pagan who watches the earth, the animals, and his dreams for signs."

Ada leaned over to kiss his wrinkled cheek, and the genial fire in his eyes slowly returned.

"Perhaps the dream is about your Teta Kotryna," he said softly, a catch in his throat at the mere mention of her name.

"Teta Kotryna?" Ada was shocked to hear him speak her aunt's name aloud. The whole family tiptoed around the subject. Though she had brought it up recently, Ada still trod carefully into this forbidden territory. "Mama said Teta lives in Smolensk."

He looked out the window. "Kotryna became a domestic servant for a Jewish family. They took her along when they moved." He cleared his throat. "It was my fault," he said in a hoarse whisper. "I'm a stubborn old man." He coughed.

"Ada, I want you to write her. My writing has become too shaky." He raked his hair with his fingers.

She was surprised, but said nothing.

He seemed lost in thought for a moment. "She was

like you, Ada. Balys used to say she was pretty and had so many matchmakers that our old dog went hoarse barking." He shook his head and smiled sadly. "But she only wanted Aleksas Simaitis." His eyes began to smart. "I have to write to him also. In America."

"But where? It's such a big country."

He took a folded piece of paper from his shirt pocket and handed it to her. "Father Jurkus said Simaitis works in the coal mines in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, and had raised money to send shipments of Lithuanian books to St. George's."

Ada repeated, "Shenandoah" like a magical incantation while she went to bring paper to the table and prepared to write.

My Dearest Kotryna,

We have not seen each other for eight long years. The time has come for you to come home. I want to see you once more. Your mother often appears in my dreams, asking me to remedy this hardheaded mistake of mine. Forgive your old father and please come quickly.

Once Ada finished the letter, the old man signed his name with his shaky, spidery signature. Then he sealed the letter and began at once to dictate a letter to Aleksas Simaitis, apologizing for having wronged his daughter's suitor. "Ada, I want you to post these letters in town."

"Can I tell the family?"

He frowned. "Don't say anything just yet." He picked up an empty bucket. "I'd better fetch some water," he said, going out to the well. When Viktoras pulled the well sweep, it screeched, scaring a gray mouse out. Seeing a nearby crow, he whispered, "run, run." The crow swooped down after the mouse, which barely escaped by darting to a shed. Viktoras smiled, whispering to the hidden mouse that they had both eluded death this morning.

Later that evening Viktoras stood at the foot of his bed, afraid to lie down, afraid to shut his eyes, afraid of Death. He stood frozen by his own cowardice and fear until weariness forced him to sit on his bed. Keeping an uneasy watch for Death, he realized this would be the hardest struggle of his battle-scarred life. How long could he forestall the inevitable? Fear clutched at him as he sat, trying to console himself with the fact that two letters had gone out into the world today. One might bring his daughter home, and one that might reach the far shores of America to soften the heart of Simaitis, making him return to Lithuania. Who knew what miracles those letters might cause? Viktoras smiled bravely and finally put his head on his goose down pillow, in the exact spot that was indented from the previous night.

He let out a small sigh. But, then again, he thought, what if Kotryna was still angry and ignored his letter,

or what if she had married someone in Smolensk? And what of Simaitis? He might have married a cowgirl in the New World. He may have died in the coal mines. Viktoras shook his head. Life was full danger and worry. Maybe it was good that his life was coming to an end. He was getting too old to worry about everyone. With a head full of apprehension, he fought off sleep as long as he could, but at long last he succumbed to fatigue.

In the raven hour before dawn, Viktoras was dreaming of Kotryna calling him to help her bring in the cows from the meadow. "Papa," he heard her call and turned to see his daughter chasing a runaway cow. "Papa," he heard her again, only this time he was half-awake when he suddenly realized it was not Kotryna calling, but Death, her breath dank and cold like the grave. His heart quickened and he held his breath, once again refusing to answer her. "Your letters are written. Come," she urged firmly but invitingly. No, he couldn't die yet. What would happen to Ada? What did his sweet granddaughter know about men like Bogdanskis? Viktoras distrusted the man completely and was determined to protect her. He gritted his teeth and steeled his will, all the while praying for the blessed morning light to splinter the darkness.

Chapter Nine

The Painted Coffin

Elzbieta sat knitting while practicing the new French word she had learned. "Bonjour," she said, haltingly, but no matter how she turned her tongue, she couldn't make it sound right and would ask Julija to repeat it. All of this was so annoying to Viktoras that he finally told them he'd have no more French in his house. No one said anything for a few moments. Viktoras put down his pipe, and looking around the table, announced he wanted the village coffin maker to make his coffin.

Ada blanched. "Your coffin!"

Elzbieta looked at her father, unsure what to make of this. "Is this a joke?" she asked, with a half-smile.

"No," said Viktoras, his face grim.

Spitting three times to ward off bad luck, Elzbieta added, Papa, whoever heard of such a thing? To have your coffin made ahead of time." She looked alarmed. "Are you ill?"

"Just call it a premonition." Viktoras looked at his hands. "Life moves ahead like a swift current and we move with it, whether we want to or not."

Ada thought he must be ill and simply not telling them to spare their feelings. She went to her grandfather and pressed her cheek to his. "Oh, Grandfather, I pray your premonition is wrong."

He was touched by her reaction.

"There, there," he said patting her cheek. "We'll all go out like candles one day." He cleared his throat to mask

his rising emotion.

"I'm sure you've got many years ahead of you," Ada said, gripping her grandfather's hand, as if to push this idea of death away. It was a well-known fact that when some old people decided it was time to die, they simply sat down in a chair and willed themselves to do it. Such stories were told in the village.

"You used to let me climb onto your lap and would listen to me, defend and advise me. What would I do without you?" Ada asked, tears rising. For a few moments, no one spoke.

As Viktoras looked at her, a smile rose, bringing him out of his sadness. He wiped his eye with his calloused finger, too moved to say anything. Taking a breath, he added, "I'm not afraid of death. It seems like the night that comes after a long summer's day, a time to rest and to join your grandmother. My generation has all died except for a few lonely survivors like Balys. Sometimes I feel as if they've all gone off to some celebration and forgotten me." He tried to smile. "But don't worry, my dear. I'm not eager to join them just yet. I still have a few things left to do."

Three days later the coffin maker arrived to take the old man's measurements. Baffled and uncomfortable, he stammered, "I've never done this for a man still living rather than a corpse," He looked at Stasys and then Elzbieta. "It doesn't seem right."

They shrugged and nodded in agreement.

Viktoras smiled. "If you live long enough, you get to see all sorts of unaccustomed things."

Before the man was finished with his measurements, neighbors were already knocking at the door, wanting to know who had died. When they saw the coffin-maker measuring a man still living, tongues began to cluck. This was unheard of. Poor Viktoras must be at death's door, they whispered to one another. That, or he was losing his good sense.

On Friday Father Jurkus came for a visit. Ada greeted him at the door and led him to the parlor, where her grandfather was sitting alone, keeping a dark hour, looking back on his life's failings and missteps.

"What's this I hear about you having your coffin made?" Father Jurkus said bracingly. "I thought I'd better come by to see for myself if you were in need of last rites," he said, half-joking.

Viktoras smiled sheepishly, inviting the priest to sit.

"I can see something is sitting heavily on you. What is it, my friend?" A silence fell between them.

After a few uncomfortable moments, Viktoras unburdened himself. "Father, you'll think this a bit peculiar, but on some nights Death comes to call me," he confided. "It seems my days are numbered, so give me your bless-



Border post with East Prussia.

ing, and when my time comes, you'll say a word at my funeral."

Father Jurkus studied him for any hints of illness or instability, but his old friend looked the same. "Ah well, we aren't as young as we used to be in our book smuggling days, but you look fine to me." The priest was decades younger, but his paunch was growing and his hair was graying.

The priest told him that soon he would be crossing the border to East Prussia, the region they called Lithuania Minor, where many Lithuanians still lived. There he would meet with the Lithuanian exiles, who printed the banned books, newspapers, and pamphlets urging resistance to the Russian Empire.

Taking out a bottle of his plum brandy, Viktoras proposed a toast. "To our book smuggling days. I wish I was still vigorous enough to cross the border with you."

"I usually leave this to the younger men," he said, "but I want to meet with some of our exiled patriots. They're urging an end to the ban on Lithuanian press and language, and autonomy for Lithuania. Their voices are calling for freedom."

Viktoras lit up at the news. "You've just added ten years to my life! I swear by my stubborn Samogitian ancestors, I'll live to see that day come."

The following Tuesday the wagon carrying the pine coffin came down the rutted road, listing this way and that, almost dropping its load several times before it arrived. Viktoras propped it on a long bench in the farmyard and lit his long clay pipe. The coffin smelled of fresh-cut wood. A heavy sadness flooded over him at the thought of being buried in this humble coffin. Soon Margis curled up next to him on the granary porch as he sat plowing through his long life. It was a melancholy meditation, as memories came flooding back of his mother singing lullabies, of his father teaching him how to harrow a field, of his many brothers and sisters, all dead and buried. There were so few alive who shared his history.

Looking back over his life, Viktoras felt regret that the press ban had not been lifted in his lifetime. He thought of his book smuggling days, his radical youth, his yearning for an independent Lithuania, the one his father and grandfather had always talked about. If only he could live to see these dreams come true. But he knew that Death sat in the shadows of his room, waiting to pluck his soul. His life suddenly felt like a long, fevered dream, yet it was sad to leave it behind. What was life, he wondered, looking at his coffin. Why do we live? What is the reason for such strife and heartache, such grief and loss?

Nearby, on the granary porch, Ada had been painting her green dowry chest with birds and flowers. Now she came to see what her grandfather was contemplating so seriously. "Doesn't it feel strange to be looking at your own coffin?"

Sucking on his pipe with a quiet dignity, Viktoras considered the question. Cloudlets of smoke hovered overhead. "I want to paint my coffin the way that you painted your dowry chest."

"Paint your coffin?" Ada was astonished into silence. To paint a dowry chest was perfectly acceptable, but to paint a coffin was altogether odd.

"Yes, with scenes from my long life like a story. And in between the scenes, I want you to paint your flowers."

Elzbieta came into the farmyard, having overheard their conversation. "Oh, God help us! It's not enough to have your coffin made, but now you're going to paint it! What will people say?"

Her father bristled. "To the devil with them if they don't like it!" He enjoyed painting. In the parlor, there were several landscapes he had painted long ago, but he had no will to paint these last years without his wife's encouragement. He stood, wincing due to his bad knee, and went into the house to find his paints.

All afternoon Viktoras sat considering the relentless hammer of time. Every so often, one or another member of the family came out to sit with him. He remembered his tiny sister, Maryte, who was born blind and lame and died before her fifth birthday. What did the blind dream of if they had never seen a flower or a bird? He had not thought of her in decades, but now she seemed so dear to him that he started to paint her portrait.

The next day was sunny, and everyone wanted to be outside. Though Viktoras's fingers were the size of sausages with yellowed fingernails like thick horn, he was still able to make the brushes do his bidding.

He spoke to Ada while he painted. "Across the turbulent Baltic Sea is Sweden, but at Lithuania's back is Russia with its yoke. The tsar is called 'little father' by his people, but I, like most Lithuanians, spit whenever his name is mentioned, in the same spirit in which I spit at the mention of the devil. And Russia, God help us, with its gen-

darmes and its magistrates, still clings to the land like an epidemic.” He spat and wiped his nose.

He finished one story and went on to the next. “Why was Catherine called the Great when she murdered her husband, the tsar, and later ordered the partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795?” He told Ada it meant the end of sovereignty for each country, and therefore he would never paint the German-born tsarina. “Lithuania was given to the Russians, and it began a long dark night in our country. That night is still upon us, and dawn seems far away, but I won’t live to see that dawn. I only hope you get to see it, my dear.”

He began to weave another tale while painting Napoleon’s Grande Armée as they advanced across Lithuania: French soldiers, dressed in blue and red uniforms, marching in cadence into Vilnius. Lithuanians joined his troops because Napoleon had promised to defeat the Russian Empire and restore freedom to Lithuania.

Viktoras despaired, realizing more than a hundred years had passed since Lithuania had been absorbed into the Russian Empire. He had not yet been born when Napoleon, the great liberator, marched into Lithuania, but elders had told the story of his march through Vilnius often, and it had fired his imagination ensuring he would remember it always. He could still picture those soldiers vividly, as though he had been there himself, so he never hesitated to tell it over a glass of beer.

Ada watched him paint, listening to his stories, though she had heard them many times before. She loved his enthusiasm, his love of life’s unexpected surprises, and his colorful, old-fashioned language.

The bitter October cold returned the next day and lasted through the week, making it difficult for Viktoras to stay at his painting long. Rubbing his hand absent-mindedly over his brown wool pants, he welcomed a break when Stasys brought in the winter cabbage, perfect for making sauerkraut. The two men sat, cutting the cabbage into the large barrel, adding apples, caraway seeds and carrots and plenty of salt for the cabbage to ferment. It would have to last the winter.

A week later the weather warmed a bit, so Viktoras continued his work on the other side of the coffin. Ada went about her daily chores of feeding the cackling chickens and honking geese. From time to time, she would stop to check on his progress. He had just finished painting his wedding to his beloved Emilija. Ada recalled how he had mourned for months after her death, sitting as if lost, his eyes wet with uncried tears. Nothing would cheer him up that year or the next.

When Ada asked about his first wife, he told her about how she had died in childbirth, as did the son she had borne. He said Jadze was now the palest shadow of a memory, while his Emilija still seemed to be in the next

room, or milking the cows—just out of sight momentarily. Sometimes he woke thinking she was still sleeping beside him. His timeworn features softened with remembered love. “She was the best wife a man could have. How could she die before me when she was fifteen years younger? It was unfair.” He had always worried about leaving her a widow.

From time to time he got lost in his memories, slipping briefly away from the conversation with the gaze of an old man. When Ada brought him some tea, he looked up as if awakening from a near doze. She wondered why was it hard to believe that the old had once been young, strong, and in love?

Viktoras put down his paintbrush and took out his handkerchief to wipe his nose. “I married your grandmother late in life, and she gave me two daughters. And now I have you, my dear.” He patted her hand and smiled, his eyes crinkling in the corners. “And, of course, your brother and your two silly sisters too.” He laughed as he took out his pipe and lit it.

Elzbieta came out with her shawl wrapped around her head and shoulders to see what her father was painting.

When she saw the image of a bride, she gasped.

“That’s mama, isn’t it?” She quietly studied the image.

“It is.” Viktoras nodded and turned to his daughter, putting his brushes down. “She was a beauty just like our Ada.”

“Let’s go inside before we all get the grippe,” said Elzbieta.

As they warmed up by the stove, Elzbieta turned to her father.

“Papa, the other day, you told Modestas about some letters Ada had written for you. To whom?”

“Didn’t I tell you?” When he saw his daughter’s perplexed look, he wheezed his characteristic laugh into his fist, enjoying her confusion. “To your sister. I’ve asked Kotryna to come home.”

Elzbieta shook her head in disbelief. She looked from Ada to her father, whose bushy eyebrows rose and fell with each suck on his pipe. “To Kotryna, after all these years of total silence?”

Her father frowned. “I was wrong. I finally see it.”

By the end of the week, when the weather cleared, Viktoras put on his sheepskin jacket and went outside to finish painting. He sat down with a weary sigh. The sky was cobalt blue and brilliantly sunny but with a cold wind blowing from the north, making his rheumatic knee worse. He clenched his teeth and grumbled, “To the devil with these hot pains.”

Margis trotted over, wagging his tail and licking the old man’s hand in sympathy. Viktoras smiled and petted his faithful guardian. Before long the cold wind was biting, so he asked his grandson to move his coffin to the barn.

In the gloom of the drafty old barn, he decided to paint the freeing of the serfs in 1861 by Tsar Alexander II.

Soon Ada came to keep him company. While painting, he told her how it had been a true wonder to finally be free from serfdom. He had thought he would never live to see the day. Now he was on his own land, and his family was no longer enslaved to the manor.

While painting the foot of his coffin, he told her about the revolt of 1863 against the Russian Empire. Once Lithuania was forced into the Russian Empire, he said, there followed many attempts at restoring independence, but he couldn't forget the terrible revolt of 1863. All of his young hopes for freedom were invested in that uprising, yet it failed. Russia crushed the rebellion by deporting thousands to Siberia, while others were hanged or imprisoned. Viktoras bitterly related how Muravyov the Hangman had said, "What the Russian bayonet didn't accomplish, the Russian school will." Even singing the national anthem was a criminal act. Centers of resistance sprung up in Tilsit and America. Viktoras lost many friends in the uprising.

That was when he had joined the book smugglers.

"This part of my history is still too dangerous to put on my coffin," he explained. "I'll just paint a book here and there."

At breakfast the next day, while Viktoras ate, he started a story and Ada listened spellbound. He had seen both Tilsit and Konigsberg aboil with revolutionaries: Socialists, Marxists, and the radical Nihilists, each plotting against the tsar.

"Death had stalked Tsar Alexander II for a number of years," Viktoras said. "In the late 1860s, a mine was laid in front of the tsar's train, but he escaped unharmed. Five shots were fired at him in 1873 but missed. In 1880, a revolutionary set off a bomb in the Winter Palace, while the tsar waited for his dinner. Again, Alexander escaped. In 1881, a revolutionary hurled a bomb at the tsar's carriage. The tsar thanked God he wasn't injured. A second assassin said it was too early to thank God and threw a second bomb. Death finally caught up to the tsar." Viktoras yawned and stretched.

"His son, Alexander III, reversed the liberal reforms of his father and restored repressions, imposing severe Russification. He demanded that Governor-General Mikhail Muravyov 'make a Lithuania with nothing Lithuanian in it.' But the tsar had underestimated the stubbornness of the farmers." Viktoras carried on. "In 1894, Nicholas II became the tsar, but he never had the stomach for it. Like his grandfather, Nicholas had the uneasy feeling that Death sat on his nose counting his days." Viktoras sighed, knowing Death was also counting his days. He gazed into the distance for a few moments. "What is sadder than a dying language? If our language dies, then who do we

become? Russians?"

"Language is what makes us Lithuanians," said Ada, watching her grandfather paint with a quiet appreciation. His hand wasn't steady and his vision was weak, but the scenes jumped to life. After each scene was finished, he'd blow on his stiffened fingers to warm them, laughing that if he lived any longer, there'd be no room left on his coffin. He seemed in good health, so neither Ada nor anyone else believed death was near.

Having his life laid out before him put Viktoras in a philosophical mood. Life, he mused, was filled with good and evil, poverty and grief, joy and sorrow. And yet, eventually, everyone died. And time erased everything. "When you look at the path your life has taken, you see there was no other possible direction." He looked at his granddaughter, who had so much life ahead of her. "Ada, I've finished. Now, come paint your beautiful flowers."

"What kind of flowers would you like, Grandfather?"

"Oh, make me a whole field of wildflowers, those delicate purple ones we see in spring, my dear, and some blue forget-me-nots with those yellow eyes in the center."

Viktoras stood watching Ada paint her flowers, marveling at how the tiny blossoms bloomed from under her brush. Her flowers looked so real that it seemed the dew still clung to them. Ada had painted Dora's dowry chest with daisies and Julija's with violets. Those chests were the envy of every girl in the village.

"What's ahead for me, Grandfather? Will I ever find love?" asked Ada plaintively.

"Oh Ada." He sighed deeply. "I guarantee love will find you."

After supper, Viktoras's thoughts returned to Kotryna. Where was she? Why hadn't he heard anything from her? Had she received his letter? Why hadn't she written him? She must still be angry with him. What if she had taken ill and died during those eight years? Wouldn't someone have written him?

Oh, he drove himself mad with all the things he imagined. All the things he had willed himself not to think about for eight years now came flooding in like water through a broken dam.

That night when he looked outside, the night was clear and filled with innumerable stars. Where was heaven, he wondered? Somewhere beyond those stars? It seemed far away. When sleep wouldn't come, he numbered his dead. Where were the souls of his departed parents, wives, or his stillborn son, may they rest in peace? He tossed and turned, wrestling with his thoughts long into the night, while remorse hid in the shadows and regret pressed down on his chest like a coffin lid.

The Last Book Smuggler can be ordered from www.amazon.com and www.barnesandnoble.com

a taste of lithuania

Močiutės pyragas (Grandmother's cake)

By Jana Sirusaitė-Motivans



My Močiutė Elena used to make a simple apricot cake. She prepared it by spreading apricot jam on top of a layer of dough, and then crumbling another layer of dough on top of the jam. The cake was flat, and cut into squares for serving. Over the years, I have tried many recipes in an effort to re-create those apricot squares. I have come close, but it has never been quite the same as Močiutės. I was beginning to think that it would be impossible to re-create a memory.

Luckily, I was proven wrong last September at the Neringa culinary heritage weekend. There was a cake on the dessert table labelled Močiutės pyragas that looked just like my Močiutės apricot squares. My sister Dalia tasted it first, and quickly sent me over to get a piece for myself. When I tasted it, I realized it was just like my Močiutės! My sister and I agreed that this was exactly the memory I had been chasing.

The Močiutės pyragas was made by my friend Vida Strazdis. In her family, it is known as Mama Rūtos pyragas, as it can be attributed to her mother-in-law Rūta Strazdienė (who got the recipe from her friend Eleonora Urbelienė). Vida started calling it Močiutės pyragas when she served it at Neringa events because, as she told me, "every Lithuanian močiutė has a variation of this cake".

This recipe yields quite a large cake, and calls for it to be baked in a 12x18 inch pan. This is a pan size that most people probably do not have in their kitchen. I am an avid baker, yet I did not have this size pan, so I used

a 9x13 inch pan the first time I baked this. The resulting cake was certainly delicious, and most people would stop right there, but it was not quite the same as the one Vida served. I went out and bought a 12x18 inch pan and tried again, and it was perfect. The larger size pan yields the perfect ratio of dough to jam.

According to Vida, the cake tastes even better the day after it is baked because the jam has a chance to soak into the cake layers. The cake can also be frozen, which is good considering the finished product is quite large. It is a nice thing to have on hand to treat visitors.

Vida also mentioned that the dough is quite versatile. She has made an apple version of the cake by spreading a layer of applesauce on the bottom layer of dough, topping it with sliced apples, and finishing with a glaze of melted apple jelly. For this tart-like version, she omits the top layer of dough. This left-over dough can be used to make cookies! The dough can be formed into a roll and chilled, then sliced and baked. Yet another option is to substitute brown sugar for the white sugar when making the dough, and use the entire batch for making refrigerator cookies. The dough needs to be formed into rolls, chilled, and sliced. Place the cookies on a baking sheet, and top each with a pecan half. Now, that reminds me of cookies my Močiutė Sofija used to make. One recipe provides memories of both of my grandmothers!

Ačiū, Vida!

Močiutės pyragas (Grandmother's cake)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound butter, softened
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 7 cups flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- Two 18-ounce jars apricot (or raspberry) preserves

Grease a 12x18 inch pan. In a medium-sized bowl, combine the dry ingredients, stirring the salt and baking powder into the flour. In an extra-large bowl, use an electric mixer to cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add in eggs and vanilla, mixing thoroughly. Use a large wooden spoon to fold in the flour a little bit at a time, mixing until well combined. The batter should not stick to your fingers. Add more flour, up to ¼ cup if needed. Divide the dough in half. Pat one half onto the bottom of the greased pan. Spread with jam. Use the large holes of a four-sided grater to grate the remaining half of dough over the jam to create a crumb-like appearance to the topping. (Chilling the dough prior to grating is helpful). Bake in 350° oven for approximately 45 minutes or until golden.



current events

Security

...Despite requests by the Baltic nations, the Secretary General of NATO Jens Stoltenberg said that they do not plan to increase their military presence in the Baltics. They plan on increasing their ability to reinforce and supply the existing troop level. The plans will be discussed at the next NATO summit in Brussels in July. The Baltic nations have also sought extra US aid to counter any Russian moves against them.

...An additional 10 Lithuanian Special Operations soldiers left for Kandahar, Afghanistan to support NATO's Operation Resolute Support. There were 21 Lithuanian troops on site so the total is less than the Seimas set limit of 50 in Afghanistan. Lithuania also supports the US-led operations in Iraq and participates in multinational operations in Kosovo, Ukraine, Mali, Central African Republic plus the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. Approximately 120 Lithuanian soldiers are deployed.

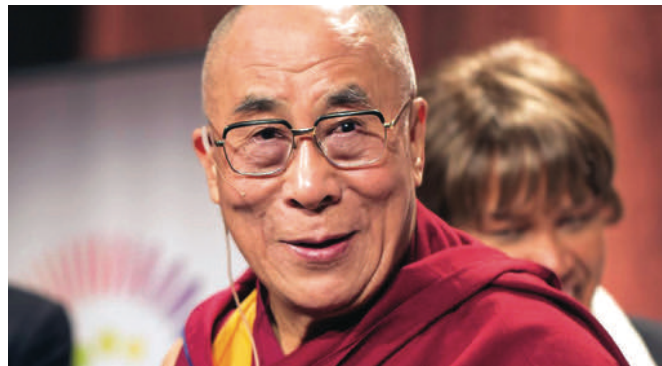
...A Russian border hovercraft violated the Lithuanian border for 2 minutes in the Curonian Lagoon. The Lithuanian Foreign Ministry has requested an explanation by the Russian Embassy.

...The Latvian Security Police have detained the pro-Russian leader of an unregistered organization, the Congress of Non-Citizens over anti-Latvian activities. Aleksandrs Gaponenko already faces criminal charges of instigation of ethnic hatred and now faces possible charges of posting statements on Facebook that American soldiers posing as Russians will carry out arrests of Russian speakers in Riga. His lawyer said that he has gone on a hunger strike. He was detained in 2015 for breaking the 78th Article of the Latvian Criminal Code-for instigation of national, ethnic and religious hatred. The court is scheduled to hear the case on June 19.

...Lithuania and Ukraine oppose the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia to Germany under the Baltic Sea because it will make Europe more dependent on the pricing and the political whims of Russia. It has already received construction permits from Germany and Finland and expects permits from Russia, Denmark and Sweden. The US also opposes the pipeline because it competes with its LNG. Ukraine opposed it because it will lose the current transit revenue.

...The Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual leader, is planning his fourth visit to Lithuania on June 13-14 where he will give a speech at Vilnius University. On his last visit in 2013 he met with President Dalia Grybauskaitė and triggered a

negative response from China. In light of the China Merchant Group's interest in building a new container terminal in Klaipeda, it will be interesting if any Lithuanian officials meet the visitor.



Tenzin Gyatso, 14th Dalai Lama since 22 February 1940.

Business

...An Austin, Texas company, Bazaarvoice, plans to open an office in Vilnius and add 60-80 employees to its current force of 750. Founded in 2005 it has a network of 5,700 client websites including QVC, Argos, and Debenhams with monthly views of 500 million and associated consumer-generated content (CGC) of ratings and reviews. The company has offices in the US, France, Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Germany and Australia. In February 2018 the Los Angeles based Marlin Equity Partners took it private and is using its resources to grow this e-commerce and data-driven business.

...The German wiring system producer, Baltijos Eukuteccas, will invest 1.5 million euros in a new manufacturing facility in the Klaipeda Free Economic Zone (FEZ). The FlexStart facility has the flexibility to build a wide variety of automotive cables and the quality local infrastructure includes roads that are able to handle heavy loads. The Klaipeda FEZ now includes electric bus producer, Dancer Bus and component manufacturers Yazaki, Albright and Be-Ge.

...Centric, a Netherlands company founded in 1992 with 4,300 on staff, plans on opening an office in Kaunas and employ 200 IT personnel within three years. The major functions of the staff will be technical engineering, managed services, IT outsourcing, business process outsourcing, infrastructure and cloud engineering. The team will work with counterparts in the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Romania and the Scandinavia countries. It will join other Dutch companies in Kaunas (GeoPhy and Meridia) and others in Vilnius (Macaw and BrokerTeam).

...Another Dutch company, Focus Fabrication Group,

plans to open a 3,800 square meter metal processing plant in Klaipėda in 2019 where it will convert 10,400 kg/day of metal into a pipe for western European oil and gas companies.

...Marriott opened its first hotel in Vilnius on the former site of the Žalgiris Stadium. The Marriott Courtyard features 199 rooms, conference facilities of 220 square meters, bar, restaurant, 24-hour store and gym. Hanner, the developer, invested 20 million euros in the project which will be run by hotel operator Apex Alliance Hotel Management.

...The Lithuanian Court of Appeals has approved Axis Industries with Vilnius Capital, Kauno Arena and architects Populous & Cloud to construct the National Stadium in Vilnius at a cost of 79.9 million euros.

...Two months ago we reported that Danske Bank was adding about 1 employee per day in Lithuania. It now appears that they will focus on supporting their Nordic clients to the gradual exclusion of Baltic clients. Existing contracts will be honored but no new Baltic contracts or accounts will be added.

General

...Construction has begun on a new memorial, The Lost Shtetl Museum, dedicated to the memory of the hundreds of Jewish settlements that were destroyed during the Nazis occupation with help of local collaborators. Of the 200,000 Lithuanian Jews prior to the Holocaust there are only about 3,000 Jews remaining in a population of under 3 million. The museum is located in Šeduva, 42 km west of Panevėžys in northern Lithuania, where more than 650 Jews executed in August 1941. The museum is expected to open in the summer of 2020. Among the attendees were the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, USA Ambassador - Anne Hall and Israel Ambassador - Amir Maimon. President Dalia Grybauskaitė offered remarks which were read at the groundbreaking.

...With the ban on alcohol advertising, the hours of alcohol sale reduced and banned for those under 20 years, the illegal trade has moved online. The head of the public organization, Lithuanian Without Shadow, Kęstutis Kupšys said that the young people are working around the alcohol restrictions by becoming illegal sellers as well as buyers. The head of the Lithuanian Free Market Institute feels that the shadow economy of trade in fuel, cigarettes and alcohol is growing.

...Also on the topic of alcohol, there is a proposal before the Seimas to require rental cars be equipped with alco-

hol interlocks. Data suggest that a quarter of all vehicle deaths are attributed to drunk driving. Such "alcolocks" are being considered for the entire EU by the European Parliament and would cover privately owned vehicles.

...A former Lithuanian judge and member of Seimas is scheduled to be extradited from Chicago to Lithuania to face charges of slander for accusing several people of molesting children and her refusal to comply with court orders. Neringa Venckienė fears for her life if returned because of her exposure of a pedophile ring.

...Pensioners rallied outside the Presidential Palace in Vilnius to demand higher pensions and to protest transfers from the state social insurance fund, Sodra, to private pension funds. The average pension is 332 euros/month up 30 euros from 2017.

...Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis' candidate for Justice Minister, Giedrius Danelius, was rejected by President Dalia Grybauskaitė. He was the defense attorney who among various cases successfully defended the President's Press Officer on charges of disclosure of state secrets and abuse of power. The Prime Minister said that the President's rejection ran counter to the rule of law and every person's right to defense.

...Under pressure from the President, the Minister of Agriculture, Bronius Markauskas, has submitted his resignation to the Prime Minister in light of his family's farming of land without permission and accepting related EU subsidies.

...Three hundred Lithuanian police officers were involved in the arrest of 19 members of a Kaunas based gang that smuggled drugs and weapons and was wanted by Europol for property crimes in Germany.

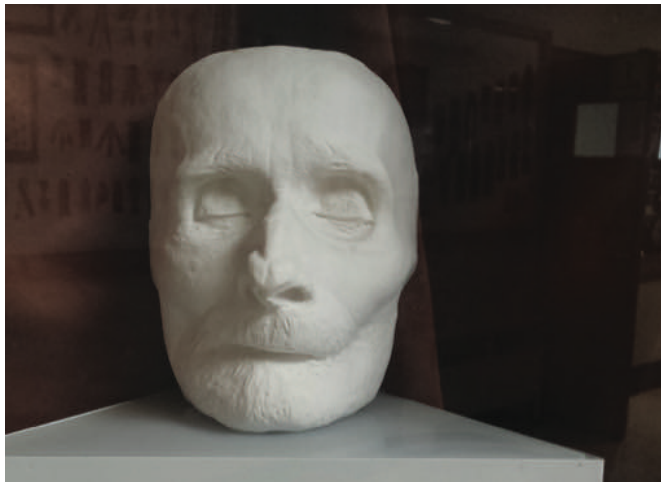
...The basketball Ball brothers left the Lithuanian BC Prienų Vytautas team "by mutual agreement". LiAngelo (19) has a bad ankle and LaMelo (16) has back pain. Over 14 games LiAngelo averaged 21.2 minutes playing time, scored 12.6 points making nearly 41% of his 3-point attempts. Over 8 games LaMelo averaged 12.4 minutes and 6.5 points. Their father, LaVar Ball expressed concern over LaMelo's limited playing time. Now they can attend the Pro Basketball Combine in Florida during May and be ready for the NBA draft June 21 in Brooklyn, NY. Their only legacy in Lithuania may be the local Tango Pizza shop which invested 100,000 euros to double the table capacity for the "Ball" tourist trade which may disappear like the snow in springtime.

Lithuanian Research and Studies Center News

By Dr. Indrė Antanaitis-Jacobs

The Lithuanian Research and Studies Center (LRSC) in Chicago, whose focus is the preservation of Lithuanian culture world-wide, continues its work of collecting, archiving, and safeguarding Lithuanian cultural heritage materials, as well as receiving researchers and aiding them in their Lithuanian-oriented studies.

With this year marking the 150th anniversary since the birth of Lithuanian teacher, philosopher, writer, and musician Wilhelm Storost Vydūnas, on March 18th, the LRSC co-hosted a commemorative event in honor of Vydūnas at the World Lithuanian Center in Lemont. There, LRSC displayed exhibits of Vydūnas from its Lithuanian Museum – his death mask, pen, published books, as well as an album of Vydūnas’s student Antanas Krauss, which contains some of Vydūnas’s later writings.



Vydūnas death mask, Lithuanian Museum at LRSC.

LRSC archivist Dr Indrė Antanaitis-Jacobs attended the audiovisual workshop of the Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) in downtown Chicago on March 22nd. Fifteen archivists participated in the workshop, from diverse work backgrounds that included several university libraries, a museum, a senior living residence, the company Hallmark, and Rotary International. The audiovisual workshop, led by Indiana University film archivist Andy Uhrich and Conagra Brands Content Asset specialist Amy Belotti, focused on how to determine what types of time-based media one has in ones collection, how to assess their condition needs, and how to handle them without damaging them.

The daughter of first wave Lithuanian immigrants, Anne Šimkutė-Suelzer, donated a few boxes of very old Lithu-

anian books, periodicals, prayer books, postcards, and holy pictures to the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center. Much of the contents of her donation was 100 years or close to one hundred years old. Mrs. Suelzer had attended the St. Casimir Academy before Maria High School was built. Together with her son Karl Suelzer, they toured the Lithuanian Museum and Medicine Museums with much interest.



Anne Suelzer in the middle, with her son Karl and LRSC intern Rūta Kupetytė.

LRSC often receives visitors, from near and far, those wishing to donate, those who wish to see the wealth of our various cultural heritage records. On April 13, Lithuanian politician Dr. Zigmantas Vaišvila visited the Center. In 1990, he was one of the signatories of the Act of the Re-Establishment of the State of Lithuania or the Act of March 11. Dr. Vaišvila was accompanied by Ligija Tautkuvienė, Vice head of the committee “Už dvigubą pilietybę (For Dual Citizenship)”.



Dr. Vaišvila and Mrs. Tautkuvienė near the portrait of Dr. Jonas Basanavičius in the World Lithuanian Archives library.

Other recent visitors to the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center in Chicago include Father Jonas Morkvėnas from Panevėžys, who was searching for archival materials regarding Father Alfonsas Lipniūnas, as well as Prof. Dr. Darius Kučinskis from Kaunas University of Technology, who is visiting in Chicago on a Baltic American Freedom Foundation scholarship in order to study old Lithuanian music recordings and Lithuanian cultural life in the beginning of the 20th century.

Archival work at the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center has been aided by two interns from Lithuania these last months. Rūta Kupetytė, radio news reporter for Lithuanian National Radio and Television recently finished a two-month internship at LRSC, and Rimantė Jaugaitė, history student graduate from Vytautas Magnus University, has been assisting us since February. These ladies both were awarded scholarships by the Education Exchanges Support Foundation, a national agency entrusted with the administration of Erasmus and Lifelong Learning programs and other initiatives funded by the European Commission and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania in the field of education and vocational training.

Also, students from the Lithuanian Culture class (taught by Prof. Giedrius Subačius) at the University of Illinois at Chicago occasionally volunteer at the Center.

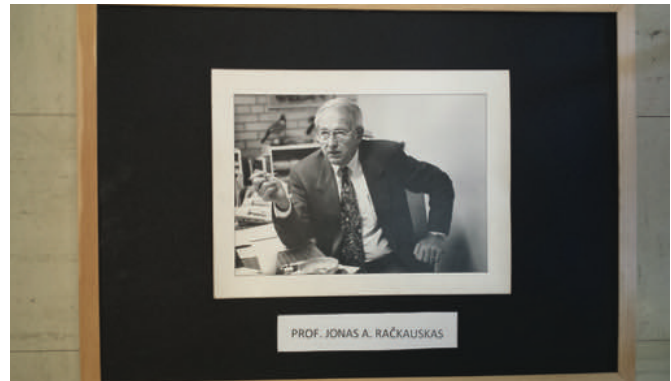
Chicago's Intervideo Duplication Services Petras Bernotas digitized LRSC archival video and audiotapes of Simas Kudirka for the new movie that Lithuanian producer Giedrė Žickytė is making about Simas Kudirka. This project was supported by the Lithuanian Foundation, Inc.



Petras Bernotas of Intervideo Duplication Services in Chicago.

A memorial was held in honor of Prof. Jonas Račkauskas (1942.01.20 – 2018.03.19), the principle founder of the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center, on April 22, at the Lithuanian Youth Center (Jaunimo centras). Mass was held in the chapel by Father Jaunius Kelpšas, and the memorial took place at the Čiurlionis Gallery of Art. The memorial was presided over by LRSC President Kristina

Lapienytė and the main speakers were Dr. Robertas Vitas, LRSC Chairman of the Board, and Saulius Kuprys, Esq., Lithuanian American Council Chairman. Prof. Augustinas Idzelis, LRSC Vice Chairman of the Board, and Rimantas Dirvonis also shared fond recollections. Jonas Račkauskas was remembered as not only the founder of the LRSC in 1981-1982 and its President til 2009, but also as a person who was involved in many important and varied Lithuanian activities and educational pursuits. He received two honorary doctorates from Lithuania – one from the Vilnius Pedagogical University and one from Šauliai University. As well, he received the Order of the Grand Duke Gediminas. Račkauskas was a Chicago State University professor for 32 years, Lithuanian Pedagogical Institute Rector in Chicago for 30 years, Lithuanian American Council President, US Army Reserve Major, and involved as officer or member of the Lithuanian Historical Society, the Lithuanian Foundation, the Lithuanian Educational Council, the Lithuanian-American National Executive Committee, and more. A fair number of Dr. Račkauskas's U.S. military buddies also came to the memorial to show their respects.



In Memoriam: Prof. Jonas A. Račkauskas.

Prof. Liudas Mažylis, who found the Lithuanian Independence Act original in a diplomatic archive in Germany, visited the LRSC on April 23. One of the professor's goals in visiting Chicago was to get acquainted with archival documents of Lithuanians world-wide as well as US Lithuanian individual and organizational archival materials housed at the Balzekas Culture Museum and the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center. Dr. Mažylis was amazed at the quality and volume of the LRSC heritage records. He was interested very specifically in "everything 1917-1918", but especially in how Lithuania was represented in Lithuanian immigrant press in this time period. Prof. Mažylis spent much of his day of research looking over the archive of diplomat Julius Bielskis. He also examined some of our older periodicals: the 1918 issue of the weekly paper Ateitis, the 1917 issue of the

our community

Lithuanian weekly Dirva, the 1918 illustrated monthly satirical journal Kardas, the 1918 monthly paper Lietuvos atstatymas, and the 1918 informational bulletin Lithuanian Review. Having run out of time to look through all available titles, Mažylis made a note of what he had not finish examining and said he hoped to return.



Filmmaker Arvydas Reneckis, Dr. Indrė Antanaitis-Jacobs, Prof. Liudas Mažylis examine 1917 Dirva. Photo by Rūta Kupetytė.

The Lithuanian Research and Studies Center, located at 5600 S. Claremont Ave., Chicago, IL 60636, accepts donations of Lithuanian materials, such as books, periodicals, music recordings, art, event posters and programs, sporting awards, maps, photos, memoirs, letters, etc. Please e-mail us at info@lithuanianresearch.org or call us at 773-434-4545 to arrange making your donation.



The publications viewed by Mažylis.

bridges

SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

Please check all that apply:

- New Renewal
 Gift Donation

Mail to:
 LAC, Inc./BRIDGES
 Subscriptions
 208 Linden Ponds Way,
 Unit 403
 Hingham, MA 02043

- Please send:**
 1 year electronic (10 issues via email) \$20
 1 year print (10 issues by mail) \$30
 2 years print (20 issues by mail) \$58
 Print subscription outside U.S., add \$25 per year

e-subscriptions
60% off
the cover price!

Make check payable to: Lithuanian American Community. Please mark "Bridges" on the Memo line.

Your Name (please print) _____

Gift Subscription Name (please print) _____

Your Email _____

Gift Subscription Email _____

Your Address _____ Apt. No. _____

Gift Subscription Address _____ Apt. No. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Order online at lithuanian-american.org/bridges

June 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, Rock-
ford, 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 Sup-
port for Lithuania's Inde-
pendence and Recognition"**
Balzekas Museum of
Lithuanian Culture
www.balzekasmuseum.org

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 3 – 17, 2018
**Exhibit "Farm Paintings" by
Irena Chambers**
Creative Cauldron
410 S. Maple Ave.,
Falls Church, VA
Info: 703-436-9948

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, 2018
**Registration deadline
Lankas Lithuanian
Heritage Camp**
August 19 – 24, 2018
www.lankostovykla.com

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

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

JULY

July 22, 2018
Putnam Picnic
600 Liberty Hwy,
Putnam, CT 06260
Neringa's camper's
performance – 3:15 pm

AUGUST

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

August 22-26, 2018
**Cultural Days '18 (ages 21+)
Neringa Camp**
Hands-on classes and activi-
ties will be offered by folk
artists, writers, music lovers,
history, film, drama and food
specialists. Each evening
program will highlight a
particular theme engaging
everyone in discussions and
a social.
Coordinator: Dr. Aldona
Lingertaitienė.

August 23, 2018 at 7 p.m.
**No One Will Ever Love
You As Much: A Glimpse
into One Hundred Years of
Lithuanian Poetry**
Poetry Foundation
61 W. Superior St.,
Chicago, IL

SEPTEMBER

September 14-16, 2018
**Lithuanian Folk Art Week-
end for adults (ages 18+)**
The first Lithuanian Folk Art
Weekend at Neringa will
include learning how to make
straw ornaments, decorate
Easter eggs, weave, wood
carving, work with metal, etc.
Weekend coordinators:
Reggie Jagminas and
Jana Sirusaitė Motivans.

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.

bridges

VOLUME 42 ISSUE 6

LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

PERIODICALS
POSTAGE PAID

POSTMASTER:
Dated Material
Please Deliver Immediately

