

bridges



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bridges

from the editor

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Dear readers,

What a busy summer it was! Most probably, this summer many Lithuanian Americans traveled to Lithuania where the special song and dance festival was held. It was special because this year Lithuania is celebrating the 100th anniversary since independence was proclaimed. The song and dance festival was not the only thing that attracted people to Lithuania. More and more Lithuanians that live abroad visit their families while others meet their newly-found relatives. And now it is time to relax and reminisce. The month of September is upon us. The end of August is when the storks leave Lithuania. Perhaps not many know it but there used to be a holiday called Atsisveikimo su gandrais diena (the day of saying farewell to the storks). It's celebrated on August 24th, St. Bartholomew's Day. In Lithuania, the 1st of September is always the start of a new school year. For the agricultural community, September is mainly the month of sowing the rye and harvesting potatoes. Even the word itself, rugsėjis (September), means planting rye. However, it might be of interest to know that rugsėjis was not always the only name for September. In ancient days, it was called rudens (fall), viržių (heath), rujos (heat), dagos (germination), rudugys (month of heat), paukštlėkis (bird's flight), šilinis (forest). It is also the month of harvesting apples. Today we are used to having many various fruit any day of the year. However, in Lithuania, apples used to be the only sweet thing on a farm. There were many beliefs of good or bad fortune associated with planting apple trees and picking apples. For example, it was believed that apple trees had to be planted by a husband a wife together. Apple trees planted this way would have plenty of apples. There was also a belief that apples could not be picked after sunset because then the apples that remained on the tree would be spoiled by worms. And one of the major wrongdoings was to cut down an apple tree that was planted by one's parents or grandparents.

I wish everyone a nice and enjoyable September filled with many good memories of the summer and tasty apples.

Sincerely,

Karilė Vaitkutė
Editor

KNIGHTS OF LITHUANIA 105th ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION

105 and still alive



Regina Juška-Švoba

K of L Supreme Council President Honorary Member and K of L Public Relations Chair

Participants of the 105th K of L National Convention.

The Knights of Lithuania is a national Roman Catholic organization consisting of men and women of Lithuanian ancestry. Its motto is "For God and Country." The Knights of Lithuania's primary focus is to foster, maintain and nurture an appreciation of the Lithuanian language, customs, traditions and culture among its members. It further stresses the importance of the beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church. The Knights are actively involved in programs to assist their less fortunate brothers and sisters in Lithuania. There are currently three charity groups within the organization and function under the auspices of the Knights of Lithuania Charities. They are: K of L Foundation, St. Casimir's Guild, and Our Lady of Šiluva Fund. Aid to Lithuania, Inc. functioned from 1991 until it was suppressed in December 2007.

The Knights of Lithuania organization was founded by Mykolas Norkūnas in 1913, in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Currently there are 40 councils in the United States with nearly 1,100 members. A National Convention is held annually at different state sites. In 2013 the Knights of Lithuania celebrated its Centennial Anniversary Convention in Quincy, MA. This year's Knights of Lithuania 105th National Convention was hosted by Council 1, Brockton, MA from August 03-05, 2018. The Hilton Boston/Dedham Hotel was the home base for the convention. 42 delegates, clergy, guests and 2 K of L Juniors converged to

participate in the three-day long meetings, cultural activities and banquet celebration. Prior to each day's sessions and meetings, Mass was celebrated. For those members who arrived prior to the convention, an optional pre-convention tour was offered on August 2, 2018.

Thursday, August 2, 2018

Early Thursday morning, August 2, 2018, 13 eager K of L travelers embarked on a pre-convention tour to the world-famous Plymouth, MA. The group converged at the Jenney Museum, where Leo, our tour guide, gave the group a "debriefing" of what to expect and see and then led us on a two-mile walking tour of the historic town. One of the highlights was seeing the Plymouth Rock! Although it was an extremely warm and muggy day, the K of L travelers forged on and pursued the interest in completing the tour. At the Pilgrim Hall Museum, a short documentary film, *One Small Candle*, about the Pilgrim's journey to and establishment in Plymouth. The travelers visited the Court House, where, in the 17th century, trials were conducted. There was a fabulously wonderful picnic lunch at the Nelson Park. It consisted of various salads, chicken, lobster rolls and strawberry shortcake. The tables were set in a nautical theme and the K of L group enjoyed the scenery of the boats on the water.

After lunch, the group traveled to the Plymouth Bay

Winery, where we tasted various samples of locally made wines. The group then traveled to the Plymouth Farmer's Market and walked around and purchased various locally grown and made items such as salts, cooking oils, jellies, jams, cookies, sea food, etc. Afterward, we visited the Mayflower Brewing Company and learned about the brewing process. Then we visited the Dirty Water Distillery, owned and operated by local Lithuanians. It is best known for its Velnias (krupnikas).

What a day, what an experience, what a time we shared! Those who participated in the pre-convention trip were certainly impressed. We returned to the hotel with plenty of new experiences and stories to share with our fellow members.

Friday, August 3, 2018

The 105th National Convention's opening Mass was celebrated at the Hilton Boston/Dedham Hotel in Dedham, MA. The main celebrant was K of L spiritual advisor Rev. Msgr. Dr. Joseph Anderlonis, HM. He was assisted by Rev. Audrius Arštikaitis, Rector of the St. Casimir Pontifical College in Rome, Italy. The opening Mass was offered for the of the Knights of Lithuania organization, the success of the convention and the host council. Hymns were led by Marytė Bizinkauskas, C-1, Boston, MA.

The first plenary session was also held at Hilton Boston/Dedham Hotel. K of L National President and Honorary Member Regina Juška-Švoba officially opened the convention. Msgr. Dr. J. Anderlonis, HM led in the opening prayer. The singing of the National Anthems of the United States, the Republic of Lithuania, and the Knights of Lithuania was led by C-1 President and 105th K of L Convention co-chair Marytė Bizinkauskas. The roll call of the Supreme Council Officers was led by National Recording Secretary Liza Macke. Marytė Bizinkauskas, co-host of the 105th National Convention welcomed all delegates and friends to Brockton and wished everyone a good and memorable stay. The convention presidium was elected and consisted of and Michael Petkus, C-96, Dayton, OH and Dave Boucher, C-78, Lawrence, MA as co-chairs. Vilija Bizinkauskas, C-1, Brockton, MA, and Tom Miller, C-72, Binghamton, NY, served as secretaries.

Greetings in writing were received from: President of the Republic of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė; Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to the USA and United Mexican States Rolandas Kriščiūnas; Honorary Consul of the Republic of Lithuania in Philadelphia Krista Butvy-



The concert celebrated 100 years of authentic Lithuanian music by various performers. From left: Dr. Edvinas Minkštimas, concert pianist; Danutė Mileika, mezzo-soprano; Algimantas Barniškis, baritone; Jonas Kublickas, lutist and guitarist; Marytė Bizinkauskas, soprano; Giliana Norkūnas, mezzo-soprano; Antanas Meilus, tenor; Eduardas Meilus, Jr. accordionist.

das Bard; Honorary Consul of the Republic of Lithuania in New Hampshire Dr. Thornstein Gislason; Archbishop of Vilnius Gintaras Grušas; Msgr. Edmond J. Putrimas, Lithuanian Bishops' Conference Delegate for the Lithuanian Catholic Apostolate Abroad; Bishop of Šiauliai Eugenijus Bartulis; Archbishop of Kaunas Lionginas Virbalas, S.J.: Rev. Msgr. Albert J. Contons, HM, President Emeritus of the Lithuanian Roman Catholic Priests' League; religious orders: Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Sister Ignė Marijošius, Superior), Sisters of Jesus Crucified of Our Lady of Sorrow Convent (Sister Mary Valliere, General Superior) and Sisters of St. Casimir (Sister Regina Dubickas); State of Massachusetts Governor Charles D. Baker and Lieutenant Governor Karyn E. Polito; State Senator for the 2nd and Bristol District Michael D. Brady; Massachusetts State Representative 11th Plymouth District Claire D. Cronin; Jack Lally, Councilor Ward Six representing the Lithuanian Village; Mirga Girnius, Amerikos Lietuvių Kultūros Archyvas (ALKA); Erika Dilys-Brooks, President, Chicago Lithuanian Women's Club; Vida Kuprytė, editor of Draugas News; Saulius V. Kuprys, President of the Lithuanian Roman Catholic Federation of America; Saulius V. Kuprys, National President of Lithuanian American Council; Laurynas R. Misevičius, President of ŠALFASS (Lithuanian Athletic Union of North America); Lithuanian Apostolate of South Boston; past C-1 president Susan Boroskas; and Tautinė Sąjunga/Boston chapter. These greetings were included in the specially prepared 105th National Convention program book.

National President and Honorary Member Regina Juška-Švoba gave a comprehensive state of the organization report. Special prayers were said in memory of past Supreme Council President Evelyn Oželis, who passed away in the past year.

National treasurer and Debbie Martin-Rudmin gave a

full financial report of the organization's status.

Honorary Membership Committee member chairperson Elena Nakrosis, HM presented one candidate for Honorary Membership - Georgianna Macke, C-57, Lemont, IL. She was unanimously approved by the convention delegates and honorary membership will be bestowed on her during the 2019 National Convention in Lemont, IL. Honorary Membership will be bestowed on Frances Bumila, C-1, Brockton, MA; June V. Grenier, C-6, Hartford, CT and Sister Helen Ivanauskas, C-1, Brockton, MA, at the closing banquet of this year's national convention.

The K of L membership report was given by Marytė Bizinkauskas, Second Vice-President. It was announced that the organization gained 28 new and rejoining members. The councils that gained the new/rejoining members are: C-19, Pittsburgh, PA; C-157, Lemont, IL; C-1, Brockton, MA; C-7, Waterbury, CT. It was announced that a standardized application was developed and approved for immediate use. The application will be available via the K of L website and hard copies are available at the local and district levels.

The Scholarship Committee representative Robert Domasauskas announced the 2018-2019 scholarship recipient winners. They are: Gabrielle Pant, C-96, Dayton, OH and Brian Johnson, Jr., C-19, Pittsburgh, PA. In all, \$5,000.00 will be awarded.

On behalf of Irene Ozalis, President of the Knights of Lithuania Foundation, Elena Nakrosis, Vice-President of the ancillary arm of the K of L reported about the last fiscal year. A resolution was passed to use the principal funds of the Foundation's assets to distribute for various worthy causes. E. Nakrosis announced that during the 2018-2019 fiscal year, donations will be made to the following: a grant to the Council hosting the 106th National Convention in 2019; stipend for each Junior member who attends and participates in the convention; reimbursement for the Supreme Council for convention donations; donation to the Our Lady of Šiluva Fund to be used as a donation to the Šiluva Shrine at the Immaculate Conception Basilica in Washington, DC IMO of member Joe Chaplick; papal visit in Lithuania per request made by Archbishop of Kaunas Lionginas Virbalas; and reimbursement to the Supreme Council for the 2017-2018 deficit. In all, \$17,050.00 will be donated to these worthy causes!

The first plenary sessions closed with a prayer led by Spiritual Advisor Msgr. Joseph Anderlonis, STD, HM.

After lunch, the second plenary session began with a



Sodauto Lithuanian Folk Ensemble performed at the K of L gala concert.

prayer led by Spiritual Advisor Msgr. Joseph Anderlonis, STD, HM.

Elena Nakrosis, H.M. president of Our Lady of Šiluva Fund, one of the ancillary organizations of the K of L, gave a comprehensive update of the activities during the past year. The history of Our Lady of Šiluva continues to be promoted on the official website www.ourladyof-siluva.com. The history has been translated in the Polish and Spanish languages to promote further dissemination about Our Lady of Šiluva. E. Nakrosis stated that she recently brought back specially made candles from Šiluva, Lithuania. They are available for purchase. Also, there are "Our Lady of Šiluva – Hymns to Mary" CDs available for purchase. In closing, E. Nakrosis thanked everyone for their continued support to the Our Lady of Šiluva Fund. A presentation was made by Daiva Navickas about "The influence of the Knights of Lithuania over 105 years." Her slide presentation of the first wave of Lithuania immigrants to the USA in the 19th century yielded several interesting facts: during that timeframe there were about 250,000 Lithuanian immigrants, of them 171,000 men and 82,000 women. Most of them were employed in the coal mines and bars; single males resided with other families or lived in boarding homes; the first Lithuanian Church was built in 1885 in Pittston, PA. D. Navickas spoke of the Knights of Lithuania organization founder Mykolas Norikūnas. She stated that the K of L organization has been a stable and needed organization. It has contributed much to the people of Lithuania. Ms. Navickas congratulated the K of L on the organization's 105th anniversary.

The second session was closed with a prayer led by Msgr. Joseph Anderlonis, STD, HM.

The cultural evening was a spectacular event. It was a gala concert, celebrating the 100th anniversary of Lithuania's independence. The gala concert was entitled: "100 Years of Music and Song." The concert was organized by Marytė Bizinkauskas, C-1 President and 105th National Convention co-chair. The concert celebrated 100 years of authentic Lithuanian music by various perform-



Robert A. Martin, Jr., HM, newly elected president of St. Casimir's Guild, presented Rev. Audrius Arštikaitis, the current Rector of the Pontifical Lithuanian College in Rome and the director of the Villa Lituanæ, with support checks.

ers: Dr. Edvinas Minkštimas, concert pianist; Marytė Bizinkauskas, soprano; Danutė , mezzo-soprano; Giliانا Norkūnas, mezzo-soprano; Antanas Meilus, tenor; Algimantas Barniškis, baritone; Jonas Kublickas, lutist and guitarist; Eduardas Meilus, Jr. accordionist; and Sodauto Lithuanian Folk Ensemble. The audience heard Lithuanian music dating from the 1800's to 2000. There was an opportunity to hear a variety of music, voices and styles. The several hour long concert was enjoyed by the over 150 attendees. A meet and greet reception was held afterward and the guests were able to chat with the performers.

Saturday, August 4, 2018

Prior to the third plenary session, Mass was celebrated at the Hilton Boston/Dedham Hotel. The main celebrant was Rev. Audrius Arštikaitis. The co-celebrant was Rev. Msgr. Dr. J. Anderlonis, HM. Marytė Bizinkauskas led the delegates with hymns for all the daily Masses.

The third session was opened with a prayer led by Rev. Msgr. Dr. Joseph Anderlonis, HM.

Georgianna Macke, Ritual Committee chairperson announced that 3 members have been approved to receive their 4th degrees at the closing Mass of this convention: Regina Juskaitis, C-112, Chicago, IL; Stella Witkavich and Gary Adams, both of C-141.

Robert A. Martin, Jr., HM, newly elected president of the ancillary program, St. Casimir's Guild, gave the annual

report about the Guild's past year's activities and the support to the St. Casimir's Pontifical Lithuanian College in Rome, Italy. During the last year, St. Casimir's Guild sent \$1,500 donation. There were 760 Mass requests made. R. Martin explained that the Mass requests can be made for special intentions, health, sympathy, and "On your special day." This card can be used for birthdays and anniversaries. Currently the card is written in English, but a Lithuanian insert will be included. There are four projects for the upcoming year. The third floor terrace of the Pontifical College needs repairs. (18,600 USD.); renovations of the roof where the nuns reside (25,800 USD), the College needs a new industrial sized (13 kg) washing machine (11,650 USD) ir industrial sized (13 kg) dryer (7,680 USD) and the ventilation and gas system in the kitchen needs to be modified/updated according to Rome's issued regulations (\$12,200 USD). The total costs to complete the projects and purchase the needed items 75,930 USD.

Rev. Audrius Arštikaitis is the current Rector of the Pontifical Lithuanian College in Rome and the director of the Villa Lituanæ. He thanked the Knights for adopting the Pontifical Lithuanian College in Rome. The K of L organization has steadfastly and consistently supported the College's various projects throughout the years. Rev. A. Arštikaitis informed the delegates of the upcoming projects for the College. He showed photographs of the deteriorating bricks on the third floor terrace.

At the present time there are 12 priests furthering their studies at the Pontifical College. The Lithuanian Bishops' Conference determined to include other priests of different ethnicities to reside at the Pontifical College. There are six priests from Lithuania, three from Latvia, 1 from India, and one from South Korea.

Rev. Audrius Arštikaitis received two checks for \$3,020 USD for Mass stipends and \$19,880 USD toward the needed renovations of the kitchen ventilation and gas system at College Pontifical College and for the purchase of the industrial sized dryer. Rev. A. Arštikaitis thanked the K of L organization for its generosity and ongoing support. He extends his blessings upon the K of L members. He congratulated the K of L organization on the occasion of the organization's 105 years of existence.

Trustees Dave Boucher and Cathy Nakrosis announced the site for the 106th National Convention It will be hosted by C-157, Lemont, IL. The Embassy Suites Hotel Chicago/Lombard/Oak Brook in Lombard, IL will serve as the home base for meetings and activities. The dates are July 26- July 28/2019. For those individuals who arrive sooner, a pre-convention trip is planned on Thursday, July 25, 2019. There will be an architecture boat tour that will travel down the Chicago River to Lake Michigan. A boxed lunch will be served on the bus. There will be a drive to Lisle, IL take a tram tour around the scenic Mor-

ton Arboretum to marvel at the various plants and flowers that will be in bloom during the season.

The 2020 107th National Convention will be hosted by the Supreme Council. It will be a cruise on the Royal Caribbean Anthem of the Sea to Bermuda. The tentative time frame will be either late July/early August 2020. Price will be provided at a later date.

The Financial Review Committee announced that there were three requests for donations to the four religious order congregations: Sisters of St. Casimir, Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Sisters of the Jesus Crucified, Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God; Lithuanian press Draugas and Draugas News, and JBANC. A total of \$2,350.00 was allotted for the donations.

Danutė Mileika gave an interesting presentation about Lino kelias from flax to cloth. She stated that Lithuania has a long and rich history of flax and linen production. Flax was grown as early as 2000 BC. Linen was the primary fabric to clothe the population – peasants to warriors. Flax has a special place in Lithuanian folklore, fairy tales, and songs. Linen is important in the life of girls and accompanied their preparations for marriage. Flax is also associated with the patron of flax cultivation, the old Lithuanian pagan god Vaižgantas. Special songs were sung to mark the harvesting of flax and weaving of linen. The fabric is frequently cited in lullabies and songs about marriage. Linens typically filled a bride's hope chest. Flaxseed oil and seeds are used for food and healing powers. Danutė Mileika showed the K of L audience the various stages that in the process of fiber flax production. With



George L. Carney Jr. was awarded with the "Friend of Lithuania" award. Pictured together with Regina Juška-Švoba, K of L Supreme Council President and Honorary Member.

the assistance of K of L juniors, Linutė and Augustas Senuta, they showed flax seeds, flax plants, dried flax, yard skein and spinning. The members enjoyed the presentation and had many questions.

The next presentation was made by Linutė and Augustas Senuta about the Hill of Crosses in Šiauliai, Lithuania. A few weeks ago, they were in Lithuania and visited the Hill of Crosses. They were amazed by the number of crosses, rosaries, candles and wayside crosses that have been placed in the reverent place. They showed slides of the various wayside crosses, small crosses and overall Hill of Crosses.

Lexie Rudmin, C-16, the third vice-president (working with the junior/youth members), gave a summary of the junior K of L member's activities. This year two junior members attended the national convention. The junior knights conducted a meeting, assisted D. Mileika with her presentation about linen, and did their own presentation about the Hill of Crosses. Each of the juniors who attended and actively participated received a \$100 stipend from the K of L Foundation Vice-President Elena Nakrosis, HM.

Elections of the new 2018-19 Supreme Council were held. Regina Juška-Švoba, Honorary Member, Council 102, Detroit, MI was unanimously re-elected as president for a seven-year term to lead the K of L organization.

Donations to various charities were collected during the convention. A total of \$2,250.00 was received and will be distributed to: St. Casimir's Guild, Scholarship Fund, Our Lady of Šiluva (includes general fund and for the Shrine in Washington, D. C.), Knights of Lithuania General Fund, K of L Foundation, Vytis -The Knight, Father Jutt Fund, and Juniors.

The formal sessions were concluded with a prayer by Rev. Msgr. Dr. Joseph Anderlonis and the singing of the Vyčių himnas.



Past and present K of L Presidents. From left: Honorary Member Elena Nakrosis, K of L Supreme Council President an Honorary Member Regina Juška-Švoba, Honorary Member Frances Petkus, and Honorary Member Robert A. Martin, Jr.



K of L Vice President and Honorary Memeber Elena Nakrosis presented Junior Knights, Augustas Senuta and Lina Senuta with support checks. Standing first from right is Third Vice President Aleksandra Rudmin who works with the youth.

Banquet

After every K of L National Convention completes the working sessions and elects a new Supreme Council for the next year, a celebratory banquet is held. So, too, the 105th National Convention celebrated with a formal banquet. Nearly 200 delegates, guests, clergy and families participated. Prior to the banquet, the Supreme Council Elect, clergy and dignitaries gathered for a brief meet and greet. The official convention photograph was taken in the garden of the hotel.

The 105th National Convention Co-Chair Susan Trautman presented the guests at the head table: Rev. Msgr. Dr. Joseph Anderlonis, HM, Regina Juška-Švoba, HM, National President; Msgr. Albert Contons, HM; Rev. Audrius Arštikaitis, Rector of the St. Casimir's Pontifical College in Rome; "Friend of Lithuania" recipient and spouse George L. Carney, Jr. and Leticia Carney; Elena Nakrosis, Honorary Member Chair, Frances Bumila, June V. Grenier and Sister Helen Ivanauskas, honorary member candidates; Robert A. Martin, Jr, HM and Veronica Bizinkauskas, HM, convention co-chair Marytė Bizinkauskas and legendary stage and film star Rūta Lee, who served as the mistress of ceremonies for the evening. Marytė Bizinkauskas greeted the guests and led in the singing of the National Anthems of the United States, Republic of Lithuania and the Vyčių himnas. Rev. Msgr. Dr. Joseph Anderlonis gave the invocation.

Knights of Lithuania National President Regina Juška-Švoba, H. M. thanked the distinguished guests, clergy,

Knights and friends for their participation in the banquet. She thanked Marytė Bizinkauskas and Susan Trautman, co-chairs and the members of C-1, for doing an outstanding job in organizing the 105th national convention. She encouraged everyone to continue to dedicate and fully participate in the various celebrations and activities on the K of L organization, as not many organizations with such longevity continue to be active and exist. We continue to exist because we are a multigenerational organization that has loyal, dedicated, committed and talented members. Let us never forget our roots and heritage. With that, she recited Janina Degutyte's poem "Lietuvai" (To Lithuania). Regina Juška-Švoba congratulated the soon to be new Honorary Members Frances Bumila, June V. Grenier and Sister Helen Ivanauskas and wished them well and continued

participation in the K of L organization. She also thanked the K of L members for re-electing her as president and entrusting her in this position.

After a delicious dinner, co-chair Susan Trautman announced the "Friend of Lithuania" recipient, George L. Carney, Jr. Mr. Carney, who knew little about Lithuania until he met Sister Helen Ivanauskas, Sisters of Jesus Crucified Order over 20 years ago. He appreciated the efforts of her founded organization, Lithuanian Children's Relief, Inc. Mr. Carney provided Sister Helen with a large



Danutė Mileika made a presentation about flax and linen.



K of L Honorary Members. Sitting, from left: Monsignor Albertas Kontautas, K of L Supreme Council President an Honorary Member Regina Juška-Švoba, Monsignor Juozas Anderlonis, new Honorary Members: June Grenier, Sister Helen Ivanauskas, Sister Frances Bumila, and Veronika Bizinkauskas. Standing, from left: Elena Nakrosis, Robert A. Martin, Jr., Frances Petkus, and Teresė Strolia.

and accessible storage space (gratis) for many years. Having the area and space allowed Sister Helen to collect and sort medical supplies, clothing and other items in a dry space, without being concerned that space will run out before the container was ready for shipment to Lithuania. Mr. Carney also provided equipment and the manpower, again, free of charge, to assist Sister Helen when preparing the containers for shipment. This assisted in the loading of the 40 feet-long containers. He also provided assistance in disposal of items that could not be sent to Lithuania (due to being impractical or hazardous) such as electrical items and console televisions. K of L Supreme Council President Regina Juška-Švoba, HM, congratulated and presented George L. Carney, Jr. with the "Friend of Lithuania" award. On behalf of C-1, Marytė Bizinkauskas presented Mr. Carney with a Lithuanian sash and his wife Leticia Carney with an amber pendant.

George L. Carney, Jr. humbly accepted the "Friend of Lithuania" award by thanking the K of L organization for this special award to him. He spoke of the wonderful people he has encountered when he met Sister Helen and the other sisters. Leticia Carney thanked C-1 for presenting her with the beautiful amber.

Honorary Membership Chair Elena Nakrosis, HM, gave a brief biography on each of the three honorary membership candidates. She called Robert A. Martin, Jr. to present Frances Bumila with the honorary membership medal. Elena Nakrosis bestowed the honorary membership medal to June V. Grenier. And Veronica Bizinkauskas, HM, presented the honorary membership medal to her sibling Sister Helen Ivanauskas. Each of these remarkable women was grateful and thanked everyone for such an honor.

Marie Smith, who represents the American Legion Auxiliary Association, presented Frances Bumila with a certificate of appreciation for her contributions to charity and Boston. She also was presented with a certificate from the Dept. of Massachusetts State Regional Auxiliary Association. Michael D. Brady, Massachusetts Senator of the 2nd Plymouth and Bristol District presented the three newly elevated Honorary Members with congratulatory citations.

Co-chair Susan Trautman thanked everyone for their attendance and participation in the K of L 105th National Convention.

The official portion of the banquet program concluded with a prayer led by Rev. Msgr. Joseph Anderlonis,

STD, HM.

Musical entertainment was provided by Algimantas and Ligita Barniškis.

Sunday, August 05, 2018

The closing Mass was celebrated at St. Peter's Lithuanian Church in South Boston, MA. The main celebrant was K of L National Spiritual Advisor Rev. Dr. Msgr. Joseph Anderlonis. He was assisted by Honorary Member Msgr. Albert Contons, Rev. Audrius Arštikaitis, and deacon Edward Meilus, Jr.

Prior to the celebration of the Mass, the 4th degree candidates gave their oaths and received their 4th degree medal and certificates. The Supreme Council elect gave their oath of office.

After the closing Mass, a farewell luncheon in the parish social hall was held. Rev. Msgr. Dr. J. Anderlonis, HM blessed the food. After the luncheon, delegates and friends bid their farewells to one another and wished each other safe travels to their homes or next destination.

The 2018 National Convention and sessions were productive and fruitful. It was good to see and nurture special friendships of members known for many years and establish new acquaintances and contacts. It was a special time of sharing and catching up. May this organization continue to live and work by our motto: "For God and Country - Dievui ir Tėvynei"! Valio Vyčiai, ilgiausių metų! The 106th convention will be hosted by C-157 Lemont, IL. It will be chaired by Liza Macke and council team. The convention will be held on July 26-28, 2019, at the Embassy Suites Hotel Chicago-Lombard/Oak Brook, Lombard, IL. Mark your calendars and save these important dates! Hope to see everyone there!

Lithuanians Celebrate Lithuania's Centennial: A Participant's Perspective of Song Festival Week

Ramunė Kubilius



View from the procession through the streets of Vilnius. Photo by Ramunė Kubilius.

As highlighted already in the July/August 2018 issue of "Bridges", the summer of 2018 offered many reasons to go to Lithuania. Some persons had the responsibility and honor of representing their communities (countries of residence) at the Lithuanian World Community gathering July 9-11th (Pasaulio Lietuvių Bendruomenės seimas) in Vilnius where many matters were discussed and debated, and Dalia Henke from Germany was elected for a second term of office. The Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. held a book event July 9th at the Mažvydas National Library to celebrate the release of the English translation of a book on Lithuania's history, *History of Lithuania. From Medieval Kingdom to Modern Democracy*, authored by Bronius Makauskas and Vytautas V. Černius. Scouts celebrated the 100th anniversary of Lithuanian scouting during the X Tautinė stovykla July 14-21st (jamboree or camp) at Rumšiškės. (This was the second of three such celebrations by the scouts-the first was in Australia in January, the third was at Camp Rakas in Custer Michigan in August). About 200 members of the Lithu-

anian Catholic Association "Ateitis" gathered for a special weekend "sąskrydis" July 7-8 at Berčiūnai near Panevėžys. Busloads of Catholics from the United States travelled to Šiauliai July 7th for the blessing of a special wayside cross built with funds donated by Lithuanian Americans, an initiative of the Lithuanian diaspora Catholic Priests group, Lietuvių katalikų vienybė (LKKV), in particular its chair, Rev. Gintaras Jonikas, pastor of the Divine Providence parish in Michigan. The Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture of Chicago sponsored one of its organized tours to Lithuanian sites and its group this year consisted of almost two dozen participants, most of Lithuanian descent, who were visiting Lithuania for the first time.

THE SONG FESTIVAL WEEK

The central focus of the trip for the Balzekas Museum organized group, and many other travelers to Lithuania this summer, was the week of June 30-July 6, Lithuania's 100th anniversary Song Festival. The week began June 30th in Kaunas and culminated with the Lithuanian Song



Song Festival scene. Photo by Ramunė Kubilius.



Song Festival scene. Photo by Ramunė Kubilius.

Festival on July 6 in Vilnius. During that week, a mosaic of events was part of the official Song Festival calendar, while other organizations scheduled their events accordingly (so they didn't conflict wherever possible).

For those who travel to Lithuania during Song Festival week, there were a number of challenges and choices. The first was getting there. Stories about airfare and air route differences, delayed flights, lost luggage, and other adven-

tures abounded. Where did people stay? Hotels, hostels, dormitories, friends' and relatives' homes, as well as private housing short-term rentals (were any residents of Vilnius left?). There were event choices to make, tickets to obtain, relatives and friends to contact and with whom to coordinate gatherings and meet-ups. There were so many logistics to plan...

The theme of Song Festival week was "Vardan Tos" (In the name of...), and each event had its own theme. Groups from abroad (the groups and countries listed in the July/August 2018 issue of "Bridges", and many more) primarily participated in the Dance Day, and the Song Festival itself in Vilnius. A men's choir, "Tolimi aidai", from Los Angeles, represented the diaspora in the Choral Groups Concert (a first-time event in 2018). Four diaspora choirs were invited to participate in the opening event in Kaunas, a launch for the Song Festival, featuring most of the festival's songs, but also including folk dances. The Theater Day event in Vilnius, held only the second time during Song Festival week, featured amateur drama troupes from throughout Lithuania, and during a procession, a troupe banner from Punkskas (the Lithuanian ethnographic region in Poland) could be seen. During Song Festival week there were also events for children, crafts and products to buy during the "Amatininkų šventė" in Bernardinai Park, the amazing choreographed ensemble evening ("Ansamblių vakaras") in Kalnų Park, the rock opera "Eglė", the Lithuanian traditional "kanklės" and brass instruments concerts, and so much more to see and do. Many events were free, though one needed to be organized, have stamina, and be resourceful to get from one place to the next.

On July 1, the World Lithuanian Community (founded 60 years ago) organized a world Lithuanian day called "Šimtas Lietuvos veidų" („The Hundred Faces of Lithuania“) near the Vilnius Town Hall (Rotušė), featuring tents staffed by volunteers from 30 country chapters. It was informative to view photos and film clips, and fun

to pick up colorful travel guides, postcards, pins, and souvenirs from the Lithuanian-American Community, as well as Canada, Austria, Israel, Italy, France, and so many more. (The LAC tent offered very nice themed scarves for a nominal fee). On stage, singers and dancers from outside of Lithuania and ethnic groups who live in Lithuania showcased and shared their music and songs. The audience was not held back by the rain. Popular photo opportunities were provided by a tricolor streamer photo "booth" and a huge beach-ball like globe of the world. Participants were invited to mark the parts of the world from which they came, showing where the estimated 4 million Lithuanians of the world live.

Perhaps those who experienced the most muscle stress and strain were the performers from Lithuania participating in the ensemble evening "Ansamblių vakaras" and also the Song Festival Dance Day participants. For the second, groups from Lithuania and outside of Lithuania not only practiced for hours on end. They also had to send tapes that showed they had learned the required dances at performance level. Prior to show time, they also spent several long days practicing the dances with all of the other groups from other countries who joined the Lithuanian groups in the choreographed formations. Rain or shine, they practiced, danced, strained every muscle in order to achieve the high standards expected by the festival choreographers. And because they were performing in a football (soccer) stadium that was smaller than the earlier years' Žalgiris Stadium venue, they had to perform the entire program twice!

THE SONG FESTIVAL

Like their dancer counterparts, Song Festival attendees practiced for months and months before the festival, had to submit choir "audition" tapes, and prior to Song Day, had two days of practice prior to the event on July 6, King Mindaugas Day. Choir members spent hours in the



Photo of the Song Festival in Kaunas on June 30. Photo by Audra Kubilius Daulys.



View from the stands: Song Festival. Photo by Ramunė Kubilius.

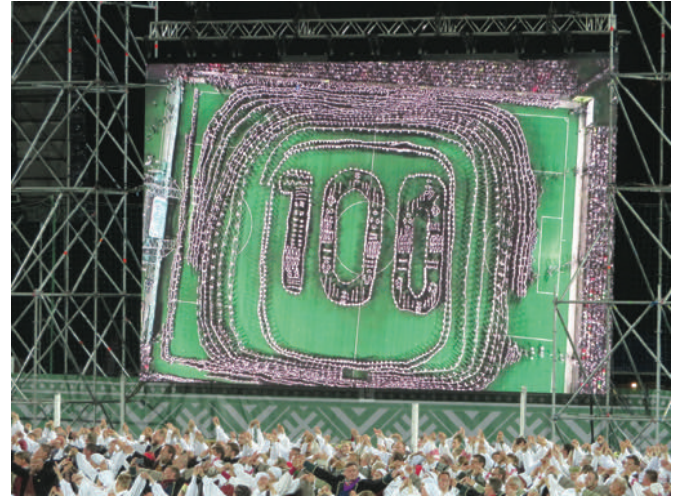
stands, rain or shine, sitting and standing, stretching their vocal cords, following choral direction from the directors, and some gesture choreography as well. A number of choirs were involved in extra performances. For example, Chicago-based "Dainava" and three other choirs from the diaspora joined the Lithuanian choirs and dancers in Kaunas for the official opening of the Song Festival on June 30th. "Dainava" was also privileged to sing with the



Festival view. Photo by Ramunė Kubilius.

boys' choir „Dagilėlis“ from Šiauliai at a special St. Christopher Festival concert at St. Casimir Church on July 2. With choirs from Vilnius and Raseiniai, they participated in the formal flag-raising the morning of July 6 in front of the Presidential Building, singing the Lithuanian anthem and “Mano kraštas” (My country) by Gytis Paškevičius.

New songs and old, traditional folks songs, regional songs, songs about farm choirs and historic events, children's songs, songs sung by women or men alone... Remembering the experience of singing in the Lithuanian Song Festival evokes many emotions and memories. There was a sense of purpose, fatigue, camaraderie with other singers, afterward - a sense of reaching a goal (and a bit of a let down that it was all over)...There is nothing that can beat the experience of walking through the streets of Vilnius in the long procession on July 6th of Song Festival week participants, from the Cathedral Square to Vingis Park, past people photographing, waving, thanking everyone for coming to Lithuania when they saw our choir banners. At the park, the choir members separated from the procession to go into the stands. There, singers had a bird's eye view: they could view the park, see Lithuania's politicians and heroes in the first-row seats, and the crowd in the seats and standing on the lawn, clapping, waving flags, singing along, all part of an unforgettable cultural tradition.



Dance Day scene. Photo by Ramunė Kubilius.

Though they were part of a huge choir, each participant felt that his or her voice was heard. Perhaps that is why, choirs from Lithuania and all over the world vied for a spot in the Song Festival. There were youth, adult, student, men's, women' and joint choirs from near and far- North America, Europe, and Australia, and even Asia. There was a joint choir from Seattle, Washington that was made up of approximately 60 song-loving Lithuanian-Americans joined by their singing American colleagues with no Lithuanian blood. There was a small dedicated joint men's choir “Jordankai” from Japan that ventured to a land far away to sing songs whose melodies attracted them (after hearing a visiting Lithuanian choir sing in Japan), and the women's choir “Vocal Orange” from Austria. Though they may have not understood the words they were singing, on July 6th, they sang in the Lithuanian Song festival and at 21:00 all sang the Lithuanian anthem, together with Lithuanians from all over the world.

It is estimated that there were about 36,000 participants in all of the 2018 Song Festival Week festivities in Lithuania, 12,000 of them in the Song Festival day itself. The Baltic song festivals (Estonian: laulupidu, Latvian: dziesmu svētki, Lithuanian: dainų šventė) are traditional amateur song and dance festivals in the Baltic countries and are included in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List. This summer, neighboring Latvia also held its Song Festival, while in September all three countries, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, will host an entirely different event, a visit by Pope Francis. In the United States, the date of the next North American Song Festival has not yet been announced, but we do know that one Lithuanian cultural gathering we can plan on attending (or participating in) will be the Folk Dance Festival, scheduled to take place in Philadelphia, PA in 2020.

Zimbabwe and Lithuania

Two Worlds Meet

By Vilia Baumilas



Vilia Baumilaitė engaging with the children and listening to instructions. Photo by Aidas Kavaliauskas.

The whim of travel is everyone's dream. Currently, it has become a lifestyle of mine. I was recently offered to fly down to Zimbabwe to monitor, evaluate and inspect the Hoops 4 Hope program. The Hoops 4 Hope program was instated decades ago to teach children life skills through the game of basketball. My main focus of the trip was to evaluate the impact of the Hoops 4 Hope program that serves thousands of kids all over Zimbabwe. I had the privilege to travel to Harare with fellow Fairfield University student and Lithuanian Aidas Kavaliauskas. Aidas plays Division One basketball for the Fairfield University Stags. He accompanied me on this trip to help monitor the program as well as coach some of the children and coaches within the program.

Once we got over the fact that we are going to Africa, we soon packed our bags and flew twenty hours to our destination. Needless to say, the flight was just as long as expressed. Once on the ground, we both immediately began our work. I began working with Francisca Skete, who helped me gather information from the serviced communities in order to measure the impact of the program over the past couple of decades. Francisca herself

was actually a participant within the program, which allowed us insight into the realities of the children and their everyday lives. Within the three weeks of my stay, we evaluated many communities, and many more children to track their progress not only within basketball, but within their schoolwork, behavior, and everyday life. After collecting the data it was sent to the software technicians stationed in the United States. With that information, they will continue tracking the program over the next couple of months.

Throughout our stay, we had the chance to visit the children within the program. It was an eye-opening experience driving to these remote locations where children were beyond happy even when they lacked just about everything. These children had the biggest smiles on their faces, and they didn't have a care in the world. At first, when Aidas and I exited the car everyone's faces turned straight to us. The racial difference was very prominent. It was like an astronaut landed rather than just two college kids came. Everyone wanted to touch our hair, pinch our skin and see our blue eyes. What was shocking was that in that moment we were just as happy as them, whilst com-



Three young boys smiling for Hoops 4 Hope. Photo by Vilia Baumilaité.



Vilia Baumilaitė leading a basketball session with the youth. Photo by Aidas Kavaliauskas.



Vilia Baumilaitė, Meredith Drosnock, Brianna Stetts glorifying in the scavenger hunt win at Basketball Power event, Lithuania. Photo by Meredith Drosnock.

ing from different worlds.

Aidas and I became good friends throughout this trip. He had the opportunity to coach the children and the coaches throughout our time there. He used his American and Lithuanian techniques that he gathered from current and former coaches and players. While in Zimbabwe, we did some traveling around as well. We decided to travel to Victoria Falls. There we went on Safari, saw wildlife, learned about the culture, heritage and many other insightful facts. We also traveled to a wildlife preserve where animals in severe situations are rehabilitated and released back to their homes.

It was amazing and shocking to see what people do to animals some in helpful ways others in more harmful ways. In the end, the trip was a success we accomplished what needed to be done, while still getting a chance to travel and see true Africa. We are very grateful for the experience and would love to continue it at another point in time.

In essence, this trip did mean a lot to me and Aidas. As years ago a dear friend Peter Kazickas, grandson of Alexandra and Joseph Kazickas, became a very large supporter of the H4H program as he had gone down as a student and soon fell in love. With his help, we were able to create a sister program in Lithuania called Basketball Power. As both Aidas and I are Lithuanian and very proud of our roots. We believed that the connection was important to both of us. This program is going on its fifth year. It as well serves children all over Lithuania and teaches them life skills within the game of basketball, which in Lithuania is like a religion. Now Basketball Power is developing a "next step" program, where we guide the kids that we have raised into futures, jobs, trade schools, and better lives. We want everyone to have a chance, and we along with the Kazickas Family Foundation believe that everyone

is deserving of one. We believe that every child is a national treasure and we will continue to treasure them under any circumstance.

From Zimbabwe to Lithuania the distance may be far, however, our work extends. The idea of Basketball Power grew from Hoops 4 Hope as we extend our help to many others. At the end of every Basketball Power season, we host a large closing ceremony where everyone gets the chance to meet, hang out, play some basketball and simply just enjoy each other's company. Within this event we invite many different embassies and partners to join us. We are very thankful to have the United States embassy provide us with American Cadets for the event. As the cadets play around with the kids, everybody contributes towards making someone's day better. Every child should be acknowledged as a national treasure.

Basketball Power wasn't the sole purpose of my visit to Lithuania, as I currently hold the position of Lithuanian Youth Public Liaison, we began a new project. Over the last year, the Kazickas Family Foundation, Global Lithuanian Leaders and I have been working to build a new internship program for Lithuanian diaspora youth. The We Connect Lithuania program is a six-week intensive internship course in Lithuania where students have been working with Nasdaq, booking.com, Enterprise Lithuania along with different ministries and many other startups and companies. The program is oriented at Lithuanian youth that has grown up outside of Lithuania. However, it is open to anyone that applies. Our goal is to form a bridge with Lithuanians that live outside of Lithuania with those inside of Lithuania because we are one people and we are all connected through the same heritage.



Aidas Kavaliauskas and Vilia Baumilaitė giving a thumbs up for Hoops 4 Hope. Photo by Francisca Skete.



Kamilė Naraitė, Vilia Baumilaitė, Gintė Genender, Neila Baumilienė, Kotryna Stankutė at Kazickas Legacy Day for We Connect Lithuania Program. The Kazickas Residence, Lithuania. Photo by Martynas Zaremba.

Growing Professionally While Connecting to our Past A Participant's Perspective on the We Connect Lithuania Pilot Program

By Ieva Juska



We Connect program visits the Kazickas family residence in Vilnius and learns about J. Kazickas and what he has done for Lithuania.

I am an Environmental Science and Biology student at Miami University, going into my senior year. For the summer I had plans to do field research in the first half, and not much in the second, so when I heard of the We Connect program I grabbed at the opportunity to make my summer more productive. I did not have any wild expectations, I assumed my internship would be like any other, I would be given mediocre tasks that did not hold much excitement, but would slowly add to my experience. Of the program, I expected a few meetings here and there, maybe a field trip or two. I grossly underestimated how much I would experience, how much I would learn, and how much I would grow in the next six weeks.

I come back to Lithuania every summer with my family, so I thought that I had a very firm grasp on Lithuanian language, culture, identity. This program showed me an entirely different side of Lithuania, an innovative side full of opportunities to expand economy, develop new technology, and do international business. We met with important innovators and leaders, discussed economic, social, and political issues with intellectuals and politicians, and visited significant companies and institutions. Everyday there was something exciting to do or someone

exciting to meet. We Connect truly did an incredible job of showing young Lithuanian-Americans not only what the modern Lithuania looks like, but also how they can be a part of it. One of the most impactful meetings for me was with Jurgis Didžiulis, who shared his experience about being Colombian-Lithuanian and really prompted us to think about what we can do in Lithuania as future global leaders. Through music, he also brought our group closer together in a spontaneous jam session.

Although I greatly enjoyed the events and trips planned by the We Connect program, I was even more thrilled about my internship. We Connect found me a position at the Baltic Environmental Forum (BEF), a non-governmental organization focused on conservation. The people that worked there were incredibly kind, knowledgeable, and really made me feel comfortable and at home. I could tell they really cared about my experience at work and in Lithuania. They allowed me to create my own project based on my interest, so I tackled the issue of the organization's international fundraising. I created a plan for international outreach for support, specifically for their five year "Protecting the Aquatic Warbler" project. I spent most of the time there working on this project, apply-



Ieva is presented with the highest achievement award in the program and is given the title "Young Lithuanian Ambassador" by We Connect coordinator Kamilė Naraitė, as well as representatives from Global Lithuanian Leaders and Kazickas Family Fund.

ing my creativity and ideas, and got to see its results at the end of my internship, which was extremely fulfilling. BEF also gave me opportunities to work on their final year reports, new website, "Young Rangers" platform for children, and visit several different sites with professionals for environmental management work and research. One of these visits was a series of interviews with farmers to gather information about local opinions on environmental management work that the nearby national park is doing. BEF even gave me the opportunity to conduct a few interviews myself, and I think I really learned more about environmental education and community outreach than I would have from just sitting back and observing. I feel I have gained so much knowledge in the field of environmental policy and nonprofit work, and experienced a variety of aspects of BEF's activities.

Overall, the We Connect program was incredible and beyond exceeded my expectations. It allowed me to grow professionally through work experience and networking, but also grow as an individual. I reevaluated my identity and understood that just because I am American, I am no less Lithuanian as long as I continue to value my cultural heritage and represent Lithuania as a young ambassador. For other young Lithuanian-Americans in the US I encourage you to explore your identity, be a global citizen, and see the modern side of Lithuania that we don't learn about in our Lithuanian communities on this side of the Atlantic. With We Connect, I connected to people with similar experiences as me, to professionals in my field, and to my heritage as a Lithuanian American.



In the closing ceremony of the We Connect program, Mayor of Vilnius Remigijus Šimašius gives a speech at Vilnius City Municipality.



Ieva, Kamilė, and fellow We Connect participant Lukas Dumašius speak about the program on LRT's Labas Rytas Lietuva.



At the end of her internship with the Baltic Environmental Forum, Ieva is excited to launch her fundraising campaign for the "Protecting Aquatic Warblers" project.

a taste of lithuania

Passing on traditions at Camp Neringa

By Jana Sirusaitė-Motivans



Gaila Narkevičienė leading a cooking class.

I spent two weeks in August helping in the kitchen at Neringa during the Lithuanian Heritage camp. This English-language camp is for children of Lithuanian descent who are interested in their heritage but do not necessarily speak the language. During their stay at camp, the children learn about the Lithuanian culture through language and history lessons, folk dancing and singing classes, games and discussions. They also learn about the traditional foods eaten in Lithuania. The best way to preserve a national cuisine is by sharing it with the next generation.

Tatjana Perkins, our talented and tireless head cook, prepared many Lithuanian specialties for the children. The campers were treated to šaltibarščiai (chilled beet soup), morkų salotos su obuoliais (carrot and apple salad), dešros ir kapūstai (kielbasa and cabbage), tinginys (sweet fudge-like dessert) and kugelis (baked potato pudding). A new camp favorite, added last year, is vištienos kotletai (chicken patties) which the campers call torpedoes because of their shape. These kotletai are made with ground chicken, mixed with onion, bread crumbs and eggs. They are similar to meat loaf, but made with ground chicken instead of ground beef.

The campers had the opportunity to create some Lithuanian specialties themselves during cooking classes. Featured dishes included bulviniai blynai (potato pancakes), varškėčiai (cheese dumplings), kepta duona (garlic bread), and raudona mišrainė, also known as vinegretas (mixed vegetable salad). Gaila Narkevičienė bravely led these cooking classes for the campers. Her vinegretas was delicious and featured a surprise ingredient in the dressing – pickle juice! Gaila had the children chop cooked beets, carrots, and potatoes. They then added chopped onions and pickles, and red kidney beans. She then prepared a simple dressing of equal parts of olive oil and pickle juice to moisten the chopped vegetables. I have previously only sampled vinegretas with a dressing of oil and vinegar, or else a mixture of mayonnaise and sour cream. The pickle juice used by Gaila was a tasty alternative.

The campers enjoyed eating traditional Lithuanian foods, those made by themselves and those served at meals. These traditional foods are an important part of our heritage.

Vištienos kotletai (chicken patties, or 'torpedoes')

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound ground chicken
- 1/4 cup bread crumbs, plus more for coating
- 2 tablespoons chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper

In large bowl, combine meat, bread crumbs, onion, mayonnaise, garlic, egg, salt and pepper. Mix well.

Pour a thin layer of bread crumbs into a roasting pan or casserole. Divide the meat mixture into 6 parts, forming them into oblong 'torpedo' shapes, placing them on top of the bread crumbs in the pan. Lightly oil your hands to prevent the meat from sticking to your fingers. Sprinkle more bread crumbs over the meat, and use your hands to coat the meat completely with a covering of crumbs.

Heat cooking oil in a frying pan and brown the kotletai evenly. Place the browned patties on a baking pan and bake in a pre-heated 350° oven until fully cooked, approximately 30 minutes. Serve with potatoes, rice, or buttered noodles.



Kotletai



Lunch - saltibarsciai kotletai coleslaw.



Vinegretas in the works.



Varškėčiai



Kepta duona bulviniai blynai and vinegretas.

Lithuanian Americans of Minnesota

By Živilė Norvilaitė-Petersen



Lithuanians in Minnesota celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Independence.

The Lithuanian American Community of Minnesota was established in 1991 by an active group of Lithuanian Americans, most of whom were born and raised in the United States. This same group of Lithuanian Americans was playing a significant and active role in representing the interests of Lithuania during the times of the Singing Revolution by joining forces with local Latvians and Estonians and protesting Gorbachev's visit to Minnesota.

Around 1995-1998 this small and active group of individuals attracted many young Lithuanian students who came from Lithuania to study at the University of Minnesota. Young individuals formed the Šiaurinė choir, a basketball team, a folk dance group and started community events to celebrate major holidays, such as Christmas, Easter, Independence Day and Mid-summer's eve. To this day we continue this tradition of getting together to celebrate holidays with Lithuanian traditions, food, songs and dancing.

In addition, a small group of women started teaching Lithuanian language during Sunday church service. This informal study group turned into Martynas Mažvydas Lithuanian Heritage School, which currently has 30 children and 5 adult students and 6 teachers. All teachers are women/mothers from our own community who took



When the Gorbachevs arrived in Minneapolis on June 3, 1990, the crowds included protestors. Most were Latvians, Lithuanians, and Ukrainians holding national flags and signs. The Lithuanian World Community from Cincinnati praised Gorbachev for his "heroic pursuit of democracy and freedom" and asked him to reverse Stalin's illegal annexation of Lithuania.

onto themselves to get trained in teaching Lithuanian language and history to children with varying levels of language skills. In 2017 the school shifted away from every other week classes to a weekly class schedule on Saturdays, allowing enhanced learning programs. For the last 4 years the Lithuanian Heritage School has been renting a public school building in Minneapolis.

Currently, the Lithuanian American Community of Minnesota has around 200 registered members and at our annual events we gather anywhere from 80-120 people, including children. Lithuanians reside in multiple suburbs of Minneapolis and Saint Paul and for the last 5 years we have been gathering to celebrate events at the church we rent in Plymouth.

Our Fall Fest event, held in October is dedicated to our annual fundraising efforts. We organize a raffle, a silent auction and other fun activities to encourage donations. During the evening, school children and the choir "Šiaurinė" put together a music program, and a home-made Lithuanian meal is served to everyone at the event.



Celebrating Lithuania's independence.



Sports fans during Minnesota's Timberwolves versus Toronto's Raptors game. Lithuanian Jonas Valančiūnas plays for the Raptors.

our community

Fall Fest requires 100% energy from our board members and is very rewarding as we watch our community come together - our volunteers serving and the rest of the community appreciating this effort.

We have a large board, consisting of 17 hard-working and dedicated folks. They are the life and core of this community, never pausing and questioning the purpose of our efforts. We do unfortunately lack someone with the talent and passion to help spread the news of happenings at the Lithuanian American Community of MN not only to the US Lithuanian community publications, such as Bridges, but also to other Lithuanians living and working in Minnesota. We believe there are another 400-500 unregistered Lithuanians who might or might not be aware of our organization and lack knowledge about it.

In need of more information, please contact Živilė Norvilaitė-Petersen, President of the Lithuanian American Community of MN. Tel: 651-206-0563. E-mail: pirmiminke@lietuviaimn.com



The Šiaurinė choir performs during the celebration of Lithuania's independence.



Lithuanians participate in the Festival of Nations in Minnesota.

Security

...The 3rd Brigade Combat Team of the All American 82nd Airborne Division parachuted into drop zones near Rukla as part of the annual Swift Response training exercise. Flying non-stop for 18 hours from Fort Bragg, North Carolina with one aerial refuel, this year's exercise, Swift Response 18, included airborne forces from nine nations: Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom and the United States. Lithuanian soldiers played the role of opposition forces.

...Operation Saber Strike included 18,000 NATO soldiers included a road march from Germany to Poland took only 5 days instead of 9 in 2017. During the Saber Strike exercise NATO forces crossed the Nemunas River in Kulautuva near Kaunas. They were observed by five arms control inspectors from Russia and Belarus as part of the Vienna Document agreement on military transparency among 57 member nations of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to verify that there are no undeclared military capabilities. The crossing can be observed on www.youtube.com at DFN:Saber Strike 18, Kulautuva, Lithuania, 06.13.2018

...The Pennsylvania National Guard participated in an air drop from a C-130 celebrating their 25 anniversary of working with the Lithuanian Armed Forces as part of Saber Strike 2018. The drop can be observed on www.youtube.com at DFN:Saber Strike 18 | PAARNG Airborne Jump, Lithuania, 06.08.2018

...The NATO Communication and Information Systems Group, held its annual command and control structure exercise, Steadfast Cobalt 2018 in Kaunas with 1,000 NATO troops from 44 different units and 25 allies. It tests the data exchange among the different elements. Next year's exercise is planned for Romania.

...Four U.S. Stryker armored personnel carriers were involved in a traffic accident near Prenjska resulting in 15 injured soldiers who were checked out at Kaunas hospitals. Ten of those injured were held for overnight observation and all returned to duty the next day. There were no civilian vehicles or injuries reported. A fake news report appeared on a website designed to mimic the Delfi news portal told of a U.S. Army Stryker vehicle killing a boy on a bicycle with a picture of a broken bicycle.

...The Lithuanian Railways is considering replacing the KLUB-U Russian safety system installed on all of its locomotives and self-propelled units because it allows tracking the real-time location, automatic braking, speed

regulation and other functions, some of which can be activated by Russian satellite systems. The Seimas Committee on National Security and Defense deemed it a risk to national security.

...During 1 week in June NATO jets were scrambled 4 times to intercept Russian military transport and reconnaissance aircraft in international airspace over the Baltic Sea where they were not using onboard transponders to identify themselves.

...German manufacturer, Artec, is testing two prototype Infantry Fighting Vehicles built to Lithuanian specifications which include an Israeli turret, 30 mm rapid fire cannons and Spike LR anti-tank missiles. Lithuania will join the NATO Support and Procurement Agency to provide proper support for the "Boxer" style units. The Lithuanian versions are named "Vilkas". The first of the 88 Vilkas will be delivered in early 2019 under a 386 million euro contract signed in 2016.

...After 12 years this year's "Mission Siberia" has been redirected to Kazakhstan because of Lithuanian-Russian disagreement on access to care for Soviet graves in Lithuania and resulting Russian refusal to issue visas for the care of Lithuanian graves in Siberia. Two Lithuanian teams will travel to Kazakhstan where nearly 50,000 Lithuanians were exiled in the 1940's. The last "Mission Siberia" team to travel to Kazakhstan was in 2009.

...The Czech Republic has deployed 250 troops to Lithuania as part of the German led enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) battalion in Rukla. The Czech parliament has authorized until December 2020 the deployment of the mechanized infantry battalion with Pandur II fighting vehicles with 30 mm guns and Spike anti-tank missiles.

...Two Lithuanian Air Force Mi-8 helicopters have been helping Latvia and Sweden fight forest fires using 2,000 liter Bambi Buckets. About 1,000 hectares have burnt in Latvia. The one unit deployed to Latvia has delivered about 1.2 million liters of water from nearby lakes. Lithuania also has AS365N3+ Dauphin helicopters which remain on duty in Lithuania for search and rescue, evacuation and firefighting.

...The US based think tank, the Rand Corporation, has published a research report, Russian Social Media Influence-Understanding Russian Propaganda in Eastern Europe. Available on line at no-charge the report analyzed 23 million Russian language tweets between May to July 2016. The Kremlin supported effort employed

current events

41,000 users to disseminate anti-Ukraine, pro-Russian propaganda which was countered by 39,000 Ukrainian volunteers spreading opposing information. The Kremlin aims to agitate ethnic Russian or Russian speaking populations against their host governments, NATO and the EU. Rand notes that these people are susceptible to Russian propaganda if they have been denied citizenship by their host countries.

...Lithuanian officials are cautioning drivers against using the Russian based Yandex taxi booking service because it collects excessive user data via connection to the user's phone camera, microphone and local data network. The Russian search engine accounts for about 65% of all Russian internet searches and operates many map and transit apps.

...Fallout from the World Cup included 56 soccer fans who were removed from Kaliningrad bound trains because they could not produce visa or correct documents and 100 Nigerian fans who planned to take trains from Kaliningrad back to Moscow but lacked visas to pass through Lithuania. Russian officials arranged for flights to Moscow but were not able to make them at no-charge.

Business

...Lithuania has officially become a member of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The OECD Economic Survey of Lithuania praises the economic growth over the past 10 years and the drop in unemployment with stabilization of public finances. It encourages increases in productivity, reduction in income inequality and reduction in emigration and declining population. It noted a mismatch between worker skills and business needs and recommends strengthening work-based learning.



OECD member states.

...The Danish brewer, Carlsberg has joined the US based Brooklyn Brewery to open Švyturys Brewery in the Klaipėda port area. It features new craft beers, beer museum, gift shop, pub, food sampling room and conference hall. Previous projects between these two compa-

nies include craft breweries in Stockholm, London, and Trondheim in Norway.

...Mars Lietuva, the pet food manufacturer, plans to invest 18 million Euros in a 2,200 m² expansion of their Gargždai facility in western Lithuania. In 2017 revenue was 156 million Euros and profit was 7.7 million Euros.

...Automotive parts manufacturer, Magna, interviewed 22 potential suppliers in Lithuania for its customer base of Chrysler, Tesla and GM in the US and Ford, BMW, and VW in Europe. Possibly 25% (5) will be offered large long-term contracts.

...Dutch King Willem-Alexander had a state visit to Vilnius where he opened the Bilateral Forum on Sustainable Energy and met with Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė. Earlier he met with Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis. The Netherlands is the second largest investor (2 billion Euros) in terms of direct foreign investment (total 14.7 billion Euros) in Lithuania. Defense issues were also discussed as 200 Dutch troops serve in the NATO forward enhanced presence battalion lead by Germany in Rukla in central Lithuania.

...The European Union has granted 110 million euros for implementation of the "Rail Baltica" project to bridge the Neris River near Jonava, northeast of Kaunas. The rail bridge is planned at 1400 meters and a height of 40 meters. The project is planned to link Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia with eventually a tunnel to Finland. The main line will have branches to Vilnius and Riga Airport. The total cost is projected to be 5.8 billion euros with about 2.5 billion invested in Lithuania. Completion is planned for 2025 and operational by 2026 but may be delayed by the effects of Brexit.

The Bank of Lithuania has begun blocking websites deemed to be offering and providing illegal investment services. It has blocked globalfxm.com (AllProTech OU) and plans to restrict access to nearly 70 sites that are used to scam users. The Seimas has authorized legislative amendments and the BOL has judicial approval to block websites offering investment and insurance services including pyramid schemes.

...Digital bank Revolut has reported suspected money laundering activities to British authorities. It has signed up 2.25 million users since its launch in July 2015 and is the largest app-only bank in Britain. Customers can open an account, have a debit card and other money management tools via its smartphone app. It offers foreign exchange services and buy, hold and sell cryptocur-

rencies such as bitcoin. Revolut does not have a banking license in Britain and cannot make loans but is applying for a European banking license in Lithuania to avoid potential problems with Brexit.

...INTUS, the US window and door manufacturer, announced plans to open a production facility in Siauliai, northern Lithuania, which will eventually employ 600 workers. Construction of the 50,000 m2 plant will begin in late 2018. They are currently recruiting 100 staff for estimating, drafting, IT, and 3D modeling for 2019 and will later add 500 production personnel. INTUS specializes in energy-efficient polymer products used in apartments, schools and large scale commercial projects. Headquartered in Fairfax, Virginia, INTUS has a "One Window – One Tree" program which plants one tree per window in the vicinity of the project.

...Norway's Yara International, a worldwide provider of fertilizer and crop nutrition products, will open a Global Business Center (GBS) in Vilnius and hire about 250 specialists ranging from transport management to customer support. In 2017 Yara had sales of 9.8 billion euros with 17,000 employees in 60 countries. The Norwegian government is the largest shareholder. Invest Lithuania aided in the decision and reports that GBS is a major economic function in Lithuania with employment growing from 5,000 in 2012 to 15,000 in 2017.

...The Ministry of Finance wants Lithuania to become the gateway of financial services for China to invest in Central and Eastern European countries patterned on the 16+1 format in the areas of transport, logistics and agriculture in the "New Silk Road" railroad and shipping projects. The Ministry envisions financing for financial services, e-trade, investment and tourism. PI Enterprise Lithuania signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Bank of China to cooperate in the fore-mentioned areas as well as development of relations between the European Union and China including sharing information, jointly organizing business forums and Business to Business (B2B) meetings.

General

...The Dalai Lama visited Lithuania for three days and met with Tibetan supporters and delivered an address at the University of Vilnius and a public talk at the Siemens Arena. He did not meet with Lithuanian officials unlike his visit in 2013 when he was greeted by President Dalia Grybauskaitė. This time Lithuanian hospitality was tempered by concern that planned investments by China would be compromised.

...The reconstruction of the Grand Dukes' Palace in Vilnius has been completed after the expenditure of 100 million Euros over a 15 year period. It was built over the remaining ruins of the original palace which was destroyed 200 years ago. The Palace is 13,500 m2 and houses a national museum containing 500,000 items of Lithuanian heritage.



Grand Dukes Palace

...Drought has affected 5 municipalities in southern Lithuanian this spring: Alytus, Kalvarija, Lazdijai, Marijampolė, and Trakai. The lack of rain has resulted in minimum fodder for livestock and likely loss of harvest. This weather contrasts with the heavy rains and flooding experienced last autumn which covered 10 municipalities and reduced the ability to get on the fields to harvest.

...The Education and Science Ministry has introduced a new teachers' pay plan where they will be paid an hourly rate based on a 1,512 hour work year. The time will be divided into three parts: class time, preparation time and school improvement time. Some teachers protested in May because of fear that the plan would worsen their current situation.

...The remains of Adolfas Ramanauskas, Lithuanian partisan commander, have been found in the Orphans' Cemetery in Antakalnis, Vilnius. They were positively identified via DNA tests and comparison of skull measurements and historical personal photos. In 1949 he joined others in signing the Lithuanian Partisans Declaration and fought against Soviet occupation in the southeastern pine forests and swamps using the codename Vanagas meaning hawk.

...Pope Francis is scheduled to visit Vilnius on Saturday, September 22 and meet with the President and Diplomatic Corps in the square in front of the Presidential Palace and meet young people at the Cathedral. On Sunday he will be driven to Kaunas for Mass and meet with Religious and then driven back to Vilnius for visit and prayer at the Museum of Occupations and Freedom Fights. Monday he flies to Riga and a visit and Mass at

current events

the Shrine of the Mother of God in Aglona, then back to Vilnius. Tuesday he visits Tallinn and the young people in the Lutheran Charles Church and says Mass in Freedom Square before returning to Rome.

...James D. Melville, Jr., the US Ambassador to Estonia resigned immediately over disagreement with President Trump's attacks on NATO members, the tariffs against European Union members, the rejection of the Paris climate agreement and the Iran nuclear deal, his personal attacks on allies' leaders and his unusual relationship with President Vladimir Putin. A career diplomat with 33 years of experience, he previously served the US Foreign Service as Executive Director of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs and International Organization Affairs and directed support for all 79 EUR and IO overseas posts.

...As of July 1, Vilnius has started collecting a tourist fee of 1 euro per night with exemptions for minors and disabled people. Next year the city expects income of about 2 million euros. A tourist tax is already collected in Paris, Amsterdam, Rome, Barcelona plus Lithuanian destinations Birštonas, Druskininkai, Palanga, and Trakai.

Lithuania has declared a nationwide emergency over the current drought which will provide relief to the farmers and help avoid European Commission sanctions for failing to meet their obligations with respect to receiving EU subsidies. Contracts provide a "force majeure" contingency which relieves obligations when a "superior

force" makes performance impossible. The EC will provide direct payments to farmers in October rather than the normal December distribution.

...The ongoing drought is forecasted to result in a decline to 5.5 million tons down 13% from this year's record grain. Encouraged by the European Commission and International Monetary Fund, the Lithuania Ministry of Environment recommends taxing passenger cars based on the level of pollution as of 2020. The recommendation is part of a plan to reduce the number of diesel powered cars and their associated pollution in Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipeda, Siauliai and Panevėžys. Under similar encouragement, Rome will ban diesels in 2024.

...The European Court of Justice may impose fines of millions of euros if Lithuania does not connect more households using outdoor toilets to centralized wastewater treatment systems as ordered by EU's executive body in February, 2017. Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis said the Cabinet has approved amendments to the Law on Drinking Water Supply and Waste Water Management but Deividas Kriauciūnas, Lithuania's Director of the European Law Department, told the Cabinet that this action may not cancel the infringement procedure and associated fines.

In celebration of Lithuania's centennial, 100 hot air balloons launched over Kaunas. One balloon pulled a 100 meter long Lithuanian flag, while others included the shapes of cats and hearts.

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September 2018

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

ONGOING

Most Fridays,
4:30-7:30 p.m.

Friday Fish Fry at the Rockford Lithuanian Club
716 Indiana Avenue, Rockford, Ill.

Open to the public. Weekly specials vary. First Friday of the month—Lithuanian dumplings.
Info: lithuanianclub.org,
815-962-9256

Every Sunday,
11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

All-You-Can-Eat Lithuanian Brunch Buffet

Lithuanian Club and Gintaras Dining Room
877 E. 185 St.,
Cleveland, Ohio
\$15 per person; \$6 kids 6-12
Info: lithclub@gmail.com,
216-531-8318

First Sunday of the
Month, 12-4 p.m.

Lithuanian Brunch

The Avenue Restaurant, 71-22 Myrtle Ave., Glendale, N.Y.
Reservations strongly recommended.
Info: 347-725-3853

First Sunday of the
Month

Rockford Lithuanian Club General Membership Meeting

716 Indiana Avenue,
Rockford, Ill.
Open to all members.
Info: lithuanianclub.org,
815-962-9256

Every Third Saturday,
Mar-Jun & Sep-Nov,
1-3 p.m.

Amber Roots Lithuanian Heritage Club

Lithuanian Music Hall,
2517 E. Allegheny Ave.,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Use Tilton Street entrance.
Bring a dish to share.
Info: milliemarks@aol.com

Exhibit "For Freedom: Lithuanian American Support for Lithuania's Independence and Recognition"

Balzekas Museum of
Lithuanian Culture
www.balzekasmuseum.org

SEPTEMBER

September 7, 2018, 6 pm

Sculpture Exhibition by Virginija Babušytė-Venckūnienė. Susivienijimas Lietuvių Amerikoje (SLA)

307 W 30th Street, New York, NY. The exhibition featuring 17 sculptures out of bronze and steel will be on display from September 7 to September 28, 2018. More information: VBVenckūnienė@gmail.com

September 14-16, 2018
Lithuanian Folk Art Weekend 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.

September 14, 2018,
7 p.m.

Presentation on Lithuanian piano rolls

by Prof. Darius Kučinskas at the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture in Chicago, 6500 S. Pulaski Rd.

September 22, 2018,
2 p.m.

Book signing by Birutė Putrius, the author of The Last Book Smuggler.

Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture in Chicago, 6500 S. Pulaski Rd.

September 28 – 30, 2018
Lithuanian American Community annual Board of Directors meeting

will be held at the Monarch Hotel & Conference Center, Clackamas, Oregon. The newly elected Board of Directors including District presidents are obligated to attend, LAC Executive Committee members and Chapter presidents as well as LAC members at large are encouraged to attend.

September 30, 2018,
6 p.m.

Balzekas Museum Man of the Year Excellence Award Banquet honoring Marijus Gudynas, Director of the Department of Lithuanians Living Abroad at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania.

Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture in Chicago, 6500 S. Pulaski Rd.

OCTOBER

October 6, 2018

The rock musical The Legend of Žygimantas Augustas and Barbora Radvilaitė

appears in Chicago, Auditorium Theater. A tragic story of romance and political intrigue from 16th century Europe. Artists and sets from Lithuania. The event organizers: LAC Cultural Council, Austėja Sruoga, President.

October 13, 2018

Divine Providence Lithuanian Catholic Parish, Southfield, MI, (near Detroit)

will celebrate its 110th anniversary. Toronto chorus Volungė will perform at the banquet.

October 20, 2018, 9 a.m.

International Basketball Tournament

"Ambassador's Cup"

in Fort Washington, Maryland at Southern Regional Technology and Recreation Complex, 7007 Bock Road, Fort Washington, MD 20744. More info: tadas.kubilius@urm.lt or (202) 234-5860.

NOVEMBER

November 23 – 25, 2018

Baltic Centennial in Boston.

The Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian communities in Boston will host a weekend full of events to recognize and honor the 100-year milestone since the Baltic countries established themselves as independent nations. The event will take place at the Marriott Hotel in Copley Square, Boston. The Organizing Committee chair: Regina Balčaitienė.

GOT EVENTS?

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

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