

# bridges



LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

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**Front Cover:** In 2018, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania Linas Linkevičius awarded the decoration of honor 'Lithuanian Diplomacy Star' to the Lithuanian American Community for fostering Lithuanian culture in the United States. The award was presented to Sigita Šimkuvienė-Rosen, President of the Lithuanian American Community National Executive Committee. Photo courtesy of Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**Back cover:** Gediminas Tower in Vilnius, Lithuania. Photo by Jonė Reed.

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## from the editor

Dear readers,

On October 7th we commemorate one special date. It has been thirty years since Lithuanian tri-color flag was raised in the Tower of Gediminas in Vilnius. I am not sure if those who did not experience this moment themselves could imagine what it meant and how it felt. My generation is a special one. Today's fifty-year-olds who were born and raised in Soviet Lithuania lived half of their life under the Soviet regime and another half under free Lithuania. We have experienced that "moment" of change and its excitement cannot be compared to anything.

I have seen the tri-color flag of independent Lithuania during the Soviet times as well. It was, of course, highly risky to own one or to show it to anyone. However, there was one person who was quite widely known in Lithuania among certain circles of people who had the flag. It was Father Stanislovas of Paberžė. I remember when I was a student at the Vilnius University, one summer I with a small group of fellow students and friends hiked around Lithuania and visited Father Stanislovas. Young people could always visit him and even stay there for a few days or a few weeks. Father Stanislovas had a "strange" home. The walls were full of old metal saulutės, old brass pots, there were all kinds of carvings. He also had a library of books we have never seen before. Here we learned about Father Antanas Mackevičius, one of the leaders of the 1963 insurrection, who was the priest in that same Paberžė parish. And one day, here I was shown the Lithuanian tri-color. It was a large, full-size flag kept in the attic and not visible openly. Seeing the flag of independent Lithuania during the Soviet times made an immense impression on me and I will never forget it. It seems it happened not so long ago. However, it has been thirty years already since the flag was raised openly in the Gediminas Tower.

Father Stanislovas's real name was Mykolas Dobrovolskis (1918-2005). In 1966 he was exiled to the remote parish in Paberžė hoping he would be further away from large crowds of people and would not influence them. How wrong the authorities were! Father Stanislovas drew young people like a magnet and was sowing the seeds of the hopes for independence in them. For his 100th birth anniversary, Lithuanian Institute of Cultural Research wants to publish an album with the photos of the collection of religious vestments and accessories that Father Stanislovas collected. Presently they are looking for donors who would help with the publishing costs.

Wishing you a beautiful month of October,

Karilė Vaitkutė  
Editor



# Sisters of St. Casimir Opened Legacy Rooms

## Interview with Daina Cyvas

By Karilė Vaitkutė



A glimpse into the Legacy room looking at “The Dream” panel on the far left side (pink colored).

More Lithuanians live in the Chicago area than anywhere else in the world except for Lithuania. Most Lithuanians lived in the Marquette Park area. The neighborhood, situated on the south side Chicago, and surrounding a vast park, was densely populated with residents of Lithuanian extraction. Many immigrants arrived after World War I, but most living in the Marquette Park area settled there after World War II. Not so long ago, streets in this neighborhood were bustling with Lithuanian businesses, restaurants, banks, and stores. Now the times have changed and not so many Lithuanians live there. However, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, in Marquette Park, designed by a Lithuanian architect, Jonas Mulokas, is still offering Mass in the Lithuanian language. Close to the church, taking up an entire city block between Washtenaw Avenue and Rockwell Street, stands a quite majestic building that houses Sisters of St. Casimir within the St. Casimir Center. Presently the building is owned by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Chicago’s Lithuanians and the religious community know quite well of the work that the Sisters have done in the fields of education and healthcare during over a

hundred years of the congregation’s existence. However, now the story of Seseleš Kazimierietės, as they are called in Lithuanian, is available for everyone to view and learn by visiting the recently opened legacy space that houses the life of their foundress, some of their history, and some of their more current endeavors. The museum is called the Legacy Rooms.

Our guide through the Museum was Daina Cyvas, the Communications and project coordinator for the Sisters of St. Casimir. She, along with other members of “the legacy team,” was instrumental in planning and preparing the historical materials for the exhibits. Other members of the committee included: Sister Regina Dubickas, General Superior, and members of the SSC Leadership Team, Sister M. Immacula Wendt; Sister Elizabeth Ann Yocius; Sister Margaret Zalot; Sister Theresa Dabulis, former member of the Leadership Team; Sister Margaret Petcavage, Vice-Postulator for the Cause of Mother Maria; Paula Schultz, past Communications Director; and Mary Beth McCarthy, Associate Treasurer and Chair of the Legacy Committee, along with other members of the committee.

**Karilė Vaitkutė:** Please tell us about the idea of founding the Legacy Rooms. Did it all begin when the convent closed?

**Daina Cyvas:** Karilė – the convent did not “close” – the property or the “Motherhouse”( as it was called) was transferred to Catholic Charities in 2014. In early 2015, Catholic Charities staff and services began working at 2601 W. Marquette Road. The SSC Leadership Team was discussing the change in ownership for the SSC property with Msgr. Michael Boland, President and CEO of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Msgr. Boland mentioned how Catholic Charities likes its employees and clients to know the history of the buildings in which they are working. That planted the seed for a possible legacy space. The building became Catholic Charities in December 2014. Early in 2017, the Leadership Team started talking about using some space for preserving the heritage and legacy of the Sisters of St. Casimir. A team was formed and thus began the process of pulling ideas together, working with Matrex Design, and having the design implemented in the current legacy space.

**KV:** I noticed that the wall colors used in the Legacy Rooms are light pink, blue, green and yellow. Is there any significance to the colors chosen?

**DC:** The colors were part of the color palette presented by Matrex. This palette was derived from the Sisters of St. Casimir seal that is in the chapel on the sarcophagus of Mother Maria and the ambo. Matrex presented the original colors and the colors that were derived from these: pink from the red, light blue from the blue in the stones on the crown and light green from the same; yellow from the gold in the crown. The colors are inviting and unique.

**KV:** The exhibit is divided into several sections. The first one tells about the beginnings of the Congregation. How did it all begin? What were the



The Legacy committee. Front row, from left: Sr. Immacula Wendt, Sr. Regina Dubickas, Sr. Theresa Dabulis, Sr. Margaret Zalot, Sr. Margaret Petcavage. Second row, from left: Daina Cyvas, Mary Beth McCarthy, Sr. Elizabeth Ann Yocius, and Paula Schultz

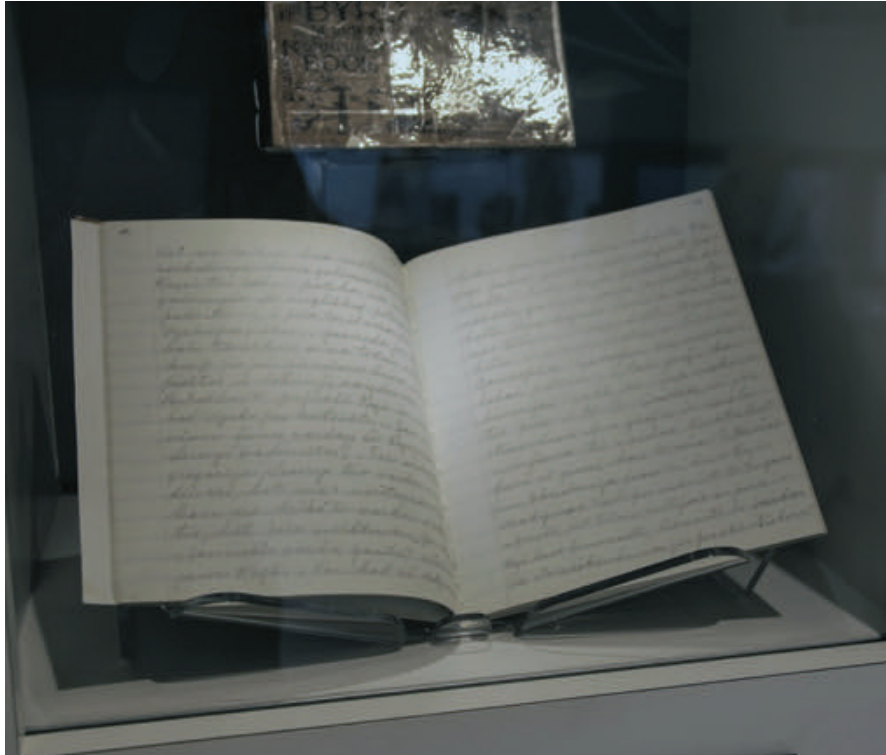
main reasons to establish the Congregation and who were the people most instrumental in its founding?

**DC:** The first panel is entitled “The Dream.” This is the beginning of the congregation. Casimira Kaupas came to Scranton, PA, in 1897 on the request of Rev. Anthony Kaupas, her priest brother, to be his housekeeper. During her time in Scranton, Casimira saw Sisters for the first time as well as the plight of Lithuanian immigrants in the U.S. They did not have a Lithuanian congregation to work with them. In 1901, Casimira returned to Lithuania with the intention of staying there. The thought of religious life and the plight of Lithuanian immigrants in Amer-



A re-creation of Mother Maria's room in which she lived and worked for 27 years.





A simple table containing Mother Maria's account of the founding of the Sisters of St. Casimir.

ally, two other young women joined her in the novitiate of these Sisters. In 1904, Casimira asks her brother, Father Anthony Kaupas, and Father Anthony Milukas to find a priest and a religious congregation to help with the founding of a new congregation. In 1905, Father Staniukynas, pastor of Holy Cross Church in Mt. Carmel, PA, requests that Bishop J. W. Shanahan, Bishop of Harrisburg, sponsor the congregation. The Bishop asks a religious Congregation, the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Scranton, and their Congregational Leader, Mother M. Cyril Conway, IHM, to assist with the founding of the new Congregation.

**KV:** The exhibit offers an opportunity to see several personal items of Mother Maria Kaupas, the foundress of the Congregation. What is your favorite among them and why?



A mosaic of the seal of the Sisters of St. Casimir.

ica never left her and Casimira decided to return to the United States. Her brother priest and his friends advised her to prepare for this by receiving an education and religious formation with a community in Switzerland. In 1902, Casimira went to Ingenbohl, Switzerland, to study with the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross; eventu-

**DC:** My favorite artifact or item that belonged to Mother Maria and was written by Mother Maria is the simple tablet that tells of the founding of the Sisters of St. Casimir. It is a personal account written in the third person. I am fascinated that it was written in pencil, and her handwriting is beautiful. It was neatly stored in her room in the closet and was only discovered after her death in 1940.

**KV:** It would be hard to enumerate all the good deeds of the hard working Sisters of St. Casimir. However, please touch upon the most important accomplishments in the field of education and health.

**DC:** The Sisters established St. Casimir Academy, Maria High School, and Villa Joseph Maria High School. They also established Holy Cross Hospital and were asked to serve at Loretto Hospital. There is one panel or area in the Legacy space where you can see all the states and cities where the Sisters have worked and ministered. It is amazing to see the width and depth of their reach in the area of education.

Of course, the Sisters have a special connection with Lithuania. In 1920, Mother Maria and four Sisters established a foundation of the Sisters of St. Casimir near Kaunas, in Pažaislis, Lithuania. The ties with Lithuania remained strong in the years after Lithuania's re-establishment of independence in 1990. The SSC and other religious congregations assisted the Lithuanian

SSC's and other communities in Lithuania with an understanding of religious life in the post-Vatican II era as well as updating in new methods in education and catechetics. Sisters from Chicago have visited the Sisters in Lithuania, especially for significant celebrations. Sisters from Lithuania have visited Sisters in Chicago for significant events as well. Sisters from Lithuania have spent longer times studying in the US and living with the Sisters of St. Casimir and Sisters from Chicago have stayed for longer periods of time assisting in schools and working together. Today, we continue our connections by sharing news and updates about our community and sending copies of publications. Sister Regina maintains regular communication with Sister Silvija Jelena Matačiūnaitė, General Superior in Pažaislis, Lithuania. So the ties with the Sisters in Lithuania are strong, and it is important to understand and remember that Mother Maria was able to establish a congregation in the United States and in Lithuania.

**KV:** As of July 1, 2010, Mother Maria Kaupas is known as Venerable Servant of God Maria Kaupas. This brings Mother Maria one step closer to Beatification. Please tell us about the steps towards Beatification and if we can expect to see Mother Marija Kaupas called St. Maria Kaupas?

**DC:** The steps are: Servant of God, Venerable, Blessed, and Saint. We are half-way there! We continue to pray for Mother Maria's beatification. We have a monthly Mass usually celebrated the first Saturday of each month. All are invited and welcome to attend and pray together with the Sisters of St. Casimir. The next Mother Maria Mass will be October 6 and November 3.

**KV:** How many Sisters are there today? Could you tell us about their present life and activities?

**DC:** There are 51 Sisters. Most live in Chicago. 36 live at the Franciscan Village in Lemont, where they continue to live their calling of prayer and presence. Five Sisters live at the St. Casimir Center, the former Motherhouse, where the SSC's administration offices are, and leadership team works. Four of the Sisters live in Chicago. Two of them work at schools in Chicago. Six are in Argentina. There, work is in two different villas and two different nursing homes. One Sister is a director, the other a volunteer. One works in Bethel, an orphanage for children. Two sisters work in their homes and are ministers of prayer and presence in their parishes and neighborhood community.

**KV:** What does the future hold for Sisters of St. Casimir?



Mass at St. Casimir Center chapel on August 25, 2018. Celebrating the 111th Anniversary of the Founding of the Sisters of St. Casimir and the Blessing of the Legacy Rooms.



A group of Lithuanians in front of the Lithuanian Heritage panel.

**DC:** The Sisters of St. Casimir are continuing to widen their circle of influence and bringing their prayer and presence wherever they are. The Sisters continue to be faithful to their calling from God to prayer, community and service to brothers and sisters. They continue their work in the ministries of education and healthcare, as well as joining others in working to improve the quality of life in our neighborhood and in our world.

The Legacy Rooms of the Sisters of St. Casimir are open to the public. The address is 2601 W. Marquette Road, Chicago IL 60629. The visiting hours are Monday through Friday, 9-5 pm. It is best to call ahead of time to schedule a guide for groups by calling 773-776-1324 or 773-349-8064. Ask for Daina.





# We Connect LITHUANIA

By Nathan Radtke

During the Closing ceremony, Nathan gave a speech and shared his personal experiences, achievements in Lithuania. Photo by Martynas Zaremba.

My name is Nathan Radtke, and I am currently a baccalaureate student at Washington College, Maryland. I am majoring in International Studies with a concentration in Peace & Conflict Studies and it is my ambition to serve abroad, representing US interests. My Lithuanian heritage comes through my mother, whose grandparents immigrated to the United States in the early 20th Century, during the interwar period. Their own roots came from Lithuanian farming villages, including Biržai and Ramygala. When they arrived, they settled in the large diaspora communities of Chicago, and the majority of my extended family still live in the surrounding suburbs of the city. I spent my childhood living in rural Maryland and was blessed to grow up surrounded by nature and communities of service and hard work. Although I grew up away from the US diaspora communities, our family still observed many holidays with Lithuanian traditions and learned about our, and the country's, history and culture.

Due to this, I was very interested when I learned about the We Connect Lithuania program. One of my younger sisters had previously visited Lithuania with the High School program for Lithuanian International Student Services (LISS) and so provided our family with a connection to other possible youth and student programs. While studying abroad this past year in Den Haag, I learned about and applied to We Connect and was honored to be chosen to participate in it. I have nothing but praise for the program. They assisted me in finding an internship at the Eastern Europe Studies Centre, where I spent my summer working on several projects related to security, extremism, and the EU's Eastern Partnership policy. I learned quite a bit from each of my assignments, as well as overall research, teamwork, and office skills. However, beyond my internship was the impressive program We Connect wrote for us. The other participants and I were granted opportunities to visit with several ministries, businesses, and other institutions - all with





Nathan is presented with the highest achievement award in the program and is given the title "Young Lithuanian Ambassador" by We Connect Lithuania project manager Kamilė Naraitė, as well as representatives from Global Lithuanian Leaders and Kazickas Family Fund. Photo by Martynas Zaremba.

the prospect of impressing upon us both the tapped and untapped potential and growth currently found in Lithuania. And they did. I found many of the interactions to be both informative and engaging, and most people we visited seemed genuinely interested to meet with us and share what they had gathered from their careers or service. Perhaps more importantly, was the insights we heard from them about how they saw Lithuania's future and how they might be working to bring such a future about. The emphasis of We Connect is that many of us already know Lithuania's past and traditional culture, but that there is much more to take away from the culture. This was primarily with regards to the current climate of innovation and competition within Lithuanian start-ups as well as the country's attractiveness to foreign investors, thanks to Lithuania's own strong talent-pool and dependability. One great example that I saw of this was when our program visited the Vilnius branch of NASDAQ, and learned that it is the only foreign branch allowed to monitor the US Stock Exchange.

These interactions with Lithuania's modern-day leaders are probably at the forefront of my memories spent here. However, I also remember several amazing times of recreation, such as the inspiring views taken from the basket of a hot-air balloon, or the beauty of the Baltic from the dunes of the Curonian Spit. But it is perhaps the surrounding streets of Vilnius that I will remember most. Vilnius was a city that was small enough to become intimate with its small side-streets and parks but large



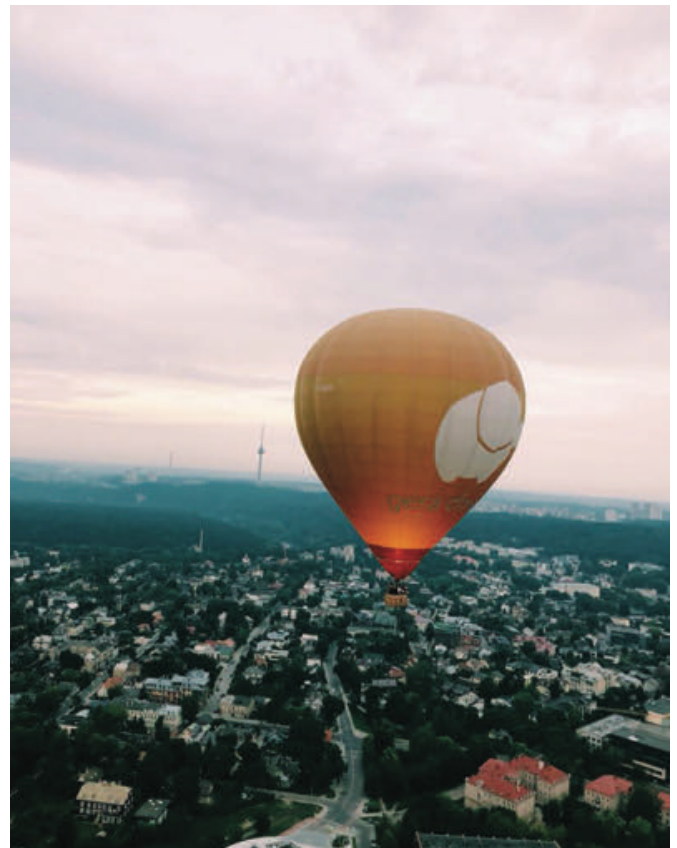
We Connect Lithuania participants spent the last weekend on the Baltic Sea coast. Visited Klaipėda, Neringa, Nida cities, explored the Curonian Spit, were fascinated by the Baltic Sea, the Curonian lagoon, sea-shore and sand dunes. Photo by Martynas Zaremba.



We Connect Lithuania participants joined Lithuania's Centenary Song Celebration, where together with Lithuania 4,000,000 and thousands of Lithuanians sang the National Anthem. Photo by Kostas Kajėnas.

enough to feel consistently engaged. It also resonated with me as both I and the city share several cultures and identities, which I believe helps add character, complexity and serves as a signal to develop a new culture, taking from the best of each influence.

I believe that this leads to two points of advice to other diaspora youth. First, that while our Lithuanian heritage help us to remember our history and recognize and appreciate the challenges our forbearers went through, we also take and learn from the societies we, ourselves, grew up in. This may possibly alienate us from either culture, as we are not solidly rooted in one or the other. But that this then serves as an invitation to define for ourselves who we are - to forge our own identity. My second point is a caveat to this. It is important for us to define for ourselves who we are, but we should not let our individuality isolate us from either the good or bad aspects of the cultures we come from - life is complex. I, myself, do not know the next time I will return to Lithuania, but I do know that the connections I made there will stay with me and help guide me in life. That is all I could've asked for while visiting, and it is why I wholeheartedly recommend other global Lithuanians to look into We Connect Lithuania. As members of diaspora communities, we are blessed to have access to various opportunities to learn about our (multiple) heritages, and to experience them in a modern light. I believe it is important to seek and use them to develop oneself - what we learn only helps us bring back to those in our lives, from whatever heritage.

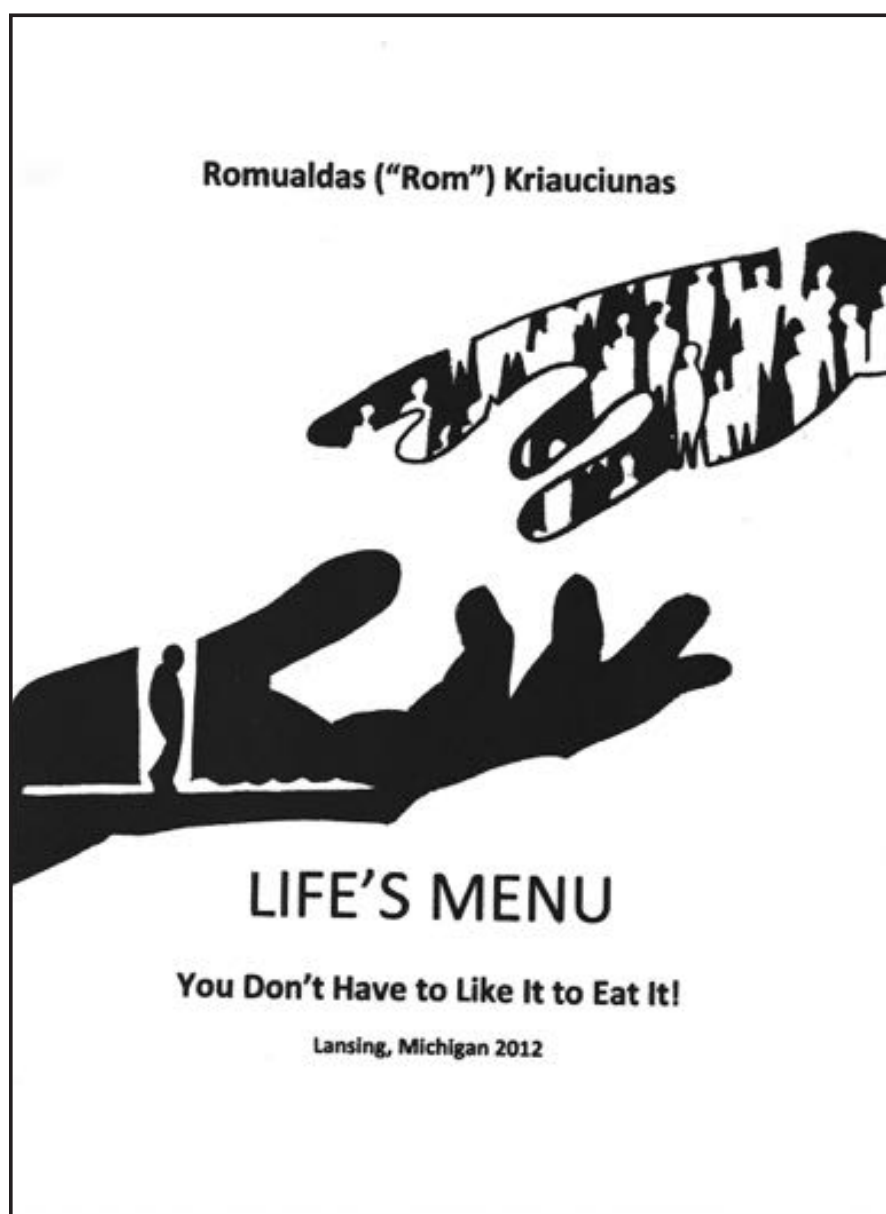


We Connect Lithuania participants had a chance to fly the hot air balloon over Vilnius, capital of Lithuania and one of the most beautiful cities in Europe. Photo by participants.



# FAST REVERSE!

By Romualdas Kriauciūnas



As I continue to live and share bits and pieces of my life with others, now and then I hear suggestions that I should capture all of it on paper. At times, in response, I would tell them that I have done so, covering the first twenty-eight years of my life, but nobody has ever asked to see it. By now it's obvious that I took their polite suggestion too seriously. But that gave me an idea. I do want to share my life story with my grandchildren. Others are most welcome to also take a peek at it.

The first part – it could be called FAST REVERSE – is what I already have written previously. It was written in 1965 for a class assignment for an advanced graduate course on Personality at Washington University in St. Louis. I will share it as it was written. In looking over it I realized that some parts needed to be clarified. So, in parentheses, I added some notes.

## Parents' Background

Both of my parents (Mykolas Kriauciūnas and Rožė Šukytė) were born in 1905 (in Lithuania) and grew up on a farm. My mother's family was one of the richer ones in that area, but World War I reduced them to "average" farmers. I understand that my father's folks owned a smaller, but more fertile farm.

My parents-to-be first met while they were students at a Teachers



College (in Panevėžys), but it was only after they were assigned to teaching positions that they started showing interest in each other. After their marriage in 1931, my father was transferred to my mother's school (in the village of Gustonys, District of Panevėžys) where both of them worked until the summer of 1944.

We lived – probably rent-free – on the second floor of the school house. Sometime during 1938, my parents bought a small farm (about 40 acres) less than a mile away and they were renting it to another family who actually lived and worked there. The rental cost actually meant dividing the farm profits in half. My parents also helped the farmer with seasonal jobs like harvesting.

#### Fragmented Memories... 1939-1940

What follows are some of the events I can remember without too much difficulty. They will be presented in a loose form and not necessarily in a chronological order. The dates attached to some of the events have been deduced from the facts that became known only later. The first calendar year that I actually remember as such was 1943.

My first vivid memory has to do with our family's trip in the summer of 1938 to Palanga, a resort town on the Baltic Sea. We stayed in a white wooden house that had many windows. The windows were divided into many smaller sections... The beach was within a short walking distance... There was lots of water and no shore on the other side... I started running toward the water, but as soon as I hit it, I fell down because there was a sudden drop at the water line. Further in it was shallow again. I became either frightened or received a mouthful of salty water and started crying... A long strolling pier was stretching way into the sea. It was very high above the water, but some people did not pay attention to it and

were diving (including my father) into the sea... One late afternoon we went to Birutė's Hill – a legendary, historical site – from which we watched the sunset. The sun was going down into the water! Won't the water put out the sun?... I ate bananas, oranges, and ice-cream... In front of a grotto on Birutė's Hill, we posed for pictures. A man kept hiding under a piece of cloth which was on top of a tripod. I was told that he was going to release a bird from there, but I must have missed it.

Our trip home was on a bus. The outside of the bus was half ivory and half maroon in color. My mother and sister must have gone home earlier since they were not on the bus with us. Just before boarding the bus my father bought some cherries that I was going to get when we got home. We forgot the cherries on the bus, and I was heartbroken.

With someone, probably my father, we visited my mother in the hospital (in Panevėžys). While there I was shown my new sister (Vitalija), and vaguely remember seeing her... It was a cold winter of the same year – 1939 – when my new sister was baptized. The ceremonies were at home. There were many tall people. I kept running around from room to room.

The schoolhouse was being remodeled in 1939. The carpenters were putting in new and larger windows. The new stairs up (to our apartment) were put in a funny position. There were lots of wood chips all over the floor and they made good toys (obviously we had no real toys).

(Another early memory from 1939.) The horses, knee deep in clay, were going in a circle. Our new animal barn was being built and the clay was used in building it. The roof was still uncovered, but to signify a near-completion a wreath was placed on it. I could see the top of the new barn from the second floor of our schoolhouse... The older children were

playing outside in the schoolyard and I used to talk to them through the window.

After the snow melted, I developed a whooping cough and had to stay inside for a long, long time. The neighbor's kids were also coughing the same way... I used to call my mother who would be working in the flower garden just outside the window... My older sister (Elvyra) was assigned to guard me against my getting into the book-shelves... Father once told me a very long adventure story, something about Eskimos, snow, and water. Whenever I wanted to hear it again, he would tell me in an abbreviated form... I was sitting on my mother's knee and was learning my first prayer. I remember the exact room and location in it when I recited the prayer without outside assistance... The memory of my younger sister is missing, apart from what was already said above.

When I was under three or four my mother used to take me along to a neighborhood sauna bathhouse (for a weekly bath). At some point, the other women felt that I was too old to be in their company and suggested that I should start going to such functions with my father. It was in this setting that my first memory of sex differences comes to my mind. It seems that the difference that I noticed had to do with the presence of breasts rather than "absence" of genitalia. This makes sense since the bathhouse was always full of steam and (was) very dark, with only one weak lantern suspended from the ceiling... When I started going with my father, the only thing I remember was the bathhouse owner who had one of his legs amputated (at the knee) only a short while ago as a result of an accident with farm machinery.

From our (school) house I could see the three (railway)-car express trains passing at regular intervals. It seems that I remember riding on it on a few occasions to the City of Panevėžys.

We used to stop for a lemonade at the train station.

My father was strict about our health. He would insist that we kept our hands and gloves dry and not play in the snow with our (bare) hands. Years later my older sister told me that we children used to have two pairs of gloves each time we would go out during the winter time. One pair would be used for our own fun, the other pair being kept dry in case of a surprise inspection. (Obviously, my mother was in cahoots with us and on the side of fun.) My sisters and I had better clothes than other school children, most of whom came from poor families. For some reason, I resented being dressed differently. I had a sailor's outfit, with a square collar in the back and a tie up front. I remember trying to avoid wearing this particular garment unless we were going to town.

#### An Unused One-Way "Ticket" to Siberia...1940-1941

(As the result of a secret agreement between Germany's Hitler and USSR's Stalin) Lithuania was occupied by the USSR during 1940. Sometime that year an "election" was held, with only Communist party members appearing on the ballot. I remember the event since our school was used as a polling place. The outside (of the school building) was decorated with pictures of Lenin and Stalin, and a guard was posted to make sure they stayed up. Some years later I discovered that the "election" results were announced in Moscow a few hours before the polls closed. (Someone miscalculated the time-zone difference and inadvertently exposed the sham.) It did not really matter. Among other things the "results" showed that 99% of the (eligible) people voted and practically 100% of them were "begging" USSR to accept Lithuania into its family of "brotherly nations".

By (mid) June of 1941, the Soviets had

sent off to Siberia or liquidated some 40,000 of Lithuanians (that number also included other nationalities). To be a priest, an officer, a teacher, etc., was enough reason to be labeled reactionary and included among the deported (to Siberia). The mass deportations started only a few weeks before Germany attacked the USSR (on June 22, 1941). My parents found out from some reliable sources that our name was on the "black list". This was anticipated. Since it was summertime, my parents spent most of the time hiding in the nearby woods, while we children were at home with our maid. One day a truck with a heavy guard (of about six soldiers) pulled into our yard. I was the first one to notice it and warn the maid about it. We knew the meaning of this visit right away. The maid answered the door and talked with the soldiers, while we children were hiding behind a door upstairs. The soldiers asked for my parents, but they were told that "the teachers" were out of town and (the maid) could not tell when they will come back. The soldiers then said that they will come back later and left without searching the house. In the meantime, my mother was coming home through the fields and saw the truck leaving. Mother was very unconvincing when she tried to calm us down by saying that the truck stopped to ask for road directions. If this were true, why did she herself have tears in her eyes?

A short time later the deportation tactics were changed and children were taken away even if parents were not at home. Then the parents would "voluntarily" join their children. We did not wait long enough to see what was coming next. The next day all of us went (by train) to my grandmother's farm which was far away from any town and accessible only by a dirt (sandy) road. We felt safer being away from home and we were. (Before we knew, at the grandmother's farm there were some dozen priests that

were also hiding from the Russians until the war started).

We children knew that the war had started, but it still was very unreal to us. How could there be a war since we have not seen any soldiers fighting? Then one day while we were playing in the fields we saw a German (army) patrol, consisting of some 10-15 men. They stopped at the farm for water and then left. (Being afraid that the water well may be poisoned, they forced my grandmother to drink the water, waited a few minutes, and then quenched their own thirst). We were surprised to see them riding bicycles, instead of tanks...

I was probably in the third grade when I got myself a girlfriend. What has survived (in my memory) from this is some feeling of jealousy and possession. She was mine! I don't remember her name but still could tell (even today) in what direction her home was (it was on the other side of the railroad tracks). She was a shoemaker's daughter. (Years later I learned from my mother that her father was an active Communist.) Around the same time, I also had a boyfriend by the name of Algis. The only thing that remains from this now is the memory of big apples by his house and our conversations about girls. Later the same friend was attacked by a cow. The curved horn went in through his lungs and came out through his eye (socket). He lived, but I have not seen him after he returned from the hospital. (We did talk one time by his house, but he was behind the bushes and did not want to be seen in the condition he was in.)

#### To School – One Floor Down...1942

It must have been in the fall of 1941 when I formally started school (There was no such thing as a kindergarten.) The key word here is "formally" since I have been around the school setting from my first day of life. In that sense starting school was not a significant

event. We not only lived on the second floor of the schoolhouse, but my parents were also my teachers – for my first three grades. If my dates are correct, I was not yet six years old when I entered the first grade. I must have spent a lot of time in classrooms so that my parents decided to enroll me.

My reading ability was not as good as my performance. I recall clearly that I had the reading booklet memorized from repeated (loud) readings by others and could recite it by making the proper associations with the pictures illustrating the written material. It was a rural school where my parents were the only teachers, the father being the principal. Each of them had a large classroom with two grades. It seems that my mother had the first two grades.

My more vivid and most pleasant memories are associated with the summer months when the whole family would go to my (maternal) grandmother's farm (in Inkūnai) and stay there until the fall. The families of my uncles and aunts would do the same. The most attractive thing about this farm was the nearby river (Šventoji) that we did not have at home. Swimming, fishing, and boating in the river, playing on the sandy beach, and picking berries and mushrooms was what the summers were made of. The war was on, but by this time and in this place it was far away once more.

### "Why, Father, Were They Shot?"...1943

The second year in school was very similar to the first: the same teacher, the same classmates, and subjects. The war atmosphere was beginning to fill the air. We lived less than a mile (perhaps, a quarter of a mile) from the railroad station which was across an open field so that the train movement was clearly visible. The frequency of military transports to the east was increasing. With it

increased the length and frequency of the hospital trains heading back to Germany. Sabotage activities by Communist guerrillas were also intensified. Initially, their aim was directed toward strategic objects, but with time and increase in numbers, they were known to attack local people and take what they needed, such as food, horses, equipment, and medical supplies. Resistance against such action was subdued by bullets. Local measures aimed at self-protection were of little success. The guerillas were also called bandits.

We still went to my grandmother's farm for the summer, even though we did not feel too safe traveling the last part through the bandit-infested forest. Our vacation was not like the previous ones, except for the place and people. The carefree atmosphere was gone. Parents' faces reflected concern and worry about the events. From our personal experience in 1941, even we children were not too naïve about the implications of the advancing eastern front.

(While still at grandma's farm, one early morning we were awakened by gunfire. Local police had surrounded the farm and came to arrest my uncle Juozas Šukys. Someone had reported to the authorities that he was helping local resistance against the Germans. Grandma woke her son (my uncle) and warned him that someone was at the front door asking for him. Right there and then he jumped out through the (bedroom) window and ran for the nearby forest, but got shot with an explosive bullet that tore up his lungs and stomach. We watched him in agony as he was loaded on a horse-drawn wagon to be taken to a hospital perhaps twenty miles away. Through my mother's efforts, he was later saved from execution and was transferred to another hospital in Panevėžys. A few years after the Soviets returned in 1944, my uncle ended up being arrested and with his new wife was shipped off to Siberia.

He was declared being "an enemy of the people". The same "enemy of the people" designation was also given to my parents when the Soviets confiscated their farm and all of their property. By that time my parents had fled to the West.)

We cut our vacation short to return home since the events were getting unpredictable. Upon returning home we discovered that a few days ago the Nazis had carried out a mass execution of the Jews that were rounded up in a nearby town (of Panevėžys). I remember visiting the mass graves with my father. It was an early Sunday morning. The birds were singing, the (pine) forest smelled of freshness, the sky was blue, and the wind was calm. And this was the setting for four or five rows of fresh (massive) graves. A hand here and there was still sticking out and the blood on the ground was hardly dry. A prayer book, some clothes, and a doll were left unburied. "Why, father, were they shot?..."



Romualdas Kriaučiūnas, author.



# No One Will Ever Love You As Much

## A Glimpse into One Hundred Years of Lithuanian Poetry

By Audrė Budrytė Nakienė



Participants of the program. Standing from left: Vainis Aleksa, Audrė Budrytė Nakienė, Dalia Lietuvninkienė, Kazys Motekaitis. In front, from left: Aušra Jasaitė Paulauskienė, Ramūnas Paulauskas. Photo by Karilė Vaitkutė.

Karilė Vaitkutė: How did you come up with the idea to celebrate Lithuania's independence through poetry? Why was the event held at the Poetry Foundation?

Audrė Budrytė Nakienė: I knew that I wanted to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the restoration of Lithuanian independence in some special way, with an artistic event for the larger community that would have personal significance for me. There are several great folk dance groups and choirs in Chicago, so I knew that the anniversary would already be celebrated in song and dance. Then I thought of how much my connection with Lithuanian culture has to do with the language, and with poetry - the poems memorized in Lithuanian Saturday school, poems sung at Camp Dainava in Michigan, poems I heard during Poezijos pavasaris (Poetry Spring) in Lithuania, those I had performed or read. I thought of how poets are kind of like rock stars in Lithuania - people know them, respect them, read them. Thus I realized a poetic celebration would be just the thing.

It seemed to me that many anniversary events would probably take place in the suburbs, but I had not heard of anything in the city of Chicago itself. So many generations of Lithuanians have lived and worked in Chicago, some were immigrants, some born here, many died here. Thus it was important to me to produce something in Chicago, for Chicagoans - for those who are not of Lithuanian descent, too, who may be curious about our rich culture.

I had participated in an event several years ago at the Poetry Foundation. At the invitation of the Consul General of the Republic of Lithuania, I had performed Lithuanian love poetry at a multi-lingual Valentine's Day event called, "Love, What Language Do You Speak?" Performers performed love poems in their native tongue, and English



Audrė Budrytė Nakienė. Photo by Karilė Vaitkutė.



Aušra Jasaitė Paulauskienė. Photo by Karilė Vaitkutė.

subtitles were projected on the stage for those who did not speak those languages. It was a wonderful event, and I fell in love with the space itself. The Poetry Foundation is right in downtown Chicago, but you can easily pass by this nondescript building during the day. In the evening, though, when it is lit up, this building calls you to enter its magical space. There is a small courtyard with young trees, and you immediately feel you're in a tranquil oasis as you approach the building's main entrance. As you look through the floor to ceiling windows, you see bookshelves filled with books of poetry. Anyone can go in and read, or attend the many free poetry events - spoken word, poetry by young authors as well as renowned poets, multicultural poetry events. I thought this would be a perfect location for a celebration of Lithuanian poetry. I submitted a proposal to the Poetry Foundation, and requested the Balzekas Museum to co-sponsor this event. Luckily, both organizations agreed.

**K. V.:** Tell us about the process of preparation. I can only imagine how much work went into it. How did you select the poems? What were the poetic discoveries for you, if any?

**A.B.N.:** I began by immersing myself in Lithuanian poetry. Old favorites were reread and new poetry was discovered. I pulled out my Lithuanian Saturday school textbooks and reviewed early Lithuanian literature. I read, borrowed books, found great resources on line, and just let it all sink in. I recommend this to everyone - devote your winter to Lithuanian poetry - you truly will be rewarded! This was the easy part of the process, because I was not doing any planning, choosing, or decision making yet, simply absorbing the words.

I enlisted Vytas Cuplinskas to be a part of the creative team. His fabulous films and subtitles were

such an important part of the last Lithuanian song festival in Chicago, and I knew that he could create a great introductory film for our event, something to introduce non-Lithuanians to Lithuania: where is this country? What is the deal with the language being the "oldest living language"? What anniversary is being celebrated? Vytas came through with a charming and informative film, "Lithuania 101," and also made slides with English subtitles. I began to mull over various possibilities for presenting a wealth of poetry; should the poems be grouped according to theme, or presented chronologically? Vytas pointed out that it would be useful to consider which poems might sound most interesting to those who do not understand Lithuanian. Are there any poets that absolutely must be included, regardless of the approach I take? I imagined different scenarios as I began to list the must-haves, the poets who simply had to be included due to their status in the Lithuanian literary world. I also wanted to be sure to include some non-Lithuanians, those of Lithuanian descent, or those of other ethnic origins who have a connection to Lithuania. It was important to include those who did not have a Christian world view as well. I was grateful to discover Lithuanian Jewish poet Matilda Olkin, through reading an article about her tragic fate in "Deep Baltic," and knew immediately that this was a voice which must be included.

I tried to work with poetry translations that were available, but sometimes a poem that was available in English did not best represent the poet, or did not work thematically, so I had to pick a different poem, and translate it. Also, some of the poems would actually be read in English, both to give a break to the audience members who did not speak Lithuanian, but also to share some beautiful English translations. I discovered a wonderful English language website that I highly recommend: "Vilnius





Vainis Aleksa. Photo by Karilė Vaitkutė.

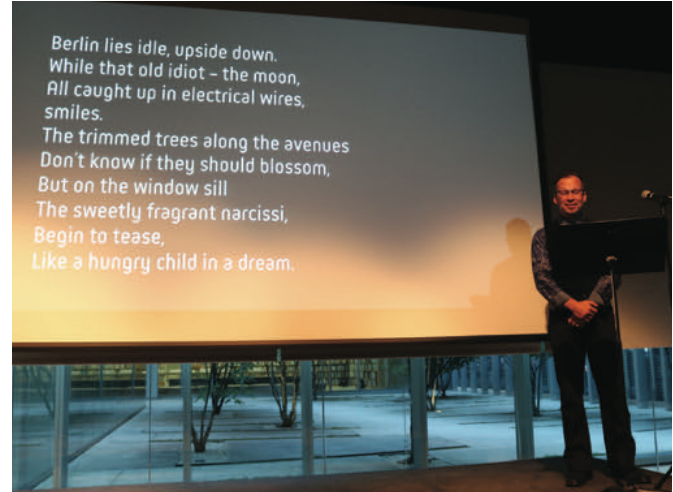
Review: The Online Magazine for Lithuanian Literature, "a terrific source for discovering new Lithuanian poetry and other types of writing, in English.

In the mean time, I invited poet Vainis Aleksa and actors Aušra Jasaitė Paulauskas and Ramūnas Paulauskas to be readers. I was thrilled that they all agreed, for I knew the variety of voices and styles would keep the event lively. Vainis let me know that he had composed music for some better known Lithuanian poems; I had definitely envisioned music at this event, but I wanted it to really be connected to the poetry, and I knew Vainis had suggested the perfect musical interludes. Soloist Dalia Lietuvninkienė and violinist Kazys Motekaitis joined the creative ensemble, and Vainis on guitar completed the musical trio.

Finally, I began sorting the poems within a chronological context by theme. It was a very difficult process; I direct plays, and the knowledge that not everyone who auditions will be cast in a given production can weigh on me. In the same way, it was a bit painful to "cut" some of the poems I really wanted in the program, but we had a time limit. Ninety minutes was our absolute limit, though we were encouraged to present an event that would only be sixty minutes long! Needless to say, with such a wealth of brilliant poetry that the poets of Lithuania provide, we had to work to keep the program within the ninety minute time frame.

**K.V.:** You selected 40 poems and translated half of them. Did that work go smoothly? Was it easy? Was it challenging?

**A.B.N.:** Translating the poems was challenging. It was certainly not my intention to give myself such a task, but I felt that certain poems simply had to be in the program, and if an existing translation could not be



Ramūnas Paulauskas. Photo by Karilė Vaitkutė.

found, it would be up to me to translate. I would call them workable translations; the goal was not to create a literary masterpiece worthy of publication, but to give the essence of the poem so that those who do not speak Lithuanian could follow along. I truly enjoyed this work. Similarly to playing a character in a play, or memorizing a poem instead of simply reading it, translation allows a deeper entry into the language. Even when I was frustrated, trying to find that perfect way to get an idea across in English, I immensely enjoyed the process. Don't give me Sudoku, let me translate poetry from Lithuanian to English!

**K.V.:** Would you organize a similar event again?

**A.B.N.:** I will definitely organize events in the future that draw from our Lithuanian poetic treasure trove. However, this event was unique – it had a special mission, which I feel we accomplished. That is – we honored the 100th anniversary of the restoration of Lithuanian independence by sharing some of the greatest Lithuanian poetry, at the Poetry Foundation in downtown Chicago, in a way that made it accessible to Lithuanians and non-Lithuanians alike. We had a full house, with a lovely, enthusiastic audience, including a woman who was studying the Lithuanian language and made a special point to travel to Chicago to see this event. We are grateful to have received some invitations to present this program again at another location - if we are able, we will certainly do that. Otherwise, I plan to present a new program next year, and I invite all Bridges readers to attend! My deepest gratitude to the Poetry Foundation, the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, the translators, and the artists who participated in making this event a success. Most of all - to the poets! Poets, keep writing - we need you and we love you!



## Summers That I Will Never Forget

By Lukas Šmidtas  
American-Lithuanian from Florida  
12th Grader



LISS members with the Mayor of Vilnius Remigijus Šimašius.

First off, I would like to say thank you to the American Lithuanian Community and everyone who helped make the LISS program a reality. I have been lucky enough to have been selected in the LISS program for the past two summers, which has allowed me to reconnect with my Lithuanian heritage, improve my Lithuanian language skills, participate in culturally relevant events, travel through the entire country, make new friends, and meet many important political figures and Lithuanian celebrities. For example, last year, I was able to meet the President of Lithuania, Dalia Grybauskaitė at the Presidential Palace!

Over the last two years, I have gotten to travel through and volunteer in many Lithuanian cities: Vilnius, Ukmergė, Tauragė, Anykščiai. Everytime we would arrive at a new city, the mayor of that city would personally greet us. We were also honored to meet the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Linas Linkevičius. Our travels were always interesting and filled with activities. We had a night of dancing with a Lithuanian folk dance group, we were entertained by a Lithuanian thespian group, we walked through the winding botanical gardens in Klaipėda, swam in the chilly waves of the Baltic Sea in Palanga, traveled to the landmark Puntukas, and walked on treetops.....if you could believe it!

This year, however, the most incredible experience was getting to go to Finland to participate as the youngest delegate representing American Lithuanian youth in the

World-Wide Lithuanian Youth Congress– a meeting of Lithuanian delegates from many countries where we voted on matters pertaining to leadership and the future of the Lithuanian youth all around the globe! It was wonderful to meet so many Lithuanians from so many different places. This meeting only happens once every four years; I feel honored to have gone, and so grateful to the LISS program for organizing our participation. While in Finland, we also met the Lithuanian Ambassador to Finland, and took a cruise to Talin, Estonia!

After our return to Lithuania from the congressional meeting, we were put into action! We volunteered by cleaning city parks, lending a helping hand in children's homes, and in the hospital. We also got to volunteer at the Tenth Global Lithuanian Sports Games! It wasn't all work and sweat, though – we were invited to sing and dance with Colombian-Lithuanian pop star Jurgis Didžiulis on the Good Morning Show "Labas Rytas" on LRT, one of the main Lithuanian television channels!

The only thing that I could dare to ask for from the LISS program is.... More. More opportunities to volunteer, to help in any way that we can. The two summers I spent in Lithuania with the LISS program were absolutely awesome, and surely summers that I will never forget. I would enthusiastically recommend this program to anyone in high school with a Lithuanian heritage. Once again, thank you, everyone, who played a role in the creation of this program.

## The Lithuanian Research and Studies Center Purchased a New Home

By Dr. Robert Vitas  
Chairman of the Board



The Lithuanian Research and Studies Center has purchased a building in Lemont, Illinois at 15533 129th Street, just a few minutes away from the Lithuanian World Center. The building will house most of the Center's books, periodicals, archives, documents and artifacts while still maintaining a presence at Chicago's Lithuanian Youth Center. The 7,000 square foot building provides the Center with four large halls and the ability to utilize space effectively to handle its growing collections, an apartment for students and researchers visiting from Lithuania, space for meetings and lectures, an outdoor area for gatherings, and access to a larger volunteer pool in an area where increasing numbers of Lithuanians have moved over the past thirty years. The purchase was made possible by a loan from the Lithuanian Foundation.

The photos picture signing the purchase agreement and the new building.



## The Lithuanian Community Reacts to The New York Times Article

Dear Editor,

There are two serious factual and historical errors in the article by Jada Yuan "The Complexities of Baltic Independence" in NYT of August 9, 2018.

1. The author states: Over 90 percent of Lithuania's Jews were murdered in the Holocaust . . . largely at the hands of enthusiastic Lithuanian volunteers, including those lauded Forest Brothers. Neither the Forest Brothers, nor any other Lithuanian partisans existed in Lithuania during the Holocaust. The Forest Brothers were formed in response to the Soviet invasion of Lithuania in 1944, after the events of the Holocaust in Lithuania, and they fought an underground battle against the Soviets from 1944 to 1953.

2. The article also seeks to dismiss the atrocities and terror that the Soviets inflicted on the civilian population of Lithuania - men, women and children - by falsely claiming that the Soviet secret police, the KGB, only targeted dissidents. Such a misstatement is contrary to the well-documented actions of the KGB throughout all of the then Soviet-occupied countries. It is especially false, and painful, as applied to Lithuania, when Michail Suslov, who in 1944 was sent by Moscow to Lithuania to Russinize the country, and who was in charge of the KGB terror and deportations, publicly stated at that time that "There will be a Lithuania, there just won't be any Lithuanians."

We respectfully ask that you recognize these serious errors and print an appropriate correction.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.

By: Donatas Januta  
Press Liaison Officer

cc: Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania  
Lithuanian Consulate, New York  
Lithuanian Consulate, Los Angeles

Mr. Januta,

I'm the editor of the article you wrote in about. Thanks for your note. I'll first note that the article was read by a Jewish scholar based in Lithuania before publication.

To your first point: you are correct. There was a wording error -- we meant to write that "some who would become those lauded Forest Brothers." We will correct that wording and add a correction to the article.

To your second point: we never say that \*only\* dissidents were targeted, though we do say that they were targeted. We also source that information to a specific expert -- it is his opinion we are citing. And so I do not agree there is an error in the article in this regard.

Thanks again for writing.  
Best, Dan

Dear Mr. Saltzstein,

Thank you for your reply.

I am aware that you did not use the word "only" in the article, but that is the clear implication of that sentence.

It would be very much appreciated if you would correct or clarify that, as well. Implications and impressions are often accepted by readers as fact no less than outright statements.

I believe the Jewish scholar you say you consulted is Dovid Katz. I know Mr. Katz, have met him, and have corresponded with him. Mr. Katz was, and perhaps still is, a scholar of historical Yiddish culture, not of events of the 20th century.

After he was terminated by the University of Vilnius in Lithuania, he felt wronged, and he has engaged in polemics against Lithuania, and is not an objective source. (He claims his termination was political but he had also previously been terminated from Oxford.)

He is also not a good source of information about Lithuania in general. Though he has lived in Vilnius, Lithuania for almost 20 years, and even lectured at the University there, he has not bothered to learn the language of the people among whom he lives, and about whom he does not hesitate to express his opinions. But the significance of that is that he has no access to any documents or sources in the Lithuanian language, thus his ability to gather accurate and complete information on Lithuania, past or present, is limited.

Thank you once again for your kind attention to this matter.

Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.  
Donatas Januta  
Press liaison officer



## I Would Certainly Do It Again

By *Emelia Dooling*

My name is Emelia Dooling. I am 15 years old and this year was my second year on the LISS program.

I enjoyed the program this year because I felt it was very one-on-one. There were lots of choices that you could make, yourself, as to what you wanted to do in the program. It was almost as if the program was customizable to your own personal wants, which I thoroughly enjoyed. There were lots of days where we were able to go out into the city and experience what we wanted to experience on our own. In turn, I went to plenty of concerts and lots of restaurants with my friends from the program.

The first location we stayed at was in Vilnius, Lithuania's capital. The program there was mainly to volunteer. I was chosen, along with about 10 other kids to work at a branch of Maisto Bankas, which is, in essence, sorting food products from large stores and corporations to go to less fortunate people. We worked for about 4 hours every day. Then, we could do what we wanted after the work day was over, and we returned back to our hotel. I was able to go to Dainų Šventė, or the Lithuanian song festival, with some of my friends after work. That was the highlight of my stay in Vilnius.

After Vilnius, we took the train to Radviliškis, a smaller city which hosted this year's European People's Festival. The moment we arrived we were able to choose the jobs we wanted to work for the next 2 weeks. I am a person that really loves all forms of art. I had never done any graffiti before, and I knew that graffiti would be a fun and beneficial experience for me, so I chose to work at a youth center, painting a mural on the wall. The second week we stayed in Radviliškis, I worked for the newspaper, translating Lithuanian text into proper English grammar. While doing my job, I was also able to go out and experience the European People's Festival. I met lots of people from the other 12 countries that participated in the festival, and, in turn, learned quite a bit about said countries, as well.

All in all, it was a fun and enriching experience, and I would certainly do it again.



# Innovation Is Not Always Easy

The Annual Meeting of the Lithuanian American Community Midwest District

By *Birutė Kairienė*  
Midwest District Chair



Participants of the Midwest District annual meeting.

This year, Lithuanians all over the world are celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Lithuania's independence and the year is filled with numerous important events in Lithuania and abroad. One of such important events, the meeting of Lithuanian American Community Midwest District, took place on August 25, 2018, in Burbank, Illinois during which a new board was elected. The Midwest District has ten chapters in three states: Illinois - 6, Indiana - 2, Minnesota - 1, and Missouri - 1. The chairmen of nine chapters attended the meeting and representatives of the tenth chapter joined the meeting by phone. All in all, nearly 50 members attended.

Consul General of the Republic of Lithuania in Chicago Mantvydas Bekešius, President of the Lithuanian Community National Executive Committee Sigita Šimkuvienė, Chairwoman of the Cultural Affairs Austėja Sruoga, and Chairman of the Lithuanian American Community Presidium Juozas Polikaitis participated as guests.

The meeting began with the singing of the US and Lithuanian national anthems. Violeta Valaitytė gave an invocation and a candle was lit to remember Birutė Vilutienė, a long-time chairwoman of the East Chicago

chapter, and other Lithuanian American Community members who had passed away this year. Chairwoman of the Midwest District Birutė Kairienė greeted the attendees and introduced the chairmen of the Midwest District chapters, members of the 22nd Council of the Lithuanian American Community and the guests of the meeting.

After the main speeches were delivered by Consul General Mantvydas Bekešius, President of the National Executive Committee Sigita Šimkuvienė, Chairman of the Presidium Juozas Polikaitis, and Chairwoman of the Midwest District Birutė Kairienė, the new board of the Midwest District was appointed. After the chairs of all Midwest District chapters consulted with each other, it was decided to introduce an innovative election method that is already being used by other chapters but was still not instilled in Chicago: the board would be composed of representatives (the chairmen or other proposed representatives) from all chapters. I think this method is fair to all the chapters. This way we will be able to get quick and accurate information about the work in all the chapters and it will be a good way to share the experience. Obviously, innovation is not always easy,



Consul General Mantvydas Bekešius.

and this time some members were not happy with the proposed electoral procedure. The future will show who was right and who was not. However, it is clear that changes were really needed.

The chairwoman shared thoughts regarding the future of the community. The immediate task for the new board would be to restore the Naperville and Beverly Shores chapters. The latter was created in 1992, but in the absence of strong leaders, it quickly merged with the Lithuanian club and lost its value. The East Chicago chapter will have to help finding enthusiastic leaders and bringing new members into the community.

#### Future plans:

1. It is time to think about a simpler structure of the Lithuanian Community. Is a meeting like this one really necessary? Is a district really needed if its main goal is just organizing elections? This year, Chairwoman Ingrida Misevičienė has proven that the best communication takes place directly between chapters. These are just thoughts for future consideration.
2. Culture and sports greatly promote the sense of community. More support is needed for dance and song groups and sports clubs. The Lithuanian Community has to be advertised as much as possible. This way we will attract more young people and introduce the Lithuanian Community activities to them.

3. The strength of ethnic communities is closely linked to the existence of parishes, religious and cultural centers. We have to make every effort to keep these centers open. It is difficult to keep churches because they belong to the dioceses. At least we have to try and maintain Lithuanian centers such as the Youth Center. We need to help them with the applications for support to the Lithuanian Foundation and help with any other way we can.

4. The Lithuanian American community has to maintain close ties with Lithuania. Lithuania is not only a geographical location. Lithuania is our roots and it is everywhere where Lithuanians live. We share common goals, interests, and language. There should be more exchanges in the fields of science, culture, investment, and charity. Student exchange programs should be implemented. Lithuanian products should be made more popular in the United States. We need to invest in Lithuanian companies more or even relocate some industries to Lithuania, as some logistics companies already do. Lithuania has very strong telecommunications which should be used more. Banks and investing are almost 100% taken by the Scandinavians. Perhaps we should establish our own bank with US-Lithuanian capital. Charity should be targeted directly at organizations that need help. We already have the Rotary Club, the Union of Mothers, the Alateja Club. There should be closer cooperation with these organizations; perhaps we need to create something similar to what the Indianapolis chapter is already doing. I think each chapter should choose the direction of action according to its capabilities, geographic location, and the infrastructure of that area. We know that cepelinai and sausages will not keep the Lithuanian activities alive for long. We need to adapt to the new conditions.

5. Let's get more in touch with local politicians, invite them to our events, and let us be politically more active, participate in local elections and the elections of the Lithuanian government. The 2019 elections will be particularly important as we will have to vote on the issue of dual citizenship.

*Translated by Karilė Vaitkutė*



# Baltic countries want Walmart to remove Soviet-themed shirts

By Liudas Dapkus, Associated Press

Three Baltic countries have lashed out at retail giant Walmart for selling online T-shirts and other products with Soviet Union emblems on them, and demanded that the goods be removed.

Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were forcibly annexed by Moscow in 1940 and remained part of the Soviet Union until its collapse in 1991, except for a brief occupation by Nazi Germany 1941-1944. Lithuania has been taking a particularly hard line against its communist-era legacy, banning all Soviet symbols as well as Nazi ones. "Horrific crimes were done under the Soviet symbols of a sickle and hammer," the Lithuanian ambassador to the United States, Rolandas Kriščiūnas, wrote Wednesday to Walmart. "The promotion of such symbols resonates with a big pain for many centuries." "When the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania, hundreds of thousands of our citizens were killed, exiled, tortured, raped, separated from their families. Similar fates struck dozens of millions of other innocent people, including children, across Europe and across the globe," the ambassador wrote. Kriščiūnas said he does not believe that Walmart deliberately chose to offend by selling the T-shirts, tank tops and sweatshirts with Soviet symbols and the letters USSR. "But in this case, the T-shirts and other products with the symbols of mass murder should be immediately withdrawn," he wrote. The Baltic News Service said a

group of lawmakers from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania had written Wednesday another letter to Walmart, saying "it is utterly disappointing (that the chain) does not show respect for the millions of different citizens who fell victim to the Soviet totalitarian regime." Selling such items "demonstrates lack of human decency," the BNS news agency quoted them as saying. They added that Walmart "participates in promotion, among its customers worldwide, of totalitarianism, human rights abuse and suppression of freedom and democracy, the values that allowed such corporations as Walmart to grow and prosper." "We call on Walmart Inc. to demonstrate their corporate responsibility (...) and immediately discontinue selling of the (...) items," they wrote, according to BNS. There was no immediate reaction from the retailer based in Bentonville, Arkansas. It seemed from the site that it is a third-party company that sells the shirts through Walmart Inc.'s page. Similar shirts were also on sale on Amazon's regional sites, but the lawmakers' letter did not mention the company. In May, German sports gear maker Adidas agreed to remove a red tank top with the letters USSR and emblems of the Soviet Union from its online store. The item was being sold ahead of the soccer World Cup in Russia.

Jari Tanner in Helsinki, Finland, and Jan M. Olsen in Copenhagen, Denmark, contributed to this report.

# EU joins Lithuania's call on Walmart to remove Soviet-themed T-shirts

By Vaidotas Beniusis

The EU Delegation to the United States has expressed its support for Lithuania's call on America's retail giant Walmart to stop selling Soviet-themed T-shirts which insult the victims of the Soviet terror.

"We are indeed aware of this worrisome development with Walmart and other stores selling Soviet-themed t-shirts and similar paraphernalia," Maria Belovas, spokesperson for the delegation, told BNS on Saturday.

"We are in touch with our member states on this issue and fully supportive of the initiative to condemn this practice," she added.

Belovas said that it is the EU's "duty to preserve the names of the millions persecuted, and keep their memories alive".

"The deportation, torture and murder of tens of millions of people under totalitarian regimes should never be forgotten – and selling t-shirts and the like with the insignia of the perpetrators is very troublesome," she said.

Lithuania's ambassador to the US and politicians of the three Baltic countries have urged Walmart to remove T-shirts with Soviet hammer and sickle symbols.

After the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania during World War Two, more than a quarter of a million people were sent to forced-labor camps or deported, and another 21,000 partisans and their supporters were killed in the anti-Soviet armed resistance.

The Soviet symbols are banned in Lithuania.

# Lithuanian Americans Urged Ambassador Vygaudas Ušackas to Participate in Lithuanian Presidential Elections

By Laurynas Misevičius

More than 500 members of the Lithuanian Community in Chicago and Philadelphia urged Ambassador Vygaudas Ušackas to submit his candidacy in Lithuanian presidential elections that will take place in 2019.

"We, Lithuanian Americans of Chicago and Philadelphia, note the upcoming presidential elections in the Republic of Lithuania and express the opinion that Lithuania needs a President who is a well-known person and is respected in the United States of America and in Europe. We know that Lithuanians in the United States and in the world hope for a leader who supports the preservation of Lithuanian citizenship. We recall the great contribution of Ambassador Vygaudas Ušackas in strengthening and ensuring the continuity of the Lithuanian community in the United States and we emphasize his invaluable contribution while serving as Lithuania's ambassador in the United States, ensuring the US support for Lithuania's membership in NATO. We value Vygaudas Ušackas's dedication to serving Lithuania and the interests of the US national security while representing the European Union in Afghanistan, and later in Russia. We urge Vygaudas Ušackas to submit his candidacy in the presidential elections in Lithuania," the letter says.

According to its authors, this letter is the response of Lithuanian Americans to the address sent by Ambassador Vygaudas Ušackas to all Lithuanian citizens in which he asks if he should participate in the presidential elections and what would be the most important problems Lithuania faces today be.

"Currently, we do not see a more suitable candidate to become the next President of Lithuania, and Vygaudas Ušackas's experience it would be very useful to him if he is elected president," Chicago Lithuanians said.

The letter to Vygaudas Ušackas was signed by the leaders of the Chicago Lithuanian sports clubs and cultural organizations, members of the Rotary Club, and active members of the Lithuanian community.



Vygaudas Ušackas during the 10th World Lithuanian Sports Games in Kaunas, Lithuania.



Vygaudas Ušackas plays for the Aukštaitija basketball team in Chicago.



Vygaudas Ušackas.

## Building a Lithuanian Cookbook Library

By Jana Sirusaitė-Motivans



As the Bridges food editor for the past five years, I have enjoyed learning about our food heritage, and I hope I have shown you how rich and diverse our cuisine is. There is so much more than kugelis, koldūnai, and cepelinai! This is my fiftieth, and final, edition of Taste of Lithuania. I owe a big thanks to my relatives in Lithuania, my family here in the States, and my friends in the kitchen at Camp Neringa, but mostly to my two Močiutės, Sofija and Elena, who nurtured me in my youth with both Lithuanian food and a love of our heritage.

To encourage you to continue to explore Lithuanian culinary traditions, here is a list of the cookbooks that I use regularly. You can purchase many of these cookbooks through Draugas News, the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, or on the Internet.

I always start with Popular Lithuanian Recipes. This is the gold standard for Lithuanian cooks. Josephine Dausvardis compiled, translated and edited this collection of recipes to create one of the first English-language cookbooks of Lithuanian cuisine. She called this her "humble contribution to the preservation of another phase of Lithuanian heritage". This cookbook was originally published by the Lithuanian Catholic Press

(Chicago) in 1955, and updated in 1974. This book is an authentic treasure, however it is written for someone who knows their way around a kitchen and assumes a certain skill level which was more commonplace in the 1950s.

Another source is Lithuanian Cookery, compiled by Izabelė Sinkevičiūtė, published by Darbininkas (Brooklyn, NY) in 1976. It has been revised and reprinted several times. This is an excellent collection containing a vast amount of recipes. Miss Sinkevičiūtė wrote that she "prepared this book with the greatest dedication, wishing to...prepare healthful and good tasting food". She has succeeded in her goal. This cookbook is full of information and helpful advice. Reading it feels like having a supportive friend in the kitchen with you.

The Frugal Gourmet on our Immigrant Ancestors was written by Jeff Smith, known as the Frugal Gourmet, in 1990. It is sub-titled 'Recipes you should have gotten from your grandmother'. There is an excellent chapter about the Lithuanian immigrants, including a brief history, and recipes for many well-known favorite foods, written in a clear, professional format. Mr. Smith recognized long ago how important it is to preserve our food heritage.

The little cookbook, Treasures of Lithuanian Cooking,





is my absolute favorite. It was written by two sisters in Toronto, Virginia Sakalas Mikenas and Ramune Sakalas Jonaitis, The recipes are clear and easy to follow, and presented in a very appealing way.

Taste of Lithuanian, a big, beautiful book by Beata Nicholson, changes everything. It is a thoroughly modern cookbook with beautiful photos of food, family, and the Lithuanian countryside. Beata Nicholson is a food celebrity in Lithuania, with a cooking show, a magazine, restaurants and many published cookbooks. This is her first book in English, published in Vilnius in 2016. This book will inspire you!

Two other recent compilations, published by Morris Press Cookbooks, include recipes for both family favorites and Lithuanian food. The first is Tried and True Treasured Recipes, a collection by the Lithuanian Scouting Association's Josephine Dausvardis Group (Lemont, Illinois) published in 2012. The group honors Josephine Dausvardis, the author of the first cookbook on my list, by naming their scouting group after her, and by dedicating this cookbook to her.

The other cookbook is the Omaha Lithuanian Women's Club Family Favorite Recipes, published in 2011. With

this cookbook they "honor and fondly remember our grandmothers, mothers, and all the former members who have done so much to enrich the Lithuanian legacy in Omaha".

Both of these informal cookbooks show how each cook has individualized our favorite Lithuanian classics and made them unique to their own family.

The last book on my list is the newest - A Lithuanian Cookbook for my Irish Wife (2017) is a family memoir by Michael Sills, with recipes important to his family and the stories that accompany those meals.

In the epilogue, Mr. Sills wrote "much of our endangered food heritage is hanging by a fragile hand-me-down recipe thread. I hope this book has provided a format and motivated you to start preserving your own cultural memories and heritage before they are lost". My sentiments exactly! I hope that my food stories and recipes here in Bridges have motivated you to start preserving your own family's food heritage. Gather your family and get in the kitchen!

Sudiev! Bye!

## current events

### Security

...The US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr. presented the Legion of Merit to the Lithuanian armed forces chief, Lt. General Jonas Vytautas Žukauskas in recognition of his efforts for bilateral and NATO exercises. The citation reads that Žukauskas "was instrumental in aligning U.S. and Lithuanian efforts to deter Russian aggression as well as preparing for the defense of Lithuania and Baltic region." Recent exercises include Saber Strike and BaltOps 2018 and deployment of USAF F-22 Raptors. US forces have worked closely with Lithuanian troops in Afghanistan and Lithuanian forces have worked in Kosovo, Mali, Iraq and Somalia.

...Serbia, the largest of the six former Yugoslavia countries, has expressed interest in joining the European Union; however, it is increasingly following policies aligned with Russia, with which it shares the Cyrillic alphabet, Orthodox Christianity and non-recognition of Kosovo, a breakaway region of Serbia. Its president, Aleksandar Vučić has visited Russia's Vladimir Putin twelve times since becoming president in 2012 and it will not support sanctions regarding the Russia's annexation of Crimea. As a member of EU, Lithuania has veto power over any new members and Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius has indicated that Serbia's pro-Russian policies are "disturbing" and may influence its vote on Serbia's membership.

...The Seimas has unanimously approved the military force level for 2019 as between 19,490 and 22,450 up 500 more than 2018 and up to 26,850 by 2024. The projected draft level is set at 4,000, similar as this year. The number of lieutenant colonels is to increase by 13 to 220 and majors to increase by 107 to 780. Lithuania spends 2.06% of GDP on defense - one of the few NATO members that meet the goal of 2%.

...The Lithuanian Defense Ministry announced that an aeronautical training facility will be completed this fall in Kazlų Rūda in the Marijampolė district southwest of Kaunas and 37 miles from Russia's Kaliningrad Oblast. It will have a NATO approved firing range where commanders can direct air strikes as jets fire on ground targets. Construction is being done by the Red Horse Engineering Company of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard which uses heavy equipment, trucks and excavators to build facilities including power supplies for firing ranges.

...Estonia has halted NATO air drills because a Spanish Eurofighter Typhoon jet misfired an AIM-120 air-to-air

missile over Estonian territory. The 12 ft. long, 335 lb. missile was headed toward the Endla bog and is still MIA. None of the Baltic countries have their own fighter jets and depend on NATO for air coverage. According to the AP, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova chimed in, "What happened is yet another vivid demonstration of the fact that NATO actions, including in the Baltic states, pose extra risks to security rather than improving it."

...On September 1 NATO air policing will rotate to responsibility of the Belgian Air Force from Portugal and Spain. Belgian flies F-16 Falcon multirole fighter jets out of the Siauliai Lithuania Air Force Base. German forces will operate out of Estonia with 4 Eurofighter Typhoons.

...In September Russia will lead its largest military exercise since 1981 and coordinate it with Chinese and Mongolian armies. Entitled Vostok (East)-2018 it will take place in the Siberia and Far Eastern Russian military districts and include almost 300,000 troops, more than 1000 aircraft, two Russian naval fleets of 80 warships and all of its airborne units. China is sending 3,200 troops, 900 combat vehicles and 30 aircraft. Per agreement military attaches from NATO countries have been invited as observers.

...Lithuania plans on donating about 1 million euros to Ukraine to support schools, water supply systems and checkpoints to counter Russian aggression. The Lithuanian Ambassador to Ukraine, Marius Janukonis, announced this funding at a mid-August meeting of the Donetsk Regional Military and Civil Administration.

### Business

...Lietuvos Energija, Lithuania's state run energy group will acquire wind farms from the Stemma Group with a capacity of 34 megawatts. Going forward Lietuvos Energija plans on acquiring land with good wind profiles and building wind farms to their own design.

...The long dry summer has resulted in the price of electricity from the Nord Pool being the highest since 2011. With demand up and water levels and hydropower down the shortfall was made up by expensive fossil fuels and averaged 54 euros per MWh which is also about 2 euros higher than in the Scandinavian countries.

...An outbreak of African swine fever (ASF) in the largest pig farm in Lithuania in the northern district of Akmenė has resulted in the culling of about 20,000 pigs on a farm owned by Idavang of Denmark. Lithuania's State Food and Veterinary Service estimates that it will take about 6

months to clean and disinfect the farm before new pigs can be housed. The farm typically houses 1,200 sows and has an annual production of 40,000 pigs. Idavang said that the herd is insured. ASF is not harmful to humans but is lethal to pigs and boars. Eradication has been difficult because of the presence in wild boars. This is the 4th year of ASF related problems.

...After only 10 months HELLA, the 7 billion euro German manufacturer of automotive electronics, has begun shipping product from its 8,000 square meter Kaunas complex of factory, warehouse and administrative offices. The initial product is a BiLED High Beam-Printed Circuit Board Assembly which are fitted into headlamps of European –made cars. This initial facility is staffed by 70 and three other modules are planned with eventually 250 employees. HELLA has 40,000 employees in 35 countries with 125 locations.

...Danske Bank investigated its Estonian branch in Tallinn for money laundering and found that 29 billion dollars were transferred through the branch in one year from Russian and other post-Soviet countries.

### General

...The central prayer platform or bimah of Vilnius' Great Synagogue has been uncovered by an international team of archeologists from Lithuania, Israel and the United States. The synagogue was burned down by the Nazis in 1941 during their occupation and during Soviet occupation being built over as a school. The floor of the synagogue was recessed such that the exterior was not higher than the neighboring churches. This left the preserved platform of green and brown bricks 9 feet below the current street level which was discovered by help of ground penetrating radar. The last three years of excavation was financed by Lithuania's Good Will Fund established by the Lithuanian government for Jewish property seized by the Nazis and kept by the Soviet regime. The synagogue was built in the 1630's and will be highlighted during Vilnius' planned 700th birthday planned for in 2023.

...Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė and Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis in effort to enlist Lithuania to support Israel's positions in the European Union. This was the first time that an Israeli PM has visited Lithuania, which was the home of the families of his parents who left in the late 19th and beginning of the 20th century. He also met with the PMs of Latvia and Estonia for the same reason. He participated in a memorial ceremony at the Ponary Forest

outside Vilnius where 75,000 people, mostly Jews, were executed by the Nazis and their Lithuanian collaborators. Before the war Vilnius had about 100,000 Jews who made up about 45% of the population. Israel has honored almost 900 Lithuanians the honorary title of "Righteous Among the Nations" to gentiles who risked their lives to save their Jewish neighbors. His visit to Vilnius included meeting Jewish members of the Choral Synagogue and visiting the grave of Rabbi Elijah ben Solomon Zalman (1720-1797), known as the "Vilna Gaon", a famous genius on the Torah, the Old Testament.

...Reigning discus world champion Andrius Gudžius (London, 2017) won the men's discus competition at the European Championships in Berlin with a throw of 68.46 meters. At 27 years, he is almost 2 meters tall (6'6") and 136 kg (300 lbs.) and comes from Padauguva, a small village near Kaunas with a population of 319. YouTube has video of his post victory interview. He follows in the footsteps of retired discus Olympic and World Champion, Virgilijus Alekna, who set the Lithuanian record at 73.88 meters and was Lithuanian Sportsman of the year in 2000, 2004, 2005, and 2006. Since 1995 he has been a bodyguard of the Lithuanian Prime Minister and in 2016 was elected to the Seimas.

...Kristina Brazauskienė, the widow of Lithuania's former president, Algirdas Brazauskas, and the son from her first marriage, Ernestas Butrimas, face tax evasion charges in Lithuania for not reporting 200,000 euros of profit from the sale of 2 properties in Florida when no tax was paid in Lithuania nor the United States. Based on the investigation Butrimas evaded about 40,000 euros in profit tax. The criminal case has been handed over to Vilnius City District Court where if convicted could face imprisonment. Investigators also want to know where they got the money that was used in the original purchases.

...Lithuania's Port of Klaipėda has filed a 1.9 million euro lawsuit against Eugenijus Gentvilas, its former CEO, because the Port was ordered by the Klaipėda Regional Court to pay a similar amount to contractors who were not paid for embankment construction which was complicated by the bankruptcy of one of the contractors. Gentvilas was CEO from 2006 to 2012 when he was elected to the Seimas and is the current Chairman of the Liberal Movement. The current CEO of the Port, Arvydas Vaitkus, ran for Seimas in 2016 as a member of the competing Social Democratic Party of Lithuania. Gentvilas accuses Vaitkus of political revenge.



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October 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

## OCTOBER

October 6, 2018  
**The rock musical The Leg-  
end of Žygimantas Augus-  
tas and Barbora Radvilaitė**  
appears in Chicago, Audito-  
rium Theater. A tragic story of  
romance and political intrigue  
from 16th century Europe.  
Artists and sets from Lithu-  
ania. The event organizers:  
LAC Cultural Council, Austėja  
Sruoga, President.

October 13, 2018  
**Divine Providence Lithua-  
nian Catholic Parish, South-  
field, MI, (near Detroit)**  
will celebrate its 110th  
anniversary. Toronto chorus  
Volungė will perform at the  
banquet.

October 13, 2018, 2 p.m.  
**Art Exhibit Opening**  
**Violeta Židonytė:**  
**Gyvenimas kaip Nemunas**  
**almės**

**Folk music concert with**  
**Žaisa group**  
Čiurlionis Art Gallery,  
Chicago Youth Center  
5620 S. Claremont,  
Chicago, IL

October 18-21, 2018  
**Baltic Film Festival**  
Scandinavia House,  
New York City  
www.balticfilmfestival.com

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.

October 20, 2018  
**Oktoberfest**  
in the Lithuanian World  
Center, Lemont, IL

October 21, 2018,  
12:30 p.m.  
**The annual Child's Gate to**  
**Learning Harvest Luncheon**  
in the Main Banquet Hall of  
the Lithuanian World Center,  
Lemont, IL. Guests will be  
treated to a delicious meal  
and a brief musical program.  
A lottery will also be held.  
The 20-year old organization  
will apply any proceeds from  
the luncheon toward the  
support of 10 afterschool  
centers for at-risk children in  
Lithuania.

October 27, 2018  
**Fashion Show**  
**"From the Baltic Shore"**  
Lithuanian World Center,  
Lemont, IL

## NOVEMBER

November 3-4, 2018  
**Lithuanian Fair**  
at the Lithuanian Music Hall,  
2715 E. Allegheny Ave., Phila-  
delphia, PA 19134. Lithuanian  
folk dancing, songs, food,  
beer and various Lithuanian  
goods for purchase. There  
will also be a Krupnikas  
Contest. Everyone is invited  
to enter with your special  
Krupnikas recipe.  
www.Lithuanianmha.org

November 4, 2018,  
1 p.m.  
**Chicago Lithuanian**  
**Women's Club will**  
**celebrate its 95th**  
**anniversary**  
at the Palos Country Club,  
13100 Southwest Highway,  
Orland Park, IL. RSVP to  
Birute Zalatorius at P.O. Box  
21, Berwyn, IL 60402

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.

# bridges

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