

# bridges



LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

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NEWS JOURNAL

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Front Cover: Easter eggs decorated and photographed by Rasa Paulauskaite Dooling

Back Cover: Willow trees are blooming. Photo by Karilė Vaitkutė

# bridges

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## from the editor

Dear readers,

The month of April is here. And with it, come brighter and more cheerful colors we see in nature. Since Lithuania is a four-season country, traditionally we, tend to observe the phenomena related to four seasons. If we read Lithuanian literature, especially classic authors, we will notice their strong connection to nature that manifests itself through vivid descriptions. However, today Lithuanians live in many different parts of the world where the seasons do not have the same characteristics as they do in Lithuania. A non-typical environment inspires non-typical ideas in applying our traditions and customs. These thoughts came to my mind when looking at the Easter eggs decorated by Rasa Paulauskaite Dooling. You can see them on the cover of this issue of Bridges. As we know, magnolias do not grow in Lithuania, and they are not typical Lithuanian trees and depicted in Lithuanian folklore. However, if one happens to live where these trees grow naturally, one might creatively incorporate them into the Easter egg decorating tradition. Rasa explained that she used parsley and onion skins in the process of decorating her Easter eggs but then finished them off by applying a metallic pencil for color and etching the pictures of magnolia blossoms.

On the back cover of this issue, you will see a picture of pussy willows. I chose it deliberately as it does remind me of Lithuania and one of the first signs of spring - blooming willow trees. I remember that as a young child, I would always bring a bouquet of kačiukai (we called pussy willows 'kit-tens') and žibutės (Hepatica) from the woods. That officially started spring for me.

I will leave to enjoy your spring with a few lines of poetry by our classic poet, Kristijonas Donelaitis, translated by Clark Mills.

#### The Spring's Joys

Now the sun rose again to rouse the world  
And laughed to topple down chill winter's labors.  
And cold's creations, with the ice, diminished  
As foam of snow changed everywhere to nothing.  
Soon the bland weather stroked and woke the fields,  
Called up herbs of all species from the dead.  
Thickets and every heath bestirred themselves;  
Hill, meadow, dale threw down their sheepskin jackets.  
All that had perished in foul autumn, tearful,  
In the lake clung to life the winter through,  
Or in some burrow slept beneath a bush,  
Crept forth in crowd and throng to welcome summer.

Sincerely,  
Karilė Vaitkutė  
Editor

# Major Stasys Raštikis and his Bride

## A lovely romance that turned into tragedy

An excerpt from Raštikis' memoirs, *Kovose dėl Lietuvos*, translated by Roland Giedraitis



Elena Smetonaitė, c. 1929

I first met my future life companion in 1921. Then we did not know each other yet, but we met. It was in a railway station in Kaunas. She, a seventeen-year-old girl at the time, a student at the Saulės Teacher Training Seminary, who had come to join her friends to greet

the arriving wounded soldiers. I, a young lieutenant, who recently returned from Bolshevik captivity, fatigued, with a festering wound in my shattered leg. I was among the wounded soldiers. While I was being carried from the hospital carriage, our gazes met, even though we did not speak a single word. That was the first time...

Seven years passed. We did not see each other during that time. In May 1928, we met with the family of our mutual acquaintances, namely the Petkelis family. Stasys Petkelis and I were students at the Dūkštas Elementary School before the First World War. Now we were both serving in the Lithuanian army in Kaunas. On Sundays, I frequently visited him. That Sunday, I was visiting my childhood friend who was married and was raising a girl and a boy. At the same time, the Kartinai family was visiting with their relation, the principal of the Aleksotas Primary School, a young teacher, Elena Marija Smetonaitė. From there, I escorted her to the Aleksotas Bridge in Aleksotas, where she lived. The young lady was graceful, intelligent, shy, and modest...

Soon after, I left for a vacation in Palanga. From there, I sent her a telegram congratulating her on her name-day. She replied with a thank you note. The note was modest and very dear...

In the meantime, my acquaintance began attending summer courses for teachers, which included physical exercise and gymnastics at the military academy in Panemunė. Once, during recess, the course members began chatting among themselves about who they will marry. Most of them were already engaged and could talk about them.

“And who will you marry, Eliutė?” suddenly teacher Miss Smetonaitė was asked.

Surprised by the question and not knowing what to answer since she was not engaged, the confused teacher automatically answered:

“I will marry Major Raštikis.”

“Who is he, what does he look like, where is he serving?” a flood of questions came from her friends, but Eliutė would not answer their questions because Miss Smetonaitė was surprised by her own answer. After all, she had seen and talked to Major Raštikis only once, and they did not discuss such personal matters. But that was her first surprising but prophetic answer.

Returning from Palanga one Sunday, I watched how the teachers were leading their charges to the City of Kaunas Ažuolynas (oak park). I noticed the teacher Eliutė. She was leading her wards correctly, in pairs with the strong hand of the teacher. She left a deep impression on me: she was dressed in a beautiful national costume, her face wholesomely sunburned from the summer sun, her hair spun in a long, beautiful braid. Her features touched my soul. I watched her stealthily unnoticed while she led her charges to the oak grove. From there, I returned to my room in the Maironis house, but I did not return alone: in my mind and my heart, she was present - the teacher Eliutė.

A couple of weeks passed. I went to a movie on Laisvės Alėja. In the dark, I found a seat, and when my eyes got attuned to the dark, I was surprised that I was seated next to Eliutė. She had seen the movie and was ready to leave but because of this surprise meeting, she decided to remain and watch the movie a second time. From there, I escorted her to Aušros Street where she now lived with her parents after moving from Aleksotas.

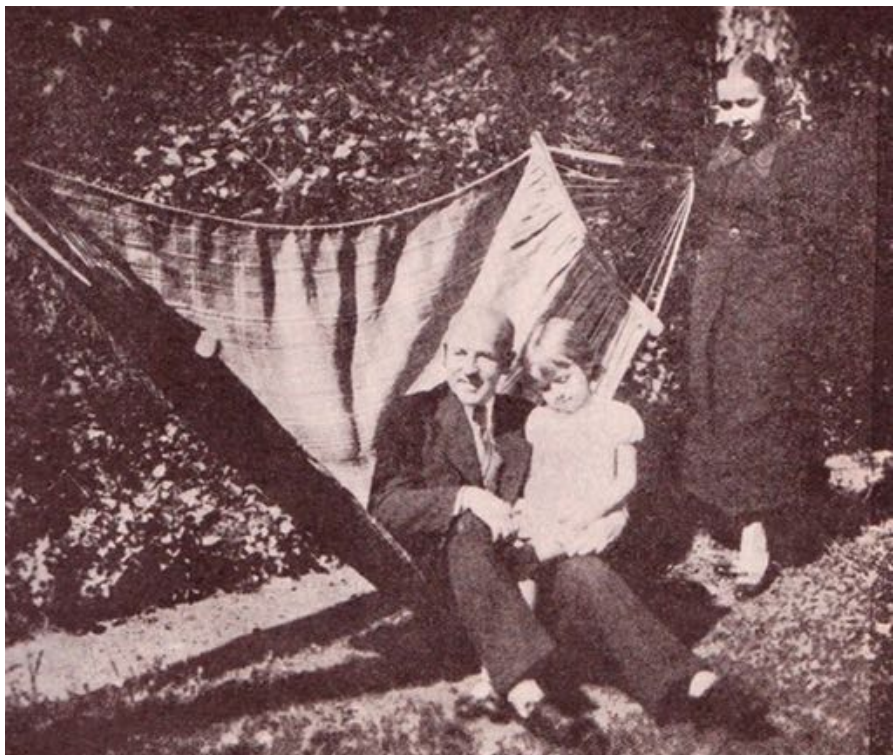
Afterward, we met more frequently. Once I went to her apartment, where her parents treated me to delicious scrambled eggs. I liked her parents: ordinary, uneducated, but good and sincere people. Her father was a common laborer, from Ukmergė, strong, lively, good-humored man, a veteran of the Russian czarist army. Her mother, a žemaitė (lowlander,) was also lively and merry. I visited more frequently. Sometimes I even visited her at her school in Aleksotas.

I liked Eliutė more and more - very modest, shy, good heart, serious, wise, religious, and fully devoted to her profession of teaching. I fell in love. She fell in love with me, too. I spent many an evening at her address. Sometimes, when the moon was shining, we would take walks. We had many dreams, so much to talk about! It seemed like they would never end.



Major Stasys Raštikis and Elena Smetonaitė on their wedding day in Kaunas, Lithuania in 1929

This was the meeting of two hearts with a happy start. Once I took my girl to Jonava where she was teaching earlier. Other times we walked about in the beautiful Kaunas neighborhoods. We greeted the New Year of 1929 in the Lithuanian Officers Club. We were both very happy and proud of one another.



The Raštikis family in the 1930s in Kaunas, Lithuania



Elena's mother, Barbora Smetonienė, with her granddaughters, Meilutė and Laimutė Raštikytės, in exile in Siberia in 1946

February 10, 1929, was our official engagement at Eliutė's parents' home. At the engagement party, one of our guests was her father's younger brother, Antanas Smetona.

These were happy days for the young couple. We were married on June 29, 1929, during Saints Peter and Paul Feast Day at the Kaunas Garrison (Įgulos) Church. The ceremony was officiated by the senior Lithuanian army chaplain and the rector of the Garrison Church, dean Vladas Mironas. The newlyweds were driven in the President of the Republic's auto to enjoy the Mickevičius Valley and right after to the presidential home where the President of the Republic and the First Lady, Mrs. Z. Smetonienė, hosted a wedding reception. We were greeted at the presidential hall by glasses of champagne which, after drinking, we had to smash the glasses on the floor as a sign of future happiness. During the feast, besides the President and his family, other guests were Eliutė's younger brother Adomas, a painter; my younger brother Henrikas; Col. Jakutis, Lt. Col. Murnikas, Lt. Col. Kirlys, and others. My father could not come since he was in the Polish-occupied region of Vilnius, in Dūkštas. We received many presents and greetings by mail and by telegram.

With my young wife, we went to my Maironis apartments, where I rented a room. The next day, we traveled to the woods of the Pažaislis Monastery and then, for a whole month, to our beautiful Palanga. We were both young (Elena 25, myself 32), healthy and happy...

We married for true mutual love. I could not have chosen any better: she was young, beautiful, wise, devoted, faithful, and a loving friend for life. Eliutė was always sensitive, gentle, and non-ostentatious not only with her family but also with others. Even when I had reached the highest ranks in the Lithuanian army, all were amazed at her modesty and simplicity.

For twelve years, we lived in true family happiness. During that time, three beautiful daughters were born: Laimutė-Julija, Meilutė-Marija, and Aldutė-Joana. Eliutė brought all her talents and motherly love in the upbringing of our daughters which produced beautiful fruit.

But we were overwhelmed by the wave of red bolshevism which uprooted Lithuania's independence drowning our whole nation in slavery and uprooted not only parents but brothers, sisters, and relations and the most valuable treasure of all - our children. During these cruel, tragic days, Eliutė showed that she knows not only how to love

but also to sacrifice. She saved my life, for which she suffered deeply. She was cruelly terrorized by the Bolsheviks, interrogated, tortured, and incarcerated, but she never betrayed my hiding place; for that, I was threatened with the punishment of death. I survived. She sacrificed for our children. Alas, this was beyond her earthly powers. The Bolsheviks stole our three daughters, the youngest being one year old, torn from her mother's breast and sent into exile for suffering and death. Those cruel beasts were ready to do the same to Eliutė, but God had mercy, and she was saved. For many years, she suffered for the fate of our children, not giving up hope to see them and, with tears of joy, press them to her bosom. Alas, our youngest daughter, Aldutė, we shall not see in this valley of tears. Her tortured body was laid to rest in the earth of the Altay Region of Siberia. May the good Lord accept the soul of this innocent martyr in the company of holy angels!

From our beautiful and happy family, only two are left - Eliutė and me. In 1954 on June 29, the two of us quietly celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary. On this occasion, we received from his Holiness Pope Pius XII an apostolic blessing for us and our children and remembered our happy days. We hardened our hopes. With the help of God Almighty, maybe someday, we can greet our daughters in the embrace of their parents.

*Epilogue: Stasys Raštikis died in Los Angeles in 1985, never seeing his daughters. They finally came to Los Angeles in 1989 to visit their very sick mother; Eliutė barely recognized them. She died at age 88 in 1990. Both parents were eventually buried in Lithuania.*



Meilutė and Laimutė Raštikytės in Kaunas in 1955, after returning from exile

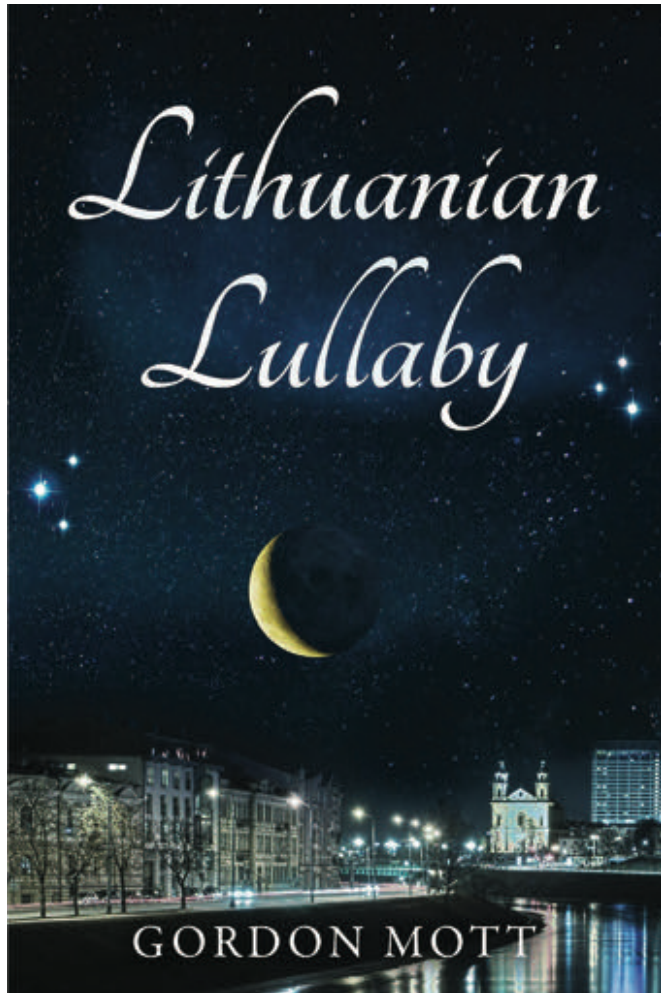


The Raštikis family gravestone in Kaunas, Lithuania

# book review

## Lithuanian Lullaby

By Gordon Mott



Lithuanian Lullaby - Kindle edition by Mott, Gordon. Literature & Fiction Kindle eBooks @ Amazon.com.

Canadian Author, Gordon Mott, was recently in touch with Bridges. Last month, he published a historical fiction called "Lithuanian Lullaby". The novel follows the lives of six people during the decade between 1987 and 1997. It opens in England, but eventually the characters all share a connection to Lithuania.

The struggle for Lithuanian independence is symbolized through the character Darius who rises from Soviet conscript, British Refugee, Oxford Scholar, protestor at the television tower, member of the Seimas and eventually lead negotiator for EU accession.

Through the eyes of two foreigners, George, an American, and Vana, a Hungarian, the book also depicts the challenges and opportunities of the days immediately following independence. The chronic lack



Gordon Mott

of hot water, poor salaries and crowded living conditions are contrasted with the unprecedented opportunities for advancement that all three are able to exploit. The author also touches upon the new immigrant experience when George returns to the United States with his new Lithuanian wife and settles in Seattle.

The novel provides a glimpse into Lithuanian culture during the 1990s and periodically contrasts it with western values. As the novel progresses, the eastern characters rise from their modest positions, while some of the westerners' lives decline. The emphasis on individuality in western culture is juxtaposed with the family and community values of the Lithuanians. This collective spirit is illustrated when Darius observes, "One thing about this country, it is more like a village than a country, everyone knows someone who knows someone who knows that person. There is no escape."

Although a fiction, this period of our history has been infrequently covered by foreign authors. As a result, Lietuvos Rytas, Anglija Today, and Radio Free Europe all recently covered its publication.

The book's author, Gordon Mott, taught English at Donelaičio mokykla in Klaipėda in the early 1990s and the book is dedicated to the principal of that school, Raimundas Šulskis, who died in a tragic car accident just before Christmas 1994. Gordon currently lives in Vancouver with his wife Asta, who is originally from Kėdainiai, and their teenage son, Justinas. The novel is now available on Amazon.





Kėdainiai, 1995 - Gordon Mott with wife, Asta Markevičiūtė, and her parents, Antanas Markevičius and Vanda Markevičienė

### Excerpt 1

For Darius, it was a monumental moment to take those next steps toward a little hut with a Lithuanian flag. A flag that had been forbidden when he left. He didn't know what to expect when he walked toward the young man at the dilapidated shack. The man was blond, about 20 years old, in a bizarre green uniform. Official 'patches' indicating his position as a border guard appeared to be pinned to his uniform rather than stitched onto the fabric. Darius was very relieved when the man greeted him in Lithuanian; they weren't using recycled Russian border guards.

It was a great beginning to the trip. The border guard was very curious about their lives; wanted to hear all about life in the west. Darius was keen to cut off the conversation, but was concerned that this could have ramifications. He answered all the questions on shopping, people's dress, attitudes toward Lithuania. Darius had to admit to the man that much of the British population weren't even aware there was such a place as Lithuania. Finally, a hearty handshake was offered to both and the visas were stamped. Darius stepped onto free Lithuanian soil for the first time.

The two walked up the road toward the railway station and awaited the next Kaunas train. Upon arrival in Kaunas, they were met by a man with a motorcar. Darius' father had arranged a friend to collect them. A motorcar was a prized possession in Lithuania and this visit was worthy of its use. A true patriot was returning home.

As they began the car journey, the weather began to turn. As they drove toward Vilnius, a gentle summer rain turned quickly into a torrential downpour. The rain beat the road so hard that the water bounced off it and seemed to give the illusion that it was raining from below as well as above.

When they exited the motorway near Vilnius, Vana looked around at the suburbs of the city. It was much different than she'd expected. Somehow, she thought it would look similar to Hungary. It wasn't; she looked at the endless pre-fabricated grey flat blocks. Occasionally, there would be a drab couple of shops between them; even in the pouring rain, each had a long queue. To Vana, it felt like she was travelling back in time as well as space; a backwater from the 1950s or 60s, she thought.

She was looking forward to meeting Darius' parents and siblings. The car pulled into a forecourt, surrounded by flat blocks. Each flatlock appeared to be about 5 stories; each looked the same shade of grey as the other.

As they exited the car to retrieve their luggage, Vana gazed at the flat block in front of her. To her shock, there were many eyes looking back at her from the various flats. Although it was evident that she had now cottoned onto their surveillance, it didn't seem to bother the onlookers. Vana smiled at the spectators, but none smiled back. What is this place? she thought.

Vana was looking forward to getting out of the rain; it had been a long journey. It wasn't quite over; Darius' parents' flat was on the fifth floor; to her dismay, there was no lift.

### Excerpt 2

In the wee hours, the Soviet master plan went into force. The Soviet scheme was simple - take all independent television broadcast facilities and put them off the air. Controlling propaganda would be key to undermining the rebels - the plan was to dispense fake news to confuse the rebels and reassure the population that their masters had their best interests at heart. Soviet tanks rolled toward the main television tower in Vilnius.

Darius and his neighbours were ready for them; they

suspected they were up to something. They shouted and pushed. 'Keep going', thought Darius, 'they won't shoot us; we've got cameras on them; we'll broadcast it to the world, they wouldn't dare.'

It was the middle of the night; thousands of protesters encircled the television tower while dozens of tanks encircled the crowd. Darius heard shots fired; 'they're just trying to scare us', he wagered.

Then, it happened.

A tank drove directly into the protestors. Live ammunition was fired at the crowd. Chaos erupted; it was Tiananmen Square revisited.

At first, Darius ran for cover, then anger overtook him. He'd fought with these bastards and knew they were incompetent. He'd run back toward the tower to see if there was an opportunity for sabotage.

As he ran through the tear gas, he tripped.

"Loreta?" asked Darius.

There was no response from the young woman who lay on the ground; she was his neighbour.

"Loreta? Can you hear me?"

Loreta's eyes opened and closed again.

"We need help here," shouted Darius; "we need a medic. Something."

There was no response – only the sounds of chaos continued around them.

"Help!" he shouted; he now realized he was too close to the action. The tear gas had penetrated his lungs; only his adrenaline and his previous experience with the gas had mitigated the affects on him.

He could see there was blood coming from her shoulder. It was hard to ascertain if it would be safe to move her. Then, he thought again. 'If I don't move her, they are likely to run over her.' Both coughed from the affects of the gas.

Darius scooped up his neighbour in his arms and abandoned his quest for the tower. He ran to a local bus stop where Sajūdis supporters were attempting to regroup. A few ran toward Darius when they saw his human cargo. An ambulance had been waiting at a distance and one of the Sajūdis supporters waved at it; the ambulance only took a minute to arrive from the shadows.

Loreta died in hospital the next day.

Vana was horrified by the news coverage. She knew he would be there. She listened to the broadcaster; 'I'm glad he is there'. This coverage might have killed him; "Lithuanian separatists demanding the fragmentation of

the Soviet Union attempted to thwart military actions in the city of Vilnius today. Soviet forces fired on unarmed protestors; the death toll is not yet known....."

## Excerpt 3

George's feelings toward the whole adventure could best be described as conflicted. Although his lodgings were luxurious, there was still no hot water. This was okay in September; but the icy water was unwelcome as the temperatures decreased. The house also had limited heating. George had devised a strategy for dealing with the cold. A shot of vodka before bedtime made him feel slightly warmer. The ordeal of the morning shower was the toughest part of the day.

The removable shower head was located above the bathtub. George would kneel in the tub with that shower head, then turn on the cold water and slowly put his head under first, ensuring the rest of his body was kept dry. He would then let the cold water run down the drain while he shampooed his head; once complete, the shower head was retrieved for the rinse. Next, would be the face and then the lower extremities; then bottom, then groin, then the legs and feet. Next would be the armpits and then chest. The most painful part of the body was left for last. As the piece de resistance, he would hold the shower head above his back and his whole body would tense as the cold water hit; it felt like little frozen ice pellets hitting the back of his spine. When complete, he was always relieved to grab his towel; finally, a bit of warmth.

The food was also an issue. It was bland and hygiene standards seemed lax. He was constantly having stomach issues; he'd begged a friend to send him antacids and Imodium. He had had to use both.

On the brighter side, teaching was going well. He especially loved Grade 8. Even in a couple of months, he noticed their competence in spoken English improving. He noticed that the boys tended to dominate the conversation in class, so, once per week, he would take his grade 8 classes for a 'field trip'. Sometimes, they would walk toward the beach; sometimes, they would go to the bus terminal or the park. The boys would inevitably run ahead and rough house with each other; this gave the girls an opportunity to practice their English.

The other teachers had made him feel welcome. There were four other English teachers. Three of them would often get together for coffee and sometimes, at each other's houses, for drinks and snacks. George was always

invited along. It seemed odd that they never invited the fourth along. She seemed nice enough. One day, he asked if he could invite Maria along to the coffee outing; the question was about to prompt a lesson in Soviet history.

"It's best not," said the teacher, "there is some history there."

"Ok," thought George and thought he should drop the topic.

"I don't mind telling you," she continued, "Maria was an informant. She asked children if they'd been to church or opinions on political issues, then she'd inform on anything she considered suspicious – anything that might suggest the family was politically unsafe. Right now, she is working with a Swedish Christian outreach programme and is taking their money for a trip to see them in Sweden. She'll need that outreach programme; there is much to account for."

George didn't know how to respond; he just nodded his head. He should be more careful in future about asking questions. He should try to figure things out first.

#### Excerpt 4

Vana couldn't believe how easy everything had been. An architect had reviewed her designs; made a few suggestions and then made some alterations. A builder then reviewed that proposal and completed a more detailed design. Planning permission had been a breeze. Darius had been correct; the whole country was like a big village. The local authorities seemed to know all about her and her plan; they certainly knew Darius who did all the talking at the meetings. They couldn't seem to wait to get their stamp on it. By December, she'd received the approvals to commence work. The bottom two stories would be gutted; the top three would remain as flats. She would now have to begin the difficult task of evicting the existing tenants. She didn't really know how to go about it; there was no alternative; they couldn't live there during construction; they shouldn't live there now; the building was bordering on uninhabitable. Still, it was a difficult task ahead. She would start by giving them lots of notice; it was hard to get started in the winter weather in any event. She would give them till April 1st, but she knew how miserable it would be to receive these notices in December – of all times. These people had survived the worst the Soviets could throw at them – and here they were about to be chucked out of their homes by a

Hungarian landlady as a result of their votes to obtain independence. It was an ironic twist, one which Vana was not proud of.

She had taken up her walks again, this time round the old town of Vilnius. It wasn't quite the same as Oxford, but it got her the exercise that she needed and helped her to clear her head.

She came across the art gallery that Darius was renovating. The workmen were finished for the day; Vana could see that a door was open into the building, which was now behind some fencing. She was curious and peered through the fence; she wondered what was through the door. She couldn't wait to see the finished product, but it was at least a year or two away. She continued and turned a corner; a workman's gate was ajar. Vana didn't feel it was safe just to leave it open; she thought about pulling it shut.

Then, she thought better of that plan. Maybe, there was someone in the building; maybe they were still working. She'd check inside the building before closing the gate. She'd learned a few words in Lithuanian now and rehearsed what she might call out.

She made her way carefully through the workman's gate and made her way to the open door; she peered inside the building and called out, "Is anyone here?"

There was no response; Vana remembered that the building had, at one point, been a church. It wouldn't hurt to step inside; just to make sure there was no one there. It was very dark, but a light seemed to be coming from one of the rooms. Vana kept calling out as she made her way toward it. As she made her way toward the room with the light; she felt a strange sensation; she wasn't alone, but oddly, she couldn't see anyone and no one was responding to her calls.

There was no door to the room; it had been removed; the light was very bright. There must be someone inside, she thought. She stood in the hall and peered carefully through the door frame. A beam of light shone from a powerful mobile light fixture which lay on the floor. With her eyes, Vana followed the beam toward the subject of its illumination.

It was an ancient cross with a mosaic of Jesus affixed to it; she looked at his crown of thorns and studied his contorted expression. At that moment, she knew why she didn't feel alone – she wasn't alone.

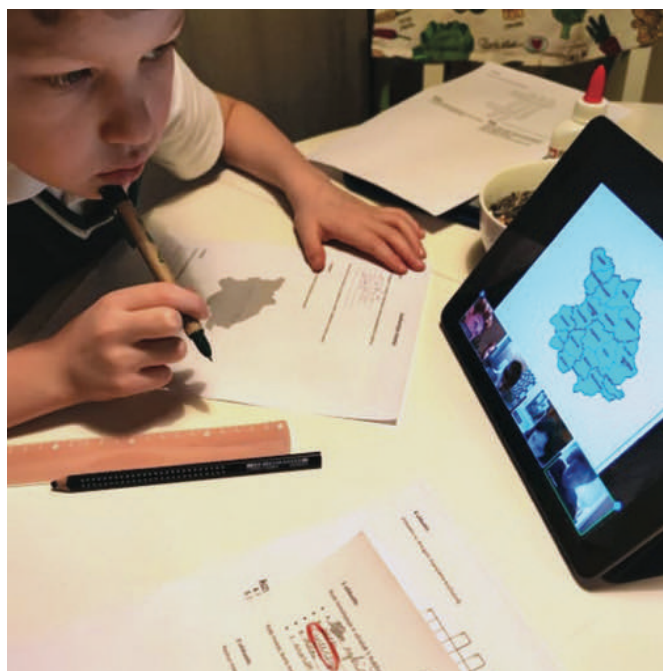
# our community

## We Embraced Aukštaitija

Jolanta Vaitkevičienė, KUTV primary education expert  
Edita Buzėnienė, CLCS principal



Event participants



Dominykas is looking for a map of five Aukštaitija cities

Do you know how to increase your level of happiness? It's very simple! The recipe for happiness: meet, greet, learn, and communicate in Lithuanian.

The Kaunas University of Technology Vaižgantas Primary School (KUTV) and the Colorado Lithuanian Children's School (CLCS) have launched a joint ethnocultural STEAM [Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics] project about Lithuanian ethnographic areas. The program manager is the KTUV primary school education expert Jolanta Vaitkevičienė. There are four parts to the project, during which students will become familiar with the four regions of Lithuania: Aukštaitija, Žemaitija, Dzūkija, and Suvalkija. The project takes place in a Zoom application virtual environment. Scheduled days of the international virtual project are March 20th, May 8th, October 16th, and November 13th, 2021. Lessons during the project will be led by KTUV teachers, Jolanta Vaitkevičienė, Česlova Žukienė, Jūratė Valančauskienė, and Agnė Varžukienė. Edita Buzėnienė, the CLCS principal, is responsible for the technical part of the project.

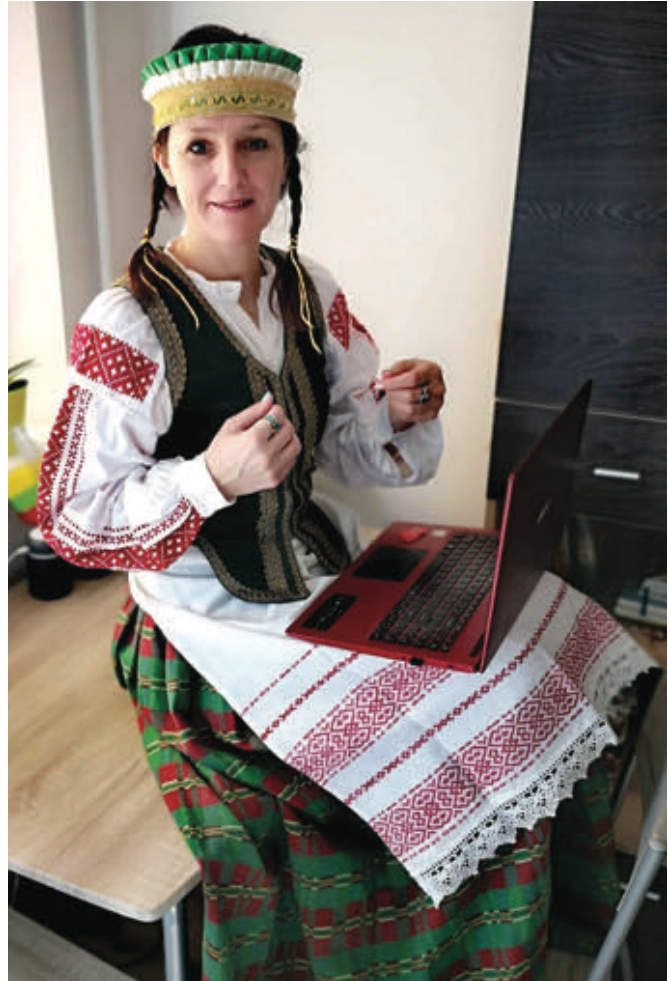
Day one of the project took place on March 20th. It



Kajus and Aronas taste the pancakes they made

began on time, as planned: 5:00 p.m. in Lithuania, 9:00 a.m. in Colorado. It started with everyone singing the Lithuanian national anthem, followed by welcomes from Lydiija Merfeldienė, the KTUV principal, and Edita Buzėnienė, the CLCS principal. Forty-five students from both schools participated together with their parents and twelve teachers, six from Lithuania and six from America.

The students were divided into four groups by grade and location. They then traveled virtually through the largest region of Lithuania, the amazing Aukštaitija. They traveled together through the internet, communicating and collaborating, searching and creating. The KUTV STEAM teachers invited everyone to get acquainted with the cities of Aukštaitija and their coats of arms, the region's traditional costumes, and to taste pancakes typical to the region. The communities of both schools traveled remotely over the plains of Aukštaitija. They used the information collected about the cities and the coats of arms, created their family coats of arms, and solved crossword puzzles. They created colorful and ornamental aprons using their creativity and imagination. They even worked in the kitchen and baked Aukštaitian



Project manager Jolanta Vaitkevičienė

potato pancakes. Day one lasted four hours. There was no shortage of smiles. They learned new Lithuanian words and shared experiences with new friends. The children of both schools spoke in Lithuanian, completed tasks together, and revealed their creativity and versatility. There was pride and satisfaction in being able to work together, accomplish goals, and most importantly, establish relationships between Lithuanian families living in Lithuania and America.

Eglė Grinkevičienė, the KUTV assistant principal, was very pleased with the collaboration between the two schools and thanked everyone for their work and participation. The communities in both schools are looking forward to the second day of the project, May 8th, 2021.

# our community

Comments from participants:

## **Tajus Juzikis, KUTV 3rd grade**

On March 20th, 2021 I participated in a virtual event with children of the Colorado Lithuanian School. There were four lessons led by teachers from our school and the Colorado Lithuanian School. I liked all the lessons, but most of all, teacher Jūratė's lesson and teacher Česlova's pancake making with the other children. This was my first time making pancakes! I liked the fact that children from the Colorado school speak Lithuanian perfectly. If such an event were to take place again, I would be happy to attend again.

## **Austėja Buzėnaitė, CLCS 7th grade**

It was fun to learn together with children living in Lithuania. The first time I made pancakes, I never thought it would be that easy. I drew my family coat of arms, which I'll hang in my room. Children living in Lithuania are very friendly. If we did not know a Lithuanian word, they helped us find it. Thank you to them. There were new words in all the lessons that I didn't know - now, I know. I look forward to the next day when we all meet again.



Milda and her sister, Saulė, have drawn their family coat of arms

## **Comments from children and parents to the survey questionnaire after the event**

- I learned how to make potato pancakes.
- Most of all, my daughter liked the lessons, which had a lot of action, an informal calm family atmosphere. I enjoyed teacher Jolanta's lesson when all the children introduced themselves and met.
- I learned a lot of interesting things, stories, I knew many of the answers, very much liked to make things with the others.
- I liked the cities of Aukštaitija, their history and questions.
- It was most interesting for me to work with the map.
- The lessons about Aukštaitija greatly enriched my knowledge. I liked the teachers, I liked it that children from Lithuania and America participated in the lessons. Very interesting experience!
- I liked that there were many practical tasks: baking pancakes, drawing the coat of arms of the family, doing other work, tasks, and games. The most fun for children was to perform tasks that corresponded to their age and language level.
- There were various and interesting tasks.
- The children learned things best when teachers used more visual material (photos, videos, graphics,) not only text on their slides. There could have been even more. Both children and parents like to recognize the places in Lithuania where they have been.
- The information provided by the teachers is also seen by the parents, I was glad to see that the Lithuanian text is correct, without mistakes.
- I liked that children could communicate with each other - both during lessons and during breaks.
- Great project idea, teachers were wonderful, kids were wonderful, thank you and until the next meeting!
- I liked to glue clothes from beans and cereals.
- I didn't know much, it was all very interesting.



Six-year-old Lukas baked pancakes for the first time by himself



Valdemaras and Artūras sing the Lithuanian national anthem

## our community

# The LAC 70th Anniversary Basketball Tournament "70 Years – 70 Scoring Shots"



On a sunny afternoon on March 6th in Colorado a three-on-three basketball tournament tagged "70 years – 70 scoring shots" was held. Eight teams participated in the tournament commemorating the 70th anniversary of the LAC. One surprising feature of the tournament was that participants had to register individually, and teams were formed by drawing lots at a special seeding ceremony. The games were played in good spirit, with many friendly smiles and much enthusiasm. No one was eager to leave after the games and a frequent question was, when the next tournament will be held. You can see some of the action: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bfeD8UlhOol>





## Lithuanian American Community Celebrates Its 70th Anniversary

For seventy years the Lithuanian American Community has been uniting Lithuanian Americans throughout the United States, fostering and preserving the Lithuanian national heritage for future generations. We celebrate the history and the numerous LAC achievements, which have endured through several generations. The National Executive Committee has formed a special Taskforce to plan the activities to celebrate this significant seventieth anniversary.

The anniversary celebration began with a symbolic journey of the special 70th anniversary flag which will travel to every LAC chapter uniting all American Lithuanians to mark the jubilee. This unique journey started on February 21st, at the commemoration of the Lithuanian Independence Day at the Blessed Jurgis Matulaitis mission in Lemont, outside of the Chicago. Chicago is called the capital of Lithuanians abroad, with the greatest concentration of Lithuanians outside of Lithuania itself. The flag has already visited all the local chapters in the Chicago area and was presented to the representatives of the Lithuanian consulate in Chicago.

In accepting the flag, the Lithuanian Consul General in Chicago, Mantvydas Bekešius, expressed his hope that “. . . such feeling of unity would remain among Lithuanians not only during this celebration, but also would endure in confronting all of the important issues that may arise in the Community.” In his address the president of the LAC Arvydas Urbonavičius quoted one of the founders of the LAC and its first president, Stasys Barzdukas, who had said that “the future of the Lithuanian American Community in the United States rests on every one of us,” and invited all assembled to reflect within their hearts on the significance of this anniversary, and to appreciate the effort and the contribution of all Lithuanian Americans in furthering the LAC goals and what the Community has accomplished.

The flag then left for Nebraska, from where, throughout the year—Covid restrictions permitting—it will travel to many cities where there are Lithuanian Americans and where the anniversary celebrations will take place. The start of the journey was recorded in numerous photographs and on a videotape. A documentary film of the flag’s journey and its reception throughout U.S. will be made.

### **Additional jubilee activities:**

Sigita Barysienė is heading up a project named “The Lithuanian Genes,” gathering recorded recollections by at least seventy individuals who have been active in the LAC throughout the years. These stories will be available on the LAC website and will be collected in a publication which will be presented at a special banquet at the annual LAC Board meeting in September, in Chicago. Part of this history will be periodically published in *Draugas*, as they become available throughout the year.

Another anniversary project, directed by Loreta Timukienė, will be a virtual exhibition of the LAC history, highlighting significant events, as well as presenting current LAC activities.

An interesting anniversary memento will be a mural on a wall of the World Lithuanian Center building in Lemont, Illinois. The mural, symbolizing a tree of Lithuanian unity, will be created by the artist Rolandas Dabrukas. The intent is to show the ties of the native culture, customs, language, art, and the love for the homeland that bind Lithuanians together wherever they may be. The Tree of the World will serve as a reminder that a tree is only as strong as its deep and enduring roots. Dabrukas says, such a Tree of the World is a “mythical inspiration, expressing the concept of a universal world.” The mural on the wall of the World Lithuanian Center will provide a delightful photo opportunity.

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### **More 2021 anniversary-related activities:**

Chair of the Cultural Council Giedrė Knieža will head the program to produce the various anniversary concerts. President of the Lithuanian American Youth Association Marija Čyvaitė will oversee youth activities, including the Youth sports festival and a dance party. There will be a joint parent-children project, organized by Živilė Ramašauskienė. All leaders of these activities have assembled their teams of co-workers and preparations are under way. Due to possible continuing restrictions imposed by the Covid pandemic, some of the plans may need to be modified. Raminta Urbonavičienė will oversee information and announcements, and the head for finan-

# our community

cial affairs, Inga Klimašauskienė, is hoping that sufficient financial resources to implement at least some of the planned activities will become available and the Commu-

nity members will be able to share the memories of this special anniversary celebration for a long time to come.



## Members of the Lithuanian Parliament meet with Lithuanians in the U.S.

On the occasion of celebrating the February 16 and the March 11 Independence Days the National Executive Committee invited the newly elected member of the Lithuanian Parliament (Seimas) and Minister of Economics and Innovation Aušrinė Armonaitė to a virtual meeting with the Committee. The meeting took place on February 28. Armonaitė is the first member of the Parliament who was elected directly by Lithuanian citizens living abroad to represent Lithuanians in the diaspora. The meeting was moderated by the chair of the Public Affairs Council Krista Bard and its vice chair, Vytautas Maciūnas. In his remarks the president of the Executive Committee Arvydas Urbonavičius greeted the participants on the upcoming Independence Days and briefly described the LAC organization and its activities.

Armonaitė spoke about the current events and issues in Lithuania and answered questions about the Lithuanian

economy, possibilities for returning to live in Lithuania, plans for holding another voter referendum regarding retaining the Lithuanian citizenship, and other matters of importance to the émigrés. Members of the Community, as well as members of the Parliament and the Lithuanian diplomatic corps joined in the conversation. "Greetings to fellow Lithuanians in the U.S.," said the Lithuanian ambassador in Canada, Darius Skusevičius. "This meeting was a good beginning in strengthening the ties with Lithuania," said Skusevičius, "so a word of gratitude goes to the representative of the Lithuanians in the World, Minister Armonaitė for her participation." The meeting received a good response by the participants and there are plans to have more such meetings in the future. A video recording of this meeting can be found on the LAC Facebook page.

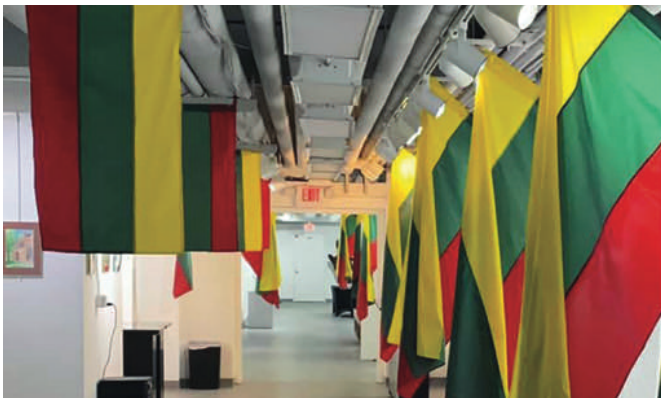


A virtual meeting by members of LAC and a group of Lithuanian professionals in the US with the member of the Lithuanian Parliament and the chair of the Joint Lithuanian Parliament (Seimas) and the World Lithuanian Community Commission, Dalia Asanavičiūtė, and the Commission co-chair, the LAC delegate to the Commission, Jonas Bružas, took place on March 2. The meeting was moderated by the LAC Executive Committee vice president for business affairs Inga Klimašauskienė. Participants discussed plans for strengthening the coopera-

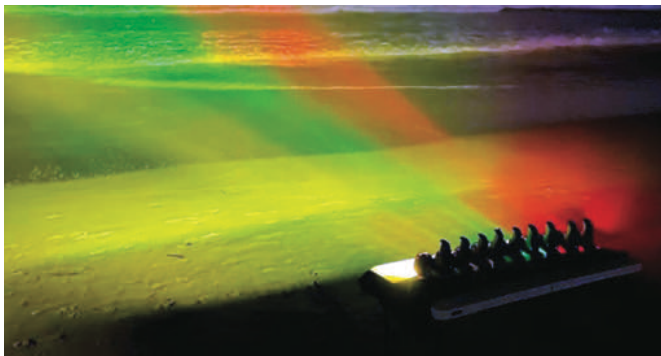
tion and developing closer ties between business professionals in Lithuania and abroad, and the possibilities to increase the export activities and greater investment opportunities. Bružas spoke optimistically about expanding trade without borders, pointing out that this subject is one of the items on the Joint Commission's agenda. More than sixty people participated in the virtual meeting. It was agreed to continue having such meetings, perhaps concentrating on a single item for discussion.

# our community

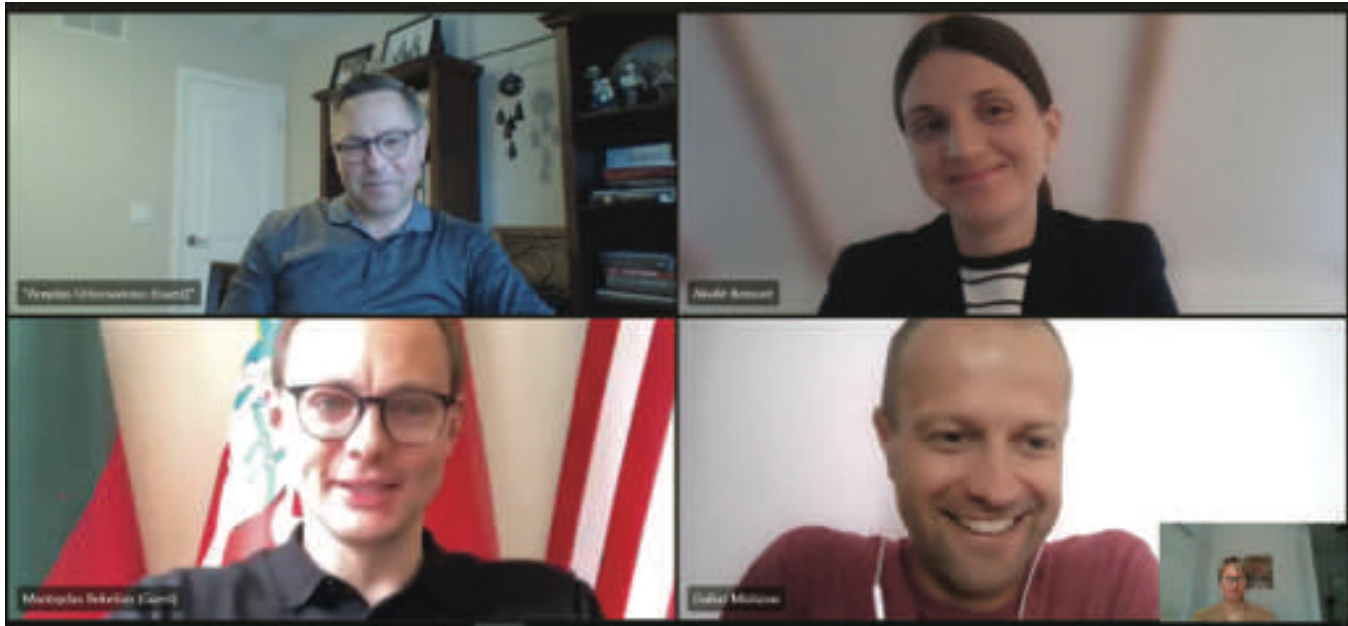
LAC celebrated the anniversary of Lithuania's independence in various inventive ways.



On March 10th a special edition of the Lithuanian Parliament Youtube and Facebook pages presented visual greetings from about fifteen Lithuanian Communities throughout the world. This was the first time such program, named "Greet Lithuania," was included to commemorate the Lithuanian Independence Day, uniting Lithuanians everywhere in the celebration. LAC participated by pre-recorded video.



## Possibilities of Studying at the ISM Management and Economics University



On March 23, LAC president Arvydas Urbonavičius, together with the Lithuanian Consul General Mantvydas Bekešius and consulate staffer Ieva Dilytė, participated in a virtual meeting with the rector of the ISM Management and Economics University, Dalius Misiūnas, and the university's representative for student admissions, Akvilė Beinorė. The possibilities of enrolling in the ISM university programs in Lithuania for Lithuanians abroad were discussed. University representatives pointed out that special scholarship programs for the study of management, economics, and other disciplines at the university

in Lithuania and elsewhere are available. The university has long-standing reciprocal agreements with some 55 universities in 27 countries. In the United States students participating in this program may receive such "dual degree" from the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago. The university representatives expressed interest in establishing more contacts and continuing further dialog with the LAC local chapters, Lithuanian Saturday schools and youth organizations. For more information about scholarships go to: <https://www.ism.lt/stipendijos-uzsienio-lietuviams-ir.../>

## Pensininkas Welcomes New Editor

The LAC president Arvydas Urbonavičius and the president of the Social Affairs Council Juozas Polikaitis visited the former editor of the LAC magazine Pensininkas (The Retiree) Danutė Bindokienė and thanked her for the many years she has devoted to its publication. The magazine started out as a single-page Social Affairs Council Chicago chapter monthly newsletter, which eventually turned, under Bindokienė's stewardship, into a 32-page magazine. The magazine has subscribers not only in the United States, but also in Canada and in Lithuania. Many readers have written thanking the editor for the twelve years she has been at the helm of the magazine. The new editor of Pensininkas will be Laima Apanavičienė.



## our community

The elections to the 23rd LAC Board of Directors



The Board of Directors is the main governing body of LAC which sets the direction and makes key decisions for all activities of the Community. Members of the Board elected in the upcoming elections will determine the LAC agenda during the next three years. Every member of the American Lithuanian Community 18 years of age is entitled to vote in this election.

The election of the 23rd Board of Directors will take place **May 1 through 15, 2021**. Lithuanian Americans may vote in person at the locations provided by their local chapters, by U.S. mail and by internet.

Members who are unable to vote by internet may vote by regular mail, by providing their mailing address to their local chapter, or to their LAC district election committee, by April 15. Ballots will be mailed to all such voters. Ballots returned by mail must be postmarked no later than May 15.

Some local chapters may provide locations for voting in person on one or more days between May 1 and 15. Because of Covid-19 pandemic not all chapters may be able to provide an opportunity to vote in person. Therefore, all voters are urged to register to vote by internet. It is the easiest and most convenient way to participate in this important election.

A vote may be cast only for the candidates running in the voter's district and for the number of candidates indicated on the ballot. You may vote for fewer than that number. Names of the candidates are available on the LAC election website.

For more information: <https://www.facebook.com/javlb-tarybosrinkimai>

## How are we going to observe the Year of the Archives?

This question is vital not only to those who keep and maintain the archives, but to everyone in the greater Lithuanian community. Archives represent our past, contain records of the current events, and will serve as witnesses of history in the future. Archives preserve our history in documents, books, artwork, film, and sometimes only in the handwritten or typed word found in personal letters or collected photographs.

Information where to leave or bequeath personal or community-related archival materials is lacking. LAC Executive Committee is trying to keep the archives where they have been accumulated, i.e., in the United States.

There are several facilities, where diaspora materials are being collected and preserved.

A large part of the LAC archives is kept at the Lithuanian Research Center (LTC) in Chicago. LAC Executive Committee vice president Regina Butkus met with the LTC officials to discuss how the Year of the Archives may be best observed. Developing wider contacts, exchanging information and public exhibitions of available archival materials would acquaint and inform more people about the archives. A seminar of representatives of all Lithuanian archives in the U.S. to discuss the problems facing

the archives will be held some time during the year. More information about this meeting will be available in July.

Questions regarding archives may be directed to archyvai@javlb.org or butkusregina10@gmail.com. Anyone interested in donating any personal or community archival materials should contact the Lithuanian Research Center (LTC) at info@lithuanianresearch.org or by calling 773-434-4545

Regina Butkus, LAC National Executive Committee vice president for archives



At the Lithuanian Research Center, from the left: Regina Butkus, Kristina Lapienyte, director Robertas Vitas, Gailė Vitienė, and Indrė Antanaitis-Jacobs.

### The future is created by tradition

With these words the World Lithuanian Youth Association is inviting young Lithuanians throughout the world to attend the virtual Sixteenth World Lithuanian Youth Congress, which will take place June 19 – 20 and 26 – 27 at various locations, including Punszk, Poland.

Such Congress takes place every three or four years at different countries throughout the world and is organized by that country's Lithuanian Youth Association. Congress has a long history and tradition. It met for the first time in 1966. The most recent Youth Congress took place in 2017, in Finland.

### Why Punszk?

At the gathering in Finland, it was decided that the 2021 Congress should meet in the historically ethnic Lithua-

nian region of Punszk. Although, due to the Covid pandemic this year's Congress will be virtual, the history and the Lithuanian culture of Punszk will be significantly reflected in the agenda of this year's Congress. The Lithuanian Youth Association of Poland (LLJS) will invite all the delegates to a special event of the Congress to be held in 2022.

About 120 delegates from all over the world are expected to participate in the virtual Congress to discuss various subjects on the agenda and to elect new members of the governing Board. The emphasis will be directed to strengthen the ties among Lithuanian young people. The agenda will include virtual workshops, panel discussions and attractive virtual exercises.

The American Lithuanian Youth Association invites all Lithuanian Americans between the ages of 18 and 30 to participate in the virtual Congress as delegates or observers. Please contact javljsvaldyba@gmail.com to receive the registration form and more information. The number of voting delegates from the U.S. is limited. Nevertheless, anyone may attend to have fun and to take part in the activities with no vote.

We invite as many young people as possible to participate in the virtual Congress this summer and then travel to Punszk for the second part in the summer of 2022. Such a Congress provides a great opportunity to meet and become acquainted with young Lithuanians from all over the world, to represent the young people of the country where you live, to make, discuss and vote on proposals, and to elect members of the governing body which will run the organization and its activities for the next four year. Young people are the future of Lithuania!

For more information go to:

<https://www.instagram.com/pljkongresas/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/.../world-lithuanian-youth...>

[www.facebook.com/PLJSKongresas](http://www.facebook.com/PLJSKongresas) [fb.com/plus.org](https://www.facebook.com/plus.org)

Marija Čyvaitė, President, Lithuanian American Youth Association



# our community

## Education

The March newsletter by the LAC Education Council is available. You may subscribe to the bi-monthly email newsletter by contacting: <https://svietimotaryba.org/kovo-menesio-naujienlaskis-4/>

The Lithuanian Foundation supports Lithuanian schools. In 2020 the Foundation allocated \$155,000 for this support.



At the March 11 commemoration ceremony in Detroit, the representative of the Lithuanian Foundation Narimantas Udryš is presenting the Foundation's check to the principal of the local school, Vilija Jurgutienė.

## Tri-Color Hearts for Lithuania

In commemoration of the LAC 70th anniversary the Educational Council will hold a student writing and drawing contest. Information about the contest is available at [svietimotaryba.org](http://svietimotaryba.org).

The Education Council is thanking all the students, their parents and their teachers for participating in the February 16 Lithuanian Independence Day commemoration ceremonies! Also we thank all those who helped in transcribing and teaching all the songs. Furthermore, we are very grateful to the Vytautas Magnus high school, the Lithuanian school in Oslo, Norway, the Lithuanian Com-

munity in Belgium, the Lithuanian language and culture center at the Sakartvelo Technical University, and to the Lithuanian Ministry of Education, Science and Sports who have contributed to this commemoration. If you were not able to participate, you can see the video at Šventė „Tegul skamba mūsų dainos po šalis plačiausias“ (Maironis) – YouTube.



JAV LB Švietimo Taryba  
2021m.  
Projektas  
**Trispalvės širdelės Lietuvai**

Šiais metais JAV Lietuvos Bendruomenė įvenčia savo 70-metį. JAV LB buvo įkurta 1951m. ir savo veikla aktyviai prisidėjo prie Lietuvos laisvės siekių. Organizacijos tikslas – suburti lietuvius ir lietuvių kilmės amerikiečius. Tad šiais sukažiais pažymėti LB Švietimo Taryba kviečia visus, pasitelkus savo fantaziją ir kūrybiškumą, dalyvauti „Trispalvės širdelės Lietuvai“ projekte. Visų bendruomenių atskirti darbai bus sujungti į vieną ilgą juostą, kuri planuoja keliauti į Lietuvą, tarsi simboliškai sujungdama mus visus gyvenančius JAV ir Lietuvoje.

**TIKSLAS:** Apjungti lietuvius, lietuvių kilmės asmenis ir visus, norinčius prisidėti prie JAV LB 70-tmečio minėjimo.

**DALYVIAI:** Projekte gali dalyvauti Lietuvos lietuvių mokyklų mokiniai, mokytojai, Lietuvos Bendruomenės nariai, pavieniai asmenys. Dalyvių amžius nuo 0 iki 120m.

**BENDROS TAISYKLĖS:** Projektui naudojama mišri technika (fotografija ir piešinys kartu). Projektui atlikti naudojamas standartinis popieriaus lapas 8.5x11 (horizontalus). Lape turi būti dalyvio nuotrauka, vaizduojanti, kad jis pučia širdelės ir trispalvės širdelės (supieštos, iškirptos iš popieriaus, ar kaip kitaip sukurtos). Pasitelkite savo vaizduotę ir kūrybinius sugebėjimus, apipavidalinkite projektą (tai gali būti ir rėmelis, muzikinės natos, palinkėjimai Lietuvai...).

**Projekte būtina dalyvio nuotrauka ir širdelės.**  
Užrašykite savo vardą galite ir pavardę, miestą arba mokyklą.

**PROJEKTO EIGA:** Individualus projektas atsiunčiamas nurodytu adresu, jis bus apipavidalintas ir sujungtas į vieną juostą.  
Dalyvaujant šame projekte Jūs suteikiate organizatoriams teisę publikuoti ir sušukti jį Lietuvoje.

Paskutinė data pašto spaudai  
2021 m. gegužės 1 d.  
Sėkmės!

Projektus siųsti adresu:  
„Trispalvės širdelės Lietuvai“  
Maironis Lithuanian School  
14911 127th St Lemont, IL 60439

JAV LB  
Švietimo  
Taryba

## Finances

District and local chapter treasurers and some chapter presidents and members of the local executive commit-





tees, a total of 31 participants, on March 14 joined the virtual conference which was moderated by LAC president Arvydas Urbonavičius. LAC National Executive Committee vice president for finances Algis Mikuckis explained the main requirements for the preparation of the mandatory annual financial reports. Actual examples of the documentation for reimbursements to vendors, the performers who were hired for Community events and for all other financial transactions were presented and explained. The response has been that such conferences are very useful. Mikuckis said that the Financial Commission of the Board is preparing a guidebook for the uniform management of the district and local chapter financial affairs.

new groups, changes to the participants' lists, new photos etc. will be announced in a few months. Information about hotel reservations will be available in October. The July 5, 2020 tickets for the seats at the Temple University Liacouras Center will be valid for 2022 and need not be exchanged. The Festival Gala event and the Youth/Family party tickets also will be valid for the same events next year. All donations and program ad money on hand will be used for the 2022 Dance Festival.

### The Festival Organizing Committee



The LAC Cultural Council is announcing the Lithuanian Children in U.S. Talent Competition. First place winner will receive \$1,000 prize. More information at: [www.javlb.org/konkursas](http://www.javlb.org/konkursas). Please share this information with music,

## Cultural Activities

### The Dance Festival postponed to 2022

Due to the continuing Covid pandemic and the government-imposed restrictions the date of the XVI National Dance Festival was moved to the weekend of July 3, 2022. As originally scheduled, it will take place in Philadelphia. We hope that this decision will safeguard the health and safety of all participants and spectators and will allow for better preparation for the festival.

The current dance group registrations will be retained for 2022. Additional information about registration for

# our community

singing and artistic dance teachers, students, and their parents. The main competition sponsor is the Lithuanian Foundation.

**Vaikų talentų konkursas 2021**

JAV LB Kultūros taryba kviečia  
**10-16 metų amžiaus vaikus**  
dalyvauti trijose konkurso kategorijose:

- VOKALAS •
- INSTRUMENTINĖ MUZIKA •
- ESTETINIO JUDESIO MENAS •

Prašome užpildyti dalyvio anketą, bei pirmą video įrašą atsiųsti el. paštu: [konkursas@javlb.org](mailto:konkursas@javlb.org) iki kovo 30 dienos.

Anketą, bei konkurso gaires galite rasti internetiniame puslapyje [www.javlb.org](http://www.javlb.org)

Pirmos vietos nugalėtojas bus apdovanotas \$1000 suma! Vertingi piniginiai prizai antrios ir trečios vietos laimėtojams!

Seimo narės Dalios Asanavičiūtės įsteigti prizai visiems dalyviams.

Informacija telefonais: 630-640-9817, 773-547-0520 arba 708-288-6662

## Happy Birthday, Juzefa!

The Lithuanians in Los Angeles, Portland, Oregon, the staff of the Lithuanian consulate in Los Angeles, and the pastor of the Lithuanian St. Casimir church in Los Angeles Fr. Tomas Karanauskas congratulate Mrs. Juzefa Jakubėnas on her 104th birthday. Best wishes for much health, good spirits, and many more sunny days!



## In Memoriam

Portland Lithuanian American Community sadly announces the death on February 9 of a long-time active member of the Portland community **Sigitas Banaitis**. He was the grandson of Saliamonas Banaitis, the signer of the original 1916 Declaration of Lithuanian Independence.

**Linus Gineitis** passed away on March 2 in Philadelphia. Linus played basketball for the Lithuanian team in Boston. For his skill and leadership on the court he was invited to play for the USA Lithuanian team and participated in competition against teams in Europe and the Canadian national team. He was a successful businessman, excellent basketball player and a coach of youth teams, and always generously supported those in need in the community.

**Rimas Mulokas** succumbed to lung cancer on March 14 in Los Angeles. Born on January 28, 1942 in Lithuania, Rimas came to the United States with his parents in 1949. He received his Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Illinois in 1965. From 1965 to 1968 he worked for the Austin Co., from 1968 to 1976, at the Atlantic Richfield Co., and, with his father, started the architectural firm of Mulokas & Mulokas Architects in Santa Monica, California. After his father's death in 1983, with partner V. Lentz he started a design and construction company "MulokasLentz Construction" and later was the director at MNM Construction, Inc. He built some 2000 homes in California, many commercial projects and designed several cemetery memorials. In 1975, with his father, he designed the gravestone for the prominent Lithuanian Monsignor Mykolas Krupavičius, and a church in Rome in 1969. His designs frequently reflected Lithuanian folk ornamentation. Rimas was an active member of the Lithuanian American Community.

We express sincere condolences to all who mourn the loss of their loved ones.

Lietuvių Opera Chicago  
PRISTATO

# Carmen

Georges Bizet operą

**J A U G R E I T A I !**

**J. Sterling Morton High School Auditorium**  
2423 S Austin Blvd., Cicero, IL 60804

Režisierius - Nerijus Petrokas  
Dirigentas - Vytautas Lukočius  
Choro vadovė - Nida Grigalavičiūtė  
Choreografas - Donatas Bakėjus  
Choreografinės grupės vadovė - Estera Wilson

Bilietai parduodami: [www.operalt.com](http://www.operalt.com)  
Old Vilnius Cafe (Darien), PLC raštinė (Lemont),  
Lithuanian Plaza Bakery & Deli (Palos Hills)  
Informacija dėl bilietų tel:  
773-547-0520 arba 708-692-8934

Rėmėjai:

LITHUANIAN SONG FESTIVAL  
JUNE 30 - JULY 2, 2023 CLEVELAND, OHIO

LITHUANIAN WORLD CENTER  
14911 127TH STREET, LEMONT

## Spring Fest

RAIN OR SHINE!

**May 16**  
9am-5pm

Delicious food, jewelry, pottery, glass, art, amber, baked goods, soaps, essential oils, health products, clothing, table decorations, books, organic produce and much more!

Lithuanian World Center, 14911 127th Street, Lemont, IL 60439  
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# GOLF

TOURNAMENT

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[www.lithuaniangolf.com](http://www.lithuaniangolf.com)

All event proceeds benefit the Lithuanian World Center, a 501(c)(3) non-profit community center in Lemont, IL.

## current events

### Security

...The first U.S. Mobile Field Exchange in the Baltics opened at the Pabradė Training Ground in Lithuania. The 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment Troopers with 450 soldiers and support staff will occupy the site during their 9-month rotation. The Exchange provides a convenient taste of home with American snacks & drinks. During the opening day, half the group purchased about \$5,500 worth of goods. Because of COVID-19 travel restrictions, trips off-base were limited to a local grocery store to purchase comfort foods, drinks, and personal hygiene products.

...During a 3-week combined U.S. and Lithuanian training exercise, U.S. troops with Abrams tanks, Bradley Fighting Vehicles, and dismounted infantry were the aggressor, and Lithuanian troops were on the defense of wooden buildings and sandbags ringed with deep ditches. After receiving fire, the Lithuanian soldiers evacuated their hidden defensive positions and used grenade launchers and 50 caliber machine guns to ambush the "aggressors."

...In January 2020, Lithuania ordered 25 special-purpose Arocs trucks for carrying platforms and containers from the German company Daimler AG for delivery by January 2024. They just received 15 of the trucks and expect the remaining 10 by December 2021, two years ahead of schedule.

...The Lithuanian Ministry of Defense is partnering with the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency in Fort Belvoir, VA to install the Transportable Xenon Laboratory (TXL) and a high volume particulate sampler to measure radionuclide background radiation near Vilnius, just west of the Belarus nuclear power plant in Astravyets. This measurement system is expected to collect data for at least one year. Similar equipment has been deployed in Gibraltar (a British base in Spain), Japan, and Burkina Faso (a former French colony in West Africa).

...Lithuania has made a concerted effort to have all countries boycott the purchase of electricity from the Astravyets nuclear power plant. However, with Lithuania dependent on foreign sources, the Lithuanian Energy Minister Dainius Kreivys said that the electricity purchased via the Latvian exchange came from the Astravyets NPP to the tune of 4 million euros with more to follow and that Russia is another large supplier.

...CityBee, a car-sharing service, confirmed that 110,000 Lithuanians and their national identification numbers were posted on a hacker website. The list included

five government ministers and the mayor of Vilnius. The data did not include financial payment data. The hacker offered the data for \$1,000 to be paid in Bitcoin. If CityBee is found in breach of regulations, it could be fined 20 million euros or 4% of its revenue.

### COVID-19

...Lithuania has expanded the methodology for counting deaths due to COVID-19, resulting in an increase in count from 3,913 to 5,840. Statistics Lithuania will report three different types of deaths related to COVID-19 – those who have died directly of the virus; those infected with the virus who have died of other causes; and everyone who has died within 28 days of testing positive for the virus. This last category is the largest group.

...Lithuania has agreed to purchase an additional 1.24 million vaccine doses from Pfizer/BioNTech to bring the total contracted to 9.5 million for the population of 2.8 million. At two jabs per person, the 9.5 million doses should cover the need for 5.6 million jabs. Lithuania has contracts with seven companies even though the European Medicines Agency has only approved those produced by Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, and AstraZeneca.

...Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Gabrielius Landsbergis met with Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal and pledged to provide COVID-19 vaccines to the nation of over 40 million, which plans on vaccinating 22 million people this year and next. The Prime Minister said that doctors and the military will be the first to be vaccinated.

### Business

...Moody's financial rating service has upgraded Lithuania from A3 to A2 based on 1) Lithuania's strong medium-term growth prospects, supported by increased European Union-funded investment to raise productivity and improved migration and demographic trends as exemplified by the economy's relative resilience to the COVID-19 shock with the return of Lithuanians from the UK due to Brexit and immigration from Belarus and Ukraine, and 2) a reduction in foreign currency debt and stability in the relations with Russia over the coming 12-18 months.

...Regarding regulatory best practices, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has named Lithuania among the top 10 countries within

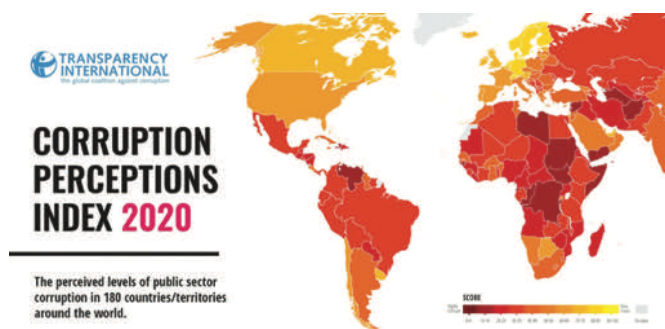
the surveyed 48 countries on services trade regulations. The report cautioned that COVID-19 has resulted in the erection of new barriers to services across all major sectors as transport and travel collapsed. Global services trade fell by 24% in the third quarter compared to a year ago.

...Vilnius-based Girtėka Logistics will purchase 2,000 Volvo FH trucks to enhance their position as a leading logistics company in Europe and Russia. With 15,000 drivers and 8,000 trucks, the new trucks feature driver comfort, adaptive high-beam headlights, and an optional fuel-efficient I-Save engine to cut fuel cost by up to 10%. Swedish-based Volvo will deliver the trucks during 2021.

...With China's President Xi Jinping calling for a "17+1" summit of Eastern European + China for the Belt and Road Initiative of a freight transport link from China to Europe, Lithuania and Estonia have snubbed the Chinese by not sending their President or Prime Minister but only lower-level ministers. Latvia cited COVID-19 travel restrictions as an excuse for the delay in finalizing the details of their participation.

...McKesson Business Services welcomed onboard its 200th employee since its opening in Vilnius in June 2019. Despite the COVID-19 challenges, 2020 saw 130 new employees joining the company, which provides operational financial services for all McKesson businesses in Europe. McKesson, headquartered in Irvine, TX, is ranked in the Top 10 Fortune 500 companies with sales of \$231 billion in the distribution of pharmaceutical, medical supplies, and equipment.

### General



...A survey of 1006 Lithuanians and 510 businesses by the Special Investigations Service and Vilmorus called "Lithuania's Corruption Map 2020" found that fewer Lithuanians have given bribes over the past year to help solve problems. In 2020, 9% felt it necessary to give a bribe, while in 2014, 25% said they had given a bribe. Nonethe-

less, 71% of individuals and 44% of heads of businesses believed a bribe helps resolve problems. People over 61 were more likely to give a bribe (12%) compared to the 18-35 age group (5%). The portion of businesses that admitted giving a bribe in 2020 stood at 4%.

...Lithuania won the last slot to qualify on the last day in the 24-team EuroBasket 2022 competition with a 77-76 defeat of Denmark. The 41st edition of the FIBA European championships is scheduled for September 1-18, 2022, with five venues in Berlin, Cologne, Milan, Prague, and Tbilisi.



...Lithuanian Foreign Minister Landsbergis expressed condolences on the passing of Lithuanian-American Dr. Bernard Lown, who died at age 99 in Newton, MA. He was born in Utena, 95 km north of Vilnius, and emigrated with his rabbi father in 1935. He graduated from the University of Maine in 1942 with a B.A. in zoology and from The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in 1945. He went on to do cardiac research at Harvard Medical School, where he was instrumental in changing cardiac defibrillation from an AC waveform to a DC Lown waveform and organized one of the first coronary care units with continuous ECG monitoring. Together with American and Soviet physicians, he co-founded the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War which was awarded the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize. At its peak, the IPPNW had 200,000 members and chapters in 60 countries. In 1986 he was individually awarded the Gandhi Peace Award by the group, Promoting Enduring Peace. In 1996 he published the book *The Lost Art of Healing*, and in 2012 he helped found the Lown Institute to transform health care systems and improve the health of communities. Dr. Lown visited Lithuania twice after the restoration of independence.



# ELECTIONS OF THE XXIII LAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

May 1 – 15, 2021

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