

bridges



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June 2022

3



3 The Tale of Kings
The 16th Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival

9



9 Memoirs of an Ordinary Lithuanian,
Jonas Venckus
Translated from the handwritten notes of
Jonas Venckus by Roland Giedraitis

13



13 The Knights of Lithuania Continue to
Fight for and Support Free, Independent,
and Democratic Republics
Dr. Paul-Michael Kazas
President, Knights of Lithuania, Council 110

16 Unexpected Journey
Memoir of a Siberian Deportee

16



2 from the editor
By Karilė Vaitkutė

our community

23 When love and warmth fit in the palm of one hand
By Dalia Lankeliėnė

26 Presentation of Aurima Diliėnė's new book,
Living with Children
By Aura Juškeviėnė

27 Let us leave a legacy
The Lithuanian language teacher training
courses in Dainava

Front Cover: "Grandis" dancers invite to the 16th Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival. Photo by Jonas Kuprys

Back Cover: Our youngest dancers are ready for the big dance festival. Photo by Jonas Kuprys

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EDITOR
Karilė Vaitkutė

ART DIRECTOR
Skaiste Bosas

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

ADVERTISING & SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER
Marius Naris

Editorial Office

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

Subscriber Services and Advertising

spauda@javlb.org

Facebook

facebook.com/BridgesLithuanianAmericanMagazine



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14911 127th Street, Lemont, IL 60439
finansai@javlb.org

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from the editor

Dear Reader,

In this issue of Bridges, you will read about the upcoming Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival to be held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Lithuanian community has been waiting for this festival for two long years. According to the schedule, it had to be held in 2020, but then the Covid-19 pandemic overturned the plans. And now, two years later, we are happy to enjoy this wonderful spectacle and manifestation of Lithuanian traditions.

However, these days, happy occasions are somewhat marred and overshadowed by the war in Ukraine and the uncertain future of Europe and the world. As we read the memoirs of an ordinary Lithuanian, Jonas Venckus (the final chapter of his diary is in this issue of Bridges), and the memoirs of the exiled Žukauskas family in the background of the war in Ukraine, we imagine the life of displaced persons and the life of exiles so much more vividly and experience their pain and frustrations so much more intensely.

With the Internet full of horrific stories and images of suffering Ukrainians, we can imagine much more strongly and graphically the same horrific situation of refugees and deportees after the Second World War. Or can we? Perhaps some people in this world still need to be bombarded even more with the images of bloody flesh scattered all around, the sound of shrieking and wailing mothers, the children crying while they are burying their parents....

When will there be an end to all the wars, the shootings, the suffering? When will it be enough? As Bob Dylan (by the way, his maternal grandparents were Lithuanian Jews) sang back in the 1960s:

"...And how many ears must one man have
Before he can hear people cry?
Yes, and how many deaths will it take 'til he knows
That too many people have died?
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind
The answer is blowin' in the wind..."

However, we should do what we can to ease the situation. So we find it in ourselves to continue living out lives, helping the ones in need, doing our jobs, learning, and even celebrating...

I hope you will have a beautiful and rewarding summer.

Sincerely,

Karilė Vaitkutė
Editor



THE TALE OF KINGS

The 16th Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 1-3, 2022

Organized by the Lithuanian American Community, the Lithuanian Canadian Community, and the Lithuanian Folk Dance Institute, the show features some 2,000 dancers and is a creation of a magical symphony of Lithuanian folk dance, costume design, and historic culture storytelling.

The 16th Lithuanian folk dance festival takes inspiration from the Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis's 1909 painting, *The Tale of Kings*. The festival logo was created by Deimantė Kalinauskaitė. It embraces many elements: the crown from Čiurlionis's painting, a pair of folk dancers, the colors of the Lithuanian flag, and a bell, the symbol of freedom. Bells were incorporated in several of Čiurlionis's paintings as well as his musical compositions and symbolized the Lithuanian nation's pursuit of freedom.



The festival's artistic committee: Gintaras Grinkevičius - artistic director, Vytas Čuplinskas - production director, Tadas Varaneckas - assistant artistic director, members; Vitalija Ivinskis, Romas Jonušonis, Eimantas Žukauskas, Aušrinė Širvinskienė, Dr. Vidmantas Mačiulskis, and Elena Maurukienė



The festival's organizing committee: Virgus L. Volertas - chairman, Kristina Volertas - organizational matters and contracts, Honorary Consul of Lithuania Krista Bard - advisor, Deimantė Kalinauskaitė - designer, Kazimieras Deksnys - Canadian Lithuanian Community chairman, Sofija Volertienė - website, Virgus P. Volertas - website and fundraising, Daiva Kazlauskas - treasurer, Jonas Howes, Jr. - legal advisor and finance director, Laima Liutikienė - public relations director, members: Vytas Bagdonavičius, Tadas Brusokas, Vytas Degesys, Jonas Dunčia, Vilija Kirvelaitis, Danguolė Kuolienė, Antanas Krušinskas, Roma Krušinskas, Alė Maciūnas, Christiana Noyalas, Henrikas Šatinskas, Jūratė Krokytė-Stirbienė, and Dainius Volertas

The title of the 16th Lithuanian folk dance festival is "The Tale of Kings." It was inspired by the painting by Lithuanian artist and composer Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis. In the painting, two kings hold a radiant country in their hands. The painting incorporates many meanings and symbols, including the mysterious virtuosity of nature, the cosmic infinity of human life, the coexistence of the present and the past, the folkloric epic significance of the kings' castles, and the adoration of folk culture.

The festival's script is based on and inspired by the motifs of Lithuanian folk tales and legends as well as the paintings of Čiurlionis that often contain supernatural, mythological, and fairy-tale elements.

The meanings of Lithuanian folk tales, legends, and fairy tales are based on the Lithuanian people's worldview, and ethnographic and spiritual customs. People have always tried to understand and pass on to younger generations the knowledge about significant events - various changes or catastrophes, the concentrated activities of a society or the fateful disagreements of its members, and the periods in the history of their country.

Through folk tales, legends, and fairy tales, we will create a narrative that symbolizes the journey of our people through history. The wisdom accumulated by our ancestors is shown through the images and metaphors of folk tales, fairy tales, and legends and the wisdom that a grandmother will pass on to her grandchild.

The program consists of 4 parts, a prologue, and a finale.

Prologue. The Light of Happiness

In the prologue, the quest for freedom and the difficult

climb up the mountain towards happiness are depicted.

Part I. The Puntukas Rock

In this part of the program, we will tell the legend of the Puntukas Rock and other tales about witches, goddesses, and little devils.

Part II. The Sun and the Moon

Here we will tell the folktale "The Sun and the Moon" which symbolizes harmony and balance in the universe and the world.

Part III. Blacksmith Televelis

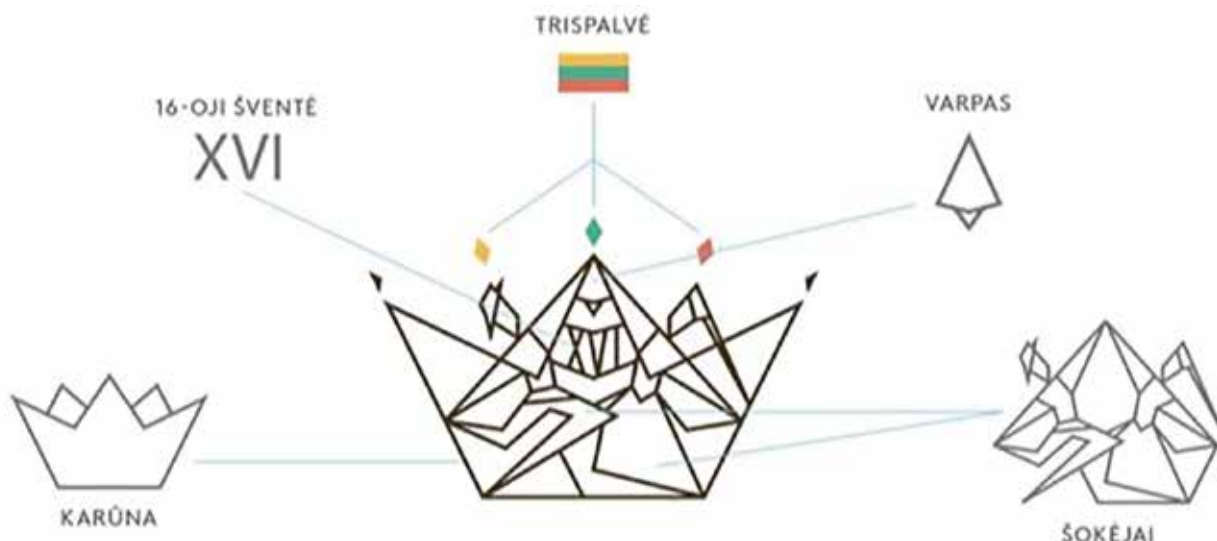
In the tale, the blacksmith Televelis has liberated the Sun. Evil forces envied people the Sun and happy life. One day, they stole it and hid it in iron chains deep underground in a stone tower. When Televelis woke up he saw that darkness reigned around him. And therefore he went to rescue the Sun. He smashed the tower with an iron hammer and freed the Sun. Since then, the Sun has been shining again for all people.

Part IV. Vaiva's Sash

In this part, we will tell the tale of Vaiva's sash, the rainbow and show that love walks side by side with peace, light, and abundance of the fruits of labor.

Finale. The Bird of Happiness

Mythical Lithuanian folklore often speaks of magical birds. Lithuanians, like other peoples, have embodied in myths about magical birds the eternal ideas of light, endless goodness, freedom, truth, beauty, music, and knowledge.





Pirmoji tautinių šokių šventė (1957)

The Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival History

World War II and the Soviet occupation of Lithuania forced thousands of Lithuanians to flee their homeland and seek new lives in foreign lands. With little or no contact with their families behind the Iron Curtain, they feared losing it all – language, music, dance, and tradition. For the next several decades, they raised families, built schools, established parishes, and formed dance, theater, and choral groups to preserve their heritage. Lithuanian songs and dances held a special place in their hearts. Lithuanian Dance wove a fabric that honored the homeland and ensured that their heritage would not be forgotten.

In 1957, the Chicago chapter of the Lithuanian-American Community organized the first North American Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival, under the direction of Bruno Shotas. Dancers from eighteen cities from around the United States and Canada gathered to celebrate Lithuanian folk dancing. It was a historic and wildly successful event, marking the first of many subsequent festivals.



Philadelphijos lietuvių tautinių šokių grupė Žilvinis (1963)

That same year, the Lithuanian Folk Dance Institute (Lietuvių Tautinių Šokių Institutas – LTSI) was formed. Its mission is to preserve and nurture the art of folk dancing together with its music, authentic costumes, and traditions. The LTSI maintains close ties with folk dance ensembles around the world and regularly hosts a week-long training course at Camp Dainava in southeastern Michigan. The Lithuanian Folk Dance Institute, together with the Lithuanian-American Community and the Lithuanian Canadian Community, organized the folk dance festivals that have taken place approximately every four years since 1957.



1968

Since 1991, when Lithuania once again gained independence, several dance groups from Lithuania have participated in the quadrennial North American festivals. A new wave of immigrants to the United States has also brought instructors and choreographers who have lent their talents to preserve the art of Lithuanian folk dancing.



1972

I FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL 1957 – CHICAGO

More than 1,100 dancers from 29 groups across 18 cities in the United States and Canada gathered to celebrate Lithuanian folk dancing. In addition, numerous children's choirs totaling 800 singers performed at this inaugural event. Artistic Director: Bruno Shotas.

II FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL 1963 – CHICAGO

1,100 dancers performed in quadrants to better showcase the formations and patterns integral to Lithuanian folk dances. Artistic Director: Liudas Šagys.

III FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL 1968 – CHICAGO

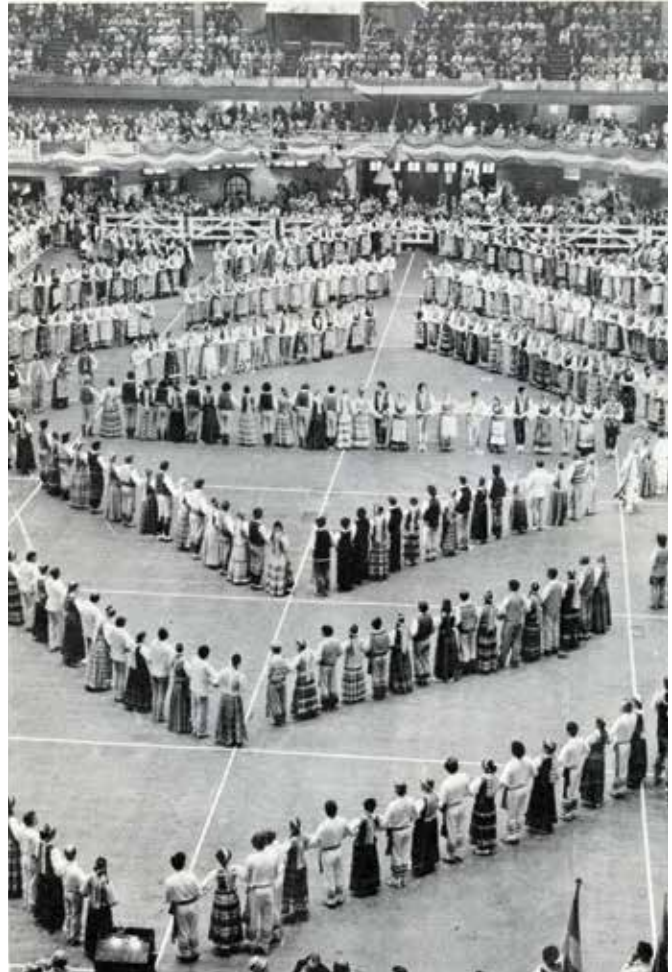
1,500 dancers executed nearly 20 traditional dances. A choir accompanied their performance.
Artistic Director: Jadvyga Meiliunaite-Matulaitiene.

IV FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL 1972 – CHICAGO

Dance groups from South America and Germany traveled to Chicago to join the 1,700 dancers who performed for First Lady Patricia Nixon. Artistic Director: Genovaite Dumciute-Breichmaniene.

V FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL 1976 – CHICAGO

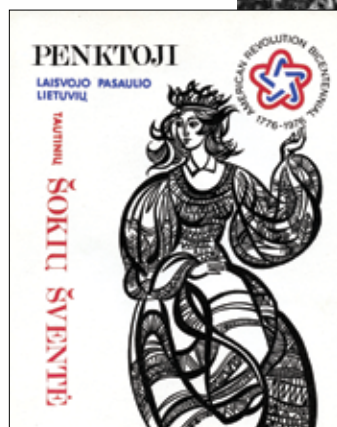
In celebration of the U.S. bicentennial, 1,800 dancers spelled out “200” and danced the Virginia Reel. First Lady Betty Ford was a special guest. Artistic Director: Galina Gobiene.



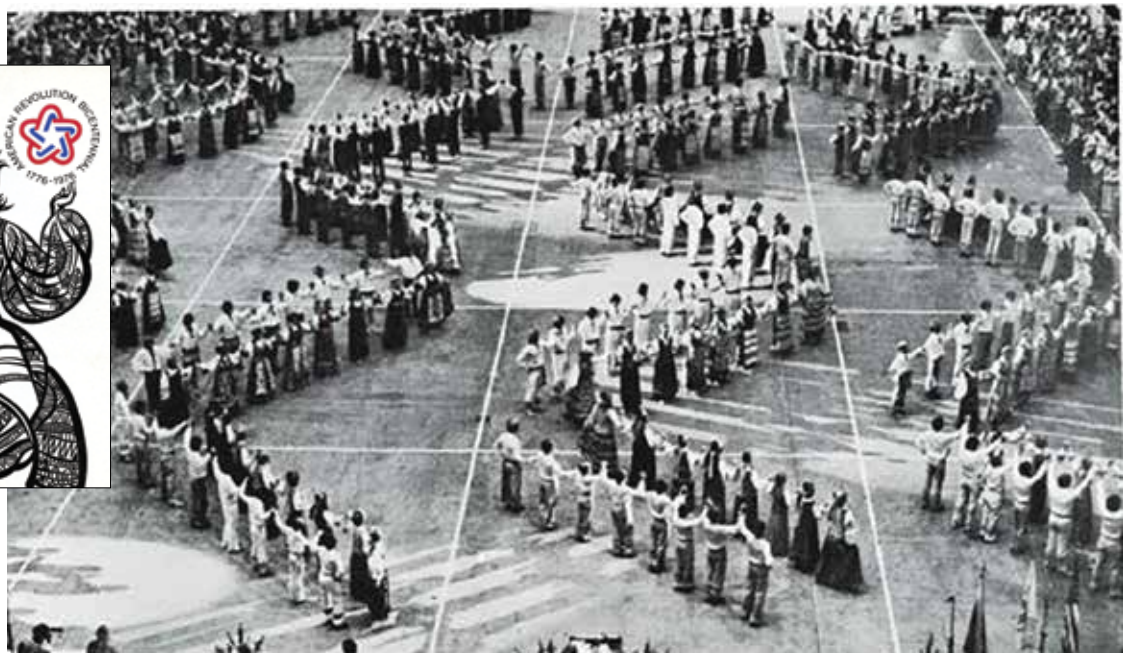
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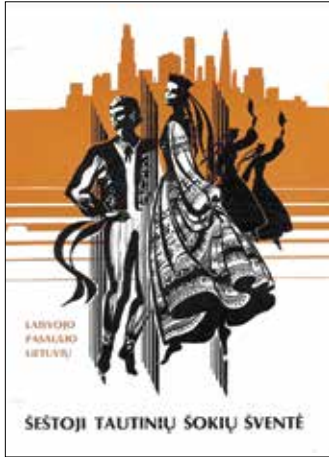
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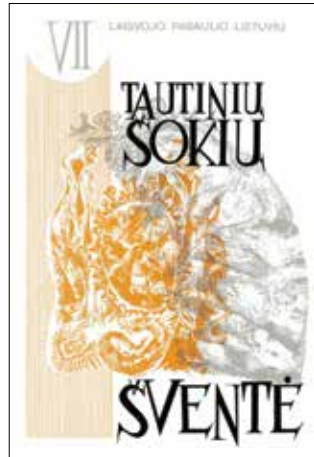
1976



1976



1980



1984

VI FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL 1980 – CHICAGO

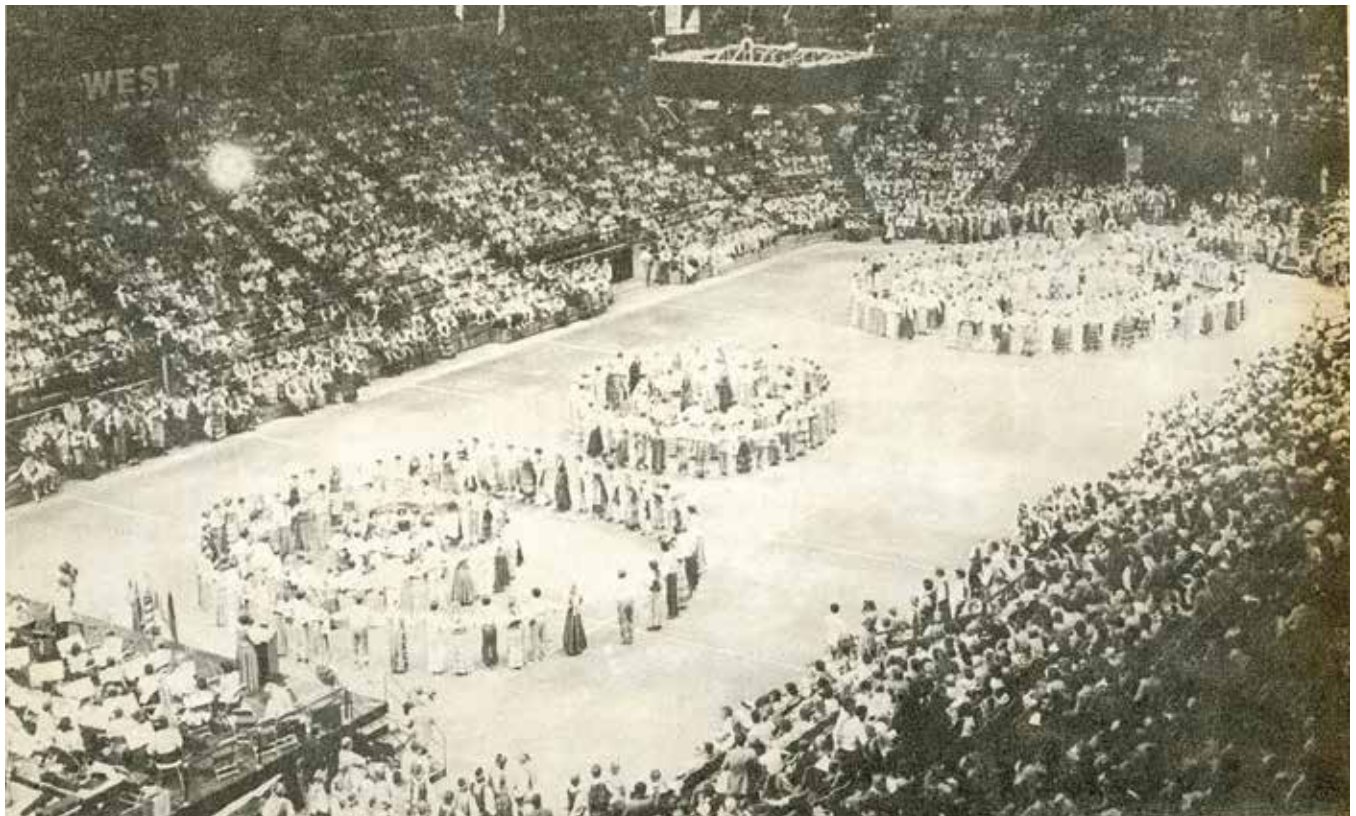
Showcasing more than 2,200 dancers, this was – and still remains – the largest folk dance festival. Artistic Director: Nijole Jasenaite-Pupiene.

VII FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL 1984 – CLEVELAND

The festival moved beyond Chicago for the first time. More than 2,000 dancers participated. Artistic Director: Jadvyga Reginiene.

VIII FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL 1988 – HAMILTON, ONTARIO

Groups from Sydney, Australia, and Punskas, Poland, joined 1,800 dancers for the first festival held in Canada. Artistic Directors: Rita and Juozas Karasiejus, Genovaite Dumciute-Breichmaniene, and Liudas Sagys.



1984

IX FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL 1992 – CHICAGO

For the very first time, a folk dance group from Lithuania – Vetrunge – joined the more than 2,100 dancers at this festival. Artistic Director: Dalia Dzikiene.

X FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL 1996 – CHICAGO

At this anniversary event, more than 2,000 dancers honored the previous artistic directors. Artistic Director: Violeta Smieliauskaite-Fabianovich.

XI FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL 2000 – TORONTO, ONTARIO

Zilvitis, a traditional musical ensemble from Lithuania, accompanied the performance of 1,600 dancers. Artistic Directors: Rita and Juozas Karasiejus.

XII FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL 2004 – CHICAGO

The acting president of Lithuania, Arturas Paulauskas, was the special guest. Over 1,500 dancers participated. Artistic Director: Rasa Soliunaite-Poskocimiene.

XIII FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL 2008 – LOS ANGELES

The festival moved to the West Coast in 2008. Three groups from Lithuania participated: Grandinele (Panevezys), Kalnapuse (Neringa), Sugrizus (Vilnius). More than 1,100 dancers performed. Artistic Director: Danguole Razutyte-Varniene.

XIV FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL 2012 – BOSTON

The 2012 festival in Boston marked the first time this festival took place on the East Coast. Over 1,800 dancers, representing 50 folk dance groups, participated in the event. The festival included groups from Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, England, Brazil, Canada, and the US. This was one of the largest gatherings of dancers in the history of the folk dance festivals. The event attracted an audience of more than 4,700! Artistic Directors: Romas Jonusonis and Vida Brazaityte.



2012

XV FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL 2016 – BALTIMORE

The 2016 festival was held in Baltimore, which has a rich Lithuanian history. The first Lithuanians arrived in Baltimore in 1876 and peaked at roughly 20,000 living in the Baltimore region in 1991. The XV Folk Dance Festival featured a performance of nearly 1,800 dancers comprised of 46 troupes from six countries. The oldest dancer was 77 and the youngest was 7. Artistic Director: Tomas E. Mikuckis, Design and Production Director: Simona Užaitė.



2016



2016

Memoirs of an Ordinary Lithuanian, Jonas Venckus

Translated from the handwritten notes of Jonas Venckus by Roland Giedraitis, his son-in-law

Part 7

Preface: This is the last chapter of the Jonas Venckus saga. His family fled a comfortable life in Lithuania, navigated through the chaos of war in Germany, found refuge in DP camps, and finally obtained an invitation to come to America.

In 1947, before Christmas, it was announced that the Bamberg Lithuanian camp is being liquidated. All of us are being moved to Garmisch-Partenkirchen, in the foothills of the Alps. Again, new worries. But by now, we had experiences with all kinds of situations. We moved to GP by train. We were assigned living quarters in old German army barracks. The camp was inhabited solely by Lithuanians. About 300-400 people settled in three large brick buildings.

We received a large room on the second floor. There were several kitchens in the building, so each family cooked individually from the groceries we received. The stoves were designed for coal and firewood burning, so there were disputes regarding who will light the stove and whose turn is it to prepare the meal, and so forth. Of course, this was the women's concern, so I did not worry about this since I did not have time for it.

Since we lived in the foothills, we enjoyed nature hikes on Sundays. We also liked excursions to the Louis 14th's summer residence, where plays of Christ's Passion were typically performed. There was no acting, but all the scenes were explained to us by locally designated persons. We hiked in the mountains. One time we traveled to Zugspitze, Germany's highest peak. The year 1948 was not boring for us.

Before Christmas of 1948, we were informed that again we need to aban-



A panoramic view of Garmisch-Partenkirchen in Germany's Southern Alps. Jonas Venckus family spent a happy year here in 1948.

don these barracks since we are being moved to Mittenwald in the Alpine region. About 50 km from G-P. Again to army barracks. We were very unhappy with this move, but we had no choice. Mittenwald's winters were much colder since Garmisch-Partenkirchen was in the Southern Alps region, so the sun warmed the area. But we soothed ourselves with the idea that this will not be for long, since we had made contact with Mrs. Razvadauskas, who promised to obtain an invitation for us to come to America. (*I- immigrants could come to the U.S. by invitation only; sponsors were found by notices in Lithuanian newspapers in the U.S. such as Draugas searching for relatives. Some good people, like priests, sponsored several deserving families)

People were already being interrogated by American security personnel. Others were moved to the Leopold barracks near München, where there was a final inspection and an oath before the consul. In Mittenwald, I was in charge of the clothing warehouse, even though precious little was being obtained.

In mid-May, we were told to move to the Leopold transitional barracks. We sorted through our ragged belongings several times and packed our stuff in wooden boxes and a couple of bags of beddings. We left by train after saying goodbye to all our camp companions. After four years, we were friendly with many families with whom we had warm relations.

At the Leopold barracks, near München, we were offered a room on the second floor with other families. Immediately, we were questioned by the American security police. They said to watch bulletins when we would be called before the consul for the swearing-in. Usually, you would be called in about two weeks. One,



The Bamberg Lithuanian DP camp where Jonas Venckus family stayed.

then two weeks passed and still we were not called before the consul. We were worried about what was happening, but there was nobody to consult. Two months passed and still, we were not called.

One morning as I was checking the lists on the bulletin board, two men approached me. I recognized them as the same who questioned me earlier. They asked if I was Jonas Venckus. I said yes. They escorted me to a different room. I was questioned in English without an interpreter. I told them that I understand very little English, but they said I can answer in German. They asked where was I born? How long did I live in Telšiai? I told them I never lived in Telšiai. How long did I live in different camps and with what people?

I asked them if I could provide documents. They said no documents are needed then again, the same questions. They wanted to know what people were in those camps. I gave them the names of about ten different families that were in the Mitten-

wald camp and Bamberg. I remembered the names Galdikas, Ulpis, Skudzinkas, Adomkaitis, Čepulis and others. They wanted to know if I was with those people in the camps since 1945. I said yes.

A couple of weeks after arriving in the transitional Leopold barracks, Čepulis told me that in the Mittenwald camp they questioned the people that I allegedly knew and they indicated that my family had not left the camp. Mrs. Galdikas, who knew some English, asked why they were being questioned about Venckus. The security people told her that a "Jonas Venckus," with family, originally from Telšiai, had stolen from UNRRA (*2- United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency) and went back to Lithuania. Therefore they were perplexed how he happened to be here. They swore that our family was always with them at the Mittenwald camp so it must have been a different Venckus since the Venckus name is common around Telšiai. They were believed. At last, in late August, we were called before the consul for the oath.

We were transported to Bremerhaven near Hamburg. We were there for about two weeks, then we were driven to the port for boarding the "U.S.A.T. Holbrook",* (U.S. Army Transport) a freighter converted for transporting passengers. The beds were the hanging type by two or even three beds. Bronė, Danutė, and Juozukas were assigned to the women's section midship, while I, Laimis, and Romas were placed in the ship's bow.

We left the port in the evening and by morning, we were passing England. The men were assigned work. My job was to paint the ship. About ten of us men painted the food storage warehouse. The food aboard the ship was good, but every day we had fewer and fewer diners. Bronė, just after passing England, was very seasick. She felt barely alive, eating nothing. After three days at sea, there was a storm. I, Romas, and Laimis skipped breakfast. The hanging beds swung all over the place when we sailed.

We arrived in Boston after seven days at sea. But we had to wait a whole day

since there was no place to dock. After most passengers disembarked, we were held back. The immigration was confused about why I was in Vienna while my family was in Lerhte. Again I had to explain without an interpreter. I told them that the Germans separated men for work. At this point, Bronytė started crying, saying that if she is returned to Germany, she will surely die during the trip. Somehow, we explained ourselves, however, we were the last to disembark. We were greeted by the Razvadauskas family, who took us to their home. This was on September 22, 1949.

In America

We finally reached America, the land we dreamed about. Onboard before disembarkation, we were greeted by representative Antanas Kneizys from the Catholic Action Center. He greeted us in Lithuanian with a short speech wishing us all good fortune to establish ourselves in this free country. In a hall of the harbor, we were welcomed by Gene and her husband Frank Razvadauskas. The ladies



The Venckus family in DP camp Bamberg, 1948. From the left: Danutė, Romas, Laimis, and Juozas. Standing behind them, parents Jonas and Bronė Venckus

from the Catholic Action center welcomed us with coffee and donuts. We reluctantly took one and told the children not to take any more. But Gene inserted herself in our conversation and declared: “Look how many they have. Let the children eat as many as they like since we will toss the leftovers in a trash can.” So we all indulged ourselves and ate as many donuts as we wanted.

Mr. and Mrs. Razvadauskas took us all with their Ford auto to their home in South Boston, 5 G street. The South Boston buildings did not excite me. Old and neglected. Here and there were some fine buildings. But the autos impressed us. Both sides of the street were lined with cars. I asked Gene how come there were so many on the street. She laughed, saying every family has a car so it has to be parked someplace. We arrived at the Razvadauskas family’s three-story home. On the lower floor, there was a so-called “saloon” or tavern. The second floor was their living quarters and the third floor was rented out.

We entered their second-floor home noticing a kitchen, a TV room, two bedrooms, a living room, and a large dining room. The hallway contained clothes closets and a bathroom. For us, coming from living five years in Germany, it seemed quite luxurious. Frank was a gracious host. He asked immediately “what are you drinking?”. We did not know how to answer. But then I answered I drink everything except tar. Then he said he will serve us an American drink. He first placed ice cubes in a glass, then some kind of spirits, then finished off with ginger ale. Bronė said it was very tasty. But for myself, since I was used to drinking straight alcohol, this seemed a bit mild. The children received Coca Cola which they drank with relish.

After a while, the Razvadauskas’s daughters, Norma and Gloria, returned from school. Norma was 8, the same age as Danutė. Gloria was 5, just a bit older than Juozas. They immediately, with American friendliness and self-confidence, took over hosting our kids. Most importantly they had television so they all watched TV. Gene was preparing supper during which time all of us adults shared our experiences.

I noticed that from the cooked ham all the fat was removed and thrown away. This bothered me since I savored the fat. I could not resist and said to Gene: “What are you doing with the most delicious part of the ham?” She said it was “grease” and inedible, while we in Germany prized that part of the ham as epicurean. I asked her to leave that part on my dish. This was the first part of the ham that we ate since our bodies were begging for some fat.

That evening all of us descended to the first floor which was the tavern. At the same time Albinas Neviera and Stasys Griganavičius came. It was just an ordinary evening but we heard music from a record. There was

a dancing floor, and tables set on the sides. Gene brought us all a drink but the conversation was difficult due to the loud music. After sitting a while we all returned to the second-floor apartment.

The following week we went to visit the living quarters rented for us by Gene. It was on Fourth St., 3rd floor. There were two large bedrooms, a smaller bedroom to which you needed to climb in, a kitchen, a dining room, and a small living room. We were very satisfied. Gene provided us with some beds and other furniture from her acquaintances.

After some time, Mr. Razvadauskas drove us to Boston to get our Social Security cards. Later he took me to the Schreft bakery and restaurant where I got a job as a floor sweeper and dishwasher. Bronė was offered a job in the Razvadauskas tavern. She began work the same day.



The Jonas Venckus family in Los Angeles, c. 1980. From the left: Jūratė, wife of Juozas, a civil engineer; Danutė, a dentist, with husband Dr. Roland; Aldona, wife of Laimis, an aeronautical engineer; Giedrė, wife of Romas, a mechanical engineer. Sitting in front, proud parents Bronė and Jonas Venckus. Jonas died in 1988.

My pay was 75 cents an hour. Bronė earned \$25. a week plus meals. A former Lithuanian army colonel J. Andrius also got a job in the same company as I. I worked there for about three months, but more DP's started work in South Boston in the Kable factory making raincoats. I joined that company since they paid more. We also could earn

more because it was based on "piece work". The work was from 11:30 at night to 7:30 in the morning. Bronė worked there from noon to midnight. This was convenient for us since we could watch the children. The children went to the Catholic parish school in South Boston. Gloria would escort Juozukas to kindergarten where he stayed until noon.



South Boston, where the Venckus family lived about 20 years after arrival in the U.S.

Epilogue

About 60,000 to 70,000 Lithuanians fled to Germany in 1944 before the Soviet onslaught. They lived in DP camps, many hoping to return to a free and independent Lithuania. When it was clear this would not happen soon, most emigrated to the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South America. The Venckus family is thankful for the Razvadauskas family who so benevolently took them in. The respective children are friends to this day.

Jonas Venckus and his family are just one example of how refugees fared. Just an ordinary man, he successfully navigated the bombings and chaos of the end of the war. Taking on a very ordinary job in Boston, the family eventually prospered. All of his children graduated from college and engaged in successful careers in the U.S. With a free and independent Lithuania since 1990, visits to the homeland are practically routine. Few did return, but most have established careers and strong family ties in their adopted homelands.

The Knights of Lithuania Continue to Fight for and Support Free, Independent, and Democratic Republics

Dr. Paul-Michael Kazas

President, Knights of Lithuania, Council 110

During these dangerous times, the Maspeth Vyčiai/ Knights of Lithuania continues to fight for, honor, and support the people of the Republic of Lithuania as well as for all free, independent, and democratic republics.

The heinous attack on the people of Ukraine was predicted. Putin is seeking to reconstitute the old Soviet Union and beyond. He has unleashed an evil that, if not stopped, will consume Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Latvia, Ukraine, and beyond.

The Maspeth Vyčiai has reached out to several representatives at all levels of government to encourage the full support for the Baltics, Poland, Ukraine, and President Volodymyr Zelensky so he may eliminate cancer that is killing innocent children, men, women, and families.

Upon learning from news reports that the New York City Comptroller who invests over \$200 Billion in funds was divesting all of its holdings/interests associated with

Russia, our organization immediately emailed our contacts at the Lithuanian, Estonian and Polish Consulates. For consideration, we encouraged their good offices to reach out to the NYC Comptroller so they can propose what each Nation has to offer as possible investments. By enhancing the economies of all NATO States boarding Russia and Belarus, Lithuania and the Baltics become stronger in our quest to retain independence.

On May 5th, at the Polish Consulate in Manhattan, the Vyčiai was honored to have been invited to a special presentation that celebrated Polish Lithuanian Constitution Day. In attendance was our dear friend Ambassador Vaclovas Šalkauskas Consul General of Lithuania, Adrian Kubicki Consul General of Poland, and Oleksii Holubov Consul General of Ukraine. Also in attendance were the Consuls General of Turkey, Finland, and Sweden among other dignitaries.



Andrew Giuliani and Dr. Paul-Michael Kazas at the presentation of Freedom Award



Presentation of the State Flag of Lithuania



Left to right: Mr. James S. York, Kairi Kunka, Consul General of Estonia, and Dr. Paul-Michael Kazas

The evening's presentations reminded all of the unwavering support that each country had for the people and Republic of Ukraine as they fight and sacrifice for all seeking to remain free.

Dr. Kazas was deeply honored to represent the Vyčiai at this engagement. He informed Consul General Holubov that in honor and support of Ukraine's Independence Day on August 24th, the Vyčiai was working with our very dear friend New York State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo Jr. to gain permission to have lighted the Kosciuszko Bridge in the colors of Ukraine. The Vyčiai had also reached out to Monsignor Joseph P. Calise, Pastor of Transfiguration Saint Stanislaus Kostka Parish in Maspeth, to hold a special mass in honor of Ukraine and freedom, should this special ceremony of the lighting of the Kosciuszko Bridge be approved by the governor. Transfiguration Church is the oldest Lithuanian Parish in New York City and ALL are invited to become a parishioner.

In April, we had the distinct honor of meeting with a dear friend Andrew Giuliani. Mr. Giuliani is married to Živilė Rezgytė, who is Lithuanian, and both were blessed with a baby girl in December. He was presented with the Maspeth Vyčiai Freedom Award, our medallions, a Teddy aka Council 110's Babka Bear for baby Grace, and a large 5x8 flag of the Lithuanian State. Mr. Giuliani committed to displaying the flag in Albany New York on our inde-



Presentation of a New York City Street Sign honoring Andrew Giuliani



Dr. Paul-Michael Kazas and Ambassador Šalkauskas



Ambassador Valovas Šalkauskas, Consul General of Lithuania



Adrian Kubicki, Consul General of Poland



Oleksii Holubov, Consul General of Ukraine

pendence day should his bid to become the next Governor become successful. He also committed to supporting all free, independent, and democratic republics. It was interesting to learn that not only did Andrew Giuliani visit Lithuania on several occasions but he also proposed to his wife in the homeland.

The Knights Lithuania was honored to meet with our very dear friend Kairi Kunka Consul General of Estonia at the Estonian Consulate.

At this presentation, Dr. Paul-Michael Kazas was joined by James S. York Director of US Business and Innovation Enterprise Estonia. Dr. Kazas also represents Union Chapter 37 of Local 375 of District Council 37. District Council 37 is the largest Municipal Union within the City of New York which has over 150 thousand members.

Consul General Kunka was presented with Chapter 37's Solidarity Award, a beautiful bouquet of flowers, and a symbolic Bridge of friendship and support between and among Tallinn, Vilnius, and New York City. She also received a Citation from NYS Senator Joseph P Addabbo. Consul General Kunka is to begin her next appointment as Estonian Ambassador to Ireland.

We are reminded that it was the union movement that started with Lech Walesa, who was the leader of the Solidarity movement in Poland that helped to bring down the old Soviet Union. Union Chapter 37 calls upon others to stop Putin's quest to restore his Communist Regime. To quote Winston Churchill's speech before the House of Commons in 1948: "Those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it."

JOIN THE MOVEMENT. Membership in the Knights of Lithuania is open to everyone. We seek to honor our members and to retain, support, and celebrate the Republic, Embassy, and Consulate as well as the Lithuanian church, culture, history, language, and the freedoms of ALL democratic nations and



Consuls General Vaclavos Salkauskas and Oleksii Holubov



Polish Consulate reception

cultures. For information on membership in Council 110 or other Councils near you kindly contact Dr. Kazas at 929-351-0367 or at paulmichaelkazas@gmail.com.

Evil is cancer that must be kept in check so it does not metastasize spreading and destroying all that we hold dear.



Dr. Kazas and Laima Šileikis Hood of the Lithuanian-American Community

UNEXPECTED JOURNEY

Memoir of a Siberian Deportee

By Juzė Avižienytė Žukauskienė

Translated from the Lithuanian by Giedrė Kumpikas, Ph.D., niece of the author, and Isabel Kumpikas, sister of the author

38. ONE PROBLEM IS NOT A PROBLEM

Spring came. Food reserves were dwindling. It was still a long wait for the nettles and the garlic. The work at the mill would end soon since all the wool had been processed and felt boots were not needed in the spring. But soon we would no longer have the 500 grams of flour, which my husband and son were getting.

Stasiukas fell very seriously ill with a kidney infection. Once again, our good doctor Šakenienė visited him every day with medication that she had brought from Lithuania and prescribed a diet. God! But what was there to give such a weak patient, a child! Not a drop of milk, not an egg, not a crumb of bread. I was boiling small pieces of potatoes in plain water. That was all, not even any salt, since the doctor had forbidden it.

I ran here, I ran there, but where to get something when no one had anything to spare? My husband decided that, since summer was coming, our bedding was not essential. And so, having asked for and gotten the permission of the commandant, he bundled up the down comforter and pillow and marched off to Svietlo-Zeliona to the speculator who came from Tomsk and would buy things. He came back without his coat but brought back a kilogram of butter, a sizable bag of flour (about 8-10 kilos) and some honey. I would have something to give my young patient and also the little one would get something.

“And where is your coat?” I asked, surprised.

“Don’t be angry, my dear! I was able to get these provisions from the storekeeper for my coat alone, since he had no need of bedding, and the man from Tomsk was not there. His colleague does not buy without him. You know very well that we must save Stasiukas, otherwise he will suffer the same fate as Smailienė’s Jonukas.”

“And what did you get for the bedding?”

“For the moment, nothing. I left it with that man. If his nephew will make it in time by the sled road, then we’ll get our money quickly. If not, then we’ll have to wait until he sails up the river by steamboat. Well, it’s good that at least while Stasiukas is sick we’ll have some better food for him.

And again the tax agents! They were a real scourge of God! Again, the demand to give last year’s tribute: meat, potatoes, hides and wool.



I noticed that they did not demand these payments from everyone. Apparently, they wanted to finish us off. Such was, it seems, the determination of the commandant. Of course, they loaded those payments on us because I had not been submissive and had been sharply argumentative with all the agents. Even though all the demands were sent in my husband’s name since he was the head of the family, I represented the family. We did not know the statutes of the law. No one explained them to us; in fact, they hid them from us.

The Soviet Army was fiercely defending Stalingrad, and did not allow the Germans to come close to the Baku* oil fields. They were also able to hold on other fronts. The army needed a lot, and Russia was a beggarly poorhouse. Besides, the most fertile regions were occupied. Very energetic, ferocious men were chosen as tax collectors. They were also hounded mercilessly with demands that the set norms be collected. And on their part, they tried to squeeze out whatever they could from the people.

I did not forget, Stasiukas’ heartache, his bitter tears

when he lost his watch. And we had robbed him of it by deceit, by theft!

When would those dragons be sated? All the inhabitants were hungry and half naked, but the unquenchable demands did not end.

I worked at the office. I used to see and I used to hear how the tax collectors shouted at others, not only at me. Even though everything—tributes, taxes—came in my husband's name, he was in poor health, and I was afraid of a heart attack, as had happened on the train. I was strong, cool tempered; besides, I worked at the office; they did not have to ask me to come, nor look for me; therefore, the whole heap of demands, insults, and curses landed on me. I repaid them in kind, although I did not shout, did not threaten, did not insult. I retorted in a cool fashion, sternly, biting, with mockery, but I avoided crossing the line. The commandant and the activists, who were being pressed from above, had a grudge against me and were just waiting for an opportunity to crush me.

In March of 1943, again the coercion to give potatoes, meat, hides and other things. The same agent to whom I had paid 90 rubles came. "Well, Žukauskiene, it's time to settle with your payments. Besides, the region has obligated us to build one tank, one plane. Look for money."

"Why this empty talk? You know that we have no meat, no hides, and no wool and that we will never have any. Money and things we have consumed long ago. We gave to the government what we had and what we could. You know that we don't earn a single ruble here."

"Don't talk so much! You know you have to pay, so pay up!"

"We gave what we could. Is the Soviet Union such a beggarly poorhouse that they want to rip something off naked people?"

The commandant jumped up, saying, "For such talk, you'll wind up in jail, then you'll know!"

"Don't try to scare me! 'For some it's a jail; for others it's a living room,'* I replied with a Russian saying. What is jail to me? There at least I'll get a ration of bread, while here? We work day and night, and we live on wind, and still there are payments to be made."

"You'll leave your children; then you'll howl."

"No! I won't howl! You think that to see your children are starving to death is easy? It's better that my eyes don't see it!"

"Not one of them has died yet," said the commandant slowly.

I got fired up and interrupted him: "You are the commandant, but you don't know what's going on in your administration. You are lost in the clouds. Why did Savickas die last year? Why did those two old people in Vostok die in 1941: they begged from beggars like themselves. And was it easy for Smailienė when her Jonukas

died of hunger? Do you know—and you should know—that he, emaciated and completely drained, was in agony for a few weeks, not able to get up from his plank-bed and his mother only able to feed him with grass. Do you know that his last wish was a speck of good food? While hallucinating he saw bread. Do you know that his last words were? 'Mother, can't I get one more potato and half a glass of milk?' Was it easy for his mother to wrap his dried-out body into his last rags and to bury him? It is better not to see that! You are threatening me with prison! Put me there; drive me there; send me there!" I choked on my tears. I was shaking from emotion and anger.

"Get out! We'll take care of the likes of you." The commandant's words sobered me up.

**Baku Oil Fields –At the beginning of the 20th Century, the richest oil fields were in Baku, a port city in Azerbaijan originally developed by the Nobel brothers of Sweden and later by the Rothschild family and then by Rockefeller and Standard Oil. All these formed a cartel and sponsored the Bolshevik Communist Revolution of 1917. The Bolsheviks plundered Baku, murdered thousands of inhabitants and burned the oil fields, causing a rise in the global price of oil.*

39. CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

The result of my outburst and stream of bitter words soon became evident. A few days later, another government agent, a storage agent higher in rank, arrived and took inventory of our wealth: clothing, of which there was hardly any besides what we had on our bodies; the remaining dishes we had not exchanged for food (5 plates brought from Lithuania, an enameled bucket, 2 pots), and bedding. When they went down into the cellar, they found 4 kg of flour and about 60 kg of potatoes, which we were saving for seed. They immediately seized the flour and the potatoes so that we wouldn't devour them.

Someone informed my husband that we were being written up. He rushed out of the mill as he was—overheated, in his shirtsleeves—and started running home. In the mill, there was steam and the temperature was around 30-32 C, while outside it was about -20 C, and a cold and biting wind was blowing. Again, a bout of pneumonia. After about three days, we received a summons to court. It was in the name of my husband. Again, I went, since my husband was lying in bed half-dead, feverish, hallucinating. He couldn't even get himself any water. I had to lift his head with my hand and help him drink.

The wife of Colonel Jasinskas, a very dear and modest woman, promised to attend to my husband.

The Circuit Court—a woman judge, Kolesnikova, and

a young wench secretary—were coming to Bolotovka (a free village), which was only 8 km away from us. From Komarovka, there were four of us Lithuanians who were being summoned: myself, Vanagas, the former midwife Vyšniauskienė and the Tatar Uzdin. There were also and some paupers summoned from elsewhere.

Court. What kind of court? A Farce! The judgments had already been decided in advance. First, the old timers were judged. Everything went fast: “Make sure that you settle everything within two months; otherwise all of your possessions will be written up!”

The Tatar Uzdin was a real heap of rags. Wearing huge, dirty felt-boots, he fell on his knees and began to cry and beg for mercy (an excellent oriental act). “Wait until the fall. The calf will grow; the cow will give milk in the summer.” Whether the judges and the spectators, who were numerous, believed his acting and or even understood was not the point; submission was shown.

Of course, he was cursed as a malicious tax-shirker who had not given his butter payment in three years. But he was given three months to settle his debt.

“Vanagas!” Although the name of this next defendant, Vanagas,* reminds one of a voracious bird of prey, there was nothing hawkish about him. Dressed properly, he had an agreeable face with a smile. His voice was not merely submissive, but rather pleasant and twittering. He promised to pay as quickly as he could. The judge was not angry.

“Vyšniauskiene! Why are you not paying the war tax?”

“I have no money and no possessions. I only have a watch left.” On her wrist was shining a gold watch with a gold band.

“Give it here!”

The frightened woman took off the watch and put it on the judge’s table.

“Žukauskas!”

I presented myself. The judge did not even ask why my husband was not there.

“Why do you refuse to pay your taxes?” Her voice was angry.

“We don’t refuse, only we don’t have the means to pay. Where can we get meat from, wool or hides? We have no animals.”

“Deliberate tax evasion! You have a chata, a garden. You can pay. You only have to try.”

I was about to say that no animals grow in the garden, but the judge, interrupted me angrily. “Enough talk! Settle up right away, and if you don’t settle within 10 days, all your possessions will be seized. The judgment is final, unalterable, without right to appeal.”

I understood that there was something wrong. Why was I being refused the right to appeal, when to all others, the judgment when read included at the end the phrase

“Those who are dissatisfied with the judgment, have the right to appeal within 10 days at the Regional Court.”

I asked for a copy of the judgment.

“What copy? It is stated that the judgment is final, not appealable!” answered Kolesnikova sharply.

Then I, quite calmly, responded, “Not quite so. The phrase is the same for all those judged today. You said to all that they have the right to appeal within 10 days at the Regional Court. Why am I an exception?”

“I have no time to write copies,” Kolesnikova fired back angrily.

“Give it to me, I’ll copy it myself, you need only certify it,” I said calmly.

“Just think of it! That I would permit everyone to rummage through court documents! Don’t even think of it!” yelled Kolesnikova, red in the face.

“Fine, you don’t trust me with it; then I shall ask a local teacher. She will make a copy. You are obliged to give me a copy.” I don’t give in.

I ran to the teacher’s chata. Formerly, she had gotten from me my brooch, a necklace, some camisoles, a girdle and other delicate things. She was always pleasant, gave us what she could, and now willingly agreed to go see the judge. The court was being held in the school.

In a half-hour she brought me the copy.

“I don’t know if it will help. Appeals to the Regional Court must be delivered to the same public judge Kolesnikova. She is furious at you,” stated the teacher; “she might hold on to it for a long time and not send it. Don’t give it into her hands. She might stick it somewhere. Better send it by mail, insured,” advised the teacher sympathetically.

As soon as I returned home, I immediately wrote an appeal to the Regional Court, and, as the good teacher had advised me, I sent it out in an insured packet by mail.

Ten days had not gone by, when the regional chairman Tomylov and the agent Maslianikov came to take away our possessions. I was informed. I ran home breathlessly.

My husband was still in bed and could not get up. My older son was at work, the two younger ones in school. I informed my husband carefully that they had come to take away our things. I asked him not to get upset. But he became very excited. His already pale face became even paler; his hands and lips trembled. I tried to calm him as much as I knew how, fearing that he might suffer another heart attack.

After a few minutes the men executing the warrant burst in with a group of curious onlookers. Tomylov, stuttering, was reading the things described on the list while Maslianikov was pulling them out and throwing them into the middle of the chata. There were not many of those things. At that moment, our youngest came home.

He was wearing a coat.

"Take it off!" They jumped at him and immediately tore the coat off his shoulders. The frightened child ran up to me and began to sob.

"Don't cry, Juozuk! Lithuanians must not cry. We must be firm and not show tears to the robbers," I tried to calm my son, remembering the phrase of Giriūnienė in the train car.

"What are you agitating there?" bellowed Tomylov.

"Don't yell! The child's coat is not on the list. Like the vilest robbers you are tearing clothes from our backs. You frightened the child, and I can't say anything to calm him!" I was beginning to get excited.

"We are the representatives of the Soviet government. Do not raise your voice to us!" shouted Tomylov. The collective farmers who had been in the chata were pulling back but still stretching their necks to watch and see what would happen next.

The agent, looking at Tomylov and coming up to the bed, said sternly, "Now, get up! We have to take the bedding." My husband's blue lips trembled. He tried to get up but, weakened, let his hands drop back on the edge of the bed and fell back again onto his pillow.

"Wait! What are you doing? You see that the man is near death. Leave it. I'll bring the bedding myself to the office right away. It won't disappear anywhere. Let us manage things ourselves," I begged.

"Ziutiunia" (my husband called me thus), "don't lower yourself before these scoundrels. Why are you begging in front of these robber beasts?" Where did he get enough strength to say this? He rolled off the bed and shouted, "Take everything and get the hell out of here!" But, his strength failed him, and gesturing with his hands, he fell towards the table. Tomylov jumped and punched him in the jaw with his fist. My husband staggered and in falling struck the edge of the metal bed, and collapsed. My first reaction was to jump at Tomylov, punch him in his snout (one could not call it a face), and strangle him. But, glancing at my unconscious husband, I saw that blood was trickling from his injured head. I dashed to help him. I lifted him up from the ground. Someone helped me put him on a straw mattress. Someone else ran and got some water from a neighbor. Our own water had been spilled, and our bucket seized.

While I was tending to my husband, my lucid reason returned. If I had struck Tomylov, I would have been accused of resisting a government representative carrying out his duties.

I was happy that I had not brought another misfortune on my family. What would they have done without me!

Tomylov became frightened himself. Having recovered my composure, I turned to the collective farmers. "Did you see? You will be witnesses. Can a man, calling him-

self a representative of the government, behave like this? No! You will not get away with this!" My voice was firm and threatening whereas the curious on-lookers, hearing that they would have to be witnesses, rushed outside, even jamming the door. The chata became empty. The agents were quickly tying up things in bed sheets. And having called some assistants, they hoisted everything on their backs and marched out.

Having calmed down my family, I went to the office. I was angry and upset. At the office, I only found my girl and Maslianikov. "So, tell me, on which paragraph of law do you base your behavior?" I asked Maslianikov.

He was obviously very worried about the incident. He saw that I was not the usual taiga inhabitant, oppressed by intimidation, and began to justify himself. "I did nothing wrong. I don't know why that Tomylov went crazy. I am not guilty of that. We were ordered to seize the things, but to hit someone was unnecessary."

"Fine! Do you have those instructions for the collection of payments, or was this only by instruction of the judge," I asked as calmly as I could.

"Judges are judges, but there is also a booklet." He extended a small book to me. I took the book and, leafing through it, found a paragraph about the collection of taxes. I read . . . "for unpaid taxes one cannot seize (from a family): 1) the last cow, 2) the last goat or, if there is no cow, 3) the last heifer 4) work tools by means of which the payer earns his basic living, 5) the clothes which he is wearing, 6) everyday household items, dishes."

I jumped with surprise and joy.

"Do you know the regulations for the demand of payment?" I asked the agent.

"What I know I was told and am carrying out."

"So listen, and show it to your Tomylov." And I read him the paragraph in its entirety. "Why do you call yourselves the representatives of the government and break the laws of the government and behave in such a beastly fashion?" I reproached him.

The poor boy, hearing this, was clearly frightened and kept on justifying himself, saying that he had nothing to do with it, that it was Tomylov.

I sat down at my worktable, but my work was not going well. I was not able to concentrate. Although, just in case, I was clicking away on the abacus. After a while, having apparently had lunch, the commandant and Tomylov came into the office building. Without hesitation, I went into his office and stated bluntly, "Citizen commandant, here you are our Tsar and God, * so perhaps you might explain how a person can behave the way you do with citizens and still call himself the representative of the government." And I described for him the scene which had taken place in our chata. Tomylov was silent, his head bent.

Meanwhile the commandant only said, "You should not have driven him to it."

"Oh really! Definitely, it should not have come to that! Do you know the law of tax collection? I read it barely an hour ago. And if you don't know, then get it from Maslianikov and read it," I stated firmly because I felt well-armed. They glanced at each other and turned to me:

"Do you have anything more to say?"

"I do. Please write me a permission to go tomorrow to Parbig since I see that you cannot or do not want to do anything here."

"No! You will get no permission, and you will go nowhere," the commandant shot back sternly.

"You are mistaken. You do not have to give me permission. I shall leave tomorrow at seven o'clock in the morning even without it." This was very insolent on my part, but knowing the law, I felt very confident.

As he heard what I said, I saw that the commandant's jowls trembled. He was furious, and Tomylov was very nervous that he had encountered such resistance.

The officials were used to doing as they pleased, without regard for the law. And the people, not knowing the laws and their power, defended themselves with tears and supplications. And here was someone who used even Lenin's authority and knew the laws. They weren't quite at ease, since there were those who were higher than they.

"Citizen commandant, I state once again, that even if you do not give me written permission, I shall leave tomorrow at seven o'clock for the Regional Center." And not waiting for an answer, I left his office.

The morning of the following day, I prepared to set out for the Regional Center. Even though it was cold, about -20 C, I put on my black spring coat, since both winter ones had been worn through. I shortened my black ball gown by about 30 cm., leaving the gown salable. From the material removed, I made myself a small hat, similar to a Turkish turban. In other words, I dressed up. And with my elegant little coat and my black silk hat, I looked quite the lady. Even so, my family was very depressed and acted as if as if they were burying me or as if I were going to my certain doom.

I kissed them all. I hugged them and asked them not to go anywhere, neither to work, nor to school, but rather to attend to and protect their father. He was lying on a bare mattress, covered only with a robe, pale tears streaming from his eyes. The children were crying also. My heart was heavy. It was overflowing with resentment for our oppressors. But I did not lack determination to find at least an iota of justice somewhere.

I left. I could have gone straight to the Parbig road, but at seven o'clock in the morning, I diverted my path to past the windows of the commandant's house. Light was shining through them. On purpose, I stopped outside. I

waited to see how the commandant would react. But no one hindered me.

At first I moved quite rapidly on the road towards the taiga. Little bits of ice cracked under my feet. It was 8 km to the main road and another 18 on it, in all, 26 km. For a normal traveler, the trek was considerable, but for me, famished in general, and not having eaten anything that day at all, it became more difficult with every step to measure the distance of road traveled. I was terribly exhausted. The soles of my feet were burning; my knees did not want to bend. After seven hours of walking, I reached Parbig. First, I went to the Regional Headquarters because I was traveling without a permit. The settlement was small. Everyone knows everyone else and each militiaman, upon meeting a stranger, immediately arrests him. I stopped by the Regional Headquarters. The Regional Commandant, Silkov, turned out to be very humane. First of all, I asked for a permit for two days. I told him everything that had happened, and how the local officials had behaved. He listened very attentively. When I finished, he posed a few questions.

"Infuriating!" he said. "I shall give you a permit for five days. You must rest. But I cannot help you in any way. I shall speak to commandant Shabalin myself, but for everything else go to the prosecutor and tell him everything without omitting anything. It appears to me that something is not right here. Such behavior by an official is not permitted."

I was deeply moved by the humane and sympathetic reaction of the commandant. It meant that not everyone was like Shabalin and Tomylov.

I walked over to the prosecutor's office. In the waiting room, there were already some people who had shed tears. When he stepped out of the office, the militiaman quickly looked over the people waiting. He looked at me very attentively and seemed surprised because I stood out from the others.

"For which day and with what purpose have you been summoned?" he asked.

"I came for a personal reason, without a summons," I answered. The militiaman glanced over the people waiting once more, then disappeared behind the office door. Some began to question me, asking what kind of reason I could have to come to the prosecutor voluntarily.

I did not have the opportunity to answer before the door of the office opened lightly and I was asked to step in. The prosecutor looked like a person of culture. That is how the Siberians would describe a neat, clean person. He was cleanly shaven; his uniform was well pressed; he asked me to sit down (what a sensation!).

"I am listening to you," he said, nodding his head slightly in my direction. I recounted to him the worries and hurts of all of us.

“For they took everything, even our last food, clothing, dishes. How can we go on living? And they even struck my sick husband.” I could hold out no longer and began to cry.

“Don’t upset yourself. Don’t upset yourself,” the prosecutor said. He even stood up.

I somehow calmed myself and asked his pardon that I had not been able to hold back my tears although he probably saw tears every day in profusion. I apologized for taking up his time unnecessarily.

“This is a dreadful story. The actions are unlawful from beginning to end! Those so-called government representatives had no right to impose taxes upon you. The behavior of the judge also astounds me. It is a pity that you did not file an appeal with the Regional Court, but now it is too late. But no law permits everything to be taken.

“I did file the appeal in time,” I said and recounted what obstacles Kolesnikova had created.

“Well, well! What kind of devilishness is this?” said the prosecutor as if to himself.

“Did you file the appeal through Judge Kolesnikova?” he asked as if suspecting something. “She can simply throw it out and say she did not receive it,” he said, pacing across the office.

“I foresaw that that she might suppress it. That is why I sent the appeal by registered mail. Besides that, I wrote down the date very clearly on the appeal.”

“Oh, you are a brave one! Tell me, what is your profession? Are you not perhaps a jurist?” asked the prosecutor smiling. “You are as good as one. For my part, I shall take some measures concerning those government officials, but you will have to wait to get your things back until you receive the decree of the Regional Court. Put everything you told me in writing, and I shall take the necessary steps. Goodbye,” the prosecutor Nostorov nodded his head slightly. I thanked him sincerely and marched out to the town to visit some friends. It was already towards evening. Not until then did I feel a terrible exhaustion and weakness. All my joints ached, and I had shooting pains in my chest from hunger. I felt weak. Even my eyes were clouding over.

I stopped in at the chata of some very close friends. They were the Jewish family from Kaunas with whom we had traveled in the same car to Siberia.

“Oh, what a guest! It is the elder from our car,” Finkelšteinas said, turning slightly to a seated person unknown to me. “Sit down, sit down! Tell us how you are living and where?” He flooded me with questions. The stranger left. The Finkelšteinas family surrounded me. “Perhaps you will have a cup of tea,” asked Finkelšteiniene.

“With pleasure, because I have not had anything to eat today,” I answered, my mouth watering thinking about

some sort of food. She immediately brought a cup of hot water and excused herself for not having sugar or any tealeaves.

“Drink it, at least you will warm up.”

Although I knew that none of the deportees had any real tea, I was still a little disappointed while slowly sipping the hot water. “Mamy, git a bisali broit,”* said her seven year-old son, cuddling up to her. His mother said something to him in a low voice, but as I listened, he promised not to eat any bread today but asked her to give me his ration.

“Very well,” said Finkelšteiniene, holding her youngest close to her. “You see what kind of boy my Kiso is! He says I must give his bread to your today.”

“Oh, Kisenka*, what a wonderful, good-hearted child you are!” But I was becoming faint. I could not eat a child’s bread. But I had such a desire to put something edible in my mouth, and bread was only a dream that we had not seen for a long time. The hostess brought a small piece of bread and a couple of spoonful of a thin carrot mash. I would have swallowed this ration in two bites, but I controlled myself and chewed the bread in small bites washing it down with the hot water, of which the generous lady gave me a second cup.

Having satisfied my hunger, more precisely having stimulated an even greater desire to eat, I thanked my hosts as best I knew how, especially the good boy, who had so heroically and nobly given up his bread. After all, they also received an inadequate ration and did not have sufficient bread.

But these Jews had it easier in another way. They had brought several thousand rubles with them and quite a few valuable things. They even had food at least at the beginning. Seemingly, they managed somehow to please the officials, since they had been settled in the center of the region, an area where others were forbidden even to enter without a permit. There were two families. They immediately bought a small house, opened up a shop to repair watches, so that they would not have to do strenuous work at a plant. Of course, apart from the deportees, very few people had any watches. And the watches of the deportees, immediately moved into the pockets of the local officials. Whether they repaired any watches or not, it was still considered that they were factory workers and received a ration of 500 grams of bread. Their dependents who were in school received 300 grams each. Clearly, only the above-mentioned two Jewish families had brought enough money with them to work out such a deal, and it was understood that it cost them a lot.

After I ate, I told them how the government officials had treated us and how the prosecutor and the regional commandant had reacted. “The prosecutor said to write an appeal to him, but where will I get some paper? If I

were at home, I would take a sheet from the children's notebook and I would write it."

The little Kisa, having listened attentively to my story, jumped out of his seat right away, tore out a sheet from his notebook and held it out to me. "Take it, write, I'll even give you a pen."

But his mother jumped up and cried out nervously, "Oi, vos titz er, vos titz er?"* She started to scold the child, grabbed the notebook from his hands, and said in Lithuanian, "What did you do? The teacher will throw you out of school! You know that the teacher strictly forbade you to tear out even one sheet from your notebook! Oi! oi! These children!"

But the eyes of the righteous Kisa were blazing and with an emotional voice he cried out through his tears, "All right! Let her throw me out! The lady must write! How can she not write since they pulled the coat off Juozukas' back in the winter? How will he be able to go to school without a coat? Nu * I won't go either!" ended Kisa decidedly. He and Juozukas had become great friends during those six weeks on the train and on the barge. They were of the same age. And now, even though they lived far away from each other and were going to different schools, the news that bad people had treated his friend so cruelly upset him very much, and the noble Kisa was determined with all his means to help punish the wrong doers even if it meant that he had to suffer himself.

I thanked the child with all my heart. I apologized to the mother that such an unpleasantness had occurred and sat down to write. I wrote briefly, concisely so that my appeal would fit on one sheet.

The following morning, as soon as it was nine o'clock, I delivered the appeal to the prosecutor and set off for home. The road was long and unpleasant. My forces were depleted. The cold Siberian wind seeping through my light summer coat was making my joints stiff, but I was very content with my actions.

Finally, I reached Bolotovka. Only 8 km were left to go, but the fatigue of two days, especially without eating, made me ready to collapse. I stopped at the chata of the teacher who had gotten my girdle, a camisole, and some jewelry in exchange for a broken, practically useless spade and who had made a copy of the decree of the court. I reminded her who I was; I told her from where I was coming. She received me very pleasantly. Right away, she asked me to sit down. She pulled a pan out of the oven with potatoes, poured me a cup of milk, and—to my great surprise—cut a rather large piece of bread and kept on urging, "Eat, eat to your fill!"

I thanked her warmly. I ate the potatoes and drank the milk, but I asked her to allow me to take the bread with me, to bring it back to my hungry children and my sick husband.

Towards evening, I was already home, where my loved ones were waiting for me anxiously and longingly. First of all, I distributed the presents—a small mouthful of bread for each! But what could a small slice of bread mean to four hungry mouths? And still, the joy of everyone was great that I was home again. I told them in detail about my trip and about how the Regional Commandant and the Prosecutor had reacted. I told them that the Jewish family, which had settled in the Regional Center, had advised me to present a request to be released from the collective farm and allowed to leave.

The following morning, when I went back to the office, I immediately recounted how the Regional Commandant Shilkov and the prosecutor Nastorov had reacted to our brutalization. I said that the things which had been seized would have to be returned.

"And how will they return them since the same day that you left for Parbig everything was sold?" said my superior Tania. "Just don't think, Juzefa Stanislavovna that any of us collective farmers bought anything. True, Delbushin took one pillow, one comforter, but the potatoes, and the other things were bought up by the Vostok Collective Farmers."

"And who got the dishes?" I saw that our enameled bucket filled with water was standing in the office waiting room.

"We kept it in the office. We didn't give it to anyone. If we are told to return it, then you will bring 30 rubles, since that's what we wrote in the inventory list and that's how much we paid. You will be able to take it back."

The more experienced farmers only laughed. "Just wait! They'll return it! You'll rip the sheep out of the jaws of the wolf. Don't even think of it. Until the verdict comes from Tomsk, you will have nothing. And you know that the paperwork will have to travel over 300 km. by ox cart. By the time the ox plods back and forth 300 km, it'll be spring because for at least for two months, the road is not passable. Just count. During that time, clothes will have become rags—if even rags are left." That's how the Altay people consoled me, having experienced the same type of legal judgments on their own claims ten years before.

Apparently, the commandant Shabalin and the agents had foreseen this, and that is why they concocted the troubles for my family at the end of March.

***"Mamy, git a bisali broit,"* Mommy, give her a little bread. (Yiddish for the German: "Mutti, gib ihr ein bisschen Brot."*

**Kiso, Kisa, Kisenka – all the same name, the latter being a diminutive.*

***"Oi, vos titz er, vos titz er?"* Oh, what is he doing, what is he doing? (Yiddish for the German: "Och, was tut er, was tut er?"*

our community

When love and warmth fit in the palm of one hand

Dalia Lankeliene

Teacher at the Lithuanian school in Colorado

With Mother's Day and Father's Day approaching, on the last Saturday of April, the students of the Colorado Lithuanian School were busy making gifts for their parents. The second session of the project "Traditions of Lithuanian Folk Art - Ceramics," funded by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sports, was held.

Listening to the instructions of the folk ceramic artist Jurgita Čiplytė and looking at the examples shown, the children kneaded clay, rolled it, and pressed it with their hands. What can fit in the palm of your hand? Maybe the sun, a symbol of warmth, light, and life since pagan times? Or, maybe, the rose, the symbol of eternal love?

Jurgita's molds were carefully evaluated by curious eyes, and little fingers repeated the artist's actions. If the little ones needed help, the teachers and older students were always there. Someone needs to revive clay that is drying too quickly in the dry Colorado air, while another can't get a clay pancake to roll out smoothly. Once the technical difficulties were overcome, the children's imagination and creativity knew no bounds - each one created a gift for their family - a palm with all the warmth of the sun in it and a great love for their loved ones.



levute is happy to participate



Teacher Veronika is always ready to help



Creative workshop in the Colorado Lithuanian School



Teacher Janina and student Aiva



Teacher Janina helps Aiva and Sean



Lukas is focused on his work



Parents also willingly participated

our community



Teachers help their students



Saule and Ricardas



Art created by children

Presentation of Aurima Dilienė's new book, *Living with Children*

Aura Juškevičienė
Teacher at the Colorado Lithuanian school

On Sunday after Easter, the Colorado Lithuanian School invited teachers and parents of the students of Lithuanian schools in the USA to a virtual meeting with Aurima Dilienė, a psychotherapist, who presented her newly published book for teachers and parents, *Living with Children*.

Dilienė has been living in France with her family for seven years, conducting live and remote counseling sessions and writing books. She told the audience that she has put a lot of energy, thought, and heart into her new work, *Living with Children*, her 4th book. It is the culmination of her vast practical experience in family therapy, counseling, and motherhood. Twenty-eight chapters cover 28 years of a child, a young person, moving on to independent adulthood. Each year has a chapter because that is how long the author has been a mother herself.

According to the author of psychological books, this book is for everyone who is in the process of growing up. The book tells her personal story, in which one of her daughters becomes the protagonist and has the task of inspiring the reader to change. Family doctors, pediatricians, nannies, psychologists, and teachers will be reminded of what they have studied in the past and discover new ideas that will help them to understand children better and help parents. In this book, which is like a textbook, parents will not find advice on how to bring up their children, but they will

find new ideas on how to live with children and help them grow. It covers topics such as guilt-free sex, surviving parents' divorce, late adolescence, how children can communicate with their parents to maintain a good relationship, and more.

It was the first meeting with a specialist organized by the Lithuanian School of Colorado. As in Colorado, teachers in most Lithuanian schools meet with their students once a week. Lithuanian schools are located many kilometers away from Lithuania, so many mothers and fathers in foreign Lithuanian communities become teachers for their own and other families' children. And there can be all sorts of issues involved in helping to educate their children. During the meeting, the audience heard many answers to their questions. For teachers, the book can be a great tool to give parents correct advice about their children when faced with behavioral problems in the classroom.



Aurima Dilienė during the presentation



Book *Living with Children*



Aurima Dilienė with one of her books



Aurima Dilienė's family

our community

Let us leave a legacy

The Lithuanian language teacher training courses in Dainava

On August 7-14, 2022, the Dainava Camp (Michigan) will once again welcome teachers, administrators, and everyone who cares about Lithuanian schools and the Lithuanian language. The LAC Educational Council prepares methodological materials, organizes teacher training courses, and helps Lithuanian language schools in the USA to open and grow.

More than 44 years of experience left an impact, a legacy. Let us leave a legacy too by opening new Lithuanian schools, maintaining those that have been in operation for many years, and improving the recently established ones. Let us use the knowledge, experience, and wisdom that several generations of Lithuanian educators have passed on to us. It all began in the summer of 1967 when the LAC Educational Council organized the first Teacher Training Week in Dainava. The course was sponsored by the Lithuanian Foundation, headed at the time by Dr.

Antanas Razma, and the Lithuanian American Community Center Board, headed by J. Jasaitis. The then chairman of the LAC Educational Council Jeronimas Ignatonis entrusted the task of organizing these courses to Jonas Kavaliūnas, whose detailed descriptions and historical material not only amaze us today with their relevance and informativeness but also oblige us. The direction has been shown to us. So let us also leave our legacy for the next generations!

For more information about the Lithuanian language teacher training course to be held in Dainava on August 7-14, 2022, please visit the LAC Educational Council website at <https://svietimotyryba.org/dokumentai/dainavos-stovyklos-formos/>

The organizing committee is looking forward to your participation.

Speakers



Dr. Akvilė Naudžiūnienė is a lecturer and researcher at Vilnius University, Department of History. As a cultural historian, she focuses her research on the history of education in Lithuania, and she is the co-author of the most recent general history curricula in Lithuania. In addition, she is interested in the history and representation of national minorities in Lithuania and combines them in her work.

Dr. Norbertas Černiauskas is a lecturer at the Department of History of Vilnius University. He is interested in the history of interwar Lithuania and the history of world Lithuanians and has visited and lectured in Lithuanian communities in the USA and other countries.

Topic. Is it possible to tell the history of Lithuania and the Lithuanians of the World through 30 historical personalities? Which personalities are the most suitable for telling history to children? What would a textbook consisting of such biographical stories be like?





Rūta Stanaitienė is a Chief Specialist of the Foreign Lithuanians Division of the Department of Quality of Education and Regional Policy. She has been working at the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport since 2005. She started working in the adult education department, and since 2015 she works in the Department of Lithuanians Living Abroad. Among other things, she focuses on the issues of Lithuanian language education programs and tools, assessment of achievements, and teacher qualification development. Rūta holds a Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences (Sociology and Political Science), a teaching qualification, and a Master's degree in Public Administration.

Topics

1. Integrated program of Lithuanian education: application and development. Distance learning tools. Certification of Lithuanian education achievements.
2. The Lithuanian language proficiency examinations following the European guidelines for language learning, teaching, and assessment for students in Lithuanian schools outside of Lithuania: experience and perspectives.

Lithuanian language teachers

Dr. Daiva Litvinskaitė taught the Lithuanian language and literature at the University of Illinois in Chicago for fourteen years. She is currently a lecturer at Vilnius University, Department of Philology. She is interested in 20th and 21st-century Lithuanian literature and feminist and gender studies.



Dr. Dalia Cidzikaitė is a senior researcher at the Lithuanian National Martynas Mažvydas Library, a journalist, translator, and author of several books. She completed her doctoral studies at the Department of Lithuanian Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago and worked for several years as the editor-in-chief of the Draugas newspaper. She is a long-time lecturer of Lithuanian at the Baltic Studies Summer Language Institute (BALSSI).

Laima Apanavičienė has lived in the USA for more than 20 years. From the very first days of her arrival, she has been involved in Lithuanian activities. She worked as a deputy principal (13 years) and principal (4 years) of the Lithuanian Language School in Chicago; she was the director (15 years) of the Čiurlionis Gallery in the Lithuanian Youth Centre (Chicago) and editor of Draugas newspaper (10 years). She currently works for the Lithuanian Foundation and is the editor of the Pensininkas magazine. In 2021, Laima Apanavičienė, together with the other authors of the project, completed a 5-year project "Textbooks for Elementary School Students of Lithuanian Schools in the USA". Four textbooks were published, namely: I Am a First Grader, I Am a Second Grader, We Are Third Graders, and We Are Fourth Graders. Teacher's books for all four textbooks are available online. The author of the textbooks is Elena Marcelionienė.



our community



1st place. Samanta Dumpis, pre-school, Maironis LS, NY



2nd place. Lėja Valaitytė, pre-school, Vincas Kudirka LS, NJ



1st place. Milena Bur, 2nd grade, Kristijonas Donelaitis LS, Washington, DC



2nd place. David Zalagaitis, 1st grade, Aleksandra Kazickienė LS, NY



1st place. Adelė Usonytė, 3rd grade, Maironis LS, IL



3rd place. Elita Trunley, 1st grade, Saulėtas Krantas LS, FL



2nd place. Benas Usonis, 3rd grade, Maironis LS, IL

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LITHUANIAN FOLK
DANCE FESTIVAL
PHILADELPHIA 2022

Events

Wednesday, June 29

North American Lithuanian Business Forum 2022

Thursday, June 30

Evening Youth Social, Lithuanian Music Hall

Friday, July 1

Welcome Celebration and Dance, Marriott Downtown Hotel

Saturday, July 2

Concert, Marriott Downtown Hotel

Sunday, July 3

Folk Dance Festival, Temple University Liacouras Center

Sunday, July 3

Gala, Family Banquet, Dance Party, Marriott Downtown Hotel

Tickets and more information at www.sokiusvente.org

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