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## from the editor

Dear readers,

Bridges celebrates its 40th Anniversary. It grew from a 4-page black and white leaflet (however, no less important) to a 32-page colorful magazine. I invite you to read the Editor's Word printed in the very first Bridges in April of 1977 and contemplate for a minute on how our communities and our goals changed over the years.

Sincerely,  
Karilė Vaitkutė  
Editor



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## I Am an Immigrant

By Vingra Steponkevičiūtė



Vingra represents Lithuania in the Countries Around the World Festival.

I am a naturalized citizen whose family, gratefully, came to America, from Lithuania, when I was six. Sometimes life throws an opportunity to play or gamble. My parents adventurously applied for a green card, without giving much thought as to how our lives forever would be changed. We were introduced to the unknown world - the U.S.A. (this was the late '90s). No, my parents and I - and my aunt, uncle and cousin, we were not fleeing from religious persecution or political/social/economic oppression, at the time. We simply were given an unanticipated, new journey. "If you are brave enough to say goodbye, life will reward you with a new hello" (Unknown).

Four months after arriving in the United States, my four-year-old cousin, Kotryna, tragically was run over by a car, and killed. We knew no one. However, the manner in which my teachers, my classmates and our neighborhood poured out their hearts to help us, remains memorable. My very first lesson about life, in our new home-country, was taught: kindness to strangers.

Having been given the opportunity to live as an immigrant in a host country has shaped and defined who I am because of where I was born and raised, since they are very different cultures. Because my parents and I (not my three brothers) were born in Lithuania, my social values are deeply rooted in the land of our forebears (there's no escaping the ethnicity piece). We remain proud of our rich culture and thousand-year-old history. My family life and educational goals, in turn, have been shaped greatly by our social and ethnic values.

Transitions never are easy. During our first years in America, when my parents were navigating housing, employment and schools, I remember feeling vastly out of place and very uncomfortable. When we arrived, I knew not one word of English. I totally experienced a cultural match/mismatch. Naturally, I didn't fit in with my American-born peers, but neither did I fully relate to my relatives in Europe. As a result, I really fit in nowhere, but with age and maturity, I have learned to embrace the rich-

ness of my background. I have learned even to love the gained self-perception of an empathetic citizen of the world vs. an alienated orphan.

Working as a substitute teacher with immigrant students and interacting with parents reminds me of how difficult the journey is to making one's life better and learning a new language, on top of that. Sometimes, some immigrants cannot stay at one place for too long so they have to move around, taking on jobs that are not as appealing per se to the local people living already. Due to the rising cost of living sometimes, they have to move constantly around, and thus, their children experience stress by the changing of schools, friends and neighborhoods until a more stable and better place is found. Immigrants contribute to society by bringing and sharing their traditions. In many parts of the world, the number of immigrants continually is increasing, whether for a better lifestyle or experience, or maybe for temporary relocation because an opportunity is presented for work, study, visit family and friends in those places. There also are individuals who want to learn about the different cultures, backgrounds and ways of life, and become so acclimated they no longer wish to return to the homeland.

What's more is that the United States of America was founded on immigrants. Everyone comes from somewhere. People make a new home, and at times, take on a new identity; eventually, the native language, traditions, and culture are forgotten. Many waves of immigrants incorporated the new ways of living while brushing off, piece by piece, the old known life. As well, historically a number of settlers who came to America shortened their names, did not teach their children the native language/ways of life and never discussed heritage, while trying to incorporate the new country's ways of life.

An often-noticed negative situation among immigrant groups is how, at times, advantage seems to be taken of the multiple care and assistance programs provided in this benevolent country, with





Vingra and her parents visit New York in August of 1998.

perhaps too little thought given to ways to self-improve and further one's standing on one's own feet. Surely, a balance is necessary while adjusting to life in a new country: to receive but also to give back.

The antipathy often associated with the word "immigrant" should not exist. Every breathing soul has some type of story to share in this world. Being an immigrant is not a bad thing. It sensitizes one to the vastness of the world. In this time of globalization, it enables one to maneuver in different directions in life, and use the opportunities presented to strengthen and deepen relations among peoples, cultures and countries, and in business. In the present, especially with young people, immigrant-status can be advantageous. Knowing another language is a major plus in all professions, and working with people of all backgrounds incorporates worldly knowledge.

In every country, there are consulates or embassies that assist with important documentation services. In addition, there are vulnerable children all over the world, unfortunately, who are in orphanages and waiting to be adopted by loving and nurturing parents. The number of

orphaned children who are immigrants, awaiting adoption, steadily keeps rising. People travel thousands of miles from many parts of the world to fulfill, hopefully, their dream of becoming parents of a child from another nation. Then, at some point, a desired trip may occur to return to visit the place of birth to see and gather information about the homeland nation.

In a sense, everyone is an immigrant living on this planet Earth. We are in this world but not of this world. We are just passing through. Every person is an immigrant in the sense that we were created to love, to bless others, to make a difference. And if we are to be a shining light in the darkness, and live as our Creator intended, it will be "one by one, side by side, soul by soul." One heart by one heart, beautiful and fragile lives will be touched.

Unfortunately, when tragedy unexpectedly strikes in a country, outsiders who may be visiting or traveling at the wrong time, along with the natives, will put differences aside and come together. In such times, everyone works side by side, together, for the sake of identifying the rebels who ignited the turmoil.

Language, in general, starts brewing communication problems. Conveying a message to get a point across, verbally or via some sort of interaction, is required by immigrants. Learning how people speak in a country and learning the native tongue where people are living is a demand. Necessarily, grammar and basic language skills need to be learned by newcomers. There are places where significant paperwork and messages are translated into the language of the majority of a particular group of immigrants living in a certain location. This type of favoritism introduces additional problems.

As my parents instilled in their children deep faith and love for country - both homeland and our new home, I would love to reassert this message to all immigrants.

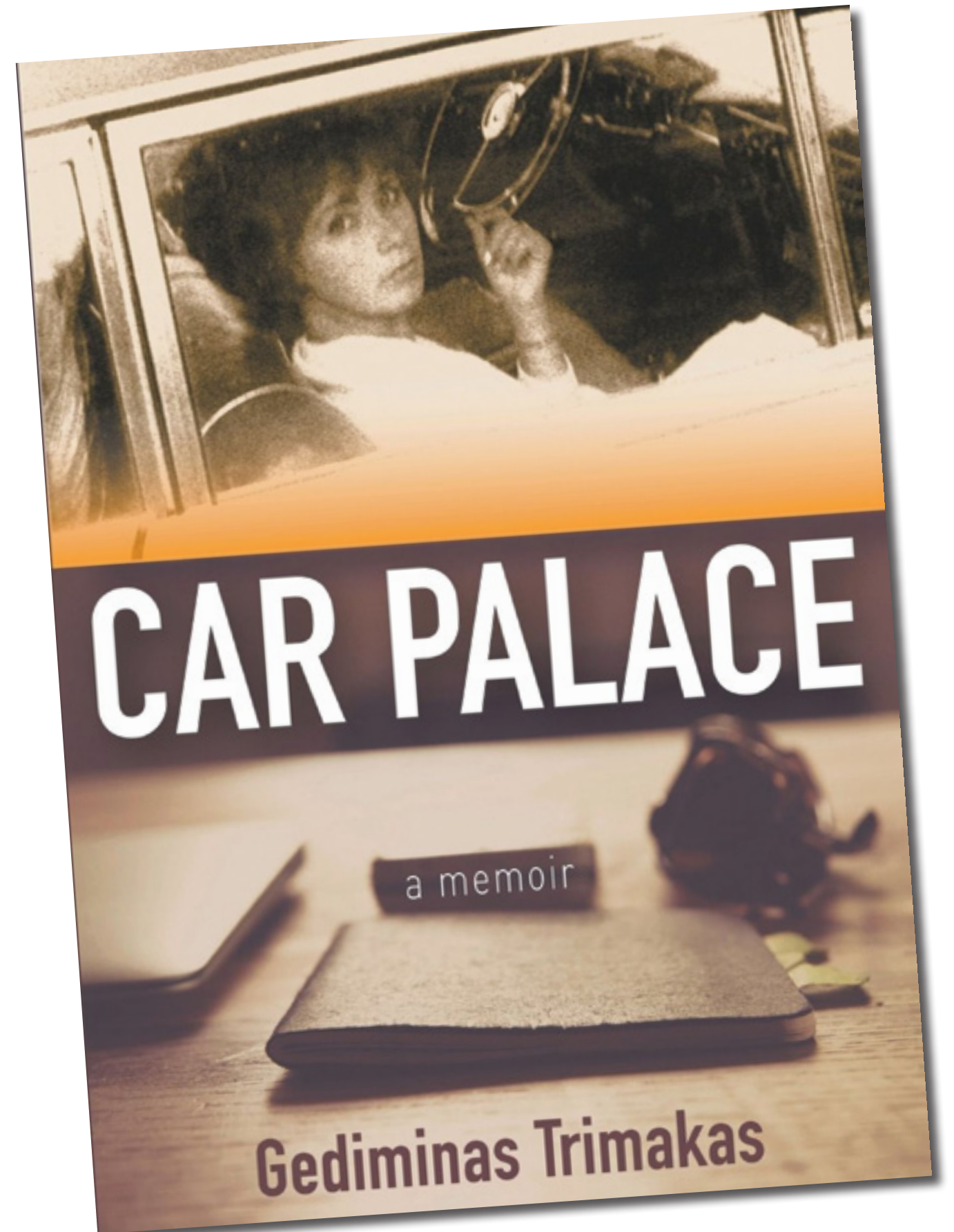
Similar to the solar system, the core might be the homeland and the nucleus could relate to the new country. Compar-

ing these two to parents who arrive in a different country, and have no extended members, as did my parents, no one close to turn to, especially when holidays come around, it gets easier when the first-generations have their own families to expand on the 'solar system.' More people are around the table and to visit to switch up from the usually routine of daily life. Understanding the emptiness yet togetherness later on in life gives an appreciation on the invisible hardships one had to go through in the beginning of where the journey started.

I am blessed to know, intimately, the homeland, as well as this new world of freedom and opportunity.

To help immigrants thrive, I would assist with easing transitions by holding events related to the home country. Such events could include venues to share translated, best-seller books, movies and music with groups of immigrants, while encouraging them to share their stories of adjustment. Cultural traditions and ways of living, after all, must be kept alive. In addition, I would endeavor to convince schools of the importance of establishing classes to learn about the many cultures of the world. This would build upon an observation I have made: increasingly of late, and interestingly, after one begins to speak about cultural roots, animated conversations ensue and actually stir people, getting them to realize that they, too, have that blood in them. Thus is awakened an interest in learning about one's own culture and culture, in general.

Popularity on the subject of worldwide culture seems to be growing, and once people are introduced, interests and newly gained information soar high to learn even more and get involved within the community. I would like to build on this increased interest in ancestry, ethnicity, and culture, and link it with serving recent, transitioning immigrant populations. Indeed, I wish to be part of societal solutions, personally and professionally. I want to use my gifts and talents, my life, to make a difference in this vast, but seemingly shrinking, the world of many cultures.





# CAR PALACE, a Memoir by Gediminas Trimakas

By Ina Bertulytė Bray

Another talented member of the “D.P.” (“Displaced Persons”) generation, Gediminas Trimakas, has just published his memoir, *Car Palace*. The title refers to the Lexus dealership on Highway 99 in Seattle, Washington, but the creation of this enterprise provides the core of the story. Beyond that, it’s the tale of an immigrant’s road to success. This convoluted road stretches from Trimakas’ roots in Lithuania - which play themselves out in his complex relationship with his parents, to his family’s wartime struggles, and then to the twists of fate that lead to life in the new country, mirroring the history of many of that era. Poignantly Trimakas weaves his love story with Donna (Dana) into the narrative.

A quote from the first chapter, the genesis of at times agonizing decisions:

“We’ve recently met a charming stranger who’s proposing a risky business deal. I’m hearing the man’s seventy-six trombones, a marching band I want to join. She (Donna) hears the click-click sound of a pair of dice that may come up snake eyes and bankrupt us.” (p. 7)

Trimakas “did join the marching band” and herein lies the crux of this intriguing memoir.

His thoughts continuously engage our minds as well as our emotions. He plays with the language which he commands perfectly and turns to authors of past and present, thus enlivening his dialogue with the reader. A bit of humor and irony makes

## Car Palace

By Gediminas Trimakas

### Foreword

Donna and I set out on our life together as teenagers, married young, and then marched and danced and sang our way along the Yellow Brick Road looking to find the Wizard of Oz. We didn’t have Dorothy to guide us, or the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion to keep us company, but we too could have used more brain, more heart, and more courage at different times in our lives. A dozen Totos accompanied us too—affectionate, cuddly, and sometimes moody dogs, often at least two at a time to keep each other company—along with a capuchin monkey, many pet birds, several cats, and after a time, and to our good fortune, two children. We hopped and skipped and picked ourselves up when we tripped. Not so delightfully as Dorothy out of Kansas, but lifted by a whirlwind nonetheless.

As immigrants from Lithuania, we landed separately in the USA, me in Brooklyn and Donna in Philadelphia, and started our Great American journey as refugees, DPs—displaced per-

the book an enticing read, for us locals who will enjoy a very familiar setting, and for the wider public interested in the providence of immigrants.

Gediminas Trimakas has been a member of the Seattle Lithuanian American Community going back to the early 1970s. Even though in recent times he and Donna have spent part of the year away from Seattle, they have left a firm imprint on our Community. Many of us still remember the Goodwill Games of the summer of 1990. With wide publicity, we raised our voices insisting that our athletes from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia compete under their own and not the Soviet flag. To emphasize our message, we produced a glossy pamphlet which we distributed widely, including at the Games themselves.

The coffers of our Seattle organization in those years had the “wealth of church mice”, and the production of such pamphlets would have been prohibitive. It was only thanks to Gediminas and Donna that this publication came into being. We gave them suggestions, they had their designer finalize the layout, and in their print shop (mentioned prominently in the book) they produced a highly professional-looking brochure. Their donation to this effort came to “real money.”

And now in *Car Palace* we read the captivating backdrop to their generosity and to their life.

Under his nom de plume Holland Kane, he already has published three well-received books of fiction: *Winter Reeds* (2012), *Morning Light* (2013), and *Deer Creek* (2014).

Published in March 2017, *Car Palace* is widely available on-line at <http://trimakasauthor.com/>

*With permission, reprinted from “Tulpe Times” Seattle, WA*

sons fleeing war. You can think of *Car Palace* as a piece of travel writing. Off to the side of the Yellow Brick Road were many smaller roads that we were tempted to try. Some were badly marked—bordered by social anxiety, class distinction, and gender bias. Some roads were privately owned, gated, guarded by entitled elites, walled off by family money and inherited wealth. Other roads were restricted, but could be entered after ambitious effort. There were several grand roads that we traveled that in retrospect appear gaudy. Roads that allowed individuals of slender means such as us to dream large. These are experiences worth sharing, and scenes worth showing. Some scenes picture America’s Main Street, where modest success gives meaning to lives lived on the edge. There are scenes from a marriage too—some of it adventurous. Becoming is part of the American creed; change is our foundational text. It’s how we measure handfuls of confusion and shape them into purpose, looking for meaning as moral beings and determined actors staging the invention of our lives. A mild disclaimer first: I’ve condensed the chronology, combined, distilled events and people to emphasize the compelling moments that a reader might find interesting. I also changed names, gender, and identify-

ing details of individuals, renamed organizations and altered locations to preserve the privacy of people who are not known to the public. I’m grateful to others who wanted me to record our interviews. Any professional or legal information imbedded within the book serves as background and is not intended as legal advice. The opinions and reservations I express in this book may differ from the memories and recollections and opinions of other participants, all of them good people. The rivalry, the frictions, the silences—successes and failures—and the many doubts as to *The Road Not Taken* is part of the story. Memory is both beautiful and strange and often difficult to evaluate. Annie Dillard, Toni Morrison, Alfred Kazin, and many others, have offered observations on how to confront the difficulties. Some of these are collected in William Zinsser’s book, *Inventing the Truth*. His masterful title describes the process well. Our emotional watershed moments remain intensely present across many years, but the narrative details—the words spoken, the time of day, the color of the sky, the amount of rain in the gutter, and how loudly the door slammed—grow hazy. Antonia Fraser in her memoir *My History* takes several lines from the play *Old Times*, written by her husband, Harold Pinter, to explain: “There are things I remember that may never have happened but as I recall them so they take place.” In this tangled web of memory, research, observation, intuition, invention, and hindsight, I’ve placed my own memoir. Where I’ve added narrative detail to the unstable mix of recall and impression, I did so in the service of expressing emotions that remain vivid. F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *Gatsby* exclaimed, “Can’t repeat the past?...Why of course you can!” This is my attempt to repeat the past.

1

All night the rain fell, splattering the cedar roof in a steady pattern of muted sounds. The climate is temperate in Seattle. The clouds have parted to reveal a full moon. “We don’t have to do it,” Donna says. Her eyes shine in the darkness, and her voice is intimate. It’s two in the morning and we’re standing on the deck of our house, holding on to the weathered cedar rail. Fate has flung us from the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea to Puget Sound, a passage that has taken many miles and years. Puget Sound connects us to the oceans of the world, the bays and estuaries, and the seas that reach back to our Lithuanian past, severed from our lives by what was once known as the Iron Curtain. We hear the chimes we’ve hung from the eaves of the house. The largest among them is tolling as we slip the moment and enter the timelessness of dreams, the scents and sounds and sights from the past—the sweet scent of fresh cut hay, the sound of birds, and the sight of fields and flowers. In these moments of reverie our imaginations rely on the photographs our parents left us, showing their lives before we were born. In one photo, my father, the Lithuanian first counsel to Sweden, and my mother attend a diplomatic reception. My father is splendid in white tie. From the left lapel and across his chest cascade four medals honoring his services. He’s a young man

who’s earned his PhD in agronomy and economics from the Université Catholique de Lille in France. My slim mother is elegant in a black evening dress. She’s caught in mid-gesture, her cigarette holder raised. A golden asp suggesting Cleopatra’s fate girds the holder’s amber. The cigarette remains unlit. No one at this gathering of diplomats knows that my mother grew up in a house with dirt floors. No one knows that my father’s parents were barely literate subsistence farmers. The urgencies of betrayal and deceit are afoot in the world of 1939—the scourge of ideologies, Nazi genocide and Soviet executions. There’s an implacable urge to kill. Thousands of people are already in concentration camps, millions more will soon be murdered, millions starved to death. Stalin will murder 60 million while in power, Hitler will murder 20 million. Why would a man and a woman want to have children as the cult of death is raging? In the wakefulness of Donna’s nightmarish dreamscape, she sees her mother reared on a Lithuanian estate they would flee to save their lives from Russian Soviet enemies. The communists carried lists of people to be executed—teachers, priests and professionals—to make room for the people’s paradise. Her paternal grandfather is on the kill list. He’s a globetrotting, bridge-building engineer. Her mother speaks five languages. Both of our mothers do. High levels of education are also reasons to put you to death. The kill lists are broad and comprehensive. Even owning two cows could have you listed as a bourgeoisie slated for death. Many choose to fight the invaders, some collaborate to save their lives, most escape into their private worlds. Donna’s father, rebelling against parental expectations, learns to play the organ, and dreams of a career in music as a concert pianist—Schubert, Chopin, Debussy, Rachmaninoff—he’s seeking Franz Liszt piano virtuosity. Such hopes were shattered as marauding Nazis and Communists took turns murdering, starving and exiling the inhabitants of Eastern Europe. Our parents were among the fortunate who survived the kill lists. They came to America, bearing us with them. In the years to come we would feel their loss in the plaintive songs they sang at social gatherings, and in the wistful words of the Lithuanian national anthem imploring God to protect the mostly rural nation from terrifying enemies. They lost their country, their professions, status and homes, but saved their lives, and ours, when they fled to the United States. My mother, once an elegant woman of diplomatic postings, became a janitor at the Domino Sugar refinery on the East River in Brooklyn. Donna’s father abandoned Schubert and Chopin to work as a factory hand in Philadelphia, skilled at chrome-plating the kitchen chairs that were sold with linoleum-topped tables of that era. He lined his shoes with cardboard to make them last longer so that he could buy new shoes for Donna and her brother. Her mother sewed garments in a sweatshop. You can call such self-sacrifice on behalf of children sentimental sweetness, you can call it hardboiled domesticity, or you can also call it love. Call it what you will. A sense of entitlement is not among our inheritances. Shadows can follow us on sunless days, unseen fears stalk our Lithuanian

woods. Our family histories echo loss, the ashes from burned fortunes and crushed dreams. “You’re going to catch a cold,” Donna says. Out in front of us, maritime activity has slowed for the night. Container ships carrying freight ply the waters of Puget Sound. Cruise ships head out to Victoria and Vancouver in British Columbia, and return. There are naval ships, fishing boats, and tugboats too. The ferries keep going, day and night. It starts to drizzle. Neither one of us is ready to go inside. How did we manage? What’s kept us together? There’s much in a marriage that’s repetitive, gone over dozens and dozens of times. Lovemaking, yes, also boredom, routine, children, diverse needs, illness, disappointments, rival attractions, compromises, and duties one had never anticipated. Donna was fifteen and living in Philadelphia when we started dating. I was eighteen. A friend and I had gone to a winter camp near Drexel in Pennsylvania, organized to keep Lithuanian girls and boys safely in the ethnic fold. We were visiting an ice-skating rink nearby. I saw her first. Her hair lushly dark, brown eyes quick and curious, her smile directed at someone else. “She’s beautiful, isn’t she?” my friend said. I tried to keep from looking at her. But every turn she made on the ice, and on the clattery wooden boards off the ice, I seemed to notice. She was bundled in a sweater and a jacket, and wore a tartan skirt and tights. Though the air was cool most of us were warm, and some of us were sweating from exertion. She wore figure skates, the blades notched at the front to dig into the ice on pirouettes. I preferred speed skates, long flat blades designed for velocity. Lights glowed brightly across the ice. The PA system poured out sappy music. We went round and round the rink, like two planets not meant to meet. She glided smoothly to the concession stand, and pulled her cap off to adjust her shoulder-length hair. Several strands were weighed with ice crystals. She was too busy to notice me, tipping her head one way and then another to brush the ice away.

“You can say hello to her,” my friend encouraged, then disappeared to find his own interest. Conversation seemed impossible. Looking to pay for her Mars candy, she realizes she’d left her wallet in the car. I overhear her explain this. She’s too young to drive a car. The thought of a boyfriend driver in her life challenges my eagerness to know her. I push several coins across the counter to pay for her candy bar. The clerk takes my money without a glance. “I’ll pay you back,” Donna says. “It’s okay. Don’t bother. How’s the Mars bar?” She looks at the chocolate, caramel and nougat. “You want some?” She holds it up, and smiles. I take a bite. She takes a bite. I take a bite. Several more bites, and the Mars bar is gone. I ask her to skate with me. Bit by bit we find a few words to speak. I’m awkward with feeling, and can’t concentrate on anything except her. I offer to teach her a couple ice skating tricks. She pretends not to know any. We’re no longer in the romantic moment of our teenage youth, parked near a bench, and Donna wondering, is this guy going to kiss me or not? Her eyebrows are still wide and dark and her eyelids slightly puffed after lovemaking. A tugboat is pulling a barge out on the Sound. The raindrops glisten on her

cheeks, like tears falling on my heart. Donna is petite. Five feet one and a half inches tall, a hundred and five pounds when we married. She remains self-possessed, self-directed, dark-haired, strong-willed, her eyes bright with expectation. She calls me her Twinkletoes, though I’m as graceful as an injured giraffe on a dance floor. Our two dogs she’s named Nikki and Sophie, but more familiarly they’re known as Mouse, a tiny Yorkshire Terrier, and Bozo, the cuddliest and possibly the dumbest Brussels Griffon on earth. Depending on the circumstances, either one may be called Twit. “What?” she asks. “I don’t know if we should do the deal.” We listen to the chimes. We can remain silent, companionable in our solitudes, secure in the knowledge that one or the other is near, even if potential disaster might be close. Her mother couldn’t handle her; her father took the belt to her. She’s the talkative one, always asking questions. She believes she’s the silent one, and I’m the unreliable narrator. Why are we out on the deck in the middle of the night, unable to sleep? We’ve recently met a charming stranger who’s proposing a risky business deal. I’m hearing the man’s seventy-six trombones, a marching band I want to join. She hears the click-click sounds of a pair of dice that may come up snake eyes and bankrupt us. We’ve made a life in America. Good luck and hard work both helped; our children are a gift. Yet our happiness can be provisional. You would think that the cable TV media narrators and the plentiful book gurus telling us how to live a passionate life and make a fortune—you would think they could actually inform your ability to live a life, write a book, or earn a fortune. Keep on dreamin’. One is left to leap into the fog alone. There’s no cavalry coming to rescue us. Whatever light we need to guide us, we must find within ourselves, our experiences, our history. There’s never enough light, and no certainty either. We’ve learned not to believe in totalizing systems, in religious or cultural absolutes, or in perfection. The breeze lifts off the Sound and silence returns to the chimes. Two cruise ships float on the water like lighted candles. A few raindrops falling are promising more rain. “We don’t have to do it,” I agree.

2  
Cars, freedom, life on the move—Donna had a learner’s permit at fifteen. I didn’t have mine until seventeen. Her father was urged to “Buy a Chevrolet and see the USA” and did. Neither of my parents learned to drive a car. At one time my father had a chauffeur, and in New York City we had subways. I’m not a car guy, though a number of cars have addled my mind. The first car I coveted was the slope-nosed, sleek-sided, 1953 Studebaker owned by a customer who came to Sam’s luncheonette in Brooklyn, where I worked the counter—from age fourteen, except for shelter and food provided by my parents, I earned all of my own spending money. Employment at Sam’s offered several attractions. I could eat whatever I wanted—lox and cream cheese on a bagel was my first step away from Lithuanian cuisine. And given our strained financial home circumstances, this was a big step up from the economy fare our family income

provided us at home. The bulk of the luncheonette business, as the name clearly states, came at lunch. It required four people to help. Sam and his wife and a brother-in-law handled most of the heat. The hectic tempo changed in the late afternoon, and by six it became a neighborhood hangout. I was eighteen when Sam put me in charge of the evening shift, which I worked solo. Bedford-Stuyvesant wasn’t a Norman Rockwell safe-harbor neighborhood. On slow nights the occasional dodgy person might wander in. Not surprisingly, I welcomed the cop on the beat whenever he dropped by for coffee or cigarettes. I liked it even more if he stayed, and sometimes he did. My favorite nights to work were Fridays and Saturdays. The business was faster and the crowd much larger, friendly and safe. Men from a wider section of Brooklyn than my neighborhood gathered on those weekend nights to plan a soiree or discuss excursions upstate to Borscht Belt Catskill resorts, Grossinger’s among them. The regular gang didn’t include women, although they were the objects of much male-centered planning. Many of the customers had lived in the neighborhood when they were younger, then prospered and moved out. The Studebaker owner was among them. He was the owner-manager of a “going concern,” as the term was then used, a company that brokered wholesale food. The much-admired United States poet laureate Maxine Kumin recalls in her memoir *The Pawnbroker’s Daughter* that her mother experienced extreme social shame on account of her husband’s trade, described as that of a “broker” to imply a stockbroker instead of a pawnbroker. But shame of any kind, let alone shame about successful mercantile and merchant efforts, wasn’t in evidence at Sam’s. The men joyfully competed to be one up on each other. My boss, Sam Gershfeld, sweat staining his shirt, energy in his movements, remains in my memory as one of my favorite bosses. Some say that the dream of opportunity, often described as the American Dream, is a delusion, others say it’s propaganda that favors the already rich, others swear by its democratic hope, and still others decry its demonic work demands, and occasional lack of morals. None of that was visible to me in my youth. What was visible was the Studebaker. This zippy-looking car morphed into a symbol of self-employed success, and the urge to own one’s own business became imbedded in the far corners of my mind. I would mix the Studebaker owner’s egg cream with special diligence, happy to serve a man who could thrive without having to work for anyone else. But I had no car the first year or so after I got my driver’s license. The Greyhound bus became a miracle of timely efficiency in my dating plans. I could travel a hundred miles in roughly two hours from Brooklyn to Philadelphia to visit Donna. From those early days I’ve been a fan of public transportation. But who can deny an American kid his or her car? The carriage toward independence, adventure, free association, fun, girls, and sometimes trouble. American, rather than Lithuanian American, is how I defined myself. But before I bought a used car, I borrowed one. Borrowed from kind adults willing to trust me. A Lithuanian pastor from Jersey City, as worldly as the more familiar Irish

model, frequently visited his physician brother who shared a house he bought with my parents as partners, and on those visits that could last several days, the pastor, who liked me, lent me his car. The glistening blackness of his Oldsmobile 88 still shimmers in my memory. Driving it, I approach a crest in the road, accelerating flawlessly. The long, sleek ebony hood prods the sky, rides the crest in a leap, settles commandingly onto the road, and continues effortlessly—a celestial ride. Sam’s car, a Chrysler, the eponymous New Yorker, I liked more. He allowed me to borrow it on several occasions. The vehicle was showy and theatrical. The two-tone paint job was divided by saber-like chrome slashes. It had a bulky, glittery, Wurlitzer-styled dashboard and a passionately chrome-charged interior. The New Yorker was not only swashbuckling, and irreverent, it was cheerfully extravagant.

Eventually, I did buy a car affectionately remembered as a “beater.” In fact I owned a string of beaters because they tended to fall apart unexpectedly. There was a funereal Hudson with slant windows and a backseat the size of a bedroom, then a perfectly normal Ford, as black as Henry Ford wanted. I owned a boxy, glossy, lemon-colored Plymouth that was stolen. But I was mostly in love with an old Buick Roadmaster with Dynaflo transmission. This might have been a sign of my youthful coarseness, a callow disregard for European cultural finesse, but I loved the memory of that Roadmaster most. Even the name was masterful. The leather upholstery was two-toned and the dry leather cracked; the steering wheel had a magnificently large horn ring. Wiremesh covered chrome “ventiports” on the sides of the front fenders convinced me that the monster inline eight cylinder engine needed all the oxygen it could grab once I stepped on the accelerator, busting up the air in front of me with a roar on my way to see Donna. This aging beast set me back a summer’s wages. The exhaust had a deep-throated sound on account of a rusted muffler. I couldn’t afford to replace it, but I liked it that way. These were the days before emission testing. The Roadmaster announced my presence in any neighborhood, mostly Donna’s neighborhood.

About the Author  
*Gediminas Trimakas spent his childhood in Europe and teenage years in New York City. He holds a Master of Fine Arts in fiction, a graduate degree in finance, and served with distinction in the U.S. Army Signal Corps. He published three novels (as Holland Kane) — Morning Light won praise from Kirkus Reviews and Publishers Weekly. He lives with his wife in the Pacific Northwest.*

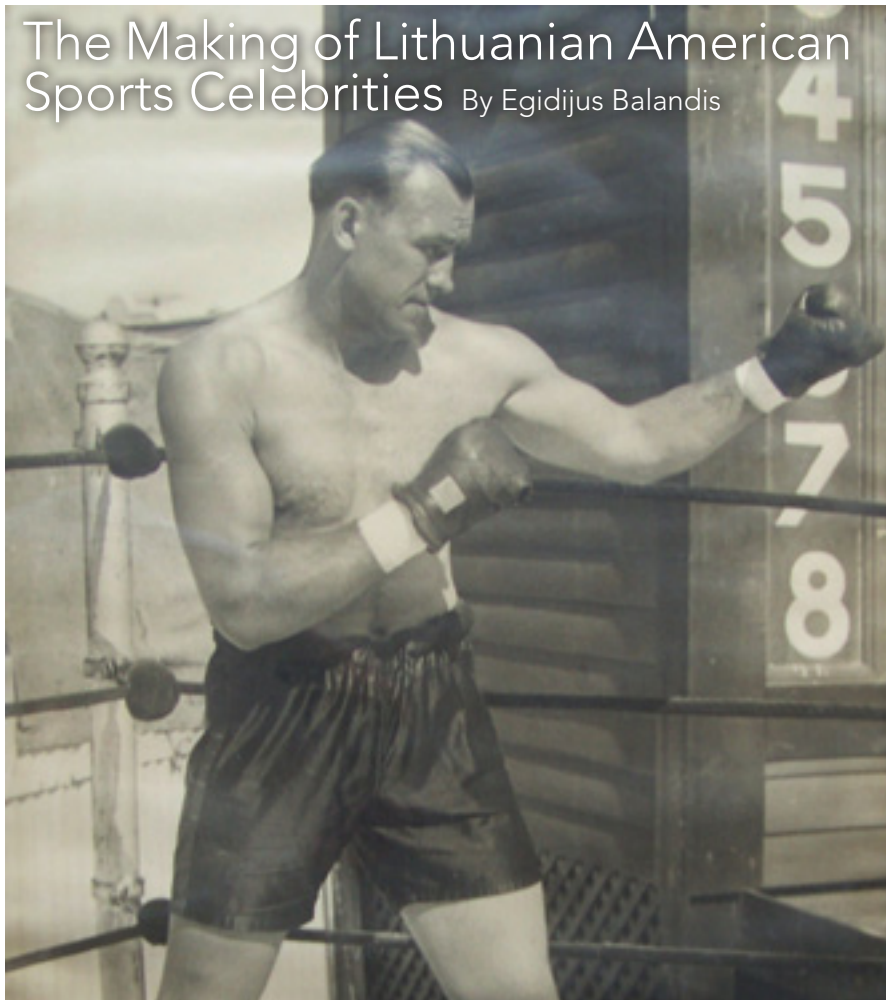


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## The Making of Lithuanian American Sports Celebrities

By Egidijus Balandis



Lithuanian American boxer Jack Sharkey Žukauskas.

Several hundred thousands of Lithuanians who immigrated to the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries found themselves in a country where music, movies, and sports started to play an increasingly important role. Using Lithuanian American newspapers of the time as the main source, this article focuses on the ways Lithuanian American sports celebrities were being made and presented.

Not refusing to recognize the influence of the press and the radio, an American historian Benjamin G. Rader emphasized the role of ordinary American people in making new kinds of heroes in late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. According to him, these heroes helped people to compensate for the disappearance of the traditional formula of

success, the erosion of Victorian values, and the feeling of an individual's powerlessness. As the society became more complex and systematized, the need for heroes who were able to leap to fame and fortune regardless of the rules of the system grew.

It was professional wrestlers and boxers who happened to be the first Lithuanian sports stars in the early 20th century. As Lithuanian historian Egidijus Aleksandravičius noticed, it was probably the state of being downtrodden that impelled Lithuanians to look for compensatory gratifications among weightlifters and fighters.

Successful Lithuanian athletes started emerging in 1910s, and the Lithuanian media, the Lithuanian community, some businessmen, and athletes themselves

began to work together in making celebrities and the so called celebrity capital. Newspapers were strongly connected to the Lithuanian communities and were always keen on doing whatever it was needed to boost Lithuanian ethnic pride. One of the ways to do that was the making of Lithuanian celebrities, and athletes proved to be the best material for doing that. In 1920s, the *Vienybė* newspaper was expressing the belief that athletes would help "put Lithuania on the map" and eradicate what was thought to be the "inferiority complex" instilled in Lithuanians by foreign oppressors. Playing with readers' ethnic feelings was a common practice which was mostly visible on the occasions when Lithuanian wrestler had to wrestle opponents from other ethnic groups, especially the Polish. These fights were often represented in Lithuanian newspapers as a continuation of the fight over Vilnius. Lithuanian wrestler Jack Ganson Karabinas expressed his opinion regarding this issue in 1927 when he began writing for one of the Lithuanian newspapers. He wrote: "So brothers Lithuanians, train and be brave and strong. Don't be afraid of the fact that your enemy is bigger and tries to scare you. Catch him by the legs and then Vilnius will be our capital".

Some groups tried to use photographs of athletes for the soft social control. After Jack Sharkey Žukauskas lost to the famous Jack Dempsey in 1927, the Lithuanian Catholic daily *Draugas* published an editorial with a picture of the Lithuanian boxer smiling. The editorial wrote: "He was smiling before the fight against the powerful Dempsey. And he is still smiling now even though the ex-champion knocked him down and he couldn't stand up and had to sit on the loser's bench. But he didn't lose; he still has his energy, his bravery, his determination, and his youth". The author proceeded to emphasize the Lithuanian boxer's optimism, bravery, strong body and spirit; he described him as being a good Catholic, loyal to his parents, to Lithuania and to the United States.

Lithuanian newspapers provided Lith-

uanian wrestlers and sports promoters the space for advertising their fights, for bullying their opponents and glorifying their own strength. Wrestlers were the best at using Lithuanian press to reach their goals. Either they themselves or their agents would often come to editorial offices of various newspapers and comment about upcoming fights and their opponents. When Cleveland Lithuanians began organizing the Lithuanian Wrestling Championship in 1927, one of the famous Lithuanian wrestlers, Juozas Komaras, came to the *Vienybė* editorial office and left this message: "First of all, I'm inviting Karolis Sarpalius to fight with me. He hasn't fought any Lithuanians and yet he wants to be titled the champion of Lithuanian wrestlers. Lithuanians did not know about him and yet he came out like some hedgehog out of a hole and started shouting and calling himself a champion. No, brother, you are not a champion. I will twist your long legs so hard that after that you won't even want the champion's belt".

Photography was another means in creating a celebrity. According to Garry Whannel, the growing use of photography helped establish the beginnings of the individualization of a sport in which star individuals began to inhabit the public imagination. Chris Rojek thought that photography provided celebrity culture with powerful new ways of staging and extending celebrity. It introduced a new and expanding medium of representation that swiftly displaced printed text as the primary means of communicating celebrity. Photographs made fame instant and ubiquitous in ways that the printed word could not match.

Pictures of athletes demonstrating their well-built bodies were often published in various Lithuanian American newspapers. For the Lithuanian Americans, possession of these photographs could probably serve as confirmation of celebrity's belonging to Lithuanian-American community. In 1929, the *Vytis* magazine, published by a Catholic Lithuanian American organization Knights of Lithuania, encouraged every Lithuanian

to own a picture of the famous boxer Jack Sharkey Žukauskas and to look for inspiration in it. The magazine even encouraged every mother to use these pictures as examples in raising their children.

Pictures, photographs, and placards could also serve as a means to attract female spectators. Their presence and even their behavior in the arenas were in some cases noted by Lithuanian newspapers. It would be difficult to say whether by that time the Lithuanian managers already understood and deliberately exploited this possibility to increase audience. However, the example of Jim Londos, a Greek American wrestler, who, according to Scott M. Beekman, provided professional wrestling with its first sex symbol, gives us an example that at the time, the appearance of an athlete alone could draw hordes of female fans to wrestling matches.

However, it was not just businesses, media, or athletes themselves who were creating celebrities and providing these images for unintelligent mass audiences to consume. The society itself began looking for heroes to follow. The correspondence published in various Lithuanian American newspapers confirms that. Readers were sending information about athletes they had noted, often making remarks about their behavior and connection to the Lithuanian heritage or language.

Wrestlers and boxers were always close to the Lithuanian community. Community leaders understood that athletes had already generated their celebrity capital, and that capital could be used to attract people to their events. Already in 1911, Chicago Lithuanians and Poles organized a wrestling match to raise money to benefit their organizations. In 1915, another wrestling event was organized in St. George Parish Hall with the profit to go to the support of Lithuanian victims of World War I. In 1918, at the same place, businessman Jonas Kulis organized yet another event with a goal to raise money for Lithuania. Famous professional Lithuanian wrestlers participated in the event. The relationship between



Lithuanian American wrestler Jack Ganson Karabinas.

wrestlers and the community lasted for a long time. Even in 1939, when Vilnius was already returned to Lithuania, Lithuanian wrestlers organized an event in Cleveland to support the residents of Vilnius. Lithuanian American newspaper *Dirva* invited everyone to participate, regardless of their political views. They believed that "supporting the residents of Vilnius was equally important for Catholics and nationalists as well as for socialists and communists".

Various organizations understood that the presence of athletes in picnics and other events was important for attracting people. It may seem paradoxical but Lithuanian American communist organizations or those sympathizing to communists would invite professional wrestlers to compete during their events even though they often blamed professional sports for having almost every possible capitalist vice. In this way, professional wrestlers served communist organizations in attracting wider audiences to listen to their political speeches. However, it was Jack Sharkey Žukauskas whose celebrity capital was most extensively used by political forces. In 1938 the Lithuanian American boxer was promoting a democratic candidate for the post of the governor of Massachusetts, James M. Curley. He visited various Lithuanian organizations and events and gave speeches in support





Basketball player Eddie Riska (front row, third from left) among his teammates.

of the aforementioned candidate.

Lithuanians had a tradition to organize banquets in someone's honor and to commemorate anniversaries. Athletes were not an exception. For example, in 1935 Brooklyn Lithuanians organized a huge event to honor wrestler Antanas Kandrotas and celebrate his 25 year-long athletic career. A large arena was rented; fifteen hundred people attended a concert. They danced until midnight. In this way, Lithuanian Americans were creating a democratic narrative about themselves, choosing their heroes themselves, without any institutions telling them to. In this case, the heroes were ordinary people who were just like them and emerged from their midst.

Jack Sharkey Žukauskas was probably the only athlete who was honored with songs created especially for him and about him. Some of these songs were recorded and sung by either professional musicians such as Antanas Vanagaitis or amateur bands such as Mahanojaus mainierių lietuviška orkestra. Fans used to write their own verses and send them to newspapers. Some of these verses were written in the English language indicating that a pugilist could be a symbol allowing Lithuanians to overcome the linguistic barrier that was still present at

the time.

However, in the process of assimilation and acculturation, this new generation of English-speaking Lithuanians fell in love with American sports such as football, basketball, and baseball. It was probably the early 1910s that Lithuanians started playing baseball but it took some until this sport became really popular among them. It became extremely popular in such organizations as the Knights of Lithuania (KoL), which concocted the Catholic youth. In 1921, one of the leaders of the Lithuanian American Catholic movement addressed the KoL with a paper in which he was contemplating the necessity of creating the synthesis of Lithuanian and American cultures. He found that sports had a potential to not only create such a synthesis, but also to strengthen Lithuanian American social network. He was sure that Lithuanians would be known better because of the achievements of future athletes than those of diplomats and politicians. The writers of the organization's newspaper started believing that baseball was a game that helped create better citizens and that just merely watching the game spectators would acquire qualities such as ambition, energy, and bravery.

Baseball and basketball games became

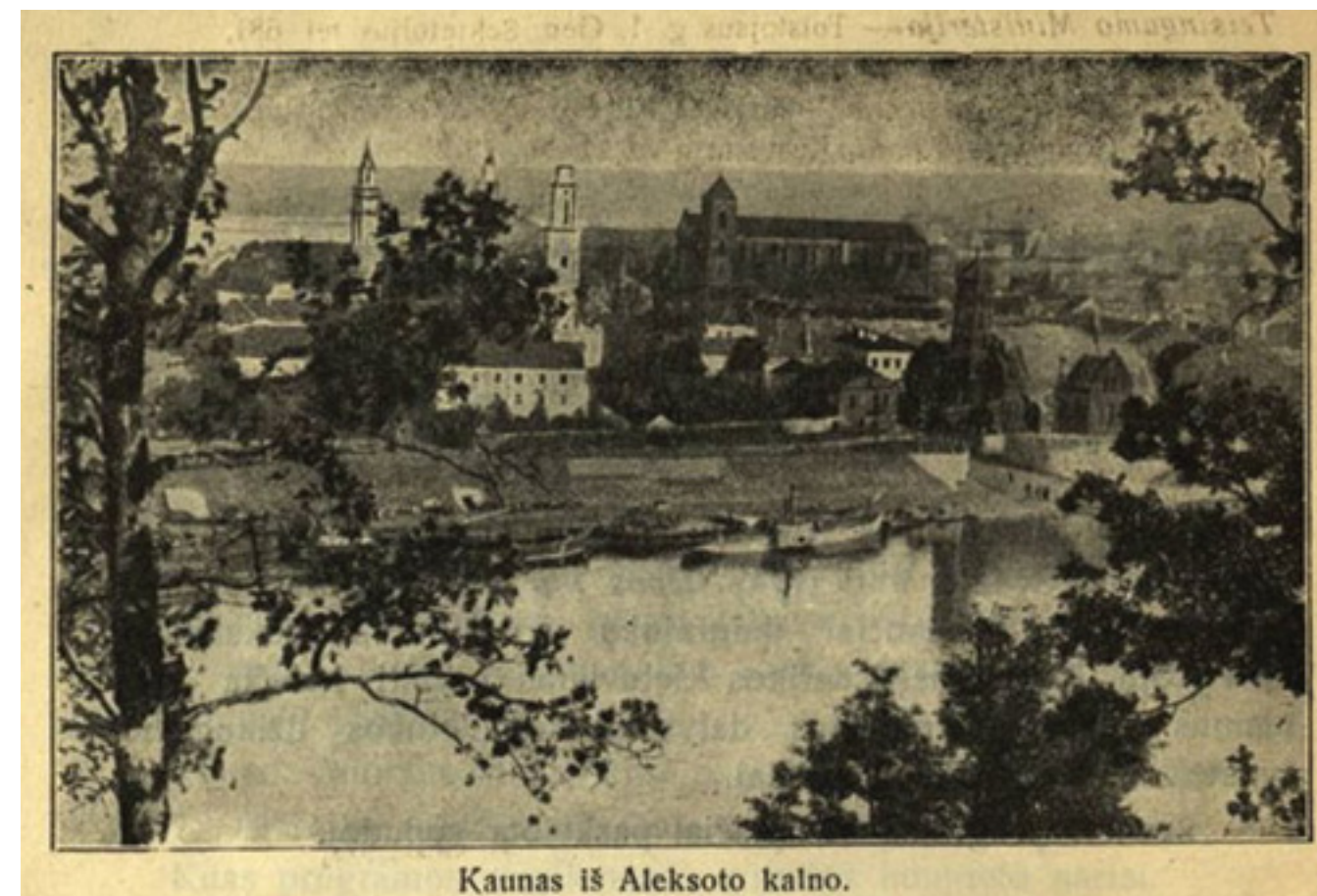
popular among the Knights of Lithuania. They established their own leagues and learned new ways of supporting the athletes. Famous players were playfully called "Lithuanian Babe Ruths" and could enjoy the status of local celebrities with parties organized in their honor and songs created for them.

In the 1930s, Lithuanian American newspapers published by the second generation Lithuanians such as Jaunimas and Studentų Žodis were mostly interested in the stars of American football, baseball, and basketball. Following the format of the American press, they were electing the best Lithuanian American college and professional players and "All Lithuanian-American teams". However, compared to the wrestling and boxing stars of the earlier times, it was impossible to find the mechanism for making celebrities out of baseball, basketball and American football players. There are at least two potential reasons for the lack of these mechanisms: the absence of managers communicating with the Lithuanian media, and the specificity of these sports that had teams representing towns and colleges and allowing players to reach much wider audience. However, many of these players still had a lot of Lithuanian connections and they were often invited to Lithuanian picnics and events that were organized in their honor. For example, in 1939 the Knights of Lithuania organized an event in honor of William Bill Osmanski, a star player of the Holy Cross College. According to the Amerika newspaper, 700 hundred people attended. Juozas Žemaitis organized the music for the event and Jack Sharkey Žukauskas was among the participants.

It is probably because of a less intense schedule that the professional basketball players had more leisure time and even players like Willie Scrill, Eddie Riska, and Antanas Kepežinskas who were playing for the elite American teams could still find time to help Lithuanian teams. However, Lithuanian American baseball stars that made it to the MLB (like Joe Genewich, Vito Tamulis, and Johnny Broaca) could be present only by attending special events organized in their honor.

## Connections Between the Lithuanian Government and Lithuanian Americans in 1926-1940: Search for the Ways of Consolidation

By Prof. Juozas Skirius



Kaunas in 1928. From a 12-page brochure Sveiki Lietuvoj! (Welcome to Lithuania), published by the Committee to Welcome Lithuanian Americans in Lithuania, 1928. Photo credit: Kaunas District Public Library.

Professor Kazys Pakštas in the United States of America in 1939–1940

Growing international tensions in 1938–1940, the outbreak of the war, and complex relationships with neighbors forced the Lithuanian government to strengthen its relations with Lithuanians abroad. The government agreed with the proposal of Professor Kazys Pakštas that during his visit to America he would deliver a number of lectures in the Lithuanian communities this way bringing Lithuania closer to its émigré community and seeking its support. The services of a former Lithuanian American, an accomplished scientist, and a former oppositionist guaranteed good results. It should be noted that Pakštas was considered an authority among numerous Lithuanian American Catholics. Upon the recommendation of diplomat Voldemaras Čarneckis, the Lithuanian government hired Kazys Pakštas with the salary of 10,000 litas to cover his traveling expenses and public speaking honorarium through 1939. In 1940, another

9,000 litas were added. Kazys Pakštas was to coordinate his route, time, and the topics of his lectures with the Lithuanian ambassador in Washington, D.C. Povilas Žadeikis. However, Pakštas proved to be rather independent: his traveling routes were organized by prominent Lithuanian American Catholics; he used to select the topics for his lectures at his own discretion with due regard to the audience. Professor attempted to maintain a correct but non-committal relationship with Žadeikis who would enlighten him on the latest news from Lithuania. Žadeikis carefully followed Pakštas' activities and did not spare criticism on his behalf in his letters to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Juozas Urbšys.

Following the return of Vilnius, Pakštas evaluated the situation in Lithuania and the relations with the USSR in a bold and rather objective manner; he also took notice of the imminent dangers. Professor spoke to Lithuanians in the US about everything that could not be said by the Lithuanian press and the





Professor Kazys Pakštas

official Lithuanian diplomats in the USA. Pakštas was rather favorably received by Lithuanian American nationalists and socialists (but not communists). Pakštas did not only deliver lectures on international politics with special focus on the Baltic States, especially Lithuania, to the Lithuanian communities. He also spoke to English-speaking Americans and French-speaking Canadians who provided a certain financial support to him (to cover travel and accommodation costs). He would explain the circumstances of the return of Vilnius and the loss of Klaipėda. While traveling across Lithuanian colonies in June 1939 – May 1940, he delivered 119 lectures to various audiences. Pakštas was well aware of the atmosphere among Lithuanian Americans. He was the first to warn the Lithuanian government by saying that for the time being the circumstances were not in favor for bringing together different patriotic movements into a single political body, i.e. the Council for the Fight for Lithuania's Independence. He also explained the limited fundraising possibilities due to the detachment of the Lithuanian émigré community members from their homeland and the negative evaluation of the coup d'état among the Lithuanian émigrés.

Pakštas planned to return to Lithuania in the fall of 1940 via the Far East and the Soviet Union. Petras Žadeikis obtained the visas of Japan and the USSR. In July, 1940, aware of the situation in the occupied Lithuania and anticipating the prospective annexation of his Homeland, Kazys Pakštas decided to stay in the USA until the end of the war, seek employment in the universities of the USA and participate in the political activities of Lithuanian Americans.

#### The Establishment of the Lithuanian American Economic Centre

In the beginning of the 1930s, the outcomes of the economic crisis gave rise to hopes that not only the cooperation between

Lithuanian Americans and Lithuanian businessmen could be activated by expanding the fields of activity of both sides but also a new space for economic activities could be provided. There was also a political goal to attract those Lithuanian Americans who were disappointed with the Lithuanian government. Consul General in New York Povilas Žadeikis took the initiative to activate a close cooperation with Lithuania through the programs of the Lithuanian American Chamber of Commerce. The first economic conference of Lithuanian Americans was held on June 10–11, 1930. During the conference, the Lithuanian American Economic Centre was founded. The Center united all active Lithuanian American Chambers of Commerce. Through this center, the organizers sought to attract more Lithuanian American businessmen to participate in the existing chambers of commerce and to establish new chambers of commerce in those Lithuanian colonies where they were absent.

Lithuanian American businessmen were united with the primary goal to collectively resolve their economic problems and prepare for more extensive trade with Lithuania. Lithuanian representatives in the USA approached the efforts of Lithuanian American businessmen as future mediators in the realization of Lithuanian goods in America and as good advertising agents in the expansion of trade among Lithuanians and other residents. Lithuanian American businessmen themselves were more interested in the prospective profitable Lithuanian export and import rather than the strengthening of their positions in the American market. The Lithuanian American Economic Centre (hereinafter – LAEC) was established by the first Lithuanian American Economic Conference in 1930. It undertook intensive structural improvements during the period of 1930–1933 (the first stage of its activities) in order to unite the Lithuanian American Chambers of Commerce, to strengthen them, and to prepare them for broader economic relations with Lithuania in the future. The LAEC raised the idea of open cooperation with the Chambers of Commerce.

The LAEC meetings prepared the most important documents for economic organizations of Lithuanian Americans: the LAEC statute and the common articles of association, a Constitution, for the Lithuanian American Chambers of Commerce. The LAEC undertook the initiative to encourage the boards of the Chambers of Commerce to pursue a more active search for niches for their businessmen in the American market; it sought opportunities for Lithuanians to find placement as translators in American banks, shipping lines, and courts; it brought forward an idea of making a list of Lithuanian American businessmen. The LAEC set itself a task to promote the Chamber of Commerce among Lithuanian American businessmen and to prove its role in the strengthening of business and the maintenance of positions in the competitive fight in the American market. It was also planned to establish new Chambers of Commerce in Lithuanian colonies where they were absent. In order to activate the movement of the Chambers of Commerce, the LAEC attempted to introduce annual meetings of the Chambers

of Commerce; it tried to publish an annual publication of economic type; it entered international economic organizations; it continuously reminded of the future profitable cooperation with Lithuanian businessmen. However, a more active involvement of the Chambers of Commerce and their members was lacking. The LAEC's activity was hindered by the concentration of its activities predominantly in the hands of the greatest initiator of the movement Consul General Žadeikis and partly the chairman of the LAEC. Preoccupied with their businesses, other interested parties in the LAEC did not show enthusiasm in practice. The desired and adequate attention from Lithuanian businessmen was lacking as well.

The second economic conference of Lithuanian Americans, which took place on July 17–19, 1933 in Chicago, provided a theoretical framework for collaboration between Lithuanian American and Lithuanian businessmen. The conference resolutions were evaluated in Lithuania as an advanced stage in the economic movement of Lithuanian Americans. The conference continued to address the ways and means for strengthening the Chamber of Commerce; the involvement of individual businessmen in it was also the issue on the agenda. The tragic death of pilots Darius and Girėnas overshadowed the work of the conference and the resolutions adopted in it which failed to receive a broader public response. Three years of the LAEC's activities were not in vain. It succeeded in creating a theoretical framework in order to strengthen the activities of the LAEC and the Chamber of Commerce and to coordinate their cooperation, to expand the economic potential of Lithuanian Americans. New ways were required to make the initiative of the Chamber of Commerce and individual businessmen more active.

The attempts of the representatives of the Lithuanian government to draw Lithuanian American businessmen into close economic relations with Lithuania in the second half of the 1930s ended in failure. The reasons for that were not only due to the economic policy of the United States (high customs charges; requirements for the quality and packaging of goods); it was also due to insufficient activities of the Lithuanian government in promoting trade with the USA and the failure of Lithuanian American businessmen to take Lithuanian import and export into their hands. As a rule, Lithuanian Americans were small local businessmen with interests within the boundaries of their residential area. Lithuanian businessmen were also not always willing to penetrate into the American market and to adjust to the requirements of the locality. Finally, World War II and its consequences to Lithuania completely undermined the idea to monopolize the economic relations with Lithuania by means of the joint efforts of Lithuanian businessmen in emigration.

#### Attempts to draw Lithuanian American businessmen into trade with Lithuania in 1930–1940

The Lithuanian American tradesmen who were closer to the leadership of the political movements in emigration would consider an opportunity of establishing business relations with

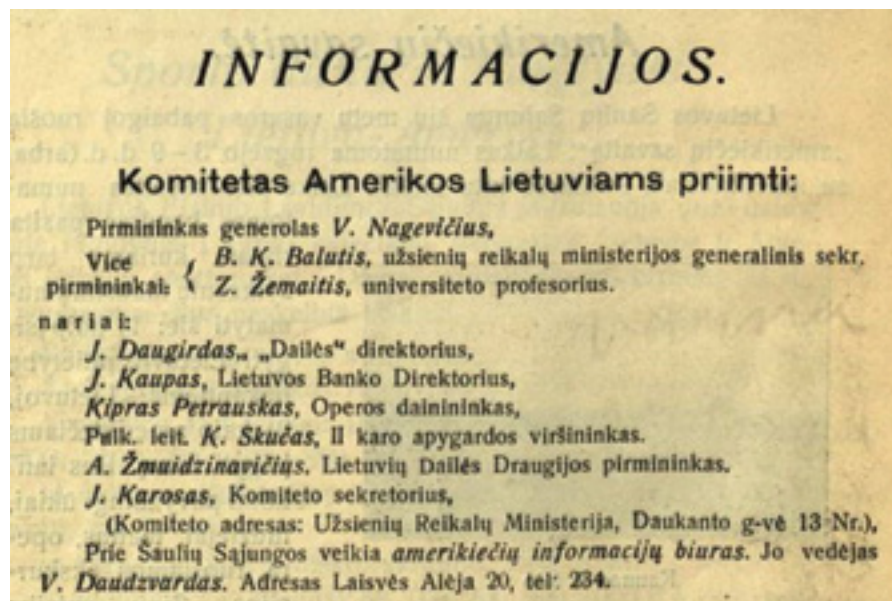
Lithuanian producers as far back as 1920–1930, in particular, with the Maistas and Pieno centras companies. Individual attempts (V. M. Stulpinas, J. J. Romanas, J. Ambraziejus) could be noted. It was driven by patriotic motives rather than the economic necessity. The business relations of other American nations (Italian, Polish, Greek, etc.) with their homelands would also serve as model examples. However, Lithuanian American tradesmen had scarce opportunities of gathering a lump sum for large orders of Lithuanian goods.

Lithuanian representatives in the USA, first of all Consul General and Ambassador Povilas Žadeikis afterwards, seeking the unexploited potential of the Lithuanian American market and being perfectly aware of the situation of Lithuanian American businessmen, sought to draw them to the Chambers of Commerce in Lithuanian communities, and to coordinate the activities of the Chambers of Commerce as well as to centralize business activities and connections with Lithuanian producers through the LAEC founded in 1930. The interest of the Lithuanian Government in Lithuanian American businessmen increased during the years of the world economic crisis. Its disastrous consequences to the businesses of Lithuanian immigrants created favorable conditions to draw the attention of Lithuanian American tradesmen towards the promising economic cooperation with Lithuanian producers by pointing out that at the moment in question profits worth millions settled in the hands of foreign-born residents – mediators dealing in trade relations between Lithuanian producers and American consumers. Lithuanian businessmen in the United States were encouraged to take this business into their hands. There was also a political goal: raise the interest of the Lithuanian community in economic relations and distract it from politics and the criticism of the then Lithuanian government.

The enthusiasm of Lithuanian American tradesmen was not only undermined by a poor interest of Lithuanian producers in the American market but also the failure of Lithuanian goods to meet the criteria of the American market (standards, packaging, sanitary requirements). The quality of food, in particular, meat products, would by certain aspects stand behind the products imported from other countries, even Poland, to the USA. All that reduced prices and profit. It was also affected by faultfinding American customs officers and long transportation distances. Lithuanian American businessmen were also dissatisfied with the high prices for Lithuanian products requested by Lithuanian producers.

In 1935 Lithuanian food exports to the USA increased, giving rise to several small import organizations established by Lithuanian American businessmen. A few examples would be J. Rakštys company Baltic Import Co. in Chicago and Amlit Co. in New York. However, they did not meet the requirements of recognized mediators; therefore, Lithuanian producers did not consider them to be important partners. Lithuanian Americans themselves had to admit that they were not ready for direct trade transactions with Lithuania; they also expressed a wish





A page from a 12-page brochure *Sveiki Lietuvoj!* (Welcome to Lithuania), published by the Committee to Welcome Lithuanian Americans in Lithuania, 1928. Photo credit: Kaunas District Public Library.

that Lithuanian producers provided them with their products directly, without any mediators. The organizations of Lithuanian American businessmen promised to contribute to them as associates. In 1938, Litamcorp, a Lithuanian producers' company, was established in New York which claimed the responsibility of mediators, thus limiting the mediating activities of the Lithuanian businessmen in the USA. At that time the Lithuanian American Chamber of Commerce united only a low percentage of businessmen in emigration; some more time had to pass to raise interest and attract the remaining businessmen to the Chamber of Commerce. Basically, 1930–1940 was the time when the foundations for future economic relations between the Lithuanian businessmen in emigration and those in Lithuania were being laid down.

#### Promotion of traveling to Lithuania in 1927–1939

In the aftermath of the military coup, the new nationalist government faced financial shortages for implementation of the planned reforms. It was hoping for foreign loans, especially from Lithuanians in the USA. However, most of the Lithuanian immigrants did not support the coup and severely criticized the government. In order to win back the confidence and favor of the Lithuanian community in the United States, Lithuanian government was ready to make concessions (in particular, in the economic sphere) which would draw the capitals of foreign Lithuanians to Lithuania. The promotion of tourism was one of the ways to draw some cash to the country. On the average, it was estimated that a foreigner spent up to 1,000 dollars in Lithuania. The tourism of emigrants, in particular, those from the USA, in Lithuania also meant that during their visits to Lithuania, foreign Lithuanians could see the progress of the country for themselves and spread a positive opinion regarding the Lith-

uanian government among others; their relations with the Homeland strengthened Lithuanianism in immigrant communities; they could also raise interest of other compatriots in the USA in Lithuanian products, in particular, foodstuffs, the export of which was about to expand; a promotion campaign was organized inviting to acquire land, buildings, and other property.

Despite the saving policy pursued by the Lithuanian government, it nevertheless allocated considerable sums for the organization of welcoming of tourist groups of foreign Lithuanians; the government organized festivals, exhibitions, facilitated the issue of foreign passports and visas on a temporary basis, etc. Such a policy influenced the formation of a favorable attitude among foreign Lithuanians. The Lithuanian government

was more and more attentive in respect of the expectations of Lithuanian émigrés. Lithuanian representatives in America (Bronius K. Balutis, Povilas Žadeikis, Mikas Bagdonas, Antanas Kalvaitis, Petras Daužvardis, Jonas Budrys) would repeatedly say that visa charges had to be canceled and the issue of passports had to be facilitated for Lithuanians, i.e. citizens of Lithuania and the USA. Though they doubted that such a policy could increase tourist flows compensating for the lost revenues from visas, the Lithuanian representatives wanted to simplify the preparations for those planning a visit to Lithuania and to form their favorable attitude towards the Lithuanian government making concessions for them. The agreement between Lithuania and the US signed on April 19, 1937 was the final step in canceling visa charges and extending the duration of the stay of tourists in Lithuania without registration to one year. Nevertheless, everyone arriving in Lithuania had to obtain a visa in Lithuanian consulates in the USA. It was a certain safeguard or control undertaken by the country which provided information on the people arriving in Lithuania.

In 1931, the Lithuanian government introduced concessions for tourists in Lithuanian railways, in particular, those who would arrive in Lithuania through the port of Klaipėda. The government paid attention to customs procedures which became more well-mannered in the handling of tourist groups. Together with Lithuanians in emigration, Lithuanian representatives in America would negotiate with various shipping companies over a direct route New York–Klaipėda. Though tourist flows gradually reduced, a direct line to Klaipėda remained open from 1930 until the start of World War II.

The analysis of statistical material on Lithuanian American tourist flows in 1929–1938 demonstrates that after the global economic recession their number showed an obvious down-

ward trend. It was influenced by the outcomes of the crisis, cheap dollar, and Lithuania's poor tourism infrastructure. The criticism of left-wing and radical Catholic Lithuanian Americans in respect to the Lithuanian government should not be disregarded as well.

Solution to the issue of providing economic information to Lithuanian Americans in Lithuania in the 1930s. Once in power, nationalists undertook the reforms in favor of Lithuanians in emigration, hoping to draw the foreign Lithuanian capital to the Lithuanian economy. However, the bitter experience of the past when Lithuanian Americans lost their money in Lithuania in the first years of Lithuania's independence and a negative approach of the émigré community towards the coup and its organizers slowed down the investments of Lithuanian émigrés in Lithuania. Lithuanian Americans would continuously draw attention to the fact that there was no institution in Lithuania which could provide certain and reliable economic information on the economic objects on sale, their prices, conditions as well as investment opportunities. Lithuanian authorities also felt that it would be appropriate to have a special institution which would work on the deepening of economic relations between Lithuanian Americans and Lithuanians. The outbreak of the Great Depression (1929–1933) affected the Lithuanian American financial interests creating an impulse for them to show a deeper interest in investment opportunities in Lithuania. In order to activate the attraction of the Lithuanian American capital, the Bureau of Economic Information for Lithuanian Americans (hereinafter – American Bureau) established to the Economic Studies Society on May 1, 1931 in Kaunas was subordinate to the Lithuanian Ministry of Finance.

The American Bureau, which collected and distributed reliable economic information, was welcomed by Lithuanian American public figures and businessmen. Though the representatives of the Lithuanian American business showed interest in it, they were not ready to invest big sums in Lithuania (either they did not have a sufficient capital or they still had doubts). Nevertheless, they purchased several hundreds of farmsteads or city houses. In fact, the activities of the American Bureau depended on the tourists arriving in Lithuania whose number considerably decreased from 1932. The activities of the bureau were also limited by insufficient funds from the Ministry of Finance as well as small advertising possibilities. From 1935 the name of the institution disappeared from the pages of Lithuanian and Lithuanian American newspapers but the provision of economic information to the Lithuanian émigré community through the press by the Lithuanian authorities through the Lithuanian representation in the USA continued, though on a smaller scope. The American Bureau contributed by raising the interest of Lithuanian Americans in the matters of their native country. It was a practical means offered to Lithuanians in emigration. Lithuanians in emigration trusted the institution which was able to mediate between the Lithuanian American



Advertisement of tours to Lithuania, 1930. Photo credit: Lithuanian National Library.

capital and Lithuania. The Lithuanian émigré community did not any longer have a pretext to assert that the Lithuanian government did not take care of re-emigrants, their property and attempts to invest in their Homeland.

#### About the author

Dr. Juozas Skirius is Dean of the World History Department of the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (LUES), the LUES Senate Member, Members of the Vytautas Magnus University Department of Humanitarian Sciences Committee, Chairman of the Editorial Board of the LUES History Department's multi-volume publication *Historia Universalis in Lithuania*, and members of many other boards and organizations.

He earned his Ph.D. degree in history at the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences. He advanced his studies in Great Britain (1994, 2002), Poland (1991–1994, 2006), Germany (1993), the USA (1998, 2000, 2003, 2008), Stockholm (Sweden) Institute of International Relations (1993), and Izrael (2011).



## May Anniversaries

### 780 Years Ago

May 14, 1237 Pope Gregory IX united the Order of the Sword with the Teutonic Order at Viterbo in Italy. Thus the Teutonic Order became established in Livonia as well as in Prussia before the conclusion of the first half of the thirteenth century.



Grand Duke Algirdas by Alexander Guagnini. Originally published in *Sarmatiae Europaeae descriptio* in 1578

### 640 Years Ago

On May 24, 1377 Grand Duke of Lithuania Algirdas died. Algirdas was a monarch of medieval Lithuania. He ruled the Lithuanians and Ruthenians from 1345 to 1377. With the help of his brother Kęstutis (who defended the western border of the Duchy) he created an empire stretching from the present Baltic states to the Black Sea and to within fifty miles of Moscow.

### 620 Years Ago

On May 9, 1397, the Cathedral School of Vilnius was first mentioned in Bishop Andrew's letter. The Cathedral School of Vilnius was a school attached to the Vilnius Cathedral. It is believed to be the earliest school in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. For about a hundred years it was the only Catholic school in Vilnius (possibly due to a royal privilege prohibiting establishment of other schools). The cathedral school was merged with Vilnius Academy (now Vilnius University), established by the Jesuits in 1570. The exact date of its establishment is unknown, but it must be sometime between the Christianization of Lithuania in 1386 and school's first mention in written sources on May 9, 1397. It was initially a primary school, evolving into a secondary school by the first half of the 15th century.

### 570 Years Ago

May 2, 1447 King Władysław II Jagiełło issued the Wilno Privilege which gave the Lithuanian noblemen (*bajorai*) the same rights as those possessed by the Polish noblemen (*szlachta*). In 1422 King Władysław II Jagiełło by the Privilege of Czerwińsk established the inviolability of nobles' property (their estates could not be confiscated except upon a court verdict) and ceded some jurisdiction over fiscal policy to the Royal Council (later, the Senat), including the right to mint coinage. In 1430 with the Privileges of Jedlnia, confirmed at Kraków in 1433, based partially on his earlier Brześć Kujawski privilege (April 25, 1425), King Władysław II Jagiełło

granted the nobility a guarantee against arbitrary arrest, similar to the English Magna Carta's Habeas corpus, known from its own Latin name as "neminem captivabimus (nisi jure victum)." Henceforth no member of the nobility could be imprisoned without a warrant from a competent court of justice: the king could neither punish nor imprison any noble at his whim. King Władysław's *quid pro quo* for this boon was the nobles' guarantee that his throne would be inherited by one of his sons (who would be bound to honor the privileges theretofore granted to the nobility).

### 475 Years Ago

May 19, 1542 Abraham Culvensis was forced to leave Lithuania upon the decree issued by Sigismund the Old. Abraomas Kulvietis was a Lithuanian jurist and a professor at Königsberg Albertina University, as well as a reformer of the church. Kulvietis was born in Kulva, now in the Jonava district of Lithuania, into an old Lithuanian noble family of middle wealth. Between 1528 and 1537 he studied in many universities across Europe. At first in Cracow Academy, later, as he became aware of humanist reforms, he moved to the Catholic University of Leuven, where he studied the works of Desiderius Erasmus. He continued his education in Wittenberg, where he studied Martin Luther's teachings. In 1536 he moved to Leipzig and finally Siena, where in 1537 he was granted the title Doctor of Law. After receiving his title, Kulvietis returned to the Great Duchy of Lithuania, giving lectures in Vilnius and working under the protection of Queen Bona Sforza and King of Poland and Grand Duke Sigismund II Augustus. In 1540 Kulvietis founded his own school where he taught about 60 pupils in Lithuanian. He was generally unpopular among the Roman Catholic hierarchy because of his Lutheran beliefs, and when the queen was away in 1542 Kulvietis was forced to leave the country. He was invited by Albert, Duke of Prussia together with other Lithuanian Lutherans, and together with them helped in the creation of the Königsberg Albertina University, and later he was the first professor of classic Hebrew and Greek. He was also the first translator of Lithuanian Evangelical songs. In 1545, Kulvietis was allowed to visit his dying mother in Lithuania. Perhaps he was already ill with tuberculosis when he left the Duchy of Prussia, but is rumored to have been poisoned there by enemies and he died at his parents' home in Kulva.

### 445 Years Ago

On May 17, 1572 the City of Skuodas was granted the Rights of Magdeburg (right to self-government).

### 420 Years Ago

On May 17, 1597 King Sigismund Vaza granted the Rights of Mag-

deburg to Lazdijai. Lazdijai Coat of Arms most probably symbolize rich local nature and crossing trade ways from Lithuania, Poland, and Prussia.

### 225 Years Ago

On May 12, 1792 King Stanislaw August Poniatowski granted the Rights of Magdeburg and the coats of arms to Skirsnemunė and Sudargas. Stanislaw II Augustus Poniatowski was the last King of Poland, Grand Duke of Lithuania and the last monarch of the united Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

On May 14, 1792 in Targowica, the forces opposing the four year Sejm reforms, proclaimed the Targowica Confederation act. The Targowica Confederation was a confederation established by Polish and Lithuanian magnates on 27 April 1792, in Saint Petersburg, with the backing of the Russian Empress Catherine II. The confederation opposed the Polish Constitution of May 3, 1791, which had been adopted by the Great Sejm, especially the provisions limiting the privileges of the nobility. The text of the founding act of the confederation was written by the Russian general Vasili Stepanovich Popov, Chief of Staff of Prince Grigori Alexandrovich Potemkin. Its purpose was proclaimed in the small town of Targowica (now in Kirovohrad Oblast, Ukraine) on May 14, 1792. Four days later two Russian armies invaded the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth without a formal declaration of war. The forces of the Targowica Confederation defeated the forces loyal to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Sejm and King Stanislaw August Poniatowski in the Polish-Russian War of 1792. As a result, the King, Poniatowski, formally joined the Confederation. Their victory precipitated the Second Partition of Poland and set the stage for the Third Partition and the final dissolution of the Commonwealth in 1795. This outcome came as a surprise to most of the Confederates, who had wished only to restore the status quo ante and had expected that the overthrow of the May 3rd Constitution would achieve that end. The term *targowiczanie*, describing the members and supporters of this confederation, became a synonym to traitors and *targowica* to treason acts in the Polish language, and is still used up to the modern day.



On May 22, 1792 King Stanislaw August Poniatowski granted the Rights of Magdeburg and the coat of arms to Ukmergė. On May 25 of the same year he granted the Rights of Magdeburg and the coat of arms to Kernavė.

Kernave Coat of Arms.

### 220 Years Ago

On May 27, 1797 Russian Czar Paul I came to Vilnius. This was the first visit of the Russian monarch in Vilnius after the Third Partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795.

### 185 Years Ago

On May 13, 1832 Czar Nikolai I closed Vilnius University. The university was founded in 1579 as the Jesuit Academy (College) of Vilnius by Grand Duke of Lithuania and King of Poland, Stephen Báthory. It was the third oldest university (after the Cracow Academy and the Albertina) in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In the aftermath of the Third Partition of Poland (1795) and the November Uprising (1830–1831), the university was closed down and suspended its operation until 1919.

### 45 Years Ago

On May 14, 1972 Romas Kalanta set himself on fire and died in Kaunas. Romas Kalanta was a 19-year-old Lithuanian student known for his public self-immolation protesting Soviet regime in Lithuania. Kalanta's death provoked the largest post-war riots in Lithuania. Kalanta became a symbol of the Lithuanian resistance throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In 2000, he was posthumously awarded the Order of the Cross of Vytyis.



A plaque in memory of Romas Kalanta. Kaunas, 1989.



# Rūgštynių Sriuba

(Sorrel Soup)

By Jana Sirusaitė-Motivans



Sorrel (Rūgštynė) is a hardy perennial which is cultivated in gardens and also grows wild throughout Europe. The young tender leaves are among the first greens to be harvested in the Spring in cooler climates such as in Lithuania. Here in Montreal the greens are ready for picking in mid-May, depending on the weather. This is probably about the time they become available in Lithuania as well. The fresh tart taste of the sorrel adds a welcome freshness to winter soups. The following recipe is served in the early Spring when there is still a chill in the air and a warm soup is welcome. The mild tartness of the sorrel gives the soup a pleasant boost in flavor. Later in the summer, as the sorrel matures, its taste intensifies and becomes much more bit-

ter. Late summer sorrel is often served pureed in a creamy soup, where the cream cuts the sharpness of the taste.

Fresh sorrel can be difficult to find. The best place to look is usually a local farmers market. Fresh spinach can be substituted in this recipe but will lack the tartness of sorrel. Some of the better stocked Russian stores sell Kėdainių Konservų Fabrikas products from Lithuania and sometimes have preserved sorrel in jars. If you find this product, use three tablespoons to start and then add more according to taste.

The following recipe comes from my mother-in-law Anna. I was able to obtain fresh sorrel from the garden of my good friend Daiva Jaugelis.

# Rūgštynių Sriuba

(Sorrel Soup)

## INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 pound fresh sorrel leaves
- 1 onion
- 2 potatoes
- 1 cup pearl barley
- 10 cups chicken broth
- Two tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- Sour cream, hard-boiled eggs and cooked bacon for garnish



1. Wash and dry the fresh sorrel leaves. Remove any tough stems, and coarsely chop the leaves to yield approximately five cups of chopped sorrel. Peel and dice the onion. Peel and dice the potatoes.



2. In a large soup pot, melt two tablespoons of butter and sauté the onion. When the onion is soft, add the barley, potatoes, and broth. Bring the broth to a boil, then reduce heat, cover with a lid, and simmer until the barley and potatoes are tender (approximately 25 minutes). Turn off the heat. Add the fresh sorrel and dill and mix thoroughly.



3. Serve the soup with a dollop of sour cream and sprinkle with chopped hard-boiled eggs and crumbled bacon and serve with a slice of dark Lithuanian bread.





**Security**

...NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) located in Rukla, Lithuania is led by a German unit and includes a US tank company from Ft. Carson, Colorado until June when it is scheduled to be replaced by a Norwegian tank company. The unit has been subject to Russian attempts at disinformation regarding the supposed rape of a Lithuanian girl and that the German commander was working for the Russians. The Rukla facility is a former Soviet military base and is central to the NATO exercise "Atlantic Resolve" and the associated US-Lithuanian drill, "Savage Wolf".



U.S. Soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 68th Armored Regiment, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, out of Fort Carson, Colo., hold their position in an M1A1 Abrams as a part of a combined exercise Savage Wolf with their Lithuanian counterparts as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve, April 4. Photo Credit: Staff Sgt. Jill People

...The Lithuanian Armed Forces and groups associated with the Interior Ministry will have joint training during "Lightning Strike 2017" in Marijampolė and Vilkaviškis, in southwestern Lithuania. The exercise will involve 3,000 troops, 200 police officers and 200 representatives of other organizations. About 2,000 reservists will be called up in early May for a short period.

...The US is sending 3 dual rotor Chinook transport helicopters to Lieivarde airbase in Latvia to join 5 Blackhawk attack helicopters already based there.

...The Associated Press reports that Lithuania is supporting the Ukrainian resistance to Russian backed rebels in eastern Ukraine. The support includes financial aid and surplus military equipment (e.g., heavy machine guns and ammunition produced during Soviet times). They have also provided hospital treatment for wounded soldiers in Druskininkai, a resort in southern Lithuania.

...Lithuanian intelligence agencies interviewed 74 Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Greece or Turkey who were scheduled to be resettled into Lithuania. They rejected 9 applicants as potentially jeopardizing national security. Lithuania has committed to relocating 1,105 refugees from Syria, Iraq and Eritrea within two years but of 250 already resettled more than half have already left Lithuania.

...Cybercriminals have stolen patient records and photos of 25,000 patients from the Lithuanian Grožio Chirurgija plastic surgery clinic and held them for ransom to take them down from the web. Some of the data is removable for the equivalent of 50 euros; others are priced at 2,000 euros. Some of the patients are celebrities who report being blackmailed.



Grožio Chirurgija

...Six news sites recently came under cyber attacks with denial of service attacks (DDoS). There was also an attempt to post a fake news article on the Baltic News Service about US troops in Latvia.

...Regarding the issue of online voting, President Dalia Grybauskaitė feels that it is not currently possible to ensure confidentiality and security. An analysis by The University of Michigan and the Open Rights Group (a NGO) three years ago found that Estonia's online voting was vulnerable to cyber attacks and recommend they give up online voting.

...The Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission has suspended the Russian channel, TVC1, for one month because of what it deemed biased and defamatory broadcasts regarding events in Lithuania during 1991.

**Business**

...The US Justice Department indicted a Vilnius resident of scamming Facebook and Google of \$100 million between 2013 and 2015 using fake email addresses, letterheads and invoices to impersonate Quanta Computer, a parts supplier to both firms. The money was transferred to various banks but it has been tracked and recovered. Evaldas Rimašauskas has been arrested in Vilnius and is fighting extradition to the US.

...The Lithuanian Supreme Administrative Court has upheld an anti-trust fine of 3.29 million euros against Lukoil Baltija (now Amic Lietuva) for acquiring 15 gas stations without approval of the Competition Council.

...The SOK Group had decided to close its 4 Prisma supermarkets in Lithuania and 3 stores in Latvia. It will keep the 8 stores in Estonia and 16 stores in St. Petersburg. SOK concluded that its market shares were too small in Lithuania and Latvia to ensure profitability.

...Simplex, an Israeli financial technology and cybersecurity start-up, has chosen Lithuania over Cyprus, Luxembourg, and the United Kingdom as the home of its new global sales and operations team. Founded in 2014 Simplex plans to add 20 specialists in marketing, sales, support, IT, data analysis and credit card processing.

...Western Union Business Solutions has informed the British government its plan to move about 50 of its 270 employees in Peterborough, U.K., to Vilnius in part because of the British act of withdrawing from the European Union (Brexit).

...Lithuanian Railways has signed an agreement with OTKL, a consortium of Russian, Kazakh and Belarusian railways that will expedite freight from China to Western Europe by way of Šeštokai, a transshipment center on the Lithuanian-Polish border. The pilot train is planned for this summer and regular container service is anticipated.

...Lithuania has issued Request for Proposals for the sale of 3.1 Billion in euro denominated debt in 2017. Lithuania's debt is rated A3/A-/A- by Moody's/S&P/Fitch reflecting its medium investment grade.

...Statistics Lithuania data indicates that the annual GDP grew by 4.1% in Lithuania during the first quarter of 2017.

...The American-Lithuanian Business Council (ALBC) has named Jeff Nelson the Chair of its Board of Directors. The ALBC has been a leading proponent of the reforms to labor laws which were approved by the Lithuanian government this year. Mr. Nelson is Vice President of Strategic Staffing Solutions, which has hired more than 5,000 people in Lithuania to work for US and UK based clients.

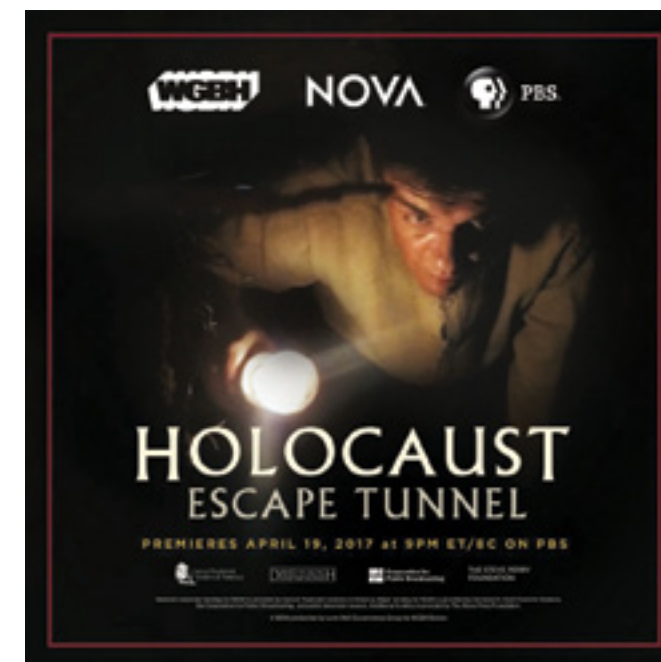


The American Lithuanian Business Council logo

**General**

...The Lithuanian Seimas is considering proposals to allow dual citizenship for Lithuanians who acquired citizenship of a country of the European Union or NATO (e.g., the US) after leaving Lithuania later than March 11, 1990 when the Re-Establishment of the State of Lithuania was adopted.

...The PBS program "Nova" presented a documentary, "Holocaust Escape Tunnel", about the hand dug tunnel in the Paneriai forest near Vilnius where 12 of 80 Jewish prisoners were able to escape an execution pit where an estimated 100,000 people were killed and buried. The 68 who were unable to escape were shot during the attempt; the successful ones joined a partisan group fighting the Nazi.

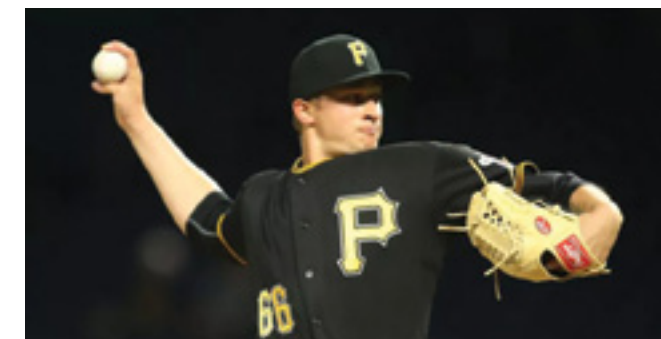


Documentary Holocaust Escape Tunnel

...The Lithuanian Seimas plans on banning the advertising of alcohol and restricting the hours of sale. They have postponed the consideration of restricting the sale from only specialized stores.

...A Lithuanian researcher, Saulius Klimašauskas, has been awarded a 2.5 million euro grant from the European Research Council for his proposal to study epigenetic change. The Vilnius University biochemist will investigate the roles that three enzymes which are responsible for DNA methylation play in human development.

...The Pittsburgh Pirates right-hand relief pitcher, Dovydas Neverauskas, is the first Lithuanian born player to reach major league baseball. With a 98 mph fastball, the 6 foot, 3 inch, 24 year old followed his father, Virmidas', pioneering interest in baseball in Lithuania. He was signed by the Pirates in 2009 as a 16 year old with a \$60,000 bonus and gained access to their training facility in Bradenton, Florida, where he finished high school.



Dovydas Neverauskas by Charles LeClair-USA TODAY Sports



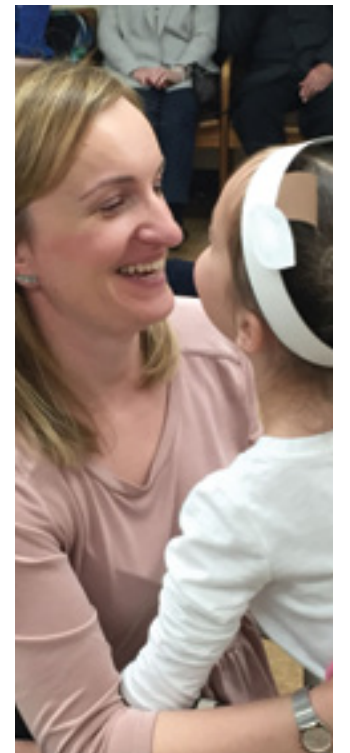
our community

Mother's Day Celebration in the Lithuanian Cultural School of Chicago



our community

Mother's Day Celebration in Maironis Lithuanian School in Lemont, Illinois





## Spring Palm Sunday Fair in Los Angeles, California

By Algis Bliudzius

On April 9 the St. Casimir Parish held Palm Sunday Mass and spring fair "Pavasarinė Verbų Mugė".

Prior to the church services palm leaves and flower decorated branches were blessed outside the church by a Rev. Tomas Karanauskas. Then the procession walked to the church. At the church service there was a public reading accompanied by a pantomime performance of the events leading to crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.

After the Mass, the parishioners went to the fair. The fair organizers distributed invitations to bring Lithuanian handicrafts, books and food to the fair. Many people responded, especially the new immigrants. It was possible to purchase "Vilniaus Verbos". They are dried flowers and grasses braided together into Lithuanian designs and tied to a short branch. They are associated with the city of Vilnius. There people would take the braided sticks to church on Palm Sunday to be blessed. Later they would bring them home to protect the household. At the fair a local lady made the "Verbos" and sold them. Parishioners were able to have their "Verbos" blessed by the parish priest.

Judging from the attendance the fair was a success. It gave the opportunity for the vendors to show off their skills, and the parishioners to make purchases and to meet old friends. Here in Los Angeles our Lithuanian-American community is a little village connected to our homeland so far away.



Father Ragauskas is leading the parishioners with palm leaves and flower decorated branches to the church.



Česlovas, our one man village band, playing his accordion.



Saulius Kajota is offering dried pastry "barankos" and Lithuanian beer.



Parishioners going from the church to the fair.

## Studies at the Vilnius Lithuanian House

The building where now Vilnius Lithuanian House is located was built in 1960, and since that year one of many Lithuanian boarding schools has been operating in it.

Over the years the school has changed a lot: it developed, expanded its functions and gained more experience. On 6 September 2011 the school acquired the status of gymnasium and changed its name to Vilnius Lithuanian house.

The purpose of Vilnius Lithuanian House is to provide general, formal and informal education to children of exiles of Lithuanian origin, descents of political prisoners, foreigners and citizens of Lithuania who have come for a short time or returned to live permanently in the Republic of Lithuania, and children of Lithuanian citizens living abroad. The school also supplies the assistance to other schools and teachers as well as assists in teaching the Lithuanian language.

The Vilnius Lithuanian House Gymnasium is responsible for providing qualified primary, comprehensive and secondary education for the students; meets the needs of students knowledge, development and self-expression as well as provides them with ethnic and cultural foundations; provides pupils with educational, social, emotional and informational support; ensures a safe and healthy learning environment; provides conditions for the Lithuanian world community to organize educational and cultural activities; guarantees delivery of formal and informal education programs for adults; provides information, consults and organizes qualification development activities for schools and teachers; organizes training for people who do not speak the Lithuanian language.

Students who come from abroad live in a renovated dormitory with all necessary facilities. There is the dining room, hall, study, recreation and fitness rooms. After graduation, successful students can apply for targeted places at Lithuanian universities.

Tuition, residence and meals in the dormitory are free of charge.



Vilnius Lithuanian House



Vilnius Lithuanian House

### Conditions of acceptance

The Vilnius Lithuanian House accepts:

- children who are descendents of Lithuanian exiles and political prisoners;
- children of foreigners;
- children of Lithuanians coming or returning to Lithuania;
- children whose parents live outside Lithuania.

### Required documents:

- parents (guardians) application form;
- documents providing the right of priority (if the priority criteria are applied);
- the child's birth certificate and the copy of it;
- the child's health certificate form;
- foreign passport and/or a temporary/permanent residence permit;
- notarized parental consent for learning, living, medical care and representation of the child in Lithuania if the pupil's parents do not live in Vilnius.

Parent (guardian) application forms are accepted by July 15. Other documents are accepted by August 25. Acceptance to school takes place on August 25-31. School year starts on September 1.

More information at:

[http://www.lietuviunamai.vilnius.lm.lt/index\\_files/eng\\_info.htm](http://www.lietuviunamai.vilnius.lm.lt/index_files/eng_info.htm)



# No One Asked Us

Photo exhibit by Anna Reich | Friday, June 9, 2017 at 7 pm at the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture in Chicago

No One Asked Us is a collection of photographs considering collective memory, identity, and landscape in Lithuania. These images document the generational effects of war, occupations, and human rights infringements on various communities across the country. The work presents details of the ways in which the people and landscape have been shaped and reshaped, the way cultural symbolism and significance has been assigned, stripped, and applied anew, and the effects of prolonged change on identity and the human condition. The various generations of people included in this work are the heart of this project. They represent a population that has consistently faced dramatic, and often traumatic, social, political, and cul-

tural changes that altered the most essential aspects of their daily life. Even today in a free republic, the people of Lithuania continue to live among ever-present physical reminders of a very difficult past.



## ONGOING

Most Fridays, 4:30-7:30 p.m.  
**Friday Fish Fry at the Rockford Lithuanian Club**  
 716 Indiana Avenue, Rockford, Ill.  
 Open to the public. Weekly specials vary. First Friday of the month—Lithuanian dumplings.  
 Info: lithuanianclub.org, 815-962-9256

Every Sunday, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
**All-You-Can-Eat Lithuanian Brunch Buffet**  
 Lithuanian Club and Gintaras Dining Room  
 877 E. 185 St., Cleveland, Ohio  
 \$15 per person; \$6 kids 6-12  
 Info: lithclub@gmail.com, 216-531-8318

First Sunday of the Month, 12-4 p.m.  
**Lithuanian Brunch**  
 The Avenue Restaurant, 71-22 Myrtle Ave., Glendale, N.Y.  
 Reservations strongly recommended.  
 Info: 347-725-3853

First Sunday of the Month  
**Rockford Lithuanian Club General Membership Meeting**  
 716 Indiana Avenue, Rockford, Ill.  
 Open to all members.  
 Info: lithuanianclub.org, 815-962-9256

Every Third Saturday, Mar-Jun & Sep-Nov, 1-3 p.m.  
**Amber Roots Lithuanian Heritage Club**  
 Lithuanian Music Hall, 2517 E. Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia, Pa.  
 Use Tilton Street entrance. Bring a dish to share.  
 Info: milliemarks@aol.com

## JUNE 2017

June 2, 7 p.m.  
**Kestutis Nakas will present his book When Lithuania Ruled the World**  
 Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture

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

Info: info@balzekasmuseum.org or 773-582-6500

June 3-4, 2017  
**Talka Work Weekend**  
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
 Info: regina@neringa.com, 978-582-5592

June 5 – July 28  
**Baltic Studies Summer Institute**  
 Indiana University Bloomington Campus, 107 S. Indiana Ave., Bloomington, Ind.  
 Six-week intensive beginning Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian language courses.  
 Application deadline for Title VIII Fellowships is February 1, 2017.  
 Info: indiana.edu/~swseel/balssi

June 9, 7 p.m.  
**Anna Reich photography exhibit "No One Asked Us"**  
 Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture  
 Info@balzekasmuseum.org or 773-582-6500

June 9-11  
**New England Chapter Knights of Lithuania Retreat**  
 Franciscan Guest House, 26 Beach Ave., Kennebunk, Maine  
 Info: 207-967-4865

June 24-29  
**Heritage Family Camp in English**  
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
 Info: neringa.org

## JULY 2017

July 2-8  
**Family Camp for Lithuanian Speakers**  
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
 Info: neringa.org

July 16, 7 p.m.  
**Forgotten Lithuanian Songs and Arias**  
 Concert, Vesta Žaliukaitė, mezzo soprano, Eglė Perkumaitė, piano  
 Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture  
 Info@balzekasmuseum.org or 773-582-6500

July 9-23  
**Children's Camp for Lithuanian Speakers 7-16**  
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
 Info: neringa.org

July 23  
**Lithuanian Friendship Day/ Putnam Picnic**  
 600 Liberty Hwy., Putnam, Conn.  
 Info: neringa.org

July 23-29  
**"Third Week" Youth Camp for Lithuanian Speakers, 12-16 Years Old**  
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
 Info: neringa.org

July 27-30  
**Knights of Lithuania 104th National Convention**  
 Holiday Inn Hotel, Dayton, Ohio  
 Info: knightsoflithuania.com

July 30-August 12  
**Heritage Camp in English, 7-16 Years Old**  
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
 Info: neringa.org

## AUGUST 2017

August 12-13  
**Lithuanian Days Festival**  
 The Knights of Lithuania Council 144  
 The Annunciation Hall in Frackville, PA  
 7 South Broad Mountain Avenue.  
 570-874-1109

August 12-19  
**"Third Week" Youth Camp in English, 12-16 Years Old**  
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.

August 5-11, 2017  
**Ateitis Annual Lithuanian Cultural Week**  
 Franciscan Guest House, 26 Beach Ave., Kennebunk, Maine  
 Concert and lecture series with accommodations available.  
 Info: 207-967-4865

August 20-27  
**Meno8Dienos Adult Art Camp in Lithuanian**  
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
 Info: neringa.org

## SEPTEMBER 2017

September 16, 1-3 p.m.  
**Amber Roots Heritage Club**  
 Lithuanian Music Hall, 2715 E. Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia  
 Everyone welcome. Use side entrance on Tilton Street.  
 Bring a dish to share.  
 Info: milliemarks@aol.com

## OCTOBER 2017

October 6-8  
**Iskyla/Walk-a-Thon**  
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.  
 Info: neringa.org

October 21, 1-3 p.m.  
**Amber Roots Heritage Club**  
 Lithuanian Music Hall, 2715 E. Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia  
 Everyone welcome. Use side entrance on Tilton Street.  
 Bring a dish to share.  
 Info: milliemarks@aol.com

## NOVEMBER 2017

November 5, 1 p.m.  
**Chicago Lithuanian Women's Club**  
 will present a fashion show of Lithuanian designers and others at Palos Country Club, 13100 Southwest Hwy, Orland Park, IL.  
 More information: ericabrooks1@yahoo.com

November 18, 1-3 p.m.  
**Amber Roots Heritage Club**  
 Lithuanian Music Hall, 2715 E. Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia  
 Everyone welcome. Use side entrance on Tilton Street.  
 Bring a dish to share.  
 Info: milliemarks@aol.com

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



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