



REJOICE!

*He
Has
Risen...*

*"I am the resurrection
and the life.
He who believes in
me will live,
even though he dies;
and whoever lives and
believes in me
will never die."*

John 11:25

Vytis (The Knight)

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Mission Statement: The Knights of Lithuania endeavors to instill in its members an attachment to Lithuania, the land of our ancestors, and knowledge, appreciation and love of the Lithuanian language, customs and culture.

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*May your heart be lifted
and your spirit refreshed
this Easter Season!*

SAINT CASIMIR

Saint for all ages and for today, your chosen lifestyle was blessed by God. Be our guide in living a fuller life for God and Country. Inspire us to imitate your love for God, your compassion for the poor and suffering, your practice and love for prayer, your self-discipline and chastity, your devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. May we be as you were; courageous and persevering day by day in living a fuller life of Faith, Love and Service that Christ Our Lord asks of us. Amen.



To My Fellow Knights

What a year this promises to be! We anticipate Lithuania's acceptance into the European Union in May and NATO membership April 2. This is the year of the Lithuanian Press and Language as we commemorate the lifting of the ban on Lithuanian text written in Latin script one hundred years ago. **Now Cardinal Audrys Backis has proclaimed 2004 the Jubilee Year of St. Casimir for the Catholics in Lithuania.**

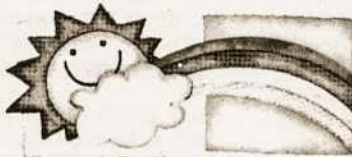
Although Pope Leo X canonized St. Casimir in 1521, his body was not removed from the Vilnius Cathedral crypt for veneration until 1604. At this time, the people carried his incorrupt body around the city as they rejoiced with processions and celebrations honoring the only saint of Lithuania, St. Casimir. Two hundred years later, the Lithuanians in Vilnius began the year of St. Casimir with processions and commemorations. St. Casimir's body was carried in procession and placed in the body of the Cathedral for the week. The calendar promises to continue the enthusiasm well into the summer, and all visitors can expect added events.

As Knights of Lithuania, we officially reverence St. Casimir as our Patron and from the beginning he was designated the patron of our youth. In 1948 this exemplary young prince was proclaimed the patron of all Lithuanian youth throughout the world.

May St. Casimir continue to be for the Knights of Lithuania and all peoples a model for living a truly Christian life with fortitude, integrity, and holiness.

Vytiškai,

Sister M. Janine



Vytis Correspondents: Council News Deadline is May 1, 2004.

LITHUANIAN LANGUAGE COURSE

The 19th annual Lithuanian language course at Camp Dainava, Manchester, Michigan, will take place **August 8th to August 15th, 2004**. This one-week intensive course, operating under the auspices of the Lithuanian Educational Council of the USA, is designed for beginners, intermediate and advanced students, or those just wishing to refresh their Lithuanian. The course is taught by experienced instructors in vacation-like surroundings and atmosphere. There are no limitations regarding age or formal education.

For more information, please contact: Vytautas Jonaitis, 1546 Quarry N.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504; phone (616) 458-6378; E-mail: vjonaitis@juno.com, or search the Internet for Dainava's language course.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear K of L Members,

Many of our Knights of Lithuania Councils have worked diligently and earnestly to keep the commemorations of Lithuania's Independence Day in the forefront of the public eye. All these efforts are noticed by city, state and federal authorities. Congratulations to all who plan and participate in these important events. During the past few months I have been personally told by persons from numerous sections of the country that the Knights of Lithuania is a mega force in keeping up and maintaining all the values and traditions associated with our Lithuanian heritage, language and beliefs.

As we approach the warm days of spring, I strongly urge everyone to seriously begin making plans to attend our 91st National Convention in Secaucus, NJ. The host Council is putting in a lot of personal time and effort to make your stay in their environs a welcome respite from your every day routines. In addition to the wonderful social aspect of renewing friendships that every Convention offers, your personal input and participation at the Convention sessions are important and extremely necessary to preserve the reasons why we are the Knights of Lithuania. I hope that every one of our Knights will accept the invitation to be a part of the 91st National Convention.

In closing, all the members of the Supreme Council join me in wishing all of our Knights a Happy and Holy Easter. May the Risen Lord bless all of the Knights throughout the year.

Vytiskai,

Agnes Mickunas, H.M.

President



From left to right: Mrs. Loreta Ušackas, Ambassador Vygaudas Ušackas, Agnes Mickunas, HM

This photo was taken at the Lithuanian Embassy on Wednesday, February 11, 2004, on the occasion of the celebration of Lithuanian Independence Day and the Restoration of the State of Lithuania.

LITHUANIAN AFFAIRS UPDATE

(March 2, 2004)

POLITICAL NEWS. The problems of the presidency of **Rolandas Paksas** continues to be the major political front page item in Lithuania. On February 18th, the CITY PAPER reported, Lithuanian parliament commission found that six out of six impeachment charges against President Rolandas Paksas had foundation, an important legal step along the road to his expected impeachment. The ruling that Paksas, among other things, violated the constitution, clears the way for the rest of the legislature to vote on ousting him sometime in April. Uncomfortably for many Lithuanians, the impeachment vote could come on the very eve of the country's long-awaited entry into the *European Union*, possibly drawing the world's attention away from the Baltic state's accomplishments at the historic turning point. On the same day, the *Baltic Times* reported "The agonizingly slow impeachment process against President Rolandas Paksas came one step closer, when a special panel upheld all six indictments against the president. On Feb. 20, *Seimas (Lithuania's Parliament)* voted 62 to 11, with three abstentions, in favor of beginning formal impeachment proceedings. Many analysts considered the vote, which involved only 76 of Parliament's 137 members, as indicative of how the final ballot to oust Paksas, which would require 85 votes, could pan out." President Paksas, however, went on the offensive, calling for impeachment procedures to be initiated against *Parliamentary Chairman Arturas Paulauskas* on charges of illegally leaking classified information. "Paulauskas has defamed the name of the Seimas, which is a violation of his oath of office," said the president. Paksas' allegations refer back to late October, when *State Security Department Chief Mecys Laurinkus*, whom the president was attempting to sack, presented Paulauskas with a dossier of information collected in his investigation of Paksas and his advisers that eventually led to the current scandal. Soon after the meeting, the parliamentary chairman shared the materials with parliamentary leaders, a move that the president claims was illegal. Framing his accusations in the context of a larger crusade against corruption, Paksas said that the country's political system as a whole must be

"cleaned up," and he pledged to "reveal.../the names of the initiators of evil deeds." In a response press conference, Paulauskas flatly denied the charges. "This is simply an unsuccessful counter-maneuver, and nothing more." **Parliamentary Vice-Chairman Vytenis Andriukaitis** told the "Baltic Times, "The entire impeachment procedure has been followed in a legal manner. There's nothing to challenge about the way it has been handled."

Recent Lithuanian President **Valdas Adamkus** is the early front-runner to replace embattled current President Rolandas Paksas, who is almost certain to be ousted in an ongoing impeachment process within the next several months. If he is deposed by Parliament, a presidential election would have to be held within two months, most probably during this summer. In a poll published in Lithuanian newspapers Wednesday, **Adamkus**, who spent most of his adult life in the United States, came out on top as the **most popular** potential presidential candidate, with nearly 25 percent of respondents backing him. **Paksas, who could theoretically run again if he is ousted, came in second** with 20 percent support; with well below 10 percent backing was Prime Minister **Algirdas Brazauskas** and Parliament Speaker **Arturas Paulauskas**.

On January 15th, President Rolandas Paksas met with foreign ambassadors residing in Lithuania and shared with them his thoughts on the previous year, as well as discussed the major goals and tasks for the future. Referring to the processes that are under way in Lithuania, he said they should not undermine the key principles of democracy. "Democracy and the strength of its institutions is revealed not when everything functions smoothly, but rather when a crisis situation develops," said the President. "I personally will make every effort to justify the trust and support of your countries, which Lithuania has felt during the thirteen years of independence. No matter how this fierce political fight ends, we shall be able to continue our foreign policy along the same lines," President Paksas assured the ambassadors.

NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer has confirmed April 2, 2004 as the date when seven aspirant candidate countries, including **Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania**, will officially become members of the transatlantic alliance. The new Secretary General noted the

successful conclusion of the **NATO Treaty ratification process by all 19 current alliance members** during a February 23 meeting with **Antanas Valionis, Foreign Minister of Lithuania**. France became the 19th and final NATO ally country to ratify the protocols of accession on February 5. The official flag-raising ceremony will be held prior to a meeting of 26 foreign ministers of the alliance member states on **April 2 at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium**. This will mark the introduction of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, together with Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, as official members of NATO.

OVER 80% OF LITHUANIANS TO VOTE IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS. Lithuania is expecting a record turnout of voters in the country's first elections to the European Parliament in mid June this year, BNS reported on February 17. According to a poll conducted by the Vilmorus public opinion and market research company, as many as 82.8 percent of Lithuania's registered voters plan to come to polling stations on June 13, when Lithuania will hold its first elections to the European Parliament. **Lithuania enters the European Union on May 1.** To mark the event, the Embassy of Lithuania in the USA will raise the flag of the EU on May 1 at the embassy on 16th Street in Washington, DC.

CITY PAPER REPORTED that Lithuania has expelled three Russian diplomats on suspicion of espionage, raising some fears here that Moscow might be stepping up intelligence activities as the Baltics prepare to join the European Union and NATO this year. The Russians were expelled on Feb. 20 for trying to gather information about the impeachment of President Rolandas Paksas "in an improper and illegal way," Foreign Minister Antanas Valionis told a hastily called new conference Friday; he gave a brief statement and did not take questions. Paksas has been accused of having links to Russian organized crime. Valionis also accused the unnamed Russian diplomat, who he said had worked at **Russia's embassy in Vilnius**, of "interfering in the Lithuanian privatization process." He provided no additional details. Since Lithuania cast off communist rule 13 years ago, Russian investors have bid for several key state-owned Lithuanian companies put on the auction bloc; Russians have showed a particular interest in oil-and-gas related firms.

On February 16th, Lithuania celebrated 86 years since the reconstitution of the country's independence in 1918. Marking the date, Lithuania paid homage to the Independence Act signatories in the **Rasu Cemetery** in Vilnius. The country's President presented state awards to more than 150 Lithuanian and foreign citizens at the President's Office. Traditionally, flags of the three Baltic States were raised in the **Daukanto Square** in front of the President's Office at noon. At the **Cathedral Basilica**, a solemn Mass was held. In the evening, a festivity of songs, music and fireworks **Tautos Jega (Power of the Nations)** took place at the central square of Vilnius.

LITHUANIAN TO COACH CHINESE NATIONAL MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM. Former head coach of Vilnius basketball club, "Lietuvos Rytas" and Lithuania's national team, **Jonas Kazlauskas**, will become an assistant coach of the Chinese national men's basketball team, which will take part in **Athens 2004 Summer Olympic Games**. Kazlauskas received the invitation to coach the Chinese national team together with the NBA coach of the Dallas Mavericks, Del Harris, soon after he resigned from the position as head coach of Vilnius basketball club, Lietuvos Rytas. Kazlauskas led the Lithuanian basketball players to achieve Olympic bronze in Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996, and Kaunas Zalgiris has won the Euroleague.

John R. Mankus

National Lithuanian Affairs Committee
Chairman

ATTENTION! The 90th Annual Lithuanian Days sponsored by the K of L C-144 will be celebrated Saturday and Sunday, August 14-15, 2004, at the Schuylkill Mall, Frackville, PA, located at the intersection of I-81 and Rt. 61. Please mark your calendars and attend this milestone celebration.



Candidates for Honorary Membership ~ 2004



Veronica Ivanauskas Bizinkauskas

Veronica Ivanauskas Bizinkauskas has been nominated for Honorary Membership by Council 1, Brockton, and the New England District.

Ronnie, as she is known to her relatives and close friends, was born and raised in South Boston. Her parents lived in a heavily Lithuanian neighborhood, near St. Peter's Lithuanian Church. The neighborhood was so Lithuanian, that she did not know a word of English until she started school. She went through the public school system, and then on the Carney Hospital School of Nursing. Upon graduation, she became a Registered Nurse and worked in nursing over the years.

Ronnie became involved in Lithuanian activity from an early age. At age 7, she joined a dance group and participated with them until she entered nursing school. At age 16, she joined the Knights of Lithuania C-17, and has been very active ever since. She assisted her parents with Lithuanian functions all through her growing up years.

Her first big K of L activity was, the 1953 Boston National Convention. She was a member of the convention committee. She later married

Peter Bizinkauskas, another active K of L'er. They moved to the Lithuanian section of Brockton, and transferred their membership to C-1. They raised a family, whose members all became K of L'ers. Unfortunately, Peter is now deceased.

Ronnie has been involved in 4 national conventions. Her first was the 1953 Boston Convention, and next was the 1973 Brockton Convention, followed by the 1996 Brockton Convention, and finally, last year's 2003 convention.

Ronnie has been President of Council 1 since 1986. She coordinates all council activities for a very active council. Some of the activities are, the annual "Snowflake Ball" for the last 50 years; the annual "Amber Ball," for the last 10 years. She also coordinated council activities for Lithuanian Independence Day, the St. Casimir Day Communion Breakfast, the Annual Kūčios held at Our Lady of Sorrows Convent for over 20 years, and the annual Lithuanian Supper held in St. Joseph's Manor in Brockton.

Further activity for Ronnie was her letter-writing and collecting of signatures for Lithuania's independence during the Cold War years. This was a project begun by the late Father John Jutt in the 1950's. Since 1990, Ronnie has been involved with her sister, who is Sister Helen Ivanauskas of the Sisters of Jesus Crucified, in fund raising and in procuring, packing and sending out many 40-foot containers of medicines, hospital supplies, food and clothing to Lithuania, through Lithuanian Children's Relief, Inc.

While her children were growing up, Ronnie served as Counselor and Nurse at Camp Nerings for many years, even after her own children were no longer campers. For the last 20 years, she has taught Lithuanian egg-decorating classes at Bridgewater State College and at St. Casimir's Parish Hall. The classes receive very good newspaper coverage.

Ronnie has been a long time active member of the local Bendruomene Council. She participates in their activities, along with the K of L activities.

Because of her many years of service to the K of L, and her many accomplishments over the years, Veronica Ivanauskas Bizinkauskas is indeed a worthy candidate for receiving Honorary Membership in 2004.

Candidates for Honorary Membership ~ 2004



Bernice Aviza

Bernice Aviza has been nominated for Honorary Membership by Council-136 Hudson Mohawk and the Mid-Atlantic District.

Bernice was born and raised in Albany, New York, the middle daughter of 3 girls and 1 boy. Her father was Lithuanian and her mother was German. Her grandparents emigrated from Lithuania and settled in the Albany area. They were among the founders of St. George Lithuanian Parish in Albany.

Bernice attended the local schools and received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the State University of New York at Albany. She is Vice-President of Charter Account Systems, Inc. in Albany, and is in charge of Software Releases. The company develops software used to manage student loans.

Bernice's interest in her Lithuanian heritage stemmed from her grandmother, who maintained her Lithuanian traditions. Her grandmother had 14 grandchildren, and when she died in 1972, none of the grandchildren was involved in any Lithuanian activity. With the encouragement of her father, Bernice took a new and stronger interest in her Lithuanian heritage. They started to attend St. George's Church, whose Pastor was Father Matthew Cyvas. The parish was small and had a limited number of

Lithuanian families, but Father Cyvas always had an annual commemoration of Lithuanian Independence Day. Father Cyvas encouraged Bernice to learn more about Lithuania, get involved with more Lithuanian activity, and get involved with Lithuanian organizations. She began to write letters to the editor and also to her Congressman on Lithuania's behalf. Along with a few others, she organized a Lithuanian booth at the local international festival. The booth then led her on to the Knights of Lithuania. Some members encouraged her to join with Council 100, Amsterdam, in June of 1979. In September, Amsterdam hosted a Mid-Atlantic District meeting, and she signed up for her first committee – the Lithuanian Affairs Committee. It has been one committee after another – one office after another since that time.

The following are positions Bernice has held: Public Relations Chair, Supreme Council Recording Secretary, Supreme Council First Vice-president, Supreme Council Editor-in-Chief of Vytis, President of the Mid-Atlantic District, 2nd Vice-president of the Mid-Atlantic District, and Lithuanian Affairs Chair C-136.

She produced the Liturgy in Lithuanian and English for the Masses at the 88th National Convention. She also gave a presentation on accessing Lithuanian web sites on the Internet at the 88th Convention. She was instrumental in reorganizing C-136, and is now a member of that Council. At every national convention you will see Bernice serving on some committee.

Bernice is past chairperson of the Capital District Captive Nations Committee. She is on the Board of Directors of the Albany Festival of Nations. Since St. George's Church has been closed, she is now a member of Blessed Sacrament Church where she serves as Lector, Eucharistic Minister, RCIA committee member and assists with nursing home visitations. Since 1983, she has been in charge of the Annual Lithuanian Day of Prayer at the Shrine of the North American Martyrs in Auriesville, New York. She assists in the gathering, packing and shipping of containers to Lithuania, and she works closely with the Joint Baltic American Committee (JBANC) in Washington.

Because of her many accomplishments over the years, Bernice Aviza is indeed a worthy candidate for receiving the Honorary Membership in 2004.

Candidates for Honorary Membership ~ 2004



Ann Marie Pupnik Kassel

Ann Marie Pupnik Kassel has been nominated for Honorary Membership by Council 157, Lemont, IL, and by the Mid-America District.

Ann Marie was born on the north side of Chicago, and her parents were members of St. Michael's Lithuanian Parish. She attended grade school at St. Michael's and high school at Maria High School. Both schools were staffed by the Sisters of St. Casimir. She then went on to Benedictine College, where she received an associate degree.

While in high school, she joined the Knights of Lithuania, becoming a member of Council 5 at St. Michael's. She became involved in council activities, serving on various committees and being chairperson of some of them. From there, she went on to the district level where she served on committees and also held office. One of Ann Marie's major projects was organizing the Illinois-Indiana District Juniors, and then, in 1976, she became National Vice-president for Juniors. She served in that office for three years.

Her other offices on the National level were, Financial Secretary for four years, and Ritual Committee for two years. While the Juniors' Vice-president, she wrote articles for the Vytis pertaining to the Juniors.

In 1962, Ann Marie married Albert Kassel, another active K of L'er, and they continued their K of L activity until Albert became sick and they had to limit most of their activity. After Albert's death, Ann Marie resumed her involvement, this time as a member of Council 36. The union of Ann Marie and Albert produced a daughter, Georgianna, who also became an active K of L'er and who later married Ken Macke, an active K of L'er.

In the early 1990's, Ann Marie became involved in reorganizing dormant K of L councils. Some of the councils she helped to reorganize were; C-40 East St. Louis, IL; C-149 Saginaw, MI; C-38 Kenosha, WI; and C-71 Milwaukee, WI. In recent years she helped to organize C-157 Lemont, IL, of which she is now a member and serves as Financial Secretary.

Ann Marie is well-known throughout the Knights of Lithuania for her beautiful singing voice. She has sung with the K of L Mid-America District Choir since it was reorganized in 1960. She has served as a soloist on a number of occasions over the years. She was the soloist on the choir's first recording, "Težydi vėliai Lietuva." The choir has traveled throughout the United States and Canada, giving concerts and sharing their talents with others. The K of L choir also traveled to Lithuania twice, in 1994 and 1998, to participate in the song festivals. They were well-received and well-appreciated by all those in attendance.

Ann Marie has held various offices in the choir, and at present, she heads the committee to distribute the choir's videotapes. It's nice to be near Ann Marie when we participate in group singing, especially when you forgot some words of the song. She knows all of the words and she is very easy to follow.

Other organizations with which Ann Marie has participated are; the prestigious Chicago Oratorio group, Apollo Chorus, and the Tower Chorale of Downers Grove. She is also active in her home parish as a song leader, lector and school volunteer. She is a member of the Women's Club and does volunteer work with seniors and public television.

As you can see, Ann Marie Pupnik Kassel has been very active with the Knights of Lithuania and other organizations, and she is indeed a worthy candidate for receiving Honorary Membership in 2004.

First Philadelphia

Lithuanian Youth Association

Mission Accomplished

(Laurynas Misevicius - SC Lith. Language & Culture Chair)

The beginning of the last year marked a revival of yet another Lithuanian organization in the Northeast. "Filadelfijos Lietuviu Jaunimo Sajunga (FLJS) - Philadelphia Lithuanian Youth Association) was re-established after being dormant for quite a few years. A young, 33-year old Doctor of Biology, Daumantas Matulis, who graduated from the University of Minnesota and moved to Philly a few years ago, is heading the FLJS (he was also elected the president of the Lithuanian-American Community Philadelphia Chapter a few months ago). Now his mission is to unite the Lithuanian youth in the Greater Philadelphia area and to foster Lithuanian culture among everyone there. The organization gathers periodically in the Lithuanian Music Hall, 2715 E. Allegheny Avenue, in the City of "Brotherly Love". It embodies and invites all Lithuanians - the ones who have arrived in the United States quite recently, and also those who were born here and are interested in their Lithuanian heritage. The group strives to make the youth organization an island of revival for every Lithuanian soul. FLJS has a close relationship with the Lithuanian Sports Club, "Aras," also based in Philadelphia. The club has many immigrants, as well as older Lithuanians as members, and maintains a men's, women's and children's basketball teams. Just a few weeks ago, there was a new chairman elected to lead the LSC "Aras," also a "third-waver," Modestas Buzinskas, once a Chicagoan, now a Philadelphia resident, an avid sports, and especially basketball fan.

FLJS and "Aras" also hold interstate tournaments between various Lithuanian basketball teams, the first of which took place at the end of 2002, and was promised not to be the last one! Well, that wasn't just a "loud word" spread across all of the Northeast and beyond. On December 27, 2003, there were a total of 12 men's teams coming from the New England states of Massachusetts and Connecticut, also New York, New Jersey, Maryland, hosts themselves, and even a squad from Minnesota, who came to Philadelphia in a mini-van through the cold and snow, dreaming about "Lithuania's

alternative religion," i.e., the No. 1 sport in almost every Lithuanian heart.

The competition was held in three courts simultaneously - all in close proximity to each other and to the Lithuanian Music Hall, a historic Lithuanian-American Community neighborhood. There was even a women's exhibition game, where a group of players from Connecticut and Pennsylvania defeated a joint New York-New Jersey team. The men's tournament produced a series of outstanding games, the most spectacular of which were the semi-finals and finals. Connecticut's "Azuolai-1," who had 2 European champions of the 1994 "Old Continent" youth competition, Marijus Kovaliukas and Ramunas Petraitis, came out on top, defeating their own second team in the semis (52:28) and winning the final against a newly established New Jersey team, based in the North Wildwood area (60:41). The third place was claimed by the younger Connecticut "Azuolai-2," winning the "little" final thriller against the host Philadelphia "Aras-1" after the overtime (57:54). The hosts had their chance both in this game, as well as the other semi-final. They lost to New Jersey only by a point (39:40); however, they were pretty tired at the end of the tourney, not able to "pull" out either of the games. To their condolence, we all have to admit that the organization of the tournament itself, as well as the "New Year's Eve" carnival party held at the Lithuanian Music Hall afterwards, was truly award-winning! Over 200 predominantly younger generation Lithuanians, gathered together by the outstanding FLJS effort that night, cheered in the holiday mood, boosted up by a surprise visit of Santa Claus, who proved to be very athletic-looking and sports-educated. (Therefore, there was an immediate rumor in the air of his resemblance to a very well-known Philadelphian, related to all kinds of sports activities in the city, Mr. Rimas Gedeika). Disco music dancing followed, as well as Lithuanian national dishes, "cepelinai" and "vedarai," prepared by Lithuanian -American Community Philadelphia Chapter Women, which went very smoothly with Lithuania-made imported beer, made available by the Lithuanian Music Hall bar. We hope to see everyone next year in Philly again, as the FLJS and "Aras" vowed to make this basketball tournament and carnival-party an ongoing annual tradition. We already know they deliver what they promise!

The United States Marines Celebrate a Birthday in Vilnius

A detachment of six members of the United States Marine Corps was formally activated in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, on March 22, 2002, to serve at the American Embassy. To those who may be wondering why they are here, a brief review of history would be in order.

The Foreign-Service Act of 1946 authorized the Secretary of the Navy, upon the request of the Secretary of State, to assign enlisted members of the Marine Corps to serve as protectors of Foreign Service posts throughout the world. The program has grown to the point, from the initial 300 Marines, to, as of now, over 1200 officers and enlisted personnel located at approximately 131 State Department missions abroad, with Vilnius now being one of them.

Their mission is to safeguard the classified documents of the American Embassy, to protect its property, equipment, and to provide safety for its employees. A privately owned home next to the Embassy was purchased by the United States government, and was completely remodeled to provide living quarters for the Marines, known as "The Marine House."

Their assignment was part of the United States' development plan for Vilnius. This was planned for the past several years, and was not, in any way, connected to the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001, or its embassies abroad in previous years.

The Marines will work inside the Embassy's chancery only. None will be seen outside, and they will operate according to their own rules. No other changes in the operation of the Embassy will be made. Those who work at the outside entrance booth will remain. The Lithuanian police will continue to guard the surrounding area and regulate traffic and crowd control.

On November 10, 1775, the date observed by Marines as their "birthday," the Continental Congress authorized its existence as an expeditionary force, and to serve aboard ships. The United States Marine Corps, as such, was established by law on July 11, 1798.

Wherever Marines are located, they will always celebrate their "birthday" in some fashion, usually with a party, and the Marine Security Guard Detachment of the American Embassy in Vilnius, Lithuania is no different.

The newly arrived Marines organized a Birthday Ball for the first time in 2002, at the recently built hotel, the *Le Meridien Villon Resort*, located about 12 miles outside the city limits of Vilnius. There was no change in venue in 2003.

Transportation to the party was no problem for people, who, like myself, do not own an automobile, or to those who did not want to risk driving home after a few drinks. The hotel's courtesy bus took us party-goers from the American Embassy to the hotel with three scheduled trips, and towards the close of the evening, the same service was provided to take us back to the Embassy.

There is a strong comradeship between Marines, and this can be judged by the old adage, "Once a Marine, Always a Marine," for there is no such person as a "former Marine," or an "ex-Marine." In my case, even though I was Honorably Discharged after serving in World War II, the detachment in Vilnius still looks upon me as "one of their own."

The evening's program began with the presentation of the colors. The detachment stood in a single line with the guest of honor, the United States Ambassador to Lithuania, Stephen Mull, standing in the middle, and standing at attention as the American National Anthem was being played. We all then bowed our heads for one minute of silence in memory of those who made the supreme sacrifice in the service of the United States.

Ambassador Mull made a brief speech, and was followed by our guest speaker, Major General David F. Bice, who retired in 2002 from the U.S. Marine Corps after 34 years of service.

It is a Marine Corps tradition, that the oldest Marine at the birthday festivities be honored, together with the youngest Marine. I stood in front of the bandstand, alongside Ambassador Mull, and to my left stood the youngest Marine in Lithuania, Lance Corporal Ian M. Leonard. A huge birthday cake, on top of a table, was wheeled up to us. Master Sergeant James M. Mitnick cut one piece of cake, holding a sword, giving it to Ambassador Mull first, and another piece was given to me and then to Lance Corporal Leonard. Needless to say, I was deeply moved.

A very nice orchestra played soft, dreamy music as we were enjoying a delicious meal, and there were couples dancing on the spacious carpeted floor area in front of the bandstand while this was going on. This kind of music brought back

memories of the Glenn Miller and the "Big Band" era of pre-war World War II days.

However, good things always come to an end, it seems. After the orchestra stopped playing, and went home, "canned music" took center stage on a dance floor at one end of the hall. This kind of music disappointed me, because the couples did gyrations that reminded me of the Indian War Dances I saw during the Gary Cooper and John Wayne "Cowboy and Indian" western movies of pre-World War II days. So, we do live a changing world, don't we?

To me, and my wife, Genute, this was a memorable evening. I hope I will still be around, now that I am 82 years old, to attend more of these fabulous Marine Corps Birthday Balls in Vilnius in the years to come.

Enclosed are some photos that were taken at the Marine Corps Birthday Ball that was held on Saturday, November 8th.

Genute and I wish you and your wonderful staff, a Blessed, Happy and Healthy New Year!

Vytiskai,

Ed and Genute Baranauskas



Mr. & Mrs. Edward Baranauskas with the Marine Corps Security Detachment, Vilnius.



American Ambassador to Lithuania, Stephen Mull, Edward Baranauskas (oldest marine in Lithuania), and Lance Corporal Ian M. Leonard (youngest). All waiting for the cake.



American Ambassador Stephen Mull, Edward Baranauskas, (with piece of cake), Lance Corporal Ian M. Leonard and Master Sergeant James E. Mitrink.



CONGRATULATIONS!

On March 14, 2004, Honorary Member, Rev. William Wolkovich will receive an Honorary Doctorate from Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania. Rector Vytautas Kaminskas will confer it in a ceremony at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Boston, Mass., at 11:00 A.M.

K of L Foundation
Honorable Mention



Winning Essay

On a first advent Sunday, Dec. 1, 2002, there was a special reason for the usual morning Mass at St. George in Bridgeport, CT, to make it really unusual. Fr. Jose Rebaque, who gave this parish 11 quality years for which, as its Pastor, he was honored with a presence of Bridgeport Bishop Rev. W.E.Lori, a Nun's Order, and over 200 parishioners, with Knights of Lithuania Council 141 members amongst them at his farewell Mass at St. George's. Fr. Jose is being transferred to organize a new ministry at St. Joseph Parish in Shelton, CT, to assist with the needs of the All American Valley ever-growing Hispanic population. Originally, he came to Bridgeport in 1992, and, two years later, was appointed the administrator of St. George Parish, which, historically, was a center of the Lithuanian community.

First immigrants from the then Russian Tzarist regime (which oppressed Lithuania), began to arrive in Connecticut through Ellis Island, New York by boat, and landed in Bridgeport at the turn of the 20th century. Soon there were enough Lithuanians to form their own Catholic organizations. However, earlier ancestors worshipped at the Sacred Heart Territorial Parish, the French Parish of St. Anthony's and St. Michael's Polish Parish. It is a mere coincidence though, that Sv. Jurgio (St. George) Lithuanian Parish in Bridgeport, CT, was first established on a February 16th, 1907. That same date, in 1916, became one of the most prominent dates in Lithuanian history when our nation was proclaimed independent. In 1912, there were about 1,000 Lithuanian families around St. George Parish. There were a number of prominent priests who served the Bridgeport Lithuanian Parish at different times after its inception meeting in 1907, under Father Joseph Zebris from Waterbury, CT. The first official St. George's priest was Father Piausimaitis, who stayed there for 6 months. Father Pankus led the parish for 26 years. During his administration, in the year of 1924, the present Gothic style, red brick church was erected. Father Kazlauskas replaced Father Pankus in 1936. He is remembered for renovating the church interior.

Probably the most dedicated Pastor of this Lithuanian church has been Msgr. Francis J. Pranckus, who first came to Bridgeport in 1952, and later became the administrator in 1964. He served almost 55 years in the priesthood until he passed away in September of 2000. Thirty-seven of these years were given to our Lithuanian Parish at St. George. Although, recently, the parish became more Spanish than Lithuanian or English (hence the appointment of Fr. Rebaque as Pastor in 1994, following Msgr. Pranckus' retirement). The statue of St. George, a patron saint of Lithuania, located to the left of the main altar within the church by the side of Our Lady of Guadalupe, reminds everyone of its Lithuanian roots.

Today, St. George Parish serves as a host to a multi-ethnic community where people worship in three languages. The Installation Mass on the first Sunday of last December gave a tribute to all of those cultures from this area. The first reading was in Spanish, and the second in both English and Lithuanian. The Most Rev. William E. Lori, Bishop of Bridgeport, as well as the Most Rev. Gustavo Javier Neto, IVE Provincial, introduced 2 young, new priests from Argentina; the Rev. Julio Lopresti, who would serve as Pastor of St. George's, and Rev. Jorge Montagna, who would become its parochial vicar, also serving the University of Bridgeport which is situated just a few blocks away. Both of the new concelebrants have expressed a firm commitment to carry on the good work begun by Father Jose, and to reach out to the entire Catholic community of the parish, continuing its evangelization effort.

The "Vetra" Lithuanian dancers and a Hispanic group together entertained the parishioners during the reception after the Mass. It has become a tradition, since the Lithuanian folk dance group was started almost 20 years ago, that "Vetra" performs at St. George's every time there's a major holiday in the church, or a special celebration hosted by the Knights of Lithuania Council 141, which was also established nearby St. George's in 1974, and has been led by one of the most dedicated people of this organization, Clemencine Miller, for the past two decades.

Laurynas Misevicius
Council 141

K of L Foundation Essay Contest Winner Writes...



Helen Hayner & daughter, Lynn Hayner

Loretta Stukas, Pres.
K of L Foundation
234 Sunlit Drive
Watchung, New Jersey 07069

Dear Loretta,

It was a great honor to be selected the Second Prize Winner of the 2003 Knights of Lithuania Foundation Essay Contest.

Each year that the essay contest was sponsored in the Vytis magazine, I had always wanted to enter, but didn't think I had a chance to win. This year, as my mother turned 85 years of age, I thought, how wonderful it would be to honor her by sharing her life story, of course, in 500 words or less. When I began to write my essay, I suddenly found that the words came very easily. It is because of her that I have a heritage that is rich in its history, culture, and language. In June of this year, we will again have the opportunity to visit our relatives in Marijampole. My award money will help defray the cost of the trip.

I would like to encourage everyone to enter the essay contest this year. There are so many stories that need to be recorded. Many thanks to the Essay Committee and the Knights of Lithuania Foundation.

Aciau!



Do you know why they couldn't play cards
on Noah's Ark?

'Cause he was standing on the deck!

SPECIAL RECIPE SHARED...

Koseliena



2 or 3 pigs feet split
1 whole carrot
½ lb. chicken breast or port
1 stalk celery
1 onion

Seasonings: Bay leaf, garlic clove, salt and pepper

Place all in pot; cover with water, bring to boil. Simmer about 2-3 hours or until meat separates from bones. Strain into bowl. Discard bones. Cut meat and veggies into small pieces and add to liquid. Refrigerate. When jelled, remove all fat from top, invert and serve.

Submitted by C-17, South Boston, MA
President Frank Markuns

SMILES WITHOUT WRINKLES...

MY SPELL CHECKER

Eye have a spelling chequer.
It came with my pea sea.
It plainly marques for my revue
Miss steaks eye kin not sea.
Eye strike a key and type a ward,
and weight four it to say
Weather eye am wrong our write;
It shows me strait a weigh.
As soon as a mist ache is maid,
It nose bee fore two long
And eye can put the error rite,
It's rare lea ever wrong!
Eye have run this poem hrew it.
I am shore your pleased to no,
It's letter perfect awl the weigh.
My chequer tolled me sew!

One guy said his grandmother was so tough that she buried three husbands, and two of them were just napping.

Some mistakes are too much fun to only make once.

Submitted by Leondas Galinskas C- 102



Scholarship Committee

*Knights of Lithuania National Scholarship Program for 2004-2005
Awards To Be Announced at the 91st National Convention in Secaucus, NJ*

The *Knights of Lithuania Scholarship Program* is intended to help a worthy and deserving Knight obtain a college education. Applicants must be a member of the organization for at least **two** years in order to be eligible to apply for a scholarship award. (This will be verified with the National Financial Secretary.) The Scholarship Program is intended to be a stimulus for young Lithuanian-Americans to join and be active in our organization. Service to the Knights of Lithuania organization is of prime importance to be considered for this award.

Scholarships are awarded annually as a grant. Applications must be complete (i.e., picture, transcripts, recommendations, etc) to be considered by the Scholarship Committee. Applications will be available January 1, 2004 and must be submitted **NO LATER THAN JUNE 15, 2004. APPLICATION INFORMATION RECEIVED AFTER THIS DATE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR THE 2004 AWARDS FOR CONSIDERATION.** The awards are paid to the recipient in two installments. ***** **APPLICANTS MAY NOW APPLY FOR A SCHOLARSHIP MORE THAN ONCE. THIS IS OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION THAT AN APPLICANT MAY WIN MORE THAN ONE YEAR.** ***** There are various scholarships available with individual amounts decided upon by the Scholarship Committee by vote each year.

Each applicant has the responsibility of completing the application and securing entrance to the college of his/her choice. If the recipient of an award drops out of college, or if his/her scholastic standing becomes unsatisfactory to the college, the unexpended balance of the award may be forfeited at the discretion of the Scholarship Committee.

Scholarship awards may be made to a person for undergraduate or graduate work. There is no age limitation. Organizational activity within the Knights of Lithuania is one of the most important criteria for obtaining a scholarship along with the following requirements and stipulations.

An applicant's *qualifications* will be based on recommendations made by his/her 1) *Council President or Council 3rd Vice President*; 2) *Spiritual Advisor or Pastor*; 3) *Former Teacher*; 4) *Character Reference*. Applicants will be evaluated on scholastic records, financial need, and most importantly, K of L involvement. The Scholarship Committee will carefully study the applications and decisions of the committee are final. The recipients of the Scholarship Awards will be announced at the annual National Convention of the Knights of Lithuania.

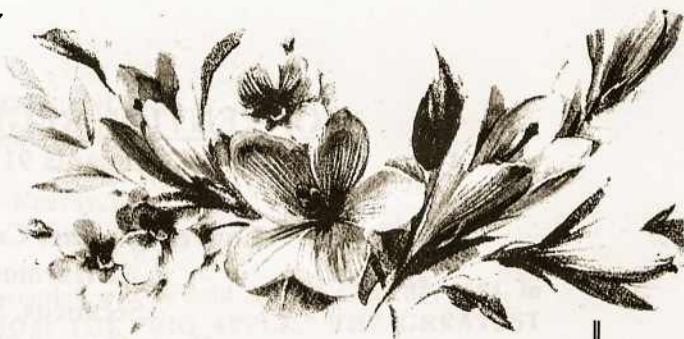
For more information, contact the Scholarship Committee Chairperson:

John P. Baltrus
C/o Knights of Lithuania Scholarship Program
118 Vine Street
Jefferson Hills, PA 15025-4034
412-233-2764
baltrus2@pittcon.org



Requests for applications forms for the 2004-2005 Scholarships must be received by May 15, 2004

In Memoriam...



K of L Obituaries

Council	Name		City	State	Date of Death
3	Joseph	Drumstas	Philadelphia	PA	1/22/04
7	Mary	Fortier	New Milford	CT	10/29/03
7	Mary	Kaukas	Easton	CT	4/6/03
7	Joseph	Samoska	Thomaston	CT	2/27/04
16	Aldona	Gapshis	Chicago	IL	2/04
19	Julia	Aleshunes	Pittsburg	PA	1/14/04
26	Frances	Glaskas	Worcester	MA	12/1/03
26	Eleanor	Walinsky	Millbury	MA	1/16/04
29	Helen	Courter	Surfside	SC	4/1/03
29	Marci	Stravinskys	Kearny	NJ	1/20/04
29	Brone	Venckus	Flemington	NJ	2/2/04
36	Raymond	Ambrose	Desert Hot Spring	CA	4/12/03
36	Lorraine	Baginski	Chicago	IL	
36	Raymond	Shlaustas	Chicago	IL	
36	Helen	Skudra	Highland	IN	1/2/04
36	Raymond	Werteika	Crestwood	IL	10/9/03
50	Marie	Antin	Hamden	CT	1/1/04
50	Marion	Meshako	Jericho	VT	1/1/04
52	Daniel	Dagutis	Elizabeth	NJ	7/03
63	Paul	Harryn	Hellertown	PA	2/15/04
78	Nell	Lelito	Portsmouth	NH	10/03
78	Anna	Axtin	Salem	NH	2/04
90	Sr. M. Clarita	Kadis	Pittsburgh	PA	1/16/04
100	Nancy	Yakas	Amsterdam	NY	2/1/04
103	Rev. Adolph	Klimanskis	Providence	RI	3/3/04
110	Dalia	Radziunas	Kings Point	NY	2/19/04
112	Anthony	Vaismoras	Burbank	IL	8/28/03
133	Stella	Audick	Granada Hills	CA	
133	Lillian	Schaefer	Valencia	CA	
135	Anne	Sabulis	Ansonia	CT	1/30/04
136	Elizabeth L.	Aviza	Albany	NY	10/6/03
140	Mary	Zutant	Syracuse	NY	2/12/04
143	Stella	Wasser	Pittston	PA	1/22/04
143	Charles	Dajnowki	Exeter	PA	2/4/04
144	Adoph	Kalvaitis	Pottsville	PA	1/14/04
144	Beatrice	Wasley	Shenandoah	PA	2/8/04
144	Stanley	Silkunas	Tamaqua	PA	2/15/04
146	Anthony	Gross	Harrisburg	PA	1/04
152	Mary	Zipkas	Greenport	NY	2/19/04
156	Bertha	Ringes	Nothumberland	PA	2004
156	Genevieve	Verbitski	Kulpmont	PA	2004
250	Gediminas	Janula	Chicago	IL	12/1/04

CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM**Knights of Lithuania 91st National Convention****Convention Site: Crowne Plaza Hotel****2 Harmon Plaza****Secaucus, NJ 07094****Host: Council 90 Kearny, NJ**

First Name: _____ **Last Name:** _____ **Council No.** _____
 (Please Print)

Street: _____ **Phone No.** _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip** _____

Early Registration - \$195.00 per person (Prior to July 1) **Amount** _____

Late Registration - \$225.00 per person (After July 1) **Amount** _____

Junior Registration: \$80.00

Name of Child _____

Age of Child _____ **Amount** _____

CONVENTION REGISTRATION INCLUDES:

**All Bus Service as required: Thursday Brunch after Mass;
 Thursday Night Get-Together: Coffee after morning Mass
 in hotel on Friday and Saturday: Saturday Luncheon;
 Saturday Night Banquet and Dance: and Sunday Breakafast
 before the Closing Mass.**

PRE-CONVENTION ACTIVITY:

**Wednesday, August 3, 2004 - Trip to Ellis Island and Statue of
 Liberty (including lunch). Departure: 8:00 A.M.**

Cost: \$50.00 per person **Amount** _____

Make checks payable to: Knights of Lithuania Council 90

Total Amount _____

Mail checks and Registration Forms to :

Ellie Nakrošis, Registration Coordinator

10 Park Avenue

Kearny, NJ 07032

Phone: (201) 998-9641

**KNIGHTS OF LITHUANIA
91st National Convention**

Host: Council 90 - Kearny, NJ

Dear Members,

The Knights of Lithuania 91st National Convention will be held August 4th to 8th, 2004, in Secaucus, New Jersey...**ONLY SEVEN MILES FROM THE "BIG APPLE," THE GREATEST CITY IN THE WORLD!!**

Greet your fellow Knights with an ad in the Convention Program Book. Ad sizes and costs are as follows:

_____ \$120.00 Full Page
8 -1/2" x 11"

_____ \$15.00 Patron Greeting (Use 3 lines below)
First Line _____

_____ \$60.00 Half Page
8-1/2" x 5-1/2"

Second Line _____

_____ \$30.00 Quarter Page
4-1/4" x 2-3/4"

Third Line _____

_____ \$5.00 Kearny Friend (Name Only)

You may submit your ad on a separate piece of paper. Camera ready copy is welcome.

DEADLINE FOR ADS: JUNE 15, 2004

Make checks payable to: Knights of Lithuania Council 90.....Amount _____

Mail Ads with payment to: Eleanor Rokas, Chair - Program Book
343 Elm Street
Kearny, NJ 07032

INFORMATION FOR HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Crowne Plaza Hotel
2 Harmon Plaza
Secaucus, NJ 07084
Phone: 201-348-6900 ext. 7205

Special K of L Room Rates: Single/Double - \$99.00 per room plus applicable taxes

(Please note: you **MUST** mention that you are with the Knights of Lithuania 91st National Convention to receive these rates!!!)

A Limited Number of Suites are Available!

ROOM-RESERVATIONS should be made by JULY 1, 2004 to insure room availability

Parking is FREE.
Valet parking is \$5.00 per car.

KNIGHTS OF LITHUANIA FOUNDATION, INC.

2004 ESSAY CONTEST

Each year, the Knights of Lithuania Foundation asks K of L members to research a selected topic and write an essay on the topic. This project enables three lucky members to earn some prize money and all to share ideas with other members. This year, the Essay Committee decided to again ask members to write about their K of L Councils or members. Specifically, we invite each interested member to write an essay giving his or her ideas about:

What Should Councils Do To Get New Members - or
What Should Councils Do To Improve Their Meetings

We'd like members to think about their organization and exchange ideas on how to help their own council and others. Rules are listed below.

LENGTH: 450 to 500 words (count all words).

DEADLINE: July 1, 2004. Essays received after this date will not be considered.

ELIGIBILITY: A contestant must be a Knights of Lithuania member (Honorary, Regular or Associate) in GOOD STANDING.

Because Junior members cannot be expected to meet the standards of adult members, there will be a separate prize category for Juniors, who are members of a Junior Council which is duly registered with the Supreme Council.

CRITERIA: Essays will be judged on content and originality. Correct grammar and neatness will also be considered in judging.

MANUSCRIPT: Must be typed or written legibly, double spaced. The FIRST PAGE should contain ONLY your name, address, council number, and the essay title. Succeeding pages should contain the essay contents but NOT your name. This is to assure anonymity in judging. Junior entries should be identified as such, giving the name and Junior Council number.

PRIZES: 1st Prize - \$300, 2nd Prize - \$200, 3rd Prize - \$100.

Monetary gifts will also be given to prize winning Junior member entries.

- JUDGES:** One member of each K of L District, plus 2002 Contest Winner.
- MAIL TO:** Bernice Aviza, 8 Tremont Street, Albany, New York 11205
- WINNERS:** Will be announced August, 2003, during the 89th National Convention in Brockton, MA. Winning entries will be published in VYTIS.
- SPONSOR:** KNIGHTS OF LITHUANIA FOUNDATION, INC., via a grant from Msgr. Juozas Prunskis.

The **KNIGHTS OF LITHUANIA FOUNDATION, INC.** is a tax-exempt endowment fund which uses interest from its investments to finance cultural and religious projects, helping the K of L AND Lithuania. This contest is just one of its projects.

The Foundation has been in existence for 20 years. You can help keep it in existence by joining the Foundation to increase its capital and provide more funds to help Lithuania and Lithuanian projects. A donation of \$100 entitles you to membership in the Foundation, and supports the Knights' future. Are YOU a member of the Foundation? If not, why not join today? If you are a member, consider making an additional donation.

Send your tax-deductible donation to:
Ann Marie Kassel, Treasurer
8200 Anchor Dr., 801
Woodridge, IL 60517



**THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL BALTIC
SUMMER STUDIES INSTITUTE**

(BALSSI) will take place at the University of Washington, Seattle, from **June 21 to August 20, 2004**. BALSSI offers intensive Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian language courses (15 credits each). This summer BALSSI will offer language instruction at two levels - elementary (Lith 150: Intensive Lithuanian) and 2nd-year (Lith 150: Intensive Second-Year Lithuanian). Classes meet daily for nine weeks, four hours per day. BALSSI also offer English-language courses about Baltic history and culture, as well as rich cultural enhancement programs.

BALSSI will be hosted in conjunction with the National Institute of Summer Scandinavian Studies (NISSSS).

For information about courses, admissions, financial aid, and cultural programs, visit <http://depts.washington.edu/baltic/balssi> or write to:

University of Washington
Baltic Studies Summer Institute
Dept. of Scandinavian Studies
Box 353420
Seattle, WA 98195-3420

Tel (206) 543-0645; Fax (206) 685-9173

E-mail: uwscand@u.washington.edu

Dalia Cidzikaite, Ph.D. Candidate
University of Illinois at Chicago

THE KNIGHTS OF LITHUANIA - NUMBER ONE

("Draugas" Editorial from Jan. 9, 2004, by Danute Bindokiene)

Before the news could have spread that the only Lithuanian daily newspaper printed beyond the frontiers of Lithuania, is celebrating its 95th anniversary this year, this respectful and important jubilee was remembered by one of the oldest and liveliest American Lithuanian organizations. The Mid-America District of the Knights of Lithuania announced to the editors of "Draugas," that they will honor and confer a special award upon this daily newspaper at the traditional "Memories of Lithuania" banquet, which will take place this year on February 1.

Mr. Robert A. Martin, Jr., the president of Mid-America District of the Knights of Lithuania, in his letter announces that at the 44th annual "Memories of Lithuania" banquet, "Draugas" was chosen because of the 95th anniversary, symbolically reminding us of the 100th anniversary since the Russians replaced the press ban of printing Lithuanian books and periodicals in Latin letters. This jubilee will be solemnly celebrated both, in Lithuania, and abroad, wherever Lithuanians who respect their native language and the printed Lithuanian word are found. So, in giving due respect to the Lithuanian press for which our nation struggled for 40 years, and for which it did not spare either efforts or human lives, they symbolically will pay respect also to all those publishers, deliverers (book-smugglers), and readers of this press ban era - to all those heroes who gained the victory for the Lithuanian press.

Because of the prohibition in Lithuania of printing in Latin letters, Lithuanian books were being printed close by, or even far abroad, and secretly transported and delivered to the homeland. Many books and periodicals reached Lithuania from America. Although "Draugas" had its start in 1909 - after the press ban was repealed - it still had a strong impact on the idea of Lithuania's independence, on fostering, strengthening, and achieving its recognition not only in the United States, but also in the capitals of other free countries. Nobody could deny "Draugas" impact on the miracle of the re-establishment of Lithuania's independence on March 11, 1990, and all its steady support for Lithuania's goals and achievements.

The Knights of Lithuania never turned their backs on the land of their origin, although they have lived far away from Lithuania for several generations and many neither speak nor read Lithuanian. There is hardly another organization in America like the Knights of Lithuania that worked so much for the good of Lithuania. Being conscientious citizens of this country, they knew all the roads and paths to influential governmental offices and so they helped Lithuania always and everywhere, whenever it was necessary.

The Knights of Lithuania activities always found space in the "Draugas" pages, and also, "Draugas" found response in their hearts: we have in the Knights of Lithuania organization many readers and supporters. We feel a cordial gratitude to the Mid-America District for the coming award, and for the planned commemoration of the 100th anniversary since the repeal of the press ban. Let's be aware that the Knights of Lithuania were the first ones who decided to commemorate this jubilee of the lifting of the press ban. What an outstanding example!

We urge all those who live far away from Chicago to show respect to the Knights of Lithuania for their many good deeds to the well-being of Lithuania, and for their intentions to honor the Lithuanian press.

"Draugas," having reached the 95th jubilee year, is inviting all those Lithuanians who also reached 95 years of age or will still reach it this year, to join our festivities. We ask them or their relatives to send us a short outline of his/her biography and a photo. We would like to show our respect to all of them in the "Draugas" pages and also to grant them a free year's subscription.

(Translated into English and submitted to the Vytis, with permission, by Faustas Strolia, HM, Council - 157)





The Presidents Three from Council 3

From left to right: Agnes Mickunas HM National President; Dianne Drumstas, Amber District President; Irene Ozalis, Council 3 President.

Rarely, if ever, does a Council have the privilege of having three of its members sitting in the office of President at the same time. And who better qualified? Agnes has been a member of the Kof L since the early Fifties. Dianne and Irene have also been members since the Fifties. The three ladies have had the privilege of being tutored by the first woman president of the Supreme Council, Miss Helen Shields, HM. Helen, may you rest in peace. You have taught them well. And should they falter, they may lean on the shoulder of, or be counseled by our Monsignor Joe Anderlonis, who also doubles as the National Spiritual Advisor. We, the members of Council 3, feel very proud to have these ladies in elevated positions. However, it could be demanding for those who are left as Indians, to accomplish the goals of those who lead.



Mrs. Danute Bindokiene, chief editor of the "Draugas" daily Lithuanian newspaper, greeting the attendees at the Knights of Lithuania Mid-America District 44th annual "Memories" banquet, February 1, 2004. Danute received the special award in the name of "Draugas" on its 95th anniversary of operation. The award was also symbolic of the centennial of the reclamation of the free press for Lithuania. UNESCO has also included this in its list of important world commemorations for the year 2004-2005.



Knight Life...



L.to R. Row 1 - Kay Urban, Bill & Brone Wisasauskas. Row 2 - Lillian Joseph, June Grenier, and Brone and Dick Qualters. Photo taken at the annual Retreat. C-74



Front Row: Mr. & Mrs. Qualters, Richard Laske, Helen Cruvath, Jean Kavelines, Marie Laske, Eleanor Pocius, John Pocius, Jr. : Upper left, Jim O'Neil. Far right, second row - Mayor J. Christopher Doherty. C-74 celebrating Lithuanian Independence Day.

AID TO LITHUANIA**Donations for the period July 1, 2003 to December 31, 2003****\$2,000.00**

Miss A Baronas (Telsiai Sem.) Colonia, NJ
 Robert S Boris (Telsiai Sem.) Fort Lauderdale, FL
 Aldona J Kirstuk (Sem.Fund) St. Petersburg, FL
 Miss A Baronas (Sem.Fund) Colonia, NJ
 Mr A Baron (Sem.Fund) Colonia, NJ
 Mjr. A Krizinauskas (Sem.Fund) Mesa, AZ
 Mr & Mrs A Alexander (Sem.Fund) Torrington, CT
 Dr. H Learman (Sem.Fund) Bloomfield Hills, MI
 Ms. J Zilinskas, Dayton, OH
 Ms. P Kamar (Sem.Fund IMO Rev. Vincent J Kamarauskas) Brookfield, IL
 Rev. P Shakalis (Sem.Fund) Plymouth, MA
 Rev. P Shakalis (Sem.Flund) Plymouth, MA

\$1,000.00

Ms. J Zilinskas (Sem.Fund) Dayton, OH
 Ms. J Zilinskas (Mo. Teresa Shelter) Dayton, OH
 Ms. J Zilinskas (Trade School) Dayton, OH
 Miss O Zelinski (Sem.Fund) Danville, PA
 Miss O Zelinski (Sem.Fund IMO Zelinski Family) Danville, PA

\$500.00

K of L Mid-America District * K of L, C-63, Leigh Valley, PA Mr & Mrs A Alexander Torrington, CT *

\$400.00

Anonymous (Trade School IMO Rimgaudas Svoba) Rockford, IL *

**\$200.00 to \$350.00**

Former K of L, C-79 (Trade School) Southfield, MI * Comerica, Inc. (IHO Patricia Zyren) Detroit, MI * K of L, C-110, Maspeth, NY * K of L, C-63, (Sem.Fund) Leigh Valley, PA *

\$100.00 to \$150.00

K of L, C-102 Detroit, MI * K of L, C-86 DuBois, PA * Maryte Abbott (IMO Vincent Boris & Ed Bablinskas) Woodside, NY * Josephine Barzda (IMO John & Agatha Barzda) Beverly Hills, CA * Mr & Mrs A Brazis Palo Heights, IL * Mrs A Bunikis (IMO Frank Bunikis) Beaverton, OR * Rev. Msgr. A Contons, HM Humarock, MA * K of L, Amber District (IMO Deceased Knights of the Amber District) * K of L, C-16 (IMO Deceased Knights of C-16) Chicago, IL * K of L, C-112 Chicago, IL * Regina Juska-Svoba (Trade School IMO Rimgaudas Svoba) Madison Heights, MI * Rita Karrytais Worchester, MA * Mr L Kapochus (IMO Kapochus Family) Milmay, NJ * Ms J Mihalick (IMO Petrauskas, Mihalick & Kapochus Families) Larksville, PA * K of L, C-3 (IMO Daina Kapochus) Philadelphia, PA * Michael Shea, Bloomfield Hills, MI * Maryte Sepikas & Family (IMO Elena Sepikas) Valley Glen, CA * Regina Juska-Svoba Madison Heights, MI * Mrs C Kurpovic Detroit, MI * Barbara Verdun (Sem.Fund IMO Veronica Aleknevicius) Taylor, MI * Ms D Neverouk Applegate, MI *

Ms M Walters (Trade School IMO Rimgaudas Svoba) Mission Viejo, CA * Regina Juska-Svoba (Trade School IMO Rimgaudas Svoba) Madison Heights, MI * Stefanija Juska (Trade School IMO Rimgaudas Svoba) Detroit, MI * Mr & Mrs J Abbott (IMO Vince Boris) Woodside, NY * Dr R Dysas (IMO Dr Algirdas Dysas) Fairborn, OH * Ms B A Selleck (IMO Joseph A & Ann Petroski) Chesterfield, MI * Mr R Leparskas, Warren, MI * Ms P Zyren, Melvindale, MI * Ms G McIntosh (Mo.Teresa Shelter IMO Gus & Gina Baibak) Livonia, MI * Mr & Mrs J Sniokaitis, Commerce, MI *

\$50.00 to \$90.00

Mr I Gurcinas (IMO Liudas Selenis) Westchester, CA * Mr L Svlenis Needham, MA * Miss D Wainauskis Oak Lawn, IL * K of L, Mid-Atlantic District * Mary Labadis (IMO Helen & Bill Labadis) Gilberton, PA * Mrs B Stoskus Cranston, RI * K of L, C-112, Chicago, IL * Mr & Mrs J Gilvydis, Franklin, MI * Helen Karpovich (IMO Kapochus & Karpovich Families) Wilkes-Barre, PA * K of L, Mid-Central District * Mr & Mrs J Zyren (Sem. Fund IMO Veronica Aleknevicus) Melvindale, MI * Patricia Ann Zyren (Sem.Fund IMO Veronica Aleknevicus) Melvindale, MI * Mr M Kohut, Jr Sugarloaf, PA * Mrs M Zelvys (Mo.Teresa Shelter IMO Petras P Zelvys) Livonia, MI *

\$25.00 to \$40.00

Mr A Janusis (Mo.Teresa Shelter) Livonia, MI * Mr W Zager (IMO Gregory Contrucci) Ann Arbor, MI (***** **The following IMO Liudas Selenis** Mr. W Zager Ann Arbor, MI * Regina Juska-Svoba (Trade School) Madison Heights, MI * Mr & Mrs D Baltuonis Dorval, Quebec, Canada * Mrs V Remeikiene (Mo.Teresa Shelter) Lasalle, Quebec, Canada * Mr & Mrs R Selenis Livonia, MI * Mr Robert S Boris Fort Lauderdale, FL * Mrs T Merkevicene Westland, MI * Mr & Mrs L Cleveland Glendale, CA *****) Mrs E Kosmisky (Sem.Fund IMO Casetonas & Sophia Barnauskas) Frackville, PA * Mrs E Kosmisky (Trade School IMO Casetonas & Sophia Barnauskas) Frackville, PA * Mrs A Gibbs (Trade School IMO Peter Gibbs) Harrison, NJ * K of L C-102 (IMO Eric Hofner) Detroit, MI * Theresa & Michael Shea (IMO Eric Hofner) Bloomfield Hills, MI * Mr & Mrs R Tamulionis (IMO Audrone Tamulionyte) Beverly Hills, MI * Eleanor Dapkus (IMO Charles Zarenasky) Hamden, CT * Eleanor Dapkus (IMO Mary & John Dapkus) Hamden, CT * Helen & Vinnie Cuperwich Linden, NJ * K of L, C-143 Pittston, PA * Mr & Mrs P Moore Clearfield, PA * Mary Beth Slakis (IMO Albert Slakis) Tinley Park, IL * Vaida Trimakas (Mo.Teresa Shelter) Westlake, OH * Mr A Osteika (Mo.Teresa Shelter IMO Valentina Osteika) Warren, MI * Mr & Mrs J Donahue (Mo.Teresa Shelter IMO Algirdas Dysas) Dayton, OH * Mrs J Zakarka (IMO Albert Zakarka) Oak Lawn, IL * Ms B Aviza, Albany, NY * June V Grenier (IMO Justina Grenier) Wethersfield, CT * Aldonna Keaney, Quincy, MA * Mrs M Kincius, Chicago, IL * Helen Medley, North Haven, CT * Mr & Mrs J Mickunas, Mt.Ephraim, NJ * K of L, C-90, Kearny, NJ * Mr & Mrs J Nakrosis, Kearny, NJ * K of L, C-29 (IMO Deceased Members of C-29) Newark, NJ * Mr & Mrs C Macke (Trade School IMO Frances & Kazys Macke) Indian Head Park, IL * Francis & Virginia Markuns, South Boston, MA * Mrs E Rogers, Oak Lawn, IL * Mrs F Petkus, HM (IMO Michael F Petkus) Dayton, OH * Sophia Sakalyss, Greenwich, RI * Mr & Mrs W Svekla (IMO Alice Bacon) Cherry Hill, NJ * Florence Zaleskas, So.Boston, MA * Dr R Dysas (IMO Dr Algirdas Dysas) Fairborn, OH * Deborah Schram (IMO Dr. Algirdas Dysas) Bellbrook, OH * Kaunelis Family (Trade School IMO Stefanija Kaunelis) Westland, MI * Dr. A Norvilas, Oak Lawn, IL * Ms M Spelman (Sem.Fund IMO Petrone Petchkis & IHO a Seminarian) Milford, CT * Vida McQuiston (IMO Algirdas Dysas) Kettering, OH * Roma Gineitis (IMO Algirdas Dysas) Dayton, OH * Mr L Grunavas, Detroit, MI * Mr L Kapochus (IMO Paul Harryn) Milmay, NJ * K of L, C-136 (Sem.Fund IMO Elizabeth L Aviza) Hudson-Mohawk Valley, NY * Leonard Kapochus (IMO Don Clark) Milmay, NJ *

Mr T F Clarke (IMO Josephine KareivaClarke) Shorewood, IL * Mrs A Gibbs (Trade School IMO PeterGibbas) Harrison, NJ * Mrs R Razauskas (Trade School IHO Cardinal Backis) Dearborn, MI * Mr G Balanda, Warren, MI * Mr G Balanda (Sem.Fund) Wasrren, MI * Mr G Balanda (Mo.Teresa Shelter) Warren, MI * Mr G Balanda (Trade School) Warren, MI * Mr & Mrs J Stanievich (IMO Robert Stanievich) Redford, MI * Mrs M Grigaras (IMO Antanas Grigaras) Warren, MI *

Under \$25.00

(The following IMO Liudas Selenis Mr A Osteika Warren, MI * Mr & Mrs K Stasaitis Redford, MI * Mr & Mrs R Tamulis (Mo.Teresa Shelter) Beverly Hills, MI * Mrs E Bulota Detroit, MI *Mrs V Patalauskas (Mo.Teresa Shelter) Farmington, MI * Mrs A Leparskas Warren, MI * Mr A Stasaitis Redford, MI *****) Mrs A Bunikis (IMO Eric Hofner) Beaverton, OR * Mrs S Staknis (IMO C A Staknis) Kearny, NJ * Regina Juska-Svoba (Trade School IMO Eric Hofner) Madison Heights, MI * Mrs S Staknis (IMO C A Staknis) Kearny, NJ * Mr & Mrs R Tamulionis (IMO Audrone Tamulionyte) Beverly Hills, MI * Mrs S Staknis (IMO C A Staknis) Kearny, NJ * Mrs S Staknis (IMO C A Staknis) Kearny, NJ * Gene Ziurys, Wethersfield, CT * Mrs R Sussko, HM (IMO Deceased members of R Sussko Family) Toms River, NJ * Mr & Mrs F Strolia, Oak Forest, IL * Mr & Mrs F Petrauskas, Baldwinsville, NY * Mr & Mrs R Tamulionis (IMO Audrone) Beverly Hills, MI * Mr & Mrs C McElligott (Mo.Teresa Shelter IMO Algirdas Dysas) Dayton, OH * Mr V Slusnys, Detroit, MI * Ms F McNichols (Mo.Teresa Shelter) Chicago, IL * Judith A Petrokas (IMO Algirdas Dysas) Dayton, OH * Anonymous (IMO Algirdas Dysas) * Mrs S Staknis (IMO C A Staknis) Kearny, NJ * Jozefa Sasinowski (Sem.Fund IMO Elizabeth L Aviza) Schenectady, NY * Mr V Slusnys Detroit, MI * Mrs S Staknis (IMO C A Staknis) Kearny, NJ * Ms F McNichols (Mo.Teresa Shelter IMO Susan Pocius) Chicago, IL * Mr & Mrs A Vaitiekaitis (Trade School IMO Rimgaudas Svoba) Canton, MI * Mrs S Staknis (IMO C A Staknis) Kearney, NJ *

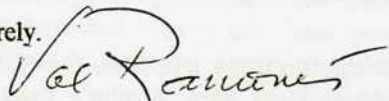
LETTER TO THE EDITOR: (CORRECTION)

Dear Sister Janine,

In the article about the Pazaislis monastery in the Jan/Feb issue of "Vytis," there are two inaccuracies. One statement (on page 14) says that the Pazaislis monastery was organized by the Sisters of St. Casimir. The Pazaislis monastery predates the Sisters by centuries. It was founded and built by the magnate, Kristupas Zigmantas Pacas in 1667. It was originally built to house the Camaldolese monks who lived in it until they were expelled by the Czarist authorities in the first part of the 19th century. Later, it was made into an Orthodox monastery. During WWI, it was an army hospital, and the Sisters of St. Casimir did not take possession of it until 1920. In 1940, the Soviets took it away from the Sisters.

The second point I want to clarify is this: Under the picture of Our Lady of Pazaislis (page 15), the caption says that it is in the Basilica of Kaunas. In reality, this picture was restored and was solemnly returned to Pazaislis last year.

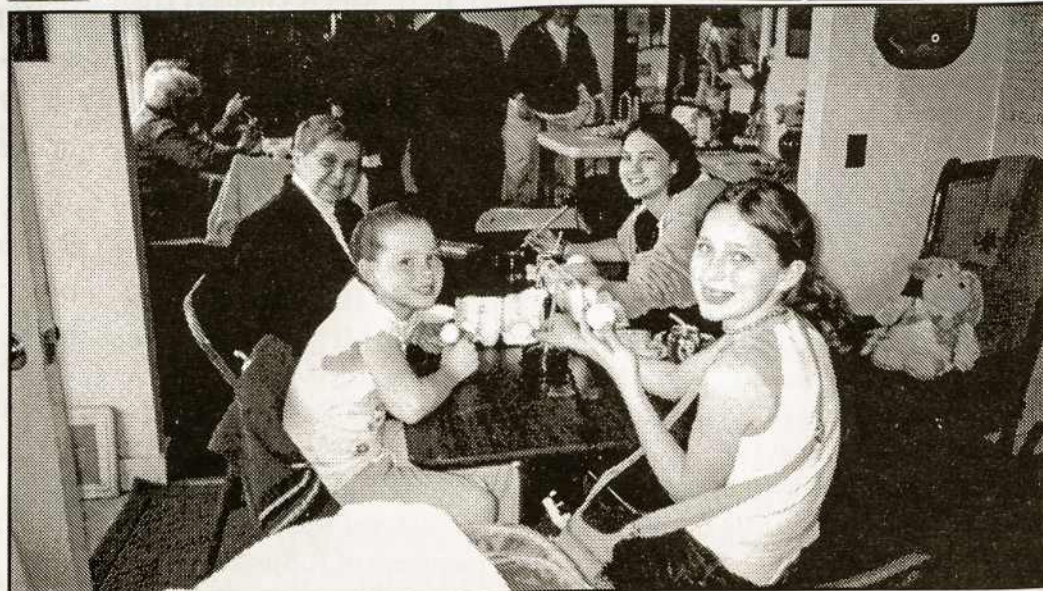
Sincerely,



Val Ramonis Publisher/Editor
Lithuanian Heritage Magazine
Baltech Publishing



K of L Juniors in Action



K of L Juniors of C-82 attending an Easter egg decorating class. Pictured from L. to R., in the forefront are April Vician and Kate Jagiella. In background: Sister M. Janine and Kodi Morgan.



Also attending the Easter egg decorating class are : in the forefront, left, Mrs. Georgianna Macke, and on right, Mrs. Strolia. Center left, Lexie Rudmin, right Mrs. Strolia's daughter. In the background is Rob Martin, Jr.

District & Council News

Mid Atlantic District C-29 Newark, NJ Rita Sussko HM

Labas, Vyciai from C-29, Newark. We opened the season on the first Sunday in September and always hold our meetings on the first Sunday of the month, following the 10:15AM Mass (weather permitting). Only one meeting has been cancelled so far, and if you recall, December was very bad weather-wise.

Throughout the year, C-29 collects donations of cash for St. John's Food Bank in Newark, NJ. We formerly gave at Christmas time, but decided it would be appreciated more during the year when, perhaps, the homeless are not remembered as much. We were correct in our assumption and St. John's is grateful.

September, the council members - with the help of our friends - worked at a Jamboree sponsored by our Lithuanian Cowboy, Ed Rimelis, for the benefit of Holy Trinity/Epiphany Church. The affair was a greater success than anticipated. Thank you, Ed.

Election of officers was held at our October meeting. Elected were: Pres. Harold Kaminskas; VP, Marie Guoba; Treas Emilia Sadonis; Rec Sec Ann Pokol; Fin Sec Rita Sussko HM. Also, in October, we held our Annual Dinner and Dance, chaired by Emilia Sadonis and Rita Sussko. As is said, an affair is only as good as the committee and a big ACIU to ours; we had a great success enjoyed by all. Music was furnished by the accomplished Stasys Telsinskas.

January was the time for our Holiday Party, co-hosted by Marie Guoba, Helen Sisak and Ed Rimelis. Food was not only delicious but plentiful, thanks

to the above.

2003 and so far into 2004 has been a sad year for C-29, health-wise and the passing of several of our faithful members: Petre Pliskaitis, Peter Podgalsky, Brone Venckus, Helen Courter, Marci Stravinskas, Mary Stunis, M. Ruth Berzanskis, John Ponelis and Jennie Miklasavige, who was active on every committee, even though her name didn't appear, she was always a helping hand. May they Rest in Peace.

New England District

C-10 Athol-Gardner Vincukas

Deacon Jim Couture and wife, Ruth, were Guests of Honor at a farewell gathering at St. Francis, Athol, recently. Jim and wife came to St. Francis at a difficult time and did a great job. The parish could have been closed if not for their sincere devotion and great care. They were well-liked and will surely be missed. Deacon Jim has been assigned to Holy Rosary Parish in Gardner. 'Our loss, their gain!

Helen Simkunas is a permanent resident at the Wachuset Nursing Home in Gardner.

On Christmas night, the Basilica of the Nativity of the Blessed Mother in Siluva was broken into and the 300 year miraculous painting, recently restored, and her jeweled crown were stolen. To this date (2-21-04), the culprits have not been found, according to Pastor Rev. Erastas Muraskas.

We welcome Vince Kulisansky as a new member of C-10. He is the son of our late, dear member, Stasy Kulisansky. Thanks, Dr. Marie!

Our council is busy preparing for the Spring Convention to be held at St. Francis Parish, Athol, on April 25.

Our council will celebrate the 90th anniversary of its founding. It probably is the oldest ethnic organization in the area. Bravo!

We wish our Irish friends a Happy St. Patrick's Day and wish all a happy, Holy and Blessed Easter Season.

C-17 South Boston, MA Regina Alexander

It was great to start the New Year 2004 with the 4PM Mass at St Peter Church, celebrated by Father Robert Carr. The annual Holiday Party followed. We were served a delicious roast pork dinner by Gerard's Caterers. The committee had prepared tasty hors d'oeuvres and liquid refreshments to precede the dinner. President Frank Markuns served his own special appetizer, koseliena. (Recipe is published elsewhere.)

After dinner, the singing of Christmas carols was accompanied by Alice Ruseckas at the piano. Special guests were Sr. Geraldine and Sr. Loretta. C-17 member, Betty Balaconis, who usually directs us in her "Twelve Days of Christmas", was missed.

Our next coming event will be the St. Casimir's Day Communion Breakfast, Feb 29, following the 10:30 Mass, celebrated by Fr. Steve Zukas; the Mass will be offered for all deceased members. The breakfast is catered by Gerard's and the guest speaker is Mrs. Mirga Girmius, PhD.

Upon Fr. Steve Zukas's return from his recent trip to Lithuania, he called an emergency meeting of the parishoners. The Archdiocese of Boston is working towards reconfiguration of parishes. St. Peter's is in a cluster in South Boston where one or more parishes will be closed. Prayers are needed.

Florence Zerveskas and Ann Norinkavich, sunshine committee, keep us informed. Get well wishes with

thoughts and prayers go out to: Florence Zaleskas, Vytas Ivanauskas, Virginia Markuns, Julie Gailinis, and Beattie Stakutis.

Our Sunshine Committee member, Ann Norinkavich, has moved to a new apartment in the Keystone Building. Congratulations.

Ritual Chairman, Larry Svelnis, is working with a large group of C-17 members towards 4th, 3rd, and 2nd degrees. He will keep us informed of their progress. Iki pasimatymo.

C-26 Worcester, MA **Ruta**

At the First Night Celebration kicking off the New Year, our C-26 was involved. Bill Leseman led the parade of all nations' flags. He carried the American flag. Vivian Rodgers carried the Knights of Lithuania flag. Irene Markevicius carried the Lithuanian Girl Scout flag and Bruno Naras, the Lithuanian Boy Scout flag. Ray Jakubauskas carried the Lithuanian flag. As you can see, the Lithuanians and our K of L were well represented.

At our February meeting, the tables were decorated with foil red hearts and red and white flowers, along with little bags of heart candies. Prior to the meeting, a wonderful potluck supper took place. As usual, the attendees brought in their favorite dishes, making it a virtual banquet. People always look to see if someone brought in some kugeli....we were rewarded! It was on the table. At the end of the meeting, special "Valentine Sweethearts" were chosen by drawing names. The lucky winners were: Teresa Adomavicius and Bill Leseman. They were given heart-shaped boxes of chocolates.

A letter was read from John Putis who sold his home, here, and moved to California to live with his son. He is

enjoying life in the West; however, he still wants to remain a member of our council and will be back to visit us in July. Ann and Bill Walinsky, Sr. are on the sick list, as is Rita Sokol. Our prayers are extended to Steve Walinsky, Jr. on the loss of his wife, Eleanor. "Ellie" was an active member of our K of L and we shall miss her. May she Rest in Peace.

Fr. Richard Jakubauskas, our Spiritual Advisor, gave an Appreciation Dinner for everyone that helps in the Church and with parish projects. Many of our members were recognized. Tony Minor was presented with a special gift of appreciation. Joe Ivaska was also honored. Vivian Rodgers, Steve Walinsky, Jr., Dorothy Virbasius, and George Sopczak received a special thank you for spending so much time working for the Church.

Ruth and Vittie Gadilauskas are presently vacationing in sunny Florida. Our 2 travelers, Aldona Waska and Lillian Kondrotas, are getting ready for their annual trip to St. Petersburg, FL. They will not be back until after Easter. Lucky them! However, we feel pretty happy here, because we have not had the usual heavy snowstorms. Michael Aiello, Irene Markevicius' grandson who plays for Bay State was given the MVP award for a tournament his team played in. Needless to say, "Grandma" was quite proud of his achievement.

Lithuanian Independence Day was celebrated with a Mass at St. Casimir's, followed by a program and a light brunch in the parish hall. There were about 16 people dressed in traditional Lithuanian outfits. Irene Markevicius was in charge of the Boy and Girl Scouts who prepared and served the food. The guest speaker was Fr. Vytautas Gevainis, Chaplain at the Immaculate Conception Convent in Putnam, CT. We should all take pride in Lithuania's progress and cherish our heritage. The choir, mostly made up of K of L members, sang Lithuanian

songs. The audience was invited to join in the singing.

Teresa and Kazys Adomavicius celebrated their 30th Wedding Anniversary this summer. They renewed their vows at a Mass at St. Casimir's, concelebrated by Fr. Vytautas Gedvainis and Fr. Richard Jakubauskas. Congratulations to them both and best wishes for many more happy years ahead.

C-27 Norwood, MA **AlbieLee Jarvis**

In honor of Lithuanian Independence Day, an 8AM Mass was celebrated by our Spiritual Director, Rev. Wm. Wolkavich, with music provided by the choral group of the Sodautu Ethnographic Ensemble.

A program followed in the parish hall. A proclamation declaring February 16th Lithuanian Independence Day was read by Gintaras Cepas.

Fr. Bill gave a talk on the unique book smuggler era (1864-1904) in tsarist-occupied Lithuania. He described the many heroic events and people who tried to keep the Lithuanian population supplied with Lithuanian publications. In those times, people found with Lithuanian literature were imprisoned for smuggling, publishing, or possessing this. Katherine Perednia accompanied the audience on the piano as we sang the Lithuanian and American Anthems.

Next the Sodautu Ethnographic Ensemble, under the direction of Gita K. entertained us with some history of their group's origins and activities. The program was closed with Lithuanian folk songs beautifully performed by the ensemble. We appreciate their talents.

On March 14, 2004, Vytautas Kaminskas, Rector of Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas will confer an

Honorary Doctorate on historian, Rev. William Wolkavich-Valkavicius at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Boston, MA at the 11:00AM Mass. Congratulations to our Pastor and Spiritual Director.

C-141 Bridgeport, CT Florence Zikaras

The Nov meeting of C-141 was filled with emotion. We learned that the Vicar of St. George's, Rev. Jorge Montagna, IVE, is being transferred to Hong Kong. He was here such a short time but had endeared himself to all. We presented him with a Lithuanian sash.

We also installed the 2004 officers. We were sorry that Pres Clemencine Miller declined re-election and happy that Barbara Schmidt accepted the nomination. Other officers are: 1st VP Marie Brilvitch; 3rdVP, Clemencine Miller HM; Sec Helen Simanis; Treas, Pat Silka; Fin Sec William Brilvitch; Sgt-at-Arms, Mary Spellman and Peter Balcius; Trustees, Claire Carroll and Linas Stasaipis. Committee

Chairpersons are: Ways and Means, Peter and Aldana Peters; Ritual, Nancy Pawasauskas and HM Miller; Spiritual, Helen Janiunas; Spiritual Advisor, Rev Julio LoPresti, Pastor of St. George's.

At the conclusion of the business meeting, the festivities started, honoring our retiring President, HM Miller, known to all of us as "Clem". Pat Silk collected pictures of many of the events that transpired during Clem's reign of 16 years and presented a collage. The entire Miller family was in attendance. HM Miller was the "glue" that held the council together through some lean times and kept the Lithuanian traditions and spirit when we no longer had a Lithuanian priest as Pastor. Her most memorable and permanent legacy was securing from the Diocese a Lithuanian Mass on the 3rd Sunday of the month -our meeting date- even though the Lithuanian

parishoners were on the decline. She also secured the last remaining stained-glass window in the church being refurbished and it now bears the name K of L #141. In addition to our council duties, HM Miller was on the National Scholarship Committee for 13 years; the Ritual Committee, for many years. Our new Pres, Barbara Schmidt, is also 1stVP on the New England Council, is Chairperson of the N.E. Scholarship Committee and is very active with the Vetra Dancers, a Lithuanian Folk Dance Group that travels all over to perform.

Our Dec Kucios meeting was the victim of the typical New England weather - snow and more snow! Unfortunately, we were unable to reschedule.

The January meeting met the same fate but we were able to hold the meeting the following week. We were fortunate to have Rev Ignacia Mikalonis, IVE, from Argentina as our celebrant. His grandparents were born in Lithuania and live in Argentina where he was born. He has several members of his family in the Religious and they are starting a Mission in Lithuania. Father is stationed in Washington, DC.

We offered prayers for our departed members Peter Januska, Lillian Argust, and Nellie Klimaytis.

On the sick list are Bob and Aldona Marcavage, Peter Radzwillas, Amelia Wilson, Anne Gecevicus, Stella Marcinauskis, Milda Lietuvninkas, Eleanor Wisnieski.

Laurynas Misevicius introduced 2 MBA students from Lithuania who are studying at the University of Bridgeport - Eugenia Fedosezeva and Nijole Tarvainaitė. Alvina and Florence were seranaded in honor of their 59th Wedding Anniversary. They were married in St. George's.

Our Lithuanian Independence Day celebration was a huge success and even the weather cooperated. We were pleased that so many attended the Mass

and the church hall was filled to capacity for the program that followed. Rev Julio LoPresti, IVE, Pasor of St. George's, presided at the Mass of Thanksgiving. Helen Janiunas and Laurynas Misevicius did the readings in Lithuanian. Music was provided by Mary Grosso, organist, and concert-violinist, Evita Orlinyte. Reception followed in the church hall and refreshments were served.

Pres Barbara Schmidt welcomed the guests and members and the Lithuanian and American anthems were sung. Laurynas read a proclamation from the Ambassador of Lithuania. Our cultural chairperson, Gintare Ivaska, gave a talk of "Forty Years of Darkness" and stressed the importance of keeping the Lithuanian language in the forefront as much as we can - even those of us who are not fluent. Vetra Dances from New Haven, under the direction of our own Nancy Pawasauskas, presented 6 folk dances, involving the guests in several of them. They are looking forward to performing in Chicago in July. Charles Brilvitch, Bridgeport historian, presented a program on the history of the South End. His slides brought back memories of places and buildings that no longer exist. The South End of Bridgeport with the shores of Long Island Sound was known as "Where the Lithuanians Live". Most of our parents settled there upon arrival from the "Old Country". They started to build the church in 1907.

During the afternoon, donations to the various Lithuanian charities were accepted. Our members and guests were most generous. Novelties and Lithuanian cookbooks were sold.

MidCentral District

C-25 Cleveland, OH Ursula Kunsitis

Fr. Dale, Pastor of St Mary's in Livingston, Montana, joined his parents Steve and Lillian, on a 2-week trip to

Czechoslovakia to visit relatives. They had such a good time there that plans are in the wind for a repeat trip this Summer!

Our deepest sympathy and condolences to Jean Marks and her family on the death of her sister, Eleanore Drummond Daughter, Mary Beth Roberts, flew in from Montana for the funeral.

Our Lithuanian Independence Day Commemoration was celebrated at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church with the Flags ceremony at the outdoor memorial followed by Mass officiated by our Spiritual Advisor, Father Gediminas Kijauskas. Dick Marks carried the American flag, proudly, in the church procession and Craig Todd was one of the Gift-bearers. Missing from the procession was Theresa Capuria who had discovered a scary gas leak on Sat night which forced her to leave her home for several days. She is now back home safe and sound, looking out her window at a torn-up driveway which won't be repaired til late Spring - and, incidentally, was just poured last Summer.

On March 20, Paul and Irene Chalko celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary with a trip to Toronto and a "little theatre"! Congratulations to both of you and many more years of health and happiness!

Dick and Jean Marks are well on their way to Indian Rock Beach, FL for a couple of weeks of R&R.

Jim and Joan Thompson and Fran Pranskevich are enjoying a month to their favorite Condo in Ft. Lauderdale, enjoying the sun, beach, and golf courses.

We wish all our members a very Happy Easter and an Enjoyable, Safe Summer and a special "Hello" to all our house-bound and ailing members - You are in our thoughts and prayers!

C-96 Dayton, OH Frances Petkus HM

C-96's latest "No Bake" Bake Sale proved once again to be a great success. Added to this was our monthly income from the council's 50/50 raffle enabling the council to disperse our Charity Fund to the following: Aid to Lithuania Inc, St. Casimir's Guild, Inc., Our Lady of Siluva Fund, Lithuanian Children's Relief Fund- Brockton, MA, Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid - Brooklyn, NY, and North East Churches Emergency Fund. Thanks to Elinor Sluzas and Eloise Berczelly for taking care of the "No Bake" project. Special thanks must go to our council's Social Chair, Elaine Pacovsky for 2 warm lunches following the January and February meetings.

A Mass of Thanksgiving for the freedom Lithuania continues to enjoy was held on Feb 15 at 10:30AM at Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church. With Elaine Pacovsky having had surgery, the Petkus'- Fran, Michael, Norma, Robert and Erin, stepped in to help her by preparing the Special Brunch following Mass in the church hall. Elinor Sluzas and Eric Geiger shared updated information on Lithuania's status at this time. Father Michael Holloran led us in prayer. Donations were collected for Aid to Lithuania, Inc.

The 4 parishes of Old North Dayton, Holy Cross, St. Adalbert, St. Stephen and Our Lady of the Rosary, all under the care of Fr. Mike, held its 2nd Annual Four Parish Mardi Gras on Feb 22. Fran Petkus, Elinor Sluzas, Michael, Norma, Robert and Erin Petkus, Annamarie Sluzas Berger, George and Frances Mikalauskas and Joseph Fletcher handled the chores for Holy Cross. Their part of the menu was preparing New Orleans style Jambalaya and Bread Pudding! Once again, the event was sold out and a great success!

Get-well wishes go to Eloise Berczelly, August (Gus) Blum, Ida Kavy, Elaine Pacovsky, Alice Petkus and Mildred Steinbrunner.

Blessed Easter from the members of C-96 to all of you!!!

Amber District

C-3 Philadelphia, PA Victor Stepalovitch

C-3 hopes that all of you had a Happy and Joyous Holiday Season and extends to all of you a wonderful and prosperous New Year.

C-3 sends our congratulations to Alberta and Charles Weigand on becoming Grandparents to a baby girl in November.

Once again, our "Kucios" was a big success and C-3's Annual Christmas Party was enjoyed by all. The food was excellent and everyone exchanged holiday greetings to one another. Next year, C-3 will be celebrating our 20th anniversary of "Kucios".

C-3 members are deeply sad at the death of member Joseph Drumstas. Our condolences go out to his wife, Diane, and her children. Joseph will be greatly missed by all of us.

C-3 also sends condolences to member Victor Stepalovitch whose sister passed away.

Many C-3 members attended the Pre-Lenten Banquet at St. George's Hall after the 5PM Mass on Feb 21 and everyone had a wonderful, enjoyable evening.

Lithuanian Independence Day again was celebrated at St. George's and St. Andrew's and St. Casimir's churches on Feb 22. Activities followed after Mass at the Lithuanian Music Hall. Many of our members attended these Masses.

MidAmerica District

C-82 Gary, IN Daisy Talley

Feb 22, 2004 was a perfect day to celebrate the 86th anniversary of Lithuanian Independence Day. The event was hosted by the Lithuanian-American Organizations of NW Indiana, including, K of L C-82, at the American Legion Post #430 in Merrillville, IN.

Birute Vilutis, Pres of LAC of US, East Chicago, IN Chapter, welcomed the great group who came to help celebrate Lithuanian Independence Day. After the Pledge of Allegiance, the Anthems of both America and Lithuania were sung, led by Bronius Muras and Sr. Janine Golubickis, SSC, both C-82 members.

Mistress of Cermonies, Joanna Rudzevicius, Pres of C-82 also greeted the guests.

Prayers for those who died for the cause of Freedom were said by Msgr. Ignatius Urbonas, Spiritual Advisor. They did not die in vain.

A delicious traditional Lithuanian dinner was served and enjoyed by all, along with the friendship of the people. Food Committee was chaired by Loreta Raudonis Vician, assisted by Ursula Tavaras, Barbara Balt, June and Joan Grigonis (twins), Joanna Rudzevicius.

Sr Janine greeted the Lithuanians who gathered to celebrate. Guest-speaker was Ausrele Sakalaite, Regional Pres of Bendruomene. Bronius Muras rendered an inspiring "Brangi Lietuva".

Proclamations from Mayor Robert Pastrick (East Chicago) and Scott King (Gary) were read. Mildred Jagiella presented the Resolution for Formal Admission of Lithuania to NATO.

The group sang "God Bless America" in Lithuanian and English. (translation by Faustas Strolia HM)

Entertainment was provided by DJ and C-82 member, Kestutis Siupienius.

C-112 Chicago, IL JMShain

March 16th found C-112 members meeting at Nativity BVM parish hall, with president, Leon Pauksta presiding. Rev. Anthony Markus, our spiritual advisor, began the meeting with a prayer. The minutes were read by our secretary, Anna Marie Gercius. First vice-president, Al Mockus, thanked all who attended the wake service for Vladas Paliulonis. Second vice-president, Anele Pocius, reported that we have welcomed 3 more members to our Council. She also informed those present that Terri Vaitkus, financial secretary reported that we have only about ten members who need to get their dues in. Maria Deksnis announced that the Junior K of L'ers from our District will be having an Easter egg decorating class at the Jagiella farm on May 20th. Father Tony Markus announced that at his parish, Our Lady of the Ridge, there will be a demonstration on the tradition of Palm weaving on the Saturday before Palm Sunday, from 2:00 to 4:00. He also added, that an article about Our Lady of Siluva appeared in the "Leaves" magazine, and as a result, he received many phone calls and e-mail, from readers who requested more information. Also, Mr. Bukauskas, from Roseland, will have about 1,000 holy cards of Our Lady of Siluva printed, including a special prayer on the reverse side of the picture. Sister Theresa

Papsis had her regular 50-50 raffle for Aid to Lithuania. Everyone was then reminded about this year's Convention and urged to attend. C-112 w hosted the MAMD District St. Casimir Day celebration with Mass and luncheon on March 7th. Seventy-two people were in attendance. Mary Ann Gercius received her third Degree at this event. Ann Pauksta received her first degree at today's meeting.

Rev. Adomavicius reported that 7 priests will be ordained in Telsiai, Lithuania this year, and asked if members would donate money for the purchase of vestments for their ordination. The Council then voted to make a special donation and anyone else who wished to donate privately could do so. He also told members that the crown which was stolen from the Siluva shrine has now been returned.

Our annual cemetery walk will again take place this year on Memorial Day at St. Casimir cemetery.

Julie Zakarka suggested that we have a "Chinese auction" at our next meeting in May, and all agreed. Each member is to bring in a few items for this purpose.

We then wished each other a very Blessed and Happy Easter, as we wish to all our fellow Councils. God bless you!



The Amber District Meeting was held March 14 at St. George's Hall after the 11AM Mass with a luncheon.

As is the custom of C-3, every year, during the Easter Season of visiting a Holy Shrine, we will be visiting the Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Doylestown, PA, April 24.

Hopefully, with the Winter and bad weather gone, C-3 members hope that all "VYCIAI" members had a Happy Easter Holiday.

C-74 Scranton, PA **Marie Laske**

The Rev. A. Pavone told the Annual Respect for Life Prayer Breakfast of the Scranton Chapter of Pennsylvanians for Human Life...." Of all the things that need to be done, none is more important than working to get people into office that won't turn their backs on an entire portion of the public that is being destroyed..." Pope John Paul said, "Love life, cherish life from conception until death." Several people representing St. Joseph's Lithuanian Church attended.

C-74 had its annual Lithuanian Independence Day Flag Raising at Scranton's City Hall. Richard and Marie Laske, Pres, were chairpersons. The Honorable Christopher A. Doherty read the proclamation. He then presented Councilman John Pocius, Jr. a plaque for the Lithuanian Man of the Year. Marie also presented a Lithuanian woven juosta/sash. John opened the Flag Raising with a prayer. Jim O'Neil, whose mother was Lithuanian, read an article on the Hill of Crosses in Lithuania. Mr. Quarter, a member of the K of L, from Montrose, spoke about Lithuania's history. Robert Gilbert, a North Scranton Rotarian, spoke on Vilnius, the capitol of Lithuania. Jean Kavalines, 4th degree member, spoke on Lithuanian joining NATO. Marie

Laske presented Councilperson Janet Evans an amber necklace and an amber pendant to Mayor Doherty for his wife. Vito Shimkus, born in Lithuania, received a Lithuanian carved wooden plaque. Robert Corado, a newly elected commissioner, was also in attendance. The Mayor gave all who attended a coffee mug with "Building a Better Scranton" on it. We thank all who made the Flag Raising a success.

C-143 Pittston, PA **MaryAnn Connor**

New officers were installed at our Jan meeting. How lucky we were that Fr Peter Alisuskas, our Spiritual Advisor, was able to celebrate Mass with us that day. Officers are: Pres, Lithuanian Affairs, Public Relations, Frank Yoga; VP Nellie Bayoras Romanas; Rec Sec, M. Pam Smith; Fin Sec and Lithuanian Culture, Martha Warnagaris; Treas and Ritual, Jean Kapochus Mihalick; Tustees - Rosalie Kizis, Marie Lauck and Anna Walatkas; Sgt-at-Arms, Casimir Kizis, Jr.; Historian, Ursula Danoski; Sunshine, Mary Ann Cipolla; Vytyis Corresp, Mary Ann Connor.

Lithuanian Independence Day was once again celebrated with a flag raising ceremony Feb 16 at the Pittston Court House. 20 flags adorned various parts of the city for the week. Martha Warnagaris was chairman with Nellie Bayoras Romanas as Honorary Chairman. Prayers were led by Monsignor John Bendik and everyone enjoyed brunch served at St. Casimir's Church Hall after the ceremony.

Please include in your prayers a speedy recovery for Nellie Bayoras Romanas recuperating at home and also Steve Soha.

We are saddened that 3 of our members have passed away, recently: Michael Krause, Stella Wasser, and Charles Dajnowski. Prayers to their families and their friends.

C-144 ANTHRACITE, PA **Brone**

C-144 observed Lithuanian Independence Day Sunday, February 15th with Mass at St. Casimir's Church celebrated by our Spiritual Director, Rev. Ronald Jankaitis, followed by a luncheon in the church hall. Atty. Karen Domalakes was the guest speaker. Her presentation, "A History of Lithuania" was very interesting and well received. The affair was capably chaired by Suzanne Domalakes and Terri Rautzahn, and their committee did a fine job of serving and cleaning up. A big aciu to all.

Plans were made to attend the District St. Casimir's Day meeting March 14th in Philadelphia, hosted by Council 3. A mini bus will be chartered for those going.

We were saddened by the loss of four council members. Adolph Kalvaitis was a new member but he was always a great supporter of our Lithuanian Days. Alma Linder, Beatrice Wasley and Stanley Silkunas were long time, very active K of L members. We remember them for being dependable, hard workers for all of our affairs. They will all be missed.

This year, Anthracite Council 144 will celebrate a milestone 90th anniversary of our Lithuanian Days, and we are trying to make this one outstanding. August 14th and 15th are the dates so mark your calendars. The celebration will again take place at the Schuylkill Mall, Frackville, PA located at the intersection of I-81 and Rt. 61. Peter Teresavage has once again taken on the big job of chairman. Iki.



2005

Where will our next Convention be???????

*Any Council interested in bidding
please contact either of your Supreme Council
trustees!!!!!!!!!!!!*

A.S.A.P.

*Joe Stiklius or Mary Beth Slakis
(see Vytis inside front cover for address, phone
or e-mail)*

**Hosting the Convention builds up your Council Treasury and provides
an opportunity to have Vyčiai visit your part of the U.S.A.**

A SPECIAL EASTER GREETING

A special Easter message and greeting was received from Msgr. Edmundas Putrimas, the Lithuanian Bishops Conference Delegate for the Pastoral Care of Lithuanian Catholics Outside of Lithuania. He presently resides in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

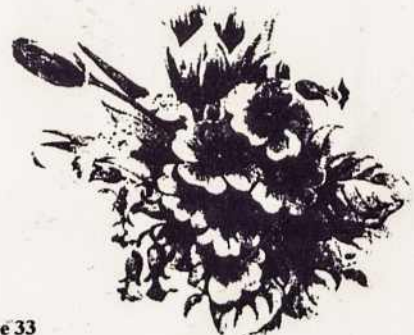
In his letter, he tells us that this year, 2004, is designated as the year commemorating "Lithuanian books and Language." He then reminds us of the bravery of the "knygnešiai," the "book carriers" of 100

years ago, who risked their lives by secretly carrying books into Lithuania when the Russians placed a ban on the Lithuanian press. Their courage and dedication helped to preserve the country's precious language and traditions, and aided in the rebirth of the nation.

He also urges us to, "Fear not!" as is written in Matthew 28:10, and go forth to spread the message, that Jesus Christ is truly risen!

He also wishes to us, that the holy spirit of the Easter Season would help us to rise above our fears and doubts, and bring the Christian Joy

and Hope to others, as well as to our families and parishes, and help those newly arrived here from Lithuania to safely and comfortably settle in their new surroundings. Let us help the adults, as well as the youth, to find their place amidst our communities. He then extends his best wishes for a Blessed Easter!



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*This is the day
 which
 the Lord has made;
 let us rejoice
 and
 be glad in it!*