

LITHUANIAN HERITAGE

SUPPLEMENT TO DRAUGAS NEWS
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LITHUANIAN HERITAGE

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Cover Credits:

FRONT and BACK COVERS: 10th Song Festival. Photo by Jonas Kuprys.

INSIDE FRONT COVER: Bee Hives at Lithuanian Museum of Ancient Beekeeping. Photo by Wosyl, Wikimedia Commons.

INSIDE BACK COVER: Bill Walton and Fr. Lukas Laniauskas, S.J. Photo by Jonas Kuprys.

THIS PAGE: Beekeeper. Photo by Kzenon. Shutterstock.



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You have arisen, our homeland, Lietuva!

Those of us who had the opportunity to attend or, even better, to participate in the 10th North American Song Festival in Chicago are still recovering from the unique experience. The four-hour performance was breathtaking, inspiring, and draining (in a good way). A 90-min video excerpt is available on the Web, thanks to Lithuanian Radio and Television, and they promise that a telecast of the entire four-hour performance will be archived by the time that this issue of *Lithuanian Heritage* has reached our readers. In this issue we post some spectacular photos from the Song Festival, and one can view many more on the *Draugas News* facebook page. We also are publishing the moving lyrics, along with an English translation, to one of the centerpiece compositions performed at the Festival, the “Singing Revolution” cantata, written by Rugilė Kazlauskaitė.

The Monday after the Song Festival, July 6th, is celebrated as Statehood Day in Lithuania, being the anniversary of the coronation of King Mindaugas in 1253. It has become a tradition for Lithuanians living abroad, no matter where they might be living, to come together on this day and sing the national anthem. In downtown Chicago, several hundred Lithuanians gathered in a flash mob at Cloud Gate (“The Bean”) next to Lake Michigan, creating a happening that was given television coverage by Fox News. So, it’s perhaps appropriate that we describe in this issue how the Lithuanian national anthem came to be written by Vincas Kudirka, and how its use was revived after the restoration of independence in 1990. In addition to the Lithuanian words and the English translation posted on the Lithuanian government Web site, we’re providing a slightly modified, singable English version that perhaps still needs to be fine-tuned.

Recently two Lithuanian Americans were successful in obtaining crowdfunding support to help prepare and launch their books. Sandra Baksys is a writer-historian whose book chronicles the experiences of Lithuanians in Springfield, Illinois. Donna Druchunas’s book is about the continuing traditions of Lithuanian knitting. Both authors kindly agreed to write articles about their area of expertise for this issue of *Lithuanian Heritage*. When I was in Lithuania last year, one of Ona’s relatives, Prof. Ramutis Rindzevičius, who happens to be a well-respected beekeeper, treated me to some very unique and delicious honey from his hives. We’re very happy to present here an article about beekeeping in Lithuania, a blend of the latest science and old traditions.

Jonas Daugirdas, Acting Editor

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Wondering about your Estate Plan?

Remember the **Draugas Foundation** and assure the future of our Lithuanian-American Press. Since 1992, the Draugas Foundation has served to sustain the Lithuanian language *Draugas*, and now comes to the aid of *Draugas News* and *Lithuanian Heritage* as well. Over the years, it has supported capital improvements and invested in printing hardware and computers. When times were especially rough, it helped pay operating expenses. The **Draugas Foundation** is our lifeline and guarantor of the future of Draugas’s unique set of publications.

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Heritage Mailbox

Cheesemaking (some tips)

I read Ona Daugirdas' article first thing when I received my *Lithuanian Heritage* magazine today. Being a hobby cheesemaker myself, I found it interesting. But I also have a few helpful hints. You see, my wife is from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and we both enjoy the Finnish fresh cheese called *juustoa* (squeaky cheese). She gets the *Finnish American Reporter* and I get your magazine. The recipes for *juustoa* are easy and simple, and as old as the hills, yet I had trouble making it. Over and over again, the curds came out too grainy and fine. And it never properly "squeaked" when I bit into it after the broiling process. I started reading up on how to make cheese and learned to make brie, blue, Port Salut, cheddar, and more. This helped me be able to finally make *juustoa* properly.

1) **Do not use homogenized milk.** The homogenizing process yields a poorly developed curd and it can become fine grained and falls apart too easily. Organic creamline milk is the best... the kind of milk that separates the cream on top. 2) **Use whole milk.** Whole milk is a bit more forgiving when making cheese. After you master it, you can move to 2%, but never skim milk. 3) You can cheat the process if your milk is ice-cold by **warming the milk on the stove very gently to room temperature, and no warmer.** Use a thermometer and stir to avoid overheating the bottom. 4) **Do not skip the buttermilk.** It contains the cultures needed to start the process (hence the names "cultured buttermilk" and "cultured sour cream"). 5) Do not be tempted to check the progress of gelling before Ona's recommendation of **2 days**. 6) When cutting the curds and separating the whey, be very very gentle and very

very slow. Like bread, **overmixing ruins it.** And finally, 7) Yes, **never use lemon juice or citric acid.** If you do, you might as well boil the milk and make ricotta cheese. The "souring" comes from the cultures that exist in the buttermilk and the sour taste comes from the production of lactic acid as the cultures ferment the milk.

DAN BUTKUS
Madison, WI

Editor's response:

Dear Dan:

Many thanks for the tip about using homogenized milk. Much of the controversy over "raw milk" in the United States has to do with the possibility (quite low, as I understand it) that unpasteurized milk might contain dangerous bacteria. However, pasteurization has nothing to do with homogenization, and one can buy pasteurized, but non-homogenized milk. I found some locally at our grocery store in the Chicago area under the Organic Valley label:

An example of pasteurized, nonhomogenized whole milk.



Japanese graves in Siberia

Reading about Chiune Sugihara made me think of another Japanese-Lithuanian collaboration, that of Antanas Petrokas, who in 1989 organized the Committee "Ad Patria" for the removal of remains and social aid to Lithuanians deported to the Soviet Union. Mr. Petrokas himself was exiled to the Irkutsk region of Siberia as a child. The Committee organized expeditions looking for Lithuanians and their remains and assisted relatives in returning them to Lithuania from various districts of Siberia and from near the Arctic Circle. Every summer he

and a group of young people would crisscross the areas where Lithuanians were sent noting names and locations.

In their travels they also came across Japanese graves and similar Japanese searchers. It seems that Japan was the only other country looking for their dead in Siberia, so soon cooperation has developed between the two groups. The Japanese were very grateful to Mr. Petrokas for his help and presented him with a video recorder, a video player and a television set, things that were beyond his means to buy in those days in Lithuania. With it he was then able to photograph graves and videotape descendants of deportees still living in Russia. Unfortunately Mr. Petrokas died and then conditions in Russia changed, so there are no organized searches any more.

TADAS STOMMA
Tega Cay, SC

Editor's response:

Dear Tada:

Many thanks for this interesting information. I knew about the searches in Siberia related to deported Lithuanians, but had no idea that similar searches were being carried out by the Japanese. I would like to comment on your last sentence, that organized searches and expeditions to Siberia have ceased. There are annual expeditions to Siberia being organized from Lithuania by the „Misija Sibiras“ group (www.misijasibiras.lt). This organization began its work in 2005, and has now organized no fewer than 12 trips for young Lithuanians to visit Siberia, to meet with Lithuanians and persons of Lithuanian descent still living there, and to help preserve and care for gravesites of Lithuanians who perished there.

We welcome letters and comments from our readers. Please address correspondence to: Lithuanian Heritage, c/o Draugas News, 4545 W 63rd St., Chicago, IL 60629; Fax: 773-585-8284. email: draugolaikrastis@gmail.com Include your full name, address, and telephone number or email address. Letters may be edited for space or clarity.

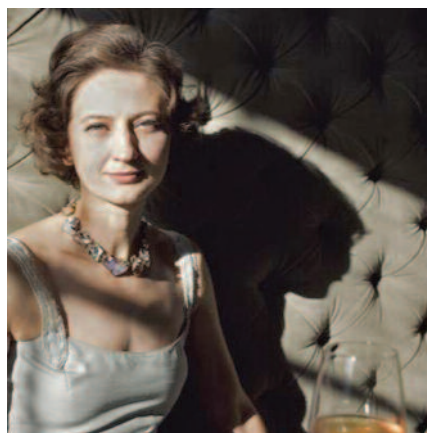
Lithuanians around the World



Rolandas Kriščiūnas (usa.mfa.lt)

As of this Fall, the Republic of Lithuania has a new ambassador to the United States. His Excellency **Rolandas Kriščiūnas** is from the city of Panevėžys. He studied Business Informatics at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, then completed European Union Studies at the Hague. He completed Master's Studies in Economic Sciences at Ohio University and Management Studies at the Swedish Institute in Stockholm. His work experience was mostly in Economic Analysis and Finance. Here's hoping he can generate a lot of new overseas investment in Lithuania and help maintain critical U.S. support during these uncertain political times.

Vilma Mazaite is a sommelier. For you beer drinkers who don't know what a sommelier is, he or she is an employee of a restaurant with extensive knowledge of wine and food pairings, and who usually orders and maintains stocks of wines at high-end restaurants. Vilma currently works at laV, a French-themed restaurant in Austin, Texas, "inspired by Provence," which has been



Vilma Mazaite (twitter.com/vmazaite)

named one of "America's 100 Best Wine Restaurants" by *Wine Enthusiast* magazine. Vilma was recently written up by the *New York Times* blog in July 8 of this year, where she was quoted as remarking, "Once you have something really good that you hadn't before, you remember everything that happened around it: with whom you drank it, when you drank it. I don't think any other beverage does that. A cocktail will never do that." At the restaurant, Vilma hosts courses, for women only, where they can sample new varieties and flavors. This year, she was named one of *Food & Wine* magazine's "Sommeliers of the Year."

Vaidas Šukys opened his Lithuania-themed restaurant in the San Francisco area, in Alameda, CA, in October of 2013. He was the subject of a feature article in *Draugas News* in January of 2014. Cabbage rolls, cold beet soup, and cepelinai are among the signature dishes served. Vaidas told *Draugas News*, "The idea was that the design and decor would take you straight to Old Vilnius, into one of the old town



Vaidas Šukys and the Mama Papa Lithuanian Restaurant and Tea House. (demenis-photography.com)

squares. One wall is made of horizontal one-cut wooden boards, the other wall is made of bricks; towards the kitchen is a mural with a detail of Vilnius' Old Town and on the other side is a wooden bar decorated with an old wheel from a horse carriage." The restaurant has become a frequent meeting place for San Francisco area Lithuanians.

On June 19th, Vytautas Žalys, Lithuania's ambassador to Canada, bestowed the Knight's Cross of Gediminas on **Gabija Juozapavičiūtė Petrauskienė** for her services to Lithuania. What did Gabija do to deserve this august honor? She was the Chair of the Lithuanian Canadian Community in 1991-92. At that time, along with Vytautas Bireta, she organized a funding drive to raise a million dollars to help the newly resurgent Lithuanian republic. The money was used for various projects including buying and furnishing a building in Brussels to house Lithuania's repre-



Gabija Juozapavičiūtė Petrauskienė

sentatives and financing trips to North America by Vytautas Landsbergis, Chair of the reactivated Lithuanian *Seimas* (parliament) and Gediminas Vagnorius, Parliament Chair at the time. Funds were spent to provide equipment to ensure the continuing ability of Lithuania to communicate with the outside world in the event of a feared blockade, as well as to support the minting of litas coins enabling a prompt changeover to the new national currency. In 1991 Gabija was appointed as a consultant to Lithuania's prime minister, and, together with the Canada International Development Agency, she prepared a plan designed to strengthen the administrative capabilities of the new government. On a personal note, I (Jonas Daugirdas) still remember Gabija in her role of organizing the 3rd and 4th World Youth Association Congresses in South America (1975-76) and in Europe (1979), both of which I attended.

Dr. Agnia Grigas is an energy and political risk expert, specializing in Russia, Eastern Europe and the post-Soviet space. She is the author of "The Politics of Energy and Memory between the Baltic States and Russia" (Ashgate 2013) and a frequent media contributor (*CNN, CCTV, Forbes, Bloomberg, Reuters, BBC, The New York Times, The Huffington Post*). Ms. Grigas is a fellow at the McKinnon Center for Global



Agnia Grigas, PhD

Affairs at Occidental College. She recently (9/17/2014) coauthored an article in *Forbes* magazine on "Five Russian Myths that have Helped Putin Win in Ukraine."

Marius Markevicius, who was responsible for bringing "The Other Dream Team" to the big screen, is now working on a film based on the best selling novel by Ruta Sepetys, "Between Shades of Grey". Published in more than 40 countries and 26 languages, "Between Shades of Grey" tells the story of a 15-year-old aspiring artist who is deported



Marius Markevicius (*indiewire.com*)

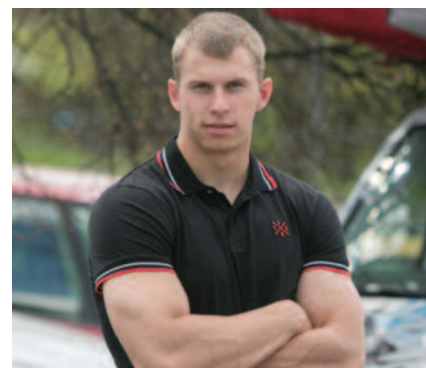
to Siberia during Stalin's cleansing of the Baltic region during WWII. As detailed by the *Hollywood Reporter*, Markevicius said, "It's amazing that the atrocities of Stalin and the Siberian mass deportations are still a relatively unknown and untold part of history. We hope to change that with this film. I'm also thrilled to once again collaborate with Ben York Jones on this adaptation. Ben has an incredible ability to capture raw emotion and young love in his writing, and those two elements will be the key drivers in our film."

The **Baku European Games** took place recently (June 2015) in Baku, Azerbaijan, and included 6,000 athletes from 50 countries, competing in 20 sports. Lithuanians took home no less than 7 medals: 2 golds, 1 silver, and 4 bronze. The gold medal-

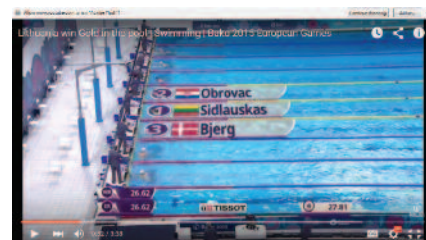
ists were Henrikas Žustautas and Andrius Šidlauskas.



Baku European Games, June 2015.



Henrikas Žustautas. Gold medal: Canoe Sprint. (*FB/zustautas1*)



Andrius Šidlauskas. Gold medal: 50 m. breaststroke.



Andrius Šidlauskas. (photo by Vytautas Dranginis / LTOK)

A Song Festival to Be Long-Remembered

by Rimas Černius

with photos by Jonas Kuprys and Arvydas Zabulionis

Lithuanian song festivals in North America are special and rare events. The first one took place in Chicago's Coliseum in 1956. This year the 10th Lithuanian Song Festival took place at the UIC Pavilion in Chicago on July 5th. It was a truly festive event. Memories of the festival will linger with singers

and audience members alike for a long time. Thanks to photographers Jonas Kuprys and Arvydas Zabulionis, here are some memorable moments from a very special song festival. You can view a 90-minute extract filmed by Lithuanian Radio and Television at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8eTIXCTzz0>



Young Lithuanians dressed in traditional national costumes get ready to present the flags. (Photo by J. Kuprys)



All rise as the flags of the United States of America, Canada and Lithuania enter the UIC Pavilion. (Photo by A. Zabulionis)



The children's chorus took an active part in the Festival. Dressed in tee-shirts with the mascots of the Festival—orange and yellow birds nicknamed Melody and Rhythm—the children let their voices be heard. (Photo by J. Kuprys)



Close to 1,400 singers from a total of 65 choral groups came to sing at the Festival. They traveled from all parts of the United States and Canada, plus there was one group from England and five groups from Lithuania. The audience was able to get a closer look at the singers thanks to a large screen that showed streaming video of the performers. (Photo by J. Kuprys)



Soloists Rasa Serra and Rima Birutienė join the chorus for the song "Lek' Gervė" ("The Crane").
(Photo by A. Zabulionis)



Two soloists from Lithuania brought their artistry to the song festival. Shown here, singer Rasa Serra and musician Saulius Petreikis perform a Lithuanian folk song "Vaikštinėjo Tėvulis" ("My Dear Dad Was Walking"). (Photo by J. Kuprys)



Conductor Raimondas Katinas from Lithuania leads the chorus in the song "Padainuosim Mes Sustoję" ("We Will Sing Standing Up"). Here he commands the chorus (and the audience too) to lie down like little birds. This was one of several songs where the audience was able to sing along.
(Photo by J. Kuprys)



The second part of the Festival showcased the world premiere of a five-part cantata *Dainuojanti Revoliucija*: "Lietuva, Tu Prisikėlei su Daina!" (*The Singing Revolution* "Lithuania, You Have Arisen with a Song!"). The composer was Kęstutis Daugirdas. The words were by Rugilė Kazlauskaitė. The cantata was illustrated with live choreography and scenes projected on the jumbotron screen. Here, conducted by Kęstutis Daugirdas, the cantata begins by depicting a major public anti-Soviet meeting that took place in Lithuania on August 23, 1987, next to the monument to Adam Mickiewicz in Vilnius. (Photo by A. Zabulionis)



The Festival honored partisans who gave their lives fighting for Lithuania's freedom. The chorus sang the song "Partizano Mirtis" ("Death of the Partisan"). The music was by Faustas Strolia, a beloved choir-master who passed away last December. Violinist Rūta Pakšaitė-Cole, accordionist Rimas Polikaitis and recorder player Saulius Petraitis accompanied the song. (Photo by J. Kuprys)

The art of accordion playing was alive and well at the Festival. Sister Ignė Marijošūtė welcomes a parade of accordionists who accompanied the chorus in a medley of camp songs. (Photo by J. Kuprys)

DAINUOJANTI REVOLIUCIJA “Lietuva, Tu Prisikėlei su Daina!”

Kęstučio Daugirdo muzika

Rugilės Kazlauskaitės žodžiai

I. Tiek metų kentėta 1987 m. rugpjūčio 23 d.

Tiek metų kentėta galvą nulenkus,
Tiek metų tamsoj gyveno tauta.
Baimė duris buvo užtrenkus,
Bet tyliai bunda laisvės dvasia.
Ligi gelmių suvirpa mūs širdys,
Ten dar kraujoja tėvynės žaizda, tėvynės žaizda, tėvynės žaizda.

Apie tėvų kančią ir mirtį lai nesudrebės ant lūpų tiesa.
Vėjai skraidina pirmą dainą,
Marija, tu švieti aukštai iš dangaus.
Per giesmę sutrauktos melo grandinės,
Marija, apgink mus nuo priešo baisaus, nuo priešo baisaus.

Tiek metų kentėta, tiek metų kentėta.

II. Į rytojų keliame akis 1988 m. rugpjūčio 23 d.

Šiandien iš šios išdegintos žemės naujai užaugo ažuolai,
Tylinčioj, priespaudos menėj, tylinčioj, vėlei suskambo mūsų balsai.

Į rytojų keliame akis, tikime baigias, baigias jau naktis,
Ir tėvynę vėlei atradau savo širdy.

Tų geležinių sienų galybę drąsi daina galėtų nuverst.
Skaudų istorijos lapą laikas artėja amžiams užverst.

Į rytojų keliame akis, tikime baigias, tikime baigias jau naktis,

Ir tėvynę vėlei atradau savo širdy.

Į rytojų keliame akis, tikime baigias, baigias jau naktis,
Ir tėvynę vėlei atradau savo širdy.

Ligi gelmių suvirpa mūs širdys, tariame vardą Lietuvos.
Lietuva, Lietuva, Lietuva, Lietuva, Lietuva.

Laikas artėja, laikas artėja, neišsiginsim savo dalios.

Visas pasaulis tegirdi: Kelias į laisvę–tautos valia!

III. Baltijos kelias 1989 m. rugpjūčio 23 d.

Baltijos kelias, kelias į laisvę.

Baltijos kelias, kelias į laisvę.

Bunda jau Baltija,

Baltijos kelias, kelias į laisvę.

Bunda jau Baltija, rankoje ranka.

Bunda jau Baltija, rankoje ranka.

Broli, sese, stovim už laisvę.

Stovim už laisvę, stovim už laisvę, laisvę, laisvę,

Baltijos kelias, kelias į laisvę.

IV. Tu prisikėlei 1990 m. kovo 11 d.

Tu prisikėlei, Tėvyne Lietuva, pražydusi ieva.

Pakirsta, sužeista, kaip pavasaris balta.

Tave išvydau, tu liejiesi upe, galinga ir šventa,

Atkovota, sulaukta, trispalvė vėliava!

Pragydo tauta didybės šviesoje, šviesoje.

Aš giedu tavyje, atgimus Lietuva, Lietuva.

SINGING REVOLUTION “Lietuva, You Have Arisen with a Song!”

Music: Kęstutis Daugirdas Lyrics: Rugilė Kazlauskaitė;

Translation: Jonas Daugirdas

I. Such long years of torment August 23, 1987

Such long years of torment, heads bowed in suffering,
In darkness and fear the nation survived,
Doors locked up tightly, everyone frightened,
Now softly roused by liberty's cry.

Deep in our hearts comes a trembling,
There where still bleed the motherland's wounds,
The motherland's wounds, the motherland's wounds.

The death and demise of our mothers and fathers,
A truth frozen cold and stopped on our lips.

But on the wind aloft a song is turning,
Marija, your radiance streams from Heaven above.

This hymn rends asunder the chains forged from falsehoods,

Marija, protect against this terrible foe, this terrible foe.
Such long years of torment, such long years of torment.

II. To the morrow in hope we lift our gaze

August 23, 1988

In earth scarred by fire and ruination, oak trees growing once again.

Gagged and stilled, in oppression once silenced, gagged and stilled,

Voices ring no longer constrained.

To the morrow, in hope we lift our gaze,

Waiting for morning, to sweep the night away,

And our homeland, we feel her once again, a joy in our heart.

A fence of steel, a wall made of iron, are overturned by valiant song.

The time has come to bury forever, this page of history unduly prolonged.

To the morrow, in hope we lift our gaze,

Waiting for morning, to sweep the night away,

And our homeland, we feel her once again, a joy in our heart.

Deep in our hearts comes a trembling

As we give voice to our fatherland's name,

Lietuva, Lietuva, Lietuva.

The moment is near, the time fast approaching,

For each one of us to take up our role.

All the world's countries must know this:

Pathway to freedom—our solemn goal!

III. Balts on a pathway to freedom

August 23, 1989

Balts on a pathway, pathway to freedom,

Balts on a pathway, pathway to freedom.

Wake from sleep, o Baltija.

Balts on a pathway, pathway to freedom,

Baltija, arm in arm, hand in hand, arm in arm.



The cantata honored the 14 Lithuanians killed on January 13, 1991, when Russian soldiers and tanks tried to suppress Lithuanian independence. (Photo by J. Kuprys)

V. Tikėkime vienas kitu 1991 m. sausio 13 d.

Tamsus debesis apgaubė dangų, baimė užtvindė gatves.
Nejaugi su dundančia armija tankų tėvynę atims iš manęs?

Beginklė ant sniego prieš vėtras nakties į aikštes išeina tauta.

Prieš aidinčius šūvius tik žodžiai giesmės, prieš tankų pabūklus malda.

Praplėšia naktį mirtis klykdama, sniegą nudažo krauju.
Broliai stovėkit kaip stovi tauta, tikėkime vienas kitu, tikėkime!

Lietuva, Lietuva, Lietuva, Lietuva...

Tikėkime, broli, tikėkime, sese, tikėkime, tikėkime vienas kitu.

Lietuva, Lietuva, tu prisikėlei, tu prisikėlei.

Te stiprybę semia tavo sūnūs iš praeities, iš praeities.

Tėvyne Lietuva, tėvyne Lietuva, tu prisikėlei, galinga šventa!

Tu prisikėlei, tu prisikėlei, tu prisikėlei su daina. Su daina!



The cantata commemorated the Baltic Way. On (August 23, 1989) almost 2.5 million people joined hands to form a human chain that stretched from Lithuania through Latvia and Estonia - a living symbol of Baltic solidarity in their struggle for freedom. As the Festival chorus sang, dancers and stage actors joined hands to form their own Baltic Way in the UIC pavilion. (Photo by J. Kuprys)

Wakening, o Baltija, hand in hand, arm in arm.

Brother, sister, stand up for freedom.

Stand up for freedom, freedom, freedom.

Balts on a pathway, pathway to freedom.

IV. You have arisen, our homeland Lietuva

March 11, 1990

You have arisen, our homeland, Lietuva, a tree in glorious bloom.

Axed and tarred, bent and scarred, like springtime, white anew.

I felt you streaming, a river's surging flow, so sacred, proud and strong.

And our flag, battled for, long awaited ours once more.

Erupting in song, in greatness and in light.

I sing as part of you, reborn, o Lietuva, Lietuva.

V. Let's believe in each other January 13, 1991

Gloom and black clouds, roll over the sky and terror floods into the streets.

Don't tell me this thundering convoy of tanks,

Will be taking my country from me!

Unarmed in the snow in the dark stormy night,

Comes the nation defending the square.

With brave songs and hymns against whirling black shells, and with prayers against turrets of tanks.

The night air is rended with screeches of death,

The snow painted scarlet with blood.

Brothers, stand up, as one nation arise;

Believe in each other again, believe we can!

Lietuva, Lietuva, Lietuva...

Believe, O brother; believe, O sister;

Believe in each other again,

Believe we can, believe we can...

Lietuva, Lietuva, you have arisen, you have arisen.

From your past, your sons draw strength.

Our homeland, Lietuva, our nation, Lietuva,

You have arisen, sacred and proud!

You have arisen, you have arisen, with a song. With a song!



Kristina Kliorytė from Montréal conducts the song "Aš Negaliu Sustot Dainuoti" ("I Can't Stop Singing"). (Photo by J. Kuprys)



The Festival conductors line up to join the chorus in the song "Mūsų Dienos kaip Šventė" ("Our Days Are like a Festive Holiday"). Pictured from left to right (only a part of the conductor group is shown) are Darius Polikaitis, Nijolė Benotienė, Juratė Grabaliauskienė, Kęstutis Daugirdas, Rimas Kasputis and Ksaveras Plancūnas. (Photo by J. Kuprys)



The chorus, dancers, and conductors congratulate the two men most responsible for putting together the Festival: Artistic Director Darius Polikaitis (left) and Creative Director Vytautas Čuplinskas (right). (Photo by J. Kuprys)

A Day in the Life of a Lithuanian Beekeeper

by Vereta Rupeikaitė

The humble bee, with its complex way of life and its simple relationship with man, has held fascination for millennia. This is especially true for anyone who has a drop of Lithuanian blood in his veins, because bees, beekeeping and honey are inseparable parts of our culture and cuisine since the times of our forefathers.

Ancient Lithuanian folklore has preserved many riddles and proverbs about bees such as: “a lady sits in the dark house, she weaves without a loom or heddles,” “a family of thousands eats less than one man,” “hard work yields sweet fruit,” “he who loves bees is loved by God.” The evocative Lithuanian word *bičiulis* is derived from the word *bītė* (bee). It connotes not simply a friend, but someone with whom you have a special camaraderie and relationship. Beekeepers had very special relationships with one another. If bees left your hive and swarmed onto your neighbor’s property, you had the option of asking for their return. A beekeeper who graciously allowed his bees to depart, forged an eternal comradeship or *bičiulystė* with his neighbor. Even historical animosities were known to dissolve with these “gifts” of bees. The proverbial generosity of bees and their honey becomes replicated in the generous and kind behavior of neighbors.

Perhaps *bičiulystė* should describe the attachment between man and bee as well. Beekeepers are passionate—they love their bees. And



Beekeeper Jonas Balžekas inspecting his hives.

who knows, perhaps bees, who have complex communication and organizational systems, love their masters as well? The author has heard of a case where the beekeeper died, and the bees left the hive and swarmed onto his grave, as if accompanying him on his final journey.

A Long Journey to Lithuania

The honeybee is a highly sophisticated insect that evolved from a carnivorous wasp over millions of years. It is likely that the proto-bee originated in the Far East, southern Asia, and Africa with the earliest recorded bee found in Myanmar, encased in amber and dated to be 100 million years old. According to Jonas Balžekas, son of a famous beekeeper and head of the Apiculture section of the Agricultural Institute of the Lithuanian Center for Agrarian and

Forestry Studies, “modern” honeybees spread into Europe fairly recently—after the last ice age, about 10,000 years ago. How they arrived from those warm far-off lands to reach and prosper in northern Europe has many explanations. Suffice it to say, that it is a testament to the little bee’s tenacity and adaptability over millions of years.

Bees in Lithuania are first mentioned in 13th century chronicles. As Jonas Balžekas recounts, the ancient territory of Lithuania was covered with lush forests and a great diversity of plants. Hives as we know them were not yet being used as housing for bees. Cavity-nesting bees would use tree hollows to live in, build their honeycombs and collect honey. Beekeepers marked *drevės* (tree hollows) and according to accepted practices of the day, har-



A family of cavity-nesting bees. (www.real-beekeeping.com)

vested honey from the hives. Unfortunately, this opportunistic method of beekeeping destroyed the bees. Once the honey had been harvested, the bees were left with inadequate food and shelter for the oncoming winter and did not survive.

Loss of the Forest Bees

For many hundreds of years, Lithuanian bees were forest bees. As the ancient forests were cut down over the centuries, new plant cultures appeared, drastically changing the natural environment. With changing conditions, the local Lithuanian bee, also known as the Dark European honeybee, didn't adapt well and became unproductive. Lithuanian beekeepers started to prefer bees imported from other countries. Bees were brought in



Working in his home laboratory, Jonas Balžekas has bred thousands of bees.

from Italy, Serbia, Ukraine, the Caucasus countries, Carpathian mountain regions and other locations. Beekeepers quickly noticed that these bees were less aggressive and simpler to work with, but this convenience came at a cost to natural selection and genetic diversity.

Introduction to Apiculture

The bee family consists of one queen bee, the *motinėlė* (literally: little mother), approximately 1,000 male *tranai* (drones) and 80,000 female *darbininkės* (worker) bees. These are the numbers at summer's peak, although by wintertime only 15,000 - 20,000 worker bees are left. The drones' fate is even sadder. Beekeeper Jonas Balžekas describes the harsh reality of their lives: "The drones are only needed to fertilize the queen, then they are expelled from the hive and die of starvation."

The queen stays in the hive except for one or two times during the season when she leaves to become fertilized by multiple drones. The sperm is stored and continually used to fertilize up to 2,000 eggs a day. These eggs hatch into worker bees (drones develop from unfertilized eggs). Beekeeper Balžekas explains: "The queen is like an egg-laying factory. Of course, if the bees become too numerous, there is not enough room in the hive and the queen decides to leave. The majority of the bees swarm away with her. This occurrence is very unprofitable for the beekeeper because it leaves the hive with an unfertilized queen and very few bees. That year, honey production is practically zero."

Even though a queen bee can live for up to five years, the current recommendation is to replace her every two years. Jonas Balžekas has a very simple prescription: "You catch the queen and, in her place, you put in a newly bred one." But where to get a new queen, you might ask?

The Miracle of Modern Science

Beekeeper Jonas Balžekas relates: "For 13 years I have been sitting at a microscope, artificially breeding bees in a laboratory. If breeding occurs naturally outdoors, artificially achieved desirable bee characteristics can be easily lost. When a bee couples with unknown drones, her purity vanishes. I want to provide beekeepers with acclimated, productive queen bees."

Jonas Balžekas learned the delicate art of bee insemination in the United States. "About 25 years ago I visited a genetics laboratory in Louisiana and studied with Professor John Harbo. My uncle, Monsignor Simonas Morkūnas, provided funds to buy equipment for my work in Lithuania. In a few years I was successfully breeding bees and was soon invited to work in Switzerland," the beekeeper recalls. Since returning from Switzerland in 2002, he has dedicated himself to this special science.

Likely the only bee-breeder in Lithuania, he raises an average of 1,300 queen bees during a single season! "A juvenile bee can mature into either a worker bee or a queen bee. The worker bee larva is fed royal jelly for three days, but the queen is fed this very concentrated, potent food for the entire growth period. This determines its evolution into a queen and is the reason for its distinctive size," explains the specialist.

Competing with Chinese Honey

To the apiarists delight, beekeeping is experiencing a renaissance in Lithuania. Interest in this ancient skill is spreading and beehives are seen gracing many homesteads. Interestingly, despite most Lithuanians' fierce preference for all things homegrown, a significant amount of honey is being imported. To no



The smoker is being prepared by Ramutis for use on a hive.

one's surprise, much of it comes from China. Sometimes cheap trumps patriotism...

Local honey production is very successful and reaches about 2,000 tons per season. So while some Lithuanians choose inexpensive foreign honey for themselves, Lithuania still exports about 500 tons of delicious (and more expensive) honey to European countries and to America.

Passing the Bee-keeping Torch

Jonas Balžekas learned the art of beekeeping from his father, a doctor of biomedicine, and hopes that his own son Jonas will share his

life experiences and take over his work. It seems there is an unspoken tradition among beekeepers that apiculture skills and knowledge are not so much taught as shared, and new converts are often made by simple exposure to the master's enthusiasm. Ramutis Rindzevičius is such an apostle. By profession Ramutis is a scientist and associate professor at Kaunas Technological University and a close friend of Jonas Balžekas. Both of their fathers were *bičiuliai* and beekeepers, and now he himself is a dedicated beekeeper.

A Lifelong Passion

Ramutis Rindzevičius began beekeeping in 1971, when he completed his university studies. But the work was familiar to him from childhood. He would help his father with the hives. "I would carry the honeycomb frames, collect the honey. The bees are docile now: they don't sting like the old species used to," Rindzevičius smiles, recalling his childhood near Kėdainiai. He then explains that smoke blown near the beehive serves to minimize the chance of stings from even peaceable strains of bees. Smoke causes the bees to feel danger, so they hurry and suck up as much honey as they can. "It is hard for a bee to curl up on a full stomach, and bees that are not

curled up cannot sting. That is why blowing smoke at a beehive is a way to protect yourself against bee stings. Similarly, the bees inside a swarm are not aggressive, because in preparation for relocation they have also loaded up with honey and cannot curl up," the beekeeper says with a big smile.

When Ramutis began beekeeping independently, he got his first three bee families from his father. He would go into the forests and heaths with Jonas Balžekas, Sr. where the hives were temporarily moved to take advantage of seasonal blooming. "You get up in the morning, decide to get some honey, open the hive, slice off a chunk of honeycomb from the very middle and eat it. The bees 'sew up' that hole very quickly," the beekeeper shares a sweet memory.

Ramutis regrets that new beekeepers face a stiff learning curve. Currently, there is no specialty training program for beekeepers in Lithuania. "If someone decides to become a beekeeper, he has to learn on his own by consulting other experienced beekeepers, attending various workshops, reading books." But modern-day beekeepers have one important advantage that the apiarist of the past did not. It used to be a minor tragedy if the queen *motinė* died or was lost when the hive swarmed. Now Ramutis and other enthusiasts can rely on the expertise of Jonas Balžekas to provide them with replacement 'pure-bred' queen bees.

Beekeeping is one of the oldest crafts in Lithuania. It has roots in ancient traditions, it binds with the deep ties of *bičiulystė*, and it features the most unassuming of God's creatures that generously reward us with a bit of sweet paradise.



Ramutis Rindzevičius may have spent his life in academia, but it's obvious where his heart lies.

Photos by Vereta Rupeikaitė except as marked.

The History of Lithuania's National Anthem

Zigmas Tamakauskas

The word *himnas*, which is what Lithuanians call their national anthem, comes from the Greek word *hymnos*, a holy and solemn song used to worship the gods in ancient times. Here we will focus on Lithuania's current anthem, while mentioning songs that at one time or another were possible candidates for national anthem status.

More than a century ago, the need for a Lithuanian national anthem was satisfied by the first line of Adam Mickewicz's epic poem *Pan Tadeusz*: "Lithuania, my homeland, you are dearer to me than health..." During the years when the Lithuanian press was banned [1864 – 1904], a song by Antanas Baranaukas – "Nu Lietuva, nu Dauguva" – was very popular. This song sounded like a national anthem. It encouraged love of the homeland and burned with hatred for the czar and for russification with the words, "Anei rašto, anei druko mums turēt neduoda..." ("They won't let us have anything written, nor anything printed...") Young people sang this song with great enthusiasm, as the writer Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas noted. The czarist government considered this song to be hostile to the state and tried to ban it. Then an appeal was made to the Lithuanian poet Maironis to write new words to the same melody, so that the government censors would not find it objectionable. That is how the popular poem by Maironis called "Eina Garsas" ("A Call to Arms is Sounding") came into being.

Vincas Pietaris, the author of the well-known historical novel *Al-*

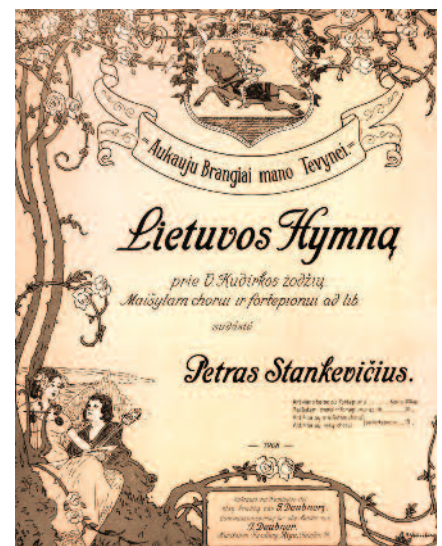
gimantas, suggested that the psalm of David – "Dievas Galybių su Mumis!" ("The God of hosts is with us!") – be turned into a national anthem. The hymn "Marija, Marija" was also very popular with the people. The composer Česlovas Sasnauskas wrote the music, and the words were by Maironis. In our time His Holiness Pope John Paul II especially liked this hymn.

Another poem that was a possible candidate for Lithuania's national anthem was "Kur Bėga Šešupė" ("Where Flows the Šešupė") by Maironis. Česlovas Sasnauskas and Aleksandras Kačanauskas wrote the music for this poem. It contained the expressive and patriotic line, "Pirmyn į kovą už tėvynę, už brangią žemę Lietuvos!" ("Forward into battle for the homeland, for the dear land of Lithuania!") This song even had a subtitle that said, "Lithuania's National Anthem." The song called "Jaunimo Giesmė" ("The Song of Youth") composed by Juozas Naujalis was also very popular. It had the line, "Užtrauksim naują giesmę, broliai, kurią jaunimas tesupras!" ("Brothers, let's sing a new song, that only the young will understand!").

The song "Lietuva Brangi" ("Dear Lithuania"), with music by Juozas Naujalis, was especially popular during the years of Soviet occupation. It became a substitute for the national anthem of Lithuania. The song had been banned, but during the so-called "thaw" of the Khrushchev era, members of the University of Vilnius chorus sang it legally for the first time on a concert

stage. From then on, as it was being sung, people would stand up out of respect for their homeland. When we were students at the University, we encouraged people to sing it during social gatherings. This song left a particularly strong impression on everyone in the autumn of 1956, in the context of the Hungarian revolution. During an evening event we had organized, after a speaker had declaimed excerpts from the poem "Jaunoji Lietuva" ("Young Lithuania"), which contained the words "Jau slavai sukilo..." ("Now the Slavs have revolted..."), we joined hands and warmly and supportively sang "Lietuva brangi."

A poem by Jurgis Sauervernas entitled, "Lietuvinkai Mes Esam Gimę" ("Lithuanians We Were Born"), became a national hymn as well. It was published in 1879 in a Klaipėda newspaper called *Lietuviškas Ceitungas*. With some editorial changes, this poem (set to music by



Sheet music featuring the national anthem (*Lietuvos Hymnas*).

Stasys Šimkus) is now called the national anthem of Lithuania Minor.

Vincas Kudirka in describing his song, “*Tautiška Giesmė*” (“National hymn”), said prophetically that he had written an anthem for Lithuanians. The “National hymn” was sung for the first time when Vincas Kudirka was close to dying. That was on November 13, 1899, during a concert in St. Petersburg held as a fund-raiser for Lithuanian students. A year later, Kazys Grinius, a good friend of Vincas Kudirka, referred to the hymn as a national anthem in the press. He sought to propagate it at family gatherings and various meetings. People would stand while singing this hymn, as is proper for a national anthem. The hymn was sung at a special concert on the eve of the first session of the Congress of Vilnius. It received an especially enthusiastic reception, and it received the respect appropriate for a national anthem. The chorus, under the direction of the composer Mikas Petrauskas, had to perform the hymn several times. In 1906 sheet music published at the behest of composer Antanas Kačanauskas referred directly to the national anthem or hymn of Lithuania. The title was, “*Lietuvių Hymnas. Žodžiai ir melodija V. Kudirkos. Fortepijonui priruošė A. Kačanovskis.*” (“The Lithuanian Hymn. Words and music by V. Kudirka. Piano part prepared by A. Kačanovskis.”). The old symbol of national sovereignty - the Vytis - decorated the cover of the publication.

The singing of the Lithuanian national anthem had a big impact on people in all parts of Lithuania. The Lithuanian writer Žemaitė described that impact in an article entitled “*Kanklės*” published in Vilnius in 1907:

...a group of Lithuanians began singing together, and everyone in the room stood up in unison because it was the national Lithuanian anthem that



was being sung. The melody grabbed everyone's heart and emotions because they all remembered a time not long ago when people would whisper the words, "Lietuva, Tėvynė mūsų" ("Lithuania, our homeland"), in fear. At the same time, our hearts were filled with joy at the realization that finally we had achieved at least enough freedom to be able to sing those words out loud in public.

Singing Lithuania's national anthem fostered patriotism in the hearts of Lithuanians as well as hope and desire to take part in the restoration of the country. It encouraged doubters to take the Lithuanian path. According to Jadvyga Čiurlionytė, the anthem composed by Vincas Kudirka influenced her brother, the famous Lithuanian composer and artist Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, and his whole family to recover their Lithuanian identity.

The Lithuanian national anthem resounded grandly at the Lithuanian conference in Vilnius in August of 1917. This conference elected the Lithuanian Council, which was empowered to proclaim the reestablishment of the Lithuanian state. The national anthem composed by Vincas Kudirka was sung with great joy and solemnity on May 15, 1920, in the Kaunas Musical Theater Hall. Here Lithuania's Constitutional Congress held its first meeting. The president of the Congress, Aleksandras Stulginskis, read the unanimously adopted Declaration of Lithuania's Independence as all the participants stood at attention. That day is considered the day when the “*Tautiška Giesmė*” (“National Hymn”) offi-

cially became Lithuania's national anthem. It also became a symbol of an independent Lithuania, and because of its popularity, no formal codification was necessary; it was not mentioned in any of the pre-war constitutions of Lithuania.

When the Soviets occupied Lithuania and after the so-called “election of the people's congress,” Lithuanian radio was forced to transmit the sounds of the towers of the Kremlin at 10 p.m. each evening; at midnight it was required to sign off by playing the “*Internationale*.” However, as it was being pushed out of public life, the Lithuanian national anthem became a symbol of national resistance. This became especially evident in August of 1940, at a conference of Lithuania's teachers held in the Kaunas Sports Center. The teachers were required to sing the “*Internationale*,” but instead they stood up and sang the Lithuanian national anthem. The servants of Moscow who were seated at the head table did not know what to do. Some stood, some sat, they felt as if they were out of place. Antanas Venclova, who was the People's Commissar of Education at that time, wrote: “*As many as 10,000 educators participated in the teachers' conference, or as many called it - the teachers' congress [...] The enemies of the new order were afraid of expressing their views. However, as the conference was concluding, they found a way of reminding everyone of their existence - they got up and sang the national anthem of bourgeois Lithuania.*” That is how teachers demonstrated their patriotism and loyalty to Lithuania. The Lithuanian national anthem was broadcast on June 23, 1941, when Lithuanians revolted and took over the Kaunas radio station. Many people listened to the Lithuanian national anthem then with tears in their eyes.

During the second Soviet occupation, singing of the Lithuanian na-

tional anthem was permitted for a while. However, in 1945 a commission to “prepare a national anthem for the Lithuanian SSR” was created. The commission was required to complete its work by January 1, 1946. However, the Soviet government delayed adopting the alternative Lithuanian SSR anthem, which its lackeys had composed, because it did not want to increase tensions, especially because of the active partisan resistance to Soviet occupation going on at the time. Meanwhile in Latvia and Estonia, where resistance was much weaker, new anthems were adopted in 1945. The Lithuanian SSR anthem, which sang the praises of the Soviet occupation, was adopted in July of 1950. Antanas Venclova wrote the words. The music was by Balys Dvarionas and Jonas Švedas. After the atrocities of Stalin were made public, the anthem was revised: Vacys Reimeris wrote new words and Edvardas Balsys wrote new music for it.

Nevertheless, the national anthem composed by Vincas Kudirka, like other symbols of independent Lithuania, continued to live through the entire Soviet occupation, and it engendered fear in those who had plundered our country. The secret singing of Lithuania’s national anthem strengthened the spirit of all Lithuanians in Lithuania itself as well as in distant Soviet labor camps. Lithuanians living in the free world also sang it with solemnity. What beautiful memories we have of All Souls Day, when in the evening a large group of people would gather in the old cemetery on Vytautas Street in Kaunas and would sing the national anthem of Lithuania boldly in an expression of hope that they would be free of the Soviet yoke some day. We sang Lithuania’s national anthem in Rasų Cemetery in Vilnius on the evening of All Souls Day in 1956 to greet the Hungarian revolution and to protest the enslave-

ment of Lithuania. We always remembered Lithuania’s national anthem during the Soviet years when we organized excursions called “Let’s get to know Lithuania better,” particularly when one of these excursions took us to the grave of Dr. Vincas Kudirka in the town of Kudirkos Naumiestis. We had a sort of legal justification for honoring this great man because his book *“Laisvos Valandos”* (“Free Hours”) had been published in 1976. The *“Tautiška Giesmė”* (“National Hymn”) was published there in two columns of eight lines. I would always use a bookmark, so that I could open the book to page 43 where the words of the Lithuanian national anthem were printed. One of the more trustworthy members of the excursion would declaim it as a candle was lit and placed on Kudirka’s grave. We were overcome with feelings of solemn patriotism, and, in a moment of silence, we joined our hearts to the roots of a Lithuania that had not been betrayed. We joined in with the exhortation of the broken Oak, which was still alive in spirit as we proclaimed, arise, arise, arise...

Despite the winds of occupation which continued to blow, the sounds of Lithuania’s national anthem were heard ever more clearly as the years went by. People would sing it more often in public places. One memorable instance was in 1988. On February 14th, it was sung in the Cathedral of Kaunas, and on February 16th, in the square in front of the Cathedral of Vilnius. The national anthem rang out during the commemorations of the deportations of June 1941, as well as during other important events that the Sąjūdis movement had organized. Finally on October 6, 1988, the *“Tautiška Giesmė”* (“National Hymn”) written by Vincas Kudirka received official recognition, and on November 18, 1988, it was adopted as the national anthem. On

October 7, 1988, the sounds of the Lithuanian national anthem accompanied the raising of the three-colored flag of Lithuania over Gediminas Tower in Vilnius. Two days later the Lithuanian national anthem was sung as our flag was raised above the bell tower of the War Museum of Vytautas the Great in Kaunas. On the evening of March 11, 1990, when the restoration of Lithuania’s independence was proclaimed, the Lithuanian national anthem was sung with solemnity.



Vincas Kudirka as pictured on the 500-litas note issued in 2000. (Lithuanian Bank website, public domain)

It is good to remember the honorable history of our national anthem and its final triumph. Now the *“Tautiška Giesmė”* of Vincas Kudirka is officially named the national anthem of Lithuania in section I, paragraph 16 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania. In 2009 sculptor Arūnas Sakalauskas created a monument to the national anthem. (The architect was Ričardas Krištapavičius.) Arūnas Sakalauskas also sculpted a monument to Vincas Kudirka, the author of the national anthem. This monument stands in aptly named Vincas Kudirka Square in Vilnius. It is in front of the building that houses the government of the Republic of Lithuania. When the monument was unveiled, Lithuanians from around the world sang the national anthem as a sign of unity



Sculpture by Arūnas Sakalauskas located in Vincas Kudirka square in Vilnius. (www.vilnius-tourism.lt)

and love for Lithuania. This singing gave rise to a new tradition which unites Lithuanians: each year on the government holiday commemorat-

ing the crowning of Mindaugas king of Lithuania, all Lithuanians, no matter where they may be, sing the national anthem of Lithuania at one designated time.

On March 11, 2005, in a solemn session of the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania, Professor Vytautas Landsbergis said:

....My wish is that each person who sings the Lithuanian national anthem would hear the words of the anthem and understand what they mean. It is a remarkable anthem. No other country has anything like it. In part - it is a solemn promise; in part - it is a prayer. Listen to these words: "May light and truth lead our steps." Here in a general way, using the concept of light, very important things are being said. Somebody may recall the teachings found in the Bible, the command to the people: 'Be children of the light.'

In some city schools in Lithuania the students were asked: what does

the national anthem mean to you? The answers were very impressive:

The national anthem is very important for the people of Lithuania because it symbolizes freedom and the dignity of our country, and it reminds us that we have to love our country. The national anthem maintains our patriotism and our trust. When I sing the national anthem, a pride in my country and its history arises in my heart. This hymn demonstrates that our country is united, that it is most beautiful and sincere. The hymn unites us. We ought to sing it more often.

We would like the anthem to light the paths of our lives, to help us not to get lost in life's byways. We hope that the Lithuanian national anthem will be sung at least once a week in all schools, and that the symbols of our country will be respected with sincerity. Let us build a bright and just Lithuania!

Translated by Rimās Černius. Adapted from an address given to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the Vincas Kudirka Public Library in Kaunas.

Lietuvos Himnas

Vincas Kudirka

Lietuva, Tėvyne mūsų,
Tu didvyrių žeme,
Iš praeities Tavo sūnūs
Te stiprybę semia.
Tegul Tavo vaikai eina
Vien takais dorybės,
Tegul dirba Tavo naudai
Ir žmonių gėrybei.
Tegul saulė Lietuvoj(s)
Tamsumas prašalina,
Ir šviesa, ir tiesa
Mūs žingsnius telydi.
Tegul meilė Lietuvos
Dega mūsų širdyse,
Vardan tos, Lietuvos
Vienybė težydi!

Official English translation

(Birutė Jatautaitė, 1994)

Lithuania, our homeland,
Land of worshiped heroes!
Let your sons draw their strength
From our past experience.
Let your children always follow
Only roads of virtue,
May your own,
mankind's well-being
Be the goals they work for.
May the sun above our land
Banish darkening clouds around
Light and truth all along
Guide our steps forever.
May the love of Lithuania
Brightly burn in our hearts.
For the sake this land
Let unity blossom.

Unofficial (singable) version

(Jonas Daugirdas, 2015)


Lietuva our home and nation,
Land of valiant heroes!
From your glorious past
Your sons draw strength, resolve
and power.
May your children walk the paths
Of honor and integrity,
May they work for your well-being
And for all of mankind.
May the sun above our land
Banish cloud and shadow.
Truth and right, radiant light
Guide our steps eternally.
May the love of Lietuva
Burn forever in our hearts.
In your name, we proclaim:
Unity and concord bloom!

The current official version of the Lithuanian National anthem. Note that the expression "saulė Lietuvos" was changed to "saulė Lietuvoj", a subject of some controversy. The official English translation is written as listed on the Lithuanian Parliament website (www.lrs.lt).

Who Put the 'Mack' in McDonald's of Springfield?

by Sandra Baksys

HUNGRY? DRIVE OVER TO McDONALD'S



2849 So. 6TH ST.
JUST OPPOSITE ALLIS CHALMERS MAIN GATE SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

HAMBURGERS	15 CENTS
CHEESEBURGERS	19 CENTS
TRIPLE THICK	
SHAKES	20 CENTS
FRENCH FRIES	10 CENTS
COKE	10 CENTS
MILK-COFFEE	10 CENTS
ORANGEADE	10 CENTS
ROOT BEER	10 CENTS



John Mack. (1975 artist-rendering of photo portrait)

Mack McDonald's store ad for the famous 15-cent hamburger, circa 1957. (Sangamon Valley Collection, Lincoln Library, Springfield, IL)

Anybody who's eaten a McDonald's hamburger in Springfield, IL has feasted on a bit of local Lithuanian-American history. The tale of McDonald's first local franchisee involves a Lithuanian coal miner aptly named John Mack. John Makarauskas changed his surname to Mack a full 16 years before he went into fast food. He had no way of knowing he would one day be the man responsible for bringing "Mack-fries," "Mack-cheeseburgers" and "Big Macks" to Springfield. At the peak of the Mack fast food empire in the 1980s, John's family would own all eight of Springfield's McDonald's restaurants. What an unimaginable scenario that would have been to the boy from strife-torn, World War I Lithuania who hustled to keep himself, his family, and his fellow working man from going hungry for most of his adult life.

The Makarauskas family

Starting in 1890, two to three thousand Lithuanian immigrants made their way to Springfield-area mines via Scotland and Pennsylvania. John Mack's father, Stanley, arrived in the United States to mine coal just before the outbreak of



Makarauskas family in 1922: Left to right, back row: John Mack's father and mother, Stanley and Agota, and Agota's uncle; front row: brother Michael and John. (Family archive photo)

World War I in 1914. He was not reunited with 10-year-old John and the rest of the family until they joined him in Springfield in 1922.

John was forced to follow his father and older brother Michael into mining at age 14 after completing sixth grade. A growing scarcity of local mine work combined with the communal tradition of job-sharing incentivized families to maximize their headcount in the mines.

Already by the 1910s, frequent mine shutdowns and job-sharing meant that most miners averaged only 2-3 days of work per week. Even worse, mines shut down for the summers, when there was no need for coal and during protracted biannual contract strikes. Unemployed miners typically resorted to digging basements and scything cemetery grass for \$1 a day. Wives and mothers took in unmarried miners as boarders and kept backyard

farms complete with chickens and rabbits to help support their cash-poor families.

Mine wars

During the 1920s, increasing coal mine mechanization led to mass layoffs. This eventually culminated in one of the most important labor conflicts of the 1930s, the so-called Central Illinois “Mine Wars” (1932-36), when mine owners tried to slash wages at the height of the Great Depression. Here’s what happened: According to Carl D. Oblinger’s history, *Divided Kingdom: Work, Community and the Mining Wars in the Central Illinois Coal Fields during the Great Depression*, in 1932, the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) tried to fraudulently impose a contract that Central Illinois miners had roundly rejected. This caused local miners to leave the UMWA *en masse* to form a new union called the Progressive Mine Workers of America (PMWA). During a protracted strike by the Progressives, the UMWA brought in scabs from southern Illinois and co-operated with mine operator Peabody Coal and its paid saboteurs. In addition, all the powers of the state, including local sheriffs and the Illinois State Militia, were arrayed against the Progressives to break their strike in a violent struggle that claimed at least

40 lives and injured hundreds. Lithuanian immigrants and their sons were represented on both sides, but mainly, it seems, they were Progressives like John Mack.

Feeding striking miners’ families

Having begun to work as a miner in 1926 as a boy of 14, Mack seems to have become something of a hero to the PMWA in his early 20s by organizing and operating part of the commissary system that fed the strikers’ families. According to the *State Journal-Register*, one such commissary was operated in the basement of Lithuanian immigrant Simonas (Sam) Lapinski’s Springfield tavern. At the same time, many family-owned corner groceries, already accustomed to “carrying” striking and underemployed miners on credit (or “on the book”), stepped up to do more of the same during the protracted and bloody war between the rival unions.

It’s not certain what kind of commissary Mack operated when he was cash-poor and only in his young 20s. It could have been something akin to today’s urban farms and food pantries. On page 92 of Oblinger’s book, miner Tom Rosko exclaims: “He carried them all [the strikers] in Springfield, John Mack!”

From commissary to grocery

Mack’s commissary activities seem to have grown into a Mack grocery store operated from 1941-43 on First Street in Springfield. In 1943 Mack closed the First Street store and opened a larger corner grocery at 1501 Keys Ave. Dorothy Makarauskas, wife of John’s much younger, American-born brother Frank, remembers that the Keys Avenue store, which sold meat, bread, milk and dry goods, was Springfield’s first “self-serve” corner grocery. This meant that customers picked up their own items and brought them to the cashier, instead of, as at other groceries of the time, the staff moving about the store to fill customers’ orders. John Mack was also a butcher, a trade that no doubt proved handy both in his commissary and grocery activities.

Mack’s son Jim remembers the financial squeeze his father faced as he continued to broadly extend store credit well into the 1950s. To make matters worse, the first supermarket chains had begun eating the small independent grocers’ lunch.

McDonald’s founder Ray Kroc enters the picture

Then one day, Ray Kroc drove by the huge Allis-Chalmers construction machinery factory right across the street from the Macks’ home. Kroc considered the real estate across from the factory’s main gate the perfect site for Springfield’s first McDonald’s restaurant (the nation’s 69th).

It was serendipity that brought together a new fast-food business model based on churning out hundreds of ground beef patties a day with Mack, a butcher able to provide the ground beef, but struggling to survive in the dying corner grocery business.

The plan Mack devised with Kroc was bold. It required moving



John Mack’s younger brother Frank carries a block of ice to a customer’s car from John’s First Street grocery, 1943. (Family archive photo)



John Mack (last person on the right) at the ribbon-cutting for his second McDonald's in Springfield, 1961. (*Sangamon Valley Collection, Lincoln Library, Springfield, IL*)

his family home to permit construction of the new restaurant and parking lot. This would take money—lots of it (including Mack's McDonald's franchise fee).

The upshot: John Mack needed to borrow \$100,000 in an era when credit and large loans were extended much more cautiously than they are today. Daughter MaryAnn (Mack) Butts recalls: "Mary, our mother, was in the meetings with Dad when he went to the banks. They literally laughed at him and said, 'You have a sixth-grade education, and you want to open a restaurant?' Mother said it was embarrassing, and she really felt bad for him. The banks also said, 'Who would want to buy a 15-cent hamburger?' They thought it was ridiculous because that was kind of expensive back then."

Who, indeed?

John Mack refused to give up. Illinois National Bank, where one of the executives was proud Lithuanian-American Augustus "Gus" Wisnosky (Vysniauskas), and where much of the Lithuanian community did business, finally agreed to make the loan.

Teen hangouts

Mack's first McDonald's restaurant across from the Allis-Chalmers factory main gate opened in 1957. A second opened in 1961 on South MacArthur Boulevard. These were small, open-air drive-ups, without eat-in capacity. Because customers were expected to eat in their cars, the McDonald's parking lots were much more extensive than those of restaurants.

In the 1960s and '70s, hot rods would scoop a fast-food loop bracketed on either end by one of these first two McDonald's. Despite paying minimum wage, the McDonald's on South MacArthur became THE



Employees of the McDonald's located at 1825 South MacArthur Boulevard, 1964. (*Sangamon Valley Collection, Lincoln Library, Springfield, IL*)

place for teens to work. It also became such a popular hotrod and "hippie" hangout that the packed parking lot required its own bouncer. Many local youth—boys only, initially—earned their first paycheck at one of these restaurants.

The ABCs of mass-produced food

In the early years, all the burgers, fries and buns were fresh and sourced locally. According to Mack daughter MaryAnn, her father had a ground-beef patty-making machine made specially in St. Louis so he could keep his long-time Keys Avenue grocery employee Frances Trello busy churning out fresh patties for his new restaurants. "Corporate" dictated the lean meat and fat content of each patty, along with the recipe followed by a local contract bakery that delivered fresh-baked buns daily.

Son Jim recalls that potatoes were delivered in 100-pound bags on a rail car. They were peeled with the help of a peeling machine, then sliced by hand into fries. After being washed and rinsed a total of three times they were then blanched at low heat until finally ready to be deep-fried. The soft ice cream for shakes was sourced locally, but the shake flavor mixes came from headquarters. Many of John Mack's kids and grandkids worked in the family business, including son John, Jr., and daughter JoAnn (Mack) Shaughnessy's husband and their daughter Debbie (Shaughnessy) Blazis. The magic starting work age for most of the Mack kids seemed to be 15 — one year older than John when he followed his father Stanley into the coal mines in 1926.

Premature death and further expansion

Paterfamilias John died in 1974 at the age of 61. "Dad didn't have a long life, and he only had a sixth



Mack family in the late 1940s. Left to right, back row: daughter JoAnn, John and his wife, Mary; middle row: sons Tom, John, Jr., and Jim; front: daughter MaryAnn. (Family archive photo)

grade education, but he had guts, and he was really smart—very good at math. He died a millionaire, and we are very proud of him,” his daughter MaryAnn said.

After John Mack’s death, his widow Mary, sons Tom and Jim, and daughter MaryAnn and her husband Gary Butts went on to open five more locations in Springfield. The family considered this to be a superior option to having “corporate” open a competing new location by bringing in a non-Mack franchisee. Not all of the new locations that “corporate” wanted were profitable, and son Jim remembers that growing the business took a heavy toll

on the family over the years. But at least if a new location cannibalized existing business, the business “gained” from a Mack restaurant would still belong to a Mack. Finally, in 1989, after 30 years in fast food, the family sold all eight of their Springfield franchises and totally exited the business.

A man who was ‘larger than life’

John Mack was a bigger-than-life personality who “would light up the place” when he visited one of his restaurants to sit down and enjoy a burger, according to Don Gietl, who worked at a “Mack McDon-



John Mack’s younger brother, Frank, as second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force, circa 1945. (Family archive photo)

ald’s.” Great corporate citizens, the “Mack McDonald’s” also sponsored innumerable local fundraisers and gave generously to Goodwill, among other local charities.

The Makarauskas family organized the creation of a Ronald McDonald House in Springfield after experiencing a family tragedy. Ronald McDonald houses are erected near hospitals to provide a home away from home for sick children and their families. John’s brother Frank and wife Dorothy had an 18-year-old son, Robert, who succumbed to brain cancer. After John’s widow, Mary, visited a Ronald McDonald house in New York City, near where young Robert was being treated at Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, she dedicated herself to donating and raising the funds necessary to provide such a house for the Springfield community.

For more information about Lithuanians in Springfield, please visit the author’s blog at <http://lithspringfield.com>. The author’s “best of blog” book, titled “A Century of Lithuanians in Springfield, Illinois”, will be available this fall from Amazon.com.

Knitting in Lithuania

by Donna Druchunas

Photos by Dominic Cotignola

I am an American of Lithuanian descent, and I am a knitter. So when I had a chance to visit Lithuania in 2007, the first thing I wanted to learn about was knitting. What makes knitting Lithuanian? Is it special techniques that are used? A unique way to hold the yarn and needles? Certain combinations of colors? The styles of clothing and accessories that are made? These were the questions I was asking myself as I flew over half of North America, across the Atlantic and over most of Europe to make my way from Colorado to the country where all four of my father's grandparents had been born.

On that trip, I only had five rainy days to explore Vilnius, the nation's capital. In those few days I stumbled onto beautiful hand-knit accessories in Old Town at the tourist market, in fiber-arts galleries hidden in small alleys spidering out from the town center, in museums, at a national folk song festival featuring thousands of performers dressed in historical costumes, and in demonstrations of traditional crafts at Cathedral Square. There were also yarn shops hiding in nooks and crannies around the city. Since then, I've gone back to visit Lithuania five

times, staying from a few weeks to a few months on each trip, and have travelled around the country.

Where Do You Find Knitting in Lithuania?

The year after my first short visit to Vilnius, I had an opportunity to spend most of the summer in Lithuania. After a month-long language course at Vilnius University, I spent several weeks traveling around the country to meet knitters,

weavers, farmers and yarn manufacturers. Beginning in Vilnius, my husband and I—along with our friend June Hall, who is also of Lithuanian descent—traveled to cities, villages, and farms from Vilnius and Šiauliai to Mažeikiai and Palanga, and many places in-between.

We visited many local art and history museums. Two that stand out in my mind are the *Šiaulių "Aušros" muziejus* (Šiauliai Aušros Museum) and the *Mažeikių muziejus*



Donna Druchunas



Woman knitting on *Pilies gatvė* in Vilnius.



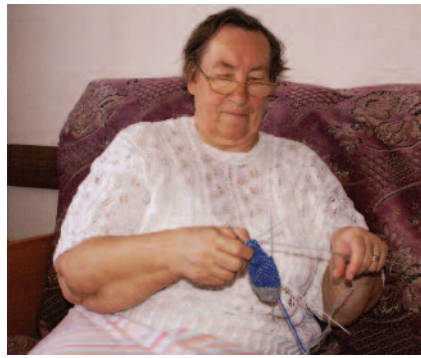
Hand-knit socks and mittens for sale in the Vilnius Tourist Market.

(Mažeikiai Museum), where we were privileged to see collections of hand-knit mittens, gloves, socks and wrist warmers that were not in the exhibits open to the public.

In Mažeikiai, we also met Marija, an expert knitter who invited us to her home for home-baked apple fritters and coffee served in beautiful china cups. She gave us a lesson in knitting and showed us the beautiful sweaters and socks she designed and knit for her family using an album of charts she has compiled, with motifs of rabbits, cats, stars, and



Floral-patterned mittens in the Mažeikiai Museum collection.



Marija giving June and Donna a knitting lesson in her home.



Sweater designed and knit by Marija.

more. Maria gave June and me each a pair of hand-knit slippers.

In Vilnius, I was privileged to take a knitting class at *Mezgimo Zona* (The Knitting Zone), a shop on *Pylimo gatvė*. The teacher, Irena Felomena Juškienė, taught us how to make beaded *riešinės* (wrist warmers) that were popular throughout Lithuania in the nineteenth century.



Donna with Irena Felomena Juškienė learning about *riešinės* at *Mezgimo Zona* in Vilnius.

In Baisogala we met Dr. Žilvinas Augustinavičius, a veterinarian and farmer, who gave us a tour of a large sheep farm and introduced us to several knitters in the area. One elderly woman who designed all of her own patterns gave us each a pair of gloves and showed us the book of patterns she drew on graph paper.

Throughout our trip we were given wonderful hand-knit gifts. We also had the opportunity to purchase many more items from vendors in markets and at craft fairs, as well as from individual knitters we met along the way as we drove from town to town. After this trip, June and I decided to collaborate on a book to share the beauty of Lithuanian knitting with knitters and readers around the world. What follows is a small bit of what we learned about knitting in Lithuania.

What Do Lithuanians Knit?

When you walk down a city street in Lithuania today, you see college students wearing jeans and mini-skirts, business people in suits and dresses, construction workers with boots and hardhats, and a few old women wearing 1950s-style housedresses and babushkas. But it is only since the end of the nine-



Many knitters in Lithuania design their own patterns based on traditional weaving motifs as well as modern ideas. This skilled knitter made knitting patterns of the Zodiac signs.

teenth century that mass-produced garments have been prevalent in Lithuania. Before that, and even into the early decades of the twentieth century, homemade clothing was the rule, particularly in rural areas.

Well into the twentieth century, making clothing and household textiles was an integral part of daily life for rural villagers in Lithuania. Small farms were self-sufficient; little or no money was available to supplement the household's home production. All of the women and girls in each family spun wool and linen into yarn. Using a drop spindle or a spin-

ning wheel like a character in a fairy tale, women made fine linen threads and tested finished skeins to make sure they would fit through a wedding ring to prove the quality of their work. This linen was woven into fabric for clothing and household textiles, and some was knit into summer gloves and socks. Coarse Lithuanian wool was spun into strong yarn to knit warm winter clothing and accessories, including mittens and socks.

Traditionally in Lithuania knitting was not considered to be a very important craft. It was a skill that every woman possessed, some with more talent than others. Spinning and weaving were the arts that gave a woman prestige in the community. Even so, for holiday wear and for weddings and other special celebrations, special accessories were knit with elaborate patterning and meticulous workmanship, which would make most of today's knitters in America and Europe green with envy.

Today women in Lithuania use patterns from books or the internet to make sweaters, shawls, afghans, toys and a huge variety of fashionable and kitschy projects just like knitters everywhere else in the Western world; however, in times past, knitting was mostly used to make socks, mittens, gloves and wrist warmers in traditional patterns passed down from grandmother to

mother, from mother to daughter. (On occasion knitting was used to make sashes, hats and even sweaters, but these items were usually made with other techniques.)

Because Lithuania was occupied by several different nations during the twentieth century, the traditional national costume based on peasants' holiday clothing, became a very strong and important part of the Lithuanian identity. When the Lithuanian language was suppressed by the Soviet Union and speaking out against "The Party" was dangerous, wearing a pair of hand-knitted gloves might be the only way one could display quiet resistance. Now that Lithuania is once again an independent nation, on national holidays and during summer music and crafts festivals the streets and shops are filled with people dressed in reproductions of traditional garments. Members of national song and dance troupes continue to spin yarn by hand and knit the beautiful accessories that are part of the Lithuanian national costume.

Socks

Traditional hand-knit woolen winter socks were made with wool yarn worked in a double-layered colorwork pattern. Socks for men and women often featured geometric patterns, with striped or solid heels and patterned or solid toes. Yarns might be brightly colored or be left in the wool's natural shades of white, gray, brown and black. Today the tourist markets offer simplified versions of these socks made from heavy yarn, with patterning limited to the sock leg and, sometimes, the foot of the sock.

Linen summer socks featured color patterns or lace stitches for women and girls and were knit plain for men. Knitted socks sometimes had ribbing at the top, but longer stockings were tied around the knees with woven bands. Women also knit



Donna buying socks from a street vendor in Vilnius.



Mittens and socks for sale in the Vilnius tourist market.

“footless stockings” (leg warmers) for summer wear, not for warmth, but to keep their legs from getting scratched when they worked in the fields.

Mittens

Mittens and gloves carried special significance in Lithuanian culture. There was a time when many Lithuanians believed that gloves had magical or supernatural power, and festive designs were knit as gifts on special occasions to protect and bless family members and loved ones, as well as to celebrate the major passages in life.



Woman knitting wrist warmers on a street in Vilnius to sell in the tourist market.

As magical as gloves may be, mittens do a better job of keeping fingers warm in extremely cold weather, and they were much more common for everyday wear. Normally knitted in color designs using two or more strands of yarn at once, these mittens were very dense and warm. The oldest patterns were geo-

metric shapes, and later designs included many floral motifs. More rare are patterns of birds and elk and other animals. All of these designs depict the beauty of the Lithuanian landscape and recall the warmer days of summer. The patterns on gloves and mittens were often larger and more elaborate than patterns used on socks. Many popular colorwork patterns are adaptations of older weaving designs.

Wrist Warmers

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, both men and women in Lithuania wore woolen wrist warmers in all seasons. These wrist warmers were snug and tight and could be worn either under or over the cuffs on a shirt or blouse. Everyday wrist warmers were knit from left-over homespun yarn and made with any technique that struck the knitter's fancy. Some were ribbed in one color or with stripes, some were made with cable patterns or other fancy texture patterns, a few were made in lacy stitches, and some were even crocheted. But holiday wristers were always made with special store-bought yarn and tiny glass beads, usually white but sometimes in other colors. The wristers were made flat and either sewn closed or fastened with decorative buttons. Lace wristers and longer fingerless gloves were made from bleached white linen to be worn at weddings.

Today beaded wrist warmers are among the most popular knitted items in Vilnius. Walking through the streets, you spy them for sale by women selling their wares on street corners, at booths in the tourist market and in upscale folk-art galleries.

Conclusion

Knitting is fascinating not only because it is beautiful and functional, but also because each stitch infuses a hand-knit project with the story of

its maker and details about the time and place in which it was made. The materials and stitches chosen tell us about what yarns and patterns were available to the knitter. The gauge and evenness of the stitching tell us about her skill level, while the wear (or lack thereof) on the knitting gives us clues about whether it was made for everyday use or just for special occasions. Ultimately, I believe what makes the knitting of Lithuania—or any place—special is the spirit of the people and the soul of the place. Here is what I discovered during my several trips: whether it is traditional or trendy, kitschy or couture, comfy or chic, historical or contemporary, if it is made of wool or linen, it can be found in Lithuania.



Donna Druchunas is a writer and knitwear designer with passions for knitting, world travel and research. She has been visiting Lithuania, where her great grandparents were born, every year since 2007. Donna has been designing knitwear and writing for over a decade and is the author of award-winning knitting books.

Her newest book, *Lithuanian Knitting: Continuing Traditions* (2015, Double Vision Press), available through <http://sheeptoshawl.com/lithuanianknitting>, tells the story of knitting in Lithuania and includes 25 patterns for socks, mittens, gloves and wrist warmers. Donna teaches an online class on how to knit mittens and a hat with a Lithuanian reindeer motif at www.craftsy.com.

Lithuania's History in English

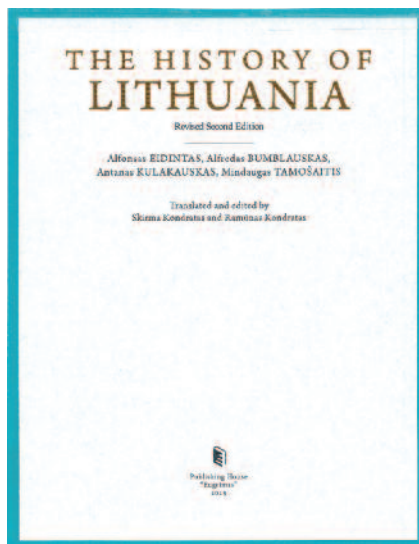
Book review by Donatas Januta

"The History of Lithuania," (2015 2nd rev. edition, 327 pp. Vilnius, Lithuania), by Alfonsas Eidintas, Alfredas Bumblauskas, Antanas Kulakauskas, Mindaugas Tamošaitis. The four authors cover Lithuania's history from the beginning of the ancient Baltic tribes to Lithuania's 2004 membership in NATO and the European Union. The book was commissioned and financed by Lithuania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This revised edition was edited and translated into English by Skirma Kondratas and Ramūnas Kondratas, two Lithuanian-American historians, who, in preparing this edition, in both content and style, aimed at the English-speaking reader. The text is accompanied by well-selected illustrations and maps. There are plans to publish the current edition in print, though for now it is available only on the Internet:

http://urm.lt/uploads/default/documents/Travel_Residence/history_of_lithuania_new.pdf

The first chapter is devoted to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the second to the Union of Lithuania with Poland. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was created by the Union of Lublin in 1569, when Lithuania was forced to choose between a military defeat to Russia or a union with Poland. The book vividly presents the pain and sorrow of the Lithuanian delegation, in having to make this choice at Lublin.

A similar sad day for the nation occurred in 1792, when the King of Poland capitulated to Russia, which precipitated the first partition, and eventually led to the third and final partition and absorption of Lithuania and Poland by Russia, Austria and Prussia.



The chapter, "Lithuania Under the Russian Empire (1793-1915)," covers the Russian czar's oppression, russification, the 1831 and 1865 uprisings, the prohibition of the Lithuanian press and books, and the 19th century's Lithuanian national awakening.

A separate chapter is devoted to the interwar years, including the successful military battles and diplomatic efforts that restored independence in 1918. The economic, social and cultural progress of the nation, despite the difficult relations with Poland over the Vilnius question, and the loss of Klaipėda, is fully presented, with this period culminating in the loss of independence at the beginning of World War II.

The "nationalism" of Lithuania in the 1920s and 1930s is contrasted favorably with the nationalism of its large neighbors. German, Soviet and Polish nationalism was used as a basis for aggression against other nations, while Lithuania's nationalism was defensive, a means by which to respond to its neighbors' expansionist policies and actions.

The chapter "Lithuania: The Soviet and Nazi Occupations," covers

the 50 years of occupation, including the 10-year partisan "war after the war," and the consequences to the country's cultural, religious, economic and political development and survival. For someone who desires to read more about the most tragic years of that period, I would recommend "The Tragic Pages of Lithuanian History 1940-1953," by Vladas Terleckas (2014 Vilnius).

In the final chapter, "The Singing Revolution," the reader learns how Lithuanians used Gorbachev's "perestroika" to form the liberation movement "*Sąjudis*," and about the events that led to the ultimate independence of the country. The most dramatic events of this period include the 675 kilometer Baltic Way in 1989 formed by two million people joining hands across Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia; Gorbachev's economic blockade of Lithuania in 1990; the January 1991 military attack on Lithuania's Parliament and Vilnius' TV tower which killed 14 civilians; and the suspense in waiting for other countries to recognize Lithuania's independence.

The authors note that the United States and other Western countries delayed recognizing Lithuania's independence because they feared that to do so would undermine Gorbachev's "perestroika" reforms: "It was not easy for the West to choose between 'Gorby' and Lithuania." The book notes that Lithuania's achievement of independence significantly contributed to the demise of the Soviet Union.

The History of Lithuania presents Lithuania's history in a concise and easy-to-read format. It is a book well worth reading by anyone with an interest in Lithuania.

Lithuanian

Baking with Honey

Is there a Lithuanian on this earth who doesn't cherish a memory of mother or grandmother or a favorite aunt baking *meduolis* (honey cake)? Oh, the smells of honey and cinnamon and cloves that filled the kitchen... And then that moment of delight when you were handed a piece of moist, dark-brown *meduolis* with a frosty cold glass of milk... Almost heaven.

Meduolis is not a fancy cake – it's just simple goodness: basic ingredients, not too sweet, easy to make. After a couple of days in an air-tight cookie tin, it's even more delicious. Could a *napoleonas* ever say that?

There are hundreds of recipes for *meduolis* – it seems that every Lithuanian *šeimininkė* makes it her own special way (just like *kugelis*, *šaltibarščiai* and *krupnikas*). Lithuanians are individualists. No discussion! But if you don't have your own favorite recipe just yet, give these two a try. And since there is nothing better than a good basic cookie when you're prowling your pantry for a bit of "something," we are including a recipe for Honey Cookies.

Meduolis –Honey Cake

The classic spice and honey cake of our memories. Honey tends to make the batter heavy, sour cream lightens it – make sure not to omit it.

1 cup honey
½ cup brown sugar
3 Tbsp. butter
4 eggs, separated
2½ cups flour
2 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. cinnamon and ginger
½ tsp. nutmeg, allspice, cloves
1 cup sour cream

Preheat oven to 325°F. Heat honey, stirring until it comes to a boil. Set aside to cool. Cream brown sugar and butter until fluffy. Mix in 4 egg yolks one at a time, then add honey.

Sift flour with leavenings and all of the spices. Mix half of this flour mixture into the batter. Add the sour cream and mix in. Follow with the remaining flour. Beat reserved egg whites into moderate peaks and gently fold into the batter.

Pour batter into greased and floured 9 x 13 inch baking pan. Bake 50 minutes. *Optional* (but recommended): while still warm, brush cake with a wash of 1 Tbsp. honey and 1 Tbsp. fresh squeezed lemon juice.

Orange Honey Cake

This meduolis gets its subtle complexity and depth from orange and coffee. It is baked in a loaf pan.

½ cup honey
⅔ cup brown sugar
3 Tbsp. oil
2 eggs
⅓ cup frozen orange juice concentrate
¼ cup warm water
1 Tbsp. grated orange zest
2 tsp. instant coffee dissolved in 1 Tbsp. warm water
¼ tsp. salt
1¾ cup flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. cinnamon, ginger, allspice
¼ tsp. cloves

Preheat oven to 350°F. With mixer at medium speed, mix honey, sugar, oil and eggs. Add orange juice concentrate, water, orange zest, dissolved coffee and salt. Mix well.

Sift flour with baking soda, baking powder and spices and gently

mix into the batter. Pour into 9 x 5 inch greased and floured loaf pan. Bake approx. 60-65 minutes. Check for doneness. Allow to cool completely before slicing.



Meduoliukai–Honey cookies

Roll these cookies thicker than you're used to. They're just better that way.

1 cup butter
⅔ cup brown sugar
¾ cup honey
1 egg + 1 yolk, white reserved
1 Tbsp. lemon zest
4½ cups flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg

Preheat oven to 350°F. Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Mix in honey, egg, egg yolk and lemon zest. Sift flour with baking soda and spices. Add flour mixture to batter incrementally. Switch to mixing by hand as the dough becomes stiff.

Divide dough in half and flatten into 2 rounds. Wrap and refrigerate for 1-2 hours. Roll out (remember: thick is best) and cut out with cookie cutters or rotary cutter to desired shapes. Lightly beat reserved egg white and brush tops of cookies. We like to press in a blanched almond for decoration and crunch. Bake for 11-13 minutes depending on size and thickness.

LCRA supports Catholic educational, religious, and social outreach projects in Lithuania and its diaspora.

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A stylized illustration of a large, leafy green tree with a brown trunk. At the base of the tree, there is a row of small, red silhouettes of people standing. Above the tree, there are three small yellow butterflies.

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Lithuanian Portraits



At the 10th North American Lithuanian Song Festival it was good to see Bill Walton once again after so many years.

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