



VARPAS

Summer 2006

Vasara 2006



The *Varpas* is the official newsletter of the Lithuanians of America which is based in Kansas City, Kansas, the heart of America.
www.kclith.org

Strawberry Hill Street Fair Friday, July 28th

The Strawberry Hill Street Fair will be held Friday, July 28th, at 6th and Tauromee in Kansas City, Kansas from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. The LOA will be selling torte and drinks as a fundraiser for moving the bell that was originally in St. Casimir's Church. The street fair will include a food court, beer garden, and music. The Zero Band will perform from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.

If you would be willing to help work at the street fair, please call Kathy Hazlewood at (913)262-7175 or e-mail at khazlewood1@yahoo.com.

Our Lady of Siluva Mass September 10th, 2006

This year the Mass in honor of Our Lady of Siluva is scheduled for Sunday, September 10, 2006, at 10 a.m. at Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church, 9th and Mill, in Kansas City, Kansas.

Father Samuel Russell, an LOA member from Conception Abbey, will conduct part of the Mass in the Lithuanian language. We will have a social hour and light refreshments after the Mass in the church hall.

Note: A few of our charter members occasionally are unable to come because of a lack of transportation. Would any of you who read this be willing to help in this capacity? If so, please call Charlotte at (816) 461-9073.

St. Casimir's Bell Update

Lithuanian Gediminas Castle at Ethnic Festival August 18th, 19th, and 20th

Lithuanians will be among 60 nations who will be celebrating the Ethnic Enrichment Festival in Kansas City at Swope Park. There will be Passport Books which children love to have stamped at each country's booth.

A different country will perform on the stage every 30 minutes during the entire festival. Also scheduled during the weekend are a Parade of Flags featuring all member nations of the EEC.

Each year, our Lithuanian community is represented by our "Gediminas" Castle, which our faithful volunteers put up on the Thursday evening before the Friday opening. After decorating the castle on Friday, the crafts, amber jewelry, breads, tortes, and cold drinks are brought in, to be ready for sales all through the weekend.

The Aidas dancers will perform on Sunday. Come out then, or any day of the festival. All the ethnic entertainment is excellent, and the food so delicious. Bring your family and friends for an enjoyable time. See you there!

Fall Picnic

The LOA is planning a Fall Picnic in October. More details to come.

The LOA has permission to move the original bell from St. Casimir's Church from Christ the King Church to the Wyandotte County Museum, where it will be permanently displayed. See the enclosed flyer for more information.

The LOA will be selling torte and drinks at the Strawberry Hill Street Fair on Friday, July 28th as a fundraiser.

Do you know any descendants of the original contributors? Just give us their name and address and we'll send them information. Contact Sally Zemaityte-Dannov at 913-384-0580, or email: sallyzd@aol.com

The LOA is collecting donations for the bell. We currently estimate the costs to be over \$6,000. Your tax deductible donation may be mailed to:

LOA/St. Casimir's Bell Fund
1731 N. 78th Terrace
Kansas City, Kansas 66112

The St. Casimir Church.



Bell Memories

Reaching the fifth grade at St. Casimir Lithuanian School in Kansas City, Kansas, was a highlight for boys. (For me it was the fall of 1939.) That meant we were old enough to become altar boys, assisting the parish priest in all the pomp and ceremonies throughout the year, until graduating from the eighth grade.

Just before the beginning of daily morning service, one or two altar boys got to ring the large church bell for a couple of minutes. Ringing the bell meant riding the rope of the bell after we started it ringing. Sometimes two altar boys would ride the rope going up and down. This was one of the secret thrills of being an altar boy. I doubt Father Zekas, our parish priest, knew of our rides of four feet up and down.

St. Casimir Church closed in 1947; the bell was given to Christ the King Church, a new parish being built in the Welborn area of Wyandotte County. It still is at that parish today, but the Lithuanians of America Organization have been given permission to remove the bell from Christ the King Church and will place it at the Wyandotte County Historical Museum.

Gene Ashley, Past President of the LOA

Do you have memories of St. Casimir's?
If so mail to Kathy Hazlewood at 6625 Reeds Dr.,
Mission, KS 66202, or e-mail
khazlewood1@yahoo.com

Change in Lithuanian Government

On June 1st, Lithuanian Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas resigned after Labor, the biggest government party, withdrew from the coalition. On June 15th Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus named a new prime minister, Zigmantas Balcytis. Parliament now has a week to decide whether it approves the nomination.

Zigmantas Balcytis is the acting prime minister and former finance minister. He is also a member of the left-wing Social Democratic Party. But it may be difficult for him to form a governing coalition which will have a majority in parliament.

The government under Prime Minister Brazauskas was the 13th since Lithuania declared independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. It had been in power for just under two years but had been shaky for months because of political rivalry between Labor and its coalition partners. Labor had 31 seats in the 63-seat minority government in a parliament comprising 141 seats. The ruling coalition comprised Labor, the Social Democrats and the Peasants Party.

Whatever government emerges, little change is expected in the pro-western foreign policy of the Baltic state, which joined the European Union and NATO in 2004.

Lithuania Donates to Food Program

Lithuania made its first ever donation to the World Food Program (WFP), providing \$37,000 in aid to the victims of the massive earthquake that hit the Indonesian island of Java last month.

Lithuania is among a number of East European countries that have raised their development assistance in recent years and joins an increasing number of emerging WFP donors from the region.

No Euro for Lithuania

European Union finance ministers vetoed Lithuania's request to adopt the euro next year, saying the Baltic country has failed to control inflation.

Finance chiefs issued their first-ever veto of a euro bidder, warning that Lithuania's inflation rate is drifting higher and rejecting the government's appeal for a loosening of the entry rules. While Lithuania's inflation matched the 2.7 percent euro target in April, the EU said the rate will jump to 3.5 percent for the full year and 3.3 percent in 2007, indicating that consumer prices aren't under control. The EU voted to make Slovenia the first eastern country to adopt the euro, in 2007.

Filmmakers Discover Lithuania

Several international film projects have found Lithuania to be an ideal location. Lithuania's geography allows filming to appear to be in Great Britain or Germany. Also Lithuania is not highly urbanized, making it attractive for the filming of historical movies.

Also The Lithuanian Film Studios have proved to be a professional partner with a good deal of experience in cooperation with foreign production companies. Apart from their foreign cooperation, the Lithuanian Film Studios produce Lithuanian movies as well. Their latest home production is *Raganos ir Lietus* (Witches and Rain), a feature based on a novel by Jurga Ivanauskaitė.

Falk Schweikhardt, a German producer, director and screen-writer, explained why Lithuania has become an attractive location for international film projects: "Of course, the expense factor is the major reason for foreign companies to come here. However, the low prices are paired with substantial know-how that does not differ much from studios in Germany."

About Our Members

Ali Bush graduated from Bishop Miege High School. She plans on attending Kansas State University in the fall. Congratulations, Ali!

Renee Rosen, daughter of **DeAnne** and **Karl Rosen** has married a Brit and now living in London. The wedding was held in a real castle

Do you have information about your family to share? Call Kathy Hazlewood at 262-7175, mail to 6625 Reeds Dr., Mission, KS 66202, or e-mail khazlewood1@yahoo.com

Space Still Available at Lithuanian Muge

Space is still available for vendors wanting to sell merchandise at the Ninth Annual Margarita's Muge, or Lithuanian Bazaar. This year, the Muge will be held November 4th.

The Lithuanian booth will feature various Lithuanian goods, including amber, linens, wood carving, and eggs. The kitchen will serve a variety of foods to enjoy at the bazaar or carry-out. Lithuanian tortes and bread will be sold; the perfect addition to holiday meals.

If you are interested in having a booth at the Muge, contact Anita Strumillo at (913)299-1453.

Midsummer's Eve

On June 23rd, Midsummer Eve is celebrated in Lithuania and the rest of the Baltics. In Lithuania Midsummer Eve is not a holiday, but a long night of parties. Most Lithuanians attend parties with bonfires, plenty of alcohol, singing and dancing. Parties usually end by honoring the rising sun in the morning. It is an ancient practice which dates back to pre-Christian times and has many rituals that are closely associated with nature and the hope for a good harvest in the autumn.

Linus Kleiza to Return to Lithuania

Linus Kleiza, in his rookie season with the Denver Nuggets, will return to Lithuania representing the NBA in their Basketball Without Borders program.

Kleiza will work with young players at the Sarunas Marciulionis Basketball Academy from June 30th to July 3rd. He attended the academy as an elementary school student and eventually followed Marciulionis, Arvydas Sabonis and Ilgauskas to the NBA. "(Marciulionis) was one of my idols," Kleiza said. "Him, Sabonis and those guys, you always look up to them."

Marciulionis opened his academy in 1992 - just two years after Lithuania declared sovereignty from the Soviet Union. The former USSR broke apart a year later.

Kleiza's parents moved to the United States when he was 10, but he remained with his grandparents in Lithuania for another six years. Kleiza joined his family in America when he was 16 and went on to play basketball at the University of Missouri before being drafted 27th overall in the 2005 NBA draft.

Kleizas is hoping to earn a position on the Lithuanian team that will play in the World Championships. In June, he will attend training camp for the Lithuanian national team.

Calendar of Events

Strawberry Hill Street Fair – Friday, July 28th from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. at 6th and Tauroomee in Kansas City, Kansas. Help us raise money for St. Casimir's bell.

Ethnic Enrichment Festival – August 18th, 19th, and 20th in Kansas City at Swope Park. Join us at the castle.

Our Lady of Siluva Mass - Sunday, September 10th at 10 a.m. at Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church. Social hour to follow.