



VARPAS

Winter 2007

Ziema 2007

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



Diplomatic Ball Hosted by Lithuania And Slavic Nations

The commissioners representing Lithuania, together with the commissioners of Croatia, the Czech Republic, Russia, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, and Ukraine, have been in the process of planning the festivities for this year's Ethnic Enrichment Commission Diplomatic Ball.

The Ball will take place at the Hyatt Regency, Crown Center, on February 24, 2007. Advance ticket sales show that the ballroom will be filled with guests. Proceeds from the Ball go toward an annual scholarship given to a high school graduate, who has shown interest in his or her ethnic heritage, and done volunteer work with the ethnic organization, in order to promote and preserve the traditions of his ancestral heritage.

The dinner menu will feature a choice of herb-stuffed pork loin roast with wild mushroom sauce, fillet of salmon, or a vegetarian pasta. Side dishes and dessert will be reminiscent of Eastern European cuisine, for all to enjoy.

Each of the countries will present a short program of ethnic music and dance, with performers wearing traditional costumes, bursting with color and a variety of patterns. After the program, Don Lipovac and his band, renowned throughout the metropolitan area, will play dance music to suit every taste. During the evening, door prizes will be given to lucky winners.

The evening will surely produce many happy memories, as each of the seven countries, and the guests of the organizations representing those countries, celebrate their unique and colorful heritages together!

Lithuanian Month at Strawberry Hill Museum

March is Lithuanian Heritage month at the Strawberry Hill Museum. The museum will feature the Lithuanian room during the month

The museum is open from noon to 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. It will be closed on Easter. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$2 for children. Rooms are also available for rental for special events.

Strawberry Hill Museum
720 N. 4th Street
Kansas City, KS 66101
(913) 371-3264

Upcoming Events

February 16th – Lithuanian Independence Day, commemorating Lithuania's original declaration of independence in 1918.

February 24th – Ethnic Ball at the Hyatt Regency, Crown Center, 6 p.m.

March 4th – LOA Lithuanian Independence Day Celebration, 1 p.m. at the Wyandotte County Museum. See enclosed invitation for more information. March 4th is also St. Casimir's Day, the patron saint of Lithuania.

March 11th – Restoration of Lithuanian Independence in 1990.

Celebration of St. Casimir's Bell

This is a summary of a short speech by Gene Ashley at the celebration of the St. Casimir's Church bell, installed at the Wyandotte County Museum on Dec. 10th.

Good afternoon to all of you. This is a very happy occasion for the local Lithuanian community.

After decades of Communist rule and occupation, Lithuania is once again a free, independent nation and our local Lithuanians now have our bell back. The Wyandotte County Museum has placed it in a very prominent place **inside** the building.

The location of St. Casimir Church was at Broadview and Ridge, in Kansas City, Kansas. It was a wood framed church in the shape of a cross.

The two story red brick school was only about 30 feet south of the church. The three Lithuanian nuns lived on the second floor of the school.

There were two classrooms on the main floor, with four elementary grades taught by one nun, with an average of 30 pupils.

You would think that we would be a bunch of crazy, mixed up kids. Our studies were in English, daily church services were in Latin, and our hymns usually in Lithuanian.

The nuns were so wonderful and dedicated, that when we moved on to high school, we were on par with the rest of the high school students.

If you want to learn more about the Lithuanian culture, and the local Lithuanian community, I recommend obtaining a copy of the Ethnic History of Wyandotte County, Volume II.

It is full of information and pictures and only sold at the Wyandotte County Museum. There are less than 5 books left.

In a few seconds the St. Casimir bell will ring for the final time to circle the bell in thanksgiving, for it's return to us after 59 years.

Šv. Kazimiero Varpo Minėjimo Šventė

Tai yra santrauka iš Gene Ashley pasisakymo per Šv. Kazimiero Bažnyčios varpo patalpinimo minėjimą Wyandotte County Muziejuje Gruodžio 10 dieną..

“Labadiena visiems susirinkusiems. Ši akimirka yra be galo ypatinga vietinei Lietuvių bendruomenei.

Po pusė amžiaus trukusios komunistų okupacijos ir valdimo, Lietuva pagaliau ir vėl yra laisva šalis, o mūsų vietinė bendruomenė ir vėl atgavo savo varpą. Wyandotte County Muziejus surado jam labai iškilų vietą greta kitų savo eksponatų.

Šv. Kazimiero Bažnyčia visiems laikams išliks kaip nedidukė kryžiaus formos širdžiai miela bažnytėlė, kuri stovėjo Broadview ir Ridge Kansas Cityje, Kansas. Vos už trisdešimties pėdų į pietus nuo bažnyčios stovėjo dviaukštė raudonų plytų mokykla, kuri antrame aukšte maloniai priglaudė tris Lietuvos vienuoles. Pagrindiniame aukšte buvo dvi klasės, kur viena iš vienuolių mokė keturias pradinės klases. Klasėse viduniškai buvo apie trisdešimt mokinių.

Jei aš jums pasakyčiau, jūs nepatykėtumėte, kad mes buvo visas pulkas pasiutusių, šiek tiek pasiklydusių vaikų. Pamokos buvo mokomos anglų kalba, pamaldos buvo laikomos lotynų, or hymnai būdavo dainuojami lietuvių kalba.

Vienuolės buvo be galo mielos ir pasišventusios, tad kai mes pradėjome lankyti vidurinę mokyklą mes niekuo nenusileidome kitiems mokiniams.

Jei jūs norėtumėte sužinoti daugiau apie Lietuvių kultūrą bei apie vietinę Lietuvių bendruomenę, aš rekomenduoju įsigyti Ethnic History of Wyandotte County, Volume II, knygą. Joje pilna informacijos ir nuotraukų. Ji parduodama tik Wyandotte County Muziejuje ir tik 5 egzemplioriui beliko.

Už kelių sekundžių Šv. Kazimiero varpas suskambės paskutinį kartą. Tad apjuoskime jį su padėka, kad jis pas mus sugrįžo po 59 metų.

Lithuanian Community Reclaims St. Casimir's Bell

After the closing of St. Casimir's Catholic Church in 1947-48, the Lithuanian parishioners were devastated, but eventually began to form ties with other parishes in the diocese. The church had been demolished, and religious objects such as statues, stations, etc, were given to other churches. The church bell, which had been commissioned through fund raising efforts of many of the original parishioners; was given to Christ the King, a new parish then being established at 51st and Parallel in Kansas City, Kansas. The bell was in use for many years until the parish installed an electronic carillon to announce the daily and Sunday Masses. After receiving diocesan permission to obtain the bell, an agreement was reached with Christ the King parish for the removal of the bell to coincide with the installation of a much-needed new roof for the bell tower in August 2006. An appeal was made to help defray the cost of the bell removal. Due to the donations of money and gifts-in-kind from our members and supporters, the bell was hoisted from the tower by Kaw Valley Roofing.

Photographers from the *Kansas City Star* and local television stations were on site, taking photos and interviewing both LOA members and Christ the King parishioners about the history of the bell. The story appeared in the *Kansas City Star*, *The Kansan*, and *Draugas* newspapers *Lithuanian Heritage* and *Bridges* magazines.

Meanwhile, negotiations had been taking place with the board of directors of the Wyandotte County Historical Museum for acceptance of the bell as a permanent display. After learning of the history of the bell and its unique craftsmanship of design; the museum board approved the placement of our ancestral bell in the Museum's main entryway. There it will greet visitors for many years to come; a beautiful and lasting memento representing the strength and tenacity of our immigrant Lithuanian ancestors who settled in Wyandotte County, over 100 years ago.

Ethnic Enrichment Scholarship Applications

The Ethnic Enrichment Commission awards a scholarship each year to a worthy candidate aspiring to attend college. Applicants must be high school graduates, who have taken an interest in their ethnic background and have volunteered with their ethnic group in outreach activities, or worked to promote, educate or understand more about their culture, and share it with others.

Applicants must write a paper on their aspirations after obtaining a college degree, and describe their contributions to their community and ethnic group. They must obtain a copy of their high school transcript, list several people as references, and be recommended by their respective countries representative commissioners.

Each summer, the EEC awards the scholarship during the Parade of Flags ceremony, which takes place on the Saturday afternoon of the weekend Festival. Students in the past have been very grateful for the financial assistance this scholarship provides. Two years ago, David Hazlewood, son of Aidas folkdance members, Kathy and Richard Hazlewood, and great-grandson of one of the founding members of the early Lithuanian community in Kansas City, Kansas, was the EEC scholarship recipient. David is now in his sophomore year at the University of Kansas, in Lawrence, Kansas.

If you or someone you know, has a family member, who might qualify for this scholarship, please contact Dick or Charlotte Horvatic at (816) 461-9073. All applications must be turned in by June 1, 2007, for full consideration.

Kucios Party Starts Holiday Season In Festive Style

Wearing smiles and carrying in food, decorations, song sheets, tableware and other supplies, LOA board members arrived at the Lake of the Forest clubhouse ready to set up the community room for the annual Kucios party held this year on December 3, 2006.

The Kucios table was covered with linens woven in Lithuania with green and white floral designs. The nativity scene was in the center, and various things which had traditional significance, such as the dried straw, which those seated at the family Kucios table, pulled out, one at a time, to foretell the future. The longest straw denoted a long life. The table was laden with the twelve traditional meatless dishes eaten on Christmas Eve. This year, our table had Poppy Seed Milk and very small biscuits, baked stuffed fish, dried fruit compote, salota, a cucumber salad with sour cream, a sauerkraut salad, a cranberry pudding, and marinated herring, among others. Members enjoyed tasting all the dishes, whetting their appetites for the potluck dinner soon to follow. The main entree of the potluck that day, was a bounty of Lithuanian sausages made by Dr. Craig Alexander, one of our members.

As members arrived, they signed in and paid 2007 dues. Greetings were exchanged as everyone brought their food dishes to the buffet table, where soon the lines would form, and the task of choosing from all the abundance would commence.

In a room adjoining the refreshment bar, Gloria Ruttman and fellow member Diane Schatte set up their Children's Store, a tradition each year now, for the children to purchase little gifts for family members at prices compatible for a small child's pocket.

Both the "shopkeepers" and the children have a delightful experience, as items are chosen and paid for. A table of Lithuanian goods was set up near the doorway of the main dining room, for the adult members also, to do some Christmas shopping.

Before the meal, President Sally Zemityte Dannov greeted all, first in Lithuanian and then in

English, thanks to the help of Jonas Pultenevicius, who is a member of both the Omaha Lithuanian community and the LOA in Kansas City. Everyone joined in a blessing prayer, and then filled their plates from all the pot luck dishes everyone brought.

After eating, everyone joined in singing traditional Lithuanian songs.. The Aidas dancers performed several numbers in the center of the room, and then invited the audience to join them in several mixer dances, always a crowd pleasing activity.

As the dancing finished, who should appear, but Father Frost with a sack of toys for the all the children present. As the afternoon came to a close, members and guests made quick work of cleaning up and putting equipment away. Another wonderful party at the Lake of the Forest clubhouse had come to a happy end; thanks to all who helped to plan, set up, prepare food, perform, and clean up afterwards! We appreciate each and everyone of you! ACIU LABAI, to one and all!!

9th Muge-Another Success!

Thanks to all the members of the LOA and the Aidas dancers who put forth the effort to plan, organize, contact vendors, shop for and transport goods, set up, cook, bake, donate, serve on kitchen duty, perform, and finally clean up and take home for storage, all the necessary materials needed to put on this successful event.

Special thanks to Jonas Pultinevicius who transported the breads and tortes from the Lithuanian Bakery in Omaha. Thanks also to Jonas and Dave Werp who assisted Father Frost during the Muge.

Without all of your efforts, the Muge would just not be possible. Aciu!! Labai aciu!!!!

Bush and Adamkus Meet

On February 12th, President Bush met with Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus in the White House.

Bush said, "I'm not surprised that in a struggling democracy like Afghanistan, your country has stood up bravely to support the Karzai government and the people of Afghanistan. And I thank you. And I thank the citizens of your country for your willingness to contribute to peace by helping a young democracy survive. I thank you very much for your support for the people of Iraq. It's hard work in Iraq. But, nevertheless, it is inspiring to know that Lithuania has said, we want to help the people realize the blessings of a free society."

LAC Meeting

The LAC Board of Directors Meeting was held in September of 2006. Our Chapter representative and Crossroads President Kate Porterfield attended. A new national executive committee was elected, see www.lietuviu-bendruomene.org for details and photos. Photo below of Kate with all of the directors: Kate is middle row, 5th from the left.

The LAC Cultural Committee announced that the next Sokių Sventė Folk Dancing Festival to be held in North America will be in the Summer of 2008, location to be determined.

Fire At Hill Of Crosses

The world famous shrine of the Hill of Crosses in Siauliai, Lithuania was partially destroyed by a fire on December 28, 2006. It is not known how the fire started, but it is under investigation by authorities. The work of replacing the crosses and filling the damaged area has already begun. Bishop Eugenijus Bartulis of Siauliai said that even though many of the smaller crosses were completely burned, the larger crosses in the immediate area of the fire were just charred.

The AIDAS folkdancers were privileged to see the famous site in May of 1992. The site has attracted tourists and sightseers for several decades, and never fails to put visitors in awe of the magnitude of the devotion which the hundreds of thousands of crosses represent. Pope John Paul II, whose mother was Lithuanian; visited the site in 1993, several years after Lithuania had gained its independence from the Soviet Union.

It is the custom for visitors and Lithuanians alike, to bring a cross to the Hill on the occasion of a first visit, or to commemorate a birth, death, marriage, answered prayer, or request for a favor or blessing. Each of the dancers had brought a cross representing their family members, to place on the site. It was a moving experience for all those who placed crosses that day; as they remembered with a prayer, their families at home and the ancestors who had immigrated from Lithuania to America.



+++In Memoriam+++

+**Anna Mary Barvick**, 93, died Friday, December 29, 2006. She was born April 6, 1913, to Anna (Skapalas) and Joseph Shartivit. She and her husband, Adam, were members of the LOA for many years. She is survived by her daughter, Carol Savory, and sisters, Helen Fedora, Stella Saragusa, Katie Estes, and Josie Kostuke. Burial in Leavenworth National Cemetery.

+**Stella Mary (Budenosky) Clark**, 79, died on November 1, 2006. She was born May 15, 1927, in Tonganoxie, Kansas to Margaret (Lynch) and Anthony Budenosky. Preceded in death by her husband, Richard and brothers Benedict, Bernard, Charles and Stanley Budenosky. She is survived by sisters Vera Wallace and Liz Johnson and brother Lawrence Budenosky.

+**Reginald Eugene "Gene" Hamm**, 99 years of age, died on January 23, 2007. He was born in Mulberry, Arkansas on July 26, 1907. He is survived by his wife Anna, and many children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. The Funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Cyril and Methodius Church.

+**Laura Julianna Paulekis Mazeitis** died November 23, 2006, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She was born December 12, 1912. She was married to Frank Matthew Mazeitis. She is survived by her son Frank Algird Mazaitis, her daughter Lynnete Mazeitis Hansson and grandchildren Michelle Mazeitis Morgan, Drew Mazeitis, Renee Mazeitis Johce, Heather Mazeitis, Derek Mazeitis, and Todd Hansson. She has 13 grandchildren.

Eternal Rest Grant Unto Them O Lord, and Let the Perpetual Light Shine Upon Them, May Their Souls all the Souls of the Faithful Departed, Rest in Peace, Amen.

Our Lady of Vilnius Intervention

Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus has asked the Archbishop of New York to preserve Our Lady of Vilnius Roman Catholic Church in Manhattan for the generations of tomorrow

He asked the archbishop to give special attention to the role played by the Parish of Our Lady of Vilnius in fostering national identity and spirituality. Tolerance and respect for the heritage and religious traditions of ethnic minorities with whom we have lived together throughout the history of our countries are among the values that are followed and cherished by both of our societies.

“Almost a century ago Lithuanian immigrants in America built, using their own funds, the Church of Our Lady of Vilnius to have a place for worship and witness their love and faith in God. With time the church acquired yet another mission: it became a center fostering not only religious belief but also Lithuanian culture and national identity. People rallied around their church to maintain community bonds and remain close to their homeland.”

President Adamkus further writes that extraordinary Lithuanian American cultural treasures have been assembled in the church. Because of its architectural and artistic value, the church building has been included in the “List of U.S. Heritage Objects Important for Lithuania” compiled in accordance with the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on the Protection and Preservation of Certain Cultural Properties, which came into force on 3 August of 2006.

Valdas Adamkus points out that now many young people from Lithuania arrive to live, work and study in the United States of America, Our Lady of Vilnius in Manhattan is gaining an ever more important role. “It has become a growing house of spiritual guidance and ethnic culture, giving generous spiritual and moral support.

St. Casimir's Bell Project Special Thanks to:

Don Zemites
Gene Ashley
Tom Strumillo
Susan Hertz

Werp/Aleksaitis Family
LOA Board of Directors
John and Susan Osborne
Trio Masonry

Christ the King Church
Wyandotte County Museum
Staff

Donors to the St. Casimir's Bell

Tom Strumillo
Susan Hertz
Don Zemites

Kate Porterfield
Fred and Eileen Dannov
Bill and Anita Strumillo

Susan and John Osborne
Sally and Dave Dannov

Charlotte and Dick Horvatic
Donald and JoAnn Lipovac
in memory of J. Jocius
Charles Werp
James and Nancy Renko
in memory of Betty Zemaitis

Tom Werp
Peter Werp
Richard Werp
Dave Werp
Bill and Sandra Kelly

Richard and Kathy Hazlewood
Mary Kelly and Chris Wright
Jeremy Zemaitis
in memory of Chuck Zemaitis

Thomas and Ann Renko
Mark and Renee Bernhardt
Gene and Donna Ashley
Judita Martin

Robert Hoffman
Julia Galas
The Permanent Solution
in memory of Chuck Zemaitis

Mark and Madonna Muder
John and Suzanne Zemaitis

Bonita Cotter
Vincas Sarka
Mark and Madonna Muder
Frances Sachen
JoAnn Timm

Joe and Bernita (Jenkins)
Pollock
Joshua Muder
Oscar Schnell
Sister Zubrickas

Marilyn Belshe
Thelma Clift-In Memory of
Chuck and Margaret Zemaitis
Joe and Nancy Stegeman

Our sincere apologies for any errors or omissions

Language Lesson

New Year- Nauju Metu (Now' yoo Mah' too)
January - Sausis (Sow' sees)
February - Vasaris (Vah sar' rees)
March- Kovas (Koh' vahs)
Month- Menuo (Meh' nuoh)
Year- Metai (Mah' tye)
Season- Sezonaš (She Zoh nah)

Winter - Ziema (Zhee eh' mah)
Spring - Pavasaris (Pah vah sar rees) (Pa-
(after) vasaris-(February_ is "Spring"
Summer- Vasara (Vah' sah rah)
Autumn - Ruduo (Roo' duoh) from root word
"rudas" meaning brown

Time for 2007 LOA Dues

If you haven't paid your LOA dues for 2007 yet, now is the time. LOA dues for 2007 are staying at the same low price of only \$10 per family or \$7 for a single person. As an LOA member, you will receive the *Varpas* mailed to your home. The *Varpas* includes information about LOA members and events, as well as news from Lithuania. You will also be invited to the LOA's events such as the Christmas Party and Lithuanian Independence Day Celebration.

LOA Treasurer, Anita Strumillo, will be collecting dues at the Lithuanian Independence Day celebration. If you are unable to pay then, you can mail in your dues. Just fill in the form below (or write the same information on a piece of paper), and mail it with your dues to Anita Strumillo.

If you would like to make an additional contribution, it would be greatly appreciated. Remember, the LOA is a non-profit organization, and your contributions are tax-deductible. Your donations allow the LOA to do more activities to help Lithuanians both here in the United States and in Lithuania.

You can also purchase a gift membership for friends or relatives. Just send the address for your gift membership with your dues.

Meeting Your Lithuanian Relatives

A new service brings people in this country together with their relatives in Lithuania. These new Family History Tours are offered by Vilius Vaseikis, an experienced and knowledgeable facilitator who lives in Vilnius. The new website, www.LithuaniaVisits.com, is richly illustrated with photographs of Lithuania. The site also has a wealth of information about traveling in the country.

"Many people want to see the region where their ancestors were born. An actual visit provides images and memories that can never be conveyed in words," Mr. Vaseikis says. With your help, he locates the area of Lithuania where your family is from. Then he contacts people there who share your genealogy. He speaks excellent English, easily bridging the two cultures.

All of the preparations come together when Vilius makes the final arrangements for your visits with your relatives. These typically include a meal or two, which are always the high points. For more information about Family History Tours and other alternatives, as well as a wealth of helpful advice, take a look at www.LithuaniaVisits.com.

Lithuanians of America 2007 Dues

___ \$10 - family ___ \$7 - single ___ Additional Contribution of \$ ___

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____ - _____ Email: _____

Mail to: LOA, 1731 N. 78th Terr., Kansas City, KS 66112

Upcoming Performances of Aidas Dancers

The upcoming performances for the Aidas Dancers are as follows:

Sunday, March 5th - St. Casimir/ Independence Day. Program will include Aidas dancing and audience participation.

Friday, March 10th - Annual 4-H Regional Convention: "Reaching Out Locally and Globally". Shrine Temple at Linwood and Paseo. Stage Time 7:45 p.m. Craft and Amber Display 5 to 9 p.m.

The Aidas Dancers also have a revised practice schedule. They will now practice on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month, at Westport Presbyterian Church, from 2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Details are available at their website: www.aidasdancers.org. If you are interested in joining, contact Anita Strumillo at (913)299-1453.

Lithuanian to Play at MU

Lithuanian Vaidatos Volkus