

bridges



LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

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Cover: Cottage in the small resort town of Pervalka, on the Curonian Spit, in autumn. Photo: Yevgen Belich

Back cover: King Mindaugas' name day is celebrated on October 14 in Lithuania. This monument to Mindaugas is in Vilnius. Photo: Teresė Vekteris

from the editor

Family Ties

So, I recently found out that I'm kind of related to Gediminas, grand duke of Lithuania from around 1315 until his death in 1341. However, lest you think I actually have a claim to royalty, I must advise you that the relationship is by marriage (five of them) rather than blood. According to the family trees I've been able to connect with on Geni.com:

"Gediminas, King of Lithuania is your first cousin once removed's ex-wife's first cousin's husband's great aunt's husband's great nephew's wife's husband's 19th great grandfather."

It's still something, right?

And as I try to wrap my head around that convoluted web of familial relationships, the bigger question might be, why does it matter? Because often as we examine our identities, try to figure out just who we are, we can sometimes cling to the most tenuous of claims as we search for meaning.

For some growing up, Lithuania was everything, as M. M. De Voe explains beginning on page 3. For others, Lithuania was nearly unknown, as Phyllis Edwards relates beginning on page 8. Common to both stories, as it might be for many of us, is the impact that our families' expectations have in guiding, and sometimes inhibiting, our personal journeys. What's most important, though, is that we begin to write our own stories.

Two young women—one in high school, the other fresh out of college—have begun to do just that, thanks in part to the Lithuanian International Student Services (LISS) program. You can read about how their summer volunteer and internship experiences in Lithuania have reshaped some of their assumptions about the country and about themselves.

Wishing you well on your path to discovery,


Teresė Vekteris, Editor

PS: While we're on the subject of family, let me introduce you to some new Bridges family members:

Beginning with this issue, we welcome our new advertising and subscription manager, Laura Vidžiūnaitė. Welcome, Laura! Laura takes over for Rimas Gedeika, who has served in the role for almost 15 years. We are indebted to Rimas, as he was much more than an administrator—he was also one of our contributing writers and photographers, not to mention a good friend and our biggest cheerleader.

With our January 2017 issue, you'll also see a new name at the top of our masthead. Karilė Vaitkutė will be taking over for me as editor of Bridges in the new year. Those of you who receive the Lithuanian Museum Review may be familiar with Karilė as editor of that publication, and I am thrilled that she will be bringing her considerable experience to the helm of Bridges. Please extend her a warm welcome! I know that she is looking forward to your submissions and feedback as she puts her creative stamp on the magazine. You can write to her at kariledalia@yahoo.com.

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book review

tion of 1912 and leads to the description of city life, with horses, taxis, streetcars and markets. In the meantime, the family with its Lithuanian friends loved to celebrate traditional weddings described in the book. Also mentioned are Christening, First Communion and Confirmation events. The author notes that All Saints Day in November was the time to visit the graves of family and light up candles. Actually that day should be the All Souls Day—Vėlinės.

World War I starts in Chapter 21. In the next chapter, Lithuania declares independence on February 16, 1918. Great celebrations take place in Lithuanian homes in Baltimore. A few months later, the Spanish flu pandemic breaks out in Baltimore. By the end of 1918, the city had nearly 24,000 reported deaths caused by influenza. This pandemic killed about 500,000 Americans. Chapter 24, near the end of the book, was aptly called "Death." The angel of death knocked on Jadvyga's door and she died on October 17, 1918, at the age of 35. The family was unable to have her funeral services at St. Alphonsus Roman Catholic Church due to restrictions on public gatherings because of the Spanish flu. Instead, Jadvyga was laid out in the parlor of her home on West Lombard Street. Later the casket was taken to Holy Redeemer Cemetery at 4430 Belair Road in Baltimore. This painful chapter ends with Philip, Jadvyga's youngest son (and the book author's father-to-be) who was 2 ½ years old at the time. "Not understanding what is going on, he cried: 'Where's mama?' He goes from one person to the next, pulling on their sleeve and asking: 'Where is mama?' His godfather reaches down and hands him a dollar. He looks at the dollar and throws it to the floor. He wants his mother. Finally Philip goes to his

father, who picks him up and hugs him. His sister Elsie comes over and tries to comfort him. He clings tightly to his father, sensing that something is very wrong" (p.138).

The book ends with an appendix containing family names, a historical overview of timeline for Lithuania, Lithuania Quick Facts, a glossary of Lithuanian terms used in the book and references. The timeline covers important historical events, starting with 2000 B.C. I noticed one significant omission, namely, there is no mention of the Lithuanian armed resistance by partizanai. It lasted from 1944 to about 1953 and planted the will to fight for freedom in the years to come. During that time, more than 500,000 Lithuanians were deported, forced into exile, jailed or shot by the Soviets.

Another issue that needs to be mentioned and corrected are references to marriage. Chapter 3 describes a wedding of Rokas Vaitkus and Elzbieta Tamašauskaitė that took place in the 1880s. "Couples, however, were obliged also to have a non-religious wedding performed at a Soviet-established 'wedding palace' because Russian law did not recognize church weddings" (p. 11). In reality, there were no Soviets back then and the wedding palaces were established by the Soviets much later.

The Invincible Heart is a product of a loving heart that guided the creation of a book filled with admiration for the Lithuanian people. It allows the reader to travel with Jadvyga and to relive the victories and defeats in the Old Country and the New World. The author admits that to her this was one of the most emotional and rewarding journeys that she has ever taken. Now the readers are grateful to the author for taking them along on this journey. "Long live Lithuania!"

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October 2016

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

ONGOING

Through April 22, 2017
Daily Life: Photography from Lithuania Exhibit
 The Print Center, 1614 Latimer St., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Free and open to the public
 Tuesday through Saturday
 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.
 Info: printcenter.org,
 215-735-6090

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

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

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

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

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

FEBRUARY 2017

February 11
Poker Tournament to Benefit Versmė Lithuanian School of Kansas City
 Cedar Creek Clubhouse, 25775 W. 103rd St., Olathe, Kans.
 \$45 ticket includes \$3,150 in chips, dinner buffet, soft drinks and Lithuanian snacks.
 Info: Renata Nantz, 913-271-3422

February 24-March 4
Lithuanian Snow Ski Trip
 Aspen Mountain Resort, Aspen, Colo.
 Sponsored by Lithuanian Athletic Union of North America and Lithuanian American Doctors Union. Skiers, non-skiers and families welcome. Race schedule TBA. Travel and accommodations: linda@ski.com, 800-525-2052 x3329 or 970-925-9500 x3329.
 Identify yourself as part of the Lithuanian Ski Group.
 General info: edmickus1@aol.com or vsaulis@sbcglobal.net

February 26, 4 p.m.
Annual Aspen Lithuanian Independence Day Celebration
 809 South Aspen Street, Aspen, Colo.
 Special guest Rolandas Krisčiūnas, Lithuanian Ambassador to the U.S.
 Info: dmb@aspenconsul.com

MARCH 2017

March 3-6
17th Annual Florida Lithuanian Open Golf Tournament
 Info: LTConsulFlorida.com,
 727-895-4811

March 17-19 (new date)
Women's Weekend
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.
 Group discussions, exercise, art, cooking, and spiritual and personal rebirth.
 Info: kerry@watershedcoachingllc.com or kriscon@frontiernet.net

March 17-20
Vyresnių Skaučių + Gintarių Lithuanian Scouts Jamboree
 Agatha A. Durland Scout Reservation, 1 Clear Lake Road, Putnam Valley, N.Y.
 Registration: via Facebook: Vyr. Sk. + Gintarių Suvaziamas 2017 or Skautai.net
 Info: djmattis@gmail.com or vaiva.rimeika@gmail.com

March 25
Ethnic Heritage Mass
 St. Peter and Paul Basilica, Philadelphia, Pa.
 Choir "Laisvė" will sing at the Mass

APRIL 2017

April 1
Benefit Concert for Neringa
 600 Liberty Hwy., Putnam, Conn.
 Info: neringa.org

MAY 2017

May 13-14, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.
45th Annual Baltimore Lithuanian Festival
 Catonsville Armory, 130 Mellor Avenue, Catonsville, Md.

May 19-21
Counselor Retreat
 Camp Neringa, Brattleboro, Vt.
 Info: neringa.org

JUNE 2017

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

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

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

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

JULY 2017

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

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

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

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

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

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

GOT EVENTS?

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

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