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Tel: 410 663-0158

Fax: 815 327-8881

E-mail: LithuanianUSA@yahoo.com

BRIDGES Consultants

Jeanne Dorr Editor
Gema Kreivenas Design & Production
Ramas Pliura Treasurer,
Lithuanian American Community, Inc.,
and Subscription Manager.

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Address all editorial correspondence to:

BRIDGES

Jeanne Dorr
4 Shrewsbury Yard
Riverton, NJ 08077-1038

E-Mail: Jeanneshalna@aol.com

For subscription and advertising
information, please contact:

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*Cover: The art work on the cover is from a book by Antanas Gedminas
of Antanas Kucas' Art Works, Printed in VILNIUS, Lithuania 1971.
The Summery of his works is on page 21.

Captain Ann Agnes Bernatitus

U.S. NAVY, WORLD WAR II



Ann Agnes Bernatitus

The Americans born before and who took part in World War II have been described as our nation's finest generation. These heroes grew up expecting to live traditional lives where they worked for a living and raised families before retiring in old age. Ann Agnes Bernatitus, a young girl growing up in Exeter, Pennsylvania, surely expected to live such a simple and mundane life. Time would soon reveal that fate had reserved a greater purpose for the lives of Ann and her generation. Ann's early life was typical of many young girls of the period.

She had been born on January 21, 1912, to Lithuanian immigrants who had settled in Exeter, Pennsylvania. Her parents, Alexander Bernatitus and Margaret Adamits, had been born in the Suvalki region of Czarist Russian occupied Lithuania. Like hundreds of thousands of Lithuanians they chose to leave their loved ones and migrate to America seeking better lives for themselves and their children. Alexander, a skilled craftsman, not only earned a successful livelihood, but even built the family home during the early part of the century. Ann received her early education through the Exeter public school system where she graduated from high school in 1928. Ann had always had an interest in caring for others and always wanted

to be a nurse. She once commented there was nothing else for girls to do in those days, but to teach or nurse. Though her widowed mother could not afford to send her to college, Ann worked briefly after high school and managed to get into nursing school. In 1931, Ann entered nurses' training at the Wyoming Valley Homeopathic Hospital in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania. Graduating in 1934, in the middle of the Depression, there were few opportunities for employment in the area. While taking a post graduate operating room technique course at the Pennsylvania Graduate Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, she managed to secure a position on the hospital's nursing staff from February to May 1935, followed by similar positions at the New Rochelle Hospital, New Rochelle, New York and Nanticoke State Hospital, Nanticoke, Pennsylvania.

One of Ann's hospital superintendents had served in the U.S. Army during World War I and spoke favorably of military nursing so she applied for a position with the U.S. Naval Nursing Corps. On September 25, 1936, Ann was appointed an Ensign in the U.S. Navy Nurse Corps. For the next twenty three years, Ann would continue to care for the sick and injured and rose through the ranks to Captain. Like thousands of her generation, Ann's life proved to be far from the mundane existence she had expected in childhood. Ann served in various military posts throughout the United States and the Pacific. During her long and distinguished career, Ann served as the Chief of Nursing at the Naval Hospitals at Camp Pendleton, California and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She retired, on April 1, 1959, and returned to a quiet life living in the family home in Exeter, Pennsylvania.

Throughout her military career, Ann

was known for her care of the sick and injured and during her later career, occupational therapy of the wounded return to civilian life. She is still largely remembered for her experiences during World War II that rival any male war hero of the period. Like many of our World War II heroes, Ann's heroic exploits have long been forgotten by the current generation. It is hoped that the following brief account of Ann's service at Bataan and Corregidor while the American strongholds were being over run by Japanese forces, will restore her to an honored place within the Lithuanian American Community.

After being commissioned, Ann served briefly at the Naval Hospitals at Chelsea, Massachusetts and Annapolis, Maryland before being assigned to the U.S. Naval Hospital, Canacao, Philippine Islands. She left the United States by naval transport from Norfolk, Virginia, via the Panama Canal, and made a brief stop to drop some U.S. Marines off at Midway Island.

In July 1940, Ann arrived in Canacao, Philippines and was immediately impressed by the easy life style enjoyed by the American personnel stationed there. She was one of twelve nurses assigned to the Naval Hospital where the work was easy and there was plenty of time to enjoy golf, bicycling, swimming and the officer club. Manila was only a ferry boat ride away where one could get anything found in the U.S. at a reasonable cost. In the Philippines, as the rest of the world, this pleasant era would soon come to a quick end.

Though there had been talk about war in Europe for some time, Ann was surprised to take a 6 o'clock telephone call from a boyfriend advising that

war had been declared. It was only then that they learned of the December 7th 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. Work immediately commenced with the sandbag being placed around the hospital because the foundation of the three story building was so strong. When the war was declared an American who could not be moved was sent to her hospital and the Filipinos sent home. A few days later Ann recalled coming off duty early one morning and hearing sirens going off and planes bombing nearby Nichols Field. With this attack, Ann was assigned to assist in the evacuation of their patients to Sternberg Hospital in Manila. On December 10, Ann watched the Japanese bombing of the Cavite Navy Yard by some 125 planes from the nurses' quarters. The wounded were immediately brought to the hospital where Ann took part in providing needed medical assistance and first aid. As Japanese forces began their invasion, American wounded continued to be brought to the hospital. As the number of wounded continued to rise a temporary hospital was ordered to be established at Balintawok, just outside Manila. Half of the Navy medical personnel were sent to this facility and the remaining personnel divided into teams for assignments to various locations. Ann was assigned to a surgical team sent to such a facility at the Santa Scholastica School where she worked long hours caring for the wounded.

On December 22, General Douglas MacArthur came to the conclusion that Manila could not be held and declared it an open city. All American military personnel were ordered to fall back to Bataan and Ann's surgical unit withdrew with the retreating Army convoy. Due to the hectic conditions, units were mixed up and Ann became the only naval nurse in her group. Ann served at Camp Limay on December 24th and remained there until January 23, 1942,



Bright Ribbons Are Her Honors of Bataan and Corregidor

Lt. (jg) Ann Agnes Bernatitus is the only member of the Navy Medical Staff who escaped after Bataan and Corregidor service under fire. The nurse's ribbons represent the first Legion of Merit Medal ever awarded, the new Distinguished Unit Badge, American Defense with star, and Asiatic-Pacific Theater. Her patient, Pvt. Daymen M. Carter, USMC, is a twice-decorated hero of Guadalcanal.

assisting in operations and the treatment of all type of casualties under the most extreme conditions.

On January 23, 1942, her unit was ordered removed to Little Baguio. Farther down the peninsula the Japanese forces continued their advance. On March 3, her hospital was bombed, even though the warehouse on the beach had a big red cross. The work day drew progressively longer with every operating table being constantly filled. During an interview, Ann stated, "They would come in from the field all dirty. You did what you could, there were lice; I kept my hair covered all the time. He did a lot of leg amputations because we had a lot of gas gangrene out there. I remember one patient we were operating on. Dr. Smith didn't want to sew him back up. He had died. I remember

telling him that I didn't want him to do that if anything happened to me. He said, 'I'll sew him up just to shut you up.' We were washing the dirty dressings that they used during an operation. We would wash them out and refold and sterilized them and use them again..."

"It was terrible. By that time, they had stopped advancing for a while. Things were kind of quiet at the front lines. But we were getting a lot of patients with malaria, dysentery, all that. We ran out of beds. You'd go to bed at night and when you awoke the next morning you'd get out there and there would be all these two or three-decker bunks made of wood and patients in them. There wasn't much surgery going on, but the nurses taking care of the sick were very busy."

On April 7th, the hospital was bombed for the second time and when their front line collapsed was moved aboard the hospital ship Relief to the Island fortress at Corregidor. Ann recalled that she had been less scared at Bataan, for on Corregidor the whole place shook when bombed by the Japanese. On Corregidor the hospital was set up in the Malinta tunnel under a rock mountain like formation which also contained the headquarters of General MacArthur and Wainwright. Upon arriving at Corregidor, Ann came down with dysentery and her operation work became limited. The bombing of the Island was terrific and the casualties continued to rise. As conditions worsened, it was decided that an attempt would be made to evacuate some key personnel and the nurses were added to this selection. This decision was made by President Roosevelt himself when he ordered General MacArthur to leave the Philippines while continuing the struggle for its eventual liberation. Ann has no idea of how she and the other nurses were selected, but somehow they were added to this list of key

personnel. She recalls being ordered with others to meet in front of Wainwright's headquarters where someone began reading out names. As your name was called, General Wainwright shook your hand and wished you Godspeed. He told the departing 'Tell them how it is out here.' and then drove off. Those selected were then taken out of the tunnel down in pitch dark to the dock where they boarded small boats and were taken to awaiting submarines.

Their travel was slow with all effort being taken to conceal their movement. Ann later learned that Corregidor had fallen during their escape and that the Japanese forces were everywhere. The appearance of two dark shapes in the water was a welcomed sight to all. They boarded the submarines quickly with little or no noise. On May 3rd, Ann embarked on a 17 day voyage aboard the U.S.S. Spearfish (SS-190) through Japanese filled waters to Fremantle, Australia. After a brief stay in Fremantle, Ann was sent home flying to Melbourne and aboard the U.S.S. West Point to New York via the Panama Canal.

Ann's World War II service did not

end here. She went on to serve at the Naval Hospitals in Bethesda, Maryland and New Orleans, Louisiana and as the chief nurse aboard the Hospital Ship Solace during the Okinawa landings. The ships' assignments took her to Saipan, Tinian, and Manchuria, China caring for our wounded and liberated prisoners of war.

Sadly, Ann died on March 3, 2003.

I doubt if anyone reading this article is not proud to read about this heroic Lithuanian American and her contribution to our World War II war efforts. A grateful nation was also just as proud of Ann. Due to a quirk in military regulations, Ann could not be given an existing decoration for service in Manila, Bataan, and Corregidor. At that time, the United States did not have a military decoration for military service for a non combat member. To correct this situation, the U.S. Congress created the Legion of Merit on July 20, 1942, to award individuals who have distinguished themselves by exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service. The first individual to be awarded the Legion of Merit was Lieutenant Ann Agnes Bernatitus, Naval Nurse

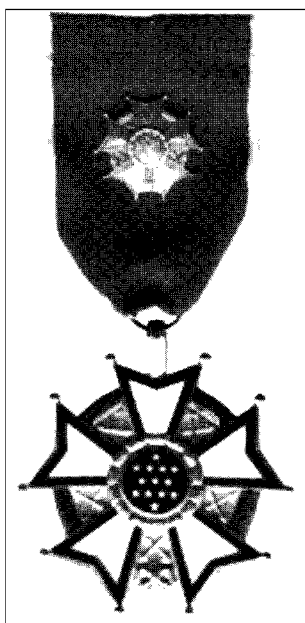


*LTJg Ann Bernatitus, (NC), USN
Albert K. Murray
Oil on canvas, 1942*

for her service on Corregidor. BRIDGES takes this opportunity to honor Ann for her heroic and meritorious service to our country.

Henry Gaidis

Henry Gaidis is a contributor to Bridges. He is a member of the Board of Directors of JBANC and among his many interests is military history.



First Recipients

American

The first American recipient of the Legion of Merit was Lieutenant (Junior Grade) Ann Agnes Bernatitus, USN, whose award was approved on October 14, 1942 based on her service as a nurse during the campaign in the Manila-Bataan Peninsula areas from December of 1941 to April of 1942.

Cape Cod Lithuanian Get Together

One sunny Sunday in June a group of enthusiastic young Lithuanians now called the “third wave” – (treciabangiai), decided to invite young and old Lithuanian Cape Codders to a fun afternoon in Brewster. The main attraction was “cepelinai”, potato balls with ground meat interiors that are often considered the Lithuanian national dish.

Lithuanian American Community Cape Cod Chapter committee member, Deimante Vilcinskaite was the one responsible for organizing this event. Her helpers were students who are in the USA with work visas. Kristina and Dalius need to be singled out

as chief chefs and cooks.... They, with the help of others, diligently peeled sacks of potatoes, grated and strained them, made a delicious ground meat center, and a super bacon and sour cream sauce. There was not enough time to shape the “cepelinai”, so when



Kristina, Dalius and Deimantė keep watch over the cepelinai

older members arrived some ladies pitched in and helped in making more than 100 “cepelinai.” Several huge pots were needed to boil them. All present stood patiently in line for the culinary delight. Much praise was lavished upon the young doers and many stood in line again for seconds and even thirds. Other good food offerings were available as well, but the most appreciated dessert was the Napoleon torte, which all Lithuanians love.

After satisfying appetites, there was singing, dancing and games. A video was shown about Vilnius, the capital, and there was opportunity to chat with old friends and make new ones. Applause, applause for a friendly get together, a mingling of young and older Lithuanians. May there be more like it on Cape Cod!

Aurelija Borgess



Continued from page 11
My Memories of ARGENTINA

Aunt Emilia's son died in a train accident a few years after I returned home and she told me that his young widow married again. I wanted to help her so much, financially, but she told me that every letter from the United States would be opened by postal employees in search of money, and then resealed. It was a no-win situation. When my aunt, who now in her 80s, stopped writing, I assumed that she probably had passed away.

I also lost contact with my Uncle Alfonsas' two daughters. Since his widow was about the same age as he was, I had to assume she moved on. Once again I had the same communication problem with all of my relatives in Argentina, as I didn't know Spanish and they didn't know English. My uncle's daughters had very little, if any, expertise in writing Lithuanian.

Now, decades later, I often think of what became of them. The economy of Argentina, at that time, was not good because of the high inflation rate, which was 176 percent, and was still climbing. The country was ruled by military leaders who, evidently, did not know how to handle the economy.

That trip in 1978 was both an emotional and educational one for me. My big disappointment was that I was not able to see the beautiful sights of Buenos Aires.

Edward Baranauskas

Edward Baranauskas lives in Vilnius and is a frequent contributor to Bridges.



Buenos Aires, Argentina 1978. The final resting place of my aunt's husband Žvinys. His flowers are between the white colored ones.



Photo of Vytas is from Rivers School of Music in Weston, Massachusetts.

Photo: Tiffany Thompson

On Saturday afternoon, August 20, 2005, the Family Concert program in Ozawa Hall at the Tanglewood Music Festival featured a composition entitled Goulash Mélange by pianist Vytas J. Bakšys. The composition, a piano arrangement for four hands, was performed by Bakšys and his colleague Randall Hodkingson. This is the first performance at Tanglewood of the work, commissioned by and dedicated to the Boston Secession, Jane Ring Frank, Artistic Director, and premiered in November 2002. Goulash Mélange is the second commission Bakšys completed for Boston Secession, one of America's premier contemporary music ensembles. The occasion was a program with the theme "The Third 'B': Johannes Brahms, Past and Future" in which carefully selected pieces of music ranging from Hassler and Bach to Schönberg and Schickele illustrate the inspirational thread that is tied to Brahms, before, during, and after his lifetime.

Bakšys is celebrating his 17th season at Tanglewood, the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Since 1989, Bakšys has served as faculty pianist with the Fellowship Conducting Program. He had also collaborated for five years with the Conducting Program at Yale School of Music. In addition to his position as orchestral keyboardist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra as well as the Boston Pops, Bakšys is active in various contemporary ensembles such as Boston Secession, Boston Symphony Chamber Players, Boston Musica Viva, Concord Chamber Players, and Boston Artists Ensemble, promoting contemporary music and pioneering new works. His extensive performance career of approximately 150 concerts annually has taken him to many countries, and he has participated in recordings produced by major labels. He has composed and arranged over thirty pieces.

Vytas J. Bakšys

PIANIST

Vytas Bakšys is the son of Viktoras and Sofija Bakšys, who immigrated to the United States from Lithuania in 1949. He entered the New England Conservatory Preparatory School at the age of five and earned his Bachelor's degree with Distinction from the New England Conservatory of Music where he was also elected to Phi Kappa Lambda. He then went on to receive a Master of Music with High Honors in performance from SUNY at Stony Brook and a Doctor of Musical Arts in 1991. His mentors were A. Ramón Rivera, Victor Rosenbaum and Gilbert Kalish. Other studies included cello, composition, theory, harpsichord, organ, chorus, percussion, orchestra and theater. While a student, he spent summers at Kinhaven Music School in Vermont and the Eastern Music Festival, North Carolina.



Photo is a "video grab" from a souvenir DVD from a concert in Taiwan, the violinist is Chao-Hsiu Lee.

Bakšys lives in Massachusetts with his wife, Sandra Nortier, a violist. Their daughter Emilija attends the Boston Lithuanian School, is active in Lithuanian Girl Scouts, and performs with Marimba Magic, an exciting ensemble for children at the Rivers School of Music in Weston, Massachusetts.

Milda B. Richardson

Oaks are venerated trees in Lithuania. From cradle to coffin, the oak provided for the needs of Lithuanians. Planted around homesteads, they protected the farm from winds and storms and marked borders between neighbors. Planted in a town square, the oak served as a monument. Planted in foreign soil, it marked that Lithuanians are here.

So, stepping onto the campus of the University of Washington in Seattle today, a visitor would be surprised to know that among the neo-gothic and modern architecture and groves of mature trees, once stood or may still stand a Lithuanian oak. This was certainly the reaction when a visiting journalist from Lithuania before WWII wrote about an oak being planted at the University of Washington in 1932. The story was printed in "Pasaulio Lietuvis" (World Lithuanian) then published in Kaunas. In Chicago, the Margutis Lithuanian language radio program also broadcasted this story, but soon it was forgotten.

With time, those Seattle Lithuanians who participated in this occasion died or moved away. Thirty years later, as more and more people of Lithuanian ancestry came to live in Seattle, nothing was known about this oak or much about these earlier Lithuanians. The only clues they left behind are the many Lithuanian language books found on the shelves of the Seattle Public Library. Inside the covers, the books are stamped with the words, "DLK GEDIMINO DRAUGISTE". (Society of the Great Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas). Most of these books were published in the early decades of the 1900's.

Recently, the Lithuanian oak story resurfaced once again when Chicago journalist Petras Petrutis commented in "Draugas" about this interesting story found in the archives. How surprising to think that in faraway Seattle, in the 1930's there were enough prominent Lithuanians who left a legacy at the University of Washington by planting a Lithuanian oak. Who were these Seattle Lithuanians? What happened to this Lithuanian oak they planted?

The answers to these questions are still being researched and information is being sought from anyone who might have a piece of the puzzle to share with us. Among the artifacts we have of the Lithuanian oak planting is a photograph from 1932.

In that year, the University of Washington desired to commemorate the 200th year anniversary of the birth of



Hopefully someone will be able to help better identify these people. From left to the right: Judge Kazis Kay, three unidentified women, and Stephen Eringis.

*This photo is the property of MSCUA, Washington Libraries, Photo Coll 700

America's first president, George Washington, for whom this state was named and in whose honor, in 1909, the university had erected a statue which still stands at the western periphery of the UW campus. In those early decades of the century, it was customary to celebrate George Washington's birthday on campus each year.

A special event was planned for the occasion of the bicentennial celebration. The Danish consul, Hon. Henning Plaun suggested a tree planting ceremony by the Consular corps of 1932 to commemorate this celebration. The archives of the University's beloved Professor Meany reveal many letters between him and the Consular corps working on the celebration and the effort that was made to find appropriate trees to represent the national tree of each participating consul: an oak for Latvia, a birch for Norway and Finland, a fir for Sweden, a beech for Denmark, and a white birch for Russia. On February 22nd, seventy-three years ago, in addition to the Lithuanian oak planted that day, thirty-four other trees were planted in a place on campus that became known as the International or Consular grove. Today, whatever remains of this original grove on campus is part of the Grieg Garden where the bust of the Norwegian composer Edvard Greig commemorates Seattle's connection to its sister city Bergen, Norway.

The question of the Lithuanian oak still remains a mystery. Is it still on campus or did it fall victim to the trees that were cleared when the Allen Library was being built on campus?

Baltic Association to the UN

Through the initiative of BATUN (Baltic Association to the UN) an extensive collection of Baltic folkart was exhibited at the Public Library in Tarrytown, New York. By popular demand, the exhibit was extended for a two month period of July and August.

Submitted by: Laurynas R. Misevicius

Left to right Giedre, Stankunas (Lith. American Community Executive Committee), Baiba Pinnis (Latvian, initiator of the exhibit) and Epp Vinkman (Estonian rep., and BATUN Board member). Missing in photo is Saulius Geniusas (Lithuanian on the teaching staff of the New School University) who also helped with this exhibit.



Was the tree really an oak from Lithuania or just another oak that would represent Lithuania? A letter sent from Seattle to the Lithuanian Embassy in Washington DC requesting an oak sapling from the oak tree brought from Lithuania suggests that an attempt to plant a real Lithuanian oak was made. Unfortunately, there is no reply from the Embassy in the UW Archives to answer one way or another.

The photograph of the Lithuanian representatives planting the tree is unique in the archives among the other photos commemorating this event. It is the only picture showing more than one person in attendance and the only one revealing the name of the country as seen on the sash worn by one of the young women. The Archives reveal that in 1932, in contrast to Latvia with its consul, Hon. Hans Cron, Seattle had no honorary Lithuanian consul. Instead, a Lithuanian American, Stephen Eringis, approached the University to represent Lithuania in the planting ceremony. Eringis was a graduate student in the school of education working on a master's degree. In a letter written by Eringis in 1931, he asked Lithuania's Foreign Ministry in Kaunas to give him a special commission to participate in these ceremonies. There was no reply. Then by agreement with the dean of the Consular corps in Seattle, Eringis, as a private citizen was given permission to participate in the Consul's event.

Other letters reveal that three national Lithuanian societies existed in Seattle. No names are mentioned except that of the DLK Gediminas Society which had already been in existence for 27 years in Seattle. B.G. Sitko, a trustee and charter member of this society suggested that Judge Kazis Kay Krauczunas, a superior court judge in Seattle take the place of Eringis. Two days before the event, the society approved Eringis' participation. The picture which is not labeled in the Archives, then can be identified as showing Judge Kazis Kay, three unidentified women, and Stephen Eringis. It's possible to surmise that the three women could be the three daughters of Judge Kay. Their names would then be Agle Reedy, Julia Duncan and Alice Hilling, after their married last names. Judge Kay passed away six years later in 1938. Not much is

known about Stephen Eringis except that he went from Seattle to live in Baltimore, Maryland in 1947, and died there in 1963, at the age of 75. Much less is known about Mr. B.G. Sitko and DLK Gedimino Draugiste outside of the few intriguing clues mentioned earlier.

If anyone knows more about this society or the people mentioned in this article, please contact me at iblekys@windermere.com. It would be extremely important to let us know so we could create a fuller picture of Lithuanian society before WWII and learn about their contributions in Seattle life.

In some way, there is a fascinating symmetry to learn that 73 years ago, Lithuanians had created a presence at the University of Washington by planting an oak tree as monument to Lithuanian culture. Today, Lithuanians are once again building a monument to Lithuanian culture and language by endowing the Baltic Studies Program at the University of Washington. A tree may be cut when there is no one to save it. This time we are working slowly but surely to establish a permanent presence in the Scandinavian Studies Department at the University of Washington to stand as proudly as those trees once stood together on campus.

I want to thank Guntis Smidchens, Sr. Lecturer in Baltic Studies program in the Scandinavian Studies Department and Bill Talley, UW landscape architect for their help in researching the UW Archives, trying to find and piece together the story of the 1932 Lithuanian oak planted at the University of Washington.

The article appeared in the May 2005 issue of "Tulpe Times". Courtesy of "Tulpe Times" Newsletter of the Washington State Chapter of the Lithuanian American Community.

Irena Blekys

The author is a former president of the Lithuanian American Community, Washington State Chapter, and currently serves as a member of its Board. She is also on the Advisory Board of the Scandinavian Studies Department of the University of Washington.

LITHUANIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY, Inc. CLEVELAND CHAPTER

The Lithuanian American Community Inc. of the USA promotes close ties with its chapters.

A youthful and enthusiastic National Executive Committee of the Lithuanian American Community Inc. headed by President Vaiva Vebraite-Vebra, advisor to Lithuanian President Adamkus, held its committee meeting in Cleveland, Ohio Aug 20-21, 2005 as part of its ongoing effort to maintain close ties with and receive input from its chapters.

Members flew in from Lithuania, New England, Chicago, and Washington D.C. They met with Cleveland chapter president Algis Gudenas, Executive V.P. Dr. V. Stankus, and vice presidents, Valerija Adomaviciene Vida Bucmiene and Dr. Kristina Phillips at the Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Lithuanian Parish facilities. During the meeting and presentation, it became apparent how deeply committed the executive committee is in promoting its goals and the welfare of Lithuanians in America and Lithuania.

Its youngest member, Arunas Karalis, president of the American Lithuanian Youth Association, related how he is recruiting new members by traveling to the major U.S. cities to promote the Youth Association and the upcoming World Lithuanian Youth Association Congress in Toronto on June 23-25, and the subsequent Lithuanian folk dance festival in Chicago July 02, 2006, and how to raise the finances and select the voting delegates to the Congress and the need to update the by-laws of the association.

Laurynas Misevicius, vice president of sports related how the Lithuanian American men's basketball won first place at the 7th Lithuanian World Games in Vilnius this summer. He played for the Lithuanian Americans as did Arunas. Laurynas believes such sports events give Lithuanian youth a way of maintaining their Lithuanian identity because half of the American team were American born, the other half, the new immigrants.



LAC Meeting Aug. 20, 2005 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Cleveland, Ohio

President Vaiva Vebraite raised the concern why most of the approximately 300,000 Lithuanians that left Lithuania for perceived better wages, are not returning. In the USA i.e. the worker pays some 17% to the government from his wages, on return to Lithuania he is forced to pay an additional 13% thus paying 30% from his, her wages. Most people thus do not return, viewing this as double taxation and if they entered the U.S. illegally are afraid also to return for they would not be able to re-enter the U.S.

Gabrielius Zemkalnis of the Lithuanian World Community has asked president Vebraite that the National Executive Committee of the Lithuanian American Community write to the Lithuanian government to negate double taxation, regulate entry in to and from the USA, so people would return to Lithuania. Its members agreed to do so.

Stasys Backaitis, Ph. D. vice president of academic affairs stated that the Lithuanian Government is seeking guidance what Lithuanian programs/existing or in the process of being established at American universities, to fund. The committee agreed with him to supply the Lithuanian Government with the information about the programs i.e. at Illinois Circle in the Chicago area, Kent State by Cleveland, Seattle etc, in order to preserve Lithuanian heritage and studies in the U.S. In general, the committee

agreed on the need to fund the preservation of the archives of Lithuanian culture.

Other topics regarding the reorganization of the Social Services Council, preparation for the upcoming LAC national board of director's session and other timely topics received worthy consideration from committee members Laima Karosiene V.P. Resources, Sigita Simkuvienė-Rosen V.P. Youth Affairs, Elona Vaisniene V.P. Community Development, Juozas Polikaitis V. P. Social Services Council.

The Executive Committee further demonstrated its interest in the Cleveland Lithuanian Community by attending a fund-raiser of the Lithuanian Cultural Garden Society that is restoring the statues of Kudirka and Maironis in its Cultural Garden, a part of a unique system of nationality gardens in Cleveland, and unique in the USA.

And on Sunday 8-21-05, after Lithuanian Mass at Our Lady of Perpetual Help the committee members acquainted the assembled parishioners with their respective duties and the tasks of the committee, in general, and answered any and all question regarding the work of the Lithuanian American Community.

Dr. Viktoras Stankus