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Painting of "Girl with a flower", 1930, Tempera by *Kazys Šimonis* from the
book "Gyvenimo Nuotrupos" - *Atsiminimai*, second edition, Vilnius 1966.

AMERIKOS LIETUVIS

Celebrating its 5th Anniversary

(The Lithuanian American Weekly)



Bronius and his wife, Sandra. "Amerikos Lietuvis" writer Nijole Tarvainaitė (center) looks on.

Photo by Eugenija Fedosejeva

It is very difficult to imagine our lives without the media. There are so many things going on that newspapers and television can not report everything. After Lithuania regained its independence various weekly, daily papers and magazines of our country started growing at a fast pace. Almost every small town in Lithuania issued a new local newspaper. Even in the land of recalcitrant people called Žemaitija, there are quite a few publications, and a newspaper "Plungė" (named after the town, where it is published) has been coming out for more than 10 years. Why are we so interested in this paper?

Because its publisher, a recent immigrant from Lithuania, Bronius Abrutis, settled in America, the country of dreams, and gave "birth" to one more newspaper. "Amerikos Lietuvis" today is one of the most popular, interesting and informative of Lithuanian news media in the USA. This weekly is known by most Lithuanians who live in America, regardless of whether they came to this country recently or they are American Lithuanians, or even people of Lithuanian descent, who live all over the world. May 7, 2005, in the most Lithuanian suburb of Chicago, Illinois, Lemont, "Amerikos Lietuvis" along with its readers and supporters celebrated the first, not so big but yet very meaningful 5th anniversary. There are other Lithuanian newspapers published in the U.S.A., Canada, Western Europe and one of them – the Lithuanian daily "Draugas" is almost 100 years old. However, the publisher of "Amerikos Lietuvis" is a so called "third-wave" immigrant from Lithuania, who came to the U.S. just seven years ago.

We all know that people are coming to America for many different reasons. "Once my wife Sandra, – remembers Bronius, – told me something about a "green card" lottery. At

the time I had no idea what that was. Her sister Jovita, who was living in Chicago for some time, had offered to try to fill out an application and take a chance on it. I said, "My wife, if you want to go – OK... and totally forgot about that conversation. I didn't think it was important." Maybe Mr. Abrutis forgot about the "green card", but one day his wife found a letter in their mail box, which changed the family's life forever. That letter had informed the Abrutis family that they had won the American residency, "green card". They decided to take a chance and go to the United States.

When Bronius arrived in America, he never thought about publishing a newspaper; he didn't know any English, didn't know where to go or where to start. In the beginning he worked in a factory, settled down, just lived and let things go their way. Still, he had some experience in newspaper publishing back in Lithuania... and became interested in the Lithuanian media in the United States. Looking at the newspapers written by Lithuanian immigrants and published in America, Bronius thought that it would be useful to publish a different kind of paper that would be more appealing to youth and newcomers from his Motherland.

"I had not written a single article in

my life, but I am a businessman by nature, I would say a creator, I always needed to come up with something new" – now professes Bronius. His first job after graduating from the secondary school was related to creativity as well. Publisher of "Amerikos Lietuvis" now, an ordinary guy then, Bronius had designed and sewn... handbags. It was his first business, unfortunately not very successful one. But later on, when Bronius became an American Lithuanian himself, he decided to do what he knew best – to create a newspaper. Though his friends treated his idea skeptically, they said he would not have any luck. "Why not" – the future publisher of a new Lithuanian newspaper wondered. "I did it once already, "Plungė" is still publishing!" So he relied on himself and decided to follow his dream. He quit the monotonous job in the factory and focused on his creativity, trying to put together the first issue of his newspaper. Not much time elapsed before Bronius found out from the other publishers how to incorporate a company and what to start with. He found a couple alter egos, who have helped him from the beginning, when he was writing the first and the only editor's letter. That was it! On May 5, 2000 the new newspaper called "Lietuvis" (at that time) saw the light of day for the first time. The most difficult thing was to find contributors. At the beginning all the expenses were paid from Bronius' own pocket (actually... from his wife's pocket), and he could not pay others much. His wife Sandra was working, at the same time Bronius was taking care of his kids and also of a couple of his friend's children and spending hours at his computer looking for the material for every new edition. The first papers were only four pages and after they were printed,

Bronius would take them to the Lithuanian church or other Lithuanian events where he was giving away "Amerikos Lietuvis" for free. A little later, people started to chip in money and they were paying a dollar for each issue. More and more people heard about "Amerikos Lietuvis". Some of them were willing to put an advertisement into the paper. Later the newspaper became eight pages long. Some people have sent their own articles. Although the staff turnover was troublesome in the beginning, Bronius was lucky since he was able to find a few professional and loyal people, who are still working there. In five years "Amerikos Lietuvis" evolved from a four page news-sheet to a forty page publication. Today it has three editions - "Rytų Pakrantėje" (East Coast), then "Vakarų Lietuviams" (for West Coast Lithuanians) and humorous "Fotelis" (The Arm-Chair). But that's still not the end of the story. Bronius Abrutis is planning to expand his newspaper even more. He is always thinking about what he can change, vary and improve upon to make "Amerikos Lietuvis" more interesting to its readers with different points of view regardless of where they live. A staff of 15 people is working to make sure that the new issue of the newspaper is ready each week. With a circulation of almost 4,000 thousand copies - "Amerikos Lietuvis" reached this threshold within five years.

As mentioned, its fifth anniversary was held in one of Chicago's suburbs - Lemont, Illinois at the World Lithuanian Centre. That day there were almost 400 guests at the party along with colleagues and readers to celebrate together. Also included were most of the 15 current associates of the paper (representing not only Chicago, but also the East and West Coasts of the U.S.). A couple of co-workers could not attend as they live in Lithuania. They were a

designer Žydrunas Pilipauskas from Plungė and journalist Agnė Marčinkevičiūtė from Vilnius. Bronius thanked everyone for their hard work as well as those who could not join him on this special day. He mentioned the "Amerikos Lietuvis" web designer, Vytis Bižauskas, one of the most loyal newspaper's contributors and Albinas Hoffmann and others. He expressed a great appreciation for the readers themselves, who send their own articles and letters.

Bronius grew up not far from the Baltic Sea, that's probably why it was symbolic that his colleagues guests entered the banquet hall that was decorated with a newspaper ship made of copies of "Amerikos Lietuvis". Ms. Vaiva Ragauskaitė, the chief-editor of the weekly was holding an authentic wheel of a ship while congratulating all. She passed the wheel to Bronius and wished him that no matter how big the storms would be, not to lose his way in this ocean of life. Then Kęstutis Vaškelevičius from the Lithuanian Embassy read a congratulatory letter from his Excellency, Ambassador of Lithuania to the United States and Mexico, Dr. Vygaudas Ušackas. The American Lithuanian TV director, Arvydas Reneckis, spoke as did several local businessmen. Special honour was given to the Man of the Year (2004) Mr. Donatas Šiliūnas and also the Woman of the Year (2004) Mrs. Rasa Poskočimienė (both from Chicago). The winners of the contest "How to remain Lithuanian in America" were announced. The first place went to Vida Bučmienė from Cleveland, Ohio. Fr. Jaunius Kelpšas blessed everyone and dinner followed. An excellent meal was prepared by the five year old "Lithuanian Plaza Bakery and Deli" owned by the Morkūnai family. The guests were entertained by an ensemble from Vilnius, "Keistuolio Teatras". Everyone had a great time, enhanced by a lot of nice songs, music and dancing at the World

Lithuanian Center Hall. The festivities lasted well into the late evening! So let's wish "Amerikos Lietuvis" further growth and many more birthdays to come.

Eugenija Fedosejeva

Eugenija Fedosejeva is a graduate student at the University of Bridgeport, Bridgeport, CT. Eugenija is an active member of Lithuanian American Community, was elected as a treasurer of its Bridgeport (CT) Chapter. She enjoys participating in amateur sports, fitness and basketball being her favorites and belongs to the Lithuanian Sports Club of Connecticut.

Editor's Note: On behalf of BRIDGES. I would like to wish Mr. Abrutis and his staff continued success in all their endeavors.

†
 Congratulations
 and
 Best Wishes
 Thank you
 for your
 many years of service
 and dedication.

65 Years
 Sister M. Dolorita Butkus
 Sister M. Immaculata
 Miltenis

50 Years
 Sister Barbara Zilch
 Sister Susanne Sutton
 Sister Elise Mora
 Sister Yolanda Maria
 Marcelino

The Sisters of
 St Francis of the
 Providence of God
 Pittsburgh,
 Pennsylvania

Child's Gate To Learning Seminar In Kaunas



Attendees at the 2005 sponsored "Child's Gate to Learning" sponsored weekend seminar in Kaunas perform a skit on what they've learned about volunteerism, the influence of music on children, the profession of social work.

CHILD'S GATE TO LEARNING SEMINAR IN KAUNAS:
Supporting those who work with Lithuania's "at risk" children.

It's said that in Lithuania only about 5.5% of the adult population is involved in some type of volunteer activity, whereas in other countries the statistics are higher (eg. United States 44%, Great Britain 48%, Germany 34%, Japan 25%, according to a 2004 Louis Penner article in Journal of Social Issues Article). Statistics don't tell the full story as "Child's Gate to Learning" organization members well know. In the nine after school centers and temporary homes (dienos centrai, laikinosios globos namai) supported by the group, there are a number of devoted volunteers who give up their free time, and there are a number of paid social workers and other employees who work beyond their scheduled hours. There is room for improvement, as there is with much in life, as Lithuania still grapples with problems with alcoholism and other problems that impact children, families, and society at large. "Child's Gate to Learning" was founded to support centers in Lithuania that work with children who largely still live at home, but in "at risk families", so the centers are a haven for the children to eat, do homework, participate in crafts and art projects, and learn social skills that may be neglected at home.

The weekend of April 23-24 was special because the organization brought to Kaunas 40 directors, employees and volunteers from the 9 centers "Child's Gate to Learning" (Vaiko Vartai į Mokslą) supports. The centers work with upwards of 350 children. Many of the workers would not have another opportunity to meet, since the centers in which they work are scattered throughout Lithuania and were founded by different organizations, a parish, a school principal, a teacher, the Catholic organization CARITAS, even a devoted retired physician. What they have in common is the continual financial and moral support of the "Child's Gate to Learning" organization. The two-day 2005 seminar was the third seminar sponsored by the organization, which has worked on behalf of Lithuania's children since 1998. Earlier seminars focused on one of the character building programs developed by the group (there have been three programs), while the 2005 seminar offered

some lectures and activities that focused more generally on the development and psychology of children, and the valuable role of volunteerism.

The nine supported centers are located throughout Lithuania: Vilnius (3 centers), Naujoji Akmenė, Marijampolė, Kazlų Rūda, Obeliai, Uzpaliai, and Rumbonys. Earlier "Bridges" articles provide information about the founding and the early days of "Child's Gate to Learning", a Chicago-based organization with fundraising chapters in Cleveland, OH, Detroit, MI, Philadelphia, PA, Washington, D.C. and Sunny Hills, FL. The group established ties with the centers in a variety of ways, but primarily on a personal level by its two "programs in Lithuania" coordinators, Rita Venclovas and Aldona Kamantas. In the past few years, the two have spent months at one time in Lithuania working at the centers with the children, familiarizing them with the character building methodologies and programs developed by a special "Child's Gate to Learning" subcommittee. Other "Child's Gate to Learning" officers and members (including this article's author) have only been able to visit for shorter stays, to accomplish specific organization-related projects, visit at least some of the centers, etc. Another role has been played by young Lithuanian American volunteers (see article by Audre Kapačinskas in a past issue of "Bridges") who have gone to work with the children of a particular center for at least a month at a time. During the summer of 2005, a recent college graduate from the Chicago area is the latest to offer to contribute a part of this summer – we await a report of his experiences upon his return.

Back to the 2005 seminar... The seminar was organized by Rita Venclovas, with the input of the newly appointed "Child's Gate to Learning" representative in Lithuania, Žydrūnė Liobikaitė, who works with at risk mothers in the "Vilties Angelo" center in Vilnius. Together, they put together a program that enhanced the knowledge base of attendees about social work (Vilnius University instructor, Birutė Švedaitė); about the impact of music in a child's life (Emilija Paktas Sakadolskis, a long time Washington, D.C. music teacher who, after obtaining her doctorate in music, has moved to Vilnius with her husband, Romas, for perma-

nent residence and continued educational work); about the ties between child and care-giver (Vytautas Magnus University professor Daiva Kuzmickaitė, an early “instigator” in the founding of the “Child’s Gate to Learning” organization, who has the distinction of being the first in Lithuania to receive her doctorate in sociology); the social mission of the Catholic Church (Rev. dr. Arvydas Žygas, an instructor at the Kaunas seminary, Chicago-area (Cicero, IL) born and raised, former Fulbright professor who now lives and works in Lithuania permanently); about volunteerism (Vilnius “Vilties Angelo” employee, formerly volunteer, Lina Gervytė, who returned to Lithuania after a two-year volunteer stint living and working in Thailand); practical steps preparing and supporting volunteers (Lina Gervytė and social worker Žydrūnė Liobikaitė, mentioned earlier in the article); a short overview of American volunteerism and the “Child’s Gate to Learning” organization in particular was provided by Ramunė Kubilius. There was time for the centers’ workers and volunteers to mingle, and share insights on common concerns and problems. Attendees were broken up into smaller groups to analyze a case study and to perform skits about their centers and the lessons they learned at the seminar. Although the work they do is serious, a sense of humor among centers’ workers can go a long way, in the right context. The hospitable facility of the Archbishop Matulaitis House, run by the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (Nekalto Prasidėjimo Vargdienių seserys) in Kaunas, was a peaceful site that accommodated the tightly packed seminar schedule, leaving time for meals and sleep, as well as Catholic Mass in the adjoining chapel. Do methodologies such as those provided by “Child’s Gate to Learning” prove to be useful in Lithuania? The organization has received several inquiries from other centers in Lithuania – permission is granted for their use, upon arrangement with the directors of “Child’s Gate to Learning”. More importantly, the directors of the centers, and the workers at the seminar confirmed that the programs provide methodologies for instilling values in children-friendship, sharing, good citizenship, avoiding alcohol and smoking, self esteem... That type of material is not easily found currently in Lithuania. The center directors and representatives who met in Kaunas during the seminar provided a long list of other social issues for which they would like to see teachings, lesson plans, and group activities. The “Child’s Gate to Learning” programs have been created by a special volunteer-based subcommittee of qualified teachers, social workers and psychologists who



One of the children at the Caritas after school center (dienos centras) “Sypsniukas” in Kazlu Rūda reads a greeting and thank you to the “Child’s Gate to Learning” organization for its support and character-building programs.

glean the English-language professional literature and adapt what they feel is suited and translatable in the Lithuanian environment. Each program plan, from conceptualization of the outline, to editing and printing of the Lithuanian-language manuals, is several months in the making. The workers at the centers can use the material as they see fit, often meshing activities into each center’s weekday packed programs, filled as they are with feeding the children, and ensuring their homework is completed. After all, the primary focus of the centers and “Child’s Gate to Learning” is to ensure that the children continue going to school, and all activities circulate around that core. It is hoped that the smaller centers, located further from Vilnius, will also have the availability and infrastructure to select, prepare and utilize more volunteers. Additional “helping hands” can make a difference in the children’s lives, as well as those of the centers. As Hillary Clinton’s 1996 book indicated, paraphrasing an African saying, “It Takes a Village”...

The Lithuanian Foundation and Seneca House have funded larger projects undertaken by the “Child’s Gate to Learning” organization. Purchases are made in Lithuania or packages sent from the United States – school necessities; arts and craft supplies, shoes, whatever is deemed needed at specific centers. Some supplies and necessities are purchased and sent from the U.S. because of their high costs or short supply in Lithuania. A few American families regularly contribute to “Child’s Gate to Learning” as their family’s special commitment. All donations are appreciated, no matter how large or small. The Web site of “Child’s Gate to Learning” (<http://www.childgate.org>) was recently updated. They highlight past accomplishments and current organization’s character building and substance abuse prevention program methodologies. Goals for 2005 are outlined. A Lithuanian language text page was added, to reflect the support the organization receives from Lithuanian as well as non-Lithuanian speaking Americans. We invite you to visit the site and to contribute towards our

Stockyard Gateway Now a Literary Landmark

According to a recent article in the Chicago Tribune the Union Stockyard Gate on Chicago's South Side has been designated a literary landmark. This was done to honor the novel that shocked the world by exposing the brutal work that had been done here. The gate was the entrance to the city's slaughterhouses where so many men, many of them immigrants, toiled in unsafe and unsanitary conditions.

The proclamation was made to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Upton Sinclair's, "The Jungle." The book tells of the horrors that Lithuanian immigrant Jurgis Rudkus suffered while working in the stockyards.

According to Chicago Alderman James Balcer, one of the dignitaries who attended the ceremony, "They worked 84 hours a week at 16 cents an hour."

Sinclair was challenged by the editor of Appeal to Reason, a socialist magazine, to make the trip to Chicago and to write about the inhuman conditions that workers in many industries faced.

Sinclair told it as he saw it; struggles among different groups, strike breakers and corruption in many areas. He was successful in describing what he saw and the public rose up in anger over these conditions. The White House received a hundred letters a day urging reforms in the meat packing industry. In response, President Theodore Roosevelt and others established the Pure Food and Drug Administration.

Embassy of Lithuania, USA

CHILD'S GATE TO LEARNING SEMINAR IN KAUNAS:



Volunteers at the Caritas "Vilties Angelas" after school center (dienos centras) in Vilnius. Some are Education majors at nearby Vilnius universities. At left is the director, Sister Jolita Matulaityte.

efforts, if you are so inclined.

Confirmation that the efforts of "Child's Gate to Learning" are appreciated could be found in the comments made by seminar attendees in an evaluation form they filled out. It was more a "what I learned and can use in my work" type of questionnaire. Answers included an expression of gratitude to the organization for its programs and this seminar. More importantly, it appears that seminar attendees absorbed what they heard—they seemed to have a greater appreciation for the role of social workers, the value of each child, the impact of caregivers and music on children's development, and the importance of volunteers... It was a privilege to visit some of the centers "Child's Gate to Learning" supports and meet with many of the center directors, employees, and volunteers during the seminar. Only by first-hand visits and personal exchanges can one truly appreciate the circumstances under which at risk child care and guidance takes place. May the centers con-

tinue to have ideas, inspiration, respect and love for the children in their care, since they are Lithuania's future. Meanwhile, organizations like "Child's Gate to Learning" will continue to support them from this side of the Atlantic, as long as circumstances require, and our own energies allow.

Addendum: Since this article was written some statistics appeared in a recent issue of "Draugas."

According to recent statistics from the Lithuanian government, at the beginning of 2005, there were 746,300 children in Lithuania. In 2004, there were 30,400 births, 179 fewer than in 2003. 29% of the children were born to unmarried parents. On June 1st, international NGO (non-governmental organization) group representatives urged governments to show concern for the well-being of children not only at election times. There are not enough programs for children with social problems, nor is there enough financing. According to the Lithuanian NGO president's assistant, Marytė Leliugienė, this year 2.3 million LT (litai, about 2.6 per U.S. dollar-RK) were set aside for "dienos centrai" (after-school, "Head Start"-like programs-RK), whereas to realize the desired goals, 154 million LT (litai) are really needed.

Ramunė Kubilius

Ramunė Kubilius is an academic medical librarian by profession. She has served in the Lithuanian American Community's Executive Committee in the past, is currently active in several other Lithuanian organizations and she dances with the Lithuanian folk dance ensemble, "Grandis". She writes for the Lithuanian language press in North America and has contributed to "Bridges" over the years.

THE DANCING SEA GULLS

The port city of Klaipėda is the third largest city in Lithuania, ranking next after Vilnius and Kaunas. The Baltic Sea is Lithuania's window into the world. This town of sailors, merchants and traders came to be in the Middle Ages. It has literally risen up from its own ashes after the devastation of WW II, when hardly a dozen buildings were left intact. Now it is proud of its Fishing Seaport, the "Baltija" shipbuilding yards and other industries. It is a rather noisy, bustling place, but also full of life. Once known as the "city of a hundred windmills" with its characteristic multinational and multicultural population, Klaipėda is again coming into its own.

The new naval hospital in Klaipėda, its educational and cultural institutions and its historical Old Town have made it a city worth visiting. The university of Klaipėda now sponsors the dance group "Žuvėdra".

Formed in 1965-67 when ballroom dancing was relatively unknown in Lithuania, the group now consists of 22 student dancers. These dancing seagulls really spread their wings in 1989 winning 7th place in the World Championships in Stuttgart,



Klaipėda, Dress Rehearsal, 1985

Germany. The young dancers were elated to be participating in an international competition and proudly displayed their tricolor flag in the locker-room to remind everyone that Lithuania was taking a radical step toward freedom and independence. Since then the dancing seagulls have won four firsts in the World Championships and four firsts in the European Championships.

On May 1st of this year the "Žuvėdra" group performed in the USA for the first time. Their concert, organized by the Cultural Council of the American Lithuanian Community headed by Mrs. Maria Remienė, took place in Chicago, the capital city of the Lithuanian diaspora. The group is very popular in its native country, but was seen for the first time in America.

Since 1971 the dancers have been trained by a husband and wife team -- Skaistė and Romaldas Izdelevičius, both of whom are professors at the Klaipėda university and also former dancers. The two coach-

es carefully select their dancers from the student body who are able to meet the rigorous physical and mental demands of competitive sport dancing and also keep up with their studies. Two former dancers, Daina Bertulienė and Juūra Laivyte assist the coaches since new students must be constantly trained. The colorful and artistic costumes are designed by another former dancer -- Aina Zinkevičiūtė. The resident composer from Vilnius, Audrius Balsys, arranges the dance music according to Latin rhythms like samba, rhumba, cha-cha, tango and also from show tunes and popular songs. The recent concert in Chicago turned out to be a spectacular success, the auditorium was filled to capacity by both second and third wave Lithuanian immigrants. It was a moment of real cultural sharing.

Sister Ann Mikaila

Sister Ann Mikaila belongs to the order of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a Lithuanian order in Putnam, CT. and is a contributor to Bridges.



Munich Master - Gala Concert, 1995

The Art Of Dressage Riding In Lithuania

Introduction

Horses have always been an integral part of Lithuanian culture. Everywhere throughout the country there are images of horses portrayed in icons of straw art, lithograph, paintings, wooden and iron sculpture. The distinctive artifact of two horse heads looking in opposite directions is as familiar in Lithuania as the "Koplytstulpis."

From earliest times, most European and Asian countries depended upon horses for the success of their defense, agriculture and transportation. Horse breeding itself has always been an art since the time of Xenophon the Athenian. From the period of the Norman Conquest, 1066 A.D., and the following centuries, the development of horse breeding to satisfy those necessities were active occupations.

In the modern world, the evolution of breeding programs to produce horses for specific purposes has resulted in such identifiable types as Clydesdales and Percherons for strength and even disposition; Arabians for stamina and refinement, and, Thoroughbreds for speed and endurance.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, horse breeding reached a pinnacle as the industrial revolution expanded, territorial pursuits increased, and, economies flourished, all requiring the energy of the horse. At the same time, steam engines were beginning to replace horses for industrial production.

Thanks to James Watt, the term "horsepower" is used in reference to automotive engines to designate power. Horses are powerful animals, capable of producing great energy and they are handsome in appearance. When Watt defined horsepower as 550 foot-pounds per second, or three-quarters of a kilowatt, he based his formula on how much work a horse can do in a day. The prototype horse he used was undoubtedly one from the draft breeds. If Watt measured the energy output of an eight horse team, that team would be generating 8 hp.

In high tech countries, engines have now completely replaced horses for industrial purposes and the standard of elite engine performance is still measured in terms of the superb, beautiful, indomitable horse. The kind of race car engine used at such spectacles as the famed Indianapolis speedway is a 600 hp kind. As one advertisement boasts, "Unleash All Your Horses!"

In the last century, serious horsemanship and the art of riding developed into a popular and cultivated international spectator sport. Competitions in dressage, show jumping and cross country became regularly scheduled world events. Divisions



Anya exhibits the extended trot on an advanced level horse at Judra's outdoor exhibitionring.

of riding grew and shows began including classes to exhibit puissance (strength) agility, stamina, courage and speed in various events. This increased activity and interest soon generated an equine industry with sophisticated products and services available for every conceivable need, from hoof care and fly repellent to psychology and air transportation.

In some nations, such as the U.S., certain regional areas of California, Florida, New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Kentucky, etc., are known as "horse worlds", where people go to work and live in those locations devoted to the sport horse and to a particular breed or style of riding. Equestrian teams have always participated in the Olympics. It was in the Olympic arena that countries with strong military equestrian units could display their top riders and horses over mammoth fences and complex courses. In these exhibits, countries celebrated with justifiable pride when their champions earned top prizes, attesting to a particular nation's horsemanship prowess based on the highest internationally recognized horsemanship standards.



Anya and Natasha at grassy riding area at Judra's.

*All photos by Zenonas Nekrosius, Vilnius, Lithuania

The inevitable disbanding of military equestrian units due to the full mechanization of militaries in the '40s, altered the appearance of Olympic team participation. In modern times, international teams appear and participate as civilians.



Anya and Natasha ride their horses. Both horses are advanced dressage competitors. Between the riders stands Judra.

Today, Lithuania is in the process of rebuilding its horse sport since independence in 1990. Prior to that year, when the country was still part of the Soviet Union, riders and horses were subsidized by the government in Moscow. For all athletes, in every type of sport, this was a convenient plan since it guaranteed that no genuine competitor would have to expend valuable time and effort working an outside job or worrying about funding. As a result, the Soviet system built up an immensely strong athletic resource farm and dominated certain branches of the sport world for decades because the government was drawing the best athletes from every country under its control.

After independence in 1990, those riders and trainers who had been living and working in the Soviet system were turned out on their own, many with no place to go, no way to earn a living and their years of equestrian skill, competence and knowledge invalidated. Competition for sponsors, supporters and funding in general became a battle, often of heroic proportions.

In 1996, the renowned Lithuanian Grand Prix de Dressage champion rider and trainer, Judra Ciuderytė-Kasarina, had been slowly but surely for several previous years, re-establishing herself. She earned her first Grand Prix championship in 1960 and her credits include being consistent champion from the years 1970 through 1974 and from 1977 through 1979.

Currently, Judra is a qualified FEI dressage judge. She has her own small stable in Belmontas, a Vilnius suburb, and she has the use of all the land in the Belmontas hippo-

drome area, located approximately one kilometre from the Belmontas national riding club barn and training facility. This is the same barn that houses the Lithuanian mounted police horses. Judra's personal stable consists of six to eight horses and she always has many young students who board their own mounts at the national barn.

In the early '90's, Judra was well known to Vilnius ex-pat riders of a more conscientious nature. She had made herself available to those same pleasure riders who appeared occasionally and who she knew would treat her horses sensibly. Judra's name was spoken of highly among embassy people and other foreigners residing in Vilnius. She was devoted to training the young people who were riding for exhibitions and who aspired to become champions. In the 90's Judra traveled to Belourus and Ukraine frequently, looking for good horses and being successful in finding them. There were still many horses in Eastern Europe that could be found with Russian Orloff breeding and when Judra could bring such an animal home with her, she would return ecstatic. Such animals were a real treasure. Unfortunately, various Eastern European governments were still marking all horses in a crude way by tattooing identifying numbers in visible areas on the horse's body and this blighted the animal's appearance if the number was not in a place that would be covered by a saddle.

At this time, the early '90s were unkind to Lithuanians, the country and certainly to horses in general. Transition from the Soviet system was a slow and sometimes anguishing process. Feed was costly and so were all the basic essentials for horses. Grains and mineral blocks could only be obtained in the West. Stallions were used for horse sport of an intense kind such as show jumping and cross country since their endurance level was stronger than that of mares and geldings. Stallions seemed to be able to convert their rations more efficiently under such feed constraints. Although a lot of these animals often seemed underweight and quite listless.

Judra agonized over these conditions as did every one of her horsey ex-pat friends. A few people who knew they were going to be in Vilnius for a year or more were able to buy a horse from Judra, stable it with her and take training with her. In this way, her reputation increased among the foreign community and clients from Western Europe would find their way to her.

Continued next month.

Barbara Bilsky

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The Woman and the Devil

Boba ir Velnias

From
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Compiled by Dr. Jonas Balyš
Published in 1951 by the Lithuanian Book Club, Chicago
Translated from Lithuanian by Gloria Kivytaitė O'Brien

Buvo kitasyk toks zmogus. Jis vede, ir pasitaie labai nedora zmona

Once there was a man, who happened to marry a very unpleasant woman who made his life miserable. She was difficult to live with and impossible to please. She would invent all sorts of unreasonable jobs for him, and he was never able to complete them, no matter how he tried. And so this poor fellow passed his time cursing each day of his life. And they say that he who curses while living in this world, sinks into Hell upon his death.

And so it happened to this man: when he died, devils carried his soul off to Hell. Once a soul has entered Hell, certainly the devils will not greet them with kisses, and they began to apply all kinds of tortures. But, the more they tormented him, the more he laughed at them. Amazed by his behavior, they asked:

"What are you laughing at? Everyone who ends up here screams and weeps uncontrollably, and you just laugh!"

He answered, "While among the living, I suffered far more from my wife's treatment, than anything you have attempted here. I am well accustomed to torture, and this is nothing."

One devil thought a bit about this, and then told him, "Well, now, I will have to go and see this woman for myself." He changed himself into a handsome young man, and finding her at home, approached her saying: "I have heard that you are a widow, how about marrying me?"

The woman, pleased to have such a handsome fellow at hand, jumped at the chance and they were immediately married. One or two days passed quietly, but then her character asserted itself, and she began to load her young husband down with work and other torments. Now, our friend the devil was strong and agile enough, but still, he couldn't complete all the jobs she gave him.

Life with the woman was tough, and when the devil had had enough, he dropped everything and took off running. The woman, seeing that he was leaving her, ran right after him. She was closing in on him, when, spying an old man raking hay, he asked: "Old man, if you will hide me someplace in this hay, I will repay you well." The man covered him with a big haystack.

The woman ran up and questioned the old farmer: "Did you see a fellow just running past here?" "I haven't seen anyone", he answered. The woman looked all around, saw nothing, and turned, muttering to herself: "Guess it's no good trying to find that Satan".

The devil, hearing his name spoken, actually began to tremble in fear of being found. But the woman, after a lot of cursing, turned around and went home. The devil, safe now, came out from under the haystack and ran into the woods, where he dug out a black kettle from under a tree. He gave the kettle, full of gold pieces, to the farmer and returned to the safety of Hell.

Once there, he spoke to the man: "I don't know how you were able to live with that woman for so many years, as I couldn't stand it for less than a year. So, go wherever you want, away from Hell, as we all know that you have done your penance on earth."

And the devils let him leave Hell, but where he went from there, I surely do not know.

*Translated from Lithuanian by Gloria Kivytaitė O'Brien
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