

The Lithuanian Connection

Published by Madison-Vilnius Sisters Cities, Inc.



WINTER 2007



**VASARIO 16
INDEPENDENCE DAY
THURSDAY,
FEBRUARY 22, 2007
Speaker:
MARY WASILEWSKI**

The evening's activities begin at 6:30 with refreshments. There also will be the opportunity to view this year's exhibit on Lithuanian textiles in the hall gallery outside of the meeting room. The presentation will begin at 7:30. The Central Library is located just off the Capitol square at 201 W. Mifflin St. Parking

may be found on the street or at the nearby Civic Center parking garage.

The title of Mary Wasilewski's lecture, *Landscapes of Lithuanian Independence* will focus on sites that were negatively impacted by the subsequent Soviet and Nazi Regimes and recent memorialization of the struggle for freedom in Lithuania. It will include sites such as the Liberty Garden and the Ninth Fort in Kaunas, The Vilnius Cathedral and its role in the Baltic Way, the Church of St. Francis and Bernardine, the TV tower and Antakalnis Cemetery in Vilnius, Grutas Park in Grutas and the Hill of Crosses in Siauliai.

A bit about Mary: she holds a Bachelor's Degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and is currently completing her master of science in Landscape Architecture at the UW-Madison. Her background is 1/2 Polish, and 1/2 Lithuanian. She was brought up to be quite aware of her ancestral heritage. During her final year at Illinois, a traveling fellowship was offered to a graduating senior to complete independent research and study of the landscape outside of the United States. She says, "Already aware of the history of the Hill of Crosses, I knew there had to be other landscapes in Lithuania that also were in some way altered or destroyed by imposing powers. I was fortunate to receive the Ryerson Traveling Fellowship, and to travel to Lithuania to see the spirit of the country."

Letter from the President

In September of 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower held a two-day conference on citizen diplomacy. As a result of this conference and post WWII environs during which people were ready to pledge their support to create a free and peaceful world, Sister Cities International was born. The mission statement reads, [to] “Promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, & cooperation – one individual, one community at a time.”

In 1989, through the efforts of many Madisonians and residents of Vilnius, Madison Vilnius Sister Cities, Inc. (MVSC) was created. Its purpose is “to develop and facilitate exchanges between Vilnius and Madison for the mutual benefit of citizens of both cities.” It further states in its by-laws that, “MVSC shall undertake broad community educational efforts to acquaint Madison area citizens with the values and life styles of the people of Lithuania and the social, economic, cultural, and political systems within their society.”

In my mind, MVSC’s purpose beautifully expresses the spirit of the International Sister Cities’ mission. We seek the common goal of peace and understanding, achieving it through cultural and educational exchange. Even within our small community, Madison Vilnius Sister Cities, Inc. continues to thrive within this ideal because of our membership. Without you, MVSC simply would not exist and many opportunities would be lost.

Your membership dues and generous donations are spent in ways that benefit so many individuals here in Madison and overseas. For instance, MVSC continues to financially support Vaiku Vartai (Children’s Gate to Learning) and Saulute (Sunlight), two organizations devoted to helping needy children in Vilnius. Funds are also used to ship American English language books to libraries in Lithuania. The last shipment consisted of over 100 children’s and early reader books, all of which were enthusiastically received. Judging from the library administrator’s letter of appreciation, it is extremely important to continue this project. To this end, MVSC is collecting novels and non-fiction works scheduled for shipment in March 2007.

Closer to home, MVSC relies on your membership when it presents Lithuanian scholars, statesmen, musicians and artists to Madison’s residents. These cultural events have succeeded not only because of your generosity but also because of your presence at performances, exhibits, and MVSC meetings. Your donations also help “Zaibas”, Lithuanian Dancers of Madison, defray the costs incurred for their rehearsal space. Zaibas represents our community internationally and performs locally, most notably at the annual International Fest and Celebrate Madison, offering a glimpse of Lithuanian culture through traditional folkdancing.

One of MVSC’s projects in 2006 was to sponsor a Lithuanian delegation to attend the World Dairy Expo (WDE) held here annually. Your donations helped advertise WDE in Lithuanian agricultural journals, laying the groundwork for this year’s LT attendees so that they may broaden their knowledge in the latest technology of dairy farming.

In addition to all of the above, you have helped keep our newsletter, “The Lithuanian Connection” alive despite the rising costs of printing and mailing. I would be remiss not to give a cheer of thanks here to our editor/producer/distributor, Betty Zeps, our one-woman-newsletter- (continued on page 3)

(President's letter continued)

show. This publication is the backbone of communication for our membership and we are pleased to now offer it in an electronic format if you no longer wish to receive it in its present form.

Coming up for our Lithuanian Independence Day celebration and the Annual Banquet, MVSC has invited two very compelling and educational speakers. Mary Wasilewski will present "Landscapes of Lithuanian Independence" on February 22, and the noted linguist Giedrius Subacius will be featured on March 30. During the month of February, MVSC will exhibit traditional Lithuanian costumes and textiles at the main branch of the Madison Public Library.

None of these worthwhile projects would come to fruition without your contributions and enthusiasm. It is clear that the members of MVSC have embraced the sister cities' mission and have made a difference in the world, "one individual, one community at a time".

I am proud to serve as Madison Vilnius Sister Cities' president and wish to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of its members.

Sincerely,
Daina Zemliauskas-Juozevicius



Zaibas to Dance at Folk Fair

Zaibas Lithuanian Dancers have been asked to present a workshop at the annual International Folk Festival, to be held at the Overture Center on Sunday, Feb. 25. After presenting a new program of 5 dances, Zaibas will teach members of the public how to dance Suktinis. We hope our always supportive audience will come to watch the program, which will start at 12:50 p.m. in the Wisconsin Studio on the upper floor. Whether you want to stay for the audience participation is totally up to you, but the dancers would love to have you stay.



Lithuanian Art Exhibit

The works of eight Lithuanian artists will be on display at First English Lutheran Church-Downtown Site, 326 E. North St., Appleton, beginning Jan. 14, as The Arthur Krempin School of Music & Art presents The Youth Artists of Old Town: An Exhibit of Lithuania. The idea for the exhibit came from Pastor Chris Quello, who served at the International Church in Vilnius, Lithuania. During the 2-year volunteer assignment there, he and his wife, Cheryl, discovered a gallery filled with young, talented artists. The Quellos contacted The Arthur Krempin School of Music & Art to organize an exhibit. An opening reception for the exhibit was held on Jan. 14. The art works and other information may be viewed on the Church's website: <http://www.firstenglishlutheran.org/html/offer.html>



Lithuanian Textiles, Past and Present: an exhibit at the main branch of the Madison Public Library, 2nd floor gallery
Feb.4 - Feb. 24, 2007

This exhibit includes hand made textiles dating from the 1920s to the present. These articles reflect the functional aspect of the art as well as their evolution into the more decorative. Napkins, table runners, and tablecloths woven with threads of silk, cotton, and linen are the handiwork of Lithuanian artisans who practice an ancient folk art, passed down through generations. Geometric and other designs of celestial bodies and plants are noted and create a unique "point of view". Also featured are sashes and the national folk costumes of several regions of Lithuania.

Central Library, 2nd floor Gallery

201 W. Mifflin St.
Madison, WI 53703

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 9:00 - 9:00

Friday: 9:00 - 6:00

Saturday: 9:00 - 5:00

Sundays: 1:00 - 5:00

For more information: Daina.Penkiunas@wisconsinhistory.org



Giedrius Subacius To Be Featured Speaker At Annual Banquet

Friday, March 30 is the date of our annual MVSC banquet. The banquet will be held at the Memorial Union, 800 Langdon Street, on the UW Campus. A cash bar will be available beginning at 6. Dinner will begin at 7.

Our speaker this year will be Professor Giedrius Subacius of the University of Illinois at Chicago. Subacius' talk: "Upton Sinclair's Lithuanian Jungle" is based on his recent book *Upton Sinclair: The Lithuanian Jungle*, an analysis of Lithuanian linguistic and historical data of *The Jungle*.

In his legendary novel *The Jungle* (1905 and 1906) Upton Sinclair included conspicuous number of Lithuanian words and phrases and surnames. Sinclair discovered the phenomenon of the Lithuanian language and explored it with certain pleasure. He even confessed to have sung in Lithuanian. If you look for "a Lithuanian linguist" working in field-research conditions in Chicago Back of the Yards—there is Upton Sinclair!

Subacius' book targets Sinclair's motives to opt for Lithuanian characters, his sources and his work methods in the "field-research" conditions in Chicago. Some real-life persons—Lithuanian *name-donors* for the protagonists of *The Jungle*—were traced down and presented in this volume. Certain details of the turn-of-the-century Chicago depicted in *The Jungle* were also revealed—e.g. the Lithuanian wedding feast saloon and its owner.

