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*Cover: Artwork is a woodcut of Saint Casimir by Vytautas Ignas, detail of a section of work from 1968 entitled "Lithuania".

Discovering Terra Democratica in Eastern Europe and Beyond: Successes, Challenges and the Way Forward”

Sixteen years ago this month, Lithuania declared the rebirth of independence. Yet, on an historical timeline, sixteen years is merely a dot. In that time so many things have changed. The hopes and dreams of joining NATO and the European Union have been realized. Vilnius has undergone a renaissance and can proudly stand with any capital city in Europe. Of course, no gift is greater than freedom and human dignity. But there are still many issues that need to be resolved.

I selected this speech by President Adamkus to point out where Lithuania has gone and the path it hopes to take in the future.

Jeanne Dorr



President Valdas Adamkus in Vilnius at January 13th. Commemoration in front of the Parliament.

Photo by Banga Grigaliunaite

Chicago Council on Foreign Relations
Chicago, September 19th, 2005

Distinguished Chairman, Dear Members of the Council,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here today again, among the friends, former colleagues, and many others whom I know from way back. Let me express sincere gratitude for the invitation and this welcoming reception.

As you know, Chicago has been part of my life -- just like the United States has been part of lives of my countrymen, many of whom found shelter and homes in the Chicago area. I am grateful to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, for an opportunity to return after my last appearance three years ago.

Indeed, many things have changed since our last meeting here in September 2002, when we marked together the first anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy. I would even go as far as to say that our whole outlook of the world has changed, as we

redrew, for better or worse, the way we view national security issues, challenges of globalization and interdependence.

On the other hand, some things remained unchanged. One of them -- so dear to us -- is the commitment of Lithuania and the United States to shared values and common security, their commitment to maintain and foster the transatlantic link and expand the area of democracy, political stability and welfare in Eastern Europe and beyond.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Three years ago, here in Chicago, my message to the Council was straightforward: small democracies like Lithuania can play an important role in global security, especially when they act in alliance with other democracies. My message was that size does not matter -- it is mutual support, creativity and readiness to contribute to the Euro-Atlantic family that is important for strengthening new quality relationship between Europe and the United States.

Looking back, I can see that this message was well understood and supported here, in America, and in Europe. Everyone has benefited from transformations in Eastern Europe and the consequent enlargement of the North Atlantic Alliance and the EU. Thanks to this, Lithuania now not only has the political will, but also a economic and practical foundation for acting as a Euro-Atlantic ally.

Today I would like to share my thoughts on how to advance the cause of freedom and democracy further to the East of Europe; how to apply the knowledge of successful transitions in Eastern Europe to countries and regions that are far far away from the cradles of the Velvet and the Singing Revolutions.

But first let me start with a small recollection of our recent history. Let me take you back in time to the 1990's, when Lithuania was still in the grip of Soviet Union and I was still a native Chicagoan, using every opportunity to help my country from exile. Back then, the winds of change from the Berlin Wall have awoken nations to begin their fight for independence and democracy. Though there were many skeptics in the West and even more unfriendly "opponents" in Moscow, we had no doubt that our choice was right.

How many of you gathered in this hall today believed back then that Lithuania and the rest of the Baltic countries would break away from the Soviet Union and build market economies? How many of you expected that, in fifteen years only, the post-communist Europe would return to the Transatlantic community and the European family by acceding to Western institutions?

SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA ACT

On the Re-establishment of the State of Lithuania

The Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania, expressing the will of the nation, decrees and solemnly proclaims that the execution of the sovereign powers of the State of Lithuania, abolished by foreign forces in 1940, is re-established, and henceforth Lithuania again is an independent state.

The Act of Independence of 16 February 1918 of the Council of Lithuania and the Constituent Assembly (Seimas) decree of 15 May 1920 on the re-established democratic State of Lithuania never lost their legal effect and comprise the constitutional foundation of the State of Lithuania.

The territory of Lithuania is whole and indivisible, and the constitution of no other state is valid on it.

The State of Lithuania stresses its adherence to universally recognised principles of international law, recognises the principle of inviolability of borders as formulated in the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe in Helsinki in 1975, and guarantees human, civil and ethnic minorities rights.

*The Supreme Council of the Republic Lithuania, expressing its sovereign power,
by this Act begins to realise the complete sovereignty of the State.*

My guess is that, if asked today, how many of you believe you will see a democratic Afghanistan, a prosperous, federal and constitutional State of Iraq or peaceful Middle East within the next decade -- we will see more optimists among us here than those who believed in Lithuania's case in the whole State Department back in the 1990's!

I believe this ability and optimism to have a vision and work to achieve it is an argument good enough to challenge ourselves and promote democratization around the globe.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

European nations showed their determination and courage to bring down the Iron Wall, to unite Europe and to instill the values of democracy, free market and the rule of law into their lives. Now, it is up to our determination to make this vision a reality in the Black Sea and the South Caucasus Region, in the Middle East and Iraq.

Let me say outright – we, in Lithuania, Poland or Latvia, don't have any magic formulas on how to start and complete democratic transition. On the other hand, we are the ones who have unique experience in successful completion of the process of democratic institution building and free market reforms.

Looking back on the road we made from the occupation to become a strong market economy and a European democracy, I would say we have succeeded because of three things.

Firstly, we have never given up our principles and values to narrow pragmatic interests. We did not sell our independ-

ence for cheaper oil nor did we trade our goal to join NATO for any sort of unilateral guarantees. Secondly, our political and academic establishment was able to agree on the issues of major importance to the country, such as market reforms and foreign policy goals. Thirdly, a little help from outside contributed significantly to the success of ongoing reforms. This is the very right place and occasion to say this, because the United States has been one of the most enthusiastic supporters of Lithuania's democratization, investing not only political, but also real capital of up to 400 million USD in Lithuanian enterprises.

Today all of these issues are critical in all the states where we are witnessing volcanic eruptions of grass-roots democracy: Ukraine, Georgia or Moldova, to name a few. And probably even more so in the countries that are suffering from autocratic and isolated regimes like in Belarus.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let's make it clear - the enlargement of NATO and the European Union does not guarantee democracy in the European neighborhood and beyond. On the contrary, they put additional responsibilities and obligations on our shoulders in order to help fragile governments in the Black Sea region to go through the process of reforms and democratization.

Hard work is ahead of us. It is our obligation today to help Ukraine, Georgia or Moldova to build internal political consensus on the strategic economic and foreign policies that these countries want to pursue; to help them restore their confidence in public institutions and upgrade ways in

which public policies are made. Finally, to unfreeze the “frozen conflicts” that are obstacles to their economic development, dividing their societies.

Today these countries look at us the same way we looked at the West a decade ago – expecting encouragement, direction and, finally – a clear European and transatlantic perspective, where they will fit as full members of democratic communities.

We cannot ignore them nor can we turn a blind eye to the strategic Black Sea region that is locked between Russia, searching today for its, hopefully, democratic way, the fast-changing Turkey and the Central Asia.

We know all too well from our own experience that lack of political agreement and good governance will destroy every grain of confidence in democracy as such. And even now as we speak we are witnesses to dissatisfaction with corruption and internal political fights that discredit the ideals of freedom and democracy from Middle East to Russia and South Caucasus.

Therefore, it is our civic duty to help build open and democratic societies from Ukraine to Georgia. And as the United States and Lithuania share democratization (in the EU neighborhood) as one of the top foreign policy priorities, the time is ripe to move from words to action.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now I would like to move to the focal point of my speech. Do we have enough political will to engage in a costly project of building democracies and advancing freedom, be it in the Middle East, the South Caucasus or Eastern Europe? And if the answer is “yes”, who should take the lead in the democratization process? What instruments and ideas could facilitate the transition toward democracy? How can Europe and its smaller Member States like Lithuania contribute to building a strong Europe, surrounded by prosperous and democratic neighbors? What are the stakes in this for the European Union, the US government, the world of NGOs or for the Chicago community?

Issues of political will and leadership are central to our democratization discussion, so let’s address them first and discuss the practical steps that we are going through later.

Let me start by saying that Eastern Europe is not “finished business: yet, at least from the point of view of those who agree with Winston Churchill that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried. And discovering “terra democratica” in the Black Sea region is not a one-day-free-ride or a sweet foreign affair.

The Rose Revolution in Georgia on November 2003 was the first sign that ideas of freedom and democracy are in the air like long-awaited oxygen. It took less than a year until we saw a similar democratic breakthrough in Ukraine, where I, together with President Alexander Kwasniewski and Javier Solana, was a mediator in a series of negotiations which led to the second round of elections and a vic-

tory of democratic forces, led by the incumbent President, Viktor Yuschenko.

Taken all together – the Orange, the Rose and even the Tulip Revolution in Kirgystan – show that ideas of freedom, prosperity and the rule of law have a universal appeal. It is especially true when we speak about students and young business people, or the youth in general, who are the most active element of any society. Having this in mind, it is the new EU Member States that should take the lead and formulate a comprehensive policy for meeting the needs of democratizing Black Sea Region.

We know the region and the mindset of people, we have gone through similar reforms and we know the pitfalls and the painful medicines.

It is good to see that today leaders of all the Baltic States understand that it is too early to sit back and enjoy our achievements with a cup of tea and a Sunday “Chicago Tribune” in our hands, when our democratic know-how is required in the Black Sea Region. But let’s be realistic - we cannot do it alone.

We need the US Administration, European Union member states and the European Commission to make the vision of a free and democratic region from the Baltic to the Black Sea reality. It is not a project of secondary importance to the ones in Middle East or Afghanistan.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am an optimist and a believer that it is a matter of hard work to reconnect the East and the West of Europe; that it is a matter of time to bring countries of the European neighborhood into the NATO and the European Union family.

How should we proceed then? Tonight, I would like to present a number of ideas as to how we can prepare, contribute to and by doing so – help finish the homework the countries that have chosen to embark on the road of democracy and transatlantic integration.

First, we should start from a small, yet very important and visible thing – sharing regional experience and building the regional identity in the Black Sea and the South Caucasus Regions.

It is a proven fact that regional partnerships create synergies that push the boundaries of the possible, opening new venues for cooperation and modernisation. Together these countries could be more effective in pursuing common regional interests, especially in areas of economic and social development.

In the Baltics, we achieved a lot creating a wide network of multidimensional partnerships that link regional State actors, businesses and NGOs. This is a must in order to listen to each other’s interests and agree on a common political regional agenda. I believe that a similar model could

also be successful in our neighbourhood, and we are eager to promote it.

Next May Lithuania will host a high-level New Democracies Summit for sharing successes and lessons learned from Baltic regional co-operation in order to create instruments of trust and co-operation in the South Caucasus and develop solutions for settlement of the "frozen conflicts" in the Black Sea region.

Secondly, we have to focus our efforts and contribute to building civil societies. George Soros, whom I met few days ago in New York, spent years and fortunes helping to build open societies from Hungary to Lithuania. We are grateful for his far-sighted vision and work.

Today it is our turn to lend a helping hand to our neighbours in the East, develop people-to-people contacts and assist in raising a new generation of experts and leaders.

We have some encouraging projects underway. The European Humanities University – a Belarusian University – that was forced into exile by Lukashenko's regime is a unique, transatlantic project advancing the case for freedom and democracy in Belarus. It is a real alternative to the regime that is desperate to suppress the teaching of democratic values and skills to future generations of the Belarusian people.

The University will make "ideology-free" research available to hundreds of Belarusian students. Situated in Vilnius and sponsored by the Lithuanian Government, private foundations, the European Union and the American Government, it seeks to revitalize the spirit of intellectual life for Belarusians by Belarusians. I am happy to note that The MacArthur Foundation from Chicago, headed by Jonathan Fanton, is one of the staunchest supporters of this project.

Last, but not least, we have to enhance coordination and cooperation between EU and United States wide "democratization" agendas. We are in no way competitors, but partners when we want to widen the area of stability and security. The sooner we pool our expertise and efforts, the better for Belarus, for the Black Sea Region and Caucasus and for real, democratic changes in Russia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

"Freedom is on the march", to quote a letter of the US President, George W. Bush, to me, referring to our joint democratization efforts in the region.

From my experience in the office as a President, I know quite well that some leaders and states view efforts of the United States or the European Union in the Middle East, Iraq and Afghanistan with suspicion. Expansion of democratization has nothing to do with the past territorial or ideological expansion which brought loss of independence and destruction to small nations across Europe.

Its origin and the logic behind it are completely different.

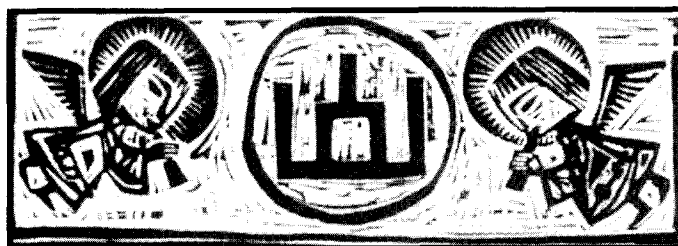
Its results – the emergence of democratic communities and stronger economies, safeguarded by Paxa Americana is exactly the opposite to the Cold War "divide and rule".

Therefore, today we have no other choice but to continue on the road of freedom. It is the only window of opportunity for those that want enjoy the right to live and work in secure and prosperous democratic communities.

I wish you all the best in your truly inspiring and challenging endeavors.

Thank you for your attention.

President Valdas Adamkus



Detail of woodcut "Lithuania", by Vytautas Ignas

Vytautas Ignas-Ignatavičius

Vytautas (1924-), painter, born in Zacižas, county of Raseiniai, on May 16, 1924. He started his studies at the Vilnius Art Academy in 1941 and graduated from the School of Applied Art in Freiburg i. Br. in 1948. Arriving in the United States in 1949, he worked in stained glass studios in Cleveland, Chicago, and New York. A member of the Print Club Gallery of Philadelphia, he is a freelance stained glass designer in New York, where he teaches at the Catan Rose Institute of Art. His work has met with critical approval and been acquired by the Cleveland Museum of Art. A prolific painter, Ignas is attracted to expressionism, although he lacks the virulence of some expressionists. He has been influenced by Lithuanian folk art and by primitive art in general. Stained glass spirit and technique have affected the form and composition of his oils and graphics, but not the color or the ultimate purpose of his art. His technique is marked by simplicity, as he disdains a rich palette in favor of a few main tones charged with a symbolic quality. Man's solitude is a frequent theme in his paintings, which have a distinct philosophical dimension. The ascetic atmosphere and the haggard figures in some of his paintings are an expression of Ignas' existentialist stance and his concern with social problems. His work is also replete with references to his native Žemaitija. While his watercolors reveal more of his spontaneous feeling, they do not leave a lasting imprint on his work. He also works in mixed media.

* From ENCYCLOPEDIA LITUANICA

**The artist and his wife will be relocating to Lithuania in May.*

A TRIP TO THE COAL MINE REGION OF PENNSYLVANIA



Father Peter Burkauskas, Philadelphia, celebrates Mass in St. George's Church, Shenandoah, PA

Photo by Rimas Gedeika

It has become a tradition for Philadelphia's Vincas Kreve Lithuanian school to have a field trip every spring. This year on a cool and cloudy first of May, the school students accompanied by their parents and some parishioners of St. Andrew's traveled to the coal mines of Pennsylvania.

Many of us were aware of this region's long Lithuanian past from local stories. However, our curiosity was peaked by a presentation a few weeks back given to our school students by Diane Rooney from California who is the president of Lithuanian World Genealogy Association. She talked about towns like Shenandoah and Frackville, where Lithuanians settled as far back as the 19th century, describing their everyday toils, concerns and hopes for the future.

The two and a half hour bus ride did not seem long as we observed the passing rocky cliffs grow in size and the picturesque towns nestled in their valleys. Our first stop was Ashland where we visited a long abandoned mine and learned about the hardships the miners had to endure in those days knowing that many of them were from Lithuania. Third grader Kristukas Akerley, in his trip report wrote: "First we rode in an old steam engine train that smelled of sulfur and the uneven tracks rattled and shook the car". This 75 year old steam engine pulled our train on the uneven rails to the other side of Mahanoy Mountain where we observed a beautiful panorama of the valley and the Mammoth Vein. The guide showed us a narrow tunnel which was used to illegally harvest the coal for private consumption or sale.

Another train with open cars took us down 1800 feet through a Pioneer tunnel in the Mahanoy Mountain. In this dark underground tunnel with water dripping on our heads,

we heard the guide describe the digging process of the coal and heard that not only grown men, but also boys labored here from dawn to dusk.

Overjoyed that times have changed, we proceeded to nearby Centralia, where we observed smoking earth due to an underground fire that has been burning for a few decades. Efforts to extinguish it have been in vain. The scene was awesome, together with the knowledge that many inhabitants refused the government's help to move to a safer location. Ms Millie Helt, who was born in this region and accompanied us on the trip, said that most of the inhabitants who stayed were from Zemaitija.

From Centralia we hurried to Shenandoah and the first Lithuanian church built in the USA, where we were met by the local Lithuanians and joined by Father Peter Burkauskas from St. Andrew's in Philadelphia who came on a separate bus. It had been quite a while since Lithuanian hymns and prayers were heard in the church of St. George, but they united the hearts of those present from many generations and several waves of immigrants.

After the closure of the coal mines, many young people drifted to other parts of the state to find jobs. However, the Lithuanian spirit is still alive in the region. That was evident not only in the large numbers who came to greet us and participate in the Lithuanian sung mass but also in their activities to uphold Lithuanian traditions. The Knights of Lithuania are still active and every August Lithuanian Day is celebrated with a fair filled with Lithuanian food, songs and dances.

After holy Mass we were treated with coffee and cake and a trip to a Knights of Lithuania museum in Frackville that houses an exposition of pictures, artifacts and art work of Lithuanians of the region.

The trip ended with dinner at "Granny's" restaurant. The owner is of Lithuanian descent and named it after his grandmother. There was even Lithuanian "balandeliai" on the menu!

Continued on page 22



Bernice Mikatavage explains the region's history to Danute Gedeika.

Photo by Rimas Gedeika

been mistaken in thinking he had seen the student, and he and his company left the monastery. They returned to the woods to search further, but found nothing.

Led by the monk who had admitted him, Adomas descended a steep flight of stone steps, to the underground. It was very dark, and he had to step carefully. His guide held him by the hand, and Adomas counted twenty-one steps before he felt level ground beneath his feet. They stopped there, while the monk took a candle from his pocket, lit it and led Adomas further. After a few turns to the right, then to the left, they entered a spacious chamber, with several openings leading in various directions. Here the monk lit a torch which hung on the wall, instructed Adomas to wait until he returned, and disappeared through one of the openings.

Adomas, exhausted from his long journey and flight from the authorities, sat down on the ground, covered by large, flat slabs of rock, and stretching out his legs, leaned back against the wall. He felt weariness and tension in every joint and muscle, but as he sat the tension began to recede. He didn't know it, when his head drooped, his eyes closed, and a deep, refreshing sleep suspended his thoughts.

He didn't know how long he had slept, but when

he woke, he saw a basket which held a loaf of bread. He remembered that he hadn't eaten in two days, and was assailed by a sharp hunger. He drew the basket nearer, seizing the bread, and also found a piece of smoked meat and a bottle of milk. Never had he tasted such delicious bread and meat. Half the loaf and a good part of the meat disappeared immediately. As he drank the milk, he felt his strength and energy return.

He considered his situation, and understood that he was in the Bernardine monastery's underground, but wasn't certain how he had gotten there. He wanted to believe that the Russians wouldn't find him. He knew that the police had surrounded the monastery, and had heard the soldier shout, so surely they knew of his whereabouts. How long would he have to stay here? Had he brought some misfortune upon the monks? He wouldn't want that. What should he do now? All these thoughts kept running through his mind, but he had no answers. To be continued next month.....

By Genrikas Songinas
English translation by Gloria O'Brien

Gloria Kivytaite O'Brien is a frequent contributor to Bridges. She grew up in Brooklyn, Annunciation Parish. Gloria can be contacted at Senaboba@aol.com

Continued from page 10

A TRIP TO THE COAL MINE

The next day, a participant and a mother of two students, Vitalija Dunciene, wrote, "The trip was splendid. My boys don't remember when they hit the sack. This morning Vytytis was looking out the window for the bus. We and the boys are very pleased with the outing. Thank you all for making it possible."

Many people are responsible for the success of the trip. Kazys Razgaitis, Chairman of the Parents' Committee, Pastor of St. Andrew's Church, Father Peter Burkauskas, Choir Director Ilona Babinskiene, the parishioners of



Shenandoah's St. George's Church, Ms. Millie Helt and all the participants from Philadelphia.

The trip is now history. However, it is my hope that it is just the beginning of the understanding of our roots and the importance of our heritage. Hopefully, our visit also, as Mrs. Dunciene wrote in her letter: "inspired our Shenandoah countrymen a new wish and energy to continue their trek."

Carving of mother and child in front of Granny's Restaurant.

*Two photos by Kazys Razgaitis



Descending into the mine.

Inga Cedinaitė

Continued from page 17

ANSWER TO TRVIA QUESTION

Look for the answer in the following excerpt from the book A HISTORY OF PAGAN EUROPE by Prudence Jones and Nigel Pennick:

"Highland Lithuania was officially Christianized in 1387, in return for the crown of Poland. Samogytia, a district that battled against the Frankish Crusaders, did not accept official Christianity until 1414.

After the Union of Poland and Lithuania had been made permanent in 1569, Poland began to be seen as the dominant partner in the relationship and the state language became POLISH.

The political importance of Lithuania from the thirteenth and to the sixteenth centuries has thus remained one of the best-kept secrets of European history. THE RULING CLASSES OF LITHUANIA BECAME POLANIZED, BUT THE PEASANTS KEPT THEIR LANGUAGE AND FOLK-CUSTOMS, even under persecution after Lithuania passed to Russia in 1795."

Back then, if you asked an old Lithuanian Peasant, "WHY DID THE LITHUANIAN RULING CLASSES BECOME POLANIZED?"

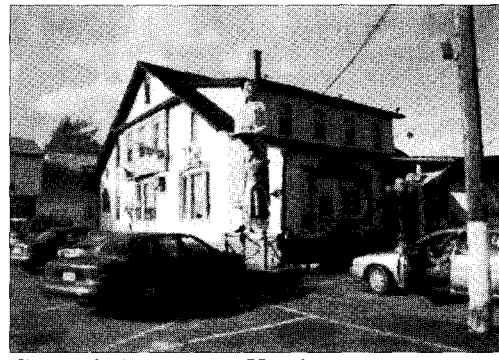
He probably would say, "TIK VELNIAS ZINO" (only the devil knows)

Ed Shakalis

Brief history of "GRANNY'S" Restaurant - Hotel in FRACKVILLE, PA

The origin of GRANNY'S dates back prior to the year 1920 with the inflow of immigrants into America from Lithuania. Enoch Petriconis was a ski soldier in the hills of his homeland for the occupying Russian army. He immigrated to America with his wife Petrona, and became a naturalized citizen soon thereafter. They settled around Frackville, in Northeastern Pennsylvania where work in the anthracite coal mines attracted many Eastern and Northern European immigrants.

The Lithuanian communities flourished in every coal mining town, centered around the churches and businesses built and owned by Lithuanians. The family established a tavern, which became a popular gathering spot in the area for coal miners between work shifts and Lithuanian friends. Recollections of those early years were of patrons conversing in their Lithuanian language, since not many were fluent in English. The elementary school taught Lithuanian history and language, and at every Mass the sermon was given in the Lithuanian language.



Granny's Restaurant-Hotel.
Photo by Eugenija Fedoesjeva

One of thirteen children in the family, Victor did not finish high school. Instead, he started driving a truck in his early teens, working in the coal business and the family tavern. His father passed away at an early age, and he carried on the tradition in the family business with his mother. He married Evelyn in the local Lithuanian church, and had two children, Victor and Diane. Devoted to his aging mother (they conversed only in Lithuanian), he saved her from a fire in the building in 1964 by carrying her down a ladder from an upper level window. Son Victor married Eileen, whose father was a coal miner born in Oldbury, England. After several years of being away in the Navy and traveling as an engineer, son Victor was convinced by his wife to return to their roots in Frackville and start a hospitality business. It was important to carry on the tradition of the family in the community, and many pictures and some furnishings from the original family business were moved to the new location. The building chosen was constructed in the same year as the original location (1920). Coincidentally, it happened to be built originally for Mary Weis, who was born in Lithuania and married Anthony Weis. Mary entertained many Lithuanian customers in her large boarding house, and was a good cook. So that tradition was carried on as well when Victor and Eileen started their restaurant and small hotel by renovating that building. Old antiques from the family and area were used in the new business started

in 1986. Eileen decided that it was most appropriate to name the business GRANNY'S, to commemorate our traditions and promote the ideals upon which our families were brought up. Many recipes from Lithuanian families were collected in a Lithuanian cookbook and used occasionally in the restaurant. The family takes pride in their heritage, giving guests of all nationalities a feeling of hospitality that flows from the original Granny.

Compiled by:
*Laurynas R. Misevicius and
Eugenija Fedosejeva*



Inside the mine.
Photo by Kazys Razgaitis



Students enjoy a train ride.
Photo by Rimās Gedeika



Learning about mining.
Photo by Rimās Gedeika