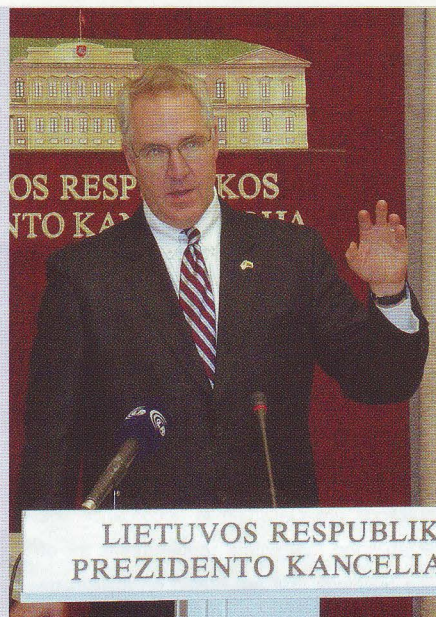


Congressman John Shimkus visits Lithuania

CONGRESSMAN JOHN SHIMKUS of the 19th District of Illinois visited Lithuania on January 16-19.

The main purpose of his visit was to attend the Snow Summit in Trakai, where he met with various representatives of governments and organisations to discuss European and transatlantic issues. Additionally, Congressman Shimkus met with the President, PM, and Foreign Minister and visited the Seimas. He spoke with Lithuanian gov-

ernment representatives about the close ties between Lithuania and the US, encouraged Lithuania to continue playing a role in the region to foster democracy, and stated that the US government is working closely with the Lithuanian government to help Lithuania meet the requirements for the Visa Waiver Program. Congressman Shimkus was awarded the Grand Cross of Commander of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas in 2001 by Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus.



Ukraine awards Orders of Merit



On 1 February, 2008 the Embassy of Ukraine in Lithuania hosted an award ceremony. By the order of the President of Ukraine, Viktor Yuschenko, members of Lithuanian Parliament Mr Audronius

Ažubalis and Mr Emanuelis Zingeris were given Orders of Merit for their personal contribution in spreading the truth about the Ukrainian famine or Holodomor of 1932-1933.

LGAVO 'Sugrižus' works on

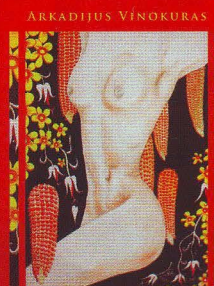


On 2 - 3 February LGAVO 'Sugrižus' celebrated its birthday in Molėtai. The meeting was partially of a working nature, as we discussed issues related to the approaching plenary meeting that will take place on 28 February, as well as matters concerning elections to the board and the election of our president. We also discussed our future activities and perspectives.

Through all our discussions, debates and criticism, we can confidently say that this meeting 'cemented' our goals. We were also happy to see 16 new faces out of 36 participants, who joined our organisation which now has nearly 100 members.

But through all our discussions, one fact remains – that a small group of enthusiasts can achieve a lot! The amount of work we take on depends on our sense of responsibility to Lithuania and ourselves.

Embraced by Eros is a book by the renowned actor, journalist and writer Arkadijus Vinokuras, and is dedicated to an analysis of the relationships between men and women through the prism of erotica. The author claims that the absence of love and bravery entails the death of erotic relationships in the bedroom. This book is the first publication of its kind in Lithuania. It is available in all Lithuanian bookstores.



Eroto glėbyje



Monsignor Edmond Putrimas

• I was very impressed with the Lietuvos Jaunimo dienas Klaipėda in June 2007 because it brought nearly 6,000 young people together to share and express our faith. Jaunimo dienas expressed unity of faith and hope because our youth is the future of Lietuva and her Church.

• What I would like to see most improved in Lietuva and with our Lithuanian communities around the world is to have a greater sense of pride for our national identity! We have a rich cultural heritage, religious traditions that express our faith sentiments, a proud history and we often forget to be thankful for all we have and who we are as a nation.

• To reread the Old and New Testaments - to "indulge" and reflect on God's workings through the prophets, the Apostles and the Church today! Another resolution - get back to playing golf!



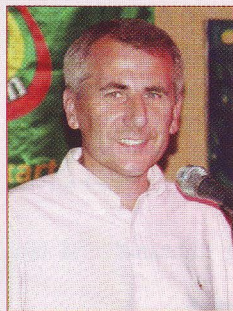
Andrew Mikšys, Photographer

• At a time when it seems everyone wants to leave Lithuania, I'm very happy that some very interesting people from all over the world have immigrated here. I've made great friends from Africa, Holland, Italy, Latvia, as well as my Belorussian colleagues and students from the European Humanities University. Before World War II Lithuania had a great reputation as a welcoming and diverse society. There are still many prejudices against foreigners and minorities, but maybe there is hope for a small multicultural renaissance.

• In the lead up to 2009 when Vilnius will be one of the cultural capitals of Europe, I think the city is trying too hard to clean everything up and make Vilnius resemble any other western European city. Boring! How many luxury clothing stores do we need in the Old Town? It's kinda like a middle aged guy who buys a Ferrari in an attempt to cover up his hair loss and belly to get the young girls. So Lithuania isn't always beautiful. So what if it has a Soviet past. Our flaws are more interesting than

the artificial stuff we use to cover them up. And anyway, the truth will come out some day and the cracks will show through the fresh paint. I'd like to see Vilnius be more authentic than that and celebrate what makes it unique rather than what makes us like everyone else.

• Leave Vilnius for a while. I've been here for a long time and as an artist I think it's important to get some perspective and see things from a different vantage point.



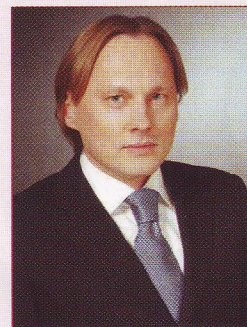
Vygaudas Ušackas, Lithuanian Ambassador To the UK

• I am proud that the project 'Siberia - 2007', which was organised by the Lithuanian Youth Organisation, attracted so much attention and support from Lithuanian students, youth and people of Lithuania. In the age of globalisation, as a nation we become considerably stronger and braver if we preserve our civil history and pass on the harsh lessons of our history and knowledge of mass deportations that took place during the communist regime, and Soviet occupation of Lithuania to the younger generation. I think that LI-JOT's mission - Siberia-2007 - was successful in doing this. I am very glad that my son Raimundas and I were part of this project. I hope that 'Mission Siberia' will become an annual project of Lithuanian youth during which places of exile and imprisonment can be visited and the graves of Lithuanian deportees taken care of.

• Our history shows that in times of crisis and troubles, we manage to unite and create examples of success. Unstable international financial markets, as well as the slowing down of the Lithuanian economy may encourage our country to speed up the processes of implementation of the necessary educational, healthcare and social welfare reforms.

In an attempt to bring back our 'brains' back from abroad, Lithuanian higher education institutions should become magnets for both Lithuanian and international academic and scientific youth. In order to achieve this we need radical reform in education. I hope that in 2008 we will do exactly that. Otherwise, we will end up losing our best people to global competition.

• I am not keen of making promises: neither to myself, nor to others, because one can never be sure of what could happen next. But, never say never ...



Artūras Zablackas, AVSC Group

• Increase of GDP; Decrease of the unemployment rate; The longest maternity and paternity leaves in Europe.

• The development of the independent energy sector; Strengthening of the means of curbing inflation of the country's economy, striving to introduce euro currency; Implementation of the energy saving programme.

• To solidify AVSC Group's leadership position in the market of financial mediation and consultancy; To strengthen the image of financial advisory in the Lithuanian market.



Giedrė Šipailaitė, LGAVO "Sugrįžus"

• I am very happy about the official establishment of our organization LGAVO "Sugrįžus". After all those years in the USA I am finally feeling that the work we do is needed and gives feedback - the wave of re-emigrants is growing - very slowly, but for sure. And it felt completely different overseas. Everyone just worried about themselves ... very few cared.

• I would love it if people could explore the world more. 'Leaving home' is really healthy. You got the chance to look from a distance, and only then do you understand what is wrong 'at home' and how to fix it. You would never discover this sitting at home and doing nothing but complaining. This is what is wrong - too much complaining.

• I would love to make my work schedule more structured. There are two principle goals for this: to become expert in a specific field - the one I truly enjoy; partially because of the increasing lack of time ... and also I truly wish to find some time to create my own family. And I sincerely wish my resolutions come true.