

House of Lithuania

House of Pacific Relations, International Cottages, Inc., Balboa Park, San Diego, California

November 8, 2008 – Lapkristis 8, 2008

Newsletter – Žinios

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MEMOIRS

VYTAS COMES TO AMERICA –PART 2

by Vytas Dukas

Students Forced into Germany Service

On March 18, 1943 my studies at business school were interrupted by Reichsminister Lohse, who shut down all higher learning institutions, and with that every student born between 1919 and 1925 instantly became a German auxiliary army member. They took us to the train station, where I began a journey towards besieged Leningrad. In Riga, however, I became "homesick." I crawled out the window and found and boarded an empty freight train rolling back toward Germany via Lithuania. The train passed through my home town, and thanks to the pneumatic brakes, which I manipulated, I was able to slow the train down enough to jump off. My father's drinking buddies helped me join the railroad traffic division, retroactively, and I became exempt from the German army.

Return of the Soviets

In 1944 the Soviet tanks returned to Lithuania. I escaped again, and found myself in a Breslau labor camp along with about 100 Czechs, 40 Poles and 20 Lithuanians. I was assigned to work in a railroad station (Breslau-Hartlieb), where I was able to increase my meager food rations by "borrowing" some of the goodies being shipped by upperclass German wives to their husbands in the German army. But since Soviet armies were beginning to surround and bombard Breslau, in February of 1945 I escaped again and settled in Thuringia.

Arrival of the Americans

That summer I was very happy to see the arrival of American troops, whose stay was unfortunately short-lived. In exchange for free access to Berlin, the US gave that area to the Soviets, and on a starless night the Americans secretly left me once again to the Soviets. We all know how the US lost this free access later, when they had to resort to the airlift to feed West Berliners. (Ich bin ein Berliner!) Through luck and ruse I escaped from Thuringia and landed in Würzburg, in the US Zone of Germany.

.— To be continued.

LAST VIDEO PRESENTATION FOR 2008 AT HALL OF NATIONS

As a House without a building, the House of Lithuania present videos of Lithuania and displays books and artifact of Lithuanian history, language fours or five time a year in the Hall of Nations, Balboa Park. The last exhibit of the year will be at the Hall on Sunday, November 23, 2008, from Noon to 4 p.m. Is event is one of the many ways in which the House of Lithuania makes cultural outreach to the community of San Diego to increase their appreciation of what is distinctive about the Lithuanian Heritage. Participation in Balboa Park's December Nites at the House of Pacific Relation's International Christmas Festival on Friday and Saturday December 5 and 6 will conclude House of Lithuania's programs for the year. .

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House of Lithuania MONTHLY MEETING & ANNUAL ELECTIONS FOLLOWED BY LITHUANIAN POTLUCK

Saturday, November 8, 2008

1 P.M. – Allied Gardens Recreation Center

GARDENS ROOM

5155 Greenbriar Ave., San Diego

For directions call

Julie-Meilute Benedict 619-507-7156, or
Francesca Williams 858-395-5168

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Membership Information

For information about the House of Lithuania, please contact Francesca Williams, 858-395-5168 <http://www.house-of-lithuania.org> or visit the House of Pacific Relations site: <http://www/sdhpr.org>