



## MARRIAGE ANNOUNCEMENT

**Dr. John and Joanne Knasas** are happy to announce the July 15<sup>th</sup> marriage of their son, John, Jr., to Catherine Laflamme. John and Cathy met as students at Providence College in Rhode Island. The marriage ceremony took place at the chapel there, followed by a reception at the Quidnessett Country Club in N. Kingstown, RI on Narragansett Bay. After a honeymoon to St. Lucia, the couple resides in Attleboro, MA. John and Cathy both teach in Rhode Island.

Congratulations to the newlyweds and the proud parents!



## JOIN SŪKURYS!

The *Sūkurys* (Whirlwind) Lithuanian folk dance group awaits you! The group meets on Saturdays for two hours at Harris County Spring Branch Memorial Library (off I-10 and Beltway 8). For a schedule of rehearsal dates and times contact **Evelina Tapia** at [etapia@uh.edu](mailto:etapia@uh.edu) or by calling 832-275-9946.

## MEMORIES OF THE EIGHTH LITHUANIAN SONG FESTIVAL



Being avid fans of Lithuanian Song and Dance Festivals (*Dainų ir Šokių Šventės*), we planned our summer vacation around the Eighth Lithuanian Song Festival in Chicago. Between us, we have actively participated in 5 Song Festivals and 2 Dance Festivals – **Siga** – in Lithuania, **Algis** – in U.S. Of course, we did not want to miss this one either (albeit in a more passive role this time), especially when **Lina** and **Vytas** have reached the age when they are starting to appreciate song. For **Lina**, of course, it was also a chance to show off her Lithuanian folk costume, lovingly made for her by Grandma Zelma.

The blue sea of singers, young and old, looked lovely and infectiousy beckoned all to sing. Our family, along with thousands of other spectators, applauded enthusiastically, swayed and rhythmically waved white scarves to the music. Especially moving was the audience participation as they waved small penlights in a darkened auditorium during several poignant lyric ballads. It also helped that the spectators were invited to join in singing many of the songs. We really had a chance to sing our hearts out.

It was amazing to watch one of the Festival's main organizers and artistic director, Rita Kliorienė, who, during 3 hours or so, was literally a whirling gyroscope of motion that never stopped singing, moving, swinging, or swaying. What a dynamo! Of course she was not the only one swept away by the moment. In the row in front of us a woman from Suvalkija – around 50 and elegantly dressed – from time to time (as the mood struck her) would break out in an ear-piercing whistle that echoed throughout the hall (Note: **Vytas** was definitely impressed by the sound). Never having really mastered the art of loud, shrill whistling, we had to settle for swaying, clapping, and cheering. Nevertheless, we certainly enjoyed every moment of it and have recharged our Lithuanian batteries to the fullest.

So when do they start selling tickets to the next Song Festival?



On a more formal note, the festival was also the time for the annual convention of the Lithuanian American Community's Board of Directors and announcement of the results of the election of new officers. **Algis Pliodžinskas**, as representative of the Houston chapter, was invited to attend a reception for all the chapter and regional chairmen/chairwomen the morning of

the song fest. The reception also included a visit by Lithuania's President Valdas Adamkus, Ambassador Vygaudas Ušackas (USA), Ambassador Sigutė



Jakštonytė (Canada), Consul General Arvydas Daunoravičius (Chicago), as well as seven members of the Lithuanian Seimas. The Seimas members were part of a Seimas commission that met with several committees of the Lithuanian American Community (USA) and the World Association of Lithuanian Communities (PLB) in Lemont, IL. Normally these meetings are held twice per year in Lithuania but this year one meeting was held in the USA because of the large number of Lithuanians attending the Song Festival. A very brief statement of what they discussed was presented by the Seimas commission chairperson Laima Mogenienė and PLB – USA commission chairman Vytas Maciūnas. A topic of discussion involved emigration from Lithuania.

by Siga and Algis Pliodžinskas



Ed. note: you can check out the 8<sup>th</sup> Lithuanian Song Festival website for more information and photos from this event at <http://www.dainusvente.org/>

## A BALTIC EVENT IN THE NORTHWEST



While visiting my son Gintaras in Seattle, he unexpectedly found out about a Baltic Rite of Spring Festival which was to take place in the new main library in Seattle. This intrigued us and the two of us decided to go. The program consisted of a presentation of folk dances by all three Baltic countries: Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. It was interesting to see the differences and similarities in the costumes as well as the dances. Representatives from all three nationalities talked about their dance festivals in the U.S. and in their respective countries. It was really amazing to hear how similar these events were and what pride each country has for its traditions.

The most notable of the dances was *Malūnas* (windmill) performed by the Latvians and then by the Lithuanians. Although the music was not the same yet it was possible to recognize the workings of a windmill in the slower pace of the Latvians and in the more vigorous routine of the Lithuanians. After the performance we complimented Zita Petkus, director of *Lietutis* folk dance group.

Another interesting fact about Seattle – we found at least eight different varieties of Lithuanian beer (not just from Utenos brewery) in a single Beer Store. Not even Chicago can beat that!

by Dalia Woss