



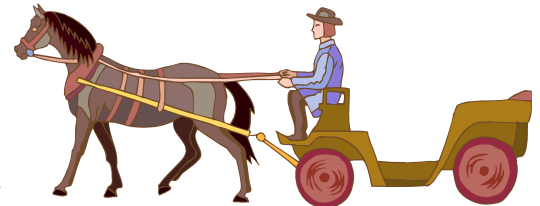
ŽOLINĖS FEAST DAY IN RUMŠIŠKĖS

In the western Christian religious calendar, August 15 is the feast day of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. In Lithuania, it is a national holiday and several areas host religious services, called *Atlaidai*, attended by massive numbers of pilgrims. The most famous *Atlaidai* are held in Pivašiūnai, a town in southeastern Lithuania, to which over 30,000 pilgrims flock.

Since **Agna** and **Zita** reside near Kaunas, we chose to go to Rumšiškės. Located in a national preserve, it houses the National Ethnography Museum made up of homesteads and farm buildings brought there in the 1970's and 1980's from the four major regions of Lithuania – Aukštaitija, Dzūkija, Suvalkija and Žemaitija. More recently a town has been added. The complex houses a windmill for grinding grain with a reconstructed interior and also a small functioning church, originally built in Aukštaitija in 1775. The church interior still lacks decoration but currently houses several dozen wayside shrines, a few over 100 years old.

The day before *Žolinės* was stormy throughout Lithuania and August 15 dawned with ominous clouds in the sky and a cold wind in our faces. Nevertheless, we risked going to Rumšiškės and were rewarded for our daring. The sky cleared. We had a lovely, sunny day. The area is hilly with endless growths of conifers, oaks, tall birch, and other leafy trees. Mass in the two-hundred-year-old church was uplifting. The faithful brought bouquets of wild flowers, grain stalks and oak clusters to be blessed. We acquired a bouquet for a small donation. A couple dressed in traditional garb from Aukštaitija carried in a huge loaf of black rye bread on a linen towel for the celebrant to bless before mass started.

Following the church service, there were drama vignettes, folk dancing, traditional food, and craft items for sale. We spent hours covering the four major regions on foot. In an Aukštaitija homestead we were even treated to a traditional dish similar to *kugelis*, a slice cut from a huge farm cheese, and a glass of *gira*, a very refreshing drink fermented from rye bread. As a grand finale we hitched a ride, with a bunch of kids the age of our grandchildren, in a horse-drawn farm buggy to the exit. The fare was 3 *litai* (currently \$1. = 2.70 Lt). It was well worth it. Not only did we feel like our parents and grandparents must have felt as they rode to town from the countryside, but we were pretty well beat from our extensive walking.



We came home very contented. We hung up our blessed bouquet to dry, sauteed freshly picked mushrooms (*baravykai* donated by a neighbor), boiled some potatoes, sliced some rye bread, and washed it all down with award-winning *Švyturys* beer. What a country feast!

by Liuda Flores, Agna Reventas, and Zita Brikšnis
(LACH “Subsidiary” in Lithuania)

AN ADOPTION AND OTHER ADVENTURES...



What a few weeks I have had! My son Vytautas, his wife, and their oldest daughter recently flew to Korea via Japan. They got to Korea and were met by my wife’s relatives that they had never met before but who treated them like family. On the 14th of August they picked up their newly adopted daughter and headed back to the States on the 16th. Unfortunately, their flight from Seoul was delayed so they missed the connection in Tokyo. They were to fly out on the next flight, but that was overbooked so they volunteered to be bumped – got \$500 flight vouchers each, were booked into first class and had another day’s worth of hotel charges and meals paid for. Not bad. Finally, they arrived home with Katherine Leigh, our new granddaughter.

My part in this was to pick up the other three grandchildren in Indiana. We drove to Pennsylvania and “things” happened. We went to church on Sunday for the 8 o’clock mass and, while there, saw this blond Lithuanian lady come into church and sit two pews in front of us. I thought she looked familiar, and she was – it was Raimonda Mikatavage. I have corresponded off and on with her for several years and this was the first time that I actually met her. Her mother-in-law, Bernice, told me about a meeting that was to take place that afternoon for Lithuanian and American National Guard personnel. I went there, got interviewed, and had my picture taken for the local paper. The Lithuanian Days were next weekend and we all went on Saturday. We saw the *Malūnas* dance group from Baltimore MD – very nice. There was a lot of Lithuanian stuff to buy and lots of good food.

We drove from PA to Houston in two days. The three kids were great in the truck. They were with us until Vytautas and family could get settled in. After a few weeks I drove the kids back to Indiana.

by Bernard Tirva Terway

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A WEDDING CONTINUED IN ANYKŠČIAI...



Our very own **Monika Zakaitytė** and **Kris Kline** blessed their wedding vows at a Nuptial Mass in the parish church of Anykščiai in northwestern Lithuania. It was a small, intimate gathering of family and friends. I was honored to represent Monika’s and Kris’s Houston friends. The wedding feast, and a feast it was, took place in a nearby forested area. We ate in a rustic restaurant and sang and danced outside, between all the courses, way into the night. Monika looked stunning in her gown and Kris very handsome in a tuxedo. Her parents were most gracious to lodge all the out-of-town guests at a Bed & Breakfast surrounded by some of the most beautiful flower gardens one could ever wish to see.

by Liuda Flores

