

## Newsletter of the Lithuanian American Community of Houston

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Kūčios ~ Sunday  
December 17

### IN THIS ISSUE:

Basketball Raffle  
LAC National Council  
Fall Potluck  
Get Well Wishes  
Across the Atlantic  
Across the Pacific  
the Flores Honored  
Contributions to BALFAS



### LABAS

compiled by

Liuda Flores

produced by

Evelina Tapia

### LITHUANIAN CONNECTION

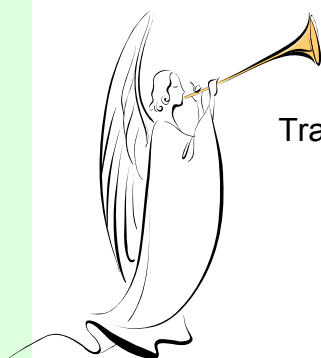
written by

Arleen Battalora

### CONTRIBUTORS:

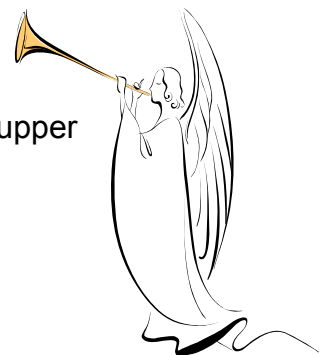
Danguolė Altman, Liuda Flores

*Labai ačiū!*



### Next Event ~ KŪČIOS

Traditional Lithuanian Christmas Eve Supper  
Sunday, December 17, 2006  
3 p.m. – 6 p.m.  
St. Laurence Catholic Church  
3100 Sweetwater Blvd.  
Sugar Land, Texas



Families with children are asked to come at 2:30 p.m. so children of all ages can participate in a special program.

LACH will provide coffee, juice, soft drinks and water. If you enjoy wine with *Kūčios*, please bring some to share with those around you.

Details for the event, directions to St. Laurence, and RSVP sheet follow.

### AUTOGRAPHED BASKETBALL RAFFLE



During the NBA All Stars Weekend, which took place in Houston in February, 2006, the LACH Board had the past and present NBA players from Lithuania, present at the festivities, autograph an official NBA game ball. It will be raffled during *Kūčios*. Tickets, available at *Kūčios*, will be \$2 each or 3 for \$5.

LACH members who will not be at *Kūčios* can participate in the raffle by sending the money to the LACH P.O. Box and we will fill out the appropriate number of tickets for you.

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

In September LACH joined the cyber age by distributing LABAS electronically to the greater part of its membership. Some recipients had problems opening it, a few preferred the printed version (which was sent to all those without e-mail addresses). We will be refining the electronic distribution for those with e-mails after the New Year but, because this issue deals with *Kūčios*, our major yearly gathering, we have gone back just this once, to 100% print distribution.

# LACH ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

## MEDICAL BRIDGES HONORS LIUDA AND GUSTAVO FLORES

by Danguole Altman

LACH longtime members, especially those who were there in the years when we participated in the Houston International Festival, undoubtedly remember the **Gedutis family – Vytas, Susan, Nijolė, Karina and Myko**. Well, Nijolė, Karina and Myko are all grown up, degreed, and pursuing individual endeavors. Vytas and Susan are retired and living in Vilnius. We just heard that they have received a five-year residency visa. Stay tuned for Vytas’s future adventures. Born in Lithuania, he left as a small child during World War II. After the requisite stint in displaced persons camps in Germany, the family emigrated to Venezuela where he grew up. Eventually he came to Houston. He is now fulfilling his dream of writing stories about the immigrant experience. The Lithuanian magazine Istorijos, akin to Texas Monthly will be publishing one in its December issue. Stay tuned.

Medical Bridges, a Houston-area non-profit organization dedicated to recovering surplus medical supplies and redirecting these goods to indigent international sites, recently honored Liuda and Gustavo Flores for their work as volunteers at the organization’s 5<sup>th</sup> annual fund-raising gala. The *One World – Your Chance to Make a Difference* Gala took place on Saturday, October 21<sup>st</sup> in the beautiful Hyatt Regency Downtown ballroom. Over 500 people attended the event, which was presided over by Honorary Chairman Mayor Bill White and his wife Andrea White.

Medical Bridges was founded by Dr. Patricia Brock ten years ago, after an international trip during which she witnessed first hand how medical professional effectiveness was severely hampered by the lack of basic medical supplies. She began by collecting unwanted supplies in her garage. To date, Medical Bridges has delivered nearly \$43.2 million of surplus medical material to nearly 60 indigent hospitals and clinics in 76 countries.

Liuda and Gustavo Flores were honored along with Sagemont Church and Prisma Energy (in Dr. Brock’s words) “as keen contributors...who exemplify the committed and passionate involvement that allow us to carry on our charge of bridging the healthcare gap worldwide.” Liuda and Gustavo received the Dr. David Wray Volunteer of the Year award and were the first couple to be so honored. The Flores’ have been involved in Medical Bridges since the infancy of the organization and have been long term volunteers in all three of the organization’s warehouses. In addition, they have organized and delivered medical supplies to Mexico and are about to take sutures to BALFAS in Chicago to be sent to Lithuania.

Both of Liuda and Gustavo’s children, Lina Hilko from Chicago and Paulo Flores from Dallas, attended the Gala, as well as Danguole and William Altman.



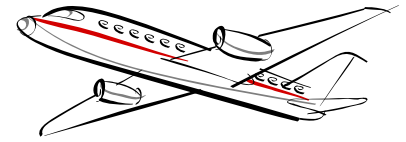
Liuda and Gustavo, we are so proud of you, not only for your substantial contributions to our community, but for working elsewhere to make the world a better (and healthier) place!

.....

### GET WELL WISHES

Your prayers and good wishes are requested for LACH longtime member Lita Javors who will undergo surgery on December 6 to remove a malignant nodule from her lungs. Lita has been spunkily and successfully battling melanoma for several years now. But this is a weird way to celebrate your birthday, Lita!

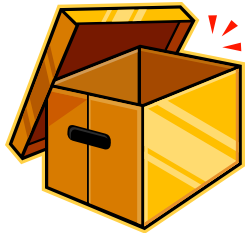




## CONTRIBUTIONS TO BALFAS

History. BALFAS, *Bendras Amerikos Lietuvių Fondas* (the United American Lithuanian Relief Fund) was established in 1944 to help Lithuanians after World War II both in European Displaced Persons Camps and upon relocation to the United States. Subsequently it was also able to send some supplies to occupied Lithuania and the Suvalkų Trikampis area of Poland. Currently BALFAS, headquartered in Chicago, continues to send clothes and some other items to needy families and institutions in Lithuania as well as distributes them to recent arrivals from Lithuania in the Chicago area.

LACH Involvement. For several years LACH members have periodically donated items to BALFAS which various LACH members or their friends and relatives take along when they go to Chicago. Our charitable involvement involves no monetary expenditure on our part.



How YOU can help. We were informed that BALFAS includes aspirin and multi-vitamins in each package they send to families in Lithuania. Here is an idea how you can help. Feel free to bring a bottle of aspirin (can be generic, does not have to be Bayer) and/or a bottle of multi-vitamins (any size, any brand, adult or children's type) to *Kūčios*. We will have a "BALFAS Box" available. Liuda and Gustavo Flores will fly any contributions to Chicago when they go there for Christmas.

.....

## LACH FALL 2006 POTLUCK

If a Martian had landed in Houston on Sunday, October 8, 2006 he/she/it would have thought it is a magnificent place to live – sunny, balmy weather, a gentle breeze, just perfect. That's how it was when several dozen LACH members gathered in Bear Creek Park for our Fall Potluck. The **Masleys** trekked in as always from Temple, TX. Long-time-no-see members **Bob and Ruth Kraye** and **Tony and Donna Knistautas** gladdened us with their presence. The **Flores** and **John Knasas** had just returned from their respective Spanish adventures. **Omar** and **Evelina Tapia** entertained all the little ones with a mostly cooperative kite. **Birutė Juška** brought photocopies of her salad recipe enriching our future culinary endeavors (she also brought the salad for us to enjoy). **Kris Kline**, **Algis Pliodžinskas** and **Cas Woss** grilled expertly. Our newest member, **Zita Dubauskas**, 'Sr' (Zita Jr's Mom) proved she can outdo Subway with her subs. The Martian, if he/she/it had landed in Houston, would have looked on the gathering and thought LACH is a magnificent community to embrace.

## LACH ACROSS THE PACIFIC

Our world traveling philosopher, **Dr. John Knasas**, will be flying to Manila in the Philippines early in January. He will be teaching a graduate course at the Royal and Pontifical University of Santo Tomás, the oldest Dominican University in the world. For John this is his third trip there and this time, Joanne will be accompanying him. We wish them *gero vėjo* across the Pacific and also during their two extended stopovers in Hawaii.

## JAV TARYBA

### LAC NATIONAL COUNCIL

The annual meeting of the Lithuanian-American Community (LAC) National Council (*Taryba*) this year took place in September, in Philadelphia. Our Houston Chapter is part of the wider America's Crossroads Region (*Amerikos Kryžkelės Apygarda*). Our region has three representatives on the National Council, two from Omaha and one, **Monika Zakaitytė Kline**, from Houston. We are pleased and thankful to both Monika and Kris for their commitment and dedication. Both went to Philadelphia and, while Monika attended the marathon sessions, Kris fulfilled a long time dream of touring the cradles of America's Independence. We will report more fully of what LACH may gain from the Taryba's decisions in the next LABAS. The LACH Board needs to discuss and evaluate the materials produced by the meeting.

President: Liuda Flores  
713-524-4823  
liuda@hal-pc.org

Vice-president: Dalia Woss  
281-778-6415  
dwoss@yahoo.com

Secretary: Zita Dubauskas  
713-383-0798  
zita@medical-pa.com

Treasurer: Bernie Terway  
281-350-1209  
bterway@sbcglobal.net

.....

**LACH BOARD MEMBERS**

Peter "Chip" Lazauskas  
Monika Zakaitytė Kline  
John Knasas  
Evelina Tapia  
Past President ~ Algis Krygeris



**LACH MEMBERSHIP**

\$15 annual dues per household (includes newsletter LABAS).  
Newsletter only is available for \$5 annually. Those with financial  
difficulties can request LABAS at no cost.

**Current members:** Please note anniversary date on mailing label for  
sending dues.

**New Members:** To join, please send dues, name, spouse's name,  
address, phone number, and e-mail address, if available. Also, please  
include minor child(ren)'s name(s) and date(s) of birth.

Please send dues and membership data to:  
LACH  
P.O. Box 667222  
Houston, TX 77266-7222

Lithuanian American Community of Houston  
P. O. Box 667222  
Houston, TX 77266-7222  
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

