



American Legion Lithuanian Post 154  
For God and Country



# Legionnaire

November & December 2011

## Commander's Message

How quickly time passes! It's almost that time of year when family and friends will be filling the air with best wishes for a "Happy Hanukkah"... "Merry Christmas"...and "Happy New Year." And rightly so. But let's not forget that this season to be jolly owes its existence to our God and Country.

With that in mind, on Sunday, November 6, we'll celebrate our annual Back to God Mass at 8:30 AM in St. Alphonsus Church in Baltimore (Saratoga and Park Avenue). Come join other Post members in thanking God for blessings big and small.

On Friday, November 11, we'll participate in the District celebration of Veterans Day at Post 285 in Baltimore (2324 McDerry Street). Join us in honoring our fallen comrades.

Have young children or grandchildren? If you do, plan now to bring them to our Childrens Christmas Party, December 11 at 1 PM in Lithuanian Hall in Baltimore (851 Hollins Street).

Isn't it a shame that instead of enjoying peace and goodwill, much of the world is suffering political unrest and even armed conflict. Why is this happening? Lust for power? Fame? Greed? Or maybe...just an attempt to right a wrong? Whatever the reasons, the toll in lives and treasure lost is sickening.

It saddens me, too, to inform you that our Past Commander and 52-year Post member, Vaclovas (Bob) Laukaitis, passed away on October 23. I'm sure many well-deserved and eloquent tributes will be paid Bob, but personally, I prefer to simply say, "He has been a good and faithful servant to God and Country."

On behalf of all Post 154 Legionnaires, I wish to recognize and thank Vincent Dulys for his outstanding job in organizing the Post's Installation of Officers Ceremony. Approximately 150 people attended this event. It is no small task to manage the many details involved in hosting this gathering. Vince obtained volunteers to buy and prepare the meal, serve refreshments, set up the tables, lend us audio equipment, entertain us with folk dances, sing the National Anthems, play Taps during Memorial Service, etc. THANK YOU Vince.

I hope this has been a good year for you. And on behalf of the Officers of Lithuanian Post 154, I wish you and your loved ones a happy, healthy Holiday Season and a blessed New Year.

John Maskavich,  
Commander

## VA Loses Lawsuit – First Amendment Prevails

The Veterans of Foreign Wars was declared the victor in a Federal Lawsuit ( Rainey v VA) filed over allegations of religious hostility and unlawful censorship by the VA and its director of the Houston National Cemetery. VA officials told the VFW they could not have prayers said during veterans' burial services at the National Cemetery unless the veteran's family requested it specifically in writing and submitted the prayers to VA officials for pre-approval. The VA's action was clearly a direct violation of the provisions of the US Constitution's First Amendment that protects the free exercise of religion and freedom of speech.

On October 21, 2011, the Constitution prevailed over political correctness. Federal District Judge Lynn N. Hughes signed a consent decree ordering the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to lift the ban on prayer and the word "God" during veterans' burial services at National cemeteries, to revoke national policies hostile to religion and to reopen the "Chapel" at the Houston National Cemetery, which had had its designation as a "Chapel" changed to "meeting facility."

## WW II Memorial Under Attack

On August 24, 2011 the Knights of Columbus (KOC) was ordered by the United States Forest Service to take down a World War II Memorial that includes a statue of Jesus erected in 1953 in the Flathead National Forest.



The KOC, which erected and maintained the Memorial, has a permit that has to be renewed every ten years in order to display the statue on a 25' by 25' plot of land leased from the Forest Service. This year, however, the US Forest Service refused to renew the permit and demanded the Memorial be removed, stating that the statue violates the First Amendment Establish Clause.

As a result of community outrage and a letter by Montana's Congressman, Denny Rehberg, urging the United States Forest Service to reconsider its denial of the permit extension for an historically significant World War II Memorial. On October 21, Forest Service Supervisor Chip Weber withdrew his denial of the permit extension in order to formally seek public comment in the next few weeks. If you care to send the Forest Service your comments, their addresses are:

US Forest Service  
Supervisor  
Chip Weber  
650 Wolfpack Way  
Kalispell, MT 59901

US Forest Service  
Chief  
Tom Tidwell  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-0003

### Membership

As of October 26, we had 94 paid members and are 21 members short of our 115 member Department goal. Your old 2011 card will only be valid until December 31. If you have not yet sent in your membership dues, please do it now.

If you have any questions about your membership status, please contact me. My contact information is on page 4.

Vincent T. Dulys,  
Membership Chairman

### 100 Club

It is that annual fundraiser time of year again! The Post will once again sponsor the 100 Club raffle. Only 100 tickets numbered 00 through 99 will be sold. There will be two \$40 winners each Wednesday for ten weeks. The winning numbers will be the last 2 digits of Wednesday mid-day and evening Maryland Lotto drawings. The first drawing will be on Wednesday, December 21 and the last drawing will be on Wednesday, February 22, 2012. As a 100 Club fundraiser finale, there will be a party on Sunday, February 26, 2012 from 1 to 4 PM at Cockeys Cow Saloon located at 900 S. Carey St. Hot buffet, beer, wine, liquor and soda will be served for free to all ticket holders. Guests will be charged \$10 to attend the party. Additional prizes will be awarded at the party based on random drawings of participants' ticket numbers. For the main prizes of \$300, \$200 and \$100, the ticket holders do not need to be present to win. Ticket holders must be present to be eligible to win various other door prizes. The donation for the 100 Club ticket is \$25. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact me.

Vincent T. Dulys,  
Chairman

### Happy Birthday

#### November

Joseph Astasauskas  
Algirdas Brasauskas  
Edward Budelis  
Wayne Callahan  
Edward Daniels  
David Gorrell  
Alfred Kyliavas  
Anton Meisinger  
Robert Mellendick  
Walter Schmidbauer

#### December

John Antoniak  
Balys Brasauskas  
John Keydash  
Vaclovas Laukaitis  
John Maskavich  
Paul Salvetti  
Richard Seymour

### Sick Call



Algirdas Paplonskis  
6511 Clear Drop Way #103  
Glen Burnie, MD 21060

Joseph Saurusaitis  
5601 Oregon Ave.  
Baltimore, MD 21227

Algirdas Siaurusaitis  
2526 Melba Rd.  
Ellicott City, MD 21042

### TAPS

Lithuanian Post 154 wishes to extend our sympathy to the family of Legionnaire Vaclovas (Vacys, Bob) Laukaitis. He was a key member of the Post and he will be greatly missed. After battling cancer for seven years, Vacys reported to the Supreme Commander on October 23, 2011.



Vacys Laukaitis

Vacys was born December 12, 1931 in Kaunas, Lithuania. In 1944 the tide of World War II had turned and it became obvious that the Communists would be returning to Lithuania to resume their arresting, torturing and deporting of innocent Lithuanians to Siberia. The Laukaitis family, like thousands of other Lithuanian families, left Lithuania and settled in displaced persons camps in Germany. After WW II, it was not safe to return to Communist-occupied Lithuania. The people in displaced persons camps applied for emigration to the United States, Canada and other free countries. In 1949, the Laukaitis family was granted permission to emigrate to America.

Vacys served in the US Army from 1952 to 1954. He was an MP stationed at Fort Meade, MD. After leaving the Army, he joined The American Legion Lithuanian Post 154 in 1959 and became an active member supporting and organizing many Post functions. He served as Post Commander from 1964 to 1966. He especially liked parades and insisted on a "spit and polish" presentation of the Post.

Though Vacys was proud of his adopted country, he was also proud of his Lithuanian heritage. In 1972, he and 19 of his friends founded the Baltimore Lithuanian Athletic Club. The club's mission was to provide a forum for maintaining their friendship while having fun competing with local sports teams as well as Lithuanian sports groups in other cities. They competed in basketball, soccer, golf, bowling, chess, etc. The club that they founded in 1972 is still active.

Over twenty Lithuanian Post 154 members participated at Vacys' Poppy Service. Among his final requests was his desire for members of Lithuanian Post 154 and members of the Baltimore Lithuanian Athletic



Club to serve as pallbearers. We did so proudly. Another of his requests was for his coffin to be draped with the flag of his adopted country, the country that he often said "gave me a second chance". He requested that The American Legion Lithuanian Post 154 serve as honor guard and fold the flag. Six Lithuanian Post 154 Legionnaires had the privilege of folding the flag as Vince Dulys, Adjutant of Lithuanian Post 154, recited the symbolism of each of the 13 folds. Post Commander John Maskavich presented the flag to Kazys Laukaitis, Vacys' brother.

May he rest in peace.

## Lithuanian Post 154 Installation of Officers

Lithuanian Post 154 Installation of Officers for 2011 - 2012 took place on Sunday, September 18, 2011 at Lithuanian Hall. Department Judge Advocate Dr. Gordon B. Browning swore in our elected officers.

Besides installing Post officers for next year, the Post recognized and presented awards to several organizations and members of our community.

Monsignor Arthur Bastress, pastor of St. Alphonsus Church and an enthusiastic supporter of The American Legion Lithuanian Post 154 and Baltimore's Lithuanian community was presented a book and a donation. The book, "Between Shades of Gray" by Ruta Sepetys, describes the hardships Lithuanian people endured during their deportations to Siberia by the Communists in 1941.

The Post presented Kirk Bauer, who joined Lithuanian Post 154 this year, with a \$500 check for Disabled Sports USA (DSUSA). Kirk Bauer is the Executive Director of DSUSA, an organization with 100 chapters that serve more than 60,000 disabled people annually. In 2003, he led the establishment of the Wounded Warrior Disabled Sports Project which has provided free sports rehabilitation instruction in over 20 different sports to 4,800 severely wounded service men and women returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Malunas dance group was presented a \$500 check to help them with their travel expenses to the Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival in Boston next July. Lithuanian dance groups from all over the world will be participating in this event.

Police Officers Scott Lawrence and Jennifer Wortham, Fire-fighter Lieutenant Christopher L. Quick and Malunas Lithuanian dance group instructor Rytis Grybauskas were recognized and awarded gift certificates.

Anneliese Galinaitis, who is attending Carroll Community College and Kasey Jackonis who is attending the University of Tennessee, were each awarded \$1,000 Collegiate Scholarships. A Scholastic award was presented to Emilie Mosier who is attending Linthicum Elementary School.

We had an excellent turnout with guests from Department and District. Post members had the opportunity to socialize with their old buddies and enjoy a great meal and refreshments while being entertained by the Malunas Lithuanian folk dance group.

Many volunteers and Legionnaires put forth significant effort to make this special event a success. A sincere "Thank You" to Deanna Howes for singing the US and Lithuanian National Anthems. Also thanks to Aldona Buda and her helpers for catering a delicious meal. Thanks also to Vytautas Dulys, Dave Gorrell and Birute Gorrell for serving the refreshments.

## Kirk Bauer, Executive Director of DSUSA

Kirk Bauer knows firsthand what it is like to face the challenges of disability. As a non-commissioned officer in the US Army, Bauer lost a leg from a hand grenade explosion in Vietnam in 1969. By example he has demonstrated that a disability can be overcome by hard work and a can-do attitude. As a member of the "Over 60 Gang," Bauer is active in skiing, biking, hiking, and swimming. In 1999, he successfully completed the Marine Corps Marathon, his first, and won the 2000 Boston Marathon, in the "Mobility Impaired" class. In addition, he has four times (2007, 2008, 2010, 2011) completed the Bataan Memorial Death March, a 26.2 mile endurance hike in the desert of White Sands Testing Grounds in New Mexico. He also completed the "Three Notch Century Ride," a one-day 100 mile cycling event. In August 2010, he successfully climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro, Africa's tallest mountain (19,340 feet), in eight days!



Source: Disabled Sports USA

Thanks to the Legionnaires who took part in our POW / MIA and Memorial Services and to Mark Zaruba for playing Taps. Thanks to the Post members who set up tables and chairs and decorate the hall for the Installation Ceremony and then put everything away and cleaned up after the ceremony.

Vincent T. Dulys,  
Installation Chairman



**Lithuanian Post 154 Officers for 2011-2012 (shown here at swearing-in ceremony) are listed below.**

Commander	John Maskavich
Vice Commander	Joseph Astauskas
Adjutant	Vincent Dulys
Finance Officer	Gintaras Buivys
Service Officer	Patrick Dohlus
Chaplain	Fred Kaminski
Judge Advocate	Joseph Jankevicius
Historian	Henry Gaidis
Sergeant At Arms	Toivo Tagamets
Executive Committee	Algis Paplonskis
	Vitas Siaurusaitis

**COMMANDER**  
 John F. Maskavich  
 19 Locust Drive  
 Baltimore, MD 21228  
 (410) 747-9628  
 JMaskavich@gmail.com

**ADJUTANT**  
 Vincent T. Dulys  
 616 Cedarwood Lane  
 Crownsville, MD 21032  
 (410) 987-5275  
 410-960-7874 - cell  
 Vincentas@verizon.net

**SERVICE OFFICER**  
 Patrick M. Dohlus  
 1920 Nipmuck Path  
 Hanover, MD 21076  
 (410) 551-2369

Post Meeting,  
 8 PM every 2nd Wednesday  
 of the month at  
 Lithuanian Hall  
 851 Hollins Street.  
 Baltimore, MD 21201

Executive Comm. Meeting,  
 7:30 PM on the 4th  
 Wednesday of the month at  
 Cockeyed Cow Saloon  
 900 S. Carey Street  
 Baltimore, MD 21223

Please send your comments,  
 suggestions and articles to :  
 Joe Jankevicius  
 624 Oak Tree Rd.  
 Westminster, MD 21157  
 JoeJankevicius@Gmail.com

**Flu Shot**

The VA Maryland Health Care System is encouraging Veterans using the VA Health Care System to get a free influenza vaccination. Vaccination before December is best since this timing ensures that protective antibodies are in place before flu activity is typically at its highest.

Even if you don't use the VA Health Care System, getting a Flu shot is a good idea.

Lithuanian Post 154 web page is on: <http://www.lietuvis.net> - click on Lithuanian Post 154.

**Calendar & Reminders**

**November**

- Sat 05 Baltimore District 4 Frenchmen Service - St. Mary's Cemetery - 10 AM
- Sun 06 Lithuanian Post 154 - Back to God Mass  
 St. Alphonsus Church, Saratoga and Park Ave, Baltimore - 8:30 AM
- Sun 06 Daylight Saving Time Ends - set clock back one hour.
- Tue 08 Election Day
- Wed 09 Lithuanian Post 154 General Meeting - Lithuanian Hall - 8 PM
- Thu 10 Marine Corps Established (1775)
- Thu 10 Baltimore District Meeting - 7 PM  
 General Haller Post 95 - 1746 Fleet Street, Baltimore
- Fri 11 Signing of WWI Armistice (1918)
- Fri 11 Veterans Day - Baltimore District Service - 10:45 AM  
 Northeastern Post 285 - 2324 McElderry Street, Baltimore
- Sun 20 Department Executive Committee Meeting - Frances Scott Key Post 11 - 9 AM
- Wed 23 Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting rescheduled to Nov. 30.
- Thu 24 Happy Thanksgiving Day
- Sun 27 First Sunday of Advent
- Wed 30 Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting -  
 Cockeyed Cow Saloon - 7:30 PM

**December**

- Wed 07 Pearl Harbor Remembrance -  
 Baltimore District Service at War Memorial - 7 PM
- Thu 08 War declared on Japan (1941)
- Sun 11 Germany & Italy declared war on U.S. (1941)
- Sun 11 Lithuanian Hall Christmas Bazaar - 12 Noon
- Sun 11 Lithuanian Post 154 Children's Christmas Party - Lithuanian Hall -1 PM
- Wed 14 Lithuanian Post 154 General Meeting - Lithuanian Hall - 8 PM
- Wed 21 First Day of Hanukkah
- Wed 21 First drawing for 100 Club fundraiser
- Thu 22 First Day of Winter
- Sat 24 Christmas Eve / Lithuanian Kūčios
- Sun 25 Merry Christmas
- Wed 28 No Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting
- Wed 28 Second drawing for 100 Club fundraiser
- Sat 31 Official End of WWII (1946)
- Sat 31 New Year's Eve

**January, 2012**

- Sun 01 New Year's Day
- Wed 04 Third drawing for 100 Club fundraiser
- Wed 11 Lithuanian Post 154 General Meeting - Lithuanian Hall - 8 PM
- Wed 11 Fourth drawing for 100 Club fundraiser
- Mon 16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday
- Mon 16 Persian Gulf War Began (1991)
- Wed 18 Fifth drawing for 100 Club fundraiser
- Wed 25 Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting -  
 Cockeyed Cow Saloon - 7:30 PM
- Wed 25 Sixth drawing for 100 Club fundraiser

**Children's Christmas Party and Christmas Bazaar**

Lithuanian Post 154 will sponsor the Children's Christmas Party at Lithuanian Hall on December 11 at 1 PM. Bring your small children and grandchildren. Chat with your friends while the children play and snack while waiting for Santa Claus to arrive with gifts.



Lithuanian Hall will also have their Christmas Bazaar on the same date starting at noon. There will be craft tables with Lithuanian Christmas decorations and gifts for sale. Lithuanian food and drink will also be available.