

2023 ANNUAL LCAS MEMBER MEETING

The 2023 annual Lithuanian Catholic Academy of Sciences (LCAS) member meeting took place on Saturday, September 9. The meeting was virtual, using ZOOM.

The meeting was attended by more than 20 people: 2 from Lithuania; 4 from Illinois; 2 from Pennsylvania; 2 from New York; 2 from Virginia; 12 from Massachusetts, 1 from France. It was an opportunity to hear young Lithuanian academicians speak about their work without leaving the house.



Left to right: dr. Žara Girniūtė, dr. Aleksas Gedmintas, Onutė Traiton, dr. Mirga Girniuvienė, Ramunė Kubiliūtė, dr. Ramūnas Kondratas.

This year LCAS members voted for the Board. The voting was co-ordinated by Dr. Tomas Girnius. Five incumbents were re-elected: Dr. Aleksas Gedmintas, Dr. Žara Girniūtė, Dr. Mirga Girniuvienė, Dr. Ramūnas Kondratas and Onutė Traiton. Paul Rizauckas, long-time Board member and volunteer at the ALKA (American Lithuanian Cultural Archive) library, where he helped catalog books using LIBIS, withdrew from the Board for health reasons. Ramunė Kubiliūtė was elected as the sixth member of the Board.

Meeting participants found the academic program quite interesting and relevant.

The first lecture was presented by Vilnius University doctoral candidate in history Ignas Stanevičius. He spent a month at ALKA researching the archives of the first Lithuanian priests' organization "Solidarity of Priests". This was the topic of his lecture and is also an important part of his doctoral dissertation at Vilnius University.



Participants were pleasantly surprised that a young man, never having lived in the US and not having experienced life in the diaspora, came to understand how Lithuanian priests integrated into the life and community-building of lay people as they struggled together to sustain Lithuanian culture in exile. Ignas received the LCAS Dr. Juozas Kriauciūnas scholarship in 2021.

Vilnius University doctoral student Ignas Stanevičius.



The second lecture was presented by Dr. Adèle Bubnys. Adèle received her doctorate at Rockefeller University in 2019. That same year she joined the Tsai laboratory at Massachusetts Institute of Technology as a postdoctoral associate, and continues her research at the Tsai Lab.

Dr. Adèle Bubnys.

Adèle spoke about research in the area of neurodegenerative disease, including Alzheimer's and dementia. She touched on various unsuccessful attempts to develop drugs to cure these diseases.

It takes 10 years before a drug can be submitted to receive FDA approval. Adèle's lab is working to reduce this interval by several years. The process they are developing uses stem cells and Crisper technology.

Participants were proud to point out that the first scientist to use Crisper technology in Petri dishes was Vilnius University researcher Virginijus Šikšnys. In 2018 he was awarded the prestigious Kavli prize for his work in this area. Adèle is a member of LCAS.

The third lecturer was Dr. Jonas Daugirdas. Jonas is a long-time member of the “Draugas” Board and editor of “Lithuanian Heritage”. In 2019 Lithuania’s Foreign Affairs office awarded him the Lithuanian Star of Diplomacy for his work in fostering Lithuanian culture in the diaspora. He is the initiator and driver of the project to digitize periodicals of the Lithuanian diaspora.



Dr. Jonas Daugirdas.

Jonas spoke about the periodicals digitization project. This project sounds like a detective story. Issues of periodicals are scattered over the world. It seems like no one location has all issues of any one periodical. Jonas has to find out who has what issues and get the issues for digitization. He also takes care of getting financial support, which comes from various sources. He works with digitizers to ensure that digital copies are clear and searchable by Google and other search engines. Jonas is a member of LCAS.



LCAS organizes member meetings annually, inviting young scientists to present their ideas and their work. That is a way of giving them a forum in which they can feel a part of a community which appreciates and values their scientific work. LCAS is also responsible for ALKA, which is the second largest Lithuanian archive outside of Lithuania. Please visit the LCAS website at www.lkma.org to learn more about its mission and its work.

