

TOURIST&TOWN

contributors



Faith Gillman has called Kennebunk home for 34 years. A wife, mother and "Nonny," Faith has enjoyed writing for a number of Maine-based magazines and newspapers. She is happiest when she's able to share the stories of the people and places that make Maine the best place to be in every season, and is truly thankful to be part of the *Tourist & Town* team. faith@touristandtown.com



Steve Hrehovcik, writer, editor and artist, has been with *Tourist & Town* (formerly *Tourist News*) since 2006. He and his wife Carol have lived in Kennebunk for almost 51 years. Steve's book *Rebel Without A Clue: A Way-Off Broadway Memoir* can be found at kennebunkartstudio.com.



Valerie Marier is a freelance journalist who has traveled the world, writing for magazines and newspapers. Val is a wife, mother and grandmother, who enjoys knitting, reading, golf and travel, and writes about them in her blog *Wandering With Val*. www.wanderingwithval.com

A heartfelt thank you to our dedicated team of writers and to everyone who contributes all who share passions and talents with T&T.



Find us at the Depot!

www.touristandtown.com



Kathy Oberman Tracy is a classically trained chef with a Masters in Culinary Arts from the New School and a degree in Food Styling from the Culinary Institute of America. Oberman worked with Martha Stewart as TV Producer and Food Stylist and was a private chef and caterer for the late Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward. In her "free" time Kathy is a mom and races sailing yachts.



Jo O'Connor is a local writer with deep roots in Kennebunkport. She is a mother of twins and founder/lead singer of the local band The Dock Squares. She teaches Zumba and aqua classes and is a marketing communication professor. jfbconnor@gmail.com



Dana Pearson is a writer and musician living in Kennebunk with his wife Diane. His books can be found at amazon.com/author/danapearson. dana@touristandtown.com



Guest Contributor Laima Vincé has published over 20 books in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Europe. She earned an MFA in Writing from Columbia University, an MFA in Nonfiction from the University of New Hampshire and a PhD from Vilnius University. She teaches Creative Writing in the English Department at the University of Southern Maine and lives in Kennebunk.

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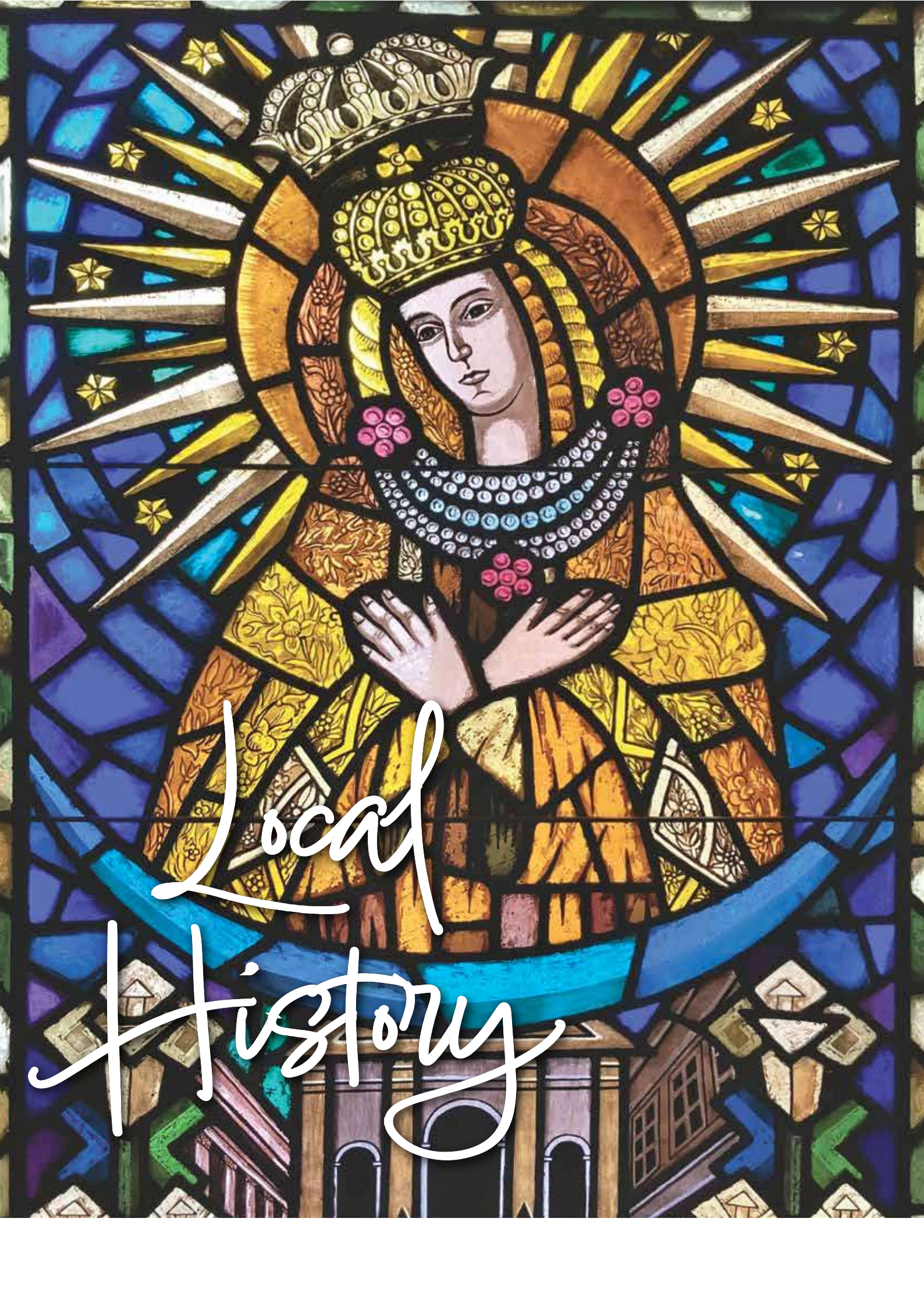
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Local
History

What's behind those monastery walls?

by Guest Contributor Laima Vince

When I was growing up in the seventies and eighties, our family made a yearly summer pilgrimage to the St. Anthony's Guest House, located on the monastery grounds in Kennebunk. My mother recalls spending her summers here in the 1950s and 1960s. Back in those days, we would hear Lithuanian spoken on the streets in the lower village and on Gooch's Beach. The Franciscan Monastery served as a meeting point and an oasis for Lithuanian émigrés who had escaped from Soviet-occupied Lithuania during World War II. In later years, their children and grandchildren continued to visit.

Have you ever gone past the St. Anthony's Franciscan Monastery in Kennebunk, and wondered what lay beyond those stone walls and stately pines and firs? Have you ever felt tempted to take a peek over that wall to catch a view of the mysterious daily rhythms of life inside the monastery? Today you can walk the paths of the monastery grounds, designed by Frederick Law Olmstead, and visit the shrines and the Chapel of St. Anthony.

The Franciscan Monastery Estate was formerly owned by the Rogers family of Buffalo, New York. In 1890, William A. Rogers, Esq. commissioned the architectural firm of Green and Wicks to build a "splendid house in the Tudor style."

An order of Lithuanian Franciscans in Greene, Maine – whose members had emigrated from Lithuania in the early twentieth century – purchased the estate in 1947.

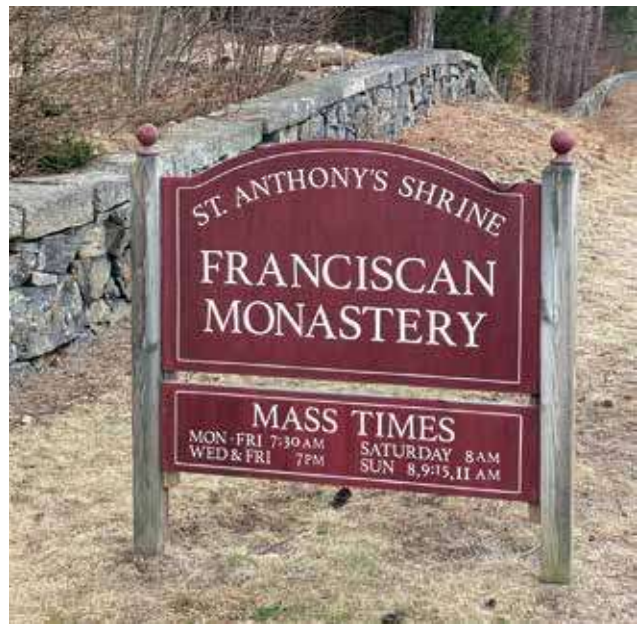
When Soviet Russia invaded Lithuania, Catholic priests and nuns were targeted by the Soviet regime. Communist ideology, and atheism was forced upon the population. Individuals who represented any religion inside the Soviet Union were deported to hard-labor camps in Siberia in 1941, and again in the forties and fifties. Franciscan monks who were able to escape to the West eventually found shelter at St. Anthony's Franciscan Monastery in Kennebunk.

The monastery houses magnificent works of unique Lithuanian art created by major émigré Lithuanian artists of the 20th century who studied in the art academies of Paris and Vienna before World War II.

When you approach the main building, you will see the sculpture of the Militant, Suffering, and Triumphant Church, featured in the Vatican Pavilion in the 1964 New York World's Fair. This sculpture is designed by the Lithuanian émigré artist Vytautas Jonynas (1907–1997).

Jonynas who studied in Paris received two gold medals at the Paris World's Fair in 1937, and in 1938 he was awarded the rank of officer in the French Legion of Honor by the French government. As a celebrated artist and professor of art, had it not been for the rise of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, Jonynas would have continued on a successful career path.

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Opposite page: Stained glass window of Mary of the Gates of Dawn by Zenonas Kolba (1909 - 1972). This page, top: St. Anthony Franciscan Friary is located at 28 Beach Street in Kennebunk. This page, above: Stained glass window with St. George slaying the dragon by Zenonas Kolba (1909 - 1972). Photos by Laima Vince

Soviet Russia targeted many artists, writers, professors, teachers, diplomats, and government employees for execution or sent them to hard labor camps in Siberia. Only those artists who collaborated with the Soviets and produced propagandistic social realist art propagating the regime survived.

Jonynas and his family fled Soviet-occupied Lithuania in 1944 and found refuge in the French zone of the allied territories of postwar Germany. In 1946, in Freiburg, Germany, he founded the Foreign Artists' Institute of Fine Arts where he was both a teacher and the director.

Students rushed to Freiburg to be able to study art with him. After World War II, most of the displaced persons lived with the hope that they would soon return home to Lithuanian, and that life in Germany was only temporary. However, they received almost no news from Lithuania. People had already experienced Soviet brutality and deportations under the first Soviet occupation, and so were afraid to write to their relatives.

The Lithuanian émigré graphic artist and stained-glass designer, Vytautas Ignas (1924–2009), was a student of Jonynas in Freiburg. His work has a distinctive style that combines the influences of simple folk art that one sees in the countryside of Lithuania with modernist expression. Inside St. Anthony's Chapel a few examples of his black and white prints are exhibited on the walls.

In 1952, the Shrine of St. Anthony was added at the monastery, and in 1953, the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes was constructed on the estate grounds. In 1959, the Chapel of the Stations of the Cross was built. These shrines, designed in an early twentieth century Lithuanian modernist style, are the work of Jonas Mulokas.

The Chapel of the Stations of the Cross, located on the lawn, is a unique sculpture designed by Lithuanian émi-

gré sculptor Vytautas Kašuba, known for his work with monumental figures cast in bronze. The large sculpture at the monastery features hand-fired ceramic plates depicting each of the stations of the cross, two ceramic angels

and a large figure of Christ on the Cross. The individual faces of the figures express pain, hope, joy. Kašuba represented Lithuania at the 1937 World's Fair, where he won gold and silver medals for his work in wood.

A bronze plaque on the opposite side of the Chapel of the Stations of the Cross lists the names of donors, all Lithuanian émigrés who came from the displaced-person camps of Europe to America. While struggling to gain a foothold in America, they made it their priority to donate any extra income to creating beautiful communal environments where they could gather and celebrate their culture and language and hope to pass it on to their children.

St. Anthony's Chapel was designed by architect Dr. Alfred Kulpa of Toronto, Canada, a Lithuanian émigré. It was constructed between 1965 and 1966.

In the vestibule a stained-glass window depicts a Lithuanian-style representation of Holy Mary. The names of the saints, St. Anthony and St. George, are written in Lithuanian on the other stained-glass windows.

When looking at the Lithuanian crosses – either the large wooden traditional Lithuanian "roadside cross" in front of the monastery lawn – or at the small crosses inside the Chapel, note how the traditional Lithuanian cross differs from the usual cross. Elements of the pre-Christian Lithuanian pagan religion are expressed within the cross in the symbols of the sun and the moon. They represent

Saulė, the mythological sun goddess, and Mėnulis, the mythological male god of the night. While most

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Photo top: "The Triad" panel for the Vatican Pavilion in the 1964-1965 World's Fair by Vytautas Jonynas (1907-1997). Photo above: Stations of the Cross, ceramic sculpture by Vytautas Kašuba (1915 - 1997). Photos by Laima Vince

western civilizations identified the sun as male and the moon as female, the Lithuanian mythology is opposite. According to Lithuanian émigré archeologist, Marija Gimbutas, this indicates that traditional Lithuanian folk culture was matriarchal.

Inside the chapel, note the unique method of combining cement with stained glass. Also take note of how traditional saints and Catholic motifs are represented through the lens of modernist art in the stained-glass windows, but then the stained-glass doors leading into the Chapel are of an abstract design.

The interior decorations, including the bas-relief, the altars, the stained-glass windows, the candlesticks and chandeliers were designed, produced, and arranged by Jonynas, Kašūba, and other Lithuanian artists who saw church art as a means of passing on Lithuanian religious traditions and inspirational art.


Once you leave the Chapel, take a stroll along the contemplative paths of the monastery park that lead down to the shores of the Kennebunk River. The sculptures and shrines along the paths, created by various artists, depict important religious figures such as St. Anthony, St. Francis surrounded by benevolent animals, and Holy Mary. At the end of the trail there is a statue of Kateri Tekakwitha (1656–1680), the first Native American woman to be canonized as a saint.

St. Anthony Franciscan Friary is located at 28 Beach Street, Kennebunk. FMI www.framon.net



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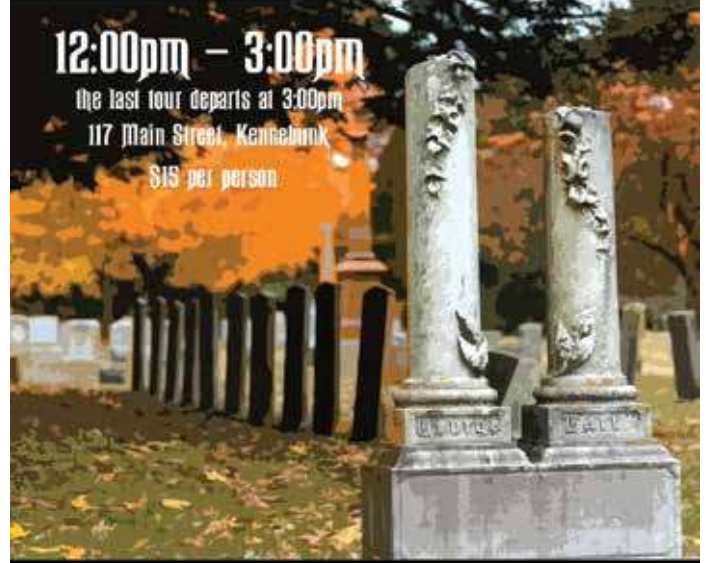
*Mother's Beach
 designed by
 Geraldine Aikman*
 available at
 Morph Gallery
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Above: The Lithuanian symbols of the sun and the moon. Photo by Laima Vince

All Souls' Walk
 Saturday, October 28, 2023

12:00pm – 3:00pm
 the last tour departs at 3:00pm
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