

BRIDGES

Lithuanian American News Journal

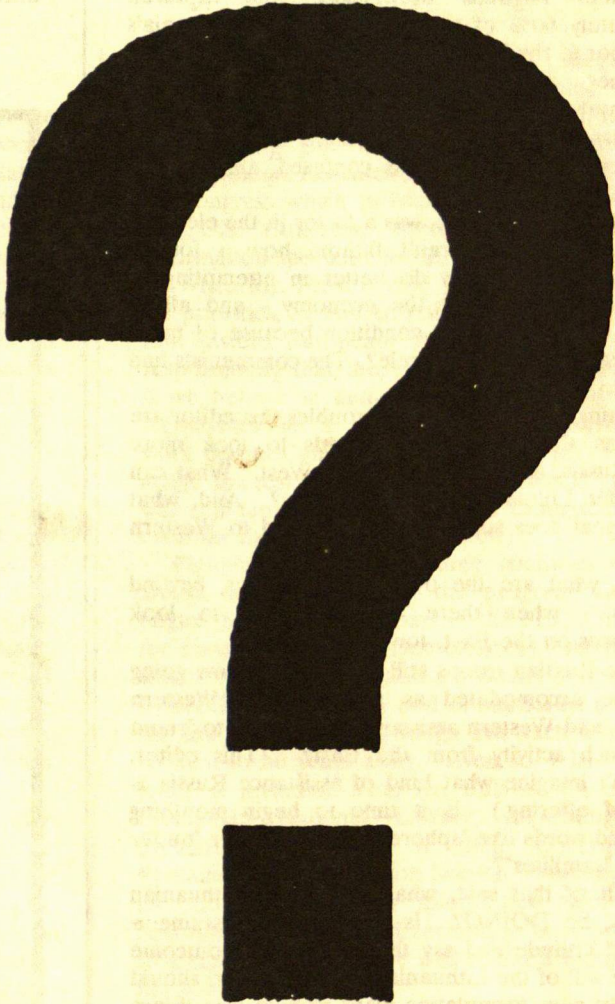
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Lithuania's Presidential Election results are in. What happens now - dare we ask? What does the future hold for Lithuania?

To our readers:

As this is being written, the election for President of Lithuania is over; and a winner has been declared. The President-Elect is former Lithuanian communist party leader Algirdas Brazauskas; who captured approximately 60% of the popular vote. Lithuania's Ambassador to the United States, Stasys Lozoraitis, the only other candidate for President, garnered approximately 40% of the popular vote.

Needless to say, the election results have left many (most?) Lithuanian Americans confused, anxious and apprehensive.

The economy, of course, was a factor in the election; but this editor simply can't fathom how a former communist could possibly do better in attempting to "fix" the economy. Isn't the economy - and all of Lithuania - in the current condition because of more than 50 years of communist rule? The communists had 51 years to "fix" things!

Something else which greatly troubles this editor are the reports that Brazauskas intends to look more towards Russia, and less towards the West. What can Russia offer Lithuania - especially now? And, what kind of signal does such a statement send to Western investors?

Finally, what are the overall implications, beyond economics - when there is a promise to look towards/focus on the East, towards Russia?

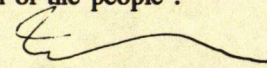
Are the Russian troops still in Lithuania now going to become accommodated as allies? Are Western exchanges, and Western assistance, now going to "stand behind" such activity from the East? (This editor, again, can't imagine what kind of assistance Russia is capable of offering.) Is it time to begin mouthing phrases and words like "sphere of influence", or "buffer states" or "satellites"?

With all of that said, what should we, Lithuanian Americans, be DOING? Is it enough to assume a "hands off" attitude and say that the election outcome was, "...the will of the Lithuanian People."? Or, should we be, right now, formulating plans to help turn things back?

The victorious Presidential candidate clearly got a considerable amount of assistance, during his campaign, from the East; in fact he got an overwhelming amount of assistance. Those Russian troops, which many Lithuanian voters saw, literally every single day, right through their trip to the polls, were a significant persuader - especially when the West remained silent during the campaign. Of course, oil flows from Russia, as well, stopped and started, as required.

Normal campaign activities, like television

commercials and newspaper advertisements, simply don't have the same persuasive power as do tanks and vital oil flows. So, how much of the outcome is really attributable to the "will of the people"?


Joseph Arlauskas, Editor

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BRIDGES: Lithuanian-American News Journal serves as a link between Lithuanian Americans and their Lithuanian heritage (as well as a source of information for those interested in Lithuania and/or the activities/goals/background of Lithuanian Americans), by presenting items on Lithuanian culture, history, conditions in Lithuania, Lithuanian related events and personalities in America; and serves the aspirations of those who want to assist Lithuania's integration into the community of democratically governed, free market economic system, nations of the world.

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The Frost Task Force

Named After Congressman Martin Frost Of Texas, This Program Will Provide Assistance To Lithuania's Parliament.

by Felicia Giedryte Kolp

Every new assistance program that originates in the U.S. Congress has to have a determined advocate who is willing to guide it through a complex legislative process, to practical implementation and funding. Fortunately, the House Special Task Force on the Development of Parliamentary Institutions in Eastern Europe has such an advocate, Congressman Martin Frost of Texas, and the program now underway to assist Parliaments of newly independent counties in Eastern Europe—including those in the Baltic states—is known as the Frost Task Force, in recognition of his efforts.

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The idea came in early 1990, when Mr. Frost was talking to a group of newly elected Czech legislators. Previously, they had no need for information; their role in rubber-stamp legislatures was clear and simple. Now, they were being asked to pass laws and make decisions that would be critical in shaping the future of their countries. Mr. Frost, on his return, noted that the Parliaments were lacking what we consider to be even the most basic office equipment and information resources.

For example, the Czech parliamentary library had two "western" encyclopedias: a 1946 *Americana* and a *Britannica* from 1957. Funds for the purchases from the West had not been available and even access to photocopiers was strictly limited, as they provided a potential means for disseminating information. Thus, after 40 years of Soviet control, most of Eastern Europe's Parliamentary libraries were decimated. Unlike the information "overload" experienced by many libraries in the West, the situation in the libraries and Parliamentary information services in these countries was the exact opposite: information hunger and a huge appetite for information from the West.

On his return, Mr. Frost pressed for funding of a parliamentary assistance program for Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, one that would include three major efforts: (1) equipment (computer networks, copiers, fax machines) to facilitate the day-to-day operations; (2)

library and information resources adequate for a functioning legislature; and (3) training for elected deputies and their support staff. Principal responsibility for carrying out this program was given to the Congressional Research Service, that part of the Library of Congress which provides research and analysis for the U.S. Congress, where I have worked as an information specialist for 20 years.

When Mr. Frost decided to make this project one of his priorities, he had no political motive; his district has few Eastern European ethnic groups. He saw it as a responsibility that the U.S. Congress should take on—if we believe in democracy, we should help the new legislatures get a good start on the terribly difficult work that lies ahead. (As it happens, Mr. Frost has an active interest in Lithuania: his maternal grandmother was Lithuanian, his wife also has Lithuanian roots and even his daughter's cello teacher!)

Planning for the first three countries was started almost immediately, and the program was officially begun in the fall 1990, part of the SEED bill (Support for Eastern European Democracies). At that time, it was not at all evident that the Soviet Union was going to break up so quickly and dramatically, and freedom for the Baltic nations, though not such a dream, still seemed to be years away. Even so, I had received a letter of invitation from Dr. Bulavas, Director of the Lithuanian National Library, requesting help in expanding the work of their Government and Parliamentary Information Section. Already, they had far more demand for information than they had resources for. The need seemed to be a pressing one, so I agreed to take leave and spend a month there, in the fall.

And then it happened: the coup, the recognition, the new reality. Once U.S. diplomatic recognition came, the purpose of my trip changed: instead of a volunteer effort, it was an official trip to reinstitute the exchange of official government documents and to assess library and information service to the Lithuanian Parliament, preparing for the extension of Frost Task Force activity to the Baltic states. As in the other countries, I saw that information resources were terribly inadequate for the new demands, but also saw a great deal of dedicated work, effort, and long hours put in day after

day by staff who were determined to get their jobs done.

Funding to include the Baltic nations in Frost activities became official in October 1991 and the first official visit took place in February 1992, by a small group of computer and information specialists, the staff director of the Frost Task Force, Ms. Kristi Walseth, and the Assistant Director of the Congressional Research Service, Mr. William Robinson. After three days of meetings in Vilnius, explaining the program, assessing the situation, and discussing specific goals, plans, and timetables with our counterparts, it was clear that this program is truly needed--in Lithuania as elsewhere-- to build a good, solid infrastructure for the institution. I had the pleasure of hearing our computer specialists say that the Parliament's computer support group, headed by Onute Volungeviciute, was the best prepared group that they had encountered. And I was proud of our Congress for being the first and only group ready with such a comprehensive plan of support.

The fall and winter of 1991/1992 was "open season" in Lithuania for dozens of delegations, all of them curious and interested, but very few ready with actual help. It was apparent that the leadership was exhausted from endless rounds of meetings, but it was just as clear that they were enormously appreciative of the Frost Task Force Plans for giving something concrete.

What is the extent of the assistance? Each country, over the next two years, will have about one million dollars to acquire computer and information support systems, a basic legislative library, and 75 days of training in the U.S. Each country develops its own plan, within certain parameters, and resources and training are determined by the country, not by us. Computer networks and support have the lion's share, about \$600,000, library collections about \$125,000, with

the remainder for technical assistance and staff training, as requested.

The program uses expertise available in Congress and the Congressional Research Service, assigning specialists to projects on a part-time basis. Thus, technical staff who have developed computerized information services for Congress are detailed to work in on technical aspects, while Law Library or foreign affairs specialists can be asked to prepare seminars or recommend specific titles for law, international relations, public policy or economics.

The Congressional Research Service prepared a comprehensive bibliography of important works that could be considered for a parliamentary library. Items selected for the library do not have to be in English; German and Polish language books and newspapers

are often requested, together with the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. Special arrangements are made with publishers and distributors so that speedy delivery is guaranteed.

Because U.S. support staff are assigned to special projects as part of their jobs, this operation can be run on a shoestring. There are no high-priced consultants

and very little overhead. The program, which now encompasses eight countries (Romania, Bulgaria, and the Baltics, added to the original three) is managed by two full-time employees two technical assistants, and a core committee of staff specialists, which meets for review and planning. Those who are involved with Frost programs are both excited and committed about participating, often spending many evening and weekend hours to complete an assignment.

Unfortunately, we have slow getting started with the delivery of computers because we must adhere to the U.S. procurement process: that is, developing a very specific proposal, advertising and publishing it (as an "RFP") to all interested groups, selecting a bidder, than awarding the contract. This is not a quick procedure,



From left: Congressmen Frost & Hammerschmidt, Julyte Minkunaite (Cleveland), Felicia Kolp (Author), Kristi Walseth (Staff Director of Frost Task Force), Congressman Price.

as anyone in the government contracting area can understand. And it is complicated by the fact the our "tekkies" are already stretched with many other projects nearing completion. Even so, we feel that it is better to devote every available dollar to buying equipment rather than hiring additional people to speed up the process by a few months. The only real "problem" with the Frost Task Force is that it has succeeded too well--demands on time and resources have been very heavy and intense. However, the results we have seen in completed projects have been dramatic and gratifying.

The RFP (formal contract bid) for Lithuanian computer acquisitions was closed in February. The Parliament's Information and Analysis Center has already received new encyclopedias, and ordered several hundred reference books as well as major U.S. and European newspapers. A CD-ROM system should be in place by May. The Parliament will draw up a "wish list" for specialized technical training by its staff.

Another feature of Frost Programs is that they targeted primarily are for the professional staff: for the committee staff, the legal counsel, the archivists, the librarians, the computer specialists--the people who will become and remain the institutional memory, even as the deputies and governments change. Congressmen Frost, after his visit in April 1991, concluded that staff training would be best implemented after the elections. To date, Lithuania has sent two people who are instrumental in developing information service:

Danute Vabalaite of the Parliament's Information and Analysis Group and Renata Blagniene, head of the National Library's Government Information Section. While here, attending a two week seminar on legislative information and observing the work of the Congressional Research Service, they worked on plans to cooperate while setting up an information system that would use the resources of both groups.

The work accomplished by the Lithuanian professional staff has been remarkable, considering all of the shortages of materials we take for granted. For example, when I was at the National Library just over a year ago, the young, energetic director of the Government Information Section (renata Blagniene) had just started to hire a staff but had no office space for them, until another section of the Library moved into a building vacated by the Russian army. In a recent letter, she reports that her staff of 20 are working two shifts so that they can make the most of their 3 computers. "No one wants to deal with the old cards, not even the old-timers," she reports. Her multilingual section indexes and abstracts Lithuanian newspapers and provides abstracts, in Lithuanian, from newspapers of other countries; the database now has several thousand entries and can be searched by any important key word. All of this was started from nothing, and went into operation even before significant Frost assistance. The spirit and attitude that prevails in this group, as in others that I worked with, is wonderfully

infectious, and inspires us to continue to do our best to help, whenever we can.

Many Lithuanian-Americans were concerned and upset at the results of the latest elections. However, I believe that support for the Parliament as a basic institution of government is essential: because it represents the wishes of the people, carried out in free elections. Anyone who saw the concrete barricades in front of the building will never forget that statement of defiance, nor the thousands of people who stood and prayed through the terrible nights, supporting those who represented their will for freedom. The Parliament remains the symbol of independence and sovereignty, and is an institution that deserves to be supported.

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Felicia Giedryte Kolp is Resources Specialist for Business and Statistics in the Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress; and is a Member of the Public Affairs Council of the Lithuanian American Community, Inc.

Vaivorykštė "The Rainbow Club"

Some very dedicated foster families in Lithuania have taken orphans and abandoned or abused children under their care. Often the caretaker is a grandmother living alone and taking care of her grandchildren, or a relative who has set another place at his table for a child in need. The standard of living for these families is not high, and the foster children under their care do not receive the humanitarian assistance targeted for orphanages and children's homes.

The Lithuanian Embassy in Washington has a list of over 400 such families in Vilnius. Most of the children are between the ages of ten and eighteen. About a quarter of them are younger. The list includes children of Lithuanian, Polish and Russian descent.

Anyone who would like to brighten the day of one or several of these youngsters by sending them a card or small gifts should contact the Embassy to inquire about "The Rainbow Club." The Embassy will send the donor the name, address, and birthday of the child. Direct financial assistance is also possible.

Write to: *Vaivorykštė*, c/o Lithuanian Embassy, 2622 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009; or call: (202) 234-2639.

A Call For Specialists

The International Executive Service Corps (IESC), A U.S. Government Agency Is Seeking Volunteers For Lithuania.

by **Edmund Kulikauskas**

Several US government funded organizations are currently working in Lithuania. Some, like the *Peace Corps*, are familiar; others are less known or completely unrecognized. The *International Executive Service Corps (IESC)* falls in the latter category. It has been operational in Lithuania since 1992.

IESC was established in 1964. It employs US specialists who are assisting in the economic development of more than 50 countries. The corps is financed by the US government through the US Agency for International Development (USAID), augmented by grants from corporations. Currently 13,000 highly qualified specialists, predominantly retired executives, are working in IESC. IESC limits its projects to the following three categories: Technical Assistance, Trade Investment Services, and Public Administration Programs. It takes requests from private individuals, business persons, companies, and governments. In Lithuania, IESC has completed 8 projects, is working on another 20, and is considering about 50 new requests. The annual budget can handle 30 projects. The director of the IESC in Lithuania is an American-Lithuanian financial expert - Antanas Grina. Grina is currently assisted by 10 individuals in Lithuania.

The Lithuanian projects are quite varied: expansion of existing factories and conversion of production for export to the West; establishing an information network; a hospital administration project; and expansion of tourism, for example. A defense-related meteorological instrument production plant has been converted to a medical instrument manufacturing plant. Jewelry experts are helping to organize products, especially amber, for sale on the world market. Bank specialists are arriving from the US to help reorganize Lithuanian banks to operate by Western standards. Projected tasks require many different types of specialists - engineers, financiers, contractors/builders, business persons, lawyers, manufacturing specialists, etc. One of the most critical current needs is for specialists to prepare Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for a Public Safety system and then to evaluate the submitted proposals and assist in the selection process. Specialists

who speak Lithuanian are preferred, as working through a translator is a slow process, but what is required is experience and expertise.

IESC members are volunteers . . . called by IESC as needed to work in various countries. IESC selects the best qualified person for a project, taking into consideration the time frame of the project and the availability of the individual . . . individuals can specify that they will only work in Lithuania.

Antanas Grina and his fellow workers are accomplishing a very important task at this most critical time for Lithuania's economic development. Fortunately, this work is supported by the US government and we should take advantage of the opportunity. Cezaris Ugianskis, an engineer/professor from California, has spent the months of October through December working on Lithuania-2000 Information project and on a patent law legal base project. He is enthusiastic about the work being done by IESC and especially the work being done by its energetic leader in Lithuania, Antanas Grina. The work is truly effective and many desire IESC's help, as indicated by the large number of requests. IESC is a completely non-profit organization. Its only purpose is to help a country develop economically such that it achieves the level of the West's free market.

How can we help in this very worthwhile effort? IESC members are volunteers whose names have been entered in a computerized data bank and who are called by IESC as needed to work in various countries. IESC selects the best qualified person for a project, taking into consideration the time frame of the project and the availability of the individual for that period. Nobody is required to go where they do not want to

go, and individuals can specify that they will only work in Lithuania. Application forms for joining IESC can be obtained from IESC, PO Box 10005, Stamford, Connecticut 06904-2005, Tel (800) 243-4372, Fax (203) 243-2531. When filling out the form, please specify when you are available and for how long. In general, it is desirable that individuals stay for at least three months, but exceptions can be made, according to the IESC Vice President Richard Shriver. Please attach a resume, if available.

For more information about IESC, call, Toll Free: 1 800 243-4372. Write for more information, or obtain application forms for joining: IESC, Post Office Box 10005, Stamford, Connecticut 06904-2005.

Travel expenses and life insurance are paid by the US government, while the local client provides room, board, and incidentals. Frequently, this does not guarantee hot water or sufficient heat. Volunteers usually arrive with their spouses, who also participate in various activities in the assigned country. Participants do not receive any monetary compensation.

The rewards come from achieving a useful and necessary task, from living overseas, and from the contacts established in a foreign country.

Antanas Grina, IESC Director in Lithuania, has extensive experience in the field of finance and speaks excellent Lithuanian. He teaches a very popular course on international finance at Vilnius University to students and business people and is an advisor to the Lithuanian government on economic and financial matters. Grina encourages qualified persons to become IESC volunteers and to come to Lithuania. "They are very much needed, especially now, when the hard living conditions are scaring off the less dedicated" according to Grina.

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Editor's Note: The article you've just read is the result of activity by a newly formed Lithuanian American Community, Inc. Council. The following information, furnished by the Council, offers more explanation:

Lithuanian American Community, Inc. Economic Affairs Council Plans and Tasks

At the yearly meeting of the *Lithuanian American Community, Inc. (LAC)* National Executive Committee

(Lietuviu Bendruomines Taryba) in September, 1992 in Cleveland, an *LAC Economic Affairs Council (EAC)* (Ekonominiu Reikalu Taryba) was formed for a period of one year. The Council's charter and planned activities are being formulated at this time. The Council's main goal is to help economic growth in Lithuania and to provide a means for American-Lithuanians to participate in this help. Specifically, *EAC* will promote interest in the Lithuanian economy without competing with, but rather supporting, individual initiatives. Among the activities being discussed are the establishment of an investment fund, organizing an information network, searching for experts for *IESC*, and writing articles about key economic subjects having to do with Lithuania. We will provide information about these and other *EAC* activities in the future. We invite everyone to become interested in Lithuania's economy and to support each others efforts in achieving a peaceful and prosperous future for Lithuania.

In order to encourage participation in the economic development of Lithuania, the *EAC* will provide information about projects in business and industry. We invite anyone to send information on economic matters for incorporation into future articles. For *IESC* forms or potential future articles, you may contact Edmund Kulikauskas, *LAC Economic Affairs Council (EAC)*, 7311 Douglas Circle, La Palma, CA 90623; Telephone & Fax: (714) 521-8694.

Note: This is an updated version of the article written by Edmund Kulikauskas which appeared in Draugas on January 9, 1993 "Lietuva laukia specialistu". New information obtained from Antanas Grina was incorporated. Translation by Milda Skucas.

Lithuanian City Telephone Codes

Alytus-01235; Anyksciai-01251; Birstonas-01210; Birzai-01220; Druskininkai-01233; Elektrenai-01237; Gargzdai-01240; Ingalina-01229; Jonava-01219; Joniskis-01296; Jurbarkas-01248; Kaisiadorys-01256; Kaunas-0127; Kedainiai-01257; Kalpeda-01261; Kretinga-01258; Kupiskis-01231; Lazdijai-01268; Marijampole-01263; Mazeikiai-01293; Moletai-01230; Naujojiakmene-01295; Nida-01259; Pakruojis-01291; Palanga-01236; Panevezys-01254; Pasvalys-01271; Plunge-01218; Prienai-01249; Raseiniai-01228; Radviliskis-01292; Rokiskis-01278; Sakiai-01247; Salcininkai-01250; Silale-01269; Silute-01241; Sirvintos-01232; Svencionys-01217; Sauliai-01214; Skuodas-01216; Snieckus-01266; Taurage-01246; Telsiai-01294; Trakai-01238; Ukmerge-01211; Utena-01239; Varena-01260; Vilkaviskis-01242; Vilnius-0122; Zarasai-01270

From The Lithuanian Press . . .

Selected items excerpted from the Lithuanian Press in America; which should be of interest to our readers. Compiled and Translated by Ms. Ramune Kubilius.

The SODAUTAS ethnographic ensemble two years began performing its program comprised of songs and story-telling depicting the first Lithuanian immigration to the United States at the turn of the century- "Ten, kur angliu kalnai steri" (Where coal mountains grow). The program of December 6th at the South Boston Lithuanian Hall was a finale and thank you by the 23 member troupe and its director Gita Kupcinskas for the support given for the efforts of bringing the songs of the Pennsylvania "maineriai" (cold miners) to life-through songs and the monologues of Mrs. Kupcinskas, which depicted the hard lives of the immigrant miners, the hardships women faced, the weddings and the funerals. The troupe received coverage on the East coast for the presentation, performing it at Eckley Miners' Village in Pennsylvania. During a trip to Lithuania, the ensemble performed the program in nine Lithuanian cities. The troupe has been invited to perform in Florida and Chicago, again in Pennsylvania, and has plans to put together a program depicting the lives of the "DP" (Displaced Person) Lithuanian immigrants who came to the United States after the Second World War. (DRAUGAS, from an article by L.Z., 2/3/93)

The second anniversary of the brutal events of January 13, 1991 were commemorated in Washington, D.C. On January 5th during the first day the new U.S. Congress at the Cannon Building Rotunda Hall, an exhibit of Lithuanian children's drawings was opened. The drawings depict children's renderings of the January 13th events during which the Soviet army killed Lithuanian civilians. The drawings were brought to the U.S. through the efforts of Lithuanian Ambassador Stasys Lozoraitis and the Lithuanian January 13th brotherhood president Jadvyga Bieliauskas. The exhibit was supported by Illinois Congressman Richard Durbin who opened the exhibit, and Texas Congressman William Sarpalius and Embassy staffer Viktoras Nakas also spoke of the importance of the events of January 13th and how Lithuania's children were affected. The exhibit features 51 drawings of artists from 4-17 years of age. The exhibit remains in the Rotunda until January 16th after which it moves to Washington's Children's Museum for about one month. (DRAUGAS, 1/16/93)

Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. Washington Government Affairs Office Director, Asta Banionis and financier Kestutis Makaitis were invited by the Clinton administration to attend the December 17, 1992 roundtable discussions on Eastern European affairs. The sessions took place in Little Rock, Arkansas. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how the United States can best help the Eastern European countries where radical changes are taking place in economic, political, educational and cultural spheres. During the three hour meeting, LAC representatives had the opportunity of raising the issue of Russian army presence in the Baltic countries, about the need for more support for the Baltic countries, and for the need to strengthen the State Department's Baltic division. K. Makaitis stressed the importance of Russian troop withdrawal as a must for encouragement of international investment in the Baltics and for the guarantee of loans. (DARBININKAS, 1/15/93)

The poetry journal THE DIRTY GOAT, published in Austin, Texas, included 20 pages of Lithuanian poets' work in its issue number 5. Translated by Grazina Slavenas, the works of Janina Degutis, Judita Vaiciunas, Vidmante Jasukaityte, and Danute Paulauskas appear in the journal. (DARBININKAS, 1/15/93)

Algirdas Brazauskas (*Editor's Note: Now Lithuania's President-Elect*) had a meeting with Vilnius Archbishop Audrys Juozas Backis. After the meeting Archbishop Backis said that one of the most important common worries for the coming year- the planned visit by Pope John Paul II to Lithuania. The meeting began the arrangements for the cooperative efforts of Lithuania's government and the Church's hierarchy. According to the Archbishop, the Pope is seriously preparing for this trip by studying the Lithuanian language. In January a special commission arrives from the Vatican. The trip of the Pope is planned for September 4 - 7, 1993. (DRAUGAS-ELTA, 12/31/92)

On December 8th Archbishop Audrys Backis officially opened the Vilnius Archdiocese cafeteria "Bethany" (Betanija). The dining hall, constructed near the St. Peter and Paul Church in the religious congregation hall returned to the Church only in recent

years. The facility will provide free meals for the poor. When the kitchen is completed, lunches for 500 will be able to be prepared. The food products will be bought using funds donated by local Vilnius residents and by visitors to Lithuania. This is the second such meal kitchen for the poor built in Vilnius. (DARBININKAS, 12/25/92)

Jonas Dainauskas was honored in Chicago January 24th. The 89 year-old lawyer by profession is known as a Lithuanian language journalist, historian, bibliographer, Lithuanian scouting activist, educator. He teaches at the Chicago - based Lithuanian Pedagogical Institute, is involved with the Vydunas Fund, for many years was active in the Lithuanian Historical Society, still collects Lithuanian periodical publications and is a prolific writer, lectures on a variety of topics. (DRAUGAS, from an article by B. Juodelis, 1/12/93)

Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. vice-president Dr. Vitolis E. Vengris recently had an opportunity to visit Lithuania - his trip was financed by the U.S. government. During the trip Dr. Vengris lectured, visited with American Embassy officials in Lithuania, met with representatives of Lithuanian educational institutes and with Minister Prof. L. Kadziulis, with students, professors and other specialists. Vengris Lithuania has 15 schools of higher education (aukstesnes mokyklos), 29 government scientific institutes (valstybiniai mokslo institutai), and 15 state educational offices (valstybines mokslo istaigos). The economic situation has affected higher education in Lithuania (government support has decreased)- during the past school year about 1/4 fewer students were accepted as university freshmen: numbers dropped from 12,000 to 9,000. Contracts for technical work by various institutes have decreased since many were tied in with defense work for Eastern Block countries. Contracts for biotechnology and physics work for the West are increasing- that is the exception. An "intellectual brain drain" from Lithuania is inevitable, but some government representatives see long-term positive results of Lithuanians living and working in foreign countries. Generally speaking, the state of higher education in Lithuania will be affected by the general state of the economy and by the priorities set by the government. (DRAUGAS, from an article by V.E.V., 1/7/93)

South American youth of Lithuanian descent gathered in Cumana near the ocean December 27 - January 2nd. 42 participants from four countries gathered for the meeting, and a third continued the gathering January 2-6 by travelling via jeep to Fran Sabana- singing Lithuanian songs, climbing hills and waterfalls. Venezuela Lithuanian Youth Association president Saulius Rosales invited the young participants,

including some married young people with their families. Among the visitors from afar: Lithuanian World Youth Association President Paulius Mickus (from Washington, D.C.), Lithuanian American Youth Association president Gaile Radvenis (from Los Angeles), Brazil's Lithuanian Youth Association president Irena Martinaitis, Argentina's Lithuanian Youth Association president Luciana Gaidimauskas- 10 participants from abroad in all. The gathering included singing of Lithuanian songs, skits and games with the children, and two days of meetings with Lithuanian ambassador Vytautas Dambrava who updated the youth on diplomatic, economic and cultural ties between Venecuela and Lithuania. Paulius Mickus updated the group on WLYA - the joining of the United Nations non-governmental list, about plans for the VIII Lithuanian World Youth Congress, scheduled for 1994 (in England and Lithuania - RK). Plans were made to continue the South American Lithuanian Youth camp tradition- in December 1993 it is scheduled to take place in Brazil, and in a few years for it to be held again in Venezuela. (DRAUGAS, from an article by A.S., 1/16/93)

Daily radio translations from Rome to Lithuania have been taking place for 40 years (since May, 1952). The Italian state radio translates in 30 languages to various countries of the world, and in 1952 overtures were made to then Lithuania's Chief Diplomat (diplomatinis sefas) Stasys Lozoraitis Sr. for a Lithuanian language program. Over the years the Lithuanian language program grew from 15 to 20 minutes daily, weathered several threats of cancellation as various political winds blew. Moscow tried to jam the translations to Lithuania. Originally, the news came from Rome Radio's news bureay, but later Lithuanian gathered news was permitted. The program's coordinators and colleagues have included Dr. Juozas Gailius, Kazys Lozoraitis, and presently Nijole Tutkas (sometimes assisted by Dr. Irena Vaisvila and Jonas Malinauskas). (DARBININKAS, VLK news item, 1/15/93)

The 60th anniversary of the ill-fated trans-Atlantic flight of Lithuanian American pilots Darius and Girenas will be commemorated this summer. A plane, the Lituania III is being built in Lithuania. It will fly from Kaunas to New York. Darius and Girenas flew from New York July 15, 1933 at 6:24. They died July 17th at night in the woods Soldin, Germany (some say they were shot down - RK). (DARBININKAS, 1/15/93)

The Knights of Lithuania Midwest Region honors Robert Boris at its February 7th banquet in Chicago's Martinique Restaurant. Through the efforts and leadership of Mr. Boris, the Knights of Lithuania in three years have been able to collect and send containers containing over six million dollars'worth of

medicines and medical equipment to Lithuanian hospitals. The banquet is the Region's 33rd Memories of Lithuania ("Lietuvos prisiminimu"). (DRAUGAS, 2/4/93)

Darius and Jolanta Mosteika travelled from Lithuania to work under special contract with the New York City Westside Fred Astaire Dance Studio Corp. The couple since 1988 has won a number of ballroom dancing contests in Lithuania. They participated in an open contest in Glendale, CA in 1990; in 1991-92 they officially represented Lithuania at competitions in Europe and at the World Championships where they often advanced to the finals. During the December 3 - 6th Rising Star contest in Cherry Hill, NJ the couple won third place where the competition included 27 of America's best ballroom dancing couples. The couple was scheduled to perform for the participants of the New Year's banquet at the New York Lithuanian Cultural Center. (DARBININKAS, 12/25/92)

The IX Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival Organizing Committee announced the financial balance sheet results of the festival which took place at the Rosemont Horizon near Chicago in July 1992. Income from the Festival: \$363,288.53. Expenses of the Festival: \$325,899.24. (The profit of \$37,389.29 will be saved to start preparations for the next Festival, an event that is deemed to be essential to keeping the Lithuanian spirit alive in each forthcoming generation.) The Organizing Committee consisted of 18 sub-committees - each had a budget and had to provide documentation of expenditures. Organizing Committee treasurer Kostas Dockus received some expense reports through mid-December. (DRAUGAS, from an article by B. Juodelis, 1/12/93)

The International Biographical Centre of Cambridge in Great Britain has announced that several Lithuanians have been awarded the status of International Man of the Year for 1991-92: poet Justinas Marcinkevicius, philosopher Bronius Kuzmickas and composer Faustas Latenas. The works of poet Marcinkevicius have been published in 120 books in various languages - he was active in the Lithuanian Reform movement SAJUDIS from the beginning. Catholic historian and cultural philosopher Kuzmickas published in the underground press during the Soviet regime, wrote a well-received book in 1976 on present day Catholic philosophy, was involved in SAJUDIS, and was elected to the Lithuanian government's seimas until he decided to return to academic life. Faustas Latenas has created a number of theatrical works, but achieved fame for his collaboration with Vilnius Youth Theater director Eimuntas Nekrosius - the troupe has performed extensively and has received critical acclaim. (DRAUGAS-ELTA, 1/5/93) □

Celebration of Freedom at The Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture

On Friday, March 12, the Art Gallery of the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, located at 6500 South Pulaski Road, Chicago, will open an art exhibit entitled "CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM: Baltic Artists from the State of Illinois".

This exhibit is one in a series of cultural programs commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Declaration of Lithuanian Independence of February 16, 1918. It is being sponsored by the Consulate General of the Republic of Lithuania in Chicago and supported by the Illinois Arts Council, the Balzekas Museum of Lithuania Culture and private donors.

The two other Baltic republics, Estonia and Latvia, also are celebrating the 75th Anniversary of their declarations of independence this year. Estonia, the northernmost Baltic country, declared its independence on February 24, 1918, and Latvia, Lithuania's neighbor to the north, on November 18 of the same year. All three countries had been under Russian and German occupations for over 120 years. Prior to that they all had enjoyed periods of freedom and independence, especially Lithuania, which by the 12th century had already developed into an organized state.

Since a number of excellent artists of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian extraction reside in the State of Illinois, it was decided to organize an art exhibit featuring the works of these artists. The exhibit includes artists who have established a reputation not only among the ethnic community, but among the cultural community of Illinois as well.

An official exhibit opening will be held on Friday, March 12, at 7:30PM. Admission to the opening is by donation at the door. A reception will follow the opening. The exhibit will continue through April 24. It can be viewed during regular Museum hours: seven days a week 10 AM to 4 PM.

Another event of the celebrations will be a round-table panel discussion to be held at the Balzekas Museum on Saturday, March 27 at 1:30 p.m. Among the panelists will be Baltic artists and directors of Baltic cultural centers and museums from Illinois. The discussions will center on the latest developments and cultural scene in the three Baltic states, and how this has affected their personal lives and careers. The public is invited to participate in the discussions. Admission is by donation at the door.

Regular admission to the Museum, which is \$4 for adults, \$3 for seniors and students, and \$1 for children accompanied by an adult, includes a visit to the art exhibit. For additional information contact the exhibit's curator Val Ramonis during Museum hours at 312/582-6500.

Tentative List of Artists Participating in the "Celebration of Freedom" Exhibit: Estonian - Walter Kivirist, Merike Tumma, Walter Peljo; Latvian - Leide Vinters Ore, Vitauts V. Simanis, Ojars Steiners, Silvija Steiners; Lithuanian - Janina Marks, Mary Strasevicius-McBride, Vytautas Virkau, Rimas Visgirda.

- From a News Release

The State Of Lithuania

February 16, 1993

GOVERNMENT: Lithuanians adopted a new constitution in the October, 1992 elections and can finally get to work building democratic institutions of government within their country. A new parliament, known by its pre-war name as the *Seimas*, has also been elected but, of its 141 members, only 71 actually represent voting districts. The other 70 have been elected-at-large from political party lists. A new president with independent authority will be elected on February 14, 1993. The president will have a primary responsibility to establish the first independent courts in Lithuania in 52 years. The president will also share responsibility with the *Seimas* for the appointment of the Prime Minister and the cabinet, and for development and implementation of the economic program. Under the new constitution Lithuania now has the ability to develop a government with the proper check-and-balance mechanisms which will serve as the best guarantee of the rights of the people of Lithuania.

However, over the last three months the *Seimas* has failed to strengthen democratic practices. Secret ballots continue, making it impossible for a citizen of Lithuania to know how his/her representative voted, even on critically important issues. It is nearly impossible to develop a tradition of government accountability under a policy of secret votes. This is precisely why the U.S. Congress does not allow secret votes within its procedures.

ECONOMY: It is estimated that 30% of Lithuania's economy is now in private hands. Approximately 60% of the investment checks issued by the government of Lithuania in 1991 have been used by the citizens of Lithuania. Those checks have helped thousands of Lithuanians buy the apartments and homes in which they live; invest as stockholders in the industries in which they work; and buy small businesses in the service sector. However, there is also mass unemployment and underemployment because factories have closed for lack of raw materials, lack of markets for finished goods, and soaring energy costs. Russia continues to be a monopoly supplier of oil, natural gas, coal and uranium fuel rods to Lithuania while payment is demanded at world prices and in hard currency.

FOREIGN TROOPS: Under pressure from the U.S. Congress, which restricted aid to Russia until it withdraws its military forces from the Baltic States, the Russian government is close to complying with a negotiated schedule of withdrawal from Lithuania. There are now approximately 17,000 Russian troops remaining to be withdrawn no later than August 31, 1993. However, the withdrawal process is now at a critical and dangerous point. Over half of the troops are officers -- not conscripts -- burdened by the routine grunt work of guard duty, equipment maintenance, and packing. History teaches that disgruntled military officers stage revolts to improve their status. It is essential that the Byrd amendment restricting Russian aid continue in force until all troops have left the Baltic States.

February 16 - Independence Day Activities Throughout The U. S.

Texts of speeches given; description of activities conducted; and other information on how this special day was observed throughout the United States.

Bridgeport, Connecticut - Text of speech given by guest speaker Joseph Arlauskas (Editor Of B R I D G E S), at St. George's Parish Hall; during a program conducted jointly by local chapters of the Knights of Lithuania and the Lithuanian American Community, Inc.:

First of all, I want to thank you for inviting my wife and I; to share with you, today, the observance of the anniversary of Lithuania's independence.

As I stand before you, I have some very strong, and some very mixed feelings of pride, of hope, and, yes, of anxiety.

A feeling of pride in being a Lithuanian. A pride of such a magnitude, that it is not even possible to come up with a reasonable analogy to describe it.

Here's just one, recent, reason for that pride: While politicians all over the world take credit for the ending of the Cold War, we, together, all know, without question, that it was Lithuanians - Lithuanians who finally managed to reach a critical, resounding, level of protest to communism, with their words and deeds - they were the real catalyst for the dissolution of the Soviet Empire.

Yes, our brothers and sisters showed the world - and the world's greatest armies - how to hold, and use, the shovels which ultimately succeeded in burying the most evil dictatorship in the history of the world.

As Lithuanians we can take pride in the knowledge that we have a heritage and tradition, which dates back many centuries; a heritage and tradition of perseverance, of righteousness, and of overwhelming power when required.

When the history books of the present era are written, they will, I am confident, give Lithuanians the due so rightfully deserved in bringing about a far different, a far safer entry for all the world as we move into the 21st Century.

That's why I'm proud; and why all of us in this room should be proud, as well!

I have, concurrent with those feelings of pride, some very strong feelings of hope - hope for Lithuania and her people.

Lithuania, as all other countries finally freed from the yoke of communism, is mired in difficulties - social, moral and economic difficulties.

As the residents of Lithuania move forward the proverbial two steps, they find themselves falling back at least one step. They're not happy with where they find themselves; and we, who watch from the outside - sometimes helplessly - are frustrated, as well.

Every single one of us, I'm certain, wishes we could do more to ease the transition. Yet, we know, even as we feel so, that we cannot live others' lives for them. Just as we can't really think for, just as we can't really do everything for our children, or spouses, or parents, so, also, there are restraints that we must adhere to in dealing with Lithuania's newly freed inhabitants. We're frustrated - sure; but we can, and should, hold out, with confidence, and a hope which comes with knowing that Lithuanians have suffered through far greater pains, and have overcome far greater obstacles than the ones facing them today.

So, our hope is well placed.

With those feelings of pride and hope, I hold, too, unfortunately, a strong feeling of anxiety, as well.

What am I to think - how am I to feel - especially today, Lithuanian national election day - when I know that a significant candidate, a candidate who has a good chance of winning the election for President of Lithuania, is a quote, former, unquote communist leader of Lithuania's government?

I'm baffled, I'm uneasy and I'm anxious. What was going on in the minds of my brothers and sisters when they, during the last election, voted in so many of those quote, former, unquote communists; thus paving the way for the possibility of electing one of the current presidential candidates - a former communist party leader?

Sure, the previous leaders had broken promises. Sure, the previous leaders had not turned around the economy as they'd been expected to do.

But, what kind of solutions to current problems could these former, high profile, communists possibly offer? They're the ones who brought all of Lithuania to its knees; and they're the ones who are solely responsible for the deplorable situation in which Lithuania now finds itself. Their insane solutions, implemented and re-

implemented, ad nauseum, over a period of more than 50 years, yielded nothing but suffering, a loss of morality and economic disaster. How could individuals steeped in communist doctrine possibly be qualified in accomplishing anything positive?

There's even more reason for my anxiety.

People with ties that are simply to close to the old, and not yet buried, communist, regime have succeeded in getting themselves elected; and they've succeeded in getting into current positions of power - all because Lithuania is not yet free of manipulation from outside sources to the East.

It doesn't take paranoia - or even much imagination - to see, clearly, that Lithuania's economic and social situation is being manipulated on an almost daily basis - manipulated by those who look to achieve favorable outcomes in continuing the subjugation of Lithuania.

For example, vital oil flows to Lithuania stop, start and stop again, at curious moments in time. Positive events - orchestrated from the outside - occur at those times when they can boost the popularity of certain individuals. Foreign troops continue to tread on Lithuania's land; and promised departure dates for those troops are continually changed, then changed, again.

Well, are Russians, and quote, non-existent communists, unquote still holding considerable, undeniable, critical sway over Lithuania? You can bet that they are; and they're succeeding eminently well in carrying out their warped, sick, agenda.

This afternoon, I am as anxious as I can possibly be - I'm waiting to hear the result of today's election. Will the outcome of that election give me more cause for anxiety; or will that anxiety be lessened?

So, I have feelings, simultaneously, of pride, of hope and of anxiety.

Very frankly, they're the same kinds of feelings I've always had toward Lithuania and her people.

Lithuania's present situation doesn't even remotely resemble the situation of just three short years ago; but I can't shake those feelings - because as much as things change, so do they, too, bring even more of the same.

Let me, at this point, if I may, change direction somewhat; and have you consider something that some might find controversial - or even unacceptable; and which others may find provocative, and worthy of pursuit.

The anxiety I've noted - and which, I'm certain, many of those present here today feel, as well, is of Lithuania's political direction now and in the future.

I've always been inclined to act on things which make me uncomfortable - act to change them.

So, what can be done - what can we do about Lithuania's possibly unacceptable political direction?

Let me propose a very direct action, an action we already follow here in the United States in helping to elect those who we want to see elected.

Why don't we do for Lithuanian candidates just like we do for American candidates?

Why don't we, proactively, now, begin to identify suitable individuals, individuals for elections to be held even several years from now, and then nurture those individuals; and, finally, when election time approaches, pull out all holds to insure that they get elected?

Let's financially support, right from the beginning, the development of people who could become good candidates; and, ultimately, good office holders.

Some of you, perhaps, as my wife and I, are already doing something like this; but consider the impact we could have if such actions were taken to a large scale.

When we, here in the United States, make a \$100 or \$200 or even a \$500 contribution to the planned or current campaign of a candidate in a local, or Gubernatorial or Congressional or Senatorial, or Presidential campaign, a contribution of that size is, in itself, not capable of purchasing, for the candidate, even a decent sized advertisement in a well circulated newspaper.

Yet, a similar sized contribution to a potential Lithuanian candidate - or to development of a candidate - would have, as we can well imagine, an impact far, far beyond what such a contribution has in America.

All right - some of you, already, may be very uncomfortable with what I am saying.

So, let me say this, "If communists - Russians - are going so far as to put all of Lithuania into periods of economic duress, in order to assure that candidates favorable to Russia - to communists - are elected; then what kind of responsibility do we have, we the people who are capable of helping to counter such nefarious activity?"

If what I propose is to be considered wrong, then, I'm sorry - I can't help but feel that those who are telling me it is wrong, are telling me, as well, that to do nothing, even as we see the other side doing everything, is right!

I can't sit on my hands.

Some may say, "What will Lithuanians think of the fact Lithuanian Americans are quote, trying to buy elections, unquote"?

Here's a simple answer: Lithuanians will have to be advised, will have to learn what we already know: that in a democracy, the voters support - have an obligation to support - the election of candidates they want to see leading the nation.

Well, if we're going to do this - if we're going to get involved financially, how do we determine who - which people are worthy of our support?

I'm not going to tell you that I have a good answer, right now. Deciding which candidate, in today's election, was worthy of our contributions was easy, no problem.

Deciding which future candidates - which people, below, say, presidential level, are worthy of our financial support - which should be supported by our contributions - is something that will have to be worked out if we have the will to proceed in such a direction.

Perhaps the Lithuanian American Community, Incorporated, and the Knights of Lithuania, along with, perhaps, some other organization could see fit to take on the role of helping to identify Lithuanians who we should consider helping to develop, and support, for future elections.

How should it be done? I'm not sure - yet. Some discussions I've had, with a few people, on this subject, have led to ideas ranging from sponsoring US based training programs for individual people identified as having potential; all the way to financial, and other, support for the development of viable, correctly oriented - in our view - political parties in Lithuania.

If there's a will to do something like this, then, most certainly, we'll come up with a way to do it.

This is not, by the way, a radical idea - it's simply the extension, to Lithuania, of programs and concepts followed in all other mature, developed democratic states. Right here in the United States, as we know, potential candidates are supported long before those potential candidates announce for election. Several institutions are in place for the purpose of giving support to, and providing exposure for, those potential candidates, over the space of several years between elections. We, all of us, know Jack Kemp; and we know, as well, that he hopes to be a US presidential candidate in 1996. These institutions of which I speak, here in the United States, will help to support and promote him over the next 4 years, by giving him a job, by providing him with national exposure, and by setting him up to announce his candidacy, when appropriate. Simultaneously, there will be - there probably already are - other organizations, and institutions, which will be, which are, even now, laying out a viable campaign committee which will be ready to come to the forefront at the right time.

Let's remember this: If we do nothing about what we see happening in Lithuania, then the other side will be free to do everything, at a very low cost; and the other side will win. They will win; and Lithuania will lose.

I, like many of you, care about Lithuania and about Lithuania's future. Furthermore, I, like many of you, am a citizen of Lithuania. If nobody else does it, then at least we fellow citizens of Lithuania should do it.

Thank you for allowing me to share both my feelings, and my hopes, with you, as we, together, observe a very special day.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania:

by Jeanne Dorr

On February 7 the Philadelphia and South Jersey Chapters of the Lithuanian-American Community celebrated the 75th anniversary of Lithuanian independence. Father Timothy Burkauskas celebrated Mass in St. Andrew's Church. Music for the liturgy was

provided by the Lithuanian Folksong Quartet and the choir. The gifts included a Lithuanian cross, amber, and Lithuanian bread.

Following the Mass a program was held at the Lithuanian Music Hall. The invocation was delivered by Msgr. Leon Peck, Pastor Emeritus of St. Joseph's Church in Warrington, PA. Philadelphia Mayor Edward Rendell read a proclamation from the City of Philadelphia. The Mayor announced that the Lithuanian flag would be flown over the City Hall on February 16. Mayor Rendell was presented with a book which was a gift from former Prime Minister Abisala. He was also given a Grateful Dead Lithuanian basketball shirt. Official greetings were given by Linas Kucinskas, Consul General of Lithuania in New York. The keynote address was delivered by Ambassador Anicetas Simutis, Lithuania's Ambassador to the United Nations. He gave a personal insight of events in Lithuania's history. Mrs. Simutis accompanied her husband to Philadelphia.

Awards were presented to three institutions which have supported Lithuania's quest for independence or are presently helping to rebuild the country in a significant way. For many years the Philadelphia Inquirer has been a strong supporter of Lithuania through its editorials and coverage of events. The Philadelphia Inquirer's foreign correspondents were at the barricades of Vilnius.

From 1968 through 1992 the management of radio station WFLM contributed free air time on the Sunday closest to February 16. Listeners learned about Lithuania's culture, language, traditions and more importantly, the desire to once again be a free and independent nation.

Deborah Hospital, through its 'Children of the World' program is bringing hope to Lithuania's children in need of heart surgery. A medical team from the hospital traveled to Vilnius and performed cardiac surgery. Medicines, operating equipment, and even an ambulance were donated to the Clinic of Cardiac Surgery in Vilnius. Children with more complicated cases will be operated on in Browns Mills, New Jersey where Deborah has the latest operating equipment. Every three months medical people are brought to Deborah on a rotation basis to learn the latest methods in heart surgery. They return to Lithuania bringing with them the knowledge to help others. In accepting the award, President Fryczynski spoke of Deborah's commitment to Lithuania's health care system. Present in the audience were three doctors from Lithuania who are currently studying and working at Deborah.

The musical selections were sung by Maryte Bizinkauskaite who has sung with opera companies in the United States, Canada, and Lithuania.

A reception followed the program in the Cultural Center. The Philadelphia Cultural Committee presented an exhibit of Lithuanian art. The guests not only enjoyed the delicious food but had the opportunity to contemplate beautiful works of art.

It was a day that made us proud of our heritage. □

UNITAR Organizes Workshop In Transportation Management And Policy For Lithuania, Latvia And Estonia

Based on an earlier and successful United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) training workshop, the three Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania asked the Institute to design and arrange an intermodal transportation management workshop which would respond to their needs and provide the basis for upgrading professional awareness and skills of key personnel in each of their respective countries.

The Institute conducted the workshop at the Hamburg Port Training Institute in Hamburg, Germany. This new intensive three-week course included upgraded material and information from the earlier program, in addition to suggestions on UNITAR experts on the subject. The course was attended by 11 decision makers from the three participating States.

Intermodal freight transportation is a flexible response to changing market and distribution requirements from moving all types of cargoes and passengers. These more complex and capital-intensive transportation systems no longer allow transportation specialists, whether decision makers or technical managers, to remain isolated from each other. Economically recovering countries, in particular, face the challenge of developing modern and efficient public and private cargo and passenger transportation systems necessary to achieve political and economic stability. To meet that challenge, efficient managers are needed, who will be familiar with multi-modal operations and other forms of logistics management, and use those concepts for a better understanding of regional, national and international business opportunities.

Financial support for the latest workshop was provided by The Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, a city which has had a long political and economic relationship with the three States. Other funds were provided by the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Division for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. The workshop was conducted from 30 November to 18 December.

The training program for the Baltic States is the forerunner of a large global training initiative being developed by UNITAR in transportation management and policy in cooperation with the United Nations Conference on the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the regional economic commissions. The Institute intends to offer these programs in two and three course modules that focus on one central theme. Over a period of 12 to 18 months several modules will be offered, with the spacing allowing time for participants to apply the lessons learned before moving on to the next phase in the program.

- From a United Nations News

Release

Key Issues Concerning U.S. - Lithuania Relations

Prepared as of January 26, 1993, by the Public Affairs Office, National Executive Committee, Lithuanian American Community, Inc., Washington, D.C.

The *Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. (LAC, Inc.)* over the last four years has directly invested over \$1 million and hundreds of thousands of volunteer man-hours supporting the democratic movement, *Sajudis*, in its efforts to reestablish the independence of Lithuania and to foster the rebirth of democratic institutions within that country. Since March, 1990, LAC, Inc. has worked closely with the democratically elected government of Lithuania and numerous private organizations in Lithuania to provide humanitarian assistance, technical advisors, and educational materials. Some of our members serve as volunteers in Lithuania.

Within the U.S., we have promoted investment and trade by U.S. business with Lithuanian enterprises. We have also followed U.S. government performance in providing U.S. technical assistance to Lithuania. As vigilant observers of developments within Lithuania, we have also continued our traditional role of engaging U.S. public opinion and U.S. decision makers on issues of vital concern to the future of a democratic and independent Lithuania. We foresee three key issues which will remain the focus of US-Lithuania relations over the near term:

1. The need for a speedy withdrawal of former Soviet military forces from the territory of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.
2. The Russian government's attempts to create a Russian sphere of influence in countries formerly controlled by the USSR by demanding that ethnic Russians and Russian citizens enjoy preferential treatment within these countries.
3. The effectiveness and size of U.S. assistance programs to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

WITHDRAWAL OF FORMER SOVIET MILITARY FORCES:

The Bush Administration chose not to exercise U.S. leadership within international forums or bi-lateral relations and thereby squandered many opportunities to

speed the withdrawal of former Soviet troops, now under the control of the Russian government, from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The continued, illegal presence of these troops now festers as a problem threatening the peace and stability of the region as well as slowing development of a market-economy and strong democratic institutions.

Suggestions for policy initiatives:

a. Continue to enforce the Byrd amendment to Foreign Operations Appropriations for FY93 (PL-102-391) which restricts aid to Russia until there is substantial progress in the removal of troops; applying the DeConcini/Pressler/Durbin amendment of the Freedom Support Act to Russian aid.

b. Develop a partnership with the nations of Finland, Denmark, France, Norway and Sweden who as early as June, 1992 offered financial and technical assistance to build housing for Russian army units withdrawing from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The Russian government has rebuffed these earlier, individual offers of assistance. With U.S. leadership, the Russian government might reconsider these offers of practical and tangible assistance.

c. Commit U.S. funds from Freedom Support Act programs for the resettlement of Russian troops withdrawing from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

d. Continue to expand U.S. military and NATO contacts to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT DEMANDS FOR PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT:

Since June, 1992 the Russian government has countered demands for speedier withdrawal of their troops with charges of discrimination against ethnic Russians living in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Failing to cite specific incidents nor providing evidence of discrimination, Russian government spokesmen have resorted to claims that citizenship laws in these countries are discriminatory against ethnic Russians.

International observers have concluded that Estonian and Lithuanian citizenship laws are liberal by European standards. A United Nations observer team recently returned from Latvia has concluded that although Latvia has not yet adopted a citizenship law, there is little evidence of discrimination against any ethnic group.

Suggestions for policy initiatives:

a. Resist Russian government efforts to link troop withdrawal issues to the treatment of ethnic Russians in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in international forums, notably the United Nations the CSCE and NATO Coordinating Council.

b. Clearly demonstrate that the U.S. does not concede a Russian sphere of influence over Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and other new democracies of Eastern Europe and the former USSR.

U.S. ASSISTANCE TO LITHUANIA:

Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have received technical assistance through FY 1992 Support for East European Democracies funds and food assistance through PL-480 and other USDA international programs. As U.S. Embassy staff has expanded, USIA programs have been strengthened in these countries. We note that between 1989 and 1991, USIA made a good effort to target Baltic nationals for inclusion in USIA programs provided for the Soviet Union.

In struggling to focus U.S. technical assistance to Lithuania, however, the U.S. government has spent too much money on assessment and feasibility studies to identify needs in Lithuania. We believe that more resources should have been devoted to placing on-site technical advisors in public and private institutions for mid-term stays of 2-6 months. The State Department, USAID and USIA, under pressure to spend assistance funds quickly, resorted to giving large contracts to traditional "beltway bandits" but failed to engage knowledgeable organizations with long-term ties to Lithuania concerning spending priorities.

During the last year it was obvious that farmers and small to medium-size businesses lacked sources for credit in Lithuania, yet no international donor stepped forward to provide resources for loans. It was also clear that Russia maintained a monopoly over energy supplies to Lithuania and that Russian officials were using that position to extract concessions. In September, Russia drastically cut natural gas and oil supplies to Lithuania in anticipation of national elections there. With the Democratic Labor Party (the former communist party) now in power and holding a slim majority in the Lithuanian parliament, the Russian

government announced on December 9, 1992, that it will once again sell Lithuania oil and natural gas at below world market prices. Similarly, the new Lithuanian government has suspended the privatization program and is moving to amend the relevant legislation. In this climate, we can expect the existing, modest private sector in Lithuania to be burdened and hindered by the government and state-owned industries.

Suggested policy initiatives:

a. Provide full funding within FY 93 for the Baltic American Enterprise Fund at a \$50,000,000 level to provide loans to private business. We ask for the right to nominate one person to the board of directors of the Fund.

b. Open a self-sustaining U.S. business center for the region in Lithuania as promoted by Congressmen Sander Levin and Richard Durbin.

c. Provide US Foreign Commercial Service officers.

d. Instruct U.S. representatives to international lending institutions to vote in favor of loans that would develop the oil-import capacity of the Port of Klaipeda so as to break the monopoly stranglehold of the Russian oil industry on the entire region.

e. Include Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in the programs to be developed under Title III of the Freedom Support Act, expanding cultural and educational exchanges between the former USSR and the U.S., as well as Title IV which establishes American agri-business centers. There are no comparable programs available under the U.S. government's East European aid programs.

f. We pledge our full support for the Democracy Corps which President Clinton advocated during the recent campaign. We believe that the U.S. should not be reticent in promoting American values of independent thinking, tolerance, respect for private initiative, respect for private property, innovation, problem-solving, and traditional American can-do spirit. With a private-public partnership as envisioned by the Democracy Corps, we could place many more American volunteers in the field to work with grassroots and private organizations in Lithuania to break the cycle of government dependence.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND OTHER U.S. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES:

The Bush Administration was in many ways unprepared for the challenge posed by Lithuania's drive for independence, a drive which struck the first decisive blows to the Soviet Empire. In its refusal to

grant political recognition for 18 months to the democratically elected government of Lithuania, the Bush Administration signaled its disapproval of peaceful democratic movements whose goals include a desire for independence. The people of Lithuania and other struggling nations learned that it makes little difference to the U.S. if you use peaceful or violent means to attain political change and independence.

Government agencies following the Administration's lead have continued this policy of disregarding the truly revolutionary nature of political change that Lithuania represents. It is not surprising that U.S. assistance programs have failed to meet Lithuania's needs, because few resources were devoted to monitoring, analysis, and policy consideration. For example, the critical post of Desk Officer within the U.S. Department of State was left unfilled for nine months in 1992; in the last 12 months, the Desk Officer at USIA responsible for the Baltic States was changed five times; in the last 12 months the East Europe aid officer for Lithuania was changed four times, and for the critical FY 93 budget planning period, that program officer was sent to Yugoslavia as a United Nations monitor, leaving no one at State to properly develop Baltic programs.

We find the bureaucracy's behavior to have been irresponsible, even scandalous, but recognize that it reflected an attitude of indifference that originated directly in the Oval Office.

In his foreign policy speeches in New York City, Los Angeles and Milwaukee, President Clinton displayed a fundamental understanding and respect for the peaceful democratic revolutions within the Soviet bloc. We trust that President Clinton would agree that if market reforms and democratic institutions fail in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, where it is acknowledged they have the best chance of success, pessimism will spread rapidly throughout the entire region.

We sincerely hope that the Clinton Administration will send a clear signal to U.S. government agencies that these new democracies are a priority for the United States.

The states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia should be properly identified as bellwethers of reform for all the former Soviet republics.



The Public Affairs Office of the National Executive Committee, Lithuanian American Community, Inc., is located at Suite 217, 2060 North 14th Street, Arlington, Virginia 22201. The telephone number is: (703) 524-0698, and the FAX number is: (703) 524-0947. Ms. Asta Banionis serves as the Director of that office. □

The Vilnius Academic Theatre

Oscaras Korsunov directs - he and one other actor, Vygandas Telksnys are in their 20's and were in the same theatre course. There is no political message - only theatre. Eimuntas Nekroshius is their supporter and brought the play into his own theatre when they couldn't find space. International success - over 10 European festivals from Edinburgh to Italy. The actors praise their own Lithuanian audience, the 13 - 30 year olds that fill the theatre to see Damil Harms' play. Korsunov is reading the third part of a trilogy balancing comedy and tragedy. Korsunov likes to feel that theatre is like predicting the future. The director is the authority, but group improvisation is the key. Korsunov explains that, "We had a terrible childhood and adolescence. The day-care centers and schools that we went to practiced real psychological terrorism. Now it feels like we've lived two radically different ways of life." He adds that he was dismissed from four different schools before quitting school completely. "But," he says, "Our relationship to society has remained the same. We were outsiders to the system and we still are. We're completely apolitical as citizens and artists."

This group intends to stay together as long as they can. Harms, the play's author, has brought them together as a working theatre, and after the trilogy is completed, they are not sure which road they will take. Korsunov, however, believes strongly in the future of Lithuanian theatre and the new generation's revolutionary ideas and hope more and more will enter the theatre. Ruta Wiman is the main planner and leader of the International Life Theatre Festival to be held in Vilna next spring. "This festival will be an emotional boost to people who have a daily struggle to manage in a spiritual void. If we can't manage to show how meaningful theatre is, soon the Lithuanian theatre will be reduced to nothing," Wiman says. This festival will attract theatre workshops from many countries, and thirty actors from the Baltic countries will take part in the productions. These will include top theatre groups, such as London's Welfare State Theatre with its "Marquis de Sade," by Ingmar Bergman, and Japan's Daisan Erotica Theatre's performance of, "The Man Called Macbeth."

-Aldona Abizaid Ristaniemi

Lithuanian American Community, Inc. Organization News

News of various activities, projects, initiatives, as reported by LAC Chapters and Committees throughout the United States.

From The Public Affairs Council, National Executive Committee:

by S. Algimantas Gecys, Chairman, Public Affairs Council; with Rimantas A. Stirbys, Vice-president for Information Resources and Member, Public Affairs Council

We view this year's anniversary of Lithuanian Independence Day, February 16, with both joy and trepidation. We rejoice at Lithuania's gradual emergence as a viable, democratic state and, protracted and piecemeal as it may be, we take satisfaction from the removal of the Russian army. However, the growing polarization of political forces within Lithuania is troubling. We also see increasing evidence of the harm caused by five decades of Soviet occupation and how it left Lithuania in such a depressed economic state. Shaken by the results of elections to the Lithuanian Parliament, we now warily observe the activities of that *Seimas* as well as those of the new Cabinet. As of this writing, the presidential elections are still some weeks away. Regardless of the outcome, we hope that the new government leaders will not betray the spirit of February 16, or that of March 11 or of January 13, or the national resolve and individual sacrifices that have been interwoven with the ideals of Lithuanian independence.

The critical issues facing Lithuania have prevented the LAC's Public Affairs Council from carrying out earlier conceived plans for celebrating Lithuania's diamond jubilee with the style and pomp it deserves. At one point earlier last year, we had begun discussing an international conference to be held in Washington, DC, cosponsored by the Lithuanian Embassy, to which we would invite noted experts, Lithuanian and non-Lithuanian, who would analyze and discuss Lithuania's road to independence, would assess the damage caused by Soviet oppression, both to the land and to the people, and would present their learned opinions of the future of the Lithuanian state. The conference proceedings were to be published so as to provide testimony of the serious weight that renowned authorities credited to this progressive, developing nation. A formal banquet was to follow, during which leading Americans who contributed to Lithuania's new-

found freedom were to be honored. But when people are suffering from cold, unemployment, and want, and when there exists a gulf of mistrust between Lithuanian-Americans and the political party controlling the Lithuanian *Seimas* and the reins of government power, and when that country was in the midst of a heated political campaign for a new president, it was inappropriate to divert time or other resources for a celebration. These plans are on hold...temporarily and briefly, we hope.

Having begun a New Year, it is appropriate to take a look back at the Public Affairs Council's activities last year, to draw satisfaction from the successes of our combined efforts, to analyze the problems that were encountered along the way, and to answer some questions that arose within the community.

When the current Public Affairs Council was formed thirteen months ago, it was felt that Lithuania's independence would allow a major reorientation of priorities and goals for our activities. Unfortunately, Lithuania became smothered by internal problems and by the limited political experience of Lithuanian government leaders. Unfamiliarity with the Lithuanian Diaspora and perhaps even mistrust of its intentions also prevented some of our plans from being carried out and interfered with our efforts at close cooperation. Over the course of the year, hardships imposed by Russia and Russian obstinacy in dealing with Lithuania often caused the PAC's activities to return to a Cold War format.

Elections for the Lithuanian Parliament (*Seimas*), which brought the former Communists to power, made the task of dealing with the US government that much more difficult. Suddenly, it was all but forgotten that Lithuania's bold and courageous moves had led to the disintegration of the Soviet Union. In June, the PAC organized a massive lobbying campaign in Washington and a demonstration in front of the Russian Embassy to demand the withdrawal of Russian troops from Baltic soil. By October and November, we had to reassure Congressional leaders and administration officials that, regardless of the results of the parliamentary elections, Lithuania still sought the removal of those soldiers and that reductions in US

economic aid to Lithuania should not be even discussed.

Representation in Washington

Somewhat abruptly, the LAC's Public Affairs Council assumed the responsibility of being the prime agent of Lithuanian-Americans in Washington: the office of VLIKas (Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania) closed; the Brooklyn-based Lithuanian Information Center curtailed its activities there; and JBANC (Joint Baltic American National Committee) narrowed its focus more on Latvia. It fell to the PAC's Public Affairs Office to bear the major burden of representing the interests of Lithuanian Americans. The office's director, Asta Banionis, found her workload increasing even as the conditions in which she labored became more difficult.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union also begot a great deal of confusion within the corridors of power in the nation's capital. Competing demands from suddenly independent republics, and continued fracturing within those republics as well as nations of Eastern Europe, came in too quickly and frequently for US government offices to rationally absorb. It became necessary for us to vie with an ever growing array of new "lobbyists," all clamoring for US aid and attention. Adding to this burden was the negative influence of Under-Secretary and later Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger: it took nine months before a new head of the Baltic Desk was selected at State. At USIA, (US Information Agency) the responsibility for the Baltic states changed hands five times in 1992, while the Country Affairs Officer for Lithuania changed four times. You may be able to understand how difficult it is to carry out programs or plan activities when the offices you have to deal with are governed only by Chaos.

Nevertheless, we did our jobs as best we could, held down our costs, and always tried to stay above the fray. Other problems arose: the passage of time and the effects of cultural assimilation have taken their toll on a new generation of LAC officials and leaders...limitations on their Lithuanian language fluency was reflected in a reduced volume of information sent to Lithuanian newspapers. The lack of time often prevented the LAC from taking credit where it was due. One constancy, a resource we had and still have in abundance, is a desire to do the job, a desire to help Lithuania.

Information Dissemination

The LAC-PAC's newsletters and bulletins inform the Community's officers as well as interested activists about the most pressing issues regarding Lithuania. The newsletters are usually issued in Lithuanian and English, while the bulletins are in English. Former Communications Center activist, Rimas Stirbys, has carried over some of his "communications" duties to his new position as Vice-president in the National

Executive Committee and as a member of the Public Affairs Council. Distribution varied according to content: material dealing strictly with organizational matters was sent to the approximately 90 District and Chapter presidents, while more general Community news was also sent to LAC board members and other executive officers. Broader information and requests for action were distributed to over 400 activists including not only LAC officers but Latvian-American and Estonian-American leaders as well. When the situation was sufficiently urgent, bulletins were issued through a computerized fax board. (The original list of over 210 individual entries has since dwindled to less than 150...those of you with access to facsimile machines who wish to be on this list, notify Mr. Stirbys of your fax number, hours of operation, how messages should be addressed, and any limitations on use.)

The PAC's Washington office prepares its own informational updates for members of Congress, the administration, and the media. Certain PAC members are also assigned the task of writing for *Bridges* or the Lithuanian press. Themes have varied widely—from brief items on political activity to articles on participation in Lithuanian referenda and elections, especially dealing with the Lithuanian Diaspora's US citizenship rights. The PAC has also prepared sample resolutions, proclamations and letters-to-the-editor for specific circumstances.

Information to American Officials

Since the Lithuanian Embassy in Washington is legally constrained from attempting to influence US government agencies or officials, the task of interpreting and presenting information and requests from Lithuania often falls to the PAC. Last year's examples include pressing for the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltic states, urging increased US aid to Lithuania, and representing the interests of Lithuanian-Americans on the national level. Press releases, position papers, letters and documentary evidence of Russian army violations of Lithuanian law were mailed, delivered, or presented in face-to-face meetings with Congressional leaders and administration officials. Since 1992 was an election year, the PAC submitted position papers to the Republican and Democratic Party platform committees. Congressional sponsors were also found to introduce fair-minded legislation dealing with the Baltic states or amendments to existing legislation that would either make the bills more favorable or, in some cases, less damaging. Sample texts were also prepared for some officials, such as the greetings from President Bush on the anniversary of Lithuanian Independence Day on February 16. Background papers were also provided for Vice-president Quayle's trip to Lithuania, including suggestions for his public statements and his itinerary.

Attention was also paid to smaller, though not necessarily less important issues. When mail delivery to

Lithuania from overseas became hobbled, a survey was conducted and the results presented to appropriate US and international officials so that corrective action could be taken. The US Defense Mapping Agency was taken to task for including part of the Vilnius District within the borders of Belarus: a promise was extracted that the error would be corrected in 1993 editions. A protest was lodged with the State Department's Office of the Geographer when the Karaliaucius District (Kaliningrad Oblast) was labeled as part of Russia. It was pointed out the 1945 Potsdam Conference ceded **administrative** control to the Soviet Union, but that sovereign rights to the territory still had to be determined through an international agreement. We have been waiting for over half a year for a response to this issue, since the fate of the Karaliaucius District has serious international ramifications. We also argued that the US Defense Department should not send a military representative to a Russian army officers' organizational conference held in the District, since doing so might be interpreted as recognition of Russian territorial claims. We were reassured that there would be no official American delegation, but later learned that some US officers participated anyway.

We asked the US Postal Administration to extend reduced postal rates for the "humanitarian air lift" to Lithuania, but were turned down. We will raise this issue again in 1993 with the Clinton Administration. We asked that the Secretary of State name someone to head the Baltic Desk, a request that took nine months to fulfill. We also asked President Bush and the Secretary of Defense to "lend" a C-141 military cargo plane to transport medical equipment and supplies donated by the Deborah Foundation...that request was granted and the material has since been sent to Lithuania.

Non-political issues also received our attention in 1992. When CBS opted to skip the entrance of Lithuanian athletes in the internationally telecast opening ceremonies of the Winter Olympics, we organized a telegram and letter-writing campaign to protest. Before the Summer Olympics began, we made a point of emphasizing to NBC executives our keen interest in Lithuania's participation in the summer games. We tried, in vain, to intercede on behalf of a Lithuanian parish in Homestead, PA that the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh closed as part of an administrative restructuring. PAC representatives attempted to assist Stasys Zadeikis in his attempts to persuade the Postal Administration to issue a commemorative stamp in honor of the historic flight of Darius and Girena. We provided scholarly texts and reference books for Lithuanian universities. We successfully nominated Rev. Kazimeras Pugevicius, a Lithuanian-American truly worthy of recognition for his many labors on behalf of Lithuania, to be a recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

Assistance to Lithuania

Although the LAC has been working in Lithuania's interest for decades, historic changes of the past few years have altered the form of that assistance. Currently, the PAC cooperates with the Lithuanian Embassy in Washington, informing Embassy staff of travel plans and meetings with Lithuanian officials, and jointly organizing major events. One such event occurred in the spring of 1992 at the Dupont Plaza Hotel in Washington: a conference that dealt with "Investing and Doing Business in Lithuania." There were 154 registered attendees, and 40% of them were non-Lithuanians. Conference panelists and moderators included Lithuanian government officials, members of the Lithuanian Parliament, and representatives of Lithuania's business union. An extensive source book was prepared for registrants, and conference tapes were later sold to those who were unable to attend.

In the days since Lithuania began taking historic steps toward the re-establishment of independence, a large number of organizations and "ad hoc" groups arose to offer Lithuania assistance within a wide spectrum of specialized areas. Although many of these groups made noteworthy contributions, it was felt that more could be achieved through greater cooperation, more communication among the groups, and a sharing of their vast pool of experiences, knowledge and resources. For those reasons, the Lithuanian Embassy, together with the LAC's Human Services and Public Affairs Councils, sponsored a conference in the fall of 1992 on "Organizing Effective Aid to Lithuania." The conference lasted two days and attracted over 80 participants. Since then, it has been gratifying to note that several of the organizations that sent representatives have found that cooperation has led to broader avenues for assistance to Lithuania with the potential for more impact and a more significant contribution.

However, the greatest focus of the PAC's activity has been on the withdrawal of former Soviet military forces from Baltic soil. Reams of letters were written, sponsors were found to introduce resolutions (such as Cong. Dornan and Senators DeConcini and Pressler), cosponsors were found, "Dear Colleague" letters were circulated among the members, cosigners were persuaded to add their names onto letters to Pres. Bush, and a concentrated lobbying effort was launched on June 16 in conjunction with a demonstration before the Russian Embassy. The PAC actively followed the development of the Russian aid bill (the FREEDOM Support Act) and stayed in touch with conference committee members of both parties to ensure that the final version would qualify aid to Russia on the withdrawal of former Soviet forces from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. We can all take some pride in the fruitful efforts not only of the PAC's activities, but of the many LAC representatives and other Baltic-American activists who successfully influenced their

American activists who successfully influenced their congressmen and senators. With minimal financial expense and careful steps, we guaranteed that Russian aid would be linked to the negotiated withdrawal of Russian troops, and that the US President was obligated to press that very issue.

THE LAC-PAC also disseminated instructions on how the Lithuanian Diaspora in America could participate in Lithuanian ballots on the establishment of the Lithuanian presidency and a referendum on troop withdrawal. Those instructions were prepared through the close cooperation of the Lithuanian diplomatic corps in the US, the National Executive Committee's Vice-president for Organizational Affairs, Gintaras Cepas, and LAC chapters and districts. Also, there were two occasions on which PAC representatives participated in discussions with former Lithuanian Prime Minister Gediminas Vagnorius and once with former Prime Minister Aleksandras Abisala.

Relations with Other Nationality Groups

The LAC-PAC maintains ties in the US with ethnic leaders from many nationality groups, including Ukrainians, Jews, Poles, Latvians, Estonians, Armenians, Russians, Hungarians, and Slovaks. A working coalition of these groups met in Washington to coordinate activities and increase the magnitude and effectiveness of US foreign aid. Another of the coalition's goals is to alter the way aid is distributed. Currently, academic and professional aid-giving organizations are favored, at the expense of the ethnic organizations which for years have successfully delivered aid and assistance by working within the framework of their ethnic heritage.

Closer ties to Jewish and Polish groups were hampered by ghosts from the past. The biggest obstacles to working more closely with Jewish groups are the activities of the Office for Special Investigations in the US and the amnesty or rehabilitation of Lithuanian political prisoners tried in Soviet courts. Relations with Poles are troubled by complaints sent to the American Congress and to the Lithuanian Parliament regarding the alleged persecution of minorities in Lithuania. The PAC has commissioned the preparation of extensive position papers to examine the issues surrounding Lithuanian-Jewish and Lithuanian-Polish relations.

The New White House Administration

The PAC has been forging links with the Clinton Administration ever since the election. In December, a memo was prepared for the Clinton transition team entitled "Key Issues Concerning United States - Lithuanian Relations." Details on this memorandum will be provided in a future issue of **BRIDGES**.

Also in December, Asta Banionis, the Director of the PAC's Public Affairs Office in Washington, and Kestutis Makaitis, a Boston businessman with close ties to the LAC, were invited to Little Rock, Arkansas by

the Clinton transition team to participate in a round table discussion on issues concerning Eastern Europe. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss appropriate US behavior towards Eastern Europe during this turbulent time. The LAC representatives to this meeting raised the issues of Russian army withdrawal from the Baltics, more generous aid to the Baltics, and the benefits of a stronger, better funded Baltic Desk at the State Department.

Composition of the Public Affairs Council

The PAC is made up of the following members: Algimantas Gecys, Chairman; Zigmantas Viskanta, Vice-chairman; Ina Bertulyte-Bray; Vincent Boris; Regina F. Narusis; Jonas Kronkaitis; Rimantas A. Stirbys; Dr. Sigita Ramanauskas; Felicija Giedryte-Kolp; Asta Banionis, ex officio.

Financial constraints have prevented the Public Affairs Council from meeting in a full session. Contact has been maintained through correspondence and over the telephone, including teleconferencing. Individual responsibilities and projects of each member will be provided in the next newsletter. Also in the next issue, a look at what we expect to be the major issues for 1993. In the meantime, we send all *Bridges* readers sincere best wishes for the New Year.

Strong Support for Lithuania

This year, as we mark the 75th anniversary of Lithuania's independence, let's think about how we can strengthen the Lithuanian spirit in our own homes, about how we can influence our organizations, our parishes, and our community so that we, ourselves, would have energy left in reserve for aid to Lithuania. We should avoid the alluring suggestions that Lithuanian independence, in and of itself, was our goal. Bear in mind the seductive blandishments of cultural assimilation with which our own within the Diaspora would seduce us, those who wear their ethnicity on their sleeves or in their wallets rather than in their souls and in their hearts. The mirror images of these same entrapments have been working on the Lithuanian psyche for fifty years. Here, our generations have gravitated to the creature comforts bought by financial and professional success. There, social, cultural and even physical survival was conditioned on degrees of obedience, conformity, passivity and acceptance of Soviet dogma. These traits were often worn as a shell, a suit of armor to protect the Lithuanian flame within. For all too many, that shell became a cyst that smothered the last glimmer of authentic Culture. These lost souls have found a voice that speaks for stronger ties to "Mother Russia" and which seeks to maintain and strengthen the vestiges of Soviet-style authority. They are not the majority, but they are insidious. They are not the future, but they are the present. They are not the enemy, but they are its allies.

We must remember that the future we envision for

Lithuania, as the vibrant, democratic, independent, economically self-sustaining cradle of our treasured heritage, is still far away, a time best measured by generations. For our part, here in America, we still have "a long row to hoe." Apathy, disillusionment, and self-satisfaction...these are our enemies.

The Lithuanian-American Community, Inc., born in the post World War II Diaspora, is that émigré group's greatest creation. For decades, the sense of Community united us and directed our efforts towards Lithuanian education, culture, social expression, and Lithuania's liberation. Even with Lithuania returned to the family of nations, let us not forsake the Community or be miserly in our support for its activities. The LAC, Inc. has accomplished gargantuan tasks with meager funds and the efforts of countless volunteers. The LAC, Inc. still has a crucial role to play, not only in keeping Lithuanian culture alive here in America, but in helping Lithuania struggle through its many difficulties. We should not let the office of the Public Affairs Council in Washington be closed down simply due to a lack of funds. The accomplishments of that office are of heroic proportions and include tying US aid for Russia to the withdrawal of Russian troops from Baltic soil. That DC office is a necessary vehicle for informing Administration and Congressional leaders of the needs and wants of all Lithuanian-Americans, for working through various government offices to ensure that aid is provided for and delivered to Lithuania, and for seeking material and financial assistance from private foundations and organizations based in the nation's capital. Finally, we need the LAC's office in Washington should Lithuania's leaders stray from the path to democracy or, worse, steer a course back into Moscow's sphere of influence. Lithuania's independence is still a fragile thing, and it must be safeguarded.

If you haven't yet donated to the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc., it's not too late (it's never too late). Simply write out your check to "Lithuanian-American Community, Inc." and mail it to our national office, 2715 E. Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19134-5914. If you have a specific target for your donation, such as the "Gift for Lithuania" Fund, or the work of the Educational Council, or even support for the Washington office of the Public Affairs Council, write it on the check or mention it in a cover letter.

LAC, Inc. Assistance to Lithuania in Privatizing a Television Station

Articles have begun to appear in the Lithuanian press about the role played by the National Executive Committees of the Canadian and American Communities in the ongoing project to purchase a television station in Lithuania. Much of what has been written about the role of the LAC, Inc. is based on a misunderstanding, or a lack of a complete understanding, of the source or degree of our

involvement. Even though this project is not within the jurisdiction of the Public Affairs Council, we feel obligated to use this opportunity to set the record straight.

The idea of having an independent, culturally oriented television station in Lithuania came from the Lithuanian government. Fearful that a dictatorial drift in the Lithuanian government might return media control to Soviet-style authoritarianism, then-Prime Minister Gediminas Vagnorius and his successor, former Prime Minister Aleksandras Abisala, took steps to find within the Diaspora investors who would guarantee the existence of a television channel that could serve the nation's democratic interests. With the efforts of the National Executive Committee of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc., such an investor was found: Lithuanian-American financier Kestutis "Max" Makaitis, president of the American Equitable Finance Corp., based in the Boston area. A not-for-profit corporation was established in Lithuania, in which the Lithuanian government, the Lithuanian Community of Canada, the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc., and Mr. Makaitis entered as equal partners on the board of directors. The "investment" of the LAC, Inc. was arranged through a no-interest loan from Mr. Makaitis. According to a signed agreement, after three years the LAC, Inc. has the right to decide whether to stay or to pull out. If the LAC, Inc. decides to stay, then the loan must be repaid in full. If the decision is made to pull out, then Mr. Makaitis assumes control of the LAC's shares and the LAC is removed from the board of directors and otherwise terminates its relationship with the corporation.

Please note that the decision to participate in the purchase of the television station does not financially obligate the LAC, Inc. At this time, the LAC, Inc.'s single biggest investment is its organizational blessing and conveyance of "good will." After three years, the LAC, Inc. has the options of "buying in" or of withdrawing at no monetary cost. It is worth noting, that the government of Algirdas Brazauskas has been attempting to stonewall the realization of an independent television station. We can only wonder why.

Presidential Elections in Lithuania

The National Executive Committee urged all Lithuanian-Americans with citizenship and voting rights in Lithuania to exercise their franchise and vote in the recent Lithuanian presidential elections. The LAC-NEC did not endorse any individual candidate or party, since that could be construed as interference in Lithuania's internal affairs and might harm the vulnerable relationship between Lithuania and the Diaspora in America.

However, the opinions of private individuals within the Lithuanian-American community were well known. We can't help feeling that if these opinions had been

expressed more often and more forcefully "over there," certain missteps might have been avoided in Lithuania. If you have an opinion about certain events or decisions in Lithuania, such as the results of the previous election, you have the right and perhaps even the responsibility to make these opinions known to your relatives, your friends, your professional colleagues and your business partners in Lithuania. Since there is no important vote or referendum announced for the immediate future, letters are the least expensive way of communicating. If, in the future, some critical issue requires more immediate intervention, we urge you to use the telephone...call, fax or use electronic mail to make your voice heard by those you know and who respect your views. Organizationally, we sometimes come across as "ugly Americans"; individually, we can show that we care.

Authors' note: In the previous issue, we promised a look at activities planned for 1993, as well as more information about the members of the Public Affairs Council. We hope to provide this information for the next issue of BRIDGES, as well as our review of the results of the Lithuanian election for president.

Write to the Public Affairs Council at: 2715 E. Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19134

From The Educational Council, National Executive Committee:
by Ramune Kubilius

The Lithuanian Foundation (Lietuviu Fondas) has announced its support for Lithuanian language education in the United States for 1992-93. The Educational Council was awarded \$30,000 to be distributed to the 19 schools and courses which submitted their annual requests and reports (5 other schools did not meet the deadline), the 1085 students and 175 teachers around the country who are now involved in the pursuit of learning the Lithuanian language, and learning about Lithuania, about its history, geography and culture. The Educational Council will supplement the Lithuanian Foundation support with financial gifts of its own.

The schools and courses support the needs of preschool, grade school, high school, university, and self-motivated adult learners. Most of the programs do not award school language credits (individual schools should be contacted for more information- in Canada Lithuanian language schools have won that right), yet they are run in a professional manner, with proper curriculum design. Most of them operate on a once weekly basis. In the cities where there are schools and representatives, the Lithuanian Foundation's representatives will present checks for the awarded sums to the Lithuanian language schools at the Lithuanian Independence Day celebrations. (The Educational Council's support and checks for other

programs and schools where there are no Lithuanian Foundation representatives will be sent by mail.)

It should also be mentioned that the Lithuanian Foundation also awarded \$10,000 to the Council in support of several larger publishing projects and for Lithuanian language educational material acquisition and preparation.

Publication of several thousand copies of various dictionaries or other books can be costly.

It was very gratifying for the Educational Council to read the latest data submitted by the school principals and course coordinators. Some schools had higher enrollments than last year. Some schools, however, have experienced some challenges- enrollment dropped, the rent on their facilities was raised or the number of families requesting reduced tuition due to need increased (e.g. families from Lithuania now living in this country). The Lithuanian Foundation and Educational Council financial support is meant to supplement tuition in helping schools pay the bills- for rent, teachers' modest salaries and other projects at the discretion of the principals.

A sampling of the growth of some schools includes: the Atgimimas school in Connecticut grew to 30 students (from 23); the Karalius Mindaugas school in Baltimore, MD grew to 38 students (from 15); the Ziburys Montessori school of Lemont, IL grew to 38 students (from 26); the Vincas Kreve school in Philadelphia grew to 24 (from 17); the Saule school of St. Petersburg, FL grew to 27 students (from 14 last year), an interesting phenomenon in a supposedly "retirees' city".

The largest school is the Lemont, IL school which grew to 235 students from 193 during the last school year. The next two schools in size are: the joint Chicago, IL school which was formed by the union of three schools this school year, and now has 131 students. The St. Casimir school in Los Angeles, CA has 128 students (down from 132 last year.) The Lithuanian classes of Pittsburgh have an enrollment of about 100 (up from 75 last year). The Ziburys school in Detroit has 76 students (almost the same as last year) and the St. Casimir school of Cleveland has 69 students (up from 64 last year).

The students and teachers of all of the schools and courses should be congratulated on their motivation and dedication in giving up their free time in the pursuit of knowledge. The Lithuanian Foundation's support is also greatly appreciated.

Lithuanian language correspondence courses are available. For information, contact the Educational Council at: 8626 S. Mozart, Chicago, IL 60652

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