

BRIDGES

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• On June 15, 1993, Ambassador Stasys Lozoraitis and his wife Daniela participated in a White House reception hosted by U.S. President Bill Clinton for the Washington DC diplomatic corps. From left to right: Ambassador Stasys Lozoraitis, Mrs. Hillary Clinton, President Bill Clinton, and Mrs. Daniela Lozoraitiene.

To Our Readers:

With this issue, we welcome Mr. Paulius Mickus to the **BRIDGES** staff. Mr. Mickus, whose work has already been seen, at least twice, by readers of **BRIDGES** – his design work appeared on the cover of an issue last year; and, earlier this year, his design work was the basis for an announcement of a World Lithuanian Youth Congress to be held in 1994. (In fact, this editor recalls commenting, on this page, back then, about the quality of his work.)

For this editor, layout and design is no more than an avocation; and the results of this editor's efforts, in previous issues, have most certainly demonstrated only that level of quality. With Mr. Mickus, we welcome aboard a professional; one whose past work scans the whole spectrum – commercial, institutional and governmental.

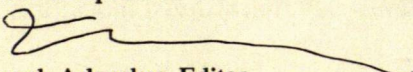
With that said, this is as appropriate time as any to say – and I don't say it nearly often enough - that this publication would simply not be possible without the tireless efforts of Ms. Ramune Kubilius, our Contributing Editor; whose name you see, several times, as author, source, translator, photographer, in every single issue. What you sometimes don't see – yet Ms. Kubilius is behind that as well – is the successful "persuasion" work accomplished by Ms. Kubilius. It is she who continually "coaxes" articles, stories and information out of various people, across the country, for the pages of **BRIDGES**.

Because this editor is not at all involved in the administrative efforts required to support this publication, that entire burden falls upon Mrs. Audra Gulbinas. It is Mrs. Gulbinas who processes subscriptions, handles the finances, arranges for printing and mailing, takes advertisements, answers your queries, and accomplishes the myriad, varied activities required to keep a publication like this one flowing to thousands of subscribers.

Technically, this publication would never make it to press if it weren't for Mrs. Layne Munley and Mrs. Leslie McQuillen (who also happens to be my daughter!). Mrs. Munley and Mrs. McQuillen (who both work in this editor's "real world" office – at the company where this editor makes his living) respond to various editorial requirements, provide interface with writers, input all text not received on computer disk (what a job!), etc. When you call me, you talk to them, first; and they probably answer your questions/respond to your comments better than I ever could!

Of course, Mr. Vytas Maciunas, President of the Lithuanian American Community, Inc. gives us the broad guidance – but he cannot be faulted, in any way – for our shortcomings; because he simply doesn't have the time to "watch over" us!

That's an update on us!


Joseph Arlauskas, Editor

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Kay Yankoski

Lithuania 1993 – A Bittersweet Journey

In July of 1993, Ms. Kay Yankoski visited Lithuania. For two weeks, she kept notes on her observations in an ever-changing country.

Friday, July 2

It's pouring rain on Friday, 4th of July weekend; my luggage weighs 142 lbs., not including my carry-on and I'm running late! (My overweight baggage consisted of one suitcase filled with winter coats and down vests for gifts and the second filled with food for me for the first week in Vilnius and for all of us the second week in Palanga; my carry-on contained my personal belongings). My name is boomed over the loudspeaker so that everybody in New Jersey knows where I am. I'm upgraded to Euro Class at Newark for flight to Copenhagen so that a family can sit together – Thank you, Jesus!

Saturday, July 3

We arrive in Copenhagen at 8 a.m. and depart for Vilnius 2 hours later. Ten people meet me at the airport on a sunny afternoon. We have lunch at my hostess's home with family members (my hostess and her husband were away on business for several days) then try to find a money exchange in town before going to my flat to unpack.

Sunday, July 4

After a fitful night, the doorbell roused me at 9 a.m. and the pensioner's wife came in laden with food for me. I only needed milk for my coffee (it was from the cow, she assured me, not from the store!); I had bread and butter and wasn't going to be around the flat for meals otherwise. But you know those Lithuanians, they don't want you to be hungry. [I literally didn't have enough time to eat all the things that people brought me; they all thought I would starve in 2 weeks while in fact, I wanted to shed a few lbs!]

The pensioner came for me at 11:00 and we took the trolley bus to town where we went into the Cathedral to see the Mindaugas chapel with its handsome life-size portrait. Then a stroll next door to the Ethnological Museum to see an exhibition on the Zemaitija region. Back on the trolley bus to see the garden of

an architect whose specialty is conifers, including varieties from my home state of Virginia. He built this home and invited us inside to show us a [sun] room paneled in bamboo (exotic for Lithuania). I noticed a simple portrait on the wall and took his picture standing next to it. Time for lunch with the rest of the family and the perfect opportunity for a family portrait. Their 5 year old granddaughter made a little bed on a chair for the plush bunny from a friend of mine and also for the teddy bear that I sent her. She took down all her toys and assured me that her crocodile did not bite!

Time to meet the next batch of friends, but first the pensioner and his son-in-law escorted me home and tried on some clothes I brought for them. The son-in-law was delighted to find that a down vest, some white trousers and a shirt fit perfectly. A knock on the door and 3 handsome men – my dearest pal (my mother calls him Mr. Lithuania), one of his pals plus our driver, a surgeon with whom Mr. L and I attended a similar celebration 2 years ago – came to take me to Medininkai for the Mindaugas holiday festivities.

We stopped for petrol and the old car sputtered all the way up to Juozapine (the highest point in Lithuania). Because it was also my Independence Day, I wore my flag T-shirt. We arrived on the high and windy hill to find the ceremonies in full swing.



• Folk Dancers at Juozapine

Ms. Kay Yankoski has traveled numerous times to Lithuania, and has written for BRIDGES in previous issues.

One of the first things that I noticed was the garlands of wild flowers in the dancers' hair but most especially, around the neck of a cute black dog who was happy to sit still for a photo. Mr. L's pal unfolded a huge American flag and he and I each held a corner.

Several people spoke, including Vytautas Landsbergis. Mr. L casually sauntered up to me in the midst of his videotaping and told me that when my name was announced, I was supposed to say a few words on behalf of the Knights of Lithuania in America! Only a pal would volunteer your services for public speaking! I tried to gather my thoughts as I made my way to the microphone. I managed to be coherent and I think the ensuing applause was for brevity rather than content, but I'm not complaining. I turned to speak to the young Political Officer from Chicago who represented the American Embassy and our very interesting discussion was interrupted by someone calling, Miss Yankoski. I turned to see Vytautas Landsbergis extending his hand to me and saying that he'd heard my speech. He introduced me to his wife while the Political Officer quickly snapped our photo – a thrilling moment for this small town girl.

A young woman came up to me and offered congratulations on my Independence Day – there were 2 of us Americans present. A bonfire was lit, musicians played and the dancing began. We agreed that we saw (a "Lithuanian") Clint Eastwood in the crowd.

The surgeon had thoughtfully brought me a basket of strawberries from his garden (where 2 years ago we all picked them after this same celebration). The four of us munched on strawberries and shared the cookies I'd bought as we swapped tales on our ride back to Vilnius. The surgeon had volunteered his services to the Kuwaitis during the Persian Gulf War but peace was declared soon thereafter. However, the grateful Kuwaitis invited him, Mr. L. and 8 other Lithuanians to visit for 10 days during which time they each had a car and driver. Thus ended my first full day in Lithuania.

Monday, July 5

There's good news and there's bad news – first the good news: we had sunny weather for 2 days; now the bad news: no hot water and it started to rain. What's more the temperature is dropping (to a low of 13°C during the week). Since my friends worked in the mornings, I used that time to heat water – for bathing, for hand laundry and for dishes. Do you have any idea how much time and water it takes to cover the bottom of a bathtub?

All cleaned up, I marched up to the kiosk, thrust out my talons and asked for bilietas. Without a moment's hesitation, I received my change and my bus tickets – a minor victor since I understand simple Lithuanian but I don't really speak it. I crossed the street and waited for good old #3 to take me to the bell tower.

Mr. L's friend from the festival the night before. He also showed me the video he shot of the funeral of Vytautas Landsbergis' 100 year old father, a famous architect and

patriot. There was little press coverage so this video was the only real record. Tears rolled down my cheeks as I watched – his granddaughter playing the organ at a Memorial Service in Vilnius, his great-granddaughter throwing flowers on the casket as it was lowered into the ground; the funeral procession and interment were in Kaunas where he lived and died. Crowds lined the streets of the funeral procession as if for a Head of State; he was a much loved man whom the public honored even while the government sector gave scant notice to his passing. Mrs. Landsbergis (the daughter-in-law, not the widow) had seen the film and requested a copy for her husband.

We stopped at St. Casimir's Church (the Museum of Atheism under the Soviets) to see the progress of its restoration; the ceilings are whitewashed again and the walls are a soft peach color. The frescoes over the altar are being redone by a friend of ours; the lower one was covered and the cleaning lady told us we could move the cloth to see it but we chose not to; the upper one has not yet been started and was blank.

Next we wandered over to the archaeological dig of a major castle near the Cathedral for a concert by a young man from Brittany singing ancient folk songs and playing the harp in the ruins. The archaeologist sat near us and joined the 3 of us afterward (he was a Gene Hackman lookalike). He talked about the connections between the ancient Greeks and the Lithuanians and a large part of my fascination was with the daddy longlegs spiders that walked all over his dusty shoulders.

The 4 of us walked to the Palace of Artists (right next door to the French Embassy and part of the same building) and pulled chairs up outside the hall where a performance was given for Brazauskas and members of the diplomatic community, all resplendent in dark suits. With each step we took, the parquet floors squeaked and our intrusion did not go unnoticed. My gallant friends pushed a chair inside for me while they sat in the next room with "Spiderman". They told me later that our Ambassador sat directly in front of me, just one chair over. Two men gave a dramatic presentation and I thought I recognized one of them; sure enough it was Lymonis Noreike whom I'd met briefly in Kaunas on my first trip. (I never forget a handsome Lithuanian man!) After poetry readings and some singing, the performance ended and I got a closer look at Mr. Brazauskas as we left. Near the door, Mr. L introduced me to several people, among them the French Ambassador's wife and a very dapper looking man who asked where I lived in America and who mentioned that he'd lived in Florida. He wished me a happy vacation as he left and my friend said, "That's our famous Bobelis!"

Tuesday, July 6

The actual Mindaugas Holiday – It's really raining today, so much so, that I never leave the flat. A journalist friend comes to take me out but we decide to stay in, stay dry and just visit. Be Prepared – that's my motto – and so I serve Lipton's noodle soup, cucumber sandwiches and the

last of the surgeon's strawberries. A dinner invitation materialized but is cancelled, much to my relief since the weather has not improved and standing in the open to wait for the trolley bus does not strike me as a smart thing to do. But again I'm prepared and continue painting a T-shirt (with Palanga, fish and waves on the front). Somehow the day passes quietly and pleasurable without leaving the flat.

Wednesday, July 7

It's very rainy and it's very cold, so I've resurrected the boy's Keds I've brought to give away and pulled out men's socks (also to give away), then dug into the recesses of the bedroom closet for a parka and a man's blue wool turtleneck as my best means of keeping warm. Thus making my fashion statement, I headed out for good old #3 and the Bell Tower to meet the journalist for some window shopping. We dodged in and out of shops, trying to time it so that we were inside when it poured and en route to the next place when the rain subsided. I was really impressed with the beautiful handicrafts in these cooperative shops and was particularly entranced with all the birds (of straw, of wheat, pottery, fabric, dried grasses and weeds). Since I was attending a folkloric performance later, I made notes of the shops and items of interest so that I could go back to make purchases toward the end of my journey rather than carry them to a theatre in the rain.

While still looking for a place for a quick lunch, we stopped in another shop and met Brone, who weaves the most beautiful juostas. I had photos of my home with me and showed her where I'd hung a couple of her masterpieces. She then recalled that Mr. L had introduced us a few years ago and showed us some of her recent work, presenting me with a lovely weaving in the process. She suggested a pizza place nearby (which turned out to be the new and very trendy cafe offshoot of a popular and pricey restaurant) and agreed to join us; treating them to lunch was a good way to say thank you.

We met my young translator friend at the Bell Tower and my journalist friend went home to her children. The theatre lobby was crowded with performers and audience members. The performance was part of Baltica '93, a folk festival that had begun the day before in all the rain when I had chosen to stay inside and dry. The Lithuanians are an enthusiastic audience and the two main attractions turned out to be a very large Irish family of musicians and dancers and last, but not least, a troop of male dancers,



• **BALTICA '93 Poster**

Sikhs in turbans from Punjab, who closed the program and brought down the house with their exotic choreography. Other Baltic countries as well as European countries also participated. I heard English being spoken behind me and asked the inevitable, Where are you from? Imagine the laughter when she said Chevy Chase, MD and I said, Well, I'm from Alexandria, VA! We are neighbors of sorts.

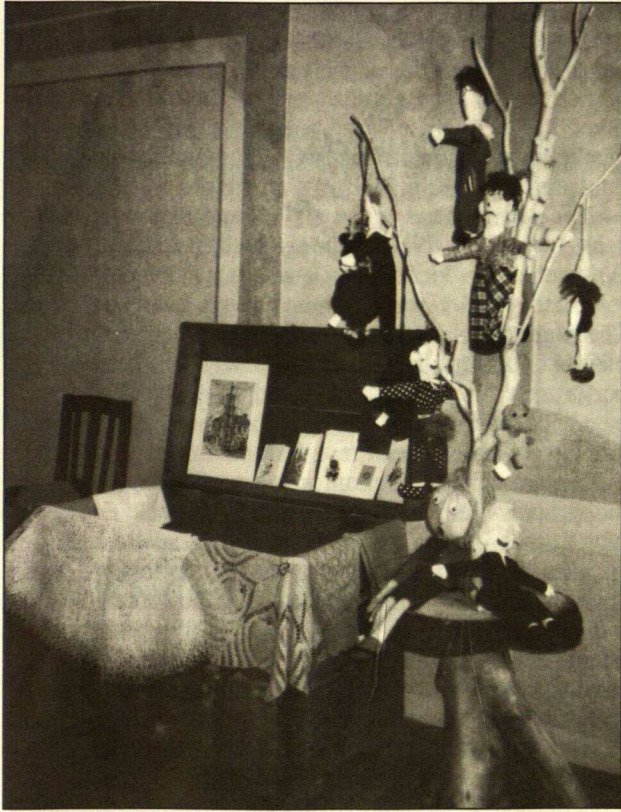
The performance ended at 9:30 and like most Americans, I was more than ready for my third meal of the day. We met other friends and quickly discovered that all restaurants had closed, despite the on-going festivities. The young translator left me in good hands and as the crowd pushed us through the gates into a courtyard where outdoor performances continued, I glanced down to see my handbag wide open (I am very careful about my handbag/money). A quick check revealed that nothing was taken, however, a woman to whom we were speaking was not so lucky; her wallet was stolen from her backpack. A sad sign of the times – street crime is commonplace.

Mr. L and I bid goodnight to our compatriots and set off again in search of food. He knocked on the door of a friend, rousing her from bed. When she saw who it was (his face does in fact open doors), she ushered us in, quickly changed clothes and set to frying potatoes, cutting cucumbers and brewing tea for us – it was not midnight! This woman, a stranger to me, cheerfully fed us, chatted while we ate and even gave me a beautiful verba which I'd admired. Mr. L and I dashed for the last bus of the night; he saw me safely to my door (my hallway was unlit and I had to use my flashlight to find the door locks) and then proceeded to walk 40 minutes to his flat (no more public transportation until morning).

Thursday, July 8

Whaddya know – it's raining! The woman whose wallet had been stolen the night before agreed to drive us to Rumsiskas for a continuance of Baltica '93 (I would pay for the petrol). For less than a \$10 investment, we would ride in comfort and she would be able to join in since I was providing for the petrol. Mr. L called me to report that she also needed oil and a minor repair totalling \$30 – the afternoon's activities suddenly became too costly so I declined (I would have been happy to repair a friend's car, but not a stranger's). So, Mr. L, his pal and I took the public bus, and, wonder of wonders, the sun began to shine on us. The bus ride was less than an hour; we got off on the highway and crossed to the road into the park. After a short distance and we stopped to pick up a German girl, another short distance and we stopped for a Japanese boy – we became international very quickly. Midst all the camaraderie, the ensemble invited any or all of us to go on to Palanga with them for the next phase of Baltica '93. None of us was in a position to accept this kind offer, however.

We arrived rather early for the festivities, but things were happening – dancing, singing, music playing and a large table filled with wonderful food which we were invited to share. Lithuanian hospitality is legendary and it's



• *Crafts on display at a cooperative*

all true. We strolled to other houses (this park is a recreation of Lithuanian country life over the past 200 years) and saw horsecarts taking people for rides. Mr. L and I hopped aboard and were transported to a different area; the horsecart driver had come to pick up the Indian dancers. We disembarked and looked around, then headed down the road on foot to see other areas. Individuals sold all kinds of handicrafts all along the way. We started walking back to find our pal but hopped on another horsecart and found him midway, all smiles and telling us how much he'd been enjoying the alaus! We pulled him onto the cart and went back to our starting point where we enjoyed honey on cheese or bread, desru, pastries and other treats. As the evening drew to a close, the Indians danced down the lane, leading everyone to their buses. They were a big hit and basked in the enthusiasm of the crowd.

The bus back came hourly and time was fleeting, so our international band – my 2 Lithuanian pals, the German girl, the Japanese boy and me – started the hike back out to the highway bus stop. An ensemble bus finally did take us for the last leg and as we headed back to Vilnius, they went to Palanga. We sat on the bench, waiting for the bus, and were absorbed in conversation when it flew past us, never even hesitating! Four girls were going back to Vilnius also and they tried hitchhiking, walking down the middle of the highway. Hitchhiking struck me as not a bad idea, so every time a vehicle approached, I stuck out my thumb. Lo and

behold, a big car stopped and I asked the driver if he was going to Vilnius and would take us along. He agreed and I hopped in front, my 2 pals hopped in back, leaving space for one more (my pals are not tiny men). We had been joined by an older woman at the bus stop and she got in with us; the German and Japanese were much younger and resilient. We had a pleasant ride home, getting there faster than the bus and being dropped off right at my door.

Friday, July 9

My hostess returned from her business trip and her children came to pick me up for lunch before she and I and her daughter set off for Palanga. We stopped in Jurbarkas on the way to see some friends (the last remains of my father's family). This is a farm family that works very hard but is always smiling. The farmer's wife set a table that was truly overflowing. But when she offered the balandeliai and the boiled potatoes, I could not contain my enthusiasm or my appetite. This was the best food I had in Lithuania! After a longer than anticipated visit, she joined us for the rest of the journey, taking advantage of the transportation to visit her sister near Palanga. However, a rear tire was very weak and the additional weight of another person made for a very perilous journey so we stopped, flagged down a chivalrous man and he changed the tire for us. By the time we dropped her off at her sister's house, it was well after midnight and we had been in transit for 10 hours.

Saturday, July 10

Our first day at the beach and it was sunny, almost hot – I was not complaining. We spent a little time on the beach so as not to burn and headed back mid-afternoon to make our lunch.

Since I'd had an extra set of keys made for myself, I had my freedom and could come and go at will. We were conveniently located for walking everywhere and I walked several times a day, alone but not lonely. Palanga is peaceful and lovely.

I returned from another solitary walk to the Botanical Gardens about 9 p.m. to find the farmer's wife, my hostess and a young girl (a stranger to me) seated at the kitchen table. I greeted them and proceeded to frost the cake I'd made before my walk and left cooling. There was a gift of cepelinai on the stove but I could not eat anything heavy that late so we all had some of my cake and some that the Farmer's wife had made.

Sunday, July 11

Not as hot, but still sunny and nice. We walked together to the turgus, mostly to look rather than to shop. It is my habit to offer to take a photo of a couple or group so the photographer is not left out so it was that I met a couple from Australia; he was Lithuanian, she was Russian. They were visiting his family for the first time and enjoying themselves immensely.

In Rumsiskes we saw young women braiding straw, then making hats and flowers with the flat braids. I saw the

same woman on Vytauto and this time I could not resist purchasing a hat to keep the sun off my head. It's authentic, lovely and, I think, very chic!

Later in the day we walked along Vytauto Gatve to see more of Baltica '93 and I talked to a Dutchman and his American wife who were guests of the organizer of the festival and with whom I'd spoken at Rumsiskes while we all ate Lithuanian honey. Later in a courtyard where dancers performed I saw the German girl too and asked her if they'd had any luck hitching a ride (as we and the 4 Lithuania girls had). Unfortunately, they had to wait for the next bus.

At Rumsiskes I was fascinated by a "Pied Piper" – cocked hat with branches of lime tree tucked in the band almost like camouflage, tight breeches and shirt with flowing sleeves. I saw him again in Palanga playing his clarinet for the dancing.

I did a doubletake as I noticed 2 teenaged girls near the statues of Jurate and Kestutis posing for photos of each other with a boa constrictor coiled around their necks! Later I came back along Basenavicius toward Vytauto, I saw a boy (the owner?) with the snake wrapped around his neck – indeed like a boa! I could not walk away fast enough.

Monday, July 12

It's windy and it's cold and rainy again! I put on my refugee outfit (the boy's Keds, the men's socks plus the wool turtleneck on top of a cotton tee shirt). This was to be my uniform until Thursday when we left. Between rains I



• *Straw weaver with hats in Palanga*

managed to find some crumbs of gintaras on the beach; my timing was off, so I was lucky to find anything.

Later in the afternoon I walked away from town and saw a huge field of wildflowers. I had my maisas (Don't leave home without it!) and my scissors with me since I was looking for grasses to try my hand at recreating some of the cute little birds I'd seen in shops. It was not without trepidation that an American woman from a metropolitan area set off alone into the field of flowers. I put myself in the hands of the Lord and struck out. I love wildflowers and was knocked out by these – Queen Anne's lace and buttercups to remind me of the ones I cut at home and other new ones so that my collection was indeed Lithuanian-American. I also cut grasses for my birdies. An older woman passed me on the path on her bicycle, but I saw no other people until I came out of the field and walked around the outside of the cemetery. Two girls rode by on bicycles, but otherwise I was alone with the graves on one side and woods on the other – again, trust in the Lord!

The humor was not lost on me that some of the prettiest flowers I cut were near an outhouse! An old man appeared to talk to me; I told him I didn't speak Lithuanian and I think he may have been telling me not to be afraid of him. I asked him how to get back to Vytauto Gatve and headed home.

One of the things I like best about Palanga is how it's laid out – Vytauto is parallel to the beach as are the paths through the woods to the Botanical Gardens and Basenavicius is perpendicular, heading out to the pier (to see and be seen at sundown). The pier was washed away in a storm and has only been partially reconstructed.

Tuesday, July 13

It's rainy and cloudy again (and raining too hard that evening to go for my before bedtime walk)! My hostess and I walked to the shop to buy bread and sour cream for my "famous" cold cucumber soup.

I provided all the food and cooked the meals at the beach except for leftover quails and some hot dogs we brought from Vilnius plus the fresh produce that my friends gave us (Some of the produce was grown from seeds that I sent them with my Easter cards.) Since I love to cook, it was a challenge to make something palatable without all of the gadgets and timesavers that are part of a "kitchen person's" life – we enjoyed tuna and noodles, rice mixes and salads (I even brought salad dressings), spaghetti (sauce now comes in cans), a carrot cake from a mix – a pretty healthy varied, but mostly meatless, menu. The cake was not like it would have been from my kitchen at home; the oven was too small to accommodate 2 layer pans and the heat cannot be set accurately. And so we smelled the cake burning but could not open the oven too soon lest it fall and be ruined in that way. In less than half the actual baking time, I removed it from the oven and the sides that were next to the oven walls were indeed burned. We cut those edges off and with frosting, it turned out to be a real treat. I even made pancakes with syrup one morning; some meals were more successful than others, but we all survived!



• *Mushroom shaped kiosk in Palanga*

Wednesday, July 14

Gray and windy and rainy—enough already!! Put on my uniform and try walk between rainstorms. Tomorrow we're going back to Vilnius and I'm counting the minutes. In the meantime, I pay my respects to Birute and Egle and try to find the memorial to the Jews, with no success. It was listed on the park map but without a "You Are Here" or arrows pointing to the right direction. The statue of Christ, arms outstretched, is again in front of the Gintaras Muziejo (it was removed by the Soviet's).

I also saw 2 posters along the way that fascinated me — featuring an older woman with heavily made up eyes, looking other worldly to me. I finally asked and found that one poster in Lithuania advertised this Tibetan-style mystic with a direct quote from President Bush saying how amazing she was, unbelievable until you witnessed her in person and that both he and Barbara were impressed. The other poster (in Russian) quoted President Clinton as saying the only thing he envied George Bush was that he had indeed witnessed this amazing woman! I took photos of both posters for posterity and a big laugh!

Thursday, July 15

We're leaving and the sun is trying to shine. We try for the beach and even determine to sit it out in the dunes, tucked into the bushes and sitting on a sheet of plastic that someone had thoughtfully folded and left behind. But, the rain gets heavier and we abandon the dunes, holding the sheet of plastic over our heads all the way home. Sunny — rainy — sunny! A moderately successful last try for a bit of sun, then we pack the car and head for Vilnius.

One big difference this time from 2 years ago was the number of bathing suits at the Moteru Plages: nudity was in the majority previously but this time the predominance of

women wore bathing suits or only bottoms.

The daughter sleeps across the back seat while we drive through blinding rain — slow but steady wins the race, I tell the driver. My advice is: do what makes you comfortable — stop or continue; it's up to you.

We arrive back in Vilnius to find the road we should take under water and the trolley buses all shorted out and lined up. We make a U-turn and jokingly consider going to Tytuvėnai for cepelinai or to Jurbarkas for balandaliai. I suggest supper in town, my treat, and so we eat at the trendy new place and come outside to yet another downpour.

Friday, July 16

I use the entire morning to bathe and shampoo my hair, drying it finally over the gas burner. Friends are calling to make last plans; there are less than 24 hours left. I have the one who speak English call the ones who don't and firm up last minute arrangements. I still have loads of things to give away and they cannot remain in the flat after I have left. Finally things are as settled as they will ever be.

Off to catch #3 and for once both the trolley bus and I are early. I try to recollect the route to the University but only succeed in getting lost and so just retrace my steps and wait at the Bell Tower. Mr. L. and friend came first and both are leaving town shortly but we have time for a last visit; friend has also brought me a copy of VILNIA with our photo on the front page, each of us holding a corner of the American flag at Medininkai. I am thrilled to make the papers. Hugs and kisses all around, the offer of the use of his flat for my next visit (Yes, there will be a next visit and more after that; my heritage draws me and friends become better friends with each visit (this was my fourth) and I am handed over to the next person.

The journalist and I head for the shops that we missed in last week's rains and also retrace our steps from the notes I have made about possible purchases. I find 4 gifts in the first new shop and am delighted with my purchases.

As we continue to the next cooperative, I hear English and ask, "Where are you from?" The fellow replies New York City, extending his hand and introducing himself. He's a Jew, part of a conference observing a 50th Anniversary, here with his 77 year old mother who has found the village and the home that she left 70 years ago. He's eager to learn more; he's interesting and interested, so I invite him to join us as we head for yet another shop. While there, another downpour, however, there just happen to be some seats, so we have a pleasant chat until rain stops.

It is almost sundown and he heads off to observe his Sabbath while we head to the Bell Tower where I am handed over to the young translator for supper and a last visit. He has a meeting in 2 hours but we manage a quick supper and visit, walking along the bus line until I wonder if I'm walking home! But, we wait and watch overcrowded buses stop (at this point I am carrying breakable, crushable items that I am unwilling to risk in that sea of humanity) and finally hop on one that has room for me and my purchases. It is a fast farewell.

Saturday, July 17

Last phone calls from friends and visits from 3 other people – passing on a package that I'd brought from the USA for the relative of a K of L member, giving back my empty jars from milk and juice plus all the leftover food-stuffs I'd brought with me and a final visit from my journalist friend to reclaim the Keds that have saved my life for 2 weeks and which I hope will be good gardening shoes for her.

She stays with me until the children come for me in the car to take me for a last lunch with my hostess; plus I would finally visit briefly with her sister-in-law with whom I'd been unable to get together earlier.

It's a brief flight to Copenhagen and soon those of us In Transit are queuing with our hotel vouchers in hand. I was last in line and the SAS agent found I neither had a reservation nor did the hotel have a room for me. However, she assured me that she would get me something better within minutes, I was changing money and heading for the SAS bus into town.

My hotel was right around the corner from the SAS bus station which was across the street from Tivoli Gardens; I was delighted with the convenience of being right in the midst of everything. But this in Scandinavia, keep your raincoat and umbrella handy. And so I stepped out off the SAS bus, unfolded my raincoat and umbrella and used them for the short walk to the hotel. I unpacked my meager belongings, just night clothes and toiletries, as I watched the rain come down against my window.

After a while it stopped and I went down to the Lobby to ask directions to the Strolling Street – again just minutes away, however, it was 4:45 and shops closed at 5! It was a delightful mob scene and I saw the most beautiful (and expensive) amber in shop windows. I walked the length of the street hoping to get ideas for supper since all entrees on the hotel menu were well over \$20 and a solitary dinner might cost me \$50. I ended up with a donor kebab and a chocolate rum ball but could not resist a soft ice cream cone for the walk back to the hotel. It was rich, it was expensive (what isn't in Scandinavia?) and it was wonderful! As soon as I held the cone in my hand, the skies burst forth again and I had to lick like crazy to finish it so that I could unfold my raincoat and umbrella – AGAIN!

I was rather wet when I got back to the hotel and as luck would have it, directly across the street from the hotel was a shop full of those wonderful little open-faced sandwiches, exactly what I'd wanted and what I didn't find until after I'd made other purchases. Perhaps God was telling me that eating my shrimp salad sandwich on the plane as well as that of the young vegetarian who sat opposite me was enough for the day!

Sunday, July 18

Now I'm really going home. But first, a famous Scandinavian breakfast – that wonderful buffet of breads and crackers, nutty and crunchy and dark; meats and cheeses; real Danish pastries; wonderful yogurt plus cereals and

things too numerous to mention or even care about. I had my fill and set out for a walk before that sedentary plane ride across the Atlantic. The streets were pretty empty that early (I was aiming for the 9 a.m. SAS bus back to the airport) but I enjoyed the solitude. As I walked back to the hotel on the opposite side of the street, I noticed some interesting shop windows and had to take photographs. Who even but the Scandinavians would make a vase in the shape of buttocks and fill it with roses? The same people who would make the base of a lamp in the shape of breasts! And both were life sized! It was my chuckle for the day. Time for the airport bus.

The flight to Newark was uneventful and 45 minutes early on arrival. It was with great pleasure that I heard my name called and looked up to see my sister and brother-in-law waiting for me (I had a 3 hour layover.) They hustled me onto a 2 o'clock plane instead of waiting for my 4 p.m. reservation and getting home earlier was the best present I could have gotten. It's nice to go away but it's even nicer to be in my own little nest with my little pup and my regular, everyday life.

General:

The talonas was being phased out and both currencies were being used when I was there (the first 2 weeks in July). The litas became the official currency on July 20.

I asked several people about the Lithuanian-American woman from Chicago who came back to Lithuania to live and who opened a pizza carry-out service. I was told that she is KGB, that she was KGB in America too; that she had worked for the Landsbergis government and currently operates her successful pizza business (more than one [educated] person told me about her KGB connection and it may just be "village" gossip).

The scent that hangs in the air at this time of year is from the lime trees in bloom and it is heavenly. Since their growing/blooming season is later than here, mock orange was also in bloom. And so I said achoo as often as I said aciu!

When will "it" (life in general) get better, I ask, and they say, when the Communists leave, when there is law and order.

Personal Observations:

It makes me sad to see furtive glances rather than a direct glaze as I pass people on the street, but I guess I can understand their hesitation.

It makes me sad to hear that the Mafia (Lithuanians) is so strong; that you pay protection or suffer the consequences. A new restaurant was bombed in Palanga while I was there and I was told that there is a bombing everyday in Lithuania.

It makes me sad to hear that there is a Hit List (a patriot who saw the list – To Kill, To Kill – told my friend about it while we were at Baltica '93 in Vilnius); as an example: a 37 year old member of the new Motherland Party (with Landsbergis as its candidate) was deliberately hit by a truck

while on his bicycle, was taken to the Morgue although he was still alive and who subsequently died.

It makes me sad to see firsthand the evidence of pick-pockets (but to have escaped being a victim).

It makes me sad to have the people of modest means spend money on gifts for me when they are things that I don't need, don't want, can't use and probably have duplicate at home. I stress that spending time with me is important, not spending money; but nobody listens. Please stop this practice; we don't expect it or want it! Spend time, not money.

But, it makes me happy:

- To see the pride with which old customs are passed on to young people.
- To spend time with people who find joy in simple pleasures.
- To know people who, despite terrible circumstances, would never leave Lithuania.
- To learn something new and make at least one new friend each time I visit.
- To shed a few pounds after so much walking (which I love), especially since the summer heat in Virginia keeps me inside.
- To have Lithuanian men actually allow me to pay for dinner (a very small thank you on my part when they are so courtly and kind to me).
- To casually seek out a bush because the public toilets are

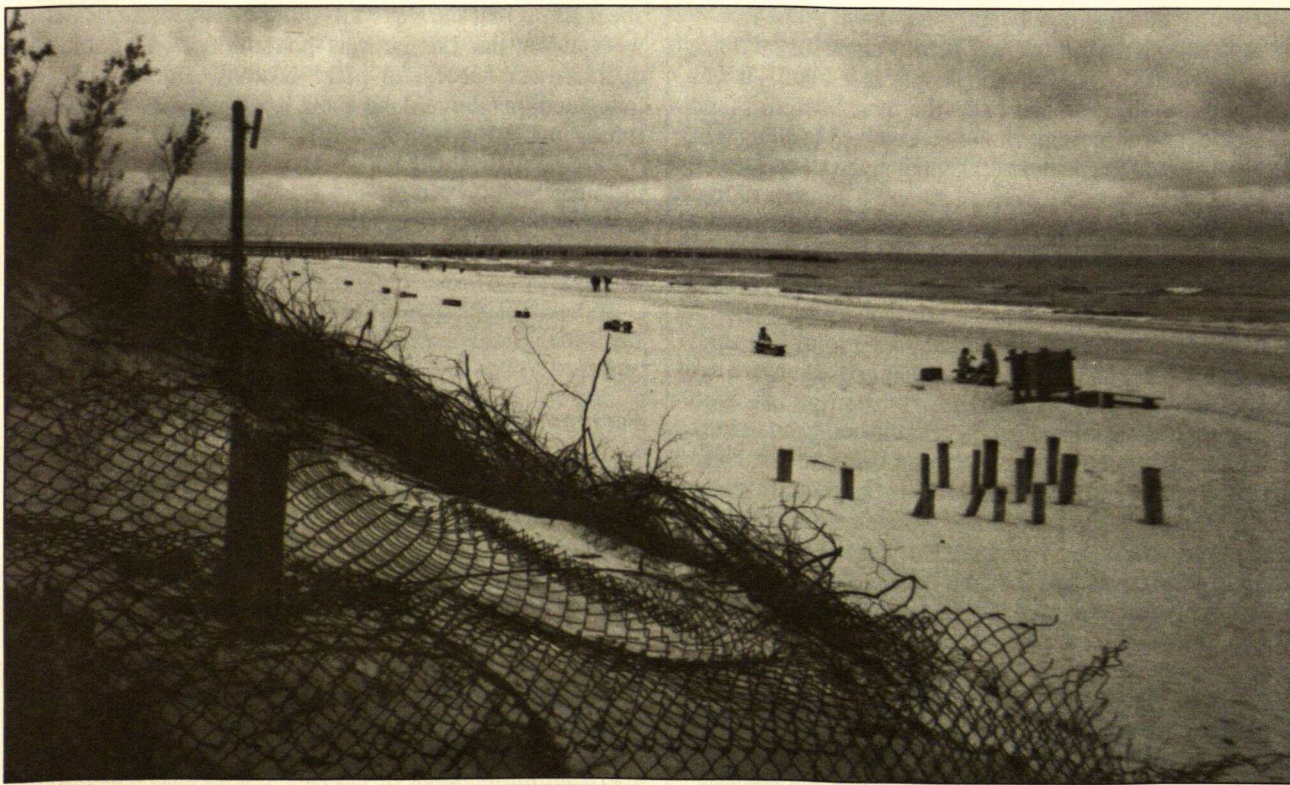
closed for lack of funds.

- To find peace and calm pleasure in circumstances that are far from my normal standards of comfort – like devouring books because there is no TV or radio available.
- To have served the only negative connection I have with Lithuania and to concentrate instead on all the warm and caring people I have the pleasure to know.
- To infect others (first-time travelers to Lithuania) with my enthusiasm and exuberance for our homeland and our heritage.
- And it thrills me every time someone commends me on my pronunciation! (including the Political Officer from our Embassy). While my vocabulary is small, I try to expand it and do in fact make myself understood on occasion!

In summary:

Never leave home without your Reeboks – or your umbrella – or your raincoat – or your maisas – or your sleep mask where there are only a few hours of darkness! Never underestimate the pleasure that an unending supply of hot water can bring.

It was a bittersweet journey; while these remarks are candid, they are my thoughts and feelings. Since I travel alone and don't stay in a hotel, my adventures are much different from those of the traveler whose journey is pre-packaged and programmed. I would – and I will – go back in a heartbeat. A part of me never leaves Lithuania.



• *Dunes at Palanga*

Asta Banionis

The State of the Free Press in Lithuania

In recent years, the independent press and mass media of an emerging society have been affected by outside sources.

The average citizen of Lithuania today has less access to accurate, timely information to make informed judgments than during the revolutionary days of open defiance to Soviet rule (1988-1991). Economic hardships brought on by the hyperinflation of the last year, as well as direct government actions have hampered the development of a strong and independent press and mass media.

The most visible element of the government's intention to restrict the press is the draft law on the press and mass media currently making its way through the Lithuania parliament. The proposed law was drafted by a newly invigorated Press Control Board which has never been abolished in Lithuania. In recent years this board has lapsed into a mere registration desk. However, under the leadership of the current ruling party, the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party, the Press Control Board has risen to new prominence.

The draft law hinders the development of a free press by setting a legal standard that journalists may only print or broadcast "accurate information". The law mandates that it is the Press Control Board of the courts which will determine what is accurate information. In economically strapped Lithuania the penalty has publicly used inaccurate information is enough to dampen any reporter's or editor's instinct for investigative reporting. Democratic societies normally choose to balance the rights of individuals against excesses of the press through libel laws which require a determination of malicious intent on the part of the reporter, writer or editor. The ruling party in Lithuania, the LDLP, prefers to reestablish government control over the press, seeking the role of a self-appointed guarantor of accurate information for the society. In reality the LDLP is promoting an atmosphere of self-censorship which will ultimately limit the public's access to information.

The draft law also usurps authority for many activities and decisions normally left to the individuals working within a democratic press or mass media. For instance, the law mandates that editors may only be Lithuanian citizens with high degrees (college degrees); that factual information must be presented without editorial comment; private information concerning an individual may not be printed without the person's permission. The micromanagement provisions of the draft law even direct a journalist that he

has the right to refuse to sign an article if the editor has altered the contents. The entire law is drafted in a spirit alien to societies which foster a free press. With the law expected to pass (the LDLP has a parliamentary majority), the presence of foreign journalists in Lithuania. Unfortunately, most foreign correspondents remain based in Moscow or Warsaw making only brief sojourns into Lithuania. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Voice of America are among the noteworthy few press organizations which have stationed full time reporters in Lithuania.

We should also look at the existing physical limitations on press and information sources in Lithuania:

a. Print journalism - the majority of the 600+ publications currently printed in Lithuania are still government financed and controlled. Although there are a few noteworthy independent newspapers developing in the capital, Vilnius, the vast majority of regional newspapers are controlled by city and rural county governments. The hyperinflation which has wreaked havoc with Lithuania's economy has priced these daily, independent newspapers out of the hands of most Lithuanians. For example, the major independent daily Lietuvos Rytas sells for 30 talonas a copy when the average monthly wage is 4,000 talonas. Regional, government financed newspapers are distributed without cost to rural residents.

b. Wire services - ELTA is the Lithuanian wire service owned and controlled by the Lithuanian government. The ruling LDLP has recently purged the management of the wire service. We ourselves, the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. have already found our own printed information distorted when reported by ELTA. The Baltic News Service (BNS) based in Tallinn, Estonia maintains a few stringers in Vilnius, but their information is mainly reprinted by papers outside of Lithuania. It is not clear if Reuters is still maintaining a stringer in Vilnius. No other major foreign wire services are permanently staffed in Lithuania.

c. Radio - most Lithuanians still listen to Lithuanian language broadcasts of RFE/RL and Voice of America for daily information. Too few Lithuanians speak English to make BBC a viable alternative source for news. The highly popular independent M-1 station in Vilnius is restricted to the environs of the capital.

d. Television - Lithuania's TV channel which reaches the entire country is government owned and controlled. The general director of the station during his confirmation proceedings in December, 1992 openly endorsed a policy

Ms. Asta Banionis is the Public Affairs Officer for the Lithuanian American Community, Inc. Ms. Banionis has written for BRIDGES in previous issues.

of censorship saying that the TV channel must take full responsibility for what it airs to the public. A second, national channel which has been broadcasting Russian TV transmissions is under private ownership as long as it can pay the re-broadcast fees demanded by Russian Television (\$17,000 per month). This channel has little independent programming ability and no news staff.

The Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. along with a private investor attempted to privatize the third existing channel last summer. Although we are parties to a legal contract with the Lithuanian government, the current leadership has unilaterally declared the contract non-binding. While we hope this matter can still be resolved through negotiation, we may be forced to seek enforcement of the contract through the courts. It is our intention to create a fully functioning independent TV station with news gathering capability and public affairs programming.

There is a regional station which mainly rebroadcasts Polish Television to the southeastern region of Lithuania. This station has been privatized, but it is not clear if the Lithuania government will grant this station the right to expand its programming throughout Lithuania, thereby providing the needed competition to the government-con-

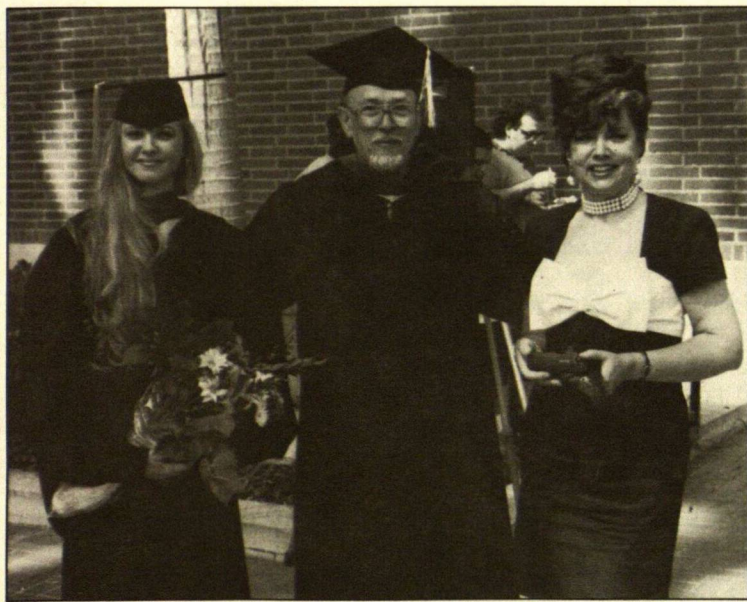
trolled TV channel.

There are other, smaller regional TV stations throughout the country, but they are in most cases government owned and operated.

Under present circumstances, the gains made by Lithuanian's journalists, editors and media professionals to develop a strong and independent press -- an essential institution for any democracy -- could easily be reversed. The moral support found through contact with Western media and press sources is essential for a press which finds itself with few defenders. The major independent dailies, *Lietuvos Rytas* and *Respublika* have found themselves threatened with lawsuits by no less than President Brazauskas and Bank of Lithuania director Visokavicius for printing stories concerning a recent government scandal.

As the United States government seeks ways to consolidate democratic gains in the Baltic region, it should remember that the existing news service in the Baltic region, it should remember that the existing news services provided by RFE/RL and Voice of America are a fundamental ingredient in the overall mix of assistance to people of Lithuania and its emerging independent press.

Lithuanian-Am. PhD Graduates from UCLA



• *Dr. Audra Lembergas (left) with her research advisor and professor Dr. V. Schumaker (center) and her mother Dana Lembergas (right).*

On the roster of graduates receiving their Doctorate degrees from the University of California (UCLA) on June 20, 1993, the only Lithuanian name listed was that of Miss Audra V. Lembergas. She received her degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Biochemistry with her thesis being "The Molecular Basis of Heart Disease."

Born in Hartford, Connecticut and raised in Santa Monica, California, the daughter of Vitalis and Dana (Daukantas) Lembergas, she also attended St. Cazimere's Lithuanian school and danced with the Lithuanian dance group "Spindulys".

Her grandparents Antanas and Emilija Daukantas were long time residents of Boston, Massachusetts where Mr. Daukantas held the title of President of the Lithuanian Roman Catholic Federation of New England for 10 years and was also a correspondent for the newspaper "Darbininkas" for 30 years. They also now reside in Santa Monica, California.

Dr. Audra Lembergas hopes to continue her postdoctoral research also in the field of heart disease.

Good Luck Dr. Audra!

Linda Brennerman

Lithuanian Sabbatical: A Time to Learn

After four and a half months spent teaching 3rd, 4th, 5th and High School English in Lithuania, it is time to write home.

Many people have asked how life in America contrasts with life in Lithuania. What were some of the differences which struck me as I came home to family and friends, as I picked up the strands of my life?

The first thing that hit me was the abundance of items in our stores. So much choice is made available to us it seems we become immune to the vast grossness of most of it. When there is so much choice, we seem to falter at making the best choices. Perhaps not only in the stores but in other aspects of our lives as well.

In Lithuania, choice has always been and still is very limited. First of all, people have very little "spending money", so browsing is not a viable choice. Secondly, shops have very few items for sale and certainly no choice of brand names, so if the shop even has the item wanted, there is usually only one. So choice becomes a priority if need, the availability. People seemed to think about a purchase for vast amount of time.

By contrast, when I first re-entered an American department store, I looked at the over-stocked shelves, as it was Christmas time, and was overcome by a sense of confusion and frustration. Confusion for myself at having to make choices from so much available stock and then frustration at realizing that in our "safe" world, Americans appear to live in a void. The reality of what is going on all over the world perhaps amounts to a passing five minute of "movie-like" news footage and then on with our high standard of living lives.

Truly, American's ignorance about atrocities that have gone on in the world during the past fifty years is remarkable to me as I think about these post WWII years in America. But then, the "iron curtain" was an obstruction, close KGB control of everything and everyone was a reality in much of Europe and Asia. We were not allowed a real peek inside, only propaganda. And the same is true for them regarding us. Now that truths are evident, I feel a need to reassess about priorities in America? What is most important; the deficit, health-care reform, education?

In Lithuania, where education has had tight governmental controls for many years, people put education number one on the list, top priority. I found teachers to be dedicated and eager and open-minded about discussing different teaching methods. Parental support and respect were high and buildings were well-maintained. Classroom size was

a real concern. Most classes were fewer than 20. The valued education.

I ask myself; higher standard of living in America? for whom? our children? I think America needs to take a long look at priorities. Not until our children are our first priority, will America begin to measure up to global standards. Perhaps even a small, ex-soviet, struggling country like Lithuania could soon provide a better standard of living for its citizens.

After all, Lithuania does not have the huge "governmental machine" to reprogram as we have. Free market economy and a parliamentary form of government are in their infancy. With the U.S. and Japan serving as past example of successes and failures, a small, struggling country like Lithuania could emerge from the chaos and confusion, which they are now experiencing, into a successful, competitive and cooperative piece of "world machinery". Each country in the world today should be constantly reassessing what direction their government, workforce and educational system need to be taking in order to supply each person with a decent kind of life.

I guess I would have to say, having travelled to Lithuania and having presented as much information as many times as I have, that the single most important impression I am left with is this:

The world is becoming smaller and smaller every day. People and governments need to develop respect, trust and knowledge about each other. This task seems overwhelming, but each person should do their part. The children I have touched need to be touched more often by different cultures. They need to understand their place in the world and how each person, each country, is just one piece of the jigsaw puzzle - but all pieces need to find a way to fit and none should be missing.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Superintendent, Dr. Corriveau, the Fall Mt. District School Board, teachers and community members and all of the children I have touched, for allowing me this dream of a lifetime. As well as the actual experience of teaching and living in Lithuania, I have given presentations at all of the schools in our district and every grade level as well. I have presented to teachers and parent groups as well as to various community organizations and functions. The response has been truly wonderful.

I would like to mention two other projects which I am working on and the status of each. First, I have been collecting used textbooks from throughout the district and

Ms. Linda Brennerman was in Lithuania on a sabbatical from the Fall Mt. School system in the Fall 1992 and Spring 1993 semesters.

have boxes at this point. I, at first, solicited books from teachers. But then the children began to spontaneously offer their own books from home. Recently, I have begun to receive phone calls from community members who wish to donate books also. The response has been overwhelming.

All textbooks are used and outdated and have become either obsolete or replaced by a newer edition. Instead of sitting on the shelves collecting dust, they will now find a useful home in the schools of Lithuania. Social studies books and small business books are among the textbooks that will provide the teachers and students of Lithuania with information which is pertinent to their current situation. English grammar books and reading series books, of which there are many old and obsolete copies, will be the most useful to the very needy English teachers. In Telsiai, where I taught, there were 15 English teachers in seven schools. English is extremely popular and books are very scarce.

This project will virtually cost the school district or myself nothing. Once I have all the books together at the Acworth Post Office, I estimate in about two more weeks, I will write a letter to Congressman, Dick Swett and the People's Fund, which he has established for charity work. I will request enough money for postage to ship these books to New York, where another charity organization has agreed to pay postage for shipping the books to Lithuania. I will have them shipped to the school in which I taught. Zita, the English teacher I worked with, will distribute the books as she assesses the need. What a wonderful way to do so much good for so little money.

The other project I am involved in is arranging for the Lithuanian student, Asta Antulyte, to come to this country

in the Fall of 1993. Asta will be a senior this Fall and is currently taking exams in the subjects she will miss at home. She speaks fluent English and I feel will be a wonderful ambassador for her country. She has written that she would like to come for a half a year and return home by Christmas, as I did.

Arrangements are being made and donations are being accepted if anyone is interested in contributing to this student exchange. Mrs. Ruth Prouty, from Cape Cod, has made the generous offer of providing the balance. The cost for a round trip ticket will be approximately \$1000.

I am currently writing a formal letter of invitation to the Ministry of Education in Lithuania, assuring them that Asta has a place to live and a position in our high school. I will assure them that I will be responsible for taking care of her.

Many, many students in the district have been writing to pen pals in Lithuania. The exchange of information has been fascinating. American adults and Lithuanian adults have both written or called me to request pen pal addresses. This kind of cultural exchange is easy and inexpensive. If you would like a pen pal, call or write to me at the following address: Linda Breneman, P.O. Box 53, Acworth, NH 03601, USA, Phone: 863-6565

All in all, I have learned so much about the world and many other things as well - but the most valuable lesson to me was that I could do it. Realizing one's ability to make a better world is such a powerful lesson. As an educator, I will never again underestimate what anyone of us has to give, and more importantly, I want to teach people that they are all important and have control over the process called "life."

Endowment Fund Providing Grants for Research

U.S. scholars who want to do research in the official archives of foreign countries have a new patron, the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The endowment is making grants for research in archives anywhere in the world, but it is particularly interested in projects in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The grants, of up to \$20,000, cover travel and research expenses for not less than three weeks.

Applications are evaluated on the basis of the project's significance for the humanities and the importance of the proposed archival research to the completion of the project.

"We'll be running a new compe-

tion every two months," says Rufus Fears, head of the endowment's research division.

An accelerated review process will enable scholars to begin their travel as soon as six weeks after the application deadline. The first grants were made in January, and a new batch will be announced soon.

"We got this program up and running fast," says Mr. Fears. "This shows how the endowment can respond quickly to emerging scholarly needs."

Scholars also are moving quickly to win access to archives in Eastern Europe and the former Communist countries start limiting access to their official records.

Or 64 proposals received for the

first deadline. 20 resulted in grants, worth a total of \$153,000. Most went to individuals, but one was awarded to the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, which will produce a computerized directory of archives throughout the former Soviet Union, including locations and information on how to apply for access.

For more information, contact the Interpretive Research Program, National Endowment for the Humanities, Division of Research, Room 318, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington 20506: (202) 606-8210.

Information furnished by Ms. Ramune Kubilius

Ramune Kubilius

From the Lithuanian Press...

Selected items excerpted from the Lithuanian Press in America of interest to our readers. Compiled and translated by Ramune Kubilius.

Journalistic Styles Change

In March 1989, there were 100 "unofficial" publications in Lithuania, beginning with newsletters of "Sajudis" ending with newsletters of middle schools. In 1990, the press control newsletter "Masines informacijos priemonės" showed that by that time there were 841 media and publications in Lithuania: newspapers, journals, radio and television studios.

In March 1993, there were 1500 titles registered with the press control committee (Spaudios kontroles valdyba). From December 1992-March 1993, permission was granted for 317 new titles, 173 were withdrawn because the publications did not put out even one issue of their registered publication. In other words, in spite of the increased costs of paper and presses, new titles are born.

Until April 1993, 472 newspapers were published in Lithuania (142 general interest, 26 political, 59 professional, 11 for business people, 5 for children, 10 for young people, 16 of an advertising nature, 18 cultural, 21 entertainment, 6 erotic, 13 religious, 3 educational); 219 journals were published; 610 publishers were registered. That kind of volume inevitably results in decreased quality and journalistic responsibility. Information drowns in words, and the word itself is weakened. Soviet journalism had completely different principles. The task of the journalist was to be an assistant of the Party, to praise Communist ideology using stereotypical phrases. Therefore, after freedom was regained, the new media came forward like a flood...Persons came from other professions to make their living in the media. The traditions of pre-war journalism were locked in special collec-

tions ("specfondai"). Reports on breaches of the ethical codes of conduct could not be kept up with the committees responsible for them. Some articles could interest psychology specialists.

According to European press regulations, some publishers and article authors should have been tried in court, and the publications shut down.

DRAUGAS, excerpted from an article by Aldona Zemaitis, 8/10/93

Immigrants Arrive in U.S.

Separation from the homeland can mean being sent away (to Siberia), or moving away (to avoid the Communist regime). Life in a foreign place has been chronicled by many. We have all read of the hardships encountered by our countrymen who were sent to the tundras of Siberia. It is also known that hardships (occasionally even starvation) were endured by those who moved to the West. Many were overcome by longing for a lost homeland, separation from family and an unclear future.

Not much remains about life of the first Lithuanian immigrants who came to America about 1868. Most often they came to work in the Pennsylvania coal mines. Many of the coal mines are now museums. The Lithuanians sought to escape the Czarist army or to earn a better living.

Between 1868 and 1899, 265,594 Lithuanians came to America. V. Rackauskas in his book "Amerika" chronicled that of those arrivals, 5 were lawyers, 21 actors, 10 architects, 6 doctors, 37 teachers, 61 musicians...Of a quarter million immigrants- 122,717 were illiterate.

As we can see, hardship and shortages accompanied those first Lithuanians who came to this country. Let us not forget them.

DRAUGAS, from an article by P. Palys, 8/5/93

Basketball Celebrates 70

Last year on the 70th anniversary of basketball in Lithuania, two books (one of them consisting of two parts) were published in Lithuania. One of them, written by sports prof. Stasys Stonkus, is entitled "Krepšinis-100 žingsniu per pasaulį" (Basketball- 100 steps around the world). "Steps" really mean years. The volumes are illustrated, include basketball history, including important milestones. Prof. Stonkus has personal experience- he was Lithuanian champion six times (1951-58), European champion one time (1957), played in two Olympics, and in one of them (1956) was on the silver medal winning team. The author in his foreward writes that for many youngsters, basketball takes up part of, or even all of their lives. In the second book "Septyniadesimt metų krepšinio metu" (Seventy years of basketball), written by the same author, it is written that music is in the life of the Czechs (quoting musician B. Smetana), while basketball is in the life of a Lithuanian- perhaps because we felt this game to the core of our hearts. According to information the author gleaned (to April 23, 1992), during 1925-1992 Lithuanian men's teams have played in 255 international games, of which they won 159, lost 95, and came out even in one (with Cuba).

Lithuanian women's teams played

100 international games, of which 27 were won and 73 lost. Lithuania participated for the first time in the Olympics in 1992 and won a bronze medal, but Lithuanian team members of Soviet Olympic teams won 17 Olympic medals (8 gold, 6 silver, and 3 bronze).

DARBININKAS, from an article by Edvardas Sulaitis, 8/6/93

Pension Checks Cashed

The Social Security Administration has crossed off Lithuania as a country to which pension payments would not be sent. That means that persons who have the right to receive social security payments in America, can receive them in Lithuania as well.

It depends on whether the person was born in America, is a naturalized citizen, or is a permanent resident alien (with green card). The first two can receive payments in Lithuania, the status of the third is yet to be interpreted, since Social Service employees in Chicago gave LAC slightly different information.

The Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. Social Services Council is organizing a Legal Forum, consisting of lawyers, immigration and Social Security experts to answer various questions on September 1st and September 8th. The seminars are to be held at its offices in the Chicago "Seklycia" Restaurant.

Persons who wish to move to Lithuania and receive their pension payments there should go to a Social Security office to fill out forms and receive information, indicating whether they wish to receive payments at an address or at a bank. The LAC Social Services Council maintains an address of Lithuanian banks in various cities which will open accounts by mail application and deposit. (The Council's address is 2711 West 71st Street, Chicago, IL 60629, tel. 312-476-2655.)

DRAUGAS, from an article by LAC Social Services Council President Birute Jasaitis, 8/14/93

Pukstys Breaks Record

Pete Cava reports on a new U.S. javelin mark set by a Lithuanian from Illinois

Tom Pukstys set an American record in the javelin at an international meet Saturday, June 26, in Kuortane, Finland, with a throw of 281 feet, 2 inches. The old record of 280-11 (85.38) was set in 1986 by Tom Petranoff. In Kuortane, Pukstys was second to Vladimir Sasimovice of Belarus. On June 19 in Eugene, Ore., Pukstys won his second straight U.S. javelin title. Here's some on Pukstys, provided by James Dunaway:

In 1992, at age 24, Tom Pukstys became the United States' Number One javelin thrower.

It was a road that started when Tom was a 10-year-old baseball pitcher in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, who also sometimes threw the javelin his older brother Andrew had brought back from a visit to their parents' native Lithuania. Their father, Romualdas, had escaped from a Displaced Persons camp in 1949 and lived in Italy before coming to the United States.

In 1981, when Tom was 13, he himself visited Lithuania with his parents. He picked up some tips from Lithuanian throwers, and his casual interest in the in the javelin grew. A third trip, in 1984, found him finally hooked on this most ancient of track and field implements.

In 1985, as a junior at Stagg High School in Palos Hills, Illinois, Pukstys placed 5th in the U.S. junior championships (although the javelin is not contested in Illinois high schools). In 1986, as a senior, he led the nation's high school list with a throw of 247 feet, 4 inches (74.40m).

Pukstys spent the next two years studying --- and throwing --- at DuPage (Ill.) Community College. His 248-5 (75.72) PR made him eligible for the U.S. Olympic Trials but he injured his back during the qualifying round and ended up 29th.

In 1989, he entered the University of Florida as a junior. He finished 4th in the NCAA and 5th at TAC, and was ranked Number 5 in the United States by Track & Field News. In 1990, he again took 4th in the NCAA, but his new PR of 273-3 (83.30m) raised his U.S. ranking to 2nd. In 1991, out of school but still living and training in Gainesville --- working as an assistant in the Florida weight room and on weekends as a bouncer in a theater club --- he finished 3rd at TAC, but in the World Championships could manage only 245-2 (74.78m) and did not qualify.

In 1992, he won the Olympic Trials in New Orleans with his opening throw, 262-5 (80.00M), and went on to place a respectable 10th in the Olympics. His consistency and his competitive record earned him his first T&FN world ranking at Number 7.

Pukstys still returns to Lithuania frequently and works out with Alviudas Dzemionas, a leading Lithuania coach, who, Pukstys says, "is the best coach for me."

Pukstys came to the USA/Mobil Championships with the season's best U.S. mark, 277-6 (84.58m). In Eugene, he won his second straight American title with a meet record 272-6 (83.06). A week later in Kuortane, Finland, Pukstys became the American record holder. His 281-2 mark eclipsed Tom Petranoff's 1986 mark of 280-1 (85.38), set in 1986.

Full Name	Tomas P. Pukstys
Born	28 MAY 68, Chicago, Illinois
Height	6'-02" (1.88m)
Weight	202 lbs. (92kg)
High School	Amos Alonzo Stagg Palos Hills, Illinois (1985)
Colleges	DuPage CC (1988) Univ. of Florida (1990)
Club	New York AC

Governor Honors Darius & Girenas

On the 60th Anniversary of the flight, Commemoration Committee presents stamp to the State of Illinois

Chicago, Ill – Gov. Jim Edgar receives a commemorative stamp of the first non-stop Transatlantic flight in 1933 from the U.S. to Lithuania by the two Lithuanian American aviation pioneers Stephen Darius and Stanley Girenas. The Honorable Vaclovas Kleiza, Consul General of the Republic of Lithuania, holds a letter from Gov. Edgar commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the event.

Pictured, left to right: Teodoras Blinstrubas, Transatlantic Flight Commemoration Committee Member; Bruno Juredelis, Lithuania Press; Stanley Balzekas, President, Lithuania Museum; Consul General Kleiza; Jura Jasiunas, Commemoration Committee Member; Gov. Edgar; Antanina Repshys, Commemoration Committee Member; Val Ramonis, Chairman, Commemoration Committee; Lucy Krutulis, Secretary, Commemoration Committee; John Daraska, Vice-Chairman, Commemoration Committee; and Zenon T. Merzis, American Legion Commander Post #271.



Lithuanian widow would like to hear from a Lithuanian, English speaking, non-drinker, non-smoker, of a quiet nature, widower gentleman of 65-70 for companionship (nature and quiet times) and correspondence. Please respond to:

*Wanda Sparnas
1211 City Street, Utica, New York 13502
tel (315) 733-5333*

Vilgailė Lendraitis

"Lithuanian Mercy Lift" Aids Hospitals

With tuberculosis and other debilitating diseases threatening children, LML offers hope.

Lithuanian Mercy Lift (LML), a charitable organization, was established in April of 1990. To date, LML has sent 44 containers of medical instruments, medicine, and other supplies, valued over 29 million dollars. Most of these goods were donated. Since November, 1992, U.S. inland transportation costs, as well as shipping, have been covered by Christian Relief Services. If it were not for Christian Relief Services, LML would not have been capable of sending the last 22 containers. The average cost of shipping one container to Lithuania is \$8,000.00. (This includes trucking costs, crating, and documentation.) Christian Relief Services has paid \$176,000.00 to transport LML containers. The Department of Defense has also agreed to ship another 5 containers before the end of the summer.

LML has supporters throughout the U.S.: Dr. Deely Janukaitis-Alaska; Dr. Skarin, Yakima-Washington; Barbara Bilsky-California; Rasa Tautvydas and Dr. E. Gedgaudas-Minnesota; Janet Apling and Brother Regis-Wisconsin; Craig Locaitis-Washington, D.C., and many more. LML supporters request hospitals, companies, or individuals for donations. Once they have made a contact, they call LML and arrange for a pick up. It is incredible how much hospitals and clinics discard, equipment or medical supplies. Most are very willing to donate these goods to a charitable organization. Lithuania's hospitals need everything: beds, sheets, bedpans, gauze, disinfectant, medicine, wheelchairs, surgical instruments, etc. LML is always looking for new members who are willing to contact hospitals or individuals for medical goods.

LML members travel to Lithuania throughout the year. Trips are paid for by members themselves. All LML members are volunteers. There are no paid employees. This past June, LML executive members visited over 26 hospitals and children's sanatoriums. LML feels it is essential to keep in contact with the Health Ministry, hospitals, and patients to make sure that goods reach their destination. Most (85-90%) of the donated goods are directed to specific hospitals (i.e., none of our medications are sent to pharmacies). LML sends the receiving hospital and Ministry of Health an inventory and date of arrival. Once the shipment reaches the hospital or Ministry, the hospital informs LML. LML directs goods throughout Lithuania from small or remote towns like Skuodas and Ariogala, to bigger cities like Telsiai and Panevezys. Good

working relations are essential for control and success.

LML has three main goals:

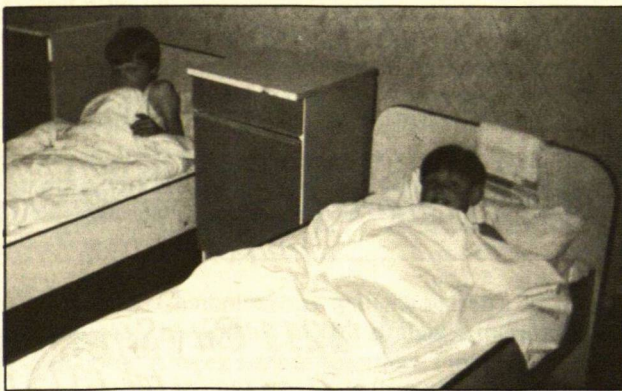
1) To help Lithuania's ailing children, especially orphans suffering from tuberculosis and other debilitating diseases.

In November, 1992, LML initiated a TB medicine drive. Since then, nine months of medicine have been delivered to the Antakalnis Children's TB Hospital. Several months ago, Bridges published a LML article on the Tuberculosis crisis. Thanks to Bridges, The British-Lithuanian Children's Fund volunteered to sponsor another children's TB hospital "Kulautuva." S.O.S. Lithuania from Miami decided to sponsor "Pusele in Valkininkai." Canadians are interested in helping also. Coordinating efforts will provide more help for more children.

2) To be the liaison in a program started a year ago between the University of Illinois at Chicago and Vilnius University. The program sends UIC perinatal/neonatal specialists to visit Lithuania, give lectures and teach clinical practice. At the same time, UIC is inviting Lithuanian pediatric and obstetrical doctors to intern at UIC. The exchange of doctors, nurses, and hospital administrators is imperative for the success of these programs.

3) To send medicine, medical instruments, and medical supplies to Lithuania for distribution to hospitals and orphanages. Lithuanian Mercy Lift provided 50% of all U.S. donated medical aid to Lithuania.

To achieve these goals we need continued help in acquiring goods and/or financial support. Please contact Lithuanian Mercy Lift, if you are interested in helping. The address is: "Lithuanian Mercy Lift," 14911 127th Street, Lemont, IL 60439.



• The Kulautuva TB Hospital and Sanatorium

Ms. Vilgailė Lendraitis is on the Executive Committee of Lithuanian Mercy Lift. LML has been featured in previous issues of BRIDGES.

Judita Martin, R.D.H

Dental Assistance Provided to People

With medical advancements and improvements, Lithuania is ready to embark on the road to healthier teeth and gums.

American Dental Association for Assistance to Lithuania (ADAAL) is on the move!

With the help of the American Dental Association for Assistance to Lithuania (ADAAL) I recently volunteered my time and dental hygiene experience in Lithuania.

This past May I spent three weeks in Lithuania working as a dental hygienist and utilizing every area of my field.

At the Kaunas Dental Akademija I gave lectures and slide presentations to dental students, faculty and local practitioners. I worked in the clinic, demonstrating practical skills in oral prophylaxis (teeth cleaning), instrumentation, local anesthesia, and fluoride applications.

Lithuania has no dental hygienists, although plans are now under way to begin a program in the 94-95 curriculum. Routine oral cleanings are not practiced there, only because: 1. they don't have the proper instruments nor the money to buy them. Prevention is not only neglected, but simply impossible because of both these reasons. Needless to say, periodontal (gum) decay. It's a vicious cycle, but correctable with more American help.

When I asked if I could take photos of their clinic, they laughed and said, "To you it will be like museum". They were right, it was very old, 40-50 years behind our equipment. But it works for them - somehow. What choice do they have? No air, no water, no suction, no anesthesia, X-ray machines that were broken, no fluoride, no floss and poor brushes. It's amazing what they can do with the little they have.

Cleaning as many teeth as I could on dental students, faculty and local patients, my hands cramped daily. I don't know how many people told me they had never had their teeth cleaned, but it was almost everyone. Many students and faculty had many decayed teeth, and many unnecessarily missing teeth.

Dentistry in Lithuania is so sorely lacking in anything remotely resembling modern advancement. When the head of Prosthetic Department at a polyclinic in Vilnius told me that patients brought in their own scrap metal to be melted down for their crowns and bridges, I could not believe it.

For the past two years ADAAL has been working to correct these obsolete dental problems in Lithuania. Going directly to the heart of the matter, the educational system, ADAAL plans to modernize the Kaunas Dental Academy.

Having recently received their signed proposal agree-

"I don't know how many people told me they had never had their teeth cleaned!"

ment from the Kaunas faculty ADAAL is now readying itself for its move to the Kaunas Dental Academy. With acquisitions from the closing Loyola School of Dentistry and the help of Mercy Lift, ADAAL will go to set up the modern clinic in Kaunas as soon as funds are raised; approximately \$100,000. This is an exciting time for ADAAL. Never before has the organization been more ready to make its move, with American Dental volunteers waiting in the wings. The last hurdle now is raising the \$100,000 - necessary to get the Dental Embassy (as ADAAL president Dr. Rugas likes to call it) running. Dr. Rugas also adds "We're not talking about 1 or 2 million dollars, dentistry is quite inexpensive really, although quite necessary". Even the optimist, Dr. Rugas is quite sure a mere \$100,000 is out there in the Lithuanian Communities all over the U.S. We need your support!

Send your tax deductible contributions to:

ADAAL
14911 127th Street
Lemont, IL 60439
(708) 529-0955
Fax: (708) 388-2059



• The Kaunas Akademija Faculty

American Dental Association for Assistance to Lithuania has been featured in previous editions of BRIDGES.

U.S.B.F.

News From the U.S.-Baltic Foundation...

Receptions, elections and interns highlight a busy summer at the offices in Washington, DC

USBF Hosts Breakfast for Lithuania's Prime Minister

Washington D.C. – On Wednesday June 22, 1993 the U.S. - Baltic Foundation hosted a breakfast at the Army and Navy Club in honor of Adolfas Slezevicius, Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania, to introduce him to the Washington business community.

Mr. Slezevicius briefed the guests on Lithuania's continuous strive toward free market reforms. Regarding energy matter, the Prime Minister stated that Lithuania will continue to exploit nuclear power by building a third type of nuclear reactor that will back up the other two that presently exist. After the breakfast, Mr. Slezevicius met with Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Mr. Anthony Lake, Senior Advisor, National Security Council to discuss the status of economic reforms in Lithuania, Russian troop presence and a host of bilateral issues.

Over forty participants attended the event, including representatives from IBM, Caterpillar and Ahlstrom PyroPower. Also attending was Stasys Lozoraitis, the Ambassador of Lithuania, and other staff members of the Lithuanian Embassy.

Honorary consul of Estonia in California joins USBF

Washington, D.C. – Linas Kojelis, President of the U.S. - Baltic Foundation (USBF), announced the election of Jaak Treiman to the Foundation's Board of Directors.

In making the announcement, Mr. Kojelis stated, "We are greatly honored by the new addition of Mr. Treiman to our board. Mr. Treiman has a long and distinguished career as

an advocate for Estonian and Baltic human and civil rights issues, and has the deep and broad respect of the American human rights community."

Jack Treiman, who was born in Estonia, is a partner in the law firm of Treiman and Curry (Canoga Park, CA). He has been the Honorary Consul of Estonia in California since 1986 and is a former director of the Baltic American Freedom League. After emigrating with his family from Estonia, he lived in Sweden and Australia, and finally came to the United States where he attained his B.A. (Political Science) and J.D. from the University of Southern California. He continued his education at the University of Chicago (M.A., Internal Relations). Mr. Treiman began his law practice briefly after his service in the United States Army (Fort Belvoir, VA). Mr. Treiman has published many articles on human and civil rights and international law in publications such as Lituanua and the Wall Street Journal.

U.S.-Baltic Foundation Elects New Officers for 1993-94

Washington, D.C. – At its June 26 meeting, the U.S. - Baltic Foundation (USBF) Board of Directors elected its officers for 1993-94.

Elected are:

Chairman	William C. Altman Houston, TX
President	Linas J. Kojelis Washington, DC
Secretary	Joseph Lukitsch Alexandria, VA
Treasurer & Vice-Chair for Finance	Ophelia L. Barsketis Chicago, IL

USBF Announces Baltic Regional Administrator

Washington, D.C. – Olari Koresaar, has been selected as the U.S. - Baltic Foundation's (USBF) Baltic Administrator. Having spent the last month in an orientation and training program in Washington, he will depart for the Baltic States on July 11 to begin coordination of USBF organizational and program operations in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Before departing Mr. Koresaar, a native of Tallinn, Estonia, stated, "This will be an excellent experience and opportunity to support the Foundation, and to share what I have learned in North America with the people of the Baltic States, while also preparing me for my future career pursuits."

Mr. Koresaar, who was born in Parnu, Estonia, studied economics at Tallinn Technical University where he was president of the International Association of Students in Economics and Business Management. He has participated in U.S Information Agency programs including working on their Activities Staff at the Philmont Boy Scouts Ranch (Cimarron, NM) and as an International Counselor at their YWCA Camp Yewell (Hartford, CT). With scholarship support from the National Estonian Foundation of Canada, the Toronto Credit, Ltd., and the National Estonian Foundation of the USA he has attended Mount St. Clare College in Clinton, IA, where he also worked as an assistant in the business office (B.A. expected in May, 1994).

Mr. Koresaar will be responsible for financial management and office operations at USBF's offices in Tallinn, Riga, and Vilnius, as well as at USBF's Municipal Training Centers at the University of Tarty (Tarty, Estonia),

University of Latvia (Riga) and Vytautas Magnus University (Kaunas, Lithuania).

USBF is a 501(c)(3), not-for-profit foundation, established in 1990 to develop and implement programs in local democracy, municipal government, rule of law, public health, economic reform, and independent media in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. USBF has offices in Tallinn, Riga, Vilnius, and Washington, D.C.

New Interns at DC Offices

Washington, D.C. - Linas Kojelis, President of the U.S. - Baltic Foundation (USBF), and the rest of the USBF staff welcomed the arrival of four new UCLA summer interns who will be aiding the foundation in its programs to promote democratic development in the Baltic States.

At the intern orientation meeting Mr. Kojelis, who also graduated from UCLA, stated, "All of us here at the U.S. - Baltic Foundation look forward to working with these enthusiastic individuals and hope that they will gain new experience and exposure that will increase their knowledge and understanding of current global issues, particularly in the Baltic States."

Although each of the interns have their own distinct ideas regarding what they hope to gain during their summer in Washington, D.C., they all share a common interest in international relations. The interns are:

- Eric Carlton (Senior, Political Science and International Relations) from Orange County, CA;
- Brittany Lauer (Senior, Political Science major/Russian language) seeks a career in international business and trade;
- Jennifer O'Sullivan (Junior, Socio-cultural Anthropology) from Santa Cruz, CA, hopes to pursue a career in international journalism or international law;
- Paul Schelin (Senior, Political Science/Business) is also interested in attending law school and later seeking a position in public office.

All the interns have been assigned project responsibilities.

Bits and Pieces...

A forthcoming book on Lithuania's past as well as preparations for the future of Lithuanian youth.

Christian Minister Documents Lithuania's Ancient Past

By: Robert A. Balaicius

I am 31 years old, of Lithuanian descent and run a small Christian Ministry. I am writing a book on the origins and Early History of the Lithuanians entitled "The Lithuanians: The Overlooked Nordic Tribe." This should be available this year. I also send English Bibles and Christian literature and contemporary Christian music to people in Lithuania and Latvia. If anyone knows of any people in Lithuania or Latvia who would like to receive such, please send me their names and addresses. Anyone wishing to donate toward this ministry, please send donations to the below address.

My first book is now available. It reveals the Biblical Origins of the people of Europe (including Lithuanians) descended from the Scythians. This book is captivating, inspiring, eye-opening, easy to read and highly documented from archaeology and history as well as Bible prophecy. It is entitled "Your Inheritance: The best kept secret in the world: Part I: Your Hidden Heritage, and is available for a cash donation of \$8.00. Anyone able and willing to translate this into Lithuanian, please contact me.

Finally, I would like to correspond with and meet some moral, Christian young Lithuanian ladies here in the U.S. Please write to me at the below address and let's get acquainted.

P.S. If anyone knows where I can purchase some Bibles in the Lithuanian language please let me know. If there is any way I can serve or minister unto anyone reading this - please don't hesitate to contact me.

Furthermore, please send me any information on any regular meetings or annual Lithuanian Festivals local or nationwide. Thanks! (P.O. Box 18, Mountain City, Tennessee 37683).

Eighth World Lithuanian Youth Congress Preparations Begun

From: WLYC Press Release

On June 26, 1993, the executive committee of the World Lithuanian Youth Association met in Boston and agreed to organize the 8th World Lithuanian Youth Congress (WLYC). A WLYC organizing committee (OC) was established as was a time-table and preliminary budget.

From July 16-18, the WLYC OC met in New York to discuss the Congress program. The "Study Days" portion of the Congress, which will be held in London was covered by Povilas Markevicius ("Study Days" Coordinator), who was visiting from London. The program in Lithuania was also covered. Ms. Ruta Kalvaitis (Lithuania Program coordinator) will be leaving to Vilnius for 12 months to begin the WLYC program planning.

The 8th WLYC will begin in Vilnius immediately following the Song & Dance festival (July 1994). The elected delegates and participants will then travel by boat to Riga and Tallinn to visit with local Lithuanian youth. The group will then travel by air to London where the 8-day "Study Days" will commence. The WLYC will end on July 31st.

Anyone interested in further information and/or prices, or anyone wishing to make a tax-deductible contribution, please contact: PLJS/WLYC, P.O. Box 2812, Springfield, VA 22152-1416

Albert Cizauskas

Smithsonian Hosts Baltic Seminar

With world attention focussed on Eastern Europe, the Smithsonian Institution organized a timely lecture series

The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, hosted a first-of-its-kind lecture series from January 23 to March 23 on the history, culture and current problems of the newly-liberated nations of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Specialists addressed various topics, among them "Who are the Balts," "Rebuilding Democracy," "The Cities of the Baltics," and the "Economics of Independence." The seminar, organized by the Baltic Lectures Committee, ended with a reception at the Lithuanian Embassy. Leonard Sadauskas, a Technical Director of SWL, an area technical services firm, coordinated the lecture series attended by over 150 persons.

A brief summary of some of the economic issues presented at the lecture on March 2 follow below. Three speakers, one from each of the Baltic nations, concentrated on ecology, privatization and monetary matters.

Nemunas an Open Sewer

Valdas Adamkus, midwest administrator for the US Environmental Protection Agency, had recently returned from Lithuania where he found conditions unbelievably bad due to a half-century of deliberate neglect of the environment by the Soviets.

More than 40 percent of well water was unfit to drink and the situation was getting worse by the day. Seventy percent of the rivers were contaminated, some of them ecologically "dead." Lithuania's historic Nemaunas river was no better than an "open sewer" spilling its wastes into an already-polluted Baltic sea. Lithuania, and the other Baltic countries as well, lacked the equipment needed to purify toxic wastes which were accumulating at the rate of 150,000 metric tons annually. Over all hung the threat of nuclear disaster at the Ignalina plant which had been built on the same faulty lines as the ill-fated Chernobyl station.

Top priority to purify Lithuania's water was the construction of three or four large biological treatment plants, and the second step the scrapping of all facilities responsible for contaminating the environment.

Mr. Adamkus deplored the widespread use of outside consultants as an unnecessary waste of money and time so far as the environment was concerned. Lithuania and its Baltic neighbors had their own experts who knew what had to be done but lacked the funds to do so. Exorbitant consultant fees could more advantageously be targeted to finance clean-up projects.

Thus far, the United States had allocated only \$15 million for this purpose in the three Baltic states. Mr Adamkus, however estimated that as much as one billion

dollars was required for each of the countries to repair the extensive damage to air and water, which was adversely affecting the health of their citizens, especially the young.

The speaker also presented a bleak picture of the overall economy in Lithuania. Manufacturing had fallen by as much as 50 percent over the course of the previous year and unemployment, if adequate external assistance were not forthcoming, could be expected to climb to 25 percent by the end of this year. (In comparison, the current US unemployment rate was 7 percent). Accentuating the decline was the paucity of economic and business know-how.

With regard to Lithuania's currency, the litas, Mr. Adamkus attributed the long-delay in its issuance to mismanagement and possible misappropriation of funds. The problem, however, was being resolved and the litas could be expected by the end of July of this year. The matter, however, had caused considerable political turmoil in the country.

In response to a question, Mr. Adamkus explained that land in Lithuania was not owned in the normal sense; rather the rights to use the land for an unspecified time were conferred upon the investor.

Problems of Privatization

Thomas Palm, economics professor at the Portland State University, pointed out that most of the Estonian economy still remained in government hands; privatization had been concentrated in the small business sector where some 1200 firms had simply been turned over to the employees. The difficulty lay in deciding how to dispose of the larger enterprises with a minimum of harm to the overall economy. Selling big firms to the highest bidder would most probably result in the transfer of Estonian assets into foreign hands. Another method was via the issuance of vouchers to the people entitling them to purchase shares but this would mean the retention of the same management, often inefficient and corrupt, as well as the non-infusion of sorely-needed new capital. Thus far, some three dozen large Estonian firms had been sold to foreign interests, mainly Germany and Swedish.

A serious problem with social, legal and political implications was determining the who's and how's of compensation some 200,000 claimants of private property seized by the Soviets.

The point was also made that the right to private ownership of property was an integral component of political independence requiring vigilant defense by a free press and judiciary.

Problems and Pluses for Latvia

George Viksnins, economics professor at Georgetown University, maintained that a centrally-planned economy depended on the threat and use of state "terror." This became evident when Gorbachev eased restrictions of freedom of speech, a policy termed "glasnost," but failed at "perestroika," the rehabilitation of the moribund Soviet economy. Retaining state control of the economy under a relatively terror-free regime proved to be unworkable and led to his undoing.

Under Stalin, the brutal collectivization of agriculture had caused the starvation of millions of Soviet people, whereas in the liberated Latvian economy, privately-owned farms, still in the minority, were producing half of the total agricultural output, thereby ensuring a reasonable supply of food, other things being equal.

With respect to national currencies, Estonia had issued the "kron" pegged at the rate of eight to one Deutsche mark. Latvia, on the other hand, had resorted to the temporary expedient of introducing a Latvian "ruble" whose value has stabilized at 160 to one US\$ in contrast to the Russian ruble which had plummeted to about 600 to one US\$. Professor Viksnins expected the government soon to issue the "lat" which would gradually replace the Latvian ruble.

Latvian exports accounted for two-thirds of the country's Gross Domestic Product (the money value of the economy's goods and services). Since virtually all of its exports (about 90 percent) were sold in the former Soviet Union, however, Latvia was practically giving away its goods for rapidly

deteriorating Russian rubles which were currently inflating at a 25 percent monthly rate.

Latvia's real resource was the "brain power" of its people. In order to compete on world markets, it was essential for Latvia to take advantage of this asset by concentrating on light industry in the "high technology" field in contrast to old style, Soviet-sponsored large and inefficient industries.

Professor Viksnins ticked off various other problems facing an independent Latvia:

- Almost half of the population (48 percent) was mostly Russian, concentrated in the cities. Furthermore, 40 to 60 thousand troops remained quartered on Latvian soil, many of them might seek citizenship and permanent residence.
- Banking difficulties were considerable as the industry was largely unregulated and engaged in "wild-cat" schemes.
- Crime had risen sharply among a population hitherto known for its law-abiding nature.

All in all, nonetheless, Professor Viksnins remained optimistic about the prospects for Latvia's recovery as a free enterprise economy.

This view was shared by the Latvian ambassador on another occasion who affirmed that the country was scrupulously adhering to the strict prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund's stabilization program and that, as a result, one could see "light at the end of the tunnel."

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THE YOUNG

Christian Children's Fund

Hope and Joy for Lithuania's Young

With many children in Lithuania facing trying and difficult times at home, one organization is trying to make a difference

While the lives of those living in the Baltics have been ripped by the political changes which brought freedom, there are many positive efforts underway to provide assistance to families and their children.

In Lithuania, Christian Children's Fund is working with the Lithuanian Children's Fund to expand a new initiative which pairs orphaned or unwanted children with a loving family. In the former Soviet Union, institutions were seen as a cure-all for any child with a physical or mental dis-

ability or without a home. Unfortunately, institutions were overcrowded, understaffed and inadequate in providing education and social services. Throughout the Baltic States, Christian Children's Fund is working to return institutionalized children to their families or find them foster families.

Meet the Radnikas family of Uzventis, Lithuania. The Radnikas have two daughters of their own but because Ms. Radnikas had seen such misery and lack of life in children's institutions, she decided to assist a

child from an institution through Christian Children's Fund. That simple decision brought such joy that the Radnikas have now expanded their family to include nine more children.

Many of the children come from extremely difficult circumstances. Among them one child whose institutional records incorrectly indicated that he was retarded. With time and attention from the Radnikas family, this young man is attending regular school and has almost developed to a normal skills level.

The latest three arrivals came from a disastrous home situation. The father had been sentenced to death for murder and the mother was an alcoholic who was unable to care for the children. The children from 18 months to four years, were malnourished, sick and in a state of depression.

The Radnikas could not bear the thought of the children going to an institution so they welcomed them into their home. The family reports that in the last few months, all of the children have regained their health and now have happy attitudes.

The Radnikas must feed, clothe and care for the 11 growing children. The family has a large vegetable garden, two cows, pigs and chickens which enable them to be nearly self sufficient in providing food for the children. Despite some financial support from the state, the present economic situation and spiraling inflation make everyday life in Lithuania quite difficult. The financial assistance provided through Christian Children's Fund and the Lithuanian Children's Fund has enabled these special people to enlarge their family and spread their love.

Christian Children's Fund has shipped millions of dollars worth of critically needed material goods into the Baltic States in recent months. Recognizing that toys are important to a child's development, in addition to providing for basic needs such as food and medical care, Christian Children's Fund shipped a cargo container of children's books and toys to needy children across Central and Eastern Europe. The shipment arrived in December, just in time to brighten the holidays for hundreds of children!

Medical professionals in the Baltic States are struggling to provide quality care to families but they are faced with the realities of outdated equipment and vast shortages of medicines. Christian Children's Fund recently shipped medical equipment, pharmaceuticals and over-the-counter medicines to Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia with a wholesale value of over \$2.6 million. Shipments included such needed items as syringes, bandages, alcohol, swabs, braces, laboratory supplies, gowns, children's cough syrup, throat spray and lozenges, and prescription drugs.

These supplies will be put to immediate use bringing relief to sick children who are suffering. The supplies will be distributed to families with the greatest needs and to

children's hospitals and clinics through Christian Children's Fund partner organizations; the Lithuanian Children's Fund, the Estonian Central Union for Child Welfare, and the Latvian Children's Fund.

Throughout the Baltics, families are suffering from vast shortages of food. Not only is food extremely expensive, but the entire food distribution system has fallen apart making it very difficult to get even the basics.

Christian Children's Fund has shipped a 20 foot container of pasta to Riga, Latvia for distribution to needy families. The pasta includes 637 cases of spaghetti and 329 cases of lasagna totalling 24,540 pounds and has a wholesale value of \$50,000. Christian Children's Fund will distribute the pasta to the families in greatest need of food.

In addition, the Fund recently sent a shipment of 720,000 packets of donated vegetable seeds to Lithuania for distribution to needy families. These seeds will allow many families to become self-sufficient and prevent hunger and malnutrition. The shipment of vegetable seeds is valued at \$369,000. Christian Children's Fund will distribute the seeds to the families with the greatest need.

By shipping donated material goods directly to the areas where it is needed rather than simply sending funds to the area, the Fund is avoiding the economic dilemma of more dollars chasing fewer goods and driving up inflation.

In addition to providing material goods, the organization is taking an active role in helping to set up social service agencies that can function in a capitalist, democratic society. They will also provide training for child care workers. Last year, Dr. Paul McCleary, executive director of Christian Children's Fund, met with the heads of state of each of the Baltic States to discuss ways of providing assistance to the many needy children.

As the world's first and oldest child sponsorship agency, Christian Children's Fund brings years of experience and expertise to the Baltics. An international not-for-profit, nonsectarian agency, free of political associations, Christian Children's Fund provided education, medical care, food, clothing, and shelter to children in over 40 countries.

If you would like more information on Christian Children's Fund activities in Central and Eastern Europe, call 1-800-776-6767.

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