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BRIDGES

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The Lithuanian Christmas Tree at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry. Story on p. 20

To Our Readers:

The holidays have descended upon us. We're proud to present an article about dedicated Lithuanians in the Chicago area who make one Christmas tradition live on year after year. Our congratulations go out to them.

The political scene is an ever-changing one, which brings new hope for Lithuania during the coming New Year. Asta's update of the political climate in Washington will help all Lithuanian-Americans keep abreast of current issues.

In November American-Lithuanians were able to participate in the Theatre Festival in Chicago which was a true exhibit of the talent we Lithuanian-Americans can claim as our own here in the US and Canada. Aukse Trojanas' description of the photo exhibit, which was part of the Theatre Festival brings many little known facts to light.

In this issue we're pleased to present Dr. Thomas Grennes' article on the Lithuanian economy and its current inflation rate. This turned out to be a lively topic of discussion in recent issues, we hope the article stimulates our readers to write more. The economy in Lithuania is a vital element of a successful democracy, therefore of concern to many. We hope you find this stimulating reading.

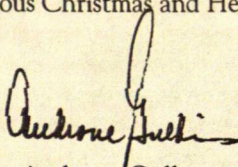
We're grateful to Mr. Al Cizauskas for a tribute to a remarkable woman - Margarita Samatas, and the insight he gives us into her life. The hardships she endured, like so many others caught in the war and subsequent occupations, did not deter her life's ambition of working to see a free and independent Lithuania.

Mr. Algis Ruginienius and his committee invite Lithuanian-American athletes to participate in the Fifth Lithuanian World Games to be held in Lithuania in the summer of 1995. We certainly hope as many participants will have a desire to visit their homeland and compete in the games as singers and dancers did last year. We look forward to reporting winning results from American athletes.

And again, in this issue Jeanne Dorr continues the saga of the children of Lithuania, less fortunate than we. I hope that you find room in your hearts to support these wonderful, loving children.

Many thanks to Ramune Kubilius for all the news items she provided for this issue, in addition to the down-to-earth article on the Internet and Baltic applications. I'm sure many of us would like to know how to become a part of it, and she has provided that info along with some very practical information as to why and what for.

As we approach a New Year, I'd like to thank the entire BRIDGES staff for a year of a job well done and wish everyone a Joyous Christmas and Healthy and Prosperous New Year.



Audrone Gulbinas
Editor, BRIDGES

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Lithuanian's Forgotten Children, Part II

December is the time of year we reflect on what has been. We hope that 1995 will bring peace, health and prosperity. For me, 1994 was a year that filled me with joy each month I wrote this column. It gave me the pleasure of meeting, if only by phone, fax or letter, so many good and caring people; those who put their own personal problems aside to help others. In many instances these good people will never see the results of their work, they will never meet the people they've helped, and most likely they will never know their names. These are the "unsung heroes", they are individuals and organizations, they are Lithuanians and non-Lithuanians, they are people who put the needs of the less fortunate first. Thank you BRIDGES readers, for your support and encouragement during 1994.

On my second trip with the Countryside Children's Fund we journeyed to the Pakruojis region, I rode with Mr. and Mrs. Svoba who help administer the fund. A second car filled with charity donations followed. Once again, we left Vilnius at 8 AM bypassing the city of Panevėžys and drove past picture post card scenery where people labored in the fields.

A "Charity Day" had been organized in the town hall. With the help of a social worker, twelve of the neediest families were invited to attend this meeting to learn about "Countryside Children". Lithuania was in the middle of a heat wave and a drought. Needless to say, the building was hot. Due to a flat tire we were almost an hour late, but the people waited patiently. As we entered the room, everyone stood. I have to admit I was momentarily stunned, it's not what I am accustomed to in America and I felt a bit uncomfortable. Both Mr. and Mrs. Svoba explained the program. I was very impressed by their words. They did not lecture or judge the people who were present. They spoke of the difficulties of rural life in Lithuania and even the injustices many of these people endure. Rural people are the last to receive help, including humanitarian aid. Very often the people who require the most assistance do not know what programs are available to them. Mrs. Svoba explained the fund was to

help their children have a better future. She discussed the necessity of the people to encourage their children to stay in school and study hard. If they did, there would be additional financial help for these students. Programs such as Lithuanian Children's Hope were also discussed for those who have children with serious illnesses. Transportation to doctors and hospitals is also provided for people who need it by Countryside Children's Fund. Both Mr. and Mrs. Svoba praised the American sponsors and the organizations which provide money and charity shipments. I spoke to the group about the work of finding American sponsors and raising funds to help them. I explained the different ways we obtain money and spoke



10 year old child burned in house fire pictured with his mother

of the many people they will never know who are involved in Orphan Care. The entire time I spoke I kept looking at the weary faces and work-worn hands of the audience. They were all proud people who were not after a handout but rather a helping hand. I closed by telling them that their problems were also our problems and that it would take more than an ocean to separate us. I got my cue to stop talking when a rooster under the window of the town hall refused to be silenced. I decided that I should stop then or I would have it on my conscience if he became soup. A question and answer period followed and some misconceptions were cleared up. A grand-

Foto: Jeanne Dorr

mother thought we were trying to "buy" her grandson and take him away from her. One of my most beautiful memories is that of the oldest woman in the room. She stood up and said she wanted to address the American lady. I thought she was probably going to tell me to mind my own business and stay home. But instead her eyes filled with tears and she explained that she sees the pictures on television and in the papers of all the "important" visitors who come to Lithuania. They are well dressed and are shown with the politicians and heads of organizations, usually in Vilnius and Kaunas, presenting checks which the country people never see. She said she noticed my feet, they were covered with the dust of the unpaved roads and the fields we walked through. Her gratitude for my visit to this small village was evident by the tears rolling down her cheeks.

After the initial meeting each adult was asked to complete a very detailed form with Mrs. Svoba asking the questions. There were questions concerning family, health, and financial status. These forms are used to help locate sponsors. They also determine who will receive money each month and who will have to have someone else provide for them. In small villages everyone knows which parents are alcoholics. Again, they receive not one cent. Why were these twelve families invited to the meeting? They were recommended by the local social worker. We were very fortunate with the social workers who worked with us. There is still a mind set among some social workers of the "old" system who will tell you that they have no problems in their area or they refuse to show you the worst cases because they are embarrassed by them.

They don't seem to understand that Countryside Children are looking for the people who need the most help. Still others don't want to be bothered with the paper work. However, every social worker we met went beyond what was expected of them. They truly cared about these families.

Once the paper work was completed we went to the parking lot where bags of clothing were prepacked for each family depending on the ages of their children. Again, items such as peanut butter and vitamins were included. We encountered a couple of women in the parking lot who began to heckle the group who were receiving the bags. The recipients were chided for "selling out" by taking advantage of the program. When the hecklers received no attention they left. Very few people who attended the meeting had cars, most relied on their feet or bicycles to go home. Before leaving the parking lot an elderly woman came up to me and thanked me. She had her fifteen year old granddaughter with her. I noticed the granddaughter in the audience, she had a

difficult time sitting still. Mentally she was only five years old. Outside she jumped from one foot to the other and asked me if I had any sweets. I found a few pieces of candy in my pocket and she was happy. Her grandmother told me about their family and how she ended up raising her only grandchild because nobody else wanted her. Jurgita was a joy and a help to her grandmother but she also needed constant attention. Her grandmother thought perhaps she should not have filled out the papers. Who would sponsor a child like this when they found out about her? Even Mrs. Svoba felt a little apprehensive about us being able to find a sponsor for such a child. I told them both never to underestimate the compassion and kindness of the American people.



Foto: Jeanne Dorr

Four children from one family needing sponsors. On left - Mr. Jonas Svoba, on right - a town official, kneeling - Jeanne Dorr.

The next step was to visit the families in their homes. While they were on their way home with their gifts we returned to the town hall for lunch. It was time to meet the people who administer the day to day activities of the village. Because we were not familiar with the back roads and the area we had to travel, we were accompanied by a gentleman who was similar to a mayor. Our first stop was to a family of six. It was the one and only time on all my visits that I "lost" it. The family consisted of a mother, father, and four children. They lived in a barn which they shared with the animals. A boy of ten was on a "couch". He was unable to walk or talk and had to be carried. When he was eight months old the house had burned down and he was badly burned. Both his legs were bandaged and when we unwrapped the bandages he screamed with such pain that it took every ounce of strength in me to stay inside. His legs were badly blistered, his feet were deformed and his toes had grown together. We photographed his legs to see if we would be able to get medical help for him. As we were leaving his

mother brought him outside in her arms. I reached up to kiss him good-bye and he held on to my face and started to make noises as if trying to tell me something. His mother's final words were "Please, please help us." I rushed back to the car with tears streaming down my face and it was at this moment I vowed to do everything I can to raise money for Lithuanian Orphan Care.

Our next stop was to a family consisting of a grandmother, a young mother and a five year old boy with cerebral palsy. The child was on a bed surrounded by pillows so he would not hurt himself. His mother worked during the day and his grandmother took care of him while trying to work in a large garden and keep house. Both mother and grandmother were exhausted. Mrs. Svoba spoke to them about obtaining a wheel chair and going to a clinic for a week. Countryside Children would provide the transportation and handle the paperwork. This child is in need of a sponsor. The small family is barely making it on the mother's salary.

The third visit was to two grandmothers who pooled their resources to raise their seven year old grandson. They could not do it on their own and they are struggling to do it together. There were many other visits but space does not allow me to print them all. My memories are as fresh as though they happened yesterday.

It was after 6 PM as we started back to Vilnius. When you do this kind of work you really need a sense of humor or the sights you deal with can drag you into despair. After we left the gentleman who was traveling with us back at the town hall we thought we lost our way. We stopped two teenaged young ladies who explained, "Oh, you're not lost. Just keep driving on this road and turn straight!" That statement made me feel like I was teaching a geography lesson back in my own school.

Countryside Children has also been successful in establishing small group homes for children. Their hope is to have 10 or 12 children live in a regular family atmosphere with a husband and wife in charge of the home. The home in Raseiniai is a testimony to the success of this kind of program. One of former Ambassador Stasys Lozoraitis' final gifts was a check to this group home.

Countryside Children is a fund that works in a very different way. Unlike most funds which deposit a set amount of money in a bank account each month this fund is not always able to operate in that fashion. If only it could be that easy! Because some of the parents are alcoholics, someone else must receive the money and buy only enough food for a short time so that the children will not be hungry. Some people have said to me, "Get help for the parents first." Let's be realistic, whether in America or Lithuania, if people don't believe they have a problem there is nothing you can do for them. But problem or not, these children have to eat and be clothed. The parents do not see one cent of this money. If I

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Asta Banionis

104th Congress: Unknown Territory

Well, it's over! And, this political commentator is very willing to admit that she was far too cautious in her predictions. A Republican controlled Senate - yes, but a Republican controlled House of Representatives - not soon. Boy, oh, boy, was I WRONG.

The oft cited description of the outcome of the November, 1994 congressional elections as a tsunami is particularly apt because the solid Democratic majority of the U.S. House of Representatives which appeared unbreachable has been swept away. The conventional wisdom, demonstrated by public opinion polls, has been that although Americans have low regard for "the U.S. Congress", they nonetheless feel that "their own representative is a good fellow". This seemingly contradictory view managed to keep a Democratic majority in place for forty years. Now, the 38% of the U.S. electorate that went to the polls in November has given us a Republican controlled Congress.

Speaking of that 38% of the U.S. electorate ... If the same percentage of people had voted in Lithuania, the parliament's election would have been ruled invalid and the election would have been held a second time. Lithuanian law requires at least a 40% turnout of all registered voters for a national election to be considered valid. The recently adopted law on local government will allow a 25% voter turnout for the city and county council elections expected in March, 1995.

Bridges readers will recall that last month's issue, predicted a much more even playing field for American supporters of Lithuania within U.S. government institutions, if the Republicans took control of the Senate. Now, we're getting a Republican controlled House as well. Will that playing field now tilt to our advantage?

Not necessarily. There are two important factors at play: 1. Quite a few Republicans have been "Russia-firsters" and are just as susceptible as the Clinton Administration has proved to be to the argument that if Russia doesn't make it as a democracy, then no one else will in the region. 2. Half of the members of the U.S. House of Representatives are new or have served for only two years and therefore, their views on Lithuania and the rest of Central & Eastern Europe are untested, in many cases unknown. This is why it is critical that Americans who support Lithuania should be expressing their views to their Representatives and Senators over the next few months.

Let's look at the committees and subcommittees which have jurisdiction over the issues which directly affect U.S. - Lithuania relations. In some cases we already know

who will chair these committees, but we won't know for a few weeks which new Republican representatives and senators will be assigned to fill vacant seats on these committees. More than a few Democrats will lose their committee assignments as their Party assumes the minority role within these committees. The dynamics within the committees are sure to change.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee will now be chaired by Congressman Benjamin Gilman from New York's 20th congressional district. Mr. Gilman's district spans the Tappan Zee bridge which crosses the Hudson River at its widest point. It connects the Irving suburbs with Rockland County and expands west all the way to the Pennsylvania border. First elected in 1972, Mr. Gilman has served on the Foreign Affairs Committee and the House Post Office & Civil Service Committee. Lithuanian-Americans best remember Mr. Gilman's support on the Post Office & Civil Service Committee where he single-handedly focused the committee's attention on the Soviet Union's practice of interfering with the letters and packages sent by Americans to their friends and relatives in countries occupied or controlled by the Soviet Union, as well as political and religious prisoners in the Soviet gulag. By the way, the new Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-GA) and his transition team have proposed that the Post Office and Civil Service Committee be eliminated along with the Merchant Marine Committee and the Small Business Committee. Their functions will be given to other remaining committees.

After the retirement of Congressman William Broomfield (R-MI) in 1993, Mr. Gilman became the ranking Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Throughout his service on the committee he has been known as a moderate on foreign policy and a person who seeks consensus within the committee rather than engaging in partisan fighting. During the last Congress, Mr. Gilman seemed genuinely interested in foreign aid reform which would lead to more effective aid to countries like Lithuania. Now as he becomes chairman of the committee, we hope that he will exercise the full authority of his office to make the House Foreign Affairs Committee a more effective voice in the public policy debate.

Within the House Foreign Affairs Committee structure there is a subcommittee on Europe and the Mid-East. Mr. Gilman has been the ranking minority member on this subcommittee, but it is unclear if he will choose to become its chairman also. Therefore, Congressman

Bill Goodling (R-PA) or Congresswoman Jan Meyers (R-KS) could become the subcommittee's chairperson. The subcommittee is due to add 2-3 Republicans, while Democrats will lose 2-3 seats; on the full committee the loss of Democrats because of their new minority status may reach as high as 9 seats, while the Republicans will appoint as many as 9 new members to the full committee.

Despite all the controversy, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will be headed by Senator Jesse A. Helms of North Carolina. The Senator was first elected in 1972 and has never been shy about his role as an advocate for his principles and causes. Fortunately, Mr. Helms has been a staunch anti-communist as well as a defender of freedom for Eastern Europe and the Baltic States. It is unclear at this point whether Senator Helms will continue his predecessor's practice of allowing the 7 subcommittees of Senate Foreign Relations to assume most of the workload of the committee, or if he will choose to centralize authority under his own chairmanship.

The European Affairs Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was previously chaired by Democrat Joseph Biden (DE), a Senator who all too often sided with the interests of the Soviet Union against Lithuania. Despite his noble and outspoken defense of Bosnia and its government, Senator Biden tends to put the interests of Russia above the interests of the Central and East European nations. The Senate Democrats are considering making Senator Biden the ranking minority member of the full Senate Foreign Relations Committee so that they may more effectively counter Senator Helms. It is not clear whether Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN) will choose to assume the chairmanship of the European subcommittee, although he is in line to do so. It has not been unusual for Republican senators to rotate through the subcommittees of the foreign relations committee.

Over the last decade, the real power to influence U.S. foreign policy has resided in the appropriations committees of the House and Senate. Because the jurisdiction of the appropriations committees is so broad, and the committees very large, the work of the committees is decentralized within its subcommittees. That's why the 13 chairmen of the 13 subcommittees of the House Appropriations Committee have been called, "the 13 cardinals". For many years, the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs which has jurisdiction over U.S. military and economic aid programs has been chaired by Congressman David Obey (D-WI). Now, it is unclear whether the ranking Republican of that subcommittee Congressman Bob Livingston (R-LA) will become its chairman because Mr. Livingston is going to assume the chairmanship of the full appropriations committee, jumping over four of his more senior colleagues on the committee.

Congressman Livingston was first elected to the House of Representatives in August, 1977 in a special election to fill the seat of a Democrat who was forced to resign due

to a fraud conviction. He represents the people of the first district of Louisiana which includes most of the newer part of the New Orleans metropolitan area extending north and west into the "Florida parishes". While serving on the foreign operations subcommittee over the last two years, Congressman Livingston, has tended to support the views of Democratic chairman David Obey, voting with him most of the time. It is unclear whether the subcommittee will take a different course, if he assumes the chairmanship. The next senior member of the foreign operations subcommittee is Congressman John Porter (R-IL), a Congressman very familiar to Lithuanian-Americans. Representing the 10th congressional district of Illinois, Congressman Porter has many Lithuanian-Americans living in his district. He has always been receptive to concerns for Lithuania and is well briefed on the issues. If he was to assume the chairmanship of this subcommittee we could well expect a positive change in the subcommittee's attitude towards Central and Eastern Europe.

The most dramatic shift in attitude will come within the Senate's subcommittee on foreign operations. There, Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky will assume the chairmanship. Over the last two years, Senator McConnell, as the ranking minority member on the subcommittee, has worked tirelessly to achieve some balance in U.S. foreign policy. He is a strong supporter of extending NATO membership to the nations of Central and Eastern Europe as soon as possible. He believes that the Clinton Administration has concentrated too much on saving Russia, to the detriment of the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, including Ukraine. Besides his Republican colleagues on the subcommittee, like Senator Phil Gramm of Texas, Senator Connie Mack of Florida, he will be able to rely on the help of Democrats like Senator Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey (just reelected in November to a third term in the Senate), Senator Barbara Mikulski of Maryland and Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa.

That's part of the line-up for the coming two years in Washington, DC. We'll know more in early January when the rest of the committee assignments are made.

Update

BALTIC PEACEKEEPING BATTALION UPDATE: As we go to press, outgoing Chairman of the Senate's subcommittee on foreign operations, Senator Patrick Leahy, has informed us that the \$10 million slated for support and training of the Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion has been saved and will not be reprogrammed to pay for U.S. peacekeeping activities in Haiti. Our thanks to both Senator Leahy and Senator McConnell for saving this worthwhile project from the State Department's budget officers.

Ramune Kubilius

A Bit About The Internet

Getting Connected

Back in September 1992, an article entitled "Gaining Access to the Internet" by Greg R. Notess of Montana State University appeared in the journal *ONLINE*. It began with these questions: "Do you feel left out of the wild new world of the Internet? Have recent articles piqued your interest? If you are looking for a way to reach the wealth of material on the Internet, commercial alternatives...now exist..." Later in the article, the author describes the Internet the way many of us in the information field describe it: "The Internet is not just one computer network, but is a vast interconnection of many national and international networks." We have been able to use the Internet to save money when we bypass traditional telecommunications connections to remote computers and databases.

Two years have passed since that article first appeared. Articles about the Internet have appeared in major newspapers and journals. A number of us have been exposed to Internet at work- we have used e-mail to correspond with electronic mail users all over the world. We have used FTP (file transfers) to receive and send documents and software. By remote logins (telnet) we have been able to access online computer catalogs of university libraries and access various interesting information resources. We were lucky in that because of our university or company affiliations, our Internet access (and passwords) were free to us as students, faculty or staff of universities or other institutions which provided us with the necessary connections. Other persons have obtained access (free or paid) to Internet e-mail and other capabilities, thanks to local initiatives such as Freenets or commercial services with provided full or partial Internet capabilities. Commercial access to Internet involves a membership fee and usually are billed by calculating how long the subscriber was online (an hourly connection fee). Sometimes a monthly minimum fee is imposed as well. Long sessions of searching may be expensive. Local public libraries (and possibly computer stores) probably keep lists of how residents in their area might obtain connection to the Internet and the fees involved.

Books about the Internet abound. Applications increase daily. The Internet user population is growing daily in the United States. Even Estonia, Latvia

and Lithuania have been users of Internet for almost 3 years, according to a report by Margit Kurm which appeared in September in *BALT-L*, an electronic discussion list to which one can "subscribe". (Her report "Discussion of Eastern Europe Telecommunications" was made possible in part by a grant from IREX and included contributed information from computer specialists in all three Baltic countries.)

Everyday Applications

What might be some of the uses one might have for online resources? Here are a few simple everyday examples:

- One can set up a meeting or ask a question of someone and you don't have to play telephone tag. Electronic mail is the answer. It doesn't matter if the person is a "night owl" and you are an "early bird". You can read your messages and respond without disturbing each other. Many of us correspond with colleagues, friends and relatives in other parts of the country, and even Lithuania.
- Some of us arranged to go to a library conference in Vilnius without having to telephone Lithuania even once. We corresponded with conference organizers in Bethesda, MD as well as Vilnius, Lithuania about travel arrangements, presentation topics, etc.
- One can write an article or presentation as a word processed document and send it to someone else. "Attach" the document and away it goes via e-mail. Some people have fax modems so they can send documents straight from their computers to a remote fax machine.
- What if you are going to Lithuania to work on a major research paper or dissertation and you wonder if the Vilnius University library owns a certain book? You can sign into the online catalog of the VU library and many other libraries around the world, as long as you know their "addresses". You can even tell if the book is checked out or not.
- Baltic organizations don't always take enough advantage of the possibilities offered by

discussion lists such as BALT-L. Where else can one publicize a meeting, ask for volunteers, make an announcement? Blatantly commercial advertising is usually not found in most discussion lists.

Everyday Applications

BALT-L, which has been written up before in BRIDGES, is an English language online discussion list to which one can electronically "subscribe". About a half dozen new (numbered) posted messages come through daily. Edis Bevans, who works at Open University in the United Kingdom, is the capable editor of the list. He pulls similar items together, adds captions, adds comments if he deems they are needed, tries to prevent discussions from getting too personal or off target, and posts news items he has come across to get the discussion ball "rolling". Anyone can post a message, question, comment, piece of information, news item, or article as long as it in some ways is related to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. One can read Radio Free Europe excerpts, read book reviews which feature Baltic characters, read late-breaking news about disasters, political changes, conferences, read business news...BALT-L is a truly democratic forum which has no boundaries. Anyone can post a message or question. Anyone can answer to the list as a whole, send an e-mail response to the individual who posted a question, or can just be a silent reader. Postings to BALT-L are made from all over the world.

There are many discussion lists, newsgroups and other electronic resources which may interest BRIDGES readers. One discussion list is BALT-INFO. Among the Latvians, mailing lists were "created at the initiative of foreign Latvians in order to be informed about domestic news and to discuss different subjects related to Latvia". Meanwhile, in the Baltics, "signs of a Baltic electronical society are the appearance of national mailing lists". However, the Lithuanians have no national mailing lists, according to Margit Kurm who wrote in her report: "Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as users of Internet are in different and unequal positions... Differences and inequalities have been caused by technical possibilities - or by the lack of possibilities that result from the lack of money and poor relationships between people".

The Future

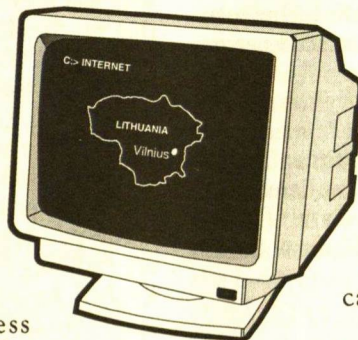
What does the future hold? Most of us will try to keep up our skills, become more computer literate.

We want to be able not only to use the resources but also to use the proper terms to be able to converse intelligently. Many of us use the resources which are useful or needed for our daily jobs. Exploring various Internet resources, keeping up with electronic mail, reading the messages in our discussion lists, and reading the literature can be very time-consuming...

Our counterparts in the Baltics seem to be keeping up with worldwide trends. We can examine each other's efforts online in many cases electronically. Discussion list editors such as BALT-L's Edis Bevans already are thinking of the enhancements from just text files. The computer world is changing... There are information servers, mailing lists, gophers, World Wide Web... Publishers of encyclopedias, dictionaries, journals and newsletters are now entering the electronic access world. Access to their publications

via the Internet might require subscription to their print or electronic product, a special password or access code. Universities and research centers mount their information systems-grant information, information about diseases, phone and staff directories, scientific data, international money conversion tables, weather maps—print and graphic information may be accessed electronically.

We can "surf" the Internet and the wide world of information if we know what information is out there and how to get to it. Let's hope that in future BRIDGES issues, "techies", librarians and other specialists will share their expertise with BRIDGES readers and point us to resources which might be of interest to us as Lithuanian-Americans and Balts.



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Ramune Kubilius

From the Lithuanian Press...

Selected excerpt from the Lithuanian Press in America.

Lithuanian-American Stamp Collectors

The Lithuanian Philatelist Society "Lietuva" organizes a stamp fair every two years. The 1994 fair, "Lithrex XXV", took place October 21-23 at Chicago's Lithuanian Youth Center with participants from Canada, Florida, California and elsewhere. A jury presented a Grand Award, gold, silver, bronze and special awards. The stamps were varied, including stamps printed to commemorate the Lithuanian scout camps held in post-World War II displaced person camps in Germany. (*Musu Zinios*, 10/94)

Chicago Attorney Elected

Attorney Algimantas Kezelis, senior partner in the Chicago law firm "French, Kezelis and Kuminiarek" has been elected as new president of the Society of Trial Lawyers. The honorary society selects its 250 members for their successful trial work.

(*DARBININKAS*, 11/4/94)

Canadian Parish supports Food Kitchens

The Ascension Parish in Toronto, ONT supports the food kitchens in Lithuania.

In Kretinga about 150 hungry people are fed daily (70 of them are children), and that number grows by 50 at the end of the month when funds run out. Many of the people are pensioners, whom the local convent tries to help. Bread must be purchased to feed the poor. Because the potato harvest was very poor this summer due to the drought, vegetables must be purchased as well. The financial support from Toronto makes it possible. In addition to the soup kitchen in Kretinga, the Toronto parishioners also support several others. Since February 1994, they support the "Caritas" soup kitchen in Kaunas and the cafeteria for 150 poorer students of Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas. The "Betanija" food kitchens in Vilnius, which feed about 500 persons daily are supporter by the Toronto Lithuanians. Food is also brought to the "Caritas" office near the Cathedral thanks to them. During the summer, occasional donations of leftover food from restaurants (such as the pizza parlor of former Chicagoan Rita Dapkus) and greenhouses are received by the soup kitchens, but the support of the Toronto parish is consistent and dependable throughout the year.

Several directors of the food kitchens wrote to Dr. Judita Cuplinskas, president of the Toronto parish's humanitarian group. In their letter they wrote that the Lithuanian gov-

ernment and the local governments in these cities aren't very helpful. Volunteers are being sought to work in the kitchens and to comfort the needy. Some of the people who eat at the kitchen are invalids or elderly and often become demanding for attention. In addition, the sisters who run the kitchen sometimes provide activities for the children there. The directors forwarded a letter, signed by ten people who had been fed at the "Betanija" kitchen-"...We know that we, the elderly, are a heavy burden. However, you can take satisfaction that you are helping your brethren. It is wonderful, that when you contemplated your life's path, you chose to give a helping hand, by giving us not only a plate of soup and bread, but by smiling and serving us. As our lives reach the sunset, we will all be asked how we expressed our love for mankind...We are sorry if we were not always polite, sometimes even persistent and annoying. We are endlessly grateful to the directors and workers at this kitchen, for your working, never resting hands. May the good Lord bless you all and our nation's tired children."

Let us consider, that if all Lithuanian parishes outside of Lithuania, not only Toronto's Ascension Parish and its Franciscan pastor, Father Augustinas Simanavicius, were to provide a small measure of support..how many tears we would dry and how we could help those who have not had easy lives. A cry of "SOS" needs to be answered not tomorrow, but today, before winter arrives, for Lithuania's hungry.

(*DARBININKAS*, from an article by Rev. K.J. Ambrasas, 11/4/94)

Young Lithuanians Compete in European Table Tennis Championships

The European Young People's Division of the Table Tennis Championships took place in Paris, France in July 1994. Participants included a group of young Lithuanians under the age of 18. The best showing was in the teen girls' class, where the young Lithuanians won 6th place out of 34 participating countries. In the other classes, the showings were not as good-36th out of 38th in the teen boys' class, 21st out of 30th in the young girls', 28th out of 37th in the young boys'. The cost of the trip to Paris, including a stay in a comfortable hotel was covered in part by present and former Lithuanian-American athletes.

(*DRAUGAS*, from an article by J.M. Baltrusaitis, 10/28/94)

Lithuanian Children's Chorus to Tour US

The Lithuanian Radio and Television Children's Chorus is presently planning a tour in the United States. The chorus, founded in 1979, currently has more than 250 school age members from various Vilnius schools. The children are divided into four age groups. The primary focus of the chorus is to record songs for Lithuanian Radio (a state-run program-rk). In one season, the chorus typically records 60 works. The repertoire primarily focuses on works by Lithuanian and classical composers, but also includes works for children by modern composers. The chorus also performs religious concerts—it regularly performs during Christmas and Easter services at the Vilnius Cathedral and at St. Casimir's Church. The collective has also performed outside of Lithuania. In 1990, the chorus won 1st place at a European Children's and Youth Chorus competition in Belgium. In 1992, at the B. Bartok contest, the chorus won 2nd place. In 1994, in Japan - the chorus won 3rd place. They have performed in Poland, France, Germany, and are now preparing for their trip to New York, Putnam (CT), Boston, Chicago, and Washington. The chorus will also perform on television.

(DARBININKAS, 10/28/94)

Lithuanian students Abroad

There are now 377 Lithuanian citizens studying in American universities. The Swedish Embassy indicates that there are 80 students and persons completing other types of training from Lithuania in Sweden. The French Embassy did not provide exact figures, but indicated that there are "many" students from Lithuania in Paris. It is also almost impossible to estimate the numbers of Lithuanian citizens studying in Germany and Great Britain because study visas are not differentiated from other types by Germany, and Great Britain does not require visas at all for citizens of Lithuania.

(DRAUGAS, 10/29/94)

Books for Social Studies Students

A container carrying 8,282 books weighing 10,511 kg is on its way to Vytautas Magnus University Library. The volumes were donated by the Follett Campus Resources Publishing Company. Funding for transportation costs is being provided by the World Lithuanian Community Fund and its president V. Kamantas. The largest portion of the books are in the subject area of social sciences and will be used as textbooks for the preparation of specialists in the field. Prof. Robert L. Poorman, who teaches in Florida, and worked for one year at the Vytautas Magnus University Pedagogical Center took the initiative in seeking donations for help in supporting a Western-world style library for the University (which only recently was re-established since being closed after World War II-rk).

(DRAUGAS, 11/1/94)

Kaunas Jesuit Anniversaries

The Kaunas Jesuit High celebrated its 70th anniversary, and the Kaunas Jesuit College, its 345th anniversary. Various events commemorating the anniversaries took place September 23-24th in Kaunas, Lithuania - High Mass, lectures on the history of the College, projections about the College's role in present-day Lithuania, a procession... Rev. Boruta, S.J., the head of the Jesuit Society in Lithuania and Latvia spoke to the many assembled alumnae and other guests about the challenges of preserving the long traditions of the Jesuit College while at the same time the needs of looking ahead to the 21st century.

(DRAUGAS, from the "Catholic Church in Lithuania" excerpt, 11/1/94)

Lithuanians in Texas

The "Lithuanians in Texas" is a group of 65 families based in San Antonio, TX but its work (and members) are represented throughout Texas. Venice Grantham (a cousin of Blessed Jurgis Matulaitis) is president of the group which most recently has supported the Knights of Lithuania "Aid to Lithuania" initiatives with the \$1500 proceeds from a raffle. One of the primary goals of the group is to continue the culture and traditions of Lithuania. The group participates in the annual San Antonio Folklife Festival and has sent 200 boxes of food and medications to Lithuania through the Lithuanian Children's Relief.

(DRAUGAS, 11/17/94)

K of L - Yet Another Container

The Knights of Lithuania's "Aid to Lithuania, Inc." recently sent its 16th container to Lithuania. The container contained a CPR mannequin which is used to train people in the life-saving techniques of cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The mannequin will be used for teaching purposes at the Kaunas Medical Academy. The group is seeking a similar model for training nursing students and is looking for a donor. "Aid to Lithuania" can be reached through: Robert S. Boris, 4457 Fairway Court, Waterford, MI 48328-3483, tel. (810) 682-0098, FAX (810) 682-5201.

(DRAUGAS, from information provided by Regina Juska, 11/17/94)

Philadelphia Parish Anniversary

Philadelphia's St. Andrew (Sv. Andriejaus) Parish celebrated its 70th anniversary on September 25th. The parish church, the third Lithuanian parish in Philadelphia, began with a chapel and parish school. The church, rectory and adjacent hall were purchased only in 1941. After the founding pastor Rev. Juozas Cepukaitis died, other pastors were Rev. Jurgis Degutis and Rev. Kajetonas Sakalauskas. The parish has been home to the Vincas Kreve Lithuanian Language School, various organizations have met there, choirs have practiced there. Three years ago, the parish was

in danger of being closed. Parishioners were successful in convincing Cardinal A. Bevalaqua and representatives of the archdiocese that the ethnic parish was alive and functioned as the center of ethnic community life. Even though church membership is not high, it was felt that the parishioners were committed to keeping the parish alive. The only element that was missing - a Lithuanian priest. A third generation Lithuanian Paulist priest working in a nearby parish, Rev. Timothy Burkauskas received the necessary permission to become pastor of St. Andrew's Parish. Dividing his time between his duties with the Paulist Fathers and his duties as pastor, Rev. Burkauskas and two parish committees were successful in renovating the rectory, fixed the sound system in the church and most importantly, livened parish activities. As the parish's 70th anniversary neared, Rev. Burkauskas fulfilled one of his wishes - a Lithuanian wayside cross by folk artisan Algirdas Liepinaitis was built for the church.

A plaque attached to the cross expresses thanks to the Almighty for the parish's 70 years of life and for the re-establishment of independence in Lithuania. Prelate Thomas J. Hilferty, who once had the task of closing the parish, has now become a supporter of the Lithuanians. He had the pleasant duty of blessing the newly built cross. Several hundred parishioners and guests gathered at a banquet to celebrate the anniversary. One of the high points in the festivities was the short program by the adult Lithuanian language class students of Bronius Krokys. The third and fourth generation Lithuanian Americans showed their love for Lithuanian poetry, song and dance. Their enthusiasm gave St. Andrew's parishioners hope that the parish could easily await its 100th anniversary.

(DRAUGAS, from an article by Dalia Jakas and Alгимantas Gecys, 11/11/94)

Academics in Lithuania

A primary obstacle to academic progress (in the years 1955-1990) at Vilnius University was the pretension of the totalitarian government that it had monopoly on all thought. The humanities and social sciences suffered most, since those disciplines study a nation's history, language, art and farm life. Academic freedom and scholarly discussion were stifled. Instead of disciplines common all over the world, pseudo-disciplines sprouted up: Soviet (SSKP) history, academic Communism, atheism, Socialist political economy, etc. Because of the principle of ideological selection, many academic disciplines were neglected, many forbidden zones developed. Cultural values were pushed out of the nation's memory. The time period of independence and emigre Lithuanian life became "enemies of the people". The protectors of the Soviet regime rightly felt that the true study of history is dangerous, since it is a means of protecting a nation's identity...For many years, there was no Philosophy Department at the University since it was felt that in order to preserve Marxism, academic philosophy studies were centralized in Moscow and other large cities...

Some academic disciplines were able to avoid rigid ideological barriers: the probability theories of Prof. Jonas Kubilius reached worldwide attention and were published three times in English editions since he first published them in 1959...

(DRAUGAS, excerpt of 11/12/94, one of a multi-part series by Vyngantas Bronius Psibilskis, published over a number of weeks in the Cultural supplement).

Klaipeda Ship-building progress

Ships being built in Klaipeda are being purchased by countries of the East and the West. The "Baltija" shipbuilding factory is currently building a 4500 ton floating dock ship. Recently, two fish refrigeration ships which permit transport of 650 tons of fish each were built for Russia's Far East. Other contracts, according to Director Juozas Abromaitis, include orders for smaller fishing vessels for Holland. (DRAUGAS, 11/19/94)

Early snow?

The Lithuanian Meteorology Center reported that already on October 16th it had snowed in the parts of Lithuania near the Baltic Sea- Klaipeda and Silute. It is said that snow in October is not rare in Lithuania. For example, in 1976, it began snowing October 13th and the snow cover didn't melt for some time. Snow in Vilnius is not expected for some time.

(DRAUGAS, 11/1/94)

Mass Grave Uncovered

600 human skeletal remains found in Tuskulėnai are being studied by a Lithuanian government medical institute under the direction of Prof. V. Urbanavicius. It is thought that the mass grave will uncover about one thousand skeletal remains, of people thought to have been killed by the NKVD-NKGB-MGB. The people were secretly brought to a large garage in Tuskulėnai which had been heavily guarded and fenced in. Occupation courts sentenced the Lithuanian partisans and patriots, supposedly led them away for further questioning, then the victims were killed in KGB cellars. The skeletal remains reveal that about 30 of the victims were women, others were men ranging in ages 18-60. It may be difficult to identify all of the remains because of a lack of documentation. Information is being gathered about all persons reported missing from that era or those sentenced to death during that time. The findings in Tuskulėnai show the criminal activities of the Communists in Lithuania, but why didn't anyone question the initiators of these atrocities, publish their names...Premier A. Slezevicius apologized to the Jews for the war-time atrocities of the German occupiers and a handful of Lithuanians. When will someone apologize to Lithuania for the atrocities committed at Tuskulėnai?

(DRAUGAS, 11/19/94, from an article by Edmundas Simanaitis in TRIMITAS of October 1994)

Aukse Trojanas

The Chicago Scene



Rasa Kazliene, Vincas Zebertavicius in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, Detroit, 1960's Photo courtesy of Jonas Tamulaitis

The first theatre play in the Lithuanian language opened on December 31, 1889 in Plymouth, PA through the efforts of a newspaper editor, Antanas Turskis. The play was called "Without a Conscience, or How Things happen in this World." For generations afterwards many amateur theatrical companies were formed throughout the U.S. as an integral part of the traditional Lithuanian communities, bringing together immigrants of different generations and migrations.

It was not until 1899 that a play was performed in Lithuania in the country's native tongue. Under Czarist rule, the language had been forbidden in spoken or written form. A professional theatre company was opened in Kaunas in 1920. World War II refugees brought theatre to DP camps and later brought their professional talents to many cities in the U.S., Canada and other countries. After arriving in 1949 and later, immigrants with training in the dramatic arts began to work with existing amateur theatrical companies. The quality and variety of performances was enhanced, beginning a kind of golden age of Lithuanian theatre in America. This era was most lively in the 1950's, 60's and 70's. There were many companies before the war, fewer, about 24 afterwards. The last 20 years have seen a decline although some cities such as Los Angeles, and Hamilton and Toronto in Canada still have very active companies. Boston and Chicago's "Vaidilutė" also have active theatrical groups.

The Lithuanian language theatre was both inno-

One of the highlights of the recent 9th Theatrical Festival in Chicago was a photography show on the history of Lithuanian theatre in the United States. The show was organized by Petras Petrutis, a popular Chicago radio broadcaster, who was chairman of the Festival. In a ceremony opening the photography show, the actor and humorist Vitalis Zukauskas spoke eloquently on the evolution of theatre companies in the United States.

Immigrant playwrights incorporated ideas from the west into their works so that there was an evolution as well as a celebration of their European past. Chicago's Anatolijus Kairys, the existentialist Antanas Skema, Algirdas Landsbergis and Kostas Ostrauskas wrote original plays which often contrasted and combined both cultures. Kairys founded the Theatrical Festival in Chicago to bring together acting troupes from around the country every 4 years. They have performed many plays in our beautiful, poetic language over the past 45 years.

The 1994 Festival presented Lifetime Achievement Awards to Vitalis Zukauskas for his contributions to the Lithuanian Stage and to Stasys Ilgunas for makeup and wigs. Mr. Zukauskas is writing a book on the history of Lithuanian theatre.

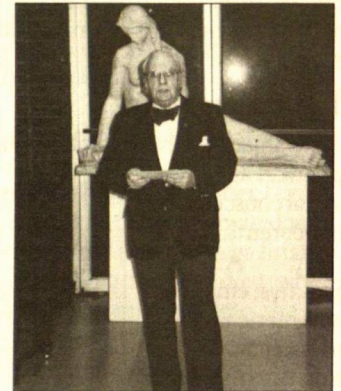


Foto: Aukse Trojanas

Vitalis Zukauskas speaking at the opening of the 1994 Photography Exhibition which commemorated 45 years of Lithuanian theatre in the United States.



The Brooklyn Player's Troupe (1952-1967), founded by Vitalis Zukauskas; Left to right, 1957. Top row: Edvardas Liogys, Edvardas Juzumas; Middle row: Leonas Karmazinas, Zygmaz Zubrys, Juozas Lapurka, Stasys Vaskys, Petras Nekrosius, Romas Kezys; Bottom row: Marija Zukauskiene, Vida Gintautaitė, Vytalis Zukauskas, Lucia Kasubaite, Neli Lape Photo courtesy of Jonas Tamulaitis.

Albert Cizauskas

Remembering Margarita Samatas

My wife and I were fortunate to become good friends with Margarita Samatas several years before her untimely death. We admired and enjoyed her, spending many happy hours in her company. In this way we came to sense, beneath her ever-present and youthful smile, an inner toughness that could not be breached and a hope that would not be stifled. During the many years of the communist nightmare, hers was an unshakable dedication to the eventual freedom of the land of her forbears.

The Staknys Family

Margarita inherited the boundless energy, interest in political affairs and social conscience of her parents. Her father, Antanas Staknys, emigrated to America in 1905 to escape conscription into the Czar's armies, like many other Lithuanian men at that time. He settled in New Jersey where he quickly assumed a leadership role in the Lithuanian colony and participated in the historic delegation to petition President Wilson in 1918 for Lithuanian independence. Her mother, Ona Vaskevicius, was born in this country and, like her husband, found the time to immerse herself in numerous activities despite a rapidly growing family.

By 1922, the Staknys family numbered eight children including Margarita (born in 1917) when the parents decided to move to Lithuania. They settled in Palanga. Mr. Staknys founded a carpentry and cement plant. His work, however, could not exhaust his energies so that again he entered eagerly into the world of politics. Once he was even chosen mayor by voice vote, but, allegedly due to his strong political convictions as a Christian Democrat, was not confirmed to that position.

Mrs. Staknys also engaged in a host of community activities as she had in New Jersey, among which was the organization of a Lithuanian Catholic Mothers' Society

and the publication of a journal for Catholic mothers. All this despite the addition of five more children to the prolific Staknys family.

Fittingly, each year, the many members of the Staknys family assemble in the Franciscan Monastery in Kennebunkport, Maine, to honor the memory of their remarkable parents who had nurtured in them an unquenchable love for Lithuania.

Margarita was reared in the exciting political atmosphere of the Staknys family and the healthy Baltic climate of Palanga. She completed her education at the gymnasium in Kaunas, then the new nation's capital. Shortly after graduation, the attractive young woman, at the age of 19, married

Adolphas Samsonas, an accountant. They had two children, Danielus and Margarita. When they were respectively two and four years of age, the father was sharpening a knife with an electric instrument. In a freak accident, a piece of metal flew into his forehead, infection set in, and he died within two weeks,

leaving Margarita a widow before her 25th birthday.

War

In a few years, the widow married again, this time to Steponas Samatas, an officer in the Lithuanian army. It was a difficult time. The country was under German occupation and Lt. Samatas was compelled like other Lithuanian men, to serve with the German forces.

By the spring of 1945, the Soviet armies were racing westward toward the Lithuanian frontier. His leave expiring, Lt. Samatas had to return to his unit. Reluctantly, he bade farewell to his pregnant wife and two small children but not before he and Margarita worked out a plan to meet and eventually settle in America.

No time was to be lost. Margarita kissed her husband tearfully and made preparations to flee. Both knew that,



Margarita Samatas

riding with the Soviet armies were the four horsemen of evil legend: pestilence, famine, war and death. What happened next is best told by Karina, the child conceived and born in time of war:

"Margarita crossed the Lithuanian border into Germany. She dared not to speak English, nor tell a soul about her American passport, as she was crossing into enemy territory. She had one suitcase, two small children and was eight months pregnant with me when she raced across the border. Had she been discovered by the border guards, chances are none of us would have been alive today."

Somehow Margarita managed to reach Hamburg which became part of the British sector when hostilities ceased. She had won the race against death.

In the meantime, Lt. Samatas reached his unit only to find the company captain had deserted, leaving his men encircled by the Soviets. Undaunted, the young Lieutenant, as next in command, took charge and skillfully led the unit of more than a hundred Lithuanian men to safety in Denmark. Among those rescued was Vladas Butenas, the recently deceased correspondent for the Chicago-based daily, *Draugas*, who, in subsequent years, wrote much about Margarita's work on behalf of Lithuania.

Peace

For two and a half years, Margarita worked for the British occupying forces as translator. Her parents, Antanas and Ona, had earlier resettled in New Jersey in time to escape the Soviet apocalypse. Karina explains:

"Finally (Margarita) was able to sail for the US with her three children. (Her parents had given her up for dead until they had joyfully heard otherwise).

"In thinking about the sea voyage to America, often our mother had spoken fondly of the joy she had upon seeing a bowl of oranges on the tables in the ship's dining room. She said everyone dove for them as if they were gold."

(Lt. Samatas) joined his family in the US after release from a displaced persons camp.

Helping the helpless

Shortly after her return to this country, the ardent young Lithuanian patriot became a one-person dynamo on behalf of the countless left behind in Soviet-occupied Lithuania. She joined various Lithuanian organizations for which, proficient in both English and Lithuanian, she wrote numerous petitions and letters to American and UN officials on the Lithuanian problem.

In 1948, she was invited to join the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC) to work with refugees. As an executive with a sense of compassion, she was soon asked to head up the NCWC's Lithuanian section.

The waves of refugees crested with a flood of "displaced persons" after an act of Congress created a special immigrant class on their behalf. Margarita's work received national attention when she appeared in a full-page photo in *Life* magazine's edition of November 22, 1948, as she

extended a historic welcome to the very first to enter the US under the new legislation, Mr. and Mrs. Simonis and their four year-old daughter, Daiva. Of the 813 arrivals in the first boat-load, 168 were Lithuanian. The caption over the *Life* article read "America Gets First of 200,000 DPs", giving currency to a new word in the lexicon of international diplomacy.

Margarita was the first contact in this country for thousands of victims of man's inhumanity to man. She made them feel welcome, putting them at ease with her friendly demeanor and assisting them in getting settled in a new country. Always, well-informed, she was more than an efficient bureaucrat. She was a fellow human who had also experienced the horrors of war.

The irony of *Life's* story was that the magazine, for some obscure reason, did not identify Margarita who remained a nameless angel of mercy.

The DP tide began to ebb by 1952, Margarita shifted to the *Voice of America's* Lithuania section until that organization moved to Washington. To help support her family, this versatile and energetic woman became associated with a commercial bank in the lucrative field of mortgage financing. Her second husband, Lt. Samatas, had died when Margarita was 42 years old. Widowed a second time, she did not remarry.

A Lithuanian Feminist

During these years, Margarita found time to become involved with Lithuanian and American women's societies. In her capacity as president of the Federation of Lithuanian Women's clubs and as a member of the general Federation of Women's Groups in this country, she addressed an international meeting in Tokyo where she spoke of Lithuania's plight under Soviet rule. Later, she successfully introduced a resolution to form a human rights committee by an international women's organization, realizing that this would focus attention on the abuse of human rights in Soviet-dominated countries like Lithuania.

While fully concerned about women's rights in modern society, Margarita seized the opportunity to bring the Lithuanian story to national and international attention. In this, as in whatever she attempted, she succeeded.

An "Unknown Soldier"

In 1980, she received an offer from a bank in Palm Beach, FL. The offer was an attractive one and the climate decidedly more pleasant than New York's.

Margarita was very much interested but fate intervened. VLIKAS (the Supreme Lithuanian Freedom Committee) was moving to the nation's capital and was sorely in need of someone with organizational skills to oversee the transference of its Secretariate. The offer was for one year only until a permanent head of the Secretariate could be found. Margarita agreed to "consider" the invitation but the bell had rung. Lithuania was calling and she could not resist. As she put it in an interview, one year lead to a second, the

second to a third until some eight years in all had elapsed, years of intense work with scant recognition.

One journalist called her Lithuania's "Unknown Soldier", taking herself lightly but her work seriously. Under her supervision, requests for information from many diverse quarters were expeditiously handled, "without," as the journalist noted, "rummaging in unmarked drawers." Among those seeking information about developments in Lithuania were the White House and the US Congress. Visitors were made to feel welcome and no one was put off with the standard bureaucratic response, "I'll call back tomorrow." Today's requests were handled today.

The reverse was also true. Information poured into the VLIKAS Secretariate from all over the world. Margarita read everything. She made certain that top VLIKAS officials were made cognizant of the more important items. But there were simply not enough hours during the normal work day to do everything in accord with her scrupulously high standards. She was known to bring bulging briefcases home for evening and weekend perusal.

One of her principal responsibilities was editing, translating and writing in simple, clear English, the Lithuanian Information Bulletin (ELTA) in tandem with the well-known Lithuanian author, Algirdas Landsbergis. For some years, ELTA was the sole source of information in English about conditions in occupied Lithuania.

By the spring of 1988, her relations with the Bobelis-dominated VLIKAS became seriously strained. Margarita rarely spoke negatively about anyone but her daughter Karina said she heard her express grave concern when Bobelis was running for office in Lithuania. Along with a number of other officials of this organization, Margarita resigned in 1998 after eight years.

Before leaving VLIKAS, Margarita earmarked a sum of \$10,000 through the Lithuanian National Fund for the purchase of modern office equipment, such as computers and fax facilities. A typical gesture of this idealistic yet practical woman.

Diplomat without Portfolio

Now came the crowning years of a career devoted wholeheartedly to the Lithuanian cause. In 1989, Stasys Lozoraitis, representing Lithuania at the Vatican was also appointed to take over Lithuania's Washington Legation. One of his first acts was to persuade Margarita to join his team as chief aide.

This she did with her customary flair for handling whatever came her way, not only efficiently but also with quiet dignity. Her position required her to act as sort of "Jill-of-all-trades," eventually revamping the Legation into an Embassy, hiring additional qualified help and general ensuring the smooth functioning of the mission under a vastly expanded workload. In effect, she was Deputy Chief of Mission, a title assigned to persons occupying the number two slot at a diplomatic post, except that she was not a member of Lithuania's diplomatic service.

During Lozoraitis's frequent visits to Rome pursuant to

his Vatican assignment, Margarita maintained daily contact with him via fax and telephone, receiving his directives for action.

Neither Lozoraitis nor she, were prepared for the joyous tumult that swept over the hitherto small and quiet establishment on 16th Street in Washington when the long-awaited miracle took place on March 11, 1990. Through its representatives in the Parliament, the Lithuanian people had reaffirmed their ancient freedom, the first in the Soviet-occupied republics to do so. Telephones never ceased ringing. Representatives of the nation's top newspapers, TV and radio stations descended in masse upon the Legation. Lozoraitis became an overnight media personality. Through all this commotion, Margarita displayed an unflappable calm.

The better to serve the voracious appetite of the American and foreign media for information on Lithuania's David-like struggle with the Goliath of the Soviet Union, she arranged two mammoth press conferences, one on April 3 and the second, May 29. For a brief moment, Lithuania had distracted Washington's attention.

With the break-up of the Soviet Union the following year in 1991, Lithuania became de jure as well as de facto a recognized member of the family of nations. At this time, the Legation was elevated to the rank of Embassy and its responsibilities escalated. Margarita's role behind the scenes helped enable Ambassador Lozoraitis to carry out his mandate at a difficult and historic time.

Tributes for a Remarkable Woman

The smooth-working team of Lozoraitis and Samatas, which had harnessed the whirlwind of triumph, was to be no more. A sick woman, Margarita left the hurly-burly of Washington in the fall of 1992 for the quiet of her daughter Karina's home in San Francisco. Before she left, the Ambassador arranged a farewell at the Embassy at which she could say, with the sad-sweet smile of those last days, farewell to her many friends. Lozoraitis too once again expressed in public his heartfelt appreciation for her meaningful contribution to the Lithuanian cause.

Margarita died on May 6, 1993 of cancer. She had ascended the mountain top and witnessed the promised land of her country's liberation. Cancer had wasted her body but not the memory of what she had accomplished. It is a sad coincidence that, thirteen months later Ambassador Lozoraitis too died of cancer.

Among the many tributes to her memory were the touching words of a journalist in Palanga, who had met her during her last visit to Lithuania. Hearing of her illness, the journalist wrote:

"Impressive and doubly so her personality, her regard for others, her mastery of the Lithuanian language, her assumption of responsibility for what she said, qualities which others possess insufficiently...This woman,...contributed more than ten times what we, living here, contributed for

Continued on p. 19

Thomas Grennes
North Carolina State University

Recent Inflationary Experience in Lithuania

The rate of inflation is often taken as a crude indicator of the success or failure of a government's economic policy. The wealthy countries of Western Europe, Canada, the United States, and Japan have experienced average inflation rates of well under 10% per year. Conversely, the low income countries of the world have experienced much higher inflation rates. Although low inflation does not guarantee prosperity, there is an inverse relationship in the empirical data between inflation and real income level.

Inflation is determined by the quantity of money (currency plus bank accounts) in a country, and in all modern economies the quantity of money is determined by the government through its central bank or a similar institution. Since modern economies no longer limit the quantity of money by the quantity of gold reserves or other precious metals, the quantity of money and the rate of inflation are the result of political decisions made by the central bank and agencies that influence the central bank.

Lithuania is currently described as in transition between central planning of the Soviet regime and a market economy. What remains to be seen is whether the Lithuanian inflation rate will approach the low rates of the prosperous developed countries or the higher rates of the less developed countries. A brief period of high inflation followed independence (peak rate of over 1000% per year in 1992), but substantial progress has been made toward reducing the inflation rate. Recently Lithuanian inflation has fallen to the rates of its Baltic neighbors and its Western neighbors in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia (about 2% per month). As such, Lithuanian inflation is far below that of Russian, Ukraine, and all the other republics of the former Soviet Union. However, inflation in Lithuania remains much higher than inflation in the developed Western countries. Thus, tangible progress toward price stability has been achieved, but much room for improvement remains.

Future progress toward monetary stability depends on the development of political and monetary institutions that restrict growth in the quantity of money. A similar situation existed in independent Lithuania in 1922 following the hyperinflation associated with the German occupation. The new Bank of Lithuania achieved mon-

etary discipline then by committing monetary policy to convertibility of the litas into gold at a fixed price. As the U.S. dollar was also linked to gold at that time, the litas also had a fixed exchange rate with the dollar.

Since no currencies are tied to gold today, Lithuania must achieve monetary discipline in a different way. Immediately following recent independence, Lithuanian monetary policy had no clear direction. The ruble continued to circulate until the inflation became intolerable. Rubles were replaced by temporary coupons (talonas) in October 1992 and finally the litas was introduced as the national currency in June 1993. At first the goals of monetary policy were unclear, and the litas floated against other currencies. Finally in April 1994 a monetary reform law was passed, a currency board was established, and a commitment to a fixed exchange rate with the dollar was announced. The current commitment to the fixed exchange rate and the currency board is a kind of monetary discipline analogous to the commitment to the gold standard in 1922.

Since April 1994 the monthly inflation rate (two percent) has been consistently below the earlier rate, but the decision to adopt a currency board was hardly unanimous. The Minister of Economics resigned, and the Governor of the Bank of Lithuania threatened to resign because of the introduction of the currency board. Members of parliament continue to predict devaluation of the litas, and exporters complain that the dollar-litas exchange rate unfairly taxes exports.

Under the currency board arrangement the exchange rate is fixed at four lits per dollar. The litas is backed by reserves of dollars, and the Bank of Lithuania is obliged to exchange lits for dollar reserves at the fixed rate. The supply of money in Lithuania increases when there is a trade surplus or a net capital inflow to the country. The Bank of Lithuania is not allowed to increase the supply of money by granting credit to either public or private agencies. These kind of loans have been the main source of monetary emission and inflation in Russia and Ukraine. The currency board is a strong form of discipline imposed on the Bank of Lithuania, and it is designed to achieve monetary stability.

Estonia adopted a currency board in June, 1992, and it has experienced the lowest inflation rate among the

Continued on p. 19

Bits and Pieces

LAC Executive Committee Officers Confirmed

The President of the LAC Board of Directors, Dr. Z. Brinkis announced on November 14, 1994 that the following nominees presented by LAC Inc Pres. Regina Narusis were confirmed in their positions on the National Executive Committee as follows:

Dr. Vytautas Bieliauskas - Executive Vice President
 Dr. Paulius Zygas - Chairman, Public Affairs Council
 Birute Jasaitis - Chairman, Social Services Council
 Regina Kucas - Chairman, Educational Council
 Ale Kezelis - Chairman, Cultural Affairs Council
 Algis Rimas - Chairman, Economic Affairs Council
 Linas Norusis - V.P. Finance
 Ramintas Pliura - Treasurer
 Dr. Vitolis Vengris - V.P. Educational Affairs
 Paulius Alsenas - V.P. Organizational Affairs
 Sr. Margarita Bareikaite - Chairman, Religious Affairs Council
 Algis Rugienius - V.P. Sports
 Viktoras Kaufmanas - Pres., American Lithuanian Youth Assn.
 Rita Likanderis - V.P. Information
 Dr. Vilija Kerelis - Secretary

Congratulations to the members of the National Executive Committee!

International Baltic Psychology Conference

In September 24 through 27, 1994, the International Baltic Psychology Conference was held at Lielupe, Latvia under the auspices of the University of Latvia and the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Psychology. Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian psychologists from the three republics, as well as from Sweden, Denmark, England, Russia, Australia, Canada and the US were represented. The conference was held in connection with the 75th Anniversary of the founding of the University of Latvia in Riga.

The four days of workshops and paper sessions generally fell into three categories: cultural and ethnic psychology, clinical issues, and early intervention/prevention with children. Evening interest groups were organized around the topics of professional issues and ethics, special education, prevention, children's rights advocacy, eating disorders, forensic mental health, post-traumatic stress, and peacekeeping in democratic reform.

North American Lithuanians were represented by Dr. Linas Bieliauskas from the University of Michigan, Dr. J.G.Deikis from the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Battle Creek, MI and Dr. Agatha Sidlauskas of Carp, Ontario.

The Association for the Advancement of Baltic Psy-

chology is an international group organized to support the profession in the Baltic countries through professional liaison, collegial ties, and donations of books and journals. For more information, contact AABP, 50 Beresford Avenue, Toronto, ONTARIO M6S 3A8, Canada. FAX: (416) 366-6772

Vilnius University celebrates 415 years

Founded in 1579, Vilnius University celebrates 415 years with a R.C. Mass and publication of the University's history book. The University was established by Polish-Lithuania Commonwealth bishops Protasevicius and Radvila, with the honor of founder accredited, of course, to King Stephen Bator.

From Internet 10/3/94

USIA funds exchange program

The US Information Agency (USIA) has funded a proposal by Creighton and Fordham Universities to administer a Junior-Year Abroad Exchange Program with Vilnius and Vytautas Magnus Universities during the 1994-1995 academic year. A total of \$341,291 has been allocated to fund the program, with the USIA providing \$246,299 in major project funds, and Creighton and Fordham Universities providing another \$94,992 in cost-sharing monies. The current exchange program involves six American students studying in Lithuania, and ten Lithuanian students studying in the US. All participating exchange students were selected from a strong pool of candidates in open, democratic and merit-based competitions at each academic institution.

Presently, the six students from Creighton and Fordham Universities are taking courses in their chosen fields of study, in the English language at Vytautas Magnus University at Kaunas. During the winter semester, they will continue their studies at Vilnius University. Throughout the academic year, these students will be attending cultural events in both Vilnius and Kaunas, visiting neighboring towns and cities, and taking excursions to significant Lithuanian historic/cultural sites.

During the present fall semester, there are five Vilnius U exchange students studying at Creighton U, and five Vytautas Magnus U students studying at Fordham U. During the winter semester, both groups will continue their coursework at the other respective American university. While studying in the US, the Lithuanians will have ample opportunity to experience the diversity of American life - from the dynamic metropolis of New York to Omaha, the agricultural Heartland and the Rocky Mountain West.

Creighton and Fordham Universities have submitted

another proposal to the USIA to fund a similar exchange program for the 1995-1996 academic year.

From a press release from the LAC, Inc Omaha Chapter November 13, 1994

Lithuanian Prime Minister in US

Adolfas Slezevicius arrived in Washington on 21 November for a four-day unofficial visit organized by the US Baltic Foundation. He held talks with FBI chief Louis Freeh, IMF Director Michel Camdessus, World Bank President Lewis Preston, and Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott.

From JBANC's Baltic Hotline November 28, 1994

Lithuanian Foundation Grants announced

The LF distributed \$249,510 in support of various Lithuanian educational, cultural and youth-related ac-

tivities in 1994. The number of grant requests continues to grow; in 1994 they numbered 235 totalling \$1.5 mil. of which the LF was able to fund 117 requests partially or totally. The Board of Directors appointed the following board members to the Grants Committee: Daina Kojelis, chairman, Dr. V. Narutis, Dr. G. Balukas and V. Momkus (alternate). The LAC, Inc. appointed the remaining members: J. Bauzys, secretary, Dr. V. Bieliauskas, Dr. K. Keblys and Dr. T. Remeikis (alternate). A detailed report of grants was sent to all LF members (those contributing at least \$100).

From a letter by D. Kojelis LF Grants Committee Chairman -Sept., 1994

BRIDGES is among the many efforts the Lithuanian Foundation is supporting. The Editorial Board would like to express its thanks to the LF for the \$1,000 grant in 1994

MARGARITA SAMATAS

Continued from p. 16

Lithuania's independence, for which we must be humbly grateful."

Another journalist wrote that "We who are left behind, owe her a debt of gratitude for the days, months, years which she devoted to the welfare of Lithuania..."

Her daughter Karina says this about the last days of Margarita's life:

"...I couldn't here what [Ambassador Lozoraitis] was saying on the phone to my mother [but] one could see the delight on her face, shining, that he had called her. This was two days before she died.

"Also, there was a lovely article written about her in the Lithuanian newspaper from Palanga. I sat by her bed, reading it to her. After it was over, she asked me to read it again, which I did. When I finished, I looked up and she had dozed off, peacefully.

"When she died, her three children were with her. We had kept a daily vigil with her for two weeks, and the last four days we were with her round-the-clock. It was a privilege to be there.

"In the months before she died, Margarita expressed that she felt she had done everything she had meant to do in this life. Sometimes she and I would talk about the after-life, which she said she would send a sign back about, if she could. After she had expired, I took a crucifix from the wall and laid it on one of her hands. She took her other hand and laid it across the cross.

"Several decades before, I would say to Margarita that I thought Lithuania would never be free. She would shake her head, vehemently disagreeing. 'Just you wait and see' she would say, 'It will be free again.'

And so it was.

Farewell, Margarita. We will always remember you.

INFLATIONARY EXPERIENCE

Continued from p. 17

former Soviet republics. Argentina successfully ended its hyperinflation in 1991 after introducing a currency board. Hong Kong has operated a successful currency board since 1988.

Tangible progress toward monetary stability has been achieved by Lithuania recently. Monetary policy of the Bank of Lithuania and the development of the currency board have contributed to the decline in the inflation rate. However, the strength of commitment to a fixed dollar-litas exchange rate remains in doubt. The relationship between interest rates on litas deposits and dollar deposits at the same Lithuanian banks provides some evidence about the credibility of Lithuanian monetary policy. A common interpretation is that when litas interest rates exceed dollar interest rates people expect the litas to depreciate relative to the dollar. As of September interest rates on litas deposits (36% per year

on one month deposits) continued to be higher than interest rates on dollar deposits (24% per year). However, the difference has been getting smaller. It appears that people continue to doubt the Bank of Lithuania's commitment to the current litas-dollar exchange rate, but every month the inflation rate remains low and the exchange rate remains fixed people become less doubtful. Also the decrease in the interest rate on litas deposits since April can be interpreted as a decrease in the expected inflation rate in Lithuania.

The Soviet period was enormously destructive in Lithuania. However, it is possible that one favorable legacy is a healthy skepticism toward government. The inflation rate is decreasing, but it is not easy to persuade people that progress will continue. In particular, government officials are to be judged by what they do rather than what they say.

A Christmas Tradition Lives On...

This year marks the 53rd anniversary of Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry's Annual "CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD" exhibit. The exhibit displays decorated Christmas trees from over 40 countries. The Lithuanian Christmas tree decorated with "šiaudinukai", traditional straw ornaments has been part of the exhibit from the very beginning in 1941. Initially, when the Museum decided to host the exhibit, Lithuania was not considered an independent country, but rather a part of the Soviet Union and therefore not eligible to be part of the exhibit. The Honorable Consul Petras Dauzvardis who at the time represented the Lithuanian government in exile, made every effort to set the facts straight and have the Museum directors acknowledge that since the United States never recognized Soviet occupation of Lithuania, Lithuanians are in exile and their country forcibly occupied by the Soviets, they indeed had every right to participate in the exhibit. Mr. Dauzvardis' efforts were successful and the Lithuanians have been a part of the exhibit for 53 consecutive years.

In addition to the decorated Christmas trees, represented countries have scheduled dates for ethnic performances designed to acquaint visitors to the exhibit with Christmas traditions or some other aspect of their country's folklore. Initially, Mrs. J. Dauzvardis enlisted the aid of members of the Lithuanian University Club at the University of Chicago to portray Lithuanian Christmas traditions. In 1948, Mr. Frank Zapolis was invited to participate in the program and has been involved ever since. After the Lithuanian University Club broke up,

Mr. Zapolis became responsible for the annual program.

The Knights of Lithuania Folk Dancers of Chicago have been the main performers in the program for over 30 years. The group, directed by Frank Zapolis and under the skillful instruction of Lidija Ringus performed once again at the Museum on December 11, 1994 at 3:30 PM. The program is actually a one hour play consisting of two acts that was written by Mrs. Dauzvardis. The first act shows the traditional Lithuanian Christmas Eve supper (Kučios); the food served and the various games and predictions made on that evening (see BRIDGES November issue). Act Two is the actual Christmas Day celebration which includes Lithuanian singing and dancing. Other members of the Lithuanian-American community are often invited to participate in the program along with members of the Knights of Lithuania Folk Dancers. Usually the number of performers is between 50-60 and have included various children's choruses, young violinists and other Lithuanian artists. The folk dancers usually perform between 7-9 dances. Over the years, Ms. Aukse Kane has contributed to the success of the show by arranging for props and other necessary items, as well as handling the administrative work necessary to tie things together.

The beautiful Lithuanian tree is on display at the Museum largely due to the efforts of a small group of Lithuanian-Americans living in the Chicagoland area. Lucille Vesota and her sister Bernice Kasarski, who learned the art in classes conducted by Frank Zapolis, have been making all the ornaments necessary to decorate the huge tree for over twenty years. When the time comes, the tree is decorated and put up with the help of Carol Bart, Sue Weiland and Mr. Vito Vesota.

The tremendous effort required to put together this program and to display the beautiful Lithuanian ornaments, is yet another example of Lithuanian-Americans devoting their time, energy and resources to share part our their beautiful culture with fellow Americans. We thank everyone involved for representing Lithuanians in such a wonderful manner and wish them continued success in years to come.

If you missed the program this year - plan on seeing it next year - in the meantime, it's not too late to see the exhibit! "Christmas Around the World" at the Museum of Science and Industry, 57th & Lake Shore Drive in Chicago on display Nov.18, 1994 through January 2, 1995.



Some of the Knights of Lithuania Dancers at the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry December 11, 1994

Hypatia Ycas Petkus

The 5th World Lithuanian Sports Games

Lithuanians have always been a nation of people who love, honor and appreciate their native homeland, her traditions, customs and history. Sports is the noble and beautiful means through which Lithuanians can fulfill their desire to meet, challenge opponents and associate with

countrymen, enjoy the hospitality of Lithuanians while becoming acquainted or re-acquainted with Lithuania and its many historical, cultural and sports aspects. The Games will also encourage a closer networking between Lithuanian Athletic organizations from various countries, allowing them to share experiences in organizing competitive events, training, and creating opportunities for sports-loving Lithuanians to meet. The committee encourages Lithuanians living everywhere to participate in sports.

The preliminary list of sporting events scheduled for the Fifth World Lithuania Sports Games:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Gliding | 10. Hiking | 19. Cross country skiing |
| 2. Badminton | 11. Basketball | (in Canada) |
| 3. Billiards | 12. Ice Hockey | 20. Table tennis |
| 4. Sailing | 13. Track and Field | 21. Weight lifting |
| 5. Bicycling | 14. Swimming | 22. Marksmanship |
| 6. Fencing | 15. Handball | 23. Chess |
| 7. Soccer | 16. Rugby | 24. Tennis |
| 8. Alpine Skiing (in Canada) | 17. Fishing | 25. Volleyball |
| 9. Equestrian | 18. Sports dancing | |

The annual SALFAS (North American Lithuanian Sports Federation) convention took place in Cleveland on November 12, where Mr. Rugienius presented preliminary information about the Games, and invited all Sports Clubs to make announcements regarding the Games to its membership. Participation of athletes living in the US will be co-ordinated by this committee. For further information contact: **Algis Rugienius, 3620 Burning Tree Dr. Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302-1511**

fellow Lithuanians.' (translated from the statute of the World Lithuanian Games).

The World Lithuanian National Olympics were organized in Kaunas in 1938. As a commemoration to that event and the 60th anniversary of Lithuania's Independence, the First World Lithuanian Games took place in Toronto, Canada in 1978. Five years later, the second Games took place in Chicago, IL (USA) and the third World Lithuanian Games brought Lithuanian athletes to Adelaide, Australia in 1988. The Fourth Games took place in a newly independent Lithuania in 1991.

The organizing committee for the Fifth World Lithuanian Sports Games invites Lithuanians from around the world to take part in the Games scheduled to take place from July 30, 1995 through August 5, 1995 in beautiful Lithuania. Eligible participants include all Lithuanians (defined as having at least one Lithuanian parent) from all continents regardless of sex, citizenship or religion, with abilities in a particular area of sports. Eligible age is defined by rules for each individual branch.

The organizing committee in the US, headed by Algis Rugienius of Bloomfield Hills, MI hopes the Games will bring together many Lithuanians from around the World. The Games are an excellent means for all participants to meet fellow

Lithuanian Basketball

Several Lithuanian basketball teams were touring the US and playing pre-season games with US college teams this November. Among the teams was "Statyba" who played the University of Detroit "Titans" on November 17, 1994. After winning their three previous matches against various other teams, "Statyba" lost to the "Titans" 81-70. From Detroit "Statyba" traveled to Cleveland, Toledo and Ypsilanti to face other opponents.



"Statyba" members: #13 R. Vaiciunas, #8 G. Ulis, #7 E. Mikalajunas, #14 E. Priudokas, #4 G. Arrington (an American), club leader R. Cesna, #15 V. Sirvydis, #6 R. Knyza. Photo: J. Urbonas

Letters to the Editor

BRIDGES will be happy to publish letters in support of and with opposing views to articles published in BRIDGES. This section is meant to be a forum for discussion - including positive statements, not a battleground. BRIDGES reserves the right to select letters or portions thereof for publication based on interest level of content. Ed.

Dec. 6, 1994

Dear Editor:

The "Politics" section of the October 1994 issue of BRIDGES contains Asta Banionis' article "Two Invitations Declined". Interestingly enough, both invitations were extended by United States official sources. The first invitation to the Lithuanian-American Community Inc. came from the White House to participate, with other member organizations of the Central and East European Coalition, in the State arrival ceremony for Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin. The second invitation was extended verbally by a mid-level Department of State official to the representatives of the LAC, Inc., as well as other Lithuanian-American organizations, to meet with Lithuania's Foreign Minister Povilas Gylys, who will be visiting Washington, D.C.

I consider the decision to forego the Yeltsin White House welcoming ceremony as being "politically correct" and take pride in having been a participant in the decision-making process. I do have a problem with the other invitation to which Mr. Gylys is alleged to have declined. I am troubled by A. Banionis' attempt to discredit Mr. Gylys and in the process to make "political hay". The Lithuanian Government is too new and its leaders too unsophisticated in the ways of "modern" diplomacy for Ms. Banionis to expound her own political agenda at their expense.

It is important to note that the LAC, Inc. did not seek a meeting with Mr. Gylys. In fact, when the Department of State official extended the invitation, the Public Affairs Council had trouble fielding an astute delegation. As it turned out, the Department of State official was only testing the climate and had not checked with the Lithuanian Embassy in Washington, D.C. as to the feasibility of holding such a meeting. When one day prior to Mr. Gyly's arrival in Washington, D.C. the official got around to contacting the Embassy, he was politely advised by counselor Jonas Paslauskas that no Lithuanian-American organizations had requested a meeting with the Foreign Minister. The embarrassed official chose not to pursue the mat-

ter any further.

Which brings me to make some interesting observations. Why would the State Department volunteer to bring about a meeting between Lithuania's Foreign Minister and the representatives of Lithuanian-American groups? It never was done before. Previous meetings were successfully arranged through the Embassy or by direct contact with Lithuania without the help of American intermediaries. In fact, at the time Mr. Gylys was to visit Washington, the President of Lithuania Algirdas Brazauskas was visiting Philadelphia and meeting with top LAC, Inc. National Executive Committee officials. Two days later, Mr. Gylys joined the President in Chicago, where they were welcomed by LAC's president-elect Regina Narusis and other LAC, Inc. officials.

A more appropriate title for A. Banionis' article might have been: "One invitation declined - the second lost in the shuffle".

S. Algimantas Gecys
Past chairman,
Public Affairs Council
Lithuanian-American
Community, Inc.

Nov. 24, 1994

Dear Editor:

The response in the August issue of BRIDGES by Mr. Brazauskas (no relation to the President) to my article on the Lithuanian economy in the May issue unfortunately relies on personal invective rather than objective fact.

My practice is usually to ignore such letters because they tend to generate more heat than light, as this one does. There are, however, several points on which I wish to make my position clear to the readers of BRIDGES.

First, Mr. Brazauskas, for reasons of his own, characterizes my article as "one man's opinion". To the contrary, I stated unambiguously that my article was largely based on a report of the Oxford Analytica, a British research organization specializing in political and economic subjects. The tone was indeed negative but Mr. Brazauskas should have noted that the facts presented therein reflected the disastrous year of 1992. Fortunately, conditions have improved since that time due, in no small measure, to policies instituted by the

former Landsbergis regime.

According to a telephone interview I had with the US AID desk officer for the Baltics, inflation is expected to run in the neighborhood of 40 percent this year, still high but considerably below the hyperinflation rate of over 1000 percent in 1992. Privatization of large enterprises, however is lagging seriously which acts as a brake on the overall economy. The desk officer also made a point of noting that both Latvia and Estonia, and especially the latter, are well ahead of Lithuania in their changeover to a market economy.

Another point raised by Mr. Brazauskas is both puzzling and potentially harmful to Lithuania. Since when is it unacceptable in a democracy, even a small and emerging one to criticize the government's policies? Suppressing negative matters is precisely what dictators do to entrench themselves in power. This is not what we want for Lithuania, and I trust, neither does Mr. Brazauskas.

Third, my critic attributes to me an influence I scarcely possess, that of being able to affect the flow of international investment into Lithuania. International investors are a sophisticated breed and have sources of their own well beyond those of your writer.

Mr. Brazauskas ends his letter with the old adage, "It's better to light a candle rather than to curse

the darkness." I would advise him to light his own way with the candle of research into the Lithuanian economy. Even a public relations professional, as Mr. Brazauskas informs us he is, needs to support his contentions.

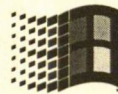
Albert Cizauskas
Falls Church, VA.

Read more about Lithuania's economy in this issue. See "Recent Inflationary Experience in Lithuania" p. 17

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XII

LITHUANIA'S CHILDREN

Continued from p. 5

thought this was a waste I would not be sponsoring a child myself who is in this situation. This program is a hand up - not a hand out.

What happened to Jurgita, the fifteen year old? She has a sponsor! While at a picnic in Philadelphia I mentioned her to a librarian from Virginia. She never hesitated when I told her about Jurgita, once again proving the compassion and kindness of the American people.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Regina and Jonas Svoba for the many opportunities they gave me to see a part of Lithuanian life that most visitors never see. May God give them the strength to continue their work on behalf of Lithuanian's FORGOTTEN CHILDREN, but they cannot continue their work without your support.

The cost to feed and clothe a child for one year is \$150, however any donation is appreciated. During this Christmas season take a good, hard look at your blessings. Now how about that little extra for the children of Lithuania?

Please send your tax deductible checks with a notation of Countryside Children's Fund to:

Lithuanian Orphan Care
2711 West 71st Str.
Chicago, IL 60629

Gift Ideas

Do you need gift ideas for that someone special or that hard to please person? Here are a few suggestions:

BRIDGES

- Enter a Christmas gift subscription to BRIDGES for yourself or someone here in the US or even someone in Lithuania who's trying to learn English.

Through the LAC Educational Council

- Donate money in someone's name to the Council in support of Lithuanian language schools in the US.
- Donate money in someone's name to the Council in support of an Educational Council Christmas Project to send school supplies to needy Lithuanian schools in Lithuania, Poland and elsewhere.
- Subscribe to EGLUTE ("little fir") for Lithuanian language-speaking children in North American, Lithuania and elsewhere.
- Purchase one of the Educational Council's printed materials, audiocassettes or videocassettes.
(Educational Council, 13648 Kickapoo Trail, Lockport, IL 60441)

LAC Human Services Council

- Donate money to the Lithuanian's Children's Hope Fund (Lietuvos Vaiku Viltis) in someone's name. The group whose projects have been written up in BRIDGES helps bring children from Lithuania to the US for complicated orthopedic procedures. The group has also helped establish a modern clinic in Lithuania and medical teams from the US have been sent to Lithuania to teach surgical teams there.
- Donate money to Lithuanian Orphan Care, which has also been featured in BRIDGES (including this issue). Both projects are under the LAC's Human Services Council, 2711 West 71st Str. Chicago, IL 60629
- Donate in someone's name to other groups which provide support for Lithuania, among them:
Lithuanian Mercy Lift, 511 E 127th Str, Lemont, IL 60439 - Seeks donations to support Lithuania through containers of medications, hospital supplies and equipment, and medical literature. In addition LML has several projects specifically targeting children with TB and hearing impairments.
- A.P.P.L.E. - Provides educational materials for Lithuania, but more importantly, conducts summer continuing education seminars for Lithuania's teachers.
- Knights of Lithuania, AID TO LITHUANIA, Inc. 4457 Fairway Court, Waterford, MI 48328-3483 - Sends containers to Lithuania, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation training mannequins, etc.

BRIDGES

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