

LD
AD?

BRIDGES

LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

Volume 19, No. 6

JULY / AUGUST 1995

\$2.50 per Copy

CONTENTS:

3 **Political News** Washington, DC Update: U.S. Foreign Aid and NATO *Asta Banionis*

6 **Humanitarian Aid** Lithuanian Children's Hope *Jeanne Dorr*

10 **People** Memorial Service for Stasys Lozoraitis *Diana Vidutis*

11 **History** Life With Vytautas the Great *Albert Cizauskas*

14 **Business News** *Algirdas Rimas*

17 **Cultural Arts** The Lithuanian Opera Company's "The Pearl Fishers" *Ramune Kubilius*

19 **Cultural Arts** The New York Scene *Aukse Trojanas*

21 **From the Lithuanian Press** *Ramune Kubilius*

26 **Calendar of Events**

27 **Sports News** *Vytas Grybauskas*

28 **Humanitarian Aid** Aid Conference *Ramune Kubilius*



The Lithuanian Opera Company's "The Pearl Fishers"

BRIDGES

To Our Readers:

During the height of this summer's sweltering heat, treat yourself - steal a few hours and relax with this issue of BRIDGES.

In addition to our regular updates in the areas of politics and business news and sports, this issue features Al Cizauskas' article on life in the court of Vytautas the Great. Relax as you are swept back into the luxury of medieval Lithuania.

Later, take a look at the Lithuanian Opera Company's production of Bizet's "The Pearl Fishers" through Ramune's article. The Opera Company has enriched Lithuanian culture abroad for decades and we certainly hope that this wonderful effort will continue.

We regret to inform our readers that Aukse Trojanas bids us farewell as Cultural Arts editor with her article this month. Professional obligations simply do not afford her the time required to be a regular contributor, but Aukse has promised to continue contributing to BRIDGES as her time allows. We thank Aukse for her past contribution and look forward to her future articles. Much of our cultural heritage comes alive in the many Lithuanian parishes throughout the US. This month Aukse takes us on a trip to Manhattan, where one such parish exists today, thanks to the efforts of the pastor and parishioners.

Many of us have been busy attending conferences and organizing efforts in various fields of interest. Read about them in reports on the Political Seminar and Conference of LAC Chapters, the Business Conference, as well as the Humanitarian Aid Conference. Even if you were not an active participant, learn of ways you can help and how you can become involved.

Great reading.....



Audrone Gulbinas

BRIDGES: Lithuanian-American News Journal (ISSN 8750-8028), is published 10 times per year by the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. 2715 E. Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19134

BRIDGES Journal.
Editorial / Subscription Offices
2715 E. Allegheny Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19134
Fax 609-234-8782

Subscription rate is \$18.00 annually (US Mail serviced subscribers; subscriptions to other addresses are \$32.00), payable in advance (US funds). Second Class Postage paid at Auburn, MA 01501; and additional locations. Copyright ©1994 Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without written permission of the publisher. All statements and opinions, including product claims, are those of the organization/advertiser making those statements or claims. The publisher does not adopt, or put forth, any such statement or claim as his own, and any such statement or claim does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the publisher. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope if return is desired.

Editor Audrone Gulbinas
Layout & Design Kazys Razgaitis
Business Algirdas Rimas
Cultural Arts Aukse Trojanas
Human Interest..... Dana Mikuzis
Humanitarian Aid Jeanne Dorr
Political News..... Asta Banionis
Sports Editor Pranas Gvildys
Contributing Editor Ramune Kubilius

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

POSTMASTER: Send any address corrections and/or changes to **BRIDGES JOURNAL**, 2715 E. Allegheny Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19134.

Asta Banionis

Washington, DC Update: U.S. Foreign Aid and NATO

The tidal wave of House Republicans which rolled into Washington, DC in January continues to raze federal agencies in its path. The latest casualty may be the Commerce Department which among its myriad activities provides information about Lithuania's economy to potential U.S. investors and exporters through its East European Business Information Center. The House Appropriations subcommittee which meets as *Bridges* goes to press is recommending that there be \$0 appropriations for the Commerce Department in fiscal year 1996. Unless the Senate steps in to rescue the Commerce Department, employees at the Commerce Department will be out of work by October 1, 1995.

The folks at the U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Information Agency have a little more time to look for other work. In their case, the authorizers and the appropriators are in sync. Although the appropriations bill for these federal agencies is severely cut back for fiscal year 1996, the House Committee on International Relations (the authorizing committee) has provided a timetable for reorganizing the functions of these two agencies and then collapsing them into the State Department. The reorganization plan is to be submitted to Congress by March 1, 1996, with funding to the two agencies eliminated in fiscal year 1997 (October 1, 1996).

So, what's happening to U.S. foreign assistance? On June 8, 1995, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 1561, the American Overseas Interest Act. This bill contains not only the directive to reorganize the State Department/USIA/USAID and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, but also the authorization for all U.S. foreign assistance programs. The spending limits in the bill are in keeping with the seven year Kasich-Gingrich budget bill. Under H.R. 1561, almost half of all U.S. foreign assistance will go to the Camp David countries, Egypt and Israel. The other half will be divided among the rest of U.S. aid recipients on four continents. The portion going to the East European aid program (SEED) is \$325 million in fiscal year 1996 and only \$250 million in fiscal year 1997. Under these numbers, Lithuania is projected to receive only \$6 million in

technical assistance (a 50% decrease in U.S. aid).

Bridges readers should know that if it wasn't for the efforts of Congressman Benjamin Gilman, Chairman of the International Relations Committee, East European aid levels might have been completely gutted in this bill. Chairman Gilman beat back efforts by Republican freshmen on the House floor to further reduce East European



Dr. Paul Goble receiving the LAC, Inc. Amber Award from Pres. R. Narusis.

assistance. Although, President Clinton has made a public commitment to veto this bill (H.R. 1561) if it makes it all the way through the legislative process, it is unlikely that East European assistance will see any dramatic increase.

For those of you who listen to Voice of America broadcasts on your short-wave radios, you should be aware that H.R. 1561 also mandates the elimination of Voice of America by 1997. Unless the U.S. Senate chooses to save Voice of America, world audiences will be learning about America only from Ted Turner and Jane Fonda. Maybe those freshmen Republicans own Turner (CNN) stock?

The House Committee on Appropriations on June 15, 1995 passed the appropriations bill for foreign operations which funds all U.S. foreign assistance programs. The full committee kept the funding for SEED (East European aid) at the same level recommended by the subcommittee - \$324 million. We can expect that level

to be the final number at the end of the entire appropriations process in September, unless Americans who support the new democracies of East Europe (that includes Lithuania) give up their summer vacations and mobilize at levels comparable to their efforts in 1990-1991.

But we have some good news amongst this doom and gloom. The Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. joined with Congressman Dick Durbin (D-IL) on June

the Hungarian American Enterprise Fund (HAEF) was one of the earliest of the enterprise funds established by the Bush Administration and received its full \$70 million funding within three years.

Now, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations was recommending that the HAEF receive an additional \$30 million so it could more effectively attract private funds for its loan and investment program in Hungary. Both Congressman Durbin and LAC, Inc. agreed that this prescribed use of precious SEED funds wasn't fair to the other East European enterprise funds like the Baltic American Enterprise Fund which had yet to receive its full funding.

LAC, Inc. helped draft amended language for the foreign aid appropriations bill which Congressman Durbin presented during the full committee mark-up of the bill on June 15. The language was accepted by the full Appropriations Committee without objection. So now the recommendation reads that the Hungarian Enterprise Fund can receive additional funding in FY 1996 "only if other enterprise funds have been fully funded". This language should help to both protect the Baltic American Enterprise Fund as well as spur the Coordinator's office at the State Department to speed up full funding for the BAEF. As we go to press,

the House of Representatives has not yet voted on the foreign operations appropriations bill, but it seems highly unlikely that any Congressman is going to offer an amendment to provide preferential treatment to the HAEF. Congressman Durbin's amendment within the Committee was not just an attempt to help the private sector in Lithuania, but a positive step to provide some reason and fairness in the current budget-cutting frenzy. With resources tight, everyone should bear the burden of budget cutbacks equitably. At least in the case of the enterprise funds, Congressman Durbin's amendment has provided that standard.

The authorization and appropriations process over in the United States Senate is in a temporary state of suspended animation. Now, that President Clinton has presented his own plan for achieving a balanced budget within 10 years rather than the Republican planned 7 years, the Senate has slowed down the House budget-slashing wave and is considering what could be a workable compromise before the fiscal year runs out on September 30, 1995 and the U.S. government grinds to a halt. On the foreign affairs field this is particularly true with the President having said that he will veto H.R. 1561, the bill that would both reorganize the foreign affairs agencies of the U.S. government as well as cut U.S. foreign assistance.

Senator Helms' Foreign Relations Committee marked-



Foto: J. Urbonas

Congressman Joseph Knollenberg (R-MI) talking with constituents during the luncheon of LAC, Inc. annual Public Affairs seminar. L to R: Cong. Knollenberg, L. Rugienius, A. Rugienius and N. Zelwinder.

15 to protect the funding for the Baltic American Enterprise Fund. Congressman Durbin is a member of the House Committee on Appropriations. His staff and our staff noticed that the Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations had recommended that a portion of the \$324 million designated for SEED (East European aid) in FY96 be given to the Hungarian American Enterprise Fund for additional funding. This didn't seem particularly fair nor equitable in light of the history of the two enterprise funds.

Bridges readers will recall that we've waited a long time for the Baltic American Enterprise Fund (BAEF) to begin its function of providing loans for small-business in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. After Secretary of State Christopher announced the establishment of the BAEF in June, 1993, it took over 13 months for the Clinton White House to name the Board of Directors for the BAEF. The Coordinator of SEED programs, Ambassador Ralph Johnson has been slow to provide funding to the Baltic American Enterprise Fund. Despite the fact that the BAEF is authorized to be capitalized at \$50 million, as of July, 1995 it has only received \$15.5 million. It received \$10 million from fiscal year 1994 funds and only \$5.5 million from fiscal year 1995 funds. In light of all the budget cutbacks by the Congress, Ambassador Johnson was making no early commitments to the BAEF for any fiscal year 1996 funds. By contrast,

up an authorization bill for the reorganization of the State Department, and U.S. foreign assistance, but have not submitted the bills to the Senate for consideration yet, as Senators caucus to try to find some workable consensus in light of the President's threatened veto. Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY), will soon begin to mark-up an appropriations bill for foreign assistance, but his subcommittee has also been delayed because of the need to begin finding some middle ground. Senator McConnell was disappointed in mid-May when he had to withdraw his amendment to the Senate Budget bill. His amendment attempted to stem the drastic cuts proposed to the foreign affairs account (account 150) of the budget bill, but with President Clinton hesitating to defend spending for the State Department and foreign assistance, most Democratic Senators held back support for Senator McConnell's brave effort.

The failure of the McConnell proposed amendment is a lesson to all of us constituents that our voice matters. If American supporters of Lithuania and other countries in East Europe don't speak up, politicians make decisions against your interests based on someone else's opinion, not yours. If you don't write to or speak to your Congressman and Senators, decisions are made without your input -- you've just denied yourself a say in making things right.

For Those of You Who Missed Our Annual Public Affairs Seminar

The Public Affairs Council of LAC, Inc. held its annual public affairs seminar earlier this year because of all the revolutionary changes being brought to the legislative process by the newly elected Republican-controlled House of Representatives. We hope to catch you next year.

Although attendance was light, the people who came are the backbone of our organization's public affairs network. We know that the information and impressions they collected while in Washington, DC last month will be put to good use in the LAC, Inc. chapters across the country.

The issues which were addressed included: the prospects for U.S. foreign assistance; NATO enlargement, organized crime in the former Soviet Union and Lithuania, as well as an evening discussion on the question of national reconciliation in post-Soviet societies. Call our public affairs office at 703-524-0698 if you'd like to receive any of the background information provided at the seminar for a small fee plus postage. During our visits to Senate offices, we discovered a remarkable number of Senators who do favor NATO enlargement and would vote to admit Lithuania into NATO. But we were only able to visit 22 Senate offices

because we only had LAC, Inc. members from 11 states attending the seminar. NATO membership for Lithuania is not impossible, but we need to guarantee at least 51 votes by mid-1996, so LAC, Inc. members have their work cut out for them over the next 12 months.

The 1995 LAC, Inc. Public Affairs Seminar was followed by a two-day conference of LAC, Inc. Chapters. 17 local boards sent their presidents or representatives to the meeting. It was disappointing to have so few East Coast chapter representatives at the conference when chapters as far away as Los Angeles, CA, Seattle, WA and even Hawaii sent representatives.

During the conference, LAC, Inc. was able to award its Amber Award to Dr. Paul Goble who has continued to work in defense of Lithuania's independence and democracy when many others have "retired" from the cause. *Bridges* readers will recall that Dr. Goble was the Baltic Desk Officer in the State Department when Gorbachev launched his attack against Lithuania's democracy on Bloody Sunday, January 12-13, 1991. Leaving that post in Summer, 1992, Dr. Goble became a



Foto: J. Urbonas

Panelists at the seminar speaking on the topic of "National Reconciliation in Post-Soviet Societies". Anne Smith, Professional Staff Foreign Relations Committee, Martins Zvaners, American Latvian Association, and Dr. J. Gedmin, Research Fellow, American Enterprise Institute.

Senior Research Associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Just recently, he has left Carnegie and become the Director of Research for the Jamestown Foundation. Dr. Goble as research director has launched the Foundation's new daily report on events in the countries of the former Soviet bloc. The report is called the *Monitor* and can be subscribed to by computer, fax or mail.

LAC, Inc.'s Amber Award was previously awarded to National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" staff for their outstanding coverage of events in Lithuania during its struggle for independence in 1990-1991.

Jeanne Dorr

Lithuanian Children's Hope

KUDOS

Congratulations to the parishioners of St. George's Lithuanian Catholic Parish in Rochester, New York for their efforts to aid Lithuania. Jan and Andrius Naujokas organize and collect clothing, medicine, school supplies, shoes, and toys to be sent to orphanages. Shipments have been sent to Father Jonikas and Father Stepanauskas of Panevezys and Father Vitkus of Kaunas. Over a thousand pounds have been sent to Lithuania. Parishioners either donate items or money for shipping costs. In addition



Jurate Budrys, Administrator of Children's Hope to helping the less fortunate in Lithuania, these good people also support their own relatives.

Thank you to Edward Valeska for taking the time to write to me. If any readers in the Rochester area are interested in helping, please contact St. George's Church. If you are unable to contact the church, let me know and I will put you in touch with Mr. Valeska.

Efforts such as this require a tremendous amount of work - collecting, sorting, packing, and shipping. To pay for shipping requires more work. Cooperation is a must in this kind of undertaking. Endeavors such as this are done for love of Lithuania and her people. BRIDGES salutes the parishioners of St. George's Church.

Over Mother's Day weekend I was privileged to be invited to play an active role in the conference on humanitarian aid to Lithuania. I was even more excited when I learned that Regina Svoba from Countryside Children would be attending the conference in Chicago. Regina and I worked long hours together last summer and now I would have first hand information about the children I visited. It was for that reason and the fact that I wanted to see how the Shiners's Hospital program was working that I decided to go to Chicago a few days earlier.

After teaching all day I arrived in Chicago looking like I rode on the outside wing of the plane. I was never afraid to fly to Lithuania alone, but the thought of arriving at O'Hare Airport sent me into a panic. However, Birute Jasaitis, who is in charge of LAC's Human Services was there to meet me. Perhaps it was the three letters and two faxes I sent with the time of arrival that prompted her not to leave me at O'Hare alone too long.

I would be staying at "Seklycia", where the Human Services Council is headquartered, along with Regina Svoba, the parents and the children who are recovering from surgery at Shiners'. When we opened the door, there were many stairs with a child's gate across the top. The most beautiful, curly-haired child greeted us. She was in her pajamas, but hardly ready for bed. She looked like she was ready to play a part on Broadway, except she wasn't acting, this was her true personality. I just had my first introduction to seven year-old Sabina. I was so caught up with Sabina's personality that quite some time elapsed before I noticed the brace on her leg. Sabina and her father were here five months when I met them. She had surgery on her leg and spine. She still needed to have a shunt

implanted into her head.

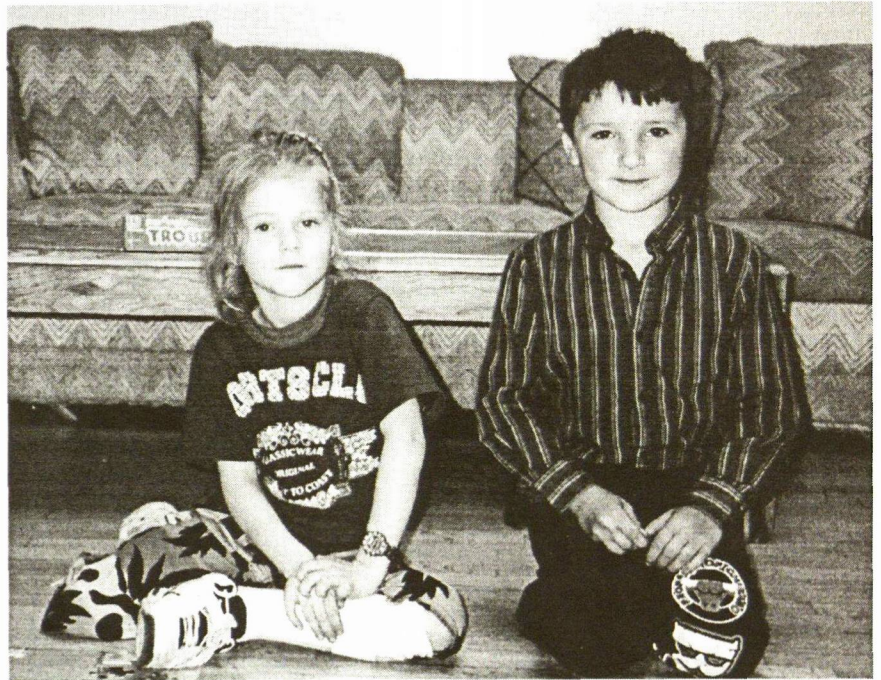
Our living quarters were above the restaurant. There was a kitchen and family room with a television and toys, in addition to the bedrooms shared by the children and their parents. These rooms each contain twin beds, a desk, and small couch. It was a very comfortable arrangement. You could have privacy and at the same time were only steps away from the comfort of other people.

We sat around the kitchen table drinking coffee and getting acquainted. Fifteen-year-old Justinas was in Chicago with his mother, eleven-year-old Ruta was also with her mother. Two and a half-year-old Gintaras was sleeping, but sixteen-year-old Aleksandra joined us around the table. They were both there with their fathers. Six-year-old Regimantas was watching television with his mother. This would be my family for the next few days. In the short time we lived together, I grew to admire and love each and everyone one of them with all my heart.

The next morning a volunteer drove Regina, Justinas, his mother and me to the Shiners's Hospital. Justinas suffered from severe arthritis and was ready for the second operation on his hands. All he needed was the date. Mother and son had arrived from Vilnius eleven months earlier. They left behind a husband and daughter. The drive to the hospital takes between forty-five minutes and an hour. All the driving is done by volunteers. They receive no reimbursement for gas or time. They usually end up spending most of the day at the hospital - between driving, waiting for tests or waiting for therapy sessions to end. The hospital is a beautiful structure, everything is geared toward the comforts of its young patients. Even the spacious lobby held a playhouse and huge stuffed animals. When we arrived at the hospital, we were met by Mary, another Children's Hope volunteer. This was an exciting day - Laura, a thirteen-year-old from Vilnius was being released later that day and going back to Seklycia. While we waited for Justinas to have his appointment, I learned about the process involved in bringing children from Lithuania to the Shiners's Hospital. There have been excellent articles written in BRIDGES and other publications explaining the details of this program. These articles have been written by people who are knowledgeable concerning the facts and figures. It is my intention to acquaint you with the children, their parents and the people who make this program a success.

Shriners works with other hospitals in the Chicago area when other test need to be done. There is no charge for any of the medical procedures. The entire time the child is in

the hospital, the parent also stays there. After surgery, many long hours of therapy are necessary. However, many of these children suffer from such grave physical problems, that they also need therapy to help them adjust mentally. There is great emphasis put on helping the children to heal emotionally as well as physically. Children can be very cruel to someone who is different and these children cannot hide



Sabina and Regimantas

their curved spines, burned faces, etc. Justinas' mother told me of an incident when he was knocked to the floor in school in Vilnius. Because of his severe arthritis, he was unable to get up. A group of children stood by watching and laughing while he struggled to get up, but there was not one child who would help him. Memories such as this are not easily erased, but the pain can be lessened through play therapy. A favorite of all the children is a mixed breed dog named Chelsea. Chelsea comes to Shriners every Tuesday to "play". She is part of a group of seven dogs who can reach even the most introverted children. Entertainment is provided by many groups such as the Scouts, who hold camp out near the hospital. Every year there is a Children's Week that has a carnival atmosphere. While we were there, a high school chorus from Minnesota sang and danced much to the delight of the youngsters.

We continued our tour through the hospital with Mary as our guide. Everyone stopped to welcome us and they all knew Mary. One of the most interesting rooms was the room where the children have the casts placed on them. Every step of the procedure is explained to them by the use of teddy bears. Before anything is done to them, it is done to the bear. They even get to choose the color of the cast.

One of the nurses described the Lithuanian children in

this way - she said you can poke them with needles, draw blood from them, and in spite of all of this they say "thank you". When we got to the therapy room we found Laura and her mother. Laura was learning to stand. Laura came to Chicago with a terrible curve in her spine. She also did not speak to any of us, she would cover her face with her hands when we spoke to her. Her mother left a younger son behind in Vilnius and was very concerned about him. We continued our tour moving on to the beautiful grounds. Everything was in bloom and parents were pushing children in their wheelchairs. The most delightful smell permeated the air. No, it was not flowers, it was a candy factory a short

that he would not be able to afford all this care, but he was reassured by Children's Hope that they would continue to care for Gintaras. Gintaras was going through the typical "terrible twos", most of his vocabulary consisted of "NE" - it was "NO" to everything and everybody except Sabina. He would not let her out of his sight. Whatever she suggested was fine, perhaps it was the allure of her being an "older woman". Aleksandra was the lady of the group. Her parents first noticed a problem with her when she was four. She had arrived in February and she and her father were preparing to return to Lithuania shortly. She had had two operations in Chicago. After the first, which had lasted eleven hours,

Aleksandra became ill. Her legs felt like wood and her father had begun to doubt the surgery. Since they were already here, they decide to go ahead with the second operation. This one lasted nine hours. Today, Aleksandra's spine is straight and she is a beautiful young lady. She was quite proud that she was the senior member of the house. During one discussion, she took it upon herself to remind Justinas that she is half a year older than he, and therefore her opinion should carry more weight. I'm sure it won't be too many more years before she starts subtracting years from her age rather than adding to them. Eleven-year-old Ruta decided I was intruding on this cozy family and chose to pretend I wasn't there. She also had an "S" curved spine. She had two operations and now her spine is straight, but she also had a hearing problem and Children's



l to r: Laura, Ruta, Gintaras, Regimantas

distance away. Justinas and his mother joined us with huge smiles and good news. He had the date for the next operation - June 2! Now, maybe they could think about returning home to the rest of their family. It didn't seem so far away any more. We ate our lunch at the hospital and started home.

Back at our living quarters, there certainly was reason to celebrate. Laura was coming home and Justinas had the date for his second operation. I want to impress upon the readers that none of these are "simple" operations; nine hours on the operating table is not unusual. Gintaras was definitely the star of the show upon our return. He decided he had had enough of his two miniature canes and the tiny walker. Can you imagine canes and a walker for a two-year old? He recently received his new leg and he was determined to walk. He would have to go back to the hospital for another fitting. The little stump on his leg was turning red and blistering. There was also an iron rod inserted into the leg. Gintaras has had five operations since his birth. He has only one kidney, but he also has one of the most loving fathers I have ever seen. He will need constant replacement of his prosthesis as he grows. His father was extremely worried

Hope was trying to have her fitted with a hearing aid. Balance is very difficult for Ruta as a result of her hearing problem.

Regimantas is six-years-old. He also took Gintaras under his wing and was very protective of the two-year-old. When Regimantas was four, he received burns over 60% of his body. He had wandered too close to the stove and his clothing had caught on fire. He ran outside and since it was an extremely windy day, the flames spread even more quickly over his little body. He had surgery on his hands and elbows. He still faces operations on his ears and head.

I wish I had more space to tell you about the individual children, but I would like to have you think about a few things. Can you imagine the pain and suffering these children are going through? Yet, there is no complaining or whining. The parents never despaired or questioned their fate or the fate of their children. Never once did I hear, "Why my child?" Their gratitude to Children's Hope went beyond words. They could not find words to express their thanks to the volunteers, those people who are the heart of this program. They are the ones who drive the parents and

children for their tests before the surgery, they are the ones who sit with the parents during the long, tense hours of surgery, they visit the children every day, and after the children are released, these are the same individuals who drive them back to the hospital for checkups and therapy. The families are made to feel that they are an integral part of the Chicago community. Outings are arranged for them, birthdays are celebrated, dinner invitations are extended, and everything that is humanly possible is done to take away some of the pain of homesickness. While I was in Chicago, the parents were invited to the Friday night reception, (at least one always stays with the children). They worked serving meals during the conference on Saturday and also attended Sunday's session.

In the afternoon, the parents and older children received tickets to the magnificent Lithuanian Opera. During the intermission, Regimantas whispered to me that I should not be afraid because he figured out that the whole thing was "pretend" and not real.

Lithuanian children are now in Shriners Hospitals in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Several other cities are almost ready to start the program. BRIDGES thanks these volunteers as well as the ones in Chicago. There are certain things money cannot buy. You have proven this by giving yourselves, your love, and your patience to the children and their parents. They could not endure being away from home and their families, not being able to speak English, and trying to cope emotionally with the surgery and recovery. They manage all this only because of that group of people who walk each step of the way with them.

Children's Hope Committee is chaired by Grazina Liautad. It is up to the committee to worry about the funds necessary to support the program. We like to believe in idealism and that is a wonderful thought, but money is what makes these programs possible. The cost to keep a parent and child here for a month is about \$1,000 a month (including airfare). The hospital requires a parent or guardian to be with the child. Some of the children in the program have been in Chicago for over a year. If Shriners and the affiliated hospitals did not offer their services without cost, these children would still be in wheelchairs. If Dr. J. Lubicki, the chief surgeon of Chicago's Shriners Hospital did not personally become so involved with the Lithuanian children, the program would not have succeeded. If people did not support it financially, it would not exist. If we did not have the volunteers, the program would crumble. If, if, if, ---but this time all the if's came together. Sometimes we don't realize how well we work together and how much good we accomplish.

The very able administrator of the program is Jurate Budrys. It seemed to me that a ten and twelve hour work day is the norm for Jurate. The problems of the children and their parents are also Jurate's problems. This is one job where you can't leave the problems at the door of the office. When you leave for the evening, or weekend, or holiday, the problems go with you.



Aleksandra

As I was packing to leave Seklycia, the same feelings washed over me as when I was leaving Lithuania. Part of me would stay behind with these children and their parents. I wanted to stay with Justinas during his second operation, I wanted to be with Sabina when the shunt was put in her head. I wanted to be one of the volunteers who would sit with their parents during this time, not talking but just holding hands. There was so much more I wanted to see and do, but we don't always get our way. I did get to see Laura, with perspiration running down her face and her mother's guidance, take those first painful steps into Jurate's office. It was only a few steps, but she walked, something she could not do before she came to Children's Hope. I had a few pictures left on my roll of film and I thought I would finish them. When I walked into the family room, Sabina was once again instructing Gintaras on how he should walk. You would almost believe that at the age of seven, she had a degree in physical therapy. She wouldn't let me take her picture until she rearranges her hair. The fact that I had a plane to catch was of no concern to her, she was going to have the right hair style. Gintaras took this opportunity to try on every pair of sunglasses he could find. The glasses were so big it was impossible to see his little face. My biggest surprise came from Ruta, who had ignored me for four days.,

She wanted to know why I had my suitcase. When I told her I was leaving, she became very upset. I guess it is true that still waters run deep. I finally calmed her down by promising her I would visit her in Lithuania at some future date. God willing, I plan to keep my promise.

I looked through several dictionaries for a meaning for "hope". The one that struck me was, "to persist in hoping for something against all odds" - that is exactly what Children's Hope is about. Think one more time about these children who come to Chicago with twisted bodies, with badly scarred bodies, with emotional scars caused by humiliation. People stare at them on the street, many schools in Lithuania will not take them. Their young bodies are riddled with pain. When they arrive at the Shriners Hospitals they are not only physically broken, they are emotionally broken. Their families spend their entire lives taking care of them.

I am appealing to the readers of BRIDGES who have been so generous to Lithuanian Orphan Care to help Children's Hope. Organizations, let's hear from you in support of Children's Hope. If we don't help our own people, who will? This is not a hit and miss program, it works! Children who cannot stand when they arrive are able to walk on their own when they leave. One of the young ladies who went through surgery recently placed among the top three in a diving championship in Lithuania. I would like to end this article by borrowing some of the words Jurate Budrys used when she closed the conference

on humanitarian aid. She said that dreams turn to reality. The Iron Wolf was a dream and Vilnius became the reality; freedom for Lithuania was a dream and the Republic of Lithuania became the reality; to help the less fortunate people in Lithuania is the dream, will you help make it a reality?

The address will be a familiar one. It is one desk away from Lithuanian Orphan Care. Every step is taken to save money - these are "no frills" offices. Any help you can give will be appreciated and will be used toward healing a child physically and emotionally. If you can't help now, put the address away for later - you might get lucky and win the lottery! Tell as many people as you can about these programs. Every dollar is used for Lithuania's children.

Thank you to Shriners Hospitals, Dr. J. Lubicki, and all the caring staff members. Thank you to Grazina Liautad and the Children's Hope Committee for the many hours they spend working and planning to make Children's Hope a success. Special thanks to the dedicated volunteers who are the heart and soul of the program. To Jurate Budrys who organizes, agonizes, and sympathizes, thank you for putting it all together.

Please send you tax deductible checks to:
Children's Hope

2711 West 71st Street
Chicago, IL 60629

HUMAN INTEREST

Diana Vidutis

Memorial Service for Stasys Lozoraitis

A memorial service marking the one year anniversary of the death of Stasys Lozoraitis, Jr., the first Ambassador to the US following Lithuania's restoration of independence, was held at the Convent of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Putnam, Connecticut, on June 13, 1995. Fathers Valdemaras Cukuras and Stasys Zakarasuskas concelebrated the Mass offered for the repose of the soul of the late Ambassador. The community of the Lithuanian Sisters of Putnam joined in prayer and hymn at the Mass and at the ceremony immediately following in the Gates of Dawn cemetery.

The Ambassador's widow, Daniela Lozoraitiene, accompanied by her sister Marinela, gathered with former members of the Embassy staff and a few close friends at the gravesite to bless the newly erected tombstone. Etched into a simple granite marker is a cross and the words **Stasys Lozoraitis 1925-1994**. The marker is identical to that of the late Ambassador's aunt, Grazina Matulaityte Rannit, who is buried close by. She had spent the last years of her life at the Blessed Jurgis Matulaitis Nursing Home in Putnam in the care of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. The Ambassador became familiar with the area when he would

visit her, and found the countryside reminiscent of Lithuania itself...

In accordance with the wishes expressed by Stasys Lozoraitis that his funeral be private and simple, the first anniversary of his death was commemorated in the same way. In a summer rain, those who could make the trip to Connecticut shared recollections and remembrances, both historical and personal, of their beloved Ambassador. Ambassador Anicetas Simutis, his colleague during the difficult years of Soviet occupation, expressed the feelings of all who participated in and were witness to the historic events culminating in Lithuania's restoration of independence. Ambassador Lozoraitis' staff, whom he had treated as family members, recalled the personal qualities that made working with Stasys Lozoraitis an experience in service and humility.

In Daniela Lozoraitiene's words, her husband's remains will stay in Putnam "until they can be returned to the Lithuania that Stasys Lozoraitis worked, fought, and died for." She plans to take the wooden cross that marked her husband's resting site for the past year to Lithuania. It will be her second visit to Lithuania since her husband's death.

Albert Cizauskas

Life with Vytautas the Great

For a change of pace, let's leave behind the political and economic complexities of present-day Lithuania and journey back in time to the 14th and 15th centuries.

We often hear of the makers of history, that breed of men whose lives have made a difference, and without whom our own lives might have been other than they are today. One of these is Vytautas the Great.

There is a painting of Vytautas, his white horse prancing into the waters of the Black Sea, holding aloft his banner in a symbolic gesture to affirm his overlordship

of those vast lands from the Baltic south to the Crimea. It's difficult for us to visualize that, although Lithuania's greatest hero spent much of his life on horseback, riding and fighting, he was also a man with needs and desires who lived and ruled successfully in a brutal and backward age.

A Lithuanian historian, Daugirdaite-Sruogiene, wrote a remarkably lively and detailed account of Lithuania in which she dealt with the royal court of Vytautas at Trakai. We tend to think of those days as very uncivilized, but there was also unimagined splendor, as she vividly portrays. More to the point, her characterization of Vytautas as a man and prince gives him flesh and blood and lifts him out of the dusty pages of history books where national heroes are usually embalmed.

Through her, we learn that one of his personality-revealing traits was moderation, in both attire and food, this at a time when outward show and sensual indulgences were common among princes. In fact, Vytautas was said to have abstained from meat on Fridays, but

whether for religious or other reasons we're not told. However, in entertaining guests, he spared nothing to honor and make them welcome with lavish banquets for days or weeks. This tradition of hospitality he obviously passed on to his fellow countrymen, as those who have visited Lithuania can abundantly attest.

The custom was prevalent among rulers then, to exchange extravagant gifts, not as today, with perhaps one or two valuable items, but with whole categories of costly and rare objects which would help stock museums in our day. Even gourmet food was sent along to please

royal palates. Fortunately, we have lists of some of the gifts which Vytautas received or gave, from which we can derive a goodly notion of life in Europe's royal courts and of the relative level of their societies.

Interestingly, Sruogiene mentions that Lithuania's greatest hero preferred gifts from the German Knights for their "superior taste". Yet these same Knights were Lithuania's mortal enemies for two centuries. In fact, the Italian opera, *I Lituani* (which was performed by the Vilnius Opera Company several years ago in Chicago), cel-

brates this bloody struggle. Vytautas and his first cousin, Jogaila, broke the power of the Knights at the first battle of Tannenberg in 1410 (called "algris") which prevented Lithuania from becoming Germanized as had already happened to Lithuania's kinsmen in Prussia. Probably, the politics of those days were no less fluid than today, changing with the changing needs of the moment.

According to one gift list, the Knights sent Vytautas



weapons, finely-bedecked horses, hunting dogs, falcons, rare fabrics, silk and woolen cloths, all manner of edible delicacies, as for example dried cherries prepared by master German chefs, dried food imported from other lands, sugar, spices (pepper, saffron, ginger and so forth), the highest quality herring, other marinated fish, casks of Rhine wine, expensive paintings, precious items (such as gold chains, rings, rare stones and many other jewels besides). Princess Anna (Ona), as wife of the Grand Duke, was pleased to receive a book on the life of the saints (it must have been an illuminated manuscript because printing had not yet been developed), a clavichord (a piano-style instrument popular in the middle ages), and a much-loved monkey.

A contemporary biography of the reigning Holy Roman Emperor has this list of the gifts which Vytautas sent the Emperor in 1396, (all items mentioned are twelve in number): falcons trained for warfare, peaceful falcons, hawks, javelins, long lances, hunting lances, dogs trained in falconry, knights' steeds equipped with golden saddles, sable hats with two pearls apiece, woven clothes, large gloves made of marten fur with one pearl apiece, Lithuanian great coats made of silk, silk handkerchiefs, silver and gold hammers.

Similarly rich gifts of furs, table cloths, napkins and gloves were sent by Princess Ona to the Emperor's wife.

What impresses us today is the quantity of the gifts, too monotonous to enumerate, exchange between rulers and their families, probably on the occasion of a state visit, or simply to assure themselves of the other ruler's good will. The custom of exchanging gifts between rulers has persisted to the present, but American presidents are not permitted to retain much simpler and fewer gifts, donating them to the government. In looking over Vytautas' gift list, one cannot help but be surprised that there was no mention of amber, but perhaps he did give Lithuania's Baltic "gold" on other occasions.

We are also told that Vytautas, in 1415, received his cousin and rival, Jogaila, with splendid ceremonies at Trakai. The Grand Duke of Lithuania showered the King of Poland, his first cousin, with gifts more costly than usual, among which was a cradle enriched with silver work in anticipation of the birth of Jogaila's daughter.

Eat, Drink, and be Merry

The scenes below are reminiscent of Charles Laughton's glutenous feasting in barbaric splendor as Henry VIII in one of Hollywood's epics.

Feasts were held often and were usually rowdy and tumultuous affairs, the guests amused by dancers and musicians while consuming vast quantities of rich food washed down with an over-abundance of mead, beer, and wine. The food consisted of domestic and wild animals and fowl, served with a great deal of fat and heavily spiced. Varieties of cakes, of the type we know as "tortes" were also served.

Vytautas normally entertained 60 to 100 guests at a time. His tables were covered with fine linen, and the plates were of gold and silver, but every guest would have to come equipped with his own knife (why?). Fingers took the place of forks which were still unknown. Dogs under the tables licked off the guests' greasy fingers and gobbled up the excess fat. The great hall at Trakai was illuminated with burning pitch on poles or sticks, giving forth a flickering light hardly better than the dark.

The often inebriated guests, while gorging themselves, were amused not only by musicians, singers and dancers, but also by jesters who were often dwarfs and otherwise handicapped persons, including cripples. While this seems crude to us today, we need only recall the many times Jerry Lewis entertained TV audiences by mimicking cripples.

The Grand Duke Outwits His Jester

In addition to physical deformities, jesters were generally selected for their intelligence and sharp wit with which to amuse their masters and the court. Frequently, they ridiculed the personal traits of their masters or pointed out some unwelcome truth. What saved them most of the time was the deliberate ambiguity of their utterances couched in a comic vein to provoke therapeutic laughter. Shakespeare's plays are full of such witty buffoons who scoffed and counseled even as they amused.

At times, a fellow prince would lend a gifted jester to a princely rival to buy his good will or even to spy on him. One such was sent to Vytautas by the German Knights.

The German jester had a crooked mouth deformed from birth but a wit honed by years of practice at this intellectual, but dangerous game. Unfortunately, the jester became a favorite of the Grand Duke and successfully spied on him for the benefit of the Knights. In one of his reports, he sent the following version of a verbal duel with Vytautas:

Once, the Grand Duke angered by the clown's impudent nonsense, boxed his ears soundly. Instead of becoming downcast or begging forgiveness, the clever jester began to shout with joy that Vytautas, by his punitive action, had elevated him to the lofty order of knighthood. (Knighthood was conferred upon an aspirant by a light blow of a sword.) Vytautas, thinking that enough was enough, threatened the jester with severe punishment and even to straighten his crooked mouth if he persisted in his disobedience.

"But I no longer have my jester's clothes. I threw them away," the jester cried out. Finally, sensing the absurdity of the situation, Vytautas allowed the irrepressible jester to pretend to knighthood in the morning but to revert to his jester's role for the remainder of the day. Here we see that Vytautas was able to distinguish the important from the unimportant. Instead of the jester making him seem foolish and impotent, he turned the tables on the jester and instead exposed him to scorn.

Such sensible compromise was a hallmark of Vytautas' political style.

Travelers

An English Ambassador, traveling through the Grand Duchy in the early years of the 15th century, wrote back to London that Vytautas provided the English diplomat with letters in Latin, Russian and the Tartar languages to ensure his safety when in Tartar-infested lands. Such letters clearly demonstrated the Grand Duke's power over these wild and brutal nomads. (Lithuania at the time had no written language. The Ambassador, therefore, may have meant Ruthenian rather than Russian since Ruthenian was the written language of the Lithuanian court). The English envoy observed that "Vytautas, prince of Lithuania, kept strict order and peace in his extensive domains, and that no foreigner passing through, or stopping therein, needed to pay for anything" or to be concerned about his safety, being allowed to go wherever he wished in the Duchy. Interestingly, the Englishman also noted that the weather in Lithuania that year (1414) was extremely cold, the snow lying on the ground for 28 weeks so that many perished.

There were other visitors, less benign than the English Ambassador. Among these were thieves and agents sent by neighboring nobles to stir up trouble. If they were denied entry, they would manage to sneak in by other means, even somehow down chimneys. They would steal, try to subvert the servants, sing ribald ditties to mock the master, and use every means to make his life trying for him.

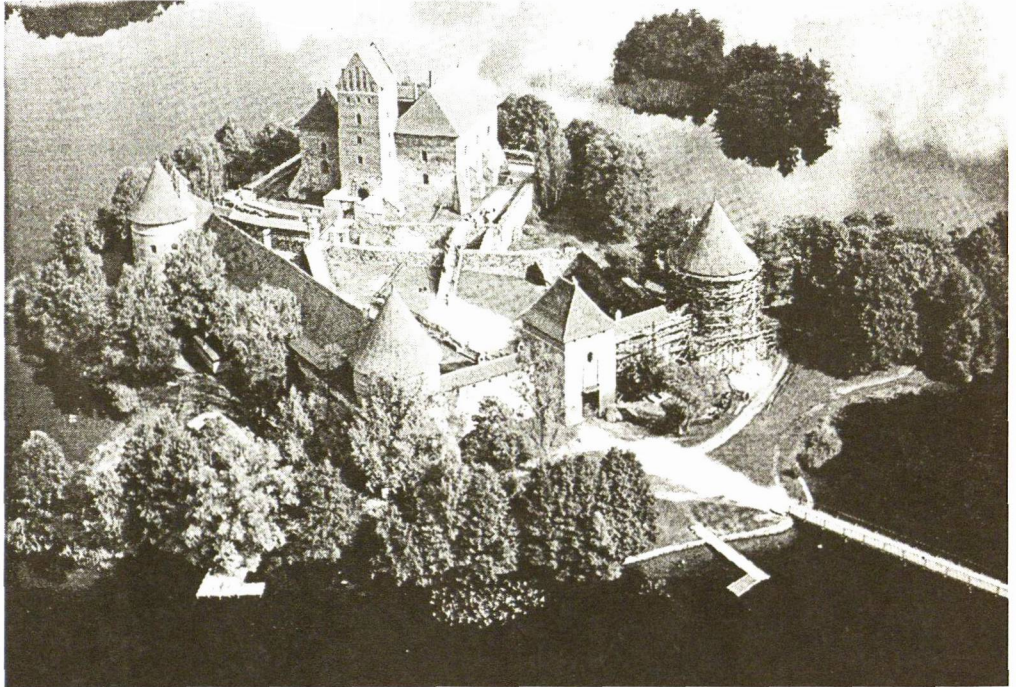
There were also honest travelers who, if they suffered on long journeys, found entry difficult because of the misbehavior of the unwelcome visitors. Those with wounds would have to expose festering sores to gain lodging for the night and perhaps even some herbal treatment if they were lucky. (Medical care was primitive. Princes are said to have exchanged doctors and on one occasion, a highly regarded German doctor cured the Grand Duke's wife of a serious ailment.)

A more welcome traveler was the troubadour, the singing lyric poet. Troubadours were admitted gladly

and, in return for pleasant hospitality, they would chant folk ballads of chivalrous love and heroic deeds performed by knights, and even bring news of other lands to lords and princes in an age which had no NY Times or Peter Jennings. Vytautas was most liberal with these wandering minstrels.

Peasants

As to peasant life, we have little information. We do know their lives were bleak, brutal and short. But in Lithuania at least, due to the land's fertility and an agricultural tradition, people never suffered from fam-



Trakai

ine. In the days of the Grand Duke Vytautas, grain was even distributed in time of need. Such action suggests an efficiently administered state.

Our historian tells us that peasant households were mostly self-sufficient. People wore simple clothes and ate sparingly, mostly from clay pots. Homes were made of wood covered over with thatch (the "bak samanota" of song and legend). Men wore short beards and hair so as not to interfere with their work, in contrast to the upper classes whose men wore long hair down over their shoulders. Within the household lived the entire family together with dogs, fowl, and other domestic animals. The women were noted for their skills in many occupations, especially weaving, and were said to be modest, thrifty, good hostesses, quiet-natured, and not given to gossip.

Just as they are today - which is a good note on which to end our journey into Lithuania's past.

Algirdas Rimas

Business News

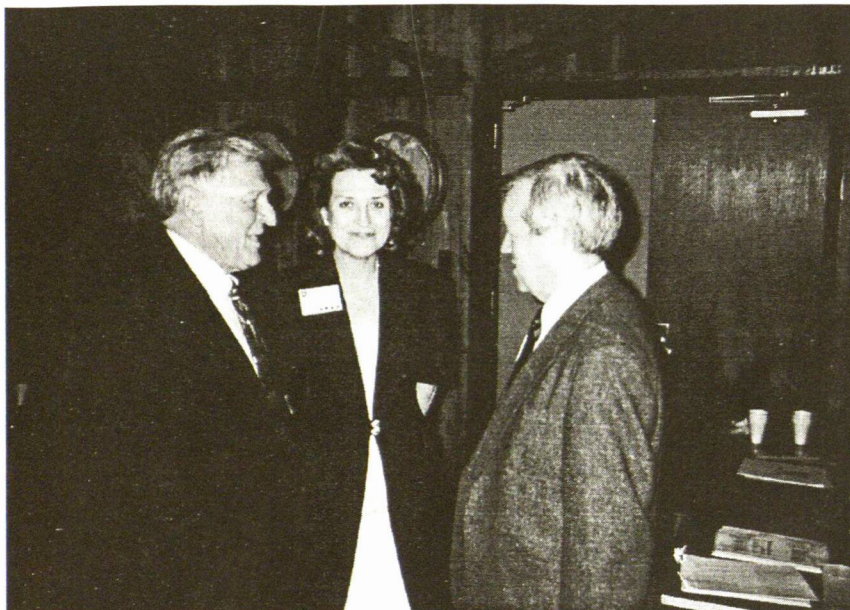
EAC Conference on Business with Lithuania attracts large turn-out, produces much talk

Some 60 Lithuanian-American business leaders attended the EAC Business Conference May 20-21 at the Lithuanian World Center in Lemont, a suburb of Chicago. The Lithuanian-American Engineers and Architects Association assisted in making arrangements for the conference.

As advertised, the conference dealt with trade and investment in Lithuania. Brewster Campbell, president of the US Government funded Baltic American Enter-

prize Fund, the Lithuanian-American economic adviser to the Lithuanian Embassy in Washington, gave a thorough briefing on Lithuania's trade and investment regulations and outlined the country's program for infrastructure investment. The bottom line is that Lithuania, in cooperation with the International Monetary Fund and other western experts, has taken measures to stabilize the economy, expand the private sector, and encourage foreign investment.

There were critics: international banking expert, Antanas Grina, criticized the Lithuanian government's policy of setting an inflexibly fixed dollar exchange rate for the litas, inviting a squeeze on liquidity and aborting chances of recovery in the industrial sector. Financial adviser Vito Valatkaitis-Val blasted Lithuanian red-tape, the venality of public officials, and general inefficiency for creating barriers to foreign investment. He lamented the souring of the initial good-will that many Lithuanian-American business people brought to Lithuania along with their project proposals. A visitor from Vilnius, Dr. Juozas Sarkus, former president of the Lithuanian Entrepreneurs Association, gave a balanced presentation of the Lithuanian commercial and industrial scene. He pointed out that Lithuania's foreign debt is fast approaching the one billion dollar mark and that much of this borrowing had been spent on consumption, not investment.



l to r: A. Kerelis, pres. Lithuanian-American Engineers and Architects Assoc., R. Narusis, D. Johnson, former Ambassador to Lithuania

prise Fund, said his fund is planning to finance, as a start, projects in tourism development (small hotels) and establishment of small photo film processing laboratories. The average loan or equity position will be \$100,000. The Enterprise Fund has been obligated only \$15 million of the \$50 million authorized by Congress for projects in all three Baltic states. Algirdas Rimas spoke of other federal programs available to assist American exporters and investors in Lithuania. He discussed recent start-up projects of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the Ex-Im Bank.

John Zerr, of the Philadelphia law firm of Ballard, Spahr, Andrews and Ingersoll gave an incisive presentation on Lithuanian commercial law and Vidmantas Rapsys, president of the Chicago company, Amber Services International, outlined the transportation services available to ship freight to Lithuania (beware of widespread pilferage experienced on Baltic Sea ferries serving the port of Klaipeda).

A show-and-tell on their experiences in Lithuania by a cross-section of Lithuanian-American business inno-

vators wound-up the session. Drasutis Gudelis from Florida told how he introduced a Hyundai and Ford dealership network into Lithuania (he first bought a shipload of Hyundais in Seoul and sold the cars while they were en-route to Lithuania; then he reinvested the proceeds into fixed assets). Ingrida Bublys from Cleveland described her experiences in introducing the sale of Lithuanian vodka to the US market. It is now available in the Baltimore/Washington area but expansion is planned to other regions. She said the Lithuanian vodka had out-ranked many well known brands in taste tests. Vytas Daugirdas of New York talked of how he started a successful high-tech manufacturing project in Kaunas.

He and other speakers stressed the importance of training the work force. Lithuanian workers generally were found to be quick studies. Ambrose Zatkus, an agro-industry entrepreneur from California, spoke of his project to create an agricultural extension service network in Lithuania.

One VIP visitor to the conference was the former American Ambassador to Lithuania, Darryl Johnson. He is currently deputy coordinator of the State Department office that handles foreign aid to the CIS (the territories occupied by the former Soviet Union minus the Baltic States). Ambassador Johnson spoke to the conference on US assistance to the region and participated in discussions. Speaking at a May 21 public meeting organized by the teachers aid organization, APPLE, Ambassador Johnson reviewed US political and economic policies toward the Baltics. He reminded all of the important role played by President Clinton and his administration in getting Russian troops out of the Baltic States. American assistance to provide housing in Russia for the departing soldiers was understood to be part of the settlement. He warned, that if current Congressional threats to cancel funds for this housing are carried out, the US would be unable to meet its commitment.

The conference also considered the next steps that the EAC could take to promote the interests of the business elements of the Lithuanian-American community. Some complained that Lithuanian-American firms were getting short-shrift in bidding for federal contracts to provide technical assistance in Lithuania. They wanted the EAC to become more assertive in advocating the interests of such firms. Others suggested developing more services to provide commercial information.

As a start, we at the EAC invite you, our readers, to get in touch and provide your stories and concerns on any aspects of doing business with Lithuania.

Economic update on Lithuania

The warning label on any commentary concerning the Lithuanian economy should read: Caution - any explanation of this economy should be taken with a grain of salt. Transforming a centrally-controlled industrial economy into a free market one requires passage through waters yet uncharted by proven theory, and infested by political agendas. Official statistics are at best approximations: they are subject to uncertain collection



Regina Narusis, President of the LAC Executive Committee and Vytautas Cernius, member of the EAC from Los Angeles, CA.

and evaluation methods and they do not include data on the suspected large number of transactions occurring outside the legally regulated economy.

There are many hopeful signs. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the international watchdog of sound macro-economic management, seems to like what it sees in Lithuania. The local currency, the litas, is sound, convertible and firmly tied to the dollar by law at a fixed exchange rate of four to one dollar. Inflation is coming down: it was almost 190 percent in 1995. The private sector continues to expand and now employs well over 60 percent of the labor force. After several years of decline, the Lithuanian gross national product (GNP) promised to register positive growth of 2.5-3 percent in 1995. This is quite an achievement when one takes into account the shock to industry and the consumer delivered by an increase in energy prices once Russia halted its subsidies on oil and gas exports. According to Vilnius

University economics professor Dr. Glaveckas, the price of a ton of crude charged to the state oil refinery rose from about \$3 dollars equivalent in 1991 to approximately the \$100 world market price in 1994.

The opening of the Lithuanian economy to world markets and competition has brought about vast changes in the structure of production. Measured as a proportion of the value of all goods and services produced domestically (Gross Domestic Product - GDP), industrial output dropped from 27 percent to 23 percent. By contrast, during the same period, services (including trade and transport) rose from 28 percent to 49 percent of GDP. Trade patterns have shifted away from markets in the former Soviet Union to the extent that over 50 percent of Lithuania's trade is now with the west. Foreign investment in Lithuania, while still relatively small, has been increasing steadily from a registered total of only \$8 million in 1991 to \$235 million in 1994. The US, with about \$50 million, currently ranks second, after first-place Germany, in the amount invested.

One of the key concerns in the short term, as discussed in the Lithuanian press, has been a growing squeeze on liquidity of the money supply in the banking system. According to Arunas Karaliunas, a former central banker writing in "Lietuvos rytas", the country's foreign reserves in the banking system have started to decline. As the supply of local currency, the litas, is tied by law to the amount of foreign currency reserves, their decline is creating a contraction in the supply of litas. In addition, large-scale government borrowing, at free market rates approaching 40 percent, has tended to crowd-out private borrowers thus increasing pressures on the productive sectors of the economy. Much of this government borrowing appears to be earmarked for current expenditures as spending continues but collection of tax revenues fall short of expectations. Press reports also indicate that recent private bank failures in Vilnius and Kaunas have resulted in a limited run on deposits.

In the longer term, the growth and distribution of foreign debt is also causing some concern. According to the Lithuanian statistics department, current exposure to foreign creditors is over \$960 million. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is the largest lender, accounting for 47 percent of the total. Fully 40 percent of the debt has been committed to energy consumption, i.e. the purchase of oil, natural gas and nuclear fuel imports from Russia and other CIS countries. A further 26 percent of the loans have been committed to fund major investment projects, mainly ones in the public sector. Another 20 percent is blocked-out to form a reserve fund to stabilize the litas. Nine percent of the foreign debt is slated for agriculture and the final five percent (\$48 million) is available for loans and investment to small and mid-sized privately owned industry. To repay these debts, Lithuanian eventually will have to produce for

export sufficient goods and services to generate the needed foreign exchange, and this may be accomplished only if there is sufficient investment.

The demand for investment in Lithuania's obsolescent industrial plant far exceeds the above mentioned amounts. The only time-tested method of attracting such sums is by appealing to international private capital markets. They normally seek countries where there is political stability and a rule of law, where competition and free trade are encouraged, and where governments abstain from intrusive regulation and confiscatory taxation. Hopefully, Lithuania can meet these requirements.

ADVERTISEMENT

Lithuanian Fonts

for Windows 3.1 and
Mac Sys 6 or 7



Available in
TrueType or



PostScript Type 1 formats

Palanga a e u i š č ž é ū
A Ę U I Š Ž Č Ū Ę

a e u i š č ž é ū Udraliai
A Ę U I Š Ž Č Ū Ę

Skuodas a e u i š č ž é ū
A Ę U I Š Ž Č Ū Ę

a e u i š č ž é ū Telsiai
A Ę U I Š Ž Č Ū Ę

My system is a:

Mac Win/PC - 3.5" disk Win/PC - 5.25"

Desired format:

PostScript

TrueType

Name

Yes I want to order:

Palanga \$40

Udraliai \$40

Skuodas \$30

Telsiai \$30

All 4 fonts \$125

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone

add \$5 shipping and handling for total order



VII

Make check payable to
Litnet; mail order to:
litnet Typographics
7 Arthur Rd.
Rosemont, PA 19010

Ramune Kubilius

The Lithuanian Opera Company's "The Pearl Fishers"

The Lithuanian Opera Company presented Bizet's opera "The Pearl Fishers" May 14th at Morton East High School Auditorium in Cicero, IL. The opera was the 39th presented by the Lithuanian Opera Company. Over the years, the Company had done the Lithuanian opera "Jurate and Kastytis" by Banaitis, the opera theme- "I Lituani" by Ponchielli and many lesser and better known international operas for which the librettos were Lithuanian. The local classical music station WFMT would advertise the operas, and in some cases, opera lovers who had no connection with the Lithuanian American community would be among the attendees. Devoted opera goers, Lithuanian Americans from the Midwest and Canada would make the long trip to come to performances.

"The Pearl Fishers" is an opera about Hindus on the island of Ceylon. The opera viewers listened to recurring musical themes and watched the scenery change as the story unfolded about ancient customs which did not bode well for two young lovers who should not be together.

The 1995 Lithuanian Opera Company's presentation was sprinkled with guests from Lithuania, a tradition that started in the years since Lithuania regained its independence. Over the years, the Lithuanian diaspora had opera singers to fill the needed roles for the operas the Company decided to perform. In many cases, the soloists sang in their spare time and worked other jobs to earn a living. They received the best musical educations they and their parents could afford, but only a few of them worked as professional opera singers or sang outside of the Lithuanian American ethnic community. Later, it became difficult to fill parts with Lithuanian-speaking soloists, and tenor or other parts were sung by hired singers who learned to sing in Lithuanian (with mixed results). The orchestra members were hired profession-

als, and in only some cases were of Lithuanian descent. The duties of conductor, concertmeister, chorus master, stage director, artistic director and other important roles were most often filled from the emigre community who did professional work in related artistic capacities. Sets

and costumes were rented from professional costume companies, sometimes even from Italy. Some sets were built in Chicago, or in one case- in Lithuania.

One of the most important ingredients to the success of the operas over the years was the strength of the chorus, a group of dedicated non-professionals who loved to sing opera. Each individual made a commitment to learn the words, melodies, movements required on stage of the chorus. Many of the chorus members devoted years of evenings—the chorus would practice from each fall when rehearsals began, until the spring when the opera would be performed. The women and men would practice in separate classrooms of the Lithuanian Youth Center, then later together...In the 1995 opera, there were 42 chorus members

listed, along with 8 guest chorus singers from Lithuania who presently are visiting or live in America.

The soloists draw the attention of the opera goers. Every opera attendee has opinions about the caliber of their performances. Each solo, duet and trio receives the audience's critiques. "The Pearl Fishers" featured some very qualified world-class singers:

Ramute Tumuliauskaite graduated from the Lithuanian State Music Academy in 1976 and soon after was accepted by the Lithuanian State Opera as a soloist. She has performed in operas and concerts outside Lithuania—in Canada, Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere. She debuted with the Lithuanian Opera Company as Leila, the virgin priestess.

Bronius Tamasauskas joined the Tallat-Kelpsa School of Music. He later graduated from the Lithuanian State Conservatory in 1978. He was accepted by the Vilnius



(Based on "The Pearl Fishers" program and personal remembrances.)



Performers, singers, and others involved in the production of "The Pearl Fishers" gather on stage for ovations. photo: RK

Opera as a soloist. He sang in the Lithuanian Opera Company's "Norma" in 1994, and has sung in Italy, Germany, Sweden, Finland, Austria, Poland and elsewhere. He sang the part of Nadir in "The Pearl Fishers".

Arvydas Markauskas completed his internship at the Vilnius Conservatory of Music in 1980. He has sung baritone parts in many operas, was invited to perform in the International Festival in Split, Yugoslavia. His performance in "Pearl Fishers" was his fifth with the Lithuanian Opera Company. He sang the part of Zurga in "The Pearl Fishers".

L i u d a s Norvaisas studied bass with prof. Virgilijus Noreika at the Lithuanian Musical Academy in Vilnius. He has sung with symphony orchestras and performed classical compositions and contemporary music in concerts— in Lithuania and other parts of Europe. He sang the part of Nourabad in "The Pearl Fishers".

The caliber of other persons in-

involved with the Opera Company also is high. Professional ballet dancer Jurate Maskaliuniene from Lithuania performed the part of The Oracle of Brahma's will in "The Pearl Fishers". Principal Conductor and Artistic Director Alvydas Vasaitis lives in the Chicagoland area, but has conducted the Lithuanian Opera Company off and on since 1974, and has conducted in Lithuania as well—in 1985 as a guest conductor by the Lithuanian Opera and Ballet Theater in Vilnius, in 1988 as guest conductor of the Lithuanian national Philharmonic Orchestra in Vilnius. Chorus master and accompanist Ricardas Sokas trained in Lithuania and has been with the Lithuanian Opera Company since 1991. Chorus master and accompanist Manigirdas Motekaitis grew up in Germany and America, but he had his early training from his mother Izabele Motekaitis who had been a leading soprano in the Kaunas State Opera before World War II.

For many years, there were three performances of each Lithuanian Opera Company annual selected opera. The Opera Company moved to a larger auditorium, so that more opera goers could be seated at each performance. Over the years, however, the performances diminished to two, then one. Was it because not all young people of the emigre Lithuanian American community

continued p. 20



Soloist Ramute Tumuliauskaite from Lithuania is joined after the "Pearl Fishers" performance by now retired soprano Dana Stankaitis of Chicago, who over the years performed a number of leading roles with the Lithuanian Opera Company.

Aukse Trojanas

The New York Scene

Our Lady of Vilnius Church is the heart of the Lithuanian Community in Manhattan. Small and serene, it occupies the middle of a short block near the entrance to the Holland Tunnel. A simple beige facade is crowned with three crosses. A large rosette of stained glass floats above the middle of three red doors. Inside, tall windows in the angular, Lithuanian style of stained glass, light up the church with color. Within the large dome above the altar, an icon of Our Lady of Vilnius glows with her golden halo of sunrays as she rests upon a sliver of the moon. She graces this New York church as she does Dawn's Gate in Vilnius.

The painting of the icon was made possible by the generosity of Dr. Grazina Austin. She commissioned the artist Tadas Sviderskis to create the image of the Madonna of Dawn's Gate, an important spiritual center in Vilnius. Grazina, her mother and many others have a powerful emotional response to this icon which affirms their Lithuanian identity within the Catholic Church.

The construction of Our Lady of Vilnius Church in 1905 was the culmination of a dream of Father Joseph Sestokas who worked as a longshoreman to help raise the necessary funds. On October 15th the church will celebrate its 90th anniversary as a parish.

The church is dear to many parishioners and visitors. Social events take place in the friendly atmosphere of its

basement. There is a small raised stage, a long bar and many tables and chairs to accommodate guests. Chameleon-like, the simple basement quarters transform themselves for art shows, poetry

readings, church dinners and enchanting Christmas parties. After Mass on Sundays, coffee and cake are served to the parishioners, a small and eclectic group whose members are attached to the church for different reasons.

For Dalia Bulgaryte, Dalia Bulviciute and Helen Matthews OLV is a center to meet Lithuanian friends and to feel at home. Dalia Bulgaryte feels the experience is similar to the old Christian tradition of praying and singing hymns with your friends. She finds it to be a very comfortable and liberal community.

Ed Cook left Lithuania at the age of three. For him, visiting the church is like coming back to his roots. He finds the church community to be cohesive and nurturing. As president of Council 12 of the Knights of Lithuania which meets at OLV, he feels renewed and refreshed in his culture. Millie Pietz is one of the tireless treasures of the church. Since the 1930's she

has been active in upholding the various Lithuanian traditions, especially with the Knights of Lithuania. Tony Zagarino has become invaluable as Pastor Eugene Sawicki's right hand man. He is a dedicated volunteer/church manager/altar boy who has found this to be a rewarding avocation in the past ten years of his retirement.

Father Sawicki brings many talents to his church. He was trained as a counselor, a psychology educator, and has a PhD in Canon Law. He was a fireman in Green-



Our Lady of Vilnius Church in Manhattan



L to r Ilya Shteynman, Angela Kiausas, Helen Mathews, Dalia Bulgaryte, Aldona Kepalaite

wich Village for many years but always wanted to be a priest. In 1986 he was ordained at St. Patrick's Cathedral by Bishop Paulius Baltakis. For him, one form of modern priesthood is "to make people aware of the mystery around them."

Aldona Kepalaite provides a good part of the soul of Our Lady of Vilnius Church. She has been associated with the church since 1983 as an organist, parishioner and organizer of many events. When she first came to OLV, she felt that she should come more often, that she was "needed" and wanted to

participate. She appreciated the indomitable spirit of the small community: it was like a community of the first Christians, fighting against all odds. Aldona is often the first to arrive and the last to leave. She says that when the church is empty, it glows in its own light.



Parishioners Mr & Mrs. Kiausas with Fr. Eugene Savicki

Lithuanian Opera continued from p.18

grew to love opera the way their parents and grandparents who had grown up in Europe did? Was it because the chorus was getting older and "new blood" didn't fill the ranks? Was it because the costs of scenery, salaries, and other expenses grew too dear? Was it really fair to the chorus, soloists, and the Executive Officers to devote so much time and money to a "one performance" opera? Did the Lithuanian Opera Company run out of operas? Some people say that the 1995 Lithuanian Opera Company season may have been its last, that the Opera Company may not survive to perform in its 40th consecutive season. Only time (and the Lithuanian Opera Company itself) will tell if this was the last opera.

Let's hope that the singers, both professional and the dedicated, music-loving chorus will continue to have musical outlets somewhere. The Opera Company has produced records of Banaitis' "Jurate ir Kastytis" and the chorus has sung for "Kad Liktum Tu Gyva" (That You May Remain Alive). The men's chorus performed at the 1995 Lithuanian Independence Day celebration in Chicago at which former Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis spoke. Opportunities will surely present themselves.

ADVERTISEMENT

SEEKING INVESTMENT CAPITAL for **MODERN, NEW DENTAL CLINIC IN** **KAUNAS, LITHUANIA**

Invest in Lithuania's future, while making an excellent 11% return.

Developers seek \$350,000 for new, state-of-the-art private dental clinic and laboratory in Kaunas, Lithuania. Five (5) year notes, pay 11% APR and are secured by \$3,000,000 in clinic's assets, existing real estate, and successful food supermarket business. Political Risk Investment Insurance (Registration No.: 163-95-004) provided by OPIC - a U.S. Government Agency.

Clinic will feature top professional staff and state-of-the-art U.S. - made equipment in prime location. Project has already been reviewed and approved by Lithuanian Ministry of Health as "sound, useful, and much needed in Lithuania." Minimum investment of \$10,000 will help create long-term employment for 25 professionals and staff, and improve quality of health care in an underserved market.

For detailed Business Plan, including financial projections, contact:
LCC Corporation, 11 Harwood Lane, Clementon, NJ 08021, U.S.A.,
Telephone: 609-435-2626 - Fax: 609-784-0493

The LCC Corporation is not affiliated with LAC, Inc.

Ramune Kubilius

From the Lithuanian Press...

Selected excerpts from the Lithuanian Press in America.

LA Acquainted with Lithuanian Traditions

April 8th library users at the newly rebuilt Los Angeles Public Library were entertained by the Lithuanian Easter Grandmother ("Velykų bobutė"). Thanks to the efforts of the St. Casimir Lithuanian Saturday School principal, Maryte Sandanaviciute-Newsom, the topic of children's story hour that Saturday was Easter in Lithuania. The attendees were children of various ethnic backgrounds and their parents – 60 chairs were soon filled, until it was standing room only. Maryte told the children about Lithuania, about Lithuanian Americans in Los Angeles, about the St. Casimir Lithuanian language school. She then introduced the "Velykų bobutė", teacher Danguole Varnas and her daughter Darija who acted the part of a rabbit. The children and their parents learned about Lithuanian Easter customs. They heard a story about a bean. Lithuanian Easter egg decorations were demonstrated by Giedra Gustas. The children were allowed to try their hand at waxing or carving flowers on eggs in the traditional Lithuanian manner. At the entry to the children's auditorium, a display case was decorated with Easter eggs, dolls in Lithuanian folk costume, a map of Lithuania, and photographs of Vilnius. The display case was scheduled to stay up all of April.

(DARBININKAS, from an article by Birute Prasauskas, 4/28/95)

Students Supported

On April 4th, members of a new support group met in Los Angeles. The group of Lithuanian Americans attempts to support Lithuania's high schools by sponsoring awards for the best English language students. At the April 4th meeting, the committee read letters from students who had already won prizes. In the letters, the students thanked committee members for the prizes received. They also thanked Lithuanian Americans for the support which provided the incentive for learning English which is a language useful around the world. They expressed an interest in learning more about Lithuanian American life. Juozas Kojelis and Zigmas Brinkis relayed their own impressions about the award ceremonies in Lithuania, relaying also the impressions of Birute Viskanta.

The committee is considering having contests and sponsoring awards for German, French, or other language skills, and even supporting community activity.

This year, however, it was decided to award only the English language prizes. "Lietuvos Gimnazijos Remti Komitetas", chaired by Z. Brinkis, is seeking donors to fund the prizes. Those who donate more than \$100 are able to choose the high school at which the awards will be given. Smaller sums will be combined and awarded to schools deemed worthy of support. Donations will not be used to cover any type of administrative costs.

Donations for the coming fall will be accepted until July 1st. Arrangements will be made with Lithuania's Education Ministry. Donations may be sent to Zibute Brinkis, 1500 West Covina Parkway, Suite 103, West Covina, CA 91790.

(DARBININKAS, from an article by Z. Brinkis, 4/28/95)

Miss World Visits

Miss World '94, Aishwarya Rai, was to fly from London May 3rd to visit Lithuania and to participate in the Miss Lithuania '95 ceremonies. Miss World was scheduled to stay in the Villon Hotel. The hosts planned on organizing a reception for about 100 people. Miss Rai's visit to Lithuania was scheduled to take two days. Lithuanian American Ben Gudelis' firm in Lithuania, KristiAna was scheduled to organize the visit, a first to Lithuania and Eastern Europe by a "Miss World".

(DARBININKAS, 4/28/95)

Lithuanian Tourists

The most popular destination of Lithuania's tourists? Italy. It is now easier and cheaper to travel from Lithuania to Italy than to Crimea. Other popular destinations are Spain, France, and a combined trip to Prague-Vienna-Budapest. In last place in terms of popularity are trips to London. 65% of the travelers go as tourists, to see and visit new places. 35% state that their primary reason is rest and relaxation. The tours groups are mostly composed of older travelers and families. Young people tend to go on the rest and relaxation trips, because these trips are cheaper. According to travel agencies, the travelers include people of various professions- from teachers to the unemployed. Tours of 35-40 persons travel in busses, staying in hotels. However, about one third of the nights are spent on the bus. Tours range in price-from \$325 US to \$400 US. Trips to the Adriatic Sea are less expensive. During Easter break, high school students traveled in

large numbers to Paris. Trips around Lithuania were popular as well, due to very mild weather. Last week in Lithuania it was 25 C (78 F) during the days, 4-9 C (40 F) during the evenings.

(DARBININKAS, 5/5/95)

Theatre group celebrates anniversary

The Los Angeles drama group "Dramos samburis" celebrated its 40th anniversary April 29th with a banquet and the publication of an commemorative book "40". Many guests gathered in the St. Casimir Parish Hall. Over the years, the directors (many of whom also acted) have included Juozas Kaributas (1954-62) who was the founder of the troupe; Gasparas Velicka (1958-1962), Dalila Mackialis (1962-1981) during whose leadership the troupe performed 20 different plays; Birute Barauskaite-Mazeikiene filled a gap when Dalila Mackialis moved from Los Angeles. The director since 1984 has been Petras Mazelis who moved from Cleveland to Los Angeles. The troupe had celebrated its 30th anniversary in a grand manner as well. Over the years the group has performed many types of plays written by Lithuanian playwrights, depicting the tragic and joyous moments and events from ancient to modern times. Vincas and Ema Dovydaitis have been the most loyal and idealistic troupe members—they've acted, they've raised funds, they've served as coordinators... (Even though a number of the actors have taken acting lessons or have even made their living in the acting field, most of them have been dedicated and talented amateurs who are devoted to their troupe and to performing in Lithuanian language plays-rk.)

(DRAUGAS, from an article by A.R., 5/13/95)

Photo exhibit

From February-March, 1995, a Lithuanian photography exhibit entitled "Vitality and Change in Lithuanian Photography" was held at the College of DuPage (in suburban Chicago, IL). The exhibit was sponsored through funding from the Illinois Humanities Council. Portions of the exhibit were scheduled to be brought to the Lithuanian Youth Center's Ciurlionis Gallery in Chicago from May 18th through June 19th. Photographers included: Aleksandras Macijauskas (born in 1938) who in his pre-photography days studied philosophy and worked in a weaving factory; Tomualdas Pozerskis (born 1951, who studied engineering in Kaunas, but who was inspired by photographer friends—by 1975 his work had won prizes in France); Antanas Sutkus (born 1939, who has been a photographer since 1958, first working on the staff of various journals, later free-lancing and winning more than 60 medals and prizes); Romualdas Rakauskas (born 1941, who studied journalism at Vilnius University and worked on the staff of "Nemunas" journal); brothers Mindaugas and Algimantas Cerniauskas (The

first was born in Lithuania in 1942, the second was born in 1953 in Siberia where the family was exiled in 1948. Upon their return to Lithuania, the brothers worked in the film industry, devoting their free time to collaborative photography projects); Vaclovas Straukas (born 1923 who studied Lithuanian language and literature, worked as a teacher, worked as a singer, actor, composer, poetry, and then discovered his calling as a photographer); Vytautas Ylevicius (born 1930 who studied environmental science, who immediately was drawn to photograph nature—he presently is a photography instructor at Vilnius Pedagogical University); Snieguole Michelkevicius (born 1953, who studied electrical engineering but who organized her first exhibit as a student; by 1993 she had organized a 120 photograph retrospective exhibit in Sauliai). A catalog of the work of these photographers was published by the College of DuPage Gahlberg Gallery.

(DRAUGAS, from an article by Ramunas Korsakas, 5/13/95)

Finnish film about Lithuania

A Finnish documentary film entitled "Liettuva, vapaus, Landsbergis" (Lithuania, Freedom, Landsbergis) was shown over Helsinki, Finland television April 7th. Reviews which appeared in the Finnish press were favorable. The Director, Marjatta Cronvall, depicted recent history through the eyes of Vytautas and Algirdas Landsbergis. The film is made up of fragments of memories. The primary subjects were people and their love for their homeland—the film draws the viewer into that history. In the film, the two meet for the first time. The author is overjoyed that his work can be published in his birthplace without censorship. The politician fights for his homeland in Parliament. History had not allowed the two to meet earlier. In the forefront of their meeting (in the film)- the barricades in front of the Lithuanian Parliament building. The film zooms in on a chapel with the date: January 13, 1991. The director, Marjatta Cronvall, in the film's opening moments describes how the idea for the film came about. In 1993 a promotional piece was being filmed about LIFE (the Lithuanian International Film Festival). At the time, she met Algimantas, the geologist brother of Algirdas, who lived near Washington, D.C. The 45 minute film then relays the history of the Landsbergis family, its family tree, and also overviews Lithuanian history. For a long time, according to the film, Lithuania was surrounded by two truths. Ethnic culture was allowed to continue, but only as decoration. Some Lithuanians, at least superficially, became Soviet-like. Others became removed from their Lithuanian identity. Still others escaped overseas and tried to work for the good of Lithuania. History is seen through the prism of both Landsbergis, the writer & professor of literature in an American university, and Landsbergis, the musician whose admiration for M.K.

Ciurlionis could be equated with the admiration the Finns have for Jan Sibelius. The documentary was to be re-broadcast April 12th in Finland. Planned include having the film shown in Sweden, Denmark, and Iceland as well, since television companies supported the making of the film. It is hoped that the film will reach many European and American viewers as well.

(DRAUGAS, 4/29/95)

German School in Klaipeda

In Klaipeda, for the third year in a row, a German class is operating for 137 1st-4th form students of German descent. The school is supported by the German government, which each year sends teachers to the school.

(DRAUGAS, 5/2/95)

Voice of America

On April 19th, for the first time in 40 years of transmission, announcers of "Voice of America" spoke via satellite with the "Radiocentras" radio station in Lithuania. Linas Rimkus of "Voice of America" spoke with Rimantas Pleikis of "Radiocentras" for 7 minutes. Although "bridges" of supposed goodwill had operated between Vilnius State Radio and Milwaukee, WI and the Lithuanian State Television's Ceslovas Jursenas and Geneva, Switzerland, those conversations had been strictly controlled. Beginning April 24th, "Radiocentras" plans to include a 10 minute broadcast of news from "Voice of America" in Lithuanian, along with live conversations between Washington, D.C. and Vilnius.

(DRAUGAS, 5/2/95)

Boston Radio Has New Announcer

As of April 1st, the new announcer of Boston's "Laisves varpas" Lithuanian radio program is Aidas Kupcinskas, who took over the duties from Petras Viscinis. The program, heard by Lithuanian Americans in Boston and surroundings, was started by Viscinis on March 7, 1954. The program was always composed of both cultural and human interest content. The new announcer/coordinator is 43 years old. He moved to Boston from Lithuania 20 years ago. He is a computer specialist. He and his wife Gita are parents of two children, and they are actively involved in the Boston ethnographic group "Sodautas".

Assisting Aidas Kupcinskas will be Gintaras Cepas (financial matters), Gita Kupcinskas (English language programming), Perkunas Krukonis (music programming). Assistant announcer/correspondent will be journalist Rima Girnius, who recently moved from Lithuania with her Lithuanian American husband. The new address of "Laisves varpas" is c/o Aidas Kupcinskas, 19 Old Farm Road, Walpole, MA 02081.

On March 26th, a committee gathered to plan a

farewell for Petras Viscinis and his wife. Among the participants were Lithuanian Americans from Boston, Brockton, Cape Cod, and other cities. The farewell is planned for June 4th in the South Boston Lithuanian Hall. Entertainment will be provided by a Boston sextet, which has long had ties with the radio program. Petras Viscinis and his wife hope to move to his birthplace of Druskininkai, Lithuania.

(DRAUGAS, 5/17/95)

Olympic Travel

Boston's "Baltic Tours" travel agency has been selected by the Lithuanian Olympic Committee as its official travel agency. According to an agreement signed by the president of "Baltic Tours", Algis Mitkus, with Olympic Committee President Arturas Poviliunas, "Baltic Tours" will organize, publicize and encourage tourism, travel from Lithuania to Atlanta, GA for the games of the 26th Olympiad. Tickets to events will be available, as will flights and hotel rooms. Five travel agencies in Lithuania had competed for this honor. "Baltic Tours" has been in operation for twenty years, and has had an office in Vilnius since 1991. Earlier, the travel agency concentrated on the travels of Lithuanian Americans to Lithuania. Now, the emphasis has switched to helping Lithuanians travel to America.

(DRAUGAS, 5/17/95)

"Ateitis" in Lithuania

The Lithuanian Catholic Association "Ateitis" in Lithuania has enjoyed a revival since 1989 when a conference was organized. At that time, Lithuanian American Dr. Arvydas Zygas (a Fulbright scholar to Lithuania, a biochemist with active interest in ethnography) was elected president of Lithuania's "Ateitis". Dr. Zygas started his Fulbright work at the University of Vilnius; he later moved to Vytautas Magnus University, where he even served as Dean of Students. In 1992, he was re-elected. Through his efforts high schoolers formed "moksleiviu" groups; students attempted to organize ideological courses. Summer camps were organized. Early "camps" were really traveling groups which stayed in country parish quarters. Besides seminars and lectures on ethical and religious topics, they performed community duties- they weeded and neatenened village cemeteries and churchyards, they included local young people in their discussion groups. It was important at the time to provide young people with the basics of the Catholic faith (the principle of Catholicism is one of the principles of the organization, along with the importance of family, community activity, ethnic loyalty, intellectualism, and so on.) At this time in Lithuania, the youngest "Ateitis" members ("jaunuciai") boast 300 members, the high schooler group ("moksleiviai") boasts about 1000 members working in parishes and schools, the student group

“studentai” has about 100 members at the universities in Vilnius and Kaunas, the college graduates/“emeritus” group (“akademikai”) has about 150 members (including some who first became members of “Ateitis” in the pre-World War II years).

The largest summer camp of “Ateitis” is Berciunai, near Panevezis. It already existed as a summer resort in the pre-World War II era. It later became a Communist Youth (“komjaunuoliu”) camp. A church designed by architect Jonas Mulokas (who later designed Lithuanian American churches in the U.S.-rk) was built there. In 1957, orders were given to bomb the church, destroying it so it wouldn’t “poke” the young Communist youth in the eyes. When Lithuania regained its independence, the camp was turned over to the city of Panevezis and to the “Linus” company. The two groups donated the site to “Ateitis” with the understanding that the camp wouldn’t be used for commercial purposes, that it would be renovated and improved, and that the children of Panevezis would be allowed to use it. The summer camps run by “Ateitis” at Berciunai were organized in a manner similar to camps run by “Ateitis” at Camp Dainava, MI and Neringa, VT. The Lithuanian Ministry of Education contacted “Ateitis” about the possibility of allowing children of Lithuanian

descent from Russia, Latvia and other neighboring countries to camp in that healthy, well-run camp. During the winter, students of the St. Casimir College live in the camp dormitories, during the summer- campers. “Ateitis” also has gotten back a “villa” in Palanga. The building, consisting of three-stories and 16 well-maintained rooms, was the “Jurate” sanitarium during the years of Soviet occupation. Plans are underway for groups to use the small facility. A larger facility, a building on Laisves aleja in Kaunas, has not been returned to the “Ateitis” organization. Donations from America helped build “Ateitininku rumai” in the pre-World War II era. (Some Lithuanian American “Ateitis” members remembered rooming in the dormitories of that building during their college days at Vytautas Magnus University.-rk) The Lithuanian government has not hurried to resolve the ownership status of the building which has been used by Kaunas Technological University. The University has reached an agreement with “Ateitis”—the government has not resolved its part of the matter.

“Ateitis” members gathered in July 1994 in Vilnius to discuss organizational matters: about 200 persons from outside of Lithuania, and 1000 total participants mingled, discussed, listened to lectures. About half of the participants were young people; they organized a concert, a literary evening, and the Holy Masses which took place each of the four days of the conference. The conference was important to the organizational structure of “Ateitis” which will have Executive Committee members both in Lithuania and outside of Lithuania. A brotherly spirit united members, no matter where they lived.

We are happy to see that the revival of “Ateitis” has been made possible because of the Catholic, moral, upstanding Lithuanians who lived through the years of occupation. “Ateitis” members who live outside of Lithuania will be able to help provide moral and material support. We will assist in preparing future leaders for the organization. Although the organization is not large in number in Lithuania, from its ranks will come the future generations of Lithuanian Catholic intelligentsia. That is the mission of “Ateitis” in Lithuania, as it was in the post-World War I years, the early years of the organization.

(DIENOVIDIS, published in Lithuania, from an article by Dalile Polikaitis, 3/31/95)

Lithuanian Orphan’s Memories

A new book has been published, written by Vilnius resident (now deceased) Prane Makariunas. She was an orphan who lived in a Vilnius orphanage from 1915-1925, and later worked in the “Rytas” children’s school from 1925-1939. The book reflects life in pre-War Vilnius, a city which remained Lithuanian in spite of the Polish, Russian and other barriers. “In Vilnius, there were several orphanages for Lithuanian children - in Antakalnis, Agronomai, Ausros Vartai, St. Michael’s...The workers were of various educational levels, sometimes even high schoolers...The children studied in the orphanage’s grade schools, the Lithuanian high school, pedagogical courses...there was also a carpentry school, sewing school...Each orphanage had its own place in the churches (sv. Mikalojaus-St. Michael’s and Bonifratiai) during the month of May for the evenings of traditional litanies and sermons...The orphanages had no water pipes. The guard named Bobelis would bring water in a barrel from Tauras Hill in a wagon. There was electricity, and the yard was surrounded by a wooded fence...At first there weren’t many of us, then women & children, refugees of World War I came with their meager worldly possessions. They gathered in the halls and yards. Some women left their children and disappeared. Soon there were 50 children...The teacher was a refugee from Seinai—she taught us as best she could. The cook was a jack of all trades- she wove sashes, she sewed and taught the girls to sew, she taught the children games, she healed the children’s feet of worms, she walked with the children to Zakretas (Vingis) Woods to gather berries and took us swimming...We ate meat on Sundays and Thursdays, on Fridays we got fish. We enjoyed visits from our guardian who taught us how to sit up straight and ate lunch with us. He encouraged us to write poems one time...In the summer we worked in our gardens where we raised vegetables: cabbage, beets, sugar beets...We had to weed and water and protect the gardens at night so no one would steal from us...The cook made innovative soups from our vegetables...She liked

to commemorate the holidays, baking a small “babka” from potatoes after harvest...she would bake traditional foods for Easter and Christmas, even if the products were always the same...

(*DIENOVIDIS*, excerpts from the autobiographical memoirs of Prane Makariunas, 3/31/95)

Activist Deacon

Julius Sasnauskas, known to readers of the Chronicles of the Lithuanian Catholic Church (published underground at great risk during the years of Soviet censorship and occupation-rk), recently became a deacon. He belongs to the Franciscan order. He is presently studying for the priesthood and living in Toronto. For two years, he was “Brolis Linas” who had his own half hour program on the Catholic radio station in Lithuania. According to him, not even the bravest optimist would have believed that Lithuania could regain its independence. He remembers the times when patriotic and religious writing-columns, declarations, protests were published in newsletters printed on basement printing presses. Whatever wasn’t distributed, was confiscated by the KGB—the KGB would take your typewriter, and in a few days, you’d have to find another. When he was taken into custody in 1979, indicated Sasnauskas, there were about 15 underground publications in Lithuania. The work of the dissidents wasn’t widely known, but thanks to their efforts, one can say that Lithuania protested...

(From the interview)

When I was arrested, indicated J. Sasnauskas, I was accused of anti-soviet agitation and propaganda, a traditional accusation...I spent about one and a half years in the basement prison of the Vilnius KGB...I spent a lot of time alone, and I had the opportunity to meditate and read literature books from the prison’s library...I spent five years in Siberia, where the surroundings are beautiful and majestic. However, it is very cold during the winter and the mosquitoes are horrible during the summer. I lived in a village, at the edge of a river, to the north of Tomsk. That land has eternally been a land of refugees of various ethnic groups. We all got along well together, and some of us keep in touch to this day. I also made friends with some Canadian Lithuanians (whose letters got through-rk): the Cuplinskas family, Linas Dauksa, Rita Sakus...

I felt that the Church was a mighty force against Soviet occupation and the degradation of Lithuanian culture. I first applied to the Kaunas Seminary in 1979, and was not accepted, but told to apply again the next year. Perhaps it’s for the best that I didn’t study then—it would have been tantalizing to be an agitator instead of a communicator of Bible teachings...While in Siberia, I dreamt of attending the seminary, and for a time I attended the Vilnius underground seminary. In 1987, I applied to Kaunas again. I was accepted, because

“perestroika” had begun. Perhaps the secret police felt it was better to pull me away from my old friends and my political activities. While at the seminary, I was brought in for questioning only once. Of course, everything that was going on in Lithuania was of interest. My fellow seminarians and I went to the “mitingai”, we stood on guard at the Parliament building, we distributed “Sajudis” and “Freedom League” literature. I understood then that freedom is opportunity and hope. A person still needs the Church’s comfort, forgiveness, and healing. That is how I see the role of the priesthood. How did I join the Franciscans? By chance. After I returned from Siberia, I visited some of the older Franciscans in Kretinga, met a very caring Franciscan brother who took care of the order’s relics. I felt the brotherhood of the “little brothers”. I liked the simplicity of St. Francis of Assisi...I spent two years working at the Catholic radio...It’s hard to evaluate the importance of Catholic radio programming in Lithuania—do you measure increased attendance at Mass, the activity of Catholics in politics? The station is experiencing difficulty these days—both financial and technical...I awaited the day of taking my vows as a deacon for three years. It’s hurtful to see that some of my friends from seminary days no longer work as priests...The priesthood is not only for official occasions and holy days. I accept the cross...I don’t like to make too many plans since the Lord makes His own...I never expected to come to Toronto, but Lithuanians overseas helped Lithuania for many decades. Now, I feel I can be of some use to them. I see the hardworking person, not the smiling woman (tourist-rk) with heavy, present-filled luggage. Eventually, I would like to return to Lithuania, to Vilnius. As the poet Aistis said, it is good to live and die in Vilnius.

(*TEVISKES ZIBURIAI*, from an interview conducted by Vincas Kolycius, 5/2/95)

American Adoptive Mother Writes...

“We adopted our son from an orphanage in Kaunas in August 1994. He was almost 3 years old at the time. He is very handsome & bright...On all the legal papers we gave him an “American” first name and kept (his Lithuanian name) as his middle name. We knew that we were upsetting his whole world when we took him from the only life he had ever known. As adults, we can reason that he will have a better life, but at 3, you only know the loss of the familiar. Because of this, we made no attempt to change his name...As I said, legally he has an “American” name if he ever wants it...”

“We met many great Lithuanian people both here and in Lithuania during the adoption process & have kept in touch. I was pleasantly surprised at how much help we received from strangers...We do plan a trip (back to Lithuania) next year...We plan to go back every couple of years while (our son) is growing up...”

“We have heard about some of the Lithuanian camps

and plan to send (our son) when he's old enough. Right now, he's busy learning English and about McDonalds, Disneyland & Barney. He's also learning that there will always be enough to eat and that his clothes are his alone. (Our son) was lucky in that the orphanage he was in was a good one. They didn't have material things, but it was very clean and the caretakers were affectionate with the children. Because of that, he is an outgoing, happy & affectionate child."

(From a letter sent by an American adoptive mother from the West Coast to the Lithuanian Educational Council, requesting information about children's books, BRIDGES subscription information, etc. A few personal pieces of information were left off to ensure the family's privacy.)

Advertisement

ALICE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANY MORE...

She moved to Florida. Alice Zupko, the Lithuanian proprietress of Alice's Flower Shop in Richmond Hill relocated to North Fort Myers five years ago, where she has opened her house as a haven for fleeing Lithuanian snowbirds and their friends from the North. She has a pool on the premises and tennis is just around the corner.

Sanibel Island and Fort Myers Beach are a short drive away. Alice serves a great breakfast to start a vacationer's day off right.

If you're planning a trip to sunny Florida and don't want to go broke - stay at:

Alice's Palace

5886 Guest Court

North Fort Myers, FL 33903

Tel. (813) 656-5886

EVENTS

Calendar

Lithuanian Scout Camps:**July 22-August 5, 1995**Camp Rakas, MI &
Lithuanian Grounds
("Sodyba"), near London, England**July 30-August 12, 1995**

Camp Romuva, ONT, Canada

July 30-August 6**Lithuanian Heritage Camp**for young people of Lithuanian descent
Camp Neringa, VT**July 30-August 8, 1995****42nd European Lithuanian Study Days**Vasario 16th High School
Huttenfeld, Germany**July 30-August 5, 1995****5th World Lithuanian Sports Games**Vilnius (opening ceremonies)
& Kaunas, Lithuania (closing)Information: Algis Ruginienus
3620 Burning Tree Dr.,
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302-1511
tel 810-642-7049**August 9-13, 1995****82nd Knights of Lithuania Convention**Novi Hilton Hotel
Novi, MI**August 6-13, 1995****Lithuanian-American Community Educational
Council Teachers' Camp** and concurrent Lithuanian
language seminar - Camp Dainava, MI**August 13-20, 1995****Lithuanian Folk Dance Teacher's Institute**
(in preparation for the 10th Lithuanian Folk Dance
Festival)

Camp Dainava, MI

Information: Dalia Dzikas,
43 Mildred Rd.
West Hartford, CT 06107**September 30-October 1, 1995****Lithuanian Days**St. Casimir Lithuanian Parish Hall & Grounds
Los Angeles, CA**October 22, 1995****Afternoon of Young Talents**Fund-raiser for DRAUGAS, the Lithuanian daily
at: Lithuanian Youth Center, Chicago, IL
Information: Indre Tijunelis,
419 Weidner Rd.
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089

Vytas Grybauskas

Sports News

The Fifth Lithuanian World Sports Games

The first Lithuanian Sports Games took place in Kaunas on July 17, 1938. At the time the games were called the "First Lithuanian National Olympics".

Because the war started shortly thereafter, and Lithuania was occupied, no more National Olympics were to follow. The war scattered thousands of Lithuanians throughout the world. At the beginning, most Lithuanians found themselves in Germany, where in 1947 the first Lithuanian Physical Education and Sports Committee was elected. After many Lithuanians emigrated from Germany, the next Sports Committee was elected in Chicago, IL in 1952. Later, the group joined American and Canadian Lithuanian Sports Club under the name of SALFAS - Siaures Amerikos Lietuviu Fizinio Auklejimo Sajunga or the North American Lithuanian Athletic Union.

The Athletic Union's Executive Committee decided to organize the first Lithuanian World Sports Games in 1978. A conscious decision was made not to call the Games the Second Lithuanian National Olympics because Lithuania was still occupied and athletes from the homeland would be unable to participate in the Games.

Today, that is prior to the Fifth Lithuanian World Sports Games, several of the veteran athletes who participated in the First Lithuanian National Olympics are demanding that the Games again be called the National Olympics. This question will probably be finally resolved during the Games in Vilnius.

The Fifth Games will differ greatly from the Fourth Games held in Lithuania. The Games will last only 7 days, with opening ceremonies on July 30th in Vilnius and closing ceremonies taking place in Kaunas on August 5th. The Games will include up to 25 branches of sports, including some not so well known to us; rugby, hiking, weight-lifting, sorts fishing and aviation sports including gliding and parachuting competitions. Even more interesting is the fact that the basketball competition will include not only men's, women's and youth teams, but will also feature mixed team (3 men, 2 women) and 3 on 3 shooting toward the same basket competition. This last form of play is quite popular here in the US and in various European countries, especially in France.

During the Fourth Lithuanian World Sports Games,

competitions took place in 11 cities throughout Lithuania, this time most events will take place in Vilnius and Kaunas. Only the first rounds of basketball competition, bicycling and part of the aviation sports will take place elsewhere. All the athletes will be housed at the new dorms of the Technical Institute. The organizing Committee for the Games will host all the athletes for two days prior to, during, and two days after the Games. The registration fee for athletes competing from Canada and the US will be \$50.

The hope behind housing all the athletes in one area is that athletes from abroad will befriend Lithuania's athletes and have greater opportunity to really get to know each other. Planned events include dances, concerts and the like to give the athletes even greater opportunity to socialize.

The main objective of the Fifth Lithuanian World Sports Games organizing committee is to provide Lithuanians living abroad with an opportunity to meet, visit their fathers' homeland, become acquainted (or reacquainted) with Lithuania's customs and traditions and see or visit the many historical, cultural and sports landmarks.

Even though the official opening of the Games is July 30th, with ceremonies at the beautiful Kalnu Parkas, the Games in fact already began near Toronto, last February with the alpine-skiing competition.

The cyclists of the Games will begin their trek around Lithuania on July 21 from Gedimino Square in Vilnius. The dual purpose of the cyclists' trek is to traverse Lithuania in about 60 hours, through 21 cities for a total of 1253 kilometers, symbolic of the coronation of King Mindaugas and the incorporation of Lithuania in the year 1253, while heralding the approaching Games and encouraging Lithuanians to actively participate in the Games. Anyone from Lithuania or abroad may participate in the cycling event.

Lithuania has earnestly prepared for the Games for several years. She awaits Lithuanian athletes from all nations. Athletes from the US and Canada are expected to number over 300, in addition to over 200 spectators from these countries. It is important to participate in this event in a variety of sports and to get acquainted with the youth of Lithuania.

We will update you with news from the Games in future issues of BRIDGES.

Ramune Kubilius

Humanitarian Aid Conference

On May 14th PARADE MAGAZINE published an article entitled "Volunteer- You'll Feel Much Better". It seemed uncanny that the article should come out on that day. It was the second day of a conference sponsored by the Lithuanian- American Community's Human Services Council called "Humanitarian Aid to Lithuania", a conference whose attendees were all volunteers helping Lithuania through various efforts.

According to the article, "More than a third of the U.S. population-89 million people-are discovering the joys and benefits of volunteering", says a survey that the Gallup Organization conducted for the Independent Sector. The article goes on to ask why people volunteer. "Those surveyed gave various reasons: to make a change in society, because they saw someone in their family helping others, or because they grew up in poverty". Those were themes heard more than once during the conference in Chicago—giving is even more satisfactory to the giver than to the receiver. Being a good example is the best incentive for volunteerism and change.

Lithuania and its citizens are of concern to humanitarian aid groups. A number of them have sprung up among persons of Lithuanian descent in North America in the last five years or so. Others have existed for a number of years or are divisions within larger organizations. Many people seem to think that volunteer, humanitarian aid, and self-help groups don't exist in Lithuania. That is not true. Attendees at the conference learned about groups in Lithuania which were founded and operate in Lithuania. Humanitarian aid to Lithuania is undergoing evolution each day, month and year; with much still to be done.

Photographs from the humanitarian aid conference in Chicago can't begin to relay the moods of optimism, collegiality, and concern which circulated among attendees. More than 100 persons gathered at the conference—they came from Chicago, flew and drove in from Boston (MA), Washington, D.C., Michigan, Montreal (Canada), and Lithuania... They networked, conferred and discussed aid to Lithuania's students, orphans, disabled, elderly, children, and the hospital system.

A previous conference, organized by the Human Ser-

vices Conference, together with the Washington Office of the Lithuanian-American Community and the Lithuanian Embassy took place in Washington, D.C. in



A discussion session on the plight of Lithuania's orphans. In the center, BRIDGES column editor Jeanne Dorr, discussion leader. To her right- Rev. Ramasauskas of Lithuania who organized group homes for 42 orphans in his parish.

November 1992. At that time, many organizations had just started their efforts, and U.S. government agency representatives reported on funding opportunities. Unfortunately, this conference was noticeably lacking government representatives—either U.S. or Lithuanian. Although U.S.A.I.D. representatives might have come to a Friday conference, a trip to Chicago on a Saturday did not meet with enthusiasm from those representatives invited to attend. Lithuania's Honorary Consul, Vaclovas Kleiza, greeted conference attendees on the first morning, on behalf of the Lithuanian Embassy in Washington, D.C.; but it appears that medical (and humanitarian) concerns rank much lower on the Lithuanian government's list of priorities than economic and other concerns.

Our non-governmental, individual efforts do not stay within Lithuanian-American confines. Robert Boris of Aid to Lithuania, Inc. relayed one example which could inspire all of us. A mother of eight in California somehow read of heard of the plight of many hospitals in Lithuania. On her own, she made telephone calls to hospitals in her area, asking for donations of used hospi-

tal equipment. Soon she had enough to fill a container...No effort is too small...Help comes from various sources...

Jeannie Dorr and I both attended the conference and gathered much information and insight into efforts being made in the area of Humanitarian Aid. It was also gratifying to meet the persons behind the many organizations. A summary of the Conference follows:

The Conference took place in Chicago on May 13-14 at the Sisters of St. Casimir Motherhouse. Sister Mary Kuzmickas greeted the almost 100 attendees who had gathered in a Motherhouse built in 1911 in Chicago. The auditorium where we sat was built in 1926. It served as a gathering place for parishioners of Nativity B.V.M, and also for students of St. Casimir Academy, which later became Maria High School, attended by many Lithuanian American girls, especially in the post World War II years. Students of Lithuanian descent still attend the high school which is housed in a building across the street. The Sisters of St. Casimir have become one of four active orders in "Religious Supporting Religious", and they support the convent in Pazaisliai.

The Ideal Organizational Model

Jurate Budrys, coordinator of the conference, introduced Jurgis Lendraitis, one of the founders of Mercy Lift, and Dr. Vytas Narutis, who has worked in a variety of organizations. Dr. Narutis reminded attendees that our organizations have a variety of concerns: a) we worry about how to collect items, b) how to transport them, c)

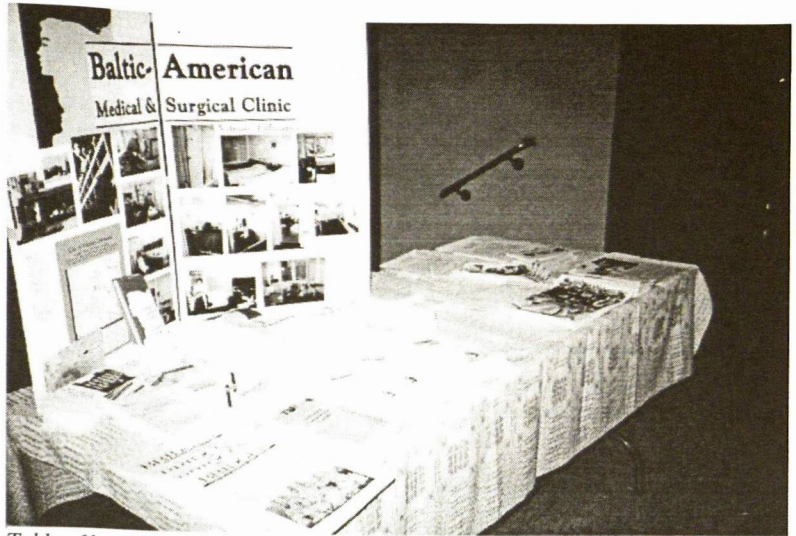


Table of handouts and brochures displayed at the Humanitarian Aid Conference.

how to distribute them. We can collect donations, buy out garage sales or "going out of business" inventories, Church bazaars.

J. Lendraitis provided a reminder of the diverse ways medical help has been provided and the lessons we have learned. Expiration dates on drug packages should be observed carefully. Operators' manuals should be included with equipment being sent.

Five years have passed—many organizations, like Mercy Lift, began their work at about the same time. It is a bit disconcerting to hear that some hospitals in Lithuania survive only because of humanitarian aid from abroad, that on the priorities list of Lithuania's government, health matters rank low. (Ecology and industry ranked higher). Lithuania has more than 300 hospitals.

In 5 years, Mercy Lift has sent 130 containers. That means that if one container had been targeted for each hospital, not even half of the hospitals would have received assistance. The services provided by Christian Relief Services, which has funded shipment of Mercy Lift containers are in jeopardy. CRS, as well as other foundations, are focusing on other priorities; financing of humanitarian aid projects for Asia and other countries concerns them now.

Fund-Raising

There is a saying that



Organizers and group leaders of the Conference on Humanitarian Aid to Lithuania-(from left, 2nd row) Dr. Arvydas Zygas, Dr. Linas Sidrys, Daiva Veitas-Neidhardt, Regina Svobis, Jurate Budrys, Rev. Antanas Saulaitis, S.J., Robert Boris; (from left, 1st row) Apolonija Steponavicius and Birute Jasaitis.

the second oldest profession is fund-raising. Grazina Liautaud stated that in America, 80% of the donors who contribute to various organizations are individuals; and to get to them, use your contacts to ask, cajole, remind, and reward the individuals who are so important to fund-raising efforts.

Group Discussions

The conference was organized so that Conference attendees could spend a large portion of time in discussion groups geared towards the interests and concerns of people working in these areas: medical assistance, assistance to children, the disabled (physically challenged), students, orphans, and the elderly.

In one discussion group about orphan care in Lithuania, participants shared news about the efforts of groups in America. What is more gratifying, of course, is to hear about small group homes which have been established in Lithuania. Rev. Ramasauskas described the lives of 42 children in his care who live in small group homes with trained care givers. His efforts are supported by Canadian Lithuanians and "Malta" from Germany. There is some envy among care givers when groups or cities in Europe and America identify and give donations to one group but not another.

In Lithuania, any family having more than three children is called "daugiavaikė" (many children). In a group which discussed aid to Lithuania's children, as with the group concerning orphan aid, the lack of children's rights was discussed. Lithuania's Parliament has not passed laws protecting children from being returned to their alcoholic parents, or supporting return to grandparents, preventing abandonment at group homes or homelessness. Even sadder are stories about young children being "sold" to adoption or worse. 200 of Lithuania's children have been adopted outside of Lithuania last year.

Group Conclusions

The insight and action statements read on the final day of the conference were practical.

-The group which discussed orphan care (led by Jeanne Dorr and summation given by Dr. Albina Prunskis) encouraged humanitarian aid groups to communicate and cooperate with the care givers and the group homes. Fund-raising is the largest aim, and support going to Lithuania should be acknowledged by the recipients. American groups could be of assistance in various arenas.

-The care of the elderly is made difficult in Lithuania when the statistics on how many people need assistance are not clear. Sister Margarita Bareika mentioned that her group advised Lithuania to draw up plans to follow successful Western models of care: visiting nurses, "meals on wheels", visiting homemakers. The retired and elderly population of Lithuania needs an advocacy association such as AARP (Association for the Advancement

of Retired Persons). Some things that cause worry include: what kind of help are older sick Lithuanians getting who are returning from exile in Siberia or elsewhere, how should the homeless or street begging elderly be helped? Lithuanian Americans could and should form support groups for Lithuania's elderly. Efforts of individuals are good, but groups could accomplish more.

-Group leader Apolonija Steponavicius mentioned that invalids (or more correctly physically challenged) Lithuanians have been neglected by their government which in essence says to humanitarian aid groups- "We will let you help them". The distribution of crutches, wheelchairs, etc. is not difficult if groups have moral, trustworthy contact person(s) in Lithuania to distribute shipments. Volunteers should perhaps be sought by writing invitations in the Lithuanian American press. Education of Lithuania is important, since one must not only dress the body but clear the mind of the feeling of hopelessness.

-The "student group" by far had the most plans to continue work after the conference. The group was led by Dr. Arvydas Zygas and summation was given by Vytautas Kamantas. The group even had plans for meeting again in June. The group identified areas where information and assistance could be provided. Lithuania's students need to find out how to identify and apply for scholarships abroad. More professors need to go to Lithuania. Physically challenged students should be integrated into student life, as should orphans and the poor. Teaching personnel already are receiving some good assistance through seminars and programs of A.P.P.L.E., the Lithuanian Montessori Society and other means. One concern, of course, is "brain drain". Lithuania's students who have received Lithuanian government assistance to study abroad should be honor bound to repay their stipends should they decide to remain abroad.

-The group which discussed Lithuania's children was led by Daiva Veitas-Neidhart. Information about all humanitarian efforts should be shared through regular columns in the Lithuanian American press. The long-term solution should be sought rather than the band-aid effort. The efforts of Lithuanian mothers' "school by correspondence" should be congratulated (it's a self-help effort: mothers correspond with each other with suggestions and insight about children, their problems and psychology). Direct contact with groups in Lithuania is a key element.

-The group which discussed medical assistance to Lithuania comprised one of the largest discussion groups of the conference. It was led by Robert Boris. The source of medical help includes corporations, institutions and philanthropic efforts. Initial introductions we make through our own contacts are helpful too. The logistics of collecting and distribution are a challenge, but accountability is the most difficult. Rumors about distribution problems or misuse should be eliminated among

Lithuanian Americans.

General Sessions

Asta Banionis of the Lithuanian-American Community's Washington, D.C. office gave a very information packed presentation about laws, trends, and concerns of events in American government. She mentioned the steps an organization needs to go through to receive support from the Agency for International Development. That registration then makes the organization eligible for various aid opportunities. The Denton Program, for example, will fly shipments to other countries. The Ocean Freight Reimbursement Program will finance shipments. The Excess Property Program gives groups the right to inspect and request items in warehouses throughout the United States and Europe (old government office furniture, etc.) Asta also mentioned various ideas which will help Lithuania; pilot programs for self-government programs, public interest help groups getting started in Lithuania and encourage citizens' lobby groups (call it "Healthy Lithuania"). Asta gave examples of ways that Lithuanian-Americans and Lithuanians can both use government & its assistance, yet become independent as a result. Non-governmental assistance is reachable as well.

Regina Svobis gave a very touching glimpse from Lithuania's countryside. A fund has been established by the "Valstieciu" newspaper, which has a very large circulation. A very disturbing statistic she presented was that 1/3 of Lithuania's countryside families get some kind of assistance. She mentioned the large numbers of underage criminals and the large number of parents whose parental rights were taken away because of alcoholism or other problems. A new non-governmental group pursues efforts to pass children's rights legislation (Organizacijos Vaiku Teisems Ginti komitetas). Teachers in the country schools have personal problems with alcoholism, or they have to rush home at lunch to milk their cows. Children who live in the Chernobyl affected areas have very high levels of sickness or die in infancy.

Sadly, a number of the 1000 organizations registered in Lithuania as humanitarian aid organizations are reputed to be tax avoidance fronts. In a land of paradoxes, everything is possible. Humanitarian aid is symbiotic. Other concerns for countryside parents is that the village grade schools may be closed in favor of regional schools, creating problems similar to busing in the US.

Dr. Linas Sidrys talked about prospects for the future. Lithuania loses a lot of financial investment when its young physicians move abroad. The cost of educating a physician has been estimated at \$300,000. Lithuania and many other countries stand to lose on their invest-

ments when physicians emigrate. In some ways, Lithuania's government has acted the way a three year old child does - "I want to do it myself". A 6-7 year old, on the other hand, asks for help. We can help the process of Lithuania's "maturation", but we can't hurry it along.

The only Canadian Lithuanian at the conference, Sister Paule, repeated a saying she had heard—Lithuanians have lost their respect and love for mankind, work, and the earth. Groups modeled after the 4-H would help Lithuania's young people in the countryside feel an appreciation for their lives.

A number of the speakers reminded attendees that the second conference day was Mothers' Day, and during church services that day, Pastor Kuzinskis said that mothers in the family play the role of physician, lawyer,



A group of volunteer workers at the Humanitarian Aid Conference- one local Chicagoan and parents from Lithuania whose children are presently being treated at Shriners Hospital in Chicago, thanks to Lithuanian Children's Hope.

treasurer...

Jurate Budrys, primary coordinator of the conference, summed up the financial sums involved in the efforts of some of the humanitarian aid groups: in 1990, Mercy Lift sent \$45 million; 1989-95, the Knights of Lithuania-\$11.5. In five years, Lithuanian Children's Relief had sent \$2 million and Lithuanian Children's Hope-\$4.5 million worth of equipment and assistance. What can't be given a dollar value is the number of hours of free time devoted to effort to help Lithuania. Our input gives hope to the person and to Lithuania's future. Let us hope that our efforts continue to be accurate, concrete, and clear. A goal for the year 2001? A center coordinating humanitarian aid efforts to Lithuania.

Dreams come true.

Registered attendees received a booklet listing the addresses and aims of the various humanitarian aid organizations, and were promised that they would receive a list of attendees and other material after the conference. It was truly a weekend of networking.

ADVERTISEMENT



PHONE: 708.430.7272

FAX: 708.430.5783

The Best to the Baltics!			
<u>Fly!</u>	<u>Experience!</u>	<u>Options</u>	<u>View Programs</u> <u>Tour Dates</u> <u>Help</u>
Complete ticketing services	Lithuanian Highlights The Best of Lithuania Spotlight on the Baltics Lithuania in a Nutshell In the Footsteps of Baltic Jews Lithuania - Land of Shrines Baltic Treasures	Three offices in Lithuania to serve you	
Custom arrangements throughout the Baltics		Our own English-speaking staff	
Professional services for the business traveler		Our own fleet of vehicles and deluxe motorcoaches	
Independent hotel and car bookings		7 popular tour programs	
		Many departure dates to choose from	
GUARANTEE OF QUALITY SERVICE WITH NO MIDDLEMAN!			
Choice dates still available for our summer tours, including :			
Lithuanian Highlights	Departures August 12 or August 30	12 days	
Spotlight on the Baltics	Departure August 11 (extensions in Lithuania available)	15 days	
<i>Call for our new full color brochure today!</i>			
WE ALSO OFFER FULL SERVICE TRAVEL FROM LITHUANIA			

BRIDGES

LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

Volume 19, No. 6 JULY / AUGUST 1995 \$2.50 per Copy
