

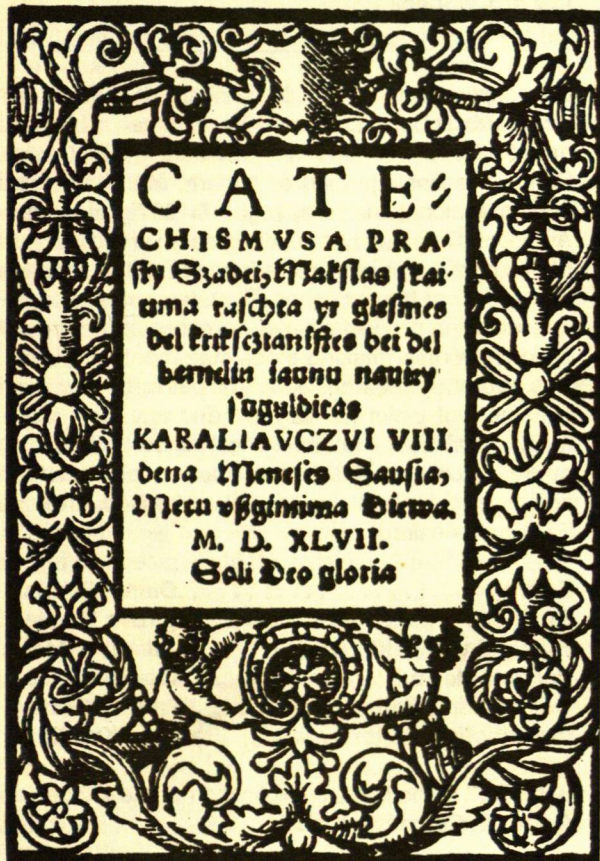
lep

BRIDGES

LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

Volume 21, No. 1

JANUARY 1997



The cover of the first Lithuanian-language book printed in 1547. "Catechismus" was written by Pastor Martynas Mažvydas, a follower of Martin Luther. Of 200-300 copies printed in the first edition, only two are known to have survived. One is housed at the Vilnius University Library in Lithuania, the other is in the Torun University Library in Poland.

CONTENTS

- 3 PoliticsLithuania Starts the New Year with a New Government
Asta Banionis
- 7 PoliticsThe Eighth Cabinet of the Republic of Lithuania
Asta Banionis
- 13 BusinessBusiness and Investment News
Algis Rimas
- 16 MeetingsNinth World Lithuanian Youth Congress
- 17 OpinionBeyond the Victory
Romas Shatas
- 19 Human InterestA Soup Kitchen in Vilnius
Jeanne Dorr
- 23 EventsThe Year of the Book: The Catechism of Martynas Mažvydas
- 24 News BriefsBits and Pieces
Ramunė Kubilius

To Our Readers:

1997 marks the 450th anniversary of the printing of the first Lithuanian-language book, a catechism, by the Lutheran pastor Martynas Mažvydas. As for any nation, the printing of the first Lithuanian-language book marks a watershed in the development of language, culture and society for the people of Lithuania. Throughout the year we hope to bring you articles which provide not only the history of Mažvydas and his books, but analyses of the cultural and political implications of the printing of that catechism.

Mažvydas was a graduate of Theological Studies at the University of Königsberg and a follower of Martin Luther. He was assigned to a parish in Ragainė, a Lithuanian village on the southern bank of the Nemunas River in Prussian territory which was by then controlled by the Germanic descendants of the crusader knights known as the Order of the Cross.

1997 will be an important year for the future of Lithuania as well. Both the Western defensive alliance, NATO, and the economic alliance, the European Union (EU), will be making decisions to enlarge their structures. Lithuania has applied to both organizations, but it is far from certain whether Lithuania will be invited to join either organization. Lithuanian-Americans should stay informed and provide political support wherever they can, so that Lithuania does not find itself isolated from these two major institutions that help to ensure the peace and prosperity of Europe.

Our congressional analyst, Asta Banionis, gives us a snapshot of the political scene in Lithuania and keeps us up to date on pertinent legislative developments in the US. We are grateful to Algis Rimas for taking a wealth of raw data and producing a valuable monthly digest of the latest in business and investment news for Lithuania. Ramunė Kubilius continues to collect intriguing news items from the press and the internet that appeal to the different interests of our wide readership. And Jeanne Dorr serves as our conscience, providing moving stories of the often hidden problems of the unfortunate in Lithuania.

As always, we welcome articles from our readers. Romas Shatas took us up on our offer and presents an interesting angle on recent developments in Lithuania. We also appreciate notices of Lithuanian events, of Lithuanians in the news, and your suggestions for feature articles.

We apologize to our readers for the delay in publication of **BRIDGES** this year. We are back on schedule and you should be receiving monthly copies of **BRIDGES** in a timely manner. We appreciate your continued support!

BRIDGES: Lithuanian-American News Journal (USPS 0735-830) is published 10 times per year by the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.
2060 N. 14th Street, Suite 217, Arlington, VA 22201

BRIDGES

Editorial Offices

7416 Piney Branch Road
Takoma Park, MD 20912
Voice 301-588-8559
Fax 301-588-8942

Subscription Offices

LAC, Inc. Treasurer
1927 West Boulevard
Racine, WI 53403

Subscription rate is \$18.00 annually (US Mail serviced subscribers; subscriptions to other addresses are \$32.00), payable in advance (US funds). Periodicals Postage paid at Auburn, MA 01501; and additional locations. Copyright ©1997 Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without written permission of the publisher. All statements and opinion, 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 **Diana Vidutis**
Business **Algirdas Rimas**
Humanitarian Aid **Jeanne Dorr**
Political News **Asta Banionis**
Contributing Editor **Paul A. Goble**
Contributing Editor **Ramune Kubilius**

BRIDGES - The Official Publication of the Lithuanian American Community, Inc.

Postmaster: Send any address corrections and/or changes to
BRIDGES JOURNAL, 2060 N. 14th Street, Suite 217, Arlington, VA 22201.

Su viltim,

Diana f. Vidutis

Asta Banionis



Lithuania Starts The New Year With A New Government

The Lithuanian parliament, the Seimas, is now controlled by a coalition of the Conservative and Christian Democratic Parties. The 141-seat legislature still has four seats undecided, but with its 70 elected members, the Homeland Union (Conservative Party) currently, has effective control of the Seimas even without the junior members of the coalition, the Christian Democrats. This balance will change when the last four members of parliament are elected in March, 1997 (at least 40 percent of the eligible voters have to vote to make the elections valid, otherwise, the seats remain vacant).

The final election results confirmed the earlier trends: Tėvynes Sąjunga (Conservative Party) holds 70 seats; Christian Democrats hold 15 seats; Center Union holds 13 seats; Democratic Labor holds 11 seats; Social Democrats hold 10 seats; Democratic Party holds 2 seats; a number of single candidates from the smaller parties as well as non-partisan candidates hold the balance of the seats.

The newly elected parliament took office at high noon on November 25, 1996 and in secret balloting elected the new parliament's leadership: Chairman of the Parliament, Prof. Vytautas Landsbergis (Conservative), four Deputy Chairmen: Andrius Kubilius (Conservative), Feliksas Palubinskas (Christian Democrat), Arvydas Vidžiūnas (Conservative), Romualdas Ozolas (Center Union) and the Chancellor of the parliament, Jurgis Razma (Conservative).

The members of parliament have grouped themselves into nine registered factions (we would call them caucuses): Conservatives, Christian Democrats, Centrist Union, Social Democrats, Democratic Labor, Democrats, United, Liberal Reform, and the Independent faction.

Mid-week, the parliament submitted to the President its recommendation for Prime Minister. On November 28, Lithuania's President Algirdas Brazauskas signed a decree which appointed the Conservative Party's Chairman of the Board, Gediminas Vagnorius, the new Prime Minister and instructed him to form a cabinet within 15 days. The 39-year old Prime Minister was prepared and moved quickly to submit his list of candidates to the President. By the next day, President Brazauskas was already meeting with the proposed Cabinet nominees.

BRIDGES readers will recall that Gediminas Vagnorius served as Prime Minister six years ago. He stepped forward during the tragic days of January 12-13, 1991 and accepted the responsibilities of the post of Prime Minister when Soviet troops were murdering Lithuanians in the streets of Vilnius, and everyone expected an attack on the parliament itself by Soviet airborne troops. He went on to serve until July 6, 1992 when he lost a vote of confidence in the parliament and was forced to resign. Prime Minister Vagnorius has been able to put his previous experience to good use this term.

The New Government (Cabinet)

The new government was formed on December 4, 1996 after the President signed a decree appointing the 17 new ministers. The cabinet took office on December 10 when the Parliament voted overwhelmingly to approve the government's program. Among the items within the program was a total reorganization of the ministries (i.e., executive branch agencies). Two ministries of the former LDLP government were abolished and five ministries were merged into three. Lithuania is the last of the Central and East European countries applying for membership in the European Union to create a Ministry of European Affairs which will act partially as an ombudsman overseeing the efforts of the other ministries in complying with European Union standards.

Another important element of the new government's program is the establishment of the "tax police." The Conservatives were elected on a platform which promised a lowering of the tax rate, but a broadening of the tax base. This means that people will pay lower taxes, but it is essential that everyone pay his fair share. In a former communist country where people have had little experience paying taxes to the government, and more importantly, have difficulty understanding the direct relationship between taxes and the level of government services, tax evasion is a major hurdle to creating a stable and successful democracy. Therefore, the new government has proposed and received parliament's approval to establish a special institution to control the collection of taxes.

The Lithuanian government has ordered a 10 to 30 percent reduction in staff within the Ministries. At the same time,

to staunch the flow of highly competent staff out of government service into the private sector, the Ministries are allowed to create a few new positions of "chief specialist" and raise the salaries of these experts, but the number of these specialists cannot exceed 10 percent of all staff in a Ministry.

Prime Minister Vagnorius received Parliament's approval to speed up the privatization process in order to attract foreign investment. Lithuania has lagged behind Latvia and Estonia in attracting foreign investors for the last four years. The new government's plan is to sell at least twelve major energy and transportation enterprises still owned by the Lithuanian government in 1997. Any BRIDGES readers interested in owning their own oil refinery?

The controversial currency board which has prevented Lithuania from developing a real central bank will be phased out as the staff of the central bank is trained to assume its proper role. At long last, the Lithuanian government will have its own treasury which writes the government's checks rather than relying on 94 separate accounts scattered among the numerous, poorly regulated, private banks. Early last fall, the previous government had centralized all government accounts and deposited them into the failing Lithuanian State Commercial Bank (a government controlled bank) to provide some liquidity as the government tried to rescue the bank rather than shutting it down. This kind of patchwork "solution" was common to the Šleževičius/ Stankevičius governments over the last four years.

With a fully functioning central bank, Lithuania's government will be able to save money because of a more efficient system (economies of scale) to deal with its obligations, and the political influences within the regulatory process will be minimized. The use of the currency board allowed the previous (Šleževičius) government to create mischief in the private banking sector by regularly depositing or withdrawing government accounts from banks in an effort to reward or punish banks for their political behavior.

The government has also declared war on organized crime structures. Prime Minister Vagnorius said on January 16, "We are declaring this is the beginning of the end for organized crime." The Administration intends to "cut off access" by the criminals to their money through stricter tax

enforcement (more auditors), proper bank regulation, and a much improved customs service to counteract smuggling. New legislation will provide an article in the criminal code which will allow government prosecutors to indict members of organized crime structures for the first time since the Soviet occupation of the country.

The new government submitted a revised 1997 budget which the Seimas approved in late December, 1996. Prime Minister Vagnorius hopes to keep the budget deficit for 1997 limited solely to the sum needed to repay earlier loans guaranteed and debts incurred by the Šleževičius/ Stankevičius governments. All new loans and their repayment schedules will be included in future budget allocations.

The New Seimas (Parliament)

The Seimas was very busy during December amending laws and even the Constitution which requires two successive votes with two-thirds of the Parliament voting in the affirmative each time. In mid-December the Seimas successfully changed article 119 of the Constitution giving local governments a three-year term instead of the current two-year term. Nationwide municipal elections are expected to take place on March 23, 1997, the same day as the supplementary Seimas elections for the four unfilled seats of the parliament.

A commission has been established to prepare legislation on fighting government

corruption with a particular emphasis on conflict of interest legislation and ethics standards for government officials. Former Prime Minister Šleževičius (and LDLP Chairman) was well known for his opposition to any conflict of interest legislation. One of the difficulties in bringing charges against the former Prime Minister for the apparent abuse of his public trust while in office is the lack of such legislation.

The commission includes representatives of various parliamentary factions, the Ministers of Justice and of Internal Affairs and officials from the Prosecutor General's office. The new legislation is being drafted with a great deal of specificity. For instance, the commission has already discussed a draft, submitted by the Commission's chairman Andrius Kubilius, which would prohibit civil servants and political appointees from participating in decision-making in areas where their private property interests are affected.



Former member of Lithuania's parliament, Mr. Pranas Tupikas and his wife, Danute Tupikas join Dr. Paul Goble, Director of Broadcast Research, RFL/RL at the LAC, Inc. reception, January 21, 1997.

President Brazauskas has had to establish a new working relationship with a parliament now controlled by the opposition parties. Although he chose not to fight the opposition on their choice of a prime minister and cabinet, he has vetoed new legislation passed by the conservative parliament.

On January 16, the new Seimas overrode the President's veto three times in a single day. The legislation which had been previously rejected by President Brazauskas dealt with amendments to the civil service law (the right to remove political appointees from the bureaucracy); amendments to the law on labor contracts allowing private employers to set their own standards for employee qualifications; and suspension of the current law on property restitution until fundamental changes are made to the existing law.

The law on property restitution continues to be a controversial issue in Lithuania as in most post-Soviet societies. The original law, passed in 1991, has been amended 15 times, considered by the Constitutional Court several times, and still fails to satisfy the vast majority of claimants. At the end of December, the Seimas had decided to suspend the law (and all court cases now pending) and rewrite it — a fundamental rewrite. The greatest problem continues to be how to balance the rights of former owners of property with the interests of those still "renting" or utilizing the housing in dispute. The new parliament's judiciary committee may be up to the challenge since it is headed by the former Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court, Mr. Stasys Stačiokas, who is now a member of the Seimas.

The 105th Congress of the United States

There's a new Congress elected in the United States as well. The Democrats in the House narrowed the margin of the Republican majority by nine seats. In 33 Senate races, the Republicans were able to win enough seats to increase their majority to 55 seats. The dynamics in each chamber are affected by these small, but significant shifts in the numbers.

On the House side, it has meant that Speaker Newt Gingrich and his hand-picked leadership have to be more responsive to their rank-and-file because the margin of control is a mere 9 votes. The House when it assembled on January 7th was still in turmoil over the mini-revolt of

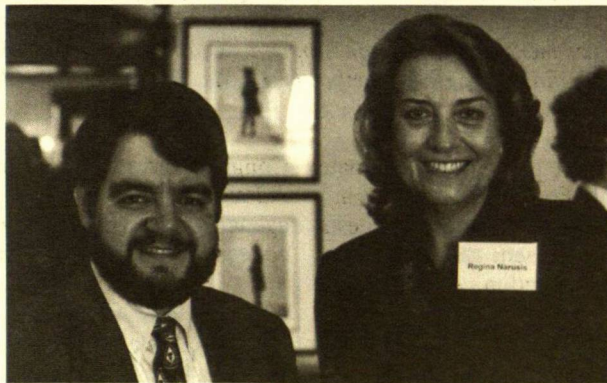
House Republicans against their leader, Mr. Gingrich, because of the ethics committee investigation into his activities using a tax-exempt organization to promote partisan programs back in the 1980s. The threatened protest votes were eventually won over, and Newt Gingrich once again was voted in as Speaker of the House of Representatives.

On the Senate side, Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-MS) has been able to enhance his leadership role because he presides over a solid majority (55 to 45). It is Senator Lott who signaled to the White House in December that the 105th Congress would work at a more measured pace, waiting for the President to put forth his budget proposal.

Chairmanships of the committees in both the House and Senate remain in Republican hands, but some of the faces have changed. For supporters of Lithuania's independence, the most significant change is that the Senate Subcommittee on European Affairs is now headed by Senator Gordon Smith of Oregon, rather than Senator Richard Lugar. Senator Smith was elected to the Senate in November, 1996 on his second try. In January, 1996 he lost to Democrat Ron Wyden by just one percentage of the vote in a special election to fill the seat left vacant by the resignation of Senator Bob Packwood. Senator Gordon Smith is a successful businessman, president of Smith Frozen Foods, who served two terms with distinction in the Oregon State Senate. He was elect-

ed by his colleagues to be president of the State Senate in 1994.

The Senate appropriations subcommittee on foreign operations will still be chaired by Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) who has proved to be a defender of the U.S. technical assistance programs to Eastern Europe, and a supporter of Lithuania's independence. By contrast, the House appropriations subcommittee on foreign operations seems less willing to continue the critical assistance needed by countries such as Lithuania. We are looking forward to working with the House Committee on International Relations (the authorizing committee) chaired by Congressman Benjamin Gilman (R-NY) this year. It is our hope that Congressman Gilman's committee will designate Lithuania for additional assistance to prepare for NATO membership, just as the committee did for Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic last year.



Regina Narušis, J.D., President, Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. and Dan O'Grady, Legislative Assistant to Senator Richard Durbin enjoy the LAC, Inc. reception, January 21, 1997.

LAC, Inc. Hosts Reception

On Tuesday, January 21, 1997, the day after the President's inaugural celebrations, the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. together with the Lansing, Michigan-based firm Dykema-Gossett hosted a reception at the historic Willard Hotel in Washington, DC in honor of the four Members of Congress who are of Lithuanian heritage: Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL), Congressman Martin Frost (D-TX), Congressman Sam Gejdenson (D-CT), and Congressman John Shimkus (R-IL).



Some of the guests at the LAC, Inc. reception to honor Members of Congress of Lithuanian heritage. From left to right: Mr. Arthur Goldberg of Ft. Worth, TX; Ms. Dalia Grybauskaite, Minister Plenipotentiary, Lithuanian Embassy; Mr. Andrew Silski, U.S. Department of State; Algis Rimas, LAC, Inc. Economic Affairs Chairman; Mrs. Rūta Kronkaitis, LAC, Inc. member (VA); Ms. Diane Dogan-Hilliard, U.S. Treasury Department.

The controversy surrounding the vote on Speaker Gingrich, as well as a Senate Budget Committee hearing with Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan on that day prevented the guests of honor from attending, but most sent representatives from their staff to the mid-day reception. Although the

Congress was embroiled in controversies, members of the Administration as well as representatives of government agencies were able to attend the reception and share their concerns for Lithuania's future with LAC, Inc. members.

TRANSPAK

Established 1987

Packages to Lithuania by SHIP or AIR for less than postal rates, including home delivery.

HOLIDAY FOOD PACKAGES
Money Transfer in US Dollars
 Delivery time 3-5 days

TRANSPAK: 4545 West 63rd St.
Chicago, IL 60629. Tel.: (773) 838-1050

Lithuanian Fonts

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

Felisai \$30

All 4 fonts \$125

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

add \$5 shipping and handling for total order



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

Asta Banionis

The Eighth Cabinet of the Republic of Lithuania

Meet the new Lithuanian cabinet which took office in late December, 1996.

PRIME MINISTER

Gediminas Vagnorius was born on June 10, 1957 in Vilkaičiai village, Plungė region. His father was a laborer and his mother was a teacher. In 1980, he graduated from the Vilnius Engineering Institute as an economist-engineer. In 1987, he defended his graduate thesis in Economics and went on to work as a senior researcher in Economics at the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences until 1990.

Vagnorius has been a member of the Lithuanian democratic movement, Sajūdis, since its founding. In 1990, he ran in the elections on the Sajūdis ticket in Vilnius and was elected a deputy to the Supreme Council (the soviet-era parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania which voted to restore the independence of the country. He was a member of the Presidium of this Supreme Council as well as serving on the Committee on Economics.

On the night of January 13, 1991, while Russian tanks were rolling in the streets of the capital city, Vilnius, and 13 unarmed civilians were killed by the attacking Soviet troops, the Parliament elected Gediminas Vagnorius Prime Minister of Lithuania. Moscow was expecting an announcement that the Government of Lithuania had fallen that night, thereby, justifying the imposition of direct, military rule from Moscow. The events of "Bloody Sunday", however, proved to be the baptism of a free Lithuania.

Vagnorius left office on July 7, 1992 on a vote of no confidence from the Parliament which had dissolved into uncompromising factions. Vagnorius continued to serve as a member of this Parliament and was reelected to the new Parliament, the Seimas, on October 24, 1992, where he has served as a member of the Committee on Local Government. Early in 1993, together with Vytautas Landsbergis, Vagnorius set out to form a new political party which would reflect the main ideological goals of Sajūdis and promote private property, individual rights, a market economy, democratization, human rights and inte-

gration of Lithuania into European structures. The new party is called "Tėvynės Sąjunga" (Homeland Union) and is a conservative party similar to the British conservatives.

Tėvynės Sąjunga was able to elect a majority of its candidates to local government office in the municipal elections of March 1994. The conservatives went on to win the majority of parliamentary seats in the Seimas elections of October 1996, and Gedimanas Vagnorius was asked to form a new government. He was sworn in for a second time as Prime Minister on November 25, 1996.

Prime Minister Vagnorius is married. His wife Nijolė is an engineer and they have two teenaged children, Tomas and Reda.

FOREIGN MINISTER

Algirdas Saudargas was born on April 17, 1948, in Kaunas. After finishing Saulė secondary school he entered Kaunas Medical Institute and graduated in 1972 as a biophysicist.

Saudargas began his career as a junior research associate at the Mathematics and Cybernetics Institute of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (1972-1977). From 1977-1982 he was a senior lecturer at the Agriculture Academy, transferring in 1982 to the Institute of Biological Research of Chemicals, where he was employed as a senior research associate until 1986. From 1990, he worked for the Central Research Laboratory of the Kaunas Medical Institute (Neurosurgery Laboratory) as a senior research associate dealing with computer applications in the medical field.

In addition to his professional responsibilities, Saudargas gave lectures on religious studies at the Kaunas 42nd Secondary School and lectures on Christianity at Kaunas Cultural Sunday School.

As the Sajūdis movement started in Lithuania, Algirdas Saudargas became an active member. From 1989 to 1990

he was a chairman of the Sąjūdis National Council Political Commission. In 1990, Saudargas was elected from Kaunas to the Lithuanian Supreme Council (the Parliament which restored the country's independence now known as the Restoration Seimas). From March 1990 to December 1992 he was Foreign Minister; he also headed Lithuania's delegation negotiating with the Soviet Union.

Saudargas was elected to the Seimas in October 1992. As a member of the minority, he served on the Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, and as co-chairman of the European Subcommittee, as well as a member of the Seimas delegation to the WEU Parliamentary Assembly. On November 11, 1996, he was elected to the new Seimas representing the Karoliniškės (8th district) constituency. Algirdas Saudargas is also the Chairman of Christian Democrat Party. He joined this party in 1989.

The Foreign Minister is married. His wife Laima is a chemist employed at Kaunas Academic Clinics. His daughter Eglė is an university student and his son Paulius is a secondary school student.

DEFENSE MINISTER

The new Defense Minister is Seimas member, Ambassador **Česlovas Vytautas Stankevičius**, a member of the Christian Democratic Party. He was born on February 27, 1937, in the Vilkaviškis region. In 1956 he graduated from Kaunas Polytechnical School; in 1965, from the Faculty of Construction, Kaunas Polytechnical Institute. Stankevičius worked at the Urban Construction and Design Institute serving as chief engineer from 1974 to 1994.

Stankevičius was a chairman of the Sąjūdis Council in Kaunas. In 1990 he was elected to the Supreme Council of Lithuania (the Restoration Seimas/Parliament) and served as deputy chairman of that parliament. He is a signatory of the March 11, 1990 Restoration of Independence Act.

In 1991-1992 he headed the delegation for negotiations with Russia and headed the Lithuanian parliamentary delegation at the North Atlantic Assembly. In 1992 he received the high rank of ambassador for special missions.

Stankevičius served in the Seimas from 1992-1996 as a minority member, but nonetheless, was able to make a major contribution as an author of the law on national security and defense concept which was finally passed.

He and his wife Jadvyga have two sons.

INTERIOR MINISTER

Vidmantas Žiemelis, born in Gailičkes village, Molėtai region on December 4, 1950, is the new Lithuanian Interior Minister. Žiemelis finished the Vilnius boarding-school No. 1 in 1968. Then he was drafted into the Soviet Army

and served in Kaluga (Russia). Returning to Lithuania after his tour of duty, he was able to enter law school and, in 1977, Žiemelis graduated from the Faculty Law of Vilnius University. By the end of his studies he was working as a legal adviser at the all-union industrial chemical plant, "Lietuvos Buitinė Chemija".

From 1981 Žiemelis was assistant prosecutor at the Vilnius Transport Office. Later, he was invited to work as a prosecutor at the department of general supervision of the Lithuanian prosecutor's office.

In 1989, Žiemelis withdrew from the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) and founded a Sąjūdis initiative group in the prosecutor's office. From 1989 to 1990 he was member of the Vilnius city council. In 1990, he was elected a deputy of the Supreme Council of Lithuania. He is a signatory of the March 11 Independence Act.

In 1992, the minister was elected to the Lithuanian Seimas as an opposition member and served on the State and Legal Committee. In 1994, he completed a training fellowship program in France where he studied legal regulation of self-government. The same year he was invited to Canada to find learn more about Canadian law enforcement institutions.

In the October 1996 parliamentary election, Žiemelis was elected to the Lithuanian Seimas as a member of the Homeland Union (the Conservative Party). The newly-confirmed minister is a member of the Lithuanian Lawyers Association. He has published many articles on legal and political issues. Žiemelis drafted laws on legal reform, migration, and the prevention of crime and government corruption.

The minister is divorced. He has two children. His son Gediminas, is a student of Vilnius Technical University, and daughter Jurgita, is a schoolgirl.

JUSTICE MINISTER

Conservative Party member, **Vytautas Pakalniškis**, born May 27, 1944 in Gegrenai village, Plungė district, is Lithuania's new Minister of Justice. In 1972, Pakalniškis graduated from the Law Faculty of Vilnius University where he later was a lecturer. In 1984, he became an associate professor of law, and in 1989 defended a thesis on law sciences. From 1984 to 1989 he served as vice-dean of the law faculty. Pakalniškis is an author and co-author of many legal textbooks.

On December 1, 1989 Pakalniškis was appointed to the legal department of the Lithuanian Supreme Council where, together with the current Prime Minister Gediminas Vagnorius, he wrote many bills, as well as developed the principles of an economic program for Lithuania.

On January 23, 1991 Pakalniškis was elected Lithuanian Vice-Premier in a new cabinet which was formed after the events of Bloody Sunday in Lithuania (the January 12-13, 1991 assault by Soviet troops). Later that Spring he was appointed Justice Minister.

With the change of power in the government after the October 1992 parliamentary elections, Pakalniškis left government service and went to work for a private investment agency. In the 1996 parliamentary elections, he was elected member of parliament as a member of the Homeland Union (Conservative Party).

Pakalniškis is married. His wife Nina and he have a daughter, Ina, and a son, Saulius.

FINANCE MINISTER

The new Finance Minister, **Rolandas Matiliauskas**, was born on July 10, 1968, in the town of Utena, in eastern Lithuania. He graduated from Vilnius University in 1990 as a specialist of bookkeeping and economic analysis. From March 1991 to July 1993, he was employed at the Finance Ministry as a Deputy Head of the Currency and Securities Department.

In 1992-1993 Matiliauskas was a fellow in economics and banking at Cambridge University in England. From 1993 to 1995 he worked for Kredito Bankas, a private, commercial bank. Before his nomination to the post of Finance Minister, he was the chief financial officer for a joint Lithuanian-German company called Interfarma.

Matiliauskas is fluent in both English and German. He is a member of Homeland Union (Lithuanian Conservatives). His wife Jolanta is an economist and they have a daughter.

MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND TRADE, soon to become the MINISTER OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

Laima Liucija (Galdikaitė) Andrikienė was born on January 1, 1958 in the southern Lithuanian resort town of Druskininkai into a family of deportees.

In 1975 she finished Druskininkai secondary school No. 1 and a seven-year music school. She graduated from Vilnius University in 1980 with a degree in economics, and started a career as an engineer at the computer centre of the Scientific Research Institute of Lithuanian Agricultural Economics. Later she was offered a post of research associate at the same institute.

In 1986, Andrikienė defended the thesis of candidate of economics. Since 1995 she is Doctor of Social Sciences. In 1988, Andrikienė attended post-graduate courses at the department of agricultural economics at Manchester University in Great Britain. Following these studies, she

was appointed as an assistant to the vice-chairman of the Lithuanian Council of Ministers.

In the 1990 parliamentary elections, Andrikienė was elected a deputy of the Lithuanian Supreme Council and was a signatory of the March 11, 1990 Restoration of Independence Act. She was elected again to the parliament in 1992, as a member of the opposition (Sąjūdis list) and served on the Seimas' Foreign Affairs Committee.

Throughout the period of 1990-1992 she was a member of the Sąjūdis National Council and the Independence Party. In 1993, she was a founding member of the Homeland Union (Conservative Party). In the October 1996 parliamentary elections she won a seat from one of the Kaunas city districts. She is a widow; her son Šarūnas is a school-boy.

MINISTER OF THE ECONOMY

Vincas Kęstutis Babilius, born in 1937 in the city of Kaunas, serves as the new Minister of Economics in the cabinet of Prime Minister Gediminas Vagnorius.

A graduate of the Kaunas Polytechnical Institute, in 1959 he became a shop head in the Vilnius computer machine plant. Three years later he was appointed a senior engineer in the Vilnius electric metering machinery plant where he took over as general director and board chairman in 1981.

Since 1993, Babilius has served as the elected vice-president of the Lithuanian Industrialists' Confederation (an association of major industrial plants) and chairman of the board of Litimpeks Bank.

The minister is married. His wife Joana is a housewife. They have two sons. Vincas, an engineer and businessman, and Vytautas, a surgeon.

MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT REFORM

The newly confirmed Lithuanian Minister of Government Reform and Municipalities, **Kęstutis Skrebys**, was born on June 14, 1965 in the city of Panevėžys. Upon graduation from Panevėžys Secondary school No. 4 in 1983, he entered the Physics Faculty at Vilnius University. In 1990 Skrebys finished Kaunas Polytechnical Institute and began work first as a laboratory assistant, and later as a senior laboratory assistant at the Faculty of Kaunas Polytechnical Institute, Panevėžys campus.

In Spring 1992, the minister was appointed as a local government representative in the Panevėžys district. He held this post until his election to the Seimas the same year. With the formation of factions (caucuses) in the Seimas Skrebys was appointed deputy head of the political prisoners and deportees freedom faction and served on the par-

liaments' Government reform and Municipalities Committee. Later, with the creation of the Homeland Union (Conservative Party) faction, he was elected deputy head of this faction.

Skrebys was re-elected to the Seimas as a conservative party member in 1996. He also serves on the executive board of the Homeland Union and its committees on municipal affairs and youth affairs. The minister is married. His wife Nerija Lijana is a pediatrician.

MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS

The new Minister of Communications is **Rimantas Pleikys**. Born in 1957 in Vilnius, he grew up in Druskininkai where he finished secondary school and worked as a communications operator at the local re-transmission station.

Pleikys graduated from the journalism department of Vilnius University in 1981, where he later served as a lecturer. In 1985 he produced local broadcasts at a Vilnius radio components plant, and in the period from 1984 to 1988 he was a correspondent of Vilnius State Radio broadcasts abroad.

In 1989 Pleikys founded the first independent M-1 radio station which provided the democratic movement Sajūdis an opportunity to broadcast its message. He soon helped found another private radio station, Radiocentras, in 1990, where he held the chief-editor's post. In 1995, he became the head of the Vilnius branch office of a private television station "Kaunas Plus".

In January 1996, Pleikys was elected to the Homeland Union (Conservatives) board, and serves as the party's vice-chairman. He also headed the Conservative Party's central election headquarters during the 1996 parliamentary election.

Pleikys is a board member of the Lithuanian Journalists Society, and adviser at the Radio and Television Association. The minister was also included in the working team which wrote the recently adopted mass media law. Pleikys is married. His wife Gracija teaches English at Vilnius University. Their son Justinas and daughter Dalia Marija are schoolchildren.

CONSTRUCTION MINISTER

The new Minister of Construction and Urban Affairs is **Algis Čaplikas** who was born in Vilnius in 1962, to a family of workers. After finishing Vilnius Secondary School No. 22, he studied engineering at the Vilnius Engineering Construction Institute.

Until 1990, he worked at the Administration unit No. 9 of the Vilnius City Construction Trust; he spent another five years as an elder of Justiniškės (a city district in Vilnius). In 1995, Čaplikas was elected a member of the Vilnius City Council and a member of the city's Board. He also served as the chairman of the municipal services committee.

He was an activist in the Sajūdis movement in 1989-1992 and was a member of Sajūdis National Council and the Sajūdis Vilnius local council. In 1992, Čaplikas was one of founders of the Lithuanian centrist movement, and in 1993 he actively promoted the formation of the Lithuanian Center Union. Now he is a member of the council and the board of this political party, and deputy council chairman of its Vilnius branch.

Čaplikas is married. His wife Eglė is employed at the Social Workers' Center as a program manager. They have a son Karolis and daughter Saulė.

TRANSPORTATION MINISTER

The new Minister of Transportation **Algis Žvaliauskas** was born in December 18, 1955, in Mackiai village, Prienai District, to a family of workers. In 1974, he finished Balbieriškis secondary school and in 1979 he graduated from the Vilnius Engineering Construction Institute.

From 1979 to 1981, Žvaliauskas worked at the Marijampolė Mechanization Enterprise as a construction superintendent. In 1991, he started his own business as a director of a private factory. In 1993 he became the chief engineer in the economic department of the Marijampolė City Board.

On September 23, 1993, Žvaliauskas was elected Mayor of Marijampolė. On April 13, 1995, he was re-elected for a second term as mayor.

In 1996, Žvaliauskas was elected to the Seimas by the electorate of the Marijampolė constituency (district No. 29) as a member of the Homeland Union (Conservative Party). He is married. He and his wife Rima have three children, a son Donatas, and two daughters, Ieva and Sigita.

AGRICULTURE MINISTER

Petras Knasys, the new Minister of Agriculture, was born in 1937, in Garliava, Kaunas district. In 1956, he finished horticulture school and then studied at the Agriculture Academy, graduating in 1961.

Until 1965 he was employed at Vytėnai Horticulture Experimental Station. Later he was appointed head of the Smališkes Experimental Station, and eventually transferred to the Vežaičiai branch of the Agriculture Institute.

Knasys has published more than 100 research papers and written several books, including a monograph on soil liming. After defending a thesis, he received his Doctor of Agriculture, and worked as a senior research associate. Knasys has been awarded a National Prize for his work in horticulture. Under the recommendation of the Agrarian division of Sajūdis and the Agrarian Council, Knasys was appointed to the post of the last Soviet Agriculture Minister.

After the restoration of independence in Lithuania, Knasys became a minister of the first government. Later he worked at the *Valstiečių Laikraščis*, a daily newspaper widely read in rural Lithuania. Knasys is a public activist, one of the founders of Agrarian Sajūdis. He is a member of the United Nations Lithuanian Association, as well as a member of a strategic development center at the presidium of Agriculture Chamber.

In October 1996, he was elected to the Seimas as a member of the Homeland Union (Conservative Party).

He is a great sports enthusiast. His wife Dalia is a pharmacist. Son Valdas is a businessman dealing with furniture. They also have two daughters. Rasa works in the medical field, and Milda is a high school student.

EDUCATION MINISTER

Zigmas Zinkevičius, born in 1925, is the new Lithuanian Minister for Education and Science. After graduation from the history and philology department of Vilnius University in 1950, Zigmas Zinkevičius began teaching in the university where he has held the posts of associate professor, professor and department head.

In the period 1964-1968, the minister was vice-dean of the history and philological faculty at Vilnius University. From 1988 to 1989, he was head of the Baltic department and was a professor in the same department. Since October, 1995 he has served as director of the Lithuanian Language Institute.

Zinkevičius' research encompasses the history of the Lithuanian language, dialectology, and the Baltic languages. He has published over twenty books, including a six-volume History of the Lithuanian Language.

He has also published nearly five hundred scientific articles in the Lithuanian and foreign press. He is member of the editorial board of *Lituanistika* published by the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, and *Baltistika*, an international periodical.

The minister holds the rank of Academician at the Lithuanian and Latvian science academies, and is a member of the Swedish Royal Humanities Science Academy and the Norwegian Science Academy. Minister

Zinkevičius is also honorary doctor of Kaunas Vytautas Magnus University and winner of the International Merder Prize. He was awarded the Order of Grand Duke Gediminas of Lithuania - 3rd grade for his service to the nation.

The minister belongs to the Lithuanian Christian Democrat Party. His wife Regina is a teacher of Lithuanian language. They have a daughter Laimutė and a son Vytautas.

HEALTH MINISTER

The new Minister of Health is **Dr. Juozas Galdikas**, born on October 31, 1958 in the southern resort town of Druskininkai to a family of deportees. In 1976, Galdikas finished secondary school and a seven-year music program, and an advanced mathematics program at Vilnius University.

Galdikas received his medical training both at the Kaunas Medical Academy and Vilnius University. Upon completing his medical training in 1983, he was offered a post in the Heart and Blood-Vessels Surgery laboratory led by Professor Algimantas Marcinkevičius at Vilnius University. Galdikas is qualified as a first-category surgeon in Lithuania. In 1993 he defended his doctoral thesis in medicine, and was granted the degree of Habilitated Doctor of Medicine. Since 1996 he has also held the rank of professor.

Minister Galdikas has furthered his studies at the Bern Heart and Blood-Vessels Surgery Clinic in Switzerland, as well as clinics in the Czech Republic, Germany and the United States. He belongs to a number of international surgeons' societies, and has been granted foreign awards for his research.

Since May, 1995 he has headed the Vilnius City, Department of Health, Sanitation and Hygiene. He continues to lecture at Vilnius University, and heads the Conservative Party's Health Committee. He was elected to the Seimas in October, 1996 from the Druskininkai district.

Galdikas' wife Vilija is a biologist. They have two sons, Liūdas and Jonas.

SOCIAL AND LABOR MINISTER

Lithuania's new Minister for Social and Labor Affairs is **Dr. Irena Degutienė**. She was born June 1, 1949, in Šiauliai but raised in the southern Lithuanian resort town Druskininkai. As Minister Degutiene herself says: "My parents, being Žemaiciai (from western Lithuania) instilled in me a great determination to pursue a chosen goal, while growing up among the people of the Dzukija region in southern Lithuania gave me a warm and careful approach to each human being."

After finishing secondary school in 1968, she entered the Medical Faculty of Vilnius University. Degutienė graduated in 1974 and worked as a therapist at the Alytus textile mill. From 1975 to 1994, she was assigned to the Vilnius University Red Cross hospital, where for 10 years she was served as an anesthesiologist-rheumatologist and later as an gastroenterologist.

Dr. Degutienė has also served in medical administrative posts, first as a department head, then as a deputy head physician, and finally as the chief medical officer of the hospital. Since 1994, she has served in the national government as Secretary of the Lithuanian Health Care Ministry.

Dr. Degutienė is a member of Homeland Union (Conservative Party). Her husband Gediminas is also a Doctor of Medicine. Daughter Silvija is a high school student. Her son Gediminas and daughter-in-law Vita are university students. Her granddaughter is still learning to walk.

CULTURE MINISTER

The new Minister of Culture is writer, **Saulius Šaltenis**, who was born on December 24, 1945, in Utena, east Lithuania, into a family of Lithuanian language teachers. After finishing secondary school No. 2 in Utena in 1962-1963, he studied Lithuanian language and literature at Vilnius University and at the same time worked at the Vilnius drill factory. He was drafted and served in the Soviet Army's missile detachment in the Kaliningrad Region for three years. After military service he worked as an editor at the Lithuanian Film Studio.

Šaltenis is one of the founders of *Šiaurės Atėnai*, a weekly which publishes articles on cultural issues; he has also served as its editor. From 1994 to the present, he has served as the editor-in-chief of the daily newspaper, *Lietuvos Aidas*.

Šaltenis published his first short stories in 1961. He is known as the author of such stories as "Atostogos" (Holidays), "Riešutų Duona" (Nut Bread), "Herkus Mantas" (a narrative about a historical person, leader of



Kristi Walseth, Senior Legislative Assistant to Congressman Martin Frost, has travelled to Lithuania a number of times while overseeing the work of the House Task Force on Assistance to East European Parliaments. The Task Force, which Congressman Frost chaired, provided over \$1 million in training, equipment and library resources to Lithuania's parliament. LAC, Inc. reception, January 21, 1997.

rebellion in Prussia), "Karvelio Linijos Istorija" (A Story of the Karvelis Line), screen scripts, plays and other works.

Šaltenis has written plays which were performed on the stage of Jaunimo Teatras in Vilnius and became famous not only in Lithuania but also abroad. His stories and plays are translated into Russian, Estonian, Georgian, Latvian, Hungarian, and Slovak.

Šaltenis was a member of Sąjūdis National Council and was elected in February, 1990 to the Lithuanian Supreme Council (the Restoration Seimas). He is also a signatory of the March 11 Restoration of Independence Act. He is a vice-chairman of the Homeland Union (Conservative Party), and a member of Conservative faction in the Seimas elected in October, 1996.

Šaltenis is married. He and his wife Lola Adela have two daughters, Saulė and Indrė.

ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

The new Lithuanian Minister of Environment and Natural Resources is **Imantas Lazdinis** who was born on January 9, 1944, in Joniškis, northern Lithuania. After finishing Joniškis secondary school No. 1 in 1961, he studied silviculture at the Lithuanian Agriculture Academy and graduated in 1970 as a forest engineer. In 1986, he defended a biology candidate thesis and received his Doctor of Nature Sciences degree.

Lazdinis has worked at the Lithuanian forest management department as a technician, engineer, and senior engineer. He also worked at the Lithuanian Forest Research Institute, where he rose from junior research associate to senior research associate. Since September 1990, Lazdinis has served as deputy director of the Dzukija National Park. On April 10, 1996, he became the director of this national park.

Lazdinis is a member of two national boards - the Center Union (political party) and the Lithuanian Foresters' Society. His wife Virginija heads a monument protection department at the Varėna district administration. Their son Marius is a student.

Algis Rimas

Business and Investment News

Prime Minister Vagnorius Takes on the Economy

After taking office at year's end, the Vagnorius government indicated that one of its first priorities would be to reduce the government's budget deficit. In early January a new budget for 1997 was announced. With revenues of \$1.51 billion and expenditures of \$1.68, the budget would be in the red by \$175 million (700 million litas), or equivalent to over two percent of the GDP. The main sources of government revenue would be as follows: VAT - \$850 million, accounting for over one-half of the total receipts; excise taxes - \$300 million; corporate taxes - \$115 million; and the personal income tax - \$93 million. The largest expenditure categories include the following: public safety - \$245 million; education - \$182 million; services for agriculture, forestry and fisheries - \$173 million; social welfare - \$127 million; local government transfers - \$120 million; and health - \$94 million. Defense spending is earmarked at \$76.5 million. The Vagnorius government has also been pressing for stricter enforcement of tax laws, threatening with dire consequences both tax evaders and those among his own bureaucrats who have been slack in their efforts to collect revenues.

Among other economic issues to which the Vagnorius government gave significant attention in January was the reworking of the government's memorandum on economic policy which is the basis for its cooperation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the eventual change in Lithuania's monetary regime to allow for greater flexibility in controlling the litas exchange rate. Prime Minister Vagnorius reportedly wishes to re-negotiate with the IMF the Lithuanian commitment to reduce its import duties on agricultural products by September of 1997 to an average of 10 percent. Prime Minister Vagnorius has attacked this undertaking to reduce trade protection, entered into by the former government, as unfairly injuring Lithuania's higher cost domestic producers. Mr. Vagnorius further justified his position by recalling that neither the European Union nor the World Trade Organization had

required similar tariff reductions as a condition to membership in their organizations.

On monetary policy, the Prime Minister and the Central Bank wish to restore the power to control monetary policy to the Central Bank gradually instead of maintaining the current currency board system which rigidly ties the litas to the U.S. dollar. To be sure, the current fixed litas-dollar exchange rate of 4 litas to one dollar is guaranteed, at least until 1998. Thereafter, the Lithuanian authorities would prefer to fix the rate to the new European currency, the euro, or, in its absence, to a basket of U.S. and European currencies. The Central Bank would also be allowed to engage in a broader range of monetary operations, including the discounting of financial paper to influence the liquidity of commercial banks.

More on the Reorganization of the Lithuanian Government's Economic Functions.

Following our report in the previous issue of **BRIDGES** on the realignment of governmental ministries, the Seimas (Parliament) has abolished the Ministries of Energy, Industry and Trade, and Economics. Most of their combined functions have been transferred to a newly established Ministry of the National Economy, headed by Mr. Vincas Babilius. However, the other new ministry, named the Ministry of European Affairs, inherited, despite its limiting geographic designation, several key economic functions. It will be responsible for selling off state-owned companies to private buyers for cash. According to media reports, Nomura Securities, a Japanese company, already has offered its services to implement parts of this state enterprise privatization program. Secondly, the Ministry will take on all global export and investment promotion responsibilities. These include oversight of the semi-independent Lithuanian Investment Agency and a similar agency charged with export promotion. However, funds to subsidize exporters through export insurance and to assist small and medium sized businesses would be managed by another ministry, the newly reorganized Ministry of the National Economy.

As for its European Affairs function, the Ministry is to harmonize Lithuania's laws with those of the European Union in preparation for eventual Lithuanian integration into the European Union. Negotiations with the Europeans appear

Algis Rimas is a business consultant living in Reston, Virginia. Before retiring from the U.S. Foreign Service, he served from 1992 to 1994 at the American Embassy in Vilnius as its deputy principal officer.

to have been left to the Foreign Affairs Ministry and to a special delegation which has been appointed for that purpose.

The European Affairs Minister is Ms. Laima Andrikiene, an energetic, Conservative Party parliamentarian who has studied in the United States. She has selected as one of her Deputy Ministers, a Kaunas-born Canadian-Lithuanian businessman, Mr. Vytautas Bireta, who previously worked as an executive in a successful Toronto Credit Union. Her other deputy is Mr. Mindaugas Paunksnis, the 28 year-old former head of economic development for the city government of Kaunas.

A Check on the Lithuanian Economy

Lithuania's inflation adjusted gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 3.6 percent during the first three quarters of 1996. The GDP for 1996 probably will surpass \$7.7 billion. The increase, according to the Statistics Department, was due mainly to increased productivity in the energy, agriculture and processing industries.

The monthly inflation rate was expected to surge in January to a 4-5 percent range, following a low 0.9 percent rate registered for December. The anticipated price rise was attributed to the pass-through effects on consumers of an adjustment in the value added tax (VAT). The change, effective on January 1, consisted of imposing the full VAT of 18 percent on food and energy products which had been previously taxed at a 9 percent rate. Although the VAT rate is supposed to be reduced in 1997 to a 15-16 percent range, higher consumer prices should force the 1997 inflation rate into the 16-17 percent, above the 13 -14 percent range achieved in 1996. The unemployment rate in December was 6.2 percent.

The debt-ridden energy sector received a boost with news that the sum of its unpaid receivable accounts in 1996 was reduced by 37 percent compared to the previous year. Lithuania's energy users still owed a total of 180.5 million litas (over \$45 million) to the energy utilities which, in turn, remain indebted to their Russian suppliers of oil, natural gas and uranium for the Ignalina power plant.

U.S. Investments in Lithuania Increasing

Dr. Dalia Grybauskaitė, Minister for Economic Affairs at the Lithuanian Embassy in Washington, announced in a recent press interview with the Vilnius daily, *Respublika*, that American investor interest in Lithuania has grown substantially during the last six months. Each month, Dr. Grybauskaitė receives over 30 letters inquiring about investment possibilities in Lithuania, and the volume of mail and calls is rising. Total U.S. direct investment in Lithuania is estimated at over \$60 million. Americans are just behind the Germans when ranked according to the value of total investments by country of origin. There are

71 different U.S.-Lithuanian joint-ventures or wholly owned U.S. companies. Among the largest are Philip Morris, Motorola, Coca Cola, McDonald's and Masterfoods.

According to Dr. Grybauskaitė, the assignment by Moody's Investors Service of a reasonably favorable, Ba2, credit rating to Lithuania has boosted investor confidence in the country as a suitable destination for capital. Moody's parent company, Dun and Bradstreet, has also started to list in its credit surveys individual Lithuanian companies. Such credit surveys are normally consulted by potential investors to aid them in their decision making. But the tradition of secrecy, developed during the Communist era, is hard to change, even among business managers, and many Lithuanian companies still refuse to disclose standard business data of the type that would be freely available to the public in all western countries.

There are more serious obstacles to investment, according to Dr. Grybauskaitė. These include a surplus of bureaucratic red tape, a small domestic market and lack of an adequate number of foreign banks operating in Lithuania. As to how small the domestic market may be, the Lithuanian economist, Dr. Eduardas Vilkas, has pointed out that Lithuania's annual per capita national income, for a declining population of just over 3.7 million people, is \$2,100. By comparison, the average western European figure is some 13 times larger. But Dr. Vilkas is undeterred; he sees great potential for Lithuania in serving as a transit country for East-West trade. He believes the best prospects for investment would be in energy, telecommunications and transportation. Food and wood processing are also highly competitive industries.

Other positive factors that may attract investors to the country include a highly trained and inexpensive workforce. The U.S. and the Lithuanian governments have been negotiating an investment protection treaty and an agreement to avoid double taxation. According to our sources, both sides have practically worked out acceptable texts which should be ready for signing in the near future. One result would be more legal protection for U.S. business people who would be accorded national treatment in Lithuania. Another factor may be the recent election of a new government determined to press ahead with establishing a competitive market and improving the economy. This should have a positive effect in speeding up market reform and liberalizing the economy.

Perhaps in anticipation of better times ahead, investors in Lithuanian equities have been enjoying a bull market during the past few months. For example, during the January 7 trading session of the admittedly thinly funded and volatile Lithuanian stock market, Vilnius Bank shares rose from 1000 to 1200 litas per share, an increase equivalent to an impressive \$50 per share. Similar swings were reported for other issues as well. In fact, the stock market became so

bullish that the government has decided to curb it by capping price changes in any one day to 20 percent.

Business Developments

The competition for a contract to develop the Šiauliai duty-free zone was won by a U.S. consortium headed by the New York-based Baltic Fund. It turned out to be the sole competitor for this contract. The Baltic Fund reportedly is financed, among others, by the interests of the Rockefeller family, Lazard Freres, and the Saudi royal family. The current plan to develop the duty free zone would require over 100 million dollars in investment over a 20 year period. Over 22,000 jobs would be created.

The Lithuanian Brewers Association announced that in 1996 Lithuanians soaked-up 34 million liters of beer, and all but 2.7 million liters were domestic suds. Ten breweries produced over 90 percent of the local beer, with 200 others accounting for 200,000 liters. Utena beer held the largest market share with 10.5 million liters brewed. Second place Kalnapilis was recognized as the fastest growing brewery, having expanded its market share from 15 to 22 percent of the total.

Some 2000 small shopkeepers demonstrated in front of the Prime Minister's office in Vilnius in mid-January to

protest the government's plans to require all shops to be registered and handle sales through cash registers. The requirements appear to be part of the Vagnorius government's crack-down on tax evaders and black marketers so as to narrow the government's budget deficit through better tax collections. But smaller, marginal shop keepers, such as those operating stands at regional market-places, are pleading be left alone. They point out that the additional cost of red tape and cash registers would drive many out of business. The economic committee of the Seimas has promised to look into the issue.

Vilnius Bank became Lithuania's largest private bank when its capitalization recently passed the 100 million litas (\$ 25 million) mark. Its assets are estimated in excess of \$ 175 million. Vilnius Bank also ranks first in profits, reporting \$4 million net gains in 1996.

Lithuania's Largest Companies

The Lithuanian Statistics Department has tabulated a listing of Lithuania's largest companies according to gross annual sales in 1996. The list was also published in the Lithuanian journal, *Verslo Žinios*. The ten largest (money figures are in millions of dollars) are as follows:

Name	Annual sales	Profit/(loss)	Employees
Lietuvos energija (state-owned electricity utility)	\$495.00	(94)	na
Mažeikių nafta (state-owned oil refinery)	\$171.00	(11.8)	1813
Lietuvos dujos (state-owned natural gas utility)	\$126.50	(2.8)	na
SBA koncernas (construction company)	\$99.50	2.6	na
Lietuvos kūras (state-owned oil products distr)	\$60.00	(1.9)	na
Ekranas (Panevėžys-based TV screen mfr)	\$59.80	17.5	6949
Lietuvos jūrų laivininkystė (state-owned shipping co)	\$58.30	9.8	2160
Chemijos gamykla "Fostrā" (Kedainiai-based chem plant)	\$52.50	1.2	na
Dirbtinis pluostas (Kaunas-based synthetic fiber plant)	\$39.30	1.1	na
Klasco (Klaipėda-based cargo handling company)	\$32.00	5	2591

The IX World Lithuanian Youth Congress

The Ninth WLY Congress will take place July 18 through 27, 1997 at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy on Cape Cod, Mass. Participants will include young people of Lithuanian descent from across the United States, Canada, Australia, Europe, and South America.

This event will provide a wonderful forum for individuals between the ages of 18 and 35 to become acquainted with each other and to celebrate their common Lithuanian heritage and culture. The program includes opportunities for formal and informal discussions on current political and social issues in Lithuania and the United States, as well as occasions to socialize.

Special "Study Days" have been set aside so that Official Delegates of the World Lithuanian Youth Organization will be able to participate in conferences. These sessions will address the theme of this congress, "Lithuanian Roots Open the Door to a World of Opportunities."

Participants will be able to learn how they can become involved in the Lithuanian community or expand upon their current commitments. Once such event will be an "Organization Expo" where representatives of various Lithuanian organizations and other interested parties will share information on strategies for success and methods of outreach.

Getting On Board

One can participate in the Congress as an "Official Delegate," a "Participant," or a "Guest." To become an Official Delegate from the World Lithuanian Youth Association, you must contact the nearest city chapter and apply. Delegates will engage in three days of seminars on

the theme of the Congress. They will also hear reports from chapters of all represented countries and participate in elections for the WLYA executive committee and president.

"Participants" means anyone between the ages of 18 and 35 who wishes to take part in the entire program of the Congress. Participants are strongly encouraged but not required to attend meetings set aside for Official Delegates. They may choose instead to participate in other Congress activities such as city tours and daytime events.

"Guests" refers to anyone interested in the Lithuanian community who would like to attend specific events such as evening gatherings and the Organization Expo. Guests are welcome and encouraged.

The price for the Congress (\$550 for "Official Delegates" and \$700 for regular "Participants") is all-inclusive, covering full room and board for ten days. "Guests" pay separately for each event or day of participation.

The organizing committee, chaired by Tomas Matusaitis, has been hard at work planning this Congress. Other committee members include Laisvyda Bielkus (vice-president), Kristina Matusaitis, Vydas Marijosius, Paul Murauskas, Claudia Luecke, Kazys Adomkaitis, Zara Bielkus, Jonas Jankauskas, Rytas Stankunas, Kristen Logan and Lina Matusaitis. These and many other others are eager to ensure that the Ninth World Lithuanian Youth Congress is a success.

For further information, write to: PLJK, PO Box 283, Manhasset NY 11030, (516) 358-6103 or jankauskas@aol.com



IX Pasaulio Lietuviu Jaunimo Kongresas IX World Lithuanian Youth Congress

Romas A. Shatas

Beyond the Victory

I would like to comment on the return to power of some of our Lithuanian resistance leaders after the Tėvynės Sąjungos/Konservatorių Partijos (Homeland Union/Conservative Party) victory in the recent parliamentary elections. I would like to offer some considered reservations. They are based on talks with my Lithuanian cousin's son, Stasys, a graduate of the Gediminas Technical University in Vilnius. Under the U.S. immigration law's Diversity Visa program, he and his family — wife and two teenaged sons — gained admission as permanent residents to the United States during the autumn of 1996. Their last Lithuanian residence was the Baltūpių suburb of Vilnius. Their current address is in Florida where they work in the service economy.

Corruption in Lithuania

In our frank and open discussion of problems generated by the four-year rule of the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party (LDLP), Stasys admitted that our perception of the current state of affairs in Lithuania is naively rosy and does not correspond to the stark reality of daily life there. During the first few years of this period of regained independence, the social situation seemed to have improved, but with the return of the LDLP to political power, the spiritual and material recovery of the country was seriously impaired. The LDLP (neo-communists) behavior reflected a nihilistic mentality which grows out of the Leninist doctrine "grab nagrablenoe," a guiding rule of the old Soviet occupation. Alcoholism is rampant, vicious crime and mafia activity, perhaps sponsored by the hardcore party echelons, is growing like a cancer gone wild. The situation is exacerbated by civil servants directly participating in this corruption. Those who refuse to pay "protection money" and report such shake-downs to the police are not only left "unprotected," but their names are given to the mafia by corrupt government officials. The mafia simply beats up the complainer in a daytime street attack, or rapes his wife or daughter. The person may eventually see the light and agree to the terms of "protection." The police do not see many of these crimes. The judicial system malfunctions starting with the prosecutors and the lower courts and ending with the Supreme Court.

The atmosphere for private business is corrupted. Because of the high tax rate enterprises are forced to keep double

The author is a retired Supervisory Research Physicist, US Army Missile Research Laboratory, Huntsville, Alabama.

books. Free competition is rare because bribes are required with most transactions. Furthermore, tax regulations are changed so frequently that a single bookkeeper for a small company finds it nearly impossible to keep abreast of the myriad of changes. The specifics of the tax regulations are not publicized; they can only be read in tax offices. The tax inspectors have been known to find or invent transgressions when reviewing a company's financial records. The levied fines are usually settled on the spot by depositing a fraction of the fine into the pocket of the inspecting official.

Vicious unprovoked muggings are common. Antisocial elements are seldom removed from the streets. In particular, elderly persons are considered easy prey. Little compassion is felt for them and they suffer with no recourse to the authorities.

Although the last election offers a restoration of confidence in the government's top officials, the lower infrastructure is rife with former communist office holders. De-communization in Lithuania, unlike de-nazification in Konrad Adenauer's German Federal Republic after World War II, has not been attempted. The torturers active under Soviet rule get larger state pensions than do their victims. Victims' rights have been restored only *pro forma*. Old ties between former communist officials (now pretending to be the newly baptized patriots) still exist to block the processing of claims by former dissidents.

Stasys was really flabbergasted when he saw that our parked cars are left in front of our residences unlocked. "In Vilnius, they would be ransacked or stolen within an hour and the police would never find the culprits," he remarked. Also, he marveled at the large sliding doors in the back of our house. "These glass doors would be broken and everything in the house would be stolen within a few days, and the thieves would never be caught."

Bonapartism in Russia

Lithuania's independence may yet be challenged by the Russian Federation. Lithuanian-Americans will have to remain vigilant and prepared to mobilize strong United States support for Lithuania. In view of Russian President Yeltsin's recurring bouts of illness, it is quite possible that what Soviet dictator Stalin termed to be "Bonapartism" (i.e., authoritarian rule by a military leader) will come to fruition in Russia.

Stalin fought even the remote possibility of Bonapartism by periodically lopping off the heads of his marshals (remember Tukhachevsky, Bluecher and others) early in the Vyshinski-staged show trials and later taking on such popular figures as Zhukov. In the post-Yeltsin era, there is a distinct probability that the new Napoleon will emerge in the figure of General Lebed. Lebed is a smart strategist. He appears to be a peacemaker as evidenced by the Russian-Chechen peace accord he negotiated. However, an analysis of the peace accord shows that the Republic of Chechnya will remain subject for five years to the successor of the Soviet Union — the Russian-dominated federation of “free nations.” Only after five years can a referendum be held on Chechnya’s complete independence. These are the same terms offered by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to Vytautas Landsbergis in March 1990, and almost successfully forced upon then Lithuanian Communist Party Secretary Algirdas Brazauskas in 1989.

In the meantime, plans are to diminish and eventually destroy Chechen credibility in the international community. Gorbachev attempted a similar tactic when he referred to Landsbergis as “that musician.” However, the Lebed accord was accompanied by the senseless killing of staff members of the International Red Cross hospital in Chechnya, an event ascribed to the inability of the Chechens to keep internal peace. While Gorbachev’s “that musician” epithet was effectively countered, the Chechen cause may have suffered a complete debacle by the withdrawal of the International Red Cross from Chechnya.

Whoever succeeds Yeltsin may also play the Primakov card of renewal of the cold war. As Primakov has said, “However rusty they may be, we still have intercontinental missiles with intact nuclear warheads that in a few minutes can be re-targeted to strike American cities.”

The Lessons of Iraq

Recalling Primakov’s past service for the Soviet Union (USSR), one should not be surprised by such statements, nor by his willingness to use nuclear blackmail tactics. When Primakov was sent as Moscow’s advisor to Saddam Hussein in the 1970s, he brought with him Soviet military advisors to plan the Iraqi defense against the American generals. The Soviet advisors based their plan on the 1943 scheme of defense of the Kursk region which allowed the

Soviet defenders to completely annihilate the panzer (tank) attack by the German Wehrmacht. The Soviet defense was based on the tactical scheme used by the British a year earlier to stop the attack by the German General Rommel’s Panzer force at El Alamein by enticing them to invade British positions lined up with heavy armor-piercing cannons. In their defense for Saddam Hussein, Russian advisors recommended a similar scheme using the 120 mm cannon-equipped Soviet tanks that did not possess motion-stabilized cannon turrets and, accordingly, could only be precision-engaged while motionless. The Iraqi military had thousands of these Soviet built tanks in their arsenal.

Already in the 1970s the United States was aware of the massive build-up in firepower, albeit of a limited tactical mobility, of the Soviet armed forces. Various counter schemes were pursued simultaneously. The prevailing defense attitude then was “defense at any cost”. In developing U.S. defenses using Iraq as a case-study, the weapons planners recommended the use of smart airborne weapons. During the Battle of the Bulge in December, 1944-January, 1945, the US Army Air Force demonstrated that the best defense against tanks was the precision bombing of the attacking vehicles, so the American military was already predisposed to

employ this defense tactic. The immobile Soviet tanks of Saddam Hussein were the demonstration “targets” for some of the weapons laser guidance systems which were the subjects of our research in laboratories in the 1970s while we were developing the physical and technological ingredients of these new weapons. Much later, in the Gulf War, the successful elimination of the Iraqi tank force by the U.S. laser-guided missiles made the Soviet planned Kursk-style Iraqi defense completely worthless.

This is offered as an example of the inability of the Soviet mentality to adjust to fundamental changes. Primakov is a prime example of this mentality. One can expect that the Russians will fall back on their traditional methods when undermining the independence and freedom of the Baltic States. If Lithuanian-Americans cannot exert their influence on the foreign policy decisions of this country, there will be a lack of counter force to Primakov-like schemes. This is why the Lithuanian-American organizations should devote more attention to mobilizing the intellectual talent in the United States to support Lithuania’s independence and freedom.

Whoever succeeds Yeltsin may also
play the Primakov card of renewal of
the cold war. As Primakov has said,
“However rusty they may be, we still
have intercontinental missiles with
intact nuclear warheads that in a few
minutes can be re-targeted to strike
American cities.”

Jeanne Dorr

A Soup Kitchen in Vilnius

The holidays are now behind us and the mental images of beautifully decorated houses, happy families, and tables laden with food remain. But these images were shattered for me when I visited a "soup kitchen" in Lithuania. There the tables were hardly weighed down with food and the people who had gathered were unrelated, but they felt fortunate to be able to share one simple meal a day.

There are many soup kitchens all over Lithuania, most of them sponsored by various religious denominations. I was privileged to be a part of a soup kitchen which is sponsored five days a week by the **Vilnius Evangelical Lutheran Church**.

When I decided to write this article, I telephoned the Vilnius Evangelical Lutheran Church to make an appointment. Mr. Viktoras Kiauka cleared his extremely busy schedule so that we could discuss the humanitarian work the Church has undertaken. Mr. Kiauka is in charge of administering several of the programs. He is a gentleman who reminded me of a dignified college professor and a CEO who was made of steel. I was also introduced to Maria and Irma, two charming women who worked at the Church. They were such warm people that within a few minutes formality flew out the window and we were chatting like long lost friends.

I remembered visiting the Church in the summer of 1994 with a friend who is a Catholic priest. There were no pews, scaffolding was everywhere, while fallen plaster and debris littered the floor. At that moment, I thought to myself that it would be nothing short of a miracle if this church would ever hold Sunday services again.

In 1996, I saw the miracle. The church was restored to its former beauty and was now filled to capacity on Sundays. It was built in 1555, outlasted communism, and has once again become a house of worship.

On November 19, 1995, the church was "officially" reopened. Over 100 invited guests from around the world attended, including Bishop Hans Dumpys from the United States. For the parishioners it was again a time of tears but this time they were tears of joy. The pastor of the church is Lithuanian-born Tamara Smidt who journeys once a month from her home in Germany to conduct services. Most other Sundays the services are led by pastor Valdas Aušra.

The entire time the church was under reconstruction, the parishioners never forgot the less fortunate of Vilnius. Their humanitarian work is incredible. Programs begin about 9 am every weekday and continue until about 10 or 11 pm each night. The humanitarian aid includes a dispensary where people can obtain donated medicines. For some, a doctor's prescription is necessary while other drugs are available over the counter. The recipients are asked to pay a small fee, if they can, for the medicine. If they cannot, they still receive what they need. The fee is mostly symbolic so that no one feels like a charity case.

There is a doctor available to make house calls to the elderly and infirm. Approximately 44 people benefit from this service, roughly half of them being parishioners of the church. Again, they are asked to pay a very modest fee. Also available is a room filled with used clothing. Most of the clothing is given away without a charge but if it is new or in absolutely mint condition, the people are asked to pay something. One of the aims of the humanitarian program is to make people feel responsible for themselves, and paying a small fee helps them approach this goal.

While I was at the Vilnius Evangelical Lutheran Church a charity shipment arrived. What truly impressed me was the fact that not a single box can be opened unless there are at least four church members present.

I had some preconceived notions about soup kitchens that were not the best of thoughts. My host was to be Juozas



Juozas Balčiūnas oversees the soup kitchen in Vilnius.
Photo by Jeanne Dorr.

Balčiūnas who is in charge of the day-to-day running of the program. Mr. Balčiūnas was a soft spoken man who appeared as though nothing would ever bother him. He explained that the soup kitchen program was started in 1992 and fed 120 people daily. As the Lithuanian economy began to change, the list had to be cut in half. They could manage to feed only 60 people a day. The names of the people are given to them by the social services departments of the city of Vilnius.

Vilnius is like any other city in the world — big on ideas and low on funds. The church tried every possible means to find the least expensive and most efficient way to manage this program. They had approximately 50 cents to spend on each person for a meal.

The solution came about as a small restaurant offered to take in the diners each week day. They would be fed at an “off hour” and the restaurant would be closed to other patrons during that short time. The menus would vary very little: hot soup, a roll, and two pieces of bread.

The restaurant was a few blocks from the church. Although it was July, it was raining and quite cool. As Mr. Balčiūnas and I walked to the restaurant, dodging the puddles along the way, he told me what to expect. Many of the people I would meet were former political prisoners. Some were invalids, while others were just down on their luck. None was homeless, although most lived in very cramped quarters. Many had a difficult time reaching the restaurant. For many, the trip required transferring buses and, although former political prisoners do not have to pay for their bus fare, the trip could be physically exhausting. I was astounded; he seemed to know each and every person's name and circumstances.

I decided I would not take a camera or tape recorder with me. I felt that to do so would be an intrusion of the people's privacy as well as their dignity. I knew BRIDGES readers would understand if there were no photographs with this article. But when Mr. Balčiūnas offered me the use of photographs that were taken earlier that year, I jumped at the offer.

I also told him that if anyone wanted to tell me their stories, they would have to approach me first, again out of respect for their privacy. I was not their to pry into their lives or to judge; I was there to observe and to learn. I also

asked Mr. Balčiūnas about the limit of 60. What happens if someone shows up who is not on the list? He said that no one is ever turned away. There's always room for one more. It might be someone who is a stranger in Vilnius or even a hungry student. Somehow, some way there is enough soup and extra piece of bread to be found.

As we approached the restaurant, the line outside had already formed. Everyone was greeted by name, inquiries



Waiting in line for lunch at the soup kitchen sponsored by the Vilnius Evangelical Lutheran Church. Vilnius, Lithuania. Photo by Jeanne Dorr.

were made about the health of elderly parents and the problems of children. But this kind and gentle Mr. Balčiūnas was no push-over. Some of those in line were gently admonished for not keeping an appointment with the doctor or for not looking after their appearance. After all, clothes were available for the asking. Balčiūnas himself was dressed in workmen's clothes, the same as the people he served.

We were to share a table with other diners and, as we worked our way to our table, I was introduced to the people who were already seated at their tables. Most were friendly but some lowered their eyes in genuine embarrassment. As we reached our table, two gentlemen stood up and introduced themselves. We shared the same meal: a bowl of hot soup, two pieces of black bread and a roll for each person. We talked about current issues. My companions were educated and we shared some laughs. I momentarily forgot that I was in a soup kitchen. I felt like I was sitting in a Vilnius restaurant with two new friends. I did notice they wrapped up their bread to take home and when I offered mine they did not refuse.

Throughout our conversation, I keep noticing an elderly woman and a little girl sitting a few tables away. As I would glance at them, the woman would lower her eyes and look away. How I hoped she would come over to talk to me.

After we finished eating, a young lady approached the table. The gentlemen politely excused themselves and I invited her to sit down. I told her I was writing a story and I asked her if she minded if I took some notes. She smiled when I told her that I probably would not be able to read my own handwriting by the time I got home. I didn't ask her name and she didn't give it. She told me she was 24 years old. I was surprised because she appeared to be older. Every day she rides two buses to get here and, upon entering the restaurant, leaves a glass bottle in the kitchen. When she leaves for home, the bottle is filled with soup and bread is wrapped in a napkin. This is for the people at home who are either elderly or infirm and unable to make the daily trip. Most people had someone at home who needed help and brought those big glass jars.

As we spoke about everyday concerns, she began to tell me about herself. She had a very bad heart condition and lived with her two invalid parents. The short time she spent in the restaurant was the only time that she left her parents. She said her parents would anxiously be waiting for her to come home. They were both bedridden and would never meet her lunch companions but they delighted in stories of who she saw and what they said. They were seeing the lunch group through the eyes of their daughter. They were happy she had this short time to herself because seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, except for this lunch break in downtown Vilnius, she took care of her parents. What a responsibility this young lady carried, but she never complained. She just wanted to tell me how thankful she and her parents were to the Church for providing them with lunch five days a week.

The second young woman who came over to me shared three rooms with her family. Her father was in the final stages of cancer. Her mother was bedridden due to a stroke and her husband was in a wheelchair because of a work-related accident. She was the mother of two sons, ages two and seven months. As her story unfolded, I thought back to the days when I was raising two small sons. Now I was ashamed of myself when I remembered how I used to complain about unimportant things. This young lady was pleasant and, like her predecessor, there were no complaints — only gratitude to the Church.

The faces were different but they came in a steady stream. So many had suffered in Siberia. They returned to Lithuania not only with shattered dreams but also with shattered health. One woman showed me her hands. Her fingers were swollen and deformed. While she was in Siberia, her fingers had been broken time and time again, and now she was in constant pain. She nursed her husband until he died from tuberculosis. Now she and her daughter and her twelve-year old granddaughter lived together. The daughter had a job that paid very little, but they managed to scrape by. Her biggest fear was that her alcoholic son-in-law would return home. He had been gone now for several months but when he was home he terrorized the three

of them. She showed me the scars of his beatings. All she asked for was peace in their lives.

I was still glancing sideways at the lady and the child but they were making no attempt to come to me. In the meantime, I heard more fascinating stories. I met a former ballerina now in her seventies. And there was the retired language teacher who was taking lunch to her best friend, a 78-year old woman who was said to be one of the oldest Lithuanian Scouts.

I met an 81-year-old gentleman who had been a journalist and editor. He had no family and lived alone in one room. He told me he dreaded the weekends not only because he had little to eat but because of this loneliness.

Oh, I met my share of characters. There was the man who demanded that I do something about the quality of the potatoes in the soup. I listened to him patiently and then gave him a typical American answer — I told him I would look into the problem. Then there was the man who wanted the meals served closer to his home. He was quite irate, but I did understand his situation when I realized that he had only one leg. I thought of how wonderful a program such as Meals on Wheels would be for someone like this person. But a program of such a scope is just a faraway dream at this point. It would be too costly.

As there was a break in the line of people, I decided to break the promise I made to myself and approach the woman and child directly. But as I stood up I saw that they were timidly approaching me. The child was almost eight years old and beautiful. She was living for a few weeks with her Vilnius grandmother and then she would be put on a bus and stay a few more weeks with her other grandmother who lived quite a distance away. They both loved her to pieces but the problem was financial. Little Alisa's mother had died during surgery and her father had died of heart problems. I asked her grandmother about attending school in a different place every few weeks. She admitted it was a problem. I then asked her if she had ever heard of Lithuanian Orphan Care. She had but did not know how to go about applying or whom to contact. She assured me that with the help of a sponsor Alisa could stay in Vilnius during the week and journey to there other grandmother on weekends. Both Alisa's parents were only children so when they died Alisa was all that remained of them. Her grandmother started to cry and told me it was destiny that brought her to the soup kitchen that day. Alisa had had a cold and the weather was so bad that they almost didn't come, but there was absolutely not a morsel of food in the house. She had to make a choice between health and hunger. I gave my word that Alisa would have a sponsor.

Before I returned to the United States, I checked with the Countryside Children's Fund (Kaimo Vaikai) and Alisa did have an American sponsor. Some generous person will



People eating lunch at the soup kitchen sponsored by the Vilnius Evangelical Lutheran Church. Photo by Jeanne Dorr.

probably never realize the impact they are having on this little girl's life.

Our time quickly came to an end. I realized that, of all the people I had spoken to in the soup kitchen, only one woman was actually a member of the Vilnius Lutheran Evangelical Church. The Church obviously practices what it preaches. It feeds and helps ALL people in need; it doesn't discriminate and it doesn't ask about ethnic origin or religious preference.

I wrote this article for two reasons. The first is to show BRIDGES readers an example of how Lithuanians are tak-

ing over their own humanitarian programs. The second is to ask for your help with this project. I was not comfortable asking you to send checks to Lithuania so I phoned Bishop Dumpys and asked him if he would agree to be responsible for seeing that the checks arrived in Lithuania. He graciously consented and assured me that your checks will be hand-delivered to Vilnius. The church in Vilnius will have no trouble cashing them but please write clearly. I urge you to be as generous as you can. These people need the help of each and every BRIDGES reader. Please make checks payable to:

Vilniaus Sandaros

and mail them to:

The Reverend Hans Dumpys, Bishop
704 South Clarence Avenue
Oak Park, IL 60304-1306

I want to thank Bishop Dumpys for adding one more project to his already overwhelming schedule. A special thank you also to Viktoras Kiauka, Juozas Balčiūnas, Irma, Maria, and to all the people involved with the humanitarian work of your parish. You are truly taking care of God's less fortunate people. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to all the people who shared their stories with me. Finally, I would be remiss if I did not thank a very special friend, Wanda Jankus of Delran, New Jersey, who inspired me to write this article.

I hope you will be generous in your donations. Thank you!

continued from page 23

1. The *Ex Libris* Exhibition organized by the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture includes the work of artists from 12 countries. It will open in Detroit, Michigan on April 5 and travel to the Lithuanian Art Museum in Lemont, IL and be exhibited from April 26 through May 11. It will be in New York City October 19-24; Los Angeles, CA November 1-2; back in Detroit November 8-9; at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, PA November 13-15; Washington, D.C. November 16; New Haven, CT November 18-21; Boston, MA November 22-23 and in Chicago, IL at the LAC, Inc. sponsored Symposium on the Arts and Sciences November 27-29, 1997.

2. A Lithuanian Books Exhibition will open at the Newberry Library in Chicago, IL in October, 1997. The exhibit is composed of books from the Newberry's Bonaparte Collection and includes a microfilm copy of the first Lithuanian book, the Catechism by Mažvydas.

3. The Mažvydas Exhibition which opens October 26th at the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture will include reprints of Mažvydas' books and articles illustrating the influence of his book on the development of Lithuanian language, literature and art.

4. Two distinguished lecturers from Lithuania will accompany the exhibits from Lithuania and will be giving lectures on various topics related to Mažvydas and the development of Lithuanian literature. The lecturers are Dr. Domas Kaunas, Professor at Vilnius University and Secretary of the Lithuanian National Committee on the Commemoration of 450th Anniversary of the First Lithuanian Book, and Dr. Darius Kuolys, Vice-President of the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Culture, Professor at Vilnius University and a former Minister of Education of Lithuania.

The Year of the Book

The Catechism of Martynas Mažvydas

1997 marks the 450th anniversary of the publication of the first Lithuanian book, a catechism by Martynas Mažvydas, in 1547. Lithuania will begin its year-long festivities in honor of Mažvydas and Lithuanian literature on January 8, 1997 by issuing commemorative coins and postage stamps. Here is a partial list of the other events which will mark this historic event in the lives of Lithuanians:

Erecting a statue of Martynas Mažvydas in Ragainė, Karaliaučius (now in Russian-occupied Kaliningrad), the village where Mažvydas was pastor.

The dedication of a plaque in the Vilnius University Library to commemorate the first Lithuanian book.

Dedication of a commemorative plaque at the church in Ragaine where Mažvydas was pastor.

Erecting a commemorative plaque at the site of the old castle in Karaliaucius (Kaliningrad) dedicated to the printer, Hans Weinrich. He printed the first Prussian-language and Lithuanian-language books.

The placement of a bas-relief of Martynas Mažvydas sculpted by R. Midvikis in the Lithuanian National Library named for Martynas Mažvydas.

The completion of research undertaken at the XVI century church in Ragaine which includes the search for the grave of Mažvydas.

Installation of a special security system in the Vilnius University Library to safeguard the works of Mažvydas and other valuable XVI and XVII century books housed there.

The building of a Martynas Mažvydas auditorium at the University of Klaipėda.

An international book research conference dedicated to the early Lithuanian-language books will take place in September, 1997.

The 8th Baltics Congress will include a commemoration of the 450th Jubilee of the first Lithuanian book.

An international conference on "The Influence of the Renaissance and the Reformation upon Lithuanian Culture in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Lithuania Minor" will be held in Vilnius.

Information about Martynas Mažvydas and the first Lithuanian book will be placed on the computer networks, available through the Internet.

Numerous exhibitions of early Lithuanian books will be organized, including one at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.

Lithuanian theaters will produce the play "Mažvydas" written by the Lithuanian writer Justinas Marcinkevicius.

The design and issuing of art posters, commemorative medals and souvenir badges dedicated to the 450th jubilee of the first Lithuanian book.

The design of a series of book-plates (ex libris) dedicated to the 450th jubilee of the first Lithuanian book and which will be used in books printed in Lithuania in 1997.

The production of a documentary film about the earliest Lithuanian books.

A permanent exposition of historical books will be established in the Lithuanian National Library named for Martynas Mažvydas in Vilnius.

A small children's encyclopedia will be published.

A concert with music dedicated to the works of Martynas Mažvydas will be held in Vilnius and other major cities in Lithuania.

A number of international exhibitions, including the reading of Mažvydas' works, will travel cities in the United States. Please contact your local LAC, Inc. chapter for details:

continued on page 22

Ramunė Kubilius

Bits and Pieces

Calling All Young Lithuanians

The Lithuanian-American Youth Association (LAYA) is starting an e-mail list. If you would like to be on this list, please write to this address: javljs@tamos.gmu.edu

Also, in your e-mail, please answer the following questions:

- 1) Are you between the ages of 18 and 35?
- 2) Do you live in the US or are you an American citizen? (If you live in the US but are not an American Citizen, how long do you plan to stay in America?)
- 3) Are you a LAYA member now? (Were you ever a LAYA member?)
- 4) Do you want to get the LAYA newsletter in the mail? (If yes—please send your address and phone number)
- 5) Are you a member of the LAYA leadership in a city in the US? (If so, which one?)
- 6) Are you a member of a Lithuanian Youth Association's leadership in another country? (If so, which one?)

Thank you, Aciu,

Andrius Čizūnas, LAYA/JAVJS Membership Chair

Hebrew and Yiddish Treasures in Lithuania

We at IREX sent the following message to the editor of the *New York Times* about IREX's Judaica program that will be of interest to members of the list.

6 December 1996
 Editor, The New York Times
 To the Editor:

The front-page article November 24 on the massive collection of Hebrew and Yiddish volumes lying neglected in the basement of a Vilnius church struck a chord. The heated debate about whether these precious items belong in Lithuania or elsewhere misses the point that unless immediate steps are taken to preserve them, they will decay beyond repair and be lost to posterity. In truth, the collection is not even fully catalogued. We know about some of the important items it contains, but the scholarly community is not fully of what treasures are there.

Next year the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) will begin a program to help librarians working on collections of Judaica in Lithuania and other countries of the former Soviet bloc protect, preserve, and make accessible such unique, threatened collections. With funding from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, our pilot project will bring librarians to the United States for practical professional training with experts working on Judaica here.

The materials in Vilnius indeed constitute a unique legacy of Jewish life and learning. Throughout Eastern Europe, many Judaica collections share a similar fate of neglect. Specialists from East and West need to work together to care for them. Our small effort will help, but much more work is needed—and needed quickly—to keep this legacy from being lost.

Sincerely,

Beate Dafeldecker
 Senior Program Officer
 Central and East European Programs
 International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX)
 1616 H Street, NW
 Washington, DC 20006
 tel. (202) 628-8188
 fax. (202) 628-8189
 email: beate@irex.org

Summer Employment Program

The Summer Employment Program is the World Bank's only internship program. It is open to students who are nationals of the Bank's member countries. Each year a large number of highly qualified candidates apply to the Program.

The World Bank does not offer unpaid or volunteer positions at any time. All Summer positions are located in Washington, D.C. The Summer Employment Program is not a means of entry into the World Bank. Summer Assistants' contracts will not be extended beyond the end of October, or converted to any other type of employment in the Bank until the Fall semester is completed.

Candidates for the Program must possess a bachelor's degree, and be enrolled in a full-time graduate study program—pursuing a master's degree or a Ph.D., and must have plans to return as a full-time student in the Fall semester.

The Program generally requires experience in business concentrations such as economics, finance, and statistics. Needs also occur in other disciplines, such as: agriculture, environment, information systems, and social sciences. Candidates must have strong computer skills. Knowledge of World Bank Group languages (Arabic, Chinese, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish) is useful; fluency in English is required. Relevant work experience is an added advantage.

The Bank pays a monthly salary to all Summer Assistants, and where applicable, provides a travel allowance to contribute towards travel expenses. Assistants are responsible for their own living accommodations.

The Summer Employment Program office is open from December through June of each year.

If you are interested in applying for the 1997 season, a detailed curriculum vitae must be received by the SEP by January 31, 1997.

Interested candidates may send their inquiries to the attention of:

The Summer Employment Program
The World Bank
1818 H Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20433 USA
e-mail: sprogram@worldbank.org
Telephone: 202 473-0309

Alta Vista in Baltic Languages

ALTA VISTA, a leading WWW search service, now has search pages in Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian. This includes information on how to obtain fonts to make WWW pages display correct accentuation

For Estonian
<http://www.altavista.telia.com/cgi-bin/telia?lang=ee>

For Latvian
<http://www.altavista.telia.com/cgi-bin/telia?lang=lv>

For Lithuanian <http://www.altavista.telia.com/cgi-bin/telia?lang=lt>

Original sender : "71233.1343@CompuServe.COM"
"Raymond Paskauskas"

Krupnikas 150 Percent Proof plus....

"Vodka 700 ml."

No, no, no! Using vodka—and it better be 100 proof and not the weaker 80 proof—is the least preferred choice for authentic Lithuanian *krupnikas*. You have to use grain alcohol which is at least 151 proof. Yes, grain alcohol is a flammable liquid. Please request a material safety data sheet for "ethyl alcohol" from your company's safety office!

Josephine J. Daužvardis compiled a good recipe for "honey liqueur" (*krupnikas*) in her *Popular Lithuanian Recipes*, Chicago, Illinois, 7th. ed., 1977. I have reproduced one popular recipe, with some editing changes.

1 tbsp. caraway seeds	10 cardomom seeds
10 cloves	1/2 nutmeg
2-3 sticks cinnamon	2-3 strips lemon rind (unwaxed)
1 stick vanilla	a pinch of saffron
2 pieces yellow ginger	4 cups water
2 pieces white ginger	2 pounds of honey
1 quart of grain alcohol	

Crack the cardomom seeds and nutmeg. Boil them, spices, rinds, and water in a covered pot until the liquid is reduced to 2 cups volume. Strain the liquid. Bring the honey in a larger separate pot to a boil, skimming off the foam. Pour the first liquid into the honey pot. Next, **turn off the gas flame or electric coil and remove the pot from any other heat source, e.g., pilots.** This will prevent a flare-up or explosion of the grain alcohol. Carefully and slowly pour the grain alcohol into the pot. Replace this pot on a very low flame or heat level. Heat the mixture for 15 minutes without boiling or simmering. Remove from heat and let cool the pot. Pour into glass bottles and allow liquid to settle. If clearer liquid is desired, filter through paper or cloth and rebottle.

You can make larger batches by increasing quantities in proportionate volume.

I am serious about exercising caution with grain alcohol. One friend's electric stove caught on fire while pouring the alcohol into a pot. A still hot range coil ignited the alcohol vapors during decantation.

Provided by Raymond Paskauskas

Opinion Poll on Living Conditions

Only 7 out of 100 hired employees and 1 out of 100 employers/business owners in Lithuania consider their living conditions very good. About half of Lithuania's inhabitants say that their standard of living is middle of the line. In order to satisfy the needs of obtaining the necessities of life, retirees feel they need about 470 litai per month.

Business owner's family members require about 774 litai and farmers 531 litai. In the last 12 months, about 22 out of 100 retirees had problems paying for their living; 17 out of 100 hired employees, 17 out of 100 farmers, 14 out of 100 business owners.

(*Darbininkas*, 12/13/96, from ELTA)

Lithuanian Tourist Information Center for US and Canada

The Republic of Lithuania is establishing a tourist information center to serve the U.S. and Canada. Tourists bring in much-needed income, and to date the most frequent tourists to Lithuania have been tourists of Lithuanian descent from the U.S. and Canada.

Romas Kezys, longtime director of the New York-based travel agency "Vytis International Travel Service, Inc" has been invited to head the center. A veteran travel agency owner with years of experience in the field of international travel, Romas Kezys was in Vilnius November 1996 to sign an initial one-year agreement with Antanas Petrauskas, Director of Lithuania's Tourism Department. Lithuanian television covered the contract signing, and Romas Kezys was interviewed by Lithuania's largest newspaper, *Lietuvos Rytas*. Kezys in turn, interviewed Antanas Petrauskas and that interview will be aired on "Laisvės Žiburys," a radio program based in New York that Kezys directs.

The Lithuanian Tourism Information Center will expand the efforts of Lithuania's Tourism Department, using brochures and literature prepared in Lithuania. "Vytis" is enabled to work with private travel agencies in Lithuania by contract. The Lithuanian Tourism Center will be housed in the same building as the "Vytis International Travel Service, Inc." offices, 40-24 235 Street, Douglaston, NY.

(*Darbininkas*, 12/13/96, from an article by P.J.)

Rūtos Knygos

In Vilnius near the University, an English language bookstore is enjoying great popularity. The shop, "Rūtos Knygos," is owned by a former Californian. The Lithuanian-born Rūta Kulikauskas is a librarian who moved back to Lithuania with her husband about a year ago. The owner comes to the U.S. about three times a year and purchases quite a bit of "Library Friends" sales books. She stocks fiction, literature, history, geography and psychological works. Fiction costs about \$1.25 (U.S.) And humorous works about \$.50 (U.S.). Rūta runs the store herself but sometimes her husband helps out.

(*Darbininkas*, 12/20/96, from an item by LR)

Lithuanian Art on the Internet

The idea of putting an art fair on the Internet grew out of a gathering at the gallery of Algimantas Kezys in Stickney, IL on November 30, 1996. The idea of the art exhibit was appealing because it would have no geographic restrictions. It was decided to try to mount such an exhibit in time for Lithuanian Independence Day, February 16, 1997. Algimantas Kezys called together the interested artists, computer graphics expert Ričardas Spitrius, computer technology expert Tomas Šakenis and Internet expert Apolinaras Sinkevičius (check his Web pages at <http://www/index.html>). A web site already exists about Lithuanian artists represented by "Galerija" (<http://www.xnet.com/~galerija/index.html>). Artists and other persons interested in the Web projects of the group or of "Galerija" should contact Algimantas Kezys by e-mail at: Kezys@msn.com or by mail: 4317 S. Wisconsin Ave., Stickney, IL 60402-4261; tel. 708-749-0888; FAX 708-749-8804.

(*Darbininkas*, 12/20/96)

J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarships

The J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board and the United States Information Agency have announced the names of nearly 600 U.S. academics, professionals, independent scholars who have received Fulbright awards to lecture, consult, or conduct research abroad in 1996-1997. The following are listed with Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia as the destinations.

Creative Writing: Laima Sruoginis, Program Coordinator at the Center for the Study of American Architecture, Columbia University: Lithuania.

Economics: David G. Bivin, Associate Professor of Economics, Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis: Estonia.

Environmental Resources: Paul Bukaveckas, Assistant Professor of Water Resources, University of Louisville: Lithuania.

Language and Literature (Non-U.S.): Viktorija Skrupskelis, Professor of Romance languages, Oberlin College: Lithuania.

Law: Michael A. Murray, Professor of Management, DePaul University: Lithuania.

Psychology: Rik C. D'Amato, Professor and Director of Programs in School Psychology, University of Northern Colorado: Latvia.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language & Applied Linguistics: David R. Boe, Doctoral Candidate in Linguistics, Indiana University: Lithuania.

(from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 12/20/96)

New LAC, Inc. Chapter in Alaska

Asta Spurgis, formerly of Chicago, moved to Alaska a few years ago. She and her husband from Lithuania managed to find one more countryman and have established a LAC (Lietuvių Bendruomenės-apylinkė). They are looking for more Alaskan Lithuanians to join.

Asta is under contract to run an information center at the National Park at Eagle River, Alaska.

Internet in Lithuania

There are about 190 Lithuanian-generated World-Wide Web pages, according to news provided by *Verslo Žinios* (Business News), which just announced its first Lithuanian Internet catalog. Since 1994, when Internet accessibility reached Lithuania, World-Wide Web pages have been created about and by Lithuanian government agencies, commercial firms and individuals. There are currently eight firms in Lithuania which offer Web page development assistance.

(*Darbininkas*, 12/6/96, from ELTA news)

New Lithuanian NBA Player in Cleveland

For the last few years, Lithuania has been proud of two Lithuanian players in the NBA—Šarunas Marčiulionis (Denver Nuggets) and Arvydas Sabonis (Portland Trailblazers). Now Lithuania has a third player in the NBA, Žydrūnas Ilgauskas (“ilgas” means long in Lithuanian!) who is playing for the Cleveland Cavaliers. Žydrūnas has already met with (and posed for photo opportunities-rk) with members of Cleveland’s Lithuanian-American community. Although ranking behind Chicago, Los Angeles, and Toronto in size, the Cleveland community is considered to be one of the more active. It is hoped that Žydrūnas will follow in the footsteps of his Lithuanian predecessors in the NBA and not forget his Lithuanian roots.

Cleveland is a city of 80 suburbs and more than 2 million population. It is the twelfth largest American city and the largest in the state of Ohio. Cleveland is proud of its NBA team, and also of its baseball team, the Cleveland Indians, which won second place in its league in 1995.

(*Darbininkas*, 12/6/96, from an article by Edmundas Capas)

Lithuanian Daily Stops Publication.

The daily *Diena*, formerly known as *Tiesa*, stopped publication on January first without notifying its subscribers, BNS reported on 7 January. The paper had fallen upon hard times financially, and must either declare bankruptcy or sell a controlling package of its stock. *Diena* staff refused to release circulation figures for the paper, but other publishers believe it is only 5,000, while major Lithuanian papers have a circulation of 42,000-70,000.

— Ustina Markus (from OMRI via BAL-L)

Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. Education Council News

In keeping with the celebrations taking place in Lithuania this year marking 500 years since the publication of the first Lithuanian Book, the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. has declared 1997 to be “Lietuviškos knygos metai” (the year of the Lithuanian book).

The Education Council distributes educational print and audiovisual materials that it publishes as well as selected materials from Lithuania. Materials include children’s literature, bilingual literature (including dictionaries), educational handbooks, teachers’ guides, etc. Publications are distributed on a cost recovery basis.

In 1996, Education Council members, LAC chapters, and Lithuanian language schools set up kiosks at the Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival in Rosemont, IL; the World Lithuanian Center Christmas Fair in Lemont, IL; the Christmas “Eglutė” show at the “Maironis” school in Lemont, IL; at the Omaha Heritage Museum (thanks to teacher Aušrele Sakalas), and at the annual Lithuanian Language Teachers’ Seminar in Camp Dainava, MI. Contact the Education Council if you wish to request materials to display at a Lithuanian language/bilingual publications kiosk in your community: at your parish, local girl or boy scout chapter, school, library, Lithuanian Independence Day celebration. Parents, grandparents and teachers were among those who have stopped and purchased materials at Education Council sponsored publication displays.

Computer programs are not yet available, but Education Council Chairperson Regina Kučas keeps in regular contact with the Lithuanian Education Ministry and Vilnius Pedagogical University. Staffers at both institutions have discussed possible educational computer program development projects which would be useful on both sides of the Atlantic.

BRIDGES

LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

Volume 21, No. 1

JANUARY 1997

Suite 217
2060 North 14th Street
Arlington, VA 22201

V16-2 19970331
Dr J.A. Rackauskas
10425 S Kenton Ave
Oak Lawn IL 60453-4841

3 1

