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Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Vytautas Landsbergis, Chairman of Lithuania's parliament, the Seimas, enjoy one another's company at the Lithuanian Independence Day festivities on Parliament Square in Vilnius, February 16, 1997.

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Dear BRIDGES readers:

We are grateful for your patience and understanding. The March issue of Bridges has a lot of solid material which we hope will be both helpful to you and enjoyable to read. For instance, did you know that March 25th is Stork Day in Lithuania? It is not an official holiday, but it is definitely a cultural treasure. Maybe the new Lithuanian Seimas should consider making the stork the national bird.

Much has been happening in the NATO debate. As we move toward the critical July date of the Madrid NATO summit, Americans of Lithuanian heritage and supporters of Lithuania must stay vigilant and vocal.

We also get an overview of Senator Durbin's recent trip to Lithuania. His eldest brother William went with him. Although this was the Senator's fourth trip, it was William Durbin's first trip.

If you are planning to visit Lithuania this summer, read Donatas Skučas' article to find out about the new Information Center being set up to help Americans who might want to settle in Lithuania.

In our continuing tribute to Martynas Mažvydas and Lithuanian books, we are reprinting an article which first appeared in Vilnius Magazine last December. The article is by Domas Kaunas, one of the leading experts on the subject of Lithuanian literature and the contributions of Mažvydas.

Al Rimas and Ramune Kubilius, our regular contributors, have updates for us. We hope you enjoy this issue. A lot more to come soon.

Best regards,

The Editorial Staff

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Asta Banionis



Lithuania's Beloved Storks

One of the most beloved birds of Lithuania is the stork, the *gandras*. With its long beak and even longer legs, it is in fact the largest of Lithuania's birds. In some villages in Lithuania, March 25 is celebrated as "Stork Day". This date corresponds to the migratory pattern of Lithuania's storks which normally arrive in Lithuania for their spring nesting period on March 25 and leave Lithuania on September 1 to fly back to Africa to avoid the winter snows of Lithuania.

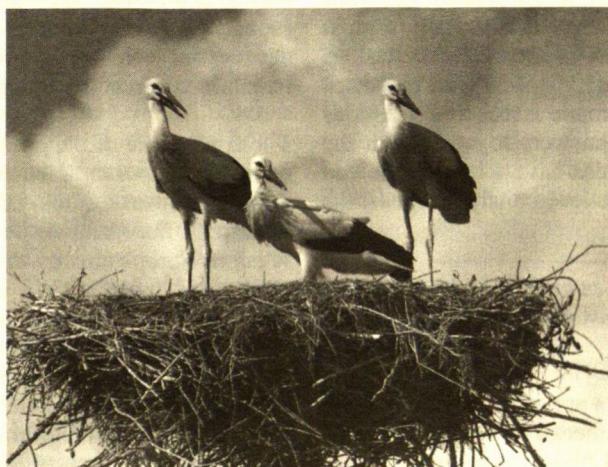
Although there are 19 types of storks in the world, only two, the common white stork and the rare black stork, live and raise their young in Lithuania. They are a familiar site to everyone who works in the countryside, and even city folk who drive the main interstate between Kaunas and Vilnius. Travelling that familiar thoroughfare, one can see over 40 stork nests within view of the roadway. Elegant birds they are, as they high-step through the marshes and wetlands foraging for food.

While flying their huge wings beat slowly, effortlessly, and their necks and legs are extended. They sleep standing on one leg in their nests or on a naked tree limb. They are quiet sentinels, having no voice to chirp nor warble nor sing. Their only sounds are to tap their long beaks and to beat their mighty wings.

They mate for life and are very devoted to their young, the *gandriukai*. They create very large nests of twigs, laying between 3 to 5 eggs each season. Both adults take turns sitting on the nest hatching the eggs. The hatchlings are covered in down and spend a long time maturing in the nest. Once the young storks are old enough to jump out, they still return to rest and to sleep in the family nest during the night.

The storks are very helpful to farmers because they help to control the insect, rodent and snake populations. But storks have been known to create some problems when they become regulars at the commercial fish farms gulping down the smaller fish.

The common white stork of Lithuania is medium-sized and has black wing tips. Its legs and beak are black. In 1994, the Ornithological Society of Lithuania (similar to the U.S.-based Audobon Society) mobilized its volunteer members for a stork count. That year there were nearly 10,000 nesting pairs which successfully raised over 20,000 young storks. The black stork is smaller than the white stork with a dark, slate grey back, white stomach, red legs and a red beak. Unlike the white storks, they avoid people preferring to live in the forests finding their food in fallen trees and in the riverbeds. The black stork is an endangered species and was protected by law in Lithuania as early as the 1920s.



The stork is highly honored by the Lithuanian farmer. No one in the countryside would dare to harm or kill a stork. There are many folk sayings associated with the stork. Much is divined from the behavior of the stork; what the stork does in his nest, or the direction of his flight can predict the future health of the person, the future success or failure of the farmer, and even natural disasters. It is believed that the stork carries with it blessings for the homestead, so the place where he takes up residence will never be struck by lightning. Farmers still set up platforms on their roofs, or set an old wagon wheel in the limbs of a nearby tree to make it easier for the storks to build their nests. Pairs of storks are known to return to the same nest each spring after their long journey back from southern Africa.

The worst omen for disaster occurs if a stork suddenly abandons its nest after having taken up residence there. It is said that much evil will befall that household: there will be a fire, or a death in the family, or some other major tragedy. If during the spring, one of the storks' eggs falls out of the nest it is said that there will be a poor harvest. If later in the spring, a hatchling falls out of the nest it is an omen that there will be a failure of the crop due to blight, followed by famine.

continued on page 18

Dr. Domas Kaunas

Excerpts from “Martynas Mažvydas and the First Lithuanian Book”

**from Vilnius magazine
December, 1996**

Martynas Mažvydas and the first Lithuanian book is a very broad subject. Dr. Juozas Tumelis, a historian of Lithuanian culture, who is preparing the bibliography of Mažvydas, says that he has registered about 600 articles and books in dozens of languages. Additionally, Mažvydas is mentioned in various texts. There is especially a great number of studies on Mažvydas in German. My task is complicated. At the risk of repeating well known facts, I have tried to raise some problematic issues and questions to discuss, and search for the answers together with the readers. Researchers on Mažvydas have a lot of unsolved questions and even mysteries, so let us analyze at least the most important ones.

1. Was the first Lithuanian book published by Mažvydas an accidental or a natural phenomenon of Lithuanian cultural and spiritual life?

The first Lithuanian book did not appear suddenly and in a vacuum. Before its appearance there was a long period of development of the pre-written Lithuanian language which produced the very name of the language and Lithuania (for the first time mentioned in the Quedlinburg annals in 1009). During the period of establishment and strengthening of the centralized state (the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, XIII-XVI centuries) many texts in Latin, German and Belarusian were created, of which the main monuments are: *Lithuanian Metrics*, the *Lithuanian Statute* and the *Lithuanian Chronicles*. At this time the tradition of Lithuanian script was formed. The Lithuanian language itself was beginning to appear in state and other legal documents, literary and historiographic works, and books of religious ceremonies. This was a direct result of the needs of the Church in christianizing the population. It is believed that the Franciscan monks were the first to begin writing in Lithuanian.

It is not by chance that most of the early Lithuanian manuscripts' texts, phrases and words were found on the empty pages and margins of the books belonging to the Franciscan libraries. The 1528 Statute of the Vilnius diocese synod contains a strict directive for the heads of churches to interpret Gospels and epistles both in Polish

and Lithuanian at the newly established schools. Therefore, the abbey preachers, church vicars and teachers would translate the Gospel texts, catechisms, prayers and the best sermons into the Lithuanian language themselves or copy them from those who knew the language better. So there was a considerable amount of religious writing at the beginning of the 16th century. In our opinion there also existed a sizeable body of Lithuanian epistolary writing, especially by the expatriate nobility; i.e., Lithuanian students who were studying at European universities and maintained contacts with relatives in their home country.

The appearance of the printed Lithuanian book was decided by two important factors. The first is the appearance of printing houses in the lands inhabited by Lithuanians. Although the printed book came to Lithuania from Western Europe already in the time of J.Gutenberg, it was to become more widely available only after P.Skorina established the first printing house in Vilnius, the capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1524. That same year, Weinreich did the same in Koenigsberg (Karaliaučius), the capital of the Prussian Duchy. The appearance of the printing industry in this region was quite early. The first printing house in the present Russian territory was established almost 30 years later, approximately 1552, in Latvia 1558, in Estonia 1631, and in Finland 1642. The printed book stimulated the development of culture and education, as well as accelerating intellectual communication in Lithuanian society. At that time it became customary for an educated Lithuanian to publish a book.

The appearance of the first Lithuanian book was also hastened by the growth of the Protestant Reformation and its Lithuanian supporters. They were attracted by the democratic ideas of the new religious movement: the "eulogy of the human being", i.e., his abilities to communicate and affirm his faith with ordinary people in their native language. The Reformation gave a lift to Lithuanian culture and social life, and provided the opportunity for Christian liberalism to develop. The free competition between Catholicism and Protestantism, the two main faiths, brought Lithuania closer to Western Europe. The Prussian ruler, Albrecht Brandenburger, made use of this competition for various reasons, mainly political, in strengthening ties with neighbouring countries. When visiting Vilnius, the Duke would make contact with reformers, and would

invite to Koenigsberg (Karaliaučius) not only men educated at the best Western universities, but also fellows willing to study. The efforts of the ruler were not in vain. The most significant departments of Koenigsberg (Karaliaučius) University were filled by the most outstanding intellectuals of humanistic culture of the first half of the 16th century such as the Lithuanians Abraomas Kulvietis (Latin: Abraham Culvensis) and Stanislovas Rapolionis (Latin: Stanislaus Rapagelanus). A group of Lithuanian youths came to study theology and later on took charge of the Protestant parishes of both Prussia and Lithuania. The Duke started publishing books for the needs of Protestant faith of his own multi-ethnic state as well as of neighboring countries.

The first book in the German language printed in Koenigsberg (Karaliaučius) was in 1524, in the Polish language in 1543, in the Prussian language in 1545. There are no doubts that the plans included a Lithuanian book, too, and that it was probably prepared by Kulvietis and Rapolionis. They had already translated the Psalms of David, and a large portion of the Old Testament, so it is quite possible that some fragment of the Bible, which was most necessary for the young Evangelical-Lutheran Church, would have become the first Lithuanian book. However, an unexpected tragedy intervened delaying the publication of such a book. Both Kulvietis and Rapolionis, authors and creators of these Lithuanian texts passed away one after another in 1545. The Duke cast a gaze at the Grand Duchy of Lithuania again. He stopped at Mažvydas.

2. Why was Mažvydas chosen?

It is impossible to give an exact and precise answer to this question because the period of Mažvydas' life before his arrival in Koenigsberg (Karaliaučius) is little known. Until now neither the date nor place of his birth have been identified. Only on the basis of a few autobiographical hints from Mažvydas' own letters, public documents and the reading of his works, have researchers come to a persuasive consensus that the future author of the first Lithuanian book was born between 1510-1520, in southern Žemaitija, (the Lowland) near the Prussian border. His cousin, Baltarmiejus Vilentas, the priest of the parish of Koenigsberg (Karaliaučius) Lithuanians, was a nobleman. However, neither Mažvydas himself, nor anybody else considered him of noble lineage. It is absolutely clear that he was born in a poor family. Nothing is known about the schools he attended, but by the time he becomes a public figure, Mažvydas is already well-educated, speaking Latin, Polish, Belorussian and some Greek in addition to his native language. In his own letters he writes that, "however, I know nothing of German". The theory that Mažvydas must have studied somewhere in Europe seems possible, although his name has not been found in any university register.

Therefore, others maintain that he never left Lithuania, but received his education at some nobleman's mansion and in 1539-1542 worked as a teacher at the Vilnius Protestant Collegium, a pioneer institution among secondary schools. It was headed by the above mentioned Kulvietis. Mažvydas actively took part in the polemics between Protestants and Catholics, was persecuted, therefore later he would sometimes add to his name the Latin word, Protomartyr, i.e. The first martyr. Duke Albrecht, of course, learned about this diligent supporter of Protestants from the educated Lithuanians living in Koenigsberg (Karaliaučius).

While visiting Vilnius, the Duke made it a point to personally meet with Mažvydas; later he invited him to visit Koenigsberg (Karaliaučius). The addressee in the ruler's letter, dated June 8, 1546, is called 'honest and well-educated'. We think this is one of the possible reasons why Mažvydas was chosen to continue the work of Kulvietis and Rapolionis. He accepted the invitation of Duke Albrecht and soon moved to Koenigsberg (Karaliaučius). We can see that the Duke was wasting no time, since the records show that Mažvydas entered the University on the 1st of August, 1546.

Mažvydas became the first Lithuanian student at Koenigsberg (Karaliaučius) University. His classmates

The free competition between Catholicism and Protestantism, the two main faiths, brought Lithuania closer to Western Europe.

were of various nationalities, among them the future Finnish Bishop of Viipuri, Paul Juusten, who later wrote the catechism and some other works in the Finnish language. Mažvydas lived rather poorly in the capital of Prussia and as an indigent he received a maintenance from the fisc (royal treasury) of the Duke of Prussia. Maybe that is why he was very dutiful and industrious while studying for the priesthood. His studies were very short, just more than one and a half years. This indicates that Mažvydas attended the University at a mature age and with an educational qualification recognized by the professors. He may have graduated from the University with the promise of becoming a Protestant priest.

From the spring of 1549 until his death Mažvydas served in Ragnit (Ragainė). He was an exacting proselytizer of the Protestant faith for which he received recognition and promotion from his superiors; in 1554 he was promoted to archdeacon (position of a bishop). He devoted much time

to the creation of Lithuanian Protestant writings, highly valued books and collected a library. His books were marked by the entry: *M.Mossuid sibi et suis comparavit* (Mažvydas acquired this title for himself and his family).

The creator of Lithuanian writing died in 1563, it is assumed, not having reached old-age. His gravestone did not survive. Certainly, Mažvydas as a priest had to be buried in the most respectful place: inside Ragnit (Ragainė) church or near it.

3. What was the first Lithuanian book?

The main reason for Mažvydas to come to Koenigsberg (Karaliaučius) was not to pursue his studies, but to carry out the order by the ruler of Prussia to prepare the necessary religious literature for the enlightenment of the young Protestant church and its Lithuanian community as soon as possible. The task was fulfilled very quickly; the first book appeared already in 1547. Certainly, this job, under such conditions, could be done only by a skillful and well-prepared Lithuanian writer. Mažvydas did not come to Koenigsberg (Karaliaučius) empty-handed; he must have had not only his own, but also the manuscripts of other contemporary authors.

The first Lithuanian book was of a small format (10x18 cm). It contained 79 pages and was printed in Gothic letters. The headline was long, its form and wording rather archaic: *Cateschismvs a prasty szadei, makslas skaitima raschta yr giesmes del kriksciansites bei del berneliu iuanu naujue susguldytas* (translation: *Simple words of Catechism, science for reading the written and cantos for Christianity and for the young fellows newly written*). One should not be surprised by such a long title. All the book titles of that period were similar to the annotation. If we compare Mažvydas' book with the first books of other nations (Prussian, Latvian, Estonian, Finnish), it appears that the Lithuanian book was more universal, complex and independent; it did not have any subsidiary texts written in other languages. From this point of view it clearly exceeds the contents and the experience of the earliest books, the catechisms.

The first Lithuanian book is composed of six works, several of which could also be printed separately: a short rhymed dedication to the Homeland of the author—the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, an appeal to the clergy (written in Latin), a rhymed preface of larger size and secular contents, an alphabet book, a catechism (it took only 1/4 of the text), and a collection of cantos with notes. All the works, or sections, show the original (marked by the author and time) views of the Lithuanian Protestant intelligentsia regarding the reality of their lives and their spiritual beliefs. The Latin dedication and appeal, clearly directed to the reader of Mažvydas' class, tactfully criticized those

churches that did not admit national languages, urged them to wisely accept the truths expressed by the Protestants in the books and, if approved, promised to prepare a work of better quality and larger size. The rhymed preface, *Knygelės pačios byla, lietuvinykump ir žemaičiumpi* (translation: *The appeal of the book itself to Lithuanians and Samogitians*) marked the beginning of Lithuanian fiction. It is important for both the history of Lithuanian culture and the scientific research of books. In the preface we find the word *knyga* (the book; the books, in fact, because until the eighteenth century this word was used only in the plural) mentioned for the first time. And by way of personification it speaks about the condition of writings in the native language:

*"Broliai, seserys, imkit mane ir skaitykit.
Ir tatai skaitydami permanykit.
Mokslo Šito tévai jūs trokšdavo turéti,
Ale to negaléjo né vienu būdu gauti.*

Translation: *Brothers and sisters, take me and read
And comprehend what you read.
Your forefathers longed for this learning,
But had no means to acquire it.*

The other part of the book is prepared from narration and translations. The alphabet is based on the Latin textbook of George Sauromann, the main part of which was exercises of syllabic reading prepared according to the requirements of medieval pedagogy. While writing the catechism, Mažvydas was using Polish and other catechisms published in Koenigsberg (Karaliaučius) as sources, and the contents of his catechism were based on the traditions of Martin Luther. Mažvydas' collection of cantos strengthened the practice of collective singing in the Lithuanian church, developed more abstract, conceptional language and built the foundation for Lithuanian poetry. It was not written by one author. Mažvydas merely translated the cantos which he acquired from contemporaries and from his heritage (the initiators of Lithuanian writings discussed earlier). He not only translated, but also edited every stanza and made the language uniform.

With such a structure and contents, let us call the first Lithuanian book a textbook and a primer of writing, religion and morality. From this point of view it is very much related to other books of religious education which were wide-spread in Western Europe. These were books which used modern (for the time) pedagogical achievements and the realities of life to illustrate their ideas.

Mažvydas was increasing his experience in other books and letters he was writing in the traditions of literature of that period. Their style and contents show that the author had a deep humanistic culture, a spiritual nature, and a very talented intellectual of the Renaissance period.

4. When did the first Lithuanian book appear?

This question may seem very simple since on the title page of the book we find the, seemingly unquestionable, place and date of publication: *Karaliavczvi VIII. dena meneses sausia, metu vžgimima Diewa M.D. XLVII*, i.e., January 8, 1547. The printed date is very characteristic of other old books which was based on the tradition from manuscripts where monks used to mark the end of copying of a work. If so, why would we doubt the date of January 8? There are several reasons for that; three of them are important: 1) Mažvydas might not have been able to prepare and publish such a complex and large book just 5 months after his arrival in Koenigsberg (Karaliaučius); 2) according to researchers, he was using as a source the second edition of Polish reformist Jan Seklucjan's catechism which had appeared only in the summer of 1547; 3) at that time 'January' usually meant December. Therefore, maybe the first Lithuanian book appeared on December 8, 1547?

We could actually agree to this date if not for Jurgis Zablockis' canto, *Litania naujei suguldyta*, included by Mažvydas in the *Catechismus*. In one stanza of this canto the author wishes good health and children to Dorothea, the first wife of Duke Albrecht. The duchess died on April 11, 1547, and to wish such things to the dead wife of the Duke would not only have been meaningless but also a risky thing. It was not by chance that this stanza was omitted when Zablockis' canto was republished in 1570. Thus, the date of the first Lithuanian book is far from being known and the entire history of its publication is still full of mystery.

Lithuanian scientists have agreed to continue the research, but the date officially recognized is January 8. On that day in 1997 the celebration of the first Lithuanian book will take place, the newly established award of Martynas Mažvydas will be presented, many other events will be organized. As announced by the Lithuanian Seimas, this day will begin the celebration of the year of the Lithuanian book.

5. Wasn't the appearance of the first Lithuanian book too late?

We can answer this question by comparing the early books published by other European nations. If one looks at the overall history, the publishing of books happened in three stages. The first one involved the region where the printing press was invented, the second involved the neighbouring countries, and the third took place in faraway countries. The printing of books was also influenced by the political and economic progress of a country, its religion, literacy, and level of national and political independence. With these factors in mind, the beginning of the published book in Lithuania as well as its neighbouring countries are part of the second stage of development of the European press.

The first Polish book was published in 1513 or in 1514; the first Belarusan book in 1517 (it was published in Prague, the second Belarusan book in 1522 in Vilnius, the capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, whose inhabitants included many Belarusans at that time). The first Jewish book was published in 1530, Prussian in 1545, Russian around 1553, Serbian in 1547. The beginning of the Latvian and Estonian book is less clear. On November 7,

Mažvydas' book was devoted to
both parts of the Lithuanian nation,
i.e., living on both sides of the
Nemunas River which had become
the state border.

1525 the catholic administration of the town of Lubeck seized a barrel of books which, according to the official record, *plenum libris lutterianis, eciam missis invulgari liuonica, lettica ac estonica* (translation: *full of Lutheran books published in the Livonian, Latvian and Estonian languages*), was being transported by some tradesman from Wittenberg to Travemunde for ultimate shipment to Riga.

Those books were probably burned; nothing definite is known about their fate. The first Estonian book of which we have evidence was published in Wittenberg in 1535, a Latvian book was published in Vilnius in 1585. According to the surviving facts, we can make a well-grounded conclusion that the appearance of the first books in the languages of Lithuanian and other historically-related nations basically coincided. Thus, it was a natural phenomenon of European culture in the first half of the sixteenth century.

6. What was the fate of the first Lithuanian book?

Mažvydas' book was devoted to both parts of the Lithuanian nation, i.e., living on both sides of the Nemunas River which had become the state border. Some scholars argue that the book was meant only for the residents of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, but there is not enough evidence to support this opinion. It does not agree with the mentioned canto of Zablockis, which asks for blessings on the family of the Prussian Duke. The implied reader of the book is an educated man, speaking several languages, aware of the Protestant doctrine, capable of teaching other people. Such a reader might have been only a priest, a teacher of a parish school, a few officials, a literate member of the nobility, or a wealthy free farmer. Indeed, not many people could be readers of the book. This factor, of course, determined the number of copies which were printed. The exact number is not known, but we can guess that

it could not exceed 200-300 items. This number is based a comparison: about 300 copies of the Polish catechism were printed in 1536 and 200 copies of the Prussian catechism were printed in 1545. In spite of the small number of copies, the first Lithuanian book was not fully distributed. It had a very hard time in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Not much was known about Mažvydas' book here. It left very few traces; one of the copies may be identified in the property list written in the Belorussian language, dated 1580, made by Petras Adomavičius who lived and died in Kolainiai. Two books are mentioned: the Polish Bible and *katechiz'm po žomoitsku drukovanyi*. Of course, it could be Mažvydas' book, or B.Vilentas' *Enchiridion* published in Koenigsberg (Karaliaučius) although less likely, since no catechism was published in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania until 1580. There philologists have found some evidence that Mažvydas' books had influence in the Grand Duchy. By comparing the texts of printed books, they have demonstrated that Mažvydas' work was used by the organizers of the first Catholic and reformist books printed in Vilnius itself.

The larger portion of the first edition of Mažvydas' catechism were distributed to Lithuanian parishes and schools in Prussia. The rest were stored in the Duke's library in Koenigsberg (Karaliaučius). Other unsold, state-sponsored books were also stored in that library: the Prussian catechism (1545), Mažvydas' *Forma chrikštimo* (1559), and J.Bretkūnas' *Postilė* (1591). After a hundred years, many of these books had no practical use in the churches and schools. The administrators of the Duke's library were permitted to sell all of them in an open market. So they did. Later, a few copies of the first Lithuanian book appeared in the book stores and collections of personal libraries. Their prices were not high until the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Only two copies of Mažvydas' book reached our days. The history of one of them is known very well. From the very beginning it belonged to the Prussian Duke; it was kept in a leather cover together with the other seven catechisms in the library of the Castle and later in the library of Koenigsberg (Karaliaučius) university. During World War II it appeared in Poland and is now kept in the Torun University library. In 1993, the text of this copy was reprinted by facsimile in the first volume of the collected works of Mažvydas. Another copy of the book appeared in Ascher's second-hand bookshop in Berlin in 1869. It was bought by a Russian for the relatively large sum of money, 45 tallers. After the war, the book was found in a scientific library in Odessa, Ukraine, and in 1957 was acquired by the library of Vilnius University—exchanged for books valuable to Ukraine. And it is still there. This copy now is a treasure of national value.

7. What can we do for the first Lithuanian book today?

Mažvydas' book has been an object of scientific research for almost two hundred years. The Germans have done the most for it so far. For scholarly purposes A.Schleicher reprinted one part in 1857 and A.Bezzenberger the entire text in 1874. Later it was studied by Lithuanian and foreign scientists. Much literature, music and art works are now created on the subject of Mažvydas. Streets in Lithuania are named after him and a park with sculptures honoring Mažvydas was established in Klaipėda. The anniversary of the book in Lithuania will strengthen the position of the author's name is science, art and literature. A thorough, scientifically-based monograph about Mažvydas, written by a talented author is expected to be published in 1997. On the occasion of the anniversary, we would like to mark the place in Kaliningrad (Karaliaučius) where Hans Weinreich's printing shop existed—the printing shop that printed the first Lithuanian and Prussian books. We would also like to hang a plaque of commemoration on the walls of his parish church—close to where Mažvydas rests. Unfortunately, the administrators of the Kaliningrad region do not trust our feelings and wishes. Maybe the friends of Lithuania and its book in Germany and Poland, and the democratic elements of Russian society could be the negotiators in this dialogue. Political help from the communities of Lithuanian emigrants would be useful as well. Mažvydas deserves our effort.

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Dr. Domas Kaunas serves as the Secretary of the National Commission for the Commemoration of the 450th Anniversary of the First Lithuanian Book. He is Head of the Book Science Department at Vilnius University. Dr. Kaunas will be one of the scholars touring the United States later this year under the sponsorship of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. Cultural Council. He will be giving lectures about Mažvydas and the Catechismus, as well as explaining the exhibits which will be shown in various cities. Please contact your local LAC, Inc. chapter for the schedule.

Donatas Skučas

Joint Commission of the Republic of Lithuania Parliament (Seimas) and the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.

The Joint Commission of the Republic of Lithuania Parliament (Seimas) and the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. (hereafter referred to as the Commission) was formed by an act of the Seimas, Act No I-776, on 26 January 1995 to function for a four year period. The purpose of the Commission is "to work for improved cooperation between Lithuanians living in Lithuania and the United States, to provide mutual aid and support to exchange scientific, cultural and other information, to present the Seimas and other governmental institutions with recommendations, which would help strengthen statesmanship and democratic traditions and to help in the development of these institutions."

One of the main differences between this Commission and individual activity in Lithuania is the ability of this Commission to present to the Seimas recommendations for passing, amending or changing laws. The Commission also prepares reports, recommendations and suggestions to the Seimas for passing these laws thereby giving it a measure of influence over legislation in Lithuania.

When the Commission was formed attention was paid to the fact that no single party in the Seimas should dominate the Commission. At that time the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party (LDLP) had a majority in the Seimas and it was feared that the LDLP might subvert the activities of the Commission for its own purposes. To preclude this, it was decided that each party in the Seimas would have a single representative on the Commission. Another safeguard is the requirement that all decisions of the Commission must be made by consensus, i.e., that all

members must agree with the decision. This has produced some interesting discussions when editing resolutions.

At the beginning of the Commission's work there were nine parties represented in the Seimas, so the Commission started out with nine members from Seimas. With the

Seimas elections of October 1996, the nine parties were reduced to five, and representation on the Commission was accordingly reduced to five members from Seimas, one from each of the remaining five parties.

The Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. (hereafter called LAC) contingent originally was to be comprised of nine members to give parity within the Commission. Five were supposed to be elected from the LAC and four from the Lithuanian-Canadian Community. At

the last minute, the Lithuanian-Canadians decided, for reasons of their own, not to participate in the Commission, leaving only the five LAC members. For its first two meetings the Commission met in Vilnius, composed of nine Seimas members and five LAC members. After last October's elections, parity was restored with only five parties from the Seimas. It was with this make-up of the Commission that we met twice in 1997.

The two separate Commission factions, Seimas and LAC, elect individual chairmen. That is why you will see two chairmen's signatures on all Commission documents. The Honorable Feliksas Palubinskas, member of the Christian Democratic Party in the Seimas and Vice-Chairman of the



The LAC, Inc. elected members of the Commission. From left to right: Mr. Vytas Maciūnas, Mr. Juozas Ardys, Mrs. Regina Narušis, Mrs. Liūda Rugienius, and Mr. Donatas Skučas, the Co-Chairman of the Commission, and author of this article.

Seimas, is the Commission chairman of the Seimas faction. I am chairman of the LAC faction.

Relations and working arrangements have been most cordial and professional between the co-chairmen.

All Commission members from LAC must be members of the National Council of LAC, Inc. The National Council, composed of more than sixty members, elects the five members that will be on the Commission. The five members in turn elect the chairman. It cannot be emphasized enough that LAC members are elected in a democratic manner, and not in some caucus. This has made an impression on the members of the Seimas. It must be also pointed out that LAC members do not receive any compensation to fly to and live in Vilnius during the Commission's meetings, nor are their expenses reimbursed by the organization. It has been estimated that in the past two years, each LAC Commission member has spent well in excess of \$6,000 of his/her personal funds on travel, lodging and food in Vilnius.

The five LAC members elected to the Commission are: Juozas Ardys, Cleveland region; Vytas Maciūnas, Philadelphia region; Regina Narušis, Chicago region; Liūda Rugienius, Detroit region; and myself from the Washington, DC region. The five Commission members of Seimas are: Česlovas Juršėnas, Chairman, Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party; Romualdas Ozolas, Chairman, Center Union and Vice-Chairman of the Seimas; Feliksas Palubinskas, Co-Chairman of the Commission, member of the Christian Democratic Party and Vice Chairman of the Seimas; Jurgis Razma, member of Homeland Union (Conservatives) and Chancellor of the Seimas; and Aloyzas Sakalas, Chairman of the Social Democratic Party. As can be seen from their titles, the five members from Seimas hold responsible positions in the Seimas. No committee of the Seimas, such as Foreign Relations or National Security, has so many influential members as this Commission and is indicative of the importance the Seimas attaches to it. During the opening ceremonies of the World Lithuanian Congress on July 2, 1997 in Vilnius, the Honorable Vytautas Landsbergis, Chairman of the Seimas, spoke very favorably of the work of the Commission.

The work of the Commission in the past two years has consisted of four week-long conferences, held in a conference room in the Seimas building in Vilnius. These meetings resulted in more than 30 resolutions and formal statements. The normal procedure is for a Commission member, usually from the LAC, to suggest a topic for discussion. The appropriate Lithuanian officials, usually ministers, their deputies or other high ranking government officials, come to testify before the Commission. This involves a formal statement followed by a question and answer period. Afterwards, the Commission formulates a resolution urging Seimas, the ministry or some department to take specific action.

For example, Liūda Rugienius took the initiative to travel to the southeast part of Lithuania to see how the Lithuanian language is taught in that Polish-speaking part of Lithuania. She noted that students in most schools were taught in Polish. The few Lithuanian schools that exist received little support from local school board officials, who were, for the most part, of Polish ancestry. She asked that this matter be put on the agenda for the next Commission meeting in March 1997. It was. The responsible official, the Vilnius county "governor" (an official appointed by the national government to represent national ministries at the local government level), was called to testify. He explained that there were many problems: there was no money to build additional schools, the Lithuanian teachers did not like to go to that part of the country due to

Another project has been the
invitation of ethnic dance and song
groups from Lithuania to present the
national culture at the Smithsonian
Festival of American Folklife in 1998

on the Mall in Washington, D.C.

a lack of living quarters, the local school officials were sometimes hostile to Lithuanian schools, etc. The Commission listened to all the arguments and then wrote a strongly worded resolution calling on officials to provide the opportunity for children who wish to be taught in Lithuanian to do so. When the Commission met in June 1997, the same official was again called to testify, and this time he said the government had found the money to build 20 new schools as well as living quarters for teachers. It turns out that some high "visibility" of the issue helped improve the situation.

Four resolutions were written concerning Lithuania's bid to join NATO. These resolutions were aimed at United States officials. While Lithuania's bid for NATO membership was unsuccessful this time, it put the Clinton Administration on notice that a large segment of Lithuanian-American voters is watching the actions of the Clinton Administration in its handling of Lithuania's bid to join NATO.

Other resolutions concerned cultural affairs, which are an important part of LAC programs here in the U.S. Unfortunately, no mechanism existed to coordinate the various activities between Lithuania and LAC. The Commission proposed the establishment of a coordinating group within Lithuania's Ministry of Culture specifically

charged with working with a corresponding group within the LAC. This worked very well, and one result has been the traveling exhibit and presentation in the United States of the first book published in Lithuania (*Mažvydas' "Catechismus"*) commemorating 450 years of Lithuanian books and the printing of the first Lithuanian-English dictionary in the U.S. Another project has been the invitation of ethnic dance and song groups from Lithuania to present the national culture at the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife in 1998 on the Mall in Washington, D.C. Unfortunately, there has been some recent upheaval in the Ministry of Culture and eight vice ministers and directors have quit. Most of them belonged to the coordinating group. It will take some time until the replacements become as proficient as the original group. So there is work for the Commission in the future.

One of the most successful programs the Commission initiated was the formation of the Information Center in Vilnius. Juozas Ardys noted that there was no office or center in Lithuania where any LAC member may inquire about conditions for moving to and living in Lithuania. This is especially a problem for elderly Lithuanian-Americans who wish to spend their retirement years in Lithuania. Juozas Ardys also calculated that there would be an economic benefit to Lithuania in the range of millions of dollars in providing for these elderly returnees/residents. He prepared a comprehensive briefing for the Commission and a draft proposal of a law that was submitted to the Seimas. The Seimas expanded the scope of the Information Center from the LAC members to include all Lithuanians living abroad. Law No. I-603 was passed authorizing the government to establish such a center.

When the Commission met in June, we learned that considerable progress had been made, and such a center will begin operations shortly. Non-Lithuanian speaking LAC members will be able to use the center, because one of the requirements is that at least one member of the staff speak English. The center is being staffed right now. We consider this center a positive development in U.S.-Lithuania relations. Until the Commission took up this matter, there was no centralized place to turn to for information. An informal survey indicated that until the center opens, 21 different offices need to be visited in order to find information and to comply with all the residency requirements. The Commission members feel very strongly that it has made an impact in this area.

Other questions addressed by the Commission include the problem of customs duties on parcels mailed to relatives. No satisfactory solution has been reached. LAC members are advised not to send parcels individually valued over \$100.00. The problem of double taxation by the U.S. and

Lithuania was also addressed. Hopefully, it will be resolved in the near future with a treaty between Lithuania and the United States. We have addressed the health care issue for LAC members who are residing in Lithuania. Lithuania started a new health care program on July 1, 1997 and many issues were left unresolved. This is one issue that definitely needs to be revisited in future meetings.

Other areas the Commission dealt with were educational support of Lithuanian Saturday schools here in the U.S.; the Lithuanian economy and possibility of encouraging foreign investments; the concept of "strategic objects" and whether they should be privatized; sports events in Lithuania and participation of youths from the U.S.; the extradition and trials of Nazi and Communist officials who committed crimes against humanity by brutalizing the Lithuanian nation; the damage done to Lithuania's youth by tobacco and alcohol; and plans for a "coming home to the ancestral land" celebration in the year 2000 A.D. Many other issues were discussed, but for lack of time could not be developed.

The question of expanding the Commission with members from Lithuanian communities of other countries has been raised from time to time. Theoretically it is possible, but it would require a change of the Seimas decision (Nr. VIII-119, dated February 20, 1997) that states "representatives of Lithuanian communities from other countries may participate in the Commission's meetings in an advisory capacity." Also, the National Council of LAC would have to approve such an expansion of the Commission. Any change in the way the Commission operates requires two approvals — one by the Seimas and another by the National Council of LAC.

One of the most frequently asked questions at the World Lithuanian Congress was why did LAC need such a Commission instead of just going through the World Lithuanian Community board of directors? The answer is very simple. The National Council of LAC saw that the personal contacts between the official representative (staff) of the World Lithuanian Community in Vilnius and the members of the Lithuanian government were insufficient to resolve the many problems arising after Lithuania's independence. This was especially acute in the area of relations with

Lithuania living abroad and especially in the US. It was felt that a more formal structure, with access to the highest levels of Lithuania's government (Seimas), was needed to address the issues. The events of the past two years have more than justified the foresight of creating such a Commission.

Asta Banionis

Helsinki or Bust

Once again Helsinki, Finland played host to an important meeting of East and West where the future of Lithuania and her people was being decided. On March 20, 1997 President Clinton and President Yeltsin opened their 3-day summit in this city which 22 years ago gave us "The Final Act of the Helsinki Conference", better known as the Helsinki Accords. At this summit, the U.S. and Russian presidents were to discuss enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), arms control and other issues of concern to both nations.



The Lithuanian army marching on parade ground of Parliament Square during Lithuanian Independence Day ceremonies, February 16, 1997.

Before the summit both sides staked out tough positions on the issue of NATO enlargement. The public sparring, widely reported in the press, heightened the public anxiety going into the summit. Yeltsin himself demanded that there be a legally binding guarantee protecting Moscow's security interests before NATO expands into Eastern Europe. Yeltsin was also insisting that Moscow would never give its consent to NATO expanding into what he defined as, "former Soviet territory". Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was defending the U.S. position that Russian approval wasn't necessary for the West to offer former Soviet allies full membership in NATO. On March 18, 1997, Secretary Albright said, "I can assure you that neither the President nor I are going to bargain away the rights of the Central Europeans...The first new members will not be the last, and we will exclude no European democracy from future consideration." The

President's National Security Advisor Samuel Berger writing in *The Washington Post* on March 17 had pledged that, "The alliance also will deepen its ties to those that are not in the first group of new members so that no nation feels it is being consigned to a zone of insecurity, cut off from the community of democracies."

The position articulated by Secretary Albright and National Security Advisor Berger is vital for Lithuania. If Lithuania is not invited to join NATO in July, it is important that it be seen as a strong candidate for later NATO membership. If the Russian government perceives that the United States is wavering in its support for Lithuania's independence, Russian demands on Lithuania's sovereignty will grow and Lithuania will slowly be drawn into Russia's political, economic and military orbit. Russia will control Lithuania's future, not the people of Lithuania. Other neighboring states were also expressing their concern for what would be decided at the Helsinki summit. Poland's Deputy Defense Minister Andrzej Karkoszka at a meeting held in Berlin summed up the feeling, "The smell of Yalta is always with us". Yalta, of course, is the site where in 1945 the Western allies along with the Soviet Union agreed to a division of postwar Europe which left the Eastern half of Europe under communist dictatorship and Soviet domination.

As last month's issue of BRIDGES reported, the Lithuanians are not idle. They are intensifying their diplomatic efforts and improving their military preparedness. Lithuanian citizens have also gotten involved in the effort. The summiteers were feted with Lithuanian songs by a group of 50 Lithuanian students from Kaunas and Vilnius universities who had travelled to Helsinki to make sure that Lithuania's voice was heard by President Clinton and Yeltsin. The demonstrators first assembled across from Finlandia Hall where the press center was based. They came marching to the site with their tri-color flags flapping in the wind and singing a rousing rendition of "*Ant Kalno Mūrai*" (From the high walls on the hill (i.e. fortifications)...ride the Lithuanians). They were well prepared with leaflets and posters in English for the thousands of journalists and reporters assembled at the press center. Many were able to give interviews and we have one report that a photograph of the demonstrators appeared on the front page of *The Detroit News*. The students also sent a delegation to the U.S. Embassy to hand in a letter which asked President Clinton not to "relegate Lithuania to a gray zone", but to support Lithuania's application for NATO

membership. We have printed the text of the letter below. Early the next morning, the protestors set up their picket outside the hotel occupied by President Clinton and his advisors. They banged pots and pans, waved their banners and sang Lithuanian songs. As Wolf Blitzer of CNN reported, "if the President didn't see the Lithuanian students, he certainly heard them." Let us hope his advisors gave him the letter.

**AN APPEAL
TO THE PRESIDENT OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Dear Mr. President,

Europe, along with the rest of the world, is crossing the bridge into the 21st century, with hopes for peace and stability. The people of Lithuania hope for the same. The second half of the 20th century was one of trial for Lithuania: we bore the indignation of not being able to participate in the founding of the great organizations that today bring stability, peace and dignity to democracies throughout the world.

Our parents came to Helsinki in 1975 to remind the world that Lithuania was and is rightfully a member of the family of sovereign nations, but they were left unheard. In 1991, we joined the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the organization that sprang from the Helsinki Accord of 1975, where our parents tried to remind the world of our rights and needs. Today it is our turn.

Lithuania proudly retook its place in the world at the end of the Cold War. Having the moral and political support of Western democracies, through blood and sweat and tears, we proved our dedication to freedom, peace and stability. We showed that, unlike some thought, we had never left Europe, we never gave up the idea that Europe is where we belong. We understand that being part of Europe entails certain concrete obligations. That is why we have joined Europe in restoring the peace in the former Yugoslavia, because European security is our security.

Lithuania has the moral and historic responsibility to cooperate in the building of the new emerging architecture of pan-European security, which cannot allow for any new dividing lines. The Baltic Sea region cannot ever become the new border between East and West. Regional stability is the bedrock of European stability. That is why Lithuania and the other Baltic States can never become bargaining chips, that is why Lithuania cannot, in any case, be relegated to a gray zone — outside transatlantic security structures, namely NATO. We are in Europe, geographically, and politically, our culture is influenced by the same

trends that influence the youth of the United States, Finland, Germany and the rest of Europe.

Mr. President, you once said, "It is the vital interest of the United States to safeguard the zone of democracy that has appeared with the collapse of communism in Europe". It is also our vital interest. We believe in you Mr. President. We believe in the values that America has stood for so long. Today it is time that they be implemented in all respects.

Our firm moral and political commitment to democracy and stability, as well as our right to choose our own security arrangements, including accession to security alliances, such as NATO, must be supported by the vision of tangible and indivisible transatlantic security. That is why Lithuania must be invited to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in the first round of expansion during the NATO summit in Madrid. Our security and enhanced stability are not a threat to anybody, neither East nor West. Rather, the Baltic Sea region's enhanced stability will be the bridge to economic, political and cultural cooperation.

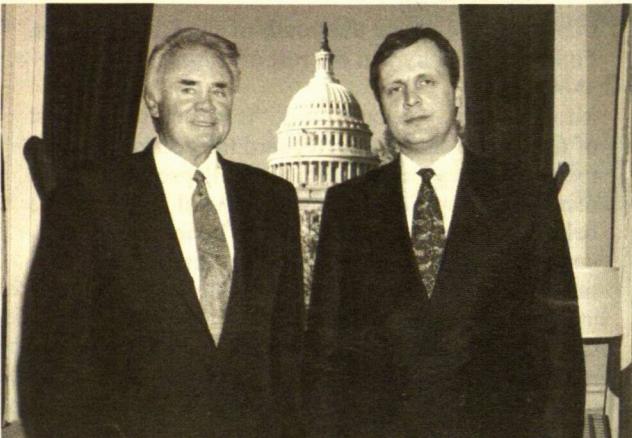
Mr. President, let us continue working together to build the future Europe, free of uncertainty, dividing lines and instability.

Helsinki, March 20, 1997
LITHUANIAN STUDENTS FOR NATO

So, did President Clinton listen to these young Lithuanians?

The President had gone into the summit saying that the door to NATO would remain open. In exchange, he was offering the Russian Federation a special relationship with NATO defined by a NATO-Russia charter including a new "consultative mechanism" within NATO which would fully inform the Russians on NATO decisions. He was also offering to not station nuclear weapons, nor sizeable numbers of troops on the territory of the new NATO members. On the issue of arms control President Clinton was offering a new treaty to reduce the level of nuclear weapons since the Russians find themselves in a curious situation under the Start II treaty of having to build new nuclear weapons, after having destroyed an old category of weapons, to keep parity with the United States. The "icing" for this multi-layered cake was an invitation for President Yeltsin to the annual G-7 meeting.

After eight hours of tough negotiations, President Yeltsin had agreed to a new relationship with NATO. He dropped his demand to have all 16 parliaments of the NATO nations ratify the NATO-Russia charter. Although the details of the charter and the consultative council have to be negotiated, Yeltsin was confident, "that we do not lose



Congressman Bill Young (R-FL) met with Albinas Januška, Deputy Foreign Minister of Lithuania in March, 1997 when Mr. Januška led a team of Lithuanian diplomats to Washington, DC to advance Lithuania's case for NATO membership.

the partnership that had developed in recent years..." Yeltsin gladly accepted the invitation to the G-7 meeting in Denver later this summer, a summit which will be known as "the Summit of the Eight". And there was significant movement on the arms control issue. Although the Russian parliament has not yet ratified the Start II agreement, President Yeltsin agreed to a Start III treaty under which both the United States and Russia will reduce their strategic nuclear arsenals to between 2,000 and 2,500 warheads by the year 2007.

It now appears that Russia has dropped its objections to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic entering NATO. In fact, with this new consultative council, some observers joke that Russia will enter NATO before any of the Eastern European countries. However, the most contentious issue of NATO enlargement remains, i.e., will Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia be allowed to join the alliance?

At the summit President Clinton announced that, "no country would be excluded" from being considered for membership in the alliance. It is reported by knowledgeable sources that Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin argued specifically over the Baltic States and their right to be considered for NATO membership. Secretary Albright said on Friday evening as the summit was concluding that President Yeltsin had agreed to respect "the sovereignty and integrity of all states, as well as their right to choose the means to ensure their security." In answer to journalists questions, she suggested that these principles also applied to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. If this was true, then it would mean that there would be no more Yaltas. President Clinton would have achieved a real breakthrough, convincing the Russians to put aside their outmoded imperialistic ways of thinking.

Unfortunately, the next day both Russian Foreign Minister Primakov and Russian President Yeltsin made it clear that they had drawn other conclusions from the negotiations. Primakov spent the day publicly railing against the Baltic States. Primakov warned, "I hope the Baltic States will not join NATO because this would shatter the whole relationship between Russia and NATO." President Yeltsin claimed that the summit had resulted in a consensus that the "former Soviet countries would not be included in NATO". By Sunday, Yeltsin was pontificating that the "Russian Federation would provide the security guarantees for the Baltic region". He added that if the people of this region are still wary of what happened during WW II, then "we Russians" would be more understanding of their concerns. This use of the term "Baltic region" is significant because this is the old, Soviet terminology for the Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Yeltsin's use of the term demonstrates that he and his advisors continue to view those independent countries as Russian territory, not as historically, politically, ethnically and socially distinct and separate from Russia. The Lithuanians are right to be wary of any Russian security guarantees. This was precisely the excuse the Soviet Union used in late 1939 to station 20,000 Red Army troops in Lithuania, "to serve as a guarantor of stability in the region". Then, with the approval of Hitler, the Soviet Union completed the occupation of Lithuania in June, 1940 with an additional 200,000 troops. So much for Soviet, or Russian security guarantees!

Where does that leave Lithuania?

The summit was successful because President Clinton did not cave into Russian demands to sacrifice Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to a Russian sphere of influence. President Clinton's advisors who had advocated a "three for three" policy (as reported in the February issue of BRIDGES) did not win the President's approval. At the same time, the Russians have made clear by their post-summit behavior that they are not going to give up on the issue. We can expect them to continue their full-court press all the way to the Madrid summit in early July.

Support in the United States Congress for Lithuania's security is essential. The co-sponsor list is growing for Congressman Solomon's resolution, H.Con.Res. 10. Is your Representative committed yet? If not, you should be writing and calling him or her in Washington, DC to endorse this concurrent resolution. We anticipate that next month, Congressman Gilman, the Chairman of the House International Relations Committee will be introducing a new NATO Enlargement bill which should address the evolving debate on the enlargement process. We will keep our readers posted on these latest developments. Lithuanian-Americans need to be particularly vigilant on this issue, since there is a continuing effort to derail NATO enlargement both here in Washington, DC as well as throughout the alliance.

Lithuania's small, but dedicated diplomatic corps has been on the move promoting Lithuania's claim to alliance membership. Foreign Minister Algirdas Saudargas was the first of the East European foreign ministers to begin a new round of "16+1 negotiations" in Brussels with the North Atlantic Council. Lithuania, just as the other NATO applicants, is active in the Partnership for Peace (PFP) program of NATO. There is a continuing dialogue between NATO headquarters in Brussels and the Partnership for Peace members as training programs, consultations and exchanges are planned, initiated and initiated. On March 19, 1997 Foreign Minister Saudargas was in Brussels for the final negotiations of the 1997-98 PFP schedule for Lithuania and had an opportunity to address the NATO council. During that speech, Saudargas introduced the NATO officials to a new Lithuanian position on NATO enlargement, an argument which will be repeated often during the coming months.

Here is a portion of his remarks: "In order to make the enlargement process a success, it is important that at least one Baltic country should be invited to join the Alliance with the first group...Such a step would ensure that the policy of non-recognition has not been abandoned and that the destiny of the three Baltic states is not hostage to Cold War stereotypes. Furthermore, inclusion of at least one Baltic state with the first group would confirm that a new NATO and a new Russia are not only able to perform peace operations in the fields of Bosnia and Herzegovina but also are able to live in close proximity. It is our legitimate expectation that the institutionalization of the NATO-Russia dialogue would not deprive us of membership guarantees."

Saudargas stressed that "...the reason for Lithuanian membership is the same that holds current Allies together. To us, membership in the Alliance is both a safeguard against any possible threat and the recognition and consolidation of our chosen path of democracy and free market reforms, consistently pursued since we have regained independence...Last, but not least, by joining the Alliance we want to contribute to strengthening ties between Europe and North America which are so important for mutual security, prosperity and welfare."

During the week of March 10, Lithuania's Deputy Foreign Minister Albinas Januška, and Head of the Political Department at the Foreign Ministry Vygaudas Ušackas made the same case to United States officials in Washington, DC. With the U.S. government increasingly committed to a limited first round of NATO enlargement, the two diplomats encountered some tough negotiating sessions. When asked by skeptical White House officials, just which of the Baltic States, Lithuania would suggest be invited to join NATO under their proposed "at least one Baltic country" formula, the talented, young Deputy Foreign Minister responded, "Why Latvia, of course".

Their reception on Capitol Hill was much warmer with Members of Congress expressing their support for Lithuania as a credible candidate for early NATO membership. The support and involvement of Lithuanian-Americans in this campaign cannot be overestimated. Keep up the good work.

Januška and Ušackas had brought with them the results of a recent public opinion poll conducted in Russia by the Moscow-based Centre of International Sociological Research between the February 3-March 6, 1997. It demonstrated that the Russian public does not object to Lithuania's membership in NATO. For instance, 70.4 percent responded that Lithuania's membership in NATO is only a matter for Lithuania to decide. Only 22 percent predicted a worsening of relations with Russia if Lithuania was to join NATO. But, it was clear that irrespective of whether Lithuania becomes a member of NATO or not, the Russian people see Lithuania as a friendly neighbor. 59 percent rejected the idea of placing Lithuania into a "buffer zone" between Russia and the West. You can read the full results of the public opinion poll at the end of this article. The pollsters are a reputable firm used by numerous Western news agencies and businesses working in Russia.

Where do we go from here? There is still a lot of work to be done before the Madrid Summit. The final candidates have not yet been chosen and all of the 12 NATO applicants are intensifying their efforts to win allied approval. For the next three months there will be a steady stream of presidents, foreign ministers and defense ministers visiting Washington, DC and asking for U.S. support for their security and eventual NATO membership. If Lithuania's case is to be heard effectively, Lithuanian-Americans must be active participants in the public policy debate. One of the national newspapers which is proving to be a staunch ally is *The Washington Post* (unlike the *New York Times* which is increasingly hostile to any NATO enlargement). After the Helsinki Summit the editorial board of *The Washington Post* published the following lead editorial on March 31, 1997. The editors zeroed in on the essence of the NATO debate as it affects Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia:

The NATO Left-Outs

What about the countries that seek NATO membership but are not expected to get it the first time around? The discomfort of the left-outs, who fear their perceived rejection will unravel their stability and security, is acute. So is the embarrassment of the existing NATO 16, who sympathize with the aspirations of democratic others but don't see the way clear to admitting them now. The situation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania is especially painful. Not only were they swallowed for 50 years by the Soviet Union. They remain exposed to any intimidation by the new Russia.

The United States is now getting to the dilemma of the Baltics. Their democratic and free-market credentials qual-

ify them for NATO, but Russia objects to having the alliance move onto formerly Soviet territory, and the West is nervous about the political risks and military costs. The Clinton administration supports their inclusion, but later. Meanwhile, it would have the alliance offer them assurances and joint programs meant to hitch them up tighter to NATO and draw them closer to other Western economic and political institutions.

The three states ask if the American proposals add up to a credible prelude to NATO membership or to a substitute for it—a question that only events can answer. So they are trying to upgrade both the quality of the West's commitment to their sovereignty and the automaticity of their early acceptance into the alliance.

The fear of another "Yalta"—meaning a Western sellout—is never far from the surface in central and eastern Europe. Yet the United States is owed a certain assumption of good faith for its steadiness in the Cold War, including its refusal to recognize the Soviet grab of the Baltics. It is only sensible that Americans should weigh the risks and costs of extending a security commitment to three small exposed states. It would be downright foolish to proceed without measuring the impact on Russia.

At the end of the day, nonetheless, the Baltics' case is unanswerable. They are of the historical democratic West. The alliance they would be joining is defensive to the core. Russia can legitimately ask respect for its security interests. But its concern for fallen pride and status is something else. Who is to tell the Balts, just emerged from a half-century in the belly of the beast that they must accept less security so that an unthreatened Russia may enjoy more pride?

Events in Lithuania

On March 31, the Chief Election Commission of Lithuania confirmed the results of the nation-wide municipal elections which were held March 23, 1997. The 1,459 candidates elected to the 12 city councils and 44 county councils will serve for three years. The results of these local government elections were similar to the parliamentary elections held five months earlier, with one surprising exception. The Christian Democratic Party lost ground among the electorate coming in third among the winners. This third place finish has already set off a series of public recriminations among top party officials and is likely to lead to some resignations.

The Homeland Union (Lithuanian Conservatives) won the greatest number of seats, 493 (33.22 percent of the vote). The Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party (LDDP) came in second with 212 seats (14.29 percent). The Christian Democrats (LKDP) came in third with 180 seats (12.13 percent). The Social Democrats (LSDP) won 136 seats (9.16 percent). The Center Union (LCS) now holds 135

seats (9.1 percent). The smaller parties garnered the following seats: Farmers' Party 84 (5.66 percent); Lithuanian Polish Electoral Action 56 (3.77 percent); Liberal Union 44 (2.96 percent); Lithuanian National Union 23 (1.55 percent); the Political Prisoners and Exiles Union and the Lithuanian Citizens' Alliance each won 20 (1.35 percent); the Women's Party 14 (0.94 percent); the Nationalist Party "Young Lithuania" 9 (0.61 percent); the Democratic Party and Lithuania's Russian Union each won 7 (0.47 percent); Lithuanian Freedom Union 6 (0.4 percent); Christian Democratic Union and Lithuania's Economy Party won 5 each (0.34 percent) and the National Progressive Party 3 (0.2 percent).

The Conservatives won an absolute majority of the seats in the city councils of Kaunas, Šiauliai, Alytus, Marijampolé, Druskininkai, and Palanga, as well as the county councils of Kaunas, Alytus and Prienai, as well as the resort town of Neringa. It is anticipated that the Conservatives will form coalitions with the Christian Democrats to control an additional 17 city and county councils in such places as the city of Panevėžys, and the regions of Anykščiai, Jurbarkas, Kaišiadorys, Klaipėda, Kretinga, Lazdijai, Marijampolé, Panevėžys, Mažeikiai, Pasvalys, Plungė, Šilalė, Šilutė, Tauragė, Telšiai, and Utena.

The former ruling party, the LDDP, will have an absolute majority only in the town of Visaginas which is the "company town" for the Ignalina nuclear power station in northeast Lithuania. The town has a heavy concentration of Russian industrial workers, many of whom are Russian citizens.



Senator Durbin with Jurgis Lendraitis of Illinois standing in front of the Lithuanian Childrens' Hope Clinic in Santariškės Hospital in Lithuania. February, 1997.

In the repeat parliamentary elections which were held to fill the four seats which remained vacant after the November nation-wide elections, only three were ruled valid. In the 56th Seimas district (Vilnius-Šalčininkai) the

Polish Electoral Action candidate Jan Senkiewicz was elected over his opponent Liberal Party candidate Algimantas Reičiunas. In the 57th Seimas district (Vilnius-Trakai region) there will be a run-off election later in the spring between Conservative candidate Bronislavas Busma and the Polish Electoral Action candidate Valdemar Tomasevski. The 58th Seimas district will also have a run-off election between Center Union candidate Danutė Aleksiūnienė and Polish Electoral Action candidate Henryk Jankowski. The one district which failed to draw 40 percent of its registered voters and will have to start the process all over again is the 10th Seimas district (Naujoji Vilnia). Less than 32 percent of the electorate turned out to vote in this district.

Most observers of the municipal elections believe that the election results indicate that the majority of Lithuanians support the ruling coalition's economic reforms and fight against crime. Gediminas Vagnorius who is Prime Minister as well as Chairman of the Board of the Conservative Party commented on his party's success at a March 24 press conference. Prime Minister Vagnorius said, "We have received a strong backing, but this also means even greater responsibility." First Deputy Chairman of the Seimas, also a Conservative Party member, Andrius Kubilius said that a coalition of Conservatives and Christian Democrats could end up with 30 of the 56 mayors in the local government. In another 10 municipalities, Mr. Kubilius, was hoping to form a coalition with the smaller right-wing parties.

In a prelude to the Lithuanian presidential elections which will be held sometime at the end of the year, Valdas Adamkus, a well-known Lithuanian-American was allowed to run on the Center Union ticket in the Šiauliai city council election by the Chief Electoral Commission. Mr. Adamkus, who is expected to contend for the presidency, was listed as 25th on the party's list. The appearance of his name on the ballot did not seem to make any tangible difference to the voters; the Center Union did not come close to winning a majority in the Šiauliai city council. The Šiauliai election commission had originally ruled to keep Mr. Adamkus off the ballot citing his failure to give up his American citizenship.

The Fight Against Crime

The Conservative Party won last year's parliamentary elections in part because of their pledge to make fighting crime one of its highest priorities. Earlier in the year they adopted new stiff measures to help the police and prosecutors fight both street crime and organized crime. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has transferred to the Prosecutor General's office 31 criminal cases which are being reopened. In January and February the Ministry examined all terminated or shelved cases and is now petitioning the courts to have them reopened.

Last year, under the old government, the Prosecutor General's office investigated 634 cases of white collar crime. 274 cases proceeded to the courts for adjudication; in 119 cases the prosecution was terminated because it was



Senator Durbin talked with some of the young patients treated by Lithuanian Childrens' Hope in Vilnius.

determined that they lacked criminal content and 160 cases were halted for various reasons such as a lack of evidence. As reported in a March 4 press release, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has determined after this review that, "It has now become apparent that numerous criminal cases were unjustifiably terminated".

Senator Durbin's visit to Lithuania

Last month BRIDGES reported that Senator Richard Durbin and his eldest brother William had travelled to Lithuania for the February 16 Independence Day celebrations. It was the Senator's fourth trip to Lithuania; he first travelled there when it was under Soviet occupation in 1979 as a tourist. It was his brother William's first trip.

Their first full day in Lithuania they attended the official Independence Day services in Vilnius both at the Cathedral and at the Seimas (parliament building). There were parades and speeches, and the weather was kind that day. The sun shone and there was little wind for a winter day in Lithuania. Senator Durbin told Lithuanian officials that he was optimistic about Lithuania's chances for NATO membership. Senator Durbin pledged to do all he could to support Lithuania's admission as well as getting the Administration to provide the assistance Lithuania needs to prepare for NATO membership. According to him, "the faster it happens, the better it is for both Lithuania and the alliance."

Everywhere he went he was asked about NATO and Lithuania's security, but the Senator had a number of additional missions in mind for this trip. He had come to see if

he could be of assistance to both the Lithuanian government and the Lithuanian Jewish community in finding the resources to help preserve the Lithuanian Jewish community's tremendous cultural heritage. During the war, with the help of Christian Lithuanians, Lithuania's Jews were able to safeguard a notable portion of Judaica. Today, thousands of religious and historical books have come out of the underground shadows, but there is no normal library space which can adequately house the collections at the present time. The Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania has tried to provide some extra help, but the Library itself is struggling with everyday issues. The collections are safe, (there were some sensationalized reports in the US media that the books were sitting in a terrible basement), but are mostly uncataloged and not easily accessible to those who need to use them. Senator Durbin working with American Jews from Illinois and around the country, is working to help raise the financial resources it will take to properly house this literary and cultural treasure.

Senator Dick Durbin and his brother William visited three hospitals in Vilnius at the request of Lithuania's new Health Minister, Dr. Juozas Galdikas. The Health Minister has to begin implementing a new health care financing system on July 1, 1997 which was mandated by law in the past parliamentary session (1996). Changes in financing, mean changes in health care delivery systems which are going to be difficult even under the best of circumstances. Lithuania

is handicapped as it sets out on its reforms because it is the only country in Eastern Europe which did not receive any kind of expert advice from the U.S. foreign aid program, the Europeans, or the international institutions in reforming its health care programs. The previous, LDDP government did not make health care a priority, so when programs and funding were available, Lithuania didn't receive them. Now, the new government would like some expert advice to help them avoid the worst of the inevitable pitfalls. Senator Durbin has pledged his help in getting some of that needed expertise.

One of the hospitals he visited is Santariškės in Vilnius which houses the Lithuanian Childrens' Hope Clinic (surgical unit) jointly sponsored by the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. and the Shriners' Hospitals of the United States. He saw the fine operating room which has been set up thanks to the generous donations of the Shriners and Lithuanian-Americans. He also got a chance to talk with the surgeons, nurses and some of the children who have benefitted by the program.

From Vilnius the two brothers went to Kaunas and then on to Jurbarkas, the town where their mother was born. Next month we'll cover the warm welcome they got from the townspeople of Jurbarkas.

Lithuania's Beloved Storks continued from page 3

A stork protects not only the farmer and his family, but the farm animals as well. If the storks take up residence in a nest near the barn, it is said that the horses will be protected from the witches and the mischievous spirits which sometimes cause the horses to run wild. One can even predict the next day's weather from observing the storks in their nest. If in the evening, just before sunset, the storks are merrily tapping their beaks (as if in a prolonged conversation) then the following day will be a perfect sunny day; if the storks are standing silently in their nest, there will be rain. Who needs the weatherman, when you have a stork?



One of the more delightful sights of a Lithuanian countryside takes place in mid-August. By then the young storks are grown strong enough preparing for their long migration back to southern Africa with their parents. The farmers are out in the fields cutting the hay, and behind them prancing along in the new mown grass are the storks—both young and old. With the newly exposed field, there is many a delicacy (stork delicacy, that is) to be found.

Lithuanian folk wisdom:

In a river in Žemaitija (the Lowlands) swam a goose speaking very loudly to no one in particular: Ga-ga-ga! Isn't it the truth, that I'm such a fine bird; a perfect bird. I know how to swim in the water. On land I can walk and I can fly in the sky. No one can compare to me. Why, I could be the king of the birds.

A stork happened to hear the goose's monologue. Having come close to him, he said to the goose: Empty words, my friend. You are in fact a very meager bird. Do you swim as well as a pike? Can you run as fast as an elk? Can you soar like a hawk? It is far better to do one thing very well, than to do all sorts of things, poorly.

Algis Rimas

Business and Investment News

Lithuanian Industry on the Web

The Lithuanian stock exchange has opened a web page listing the country's top 100 traded companies and their performance indicators. The information is in English and may be viewed on the internet at the following address: www.is.lt/depozit.

The Views of Foreign Investors

According to Margarita Starkevičiūtė, financial reporter of the Vilnius daily, *Lietuvos Rytas*, the majority of foreign investors in the Baltic credit Estonia with having developed the best services sector, Latvia the strongest banking sector, and Lithuania the best performing industries in the region. While praising most of the top listed companies for showing solid improvement and even profits, over the past three years, Ms. Starkevičiūtė sounded a word of caution about some of the state-owned industries. She warned that government subsidies to some state owned companies simply enabled them to continue working inefficiently while showing paper profits. Lithuanian Airlines was mentioned as one example of such corporate welfarism.

A positive outlook on Lithuanian investments was sounded recently by the Lithuanian Investment Agency. It released a poll of 46 foreign investors, who together account for two-thirds of the \$450 million invested by foreigners in Lithuania. Over 80 percent said they were glad they had placed their resources into Lithuania and that they would do so again. The main advantages cited for investing in the country were the presence of a highly trained and inexpensive workforce and the country's proximity to the large eastern European and Russian markets. Those polled said they were especially pleased with the quality of Lithuanian insurance services, lawyers, consultants, hotels and restaurants. They were least happy with telecommunication services, auto repair services and the general unavailability of information in foreign languages. Other drawbacks mentioned included lack of clarity in the legal and tax systems, vestiges of a Soviet work ethic, and an inefficient banking system.

A separate national opinion poll was conducted in March to measure public confidence in the economy. Respondents covered all age groups and locations. Asked whether they expected 1997 to be better, same as, or worse than the previous year economically, 29 percent answered

positively, 31 percent were neutral, and 11 percent predicted a worse year. The remainder had no opinion.

The IMF Gives a Green Light to Extend Lithuanian Import Protection

According to Lithuanian media reports, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in mid-March agreed to release the Lithuanian government from its earlier commitment to lower agricultural import tariffs this year. The average duties on food items will remain at 27 percent. A longer phase-out period was accepted to provide much sought protection for Lithuanian farmers and to narrow the foreign trade deficit which in 1996 reached one billion dollars on imports of \$4.4 billion. The IMF reportedly also consented to the abolition, over time, of the Lithuanian currency control board while maintaining a fixed exchange rate for the litas.

The economic policy package agreed to by the Vagnorius government with the IMF also includes a further energy price hike for consumers this fall. However, its impact on households should be mitigated by the introduction of additional social welfare programs and wage and pension increases.

Lost Savings Deposits to be Restored

Before Lithuania regained its independence, a large portion of household savings had been in the form of time deposits denominated in rubles at the then-Soviet Savings Bank. It, like all things Soviet, broke up and its Lithuanian branch emerged from the rubble as the Lithuanian Savings Bank. Its funds, however, were much reduced from the book entry values as a result of the break-up. Thousands of Lithuanian households found themselves unable to collect their money.

Now the new Vagnorius government, acting on its election campaign promise, has introduced a measure to partially compensate such depositors. A proposed law, now before the Seimas, would restore ruble deposits at parity in the litas currency up to a maximum of 6000 litas. Payment would be funded from the proceeds of selling-off remaining state companies. The estimated price tag of 3.8 billion litas is equivalent to almost one billion dollars.

Some economists have criticized the measure as being populist and likely to reignite a new wave of inflation by

expanding the money supply. The time period for the compensation payout reportedly has not been established. If it is stretched out, inflationary pressures could be reduced correspondingly. The shrinking rate of inflation has been one of the success stories of the Lithuanian economy and none would like to see a return to the 1000 plus percent rate of 1992. February's monthly rate was a mere 0.6 percent compared to 2.4 percent in February 1996.

Income Growth and Distribution Changes

The Lithuanian Department of Statistics recently confirmed some new trends in income growth and distribution. Measured from the trough of the business cycle in 1993, average real incomes rose by year's end, 1995, by 12 percent. However, 17 percent of households were considered to live below the minimum poverty line income of 110 litas per person, per month. This official poverty line figure is considered by experts to be understated. The 10 percent of the population in the highest earning bracket earned 26 percent of the national disposable income, while the lowest 10 percent of all earners accounted for three percent of the income.

The official figures do not include black market earnings, reportedly equivalent to some 35 of total national income. These earnings supposedly accrue disproportionately to the wealthiest individuals who have the opportunity and the means to engage in black market operations.

Auto Rentals Now Available in Vilnius

Two companies have started to offer immediate availability car rentals at Vilnius airport. They are the chain, Avis, and the firm, Balticar. Other companies have also been providing rental cars, but only if the car is ordered in advance, and if a substantial security deposit is paid.

Avis reportedly dispenses with the security deposit, merely showing a credit card will suffice. The available makes

include Toyota, Nissan, Suzuki, Opel, Ford and VW. Rates vary according to make and time period leased, but the basic average rate is \$50 per day. For an extra \$15 per day, Avis will throw in a driver. Balticar offers its range of Mazdas, Fords, Opels, Fiats and Mitsubishi for about \$100 per day, plus a \$1000 refundable security deposit. Drivers, at \$35 per day, are also more expensive. But Balticar offers the show-off VIP a special treat—a Lincoln Town Car for \$250 per day.

For the Francophiles, there is a Vilnius car rental shop offering only Renaults. The firm, Litinterp, will reserve one of its Renaults for a \$400 deposit. The daily rate is approximately \$50.

Major Projects Advance:

Klaipėda Free Trade Zone. A U.S.-Lithuanian joint venture called the Klaipėda Development Group has emerged as the sole qualified bidder for the public tender to develop the Klaipeda free trade zone, which includes the entire sea port area. According to the rules of the competition the contract award is to be decided by April 20. Possible tenants and investors in the zone reportedly include Philips, the Dutch electronics firm already active in Šiauliai, and Japan's Jetro.

Butingė Oil Terminal. Full financing for this \$200 million project reportedly has yet to be lined up, although a number of loan offers are being considered. The share holders of the terminal also plan a further stock issue. In the meanwhile, a \$10 million loan from the Union Bank of Switzerland reportedly has been secured to enable equipment purchases to move ahead. The future off-shore terminal is intended primarily to export Russian origin oil and products refined at the currently under-utilized Mažeikiai refinery. A secondary function would be to handle imported oil.

Ramune Kubilius

Bits and Pieces

LAC PUBLISHES DIRECTORY

A new directory entitled "Study and Research Opportunities in the United States of America" has been published by the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. National Executive Committee. The idea for the directory arose when Lithuania regained its independence and interest increased in educational and research opportunities abroad for Lithuania's students and scholars. Although the diaspora community was generous in supporting interested persons, it soon became apparent that other financial support could and should be sought.

The 150 page, English-language directory (with a Lithuanian language introduction) describes the American educational system and provides information on various funding opportunities from the U.S. government and private foundations. The LAC National Executive Committee paid for the preparation and publishing with partial financial support from the Lithuanian Foundation. The staff of the Lithuanian Embassy in Washington shared information. The directory is aimed at a Lithuanian audience and copies have already been sent to educational institutions in Lithuania, as well as institutions in the U.S. such as the Endowed Chair of Lithuanian Studies of the University of Illinois at Chicago, A.P.P.L.E., the Lithuanian Embassy and Consulates, the LAC Human Services Council office in Chicago's "Seklyčia". 250 copies were published. Public and University Libraries in Lithuania are among the "depository" sites.

(*DRAUGAS*, 2/27/97, from an article by Elvyra Vodopalas)

FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS FROM LITHUANIA

J. William Fulbright Foreign scholars are lecturing or conducting research in the United States during the academic year and are encouraged to visit other educational institutions during their stay in the United States. The announcement from the scholarship board includes some names of scholars from Lithuania during 1996-1997:

American Literature

Irena Sabaliauskaitė, head of the department of English philology, Klaipėda University: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Medical Sciences

Arvydas Ambrozaitis, head of infectious diseases, Vilnius University: University of Wisconsin at Madison.

Music

Eglė Perkūnaitė-Viksraitienė, senior assistant in the piano and accompanying department, Lithuanian Music Academy: University of Miami.

Sociology and Social Work

Elvyra Giedraitienė, Head of the Department of Social Pedagogy, Klaipėda University is visiting the University of South Carolina at Spartanburg.

(from *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 1/3/197)

LITHUANIAN BAKERY AVAILABLE

The Brooklyn Bakery in Waterbury, Connecticut closed its doors December, 1996 after several decades of making top quality European breads, including Lithuanian bread. The owner is willing, even eager, to sell his equipment (for \$225,000.00), his recipes, and his customer lists and is willing to train anyone who would take over this business. Is there a business opportunity here for some collaborative effort between the U.S. and Lithuania? People from all over Connecticut and from many nearby states have bought this bread. The incoming European immigrant looks all over for it. I have only the information that was in the newspaper about this opportunity and will gladly share that with anyone who may be interested.

(Barbara Valuckas, e-mail: BVALUCKAS@compuserve.com)

CHICAGO FACT BOOK

Some call it the finest history of the Chicago area ever written. Published every 10 years since the 1930s, the *Local Community Fact Book, Chicago Metropolitan Area, 1990*, edited by The Chicago Fact Book Consortium is a "unique compendium of data, maps and histories of city neighborhoods and major suburbs that reveals the character of the Chicago region in a fineness of detail unprecedented for any world metropolis." In the 1960s the editors began including the histories and demographic data of

Chicago's major suburbs. William Erbe, a retired sociologist at the University of Illinois at Chicago, was this 494 page edition's main editor.

The *Fact Book* interweaves historical and modern-day facts. Chicago neighborhoods stand out for one or, in some cases, many reasons. For example, "Chicago Lawn" has the highest number of people of Lithuanian ancestry (3,144) and Arabic ancestry (2,547)...The official city community name is "Chicago Lawn", but the unofficial name is "Marquette Park"... "In 1930, immigrants represented 27 percent of the city's population...But the foreign-born segment was as low as 1 percent in some neighborhoods and as high as 45 percent in others"... "In several cases, communities had more than one name. For instance, the area to the west of the Union Stockyards was most commonly known as Back of the Yards, but, at the time, that name carried an extremely negative connotation, rooted in Upton Sinclair's description of the area in his muckraking 1906 novel "The Jungle". So Burgess (the original editor-rk) employed a lesser-used designation, New City".." And the name Back of the Yards was never really displaced in that community by New City"...

(From "Biggest and Best: Revealing the secrets of the finest history of our area ever written" by Patrick T. Reardon, *CHICAGO TRIBUNE MAGAZINE*, March 9,1997)

DURING THE REIGN OF VYTAUTAS THE GREAT

Daiva Markelis reminisces in an essay published in *CHICAGO TRIBUNE MAGAZINE*, March 9,1997...

"Every Saturday morning, for seven years of my life, while other children were watching cartoons, I studied Lithuanian history and geography, literature and grammar, in the classrooms of St. Anthony's School in Cicero"..."At Lithuanian Saturday School I learned a geography imbued with longing for Lithuania; a country of lush pine forests and golden dunes, a paradise on earth, forever embedded in amber. More important, I learned about the arbitrariness of borders; that a country can exist for one person and not for another—a lesson reinforced at home, where there were always maps, and a globe that my sister and I loved to twirl when my father wasn't around"...

"Today, as I work on a dissertation that deals with issues of language and history, I frequently think about those Saturdays spent conjugating verbs and memorizing poems.

I think about the larger, broader past, the extravagant past of victories won in the forests of Žalgiris, the tragic past of Soviet occupation..."

(From an essay by Daiva Markelis, "During the Reign of Vytautas the Great: Mr. Kreivenas taught his students more than he'll ever realize", *CHICAGO TRIBUNE MAGAZINE*, March 9, 1997)

BOOKS ON LINE

The Lithuanian Cultural institute is starting to put out Online Books. The text of the first two which are on Lithuanian culture can be picked up from <http://neris.mii.lt/heritage/lfcc/book.html>

RECENTLY PRINTED BOOKS

Forest of the Gods (Dievų Miškas) by Lithuanian writer, Balsys Sruoga has finally been translated and published in English. This brilliant memoir of the writer's incarceration in the Nazi concentration camp at Stutthof (1943-45) is a Lithuanian classic. Aušrinė Byla has done an excellent translation. The book was published by Vaga Press in Vilnius and is available in the West only from the translator: Aušrinė Byla, 134 Haven #5G, New York NY 10032. The price of the book is \$20. USD (this includes shipping and handling).

It is historically accurate, yet, written with irony and humor. I recommend it to the general reader, historians and literary people as one of the most important documents of the period.

Prof. Violeta Kelertas
Endowed Chair of Lithuanian Studies,
University of Illinois at Chicago
Original Sender Violeta Kelertas
<Kelertas@uicvm.uic.edu>

Showdown : The Lithuanian Rebellion and the Breakup of the Soviet Empire by Richard J. Krickus covers the period 1990-1991 in Lithuania. The publisher is Brassey's, Inc.; expected publication date is March, 1997. ISBN: 1574880586. List: \$24.95 — Amazon.com Price: \$22.46 — You Save: \$2.49 (10%). URL: <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ISBN=1574880586>

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