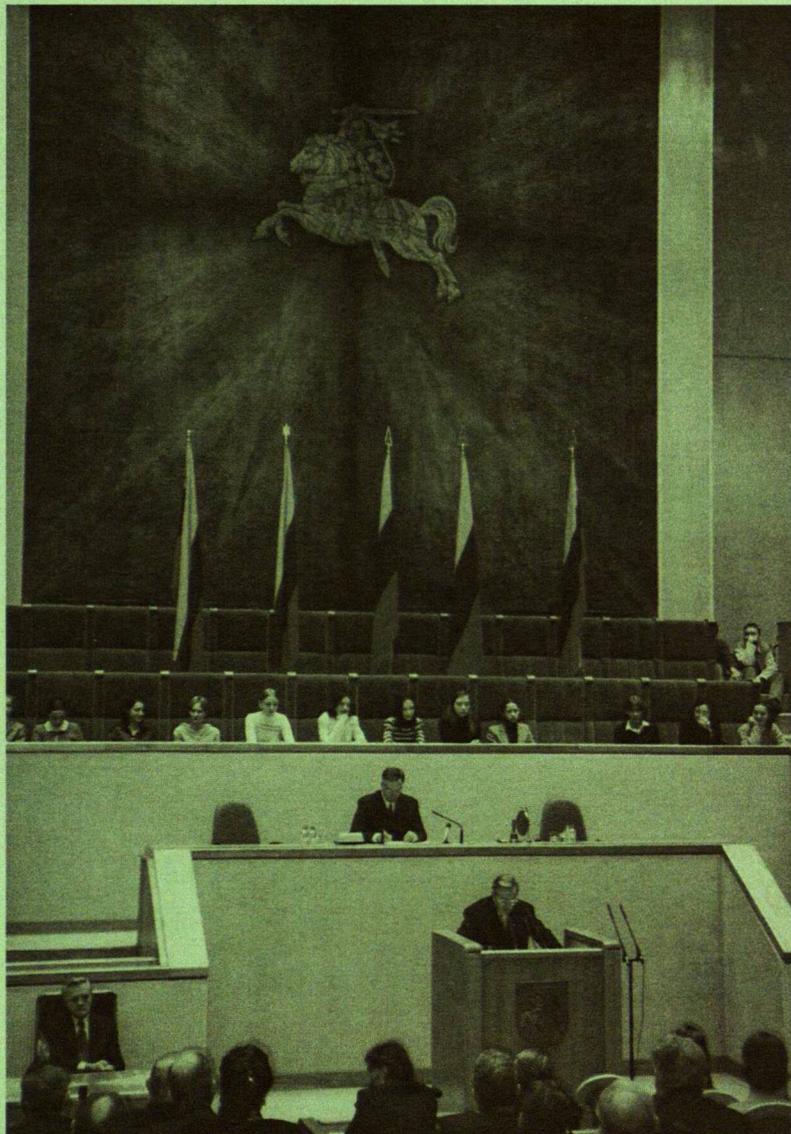

BRIDGES

• LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL •

Volume 24

Issue 1, January/February 2000



The Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.

P e r s p e c t i v e s

Ever since I can remember, February 16th Independence Day Commemorations (Vasario 16-tosios Minėjimai) were just that — commemorations. To me that meant remembering what once had been and lost.

America's July 4th celebrations thundered and sparkled; while, Lithuanians would sit misty-eyed listening to sentimental poetry, often-times sorrowful singing, and woeful speeches in the dead of winter. But that was the lot of a Lithuanian-American. It must have seemed strange to visitors to watch an Independence Day celebration without the celebration.

For a young child, the long event would tick by ever so slowly, but it held my attention. People around me would nod in agreement with the speeches. Some men, more "politically" inclined, would rustle off to the back of the hall to make a point or voice disagreement with their compatriots. The women would shush them as they bustled around with the desserts and coffee items. They too listened intently and whispered in hushed tones when something was said just right or needed special embellishment.

During the lighter part of the event, the singing and folk dancing, women would dab their eyes with nice white handkerchiefs. Our parents snapped pictures as they proudly watched the next generation repeat the dances they had danced when they had been young... when they had lived in independent Lithuania.

The quite ride home found some of us deep in thought. My littlest sister would often collapse in the car with feet and legs sprawled over my sister's and my lap. We didn't mind this time.

We would watch our parents as we drove home. They often said very little — either driving intently or staring out the window. Sometimes we would ask them if they liked the commemoration. One time, my mother answered that it would better to celebrate independence, rather than commemorate it.

Rasa Ardys-Juška
Editor

BRIDGES

Lithuanian American News Journal

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On Creating a Lithuanian-American Community

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Lithuania's Independence — Not Easily Won

“The re-establishment of the independent State of Lithuania, proclaimed on February 16th, 1918, was not to be secured by peaceful agreement with its neighbors, even though the end of World War I had brought some recognition of the right of national self-determination,” according to *Encyclopædia Lituanica*.

“It was only because they did not succumb to Russian Bolsheviks, German Bermondists, and Polish Nationalists in a fierce two-year long struggle that the Lithuanian people were able to achieve a measure of international respect for their right to independence and for the territorial integrity of their newly resurrected state.”

Lithuania's re-establishment of its independence in 1990 on March 11th, also was gained not without a fierce struggle. But, this struggle cost hundreds of thousands of lives over a 50-year period.

**Commemorate Lithuania's Independence with
your local Lithuanian-American Community**

On the cover:

The Selmas (Lithuanian Parliament) — In session to commemorate the re-establishment of Lithuania's Independence in 1999.

Photo by Bernard Narušis

The Lithuanian-American Community Enters the 21st Century

When the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. first established itself in the United States in 1952, its primary goals were maintaining Lithuanian culture and heritage outside the borders of Lithuania. Those goals never altered. The faces and the hands of those who helped Lithuanians succeed in their bicultural lives changed many times as they entered the administration of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.'s Board of Directors and National Executive Board. Now, the millenium begins with a prodigious Lithuanian-American legacy enriching future decisions and accomplishments yet to come.

Who We Are

The Lithuanian American Community, Inc. is a non-profit community-based organization providing educational, cultural, and social services to our membership. Serving the interests of approximately 800,000 Americans of Lithuanian descent, LAC, Inc. is in the forefront of supporting the growth of democratic institutions and economic, as well as social reform in the Republic of Lithuania.

Since its founding in 1951, LAC, Inc. has sponsored a wide variety of activities. To commemorate this very special year, the LAC through the efforts of Sister Margarita Bareikaitė has published a 2000 Year Jubilee Calendar. Since our Board of Directors has designated this the year of Christ, the emphasis is religious; however, it contains Lithuania's historical events and our Community programs.

Members, Lithuanian-Americans, participate in programs both within their local chapters, as well as in nation-wide events organized in six areas of interest: cultural, educational and religious, human services, economic, and public affairs.

Cultural

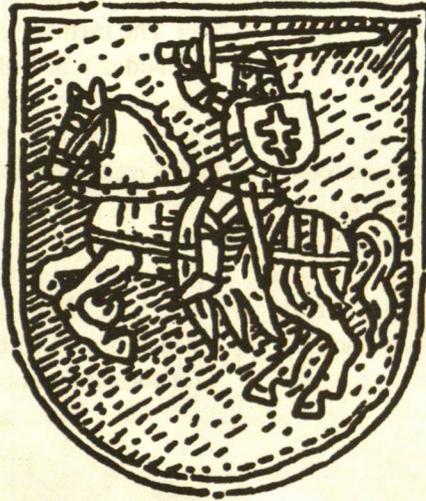
LAC, Inc. promotes and fosters Lithuanian culture and traditions through regular sponsorship of specific events, such as folk dance, music, song and theater festivals and concerts, arts and science symposiums. LAC, Inc. also publishes books about Lithuania's cultural heritage and generally seeks to support cultural interaction between the United States and Lithuania.

The year 2000 begins a rich, cultural year. In March, two famous soloists from Lithuanian – Vladimeras Prudnikovas and Judita Leitaitis are expected to tour. In April, the theater company, "Žaltvykslės", will stage a play. In May, the Chicago-based "Poetry Day" and the Lithuanian Opera Company's presentation of "La Traviata" will highlight their talents.

By the end of June and early July, people from around the world will gather for the 11th International Lithuanian Folk Dance Festival in Toronto, Canada. Look for even more events in the fall.

Educational and Religious

LAC, Inc. has been instrumental in keeping the Lithuanian heritage and its religious traditions alive in the U.S. through its network of Lithuanian Heritage and Language Schools, which provide classes to Lithuanian-Americans of all ages. Educational programs are designed, instructional materials are published, and teachers are prepared to meet the continuously changing environmental demands. Educational programs continue to expand encompassing adults as well as children. Enrollment numbers are correspondingly increasing.



Human Services

The Human Services Council of LAC, Inc. provides specialized services to senior citizens and individuals of Lithuanian descent requiring assistance. These services include social, informational, legal aid, medical, as well as case-unique aid to individuals and/or families in need. The Council operates two service centers and publishes *Pensininkas*, (The Pensioner) a magazine for senior citizens as well as informational columns in Lithuanian media.

With the reestablishment of independence, the Council has expanded its scope to provide aid to the people of Lithuania by establishing a series of ongoing projects via its subsidiaries:

- *Lithuanian Children's Hope* provides specialized orthopedic care and treatment for Lithuania's children;

- *Lithuanian Orphan Care* allows LAC, Inc. members to sponsor a foster child in Lithuania;
- And, the *Lithuanian Freedom Fighters' Fund* provides aid to Lithuanian freedom fighters of advanced age who have suffered from the Soviet Union occupation and persecution.

Economic Affairs

The LAC, Inc. Economic Affairs Council actively promotes business with and investment in Lithuania. In this respect, the Council sponsors conferences and trade shows, both in the U.S. and Lithuania, for potential investors and businesses. Working through the U.S. government Baltic American Enterprise Fund, the Council actively seeks to establish business partnerships between the U.S. and Lithuanian companies. The Council also publishes a weekly column in the Lithuanian press providing up-to-date information regarding economic changes taking place in Lithuania.

Public Affairs

Since its inception, LAC, Inc. has worked to support the independence of Lithuania by providing required assistance to Lithuania's democratic movement and championing a variety of projects before and after the declaration of independence. The Public Affairs Council has an exceptionally busy year ahead as they continue to assemble and provide accurate information about Lithuania to our American government to enable it to make informed and good decisions. Currently, the emphasis has shifted to developing and supporting Lithuania's democracy and changing economy.

Such issues as the expansion of NATO to

include Lithuania, the demilitarization of the Kaliningrad territory, and foreign aid remain of vital concern to the LAC. NATO membership can assure Lithuania's independence and security. NATO must pace, not pause, the process of enlargement by extending an invitation to join to those nations able to meet the guidelines established by the 1995 NATO Study on Enlargement and do so on a country to country basis. The next expansion is expected in the year 2002, but realistically we have but one year to make the case for Lithuania's admission to NATO. We are proud of the accomplishments of the Lithuanian Armed Forces and congratulate them on their acknowledged and commendable accomplishments.

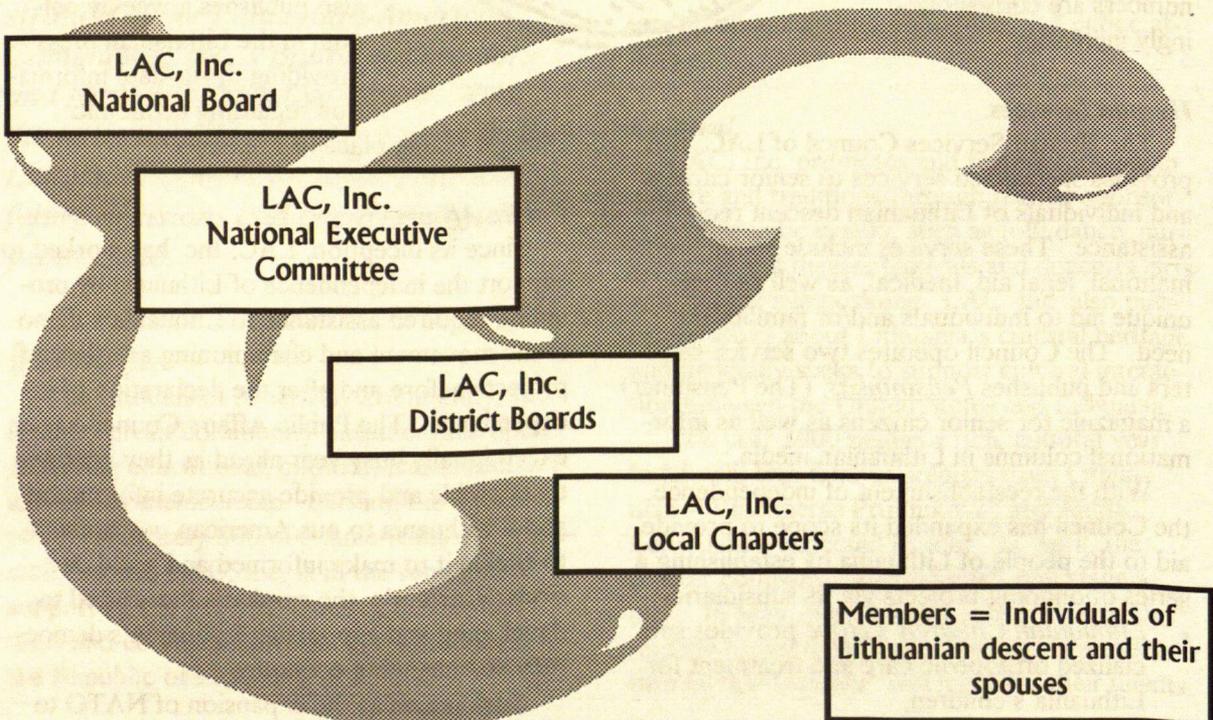
To ensure that public dissemination and guaranteed American governmental awareness exists, LAC, Inc.'s main office is near Washington D.C. This office provides information on Lithuanian affairs to the media, Congress, agencies of the U.S. government, foundations and interested private sector organizations and persons.

Publications

Through LAC, Inc. sponsored publications — the English language magazine *Bridges*; the quarterly journal of art and science *Lituanus*; the Lithuanian language children's magazine *Eglutė*; and the senior citizens' magazine *Pensininkas* — LAC keeps its membership informed of all activities and events relevant to individuals of all walks of life with what is going on both here in the U.S. and Lithuania.

STRUCTURE

The membership of LAC, Inc. includes all individuals of Lithuanian descent. Activities are carried out through 69 local chapters headquartered in 30 states and the District of Columbia, organized into nine geographical districts. The policy-making body, the highest authority, is the LAC, Inc. National Board that is elected every three years by the membership. The LAC, Inc. National Executive Committee, which is elected by the National Board for a three-year term. ♦



Regina Narušis

The LAC Moves Forward

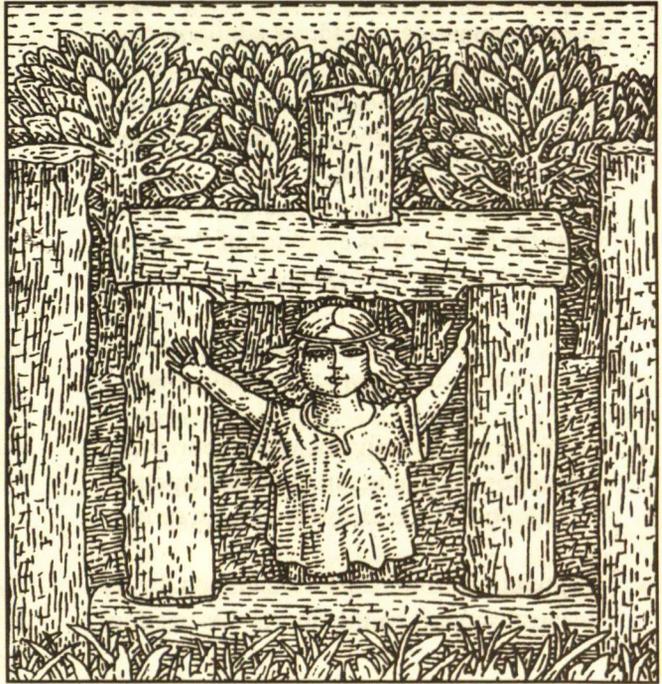
The third annual session of the 15th Board of Directors of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. (LAC) was held to set policies for the Community through the National Executive Board on October 8th through the 10th of 1999 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

At this annual meeting, as is the custom and tradition, the National Executive Board presented in writing and verbally an accounting of its past year's activities and proposed programs for the coming year. The Board broke into eight group sessions (commissions) to consider and recommend future policies in the following areas: Cultural Affairs, Educational Affairs, Public Affairs, Religious Affairs, Human Services, Economic Affairs, Youth Matters, and Finance. Each commission discussed the pertinent problems and proposed resolutions to be submitted to the full Board of Directors for its approval.

The full Board approved the Executive Board's financial accounting and adopted the budget for the year 2000.

The Board approved the following (condensed) resolutions of the Cultural Affairs Commission:

- Urges all Lithuanian-Americans to support and attend the Folk Dance Festival to be held in Canada in July 2000, including the dance groups;
- Urges LAC chapters and areas to com-



memorate the 50th anniversary of the Lithuanian Charter, our accomplishments, the founding of LAC, and to document our history;

- Urges the LAC Cultural Council to prepare and disseminate a list of Lithuanian cultural video tapes;
- Urges the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania and LAC's Joint Commission to call attention to the critical condition of Kaunas's Čiurlionis Museum and the preservation of its art;
- Congratulates the Cultural Council on the re-establishment of the Cultural Awards Day and urges it to continue that tradition;
- Requests the LAC chapters to inform the Cultural Council of the musicians, artists,

REGINA NARUŠIS is the President of the National Executive Committee of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.

actors, dance groups, and choruses in their chapters and areas;

The Human Services' resolutions (condensed) approved by the Board of Directors included the following:

- Suggests that the Human Services Council form a committee to address adoption concerns of Lithuanian children;
- Urges the Human Services Council to continue to assist, within legal bounds, the new arrivals from Lithuania;
- Thanking the Council and Korolius Milkovaitis for his 16 years as editor of Pensininkas (Pensioner) magazine;

The following abbreviated resolutions concerning Sports Affairs were adopted by the Council;

- Thanking sports activists, urges sports activities for the young, and the participation and support of the chapters of such sports events;
- Thanking the Lithuanian Foundation for its financial support to the Sports Association;

Much of the meeting was consumed by organizational matters. The by-laws were amended and the rules were adopted for the election of a new Board of Directors in May of 2000. We urge all to vote through local chapters. As amended at this meeting, the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. consists of those persons of Lithuanian descent living in the United States and their spouses, and those not of Lithuanian descent at the request of the applicant and those who have earned membership due to their acknowledged contribution to the LAC or the Republic of Lithuania.

The Public Affairs Commission considered the adoption of many resolutions. Due to lack of time, not all resolutions submitted were accepted by the Commission nor adopted at the meeting by the full Board of Directors. Among those adopted at the full Board meeting were

the following condensed resolutions:

- The Board supports the necessity of the Genocide of Lithuania Research Committee to verify and prepare accurate data concerning the harm inflicted upon Lithuania and its citizens by the Soviet and Nazi occupations between 1940 and 1990; where necessary to correct inaccurate, defamatory, or slanderous statements; and authorizes the LAC Executive Board to raise revenues to finance the work of this Committee;
- Urges the Public Affairs Council to designate a person in each area to act as a liaison with that area's Congressperson to effectuate our undertakings;
- In order to attract the participation of our younger members, instructs the LAC National Executive Board to:
 - Poll our Community to determine what is being done to maintain continuity and educate our young to take over the work and leadership.
 - Urge our chapters and areas to encourage our younger generation to run for the National Board of Directors.
 - Develop a program to assist our youth to visit Lithuania to learn of its history, genocide, and archeology.
- Urges the Parliament of Lithuania and its government to support the defense strategy law adopted in Jan. of 1999 and continue to finance the defense budget at 1.5% of its GDP now and increase to 2% by year 2001.
- Congratulates the Lithuanian Armed Forces for its great achievements in preparing for its defense and sends our best wishes to LAC's former members, the Commander of the Armed Forces Brigadier General John Kronkaitis, Vice-minister of Defense Colonel R. Kilikauskas, and Inspector General of the Armed Forces Colonel A. V. Garsys.
- Requests that the Public Affairs Council seek the academia to prepare and publish an evaluation of the Soviet 1940-1941 occupation and the Nazi occupation of 1941-1944.
- Supports the Tiurnberg II International Con-

gress in Lithuania, which would condemn communist ideology and its consequences;

- The joint Parliament and LAC Commission is asked to request the preservation of Lithuanian citizenship for all those who have taken on U.S. citizenship – allowing dual citizenship as permitted by U.S. laws;
- Proclaims the year 2000 as the "Year of Christ's Birth" with special attention to our youth.

Due to the shortness of time, the Education Commission's proposed resolutions were presented but were not then adopted. The proposed resolutions included in part the following:

- Requests the Education Council of LAC to prepare a computer program for teaching the Lithuanian language;
- Requests the Council with the Republic of Lithuania's Education Ministry to plan excursions to Lithuania for older students to learn of their homeland firsthand;
- Urges the preparation of a plan for our students to make use of e-mail to communicate with each other here and in Lithuania;
- Urges the preparation of a public and Community service manual for our schools;
- Urges the LAC to declare a "Lithuanian School Teachers' Day", and urges our chapters to honor their teachers;
- Urges to continue the regional and week-long teachers' conferences for our Lithuanian school teachers to afford them a continuing education in new technology and methodology;
- Urges our LAC Education Council to include religious training, encourage attending our parish churches, and make use of the LAC's Religious Council material prepared for that purpose;

As clearly evident, the resolutions are many. They are only excerpts and are not translations in full, nor do they include all the resolutions. To effectuate all or the majority of these resolutions, the LAC will require man-

power and finances. Without both, the programs suggested will remain only a wish list. We encourage you to volunteer your services in an area you are interested and vote in the spring to elect a new National Board of Directors. If you don't belong to a chapter, find one nearest you and participate in meetings and events, especially the "Independence Day" celebrations, commemorations, and fund-raising.

The National Executive Board has worked hard to make the programs that were presented to you meaningful and fruitful. We look forward to seeing you and hearing from you. There are about a million of us in the United States. Let's make an effort to allow those million voices to be heard and those million minds to produce a strong Lithuanian-American Community for the 21st century.

Our national office is located in Reston, Virginia at 11259 Roger Bacon Dr., Suite 17C. Our director is Audronė Pakštys. The telephone number is 703-397-0950, fax is 703-397-0951, e-mail is lacin@erols.com, and our web-site is www.javlb.org or www.lithuanian-american.org. Let us show our solidarity! ♦

LAC Calendars Are Now Available!

Commemorating the year 2000, the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. published a 2000 Year Jubilee Calendar.

The Chairperson of Religious Affairs, Sister Margarita Bareikaitė, edited and coordinated this colorful publication. The calendar contains Lithuania's historical events, photos of Lithuanian-American parishes, LAC programs, and thoughts from Bishop Baltakis.

To acquire a calendar(s), contact the LAC Washington, D.C. office's Mrs. Audronė Pakštys at 703-397-0950 or send a check for \$6.95 (\$5.00 plus 1.95 shipping and handling) to:

11259 Roger Bacon Dr.,
Suite 17C
Reston, VA 22090 ♦

Vytas Maciūnas

A New Board of Directors for the Year 2000

Elections to the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. (LAC, Inc.) Board of Directors and U.S. delegates to World Lithuanian Community Council (WLCC) will be held in LAC, Inc. chapters throughout the United States on May 13th and 14th and May 20th and 21st.

This will be the 16th Board of Directors elected since the creation of the LAC, Inc. The 10th Council of delegates is being formed for the World Lithuanian Community.

Everyone of Lithuanian descent (*see paragraph at the end of the article for details), at least 18 years of age, living in the United States, and who is registered in a LAC, Inc. chapter can vote in the elections in person or by mail for the LAC, Inc. Board of Directors and for the U.S. delegates to the World Lithuanian Council. If your name is not on the list of members maintained by LAC chapters, you can still vote. You can either advise the local chapter election committee in writing that you wish to vote and request ballots in the mail, or show up at the announced polling places on the voting dates announced above to register and vote.

The LAC, Inc. by-laws were recently changed; so that from January 1, 2000, spouses of LAC, Inc. members who are not of Lithuanian descent are also entitled upon their request to register in a LAC, Inc. chapter. They can also receive full rights and privileges granted by LAC membership, including the right to vote in LAC elections and be elected to LAC, Inc. of-

fices. Participation in the World Lithuanian Council is still restricted to persons of Lithuanian descent by the World Lithuanian Council Constitution.

As a practical element, however, a working knowledge of Lithuanian language is an important requirement for being selected to LAC Board of Directors and the World Lithuanian Council, as the Lithuanian language remains the official and necessary unifying language for all deliberations.

Candidates to the LAC, Inc. Board of Directors and U.S. delegates to the World Lithuanian Council must be nominated by at least 10 registered LAC members from the LAC region, which encompasses the LAC chapter. All candidates must be duly nominated by March 30th, 2000.

The LAC Board of Directors serves a three-year term. There is typically one physical meeting each year. The first meeting of the 16th LAC Board of Directors will be held in Hartford, Connecticut during the fall of 2000, at which time the President of the National Executive Committee, who represents the LAC organization, will be elected for a concurrent three year term. Subsequently, the elected President forms a committee of about 15 members, which is subject to approval by the Board of Directors, to implement the goals and objectives of the LAC organization. All members of the Board of Directors are expected to be able to pay their own expenses. However, the ex-

VYTAS MACIŪNAS is the Vice President of Organizational Affairs of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.

penses are generally considered to be tax deductible; since the LAC, Inc. is a non-profit organization.

The delegates to the World Lithuanian Community Council serve a term of three years. There is only one physical council session during the three years; as matters throughout the three years can be handled by mail and ever more electronically. The first and only planned World Lithuanian Community Council session (also known as the Seimas) will take place in Vilnius, Lithuania beginning on August 16th and ending on August 20th. The Seimas will be held in the conference facilities of the Parliament of Lithuania.

The LAC Board of Directors consists of 60 elected representatives and nine LAC Regional

Chairpersons. All 60 representative positions are to be voted on.

There are 32 U.S. delegates to be elected, plus the LAC, Inc. National President and Lithuanian Youth Association National President, for a total of 34 delegates representing Lithuanians living in the United States at the World Lithuanian Community Council.

The LAC elections' rules provide for a very democratic election process. The numbers of representatives elected from each region is actually adjusted based on the proportional distribution of voters throughout the various LAC regions. Hence, an LAC region increases its representative count with increased numbers of people voting in the election. A similar procedure is used to determine the U.S. delegates to

	LAC Board of Directors	U.S. Delegates to WLC
Mid West Region:		
1 st voting region	8	4
2 nd voting region	2	1
3 rd voting region	3	2
4 th voting region	2	1
Michigan Region	6	3
Ohio Region	5	3
Boston Region	5	3
Connecticut Region	4	2
New York Region	4	2
Mid Atlantic Region:		
1 st region	6	3
2 nd region	3	2
Florida and Southeast Region	6	3
Western Region	6	3

Mid West Region – LAC, Inc. Chapters

- 1st region -- Brighton Park, Cicero, Melrose Park, Lemont, Springfield, "Krantas" (newly-arrived Lithuanian-American chapter), Marquette Park
- 2nd region -- East Chicago, Indianapolis, Michiana
- 3rd region -- Waukegan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, East St. Louis
- 4th region -- Colorado, Kansas City, Omaha, Sioux City, Houston, Alaska, San Antonio, Hot Springs

Michigan Region -- LAC, Inc. chapters

Detroit, Grand Rapids, Lansing

Ohio Region -- LAC, Inc. chapters

Buffalo, NY, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, Pittsburgh

Boston and Surrounding Region -- LAC, Inc. chapters

Boston, Brockton, Cape Cod, Kennebunkport, Providence, Worcester

Connecticut Region -- LAC, Inc. chapters

Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, Putnam, Waterbury

New York Region -- LAC, Inc. chapters

Bushwick, Great Neck, Manhattan, Queens, "Versmè" (newly-arrived Lithuanian-American chapter),

Mid-Atlantic Region -- LAC, Inc. chapters

- 1st region -- Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Scranton
- 2nd region -- Elizabeth, Newark, Paterson

Florida and Surrounding Region -- LAC, Inc. chapters

Atlanta, Gulf Coast, Daytona Beach, Palm Beach, St. Petersburg, Sunny Hills

Western Region -- LAC, Inc. chapters

Arizona, San Diego, Los Angeles, Portland,

San Francisco, Santa Monica, Washington State

Each LAC region and the LAC chapters form election committees to run the elections. The National LAC, Inc. Election Committee was affirmed by the current LAC Board of Directors and the National Executive Committee as required in by-laws. The National LAC Election Committee is as follows:

Albinas Karnius -- chairman

Angelė Karnienė -- vice chairwoman and secretary

Loreta Kynienė -- treasurer

Liutaveras Siemaška -- member

Address: 6927 - 14th Ave. North, St. Petersburg, FL 33710-5323.

E-mail: AnKarnius@aol.com

Telephone and fax: 727 - 347 - 3717

*Everyone of Lithuanian descent, and non-Lithuanian spouses, living in the United States are encouraged to get to know the candidates and vote. If you know someone who you think would be a good representative either on the LAC Board of Directors or as a U.S. delegate to the World Lithuanian Council, consider getting a group of people (at least 10) and nominating him/her. If you have a working knowledge of the Lithuanian language, consider running yourself. The candidate consent and nominating petition form are enclosed for your use.

All candidates must be dutifully nominated by submitting the consent and nomination petition form to the LAC Region Election committee at the aforementioned address by March 30th, 2000.

Contact your local LAC chapter and your local LAC chapter election committee for additional information. A listing of all chapters and independent areas follows. Keep this list on hand as the year develops and so do the events and activities! ♦



JAV LIETUVIŲ BENDRUOMENĖ
LITHUANIAN - AMERICAN COMMUNITY, INC.

JAV LIETUVIŲ BENDRUOMENĖS XVI-sios TARYBOS
 KANDIDATO IR SIŪLYMO RAŠTAS

Candidate's consent and nominating petition for election to the 16th Board of Directors of
 the Lithuanian American Community, Inc.

Kandidato vardas ir pavardė / *Candidate's name* Telefonas / *telephone* Telefaksas / *telefax* E-mail

Adresas / *address*

Amžius / *age*

Užsiėmimas / *occupation*

Einamos arba citos pareigos LB / *present and past offices held in LAC, Inc.*

Apylinkė, kurioje registruotas
Chapter of LAC in which registered

Sutinku Kandidatuoti:
I agree to be a candidate

Parašas / *signature*

SIŪLYTOJAI / SPONSORS

Nr.	Vardas ir Pavardė <i>First & Last Name</i>	Adresas <i>Address</i>	Parašas <i>Signature</i>	Apylinkė <i>Chapter</i>
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

Siūlytojų įgaliotinis
Sponsors' representative

Pastaba: Kandidato sutikimo ir siūlymo raštą pristatyti JAV LB Apygardos Rinkimų Komisijai iki 2000 m. kovo mėn 30 dienos.

Note: Candidate's consent and nominating petition must be turned in to the District Election Committee no later than March 30, 2000.

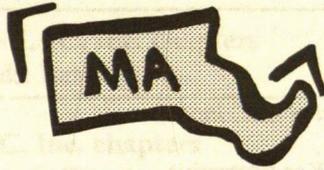
The Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. is comprised of many active groups across the United States. The following lists the contact people who can direct you to the next event — the Independence Day commemorations and celebrations.

BOSTON REGION (APYGARDA)

Gintaras Čepas
57 Edgemere Road
Quincy, MA 02169
(617) 472-4956

Boston Chapter (Apylinkė)

Aidas Kupčinskas
19 Old Farm Road
Walpole, MA 02081



Brockton Chapter

Stasys Eiva
139 Bellevue Ave.
Brockton, MA 02402
(508) 583-6492

Cape Cod Chapter

Alfonsas Petrutis
73 Centerville
W. Hyannisport, MA 02672
(508) 775-3987

Kennebunkport Chapter

Father Rafaelis
P.O. Box 980
Franciscan Monastery
Kennebunkport, ME 04046

Providence Chapter

Aldona Kairys
46 Peckham Ave.
Providence, RI 02908
(401) 831-4270

Worcester Chapter

Romas Jakubauskas
14 Nancy Drive
Auburn, MA 01501
(508) 832-6682

CONNECTICUT REGION

Laima Karosas
9 Sperry Lane
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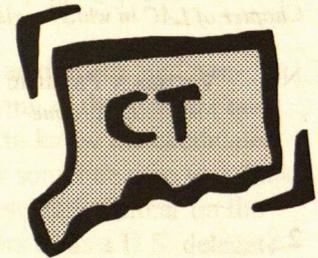
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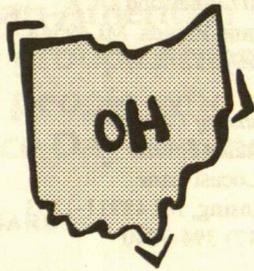
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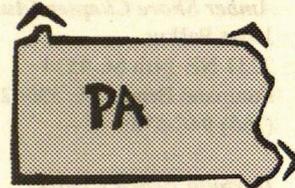
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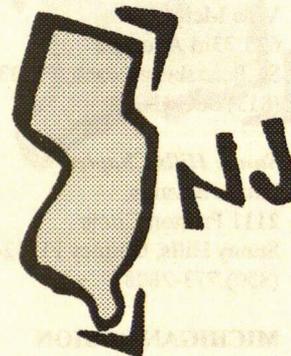
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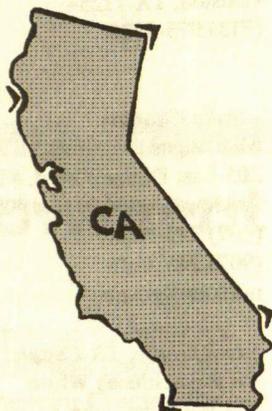
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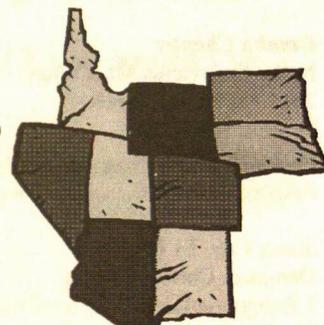
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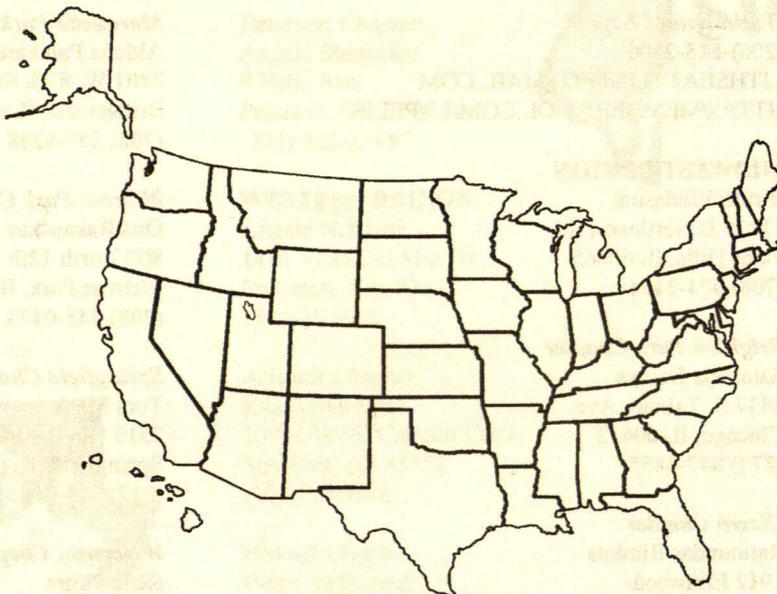
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There are over 800,000
 Lithuanian-Americans in
 the United States!



Ramutis Pliūra

Lithuanian-American Community's Endowment Fund Update

A Lithuanian-American Community Endowment Fund was created at the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. (LAC) Board of Directors annual meeting held on October 11, 1998 in Cleveland, Ohio. This endowment program is a time-honored method of creating a fund which is to last forever and invested to earn income. It is only that earned income that will be used to support the work of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. The principal will always remain invested in order to perpetuate the fund. It is a most effective way to ensure the continued existence of the Community.

Monies allow the Community to offer better programs and services. In the past year since its beginnings, this endowment fund allowed us to help fulfill our mission with the best quality programs and services.

LAC is a non-profit community-based organization. Should you like to become involved in the Endowment Fund with your gracious contribution, contact our national office in Reston, Virginia at 11250 Bacon Drive, Suite 17C or phone (703) 397-0950, and talk to Audronė Pakštys. You may do so outright or deferred. An outright gift should be sent to our LAC, Inc. Treasurer, Ramas Pliūra at 1927 West Boulevard, Racine, Wisconsin, 53403. It is a tax-deductible gift.

Your one gift will turn into a legacy long into the future. You may also pledge to give each year to show your continued support and defer your gift by a bequest in a will to the "Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. En-

dowment Fund". Your gift will assure the future of the Community and its mission, as well as enhance the quality of our opportunities to serve you. Leave a legacy for the future Lithuanian-American generations — your gift.

There are five levels of donation:

- \$5,000 and over -- **The Lithuanian Flag:** our country's honor.
- \$1,000 to \$4,999 -- **Amber:** our country's gold.
- \$500 to \$999 -- **Oak:** our country's strength.
- \$100 to 499 -- **Rūta:** our country's flower.
- \$1 to 99 -- **Sash:** our country's unity.

As of Dec. 31, 1999, the following generous contributors have helped make the Endowment Fund part of all Lithuanian-Americans' future. We thank them very much.

The Lithuanian Flag: Miss Julia Griska

Amber: Bernard and Regina Narušis * Vytautas Janušonis

Oak: Dr. Vytautas Bieliauskas * Rima Binder * Vytautas Vidugiris * Brighton Park Chapter, LAC, Inc.

Rūta: Kazimieras Rimkus, MD * Christopher Pakštys * Rima Binder * Juozas Ardys * Vladas Sinkus * Dr. Rimas Sidrys * Antanas Polikaitis * Great Neck, New York Chapter of the Lithuanian-American Community * Jonas and Laima Karosas * Vytautas Janušonis *

RAMUTIS PLIŪRA is the treasurer of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. and subscriptions manager of BRIDGES.

Antanas Dundzila * Rimantas Bitėnas * Antanas and Viktorija Valavičius * Stasė Balsevičius * Salomėja Daulys * Česlovas Mickūnas * Jurgis & Dalia Anysas * Long Island, NY Chapter, LAC, Inc. * Bronius & Juzė Krokys * Marija Remienė * Šarūnas Užgiris * Irena Veitas * Julija Danta * Ramutė Česnavičius * Laima Šileikis-Hood * Linda Bendoraitis-Taylor * Kazys G. Ambrozaitis, M.D. * Gediminas Blanda * Stephanie Laucius.

Sash: Melrose Park Chapter of the LAC, Inc. * Alexandra Sakas * Vincas Regina * Danutė Krivickas * Justinas Dėdinas * Maksiminas Karaška * Eugenija Liaugaudas * Č. Masaitis * Tadas Bukaveckas * Kristina & Virgus Volertas * Pranas Šimkus * Ramūnas Motekaitis * Lietuvių Piliečių Club, Melrose Park, Il. * Ronald Karpis * Vytautas Gailiūnas * Algirdas & Raminta Marchertas * Karl & Dovilė Cooper * Ona Baltutis * Mėta Linkus * Stasys Kligys * Vitas & Audra Daulys * Stanley & Sofija Vashkys * Teklė Bogušas * Eugenijus & Irena Vilkas * Juozas Žadeikis * Zuzana Stauskas * Vytautas Janulaitis * Stasė Bublienė * Antanas Kvedaras * Danutė Baltutis * Angelė Simaitis * Stanley Rimas * Stasė Kavaliūnas * Ramūnas Bigelis * Bronius Skrabulis * Marija Noreikienė * Stanley Daržinskis * Juozas Žygas * Elena Druskis * Aleksander Vakselis * Vytautas Kasniūnas * Janina Radvenis * Robert Novak * Aleksas Smilga * Julia Smilga * Stasys Ruibis * Vladas Plečkaitis * Vytautas & Danutė Bindokas * Eugenijus Slavinskas * Vytautas Kondrotas * Algis Vydas * Kazys & Elena Majauskas * Kestutis Sidabras * Bronius Paliulis * Juozas Vaineikis * A. Norvilas, Ph.D. * Julius Karasas * Elena Purtulis * Regimantas Vedegys * Petronilla Mesec * George Likander * Martinas Brakas * Victor Chainas * Jonas Velutis * Vladas Ovsiankinas * John Antanavičius. ♦

A Painless Way to Give to Charity

The Lithuanian American Community Inc. has found existing ways of helping us with no cost to you, for example;

1) Discount Long Distance Calling...

The advertisement on the inside back cover of our *BRIDGES* news journal always has a money-saving, charity-oriented, practical way to give without really giving. Your calls save you money and provide a small donation to LAC, Inc. every time you call!

2) MBNA MasterCard...

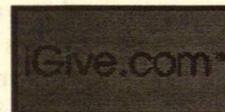
Use your credit card and the MBNA folks will donate to LAC, Inc. with every purchase you make. The card features the Lithuanian Vytis (golden knight) always identifying you as a Lithuanian-American supporter.

For an application for this credit card please send your name and address to the *Bridges* subscription manager at:

Ramas Pliūra
1927 West Blvd
Racine, WI 53403

3) Everyday Shopping Online...

Here's an exciting new way to help us at no cost to you or to us. Become a member of **iGive.com** by going to this URL on your Internet browser: <http://www.igive.com/html/ssi.cfm?cid=8574>. Shop for everyday items from leading online merchants in the "Mall" section at iGive.com and up to 15% of each purchase goes to the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.



Try out these services that the Lithuanian American Community Inc. has established for its members. All of these services provide The Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. with royalties so that the organization can sustain its cultural and educational programs. More information on any of these services can be obtained at the following e-mail address: dutsmuts@powerlynk.com. Or visit our Web Page at www.javlb.org.

What a painless way to donate! ♦

C u r r e n t E v e n t s

News From Our Readers...

A Star is Born!

Dear Bridges:

Enclosed is a recent article of my son, Vitalius, who was featured in the Carroll County Times newspaper being selected as the grand winner in the Maryland State Police "Buckle Up for Safety" poster contest. The contest was open for all fifth graders. The entries totaled 1400. Vitali was awarded a beautiful trophy, a \$50 savings bond and his poster will be placed on a highway billboard in the near future.

I thought you might be interested in running the story since Vitali is of Lithuanian heritage along with his two sisters, Alma and Villa. They were adopted from Children's Homes #1 & #2 in Vilnius, Lithuania.

By the way, when we met Chief of Police Joneckis for the first time at the award ceremony, we found out he is of Lithuanian heritage but he has no knowledge of his family in Lithuania except that they were from a town similar to his last name. Isn't it amazing such a distinguished "Lithuanian/American" public official honored Vitali?

— Michele C. Brand

Enclosed with Mrs. Brand's letter was the newspaper article entitled, "Poster boosts 'safety is only a click away' theme" written by Jeanette Kasnia for the 'Neighborhoods of South Carroll' section of the December 17th, 1999 Carroll County Times. Excerpts from the article follow:

"I'm proud," Vitalius Brand said when asked his reaction to winning the grand prize in the Westminster Police Department's safety belt poster contest.

And proud he should be, since he bested more than 1,400 entries from across the county, winning the right to have his poster made into a safety billboard for all the world to see.

The poster contest, which was restricted to children in the fifth grade, had only three requirements. The poster had to be within specified size parameters. The wording on the front had to say: "safety is



Vitalius with Westminster Police Chief Roger Joneckis.

Photo: Michelle Brand

only a click away -- buckle up!" and the student's name and school had to be on the back..

Vitalius' poster, which is done in markers with glitter enhancement, shows a smiling seat belt about to be clicked into locked position. The required slogan is printed in bold letters. Scattered around and on the belt are three dimensional stars with the words "buckle up" printed on them.

Vitalius specifically chose stars because the mascot of his school, Linton Springs Elementary, is a star. Regardless, the subtle message that comes through when looking at his poster is "you are a star if you buckle up".

According to Mrs. Brand, Vitalius, who goes by the nickname Vitali, set his mind on winning the poster contest from the start. "He never entered anything before. He said "Mom, I'm going to do this, and I'm going to win."

It would be easy to pass such a statement off as typical, pre-teen overconfidence, but in young Brand's case, it's more likely a verbal acknowledgment that he has a future full of possibilities if he just goes after them. For, you see, he and his sister Alma, 10, were both adopted about five years ago from a children's home in Lithuania. It took him two years just to master the English language. Although he enjoys arts and crafts and shows artistic talent, it is only lately that he has gained the confidence to engage his world in new and different ways.

Congratulations, Vitali! Sveikiname, Vitaliau! ♦

Discoveries in the Making

Dear Bridges,

I am enclosing a very interesting article on Dr. Susan M. Dallabrida who is the granddaughter of Marion Saukaitis Wydra, the president of the Knights of Lithuania, Anthracite Council 144, Pennsylvania.

Dr Susan has made very important discoveries and I was just told of an additional discovery.

— Mrs. Bernice Mikatavage

Enclosed with Mrs. Mikatavage's letter was the Mt. Carmel News article entitled, "Wilburton native earns doctorate in biochemistry, molecular biology" dated November 17, 1999. The article follows:

Dr. Susan M. Dallabrida, formerly of Wilburton, graduated from Pennsylvania State University's College of Medicine in Hershey with a doctorate in biochemistry and molecular biology.

While at Penn State, Dallabrida researched the role of the cell adhesion receptor in blood vessel formation. She developed and patented a three-dimensional fibrin-based angiogenesis assay that allows for rapid, inexpensive and quantitative comparison of angiogenesis regulators.

She also discovered and patented a potentially new antiangiogenesis agent, RNA anti-sense to a special integrin and provided evidence of the important role this integrin plays in angiogenesis. In addition, she found a potentially new natural angiogenesis regulator blood coagulation factor XIIIa.

Anti-angiogenesis agents may be useful in the treatment of solid tumor growth and metastasis, proliferative diabetic retinopathy, atherosclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis and other inflammatory disorders, according to Dallabrida.

Dallabrida said the principle behind anti-angiogenesis therapy is that, in a normal adult, very little if any angiogenesis occurs. But angiogenesis is required to supply a tumor with needed oxygen, nutrients and waste removal.

"Targeting these diseased areas with anti-

angiogenesis agents may provide a way to treat several pathologies without encountering the side effects commonly incurred with some of the current anti-cancer agents," Dallabrida explained.

As a graduate student at Penn State, she was awarded a \$25,000, two-year grant from the American Heart Association for her research. She was invited to present her work at the American Society of Hematology International, the Keystone Conference and American Society of Biochemistry and molecular biology meetings on nine different occasions.

Her research was selected as one of the top five finalists in the 1999 American Heart Association National Annual Contest for Outstanding New Research. She also was elected to serve as the senior student representative for Department of Biochemistry Molecular Biology at Hershey College of Medicine.

She received her undergraduate education at Bloomsburg University, where she graduated cum

laude and earned a dual degree with a bachelor of science degree in biology and a bachelor of arts degree in chemistry. While at Bloomsburg University she conducted research with Dr. Emeric Schultz and, together, published their findings on the enzymatic activity and specificity of bark-degrading enzymes.

She has accepted a position as a post-doctoral research fellow with Dr. Judah Folkman in the surgical research department at Harvard Medical School and Children's Hospital in Boston, Mass. She is researching angiopoietins, which are recently-discovered regulators of angiogenesis (blood vessel formation from pre-existing vessels) and their role in vascular remodeling.

Dallabrida is the daughter of Karen and Don Dallabrida of Wilburton and the granddaughter of Joseph and Marion Wydra of Mount Carmel. ♦



Mažeikiu Nafta Steps up its Production

Butingė oil terminal, a Mažeikių Nafta oil concern, accepted imported crude for the second time in its history.

On Jan. 7th, 2000, Butingė unloaded a tanker, the Nordic Torinita, bringing the North Sea crude to Mažeikiai refinery. This was the first tanker in the year 2000 and the ninth one since it began operations last year.

The first Western crude was imported via Butingė oil terminal at the end of November 1999, when Mažeikiai refinery had been forced to halt due to the absence of Russian crude deliveries. A Panama-registered tanker, Stena Compas, brought more than 83,000 tons of Flotta crude from Scotland.

Butingė oil terminal was officially opened last summer. Until now, nine tankers have been loaded with Russian Yukos company crude at the terminal.

After Williams International took over the management of the Mažeikių Nafta concern last autumn, its leaders have been unable to agree with the Russian crude supplies coordinator of the LUKoil concern on crude deliveries to Lithuania. Shortage of crude forced Mažeikių Nafta Co. to halt its production several times last year.

The *Lietuvos Rytas* [daily newspaper] reported on Jan. 17th that an agreement between LUKoil Co. and officials of the Williams International Co. had

been reached in Moscow. LUKoil agreed to sell to Lithuania 100,000 tons of oil

Ivan Paleichik, chairman of LUKoil affiliate LUKoil Baltija Co., refused to speak about the price of crude. The official admitted that Russian oil would cost Mažeikių Nafta Co. much less than crude purchased from oilfields in the North Sea. However, the *Lietuvos Rytas* noted that the amount of "cheaper crude" would not be a big one.

As an aside, during mid January the documents of Williams International and Lithuanian government agreement over privatization of Mažeikių Nafta oil concern was available to the public, the *Lietuvos Aidas* [daily newspaper] reported.

However, the daily said that only insignificant documents would be presented to the public in an unprecedented move. It would not be possible to see the most important and controversial cooperation agreements between Mažeikių Nafta and Klaipėda Nafta and Lietuvos Geležinkeliai. It would also not be possible to see the conclusions of legal experts and Mažeikių Nafta business and financing plans.

Economy Minister Valentinas Milaknis said that it was unusual to give the public an opportunity to glance at commercial agreements. ♦

Seimas Marks Ninth Anniversary of 1991 Soviet Aggression

The Lithuanian parliament (Seimas) hosted a solemn session on Jan. 13th to mark **Freedom Defenders Day**, the ninth anniversary of Soviet military aggression against Lithuanians in Vilnius in 1991 after Lithuania proclaimed independence from the USSR.

The session included family members and relatives of those who were killed for freedom, President Valdas Adamkus, Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius, government officials, deputies of the former Supreme Council of Restoration Seimas (who were also signatories of the Independence Declaration), members of the first government, ex-President Algirdas Brazauskas, court judges, Church representatives, diplomats, and representatives of youth groups.

The Speaker of Parliament, Vytautas Landsbergis, who chaired the solemn session, invited every-

one to pay homage to those killed during the fight for independence.

Bishop Juozas Boruta said a prayer in remembrance of the freedom defenders, urging politicians to recall the past and refer to higher ideals in their actions.

The other speakers were the wife of January 13th victim Apolinaras Juozas Povilaitis; MP Antanas Stasiškis; and Lithuanian Ambassador to Latvia Petras Vaitiekunas.

MP Bronislovas Kuzmickas said he recollected with gratitude the support, which came from foreign countries, in particular Scandinavia, at that time and the political moral support of the mass media.

MPs Sofija Daubaraitė and Saulius Kubiliūnas went to the Medininkai border checkpoint to pay respect to victims of the 1991 offensive against pioneer customs officers. ♦

Lithuania Moves Towards the West

Among seven new European Union (EU) candidates mentioned at the EU summit in Helsinki last December, Lithuania turned out to be on top of the list, an article published in the latest publication of the influential British magazine *The Economist* said.

The magazine stressed that Lithuania has moved away from Russia's orbit more towards the west. The country has resolved a border dispute with its neighbor Latvia and has good relations with Poland. Also, regardless of suffered historical wrongs during the Soviet occupation, Lithuania maintains good neighbor links with Russia.

While Russia is quarrelling with Estonia and Latvia over ethnic issues and the rights of the Russian population in these Baltic States, Lithuania is doing much better. Demography bears its weight here, as ethnic Russians account for only nine percent of Lithuania's 3.7 million population. In Estonia and Latvia, Russians make up one third of the residents.

Lithuania has also won Moscow's favor by its attempts to help Russians in the impoverished Russian enclave of Kaliningrad, situated on the Baltic Sea coast between Lithuania and Poland.

With regard to the neighboring Belarus, Lithuania is trying to be on the safe side and continues to

extend itself to its president, Lukashenko, despite prevailing negative views among the local population towards Pres. Lukashenko. Lithuania needs Belarus as a junction to trade with Russia, and also expects that some time in the future it might become a huge market for its goods. However, the present situation is totally different -- as tobacco, alcohol and drugs keep flowing into the Baltic State from Belarus, as well illegal migrants.

Following the invitation to start EU membership talks, Lithuania became even more active to join NATO. Its small and poorly armed forces took part in peacekeeping missions. Recently, Lithuania and Poland, the latter joined NATO last year, formed a joint battalion LITPOLBAT. The Lithuanian government said it was going to raise military expenditures from 1.5 to 2 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the year 2000.

Although the government is excited over the invitation to start membership negotiations with the Union, a lot of ordinary Lithuanian nationals are not that optimistic over joining the 15-member bloc. Even the most optimistic locals do not expect full EU membership by the year 2007; meanwhile, one of the country's most influential dailies maintains that the date 2015 is much more realistic. ♦

Adamkus wants Child Adoption to be Stepped Up

The Lithuania's President Valdas Adamkus spoke out in favor of simplifying rules for adoption of children left without parental custody, as he met the newly formed working team whose goal was to improve protection of such children.

Adamkus alleged that, according to available figures, the state failed to take care of orphaned children. He underscored that the principal goal of the state was to ensure the rights of these children to grow up in a family.

"Therefore, our task is to ensure that no artificial bureaucratic hurdles impede child adoption," he said.

Adamkus asserted that he was aware of the fact that people distrusted the present child adoption system, and there was data about corruption and power abuse cases. He ordered the working team, formed at his initiative, to evaluate the current legislation and operation of services concerned.

He expressed belief that the group, led by the Director of the Human Rights Center, Toma Birmonienė, would produce recommendations on how to improve law on protection of children's rights, civil code, and family code.

At present, various institutions for child care house around 15,000 children in Lithuania -- of which 40 percent are orphans or children whose parents lost formal parental custody.

Unfortunately, the child adoption rate has been declining recently -- from 421 adoptions in 1997 to 118 during the first half of 1999.

According to formal sources, 357 foreign and 78 Lithuanian families filed applications for child adoption. However, the motivation of some Lithuanian applicants is often based on economic reasons - they apply for custody of a child and not adoption to become eligible for State support. ♦

Source for news from Lithuania - ELTA News Agency

 R e f l e c t i o n s

Rev. Msgr. Jonas Kučinskas-Kučingis

On Creating a Lithuanian-American Community...

*Rev. Msgr. Jonas Kučinskas-Kučingis chronicled not only his life's experiences, but also the creation and growth of the Lithuanian-American Community in Los Angeles, California. His memoirs bring to life what many communities throughout the United States experienced and are still experiencing, as new communities form to embrace and maintain the Lithuanian culture, traditions, and language. The following is an excerpt from the Reverend's book, **Along the Paths of my Life**. (published in Los Angeles in 1997).*

In 1948 new work began in the life of the parish -- the settling of exiles. America, Canada and Australia opened up the ways for the exiles to come to their countries.

On April 14, 1948 Los Angeles archbishop McIntyre published a pastoral letter, in which he urged the faithful to render all possible help, to make out affidavits and give financial assistance to persons displaced by fear of terror. Msgr. T. J. O'Dwyer was appointed by the archbishop to be in charge of the exiles' settlement Los Angeles. Mrs. Bronė Starkienė, Antanas Skirius and I were members of this committee. Since I was not yet an American citizen (I became one in 1952) I could not give such documents. Hence through the church, advertisement[s], at meetings and in the press I asked the old immigrants to help me. Amazingly, within a few months we succeeded in finding

several hundred persons, who took the risk to help them. It was necessary to guarantee a place to live, work and, in case of illness, medical costs. And in [a] short time several hundred exiles, single persons, and families came to Los Angeles. The sponsors felt a national pride. The newcomers themselves were able to find sponsors for their acquaintances and relatives. Los Angeles rapidly became richer in poets, writers, composers, artists, journalists, generals, and, after spending a short time in Boston, our great poet Bernardas Brazdžionis also moved to Los Angeles.

Under the Parish Roof an Exile Camp

Not all sponsors could accommodate the exiles, especially those with families. It was necessary to shelter them under the roof of the parish. All the rooms at the church (the present

REV. MSGR. JONAS KUČINSKAS-KUČINGIS retired from his duties as pastor of St. Casimir Parish of Los Angeles, California in 1984, but will always be the driving force behind the successful Lithuanian-American community.

hall), upstairs, and downstairs, became their first shelters. In addition, it was necessary to look for work right away. Thus in the mornings, after saying the Mass, I got into the car and we went to the factories' area to look for work. It was most difficult to place the first one. But the exiles were diligent and the employers liked them so well, that they often called asking for more of such workers. There were also days, when after trying all day, we returned back home with our "load." Only one of them said to me: "Why did you invite me, if you don't have any work."

Exiles' Moods

Among the exiles were persons of various professions. In spite of that, they were delighted to get any kind of work, just so they could find, so to say, a toehold. I remember, how an attorney Vincas Kazlauskas, when

asked about work he had found, used to answer that he worked at the university, not mentioning that he was sweeping hallways at the university. But that same university sweeper, after working for several years, bought himself a small truck and used it to deliver ready-made food and drinks to construction workers.

I should say, that almost all the newcomers joined parish activities, organizations, and assiduously attended church, even though in those days there were no broad freeways. They traveled by buses, since only a few had automobiles. All that was my greatest reward.

I myself being an exile, like one of them, tried to assure that there should be no friction among the old immigrants and the exiles. Hence I used to organize dinners, introducing the exiles and honoring the sponsors. All of that united us into one large, common family. ♦



According to the Los Angeles Lithuanian-American Community's web page (www.langas.com), St. Casimir's Lithuanian Saturday School of Los Angeles was founded in 1949 by Msgr. Jonas Kučingis, pastor emeritus, and is presently under the gracious guardianship of St. Casimir's Pastor, Msgr. Dr. A. Olšauskas.

This Saturday School has been a meeting point for young Lithuanian families for over four generations. The school will be celebrating its 50th anniversary during the school year 1999 - 2000.

In the photo above, the school's founder Msgr. John Kučingis is being congratulated by the present School Director Marytė Newsom and her daughter Inga, on the occasion of his 90th birthday.

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