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It's School Time!...Lithuania's President Shares His Thoughts...NATO Still in Focus

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

A while ago, I received an e-mail urging me to go to a certain website and shed my hyphenated identity – Lithuanian-American. "Be what you are – an American without the baggage!" I've never felt it was baggage. I'm glad I didn't.

After the recent terrorist attacks on the U.S., being a hyphenated American has aided the government take one step at a time to minimize the cost of a full-fledged war. As much as biculturalism grinds on some people's nerves, it's what helped curb what could have been the tremendous backlash at Muslim-Americans, Arab-Americans, and other Middle-Eastern-Americans. Initially, violence played out in some cities with vandalism, beatings and even a murder. But the insightfulness of educators and journalists helped the American population understand the intricate differences between the Islam religion and the people, one Middle-Eastern country and the other.

Continued efforts on the part of each Middle-Eastern community and Muslims to help the rest of America understand why, who, and what may or may not occur in the United States is the key to continued solidarity against raging, cultist terrorists who should not be identified with any freedom-loving, democracy-striving ethnic group in the U.S.

These terrorists stand by themselves. They are alone. They are not one of us.

We are wiser to listen and understand our fellow hyphenated Americans because they will help to unlock the mysteries behind the terrorists' motivations and intent. The more united we are, the better we will be to find them and bring them to justice.

Flags are waving. We sing, "God Bless America" with whole-hearted emotion. We also understand that it was the hyphenated American that built this country and will also find the solution to this terrible crisis.

Rasa Ardys-Juška
Editor

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On the cover:

The popular Meškiukas Rudnosiukas (Little Brown-Nosed Bear) by Vytė Nemunėlis was instrumental in teaching many Lithuanian child the language's rhythmic beauty. The book was illustrated by V.S. Stančiškaitė. It was printed in 1939, with reprints in 1951, 1966, and 1999.

The gala 50th anniversary celebration in honor of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. will open with an exhibit highlighting the LAC's history in photos and publications at the Lithuanian Youth Center in Chicago, Illinois on October 13th at 5:00 PM.

The festivities will continue with a keynote address delivered by Bronius Nainys, previous president of the LAC and the World Lithuanian Community. The folk dance group "Grandis" and choir "Dainava" will perform after the address.



"We are not secure from evil..."

...President Valdas Adamkus of the Republic of Lithuania in response to terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 in the United States.

Dear fellow countrymen,

We all have been shocked by the horrible tragedy that struck the United States. Terror of unprecedented magnitude has taken thousands of innocent lives. Today the minds and hearts of the entire Lithuanian nation are with the families of the victims, with all the people of America.

September 11th has shocked and changed the world. And we, the people of Lithuania, must comprehend well the depth and the scope of these changes.

In one day our world has become more fragile and more vulnerable as we realize that even the most powerful nation in the world is not secure from evil.

Organized terrorism has erupted as a wiping-out force of evil. It declared war — the war against the freedom of America and democracy in America; the war against our freedom and democracy; the war against Western civilization and its values.

And not only that. On September 11th an unconditional ultimatum has challenged all human civilizations on our planet and their life at peace with each other — the humanity of mankind.

This is a gray war that has no rules of engagement and no front lines. This war is difficult to fight, as it is hard to combat the enemy

who has no regard whatsoever for any human values and the sanctity of human life — either his or somebody else's.

But the world must win a victory in this battle. Terrorism does have flesh and face. The perpetrators and their masters must be brought to justice not because we seek revenge, but because, above all, justice must be established. If we lose this battle for justice, we shall lose our belief in humanity and shall be deprived of confidence in our ability to stand tall.

But I want to underscore that a clear line of division should be drawn between justice and revenge. Those who waged the war against us believe that the world will revenge itself on them, as they believe those terrorist acts to be their revenge on America for its alleged crimes.

Today we must ask ourselves: Do we believe when terrorists and their defenders say that America and NATO have been wrong in their endeavors and now must pay for alleged mistakes? This is an essential question. And the answer to it depends on the strength of our belief in the fundamental values of our everyday lives — freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights and, above all, human life. The answer to this question is essential, as it will determine in what kind of world we want to live and which values we choose to embody. If it is the world of shared human values, hence

the Western world, we must stand up for it and defend it together with America and Europe.

And not only must we defend this world. Our most urgent task today is to strengthen beyond destruction the pillar of the fundamental human values in international politics. It is our common duty to equip those values with ever-greater power and advance them throughout the world if we don't want to live in a world where man is degraded and his life has a price.

We are aware of the people in the world, in Lithuania also, who view America's policies with suspicion. Lithuania knows well the destructive power of totalitarian expansion. We suffered through it. This expansion enslaves small nations and brings war. But the extension of democracy only spreads the genuine values and cannot enslave states and nations.

America is the manifest leader of the enlargement of democracy. The United States is the stabilizing power in the world and brings more security, greater progress, and more openness to the world. Today the European Union stands shoulder to shoulder with America in defense of the democratic values in the shared transatlantic area. I am convinced that they do stand together with all other states, Russia among them.

Today we have to assume more responsibility for our common future. Until now we thought that only America should safeguard our common life. And when America has been calling on us to defend democracy, we too often thought first only about our interests. After September 11th, it has become painfully clear that we should act with America not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina or Kosovo, but also everywhere where human rights and freedoms are threatened.

Therefore our state must stand ready today to defend the entire democratic world together with NATO member countries and act as an ally of America and NATO. We must assess our resources and deter-

mine what share of them we are able to contribute to the cause of defense.

In a fragile modern world, Lithuania is fragile. Our security demands new initiatives. We must learn to effectively combat terrorist acts and organized crime by taking on board all legislative power and administrative measures. Our law enforcement system must operate with utmost effectiveness and responsibility, set high standards for itself, and not tolerate the abuse of duty or dishonesty among its ranks. Today we also must reinforce the national intelligence and counterintelligence forces.

No longer can anonymous threats be tolerated. We must fight more effectively against those who use the Internet and modern technologies for achieving their criminal designs.

But I must stress that fighting does not mean living in the state of war. Lithuania is not a state that should live under the conditions of the state of emergency today. We must be calm, and should not give in to fears and let any doubt about the rightness of the road to freedom that we may have chosen emerge. Furthermore, in the face of the tragic September 11th we must consolidate the national political will and the efforts of our people to strengthen democracy in the country and to achieve with a minimum loss of time our ultimate goal of greater progress and prosperity. Our solidarity and resolve to create a full and meaningful life at home can best guarantee the security of Lithuania.

Today is the day of mourning. Together with Europe and all the people of the world, Lithuania expresses profound sympathy to



America.

But we are convinced that this terrible tragedy has not weakened America. On the contrary, the entire civilized world, as well as us, got stronger. Terrorists did not expect that. And this is a promising sign that the perpetrators will be defeated and that humanity in the world will be defended. ♦



The Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. extends its deepest sympathies to the families of the victims of the September 11th terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the Pennsylvania plane crash.

We also send our heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of John Wenckus, a Lithuanian-American living in Los Angeles, who was a passenger on the American Airlines Boeing 767, which was the first plane to strike the World Trade Center. We mourn with his family.

Still missing in the World Trade Center rubble is Vilnius, Lithuania resident Jelena Melničenko. Survivors include New York Lithuanians Paulius Šilbajoris, Rimantas Šileikis, and Rasa Varankaitė-McKean.

U.S. Secretary of State Powell Urges Baltic States to Develop Anti-Terrorism Programs

WASHINGTON, D.C.-VILNIUS, Sep 25, BNS - U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell asked the three Baltic states to create action programs for the war on international terrorism. Powell made the request in a letter to Lithuanian foreign minister Antanas Valionis.

Petras Zapolskas, director of the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry's Information Department, said the message meant to stress that the recent acts of terror "have not deterred us from the purpose and vision president Bush enunciated in his Warsaw speech: forging a Europe truly whole, free and secure," quoting from Powell's letter.

"We have rededicated ourselves to a vision in which your country and the other Baltic states have a vital role to play. We remain steadfast in our commitment to help you prepare yourselves for full integration in the trans-Atlantic community," Powell wrote.

The U.S. secretary of state also urged the Lithuanian foreign minister "to think of tangible ways to advance the goals of the U.S.-Baltic Charter, through the Northern Europe Initiative and other means. We look forward in particular to your thoughts on ways the Baltic states can build cooperation with Russia, which must also be part of a Europe that is truly whole and free."

Powell said: "We must turn our outrage into action and combine resources to defend against extremists who murder innocent men, women and children. The three Baltic states, under the

U.S.-Baltic Charter and through the Baltic Partnership Commission, can contribute to this effort. As we look forward to the next meeting, I urge you to develop a program of action, including steps you can take individually and in concert to contribute to the worldwide fight against the terrible scourge of terrorism."

Because of the attacks on September 11, the Baltic Partnership Commission had to postpone a meeting, where Valionis and Latvian and Estonian foreign affairs ministers were to have taken part. Valionis was scheduled to meet with Powell in Washington.

The U.S. - Baltic Charter was signed in 1998 by the U.S., Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. It expressed U.S. support for the Baltic states' bid to join NATO. Lithuania has said officially it will support the U.S. and international war on terrorism to the extent it is capable. ◆

Valdas Adamkus, president of the Republic of Lithuania

BRIDGING THE NEW EUROPE



The following is an excerpt from Pres. Valdas Adamkus's address delivered to the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington D.C. on September 10, 2001.

Today, I would like to talk about NATO. And not because we don't have other issues to talk about. On the contrary, Lithuania and America have a lot in common. Some of my European counterparts tell me we are one of the most pro-American countries in Europe. Most of them – I think – mean it as a compliment. Many Lithuanians have family among the million strong Lithuanian-American community here in the United States. And many Lithuanian-Americans have, of course, returned to their homeland to help its reforms and pass on the knowledge and experiences they have gathered while living in this wonderful country. With over \$200 million in investment, the United States is one of largest foreign investors in Lithuania.

But perhaps more important than that is the fact that we share common values: a commitment to democracy, the rule of law, tolerance, and open societies. Based on those values, we have a common vision of Europe, whole and free and in Alliance with the United States – a vision that we embraced and committed to build together in the U.S.-Baltic Charter. At its signing ceremony three years ago, President Clinton said that our common goal was to create the condition under which Lithuania could one day walk through the open door and join NATO. The Charter has helped us do that.

In a truly historical speech in Warsaw last June, President Bush set forth his vision of Europe whole and free. He made it clear that the question of 'when' the Baltic states will join NATO may still be up for debate; the question 'whether' is not. He encouraged all of us to be ambitious. And he made it clear that whether or not we receive an invitation will be largely up to us, and that there would be no trade offs or secret deals between the U.S. and Russia, between NATO enlargement and missile defense.

President Bush's Warsaw speech was remarkable for many reasons. Above all, it shows how far our own thinking has come recently. In 1998, I stood here and, frankly, had to try to convince some of you that Lithuania, in principle, should have the right to join NATO. Today, that goal is no longer questioned. On the contrary, it increasingly appears within reach, and what we are debating is the timing and modalities.

I am therefore excited about our prospects as we approach the next NATO summit in Prague in some fourteen months. As a politician, I know that fourteen months can be an awfully long time. But the shift that has taken place in our thinking makes me believe that the enlargement will happen. Even Russian leadership now acknowledges the right of our nations to choose their own alliances.

I have to confess that I was captivated by

President Bush's notion of NATO embracing all of the new democracies from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Some of you may know that the Lithuanian-Polish commonwealth once had the same idea. Indeed, if you come visit me at the Presidential Palace in Vilnius, you will find in the lobby a painting of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Vytautas standing on the shores of the Black Sea. Of course this was in the 15th century, but sometimes we joke that it was a precursor to the deployment of the Baltic Battalion and, later the Lithuanian-Polish battalion Litpolbat to the Balkans. I am truly happy that the Lithuanian-Polish cooperation now reemerges in new, modern European forms.

The vision of a community of democracies from the Baltic to the Black Seas is also the one that has motivated and brought together initially nine, and now ten, new democracies in the Vilnius Group. These countries came together for the first time in Vilnius in May 2000. The message we wanted to convey was simple. It had three parts. First we share a common vision of a unified Europe that includes all of Central and Eastern Europe. Second, we have all learned from our own histories that we can suffer when we don't stick together. Third, we came together to show that we are all willing to assume the responsibilities and share the burdens of being part of the Euro-Atlantic family.

Since then, Vilnius Nine has become Vilnius Ten, as Croatia joined the initiative last spring. This only reinforced our commitment to work together and support each other to create democracy and stability in our region; to support each other's efforts to integrate into both NATO and the European Union; and to spare no effort to ensure that the process of enlargement continued until we have completed our vision of Europe. In many ways, our joint work is an attempt by us to demonstrate in advance that we can practice the same kind of political solidarity and allied behavior that, we understand, is expected of us once we join these institutions...

... Thus, Euro-Atlantic integration does not create new problems. It opens up new opportunities – for us, for Europe, and for the United States. In a few years, current candidate countries will constitute a region, where the European

Union legislation will prevail, free trade will flourish, and investments will flow. NATO will be an essential part of this picture, as it is a driving force of Europe's transformation and unification.

I am a realist though and do not expect that NATO and EU membership will change our situation overnight. Overcoming the problems of transition will remain a challenge for years to come. But there is no other way to go. Together we have to overcome the social, economic, and psychological divide left by the Cold War.

I hope that the words I have just spoken apply not only to Lithuania, America and the rest of the Euro-Atlantic family, but also to Russia. I do hope – in spite of the fact that the second argument I often hear as to why Lithuania cannot join NATO is Russia.

It is hardly a secret that Lithuania, as well as the other two Baltic states, have had a complicated history with our Russian neighbor. Our countries were illegally annexed and incorporated into the Soviet Union. Only a few weeks ago we commemorated the 60th anniversary of the mass deportations of innocent Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians to labor camps in Siberia and elsewhere. It was the beginning of a strategy to sovietize our countries and destroy our intellectual will and capacity to resist.

That strategy failed. Our nations' desire to be free remained strong. We regained our freedom – but it took 50 years. And we paid a heavy price. That is why we are determined to safeguard our re-established independence through our own integration into NATO and the European Union.

But this does not mean that we want to escape our neighborhood and our geography. More than anyone else, we know that we must live with our Russian neighbor.

In my lifetime I've seen quite a few courageous efforts to make peace with history...

Some have suggested that the historical wounds are too grievous, and the antipathy on both sides runs too deep for Baltic-Russian reconciliation to take place. Some even suggest that it is so hard that it is not even worth trying. I profoundly disagree — both as the President of Lithuania and as a member of the generation that

suffered firsthand from Stalin's actions. Indeed, we have a special responsibility as Lithuanians, and as Europeans, to transcend that past and to build a different future if we are to be true to the vision of a Europe that is truly democratic, secure, and undivided.

Lithuanians do not view our aspirations to join NATO as an anti-Russian act. We want to join the Alliance for the same reasons that current NATO members decided to adapt and refocus the Alliance after the end of the Cold War. We would much prefer to join the Alliance as part of an overall process of Europe coming together and in cooperation, and not in confrontation, with Russia. That is why we all have a common responsibility to work towards expanding relations with Russia, which will facilitate our full integration into the West

As we reflect on how to construct a better future for Baltic-Russian relations, we should take note of the fact that we have a model in front of us that offers great promise for Europe, for Russia – and also for the Baltic states. I am referring to the Polish-Russian relationship and the signs we now see of Warsaw and Moscow turning a new page and building new cooperative relations, now that Warsaw has fully secured its moorings in the West.

In my view, the time has also come for Lithuania to step forward and to expand our vision for the future Baltic-Russian cooperation, as well as concrete steps on how to get there. The greater the progress we make in achieving our goal of integration into the Euro-Atlantic community, the greater the responsibility we have to look East and to develop policies that bridge us with the countries in that region.

Today I would like to suggest some ideas on how we might achieve this. First, I think we should build on what has been achieved at home and in the region during the past decade. We should remain committed to the goal that the borders of Lithuania, as well as the other Baltic states, should be among the most friendly and cooperative in all of Europe. Lithuania and Russia are already off to a good start, especially with regard to Kaliningrad. We have managed to build a constructive dialogue and address the conventional issues in new ways. Together we



Mrs. Alma Adamkus and Lithuania's president Valdas Adamkus.

Photo: JBANC

are engaged in various environmental and cross-border cooperation projects, which were initiated in my 1998 Statement on Confidence Building with Russia and our joint Nida Initiatives adopted in 1999. The overall effect is an improved level of security and mutual confidence in the Baltic Sea region.

We are prepared to build on our successful cooperation with Russia in Kaliningrad and to expand cross-border cooperation with other neighboring regions of Russia and make it a priority. Academic exchange, sharing experience on how to widen business networks and improve public administration, and to develop gradual military contacts are just a few examples to mention. There should be more people-to-people contacts between our countries and regions.

Second, we have a common interest with Russia in regional economic growth and prosperity. There are people on both sides of the border who want to make the free market work and prosper. At times I hear the concern from Russian commentators that once Lithuania is in the EU and

NATO, they could have problems in having access to our ports or using the transit routes. They express the fear that our economic relations might alleviate.

Actually, the opposite is in my view more likely to be the case. The more securely we are anchored in the West, the more open we will be to trade and expand economic cooperation with the East, including with Russia. For centuries Lithuania has been a natural gateway between Europe and Russia. We will be better able to assume that role once we are members of the EU and NATO.

There can hardly be a better example than our cooperation with Russia in the oil sector. Before privatization, the Lithuanian oil company in Mažeikiai was experiencing severe difficulties in terms of both oil supply and investment. In 1999, an American company, Williams International, who launched a broad scale modernization program and struck a deal with Russian *Yukos* [oil company] on long-term oil supplies, bought this company. I believe that in a few years, when the company will be fully upgraded and will increase its capacity, we will all win – Lithuania, America, and of course, Russia.

Third, a Russia that is democratic and at peace with itself and with its neighbors is an essential Lithuanian interest. No one will benefit more than us from the success of Russian democratic reform. We, too, want to see a Russia that feels integrated and not isolated from the West. That is why Lithuania will be among those countries in the European Union and NATO who are politically committed to working to make sure that the doors of the Euro-Atlantic community are open for expanded cooperation with Russia.

There is a lot of debate today about Russia perhaps one day wanting to join NATO, too. This is not an issue or a debate that we should fear. I certainly do not fear it. A Russia that truly wants to participate in the European affairs, and which would adhere to the underlying principles of the Euro-Atlantic community, would be a success – both for them and for us.

Finally, at some point Russia will have to [make peace] with its history, including with our countries. We recognize that the Russian people suffered as much as anyone else under the yoke

of communism. True reconciliation between the Baltic States and Russia can only be based on the truth about history – and an honest reckoning with the past. We do not see this as a precondition for moving forward. But so long as Russia is in denial about that past, and insists on upholding the myth that our countries voluntarily joined the Soviet Union, our peoples will harbor doubts as to whether Moscow has truly and finally accepted the legitimacy of our sovereignty and independence.

Ladies and gentlemen: For us, the enlargement of NATO is not just another technical foreign policy issue. It is a question of determining our place and role in Europe and the Euro-Atlantic community. It is a strategic decision that will affect the lives of many citizens in Central and Eastern Europe. For us, the upcoming Prague summit is a rendezvous with history. It is an opportunity to come home and a chance to regain our place in the Western community of nations whose values and spirit we have always shared. It is a chance for us to strengthen an alliance with the United States and Europe – and to share with you the responsibilities and burdens of European security.

Today, the decision belongs to NATO governments – not least of all the United States. Lithuanians admire Americans for many reasons. Among them is the fact that the United States believes in – and stands up for – principles. Your country did not recognize our illegal annexation by the Soviet Union. You defended the right of all countries in modern-day Europe to choose their own alliances and resisted those siren calls for new arrangements based on old and discredited spheres of influence. You have stood tall for us in the past – and we appreciate it more than I can perhaps express. We look forward to the day when we can stand tall together – as new allies. ◆

From the Joint Baltic American National Committee

NATO Enlargement Support Continues

On Monday, September 10th, Baltic-Americans met with officials from the Administration to encourage the White House to support NATO membership for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. To accentuate this effort, approximately 25,000 petition signatures were submitted to President George W. Bush. Petitions presented to the White House came from all 50 states.

In a statement prepared for the meeting, Leaders of Organizations Representing Americans of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Heritage affirmed President Bush's historic remarks in Poland this past June, in which he committed the U.S. to NATO enlargement at the Prague Summit in 2002.

Pointing out the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the reestablishment of independence of the Baltic countries, the statement by Baltic-American leaders signaled increasing confidence in the Baltic region and gratitude for the continued support of the United States in assisting the countries in the democratization process. Still, security issues remain unresolved. The seven signers of the statement added, "The security and stability of the Baltic region is vital to the peace of Europe and the transatlantic community" and added that this is best provided by admission to NATO.

Members of the Administration participating at the meeting were Daniel Fried, Senior Director for European and Eurasian Affairs at the National Security Council (NSC), Cameron Munter, Director for Central Europe (NSC), Elizabeth Jones, Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs, Department of State, and John Tefft, U.S. Ambassador to Lithuania.

Later that same evening, a reception for the President of Lithuania Valdas Adamkus was held on Capitol Hill. At the event, Senator Richard Durbin, co-chair of the Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus, reaffirmed his support for Baltic membership

in NATO. President Adamkus, in his remarks to nearly 200 guests, gave praise to Ambassador Jón Balvin Hanibalsson of Iceland, who, as Foreign Minister in 1990, led Iceland in becoming the first country to recognize Lithuania's restoration of independence. Latvian Foreign Minister Indulis Berzins, in the U.S. for planned U.S.-Baltic Partnership consultations, was also recognized.

Other speakers at the event included Saulius Kuprys, President of the Lithuanian American Council and current JBANC President, Mati Kõiva of the Estonian American National Council, and Janis Kukainis, President of the American Latvian Association. In addition, Polish Ambassador Przemyslaw Grudzinski commented along with Frank Koszorus of the Hungarian American Coalition, who spoke on behalf of the Central and East European Coalition. S. Algimantas Gečys, President of the Lithuanian American-Community's National Executive Committee, introduced Pres. Adamkus.

JBANC, the Lithuanian American Council and the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. sponsored the reception.

President Adamkus, who was to participate in a webcast with JBANC on September 12th, left Washington, DC that morning for security reasons in the wake of Tuesday's terrorist attacks. Adamkus, accompanied by Latvian Foreign Minister Berzins, departed on a U.S. military transport, on what was reportedly the first flight out of the country following the attacks.

On September 9, JBANC's Board of Directors held its annual meeting in Rockville, Maryland. Besides discussing grassroots strategy leading up to the 2002 NATO Summit, the JBANC Board pledged to fully support the Freedom Consolidation Act of 2001, a bill that will endorse the vision of further enlargement of the NATO Alliance. The bill's supporters in Congress plan to introduce the legislation shortly. ♦

THE JOINT BALTIC AMERICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE, INC. (JBANC) represents the Estonian American National Council, Inc., the American Latvian Association, Inc. and the Lithuanian American Council, Inc.

Juozas Masilionis
Translated by Asta K. Velička

Off to School We Go...

The History of the Lithuanian School in America

Lithuanian Education in North America (*Lietuviškasis Švietimas Šiaurės Amerikoje*) describes the histories of schools of Lithuanian studies in North America – that is, in the United States, Part I, and Canada, Part II. The first part was edited by Juozas Masilionis (who collected 74 school histories), while the second part was edited by Stasė Petersonienė (who collected 28 school histories). The following is an excerpt from the book highlighting the perseverance of Lithuanian-Americans determined to maintain and further their culture by establishing an educational system in North America.

A large-scale establishment of Lithuanian schools outside the homeland – the first of its kind in the history of Lithuania – began in 1945 in Germany and Austria (in areas occupied by the Western Allied armed forces). It was there that many Lithuanians, in the course of World War II (especially in 1944, when the Soviet army advanced a second time into Lithuania), had fled to escape Soviet oppres-



Illustration by Zita Sodeikienė **

sion, experienced once before (1940-1941).

After the war, living in DP (Displaced Persons') camps, under the protection of the UN-NRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration), later under the IRO (International Refugee Organization), the Lithuanians wasted no time. In 1945 to 1949, in occupied Germany and Austria, they established kindergartens, elementary schools, junior high schools, and high schools, successfully providing general education programs of the level that had existed in Lithuania during the period of its political independence (1918-1940).

Here too the Lithuanian school week had six days. The schools' diplomas and transcripts were later accepted, recognized, in the United States and Canada and wherever else Lithuanians, after emigrating from Europe, happened to settle.

JUOZAS MASILIONIS, along with STASĖ PETERSONIENĖ, are the authors of Lithuanian Education in North America (Lietuviškasis Švietimas Šiaurės Amerikoje) (Chicago, IL: Pedagoginis Lituanistikos Institutas, 2000). Each of the editors has worked in schools of Lithuanian studies for over forty years and has served a significant length of time as a school director.

In 1949, with the onset of mass emigration from Europe, a great number of Lithuanians left Germany, Austria, and other countries of refuge to establish permanent residency in the United States and Canada. In the process, virtually all of the Lithuanian schools once operating in Germany and Austria – the entire system of education created there by the Lithuanians — disappeared.

Learning in the U.S. and Canada

But, whether in the United States or in Canada, the Lithuanians arriving after World War II did not come as though to an empty field – to a cultural landscape devoid of Lithuanian features. Instead, they found over a hundred Lithuanian parishes in the United States (Roman Catholic, Protestant and Lutheran), some in Canada, with parish schools, and a multitude of newspapers and associations.

There was also evidence of Lithuanian education: in families, with mothers providing instruction, or hired tutors; in parish schools, where Lithuanian Roman Catholic sisters, for instance, did the teaching, and through a variety of self-improvement courses, in which adults studied the Lithuanian and English languages, prepared for citizenship, and developed their vocational skills. But those forms of education for Lithuanians had flourished during the first three decades of the twentieth century; later, they had gradually declined, and, by 1949, the founders-to-be of the schools of Lithuanian studies happened upon but a memento or two and oral histories.

In 1949, having settled in the United States and Canada, teachers and other Lithuanians concerned about the future of Lithuanian youth began thinking about establishing Lithuanian schools of some kind in their new home countries as well. They quickly realized that it would be impossible for them to privately support such schools as had existed either in independent Lithuania or in the DP camps, where, as refugees, they had had cultural autonomy.

Since Lithuanian children of school age

would have to be enrolled in the accredited local schools of the country (by law), and the children would seek to complete the required general programs of education, there would no need (the planners reasoned) for “Lithuanian schools.” But there could be “schools of Lithuanian studies,” in which the program of instruction would be limited to Lithuanian subjects: Lithuanian language and literature, history and geography of Lithuania, Lithuanian songs and folk dances – subjects, in other words, not taught in the local schools and, from the perspective of the local schools, serving primarily as educational, cultural enrichment or as community activities.

Accepted, finally, was a plan to organize Saturday schools of Lithuanian studies. Because the local schools did not work on Saturdays, Lithuanian young people would be free to attend. Saturdays were not workdays at many local places of employment; therefore, Lithuanian teachers would be available.

Facilities were needed to operate a school. At the time the Saturday schools were being planned, there existed in the United States and Canada many Lithuanian parishes with their own schools. Within the boundaries of the established Lithuanian parishes, the newcomers themselves had settled. Therefore, when the matter of opening Lithuanian studies schools arose, inquiries about facilities were first directed to the pastors and the teaching sisters. Not all the parishes welcomed the new schools with open arms, but accommodation was more common, and no rent was demanded. In some places, a small fee had to be paid – for electricity, heat, and janitorial services.

In some places, no heat was provided on Saturdays; the facilities were in the basement or in the attic or in actual classrooms. In some parishes, the schools were able to complete the full term – the school year; in others, they were asked to leave early. A school, having found itself in the street, would end up leasing public school facilities and paying very high rent.

Later, there were also those monasteries and parishes that included classrooms for schools

of Lithuanian studies in their plans for new buildings. The Youth Center (built by Lithuanian Jesuit Fathers) in Chicago, the Cultural Hearth (built by the Lithuanian Franciscan Fathers) in New York, Divine Providence Cultural Hearth in Detroit, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Cleveland, and St. Casimir's Parish in Los Angeles are examples of religious and cultural centers with such facilities.

Reading, Writing and Culture Studies

Mirroring the local school systems, the elementary schools of Lithuanian studies consisted of eight grades, and the high schools of Lithuanian studies consisted of four years. Numerous elementary schools were established; high schools were established only in the major cities or larger communities of Lithuanians: Chicago, Cicero (Illinois), Lemont (Illinois), Los Angeles, Detroit, Cleveland, Boston, and New York. In some places, added to the elementary schools were one or two years of high school. The designations varied: Saturday schools, eight-year schools, ten-year schools, twelve-year schools. The schools operated mostly on Saturdays, but, in a few places, school was held on Sundays or on other convenient days. Here and there, a school had become integrated effectively within the daily schedule of a local parish elementary school; then, it would designate itself as the Lithuanian studies class of that school (classes in Chicago's Brighton Park and Marquette Park areas, in Cicero, and in Los Angeles).

When enrollment in the Lithuanian studies schools began to decline, a new effort emerged: preparing very young children of Lithuanians for future attendance. Kindergartens were opened in the elementary schools; independent Montessori systems and other kinds of preschools, as well as bilingual classes and classes for beginners in Lithuanian, were organized throughout Lithuanian communities.

In addition to the elementary schools and the high schools, a third type of school evolved: classes beyond the high school, for

young adults and adults aspiring to do cultural work, lead groups, and teach within communities of Lithuanians. In different locations, the schools had different designations: in Chicago – the Lithuanian Institute of Education; in Cicero – the Institute of Lithuanian Studies; in New York – the Teacher Preparatory Courses; in Cleveland – the Advanced Course Lithuanian Studies. They were college-level classes; some lasted a year or two, others continued to operate longer. In Chicago, the Lithuanian Institute of Education (the Institute's main founder was Domas Velička) continues to operate for more than forty years; it is the publisher of this book. Later, at the college level, correspondence sections were developed, as well as classes in Lithuanian language skills for beginners.

In smaller communities of Lithuanians, where typically but one school would exist, the



*Illustration by Zita Sodeikienė ***

teachers, at the beginning, were guided by their individual experience and would determine their own programs of instruction. In larger communities, such as Chicago and its vicinity – where the organizing of Lithuanian studies schools had become the concern of the Lithuanian Teachers' Association, formed already in autumn 1949 (the concern especially of Association president Stasys Rudys) – the schools quickly established communication, as well as working relationships, among themselves; principals or other faculty members would make announcements at association meetings about activities occurring at their particular schools.

Lithuanian Teachers Unite

Within the Association, the Education Council of the Lithuanian-American Community (LAC) developed. The original function of the LAC Education Council was to unify and coordinate schools of Lithuanian studies existing within the Chicago District. But in 1959, when the National Executive Committee (at first called the Central Executive Committee) of LAC had grown stronger, it invited the Education Council of the Chicago District to supervise Lithuanian studies schools throughout the United States. At about the same time, Lithuanian studies schools in Canada were unified under the Education Commission of the Lithuanian Canadian Community.

The LAC Education Council, then, performed the work of system wide school coordination: prepared, published, and distributed student promotion and discipline policies; prepared and revised programs of instruction (curricula); published textbooks and workbooks (for every grade- and year-level), as well as reading materials and a map of Lithuania. If, at the beginning of their operation, the schools had struggled because they did not have enough textbooks or supplementary materials, then at last they had what they needed. Two of the larger schools independently prepared and published the textbooks and work-

books they needed (Chicago High School of Lithuanian Studies, K. Donelaitis Lower and Upper School).

The LAC Educational Council also addressed the matter of teacher improvement and self-improvement – through the teachers' conferences it sponsored and, beginning in 1967, the annual Studies' Week for Teachers, Parents, and Youth in Camp Dainava, Michigan. It had a publication, *Švietimo Gairės (Trends in Education)*, which now continues only as a regular section of the periodical *Pasaulio Lietuvis (The World Lithuanian)*.

The Key — Financial Support

But what was the source of funding for the broad network of Lithuanian studies schools? None other, at first, than the parents themselves, who determined and paid fees for their children's instruction, organized school and community events (fund-raisers), and sought out individual and group benefactors. School benefactors were also sought by teachers, primarily by those in administrative roles: for basic school needs such as furniture, instructional improvements such as audio-visual equipment, and student stipends, student achievement and motivation awards.

Later, support for the schools also came – and came regularly – from the Lithuanian Foundation, Inc. According to estimates made by the LAC Education Council, the average annual cost of all the Lithuanian studies schools has been about \$150,000. At least during the first decade (1949-1959), the teachers received no financial compensation or received very little, compared with rates of pay for regular weekday jobs at local places of employment.

Before the existence of the Education Council, the schools themselves determined the subjects they would teach; later, the Council made the determination. Ordinarily, the elementary schools taught religion (in oral and written Lithuanian), Lithuanian grammar, history and geography of Lithuania (or acquaintance with

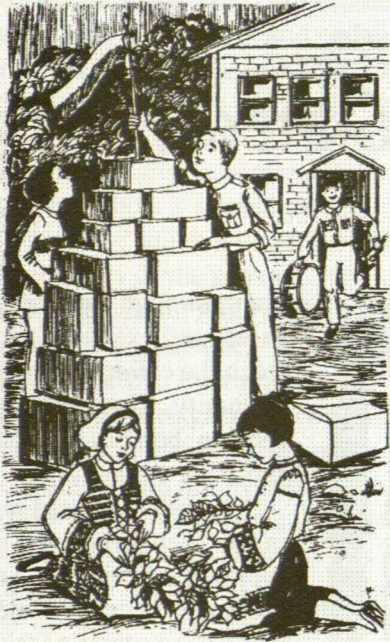


Illustration by Zita Sodeikienė **

the Homeland), singing, and folk dancing. The high schools taught religion, Lithuanian language and literature, oral interpretation of literature, history and geography of Lithuania, acquaintance with the contemporary Lithuanian community, singing, and folk dancing.

The school year would ordinarily start at the beginning of September (in the United States, right after Labor Day) and end at the close of May or, in some locations, at the beginning of June. The school year would consist of 30-32 Saturdays of operation, with six periods of instruction each Saturday, a period being 30-40 minutes long.

Can Results be Measured?

But have all the students attended unwillingly – only because their parents have demanded they attend? It appears that a great majority would come to school without noticeable pressure, showing genuine commitment and idealism.

Have good results been achieved by the schools? Or has enforced attendance served to

develop in students a dislike for things Lithuanian? Rarely. “Not wanting” to attend may have been a matter of style, a fashionable attitude among the young: how could one admit one liked attending an extra school, an unrequired school, a school promising no future living? We see, when we review the latest data collected from schools still in operation, that the principals of most of the schools, as well as other faculty, are alumni of Lithuanian studies schools in North America – individuals who may have attended “unwillingly,” “forced by parents,” “weeping and complaining.” Those kinds of complaints, at least, are what anyone would have become accustomed to hearing, in halls and classrooms, at meetings and social gatherings, in one-to-one conversations.

According to the data, also, the parents now enrolling children are those who, once upon a time, had attended the schools themselves. The data show, therefore, that sooner or later, the values and the significance of the schools, their purpose, had been understood and that efforts are now being made to pass on the same understanding to the next generation. It is a good sign, one that reinforces an old Lithuanian saying: “The roots of learning are bitter, the fruits sweet.”

Without the schools of Lithuanian studies, the lives of Lithuanians in North America would have been less meaningful. Deserving review, and perhaps new research, may be the contribution made by the schools: to the continuity of Lithuanian community organizations, the winning of Lithuania’s political freedom, the advancement of students’ professional lives (through the formal re-evaluation of Lithuanian studies credits, for instance), and the enrichment of local (United States and Canadian), as well as world, culture. ◆

** All illustrations by Zita Sodeikienė were originally used in *Tėviškės Sodyba (Our Homeland's Garden)*, a textbook written by J. Plačas (Chicago: the LAC Educational Council, 1990) for the third grade.

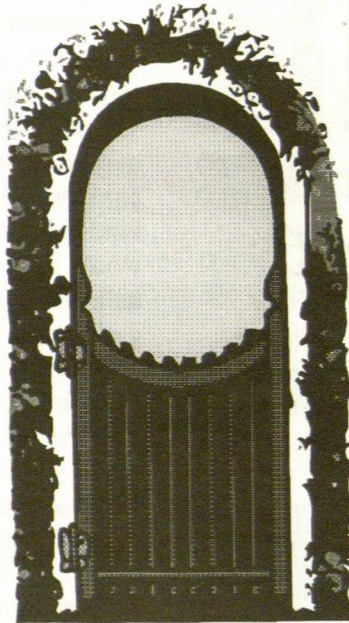
Opening the School Gates Further

For the past ten years, a Chicago newspaper and its partners have sponsored a fundraiser to help needy children living in shelters buy shoes and extra school supplies. The death of a prominent Chicago area sports newscaster prompted his family to seek donations in his name for a sports and recreation center in the inner city that keeps children off the streets, productively busy, and out of trouble.

Such grassroots efforts are not government and can be found in many parts of the world, including Lithuania. The efforts of "A Child's Gate to Learning" have been written up previously in BRIDGES. As the new school year approaches, the group has made some new strides in Lithuania.

The group, founded in Chicago in 1998, works on projects that support several after-school centers that work with street children in Lithuania. The group has established contacts with centers in Vilnius, Marijampolė, and several small towns and villages. Support has included funding school supplies for children from asocial families whose home situations are not conducive to providing stable support and money for school necessities.

Two group members spent much of the 2000-2001 school year working in two Vilnius after-school centers helping children with homework, but more importantly, implementing a character-building program. The pro-



gram, through age-appropriate games and exercises, strived to teach the children values, such as charity, friendship, good citizenship, honesty, responsibility and other values.

The Vilnius-based members, in turn, networked and found support from visiting American groups for specific projects: repair of one center's leaking, drafty windows; lunch delivered to one center on days the children did not receive any; and shelving for toys and books.

The group's members and supporters in Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, and Philadelphia held fundraisers and sent packages of school and sports supplies. Lithuanian Foundation (Lietuvių Fondas) seed money was sought to formalize the character-building program.

What are some of "A Child's Gate to Learning" new projects and endeavors?

- The two members, Rita Venclovas and Aldona Kamantas, who went to Lithuania last year, are returning at the beginning of the new school year. They will help centers purchase school supplies using the lists given to children by their schools.
- The two members will also conduct training seminars on the character-building program. These seminars will be for

RAMUNE KUBILIUS is "A Child's Gate to Learning" group member.

workers at the after-school centers, as well as for social work and pedagogical students whose programs have already extended invitations. (The women finance their own trips.)

- One Chicago area suburban family has offered to host a catered dinner. The proceeds of which will go to replenish the treasury of the group.
- Some enthusiastic folks in the New York area have started a new branch of "A Child's Gate to Learning".
- The Chicago area group is concentrating on seeking donations and collecting school supplies not available at a reasonable cost in Lithuania. They are presently concentrating on book bags or knapsacks.

Working in and providing donations to "A Child's Gate to Learning" is very satisfying. Hearing that a center in an economically depressed area can remain open thanks to group efforts is pleasing. "A Child's Gate to Learning" sometimes can get the ball rolling to seek assistance from other persons and groups, both

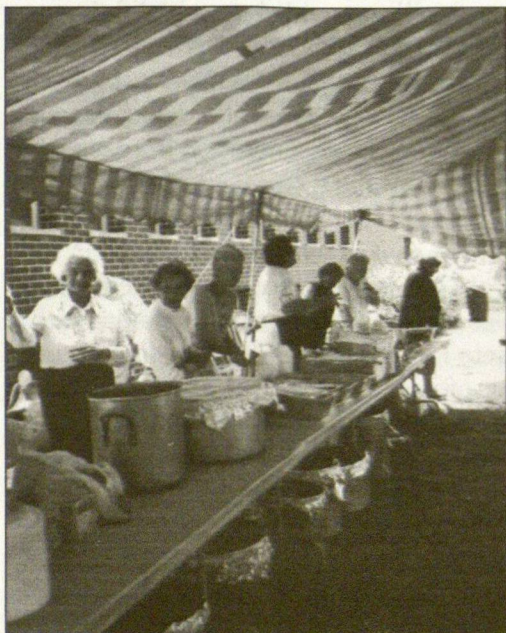
in the U.S. and Lithuania. The funding group sometimes directs donations for one time support of a particular center. Financial contributions are tax deductible.

Some young Lithuanian-American volunteers have contacted "Child's Gate" and have been put in touch with centers in Lithuania to provide center and office help or work with children teaching English, dancing, and crafts. These volunteers' high schools and colleges in the U.S. have even awarded them course and community service credits.

It is said that, "Rome wasn't built in a day". That is the philosophy of "A Child's Gate to Learning". Small efforts, personal contact with centers doing good work in Lithuania, and above all, the optimistic hope that the promise of Lithuania's future lies in its children – motivates this grass roots group to reach even higher goals.

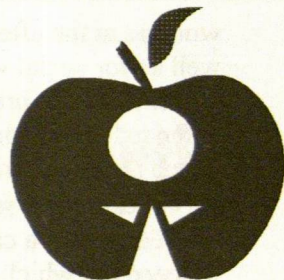
For more information on "A Child's Gate to Learning", contact the current president, Mrs. Birutė Pabedinskas, e-mail: BP@psych.uic.edu. Please send donations to the treasurer: Mrs. Irena Grigaitis, 3990 Gregory Drive, Northbrook, IL 60062. ♦

Scenes from the 2001 "A Child's Gate to Learning" fundraiser picnic held in July 2001.

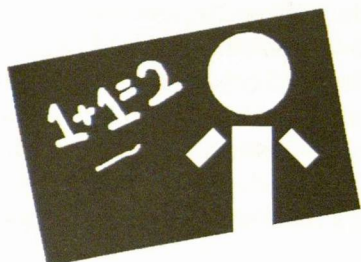


Danutė Masiulienė
Translated by Zita Petkus

Lessons in



Life and Education



in America

I'm grateful to fate and to the good people of Seattle who twice now have provided me with the opportunity of visiting this wonderful city near the Pacific Ocean. I met a number of exceptional people here who put their heart and soul into making my visit meaningful in a way that will be of great benefit to me, my students, and my colleagues.

My school's connection with the Seattle Lithuanian Community and the English Speaking Union (ESU) arose out of a 1994 visit to Seattle by the principal, Vytautas Raišys. Here to visit relatives, Mr. Raišys met many local Lithuanians and also connected with members of the ESU. Shortly thereafter, thanks to Ina Bertulytė Bray, Vytautas Lapatinskas, and Nijolė and Vidmantas Raišys, several shipments of valuable English language books arrived at my school.

My trip to Seattle was organized and underwritten by the ESU. In Lithuania, the noble objectives of the ESU are held in high regard:

to promote the teaching of English, to improve schools, to assist schools materially, financially, and in their teaching methods. Personally, as well as on behalf of my school, I want to thank Ina Bertulytė Bray, Eleanor Monroe, Ann DeLaurenti, and Dee Anderson for their assistance and excellent planning of my trip.

Observing Seattle schools and living with American families provided me with lifetime lessons. In the schools I observed various methodologies in action, from new teaching techniques, to small group work, to the didactic style. I was particularly interested in educational philosophy and the organization of the teaching process. I constantly looked for "seeds" that I could sow in Lithuania and in my school. I observed quite a few differences, both in lessons and in resources, in comparison with where I teach, and we'll be incorporating a number of your great ideas.

I was first taken with the way Americans relate to each other, the attention given to one another, the courtesy and care. I was espe-

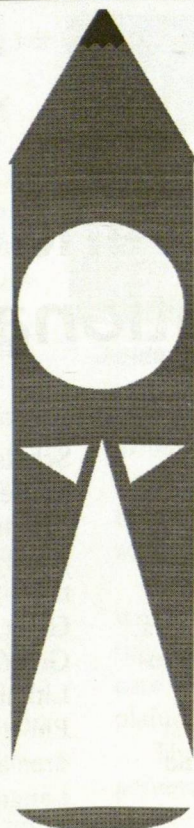
*English teacher DANUTĖ MASIULIENĖ is vice principal at the J. Miltinis Middle School in Panevėžys. This spring, as a repeat guest of the English Speaking Union, she visited Seattle to observe American schools in action. This article first appeared in **Tulpe Times** (August, Vol. 21, No. 3) and was translated by editor ZITA PETKUS.*

cially impressed with the respect accorded the student. We (teachers in Lithuania) are more formal, perhaps even colder, and we tend to discount the student somewhat. Your high schoolers have greater freedom to choose their courses, and they study fewer subjects in the upper classes. We have started to integrate electives, but are short on finances and facilities, so the students are overloaded, and it's questionable whether that yields much benefit. Americans are luckier because they have a wealthier society, and schools are better equipped. Our largest shortage is space and facilities. In Lithuania, though banks and stores are going up, schools are not. Very many schools accommodate up to 1500 students, all of whom have to share perhaps 20 computers and a single copier. We lack textbooks, desks, and chairs.

In contrast with American schools, all our students, from first through 12th grade, study under one roof. Classes are held in two shifts from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Hence, our schools resound with much more activity and noise. Compared to your alternative schools, however, our classes are more restrained and run more peaceful; the teachers are more formal and strict. Your students are less inhibited, freer. Evidently, we use old-fashioned methods, some of which it's time to part with.

Of course in Lithuania, we experience a fair amount of behavior and attendance problems: the burden of dealing with them lies in the hands of the homeroom teacher, something I didn't observe in America. I also think it's a good idea, one we should think about, to have a (security) person on the premises to maintain order, as is done in American schools.

It's great that many American men enter the teaching profession. Our students are truly "tired" of the feminine environment. My



school has 100 teachers, ten of whom are men. Most likely, Lithuanian men prefer easier work that pays better.

I'll never forget my trip to Seattle. Each day was crammed with work and left me with a myriad of impressions. It was very moving for me to meet my fellow Lithuanians, to see your concern for Lithuania, and your desire to help. The "adoption" of my school by the Seattle Lithuanian Community together with support from the Lithuanian National Foundation has been significant.

I was very impressed that my trip was organized, and I was cared for and escorted by mostly Americans. Their attentiveness, goodwill, and generosity of heart are unforgettable! I lived with a Lithuanian family and then with four American families. This afforded me a unique opportunity to practice my English while enjoying the attention and

care of highly educated people. In particular I'm grateful to ESU members Eleanor Monroe, Ann DeLaurenti, Dee Anderson, and Marlene Holbrook, all of who were involved with the organization of my visit. I send my love especially to Ina and Jim Bray for their warmth, help, and in particular, our pleasant time together, and also to Vytautas Lapatinskas for all his many good works for Lithuania.

I saw much, absorbed, and learned a lot. I'm sharing what I learned with my students and fellow teachers. Every day I thank God for the gift of meeting such extraordinary people and the experience of a lifetime. ♦

From the press

Blending...

Lithuanian and American Educational Philosophies

In the July 25th, 2001 issue of the *Far Northeast Times*, a Philadelphia news-weekly, an article appeared about a new Philadelphia charter school. As most states are including charter schools as viable alternatives to private and public schools, this one has a particular interest to the Lithuanian-American community. The Independence Charter School opened its doors for the first time in September 2001 by its principal and chief academic officer – Juratė Krokys, a Lithuanian-American.

According to her biographical sketch on the school's webpage, www.independencecharter.org, she completed a Bachelor's degree in Sociology at the State University College at Brockport (NY), a Master's in Education from Temple University, and currently is a PhD Candidate at the University of Pennsylvania, in Educational Leadership. She has certification in Special Education and in Curriculum and Supervision. In August, she earned a Principal's Certificate.

Juratė has been a teacher for over 20 years in both private and public schools. She has also led workshops for the Philadelphia School District in a variety of areas including Diversity, At-risk Learners, Immigrant Student Issues, Service Learning, and Special Education topics.

She has lectured as an Adjunct Professor at Holy Family College. She was a Fulbright

Scholar to the Republic of Lithuania from September 1992-July 1993, where she lectured at Vilnius University, Vilnius Pedagogical University, and consulted the Ministry of Education. She has been a recipient of a Soros Grant, and USAID Academic Exchange Grants. Juratė has also been a Director of the Lithuanian Language School located in the Philadelphia area. Her husband and three children are bilingual and literate in the Lithuanian Language.

The *Far Northeast Times* article, "Charter school to put theories into practice", written by Times staff writer Julian Walker described the philosophy of the new charter school and how well Juratė's experience and philosophy fits right into its existence. The following is an excerpt from the article.

Juratė Krokys (pronounced U-rah-tá Crow-keys) has dedicated her life to educating children.

The daughter of Lithuanian immigrants believes in the value of instructing students in a bilingual format, encouraging them to achieve at high levels, and exposing kids at a young age to the wealth of culture the world has to offer.

A 20-year teaching veteran who has been at John Hancock Elementary School in Morrell Park for the past 11 years, Krokys has been able to incorporate most of those beliefs into

THE FAR NORTHEAST TIMES is a Philadelphia area newsweekly which printed "Charter school to put theories into practice", written by Times staff writer Julian Walker, in its July 25th, 2001 issue, page 21 continued on page 65.

the variety of positions she has held during her career.

But none ever seemed to combine all of those elements in its curriculum.

So when Krokys, a resident of Bustleton's Pine Valley section, learned of an opportunity with a charter school whose educational philosophy appeared to mirror her own, she was understandably excited.

An Internet mailing she received from the University of Pennsylvania, where Krokys is a doctoral candidate, alerted her to an opening at Independence Charter School.

"I have studied educational leadership and educational reform. So, I was interested in the possibilities of charter school to enact educational reform, specifically in a large school district like Philadelphia," she explained.

"When I saw the position posting in November and read the school's vision and mission, it matched so much with all I believed in, all of the goals and beliefs I have about children being able to learn more earlier."

Krokys was hired as the principal and chief academic officer at Independence.

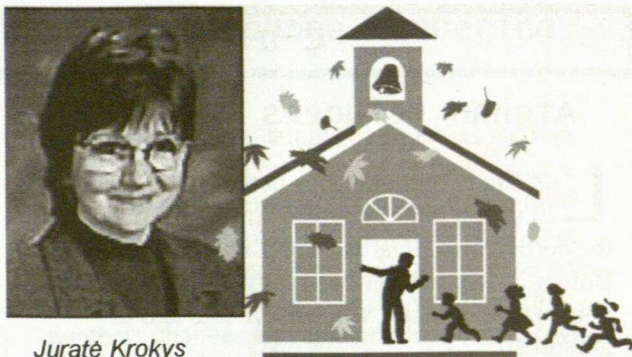
The school, at Seventh and Sansom streets near Independence Mall, is the brainchild of a group of parents who believe in public education but don't particularly approve of the way it is practiced in Philadelphia.

Three years ago, a group of "young professional parents," as Krokys described them, began to hold impromptu meetings at Three Bear Park in Society Hill.

[After several years of going back and forth from those interested in starting Independence Charter School to the school board members, in September 2001]...one year behind schedule, Independence Charter School – which, according to founders, is the only charter in the state founded by a parent group – [finally opened] its doors to 287 students in kindergarten through third grade.

Annual enrollment will increase by 60 students each year until classes up to the sixth-grade level are filled.

Its curriculum, said Krokys, will focus on



Juratė Krokys

bilingual (Spanish) education and world cultures. That focus, she added, fits with the ideals of parents who helped to establish the school.

"We're educating children who live and/or work in the area. One of the most important things to these people is that they have a sincere interest in multiculturalism," Krokys explained.

Though all students will be taught Spanish, parents who so choose may enroll children in "Spanish immersion" classes. In other words, all students in that program will receive their instruction in Spanish beginning in kindergarten.

The school's location, in the heart of the Independence Mall area, also will factor significantly in the education process. Its wealth of area attractions provides teachers educational tools "within walking distance," Krokys noted.

"The trends in this country and around the world show us that the best time to learn a language is when children are young. That's how you build fluency," Eric L. Cramer, vice-president of the charter school board explained. "But none of us want a school [to teach world culture to the exclusion of a core-challenging curriculum]."

Apparently the school has attracted some believers in high places. City Councilman Jim Kenney (D-at large), for example, is an Independence board member.

Kenney said the school's goal mirrors some of his initiatives to restore the city to prominence. ♦

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

Afghan refugees caught near Lithuanian/Belarus border

Lithuanian border troops detained a group of 20 illegal migrants from Afghanistan along the border with Belarus. The Lithuanian State Border Protection Service reported that all those detained were males with an average age of around 20.

Lithuanian State Border Protection officers from the Lazdijai and Akmeniai border police stations received information about the group of illegals and detained them about seven kilometers from the Belarusian border.

They were caught at an otherwise uninhabited homestead and weren't carrying any identification documents.

Border police said the illegal migrants had earlier crossed the Nemunas River in a small boat and set up camp at the homestead, spending about 24 hours there.

The Afghans said they left their homeland about four months ago. First they went to Pakistan, later on to Iran and Azerbaijan to reach Russia. From Moscow, they traveled on to Minsk, where they met and formed into a group.

The Afghans didn't try to conceal that they were headed for Germany and Britain. They said they each paid USD 3,000 to runners to get them to their destinations.

The detainees will be housed at the Foreigners Registration Center in Pabradė in eastern Lithuania.

This is the second larger group of Afghans to be stopped by Lithuanian border patrols this year. Two weeks ago border officials at the Lazdijai Lithuania border police station caught 21 people from Afghanistan, the largest group this year. They were taken into custody at the village of Kalniai in Lithuania's Kalvarija district just 2.5 kilometers from the border with Poland.

According to unofficial figures, there are some 130,000 Afghans waiting in Moscow for the chance to make it to developed Western European countries. Lithuanian border officials said that makes Lithuania a likely route for human traffickers serving that demand.

A total of 99 illegal migrants have been caught in Lithuania this year. Most of them, 53, are citizens of Afghanistan. Another ten people from Sri Lanka, ten from Pakistan and nine Indians have been arrested. Illegal migrants from Russia, Georgia, Somalia, Viet Nam, Iraq, Tanzania, and Sudan have also appeared this year.

Lithuanian officials also arrested two Chechens heading for Poland earlier this month. ♦

Fewer water pollution cases noted this year

The number of cases of water pollution by oil products has decreased in Lithuania this year; however, the accident in Butingė Oil Terminal in March was the largest ecological accident in the last few years, environment protection officials say.

In the water area of Lithuania's western Klaipėda port and in the Baltic Sea at the Butingė terminal, as well as in other Lithuanian economic and territorial waters, 34 cases of pollution were registered this year, head of the Sea Environment Protection Agency, Raimondas Šat-

kauskas told BNS.

During the nine months of last year, 62 pollution cases were registered; while during the whole year 2000, a total of 76 cases were recorded.

The oil spillage in Butingė was considered the most serious environmental accident in the existence of the Sea Environment Protection Agency. The oil spillage, estimated at about three tons of oil, occurred in early March during pumping operations into the Norwegian North Pacific tanker,



Big changes ahead in Lithuanian telephone numbering

On September 1, Lithuania began implementing a national telephone connection numbering plan, which will eventually change the telephone numbers of all mobile and fixed-line telephones and the international dialing codes needed to reach Lithuania from foreign countries, and foreign countries from inside Lithuania.

In Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital, the current six-digit telephone numbers will become seven digits long; while all emergency service numbers will be combined into one three digit number, 112.

Head of the Lithuanian Communications Regulatory Service Tomas Barakauskas told the press that the current system of assigning telephone numbers is exhausted, and that this is preventing new consumers from entering the Lithuanian telecommunications market as well as hurting business for current consumers.

"Once the national telephone connection numbering plan is [fully -BNS] implemented, the space for telephone numbering will expand, and telephone numbers will be distributed. The new plan will increase the combination of numbers by a factor of ten, from 10 million to 100 million," Barakauskas explained to reporters.

He said they plan to change all fixed-line numbers over by December 31, 2002, and all mobile, or cellular telephone numbers by March

1, 2003.

Under the plan, telephone numbers starting with 3, 4 or 5 will be assigned to fixed-line service, 6 to mobile telephony, 8 to toll-free or reduced tariff lines and 9 to increased tariff lines.

Telephone subscribers in Vilnius whose numbers now begin with the digit 2 will have their numbers changed by replacing that initial 2 with 21. All other Vilnius telephone numbers - beginning with 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7 - will have the digit 2 inserted after their initial digit.

New numbers dialed from abroad will be a digit longer, comprised of the country code 370 plus an eight-digit domestic number.

Beginning January 1, 2003, the number for calling out of Lithuania will also change - from the current 8, pause for dial tone, then 10 - to a shorter combination, 00.

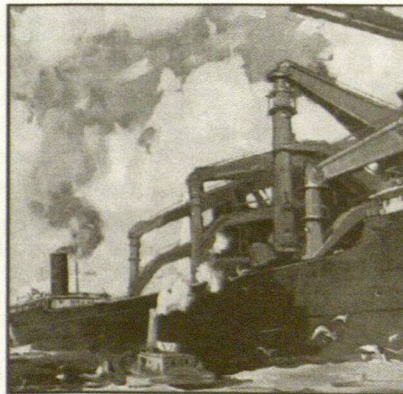
Rescue and emergency service numbers 01 for fire, 02 for police, 03 for paramedics, and 04 for natural gas leaks will be combined into a single number, 112. After the service numbers change over to the single dispatch number, the current inter-city access code, 8, will change to 0.

New codes will also be assigned to all mobile telephony firms operating in Lithuania, whose current dialing system is scheduled to change beginning on March 1, 2002. ♦

when a hose connecting the vessel to the Butinge terminal's buoy snapped.

Strong winds drove the oil slick to the north, and a part of the oil slick entered territorial waters of Latvia just several kilometers from the Lithuanian oil terminal.

Some of the spilled oil was collected, while the remaining was neutralized with Simple Green solution, which dissolves oil in the water.



The environment protection officials say the decrease of pollution falling into the water area of the ports of Klaipėda and the Dane River is linked to the slowdown of activity of companies operating in the port and the fact that fewer ships are coming to the Klaipėda port that often spilled fuel oil. ♦

Lithuania enthusiastic about Norwegian natural gas supply



In a farewell meeting with Norwegian ambassador to Lithuania John Atle Gaarder Tuesday, Lithuanian Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas expressed interest in Norway's supply of natural gas to Lithuania, among other things.

After the farewell meeting at the Lithuanian government building in Vilnius, Gaarder told BNS that they discussed in general Lithuania's interest in a planned Norwegian-Polish natural gas supply pipeline along the Baltic Sea bed.

In early September, Norway and Poland signed an agreement worth USD 11 billion for Norway to supply Poland annually with 74 billion cubic meters of natural gas over 16 years. The term in the deal is from 2008 to 2024, but before that, some 1,100 kilometers of pipeline have to be laid across the Baltic Sea.

When Brazauskas made an official visit to Poland in early September, he discussed with his Polish counterpart Jerzy Buzek the possibility of connecting of Lithuanian and Polish natural gas pipelines.

Lithuania's prime minister said he would bring up the project with the prime ministers of Estonia and Latvia, in order for natural gas companies in the other two Baltic states to participate.

Suppliers and government officials in Latvia, Denmark, Estonia, and other countries around the Baltic Sea have been planning the same thing for several years now, under the auspices of the Baltic Energy Ring project.

Besides a possible Lithuanian participation in the Polish-Norwegian natural gas project, Brazauskas and Gaarder also spoke about Norwegian support for Lithuania's bid to join NATO, as well as the European Union, the government reported. ♦

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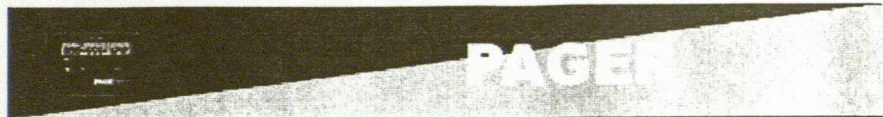
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