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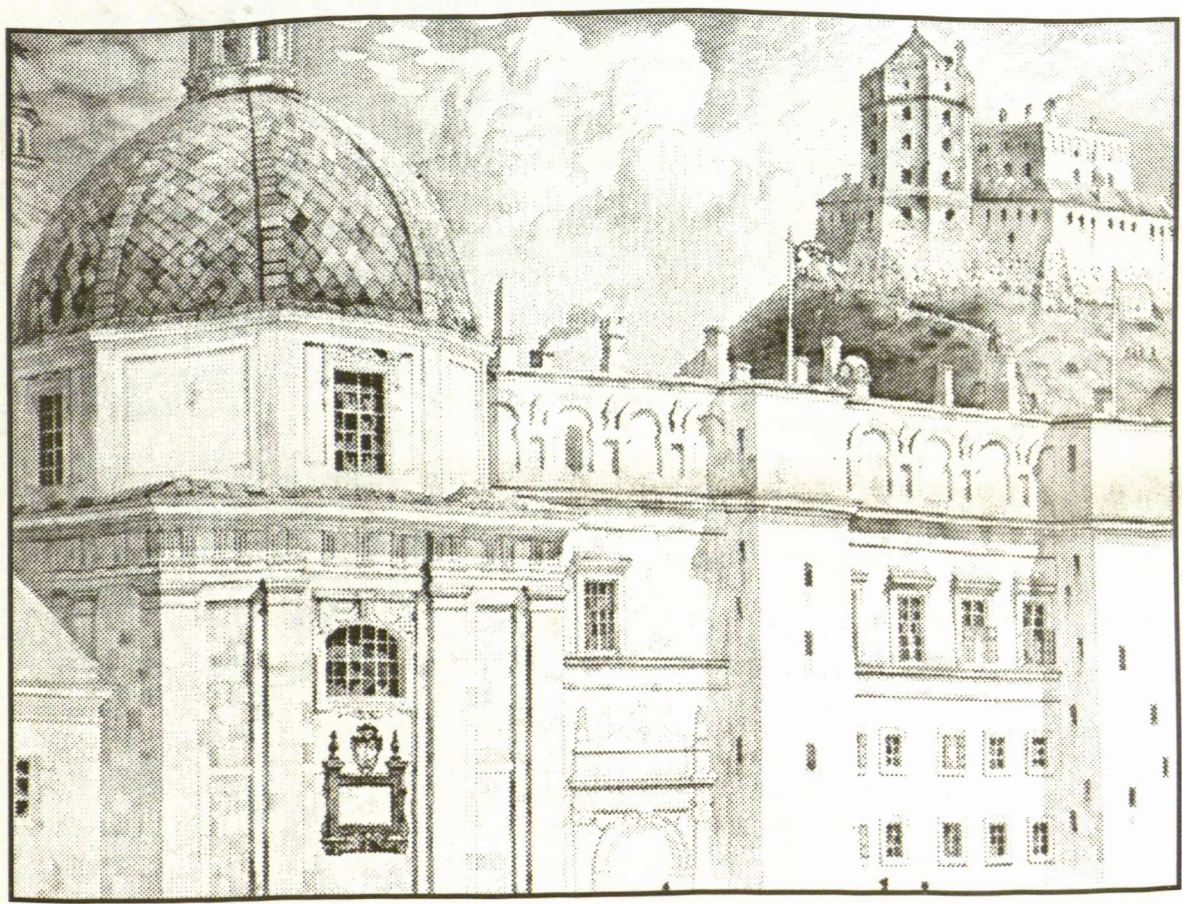
BRIDGES

• LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL •

Volume 26

Issue 4, May 2002

Our 25th Year!



Lithuania's Castles to be restored...Freedom Consolidation Act passed...NATO update...

P E R S P E C T I V E S

Florida can be easily reached with an airplane. My husband decided to experiment by driving...from New Jersey. To say the least, it was an adventure in perseverance.

We had never tried driving that whole distance in one gulp, but we decided to try it. We figured that it would be a great bonding experience. I mean with our kids, not the car seats. Although, even now, when I get into the car I get flashbacks of palm trees as my body instantly molds to the seat.

About sixteen hours after we started on our trip, we rolled into Jacksonville. Our eyes were very slow to blink and all I could say to the hotel clerk was, "Bed...now."

We saw the oldest city in the U.S. — St. Augustine, Cape Canaveral, alligators roaming the streams, and cows meandering beside the roads.

Our favorite time was visiting friends. We had not seen these friends of ours for about ten years — when they had three children. During our long-awaited visit, they had become five children strong. What was so unique was the fact that they not only kept Lithuanian traditions and the language going in the tropical climate, but they home-school their children. In addition, they run their own business from their home, and each child has opportunities to create and meet challenges.

The oldest daughter put together a Catholic teen girls' magazine. Her questionnaire stumped — not totally, mind you — most of us. The kids' enthusiasm coupled with their parents' support and love shone throughout our visit.

Florida has a big population of Lithuanian-Americans. They live in Daytona Beach, St. Petersburg, Palm Beach, Sunny Hills, Miami, and other assorted areas. In some cities, Lithuanian language schools invite children of many ages. In other areas, the professional retirees continue their Lithuanian-oriented events under the warm sun.

They are all so friendly, as we found out while driving from Cape Canaveral to Fort Myers. A car with an "LT" sticker zoomed by and we all waved to each other — one Lithuanian to another. It was a couple months later, that my husband realized that the green lettered "LT" sticker really meant "Lake Tahoe". So, we goofed! But, we were friendly.

But for the fact that we were inseparable from the car, our visit to Florida was extremely enjoyable. And to be repeated — only the next time with an airplane.

Rasa Ardys-Juška

Editor

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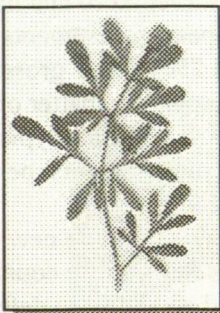
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The Mysterious Rue...

The rue's leaves and blossoms are especially prized before June weddings! In Lithuania, the bride gives her groom a sprig of rue, which matches her wreath of wild flowers and rue. Her wreath is given later to her maid of honor.

The rue represents chastity and youth. When the bride gives her groom the sprig, she symbolically gives her youth and freedom over to him.

Before the wedding, the bridesmaids would braid the bride's hair, intertwining sprigs of rue into it. A wreath of rue was placed on her head.

These Lithuanian traditions and many more are still incorporated into present day traditions, although not to the extent as in the past. With a little creativity, rue can always be a lovely traditional addition to a wedding.

On the cover:
J. Kamarauskas rendering of the Vilnius palaces, 1894.

Regina F. Narušis, J.D.

NATO in the 21st Century

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization Summit is scheduled for November 21-22 in Prague. The Summit is expected to deal with four major issues: new threats, closing the gap between the military capabilities of the United States and the Europeans, expansion of NATO membership, and improving cooperation with Russia.

The new threats that we are facing today are weapons of mass destruction, militant nationalism, the proliferation of ballistic missile technology, and of course, terrorism. General Wesley Clark, USA (Ret.) sees five combat tasks as necessary to meet the current needs: eliminate the enemy air defense and air defense networks, destroy enemy command centers, defeat their land forces, successfully conclude the fight in urban areas, and conduct the post-conflict operations.

Not all NATO members have the same capabilities. Some member countries have small armed forces, but they can offer bases, facilities, and access rights. Some can offer medical assistance, transport others intelligence. All of these capabilities need to be assessed, coordinated, and efficiently used. In this new age, the old methods of the Cold War are no longer

effective. The enemy is different. NATO is the most capable institution to coordinate these operational tasks for the common defense of the Alliance.

We have learned in Afghanistan that there exists a large capabilities gap between the United States and its European and Canadian allies. That gap needs to be closed. Our allies must enhance their precision-guided munitions, build up their transport abilities to move troops quickly, and improve their communications, as well as surveillance and intelligence.

European governments have been reluctant to spend 2% of their gross national product for defense, and as a matter of fact few do. Their weapons systems are typically outdated. Their defense spending must be increased to meet today's threats.

NATO will invite new members to the alliance this fall. Those countries that have demonstrated an ability to defend the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law will be invited. No invitee countries have as yet been named. The general consensus is that the enlargement will be robust. It is believed that all three Baltic countries will receive an invitation, as well as Slovenia, and depending on the outcome of the election this fall

REGINA NARUŠIS is the chairperson of the Lithuanian-American Community Inc.'s Board of Directors.

in Slovakia, perhaps Slovakia. Consideration is now also being given to extend the invitation to Rumania and Bulgaria, if they can meet admission standards in time for the Summit.

A final meeting of the candidates for NATO membership, commonly known as the Vilnius 10, will take place in Riga, Latvia on July 5th and 6th, which will be attended by government leaders, policy makers, security experts, and journalists from throughout Europe and North America. It is expected that the NATO candidates will highlight their achievements, issues, and expectations for the next round of enlargement. They want the world see their success stories up close.

The NATO Summit is expected to address its new relationships, particularly that with Russia. A new NATO Russian Council will be launched. This Council will focus on practical, well-defined common issues, goals, and purposes that NATO and Russia share. This will

allow Russia to participate and cooperate in such areas such as counter-terrorism, nonproliferation, and civil emergency preparedness.

The United States administration maintains that Russia will not have a veto power or infringe on NATO's prerogatives, nor will it be considered a NATO member. President Putin himself is a complex personality. Will his words match his deeds?

Within Russia there is dissent over Putin's foreign policy. He is criticized in Russia for "losing Central Asia and the Caucasus by succumbing to U.S. imperialism". Openly published letters from retired Russian generals and a former defense minister accuse Putin of betraying the nation's security and other vital interests.

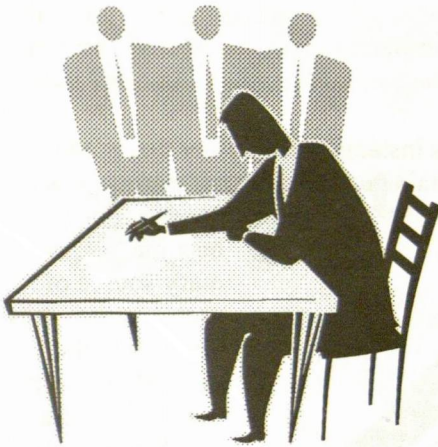
Russia's instability is another major concern. Russia's nuclear devices, materials, and knowledge might become the primary source of proliferation. It is hoped that this new relationship between Russia and NATO will encourage further democracy, military reform, and market economy in Russia. Only time will tell.

It is also now recognized that Russia is not the only country that needs a relationship with NATO. There is Ukraine, Georgia, and other former Soviet Republics that should have like treatment.

NATO represents close to 700

million people and one-half of the world's gross domestic product. With NATO, the world can be secure and forward moving. New members will only add to that base and make NATO stronger and more effective. ♦





Freedom Consolidation Act Passed

The Freedom Consolidation Act (HR3167/S.1572) passed on May 17th with an 85-6 vote result.

Passage of the Freedom Consolidation Act is vital to all Americans of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian heritage. The Act endorses the enlargement of NATO in 2002 to include all three Baltic countries in addition to other qualified European democracies that have applied. Financial support to assist them in preparing for NATO membership is also authorized. For example, the following illustrates what the Act's specific assistance will be designated.

"Authorization of foreign military financing of the amounts made available for fiscal year 2002 under section 23 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2763)...

- (1) \$6,500,000 is authorized to be available on a grant basis for Estonia;
- (2) \$7,000,000 is authorized to be available on a grant basis for Latvia;
- (3) \$7,500,000 is authorized to be available on a grant basis for Lithuania;
- (4) \$8,500,000 is authorized to be available on a grant basis for Slovakia;

(5) \$4,500,000 is authorized to be available on a grant basis for Slovenia;

(6) \$10,000,000 is authorized to be available on a grant basis for Bulgaria; and

(7) \$11,500,000 is authorized to be available on a grant basis for Romania."

(<http://www.expandnato.org/senact2001.html>)

Senators voting against The Freedom Consolidation Act were:

Larry Craig (R-ID)
 James Inhofe (R-OK)
 Pat Roberts (R-KS)
 Robert Smith (R-NH)
 Ted Stevens (R-AK)
 John Warner (R-VA)

According to journalist Andris Straumanis in his article, "Bill's passage seen as first test of NATO vote" (www.latviansonline.com), "In the Senate, the most vocal opposition came from Sen. John Warner (R-Va.), who questioned the language of the act, although he said he's not opposed to NATO enlargement per se. During floor debate May 16, he objected to what he saw as the "open door" policy suggested in the bill and expressed concern that enlargement might drain resources from the

RASA ARDYS-JUŠKA is the editor of BRIDGES. The article used information from the Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC), <http://www.expandnato.org/senact2001.html>, Andris Straumanis on www.latviansonline.com.

American military.”

Straumanis went on to say, “The bill saw strong support from a number of senators, including Sen. Joseph Biden Jr. (D-Del.). During the Senate debate, he addressed a number of concerns, including that Russia might balk at a burgeoning NATO. Biden suggested that Russia, and particularly President Putin, has not had as close a relationship to the United States since the time of the czars. That relationship was strengthened in the days before the Senate vote when Russia and NATO agreed during a meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, to work closer on joint security issues. In addition, the United States and Russia announced a plan to reduce nuclear arsenals.”

In addition to Sen. Biden’s Support, “Sen. Richard Durbin (D-Ill.), whose mother was born in Lithuania, reminded his fellow senators of the recent history of the Baltic states. “If we refuse to enlarge NATO further,” he said, “we would have told these countries that despite their epic and inspiring struggle to liberate themselves from communism, the West had once again turned its back on them,” Straumanis went on to say.

Text of the debate from May 16-17 is available on JBANC's website <http://jbanc.org> and also <http://expandnato.org>.

Also of interest to Baltic lobbyists is HCR116, a resolution calling for the integration of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into NATO. According to Straumanis, “Next on the agenda for BAFL [Baltic American Freedom League], [Valdis] Pavlovskis, [president of the Los Angeles-based BAFL] said, is to push for adoption of HCR 116, a resolution before the House of Representatives that recommends integration of the Baltic states into NATO. Sponsored by Rep. John Shimkus (R-Ill.), a leader of the House Baltic Caucus, the resolution was introduced April 26, 2001. It argues that the “extension of full NATO membership to these Baltic countries would contribute to stability, freedom, and peace in the Baltic region and Europe as a whole.”

Baltic Americans as well as those interested in the Baltic integration into NATO are urged to continue to contact their Senators and Representatives to support HCR 116. ♦

How you can continue to help...

Previously, we informed you of the pending, now successfully passed, Senate vote on the Freedom Consolidation Act (S. 1572). Some of you were requested to provide extra assistance in approaching Senators who were considered to be uncertain in their support of S. 1572. We thank you for your support and actions to make this passage possible.

Many of the undecided Senators represented states where there are few American Lithuanians and no LAC chapters. We would like to compile a listing of Lithuanian-Americans or those interested in helping the NATO enlargement cause for Lithuania living in such states with the intention of contacting

them and requesting them to make known to their Senators the views of the Lithuanian American Community regarding NATO enlargement. Accordingly, we would like to hear from you regarding any names and addresses of potential activists in the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Louisiana, Montana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, West Virginia.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

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The Baltic News Service

The Lithuanian ambassador welcomes the new NATO-Russia relations

Lithuanian ambassador to U.S. Vygaudas Ušackas welcomed the signing of the NATO-Russia Council accord May 28 in Rome, stressing that Lithuania will bring its significant share in the development of the new NATO-Russia relations as well.

The Rome Declaration was signed by state heads of 19 NATO countries and Russian President Vladimir Putin at a military airbase outside Rome. The new council will give Moscow an equal voice with members of the Alliance in dealing with various security issues

“Once accepted into NATO Lithuania’s constructive dialogue and experience in the regional cooperation with Russia will bring an added value to the new NATO-Russia relations,” said Mr. Ušackas.

Mr. Ušackas delivered these remarks at the Portland World Affairs Council on May 28. He also expressed gratitude to Sen. Gordon Smith, co-chairman of the Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus, for his leadership in assuring the U.S. Senate vote on May 17 in support of the Freedom Consolidation Act of 2001, which endorsed the vision of further NATO enlargement of the NATO Alliance.

The Lithuanian ambassador visited Oregon



Vladimir Putin (right) and NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson during a meeting in Moscow on Feb. 16, 2000

Photo: Belga www.nato.int/pictures/review/2000/b0004171.jpg

on May 28 and he traveled to Boise, Idaho, the next day to promote Lithuania’s goal of joining NATO and search for new opportunities for trade and business.

While on the visit, he met senior officials of the district offices of the members of the Oregon and Idaho congressional delegations, representatives of the state press, and members of the local business communities. ♦

THE BALTIC NEW SERVICE provides news from Lithuania via the The Information Center for Homecoming Lithuanians. .

NATO Enlargement Endorsed by U.S. Council of State Governments

The Council of State Governments (<http://www.statesnews.org>) recently passed a Resolution Endorsing NATO Enlargement stating that enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance "is consistent with U.S. policy objectives".

Seven aspirant countries - Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia - are singled out in the resolution. The Council of State Governments (CSG) passed a similar resolution in December 1997, supporting the NATO aspirations of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

The resolution was signed by Maryland Governor Parris N. Glendening, current CSG President, on April 7 at the Spring Meeting in Florida. The members of The Council of State Governments include all elected and appointed officials and staff in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of state government and the U.S. territories.

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS RESOLUTION ENDORING NATO ENLARGEMENT

WHEREAS, The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is recognized as the most successful defense alliance in the world today and is working to expand and deepen political and military cooperation throughout Europe based on dialogue, cooperation, and transparency; and

WHEREAS, NATO policy seeks to foster stability and security through enlargement of member-

ship to selected new democracies in Europe in order to provide a stronger basis for security and prosperity for both Europe and North America; and
WHEREAS, NATO enlargement is a stated goal of U.S. foreign policy as expressed both by President George W. Bush and by former President William J. Clinton; and

WHEREAS, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia share values fundamental to NATO and have demonstrated their ability to support NATO-led operations and to operate with the military forces of NATO members, thus contributing to the security and stability of Europe and the worldwide effort against terrorism; and

WHEREAS, The Council of State Governments passed a resolution in December 1997 endorsing the enlargement of NATO to include the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland; and

WHEREAS, NATO's decision in April 1998 to include these nations has served to strengthen the alliance;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that The Council of State Governments endorses NATO enlargement consistent with U.S. policy objectives; and that this resolution be transmitted to the President and to appropriate members of Congress.

Adopted this 7th day of April, 2002, at the CSG Spring Meeting in Coral Gables, Florida.

Governor Parris N. Glendening, Maryland
2002 CSG President. ♦

THE JOINT BALTIC AMERICAN COMMITTEE (JBANC) represents the Estonian American National Council, Inc., the American Latvian Association, Inc., and Lithuanian American Council, Inc. Karl Altai, JBANC's Managing Director sent the information which appeared in May 20, 2002 NATO Enlargement Daily Brief at <http://expandnato.org/nedb.html>.

Sr. Ona Mikaila
Regina F. Narušis, J.D.

Resurrecting a Lost Palace

The Castles of the Past

—*Sr. Ona Mikaila*

The city of Vilnius, Lithuania's capital, has a long and turbulent history. Vilnius is famous in song and story. It presents a fertile field of study for archeologists.

Vilnius may well be at least 1,000 years old. Artifacts have been found dating from the first millennium. The well-known story about the iron wolf howling on the hilltop in Gediminas' dream makes him the founder of the city, but it was there well before his time.

Vilnius is first mentioned in written records in the letters of Gediminas (1275-1341), ruler of Lithuania. He was already living in Vilnius when he wrote the letters in 1323-25, and he calls it "civita nostra regia" – "city of our realm", meaning that he had chosen it to be his capital city. Gediminas gave Vilnius its political importance, and in between fighting off the

Teutonic Knights, he put every effort into developing the city.

Set among rolling hills on the banks of the Neris River with its tributary Vilnia winding around it, the city is in a strategic position. If you stand in the heart of the old city, facing Vilnius Cathedral, the Hill of Gediminas rises up behind it. The red brick tower with the flag flying from the top, marks the site of the Upper Castle that once stood there. Actually, Vilnius had three castles.

The Castles of Vilnius

The Upper Castle was originally a wooden fortress used for defense purposes. At the foot of it on the western side, stood the Lower Castle. This was the royal residence where Gediminas lived. Did he build three castles? He may have, but there is no hard evidence to

SR. ONA MIKAILA is a writer and editor of *Bendradarbis* and belongs to the order of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a Lithuanian order in Putnam, Connecticut.

REGINA NARUŠIS is the chairperson of the Lithuanian-American Community Inc.'s Board of Directors and one of the founding members of the Royal Palace Fund for the World Lithuanian Community Foundation. All photos: *Bernard Narušis*.

prove it.

On a nearby hill, now called the Hill of the Three Crosses, another castle once stood, strangely named the Twisted Castle. It is referred to in old Latin records, but otherwise no trace remains. It was destroyed during the wars with the Teutonic Knights.

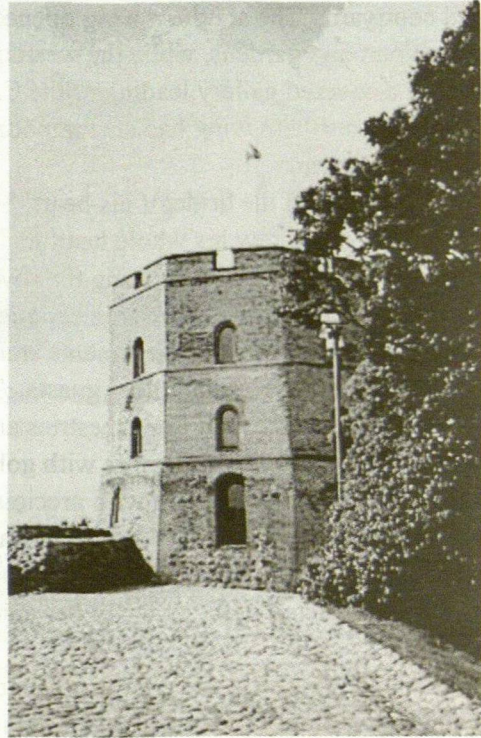
The Upper and Lower Castle were used in the time of Gediminas. Gediminas' grandson, Vytautas the Great (1392-1430) rebuilt the Upper Castle in the Gothic style. A wall of brick and stone with three massive, crenellated towers encircled the summit of Gediminas Hill. It stood for some 200 years. Later rulers used it as an arsenal and for weapons workshops. In 1610 it was remodeled as a prison for the gentry. After the Russian invasion of 1655-61, it was severely damaged and gradually fell into ruin. Only the present brick tower was restored to mark the site. In 1964, archeological excavations found remains of stonewalls and buildings on the hill and down the western slope.

The Lower Castle, at the foot of Gediminas Hill, the official residence of Lithuania's rulers, also included a number of other buildings. Within its defensive wall were located the houses of state dignitaries and various administrative buildings. In the western part of the castle area, Vilnius Cathedral was rebuilt when Lithuania became Christian in 1387. Being part of the Lower Castle buildings, it was called the castle church.

The Renaissance Palace

In the middle of the 16th century, a new royal residence was built within the Lower Castle enclave. King Sigismund the Elder (1467-1548) was proclaimed Grand Prince of Lithuania and crowned in Vilnius Cathedral in 1506; he was also King of Poland.

He and his Italian wife Queen Bona Sforza



The Gedimino Castle

were patrons of the Italian Renaissance. They often stayed in Vilnius, although they didn't actually live there. Sigismund imported Italian architects to build a Renaissance style palace – and his son Sigismund Augustus completed the project.

Sigismund Augustus was crowned Grand Prince of Lithuania in 1529 when he was just nine years old. In 1544, he came to live in Vilnius and ruled Lithuania as his father's viceroy. In 1548, he assumed his father's titles and power. He loved Vilnius and elected to live here. In 1545, he married his first wife Elizabeth and when she died, he married a Lithuanian beauty, Barbara of the Radvila family in 1547, despite the opposition of his mother, Queen Bona.

Meanwhile, the palace was going up. It consisted of four three-story buildings forming a quadrangle, which enclosed a large stone-

paved courtyard. The southern wing opened out to a court and gardens, while the western wing had a covered gallery leading to the Cathedral. The northern wing had accommodations for the servants.

Having obtained the bride of his heart, Sigismund Augustus threw his whole heart and soul into decorating and beautifying the royal residence. The top floor had a large banquet and reception hall, the royal apartments and suites for visiting nobles and other guests. The rooms were bedecked with fine tapestries and luxurious sables and black fox furs with gold and silver ornaments sparkling with precious gems. Below the royal bride's apartment facing the Neris River, Sigismund had an island of swans constructed in the river for her enjoyment.

Sigismund Augustus was a book collector and amassed a library of some 4,000 volumes. He also collected paintings and tapestries and

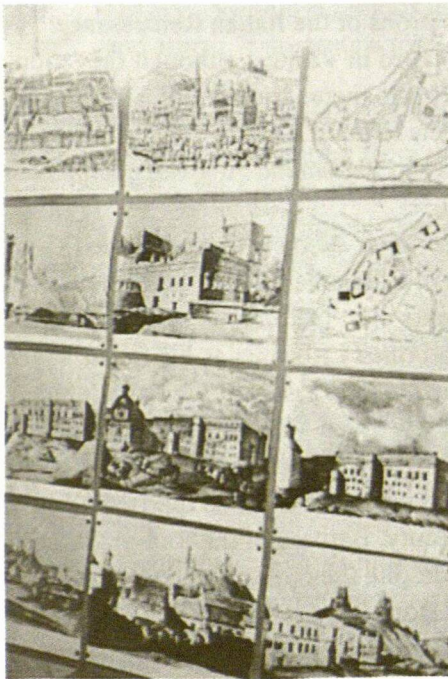
built a gallery to display them. When the papal nuncio, Archbishop Bernardo Bongiovanni, serving in Lithuania in 1560-63, visited the palace, he was much impressed, saying that he had seen nothing finer in the Venetian palaces or the Vatican itself.

Life at the palace was gay – at least for a time. Sigismund loved music and engaged a cappella of fifteen musicians to play for him. The first opera ever performed in Lithuania entertained his court, imitating West European courts in style and culture. There were masked balls and tournaments for the nobility. Leading German and Italian humanists, scientists, literary men, and artists were invited to display their learning and art. On festive occasions the whole city was lit up with fireworks.

The nobles followed their ruler's example and built their own mansions in and around Vilnius. Trade and manufacturing increased, and the introduction of Renaissance culture contributed to the development of the city. It was at the height of its glory.

Sigismund also took care to ensure the safety of the city. He built an arsenal housing 180 large cannon and a great many smaller ones. These came from the newly constructed cannon foundry. Outside the walls were stables for 2,000 riding horses.

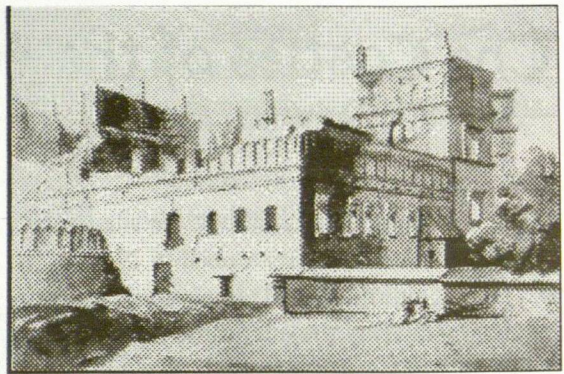
Unfortunately, both Sigismund Augustus and his palace were doomed to an unhappy fate. His beautiful bride, Barbara, died of cancer after only three years of marriage. Although he married again, he mourned the loss of Barbara all his life. He died in 1572, at the age of 52, a prematurely aged and broken-hearted man. He did not spend the last year of his life in Vilnius, but in Poland, conscience stricken, according to one historian, for having forced the Lithuanians to sign the Treaty of Lublin in 1569, joining Lithuania and Poland as one kingdom, to the disadvantage of Lithuania. Sigismund Augustus' three marriages



The many renditions and etchings, throughout the ages, depicting the castles of Vilnius.



K. Račinskas' etching of the Royal Palace and the Cathedral in 1832.



P. Smuglevičius' etching of the Royal Palace from the north west in 1785.

were all childless, making him the last member of the Gediminas dynasty. With his death, the royal palace lost its importance, since the subsequent kings of Lithuania and Poland rarely visited Vilnius.

In 1610 after another fire destroyed some of the palace buildings, Peter Nonhaart, a Dutch architect, was assigned to rebuild the palace, the arsenal, the cathedral, and courthouse. These were remodeled in the baroque style. In the summer of 1655, the Russian army invaded Vilnius. The city was ravaged by fire that burned for seventeen days. The palace buildings were gutted by cannon balls and fire and severely damaged. The picturesque ruin remained standing until the end of the 18th century.

In 1785 an artist from Warsaw, Francišek Smuglewicz, who also worked in Vilnius as a decorator and portrait painter, became interested in historical scenes. He made several sepia watercolors and, later, etchings of the ruined palace and put them in a book that he published in 1788. These pictures are probably the last glimpse we have of the royal palace. In 1799 when Lithuania had fallen under Russian rule that was to last 120 years, Tsarina Ekaterina II ordered the palace to be destroyed. Demolition took two years. The area around

the Cathedral was paved and came to be known as Cathedral Square.

Now, 200 years later, the royal residence is being brought back to life by diligent archeologists. Systematic archeological investigations of the Lower Castle and its territory began in 1987. Archeologists of the Design and Restoration Institute had already examined the arsenal in 1972-88. New evidence has been found of the 16th century palace and its restoration after 1610.

In 1996 Dr. Tadeusz Polack from Warsaw, an expert on the reconstruction of old monuments and buildings, visited the excavations in Vilnius. In an interview given to the Lithuanian daily *Lietuvos rytas*, he said there was no question about the need to restore this lost palace: "I can compare it to the restoration of the royal palace in Warsaw. It is a cultural symbol and a sign of the country's strength... The palaces of Vilnius and of Warsaw were destroyed because the invader wanted to erase our culture from the pages of history..."

The Castles of the future

—Regina F. Narušis, J.D.

Archeological research at the site of the Palaces was commenced in 1987, at the beginning of the Democratic Reform movement nearing the end of the Soviet occupation. It is now completed. Palace foundations and cellars were uncovered. Stone and brick fortifications were found dating back to the 13th century.

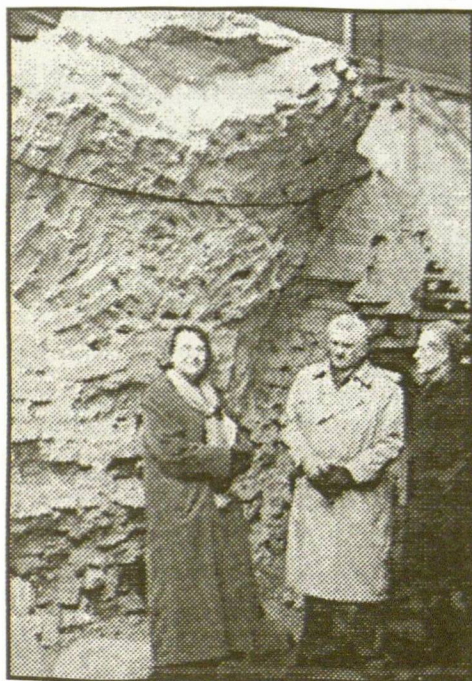
The Royal Palace consists of a quadrangle of four three-story wings enclosing a courtyard. The total floor space in the three-story structure, including the cellars was about 88,000 square feet. It is estimated that it will cost about 25 million U.S. dollars to rebuild it.

On October 17, 2000, the Lithuanian Parliament enacted a law stating that the Royal Pal-

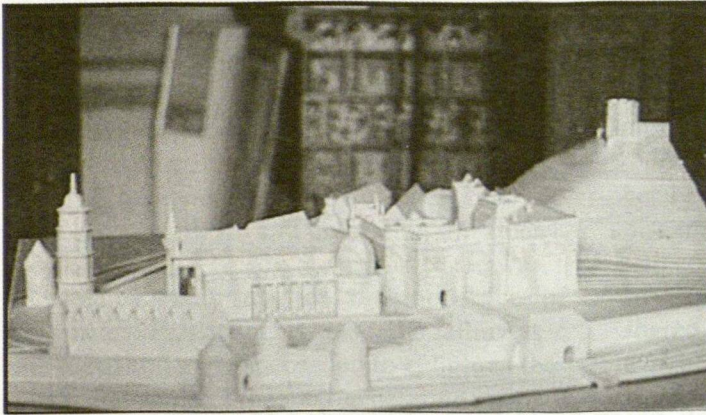
ace should be rebuilt by the year 2009, in time for the celebration of the Millennium of the first mention of Lithuania's name in written records. This year Lithuania's Parliament provided a sum of seven million litas (1.75 million U.S. dollars) for the beginning of the restoration process. The Royal Palace will serve as a cultural, educational, national ceremonial center, and museum. It is an historic heritage project of great importance to all Lithuanians wherever they may live. It will be a permanent visible statement of our justifiable pride in our Lithuanian heritage, the survival of the Lithuanian nation and its hope and faith in the future.

On August 23, 2000, in Lithuania, private citizens formed the "Valdovų rūmų paramos fondas" (Royal Palace Restoration Foundation) to raise private funds to help the Lithuanian Government finance the restoration of the Royal Palace. The founders are well known individuals living in Lithuania and abroad. They include clergy, poets, musicians, businessmen, historians, engineers, other professionals and leaders of communities from Lithuania and from abroad.

The World Lithuanian Community enthusiastically endorses the Foundation. This Foundation seeks donations, organizes fund raising concerts, and is developing quality fund-raising products promoted by the name of "Valdovų Rūmai". Last July the Foundation opened the pavilion "Gates of the Royal Palace" at the site of the Royal Palace that made the foundations and ruins publicly accessible from the Cathedral Square. So far, almost 100,000 people have visited the site through the pavilion. On May 10th, 2002, the restora-



In the Grand Duke's palace digs are, from left, Regina Narušis, Architect Napalys Kitkauskas, and Bernard Narušis.



A model of the Grand Duke's Palace with the Cathedral.

tion of the Royal Palace officially began. The Foundation to date has received over \$120,000 U.S. dollars in funds and pledges.

The World Lithuanian Community has established a separate account under the name of the World Lithuanian Foundation to receive donations from outside of Lithuania to give to the Royal Palace Restoration Foundation. By agreement with the Ministry of Culture, every donor will be named in the Royal Palace supporters' rolls that shall be kept on the premises with the records of the project.

Each donor who contributes 1,000 litai (about \$250 U.S. dollars), or more, will be named on a plaque to be displayed in the rebuilt Royal Palace. Those who pledge to give 1,000 litai a year until it is rebuilt will be honored with the designation of "great" donors and afforded other special privileges.

Donors may choose to pay for a specific project or job, such as windows, art, furniture, or restoration of a specific room. Those donations will be appropriately

acknowledged in the restored Royal Palace.

Donations may be made to the World Lithuanian Community Foundation – Royal Palace Restoration Fund at P.O. Box 140796, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49514-0796. If readers have any questions, they may contact Regina Narušis, one of the founding members of the Fund for the World Lithuanian Community Foundation, at 213 West Lake Shore Dr.,

Cary, Illinois 60013, 847-639-3630 or e-mail at rbnarusis@aol.com.

You are all invited to become a part of this very historically significant project. You can then proudly say that you helped rebuild this symbol of Lithuania's statehood. No donation is too small. ♦



The World Lithuanian Community Foundation – Royal Palace Restoration Fund Committee.

Vygaudas Ušackas. Ambassador of Lithuania

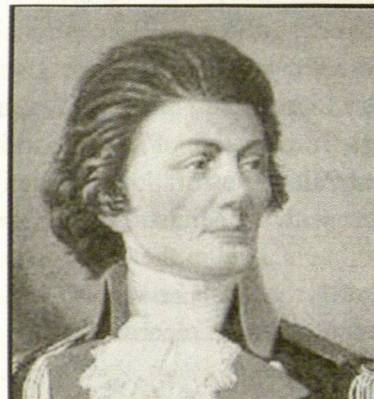
Tadeusz Kosciuszko... *is remembered*

The following is the keynote speech given by H.E. Ambassador of Lithuania, Mr. Vygaudas Ušackas at the Annual National Tadeusz Kościuszko Observance at the United States Military Academy in West Point on May 4, 2002.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor to be at the United States Military Academy in West Point today. I did not hesitate a single moment to accept an invitation to speak to you today from Dean Bajdek during our meeting with Polish and Lithuanian leaders in Boston in October 2001. I feel very privileged to have this opportunity to participate in the Annual National Tadeusz Kosciuszko Observance.

Sometime in August of 1776, less than two months after the Declaration of Independence had been signed, a military engineer from near the little town of Naugardukas (or Nowogródek in Polish) in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania - Lithuanian part of the Commonwealth of Two Nations - arrived in Philadelphia. Seven years of service for the cause of American freedom earned him a tremendous respect among Americans. Thomas Jefferson later described him as his dear friend and colleague by declaring, "he is as pure a son of liberty as I have ever known".



Educated at the finest military schools of Warsaw and Versailles, he joined the Army of the North as a Colonel of Engineers when the American Revolution broke out. His distinctive engineering skills helped to secure the American victory at Saratoga. He designed and implemented the system, which prevented the British from entering the Hudson River, which according to George Washington was "the key to America". The West Point fortress was never captured [by the British].

He deeply believed in the same values articulated in the magnificently phrased Declaration of

MR. VYGAUDAS UŠACKAS is the ambassador of Lithuania.

Independence and for the very same values Americans were fighting. Passionate about his role to implement them, Kosciuszko returned to his own country. Joined by Lithuanians he bravely led the Insurrection of 1794 against Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth captors. With all his struggle and dedication for fundamental values of freedom and liberty, he was defeated by vastly superior combined forces of Prussia and Russia. This was not a failure as one may think. He succeeded to enlighten the minds and souls of the next generations with ideas of independence, freedom and equality of all citizens.

The reborn Republics of Poland and Lithuania in 1918 chose to implement these ideas separately. Then the Second World War [ensued], and our countries shared the fate of German and then Soviet occupation.

For more than 40 years after the end of the Second World War, Lithuania, along with other Central European countries, was outside the area of stability and security in Europe, which was created under the leadership of the United States of America within the North Atlantic Alliance. Separated from the West by the Iron Curtain, the Lithuanian people have nevertheless retained their commitment and belief in the common values of free nations: democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. The sympathy of the American people and the US non-recognition policy of the Soviet occupation have significantly contributed to this.

That is why we saluted the leadership of the U.S. President G. W. Bush during his trip to Europe in June last year to advance the process of completing the unification of Europe through the subsequent enlargement of NATO at the next Summit in Prague in November 2002. When President Bush said in Warsaw on the 15th of June, that when NATO's leaders will meet in Prague "The United States will be prepared to make concrete historic decisions with its allies to advance NATO enlargement" and "we should not calculate how little we can get away with, but how much we can do to ad-

vance the cause of freedom" we knew the United States would provide the leadership necessary for the next expansion of the Alliance.

Some people say that the events of September 11 changed everything. I would, in part, disagree. The events made clearer how important core alliances are. They crystallized the relevance of a community of nations with shared values. And I am 100 per cent sure that a great Son of Liberty, Tadeusz Kosciuszko, would join us today in praising Europe Whole and Free and the Alliance of the United States of America, Poland, Lithuania, and all other freedom loving nations. ♦



REFLECTIONS

Sr. Margarita Bareikaitė

The Forgotten Holy Spirit

On the May 19th, we read: "Lord, send out your spirit, and renew the face of the earth" (Ps. 104).

The Church remembers the moment when the risen Jesus fills the disciples with the Holy Spirit. In fact, all the readings from the Holy Bible bring us to the culmination of the fifty-day celebration of Easter with images of strong winds and tongues of fire.

Many Catholics today admit that they have little or no knowledge of the Holy Spirit. It is not surprising then that Pope John Paul II asked everyone for a renewed appreciation of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit. The reality of the Holy Spirit is one of the Catholic Church's most central beliefs, but also one of the most elusive. We discover the Holy Spirit's identity only through the effects of the Spirit's action in people's lives, including our own.

As we enter the Church we make a sign of the cross, and we profess our faith in God Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The creed at Sunday Mass affirms our belief in the Trinity as well. All these words are precise, but rather abstract leaving the important role of God as Father, Son Jesus of Nazareth and God the Holy Spirit.

Saint Luke recounts this special event: "When Pentecost day came around, they had all met in one room, when suddenly they heard ... a powerful wind ... and ... that seemed like tongues of fire. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech." (Act 2:1-4).

In Luke 4:16-30, Jesus announces that He is



anointed "by the Spirit of the Lord", to bring glad tidings to the poor, sight to the blind, and freedom to the oppressed". The life of Jesus shows His carrying out this mission, which He attributes to the "Spirit of the Lord". Also the Spirit is recognized through Jesus as the Spirit of joy, compassion, healing, and more.

Pentecost was a Jewish feast. It was also a harvest feast. Jesus chose a harvest feast as the time to send the Holy Spirit to fill the small group of fearful disciples with new courage, hope and a sense of mission.

We also see the Holy Spirit as being creative, powerful but gentle, life giving, bonding people with God and with one another. Like the winds, the Holy Spirit is mysterious, unpredictable, and free. Like breath, the Holy Spirit is essential for spiritual, Christ like life. The Holy Spirit is our helper and guide.

The early Christians confirmed Isaiah's description (11:2) of the characteristics of the Spirit of the Lord "a Spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, a Spirit of Counsel, strength, knowledge, and of fear of the Lord. St. Paul summed up the "fruits" of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal 5:22-23). After Pentecost, the Apostles became strong and courageous in faith. They preached the Good News of the Lord Jesus fearlessly. They proclaimed the presence of the Spirit in their lives by the love they showed one another. ♦

SR. MARGARITA BAREIKAITĖ belongs to the order of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a Lithuanian order in Putnam, CT. She is also the Chairperson of the Religious Affairs Council for the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.

C U R R E N T E V E N T S

Learn Lithuanian in Michigan

The 17th annual Lithuanian Language Course at Camp Dainava, Manchester, Michigan, will take place July 28th to Aug 4th, 2002. This intensive course, operating under the auspices of the Educational Council of the Lithuanian American Community of the USA, is designed for beginners, intermediate, and advanced students, or those just wishing to refresh their Lithuanian. Experienced instructors in vacation-like surroundings and atmosphere teach the course.

There are no limitations regarding age or formal education. For more information or registration please contact Ms. Aušrelė Sakalas, 1388 Overton Dr., Lemont, Illinois, 60439; phone 630-243-6302, fax 630-243-6304, e-mail: ausreles@attbi.com or log onto <http://javlb.org/educat/mokytoju.html>. ♦

— *Aušrelė Sakalaitė*

Lithuanian Days in Pennsylvania

The Knights of Lithuania, Council 144, will be celebrating the 88th Annual Lithuanian Days Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 10 and 11 at the Schuylkill Mall, Frackville, PA from 11 a. m. to 5 p.m. each day.

The mall is located at the intersection of Interstate 81 and Route 61 with motels nearby.

This year Lithuanians attending who are eight months, eight years and 88 years of age will be honored.

Come and enjoy Lithuanian dancers and singers, partake of delicious ethnic foods and take home a "bit of Lithuania". Meet in the Heritage Room where you can view the beautiful cultural display, watch videos or enjoy Coal Region hospitality.

For information contact Bernice Mikatavage 570 544-4598 or e-mail bermika@infi.net. ♦

— *Bernice Mikatavage,
Lithuanian Day Committee*

Lithuania chosen for NATO advisory meeting

Lithuania will host the annual meeting of the NATO consulting body, Atlantic Policy Advisory Group (APAG), in 2003 on its own initiative and with approval from the Alliance.

The Lithuanian officials see acceptance of this initiative as promotion of its cooperation in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. The forum of political advisors, due on April 4-5 2003, will attract some 80 experts from 46 countries.

APAG head Guenther Altenburg, who also acts as advisor of NATO secretary general for policy issues, conveyed the approval message of his office to the head of Lithuanian mission at NATO, Ambassador Gintė Damušytė.

The diplomat said such an initiative of Lithuania was welcomed by NATO, especially taking into account expectations of the Baltic state to be invited to the Alliance later this year.

APAG represents policy advisors of NATO member and partners countries who gather yearly for informal discussions on top security issues. This year the group held its regular meeting in Macedonia. ♦

— *The Baltic News Service*

A Baltic Symposium in Vilnius

The University of Vilnius in Lithuania will be the venue for a prestigious meeting of scientists this June 22 through 27.

The Balticum Organicum Syntheticum for the year 2002 (BOS 2002, for short) has been publicized in, among other scientific publications, *Chemical and Engineering News*, the official publication of the 130,000-member American Chemical Society.

From the web site (www.chem.queensu.ca/duDont/index.htm) comes the following:

Balticum Organicum Syntheticum is an international conference on organic synthesis hosted by historic Vilnius University (established 1579) in Vilnius, Lithuania.

The program will consist of a series of plenary lectures by a distinguished roster of Baltic and internationally known speakers, poster sessions, and a discussion period.

Environmentally benign (green) chemistry will be one of the conference's themes. Both fundamental and practical aspects of organic synthesis will be highlighted by the distinguished slate of speakers. All talks and poster sessions will take place at the university to maximize interactions between Western and Baltic researchers. Participation will be limited to 200 scientists. English will be the official language.

"In addition to its focus on green chemistry," conference organizer Victor Snieckus said, "this conference will provide a forum for Baltic chemists to present their research to the Western world, as well as help to forge ties between the Baltic chemistry community and Western chemists, both academic and industrial."

"We are looking forward to another exciting and relaxed meeting which has the honor to host, as it did in BOS 2000, a

Nobel Prize awardee," Snieckus added. Victor Snieckus, born in Lithuania, holds the Bader Chair for Organic Chemistry at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

Goals:

- Provide a window for Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian science to the West.
- Create a forum for interaction and discussion between Baltic and Western scientists, to establish in scientific cooperation at academic and industrial levels.
- Present a unique cultural, linguistic and social experience for participants and accompanying persons.

The article in *Chemical and Engineering News* further quoted Snieckus as saying that the prior meeting, BOS 2000, "surprised many Western participants. The Baltic States are re-entering Europe, and our wish is to have people experience this society fully, including perhaps appreciation of Lithuanian, the oldest Indo-European language closest to Sanskrit."

— sent in by John Patrick (*Petruskevicius*)



The Latest News from Lithuania...

As a new resident of Lithuania for the past several months, I have learned a lot about what is going on here by reading the only English language newspaper published in Lithuania, "Lithuanian Weekly". Actually, it is not a weekly, but a bi-weekly, is only available by subscription, and cannot be purchased at any newsstand here.

Years ago when I came to Lithuania as a tourist, I stopped off at the office one day and put that question to the editor. There is a saving on postage, I was told, and now the staff has more time to gather newsworthy stories. Even though I live in Vilnius, I can only get it by mail, strange as it may seem. Its editions, believe it or not, are sent to subscribers all over the world. From its latest issue, I would like to pass along some stories that attracted my attention.

The Lithuanian Statistic Department issued a report on the nation's population for the year 2001, and it was sad, to me at least.

Early data indicated that the number of residents dropped by 11,500 last year. According to Algirdas Semeta, the department director, this negative figure was the same as losing the entire Lithuanian town of Varena. Births were down by 8 % in 2001, with 2,649 fewer babies born than in 2000. That decline was the steepest downward trend over recent years. After declining for six years, the death rate also grew. In 2001, 1,400 more people died than in 2000, largely responsible were alcohol, automobile accidents and cardiovascular problems.

Marriages were down and divorces were more frequent as compared to 2000. Compounding the dwindling population, were the immigration figures, with 3,000 more leaving than arriving to live in Lithuania. According to experts, the official statistics for those leaving are often considered to be far lower than the actual number.

Preliminary counts from the 2001 census indicate about 3,482,000 people call Lithuania their home.

The most popular names for newborns in Lithuania in 2001 were Lukas for boys (642), and Gabriele for girls (491); the second most popular name for boys was Mantas (389), and for girls Gabija (465); for third, Rokas (338) for boys, Karolina (387) for girls. Other popular female names were Viktorija, Kamile, Greta; for boys, Deividas,

Tomas and Matas.

I would like to bring up one very important point at this time. Every generation brings change, and the naming of offspring is no exception. In my parents' generation, children were named after saints, such as Kazimieras (Casimir), Antanas (Anthony), Petras (Peter), Jurgis (George), Ona (Anna), Maryte (Mary), and so on. Following the brief period of independence in 1918, patriotism swept the nation and the boys were named after the Grand Dukes of Lithuania, with Vytautas being the most popular, and others being Algirdas, Kestutis, Gediminas, Mindaugas and so on. There is an old saying that goes something like this, and correct me if I am wrong: "What goes around, comes around". Perhaps someday those old names will make a comeback. Who knows?

Now, getting back to present day Lithuania. According to the latest forecasts from the government, the unemployment rate will reach 11.3 % this year, while Vilniaus Bankas calculates the jobless rate will reach 12 %. In Vilnius, the jobless rate stood at 8.9 % as of early February.

Perhaps the picture will change before the year is out. Šarūnas Marčiulionis, the former professional basketball player who played with the NBA in the United States, is investing in a new sports and entertainment center in Vilnius called Forum Place, now being built on the bank of the Neris River. This five story structure, occupying a space of 14,000 square meters (or, a little more than 16,000 square yards) will house a sports club, swimming pools and saunas, disco and banquet halls, bowling, casino, [go-go] bar, restaurant and sports bar. The staff of 200 people does not include security and cleaning personnel. Forum Place will be able to accommodate 2,500 people at a time, with a 2,500 square meter (or, a little under 3,000 square yards) underground parking garage. He hopes to get a return on the investment of 60 million litas in 7 to 8 years on this project, which is expected to be opened at the end of this year. He is a major investor, and declined to disclose the names of the other investors, but he noted that some will come from Russia.

As one can see, Lithuania is undergoing a lot of changes. ♦

— *Edward Baranauskas*

Jubilee of Baltic Assembly adopts nine documents

The jubilee 20th session of inter-parliamentary Baltic Assembly, gathered in Vilnius, adopted on May 25th a resolution proposing to back the European Union's initiatives on border, regional and international cooperation in the Baltic Sea region.

In one of nine adopted documents, the Assembly also suggested involving Baltic countries in the EU initiatives and programs prior to the completion of accession talks. The session's agenda was dominated by the theme of new opportunities to open in the Baltic states after their entrance to EU and NATO.

The Assembly's resolution on agricultural policy included a recommendation for the Baltic governments to work together in negotiations with Brussels so as to achieve acceptable results.

As regional cooperation was high on the agenda of session, the Assembly adopted two resolutions urging to step up cooperation with the Nordic Council and Russian Kaliningrad region. Other adopted documents concerned the role of libraries in the development of an information society and improvement of his-

tory curricula at schools.

Before the closing of the jubilee session, leaders of Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian delegations to the Assembly sealed a conclusive document. During the session Lithuania relayed chairmanship to Latvia, which will host the next regular session on December 12-14.

Romualds Razuks, chairman of the Latvian delegation, said the next session would revolve around public information on the advantages and disadvantages of membership in the European Union, anti-corruption efforts, and transport issues.

Moreover, this inter-parliamentary organization is facing possible structural reforms to include extension of chairmanship over the Assembly from six months to one year. The leader of the Lithuanian delegation, Giedrė Purvaneckienė, and her Estonian counterpart Trivimi Velliste said the Assembly would keep expanding its cooperation with the Nordic Council in the future.. ♦

— *The Baltic News Service*

Lithuania to elect next president before Christmas

Lithuania is to hold the next presidential election on December 22nd, 2002, on the eve of the Christmas holiday, a date indicated in a draft resolution which the parliament approved on May 28th.

An opposition Conservative faction declared that the Centre-Left ruling majority was pressing ahead with the resolution in order to push another motion on merging these polls with local elections.

Under the national Constitution, it is the parliament which is entitled to assign the date of presidential election that has to take place

on the last Sunday two months before the expiry of term of the incumbent president. The tenure of the incumbent leader, Valdas Adamkus, expires on February 23rd, 2003.

Now the draft resolution will pass through law enforcement and public administration committees of Seimas to reach a final vote on June 6th. ♦

— *The Baltic News Service*

LITHUANIA 2002

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