
BRIDGES

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Our 25th Year!



Soviet Deportees Remembered...NATO's New Mission...Pictures of Humanity

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

It's finally summer! I look forward to this time of year from sheer habit — from my schooldays.

This is a great time to do so many things and visit different places. It's also an opportune time to catch up on my reading. I enjoy humorous stories and adventure novels. On occasion, I'll stumble on a gripping drama that seems destined for the cinema. But the main event this summer seems to be "teaching 16 year old son to drive".

During this much-maligned, yet truly "enjoyable" experience, I've come up with a few pointers for those in our shoes.

1. Never watch your child back out the driveway with your spouse, especially if your car is parked nearby. As my son veered out the driveway one day, I was sure he was inches from my car as he sent his into warp speed in reverse.

2. Whisper quietly as your child drives beside you. It is vital not to interfere with the rock channel he is listening to because it may break his concentration and make him use one hand on the wheel as the other starts searching for the volume.

3. Stress that "peeling away" is not considered safe driving. My chiropractor agrees.

4. If they do something like honking at another driver, it's because they've seen you do it and to them it's perfectly alright. If they honk even when you tell them not to, wear a hat, a wig and sunglasses to disguise yourself.

5. If you want your child to stop quicker than he is doing, don't scream or place your feet on the dashboard. Those actions are not internationally recognized ways to teach good stopping skills. Instead, continually repeat in a slow, quiet voice, "Brake...brake...brake...now...now...now..." until he does.

6. When he brings home car shopper magazines and highlights the Mustangs, El Caminos or other "interesting" cars, calmly tell him that he has to be 18, a proven (keyword) driver, and have driven with you in the car for at least six months before he can even dream about a used car driven only on Sundays by a little old lady.

7. Last, but not least, it really doesn't help when a spouse (in this case the husband) gets all excited about cars during this important time period and goes out and buys a dune buggy. Naturally, all the rules go out the window and the remaining spouse gets to wield the Driver's Education Handbook with both hands.

This mind-bending, physically stimulating experience will continue until January of next year when he passes the driving test and holds his license in his hands. Having survived one, I think we'll make it with the other. So, to all you out there with similar situations at hand — good luck! To all you experienced drivers — we were there once and lived to tell the tale.

Have a safe and fun summer!

Rasa Ardys-Juška

Editor

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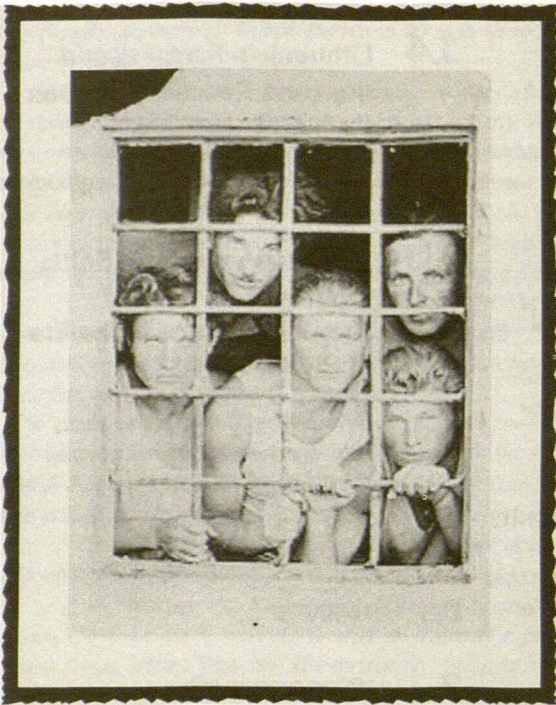
By the Sea...By the Sea... By the Baltic Sea!

Summer time, in fact any time of the year, is just right for a visit to Palanga! Palanga is a seaside resort famous for its mud baths, mild climate, and beaches that stretch 20 kilometers along the Baltic Sea.

It became a resort at the beginning of the 19th century. Count Tiškevičius bought the city and the coastal land in 1824. He helped renovate the port and build a new oak pier from which the ships cast anchor. After the port was covered by the fast-shifting sand, the pier became a favorite strolling place for beachgoers. Even now, vacation photos dating from long ago to the present seem to focus on the long pier extending into the sea at dusk.

Of course, we mustn't forget the amber. Archaeological findings show that the earliest settlements date back to the Neolithic period (4–2 thousand B.C.) Among the finds, amber pieces mingle. Through the ages, trade involved these yellow golden nuggets. In 1963, the mansion of Count Tiškevičius was converted to The Amber Museum, which chronicles the uses and the art of amber from the Baltic Sea.

On the cover:
This is a traditional papercutting by T. Žutautienė entitled "Vakaras" or "Evening", printed along with many other examples of papercuttings in *World's Paper-Cuts '89* compiled by Feliksas Marcinkas (Vilnius, 1989).



Young men on their way to Siberia.

President Valdas Adamkus joined a homage ceremony held in front of former Soviet KGB building in Vilnius' Lukiškės Square on the Day of Mourning and Hope on June 14th.

"Let this day strengthen our hope to overcome finally the heritage of past, lie and violence, obedience and inactivity. We are together and remember tragic experience of our nation. We remember genocide and deportations waged against our nation that had been launched more than 6 decades ago," Adamkus told the crowd of people.

Chairman of the Lithuanian Prisoner and Deportee Union, MP Povilas Jakučionis said today some forces hostile to freedom for Lithuania continue to exist, therefore Lithua-

Soviet Deportees Remembered in Vilnius

nian people must resist them.

Another ceremony also took place in suburban Naujoji Vilnia railway station, at a memorial to those who had perished. The station had been the last point of departure for thousands of Lithuanian people doomed by Soviet authorities to deportation to Siberia.

The Lithuanian Parliament also held a commemoration ceremony to mark this tragic anniversary. The solemn event in the Parliament was attended by Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas and Speaker of Parliament Artūras Paulauskas.

Soviet mass deportations in Lithuania were set off along with the Baltic state's occupation on June 14, 1941, which sent 31,000 persons to Gulags (concentration camps) and jails in Sibe-

THE BALTIC NEWS SERVICE provides news from Lithuania via the *The Information Center for Homecoming Lithuanians*.
Source for photo and graph is <http://www.genocid.lt/GRTD/Tremtis/total.htm> (Lithuanian Genocide Research Center in Vilnius).

ria and other regions of the former USSR at the initial phase.

All in all, more than 131,000 people of Lithuania were forced out of their Homeland throughout all phases of deportation, including during the post-war years. Statistics show that during the first days of deportation in June 1941 alone, there were 18,900 persons – farmers, doctors, and teachers – exiled from the home country; of them, 1,202 had to travel a long distance in cattle wagons.

"Why? Because they were good teachers and taught children to read and write...because they were peasants and loved their land very much which was so generous to them. Namely for this reason, they were nicknamed kulaks (persons working for personal profit). Even in Siberia, the so-called kulaks managed to be good owners of farms and taught local peo-

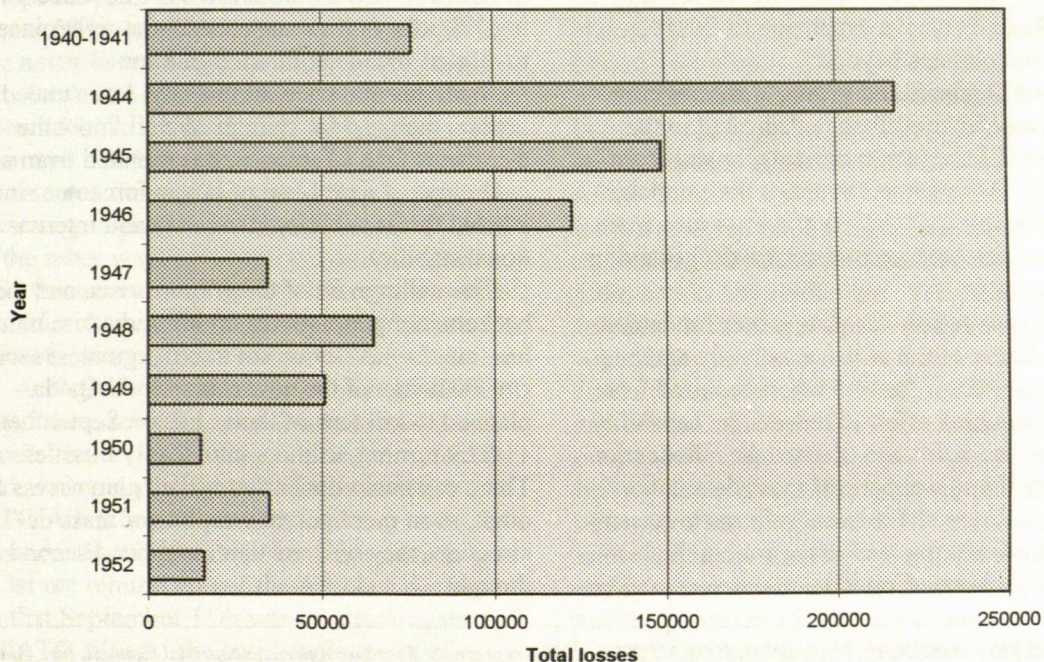
ple...because they loved Lithuania," so said the Speaker of Parliament Artūras Paulauskas during the Lithuanian Parliament ceremony.

The parliament leader was quoted as saying that those committed to wipe Lithuania off the global map realized that the Lithuanian people's silent love for their Homeland was much more dangerous to them and the clamorous Bolshevik ideology.

"Therefore, Lithuania was rolling towards the East in an uncertain direction carrying a silent love for the Homeland. This is perhaps the reason why today we can find hardly a family in Lithuania without deportees or political prisoners – former resistance fighters and dissidents – among relatives," Paulauskas said.

The top legislator said Lithuania was standing on a threshold of the European Union and NATO, which "meant a threshold of Hope". ♦

Total losses of the Lithuanian population from 1940–1952.



Tackling Terror: NATO's New Mission

NATO General Lord Robertson spoke at the American Enterprise Institute's New Atlantic Initiative on June 20, 2002 in Washington, DC. Robertson addressed the changing role of NATO in lieu of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the United States and the new relationship with Russia. Before the speech, NATO Secretary Robertson was introduced with these words:

“With the end of the cold war, some have questioned NATO's utility to the United States. Does this union of freedom-loving Western nations have a part to play in the twenty-first century, and can it survive expansion to Russia's edge — and perhaps beyond?”

As NATO adapts and grows, it is transforming from a defensive alliance dedicated to the protection of Europe to a critical ally and force multiplier for the United States in the campaign against new threats. Indeed, there are now more European than American troops on the ground in Afghanistan.

NATO is currently tackling issues fundamental to the future of the alliance, recently agreeing to act against terror "as and where required," outlining a redoubled effort to redress the capability gap, launching a drive to prepare the alliance for attacks involving weapons of mass destruction, initiating military and internal reforms to streamline decision-making, and inaugurating the historic NATO-Russia Council.

This autumn, the Prague Summit will see a robust enlargement of NATO likely to include several former Soviet states. NATO's secretary general, Lord Robertson, will speak on NATO's transformation and the role of America's allies in the war on terror.”

Here follows excerpts from NATO Secretary Robertson's speech.

It is a great pleasure to be here. The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) has always been a wellspring of ideas for change, on a whole range of issues. Many of those ideas are now becoming US policy. That makes AEI the right place to discuss the idea of transformation.

With this audience, in this city, I don't need to explain the need for change. We all know the threats we face. Terrorism has mutated from a nation-specific problem of law enforcement into a lethal threat to national security and international stability.

The willingness of today's terrorists, and their backers in rogue regimes, to kill indiscriminately has transformed terrorism into the greatest security challenge of the new century. Al Qaida planned to kill tens of thousands on September 11th by turning airliners into deadly missiles. There can be no doubt that if they gain access to other, even more potent weapons of mass destruction, they will use them without a second thought.

JOINT BALTIC AMERICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE, INC., represents: Estonian American National Council, Inc., American Latvian Association, Inc., and the Lithuanian American Council, Inc.

This puts an immense burden on the governments of the free world. Not least because today's enemies are unlike past antagonists. They are not rational and predictable. They are not prepared to balance interests and risks. No, they are extremist fanatics, driven by hatred, and operating beyond rationality and predictability.

At the same time, however, we must not suggest that the terrorists are winning. The September 11th attacks were horrific. But the terrorists have suffered a series of massive setbacks since then, from Afghanistan through the Balkans, where NATO has smashed key Al Qaida cells, to recent arrests in North America, Europe and North Africa. They can hurt us. But we can defeat them.

That is not complacency. Our ideals, our societies, our peoples have been tempered in the victories over fascism and communism. They are too strong for the new barbarians of terrorism.

But our victory will be easier, quicker and more assured if we remember the lessons of the great struggles of the 2001 century.

First, national governments must act promptly and effectively to mount their own defenses. That is what the United States is doing now in perhaps the most profound period of change in the past 50 years. However, national solutions have never been enough on their own. The history of my own country shows that the mirage of "splendid isolation" leads inevitably to bloody engagement. Far better to work with friends to avert a crisis than to find yourself alone with the crisis on your doorstep and your friends all looking the other way.

So the second priority for all free countries is to build and maintain the friendships that are critical to winning our common war against terror. As President Bush said on June 1st at West Point, "America needs partners to preserve the peace".

You may already know what America's NATO Allies have done and are doing to crush terrorism. But if you don't know, or have forgotten, let me remind you of the Article 5 declaration that September 11th was an attack against all 19 NATO Allies... the rapid deployment of NATO AWACS aircraft to help defend Ameri-



NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson

can cities... the crackdown across Europe against Al Qaida and its backers... the commitment by 14 NATO Allies of combat troops and aircraft, support services and specialist skills to fight Al Qaida and the Taleban in the mountains of Afghanistan, and bring stability to the streets of Kabul.

For generations, NATO and its members have been America's staunchest allies. It is no different in this time of crisis. As Secretary Rumsfeld said in Brussels earlier this month, the war on terrorism would not be possible without NATO.

But the old NATO will not be enough to meet today's risks and challenges. The Alliance is therefore mirroring the profound change being wrought by the Bush Administration in its most fundamental process of transformation since the end of the Cold War. I would not normally set out publicly what is still work in progress. But I believe that it is essential in the current climate of concern here in the United States for people to know and understand how NATO is changing and how this will benefit the American people, and the people in all Alliance countries.

Most fundamental, perhaps, is a simple policy decision.. NATO has decided that the Alliance

must play a prominent role in defending its own populations and forces against terrorist attacks. Defense against terrorism was already one of the new tasks highlighted in our 1999 Strategic Concept. Now it's front and center – a main focus of our activities.

To this end, we have now defined "defense against terrorism" broadly to include activities by our forces, "as and where required". They must also be able to deter, defend, disrupt and protect against terrorist attack, or threats of attacks directed from abroad, and to act against such terrorists and those who harbor them. So much for the sterile "out of area" debate that, as many of you will remember, hamstrung NATO throughout much of the early 1990s.

So NATO can now take a lead in fighting terrorism. Sometimes that will be the right approach. Sometimes other coalitions will be more appropriate.

A permanent coalition is better than a temporary one. An interoperable coalition is better than an incapable one. A value sharing coalition is better than a coalition of convenience. And a NATO coalition is better than anything else.

Allies therefore agreed last week that, on a case-by-case basis, the Alliance would be prepared to provide its formidable assets and capabilities to support operations, including operations against terrorism, undertaken by other international organizations or by coalitions involving Allies. In other words, where it is appropriate, NATO will be able to support a non-NATO operation. This could include something as simple as doing the complex planning that modern operations require, and in which NATO has over five decades of experience. But it could also include much more substantial military support.

Perhaps the most striking scenario would be future operations involving NATO, its Partners including Russia, and other members of a grand coalition.

These decisions are immensely significant. They show that NATO is prepared to act as a focus of the international community's military preparations for defense against terrorism. They also underscore the need to develop global deployment capabilities. NATO may even be in a position to take on a wide-ranging facilitating

role for UN-mandated operations, not just against terrorism.

Taken together, these are substantial new commitments. To meet them, NATO will need substantial new capabilities. And on that front too, major transformations are underway...

... Countering terrorism is at the heart of NATO's new relationship with Russia. Much has been said about this relationship. To my mind, the essence is this. September 11th confirmed what we already knew. That the Cold War alignment of adversaries is dead and buried. We need Russia to face new and common threats, just as much as Russia needs us. Russia is now willing to play an honest, cooperative role in working with us.

The new NATO-Russia Council allows just that. It in no way replaces the North Atlantic Council. We have safeguarded our ability to act as an Alliance. There can be no such thing as a Russian veto of NATO action, or indeed a NATO veto of Russian interests.

But on a range of vital issues such as terrorism, missile defense and proliferation, the new Council gives Russia an equal seat at the table – and that has two real benefits. First, our cooperation will take an immediate and concrete step forward in meeting urgent challenges. That, alone, is significant. But the longer-term benefit to Euro-Atlantic security is just as important.

If in the coming years, Russia comes to see NATO as an organization to which it can turn – regularly and with confidence – for cooperation in solving Euro-Atlantic problems, then we will have brought Russia into Europe as a trusting and trustworthy member. That would truly be an historic contribution to our common security, and a major contribution to the success of our long-term fight against the new threats we all face.

At Prague in November [2002], we will also take a decisive step forward in our relations with countries across Europe and into Central Asia. The logic is clear. Meeting challenges such as terrorism and proliferation requires the broadest and deepest possible cooperation. And even small countries, far away from Washington or Brussels, can play a decisive role.

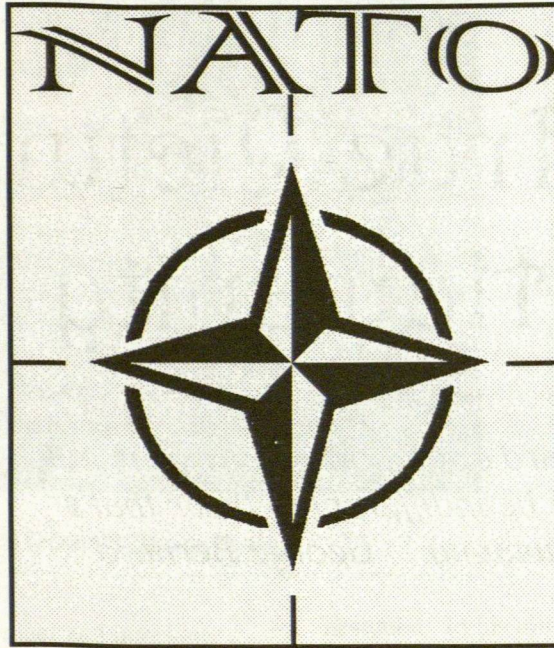
For almost a decade, NATO has had increas-

ingly close and practical relations with 27 non-NATO countries, including the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Ask yourself whether the countries of Central Asia would have been so ready, willing and able to offer the critical assistance that helped bring down the Taliban without 10 years of cooperation with the United States and its allies in NATO's Partnership for Peace. These relations were critical. Now they are about to get an upgrade.

We will develop better intelligence sharing. We will share knowledge on how to deal, together, with the consequences of a terrorist attack, including the use of weapons of mass destruction. We will train more together, so that when the time comes for joint operations, our coalition is as strong and as broad as possible.

Let me offer a brief word on enlargement. All of the nations aspiring to membership are busily focused on reforms before we even consider any decisions – which is how I want it. But just because enlargement is not a headline story at the moment, we cannot forget how dramatically the decisions at Prague will reshape Europe. The democratic unification of Europe is something easy to take for granted as we focus increasingly on the so-called new agenda beyond Europe. But the uniting of that continent so bloodied by war for centuries is far from complete. Prague will ensure that that process is inevitable.

Ladies and Gentlemen, today is an interesting day in American history. On June 20, 1782, two hundred and twenty years ago the American Congress adopted the Great Seal of the United States. It featured the legend "e pluribus



unum" – "one from many."

In a very real sense, that sentiment applies not only to the United States, but also to NATO. For over 50 years, the Atlantic Alliance has brought its members together – to arrive at common perceptions of the challenges they face; to develop common means to deal with them; and to act together, when they must, in defense of their shared interests and values. Many countries formed one strong, effective security community – a community that will only grow as more

countries come to share our values, and can share the burdens of security with us.

Today, NATO is once again in a process of rapid, substantive transformation. By Prague, that transformation will deliver results. It will enable NATO's members, and its Partners, to work together to defend against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and it will spark and guide substantial improvements in our collective capability to win this fight.

Taking all elements together, the transformation of NATO will make a key, indeed essential, contribution to US security, to the security of all NATO nations, and in turn to the safety of future generations. ♦

Jeanne Dorr

The True Picture of Humanity

"The worst sin toward our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them: that's the essence of inhumanity." George Bernard Shaw

How many of us would risk our lives and the lives of our families to help another human being? More to the point, how many of us would do this for a stranger? I would venture to guess the answer would be not too many.

A teaching colleague, a Jewish friend whose grandfather came from Vilnius, brought me a copy of a Jewish newspaper that featured an article about a local woman meeting the woman whose grandparents saved her father in Kaunas. I was immediately interested and contacted the newspaper, *The Voice*. I explained that I would like to follow up on the story and asked if they would put me in touch with the local woman. Within a day or two they returned my message, and from there we started a story that would take us many miles around the world.

I phoned Raya Gonen of Cherry Hill, New Jersey, and we spoke for more than an hour. There were several more calls before I left for Lithuania. Raya told me about herself and her family. She and her husband are Israeli citizens who are in the United States while her husband,

an eye surgeon, is teaching at a Philadelphia hospital. It was to be a short assignment, but they keep asking him to prolong his stay. The couple has two daughters. Raya's parents live in Israel where they settled after the Second World War. This is the story of her father, Yerachmiel Sin-iuk, and his rescue from the Kaunas Ghetto.

The newspaper article focused on Raya and her family meeting Dr. Virginija Vasiliauskienė. Virginija is a professor of Old Lithuanian at Vytautas the Great University in Kaunas. She took advantage of an opportunity to employ modern research methods unavailable in Lithuania for a book on Old Lithuanian syntax.

Raya met her at Kennedy Airport, helped her stretch her scholarship money, while she studied at Penn State, arranged for speaking engagements for her, and took Virginija into her own house before she journeyed back to Lithuania. It was a week to get acquainted and show her gratitude to the granddaughter of the people who saved her father's life when he was a young man. It was Virginija's grandparents and uncle who rescued Raya's father from the Kaunas Ghetto.

JEANNE DORR is a member of the Board of Directors of Lithuanian Orphan Care, a branch of the Human Services Council of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. She is also a Social Studies teacher in New Jersey.



Ona Urbonaitė Damanskienė

It was my pleasure to meet and interview Virginija in Lithuania. As soon as I arrived, I phoned Virginija, and we agreed to meet in her office. Before we started the interview, Virginija showed me the very old books she was working on as a Professor of Old Lithuanian. I felt a reverence as I touched the books, some more than four hundred years old, and wondered who the people were so many, many years ago that used these same books. It was difficult to tear myself away from these treasures, but I was on a mission and it was time to get to work. Virginija spent a lot of time with her grandparents when she was child, and I would like to share with you the story of her heroic family.

Maria and Andrius Urbonas lived in a small village near the Ninth Fort, just outside of Kaunas. Their daughter Ona (Virginija's mother) was twenty, and their sons, Juozas and Algirdas, were fourteen and four respectively. They were very poor, barely eking out a living on their farm. They owned one horse, one cow, and a few hens. By 1941, Kaunas' Jews were in the ghetto, and the Soviet Union had occupied Lithuania. It was also a horrible year for the Urbonas family. Two of their older sons had been exiled to Siberia and died there. A year later the family made a decision to help others.

David Sandler was forced to work not far

from the Urbonas farm. The farm family became friendly with him, often feeding him and sympathizing with his situation. It was David who told them about his brother-in-law, Yerachmiel Siniuk. Siniuk had been taken to a German labor camp where he worked in a weapons warehouse. He was badly injured in an explosion and lost his left hand. David knew it was only a matter of time that his brother-in-law would be allowed to live. The Germans executed the disabled first.

David asked Andrius if he would hide Yerachmiel, and Andrius never for a moment

hesitated. In his mind, it was the right thing to do.

Until 1944, a mill filled with hay would be the home of Yerachmiel Siniuk. He had an idea that Andrius could save more Jews. Again, Andrius did not hesitate. He said he could only be killed once, so it really didn't matter how many people he harbored.

Siniuk returned to the Ghetto where he met a man named Fain. Fain, his wife Mira, and two children took refuge in the mill. Yerachmiel remained in the Ghetto and found Henry Kacenenbogen. Andrius arrived with his horse and cart at a certain place where they were to meet. Henry, his wife Julia, and his nephew Jacob stretched out on the bottom of the cart, while Andrius piled it high with hay.

The mill had two levels. Fain's family lived in the lower level, and Siniuk and Henry's family lived above. At night they were able to get some fresh air by leaving through a tunnel.

Every week Andrius and Juozas went in search of food. There were times they had to go twenty or thirty miles outside the city in the cart. Andrius made wooden spoons and sold them in the market. The people in hiding also gave them money to buy the food. Eventually the Germans and Ukrainians came and confiscated the cow and the horse.



Yerachmel Siniuk and Ona Damanskienė hug after a long separation.

Even with the aid of a cane, Virginija's grandmother had great difficulty moving. One of her legs was hurt when she was a child, and the other was injured during a house fire. Although her daughter Ona helped, it was very hard for her to cook for so many people, but she managed. Before Easter, Henry's wife Julia helped Maria bake cakes.

Twice a day Juozas took food and drink to the people in hiding. Although he played with other children, he never let the secret slip from his lips.

As the Russian front began to move closer, Andrius worried that a bomb might hit the mill. He dug a hole under the floor of a back bedroom. The entrance was through a closet that was filled with clothes and anything else that would detract from the hiding place. The Jews moved out of the mill during the night.

Two days later a bomb hit the mill, and it was totally destroyed. The family became concerned about their safety that night, and they all left the house to hide outside. The artillery fire from the eastern front was tremendous, and the house was partly destroyed by another bomb.

The Russian army entered the village two days later, and the Jews were liberated from their hiding place.

Andrius always told Virginija that he believed he should help anyone who needed help. When

the war was over, they took a teacher who had no place to live into their home. Later they helped a family who returned from Siberia who had nothing and nowhere to lay their heads.

After the war, Henry's family relocated to the United States and Fain migrated to Israel where his wife Mira would gain recognition as an artist. Siniuk made his home in Vilnius where he kept in close contact with the Urbonas family and helped them as often as he could. In 1957, he also moved to Israel and the families lost contact.

The family's goodness and courage was never forgotten. As early as 1948, Henry began to

search for Andrius and his family. He sent packages and letters to Andrius, but they were never received.

By 1970 both Maria and Andrius died never knowing what became of the people they had saved. It was not until 1998 that Henry finally found Ona and her daughter Virginija. Henry is the founder of the Holocaust Museum in El Paso, Texas, and it is there that Virginija saw the tree that was planted and dedicated to Andrius.

Soon after Lithuania regained independence, Yerachmiel began his search for his rescuers. He found Ona and Juozas and has been helping the family ever since. Ona and Virginija frequently receive telephone calls and packages from Israel. He wrote the following words when he recommended the family for the great honor of "The Righteous"; "The whole family welcomed me warmly, fed me, gave me a hiding place. They were aware of the danger and risk they had taken upon themselves... but still risked their lives for us." He arranged for Ona and Virginija to go to Israel for Israel's 50th anniversary. In Jerusalem, through Yad Vashem, the Urbonas family received the title of honor, "The Righteous."

Last December Ona and Virginija were flown to New York where they, along with others, were again honored at the Waldorf-Astoria. Both Yerachmiel from Israel and Henry from Texas, were

there to share the occasion with them.

There will always be a connection between Raya, the daughter, and Virginija, the granddaughter of the people involved in the events that happened so many years before they were born. Their lives will forever be interwoven because Andrius and Maria refused to let the times dictate their beliefs in what was right and what was wrong.

A sincere thank you to *The Voice* for their

help in contacting Raya. I would also like to thank Raya for her help in writing this article. A very special thank you to Dr. Virginija Vasiliauskienė for sharing so much of the story with me in Kaunas, as well as the many e-mail messages we shared. I would be remiss if I did not thank my dear friend and colleague, Paulette Wishnick, who planted the idea in my head to write the story. To all the Righteous Gentiles, may God bless you for doing what was right. ♦

Editor's Note...

Another Picture of Humanity...

In a recent television news story, Elena Anužis and her husband were the focus because of her efforts to help several Jews escape the Nazis in Lithuania during World War II. Katie Heid, of WLNS NewsCenter 6, Lansing, Michigan, covered this story on June 26th, 2002.

Heid reported that the Consulate General of Israel had been visiting Lansing, and took time to honor Mrs. Anužis. She reported that the Anužis family decided to help Jews in light of the horrific events occurring at that time by taking in a young woman. Saulius Anužis, Elena's son, said, "My parents just had my sister, and she was a baby. They pretended this woman was their cousin. My dad worked for the railroad and helped her get out of Lithuania and into Israel."

Saulius spoke for his mother because Elena suffers from Alzheimer's.

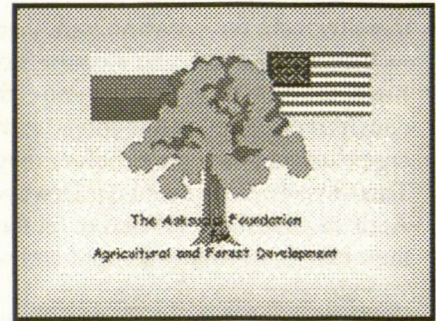
Heid filmed Saulius and Elena Anužis saying, "My father said it best. He said we weren't helping them because they were Jews. We were helping them because they were people who were being unfairly persecuted, because they were Jewish."



Heid said that "the woman that the Anužis family helped escape the Nazis now lives in Israel. She came to mid-Michigan 10 years ago to meet with her rescuers. And about five years ago, she started calling different organizations to try to get recognition for the Anužis family.

The news story reported that "Mrs. Anužis received the Righteous Among the Nations Award at Congregation Shaarey Zedek. It's one of the highest awards given by the nation of Israel to non-Jewish people, and recognizes them for risking their freedom and safety to rescue Jews from Nazi persecution." ♦

The Auksučiai Foundation



LITHUANIA'S FARMERS AND THE LAND RECEIVE ATTENTION

Born as an idea to help Lithuania's small scale farmers in the United States, the Auksučiai Foundation has had an opportunity to grow and become an important resource to Lithuanians.

According to the Foundation, the purpose of the program for Agricultural and Forest Development is to help small scale Lithuanian farmers become more self-sufficient and competitive in a free market economy and to sponsor and organize agricultural education exchanges for young farmers and students.

The Auksučiai Foundation research, demonstration and education facility is located northeast of Kuršėnai, County of Šiauliai, Lithuania. It has access to 366 acres of land (222.5 acres of cultivated land and 143.5 acres of forests). At this time, 58.5 acres are dedicated to the Lithuanian non-profit organization "Auksučių Institutas", which is utilized by the Foundation to carry out agricultural and forest ecological research training.

A field day is planned for August 8, 2002 at the Auksučiai Farm and Center. Colleagues from the U.S. and Lithuania and local farmers will exchange academic information. They all will have the opportunity to see new crops and technologies.

From the very beginning, Vytautas J. Šliupas,

P.E., president of the Foundation strove to make the program work. An irrigation, drainage and water resources engineer retired from Morrison-Knudsen Intl., Co., he works closely with a diligent board. This board includes Vice President for Program Development – Lawrence D. Clement, Fairfield, CA (is County Director/Farm Advisor, Soils, Water, Economics, University of California Cooperative Extension); Vice President International/Academic Relations – Professor Calvin O. Qualset, Rohnert Park, CA (is a world known Cereal Grain Geneticist and Director of Resources Conservation Program, University of California); Vice President for Exchange Programs and Treasurer – John S. Chiles, Davis, CA (is a local farmer and researcher for Campbell Seeds and board member of Yolo County Farm bureau); Secretary – Leland H. Ruth-Rutkauskas, Sacramento, CA (is President Emeritus of the Agricultural Council of California and an expert in farmer cooperative development).

Other members include honorary sponsors Mrs. Alma Adamkienė, First Lady of Lithuania; Dr. Algirdas Avizienis, University of California, Los Angeles; and Professor Emeritus Czesław Miłosz, Nobel Prize Laureate, University of California, Berkeley.

Honorary directors in Lithuania include: Prof.

THE AUKSUČIAI FOUNDATION can also be contacted through their web page, www.aukfoundation.org for further detailed information.

Habil, Dr. Leonas Kadziulis, former Chairman Lithuania Science Council, Vilnius; Dr. Edvardas Gedvilas, Šiauliai Region Rural Commissioner, Kuršėnai; Vladas Kavaliauskas, Forester, Kuršėnai-Auksučiai Dist; Darius Malinauskas, General Manager, Nutrilita, UAB, Šiauliai.

Major accomplishments in 2001 were many. Some are:

- Obtained major grant to build Agricultural Research and Learning Center at the institute site in Lithuania;
- Sent \$200,000 Humanitarian Aid shipment to Lithuania, in addition \$125,000 in farm equipment was delivered for use at the Auksučiai Institute;
- Sponsored a student from the Lithuanian University of Agriculture for eleven months of study and hands-on work in agriculture in California.

The goals for 2002 are being expanded to provide concrete results for Lithuanian farmers.

Several goals are as follows:

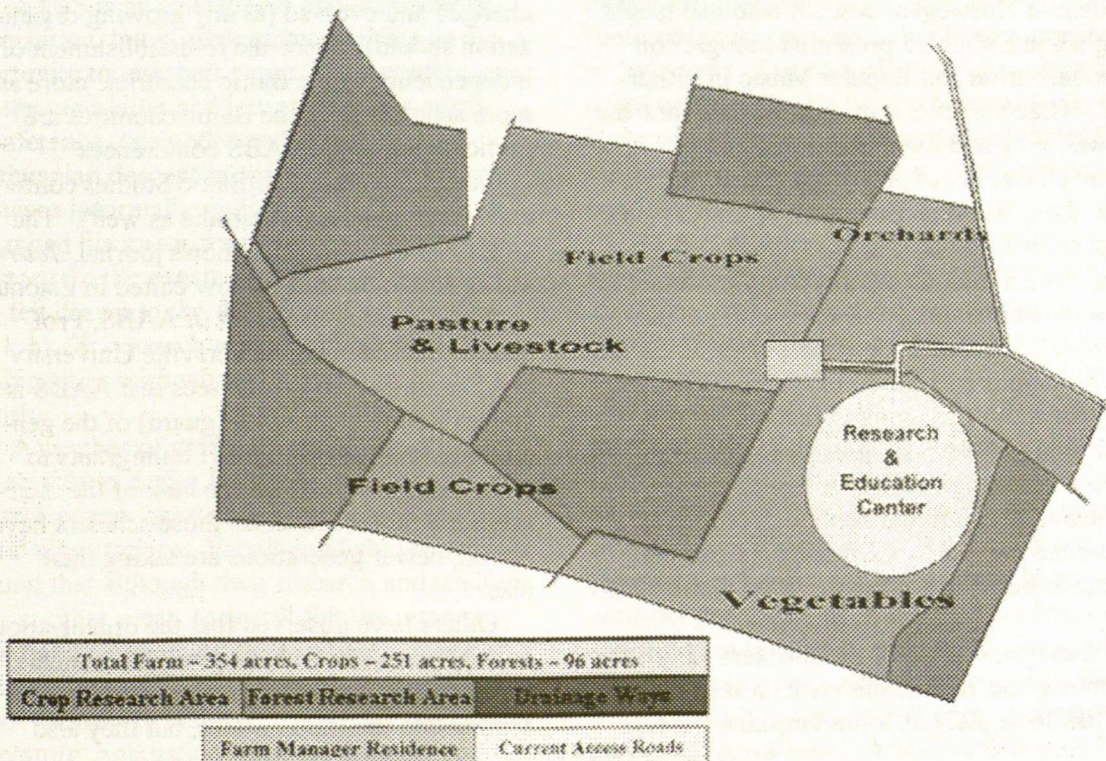
- One Board member is taking sabbatical leave from the University of California and is spending nine months on site at the farm in Lithuania developing the Research and Demonstration program at the farm;
- Construction of a major building will begin on the farm site which will be utilized as a Research and Teaching Center;
- A Symposium and a Field Day will be conducted on site at the farm for local farmers and agricultural research specialists.

The Foundation has no paid administrative overhead: 100% of the money received goes to support programs. You are interested in getting involved with a donation, please make checks payable and mail to:

The Auksučiai Foundation
2907 Frontera Way
Burlingame, CA 94010 USA

The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-deductible organization – ID# 91-1944327.

Or e-mail Mr. Šliupas at slipas-vyt@earthlink.net. ♦



Auksučiai Research Farm Site Plan

Ramunė Kubilius

18th Conference on Baltic Studies: The Baltic States in the Era of Globalization

An American religious historian of Czech descent who now teaches courses on comparative religions in Japan presented information on "Neopagan movements in Lithuania and Latvia". A Latvian American folklorist and cultural historian shared insights about Baptist and Lutheran Latvians in Brazil. A graduate student of Norwegian descent who had taught English in Lithuania presented thoughts on "Globalization and Popular Music in Lithuania", while an American doctoral student from Hawaii who had lived in Estonia and was now at the University of Aberdeen (Scotland) presented on "Rujaline Eestimaa: A Rock Band's Impact on Estonian Culture During Occupation". A Lithuanian anthropology professor presented his findings on socio-cultural panorama of Lithuanian-ness in the USA (during different periods and waves of migration from Lithuania). A Lithuanian graduate student, now living in Norway, presented on "The Forces of Change in Higher Education in Lithuania". A Latvian American professor presented the topic: "Globalization and the Baltic States: What is Myth, What is the Reality".

These were some of the speakers and their themes at the 18th Conference on Baltic Studies that took place at Johns Hopkins Univer-

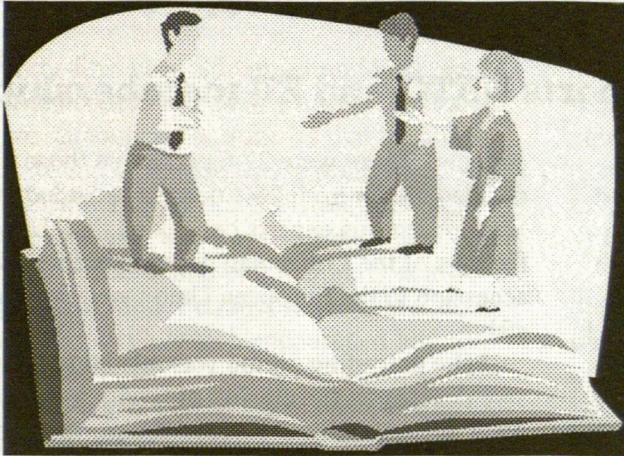
sity-Homewood Campus (Baltimore, MD) June 6-8th. The overall conference theme was "The Baltic States in the Era of Globalization".

The Conference is sponsored every two years by the AABS (Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies) and presentations are given in English. Founded in 1968, in recent years, the 600+ member organization has changed and evolved (as any growing organization should). Since the re-establishment of independence in the Baltic countries, more and more scholars from the Baltic countries are participating at the AABS conferences (although there are also Baltic Studies conferences in Europe and Australia as well). The editorship of the organization's journal, *Journal of Baltic Studies*, is now edited in Estonia.

The incoming president of AABS, Prof. Saulius Sužiedelis of Millersville University (PA) has indicated that he sees that AABS is going through a changing (guard) of the generations. Post World War II immigrants to North America made up the bulk of the membership until recently. As those scholars have retired, newer generations are taking their place.

Others have observed that the organization now interests researchers, graduate students, and scholars who have an interest in Baltic Studies and the Baltic States, but they also

RAMUNĖ KUBILIUS is a regular contributor to BRIDGES.



look at issues affecting the entire Baltic Sea Region. The attendees at the 2002 conference included scholars not only from North America and the Baltic countries, but also those from Australia, Scotland, Sweden, Germany, and Denmark. One American-educated professor even traveled from Japan where he currently is teaching comparative religions.

AABS is an educational and scholarly organization, but it gives many students an opportunity to test their wings at the conferences, in the newsletter and journal. At this year's conference, one undergraduate student of Lithuanian descent in speaking with other attendees informally, indicated that he had just changed his major from computer science to history (to the consternation of his parents), but he felt drawn to the AABS conference as a way to look for research topics and faculty at other universities with whom he might want to network.

A number of graduate students and faculty were able to parlay Baltic themes into their research papers, master's degree theses and doctoral dissertations. Faculty and students alike found that although their research and teaching lay in other areas, they still felt the interest, need and compulsion to investigate topics of interest that had Lithuanian, Estonian, or Latvian themes- in history, psychology, education, literature, linguistics, political science, and many other social science and humanities spe-

cialties.

At a lunchtime address, former White House Baltic Desk expert (currently an advisor at Voice of America), Paul Goble, was very frank about current trends in the Baltics – overcoming the legacy, the return to the Western World and Europe, as well as the changed position of Russia in the world. He warned that perhaps there has been too much celebration and too little thought to the responsibilities and challenges of independence. He also expressed disapproval of the decision

for Baltic and other former Soviet-occupied countries' athletes participating in athletic games in Moscow scheduled during the anniversary of the mass exiles and deportations to Siberia.

Two ambassadors (Lithuania and Estonia) and an embassy representative (Latvia) participated in a political science roundtable. They mentioned that diplomacy often goes its own route and in its own time, that history consists of "windows of opportunity". While military cooperation in the Baltic States is a priority, but economic interests (example investments) may put the three countries in competition with each other.

The ambassadors still hear a lot of questions about why the three countries still have three currencies and three militaries. One quoted a French official who stated that "we are not a superpower and we do not plan on becoming one". In any case, the Baltic countries are still proving themselves to other nations – showing they have values, democracy, and rules of law.

AABS always seeks new members. Interested persons should check out the website (<http://www.balticstudies-aabs.lanet.lv/>) and consider participating at the 2004 conference, scheduled to take place in Toronto, Canada or the 2006 conference, scheduled to again take place in Washington. Whether presenting or participating (or both), AABS conferences can be stimulating and provocative. ♦

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

Majority of Lithuania supports NATO and EU membership

Public opinion surveys conducted in Lithuania in May and June have revealed a continued growth of public support to the Baltic state's aspired membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) from 64.6 percent at the outset of the year up to 68.1 percent presently.

According to survey by the Vilnius center, 27.2 percent of the population saw NATO membership unnecessary to Lithuania, and another 4.7 percent showed no interest in NATO integration issues.

The Vilnius surveys also showed that the pro-EU Lithuanian population expanded up to 52.5 percent from 49 percent seen last month, contrary to 24.9 percent of EU membership op-

ponents. There were 22.6 percent of those undecided, down from 26.1 percent recorded in May. Vilnius experts concluded that the feelings of the Lithuanian population towards accession to the European Union were growing stable.

"The preceding period was related to intensive debates on the closing of Ignalina nuclear plant and agricultural issues. We can say that reasoning provided during the debates gradually yielded results in favor of EU supporters," Vilnius director Vladas Gaidys said.

The EU-seeking Lithuania is expected to wind up accession talks at the close of 2002 to be able enter the EU in 2004. ◆

— *The Baltic News Service*

Some barriers remain before EU acceptance

In accession to the European Union, Lithuania has to cope with three remaining tough-est problems—agriculture, closure of Ignalina nuclear plant, and the Kaliningrad region — the barriers which visiting EU Commissioner for Enlargement Guenter Verheugen and Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas named during a news conference in Vilnius on July 4.

"These issues are most complicated ones but not very sharp, so I hope we will solve them successfully, for we have enough time. We have discussed in detail the agricultural issues, namely an amendment to Article 47 of the Constitution, our further actions, and amendments and other documents related to integration particularly in agricultural field..." Brazauskas said.

The Lithuanian premier said he was satisfied with both official contacts and personal interviews with the European commissioner because of built-up mutual confidence.

"I can affirm that you are indeed close to achieving the final goal," Verheugen said.

As regards the move of Vilnius to resume talks on land sale to foreigners, the commissioner billed it as a technical issue, because there were transition periods negotiated with some countries.

Verheugen said the European Union was firmly behind a posture that funding of the Ignalina n-plant shutdown represented shared responsibility of parties.

Brussels he said would not create any privileges or revise its principles when resolving the visa issue of the Russian Kaliningrad region. The commissioner said he resented the emphasis laid by Moscow on visas rather than on pending border problems. The European Commission has already offered its assistance to streamlining infrastructure at the frontier of Russia. ◆

— *The Baltic News Service*

Lithuanian presidential candidates announcing intentions

Forty-four year old lawyer and businessman Juozas Petraitis, a former Australian, émigré, announced on June 19 that his ambition is to run in the upcoming presidential election of Lithuania before Christmas this year.

The aspirant, who has lived in Lithuania for fourteen years, has no political party campaigning for him. Petraitis stated that it was a group of citizens, which encouraged him to stand in the polls.

"People have persuaded me that among current hopeful presidents they see nobody to cast a vote for. These politicians already had the chance to do their job. As no other candidates emerged, I have made up my mind to run now, since in the future it may be too late," Petraitis said. The candidate vowed, if elected, to first crack down on corruption beginning from the courts.

Numbering himself among the richest persons in Lithuania, Petraitis revealed that he started his business before graduation from UK's Cambridge University. Upon coming Lithuania in 1989, Petraitis has worked in the Supreme Council (parliament), the economy and trade ministries, and Lietuvos Bankas. The hopeful president currently provides legal advice and is engaged in real estate business.

Rating his chances to win the presidency, the aspirant said other candidates were not equal rivals because they already had the opportunity "to undertake deeds to curb corruption, the worst phenomenon hindering progress of Lithuania".

To date, intentions to seek the seat of president have been aired by the leader of the Christian Democrat Party Kazys Bobelis; the leader of the Liberal Democrat Party, ex-Premier Rolandas Paksas; the head of the Centre Union Kestutis Glaveckas; the vice-chairman of the Conservative Party Andrius Kubilius; the chairwoman of the Peasant and New Democracy Union Kazimiera Prunskienė; the leader of the Liberal Union Eugenijus Gentvilas; and Liberal MP Algimantas Matulevičius.

The incumbent President Valdas Adamkus, also a former émigré from the US, and Premier Algirdas Brazauskas who top a political rating list have not confirmed their participation in the next presidential elections so far. Both politicians are likely to voice their decisions in autumn. ◆

— *The Baltic News Service*

Cleanup will proceed with EU aid

The European Union earmarked 9.4 million euros in assistance to Lithuania facing a challenge of managing Kairiai dumps near northern Šiauliai town, recently hit by the nation's worst spilling of hazardous substances, a few other old dumps in Šiauliai region and construction of a new one, the finance ministry reported.

On July 2, the ministry and European Commission officials signed a financial memorandum on an investment project for a waste management system in Šiauliai.

The EU assistance package will come from

the ISPA fund. Lithuania is to co-finance the project with 5.26 million euros, of which 2.05 million litas will represent the state budget funds envisaged in a State Investment Program and the rest will come in form of loans.

The project will entail the installation of a regional dump in Austrakiai, gradual closing of local dumps in Šiauliai region and installing new waste collection sites. The deadline for completion of this project was scheduled for the end of 2006. ◆

— *The Baltic News Service*

Soviet-Nazi crime commission held in Vilnius

The 6th meeting of international investigation commission for crimes of Nazi and Soviet regimes in Lithuania were held in Vilnius on June 18 to approve a dozen of conclusions drafted by researchers.

The meeting dealt with fresh research material concerning crimes of totalitarian regimes, namely Soviet and Nazi crimes against Gypsies, growing anti-Semitism during Soviet occupation, massacre of Lithuanian military officers, and mobilization waged by Soviet authorities.

The research work was done on the initiative of the Commission to bridge gaps in Lithuanian history that resulted from a 50-year Soviet occupation. It received material about arrests and other forms of violence in 1940-

1941, massacre of civilians and military, forced employment of the Lithuanian population in USSR armed forces at the end of World War Two, and suppression of armed resistance movement in 1944-1953. The investigation material was submitted to the Soviet crime evaluation sub-commission.

The other sub-commission for Nazi crimes deals with anti-Semitism in Lithuania, preconditions for the Holocaust, the role of persons who served in Nazi institutions, and persecution of non-Jews. ♦

— *The Baltic News Service*

Lithuanian Navy marks decennium on July 4

The Lithuanian Navy marked its 10th jubilee. Defence Minister Linas Linkevičius attended solemn celebrations of this date in the Klaipėda seaport.

Linkevičius affirmed it was evident that over a decade the Lithuanian marine forces paid particular heed to officer training, which he said would be vital after the NATO summit in Prague when all the armed forces would be given fresh tasks.

The defense leader told a news conference the Navy of Lithuania was not large but specialized in various fields. Now its task is to find a niche in NATO structures.

Linkevičius spoke optimistically about the future of the Baltic trilateral project BALTRON upon admission to NATO — this squadron could become a joint unit of several countries in the Baltic Sea region.



Commander of Lithuanian Navy, Captain Kestutis Macijauskas said the main point is preparedness of servicemen for emerging challenges rather than number of boats. The Navy leader pledged to focus on servicemen training in foreign countries in the future.

He commented that Lithuania's major accomplishment in a decade was its recognition as a marine state.

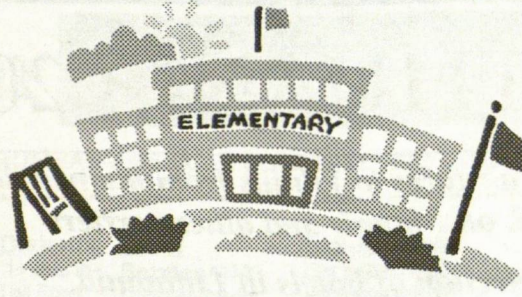
Klaipėda has not got a military port to receive foreign warships, but Macijauskas expressed hope that this problem would be resolved by the close of the year. Presently, the Lithuanian Navy includes ten boats forming battle, mine, and patrol divisions, and a cutter section with 700-member crew. ♦

— *The Baltic News Service*

World Bank approves loan for Lithuanian education

The World Bank voted on June 21 to approve 29.0 million euros (1.2 billion litas) financing for an education improvement project in Lithuania. The project aims at improving the quality of teaching at basic schools, rehabilitating school buildings, and making more efficient use of resources allocated to education. The number of schools to participate in the project stands at 400.

The project will have five components, which includes improvement of teaching and learning conditions and supplying of teaching aids as well as school busses to transport stu-



dents, modernizing the education quality management system, upgrading facilities in 62 primary schools to improve energy efficiency, rationalizing the primary school network, and improving the education monitoring system.

The costs of the loan are fixed at 0.55 percent over LIBOR (London Interbank Offered Rate), repayable in 17 years, including five-year grace period.

Since Lithuania joined the bank in 1992, the Bank's commitments to Lithuania total \$490.8 million for 19 projects. ♦

— *The Baltic News Service*

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