
BRIDGES

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Our 25th Year!



Lithuanian Orphan Care extends Christmas wishes...Special NATO Report

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

During the Prague Summit, I tried to closely follow media reports regarding NATO and the Baltic States. The key word in the last sentence is "tried", because it was nearly impossible to read, listen, or watch a report that was more than 10 seconds in length regarding this momentous event. They didn't exist.

One night, during Pres. Bush's visit to Lithuania, ABC News presented a quick blurb in connection with the archeological findings of Napoleon's troops. It really brought home the unmistakable fact that NATO's enlargement meant more to the Baltic States than to America and Americans.

The American media continues to ignore the Baltics — during the Olympics, you never did get to see the Lithuanian delegation march in. How many Olympic games — winter and summer — have gone by since 1991? Let's face it, the Baltics are not hot enough for the American media.

In fact, the Russians had stated in one news report that America will always do what it wants disregarding how other countries felt or recommended, especially at the present time in relation to Iraq. Thus, why would America be significantly affected by an enlargement?

The gain here was for the Baltic States — perhaps more ideologically. The fact that they now belong to a huge encompassing faction does bring about security that would protect them from the Russians never before experienced, even during their independence years. They are seen as insiders and partners in a brotherhood with countries that encircle them. They can finally feel a part of the European community and as political equals.

As for America, it is wonderful that Pres. Bush came through with America's support for the Baltic States. Yet it is a shame that Americans don't see the importance of a unified global community that NATO can help support. By working together at the discussion table and relying on each other for world security, wars can be diverted and terrorism can be quelled. I realize that it is not so easy. It is time NATO's strength in numbers, in countries, showed the full potential of its promise of world security and stability. And it is time that America and Americans recognize this also.

Rasa Ardyš-Juška

Editor

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We all know that Christmas Eve dinner is always graced with different herring dishes. Here are a few fishing secrets for those of you who would like to try their hand in bringing it to the dinner table straight from the sea.

According to Sportfishing magazine, "only few sports fishermen know how to fish Baltic herring with reel and rod. This silvery delicacy of the sea is one of the most versatile fish-species to prepare. You can cook, fry, smoke, grill, salt, and make different pickles out of Baltic herring.

Most sport fishermen use several shiny, gold or silver, hooks on a rig that imitate herring natural food, amphipods or small minnows. Herring is usually caught three to five to eight at a time." Peak time to go fishing is high tide outgoing and incoming high tide.

This silvery catch harvested in the fall can be marinated in brine or a vinegar/sugar marinade for the Christmas season. Good luck!

On the cover:
"Lithuanian Orphan Care" recipients show a smile to those who care.
Photo: Jeanne Dorr

NATO Updates...

Lithuania among seven countries invited to join NATO

The decision to issue invitations to seven countries to join the North Atlantic Organization was announced Nov. 21st, 2002 at the beginning of a two-day Summit meeting of NATO Heads of State and Government in Prague. Among the countries invited to join were Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Following the opening of the Summit at the heavily guarded Prague Congress Center, NATO Secretary General Lord George Robertson made the following long-awaited announcement at 9:55 a.m. local time.

From its inception, NATO has never been an exclusive organization. From twelve original countries, we enlarged successively to 14, 15, 16 and then, in 1999, to 19. NATO's door is still open.

In 1999, NATO leaders set up a Membership Action Plan to assist countries across Europe to prepare for eventual membership. Aspirant countries have been working hard to modernize and reform their armed forces, and to meet NATO's very high standards on values, the rule of law and robust democratic institutions. All aspirants have been faced with tough and difficult decisions. It is a reflection of their political determination to join NATO that they have met this challenge.

In June last year, NATO leaders announced their intention to issue further invitations to join the Alliance. Since then, we have been

working to ensure that NATO itself is ready to enlarge. As a result of a comprehensive internal reform process, an organization designed originally for 12

members will be ready to operate as effectively with over twice that number.

We can therefore say with complete confidence that this round of enlargement will maintain and increase NATO's strength, cohesion and vitality, and that it is not directed against the security interests of any partner state.



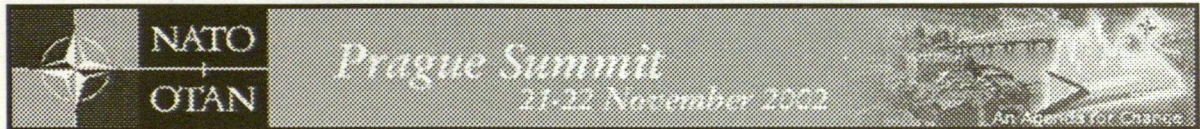
NATO Secretary General Lord George Robertson.

Photo: <http://www.natosummit.cz/en/>

THE ARTICLE was edited from separate reports from the Joint Baltic American National Committee, Inc., the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. Public Affairs Office, ELTA special correspondent Vereta Rupeikaitė in Prague via The Information Center for Homecoming Lithuanians, The New York Times, the Moscow Times, and Radio Free Europe.

You have recently received a Comprehensive report on the enlargement process. Today, we decide on further invitations to countries to begin Accession Talks. This is a crucially important decision where consensus among Allies has emerged gradually over the last few months. I believe that consensus has now been reached.

I therefore put to the Heads of State and Government of NATO that they agree that we invite to Accession talks with NATO the following nations: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. I take it that this is agreed – the Council has so decided. ♦



<http://www.natosummit.cz/en/>

Lithuania's Road to NATO...

Lithuania has walked a long way, which took more than eight years, to hear the message of NATO on its new enlargement wave taking in seven new entrants, including Lithuania, at a Prague summit on November 21st.

Once nine mainstream political parties of the country reached consensus, on January 4, 1994, on seeking membership in the western defense bloc, then President Algirdas Brazauskas sent a letter to NATO Secretary General George Robertson to apply for admission of Lithuania to this organization.

Later in the same year, the Baltic state acceded to the program Partnership for Peace, and for the first time dispatched its servicemen to the NATO-led peacekeeping operation in Croatia.

In 1996, the national parliament passed the law on national security fundamentals naming NATO membership as a key tool to ensure national security. In the succeeding year, Vilnius set up the national mission at NATO. Later, the US and three Baltic states signed a cooperation charter on January 16, 1998.

In 1999, The Seimas-adopted the law on a strategy for the defense system's funding by increasing national defense spending – up to 2 percent of the GDP until 2001. On April 23,

1999, the NATO summit in Washington approved the Membership Action Plan for Lithuania.

In May of 2001, eleven parliamentary parties signed a deal on the defense policy, which committed them to allocate two percent of the GDP to the defense from 2001 to 2004. In the same month, foreign ministers of NATO-seeking nations sealed the "Vilnius Declaration". On May 27th of the same year, Vilnius hosted a session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the first for former eastern bloc countries.

It took Lithuanians in Lithuania, Lithuanians throughout the world, including a very strong group in the United States, Baltic State sympathizers, foresighted Congressmen and Senators, and journalists to help Lithuania and her Baltic friends come to hear the words spoken by NATO Secretary General Lord George Robertson on November 21st, 2002.

A hearty thank you — ačiū— goes to all the *Bridges* readers for your efforts and hard work as you supported Lithuania through the years. ♦

Lithuania's Reactions...

"This is a great day for Lithuania," said Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus after hearing NATO Secretary General George Robertson's historical statement inviting seven candidates of eastern Europe to join the 19-nation bloc in Prague on Nov. 21st, 2002.

Speaking about the landmark event, towards which Lithuania had

moved for almost a decade, Adamkus said he believed the entire Lithuanian nation rejoiced at this event.

"I am happy that the aspiration which I uttered during my inauguration speech (as president) - to take Lithuania to NATO during my tenure - has come true," Adamkus said.

Defense Minister Linas Linkevičius commented that Lithuania will not feel the advantage of being a NATO member right away, but he acknowledged that with the issued invitation to join the Alliance, the country has become safer.

"This is not a final breakthrough and not a full membership yet, but the invitation already means a great achievement," Linkevičius said during the Prague-hosted summit.

As for the aspired "yield" from NATO membership, the official maintained it would not come in a week because only "hard toil and investments in technologies" could bring it.

"We have got the entire set of conditions to attract investments to our country. The fact we have got stability will improve life in other fields, too. But we will not have to wait long for the improvement, maybe within one and a half years when Lithuanian membership in NATO is fixed," Linkevičius said.



Lithuania's Pres. Adamkus and U.S. Pres. Bush.

Photo: <http://www.natosummit.cz/en/>

Speaker of Seimas Artūras Paulauskas billed NATO's invitation for Lithuania as an "historic event in the contemporary history of Lithuania and the fact difficult to compare with anything else".

The parliament leader maintained that an official invitation for Vilnius meant real integra-

tion into western structures.

"There is the sense of pride in that over 12 years we have built a democracy, free market economy, and managed not only to declare but also defend human rights. The global community recognizes us as a democratic state which maybe still has some work lying ahead but enjoys bright prospects," Paulauskas continued.

Nonetheless, the speaker of Seimas reminded that being a NATO member meant rights, duties, and responsibility because Lithuania would be among those, which would adopt world's most crucial decisions.

Paulauskas said 2003 would be the year of intensive work between the Seimas and parliaments of NATO member states to accelerate the ratification of the Lithuanian Accession Treaty with NATO. The official stated that, according to an optimistic scenario, this process could take one year.

On Friday, Nov. 22nd, President Valdas Adamkus addressed the summit of Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in Prague, to confirm the commitment of Lithuania to share its responsibilities in the new security environment together with Allies and all interested Partners.

"This includes continued active engagement

in the EAPC and involvement - both bilaterally and as a Partner - in projects, which support reform efforts and address the specific needs of individual countries around this table," he said.

Adamkus said in the recent decade many NATO Partnership initiatives were implemented.

"Just as the Vilnius Group has fostered a culture of co-operation among aspirant countries, so too has the EAPC sowed the seeds of a true Euro-Atlantic security culture. By forging practical security links between the Alliance and its Partners, we can be in a better position to respond to challenges of the 21st century," he said.

As for the growing NATO-Russian partnership, Adamkus said Lithuania looked forward to becoming part of this new relationship and sharing its own positive experience. The Lithuanian president confirmed the resolve of Vilnius to strengthen NATO-Ukraine relations and support reforms in the latter which would further full Euro-Atlantic integration of the Ukraine.

"Today Europe, North America, and other regions confront the same asymmetric threats and share many similar goals. We must stand together against terror and proliferation of weapons of nuclear destruction; consult on

threats; co-ordinate responses; share risks and burdens. Lithuania fully supports the determination of the North Atlantic Council to ensure full and immediate compliance by Iraq of the UN Security Council Resolution 1441," the president said.

The Lithuanian leader named EAPC a key forum that brought together North America and Europe, Allies and Partners.

In conclusion, Adamkus emphasized the importance of the Partnership, which he said prepared Lithuania for participation in international and Alliance operations.

"We are providing deployable units. Elite special forces are carrying out operations in "Enduring Freedom" side by side with their American counterparts. Our military medics are working together with their Czech colleagues in a field hospital in Afghanistan" he said.

Later that same day, Lithuanian Foreign Minister Antanas Valionis met briefly with NATO Secretary General George Robertson. The leader of the Alliance congratulated Lithuania and personally applauded the foreign leader on getting the invitation to join NATO.

"Welcome to the club," Robertson told Valionis. ♦



The NATO — Prague Summit during session.

Photo: <http://www.nato.int/>

From the United States Government...

After NATO's announcement that Lithuania had been invited to join them, U.S. President George W. Bush stated he was impatient to visit the Lithuanian capital Vilnius, as he personally saluted President Valdas Adamkus for the invitation of the Baltic state to NATO, "You have achieved your goal at last," Adamkus cited Bush.

Pres. Bush was among many world leaders participating at the Summit. Bush remarked that "by welcoming seven members, we will not only add to our military capabilities, we will refresh the spirit of this great democratic alliance."

The U.S. delegation also included Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of State Colin Powell, and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice.

President Bush and the First Lady traveled to Vilnius on Nov. 22 to meet the three Baltic presidents and other leaders, and to lend support to the candidacies of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as they now begin to concentrate on the ratification process. This process is expected to be completed in 2004 by the time of the next NATO Summit.

Pres. Bush flew to Vilnius from St. Petersburg where he traveled to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Pres. Bush, on a maiden visit to Lithuania, met with the Speaker of Lithuanian Seimas Artūras Paulauskas and Premier Algirdas Brazauskas in the presidential office on Saturday morning.

Following an award ceremony during which Pres. Bush received the Great Cross of Vytautas Magnus Order, the American leader held a meeting with President Valdas Adamkus. He then talked with all three Baltic state heads – of which Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga and Estonian leader Arnold Ruutel represented their countries.

Pres. Adamkus presented a sculpture, entitled "The Baltic Wind", as a keepsake to the U.S. president. In return and being aware of

Lithuania's great interest for basketball, Pres. Bush brought to Vilnius a basketball bearing the autograph of Michael Jordan.

While the state heads discussed political issues, the U.S. First Lady Laura Bush and Lithuania's First Lady Alma Adamkienė had a morning tea and paid a visit to Vilnius University.

Subsequent to these official meetings, Pres. Bush greeted the Lithuanian people in the Town Hall Square of Vilnius. Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga and Estonian leader Arnold Ruutel were present at the event, too. Introducing Pres. Bush to thousands of Lithuanian people gathered in the Square, Pres. Valdas Adamkus said that the U.S. president made a big contribution to all these achievements [NATO invitation].

Pres. Bush said in his speech to the Square's throng, "Today is a great day in the history of Baltic countries and in the history of freedom fights. NATO has been opened for Lithuania and the other six countries. Many people doubted whether this country would regain its freedom. The U.S., which had never recognized the occupation of Lithuania, always believed in this. We believed that this continent would be never divided."

"Dividing is in the past – no more Munichs, nor more Yaltas," Pres. Bush continued.

Saying that a long night of fear, uncertainty, and loneliness was over, the U.S. leader delivered a strong message to the Lithuanian people – those who choose Lithuania as an enemy would have the U.S. as an enemy – words which aroused a stormy reaction from the crowd that shouted "Ačiū!". Pres. Bush leaned over to Pres. Adamkus and asked what that word meant. At the response, Pres. Bush answered to the crowd, "You're welcome!"

Pres. Bush said that NATO needed Lithuania because it would reinforce the Alliance in terms of the courage and strength of ordinary citizens rather than arms. Thousands of people

who gathered in the Town Hall Square welcomed the speech with resounding applause and fervent slogans.

Winding up his brief visit, Pres. Bush met with commanders of the Lithuanian armed forces and servicemen ready to join the NATO-led international operations. Bidding farewell, the U.S. president warmly shook the hand of Army Commander Major General Jonas Kronkaitis, Field Commander Brigadier General Valdas Tutkus, and Defense Minister

Linus Linkevičius.

President W. Bush and his wife, before ascending to Air Force One, said goodbye to the Lithuania's Pres. Adamkus and his wife Alma. The U.S. leader headed for the Romanian capital as part of his tour to NATO invitees in the wake of the landmark Prague summit.

This is the first visit of a U.S. president in Lithuania. In 1992, then U.S. Vice-President Dan Quayle came to visit. ♦

From the Lithuanian-Americans...

A group of Lithuanian-Americans gathered in Vilnius for a regular conference of a joint Seimas-Lithuanian-American Community, Inc (LAC) commission from Nov. 16th to the 24th. They affirmed that albeit the Baltic state received an invitation to NATO, the mission of Lithuanian-Americans on this issue is not over yet.

Members of the LAC see it as their mission to attend to as prompt as possible ratification of the Lithuanian Accession Treaty in NATO member states, the commission members told a news conference in Vilnius on Nov. 22nd. The commission was concluding a series of its autumn session's meetings in the Lithuanian capital city. The group, founded in 1995, holds two sessions annually. It aims to strengthen contacts between the mainland and emigrant community.

In Vilnius, the representatives suggested appointing commerce attaches at Lithuanian consulates abroad, reinforcing economic units at embassies, and supporting newcomer export enterprises.

Regina Narušienė, chairwoman of the presidium of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc, was cited as saying that the NATO bid was at the heart of the commission's activities. Lithuanians in America exhausted all

possible measures to influence the U.S. administration's decision on inviting Lithuania to the defense bloc.

It is a pleasure that Lithuania has invited some American Lithuanians to contribute to the training and strengthening of Lithuanian troops, Narušienė said referring to the appointment of General Jonas Kronkaitis as the army chief.

Liūda Ruginienė, co-chair of the joint commission, said the U.S.-Lithuanian community was anxious about the future transit to Russia's Kaliningrad region via Lithuania and already drafted a resolution on the issue. She added that the accomplishments that the commission has made included the adopted amendments to the citizenship law of Lithuania. Under the modified law, Lithuanian emigrants holding citizenship of another country would be able to keep the Lithuanian citizenship as well, which is vital for the third generation of emigrants.

Other work on the commission's docket is centering on Lithuanian archives abroad, joint culture and science projects, and U.S.-Lithuanian business contacts. ♦

Russia Speaks...

Moscow hoped that the membership of Baltic states in NATO would help to improve the situation of human rights in these countries, said Russian deputy foreign minister Vladimir Tshizhov, speaking in Prague.

Hopefully NATO will be a positive influence on the Baltic States because the foundation documents of the alliance speak about following democratic principles and human rights, including ethnic minorities, Tshizhov said, speaking to Czech television.

Moscow still considers the enlargement of the alliance to be a big mistake because mechanical expansion does not enhance security, Tshizhov continued.

"New challengers and threats to security require new answers, but NATO enlargement is an answer only to Cold War challenges," RIA-Novosti news agency quoted Tshizhov as saying.

At the same time, Moscow believes that the Baltic membership in NATO will not have a negative impact on their bilateral relations with Russia.

According to the *Moscow Times* (11/22/2002) Bush had stated, "I am going to Russia to make it clear to the Russians and to Vladimir Putin they have nothing to fear from NATO expansion, that a Baltic – the Baltics in NATO are positive for Russia," Bush said.

The *Moscow Times* report continued, "Robert Nurick, director of the Moscow Carnegie Center, suggested in an interview Thursday [Nov. 21] that Washington and NATO would do something similar to what they did immediately after the first wave of NATO expansion – provide assurances to Russian defense planners that no weapons of mass destruction would be placed in the Baltics and there would be no huge buildup of troops on Russia's borders."

"Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov said Russia views NATO's expansion "calmly" but expects the Baltic nations to quickly join the modified Conventional Forces in Europe



Russia's Pres. Putin and America's Pres. Bush.

Photo: <http://www.nato.int/>

Treaty, which puts limits on weapons and troops in different regions of the continent, The Associated Press reported. Nurick said that because of procedural problems this was unlikely to happen quickly." the *Moscow Times* added.

In an article from Radio Free Europe, "NATO: Russia Reluctantly Accepts Alliance Expansion" (11/19/2002) by Gregory Feifer, Russia claims, "... the addition of seven relatively weak states will only strain an outdated Cold War alliance that is becoming less and less relevant. Russian politicians back their claims by noting that Washington itself is circumventing the alliance in order to address its top priorities, like counter terrorism, through bilateral and other channels."

Feifer continued, "A new NATO-Russia Council was set up last May to give Russia a voice within the alliance on some matters of mutual security, including counter terrorism and rescue operations. The Moscow Carnegie Center's Nurick said Moscow wants the new structure to work and that both sides have signaled support for the framework, although it is too early to tell whether the council will ultimately prove productive."

In the meantime, it is very wise to keep our eyes and ears on what Russia does and says concerning the Baltic States. Lithuania has several more years to work on its relationship with Russia, yet prove to NATO that it can help in European unification and stability. ♦

From the Press...

The New York Times Nov. 21st, 2002 edition featured William Safire's reaction to the "Victory in the Baltics".

In his editorial Safire recalled his 1989 trip to then Soviet-occupied Latvia. Safire stated, "In those days, the breakup of the powerful Soviet Union was not so inevitable. But because of their unique diplomatic status, the Baltic States - Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania - were seen by U.S. hard-liners as the path to the end of the hollowed-out Soviet empire."

Safire continued that "elder President Bush was blind to this opportunity." He stated that Lithuania persevered and "by provoking Moscow into a brutal crackdown, helped to crack the Soviet Union."

He said that although the Baltic States tried to ensure their safety from Russia by seeking entrance into NATO, the "I'm-all-right-Jack Western Europeans, fearful of offending Russia, denied entry of nations Moscow insisted were former Soviet republics into the military alliance."

Safire had the opportunity to ask Vice President Al Gore if he supported the entry of the Baltic States into NATO. Gore replied positively making "NATO expansion eastward

a part of Bill Clinton's otherwise round-heeled foreign policy. (Hard-liners now grudgingly call it Gore's Good Deed.)"

Safire traced current Pres. Bush's relationship with Russia's president Putin regarding NATO expansion, which led to Putin's acquiescence to the inevitable, but not without a fight. As Safire stated, "behind the scenes, Putin had been trying to delay the expansion by requiring the Baltic States to first join the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, its side agreements now tied in knots by Russian troops around Chechnya. Further, Putin tried to restrict deployment of NATO troops or weapons in the Baltics - which would have made the three states second-class members. George W. was having none of that."

Safire commented that Pres. Bush had said that Russia is not the enemy. He went on to say, "but in Vilnius, Lithuania's Landsbergis has a longer memory and is properly more cautious: I don't see any reason to trust Russians."

William Safire ended his editorial with, "... Those were hard but exciting times, says Sarmite Elerte in Riga, remembering the heady days of rising resistance to tyranny. Now we are a happily boring Western country." ♦

The Importance of the Summit...

Analyzing this NATO Summit, was U.S. political analyst Zbigniew Brzezinski as he flew from Prague together with Pres. Valdas Adamkus to Vilnius on Nov. 22nd. Brzezinski said that the U.S. President has opted for Lithuania and Romania, among would-be new NATO entrants, to be symbols of (geographical) NATO expansion landmarks.

Pres. Bush's visit to Lithuania is also symbolic for Latvia and Estonia: the U.S. heeded the fact that Lithuania was the first to resist the Soviet domination. The Baltic countries, which suffered most of all deserve to be secure, the analyst told reporters aboard the

plane.

According to Brzezinski, the trip was also important in that it would draw the whole world's attention to the Baltic countries which had suffered suppression, managed to gain freedom, and now were in the process of becoming a part of NATO.

The American official encouraged NATO invitees to fulfill all commitments, and the U.S. would keep a close eye on this process. He opined that such small countries as Lithuania could only contribute less to NATO as compared to the other countries; therefore, they should specialize in some field. ♦

Teresė Gečys

The Silver Jubilee of



In the fall of 1976, when as newly elected president of Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. (LAC), Algimantas S. Gečys called together the first meeting of the National Executive Committee, the first item on his agenda was the start-up of an English language newsletter to be published by LAC. He was most apprehensive about the reaction of his colleagues on the LAC. To his surprise, the reaction was overwhelmingly positive.

The title of *Bridges* for the new publication was selected by Dr. Algirdas Budreckis, its first editor and vice-president of LAC. First generation American born to immigrant parents from Lithuania, Dr. Budreckis was already active in numerous Lithuanian-American organizations. A student of Lithuanian history and fluent in the Lithuanian language, he was a strong believer in the necessity to reach those Lithuanian-Americans who had not been as lucky to have been taught the Lithuanian language and who were not familiar with their Lithuanian heritage.

In his first editorial, Dr. Budreckis spelled out the objectives of *Bridges*: to reestablish ties between Lithuanian heritage and those mobile Americans who had distanced themselves

from that heritage. Once a month, the newsletter would focus on Lithuanian culture, on conditions in Soviet occupied Lithuania, and on those Lithuanians in the homeland who yearned for re-establishment of independence.

On assuming the responsibility of editor-in-chief of *Bridges*, Algirdas Budreckis invited an impressive group of Lithuanian-Americans to join the editorial board: Mykolas Drunga, Algirdas Dumčius, Vytautas Jurgėla, Gintaras Karosas, Eduardas Meilus, Jr., Algirdas Mitkus, Dr., Viktoras Stankus, and Jonas Stundzia. Later, Aldona Ryan and Marytė Bizinkauskas also joined the Editorial Board.

The first issue of *Bridges* came out in April of 1977. At that time it was merely an eight-page newsletter whose logo was an old-fashioned railroad bridge with the Gediminas coat of arms on the bridge. The contents included several brief articles and short news items.

As the years passed, the newsletter *Bridges* grew into a 28 page (and sometimes more) journal. There was a turnover of editors. Algirdas Budreckis was replaced by Rimantas A. Stirbys. Many others followed: Dr. Stasys Goštautas, Domicelė (Demie) Jonaitis, Eduar-

TERESĖ GEČYS is in charge of information services for the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. This article is based on an article by S. Algimantas Gečys, written for *Draugas*, Lithuanian daily newspaper. The *Bridges* logo used at the top of the article was the original one used in the 1970s, care of Ms. Snieguolė Jurskytė's archives.

das Meilus, Jr., Juozas Arlauskas, Audronė Gulbinas, Asta Banionis, and Diana Vidutis. During the turn-overs, individual issues were edited by Nerija Gureckas, Linas Norušis, and Rimantas Stirbys.

Since 1998, the editor of *Bridges* is Rasa Ardys-Juška. Her contributions to *Bridges* were recognized

September 21, 2002 during the annual meeting of the LAC XVI Board of Directors in Washington, D.C. On behalf of the National Executive Committee of Lithuanian-American Community, Inc., an inscribed plaque was presented to *Bridges* editor Rasa Ardys-Juška and in her person to all the past editors and contributors who helped *Bridges* grow and become a serious journal read and appreciated by many.

Throughout its 25 years, *Bridges* has remained free of private agendas, free of hostile discussion and polemics, and free of prejudicial articles against minorities or nationalities. It sought to reach Lithuanian Americans. Since the re-establishment of independence, *Bridges* became a helpful tool in LAC's efforts to explain to an American audience the hopes and aspirations of the Lithuanian nation as it struggled to rebuild after half a century under communism. For a number of years, congressional staffs of all 535 members of U.S. Congress received *Bridges*.

During its first ten years, *Bridges* sought to awaken pride in Lithuanian heritage and to inform about the violations of human rights in the homeland. From 1989 to 1991, the focus was on Lithuania's right to be independent and on the re-establishment of its statehood. After independence, the main focus is on Lithuania's

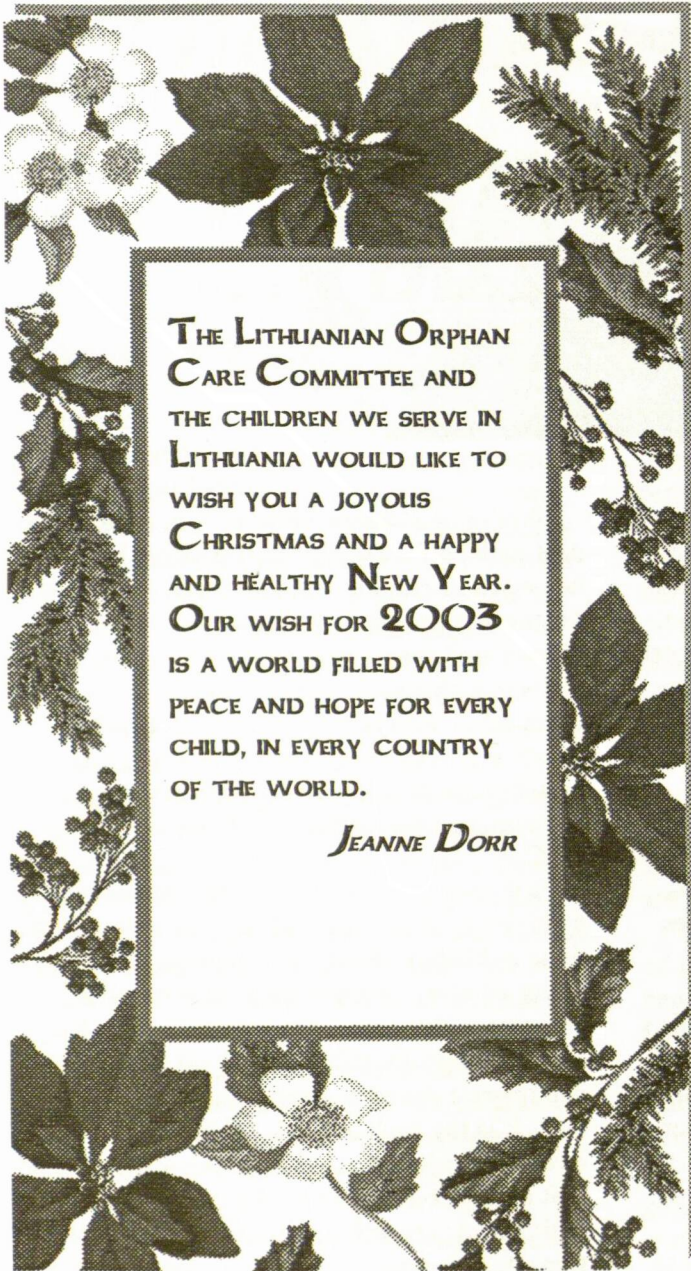


aspirations to join NATO and the European Union, on the modernization of its armed forces, and on the rebuilding of the country not only economically, but also socially and morally. Many pages of *Bridges* are devoted to describe the plight of orphans, handicapped children, and lonely, ailing aged in Lithuania.

While the *Bridges* administrator is forced to deal with publishing deficits, *Bridges* has helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for the less fortunate in Lithuania. Jeanne Šalna Dorr's heart-wrenching articles about her visits to Lithuania's orphans and the many foster families who help care for them reach the hearts and pocketbooks of readers who so generously support Lithuanian Orphan Care through the Human Services Council of the LAC.

It is hard to say how long the National Executive Committee of LAC will be able to continue publishing *Bridges*. Financial hardships affect all ethnic publications. It is tough to compete with much more colorful and richer English language publications, often with special interest agendas, from Lithuania. However, it is the wish of the LAC National Executive Committee to go on publishing *Bridges*, so that it may continue to be the symbolic *bridge* which brings together past and present generations of Lithuanian-Americans who value their heritage, but who search for it by traveling different paths toward the same goal. We are certain, that is what Algirdas Budreckis would have wished, had he lived to see the 25th anniversary of *Bridges*. ♦

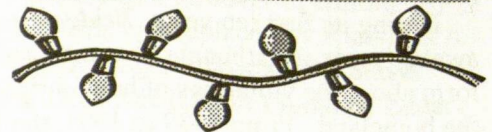
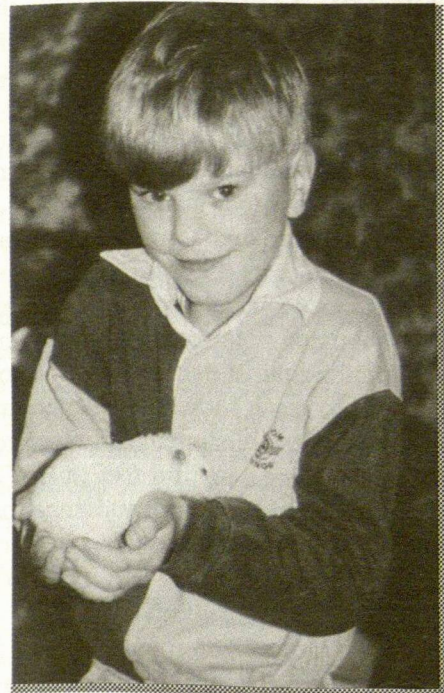
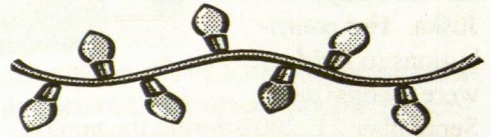
Jeanne Dorr



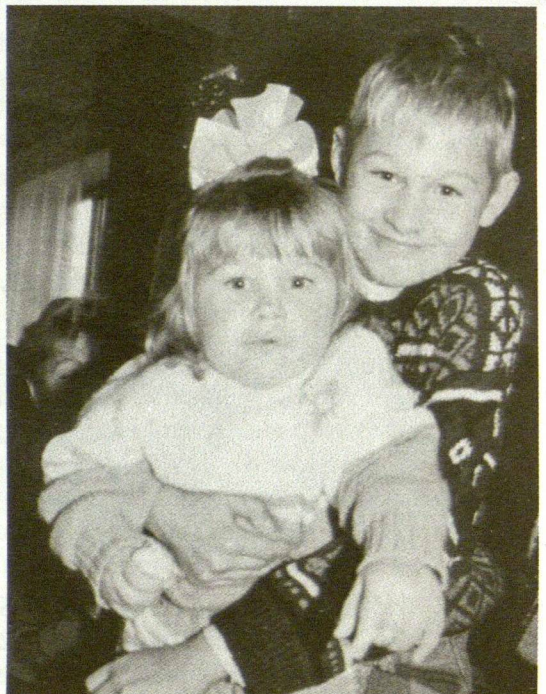
THE LITHUANIAN ORPHAN
CARE COMMITTEE AND
THE CHILDREN WE SERVE IN
LITHUANIA WOULD LIKE TO
WISH YOU A JOYOUS
CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY
AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR.
OUR WISH FOR 2003
IS A WORLD FILLED WITH
PEACE AND HOPE FOR EVERY
CHILD, IN EVERY COUNTRY
OF THE WORLD.

JEANNE DORR

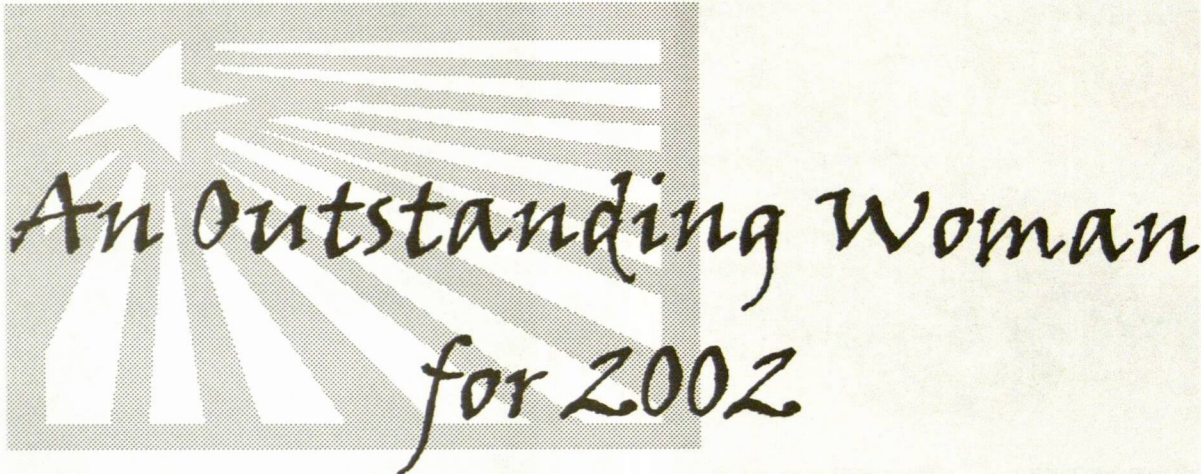
A LITHUANIAN ORPHAN CARE CHRISTMAS GREETING



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.



Laurynas (Larry) R. Misevičius



An Outstanding Woman for 2002

A few weeks ago on a beautiful Saturday afternoon of Oct. 5, 2002, there was an unprecedented event at Our Lady of Sorrows Convent in Brockton, Mass. Sister Helen Ivanauskas was honoured because she was named the Lithuanian-American Women's Federation "Outstanding Woman of the 2002 Year".

Helen (she bears a Lithuanian name Elena Ivanauskaitė) is one of the most energetic sisters in her Convent – always busy with her charitable endeavours for Lithuania as well as assisting with the Matulaitis Nursing Home and orphans in the area.

Back in 1990, a small group of people in Boston decided that something must be done about the worsening situation with orphanages in Lithuania and organized a non-profit corporation to help Lithuanian children. Sister Helen and Romualdas Veitas from Boston are those restless workers who have been organizing fundraisers and managing various charity projects for over 12 years now.

With the help of many people within the Boston Lithuanian community and donors everywhere in the world, "Lithuanian Children's

Relief" has made a significant impact on the lives of thousands of children in Lithuania – most of whom are in the country's sanatoriums, hospitals, and other medical and schooling institutions. The organization has been working closely with the U.S. government; i.e. its foreign financial aid Agency for International Development with the help of which each dollar donated to LCR resulted in three times that amount of aid to Lithuania.

In the year of 1998, Sister Helen received a special "Life in Christ" recognition award from "My Brother's Keeper" religious organization, which carries a mission "to bring the Love and Hope from Jesus to the ones who we are here for". Sister Helen Ivanauskas is known as *Sešutė Elenytė* to many of us, who have ever had a chance to help her in those numerous charitable activities, be it participating in a fundraiser, loading one of more than 120 containers shipped to Lietuva, or simply collecting cancelled post stamps and sending them for a "Save a Stamp - Save a Child Project".

As far as the containers are concerned, those already shipped were full of clothes, baby food, toys, vitamins, and school supplies to the children of the orphanages, and last, but

LAURYNAS (LARRY) R. MISEVIČIUS belongs to the Knights of Lithuania Supreme Council Chair for Lithuanian Language and Culture Committee.

not the least, mostly needed medical equipment, beds, donated to the Lithuanian hospitals and children's sanatoriums. During the last year, three containers worth of \$15,000-25,000 each were shipped to Kaunas V. Tumėnienės Children Sanatorium and Druskininkai Children Sanatorium "Saulutė".

Now, Sr. Helen and her coworkers are looking for necessary medical equipment to be sent to a Kaunas Boarding School for Low Vision Children.

Honoring Sr. Helen in Brockton gathered a few hundred people. She was presented with the Outstanding Woman of the Year award by the Lithuanian-American Roman Catholic Women's Federation Council. Five representatives from Worcester, Mass were present. Official congratulation speeches followed later.

Sister was honored by Gintaras Čepas, member of the District Board of Boston, MA Lithuanian-American Community (Lietuvių Bendruomenė); Sigita Šimkuvienė, Lithuanian-American Community National Board of Directors Vice-President for the "Third Wave"

Lithuanian immigration; President Kathryn Urban of the Knights of Lithuania Council 6 (Hartford, CT); and the Knights of Lithuania SC Lithuanian Language and Culture Chair Laurynas Misevičius. Among all of her other responsibilities and obligations, Sr. Helen is a Knights of Lithuania Council 1 - Brockton member!

There were a lot of other recognizable guests, Lithuanian folk-dance group "Sodauto" leader Gita Kupčinskienė, Sisters from the Convent of the Immaculate Conception in Putnam, CT., and others. However, the biggest surprise to Sr. Helen was a present from a Tauragė (Žemaitijos region town in Lithuania)-born artist Danguolė Jokubaitienė who is visiting Connecticut and other New England states at the moment. Danguole gave Sr. Helen one of her pictures – a portrait of a child resembling an Angel.

We wish Sr. Helen continued strength and joy in her work as the fruits of her labor produce the wonderful results it has already. ♦



At the Awards ceremony are (from left): S. Šimkuvienė, Sr. Helen Ivanauskas, K. Urban, L. R. Misevičius and D. Jokubaitienė.

Photo: L. Misevičius

REFLECTIONS

Sr. Margarita Bareikaitė

Advent...

A Time for Change

Advent means “a coming”. From the first Sunday of Advent until Christmas, the Church recalls that Christ is coming. The core message of Advent is, “Be Alert”, “Repent”, change your way of thinking, so you can change your way of acting.

We begin another Advent season of waiting, longing, and expectation. Every year we sing “(O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”. Advent is the time to prepare to meet Jesus. “To you, my God, I lift my soul, I trust in you; let me never come to shame” (Ps 25: 1:3).

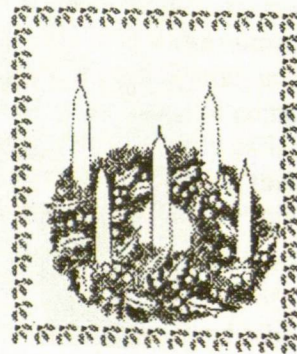
Some may think that we do not need any help to remind us that the Lord is coming, that He’s waiting, watching and silent. Let’s face it, all of us need reminders. Advent is an invitation to wait for the Lord Jesus. All of our life is an advent, a waiting for something we are not completely sure of, as much as life itself. Holy Scripture teaches us how to wait, not with anxiety but with hope and anticipation. The waiting is good, hut it is never better than the event of Christ’s birth.

The celebration of Advent means that we share the longing for God’s coming and the conversion, which we prepared for. The liturgy draws especially on Isaiah, who is so rich in messianic theme. “Have courage, fear not,

behold your God”, and “Rain down a heaven from on high” are from Isaiah.

The second great figure during Advent is John the Baptist. The liturgy also takes up the story of the immediate human preparation – Mary, The Blessed Mother of God, as Scripture notes in her faith (Lk 1:45) in the messianic joy of the Magnificat.

The whole liturgy of Advent mingles a sense of desolation with hopefulness and joy. We need yearly proclamation of the birth of the “son of righteousness” and manifestation of the Lord. Advent and Christmastime are our inheritance because in the midst of the winter our hearts still long for the light, hope, challenge, and promise for these days and the days to come. ♦



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

News from the Lithuanian-American Community

LAC XVI Board of Directors Third Session is History

The third and final session for the XVI Board of Directors took place on Sept. 21 and 22 in Washington, DC. On the eve of the session, a Public Affairs Conference focusing on Lithuania's invitation to join NATO took place at the Capitol; an amber exhibit from Lithuania was opened at the Old Post Office building; and a reception at the Lithuanian Embassy provided a festive prelude to two days of intensive work by the Board of Directors.

At a festive gala dinner during the Saturday evening of the session, a number of people were recognized for accomplishments in their fields on behalf of Lithuania and/or Lithuanians. Those honored included Daniel Fried, who received the Amber Award; LAC's Cultural Council's chairwoman Marija Remienė, who received Lithuania's Gediminas Cross given to her by Lithuanian Ambassador Ušackas; Algimantas Garsys, who received the Vytis ordinis (award) presented by Lithuania's General Jonas Kronkaitis; and Rasa Ardys-Juška, who received a plaque commemorating *Bridges'* 25th anniversary.

During the two working days of the session, a number of important resolutions were passed per-

taining to efforts to unify LAC and the American Lithuanian Council; to bring to closure the disagreements and lawsuits over the Cultural Center of New York; to settle on-going problems at the Cleveland Lithuanian Center; to decide on the number of delegates from LAC to attend the Lithuanian World Congress in Lithuania next summer; and to eliminate the LAC Council for Economic Affairs.

Local LAC chapters were being asked to assist the Lithuanian Youth Association to revitalize its activities and to assist the Religious Affairs Council by staying alert to future closings of Lithuanian parishes by trying to prevent closings or at least salvaging parish inventories for shipment to churches in Lithuania.

The Next Board of Directors will continue to have 60 elected members. The current session was attended by seven LAC Chapter presidents with non-voting guest privileges. Next spring, elections will be held for the XVII Board of Directors who will have the important task of electing a new LAC president and confirming the new National Executive Committee (NEC). ♦



New member of the Executive Board for Affairs of Recent Arrivals

The LAC Board of Directors has confirmed Sigita Šimkuvienė for the post of vice president for New Immigrants from Lithuania. Sigita has been active in the LAC Connecticut District and is a member of the New Haven Chapter Executive Board.

Her numerous articles appear in every Lithuanian-American periodical. She is a teacher by training with degrees in Education and Psychology from Vilnius and Klaipėda Pedagogical Institutes. She has worked as a teacher in Vilnius and Tauragė

where she was active in advancing health of youth through sports. Her varied interests include drama, poetry, and organizing sports activities for young immigrants from Lithuania. ♦

Major 2003 events in Lithuania

The Lithuanian World Community provided basic information regarding the Lithuanian World Days:

June 30 – July 6: The III Lithuanian World Song and Dance Festival and the 750th jubilee of the Coronation of King Mindaugas.

July 7 – 11: the XI Congress of the Lithuanian World Community

July 12: The start of the XI Lithuanian Youth World Congress

The coordinator of diaspora participation in Lithuanian World Days events is Darius Polikaitis, who can be reached at:

7317 Ticonderoga
Downers Grove, IL 60516-3754

e-mail: dpolikaitis@lucent.com

We are interested in having as many choirs and dance groups as possible participating in the Festival. All questions about participation should be directed to Darius Polikaitis. We hope that great numbers of Lithuanian-Americans will travel to Lithuania next summer to celebrate Lithuania's great jubilee.

According to the most recent communique from the Lithuanian World Community, LAC will be represented by 36 delegates at the Lithuanian World Congress. All question about representation at the Lithuanian World Congress should be directed to Mrs. Regina Narušis, Chairperson of the LAC Board of Directors. ♦



Finances

We have been pleasantly surprised by a donation of \$800 from the Midwestern District for the work of the National Executive Committee. The LAC Educational Council is grateful to Lithuanian Citizens Society of Western PA for a \$1,000 donation, to St. Petersburg Chapter for a \$1,600 donation, Brighton Park (Chicago) Chapter - \$500, Palm Beach Chapter - \$100, and Cicero Chapter - \$50. Our thanks to all who have contributed, and we wait to hear from other chapters. ♦

LAC 50th Jubilees

October 26: Jubilee Banquet Waukegan, IL LAC Chapter (Vaidas Aksamitauskas, Chapter President);

November 9: Banquet and Concert by Ensemble Kanklės from Lithuania in New Britain, CT (Laima Karosas, CT District President);

November 17: Gala Banquet in Philadelphia to celebrate 50th of LAC, 95th of Lithuanian Music Hall, and 2002 LAC Cultural Awards (Vytautas Bagdonavičius, Chapter President). ♦



2002 LAC Cultural Awardees

The LAC Cultural Council jury committees chose the awardees and the Lithuanian Foundation financed the awards for journalism to Algirdas Pužauskas; for teacher of folk dancing to Dalia Dzikas; for Lithuanian Radio programming to Raimundas Kiršteinis; for art to Juozas Mielius, for music to Raimonda Apeikytė; and for drama to Algimantas Žemaitaitis. ♦

2002 LAC Educational Awardees

For many years of work advancing Lithuanian education in the U.S., the Lithuanian Foundation's 2002 award, selected by the LAC Educational Council, goes to Julius Širka, former director of the Donelaitis School in Chicago. ♦



Symposium on Science and Creativity in Chicago

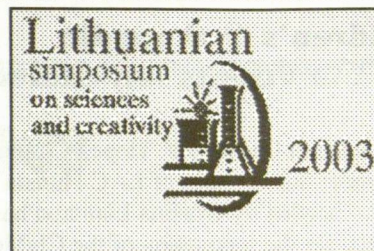
The 12th Lithuanian Symposium on Sciences and Creativity (MKS) will take place in Chicago, Illinois on May 22-25, 2003. Preliminary information about the Symposium and procedures to participate are now available.

The specific location will be announced later, but the call for papers and themes to be addressed has been released:

Themes to be addressed are:

1. Lithuanian Linguistics - (Literature, Linguistics, Folklore, etc.)
2. History
3. Science (physics, chemistry, biology, biotechnology, biochemistry, neurology, etc.)
4. Law
5. Architecture and Engineering
6. Medical Sciences
7. Information Sciences
8. Business Administration/Commerce
9. Economics
10. Sociology
11. Political Sciences
12. Ecology and Environmental protection
13. Computer Sciences
14. Productivity of Lithuania's scientists, promotion of science at the community, influence of globalization on Lithuania's young scientists and researchers, and reciprocal ties between scientists of Lithuanian origin abroad and Lithuania.

Those desiring to offer presentations should submit their names and e-mail addresses, telephone number, title of the presentation, and an abstract in 100-150 words in Lithuanian and English lan-



guages. Verbal presentations are to be delivered in Lithuanian, but in exceptional cases will be allowed in English.

The MKS intends also to conduct seminars of general interest on the following topics:

- Fine arts;
- Music;
- Lithuania – member of NATO and the European Union, its relationship with neighboring countries and with Lithuanian based organizations outside of the country;
- Aid to Lithuania from Lithuanian organizations abroad;
- Lithuania Minor.

Marius Naris is the Principal chair and organizer for the 2003 MKS program. Proposal for presentations should be sent by e-mail to (mnaris@att.net).

Vygintas Gontis is the Principal co-chair and co-organizer for the 2003 MKS program in Lithuania (except for architecture and engineering). Proposal for presentations should be sent by e-mail (gontis@ktl.mii.lt). The Rectorate of Kaunas University of Technology is the Principal co-chair and co-organizer for the 2003 MKS architecture and engineering programs in Lithuania. Proposal for presentations should be sent by e-mail (bansevicius@cr.ktu.lt). ♦



New law to help preservation of Lithuanian citizenship

On Sept. 30th, Pres. Adamkus signed a law of the Republic of Lithuania, which allows maintaining Lithuanian citizenship even if a person receives citizenship of another country. This was achieved through efforts of united activism of recent Lithuanian immigrants to the United States, interested lawmakers of the Lithuanian Parliament (Seimas), and to a great degree, the Joint Commis-

sion of LAC and Seimas. Through e-mails we asked you to write to Pres. Adamkus to urge him to sign the law. We thank you for your strong response and numerous messages to Pres. Adamkus. ♦

Children's Orthopedic Ward in Vilnius remodeled

Lithuanian Children's "Hope" Committee (under the auspices of LAC Human Services Council) headed by Gražina Liautaud has raised \$174,000 for the renovation of the Children's Orthopedic Ward in Santariškės. Our congratulations go to them for a job well done. ♦

Congratulations and thank you

LAC Cultural Council, Dale Lukas, numerous financial contributors and representatives of Vasario 16 High School have facilitated the exhibition of books printed in the Diaspora at the world famous Frankfurt Book Fair in October. ♦



New LAC brochures

Kazys Razgaitis and Teresė Gečys have revised brochures about LAC in both Lithuanian and English. Please let us know by e-mail (see the www.javlb.org web site) or regular mail, if you would like us to send you the new brochures and how many in each language. ♦

Web site calendar

All LAC Chapters are invited to submit items to the newly redesigned LAC web site calendar. Check out www.javlb.org and see the listings of "Kanklės" Ensemble Concerts organized by the LAC Cultural Council as well as other events of interest. ♦



Zydrunas Ilgauskas and the Cleveland "Cavaliers" are coming your way

Don't miss the chance to see Lithuanian basketball player Žydrūnas Ilgauskas play in your area. He will appear in the following locations:

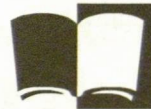
- ♦ Dec. 7 — Chicago
- ♦ Dec. 13 — Boston
- ♦ Dec. 20 — Detroit
- ♦ Dec. 30 — New Jersey

In 2003...

- ♦ Jan. 3 — Toronto
- ♦ Jan. 4 — Chicago
- ♦ Jan. 10 — Los Angeles
- ♦ Jan. 12 — Seattle
- ♦ Jan. 13 — Portland
- ♦ Jan. 15 — San Francisco
- ♦ Jan. 17 — Denver
- ♦ Jan. 18 — Utah
- ♦ Jan. 29 — Orlando
- ♦ Jan. 31 — Atlanta
- ♦ Feb. 4 — Washington, D.C.
- ♦ Feb. 11 — Indiana
- ♦ Feb. 23 — Philadelphia

- ♦ Feb. 28 — Minnesota
- Other dates will be given later. ♦

— *Linas Johansonas*



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English-Lithuanian/Lithuanian-English Pocket Dictionary. S/C/ \$7.00 + \$4.00 S/H.

LITHUANIA 2003

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DETROIT	27	11
LOS ANGELES	28	11
NEWARK	28	13

CITY	DEPARTURE JUNE	RETURN JULY
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PHILADELPHIA	26	11
SAN FRANCISCO	28	13
TAMPA	29	12
TORONTO	29	14
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