

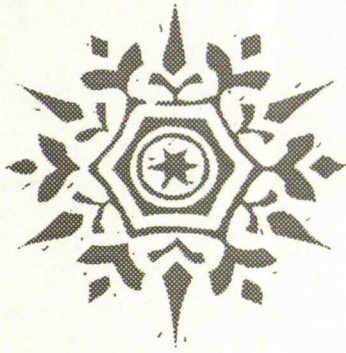
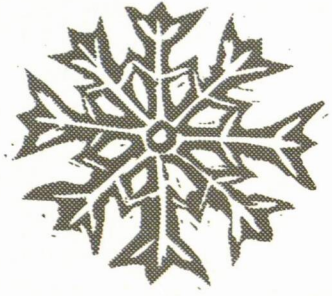
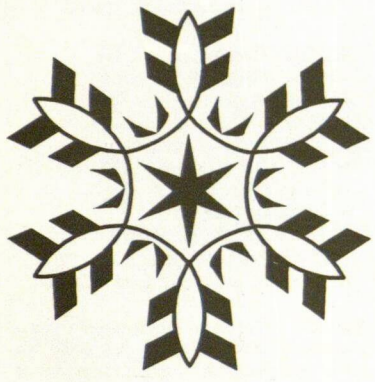
BRIDGES

• LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL •

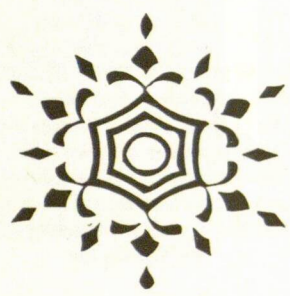
Volume 26

Issue 10, December 2002

Our 25th Year!



LINKSMŲ
KALĖDŲ!



MERRY
CHRISTMAS!

News from Lithuania...Remembrances...Books from Lithuanian authors

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

At the end of the year, we raise our glasses of champagne to salute the past year and greet the one entering with hope for a brilliant, happy, and peaceful time.

It doesn't always work out that way — I mean in a positive light. Life will always have its ups and downs, then downs and ups — repeatedly. My mother always says, "It is not a misfortune if it produces a blessing." And she is right, thankfully.

For instance...several years ago, in the winter thereabouts, a young family recently from Lithuania experienced a most tragic event. The young mother and her only child were crossing the street. An SUV jumped the sidewalk at the corner to turn and struck both the mother and child — the little girl did not survive.

At the funeral mass, the policemen, who had helped at the scene of the accident, attended and couldn't contain their tears along with the rest of us. We all felt the young couple's hopelessness and despair.

As time went on, we saw the couple at a few events. They seemed calmer and stronger, and they always talked of their dear, little daughter. We then lost touch for a while.

A year ago, we received a Christmas card with a photo from them. In the picture was this couple, now smiling, and two children — a toddler daughter and a newborn son. Between the couple, stood a bookshelf on which was a large framed photo of their first daughter. This ring of people, connecting all, the living and the departed, cast a feeling of hope and reconciliation that was so strongly communicated by the family's smiles. A true blessing.

One of the Lithuanian Christmas and New Year's traditions is to set a place for those family members who had departed, but still remained in our hearts. Contrary to the belief that it may open a wound, this custom celebrates the life of the missing relative — providing an opportunity to feel blessed with the chance to have known him or her.

I raise my champagne glass during the New Year's celebration to all of you who have supported Bridges with your readership and attention! Laimingu Naujuju Metu!

Rasa Ardys-Juška

Editor

BRIDGES

Lithuanian American News Journal

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BRIDGES Consultants

ALGIMANTAS GEČYS, President,
Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.
TERESĖ GEČYS, Information Services.
RASA ARDYS-JUŠKA, Editor
RAMAS PLIŪRA, Treasurer, Lithuanian-American Community, Inc., and
Subscriptions Manager.

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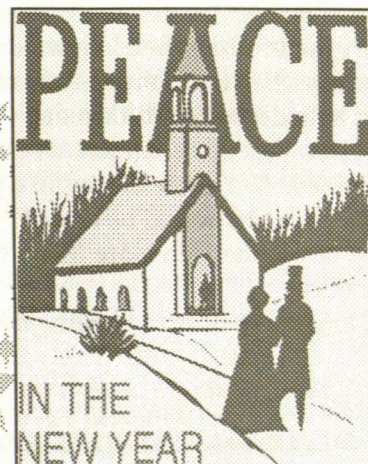
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Taikos ir Ramybės
Naujiems Metams!



What Lithuania heard Pres. Bush say...

Although President Bush's speech on November 23, 2002 during his visit to Vilnius may have seemed like a speech given by a politician, the world, including Lithuanians, knew these were words worth waiting for. What follows is what Lithuania heard on this day marking world support for the Baltic States' security and unity.

Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you for your friendship, and thank you for your leadership. I'm also honored to be here with the presidents of Latvia and Estonia. I want to thank them for coming, as well. Laura and I are honored to be here with you. Thank you for coming out to say hello.

This is a great day in the history of Lithuania, in the history of the Baltics, in the history of NATO, and in the history of freedom.

The countries of NATO have opened the doors of our alliance to Lithuania and six other European democracies. And I have the honor of sharing this message with you: We proudly invite Lithuania to join us in NATO, the great Atlantic alliance.

Many doubted that freedom would come to this country. But the United States always recognized an independent Lithuania.

We knew that this continent would not remain divided. We knew that arbitrary lines drawn by dictators would be erased. And those lines are now gone. No more Munichs, no more Yaltas.

The long night of fear, uncertainty and lone-

liness is over. You are joining the strong and growing family of NATO. Our alliance has made a solemn pledge of protection, and anyone who would choose Lithuania as an enemy has also made an enemy of the United States of America.

In the face of aggression, the brave people of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia will never again stand alone.

(AUDIENCE CHANTS "THANK YOU" IN LITHUANIAN)

You're welcome.

(LAUGHTER)

You are needed in the NATO alliance. You will contribute to our common security. Yet the strength of NATO does not only depend on the might of armies, but on the character of men and women.

We must be willing to stand in the face of evil, to have the courage to always face danger. The people of the Baltic States have shown these qualities to the world. You have known cruel oppression and withstood it. You were held captive by an empire, and you outlived it. And because you have paid its cost, you know

THE SPEECH was printed in its entirety at <http://www.philly.com/mld/philly/4589187.htm>, which had found it transcribed by Associated Press. The second article came from the Baltic News Service. The third article came from RFE/RL Baltic States Report Vol. 3, No. 41, 13 December 2002 via Tony Mažeika.

the value of human freedom.

Lithuania today is true to its best traditions of democracy and tolerance and religious liberty. And you have earned the respect of my nation and all nations.

Our alliance of freedom is being tested again by new and terrible dangers, like the Nazis and the Communists before them. The terrorists seek to end lives and control all life. And like the Nazis and the Communists before them, they will be opposed by free nations, and the terrorists will be defeated.

Over a decade ago, hundreds of thousands of Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians joined hands from Tallinn to Vilnius to show your

love for freedom. Near Cathedral Square is a stone commemorating that struggle. Inscribed on that stone is one word: Miracle.

The recent history of the Baltic States truly is a miracle. You've gained your freedom. You've won your independence. You now join a great alliance. And your miracle goes on.

Today, on this great day, may God bless the memory of Lithuania patriots and freedom fighters who did not live to see this moment. And may God always bless the brave and the free people of Lithuania.

Thank you for coming today. May God bless freedom.

(APPLAUSE) ♦

Pres. Bush sends letter to Lithuania

Baltic News Service

On December 13, President Valdas Adamkus received a letter from US Pres. George W. Bush who, on behalf of himself and First Lady Laura Bush, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to visit Lithuania.

"We were moved by a warm welcoming which the Lithuanian people gave to us," Pres. Bush said in his letter.

The US president repeatedly offered congratulations to Lithuania on receiving the invitation to accede to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

"By proceeding consistently with reforms and pursuing its goal, Lithuania won global recognition and was invited to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. At this historic moment, the United States considered it a big honor to be together with you. I appreciate greatly our friendship and hope to further cooperate with you successfully," Pres. Bush wrote in his letter. ♦

Putin aide criticizes NATO expansion

RFE/RL Baltic States Report

Presidential aide Sergei Yastrzhembskii, speaking at a conference on Russia-NATO relations in Moscow on Dec. 6, emphasized that Russia "calmly disapproved" of NATO's decision last month to invite seven new countries, including the three Baltic states, to join the alliance, RIA-Novosti and other Russian news agencies reported.

Yastrzhembskii said that NATO is a Cold War relic that has "revealed its inability to respond to new challenges," adding that Central European countries want to join "mostly because of their historical complexes." He claimed that unspecified surveys have shown "an overall public disapproval of NATO" among the populations of the seven invitees. He concluded that enlargement will weaken the alliance.

Yastrzhembskii also told the conference that once the three Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia join NATO, their attitude toward their Russian-speaking populations will change, RIA-Novosti reported. He said that Moscow will "keep an eye" on developments. "The Russian public is very sensitive to the policies pursued regarding our compatriots in the Baltic states," he was quoted by ITAR-TASS as saying. ♦

Sr. Ona Mikailaitė

The Story of the Bones

In the fall of 2001, construction workers excavating for a new road in a northern suburb of Vilnius struck not pay dirt, but bones. This had been a soviet military base, and at first the workers thought they had uncovered a mass grave from the Stalin era. Such a grave had been found five years ago.

Scientists were called in to investigate. The grave proved to be a huge one – eventually some 3,000 skeletons were found and are still being analyzed.

The buttons were the crucial clue. Among the bones, scattered helter skelter were buttons embossed with numbers. These identified 40 different squadrons of Napoleon's army that had fought in the Russian Campaign of 1812.

Historian Dr. Virgilijus Pugačauskas contends that actually about 40,000 French soldiers are buried in and around Vilnius. Records in the Vilnius archives bear this out.

Vilnius University anthropologist, Dr. Albinas Kuncevičius and Dr. Rimantas Jankauskas, professor at the Vilnius School of Medicine, examined the bones. They belonged to young 20 to 25 year-old men and some even younger, about 15 years old. The latter weren't soldiers, but drummer boys and flag bearers. The bones of 27 women were also found. At first, it was

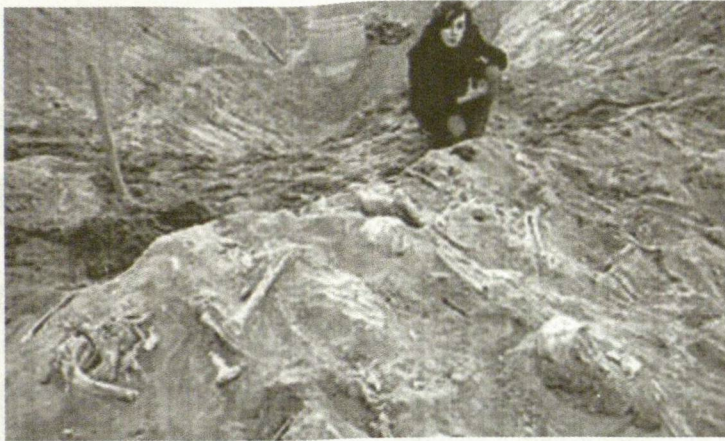
thought that these were servants or prostitutes, but there were indications that they were women with social status.

These young soldiers and their attendants appear to have died of exposure and starvation. There was also evidence that some had been infected with syphilis. A number of the skeletons showed signs of sharp, unhealed, wounds, suggesting that looters cut the frozen corpses to get at boots or other valuable items. Among the bones were found chains with crosses, copper hooks, and a few gold coins. These would have bought their owners a good meal.

The history behind this find is an interesting one. On June 24, 1812, a huge French army led by Napoleon himself crossed the Nemunas River at various points on the way to Russia. Lithuania itself was under the rule of the Russian Czar, Alexander I at this time. Napoleon was determined to defeat Russia, but this was to prove a tragic mistake (as Hitler found out when he tried the same thing during WW II).

French losses amounted to 300,000 fighting men. When the bedraggled remnants of the once proud army retreated six months later, tens of thousands of French soldiers stopped in Vilnius. Frozen and starving, many limping along wounded and ill, they grabbed whatever they could get their hands on. The people of

SR. ONA MIKAILAITĖ belongs to the order of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a Lithuanian order in Putnam, CT. *Sr. Ona* is a writer and editor of *Bendradarbis* Photos from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/2230656.stm>.



Vilnius did not have much to give, but tried to help the ill-fated men.

Napoleon himself did not enter the city; he only met with his foreign minister Maré who had spent the entire war on the outskirts of Vilnius. Then Napoleon hurried off to Paris, without even a backward glance at the fate of his soldiers.

On December 10, 1812, the Russian army marched into Vilnius, led by the victorious General Kutuzov. Twelve days later czar Alexander himself arrived in Vilnius, where General Kutuzov gave him a victory celebration, laying the flags of the defeated French army at his feet.

There are historical records of these events as well as personal memoirs giving some of the lurid details. Dr. Jozef Frank, who ran a clinic in Vilnius at the time, wrote an account of the French soldiers descending upon the city. The starving men happened to see a stray dog and tore it apart with bare hands to eat it. Hospitals and clinics were filled to overflowing with

the sick and dying.

This recently excavated mass grave, indicating the bitter end of Napoleon's army, is the largest ever found in Europe. The find has received worldwide attention from the press: Britain's BBC, the USA Discovery channel, Newsweek, The New York Times ("Baltic Soil Yields Evidence of a Bitter End to Napoleon's Army" by Michael Wines, September 14, 2002), France's Le Monde, as well as press coverage by newspapers from Poland, Russia, Finland, Holland, Spain, and Hungary. More information will be forthcoming as the investigation progresses. ♦



Ina Bertulytė Bray

The School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Panevėžys...

...the Seattle Connection

Western thought takes it for granted that individuals with physical handicaps can still be productive members of society, a belief we see reflected in schools as well as beyond. That, however, was counter to the Soviet system where “perfection” of the human body was mandatory. A deaf or hard-of-hearing individual, for example, automatically found himself relegated to a shadowy existence.

Children with this handicap had to be home-schooled, even if the parents were unqualified; ordinary citizens had no access to highly specialized medical help; hearing aids or other hearing enhancing apparatus were usually beyond reach; psychological help – non-existent. The handicapped individual as well as the parents became outcasts and frequently abandoned by the father who saw such a child as a personal shame. As a result, children often grew up into mentally and emotionally challenged adults, living on the margins of society. Unfortunately, even after Lithuania regained its independence that attitude has been slow to change.

Evidence of change exists, however. Take for example the School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Panevėžys. Through the relentless efforts of individuals who sought a more normal future for children, the City Council agreed to rent space from the Marionai religious order, and thus in 1993 establishing this School.

For years, with its director Danutė Krisčiūnienė at the helm, its teachers, administrators, and parents have been struggling, receiving minimal support from the local or national govern-

ment – again a reflection of old attitudes. In the late 1990’s even that space became too expensive, precipitating a desperate search for alternatives.

The alternative came last year when the City Council made available a vacated kindergarten building. Yes, it was a building, but with a roof through which you could see the stars at night, with bathrooms in indescribable condition, peeling paint, leaking windows, dirt in abundance; in other words, a shambles. Of course there was no furniture, no sports facilities, only aging kitchen equipment, but for this group of enthusiasts, the building provided possibilities. They rolled up their sleeves and went to work, digging into their own pockets and into their weekends and summer vacations.

Today the school houses 64 students from ages 6 to 21. Forty of them are deaf, while 24 are hearing impaired. Some 30 come from some distance and live in the dormitory (which presents a whole new set of problems: bedding, food, laundry, supervision, “LTC” after school, etc.). Some students are orphans; others come from broken or destitute families. One girl is both deaf and is going blind. The school is allotted a subsidy for each student, but that amounts to a fraction of the educational cost.

For some years now, a group of parents has worked hand in hand with the school, providing support, elbow grease, searching for financial and material help, as well as being a physical presence. They also emerged as a highly effective support group for each other: from bitter experience to advising, guiding, and consoling

INA BERTULYTĖ BRAY is an active member of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. Seattle area. This article originally appeared in The Tulpė Times (July 2002) issue.

those in need, expanding their own knowledge of hearing impairment, and tutoring these children intensely which becomes mandatory to insure even a basic high school diploma. In the wider local and national community, they became advocates and lobbyists for the young and adults with this handicap.

In 1999, they officially became registered as the organization ADAPTA with a young, single mother, Asta Karalienė as president. A whole article could be written solely about the accomplishments of this dynamo!

Enter the US Peace Corps. In the late 1990's, a young and energetic woman worked very effectively with the school and ADAPTA. It was the last volunteer, Phyllis Lichenstein, however, who over the past two years "moved mountains". Incidentally, it was she who found my name on a bookplate in an English book in the Panevėžys Public Library and contacted me. And that began the bridge from the Seattle Daughter's of Lithuania to the Panevėžys School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the ADAPTA organization.

Nothing escaped the good will or the involvement of this 75-year-old woman. She even found a way to persuade US Ambassador John Tefft, to request a \$150,000 grant from the US Defense Department (Congressional funds dedicated for humanitarian aid for countries in Europe and Africa) for the purpose of upgrading the school. If that grant materializes (they will know later this year), the buckets in the upper floor collecting rainwater will vanish, new toilets, walls, even an area for physical education will be built, and some furniture will be bought. But that is still an uncertain "if".

On June 4 of this year, Ambassador Tefft, his wife, and some staff honored the school with a visit. I was invited as well. The school outdid itself in welcoming us all – flowers on every flat surface, students performed, excited conversations and speeches, and topped off with a hardy, delicious, and very Lithuanian lunch. Of course the media had a field day both locally and nationally.

The Ambassador commented repeatedly on the initiative and the energy that he saw going into making this institution a success. And the

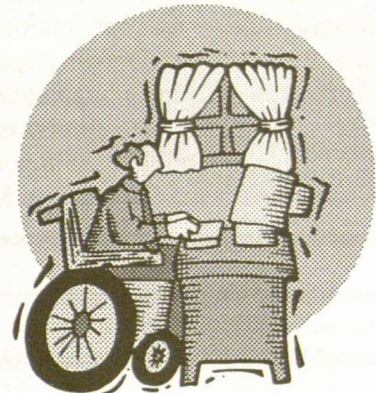
fact that an American-Lithuanian organization, the Daughters of Lithuania from far-off Seattle, also recognized this effort and is actively supporting them, made an impression both on the Ambassador and the press.

(Some days after I left, the local city council amazingly took notice of this US intervention. They voted to provide some funds to re-roof the building and perhaps help with the development of a sports area!)

The significance of the physical environment that is conducive to learning cannot be overstated. However, some of these children's lives could be turned around with surgical procedures and therapy that are either underdeveloped or non-existent in Lithuania, or simply beyond the family's means. The question arises, how could one bring the children's needs and Western know-how together on a more individual level?

Last year, the Daughters bestowed the Aleksandra Gylys award to the School and the organization, which included \$500. Again this year the Daughters granted them \$1,000. Over and over I was asked to convey to the Daughters their supreme gratitude. They wanted us to know that it is not only our funds that are valued but just as much our moral support, our belief in their efforts, their school, and their school community.

Private initiative is a recent phenomenon in Lithuania, but it needs to expand in the country where historically problems were accepted with the ubiquitous expression "nieko negali padaryti" ("nothing can be done"). In recognizing the initiative of the Panevėžys group and supporting it, both the organization of the Daughters of Lithuania and individual members who are participating separately, are to be vigorously applauded. ♦



*Ramunė Kubilius
and Rasa Ardys-Juška*

Books for a cold winter's day

It's always a pleasure to come across books whose authors have Lithuanian sounding names. Here are a few recent English language books published outside of Lithuania.



The Process of Reconciliation Within the Lithuanian Catholic Church: After the Soviet Occupation

By Rimantas Gudelis

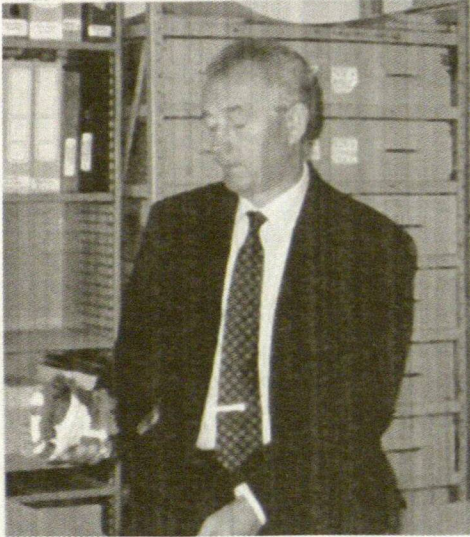
Foreword: Robert J. Schreiter, C.P.P.S.

Chicago, IL: Lithuanian Research and Studies Center, 2002

(Work from doctoral dissertation at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago)

From the Foreword: "What has become evident in situation after situation around the world too is that skills for leadership in a time of resistance do not always translate well into a new situation of reconstruction... This book by Father Rimantas Gudelis is a contribution to that work of reconstruction of the Catholic Church in Lithuania. Drawing upon his own experience in the concluding years of Communist rule in Lithuania, and upon the experience of churches in other countries struggling with similar issues of remembering, healing, and reconciliation, he offers a number of things which will be valuable for the Church in Lithuania as it struggles to move forward..."

RAMUNĖ KUBILIUS is a regular and prolific contributor to *Bridges*. *RASA ARDYS-JUŠKA* is the editor of *Bridges*.



European Prehistory: A Survey

edited by Šarūnas Milišauskas

Series: Interdisciplinary Contributions to Archaeology.
New York: Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers,
2002

From the Introduction: "The purpose of this book is four-fold: to introduce English-speaking students and scholars to some of the outstanding archaeological research that has been done in Europe in recent years; to integrate this research into an anthropological frame of reference; to address episodes of cultural change such as the transition to farming; the origin of complex societies, and the origin of urbanism, and to provide an overview of European prehistory from the earliest appearance of humans to the rise of the Roman empire..."

The editor, who is at State University of Buffalo at New York, in his dedication, wrote: "To Rimutė Rimantienė, the doyenne of Lithuanian archaeologists, who with her classmate, Marija Gimbutas, made European archaeology much richer."

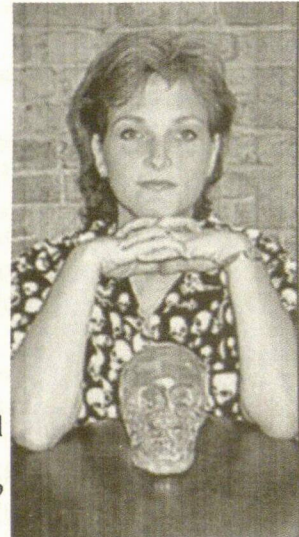
Scullduggery

by Sylvia Kučėnas Foti

Creative Arts Book Co; Paperback: 252 pages; ISBN: 0-88739-412-4; (September 2, 2002)

Supernatural reporter Alexandria Vilkas launches a feature on Crystal Skull, but is skeptical of its metaphysical powers – until the Chicago mayor dies in her arms. Now the prime suspect in the mayor's murder, Alex needs to clear her name, fast. Along the way, she begins to suspect her own mother, discovers a cigarette-selling scam that's making some city aldermen rich, stumbles into some bad shenanigans in a tortilla factory, and gets attacked by a lovelorn astrologer.

Meanwhile, a knock-out brawl among the town's fifty aldermen erupts in downtown City Hall, and Alex desperately wonders if she'll still be alive for the next mayoral election. Can she unearth the connection between the Crystal Skull and the murder before it's too late? This is a very witty, intriguing book that will keep you intensely interested until its conclusion!



Lithuania – The Indestructible Soul

by Harold C. Wilson

Vilnius, Lithuania: Žara Publishers, 2002. (Book distributor: Baltic Bookshelf at balticbook@aol.com; ISBN 9986-34-096-9, \$27.00)

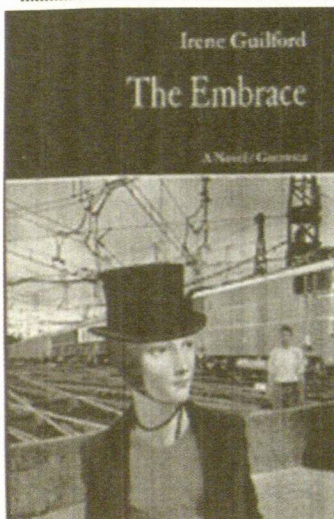
Lithuania – The Indestructible Soul melts history, nature, and love into one story. A press release summarized the book...

“This book tells the story of a lost soul, the author, searching his entire life for “Paradise” until finally, he discovers the indestructibility of the Lithuanians which not only satisfies his thirst for “Utopia”, but also gives him a clear understanding of his roots.

The book also details the remarkable story of Lithuania. This small heart-shaped country, the size of West Virginia, has had more “re-awakenings” than any country in history. The basic deep-rooted attitude of the Lithuanians regarding fatherland and love of country reaches back to their ancient religion when love of nature was a part of the Lithuanians’ life.

This novel is filled with enchanting fairy tales, folk stories, and numerous accounts of courage and heroism. The reader will be amazed when he is introduced to the works of the great Lithuanian composer and painter, M. K. Čiurlionis. He will be further awed at the accounts of great Lithuanian personalities as poets Maironis, Adam Mickevičius, Janina Degutyte, and Kristijonas Donelaitis; patriots Juozas Daumantas, Nijole Sadūnaitė, Sigitas Tamkevičius, Vytautas Landsbergis, and Jonas Basanavičius, who was called, the father of his country. Grand Duke Gediminas founded Vilnius, the ancient capital of Lithuania. Vilnius was also later called the Jerusalem of Eastern Europe because of the exploits of Elijah ben Solomon Zalmen, the great Gaon of the people.

The story of the Lithuanians is a shining light and beacon for mankind. The human spirit is the strongest feature of humanity, and it is capable of defeating evil in no matter what form. This book proves that it is impossible to separate the Lithuanian soul from the land.”

***The Embrace (Prose Series 55)***

by Irene Guilford (Irene Guilford is Irene Mačiulis Guilford, a Canadian-Lithuanian author).

Guernica Editions; Paperback: 150 pages, ISBN: 1550710869; 1st edition (May 30, 1999)

During World War II, when the Communists invade Lithuania, twenty-one-year-old Edvardas flees while his eighteen-year-old brother Pranas stays. At war's end, each brother marries and raises a family, one in the free West, the other in the Communist East. For forty years, a harsh separation lies between them, a no man's land of love, envy and guilt.

Also...***Alistair MacLeod: Essays on His Works***

by Irene Guilford (Editor), Alistair MacLeod

Guernica Editions; 144 pages, ISBN: 1550711377; (April 2002)

A Cook's Guide to Chicago

by Marilyn Pocius

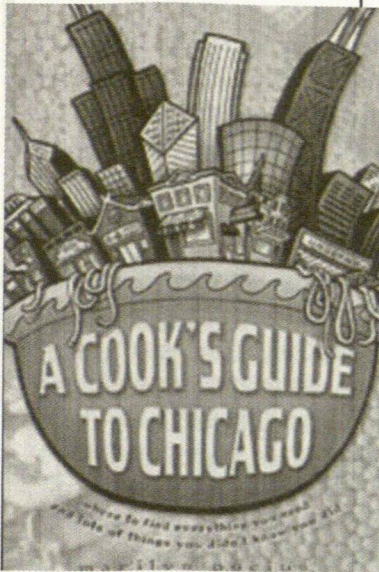
Lake Claremont Pr; Paperback: 278 pages; ISBN: 189312116X; (June 2002) (www.lakeclaremont.com, \$15)

“This is not a cookbook. It's a cook's book!”

Pocius is a chef, food writer, and columnist. She grew up on the Southwest Side of Chicago eating kolackys and black bread. At an early age she discovered risotto, mole sauce, and tandori chicken. Ever since, she's been exploring Chicago foodways, from the hot to the haute, from the exotic to the everyday. She lives with her daughter, a dog, a cat, and a fridge full of weird ingredients – according to Amazon.com.

A Cook's Guide to Chicago takes you on a tasty romp through gourmet shops, ethnic supermarkets, chef's equipment stores, and much more. Follow author Marilyn Pocius as she divulges the shortcuts to finding what you need and introduces you to new worlds of flavor that are waiting just outside your door.

Marilyn Pocius writes that she grew up eating Lithuanian food and several Lithuanian / Polish delis on Chicago's Southwest side are featured in the book, although it covers other ethnic ingredients as well.



Nonviolent Resistance in Lithuania: A Story of Peaceful Liberation (Monograph Series Number 8)

by Gražina Miniotaitė

Boston, MA: The Albert Einstein Institution, 2002. (contact: www.aeinsteinst.org)

In her introduction, Miniotaitė states, “ This monograph seeks to highlight the important role that nonviolent action has played in Lithuania, especially in the reassertion of independence in the 1980s and 1990s. In no way is it my intention to try to revise or downplay the troubling, and at times horrific, infliction of violence in Lithuanian history, particularly in regards to the destruction of the Lithuanian Jewish community during the Second World War. Rather, I seek only to draw attention to an often ignored strand of the Lithuanian experience, one that – given greater understanding and development – could help diminish the prospect of a recurrence of such destructive national and communal violence.”

The publisher, The Albert Einstein Institution, is a non-profit organization committed to advancing the worldwide study and strategic use of nonviolent action in conflict. The Institution expressed the following in a publicity letter, “This monograph may be the first major compilation and analysis in English of the nonviolent strategies employed by Lithuanians during that time. The Lithuanian Ministry of Defense recently ordered 250 copies of [the book].”

The Church, the "Kronika" and the KGB Web.

by Vidas Spengla, edited by Dr. Saulius Girnius

The Lithuanian Catholic Academy (Kataliku Akademija); ISBN 9986-592-36-6, 111 pages, 2002

This book was written by Vidas Spengla, the pseudonym of Algimantas Žilinskas, an author of several Lithuanian-language books on the period of Soviet rule in Lithuania and its effect on the Catholic Church in Lithuania. This is his first English-language book.

The book's editor is Dr. Saulius Girnius, a former long-time Chicagoan, a University of Chicago-educated historian and Radio Free Europe analyst who now lives in Lithuania. The publication of the book was supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania.

A book of this nature in English will be a valuable asset for scholars and students writing about this topic (and for libraries), since it is succinct but comprehensive, generously illustrated with photographs of churches, underground publishing equipment, and important leaders in this publishing movement.

The name list at the end of the book is a true "who's who" of Lithuanian dissidents who helped publish and distribute this underground publication that first began its brave revelations of a religiously oppressed country thirty years ago, in March 1972.

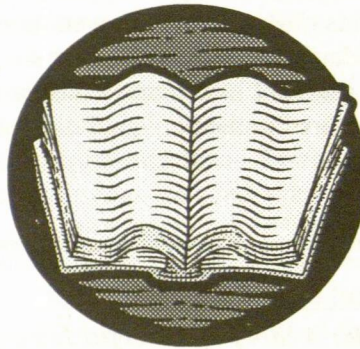
The synopsis in the book itself summa-

rizes the contents, "Relying on documents from archives and the recollections of the editors of the Kronika, the book reveals many facts about the difficult situation of the Catholic Church in Lithuania in the years of Soviet oppression and about the opposition to the persecution of Communist Party and Soviet Security Committee. It discusses the Catholic opposition movement and especially difficult and dangerous work of the organizers and distributors of the underground periodical "The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania", which made an important contribution to the emancipation of the nation from Communism."

No information is available yet on the distribution channels for this book, but it is anticipated that most Baltic and Lithuanian book vendors, bookshops, and websites will want to have copies of it in stock here in the United States.

Although it does not indicate it in the book, it should be mentioned that in 2001 the Catholic Academy published a longer version of the author's book (519 pages) with the same title in Lithuanian (*Bažnyčia, "Kronika" ir KGB voratinklis*).

The Lithuanian language book was a revised and enlarged edition of the author's 1997 book that aimed to complete the XI volume of the Chronicle of the Catholic Church of Lithuania. Based on evaluations of the 1997 edition, the author reorganized some 1997 edition chapters for the 2001 edition.



Buying on Time

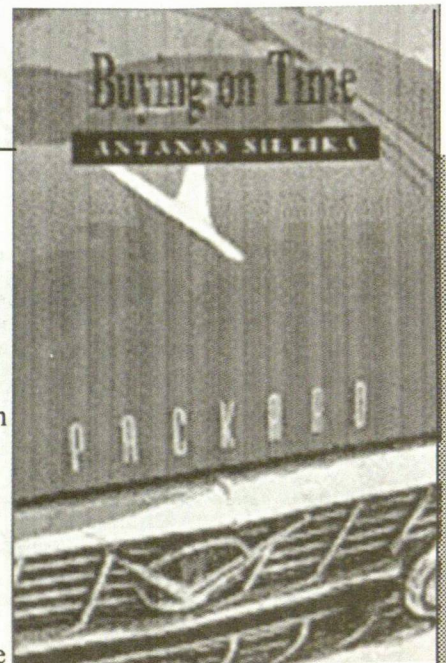
by Antanas Šileika

The Porcupine's Quill; Hardcover: 240 pages ISBN: 0889841861; (March 1997)

Antanas Šileika writes of this collection: "I took various fragments as seeds for the stories here. These were anecdotes I heard over the dinner table, at the homes of others in our ethnic tribe [Lithuanians], and in the church basements after those impossibly long Latin high masses of the fifties.

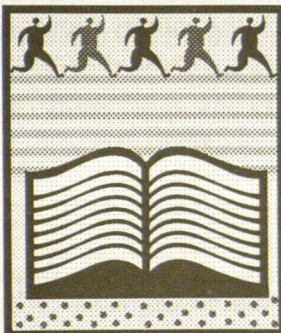
Our ethnic tribe was as varied as any other, but it seemed to take a special joy in the adventures in a new land. In a smoky church basement I first heard of the lumberjack who wrestled with bears, of a woman who married a legionnaire, and of the secret delights of Voltaire. If there was a collective vision among the DPs, it was to learn the rules of the game in North America, and then beat the locals at their own game. The ethnics won, only to discover that they have become the new establishment; now it is they who will be bested by the newer immigrants still." (from <http://www.sentex.net/~pql/buying.html>)

(Amazon.com writes in a review, "In this book of linked stories, a fictional family of Lithuanian immigrants explores their new lives in the Ontario of the 1950s. I found it to be funny, thoughtful and memorable.)

**Also...*****Dinner at the End of the World***

by Antanas Šileika

Mosaic Press; Paperback: ISBN: 088962576X; (October 1996)



All books are available at your nearest bookstore as special orders or on the web at such sites as amazon.com or [barnes and noble.com](http://barnesandnoble.com).

Happy reading!

Gloria Kivytaité O'Brien

...as I was visiting Lithuania...

There are so many memorable events and experiences that a person can take home with them after a visit to Lithuania.

Gloria O'Brien writes to us about several of those events that many may recognize having experienced themselves.

*F*riends and Neighbors

Sometimes one or another of our relatives will escort us to a friend's or neighbor's house or apartment, and although it's not our habit to "just drop in" on folks, we go along having been assured of an eager welcome.

We are invariably met with great courtesy, and treated to a cup of the strong coffee that Lithuanians seem to favor. The requisite bottle of "hot stuff" is brought out, as well as a large bar of chocolate. People are full of questions about life in America and quick to compliment one's ability to speak the Lithuanian language, however awkwardly or imperfectly.

One day after walking through museums, I went home with my friend Liucija, met her twin, Dalia, and they fed me – hot boiled small potatoes with fresh dill from their garden and real forest mushrooms with onions and sour cream – yummy! They live in a nice house in the Linksmadvaris section of Kaunas on the hills above the Nemunas. The house was built

and decorated by their father, who they described as a person of artistic inclinations, almost stifled by the communist system.

We walked around their neighborhood, which had a suburban feel, and they showed me a large building that had been built around the time of Smetona, and had been planned for the University's use. Right now it looks like some sort of multiple dwelling. Not far from there, at the top of the hill, we had a fine view of the river and all of Kaunas at our feet.

As we walked, I almost stumbled over a very large circular cement box set into the ground at the edge of the hill. Liucija explained that it was one of a series of bunkers built at the behest of the Russians, who warned that it would be needed to defend Lithuania against the Americans, who were sure to come and invade the country sooner or later, just you wait and see. It's still there, just in case. ♦

GLORIA KIVYTAITÉ O'BRIEN is a first-generation Lithuanian-American, one of three children of Anthony and Mary Kiveta. Born and educated in Brooklyn, NY, Annunciation parish, she sang in the church choir from childhood until she married and moved to New Jersey, where she now lives in contented retirement, and annually visits her many relatives in Lithuania.

Ina Bertulyté Bray

OUR AMERICAN CHRISTMAS PRESENT – 1944

Winter came early that year in Bavaria. A damp, dark cold enveloped the countryside and seeped into our souls. My fleeing family had been ordered to Ismaning, a town some ten miles north-east of Munich. Would we be safe here from the Soviet onslaught? These were the last apocalyptic months of the Second World War, and its fury touched all, be it the local inhabitants or us, the undesirable refugees from the East.

Nearly every night, the horizon glowed orange with the fires that were consuming Munich – a target that was only ten miles away. Would my family escape the relentless bombing that continued day and night?

Yet Christmas was not to be denied. In spite of the terror, the pain, and the deprivations that were surrounding us, in spite of the moral degradation that filtered deeper and deeper into the psyche of the population, the beauty and gentleness of the season still survived, and my parents prepared for it as best they could.

That was not an easy task. Everything that represented *our* family's Christmas no longer existed, and even facsimiles could not be had. Consumer goods, as well as ordinary food, had become precious commodities, and as foreigners our access to them was limited by decree. Even the decorations on the Christmas tree promised to be not much more than some dull paper ornaments created by my brother and me. But — a Christmas tree without the magic



of glitter? Has even that simple adornment vanished?? *America to the rescue!*

No, the rescue did not come in the form of the worshipped CARE packages of later years, nor as boxes of wondrous glass ornaments and silver strands conjured up by an American fairy godmother (that also came much later). It was simply radar deflecting aluminum tinsel

that had fallen from the sky!

In order to confuse German anti-aircraft radar, American planes would dump bales of tinsel-like aluminum threads. We children delighted in the sight and feel of them and in the ploughed, darkened fields easily collected them by the armload (once, along with some partly exploded incendiary bombs – horrifying my mother!).

I remember almost nothing of that Christmas Eve in the Ismaning of 1944. Did our family celebrate alone? Or together with the other refugees with whom we had shared our fate? Did the light of candles warm our gathering? What food graced the table? Undoubtedly, my mother had continued the tradition of straw under the white tablecloth, a tradition that reaches back generations, and I continue to this day. But, yes there was a Christmas tree, an absolutely magical Christmas tree. From its lofty top to the very floor, glittering with “tinsel” made in America, this was our very first American present. ♦

R E F L E C T I O N S

Sr. Margarita Bareikaitė



Christmas is a feast full of sentiment – that it is difficult to present its deep spiritual significance. For us Christians, the coining on earth of Christ is the Light of the world, king and God, and at the same time Saviour to all men of good will. The divine Infant lying in the manger is divine love manifest in human form. This love flows out from the crib into the world and is made captive in the hearts of Christians. We find a beautiful symbol of His divine Love in our practice of exchanging gifts at Christmas time.

Our faith confirmed in the divinity of Christ, we are ready to make our visit to the crib. Only then do we take joy in the Child of Bethlehem “born of the Virgin Mary”. This infant lying on a hard manger in the rude stable, poor and destitute is the almighty God who established the stars, who raised up the mountain heights.

And why has Jesus become a helpless babe? St. Augustine gives us the answer: “The Son of

“Oh, Holy Night”

God was made man in order that men might become the children of God.”

The mystery of Bethlehem becomes reality in the sacrifice of the Mass. The same flesh and blood in which the Son of God clothed Himself on the first holy night is present for us in the form of bread and wine, to be nourishment for our souls.

With these thoughts, we visit the crib on this day, for there we find the most striking manifestation of the goodness and kindness of our Lord. Is it not a characteristic trait of human nature to be lacking in understanding and appreciation? The Redeemer had been announced and awaited for thousands of years, and yet when He came, who was ready to receive Him? The whole land sleeps while the miracle of Bethlehem takes place. Only one little group of people is awake to the announcement of the Redeemer’s birth, the poor, simple shepherds.

During Christmas time we are going to be associated with a number of persons at the crib of Bethlehem: St. Stephen the martyr, St. John the beloved disciple, the Holy Innocents who represent all children, and the privileged woman, the Mother of God, Mary. It is fitting that the first day of the year the Church focuses our attention on Mary the Mother of Jesus. ♦

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

European Union announces an enlargement

The European Union has approved its biggest-ever enlargement, paving the way for 10 candidates to join on May 1, 2004.

Next year the 15 existing EU parliaments must ratify the accession treaty, while the mainly ex-communist central European newcomers will go to the polls in national referendums, seeking a popular mandate to join the EU.

Public support among candidates for EU entry is widespread and growing. But there are pockets of "euroskepticism", and not all referendums will be smooth sailing. Two other candidates, Romania and Bulgaria, will not join the enlarged EU until 2007. Turkey will begin negotiations in 2005, if it passes a human rights review in December 2004.

This is how the Baltic States stand regarding the European Union.

Estonia:

Referendum: Sept 14, 2003 (parliament voted on Dec. 18)

Public opinion: Most recent poll shows EU support has jumped to 57 percent, while opposition has dipped to 36 percent.

Notes: Referendum will be non-binding, with no minimum turnout requirement. No coordinated anti-EU movement, but critical umbrella group

could emerge. No contingency plans yet in the event of a 'No' vote.

Latvia:

Referendum: September or November 2003

Public opinion: 'Yes' vote has risen above 46 percent, with opposition steady at close to 36 percent.

Notes: Binding referendum with minimum turnout of at least 50 percent. No anti-EU group, but high potential given strong anti-EU sentiment. Analysts have said a 'No' vote would result in a second referendum to coincide with the next general election, due in 2006.

Lithuania:

Referendum: May or September 2003 (decision not expected until after presidential elections in January)

Public opinion: 'Yes' camp has grown to about 68 percent, with 'No' vote slipping to 19 percent.

Notes: Likely to be binding referendum, with simple majority as long as at least 50 percent of voters take part. Opposition comes mainly from small populist parties; foes are more issue-specific than anti-EU. No bar to holding a second vote in the event of a 'No' win, but wording would probably be revised. ♦

— Reuters

Over 18,000 vote for officials in Lithuania by mail

Over 18,000 voters in this year's elections for president and local councils have used their right to vote by mail, the Lithuanian Post told Chief Electoral Commission on Dec. 18. The voting by mail and at home opened on Dec. 17 and closed on Friday, Dec 20.

Head of Chief Electoral Commission Zenonas Vaigauskas told ELTA that the Lithuanian Post-submitted data showed a huge interest of Lithuanian citizens in the presidential and lo-



cal elections this year.

The first results also revealed higher activity of local electorate this year if compared to presidential elections in 1997 and general elections of 2000, when the number of votes cast on the first day of the voting by mail stood at 13,000. ♦

— ELTA

Women candidates are on an increase

Among 10,138 candidates whom the Lithuanian political parties have fielded in the upcoming local election, there are 3,468 women or 34 percent of all the candidates.

Despite Seimas male member skepticism towards Social Democratic MP Birutė Vesaitė's initiated amendment to local elections law on establishing gender quotas for local elections, some of the Lithuanian political parties and coalitions boosted the number of female candidates on their lists of nominees for local councils.

The Russian Alliance submitted the largest number of "female" candidates. This political force participated only in the local election in western Klaipėda city. The Alliance list included 67 women.

About 41 to 45 percent of female candidates

were found on the candidate lists of the Lithuanian Christian Democrats, Lithuanian Rightists Party, Political Prisoners and Deportees Union, Lithuanian Polish People, and Nation's Progress parties.

The Social Democrats gave 33 percent of the positions on their candidate list to women, while female nominees on the list of the Conservatives made 34 percent; Liberal Democrats, 38; Peasant and New Democracy Party, 36; and New Union (Social Liberals), 32 percent.

However, the list of incumbents led by Vilnius Mayor Artūras Zuokas's coalition, the Liberals and Modern Christian Democrats, had only 21 percent of female candidates on it. ♦

— ELTA

JBANC Conference announced

JBANC's fifth conference on Baltic Security and NATO will occur March 6-8, 2003 in Washington, DC.

The schedule is:

- ♦ Thursday, March 6, 2003 - Business & Economic Forum
- ♦ Friday, March 7, 2003 - Congress & Administration (Briefings and Visits)
- ♦ Saturday, March 8, 2003 - Seminar Day (with Lunch and Dinner)

The main conference venue is the Washington Marriott Hotel on 22nd St., NW. To make hotel reservations call 1-800-228-9290 (the single/double rate for the conference is \$119 per night) or visit: <http://www.marriott.com/epp/default.asp?marshacode=WASWE>

Please contact JBANC for details on the program and participation and sponsorship opportunities.

The conference will provide an overview of NATO enlargement, review the outcome of the Prague Summit and inform about political trends related to the issue. Participants will be supplied with reliable information about the evolving se-

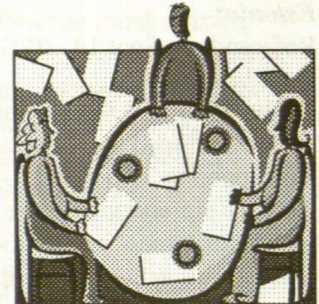
curity environment, new threats and challenges to the Euro-Atlantic area, and NATO's role in addressing those challenges.

As during previous conferences, high-level representatives from the U.S. government and legislature and leading NGO's and the diplomatic community, including leading Baltic officials, will participate and discuss NATO enlargement, foreign policy and the issues of transatlantic security.

JBANC is dedicated in providing and advocating objective and reliable information about international relations, diplomatic trends and policies on foreign affairs. Our organization is also devoted in facilitating and encouraging open debate about security in the Euro-Atlantic area.

We hope to see you at the conference. Best wishes for the Holidays and a Happy New Year from JBANC! ♦

— JBANC



2003 national budget passed into law

A 141-seat Lithuanian parliament approved a national budget for 2003 after two months of deliberations, voting 72 "for" to 43 "against" and 5 "abstained", on Dec. 10th.

The left-center government, which drafted the revenue and expenditure estimate, called the budget for the next year as "socially geared and meeting the needs of Euro-Atlantic integration". The new budget has not reduced allocations to the programs of budgetary organizations for the first time in five years.

The expenditure enshrined in national budget 2003 makes up 12.406 billion litas (3.595 billion euros) versus an estimate of 11.092 billion litas (3.215 billion euros) revenues. In 2003, the fiscal deficit of the Lithuanian national budget will be as high as 1.5 percent. The national budget's allocations in 2003 will grow 7.7 percent and revenues will be up by 6.8 percent on year-on-year basis.

Meanwhile, the state budget revenues will stand at 9.545 billion litas (2.766 billion euros) against expenditure of 10.857 billion litas (3.146 billion euros).

Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas, when attending a parliamentary session Dec. 10th, thanked MPs who voted for the budget bill and said that the Cabinet was committed to fulfill the revenue and expenditure estimate for 2003.

The opposing groups, nonetheless, found the national budget as contravening the expectations of Lithuanian people and missed ambitions of the

ruling parties therein. They lambasted the increase of public administration costs and deficit.

They contended that the deficit of budget 2003 would constitute around 14 percent or 1.3 billion litas (376 million euros) of total budget amount.

"These figures signal a threat, since the state debt amounting to 13 billion litas to date will grow vividly again next year," Seimas vice-chairman, Liberal Gintaras Steponavičius said. The lawmaker said ironically that the budget was "socially geared only towards public officials".

"Public administration costs are mounting by some 20 percent, meanwhile, such sensitive social fields as education, social care, health care and personal safety - scarcely by a few percent," Steponavičius said.

Andrius Kubilius, chair of the Conservative faction, commented that the budget was "neither good nor bad but traditionally of a kind the Social Democrats usually had".

Social Democrat Algirdas Butkevičius of the budget and finance committee deflected criticism of the opposition regarding the social allocations of budget 2003. He explained that public administration costs grew chiefly through a large amount of money, 260 million litas (75.3 million euros), earmarked for the EU integration. The National Payment Agency at the agriculture ministry alone, he said, would set up 100 new jobs.

— ELTA

First digital Lithuanian textbook issued

The first digital textbook of Lithuanian history has been issued in CD format. The digital textbook, entitled *History of Native Land*, is meant for grades 7 to 12.

The Lithuanian Textbook Research Center's officials say the newly issued textbook has nothing to compare with it in the Baltics. It was drafted by a team of 32 Lithuanian historians and issued by Elektroninės Leidybos Namai Co.

The project manager Eugenijus Jovaiša, Baltic history researcher of Vilnius Pedagogical University, said the digital textbook was more convenient

to use than the traditional one and conformed better to the needs of contemporary students.

The material recorded in CD covers the period since the prehistoric era of Lithuania, i.e. 11th century AD and the life of the first tribes that had settled in the Baltics.

Impetus for the issue of a digital textbook came from success of the CD *Lithuania Before King Mindaugas*, which won the title of top educational digital publication at Multimedia league of Infobalt IT association in 2000. ◆

— ELTA

New study of Soviet occupation presented at Vilnius University

New scientific studies on the government of the USSR-annexed Lithuania during 1940-1941 and 1944-1953 have been conducted and were presented at a conference of the International Commission of Investigation of Nazi and Soviet Crimes in Vilnius Rotonda Hotel on Dec. 12.

The scientists who conducted these studies concluded that in occupied Lithuania the Soviet political system performed a particular felonious role, namely incorporation of and keeping by force Lithuania within the Soviet Union. Lithuania had to be subjected to political and economic interests of the Soviet Union as successor of the imperial state of Russia.

The conducted studies read that all Soviet

political institutions organized and pursued the policy of occupation authorities in Lithuania, aiding them in demolition of the country's political system and economic framework.

These institutions sought to reorganize the whole public life in the Baltic state according to Soviet principles; to suppress resistance of the Lithuanian nation against occupation and annexation; and organize genocide of the people.

The former Lithuanian Communist Party has been pinpointed as "most merited" in the occupation regime among all political institutions that existed inside the country. ◆

— **ELTA**

Look for Arvydas Sabonis and the Portland Trailblazers in your neighborhood!

Arvydas Sabonis and the Portland Trailblazers may be heading your way. Check the schedule of dates below to see:

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- ◆ Jan. 24 — New Orleans
- ◆ Jan. 26 — Dallas
- ◆ Jan. 29 — Utah
- ◆ Feb. 2 — Cleveland
- ◆ Feb. 4 — Orlando
- ◆ Feb. 5 — Miami
- ◆ Feb. 21 — Los Angeles
- ◆ Feb. 26 — Denver
- ◆ March 5 — Phoenix
- ◆ March 11 — Seattle
- ◆ March 14 — Philadelphia
- ◆ March 16 — Minnesota
- ◆ March 17 — Indiana
- ◆ March 26 — Utah
- ◆ April 4 — San Francisco
- ◆ April 8 — Houston
- ◆ April 9 — San Antonio
- ◆ April 11 — Memphis

- ◆ April 16—Los Angeles

Other dates will be given later. ◆

— **Linas Johansonas**

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LITHUANIA 2003

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CITY	DEPARTURE JUNE	RETURN JULY
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