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The Feast of the Three Kings...Lithuania's New President...Independence Day Celebrations

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

I really don't think of myself as protective, as my kids always accuse me of being. I just don't think a tattoo is a viable sign of rebellion. I tell them, "Imagine yourself at 65 and explaining why your wrinkled eagle was cool at 18." They never buy that argument. Then came Joe Jurevicius (you-REH-vih-chus).

When my husband and I first started reading about him — reporters called him "Jury-vick-eyus" — we were intrigued and proud of this Lithuanian-American football player. We were never followers of the "Game" and felt no compunction to watch any football games.

One weekend, my sons and my husband were sitting riveted in front of the television screen, alternately shouting, "ooohing", and saying "Did you see that?" It was a surreal picture — my men were into...football.

As Super Bowl was closing in, news reports about Joe Jurevicius's prematurely-born son, his devotion to his family, and pride in his Lithuanian heritage kept us going to the "Sports Page" on a daily schedule. A sports hero was truly in our midst.

By Super Bowl, we knew who would win and why. It was a given. And true to our confidence in Joe, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers won. Every e-mail that I received glowed with pride. We could only imagine that the late Johnny Unitas would have been proud, as well.

So where does that put me with the teen rebellion-tattoo-wanting sons of mine? Joe Jurevicius has this neat (did I say "neat"?) tattoo of the Lithuanian Vytis on his arm. The Vytis has symbolized the goal of freedom for centuries. It has unified Lithuania's people wherever they may be. Joe's unabashed pride in his family and national-ity further exemplifies its meaning.

At present, I've been silent regarding tattoos in my household. In fact, I've been wondering if a little "ruta" wouldn't look kind of "cool" on my ankle.

Rasa Ardys-Juška

Editor

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The Three Kings in Lithuania

Lithuania may have received her devotion to the Three Kings from Germany. On the eve of the feast of the Three Kings (Its liturgical name is the Epiphany, but this word is foreign to Lithuanians) men dressed up in flowing robes decorated with stars, bearded, and wearing crowns on their heads, they would ride around the towns and villages on horseback.

The main job of these “kings” was to mark the doors of the houses with blessed chalk: †G†M†B. This was supposed to bring blessings on the house and keep it safe from evil spirits.

Various other folk customs and superstitions sprang up around the feast of the Three Kings. One was to take the blessed chalk used by the “kings” and draw a circle around yourself as far out as your arm could reach. Then you had to call on the devil asking for money, “Give me 9,000, 900, 90, 9!” If the devil hands it to you, don't take it but make him throw it into the circle. Then, ask him, “Do I owe you anything?” If he says, “No,” you can take the money.

In present-day Lithuania, some of the old customs are being revived — mostly marking doors with the Three Kings' names on the eve of the feast. In other places, “kings” dress up in celebration.

— Sr. Ona Mikailaitė

On the cover:

Two Sisters from the Convent of the Immaculate Conception in Lithuania accompany children dressed as the Three Kings on their rounds.

Photo: Sr. Ona Mikailaitė

Lithuania votes in a new president

When the Soviet tanks came rolling into Vilnius on January 13, 1991, Rolandas Paksas had been focusing his interests and professional goals on aviation. Now in 2003, 46 year-old Paksas takes on new wings as President of the Republic of Lithuania after his election win over incumbent Valdas Adamkus.

Going from aerobatics connoisseur to being a nation's leader takes a lot more than finesse and a warm handshake. Paksas's experience as Chairman of the Vilnius' Darius and Girėnas Aero Club, the Head of the Aviation Department of the Voluntary National Defense Service, and winner of two aerobatics championships of the Soviet Union between 1985 to 1992 came into play as a good gimmick for the elections.

Paksas' experience as president of the Restako construction company in 1992, then as Mayor of Vilnius in 1997 led him to the short-lived position as Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania from May to October 1999.

His political career started to ascend when he was appointed Advisor to the President for Special Tasks in 2000. Paksas also won the 2000 municipal elections for Mayor of Vilnius, once again. Later that same year he was appointed Prime Minister by President's decree. He was labeled a "quitter", since he resigned from both Prime Minister appointments after only a few short months in office.

Paksas took on the role of Chairman of the Lithuanian Liberal Union, but he and others splintered away to form the Liberal Democratic Party in 2002, under whose auspices Paksas ran for president. Yet, his short forays in public office leave him with little reputation for substantive policy

making. This is vitally important as Lithuania enters into global relations via the European Union, NATO, and the scrutiny attached to a freshly minted democracy sans Russia as the backbone.

The Official Announcement...

President-elect Rolandas Paksas called on all state institutions for consolidation when he received the certificate of the president from Chief Election Commissioner Zenonas Vaigauskas at a solemn ceremony on Jan. 7th.

Vaigauskas announced the official election results and congratulated the winner. Paksas received 54.15 percent of the public vote to win a convincing victory against 44.83 percent given to the incumbent President Valdas Adamkus, who had been a favorite of the polls. The voter turnout during the presidential run-off on Jan. 5th was recorded at 52.65 percent.

The incoming president thanked the Lithuanian people for demonstrating confidence; the Chief Election Commission for correctly counting the votes; and members of his home Liberal Democratic Party and family for working and supporting him in the polls.

Speaker of the Seimas Artūras Paulauskas, during a congratulatory speech remarked, "You are the 21st century president-elect of our generation, and what is most important – a member of the parliament. This fact makes us take pride in both the presidential institution and the Seimas."

Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas assured the newly elected president that the Cabinet actions with respect to him "would be correct and tolerant".

"Everything depends on us. I believe and am optimistic that our common efforts will indeed yield perfect results," he said.

The premier noted that the preference, which the

THE NEWS COMPILATION was edited by Rasa Ardys-Juška with news from *The Information Center for Homecoming Lithuanians*, *ELTA*, *The Economist*, *Reuters*, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, *The Orange County Register*, and the *BBC News*.

nation gave to a new generation of politicians in the 21st century, was natural.

Analysts said the Paksas victory was due to incumbent Valdas Adamkus' vague election campaign and Paksas' sound tactics. Adamkus, who ran as an independent and is regarded as a center right, had run a low-profile campaign focused on stability and foreign policy successes. Paksas, who heads the Liberal Democrat party he formed over a year ago, campaigned on a platform of change, including law and order.

"Despite all this public optimism after invitations to NATO and EU, we do have to accept that quite a big part of the Lithuanian population is not so happy and [not living well]," Alvydas Luškošaitis, political analyst from the Vilnius institute of international relations and political science.

"Paksas was carefully listening to this part of the population, and during the election campaign, he hit the bull's eye and was talking about the issues people wanted to hear – pensions, salaries, corruption," he added.

Turnout one hour before polls closed was put by the election commission at 48.42 percent, with voters braving freezing weather which dipped below minus 20 degrees Celsius (minus four Fahrenheit). Less than 50 percent turned out at the first round poll.

Paksas is to embark on his presidential duties after the inauguration on February 26. He will be the eighth president in the history of independent Lithuania and the fourth after restoration of independence. **

Tentative plans from Paksas...

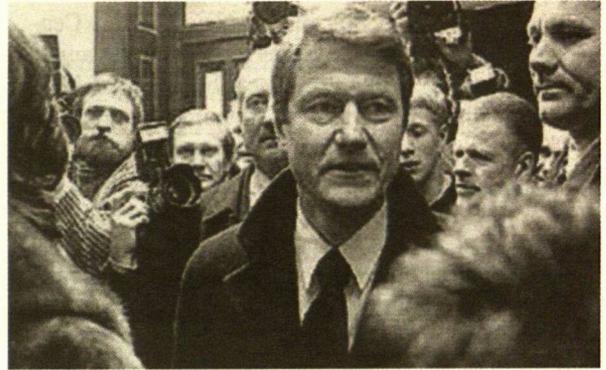
Paksas declared that he will not reverse the Lithuanian foreign policy line.

"I want to send the first signal to the world: Lithuania will sustain its current foreign policy priorities – the European Union, NATO and [being a good neighbor]," Paksas told reporters after the positive poll results

The president-elect indicated that criticism poured by opponents on the issue could have created "a misleading picture and the neighboring countries would have received a wrong signal".

But Paksas said he would add on one more priority – defense of Lithuanian interests, particularly economic ones abroad.

Paksas will be charged with seeing the country through to membership of both the European Union



Lithuania's newly-elected president, Rolandas Paksas responds to the press.

and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 2004. He told AFP he remained committed to both goals. "I am a sincere supporter of Lithuania's integration to NATO and the EU and have proved this in my political career," he said.

Adamkus predicted that Paksas would keep the former Soviet republic on the same foreign policy track. "I want to congratulate the future president," he told Lithuanian television. "The background has been laid and I do believe he (Paksas) will lead Lithuania on the same track."

Under the Lithuanian constitution, the president's main responsibility is foreign policy, but the leader also has considerable influence over the courts and could play a role in domestic policy.

Comments from Lithuania's echelon...

Chairwoman of the leftist Peasant and New Democracy Union, ex-Premier Kazimiera Prunskienė said changes are required in all sectors of Lithuania – economic, social, cultural and other.

Speaker of the Seimas and ruling New Union's head Artūras Paulauskas has declared he is poised to work together with President elect Rolandas Paksas, since this is enshrined in all Lithuanian laws and Constitution.

"I had a talk with Premier Algirdas Brazauskas. We want to reinforce the ruling coalition so that it would work constructively," Paulauskas said.

The Lithuanian Centre Union has pledged its readiness to cooperate constructively with President elect Rolandas Paksas "for the sake of Lithuanian people".

Kestutis Glaveckas, head of the Union, said his party expected that the newly elected state head would achieve a compromise with Seimas majority

of the Social Democrats and the New Union. Centrists reportedly expect Paksas to revive Lithuanian regions, halt the leak of intellect abroad, and implement other pledges given to Lithuanian voters.

Glaveckas congratulated Paksas on becoming the president of Lithuania and wished that the politician met the people's expectations by pursuing correct regional policy, reviving regions, and defending national interests in international organizations and in relations with foreign states.

Lithuanian influential MP Vytautas Landsbergis, head of the Homeland's Union (Conservatives), said he wished to expect new good jobs and completion of the country's integration bids by President elect Rolandas Paksas.

He also warned Paksas against possible pressure of Russia and efforts to change the western integration line of the Baltic state.

The right-wing politician opined that Russia had sought and still seeks to seize control over its neighboring countries in one form or another, and now this would mean control under new conditions. He stated, therefore, the standpoint of Paksas on some specific issues would be vital.

"Russia does not dream about seeing Lithuania with full political independence. I think we are in for various kinds of pressure, so the possibilities of both President Rolandas Paksas and Premier Algirdas Brazauskas to withstand and the resolve to keep the independence line of Lithuania will matter much," Landsbergis said.

Lithuanian Christian Democrats said they were ready for cooperation with president-elect Rolandas Paksas and called other parties to unite.

The party's leader Kazys Bobelis underlined, that the Christian Democrats gave positive evaluation to Paksas' program, and are to support it to the extent it does not come against their major ideological principles.

The chair of the Lithuanian Christian Democrats' Board Petras Gražulis noted the Christian Democrats respected the choice of the Lithuanian people. "We are ready to work together with the newly elected state leader and want to offer him our experience in the fields of interior and exterior policy".

Comments from Latvia...

Latvian political scientist Artis Pabriks believes that the unexpected results of the Lithuanian elections indicate that discontent with government still

exists in all Baltic countries. Left-wing forces have won in Estonia both in parliament and presidential elections in the past two years, Pabriks stressed. Results of elections in Latvia were also surprising – ruling parties were replaced.

In Pabriks' view, the age of Aamkus played a negative role, and the fact that he was not "a leading Baltic president". "The vote mirrors the Baltic nations' symptomatic disappointment with current government, and if such a tendency keeps growing, we can also expect surprises at the referendum on joining the European Union," Pabriks said.

It was impossible to predict that Paksas would win since pre-election surveys favored Adamkus, political analyst Zaneta Ozolina told LETA. Ozolina pointed out that "logic does not always work in politics," the success of election campaigns and psychological factors are also important, Ozolina said.

The fact that Lithuania is likely to have a new president will not have any major influence on Latvian-Lithuanian relations or Lithuanian foreign policy, Ozolina said.

Politician Romualds Razuks, who has been heading the Baltic Assembly for a long period of time, admitted that the election results were unexpected but natural, noting that people in Poland and Latvia had also cast their votes for "new forces". He pointed out that one of the factors could be the insignificant number of voters participating in the election.

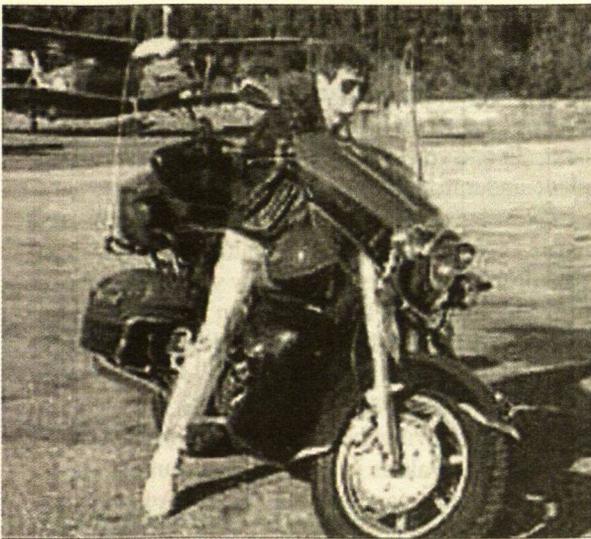
Razuks is confident that Latvian-Lithuanian relations will remain as strong as ever.

Saeima deputies also believe that Latvian-Lithuanian relations will not change. Saeima Foreign Affairs Commission Chairwoman Inese Vaidere hopes the mutual relations will even improve. Saeima Secretary Janis Reirs, the head of the Latvian delegation to the Baltic Assembly, believes that relations between both countries will remain sound and constructive.

Whereas ex-President Guntis Ulmanis told LETA that it would be too soon to comment on Paksas as the new Lithuanian president. Paksas is an active politician and enterprising man, he said though.

Greetings from the U.S. and Russia...

U.S. President George W. Bush, in a letter dated January 17, offered congratulations to the Lithuanian newly elected state head Rolandas Paksas on



During his vacation, R. Paksas cannot be without a motorcycle or airplanes.

winning the nation's presidency.

"Our countries enjoy a close relationship, and I look forward to working with you in the future," he wrote in the letter.

Bush indicated that Paksas was assuming important responsibilities as Lithuania prepared to become a full member of the NATO Alliance and the European Union.

Bush referred to a recent visit to Lithuania, saying that he recalled the warm hospitality of the officials and the Lithuanian people during his stay in Vilnius. The U.S. president added that his wife Laura joined him in sending best wishes to Paksas.

President-elect Paksas dined on Tuesday with U.S. Ambassador for Lithuania John Tefft.

Russian President Vladimir Putin sent his greetings Rolandas Paksas also. He expressed to Paksas hope that joint efforts would give a positive stimulus to Russian-Lithuanian relations to benefit the people of both states, and add to stability and good neighbour links in the region.

The change of president in Lithuania will not have any detrimental effect on the good relations between Russia and Lithuania. This announcement was made by co-chairman of the Russian-Lithuanian council for cooperation between the Kaliningrad Region and the regions of Lithuania and Deputy Governor of the Kaliningrad Region Mikhail Tsikel in an exclusive interview with a **Rosbalt** correspondent.

"We respect the choice of the Lithuanian peo-

ple, who have shown their preference for Rolandas Paksas," he said. "I am sure that the new president will maintain the continuity and loyalty that Lithuania has shown in its relations with Russia and the Kaliningrad Region. I think that Lithuania with its new president will scrupulously uphold the agreements on the Kaliningrad issue, which we reached at the Russia-EU summit in Brussels last November."

Mr. Tsikel added that he believes Mr. Paksas knows Russia even better than the last president Valdas Adamkus. Mr. Paksas studied in Leningrad and was in the Soviet team for aerobatics.

"Judging by his initial comments he seems to want a constructive relationship with both the EU and Europe," said the deputy governor. "We are hoping to organize a meeting between Governor Vladimir Yegorov and Mr. Paksas to discuss potential links with our neighbors, who are our most active business partners.

Tidbits from the Press...

The Economist (Jan. 11, 2003) stated, "...For all his integrity and sophistication, Mr. Adamkus, once a civil servant in Chicago, had been ineffective at home. He looked tired and was often ill; his team was weak. His anti-corruption chief - a presidential appointment - was a particular disappointment. His defeat is a salutary shock for the country's complacent and inward-looking political elite, which backed him solidly.

Mr. Paksas' slick, well-financed campaign focused on poverty, corruption and bad government. He drew a lot of support from Lithuania's large rural population, which has done poorly in the past ten years, by promising higher pensions and lower taxes - no matter that they are the government's responsibility, not the president's. Mr. Paksas was a competent mayor of Vilnius, the capital, and served twice as prime minister, both times to little effect.

His main claim to fame is stunt-piloting, a skill he displayed eagerly in the campaign, on one occasion flying under a Vilnius bridge. It will be hard for him to wow foreign audiences, though. His only fluent foreign language is Russian, and he lacks the intellect of his colleagues in next-door countries, such as Latvia's steely Vaira Vike-Freiberga or Poland's suave Alexander Kwasniewski."

The Orange County Register editorial ("Lithuania's Future", Jan. 7, 2003) stated,

"...He [Paksas] defeated widely admired President Valdas Adamkus, who earlier in life had been an EPA official in the United States. Mr. Adamkus presided over Lithuania's admission to NATO and the European Union. It's also a generation change. Mr. Adamkus is 76, Mr. Paksas 46.

Mr. Paksas "is a very dedicated and focused man," Angela Nelsas told us; she's president of the Lithuanian American Community Inc., Western Region. "The country certainly needs someone with a great deal of courage. He seems determined to stay on course with integration with the West."

The Sueddeutsche Zeitung (Jan. 7, 2003) said "the 46-year-old Paksas had the advantage of youth in the election campaign, while the 76-year-old Adamkus left a tired impression and seemed incapable of mobilizing support.

Also, while Adamkus has, to his credit, secured his country's invitation to join NATO and the European Union, Paksas exuded more appeal by promising to fight crime and corruption."

Reuters ("Populist Paksas storms to power in Lithuania" by Erik Brynhildsbakken Jan. 6, 2003) reported that Paksas "defeated President Valdas Adamkus by a stunning 10 point margin by appealing to those who have lost out in the small Baltic state's transition from communism to democracy since 1991."

"His victory sets up a tussle with the leftist coalition of Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas over economic policy that may overshadow a May referendum on EU entry but is unlikely to damage its outcome, analysts say."

"...Paksas's election will have the biggest impact at home, where he has already called for the sacking of several members of Brazauskas's cabinet, despite having little constitutional authority to interfere in the daily running of government."

The BBC News (January 6, 2003) took a different slant and focused on Paksas's "hobbies" and campaigning techniques.

"His campaign slogan was "Vote for Change", though he backs Lithuania's course towards membership of NATO and the European Union. His challenge to the incumbent president, Valdas Adamkus, came from the right – he proposed the

death penalty for drug traffickers – but he denies that he is a populist or a radical."

"He conducted his campaign from the seat of a helicopter, flying himself from one meeting to the next. In one vote-winning stunt, he flew a small plane underneath a bridge."

"Now aged 46, he spent six years in the 1980s in the USSR national aerobatics team. "I flew when I was Vilnius mayor, I flew when I was the prime minister, and I will fly when I am president," he has said. He is also a motorcycling enthusiast."

Adamkus's next step

When observing the triumph of his younger rival Rolandas Paksas in a presidential run-off, the outgoing Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus has promised his continued active presence in Lithuania's political life after February 26, the date set for inauguration of his successor.

"I will not retire, will not sit in a rocking chair and will not think about the past years. I will follow actively the life of Lithuania and will try to have an active role therein," Adamkus told reporters on Jan. 7th.

The incumbent state head, who has lived for a few decades in the U.S. in emigration, said he did not intend to leave Lithuania.

"Where (should I go)? I was born here, grew up and worked. My dreams are set here, and I will stay in this country," Adamkus said. His spouse Alma added that they "did not come but returned to Lithuania".

Adamkus also promised to give advice to his successor Paksas when the latter takes over the office.

In his electoral staff housed by Vilnius restaurant "Freskos", Adamkus shook hands with his aides and brothers-in-arms. Some women, whom Adamkus embraced, wiped tears from their eyes. As the clock struck 1 a.m., the smiling outgoing first couple danced a farewell waltz to guests and the electoral team. ♦

***** Lithuania's presidents during years of independence:***

Antanas Smetona: 1918-1920

Aleksandras Stulginskis: 1920-1926

Kazys Grinius: 1926

Jonas Staugaitis: 1926

Aleksandras Stulginskis: 1926 (for a few hours)

Antanas Smetona: 1926-1940

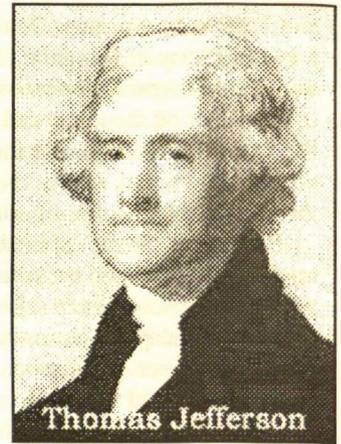
Vytautas Landsbergis: 1990-1993

Algirdas Brazauskas: 1993-1998

Valdas Adamkus: 1998-2003

His Excellency Vygaudas Ušackas

Jefferson... Democracy... Europe... And the Atlantic Alliance



It is a great pleasure and honor for me to speak before the Charlottesville Committee of Foreign Relations on the very interesting and thought provoking subject of "Thomas Jefferson, Democracy, Europe and the Atlantic Alliance". It is also a very challenging task for me personally to do so in the town of Thomas Jefferson's great creation – the University of Virginia.

I must acknowledge that as a student of the University of Vilnius – one of the oldest and most famous establishments of higher education in Eastern and Central Europe, founded in 1579 – in still occupied Lithuania 13 years ago and reading the draft of the "Declaration of Independence", a "Summary of View of the Rights of British America", "An Act for Establishing Religious Freedom" as well as numerous letters by Thomas Jefferson, I could not in my wildest dreams imagine that in a decade or so I would be visiting the University of Virginia and sharing my thoughts on my most favorite "founding father" with probably the most demanding audience on this subject in the World.

Nor could I ever predict that in eleven years I would be the ambassador of the independent Republic of Lithuania, a country which was recently invited to join NATO and the European Union, and, in that position, it would be only natural for me as a host to accompany visiting Lithuanian officials to one of America's monuments of liberty – the Jefferson Memorial, or during diplomatic receptions and dinners to proudly host my guests with the wine from vineyards of Thomas Jefferson

at Monticello.

The legacy of Thomas Jefferson transcends far beyond Virginia and the United States of America. His thoughts and ideas on the rights and freedoms of the people and on democratic governments have served as an inspiration and guidance for many nations striving for freedom and democracy across the globe.

I remember myself in 1989-90, sharing my findings of Jeffersonian philosophy on the nature of inherent and inalienable rights (including "that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"), on the role of the government to safeguard them, and on the importance of the formation of the government into legislative, judiciary, and executive branches with an appropriate system of "checks and balances" with my fellow students, politicians, and journalists in Lithuania and elsewhere.

As I traveled across the region in the position of the vice-president of the Lithuanian student union, I found it astonishing how relevant, attractive, and acceptable the basic political and legal premises of the "founding fathers" of America were for Central

H.E. VYGAUDAS UŠACKAS, appointed Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to the United States on March 13, 2001, gave the above speech at the University of Virginia to Charlottesville Committee of Foreign Relations on January 15, 2003.

and Eastern Europeans. On the other hand, the history of Lithuania, Hungary, the Czech Republic or any other Central European nation which is already in NATO or on the threshold of joining NATO and the European Union prove the existence of an invisible bond which makes these nations a part of the inseparable community of democracies.

Because of our belief in shared values of democracy, liberty, and the rule of law, Central European nations have never refrained from the desire to rejoin one day the community of like minded nations. Moreover, revolutionary events of 1956 in Hungary, 1968 in Czech Republic, and 1989/1990 in Lithuania have proven not only the shared rights and duties of citizens to throw out the government of tyranny, despotism, and foreign occupation, but also the shared passion of our nations to live in freedom, democracy and peace.

For more than 50 years, Lithuania and other nations of Central Europe were outside the area of democracy, liberty, and free market established under the leadership of the United States within NATO and supported by the evolutionary process of what is known today as the great project of the European Union. The criminal Molotov- Ribbentrop pact, as well as Munich and Yalta accords, divided the Old Continent for more than five decades. Occupation by the Soviet Union and its domination in Central and Eastern Europe have deprived citizens of these countries from basic inalienable rights and freedoms, abolished functioning democracy and free markets, and displaced or deported thousands and thousands of people from their homelands to Siberia and elsewhere.

However, Lithuania, as well as other Central European nations, has always felt the support and sympathy of American people for the cause of the captive nations. The United States never recognized the forced and illegal incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union. Despite the many years of Soviet occupation, Lithuania's Independence Day was commemorated without interruption at the Lithuanian diplomatic legation in Washington, D.C., which continued to perform its functions, and the Lithuanian national tricolor flag, which kept flying in the U.S. Department of State along with the flags of other countries with whom the United States has diplomatic relations, irritated Soviet diplomats.

The transmission of programs of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Voice of America to

Central Europe provided an alternative source of information and contributed towards the belief that one day we will become free. The United States along with its Western allies maintained political and military pressure against the soviet system, which finally crumbled as Germany reunited. The Soviet Union disintegrated and the Baltic countries regained their independences. NATO won because it did stand for the principals of freedom loving nations and because its leaders in Europe and America jointly shared the commitment to face threats and challenges posed to the Western world.

America's long lasting support was not just an act. This position demanded from the United States firmness, consistency, and clear priorities. This position observed the values that had been framed by the "founding fathers" and on which is based current U.S. foreign policy, and on which we build the future of our own country as well. These values are democracy, respect of human rights, the rule of law, and the free market.

Recent historical NATO and EU decisions on eastward expansion represent another victory of democracy and freedom loving nations. As it is well known, on November 21, 2002 at the NATO summit in Prague, heads of state and government of NATO countries announced that they had invited Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia to start accession negotiations with NATO.

In another related development, the EU leaders announced on December 13, 2002 at the summit in Copenhagen that negotiations on the accession of all three Baltic countries, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, and Malta to the EU had been concluded and they had been invited to join the European Union by 2004.

These are truly historical decisions that will facilitate the fulfillment of the vision of Europe whole and free. These events came to symbolize our return to the family of nations to which we always felt we belonged.

The importance and magnitude of the happening was especially well felt during these days in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, where U.S. President George W. Bush traveled to celebrate the victory of freedom. Addressing a crowd of thousands gathered on Old Town Hall Square in Vilnius, President Bush said "the long night of fear, uncertainty, and loneliness is over." President Bush praised the faith in freedom, stressing that although many

doubted whether freedom would ever come to Lithuania, the United States always recognized the independence of Lithuania and knew that arbitrary lines drawn by dictators would be erased.

I am confident that our membership in NATO and the European Union will reinforce the common values we share with you, will transcend further freedoms and rights elaborated by Jefferson and other "founding fathers" of America and will strengthen the community of shared values to defend ourselves against any kind of threats. If you visit Lithuania today, you will find a country of great energy, dynamism, and appreciation of historical opportunity to truly become part of the "West".

In a relatively short period of twelve years, Lithuania has made great progress in restoring its international role as an independent state, adopting new laws and regulations, strengthening democratic values, and establishing the base for a rapid economic growth. Over the past few years, Lithuania has become a leading location for foreign investors, including from the United States, and this trend continues: foreign direct investment (FDI) in Lithuania during three quarters of 2002 went up by another 18.0 per cent.

It is said that money goes where they can grow. Indeed, Lithuania today has one of the fastest growing economies in not only in Europe, but in the World as well, with the private sector now producing about 80% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and more than 50 per cent of Lithuania's foreign trade going with the EU.

Lithuania's economy grew by 6.8 percent in the third quarter of 2002. Over the nine months of 2002, against the same period of the previous – 2001 – year, the GDP ascended by 6.1 per cent. Lithuania has defied a global slump this year and seen its economy boom after a decade of often-painful reforms towards Western-style democracies and open market-based economies.

Foremost, this progress was made due to the hard and consistent work of the Lithuanian people. Nevertheless, we would hardly be successful if not for the vision and leadership of President Bush and bipartisan support in the U.S. Senate to assist new



Ambassador Vygaudas Ušackas

democracies and advance the process of completing the unification of Europe through the subsequent enlargement of NATO at the Prague summit in November of 2002.

On another hand, we fully understand that today's achievements and decisions by NATO as well as the EU mark not the end, but rather the beginning of a new era for my country. No matter how convincing our achievements are to date, there is still much to be done.

As President Valdas Adamkus of Lithuania assured in his address at the North Atlantic Council with NATO invitees in Prague, Lithuania wants to become a member of a strong and effective Alliance. We will make sure that our membership strengthens the Alliance's capability to perform present tasks and take on new ones. This remains the focus of our defense reform. We are committed to developing more flexible, adaptable, and mobile forces, which will be part of the future NATO Response Force and will continue to contribute to the full spectrum of Alliance missions.

In fact, already today Lithuania and other invited countries contribute actively, in political, economic and military terms, to the implementation of NATO's policies. Over one thousand Lithuanian troops have been part to the NATO operations in Croatia, Bosnia, Albania, and Kosovo. In support of U.S efforts to combat terrorism, Lithuania along with other countries invited to join NATO have offered over-flight rights, transit and basing privileges, military and police forces, medical units, and transportation support.

Lithuania already participates in the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. Soon it will be four months since 40 professionally trained troops have taken part in a special reconnaissance operation in Afghanistan. A unit of Lithuanian military doctors has concluded already its mission at a security assistance force in Afghanistan as part of a Czech military hospital and provided a valuable medical service to a military personnel as well as the local community.

Finally, the decision on NATO and the EU expansion will contribute to strengthening the transat-

lantic link between Europe and North America. Lithuania, as well as other countries from Central and Eastern Europe, is clearly pursuing a trans-Atlantic policy. I am confident that it is a clear advantage to the transatlantic relationship as well as to both NATO and the EU that as many European countries as possible are members of both EU and NATO.

As for the EU, the larger, economically stronger, politically more united the EU will be, the more important partner it will become to the U.S. and NATO, as it will also assume a greater part of the burden sharing in global politics. A stronger Europe is good for Europe and good for the United States.

Of course, Lithuania, like many other countries from Central and Eastern Europe are small compared to the United States and some other powerful countries. However, how small we might look on the chessboard of Grand Politics, to borrow from President Bush "we are big in hearts, freedom loving hearts, as history proves".

There is no secret that you find a better appreciation of U.S. policies and actions against threats of terrorism and the Iraqi regime in the Central and Eastern part of Europe than in some other countries. From our own experience we know the price democracies have to pay for inaction. That's why the presidents of three Baltic countries assured President Bush they would stand shoulder to shoulder with America in the fight against terrorism and meeting the new challenges of the 21st century.

In conclusion I would like to say the following... Being a diplomat I cannot avoid making acknowledgements to the legacy of Thomas Jefferson – Ambassador, Secretary of State, and President – to the foreign affairs of the United States and international practices at large. He was the chief architect of the largest land purchase in history, Louisiana, which doubled the territory of the United States. Jefferson's "island of freedom" thereby became an empire of liberty, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Rocky Mountains.

Diplomacy owes to Jefferson for his institution of an economic weapon – a substitute for war – the embargo of goods. Although, the Embargo Act, initiated by President Jefferson and passed by Congress in 1807, failed and was recalled by Jefferson himself in 1809, the Embargo policy remains within the currently existing international sanctions system and is often used as one of the critical resort

measures against failing regimes.

However, not everything that was taken for granted in the United States at the end of the 19th century is appropriate and affordable in the beginning of 21st century. To Jefferson, the United States was a great island of freedom in the midst of a world of tyranny. He blessed the Almighty Being for the fact that America was "separated by a wide ocean from the nations of Europe", and he hoped to keep it that way.

September 11th of 2001 changed this conventional wisdom. The United States itself became the battlefield. The beacon of freedom and democracy was attacked. However it was not only an attack against the United States, it was also an attack against our shared values of democracy and liberty.

In fighting this war against the enemy of freedom, the United States cannot separate herself from the closest allies- the European nations of NATO. So too Europeans cannot afford to limit their interests within geographical borders of the Old Continent, when the new threats of the combination of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and failed and rogue states derive from beyond Europe.

The Prague Summit of NATO recognized the importance of solidarity and unity of allies in countering the challenges of the 21st century. In Prague, the United States reconfirmed its commitment to Europe, and Europe reconfirmed its commitment to the United States cooperation. NATO's members all agreed completely on defining the threats and challenges NATO faces, including ones that were of priority to the US, i.e. terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and on defining the missions NATO should take on.

Allies agreed that in facing new threats, artificial geographic limitations make no sense. And that NATO forces must be able to go wherever they are required to carry out their mission. In sum, as NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson put it recently at the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung meeting, "at Prague, Europe and North America set out a common vision – of the threats we face, on how we should respond, and on where we might have to respond".

The changes, which were initiated in the Prague Summit, lay the foundation for an invigorated Euro-Atlantic alliance. The history of Euro-Atlantic relationship proves that Europe and the U.S. are successful when they act together. ♦

Father Sigitas Tamkevičius
 With a foreword by Dr. Vytautas Bieliauskas

the church, The Chronicle, and the KGB

Foreword:

The former Soviet Union, which occupied Lithuania for fifty years, had no respect for either human rights or religious freedom. For Soviet Communism, religion was an enemy that was to be eradicated. Religious persecution, which included harassments, interrogations, tortures, and imprisonment, was practiced from day to day, from year to year. Therefore, it took a strong intellectual and moral fortitude to stand for what was right and to work under the threat of severe punishment or even death. Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, a Jesuit priest, was one of those who dared to oppose the cruel regime and to continue his religious work as a priest and as an underground Jesuit.

Fr. Tamkevičius was interrogated frequently by the KGB, several times forcibly removed from his work, and finally exiled to a labor camp in Siberia.

One of his greatest achievements was being editor and publisher of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, which was an underground publication reporting detailed, accurate facts of human rights violations and religious suppression under the Soviets. This newspaper was secretly distributed in Lithuania, but it was also smuggled into the West and then published in the English, French, and Italian languages. In spite of the most elaborate surveillance and all the efforts of the government to stop this publication, it continued for over eleven years.

In 1983, Father Sigitas Tamkevičius was arrested, charged with co-founding a committee to defend religious freedom, and sentenced to six years of hard labor and exiled to Siberia. He was released in 1988 under the pressure from fellow Lithuanians during the first convention of SAJŪ-DIS (Lithuanian Perestroika).

Today, his Excellency Sigitas Tamkevičius is Archbishop of Kaunas and the Grand Chancellor of the Vytautas Magnus University. On Dec. 5, 2002, The Xavier University, in Cincinnati, Ohio, bestowed upon him The St. Francis Xavier Medal. The medal is awarded to people who exemplify the virtues of St. Francis Xavier.

Leo Klein, S.J., vice president for mission and ministry at Xavier University, nominated Archbishop Tamkevičius. He said, "I nominated him because I think he is an outstanding example of modern Jesuit heroism. He really risked his life and freedom to do something he felt was very important for the Roman Catholic Church and the people of Lithuania. He really put his life on the line."

The medal, the highest honor awarded by the university, was presented by retired psychology professor Vytautas Bieliauskas, a Lithuania native, in the presence of Antanas Saulaitis, S.J., provincial superior of the Jesuit province of Lithuania and Latvia.

FATHER SIGITAS TAMKEVIČIUS, Archbishop of Kaunas and Grand Chancellor of the Vytautas Magnus University, delivered this acceptance speech for the St. Francis Xavier Medal that he received from Xavier University on Dec. 5, 2002. Antanas Saulaitis SJ, Provincial for the Lithuanian and Latvian Jesuits translated the speech. Dr. Vytautas Bieliauskas wrote the foreword and presented the medal to Fr. Tamkevičius.

The following is the translation of Archbishop Sigitas Tamkevičius's acceptance speech upon receipt of the medal, as translated by Antanas Saulaitis SJ, Provincial for the Lithuanian and Latvian Jesuits.

The Church, The Chronicle, and the KGB

First of all I would like to thank Xavier University for the honor bestowed not only on me, but in my person to my compatriots who carried the chains of oppression and continued to believe in the resurrection of the nation and the Church.

The Chronicle of the Catholic Church of Lithuania reminds us of the period called developed socialism by the founders of communism in the Soviet Union, while free people called it a communist dictatorship.

For a long time we could only enjoy freedom in our dreams. I remember one dream from that time – a dream in which I experienced fear that I had never undergone in reality. It was a dream during which I was in free America; such dreams were as a gift from God and brought variety to the life of a Soviet prisoner, giving even that chance to visit one's homeland and dearest friends.

In the postwar year I saw partisans, killed for Lithuania's freedom, whose bodies were desecrated in city squares. From the first grade, we were taught to love not the land of our fathers, but the Soviet Union. Belief in God was considered outdated, and the Church – a brake on the road to the bright communist future. For this reason the Church was condemned to destruction.

The persecutors did not want to be known as occupiers or tyrants; so in the eyes of the free



Father Tamkevičius stands between Leo Klein, S.J. and Prof. Bieliauskas.

Photo: V. Bieliauskas

world they masqueraded as representatives of the most democratic land. Those who disagreed with them were called criminals.

The agents of force considered vital, the lie that there was freedom of conscience and religion in the Soviet Union. In order to maintain this lie, a whole system was created, a system in which representatives of the Church played not the smallest role.

At a time when the only seminary left open was the Kaunas Seminary, which was permitted to admit a very limited number of seminarians; when Catholics did not have the right to publish even prayer books or catechisms; when the activity of priests was controlled and impeded by the communist party and the KGB; when priests and bishops were asked to collaborate; the lips of high ranking churchmen announced to the free world that the Church was free and alive in Soviet Lithuania. The totalitarian system needed lies to cover up the reality of soviet life.

At that time, force and lies were a challenge to the priests of my generation who had seen but did not reconcile themselves to Soviet reality. We did not have any real hope that life could become better, since at that time the builders of communism brought fear to the free world no less than the fear instilled by terrorists today. I

would not say that we in occupied Lithuania did not have fears about possible repression, but the desire to rip the curtain of lies and to show the world the true face of atheistic communism was stronger than fear.

Persecution of the church and the thirst for freedom fostered the idea of publishing the underground publication, *the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*. When the clandestine publication was born in 1972, it did not call for armed resistance to the occupiers and did not even write about occupation, but only documented trustworthy information about persecution of the Church, violation of human rights, and tried to send this to the free world.

Today if we want to send information to America, we can do it over the Internet in seconds, but at that time it was full of danger and unimaginable obstacles in the attempt to cross the Iron Curtain.

In the 1980s, repression of people who did not conform to force and lies became very strong. Soviet institutions accused me – not the first and not the last – of the attempt to destroy the foundation of the soviet regime, and measured out ten years of prison for this criminal against the state. Ten years were given not for terrorism or crime, but for a word. My fate was similar to many other Lithuanians who did not resign themselves to the chains of slavery.

However, the sentence of the court, which gave a cross of ten years in prison, was not a punishment, but a gift to me and my Church from the heavenly Father. That was a second university in which, unfortunately, they didn't teach English, but in which I came to see the absolute bottom of humanity about which I had read in Dostojevsky. In this university of interrogations, prisons, convoys to prison camps, life in the Urals and Siberia, I understood the value and beauty of the cross of Christ, I learned to look without envy on human beings who are free, but drowning in hedonism and material things – and thus putting on the chains of slavery.

I would suggest to such a person that it would be healthy to spend at least several years in the "university" of soviet prison camps. Human beings are enslaved not by a totalitarian system, but

by sin. Prison chains can be wrought in each person's heart, but chains can also fall apart in one's heart. I am happy that in those very difficult times I had inherited faith in Christ, which the Soviet schools could not destroy, in Christ who alone frees human persons.

God's Providence performed a miracle: it was not only the Berlin wall, which crumbled, but the Iron Curtain separating my homeland from the free world as well. Together with Latvia and Estonia, Lithuania has been invited to NATO and is preparing to join the European Union. We rejoice in many things: the freedom to evangelize without hindrance, the possibility of relating to the whole world and truly feel part of the universal Church.

Today religion teachers can enter through school doors; priests can serve the faithful in the armed forces, hospitals and even prisons. We are able to employ all means of communication, radio, TV, and Internet. But not all would be said about freedom if I only rejoiced in it, because we are not lacking very serious concerns.

The culture which values utility and hedonism often becomes a hindrance for our people on their journey to God, an obstacle not smaller than that previously placed by atheistic communism. The Church feels weak in the face of certain new challenges even after twelve years of independence: we are often short of material resources, and we also see the wounds and losses left by the Soviet years.

We learned much and are continuing to learn from the Church in other places; we value their experience while we were cut off from the free world. We firmly hope that we will develop and that we will be able to surmount the difficulties we encounter. ♦

The Defenders of Freedom are remembered...

The Seimas adopted a Declaration at a solemn meeting to mark the 20th anniversary of the Resolution of the European Parliament of January 13, 1983 and the Day of the Defenders of Freedom.

13 January 2003
Vilnius

The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania,

noting that ever since the forced occupation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in 1940 by the Soviet Union and coercive annexation of these countries to the Soviet Union, the democratic countries of the world adhered to the policy of non-recognition of annexation of the Baltic States and at the same time the policy of recognition of the continuity of their sovereignty;

stating that the case of freedom of the Baltic States had become a special constituent part of the efforts to eliminate the consequences of the Second World War, and that solidarity with the Baltic States during the period of the occupation and support for their aspirations for independence were expressed in Europe by emphasizing ever and ever again that the occupation of the Baltic States was illegal;

stressing that such a stance of the democratic nations of Europe was conditioned, to a large ex-

tent, by an enduring resistance of the dissident movement in the Baltic States as well as intense activities of the diplomatic services of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania (SCLL), and the organisations of the émigrés from these states abroad;

noting that the best known examples of support expressed for the occupied Baltic States were the Resolution of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted on 28 September 1960 to mark the 20th anniversary of the forced annexation of the Baltic States to the Soviet Union, and "Resolution on the Situation in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania" of the European Parliament of 13 January 1983 in response to the memorandum of 45 Balts of 23 August 1979, and that the above resolutions condemned the unlawful occupation of the Baltic States, calling for solution of the issue of these States in accordance with the principle of free self-determination of peoples and nations;

emphasizing that the support by the European states and the dissident movement in the Baltic States as well as the activities of the diplomatic

THE SEIMAS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA is the supreme body of state power of the Republic of Lithuania. It comprises 141 deputies elected for a period of four years. The Seimas have the power to adopt the Constitution and amend it, to adopt laws, to consider drafts on the program produced by the Government and to approve it, to control the activities of the Government, to approve the budget of the Government, to establish the state institutions provided by the law, to appoint and to dismiss chairpersons of the state institutions, to settle other issues pertaining to state power.

services, the SCLL, and the émigré organisations of these states became very important factors in 1990 while restoring the independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which was defended and saved in Lithuania during the tragic night of 13th January 1991, and in Estonia and Latvia during the later events of 1991;

noting that the aspiration for Euro-Atlantic integration has become one of the most important priorities of the foreign policy of the Lithuanian Republic after the restoration of its independence, opening up the opportunities for irrevocably establishing itself in the community of European states, which fosters democratic values;

by this declaration...

expresses gratitude to all participants in the freedom struggles of Lithuania for their determination, will and faith in Lithuania's independence and to the democratic states of the world, who have implemented the policy of non-recognition of the annexation of the Baltic States;

expresses gratitude to the European Parliament for "Resolution on the Situation in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania" of 13 January 1983, reflecting a wholehearted support of this international institution for the aspirations for freedom of the Baltic States;

emphasizes that Lithuania, having successfully concluded the accession negotiations and having been issued the invitation to membership in the EU and NATO, is establishing itself in the community of the world and European states;

commits itself to actively prepare for work under the conditions of EU membership and urges all institutions of Lithuania to improve the administrative capacities and implement the necessary reforms in order to ensure timely performance of membership obligations and successful participation in the activities of the EU institutions;

is convinced that the forthcoming ratification of the Accession Treaty in the European Union Member States and assent given to it in the European Parliament as well as the EU accession referenda in the candidate countries will be one more proof of solidarity of the uniting Europe;

urges all citizens of the Republic of Lithuania to make use of the new possibilities offered by membership in the EU and to participate actively, expressing their will in the forthcoming referendum on Lithuania's accession to the EU.

The Chairman of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania...

Artūras Paulauskas

Jan 13 medals to the defenders of the ideal of freedom...

Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus presented January 13th medals to a group of Lithuanian and foreign citizens, active defenders of the Lithuanian freedom and independence during the period of January to September 1991.

The presidential decree, signed on Jan 8, said these awards would be given to 219 individuals; of them 11 would receive the medals post mortem. The medal is the first award established in Independent Lithuania and among the most massive ones. It has been presented to more than 3,000 of Lithuanian and foreign citizens.

"January 13 will always remain for Lithuania

the fatal moment, during which the nation and [individuals], tragedy and heroism combined into one leaving the world astounded by self-sacrifice and courage," Adamkus told the guests who gathered at the White Hall of the presidential palace.

The first January 13th Medal was handed to Russian President Boris Yeltsin for his firm stance regarding Lithuania and its situation in 1991. ♦

—The Baltic News Service

The Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.

2003 LITHUANIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY OBSERVANCES THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES

"We cherish our heritage and believe in our future."



BOSTON REGION

Boston, MA **Sunday, February 16, 2003**
Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Peter Lithuanian R.C. Church, 50 West 6th Street (Flaherty Way), So. Boston, 10:30 a.m. Program at Lithuanian Citizens Association Hall, 368 W. Broadway, So. Boston, 1:00 p.m. Organizers: LAC, American Lithuanian Council, Lithuanian National Assoc.

Brockton, MA **Sunday, Feb. 9, 2003**
Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Casimir Lithuanian R. C. Church, Corner of Sawtell and Ames Streets., Brockton, 10:30 a.m. Program at St. Casimir Parish Hall immediately following the Mass.

Cape Cod, MA **Sunday, February 23, 2003**
Mass of Thanksgiving at Our Lady of Victory R.C. Church, South Main Street, Centerville, MA, 11:30 a.m. Program and reception in the parish hall at 1:00 p.m.

Lawrence, MA **Sunday, Feb. 16, 2003**
Mass of Thanksgiving (Lithuanian) at Church of the Holy Rosary, Lawrence, 11:00 a.m. Program/ luncheon at 12 noon, Heritage State Park Visitor Center, 2nd Fl., 1 Jackson St., Lawrence, MA (For information: Jonas Studzia: 978-685-4478.) Organized by American Lithuanian Council.

Providence, RI **Sunday, Feb. 23, 2003**
Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Casimir Lithuanian R.

C. Church, 350 Smith St., Providence, 10:00 a.m. Program and reception at St. Casimir Parish Hall immediately following the Mass.

Worcester, MA **Sunday, Feb. 16, 2003**
Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Casimir Lithuanian R. C. Church, Waverly and Providence Sts., 10:00 a. m. Program at St. Casimir Parish Hall immediately following the Mass. Organizers: Council of Lithuanian Organizations of Worcester of which LAC is a member.

CONNECTICUT REGION

Bridgeport, CT **Sunday, February, 16, 2003**
Mass of Thanksgiving at St. George Lithuanian R. C. Church, 443 Park Ave., Bridgeport, 11:30 a.m. Program in the parish hall at 12:30 p.m. Organized by the Knights of Lithuania and LAC.

Hartford, CT **Sunday, February 16, 2003**
Mass of Thanksgiving at Holy Trinity Lithuanian R. C. Church, 53 Capitol Ave., Hartford, 9:00 a.m. Program and refreshments at the Holy Trinity Parish Hall immediately following the Mass.

New Britain, CT. **Sunday, Feb. 9, 2003**
Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Andrew Lithuanian R. C. Church, 397 Church St., New Britain, CT 11:30 a.m. Program and reception at St. Andrew Parish Hall immediately following the Mass.

Eastern Connecticut Sunday, Feb. 16, 2003
 Mass of Thanksgiving at Immaculate Conception
 Convent, 600 Liberty Highway, Putnam, CT,
 8:00 a.m. Program at Matulaitis Nursing Home
 Auditorium, 10 Thuber Rd., Putnam, CT, 2:00 p.m.

Waterbury, CT Friday, Feb. 14, 2003
 Lithuanian flag raising ceremony at Waterbury
 City Hall, 10:00 a.m. Organized by Knights of
 Lithuania Waterbury Council.

Sunday, February 16, 2003
 Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Joseph Lithuanian R.
 C. Church, 46 Congress Ave., Waterbury, 9:15 a.
 m. Program in the St. Joseph School Hall 3:00 p.m.
 Organized by LAC and Knights of Lithuania.

FLORIDA REGION (Including Georgia)

Atlanta, GA
 Plans incomplete at press time. For information:
 770-992-6620, Dr. Roma Klicius, LAC, Inc. Chap-
 ter President.

Daytona Beach, FL Sunday, Feb. 9, 2003
 Mass of Thanksgiving at Prince of Peace R.C.
 Church, 600 S. Nova Rd., Ormond Beach, FL, 2:30
 p.m. Program in parish hall at 4:00 p.m.

March 11, 2003
 The Restoration of Independence from Soviet oc-
 cupation will be observed March 5, at 12 noon at
 Stacey's Restaurant, 600 S. Atlantic Ave., Ormond
 Beach, FL.

Palm Beach, FL Sunday, Feb. 9, 2003
 Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Jude R.C. Church, Te-
 questa, Fl. at 2:00 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 14, 2003
 Lithuanian Flag Raising Ceremony at Juno Beach
 City Hall, 10:00 a.m. Immediately following the
 ceremony in the City Council Chambers a concert
 and reception.

Saturday, March 8, 2003.
 Observance of February 16, March 11 and King
 Mindaugas' Coronation 750th jubilee at St. Paul of
 the Cross Parish Hall, 10970 State Road, A1A,
 North Palm Beach, FL, 2:00 p.m.

Pompano Beach, FL
 Plans incomplete at press time. For information:
 954-946-4389, Mr. Jonas Paskus, LAC, Inc. Chap-

ter President.

St. Petersburg, FL Saturday, Feb. 15, 2003
 Program at the Lithuanian American Club of St.
 Petersburg, 4880 46th Ave, St. Petersburg, FL,
 2:00 p.m.

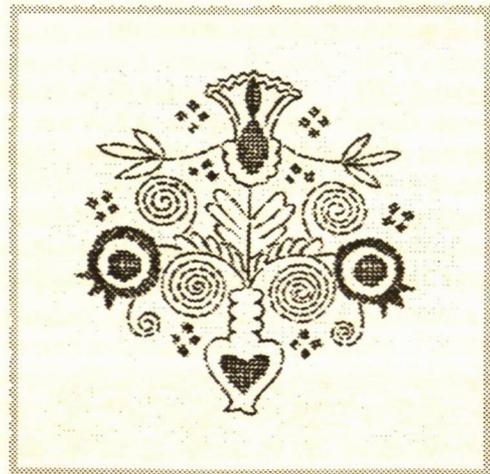
Sunday, Feb. 16, 2003
 Mass of Thanksgiving at Holy Name of Jesus
 Catholic Church, 5800 15th Ave., Gulfport, FL,
 1:00 p.m.

Sunny Hills, FL Sunday, Feb. 16, 2003
 Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Theresa R.C. Church,
 2056 Sunny Hills Blvd., Sunny Hills, FL, 11:00 a.
 m. Program and reception at St. Theresa Parish
 Auditorium, 3:00 p.m.

MICHIGAN REGION

Detroit, MI Sunday, Feb. 16, 2003
 Mass of Thanksgiving at Divine Providence
 Lithuanian R.C. Church, 25335 W. Nine Mile
 Road, Southfield, MI, 10:30 a.m. Program at the
 parish hall immediately following the Mass. Or-
 ganized by Michigan District of Lithuanian-
 American Community, Inc.

Grand Rapids, MI Sunday, Feb. 16, 2003
 Mass of Thanksgiving at Sts. Peter and Paul
 Lithuanian R.C. Church, 520 Myrtle St., Grand
 Rapids, 9:30 a.m. Program and refreshments at
 Sts. Peter and Paul Family Center immediately fol-
 lowing the Mass.



Lansing, MI

Participates in the Detroit, MI observances.

NEW YORK REGION**Long Island, Manhattan, Queens**

Sunday, February 16, 2003

Mass of Thanksgiving at Annunciation Church, North 5th St. & Havermeier Ave., Brooklyn, NY, 10 a.m. Program at Union Congregational Church Auditorium, 86-15 114th Street, Richmond Hill, NY, 4:00 p.m. Organized by Joint Committee of LAC N.Y. District, National Foundation, Lithuanian-American Council.

Rochester, NY

Sunday, Feb. 16, 2003

Mass of Thanksgiving at St. George Lithuanian R. C. Church, 545 Hudson Ave., Rochester, 11:00 a.m. Program and reception at the parish hall immediately following the Mass.

Schenectady, NY

Sunday, Feb. 16, 2003

Mass of Thanksgiving at Holy Cross Church, 16 No. College St., Schenectady, NY, 9:00 a.m. Reception after Mass in the church hall. Organized by Knights of Lithuania, the Capital District of NY State.

OHIO REGION**Cincinnati, OH**

Sunday, March 2, 2003

Program at the Community Clubhouse, 1A Highland Meadows Dr., Highland Meadows, KY, 2:00 p.m. Participation by representatives of Dayton, OH Lithuanian-American Community

Cleveland, OH

Sunday, Feb. 16, 2003

"Tevynės Garsai" Radio Program at 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. WJCU, 88.7 FM radio station. Laying of wreath at Lithuanian Wayside Cross and Mass of Thanksgiving at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 18022 Neff Rd., Cleveland, 9:45 a.m. Mass of Thanksgiving at St. George Lithuanian R.

C. Church, 65th and Superior, Cleveland, 10:30 a.m. Program at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish Hall, 4:00 p.m. Organized by LAC, Inc. and American Lithuanian Council Cleveland Chapters.

SOUTHEAST REGION, CENTRAL AND WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA**Baltimore, MD**

Sunday, Feb. 16, 2003

Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Alphonsus Lithuanian R.C. Church, 114 W. Saratoga St. at Park Ave., Baltimore, 8:30 a.m. Program at Lithuanian Hall, 851-853 Hollins St., Baltimore, 2:00 p.m. Organizers: LAC with Council of Lithuanian Societies of Maryland.

Elizabeth, NJ

Sunday, February 23, 2003

Mass of Thanksgiving at Sts. Peter and Paul Lithuanian R.C. Church, 211 Ripley Place, Elizabeth, 11:00 a.m. Program at the parish hall at 12:30 p.m.

Newark, NJ

Observance with Elizabeth Chapter of LAC in Elizabeth, NJ..

Philadelphia, PA

Sunday, Feb. 23, 2003

Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Andrew Lithuanian R. C. Church, 19th and Wallace Sts., Philadelphia, 10:30 a.m. Program at the Lithuanian Music Hall, 2715 E. Allegheny Ave., Philadelphia (Richmond Area), 2:00 p.m.

Pittsburgh, PA

Sunday, Feb. 9, 2003

A short program at the Lithuanian Citizens Society of Western PA, 1723 Jane St. South Side, Pittsburgh, 1:30 p.m. "Echoes of Lithuania" Radio Program (Dalia Yucius, Director) will feature Lithuanian History and special music for Lithuanian Independence Day throughout the month of February, station WEDO, 810AM.

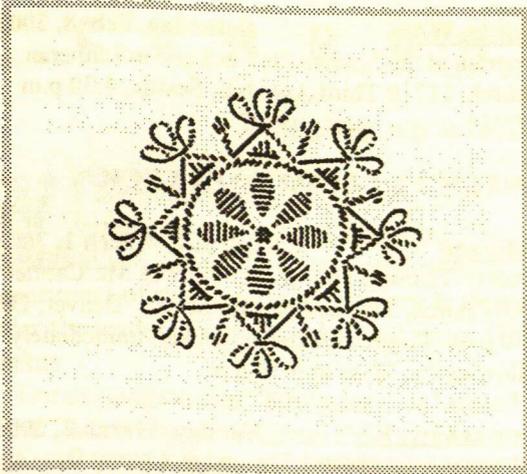
Pittston, PA

For information please call Nellie Bajoras At (570) 654-0870

Scranton, PA

For information please call Marie Laskie at (570) 347-1347





Shenandoah, PA **Sunday, Feb. 16, 2003**
 Mass of Thanksgiving at St. George Lithuanian R. C. Church, 129 South Jardin St., 11:00 a.m.
 Luncheon with Lithuanian Sing-along immediately following the Mass in parish hall. For information: Florence Yanall, event organizer (570) 462-2458

Washington, DC **Sunday, Feb. 9, 2003**
 Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Matthew R.C. Cathedral, 1725 Rhode Island Ave., Washington, DC, 10:00 a.m. Program at Latvian Hall, 415 Hurley Ave., Rockville, MD, 2:00 p.m.

MIDWESTERN REGION

Brighton Park (Chicago), IL **Sunday, Feb. 9, 2003**
 Mass of Thanksgiving at Immaculate Conception Lithuanian R.C. Church, 4420 So. Fairfield Ave., Brighton Park, Chicago, IL, 10:30 a.m. Program at the school hall immediately following the Mass.
 Sunday, March 9, 2003 observance of March 11 same as on Feb. 9, 2003

Cicero IL **February 11, 2003**
 Cicero City Hall reading of Lithuanian Day Resolution, 10:30 a.m.

Thursday, February 13, 2003
 Cicero City Hall Lithuanian flag raising ceremony, 12 noon.

Sunday, February 16, 2003
 Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Anthony Lithuanian R. C. Church, 1515 So. 50th Ave., Cicero, 9:00 a.m. Program and refreshments at the parish hall immediately following the Mass. Organizers: Lithua-

nian-American Community, Inc and American Lithuanian Council Chapters.

East Chicago, IN **Sunday, Feb. 9, 2003**
 Program at American Legion Post 430, 7430 Broadway (Rt. 53), Merrillville, IN, 1:00 p.m. Organizers: Lithuanian American Community, Inc. and American Lithuanian Council Chapters and Knights of Lithuania Council.

East St. Louis, IL **Sunday, March 9, 2003**
 Mass of Thanksgiving at Immaculate Conception Lithuanian R.C. Church, 1509 Baugh Ave., East St. Louis, 10:30 a.m. Program and luncheon in the parish hall immediately following the Mass at 11:30 a.m.

Lemont, IL **Saturday, Feb. 15, 2003**
 Gala Independence Day Banquet, Lithuanian World Center, 14911 127th Street, Lemont, IL 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, February 16, 2003
 Mass of Thanksgiving Blessed Matulaitis Mission Lithuanian World Center, Lemont, IL 11:00 a.m. Program in main auditorium of Lithuanian World Center, Lemont, IL immediately following the Mass at 12 noon.

Waukeegan, IL **Saturday, Feb. 15, 2003**
 Concert to celebrate King Mindaugas 750 years Jubilee and Lithuanian Independence Day, 5:00 p.m. College of Lake County Auditorium, Bldg "C" C005, 19351 W. Washington St., Grayslake, IL

Minnesota (Twin Cities Area)

Saturday, Feb. 8, 2003
 Religious service followed by cultural program at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 2561 Victoria St., Roseville, MN, 4:30 p.m.

Madison, WI **Sunday, Feb. 16, 2003**

Celebrate Lithuanian Independence Day at the Madison International Festival at the Madison Civic Center, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Lithuanian history will be presented at an information table as well as Lithuanian arts and crafts. ŽAIBAS Lithuanian Folk Dancers will dance. (Call Nijolė Etwiler for time of Lithuanian performance at 608-356-6549)

WESTERN REGION**Alaska**

Plans incomplete at press time. "Lithuanian Independence Day Celebration Get Together", Anchorage, Alaska. Please contact Asta Spurgis-Sirvelis at 907-277-7897 for more information.

Hawaii**Sunday, Feb. 16, 2003**

Program and social at Makani Kai Marina Boat-house, 45-995 Wailele Road in Kaneohe on the island of Oahu from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. All visitors to Hawaii are cordially invited. For more information call LAC Chapter president Elena Bradūnas-Aglinskas at (808) 247-6037 or e-mail: elena@lava.net

Phoenix, AZ**Sunday, Feb. 23, 2003**

Mass of Thanksgiving at St. St. Clement of Rome R.C. Church, 15800 Del Webb Blvd., Sun City, AZ, 1:30 p.m. Program with a luncheon at the parish hall immediately following the Mass at 2 p.m.

Los Angeles, CA**Sunday, Feb. 16, 2003**

Flag raising ceremony in St. Casimir Parish Courtyard at 9:15 a.m. Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Casimir Lithuanian R. C. Church, 2716 St. George St., 10:30 a.m. Program at the parish hall immediately following the Mass at 12:00 noon. Organized by the American Lithuanian Council Chapter and Lithuanian American Community Western District.

San Diego, CA**Sunday, Feb. 16, 2003**

Program at Oceanside Senior Center, 455 Country Club Lane, Oceanside, CA, 2:00 p.m. For information contact LAC Chapter President Saulius Lišauskas at 760-943-9439

San Francisco, CA**Sunday, March 9, 2003**

Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Mary Magdalene Church, Barryman and Milvia Sts, Berkeley, CA, 12:30 p.m. Program at the parish hall immediately following the Mass. For information and to confirm time, please call Rita Kovas at (510) 843-4749.

Portland, OR**Saturday, March 1, 2003**

Program at the Latvian Hall, 5500 SW Dosch St., Portland, 4:00 p.m. For information contact Portland LAC Chapter president Vilius Zalpys at 360-834-6988

Seattle, WA**Saturday, Feb. 8, 2003**

Program at the Latvian Hall at Latvian Lutheran Church, 11710 Third Ave. NE, Seattle, 4:30 p.m.

AMERICA'S CROSSROADS REGION**Colorado****Saturday, March 1, 2003**

Mass of Thanksgiving at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel R.C. Church, 34th and Navajo Streets, Denver, CO 5:30 p.m. Program at the parish hall immediately following the Mass at 6:30 p.m.

Kansas City, KS**Sunday, March 2, 2003**

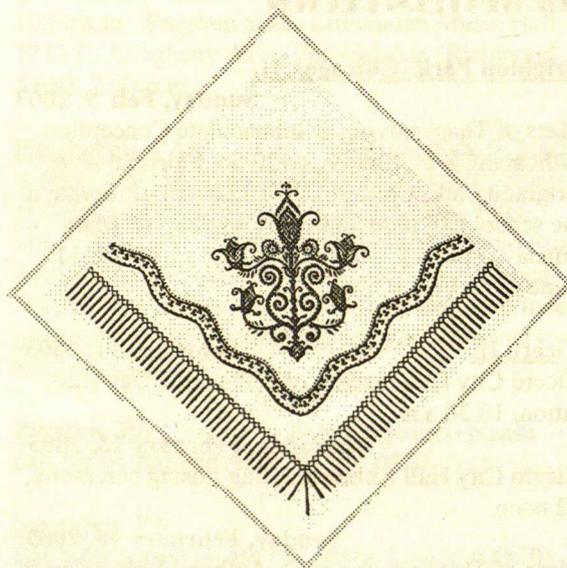
Lithuanian Independence Day and St. Casimir Day Observances. Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Cyril Church, 44 N. Mill, Kansas City, 11:00 a.m. Program to follow in church hall.

Omaha, NE**Sunday, Feb. 16, 2003**

Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Anthony Lithuanian Catholic Church, 32nd and "S" Streets, Omaha, NE, 10:00 a.m. Program at St. Anthony Parish Social Hall, 32nd and T Streets, Omaha, 11:00 a.m.

Houston, TX

Plans not finalized at time of going to press. For information please call John Knašas, Houston LAC Chapter president at (713) 895-7745. ♦



(Organized by Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. Chapters, unless noted otherwise)

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

Digging up a little history in Lithuania

We are inviting you to join an archeological expedition in Lithuania! The expedition is organized by the Archeological Department of the Lithuanian History Institute under the leadership of Dr. habil. Algirdas Girininkas.

The excavation site "Kretuonas" is located in the "Aukštaitijos" National Park on the shores of Lake Kretuonas, one of the largest lakes in Lithuania. The work will be done under the supervision of professional archeologists who are exploring a 4000 year-old Neolithic habitation of Lithuanian forebears.

Of course, you shall find neither gold nor silver, not even iron, because at that time these people had not yet learned to use metals. Their tools, vessels, and weapons were made of local materials – flint, bone, horn, stone, wood, and clay. It will, however, be no less thrilling to uncover with your trowel a 4000 year-old artifact – possibly a bone amulet once worn around the neck of an ancient inhabitant of this site. Various artifacts, for example, flint scrapers, knives, and pottery shards are so plentiful that you are virtually guaranteed to experience the joy of discovery with your own hands.

The living conditions will be quite comfort-

able. You will be staying and eating your meals at a tourist lodge 10 kilometers (approximately 6 miles) from the excavation site. Transportation will be provided to and from the site.

At the excavation site you shall be working with a mason's trowel and a shovel. The work is not hard but requires meticulous attention. You will be scraping soil little by little from the surface of your assigned plot, usually a square, and collect all archeological finds – mostly flint pieces, pottery shards, fish and animal bones, and artifacts made from these materials.

After that your finds have to be washed, conserved, and inventoried. In your free time you will be able to learn some of the ancient skills: archeologists will teach participants to flake flint stone, to cast and fire clay pots, to carve wooden spoons, and, if you wish, to plait sashes, and recognize and collect medicinal herbs.

Excursions will be organized by foot or bus to wilderness areas to collect berries and mushrooms. During the evenings, there shall be lectures and slide shows about Lithuanian prehistory, and get-togethers with performances of old Lithuanian folk songs and dances by members of ethnographic ensembles.

Anyone over 18 years of age may participate. Younger participants accompanied by an adult are also welcome. Non-speakers of Lithuanian can be accommodated. Expedition leaders will gladly explain everything in English.

Here are some more details:

- ◆ The expedition will begin on June 14, 2003 and last 20 days allowing participants to attend the



Song and Dance Festival from July 4 to 6 in Vilnius (the length of stay may be adjusted to meet individual needs).

- ◆ Cost: \$1,000 (\$50 per day).
- ◆ Those interested in participating should register by March 1, 2003 by mailing a deposit of \$250.00 to Dalia Anysas, 614 South Laflin Street, Townhouse F, Chicago, IL 60607-3161. The check should be made out to the "Lithuanian-American Community - Cultural Council" noting on the check, if you wish, that it is for "Baltic Archeology". A portion of the cost is a do-

nation to support the journal "Baltų Archeologija" and is tax deductible in the US.

- ◆ The balance of the payment will be due on arrival in Lithuania.

For more information contact Dalia or Jurgis Anysas by telephone at 312 733-2696, by E-mail at janyzas@condor.DePaul.edu, or by mail at the address given above. You may also contact dr. A.Girininkas at lii@pub.osf.lt or algis@mail.lt . ◆

— *Dalia and Jurgis Anysas*

Information Technology from Lithuania

Lithuania will host the first ever World IT Forum (WITFOR) in Vilnius on August 27-29, 2003. The Forum will focus on the ICT-equity agenda and will aim at assisting developing nations in implementing sustainable strategies for application on ICT.

In order to present to the United States WITFOR its goals as well as Lithuania's efforts to stimulate research, development, application, and international cooperation in information, technology members of the Steering Committee of WITFOR made two presentations on Tuesday, January 21, 2003 at San Jose University and on Wednesday, January 22, 2003 at Santa Clara University.

Lithuania has historically put high emphasis on development of modern technologies and has become the gateway for western technology companies seeking to expand business in Central and Eastern Europe. Relations between Lithuania and the United States have grown rapidly as a result of last year's invitation to join NATO and European Union. We are eager to present to you new opportunities provided by the dynamic and fast-growing IT sector in Lithuania.

If you would have further questions please do not hesitate to contact the Embassy or visit www.witfor.lt. ◆

—*Raimondas Ališauskas*
First Secretary of the Embassy of Lithuania
(Commercial Issues)

A St. George Sports hero

From Cleveland's own St. George's Lithuanian Roman Catholic Church where he was an altar boy to Tampa Bay's Buccaneers football team, Joe Jurevičius has stepped into Lithuanian-American hero status. His Super Bowl performance on Jan. 26, 2003 was recorded nationwide by many Lithuanian-Americans.

Joe Jurevičius's whole story about his family, life, ambitions, and proud heritage is in *Sports Illustrated*, (Feb. 3, 2003 — with cover photo) and in various newspapers.

In addition to belonging to the parish, Joe is a member of the "Žaibas" Lithuanian sports club, Cleveland Lithuanian Club, and the "Litts Anglers", a Lithuanian fishing club.

Don't miss this rising star! ◆



Joe Jurevičius displays his tattoo of the Lithuanian "Vytis" — symbolizing Lithuania's perseverance.

Lithuanian service of Radio Free Europe needs your support

Reliable sources have confirmed that the Bush Administration's Office of Management and Budget is finalizing its proposed budget for FY 2004 which currently includes SPECIFIC ORDERS to shut down Radio Free Europe's (RFE) broadcasts to **Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.**



written to President Bush, asking him to ensure continued funding for RFE's Lithuanian broadcasting. Lithuanian-Americans and all who are concerned with the state of Baltic-American relations and the situation in the Baltics, are asked to help with the following, three-step approach:

Latest SIC Gallup Lithuania polls show that nearly a half million listeners in Lithuania rely on RFE's Lithuanian programs as their source for objective news and analysis. RFE's Lithuanian broadcasts are heard seven times daily. Listenership in the past year has doubled, which shows that there is still a need for RFE. RFE remains Lithuania's most important source of Western-style news and analysis independent of the Russian media!

As foreign policy programs go, RFE broadcasting is relatively inexpensive. A full year of Lithuanian broadcasting costs barely one million dollars.

If the White House submits and Congress approves the budget proposal as it currently stands, RFE's Baltic broadcasts will cease in June 2003.

There is still a clear need for RFE's Lithuanian Service. Over 300,000 listeners can't be wrong. Politicians, including former chairman of the Lithuanian Parliament Vytautas Landsbergis and President Valdas Adamkus, agree.

Professor Landsbergis, speaking after the NATO summit in Prague, declared that "the Lithuanian Service of RFE is necessary because...a free Europe is yet to be created."

Recently, President Adamkus personally appealed to the United States to continue funding Radio Free Europe's Lithuanian Service.

He said, "A free Europe needs Radio Free Europe."

President Valdas Adamkus has already

1. **Immediately** call the White House comments line at 202-456-1111, or contact President Bush by fax 202-456-5461 or email president@whitehouse.gov, and ask him to: **please restore funding for the Lithuanian service of Radio Free Europe.**
2. **Early February** contact the chair and chair-designee of the House appropriations and Senate appropriations committees Bill Young and Ted Stevens, and members of the committees from your state with the same request.
3. In **February**, ask your Representative and Senators to ensure funding for the Lithuanian service of Radio Free Europe. Use www.vote-smart.org to find your member of Congress and Senators.

Radio Free Europe is an independent, non-profit radio funded by Congress. You can find RFE on the internet at www.laisvojieuropa.org or www.rferl.org. The Lithuanian Service of RFE can be reached by email at: laisvojieuropa@hotmail.com. ♦

—Radio Free Europe

Fifth JBANC Conference 2003

“ESTONIA, LATVIA, LITHUANIA IN NATO: BUILDING TRANS-ATLANTIC SECURITY”

The Joint Baltic American National Committee, Inc. (JBANC) is pleased to invite you to its fifth conference on Baltic Security, “*Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania in NATO: Building Trans-Atlantic Security*” at the Washington Marriott hotel in Washington, D.C. on March 6–8, 2003.

Ministerial level representatives from the Baltic countries and acclaimed scholars from leading NGO’s, together with high-level representatives from the U.S. government and the diplomatic community will join in an exciting three-day event. Discussions will focus on Baltic political, military, economic and regional developments, the outcome of the Prague Summit and the NATO enlargement treaty ratification process in the U.S. Senate.

The program includes a briefing on Capitol Hill, meetings with Administration officials, panels on the economical and socio-political environment in the Baltics, along with an evening reception and special lunch and dinner on Saturday.

A reduced registration fee of \$110 includes lunch and dinner on Saturday and round trip transportation from the hotel to briefings on Capitol Hill and with the Administration. **This rate will apply only till February 7.** Hotel reservations have to be made by that day calling the Washington Marriott at: 1-888-236-2427 or 202-872-1500. Please mention that you will be attending the JBANC Conference.

We’ll see you in Washington!



Please Send this Card to Receive *Fifth JBANC Conference on NATO* Registration Materials
 Attn: *JBANC Conference on NATO*
 400 Hurley Av.
 Rockville MD 20850

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Or simply contact JBANC at (301) 340-1954 or jbanc@jbanc.org or via Internet at www.jbanc.org

- Please check this box if you would like to receive JBANC Action Alerts and Press Releases related to the Baltics.
 Please check this box if you would like to receive the JBANC Chronicle – a FREE Publication for Baltic Activists.

LITHUANIA 2003

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ON FINNAIR AND OTHER CARRIERS*

CITY	DEPARTURE JUNE	RETURN JULY
BOSTON	29	14
CHICAGO	29	13
CLEVELAND	27	11
DETROIT	27	11
LOS ANGELES	28	11
NEWARK	28	13

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

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