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The American Embassy Newsletter

Embassy of the United States of America to Lithuania

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Message from Ambassador John Cloud

The United States has been actively engaged in promoting democracy in this region and throughout the world. In November, we get our chance to lead by example and show the world how we value the privilege of voting to elect our leaders. Obviously, living overseas, we need to plan ahead to make sure we get our ballots submitted in a timely manner. More detailed information is contained on page 3 of the newsletter. The Embassy's Consular Section stands ready to assist Americans who want to register to vote.

Lithuanian-American relations continue to be excellent. The major accomplishment of the last month was the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on visa waiver on March 17th. The signing of this MOU does not grant immediate visa waiver status, but moves the process closer. It is important to understand that visa waiver does not provide completely visa free travel. However, it will allow most Lithuanians to travel to the United States for tourism or business for 90 days without a visa. Lithuanians traveling for other purposes (e.g., students) or wanting to stay longer than 90 days will still need a visa.

I am very excited to tell you about the upcoming "Month of American Culture." During April the Embassy will be involved in a number of American cultural events designed to showcase the diversity of our culture and heritage. We have listed the events and how to obtain tickets on page 7 of the newsletter.

Our next town hall meeting is scheduled for Saturday, May 17. I hope to see you then.

-- Ambassador John Cloud

News from the Consular Section

SCHENGEN UPDATE

Effective March 30, 2008 Lithuania will eliminate border checks for air entries via other Schengen states. This action should facilitate travel within the Schengen zone for American residents of Lithuania and visitors alike. As you may recall, Lithuanian land border checks ceased in December 2007.

However, it is important to note that American citizens will be permitted to spend only 90 days without a visa in the Schengen zone, not 90 days per country. This point is particularly relevant for non-resident Americans as they will need to exit the Schengen zone (rather than just exiting Lithuania) after completing a 90-day visit in country. For those Americans with residence permits for Lithuania, the 90-day limit applies to stays outside Lithuania but within the Schengen zone.

American citizens should still travel with a valid passport even within the Schengen zone because proof of identification may be required by local authorities. Also if public order or national security so require, checks at the internal borders may be carried out for limited periods. This happened as recently as summer 2006, when Germany reinstated checks during the soccer World Cup. EU citizens may travel within the Schengen zone with a valid passport or identity card.

The Schengen accord (an optional EU agreement) eliminates border checks for entry via other Schengen countries. Today the Schengen area is composed of 24 states:

- 22 EU member states: Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden;
- 2 non-EU states: Norway and Iceland.

The EU Member States Ireland, Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, Cyprus and Romania do *not* belong to the Schengen group.

*Please encourage any
American Citizens living
in Lithuania to register
with the Consular
Section.
They can register
online at
[http://travelregistration.
state.gov](http://travelregistration.state.gov).*

BE SMART. DO YOUR PART. VOTE.

Election season began long ago and Election Day is only months away. Especially for those of us overseas, it is important to start the registration and absentee ballot request processes early.

All U.S. citizens who are 18 years old on Election Day may register to vote. Keep in mind, though, that the issues of voting residence and registration can be complex. Luckily, the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act allows citizens outside the U.S. to vote in the state or territory where they resided immediately prior to departing the United States, even if many years have passed and the voter maintains no residence in the state or territory.

To register to vote or request an absentee ballot if you are already registered, you can submit a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to the appropriate state/local election official. In some states, registration may not be necessary to vote. Therefore, it is important to determine your state of voting residence and find out what the requirements are for your state. To obtain a FPCA or for more information, please visit the Federal Voting Assistance Program website at <http://www.fvap.gov>, your state's official voting website, or come see us in the Consular Section to review a copy of the Federal Voting Assistance Guide.

Some states or territories such as Michigan require voter registration materials to be notarized. We provide this service free of charge during our American Citizen Services hours.

We look forward to helping you make your voice heard this election year!

ECONOMIC STIMULUS PAYMENTS

Starting in May, the Treasury will begin sending economic stimulus payments to more than 130 million households. To receive a payment, taxpayers must have a valid Social Security number, \$3,000 of income and file a 2007 federal tax return. IRS will take care of the rest. Eligible people will receive up to \$600 (\$1,200 for married couples), and parents will receive an additional \$300 for each eligible child younger than 17. Millions of retirees, disabled veterans and low-wage workers who usually are exempt from filing a tax return must do so this year in order to receive a stimulus payment. For more detailed information about the Economic Stimulus Act you can visit the Economic Stimulus Payments Information Center on the IRS web site www.irs.gov.

Update from the Political-Economic Section

TOLERANCE AND EQUAL RIGHTS IN LITHUANIA

Human Rights Monitoring Institute's Action Week against Racism

Increasing manifestations of discrimination, racism, anti-Semitism, and other forms of intolerance in Lithuania have been observed by NGOs and the media over the last several years. The most notorious recent case was the skinhead march on March 11th. A high profile case from last year was the reaction to a proposed, EU-sponsored diversity rally in May, which prompted an anti-homosexual rally and a decision by Vilnius Municipality not to grant a permit to the planned diversity rally. The anti-homosexual rally was attended by only a handful of people, despite widespread publicity through offensive flyers that were posted all over Vilnius, suggesting that intolerance is not accepted or supported by most Lithuanians.

In this context, a leading human rights NGO, the Human Rights Monitoring Institute (HRMI), declared the week of March 15-23, 2008, as an Action Week against Racism. The HRMI sought to engage Lithuanians on the subjects of tolerance, equal rights, and a celebration of diversity.

A round table discussion "The Price of Racial Discrimination: Effectiveness of Equal Opportunities Policy in Lithuania" and a press conference opened the Action Week on March 14. The program of the Action Week included various events and activities centered on youth and included discussions, art exhibitions, film screenings, and concerts. Participants of the Action Week had an opportunity to get acquainted with the culture, traditions, skills, and artwork of ethnic minorities.

The Action Week was supported by several Lithuanian government agencies, the Campaign "All Different – All Equal", by the Project "In Corpore" of the European Communities initiative EQUAL, Lithuanian Chapter of the Red Cross, Human Rights Centre, Roma Society Centre, and the Children's Fund of Lithuania.

The issue of racial discrimination and intolerance will remain in the spotlight for some time in Lithuania. For example, the well-known Lithuanian internet news portal Delfi also has plans for a conference about diversity. We all hope that such efforts help to decrease intolerance.



New Acquisitions

American Information Resource Center - Vilnius

Akmenu str. 7, tel. 266-5402, 266-5444, 266-5412

The Information Research Center is pleased to announce our recent acquisition of new books, CDs and DVDs in the American Center Library. We have provided a list of new items below. To view a full listing of library resources please visit our on-line catalog at <http://vilnius.usembassy.gov/online-catalog.html>.

BOOKS

Blair, Karen J. *Joining In: Exploring the History of Voluntary Organizations: Original Ed.* - Malabar, Fla. Krieger Pub. Co., 2006

Brigham, Robert K. (Robert Kendall), 1960- *Is Iraq another Vietnam? 1st ed.* -New York: Public Affairs, 2006

Chong, Derrick, 1963- *Arts Management.* - London; New York Routledge, 2002

Dabney, Lewis M. *Edmund Wilson: A Life in Literature, 1st ed.* - New York Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005

Drewniany, Bonnie L. *Creative Strategy in Advertising, 9th ed.* -Boston, MA, USA Thomson/Wadsworth, 2008

Greenberg, David, 1968-*Nixon's Shadow: The History of an Image, 1st ed.* -New York W.W. Norton 2003

Heilbrun, James, Charles M. Gray. *The Economics of Art and Culture, 2nd ed.* - New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001

Ivy, Diana K., Phil Backlund. *Gender Speak: Personal Effectiveness in Gender Communication, 3rd ed.* - Boston McGraw-Hill 2004

Lowe, Kelly Fisher. *The Words and Music of Frank Zappa.* - Lincoln University of Nebraska Press, 2007

Skinner, Bruce E., Vladimir Rukavina. *Event Sponsorship.*- Hoboken, N.J. John Wiley & Sons 2003 (The Wiley Event Management Series)

***Volunteering as Leisure/Leisure as Volunteering: An International Assessment.* - Oxon, Cambridge, MA CABI Pub., 2004**



New Acquisitions

American Information Resource Center - Vilnius

Akmenu str. 7, tel. 266-5402, 266-5444, 266-5412

DVDs and CDs

Frank Zappa: Apostrophe ('), Over-Night Sensation.-United States Eagle Rock Entertainment, 2007 (Approx. 97 min.)

Hitchcock, Alfred. The Birds; Marnie; Torn Curtain; Topaz; Frenzy; Family Plot; The Trouble with Harry; The Man Who Knew Too Much; Vertigo; Psycho. -United States Universal Studios, 2005

Huston, John. The Treasure of the Sierra Madre. - Burbank, CA Turner Entertainment Co. and Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc., 2003 (2 Disc Special Edition, B&W, 126 min.)

Lee, Spike. When The Levees Broke - A Requiem In Four Acts - Home Box Office, Inc. 2006 (Color, approx: 256 minutes; 3 discs)

Ostrow, Martin. The American Experience. America and the Holocaust--Deceit and Indifference.- United States WGBH Educational Foundation, 2005 (Color, approx. 90 min.)

Schumacher, Joel. The Phantom of the Opera. - Burbank, CA Warner Bros. Entertainment, Inc. 2005 (2-Disc Special Edition, Color, 141 min.)

The Scrambled States of America. - United States Weston Woods Studios, Inc. 2003 (Approx. 65 min.)

Spielberg, Steven. Schindler's List. - United States Universal Studios, 2004 (B&W with Color Segments; 3 hrs. 16 min.)

Zinnemann, Fred, 1907-1997. High Noon. - United States Republic Entertainment Inc., 2002 (Collector's Edition, 85 minutes)

Public Affairs

**Akmenu 7, 03106 Vilnius Tel. 266-5300 Fax. 266-5310
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U.S. Embassy Newsletter

More News From the Public Affairs Section

Cultural Calendar:

APRIL 2008 - MONTH OF AMERICAN CULTURE

U.S. Embassy

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We're on the Web!
See us at:
<http://vilnius.usembassy.gov/>

The Embassy of the United States is pleased to announce that April is the month of American Culture. We encourage you to join us as we celebrate American culture in its many forms around Lithuania.

March 29, 8:00 p.m.

Festival "Birštonas Jazz" 2008

Birštonas Culture Center Jaunimo 4, Birštonas

March 31, 7:00 p.m.

Jazz Concert

Lithuanian Music and Theater Academy II (Congress) Palace Chamber Hall.
Tilto 16, Vilnius
Admission is free.

April 10, 7:00 p.m.

Frank Zappa's Symphony pieces ... From A Distance...
String Quintet "Intermezzo"

Artistic Director: Lionius Treikauskas
Lithuanian National Philharmonic. Aušros vartų 5, Vilnius
Tickets available through the Philharmonic.

April 11, 7:00 p.m.

Jazz Concert

Jemeel Moondoc & Roy Campbell quartet (U.S.)
Lithuanian Russian Drama Theater. Basanavičiaus 19, Vilnius
Tickets available at www.Bilietai.lt

April 13, 4:00 p.m.

American Bikers Night

Featuring a documentary film about American Bikers
Club "Ramybe" Vytauto 35, Palanga
Admission is free.

April 17, 6:00 p.m.

George Gershwin Society Inauguration Concert

Concert will be conducted by musicologist Viktoras Gerulaitis

American Center. Akmenų 7, Vilnius

Admission is free. Advance registration required, tel.: 266 53 00

April 20, 4:00 p.m.

Frank Zappa Night

Featuring documentary film cuts from: Dinah-Moe Humm, I'm the Smile, Montana, St

Alfonzo's Pancake Breakfast, Cosmic Debris, Stink-Foot

Club "Ramybe" Vytauto 35, Palanga

Admission is free.

Independent American Movie Festival

In collaboration with the American Film Institute

Film House "Skalvija." Gostauto 2/15, Vilnius

Admission is free. Tickets will be offered on a first come first served basis.

April 21, 7:00 p.m.

"Big Rig" Directed by Doug Prey

Welcoming address by American film director Doug Prey before the screening

April 22, 7:00 p.m.

"Shame" Directed by Mohamed Naqvi (Pakistan)

Welcoming address by the film director Mohamed Naqvi before the screening

April 23, 7:00 p.m.

"American Fork" Directed by Chris Bowman

April 24, 9:00 p.m.

"Spine Tingler! The William Castle Story" Directed

by Jeffrey Schwarz

April 24, 7:00 p.m.

"Disappearances" Directed by Jay Craven

April 23, 7:00 p.m.

Trio Cavatina (U.S.)

Lithuanian National Philharmonic. Aušros vartų 5, Vilnius

Tickets available through the Philharmonic.

April 23, 7:00 p.m.

Concert in honor of the 60th Anniversary of the Šiauliai Higher Educational School

Featuring:

UNO Jazz Ensemble (U.S.)

Singer Aurelija Čižauskaitė,

Šiauliai University students,

Modern folklore group "Kitava",

Andrius Mamontovas and group.

Šiaulių arena. J. Jablonskio 16, Šiauliai

Kaunas Jazz Festival 2008

April 26, 4:00 p.m.

Uno Jazz Ensemble (U.S.)
Jugend Jazz Orchester Baden-Wurttemberg (Germany)
Vienybės Square, Kaunas
Admission is free of charge.

April 27, 7:00 p.m.

Petras Vyšniauskas (Lithuania),
Eddie Palmieri Afro Caribbean Jazz All Stars (U.S., Cuba)
Tickets available at www.kaunasjazz.lt

April 28, 7:00 p.m.

Nosso Trio (Brazil),
David Sanchez Group 2007 (U.S.)
Tickets available at www.kaunasjazz.lt

Next American Citizen Town Hall Meeting – May 17, 2008

Holiday Closures at the Embassy:

May 1 – International Labor Day

May 26 – Memorial Day

June 24 – St. John's Day

July 4 – Independence Day

July 7 – King Mindaugas Day

*Public Affairs Section
(PAS) e-mail & website:*

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