



### Commander's Message

I hope you have stayed well and had an enjoyable Thanksgiving and Christmas.

I wish to thank the regular attendees to our Post 154 meetings for their support. I wish to especially thank our Adjutant Vincent Dulys, Vice Commander Gintaras Buivys and Historian Henry Gaidis.

Vince is the hardest worker in our Post. He keeps our Post in good standing by representing our Post at Department Executive Committee Meetings, participating in them and maintaining Post records.

Gintaras slept through the Army's basic training lesson "Don't Volunteer for Anything." Regardless if it is a task for Post 154 or the Lithuanian Community, you can be certain that Gintaras is involved or leading it.

Henry spent months researching and composing Post 154's history and won "Best History Book" at the American Legion Department of Maryland Convention. He is also constantly promoting Post 154 during his frequent visits to the Lithuanian Embassy and to visitors to the Lithuanian Museum where he has a Post 154 display.

Baltimore Lithuanian Community's Lithuanian Independence Celebration will take place at Lithuanian Hall on March 10 at 2 PM. Post 154 has been invited to present *The Colors*. Please arrive 30 minutes early wearing your Post 154 uniform and participate.

On Television recently I saw a reporter approach collage kids protesting the Israel/Hamas war to ask them a few basic civics questions. Sadly, most were unable to answer. Obviously our schools are not doing their job. That made me think that if the collage kids would have attended American Legion Boys or Girls State programs, they would probably been able to answer them. Two of my grandsons attended the Boys State program a few years ago and found it to be an excellent life experience and civics lesson. Their endorsement of Boys State prompted me to include the Boys State information on page 3. If you know of a boy or girl who will finish their junior year of high school next summer, please ask them to discuss the program with their HS counselor and apply. Our country needs knowledgeable citizens and attending Boys/Girls State will help educate them.

On behalf of the officers of Lithuanian Post 154, I wish you and your family a safe, happy, healthy and prosperous 2024.

Joe Jankevicius  
Commander

### Back to God Mass



Our Lady of Victory Church

Lithuanian Post 154 continued its annual Back to God Mass program at Our Lady of Victory Church in Arbutus on Sunday, November 12, 2023. Fr. Bill Keown introduced Post 154 to Our Lady of Victory parishioners and thanked us for our participation at the mass. After mass, Lithuanian Post 154 members and their families met for lunch and socializing in Catonsville.

How did the Back to God Mass get started? American Legion in the 1950s took a strong McCarthyist stance. There was an anti-Communist "crusade" to discourage Communist influence and bring the American people closer to God. The American Legion, consistent with the Legion's purpose as stated in its Preamble to The American Legion Constitution that begins with "For God and Country..." at its 1951 convention in Miami, Florida, formally endorsed a "Back to God" movement in a resolution. Prompted by the American Legion's endorsement, Lithuanian Post 154's "Back to God Mass" was started by Father Dranginis in 1953. With only a few exceptions, it has been held every year since.

During his radio broadcast on February 7, 1954, President Eisenhower made the nation aware and strongly endorsed the American Legion "Back to God" program. He said "As a former soldier, I am delighted that our veterans are sponsoring a movement to increase our awareness of God in our daily lives. In battle, they learned a great truth—that there are no atheists in the foxholes. They know that in time of test and trial, we instinctively turn to God for new courage and peace of mind. All the history of America bears witness to this truth."

The American Legion's National Commander in 1952, Lewis K. Gough, promoted "regular church attendance, daily family prayer, and the religious training of children." Also, The American Legion endorsed the passage of state bills requiring U.S. loyalty oaths of school teachers. Something that would certainly be challenged in our courts today. We are living in a different country.

## Membership

If you have not yet paid your 2024 dues, please do so now. The old 2023 membership card became invalid on December 31, 2023.

You can renew your membership by going to the Lithuanian Post 154 website <http://www.lietuvis.net> and clicking on "Online Membership Renewal." If you wish to renew by mail, make a \$30 check payable to "The American Legion Lithuanian Post 154" and mail it to my address that is on the last page of this newsletter.

Vincent Dulys,  
Membership Chairman

## Germany to Deploy Troops in Lithuania



**Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis watches German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius sign agreement with Lithuania for the deployment of a German brigade to Lithuania.**

German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius and his Lithuanian counterpart, Arvydas Anusauskas, signed an agreement on Dec. 18, 2023 to permanently deploy a brigade of German soldiers in Lithuania. The decision, described by Pistorius as "historic," represents the first permanent deployment of German troops abroad since the end of World War II.

The deployment of a brigade, consisting of close to 5,000 soldiers, will begin in 2024 and reach full strength in 2027. The move aims to strengthen NATO's presence on its eastern flank with Russia, which is the "duty of Germany to protect," Pistorius said.

Also, on 18 December, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, Gabriel Landsbergis, met German Defence Minister, Boris Pistorius. During the meeting, Landsbergis noted that the deployment of the German brigade in Lithuania was the priority of the Lithuanian Government and therefore attempts were made to ensure the best conditions for German troops and their families.

Source: Lithuanian Embassy

## Happy Birthday

### January

Patrick Dohlus  
William Morrison  
Stephen Mueller  
John Potts  
Ronald Price  
Vytautas Ramunas

### February

Kirk Bauer  
Jeffrey Burton

### March

Richard Leffler  
Gediminas Naujokaitis  
Augustinas Uleckas

## Congratulations



Congratulations to Ballys Brasauskas, Post 154's oldest member, on reaching his 99th birthday last month. Ballys also holds the Post's continuous membership record of 70 years.

Post 154 wishes Ballys many more healthy years.

## Two \$1,000 College Scholarships

Lithuanian Post 154 will grant two \$1,000 scholarships in 2024. The scholarships will be available to children, grandchildren, stepchildren, step grandchildren, nephews, nieces and adopted children of Lithuanian Post 154 members in good standing or deceased members who were in good standing at time of death.

The students must be graduating from high school in 2024. Contact Joe Jankevicius at (410) 259-5032 or email Joe at [joejankevicius@gmail.com](mailto:joejankevicius@gmail.com) for an application. Completed applications must be received by July 15, 2024.

In addition, American Legion Department of MD has a scholarship program available. The application can be found at [www.mdlegion.org/Forms/genschlo.pdf](http://www.mdlegion.org/Forms/genschlo.pdf).

## Patron of City of Vilnius Medal

Vilnius City Council awarded the title of "Patron of the City of Vilnius" to Lithuanian Post 154 Historian Henry Gaidis last July in appreciation of the Lithuanian military collection he donated to the Lithuanian National Museum in 2021. The collection containing thousands of items and is valued at over \$400,000. Since he was unable to travel to Vilnius at that time to receive the award and medal in the formal setting, they arranged for the medal to be presented to Henry at the Lithuanian Embassy on Sep 18, 2023 by Lithuanian Ambassador Audra Plepytė. The "Patron" title is granted to individuals who have made significant contributions to enhance the city of Vilnius. The collection is currently on display in a wing of the Lithuanian National Museum in Vilnius.



Congratulations Henry!

## Boys State Applications Available Now

The American Legion 2024 MD Boys State Program will be held at McDaniel College, Westminster, Maryland from June 16 to 22, 2024 (date and location are subject to change). The program is a Nationally recognized program in leadership, government, and political sciences. Tuition for the program for accepted Boys is fully funded by The American Legion, Department of Maryland Posts. Lithuanian Post 14 will sponsor boys recommended by Post members.

Detail information about the program and application can be found at [www.mdlegion.org/boysstate](http://www.mdlegion.org/boysstate). The application has to be submitted on-line.

The program's aim is to expose current high school juniors to the United States Constitutional form of government. Experienced instructors at Boys State offer the students an opportunity of a lifetime to immerse themselves into the creation of a government among equal citizens selected from the finest young men in high school. The challenge to create a functioning City and State government allows the young men to focus their talents in areas seldom explored in a normal classroom environment. Presenters include politicians and elected leaders from the local and State levels of government, and many special interest topics to young adults. Highlights of the week include a trip to the State Emergency Management Agency, sports, and political simulations, along with City, State, and National elections, where 2 young men will represent MD at Boys Nation in Washington, DC.

Having graduated from Boys State is an excellent addition to the boys professional resume and college application and is a highly coveted entry on applications to Service Academies.

Attendees at MD Boys State have 2 exciting opportunities offered by McDaniel College. For a small fee (rate for 2024 to be determined) any graduate of MD Boys State can receive 2 College Credits for the week from McDaniel College by completing a few requirements. Also, McDaniel College is offering MD Boys State 2024 graduates that are accepted and enroll in McDaniel College for the Fall 2025 semester \$10,000 per year (\$40,000) for four years in scholarship funds. Boys who attend Boys State in 2024 and meet Samsung requirements may apply for the Samsung Scholarship grant, which last year amounted to \$1,100 for our State winner. There is an opportunity to receive up to \$20,000 in the Samsung Scholarship if selected as the National winner. More information and the application can be found at [www.legion.org/scholarships/samsung](http://www.legion.org/scholarships/samsung).

During the week-long event, attendees will reside in a McDaniel College dormitory. In some respects, it will be like a mini basic training experience that we went through when we joined the US military. Participant will learn how to live together sharing a room and work together to accomplish shared goals. Boys State is not a rest and recreation camp. It may be the hardest work the candidate has experienced. The experience in the program will test the boy's ability to participate and adapt to a structured environment.

### A TYPICAL DAY AT BOYS STATE

5:00 AM	Reveille
5:15 AM	Morning Exercise
6:00 AM	Shower and Clean Quarters (sick call)
6:30 AM	Morning Formation
6:45 AM	Breakfast
8:00 AM	Colors, Class Formation
8:30 AM	Class - "Maryland Fiscal Affairs"
9:15 AM	Class - "State Legislative Process"
0:00 AM	Class - "Citizen Responsibilities"
11:00 AM	Class - "How Bills Become Law"
12:10PM	Lunch
1:00 PM	Class - "The Two-Party System"
2:00 PM	Class - "City Government"
3:00 PM	City Party Conventions & Campaigns
4:30 PM	Evening Meal - Colors
6:00PM	City Elections
7:00 PM	Talent Show Practice & Sporting Activities
10:00 PM	Taps, Lights out

Use of tobacco, vaping, or use of contraband at Boys State is not allowed. The boys will not be allowed to bring distractions such as electronic equipment including but not limited to cell phone, computers, iPods', etc. The boys are not to bring reading material (other than religious), food, candy, gum, knives, stuffed animals, etc. The boys will require someone to bring them to boys State and pick them up after graduation on June 22nd. The boys will be exhausted after a week of long intensely active days and will be too tired to drive. Most likely they will fall asleep in the car a few minutes after being picked up.

If you know of a boy who will finish his junior year of high school this summer who would like to attend, ask him to go to The American Legion Department of Maryland website <http://www.mdlegion.org/boysstate> and click on "Apply Today" button. Applications have to be submitted by May 1, 2024.

There is a companion program named MD Girls State at Salisbury State University during the same dates conducted by The American Legion Auxiliary for young women completing their Junior year in high school. A link for more information about the program and an application is also on [www.mdlegion.org/boysstate](http://www.mdlegion.org/boysstate). Collage credit and scholarship opportunities mentioned above also apply for MD Girls State. Though Lithuanian Post 154 no longer has an Auxiliary, the Post will pay the tuition for girls recommended by Post 154 members to Girls State.

Please ask the boy or girl to print and send a copy of their completed application to Vincent Dulys so that Post 154 could pay American Legion Department of Maryland Legion or Auxiliary the tuition.

Besides Boys/Girls State, the [www.mdlegion.org/boysstate](http://www.mdlegion.org/boysstate) website has links to American Legion Department of Maryland and other scholarship opportunities.

Source: American Legion Department of Maryland



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**Meeting Information****Post General Meeting**

are scheduled to be held at Lithuanian Hall, 851 Hollins Street, Baltimore, MD 21201 at 11 AM on the 2nd Wednesday of January, March, May, June, August, September and November.

**Exec. Committee Meeting**

are scheduled for last Wednesday of every month except December at 1 PM at Spirits West Country Club, 2601 Wilkens Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21223

**Calendar & Reminders****January, 2024**

Mon	01	New Year's Day
Wed	10	Lithuanian Post 154 General Meeting - Lithuanian Hall - 11 AM
Mon	15	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Wed	17	Persian Gulf War Began (1991)
Sat	27	Signing of Vietnam Peace Accord (1973)
Sun	28	US - Vietnam Cease Fire (1973)
Wed	31	Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting - Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM

**February**

Thu	01	National Freedom Day
Fri	02	Groundhog Day
Thu	08	Boy Scouts of America founded (1910)
Mon	12	Lincoln's Birthday
Wed	14	St. Valentine's Day
Wed	14	Ash Wednesday
Sun	18	Department Executive Committee Meeting - Kent Island Post 278 800 Romancoke Rd, Stevensville MD 21666 - 1 PM
Mon	19	Presidents' Day
Mon	19	George Washington's Birthday
Wed	28	Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting - Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM

**March**

Sun	03	"The Star Spangled Banner" made US National Anthem (1931)
Sun	10	Daylight Saving Time Begins - Set clock ahead one hour
Sun	10	Lithuanian Independence Celebration Lithuanian Hall - 2 PM Post 154 invited to present <i>The Colors</i> . Please arrive in Post 154 uniform at 1:30.
Tue	12	Girl Scouts of America founded (1912)
Wed	13	Lithuanian Post 154 General Meeting - Lithuanian Hall - 11 AM
Sat	16	National Commander's Banquet - Kent Island Post 278 800 Romancoke Rd, Stevensville MD 21666 - 5 - 10 PM
Sun	17	St. Patrick's Day
Tue	19	Iraq War began (2003)
Tue	19	Spring begins
Sun	24	Palm Sunday
Wed	27	Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting - Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM
Fri	29	Good Friday
Sun	31	Easter Sunday

**April**

Mon	01	April Fools' Day
Sat	06	US entered WW I (1917)
Mon	15	Income Tax Returns due
Mon	22	Passover begins at sundown
Wed	24	Lithuanian Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting - Spirits West Country Club - 1 PM
Tue	30	Vietnam War ended (1975)