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REPORT TO THE CORPS

Volume 13, Number 2

September/October 2003

CELEBRATING SUMMER— A.P.P.L.E. SEMINARS A HUGE SUCCESS!

The 2003 A.P.P.L.E. Summer Seminars were among the best we have ever produced! All together, we served about 1,120 teachers, librarians, administrators, social workers, and other professionals connected with education. Our programs took place in almost 22 locations around the country. In each venue participants resonated to our theme, *The Social Context of Education*. Our goal was to help the educational system prepare students to be citizens of the new, modern market economy, while retaining the traditional character that makes Lithuania unique and beloved. We offered four types of programs:

- With 15 strands the two-week Vilnius Seminars attracted 343 participants. This was the largest number we have ever served, and it required a split lunch period to feed everyone!

- Our seaside camp, sponsored in association with the Viltis Organization, taught best practices for 20 youth with severe handicaps, their parents, siblings, teachers, therapists, and volunteers. Some of the highlights included a Hat evening, sidewalk drawing, the Neptune festival, a talent and fashion show, and a drama project, *Jurate ir Kastytis*.

- Dr. Grigonis and the Kaunas chapter of A.P.P.L.E. again served more than 750

teachers, therapists, social workers, and the staffs of residential facilities in five sites around the country. The Soviets established most of these facilities in rural areas so that the residents would not be an embarrassment to the State. Our programs are critical in showing both residents and staff that people with handicapping conditions are still valuable human beings worthy of our respect.

- Finally, we offered regional programs on diverse topics requested by the Teachers' Centers. These programs included Administration, Agricultural Education (2), Computer Science (2), Elementary Education, History, Pupil Support, Religious Education (2), and Social Work.

Of our 56 lecturers, only nine were new to the A.P.P.L.E. organization; the others have been with us at least once before, making friends and building bridges of peace across the water. We are especially pleased that we had at least one Lithuanian speaker in seven of our 15 programs in Vilnius.

We continue to work closely with representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Agriculture so that our programs are truly relevant for current conditions. To that end, we have already begun planning for 2004. Watch your e-mail for the Call for Proposals that will be issued in early October. Our theme will be *Using Communication Theory to Create a Learning Community*.

Our only disappointment was the exchange rate. Because the dollar has weakened against the euro, it cost us 25% more to run



A.P.P.L.E. officers plant apple tree #13 in the front yard of the PPRC. Left to right: President-elect Irena Ross, Immediate Past President Phil Taylor, 2002-03 A.P.P.L.E. President Katie Dunlap.



Vilnius seminar in the good hands of Snieguole Kavoliuniene, Ramute Zemioniene and Juozas Karmuza, enjoying their administrative duties.

essentially the same program we ran in 2002. At every step we tried to be good stewards of the funds entrusted to our care; however, because of the slipping exchange rate, we ended the year with lower reserves than we expected.

As I turn over the reins of office to the very capable Irena Ross, I want to thank each of you for making this such a successful year. Whether you sent a scholarship, renewed your membership, served as a lecturer, donated supplies, or upheld us with your prayers and good wishes, you were an important aspect of our success. Without you, we could not have done it!

—Katherine M. Dunlap, Immediate Past President

LEARNING EMPOWERED EVERYONE IN THE LANGUAGE ARTS STRAND

How to capture the essence of the A.P.P.L.E. experience? It's as elusive as the lingering scent of an expensive Parisian perfume! I guess it starts with the weeks of preparing teaching materials in the U. S. What do these teachers want to learn? I thought about this question a lot. How does an American teacher present material that our Lithuanian colleagues will find interesting and relevant?

The flight over was long; to me it symbolized the vast differences I felt between us, not knowing anything much about Lithuania. The first things I saw were lots of pine trees. Then I saw row after row of gray blocks of concrete high-rises on my way to the Teachers' Institute, my home for the next two weeks.

The accommodations were clean and comfortable though dated and poorly decorated. One had the impression that during the Soviet era, whatever was available was used, no matter the color, the pattern, or the design. The food was abundant with a great variety of carbohydrates throughout the duration. Then came the

teaching. I looked over my class list: sixteen names and mostly from the city of Vilnius, close by.

The classroom was charming—wood floors and desks, white lace curtains, and tall plants with a shiny new overhead and dry-erase board. One lovely thing happened at the start. Unbeknownst to me, the teachers somehow decided to take turns providing treats on a daily basis: coffee, candies, and cookies. They served me with such polite graciousness at the start of each session. I thought, now how come I didn't think of providing that?

They were well dressed, leaning forward in their chairs, eager to copy down everything I said. Teaching ninth-graders here in the states, I was not used to such motivation. I found them to be challenging and questioning in a very straightforward way. I was not just going to be pouring educational theory and methodology into their heads. Even though I was introducing new ways of teaching vocabulary, they were observant enough to see what could be problems. They suggested alternative uses to any game I presented. I suddenly discovered that I was really working "with" them as I, too, was learning. We were professional equals in our vision to improve learning for all students everywhere. This was an empowering experience. Even though we did not speak the same language or have any kind of a common historical background, it didn't matter at all. I think their smiles and eyes said it all. It's something worth experiencing, teaching through A.P.P.L.E..

—Linda Spoleti

THE SEARCH FOR LITHUANIAN ROOTS

This summer I've been rereading *The Eagle's Shadow: Why America Fascinates and Infuriates the World* by Mark Hertsgaard. His main idea is that in our pursuit of convenience and affluence, we Americans have largely forfeited our birthright of history, culture and close personal ties. My Lithuanian experience lends credence to that view.

I spent one long and carefree day, much of it in Ruta's car, while she and Simona, Linda Spoleti and I, searched the countryside for Linda's relatives. We found a whole town of people with Linda's family name who, rich and poor alike, invited us into their homes to peruse faded photographs, have a cup of honeyed tea, or reflect on the startling resemblances between a youngest local grandchild and Linda's granddaughter back home. We also received a curator-guided tour of a private museum featuring iron crosses and historic farm and home implements.

Music and dance brought tears of joy and sadness to my eyes, both on my second night there and throughout my two-week stay. That, with a history mixing

maypoles with the SS and the KGB, Lithuanian women know many verses to thousands of songs, and everyone I met sings these joyfully, speaks to the role of tradition as an antidote to force. Not that the role of tradition was unmixed. Perhaps the most difficult part of this visit was forcing myself (in several northern and central European countries) to immerse myself in the richness of Jewish history. I spent a couple of days with Simona, my generous interpreter, doing an in-depth Jewish history tour—including the usual Old Town sights, the Jewish Museum and the Green House, and ending with the KGB Museum and Paneriai, a Nazi killing field near Vilnius which took our cabbie an hour to find. The role tradition played at that site filled me with apprehension, along with the fact that this peaceful memorial park, a holy space, remains almost entirely unmarked from the road even today.

Most valued was the kindness of the many who befriended me, like Simona and Ruta (my interpreters), who lavished personal time and resources on me; like the complete strangers at the Jewish Museum who kept it open, even though I arrived at their unexpectedly early closing hour; like Ruta's mother who spent a whole day cooking traditional foods for Linda and me; like the others who showered me and my colleagues with food and gifts, including the teachers in my two groups and the second elderly man to guide me through his small "Private Museum," where he makes his collection of thousands of "Ex Libris" prints freely available for public view. Patching together conversation in French, German, English, and Russian, with a few tentative Lithuanian words thrown in, Maureen and I enjoyed an early afternoon with him.

While some other older people seemed sadly restrained, Lithuania's optimism sprang alive during the finale of the dance festival when a half-dozen joyous two- and three-year old girls, sprinkled through the audience at my end of the stadium, jumped onto their seats,

spilled into the aisles, or danced their way onto the sidelines, caught up in the rhythm and hope and solidarity sweeping the stands. When I think of Lithuania's future, I think of them.

—Marie Nelson

ELEMENTARY STRAND FOCUSES ON TEACHER COLLABORATION

Collaboration was the theme that unified the lectures and activities in the second elementary strand. Our first meeting consisted of getting to know each other and setting up the classroom in groups to model the actual process used in an elementary classroom. Each group created a theme, mission statement and developed group norms. The teachers participated in simulations and reflective discussions about Classroom Meetings and Student Study Teams. Although many of the participants were familiar with the concept of classroom meetings, the notion of their consistent use in the classroom, along with regular social skills lessons provided a new perspective. Participants acknowledged the success of integrating classroom meetings on a regular basis into the curriculum to deal with behavioral issues and to create a sense of community with the students.

The Lithuanian teachers considered a model for the Student Study Team process. This model was used a basis for the simulations. These simulations provided participants with an opportunity to participate in and also observe the process involved in the success of these teams at a school site. They learned, first hand, how Student Study Teams could create a partnership between the school and home for the purpose of providing support for students who are behaviorally and/or academically "at-risk."

Each participant developed a plan to implement the concept of Classroom Meetings and Student Study Teams at his or her school site.

—Nancy Hanssen and Karen Fetter



Katie and the A.P.P.L.E. gang relax in the dorm after a hectic day of teaching.

ELEMENTARY TEACHERS DEVELOP ART EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Teachers challenge students to trust and take risks. Our art education activities with the Lithuanian teachers in the Elementary Strand this summer created an atmosphere of problem solving as a classroom model. We explored dimensional space, teaching models, classroom management and the sculptural process of Jacques Lipschitz. Our collaboration consisted of problem solving, judgment and choices, coupled with plastic bottles and tape. As we

visualized imaginary pets, we experienced cooperative tasks needing consensus, a plan, differentiation and collaboration. The resulting seven-foot giraffe was a source of group pride and joy. The boat with oars created for “Skit Night” allowed the teachers another opportunity to be outrageously expressive before an enthusiastic and appreciative audience.

—*Sr. Loretta Hoag*

RELIGION AND ETHICS STRAND BECAME A SHARING COMMUNITY

A.P.P.L.E. 2003 was an amazing experience for me. As one of the three team members of the Religion and Ethics strand, I grew a great deal from the serious reflection that we did with the 21 teachers in our strand about the values, ethics and elements of the Catholic faith tradition that it is important to pass on to students who are maturing in a world of conflicting values. In essence, the religion/ethics teacher in Lithuania today is confronting a challenge similar to that faced by Catholic schoolteachers in the U.S. in the 1960s/1970s period of social liberation and post-Vatican era. The challenge is twofold. First, the teacher has to clarify his/her own personal values, the enduring elements of culture, and the context of faith in which he/she desires to live. Then, in a consensus-building way, teachers have to arrive at the shared values and faith tradition that they will pass on to the next generation. We began the institute in the context of the Baltic dance and song festivals that are designed as intergenerational celebrations to motivate youth to take pride in their culture and to perpetuate it. From this colorful weekend, we moved into our strand activities. We examined the enduring values of culture and faith in the Lithuanian context and the impact of the cultural invasion that many are experiencing as the nation adopts Western capitalism. By the end of the two weeks, through a sharing of ideas, times of dialogue, experiential-learning activities and ritual, we all gained new insights, tools and spiritual resources for educating young people to contribute positively to their nation and their church. As one of the participating teachers put it during our final celebration: “This was a safe place in which we became a community where we could really share our values and faith. I only wish we could be together longer, because I need the kind of support I found here.”

In many ways A.P.P.L.E. is like an oasis where the teachers who participate in the Vilnius Institute and in the regional seminars can come annually to be refreshed, rejuvenated and renewed. I feel blessed that I have been able to be part of the effort.

—*Sr. Cathy Campbell, SP, D. Min.*

LIBRARIANS SEEK INCREASED VISIBILITY

This summer was especially delightful because of the high quality of the school librarians who attended. Much of the content we thought we would be offering was set aside and newer content created. We have established an e-mail link and list with students that will continue throughout the year. They are going to work to increase their visibility in Lithuania and to become active members of the Lithuanian Library Association. They were also pleased with the computer instruction given and for the manual Amanda created to help them understand how to create web sites.

This summer, too, students were very willing to bring materials to share with each other. We were delighted that they brought so many things and that we were able to make copies when they needed or wanted to take them home. They made their selections so carefully that we know they will be used when they return to their school libraries. Thank you, Joe, for the good help you provided in making copies for us. It will make a difference. And, so, while we talked about integrating the school library with the curriculum, we really feel that the most important concept they took away with them was the sense that they could and should cooperate and collaborate to build strong school libraries in Lithuania.

—*Blanche Wools*

MATH STRAND COMBINED FUN WITH LEARNING STRATEGIES

Three things helped to create the most exhilarating experience I have had since I began participating as a lecturer with the A.P.P.L.E. mathematics strand in 1992. First, my translator, Giedre, was marvelous with both English and mathematics. Second, one of my teachers, Lina, served as our class leader. Lina spoke wonderful English and performed the timesaving job of leading many of the games and competitions we were using in class. Third, my twenty-one middle and high school math teachers were filled with enthusiasm and shared many of their teaching ideas with me. I learned much from them that I will pass on to my colleagues here in the States.

One focus of our work was on mathematics in art. Our teachers learned several ways to draw beautiful patterns using magic squares, modular arithmetic, Fibonacci sequences, symmetry and reflection. This was so successful that the group used their drawings as a theme for Strand night. Other activities centered on active learning in math. I presented various ways to learn and review material using games that could be adapted



Bee Taylor (center) and two math strand teachers display math art at "Skit Night."

to any subject level from arithmetic to algebra and trigonometry. I demonstrated ways to have students generate their own equations to solve using cards or dice. We explored classroom management schemes to incorporate teams. My college donated \$1,400 worth of graphing calculators to bring with me. After spending several afternoons showing how to use them, I was delighted to present each teacher in my strand with a calculator to keep.

I also wish to thank my husband Phil Taylor who served as coordinator of the Administration stand. He dropped by our strand occasionally to help me organize my Tic-Tac-Toe, Bingo, and Wheel of Fortune games and our elaborate Jeopardy tournament. He also helped me carry the props I needed for my napkin folding choice lectures. Many thanks also to our management team in Vilnius who made possible a fantastic two weeks!

—Bee Taylor, Mathematics Strand

ADMIN STRAND DEVELOPED RESEARCH PROJECTS

Our Newsletter readers will appreciate the difficulty a past president has in saying 2003 was the "best ever"!!! I will say that this summer was "one of the most enjoyable seminars" I have been privileged to attend. Much of the credit for my good time goes to having my fantastic wife along to contribute and enjoy the experience with me. She worked hard, and our eight pieces of luggage presented a daunting challenge as we traveled from Vienna to Venice to Croatia and even Bosnia ... but having Bee with me made it worth the effort. I also know that the calculators donated by Valencia Community College were most appreciated by her students.

I will say without hesitation that this was by far the best Administration Strand ever!!! This was due

primarily to two factors. First the participants. This year we had younger and more career-motivated administrators who clearly understood the challenges they face and were eager to find solutions to their school problems. It should also be noted that this year Admin had eight men in the group. We usually have no more than two or three. These men worked well with the women and were more active in all phases of the Admin sessions. One of the men even directed the highly acclaimed Admin skit! The second reason for the success of this year's Admin Strand was the outstanding content provided by Barb Henriques and Audra Skukauskaite. Barb and I enjoyed working with Audra, a Lithuanian doctoral student at UCSB. She impressed us with her knowledge and ability to communicate theoretical concepts clearly. She was able to relate to the Lithuanian school directors in ways Barb and I could not achieve. Audra gives me great hope that Lithuania's educational future is in capable hands.

—Phil Taylor, Administrative Strand

ANNUAL MEETING OF A.P.P.L.E. OFFICERS

Because Connecticut is the state in which A.P.P.L.E. has its roots, the tradition of holding its annual Officers' Planning meeting there continues still as we enter our 14th year of existence. Through Shirley Sabo's ongoing generosity, we met at her spacious and welcoming home in Prospect, Connecticut, on Saturday, August 16, 2003. Because this date was two days after the 2003 power blackout, some officers who planned to attend were unable to do so. However, we had a motivated group who made a concerted effort to follow the agenda and achieve the outlined goals.



A.P.P.L.E. team celebrates "Bingo Night" success. Left to right: Phil Taylor, Chris McGann, Aldona Marjosius, Irena Ross and Bee Taylor.

August 15 was the date of change of responsibility. Katie Dunlap, President of A.P.P.L.E. for 2002-2003, relinquished her duties and passed them on to Irena Ross, President for 2003-2004. Also present were Phil Taylor, Immediate Past President (2001-2002) and Vaiva Vebra, President-elect (2004-2005). Other officers included Walter Serbent, Vice President for Public Relations; Shirley Sabo, Vice President for Personnel and Recruiting; Juozas Karmuza, Administrator in Lithuania; and Jane Serbent, Treasurer. Jane was also elected to the Board of Directors.

We reviewed our seminars and educational summer camps in various towns and cities in Lithuania in July 2003 and planned the seminars and programs for the summer of 2004. We always attempt to build on the foundation established in previous summers. Traditionally, the Vilnius summer seminar for Lithuania's teachers is based on a theme chosen by the president responsible for that summer. That theme is then expanded upon through specific lectures. The theme for the summer of 2003, chosen by Katie Dunlap, was "The Social Context of Education." The theme for the summer of 2004, chosen by Irena Ross, will be "**Effective Communication in the Context of Education.**"

We received written reports from Amanda Muliolis, Registrar, Data Manager and Webmaster. Amanda and

Algirdas Muliolis must be commended for their continuing devotion and energy expended through the fall and winter months visiting individual schools throughout Lithuania and introducing many teachers to computer skills for the very first time or improving the skills of certain beginners. They have been doing this for a number of years and both A.P.P.L.E. and Lithuania have symbolically expressed their appreciation for their contributions to Lithuanian education.

We were hoping to get some details about the planned annual spring meeting in April 2004 in New Jersey from the organizer, Ilona Laucius, Administrator for Camp Viltis. Regretfully, she was unable to attend our August meeting. We expect to be updated by her in the near future.

We also expressed concern about our financial status in the context of the reduced value of the dollar and rising expenses. As an organization, we need to press forward with additional fundraising efforts in order to be able to meet our expected expenses in 2004 and '05.

More than ever, we will look forward to the goodwill and generosity of all our readers and donors to help us meet our ongoing goals: the information enrichment and professional development of the educators in Lithuania.

—Irena Ross, A.P.P.L.E. President

WHAT CAN YOU BUY FOR \$40 IN 2004?

YOU CAN STILL CHANGE THE LIFE OF A LITHUANIAN TEACHER!

Yes, the cost of change has gone up this year, from \$30 to \$40 per scholarship. The driving factor is the startling loss of the value of a dollar compared to the litas, more so than rising prices in Lithuania (but those also can't be ignored). The cost to underwrite an interpreter is now \$200. Those who receive scholarships will write personal letters to their sponsors, providing a firsthand account of the influence that the Seminar experience has on their lives and professional development.

These letters confirm our hopes—and the promise of our headline.

If you sponsored a teacher last year, you know the value that was received. If you didn't, this is your chance to find out. Consider honoring a friend with this special gift, giving a scholarship in his or her name. You will be making a difference! *Please send scholarship and stipend donations to: A.P.P.L.E., Box 617, Durham, CT 06422. We can reach so many more people with your help.*

PS. We would like to remind you that because of strict Internal Revenue Service regulations, we cannot accept scholarships intended for specific persons. If you would like to support your relatives or friends, please do so directly. This scholarship fund is for those Lithuanian teachers who have no such friends in the United States.

Reminder: A.P.P.L.E. membership remains a bargain at \$25 per year, because all this work is still handled by volunteers. If you haven't sent in your renewal, please include it with your scholarship donation.

WHO'S IN CHARGE?

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Send correspondence concerning A.P.P.L.E. to:

Irena Ross

73 Baby Point Crescent

Toronto, ON M6S 2B7

Canada

Home tel. 416-763-4780

Fax (c/o of Jim Ross): 416-239-3241

e-mail: jamesandirene.ross@sympatico.ca

Scholarships and other donations should be sent to:

A.P.P.L.E.

P.O. Box 617

Durham, CT 06422

2003-2004

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YES! I would like to join in your efforts toward educational reform in Lithuania.

I would like to make a contribution to:

The Scholarship Fund. (\$40 supports one teacher. You will receive a personal letter from the teacher who receives your donation.) _____

The Stipend Fund. (\$200 supports an interpreter or Lithuanian lecturer.) _____

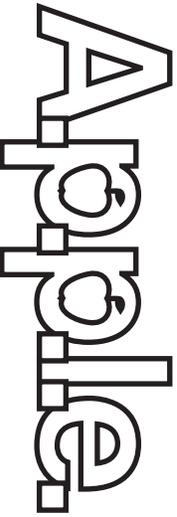
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I would like to add the following amount to help pay for A.P.P.L.E. programs: _____

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