

Apple

REPORT TO THE CORPS

Volume 14, Number 2

May/June 2004

LETTER FROM JURBARKAS

Hello, everyone. We are now into the second half of our seminars in Lithuania. One week has gone by in Jurbarkas, where we have a light load. We teach only two groups of teachers, one group of beginners and a second group of teachers with some computer literacy skills. We teach from 2:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. every day, with a Saturday morning session for those who got behind or missed a class. Eight of the 26 participants attended the Saturday session.

The first session in Venta was more time consuming. We worked with three groups of beginners for a total of 7.5 hours of lectures per day, starting at 8 in the morning and ending at 6 p.m. with a one-hour lunch period and a few short breaks. Ventos Pensionatas is a home for mentally challenged young people from ages 3 to 27. Many have severe problems, but many seem normal. There is even one group of 18 that is considered educable and goes out to the area high school for

their education. Most of the children have been abandoned by their parents or are orphans. One teacher told us that of the ten girls in her family only one receives regular visits from her mother.

Some of the young men came to help transport the computers from the van to the second floor classroom. They were a friendly bunch, greeting us every morning, wishing us a good breakfast, then again at lunch and supper. A couple of them always saw us off to our room after supper and wished us a good night. Some came to the computer room and wanted to print their names in colorful letters. One young man, who acts as a policeman for the school, wanted Algirdas to make him an official-looking badge to wear when he is on duty. It was an interesting two weeks.

The two weeks in Kedainiai also flew by. Here we worked in a boarding school, where most of the almost 200 students go home over the weekend. Only 12 were permanent residents, most of them orphans. This special school is considered one of the best in the country, so its enrollment keeps going up. They cannot accommodate many more children than they have now because of lack of space. We celebrated Independence Day with them. A group of the older children performed for us, sang songs and recited poetry. A history teacher from a neighboring school, who is also a parent of one of the children, was the main speaker. He knew how to talk to this group of children and made his comments about independence relevant to their lives. Then they asked us to speak, so I explained how we used to celebrate Independence Day in Saturday school.

The week of February 16 we spent in Vilnius, with only one day of work at a Mimosa conference with Mimosa users. We broke tradition this year. Every Independence Day



Amanda and Algirdas in a Lithuanian winter wonderland.

since we started coming to Lithuania during the winter months we have attended the presidential commemoration at Opera House. This year, although our usual group of friends tried to get an invitation for us, they were not successful. Jonas Kazlauskas wanted us to go to the presidential commemoration and see for ourselves how this president conducts operations. Sorry, Jonai, we could not do it.

Jurbarkas is a different environment. We are working in an average K-12 school in a midsized town, in a good neighborhood. Although the director tells us about some of the children from poor homes (poor not necessarily in terms of money) who are big problems and a



Amanda and Algirdas at the Putnam meeting

worry for them, the majority are doing well in school and looking forward to a good life. We met some of them on our trip from Vilnius to Jurbarkas. We stopped on our way to pick them up at a conference in Kaisiadorys. We were in a van that transports 12 people, if there is minimal baggage. But we already had the back seat full with our things—we are taking three computers with us to use in Buozenai, our next stop. We also have several boxes of books, disks, and other teaching items, as well as our personal baggage. We were very crowded in the van, but the kids were a happy bunch, had participated in a worthwhile conference, were excited to be going home and were planning how to talk the director into letting them stay home from school Monday, since they had had very long days and late evenings at the conference. We never learned what the conference was about.

At the boarding school half of the teachers and caregivers work the morning shift, the other half work the evening and night shift. That is why we could teach all day and have the students still supervised. But in this school, because of heavy schedules, teachers could not attend morning computer classes. Also, they did not want to deprive students of a computer lab. That is why

we only teach afternoon and evening classes. The computers here are old, Windows 95, with 8 Mg of memory, and Office 97 installations. They are slow; the disk drives intermittently refuse to read just created and closed documents—problems, problems, problems! But we are managing, teachers are learning, that is most important.

During the Mimosa seminar at the Information Technologies Center, I talked to Vainas Brazdeikis, its director. When I told him about the seminar that I am taking through the Internet on distance learning, and learning to give distance learning lessons, he asked me to put together a distance learning seminar for Mimosa. I originally signed up for this course because I have two experts on teaching on the Internet who will be giving a seminar about this at the A.P.P.L.E. seminars this summer. They have asked me to translate their material for this seminar. I decided that translation would be easier if I knew more about the subject. One of the lecturers is from Michigan, where they have a very extensive high school distance learning program. A teacher training session was scheduled for this time, and they accepted me, free of charge, to audit the program. It is a very interesting program, but rather Internet-intensive.

Here in Jurbarkas we have the good fortune to be housed with one of the teachers, a wonderful woman who just suffered bereavement. Her brother died last week. In her apartment the telephone is of the correct type to hook up with my computer modem for excellent access to the Internet. I happily did a lot of work mornings, catching up with all the assignments that I did not do in Kedainiai, where Internet access was limited and slow.

That's all for now. Have a great day, may God bless you.

Love,

Amanda and Algirdas

February 29, 2004

DID YOU KNOW?

One of the major cultural undertakings for 2004 in Lithuania will be the commemoration of the restoration of the Latin alphabet to Lithuanian publications in 1904. From 1864 to 1904, as a means of russifying the population, Russia decreed that Lithuanian books should be printed in the Russian alphabet. Lithuanians countered by printing Lithuanian books in the Latin alphabet outside Lithuania and then smuggling them into Lithuania via a network of book-runners.

Lithuanian Americans assisted with financing the printing of Lithuanian books in the Latin alphabet outside of Lithuania. UNESCO has included in its 2004-2005 calendar of events of global significance, the 100th

anniversary of the 1904 restoration of the Latin alphabet to Lithuanian publications.

As noted in the *Encyclopedia Lituanica I-VI*: “The press ban and the resistance it aroused among the people were the central events in the history of the Lithuanian national movement in the 19th century. The struggle against the press ban mobilized and developed Lithuanian forces. Furthermore, the press ban created among the Lithuanian nation at large a tremendous feeling of national injustice and the sense of being singled out for especially harsh treatment. Vincas Kudirka wrote in the first issue of *Varpas* (January, 1889) that the situation of the Lithuanians was ‘far worse than that of the Jews or Tatars who are not prevented from speaking their language, publishing newspapers or maintaining schools.’ The press ban was originally conceived to bring Lithuanian peasantry into closer relations with Russia and Russian culture. In fact, by arousing their specifically Lithuanian national feelings and inspiring them to resist Russification, it managed to achieve the opposite result.”

SPRING MEETING ENJOYED BY A.P.P.L.E. OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

Tables topped with colorful sashes and garnished with bouquets of daffodils ...

Exuberant laughter and joyful voices raised in greeting ...

Earnest reflections about stewardship of the orchard ...

If you can imagine this scene, complete with a group of 20 dedicated volunteers, you have a good picture of the spring meeting of the A.P.P.L.E. Board of Directors. This year, the annual enclave was held at the Convent of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in Putnam, Connecticut. Many participants shared fond memories of camps and pre-schools run by Lithuanian nuns from the Motherhouse. Ilona Laucius, one of the meeting organizers, commented, “This is a living, growing place. It inspires the same qualities in us.”

The purpose of the spring meeting is to finalize programs for the current year and begin planning for the upcoming year. The group gathered to discuss summer programs, printing policies, and scholarships. Details of the 2004 program are reported elsewhere in this newsletter, but the theme for 2005 is still emerging.



Gita Kupinskas, Sr. MaryPaul, and Irena Ross discuss success of the Putnam, CT, A.P.P.L.E. meeting.

President-elect Vaiva Vebra reported on the current educational scene in Lithuania. One important development is the institution of the new educational law. (An English translation is available on the A.P.P.L.E. website at www.applequest.org.) The new law has important implications for A.P.P.L.E. because it views education as a lifelong process, not a destination. It also recognizes the importance of community involvement in education at all levels. A plan for implementing took effect in the fall of 2003, and A.P.P.L.E. is listed as a partner in this endeavor.

Another highlight of the weekend was a tour of ALKA, the Amerikos Lietuviu Kulturos Archyvas (American-Lithuanian Culture Archives). The group was inspired by more than 50,000 books and other Lithuanian archives collected there, including pictures and examples of jewelry, wood carvings, and other handicrafts.

At the Board meeting on Sunday morning, Kristine McGann and Katie Dunlap were thanked for their three years of service on the Board. “It has been a pleasure to be part of such a dedicated team,” remarked Dunlap, who has provided technical support to President Irena Ross this year. This summer Dunlap and a team from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will be leading regional programs on families and schools. “Thank you for this inspiring—and sometimes challenging—opportunity,” Dunlap added.

Barbara Henriques, Karl Janowitz, and Giedre Stankunas were elected to the Class of 2007. “I’m honored to serve,” Karl confessed. For many years, Karl has been working with Dr. Algirdas Grigonis to offer special education workshops to residential staff at institutions serving handicapped children. “This organization is changing lives,” Karl added, “I’m proud to be part of that effort.” Nancy Hanssen was elected to fill a vacancy in the class of 2005.

The Board sends a special thank you to members of the planning committee, Vida Anton, Ilona Laucius,



Giedre Stankunas and Aldona Marijosius prepare snacks for Putnam meeting.

Aldona Marijosius, and Giedre Stankunas. “They did an excellent job with all the details,” explained Phil Taylor. “That enabled us to spend our energy on important matters.”

—Katherine Dunlap

A BRIGHT SUMMER AHEAD!

The summer of 2004 is going to be another banner year for A.P.P.L.E. Once again, we have a full plate of programs planned for educators around the country. Those of you who read these pages regularly know that we typically offer four venues: Vilnius Summer Seminars, Regional Programs, Special Education workshops, and Camp Viltis (Hope), a demonstration project for handicapped children and their families. Because of changes in funding streams, the Viltis organization did not receive funding for camp, so we will not be able to offer that option this year. The other programs have been fully staffed by strong, qualified lecturers.

A NOTE OF THANKS . . .

No matter how small, each donation is important. Individual scholarships for Lithuanian teachers add up to support of several hundred deserving recipients. Each membership supports the logistics of putting the A.P.P.L.E. program together.

The officers and Board of Directors wish to acknowledge the generous contributors who gave \$100 or more in support of the 2003 A.P.P.L.E. program in Lithuania.

\$100 or more

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Januska, Antanas & Aniceta – Milton, MA
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Strudler, Lynn H – New York, NY

THE VILNIUS SEMINARS

Vilnius is probably our most visible site. This summer, 15 programs in 8 strands will elaborate the theme of *Communicating at School*. Programs include regular favorites such as Elementary Education Basics, English as a Second (Foreign) Language, Library Science, Religious Education, and Secondary Language Arts. New this year are Secondary Biology, Inclusion, and the Performing Arts. Our social work strand will focus on bullying, an emerging problem in Lithuania—and a growing problem in the U.S. Elementary pupil support will introduce ways to create a safe, positive school climate. Secondary pupil support will address communication and career skills. You can find a complete listing of strands, program, and faculty on our website at www.applequest.org.

Evening activities in Vilnius will include Ice-Breakers, Bingo, and ethnographic programs featuring singing and dancing by all. (Males, beware! As long as you remain standing, you *will* be invited to dance!) During Strand Night each group will showcase what they have

learned—and audience participation will be required. In place of the International Dinner, we will hold an old-fashioned wiener roast, complete with yellow mustard, relish, cole slaw, and apple pie for dessert.

REGIONAL SEMINARS

For those who cannot come to the capital for in-service education, A.P.P.L.E. will offer 13 regional programs on a variety of topics, such as Administration, Bullying, Computer Science, ESL, Family Dynamics, and Religious Education. Proposed sites include Varena, Klaipeda, Siauliu University, Akmene, Druskininkai, and Kaunas. Since Lithuania is reported to have one of the highest rates of alcoholism in the world, we are especially delighted to have a new program on substance abuse offered by experts from the National Institute of Mental Health.

SPECIAL EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

Though inclusion or mainstreaming is becoming more prevalent in Lithuania, many children with special needs are still assigned to residential facilities. These

Sullivan, Patricia – Kailua, HI
Sustik Anne – Springfield, IL
Tautvydas, Rasa M – Seattle, WA
Urbaitis, Vincas & Theresa – Mayfield Heights, OH
Valavicius, A. & V. – Chicago, IL
Veblaitis, Julius & Irene – Union, NJ
Vydunas Youth Fund – Lemont, IL
Waylonis, John E – Fairfax Station, VA
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Zilinskas, Anthony – Birmingham, AL
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Bacanskas, John – Pompano Beach, FL
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Knights of Lithuania, Sviklas/Tamulevich School Fund (MA)
Treciokas, Kazys & Genovaite – Union, NJ

\$1,000 or more

Lithuanian Citizens Society of Western Pennsylvania – Pittsburgh, PA
Lithuanian National Foundation – New York, NY (Grant)
MBNA Foundation – Belfast, ME (Grant)
Rumple Memorial Presbyterian Church – Blowing Rock, NC

Society of Analytical Chemists of Pittsburgh – Pittsburgh, PA (Grant)
Taylor, Phillip & Beverly – Winter Park, FL
Vydunas Youth Fund – Lemont, IL

\$5,000 or more

American Cultural Center – Vilnius, Lithuania (Grant)

\$10,000 or more

Lithuanian Foundation – Lemont, IL (Grant)
Messick, Andrew & Audrone – Naples, FL

Special thanks must also go to Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid as well as the School of Social Work, University of North Carolina. By covering the transportation costs of several lecturers, monies could be diverted toward quality interpreters, translators, and additional teaching supplies.

Thanks to all for your help!

It was not to be expected that all our scholarship sponsors could read Lithuanian, so when the teachers' thank you letters went out, a note was included that read, "If your letter is in Lithuanian and you need a translation ...". Several sponsors contacted A.P.P.L.E. for just such assistance. A.P.P.L.E. is most appreciative to our members who provided the requested translations: Gita Kupcinskas, Emilija Sakadolskis, Giedre Stankunas, Vaiva Vebraite, Juozas Karmuza, and Julius Veblaitis.

large institutions are not under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Science, and some have very limited educational programming. To support the work of the staff at these facilities, A.P.P.L.E. works closely with Dr. Algirdas Grigonis and A.P.P.L.E.-Kaunas, offering specialized training at the institutes. Our goal is to help residential staff provide stronger services to children with mental and physical handicaps.

Though not our most visible project, our special education workshops reach the most people. Each year, we provide in-service education to at least 750 personnel in at least five sites. In 2004 five A.P.P.L.E. lecturers will share the spotlight, with at least three A.P.P.L.E. professionals present each week at each site.

WHO ARE WE?

After a rigorous selection process, 50 lecturers from the U.S., Canada and Lithuania have been accepted for 2004. Our lecturers are seasoned professionals who hail from across the U.S., with California, North Carolina, and the New England states strongly represented. Only 15 are new to A.P.P.L.E. Twenty-eight are of Lithuanian heritage, and in Vilnius, for example, at least one person in nine of 15 strands speaks Lithuanian. Several are going to Lithuania for the first time, hoping to find their roots. While we cannot guarantee the discovery of family ties, we know that each person will find a warm welcome and an enthusiastic audience.

Katherine Dunlap, Immediate Past President and Irena Ross, A.P.P.L.E. President collaborated on the development of the 2004 Program and Faculty



Past, present, and future APPLE presidents participate in Putnam planning session.

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.*

P.S. 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.

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.

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2003-2004

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Our Internet address is: <http://www.applequest.org/index.html>. Please check it out, sign our guestbook, and offer your comments and suggestions. Please send information that you would like included on the Web site to: amanda@applequest.org or Amanda Muliolis, 1725 Sherwood Blvd, Euclid, OH 44117.

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.)

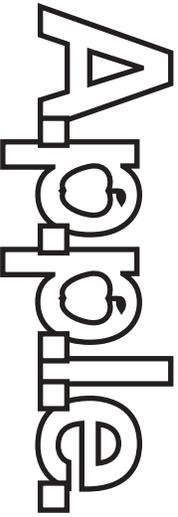
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