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The A.P.P.L.E. Seed



(American Professional Partnership

for

Lithuanian Education)

E-Zine

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Message from the President:

A Happy Spring and a Happy Easter to all our A.P.P.L.E. friends and colleagues!

We are looking forward to our Annual Spring Meeting in Milan, Michigan, on April 10th and 11th, and I hope to see many of you there. Thanks to Jim Brousseau and Sue Kohfeldt for hosting us again this year.

We are trying to finalize our plans for this summer, and the Ministry has informed us that we will have only one week in Vilnius, July 12-16th, and then the second week we will have a regional in either Panavezys, Siauliai, or Klaipeda. More information on the regional will be forthcoming. While in Vilnius, we will be at the Educational Development Center, (the former PPRC), and housed at the Viesbutis next door.

Camp Viltis will take place from July 10 to 21, 2010, and the Kaunas sessions will take place from July 12 to the 23, 2010.

The Ministry is planning some type of celebration for our 20th anniversary while we are in Lithuania, and we look forward to celebrating with them.

Our 20th Anniversary celebration here in the states will take place aboard the cruise ship Inspiration from August 23 to 28, 2010, and I look forward to celebrating this special occasion with many of you. It is still not too late to sign up and reserve your room by contacting Vida Anton at applecelebration2010@gmail.com

Linksmu Sventu Velyku!

Dr. Vida R. (Strazdaite) Gavin, President

Mission Statement:

"The American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education (A.P.P.L.E.) is a volunteer international non-profit educational organization. With the support of the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science, A.P.P.L.E. partners with Lithuanian educators to foster the implementation of innovative educational approaches that contribute to the development of a democratic society."

Organizational Development Message

2010 holds the potential to be a crossroads year for A.P.P.L.E..... With serious consideration being given to potential restructuring within the organization, the leadership team will no doubt be engaged in serious deliberations when it meets later this month for its Annual Meeting on April 10th and 11th. Driving many of the discussions will be the critical areas of communication, revenues, membership and infrastructure for the future.

Many thanks to John Baltrus, Gail Cassidy, Anita Scarborough and Vida

Anton.... for their participation in our ongoing efforts to put together the final version of an official Election Policy. John's insights were especially helpful in the areas of developing an effective nomination process and ensuring the alignment of the policy with the current A.P.P.L.E. By-Laws. The Election Policy discussions will hopefully be concluded when all the participants get together for the Annual Meeting later this month.

ARTICLES

Additionally, we want to remind you that **you are encouraged to send articles** to us that you feel would be of interest to our readers. They can be items that you have authored or articles from others, including photos, from whom you have received permission to duplicate and publish.

Heard in Lithuania

Three Lithuanian Universities offering three year bachelor degrees..... As reported in the *Baltic News*, three Lithuanian universities have announced their intentions to offer bachelor degrees after only three years of study. Traditionally, universities have required four years of study prior to granting bachelor degrees. However, Vilnius Pedagogical University, Mykolas Romeris University and Kaunas University all announced their intentions on Tuesday, March 2nd, to offer three-year bachelor degree programs. The specific courses of study were not identified.

The Top Five Teachers of The Year Awards..... On March 17th Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius and Education and Science Minister Gintaras Steponavicius announced the Top Five Teachers Awards for 2009, according to Lrt.lt.

The winners for this year are:

Antanas Burksaiciui from Luksiu Vincas Fungas Secondary School, a teacher of Information Technology.

Danoras Eigminiene from Church of St. Christopher Secondary School, a teacher of Lithuanian language.

Rasa Jankauskiene from Kaunas Sanatorium Kindergarten, a pre-primary education center methodologist.

Irena Volosinai from Vilnius Naujininku High School, a teacher of Russian language and school examination strategist.

K. Bakutis from Rasieniu President John Zemaitis Gymnasium, a teacher, an educational technologist and well known author on the topic of electronic textbooks.



Pictured from right to left: Amanda Muliolis, Valdas Adamkus, former President of Lithuania, and Algirdas Petras Muliolis.

Algirdas Petras Muliolis is a graduate of Cooper School of Art and worked as an artist and later as an

Art Director at American Greetings Corp. Amanda earned a bachelor of science degree from Ursuline College for Women and a Masters of Education degree from Cleveland State University. For 20 years she worked at St. Augustine Academy. While there, she received an Award for Excellence from the Diocese of Cleveland and recognition as Ohio Computer Science teacher of the year by Microsoft and the Education and Technology Magazine. Together they have worked with A.P.P.L.E. since its first year and traveled to Lithuania 27 times - 10 winter trips and 17 summer trips.

On March 11, 1990 Lithuania declared its independence and separated from the Soviet Union. Now the focus of the Lithuanian community turned from regaining Lithuania's independence to aiding it to rise from 50 years of Soviet oppression. We knew that Lithuania would need all kinds of resources to overcome those years of disconnect from the world community of nations, and all of us were looking for a way of helping, that would fit our talents and experience. When I heard about A.P.P.L.E., I knew that I had found my niche! So I sent in my dues and became a member of this wonderful organization.

It was already too late to sign up to go to Lithuania that year, and the following year our son Jonas got married. His wedding was in Australia, and our resources were exhausted with this great trip. Finally, in 1993 I sent an answer to the Call for Proposals, got accepted and was requested to head the Science strand.

My memories of that first summer in Lithuania are unique - meeting, at the

airport, about 40 relatives with flowers, spending about 20 minutes getting acquainted, then heading to my cousin's home (a doll's apartment in size). Only 10 people could fit into their small living room, so only my closest relatives could fit, whereas Algirdas' relatives, who had come from southern Lithuania, had to turn around and go home. We, of course, had hoped to visit them all that year, but it was impossible, since Algirdas had to, after the first two weeks, return to his job. He was there only for the start of the A.P.P.L.E. seminars and helped me set up the computers.

In 1989 our parish elementary school had closed and I knew that there were several Apple IIe computers there. I asked Father Kijauskas what had happened to them - he told me that they were in storage and donated them for my strand in Lithuania. Also, that first year I got an unexpected gift of 60 graphing calculators from Cisco. From then on I became known as the lecturer with the biggest baggage. Six computers and a box of calculators traveled with me around Lithuania. As the years went by, we replaced the Apple IIe's with PC's, added a couple of printers and continued with science and math strands for several years with a Choice lecture about computers. As interest in computers and their applications grew, I changed my strand from math and science to computer science.

Algirdas retired in 1996 and I - in 1997, and we had more time to devote to A.P.P.L.E. So, during the winter of 1998 we went to Lithuania for two and a half months and held Computer Literacy seminars in two cities - Vilnius and Pakruojis. The Vilnius seminars were requested by a member of my science strand and the future wife of Juozas Karmuza. Pakruojis seminars were requested by the Education center director then attending our Vilnius seminar in the Administration strand.

For 10 winters we traveled around Lithuania teaching teachers and Special school workers how to use computers and apply them in their work with students. At first, only raw beginners were attending our seminars. When dealing with teachers afraid of the computer and having no confidence in themselves and their ability to learn, Algirdas became a better teacher than I. In many cases, his individual attention to the needs of these teachers meant the difference between their success and failure. By our last two winter trips, there were few beginners, each class would consist of those familiar with basics and the experienced. We decided then not to continue these trips, since our objective has been met.

The biggest change that I saw during all these years has been in the attitude of the seminar participants. In 1993 they sat quietly taking notes of everything I said and none of them asked even one question. The math, biology, chemistry and physics teachers could not understand what we could tell all of them at the same time, since they were used to subject matter based seminars, not methodology based lectures. When I presented the graphing calculator, I passed out the Cisco calculators to the participants and talked for about 30 minutes, hoping the participants will follow my examples on their calculators. But they were so intent on taking notes as well as trying to do the exercises, that not even one hand was raised or a question asked. Then I gave them a worksheet to do and started going around, expecting them to have understood the instructions and be able to follow. Most of them had never seen even a simple calculator, much less a graphing calculator, and were completely lost, but still no questions.... I then gave them a lecture on how to learn - the importance of asking questions as they arise, especially when working with new technology.

At the end of the first 10 years of seminars, we had lively discussions, offers of solutions, even contradicting the lecturer, when they did not agree with you or had a better way of doing something. The teachers have more openness, more self-respect and autonomy than they had at the start. Now they are much more like our American teachers!

A Perspective on Special Education

A.P.P.L.E.: Sharing the Philosophy of Special Education

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1975) is the federal mandate that requires schools in the U.S. to provide free and appropriate education to all children, regardless of physical or cognitive limitation. This landmark legislation marks the culmination of years of advocacy of parents and disability organizations.

Prior to 1975, public educational services offered to children with disabilities, if any, was at the discretion of state and local systems. Before IDEA, children with disabilities were commonly institutionalized. Schools did not offer alternative instruction to children who were not learning from the standard curriculum. Often children with significant learning disabilities were held back in grade placement,

until it was too humiliating to attend school. Schools had no obligation to educate children deemed unable to learn.

The 1994 film *Forrest Gump* portrayed this era in the social history of the educational system. You may remember the extraordinary efforts of Forrest's mother to convince the principal to allow Forrest, who had a cognitive limitation, to attend the local public school. This film communicates major points of the philosophy of special education; namely, the functional capacity of children with disabilities is optimized through appropriate education, that all children are capable of learning, and that treating children with respect results in the development of productive members of society.

The initial goal of special education was to ensure that children with disabilities were included in the school environment experienced by all children. This objective was reinforced in 1990 by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). ADA which applies to all Americans, prohibits discrimination of individuals with disabilities, by requiring public buildings, including schools, to provide universal access. ADA mandates that schools provide modifications necessary to allow participation in school activities, whereas IDEA mandates the provision of an individualized education for children who cannot learn from the standard curriculum. We now take for granted accessible bathrooms and dressing rooms, curb cuts, wide doors and Braille labeled elevators in public places, mandated by ADA.

This was the context of special education in the U.S. when Karl Janowitz and Jurate Krokys, an A.P.P.L.E. co-founder, first visited Lithuania in 1992, as part of a fact finding mission to provide feedback regarding practices in special education. Since then many special educators have participated in summer sessions, presenting information on many facets of special education, ranging from early intervention services for infants and toddlers, school-age special education services; including learning disabilities, autism, mental retardation, as well as procedures for the transition of young adults from the educational system to the workplace. Special education lecturers have participated in all aspects of A.P.P.L.E. programs in Vilnius, Kaunas, and Camp Viltis.

Since the inception of A.P.P.L.E. special education in the U.S. has evolved to include services for eligible children from birth to 21 years of age, utilizing advances in adaptive technology to enhance learning and functioning, and shifted from mere inclusion in the school environment to increased program accountability to optimize academic achievement and promotion of full participation in the school and community. A.P.P.L.E. lecturers have disseminated progressive information regarding how to meet the educational needs of children with disabilities; the

evaluation of strengths in order to individualize instruction to maximize learning, methods for adapting regular educational curriculum and physical activities, and infused in all presentations the underlying philosophy of special education with the intention of dispelling old attitudes associated with 'feeble-mindedness', a label sometimes still used in Lithuania.

In return, A.P.P.L.E. lecturers have been rewarded by witnessing change over time. Last month Vitas Underys shared the story of Irena Perminiene, a Lithuanian paralympian, who demonstrated how to adapt activities for children with disabilities at Camp Viltis. She was an inspiration to children with disabilities and their families. Many have never had the experience of interaction with a competent adult with a disability. Lack of positive role models makes it difficult for families to imagine a productive future for their child. Many children are ostracized from school and community activities. A tradition of keeping disability hidden from the public still exists, perpetuating the stigma. Nevertheless, sightings of children with a disability participating in community activities are becoming more common. Curb cuts, ramps, and wide doors, though far from universal, are appearing. Kindergartens and elementary schools are moving toward including children with diverse abilities. However, systematic changes within the educational system needed to address the educational needs of all children, including those with diverse learning styles have yet to be accomplished. We intend to continue this topic by sharing stories of positive change, and to carry on promoting the goals of special education through this long-standing partnership.

Anita Adamitis Scarborough, Ph.D.
Chapel Hill, NC

Summer Program Activities

Check out *VILNIUS IN YOUR POCKET* [on line](#).....For those of you going with us to Lithuania this year as part of our Summer Programs, you may want to visit this first-rate internet site offered by the folks at *VILNIUS IN YOUR POCKET*. This service is provided by the same folks who publish the notable pocket travel guide many of you are already familiar with.

This excellent site offers current, accurate and extremely helpful advice on everything Lithuanian for those visiting the country for the first time. It also works well for you seasoned travelers. They also offer the same thorough

information and insights to more than 50 cities in 23 countries around the world. Check them out, you will not be disappointed!

How much is a Lita worth?.... Beginning this month we will post the monetary values of the Lita, the Euro, and the Dollar relative to each other to assist those going to Lithuania with us this summer with their finances. Believe it or not, it is only three months away.

Start saving!

As of 3/26/10 the relative values for each currency were:

1 EURO = 1.33 DOLLARS 1 DOLLAR = .74 EUROS 1 LITA = .38 DOLLARS

1 EURO = 3.45 LITAS 1 DOLLAR = 2.57 LITAS 1 LITA = .28 EUROS

On the road again....Word has it that the summer programs scheduled in Vilnius in the Educational Development Center for this year will see a schedule that calls for one (1) week in Vilnius and one (1) week in a regional area of the country. Specific details are not confirmed as yet, but will be available in the May issue of The A.P.P.L.E. Seed.

Quotables and Quizzes

"The arrogance of success is..... to believe that what you did yesterday will be enough to ensure your success in the future."

- William Pollard, Chairman and former Chief Executive Officer
of The ServiceMaster Company

Reminders

Summer Program Strand Description.... If you have not turned in a description of your particular course for this summer's program as yet, please forward it to Barbara Henriques, bhenriques@sjc.edu, as soon as possible. Your course description will be needed to advertise your course to the Lithuanian participants you expect to be in attendance. A well written and timely course description can ensure that the right

participants will sign up for your course.

To learn more about **specific details or for questions** related to the A.P.P.L.E. Annual Spring Meeting, contact Jim Brousseau at (734) 232-6589.

If you would like a relative or a friend to receive their copy of **The A.P.P.L.E. Seed directly, go to the last line of this e-zine and click "Join Our Mailing List."**

Lithuanians Play Baseball Too!

PLAY BALL!.....Baseball season is here, and for the Lithuanian Little League team *Sporto Vilnai (Sports Wolves)* from Vilnius, Lithuania, this season will be highlighted by their visit to the U.S. to play their early season games against teams from the San Diego and Orange County areas of Southern California. Their hectic schedule saw them arrive on Saturday, 3/27, and immediately launch into a series of six (6) games in five (5) days. Throw in a barbeque or two, a trip to Sea World, a taste of that California weather and what could be better for a group of eleven and twelve year old baseball players! The team members were on a two week visit and were hosted by local families providing a welcoming atmosphere for these youngsters so far from home.

Thanks to Nancy Hannsen for this news brief.

This electronic newsletter is designed for quick delivery of A.P.P.L.E.-related news to an audience that includes current A.P.P.L.E. members, friends of A.P.P.L.E. and interested potential members both within the United States and Lithuania.

Increasing communication and the exchange of ideas among our members increases the strength of our organization and our ability to be relevant to our Lithuanian constituents. Exciting and pertinent events occur all year round, and we want to keep all of you abreast of what is happening, when it's happening.

Editing for grammar, punctuation, and spelling of submitted materials is the responsibility of the authors.

Organizational Development Committee
A.P.P.L.E. (American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education)

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