

John Baltrus

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

(American Professional Partnership
for
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E-Zine

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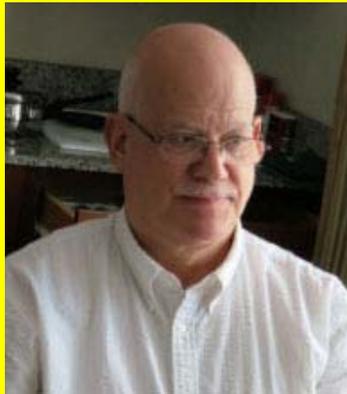
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Dear John,



Karl Janowitz

Message from the President

Our 24th A.P.P.L.E. Summer Session has come and gone. It was a most successful seminar held in Kaunas. Elementary Education, Language Arts, Technology, Administration, and Science Strands were held. Reflections by the lecturers in the Language Arts Strand, Laurie Hendrickson and Wendell Mayo, are highlighted in this issue of the Ezine with additional strands to be featured in future Ezines.

Our summer Board of Director's meeting to be held the weekend of August 23rd in St. Augustine, Florida. We will reflect on this summer and plan A.P.P.L.E. activities for 2015. Keep posted for details.

I wish you a wonderful remainder of the summer. As always feel free to contact me. And thank you for your interest in A.P.P.L.E.

Karl

Dr. Karl P. Janowitz
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."

A.P.P.L.E. 2014 - Kaunas

A.P.P.L.E. completed another successful year of summer programs over 2 weeks in Kaunas. Other than some snow one day (yes it was late June), just about everything ran smoothly.



L to R: Vida Anton, Roma Sausaitiene, Anita Scarborough, Laurie Hendrickson, Wendell Mayo, Ramute Zemioniene, John Trimble, Regina Zukiene, Linda Brenneman, Ed Topar, Dea Conrad-Curry, Tracy Mandara, Anne Erbe, Kristen Ross (missing Karl Janowitz & Audre Ruzga)

During the A.P.P.L.E. seminars, time was taken to listen to presentations by grant winners from A.P.P.L.E.'s Lithuanian Scholars' Fund. It was fascinating to hear how much could be accomplished with relatively little seed money. One such award winner, Eugenija Bieliauskaite, a teacher of geography at Jonava's "Neris" elementary school, presented a certificate of thanks to A.P.P.L.E. for its grant that helped to establish the a Museum of Rocks and Minerals at the school.



Eugenija Bieliauskaite (left) presents certificate of thanks to Ramute Zemioniene

Language Arts Strand Reflection - Wendell Mayo

I was very pleased to work with Laurie Hendrickson in the Language Arts Strand, concentrating on creative writing. Over the years, A.P.P.L.E. (The American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education) has been devoted to the democratization of schools in Lithuania. In language arts, we've focused on teaching writing as a process of drafting, sharing, revision, and finishing-and along the way discovering what it is a writer says, clearly and convincingly. This summer, eighteen Lithuanian teachers worked on a portion of this process that is not often emphasized-invention, that mysterious place from which ideas come-our hearts, souls, our needs to express a feeling that may, at first, only mean something to ourselves-and to shape that feeling into something others can understand and feel as well.

I am so proud of the teachers participating in our strand. They have proven that hard work and inventive minds can produce something of emotional and intellectual value-something that I am sure their students will be inspired to do as well.

During the week, we employed a number of writing exercises and prompts to inspire creativity. Participants wrote in four time-honored modes of poetry using particular creative exercises to get them started:

1)The Memory Auction was used to inspire the narrative poem, a mode of poetry that dates back to the times of the epic poetry of Virgil and Homer. We asked teachers to imagine they can only bid on one person, place, or thing from ten items they have lost over the years, then write a poem that tells the story of the item, and its emotional meaning. Teachers learned to mine their own memories to create a narrative

employing highly figurative language that elevates the story beyond the commonplace.

2) In another exercise, we tried the Poetry Salad to create lyric poems. Lyric poetry comes from the intensely figurative poems of Pindar and Sappho. Teachers were asked to write three random words apiece on Post-It Notes; the instructors gathered these random words in a bag and shook it, mixing the words like a salad. Each teacher chose three words from the bag and wrote a poem containing those three words. This exercise not only asks participants to create a context that embraces all three words, it motivates association and connotation--the psychological basis for metaphor key to the lyric mode of poetry.

3) Teachers also practiced the Ghazal, a poetic form over 1,300 years old that comes from Persia and often concerns the mystical and/or painful aspects of love or religion, though other subjects are acceptable. This form teaches participants to explore a theme from many different contexts.

4) Teachers also invented poems using a form called the Pantoum, a 500-year-old Malayan form made of four-line stanzas (quatrains) that circle back to repeated phrases. This form is different from the ghazal but, like the ghazal, it teaches participants to use a poetic form to intensely explore an idea through focused and emotional language.

We finished our time together by writing short stories. Stories are part of our everyday lives--they entertain, they teach, and in nearly all intellectual pursuits they are indispensable: In literature, stories of the human heart are told; in geology, the ancient story of the Earth is told; in history, stories of civilizations are told; the scientific method itself is a narrative aimed at arriving at truth; in business, a knowledge of "case studies" can mean the difference between success and failure in real life. So in our class, we examined archetypal patterns in the short story in English--patterns in stories that tend to be universal, ones that most people can relate to because of their everyday experiences: the archetypes of Taboo, Contest, Metamorphosis, Scapegoat, and Trickster. Then participants each wrote a taboo story, one in which a protagonist pursues something that may be desirable, yet also poses some kind of risk.

During the two weeks, I spent a great deal of time taking the rough drafts of teachers' stories and poems and editing them for a 47-page polished anthology of their poems and stories--a tangible outcome that I hope will be useful in recruiting future participants and for A.P.P.L.E. funding.

I was also honored to lecture twice for the general assembly of A.P.P.L.E. participants on the topic of storytelling as a pedagogy across disciplines. I received positive feedback from my fellow lecturers, some of whom said they reinforced some of the ideas I mentioned in their classes.

Finally, I taught as a guest lecturer in the Primary Education strand. I conducted two creative writing workshops. The first challenged teachers to invent a coherent narrative from memory. The second asked them to creatively associate three different words, create a coherent context using all three, and finish with a cohesive narrative.

Having started with A.P.P.L.E. in 1993, I can say with certainty that Lithuanian teachers are now among the most talented, dedicated, and skilled with whom I've ever worked--bar none!

Language Arts Strand Reflection - Laurie Hendrickson

It didn't take long for me to say yes. I was in a taxi with my son and daughter-in-law heading to the start of the Miami Marathon, where my son would be running, when I received a forwarded email from Kristin Ross asking if anyone from the Illinois Writing Project would be interested in providing professional development to teachers in Lithuania. I had spent the previous summer teaching children in Dadar, India, so the plan for my summer of 2014, was to lay low. "This is interesting," I said, "but I don't think I'll go."

"For heavens sake, Laurie, this is a no brainer. Why on earth wouldn't you take advantage of such an amazing opportunity?" my daughter-in-law asked incredulously.

I thought about it for less than a minute and said, "Why not?" This impromptu decision led to one of the richest experiences of my life, because I learned far more than I taught. The lecturers I traveled with were generous enough to share their expertise in teaching and learning, as well as their considerable knowledge about Lithuanian history and geography.

For the first week, I had the privilege of working with Dr. Wendell Mayo, a gifted professor from Bowling Green State University and the author of two books about Lithuania-In Lithuania Wood and The Cucumber King of Kedainiai. We shared responsibilities for this one-week workshop, with Wendell teaching genre lessons in the morning, and me working with the students in writing workshop in the afternoon. I attended all of Wendell's morning lectures, because the lessons on poetry and short fiction writing were so informative and creative. During this time, I participated alongside the other students in all of the writing exercises. I gained so much knowledge during this time about allowing students an entry into poetry in a safe and comfortable way. I plan to use this new-found knowledge with my own classroom of sixth-grade writing students in River Forest, Illinois.

During writing workshop, students in the class finished writing their poems and short stories that were started in the morning. The teacher attendees were engaged and enthusiastic learners, and most were eager to share their writing in small groups and also to the group as a whole. Students then wrote reflections about their experiences in the week-long workshop. Poems, short stories, and reflections were compiled by Wendell into an anthology that was distributed to all students.

Since there was no creative writing class held during the second week, I kept myself busy by attending the classes taught by other lecturers. I also had the opportunity to teach blogging to the technology students and reading to the primary teachers. This allowed me to meet and interact with students from other strands. I helped out whenever I could and learned much about the educational system in Lithuania.

On my flight from Chicago to Vilnius, I read a young adult novel titled *Between Shades of Gray* by Ruta Sepetys. This beautifully written novel shines a light on a piece of history not known to many Americans. It's the story of a young girl whose family is deported to Siberia by the Soviets, and how they are criminalized through no fault of their own. The fact that many of these people endured such brutality and hardship is a testament to their courage and will to survive. In Kaunas, I was also given the book *Children of Siberia: Memoirs of Lithuanian Exiles* which contained true personal accounts of the lives of children in exile. Both books prompted me to want to learn more about the history of Lithuania.

I plan to pass this history on to my own sixth-grade students in River Forest. I am now in the process of creating a lesson plan that uses both of these books as resources. My students are very interested in learning about the Jewish Holocaust, and I think they will be just as interested in learning that Stalin was every bit as brutal and heartless as

Hitler.

I flew into Vilnius at the end of June when the landscape was lush and verdant, and its suitability for agriculture was evident. In fact, one half of its land is used for agriculture, and one third is composed of forests. I hadn't realized that Lithuania is basically flat with many lakes and rivers running through it. I later learned that inland waters account for four percent of its territory. As I was being driven from the Vilnius airport to Kaunas, I saw that many of the homes had large vegetable and flower gardens, all lovingly tended.

The weather during our visit was on the cool side, and we made sure to bring a jacket whenever we went out. This made me wonder about how the geographic features of Lithuania affect the climate. I learned that the area by the Baltic Sea exhibits maritime influences (temperatures without much fluctuation because its climate is tied to the water, which is warmer than air in the winter and colder than air in the summer). The rest of the land-locked country experiences a continental climate because the land mass and the wind are the only influences, causing a greater difference in temperature than maritime. Even though temperatures were cool in the month of June (high of about 21° C), since I've been back in Chicago, the temperatures in Vilnius have been closer to 26° C.

All of this new knowledge has led me to create a "zine" about Lithuania. My River Forest

students create magazines like these about geographic areas of their choosing. They write about an area's history and geography, and they analyze the weather patterns and even include poetry and some information about things to see and do. I have learned so much about so many different international cities from my students, and I can't wait to share what I learned about Vilnius, Lithuania with them, because as a teacher, one of the of the best things about learning something new is sharing that knowledge with others.

Fundraising Corner

You still have an opportunity to make a donation to honor A.P.P.L.E. and the many volunteers who have served A.P.P.L.E. over 25 years. All donations will be expended towards 2015 programs including A.P.P.L.E. Scholar's Fund. You can make a direct donation to A.P.P.L.E. by [clicking here](#) and using PayPal. Make sure to add a note if you wish that your donation be specifically used for a Lithuanian Scholars' Fund grant.

What will different levels of donations accomplish?

- For \$100, you can provide an ink cartridge and paper so that A.P.P.L.E. can distribute lesson notes to teachers.
- For \$200, you can provide a stipend for a translator.
- For \$450, you can underwrite the distribution of our newsletter.
- For \$500, you can sponsor a Scholar's Fund Grant. Lesser amounts will be combined to fund a grant.

A minimum donation of \$25-individual or \$40-family will enroll you as a member of A.P.P.L.E. for one year. Of course, donations are still welcome by mail: A.P.P.L.E., 105 Sturbridge Lane, Chapel Hill, NC 27516

A.P.P.L.E. is a 501(3)c organization, which means that your gifts are tax-deductible. Our tax-exempt number is 23-2682202. Because of strict IRS regulations, we cannot

accept donations intended for specific people. If you would like to support relatives or friends, please do so directly. The A.P.P.L.E. scholar grants are intended for Lithuanian educators who do not have contacts in the United States.

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.

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