

John Baltrus

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Sent: Thursday, January 05, 2012 1:03 PM
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The A.P.P.L.E. Seed

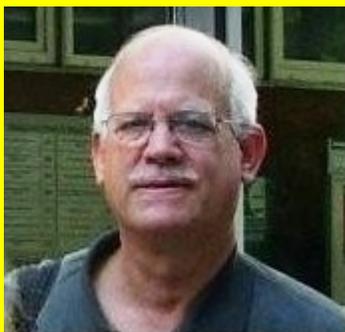
(American Professional Partnership
for
Lithuanian Education)

E-Zine

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Dear John,



Karl Janowitz

Message from the President

With the new year upon us, I want to take this opportunity to wish you a happy and healthy 2012 and to thank you for your continued commitment to A.P.P.L.E. In just five months, we will begin our 22nd year of summer programs in Lithuania. Our theme, "Building Educational Communities in Our Schools", seems especially pertinent in light of the challenges currently confronting our schools. Without your support, our programs would not be possible.

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. Member Profile - Juozas "Joe" Karmuza



Joe Karmuza

In 1992 the Soviet Union was recently dissolved. Lithuania was newly independent and I was traveling to Vilnius to participate in a meeting of ethnic Lithuanians representing organizations from all over the world. Displaced Lithuanians representing many countries were ecstatic with independence and eager to contribute in all ways possible to help their homeland transform from a Soviet state to a democratic nation. While in Lithuania I would visit an educational seminar conducted by a group of American volunteers, that called themselves A.P.P.L.E. With the help of many, seminars designed to help Lithuanian teachers learn how to infuse democratic ideals into their teaching practices had been organized by my friend Vaiva Vebraite. I knew Vaiva from the Lithuanian American Community in CT, where I was President of the New Haven group. The Community had recently circulated a petition to President George H.W. Bush requesting recognition of Lithuanian independence.

These events were related to why I was returning to Lithuania after 48 years. The trip brought memories of the farm where I was born, the 1944 flight from that farm by horse drawn wagon, and the years spent in Germany before finally arriving in Boston Harbor, April 21, 1949 aboard the US NS General Hahn, a troop carrier. I was born on the family farm in the kaimas Palaimos, located between Marimpole and Vilkaviskis. My father was awarded the 33 hectares in payment for his service in the Lithuanian army in 1918. During WWII our family remained on the farm, with the exception of a few times when we had to leave because the battle got too close. Our root cellar doubled

as a bunker when needed. Toward the end of the war, as the Soviet Army advanced westward, pushing the retreating Germans across Lithuania, the fighting became too intense and my father suddenly had to pack up the extended family in a horse drawn wagon and we too headed west, just ahead of the Soviets. I was only six-years-old, but remember this exodus. We stopped at the border near Kybartai, so that my father could bury my infant brother. Many were headed to Danzig with hopes of escaping Europe by ship. However my father, based on his experience as a soldier, was fearful that Danzig would be vulnerable to Soviet attack, and he was correct. Instead, we headed south toward Leipzig. My father sold everything we had and bought train tickets that got us to Regensberg, where he found work helping a farmer.

As a boy in Germany in 1945 I remembered watching soldiers build a bridge from logs so that tanks could cross the river. My grandmother was watching with me when the lead tank stopped, opened, and to our utter astoundment, out stepped a Black man. My Lithuanian grandmother, who like myself had never before been outside the village, gasped and quickly blessed herself, presuming she had just seen the devil. Much later I realized that the Black man driving the tank with a white star, was part of the American Armored Cavalry. While living in Germany in the American sector I learned with the rest of the kids how to approach soldiers to ask for chocolate and gum. After a few years our family was sponsored by relatives from my mother's family and we settled in Wolcott CT in 1949. Less than 8 years later, in January 1957, I returned to the American sector of Germany as a member of the US Airforce. Continuing the odyssey, I traveled to Germany via the US NS General Geiger. Following us into Bremerhaven was the US NS General Rose, sister ship to the General Hahn, the ship that brought me and my family to the US. It was now my turn to be approached by kids asking for treats.

In 1994 I traveled to Birstonas Lithuania to participate in an international dance festival. That summer I joined the A.P.P.L.E. team as an administrator and was part of the program every year until 2007. Part of my job responsibility was to keep track of everyone and make sure that all lecturers arrived and departed. I met everyone who participated in A.P.P.L.E. during that period because I was the one who met them at the Vilnius airport, helped them collect luggage, exchange money, and check in at the remembered-by-all PPRC on Didlaukio gatve. I married twice, both times to Lithuanian women. I met my second wife while she was attending an A.P.P.L.E. summer session in Vilnius. Though no longer together, we both live in Waterbury CT and share responsibility for raising two handsome bilingual sons, Joseph 13 and Dainius 10. My 100-year-old mother, Anele, lives nearby.

In the years since independence the contribution that American Lithuanians made to the transformation of Lithuania is recognized. When I first worked with A.P.P.L.E., Lithuanian teachers did not typically participate in discussions or request clarification. Within a few years changes in openness were obvious. Teachers became comfortable expressing their thoughts and requesting clarification from presenters. This change may have been related to teachers having been given more opportunity to evaluate ideas presented by foreigners, who in the past may have been distrusted. From the perspective of an individual who left Lithuania as a child, but was fortunate to see the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a question that I sometimes ponder is; "What would Lithuania have been like if there had never been a war?" But perhaps a more provocative question that relates to the contribution of A.P.P.L.E. is; "Would the transformation that Lithuania has undergone in the last 20 years been the same if communism had lasted another 50 years, when there would have been no one with a memory of a once free and independent Lithuania to foster that progress?"

Lithuanian Scholars' Fund Contest Winners Announced

The winners from the latest round of applications for the Lithuanian Scholars' Fund have just been announced and are posted on the [A.P.P.L.E. Website](#). Select winners will receive a Flip camera to document their project to share with others. In total, 16 winners will receive more than 14,000 LTL. We hope to feature some of the highest rated proposals in next month's E-Zine.

The Lithuanian Scholars' Fund/Lietuvos Mokytoju Fondas (LMF) was established in 2006 to encourage teachers who attend summer seminars to implement new teaching ideas in their classrooms. Teachers submit proposals which are reviewed by a panel to determine the best quality projects. A.P.P.L.E. funds as many of the proposals, according to rank, as available funding permits. In this manner A.P.P.L.E. supports classroom teachers in effecting grassroots educational change. A.P.P.L.E. is proud to have supported over 100 projects.

Volunteer Describes Her First Summer with A.P.P.L.E.

Kristen Ross, a teacher, Principal and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Consultant for the Educational Service Center in Rockford, the Center for Best Practice in Chicago, and the Erickson Institute and Illinois State Board of Education is the author of an article in the November/December edition of [Lithuanian Heritage Magazine](#) describing her experiences as a first-time volunteer in A.P.P.L.E.'s 2011 Summer Program.

Dr. Ross and Ed Topar taught an administrative strand on educational ethics and change to a group of school directors (principals). She also had the opportunity to review post-grant presentations from last year's winners of the Lithuanian Scholars' Fund Grants. The projects ranged from science and environmental studies to reading. She described the projects and program as very successful based on her evaluations. In the article, Dr. Ross also related her personal experiences from visiting the country of her father's ancestors. In all, the article offered a very favorable portrayal of the A.P.P.L.E. program and we thank her for taking the time to write it.

A.P.P.L.E. Board Spring Meeting

Mark your calendars for the Spring Meeting of the Board of Directors and the Annual Meeting for the purpose of electing officers which will be held the weekend of April 14-15 in New Jersey. More details will follow in the next EZine.

Fundraising Corner

Did the information presented about the Scholars' Fund in the articles above intrigue you? We receive more good proposals than we can fund. Also, imagine the impact we could make if we were able to raise the limit on the proposals we do fund! You can always designate your donation so that it goes directly to the Scholars' Fund. Just mark the appropriate line on the donation envelope or enclose a note with your check. Those who donate using PayPal can also include a note to direct their donation.

Find out more about donating to A.P.P.L.E. on the [A.P.P.L.E. Website](#).

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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