

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



(American Professional Partnership

for

Lithuanian Education)

E-Zine

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Message from the President

We have just completed our Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 30th, and our Board meeting on Sunday, May 1st. The Annual meeting was attended by 14 Board members, and we also had five members-at-large who joined us for the day. The morning was spent getting updates from committees as well as our Treasurer. Amanda Muliolis reported on the Lithuanian Scholars Program. John Baltrus wanted someone to join him at The Knights of Lithuania Annual Convention, which will be held on

Friday, July 29th in Michigan City, Indiana. He was able to get a spot for us at an open panel and give a report as to the Special Education programs in Lithuania and A.P.P.L.E.'s role in Lithuania. Vitas Underys and Ilona Laucius agreed to accompany John Baltrus and participate on the panel with him.

The afternoon was spent planning our summer programs in Lithuania. Our general session will take place in Klaipeda from July 11 to 22, 2011. We will have an Administration Strand, Two Computer Strands, a Library Strand, and an English Learners Teacher Strand. The Special Education Strand will spend one week in Kaunas and the second week in Klaipeda.

At the Board Meeting on Sunday, the revised by-laws were accepted. Four of the board members who were unable to join us in person were able to participate through Skype.

The Election results are as follows:

Secretary- Anita Scarborough

Treasurer- Jack Vellis

Program Director - Nancy Vellis

Communications Director- Jim Brousseau

Finance Director- Gail Cassidy

Directors-at-large- Sue Kohfeldt, Amanda Muliolis, Ilona Laucius

Our summer meeting has tentatively been scheduled for Saturday, August 27th, at Shirley Sabo's home in Connecticut.

Happy Spring and a Happy Mother's Day to all our mothers out there.

Dr. Vida R. 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."

Heard in Lithuania

The price of petrol in Lithuania continues to climb..... a recent survey of ninety-five (95) gas stations in the area around Vilnius showed an average price for a liter of petrol to be 4.8 Litass. The near-term forecast for petrol is now within reach of the previously unheard of price of 5.0 Litass per liter. With the summer driving season just around the corner and petrol prices normally higher during that time, it is not an attractive prospect for Lithuanian drivers.

An update on the real estate market for apartments in Lithuania.....Ober-Haus, one of the largest real estate firms in the country, has recently issued a statement indicating that their research shows that comparable prices of the highest recorded apartment prices from late 2007 vs. the first quarter of 2011 have dropped in Lithuania's five largest cities as follows: Vilnius 40%; Kaunas 33.2%; Klaipeda 45.4%; Siauliai 44.6% and Panevezys 46%.

On the positive side, according to their research over the past twelve months, Ober-Haus believes that the prices for apartments in Lithuania have stabilized and will continue to improve in the near term.

LITHUANIA'S MOST FAMOUS BASKETBALL PLAYER HONORED

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Arvydas Sabonis, the legendary Lithuanian basketball player.....has been inducted into the National Basketball Association (NBA) Hall of Fame. The announcement came on April 4 during the finals of the NCAA Basketball Tournament in Houston.

Sabonis has been an Olympic Champion, played in the NBA for the Portland Trailblazers from 1995 through 2003 and was known for his excellent passing and rebounding skills and astute knowledge of the game. He is the first Lithuanian national to be so honored. The actual induction ceremony will be held on August 12.

The 46 year old retired basketball player was previously voted into the International Basketball (FIBA) Hall of Fame in 2010.

YOUR CONTENT

**ATTENTION.....READERS OF THIS NEWSLETTER!
DON'T HESITATE TO LET US KNOW WHAT YOU WANT!!**

This is your e-zine and your opportunity to express your interests and perspective by submitting articles and/or requests for content that you believe would be informative and of interest to all our members, friends and subscribers. So, don't hesitate. Let us know what is of interest to you, and we will make every effort to provide the space and/or content that will allow for coverage of those areas of common interest. We look forward to hearing from each and every one of our readers. **Remember, this is your e-zine!**



Vitas Undrys

**Vitas with Augiene Viliuniene,
Dir., ViltisDevelopmental Center**

This year is my tenth year of working with APPLE and working in Lithuania. As I reflect upon those ten years, I have come to realize that the choices I have made have been linked to a thread that has been guiding my life.

My parents left Lithuania during the Second World War, came to the United States, and settled in Chicago. I was born and raised in a south side Lithuanian neighborhood, attended the Lithuanian parish school, and then followed my two brothers' lead by attending a Jesuit high school, Saint Ignatius College Prep. The Jesuit influence continued on at Loyola University, where I received a bachelor's degree in psychology.

As I prepared to graduate, I faced a major decision. Up until then I was following the wishes of my family and following the path my brothers took. I didn't know what I was going to do with a psychology degree. It was in my final year of university that I made the choice of going to work at an institution for children with severe disabilities. This decision took me down the path of working in special education.

I spent seven years working at Misericordia Home in Chicago, and then went to the University of Illinois for my master's degree in education. In 1986, I moved to Michigan where I worked at three special education schools, and eventually landed at William Grace Elementary in Farmington Michigan.

At William Grace Elementary my responsibilities included developing inclusive opportunities for a group of students with severe disabilities. I had a great deal of support during the twenty years at this school. Our team was able to build a community where everyone belonged. Our students were a part of the building and their classrooms. They worked and played alongside their peers.

Ten years ago, I decided it was time for me to visit my parents' homeland. During this trip I met with my friend from the states, a Jesuit priest. Father Antanas Saulaitis was stationed in Lithuania at the time. He was very interested in my work, and the stories of children being included into general education classes intrigued him. He believed Lithuania needed to have this discussion.

This meeting with Fr. Saulaitis opened the door to working with APPLE. Upon my return home I found a message on the answering machine. It was from the current APPLE president inviting me to return to Lithuania in a few months to work at "Viltis" a camp for students with disabilities and their families. I returned to Lithuania that summer, and for the next nine summers, as a member of APPLE.

Recently, I returned to Lithuania with my wife to celebrate our 30 year wedding anniversary. We visited relatives and friends, but we also dedicated one day to conduct a seminar at the "Viltis" Developmental Center located in Vilnius. The room was full of new faces. As I began my lecture I realized that the front row was filled with familiar faces from the past ten years. Teachers from my first visit, to teachers from last all returned to continue taking part in this discussion. My first year was filled with nervous anticipation, I did not know what to expect. This seminar was very different. I was not nervous and the faces I saw were not the frozen faces of ten years ago. The discussion was lively, and interactive. Ideas that were presented were taken back to classrooms and teachers began to implement them and, as they reported, with some success. This was extremely rewarding.

As I reflect on the past ten years, I am grateful to APPLE and all the dedicated individuals of this organization, from those who created it, to those who continue to work to keep it moving forward, and especially those that donate to provide the resources needed. I am grateful that I have this opportunity to share what I have learned with others, especially in Lithuania. It is a great gift to be able to return to my parents' homeland, not as a tourist, but as a worker. It seems as though there was a thread I was following all along and this may have been in the plans all along.

A local newspaper from Silute heard that Vitas and Taura were making a presentation at the seminar in Vilnius and asked if they would agree to be interviewed for an article in their paper. For those of our readers who can read Lithuanian, the link to that article is <http://www.siloidas.lt/?p=1624#more-1624>

Summer Programs

Congratulations to Barbara Henriques, Irena Ross and Amanda Muliolis on their recruiting and placement efforts in securing another highly respected teacher/lecturer for our summer programs. This is an excellent example of cooperation between Irena and Barbara as they researched through the earlier records of participating lecturers and were able to use that network to locate a friend of a former lecturer who was more than anxious to participate this year for the first time.

Barbara, as Program Director for this summer, then enlisted Amanda Muliolis to assist with the placement of the new lecturer, due to her added skill set that included expertise in the practical application of IT in the area of ELT. This final piece in the process ensures that the new lecturer and her considerable skills will be best utilized.

Nice work ladies!



Opening day for the A.P.P.L.E. Summer Program in Klaipeda last July. Included in photo, former President Adamkas and his wife, Headmaster Audrius Kurlevicious with his staff, A.P.P.L.E. President Vida Gavin with the A.P.P.L.E. lecturers and Giedrius Vaidelis from the UPC in Vilnius

It's back to the Baltic for our Summer Programs and lecturers this year.....this July we will again be hosted by Headmaster Audrius Kurlavicious and his excellent staff at the Klaipedos Turizmo Mokykla in Klaipeda. In a recent conversation with the headmaster, he stated that he was anxious to let us know that the significant renovations and upgrades to the facilities in progress last July, have all been completed. Both the housing and classroom facility upgrades were provided for by support monies from the EU and promises to provide our lecturers and participants with much improved accommodations for all of our programs.

QUIZ

QUIZ FOR MAY

1. Which is taller, the Eiffel Tower or the Vilnius TV Tower?
2. How many airports are there in Lithuania?
3. What is the average life expectancy in Lithuania?
4. What is the literacy rate for those 15 years and older?

5. What is the official name of the Lithuanian National Song?

ANSWERS: Can be found under the REMINDERS section.

Quotables

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"Change is the law of life. Those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future."

John F. Kennedy
(Former President of the United States)

Reminders

For all those participating in our A.P.P.L.E. Summer Programs..... or anyone planning travel overseas, it is time to confirm that your passport is current or, if not, to apply for renewal early enough in advance of your trip to have a current and valid passport available.

If you have not made reservations for your flight(s), you may want to secure them asap, to ensure your choice of flights and avoid the price increases that generally come with the vacation travel season.

To assist you with your financial planning for your trip to Lithuania this summer....here is a comparison of the current related values of the Lita, the Euro and the Dollar. The values are subject to change daily, and can vary slightly within exchange locations.

<u>DOLLAR</u>		<u>LITAS</u>		<u>EURO</u>
1.00	=	2.3345	=	.6849

Answers to Quiz:

1. The Vilnius TV Tower (326.47 meters; Eiffel Tower 300 meters)

2. 81
3. 75
4. 99.6%
5. "Tautiska giesme"

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To our Lithuanian readers.....as we announced in our February issue, you are now eligible to participate in our newly announced program to support Lithuanian citizens in becoming official members of A.P.P.L.E. Please contact our coordinator in Lithuania, Ramute Zemioniene, at obuolys_lt@yahoo.com with your name, address and email address for details.

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.

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