

John Baltrus

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Sent: Wednesday, November 06, 2013 7:11 PM
To: jonaspb@comcast.net
Subject: News from A.P.P.L.E. (American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education)

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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

It is November; what an exciting time of year. The school year is in full swing on both sides of the Atlantic and Winter is right around the corner.

It is time to be thinking about next Summer's A.P.P.L.E. seminars --- our 24th Summer of in-service programs in Lithuania. Applications are already coming in.

The wonderful holiday of Thanksgiving takes place later this month in the U.S. It is a terrific opportunity to reflect on all that we have and for all that we should give thanks.

All my best for the coming month.

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. Member Profile - Wendell Mayo



Wendell Mayo

My name is Wendell Mayo and I first came to A.P.P.L.E. in 1993 when my partner Debbie, a Lithuanian -American, encouraged me to apply. From 1993-2001, I was a language arts lecturer, strand coordinator, and three times A.P.P.L.E. program director (in Alanta, Mazeikiai, and Salčininkai). I worked with wonderful colleagues, such as Shirley Sabo, Gita Kupčinskienė, Anne Baltren, Vilma Bačkiūtė, and many others. In 2001-2002 I lived in Vilnius on Fulbright; in 2004 I returned to Vilnius to present and sign my novel-in-stories, *In Lithuanian Wood*, which had just been published in Lithuanian language by Mintis Press as *Vilko Valanda (Hour of the Wolf)*. When I arrived in the summer of 1993, I'd never travelled outside the western hemisphere. When last week John Baltrus suggested I write a profile of myself and my relationship to A.P.P.L.E., I asked myself, "Who am I, really?" I decided: I am one of the many who were new to A.P.P.L.E., and who've been profoundly changed by their experiences. So, because I'm a writer, and because I kept a writing journal of my years in Lithuania, I wanted to share that which I've never made public before: How, as handwritten in my journal, in just a few days, I learned to love Lithuania.

So, from the twenty-year-old, yellowing pages of my journal, here goes. I've edited the journal entries very little, mainly just to make them read a bit smoother; please forgive sentence fragments and the like; I wanted to make these excerpts as authentic and expressive as possible.

9:30 a.m., Saturday, 24 July, 1993

Vilnius, first impression. Pine stands everywhere. Deep, gorgeous green. Decay. No road services. All the grass has gone to seed. Weeds everywhere. The streets are dusty and red mud is caked alongside berms. I saw an old man mowing with a scythe by the dormitory and Didlaukio 86-not a dent in the stuff. He cut a small patch with the scythe and quit. Queen Anne's lace everywhere. Tall grass. Wildflowers. Nature is reclaiming the city! Dirt paths everywhere, people walking, pacing for the bus or trolley. A lot of pacing. Milling about. Brief stops at kiosks; cheap; made of metal flashing; the better ones are corrugated, better-painted, yellow-yellow is an important color here-the color of amber from the Baltic Sea. And there are ravens. Huge ravens. Some are black, some with gray bodies and black wings and heads. They waddle in the higher weeds on all sides of sidewalks and the parking lot... like heartless little Cossacks. The ravens are *not* like the people of Lithuania! The difference being the hearts of Lithuanians, hearts of people who held out against everything for freedom-poverty, a Western world that has forgotten their courage in the face of the Soviet

Union. Here's the feeling I get, this place I've come to, the other side of the world, "in a Lithuanian wood," a magical place...

6:05 a.m., Sunday, 25 July, 1993

I am told by Gita (Kupčinskienė) that I have a good Lithuanian accent. My vocabulary stinks, but I'm getting the sounds. I can see why the country has persisted despite the Poles, the Russians; their language is lovely and unique, phonetically "correct"-has integrity...

Last night I went to the "best" restaurant in Vilnius, Stiklai-a place, so I've heard, for diplomats and heads of state. Ordered the barbequed sturgeon. On the way back to the bendrabutis, we took two taxis; I was in the lead taxi; the other followed close behind with its headlights out, "to save the battery," our driver told us.

This past Friday A.P.P.L.E. teachers from Marijampolė arrived, and early Saturday our Vilnius A.P.P.L.E. teachers took off for Klaipėda. A.P.P.L.E. teachers returning from Marijampolė are a boisterous, hardened group: a mile in the rain each way from dormitory to a cafeteria, another mile each way to teach classes; no flush toilets; hammocks for beds; no showers or cold ones only. Phil (Taylor) told us a story about how he and Karl (Janowitz) were invited to dinner by people who had little food; after they readied things, only their guests and their children were at the table. The parents planned to not eat. I could tell it broke Phil's heart telling the story-he seems a man with a big heart...

Did I mention the wino I gave two litai to in the park by the Cathedral? He kissed me all over my face and hugged me and made the sign of the cross on me. He kissed my hands. A group of Lithuanian teenagers were laughing and scowling at me because I gave him the money. I was ashamed. Then I was a little angry. But the anger drained out of me when I saw somewhere, perhaps a kiosk, the wooden carving of the caring and concerned Christ-somehow, it had that effect on me.

Light has just come through the blue clouds and has illuminated the low, pine-covered hills east of Vilnius, and with the light comes a thought: Lithuanians ask me, "Why did you come here? Are you Lithuanian? Why are you here?" The clouds now drag a shaft of light over the land and the winds take the whole blue mass of clouds toward the Baltic Sea... I remember how beautiful Lithuanian amber is ... and, then I remember the reason Lithuanians keep asking, "Are you Lithuanian?"-it's because they are so impressed that anyone who is not Lithuanian would care enough to find their way to their country and work on their behalf.

11:30 p.m.

Remember-do not ever forget-the story that Myra (Goodwin) told me about the hill in Siauliai, pagan symbols, then eventually crosses out of respect for families, the dead, the brave-but it is not a cemetery. Russians bulldozed it twice, but Lithuanians keep resurrecting the crosses. Symbols of Lithuania's national Catholic tradition; Soviets flooded it with sewage; still they erected the crosses-family unity in crosses hanging on crosses...generations.

Okay, my very limited vocabulary so far:

dvylika (12), taksis (taxi), mano vardas Wendell (my name is Wendell), Angliskiai (English), prasau (please and you're welcome), ačiu (thank you), du (two), arbatas (tea), kava (coffee), mokytoja (teacher)
labas (hello), labas rytas (good morning), labadiena (good day or afternoon), labas vakaras (good evening), and gėlės (flowers-a very important word in Lithuania!)

My address: Didlaukio 86, Vilnius, Lithuania.
My room number at the bendrabutis (don't forget it!): 806.
My interpreter: Ruta Kaupinytė
Executive Director of A.P.P.L.E.: Vaiva Vėbraitė

7:35 p.m., Monday, 26 July, 1993

Okay... I'm okay After our first strand meeting with 33 Lithuanian teachers-I hope I didn't dip into the lecture time of others and monopolize time in general... God, it never fails; why do I worry so much about the feelings of others? I don't know. I have to stop worrying about myself and focus on the Lithuanian teachers. I want to know so much about them, and tell them about myself (whoever that is!). I said to Karl (Janowitz) the other day, "Karl," I said, "I have to stop worrying about things-I only care about my students, the teachers." Karl agreed. We've only just met. I like him, but not because he agreed with me about teaching. I just do. He works hard. Talks a mean game of Special Education-and I believe he can back it up!...

10:30 p.m.

Gita (Kupčinskienė) is a wonder; she heads our little group by creating pleasant "structures"-a salad party; "happy hours"-today we had what Phil (Taylor) called a "happy minute" because we ran out of cola.... Someone says food is running short in the cafeteria-the women in the kitchen are miracle workers-stretching everything:

Potato pancakes (with sour cream), pancakes stuffed with cheese (swimming in butter), pancakes with a cold rhubarb concoction-*did I forget to mention pancakes?*

2:45 p.m., Tuesday, 27 July, 1993

My memory of the first time I saw Lithuania: When I first saw Lithuania, it was from the air, through the small oval-shaped window of the airplane. Through this window, I saw green fields of crops, rows of vegetables crisscrossing low hills and shallow valleys. There were farms dotting the hillsides, and through them a small winding stream. In places, between the farms, were wide stands of pines whose pointed tops swayed and tossed side to side with the wind. My memory, then, is full of nature and life at a distance.

Now that I have landed, in just a few days, Lithuania means so much more...

(Editor's note: Some Lithuanian characters had to be removed from the submitted text because they are not supported by the editing program. Our apologies to Wendell.)

The Cucumber King of Kėdainiai

Wendell Mayo's new book of short stories, *The Cucumber King of Kėdainiai*, (published October, 2013) is winner of a national literary prize, the Subito Press Award for Innovative Fiction, sponsored by the University of Colorado, Boulder. It is dedicated to Vaiva Vėbraitė. Copies are available now through Amazon.com and other booksellers. Description from the publisher: "Characters in Wendell Mayo's collection, *The Cucumber King of Kėdainiai*, are one of a kind. A Lithuanian mafia boss strives to achieve world domination with black market cucumbers. A starving Russian artist discovers he can profit by selling paint-by-numbers portraits of former General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev. Two spiders re-enact the Cold War years in the bathtub of an abandoned Soviet sanatorium. A woman is interrogated by former-KGB police about the whereabouts of an American she's never met. A man trades a bag of cold fried pike

for clues about his Lithuanian ancestors. The concluding narrative, "The Universal Store," assembles all in a kind of marketplace of the heart, where the new realities of an Eastern Europe adapting to change since the fall of the Berlin Wall emerge." The publisher's link: <http://www.subitopress.org/mayo>

A.P.P.L.E. Summer 2014 Call for Proposals

The official Call for Proposals to volunteer as a lecturer for A.P.P.L.E.'s 2014 Summer Program can now be found on the [A.P.P.L.E. website](#). Detailed information on how to apply and an application form are included. The deadline for applications is January 15, 2014.

Summer 2014 Seminars, two, one-week sessions, are designed for teachers and other educational personnel, June 25- 28, 2014 and June 30 - July 4, 2014. Lecturers may be preschool, elementary, and secondary teachers holding the equivalent of a master's degree, including those with special education credentials, who have demonstrated excellence in teaching. We also welcome college or university faculty with specific expertise and excellent teaching skills. We also encourage participation from a wide variety of specialists, including social workers, psychologists, counselors, health care professionals, librarians, computer specialists, and others. We are seeking teachers and other professionals who are prepared to share their knowledge of and are ready to demonstrate their expertise in current theory and practices related to this summer's theme: ***Real World Applications of What We Teach***. This topic encourages teachers, administrators, staff, families, and others involved in the educational process to ensure that what we teach has relevance beyond the classroom. We will address strategies for translating what is presented in the classroom into practical outcomes for 21st century learners.

Needs assessment from Lithuania highlighted interest in the following topics for 2014: preschool and kindergarten (ages 2-3 through 6-7), elementary education, teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (one group for elementary school educators and one for those at middle and high school levels), information technologies, school administration, and teaching creativity for teachers of various subjects. Other creative and innovative proposals relevant to current educational issues may also be considered.

Participating lecturers in ***Real World Applications of What We Teach*** must utilize best practices in content methodology; differentiation of instruction; administrative methodologies; teaching strategies that reach all students ("universal design for learning"); inquiry-based science; etc. Teaching should be grounded in evidence-based methods that promote teaching in diverse educational communities and success for all learners.

Lithuania's First Graders Increase in Number

Although in the last seven years the number of schoolchildren in Lithuania's schools decreased by almost a third, in 2013 there are 2,000 more first graders compared to 2012, writes *the Baltic Course* with reference to the news agency ELTA.

According to the data of the Ministry of Education and Science, 351,400 schoolchildren started the new school year in September; around 29,000 of them are first graders - 2,000 more than last year.

The Ministry has also reported that 1,229 primary and secondary schools and 260 non-

formal education institutions will operate this year. Some 40,000 students will attend 70 Lithuanian vocational schools; while 28,000 students will study in Lithuanian universities and colleges.

Fundraising Corner

Many of you will soon begin shopping for Holiday gifts. Don't forget that you can support A.P.P.L.E. and its programs at the same time through an application called iGive. Every time you shop on the Internet at one of the over 1300 stores participating in the **iGive program**, a percentage of your spending will be donated to A.P.P.L.E. by the participating store. So far, A.P.P.L.E. has received almost \$1,000 in donations through the iGive program.

Instructions for signing up for the iGive program are available on the [A.P.P.L.E. website](#). Just scroll down the right side of the home page.



You may also make a direct donation to A.P.P.L.E. by using PayPal. Simply follow [this link to the A.P.P.L.E. website](#) where you will find the PayPal link towards the bottom of the home page. 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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