

## John Baltrus

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**From:** A.P.P.L.E. (American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education) [gail@appleamericanprofessionalpartnershipforlithuanianeducation.ccsend.com] on behalf of A.P.P.L.E. (American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education) [jonaspb@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, September 06, 2013 2:01 AM  
**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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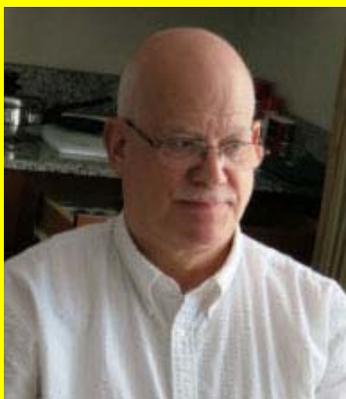
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**Dear John,**



Karl Janowitz

**Message from the President**

The new school year has arrived and A.P.P.L.E.'s 2013 summer program is a memory. I hope you all had a refreshing summer vacation and are ready for what awaits this fall.

We had a productive Board of Directors meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania the weekend of August 24-25, 2013. It was good to see the Directors and take stock of the organization. We presented an overview of the summer 2013 program, and began planning for 2014.

I want to acknowledge the contributions of two departing officers, Nancy Hanssen and Jack Vellis. Nancy has served in a variety of capacities, bringing many innovations to our summer programs. In addition to lecturing this past year, she served as Director of Programs. Jack, our long-time treasurer, brought our fiscal operations into the 21st century, computerizing many of the functions that help us understand the financial health of the organization. We will miss all they have done for A.P.P.L.E.

I would also like to thank Anita Yuskauskas for her service on our Board of Directors.

I would like to congratulate and welcome newly-elected Director of Programs, Audre Ruzga. In addition, I am pleased to announce that our Secretary, Anita Scarborough has been elected to also serve in the role of Treasurer.

This issue of our e-zine will highlight an article from the Administrative Strand, reflecting the Strand's accomplishments this summer.

Wishing you a wonderful September.

*Karl*

Dr. Karl P. Janowitz  
President



**A.P.P.L.E.'s Board meets in Pittsburgh - August 24th**

**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 - Linda Brenneman



**Linda Brenneman**

My story is one of reflection about who I am as a Lithuanian and how I have been able to share my knowledge and experience with Lithuanian educators, to learn from them, and what strides they have made in their educational improvement efforts. I have been thinking about this since my return from my most recent visit to Lithuania this summer.

I am of Lithuanian heritage. My story actually begins with my grandfather, Alex Salaviejus. My grandfather came to the USA in 1909 at the age of 16 to avoid being drafted into the Red Army and German occupation. He was able to escape into Germany by bribing border guards, where he worked for a while to earn passage to Canada. He had a sister, Ona who remained in Lithuania and a brother, Benedictus, who was sent to Siberia during WWI and WWII. Benedictus did survive and returned to Lithuania years later. He was able to acquire the family farm in Tryskai upon his return.

My grandfather worked as a lumberjack in Canada, saved enough money to enter the US and found work in Brockton, MA in a shoe factory where he met my grandmother Roze Kasetas. He eventually moved to Milford, MA where he also found work in a shoe factory and my mother, Ruta Salaviejus, was born. After a year, they bought a farm and moved to Franklin, MA, where I was born. I grew up in a rural community where my grandfather had established a farm which had become quite lucrative by the time I was born in 1953. I remember my grandfather and mother speaking Lithuanian and wondering what that strange sounding language was all about? My mother told me stories about my relatives back in Lithuania. She dressed us kids up in crepe paper outfits that resembled Lithuanian traditional dress and she taught us Lithuanian dances. Although I never had the opportunity to learn the language, I certainly was exposed to the culture.

As a young adult I learned more and more about Lithuania through my mother. She was able to maintain contact with relatives throughout all those years. Although we always prayed for freedom for Lithuania we never believed it would happen, until one day it did! I remember my mother and I being so happy that they were finally free from Soviet rule and communism. I decided to apply for a sabbatical from my school district in order to teach English in Lithuania. My mother and I put our heads together and devised a plan that would allow me to teach and live with my relatives. Low and behold, the New Hampshire School District I worked for approved my sabbatical and our relatives were able to secure a teaching job for me in Telsiai. That was truly an amazing experience.

That was in 1992. Lithuania had just become free in January 1991. However, a number of communist troops were still there living in their barracks just on the outskirts of town. I was able to experience their first free election. I taught in one of the first Catholic Schools. I experienced the cold when the USSR refused to send oil. It was cold everywhere; schools, shops, and people's homes. I managed to stay for the 5 months and during that time I met hundreds of Lithuanian people who all had their own stories. Men and woman telling me how they were snatched in the middle of the night and taken to live in remote areas of Siberia; men who lived in holes in the ground that they had to dig themselves, women who had to make their own lean-tos as shelters. I heard about the lack of food, sickness, disease, and desperation. Their strong wills, faith, and love of their motherland kept them alive. In 1953, the fact that Stalin had died, allowed the survivors the opportunity to return to their homeland. I learned first hand what these people had gone through and finally in 1992 they were able to speak openly about their experiences without fear or retribution. The stories tumbled out of them like tears. I recorded many of these stories and one day will write a book.

I have traveled to Lithuania 5 more times since then teaching with A.P.P.L.E. 4 times: 1998, 2001, 2009, and 2013. Each teaching experience has broadened my knowledge and understanding of the culture and political climate of Lithuania. I have always been amazed at the standards of nobility and cultural pride that Lithuanians hold themselves to. This inner strength is what kept them alive in Siberia as well as alive back home under soviet rule. They clung to their inner well of strength through their faith that Lithuania would someday be free.

Since arriving home after teaching the administrative strand this summer I have taken the time to reflect on the progression of Lithuania's educational system as I have experienced it through the last 21 years. The teachers and administrators I have worked with have always strived to learn and apply best teaching strategies. They have worked tirelessly to implement high standards while developing teaching methodologies that allow their students to excel. They have been open to new ideas and have shared ideas of their own. Through these discussions I have learned that Lithuania is a very educationally progressive country. The computer literacy rate is very high. They have developed standards and competencies that students must aspire to. Teaching methodology of best teaching practices has permeated their schools.

Teaching the administrative strand this summer has allowed me insight into the role of administrators in Lithuanian. They are striving toward an instructional leadership model where administrators are not just managers, but leaders who are knowledgeable about teaching practices in order to better supervise their teachers and to build leadership capacity among their teachers. It became evident to me that they are striving for the same goals as we have in the USA.

The world has become smaller and more closely connected and therefore we all need to work together to create the best educational systems possible for our children. I look forward to continuing to share my knowledge and experience with Lithuanian teachers and administrators. I look forward to them sharing their knowledge and experience with me. I look forward to continuing my work with the A.P.P.L.E. organization, which has made tremendous inroads and impact on the educators of Lithuania.

**A.P.P.L.E. Summer Program - Administrative Strand**



**Administrative Strand Leaders Ed Topar (right) and Linda Brenneman (2nd from right) with some strand participants**

Over the course of our two week training sessions this year, we were very pleased to host a total of 59 enthusiastic and very receptive Lithuanian school administrators plus a sprinkling of teachers. The concepts I presented were associated with managing change and time, while Linda's topics focused on teacher assessment and the value of informal walkthroughs were very well received by our groups.

The most encouraging feature, for me, relative to this year's participants was the number of returning administrators (19) from last year. Its always very encouraging when returning participants share with the others in class, how they were able to successfully initiate something they learned in a previous class.

As always, our Lithuanian hosts were fantastic, Ramute was spot on with all our administrative needs and the living accommodations were extraordinary. Makes you want to look forward to next year.

Ed Topar

### More Buses - Fewer Students



*BFL photo*

The new academic year started on September 2<sup>nd</sup> for Lithuanian students. This year there will be approximately 351,000 students attending classes in Lithuania, which is a

decrease of approximately 22,500 compared to last year. This has led to the closing of 13 schools for the new academic year. This continues the trend from 2008-2012, when approximately 120 schools were closed. The greatest loss of schools has been in the rural areas. The closing of schools has resulted in an increased need to bus students in those rural areas because otherwise they would be required to walk prohibitive distances to the schools that remain. Last week, 42 new minibuses costing 5 million LTL were delivered to various schools across the country. This brings the total number of school buses to 645, which will transport approximately 22,000 students.

Unlike the days when students would be required to walk several kilometers to attend classes, increased traffic and dangerous conditions prevent students from walking no more than a couple of kilometers. Not all are happy with the increased busing and plans to add more buses in future years. While municipalities often experience joy upon receiving a new bus whose cost is born by the central government, they soon realize they must find a way to bear the cost of fuel, maintenance, repairs, and drivers. The Ministry of Education is trying to relax the requirements for schools to stay open, but further declines in student population will make life difficult for students and teachers alike. One benefit of increased busing is that the buses have improved the transportation options for students with special needs.

## Fundraising Corner

Would you like to support A.P.P.L.E. and programs like the Lithuanian Scholars' Fund? Now is the perfect time to make a gift to A.P.P.L.E.

You may click on the button below to make a donation 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., 1820 Dansy Dr., Euclid, OH 44117



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.

Consider passing this email along to a friend who you think might be interested in hearing about us.

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