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REPORT TO THE CORPS

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A 20th Anniversary Gift that Celebrates A.P.P.L.E. Relationships

My dream of a trip to visit the USA came true, thanks to the generosity and kindness of Nancy Hanssen and Jack Vellis. This trip was a gift from them on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of A.P.P.L.E. My son, Darius, and I arrived in San Diego and were hosted in their home and taken to many fabulous places. I would like to share my experiences on this trip.

The first day when we arrived we were warmly greeted by Jack and Nancy. Obviously, we were tired but nonetheless, we had a great conversation about Lithuania and the future plans for A.P.P.L.E. We talked about Nancy and Jack's lessons with Prienai Ziburys gymnasium students, and their meeting with the teachers last April. We made plans for continued cooperation in the coming year. Our second day we drove around San Diego and took in the beaches, the naval bases, Point Loma and Pacific Beach. On the way to La Jolla we ate *the best* hamburgers in California, from "In and Out burgers." This was our first experience eating hamburgers in the states! A most enjoyable part of the day was seeing the many seals at the cove and the huge waves in La Jolla. We then had the opportunity to see a play at the Old Globe Theater in Balboa Park. *Robin and the Seven Hood* was here prior to its run on Broadway, in New York.



Sunday we visited many open houses at homes which were for sale. This is not something you can experience in Lithuania. To walk into a house that is for sale was very interesting. Such beautiful houses and such expensive prices! This was a great way to see American homes and how people live. Later that evening we attended the San Diego Summer Pops concert featuring the talented Burt Bacharach. We picnicked near the harbor while listening to his wonderful songs and music. After dark we marveled at the view of the lights of downtown.

Monday, we spent the day at La Jolla Shores beach where the water is warm and pure blue. We walked, swam and sun-bathed. We were tired but had a wonderful barbeque of steak and corn-on-the-cob, which is boiled in water and smothered with butter, salt and pepper. It was another new experience!

Tuesday, we drove to Nancy's school, Sunset Hills Elementary, about a half hour away. We met with the principal, some teachers and visited her classroom and the multipurpose center. We also visited their middle school and West View High School. The schools are completely different from Lithuanian schools. Moreover, that evening, we attended our first American baseball game in a huge stadium called Petco Park, which is located right downtown. It was a great opportunity to experience the spirit of baseball and to find out why Americans are mad about this game! The San Diego Padres played against the Pittsburg Pirates and "we" won!

(Continued on page 4)

For those of you who might not know, I am a first generation Lithuanian immigrant to the USA after W.W.II. My father was a judge, who also was a resistance fighter against the Soviets in the 1940s. My mother, also Lithuanian, was a nurse who met my father in a hospital. He had been shot three times, captured by the Soviets, and was recovering after being interrogated and tortured. In spite of the trauma that encircled their lives, there was a fairy tale aura that dominated their story and the country of my origin. Lithuania seemed to be ethereal. Why? because we couldn't travel there and it was not on maps. Growing up, my perception of Lithuania was that it was a near-perfect place to live and to learn and to enjoy life and to partake in her cultural offerings. And what a magnificent culture indeed!

<< Fast Forward 50 years and recognition of my father by Lithuania >>

While my father was still alive, we went to Lithuania four times. The one year anniversary of his death was celebrated in Lithuania in 2005. I was restless for a few years because I wanted to “do something” for Lithuania but I just couldn't capture what that would be. I did know I wanted to tour Lithuania with American friends - to show her off and to feed her economy. As I was adjusting to life without my parents - my heroes, I was introduced to a warm-bodied A.P.P.L.E. volunteer (as opposed to the brochure I had seen) at a party. Nancy talked about Lithuania in terms of endearment. During July 2009, I was able to participate in an incredible summer adventure. Traveling is fun. Traveling with a humanitarian purpose is more fun and most rewarding. Thank you, A.P.P.L.E..

I am so grateful that a program exists in which non-Lithuanians are able to experience Lithuania in an environment where her recent downtrodden past is still visible but her resurrection is clearly evident. A.P.P.L.E. staff members were housed in a Soviet relic of a dormitory-hotel. It certainly had some second-world features because it was built by an occupying force without local influence or consideration. Although the building was drab and so basic, typical Lithuanian touches brought smiles: a tidy flower garden bloomed; an attractive mini-forest invited you to its paths; bountiful food buffets had something for mostly everyone; sunsets were spectacular; translators and interpreters were helpful, informative, and sophisticated.

After getting settled, our classes became our focus. (Mary and Faith were my non-Lithuanian colleagues.) Our proposal was generic enough that we could expect the full spectrum of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers - from beginner to advanced. It turns out that almost everyone was advanced, and those that weren't, were intermediate. Bravo to the EFL teachers of these teachers!!! The Lithuanian teachers' outlook ranged from a universal caring philosophy to a predestined success or failure attitude.

Week One participants included a mixture of nationalities; and discussions of patriotism, or lack of it, were worrisome. I spent the evening before the last day writing a two page paper on patriotic assemblies and how the school/teacher can instill love of country. The second week's class composition was mostly Lithuanian and anti-Lithuanian remarks were nonexistent, or not expressed. An interesting revelation is that Lithuanians maintain that they have not been able to trust their government for over 50 years, so political elections were not consuming. Life went on regardless of who was elected. However, the newly inaugurated president seems to inspire and gives credence to a Lithuania that is honorable and revered by her citizens. These particular teachers were patriotic, positive, optimistic, and very excited about the future.



An Altruistic Way to Go “Home” again..... (continued from page 2)

As I reflect on the entire group, I can confidently say that Lithuanian women are dynamic, strong, and “take charge.” They have kept families in tact, even when their spouses were non-supportive and unproductive. They appeared to be “go-getters;” coping with stress; interested in hobbies and traveling; in short, “sponges” trying to absorb all the ideas and techniques that were presented. They saw the beauty of group dynamics - no one knew each other on Monday, and, yet, by Friday, friendships had been forged and knowledge had been shared. They appreciated the synergism of group work and came up with their own uses for applications. There was a magical sense about their group presentations, which were extremely talented and creative.

I am no longer restless. I feel that Lithuania has so much potential and she is getting the necessary help from other countries. A.P.P.L.E. isn’t the only organization helping out, nor is America the only country helping out. But after experiencing American A.P.P.L.E. , I do need/want to give some accolades to the organization that brought me to this point.

The A.P.P.L.E. “groupies” are inspiring people. They are mostly PhD’s and MS/MAs, but they are astute about mentoring rookies, one on one. They are “good people” whose performance is inspiring - dedicated to the task but still able to have fun. Even though A.P.P.L.E. activities require significant personal resources, professors keep coming back, some yearly, some every other year. There is a cooperative spirit where help is freely given. There are behind-the-scene colleagues who are pillars of the program. There are a variety of professions, talents and personalities.

A.P.P.L.E. has left its touch not just in the minds and hearts of “summer seminar scholars,” but in the surroundings of the complex. There are now nineteen A.P.P.L.E. trees planted by A.P.P.L.E. in front of PPRC, our educational site. It’s a nice orchard. It’s an even nicer legacy. A.P.P.L.E.: Altruistic-Pursuit of Progress for Lithuanian Education (sic).

Once upon a time..... in a far-far away place.....

A once-displaced person nurtured a dream and made it come alive!

Lithuania, you have history, you are beautiful, you are clean

Lithuania, you are a fairy tale country - may you live forever and ever !

Maria’s family in a 2009 photo.



Editor’s note: The next *Report to the Corp* will feature a follow-up to this article. It will focus on Maria’s father and his efforts during WWII to help Lithuania regain its independence. His actions resulted in the awarding of a medal from the Government of Lithuania.

A 20th Anniversary Gift that Celebrates A.P.P.L.E. Relationships (con't. from front page)

Wednesday was a completely different experience—we crossed the border to Tijuana, Mexico. We walked down “Revelucion Avenue” and saw buildings and people. There were small shops with vendors who tried to persuade us to buy things. We did buy some silver from a vendor who was willing to bargain. The difference between San Diego and Tijuana is huge. That night we ate a wonderful Greek dinner prepared by Jack.

Thursday was another wonderful day of sailing on Dan Diego Harbor with Rear Admiral Fran Holian. WE saw military ships, planes, helicopters and many yachts, big and small. The view of San Diego from the water was unforgettable. That evening we had another surprise—Hawaiian food!

Friday, Nancy took us around the University of San Diego before preparing for the wine tasting party hosted in our honor that evening. We brought Alita Champagne and Lithuanian chocolate for the guests. There were 27 people with whom we enjoyed great conversations and shared about Lithuania. The guests included Nancy’s friends from USD and Jack’s colleagues and Naval Academy classmates. There were also two individuals who had presented during A.P.P.L.E. lectures in 2009.

Saturday, Darius and I visited the beautiful San Diego Zoo. We spent a whole day there. Memories from there cannot be described or expressed in words. There were so many animals and plants. We took a guided bus tour, the sky ride and walked all through the park. It goes without saying that we took lots of photos!

Sunday, we had the chance to visit Los Angles and saw many nice beaches along the way to Hollywood and Beverly Hills. At night we experienced another type of food: Mexican food! All these different meals is Jack’s way to surprise people!

Monday we spent the day at Coronado beach and saw dolphins, many jellyfish and beautiful birds. Later, we were invited to the home of Jim and Victoria Treadwell. Jim took us to Coronado Bay and taught us to paddle board. It’s a great sport and leisure activity. We then had a delicious dinner of steak and borsch.

Our final day was spent exploring Sea World, an amazing place. We watched killer whales, dolphins, pets, sea loin performances, flocks of flamingos, penguins, white bears and sharks! It is hard to describe all that we experienced there. Our last night was spent in the downtown area where we ate at an Italian restaurant, talked and enjoyed the time together.

I will keep these warm memories of our visit to San Diego in my heart forever.

Thank you Nancy and Jack!

Irma Sneideriene
Headmaster Deputy
Prienai Ziburys Gymnasium
Lithuania

Editor’s Note:

Irma has been a very effective and motivated interpreter for A.P.P.L.E. for almost as many years as the program has existed. She worked with Nancy many times over the past decade to present sound educational strategies to Lithuanian Educators. She has also been instrumental in facilitating contacts between our lecturers and various schools in Lithuania.



Jack Vellis, Nancy Hanssen and Irma Sneideriene in San Diego.

A.P.P.L.E.'s 20th Anniversary Celebration!

To congratulate A.P.P.L.E. on its 20th anniversary of on-going specialized volunteer work with Lithuania's educators, please join our celebration by contributing \$20.

We invite you to mark this occasion by writing a check to A.P.P.L.E. and mailing it to our treasurer, Jack Vellis, as follows: A.P.P.L.E., P.O. Box 179017, San Diego, CA 92177. Jack's reply will be an income tax receipt sent to every donor. As a token of our appreciation for your donation and to further acknowledge our 20th Anniversary we will also send to each donor a commemorative pin displaying the joined flags of the United States and Lithuania.



Pins measure approximately
1.25 inches in width and

With your donation, please indicate your name as you wish it to appear in our published list of contributors along with your residential location as well as the year in which your involvement with A.P.P.L.E. began.

Please also indicate one specific role relating to A.P.P.L.E. such as lecturer, donor, editor, etc. - all to fit into one line of print. Should you choose to double your donation to \$40, this fact will be included in the one-liner assigned to you. One-liner examples identifying two \$20 contributors follow:

- 1991 - Dr. Vida (Strazdaite) Gavin, Cape Cod, MA - President 2009-2011
- 1996 - Grazina Irena Ross, Toronto, ON, Canada - President 2003-2004

Submitted by Irena Ross

Message from the President

This past summer, A.P.P.L.E. celebrated its 20th anniversary. The Ministry of Education and Science hosted a reception for us at the ministry located in Old Town Vilnius, and we were welcomed by the Minister Gintaras Steponavicius and Giedrius Vaidelis, the new Director of the Educational Development Center. Our main seminars were held at the Tourism Vocational School in Klaipeda, the Special Education strands were held in Kaunas, Klaipeda, Taurage, and other sites in Lithuania, and Camp Viltis had their session in their usual location. Former President Valdas Adamkus came to the opening ceremonies in Klaipeda, and at the end of the sessions, we were hosted at the US Embassy by Ambassador Anne Derse. It was quite an eventful summer, with lots to celebrate.

A.P.P.L.E. had its fall meeting in Washington, D.C. on September 25, 2010 at the Lithuanian Embassy. We were welcomed by Second Secretary, Leonas Garbaciauskas. Our 20th anniversary commemorative pin was a big hit, and there are still some pins left for those who donate \$20 to commemorate our anniversary. An ad for the pins appears in another section of the Newsletter.

We are now preparing for our annual meeting which will be held in Orlando, Florida, on April 30, 2011. All A.P.P.L.E. members have an open invitation to attend this annual meeting. It would be a great way to reconnect with former friends and colleagues. For more information contact Vida Anton at crolit@optonline.net.

We are still looking for presenters for next summer's sessions which will take place from July 11, 2011 to July 22, 2011. Our topic is Integrating Technology into the Curriculum. The location for the seminars has not as yet been determined, but they will not be in Vilnius. The application is on our web site at www.applequest.org, or contact Shirley Sabo, Administrative Assistant at 203-758-4600 for further information.

We are appreciative of all the support our members have given us in the past, and we look forward to continued collaboration in the coming years.

Vida Strazdaite Gavin

A.P.P.L.E. President 2009-2011

American Professional Partnership

for Lithuanian Education

Post Office Box 179017

San Diego, CA 92177

2011 Spring Membership Meeting is April 30th in Orlando, Florida. For details about the meeting site, lodging, and schedule, please email Vida Anton at croplit@optonline.net

YES! I would like to join in your efforts toward educational reform in Lithuania.

I would like to make a contribution to:

The Lithuanian Scholars Fund (\$50)

The Interpreters Fund (\$200)

You will receive a letter of thanks from those that benefit.

I am enclosing the following amount for annual membership:

Regular Membership (\$25)

Family Membership (no duplicate mailings) (\$40)

Charter Membership (\$100)

Leadership Group (\$250)

Patron (\$500)

I would like to add the following amount to help pay for

A.P.P.L.E. programs:

TOTAL

Name _____

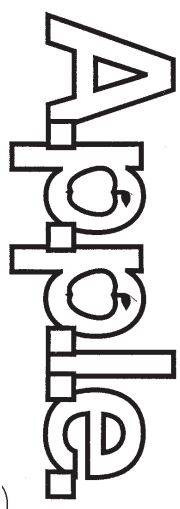
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