

Apple

REPORT TO THE CORPS

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AND THE WINNER IS . . .

In 1960 Dr. Antanas Razma published an article in *Draugas* called “A Million Dollar Fund for Lithuanian Needs.” That article, and Razma’s work with similarly minded idealists, led to the creation of The Lithuanian Foundation. This critical resource to Lithuanian Americans has grown to a current capital base of \$15 million. To honor his achievement, in 2001 the Foundation established the Dr. Antanas Razma Award, recognizing excellence in promoting the Lithuanian national heritage in the world. A Lithuanian “Nobel Prize,” as it were.

The honorees to date are a most distinguished group:

2001—The February 16th Gymnasium (Lithuanian High School) in Germany.

2002—The National Vilnius Quartet

2003—Kaunas University Biomedical Research Institute, and its Director, Dr. Dumcius.

2004—Vytautas Landsbergis, one of the architects of Lithuania's independence.

The winner of the Dr. Antanas Razma award for 2005 has been announced: The American Professional Partnership for Lithuanian Education. The formal ceremony delivering the award will be held in Lemont, Illinois, on November 5.

We are honored, grateful, humbled, and finally energized by this recognition of our efforts.

A.P.P.L.E. did not apply for this award; that’s not how it works. We are deeply grateful to Vida Jankauskas, who works with Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid in Brooklyn, New York, for writing to the Lithuanian Foundation and submitting A.P.P.L.E. for the honor.



DR. ALGIRDAS GRIGONIS, RIP

As you may have heard, Dr. Algirdas Grigonis has died. You also know, I am sure, that he and I have been extremely close—we were best friends, he was my mentor and was monumentally influential in my special education work in Lithuania with A.P.P.L.E. In short, he played an important role in the last quarter of my life.

For those of you who didn’t know him, he was a true humanist. His kind, compassionate manner was extended to all with whom he worked—school directors, administrators, government officials, parents, children, and his students (both University and the special students he worked with so passionately).

No matter how high he climbed in the special education system in Lithuania, he never stopped working directly with children with disabilities. He was a true expert in his field, studying with leading professors and researchers in Eastern Europe's most prominent institute for special psychology/special education. He was a cornerstone, both theoretically and practically, of the modern Lithuanian special education movement.

He was a true nationalist, in the most positive sense of the word. He was loving and caring for Lithuania, wishing to use his knowledge to influence things in his own country. He never considered working anywhere else.

Yet, he was a true, ecumenical "world citizen." He never felt prejudice toward anyone, never said a disparaging word because of national, ethnic, religious, or any other differences that divide human beings today.

Algirdas was a true friend and supporter of A.P.P.L.E. He established an A.P.P.L.E. chapter in Kaunas with over 600 active members, established an A.P.P.L.E. library of special education materials in Kaunas for everyone's use, and organized A.P.P.L.E. seminars throughout Lithuania, often in sites that never received other "professional" visitors.

Dr. Grigonis tremendously shaped A.P.P.L.E.'s mission in Lithuania. You also know I worked with him for the past 14 years, in the spring as well as in the summer. Isn't it ironic that now I am president of A.P.P.L.E.—a role he always wanted for me, although I didn't always want it for myself. At a time when I was looking forward to being able to look to him for wisdom and guidance with this important position—he is no longer here.

I have never known anyone like Algirdas Grigonis. While his death has created a void, I am forever grateful for having had him in my life. He has shown me the true greatness of Lithuania.

—Karl Janowitz
A.P.P.L.E. President

THE GIVING SPIRIT

This article is written with great appreciation to Audrone and Andrew Messick, longtime sponsors of A.P.P.L.E. From sending money for an ever-increasing number of scholarships to funding entire projects, their financial support has become an A.P.P.L.E. mainstay. Their money has been used for everything from computer projects to the funding of the joint effort between A.P.P.L.E. and the Viltis Organization in the summer of 2005 to provide a camp for children and young adults with developmental disabilities and their

families. I recently had the pleasure of chatting with them at their new home in Asheville, North Carolina.

Audrone's graceful manner and warmth put you at ease, making you feel right at home. Constantly smiling, with bright eyes always shining, it's easy to trace her generous hospitality to her Lithuanian heritage. I'm always interested in "small world" stories, and now here's yet another, because Audrone and Andy Messick, ongoing benefactors of A.P.P.L.E., have landed in my backyard, the mountains of western North Carolina.

Audrone Gelazyte, born in Lithuania, fled with her family to Germany in 1944. They always were just ahead of the war front (Russia driving Germany back), and five years after the war, they moved to "the great USA," as they affectionately thought of America. They first lived in Baltimore and then relocated to Cleveland.

Later, working as a chemist, Audrone moved to Chicago, where she met Andrew Messick. She had her first return trip to Lithuania planned in 1982 when Andy asked her to marry him. Her answer? "I'll marry you when I get back from Lithuania."

Andy and Audrone, sister to Amanda Muliolis, first started their support of A.P.P.L.E. in 1994, when they donated the money for 24 teacher scholarships. A.P.P.L.E.'s Board of Directors often has heard Amanda say that when she needs something for A.P.P.L.E., she goes to Audrone and Andy. Audrone and Andy have great respect for Amanda and her husband, Algirdas for the extensive work they do with A.P.P.L.E. in Lithuania.

When asked about the money they've given, Andy replied easily, "We all have a role in helping others." Audrone said, "It seemed like the right thing to do."



Andy and Audrone Messick are shown here with their dog, Bijou. A.P.P.L.E. extends sincere gratitude for being on the receiving end of the Messicks' giving spirit throughout the years.

Growing up in the Lithuanian community in America, she says they never forgot their Lithuanian countrymen who were held captive in their own land by the Soviets. The adults in the community maintained this connection to heritage. “Wherever we were, we never hid our Lithuanian heritage. We were a strong Lithuanian community, yet we always felt a part of America, too.”

During Audrone’s 1982 trip, she was fascinated to become reacquainted with her family, who could remember her as a four-year-old, and to meet new family. “Roots are essential to us as humans,” she said, “It’s a joy to meet up with someone who is a part of our roots.” She remembers just sitting in Lithuania and smiling, just smiling the whole time she was there. One night, she and some cousins went out to a night club. Before the evening was over, they began to sing Lithuanian folk songs. Audrone knew these songs from the American/Lithuanian community and found herself singing with gusto from deep in her heart.

However, she noticed the stares they received from others as they left. She clearly felt that these stares had nothing to do with the fact that she was American. Instead, she knew these stares came because they were bold enough to sing these Lithuanian songs in public. Even in the midst of the wonderment of that 1982 trip, she remembers the grayness of life in Lithuania.

Then she talks with enthusiasm about the explosion of color she saw when visiting Vilnius in 1998. She says that old town, with its turquoise and yellow, reminded her of the colors of both Florida and Italy—like a dollhouse. And so alive! And what of hearing Lithuanian folk songs? Well, 1998 was the year of Dainu Svente, the Lithuanian International Song Festival. Andy, who is not of Lithuanian descent, has never visited Lithuania, but they now are planning a trip together.

When visiting with A.P.P.L.E. in Vilnius, she says she saw oneness in the A.P.P.L.E. group. She saw a missionary spirit and desire to do something good. Andy talked about the absence of selfishness in the people working with A.P.P.L.E., and Audrone summed it up like this, “The giving spirit is alien to the selfish human nature.” It’s quite obvious that the giving spirit is not alien here—selfishness finds no home in the hearts of this couple.

With her fingertips pulled close together and then splaying her fingers into a wide-arcing fan, Audrone describes how she sees the effect of teaching. Her gesture reminds me of the tiny light you can follow into the sky as fireworks are launched and then the resulting explosion when the far-reaching colors light up the night. She says that when teaching teachers, you’re starting a process that grows and grows, spreading far and wide.

—Katie Hoyle
Sylva, NC



Aldona Miskinis (right) with Vilja Tarnaviciute overlooking Vilnius

MOURNING THE LOSS OF ALDONA MISKINIS

I have had my invitation to this world’s festival, and thus my life has been blessed. My eyes have seen and my ears have heard.

It was my part at this feast to play upon my instrument, and I have done all I could.

Now, I ask, has the time come at last when I may go in and see thy face and offer thee my silent salutation?

—Rabindranath Tagore

Aldona Miskinis enjoyed poetry, and one of her favorite poets was Rabindranath Tagore. The excerpt above was one that she particularly liked. She played her instrument with gusto. I have missed her input during this year of mourning for her loss. So many times I would think, “Aldona can help with this,” or “Aldona will know,” and I almost pick up the phone to call her. Then sadness engulfs me when I remember that she is not available for consultation anymore.

Aldona worked with A.P.P.L.E. for five summers, from 1995 through 2000. Her expertise was mathematics. For two years we worked on cooperative learning activities in mathematics and published a booklet of these activities for the Lithuanian teachers to use in their schools.

My friendship with Aldona started when she moved to Cleveland and joined the Lithuanian Scouts organization’s Cleveland branch. Our children were small and of similar ages, so we met often in scout

meetings and Lithuanian Saturday School, where we both taught. We have camped together, worked with girls together, waded through rivers, climbed hills, slept under the stars together—my memories of Aldona are varied and rich. I am sure that those of you, who met and worked with Aldona, also remember her smile, commonsense outlook, to-the-point comments, her help in projects, and her sense of humor.

—*Amanda Multiolis*
Euclid, OH

A FIRST-YEAR LECTURER'S OBSERVATIONS

In my job as a professor of science education at the University of San Diego, I work with a seasoned A.P.P.L.E. colleague, Nancy Hanssen. At work, she wears the most stunning amber jewelry that I ever have seen. One day I ventured into conversation with her about the source of her amazing amber collection. That

is how I discovered the opportunities available to an A.P.P.L.E. lecturer. She encouraged me to write a proposal for the elementary science strand. I looked for Lithuania on a map; I researched the A.P.P.L.E. organization; I applied; I experienced the educational encounter of a lifetime.

My partner in creating an engaging and effective series of seminars for Lithuanian elementary teachers was A.P.P.L.E. veteran Jim Brousseau. I waited until I was seated on the flight, turned to the man on my left, took a deep breath, and asked, “Are you Jim?” What are the chances? Jim and I talked nonstop for the duration of the flight. Our fellow seatmate worked with INTERPOL and was full of fascinating information about Lithuania. What an interesting beginning!

We were met at the airport by a group of energetic, organized colleagues who took us to the PPRC (Pedagogical Professional Development Center). The joyous reunion of former A.P.P.L.E. participants fused with the anticipation of new members. It had a first day of school feel to it. The next day, at the conference cel-

A.P.P.L.E. GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES ITS

\$100 or more

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American Lithuanian Club - Toms River, NJ
Aukstikalnis, Valerija - Boston, MA
Batesel, M/M Paul - Portland, ND
Bray, M/M Abdon - Wilmette, IL
Brezenas, Nijole - Sparkill, NY
Brousseau, James - Milan, MI
Cesnavicius, Ramute - Richmond Hill, NY
Deasy, Marilyn - New York, New York
DLKV Lithuanian Ladies Auxiliary - Lowell, MA
Dodge, Lynda - Danvers, MA
General Federation of Women's Clubs of Connecticut
Griglun, Thomas - Meriden, CT
Januskis, Lola - South Pasadena, FL
Kaska, Edward - Emmaus, PA
Kelly, Aldona - Toms River, NJ
Kramer, Lawrence - Paterson, NJ
Laniauskas, M/M Marius - Mentor, OH
Lanys, Ona - Ormond Beach, FL
Laucius, Henrikas - Paterson, NJ
Laucius, Stephanie - Elizabeth, NJ
Linn, Priscilla - Arlington, VA
Marchetas, M/M Algirdas - Lemont, IL

Mikutis, Albert Jr. - Philadelphia, PA
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Virkau, Irena - Downers Grove, IL
Wolkovich, Adam - Marlborough, MA
Wolkovich, Rev. William - Marlborough, MA

celebrating the 15th year of A.P.P.L.E., a segment of A.P.P.L.E.'s mission statement came alive for me: "developing ongoing and mutually beneficial professional relationships and joint projects with Lithuanian teachers, teacher-trainers, and university professors." As the presenters spoke both in English and Lithuanian (with accompanying interpreters), this concept of mutually beneficial professional relationships resonated. Lithuanian educators become familiar with American educational ideas and vice versa. The education goals common to both cultures were made evident. The accomplishments of A.P.P.L.E. to date—introduction of conference themes, establishment of scholarships for Lithuania teachers, creation of teacher centers, and development of action research opportunities—provide those occasions where professional relationships can be fostered. I was intrigued and ready to cultivate productive and lasting relationships.

Don't all relationships begin with food? My first taste of Lithuanian fare was a lovely cold beet soup with potatoes, shared with Pledger Fedora and Anita, Scarborough, both from the University of North Carolina.

My assignment was in Klaipeda, in western Lithuania on the Baltic Sea. We boarded a bus and had four hours to bond. The spotting of stork nests in open fields was a highlight of the journey for this biologist. Upon arrival at the School for Sewing and Business Services in Klaipeda, we unloaded an entire command center for the "Fearsome Foursome": Gita Kupcinskas, Vida Anton, Giedre Stankunas, and Aldona Marijosius. These women were the heart of the Klaipeda experience. They programmed choice lectures, organized entertainment, planned field trips, informed, problem solved, provided assistance, encouraged, verified, supported, and generally kept us all on schedule.

On Monday morning Jim and I were greeted by 26 women, ranging in age from 29 to 61 years old. All of the elementary science strand participants were veteran teachers of two years or more, spread through teaching assignments in grades (forms) 1-4 for their next year's position. Nine of these teachers were returning A.P.P.L.E. participants. In their various teaching assignments, these Lithuanian educators uniformly indicated that they spent two 45-minute lessons per week on sci-

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE 2005 SUMMER PROGRAM

\$250 or more

Anton, Vida - Oakhurst, NJ
 Bitenas, M/M Rimantas - Bronxville, NY
 Blekaitis, Grazina - Laurel, MD
 Columbus Lietuviai - Columbus, OH
 Cyvas, Rev. Matthew - St. Petersburg Beach, FL
 Daughters of Lithuania - Seattle Chapter
 Hammer, JoAnn - Citrus Heights, CA
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 Muliolis, M/M Algirdas - Euclid, OH
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Bacanskas, M/M John - Hillsboro Beach, FL
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 Dunlap, Katherine K - Hartsville, SC
 Janusonis, Palmira - Dousman, WI
 Ruple Memorial Presbyterian Church - Blowing Rock, NC
 Vydunas Youth Fund - Lemont, IL

\$1,000 or more

Anonymous - So. Pasadena, FL
 Dunlap, Katherine - Star, NC
 Muliolis, M/M Algirdas - Euclid, OH
 Society for Analytical Chemists of Pittsburgh - Pittsburgh, PA
 Taylor, M/M K. Phillip - Winter Park, FL

\$3,000 or more

Tautos Fondas (Lithuanian National Foundation) - New York, NY

\$10,000 or more

Lietuviu Fondas (Lithuanian Foundation) - Lemont, IL

ence topics, ranging in content from the human body to ecology. One teacher pointed out that this science instruction is also integrated into social science. The participants specified that hands-on experiences were a common occurrence in their science lessons.

Jim and I began the strand with a simple question: “What are you interested in learning during the elementary science education strand?” Upon surveying the class, we found the overwhelming response centered on learning new teaching methods, which are practical and can be adapted easily to the Lithuanian workplace. There was a shared vision of challenges in the process of elementary science education. One teacher stated, “I would like to get ideas on how to make science lessons more interesting.” Another conveyed, “It is difficult to teach science. You should have a lot of knowledge and work hard. And I expect to get new ideas.” With the expectations of the teachers to guide us, we began to share with them ideas, experiments, strategies, content, and methodologies to make science interesting, relevant, and exciting for their students. We also were mindful of the conference theme, “sustainable development.” Science education for sustainable development means transitioning learners from students into scientists. It means that each teacher returns to his or her classroom with a repertoire of strategies and activities to create a strong, authentic, inquiry-based elementary science classroom long after the A.P.P.L.E. lecturers have departed.

The elementary science strand became a whirlwind of activity as the teachers experienced an exploration of ideas, experimentation, creativity, and lots of thinking. As the question “Kodel?” (Why?) was posed again and again, the teachers became familiar with what inquiry-based learning felt like. The basic principles of questioning, learning through investigation, and process skill development were emphasized in order to provide the teachers with a genuine inquiry environment.

The science strand was suspected when items went missing. “Hey, we took the kettle from the lounge to provide hot water for an experiment — we returned it!!! The power saw will only make this obnoxious noise for another 30 minutes. No, we did not take them, we brought our own scissors.” These became our defensive refrain. Science investigation is messy, noisy, resource intensive, and time consuming. In making science education sustainable, we focused on two elements. First was the process of science. For this we modeled “micro-scaling” experiments. That is using a very small amount (drops) of materials rather than milliliters. This significantly reduces the volume of resources that a teacher would need to provide an inquiry-based learning environment. We also incorporated multiple cooperative learning strategies into the lessons so that groups of learners shared resources and had meaningful discussions around the table. Again this reduces the quantity of materials required for each learner to participate in the investigation. Second, we focused on content. In

the initial survey the teachers indicated two content areas of interest, ecology and the human body. To assist with these subject areas, we provided the elementary teachers with “make and take” opportunities. These projects included useable and useful examples and models for the teachers to take back to their classrooms. Each teacher built a birdhouse. This will assist in creating a lasting avian habitat to enhance a student’s study of ecology. The teachers also crafted a model of human body systems (skeletal, digestive, respiratory) out of card stock. This model provides a tangible method to illustrate the location and interaction of various organs systems in the human body as the learners study anatomy.

The teachers viewed inquiry as a tool to develop observational skills and make valid conclusions based on those understandings. At the same time, we learned so much about learning in the Lithuanian educational system. For example, these teachers loop with their students from first form through fourth form. What are the implications for learning in this model? These elementary teachers expressed a strong belief that elementary education programs should teach Lithuanian students about the interrelationship between the environment and themselves. This concept is fostered through knowledge of sustainable environments, reinforcing the theme of this conference.

On the weekend, representatives from the local Klaipeda Regional Education Center hosted us. There were guided walking tours of the Old Town of Klaipeda and a narrated sightseeing excursion to Nida. The vastness of the sand dunes, eerie Witch’s Hill, and bleak cormorant’s nesting site are images that will stay with me forever. We cruised up and down the Curonian Spit singing, dancing, and enjoying a wonderful Lithuanian buffet. A field trip to Palanga ended with the thrill of finding actual bits of amber on the beach after an informative tour of the amber museum. A travel agent could not have planned a better leisure experience.

Did I leave Lithuania with my own piece of spectacular amber jewelry to wear to work? You bet I did! Did I leave the A.P.P.L.E. experience with “mutually beneficial professional relationships?” Absolutely! Do I look forward to returning to Lithuania to reconnect with the educators there? I can’t wait!!

—*Dr. Sandy Buczynski*
Escondido, CA

*A.P.P.L.E. Board
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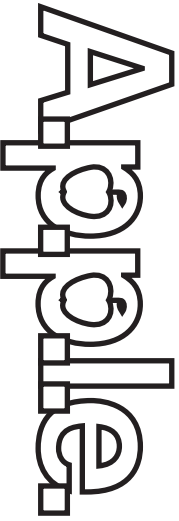
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