

American Hungarian **Educator**

NEWSLETTER
of the
**American
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Educators'
Association**

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Please visit the AHEA Web page at: <http://magyar.org/ahea> and send any suggestions you have to the Executive Director at eniko.basa@verizon.net or 4515 Willard Ave., Apt. 2210, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Whither AHEA?

We are a viable organization and in some ways thriving. We have successful conferences with participants from a wide spectrum of studies and participation from many geographic areas. We have good communications via emails, a web page, and e-journal, and a printed publication. Our conferences are open to a variety of topics and our membership remains friendly and welcoming. Yet, we need to renew ourselves. All associations need to do this. Our roots lie in the 1970's and things have changed in forty years! Hungarian studies at universities have changed!

We need new members, and young members who will take on leadership positions. These members need not be in the mold of the lone Hungarian studies person at a university, or even the person in history, literature, etc. who also teaches Hungarian. We need people who have a Hungarian interest whether teaching Hungarian studies or not. We need those interested in Hungary, of Hungarian background or not, to become the backbone of our Association.

Our members can help in this outreach: contact your colleagues and acquaintances to talk up the Association and its programs. Involve the AHEA in programs you are putting on, not just when you hope for a subsidy. All too often programs in Hungarian Studies do not even mention the AHEA, yet these same programs ask us for publicity, funds, and assistance in various ways. We generally give this.

Please call attention to our home page. We also have printed brochures to distribute at events. Papers are published in our e-journal. We have resources which you, the members should be using. Let's work together!

Conference

The 33rd Annual Conference of the AHEA opened with reminiscences by **Les Banos**, who had been a Hungarian resistance fighter during World War II. As an undercover agent he was able to save many Hungarian Jews during the German occupation and has been honored in Hungary for his bravery. His memoir, *If They Catch You, You Will Die*, is due out soon. The talk served as an introduction to the film, “Brady’s Escape,” about an American pilot who had been shot down on the Hortobagy. The video was produced by Robert Halmi and is based on a real event.

Steven B. Vardy (Duquesne U.) delivered the keynote address on Friday morning, also using a film to augment his remarks on “Hungarians in the Forced Labor Camps of the Gulag.” Professor Vardy has studied this subject and published on it, hoping to call attention to the thousands of lives lost in the Soviet camps about which little is known.

Two sessions were devoted to cultural studies. **Mario Fenyo** (Bowie State U.) delivered comments marking the 100th anniversary of *Nyugat*. **Martha Pereszlényi Pinter** (John Carroll U.) gave a power point presentation on Hungarian men chefs with references to literary and journalistic writings illustrating the dedication to good food from 1587 to the present. **Agnes Vardy** (Duquesne U.) talked about the record of industrial accidents in Pennsylvania depicted by Hungarian emigre poets in the early years of the 20th century. While these writers were not necessarily great talents, they give a poignant picture of the lives – and often deaths – of the early immigrants to this country. *Rokonok* by Zsigmond Moricz was the topic of papers by **Timea Antal** and **Johanna Domokos**, both of UCLA. The latter examined relationships

and meanings in the novel, primarily as evidenced through laughter. Self-deception, wishful thinking, and irresoluteness are seen by Domokos as the three theses of the novel. Antal examines the way in which Moricz broke new ground in the examination of sexuality in this novel: he discussed a topic which then was still fairly taboo in Hungarian literature with openness and richness.

Julia Bock (Long Island U.) and **Wayne Brinda** (Duquesne U.) addressed the plight of Hungarian Jewish health professionals during the Holocaust and the creation of a one-act play, “Memories” to teach children about history and help them look beyond events to the lessons. In the Science section **Lajos Balogh** (Roswell Park Cancer Institute) spoke about nanotechnology as promising medical breakthroughs. **Erzsébet Molnár** (U. Of Miskolc) gave a tribute to Sámuel Brassai, the Transylvanian who worked to reform education, focusing on the way younger students in particular learned, and advocated instruction in the native language (Hungarian) rather than Latin. An interesting account of the work of Count Marsigli’s exploration of the Danube in the late 17th and early 18th century was given by **István Turcsányi** (Dynamic Corporation). The remarkably accurate maps and drawings of animals, plants, mineral of Marsigli gave a picture of Hungarian life in the aftermath of the Turkish wars. A fascinating bit of information was that the Italian soldier-scientist even gave a description of the ancient Hungarian *rovás írás* or runic writing.

The Education panel addressed differences in schools in the US and Hungary as seen by **Eva Balogh** (International Institute, Buffalo). **Anita Komlodi** (U. of Maryland, Baltimore County) reported on a study to encourage

international online communities for children citing reactions and differences among children in the U.S., Hungary and Mexico. The project studies ways in which computers can be made user friendly. Hungary's founding legend of the *Csodaszarvas* (The White Stag) as it has become a central symbol of the leadership program of the Boy Scouts of America formed the topic of **Ruth Biro's** (Duquesne U.) presentation. The miraculous stag in the 1933 International Jamboree in Gödöllő was taken by Lord Baden-Powell as a perfect symbol of the pure spirit of scouting. Bela Banathy and other Hungarian emigres later created a leadership program based on the legend of the White (Miraculous) Stag for American scouts which is still being used today. The award-winning book by Kate Serédy, *The White Stag* (1938), also contributed to the popularity of this enduring symbol.

Two papers were presented on Postwar History: **Katalin Kádár** talked about Cold War organizations while **Edith Nagy** (U. of Florida, Gainesville) focused on the Planned Economy of Hungary between 1947-1955. They served as good introductions to the panel on Current Issues. **Andrew Felkay** (Kutztown U.) looked at the Helsinki Accords. Turning to the image of the Revolution of 1956 **Barnabás Rácz** (Eastern Michigan U.) examined the image of the UN and international law in the picture of the uprising. These explorations of Hungary's role in the international community were complemented by **Angela K. Gazda's** (CUNY) talk on Hungarian nationhood and the Schengen enlargement which abolished border formalities between Hungary and other EU countries but which also imposed stricter controls towards Hungarians living in countries not within the system. This raises questions of Hungarian self-perception, national cohesion, and national identity.

Susan Glanz (St. John's U.) addressed the very timely topic of entrepreneurship in Hungary and the role of the European Union.

In the session on Kossuth in America **Arthur A. Bartfay** (Ohio State U.) pointed to the popularity of the Hungarian leader in the United States: Kossuth County Iowa and villages in Mississippi, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana named for him. But there were those who opposed the general enthusiasm as **Kenneth Nyirady** (Library of Congress) pointed out in "Orestes Brownson and Catholic Opposition to Kossuth in the U.S."

Education and Language Maintenance are always moot topics, and several sessions addressed this issue. In Hungarians in the USA **John Balas** (Ohio Dept. of Education) reported on his invitation by the Hungarian government to look at the school system in 2004. This was followed by a visit from Hungarian educators whose reactions were presented by Tamás Kowalik. The usual differences were noted, i.e. the Hungarian system being more rigid while the U.S. one is more casual. Questions of diversity and special education, however, lead to fruitful comparisons and exchanges. **Balázs Balogh** (Institute of Ethnography, HAS) showed pictures of some of the old Hungarian settlements in Pennsylvania, now largely deserted, and interviewed some of the elderly who remember when these communities were vital Hungarian centers. A very positive note was struck by **Endre Szentkirályi** (Nordon Hills City Schools) in "Teens Map the Community" where members of the Hungarian Scout Folk Ensemble interviewed Cleveland's older Hungarians thus not only learning about their heritage but also providing documents and recordings for oral history archives. The session on Language Maintenance examined the problem through papers by **Katalin Nyikos** (Georgetown U.)

and **Martha Nyikos** (Georgetown U.). The first addressed the challenges of language development and maintenance in a bilingual setting, while the second presented three case studies of language erosion, pointing out that social forces, parental stance and personal decisions all play a role in language retention and identification as Hungarians. These are pressing problem as the second, third and fourth generation loses contact with the language and thus is in danger of losing contact with its culture.

Cultural maintenance, however, can be independent of linguistic skills, as the presentations on Dance and Music made clear. **Judith Olson** (American Hungarian Folklore Centrum) showed films of Hungarian men's dances and explained how these communicated clearly to the audience and other dancers. **Susan Stafura** (Duquesne) talked about the very successful program through which the Tamburitians maintain cultural identity and spread understanding of cultural values through their program of dance and music. The original South Slavic emphasis was expanded early on and their repertoire has included Hungarian material since at least 1956. Like music and dance, Arts and Design is also independent of language in transmitting culture, as the presenters in this panel pointed out. **Denis Feigler** (Montclair State U.) took a historical approach in tracing Hungarian design from Arts and Crafts to the Information Age. **Susanna Lippoczy-Rich** (Kean U.) took as her inspiration statues of female figures in Hungary to illustrate how they mythologize women. **Kathy Megyeri** (Fraternity, Testvériség) introduced the audience to the work of Hungarian-born artists Ilonka and Mariska Karasz who adapted Hungarian folk themes in their designs in the first half of the 20th century in the US. The career of Baron László Mednyanszky, to whose works a major

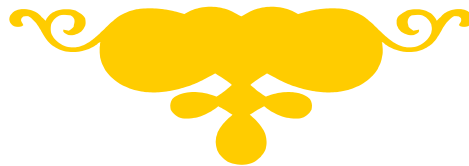
Hungarian-Slovak exhibition was devoted in 2004, was Lilla Szabo's (Hungarian National Archives) presentation. She pointed out that all of the major themes of the turn of the 19th-20th can be found in his works but his study has been neglected for political reasons and because research had been carried on mostly in parallel yet isolated ways in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. (Mednyanszky was born and spend significant parts of his life in Upper Hungary and so the division of the country after 1920 placed artificial divisions in his work also). While the cooperation of Hungarian and Slovak scholars is a good sign, research in Italy, France, Dalmatia and Serbia is still waiting to be integrated.

A panel on Transylvania covered a wide range of subject. In his presentation, "The Szeklers and the EU" **Brant Beyer** (Indiana U.) examined the European Union's effect on minority policies in the Szekler regions of Romania. The EU's subsidiary principle (government decisions should be made at the lowest possible level) provides certain means of self-determination to smaller groups within nations: autonomy, political caucuses which ensure the clout of a unified vote, and the creation of administrative districts which then have control over EU structural funds. The economic development regions created by Romania place the Szekler regions at a disadvantage, but debate within the European Parliament, and Transylvanian Hungarian voices there enable the debate to continue. Higher Education in Transylvania **Boróka Prohaszka Rád** (Sapientia U., Csíkszereda) pointed out in her paper, has been linked to political, ideological and national identity and thus the last 40 years of systematic elimination of the Hungarian education system has been particularly destructive. The establishment of Sapientia University is an effort to revive the distinguished history of over eight hundred years of higher education

in the region. The university, with campuses in Kolozsvár, Marosvásárhely and Csíkszereda has numerous faculties, over two thousand students and 200 faculty and staff. Also taking a historical look at modern problems was the presentation by **Agnes Fülemile** (Indiana U. and Institute of Ethnology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences) who examined the ways in which spouse selection has played an important role in the formation of the identity of the Kalotaszeg region. Marriage connections going back centuries are changing rapidly with economic changes and globalization.

Papers in Hungarian were by **Kissné Eva Novák** (U. of Szeged) speaking on the importance of personality in the case of teachers, and **Gyula Nyikos** (Washington and Jefferson College) who reminisced about his conversations with the poet Sándor Sík who is being appreciated again after being ignored during the Communist years.

As usual, the conference was closed by a festive banquet. In her address entitled “Attribution, Explanation, Hyphenation: Coming to Terms with Identity,” Dr. Emőke J. Szathmáry, President of the University of Manitoba, provided a thought-provoking and inspiring conclusion to this year’s theme of Hungarian Identity in an Intercultural World. She came to Canada as a child and rose to be a respected teacher, researcher, and administrator. She was inducted into the Canadian Academy of Sciences in 2006 and has been recognized for her genetic studies among the aborigines of the Arctic region which have led to breakthroughs in medical treatments. A selection songs by Georgina K. Gatto lent a further air of festivity. Some old-time members were glad to welcome back the Hon. Victor Polgár, Consul-General of Hungary, who had attended several AHEA conferences while he was a diplomat in Washington, D.C.



Business Meeting

Minutes of the General Meeting May 10, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 8:30. Since both the President and Vice-President were unable to attend the conference, the Executive Director stepped in to chair.

Eniko M. Basa referred to the Summer 2007 American Hungarian Educator for the *minutes* of the last meeting. Some copies were also handed out. The minutes were approved as printed. The *Treasurer’s report* for calendar year 2007 (our fiscal year) is as follows:

Checking:

Beginning balance \$ 792.21

Ending balance 1861.89

Income from dues and the conference was \$6,550.00; Expenses totaled \$5,480.89. The major expenses were \$2,442.50 for the AHEA conference and \$2,485.00 transferred to the Scholarship Fund.

Savings (to be rolled over to the Scholarship Fund CD).

Beginning balance: \$2,879.90

Ending balance: 2,707.93

Major income was \$3,984.00 from dues and the conference; major expense was transfer of \$3,122.58 to the CD and \$1,038.00 disbursed for scholarships.

We have a CD for \$18,763.66 which will mature in September.

Old Business

Enikő reminded the members that the primary means of communication is via email and please keep your emails up to date. Sometimes messages are bounced also because of Spam filtering programs. If this is the case, you might miss items of a timely nature. [I have divided the AHEA list into two sections, and this has solves of this problem.]

We have launched the E-journal of the American Hungarian Educators Association. Eight articles based on papers presented at the 2007 conference are online at ejournal.ahea.net. The journal is also accessible from the AHEA home page.

We sent \$1,000.00 to the Felfalusi Kovacs Antal Alapitvány which administers the Scholarship Fund in Brasso. Bank charges here and at the other end meant that \$967.00 (2,214.91 lei) was actually distributed to eleven students ranging from 150 lei to 280 lei.

New Business

Elections are coming up in 2009; Susan Glanz volunteered to chair the Nominating Committee. 2009 Conference: as agreed last year, the 34th Conference will be held at the University of California, Berkeley and organized by Katalin Vörös and Irén Romoda. It will probably be in mid-April, the traditional month for our conferences. [The date has been set for May 14-16, see Call for Papers.] The theme is: *Hungarians in the New World*. This can refer both to the geographical and the political topos. In 2010 we will again go to Hungary. We had invitations to Pecs, which is being honored as a European Cultural Capital that year, and also to Transylvania where the conference center of the Association of Hungarian Teachers in Transylvania would be available, but the consensus was for Szeged, which had extended invitations for several years now. Kissné Éva Novák has undertaken to organize the event. The Szeged conference will be in June. A separate committee will continue to receive proposals and organize the presentations. Information will be available at hungaria.org/hal/ahea/) and a call for papers will be sent via email as well. Professor Paul Hannebrink has taken over the Hungarian program at Rutgers and we hope to go there, maybe in 2011.

No other new business being brought up, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15.

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## **News and Hungarian Courses**

Please support the **Hungarian Studies Programs at Indiana University**, Bloomington, IN.

This is the only graduate program in Hungarian studies in the United States, and suggestions are welcome for raising its visibility and increasing funding. Please contact: Ágnes Fülemlé, Hungarian Chair Professor, Department of Central Eurasian Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington, Goodbody Hall, Room 238, (812) – 855-1102; [fulemla@indiana.edu](mailto:fulemla@indiana.edu)

The **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill** has established the László Birinyi, Sr. Chair of Hungarian Studies. The incumbent is Peter Sherwood, Distinguished Professor. He comes to this

**Professor Denis Sinor** has been awarded the President's Medal for Excellence by Indiana University President Michael A. McRobbie. The award is among the highest the President can bestow.

**Debrecen Summer School:** the expanded program offers classes year round in a variety of formats and with programs of varying lengths. Sites have also been expanded to include Budapest, and Sopron. See [www.summerschool.hu](http://www.summerschool.hu) for more information.

**Summer Program of the American Hungarian Collegium** took place this year in Pennsylvania from August 16-23. If it is repeated, and you are interested, please contact [AmHunCol@aol.com](mailto:AmHunCol@aol.com).

Hungarians from Ancient Times to 1956: Biographical and historical essays. 15 essays on Hungarian history by Nándor Dreisziger. Ottawa: Legas, 2007).

Explosion: the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. John P.C. Matthews. New York: Hippocrene Books, 2008. A comprehensive account of the 1956 Hungarian revolution.

Perspectives of Diaspora Experience: Hungarian Diaspora in the Carpathian Basin–Historical and Current Contexts of a Specific Diaspora Interpretation and Its Aspects of Ethnic Minority Protection. Ed. Balázs Balogh, Zoltán Illyés. Trans. Gábor Komáromy. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2006

Freedom's Fury – A Szabadság Vihara. Now available on DVD. Go to:

[www.filmbaby.com/films/2438](http://www.filmbaby.com/films/2438).

Please remember the Hungarian Studies Review. Volume 34 (2997) contains articles on various aspects of 1956. Other issues present essays on different aspects of Hungarian culture.

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### **Assistance Requested**

The **Ópusztaszeri Nemzeti Történeti Emlékpark Közhasznú Társaság** is looking for donations to allow them to keep the park open and develop its resources. It has been financed from ticket receipts but this is no longer feasible. Donations can be sent to: HU27

11100403-18455474-36000001 account; the SWIFT code is: CIBHHUHB. For more information:

Gábor Horváth, Ópusztaszeri Nemzeti Történeti Emlékpark, 6767 Ópusztaszer, Szoborkert 68, Hungary. Email: [info@pusztaszer.hu](mailto:info@pusztaszer.hu).

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### **AHEA Membership Form/Dues Renewal**

Dues are payable for the calendar year. All members are urged to send dues for the current year. *The date on your mailing label indicates the year we last received dues from you.* I send out email notices in January.

**Name:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Address:(give preferred mailing address)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Institutional affiliation:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Business phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Home phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other address (optional)**

\_\_\_\_\_



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*Dues: Regular members: \$15.00   Couples/Joint members: \$20.00   Students/Retired: \$10.00*

Make checks payable to: AHEA Treasurer and send to AHEA, 4515 Willard Ave. Apt. 2210 Chevy Chase, MD 20815. Clip or copy and return with a check for the appropriate amount.

Dues have remained constant for several years. Please send your email address as we are using this as the primary means of communication. We can notify you about developments pertaining to the e-journal, updates on the conference, and other dated news.

Those who do not have email will receive important information via regular mail. Please also check the web page for information, updates, etc.

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