



March 2021 Newsletter

President's Corner

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

News about AHEA21

Our 45th Annual AHEA Conference is taking shape. Technical support is being offered by the University of Pécs and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. We will have plenary sessions, breakout rooms, and opportunities for networking.

We are carefully considering how early we can begin and how late we can schedule events. The program includes a divergent group of scholars from a total of six countries within three continents featuring an exciting array of multidisciplinary topics. Review [AHEA21 accepted abstracts](#) at this link. Watch for registration information coming soon!

Governance

AHEA's VP, Helga Lénárt-Cheng, provided strong leadership and worked diligently over a span of two years with her committee members: Katalin Kádár-Lynn, Judit Némethy, and me. We owe them all a debt of gratitude! Proposed [AOI and By Laws available for review](#).

Awards and Honors

Congratulations to Louise O. Vasvári who was the recipient of the first annual [Kafka Margit Award](#) on February 19, 2021. The recognition was conferred by the [Gender Studies Research Group of the Institute of English & American Studies, University of Szeged](#). The award recognizes Louise's scholarly research in a wide array of studies ranging from premodern literature to themes in the works of Imre Kertész and contributions as Editor-in-Chief of AHEA's Hungarian Cultural Studies online journal. The Awards Committee stated that she is worthy recipient of this award, named after one of Hungary's most important woman writer and poet. [The award announcement in Hungarian](#).

Here's wishing you good health, much success in your scholarly pursuits. Please reach out if you have comments or suggestions on how AHEA might better support your career advancement.

With best wishes,

Klara Papp, PhD
President, AHEA
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Member Spotlight

AHEA is a scholarly organization connecting a diverse set of educators, researchers, professionals, independent scholars and academics who come from many walks of life. Each month we highlight the academic and professional career of a different AHEA member.



This month's featured member is **Andrea Lauer**.

Andrea is a journalist and multi-platform media producer. Alongside Réka Pigniczky (last month's featured member), she is the co-creator of the [Memory Project](#), a monumental work of visual history, which documents the lives of over 130 Hungarian émigrés from the post-1945 and post-1956 eras. Many of the interviewees are AHEA members.

We asked Andrea to talk about her work and her connections with AHEA, and, like Réka, she was graciously forthcoming. An overview of her work, including projects mentioned below, is available at www.lauerlearning.com.

Please tell us a little bit about your career arc, how you came to know Réka [Pigniczky], and how you came to work on the Memory Project.

In 1990, I made the decision to move to Hungary with a new journalism degree in hand. It was an incredible time to be there, witnessing the day-to-day transitions, writing for various newspapers and working first in the Prime Minister's Office for Hungarian Communities Outside the Borders of Hungary and later for the Center for Independent Journalism, a project of the New York Times Company Foundation. Our work was with Hungarian journalists and students, but we were also part of a larger network of journalism centers all across the region. So, as a wide-eyed 20-year-old, I worked alongside directors in various countries and saw firsthand the impact of journalism during this heady period of transition and the benefits of technology in leveling the playing field.

During that period, I also worked with the European Journalism Network and helped teach young people all across the region the fundamentals of reporting and design as we helped develop a network of independent student newspapers. At one point, we ran a class in a bomb shelter in Croatia. Traveling across the region with this team of passionate, young Americans, teaching students, was impactful, meaningful and unforgettable.

During my six years in Hungary, I started learning to speak more than my kitchen Hungarian. I grew closer with my Hungarian family and discovered so much about my Hungarian and American identities. And I heard so many stories. That was when I first met Réka, in Budapest in the early 1990s, the days when everything seemed possible and the world was literally changing around us.

After these years in Budapest, I returned to the US in 1997 and got my MBA from the Goizueta Business School in Atlanta, GA. I went to work for IBM in e-learning and Global Services, and became an evangelist for simulations and game-based learning. After five years, I started my own business—Lauer Learning—just prior to the 50th anniversary of 1956. I wanted to use what I had learned at IBM to teach children about the Revolution of 1956. My 50th anniversary project started as an oral history website to collect stories about 1956, to both create a resource for the community but also to find stories we could use to create *FF56*, a historically-accurate computer game about the Revolution to teach the next generation. Réka invited me to join her on a research trip to a local hospital that she had set up. I was not granted access since I was working on a computer game about 1956, and at that time, that idea was seen as being somewhat sacrilegious. She got me in as "part of her crew." The project eventually led to the publication of two coffee table books—in Hungarian and English—and a graphic novel. At that point, I had officially become a multimedia producer.

This fascination with reaching and teaching the next generation in innovative ways has driven my work. When I had my children, I began to focus on the fact that people all learn differently and process information in their own ways. I began presenting information in ways that meet the student / learner where they are, by creating multimedia exhibits that consisted of many forms of learning: video, audio, photographs, live speakers, reading materials, game-based play, etc.

Réka and I met up again around the 50th anniversary and even went on a research trip together as we both worked on our own projects. I became more and more involved in the Hungarian American Coalition and our friendship grew through Hungarian American community work during that time. For the 60th anniversary, it seemed like a natural progression for us to work together and create Memory Project.

The Memory Project has been an incredible experience for both of us and has led us into many different directions. We've done 143+ interviews which have taken hundreds of hours of travel, post-production, etc. We've learned so much about 1956, our community, our elders, in some cases our own relatives, human nature, ethnic identity and so much more. Our work has also led to a documentary film (based on Memory Project interviews) called *Lövészek*, and now this unique educational project with MOME. We're so proud we are creating this archive of incredible stories which will provide a lasting record of our community history. It is a true labor of love.

How did you find out about AHEA, and what led you to join?

My mother, Edith K. Lauer, provided the first introduction. I've been to several conferences over the years with Réka. It's always such a thought-provoking experience to hear about projects and studies from within the community. As I worked on my own personal study of how to pass on love of Hungarian heritage to the next generation, I often came home from AHEA conferences with new approaches and ideas.

What impact has your involvement with AHEA made on your career and/or your work?

I grew up hearing about history and the importance of education from both sides of my family. There was never any question that I would go on to receive a graduate degree. So there has always been a great connection to academic studies. At AHEA, Réka and I found an incredible support network for Memory Project. Katalin Kádár Lynn became our primary mentor and an incredible supporter for Memory Project. There were many others who helped support us: Katalin Vörös, Enikő Molnár Basa, Endre Szentkiralyi, András Ludányi... the list goes on.

Tell us, please, about your current project.

This is a busy year, particularly around the 65th anniversary of 1956 and the 30th anniversary of the Hungarian American Coalition. In addition to the Memory Project / MOME collaboration, about which Réka talked in detail last month, we are working on compilations and a short film for Hungarian TV. For the Coalition's anniversary, we are looking back on many of our most successful initiatives across our 30 years history as well as launching a membership drive campaign. And, as a new project, HAC along with two member organizations - the American Hungarian Foundation and HungarianHub - is about to publish the inaugural Hungarian American Community Yearbook, a searchable digital and physical record of our community events during 2020. We're working with several historians to create a traveling exhibit on Hungarian history and an accompanying English language, game-based booklet to engage kids to learn about the same topics (this would be the third such resource). And lastly, as US President for the Hungarian Diaspora Council, I host monthly community update calls (open to all) and we are working to finalize reports from four working groups on community-wide challenges: preserving Hungarian American community heritage and history, Outreach to non-Hungarian speakers and next generation Hungarian Americans, unique challenges of Hungarian Houses and the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor internship program. Anyone is welcome to join these committees.

Bylaws Vote Coming Soon

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Renew Your Membership Now!

We are pleased to announce that our Bylaws have been rewritten to comply with the laws of the state in which we are incorporated (Maryland). We will post the new Bylaws on our website and invite members to vote on its acceptance by electronic ballot in March. All dues paying members in 2020 and 2021 will have the right to vote. Voting members will receive a personalized link by email to access their ballot. The election will be held over a 14-day period and all voting members are urged to exercise their right to vote.

You can [join or renew your membership](#) to participate in this important governance issue.

Don't Let Your Membership Benefits Stop!

Renew your 2021 membership to ensure uninterrupted membership today to ensure access to an expanded network of scholars and academics working in multidisciplinary fields of Hungarian Studies.

AHEA's membership dues enable you to access "Members Only" section of the website, participate in the governance of AHEA through your vote on our newly revised Bylaws as well as officers and board members.

We are pleased to announce membership discounts as well as the option of a new **lifetime membership**. Visit <https://ahea.net/members/membership-information>.

Only members in good standing can vote in leadership elections. Please remember to renew yours! **[Click here](#)** to access our PayPal link, or to get information on paying by check or bank transfer.

Where Your Membership Dollar Goes



**AWARDS AND
SCHOLARSHIPS**
28%

CONFERENCE OPERATIONS
43%

**INTERNET
HOSTING
AND
SUPPORT**
12%

**ORGANIZATIONAL
OVERHEAD**
17%

71% of your membership dues directly fund AHEA's mission of the **teaching and dissemination of Hungarian culture** through the annual conference and scholarship support programs. The other 29% helps keep our organization running.