

---

## AHEA Newsletter: May 2024

1 message

---

**American Hungarian Educators Association** <aheanews@123673990.mailchimpapp.com> Wed, May 15, 2024 at 9:00 AM

Reply-To: aheanews@gmail.com

To: voros@eecs.berkeley.edu

[View this email in your browser](#)



# May 2024 Newsletter

## President's Corner

Dear Colleagues,

The month of May was a busy one. We held a successful in-person conference at Rutgers University, where we celebrated the 50th anniversary of our association and launched an Early Career Scholars Network. These two symbolic gestures build bridges between generations and will ensure the long-term health of our organization. In addition, we are now finalizing the program for our hybrid conference in August, [co-organized with the University of Debrecen](#), and we are soon starting a search for a new Editor-in-Chief for *Hungarian Cultural Studies*. Finally, it is my pleasure to announce that our 2025 in-person conference will be held in Pécs, Hungary in June of next year. I look forward to seeing many of you there!

Warm regards, üdvözlettel,  
Helga Lenart-Cheng

---

## DEADLINE TODAY! AHEA Scholarships

### [The Steven Béla Várdy Legacy and Ágnes Huszár Várdy Scholarship](#)

The Steven Béla Várdy Legacy and Ágnes Huszár Várdy Scholarship recognizes a scholar in the fields of history or literature who exemplifies the high standards of

original research and historical and literary writing set by its namesakes. Eligible candidates must be a member of AHEA whose degree and research focus are in history or literature.

Amount Awarded: 2,500 USD

Application Requirements:

1. Submit either a narrative essay of up to 500 words or a 3 – 5-minute video describing your research and your area of specialization in history or literature.
2. Submit a current CV (include 2 – 3 references whom we might contact).
3. Eligible candidates must be a current members of AHEA. Join or renew your membership here: <https://ahea.net/members/membership-information>

How to Apply: Submit all materials through [this form](#)

---

### The Helena History Press Scholarship

The Helena History Press Scholarship recognizes a scholar in any field of the humanities who specializes in scholarship related to or about Central and East Europe. The field of humanities includes ancient and modern languages, literature, philosophy, history, human geography, law, politics, religion, and art.

Amount Awarded: 2,500 USD

Application Requirements:

1. Submit a narrative essay of up to 500 words on your research in any of the above fields including how funds from the award will be used to further your research.
2. Submit a current CV [include 2 references whom we might contact].
3. Eligible candidates must be current members of AHEA. Join or renew your membership here: <https://ahea.net/members/membership-information>

How to Apply: Submit all materials through [this form](#).

## President's Report on the 2024 Conference

The 48th Annual In-Person Conference of the American Hungarian Educators Association (AHEA) took place from May 2-4, 2024, at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with 80 registered attendees. The theme of the conference was “Reimagining Boundaries: Hungary and Hungarians in a Global Context.” The event explored a broad range of topics related to Hungarian culture, including history, literature, linguistics, sociology, anthropology, political science, education, folklore, fine arts, mathematics, and music. The conference featured various presentation formats, including individual presentations, panel discussions, workshops, roundtable discussions, and book presentations. Our keynote speaker, Prof. Paul Hanebrink, delivered an engaging lecture about his book, [\*A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism\*](#), while our plenary speaker, Prof. Cleopatra Charles, provided practical tips on how nonprofit organizations can leverage AI to expand reach and enhance giving experiences. The friendly atmosphere at the conference created an ideal environment for meaningful exchanges, and based on the feedback I received, attendees appreciated the genuine connections they formed.

I myself thoroughly enjoyed the stimulating conversations that took place throughout the conference, and I loved the workshops that provided hands-on training and active participation. The evening programs were particularly enjoyable, providing a perfect blend of scholarly exchange and social interaction. These moments of camaraderie underscored the vibrant community we have within AHEA.

We owe a debt of gratitude to our fantastic team: Jim Niessen, Kálmán Magyar,

Katalin Vörös, Nóra Deák, Klara Papp, and all the board members, program committee members, session chairs, local hosts, and volunteers who worked tirelessly behind the scenes. Köszönjük szépen!

Special thanks to our sponsors and hosts, the Fulbright Foundation, Helena History Press, The Liszt Institute, Alexander Library, American Hungarian Foundation, HAAC. The Alexander Library at Rutgers University was a perfect location, and we are thankful to our gracious and generous hosts!

Your feedback is invaluable to us, so I kindly invite you to share your thoughts on the conference through this form: <https://forms.gle/QfzQV8rQCaHV9mvMA>

Your insights will guide us in shaping future events so we can continue to meet the needs and expectations of our community.

If you have some good pictures, please share them with Katalin Voros: [voros@eecs.berkeley.edu](mailto:voros@eecs.berkeley.edu)

I look forward to many more such enriching conferences in the future!

Respectfully submitted,  
Prof. Helga Lenart-Cheng

---

## Coral and Gold: Commemorating 50 Years of AHEA and 35 Years of AHF



**Grant William Currier** earned his PhD in fiction rhetorics from Oklahoma State University and is currently a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant at the

*University of Debrecen. Hungarian by maternal ancestry, his writings focus on understanding and recapturing identities lost across generations.*

2024 is a monumental year for both the American Hungarian Educators Association and the American Hungarian Foundation in New Brunswick, which celebrate their 50th and 35th anniversaries respectively.

The traditional gifts for these milestones are coral for 35 years and gold for 50. Though we at the AHEA's annual conference had no such lavish gifts to offer each other, it was not from any impoverishment. Our celebration was one in which we, coffees in hand, exchanged ideas, entrusting to each other as-yet gestating and fully formed thoughts. And more than this, we gave and received the gift of each other's company, speaking in clusters in one of Rutgers' library's hallways or admiring the impressive collection of artwork in the American Hungarian Foundation's gallery while waiting for a delicious feast of *csirkepaprikás* and *házi savanyúság*.

This was my first attendance at AHEA, as well as my first presentation, which was about Magda Szabó's *Iza's Ballad*. I was invited to join AHEA due to my current Fulbright grant to Hungary, a nation my ancestors once called home nearly a century ago. Of the many attendees there, I spoke the least Hungarian, yet no translation was needed to understand the impressive depth of learning and articulation among our members. As a freshly minted PhD, the conversations others initiated, the interest everyone showed in what my experience has been living in Debrecen, Hungary, was a gesture for which I am truly grateful. From performative poetics to understanding Hungarian culture through international students' eyes, an innovative adaptation of the famous Rubik's cube, and an investigation of social media's religious mimicry, our panels and presenters showcased both their passions and their insights, and we who listened offered our questions like whetstones to a woodworker. From our time together, I believe we all came away sharpened.

In many ways it reminded me of Budapest's café culture of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This is because—I firmly believe—those who learn together ought to feast together. By the time we started this celebration Friday night, the stress of my own presentation had disappeared like a bottle of *pálinka* at a *disznóvágás*. I had the honor to represent the US-Hungary Fulbright Commission, which sponsored the evening, and spoke to a room full of former and current Fulbrighters. The number of those who had received the scholarship surprised and encouraged all of us. It was here the youthful vigor of Kálmán Magyar was on full display as he danced, and we enjoyed hours of conversation understanding both the American and Hungarian qualities of our community.

I am grateful that my own entrance into AHEA corresponded with these two anniversaries because they allow me to reflect on what makes a healthy scholarly organization. Let me return briefly to my initial image of anniversary gifts. Coral is a living thing that grows and builds on itself, year after year making itself grander and wider; gold, of course, is precious, mined from the depths of the earth and its use is no everyday affair. It is precious because it is rare. In the coming year, I am confident that we who attended, and those who could not, will continue to build on our own and each other's work and to dig the depths of scholarship that make AHEA both an exciting and hospitable organization.

---

## 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 **Marguerite deHuszar Allen**,  
[independent scholar](#)

**Please tell us a little bit about your career arc, especially how you came to range so widely across Central European literature, the law, and global studies?**

My early academic career followed a fairly traditional path. I had studied French in elementary and high school, then studied German at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. After my junior year abroad in Freiburg, Germany, I qualified for admittance to the Comparative Literature program in my senior year. (Later, I discovered my grandfather, Vilmos, was one of the early scholars in this new field.) As a student in the Honors program, I wrote my senior honors thesis on “The Influence of Nietzsche’s Theory of Nihilism on the Works of Albert Camus.” I continued my studies at the University of Chicago where I earned my MA in Comparative Studies in Literature, then worked for several months at the University of Chicago Press before beginning my doctoral degree. (This job led to other editing jobs at publishers of educational materials.) Fortunately, my professors at Chicago were gifted teachers, especially Richard Weisberg, Clayton Koelb, Manfred Hoppe, and John Cawelti.

In 1982, my dissertation, *The Faust Legend: Popular Formula and Modern Novel*, became a book which, for the first time, treated the 1587 Spies *Faustbuch* as a popular formula, one of the earliest manifestations of the Faustbooks. I then compared the Faust formula to the modern novel embodied in Thomas Mann’s *Dr. Faustus*. My dissertation director told AHEA member Frank Baron about my work and Frank, a world-renowned Faust scholar, invited me to speak to his Faust seminar at the University of Kansas. (In 2007, I presented my research to students at the Eötvös Lorand Tudományegyetem.) *The Faust Legend* earned me a Mrs. Giles Whiting Dissertation Fellowship in 1981-82. In 2013, an updated and expanded version of my *Faustbook* analysis appeared in *The Faustian Century: German Literature and Culture in the Age of Luther and Faustus*. Articles about the *Faustbuch*’s origins and reception, as well as Mann’s famous “montage technique” in *Dr. Faustus*, inspired by the Spies *Faustbuch*, complemented this research. Thanks to a National Endowment for the Humanities Travel to Acquisitions Grant, I confirmed at the Thomas Mann Archives in Zürich that Mann had consulted Heinrich von Kleist’s *Marquise von O* before writing *Die Betrogene* (literally *The Betrayed One*), in which Mann “borrowed” Kleist’s exploration of the psychological phenomena of denial and acceptance of reality.

My interest in Law and Literature was a natural outgrowth from my work with Richard Weisberg, a founder of the Law and Literature movement, who analyzed the phenomenon of *ressentiment* and judicial error as depicted in literature in *The*

*Failure of the Word.* I translated the introduction of a central text in this field, Wolfgang Holdheim's monograph, *Justizirrtum als literarische Problematik* ("judicial error as a literary theme") in 1995. I also organized a Law and Literature conference at the Cardozo Law School and edited the contributions for a special 2017 issue of *Law and Literature*. While teaching German and English at Evanston Township High School, I met Edith Jokay, head of the foreign language department, whose daughter translated my grandfather's autobiography and whose son heads the Fulbright program in Hungary. A fortunate development at Northwestern University occurred when Professor Andrew Wachtel created the Center for Central and Southeast European Studies (now called "Global Studies"), in which I participated for several years, the sole advocate of Hungarian studies.

**How did you find out about AHEA, and what brought you to join? What impact has your involvement with AHEA made on your career and/or your work?**

It must have been Frank Baron who first told me about the AHEA. I have attended AHEA conferences at Indiana University, the CEU, Rutgers, and on Zoom during the Covid pandemic, using these occasions to try out new ideas and learn more from others about Hungary. To me, the AHEA is a friendly group of people with similar interests, many experts in their fields. Among the many members who have influenced my work, Louise Vasvári, founder and editor of the *HCS*, stands out. I've published a book review in the *HCS*, a review article of Randolph Braham's geographical trilogy on the Holocaust in Hungary, and in 2023 an article showing the likely influence of the French diplomat Viscount Joseph de Fontenay on the placement of Hungary's borders in the wake of WWI. Northwestern University Press published Ferenc Barnás's novel *The Ninth (A Kilencedik)* and brought him to Northwestern for a reading, providing me with the opportunity to dine with him in Evanston and later to write a review of his book for *World Literature Today*. This review led to my first encounter with the novel's translator, our former editor Paul Olchvary, who, like Louise, always succeeded in improving my work. I've studied Hungarian at Beloit's Summer Language School and taken classes in Budapest and Debrecen.

**Tell us, please, what you're working on right now.**

I have held teaching positions briefly at Loyola University of Chicago, Princeton University, and Northwestern University, but family has always played a central role in my life. A major turning point in my career came with the death of my Hungarian father. From my father I inherited my grandfather's library: leather bound books with ribbed spines in various languages, including Greek, Latin, French, German, Spanish, and Hungarian, many of which were signed by the authors, along with thirty-six volumes of *Revue de Hongrie*. Among these books was his autobiography, *The Story of My Life (Életem Regénye)*, from which I learned that my grandfather's family was Jewish. In 2008, as a Fulbright research scholar, I began searching archival documents related to the life and works of my grandfather Vilmos de Huszár and his journal, *Revue de Hongrie*. My excellent Fulbright mentor Tibor Frank, who is sadly no longer with us, warned me at the start that I was undertaking a twenty-year project. Fortunately, I still have a few of those years left and I still hope to work in the archives in Vienna as originally planned. I have published two articles so far in my projected book about my grandfather.

Through genealogical and genetic study I found that my Hungarian grandmother was also Jewish, although my father had been baptized and raised as a Lutheran. (Sociologist András Kovács has written about the fact that even today many in Hungary learn about their Jewish heritage only as school children or adults.) This prompted me to attend Northwestern University's Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish Civilization in 2007 and to visit the USHMM, thanks to Holocaust scholar Peter Hayes. Adding to this new information was my discovery of my father's WWII diary, which led me to conduct research at NARA. Suddenly I realized my father was not an immigrant, but a refugee; a survivor who lost most of his family in the Holocaust; and a Ritchie boy who returned to Europe with Patton's Third Army. In addition to two articles I have written about the content of the diary, I am currently writing about my slow assimilation of this knowledge, and my father's changing sense of identity embodied in his WWII diary. At the same time, I am providing context for the diary: first, my father's life before and after the war as it effects his

military service, especially his capture of war criminals, and second, my father's wartime experiences as they fit into the wider context of WWII history. Oh, and also his encounters with Adolf Eichmann...

---

## New! AHEA Early Career Network

The AHEA Board is pleased to announce the formation of the **AHEA Early Career Network**.

The goal of the group is to provide international networking opportunities, mentorship, and resources to students and early-career scholars in Hungarian studies as they navigate the challenges of publication, grant writing, job searches, independent scholarship, as well as contingent faculty positions.

We welcome PhD students and scholars **within 10 years** of receiving their PhD. Please [fill out this form if interested](#).

The network was launched at the May 2024 AHEA Conference at Rutgers University.

Questions and suggestions regarding the new group are welcome and may be directed to Sarah Lucas at [sarah.lucas@tamuk.edu](mailto:sarah.lucas@tamuk.edu)

---

## Member Publications

The listing of publications is for our members' information and does not signify endorsement by AHEA.

**Mátyás Mervay** (Ph.D. Candidate in History, New York University) published "A Hungarian Old China Hand and the End of Empire: Loyalty Struggles in Interwar Shanghai's Migrant Community" in the most recent volume of [Austrian History Yearbook](#). explores Central European identities in the diaspora after the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire. The piece also sets the stage for the wartime Jewish refugee aid and is the academic version of Mátyás's recently published Hungarian non-fiction *A cserben hagyott hazafi. Zsidómentés a háborús Sanghajban* (Budapest: Könyv Népe, 2023). The article also allows a sneak peek into Mátyás's dissertation, "Habsburg Refugees in China: Postimperial Diaspora, Diplomacy, and Orientalism in the Republican Era (1918-1949)," which he's prepared to defend in May.

---

## Have a New or Upcoming Publication?

We would love to help share news of the impressive and diverse work that AHEA members are doing! If you have a recent book, article, or other scholarly/artistic

work you would like your fellow members to know about, send a brief description/promotional blurb and a link to further information to [ahenews@gmail.com](mailto:ahenews@gmail.com). Requests will appear in the order in which they were received and may be edited for space.

---

## Diaspora Scholarship: Summer University

*This third-party announcement is included for the benefit of our readers.  
AHEA is not directly affiliated with the program described below.*



Copyright © 2024 American Hungarian Educators Association, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is: [info@ahenews.net](mailto:info@ahenews.net)

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

