
AHEA Newsletter: March 2026

1 message

American Hungarian Educators Association <aheanews@123673990.mailchimpapp.com> Mon, Mar 30, 2026 at 11:59 PM

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March 2026 Newsletter

Editor's Corner



Mather Mansion. Photo credit: Greg Huth

AHEA 2026 is almost here!

From April 16-19, we will be gathering at the historic **Mather Mansion** (pictured above) on the Cleveland State University campus for our 50th conference. AHEA has come a long way since its first its first convention at Rutgers in 1976. Five decades of intellectual activity and comradeship, disrupted only by a global pandemic, is a real achievement! We hope you will be able to join us.

Our conference committee has been working hard on the final touches to the program. You may peruse a draft, which is subject to change, [right here](#). The fun begins on Thursday evening with a special screening of *Magyar Menyegző* (2025, dir. Csaba Káel) at the Berkman Hall Auditorium. Then the conference proper kicks off on Friday morning with welcoming remarks and a keynote address by **Gabriella Paár-Jákli**, of Kent State University. That first evening will feature wine and hors d'oeuvres at the **Cleveland Hungarian Heritage Society Museum**, followed by a buffet dinner at the Café Sausolito. Our annual business meeting will take place on Saturday morning. The conference wraps up with an onsite banquet and folk music performance by Harmonia. (Registration required!)

For those able to stay through Sunday, we are offering a guided bus tour of Hungarian heritage sites in Cleveland for \$25. The tour begins at 9:00am and will take approximately three hours.

Discounted early-bird registration (see below) ends on **April 1**, but full-price registration will continue through the conference itself.

Please note that if you hope to take part in the "Singing Canons" workshop, you will want to preorder your copy of the featured text! See the instructions below.

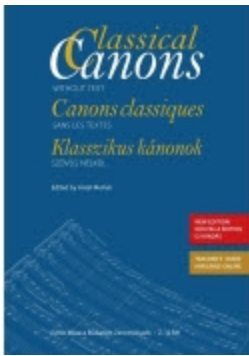
In other AHEA news, we have two scholarship deadlines rapidly approaching! Applications for both the **Steven Béla Várdy and Ágnes Huszár Várdy Legacy Scholarship** and the **Helena History Press Scholarship** must be received by May 15. These are unique, generous awards that might be just what you need to start (or finish) your latest project. Please consult our [Awards and Scholarships page](#) for full information!

Preorder *Classical Canons* for the "Singing Canons" Workshop

Attention conference attendees!

If you plan on joining the ["Singing Canons" workshop](#) hosted by Dr. Thomas Kite, you will want to preorder your copy of the featured text ASAP!

Preorders may be made through [Roylton Music Center](#), via their purpose-made



webpage: <https://www.royaltonmusic.com/p-6909-classical-cannons-preorder-for-ahca-delivery.aspx>

Copies purchased in advance will be distributed onsite at the conference.

Scholarship Deadlines: May 15

AHEA is proud to offer two research scholarships, provided by generous donors. Both applications are due on **May 15**.

Helena History Press Scholarship

Deadline: May 15, 2026

Purpose: To support the research of a scholar in any field of the humanities who specializes in work related to or about Central and Eastern Europe

Amount: \$2,500 USD

[Details and application form at this link.](#)

Steven Béla Várdy and Ágnes Huszár Várdy Legacy Scholarship

Deadline: May 15, 2026

Purpose: To support the research of a scholar in the fields of history or literature

Amount: \$2,500 USD

[Details and application form at this link.](#)

AHEA 2026: Discounted Registration Ends April 1!

REGISTRATION

Registration for the 50th Annual AHEA Conference at Cleveland State University is open! [Follow this link to the registration page.](#)

The basic "early bird" fee is \$85 or \$35 for students, if purchased before April 1. After that, the amount will increase by \$20. The price includes on-site lunches, coffee breaks, and program materials. Tickets to the Saturday banquet (also onsite), featuring a special performance by the folk ensemble [Harmonia](#), are an additional \$50. There will also be an optional Sunday (April 19) excursion: [a guided bus tour of the important Hungarian sites of Cleveland](#). Tickets are \$25 per person.

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 **Anna Fenyvesi**,
University of Szeged and Editor-in-Chief of *Hungarian Cultural Studies*

Please tell us a little bit about your academic career arc. How did you end up in American Studies? And, more particularly, how did you come to devote so much of your attention to Appalachia (and the greater Appalachian region, if we count Pittsburgh)?

I was educated in both Hungary and the United States. I got my 5-year degrees (MA-equivalents) in English and Russian at József Attila University (today the University of Szeged) in the late 1980s. I was actually the first-ever person at Szeged to receive my English degree with an American Studies minor (or specialization, as it was categorized more precisely at the time), as I was in the first group of three people to have the option to do it. (And I happened to be the first one basically by virtue of coming earlier in the alphabet than my two fellow students.) I was hired by the English department in Szeged the year after I graduated. At the time, there was no graduate-level education in Hungary, so departments often hired their former students right out of college, and then people completed and defended their dissertations while working full time.

The year after I was hired, the communist regime collapsed in 1989, and at that point we became free to travel and to apply to universities abroad. So I applied to six linguistics programs in the US in the academic year 1990-1991, did my TOEFL exam and GRE, and hoped for the best. I was offered admission and a graduate assistantship at the University of Pittsburgh! So I moved to the US in 1991 and got my MA in linguistics in 1994.

As a graduate assistant, I taught Hungarian at Pitt and also then worked as an editorial assistant for *Language*, the journal of the Linguistic Society of America, whose editor happened to be my advisor, Sarah (Sally) Thomason at the time. I

worked in the editorial office for 3 years, and this experience turned out to be very valuable in many respects—for instance in knowing how a journal is run on a day-to-day basis, when it came to me stepping into the role of Editor-in-Chief of *Hungarian Cultural Studies*. Also, during these years I became intrigued by the American Hungarian communities of southwestern Pennsylvania, which is sort of in the outer circle of Appalachia, ending up doing my master's thesis on the contact effects of English on the Hungarian language use of 1st and 2nd generation speakers in McKeesport, PA, a former steel town just outside of Pittsburgh.

Together with my husband, a fellow student at the Linguistics Department, I moved back to Hungary after 5 years in Pittsburgh, when we were both ABDs. He is American, and was very much sought after not just as a native speaker but also as a well-trained applied linguist in Szeged. I defended my dissertation in 1998. Then things slowed down a bit career-wise: we had three kids, a son and twin daughters, then divorced, and so the next few years were very busy and hard. But then slowly I was able to do more at work than just teach my classes: I edited *Hungarian Language Contact Outside Hungary* (Benjamins, 2005), an overview of the varieties of Hungarian outside Hungary, in the countries neighboring Hungary as well as in the US and Australia, with the “Hungarian in the United States” chapter authored by me. This became the second most quoted book I was closely involved with, the first one being *Hungarian* (Descriptive Grammars Series, Routledge, 1998), the first ever descriptive grammar of the language written in English, which I co-authored with my former professor István Kenesei and with Robert Vago (SUNY).

I still teach at the University of Szeged, where I have been the director of the Institute of English and American Studies for 17 years now. In the past 20 years I was involved in a large scale EU-funded (FP6) project, LINEE (Languages in a Network of European Excellence), where we studied European multilingualism in the late 2000s, and a joint Finnish–Hungarian project, FinUgRevita in the mid-2010s, where we developed computational linguistic tools for endangered Finno-Ugric minority languages (like Mansi and Udmurt) in Russia to aid their revitalization. And then in 2019 I joined the team of American historians, led by Briane Turley, to study the heritage of American Hungarians in Appalachia as part of the Appalachian Hungarian Heritage Project (AHHP). I loved the return to my first research topic of American Hungarian language use and linguistic heritage. We had this very interesting old newspaper, the *Magyar Bányászlap / Hungarian Miners Journal* that the historian team members are very interested in digitized by the National Széchenyi Library, and my colleague Róbert Péter is now making it into a searchable database. It is a gold mine of information on working class American Hungarians of the first half of the 20th century, having been published from 1913 to 1962.

As a sociolinguist, I am more interested in the language use of the American Hungarian communities, and in the fall of 2024 I was able to spend 5 months on a Fulbright Scholar grant at West Virginia University in Morgantown, WV, to study the linguistic landscape of American Hungarian cemeteries and to collect life narratives from descendants of Hungarian immigrants. I'm still analyzing my data and publishing my results.

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

I have known about AHEA for almost 20 years now, and before I became editor, I had two papers published in its journal, *Hungarian Cultural Studies*, back at the time when Lujzi Vasvári was editor: a paper, with István Cserniczkó, about Hungarian language use in Subcarpathia, in 2012, and another paper, about implications of genealogical research, a hobby of mine, in 2022. And then when I returned to the topic of American Hungarian language use for my research, AHEA became an obvious professional venue to share the results of this work.

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

I applied for the position of Editor-in-Chief, so tragically abruptly vacated by Paul Olchváry's untimely passing, while I was in Morgantown. I was far away from the daily grind in Szeged, happy to be back in the US after many years, enjoying the wonderful professional opportunities that Fulbright gives you, and anything felt

possible. I was able to reflect on my own professional trajectory from a fresh vantage point and felt that I might have a good chance doing the work of the Editor. I have spent my whole life navigating languages and cultures (my mother was Russian, an academic, and I grew up bilingual in Hungarian and Russian) in general, and specifically in academia in Hungary and the U.S. I felt humbled when I actually got the position, and I strive to use my professional experience in both countries to serve the journal, its authors, and its readers. With a little high-flown exaggeration, I feel like everything I have done in my life until now has prepared me to be in a good position to do this. I think it's a very prestigious place to be in, and I hope to do good work.

Tell us, please, what you're working on right now—beyond the journal?

Two years ago, just as I was preparing to go and do my Fulbright stint, my life changed through a Facebook group. I'm not a big fan of social media, but I am on Facebook and Instagram, and I have used Facebook especially to participate in groups for the fans of hobbies I do (like genealogical research, photography, and also fused glass jewelry making). In late February 2024, I stumbled on the group "Hungarian Roots and American Dreams / Óhazából az Újvilágba", for people who were researching ancestors who emigrated from Hungary to the U.S., which was just taking off then. I joined out of professional interest and was amazed by the stories people were posting day after day about their great-grandpas and other people. I messaged the admin of the group, Réka Bakos, to suggest we publish these stories in a book.

Well, long story short, in the past two years Réka and I have published two collections of such stories, with 48 and 58 stories, respectively, both of them in both languages, Hungarian and English. We are now working on the third book, about the couple of hundred of forestry students and two dozen faculty who left Sopron after the 1956 Hungarian Revolution was crushed and went to Canada, where the University of British Columbia let them finish their studies in Hungarian and gave them UBC degrees. They are an amazing generation of Hungarians who became very successful and had a great impact on forest management in Canada, and also to some extent also in the U.S. We are doing this volume on their legacy. And we are also preparing the fourth book for publication: the diary of István Béres, a peasant man from Borsod County who went to Buffalo, NY, just before WWI, and kept a diary throughout the years he worked in the U.S. (He returned to Hungary in the end.) It's an amazing authentic first hand account of the experiences of so many Hungarians who went to the U.S.

Réka and I also initiated two workshops last year, one in June, the other in December, to gather humanities and social science professionals – historians, ethnographers, librarians, archivists, linguists – in Hungary with an interest in Hungarians in North America. And now a bunch of these people and us are also working, in an inter-institutional co-operation, on an exhibition to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the USA, called "The Legacy of Hungarians in the United States: People, Places, Pathways", which will have both online and physical exhibits, basically, through visualizing 250 American Hungarian lives and 50 American Hungarian places. All of this, as you can imagine, is keeping us off the streets, as my former advisor, Sally would say.

Call for Applications: Debrecen Summer School

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

Date: 20 -31 July 2026

Location: DEBRECEN, HUNGARY

60 classes, 3 ECTS credits

DEBRECEN SUMMER SCHOOL



Structure of the Course:

- 3 blocks of classes (3 x 90 min) a day
- examination offered at the end of the course (ECTS credits)

Cultural Activities:

- opening ceremony
- guided tour in Debrecen
- weekend excursion
- Hungarian gastronomy and foodways
- folk dances and folk songs
- quiz
- farewell party

Leisure Activities:

- disco, karaoke night
- sports

EXTRA Program:

- traditional handicrafts
- sightseeing tour by night
- bike tour



Program Director:

Dr. Róbert Barta
Professor of History (University of Debrecen)

Accommodation & Meals:

- Accommodation: Kossuth Lajos Dormitory (single and double rooms)
- Full board (breakfast, lunch and dinner)

Dates & Reminders

- registration: 19 July (Sunday), 14–18
- course starts: 20 July (Monday)
- daily schedule: 9–10:30; 11–12:30; 14–15:30
- tuition ends: 31 July (Friday)
- check-out time: 1 August (Saturday), before 10:00

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

aheanews@gmail.com. Requests will appear in the order in which they were received and may be edited for space.



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