

# American Hungarian educator

NEWSLETTER

of the

American  
Hungarian  
Educators'  
Association

Volume XXIII, No. 1-3

Fall 2000

Please visit the AHEA Web page at: <http://magyar.org> and send any suggestions you have to the Executive Director at [eniko@ex-pressnet.com](mailto:eniko@ex-pressnet.com), or 4515 Willard Ave. 2210S, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

## Conference

**B**udapest! To celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> conference of the AHEA, we met in Hungary from May 24-27. With the theme, "Hungarians in North America," we strove to introduce Hungarian scholars not only to the Association but also to research in Hungarian studies. The site—Hotel Kulturinov and the Institute of Military History in the Castle District and the Ethnographic Museum right next to Parliament—allowed us to take full advantage of the support of various Hungarian institutions.

Minister of Education **Zoltán Pokorni** gave the opening address. He reported on his US trip and mentioned some initiatives and reforms in Hungarian education. Of interest is the agreement with New York State for Hungarian mathematics and science teachers to work in that state. **Brian H. Guss**, representing U.S. Ambassador to Hungary Peter Tofu, gave the keynote address on Thursday, speaking about the Fulbright and Humphrey programs and noting that there is much misinformation about US initiatives in the region as well as about US programs. He advised that anyone interested in State Department help or information on US exchange and other "aid" programs get in touch with the Department before writing off US help. **Ignác Romsics'** address on Friday not only revealed the more favorable proposals the US had in mind for Hungary after World War I, but also emphasized the democratic reforms that would have been required in the new state. Land reform and political democracy were prerequisites, but

monarchy was not rejected out of hand, although the Habsburgs were ruled out.

Some other highlights were **Ivan Sanders'** talk, "The Reception of Twentieth Century Hungarian Fiction in the U.S. and Britain," and **Enikő M. Basa's** presentation, "Integrating Hungarian Literature into Comparative Studies." Sessions on Cleveland's Hungarian heritage were covered by **Martha Pereszlényi-Pinter** and **Katherine Gyékényesi-Gatto** and members of the Cleveland community. **Louise O. Vasváry**, delivered an interesting address on the *Taming of the Shrew* and wedding songs in the Hungarian context giving the comparative spin to Hungarian studies that is sought by our Association. The history sections focused on ethnic history, examining the Hungarian community in the US in papers by **Nándor Dreisziger**, **Tibor Glant**, **Béla Bognár**, **Susan Glanz**, **Tibor Frank** and **Peter Hidas**.

A dinner at the Magyar Írószövetség (Hungarian Writers Association) and conversation with its President, **Béla Pomogáts** opened the social events. Lunch in the Vadászterem of the Parliament, with former AHEA President **János Horváth** and a reception at the Ethnographic Museum were highlights on Thursday; on Friday the conference concluded with a gala dinner at the Kárpátia restaurant. **János Horváth** entertained the group with reminiscences and observations on politics and Hungarian activism. Afterwards, to the tune of

gypsy music, participants celebrated until the small hours of the morning.

On Saturday those members who took the trip to Slovakia were treated to a meeting of educators at the Városi Egyetem in Komárom (Komarno), a "branch" university for which Kecskemét, Győr, and Sopron provide teachers. Presentations focused on primary and secondary education in Komárom and Slovakia. A tour of the city and a trip to Pozsony (Bratislava) helped to orient

participants to the problems of the minorities in this state. It was interesting to learn of ways in which the possibility of Hungarian schools does not necessarily relate to enrollment in them, and the role (or lack thereof) of Hungarian schools in meeting the needs of the minorities. **Zoltán Sido**, President of the Szlovákiai Magyar Pedagógusszövetség, served as guide for the trip, and AHEA members were welcomed to Komárom and the Csallóköz by Deputy Mayor Mihály Mácza.

### Business Meeting

The business meeting addressed several important issues. **Ruth Biró** was appointed to head the nominating committee to select the slate for the new candidates. Washington DC was selected as the site of the 2001 Conference, with **Enikő M. Basa** serving as chair. In the absence of the Secretary members were referred to the minutes as published in the 1999 newsletter. **Enikő Basa** gave the Treasurer's report. On January 1, 1999 the Association had a balance in the checking account of \$2251.70; on December 31 the balance was \$950.71. Expenses amounted to \$1077.71 with an additional \$1,000.00 being transferred to the Savings account. Income was \$776.50. The Savings account opened with a balance of \$1,109.53 and closed with \$2,137.50 on December 31. The balance in the two CD's was \$5,122.50. The financial statement for 2000 is not yet prepared, but the 1999 conference in Cleveland had an income of \$5965.00 with expenses amounting to \$4316.16. The positive balance of \$1300.00 was added to the AHEA account, while \$348.84 was retained in Cleveland for the publication of the Conference papers. (This amount was not sent until early in 2000 and so is not reflected in the above.) We had very generous support from the university and the Hungarian community so that all printing and mailing expenses as well as some of the social events were covered. Many thanks to **Martha Pereszlényi-Pinter** for putting this together.

New business included the introduction of the **Magyar Professzorok Szövetsége** which wishes to work with the AHEA. No objection was raised to

this, provided the goals and principles of the AHEA are not compromised. Cooperation in the areas of the media and governmental contacts were discussed. Since the Magyar Professzorok are primarily based in Hungary this might be of use to the AHEA only in disseminating information in Hungary. **Mihály Kecskés** is the president and he can be reached at [prof@mpv.huninet.hu](mailto:prof@mpv.huninet.hu). The mail address is Professzorok Háza, 1146 Budapest, Ajtósi Dürer sor 19-21.

**Ágnes Soós Nagy**, Executive Director of the **Friends of Hungarian Higher Education** came to make connections and seek assistance in gaining access to the corporate world (they are doing this in Hungary). The Confederation is a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization in the US and is addressing the crisis in Hungarian higher education by seeking to diversify funding sources, enhancing the ability of higher education to meet the needs of the business community and serving as a clearinghouse and catalyst for business and higher education. It also seeks to introduce to Hungarian universities alternative funding, for example the kind of support US universities get from alumni. If interested in any aspect, please contact **Ágnes** at [soos@mfa.huninet.hu](mailto:soos@mfa.huninet.hu) at Ajtósi Dürer sor 19-21.

**Huba Brückner** of the Fulbright program was also there to urge members to suggest candidates and support the program in their institutions. He can be reached at [bruckner@fulbright.huninet.hu](mailto:bruckner@fulbright.huninet.hu) and at the Ajtósi Dürer sor address also.

Elizabeth Simon of the Council of International Study Programs, a part of the CIEE–Council on International Education Exchange also urges AHEA members to contact her at [cieebues@isc.bke.hu](mailto:cieebues@isc.bke.hu). She spends part of the year in New York so the email contact is the best.

Gábor Tarján of the Collegium Hungaricum Juventutis Occidentalis informed the group of the possibility of study in Hungary within the “study abroad” programs of US colleges. Some scholarships are available, but the opportunity to learn the language while pursuing regular degree studies is the main attraction. For further information, contact Dr. Tarján at [CHJO@aol.com](mailto:CHJO@aol.com) or P.O. Box 57, Garfield, NJ 07026.

Another contact of interest for academic exchanges is Éva Sallai at [info-hungary@afs.org](mailto:info-hungary@afs.org); web: <http://www.afs.org>, with the AFS Magyarországi Nemzetközi Csereprogram Alapítvány.

The Sapientia Foundation, on behalf of the Erdélyi Magyar Magánegyetem Kuratórium, made a presentation to argue that Hungarian educators should support the idea of a Hungarian university in Transylvania in order to ensure its international recognition. Tangible support in terms of books, teacher and student exchanges, consultative services, grants are welcome. For further information, see their home page at <http://www.hhrf.org.sapientia>. The Foundation is currently constituted with an eight-person Board representing the potential sites of branch universities: Kolozsvár, Marosvásárhely, Gyulaféhevár, and Temesvár. This would be an autonomous university governed by its Board, and contacts are sought to give legitimacy to the undertaking.

A resolution on the independent Hungarian university in Transylvania was approved.

Many thanks to Kálmán Magyar for the remembrance below.

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#### IN MEMORIAM

Peter Basa  
1935-2000

On April 12, 2000 AHEA lost one of its founding members, who was an active supporter and the loving husband of our Executive Director. This is a great loss to us and Peter will be missed. We offer our heartfelt condolences to his wife, Enikő Molnar Basa. We all knew and loved Peter, he was a very private and kind person who showed much more interest in listening and helping others than talking about himself. He will always be part of AHEA and our organization should always remember his unselfish personality and continuous supporting work.

I think a review of his life will be a revelation to many of us since we know so little about Peter's personal life. He was born in Nagykáta, Hungary. He participated in the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, at that time he was a medical student. He drove an ambulance and ferried supplies to where these were needed. Wounded twice, he eventually fled Hungary to Austria, and came to the United States.. After language courses at Bard College, he was accepted at Georgetown University. Before the completion of his studies he was drafted and served in the Pentagon and later as a medical technician in Fort Belvoir.

Even during these years he was ready to help his community in the USA and he worked as the personal secretary of Father Irányi, who was the superior of the Piarist House of Studies in Washington DC.

Upon leaving the Army, he continued his studies in sciences. Eventually he became a computer specialist, working at the National Institute of Health [NIH] for many years until his retirement in December, 1999. It is

sad that he was not able to enjoy his well-deserved retirement years with his wife and undertake the many plans they had made for the future.

Peter married Enikő Molnár in 1966 and they lived in the Washington area always taking a leadership role in American Hungarian cultural life. In 1974 they helped to establish the American Hungarian Educators' Association and both have been active in our Association's work ever since. Although Enikő assumed more leadership roles in the organization, Peter was always a "behind the scene" worker, supporter and financial contributor. He was generous with his time and resources in welcoming Hungarian and other Eastern European visitors, students, or researchers. He was most interested in the establishment of the AHEA Scholarship, which, although it has modest means at the present, provides significant support to Hungarian minority students in Slovakia and Romania.

Peter was a wonderful husband and a caring friend. He will be remembered and will continue to be part of our lives for decades to come, due to his unselfish work for our AHEA community. We ask that Peter be remembered kindly by all those who knew him and have touched their lives, and we pray that his wife, Enikő, will remain to be strong to carry out all those wonderful plans they formulated together, but could not complete due to Peter's untimely departure.

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### **Scholarships**

The AHEA Scholarship Fund was able to send \$300.00 each to both Slovakia and Transylvania this year thanks to contributions to the Memorial Fund for Péter Basa and donations to the fund by László Bitó of New York, who contributed conference sales of his books *Istenjárás* and *Az ötödik lovas*. Donations to the Fund in Peter's memory amounted to \$460.00 and receipts from the Bito book were \$75.00. Enikő M. Basa contributed the funds to make the total \$600.00. The availability of these funds also meant that the interest on the fund could be turned back into the investment. A CD for \$7,000.00 is now the basis of the fund; this should be raised to at least \$10,000 to ensure an interest that allows us to grant scholarships of \$300.00 or more to each of our partners. Contributions are welcome to bring the capital up to the targeted amount or beyond. Scholarships go to Hungarian minority students engaged in any discipline that will support the preservation of the Hungarian communities in those countries and who plan to remain there to pursue their careers.

### **Miscellaneous News**

Béla Markó, President of the RMDSZ, and Péter Eckstein-Kovács, Minister without Portfolio for Minority Rights, were in Washington DC in early October. In remarks at the Kossuth House they emphasized that the cooperation with the coalition has not been without problems. Some things have been achieved, but much has not been carried through. Often, laws were passed but implementation was not assured (property restoration particularly of common forests in Székelyföld, of church property, etc.) On the whole, the balance is positive, but there are fears if the nationalistic opposition wins the next elections. The greatest threat to the Hungarian community is the siphoning off of the best and most talented of its members to Hungary and to the West. Given the centralized nature of Romania, the only alternative is investment from Hungary and the West, directed to Transylvania and not to the country as a whole. The economic situation is the key to Hungarian survival, beyond schools and all other efforts. Investments in Hungarian enterprises, however, can be assured of more than normal return: the work ethic and willingness to invest labor and effort into a venture is manifold that of the Hungarian

or western norm. (Your Executive Director saw evidence of this in a trip to the Székelyföld this summer: with no capital, individuals and groups created facilities that put state-supported enterprises managed from Bucharest to shame.)

The 9<sup>th</sup> **Anyanyelvi Konferencia** was held in Marosvásárhely (Tirgu Mures) Romania August 10-15. The venue in one of the largest centers of Hungarian culture outside of Hungary emphasized the need for the cultural awareness and linguistic maintenance that are the *raison d'être* of the organization. Recently elected mayor **Dorin Florea** emphasized ethnic cooperation while other speakers, from former mayor **Imre Fodor** to AHEA member and representative in the Hungarian Parliament **János Horváth** and personalities such as **István Sütő** and **Béla Markó** spoke of the rich Hungarian heritage of the region. Multilingual and native language instruction, the role of the churches, as well as the formation of the world-view of the new generation were debated. **Béla Pomogáts** was reelected as president of the Anyanyelvi Konferencia–Magyar Nyelv és Kultúra Nemzetközi Társasága.

### **Books and Contacts**

**Emigránsok küldetésben** (Debrecen : Csokonai Press, 2000) is a case study of forty years in voluntary mission by the members of the Hungarian Alumni Association (Magyar Öregdiák Szövetség–Bessenyei György Kör). Its lecture series has provided a forum for 260 outstanding Hungarian writers interested in events in Hungary. The book, containing detailed historical accounts and facsimiles of archival documents relating to the Cold War, was edited by Károly Nagy and can be obtained from the Alumni Association. For information, see <http://www.hhrf.org/bessenyei/magyar.htm>.

**Encyclopaedia Humana Hungarica** is a CD-ROM based series on Hungarian history and culture. The developers gave a demonstration at the conference and it is a very useful tool for teaching any aspect of Hungarian studies. Five CD's have been released covering pre-history to 1699. These are multilingual editions available in English. Issues in preparation will cover the 18<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. For information contact Enciklopédia Humana Egyesület, 1438 Budapest, PF. 435. Telephone/fax: 06-1-306-9492; email: [ehe@satimex.tvnet.hu](mailto:ehe@satimex.tvnet.hu).

The **Cleveland Hungarian Heritage Society** can be visited at <http://www1.jcu.edu/language/hunghemu.htm>.

Judith Karsay has ceramics of a historical nature. See [judti@karsay.hu](mailto:judti@karsay.hu).

A web page on **Hungarian folklore** has been established. Please check out <http://www.nepmuvesz.hu>.

The **ICCEEs** (International Council for Central and East European Studies) might be of interest to our members, please contact them at [lth@politics.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:lth@politics.unimelb.edu.au).

Translations: literary translators are sought for Hungarian works in literature or social sciences. Please apply at **The Hungarian Translators House Foundation**. This is not a publishing opportunity but rather a chance to work on translations in a congenial atmosphere. Scholarships of 95,000 HUF per month are available, with a deduction of 15,000 for costs of the program. Persons living outside of Hungary get half the amount. The house is open to those without scholarships for a fee of 2,500 HUF per week. For information write to Translators House, H-8230 Balatonfüred, Petőfi Sándor u. 36. e-mail: [bfordhaz@matavnet.hu](mailto:bfordhaz@matavnet.hu).

**European Teaching Program** seeks teachers of English in Central and Eastern Europe. Some teachers of history and culture might also be needed. Salary and housing are provided by the school. For more information,

## **26<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

# **AMERICAN HUNGARIAN EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION**

## **Hungarian Culture–Central European Culture**

April 19-22, 2001

Georgetown University, Washington, DC

The Theme of the 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of the AHEA focuses on Hungary's historical and current role as pivotal in Central Europe and in the European integration process. Papers presented should emphasize the role of Hungary and Hungarians in addressing the multi cultural matrix of Central Europe. All aspects of Hungarian culture and education are welcome, but of particular interest are themes on:

Hungarian regions in and outside of Hungary  
Hungary and her neighbors in any aspect: literary, historical, economic, etc.  
Hungarian minorities and minorities in Hungary  
Arts and the Hungarian scene

Each approach can address Hungarian-minority issues or the problems of minorities in the successor states. The emphasis, however, should be on ways in which cooperation is possible, how various groups have worked together, similarities and differences, shared history and different perceptions, etc.

Thanks to Professors Gábor Ágoston and James Collins for their support in making the meeting at Georgetown University possible.

Please send abstracts of any proposed papers or proposals for sessions by February 1 to:

Enikő M. Basa  
4515 Willard Ave. 2210 S  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Fax: (301) 657-4764 or e-mail: [ebas@loc.gov](mailto:ebas@loc.gov) or [eniko@ex-pressnet.com](mailto:eniko@ex-pressnet.com)

The Magyar Professzorok Világtanácsa will be joining us for the meeting. Sessions on Friday will be held together with them; on Saturday, they will have their own session. Social events will be held jointly.

H.E. Géza Jeszenszky, the Hungarian Ambassador, has agreed to be the banquet speaker. We hope to enlist interesting keynote speakers on each day also.

Please note: Only members in good standing, i.e. with dues paid in up, may vote in the elections. If you did not pay in 2000, please try to send in dues for both 2000 and 2001 now..

### AHEA Membership Form/Dues Renewal

Dues are payable for the calendar year. All members are urged to send their 2000/2001 dues promptly. *The date on your mailing label indicates the year we last received dues from you.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: (give preferred mailing address here) \_\_\_\_\_

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

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Institutional affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Other address (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Dues: Regular members: \$15.00    Couples/Joint members: \$20.00    Students/Retired: \$10.00  
Make checks payable to: AHEA Treasurer and send to AHEA, P.O. Box 30288, Bethesda, MD 20824-0288  
Please clip or copy and return with a check for the appropriate amount.

### American Hungarian Educator

(ISSN 0163-0040) is published in Chevy Chase, MD by the AHEA, a non-profit educational organization.  
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