

American Hungarian EDUCATOR

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ASSOCIATION

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THE MINUTES OF AHEA GENERAL MEETING IN MONTCLAIR APRIL 27, 1996

The annual meeting of the AHEA was called to order by Enikő M. Basa in the absence of the outgoing president, Attila Lantos. She announced the results of the elections, which were: President: Peter Pastor, Vice-President: Kálmán Magyar, Secretary: Kay Scrimger, Treasurer: Péter Basa; new Board members: George Bisztray, Kenneth Nyirady, and Ruth Bíró; continuing as Board members: Nandor Dreisziger, Martha Pereszlényi-Pinter, Susan Glanz, and Ilona Lantos.

Incoming President Peter Pastor then took over the conduct of the meeting. Since there had been no meeting in Montreal due to a lack of quorum, Enikő referred members to the report on the 20th conference in *The Educator* (Vol. 18, no. 3). As outgoing treasurer, Enikő reported on the financial situation of the Association: Balance from 1994: \$1,746.66; Income in 1995 from dues, interest and donations: \$1,069.96 for a total of \$2,816.62. Expenses: Newsletter, postage, P.O. box: \$365.33; Office supplies \$116.55; HAC for booklets: \$25.00; Bank charges (returned checks, Canadian checks) \$76.45; Scholarship fund: \$100.00 for a total of \$683.33. This left a balance at the end of 1995 of \$2,133.29. The Savings account had a balance of \$856.75 of which \$300.00 is earmarked for the textbook fund and the rest is the Scholarship Fund. Also in the Scholarship Fund are a two-year Certificate of Deposit for 1,000.00 and a five-year CD for \$3,000. The interest on the savings was \$117.69, on the CD's \$60.38 for four months as of December.

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A letter from Béla Pomogats, President of the Anyanyelvi Konferencia, was read. Copies were available at the conference.

The site of the 1997 conference was announced: it will be at the University of Maryland Conference Center, College Park, April 17-19. The call for papers and information will be sent out to all members and included

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AHEA

HUNGARIAN STUDIES - A HOLDING ACTION?

REFLECTIONS ON THE 1996 CONFERENCE

In our efforts to maintain and promote Hungarian culture and Hungarian language, are we just engaging in a holding action "to push back the time when Hungarian is no longer spoken" in the United States and Canada? Does this, by implication, mean that Hungarian studies will be relegated to a historical footnote in college catalogs? Now that there is a free Hungary taking its place in the community of nations, do Hungarian-Americans no longer have a valid mission in maintaining and passing on their language and culture here? Do Hungarian-Americans no longer have a role to play in American universities, colleges, libraries, research institutions, scouting, and all levels of education? Are we to plan on obsolescence and the slow if orderly demise of this association and all our institutions? This scenario was suggested (not stated) by Károly Nagy's comment in his closing remarks on the panel, "Hungarian Schools in the USA." My answer, most emphatically, is no. As we look toward the 25th anniversary of this Association in the year 2,000, and as we celebrate the various important milestones in Hungarian history in the upcoming years, we have to transcend this pessimism. We have to define our goals and reevaluate our methods. And, we have to reaffirm our commitment to Hungarian studies. Otherwise, all past efforts shall have been in vain.

The suggestion that teaching Hungarian to children is merely an effort to push back time—and it is only to this that Károly referred—suggests nostalgia, not planning. Besides the intrinsic value of a second language our children thus gain, we are training a new generation with a background in Hungarian culture that can only be learned with great difficulty later, and which will almost always lack an emotional component that provides intuitive understanding of nuances not generally acquired in a formal educational setting. The second language and cultural background will give these students opportunities in business, government, science and the academic world; many students will also come to an understanding

of Hungarian as part of world culture, as part of American achievements, and will, often inadvertently and maybe unconsciously, aid Hungarian-American relations.

To move towards this natural integration of our values in American society—an integration that does not negate the need for institutions, and cultural and language maintenance—we have to change our mind set. We have to make this an organic part of our life, personally and institutionally. We cannot be, or profess to be, Americans from 8-5 and Hungarians the rest of the time. Nor is there anything unusual in these coexisting roles: most Americans work at a job and are also active in community or religious affairs; they might even have a second career as coaches, counsellors, or ministers besides being doctors, teachers, or carpenters. So, we have to stop dividing our "Hungarian" lives from our "American" lives. We have to stop being apologetic for our "other" interests. We have to learn that we do contribute to society at large through our work in Hungarian studies at any level. Conversely, we have to guard against being arrogant and assuming that others don't understand our interests and so why should we bother sharing these with them. We should be aggressive (not obnoxious) in our efforts for the maintenance of Hungarian language and culture in the United States and Canada.

I have started by denying that language maintenance is a "holding action," yet have directed most of my remarks to cultural maintenance. But, there is really no contradiction. Language maintenance is the foundation of the rest. True, not everyone of Hungarian heritage will learn Hungarian, or retain it even if he or she goes to a few sessions of Hungarian class. If we look around, relatively few of the "old" emigrant groups have kept their language. But, efforts at language maintenance should not be written off. There is value in the exposure to a language, and those most interested will build on the foundations of the Hungarian schools or scouts, or visits to Hungary, to keep in touch with their roots. They will be the ones with real insight into Hungarian culture who can provide the next generation of academics and who can become the generation of political leaders for whom Hungary will not be merely a strange country somewhere in the troubled Balkans. Free(er) of emotional baggage than the first generation, they will also be able to evaluate world events more like Americans and respond with more savvy. They will have the advantage of being able to

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travel, of getting to know both Hungary and the United States. If American students are willing to invest both money and time as part of their university studies—and even independently of them—to get to know foreign lands, how much more logical such an investment would be for a person of Hungarian background. And how much more rewarding if he already has some familiarity with the language and the culture. At the very least, the lives of those students who spend time in Hungarian school or participate in the Hungarian scouts can be enriched.

It is up to us, the parents and teachers, to present the Hungarian experience as a positive value. It should not be a chore (though it will often be a burden). We complain of fewer and fewer children in the Saturday schools, yet there are more and more adults who want to learn the language. We point to a lack of student interest in Hungarian at universities, yet a well-advertised and presented course draws students. Maybe the fault is not in the course but in the presentation. Judging from the comments by the two principals of week-end Hungarian schools, Péter Harkay and Gyula Varga, the difficulties are financial and administrative, not lack of interest. If the curriculum is flexible and it is integrated into the mainstream, the schools can be forward-looking and not nostalgic. But, Hungarian identity should not be tied to language: if it is, even language learning will suffer. Language has to be presented as a component of a heritage which informs other areas of life. Only in that way will it continue to have validity. specialize in a variety of fields. At Rutgers University, the Hungarian Institute is in a different position, but it can still become the basis of a serious program. Here the support of the community as well as the University is essential, so the courses have to address the needs and interests of both constituencies. Outreach is essential: the Hungarian community must see how the Institute can contribute to the maintenance of the Hungarian heritage of which the community is proud; the university must see that the

Institute contributes to its record of offering an excellent academic program.

The theme of the 1997 conference will be "Hungarian Education in the Second Millennium." Let us think of constructive ways in which new educational strategies can be developed to meet the needs of this new millenia through which new generations will become familiar with both Hungarian language and its culture, and the ways in which the technology of this new age can help us achieve this goal.

Enikő M. Basa
Executive Director

UNIVERSALIST UNITARIAN CHURCHES

The Universalist Unitarian Churches, as some of you know, have an active Partner Church program with the Unitarian churches in Transylvania. At the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Partner Church Council in February of this year they passed a resolution "noting with grave concern the Education Law which denies native language education to ethnic minorities. Unitarians of Romania, with whom our 180 churches and thousands of members engage in partnerships of great mutual benefit, and whom we regard as close kin, report to us that they feel this law is the most serious threat to their human rights in this century, and could lead to the obliteration of their culture and religion." They resolve to express support for the Unitarian Church in Romania "in their struggle to repeal the Education Law"; to educate their own congregations on the law and communicate their opposition to the law "by organizing public witnesses at embassies and consulates of Romania in the United States and Canada," and by contacting the appropriate U.S. and Canadian legislative and governmental bodies to lobby against the acceptance of "Romania's membership in any body that respects or guards the human rights of citizens of its member nations." They also request the International Association for Religious Freedom and the International Association of Unitarians and Universalists to support the cause.

Cont. from page 1- The Minutes of AHEA...

in *The Educator*, and will also be mounted on various discussion group lists. Please contact Enikő M. Basa for information or suggestions for sessions. The sites of upcoming conferences was then discussed, with Indiana U. mentioned as a possibility for 1998, and Rutgers or New York for the following year. A meeting with the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada will also be due.

It was decided that the AHEA will mount a home page on the World Wide Web. It can be used to increase visibility, recruit new members, and disseminate information. It was moved that the necessary funds be allocated, and the motion carried unanimously. Kálmán Magyar will chair a subcommittee on how best to establish and use the home page. The Executive Committee will have oversight of the funds.

Enikő then announced two programs that will be partly sponsored by the AHEA, although not involving significant AHEA funds. In the fall AHEA will cooperate with the Hungarian Embassy to host area students at a picnic. Anita Komlódi will coordinate with Katalin Bánlaki. In November Enikő will organize a symposium at the Library of Congress to commemorate the 1100 years of the Hungarian statehood. The Hungarian Embassy, the European Division of the Library of Congress, and the LCPC Hungarian Language Table will co-sponsor. It will be coordinated with the gala at the Kennedy Center.

Károly Nagy raised the question of what happened to the papers from the 1994 Rutgers conference. Enikő reported that the papers had been sent to Hungary in the fall of that year and no response has been received. She will contact Margit Papp to see if we can get some information on the status of the publication, and will report in the newsletter. Károly also inquired if any more contributions have been made to the textbook fund established at Rutgers. None have been made, the money is in the AHEA savings account. He then introduced a resolution on in support of the language rights and schools of the Hungarian minorities in Romania, Slovakia, and Serbia, which carried unanimously. (See p. 6.)

CIVIC EDUCATION PROJECT

Civic Education Project is once again looking for individuals who are interested in spending a year teaching at institutions of higher learning in Central and Eastern Europe and the NIS. Applications can be requested at the below addresses. However, in order to speed up the application process and save valuable resources that can be better spent in the region, please consider obtaining the application online. The easiest way to do this is to view that CEP brochure at our WWW site (<http://cep.nonprofit.net/>). The brochure can be found at <http://cep.nonprofit.net/brochure.html> and that page has a pointer to the application form itself which is available in digital form via FTP.

Civic Education Project is an international not-for-profit organization devoted to the strengthening of democracy in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union through the revitalization of the social sciences in universities and institutes of higher education.

Through its visiting professor program, CEP sends Western-trained scholars to teach and advise at universities in ... Hungary ... Romania ... Slovakia and Ukraine.

Teaching assignments are initially for one year, during which lecturers teach university-level courses in economics, history, law, political science, public administration, and sociology, and also work on outreach and research. Lectures are conducted in English, and transportation, housing, insurance, teaching materials and a living stipend are provided to program participants. Faculty and advanced graduate students are encouraged to apply. Write for a brochure/application packet. Applications are currently being accepted for the 1996-97 program year.

For more information on the Civic Education Project and its activities, please contact:

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Code: the first two numbers indicate
type of membership. The second the
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send any necessary changes to:
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Amerikai magyar tanárok A kisebbségi nyelvhasználat védelmében

A honfoglalás 1100., a magyar oktatás 1000. és az 1956-os forradalom 40. évfordulója jegyében rendezte meg 21. konferenciáját az Amerikai Magyar Tanárok Egyesülete – értesültünk Nagy Károlytól, az Egyesült Államokbeli Rutgers egyetem szociológia professzorától. Ez évben New Jersey államban a Montclair State University volt a színhelye az április 25-től 28-ig tartó előadás- és tanácskozási-sorozatnak.

A tanáregyesület külön-külön ülészeket szentelt a mintegy húsz elemi és középszintű hétvégi és nyári amerikai magyar iskola, valamint a Beloit, Indiana, Rutgers és Toronto

gers és Toronto egyetemeken működő magyar tanulmányi programok beszámolóinak megvitatására.

Az egyesület közgyűlése egyebek között arról is határozott, hogy pártfogolja a Kárpát-medence kisebbségi magyar közönségei tanítóit, tanárait és iskoláit. Felhívják az Egyesült Államok és Kanada kormányát, valamint az egyéb nemzetközi testületeket, igyekezzenek rábírn Románia, Szlovákia és Szerbia kormányait a kisebbségi nyelvhasználat és anyanyelvoktatás minden szinten való támogatására.

(k. b.)

Az Amerikai Magyar Tanárok Egyesületének 21. konferenciája

A honfoglalás ezerszázadik, a magyar oktatás ezredik és az 1956-os forradalom negyvenedik évfordulója jegyében rendezte meg 21. konferenciáját az Amerikai Magyar Tanárok Egyesülete. Ez évben New Jersey államban a Montclair State University volt a színhelye az április 25-től 28-ig tartó előadás- és tanácskozási-sorozatnak

Magyarországról az Anyanyelvi Konferencia - A Magyar Nyelv és Kultúra Nemzetközi Társaság nevében annak elnöke: Pomogáts Béla üdvözölte levélben az összejövetelt, hangsúlyozva, hogy nagyra értékeli azt az együttműködést, amely a két szervezet között már hosszú ideje kialakult és meghívta a résztvevőket az Egerben augusztus 12-18 között rendezendő VIII. Anyanyelvi Konferenciára.

A Tanáregyesület külön-külön ülészeket szentelt a mintegy húsz elemi és középszintű hétvégi és nyári amerikai magyar iskola, valamint a Beloit, Indiana, Rutgers és Toronto egyetemeken működő magyar tanulmányi programok beszámolóinak meghallgatására, megtárgyalására.

Az egyesület közgyűlése egyebek között arról is határozatot hozott, hogy továbbra is támogatja a Kárpát-medence kisebbségi magyar közönségei tanítóit, tanárait és iskoláit. Felhívják az Egyesült Államok és Kanada kormányát és egyéb nemzetközi testületeket, hogy igyekezzenek rábírn Románia, Szlovákia és Szerbia kormányait a kisebbségi nyelvhasználat és anyanyelvoktatás minden szinten való támogatására, feltétellel téve a magyar kisebbségi jogok biztosítását a legnagyobb vámkedvezmény odaítélésnél és egyéb kétoldalú tárgyalásoknál.

sociologist with a PhD from The Johns Hopkins University, was appointed as Associate Professor of Sociology and one-fourth-teaching-time Director of Hungarian Studies. He began his service in July, 1995.

Currently about 20 undergraduate students take Hungarian Studies as a minor area of their specialization. During the fall of 1994, two of our students spent one semester in Szeged as participants in the Hungarian Studies program at József Attila University. An additional 4-5 graduate students and researchers are also studying Hungarian (which is, along with German, currently one of the two central European languages taught at Rutgers).

In 1995-96 the Institute held (in co-sponsorship with CRCEES) a well-attended public lecture series, featuring such prominent scholars as Andrew Arato, György Csepeli, András Gerő, Péter György, Mária Neményi, and Susan Zimmermann. The Institute is also pleased to have co-sponsored with New Brunswick's Hungarian Alumni Association a number of high-quality public lectures in Hungarian.

The Hungarian community of central New Jersey lends strong moral support to the Institute and provides its students with scholarships: In 1996 the Hungarian American Athletic Club will support the participation of one of our students in the Debrecen Summer University program at Kossuth Lajos University; another student will receive a scholarship from the Hungarian Alumni Association in the fall of 1996. Our students and other affiliates also have convenient access to the valuable Hungarian book and document holdings in the library of the Hungarian Heritage Center.

Rutgers University provides skeleton funding for the Institute. The scope of our activities can be expanded only from additional support from governmental, foundation, and private sources, which we are actively seeking.

The Institute is equipped to handle the language and other instructional needs of a much larger number of students than those currently enrolled in Hungarian Studies. Rutgers' consistently high quality in the related fields of the social sciences and the humanities and the presence of our institute makes it a perfect place of choice for students interested in pursuing careers in Central European Studies, Economics, English, History, Music, Political Science, Sociology, Women's Studies *and* Hungarian Studies.

June, 1996.

For further information, please connect Professors Katalin Miklósy or József Böröcz at

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**RESOLUTION OF THE 21ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE
AMERICAN HUNGARIAN EDUCATORS' ASSOCIATION**

AHEA'S AFFILIATE: AMERICAN HUNGARIAN FOLKLORE CENTRUM

WHEREAS, Hungarian educators from the United States, Canada and other parts of the world, convened at Montclair State University for their 21st Annual Conference, April 25-28, 1996, noted with alarm that all levels of Hungarian-language education for the sizable Hungarian national minorities of Romania, Slovakia and Serbia are clearly and presently curtailed and endangered;

WHEREAS, In Romania and Slovakia this endangerment reached the legislative level, when on June 28, 1995 the Romanian Parliament and on November 15, 1995 the Slovak Parliament passed laws discriminating against minority education and language use, thereby clearly violating the basic human rights of the more than 2 million Hungarians in Romania and more than 600,000 Hungarians in Slovakia;

WHEREAS, the nearly 400,000 Hungarians of Serbia's Vojvodina region are victimized by the Serbian government's nationalist policies in the field of education;

CONSIDERING that the above mentioned regressive policies and practices contravene the growing body of international norms protecting the rights of national minorities, including the right to native-language education, as set forth, inter alia, in the European Charter for Regional and Minority Language (Council of Europe, 1992), and in the Helsinki Final Act (1975) as supplemented by the concluding Documents adopted in Copenhagen (1990), Paris (1991), Geneva (1991), Moscow (1991) and Helsinki (1992);

NOTING that, in place of government-sponsored provocation of anti-minority animosities, fulfillment of the legitimate aspirations of national minorities in the field of education can serve to defuse tensions, promote mutual respect and lead to general understanding and harmony benefiting the whole of society; and

RECOGNIZING the United States' and Canada's long-standing position that a government's compliance with international human rights standards, including its protection of the rights of national minorities, are key factors in determining the level of political and trade relations with that country; and

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the specific relevance of the aforementioned issues at the present time, while the U.S. is actively considering the granting of Most-Favored-Nation status to Romania, and both the United States and Canada are active participants in the efforts to resolve the national and ethnic conflict in former Yugoslavia; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the 21st Annual Conference of the American Hungarian Educators' Association

1. DEPLORES the actions by the governments of the Republics of Romania, Slovakia and Serbia which deprive national minorities of native-language education rights, thereby violating their international obligations regarding the protection of human rights and the rights of national minorities;

2. ENCOURAGES the aforementioned governments to adopt enlightened and innovative policies in the field of education designed to embrace and promote, not retard, the maintenance and passing on of ethnic identity, thus actively seeking the support, not provoking the opposition, of these sizable communities;

3. URGES the governments of the United States and Canada and other international bodies to continue to take every opportunity at international forums and in their bilateral relations to encourage the aforementioned republic to comply with their commitments to promote minority language education at all levels; and, specifically

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