



You Cannot Bid...

Petőfi Sándor

You cannot bid the flower not to bloom
When all the urgencies of springtide come,
Girlhood in spring, and love an opening flower,
A maid must bloom in springtime's golden hour.

My dearest heart, I lov'd thee at first sight!
Thy spirit won my heart, for it was bright
With all the smiling beauty of the skies
Caught in the magic mirror of your eyes.

A secret question rises in my mind:
Is thy heart mine, or to another join'd?...
Twin thoughts, they chase each other in my brain
As autumn sunshine chases autumn rain.

Ah, if I knew another's eager lip
Would kiss thy fairy cheek in fellowship,
I would henceforth as exile draw my breath,
Or give my spirit wholly up to death.

Shine on me, then, fair star of happiness,
Amid the darkness of my night's distress!
Love me, my heart's true treasure, love me now!
And God will bless the passion of our vow.

A virágnak megtiltani nem lehet...

Petőfi Sándor

A virágnak megtiltani nem lehet,
Hogy ne nyílják, ha jön a szép kikelet;
Kikelet a lány, virág a szerelem,
Kikeletre virítani kénytelen.

Kedves babám, megláttalak, szeretlek!
Szeretője lettem én szép lelkednek –
Szép lelkednek, mely mosolyog szelíden
Szemeidnek bűvösbájós tükrében.

Titkos kérdés keletkezik szívemben:
Mást szeretsz-e, gyöngyvirágom, vagy engem?
Egymást űzi bennem e két gondolat,
Mint ősszel a felhő a napsugarat.

Jaj ha tudnám, hogy másnak vár csókjára
Tündér orcád tejben úszó rózsája:
Bujdosója lennék a nagy világnak,
Vagy od'adnám magamat a halálnak.

Ragyogj reám, boldogságom csillaga!
Hogy ne legyen életem bús éjszaka;
Szeress engem, szívem gyöngye, ha lehet,
Hogy az Isten áldja meg a lelkedet.

The Hungarian Scout Association

The Hungarian Scout Association in Exeteris requested that we publish this interview with the leader of the Scouting Minstrel Group of Cleveland.

Tábor Matyi, third generation Hungarian-American, leads the folk-dance group which has performed not only locally but has also shown their talents in Hungary. This year, they are planning another 3-week tour to Hungary, Transylvania and the Vajdaság (now part of Serbia). Every year they add to their repertoire the folk dances of two or three different regions. The group makes (or buys) the costumes appropriate to the area. They insist that the members speak Hungarian, and if they use English phrases, the whole group has to do push-ups. Fund-raisers such as selling *beigli* at Christmastime, a *gulyás-lángos* luncheon in November and private contributions help defray the costs of their tours.

For further information, contact them at www.kmcpsz.org.

Széchenyi István – 2

By: Erika Papp Faber

This is the second in our series on "the greatest Hungarian" which we are running during this 225th anniversary year of his birth. Here we look at his family background, the family estate, and how he began his career.

Nagyecenk, a small village 12 km (7½ miles) southeast of Sopron, 70 km (c. 40 miles) from Vienna, with a population of just about 2000 inhabitants as reported last year, is part of the Fertő / Neusiedlersee World Heritage Site. Within its borders, archaeologists have found remains of a Bronze Age settlement, Roman ruins and an Avar cemetery. First documented mention of the village dates back to 1291. But its major claim to fame is the Széchenyi estate.

The Széchenyis were an illustrious and influential family of the nobility, boasting soldiers and even archbishops on their family tree. By tradition, they were loyal to the Hapsburg dynasty, and were related to a number of other aristocratic families. They came into their Nagyecenk property through foreclosure, in the early 1700's, when the financial fortunes of the previous owners, the Draskovich family, could no longer support it.

In the first half of the 18th century, Count Antal Széchenyi had commissioned the famed Austrian architect, Franz Anton Pilgram, to design a castle for Nagyecenk, but these plans never came to fruition in their original form. Nevertheless, they influenced the later building which was completed in 1750. It was inherited by Count Széchenyi Ferenc, who married Festetics Julianna. But because of legal stipulations, they could not move in until 1781.

In his Admonitions to his son Béla, Count Széchenyi István would describe Cenk as "a very expensive establishment".

Today, the Széchenyi estate consists of

1) the Castle, which is now a Memorial Museum, exhibiting Count

Széchenyi István's ministerial study, instruments and pictorial material connected with his regulation of the Duna and the Tisza, and other transportation-related objects;

2) the Stud Farm, located in the East wing, which is now a horse performance research facility; also displayed are four-wheeled carriages and ornamented saddles;

3) the Mausoleum, located in the middle of the village cemetery, where István and his wife Crescentia Seilern are buried, together with 47 Széchenyi descendants;

4) the Linden Tree Avenue – a mile and a half long, intended to be a riding alley, originally lined by 645 linden trees, of which only 461 have survived;

5) tomb of Széchenyi Béla, son of István, who became a renowned explorer;

6) open-air exhibit of narrow-gauge locomotives and trains.

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Count Ferenc Széchenyi, a high-ranking diplomat at the court of Vienna, impressed on his sons an appreciation of the work of the serfs, exhorting them always to respect and protect them. He impressed on them also that their personal wealth had been given to them in trust, and that they would be responsible before God for the way they had used it.

Count Ferenc founded the National Library (today known as *Országos Széchenyi Könyvtár*) in 1802, by donating many thousands of Hungarian-related books, manuscripts, etchings, a map collection and a collection of medals. A year later, his wife donated a mineral collection to the Library. The Library then morphed into the National Museum and the Museum of Natural History. (In his later years, the Germanizing policies of the Hapsburgs caused Count Ferenc to withdraw from public affairs. He suffered increasingly from depression, and turned to religion, praying much in the family chapel. His son István later said that he died without hope in the nation's future.)

Sárvár-felsővidéki Széchenyi István Mária Péter was born in Vienna on September 21st, 1791, the youngest of three sons and two daughters of Count Ferenc. Like most Hungarian aristocrats of the time, the Széchenyis lived mostly in Vienna, and István was taught by private tutors. His education emphasized neither Hungarian culture nor language, and it was rumored that when he moved back to Hungary, he could speak only 24 words in Hungarian.

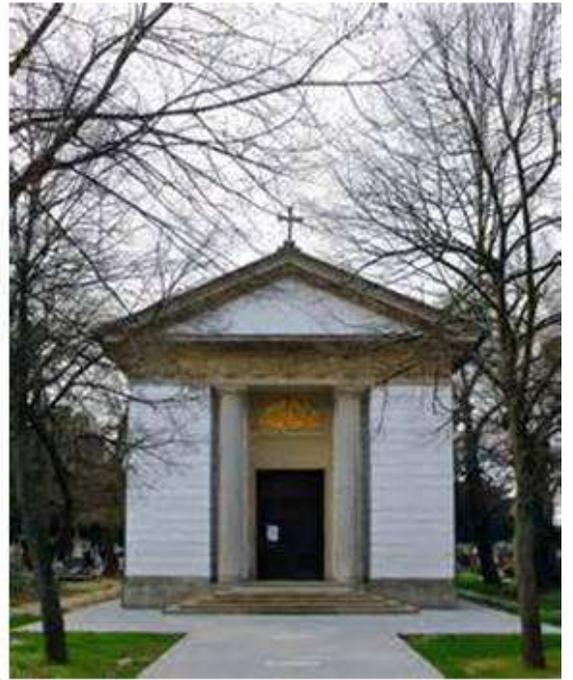
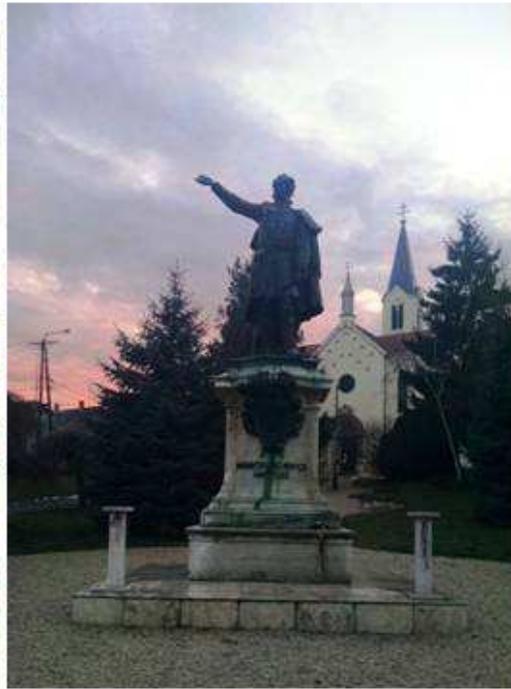
He was a witty, attractive young man, enjoying the gay and luxurious life of Viennese high society, and traveling periodically to France and England. His "conversion", so to speak, came about because he overheard a conversation at a dinner given by a French diplomat in Paris. In referring to István, the diplomat called him "witty but terribly ignorant, wasting his talents and wealth aimlessly instead of using them to benefit his country."

Young Count István was honest enough to realize that the assessment was true. He set about filling in some of the gaps in his education by beginning to read English, French, German and Italian authors, especially British political writings, and studying British conditions in general. He also started to keep a diary, a habit he kept up until the end of his life.

He traveled abroad, to France and England, observing with keen interest their institutions as well as their technical and cultural achievements. In Italy and Greece he studied ancient classical literature, art and archaeology. On his return, he visited the most famous cities in Hungary and Transylvania, which made him realize the cultural and economic differences between Hungary and other countries. This prompted him to work on introducing at home those public institutions which proved to have worked abroad. During this year, we will consider his major initiatives.

Erika Papp Faber is Editor of Magyar News Online.

Nagycenk



The "Zero" Kilometer Marker in Budapest

By: Éva Wajda

Tourists who even notice this landmark find it puzzling, unless they study it close up. Yet it too has a history, and is important in its significance.

The Zero Kilometer Marker's physical location is at the entrance of the Tunnel near the Chain Bridge in Adam Clark Square*, a very busy traffic junction. It is a 3-meter high limestone sculpture forming a "zero" sign with an inscription on its pedestal reading "KM" (for kilometers). It marks the reference point from which all road distances in the country are measured.

The 0 Marker stands on a cube, which rests on top of a circular disc on which one can observe the engraved town and city names and kilometer markings indicating their distances from this point, for instance: Szeged 168 km, Kecskemét 83 km, Szolnok 97 km, Hortobágy-Puszta 182 km, and so on. The sculpture is the work of Bor-sos Miklós and was erected in 1975.

The present-day sculpture is the fourth that marks the starting point of our roads. The other three have disappeared either during the war or for political reasons.

In the 1800's, the 0 stone Marker had initially been located at the threshold of the Buda Royal Palace, but was moved to its present location at the Buda abutment of the *Lánchíd* (Széchenyi Chain Bridge) when the crossing was completed in 1849. It is not known what happened to it in later years.

In the 1930's, Count Festetics Pál proposed that a statue should symbolize the starting point near the Chain Bridge, where the Museum of Commerce stood nearby at the time. Körmendi Jenő was commissioned by the Hungarian Auto Club to create the statue, and on May 7, 1932 the finished work, symbolizing the Patroness of Hungary with a halo on her head,

was unveiled. Sadly, it was destroyed during the siege of Budapest in 1944-1945.

As of 1953, a life-size statue of a worker by Molnár László took its place. It disappeared after the Rákosi era.

After many years, the fourth "0-Kilometer Marker" occupies its present place on Adam Clark Square.

**Adam Clark, born 1811 in Edinburgh, Scotland - died in 1866, in Buda - was the British civil engineer who was commissioned in 1839 to direct the construction of the Széchenyi Chain Bridge, the first permanent bridge over the Danube River. Magyar News Online is planning an article on the construction of the Chain Bridge later on during this Széchenyi Memorial Year.*

Clark twice saved the bridge: first, from the Austrian general who, during the Revolution of 1849, wanted to blow up the bridge; and a second time, from the commander of the Hungarian army who gave orders to destroy it as his troops retreated.

He also designed the Buda Tunnel at the Buda bridgehead that was completed in 1857. The square between



the Bridge and the Tunnel is named for him.

Éva Wajda is a member of the Magyar News Online Editorial Board.



Romance of the Generations

By: Olga Vallay Szokolay

When my daughter was a teenager she once used an inappropriate word or phrase. When reprimanded, she blamed me for being sanctimonious, since everyone was doing the same thing. My response was that it is not "WHAT" but "HOW". That it is like the difference between a love song and a stranger's obscene phone call in the middle of the night... She understood..



Music, fashion, mass media, technology all influence people's tastes, customs and lifestyles over time. Reading novels, poetry, listening to lyrics of songs, even the melodies tell a lot about the style in which men and women, girls and boys respond to each other due to the "slings and arrows" of (not outrageous fortune but) that sneaky little creature called Cupid shooting them from his bow right into the heart...

Or so we were made to believe. Barely more than a toddler, at age four, I was already "in love" with a boy two years my senior. I fast learned lyrics of songs I heard on the radio and was sold completely on their contents. Starry-eyed popular songs had penetrated my mind and I adorned my "beloved" with them like Christmas trees with ornaments.

Yes, I have been an incurable romantic. But I must have had it in my

genes: my parents seemed to melt by love-duets of Verdi and Puccini as well as Johann Strauss and Lehár. They bemoaned the loss of the demolished quaint old part of Buda called *Tabán* where they used to stroll during their long engagement.

But the scenery had changed by the time I came along. So did the songs, dances, and ladies' skirt lengths. All this made me wonder and ponder over the differences of styles and expectations of courtship and romance in the lives of different generations.

My parents, growing up during WW I witnessed the advent of radio, electric lights, telephones, phonographs, airplanes, motion pictures and the automobile. In keeping with fashion, Mom's hair and dresses "shrank" in the 1920's to uncover not only her ankles but – lo and behold – her calves and even knees! Yet Dad was conservative enough to frown at a photograph she posed for with her girlfriend, where they smiled with their teeth showing...

They danced to romantic *Viennese and English waltzes*, maybe even the *foxtrot*. More exotic dances with their roots in 19th century tribal South America such as the *tango*, especially the showy "dip", were considered too erotic, thus avoided. Yet with the exponential spreading of movie theaters, audiences became acquainted with far-away places, and dances like the *rumba, samba, carioca*, began to be popular.

But the soft music of the 1930's was soon mixed with military bands' stirring patriotic sounds and, by the forties, with air raid sirens, bomb explosions, cannon shots and machine gun rattles. Everything around us was in ruins.

Some of us stayed to re-build our homes, our country, our lives, hoping that the political situation would create an agreeable government and a free state for us. Instead, in a few years we woke up to the most atrocious regime of terror, deportations and other byproducts of the Soviet occupation.

Others, mostly within the bond of their employment, had escaped westward, with or without their belongings. Some returned in a year or two, others, knowing that their previous positions or estates would render them "persona non grata" in their homeland, stayed in Austria or Germany, often in poverty, from where they scattered to other countries and continents, becoming "displaced persons" (DP's).

Many children of these two different groups reached puberty in those post-war years. Both faced problems with clothing. While our parents could make do with their remaining wardrobe, we outgrew our old belongings in size as well as in style. We had to be resourceful. At age 13, I started painting signs to replace broken storefronts, making enough money to have clothes received from America altered to size.

When I was 14, our parochial school in Budapest organized the first ever co-ed dancing school in cooperation with our "brother school", under the direction of a prominent dance school's owner / instructor. We learned all the formal and informal dances plus our very favorite: the SWING. This started a series of parties at girls' houses with the participation of the dance school's "classmates" as well as family friends, with music provided by phonographs and 78 rpm records. Those were either contemporary Hungarian pop songs or, if you were lucky, some real American jazz by big bands, obtained from the American Library at the Gresham Palace. It's amazing how we could dance in the raw-rubber-soled shoes of the vogue, again if one was lucky enough to get a pair!

We learned English in school and at private lessons. We eagerly read American magazines whenever we could get them. Anything American was cool but dangerous. It was the unattainable dream world. It was Gershwin's music and Fred Astaire's dancing that we had a chance hearing and seeing in movies until all that was

banned for being "imperialistic". But other foreign films from Sweden and Italy opened our eyes to more realistic lives, lives of teenagers like us who, until then, had not been on center stage.

Most of us had plans to continue our education beyond high school. My conservative father strongly supported the idea, wanting me to be able to have choices for my life, so that I would not have to marry for a living but for loving. Getting married no longer meant being provided for and it ceased to be the career for our future. We had come a long way from Victorian standards, and chaperones had become figures from the past. This, however, did not influence our romantic endeavors.

For years I was immune from getting involved with any exclusive "boyfriend" since the focus of my lopsided adoration had escaped, as did the fortunate ones of his generation, to Austria, then to the U.S. We had a brief exchange of letters but he was too busy with older girls nearby. I was 19 when he (had to get) married. I was devastated. But meanwhile I loved to dance, ski, sail, play tennis, piano, guitar, do artwork and school plays. I was very active socially but attached to no particular person. Although generally enlightened, as a freshman I had to read the chapter on reproduction in my friend's medical textbook, to get authentic, accurate facts-of-life information.

By then, some other girls had steady boyfriends. The word is used here meaning exclusive male companion, spending all free time, appearing at parties and other venues together. The relationship most likely included kissing and petting. Some even got married. Some even divorced.

Some of my friends were involved in premarital sex. That was a dangerous venture since in that day and age there was no reliable contraception, worldwide. Some became pregnant. Some even got married. Some even divorced...

While we had to deal with political survival, our counterparts in Western countries had to cope with fitting in and

sometimes against alien lifestyles. Torn away from their native soil they lived basically the lives of their parents who were trying to maintain, as much as possible, their old traditions. Where large Hungarian populations dated back to the WW I era, the newcomers had little in common with them except the remainders of the language. New York and nearby areas gave home to large numbers of Magyar DP's. They could join already existing Hungarian churches, organizations, clubs, or form their own, arranging dances, even formal balls where young people could readily find suitable company. They skied, partied, played tennis together. Some continued their higher education while living an active social life. Some even got married. Some even divorced...

The DP-crowd, as did their parents, seemed preserved in the pre-war world in their customs and behavior. We, the '56-ers were somewhat embarrassed finding that our slangy vocabulary and very informal behavior was often objectionable by their standards. One carries the stigma of one's time of separation from the homeland. But we both had to survive and we did.

By the time our children came, the two groups had more or less merged. Many of our friends' children joined the Hungarian Scouts, attended Saturday school at the N.Y. City Hungarian House and became debutantes at Hungarian balls. Some found Hungarian girl- or boyfriends. Some even got married. Some even divorced...

But in this TV-fed generation, now in-



Mom (left) and friend sporting a toothy smile; My conservative Dad; Entertaining; Having fun a generation later

termixed with Americans, few married early, to first complete their higher education and get the maximum out of their young, seemingly irresponsible years.

My (otherwise) conservative father had claimed that every woman has the God-given right to become a mother. If she, by age 30, could not find an eligible husband, society should accept her choosing a man, married or not, to give her a baby. He had said this more than half a century before a friend of my daughter's, a lovely, well educated, courageous woman, opted to take matters in her own hands. Having not found an eligible husband, she turned to the sperm bank and had herself artificially inseminated to give birth to a healthy, handsome boy, now a teenager himself.

So the story goes...Some even get married. Some don't.

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The Story of "Cuddles"

By: Paul Soos

February is "Oscar" month this year but one of the greatest character actors of all time never even received a nomination. His birth and death occurred 72 years apart, in the month of February. And now, the story of Cuddles.



The Academy Awards, or "Oscars", is Hollywood's way of recognizing cinematic achievements in the film industry. The film industry has been heavily influenced by the Hungarian input. As a result, Hungarians have been nominated many times and many times have garnered the top awards for Best Picture, Actor, Supporting Actor, Director, etc., etc. Sometimes their Americanized names hide their Hungarian; e.g., Mihály Kertész is better known as Michael Curtiz, the Oscar winning director of "Casablanca."

Paul Lukas, the 1944 Best Actor, was born in Budapest and subsequent Winners Adrien Brody, Rachel Weisz, and Goldie Hawn have at least one Hungarian parent. Hollywood Hungarians, winners and nominees are, indeed, an extensive group. The subject of this article, though 100% Hungarian, was not even nominated for an award but yet is one of the greatest character actors of all time.

Born Gerő Jenő in Budapest on February 2nd, 1883, he took the stage name "Szóke Szakáll" which translates to Blond Beard. He grew the beard to appear older; you may know him as S. Z. Szakáll or "Cuddles." Cuddles (a name he hated) appeared in over 40 of the best films from 1940 to 1955,

many of which were "Oscar" nominees along with the top actors (and winners – Cagney, Bogart, Cooper, Stanwyck, Bergman, Raines, etc.) of the time.

He appeared in, and gained recognition for his supporting roles in four American films before he was cast as Carl, the Headwaiter in "Casablanca," possibly his most famous role. He almost turned it down.

He and his wife escaped to Hollywood from Nazi Germany in 1940. But he had three sisters, a niece, and his wife's brother and sister who died in concentration camps. This may have been the reason he was hesitant to accept the role. Many of the film's cast and crew had either fled or left Nazi territory including Paul Henreid, Peter Lorre, Conrad Veidt, and Szakáll. It was said that during the "La Marseillaise" scene, none of the cast had to be told to show tears.

By now Szakáll had established his screen persona as the cuddly, affable, befuddled grandfather or uncle or loyal friend everyone wants. He fractured the English language with both his heavy Hungarian accent and use of phrases. Two of my favorites are: "Everything is hunky-dunky" and "Keep your hands to myself." But not all of his phrases were English. In "Christmas in Connecticut", he utters under his breath "*csúnya bogár*" (ugly bug) at the housekeeper after an argument. This was actually my favorite role of his. He played Felix the wise confidant to Barbara Stanwyck, who as a chef was ghost-writing her recipes for her homemaker's column and advised that paprika could help any dish.

Cuddles had significant screen time in most of his films but never had star billing, although he was third credited a few times, once behind Judy Garland in "In the Good Old Summertime" (another of my favorites). Yet he was well loved and respected by his peers; it was said he was just as sweet off stage as on. When he was asked for a loan, it was said he merely answered, "Take what you need", without expectation of payback.

He had a loving devoted marriage of 35 years to his second wife, Bözsi (Anne Kardos); his first wife had died two years after marriage. Bözsi would bring Hungarian cooking to the set every day for Szóke — he never developed a taste for American cuisine but he displayed his naturalization papers on his mantle and everything was hunky-dunky.

His humorous 1954 autobiography was entitled "The Story of Cuddles: My Life Under the Emperor Francis Joseph, [Adolf Hitler](#), and the Warner Brothers." It is no longer in print, but may be found digitally.

He died in Los Angeles on February 12th, 1955. Hollywood and the world need more Szóke's.

Paul Soos is a member of the Editorial Board of Magyar News Online, a lay reader at St. Ladislaus R.C. Church in South Norwalk, Connecticut, and a student at the Magyar Studies Hungarian School in Fairfield. He is a former U.S. Air Force Officer.



Cuddles and Barbara Stanwyck in "Christmas in Connecticut"

Snapshots: Marosvásárhely's Palace of Culture

By: Erika Papp Faber

On my first visit to Transylvania in 2006, my friend Piroska had included Marosvásárhely in our itinerary. When I revisited the city in 2011 with my friend Zsuzsa, it was like coming back to see an old friend. Of course, the focus both times was on the Kultúrpalota, or Palace of Culture.

Marosvásárhely, straddling the Maros River, has been the center of the cultural, educational, spiritual, industrial and commercial life of Transylvania. The city was first mentioned in a document dating from 1107. Its fortress dates from the 17th century, built after the previous structure was unable to resist the Turkish-Tartar invasion of 1601.

The mathematicians Bólyai – father, Farkas, who is best known for his contributions to the foundations of geometry, and son János – worked and died in this city. Bólyai János has been called the "Hungarian Euclid" and the "Copernicus of Geometry". He developed the basis of the theory of relativity which Einstein later refined.

Also here is where Count Teleki Sámuel established his famed public library of 40,000 volumes. In 1962, it was combined with the Bólyai Library, and is now officially called the Teleki-Bólyai Library which nowadays was partially supported by the Hungarian Cultural Society of Connecticut.

Marosvásárhely's cultural importance is palpably presented in the *Kultúrpalota*, the *art nouveau* style Palace of Culture, which is the city's best-known landmark. Called *szecessziós építészet* in Hungarian, because it "seceded" from the art forms that preceded it, it was in evidence in the early years of the 20th century (the Budapest Academy of Music being a prime example.) The *Kultúrpalota* was built between 1911 and 1913, and is covered with Zsolnai majolica tiles. Bronze bas-reliefs adorn the outside.

The *Kultúrpalota* is home to a philhar-

monic orchestra, and the concert hall has a very large organ with 63 registers and 4,463 pipes. The building also houses a picture gallery and art museum, a museum of History and the county library. It is decorated with frescoes, mosaics, statues, marble wall coverings and, in the Hall of Mirrors, Venetian mirrors. That reception hall boasts a series of stained glass windows by Róth Miksa depicting folk ballads. (We will deal with his work in our March issue.) "Beautiful Julia" (*Julia szép leány*, The Girl Taken to Heaven) is perhaps the oldest of these, dating back to the 11th century.

The story is simple: Beautiful Julia goes to pick corn flowers for a wreath, when she has a vision of a white ram covered with stars descending on a path that rolled down from heaven, with the moon and the sun between its horns, and a candle on each side of it. It tells Julia it would come for her the next day to take her to heaven. The girl relates the story to her mother, and asks her to mourn for her. And it all happens the next day as foretold.

Ballads are usually tragic, and are related by means of dramatic dialogues. The action is condensed, usually to just one scene, and presents its characters at psychologically important moments. They used to be sung only, with repetition of lines and even of verses. "Beautiful Julia" has pre-Christian and early Christian poetic elements.

Other ballads depicted by Róth Miksa in the Hall of Mirrors are that of Kádár Kata, in which a mother forbids her son to marry the daughter of a serf, and has the girl thrown into a deep lake, whereupon the son drowns himself in the lake too, and their spirits become entwined as flowers, but the mother tears up the plant, thereby killing her son a second time; Molnár Anna, the story of the mother of three children, kidnapped by Ajgó Márton when she does not want to go with him, but she manages to kill him,

and then returns home in man's clothing, and suckles her infant; that of Kómíves Kelemen and the 12 masons who, because they were unable to build up the fortress of Déva, decided to kill the wife of the mason who would be the first to visit her husband, and then mingle her blood into the cement to make the walls stand.

Most of the classical Hungarian ballads were preserved through *Székely* folklore. According to the novelist Nyírő József, "Transylvania always remained the depository of the national characteristics."

If you have a chance, visit Marosvásárhely – it is a treasure-trove of Hungarian culture.

Erika Papp Faber is Editor of Magyar News Online.



The Voice of Romance

By: Jules S. Vállay

Each February brings Valentine's Day, when young people's fancy turns to ... ? See how Cupid invaded even the choir loft of St. Stephen of Hungary Church in New York!

My wife and I were members of the Voice of Faith (*Hit Szava*) Choir within the premises of the Church of St. Stephen of Hungary. The group was called to life by Father Sabbas (Csaba) Kilián OFM in late 1953, and it soon became a new focal point in the life of the parish. When Father Kilián assumed a teaching position at St. Bonaventure University in September 1959, the Choir fell under my musical direction and functioned for the next 30 years.

The choral group's purpose was to support Church liturgy and to sing, by invitation, at Hungarian functions and historical commemorations. In addition to the thousands who had heard its performances, the Choir touched the lives of nearly 150 people who had sung in its ranks throughout the Choir's existence. The group developed into a great social magnet, including eight weddings among 16 of its members. The Choir also performed musical selections at the wedding of 11 other choristers who wed their partners outside the Choir.

During the Choir's existence, six charity balls were held at the church hall as well as at the Hotel New Yorker. These social occasions provided an opportunity for many young ladies and young men to participate as debutantes on the New York social scene, thus enhancing the ties of friendship, the love of music, loyalty to their Hungarian heritage and yes, romance, indeed.

It is interesting to consider that Father Kilián's initial call for a Church choir was answered mostly by middle-aged and older parishioners. Some of those had immigrated following World War I, and found a Hungarian haven at St. Stephen's. Within a few months of "energetic" rehearsals, however, most of those dropped out, leaving the younger generation, also called D.P.'s

(World War II's Displaced Persons) to take their place.

The make-up of the Choir would start to change with the influx of refugees following the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. Some of them brought the "revolutionary spirit" with them and after an initial trial to fit in with the other Choir members, many of them dropped out. Even their church attendance became rather helter-skelter, except for family events and religious holidays like Easter and Christmas which brought them to St. Stephen's.

The first member of the Choir to get



hitched was Evelyn. Her wedding took
Voice of Faith Choir; Jules Vállay with his wife Márta; Jules Vállay

place in a Protestant church and in those pre-ecumenical days, it prevented our participation as a group. We chose to attend the ceremony as individual friends of the bride.

In our youthful exuberance, it was something of a shock to us when a soprano and a bass appeared one day at rehearsal, and Juliette proudly displayed an engagement ring given to her by Richard. When they were married at St. Stephen's, naturally, the Choir sang at the nuptial Mass which, from this day forward, would become a tradition. In a moving testimony to their union, the Choir also sang at their 25th wedding

anniversary. Their eyes, as well as ours, were brimming with tears as we sang "*Minden földek Istent dicsérik*" (All lands praise the Lord).

Two of our "lovebirds" had met at their place of work. The office supply firm in Long Island City had employed many refugees from Europe. Their families also found an apartment near each other in Manhattan's upper 80's. It was a foregone conclusion that they would eventually get married, which they did in a year when another four members of the Choir were wed as well. Sadly, some moved away and some, due to family obligations, had to terminate their Choir membership.

Long-distance love affairs don't usually work out. One of our tenors proved this false, as he had kept up correspondence with his lady-love who would emigrate to the US after a long stay in Germany. Like most couples in our circle, their wedding has lasted all these years, as I just got word of them moving into a retirement home together...

The influx of refugees from the 1956 Hungarian Revolution was beneficial for the Choir, as some of our strongest singers would join us as a result. The regular Friday night rehearsals were not enough to spark romance, so several members, now unofficially coupled with partners, would go out for pizza, or meet at Kleine Konditorei on 86th Street and spend 75 cents for a Sunday afternoon movie.

The heart of a shy young lady was apparently moved by a bold newcomer from Hungary. When the couple appeared in front of Fr. Csaba to discuss their wedding plans, the good priest gave his blessing and said to Sam: "You may now kiss the bride." Blushing a bit, they responded: "Father, if we hadn't kissed earlier, we would not be here now!" Such were the morals of those days...

Another male member of the Choir was an excellent dancer for whom his several attempts at finding a dancing partner within the Choir just didn't seem to jell. He joined a professional dance club where he finally found his sweetheart. The Italian bride insisted on being wed at her Italian church, and a large contingent of our Choir sang at their happy moment.

Hagymatokány

My own wedding took place in June of 1960. The object of my attention was someone who had joined the Choir at age 14 and was, at that time, the youngest member. As in the movie *Gigi*, the young lady grew up before my eyes, and four years later, I proposed to her. At our wedding, the Choir performed my own composition of a Mass. Last year, we celebrated our 55th anniversary.

In February, 1964, the Choir held its 10th anniversary get-together for a picnic and libation, and enjoyed the home movies of Choir activities which some members had taken. In April 1982, augmented by family members, some 100 of us celebrated together at a luncheon.

The love of music and the call of common memories kept us together over the years. Outside forces of this grinding life may tear at us, but Fr. Kilian's boys and girls still keep in touch with each other. Aside from the lofty goals of the propagation of art, faith, patriotism and service, I am sure we would all do it again, anytime – just for the romance of it!

Hungarian-born Jules S. Vállay, a retired telecom executive, is the former organist and choir-master of St. Stephen's Church in New York. He is also the author of historical essays, and is currently retired in Virginia.

Did you know...

... **that** two young Hungarians, Kovalcsik Levente and Szabó Norbert Ádám, just crossed the Atlantic Ocean in a double kayak in 64 days, thus establishing a world record?

The two friends left from the port of Mazagon, Spain, in November in a specially built 6.8 m long and 95 cm wide (22'3" x 3'2") Kele double kayak. The vessel was designed by Reder Ákos and built by Juhász György. This was home to the two brave guys for over two months, enduring the 6,500 km (over 4,000 mile) journey before they landed at Antigua.

... **that** an 18-month old, 31-pound Hungarian-born *Vizsla* named Matka (meaning "mother" in Czech) is the first full time bomb-sniffing K-9 helper employed by the Minnesota State Patrol at the Capitol complex currently under construction? She is playful, approachable and likes attention, and may be petted if permission is asked first. She has been trained to detect explosive materials and is said to be very good at her job. (What did you expect? She's Hungarian!)

... **that** the Hungarian film "Son of Saul" has placed first in the Best Foreign Language Film category in the Golden Globe Awards in January? Is an Oscar next?

... **that** a petition is being circulated, seeking signatures, to ask the Hungarian government to make June 16th an official holiday? It was on that day in 1703 that the longest freedom fight in Hungarian history, that of II. Rákóczi Ferenc began. It went on for eight years, until 1711. (For more details, see the June 2013 issue of Magyar News Online).

... **that** the Hungarian women's water polo team has become the latest European champion, beating the Dutch national team by two goals? This has gained them the right to participate in the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

Simple ingredients can also make a tasty dish, as proven by this onion stew served with polenta and perked up with some slices of slab bacon.

Hozzávalók:

4-5 fej vöröshagyma, só, bors, pirospaprika, 1 evőkanál liszt, 2 dl tejföl, 30 dkg puliszkaliszt, 2-3 szelet füstölt szalonna.

Elkészítése:

A hagymát szeletekre vágom és forró zsírban megdinsztelem, megszórom, megszórom őrölt borssal és kevés pirospaprikával. 1 evőkanál lisztet szórok rá és a tejföllel felengedem.

Savanyítani szoktam 1 kávéskanál tárkonyecettel.

A puliszkához felforralok 1 l sós vizet és beleöntöm a kukoricalisztet. 10 perc főzés után puliszkakeverővel simára keverem és hagyom puffogni még egy keveset, amíg a liszt megpuhul.

A szalonnát apróra vágom és megpirítom.

A hagymatokányt a puliszkával tálalom és szalonnapörccöt szórok a tetejére.

(Forrás: erdély.ma)



Matka



Kovalcsik Levente and Szabó Norbert Ádám,

The Bear King / A medve király - part 1

By: Veress Vilmosné, malomvizi Malom Aranka (1862-1937)

Illustration by Erin Corrigan

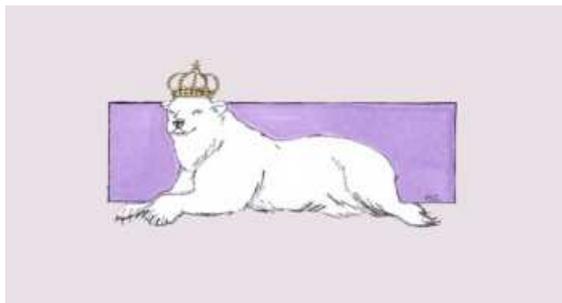
A new Hungarian government program is aimed at strengthening the role of storytelling in education. Live storytelling is to become part of teacher training, and to be considered a literary genre similar to poetry, novels or theater plays.

Here is a story, a fairy-tale, one of 14, written by my grandmother's sister, for her own grandchildren. For the Hungarian original, contact editor@magyarnews.org, and we will e-mail it to you.

Once upon a time, beyond the seven seas, there was a wealthy count whose wife had died and left a little daughter, Lily. The man grieved, not knowing what to do, with whom could he leave his little daughter, because as the king's commander he had to travel a lot and was often away for months. A wicked old woman lived next door who wanted the count to marry her daughter. The old woman was a master of witchery, so she said to her daughter: "If you weren't so ugly, you could make your fortune now. But no matter, I'll see to that."

She went out into the woods, gathered all kinds of grasses, and caught three poisonous snakes and a little fawn. She took the grasses home, boiled and boiled them in a big kettle, and when they were well cooked, she threw in the snakes. Then she said to her daughter: "Eat this, and bathe in the broth."

Then she took the fawn, killed it, and removed its eyes, heart and liver. The girl ate the three snakes, bathed and fell so sound asleep that she didn't wake up for three days. While the girl was asleep, her mother took out her cross-eyed eyes, and replaced them with the beautiful gentle eyes of the fawn; took out her heart and liver, and replaced them with those of the fawn so she would be good-hearted and gen-



tle. But while she was taking out the hearts and livers, she dropped them and when she replaced them, she got them mixed up, putting a liver in place of the heart too, so that she always remained heartless and evil-minded. (In Hungarian, *rosszmájú*, bad-livered, means malicious. Trans.) She washed the girl's face with the blood of the fawn to make it nice and white. She cut off her unkempt hair and glued beautiful black hair on her head instead. "Well, go look at yourself in the mirror now." The girl was amazed at how beautiful she looked now.

It so happened that the count went hunting. The witch told her daughter:

"Listen, go into the woods where the hunters go, and leave the rest to me." The girl went out dressed beautifully, and the witch followed. As soon as the witch saw the count, she turned a somersault and turned into a tiger. The tiger rushed on the girl, as if to tear her apart. The hunters took aim, the count shooting first, and the tiger disappeared as if the ground had swallowed it. But the girl screamed and collapsed, and blood flowed from her arm.

"Woe is me," said the count, "I have shot her instead of the tiger."

Servants picked her up and carried her back to the count's house. They called a doctor who took the bullet out of her arm and told her to rest and she would get better. The girl asked the count to call her mother, and the witch came right away. But she was so changed that even her daughter barely recognized her; she had become such a mild, good old lady. She wailed: "What happened?" and complained how poor she was.

"Don't be sad, I shot her, but I won't let her go again. I will marry her. My little daughter needs a mother. Both of you can stay here, you won't have to worry about anything. You must only watch my little daughter when I have to go traveling."

They brought in little Lily, and he said to her: "Look, daughter, this is your new mommy. Now you won't be alone any more."

The witch said: "Well, go on, kiss your new mommy." But little Lily sensed that this was not a good woman; she did not want to sadden her dad, so she said hello, but then ran to her dad, and fell on his neck, crying.

Time passed. Six months later the count had to go away. He said that now he would be away for a long time, because the king was taking him to war. While the count was at home, Lily had it good, but as soon as he left, they started shoving her, scolding her. When Lily saw that they started wearing her dead mother's pretty clothes and jewelry, she said,

"You're not allowed to touch those, those are mine!"

They beat her then, and shut her into a dark closet. There was an old coachman who loved little Lily. He freed her and took her with him to his house. But the old witch found out, chased away the old coachman, and shut Lily into a worse closet.

But one day they gave a ball and the old witch forgot to take the key out of the lock. A servant passed by that way and Lily asked him to open the door, she just wanted to see the ball, and then she would go back. He let her out, but Lily didn't go to watch the ball; she ran away instead, ran where her eyes took her. She kept running, didn't know which way or where. She finally reached a great wood. She didn't have the strength to go any farther. She sat down at the foot of a big tree and began to cry bitterly. And so she fell asleep.

(to be continued)

It's a Small World....

By: Olga Vallay Szokolay

Hungarians are members of a not-at-all-secret society and pop up in the most unlikely places.

My I-pad misbehaving, I stopped by the Apple Store in the Danbury Fair Mall. Soon I discovered that, in the crowded shop, employees were wearing red tops and some cap or hat of their choice for distinction. My saleslady wore a black-and-white knitted cap. While we were waiting for my baby to re-boot, I noticed a very tall, white-haired-and-bearded, bespectacled salesman next to me, serving another customer. He wore a baseball cap with "Vietnam Veteran" and "Purple Heart" inscriptions embroidered on it.

Suddenly he turned to me with scrutiny, asking about the origin of my accent. With a smile I gave him my typical answer:

"I won't give it away free; you may have three guesses."
He looked at me intently and said he'd probably be wrong but –
"Hungarian"...

I was really shocked and asked:
"How did you guess?"

"Because I am Hungarian too", he said.
He admitted he could not speak the language but heard it from his grandmother throughout his childhood.

"What is the last name?" – I asked.
He looked me deep in the eye and said:
"Schwartz!"

His answer floored me again, since Schwartz is as Hungarian a name as Szokolay is English, yet I knew that there are many Hungarians, mostly Jewish, by that name. To prove this, and to hide my giggle, I told him that the film actor Tony Curtis's original name was also Schwartz, and he was Hungarian.

He replied, "Yes, Bernie Schwartz, and he was my cousin...."

Is this world really that small or are we, Magyars, just all over it?...

Olga Vallay Szokolay is an architect and Professor Emerita of Norwalk Community College



A Pannonia American Hungarian Club Inc. és
A Fairfield-i Református Egyház közös rendezésében:

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2016 Március 13-án 15:00 órakor

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Ünnepi köszöntőt mond: Dr Király Zsuzsanna
A NY-i Magyar Főkonzulátus Vezető Konzulja

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