



MAGYAR STUDIES OF AMERICA
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***We wish all our kind Readers a
Happy and Healthy New Year!
Minden kedves Olvasónknak Boldog Új Évet kívánunk!***

Kéményseprők – Chimney Sweeps

Judit Paolini

Chief among the symbols for New Year's luck was the chimney sweep. While featured prominently at this time of year, the kéményseprők actually had a very practical and essential year round function to keep houses safe.

The need for *kéményseprők* (chimney sweeps) greatly increased with the use of coal to heat homes during the Industrial Age. The burning coal caked chimneys with soot, thus creating an unhealthy environment. Also, soot buildup could catch fire, and set the whole house ablaze. Consequently, it had to be removed regularly.

Kéményseprők were employed throughout Hungary well beyond the Industrial Age. In Budapest, even in the mid-1950's, it was very common to spot a *kéményseprő* walking, carrying a ladder and a long brush dangling from a long coiled wire over his shoulder.

During the summer, less coal was used, for it was not needed for heating homes. Instead, it was primarily used when cooking or



baking. People often had their chimneys cleaned during the summer months.

The job of a *kéményseprő* was hazardous. The task of cleaning a chimney presented danger, for there was very little space inside. It was not uncommon for a *kéményseprő* to get stuck in a chimney, creating great peril. In addition, soot was a carcinogen and after a while, left long-scarring effects on the chimney sweep.

However, with the removal of the grimy soot, clean air returns to one's home. Hungarians believe a *kéményseprő* brings good luck. Upon seeing one, a person would superstitiously twirl a button three times and recite, "*Kéményseprőt látok, szeren-*

csét találok" (I see a chimney sweep, I find luck). Furthermore, welcoming the New Year with a *kéményseprő* is thought to bring good luck for the coming year.

Nowadays, representatives of the municipal chimney sweep service – wearing their traditional top hat – pay a ceremonial visit to the Hungarian President on New Year's Day to wish him – and by extension, the nation – good luck for the upcoming year. At that time, the President pulls one bristle from the chimney sweeps' broom to insure good fortune.

Gas – a cleaner energy source – replaced coal used for heating around the 1960's. Soot is not a big problem as it once was, although burning wood in fireplaces is just as sooty. But it is not as common as in days gone by to see a *kéményseprő* today. The profession has changed some, as better equipment has been developed. But should one need a *kéményseprő*, the internet will provide a list of businesses readily available!

Judit Vasmatatics Paolini is a former member of the Southern Connecticut State University Alumni Association Board of Directors, former lecturer at Tunxis Community College, and a member of the Magyar News Online Editorial

Téli reggel

Áprily Lajos

Ködben ember haladt.
Páncélos hó harsant a súly alatt.

Szakadt a fátyol: hegytetőre ért
Nap villogtatta bükkcserjén a dért.

Gallyak hóbarlangjába cinke szállt,
fény szédítette s egy napos titok,
s dermedt rügy-csipkerózsikák
között dalolt:

- Nyitni fog - nyitni fog - nyitni
fog!...

Feje felett

azúr-kék szajkó-toll csillant a fán
s hókristályos lett kalap és kabát:
a rikoltozva rebbenő madár
leverte rá a cifra bükk havát.

S amerre járt:

hegyek ontották rá a napsugárt
s hó-szikra kápráztatta - milliárd!...

Köd várta lent.

A ködbe visszament
s házába tért derült aszkétaként.

Két szemben a csodálkozás kigyúlt:
- Sötét ember, honnan hozol ma
fényt?

*A man goes up the snowy mountain
one winter morning, where all is
sparkling and glistening white. Birds
hide in the snowy trees, and trill of
opening buds. Returning to be-
low the fog cover, he has
brought some of that bright-
ness with him.*

Áprily Lajos (1887-1967) was born in Transylvania. The poetry of Ady made a great impression on him, so much so that he followed Ady to Paris. But due to his innate shyness, he turned back from Ady's front door, and never met him. He soon went back to Transylvania on account of his aging parents. At first, he taught at Nagyenyed and later became Editor of Erdélyi Helikon, a literary magazine. In order to be able to support his family,

he resettled in Hungary, in Visegrád, but always had pangs of conscience, considering that he had "betrayed" his native land by leaving. Most of his poems deal with Nature.



Getting Ready for New Year's Eve in Brazil

Estevao Arato

We in the States are used to frosty New Year's Eves, with crowds undeterred by the cold gathering in Times Square by the thousands to see the ball drop at midnight. But not everyone lives in the Northern Hemisphere; many Hungarians live in the Southern Hemisphere, with an estimated 80,000 to 100,000 living in Brazil (according to Hungarian government figures, as quoted on the Internet). Their New Year's Eve experience is quite different. Here is a description of Brazilian New Year's customs by a Hungarian who grew up there.

There are many traditions and habits among Brazilians to prepare for a new year and I am going to explain some of them. I think by far the most traditional, independently of economic or racial background is to wear white on New Year's Eve; it means peace and a good way to start a new year and most

Brazilians are wearing that color.

Jumping 7 waves at midnight for the lucky ones who are at the beach is also a very traditional way of starting the New Year; wearing white of course and making a wish during each wave.

Most Brazilians will eat fish on New Year's Eve because it is a belief that it brings good luck, unlike birds (chickens, turkeys) because they scratch backwards and it would mean going "back" instead of forward for the new year.

In order to attract wealth, putting a big bill inside the right shoe before midnight and keeping it until the morning of New Year's Day is also very popular and lots of Brazilians do it.

Furthermore, some people also eat 7 grapes at midnight because it is a belief that this attracts fortune. One thing is for sure – we will observe at least a couple of these traditions to start the New Year.

Boldog Új Évet!

Estevao Arato, son of Hungarian immigrant parents, was born in São Paulo where he was a journalist. He came to the US in 1996 and now works in the hospitality/restaurant business. He attends the Hungarian School sponsored by Magyar Studies of America in Fairfield, CT.



Princess Michael of Kent – The Hungarian Connection to the British Royal Family

Charles Bálintitt Jr.

As we all know, Hungarians are everywhere; we may even have been aware of a Hungarian connection to the British Royal Family in the past. But less well known is the fact that there is a Hungarian connection there even today! Our Editorial Board member Charles Balintitt Jr. explains.

When I was a child, my mother told me that I was a distant relative of the English Royal Family. She would see Prince Charles on television or mentioned in the newspaper and she would say, "That's your cousin". It is true that Queen Elizabeth II actually does have some Hungarian blood running through her veins. Her great-great-grandmother was Countess Claudia Rhédey de Kis-Rhéde (1812-1841). I'm not sure exactly how distant a relative I am. I would guess that it is somewhere in the 6th to 9th cousin range, but I would have to do a lot more research to find out for sure. But I do know that on the Count Rhédey family tree you can find the names Bánffy, Bethlen, Teleki and Tholdalaghy; and in fact Claudia's grandmother was Baroness Bánffy Teréz. I do know that one or, in some cases, both of my parents have second cousins from all four of these families.

Prince Charles has actually been to Transylvania a number of times, has visited some of the graves of his Hungarian ancestors, has bought property there and has become friends with Count Kálnoky Tibor. Tibor has gotten back some property in Miklósvár in the south-eastern part of Transylvania, where he has some guesthouses. (If any-

one is interested in going on a trip to Transylvania and doesn't have any relatives in that truly beautiful area of the world, this could be a very nice place to spend a few days. See Count Kálnoky's Guesthouses on Tripadvisor.com). I did visit there 10 years ago and was taken on a tour by one of his managers. There was a very nice wine cellar with a fire-



place and an old thick wooden dining table. In the dimly lit room I could see the Kálnoky family coat of arms displayed on one of the walls and then as I turned I noticed the Apor family's coat of arms on the adjacent wall. It turns out that we are 7th cousins with Tibor on my mother's side, through one of my ancestors, Apor Péter, who married Kálnoky Borbála in the 1690's.

So actually through the Rhédey connection there are many Hungarians who are related to the British Royal Family. But currently, the closest Hungarian relation to the Queen is the former Marie Christine von Leibnitz, who married Prince Michael of Kent in 1978, making her Princess Michael of Kent. Her father was Baron Günther von Reibnitz and her mother was Countess Szapáry Maria Anna von Muraszombath. Prince Michael is the first cousin of Queen Elizabeth II, being the grandson of King George V and Queen Mary.

The Prince and Princess don't have official positions in the British government. But they have on occasion represented the Queen at certain functions, such as weddings and fu-

nerals, in various countries around the world. They also do a lot of charity work. In recognition of this activity, the Queen pays the rent for their apartments at Kensington Palace, which amounts to £120,000 per year. This as well as large sums of money that the Prince has received over the years from a rich Russian businessman has led to some critical articles about the couple in the British press. But a Russian connection is not surprising, since the Prince does speak Russian and does have Russian relatives. As we learned from History, the grandchildren of Queen Victoria populated many of the other royal families of Europe.

Among them were German Emperor Wilhelm II; Sophia, the Queen consort of Greece; Alexandra Feodorovna, the Empress of Russia, wife of Tsar Nicholas II; Marie of Romania, wife of King Ferdinand I; and Princess Margaret of Connaught, first wife of the future King Gustav VI Adolf of Sweden.

Marie Christine (her full name was Baroness Marie Christine Anna Agnes Hedwig Ida von Reibnitz) was born on January 15, 1945 in the town of Karlsbad in the German Sudetenland region, which is known today as Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic. Three decades earlier, this town had also been known as Karlsbad, but in the Bohemia region of the Austrian part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. She was married (1971) for a short time to an English banker, Thomas Troubridge. They separated after 2 years and were divorced in 1977. Around that time she met Prince Michael at a hunt. They instantly hit it off due to his wonderful sense of humor and their mutual love of history. A month after her first marriage was annulled by the Pope, she married Prince Michael of Kent on June 30, 1978. From that moment on, she was to be officially addressed as Her Royal Highness Princess Michael of Kent. After the marriage, due to her being a Roman Catholic, Prince Mi-

chael lost his right of succession to the throne based on a law that dated back to 1701. However, this was changed a few years ago, and now, by virtue of the Succession to the Crown Act of 2013, he is 45th in line to the British throne.

The Princess was once an interior designer, which she took up again for a while a few years ago, but currently is more involved with certain charities, among them the Cheetah Conservation Fund in Namibia. When she married into the Royal Family she knew that she would have to give up her chosen career and was a little depressed about it. She then spoke to her mother, who suggested that since she studied history in school, she should write about history. As a result, over the last 3 decades she has written five books, three non-fiction: "Crowned in a Far Country: Portraits of Eight Royal Brides", "Cupid and the King" and "The Serpent and the Moon: Two Rivals for the Love of a Renaissance King"; and more recently two novels: "The Queen of Four Kingdoms" and "Agnes Sorel: Mistress of Beauty".

The royal couple has two children: Lord Frederick Windsor, born April 6, 1979 and Lady Gabriella Windsor, born on April 23, 1981. Through their son they also have two very young granddaughters: Maud Elizabeth Daphne Marina, born on August 15, 2013; and Isabella Alexandra May born on January 16, 2016.

Princess Michael has been known to speak her mind and as a result has been criticized in the media on occasion. She actually has a lot of company there. These days with so many ways of instant communication, almost anything a public figure says is transmitted somewhere by someone and more often than not, there is someone out there to find fault with it.

So now we Hungarians have more

than one link to the British Royal Family. Some of us may be quite distant relatives, but it looks like there is a whole other group that now have much closer ties. Is anyone out there in the Szapáry family or closely related to them? Maybe your cousin Elizabeth will take your call or welcome you at the palace. You never know...

Charles Bálintitt Jr. is a working Customs Broker in Lawrence, NY and a member of the Magyar News Online Editorial Board.



Agape at Calvin United Church of Christ EPF

About a hundred community leaders and their friends were invited on December 17th by the Calvin United Church of Christ in Fairfield, CT for an agape, or "love feast" organized by Presbyter Anikó Soltész, Cultural Director of the Church, under the leadership of Presbyter Erika Urszényi.

Starting at 3PM in the church hall, the Pastor, Rev. Tibor Király welcomed the attendees, urging them to love each other, regardless of what denomination they belonged

to. He recommended that the various organizations coordinate events so that their program schedules would not conflict with each other, as has often happened in the past. He also reminded his audience that instead of the 187 families who used to provide for the upkeep of the Calvin Church buildings, a mere 33 families have to bear these burdens today. But as the congregation had overcome obstacles in the past, he was confident they would do so again.

Ladies under the leadership of Erika Urszényi, Director of the Hungarian Bistro operating every Friday at the Church, had prepared a varied buffet of appetizers, followed by stuffed cabbage and desserts baked by various volunteers. A program of poetry recitals and folkdances followed, with Ilona Krasznay Király, wife of the Pastor, being the emcee. She pointed out that we had gathered in the name of love on this third Sunday of Advent, and that the arts – prose, poetry and song – bring us divine beauty.

The program was started off with Csengi and Klaudia Zaborecky, 4-year old twin students of the Fairfield Hungarian School. Wearing red velvet dresses, they sang "Kiskarácsony, nagy karácsony" and "Frosty the Snowman" in which 2 1/2 year-old Emily Szabo joined on stage, but after a few moments took refuge in the safety of Mom's arms.

Olivia Kiss, daughter of Presbyter János Kiss, expertly played several pieces on the violin. "Táncoló fekete lakk cipő", was the whimsical poem presented by Zalán Kovács. Presbyter János Bagyinka, who had built the outdoor oven on the Church grounds earlier this year and who wore a traditional suit with *sujtás*, recited a poem by Juhász Gyula and another poem by an unknown author. Róbert Újj, a Ping-Pong champion, also presented

a poem, this one by Garay Gábor.

Tünde Csonka, winner of the Emerton Prize and a member of the Theater of Győr, sang some Hungarian Christmas songs.

Four members of the Délibáb Dance Ensemble of New York, under the leadership of Nagy Ildikó, performed several regional dances. Members of Tímea Zsédely's Pilvax Art Center of Manhattan, who also owns 10 Thousand Steps Bookstore in lower Manhattan, offered a dramatization of Arany János' ballad "*Rozgonyiné!*".

The entertainment closed with a cabaret piece presented by Judit Sipos, Attila Patkós and Noémi Sáros of Sarasota, FL.

As advertised, the children who had attended were awarded free tickets to a children's theater performance at the Church in March, courtesy of Calvin United Church of Christ.

At the end, the leaders of every club and association were asked to say a few words about the group they represented, which was recorded for airing by Gyula Apatini on the New York Hungarian TV station.

Rev. Király closed the celebration with a prayer for a blessed Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year.

A heartfelt "Thank you!" is due to Erika Urszényi and Anikó Soltész, as well as to each hard-working member of Calvin United Church of Christ, who put on such a wonderful, warm evening of fellowship and showed us all the true meaning of the Christian concept of *agape*.



An Olympic Star Visits Trumbull, CT

Erika Papp Faber

Those of us who watched the 1984 summer Olympics were thrilled to be rooting for a young gymnast named Ekaterina Szabo. For even though she competed in Romanian colors, we knew, of course, that her name was Szabó Kati. We were even more thrilled when she garnered four gold medals and one silver in the City of the Angels.

It is our good fortune to have her sister, Zita Balogh, as our Treasurer of Magyar News Online. So when Kati visited her in December, we were able to talk with her and ask her questions about her career.

On December 27th, some friends of Zita Balogh gathered at the Trumbull Congregational Church to meet her sister Ekaterina Szabo and ask her about her stellar career.

She was born in Zágón (see our "Snapshots" piece elsewhere in this issue) in 1968, and was sent to boarding school in Onesti at the very early age of 5, where a gym teacher noticed her talent. She started gymnastic training in the first grade – for 7 or 8 hours daily! – with the Károlyis among her coaches. At the age of 11, she was sent to a gymnastics training school at Déva.

Kati took part in every available gymnastic competition, and earned every possible medal. At the 1983 European Championship Games in Goteborg, she won a gold in Uneven Bars and Floor Exercise and a silver in Vault. In the World Championships of the same year held in Budapest, she won gold in Floor Exercise and silver in Team, Vault and Uneven Bars.

But her peak came in 1984, at the Los Angeles summer Olympic Games, when Romania was the only Socialist state to participate. There, she earned



a gold medal in Vault, Balance Beam and Floor Exercise, and contributed to the Team Gold medal. She also won a silver medal for All-Around best gymnast. She was the most successful athlete in the '84 Olympics.

She was fortunate in that she had no injuries. She wanted to leave while she was at her peak, and to do something else; so after 16 years, she stopped competing in 1987.

She completed studies at the Sports Academy in Bucharest, and then went to live in France. There she taught gymnastic at a school for a number of years, but then decided to devote her time to her children and taking care of herself. Because her back was affected, and she underwent surgery five years ago, although the doctors had warned that it might not be successful. Unfortunately, the prognosis was correct: today, she still has to contend with back pain. So for the last two years, she has attended physical therapy daily. Nowadays, she volunteers in helping children and seniors.

Kati's biography, "Az ötödik szer – Szabó Kati életei" (The fifth apparatus – the lives of Kati Szabó), written by Csinta Samu is being published now. Her first book signing will be in Sepsiszentgyörgy on January 22nd, followed by one in Budapest on the 24th. The book will be published also

in Romanian, with a book signing in Bucharest on the 26th. A French and an English version are also planned.

Participating at our Trumbull meeting was Szakács Imre, Counselor of National Cohesion from the Hungarian Consulate in New York. He mentioned that Hungarians had followed her Olympic accomplishments with great interest, and presented her with a book about Budapest as a token of the current government's appreciation.

She has been invited to the "M4 – Az Év Sportolója Gála", organized by the Association of Hungarian Sportswriters which honors the outstanding athletes and coaches of the year, to be held in Budapest on January 11th, 2018.

In her birthplace of Zágón, a kindergarten has been named for her, as has a sport center in Sepsiszentgyörgy. Recently, a French gymnastic club asked permission to use her name. And the girls in a gymnastics club in Fairfield, CT, attended by the granddaughter of our Editorial Board member Paul Soos were thrilled to have Ekaterina visit them and autograph their shirts.

(We are proud to have Szabó Kati dedicate a photograph to MNO - see photo with the lead.)



*Meeting Ekaterina Szabo at the Trumbull Congregational Church.
Photos by Debbie Wood Soos*

About a *drótostót*

Tima Dora Irma

Having heard about drótostót all my life, I (EPF) could never picture what a "drótozott" piece of pottery would look like. That is why I was thrilled to spot one in a local museum in Isaszeg some years ago. The curator obliged by taking it out and letting me photograph it.



Until World War II and a short time after, a few traveling self-employed men existed in Hungary. One of those was the *drótostót* (tinker).

They were from Northern Hungary, from Árva, and Trencsény County. Even from their names one can deduce their origin and occupation. *Drótos* (wire) means that with fine wire they made a net over a broken piece of pottery; *tót* is their origin (Slovak, an ethnic group in Hungary), although some *drótos* were Gypsies.

They walked the streets, carrying in their bag all their tools and hollering "Van-e valami drótozní, fótozní való?" (Is there anything broken to fix or patch?)

The work wasn't too hygienic, the holes on the enamel pots they patched with a piece of aluminum. In the middle of the patch was a *nitt szög* (rivet) that they pushed over the hole of the pot. A piece of dough was used as a sealer; they flattened the nail on the other side with a small hammer. Anything could have attached itself to the dough, making it not very safe, but the hole was covered.

At the time, much pottery was used in the households for cooking. Mostly it was used in ovens and brick ovens, but they cracked

from the heat. Due to poverty, housewives were forced to have the pots and mugs wired; there was no money to replace them.

Mothers also used to scare their children if they did not behave – be good, or the *drótostót* will take you. Soon after the war, for reasons unknown, they disappeared from the country.

Dora Tima Irma is a retired school principal, lives in Hungary.

Lentils with vegetables

Lentils are a popular dish for New Year, since they look like small coins, and are therefore supposed to bring wealth. May this recipe bring you good fortune!

1 cup lentils
2 bay leaves
2 tsp oil
1 small onion, chopped
2 large carrots cut up into small cubes
3 celery stalks, cut up small
2 tsp paprika
1 Tbsp tomato puree
Salt
Pepper

Wash lentils. Cook covered with the bay leaves for 25 minutes. Drain lentils, remove and discard

bay leaves. Save some of the liquid. Sauté onions and the vegetables in the oil for about 5 minutes. Add lentils and the spices and the reserved liquid. Cook covered for 25 minutes.

Remove some of the liquid and some vegetables from the soup, mix it with a stick mixer or blender and put it back into the lentils. Mix and serve warm.



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Seeing ***Stars***!

Erika Papp Faber

Folk songs are windows opening on a people's culture, and provide insight into their ways of thinking. Here we present some Hungarian folk songs revolving around stars, and the various ways in which stars are considered.

Our examples will also include a couple of literary references.

In times gone by, sweethearts in Hungary would often choose a star as THEIR special one. Memorialized by Petőfi in his poem "The Four-Ox Cart" (*A négy-ökrös szekér*), he explained this custom in the last stanza, (as translated by Watson Kirkconnell):

In folk songs, this same custom may appear with a different twist, when stars are regarded as mediators of messages. Here is the wartime ditty

„Ne válasszunk magunknak csillagot?”
Szólék én ábrándozva Erzsikéhez,
„A csillag vissza fog vezetni majd
A múlt időknek boldog emlékéhez,
Ha elszakaszt a sors egymástul minket.”
S választottunk magunknak csillagot...

"If we should choose a star," I whispered on,
To little Erzsébet, "the star some day,
If destiny should separate us two,
Will serve to lead us back, where'er we stray,
To a remembrance of the happiest time."
And she was willing, and we chose a star...

"Jóska lelkem, én édes vitézem", which speaks of using the stars as a means of communication (Send me word too over the starry sky):

Jóska lelkem, én édes vitézem!

Hogyha levelem majd megkapod,
gondolj csak az itthoni vidékre,
s megtalálod azt a csillagot.
Üzenj te is nekem,
a csillagos egen,
hogy visszajössz
majd győztesen.
És meghallod ismét
szívem boldog dalát,
hogy vár rád a sírig
hűséges Pannikád.

Jóska, my soul (sweetheart), my
dear brave warrior!

When you receive my letter,
think of these home surroundings,
and you'll find that star.
Send me word too
over the starry sky,
that you'll return
victorious.
And you'll hear once again
the happy song of my heart,
that as far as the grave,
your faithful Annie awaits you.



In the Transylvanian poet Reményik Sándor's "Magyars, everywhere ..." (*Magyarok, mindenütt...*), the stars also serve as an imaginary "mail service" to transmit news among family members separated by the Treaty of Trianon, and he urges them all to "gaze steadily at the same star":

... Magyarok, mindenütt a végeken, Posta nem jár a téli éjeken,	... Magyars, in the borderlands everywhere, No mail goes through on cold winter nights there.
Levél nem száll kedvestől kedvesig, Ércdrótok a hírt nem rezegetik:	No letters from sweetheart to sweetheart fly, No news the metal wires electrify:
Élünk-e még, vagy sírban pihenünk? – Csak a csillagos ég közös velünk.	Are we alive, or in the world beyond? Only the starry sky's our common bond.
Az ezerévnél ősbibb csillagok, Mint Etelközben, fényök úgy ragyog.	The stars more ancient than our thousand years, As in Etelköz*, their light still appears.
Fenn a Fiastyúk őrzi fiait; Mi nagybeteg anyánk virrasztjuk itt.	The Brooding Hen** above guards its young chicks, We're staying up with Mom who's very sick.
Magyarok, kiknek nincsen vértetek, A csillagokra gyakran nézzetek!	Magyars, who have no armor for defense, Look often at the stars with confidence!
Egy csillagra nézzünk mi mind, merőn, Keleten, délen, völgyben, bérctetőn,	Let's all gaze steadily at the same star, East or south, in vale or peak afar.
És érezze, ki rokonához vágyik: Ezer mérföldről azt nézi a másik.	Let those who yearn to be with their kin, know: A thousand miles away they too watch so.
Ha elvész, összeomlik itt a hon: Találkozunk azon a csillagon.	Should our homeland here be lost in defeat, On that very star once again we'll meet.

* Etelköz, located on the northwestern shores of the Black Sea, was the last of the "original homes" of the Hungarians before settling in the Carpathian Basin in the 9th century.

** "Brooding Hen" is the Hungarian term for the Pleiades.

Of course, stars were also used to indicate time. As in the folk song "*Este van már, csillag van az égen*" (It's already evening, stars are in the sky), or in the pop tune "*Legyen a Horváth kertben Budán*":

...Legyen a Horváth kertben Budán, szombaton este fél nyolc után, mikor az első csillag kigyúl, kicsi kis babám hozzám simul...	Be at the Horváth kert in Buda, Saturday evening after half past seven, when the first star lights up my little sweetheart snuggles up to me...
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In the folk song "*Októbernek elsején*" (On the first of October), the second stanza describes the young man's determination to remain a soldier "*míg az égen egy ragyogó csillag lesz*" – as long as there remains one shining star in the sky! So stars were also regarded as being a sign of permanence.

As man's original GPS, the stars are also mentioned in folk songs to indicate direction. There is a very poignant song dating from World War I, from the Isonzo area, one of the bloodiest battlefields of that war, where 200,000 Hungarians and 300,000 Italians lost their lives in 11 battles fought over a period of two and a half years. Entitled "*Kimegyek a doberdói harctérre*" – I go out to the battlefield of Doberdó – the singer looks at the "great starry sky" and asks: "*Csillagos ég, merre van a magyar hazám, merre sirat*

engem az édesanyám?” (Starry sky, which way is my Hungarian homeland, where is my mother mourning for me?)

In a happier vein, there is the folk song

Csillagok, csillagok,
szépen ragyogjatok!
Ennek a legénynek
utat mutassatok.
Mutassatok utat
ennek a legénynek,
nem találja házát
a szeretőjének.

Stars, stars,
shine nicely!
Show this lad
the way.
Show the way
for this lad,
He can't find the house
of his lover.

The stars above are also called on to witness happiness and unhappiness:

Nincsen annyi tenger csillag az égen,
mint ahányszor eszembe jutsz te nékem.
Ha te engem úgy igazán szeretnél,
mélyebb lenne, nagyobb lenne
szerelmünk a tengernél.

There aren't as many (lit.oceans of)stars in the sky,
as how often you come to my mind.
If you really, truly loved me
our love would be deeper,
greater than the ocean.

And then there is:

Sűrű csillag ritkán ragyog az égen.
Az én rózsám szénát kaszál a réten.
Olyan szépen penge-, penge-, pengeti
a kaszáját,
oda várja búbánatos babáját.

Close-set stars shine rarely in the sky.
My sweetheart is mowing hay in the meadow.
He is making his scythe ring, ring, ring so prettily,
he is waiting for his sad sweetheart (to come)

After recounting with what difficulty his mother had raised him, spinning by night and doing laundry by day, this singer relates:

Mikor mentem hazafelé,
megnyílt az ég három felé.
Ragyogtak rám a csillagok,
mert tudták, hogy árva vagyok.

As I was going homeward,
the sky opened up three ways.
The stars shone on me
because they knew I am an orphan.

The Big Dipper is called "*Göncöl szekere*", Göncöl's wagon, the stuff of national myths. Among the nomadic Hungarians who entered the Carpathian Basin in the 9th century, Göncöl was believed to have been a very wise and benevolent shaman, who could speak with the animals and trees and went about helping people and healing their ills. Once, his wagon pole broke, and he asked for help, but the very people whom he had helped earlier would not help him in his need. So he whipped his horses and with his wagon flew up to the sky where his wagon may still be seen.

In this following song, Göncöl's wagon is invoked just as a starting point, drawing a parallel – seven stars, seven lovers – a very typical device used in Hungarian folk songs.

Hét csillagból van a Göncöl szekere.
Hét szeretőm is volt nékem egyszerre.
A hét közül hűséges csak egy maradt,
az is nyugszik temetőben,
egy virágos hant alatt.

Seven stars make up Göncöl's wagon.
Seven lovers I also had at the same time.
Of the seven only one remained faithful (!),
and that one is resting in the cemetery,
under a flowery grave.

The Milky Way (*Tejút*) is also called *Hadak útja* – the Road of the Troops. That name is derived from another legend: When Prince Csaba, son of Attila, was about to die, he told his Székely people that if they were in trouble, they should send him word by fire, water, wind or even the earth, and he would return to help them. The Székelys were in fact attacked and in dire straits numerous times, but when they sent word by wind or flood or storm and lightning, so the legend goes, he returned to help.

The last time, years after King Csaba and his warriors had died, the Székelys were once more attacked. A fierce battle raged, and went for a week. The Székely horses were pounding the ground, sending an S.O.S. And sure enough, Csaba returned with his troops, this time with his "ghost riders in the sky". They helped defeat the enemy, and then returned the way they came, their horses' hooves leaving a visible "starry path", the Milky Way. This is referred to in the Székely anthem, which asks King Csaba to lead his people once again to victory over the "path of stars" (*csillagösvényen*).

Hungarians scattered throughout the world can apply to themselves the words of Reményik Sándor: "Magyars, in the borderlands everywhere ... Look often at the stars in confidence! ...To unite us all, nothing else remains But the stars above twinkling in the night."

Snapshots: Zágón – Birthplace of Mikes Kelemen

Erika Papp Faber

Located some 17 miles south of Kézdivásárhely, Zágón is famous not only as the birthplace of Olympic gymnastics champion Ekaterina Szabo – Szabó Katalin – our interview with whom may be found elsewhere in this issue – but also as the birthplace of Mikes Kelemen. I was fortunate to be able to visit it with my friend Piroska Molnár Haywood, during a three week stay in Transylvania in 2006.

Born in Zágón in 1690, Mikes at 17 became a page of Transylvanian Prince Rákóczi Ferenc II, who led the insurrection against Habsburg rule from 1703 to 1711. When that revolution was put down, Rákóczi was exiled, but Mikes remained faithful to his master. He went with him, first to Poland, then to England and France. He learned French and became familiar with

French culture.

On the principle that my enemy's enemy is my friend, the Sultan offered Rákóczi and his retinue refuge in Turkey in 1717. Three years later, the kuruc "bujdosók", i.e., exiles, were settled in Rodostó by the Sea of Marmara.

Mikes was an eyewitness of the lives of these exiles, which he described in detail in letters to an imaginary aunt, letters that were never mailed. Known as "Letters from Turkey" (*Törökországi levelek*), the collection is a literary masterpiece, a vital source of information about the period covering the 41 years of his exile.

Rákóczi died in 1735, but Mikes remained in Turkey because the Empress Maria Theresa refused his request to return home. But he was favored by the Sultan who sent him as an emissary to the voivode of Moldavia, as close as he could ever again come to his birthplace.

Mikes survived all the exiles. In 1758, he became the leader of the Hungarian community in Turkey, and spent his time in translating works from the French. He died at Rodostó in 1761. A memorial column was set up in Zágón, on the Mikes property, to mark his actual birthplace.





Top: town sign; carved gate over road leading to Zágon. Center: Mikes manor house today. Bottom: tree believed to have been planted at birth of Mikes Kelemen, protected as natural landmark; marker indicating actual location of house where he was born.

Kicsi a világ!

Two people from different parts of the world arrive at the same place at the same time, and There's only one explanation ...

It happened in 2006, on the trip to Transylvania that my friend Piroska Molnár Haywood had organized. With us was a friend from Canada, Agnes DiBalasi, and this day we were headed to Kászonimpér, to see the DiBalasi manor house of her ancestors.

On the way, we saw groups of pilgrims walking to Csíkсомlyó for the annual Pentecost celebration. As we approached Kászonimpér, we saw two men with rucksacks, who seemed like pilgrims too, but were apparently somewhat off the main track. Our driver passed them, and we arrived at the manor house. It was closed, of course, but someone went to find the caretaker with the key.

While we were waiting, the two men we had seen along the road walked up. They too wanted to see the house. The reason? One of them was also a DiBalasi descendent. Although they were not aware of each other's existence, he and Agnes were actually related!

As we went inside, there was a family tree on the wall, and they could see their names inscribed!

If this was in a book, the reader would shake his head and say, "A writer can concoct anything!" But no, this actually happened, because ...

... It's a Small World!



DiBalasi manor house, Kászonimpér



Agnes with her new-found relative

Did you know...

... that we have items ranging from Roman times to the ultra-modern world of robotics?

... that January 6th marks the 40th anniversary of the return of St. Stephen's Holy Crown from the United States to Hungary? The Crown was taken to the U.S. after WWII for safe keeping. It was held at Fort Knox under guard, and it was President Carter's decision to send the Crown back to Hungary, with the one condition that the Crown could not be taken out of Hungary.

The Holy Crown was at *Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum* (Hungarian National Museum) until January 1st, 2000, when it was transferred to the *Parliament*, and can now be viewed there.

... that the Hungarian *gulyás leves*, the 240 year-old Porcelain of Holloháza and the Order of the Paulines (the Pálos Rend - the only men's religious Order founded in Hungary) became a Hungaricum on December 6, 2017? (A "Hungaricum" is a traditional product or institution that is unique and indigenous to Hungary, and is protected by law.) These have brought the number of products and institutions in this category to 70.

... that a votive column has been set up in Óbuda, honoring Hadrian for the 1900th anniversary of his assuming the office of Roman Emperor? His Hungarian connection was that, before assuming the emperorship, he had been governor of Aquincum, the former Roman settlement which he had raised to the status of city, and which is located in what is now northern Budapest. The column, a copy of one found in a Roman villa, was dedicated on December 18th, 2017.

Excavating for new construction in and around Budapest, most contractors find Roman ruins, vestiges of the Roman Province of Pannonia. Their work is often slowed down by the need to find a viable solution to preserve them.

... that the city of Győr has been chosen to host the 2019 World Robotic Olympiad? Eligible to participate will be students between the ages of 7 and 25, who will be challenged to build robots that

"can navigate obstacle courses,
take on unique challenges or win

a game of robot football."
This year, the Hungarian team
won second place in the Advanced

Robotics Challenge category in
Costa Rica.

