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Minden Édesanyának boldog Anyáknapját kívánunk! Happy Mother's Day!

Az Anyák

Szabó Lőrinc

Csak egy voltak kivétel, az Anyák.
Szentek és ápolónők: a csodát,
a jelenést láttam bennük. A nagy
odaadást, az aggodalmakat,
a virrasztást, a könnyet, s mind, amit
a nő szenved, ha otthon dolgozik,
a gondviselést. Hogy testileg mi a
férj, feleség s a család viszonya,
nem sejtettem-kutattam. Valami,
éreztem, előre elrendeli,
ki hol álljon, mi legyen, öröme,
bánata mennyi, milyen gyermeke,
és ezen változtatni nem lehet.
A férfi maga küzdi ki szerepét,
a nők az eleve-elrendelés:
ők a béke, a jóság, puhaság
a földön, a föltétlen szeretet...
Anyám, nyujtsd felém öreg kezedet!

*gáborjáni Szabó Lőrinc (1900-1957)
was a poet and literary translator. He
received the prestigious Baumgarten
Prize three times, translated several
works of Shakespeare, Goethe,
Beaudelaire, Villon, Thomas Hardy's
Tess of the d'Uberilles.*



Szabó Lőrinc statue in Debrecen

Anyák napja

Palócz Endre

Természetesen nem véletlen, hogy Anyák napja abban a hónapban van, melyet általában az év legszebb hónapjának tartunk – legalább is a föld északi felén. Amikor a föld és a természet már felébredt a téli dermedtségből; a feltámadás tavasz ünnepe is mögöttünk van már, de a száraz, forró nyár még semmit sem fakíthatott az éppen csak új életre kelt természet üdeségén, frissességén.

Május az erőre kapó, diadalmas, új élet ideje – jelképe, és ezért ünnepeljük Anyák napját egy májusi vasárnapon.

Mert élet és szeretet valahogyan rokon fogalmak; egyik sem létezhetik a másik nélkül. A szerelem, a szeretet készlet arra, hogy új élettel gazdagítsuk Isten teremtett világát, az élet pedig az egyetlen lehetőség a szeretet beteljesülésére.

Valaki abban foglalta össze az anyák szerepére vonatkozó gondolatait, hogy ez a szó „édesanya” csupán egy másik kifejezési forma a szeretetre. De a két szó lényegében, tartalmilag azonos fogalmat takar.

Úgy érzem, szeretetünknek és megbecsülésünknek egyaránt méltó kifejezésére lesz, ha Anyák napján ezzel a gondolattal üdvözöljük az Édesanyákat köszönetként mindenért.

Magyar Ismertető 1978 május

Palócz Endre was an Accountant, the Father of our Associate Webmaster Zsuzsa Lengyel.

Good-bye to László Hámos

It is with great sadness that the Board of Trustees of the American Hungarian Library and Historical Society announces the passing of László Hámos, the President of our Library. László, passed away in New York City on April 16, 2019 after courageously fighting a long illness. He was surrounded by his family, whom he loved so dearly. He is survived by his wife – and fellow trustee - Zsuzsa, children Julia and Daniel, parents Margit and Otto, brother Árpád, extended family and countless dear friends throughout the world.

Mr. Hámos was born in Paris on June 22nd, 1951 to Hungarian parents. He was President of the American Hungarian Library for several decades, a position he assumed from his father, Dr. Otto Hámos, an original founding member in 1955 and current Honorary President. The Library is a co-owner of the Hungarian House in New York City and László worked tirelessly to preserve and maintain this physical Hungarian cultural institution in the City.

He was a driving force in numerous other Hungarian-American organizations, always keeping the fate of ethnic Hungarian minorities living in the Carpathian Basin in the forefront. This important work he accomplished by co-founding and leading the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation (HHRF) for the past four decades. László's commitment to serving a wide variety of Hungarian causes was unmatched, and his accomplishments on behalf of these causes was recognized on both continents.

László touched many lives, both directly and indirectly. He leaves an

enduring legacy of leadership, vision and pragmatism that will inspire and benefit many generations to come. A community leader, protector and promoter of Hungarian culture, the entire Hungarian nation mourns his sudden passing.

We at the American Hungarian Library are grateful for his leadership. He steered the Library and the Hungarian House through difficult times to preserve them as bastions of Hungarian culture in North America. While we will strive to honor his



memory, we recognize that he is leaving behind an unfillable void.

GYÁSZJELENTÉS: Hámos László

Az Amerikai Magyar Könyvtár és Történelmi Társulat fájó szívvel tudatja, tagságunk, támogatóink és közösségünkkel, hogy Elnökünk, Hámos László, hosszas, de türelemmel viselt betegség után, váratlan hirtelenséggel, szeretett családjá körében, vissza adta lelkét Teremtőjének, 2019 április 16.-án New York City-ben. Gyászolja felesége és igazgató társunk Zsuzsa, valamint gyermekei Júlia és Dániel, szülei Margit és Ottó, bátyja Árpád, nagy

családja és számtalan barátja Észak Amerikában, Európában és világszerte.

Hámos László 1951-ben született Párizsban. Az Amerikai Magyar Könyvtár elnöke volt több évtizeden keresztül, vezetését Édesapjától, Dr. Hámos Ottótól vette át, aki a Könyvtár egyik alapítója volt és jelenleg is Tiszteletbeli Elnöke. A Könyvtár a new yorki Magyar Ház résztulajdonosa és László ott is igazgatósági tag volt. Sokat segített a Magyar Ház felújításában és a New York államtól kapott pályázati támogatás kezelésében.

László mindenképpen megemlékező életműve a Magyar Emberi Jogok Alapítvány (HHRF) megalapítása és annak nagyon fontos munkája, melyen belül a Kárpát-medencében, kisebbségben élő magyarok emberi jogainak védelmezése volt. Ezen felül, László több magyar intézményben és alapítványban vállalt vezető szerepet, amelyet úgy Magyarországon, mint a diaszpórában élő magyar szervezetek kitüntetésekkel ismertek el. Halála pótolhatatlan úrt hagy az összmagyarság számára.

Hámos László személyében és munkásságán keresztül, számtalan ember életét megérintette és segítette, szellemi hagyatéka hosszú éveken át megmarad a magyar közéletben és a közösségek emlékezetében.

Az Amerikai Magyar Könyvtár és Történelmi Társaság hálóját fejezi ki Hámos László több évtizedes vezetéséért, kritikus években. Intézményünk elkötelezett, hogy elhunyt igazgatónk szellemiségét megőrizze és tovább adja a jövő amerikai magyar generációknak, hiszen tudjuk László fontosnak tartotta a magyar kultúra egyik utolsó fellegvára fennmaradását New Yorkban.

Explorer Sass Flóra – Florence Baker – part 3

Eva Wajda

In the previous instalment, we had followed Sass Flóra and Sam Baker through the Nubian Desert. Here they continue their expedition in search of the origin of the Nile.

Sass Flóra and Sam Baker left Berber on June 10th, 1861 with a new group of porters, two Turkish soldiers as attendants along with several others. Mahomet the *dragoman* (interpreter and guide) stayed on, but thought his employers lost their senses to venture on such a "useless" journey. Their heavy baggage of 28 individual pieces had been sent ahead by boat from Berber to Khartoum so they could travel lighter. This time Florence and Sam journeyed on donkeys, which walk more rapidly than camels, but had greater need for water and forage. The heat was dreadful, the *simoom* was worsening and both Sam and Florence suffered from attacks of malaria, heatstroke and dehydration.

Florence was an able seamstress; she sewed their comfortable garments. Her trousers were loose and her long shirt covered her arms, much cooler than a dress or blouse and skirt would have been. Her face was protected by a broad brimmed hat. Sam's clothes were similar.

The weather grew cooler and more humid as the rainy season approached. They reached the junction of the Atbara and the White Nile which was a broad river of sand with occasional pools of standing water, thick with crocodiles, turtles, fish, gazelles, hyenas, birds and wild asses, all crowded into the few waterholes in the dry season, as were the goats and sheep of the local Arabs. The largest pool was about a mile in length, some 160 miles from the junction of the Atbara and the

Nile. Now the expedition was freed from carrying enormous supplies of water since it became available by digging in the sand.



Sam Baker (lazarus.elte.hu)

Sam had a long-standing wish to hunt hippos and the opportunity presented itself when he came across several in shallow water. They were raiding the melon patches of the natives and killed a man. Sam shot a very large and a smaller one, after which 300 Arabs came running with knives and, with Sam's permission, began to butcher them. Men stood knee deep in hippo intestines and fought over choice bits, women were hacking off fatty meat for their families. Uneaten meat was dried, hides were tanned to make *girbas* (pouches that hold water), bones were pounded to remove marrows and the rest was cooked for soup. The Arabs were grateful for the meat supply.

On the night of June 23rd, the rainy season arrived suddenly and unannounced. It started with an ominous rumbling and in the darkness, Arabs were shouting "*El Bahr! El Bahr!*", "the River, the River!" The camp awoke. Many people had been sleeping on the clean sand of the river and rushed to the riverbank for safety.

Within minutes a massive wall of wa-

ter came charging down the riverbed like a locomotive. Within days, the barren desert blossomed with leaves and flowers and fruits, animals and birds gave birth. The rains were pouring into Abyssinia.

After six days of marching from the junction of the Atbara and the White Nile, about 220 miles, they arrived in Gozejarup, a village inhabited by Bishareen Arabs, the largest Arab tribe in Nubia. Gazerajub was appalling. The people had no regard for sanitary habits. Human waste and garbage contaminated the river that people drank from and washed in, no one dug latrines, no one bothered to get drinking water upstream of the village. Sam and Florence drank only boiled milk which was scarce despite the large number of cattle. The villagers gave lame excuses to the Turks as to why milk was scarce until they lost patience and beat the villagers with a hippo hide whip known as a *coorbach*, freely, cruelly, and randomly. After that, milk became available. "They said why pay good money for something when with force the same result can be achieved." Violence was a primary medium of communication along the River.

Florence had befriended a little girl about 3-4 years old, whose mother invited her to an important ceremony. The little girl sat in the middle of a circle of women in a hut and the ritual of circumcision began. Florence was horrified, felt sick and left, trying to shut out the gruesome vision. A young girl explained to her proudly that all the tribes from Casala to Berber perform this procedure on their women, because no man would marry a dirty woman who had not been circumcised. Because an uncircumcised wife could take many lovers without his knowing. Florence had nightmares afterwards and was ill for several days.

Sam began looking for fresh camels to continue their journey, but the Arabs flatly declined to hire out their animals. The Turkish soldiers again

solved the problem by seizing as many camels as were needed, plus their owners as camel drivers. They arrived back at the banks of the Atbara and wanted to spend the winter months in the village of Sofi on the other side of the River. There was a crude ferry to transport people across but the animals had to swim. Camels are reluctant to swim in the water and to avoid the ordeal of shouting, beating, and pulling and pushing the beasts into the water, the camel men and their charges absconded during the night.

The replacement animals were stubborn and out of control, with irritable temperaments and bad habits, bolting through thorn bushes and leaving Sam bleeding, his clothes torn, and nearly naked. Weeks later they were loaned a pair of genuine *hygeens* by another sheik. These camels were pure white with swift, smooth riding gaits that left the baggage camels far behind.

Rainstorms grew more frequent as they moved southward. The thunder at night made sleep impossible and rain fell like a waterfall into their tent, soaking Florence and Sam in their beds. The large flat feet of the camels sank into the mud so they could no longer walk. So they stood until the camel men cleaned their feet.

At Sofi, Sam bought an empty hut and had it moved close to the banks of the Atbara. Florence lined the inside of the hut with canvas to keep the insects and snakes out of the living space. Maps, guns, instruments, sewing notions were suspended in nets and in baskets attached to the canvas to protect them from ants and termites that ate everything. The camp was cozy and functional.

But the rainy season washed their comfort away. Horseflies, tsetse flies, mosquitoes and all sorts of stinging or biting insects hatched by the millions. Insects transformed a cup of coffee into a wiggling thick soup before it could be drunk. People and animals were covered in welts and sores from biting flies. Ox peckers and egrets stood on animals' backs

and picked at the sores removing lice, but also enlarging the wounds. The donkeys refused to graze in the open, preferring to stand in dense smoke clouds produced by burning grass and sticks. Fever struck hard. Sam was doctoring the men and tending to Florence who suffered from a gastric attack and stayed in bed for nine days. An outbreak of boils infected everyone. Sam mixed gunpowder and sulfur with water and fat to make an ointment, and this seemed to work.

Sam and Florence decided to move on, as the rainy season was coming to an end. They left Sofi, crossing the River again. In the new camp, Sam fished and hunted. Florence made him some tough gaiters of gazelle skin that protected his lower legs from the sharp barbed grasses and thorn bushes. Many of the men fell seriously ill with fever and some died.

On August 17th, 1861 they went further down the Settite River. In October, more rain fell and more men became ill. Everything began to mold, rot, and mildew – clothes, leather, canvas, pages of books. And there was mud everywhere. They were trapped, unable to move at all.

Sam and Florence traveled and hunted along the Settite River. One day Sam went hunting with several men and when he did not return later that day Florence became worried. While dinner was being prepared, she scanned the landscape for a sign of them. It was getting dark, and Sam's horse cantered into camp in a lather; his skin and saddle were scraped and scratched, his rider gone.

Florence was frantic with fear. When darkness fell, she ordered the men to build a fire so it could be seen from a long distance, and she posted sentries in all directions to watch for the hunting party. She took her little Fletcher rifle and with a few men armed with swords and lances, set out to find Sam. At intervals she would fire the shotgun, listening for a reply. When at 9 p.m., three hours later, she fired her rifle again, there was an answering whistle. It was Sam! Florence

and the men shouted and fired repeatedly, and she heard the whistle again. They kept doing this, and the sound guided Sam and his party in the darkness. Finally, they appeared and Florence rushed to embrace Sam. They walked three miles back to camp. Sam explained that, while they were chasing elephants, his horse stumbled and did a complete somersault. Sam was thrown on the ground. The gun bearers thought Sam would die and ran off, but returned when they saw he was alive. They were 17 miles from camp and were lost until they heard the rifle shots that guided them in the right direction.

On May 19th, 1862, a year after leaving Korosoko, Sam and Florence evaluated their progress with pride. They visited every river that flowed into the Nile from the east: the Atbara and its tributaries, the Settite, the Salaam, the Angarep, and the Royan. They also followed the Rahad and the Dinder. They traveled hundreds of miles on unknown river systems, made detailed observations on the climate, terrain, the people and animals and plants. They had hired and managed a large crew of natives, put down several mutinies, mastered the riding of camels, horses, donkeys, and collected specimens of mammals that inhabited that region of Abyssinia. Although they suffered many fevers and ailments, as could be expected, the expedition was a success, and so was their partnership.

They continued their trip to Khartoum, but as they drew closer, their journey became close to unbearable. They were tired and worn out, emotionally and physically. On June 11th, 1862, they arrived at Khartoum.

(to be continued)

(Sources: To the Heart of the Nile by Pat Shipman In the Heart of Africa, by Samuel Baker)

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

Swindler with a Heart of Gold

viola vonfi

"Róbert bácsi" was a household word in Budapest in the 1920s. When the City government was no longer able to finance the soup kitchens necessitated by post-World War I conditions, Robert Feinsilber, a Turkish citizen born in Yemen and wearing Russian garb offered to take them over, to be financed by his "Dutch wealth". The offer was gratefully accepted, since providing a hot lunch for 60,000 to 70,000 poor people every day became an ever heavier burden in those difficult economic times.

Originally set up in Kálvin tér, *Róbert bácsi* served a hot meal to the victims of the economic crisis caused by World War I and its aftermath – the unemployed, the poor, those repatriated from the territories cut off by the Treaty of Trianon. He convinced the markets and restaurants of Budapest to donate their leftover food to his (eventually four) soup kitchens. Those who were hesitant he convinced by telling them he would arrange to have their names inscribed in Budapest's "Golden Book". Later on, even the military barracks donated their leftovers to him.

The newspapers quickly picked up his story, presenting him as the "apostle of the poor". Meanwhile, he recruited young men who could give a convincing spiel to approach the wealthy for monetary donations. When the wife of the Regent donated a thousand *pengős*, *Róbert bácsi's* agents spread the news among the aristocrats, each of whom wanted to outdo the Regent's wife.

Róbert bácsi was a superb PR man, and was not shy about blowing his own horn, always with the caveat that his own resources were seriously diminishing. That always

prompted another outpouring of financial assistance.

Meanwhile, he had rented a posh suite in the Hotel New York in Pest – perhaps comparable to the Waldorf Astoria – and lived the high life, often traveling abroad, which no one thought to investigate. Nor did anyone question where the money came from to pay the cooks, the people who delivered the food and those who served. Until 1930, when he was accused by two brothers of having extended loans to them at the usurious interest rate of 25%.

Then his "charitable" work began to unravel. It was found that his charity did not extend to the less unfortunate. Providing credit at such high rates, and pocketing the donations made to his soup kitchens, *Róbert bácsi* became quite wealthy, owning seven apartment houses and two family houses in Budapest, as well as hefty savings accounts in London and Vienna. What's more, the Budapest "Golden Book" did not exist!

Since so many wealthy donors, including the Regent's wife were involved, the matter was handled with the utmost discretion. No charges were put forward, on the trumped up excuse that since he was a Turkish citizen, he could not be called to account. He was merely expelled from Hungary.

He settled in Vienna, and as *Onkel Robert* opened an office to help the police deal with suicidal people, something he had also done in Budapest before opening the soup kitchens. But the same scenario as in Budapest was repeated in Vienna, where he was found to extend credit to troubled busi-

nesses at exorbitant rates.

His Turkish citizenship helped him to survive the persecution of the Jews. He became homeless, having lost his wealth, and finally was taken in by a Viennese woman who gave him a room. He died at 92 in a mental institution, in the mid-fifties. According to his own words, he did not steal from the poor, always providing them what they needed; he merely managed well "the crumbs" that the wealthy offered. Nevertheless, he provided a much-needed social service in a time of great poverty.

Source: Wikipedia

viola vonfi is our correspondent from Stamford, CT. She finds it amusing that one of her ancestors was knighted by Wallenstein during the Thirty Years' War.



Róbert bácsi being helped by Petrás Sári, operette diva

Too Much Talent?

Olga Vállay Szokolay

Imagine a large meeting of international conductors in the 1960s. The Master of Ceremonies, taking the podium announces: "Would the Hungarian-born Maestro please step forward?"

Not one, but about half a dozen would have stepped forward: George Szell, Eugene Ormandy, Antal Dorati KBE, Sir Georg (sic, pron. "George") Solti, and Zoltán Rozsnyai.

All of them handled their batons like magic wands at the helms of world-famous U.S. orchestras.

Anybody might rightfully ask: how could a country of about 10 million produce this much talent to export? It has never been established what the ratio between conductors and population could or should be. How many world-class musicians can a country support? You decide.

GEORGE SZELL (Széll György), was born in Budapest on June 7, 1897 but grew up in Vienna. His family was of Jewish origin but converted to Catholicism. George was brought up a Catholic and taken regularly to Mass. At age 11, he began touring Europe and debuted in London as a pianist and composer. Newspapers declared him "the next Mozart".

But he preferred the artistic control he could achieve as a conductor. While vacationing with his family at a summer resort, he made an unplanned public conducting debut at age 17, when the Vienna Symphony's conductor had injured his arm, and Széll was asked to substitute. He quickly became a full-time conductor. At 18, he won an appointment with Berlin's Royal Court Opera (now *Staatsoper*). There, Richard Strauss, completely impressed by a teenager performing his music so perfectly, befriended him. His later repertoire came mostly from Austro-German classical and romantic com-



posers like Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, through Mendelssohn, Schumann and Brahms to Bruckner, Mahler and Strauss.

He married twice. The first union ended in divorce after six years, the second lasted from 1938 to his death. In his free time, he was a gourmet cook and an automobile enthusiast.

In the post-war years, the *Cleveland Orchestra* was well respected but undersized. In 1946, Szell was asked to become its Music Director. He took and held the post with utmost perfection for 24 years, until his death, and his name remains synonymous with it.

Szell is widely considered one of the 20th century's greatest conductors. He died of bone cancer at age 73 on July 30, 1970.

EUGENE ORMANDY, son of Blau Benjámin, Jewish dentist and amateur violinist, and Rozália, was born on November 18, 1899 in Budapest, as Blau Jenő. He began studying violin at the Royal National Hungarian Academy of Music at age five, gave his first concert at age seven and, studying with Hubay Jenő, graduated at 14 with a master's degree. In 1920, he obtained a university degree in philosophy.

In 1921, he moved to the U.S. and changed his name to Ormandy.

He was first engaged as a violinist in the 77-player ensemble at the Capitol Theatre in New York City. They accompanied silent movies. In five days, he became concertmaster, and soon one of the conductors of the group. In the 1920s, he made several recordings as a violinist. In 1931, he was asked to stand in for his idol Arturo Toscanini, who was too ill to conduct the Philadelphia Orchestra. This

led to his first major appointment as a conductor, in Minneapolis.

There he served until 1936, when he started with the *Philadelphia Orchestra* as Associate Conductor under Leopold Stokowski. After two years, he became its Music Director, conducting from 100 to 180 concerts each year. He was a quick learner of scores, often conducting from memory and without a baton. After his legendary 44 years in Philadelphia he retired in 1980, when he was made Conductor Laureate.

Ormandy died of pneumonia at his home in Philadelphia, on March 12, 1985 but innumerable recordings, some of which are still considered the best version of certain works, have immortalized his life and career.

ANTAL DORATI, KBE was born on April 9, 1906 in Budapest. He was the son of two professional musicians: Doráti Sándor, violinist with the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra and Kunwald Margit, piano teacher.

He was a child prodigy: at an early age he learned to play the cello. At 12, he started composition lessons with Weiner Leó, later Kodály; composed three youthful operas before entering the Academy of Music at age 14. In 1924, he was *repetiteur* at the Budapest Royal Opera House and soon even conducted there.

In 1928, Dorati went to the Dresden

Opera, then to Muenster, until 1933. In the 1930s he joined the conducting staff of the *Ballet Russe* in Monte Carlo and was also guest conducting in Europe and America. In 1941, he was named Music Director of the American Ballet Theater where he demonstrated his ability to build an orchestra. He also revitalized the *Dallas Symphony Orchestra* during his 1945-49 tenure. During that time, he became an American citizen.

Dorati spent a significant period (1949-1960) at the helm of the *Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra*, followed by 4 years with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, then the Stockholm Philharmonic from 1966-1970. Then he returned to the U.S. to be with the *National Symphony Orchestra* in Washington, DC, and during 1970-1977 he rescued them from bankruptcy. After four years with the *Detroit Symphony Orchestra* and the *Royal Philharmonic Orchestra*, Queen Elizabeth II made him honorary Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1983. This entitled him to use the post-nominal letters KBE, but by convention, honorary knights do not generally use the "Sir" unless they subsequently acquire UK citizenship. His wife, Ilse von Alpenheim was an Austrian pianist.

He made nearly 600 recordings, including all 106 Haydn symphonies, with the Philharmonia Hungarica.

Dorati died on November 13, 1988 in Gerzensee, Switzerland.



George Szell, Antal Dorati KBE, Eugene Ormandy, Zoltán Rozsnyai, Sir Georg Solti

SIR GEORG SOLTI was born on October 21, 1912 in Budapest, as Stern György, one of five children of Stern Móricz and Rosenbaum Teréz. To improve his career opportunities, the father changed the family name to the Hungarian-sounding Solti.

Although György had a sense for music, *he was no child prodigy* and preferred playing soccer to the piano lessons his mother insisted on. It was *her* relentless prodding that kept the child in the world of music. He had to

attend concerts where he had the privilege of hearing Vladimir Horowitz as well as Rachmaninov at the piano. By his own admission, at age 12 he fell asleep during a performance of Wagner's *Meistersinger*. The first symphonic work that caught his attention at age 14 was *Beethoven's Fifth Symphony* conducted by Erich Kleiber. The monumentality of the performance mesmerized him to the point of deciding that instead of becoming a pianist, *he wanted to be a conductor*.

Upon graduating from the Academy of Music, he started working without pay at the Budapest Opera. In 1936, he visited the Salzburg Festival where the following year, he managed to get employed as *repetiteur*, again without pay. At the time of a performance of the Magic Flute, both Toscanini and his assistant Erich Leinsdorf became ill with influenza and, being familiar with the score, Solti jumped in to conduct. A few months later Toscanini visited Budapest with the Vienna Philharmonic. He met and remembered his young substitute, making György famous overnight.

Being Jewish, however, hindered Solti's early career.

Antisemitic laws made it progressively more difficult to get

ahead at home. During the Nazi and war years he found refuge in Switzerland, as did many other artists in his predicament. There he met and married his first wife, Hedi Oechsli. The post-war years proved hard as well. Although he was invited and worked in Munich, then in Frankfurt, he endured difficulties professionally and personally for not being German.

Solti first appeared in the United States in 1953, in San Francisco, followed by Chicago and Los Angeles;

then in New York in 1957, with mixed success. In 1961, he became Music Director of the *Royal Opera in London*. Soon he divorced the henpecking Hedi and in 1967 married the young journalist Valerie Pitts, with whom he had two daughters. In 1972, Queen Elizabeth II knighted him in recognition for his ten years at the helm of the Royal Opera.

His 22 years as Music Director of the *Chicago Symphony Orchestra*, which he re-vitalized, reorganized and saved from bankruptcy, meant the fulfillment of his professional life. During his lifetime he garnered innumerable awards. Despite his main language being English, he never lost his "goulash" accent.

Sir Georg never actually retired. He died unexpectedly at Antibes, on September 5, 1997, of a heart attack. According to his wishes, he was interred at the Farkasrét cemetery in Budapest, next to Bartók. His tombstone declares: "*Hazatért*" (He came home).

ZOLTÁN ROZSNYAI was born in Budapest, on January 29, 1926. At age 10, he was already a concert pianist and was one of the youngest ever accepted by the Franz Liszt Academy of Music. Prior to the Academy, however, at the St. Imre Cistercian gimnázium he was classmate of one of my cousins who invited me to Rozsnyai's conducting diploma concert in 1949. I don't remember the program, yet vividly recall the impression it gave me. Although most of the pieces were familiar, never before was I so carried away by music. Zoltán made me realize *what enormous difference the work of a conductor can make*.

I lost track of him while he was appointed Music Director of the Debrecen Opera and other orchestras in the country. In 1954, however, he became permanent conductor of the Hungarian National Philharmonia Concert Association. In 1956, he was awarded second prize at the Interna-

tional Conductor's Competition in Rome, resulting in an immediate invitation there as a guest conductor.

After the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, like hundreds of thousands, Zoltán left Budapest for Vienna. There he ran into fellow-refugee musicians in the street. Seeing all the exceptionally talented Hungarian musicians, he started to organize an orchestra from nothing. He invited them and they followed the agile, smart, good-looking conductor. With his tireless effort, *Philharmonia Hungarica*, the "Orchestra of Freedom" was born and became one of the most outstanding concert orchestras in Europe. Everyone loved them. Yehudi Menuhin played Bartók's Violin Concerto No.2 with them in Vienna. When he learned that they had no harp, he wrote a check for them to buy one.

Under the auspices of the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, Rozsnyai brought the orchestra to the United States in 1959. They earned high critical acclaim everywhere. On October 23, 1959, the third anniversary of the Revolution, the successful orchestra gave a most memorable concert at Carnegie Hall. Their virtuoso, magnetic performance rendered the Star-Spangled Banner a rousing, unforgettable experience. The audience sang along the Hungarian *Himnusz* (National Anthem) and even some musicians became teary-eyed.

Communist Hungary never mentioned the Philharmonia Hungarica. The successful expatriate orchestra strongly bound to the spirit of 1956 was kept in secrecy. Their first concert in Budapest was not until 1990.

In 1961, Rozsnyai and his wife, architect Elizabeth (Mimi) Póczy became American citizens. They had one daughter. In 1962, he became Assistant Conductor of the New York Philharmonic under Leonard Bernstein, followed by appointments to Cleveland and Utica, being Music Director with both.

In 1967, Zoltán was chosen over 130 candidates for the position on Music

Director of the *San Diego Symphony*. During his years with them, they made several recordings under different famous labels. His infamous philandering, however, led to his divorce and subsequent marriages, producing three more daughters and a son. On the occasion of the World's Fair in 1982, he built up the Knoxville Symphony, and in 1987 he founded the *International Orchestra of San Diego*. Into this orchestra Rozsnyai gathered a select group of young musicians who had performed with symphonic orchestras and musical ensembles all over the world. Being close to Mexico, the orchestra performed on both sides of the border to unusual acclaim.

He worked with the International Orchestra until September 10, 1990, when he died too soon, at age 64 from a heart attack in San Diego.

There must be something in the Hungarian air to have produced this spectacular array of 20th century world-class conductors. Although these are gone, Hungarian musical talent is alive and well, as the next generation is on its way to fame. We wish all the best to every budding musical talent of the 21st century... For you can never have TOO MUCH TALENT!

Olga Vállay Szokolay is an architect and Professor Emerita of Norwalk Community College, CT after three decades of teaching. She is a member of the Editorial Board of Magyar News Online.

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Zsuzsi and Andris, a Székely Barbie and Ken

Karolina Tima Szabó

In the fall of 2018, I spent 5 days in beautiful Erdély with my two younger sisters, Ili and Zsuzsa. It goes without saying: it was a trip of a lifetime! I will tell you about our visit in a very unusual and beautiful museum.

On the third day of our trip to Erdély we arrived at Kézdivásárhely, in Kovászna County.

We decided that instead of sitting down for lunch, we wanted to see the *Céhtörténeti Múzeum* (Guild History Museum). Kézdivásárhely and the region around the city is extremely rich in historical handcrafts.

Sometimes Kézdivásárhely is called the "City of Craftsmen". Gábor Áron had his cannon foundry during the 1848-1849 Revolution on the property where the museum is located.

The Museum opened in 1969, the 120th anniversary of the death of Gábor Áron. Soon after the opening it was discovered that the craftsmen's families had many more memorabilia, therefore Incze László, history teacher, was entrusted with further developing the Museum. The current Museum was opened on March 3rd, 1972. Part of the craft museum is the "*Zsuzsi and Andris Baba Múzeum*" (Zsuzsi and Andris Doll Museum), where every area of Transylvania is represented.

A competition was advertised in the "*Jó Barát*" children's newspaper in 1970 and 1971, to create traditional folk costumes of their towns for dolls. 250 dresses arrived; out of those the jury selected 140.

The competition was advertised in Hungarian, still there are 22 Romanian, 4 Swabian, 3 Saxon and one Slovak costume in the museum. But most (130!) came from Székelyföld and Hargita County.



At that time, Zsuzsi became so famous, children wrote to her, and even parents, relatives, sometime the whole village got very involved and helped to create the clothing.

When the tour was in Sepsiszentgyörgy, a young girl offered to make boys' outfits also. Now there are nearly as many boys' as girls' costumes.

I would like to mention that many, but not all towns are represented here. The collection was started at the end of the last century; by that time people were 'undressed' from their traditional costumes, so in some cases there is nothing left that can be reproduced.

The dresses are miniature versions of the adult folk costumes, many of them made out of the remnants of the grown-up dresses. Some of the costumes were made by children, but the workmanship is so exquisite that some very talented adults must have had a share in making them. Mostly they are Sunday dresses, decorated with ribbons, bows, flowers; tiaras and hats make them complete.

The costumes are displayed on 55 cm tall 'alvó' (sleeping) dolls which have hair and moving eyes, arms and legs. The dolls were made in the Arad doll and toy factory. After the exhibit in Bucharest, the dolls were donated to the Kovászna County Museum, due to a shortage of space. The collection was exhibited in Csíkszereda, Kolozs-

vár and Sepsiszentgyörgy. Because of the changing political climate, the tours didn't last long, and some of the dolls were moved to Kézdivásárhely in 1974, the rest in 1996. Since then, the collection of dolls is displayed there, for the pleasure of many visitors.

Currently, the collection is made up of 344 dolls, from which 244 are on exhibit. The origin of the doll outfits is from all 40 counties of Romania, but most come from Erdély, Székelyföld, Bánság and Partium; Bákó (Bacău) of Moldova is also represented.

The dolls are located in three rooms. Next to every doll, a sign is displayed with the name of the town (in Hungarian and Romanian, zip code included) where it was made. The outfits are authentic, and the collection is still growing slowly.

After our visit at the Museum, we walked around the city center, took photographs of the copy of Gábor Áron's cannon, and finished our visit at the Rigó Jancsi pastry shop, enjoying *krémes*.

Karolina Tima Szabo is a retired Systems Analyst of the Connecticut Post newspaper and Webmaster of Magyar News Online. She is the proud grandmother of two.



What Language Do Animals Speak?

viola vonfi

People speak many different languages; so do animals. Or is it only that we perceive their "speech" differently?

A pig "speaking" in English will say "oink-oink". His Hungarian cousin, the *disznó* will say "röf-röf". You would think they were different animals!

In the US, the cock will screech "cock-a-doodle-doo"; the *kakas*, his "distant" relative six thousand miles away in Hungary will say "kukuriku". Their partners, the hens on this side of the Atlantic cackle, but become more verbose *tyukok* on the other side as they say "kot-kot-kot-kot-kot-kodács".

In America, ducks quack; in Hungary, the *kacsa* say "háp-háp". And while turkeys gobble here, over there the *pulyka* says "krú-krú", or "rút-rút" (perhaps that's a *pulyka* dialect!) American geese honk; Hungarian geese (*libák*) say "gá-gá".

Crows here caw; in Hungary the *varjú* say "kár-kár", which may be translated as either "loss" or "pity" (as in "it's such a pity!")

Everyone knows that true red-white-and-blue donkeys say "hee-haw"; in Magyar-land the *szamarak* say "i-á", in a somewhat related and recognizable form. Similarly close is the language of the sheep: in English they say "baa", in Hungarian it's "be-he-he".

But the dog and the cat truly speak an international language: while the American dog says "bow-wow", his Hungarian counterpart, the *kutya* says "vau-vau". And kitty

says meow, while *macska/cica* says "miau", pronounced exactly the same.

We may not even need a translator!

viola vonfi is our correspondent from Stamford, CT. She finds it amusing that one of her ancestors was knighted by Wallenstein during the Thirty Years' War.

Stuffed kohlrabi

3-4 kohlrabi
 ¾ lb ground meat
 ½ cup rice (partially cooked)
 1 small onion, chopped small and braised
 1 cup sour cream
 2 Tbs flour
 salt, pepper

Using a melon ball scooper, scoop out the kohlrabis, and save the cut out pieces.

Mix the half-cooked rice, ground meat and onions. Add the spices. Fill the scooped out kohlrabis with the mixture. If there is any of the mixture left, form little meatballs.

Put the kohlrabis, the meatballs and the saved pieces in a pot and add enough water to cover. When cooked, carefully lift the kohlrabis and meatballs from the water. Whisk the flour and sour cream, add to the liquid and bring it to a low boil. Put the other pieces back, so they will soak in the sauce and sprinkle cut parsley over them.



Snapshots: Ajka, the Crystal Capital of Europe?

Dora Tima Irma

The city of Ajka is located between North and South Bakony, about 40 km North of Lake Balaton in Veszprém County.

According to legend, giants lived in the Carpathian Basin a long time ago. One of the giants stumbled and hit his 'ajak' (lips), and at the same time he dented the earth. That is how the town of Ajka got its name and place.

Of course, reality is different.

The history of Ajka goes back to the Stone Age. Many finds prove that Celts, Illyrians, Cumanians (*kunok*), lived there. Romer Florian, a famous archeologist found Celtic earth mounds and gravesites on Török-tető (it is also called Cservár). Romans also lived in the area; many pieces of grave markers are proof.

When Queen Gizella, wife of King Stephen came to Hungary, with her came a German warrior named Heiko. Gizella gifted the town to him. That is where the name came from. First it was called Eyka, later Ayka.

The name of Ajka is mentioned first in documents in 1228.

In 1878, Neuman Bernárd built the Ajka Crystal Factory, where it still stands today. He gathered the glassworkers from nearby Úrkút, and the rest of Transdanubia, from Bavaria, and even Saxony. In his



glass melting ovens he used coal from Ajkacsinger, instead of wood. The glass is blown by mouth, and all work is made by hand. Ajka crystal is world famous. 96% of the wine glasses, whiskey tumblers, champagne flutes, bowls, vases and giftware is exported to big name manufacturers such as Wedgwood, Tiffany's, Rosenthal, Waterford, Polo Ralph Lauren, Christian Dior, etc...

During the Socialist government in the country, the factory was nationalized; it was returned to private ownership again in the 1990's. Purchased by the Fotex group, owned by Várszegi Gábor, it went through major technical improvements. High quality multicolored glasses, and painted lead crystal were produced. Due to great demand, a second site was built in Ajkacsinger.

Other factories were built and the town grew; in 1959 it was declared an "Emberarcú város" (a people-friendly city) and it won the Hild Award in 1987.

Bauxite was discovered in the Bakony Mountains, and an aluminum foundry and alum earth (*timföld*) factory was built in Ajka to process these finds. To supply electricity to the factories, a power plant was built.

In 1937, a krypton bulb factory – the first in the world – was built in Ajka, based on a patent obtained by Bródi Imre. Today, a zeolite factory, and over 30 other factories provide work to the people of Ajka and the region.

I have to mention the 2010 tragedy the city of Ajka endured. More than 1 million cubic meters of red sludge waste from the alumina plant flooded the area between Ajka and Kolontár. Ten people were confirmed dead, 150 were injured. The ecological damage was immeasurable; it devastated the wildlife; the Tarna and Marcal river fish died immediately. The spill even reached the Rába and Duna Rivers. Now the city of Ajka and the towns affected by the sludge are rebuilding. The government has allocated 38 billion HUF for home reconstruction.

If you visit Ajka, don't miss seeing the churches: Szent István Roman Catholic church, and the Reformed and Lutheran churches.

In addition to the crystal factory, the *Városi Múzeum* (city museum), *Bányászati Múzeum* (mine museum), *Őslény* and *Kőzettár* (prehistoric and mineral museum) are also worth a visit.

At Ajka, the Hungarian race mare "Kincsem" was memorialized in a sculpture. (Read about Kincsem in the September 2015 issue of www.magyarnews.org.) Until 2012, a small replica of Kincsem, manufactured at the Ajka Crystal Factory, was the Prima Primissima Prize (a distinction awarded annually, in recognition of outstanding achievements in the arts, sciences and athletics).

A sport center and recreational pond was built in the *Városliget* (city park). In the middle of the pond, on an island is a statue of Ajka's favorite son, the author



Fekete István, as well as animal statues representing characters of his books, including Bogáncs, the dog. Ajka is also called "the city of statues", for many statues may be found in the parks all around the city. The five small streams that cross the city make a stroll through the parks very pleasant.



Dr. Dora Józsefné, née Tima Irma is a retired school principal enjoying her "Golden Days".

Did you know ...

... that there is a protected 300 year old linden tree that lives on the side of Somló mountain, Veszprém County? It is located in a fenced-in area by the St. Margaret chapel. (The original chapel was built during King Mátyás' rule. It was destroyed during the Turkish invasion and was rebuilt in 1727.) The tree was hit by lightning in 1983, but survived, and lives in the shoots that sprout every year.



300 year old linden tree

Ajka crystal stemware, statue of Kincsem; statues of "Bogáncs" and Fekete István, Glass factory; Lutheran Church, Bánya Múzeum (Mining Museum) and Szent István Church

... **that** Hungarian ELTE University (Eötvös Lóránd Tudomány Egyetem of Budapest) won the important law competition organized annually by Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition last month? This competition has been held every year in Washington since 1960. This was a great achievement for the students since it was the first time they went to the finals and defeated the team of Yale, Columbia, Berkeley and King's College, London.

In the past, ELTE groups received points and rewards, but they never had the opportunity to go so far. The event had 2,000 contestants from 680 universities and 100 countries. The team of ELTE consisted of Bazsó Gábor, Buda Zolta, Koncsik Marcell and Szép Vanessza, who were helped and prepared by Kajtar Gábor, Sulyok Katalin and Pap Dániel.

"The writing part involves preparing two 60-page-long memoranda in English. In the oral part, the teams present two 45-minute oral pleadings in English before a panel of three judges, during which they are expected to answer the questions posed by the judges "- according to ELTE'S website.

Kicsi a világ: Once Upon a Time in Staten Island

Charles Balintitt Jr.

In 1960, my mother began working at a surveying company in Staten Island called North, Allison & Ettlinger. A Hungarian friend, de Benedicty Fruzsina, originally told her about the available job. Fruzsina's husband, George, may have been the first Hungarian to work there, but he was far from the last. After



ELTE students

George and Fruzsina left, my mother continued on till the present day, bringing in many more Hungarians along the way. Since its founding in 1913, the company has changed its name a couple of times and today only a few people are left, but my mother still goes in 3 days a week in her 59th year of employment with the Ettlinger family. I believe the other partners, or their descendants, were already gone before she got there.

The company was never too large; at its peak it may have had about 30 to 40 employees. My mother drew maps along with at least one and at times 2 or 3 other Hungarians. One day about 30 years or so ago, a customer came into the office to pick up a property map. He

was talking to my mother's boss, Todd Ettlinger, toward the back of the office, while my mother and her colleagues were working at their drafting tables toward the front of the office; and of course they were all speaking Hungarian.

The customer heard their conversation and, while looking over toward them, he asked the boss: "Are they all foreigners?" I guess the boss was so used to having them there, he responded: "Oh no! They aren't foreigners, they're Hungarians."

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



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