



MAGYAR STUDIES OF AMERICA

# Magyar News Online

[www.magyarnews.org](http://www.magyarnews.org)

## March 2020 Issue 141

### Véres napokról álmodom ...

Petőfi Sándor

*Petőfi Sándor's patriotic poems often expressed his dreams of military prowess. In this one, he refers to his wife being there to succor him in case he is injured in battle, which ties in beautifully with the double statue recently erected in China in his honor. He disappeared in the Battle of Segesvár (against the Russians whom the Austrians had called in to help defeat the Hungarian Revolution), in 1849. We have kept the original spelling Petőfi used.*

Véres napokról álmodom,  
Mik a világot romba döntik,  
S az ó világnak romjain  
Az új világot megteremtik.

Csak szólna már, csak szólna már  
A harczok harsány trombitája!  
A csatajelt, a csatajelt  
Zajongó lelkem alig várja!

Örömmel vágom én magam  
Föl paripámra a nyeregbe!  
A bajnokok sorába én  
Szilaj jókedvvel nyargalok be!

Ha megvagdadják mellemet,  
Fog lenni, a ki bekötözze,  
Fog lenni, a ki sebemet  
Csók-balzsammal forrasztja össze.

Ha rabbá tesznek, lesz, a ki  
Homályos börtönömbé jó el,  
S föl fogja azt deríteni  
Fényes hajnalcsillag-szemével.

Ha meghalok, ha meghalok  
A vérpadon vagy csatatéren,  
Lesz, a ki majd holttestemről  
Könyüivel lemossa vérem!



*Statue of Petőfi Sándor at Fehéregyháza, Transylvania, not far from the scene of battle where he disappeared.*

*Petőfi Sándor (1823-1849) was perhaps Hungary's greatest lyric poet. Chinese is one of the 41 languages into which his poetry has been translated. (See article about his statues in China elsewhere in this issue.) He became the poet of the 1848-49 Revolution which aimed at independence from the Habsburgs.*

## Another "Youth of March": Irányi Dániel

Karolina Tima Szabó

*Hungary's role was very limited after the Rákóczi freedom fight was crushed in 1711, although the country had some independence within the Habsburg Monarchy. After the Pragmatica Sanctio, ratified in 1723, the relationship between the Habsburg ruler and the Hungarians was somewhat more legalized.*

*The Parliaments during the Reform Era of the early 1800s brought very little changes, but the time was getting ripe for a larger change. Characters like Deák Ferenc, Kossuth Lajos, Batthyány Lajos, Széchenyi István, Eötvös József, and others appeared on the horizon.*

*The young men who followed Petőfi and his call for freedom became known as "the Youth of March" (a márciusi ifjak). As we have in the past several years, we will once again look at another one of these "youth".*

The Paris revolution of February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1848, then the March 13<sup>th</sup> Vienna revolution paved the way for March 15<sup>th</sup>, when the youth of Budapest took to the streets, demanding more radical reforms. The 12 points were written: **"Mit kíván a magyar nemzet? Legyen béke, szabadság és egyetértés"** – **What does the Hungarian nation want? – Let there be peace, freedom and harmony.**



*Irányi Dániel in his later years; his memorial in the Kerepesi úti cemetery*

This was the headline of the petition publicized throughout the city. Leaders of the Youth of March were Petőfi Sándor, Jókai Mór, Vasvári Pál, Irinyi József, followed by many others.

One of those others, Irányi Dániel, played a major role in the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence of 1848-49 against the Habsburg rulers. He was the son of Halnschuck Dániel and nemesszéki Czabkay Zsófia Cecília, born on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 1822 in Toporc. After his early schooling in Eperjes, Késmárk and Rozsnyó, he studied law and philosophy. His parents were German, so he changed his name officially to Irányi in 1847.

After Eperjes, he moved to Budapest, where he became the most sought-after lawyer. He met Kossuth Lajos, and many members of the *Pesti kör* (Pest Circle), and the *Ellenzéki kör* (Opposition Circle).

He became the secretary of the Batthyány cabinet, then a parlia-

mentary representative of Pest-Lipótváros, and finally a commissioner (*kormánybiztos*).

After Jellačić's attack, he volunteered for the army. He fought in the battle of Pákozd (see September 2019 issue of Magyar News Online), the Budamér battle (December 4<sup>th</sup>), and the battle of Kassa (January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1849). After the defeat at Kassa, he resigned as commissioner, and followed the parliament to Debrecen, where the parliament declared the Habsburg-house to be deposed.

He was a supporter of Kossuth's politics, and strongly opposed the politics of the Peace party (*Békepárt*).

In the April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1849 parliament, he was the one who recorded the minutes. After the liberation of Pest, he was named government commissioner with full powers.

In the summer of 1849, he led the uprising against the Russian

invasion. As the war situation turned worse, he followed the parliament to Szeged, then to Arad. A day or so before the surrender at Világos, he got into an argument with Commander-in-chief General Görgei Artúr, and escaped first to Szatmár then to Bereg County. In January 1850, he escaped to Switzerland, then went to Paris. He was sentenced to death *in absentia*. To save his life, his older brother Irányi István claimed he was Dániel. His life was spared by the intervention of Count Szirmay István.

During Irányi Dániel's time in emigration, he wrote for newspapers and taught English, Latin and German. He wrote for the French publications *Siècle* and *Presse*, and the Italian *Opinione*. He was a correspondent for Brussel's *Independence Belgium*, and Milan's *Allianza*.

He kept in touch with the other emigrants, and was part of the Hungarian emigrant cabinet. He also spent time in Belgium, Great Britain, and Switzerland.

After the Hungarian-Austrian Compromise of 1867, Irányi did not return to Hungary; he refused to take the oath which was required for amnesty. Although absent, he was elected as parliamentary representative of Pécs on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 1868. After that he went back home, but he never took the oath.

Until his death, he was a member of parliament, represented Pécs, then Békés city. He was elected president of the "*Negyvennyolcas Függetlenség*" (the 1848 Independence) party. He was honest, his ethics and moral character were recognized and respected even by his political opponents.

One of the important works of Irányi is "*Női jellemvonások a sza-*



*badság harc idejéből*" (Female characteristics from the time of the Freedom Fight). It was published in the *Magyar Újság* in 1868.

Irányi died on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1892 at Nyíregyháza; he was buried three days later in Budapest in the Kerepesi úti cemetery. The eulogy was given by Eötvös Károly, writer, lawyer and politician.

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## The Ultimatum

*Erika Papp Faber*

*In this 100th anniversary year of the disastrous Treaty of Trianon, we are examining the events which preceded it.*

*Following the assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife on June 28th, 1914 in Sarajevo, Serbia, the Ministerial Council, with the sole exception of its Hungarian member Count Tisza István, was unanimous in its desire to go to war with Serbia. On July 5th, German Emperor Wilhelm II, at a luncheon in Potsdam, pledged his country's "faithful support" for Austria-Hungary in whatever action it chose to take*

*against Serbia, even if Russia intervened. This so-called "blank check" tipped the scales, and caused what could have remained a local conflict to blow up into a world war.*

Text of the declaration of war in the Viennese newspaper "Wiener Zeitung"

"On the basis of the highest decision of His Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty, of July 28th, 1914, a declaration of war has been addressed to the royal Serbian government, in the French language, the translation of which is as follows:

**'Since the royal Serbian government did not reply in a satisfactory manner to the Note handed over by the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Belgrade on the 23rd of July, 1914, the Imperial and Royal government finds it necessary to concern itself with preserving its rights and interests, and to resort to the force of arms for this end. Austria-Hungary considers itself from this moment on to be in a state of war with Serbia. (Signed) Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary Count Berchtold'**

### Sequence of events

In 1914, Wladimir Baron Giesl von Gieslingen was the Austro-Hungarian Minister to Belgrade (the Serbian capital). Following the assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie at Sarajevo, Baron Giesl, on July 22nd, 1914, received orders from Vienna, detailing the demands of the ultimatum he was to deliver to the Serbian government the following day.

The Serbian government was to be given 48 hours to respond – unconditionally! Should he not receive an "unconditionally positive



*Text of the declaration of war in the Viennese newspaper "Wiener Zeitung":*

- bring to trial all accessories to the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and allow Austro-Hungarian law enforcement officers to take part in the investigations;
- arrest the military officer and the civil servant named as participants in the assassination plot;
- end the cooperation of Serbian authorities with the "traffic in arms and explosives across the frontier", and punish the frontier service officials who assisted the perpetrators of the assassination;
- provide "explanations" regarding Serbian officials who have expressed hostility to the Austro-Hungarian government;
- notify the Austro-Hungarian government "without delay" of the execution of these measures.

The Serbian government accepted all points except one: it would not accept the participation of Austria-Hungary in any internal inquiry, since this would violate their constitution and the law of criminal procedure, and they were already investigating the crime.

German Emperor Wilhelm, on reading the reply, declared that "with it all reason for war is gone... I would never have recommended mobilization on this basis."

The Serbian answer was provided to Baron Giesl five minutes before the deadline of 6 PM, July 25th, 1914. Anticipating the response, he had already packed his bags, and was ready to leave, as per his instructions from Vienna.

The die was cast!

So, on July 28th, 1914, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy declared war on Serbia.

answer" within that time, he was commissioned to leave the embassy, together with all personnel. The Austrian members of the Ministerial Council (see the February issue of Magyar News Online), itching to go to war with Serbia, and encouraged by German Emperor Wilhelm, wanted to present terms which that country could not possibly accept. So they drew up an ultimatum which demanded that Serbia publicly "condemn the propaganda directed against Austria-Hungary, that is to say, the whole body of the efforts whose ultimate object is to separate from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy territories that belong to it; and that it will obligate itself to suppress by every means this criminal and terrorist propaganda".

To understand this stipulation better, it must be explained that the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had unilaterally annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908-09, which had a heavy concentration of Serbs. This gave rise to the nationalist organization called *Narodna Odbrana*,

"People's – or National – Defense". Its aim was training guerrilla fighters, using anti-Austrian propaganda and organizing spies and saboteurs to liberate the ethnic Serbs in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. They were supported by a secret organization called "Unification or Death", better known as the "Black Hand".

Further, the ultimatum demanded that the Serbian government

- eliminate from schoolbooks and public documents all "propaganda against Austria-Hungary";
- remove from the Serbian military and civil administration all officers and functionaries named by the Austro-Hungarian government;
- accept in Serbia "representatives of the Austro-Hungarian government for the suppression of subversive movements";

## Magyar Treasures: Székelykapuk (Transylvanian Carved Gates)

EPF

*Typical of the Székely area of Transylvania, which until 1920 was part of Hungary, these individually created carved gates are true works of art. They are used not only as entryways in house enclosures, but have become popular as memorials, and are found even at the entrance of villages (see the gate erected across the road leading to Zágon).*

Originally called *nagykapu* (large gate), *fedeles kapu* (roofed gate) or *galambbúgos* (pigeon cooing) gate, it acquired its current designation in the early 1900s.

A *székelykapu* consists of a smaller walk-in gate – known as *kiskapu* or little gate – for use by people, and a wide and latticed high gate, *nagykapu* or large gate – that will accommodate wagons piled high with hay. The dimensions of the *nagykapu* are about twelve and a half feet by twelve and a half feet. A dovecote always runs atop the entire width of the *nagykapu*, and is sometimes found even over the *kiskapu*, which measures about 3 feet wide and about 6 feet high. (On my two trips, I never saw a dove on any *székelykapu*!) Next to the walk-in gate there may be a small bench (sometimes called a *szakállszárító* or “beard drier”) with an overhang. That is where the owner and his wife might sit



*Carved gate in Csíkszentdomokos*

on a Sunday afternoon as they chatted with their neighbors.

In the Catholic areas of Transylvania, I noticed that many *székelykapu* have two small metal crosses affixed to the top, one on each end, as do the houses.

In olden times, not everyone who wanted to do so could erect a *székelykapu*. First of all, only a *Székely* (a Hungarian from the counties of Csík, Háromszék or Udvarhely Counties) was permitted to do so, and only a privileged *Székely* could erect a large gate. Serfs (*jobbágyok*) and landless people (*zsellérek*) were allowed to erect only a small walk-in gate.

The oldest still standing *székelykapu*, found in Sepsiszentgyörgy, dates back to 1773. They are now becoming popular in truncated Hungary too.

These gates are constructed entirely of wood, even using wooden pegs instead of nails.

Oak is the preferred material because it is durable. The leaves of the gate are made of lighter pine wood and are either latticed or solid. The wood is left to dry for a year before being carved.

Carving a *székelykapu* is the work of an artist. Using a chisel and carving knives for the finer details, the vertical posts as well as the surface above the small gate are elaborately decorated. There is no carving on the body of the gate itself. Roses or a string of leaves are popular motifs for the posts, while tulips, stars, palmettes and other flowers are used on the frame.

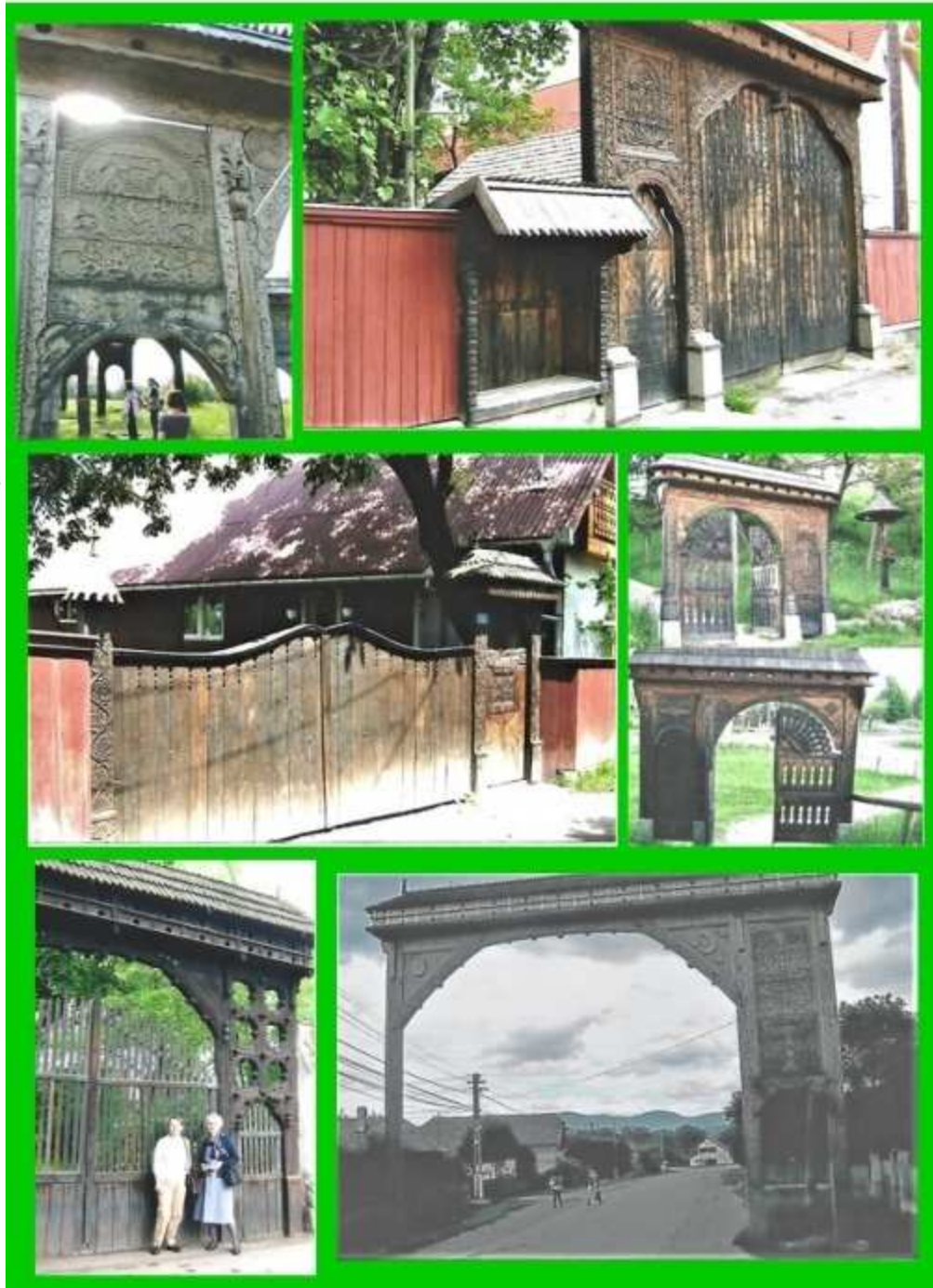
Older gates may have round openings above the small gate (see the one from Illyefalva in the collage). Other decorative motifs above the small gate include the sun and moon (motifs of Székely identity, with the sun signifying blessing). There may be birds, flowers, and the Hungarian or Transylvanian coat of arms.

Sometimes one may see a painted carved gate. Red, white, green and blue were the colors use originally, dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Only later did other colors come into use. At times, the colored surface is covered with white dots. But traditionally, there were many more plain gates than decorated ones.

They may look similar, but no two carved gates are the same, since they are all individually designed and executed. Often the name of the owner and his wife will be mentioned, as having erected this gate "with the help of God" on such and such a date. There is often also a good wish or message for those about to enter, such as "*Béke a bejövőre, áldás a kimenőre*" (Peace on the one who enters, blessing on the one who leaves).

The job of putting up such a gate is a community effort, taking 10 or 12 men to erect. It is also a significant event in the life of a family, usually marking a wedding, when a young man marries outside of the community. The gate becomes part of the family, sharing their joys and sorrows.

As mentioned above, *székelykapuk* are now beginning to appear in truncated Hungary too, a part of our common heritage.



## Linzer Cookies (Linzi pogácsa)

### Ingredients:

- ¼ tsp salt
- ½ lb of butter
- 4 eggs separated
- ½ c. sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 2 c. flour
- ½ c. crushed almonds, mixed with ¼ c. sugar
- ½ c. raspberry jam

### Directions:

Beat butter until creamy. Add egg yolks, one at a time. Add vanilla, then sugar; beat well. Fold in stiffly beaten egg whites; add flour and salt. Roll out on a lightly floured board to ¼ inch thickness. Cut with round cookie cutter. Brush tops with beaten egg. Press center of cookies with teaspoon to make a dent; sprinkle with almond mixture. Bake in a 325° oven for about 25 minutes. When done, fill the centers with jam.

# Magyar Ismertető

This page from the Danbury Hungarian American Club's March 1976 issue of "Magyar Ismertető" features contemporary comments about the Hungarian Revolution of 1848-49. Among them is Abraham Lincoln's congressional resolution introduced while he was a Representative from Illinois, dated September 6, 1849, in which he declares that "the present glorious freedom fight of the Hungarians elicits from us our greatest admiration and enthusiastic sympathy ... and we pray earnestly for their prompt victory and final success."



**MAGYAR ISMERTETŐ**

SZÁND MEG ISTEN A MAGYART  
KIT VÉSZEK HÁNYÁNAK  
NYÚJTS FELÉJE VÉDŐ KART  
TENGERÉN KÍNJÁNAK.

MEGFOGYVA BÁR, DE TÖRVE NEM.  
(VÖRÖSMARTY)

MAGYAR AMERIKAI KLUB, DANBURY, CONN.

II. Évfolyam 12. szám. 1976 Március

1849 OKTÓBER

(részlet) Irta: Heinrich Heine

Ez ugyanaz a hősi vég.  
Csak a hősök nevei mások,  
de élnek a régi regék,  
élnek a "híróvezte óriások".  
Ő, ez a sors mily ismerős!  
Szabad zászlóval, büszke fővel,  
Ósi szokás szerint, a hős  
nem bír a nyers, állati túlerővel.  
Egyenlőtlen a viadal,  
ha az ökör partján a medve...  
Vigasztalodj, bukott magyar,  
mi irigykedve nézünk szégyenedre.

Kálnoky László fordítása.

Heinrich HEINE (1797-1856), jól ismert német költő és proza író. Verseivel kiváltotta kora forradalmi, romantikus költőinek csodálatát, nagyrabecsülését, ezek között Petőfiét is.

Egy vandál sereg, amelyet a zsarnok hatalom a szabad népektől kisajtolta pénzen felnevelt, a rombolási vágytól vezetve előállt, hogy Magyarország szép tájait és szabad férfiai elpusztítsa! Jaj neked német Ausztria, ha Magyarország megszűnt létezni! Nem leszel többé sem német, se szabad!

Bécs, 1848. szept. 14.

HATÁROZATOK A MAGYAR SZABADSÁG UGYÉBEN.....

melyet Ábrahám Lincoln, Illinois kongresszusi képviselője, (későbbi amerikai elnök 1861-1865-ig) terjesztett elő

1849 szeptember 6.-án  
(részlet)

"Elhatározottam, hogy a magyarok jelenlegi, dicsőséges szabadságharca kiérdemli legnagyobb csodálatunkat és lelkes együttérzésünket.

Elhatározottam, hogy mielőbbi győzelmükért és végleges sikerükért buzgon fohászkojunk."

A. Lincoln.

FEL A HARCRA MAGYARORSZÁGÉRT!

(Részlet, egy 1848-as bécsi plakát szövegéből)

FEL, TI MUZSÁK FIAI, AZ AKADEMIAI LEGIO TAGJAI, A SZABADSÁG IFJAI, FEL TESTVEREK A HARCRA!

A "Bécsi Légión Magyarorszáért" szabad csapatainak parancsnoksága.

# Csilla Somogyi: The Artist at 80 – a retrospective

EPF

*An exhibit of paintings and etchings by this Hungarian-American artist opened in January at the Madison Art Cinema in Madison, CT, organized as a birthday surprise by her daughters. The theater plays first-run independent art and upscale foreign and domestic films.*

*Placed along the sloping entryway and hung on the walls in the lobby, Csilla's works range from small black-and-white etchings to large paintings of sports action. The exhibit runs until March 4<sup>th</sup>.*

In celebration of her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, 29 works of art, of varying sizes, by Csilla Somogyi – a sampling of her work – are on exhibit at the Madison Art Cinema in Madison, CT. Included are acrylic paintings, linocuts, etchings, lithographs, watercolors and collages.

Her favorite subjects include landscapes, particularly as viewed through a screen of trees, and mother-and-child compositions. A series of large paintings present the explosive movement of sports. Some Hungarian folk motifs may be seen in a few of her pieces.

She was born Csilla Makay, daughter of Árpád Makay, a successful cinematographer active in Hungary's vibrant film industry. Her mother was a gifted artist who wanted to become an art teacher. Both her parents were born in Transylvania and moved to Budapest when that area became part of Romania as a result of the Treaty of Trianon. World War II literally "hit" close to home, when

their apartment building was destroyed in an air raid.

Between the ages of 8 and 12, Csilla and her family were often separated. She spent two years in a Church-sponsored foster care in Switzerland. Finally reunited with her brother and parents, she emigrated to the US in 1952. It has been my privilege to know Csilla since then.

In New York City, Csilla attended Music and Art High School. Although in college she majored in

Biology, she continued taking art courses, first at Columbia University, and after she was married and moved to Connecticut, at the Cheshire Creative Arts Workshop.

In the 1980s, she received an Associate degree in Sculpture from the University of Bridgeport, while serving as President of the Cheshire Art League. She has sculptured pieces in clay, plaster and wood.

Her many-sided artistic talent is expressed also in embroidery, drawing on the rich tradition of



*Top: "Rugby", "Pilgrims"; Center: "Trees", "Abstract", "The Brook in Winter"; Bottom (not in exhibit): Mother and Child sculpture, Arany János (illustration in "A Sampler of Hungarian Poetry"), bas-relief*

Hungarian folk motifs. And like most Hungarian women, she is also a master of the culinary arts!

Ilona Somogyi, one of Csilla's three daughters, explained: "Our mom never had a chance to follow her artistic dream – she devoted herself to her kids, her husband, and her community... (W)e thought what better way to celebrate her artistic accomplishments than by really showing them off in the most public of ways – an exhibit."



Csilla and her orthopedic surgeon husband, Dr. Balazs Somogyi, are the parents of three daughters, and they have one grandson. Together, they are vital members of the Wallingford Hungarian community.

In connection with the exhibit, Csilla is featured on the front cover of the February 20th issue of *The Cheshire Citizen*. Her reaction to all this? As quoted in the newspaper article, "seeing the artwork she's created through the years on the Madison Art Cinema gallery walls was the best kind of surprise."

## Venice, FL Remember Trianon

*Eliz Kakas*

In this 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the Treaty of Trianon, the Venice, FL Petőfi Klub és Baráti Kör (Petőfi Club and its Circle of Friends) held a retrospective

observance, entitled "*Emlékezzünk Trianonra*" – Let Us Remember Trianon – on February 8<sup>th</sup>.

Members of the Petőfi Klub, Kossuth Klub and numerous guests gathered in the hall of the Hungarian Christian Society for this historic retrospective.

The program was introduced by Noémi Szilágyi, President of the Petőfi Klub of Venice, FL. The main speaker was Sándor Sasvári, who gave a historical summary of Trianon. Dr. György Krajcsik, President of the Sarasota Kossuth Klub, recited an appropriate poem.

To me, the most moving part of the program was Róbert Velkei's reading of "The Day Hungary was 'Crucified'" by Viktor Padányi (see the June 2010 issue of Magyar News Online).

A student of the Liszt Ferenc Music Academy, Ákos Gubinecz, visiting in Venice, gave a presentation of folk music on the zither. He was joined by several members of the Baráti Kör.

Also participating were members of the No. 9 Jámbor Lajos Scout Troop, accredited in 2015, and also led by Noémi. The Rev. Sándor Kulcsár, retired minister, gave a closing prayer.



*Dr. György Krajcsik at the podium; members of the Jámbor Lajos Scout Troop*



*Eliz Kakas, a long-time resident of Fairfield, CT and still a member of the MNO Editorial Board, writes from Florida.*

## A New Petőfi Statue in China

Charles Balintitt Jr.

*It may come as a surprise that our national poet is becoming a link between Hungary and China. But his poetry soars above national boundaries, addressing basic longings of the human heart. The newly erected statue is unusual in that, instead of showing Petőfi by himself, it presents him together with his beloved wife, Szendrey Júlia.*

This month when we think of one of Hungary's greatest national holidays, the commemoration of the beginning of the uprising against the Habsburgs on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1848, we also have to think about Petőfi Sándor. While Kosuth Lajos was the voice of the Revolution, Petőfi Sándor was its spirit. It was his poem, "*Nemzeti Dal*" (National Song), which was recited over and over from the beginning and throughout the Revolution as the anthem of the rebellion. The powerful words of this poem became the battle cry of Hungarian patriots as they

roused their fellow citizens to take action.

This past December 2<sup>nd</sup>, a new statue of the great Hungarian poet, Petőfi Sándor and his wife, Szendrey Júlia, was dedicated in the city of Chongqing in western\* China. It is a bust showing the two of them embracing each other. This was done in memory of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The sculpture, by Szórádi Zsigmond, was a gift from the Hungarian Foreign Ministry. The event included speeches by Szócs Géza, a chief advisor to Prime Minister Orbán Viktor and by Zhang Ling, vice-chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

You may be asking yourself: Why place a statue of a Hungarian poet in a park in China; and why this poet in particular; and why in this city? Well, there are a few reasons: First of all, there are new Hungarian courses being offered in a few Chinese universities, including Chengdu, Xi'an and Chongqing. Second, a direct flight from Budapest to Chongqing will commence in the near fu-

ture. Third, currently the main signs of Hungarian culture in China can mostly be found in coastal cities, such as Beijing or Shanghai, and Hungary wanted to establish a presence in the interior of the country. Another reason is that most Chinese students already have some knowledge of Petőfi, because his poem "*Szabadság, Szerelem*", is part of the curriculum in most Chinese primary schools:

*Szabadság, Szerelem!  
E kettő kell nekem.  
Szerelmemért föláldozom  
Az életet,  
Szabadságért, föláldozom  
Szerelmemet.*

Freedom, Love!  
These two I need.  
For my love I sacrifice  
My life,  
For Freedom, I sacrifice  
My love.

When I went to Hungarian school on Saturdays, from the mid-1960s and 1970s, at the end of each school year a number of students had to learn and then



*Dedication of Petőfi statue in Chongqing; Petőfi statue in Shanghai*

recite a poem in front of all of their fellow students, parents and teachers. I remember that at least 2 of the poems that I recited were written by Petőfi Sándor. One of them, of course, was "*Nemzeti Dal*"; the other was "*Szeptember végén*" (At the End of September). By the way, the New York Hungarian School was named after another famous Hungarian poet, Arany János, who was also a contemporary of Petőfi Sándor. In fact, the School which, when I was a student, had been housed in the classrooms of the former St. Stephen of Hungary Church and School, is still going strong a half century later, but now at the New York Hungarian House.

As it turns out, the statue in Chongqing is not the first statue of Petőfi Sándor in China. Another statue was dedicated 3 years ago in Lu Xun Park in Shanghai. The Chinese poet, Zhou Shure, who was known by the name, Lu Xun (9/25/1881 – 10/19/1936), translated many of Petőfi's poems into Chinese. Lu Xun's poems were also translated into Hungarian and his statue can be found in Kiskőrös, Hungary, the town where Petőfi was born.

Even though Hungary has remained a more homogenous society than many other areas in Europe, there is still a conglomeration of other nationalities in the country. There were probably few greater Hungarian patriots than Petőfi Sándor. But many years ago, it was actually my late father-in-law, Milutin Petkovich, who told me that Petőfi was really Serbian. As it turns out, he was born Alexander Petrovic, to a Serbian father and a Slovakian mother, yet he grew up to be an exceptionally proud Hungarian.

It was truly amazing how many

beautiful poems he wrote during such a short lifetime. He joins some of my other favorite poets, who all left this world way too soon. But each of them still managed to leave a legacy of wisdom, culture and beauty, worthy of one much, much older than they: Lord Byron was 36, Percy Bysshe Shelley was not quite 30 and Petőfi Sándor was only 26 and a half!

\*Chongqing is referred to as western China probably because of its distance from the coast, but it is really more south-central China.

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## March, Tavaszelő

*Karolina Tima Szabó*

*Many folk traditions are attached to the month of March around the globe, but let's look some of the Hungarian folk traditions; some are in the past, some still exist in parts of the country.*

March is the first month of spring; it is the rebirth and renewal of nature. Snowdrops are emerging from under the snow; birds are ready to build their nests.

On Bishop Albinus' day (March 1<sup>st</sup>), before sunrise, the Székelys bottled water from the well, and used it to heal all kinds of illness. In Marosnagylak, in the early morning, they would pick up all the trash and throw it by the third neighbors, so all the fleas should go there.

In some areas, on Kázmér's day (March 4<sup>th</sup>), beekeepers let the bees out, and women ran

around the house three times and hit the wall to chase the rats away.

March 7<sup>th</sup> is Tamás' Day. It is said March is better than the three "ember" months (September, November and December), because winter isn't coming, it's already gone.

Whatever the weather is on St. Francisca's day (the 9<sup>th</sup>), the rest of March will be the same.

On March 10<sup>th</sup> the womenfolk have to finish spinning and weaving; it's time to do some outside work.

Many traditions are tied to Szent Gergely's - St. Gregory's - day (March 12<sup>th</sup>). This is the day when the legumes (beans, peas) should be planted. In Szamoshat, that's the day the bees are let out. But beekeepers must not look to the sky, or the bees will fly high! Snow is not unusual on that day, then it is said Gergely is shaking his beard.



*Storks in Tiszatarros*

Soon comes "Sándor, József, Benedek (on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>) – zsákban hozzák a meleget" – bringing warmth in a sack. If the three days are sunny, it will be a long hot summer. If no sun, it will be a long and rainy autumn.

On the 18<sup>th</sup>, oats and barley should be sown. That is the day when the shepherds let the sheep out to pasture.

If the weather is bad on St. Joseph's Day (the 19<sup>th</sup>), it will be bad for another 40 days, and many people will die during the year.

In Szamoshát people say that, after St. Joseph's day, you cannot drive the grass back into the earth with a hammer. Swallows and storks will return. If the stork's feathers are dirty, it will be a good harvest; if clean, just the opposite.

St. Benedict's day (the 21<sup>st</sup>) is the official beginning of spring; the length of day and night are the same (in 2020, the equinox is on March 19<sup>th</sup>). If one plants garlic on the 21<sup>st</sup>, the cloves of garlic will be fat. On that day, grease and garlic are blessed. Garlic was believed to have healing powers. Those who suffered from typhoid had their head and belly rubbed with some garlic concoction.

March 24<sup>th</sup> is St. Gabriel's day. That is the day cabbage and the cabbage family of vegetables should be sown. Beware if you are a farmer: make sure you don't meet a rooster on your way to sowing, or rape (the seeds of which yield an oil and whose leaves are used for fodder) will grow instead of cabbage.

Fruit trees should be grafted on the feast of the Annunciation (or

Lady's Day, March 25<sup>th</sup>). But do not break the tree that was grafted on that day or blood will flow from the branch, and if you cut it, you might go blind. If the frogs croak on Lady's Day, it will be cold for the next 40 days. Another belief is that if Easter falls on March 25<sup>th</sup>, some disaster will follow soon thereafter.

Finally, according to the *csízió* book (calendar of superstitions), do not let your arm bleed in March (because in olden days, cutting your arm to make it bleed was considered a cure for almost anything.) Eat sweet food and drink sweet stuff. Eat mustard and horseradish with vinegar. If you hear thunder in March, the weather will be windy. There will be as many showers during the year as there is fog during the month.

A child born in March will be quick, God-fearing, honest, smart and friendly.

Sorry, I missed it by half a year!

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## The Beautiful Hungarians

*Olga Vállay Szokolay*

*Hungarians have been known – and sometimes even appreciated – for their brains: their intellect, their mental achievements. Scores of our inventors have entered the world's annals over decades, and even centuries. So did champions of various sports, including the Olympic Games (see Magyar-news.org, July 2019) where the*



*Simon Böske, Hargitay Mickey*

*Magyars traditionally excelled. There has been, however, a remarkable quality of theirs that has been sorely overlooked: their Beauty. Little has been mentioned in recent history about the first Miss Universe and the first Mr. Universe both having been Hungarian! Let's peek into the rear-view mirror to examine them closer...*

She was the daughter of a Jewish physician, Dr. Simon Sándor; born on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1909 at Keszthely, in the southwest corner of Lake Balaton as *Simon Erzsébet*. At age 15, in 1924, she already turned heads to the point that she was named "a keszthelyi Korzó Szépe" (the Belle of the Keszthely Promenade). That competition was based on photos only. Shortly thereafter, however, she won a live beauty contest as "*Balaton Tündére*" (The Fairy of Balaton). Both contests were organized by *Incze Sándor*, the editor of the popular illustrated weekly *Színházi Élet* (Theater Life).



Following western trends, in late 1928, Incze announced the *first Miss Hungary contest*. In January 1929, Erzsébet, now becoming popular by her nickname

**Simon Böske**, won the title. By her own admission, her only preparation for the competition was putting on some lipstick for the first time in her life, urged on and helped by her girlfriend.

In February 1929, the new *Miss Hungaria* traveled to Paris, escorted by her mother and Incze Sándor, to be entered into the second Miss Europa contest.

There the Hungarian-American entertainers, the twin Dolly Sisters took her under their wing and provided her with outfits from the famed French designer Jean Patou, as well as coiffures and make-ups by the best salons, thus properly preparing her for the big event. Ultimately,



*Simon Böske as Miss Europa; the two who tied for the Miss Universe title; Böske and her dog; Simon Böske Memorial Plaque; Hargitay and Mansfield; the picture that caught the eye of Mae West; Mickey with his daughter Mariska*

*Simon Böske won the Miss Europa title*, sporting a Trianon cockade. The prizes were presented by the King of Denmark and the President of France.

Upon her return to Budapest on March 13<sup>th</sup>, in a horse-drawn carriage decorated with flowers, Böske was received by a large jubilant crowd. Orchestras played the national anthem and the Mayor greeted and congratulated

her. In tears, she expressed her pride in having been able to represent and glorify her country. Among the cheers, however, ugly anti-Semitic jeers were also heard.

The *competition for Miss Universe* was held for over three months in Galveston, Texas. But Maurice de Waleffe, the founder and organizer of the Miss Europa contest, complained that the Americans invited 48 contestants from the US and only a handful from Europe. In objection, he decided to stay on the other side of the Ocean and elect his own Miss Universe from among fifteen European beauties. Thus, in July, Böske returned to France and in Deauville, on August 7, 1929, *she won the European-held title of Miss Universe in a tie with Ella van Hueson, Miss America*. Of the two winners, the "Junoesque" American from Chicago was the initial favorite, but *Simon Böske was deemed classier, more aristocratic* and won over the jury, so that a tie had to be finally declared.

The blonde, blue-eyed girl from Keszthely became an overnight celebrity who received offers of film contracts with American and German studios, and famous companies such as the "4711" cologne, while illustrious painters were competing to paint her portrait. Even a Maharajah held a large dinner in her honor and princes were vying for her hand.

Simon Böske, however, had no such ambitions. All she wanted was to lead a quiet, happy life in a quiet, happy marriage. To that end, on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, the end of the year of her multiple victories, she tied the knot with *Brammer Pál*, heir to his family's legendary textile emporium.

The marriage lasted only five years; in April, 1935, Brammer fought a mock revolver-duel against Jób Dániel, the artistic director of *Vígyszínház* (Comedy Theater), for the alienation of Böske's affections. Neither was hurt but both were fined. Soon Jób, 29 years Simon's senior, became her second husband.

World War II and the Nazis were merciless to Simon Böske and her family. By 1939, after 18 years at the theater, Jób, as a Jew, was no longer allowed to work there.

The couple survived the war by hiding in the cellar of the villa of an actor friend in 1944. Her parents were among the 829 Jews deported from Keszthely to Auschwitz, where all but six of them perished. Böske emerged from this tormented period emotionally and physically shattered.

After the war, the former beauty queen and her husband were never able to re-establish their lives and lived in poverty until Jób's death. Böske's health steadily deteriorated. From the time she was widowed in 1955 until her own death in 1970, she lived under the care of her brother, Simon Imre, and his family in Budapest. She is buried at the Kozma Street Jewish Cemetery.

*Sic transit gloria mundi.*

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About a generation had to pass before guys reached equal status with women on the beauty scene. Indeed, nobody suspected in 1926 that *Hargitay Miklós*, born in Budapest on January 6<sup>th</sup>, would once be the first man to attain the distinction of being declared the... but wait a minute...we're not there yet!...

His father was extremely athletic

and raised his sons to become athletes. The family had an acrobatic act that they performed throughout Hungary. He was an exceptional soccer player and a speed-skating champion. During WWII, he fought the Nazis with the Hungarian Resistance, creating the double act of soldier and strong-man stage performer. But in the aftermath of the war, when the Soviet troops' occupying presence became more obvious in the country, not seeing any promise for his future, he fled Hungary in 1947.

In the same year, Hargitay managed to immigrate to the United States, working as a plumber and carpenter and started bodybuilding. He walked into an Indianapolis gym one day and, never having lifted weights before, he astonished the owner when he lifted 215 pounds over his 180-pound frame.

His big break came when *Mae West* noticed him on the October 1953 cover of *Strength and Health* magazine and made him a member of her muscleman nightclub act. **Mickey Hargitay** did much to change the concept of the art of bodybuilding that had been discouraged by athletic coaches as freakish. He broke into the field theretofore dominated by Americans only.

After a few years of working at odd jobs, seeing Steve Reeves on the cover of a magazine, Hargitay began training for the *Mr. Universe competition* and – end of suspense! – *the hunky Magyar won the 1955 Mr. Universe title!*

Next year, after divorcing his first wife, Mary Birge, he moved to New York City. At the nightclub in the Latin Quarter where he performed, the super-famous and well-endowed actress *Jayne Mansfield* appeared for dinner one

night. When asked what she'd like to eat, she responded, "I'll have a steak and the man on the left". She got what she wanted. It was love at first sight and they married in January 1958, becoming one of the most visibly stunning couples in Hollywood. Together they made a series of – not too memorable – movies as well as three children, Mickey Jr., Zoltan and *Mariska, superstar of Law and Order Special Victims Unit*. He remodeled their Beverly Hills mansion, the Pink Palace, including building the famous heart-shaped pool.

Despite their scorching romance, Mansfield and Hargitay divorced in 1964 and she died in a car accident three years later. Mickey arranged to have a heart-shaped headstone erected for his ex at her place of burial.

In 2003, Mickey appeared in one episode of daughter Mariska's TV show. He died of multiple myeloma in Los Angeles at age 80, on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

According to a columnist, "what President Eisenhower did for golf, Mickey Hargitay did for bodybuilding, because he brought it to the forefront". Arnold Schwarzenegger called Hargitay an "inspirational force".

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Fashions change.

The demure, conservative ingénue in the closed-neck, long-sleeved dress was oddly considered the female beauty ideal of the day, as juxtaposed to the "roaring twenties". Bathing suits still covered half of the thighs and all bosoms, which were understated rather than emphasized. But in the advent of the self-assured, independent "modern girl", Simon Böske's subordinate but elegant poise cer-

tainly caught the eye of the jurors, domestic as well as international.

In the wake of wars and death people usually realize life's fragility and they foster the "*carpe diem*" attitude. Perhaps that was partially responsible for men's desire to face life's challenges by becoming strong and invincible, in contrast with the somewhat effeminate, sophisticated male ideals of the pre-war movies. It was the perfect ambience for noticing and appreciating bodybuilding Mickey Hargitay.

Conclusion: our beautiful stars seem to prove that to be at the right place at the right time is the key to *rule the Universe!* (At least for a year...)

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## Magyarosaurus

*Olga Vállay Szokolay*

Trying to get into *magyarnews* on the Internet, it was certainly surprising – if not downright shocking! – to find an adjacent listing of *Magyarosaurus dacus!* Could not resist investigating it and became fascinated by the illustration: a nice, red dinosaur compared in size to a light-blue elephant that is being kicked in the butt by a black human figure...Get the picture?

About two decades ago my grandson was totally "into" dinosaurs, as were most of his friends and contemporaries. He knew the names and specifics of most examples of those prehistoric creatures. Yet neither of us

recalls ever having heard of the *Magyarosaurus* which, for all we know, might have been the household pet or work animal of our very distant ancestors. (Remember the Flintstones?)

The first fossils of that lizard were discovered by Baron Franz Nopcsa, a Transylvanian paleontologist in 1895, at Szentpéterfalva (today: Sanpetru), in Hunyad (today: Hunedoara) County. He named it *Titanosaurus dacus*, a peculiar choice since our dinosaur was one of the smallest among its relatives and was anything but titanic. Its maximal length was only six meters (c. 20 feet) and height of 1.5 meters (c. 5 feet), weighing about 1,000 kilograms (c. 2,200 pounds). They were herbivores and lived roughly 70 million years ago, give or take a few million.

It may also seem odd that a dinosaur from Romania honors Hungarians, but Hátszeg (today: Hatzeg), also in the Hunyad area, became Western Romania after the Treaty of Trianon, but it *still belonged to Hungary* when *Magyarosaurus* was found there in 1915 and was named at that time. The *species' epithet* was to honor the ancient Dacians of that territory.

The islands the *Magyarosaurus* inhabited led to its *insular dwarfism* as a result of selective pres-

ures presented by limited food supplies and a lack of predators. All these conditions favored a smaller body size. Nopcsa was the first to suggest this theory. Some later researchers doubted his conclusions, claiming that the known fossil represented juveniles. However, 21<sup>st</sup> century detailed studies supported Nopcsa's hypothesis, showing that the small *Magyarosaurus* individuals were adults. (It was an early realization that good things come in small packages!)

In 2001, some eggs attributed to the *Magyarosaurus* were uncovered, with embryos preserved inside the eggs. (A significantly more convenient way to produce offspring than giving birth to live young.)

To spare the reader pages of very technical archeological and paleobiological data, I close this article hoping that the information herein fosters pride in you for sharing a *national kinship* with some fascinating ancient creatures.

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