



Epic About a Budapest Teenager / Hősköltemény egy pesti srácról

As we commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution this October, we remember in particular the teenagers who used the training provided by their Communist instructors to produce so-called "Molotov cocktails" - bottles filled with gasoline, with a rag wick. They ignited them, and as per instructions, would hurl them like grenades, not at "imperialist, capitalist invaders", as they were taught, but at the Soviet tanks sent to crush the Hungarian Fight for Freedom. We pay our grateful respects to these youngsters who gave their lives for their country.

Epic About a Budapest Teenager / Hősköltemény egy pesti srácról

By: Szentkúti Ferenc

Te napköziben nevelkedett apró kamasz,
Te, akinek élete mindössze
vagy tizenöt sivár tavasz.
Te, kibe már az A.B.C.-vel
tölték az ideológiát,
A szovjet tankok vad tűzében
zengted a szabadság dalát.

A tankok acél záporában
sem remegett gyenge kezed.
Bátran markoltad meg a géppisztolyt,
és szórtad rájuk a tüzet.
Kicsiny szíved tán összerendezte,
de lábad bátran szaladt.
Kezedből nyugodt, biztos ívben
repült a benzines palack...

Te pesti srác, the hősök hőse
ontottad drága véredet,
s a kivívott szent szabadságban
megkaptad érte béredet.
Te kicsiny bajtárs, - esküszünk, hogy
megvédjük ezt a drága vért,
mert nem lehet, hogy kicsiny szíved
hiába ontott annyi vért...

Te pesti srác,
Te napköziben nevelkedett apró kamasz!
Te, akinek élete mindössze
vagy tizenöt sivár tavasz.
Téged, ki ezt a drága élted
hazáért így adtad oda,
amíg magyar él e földön:
nem felejtünk el soha!



*Taken from LIFE magazine's "Hungary's Fight for Freedom -
A Special Report in Pictures"*

My October

By: Olga Vállay Szokolay

This is a first-hand account of the events of the Revolution of 1956 by a survivor who eventually made it to the US. It was first published in the 50th anniversary commemorative volume entitled "56 Stories".

1956 was a very special year.

In the first few days of January, an early morning streetcar derailed and plunged from the Margit Bridge into the Danube.

A few days later, Budapest was shaken awake at day-break by the earthquake at the suburb Soroksár.

In February, on leap-year-day, I married Dr. Denis Szokolay. Circumstances of the times did not make it possible for us to have an apartment of our own. We lived separately in rented rooms, either of them too small for two people. As a budding architect, I was already working on the plans for subdividing a nook of a studio we could call our own, hoping we could build it in a year or two.

We both worked. But by fall, our circumstances hadn't changed. We grabbed whatever time we could together. Sometimes it meant simply talking to each other from the office phones (we had none at home) or meeting and having dinner together at my parents' apartment. This was not what you would consider typical married life.

On the 23rd of October, the news spread like wildfire: there was going to be a demonstration in front of the Parliament where the 16 Point Petition, drawn up by students, for human rights and against the Soviet occupation, would be presented. Denis and I agreed to go to the scene with our respective colleagues, and we'd see what would happen.

Along with all others (several hundreds of thousands, as it turned out) we went to the Parliament, listened to the reading of the Petition, partook in the cutting out the communist symbols from the middle of the red-white-green Hungarian flag and sang the National Anthem with torches improvised from rolled-up newspapers. From there we went with the crowds to the Bem Memorial – a sequence of events commemorated and sung about by innumerable bards and historians.



*Denis and Olga with "good luck charm" teddybear Dorka.
(Stamford Advocate, 12/12/1956)*

I got home, with the unforgettable memory etched in my head, of having participated in the most civilized revolution of history. Denis came over since we had no phones. We discussed the events of the evening, then he went home.

The next day we showed up at our respective offices but, of course, nobody did any work that day. We exchanged news, weighed the events of the evening before, and shared our hopes for the future, just learning that there were already some shootings citywide. That evening we got together at my place again. We listened to the Voice of America and the BBC in the bathroom, the only room which did not have walls adjacent to neighboring apartments. In order to share information and hope with others who had no means of getting it elsewhere, Denis, reviving his stenographic skills, took notes from the radio reports, as I muffled the typewriter sounds with pillows and typed as many copies with carbon paper as would fit into the machine. I then typed another batch, and then some more until our paper

supply ran out.

By the next morning nobody was going to work anymore. I stashed the freshly typed news under my coat, "hiding them into my bosom". Every time I saw a child in the street I pulled out a batch of the news for him to take home and distribute it in his neighborhood. Strangers, who typically walked with heads down, now addressed me jubilantly on the Lánchíd: "Have you heard? The UN troops landed at the Dunántúl!"

Denis met with his friends at Pest. The Smallholders' Party had already started to get organized. They wanted him to run in expected elections on several (city, county, nationwide) tickets. Amidst the shootings and bloodshed, the

planning of the future had already begun. A Jewish friend of ours started to work on the founding of a new Christian Democratic Party. By the time the Revolution claimed victory, the interim government reported receipt of 120 applications to start new political parties... The longtime one-party-system had boiled down to a festering head.

For the first time in my life I felt I had a country. The irredentism during my childhood seemed affected, though the re-annexing of parts of historic Hungary, torn away by the post-WWI Trianon Pact, brought some genuine hope. But soon that was followed by the German occupation and then, over the ruins, the Soviets took over. Now, in the last days of October, 1956, for the first time, was I a real Hungarian.

During one of the evenings of "victory" Denis brought the news that the Smallholders predicted three possible scenarios for the future:

1. The Soviets withdraw, we'll hold free elections and establish a coalition government which, by geographic ne-

cessity, will be of pinkish hue.

2. The Soviet Union would not accept defeat and Hungary turns into a second Korea.

3. The West intervenes and a third world war starts over us.

At this point, the next step became crystal clear to me:

"There is only one conclusion from all this: we have to leave."

Yes, leave... But how? We had to find transportation.

That very evening, we visited our friend Tony who had a Jeep. It just so happened that his Austrian wife was on a visit to Vienna. We surmised that he would feel like trying to follow her and we might join him in the Jeep.

He certainly agreed, but only under the condition that both his little daughters could go with Austrian passports. One of the girls had a passport but Tony had to apply for the other daughter's at the Consulate the next morning.

At the crack of dawn we rode with him and the girls to the Consulate at Rózsadomb.

Two Austrian vehicles were already lined up in front of the building: a pick-up truck and a VW mini-bus. They had delivered food and medications to Budapest and were now waiting for their return papers as well as some passengers. We expected to ride in the Jeep along with the other two vehicles but, considering the autumn chill and the fact that we were all heading to the same destination, I was allowed in the mini-bus along with the other women and children, while the men were directed to the pick-up truck. With the exception of one family and ourselves, all passengers had valid passports. The three-vehicle convoy was ready to leave, Tony's two-year old little girl was sitting in my lap but, back at the office, her six-year old sister was *denied* a passport by the Consul! Tony accompanied us in the

Jeep with his two little ones to the edge of the City, then, in tears, he turned back, not daring to take the risk.

His wife in Vienna cried hysterically on hearing our account of the events. She returned to Hungary and it took the family several years to finally get to freedom together.

Encountering mixed fortune during our attempted escape, Denis and I met up with each other in Vienna a few days later. Camouflaged as luggage in the mini-bus, I escaped safely over the border the same day we left. Denis was not so lucky. His feet were seen sticking out from under a tarp in the back of the truck. He was dragged off the truck at the border, jailed overnight and released in the morning. No sooner had he been set loose than he took off for the fields running, never stopping until he reached safety in Austria.

On November 3rd, we thought we were among the last ones to cross the border. At the time we couldn't possibly have dreamt that we were the beginning of the Hungarian mass migration of the twentieth century.

Postscript

Many years later, in the 1990's, the then commodore of our yacht club was trying to be friendly, and told me that he was born in Austria but had lived in Budapest in the 1950's.

His father was the Austrian consul in Budapest....
I could never speak to him again.

Olga Vállay Szokolay is an architect and educator. A graduate of both the Polytechnical University of Budapest and the University of Bridgeport, Connecticut, she is Professor Emerita of Norwalk Community College after three decades of teaching. She escaped from Hungary in 1956 with her husband, Dr. Denis T. Szokolay, who died in 2000. Since her retirement in 2003, she has focused on her architectural practice. She resides in Redding, Connecticut, has two daughters and

two adult grandchildren. Olga is a member of the Editorial Board of Magyar News Online.

1956: Protest at the Statue of Liberty

By: Jules Vállay

One of the most memorable and unique stories of the worldwide protest occurred at the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor. In early 1999, I conducted research and spoke with several of the participants. Here is the story as I was able to put it together, based on personal recollections of the individuals.

On November 12, 1956, István Sisa, editor of the New World Review, called a meeting at his New Jersey home to discuss some way of expressing protest over the brutal suppression of the Hungarian Revolution. István Juharos, painter and artist, István Koronka (Sisa's neighbor) and István Mártonffy, an engineer and colleague of Koronka, participated in the meeting.

Several subjects were discussed, including painting the Hudson River with red dye, placing tri-color smoke bombs, dropping leaflets by plane, etc. Finally, their attention focused on the Statue of Liberty. The group, whose nickname became the "Conspiracy of Stephens" (since all the initiators had István/Stephen as their Christian name), determined to fly the Hungarian flag from the torch of Lady Liberty.

The Hungarian photographer Kálmán Keviczky became involved inasmuch as it would be his responsibility to film the planned event, while his son Attila would take photos. István Mártonffy organized a group of young people to carry out the plan. These included Martha (aged 14) and Judith (17) Bakonyi, Joseph Sövé, Joseph Abrankó, Elemér Édes, William Sárközy, István Juharos and, of course, István Mártonffy who, by his own recollection and admission, executed the final project.

To sew the flag together was no small task. Mrs. Ilona Bakonyi (my future mother-in-law) was asked to buy the tri-color material and stitch the 30 x 9 foot flag overnight in their apartment. (A smaller American flag was also to be flown.) In addition, a long white banner, carrying the inscription "STOP GENOCIDE; SAVE HUNGARY" was to be displayed from the 10th floor balcony of the Statue's base. The consensus is that the wording on the proclamation as well as the emblem of the Hungarian flag were the work of István Juharos.

Juharos and some of his friends had previously visited the Statue and climbed up to the crown, only to find that the staircase leading up to the torch-carrying arm was padlocked. They made a note of the lock's model with the idea that after knocking it down, they would replace it with an identical model. The original action was planned for Saturday, November 17, 1956; however, rainy weather prevented its execution. They decided to postpone it by one day.

In her own words, my wife Martha subsequently recorded the following: "... I don't quite remember how exactly I got involved in this project. Maybe through the fact that my sister and I were Girl Scouts and were active in the St. Emeric (Szent Imre) organization. I was always picketing with my parents and friends at the Soviet Mission to the UN and we had known at least one of the organizers, István Mártonffy.

"One Sunday afternoon, Mártonffy asked my sister, myself, my brother-in-law William Sárközy and three other young men to come to his apartment to make some banners. The fate of the Hungarian Revolution had turned sour and the West did not seem to pay much attention to it. We had to do something about it. Mártonffy talked to us about a big project. He wanted us to place a Hungarian flag around the torch of the Statue of Liberty and a 50-foot long banner on the base of the Statue. I guess we all felt proud to have been selected and didn't think of the possible conse-



quences. On reflection, how could I? I was only 14 at the time. Our parents were asked to make a flag but they were not told for what purpose. We were sworn to secrecy.

"A Sunday morning was set for the action. On November 18th, we all met at the Hungarian self-service restaurant on 81st Street, had breakfast and went to take the subway for the first ferry to the Statue of Liberty. We were paired off and tried to look as natural and calm as possible. Kálmán Kevicky and his son were there to take pictures and film to commemorate the events. We carried the flag and banner in shopping bags." (In the ladies' room at Liberty Island, the banner was wrapped around Martha's waist to be able to get it up into the Statue.)

"Unfortunately, we were not the only passengers on the ferry. There was a Puerto Rican couple as well. This made our situation more difficult. After all, we were all amateurs. But we did not intend to do any damage. We even brought a lock to replace the one that would have to be broken in order to get up into the arm of the Statue.

"After arriving at Liberty Island, I followed the Puerto Rican couple for a

while. My sister feigned illness and sat down on the stairs of the Statue in order to slow the ascent of this couple to the crown. The couple must have sensed that something was wrong and started to descend. I tried to alert everyone that we were in trouble, for surely they would tell the guards. At this point we had already managed to stretch the banner on the 10th floor balcony's bannister and some of our people draped the flag around the balcony of the torch-bearing arm. Our job done, we spread out and tried to catch the return ferry. But the guards stopped us anyway. Mártonffy was our spokesman. He took full responsibility; he was arrested and we were let go. The Keviczksys had already boarded the ferry to return to Manhattan.

"That evening, this was reported on the TV news ... Our parents were surprised to find out that we had been involved in this. And they probably were a little proud, too.

"A few days later, Mártonffy came to our home with an FBI agent to interrogate me. (No one else in the group had been interrogated.) The agent asked how old I was and why I did what I did. I replied: 'I wanted the United States and the world to know that we want freedom for Hungary.' With that, the interview was over and I never heard from the FBI again. But the authorities confiscated the flag and despite several efforts to get it back from them, we never were able to locate it. It would have served as a nice memento to the immigrants' museum at the Statue of Liberty – but the flag and the banner had disappeared. I have only the memories left..."

While this was going on, István Sisa was watching the events with binoculars from his office in downtown Manhattan and when he saw its success, he immediately called the news media which sent helicopters and reporters to the scene. Kevicky and his son had filmed and photographed the action from the lawn at the base of the Statue. When they realized that the inscription was removed from the balcony they hastily withdrew to the ferry landing. The

alerted guards asked them whether they had seen a flag flying from the torch, which they denied, then boarded the ferry and returned to Manhattan. On arrival, they hurried to the NBC News studio where Kevicky emptied his Bolex movie camera of the film clip. (He was later paid \$25 by NBC as a first prize for the documentary.) Kevicky developed the photos in his own laboratory and transported them to the Rockefeller Center office of the Associated Press. That evening, the news was televised and the photograph was carried in the Daily News and on the front page of the New York Times.

1956: Further NY Protests

The emigrant world, including us in New York, took to the streets in protest when we learned of the Soviet attack and reprisals. On the night of Saturday, November 3 to Sunday, November 4, I received a telephone call from a friend in New York about the Soviet military intervention. At 3 o'clock at night, a demonstration was organized in front of the United Nations complex. At 10 the following morning, a caravan of 60 flag-bedecked cars cruised throughout New York City to call attention to the tragic events in Hungary. I drove one of the cars in the parade.

In the afternoon, 10,000 gathered on Fifth Avenue for a protest march. The Voice of Faith Radio Choir, to which our friends and I belonged, led the way, singing tragic church anthems and Marian hymns under the direction of Fr. Sabbas Kilian, OFM. According to police reports, more than 50,000 watched the "funeral march" from the sidewalks of New York. The day ended with another demonstration at UN headquarters.

Demonstrations and picketing continued also at the Soviet Mission to the United Nations on Park Avenue and 68th Street. The New York police department kept us in check with mounted cops and swinging clubs. From time to time, things did get out of hand. Bottles of red dye were thrown against the building wall. On one occasion a man, elegantly

dressed, pulled up in a limousine, walked up to the door of the Mission where the commemoration of the 1917 Soviet revolution was being held. When the door opened, he threw in a brown paper bag full of human excrement and then disappeared.

While we demonstrated at the UN, Joe Sárossy of our choir sneaked behind police lines and cut the ropes from the Soviet and Hungarian flags on the flagpoles. Others, including my future wife, Martha Bakonyi, who was still in high school, went to the Rockefeller Center skating rink and cut a hole in the middle of the Hungarian flag on display, thereby eliminating the hated hammer and sickle, symbol of the Red regime.

One of the major demonstrations of the period was to take place at Madison Square Garden on the evening of Thursday, November 8. Some 10,000 people gathered at the sports arena to raise \$100,000 for Hungarian refugees, listen to some speeches and await some sort of commitment from the US government to aid the freedom fighters. We expected to volunteer for the Hungarian cause, and either be parachuted into Hungary, or be dropped off at the Austrian border armed with American weaponry to come to the rescue of the embattled forces.

New York State Governor Averell Harriman delivered President Eisenhower's message to the Hungarians assembled at Madison Square Garden. He announced that the US would admit thousands of Hungarian refugees, victims of the revolt. The audience expected a lot more and became restless, especially when some politicians, recently escaped from Hungary, appeared on the stage with Harriman, one of them raising his right fist in the traditional Socialist salute. I, too, felt the blood boiling in me and my utter disappointment came to the surface. Suddenly, I sprang on my feet and at the top of my voice I started yelling: "We want action! We want action!"

The crowd took up the cry. Several friends, seated in the audience around me, also rose to their feet and raised

their voices. Next day, when I went to the office at American Export Lines, people told me that television cameras had brought my face up close as my chant was taken up by thousands. Newspapers and LIFE magazine took pictures of this spontaneous outburst and our photo appeared in a commemorative edition of the magazine.

Hungarian-born Jules S. Vallay, retired telecom executive, was the organist and choir-master of St. Stephen of Hungary Church in New York City. Between 1990 and 1992, he represented NYNEX in Budapest, counseling the newly liberated Hungarian government on modern telecommunications systems. Mr. Vallay is also the author of historical essays and is currently retired in Virginia.

Sütőtök krémleves

By: Papp Ildikó

„A verzió”

70 dkg sütőtök
10 dkg sárgarépa
1 db vöröshagyma
5 ek olivaj
1 l víz (kb)
1 kk curry
1kk gyömbér
Só, bors

A sütőtököt tepsire tesszük, húsát bevagdossuk, kissé megborsozzuk. Jó egy kanál olivajjal meglocsoljuk. Közepesen forró sütőben 40-50 percig sütjük.

A hagymát megtisztítjuk, finomra vágjuk, és egy lábasban a maradék olajon megfonnyasztjuk. A sült tök húsát belekaparjuk, és beletesszük a felkockázott répát. Sóval, borsal, curryvel és gyömbérral fűszerezzük. Kb. 1 liter vízzel felöntjük. (Gordon eredetileg füstölt sonka főzőlevét öntötte rá, így ha lenne kéznél, azt is használhatjuk). Kb 10 percig főzzük, majd turmixoljuk, vagy merülőmixerrel pürésítjük.

Tálalásnál 1 evőkanál tejfölt rakhatunk bele, és piritott tökmagot szórunk bele.



Hungarian Festival

On September 18th, the Hungarian Community Club of Wallingford, CT held its Hungarian Festival at the Hungarian House there. In addition to the Hon. Imre Szakács, Deputy Consul General of Hungary, and Professor Christopher P. Ball, Honorary Consul to Connecticut, the Mayor, the Hon. William Dickinson, and Representative Mary Mushinsky also attended. Moderator was Dr. Balázs B. Somogyi. There

Railway Lamp Museum in Fertőszéplak

By: Haragovics József

Haragovics József, with introduction by Karolina Tima Szabo

When you are visiting or live in Hungary, and you are ready for the unusual, I advise you to visit a very unique museum. This summer I had an opportunity to see such, thanks to my friend Erzsike Cseh who, after visiting our beloved Bözsi néni's lace museum (Csipke Muzeum) in Hegykő, took my two sisters and me to the Railway Lamp Museum in Fertőszéplak. The following article is about the museum, as told us by its owner, as written in the third person by, Haragovics József. He omitted telling us that he also has a lamp from the interior of the wrecked railroad car of Sisi, Queen Elizabeth of Hungary, in which she traveled from Vienna to Budapest.

Since he was a child, Haragovics József had an interest in railway lamps. He created this very one-of-a-kind museum from his collection. On our visit, he welcomed us in his railway man's outfit. The museum is located in a one hundred-year old peasant house with open arched veranda, a very typical Hungarian style of architecture. In the front room (*tiszta szoba*), you'll find around 300 railway lamps, each of which is unique and has its own special story.

There are lamps from many countries, from every country of Europe, but also from Japan, Mongolia, India, Sri Lanka, the USA, Canada, Cuba and New Zealand.



The very first lamps used candles; later they burned rape oil (*repce olaj*), and then the rail companies switched to using petroleum. Carbide and propane-butane gas were also used. Electric lamps were used with steam engines, where a steam powered dynamo generated the electricity. Later, the petro-

leum lamps were changed to electric, where the shape stayed the same, and the wick was replaced with a bulb. There were also hybrids which, to be on the safe side, could be switched to petroleum, in case there was an electric outage.

The museum's oldest piece dates from 1838 and 1860. One can con-

clude its age by the initials found on the lamp: K. F. N. B. (Kaiser Ferdinand Nord Bahn). The museum also has modern lamps, which have LED diodes.

Haragovics József got the first piece of his collection when he was 24 years old. The corner beacon Krolupper type lamp he received 36 years-ago. This first of its kind lamp was placed on the corner of the last car, shining white frontward, and red backward in the dark, reassuring the conductor that the last car was not lost.

To listen to Mr. Haragovics talking about his treasures is a pleasure. His enthusiasm is reflected in his stories, when he tells the way he acquired and restored the pieces for the last 36 years.

The Railway Lamp Museum (Lámpamúzeum) is located on Soproni út 13 Fertőszéplak tel.: 00/36/99/340-556 cell: 00/36/20/322-47-34 e mail: jozsef@haragovics.hu

*His website reads:
The exhibition showing the special lamps once used in the Hungarian railway network is unique in its kind. As for their shape, function and lighting technique, each lamp is considered to be a special one. We can find such rarities here which are masterpieces of design and manufacture.*

There's a lamp which not only lights but also generates electricity and boils water for tea. Haragovics József collected the exhibits over 30 years with very special methods. Once he has obtained a piece, he starts a detailed, careful job on it to make it look nice. He has also searched for exact documents which prove the origin of the lamps and their ways of usage. The lamps tell us how a piece of junk can become an industrial masterpiece in the hands of a pas-

sionate man who loves his profession.

Széchenyi's Chain Bridge / Lánchíd

By: Erika Papp Faber

Count Széchenyi István's vision for the advancement of his homeland included the unification of the two distinct cities of Buda and Pest separated by the Danube River. In this our ninth piece commemorating the 225th anniversary of his birth, we look at his overall plan with which he had more in mind than merely the construction of a bridge; he also wanted to equalize the social burdens by requiring every member of the populace to pay the toll, regardless of social status.



Count Széchenyi István's vision for the advancement of his homeland included the unification of the two distinct cities of Buda and Pest, separated by the Danube River, to create a flourishing capital. The first step in this overall plan was construction of a bridge to link the two cities.

His was not a new idea: King Zsigmond (Sigismund of Luxemburg – reigned 1387–1437) already contemplated building such a bridge. However, his reign was notable for its

great lack of funds, and so a bridge across the Danube remained a dream. But by 1556, a pontoon bridge was realized during the Turkish occupation. Damaged a number of times, it was finally destroyed by the Turks themselves when they withdrew from Pest in 1686.

With the recapture of Buda and Pest from the Turks, a so-called "flying bridge" or ferry was instituted. The ferry, consisting of a deck built over two ships, which could accommodate 3-4 horse-drawn wagons and 300 passengers, was attached to a 750-meter long rope anchored in the middle of the river channel. This rope was kept afloat by 7 flat boats. The ferry would use the river current to bring it across the river.

By the 18th century, this "flying bridge" proved inadequate for the increased traffic, so they once again resorted to a pontoon bridge. In the beginning, the toll was exacted by the cities of Buda and Pest themselves, but was later leased out to the highest bidder.

A temporary pontoon bridge was put in place in 1767 for the visit of the Archduke Albert. For the national assembly that was convened in Pest in 1790, another temporary "flying bridge" or ferry was used.

The Danube differs from other major European rivers in that it is covered with ice in the winter, and in addition to causing flooding, thawing ice can wreak great damage. All this had to be taken into consideration when designing a bridge, and was one of the reasons it took so long to build one at Buda and Pest.

In 1832, Széchenyi traveled to England, and there consulted several British bridge designers. On his return, he drew up an estimate of proposed costs, which he hoped to finance by the issuance of stocks and the imposition of a toll on a democratic basis, i.e., everyone – peasant



The inscription on the lion still uses the "cz" for the "c" sound in "Lánczhíd". This was common usage until approximately the 1930's

as well as aristocrat – would pay the same toll.

This latter provision was considered revolutionary and caused an uproar in the National Assembly (*Országgyűlés*), since the upper classes were exempt from all taxation, and they considered a bridge toll to be a tax, an infringement on their traditional privileges. They were finally persuaded to place the common good above their personal interests, and passed the law in 1836. The law also established a Delegation (*Küldöttség*) to handle all matters relating to the bridge's construction.

Széchenyi then set up a Bridge Society, and numerous (mostly unsuitable) designs to span the Danube were submitted. A plan was also submitted by Vasvári Pál, who later planned the regulation of the Tisza – see September issue of Magyar News Online. (His bridge design included a drawbridge to permit the passage of ships – predating the Tower Bridge of London by half a century.)

The final design accepted by the Delegation was that of the English engineer William Tierney Clark for a suspension bridge. Financing was handled by Baron Sina György, who himself made the largest contribution to the costs. In consideration of his generosity, he received the right to collect the toll for 87 years! But after the Compromise of 1867, the Hungarian government bought the right from Sina and his heir.

Construction of the *Lánchíd* began in 1839. A Scottish engineer, Adam Clark – no relation to William Tierney – who earlier had designed and built dredges for the Danube Steamship Company – was put in charge of the work. (Today, we would call him the Project Manager.)

The first pile on which the structure would rest was driven on the Buda side in 1840. It took two years to

complete driving the piles, with often 800 people working at the same time. The Pest side foundation pit was completed first, and the laying of the foundation stone was celebrated on August 24th, 1842.

The iron castings and chains were manufactured in England, the anchoring steel blocks in Austria. Installation of 11 chains went fine; however, an accident occurred at the installation of the 12th and last one. One worker lost his life, and observers, including Széchenyi himself, were swept into the river from a floating scaffolding.

This delayed construction on the bridge. But much more serious delays were caused by the Freedom Fight of 1848-49. Each side wanted to make the bridge impassable to the other. The Austrians shelled the bridge, and caused some damage, but more serious danger threatened when they began to make preparations to blow it up. Adam Clark prevented this catastrophe by flooding the anchoring chamber, dismantling the pumps and breaking some parts.

It was by order of Kossuth himself that a wagon crossed the Chain Bridge even before it was completed: On January 1st, 1849, it took the Holy Crown from beleaguered Buda to the train leaving for safety in Debrecen.

But others – officials, the military and pedestrians – used the bridge even before its official opening on November 20, 1849.

Only Széchenyi himself, who was responsible for its existence, never was able to cross it. Because by that time, he was in a mental institution in Austria. Nor did he live to see his vision become a reality – the unification of Buda and Pest into one grand capital city, in 1873.

This is the early history of the iconic *Lánchíd* that became part of the Budapest cityscape. Together

with every other bridge in the capital, it was blown up during World War II, finally restored in 1949, and renovated in 1973. However, by now, the Chain Bridge, Széchenyi's dream, is once again in urgent need of renovation.

Erika Papp Faber is Editor of Magyar News Online.

Kicsi a Világ

By: Olga Vállay Szokolay

In 1985, my husband and I visited San Francisco, where I attended the annual convention of the American Institute of Architects. We were enjoying dinner at our friends' house when one of the fellow guests and I stared at each other in mutual disbelief. He had been a young army officer during WW II, who became a prisoner of war in the Soviet Union. He learned Russian during his several years of "paid vacation". That enabled him upon his release to become a Russian language instructor at the Technical University of Budapest in the 1950's and – lo and behold – he had been my group's teacher of the obligatory Russian language class!



Olga with her Russian teacher

Dömötör nap / Demetrius' Day

viola vonfi



Enamelled plaque of St. Demetrius on the Holy Crown

According to the Érdy-kodex – a most significant and extensive collection of sermons and legends compiled by a Carthusian monk in the vernacular in 1526-27 – Dömötör was a Roman officer in the 4th century born in the Szerémség, in the south of what later became Hungary. (Like St. Martin of Tours who was born in Pannonia, he is therefore considered to be a Hungarian saint.) Since Dömötör was a Christian, he refused to sacrifice to idols, and was martyred on October 26th.

Traditionally, people believed that if a cold wind blew on October 26th, Dömötör's day, the winter would be cold. (*Hideg szél – hideg tél.*)

Dömötör was the patron of shepherds and the country people attributed to him miraculous powers, especially the power of protection. The day of Dömötör was sometimes called Shepherds' New Year, because that was the day the contract between shepherd and

master was either renewed or terminated. It was observed with special ceremony in the city of Szeged, where the main church bore the name of Dömötör. (Sadly, it was demolished in the early 20th century, and only one tower of it - *Dömötör torony* - is left.)

On the patronal feast, the sheep were driven in from pasture, and the priest, fully vested, received the shepherds and their families in front of the church. After the sermon, he accepted the lambs brought as an offering. Then they prepared lamb stew in the church yard, while their wives served up *rétes* (strudel).

To complete the festivities, there was dancing to the music of the *duda* or bagpipes. (O yes, Hungarians have bagpipes too! As a matter of fact, the bagpipe tradition has just become a part of the Hungarian Spiritual Cultural Heritage register.) Thus the saying "*Dömötör juhászt táncoltat*" (Demetrius makes shepherds dance) could be taken literally, although it has also been interpreted to mean that by that time it's too



The preserved tower of Dömötör Church in Szeged

cold to spend any time outdoors.

In some places, the celebrations would go on for a whole week. Which explains why a drunkard was often described as someone for whom every day is Dömötör's day!

viola vonfi is our correspondent from Stamford, CT.

Did you know

...that the first paper mill in Hungary was set up at Lócse, probably before 1515? Though the date of its establishment is not known, it is documented to have burnt down on November 24th, 1530.

Lócse is located in the Felvidék (Upper Hungary), 40 km west of Eperjes. Géza II (12th century) brought in settlers from Saxony to populate the area. It became an economic center, and its schools and print shops were famous. The population accepted the teachings of Martin Luther and helped Prince Rákóczi Ferenc II who led the Freedom Fight against the Austrians (1703 – 1711). On that account, the city was frequently subject to siege. Yet most of the medieval city walls have been preserved.

Géczy Julianna, Korponay Jánosné was the lover of Baron Andrassy István, commanding officer of Lócse fortress. She was instrumental in turning the city over to the besieging Austrian troops in 1710. She expected to be rewarded for her treason, but instead was arrested and beheaded at Győr in September of 1715. She was immortalized by the novelist Jókai Mór as "The White Woman of Lócse".

Those pesky "accents"!

By: EPF

What a difference those marks make! Yet they are easily conquered once you have made the Hungarian alphabet your own.

Those brave souls who undertake to study the Hungarian language are often confused by what they mistakenly term "accents". They refer, of course, to the slashes and double dots they encounter in the Hungarian alphabet. However, these are not accents, because accents indicate emphasis, and Magyar does not need to have a special indication for that because the emphasis in any word ALWAYS falls on the first syllable.

So what are they? They are officially called "diacritical marks" which actually change the pronunciation of a letter. And that most often changes the meaning of a word.

So diacritical marks are extremely important. Because it matters whether you are speaking of a "hal" – fish – or saying "hál" – he/she/it sleeps. Or whether you say "faj" – race – or "fáj" – it hurts. Or "harmat" – dew – or "hármat" – three in the objective case (Hány sört kérnek? Hármat.)

See whether you can spot the pitfalls of diacritical marks, or the lack thereof, in the following text:

Ma Marika a soros/sörös - it's Marika's turn today – (or is she the beer girl today?)

Megmosta a haját/háját – she washed her hair – or her fat.

Ez az asztal kerek, és a kerék is kerek. This table is round, and the wheel is round too.

Kérek egy kereket. I would like to

have a round one (or a wheel).

Vágja a gazt (nem a gázt!). He/she cuts the weeds (NOT the gas!)

Jancsinak két bal lába van... Johnny has two left feet ...

...ami nem jó amikor balba megy. ...which is not good when he goes to a ball.

Már ez a kutya is mar. Already this dog too bites.

You don't want to accuse someone of being out of his/her mind (őrült), when you really want to say that that person was very glad (örült). (This also illustrates how much easier Hungarian is, because there are NO GENDER PRO-


NOUNS!)

And it does make a difference, to which vowel you add that mark: is it a veréb (sparrow) – or a véreb (a bloodhound)???

But don't let these examples discourage you! The Hungarian alphabet is not difficult to master. And unlike English, once you know it, you'll be able to read EVERYTHING! Isn't that worth a bit of effort?

Just remember always to put the *accent* on the first syllable!

Erika Papp Faber is Editor of Magyar News Online.



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*Emléktábla koszorúzása a Fairfield Independence
Hall-nál d.u. 3-kor
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Utána mindenkit szeretettel meghívunk kávéra és süteményre.

