



Föltámadott a tenger...

The Hungarian Revolution broke out on March 15th, 1848. Petőfi wrote this allegoric poem at the end of March, in response to rumors that the king was about to withdraw his promise of an independent national government. This rumor was confirmed by an ordinance issued on March 28th. Consequently, the newly named Hungarian Prime Minister, Count Batthyány Lajos resigned, and Petőfi and his friends, the "Youth of March" called on the people to take up arms. A new revolt was in the making, which Petőfi saw as proof of the power of the people. His verses celebrate their victory.

In the poem, the sea represents the people, the storm stands for the revolution, the ship being tossed about is the ruling class and the king. Petőfi speaks of "peoples", since the Hungarian Revolution was only one of numerous uprisings across Europe at the time. Therefore the poem is addressed to all rulers who oppress their people.

Föltámadott a tenger...

Petőfi Sándor

Föltámadott a tenger,
A népek tengere;
Ijesztve eget földet,
Szilaj hullámokat vet
Rémítő ereje.

Látjátok ezt a táncot?
Halljátok e zenét?
Akik még nem tudtátok,
Most megtanulhatjátok,
Hogyan mulat a nép.

Reng és üvölt a tenger,
Hánykódnak a hajók,
Súlyednek a pokolra,
Az árbóc és vitorla
Megtörve, tépve lóg.

Tombold ki, te özönvíz,
Tombold ki magadat,
Mutasd mélységes medred,
S dobáld a fellegekre

Bőszült tajtékodat;
Jegyezd vele az égre
Örök tanulságul:
Habár fölül a gályá,
S alúl a víznek árja,
Azért a víz az úr.



Café Budapest 2019

Some 69 years ago a few young Hungarian refugees started the Pannonia American-Hungarian Club in Fairfield, CT. A few years after, during *farsang*, they organized a ball. That was the first Café Budapest Ball; of course the name came later.

On Saturday, February 23rd the Pannonia Club organized the 66th Café Budapest Debutante Ball at Water-view, located on picturesque Lake Zoar in Monroe. After cocktails we moved into the elegant dining room where Dr. Balázs Somogyi, Master of Ceremonies welcomed the guests and introduced Valéria Miklós, the Club's President. Dr. Imre Szakács, Consul, represented the Consulate General of Hungary of New York. He read a message from Dr. István Pásztor, Consul General.

Every year, the Club gives out scholarships to "Hungarian-American youth who entered higher-level education and who as children have actively participated in our community". This year, Claudia Margitay Balogh presented the Justin Margitay Balogh Scholarship to two young college students, Lilianna Giaume, and Erik Mihok, wishing them much success!

Following the scholarship presentation, Dr. Somogyi introduced this year's Debutantes and their Escorts. Ally Szabo, one of the Debutantes shares her experience at the Ball.

Café Budapest 2019, My Debutante Ball

Ally Szabo

The Pannonia Ball is an incredible experience. I have attended as a guest twice before, but participating in the Debutante dance was especially amazing. It not only provided me with an opportunity to meet new people in the Hungarian community, but it also allows young women and men to deepen their sense of belonging to a network, a family, of some of the best people they have ever met. This



beautiful ball and my involvement in it has had a wonderful impact on my sense of pride and adoration for my Hungarian heritage.

Ally Szabo is turning 16 in March. She is a sophomore at Trumbull High School, a member of the Trumbull High School Golden Eagle Marching Band and the Varsity Tennis Club.

Captions: Ally and her escort Beau Dragone; Valeria Miklos Pannonia Club President,; Lilliana Giaume; Eric Mihok



Debutantes and their Escorts

Michigan White Rose Ball

Laura A. Kuczajda

The White Rose Ball of the Hungarian Arts Club of Detroit has a history dating back to 1958. It was held again this year in Dearborn, MI on February 2nd. We are pleased to bring a report on the festivities.

The 2019 Hungarian Arts Club's annual White Rose Ball was a true family affair. First, one of the college scholarship winners, Tamas Salaman, just happened to be the eldest son of the Ball's Honorary Chairpersons, Andrea and Jozsef Salaman. Second, that same scholarship winner, Tamas Salaman and his younger brother, Zalan, were both Escorts this year and thirdly, the Wolkensperg Family hosted an ideal family reunion by having family members come from multiple States and Canada to see their Debutantes introduced.

The Hungarian Arts Club held their annual White Rose Ball on Saturday, February 2nd at the Marriott Dearborn Inn. This formal ball introduces young Hungarian ladies into society, and awards a college scholarship to a student of Hungarian descent studying fine arts. This year's Debutantes were :

- Saraiah Evans, from Noblesville, Indiana. She attends Fishers High School and enjoys track, working on the yearbook and photography.
- Annika Burney is from Sterling Hts., MI where she attends the Great Lakes Cyber Academy.
- Avery McNamara attends Stoney Creek High School and enjoys competitive cheerleading and soccer.



- Jenna Bernath lives in Riverside California, where she attends Martin Luther King High School. She enjoys track, softball, and baseball.
- Frances Wolkensperg is from Elora, Ontario, Canada. She attends Centre Wellington District High School where she is on the honor roll. She also enjoys hockey, soccer and volleyball.
- Carolyn Bourgeois is from Thibodeaux, Louisiana. She attends Thibodaux High School where she enjoys gymnastics, hunting, and fishing.

The Ball's Escorts this year were: Alek Lukacs, Tamas Salaman, Zalan Salaman, Weston Krause, Ian Bester and Akos Choinski. The Ball's extra dancers were: Rachel Woods, Kaili Brooks, and Reagan McNamara. The Club's 2019 Scholarship winners were Tamas Salaman and Bryan Szabo. Tamas is a senior at Flat Rock High School, who has been playing the violin since he was 7, and Hungarian Folk dancing since he was 6. Tamas performed a beautiful violin piece at the Ball which was very well received and enjoyed by all the attendees.

The other winner, Bryan Szabo, was

born in Romania and in 2004 moved to Michigan. He currently attends UofM Dearborn and has been playing the euphonium and trumpet for 8 years. He is working towards dual degrees in electrical engineering and applied music.

This year the Club selected Andrea and Jozsef Salaman as their Honorary Chairpersons for their contributions to promoting Hungarian Culture in our community. The Salamans currently reside in Flat Rock, MI and are the founders of Csipke Ensemble Hungarian Folk Dance group. They are also the Founders of Csipke Tábor, an annual week long Hungarian Dance and Music Camp.

Goal of the Camp is to preserve and promote Hungarian folk music and dance traditions. Csipke Tábor brings musicians and dancers from Hungary or Transylvania to teach and perform music and dances from a specific region each year. It is the annual "mecca" of Hungarian folk music and dance in North America. The Camp has been very successful and widely recognized. People come from all over North America to participate. It had 80 in attendance the first year and has grown to over 300 people, and has inspired other Hungarian communi-

ties in North America to start dance groups and folk bands. Csipke Tábor has been recognized in many professional journals, articles and broadcasts in the US as well as in Hungary.

Now for the Wolkensperg's Family reunion. As a family, they had three Debutantes introduced this year: one from Louisiana (Carolyn Bourgeois), one from California (Jenna Bernath), and one from Elora, Ontario, Canada (Frances Wolkensperg). The Wolkensperg family has a long White Rose Ball tradition, starting with an Escort Wolkensperg in 1959, and the first Wolkensperg Debutante in 1961. In the 61 years of White Rose Ball history, over 20 Wolkensperg family members have been either a Debutante or an Escort. The Wolkenspergs want this family tradition to continue no matter where they live, and took this wonderful opportunity to gather family together, to celebrate their culture, continue a family tradition, and spend quality time with family and friends. We applaud their loyalty and cultural traditions. We also encourage others to share their Hungarian heritage across State lines and US borders.

Whether a Debutante, an Escort, or a potential scholarship winner, we can all come together at the White Rose Ball to honor and promote Hungarian culture.

Laura A. Kuczajda has been the publicity person for the Hungarian Arts Club for the last 11 years. She has an MBA and is currently the Director of the College of Human Medicine for Michigan State University.

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In connection with the folk dance camps mentioned in this article, here are a couple of descriptive paragraphs on the topic, explaining that almost all Hungarian folk dances are improvisational. Hungarian folk dances have a very rich language of movement:

„A néptáncművészetnek két fontos ágazata alakult ki a hatvanas – hetvenes években. Az egyik ágazat a tisztas forrást kívánja bemutatni. Az eredeti

anyagot, természetesen színpadi műformába öntve a legnagyobb hitelességgel igyekeznek megjelentetni. A másik törekvés a Kárpát-medencei néptáncincset anyanyelvként használja, és tánc házi előadásokat kíván létrehozni...

„Sok más népek táncaival ellentétben a magyar tánc típusok úgyszólván mindegyike improvizatív jellegű. Egy kőrtánc vagy egy sortánc általában kötött, szabályozott sorrendű lépésekből épül fel... A magyar néptáncokban szabadon variálnak a napi kedvüknek és kreativitásuknak megfelelően. Ez lehetővé teszi, hogy új lépések, új variációk szülessenek a táncosok tehetségétől függően. Mai példával élve egy kitűnő rock and roll táncos alkalmanként elképesztő új fordulatokat, mozgás ötleteket használ. A magyar és az erdélyi román táncok, melyeknek ugyanilyen a szerkezetük, óriási lehetőséget nyújtanak a koreográfusoknak, hogy ezt a nagyon gazdag mozgásanyanyelvet olyan szabadon alkalmazzák, ahogy a mondanivalója kívánja. Ez a magyar néptánciskola alapja és nagy lehetősége. A kortárs jellegű néptánc-koreográfiák sikere és sokoldalúsága ezt bizonyítja.”

*Magyar kulturális kalauz,
Napkút kiadó, Budapest 2011,
„Néptáncművészet” c. cikkéből*

Mága Zoltán at Carnegie Hall

Stern Auditorium / Perelman Stage
Carnegie Hall.

Dazzling music by Hungary's foremost violinist and his fiery orchestra: the Budapest Gypsy Virtuosi.

Fiery music brought to

life through the flair and passion of Hungary's preeminent violin virtuoso, Zoltán Mága. As a crossover artist, Zoltán is equally at home in classical repertoire as he is with pop and Hungarian folk. Over his career he has shared the stage with 16-time Grammy-winner David Foster, Ekaterina Lezhina, Julia Novikova, Kristin Chenoweth, Kenneth Babyface Edmonds, Aida Garifullina, and Shlomo Mintz, was featured on a Michael Bublé album, and has performed for esteemed audiences including Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis, Prince Charles, Mohammed VI of Morocco, Robert de Niro and Salma Hayek. Touring five continents and nearly 100 countries, Zoltán is returning to North America after recording his second special for PBS television. With a diverse program at Carnegie Hall from Béla Bartók, Franz Liszt, and Zoltán Kodály to Vittorio Monti and Johannes Brahms, Zoltán Mága and his exceptional orchestra, the Budapest Gypsy Virtuosi, will deliver a lively, masterful performance that is not to be missed.

The direct link to buy tickets: <https://www.carnegiehall.org/Cart/Seat-Selection-Performance/Syos?eventid=37468>.

The 50% discount code is now set up. It is HUN31082.

On the above link the code can be entered before the seats are chosen.



Florence Baker, a Nearly Forgotten Hungarian Explorer

Éva Wajda

Florence, Lady Baker or Barbara Szasz; Maria Freiin von Sass; Barbara Szasz, Barbara Maria Szasz, Sass Flóra (August 6, 1841-March 11, 1916), was a Hungarian-British explorer. Born in Nagyenyed, Háromszék, Transylvania (then Austro-Hungarian Empire), she became an orphan and was sold as a slave to Samuel Baker. Together they went on a four year expedition to search for the source of the Nile and discovered Lake Albert. When they returned to Baker's home in England they married in 1864, Sam was knighted by Queen Victoria the following year and she became Lady Baker. In 1869, she returned to Africa with her husband to put down the slave trade. They both retired and died in Devon, England. This is her life story in a nutshell.

Florence Barbara von Sass, also known as Szász or Sas Flóra in Hungarian, was born in Nagyenyed, Transylvania in 1841. She was orphaned during the 1848/49 Hungarian Revolution for Independence from Austria. When on January 8, 1849, Nagyenyed was burned and destroyed by Valachian soldiers and rebelling Romanian peasants, 600 Hungarians were murdered. The seven year old Flóra watched from her hiding place as her mother and brother were killed in the middle of the night. Her life was saved by her nanny, a Romanian woman who claimed Flóra as her daughter. They escaped the horror and walked for days, hiding and avoiding people and farm houses until they found her father, Mathias von Szász. He was in the Transylvanian army, adjutant to Polish General Bem who had offered his services to Lajos Kossuth to fight the Austrians for Hungarian Independence, and had been assigned the defense of Transylvania.

When the Freedom Fight for Independence from Austria was lost with the help of Russia and the Surrender



Florence, Lady Baker

at Világos was signed on August 13, 1849, the Austrians engaged in high reprisals against Hungary. Hundreds of soldiers and civilians were sentenced to death or were imprisoned. In Arad they executed 12 generals and one colonel, known as the 13 Martyrs of Arad. The Prime Minister, Lajos Batthyány was executed by firing squad. Flora's father was wounded at Temesvár where Bem's last battle was fought and lost.

Thousands were escaping by walking in the August heat to Orsova, the furthest outpost of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. From there they crossed the Danube in boats to seek refuge in Vidin (now in Bulgaria), a small old fortified port town on the banks of the Danube in the Turkish Empire. The town was not equipped to handle the influx of refugees; there was a shortage of food, sanitation, the wounded soldiers died without proper medical care. Flora was living in the camp with her nanny and her father.

The Austrians demanded the refugees be returned to them for punishment under the terms of the Belgrade Treaty concluded between the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire and the Austrian Emperor in 1739. The Hungarians were at the mercy of the Sultan. One of the tenets of Islam was to offer asylum to those who seek it, therefore the Sultan and the Porte were honor-bound to protect the refugees according to religious law. The Sultan refused their extradition.

The Austrians offered amnesty to junior officers and enlisted men if they agreed to join their army and

renounce the Rebellion. Senior officers and high ranking officials and those who defected from the Austrian army to join the rebels found their names on a list of those wanted for punishment. Louis Kossuth and General Bem were singled out. Death awaited those on the extradition list. Tensions grew between the demands of extradition and refusal. On October 13, 1849, approximately 3,360 men accepted amnesty and returned to Austria. Kossuth and many other leaders and the remaining 1,250 stayed in the camp and in November moved to Shumla (now in Bulgaria). Eventually they were released. By the time the refugee camp closed, 500 men had died.

Mathias Szász and nine other officers in the camp drafted a letter of allegiance to Kossuth and the Revolution and refused Austrian amnesty. On September 18, 1849, the Sultan sent an envoy, Ekrem Effendi, to meet with the Hungarian leaders, to present them with an extraordinary offer. Anyone who converted to Islam would be given a military position in the Turkish army equivalent to his former rank. As a new citizen of the Ottoman Empire he would be protected from extradition. If all those on the extradition list converted, the problem would be solved. A great number of Hungarian soldiers, close to 500, and 15 officers accepted the Sultan's offer and took Muslim names. Among the converts were 15 women.

Kossuth took a completely opposite view and was offended by the offer. He made an impassioned speech in the camp to prevent junior officers and common soldiers from joining their generals in converting. Kossuth and many other Hungarians thought that conversion to Islam was a disgrace, and the converts thought that amnesty was cowardly.

General Bem was the first to accept the offer immediately and converted to Islam, taking the name Murad Pasha. He became governor of Aleppo in what is now Syria. He died shortly thereafter of malaria in 1850, but not before he quelled an uprising and

saved Aleppo's Christian population from being massacred.

Flora was living in the refugee camp with her father and her nanny, but one day her father left camp and she never saw him again, and then her nanny disappeared. Flora was left alone, hungry and cold, waiting in their tent. After several days she was taken in by an Armenian family by the name of Finjanjian, a common surname in the Ottoman Empire for porcelain sellers. (*Finjan* is the name for a tall porcelain beaker set in an open-work metal holder.) They named her Florence.

It was a common and accepted practice for well-to-do women in the Ottoman Empire to buy young girls, to train and sell them for the harem. This was the fate awaiting Florence, who had no idea of this plan. She was raised with other girls and believed she was adopted. She was educated and learned several languages. When she was 17 years old, she was highly shocked when she was taken to a slave market to be auctioned off to the highest bidder. She stood out from the other girls because she was very pretty, fair skinned, her hair was golden and curled round a fair face, all of which added to her value. Even in her old age she was described as beautiful and had a lovely smile.

Among the buyers at the slave auction was a light skinned man wearing a long, black beard, and Flora noticed him immediately. He was Samuel White Baker who was in Vidin with his friend the Maharajah Singh while awaiting their boat, which had been damaged by an ice floe, to be repaired. With nothing to do, they attended the slave auction out of curiosity. Sam was entranced at the sight of the beautiful slave girl on the auction block and noticed she was upset and angry. He felt empathy for her and decided immediately he would rescue her from an unknown fate. It is not known whether he was outbid by the Pasha of Vidin, but the fact remains that he escaped with her



Samuel Baker and Florence

The largest of these reached as much as 13 feet in height at the shoulder (truly "mammoth" in size!), but the average animal reached only about 9 feet at the shoulder, and weighed an approximate 5 tons. From studying the – uh – poop, scientists have concluded that they were herbivores, eating grasses and leaves.

About three quarters of the Pécs specimen's skeleton was recovered, found over 90 years ago at Pécsbányatelep, and is going on exhibit on March 1st. Scientists have determined that it was about 15 feet in length, and about 9 feet in height. It was probably 35-40 years old. Its tusks have been reconstructed, and they are about five feet in length.

The exhibit will also include remains of other contemporary animals. An interactive component of the exhibit includes a mammoth skeleton that can be assembled.

Remains of hairy mammoths were also found at Szurdokpüspöki in Nógrád County in 2014. That find was estimated to be 14,000 years old.

Teeth and other bones have been found in the Tisza River bed, as well as near Miskolc, Érd, Dorog, Tokod, Bodrogkeresztúr,

Pilisszántó. Bones of several mammoths were found at Csajág near Lake Balaton during highway construction, in 2006. A reminder of these prehistoric animals is found in Budapest, where a brass sculpture immortalizes them in front of the Mammut shopping mall in Buda.

in hired carriages and sped to Bucharest for safety along with his friend Maharajah Singh.

(to be continued)

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

Pécs Mammoth Exhibit Opens

viola vonfi

Remains of a mammoth discovered in a sand pit at Pécsbányatelep in 1928 will go on exhibit at the Janus Pannonius Museum in Pécs on March 1st this year. It will be open to visitors until May 30th.



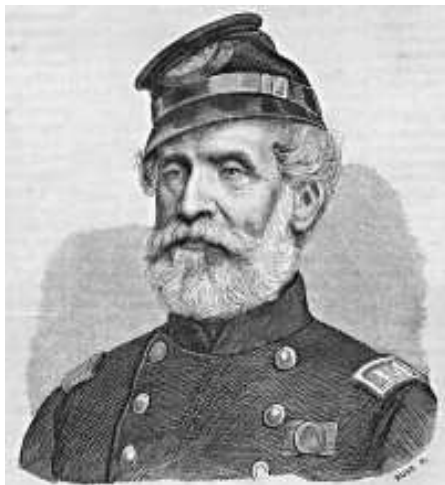
The mammoth at the Pécs exhibit

Many mammoth bones and teeth have been discovered in Hungary over the years. These hairy relatives of the elephant have been extinct for thousands of years, but their remains have turned up in Siberia, Eurasia and the Americas, including Alaska. And in Hungary.

Perczel Miklós - Fought for Freedom on Two Continents

EPF

The thirst for freedom is unquenchable, and many have fought untiringly to achieve and preserve that freedom. As we commemorate the outbreak of the 1848-49 Revolution and Freedom Fight this month, let us look at one of the leading men who took part in that fight – and could not stop battling for freedom. After the Hungarian Freedom Fight was put down by the Habsburgs with Russian help, many officers escaped retribution by coming to the United States. When a dozen years later the Civil War broke out in America, a good number of them took part in it, mostly on the side of the North. Among them was Perczel Miklós, known here as Nicholas Perczel. This is his story in brief.



Bonyhádi Perczel Miklós (1812-1904) was born in Bonyhád in southwestern Hungary, about 26 miles northeast of Pécs. He was one of 19 children of bonyhádi Perczel Sándor, a wealthy landowner whose original (German) title of nobility had been bestowed on an ancestor by the Holy Roman Emperor in the 16th century. In 1697, the family also received a Hungarian title of nobility. In 1745, in recognition of services rendered in the political arena, Empress and Queen of Hungary Maria



Battle of Corinth, Mississippi

Theresa issued a document granting the family the right to add "bonyhádi" to their name.

Bonyhádi Perczel Miklós, together with his brothers Móric and Béla, was tutored by Vörösmarty Mihály who later became one of Hungary's great lyric poets. (Their sister Adél, who died very young, was Vörösmarty's secret love whom he immortalized as Etelka. But Vörösmarty, who came from an impoverished family of the lower nobility, thought the social gap between them was insurmountable, and hid his emotions.)

Miklós studied law, and served in several County positions. In 1848, he was elected to Parliament, as representative of Baranya County, and also of a district in Tolna County. In the 1848-49 War of Independence, he served as Major in the Hungarian National Guard (*nemzetőrség*). He fought in a number of battles, including the Battle of Pákozd and Mór. Under his brother Móric's command he took part in the liberation of Bácska. He was temporarily named commandant of Pétervárad, then promoted to General by Kossuth who named him commandant of Arad fortress. However, his unbridled temper caused friction with his superior, who had him locked up. Only the intervention of Vörösmarty saved him from further consequences. On his release he joined his brother Móric and

fought as a volunteer in the Battle of Temesvár.

Following the defeat at Temesvár, the last battle of the War of Independence, Perczel Miklós and Móric fled with Kossuth via Vidin and Shumla to Kutahia, Turkey, where they were interned. In September 1851, he, Kossuth and a number of others were hanged in effigy by the Austrians in Budapest. That same year, Perczel was freed and left with his wife for the United States, settling in Davenport, Iowa.

At first he gave French lessons, then tried farming. In 1857, he went to England, where his brother Móric lived, and two years later, both of them went to Italy to take part in the Second Italian War of Independence, fought by the French and the Kingdom of Sardinia against the Austrian Empire. But it was a short war, lasting a little more than two months, and Miklós returned to Davenport.

After the outbreak of the American Civil War in April of 1861, Perczel took an active part in the organization of the 10th Iowa Volunteer Infantry Regiment in July of that year, and became its first Colonel. In the Missouri Campaign, he saw active duty at Charleston, New Madrid, and in the capture of Island No. 10. His regiment was also part of the army that captured 5,000

Confederate soldiers near Tiptonville.

Perczel's regiment was part of General Rosecrans' force, and he was commended for his bravery and tenaciousness in the battles of Corinth and Iuka, Mississippi. It was reported that his conduct won the "applause" of his own officers and men. He was recommended for an appointment as Brigadier-General, but left the service in November of 1862, some say because of intrigues among the leadership and because his supervisors often did not have his military experience or knowledge. Another version mentions his having contracted malaria as the reason for his leaving the army. I have also seen a report that General Ulysses Grant himself awarded him a medal, but could not find confirmation of that.

He moved to New York, where he supported his family by selling Hungarian wines. For a year he served as the first President of the Hungarian Society there, organized in 1865.

Following the Compromise of 1867, Perczel returned to Hungary and became Chief County Executive (*főispán*) of Pécs and Baranya (1867-1887). From 1887 to 1892, he was parliamentary representative of the city of Pécs. He also took part in organizing the veterans of the War of Independence.

He died at Baja on March 14th, 1904, a freedom fighter to the end.



Some Like it Hot

Olga Vállay Szokolay



Believe it or not, but "Some Like It Hot", that unforgettable comedy was originally a Hungarian movie! Read on to find out how it happened.

Years ago I tried to work up a list of the 10 books, music and movies whose copies I would take with me to that proverbial deserted island where, of course, there would be all the necessary state-of-the-art equipment available for the total enjoyment of my favorites. Among the movies, an uncontested place has been reserved for the movie *Some Like It Hot*.

I have watched it several times, know some of those witty dialogues by heart, and never became bored by it. This year it will celebrate its 60th anniversary. Most, if not all the actors and actresses are dead by

now. Yet, the unique trio of Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon, under the direction of Billy Wilder will live forever in that zany, witty, hilarious all-star motion picture.

All right, but where is the Hungarian connection?

Well, you may or may not know that Tony Curtis (originally Bernard Herschel Schwartz) was the son of a Hungarian Jewish immigrant tailor from Mátészalka who settled in the Bronx. That fact, however, is only incidental.

We have to go back now, to the beginnings.

The basic original story was a French property. In the 1930s, a Hungarian lawyer, *Dr. Szentpály István*, purchased it for his Atelier Film KFT. Szentpály, *Tiki*, as his friends knew him, loved to dabble in the performing arts as did his dear wife, *Alice*, who was the Founder and Editor of *Mozi Ujság*, the popular Hungarian movie magazine.

It happened 80 years ago. In 1939, with Martonffy Emil's directing, Szentpály produced a movie based on the original story, under the title "*Hölgyek előnyben*" (Ladies First). Short of the leading lady, *Nagy Alice*, whose name faded away, the picture had an all-star cast: *Vaszary Piri*, *Szilassy László*, *Pethes Sándor*, *Pártos Gusztáv*, *Kiss Manyi*, *Bilicsi Tivadar*, *Dajbukát Ilona*, *Pethes Ferenc*. The highly successful movie was also distributed in Central Europe.

Several years later, Polish-born Writer/Director Billy Wilder acquired the story. He Americanized it, planted the 1929 St. Valentine's Day Massacre in it and 20 years after the Hungarian original, with the fail-safe cast he turned it into that gem, "Some Like It Hot".

Let's celebrate the triple anniversary of that most enjoyable perennial piece of entertainment whose roots go back to Hungarian soil!

Fish in Wine

With Lent starting on March 6th this year, here is an easy Lenten recipe.

1 carrot, sliced
1 knob celery, sliced
1 onion, sliced
1 sprig parsley, chopped
2 Tbsp. butter
2 lbs. fish
1 cup white wine
1 tsp. salt
1/8 tsp pepper

Simmer the vegetables, covered, in butter until nearly done. Cut the fish into serving pieces and arrange over the vegetables. Pour on the wine, sprinkle with salt and pepper; cover and cook over low heat until fish is tender and the sauce becomes slightly thickened, about 15 minutes.

Makes about 6 servings.

Petőfi's Widow Re-habilitated

Erika Papp Faber

From the time of her death, Szendrey Júlia had been characterized as the epitome of unfaithfulness to her husband's memory, fulfilling Petőfi's projection, in his poem "The End of Sep-



tember", of her "throwing off her veil of deep mourning" for another man soon after his death. But her letters and diary, which were discovered only in the 1920s, laid bare the truth of a viciously maligned widow.

*Ne higgy nekem, ha mosolygok,
Álarcz ez csak arcomon,
Mit felöltök, ha a valót
Eltakarni akarom.*

*Ne higgy nekem, ha dallásra
Látod nyílni ajkamat,
Gondolatot főd e dal, mit
Kimondanom nem szabad.*

*Ne higgy nekem, hogyha hallasz
Fölkacagni engemet,
Magsiratnál, hogyha látnád
Egy ily percben lelkemet.*

(Don't believe me, if I'm smiling,
That's only a mask on my face,
Which I put on when I wish
To hide reality.

Don't believe me, if you see me
Open my lips in song,
That song covers a thought which
I may not pronounce.

Don't believe me if you hear me
Laugh out loud,
You would cry for me if you saw
My soul at such a moment.)

This poem was written by Szendrey Júlia, widow of Petőfi Sándor who, after his disappearance at the Battle of Segesvár became the victim of the vilest character assassination.

She was 18 years old when she met Petőfi Sándor in 1846, whom she married a year later despite her parents' objections. Her father, an estate manager for the Festetics and later for the Károlyi families, had given her an excellent education. She spoke several languages, played the piano outstandingly well, painted, and was a good dancer, all of which would have assured her success in society. Nevertheless, she shunned people, preferring to play the piano or read Heinrich Heine's poetry and

novels by George Sand. Life on the estates bored her.

In the letter to her father, dictated on her deathbed in 1868, she wrote: "My father said I would be unhappy with Sándor. No woman has ever been granted such happiness as what I felt when my Sándor and I were together. I was his queen, he adored me, and I adored him. We were the happiest couple in the world and would still be if fate had not intervened."

Júlia was not only Petőfi Sándor's wife, but also his soul mate. She was the one, history books recall, who made and pinned the first red-white-and-green cockade on his lapel that momentous day in March 1848. By the time she became pregnant with their son Zoltán, Petőfi was serving as Captain in the Freedom Fight. Towards the end of the war, in July 1849, he took his family to Transylvania, hoping to find safety and peace there.

Since the Hungarian side was winning, Austria requested Russian help, and 200,000 Russian troops were sent to help put down the Hungarian fight for freedom. They were advancing from the northeastern Carpathians, and through the southern Transylvania passes. The Petőfis were staying at Torda in Transylvania when news came that the Polish General Joseph Bem, who had become one of the major Hungarian military leaders, was advancing with his troops into Transylvania to stop the Russian invasion. Petőfi was torn between his responsibility as husband and father, and the country's call to fight for the freedom he had so zealously advocated. Although Júlia tried to persuade him to stay, he retorted that the poet of the Revolution had to be on the battlefield to encourage his comrades. He rode off in haste to join Bem's troops. They engaged the combined Russian-Austrian troops near Segesvár on July 31st, 1849.

A few days later, a breathless messenger arrived at Torda: "Petőfi has fallen! Flee! Flee! The kozaks are coming!" Júlia could not believe the news, and as people were fleeing the city posthaste, she kept asking those arriving from the battlefield about her husband. She did not want to leave, but friends forcibly put her on a carriage going to Kolozsvár.

Convinced that Petőfi had not died, she cut her hair and put on man's clothing to look for him on the battlefield. Leaving her child with her parents, she first went to see the Austrian military commander, who felt sorry for her, and told her he himself had seen Sándor's corpse which had been put in a mass grave by the roadside. A master weaver also reported having seen Petőfi wounded but still alive, and although the Hungarian soldiers had begged the Austrians to allow them to take him away, they had thrown him into a mass grave. At this news, Júlia fainted away. The next day, with paper flowers on her arm, she went to the Segesvár battlefield herself, and wandered for days among the graves.

Finally someone informed her father of Júlia's deranged behavior, and he came to take her home. Still not reconciled to the idea of his daughter having married "that scribbler", he claimed that Petőfi had gotten tired of married life and had staged his own death, then gone to Turkey with Bem, "the crazy old Pole."

Júlia, grasping at straws, thought her father might be right, and decided to apply for a passport to go to Turkey. She had to apply directly to Haynau, the cruel Austrian commander, who denied her request, and cynically tried to recruit her to become a spy among freedom fighters who had fled abroad, but without success.

In her diary, Júlia recorded how Haynau's assistant, Count Liechtenstein, had then tried to force himself on her, offering to be her "escort", to



Szendrey Júlia, by Klígl Sándor, recently erected in the Hungarian embassy at Copenhagen

"protect" her from being totally at the mercy of the authorities. Infuriated, Júlia chased him away.

It was at this juncture that Júlia met Horvát Árpád, a quiet, elderly university professor, who tried to offer some moral support to Júlia. He proposed marriage to his protegee, and Júlia thought she had gained a protector. They married quickly, shortly before the first anniversary of Petőfi's death, to prevent Liechtenstein and the Austrian police from stopping them.

The gossip columns went to town, making sarcastic comments on Júlia's hasty wedding. The Austrians, assuming that she was covering up for Petőfi who they supposed was still in hiding, had the secret police follow Júlia for years. They even put her in jail once, for having pictures of Petőfi, Kossuth and Bem in her apartment, but she was freed through the intervention of her friends.

Vachott Sándorné Csapó Mária was the sister of Etelka, a young girl whom Petőfi had never met, but to whom he had written numerous love poems after her untimely death. Mária was jealous of Júlia, who in her mind had taken Etelka's place in Petőfi's affections. Besides, Júlia was a better writer. So in her "Drawings from the Past", she painted Júlia as depraved, having married Petőfi only out of a desire to be famous, and having chased him to join Bem's forces where she followed him in order to garner admiration.

But the most vicious libelous attacks on Júlia were launched by Dekániné Vadadi Berta. Júlia and her son Zoltán had lived with their parents in Kolozsvár in 1849, and Berta, who was 13 years at the time, "recalled" seeing Júlia's "orgies". (At age 13 ???) She claimed Júlia had "masculine tendencies and was striving for independence", wore man's clothing, and abandoned her femininity.

Literary figures followed suit. In a three act play, Herczeg Ferenc, totally ignoring historic facts, had Júlia dancing and carousing all night with Russian officers who had ordered her ball gowns from Paris while Petőfi was lying dead on the battlefield. Another literary figure who jumped on the mud-slinging bandwagon was Krudy Gyula. Even Arany János wrote a poem censuring Júlia, although he did not publish it during his lifetime; it came to light only after his death, when Arany's son published his father's collected works.

All of these served to fix in the public mind an image of Júlia as the immoral, faithless widow of the great poet of the Hungarian Revolution.

While Júlia thought she had found safety with Horvát Árpád, she soon found that he was a dirty old man when he showed her his pornographic pictures and books. She was horrified and disgusted, and wanted to flee, but Horvát threatened to kill their children – a girl and two boys. (He did not tolerate Petőfi's son, who was raised by an uncle.)

From childhood Júlia had kept a diary, in which she recorded all her happiness with Petőfi and her misery with Horvát. By 1867, she was sick with cancer and ready to divorce him, and moved into a small apartment rented for her by her father. Before her death, she dictated a 22-page letter to her father, begging him to forgive her, and wrote that she had thought to have found her rescuer when she married Horvát, only to realize that he was "merely a sensual animal". That explains the poem at the beginning of this article.

She asked to have her writings and her diary buried with her. While her intimate friends kept up this fictive narrative, they actually hid the documents which came to light only in 1925. Petőfi's widow was finally vindicated.

Szendrey Júlia had written poems and short stories, and translated some of Andersen's fairytales from German into Hungarian. Commissioned by the Hungarian embassy in Copenhagen, sculptor Kligl Sándor of Szeged created her statue dedicated in the embassy last December 7th. She holds in her hand some of her own poems, and on the open book in front of her are figures representing "The Steadfast Tin Soldier", "The Red Shoes" and "The Princess and the Pea".

An exhibit dealing with the life and literary works of Szendrey Júlia may be seen at the Országos Széchenyi Könyvtár in Budapest until March 9th.

*Sources: "Júlia, az elátkozott özvegy" by Németh Ványi Klári
Wikipedia*

II. Rákóczi Ferenc – part II

Erika Papp Faber

In our February issue, we looked at the events leading up to the appearance of II. Rákóczi Ferenc on the scene. Here we will follow his rise and fall in Hungarian history.



Detail from full page artwork illustrating the freedom fight of the 17th-18th century, taken from "Hungarian Heroes and Legends" by Joseph Domjan

Meanwhile the Turks had been beaten back from Buda in 1686. But Hungary was still left with Austrian rulers, who despised their Hungarian subjects and continued to oppress and exploit the people. The ranks of the *bujdosók* swelled as a result. Enter Thököly Ilona's son, II. Rákóczi Ferenc.

Although raised by Austrians to be a loyal subject, he had what has been called a "conversion". A romanticized version of this is presented in a song composed in the early 20th century by Kacsóh Pongrácz. Entitled "*Rákóczi megtérése*", it talks of his recalling nursery songs about a forsaken people, and he contrasts the forced gaiety and pomp of the court with the songs of his homeland that awaken his homesickness.

*Hazámba vágyom,
Duna, Tisza partja vár.
Szebb ott az álom,
Szebben dalol a madár.*

Rákóczi would eventually take up the mantle of his step-father Thököly Imre, after seeing the plight of the people when his own serfs revolted.

In 1700, war broke out between France and the Habsburg Empire. Rákóczi seized the moment to inquire about possible help from King Louis XIV of France. Unfortunately, the letter fell into Austrian hands, and Rákóczi was arrested. He managed to escape with outside help, and took refuge in Poland. There, delegations from the *bujdosók* came to beg him to call for a general uprising. On May 6th, 1703, Rákóczi gave the word, and when he returned to Hungary, troops – mostly poor peasants – flocked to him. He had a hard time forming these ill-equipped and untrained volunteers into a fighting force.

By the end of that year, Rákóczi's troops had grown to 70,000 men. His banners bore the inscription "*Cum Deo pro patria et libertate*" – With God for homeland and freedom. In January of 1704, he issued a Manifesto, appealing for help, addressed to the Christian rulers and peoples of the world, listing Hungary's grievances against the House of Habsburg. In July of that same year, he was elected Prince of Transylvania by the Magyar, Székely and Saxon estates.

In that same fateful year, the French suffered a major defeat at the hands of the Austrians, and so did Rákóczi's troops, as the Austrians burned Nagyenyed and dispersed the *kuruc* troops in the area of Sopron. Thus, Transdanubia fell to the Austrians too. But the *kurucok* also scored some victories, as several imperial officers went over to the *kuruc* side.

"Mercurius Hungaricus", the first periodical in Hungary (in Latin) which became the semi-official bulletin of the Rákóczi freedom fight, was published at the end of May 1705. It changed its name by the second edition, and from then on was known as "Mercurius Veridicus ex Hungaria" – The Truthful Mercury from Hungary.

Austrian Emperor Leopold I died that same month, and a 3-month armistice was signed. The new Emperor, Joseph I, wanted to negotiate peace, but would not agree to independence for Transylvania, nor would he agree to have foreign powers guarantee that Austria adhere to the peace treaty. And so the war continued.

Thököly Imre died in Turkey, in September of 1705. At the end of that month, at the Diet of Szécsény, II. Rákóczi Ferenc, Prince of Transylvania, was elected Ruling Prince of Hungary.

Rákóczi's troops were adept at guerilla warfare, but could not acquit themselves in sustained battles. Rákóczi hoped to get French support, but Louis XIV would not agree to a formal alliance as long as the Hungarians recognized Joseph I as their king. So, the Hungarians hoped to solve the problem by calling a Diet at Ónod (June 14, 1707), de-throning the Habsburgs, and confirming the election of Rákóczi as Prince of Hungary.

This only made the Austrians more determined, and a series of Habsburg victories, combined with the ravages of the Black Death, defection of some of his troops and the death of some of

the *kuruc* commanders started the decline of Rákóczi's military fortunes. He traveled to Russia in a futile attempt to gain support from the tsar, and commissioned Károlyi Sándor, one of his lieutenants, to enter into peace negotiations with the Austrians.

Károlyi and 151 dignitaries thus signed the Treaty of Szatmár, without Rákóczi's consent. The treaty provided for religious freedom, respect for the Hungarian constitution, convocation of a national assembly, and amnesty for all, including Rákóczi himself. But all this was contingent on his taking an oath of allegiance to the Austrian emperor, which he naturally refused. The *kuruc* troops surrendered on the plain of Nagymajtény on May 1st, 1711, ending the Freedom



Fight.

Rákóczi and his closest friends first went to France, where they were received with honor. He withdrew to a monastery there, gardening and spending his time in contemplation. Then war broke out between Austria and Turkey, and the Sultan offered him an alliance if he would fight with them against the Habsburgs. By the time he arrived in Constantinople, however, the Turks had been defeated and his hopes were dashed. The peace treaty concluded

between Turkey and Austria specified that Rákóczi had to be exiled to Rostó, Turkey (the village is called Tekirdag today), on the shore of the Sea of Marmara.

The Habsburgs imposed absolutist rule in Hungary. They ordered that most Hungarian fortresses be blown up. *Kuruc* songs were forbidden, and every *tárogató* (a double-reed Hungarian musical instrument that had been favored by Rákóczi's freedom fighters), was ordered by the Austrians to be burned.

The following song was written by Countess Andrassy Katinka, many of whose ancestors had joined the *kurucok*, and whose family eventually became the owners of Krasznahorka fortress. (It was one of the few that the Austrians did not destroy. It is located a few miles south of Rozsnyó, in Upper Hungary.) Here she laments the passing of the Rákóczi era:

*Krasznahorka büszke vára,
ráborult az éj homálya.
Toronyok ormán az őszi szél
rég múlt dicsőségről mesél.
Rákóczinak dicső kora
nem jön vissza többé soha.*

(The mists of night have covered the proud fortress of Krasznahorka. On the tops of its towers the autumn winds tell tales of glory long past. The glorious era of Rákóczi will never return.)

*Harcosai mind pihennek
bujdosó fejedelemnek.
A toronyból késő este
tárogató nem szól messze.
Olyan kihalt, olyan árva
Krasznahorka büszke vára.*

(All the warriors of the exiled prince are at rest. From the tower, late at night, the *tárogató* no longer sounds afar. Krasznahorka's fortress is so desolate, so forlorn.)"

Rákóczi spent the last 22 years of his life in exile. According to his scribe,

Mikes Kelemen, who described the life of the exiles in his "Letters from Turkey" – a literary masterpiece addressed to an imaginary aunt – Rákóczi occupied himself with reading, writing letters and his memoirs, and woodworking. He died in 1735. In 1885, his coffin was brought back to Hungary with great pomp. His tomb may be found in the cathedral of Kassa.

The Rákóczi March, famous around the world, was supposedly first played by Bihari János, a composer with gypsy ancestors, in the early 19th century. It was picked up and elaborated on by various famous composers, including Liszt. But Bizet's version is the one played most often, and its opening bars were used by Radio Budapest, and later by Kossuth Rádió as their signal.

On a personal note: In the late 1950s, a concert was given at Town Hall in New York City by the Philharmonia Hungarica which was composed of musicians who had fled in 1956. For an encore, they played the Rákóczi March. I was among the sizeable group from the audience who stayed for literally half an hour to applaud, because they had played the March as only Hungarian musicians are able to! It was an experience like no other!

Did you know...

... **that** an exhibition of some of Tony Curtis' personal effects – courtesy of his widow Jill-Curtis Weber – will open in August in Mátészalka, from where his parents had emigrated? The exhibit will feature paintings and some household objects.

... **that** after the Shanghai performance of "Bánk bán", that opera has now been presented in South Korea? On January 17th, celebrating the 30th anniversary of Hungarian-South Korean relations, and the centenary of Korea's independence from Japan, the Hungarian classic

was presented in concert form at the Daegu Opera House. It was a common production with the Budapest Opera company, with the local Korean orchestra and chorus participating. Apparently their Hungarian pronunciation was very good. The presentation was a resounding success.

... **that** Budapest has just been voted Best European Destination by an unprecedented over half a million votes, 77% of which came from abroad, mostly from the UK, USA, Germany, France, Austria and Italy? Between January 15th and February 5th, it garnered more votes than Paris, Athens, London, Florence and Geneva.

In the last 10 years, Budapest has become one of the most attractive and most livable cities, drawing investors, companies, startups and tourists from around the world.

... **that** the national anthems of both Uruguay and Paraguay were written by a Hungarian? Debály Ferenc József (1791-1859), well known in those countries as Francisco José Debali, was born near Kolozsvár and became a military band leader in the Austrian army. He served in Italy, and met his future wife in Sardinia. In 1838, he left with his wife and six children to settle in Brazil. However, yellow fever was raging in that country when the ship arrived, and it was diverted to Uruguay.

In the long drawn out Uruguayan civil war, Debály again assumed the position of military band leader and made quite a name for himself. So much so that he was asked to compose the music for the Uruguayan national anthem, written by Francisco Acuña de Figueroa, which incidentally is the world's longest, consisting of 11 stanzas. A street in Montevideo has even been named after Debály. In 1845, he was asked to compose the music for the

Paraguayan national anthem as well, written by the same author. In South America, Debály's music is often compared with that of Donizetti, Verdi and Rossini.

He never made it to Brazil.

...**that** a *Chinese-American-Hungarian* documentary filmmaker *Elizabeth Chai Vásárhelyi* and her husband, climber and filmmaker Jimmy Chin won the 2019 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature *Free Solo*?

The motion picture has already won more than a dozen awards worldwide. It follows climber Alex Honnold's 2017 rope-free ascent of Yosemite's El Capitan, done in less than four hours and being the first person to scale the iconic 3,000-foot granite wall in this fashion and in such record time.

Director Vásárhelyi grew up in New York. She is the daughter of Hongkongan Marina Chai and Hungarian Miklós Vásárhelyi.

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