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Téli világ

Petőfi Sándor verse

Megölte valaki magát,
Az hozta ránk a rút időt.
Fuj a szél, táncol a tányér*
A borbélyműhelyek előtt.
Hol a boldogság mostanában?
Barátságos meleg szobában.

A napszámos, napszámosné
Tuskót fűrészsel és hasít;
Daróc pólyában gyermekük
A szélvésszel versenyt visít.
Hol a boldogság mostanában?
Barátságos meleg szobában.

Jár nagy léptekkel föl s alá
A katona az őrhelyen,
És számolgatja lépteit;
Kínjában mást mit is tegyen?
Hol a boldogság mostanában?
Barátságos meleg szobában.

A hosszú lábu drótostót
Kopott gubáját cepeli;
Az orra érett paprika,
S hidegtől folynak könnyei.
Hol a boldogság mostanában?
Barátságos meleg szobában.



Gajakanyar (photo by masszogepe)

Barangol a vándorszinész
Egy falutól a másikig;
Meleg ruhája nincs ugyan,
De mindazáltal éhezik.
Hol a boldogság mostanában?
Barátságos meleg szobában.

Hát a cigány? ... vacog foga
A rongyos sátorok alatt;
Kopogtat a szél, és bemegy,
Bár a cigány nem szól: szabad!
Hol a boldogság mostanában?
Barátságos meleg szobában.

Megölte valaki magát,
Az hozta ezt a rút időt.
Fuj a szél, táncol a tányér
A borbélyműhelyek előtt.
Hol a boldogság mostanában?
Barátságos meleg szobában.

**In the old days, Hungarian barbershops had a metal plate hung in front of their establishment, much as the barbers in the US had a red-white-and-blue pole. It signified the bowl in which the barber whipped up the shaving cream for his customers.*

Although the middle of February in Hungary shows promise of spring to come, here it is still the middle of winter. The enclosed poem about winter weather by Petőfi Sándor makes one wish for a "friendly, warm room."

Ed.



*Tél a Bakonyban
by Istu7*



*Téli Balaton
photo by Hajas Gyula*



Havas háztető by kava.hu

A Day in Hungarian History: February 11, 1945

László Papp

Here is a little-remembered World War II anniversary, but one that – for the sheer number of casualties and long-lasting effects – surpassed most historic battles. We are indebted to László Papp for recording that momentous time in Hungarian history.

February 11th, 1945 certainly does not live in people's consciousness as vividly as August 29th, 1526 [1](#), yet one must still remember it, for it recalls in the same way that "battlefield reddened by heroes' blood" [2](#) on which so many Hungarians were lost and which was followed by the same type of foreign occupation as was the battle of Mohács.

It is true that, without consulting Parliament, Prime Minister Bár-dossy illegally sent the declaration of war to the Soviet Union, the United States and Great Britain. It is also true that the Hungarian army, sent to secure the hinterland, was perfidiously sacrificed at the River Don. It is a fact that the majority of the remaining Hungarian army broke its oath to the high commander and continued to serve the lost cause even after October 15, 1944. [3](#) It was tragic that Hitler's madness designated Budapest as the last possibility of holding up the Soviet army, and Szálasy, who in the meantime had fled, participated in that decision. But this should not dim the memory of the soldiers who fought and died a hero's death.

The remnant of the fighters who had been annihilated by the enormous Soviet superiority, had fallen or become prisoner, attempted to break out of the surrounding ring. Of the 40,000 Hungarian and 35,000 German soldiers defending Buda Castle, only 782 escaped from the ring of the estimated 157,000 Soviet and Romanian troops. After the Red Army had encircled the capital at Christmas of 1944, numerous attempts had been made, during January, to break through the ring, from both inside and out. All of these ended in failure, until finally a small unit managed to get out on February 11th. At that time, a troop of some 20,000, equipped with light hand weapons, started out toward Budakeszi, over the Olasz Fásor (today's Szilágyi Erzsébet Fásor). Deák Barla



Chain Bridge in 1945.



Széll Kálmán tér in 1945

remembers it this way: "They could not take with them those wounded in battle. The uneven struggle lasted all night. By dawn, the once shaded avenue lined with flowers had become a cemetery, in the strictest sense of the word. The corpses of soldiers, civilians, women and children lay among the uprooted trees and the ruined, burning houses."

From the day when the first tank appeared at the outskirts of the Hungarian capital, until the Red Army occupied Budapest, 102 days had passed; after the closing of the Buda ring, 49 days. By contrast, in Berlin it took a mere two weeks, and 6 days for Vienna to fall. From Buda, 782 people escaped, the rest remained there on the streets, in the cemeteries. Eyewitnesses reported that some of the wounded in the cellars were destroyed

with flame-throwers. To camouflage their lack of success for such a long time, the besieging army reported several hundred thousand defenders. Malinovszkij's supreme command tried to support this lie by rounding up masses of civilians who ventured out from the cellars, who were taken as prisoners of war to the Soviet Union.

Very little literature is available, dealing with the attempts at breaking out. A young historian, Ungvári Krisztián, researched this topic and wrote a doctoral thesis, which has also been published in English ("100 Days in WWII", 2003). Galántay Ervin, a first year student at a military academy who served as messenger at Castle Hill during the siege, also recorded his memories in an English-language book ("Boy Soldier"). Galántay studied architecture in Switzerland, and worked in the United States and in Venezuela. In his book, he quoted several participants of the siege.

There were a number of military academy students among the soldiers assembled at Castle Hill and

its environs, having come home to their families for the Christmas holidays and were stuck in the surrounded city. They considered it their duty to report for service. A plaque in the park of the Museum of Military History commemorates six members of the Gábor Áron military artillery school of Nagyvárád. Kokovay Gyula Antal, one of my classmates who had taken part in the fighting and successfully got out during the February breakout wrote about the events of that time:

"Having become stuck in surrounded Buda, my classmate Soltész István and I reported for duty at Naphegy on December 25th, 1944... On January 2nd, they assigned us to the University Storm Battalion at Rózsadomb. Here, my task among other things was personally providing information to the castle command. After giving up the

Rózsadomb, we marched to the Margit körút, finally the battalion, which had shrunk to one or two platoons, withdrew to the region of Castle Hill. On the evening of February 11th, around 8 o'clock, we managed to break through, at the price of great losses. Our 600-member troop headed toward Budakeszi around 2 AM, on Béla király út, and then amidst infantry fire on János hegy. For two days, we fought our way westward, through the ring of Russian troops, between almost constant defensive and offensive action. Finally, on the morning of the 14th, 36 German and 9 Hungarian members of our troop got through at the village of Mány. I separated from Soltész Pista before the last assault. I have not heard from him since, neither have his relatives heard about his fate..." Kokovay was declared a class alien and was not admitted to the university. He worked at Hódmezővásárhely and later at Inota as a locksmith, welder and boiler man, until his retirement. Hungarian history is a series of sad defeats. In addition to Muhi⁴, Mohács, Nagymajtény⁵, Világos⁶, Doberdó⁷ and the Don River⁸, it is perhaps fitting also to remember, on February 11th, Buda Castle and the attempts to break out of there.

1 *Date of the disastrous battle of Mohács, at which 21,000 troops, the king and all the leaders of the Hungarian people were annihilated by the Turks. It marked the beginning of 160 years of*

Turkish occupation of Hungary, and led to the Austrian dominion of the country afterwards.

2 *First line of epic poem "Mohács" by Kisfaludy Károly (1788-1830), which everyone learned in school.*

3 *The day Regent Horthy ordered the cessation of hostilities against the Russians, since Hungary had obviously lost the war.*

4 *Decisive battle during Mongolian invasion of 1241, during which 10,000 Hungarian troops, including important military and religious leaders, perished.*

5 *Plain where Rákóczi's kuruc troops, who had fought for freedom from Austrian domination (1703-1711), surren-*

dered.

6 *1849 surrender of Hungarian troops to the Russians. They had been called in by Austria when the Freedom Fight of 1848-49 was going in Hungary's favor.*

7 *One of the bloodiest World War I battlefields, in the Isonzo region of Italy. Eleven battles were fought there over a period of two and a half years (1915-1918), and of the 200,000 Hungarian troops killed there, half of them died at Doberdó.*

8 *World War II battlesite, where 120,000 Hungarian troops (some put the figure at 250,000) lost their lives.*

László Papp, Hungarian-born architect, living in Connecticut is well known for his design of the Hungarian Museum of New Brunswick, New Jersey. He writes frequently about issues of concern to the Hungarian American community.

EGY TRAGIKUS ÉVFORDULÓ



1945. február 11. bizonyára nem olyan élő a köztudatban, mint 1526.

augusztus 29., mégis emlékezni kell rá, hiszen ugyanúgy visszaidézi a „hősvértől pirosult gyásztért”, amelyben oly sok magyar vérzett el és amelyet ugyan olyan hódoltság követett, mint a mohácsit. Buda elestéről van szó, amely számunkra a második világháború befejező aktusa volt.

Való, hogy a háborús hadüzenetet Bárdossy miniszterelnök törvény ellenesen, a parlament megkérdése nélkül küldte el a Szovjetunióknak, az Egyesült Államoknak és Nagy Britanniának. Igaz, hogy a hátszág

biztosítására küldött magyar hadsereget galád módon áldozták fel a Don kanyarnál. Tény, hogy a magyar hadsereg megmaradt részének többsége a Legfelső Hadúrnak tett esküjét megszegve szolgálta tovább 1944. október 15. után a veszített ügyet. Tragikus, hogy Hitler örülete Budapestet jelölte ki a Szovjet feltartóztatásának utolsó lehetőségeként és Szálasi, aki közben már elmenekült, ebben részese lett. Ez azonban nem kell elhomályosítsa a harcoló és hősi halált halt katonák emlékét.

1945. február 11-én kísérelte meg a hatalmas Szovjet túlerő által felmorzsolts, elesett vagy fogságba ejtett harcolók maradványa a gyűrűből való kitörést. A budai várat védő 40 ezer magyar és 35 ezer német katonából csak 782 szabadult meg a mintegy 157 ezerre tehető Szovjet és román csapatok gyűrűjéből.

Miután a vörös hadsereg 1944. karácsonyán bekerítette a fővárost, január során számos kísérlet történt a gyűrű áttörésére mind kívülről, mind belülről. Ezek végül mind kudarcba fulladtak, amikor végre egy kis egységnek február 11-én sikerült kijutni. Ekkor mintegy 20 ezer főnyi csapat indult neki az Olasz Fasoron (ma Szilágyi Erzsébet Fasor) át Budakeszi felé könnyű kézi fegyverekkel felszerelve. „A harcok közben megsebesülteket nem vihették magukkal. Az egyenlőtlen küzdelem egész

éjjel tartott. Hajnalra a szó-szoros értelemben temetővé változott az egykor árnyas, virágsorral díszített fasor. A kitépett fák és romba dűlt, égő házak között katonák, civilek, asszonyok és gyermekek hullái hevertek” - emlékezett Deák Barla. Attól a naptól kezdve, hogy az első harckocsi megjelent a magyar főváros határában és a vörös hadsereg teljes egészében elfoglalta Budapestet, 102 nap telt el. A budai gyűrű bezárása után 49 nap. Ezzel szemben Berlin mindössze két hét, Bécs pedig 6 nap alatt esett el. Budáról kijutott 782 ember, a többiek ott maradtak az utcákon, temetőben. A szemtanúk beszámolója szerint a pincékben levő

sebesültek egy részét lángszórókkal pusztították el. Az ostromlók, hogy a hosszú ideig tartó sikertelenségüket palástolják több százezres védő seregről tettek jelentést. Az erről való hazugságot a Malinovszkij hadvezetés azzal próbálta igazolni, hogy tömegével fogdosták össze a pincékből elő merészkedő polgári személyeket, akiket mint hadifoglyokat vittek a Szovjetunióba. Az ostromról és a kitörési kísérletekről igen kevés irodalom található. Egy fiatal történész, Ungvári Krisztián, tanulmányozta, doktori disszertációt írt a témáról, amely angolul is megjelent („100 days in WW II”, 2003). Egy első éves hadapródiskolás, Galántay Ervin, aki az ostrom alatt futár szolgálatot teljesített a várban, élményeit szintén angol nyelvű könyvben („Boy Soldier”) örökítette meg. Galántay Svájcban tanult építészetet, Amerikában és Venezuelában is dolgozott és tanított. Könyvében megszólaltatta az ostrom több résztvevőjét.

A várban és környékén összesereglett katonák között több hadapródiskolás növendék is volt, akik a karácsonyi szünetre családjukhoz mentek Budapestre és a körülzárt városban ragadtak. Kötelességüknek érezték, hogy ott szolgálatra jelentkezzenek. A nagyváradi Gábor Áron tüzér hadapródiskola hat hősi halottjáról a Hadtörténeti Múzeum kertjében elhelyezett emléktábla emlékezik meg. A harcokban részt vett és a februári kitörésben szerencsésen kijutó egyik volt évfolyamtársam, Kokovay Gyula Antal így írt az akkori eseményekről:

„1944 december 25-én a körülzárt Budán rekedve Soltész István évfolyamtársammal a Naphegyen jelentkezünk... Január 2-án az Egyetemi Rohamzászlóaljhoz helyeztek a Rózsadombra, itt többek között a várbeli parancsnokság személyes tájékoztatása volt a feladatom. A Rózsadomb feladása után vonultunk a Margit körútra, majd a vár környékére húzódtunk vissza a zászlóalj, (amely) egy-két szakaszra zsugorodott. Február 11-én este 8 óra körül sikerült nagy veszteségek árán áttörnünk. Éjjel 2 óra körül a Béla király úton, majd a János hegyen

gyalogosági tűzben haladt tovább 600 fős csapatunk Budakeszít megkerülve északnyugat felé. Két napon át szinte állandó védő és támadó akciók között küzdöttük át magunkat az orosz csapatok gyűrűjén nyugati irányban. Végül 14-én délelőtt Mátyás községei csapatunkból 36 német és 9 magyar jutott át. Soltész Pistától az utolsó roham előtt váltam el. Azóta nem hallottam róla, rokonai sem értesültek sorsáról...”

Kokovayt mint osztályidegent nem vették fel az egyetemre, Hódmezővásárhelyen, majd Inotán lakatos, hegesztő, kazánfűtő munkásként dolgozott nyugdíjazásáig. A magyar történelem szomorú, vesztes események sorozata. Muhi, Mohács, Nagymajtény, Világos, Doberdó, Don-kanyar mellett, talán helyénvaló megemlékezni Budavár és az onnan való kitörési kísérletekről is február 11-én.

Papp László



Oscar with Zita and his Goddaughter

Oscar and his motorcycle



A Tribute to Oscar Balogh

We have to say good-bye to another great friend. On January 20th 2012 we lost Oscar Balogh to a long illness. Oscar was born and raised in Transylvania (Erdély), now Romania; he immigrated to the U.S. in 1985 with his family. Living in Transylvania under great oppression, Oscar was faithful to his Hungarian heritage. After he became a U.S. citizen in 1989, he loved his adopted country just as well. He wanted to know as much as possible of the history of the U.S., and he also wanted to see the country. He took many tours on his motorcycle to visit as many places as he could. Before he left on his trip, he made sure he knew all about the place he was going to visit. He had dreams to visit Nova Scotia, and Mackinac Island. His dream never materialized due to his illness. Oscar wanted to know Europe also. He wanted to visit Rome. Again, it did not happen. His wife Zita, a great friend of mine, and his daughter Abigél made a promise to Oscar: they will visit the places he wanted to visit, but he couldn't.

Oscar founded Balco Interior Construction; his clients and all he worked with recognized and respected him for his honesty and professionalism.

Oscar loved his family, friends and his God. As his illness was getting worse, his faith grew stronger. Even during his darkest and most painful days, he had peace in his heart, and was resigned to the will of God.

Sunday in church a lady stopped me and asked me, "Was that your brother-in-law in the paper?" I guess she asked because she saw Zita's maiden name is Szabo. No, I said he wasn't, he was a friend. I would have been proud to have Oscar for a brother-in-law or even for a brother.

Oscar was a sponsor of Magyar News Online, whose Treasurer is his loving wife, Zita.

Our sincere condolences to Zita, Abigél, his mother Mária Sándor Balogh, and his sister Orsi Varga-Balogh.

Farewell, my friend, and peace be with you!

Karolina Szabo and the MNO Editorial Board

Memories of a Second-Generation Hungarian: Interview with Mrs. Anna Kocsmaros Waller

Martha Matus Schipul

At the turn of the last century (1899 to 1900), some 100,000 Hungarians emigrated to the Bridgeport, CT area alone. Consequently, there is still a sizable section of the population that traces its roots back to Hungary. They have much to tell us about those early immigrant days, and are a repository of local Hungarian history

Recently I had the privilege of a lovely afternoon chat with my friend Fay's 95 year-old mother, Mrs. Anna Kocsmaros Waller, at Fay's house in Trumbull.

name?

Terézia Fekete and my father was Joseph Kocsmáros.

How many brothers and sisters do you

My father didn't like the *kolbász*.

Did you help your mother make it? I started helping when I was about fifteen. Before that I was too busy playing.

Tell me about your family. How many children, grandchildren and great grandchildren?

I have seven children, twenty-seven grandchildren, forty-eight great-grandchildren and ten great-great-grandchildren.

Wow! That's amazing! Where were you born?

In Bridgeport, at home on Salt Street (near Mountain Grove Cemetery.) The cellar had a dirt floor. I was the baby of the family. My mother couldn't nurse me so she

sent my sister to Horvath's Pharmacy to get the formula he made up. He kept me alive.

No kidding! That was my grandfather. *Kicsi a világ, no?* Where did you grow up?

On Denver Avenue.

Near Lesko's Funeral Home?

Yes, they are related to us.

Do you know where your parents came from in Hungary? When?

My parents were both born in 1880. They were both from Abaújmegye. My mother, who was already married to my father, and her brother, John Fekete, went first to Pennsylvania. Another sister moved to Ohio.

Do you know your mother's maiden

name? Their names?

Theresa, Margaret, Joseph. Theresa died at 50 in Stratford, Margaret died at 98 in Dayton Ohio, and Joseph died at 87 on Denver Avenue. I'm the only one left in the whole family.

What did your father do for a living?

He was a maintenance man at Bullard's for 25 years. He had a brand new Chevrolet. He paid 300 dollars for it.

What kind of Hungarian food did your mother make? What was your favorite?

Oh, the stuffed cabbage! We used three kinds of meat, pork, beef, and veal. After you boiled it, you added a *mártás* with tomato puree and barley. We put in ham hocks for flavor.

What? No *kolbász*?



Mrs. Anna Kocsmaros Waller at the Angel Fund Benefit held at the Trumbull (CT) Marriott this past fall. Mrs. Waller won first place in the "Beautiful Hat" contest. She is shown here with three of her daughters

Where did you go to school? Bryant School, then Maplewood Junior High.

Where did you go to church? St. Stephen's with Reverend Czernitsky.

What are some of your favorite childhood memories? Did you go to the movies? To Rákóczi Hall? I really liked the movies.

There was the Liberty Theater on State Street and the West End which Jack Schwartz ran. He gave me the job of counting how many people went to the Liberty with a clicker to check out the competition. My brother, Joseph, was the projectionist at the Liberty and then the Bostwick Theater. I went to Rákóczi Hall with my sister, and the Ritz Ballroom. I saw Benny Goodman, Les Brown, Tex Beineke. We did the waltz and the foxtrot.

Did you go to picnics?

St. Stephen's used to have picnics at Gypsy Springs, the heights above King's Highway across from Mountain Grove Cemetery (see "Recollections of Jack Szepessy" in the December 2010 issue of Magyar News Online. Ed.) Our father would take us in a horse-drawn

wagon until he got a car. They had "sütni szalonna" and stuffed cabbage. We still do *sütni* twice a year. You put a slice of onion and green pepper on it. You put it on Jewish rye with caraway seeds and then wash it down with a shot of whiskey.

Which grocery did you go to?

On State Street Cohn's Bakery. They made the *Magyar kifli* (large crescent rolls). Caraway seed was my favorite. They had wooden buckets full of smelts. There was the Publix Market on Fairfield Avenue downtown with sawdust on the floor. There was Haydu's Market on State. Later, we went to King Cole and Piggly Wiggly on Maplewood and George Bodi's Meat Market on Maplewood.

What did your family buy off the street from wagons?

Vegetables from the farms, rags 5 cents a bag, ice 25 cents a bag.

What Hungarian traditions have you passed down to your family?

The *szalonna*. I only talked Hungarian with my mother. We spoke English with my father.

It was the same way with my grandmother and grandfather. My grandfather also wanted to be American. – You are 95 years old. What is the biggest change you have seen in Bridgeport since you were a little girl?

The Thruway. It messed up the whole world; and the big department stores. We used to shop at Cederbaum's for wool for knitting. My mother was a good knitter and she crocheted bedspreads.

What is your secret for a long healthy life?

I'm here to keep the family together.

What do you like to do now?

I like to read as I can, magazines, mostly. I still cook for myself – stuffed cabbage, goulash, *palacsinta* with cottage cheese and grape jelly, and *Magyar kifli* with prune *lekvár* and *dió*.

Thank you, Mrs. Waller. You are a real treasure to your family and the Hungarian community.

Martha Matus Schipul is a graduate of the University of Bridgeport, a writer and a playwright, and member the Editorial Board of Magyar News Online

Hungarian Mosaic – Paprika IV

During the 1980's Claudia and Joseph Balogh wrote, edited and presented an informative radio series in the Bridgeport, Connecticut area as part of the weekly program featuring Rózsi and László, very well known and respected Hungarian musicians. The Hungarian Mosaic focused on a variety of topics of interest to Hungarian Americans and we are pleased to present another of these topics.



In Hungary there are two well-known areas that produce paprika. Along the River Tisza lies Szeged, and on the other side of the Hungarian Plain we find the Kalocsa region, hugging the Danube River. Both areas had an early start in supplying the world with the excellent Hungarian spice, the paprika.

In a publication printed over a hundred years ago, we learn about the watermills anchored in the Tisza, grinding paprika. We also gain knowledge about a village, Fajsz, with a population hardly exceeding 2,000 at that time, in the Kalocsa region. The people grew almost exclusively paprika plants, and they pounded the pods themselves into powder with a wooden mortar called *külü*. The *külü* is like a seesaw, made of a heavy beam. At one end, there is a cone-shaped breaker with a weight on it, and this fits into a hole. The hole was a mortar and the breaker was the pestle. At the other end of the beam was a person who stepped on and off, letting the breaker crash into the hole, thus crushing the pods. This way, the *külü*, with a day of hard work, produced a maximum of 20 pounds of powdered paprika. Besides the *külü*, which every house possessed, this small village also had 20 dry-mills grinding the precious spice.

Today, Hungary exports over 3,000 tons of paprika all around the world, and at the same time consumes just as much by itself. Naturally, this amount cannot be produced with *külüs*. Among all the people who participated with their ingenuity to develop the means to produce more paprika, I would like to mention only two. The Pálffy brothers, János, a blacksmith and Balázs, a locksmith returned to Szeged after their Western European travel as journeymen. At that time, Szeged was hit by the great flood that devastated the city. Even though the paprika plant was destroyed, the city was back to normal in 10 years, producing even more paprika pods than ever. This was due to the perseverance of the townsfolk and the Pálffy brothers' inventions. They invented the roller-frame which replaced the hard physical work. Their invention speeded up the crushing process.

Yet real progress came when the brothers made a machine that revolutionized the quality of the Hungarian paprika, combating its hotness. It was known through experience that the pungency of the paprika came from the capsaicin, which was contained in the ribs of the pod. This capsaicin could be removed and washed off with the seeds. The skin has practically no hotness. The new machine split open the pods and, with one clever movement, cut out the ribs and seeds. This method produced the Szeged Noble Sweet Paprika that conquered the world in no time. The Hungarians did not stop at this point. They had a feeling the paprika had more potential that lends itself to improvement. They found that the skin has the rich color, but is very dry. On the other hand, the seeds contain an abundance of natural vegetable oil. It is the miller who determines what type of spice he is going to get from his mill. The proportion of the skin and seeds, and the amount of ribs used for pungency will give a variety from sweet to very hot. The miller also has to know that the heat generated in the grinding process will be sufficient to make the oil flow but won't scorch the red powder. He realizes that it should be warm enough to slightly caramelize the sugar content of the paprika. Since every batch differs by nature, there cannot be a set rule. If you ask a miller how he grinds paprika into different varieties, he will say, "You just have to know how."

Gyertyaszentelő

Karolina Szabo

Most is eszembe jut néha, mikor reménykedve mentem a piacra, hogy talán – talán találok; egy kis csokor ibolyát kerestem. Február 2. Édesanyám névnapja volt, és minden évben amikor a gimnáziumba jártam, vagy már dolgoztam és a városban laktam, ibolyával leptem meg Édesanyámat. Bizony sokszor volt úgy, hogy még hó lepte a földet, és gyakran a tél java még azután jött, de volt egy kis öreg néni, aki kiment az erdőbe és a fák töveinél kereste a kis korai virágocskát és pár forintot kapott érte a piacon. Drága Édesanyám annyira örült neki, mert talán a hideg tél végét, a tavasz jövetelét jelezte számára. Nekem erről emlékezetes február 2. De ennél fontosabb nap ez a keresztény embereknek, Gyertyaszentelő. Gyertyaszentelő Boldogasszony ünnepe, megemlékezünk Szűz Máriáról, aki Jézus születése után negyven nappal, a zsidó törvények szerint, bemutatta Jézust a jeruzsálemi templomban. Az agg Simeon, aki éppen jelen volt a bemutatásakor, Jézust a nemzetek megvilágosítására szolgáló világosságnak nevezte. Innen ered a Gyertyaszentelő szokása. A szentelt gyertya Jézus egyik legrégebbi jelképe. A keleti és nyugati liturgiák másképp nevezik ezt a napot, de Magyarországon megmaradt Gyertyaszentelő Boldogasszonynak, és már a XI. században a Hahoti-kódexben megtalálható. A magyar középkorban a tüzet megáldották először, és annál gyújtották meg a gyertyát. Magyarországon különböző szokások kapcsolódnak ehhez a naphoz. Kevés falusi katolikus család van, akinek az otthonában ne lenne szentelt gyertya. Van ahol azt tartják, ha a szentelt gyertya nem alszik ki ezen a napon, akkor sok méz lesz abban az évben. Kiszomborban kaptárokat is ezen a napon tisztítottak ki. Hogy békesség legyen a házban, a kilincsre is kentek egy kis gyertyát. Azt is mondják, ha a gyermek nyelve alá egy kis darab szentelt gyertyát tesznek, az korán megtanul beszélni. A gyomorbeteg ember köldökére is

tesznek egy égő gyertyát, azt lefedik egy üveg pohárral, akkor a beteg meggyógyul, mert a szentelt gyertya lángja magába szívja a betegséget. Mohácson a fejfájást is elűzetik vele. De még a torokfájás is elmúlik, ha egy kicsi darabot lenyelnek. Tápén az épülő ház fundamentumába tesznek egy gyertyát, Szegeden meg a falba egy égő szentelt gyertyát falaznak be. Ott nagy hatalma van a gyertyának. A gyermekágyas anyát égő gyertyával kerülgetik, hogy így elzárják a gonoszok elől. A haldokló ember ágyát is körbe járják; a fénye mutatja az utat a léleknek, a füst meg távol tartja a gonoszt. A gyermek születése után a keresztelőig a gyermek fejénél egy szentelt gyertyát gyújtanak, hogy az megvédje, nehogy a gonoszok kicseréljék a kis pogány gyermeket. Gyertyaszentelő napjához időjárást jósoló hiedelmek is kapcsolódnak. Vihar, jégeső, dörgés és villámláskor szentelt gyertyát gyújtanak és mellette imádkoznak. Ha február 2.-án jó idő van, a



medve a barlangjából kibújva meglátja az árnyékát, akkor megfordul és visszamegy, mert még 40 napig tél lesz. Ha pedig hideg van, a „farkas ordít be az ablakon”, akkor a medve kint marad, mert a tavasz itt lesz hamarosan.

Itt az Egyesült Államokban a Punxsutawney Phil, a pennsylvániai „groundhog”, tölti be a magyarországi medve szerepét. Hát csak essen a hó február másodikán, hogy az a medve ill. "groundhog" meg ne lássa az árnyékát!

Candlemas Day

I still remember sometimes how I would go to the market, hoping to perhaps – perhaps find it; I was looking for a small bouquet of violets. February 2nd was my Mother's feast day, and when I was attending the *gimnázium* (prep school), or was already working and lived in the city, I would surprise Mother with violets. Many times snow still covered the ground, and often the better part of winter was still to come, but there was a little old lady who would go out into the woods and search out the little early flower at the base of trees, for which she would receive a few forints at the market. My dear Mother was so glad to get them, maybe because for her they meant the end of the cold winter, the coming of spring.

This is why February 2nd is memorable for me. But for Christians, it is more important, it is Candlemas Day. On the feast of Candlemas, we remember the Virgin Mary, who 40 days after the birth of Jesus, presented him in the temple at Jerusalem, according to Jewish law. The aged Simeon, who happened to be present at the presentation, called Jesus the light that would serve to enlighten nations. That is where the custom of Candlemas originated. The blessed candle is one of the oldest symbols of Jesus. This day is called by different names in the Eastern and Western liturgies, but in Hungary it has remained *Gyertyaszentelő Boldogasszony* (lit. Candle-blessing Blessed Mother), and is already mentioned in the 11th cen-

tury Hahót codex. In the Hungarian Middle Ages, fire was first blessed, and the candle was lit from that. In Hungary, different customs are connected with this day. In the villages, few Catholic households are without blessed candles. In some areas, they believe that if the blessed candle does not go out on this day, there will be much honey that year. In the town of Kiszombor, this was the day they cleaned out the beehives. To make sure there was peace in the house, they would smear a bit of candle wax on the doorknob.

It is also said that if a small piece of the blessed candle is placed under a child's tongue, it will learn to speak early. A blessed candle is also placed on the navel of a person with stomach trouble, and is then covered with a glass; he will be cured because the flame of the blessed candle will absorb the sickness. In Mohács, it is used to banish headaches. Even sore throats are cured if a small piece is swallowed.

In Tápé, a blessed candle is placed in the foundation of a house under construction, and in Szeged a burning blessed candle is built into the wall. The candle there has great power. The mother giving birth is circled with burning blessed candles, to shut her off from the evil spirits. A dying man's bed is similarly circled; the candlelight shows his soul the way, and its smoke keeps the evil one away. After the baby's birth and until its christening, a blessed candle is lit at its head to protect it, lest the evil spirits exchange the little pagan baby. Weather forecasting beliefs also are connected with Candlemas. A blessed candle is lit during storms, hailstorms and lightning, and people pray near it. If the weather is good on Candlemas Day, and the bear, coming from his den, sees his shadow, he goes back, because winter will last another 40 days. If instead it is cold, and „the wolves scream through the window“, then the bear will stay outside, because spring will be here soon. Here in the United States, it is Punxsutawny Phil of Pennsylvania who fills the role of the Hungarian bear. So let



Gyertyaszentelő a tiszafüredi plébánián

it snow on February 2nd, that the bear, or rather the ground hog, may not see his shadow!

Csúsztatott palacsinta/ Slipped pancakes

During the winter, my Mom would give several dinner parties. Our apartment was small, so she could invite only a few people at a time. She would decide on a menu in the fall, and serve the same dishes at all of them. The year she served slipped pancakes (csúsztatott palacsinta), all her guests gave it rave reviews.

This dish is easy to prepare ahead of time. Made with beaten egg whites, it is a light appetizer which does not take away from the main dish that follows. It can also be made as a dessert, without cheese, but using walnuts or cottage cheese. Jó étvágyat!



*6 tojás sárgája
6 tojás habja
6 dkg vaj
6 leveses kanál liszt
kicsi só
fél liter tej
reszelt sajt és olvasztott vaj*

A tojás sárgáját, vaját, lisztet, sót jól eldörzsöljük. Apránként hozzáadjuk a fél liter tejet, és ha már síma, akkor a tojás habját.

Levesmerő kanállal teszünk a palacsintásütőbe (amit előre megforrosítottunk zsírral) és csak egyik felét sütjük meg. Tűzálló táltra csúsztatjuk és a tetejét (a sületlent) megszórjuk reszelt sajttal.

Minden következő egymásra rakunk és megszórjuk sajttal.

A torta forma tésztát betesszük a sütőbe 350 fokon és kb. 30 percig bent hagyjuk, de ne hagyjuk kiszáradni a legfelső palacsintát. Kivéve a sütőből, olvasztott vajjal leöntve tálaljuk. Lehet előtte való napon is elkészíteni, és csak tálalás előtt sütőbe tenni.

Slipped Pancakes

6 egg yolks
6 egg whites, beaten
Half a stick of butter
6 Tbsp flour
Grated cheese
Melted butter
Salt
Mix egg yolks with butter, flour and salt by hand until coarse. Slowly add milk; mix until smooth. Gradually add beaten egg whites. Mix gently until incorporated.

Grease frying pan and heat. With a ladle pour enough batter in frying pan to cover the pan. Fry on one side; when done, slide onto an oven-safe dish, fried side on bottom. Top with grated cheese. Continue frying pancakes until all are done, sliding each on top of the others, fried side on bottom. Top each one with cheese. Fry both sides of the last one.

Put the stack of pancakes into the oven. Bake on 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Be careful not to dry the top one. Sprinkle melted butter on top before serving.

Can be prepared in advance, and baked just before serving. May also be prepared as a dessert, skipping the salt and replacing the cheese with cottage cheese or nuts.

A Shrove Tuesday Folk Custom from Moha

The tradition of „tikverőzés” can be traced back as far as the 1700’s in the villages of the Móri Valley and the Balaton highlands. Today, this folk custom is practiced only in Moha. On Shrove Tuesday, the young men, masked and dressed in costumes decorated with ribbons (the clowns), walk the streets of Moha and smear the girls’ faces with soot to make them pretty. In return, they receive eggs or other donations which the youngest – so-called „first-year” boys who are dressed as girls – gather into baskets they carry. In the old days, only young men who had been drafted (and had presumably done their military duty) could dress as these clowns. Now they can start earlier, but only those who have finished elementary school may participate.

It is called „hen beating”, because the hens are also smeared with soot so they will be better egg layers.

The masked clown parade starts from the cultural center. At the head of the parade, the „hay Turk” stumbles along in his ample white clothing which has been stuffed with 30-40 kilos of straw, a remembrance of the driving out of the Turks. Today, the chimney sweep has also become part of the parade.

Various interpretations have been given to the smearing with soot. One is that it drives out evil; another is that it is a fertility rite. And since it is carried out before the start of Lent, „hen beating” also has an overtone of driving out winter.

The parents of the „first-year” boys have the honor of entertaining the masked participants. In olden days, „hen beating” was a part of post-wedding revelry, when the young men went through the village to collect eggs which they fried after the wedding guests had gone home, and then continued their revelry.

Today, the „hen beating” of Moha has become a tourist attraction, and the clowns cover not only the girls’ faces with soot, but also the faces of anyone they are able to catch. The population welcomes visitors to Moha with home-made *fánk* (Hungarian doughnuts), mulled wine and tea.

Several years ago, UNESCO added the *busójárás* custom of Mohács (see the February 2009 issue of MNO) to the international cultural heritage list. The settlement of Moha has been encouraged by this and hopes to achieve the same status with its *tikverőzés* custom.



No one escapes being smeared with soot.



This hen will be a good layer!



Húshagyókeddi népszokás: „Tikverőzés” Mohán

Moha község Székesfehérvártól 10 km-re fekszik észak-nyugati irányban. Nem a lakosság nagyságáról híres - még az 500-at sem haladja meg. Nem is annyira az ásványvize teszi ismertté – bár már 1374-ben feljegyezték az „Áldókút” gyógyhatását. Manapság legfőképpen a húshagyókeddi népszokás, a „tikverőzés”, azaz „tyúkverés”, teszi népszerűvé ezt a Fejér megyei települést.

A tikverőzés hagyományát vissza lehet vezetni legalább az 1700-as évekig a

Móri-völgy falvakban és a Balaton-felvidéken, de most már csupán Mohán űzik ezt a népszokást. Húshagyókedden fiatal legények (a bohócok) szalagokkal díszített ruhában, maskarában járják Moha utcáit, és a lányok arcát korommal kenik be, hogy megszépítsék őket. Ennek fejébe tojást vagy más adományt kapnak, amit a legfiatalabb – úgymond „elsőéves” fiúk, akik lánynak öltöznek – gyűjtenek össze a karjukon hordott kosárba. Régen

csak a sorozás után öltözhetek be a legények bohócnak. Most már fiatalabban kezdhetik, de csak az általános iskolát végzett falubeli fiatal legények vehetnek részt benne.

Azért hívják „tikverőzés”-nek (tyúkverésnek), mert a tyúkokat is bekormozzák, azért, hogy jobban tojjanak.

A maskarás bohóc menet reggel a kulturház elől indul. A menet elején csetlik-botlik a „szómatörök”, akinek bő, fehér ruháját 30-40 kiló szalmával tömki ki, emlékeztetvén a török kiűzésére. Mostanában már a kéményseprő is része a menetnek.

A kormozásnak többféle értelmezést is adnak. Az egyik a gonosz elűzése; a másik, termékenységvarázslás. És mivel a nagybőjt kezdete előtt tartják, télűző jellege is van a tikverés szokásának.

Az „elsőévesek” szüleit illeti az a megtiszteltetés, hogy megvendégeljék a maskarás felvonulókat. Régen lakodalom utáni mulatság része volt a tikverőzés, amikor is a legények hajnalban járták a falut és tojást

gyűjtöttek, és miután szétszéledt a násznép, megsütötték és folytatták a mulatozást.

Manapság már turisztikai látványosság lett a mohai tikverőzés, és bekormozzák nem csak a lányok arcát, hanem mindenkiét, akit el tudnak kapni. A lakosság fánkkal, forralt borral és meleg teával várja a vendégeket Mohán. Néhány éve az UNESCO felvette a mohácsi busójárást a nemzetközi kulturális örökség listájára. Ezen felbuzdulva, Moha település is reménykedik, hogy ugyancsak megkapja ezt az elismerést a hagyományos tikverőzés szokása révén.

Strange, but not so Strange : Washington in Budapest

Despite the “observance of convenience” which moves the remembrance of Washington’s birthday to the nearest weekend, February 22nd remains the actual date of his birth. Here is an unusual – we might even call it a strange – place for his statue.

The visitor to Budapest who wanders through *Városliget* (City Park) might be surprised, and think it strange, to find a statue of George Washington among the trees. It was erected in 1906 by “The Hungarians of America”, according to the inscription on the statue’s base. In a way, it is OUR statue, erected by our ancestors. The idea of a statue of George Washington was first broached by the leaders of the Hungarian-American community. It was to be “a sign of unity and ... (would) symbolize that Hungarians and Americans were tied together inextricably from the start”. This is how the American Hungarian Federation, founded in 1906, describes the initiative. The necessary funds were collected in record time, and the sculptor Bezéredy Gyula was commissioned for the task. The statue was unveiled on September 16, 1906, an event attended by several hundred American-Hungarians who were led by Tihamer Kohanyi, editor of the Hungarian-language newspaper “*Szabadság*” and first president of the American Hungarian Federation. An all-volunteer, non-partisan, non-profit, charitable and educational organization of Hungarian societies, institutions and churches, the aim of the American Hungarian Federation (*Amerikai magyar szövetség*) is to “defend the interests of Americans of Hungarian origin in the US.” As we remember the “Father of Our Country” on February 22nd, it is appropriate to take a look at “our” statue – a part of that “inextricable” tie!



Kicsi a világ!

This story appeared in a Hungarian publication in the West, in the early fifties.

It seems an expedition was launched by the British to discover, once and for all, the truth about the Abominable Snowman of the Himalayas. They would search it out in its habitat, and if possible, capture it for scientific research. As often happens in our crazy world, a Hungarian signed on for the expedition too. The team arrived at the foot of the great Himalayan Mountain range, and set up camp. They searched for days, and were elated when they

found some tracks in the snow, probably made by the strange creature.

One night, the Hungarian member of the expedition heard stealthy movement outside his tent. He peeked out, and saw a shaggy form moving about the camp. The Abominable Snowman! Pulling himself together, he took a flying leap, and landed on its back. At that, there came a stream of profanity from the creature ... in Hungarian!

“What! You speak Hungarian? How come?” asked the baffled explorer. “Sure!” replied the creature, pulling off his shaggy mask, and moulting into a human being. “The Abominable Snowman is such a tourist attraction, the local government wanted to build it up. They advertised for the position, and I needed a job... I have to wear large paw-like boots, and a mask, and am not too well paid, but it’s better than nothing...”

Somehow, I almost believe the story, not only because Hungarians have been known to do crazy things, but because ... *Kicsi a világ!* It’s a small world!



Abominable Snowman of the Himalayas from a movie

A szegedi utca jaj, de sáros

Folksongs provide many clues not only about the culture, but also about the language. While this one refers to the state of the streets in Szeged before the end of the 1800's, when the streets were finally paved, it can serve to point out some of the intricacies of the Hungarian language .

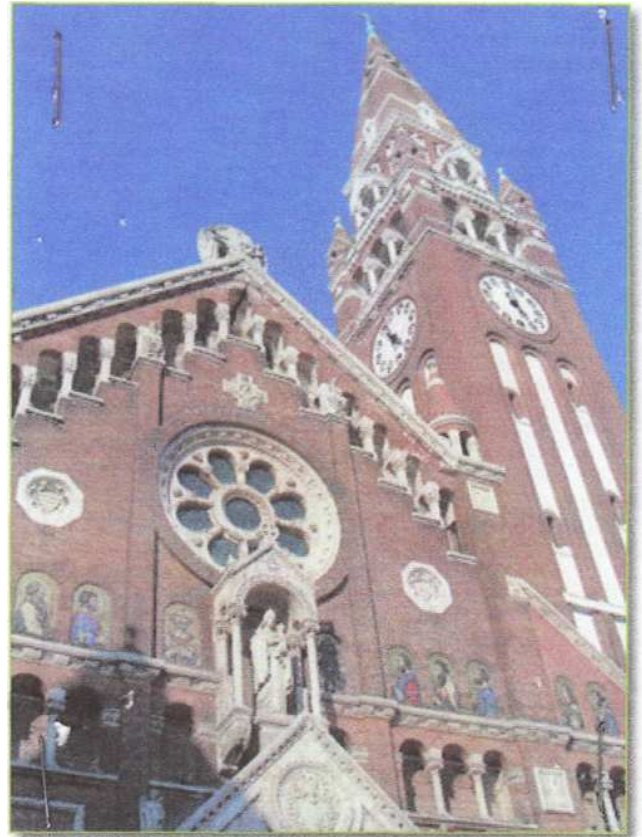
A szegedi utca jaj, de sáros

A szegedi utca
jaj, de sáros
Végig menni rajta
nem tanácsos,
mert megfognak engemet,
megkötik a kezemet
a zsandárok.
sej-haj a zsandárok..

De én könyörögni
nagyon jóI tudok.
Meggérem a híres
zsandár urakat:
engedjék el a károm.
a babámat akarom
megölelni,
sej-haj megcsókolni.

The street of Szeged
(is) o, so muddy. **(Notice:
no verb!)**
Going along it
is not advisable,
because they will catch me,
they will tie my hands,
the gendarmes,
hey-hey, the gendarmes.

But I know very well
how to plead (beg).
I will ask the famous
sir gendarmes:
let them release my arm(s),
My sweetheart I want
to embrace,
hey-hey, to kiss.



Szeged is an ancient city already mentioned in the 2nd century AD. It is located in southeastern Hungary, and is the fourth largest Hungarian city. It is known for its production of **pa-prika**, brought here in the 16th century. It straddles the Tisza River, near its confluence with the Maros River, which explains why its streets were muddy – flooding was a frequent problem. In Turkish times, Szeged was the property of the sultan, which meant the city had certain privileges. (The making of slippers – *szegedi papucs* – was taken over from the Turks at that time. See “The Slippers of Szeged” in the October 2011 issue of Magyar News Online.)

Szeged was almost totally destroyed by the devastating flood of 1879. The people then vowed to build a church, which was completed only after WWI, in 1930. Called the *Fogadalmi templom* (Votive Church), it can accommodate 5,000 people. Its organ is the 3rd largest in Europe, and its tower clock the largest in Hungary.

The city was rebuilt in the Art Nouveau style, which gives it a coherent look. Nobel Prize winner Szent-Györgyi Albert did his research on Vitamin C here.

The first two lines of this folksong (“*A szegedi utca jaj, de sáros*”) illustrate the principle that in Hungarian, the various forms of the **verb “to be” often** can be skipped: here, for example, the verb “is” is **understood**.



Hol (van) a gyerek? – Where (is) the child?
To which one might answer: *Ott.* – Over there.

Similarly, **prefixes can be used as an answer:**

Elment már? – Has he/she gone (away) yet?

To which one could reply: *El.* (Or: *Element.* Or: *Igen.*)

Kivittet a szemetet? – Did you take out the garbage? (*kivinni* - take out)

Answer: *Kí.*

Beengeded a macskát? – Will you let the cat in? (*beengedni* - let in)

Answer: *Be.* (**Present tense can also express future action.**)

Megette az egészet? – Did he/she eat it all?

Meg.

Túladtál rajta? – Have you passed it on?

Túl.

zsandár - phonetic spelling of the French word "gendarme", which was taken over by the Austrians

Engedjék el a karom - let them release my arm (**singular**)

Parts of the body are always referred to in the singular:

a kezem - my hand(s)

a lábam - my foot (feet)

a fülem - my ear(s)

a szemem - my eye(s)

az ujjam - my finger(s)

When we speak of one arm, or one leg, (which is half of two!) we say:

fél lábbal – lit. with half a foot -

Fél lábbal már kinn volt. - He already had one foot outside.

fél kézzel – lit. with half a hand -

Megfogtam a macskát fél kézzel. – I caught the cat with one hand.

fél füllel – lit. with half an ear

Fél füllel hallottam. – I heard it with one ear. (I barely heard it. I wasn't paying attention.)

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Did you know...

...that there was a Hungarian hero in the Costa Concordia Cruise disaster? Although much discussion of the Costa Concordia Cruise ship disaster off the coast of Tuscany has centered on the apparently cowardly actions of her captain, there has emerged the narrative of at least one bona fide hero. Sándor Fehér, a 38-year-old Hungarian violinist on the cruise, was the first person identified among the dead.

Mr. Fehér placed life vests on several crying children before returning to his cabin to retrieve his beloved vio-

lin, according to his pianist friend József Balog. He was last seen on deck heading for a lifeboat. Sándor is a terrible loss not only to his family, but also to the world of musical instruction. Like Zoltán Kodály, he had developed a new way of teaching music to children. In this case, it was a method for teaching the violin. According to a Youtube video, he had commented "I would like to teach in other countries... and use this amazing new system for the next generation of

violin players."

<http://www.thestar.com/news/article/1118205--violinist-saved-chi...>

Martha Matus Schipul

Sándor Fehér

