



**BOLDOG ANYÁK NAPJÁT KÍVÁNUNK MINDEN ÉDESANYÁNAK!  
HAPPY MOTHERS' DAY!**

*A bitter-sweet poem for Mothers' Day. Áprily Lajos tells of his mother, who loved to weed his garden, and who has now gone into God's garden. He asks the Lord to sow some weeds among His flowers, so she would not have to sit there idle.*

**A kertbe ment /  
She Went into the Garden**  
*Áprily Lajos*

Uram, én nem tudom, milyen a kerted,  
a virágosod és a pázsitod.  
Én nem tudom, virágok ültetését  
ágyásaidban hogy igazítod.

Csak azt tudom, hogy kendőjét levette  
júniusi vasárnap hajnalán,  
beteg lábával és beteg szívével  
bánatosan kertedbe ment anyám.

Uram, tele volt immár félelemmel,  
sokszor riasztó árnyék lepte meg,  
de szigony-eres, érdes két kezével  
még gyomlálgatta volna kertemet.

A kicsi teste csupa nyugtalanság,  
s most elgondolni nem tudom, hogy ül.  
Virágosodban könnyörülj meg rajta,  
hogy szegény ne szenvedjen tétlenül.

Mezőiden ne csak virágmagot vess,  
virágaid közé vegyíts gyomot,  
hogy anyám keze gyomlálhassa kerted:  
asphodelosod és liliomod.

*Áprily Lajos (1887-1967) was born in Transylvania. The poetry of Ady made a great impression on him, so much so that he followed Ady to Paris. But due to his innate shyness, he turned back from Ady's front door, and never met him. He soon went back to Transylvania on*

*account of his aging parents. At first, he taught at Nagyenyed and later became Editor of Erdélyi Helikon, a literary magazine. In order to be able to support his family, he resettled in Hungary, but always had pangs of conscience, considering that he had "betrayed" his native land by leaving. Most of his poems deal with Nature.*



*Asphodelus ramosus*

## MAMI AND MY OTHER MOTHERS

Olga Vállay Szokolay

*May is for mothers – remembering, thanking those without whom we would not exist. And without whom we would not be what we are. Happy Mothers' Day to all of them, wherever they are!*

My mother was young and beautiful. Of course, all used to be young once, but she was different.

Mom was 28 when she got married; that definitely was not underage in those days. When, after they were married, she went with my father to a movie theater for an "adults only" show (probably the equivalent of an R-rated production now), they did not want to allow her in, seeming to be too young. Dad had to vouch for her, just to elicit an exclamation of "How cruel to let such a young thing marry!"

To me, she was just my *Mami* and her chestnut-brown hair, blue eyes and naturally peaches-and-cream complexion admired by all, meant nothing. In fact, I thought that the blondes wearing cherry-red lipstick and stilettos were the pretty ones. *Mami* dressed conservatively and wore no makeup: she didn't have to. It was for her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday that I bought her the first lipstick of her very own because I'd caught her filching mine for just a dab... Then I told her she was old enough to have her own. Probably the noble fragrance of 4711 cologne was her only subdued trademark. Thus, she always smelled nice.

When I was about eight months old, she thought I was ready to meet my father who was a merchant marine captain and away at sea for many months at a time. We embarked at a port on the Kaiser-Wilhelm Canal (now Kiel Canal) after midnight. *Mami* put me down, sound asleep,

on the bed in Dad's cabin. He leaned over me, catching his first glimpse of his mini-Sleeping-Beauty who opened her eyes, gave him a broad smile and then went on dreaming. It sealed our friendship for life and after.



*Mami* was never seasick: one useful trait I fortunately inherited. We accompanied Dad to Spain – Seville and Malaga, as well as to North Africa – Algiers and Morocco come to mind from my parents' accounts. How I wish I could recall all that!

Today's profuse assurance of "I love you" was, in our circle, exclusively reserved for very special, romantic occasions, not for daily usage to kids and all. The only reference to that precious phrase was when I was being punished, with the lyric: "I am doing this (whatever) because I love you..." It didn't make much sense to me until much, much later. Yet, there was never any doubt about love between us. When I was pre-school age, my uncle teased me, promising me something if I'd love him the best. My diplomatic answer was: "I love you best, but I love Dad the very best and Mom the very-very-very best!"

Mother's delicate beauty inspired some painters and we had two of her portraits that had been shown

at exhibits, hanging in heavy gold frames on the walls of our apartment. The smaller one was sweet and gentle. The larger one was stern and strict and its glance seemed to follow me around the room, seeing everything. For a long time it kept me on the straight and narrow...

All my life she was proud of me, while being rather sparing, actually frugal, with praises. Later, however, in my teenage years, *Mami* became my confidante and secretary. She helped me organize the timing of visits by boyfriends, gently steering some away, presenting them more in perspective.

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When I was about year-and-a-half and a fast runner, I became too dangerous for another voyage aboard Dad's ship. Yet my parents were understandably yearning for each other. I had no grandmothers: my paternal one died at age 36, when Dad was 10 years old. The maternal one was still alive when I was born but died shortly thereafter. It was my dear godmother living with us who made it possible for Mom to join Dad for a few months away from home. She owned a dental laboratory. During her hours at work the maid cared for me. Then *Tepa*, as I called my godmother, spent all her free time with me. We used to go for walks that gave me a chance to play tag. I must have given her a real hard time running in-and-out of buildings, having her pursue me in a cat-and-mouse chase. She was a great cook, making me remember her cream-of-mushroom soup and Christmas turkey forever.

My mother cried when she returned after a few months, as I didn't recognize her and called *Tepa* "*Mami*".

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It was Christmas Eve, 1944. The Russians were fighting on the Pest



side and the sounds of heavy artillery filled the air over all of Budapest. We lived on the top floor of the eight-story apartment house where 15 months earlier one of the very first bombs dropped on the city fell just a couple of hundred feet short of our flat. My parents' best friends living on the second floor invited us to dinner and suggested that I'd stay with them overnight due to the dangerous shooting. *Ilus néni*, an artist and Mom's closest friend, knowing that I was interested in drawing and painting, gave me a set each of fine quality watercolor and tempera, along with appropriate paper and brushes. With her daughter, Ildikó, we sat in their bathroom, an interior space, where I was thrilled trying out the new paints. After *Ilus néni* explained the rules of composition to me, I painted a nativity scene and she was delighted. That night she became my mentor for years to come.



On Christmas Day, along with the 130 other inhabitants, we moved down to the basement of the building where we stayed for the ensuing six weeks. Ildikó, then seven, got a pair of kiddie-skis for Christmas that she let us kids try on to slide down a tiny snowed-in heap of dirt in the yard during the siege of the City. It felt like flying and I knew I wanted to ski. Next Christmas, *Ilus néni* gave me my first pair of skis. She and her family also introduced me to the joy of language, and in particular, to puns...

All these became organic parts of my life, of much success, much joy and much love.

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At age 16, I fell hopelessly in love with a guy eight years my senior. My, he was already an assistant professor at the University! He played the guitar that was my fascination all my life, from the Italian songs

played by my uncle to Bluegrass that drew me into the American folklore. He was so different from the boys in dancing-school! Like myself, he was an only child; he skied, sailed and could draw like magic. And just when it seemed we could get better acquainted he, like oh so many who had a chance and the luck, left the country.

I was devastated.

Yet, somehow the opportunity presented itself for me to meet his parents. Joining the post-war cottage industry, his mother tried to augment the shrinking paychecks of her

husband by making ladies' purses out of nylon fabric. Her name being also *Ilus néni*, to differentiate, I gave her the nickname *Nylona néni* that she found quite endearing. I became her sales lady and we did great business.

She could not escape noticing the similar traits and interests between her far-away son and me. Thus, after I sent her an illustrated letter from my vacation, she arranged for correspondence between us. It lasted for a few exchanges but the distance between Budapest and Salzburg seemed unsurmountable in those days.

Nylona and her dear husband became parents at a later age and, by their own admission, would have wanted a daughter. Instead, they had a boy and even he was so hopelessly far away. In semi-jest, they wanted to "buy me" from my parents to have their old dream come true... She considered herself my vice-mother and was just as devastated by the news of her son's sudden marriage as I was.

As all my "other mothers", Nylona was best of friends with *Mami*. They enjoyed vacationing together and humored each other into their first flight to visit their respective families in the United States.

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*Marcelle néni* knew and liked me since childhood. Her daughter and I were best friends and I spent several vacations at their place at Lake Balaton in our teen years. Then their family managed to emigrate to the U.S. and lived in Connecticut when my husband and I fled from Hungary. From Vienna, I notified my uncle in New York who, not being able to do so himself, approached Marcelle and her family about sponsoring us.

They didn't hesitate: picked us up at

Camp Kilmer, put us up until we could move into our own and helped us in any way imaginable to establish our new home in our new country. Away from my own, Marcelleka, as she became to me as an adult, was my surrogate mother. She validated my humor, my playing, my being different, my being me.

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In a long, circuitous way I arrived back at *Mami*. She visited us last in 1981, when she was still fully mobile, alert and although older, still beautiful. Then I visited her for Christmas 1984, finding her shrunken by several inches due to osteoporosis but still lively and nimble.

By 1987, however, on her road to final deterioration, she was homebound, cared for by relatives in exchange for inheriting her apartment. I gave her an audio-tape of *La Bohème*, Puccini being her all-time favorite. She could play it over and over till she fell asleep.

When I arrived, she was perplexed: she first did not recognize me, as if reciprocating for my blunder of 50-some years earlier. As she realized who I was, we both cried, hugging each other tight, for the last time.

Next year I had to attend her funeral. Surrounded by all our loving friends and relatives, it was comforting to see the urn containing her ashes next to that of my father's. They were together again at last.

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Every person in this reminiscence has passed to the other side, but I feel privileged to be the guardian of their memory. Happy Mothers' Day! – till we meet again...?

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

## Dr. Abel Lajtha: *Életem (My Life) – HCSC Presentation*

OVS

*The nonagenarian brain researcher held a spellbinding introduction of his lifetime work and eventful life at the Radcliffes' Riverside Home.*

The Hungarian Cultural Society of Cheshire, Connecticut presented a lecture by Dr. Abel Lajtha, the world-renowned brain researcher.

Richard and Mary Radcliffe of Greenwich Symphony fame, herself Hungarian-born, hosted the event in their sunny Riverside, Connecticut home on Sunday, April 22, 2018. Mary and her siblings have been lifelong friends with Abel whose composer-father gave music lessons to their family many decades ago.

Dr. Balázs Somogyi, President of HCSC, introduced the speaker, born as Lajtha Ábel in Budapest. Magyar News Online published an article: *Journey into the Brain with Dr. Abel Lajtha* in its September, 2017 issue to celebrate his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The audience, sitting comfortably in arm-chairs and sofas, was mesmerized by the fascinating topic. The 95-year-old Dr. Lajtha gave a colorful account of his youth, his participation in the resistance movement against the Nazi troops, and his masterful escape from them as well as from the Soviet occupiers, including a medically unnecessary but life-saving appendectomy...

The young Ábel was determined about his future plans: he wanted to work with his idol,

Nobel-laureate Szent-Görgyi Albert. Upon receiving his PhD in 1945, he started working under his mentor in Hungary, in Naples, Italy, then in London. In 1948, he gladly accepted Szent-Györgyi's invitation to the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts.

There they worked on muscle research. Lajtha, however, wanted to study the brain. Szent-Györgyi tried to steer him away from the most complex organ but Ábel's attraction to his chosen focus was stronger than anything else. He left his mentor and, in 1950, started working at Columbia University on the blood-brain barrier and brain protein metabolic studies. At that time, neurochemistry as a discipline was just starting and he was a founding member of it. Since then, he spent six decades in research of various functions of this complex, elusive organ. He estimates our current progress into the field is about 5%.



*Top: Mary Radcliffe; Esther Odescalchi; Bottom: Rev. Tibor Király; Joseph Kata*



A lively question-and-answer session followed Abel's presentation. Understandably, one of the focal questions was how to keep one's gray cells functioning into old age and how he has managed to keep himself mentally and physically healthy and fit. He claims that the brain's alertness, fuelled by an adequate blood supply, can be maintained by exercise. He skied into his eighties and still plays singles in tennis!

Exhausting the inexhaustible question-and-answer epilogue, the audience drifted over to another room for wine and hors d'oeuvres, continuing the spirited discussion until all went home for dinner.

Abel left a bit earlier to pack for his trip to Hungary at mid-week...



Dr. Abel Lajtha

## Szabó Kati Zágontól Párizsig

Szabó Kati recently received a lifetime achievement award from the Hungarian government. (Ed.)

A Magyar Érdemrend Lovagkeresztjével tüntette ki a magyar állam Szabó Katit, a zágoni tornászcsil-



At the award ceremony

lagot a párizsi nagykövetségen megtartott ünnepségen április 11-én, szerdán.

A ma Franciaországban élő négyszeres olimpiai bajnoknak, kétszeres világ- és Európa-bajnoknak **Áder János**, Magyarország köztársasági elnökének nevében **Károlyi György**, párizsi magyar nagykövet nyújtotta át a kitüntetést magas színvonalú munkájáért, a tornászsportban elért kiemelkedő eredményei, utánpótlás-nevelés, illetve a sportág határon túli magyarok körében történő népszerűsítése érdekében végzett tevékenysége elismeréseként.

**Tamás Sándor**, Kovászna Megye Tanácsának elnöke az eseményen elmondta: „A szülőföld nevében azért javasoltuk Szabó Katit a magyar kormány megtisztelő díjára, mert megérdemli, nemcsak azért mert zágoni születésű, mert a szülőföldet úgy érzi, mint ahogy Mikes Kelemen azt megírta és átérezte, hanem mert részvett életének munkájával, az élete első felében kivívott dicsőségeivel. Úgy érezzük, hogy ismét előtérbe kell hozni azt a Szabó Katit, aki Romániának és a magyar nemzetnek egyszerre világszintű dicsőségeket szerzett az elmúlt időszakban. Születésnapján, a magyar kultúra

*napján méltó újraindítását szerveztük meg annak, amit az elkövetkezőkben is szeretnénk, azt, hogy a 'szülőföld nagykövete' legyen.”*

**Károlyi György**, párizsi magyar nagykövet laudációjában kihangsúlyozta, az erdélyi székely magyar olimpiikon neve a hetvenes és nyolcvanas évek nemzedékeivel a minőség forradalmának egyik jelképe lett. *„Egy kisebbségi létet öröklő versenyző nemcsak magáért fut és nem elsősorban azért a zászlóért és himnuszért, amely kíséri sikereit. Egy erdélyi magyarnak elszakíthatóságában a legtitkosabb és legértékesebb kihívás nemzetközösségét szolgálni az egyéni teljesítménye által. A magyar nemzet egységes a sportban. Mindannyiunk felelőssége, hogy az akár idegen zászlók alatt elért sikereinket is számon tartjuk és díjazzuk. Ma a magyar haza nevében állami kitüntetésével kifejezzük hálánkat és nagyrabecsülésünket Szabó Katalinnak. A mi Katink születésétől versenykarrierje végéig vállalta magyarságát és szótlanul, tettekkel, minőséggel hagyta le azokat, akikkel összemérték. Ősei örökségét ösztönösen tovább vitte, szüleinek áldozatvállalásait kama-*  
*tostól megfizette, amikor életpályája emlékéül egy nagyobb család színe előtt a nemzet nagyjai közé beiratott*

*a zágoni Szabó név” – fogalmazott a nagykövet.*

**Szabó Kati** meghatottan vette át a magyar állam kitüntetését. *„Nagy megtiszteltetés számomra ez a díj. Felemelő érzés, hogy a szülőföldem és a magyar nemzet gondol rám, és büszkén sorolnak nagyjaik közé”* – nyilatkozott az orbaiszéki Zágonból kislányként Onești-re elkerült és ma már többszörös olimpiai, kétszeres világ- és Európa-bajnoki címet magáénak tudó tornászcsillag.

**Kovácsna Megye Tanácsának sajtóirodája**

**2018. április 11.**



*Szabó Kati receiving the award from Ambassador Károlyi György; bust of Szabó Katalin at Déva*

## **My Connection to King Matthias I (Mátyás Király)** Charles Bálintitt Jr.

*Even though some 650 years have passed, King Mátyás still figures in some family histories!*

He was from Transylvania (as were most of my ancestors), the place in this world that may be the closest to my heart. He was born 550 years ago in the same city where my father was born a little over 106 years ago, namely Kolozsvár (Cluj, Romania today).

Mátyás was named King of Hungary when he was not yet 15 years old. His uncle, Szilágyi Miklós, was his regent for the first year and a half until Mátyás took full control.

I always admired the stories of how King Mátyás would disguise himself and go among the people to find out what was really going on in his country and to get a sense of the true feelings of ordinary people. This was one of the reasons why he was referred to as “Matthias the Just” – even though he imposed very high

taxes on the peasants. In fact, a few years after his death, many of them said that they would be willing to pay even more, if they could have him back as their king.

I remember visiting his statue in front of St. Michael’s Church in Kolozsvár. I also remember something else that my cousin, Kati, had said while I was visiting with her in Budapest. Erdei Kati is a German teacher and a tour guide in Hungary, as was her grandmother till past the age of 90. A number of years ago, I went along with her for part of one of her tours in Budapest. While standing in front of a statue and giving some details about the life of Mátyás I, she just happened to mention that “This was the last king in our family.” Of course, this made me a bit curious; but since we were a little rushed at the time, I didn’t have the chance to ask her to elaborate.

Recently I started thinking about this subject again. I know that King Mátyás didn’t have any legitimate children, so I figured that we were not his direct descendants. Then I took a closer look to see what I could find out about his parents. His father was Hunyadi János, Voivode

of Transylvania, and his mother was Szilágyi Erzsébet. Her father was Count Szilágyi László, Captain of the fortress of Bradics, and her mother was Bellyéni Katalin. They had 5 other children, including Zsófia who married Geréb János (in some places I have also seen the name as Geréb Péter). János, the vice-Voivode of Transylvania, and his wife had 5 sons. Among them were Péter, who served for a time as the Palatine of the Kingdom of Hungary, which was the highest ranking office after the king; Mátyás, who was the Bán of Croatia and Slavonia; and László, who was the Archbishop of Kalocsa. So the Geréb brothers were all the first cousins of King Mátyás.

My grandmother, my mother’s mother, was Geréb Margit. Her sister was Kati’s grandmother, which is how we are second cousins. This is our mutual connection to King Mátyás, but I would need to do a lot more research to trace the direct lineage from my grandmother to his first cousins. I may need to begin with another conversation with Kati’s mother, who recently mentioned to me about King Mátyás having a Geréb uncle.



Grandma Zsuzsi (káposztásszentmiklósi Nagy Tiborné, Vicenty Zsuzsa), as she is known to the family, interrupted the writing of her 2,000-plus page plus family cookbook (believe me she can cook better than anyone I know!), a few years ago in order to start writing a family history and her own memoir for her children and grandchildren. This project is well under way, as I have already received the first volume with 575 pages from my cousin Tibor Jr. Even though her late husband Tibor was the one on the Geréb side of the family, I think she may be able to shed some more light on the Geréb family tree as well.

Hopefully, I'll have another chance to visit her in Budapest in the not too distant future. Just the other day she told me to come with my wife, Lily, while she still has a home where she can put us up and cook for us. After all, she will only be turning 94 in July!

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

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*Top: Statue of Mátyás király in Kolozsvár;  
Bottom: Statue in Budapest*

# Transylvanian Carved Gates – *Székelykapuk*

EPF

On my two trips to Transylvania, I saw many a *székelykapu*. This unique component of folk culture can be found all over Transylvania, and more recently has been spreading even into Hungary. Let us look a little more closely at these public works of art.

They are found all over Transylvania – as gates in house enclosures, at the entrance of villages, as memorials. They consist entirely of wood, including the pegs and nails, and are always hand-carved.

A *székelykapu* consists of a smaller walk-in gate – or *kiskapu* – for use by people, and a wide and latticed high gate – or *nagykapu* – that will admit wagons piled high with hay. A dovecote always runs atop the entire length of the *nagykapu*, and is sometimes found even over the *kiskapu*. Next to the walk-in gate there is often a small bench (sometimes called a *szakállszárító* – “beard drier”) with an overhang, where the owner or his wife would sit on a Sunday afternoon and chat with neighbors.

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

In olden times, restrictions were placed on who might be allowed to erect a *székelykapu*. First of all, only a *székely* (Hungarian) was allowed to do so, and only a privileged *székely* might erect a large gate; serfs (*jobbágyok*) and landless people (*zsellérek*) were permitted to have only a walk-in gate.

Carving a *székelykapu* is the work of an artist. The vertical posts as well as the top of the small gate are the surfaces to be covered. The body of the gate itself is not carved. Roses or a string of leaves are popular motifs for the posts, while tulips, stars, palmettes and other flowers are used on the frame. Older gates may have small round openings above the small gate, or even in the posts (see the one taken in Illyefalva, in the collage).

Decorative motifs for the area above the small gate include the sun and moon (motifs of *Székely* identity), as well as birds, flowers, and the Hungarian or Transylvanian coat of arms.

Sometimes one may see painted carved gates. Red, white, green and blue were used on gates dating back to the 18th century. Other colors came into use later. At times, the painted surface is covered with white dots.

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

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

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



Source: „A *székelykapuk*” – Egri HVIM – Tanulmányok

*Vasárnap délután (Sunday Afternoon)*, linocut by Portik Sándor





*Top: Esztelnek; entrance to path leading to Csíkkarcfalva church; Center: Korond; Illyefalva; Bottom: Szejkefürdő, Orbán Balázs memorial; Fehéregyháza, entrance to Petőfi Sándor memorial*



## May 1<sup>st</sup> – First Telephone Exchange Opened in Budapest

Estevao Arato

*This year we observe the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the telefon hírmondó, the forerunner of the radio, and the 137<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the telephone exchange set up in Budapest.*

Puskás Tivadar, a Hungarian inventor, was born in Pest, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1844. He was working on developing a telegraph exchange when Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876. Its disadvantage was that only one person could talk to another person on it.

Bell's invention made Puskás look at his own work from a new perspective. He switched to devising a telephone exchange, and invented the multiple switch box, making it possible to connect and disconnect any number of phone users.

By this time, Thomas A. Edison was also working on developing the telephone. On his version, only 50 subscribers could be listening at the same time. Therefore, Puskás' invention of the telephone exchange gave a major boost to both Bell's and Edison's work. In later years, Edison acknowledged that "Puskás was the first person to suggest the idea of a telephone exchange."

Puskás' system had service centers in given geographic areas, providing the connection. The system was set to switch electrical lines.

The operator sat in front of a vertical panel containing banks of jacks, each of which was the local terminus of a subscriber's telephone line.

In 1887, Puskás introduced the multiplex switchboard, a revolutionary step in the development of telephone exchanges. He set up the first one in 1878. (Sources differ on the location – many say it was in Boston, but



*First telephone exchange, Fűrdő utca, Budapest (1881)*

there is also a source that indicates it was in New Haven, CT.) The following year, he set one up in Paris, and began to set up telephone exchanges, with his brother Ferenc, throughout the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The one in Budapest opened on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1881.

His next invention was the telephone news service (*telefon hírmondó*), the longest running telephone news service: it provided original programming from 1893 until 1925, and relayed radio station programming until 1944.

Subscribers paid an annual fee and could listen to news, music (including live opera performances), lectures, sports and programming for children. Below is the first story, an example of the children's programs available at the time.

### **Mátyás' Smart Wife**

*King Mátyás had a very smart wife, even smarter than the king himself, but she had a very bad habit:*

*When her husband was legislating, she was always meddling and often interfered in his business, irritating Mátyás. One day he ran out of patience and said:*

*"My dear love, if you get involved in my business once more, you'll have to leave. I'll take you back to your mother."*

*The Queen became very scared, and obeyed for a while, not wanting to decide cases between opponents. But what happened? One day, King Mátyás was not home when two beggars came to ask the King to decide a case between them. The Queen told them:*

*"My husband isn't home. I can't make the decision. God be with you."*

*But the two beggars shilly-shallied, saying they came from far away, that they're in great difficulty, now what will happen? They carried on so long that the Queen asked what matter they wanted to bother the king about?*

*"Well," one of them began, "I have a horse and my partner has a carriage. Last night we slept by the roadside. My horse foaled. Somehow the colt rolled under the carriage. My partner says the colt is his, his carriage foaled it."*

*The Queen had a good laugh, and sent the beggars packing, telling them to come back later when the King was home.*

*She put to boil a pot of potatoes and cooked them. When the potatoes cooled off, she put them into her apron, took a hoe and went to the garden where the two men were waiting. The woman pretended to plant the potatoes, dug a hole with the hoe and placed a potato in it. The men were watching what the Queen was doing.*

*The beggar said: "Excuse me, madam, but did you just plant a boiled potato in the soil? Whoever heard of such a thing?"*

*"Well, if it is possible for a colt to be born to a carriage, it's also possible for a boiled potato to grow!"*



"See, my friend? The colt is mine!" said the owner of the horse. The men were not able to agree.

When the King came home, they went to ask him to decide the case. King Mátyás said that the colt belonged to the carriage. The Queen became annoyed over the King's judgment. She told the owner of the horse to get a net and pull it back and forth under their window, as if he were fishing. When they would lean out of the window and ask, "What are you doing?" he should just answer that he was fishing. She would take care of the rest. So it happened. The man held a very big net and dragged it in the dust. The Queen leaned out of the window and called:

"Look at that, Majesty! What is that man doing?"

The King also looked out of the window and asked: "Why are you dragging that net in the dust?"

"Only because I'm fishing", replied the man.

"Come, come! Whoever heard of someone wanting to catch fish in the dust?" questioned the King.

"Why not? Whoever heard of a carriage giving birth to a colt?" the Queen snapped back.

Right away the King knew what was going on. He became very angry: "Didn't I tell you, wife, not to meddle in my business? Pack immediately and go home to your mother! You may take from the palace whatever is dearest to you, but you can no longer stay here."

"I will leave if your Majesty won't suffer me any more, but let's have one more dinner together," implored the Queen.

The King agreed. Well, that's all the Queen wanted! She put a sleeping powder in the King's wine, and the King fell so soundly asleep that he didn't even know whether he was

alive or dead! The Queen had horses harnessed to a carriage and put the sleeping king in it with his sheet and featherbed. The King did not even wake up when they arrived at the small house where the Queen's mother lived. The two women brought the King into the guest room and laid him in the bed. The Queen slipped in next to him, and they slept until the morning.

The King woke up in the morning. "Where am I? Where am I?" he asked sleepily.

"We're here with my dear mother, love of my heart," said the Queen. "You said to get out of the palace, and take only what was dearest to me. There is nothing more dear to me in this wide world than you, that's why I brought you with me."

"And where is the carriage?" asked King Mátyás, appeased.

"It's in the barn," said the Queen.

"Have the horses harnessed, wife, and let's go home. I see that I have no truer person than you in the world. I won't even mind if sometimes you will wear the hat," laughed the King and kissed his smart wife.

They returned home and lived happily until they died. (This is the Hungarian equivalent of "they lived happily ever after".)

Estevao Arato, son of Hungarian immigrant parents, was born in São Paulo, Brazil where he became a journalist. He came to the US in 1996 and now works in the hospitality/restaurant business. He attends the Hungarian School sponsored by Magyar Studies of America in Fairfield, CT.

## It's a Small World (Kicsi a Világ)

Charles Bálintt Jr.

After finishing college, I spent the entire summer of 1980 in Europe, including one week in Budapest. I was traveling with one of my closest friends, Simonfay Feri, and we were both able to find lodging with a relative of mine, the amazing Atzél Bandi. Now Bandi was the kind of guy who welcomed anyone and everyone at his apartment, in fact many people were given keys and could show up at almost any time seeking a place to spend the night. While we were there, two brothers, Kicsi (yes Kicsi) Gyuri and Gábor were sharing the apartment with us, Bandi and Bandi's 4 young children.

At the time, I had no idea who the Kicsi brothers were. I just knew them as two other young guys who needed a place to stay while in Budapest. It turns out that Gyuri lived in Romania, very close to the Hungarian border. Gyuri told me that he was freely allowed to cross into Hungary, but had to stay within 20 kilometers of the border. He could get into a lot of trouble if any of the authorities found out that he went all the way to Budapest.

A couple of days after our arrival, while walking through the city of Budapest with Gyuri, he asked me if there was anyone that I needed to see while I was there. I told him that I did want to see my father's first cousin, Feilitzsch Róbert. He said: "Robi bácsi is away on vacation." I thought, "OK, he knows Robi bácsi." He then asked if I needed to see anyone else. I told him that I did want to see Bethlen Erzsébet. Gyuri responded: "I was just on my way to see Erzsébet néni myself because she's my grandmother's sister."

Then my response was: "Your grandmother's sister??? She's my father's second cousin!"

And this is how I found out that I was actually Kicsi Gyuri's mother's third cousin. You see it is a small (kicsi) world after all!

## ditrói Puskás Tivadar – So Much More Than an Inventor

EPF

*The man renowned for having invented the telephone exchange and the forerunner of the radio (see elsewhere in this issue) had a most interesting life. We will take a closer look at it here.*

By the time ditrói Puskás Tivadar was born into a family of Transylvanian nobles in 1844, his family's former wealth had melted away. He began his engineering studies in Budapest, then continued in Vienna, but could not finish because of his family's straitened circumstances. When his father died, he spent his meager inheritance on a trip to England (1866) to continue his education. He learned English and, to support himself, became a tutor in the household of a British lord. One source indicates that he also worked for a British railway construction company, whose representative and later chief engineer he supposedly became. However, I could find no confirmation of this.

At the time of the Vienna World Exhibition in 1873, Puskás set up a travel agency, said to have been the first in Central Europe. It was a great success.

In 1875, he traveled to the United States, and bought land in Colorado, where he began to prospect for gold, but there is no information about his having struck it rich.

He eventually returned to Hungary, and in 1890 received a patent for a procedure to carry out controlled explosions – a forerunner of modern techniques – which he tried out when he was involved in the regulation of the Lower Danube (see the

September 2016 issue of Magyar News Online).

Although Puskás had ample income, he was incapable of handling it; he was constantly in financial difficulties. There has been speculation that this may have led to panic disorder, bringing about the heart attack which killed him on March 16<sup>th</sup>, 1893, a mere month after his *telefon hírmondó* (telephone newscast) went into service. His death was broadcast by his newfangled



invention, the forer-

runner of the radio.

## Did you know...

**...that** two young artists were re-designing the "szegedi papucs" (slippers of Szeged)?

szetlekmagyarorszag.hu reported that Attalai Zita, designer and Sallay Tibor, slipper maker master are re-designing the slippers to comply with the demands of the 21st century.

The new styles will be exhibited at the Múcsarnok this year. (See Oct 2011 issue of MNO - szegedi papucs article).

**...that** a memorial to religious freedom has recently been dedicated in Torda? The work of Liviu Mocan, it was erected on January 13th this year, on the South side of the church in which the Edict of Religious Toleration was adopted in 1458 (see our March 2018 issue).

The ladder represents the rising to heaven (lit. "to the stars" - Ad astra - which is its official title), with the dove symbolizing the soul flying freely to God.

This photo by Sántha Imre Géza was posted on the Köztérkép website and is used here by permission.

