

Issue # 76 ---- Fall 2008

News in Hungarian Studies

The Newsletter of the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Following the unfortunate failure of the 2007 University of Saskatchewan conference we, the executive of our Association, were anxiously waiting and hoping that the 2008 University of British Columbia (UBC) conference will be a success. We were also not quite certain about the future of our Association, and deep down we hoped that the lack of interest in having a conference at Saskatoon was simply an anomaly in our regular annual conferencing.

Before the deadline for the submission of proposals arrived we, once again, were not certain if we will have enough presentations to hold a two days conference. However, we ultimately had sufficient number of presentation proposals to launch a two days conference, as it is our tradition.

The members of the conference committee, Dr. Bisztray, Éva Kossuth, and yours truly, were laden with trepidation up until the opening of the 23rd Annual Conference on the 31st of May, 2008. I noted that the Hungarian community of Vancouver was well represented, and we were honoured by the presence of delegations from the local churches. The representatives stayed with us throughout the two days' conference, and they actively participated in our conference. To them I wish to express our thanks and gratitude.

The conference program listed 16 presentations. Unfortunately, a number of presenters were unable to attend, and in a few cases their presentations were read to the audience by other members of the Association

The presentations represented a wide range of interesting topics and approaches that made the whole conference exciting and lively. They showed the unique broad spectrum of research and studies our members bring to the annual conferences. This was not the run of the mill, at times dry, single-focussed, academic conference that one participates at times elsewhere. People attending our conference had lively discussions following the presentations during coffee breaks, and later on as well.

Following the presentations, the attending members had an informal session which dealt with the future of our Association. There was honest discussion about some of the problems our Associations is facing, such as the attendance, interest of our members, the focus, approach, and format of our conferences, and the identity of our Association. Based on our discussions I felt that there are a few disturbing issues we should deal with before long. One is our identity. Are we "a scholarly organization devoted to the study of Hungarian culture and history at an academic level" as stated in our HSAC pamphlet? Do the terms "scholarly," and "academic" refer to university-professorial style presentations – which can be genuinely dry and boring, at times – or do they suggest that the Association is primarily for academic appointees as it could be implied by our desire to remain within the Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities?

The second important point is our membership and attendance. If we are an academic body, do we have enough actively participating and regularly attending academics to justify such perception? According to my list the Association has about 15 academic members, including retired ones, however, there are only six of those who attend regularly, and three of those are retired.

This monologue also begs a very important question. If this is a "scholarly organization" where does it leave our "regular" members who are the backbone of our Association, those who regularly attend the conferences, do presentations, and actively participate? I noted that the six presentations by our regular

members during the UBC conference were extremely valuable, interesting, colourful, and as sound and factual as any other presentations we heard during the two days of the conference.

It is hoped that after reading this note you will think about some of the points raised and help with issues and the revitalizing process during our future conferences.

As you may know by now, the next conferences will be held in Ottawa in 2009 and Montreal in 2010.

Andor J. Tari
President of the HSAC.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING
OF THE HUNGARIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

June 1, 2008

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

1. The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m. by Andor Tari, president. Quorum was present.
2. Adoption of the minutes of the of the 2006 General Meeting. Judy Young moves to accept Minutes, seconded by Nándor Dreisziger. Carried.
3. Reports of the Executive.
 - a.) President (A. Tari). The cancellation of last year's conference worried him and the membership. This year's was a success, however, that makes one hopeful. The Association needs new members. Attempts to involve Hungarian Canadian academics have been unsuccessful.
 - b.) Vice-President (Agatha Schwartz). She did not have opportunity to do more for the Association. Neither was she sure about her function as VP.
 - c.) Treasurer (Margit Lovrics). In her report (cf. p. 4 in this newsletter) she itemizes revenue and disbursements. Acknowledges Eva Tomory's generosity who mailed the newsletter for the past years without claiming expenses. A. Tari: This is inappropriate. Compromise: expenses will be donated to association. Acceptance moved by E. Tomory, seconded by Judy Young; carried. Schwartz's motion: \$ 500 be disbursed to the *Hungarian Studies Review*. Seconded by Maria Tiltins; carried.
 - d.) Secretaries. George Bisztray: refers to discussion that preceded the General Meeting, in which he proposed –
 - activating the membership,
 - effectuating the tasks of the Executive Committee as described in the Constitution,
 - revising the Association's web page and its editing,
 - the possible revision of the Constitution.
 He announces that he will step down in 2010.
 Eva Tomory: she, too, will step down in 2010.
 M. Lovrics moves to accept the reports of the President, Vice-President and the Secretaries. Seconded by M. Tiltins; carried.

4. Reports of the Committees.

- a.) Conference Committee (G. Bisztray). Mentions difficulties of setting up the conference. Acknowledges Eva Kossuth's (local organizer) dedicated and efficient work, and a \$ 100 donation from István and Erzsébet Csúty, owners of Vancouver Metro Travel and Tours. A. Tari: will write a letter of thanks to E. Kossuth.
- b.) Publications Committee (Nandor F. Dreisziger). The erratic cooperation of the National Széchényi Library in publishing the *Hungarian Studies Review* was frustrating. Long hassle evolved about the way of transferring payment for the production expenses to Hungary. On a more encouraging note, the most recent (2007) issue got favourable reviews, and the 2008 issue was ready for printing. Enikő Pittner: is the journal in immediate financial trouble? Answer: not at the present, but if the National Széchényi Library ever cancels its support, then it will be.
- c.) and 5. Report of the Nominations Committee and nominations.
Chair: N.F. Dreisziger. Members: Klára Bencsics and Judith Galántha-Hermann.
After much consideration, the Committee proposes the re-appointment of the President, Vice-President and Treasurer. Question: were the nominations published in the newsletter? Answer (G.Bisztray): yes, in issue # 75.
Acceptance of the committees' reports and the nominations moved by Lisa Turkewitsch, seconded by M. Tiltins. Carried, with two abstentions.
Election of committees. Conference Committee. Chair: A. Schwartz, member Judy Young; they will appoint another member. Resource person: G. Bisztray.
Publications Committee: N.F. Dreisziger continues.
Acceptance moved by J. Young, seconded by M. Lovrics.

6. Future conference sites.

Next year's congress will be hosted by Carleton University, Ottawa. Decision to participate accepted unanimously.

7. Other business.

G. Bisztray suggests establishing a joint planning and nominating committee in order to consider the state of the Association, propose new policies, and nominate officers at the next nominations in two years. A. Tari suggests splitting the two tasks, planning and nominating. Consensus: to keep the two functions together. Recommendation by M. Tiltins: the President or one Secretary should be a member of the committee. G. Bisztray declines participation.

Members proposed: J. Young (chair), N.F. Dreisziger, E. Pittner, A. Schwartz, M. Tiltins.
Consultant: G. Bisztray.

M. Lovrics moves to accept, seconded by Ágnes Simándi; carried.

Short discussion follows about members who submit proposals for conference papers but either do not appear in person, or do not even send in their papers for reading.

8. Adjournment at 4.45. Approved unanimously.

**Krisztinkovich Mária
(1918-2008)**

Words are simply inadequate to accurately convey our deep sense of loss and sorrow about the death of one of the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada's most significant member and long standing supporter.

Mária was an unique individual in all sense of the word. She was a profoundly accomplished person. In Canada she worked as a librarian at the University of British Columbia, in Vancouver. However, she was also a scientific researcher with a wide range of interests and she was member of several scientific associations, actively participating and supporting their efforts. Mária was one of the cornerstones of the Hungarian community in Vancouver where she was a regular presenter and she participated in many of their activities and efforts. She was widely acknowledged for her expertise in the history and arts of the Anabaptists, including the habán ceramics in Hungary. In the 1990s her novel, titled Bridge Under The Water appeared both in Hungarian and English, and only a few years ago her collection of poetry was also published. Indeed, Mária was a person of all seasons; she was a researcher, a writer, a poet, a wife, a mother, a gardener, a delightful social convener, and a profoundly important member and supporter of our Association's activities.

According to our statistics she presented in 15 of our 23 annual conferences, and with her husband, Horváth Jent, contributed over 2,000.00 dollars to the Association's activities. Her presentations were always very well received. She was a popular speaker and her topics always fascinated our audience.

However, Mária was more than this. And, this additional quality is what makes the writing of this memorial, however mundane and inadequate it is, very difficult to compose and complete. To me Mária was a warm, caring, and giving individual, a grand lady, in the traditional sense of the word. She was spontaneous, perceptive, and she put people at ease in her chats, with her reassuring smile she made the troubled ones feel at ease.

She was like this when a group of our Association's members last visited her on the 31st of May, 2008, following the completion of our annual conference. Mária and Jent received us with their typical warmth and Mária especially was extremely happy for having a chance to show us her home, her incredible collection of ceramics and other treasures, and to show us her great pride and joy; her garden, flowers, especially her famous rhododendrons. I recall she was slowly walked around her garden with me, describing the wide variety of her flowers, lightly touching their petals, smiling, and talking to them. I recall her gentle touch as we were walking out of her home, she was smiling, waving to us, and there was a sadness in her expression, and in her eyes...On the 12th of July, 2008 Mária left us, and we all are left with a tremendous loss...

Andor Tari

NEWS. . . from our members

KOSSUTH Éva „a kanadai magyarság érdekében végzett sokirányú, áldozatkész tevékenysége elismeréseként” a Magyar Köztársaság érdemrend lovagkeresztjét kapta. Gratulálunk!

Judith Galántha Hermann, former president of HSAC edited and translated the Hungarian text into English of v. Gyula L. Detre's book *History First Hand..* Antológia (Lakitelek) published this bilingual volume in 2007. A major Canadian venture, the Encyclopaedia Hungarica's first volume (A-G) in English is out of the press now. Judith G. Hermann also worked as a contributor and translator for this project.

. . . from the secretaries

Társaságunk idei konferenciájáról három ismertetés jelent meg a kanadai magyar sajtóban. Bencsics Klára cikkét a montreali Magyar Krónika június 20-i száma, Kerti Éváét a vancouveri Tárogató augusztusi száma közölte. Egy harmadik, névtelen hír a torontói Magyar Élet augusztus 2-i számában jelent meg. Az előbb említett kettő részletesen ismertette a programot, míg a harmadik felhívta a figyelmet annak fontosságára, hogy a konferencia az ország egyik legnyugatibb városában zajlott le, ahova ritkán jutnak el a keleti magyarságkutatók.



ARE YOU STILL A MEMBER?

Since we did not have a conference in 2007, the Executive felt that it would be inappropriate to collect membership dues last year. If you paid your dues for 2006, you remained a member in good standing in 2007. As of this year, 2008, this “payment holiday” is over, however. If you have not done yet, please send a check to our Treasurer, Margit Lovrics (75 Graydon Hall Drive, suite 1804, Don Mills, ON M3A 3M5).

If you became a member in 2007, you are still one.

We, the Executive realize that the arrangement may be confusing. If in doubt, please contact the Treasurer by mail, or at this telephone number (416) 447-3247.

(Other members of the Executive:

President: Andor Tari tariandor@rogers.com

Vice-President: Agatha Schwartz agathas@uottawa.ca

Secretaries: George Bisztray george.bisztray@utoronto.ca

Eva Tomory eva.tomory@zing-net.ca)