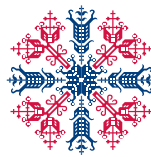


The Hungarian American Coalition

# The First 20 Years

*Dedicated Advocacy and Community Leadership*



Hungarian American Coalition

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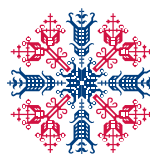
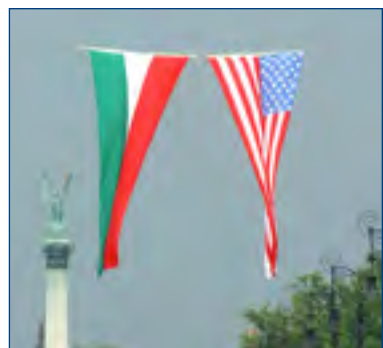
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Hungarian American Coalition

Coalition Board meeting in Cleveland, OH: László Hámos, Julius Várallyay, Péter Újvági, Andrew Ludányi, László Böjtös, Frank Dobos, Katica Avvakumovits, Zsolt Szekeres, Edith K. Lauer, Frank Koszorús, Jr., Frank Kapitan, Father István Mustos, George Pogan, Geza Kadar, Jr., Anne Bader, Paul Varga



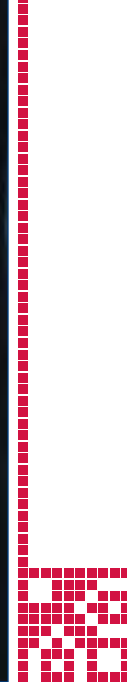
**Top left:** Max and Wendy Teleki, Susan Hutchison and Gov. George Pataki **Top right:** Hungarian Foreign Minister Ferenc Somogyi, Hungarian President Árpád Göncz, HAC co-founder Edith Lauer, at the first NATO Conference held in the Hungarian Parliament. **Bottom left:** Andrew Ludányi, László Fülöp, Edith K. Lauer, Ágnes Fülöp **Bottom right:** Hungarian Festival Parade in 1992 in New Brunswick, NJ







Edith K. Lauer meets President Bill Clinton as Coalition members, László Hamos, András Ludányi and Rev. Imre Bertalan look on.



# INTRODUCTION

*"Nationhood is not a land; it is a historic destiny."*

— László Németh  
Hungarian Writer

**Below left:** 2011 - Max Teleki in Roosevelt Room at the White House. **Below right:** Edith and John Lauer admire traditional Transylvanian embroidery in the Kalotaszeg region in Transylvania, Romania.





# Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

As I reflect on the 20-year history of the Hungarian American Coalition, it is natural to look back on my personal experiences with the organization in early 1994. As a member of the Teleki family, I have a deep-seated interest in Hungarian history; and as a graduate student at The Johns Hopkins, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) I was fully aware of the changes we were witnessing at that time in foreign affairs. I knew I didn't want to be simply an observer as historic events unfolded; I wanted to be a participant.



My most vivid memory was attending a Human Rights Workshop in Hartford, Connecticut in the summer of 1994, along with other volunteers and interns. I remember László Hamos and Professor Andrew Ludányi as they described the challenges advocates face in promoting human rights and how a persistent, unwavering commitment was the only answer. The message was simple: "Never give in and never give up."

I remember Edith Lauer, then President, Sándor Taraszovics, then Executive Vice President, and Zolt Szekeres, then (and still) Treasurer, speaking about their devotion to Hungary and at the same time welcoming me as a member of a close-knit group with an important mission. On the long drive home back to Washington, I thought with great respect of their knowledge and dedication. At the same time, I realized how much I still had to learn about the plight of our ethnic Hungarian family living in the Carpathian Basin. A few weeks later, in a memorable conversation with Sándor, he told me this was my duty; I had an obligation to serve. Both he and others managed to make me feel that this was also to be "my cause."

In 1995, while still in graduate school, I had the privilege of being the Coalition's White House Intern for six months. Many years later in 2001, I was nominated to join the Coalition Board of Directors. I was impressed by the great respect and fellowship among Board Members. Even when there was disagreement on policy issues, they were resolved because we all felt we were working for a sacred cause. Often it took major sacrifices, but the founders of the Coalition were willing to do it! They didn't want to let each other down; they wanted to keep their promises, not only to each other, but also to the broader community, and they wanted to do everything possible to advance Hungarian American relations and to help Hungarians in and outside Hungary.

In those early days and ever since, I feel we have a strong sense of responsibility for being active participants for change. Whether working on NATO expansion, Congressional conferences on minority rights, Human Rights Workshops, scholarships for Hungarian students, Washington internships, on the expansion of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) for Hungary, hosting Hungarian visitors, or presenting our views to U.S. decision makers, I am convinced that what the Coalition does truly makes a difference.

## Timeline Legend

**Blue** = world events

**Red** = leaders in U.S. and Hungary

**Green** = HAC events

## Icons



= Human Rights Workshop



= Kiss Scholarships



= White House Briefing



= HATOG Conferences



= Charles Simonyi Awards



= Posonium Literary Awards



= Annual / Board Meeting



= NATO



= White House and Congressional Internship Programs

Today, as we look back on 20 years of Coalition history, I realize more than ever that in those early days (long before my time), the Coalition's birth was far from pre-ordained. It was the culmination of over a year of planning by a group of dedicated individuals who realized the importance of establishing an effective Hungarian American non-profit organization at a historic time. The long-standing individual efforts, however dedicated, were no longer sufficient to promote the newly dynamic Hungarian American relations. Only an "institution" of dedicated brothers and sisters could do them justice, as there was no other organization that could fill the need. Thus, the Hungarian American Coalition was founded.

As I enter my eighth year as President, my eleventh as a Board Member, and my eighteenth as an individual member – our mission is the same as it was 20 years ago: To mobilize and coordinate the resources of our membership to promote the interests of the Hungarian American community.

**We are still ambitious in our goals and straightforward in our objectives:**

- » Build strong relations between the U.S. and Hungary;
- » Promote cultural and educational exchanges;
- » Advocate for human and minority rights of ALL Hungarians; and
- » Support strong democratic institutions in Hungary.

In the past 20 years, many people have volunteered tens of thousands of hours, donated generously, traveled hundreds of thousands of miles, and met with countless individuals and groups in the U.S., Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Serbia and Ukraine to develop the network and projects that make the Hungarian American Coalition, "a credible, dependable voice for the interests of Hungarians around the world."

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Coalition I would like to sincerely thank all members and supporters for their work. I would also like to thank the dedicated public servants on both sides of the Atlantic who have been, and are still part of this journey, and with whom we have shared many challenges and great successes.

As we look to the future, we at the Hungarian American Coalition look forward to working with you in the pursuit of our noble endeavors. Although much has changed in the Carpathian Basin, not all of it has been for the best. We have much to do and not a minute to waste.

Sincerely,



Maximilian N. Teleki  
President



**1989**

Hungary opens border with Austria  
President Bush visits Hungary  
Berlin Wall comes down



**1990**

Árpád Göncz elected President  
József Antall (MDF) elected PM



**1991**

Warsaw Pact's military arm dissolves  
Croatia and Slovenia declare independence  
Hungarian American Coalition founded  
First Mikulás Dinner held  
Soviet troops leave Hungary



# The Founding of the Coalition

The Hungarian American Coalition (HAC) was created in 1991 in response to changing needs at a critical time in Hungarian history. After the miraculously peaceful dissolution of communism, the nation struggled to accommodate economic, political and social change. A number of active Hungarian Americans in the Washington area – predominantly those who had supported the anti-

communist opposition in Hungary – recognized both the historic opportunity and the compelling need to create an organization that could identify and promote the interests of the Hungarian American community in the United States. Foremost among those interests was providing assistance to the historic Hungarian minority communities in the Carpathian Basin and helping in the transformation of Hungary into a democratic, free-market society.

In August 1989, after Hungary opened its Western border to East German tourists, events accelerated. In November, to the delight of a mesmerized world, the Berlin Wall fell. At the historic National Roundtable discussions in 1989, Hungarian political parties negotiated a peaceful transition to multi-party democracy. In the spring of 1990, Hungary returned to parliamentary democracy and, in the first free

elections since 1945, elected a center-right coalition headed by Prime Minister József Antall. It was at his initiative that the Warsaw Pact was dissolved; Hungary and the rest of Central and Eastern Europe were finally free from all communist military threats.

## Fulfilling an Important Need

Back in Washington, the U.S. government responded immediately to the changes in Central Europe by creating hundreds of programs to assist the region's political and economic transition. It soon became obvious that in order for Hungary to benefit from these programs, there was an urgent need to create a non-profit organization dedicated to providing U.S. officials with timely, dependable information and contacts both in Hungary and the surrounding countries where Hungarian minorities lived.

A group of committed Hungarian American individuals and organizational leaders began serious discussions about how to best fulfill this need. They wanted to build on the effective actions in Washington, D.C. of the young activists of the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation (HHRF) who



Hungarian Prime Minister József Antall's visit to the White House on Oct. 18, 1990. His colleagues and Hungarian American guests gather at Blair House: Ferenc Furulyás, Gyula Kodolányi, László Hámos, HAC co-founder, Enikő Bollobás, Géza Jeszenszky (Foreign Minister), Péter Boross (future Prime Minister), Sándor Taraszovics, HAC co-founder, Edit Jeszenszky, Béla Kádár, Istvan Tóth, Edith Lauer, HAC Chair Emerita, Zsolt Szekeres, HAC co-founder, Bulcsú Veress and Ferenc Mádl (future President).



1992

Civil war starts in Bosnia-Herzegovina  
Rev. Imre Bertalan, HAC Chairman  
HAC co-sponsors Human Rights Workshop (HRW)



1993

White House Internship Program created  
Inauguration of President Clinton  
PM Antall passes away  
Péter Boross succeeds Antall as PM



1994

HAC leaders meet with Pres. Clinton  
Gyula Horn (MSZP) elected PM  
Pres. Clinton visits Budapest



visited congressional offices, participated in hearings or took part in large demonstrations that called attention to the plight of Hungarian minorities in Romania.

Recognizing that the timing was right, Rev. Imre Bertalan, President of the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America (HRFA), one of the two large Hungarian fraternal life insurance organizations, called the first of several meetings to begin formal planning. Participants included Washington-based individuals, such as Sándor Taraszovics, Hám Tibor, Árpád Kovács, Zsolt Szekeres, Frank Koszurús, Jr. and at various times, representatives of local and national Hungarian American organizations, such as Andrew Ludányi, Paul Fekete, Peter Újvági and others.

Although individual motivations of some founders were different, in some cases, even conflicting, all participants agreed that it was time to create a new institution to fill the void left by the dissolution of the American Hungarian Federation due to internal conflicts. Over the course of several discussions, the parameters of the new organization were gradually determined.

Sándor Taraszovics, who as manager of the centrally located Center for Hellenic Studies of Harvard University had hosted hundreds of visitors and programs, wanted the new organization to serve this need. Sándor's priority was to help Hungary overcome the evils of communism that emanated from 40 years of dictatorship. He dreamed of the rapid development of a free and strong Hungary, one that can effectively help minorities in the Carpathian basin.

Zsolt Szekeres was personally one of the strongest supporters of establishing an active presence in the nation's capital. Yet, as the representative of HHRF in the talks, he relayed the reservations of HHRF leadership, who was wary of creating a new organization that might complicate their mission in Washington.

Árpád Kovács, an engineer working for the Smithsonian Museum, was an ardent proponent of the plan. He was mostly motivated by his vision to build a home for the local Hungarian Scout troop, which had to use rented school basements for their weekly activity.

Frank Koszorús, Jr., the leader of an AMSZ offshoot organization called "American Hungarian Federation of Metropolitan Washington D.C.," envisioned the creation of a lobbying and coordinating organization to represent the views of the Hungarian American community.

An important planning meeting took place in the summer of 1989 at the Scenic View Lodge in Seven Springs, PA, the home of the William Penn Association (WPA), the second Hungarian fraternal association. Under the leadership of Rev. Imre Bertalan and Elmer Vargo of the William Penn Association, a good cross-section of East Coast and Midwestern organizational leaders attended and advanced the discussion about the structure and mission of the new organization.

On March 15, 1990, the dialogue continued with a meeting of 23 Hungarian American leaders at the Kossuth House. Co-sponsors Rev. Imre Bertalan (HRFA) and Co-Chair Elmer Vargo (WPA) encouraged those present to consider the establishment of the Hungarian American Coalition. An Organizing Committee was established with the following members: Joseph Árvay, Imre A. Bertalan, Frank Koszorús Jr., Andrew Ludányi, Fr. Stephen N. Mustos and Péter Újvági.



1995

Minority Leaders' Conference in D.C.  
HAC leaders meet with Pres. Clinton  
Dayton Peace Talks end war in Bosnia



1996

Pres. Clinton visits Taszár Base in Hungary  
HAC Scholarship Program established  
HAC leaders meet with Pres. Clinton  
Coalition testifies on NATO Expansion  
Hungary joins NATO Force in Bosnia  
1100th Birthday of Hungary  
40th Anniversary of 1956



1997

U.S. tour of Béla Bartók Choir and ELTE Orchestra  
Casemapping Education Project  
U.S. Ratifies NATO Enlargement  
HAC attends NATO ceremony at White House

Initial plans to create a “congress” were replaced by a “coalition” that would function as an umbrella organization. It would speak only on behalf of its membership, and not the whole Hungarian American community.

The Coalition accepted the generous offer of Szabolcs and Zsolt Szekeres who were not only willing to host the organization on an interim basis in the Washington D.C. offices of Information for Investment Decisions (IID Inc) but also to provide operational and administrative support. The founders made the important decision that individuals as well as organizations could be Coalition members. Both individual and organizational members could be elected to the Board of Directors, and their vote would carry equal weight. This decision turned out to be a wise one, as in the past twenty years, the major part of the Coalition’s operational funding has been provided by individual member-donors, instead of organizations, as had been originally expected.

### The Coalition was Born

The Coalition’s Articles of Incorporation were soon drafted by attorneys Frank Koszorús, Jr. and Geza Kadar, Jr., to be unanimously approved later at the Dec. 7, 1991 first Coalition Board Meeting. Sándor Taraszovics suggested that formal registration of the Coalition take place on August 20th, coinciding with St. Stephen’s Day, Hungary’s national holiday honoring the establishment of Hungary as a nation. Thus, the Hungarian American Coalition was registered in Washington, D.C. on August 20, 1991, as a nationwide 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization with the following founding members:

Judy Balogh, Hungarian Club of Toledo  
 Rev. Imre Bertalan, Hungarian Reformed Federation of America  
 Ildikó J. Bodoni, Hungarian American Human Rights Council  
 Paul Fekete, Hungarian Alumni Association-Bessenyei Kör  
 Bishop Andrew Harsányi, Hungarian Reformed Church in America  
 Geza Kadar, Jr., Individual  
 Frank Koszorús, Jr., American Hungarian Federation of Metropolitan Washington, D.C.  
 Rev. Paul Kovács, Bethlen Home  
 Edith Lauer, Individual  
 Prof. Andrew Ludányi, Individual  
 Prof. August Molnár, American Hungarian Foundation  
 Father István Mustos, American Hungarian Catholic Clergy Association  
 Prof. Peter Pástor, Atlantic Research and Publications, Inc  
 Dr. Balázs Somogyi, Hungarian Communion of Friends  
 Szabolcs Szekeres, Hungarian Scouts Association Abroad  
 Zsolt Szekeres, Hungarian Human Rights Foundation  
 Bishop Zoltan Szűcs, Calvin Synod of the United Church of Christ  
 Sándor Taraszovics, Committee for Danubian Research  
 Paul G. Teleki, Individual  
 Péter Újvági, Individual

The organization’s mission was to mobilize and coordinate the talents and resources of its individual and organizational members to promote the interests of the Hungarian American community.



**1998**

Viktor Orbán (Fidesz) elected PM  
 State Sec. Zsolt Németh at Mikulás Dinner  
 Edith K. Lauer, HAC Chairperson

**1999**

HAC publishes Educational Program Directory  
 NATO welcomes Hungary  
 NATO’s air war against Serbia and Montenegro  
 Pres. Göncz visit to White House

**2000**

Posonium Awards created in Slovakia  
 PM Viktor Orbán visits U.S.  
 HAC participates in Hungary 2000  
 Ferenc Mádl elected President  
 HAC holds its 10th Annual Meeting  
 Imre Boros, Minister, at Mikulás dinner  
 HAC co-sponsors 9th HRW



# 20th Anniversary Remarks



Edited Remarks from Andrea Lauer Rice  
Hungarian American Coalition Gala Dinner - May 11, 2011

*Since 2005, the Hungarian American Coalition has hosted an annual Gala Dinner during which we have recognized outstanding individuals and organizations who are part of or have inspired our community. On the occasion of our 20th anniversary, the Coalition honored two great Hungarian "institutions" at our Gala dinner – János Horváth, Doyen of the Hungarian Parliament, and the William Penn Association in the year of their 125th anniversary.*

*The following are edited remarks from Mistress of Ceremonies Andrea Lauer Rice, V.P. of the Coalition:*

This evening we come together to celebrate the 20th anniversary of our Hungarian American Coalition...Looking back on the past 20 years, also provides us a unique opportunity to walk through, albeit quickly, a bit of our own history. By charting how our community came into being, we can see how it has evolved through the years and how we, as an organization, have risen to address the ever-changing challenges.

Let's begin this odyssey way back in 1886, some 125 years ago, when our community was made up largely of Hungarian immigrants who worked in industrial centers. There were thousands of work-related injuries every year, but since no insurance industry existed at that time, families had no place to turn for help. To address this need, the first Hungarian fraternal organization was founded. This is how so many of our Hungarian institutions came into being - people saw a need and moved to fill it.

Later we saw our community grow through three major waves of immigration - the first at the turn of the century around the Industrial Revolution. After World War 1 ended and much of Hungary had sadly been annexed to surrounding countries, many of these immigrants had no home to return to, so they stayed. Next came the wave of Displaced Persons (DPs) after the Second World War. These experiences were similar for many other European countries, but in 1956, Hungarians saw a unique, large wave of immigration which brought some 35,000 Hungarians to the United States after the heroic but ill-fated Revolution of 1956. This was a pivotal moment for our Hungarian American community.

As we look around the room this evening, we see a number of people who came to the United States in 1956 - freedom fighters and passionate Hungarians one and all. They created exceptional organizations within our community, they vowed to ensure the story of 1956 would never be forgotten, they took up the cause of spreading love and appreciation for Hungarian culture and history. This accurately describes so many of the founders and Board members of the Hungarian American Coalition.



**2001**

Inauguration of President Bush  
Presentation of 1st Posonium Literary Awards  
Conference on Vojvodina's Autonomy in D.C.  
9/11 terrorist attacks against the U.S.  
U.S. invades Afghanistan  
Dr. Ibolya Dávid, Min. of Justice, at Mikulás Dinner  
Viktor Orbán receives VOC Freedom Medal



**2002**

Péter Medgyessy (MSZP) elected PM  
Former Pres. Bush visits Hungary  
Dan Fried, Natl. Security Council, at Mikulás Dinner  
HAC establishes rotating Chairmanship  
Charles Vámosy, HAC Chairman



**2003**

Hungarian Parliamentarians' Seminar in D.C.  
Coalition Troops invade Iraq  
Hungary joins Coalition Forces in Iraq  
Janusz Bugajski, CSIS, at Mikulás Dinner  
László Hámos, HHRF, HAC Chairman

Zsolt Németh, the current Minister of State for Foreign Affairs in Hungary made the following statement about the great tie between Hungary and the United States.

*"We owe much of our liberty to the resolute politics of President Reagan against the 'evil empire.' We had another American supporter of our fight for freedom and human rights: the late Hungarian-born Holocaust survivor, Congressman Tom Lantos.*

*Hungary shall always remember President Reagan and Congressman Lantos. It is for this reason at the end of June this year, when Hungary will celebrate the 20th anniversary of her independence, and will complete its Presidency of the European Union, we will erect a statue of President Reagan in the center of Budapest and inaugurate the Tom Lantos Institute.*

*I hope that many of you will join us as we celebrate the most important value that binds us Hungarians and Americans: freedom!"*

In 1991, the Berlin Wall came down, Hungary made the fateful decision to open its borders, and democracy and freedom were finally returned to Hungary. In that same year, a small group of dedicated Hungarian Americans established the Hungarian American Coalition to mobilize and coordinate the resources of its membership to promote the interests of Hungarian Americans.

Our hope was to become representatives of both worlds. Our goals were to support the democratic transformation in Hungary, to serve the interests of the Hungarian American community and to help safeguard the human rights of ethnic Hungarians living outside the borders of Hungary.

While the original Coalition goals still guide us, our dreams and activities have grown substantially over the past 20 years. I'd like to mention some of the highlights of our work, but need to warn you that there is so much to review from 20 years, that this is by no means a complete list.

- » Our internship and scholarship programs have been a remarkable success - The White House Internship Program sent 16 interns to the White House in the 1990's, and the subsequent Congressional Internship Program continues to place 4-6 outstanding young Hungarian interns every year in Congressional offices, Washington think-tanks and foundations thanks to the generous support of the Charles Simonyi Fund for the Arts and Sciences.
- » In addition, more than 50 scholarships have been awarded from our Éva and Elemér Kiss Scholarship Fund to outstanding Hungarian university students from Hungary and the region, for American university studies.
- » In the area of human rights advocacy, we have worked hard to become a trusted, credible source of information for Washington decision makers. We've organized



## 2004

Hungarian Mayors' Seminar in D.C. and OH  
Seven new members join NATO  
PM Medgyessy resigns, replaced by Gyurcsány  
Rep. Tom Lantos at Mikulás Dinner  
Imre Lendvai-Lintner, Hungarian Scouts, HAC Chairman



## 2005

U.S. tour for Otto von Habsburg  
HAC honors Otto von Habsburg at Gala  
László Sólyom elected President  
U.S. tour of Béla Bartók Choir and ELTE Orchestra  
U.S. Amb. Bert Walker at Mikulás Dinner  
George Dózsa, HRFA, HAC Chairman  
1956 oral history project established



## 2006

HAC marks 15th Anniversary  
Congressional Internship Program starts  
PM Gyurcsány (MSZP) re-elected  
HAC honors Charles Simonyi at Gala  
Pres. Bush commemorates 1956 in Hungary



Congressional conferences to highlight issues of minority rights of historic Hungarian communities in Romania, Slovakia, and Vojvodina, Serbia; brought minority community leaders to D.C. to meet decision-makers in person and we've trained young Hungarian American leaders in workshops to get the word out. Honestly, we were hoping to be out of this business by now, but unfortunately the hard work must continue.

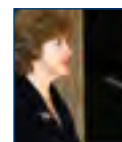
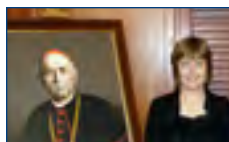
- » One of the major ways we supported democracy in Hungary early on was by launching a comprehensive information campaign between 1994-98, in both the U.S. and Hungary, to support NATO's first expansion. This culminated in the long-awaited NATO membership of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic in 1999.
- » Through the years, we've organized seminars and brought groups over of everyone from Hungarian Parliamentarians to Hungarian Mayors to High School Principals to provide first-hand information and to gain experience in Washington, D.C. and our local communities.
- » We've also focused on cultural programs that help promote and maintain Hungarian identity throughout the U.S. These have included: two tours of 17 cities by the Béla Bartók Choir & University Orchestra of the Eötvös Loránd University, fundraising for the completion of the wonderful award-winning documentary on 1956, *Torn from the Flag*, and just recently, we sponsored an 8-city tour of *Incubator*, a film about growing up in a Hungarian American family in the U.S.

### And the list of projects goes on...

So, this brings us to today and some of the new challenges we face as a community in 2011, 20 years after our founding.

In recent years, our community has seen yet another wave of immigration, filled with ethnic Hungarians from the surrounding region seeking educational and economic opportunities. While this new wave of immigrants brings new energy, new ideas and new passion for preserving Hungarian culture in the U.S., in many communities, it also means there are two different groups with two different agendas - one who speaks the language and is trying to hang onto their traditions, and the other that is made up of 2nd, 3rd, 4th generation Hungarians who may just be trying to find some ways to embrace little bits of their heritage in their busy lives.

Let's be honest, it is becoming more difficult. Assimilation in a totally peaceful world is easy, and with each generation it grows. Time does not favor the immigrant culture.



**2007**

HAC publishes *56 Stories* and *56 történet*  
 50th Anniversary of the 1956 Revolution  
 Hungarian principals visit U.S. schools  
 Sen. Chuck Hagel & Gov. Pataki at Mikulás Dinner  
 HAC honors HHRF and Rep. Tom Lantos  
 Helen Szablya, Seattle-Pécs Sister Cities, HAC Chairperson

HAC supports Visa Waiver Program  
 Charles Simonyi travels into space  
 HAC honors Amb. George H. Walker, III at Gala  
 Coalition leaders meet with Pres. Sólyom  
 Dedication of VOC Memorial in D.C.  
 HAC donates \$15,000 to Scouts  
 Balázs Somogyi, MBK, HAC Chairman

Dr. János Horváth awarded Freedom Medal by VOC  
 Former Pres. Clinton visits Budapest  
 World premiere of *Torn from the Flag*  
 U.S. Amb. April Foley at Mikulás Dinner

On the occasion of our 20th anniversary, President of the Republic of Hungary, Pál Schmitt, sent the following remarks:

*Quoting Hungarian writer László Németh, he said “Nationhood is not a land; it is a historic destiny.” And who could better understand this truth than Hungarians who live outside the borders of their mother country? If nationhood is primarily a destiny, then every Hungarian is called to keep this destiny alive by preserving and passing on the Hungarian language, culture and traditions across generations.*

*Hungarians living in the United States have, throughout the ages, demonstrated that even a small nation can have a great influence on the world’s way of thinking; their native talent and ideas can shape the fate of larger communities.*

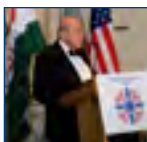
*In this spirit, the work of the Hungarian American Coalition builds upon two important pillars. First, it brings together the efforts of all groups in the community and supports Hungarian Americans in preserving their identity. Second, taking advantage of its national organization, it builds and furthers a wide-ranging network of relationships between Hungarians and Americans, and in doing so, contributes to the positive perception of Hungary overseas.”*

President Schmitt has it right: we are all called on to preserve our culture and our ethnic identity, the unique identity of being Hungarian American, of finding the best of both worlds and bringing them together. Let’s just mark this down as the next monumental challenge on our ever-changing list.

Twenty years ago no one could have imagined how fascinating and challenging this journey would be. The past two decades have presented us with many challenges, on both sides of the ocean. While we are extremely proud of our accomplishments, we are also mindful of the continuing and changing challenges as we begin our third decade of work together.

So many of the people who have made these last two decades at the Coalition as successful as they have been are in this room this evening (or are reading this book). I’d like to say on behalf of all of us, a heartfelt thank you.

House of Sweden, Washington, D.C.



## 2008

Rep. Tom Lantos dies at 80

HAC honors Dr. August Molnár at Gala

HATOG Conference in D.C. and PA (HATOG)

VOC presents Freedom Medal to Rep. Lantos

HAC donates \$17,500 to AHF

Coalition leaders meet with Pres. Bush

HAC Honors Dr. Robert King at Mikulás Dinner

László Böljös, MBK, HAC Chairman



# Looking Ahead: Our Vision for 2020

Through the past 20 years of accomplishments, both on the front lines and behind the scenes, the Coalition has emerged as a dependable voice for our community in the United States, Hungary and the surrounding region. The relationships we have built and nurtured, the network created through our membership of individuals and organizations, and the track record outlined in these pages are a strong foundation for the future.

As we look to the year 2020, we pledge to build on this success, and to continue our mission of dedicated advocacy and community leadership.

We will continue to promote the U.S.-Hungary bilateral relationship. We remain convinced that Hungary and the region represent areas of strategic interest for the United States. The Coalition, serving as a link between the two countries and building on the reputation we have earned as a credible interlocutor, will continue to emphasize Hungary's value as a U.S. ally.

We will continue to advocate for the human rights of Hungarian minorities throughout Central and Eastern Europe. We will stress to Washington decision-makers that protection of minority rights is of paramount importance for the future of the region's democracies, whose institutions will be viable only if they earn the trust of majority and minority populations alike.

We will promote contacts and exchanges between Hungarian cultural, scientific and political leaders with their American counterparts, to encourage the constructive exchange of ideas and the deepening of productive ties between our two nations and across generations.

We will emphasize our programs that support leadership development, in particular, our scholarships and internship programs which provide valuable training to talented Hungarians on both sides of the Atlantic.

We will seek ways to collaborate productively with our organizational and individual members as well as other viable, like-minded Hungarian American organizations that share our mission to serve our community for years to come.

We recognize the demographic challenges in serving a broad and diverse Hungarian American community. We will recruit new leaders from the next generation of Hungarian Americans, while nurturing their cultural pride and personal connections to their Hungarian identity.

We will work to build a generous *HAC 2020 Endowment* to support a sustainable organizational model whose projects, scholarships, and advocacy are supported by both volunteers and professionals.

We look forward to making this journey together with our members and supporters. Thank you one and all for supporting our Hungarian American community and for ensuring the successful future of the Hungarian American Coalition. The next 20 years have already begun!



2009

Inauguration of President Obama

10th Anniversary of Hungary's NATO membership

HAC honors former Dep. Sec. of State John C. Whitehead at Gala

PM Gyurcsany resigns, replaced by Bajnai

Bishop László Tóké receives VOC Freedom Medal

20th Anniversary of Romanian Revolution

For. Min. János Martonyi and PM Gordon Bajnai at Mikulás Dinner

10th Anniv. of Charles Simonyi Research Scholarships

Steve Varga, WPA, HAC Chairman



# A Memorable Journey

## Letter from the Chair Emeritus

When long-sought freedom came to Hungary in 1990, little did the founders of the Coalition anticipate the enormous challenges that lay ahead! We felt such excitement to have the historic opportunity to assist in the transition of Hungary into a democratic, free-market society. We had such high hopes that finally, Hungarians in the minority communities outside Hungary could have equal rights and live free of ethnic discrimination.



There was little known about Hungary in Washington at that time. Thus, our first task was to set up an office in D.C., which could provide timely and credible information to decision makers. Right away we began publishing Coalition newsletters and developing a network of contacts - both in the U.S. and Hungary. We wanted to facilitate cooperation, create direct lines of communication between Hungarians and their American counterparts, and secure effective assistance that served both Hungarian and U.S. interests for stable democracies in the region. Washington-area Coalition founders such as Sándor Taraszovics, Frank Koszorús Jr., Zsolt Szekeres as well as László Hámos shared their knowledge and contacts, and the close relationship of Péter Újvagi (a councilman from Toledo, OH) with the Clinton Administration opened doors for us to the White House.

As new organizations and individual members joined the 15 founding organizations, the Coalition's network spread far and wide - from Seattle to Connecticut and New Jersey, from Sarasota through Cleveland to Chicago and elsewhere. Each organization brought its own valuable experiences, community contacts and talented leadership to the Coalition's efforts.

From the beginning there was effective cooperation on Human Rights Workshops, White House/Congressional internships, conferences on minority issues, hosting Hungarian visitors, Gala Dinners, and more. Our advocacy campaign on NATO Expansion between 1994-1998, could be considered a "case study" of how an initially controversial subject could eventually become widely supported public policy, and, in the end, through the U.S. Senate's ratification, become law.

### An Inspiring Story

We wrote this book to share with you, our readers, some interesting details of our activities in the past 20 years. What are not here in black and white are the hundreds of behind-the-scenes, confidential conversations and memos that have enriched this narrative. When you read our story, I know you will better understand the Coalition's mission. You will also see why I have been so inspired by many of our fellow Board members, for their commitment, not only to our common cause, but also to each other. It is important to remember that our organization was founded and has been operated by volunteers - strongly committed individuals with families and jobs, who, often at considerable personal sacrifice, have put the interests of our Coalition first!

During the Coalition's journey these colleagues have taught me a great deal! I also learned through some truly unforgettable experiences: for example, participating in high-level White House discussions on NATO expansion; attending the yearly graduation ceremonies at the Kolozsvár Reformed Kollégium in Romania; seeing the joy of Hungarian writers in Slovakia, as they received recognition



2010

Sütő András Conference in Hungary  
HAC honors Gov. George Pataki at Gala  
Viktor Orbán (Fidesz) elected PM  
10th and Final Posonium Literary Awards  
Ted Horvath, CHHS, HAC Chairman

Pál Schmitt (Fidesz) elected President  
Red sludge disaster in Hungary  
Coalition leaders meet with Pres. Schmitt  
Dep. Min. for For. Affairs, Zsolt Németh, at Mikulás Dinner  
HAC honors Dr. Kay King



for the first time in 80 years through the Coalition-sponsored Posonium Literary Awards in Pozsony, Slovakia; or speaking up against the discriminative Slovak Language Law before a chanting stadium crowd of 10,000 Hungarians in Dunaszerdahely, Slovakia, just to mention a few.

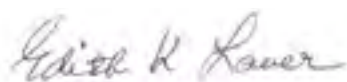
It has been a privilege to travel extensively on Coalition “business”, to represent the organization in the U.S. and Central Europe, to visit our member organizations, to attend or speak at conferences, to investigate potential assistance projects, and to interview candidates for our internships and scholarships. On our trips to Hungary it is such a pleasure to discover young Hungarians entering public service after finishing their studies at U.S. universities with the help of Coalition scholarships or after completing the Congressional Internship Program.

In 20 years, my husband, John, and I have made close to one hundred trips to Hungary, Romania and Slovakia (and several to Serbia and Ukraine). Our lives as well as the Coalition’s work have been truly enriched by having met so many inspiring individuals – writers, educators, ministers, politicians and students – some whose lives are affected even today by continued ethnic discrimination, simply because they are Hungarians.

### Two Decades of Influence

Although the Hungarian American community is diverse, there is much synergy among our members. Since the 1990s our Washington conferences and sponsored visitors have brought valuable information to U.S. decision makers. They are the result of our long-standing cooperation with the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation, the Hungarians for Human Rights in Délvidék, the Committee of Hungarians from Slovakia and others. We build on the strengths of the Hungarian Communion of Friends and often host the guests of their annual Itt Ott Conference. The White House Internships, the various scholarship programs, our close cooperation with the William Penn Association, Hungarian Scout Association in Exteris and the Calasanctius Foundation – all serve the interests of the next generation. Joint projects with our member organizations strengthen us all and are vital to our future.

Today, in the shifting tides of history, just when we feel that freedom and security have finally returned to Hungary and its neighbors, we continue to face new, and often unexpected developments. While these challenges as well as our leadership will certainly change in the coming years, we remain determined as members of the Hungarian American Coalition to continue to support the interests of Hungarians in the U.S. and around the world.



Edith Lauer  
February 25, 2012



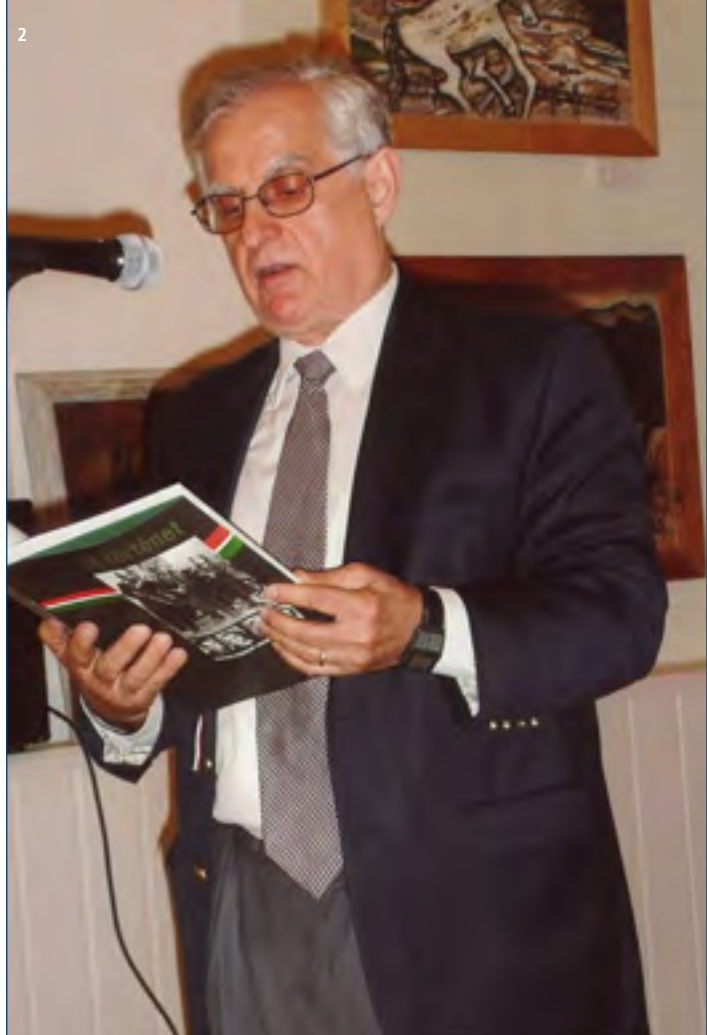
## 2011

HAC celebrates 20 years of service  
HAC honors Dr. János Horváth and WPA at Gala  
Sec. of State Clinton visits Budapest  
Statue of Pres. Reagan unveiled in Budapest  
Opening of Lantos Institute in Budapest

Obama letter on HAC 20th Anniversary  
President Schmitt visits Cleveland  
Pres. Schmitt and U.S. Amb. Kounalakis at Mikulás Dinner

## 2012

AHF Honors HAC with Abraham Lincoln Award  
HAC honors Amb. Nancy Brinker and Hungarian Scouts Assoc. in Exteris at Gala  
Hungarian Pres. Schmitt resigns  
Péter Kovalszki, HAC Chairman  
Parliament elects János Áder President



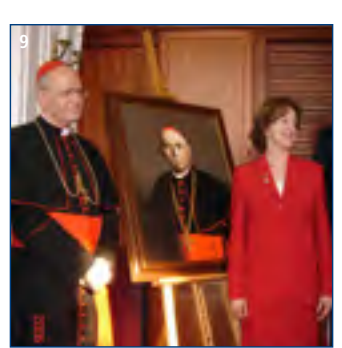
1. Katrina Lantos Swett, President, Lantos Foundation, and Max Teleki open the Carl Lutz Exhibit at the Russell Senate Office Building. 2 HAC Treasurer, Zsolt Szekeres, reads from *56 Stories* at the presentation of the book at the Madach Posonium in Pozsony, Slovakia. 3. HAC President, Max Teleki, VP, Andrea Lauer Rice, and Board Member Ted Horvath at the 1956 Conference at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH. 4. 2006 - Barbara and Charles Vámosy at the 1956 Memorial Concert held at Carnegie Hall, NY. 5. 2005 Posonium Awards - 1st row: Gyula Duba, Edith Lauer, Elemér Török, Zsófia Bárczi, Sándor Gál. 2nd row: László Dobos, Tibor Kopócs, József Gágyor, Zoltán Németh, László Gyurgyik, József Gazdag. 6. HAC Congressional Interns: Viktória Zoltan, Anna Stumpf, Réka Pipis and Bence Varsányi. 7. White House Chief of Staff, Josh Bolton, László Hámos, and Max and Wendy Teleki at the White House screening of *Children of Glory*



8



9



# EDUCATION & CULTURE

*“For the past twenty years, the Hungarian American Coalition has played a vital leadership role in preserving and building a strong relationship between our two countries. Their good work, truly inspired, has brought together citizens in both countries who cherish the cultural and economic ties that bind us together.”*

— Ambassador George Herbert Walker, III  
U.S. Ambassador to Hungary, 2003-2006

10



11



**8.** Students celebrating graduation at the Kolozsvári Reformed Kollégium in traditional Hungarian folk dress. **9.** Cardinal Péter Erdő and U.S. Ambassador April Foley at the unveiling of the new portrait of Cardinal József Mindszenty. **10.** Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of 1956 in Budapest, Hungary: HAC Members Nora Szabó, Barton Rice, Edith Lauer and journalist Valéria Kormos. **11.** Congressional Intern Viktória Zoltán posing with Lady Liberty



# Leadership Training

One of the early objectives of the Hungarian American Coalition was to train future leaders – both for the Hungarian American community and in Hungary and the surrounding region as well. Another goal was to develop close relationships with the White House, Congress and members of the Administration. Therefore, between 1995 and 2001, HAC sponsored 16 young Hungarian Americans in White House internships, and between 2005 and 2012, funded 30 Hungarians to serve as interns in the Congressional Internship Program.

## White House Internships

With the encouragement of Péter Újvági and András Ludányi, the Coalition Board established the White House Internship Program in 1994 to accomplish the above objectives. Through its selection of talented Hungarian American students, the Coalition sponsored service-minded future leaders to gain experience and further their interest in Hungarian American relations. Ameritech and later SBC Communications served as corporate sponsors of this program.

Prof. Ludányi chaired the committee that selected the interns on the basis of academic achievements, activities in the Hungarian American community and interest in public service. The internship provided a monthly stipend, and in addition to their White House duties, Coalition interns were also expected to complete a project for the organization. Many interns attended Human Rights Workshops as well (pgs. 28-29).

Between 1995 and 2001, 16 young Hungarian Americans participated in the Coalition's White House Internship program. Most of them worked in the White House Office of Public Liaison as a part of that office's outreach to ethnic communities all over the U.S. Some worked in the White House Office of Personnel.

### Participants in the White House Internship Program were:

- 2000 Steven Gyeszly – Texas A & M University, College Station, TX
- 1999 Andrea Görög – University of Washington, Seattle, WA  
Éva Schueller – University of California, Berkeley, CA  
Alexander Csizinszky – Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH
- 1998 Katalin Kovalszki – University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI  
Nora Egger – Cleveland State University, Cleveland, OH  
Susan Gyeszly – University of Georgia, graduate student, Athens, GA
- 1997 Zoltán Hargitai – Cleveland State University, Cleveland, OH  
Melissa Byrd – Lebanon, OH  
Christina Stacey – Baldwin-Wallace College, Cleveland, OH  
Genevieve Bader – Chapman University, Orange, CA
- 1996 Krisztina Újvági – Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI  
Ágnes Varga – Cornell University, Ithaca, NY  
Tamás Bollyky – Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
- 1995 Ildikó Kovács – North Central College, Naperville, IL  
Max Teleki – Johns Hopkins University, graduate student, Washington, D.C.



Marilyn DiGiacobbe, Special Assistant to the President for Public Liaison and Péter Újvági, former OH state representative.

White House interns 1996: Ágnes Varga, Tamás Bollyky and Krisztina Újvági.





*"I was an intern in the White House Volunteer Office, which managed over 2,000 White House volunteers doing everything from reading incoming mail, answering the phones on the comment line, and staffing the Easter Egg Roll and Holiday tours. I credit the Coalition White House Internship opportunity, and my Hungarian background, with opening so many doors for me. The internship turned into a full time staff position in June 1998. From the White House, I took a position in the Secretary of Defense's press office, serving directly under Assistant Secretary of Defense Ken Bacon. I know that part of the reason they chose me for the Defense Department position, which included supporting the Secretary of Defense on all overseas trips, was because of my deep connection to my Hungarian roots, my ability to speak the Hungarian language and the time I spent visiting and living in Hungary. They wanted someone with cultural appreciation and awareness. I am and always will be grateful for the opportunities the HAC experience afforded me."*

– Christina Stacey, Fall, 1997 Coalition White House Intern

### Congressional Internship Program

The Congressional Internship Program (CIP), a public service scholarship established in 2005 by the Coalition, replaced the successful Coalition-sponsored White House internship program that was discontinued along with all internship programs during the Clinton administration in 2001. CIP is generously funded by the Charles Simonyi Fund for the Arts and Sciences.

This signature leadership training program was created for outstanding young Hungarians from Hungary and the neighboring countries to provide them with first-hand experience at the U.S. Congress and various Washington-based institutions. Internship participants are expected to complete a Coalition research project that acquaints them with the greater Hungarian American community and its most pressing issues. The program includes a pre-internship training session in Budapest, and a four months-long internship in Washington, D.C., supervised by Coalition President, Max Teleki. The goal of the program is to enable CIP interns to gain hands-on experience in American political culture and civil society, to establish valuable contacts in their chosen field, and to motivate them to enter public service once they return to their country of origin.

#### Host institutions have included:

- » Office of Congressman Tom Lantos
- » Office of Congressman Dennis Kucinich
- » House Committee on Foreign Affairs
- » Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)
- » International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)
- » Heritage Foundation
- » William Penn Association
- » Hungarian Human Rights Foundation
- » Community Wealth Ventures
- » Hungarian American Coalition
- » First Book and Greater D.C. Cares
- » Women for Women International (supports women survivors of wars)
- » Dutko Worldwide (bipartisan Washington lobbying firm)
- » Hudson Institute



Bence Varsányi, Coalition CIP Intern at the White House for the 2008 Visa Waiver Program expansion ceremony.

Recently, the Coalition has partnered with a member organization, the Calasanctius Training Program, to accept several outstanding graduate students into the Congressional Internship Program. This partnership has been extremely beneficial for CIP participants and both organizations.

*“The Calasanctius Training Program was established 18 years ago to enable talented young Hungarians to receive an American Master’s Degree in Business Administration, Media Studies, and Political Science. We are very thankful to the Colleges and Universities that have helped us train some 200 Hungarian Students. While this theoretical training is invaluable, it was painfully obvious, that our students also needed practical training in the U.S. Through the generosity of HAC we were able to take advantage of the Congressional Internship Program to arrange internships for our Political Science students in the U.S. Congress and Washington institutions. Presently six former CTP students are working either in Brussels at the EU or for the current government in Budapest. We are very thankful to the Coalition for this opportunity and hope to continue this very noble project.”*

— Dr. Péter Forgách, founder of the Calasanctius Training Program  
Coalition Board Member



**Edith K. Lauer, HAC Chair Emerita**  
**HAC Chairperson, 1998-2002**

Edith K. Lauer serves as Chair Emerita of the Hungarian American Coalition, the organization she helped found in 1991. She serves on the Boards of various Hungarian American as well as American organizations. She has been a dedicated supporter of Hungarian education and culture, and a tireless advocate for human rights of the 2.5 million Hungarians who live in historic national communities in countries bordering Hungary. After she witnessed the 1956 Revolution, her family escaped to Austria and settled in the U.S. in 1957. Among other honors Mrs. Lauer received the Order of the Merit of the Republic of Hungary in 2011. She and her husband, John, an Honorary Hungarian, currently spend most of their time on volunteer work in Cleveland, OH, Budapest, Hungary, and Washington, D.C. They have two daughters, Andrea and Kriszta, and two grandchildren, Miklós and Jánoska.

Thirty students have completed HAC’s Congressional Internship Program since 2005. The results in professional development of participants [in brackets] are truly impressive:

#### 2011

- » Anita Böröcz, First Book and Greater D.C. Cares, helped organize the 9/11 National Day of Service and Remembrance [Hammer Advertising Agency]
- » Hajnalka Juhász, International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), worked as a research fellow analyzing out-of-country voting systems of 115 countries
- » Beáta Tóth – Hungarian American Coalition [Budapest School of Communications]
- » Ádám Richnovszky, William Penn Association
- » Zoltán Szényi, Sustained Dialogue Campus Network and Interages - Jewish Council for the Aging [Ph.D. Program, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada]
- » Márta Tankó, U.S. House of Representatives [Federation of Young Christian Democrats]

*“The HAC Congressional Internship Program gave me the opportunity to experience, succeed and to be part of an amazing network, which forms a supportive system and encourages every individual to dream big and then dream bigger.”*

– Anita Böröcz, 2011 Coalition Congressional Intern



HAC Treasurer Zsolt Szekeres, Congressional Interns Réka Pipis and Csaba Fülöp and HAC President Max Teleki.

## 2010

- » Orsolya Meleg, Women for Women International and HAC [British Telecom, non-profit boards]
- » László Galántai, Johns Hopkins – SAIS Center for Transatlantic Relations [Americas Office of the Ministry of Foreign Relations, Budapest]
- » Melinda Szilágyi, Office of Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich [Hungarian Investment and Trade Agency]

## 2009

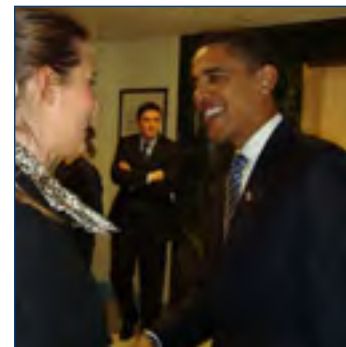
- » Melanie Flugel, HAC, International Centre for Democratic Transition
- » Gergely Mohay, Office of Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich [administrative secretary at the Hungarian Parliament]
- » Viktoria Zoltán, Dutko Worldwide
- » Bence Gonda, Office of Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich [Binga, a Creative Communications Company]
- » Sabrina Dax, Hungarian American Coalition – [February Partners as a Publicist]

## 2008

- » Csaba Fülöp, HAC – [Anheuser-Busch]
- » Péter Leányfalvi, Community Wealth Ventures, Washington D.C.
- » Eszter Éva Nagy, OH State Representative Péter Újvági working on the Ohio campaign of Barack Obama – [working for István Makai, President of the Roma Civic Association, Budapest]
- » Réka Pipis, Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of U.S. Representatives [iMind, a software company]
- » Benedek Varsányi, Center for Strategic and International Studies [Constitutional Court of Hungary]
- » Péter Wendl, Office of Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich [Roma Civic Association]



Congressman Dennis Kucinich with Coalition Congressional intern Bence Gonda.



Coalition intern Eszter Éva Nagy meets President Barack Obama.

**2007**

- » Márton Aichelburg, Community Wealth Ventures, Inc. in D.C. and HHRF [founder of Civic Enterprises, a not-for-profit organization based in Budapest; developed the Senior Mentor Programs In Hungary and Slovakia]
- » Igor Breitner, Hudson Institute, Hungarian Human Rights Foundation [Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development]
- » Dora Tátrai, Hungarian American Coalition
- » Lilla Vukovich, Office of Congressman Tom Lantos [junior associate at Wolf Theiss Attorneys at law]
- » Emőke Korzenszky, Office of Congressman Tom Lantos [European Council, Ministry of National Development, Budapest]

**2006**

- » Tamás Hovanyecz, IFES and William Penn Association in Pittsburgh, PA [Morgan Stanley, Budapest]
- » Anna Stumpf, Center for Strategic and International Studies [Dir. of Common Sense Society, Budapest, and Political Attache/Congressional Liaison at the Hungarian Embassy in Washington D.C.]
- » János Pokol, Hungarian American Coalition, IFES, HHRF

**2005**

- » Emese Lendvai, Office of California Congressman Tom Lantos
- » Katalin Vinkler, Heritage Foundation

*“I would never have thought that interning at CSIS and writing a policy report about the Visa Waiver Program would so decisively shape my future academic and career choice. It was amazing to feel deeply involved in the most important bilateral issue that touched the lives of so many Hungarians. Whenever I talked with Edit, Max or Zsolt, I felt a genuine benevolence and true concern for Hungarian American issues that I could very much identify with...two years after my Washington endeavor, I returned to D.C. to interview the very same policy makers, experts and diplomats I met in 2006 to turn my earlier VWP research into an honors Master’s thesis. After graduation, I instinctively applied to the Foreign Ministry where I joined the American Department and I was soon posted to Washington as a diplomat - a dream job since the time of my total immersion in diplomacy, thanks to the Coalition.”*

— Anna Stumpf, 2006 Coalition Congressional Intern

**Geza Kadar, Jr. HAC Legal Counsel, 1991-present**

Geza Kadar, Jr. was born in a Swiss refugee camp to Hungarian parents fleeing from the communist takeover of Hungary in 1947. The Kadar family emigrated first to Melbourne, Australia and in 1958 settled in California. Mr. Kadar earned his degree in international relations at UC Berkeley and his Juris Doctorate from Georgetown in Washington D.C. After working for a Congressman, he served as an attorney and federal lobbyist for the health insurance industry until 1990. After returning to California, he led the health law practice of a large law firm and then created a physician management firm, Advocates for Primary Care, Inc. Although he made many trips to Hungary, it was the highly emotional experience of standing with lit candle in front of the Hungarian Parliament in 1989 when the creation of the new Republic of Hungary was publicly declared, that galvanized his desire to be of service to the homeland. He is a founding board member of the Coalition.



# Dr. Charles Simonyi

Technology pioneer, researcher, visionary, successful entrepreneur and dedicated philanthropist are all terms which characterize the highly accomplished and multi-faceted Dr. Charles Simonyi. Born in Budapest, Hungary in 1948, Dr. Simonyi's interest in computers began in high school, when he assisted an engineer working on one of only five computers in Hungary, a Russian-made Ural II.

In 1967, he moved to the U.S. to study at the University of California at Berkeley, where he received his B.S. in engineering mathematics in 1972. In 1977, he completed his doctorate in computer science from Stanford University.

From 1972 to 1980, Dr. Simonyi worked at Xerox Palo Alto Research Center (PARC), the flagship research division of the Xerox Corporation, a hotbed of outstanding minds in the 1970s and incubator of many elements of modern computing. At Xerox PARC, he created the first WYSIWYG (what-you-see-is-what-you-get) text editor called Bravo.

In 1981, Charles Simonyi joined Microsoft Corporation where he held the titles of Director of Application Development, Chief Architect and Distinguished Engineer. He oversaw the development of what became the company's most profitable products, Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel, and introduced techniques and methods developed at PARC, including "Hungarian notation" naming conventions memorable by the strings of unpronounceable consonants that resemble his consonant-rich native tongue. Simonyi was a key player at Microsoft during its meteoric rise in the software industry, becoming one of its highest-ranking developers. He left Microsoft in August 2002 to found Intentional Software Corporation, a software engineering company, with fellow Hungarian Gregor Kiczales.

In late 2003 he established the Charles Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences, led by Executive Director Susan Hutchison, to support arts organizations, science programs and educational institutions. Through this fund, Dr. Simonyi has partnered with the Coalition on a number of projects. Since its inception in 2005, he has funded the Congressional Internship Program (pgs. 21-24) and for the past ten years Dr. Simonyi has worked with the Coalition to award research scholarships, and annual awards for excellence in physical sciences and technical education in Hungary (pgs. 37-38). Several grants to the Coalition have funded special projects, such as the rebuilding of the Town Hall of Vámosújfalu (pg. 101) and the restoration of the 100-year-old lecture hall at Semmelweis University in Budapest (pg. 41).

Dr. Simonyi is an avid collector of modern art, enjoys classical music and is an experienced pilot. In 2007, he became the fifth private individual to travel into space to the International Space Station.



Dr. Charles Simonyi at the Museum of Flight's Charles Simonyi Space Gallery upon the arrival of the Soyuz TMA-14, the vehicle that propelled Dr. Simonyi, for a second time, to the International Space Station in 2009.

*"We have been gratified to fund the Hungarian American Coalition's Congressional Internship program, which brings outstanding young people – Hungary's future leaders – to learn and study American policy in Washington D.C. The Coalition has provided expert advisory and management services and thorough oversight for our philanthropic grants to Hungarian institutions. In two large projects – rebuilding the Town Hall of Vámosújfalu after a devastating flood and reconstruction of a historic lecture hall at Budapest's Semmelweis University of Medicine – the Coalition's thorough knowledge of how things work in Hungary has been invaluable in helping us deliver successful projects."*

— Dr. Charles Simonyi





Dr. and Mrs. Elemér Kiss for whom the Coalition Scholarship Program is named.

### **The Dr. Elemér and Éva Kiss Scholarship Fund**

By the mid 1990's there were many university students from Hungary gaining admission to U.S. colleges and universities. However, paying American tuition and expenses was out of the reach of most Hungarian families. Thus, many turned to the Coalition to ask advice about where they could get financial aid. With partial scholarships from the universities and part-time work covering most of their living expenses, there was still a \$1,000-\$2,000 gap in their budget. It was to meet this need that in 1997 the Coalition established a Scholarship Fund.

Three years later, when Dr. Elemér Kiss, an original member of the Coalition passed away, his family and friends sent generous contributions in his honor to the Scholarship Fund. Thus, in 2000, the Fund was renamed "The Dr. Elemér Kiss Scholarship Fund." Subsequently, when his wife, Mrs. Éva Kiss passed away in 2008, the name of the fund became "The Dr. Elemér and Éva Kiss Scholarship Fund." Since 2004, the Coalition has dedicated proceeds of the annual Gala to the Scholarship Fund.

To date, more than 32 outstanding Hungarian students have benefitted from these scholarships, some for multiple years. Perhaps one of the most unusual recipients is a remarkable young man, János Barbero, who started his university studies at age 14.

*"When I was only 13, I suffered a devastating loss, when my beloved father died from cancer...I started to go into my favorite teacher, Prof. Palkovits's neuromorphological research lab at Semmelweis Medical University in Budapest. A year later, I started as a first-year medical student at Semmelweis. Prof. Palkovits introduced me to Edith Lauer, President of the Hungarian American Coalition. I was accepted to several U.S. universities and decided to study in the U.S. Prof. Palkovits and Edith helped me choose the best college for me and Edith told me about the Coalition's Elemér and Éva Kiss Scholarship. The Kiss Scholarship supported me during my studies at the University of Washington...and allowed me to achieve successes in research beyond what I imagined possible in Hungary.*

*Currently, I work in the Silicon Valley on a green technology project that promises to yield large energy savings and other benefits... I feel it is important to acknowledge the role the Coalition had in helping me work toward my dreams....So my heartfelt thanks to the Coalition, and I hope one day to be able to contribute to it and help the next generation along as I was helped along myself!"*

— János Barbero, Multi-year Kiss Scholarship Recipient

**Kiss Scholarship Awardees:**

(Years in parentheses indicate multiple-year scholarships)

**2011-2012**

Krisztina Oláh – John Carroll University, Cleveland, OH

Edit Frenyó – Georgetown University Law Center, Washington, D.C.

Beáta Krasznai – Cleveland State University, Cleveland, OH

**2010-2011**

Kinga Edit Fodor – Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York, NY

Dorottya Irén Győri – Messiah College, Grantham, PA (2011)

Dóra Halász – Mercyhurst College, Erie, PA

Zita Monori – The University of the South, Sewanee, TN (2011)

Edith M. Petrovics – Georgetown Univ. School of Continuing Studies, Washington, D.C.

**2009-2010**

Tamás Kubik – The University of the South, Sewanee, TN

**2008-2009**

Eszter Győri, Sewanee – The University of the South, Sewanee, TN (2008-2011)

Betty Henkel – Trocaire College, Buffalo, NY

Mirjam Donáth – Columbia University, New York, NY (2009-2010)

Zsófia Schwéger – Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA (2010)

**2006-2007**

Éva Tessza Udvarhelyi – Cultural Anthropology, City Univ., New York, NY (2010)

Enikő Horváth – International Relations, Harvard Univ., Boston, MA (2008-2009)

Noémi Keszler – Ohio Wesleyan University, OH (2008)

**2005-2006**

János Américo Barbero – University of Washington, Seattle, WA (2003-2007)

Zoltán Hardi – Winona State University, Winona, MN

Nóra Németh – Dutchess Community College, Poughkeepsie, NY

**2002-2003**

Eszter Gulácsy – University of California, Berkeley, CA

Márta Murvai – Lynn Conservatory of Music, Boca Raton, FL

Zoltán Nagy – Dance Program, University of Maryland, College Park, MD

**2000-2001**

Miklós Orbán – Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

Beáta Surányi – Western Maryland College, MD

Sándor Végh – University of Maryland, College Park, MD

**1999-2000**

Anikó Kukla – University of Akron, Akron, OH

Éva Varga – Columbia University, New York, NY

Edit Velényi – Paul H Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, D.C.

**1998-1999**

Ágnes Frehr – John Carroll University, Cleveland, OH

Kornél Romada – Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, MO

Krisztina Tillinger – American University, Washington, D.C.

András Váradi – Randolph Macon College, VA

### Human Rights Workshops

Since its founding in 1991, the Coalition has been committed to supporting the human and minority rights of Hungarians. As early as in 1992, HAC joined the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation (HHRF) and the Hungarian Communion of Friends (MBK) in co-sponsoring and organizing an annual Human Rights Workshop.

The workshops were originally created in response to a report entitled “Hungarian Lobbying Efforts for the Human Rights of Hungarians in Romania – the Committee for Hungarian Human Rights in Romania as Case Study,” published in 1990, in the Hungarian Studies Journal, by Prof. Andrew Ludányi. The report discussed the importance of the human rights work of the HHRF and recommended increasing grassroots support by involving youth in human rights advocacy for Hungarians in Romania and elsewhere.

#### The criteria for each program included:

- » Giving high school and college-aged Hungarian Americans the opportunity to learn about the history of Hungarian minority populations in politically unstable societies.
- » Teaching the necessary practical skills to effectively inform U.S. government officials and the public about minority issues.
- » Inviting expert guests to present interactive programs on: 20th century European history, international human rights protections, models of personal, territorial and cultural autonomy, effective communications with the media and decision-makers, and U.S. government affairs. Lecturers included: Andrew Ludányi, László Hámos, Péter Újvági, Edith Lauer, Frank Koszorús, Jr., Katica Avvakumovits, Ildikó Bodoni, Bernard Hanley, Kay Scrimger, Krisztina Újvági, Tibor Purger and others.

Between 1989-2000, nine Human Rights Workshops were held in locations across the country in order to reach as many Hungarian American communities as possible. HAC, MBK and HHRF were the primary sponsors, but a number of other organizations also funded the effort.



Human Rights Workshop attendees in front of the White House – 1995.

#### Historical Calendar of Human Rights Workshops 2000, American Univ., Washington, D.C. – June 5

- » Co-sponsored by HAC, MBK, HHRF
- » *Promoting Human and Minority Rights in an Election Year* - This workshop focused on how human and minority rights can be promoted in a presidential election year, with special focus on Vojvodina, Serbia.

#### 1997, East Michigan State Univ., Ypsilanti, MI – June 5-7

- » Co-sponsored by HAC, MBK, AHF, HHRF, Honors Program of E. Michigan University
- » This workshop featured a visit to the historic Hungarian community in the Birmingham area of Toledo, OH, and a congressional briefing by Rep. Marcy Kaptur.

#### 1996, Univ. of California, Berkeley at the International House – May 30

- » Co-sponsored by HAC, HHRF, MBK, International House, U.C. Berkeley, the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council, the National Comm. for Hungarians in Slovakia, San Francisco Area Hungarian American Chamber of Commerce
- » Simulated a Congressional Finance Committee meeting where participants acted as witnesses and members of Congress.

#### 1995, Shepherd College, Shepherdstown, WV – June 9-12

- » Co-sponsored by HAC, HHRF, MBK
- » The workshop included a trip to Washington, D.C. with visits to a State Department Briefing for the 27 participants with Dan Fried, Director of Central and Eastern European Affairs, National Security Council, and individual visits to the offices of selected Senators and Representatives.

### 1994, Univ. of Hartford, Hartford, CT – June 10-12

- » Simulated a Helsinki Commission hearing where participants acted as witnesses and commissioners. Topics included self-determination and cultural autonomy.

### 1992, John Carroll Univ., Cleveland, OH – May 29-31

- » Co-sponsored by HAC, HHRF, Hungarian American Human Rights Council, MBK, Hungarian American Educators Assoc (AHEA)

### The first three workshops were held at:

Trinity Evangelical Theology School in Bannockburn, IL, June 7-10, 1991;

Catholic Univ., Washington, D.C. June 9-12, 1990;

William Penn Fraternal Assoc.'s St. George facility in WV, June, 1989.



Human Rights Workshop attendees in 1991: Pál Fekete, Andrew Ludányi, István Csutak, Zsolt Luka, Árpád Kovács, Ilona Somogyi, Otto Hámos, Balázs Somogyi, Ildikó Bodoni, Katica Awakumovits, Emese Latkóczy, László Hámos and Andrea Lauer Rice.

*"After attending a summer human rights workshop in 1992, I got fired up to go to Erdély and teach English. I ended up teaching community classes for one school year. It was an amazing experience, hands-down one of the best life decisions I ever made, and it was solely due to the human rights workshop and a follow-up discussion with Edit Lauer that I was inspired to go."*

— Paulette Layton, Human Rights Workshop Attendee



### Balázs B. Somogyi, M.D. HAC Chairman, 2007

After the 1956 Revolution, Balázs Somogyi arrived to the U.S. in 1958 where he received his medical degree at Downstate Medical Center, Brooklyn, NY in 1965. Dr. Somogyi, who is an orthopedic surgeon, has been an inspiring leader in many Hungarian organizations: he was co-founder and director of the Hungarian Folk Ensemble of New York; he served two terms as president of the Magyar Baráti Közösség (MBK); he is also president of the Hungarian Cultural Society of Connecticut (HCSC). He is Presbyterian of the Wallingford Hungarian Church, a supporter of the operation of the Hungarian House of Wallingford, a Board Member of the Széchenyi István Society in New York, of the American Hungarian Foundation in NJ and of the Wallingford Symphony Orchestra. He and his wife Csilla have lived in Cheshire, CT since 1973. They have three daughters, Zsuzsanna, Ilona and Judit and a grandson, Kristóf.





# Commemorating the 1956 Revolution

Many founding members of the Hungarian American Coalition actively participated in the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and Freedom Fight. When the Revolution was brutally crushed by the Soviets, more than 200,000 Hungarians escaped from their homeland, some 35,000 coming to the U.S. Many of these immigrants felt it their life-long mission to keep the spirit of freedom alive through formal commemorations of 1956, during the 40 years when even mentioning the 1956 Revolution was forbidden in communist-ruled Hungary. That same passion motivated their involvement and leadership in the Hungarian American community.

Since its founding the Coalition has sponsored many 1956 projects, and Board Members who were '56ers shared their memories of the 1956 Revolution at conferences and ceremonies across the United States. Some highlights are listed below.

## Celebration of a Historic 50th Anniversary

In 2006, the Hungarian American community had an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to pay homage to the 50th Anniversary of this life-defining time for Hungarians all over the world.

### The Coalition focused on the following major projects:

1. To launch an oral history project website – [www.FreedomFighter56.com](http://www.FreedomFighter56.com) – dedicated to collecting testimonials from participants in the 1956 Revolution;
2. To publish two books, *56 Stories: Personal Recollections of the Hungarian Revolution: A Hungarian American Perspective*, and in Hungarian *56 történet: Amerikai magyarok személyes emlékei 1956-ról*.
3. To assist in fund-raising for *Torn from the Flag*, the excellent documentary film produced about the 1956 Revolution by Klaudia Kovács.



*56 Stories: Personal Recollections of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, A Hungarian American Perspective.*



Andrea Lauer Rice, co-editor of *56 Stories*, presents a copy of the book to Hungarian actor, Tony Curtis, at the White House screening of *Children of Glory*.

The Coalition partnered with Lauer Learning, an educational multimedia company, to establish the oral history site to ensure that not only the personal stories, but the very spirit of 1956 is passed on to future generations. The bilingual website shows over 100 English and Hungarian testimonials and provides an interview guide for young people to use to collect their family stories to be documented and shared. It is a permanent educational resource with historical information on 1956, photographs and links to other projects and resources about the Revolution.

The site was so successful in gathering personal testimonials that it led to the publication of two large-format hard-cover books co-edited by Andrea Lauer Rice, Founder of Lauer Learning and Coalition VP, and Edith Lauer, a '56-er and Chair Emerita of the Coalition. Each book contains 65 personal stories

that provide a unique personal recollection about 1956 through the eyes of Hungarian Americans. The books also include educational materials, original photographs and never-before-published sketches from that time.

During the 50th Anniversary commemorations, Mrs. Lauer and Mrs. Lauer Rice traveled to Hungary and Slovakia to introduce the book to great public interest. There were book launchings in Budapest and Pozsony (Bratislava) and in several U.S. cities, including Cleveland, Washington, Sarasota, Boston and Atlanta, where local contributors read their own excerpts in what often resulted in dramatically historic readings.

### ***Torn from the Flag* Documentary**

Fundraising for *Torn from the Flag* was the third major commemorative project in 2005-06. The Coalition played a leadership role for more than two years in raising over \$200,000 from the greater Hungarian American community for the completion of the film. This documentary about the fall of communism and the 1956 Hungarian Revolution had its world premiere on November 10, 2007, at the prestigious American Film Institute (AFI) Film Festival in Hollywood, CA. Later various Coalition members arranged showings in Washington D.C., Cleveland, OH, Atlanta, GA, Minneapolis, MN, San Mateo, CA.

*“The Hungarian American Coalition played a central role in the funding, distribution and promotion of Torn from the Flag, the most significant film produced about 1956 through the co-operative efforts of the Hungarian American community. The Coalition’s reputation for fairness and inclusiveness assured the positive reception and success of this documentary, which will continue to have a positive impact on our countrymen and the international image of the Hungarian nation.”*

— Klaudia Kovács, *Torn from the Flag* Filmmaker

This award-winning film provides an authoritative and historically balanced view of the methods used by the Soviet Union between 1945 and 1989 to subjugate tens of millions of people in East-Central Europe and the Baltic States. Thus, *Torn from the Flag* makes a major contribution to understanding how communist dictatorships worked, and why they were eventually doomed to fail. The centerpiece of the film is the Hungarian Revolution. Its widely recognized symbol, the hole in the flag, was the result of communist emblems “torn from the flag” on October 23, 1956, the first day of the Revolution.

Against the backdrop of archival photos, viewers hear the emotional voices of former freedom fighters who recall both the joy and the tragedy of those days. Their memories are juxtaposed with the expert opinions of Dr. Otto von Habsburg, Dr. Henry Kissinger, Prof. Csaba Békés and others to present a compelling story about the greater significance of what Hungarians did in 1956.

Helen M. Szablya, a '56er and Coalition Board Member, worked extensively on the *Torn from the Flag* film project, translating the text and promoting the film in various venues.

Edith K. Lauer, HAC Chair Emerita and Klaudia Kovács, *Torn from the Flag* filmmaker.





President George W. Bush speaks on Gellért Hill in Budapest, Hungary. He visited in June 2006 to help celebrate and commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. Photo by Hungarian News Agency (MTI)

### President Bush Makes 50th Anniversary Visit to Budapest

President George W. Bush, First Lady Laura Bush, Secretary of State Dr. Condoleezza Rice and other high-ranking U.S. government officials traveled to Budapest on June 22, 2006, to honor the spirit of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, and to commend the successful democratic transformation of Hungary.

In 2005, the Hungarian Government and opposition political leaders issued letters of invitation to President Bush to participate in the commemoration of 1956. This bipartisan invitation was complemented by efforts of the Coalition and other Hungarian Americans urging President Bush to visit

Hungary in this anniversary year. These efforts were greatly helped by the good offices of U.S. Ambassador to Hungary Mr. George Herbert Walker III and Mr. András Simonyi, Hungary's Ambassador to the United States.



Edith K. Lauer, co-author of *56 Stories* at the Washington, D.C. book launch at the Kossuth House.

Coalition leaders attended several events of the Presidential visit. Mrs. Edith Lauer, Mr. Zsolt Szekeres, Treasurer, and Mrs. Andrea Lauer Rice, participated in the luncheon hosted by President László Sólyom of Hungary and Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány which was held at the Hungarian Parliament in honor of the President's visit. President Bush personally greeted all of the approximately 120 guests.

Later, the President delivered his speech atop Gellért Hill, against the backdrop of a magnificent view of Budapest, in front of 150 invited guests. Coalition members present also included Mr. John

N. Lauer, Mr. Barton Rice, Mr. Bulcsú Veress, and Honorary Hungarian Consuls Ms. Kaarina Koskenalusta from Chicago and Ms. Emese Komjáthy from Honolulu.

After greeting his audience in Hungarian, President Bush summarized the events of 1956, recognizing the heroism of those who dared to stand against tyranny.

*"The lesson of the Hungarian experience is clear: liberty can be delayed, but it cannot be denied." Speaking of the Hungarian American community, he said: "Some 200,000 Hungarians fled into exile in search of liberty. Many found refuge in the United States. These immigrants have contributed to my country in countless ways, and America will always be glad that we opened our doors to Hungarians that were seeking freedom."*

— President George W. Bush



### Children of Glory White House Screening

In October 2006, the White House invited 48 guests, including several members of the Hungarian American Coalition, to attend a private dinner and special screening of Andy Vajna's film, *Children of Glory*, the first Hungarian film ever shown at the White House.



Andrea Lauer Rice, President George W. Bush, First Lady Laura Bush and Barton Rice at the White House.

The film portrays the '56 Hungarian Revolution and was released in Budapest in celebration of the 50th Anniversary. According to White House officials the event served to express American gratitude for the contributions of Hungarians to the United States and to global freedom and democracy.

The screening and dinner that followed were enjoyed by the following Coalition members: Mr. Max and Mrs. Wendy Teleki, Mr. George Dózsa, Mr. László and Mrs. Zsuzsa Hámos, Mr. John and Mrs. Ildikó Kőrössi, Jr., Mr. Barton and Mrs. Andrea Lauer Rice, Mr. Imre and Mrs. Ágnes Lendvai-Lintner, and Mr. Leslie and Mrs. Kathy Megyeri.

### Official Celebrations in Washington, D.C.

On Feb. 14, 2006, a memorial celebration of 1956 was hosted at the State Department by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

*"Hungary's support for the freedom of others now stretches throughout the world, from the Balkans to Afghanistan to Iraq and beyond. In Budapest, the Hungarian Government has created the International Center for Democratic Transition (ICDT), which pools the knowledge and experience of democratic nations to help countries across the world navigate their own transitions to democracy."*

— Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice

The event was attended by many dignitaries, including Under Secretary Nicholas Burns, Congressman Tom Lantos, Archbishop of Washington Cardinal Theodore McCarrick and President of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation Rabbi Arthur Schneier, U.S. Ambassador George H. Walker III, Hungarian Ambassador, András Simonyi and several Hungarian Americans, among them Coalition members.

On March 15, 2006, a special commemoration was held in Statuary Hall of the U.S. Capitol to celebrate Hungary's contributions to freedom and democracy. The event organized by Congressman Tom Lantos and András Simonyi, Ambassador from Hungary, was dedicated to the Hungarian Revolution and Freedom Fights of 1848, 1956 and the fall of Communism in 1989. Speakers included President Bush, Majority leader Bill Frist, Minority leader Harry Reid, Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert, Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Congressman Tom Lantos, U.S. Ambassador George H. Walker III, Hungarian Ambassador András Simonyi and others.

During the Fall of 2006 several hundred commemorative events, conferences, concerts and church services were organized - many by Coalition members - in Hungarian American communities all over the U.S.

In December, 2005, the House of Representatives approved a resolution submitted by Congressman Tom Lantos. It declared that the 1956 Hungarian Revolution led the way to the collapse of Communism in 1989 in Hungary, throughout East and Central Europe and eventually, in the Soviet Union.



Coalition members Kriszta Lauer Nagy and Robert Nagy commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the 1956 Revolution in Hungary.



### Hungarica Project

This project was supported by the Coalition in 1997-98 to fund objective analysis and research in the U.S. of the critical events surrounding the Revolution of 1956. Another objective of the project was to retrieve and archive sound tapes for the Hungarian Radio's permanent collection of historic tapes of 1956 radio broadcasts by Voice of America.

### Marking the 40th Anniversary of 1956

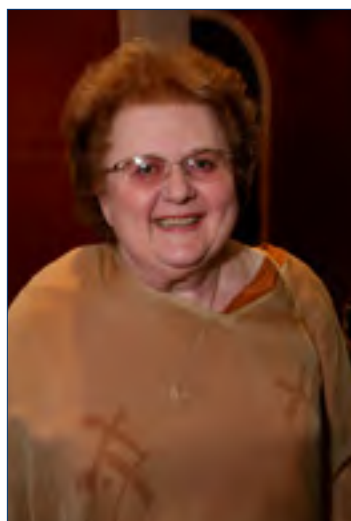
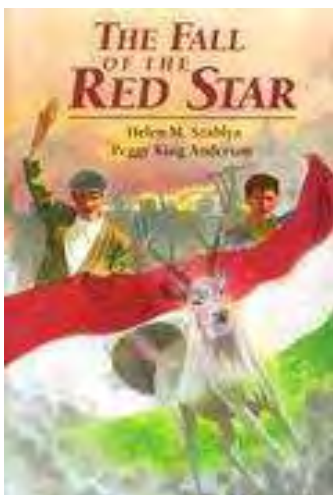
In 1996, on the 40th Anniversary, a young Hungarian librarian in Budapest, Csete Örs, asked for Coalition support with his special exhibit in Hungary: *Encounter with 1956: 40 Faces in 40 Years*. The exhibit presented 40 compelling black and white portraits with recorded oral histories of 40 almost accidental heroes of the 1956 Revolution.

Szabolcs Szekeres, the Coalition's Budapest liaison, immediately recognized the quality and vision of *Encounter with 1956*: "This is a highly professional project which fits the profile of the Coalition. When I hear Hungarians say, to my great surprise, that doing such a project is politically unwise in today's Hungary, I am more convinced than ever of the need to have the Coalition sponsor it."

### Promotion of *The Fall of the Red Star*

Coalition member, Helen Szablya and Peggy King Anderson, co-authored *The Fall of the Red Star*. This historical novel, written for young adults and published both in English and Hungarian, tells the story of the Revolution through the eyes of an illegal scout troop. This excellent book has been awarded first prize by both the Washington Press Association and the National Federation of Press Women.

For the 40th Anniversary, the Coalition sponsored several trips and presentations in schools, libraries, churches and scout troops in Berkeley, San Francisco and Los Angeles, CA, and elsewhere, and promoted the book to members.



#### Helen M. Szablya

Honorary Consul of Hungary for WA, OR, and ID  
HAC Chairperson, 2006

Helen M. Szablya is an award-winning author, columnist, translator, and lecturer. Based in Seattle, she has two university degrees, speaks six languages, and many of her more than 700 publications and five books have won awards. In 1956, Mrs. Szablya escaped with her husband John, two toddlers and a newborn. For the 30th Anniversary of the Revolution, she co-authored *Hungary Remembered*, an oral history drama and for the 40th Anniversary, she published an award-winning book, *The Fall of the Red Star*, about a Boy Scout troop during 1956. In 2005, Dr. and Mrs. John Szablya were honored with the Presidential Order of Merit from the Republic of Hungary for their lives' work. They have seven children, 16 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.



# Awards for Excellence

The Posonium Awards, established in 2000 as a project of the Coalition, were funded through an annual contribution by Edith and John Lauer. The Lauers established the awards to give long overdue recognition to Hungarian writers and artists for outstanding contributions to the literature, art and cultural heritage of the 526,000-large historic Hungarian community in Slovakia. The Fine Arts awards were sponsored by György Mátyásfalvi, a Budapest businessman.

Each year publishers in Slovakia submitted Hungarian books published in the previous year. An Award Selection Committee of respected writers and literary critics (Gyula Duba, Zoltán Fónod, Zoltán Németh, László Szarka, and Árpád Tőzsér) appointed by Madách Publisher President, László Dobos, nominated and selected writers in various categories of achievement. Dobos, a renowned writer, publicist, and community leader in his own right, is a winner of the Kossuth Prize, the highest Hungarian cultural award, and also of the Pribina Cross, a prestigious Slovak state award recognizing his historic role as Minister of Minorities in the late 60s.

Awards were given for Lifetime Achievement, Best Book, Best First Book, Best Translation and the Homeland Award. The Fine Arts Award has been given for painting, sculpture, graphic arts and art history. The monetary value of the awards was between 300 and 1,150 Euros.

Between 2001 and 2010, the presentation of the Posonium Literary and Fine Arts Awards was a well-attended affair and took place each year in the ballroom of the Csemadok (largest Hungarian NGO in Slovakia) headquarters in downtown Pozsony (Bratislava). The awards ceremonies have been attended by past winners, writers, publishers, critics, members of the press, ambassadors, leaders of the Hungarian community and the general public, including Coalition members.

At the 2010 award ceremony, Edith Lauer commended Selection Committee Chair, Gyula Duba, for his excellent work and high standards of selecting the 68 Literary and 10 Fine Arts Award winners of the past 10 years. She thanked László Dobos for inspiring her through his own example to establish the Posonium Literary Awards.



The Posonium Awards gave long overdue recognition to Hungarian writers and artists for outstanding contributions to the literature, art and cultural heritage of the historic Hungarian community in Slovakia.

2002: László Dobos presents award to writer Lajos Turczel with Edith Lauer looking on.





2008 – Posonium Awards: 1st row: Edith Lauer, László Dobos, Katalin Vadkerty, György Lipcsey, György Mátyásfalvi. 2nd row: Krisztián Benyovszky, Péter H. Nagy, Éva Lacza, László Cselényi, Elemér Tóth.

*“The Posonium Awards have done more than recognize individual artists or works. Their long-term effect on the Hungarian literature of Slovakia is to raise standards of artistic quality. They’ve set the bar high for today’s young writers.”*

– László Dobos, President of Madách Publishers

#### Lifetime Achievement Awards:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>2001</b> – Ág Tibor, Ozsvald Árpád                 | <b>2006</b> – Szőke József, Szeberényi Zoltán          |
| <b>2002</b> – Duba Gyula, Turczel Lajos               | <b>2007</b> – Koncsol László                           |
| <b>2003</b> – Dobos László, Mayer Judit, Dénes György | <b>2008</b> – Cselényi László, Vadkerty Katalin        |
| <b>2004</b> – Fónod Zoltán, Mács József               | <b>2009</b> – Jakab István, Tőzsér Árpád, Zeman László |
| <b>2005</b> – Gál Sándor, Zs. Nagy Lajos              | <b>2010</b> – Grendel Lajos, Tóth Elemér               |

#### The Grand Prize for Best Book of the Year:

- |                               |                             |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>2001</b> – Lanstyák István | <b>2006</b> – N. Tóth Anikó |
| <b>2002</b> – Tőzsér Árpád    | <b>2007</b> – Duba Gyula    |
| <b>2003</b> – Grendel Lajos   | <b>2010</b> – Polgár Anikó  |
| <b>2004</b> – Koncsol László  |                             |

#### Posonium Fine Arts winners include:

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| <b>2002</b> – Barta Gyula                | <b>2007</b> – Tóthpál Gyula  |
| <b>2003</b> – Nagy János and Nagy József | <b>2008</b> – Lipcsey György |
| <b>2004</b> – Janiga József              | <b>2009</b> – Jaksics Ferenc |
| <b>2005</b> – Kopócs Tibor               | <b>2010</b> – Varga Lajos    |
| <b>2006</b> – Kubicka-Kucsera Klára      |                              |

Between 2001-2010 there were also 10 winners of Best First Book Awards; 22 of Best Translation Awards; and eight Homeland Awards.

### Charles Simonyi Research Scholarship

In 2000, Dr. Charles Simonyi, a leading software developer for Microsoft Corporation, established the Charles Simonyi Research Scholarship Awards, with the cooperation of HAC, to encourage research by Hungarian scientists. The Scholarship was presented for 10 years.

Noted Hungarian researchers received the Charles Simonyi Research Scholarship Award at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA) in Budapest. The grants were awarded at a formal ceremony by a Scholarship Committee constituted by seven members upon the recommendation of the Minister of Education and the President of MTA.

#### The following Hungarian researchers received awards in the amount of 3 million HUF:

- » László Acsády, head of Laboratory of Thalamus Research, Institute of Experimental Medicine, MTA
- » Péter László Biró, head of the Nanostructures Department, Research Institute for Technical Physics and Materials Science, MTA
- » György Gergely, for work in the cognitive and developmental sciences
- » Dr. László Kollár, chemist, Professor of the Dept. of Inorganic Chemistry, University of Pécs
- » Dr. István Simon, physicist and head researcher, Institute of Enzymology, Biological Research Center, MTA
- » Dr. Pál S. Varga, literary scientist, Professor of the Institute of Cultural Studies and Hungarian Literature, University of Debrecen
- » Dr. Éva Rajnavölgyi, biologist and head researcher, Institute of Immunology, University of Debrecen
- » Dr. Imre Romics, M.D., Professor and Director, Urology Clinic at Semmelweis University
- » Dr. János Levendovszky, information scientist trained at MTA, and Professor, Budapest Univ. of Technology and Economics
- » Dr. György Könczei, sociologist, trained at the Sociology Dept., MTA, and Director, Occupational Rehabilitation Research Group, ELTE
- » Dr. Zoltán Kövecses, linguist, trained at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Professor, School of English and American Studies, ELTE
- » Dr. Beáta Sperlágh, principal research fellow in life sciences, genomics and biotechnology for health, Institute of Experimental Medicine, MTA
- » Dr. Tamás Sándor Biró, Research Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics
- » Dr. György Granasztói, Chairman, scientific advisory board, Professor Emeritus, ELTE
- » Dr. János Csapó, Ph.D. in agricultural science, Institute of Chemistry, Pannon Agricultural University of Kaposvár
- » Dr. Miklós Tisza, Ph.D. in technical science, Professor of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, University of Miskolc
- » Dr. László Szirmay-Kalos, Ph.D in literature, researcher, Institute of Hungarian and Comparative Literature, University of Debrecen
- » Miklós Rontó, University of Miskolc
- » Dr. Erzsébet Róth, University of Pécs Medical School
- » Mihály Hoppál, Budapest, whose field includes folklore, folk art and mythology research, and whose ethnic research has taken him to the U.S. to study the Hungarian American community

Other award winners included: Katalin Keserű, art historian; Lajos Pósa, mathematician; Sándor Sonkodi, M.D.; Judit Demeter, M.D.; Katalin É. Kiss, linguist; and Rezső Lovas, physicist.



Charles Simonyi, founder of the Charles Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences.



### Károly Simonyi Prize for Excellence in the Sciences

In 2002, Dr. Simonyi established two annual awards for excellence: one in the physical sciences and one in technical education and research in honor of his late father, Prof. Károly Simonyi. He was an internationally recognized electrical engineer and author of *Physics: A Cultural History*.

The agreement to provide funding for the operation of the Károly Simonyi Board of Trustees was made between the Coalition and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA) in Budapest. The award, 3 million HUF or approximately \$15,000 each, was presented annually on Hungarian Science Day and supported the development of scientific endeavors of Hungarians living in Hungary and the region.

#### Award recipients included:

##### Physics:

- » Zoltán Gábos, corresponding member, MTA, retired Professor, Babes-Bolyai University of Kolozsvár, (Cluj-Napoca) Romania
- » Dr. Gabriella Pála, physicist and internationally acknowledged expert of Hungarian nuclear research
- » Dr. Tamás Tél, Professor of the Dept. of Theoretical Physics, ELTE
- » Zoltán Szőkefalvi-Nagy, Deputy Director Research Institute for Particle and Nuclear Physics Central Research Institute of Physics, MTA
- » Dr. Győző Farkas, academic consultant, Research Institute for Solid State Physics and Optics, MTA

##### Technical education and research:

- » Dr. József Bokor, a full member of MTA, for scientific achievements in the theory and control of high complexity dynamic systems
- » Márta Kurutz Kovács, a full member of MTA, Professor Emeritus, Department of Structural Mechanics, Budapest University of Technology and Economics
- » Dr. György Gergely, Professor Emeritus, Research Institute for Technical Physics, MTA
- » Ákos Zarándy, Computer and Automation Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA-SZTAKI)
- » Dr. Gábor Stépán, Dept. head, Budapest University of Technology and Economics



#### László G. Fülöp

HAC Vice President, 2006-2012

Raised in the towns of Tiszaécske, Máramarosziget, and Szentendre, László G. Fülöp was conscripted to a forced labor division in Komló and Budapest in 1954-55. He took an active role in the Revolution of 1956, then fled to Austria in January of 1957. He studied architecture in Vienna, Austria and at the University of Minnesota; he worked in private practice, then at the Universities of Minnesota and Wisconsin as Director of Planning and Construction 1975-90. With his wife Ágnes Sylvester, Mr. Fülöp has long been a leader of the Association of the Minnesota Hungarians. He has been a member of the Executive Committee of the Hungarian American Coalition since 1996, a former President of MBK, and a member of the AHF. The Republic of Hungary has honored László Fülöp for his many contributions with the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary.



# Support for Educational Institutions

Central to the Coalition's educational support is its commitment to institutions themselves. Without funding to maintain and improve facilities and defray tuition costs, Hungary's institutions of higher learning cannot succeed, or even survive. The generosity of countless Hungarian Americans through programs of the Coalition has allowed these institutions to grow and thrive.

## Supporting the Kolozsvári Reformed Kollégium and the Godparents' Program

In 1991, Bishop Csiha Kálmán visited North America on a critical fundraising mission. His goals were to earn support for the Reformed Church's newly re-opened high school in Kolozsvár, Transylvania, and to build ties between its students and individuals in the U.S. and Canada.

Shut down by Ceausescu, Kolozsvári Reformed Kollégium had eventually earned government permission to re-open but had not been allowed to return to its original, 300-year-old building. The school was forced to rent woefully inadequate and inconvenient classroom and dormitory space. As the rental agreement neared expiration, it was imperative that the Reformed Church begin construction of a new facility. With the generous support of the Dutch Reformed Church and Hungarian American individuals, organizations and churches, the first stage of construction was completed in 1993.

Bishop Csiha's desire to strengthen ties between his students and people in North America led to the founding of the "Godparents' Program" program. With a simple \$20-a-month donation, contributors became "Godparents" to students, many of whom could not afford room and board or even books. The program supported 150 students for the 1992-93 school year, and continued to grow thereafter.

Today, Gabriella Nádas – a Coalition Board member and niece of Bishop Csiha – continues to administer the "Godparents' Program" from Cleveland. It has paid for major renovations to the school and allowed several thousand students to complete their studies. Her story is below.



Students of the Kolozsvári Reformed Kollégium and Lauer with her "Godchildren": Csaba Fórián, Melinda Geréb, Edith K. Lauer, Árpád Székely, Principal, and László Bányai.

*"If I were to characterize the Hungarian American Coalition, I would use the word "leadership." In 1990, with the changing political winds in Central and Eastern Europe, the Hungarian Reformed Church in Transylvania received permission to reopen its centuries old, Hungarian schools that had been shut down in communist Romania. Due to the systematic confiscation of school buildings from the Reformed church, the most immediate challenge was to find housing and classrooms to accommodate the hundreds of students who enrolled in the Reformed Kollégiums. Therefore, in 1990, Reformed Bishop Kálmán Csiha came to the U.S. to raise much-needed funds for the schools. On his recommendation a "Godparents' Program" was created through which Hungarian American families could sponsor Hungarian students in the Kolozsvár Reformed Kollégium, and other Reformed Church schools.*

*The Calvin Synod, a founding member of the Coalition, declared the school re-openings an important part of their mission. The restitution of confiscated church properties was a crucially important issue in the 1990's, and it was actively promoted by the Coalition and the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation. Through their*



On the morning of graduation, the students march through the school singing the traditional graduation song carrying a symbolic package of provisions for the long road ahead.



Gabriella Nádas and Bishop Kálmán Csiha in 1991.

*network of contacts with U.S. officials, there was finally a window of opportunity in late 2002 to regain possession of one of the school buildings in Kolozsvár. Together, we organized a campaign that flooded the office of Romanian Prime Minister Adrian Nastase with a hundred letters urging him to return the building. In late December, Kollégium Principal Árpád Székely, was told by the authorities that one of the buildings could be occupied by the school in January, 2003.*

*In the past 21 years, thanks to our generous donors, 661 high school students have been sponsored through our “Godparents’ Program.” In addition, funds were sent for the much-needed restoration of school buildings in Kolozsvár, Székelyudvarhely and Nagyenyed. Our total collections to date are close to 1.5 million dollars. 1190 Hungarian students – a remarkable number – have graduated just from the Kolozsvár Reformed Kollégium. During this time, Edith and her husband, John, have attended many graduation ceremonies updating us all on the school, its challenges, its graduates and our ongoing “Godparents’ Program.” These frequent visits have not only formed closer bonds between the Transylvanian Reformed Church students and their American Godparents, but have also deepened our insight into the centuries-long, strong Hungarian cultural heritage in Transylvania.”*

– Gabriella Nádas, Coalition Board Member

An important aspect of the program has been students’ correspondence with their “Godparents.” Their moving letters nourished the very friendships Bishop Csiha envisioned:

*“...I thank you for your kind letter which made me unbelievably happy...what surprised me most was your understanding tone. Then when I found the extra gift in your letter addressed to my Mother, I simply couldn’t wait to get to my faraway home. How very happy my dear mother will be and what joy it will cause her to think that from such a long way away there is someone who feels our needs, our sadness, and cares enough to help.”*

– 14-year-old student of Kolozsvári Kollegium

### **Sapientia University Building Dedicated in Kolozsvár (Cluj)**

#### **Coalition Members Among Major Supporters**

June 2003 marked the historic dedication of the newly restored Kolozsvár campus of Sapientia – Hungarian University of Transylvania.

At the dedication, University President Sándor Tonk stressed the significance of a Hungarian language university as the center for research, intellectual and leadership development for the 1.5 million-strong historic Hungarian community of Romania.

The city of Kolozsvár, where the Hungarian language state-run Bolyai University was established in 1945, has a rich 400-year history as the center of Hungarian higher education in Transylvania. In 1959 under the direction of then-Party Secretary Nicolae Ceausescu the communist government ordered the merging of the Bolyai with the Romanian-language Babes University, in an effort to speed up the assimilation of Hungarians by denying them the right to native-language education and leadership development. Since 1989 Hungarian political and religious leaders have unanimously urged the Romanian government to reestablish a publicly supported Hungarian-language university. To date, the Romanian government has been unwilling to do so.

Since its inception in 2000, Sapientia has established four campuses – in Nagyvárad (Oradea), run today as a separate institution known as the Partium Christian University, Kolozsvár (Cluj), Marosvásárhely (Tirgu Mures), and Csíkszereda (Miercurea-Ciuc).

After a year-long fundraising campaign, HHRF provided \$72,000 to Sapientia University, in support of a wide range of academic activities, purchase of equipment, scholarships and professorships, and library development. Kolozsvár-born Prof. Zoltán Öváry and a number of anonymous donors were among the 400 Hungarian Americans who supported the campaign.

László Hámos, President of the HHRF and Coalition Executive Committee member, unveiled the marble plaque listing major Hungarian American donors to the Sapientia University. Coalition members listed include The Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, Minnesota Hungarians, Edith and John Lauer, Beáta and Andor Nas, Judit and László Papp, and Gyula Várallyay. Edith and John Lauer attended the dedication ceremony in Kolozsvár.

Presently Sapientia has 1600 students and 300 professors. Departments include Environmental Studies, Computer Science, Industrial IT and Automation, Information Technology, Mechatronics, Social Work/Education, Regional Development and European Integration, Accounting/Computer Science, Agricultural Economics, Romanian Language and Literature/English Language and Literature.



If I were to characterize the Hungarian American Coalition,  
I would use the word "leadership!"

— Gabriella Nadas

### Funding Renovations at Semmelweis University

The Hungarian American Coalition, in July 2010, approved a \$525,000 grant for the reconstruction of a lecture hall at the First Department of Medicine of Budapest's Semmelweis University. Awarded to the Foundation for the Onco-Haematological Patients, the grant was made possible by a generous donation from the Charles Simonyi Foundation for the Arts and Sciences. The Simonyi Fund grant helped rebuild the University's 100-year-old lecture hall, which had fallen into grave disrepair.

Semmelweis University has a more than 230-year old tradition of academic excellence and commitment to the education of physicians. Nearly 3,000 students are currently enrolled at the Faculty of Medicine. English-language medical training is offered to more than 800 of those students in three specialties. The associated university hospitals have 2,800 beds and admit about 112,000 patients annually, while the outpatient departments care for approximately 2.1 million patients each year.

Renovated Lecture Hall at Semmelweis University.



The renovation of the Lecture Hall at  
the first  
**Department of Medicine**  
of Semmelweis University  
was made possible by  
a grant from the  
**Charles Simonyi Fund**  
for the Arts and Sciences  
through the  
**Hungarian American Coalition**  
and the  
Foundation for  
Onco-Hematological patients.





# Special Projects

## **USAID Funded Casemapping Education Project**

The Hungarian American Coalition administered and completed a health care educational project in 1998. Funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the project provided seven Hungarian hospitals with improved quality and financial management tools. More than 150 professionals from 17 Hungarian hospitals participated in the sessions. The two-day seminars were held in Csorna, Szombathely, Debrecen, Karcag and Budapest.

Casemapping integrates clinical pathways techniques and financial cost management, and is used extensively in American hospitals.

“In Hungary, these have generally been separate undertakings and hospitals have not been getting the combined value of these approaches,” said George J. Pogan, FACHE, MS.HYG, the Project Director. The project consultants taught the use of these techniques to professional staff in the 17 hospitals using the latest studies from the United States and a “Guidebook” developed by the consultants.

After being trained in casemapping techniques, the Hungarian health care professionals were able to improve clinical services by eliminating unnecessary procedures, refining the scheduling and coordination of patient services, and selecting more appropriate drugs. This in turn reduced overall pharmacy and length of stay costs, and led to overall more efficient delivery of care.

“While we have tried to use some of these techniques, casemapping provides the framework for us to help manage the care and the costs associated with the care and rehabilitation of the patient more efficiently” stated Dr. Éva Lengyel, Associate Medical Director at the National Medical Rehabilitation Institute in Budapest.

An added benefit has been the improved communication among the health professionals involved with the patient.

*“As I look back, the thing that struck me most was the eagerness to learn of the Hungarian clinicians and business persons in the hospitals. They met in the study groups with enthusiasm and were able to develop consensus on the management of a patient diagnosis. During a coffee break one of the surgeons told me that he has been working for 20 years with the anesthesiologist in the group, yet this was the first time they had sat down to work out a protocol together. The medical director of a hospital told me: “How useful this (course) would be for every hospital in Hungary.” In a way, this project provided the seeds for the transition of the process of care in Hungarian hospitals and demonstrated a relationship between the cost and clinical outcomes by identifying cost drivers and the ability of the clinical staff to effect change with improved outcomes of care.”*

— George Pogan, FACHE, Coalition Board Member, Fellow  
and Past Regent of the American College of Healthcare Executives

## **Duna TV**

After working on this issue for many years, Duna TV, the Hungarian public satellite television service based in Budapest, secured a grant from the Hungarian Parliament to begin North American broadcast services in 2000.

Leaders of the Coalition, together with officials at Duna TV, recognized the vital potential of Hungarian television to inform and link Hungarian Americans with those in Central Europe. The Coalition and Duna TV formed a partnership and began promoting the need for a North American broadcast as early as 1994.

The Coalition was credited with playing a lead role in achieving the broadcast. In October 1998, HAC petitioned Prime Minister Orbán about Duna TV and began to seek the support of the Hungarian government. Coalition leaders continued to raise the Duna TV issue at every forum.

“It’s truly a worthy cause,” said Zsolt Szekeres, project leader for the Coalition. “Duna TV will be a godsend for Hungarians in the U.S. and Canada, bringing us into daily contact with the everyday reality of Hungary and the surrounding countries.”

Between 15,000 and 25,000 viewers in the U.S. and Canada were expected to subscribe to Duna TV, based on the results of a 1998 market survey funded by the Hungarian American Coalition and Duna TV. The North American broadcasts consist of a daily six-hour segment, repeated four times per day. László Hámos, Coalition Board Member said: “It is about time that Hungary reaches out to this very important diaspora.”



“The Coalition’s energetic efforts really have been crucial in keeping this issue on the table.”

— János Horváth, Fidesz Member of Parliament  
HAC Gala Honoree, 2011

### English-language Training for Hungarian Embassy

As part of its educational outreach, the Coalition also provided English language training for personnel at the Hungarian embassy in Washington, D.C. Classes were given at three skill levels and were taught by volunteer English teachers.

### Visiting Medical Scholars Program

Helping Hungarian professionals establish mutually beneficial relationships with their American counterparts has always been one of the Coalition’s objectives. In 1992, the Coalition helped launch this successful program under the guidance of Dr. Béla Jankó.

*“Among the first Coalition-sponsored projects was the Visiting Medical Scholars Program supported by donations from two individuals who were particularly interested in medical education projects in Hungary. They were Dr. Béla Jankó, a physician in Monterey and an undisclosed American patient of his who was extremely grateful for her contact with Hungary. These funds covered travel expenses to California for the dean of the Semmelweis University Medical School and two medical professors. With Dr. Jankó’s contacts, the Coalition was able to make arrangements for the Semmelweis delegation to meet their counterparts at the Stanford University Hospital in Palo Alto, the University of California Medical Center in San Francisco, the Syntex Pharmaceutical Company, and several companies working on medical instrumentation.”*

— Geza Kadar, Jr., HAC Legal Counsel



**George J. Pogan**  
HAC Secretary

George J. Pogan, a 3rd generation Hungarian American, has served on the Coalition Board since 1991. In 1989, he served as Chair of a 14-person delegation to Hungary and witnessed the fall of the communist government and the birth of the Republic of Hungary firsthand. As a health care consultant to Hungary since 1991, Mr. Pogan has provided assistance to hospitals, health professionals and has been involved in health professional exchanges with the Cleveland Clinic. He helped establish the Cleveland-Miskolc Sister City relationship and has served on the Board and Executive Committee of the Bethlen Communities in Ligonier, PA, where he remains active. He and his wife Sandy have two children and live in Chagrin Falls, OH.



# Cultural Programs

Among its goals and initiatives, the Hungarian American Coalition takes particular pride and pleasure in helping foster appreciation for Hungary's history and culture. The range of sponsored events – from commemorations in the Capitol to concerts in community churches – reflects the depth and breadth of Hungarian heritage and Hungarian identity, and is a reminder of the importance of sharing that heritage with generations to come and the U.S. public at large.

## Music

### **The Béla Bartók Choir and Orchestra Tours**

Twice in the past two decades, HAC helped bring the music of the Béla Bartók Choir and Orchestra to thousands of admirers with multi-city tours through the United States and Canada.

The 1997 concert tour entertained audiences at Barnard College, Riley University, Rutgers University, and the University of Maryland. The Choir also appeared at the World Bank, the United Nations, the U.S. Senate, The First United Methodist Church and the Piedmont Arts Association of Martinsville, VA.

Sponsors of the 1997 tour included the Coalition, Friendship Ambassadors Foundation, the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation (HHRF), the American Hungarian Foundation, Barnard College of Columbia University, University of Maryland and Rutgers University, the First Methodist Church and the Piedmont Arts Association.

The success of the 1997 tour led to a more expansive undertaking in 2010: an eight-city North American tour across the United States and Canada sponsored by a number of Hungarian Canadians and Hungarian Americans. Zsolt Szekeres served as coordinator and organizer of both tours.

2005 Concert: Béla Bartók Choir and University Orchestra.



### Highlights of the 2010 tour included:

- » An appearance at Toronto's Hungarian Canadian Cultural Centre, part of an event commemorating the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Proceeds benefitted Transylvanian flood victims.
- » A Vancouver performance sponsored by the Hungarian Cultural Alliance, its inaugural event.
- » A Seattle appearance sponsored by the Hungarian American Association of Washington, the Seattle-Pécs Sister City Association, and Helen M. Szablya, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Hungary in Seattle. Daniel Petersen, Executive Director of the Seattle Youth Symphony, served as main organizer.
- » An Oakland, CA concert sponsored by Eva E. Voisin, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Hungary; Katalin Vörös, University of California, Berkeley; and the Holy Names University. Anne Laskey of the Kodály Center for Music Education served as main organizer.
- » A performance at San Francisco's First Unitarian Universalist Church, sponsored by Mr. Geza Kadar, Jr., and the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco. San Francisco State University sponsored and hosted a second performance.
- » A New York performance at St. Peter's Church, Citicorp Center, sponsored by HHRF and the Manhattan Hungarian Network.



Organizations like the Hungarian American Coalition help us celebrate the rich history and vibrant culture Hungarian Americans have brought to our shores. These efforts connect individuals to their past, and reaffirm our founding ideals for future generations.

As you mark this special milestone, I wish you all the best for continued success in the years ahead.

— President Barack Obama

For the 2010 tour's final concert, the Széchenyi István Hungarian School and Kindergarten sponsored the ensemble's return performance to the Kirkpatrick Chapel in New Brunswick, N.J.

*"We have realized again how beautiful and luxuriant our Hungarian music is. It was wonderful to hear all this through the performance of these talented young Hungarians."*

— Mr. Zsolt Balla, Director of the Széchenyi István Hungarian School and Kindergarten

### Gergely Bogányi, Hungarian Pianist Celebrates Liszt

To mark the 200th Anniversary year of Ferenc Liszt's birth in 1811, the Coalition sponsored virtuoso pianist Gergely Bogányi's performances in November, 2011, at the Hungarian Embassy in Washington D.C and at the Cleveland Institute of Music in Cleveland, OH.



Gergely Bogányi is an exceptional pianist whose technique and artistic interpretation have won him high international acclaim. The programs featured works by Liszt and by Frederic Chopin, whose interpretation is Mr. Bogányi's specialty.

The Coalition is grateful to the Hungarian Embassy in Washington for hosting Mr. Bogányi's concert. The Cleveland concert of Mr. Bogányi was sponsored by Drs. Jeanette and Glenn Brown, and Edith and John Lauer, with organizational assistance by Ms. Andrea Mészáros and the Cleveland Hungarian Heritage Society. Mr. Bogányi's international travel was underwritten by the Balassi Institute of Budapest.





Senator George Voinovich of Ohio speaks at the "Carl Lutz and the Legendary Glass House Exhibit" in the Russell Senate Office Building.

## Commemorations and Exhibits

### The Glass House Exhibit and Carl Lutz Commemorative Plaque

Carl Lutz, the Swiss Vice-Consul who also represented the U.S. government in Hungary during the War years, rescued thousands of Jews in Budapest during the Holocaust by issuing protective documents and establishing Swiss "safe houses." The most famous of these was the "Glass House," an industrial building that provided refuge for more than 3,000 Jews during World War II.

The Coalition, together with other organizations, honored the memory of Carl Lutz on three occasions. On April 19, 2008 the Coalition organized and supported a week-long exhibit, "Carl Lutz and the Legendary Glass House in Budapest" at the Kossuth House in Washington, D.C., headquarters of the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America. Co-sponsors of the exhibit were the Carl Lutz Foundation, the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation, the Embassy of Hungary and the Embassy of Switzerland.

In 2009 with the support of Sen. George Voinovich and Sen. Robert Casey, the Coalition helped bring the traveling exhibit "Carl Lutz and the Legendary Glass House in Budapest" to the Rotunda of the Russell Senate Office building. Co-sponsors included the Carl Lutz Foundation, the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice, and the Mensch International Foundation, as well as the embassies of Switzerland, Israel and Hungary.

A reception featured remarks from Sen. George Voinovich, Sen. Joe Lieberman, Rep. Dennis Kucinich, György Vámos, President of the Carl Lutz Foundation, Swiss Ambassador Urs Ziswiler, Israeli Ambassador Sallai Meridor, Mrs. Annette Lantos, Mrs. Katrina Swett, President of the Lantos Foundation, and Coalition President Max Teleki who was the evening's Master of Ceremonies.

Mr. Jean Greenstein, a Holocaust survivor, shared his moving personal story of working as an underground messenger, delivering documents to the Glass House.

*"In 1944, the Jewish population of Budapest had many enemies, but when the clouds appeared they were not alone. A few career diplomats and some people fulfilling temporary diplomatic service extended a helping hand. The saving of the many lives in Budapest in 1944, at the height of the horrors of the Second World War, is the story of humanism."*

— György Vámos, President of the Carl Lutz Foundation



2010 - Dr. János Martonyi dedicates the Carl Lutz Plaque as Max Teleki looks on.

Also recognized were a large number of wartime diplomatic heroes who took part in the Budapest rescue.

In 2010, in a related initiative, Dr. János Martonyi, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Hungary, unveiled a memorial plaque on Carl Lutz's residence in Washington, D.C. This was his first official visit to Washington as Hungary's Foreign Minister. The Coalition co-sponsored the event with the Carl Lutz Foundation, the Government of the Republic of Hungary, and the Lantos Foundation.

At the unveiling, Dr. Martonyi recalled the bravery and nobility of Carl Lutz during the war in Budapest, and stressed the importance of remembering the past.

Ambassador Béla Szombati welcomed a number of distinguished guests at a reception at his residence, among them: Ambassador Mark Palmer, Mrs. Annette Lantos, Mr. and Mrs. Ferenc Katona, Holocaust Museum, Prof. Charles Gati, Mr. Mason

Kalfus and Mrs. Susan Burgess, who resided in the former residence of Carl Lutz, Mr. Stephen Varga, President of the William Penn Association and HAC's Chairman of the Board, and Mr. and Mrs. Les Megyeri, President of the Hungarian Reformed Federation, among others.

Speaking at the reception, Tomica Tillmann, grandson of former Congressman Tom Lantos quoted an old Jewish saying: “he who saves a life saves the world”; Lutz saved many thousands of lives, thus saving the world many times over.

### Zoltán Szabó, Hungarian Writer, Remembered

In 1998, HAC provided support for two projects commemorating the legacy of Hungarian writer Zoltán Szabó (1912-1984).

- » A bust of Zoltán Szabó was inaugurated in the village of Tard, in northeastern Hungary, the scene of his first and most famous book.
- » A commemorative plaque was placed on the wall of his house in Josselin, France.

During the interwar years, Zoltán Szabó’s sociography *The Situation in Tard* focused public attention on poverty in the Hungarian countryside; while his *Geography of Love*, half travelogue, half diary, was a lyrical testament to the poetic appeal of the regions of Hungary. Following the war, Szabó served as Cultural Attache of the Hungarian Embassy in Paris. He resigned in 1949 in protest against the communist show trials underway in Hungary. He emigrated to London, and later to Josselin, France. For many years he was a respected commentator for Radio Free Europe. Four volumes of his prolific postwar writings have been published.

During five decades of publications, Szabó consistently repudiated political and intellectual oppression in all forms. Shunned by Hungary’s official intelligentsia under communism, his works are being rediscovered in present-day Hungary. His concept of a Hungarian nation as a community of values that extends beyond borders resounds with Hungarians throughout the world.

### Memorial Conference on Sütő András Held in Debrecen

Since Mr. Sütő’s death in 2006, the Coalition has worked to keep alive the memory of this outstanding writer and respected human rights advocate. Toward that end, the Coalition co-sponsored a 2010 “Sütő András Conference” in Debrecen, Hungary, where literary historians and critics commented on the timeliness and permanence of his life’s work.

The Conference marked the 20th anniversary of a tragic event in 1990 in Marosvásárhely (Tirgu Mures), Romania, when Mr. Sütő was severely beaten by a Romanian mob and lost his sight. The attack suspended hopes for improved relations between Romanians and the Hungarian minority just months after the Romanian Revolution had toppled the universally hated Ceausescu regime.

Between 1956 and 1989, Mr. Sütő wrote dozens of short stories, historic dramas and novels creating a special language of symbols and historic parallels that helped him avoid censorship, even as the symbolic language was easily decoded by his readers. In 1970, he wrote what many consider to be his most remarkable work, *My Mother Promises Easy Dreams*, a realistic look at the effects of forced collectivization in his birthplace, the village of Pusztakamarás (Camarasu).

Organizers of the “Sütő András Conference” included the Institute of Literary Studies, Debrecen Working Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Hungarian Culture Foundation’s András Sütő Circle. The Coalition’s sponsorship made the conference possible.

### Stage and Film

#### ***Incubator - A Documentary on Growing Up Hungarian American***

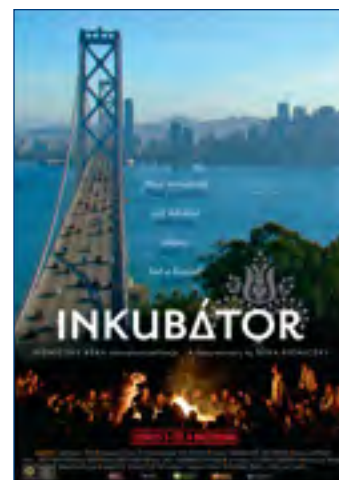
In 2010, Coalition member Réka Pigniczky received HAC support for touring the U.S. to present her film, *Incubator*, a documentary about growing up Hungarian in the U.S.

The film was screened in New Brunswick and Garfield, NJ, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Atlanta, Detroit, and San Francisco, Berkeley and Portola Valley, CA. The Coalition helped with the film’s promotion and distribution in the United States. *Incubator* went on to screenings at the August Itt-Ott (MBK) conference.

Ms. Pigniczky was born and raised in the U.S. by parents who fled Hungary during the 1956 Revolution and Freedom Fight. Her film tells the story of an unlikely, albeit dramatic reunion – involving a Hungarian rock opera performed in California’s Sierra Nevada Mountains by a cast of 40-something



Transylvanian writer, András Sütő



Hungarian-Americans. They meet in the same place they performed *Stephen, the King* as teenagers, 25 years earlier, during 1984, at a time when the Soviets still had tanks stationed in Hungary, and the country was isolated behind the Iron Curtain. In the film, the reunion makes for an emotional and humorous portrait of one of many ethnic 'incubators' operating in the U.S. The characters meet not only to reminisce, but also to figure out just who they've become.

The film premiered in Budapest at the National Film Week and ran in select Hungarian theaters.

### ***No Conductor* and *In Shadow* Performances in Hungary**

In 1993, at the invitation of the Hungarian National Theater, the Threshold Theater Company of New York took to Hungary its acclaimed productions of *No Conductor* and *In Shadow* by Transylvanian playwright, Géza Páskándi. The Troupe performed in three cities over ten days.

The performances were funded by HAC, Malév Airlines and Ward Howell International. Director Pamela Billig, well known for directing many other English-language premieres of contemporary Hungarian plays by András Sütő and Miklós Vámos, earned rave reviews from Clive A. Barnes of the *New York Post* on the American premiere of the two plays.

Eugene Brogyányi, co-founder with Billig of the Threshold Theater Company, was the prize-winning translator of *No Conductor*.



Hungarian artist Nóra Szabó and her Coalition-sponsored exhibit.

### **Other Artistic Endeavors**

#### **Hungarian Youth Talent Contest in Vojvodina**

In 2000 and 2001, HAC proudly served as a major sponsor of the Teenage Song Competition and Festival in Temerin, Vojvodina in Serbia, designed to identify and support talented young Hungarians in the field of pop music. Contestants competed before an audience and jury, performing popular songs in Hungarian. The events were attended by Zsolt Szekeres who saw them as uplifting, positive experiences for young people whose youth was largely overshadowed by war, privation and discrimination.

#### **Hungarian Exhibition of the Artist Nóra Szabó**

The Hungarian American Coalition was privileged to co-sponsor in 1995 the exhibition of Hungarian-born U.S. artist Nóra Szabó – longtime Coalition member and well-known contemporary painter – at the prestigious Vasarely Museum in Budapest. Nóra Szabó was only the second Hungarian American exhibited by the museum, which presents outstanding Hungarian-born artists who live and paint in the West.

#### **Nagybánya Artist Retreats in Romania**

In the early 1900s the artist colony of Nagybánya was the center of the Impressionist School of painting in Hungary. After the 1920 Treaty of Trianon, Nagybánya became Baia Mare, part of Romania, and many prominent Hungarian artists fled to Szentendre, Hungary, to establish a new art colony there.

In late 1998, the prominent artist Ágoston Véső and others asked Bishop László Tőcs to help them revive the Nagybánya tradition of holding summer artist retreats there. Bishop Tőcs turned to the Coalition to help fund the first two retreats for 10-12 artists. Soon thereafter, beautiful paintings were being created in Nagybánya (Baia Mare) once more.

### **Video History of Hungary**

In 1993-95 Director Roger Conant produced a video series from the collections of Hungarian museums, libraries and archives to tell the story of Hungary's history for an English speaking audience. The eight-part series would cover the history of Hungary from the Finno-Ugrian migrations to 1989. The project was co-sponsored by Indiana University, Bloomington, Department of Uralic & Altaic Studies, the U.S. Department of Education, and Budapest Bank. The Coalition offered extensive support to the project.

# John N. Lauer

John N. Lauer, long-time supporter of the Hungarian American Coalition, has had a long and distinguished business career. Since 2005 he has served as non-executive Chairman of the Board for Diebold, Inc. He is former Chairman, President and CEO of Oglebay Norton Company, Cleveland, OH. Prior to Oglebay, Lauer served as President and COO of the B.F. Goodrich Company. He began his career at Celanese Corp. and was a top executive in 1987 when it was bought by the German Hoechst Company.

Lauer has served on the Boards of Cleveland-area civic and arts organizations such as the Visiting Nurses Association of Northeast Ohio and the Cleveland Opera. He is presently a member of the Board of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon National Fraternity, will be Chair of the Moreland Courts Condominium Association, and in June, 2012, will become Chairman of the University of Maryland College Park Foundation Board of Trustees, a Board he first joined in 1993.

Due to his strong commitment to higher education, Lauer established The John N. Lauer Banneker/Key Scholarship at the University of Maryland in 1997 that provides merit-based awards for outstanding undergraduates who pursue science.

He is an avid hunter, fisherman and enthusiastic traveler with a special interest in Mayan civilization and culture. His thorough knowledge of Hungary, Romania and Slovakia has been gained through accompanying his wife, Edith on dozens of visits to the region. In 1971 the Lauers traveled to Hungary, the first-ever visit for John and an emotional return for Edith since her family's escape in 1956. In 1977 they undertook an adventure-filled first trip to Transylvania, Romania, where observation by the feared Securitate was commonplace, and Hungarians often faced police interrogation about their meetings with foreigners. Dozens of trips followed through the years, especially to Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca), where Lauer became the official chronicler for Gabriella Nádas's annual reports about the status of the Kolozsvár Reformed Kollégium through his comprehensive travelogues and photographs. Starting in 1995, the Lauers also traveled often to Pozsony (Bratislava), Slovakia, to visit the Doboses, Madách Publishers and attend the annual Posonium Literary Awards.

Dubbed an Honorary Hungarian in 1993 by Ambassador Pál Tar, he has been one of the most active and generous supporters of the Coalition since its founding in 1991. The Lauer Family's Pannonius Foundation has supported such projects as the Godparents' Program for the Reformed Kollégium of Kolozsvár, Madách Posonium Publishers and the Posonium Literary Awards in Slovakia.

Lauer received a B.S. degree in chemical engineering from the University of Maryland, College Park, and an MBA from Texas A&M University, Kingsville, TX. Both institutions have honored him with outstanding alumnus awards.

*"Since the Coalition's founding, I have been an avid and enthusiastic supporter of the mission and many of the excellent projects of this organization. With interest and pride, I have encouraged the efforts of my wife Edith and daughter Andrea as they have actively participated in HAC's many accomplishments, which have positively changed numerous lives in the Carpathian Basin, in the Hungarian American community, and, on occasion, have been able to inform government policies and direction.*

*The Coalition's success has been the best possible return on investment!"*

— John N. Lauer



John N. Lauer



1. Gabriella Nádas with Bishop László Tőkés at a CHDP Gala, 1993 2. Honorary Consul László Bőjtös and Ambassadors Géza Jeszenesky and Pál Tar 3. NATO Conference speakers U.S. Army Colonel Árpád Szűrgyi and Lt. General Nicholas B. Kehoe of the U.S. Air Force 4. First Lady Hilary Clinton visits Hungary in 2008 – Edith K. Lauer, Jenő Megyesy, Éva Voisin, Hilary Clinton, Helen Szablya and Emese Pring Kornjáthy 5. 2001 Conference – Panel Discussion on the "Restoration of Vojvodina's Autonomy" at the U.S. Capitol 6. At the Kossuth House for Prime Minister Orbán's trip to Washington D.C. in 1998 7. HAC Congressional intern, Péter Wendl, at White House NATO Enlargement signing ceremony





**Left:** Róbert Gábor, János Horváth, August Molnár at the Kossuth House.  
**Below:** Minority Conference 1995: László Hámos, Frank Koszorús, Jr., Dr. Constantine Menges, Ambassador Charles Thomas, Dr. Daniel McDonald and Edith Lauer.



# INFORMATION & ADVOCACY



*"I have had the pleasure of working with the Hungarian American Coalition since January, 1994, when we met one snowy night in Milwaukee for a "spirited" discussion of the shape of post-Cold War Europe and the role of NATO enlargement. Building on the partnership we forged then, the Hungarian American Coalition and the U.S. government worked together in the years that followed, under Presidents Clinton and Bush, to erase the Cold War line and help create a Europe whole, free and at peace. The Hungarian American Coalition was a great partner in this worthy task."*

– Daniel Fried, former Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs;  
 former Special Assistant to President Clinton for Central and Eastern Europe  
 and to President Bush for Europe and Eurasia

HHRF receives the "Minorites Award" from the Hungarian Government in 1995. László Hámos, Emese Latkóczy, Zsolt Szekeres and Bulcsú Veress share the honor.



László Hámos, Governor George Pataki, Max Teleki and Zsolt Szekeres meet with Slovak officials.





# NATO Expansion

When we look back on the Coalition's major accomplishments in the past 20 years, our five years of advocacy for NATO expansion and Hungary's inclusion along with Poland and the Czech Republic as new members must certainly be considered a remarkable success. Between 2004-2009 the Coalition played an active role in the development of U.S. policy at a critical time in post-communist history. Putting the newly free democracies of Central Europe under NATO's umbrella was a goal widely supported by the Clinton White House, many members of Congress, and not least, by many constituencies of voters of Central European origin. But there were also doubters and opponents who had to be persuaded that NATO expansion would indeed serve U.S. interests.

The following speech made in 2009 at the Hungarian Embassy in Washington, D.C. by Edith Lauer tells the full story of the Coalition's participation in NATO expansion.

## **The Remarkable Story of NATO Expansion**

A lot has been written about how the process of NATO's first expansion developed from the early 1990's until the accession ceremony held almost exactly ten years ago today. However, much less is known about the role American ethnic communities played in the long process. Today, I'd like to tell you how one such organization - the Hungarian American Coalition - became a committed advocate and participant in NATO enlargement.



Coalition members participate in Jan., 1994 meeting with V.P. Al Gore and White House officials in Milwaukee, WI

The Coalition was founded in 1991 after the long-hoped-for fall of communism, to represent the interests of the Hungarian American community. We Hungarians together with millions of ethnic Americans hailing from Central and Eastern Europe wanted to seize the opportunity to assure the security and freedom of our former homeland within the framework of Western Europe. We came to recognize that our fervent hope matched U.S. security interests in the region: we all wanted an undivided, democratic and peaceful Europe to replace the strategic vacuum created by the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact.

President Clinton certainly recognized early on that by promoting the re-integration of the most developed new democracies to the Western European community, NATO's wider sphere of influence would serve both European and American security interests. As a bonus, his early espousal of NATO enlargement would gain the support of millions of voters of Central and Eastern European heritage.

And there were a lot of voters in this category: 20 million American citizens who soon formed an increasingly active and effective multi-ethnic umbrella organization in order to advocate NATO's eastward expansion with a stronger voice. The CEEC - Central and Eastern European Coalition - was established to coordinate the efforts of 17 national organizations made up of Ukrainians, Poles, Baltics, Slovaks, Hungarians, Romanians, and others. It played a major role in advocating for NATO expansion through its Washington presence and its ability to mobilize grassroots support where voters of Central and Eastern European heritage lived. Naturally, our Hungarian American Coalition was an active member of CEEC.

In January, 1994, the Clinton administration began a dialogue in Milwaukee with 20 leaders of the ethnic communities of the four Visegrád countries. We attended the meeting expecting to hear about NATO expansion. But during three hours of heated conversation with Sandy Berger, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security, and Dan Fried, Director of ECE for the National Security Council, and eventually Vice President Gore, we were presented another option - Partnership for Peace. Many of us present expressed strong reservations about the administration's sug-

gested requirement that the Visegrád countries participate in Partnership for Peace as a first step on the road to eventual NATO membership. We feared this represented a pull-back from the original NATO plan; it yielded to Russian fears of isolation and of rising nationalism; it gave no criteria or timetable for NATO expansion; and it did not provide the much-desired NATO commitment to mutual defense of member nations.

Several similar meetings followed in 1994 and 95. For me the most memorable one took place in March, 1994. At this meeting Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, a Russia specialist who wanted to slow the NATO expansion process, told us ethnic leaders that in his opinion a reformed Russia will not represent a threat to its former satellites. He went on: “The question is – what kind of Russia will we have in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? YOU feel Russia will revert to type and foresee a dangerous scenario; we see Russia more positively... building a benign democratic system.” Many of us strongly argued this point. Finally, the 80 year old Director of the Polish American Congress, Jan Nowak, posed two questions to Mr. Talbott: “Why did you invite us here, sir, if you think our experience with communism makes us unable to form a credible opinion about Russia?” and, more importantly, “What will happen, Mr. Talbott, if WE are right, and YOU are wrong?” No one had an answer to that question.

In retrospect, despite our reservations, Partnership for Peace proved to be a very successful arrangement for gradual integration and training. In 1995 a logistical base opened in Taszár, Hungary, to support U.S. military operations in Bosnia. Eventually, Partnership for Peace involved 27 nations with participation in more than 1,000 multilateral military training exercises.



After 50 years of great suffering and forced absence, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, through their membership in NATO, finally returned to the Western world.

But public opinion, and a number of policy experts as well as prominent journalists – Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* and others – continued to question the wisdom of NATO membership for the Central European nations. Many felt such action would alienate Russia and weaken President Yeltsin’s position; others feared NATO’s military effectiveness would be diluted by the entry of new members. There was great concern whether Russia would be given a voice in future NATO expansions or major NATO decisions. In May, 1997, a Russia-NATO Summit was held and the NATO-Russia Founding Act defined areas of cooperation between Russia and NATO. U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright assured the Central Europeans that Russia would have a “voice but not a veto.”

An intensive Coalition campaign was coordinated by the Chairman of the Coalition’s Information Committee, Frank Koszorus Jr. A key strategy of the Coalition’s advocacy was aligning itself with other influential organizations, primarily the CEEC, the Working Group on NATO Enlargement and the U.S. Committee to Expand NATO.



1994 - Coalition members László Papp, Rev. Bertalan, László Hámos, Andrew Ludányi and Edith K. Lauer alongside Alexis Herman, Director of the White House Office of Public Liaison, participate in discussions about NATO Expansion with President Clinton. Courtesy of the William J. Clinton Presidential Library



### The Coalition's advocacy focused on three fronts:

- » Congress: drafting legislation and informing Representatives of the importance of expansion; participating in conferences; testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee;
- » The White House: participation in meetings with President Clinton, Vice President Gore, Sandy Berger, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs; Dan Fried, Senior Director of Eastern and Central Europe at NSC; Jeremy Rosner, Special Advisor to the President and Secretary of State for NATO Enlargement Ratification;
- » The State Department: meeting with Strobe Talbott, Deputy Secretary of State; Richard Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary of State; James Holmes, Coordinator for ECE Assistance and others.

Finally, on July 8, 1997, at the Madrid NATO Summit invitations were extended to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to join NATO. The proposal required all 16 NATO members to ratify the entry of new members, including a two-thirds vote in the U.S. Senate.

In the meanwhile, during my and other Coalition leaders' visits to Hungary, it became obvious that Hungarians did not fully understand the stakes, and many remained opposed to the idea of Hungary in NATO. Some wished for a status of neutrality; others considered this a dangerous, false hope. Many opposed any kind of foreign influence: to our chagrin they equated potential NATO presence in Hungary with that of the hated Soviet military! There was an active anti-NATO group, the Alba Circle, and the small but loud Labor Party was also a strong opponent.

When Prime Minister Horn decided to hold a referendum on the subject in November, 1997, we knew we would have to get involved in planning an informational campaign to enable Hungarian voters to cast an educated vote. Although we had planned to do our educational project from SEED funds, in February of 1997 we were faced with a major setback. Public funds were suddenly not available to us, so unless we raised the necessary funds ourselves, we would have to give up our Hungarian project. We managed to reschedule, redesign and streamline our project after an enormous effort to raise the funds needed from foundations and corporations in record time! Our sponsors included The German Marshall Fund, the Ronald Lauder Foundation, Malév Hungarian Airlines, the U.S. Mission in Budapest, and our primary Hungarian partner, the Hungarian Atlantic Forum.



**Above:** 1997 - Hungarian Foreign Minister Ferenc Somogyi, Hungarian President Árpád Göncz and HAC President Edith K. Lauer at the Hungarian Parliament. **Right:** NATO Conference audience at the Parliament.



With the Hungarian referendum scheduled to be held November 16, 1997, our plan was to organize conferences in three cities in Hungary, entitled “Hungary in an Expanded NATO: Benefits and Responsibilities—an Open Discussion with the Hungarian People.”

The conferences featured 38 speakers, including outstanding political, economic and military experts from Hungary, NATO, Western Europe and the United States. They included: Lt. Gen. Nicholas Kehoe, Deputy Chairman of the Military Comm. of NATO and Chris Donnelly, Special Advisor to the Secretary General of NATO; Hungarian Ambassador to the U.S. György Bánlaki and Hungarian Ambassador to NATO András Simonyi; former Hungarian Ambassador to the U.S. Géza Jeszenszky; U.S. Ambassador Donald Blinken, Hungarian Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Ferenc Végh; Ms. Gina Marie Hatheway; Foreign Affairs Advisor to Ohio Senator Mike deWine; István Csicsery Rónay; Miklós Dérer; Sec. Gen. of the Hungarian Atlantic Forum and others.

When President Árpád Göncz opened the first conference at the Hungarian Parliament on November 6, all Hungarian political parties declared their support for Hungary’s NATO membership. On November 8 a full-day conference was held at the historic Reformed College in Debrecen, while the venue for the third conference was Lillafüred, outside Miskolc, on November 10. In both cities the speakers participated in a Town Hall Meeting format where both opponents and supporters asked dozens of questions. The conference series received extensive national and local media coverage in Hungary.

Our Hungarian NGO partners were most enthusiastic. They included the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the Hungarian Atlantic Council, The 1945 Foundation, The Lajos Batthány Foundation, Paul Forgács Foundation, the Institute for the History of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the Democracy after Communism Foundation.

I could relate so many stories of these conferences, but I will share only one with you. An important part in educating the Hungarian electorate in a non-partisan way was to invite both proponents and opponents of NATO membership to the conferences. In Miskolc, where the local Labor Party was an active opponent, an older man came up to me, and said, apologetically: “My dear lady, I hope you realize that I am going to have to disagree with you?” “Yes,” I replied, “that is why you have been invited.” He respectfully kissed my hand, and shaking his head, walked away: “This is just unheard of in Hungary! They’re paying our expenses so we can disagree with them!?” When he proceeded to voice his opposition to Hungary’s membership in NATO, members of the audience told him he was simply wrong, and what would he tell his grandson about why he voted against a secure future for him?

The Hungarian referendum took place on Nov. 16, 1997 and with just over 50% of the population voting, 85% supported NATO membership for Hungary! This was a significant result, as American opponents of NATO expansion would have been able to use defeat in Hungary as an effective argument in the U.S. Senate. On May 1, 1998, the U.S. Senate ratified the treaty with a vote of 80:19.

The following spring, Coalition leaders were invited to attend the historic signing ceremony marking the formal accession to NATO of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. The event took place on March 12, 1999, in Independence, Missouri, where in 1949 President Truman announced the initial creation of NATO.

Soon thereafter, in April, 1999, the Hungarian American Coalition co-hosted, with the Potomac Foundation, a Gala Dinner commemorating both the Fiftieth anniversary of NATO’s founding and the accession of Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic to the Alliance. U.S. President Bill Clinton and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán served as Honorary Patrons of the Gala Dinner. En route to the formal celebration at the White House, Prime Minister Orbán and the Hungarian delegation delivered a special greeting to Gala Dinner participants.



In retrospect, the NATO membership challenge became ours as an organization. It became a binding force which catapulted us to the heights of international engagement. Our interaction with heads of government, civil society and top NATO leaders set a new benchmark for our hopes for Hungary and for the Hungarian American Coalition.

— Anne Bader, Founder of The Bader Group,  
Coalition Board Member



Edith K. Lauer, Anne Bader, Senator Mike DeWine and Chris Donnelly, Special Advisor for Central and East European Affairs to the Secretary General of NATO.

Throughout my remarks, I have consistently used the pronoun “we.” You can well imagine that the level of activity generated by our Coalition during five years of promoting NATO expansion involved the efforts of many people. Please allow me to mention some of them:

- » **Frank Koszorús, Jr.**, who represented the Hungarian American Coalition on the Central and East European Coalition, chaired the HAC Information Committee and was extremely pro-active in Washington venues;
- » **Péter Újvági**, who introduced us to the Clinton White House, participated in all the negotiations, provided sage political advice and stayed involved in the process throughout;
- » **Zsolt Szekeres**, who was always ready to advise, help with organizational matters and administer the Coalition’s programs in Hungary and Washington;
- » **Anne Bader**, who took an active part in planning our Hungarian conferences, assuring the participation of Chris Donnelly and Lt. Gen. Kehoe, our high-ranking NATO speakers, and attended the conferences with her husband, Joseph;
- » **Lt. Gen Nick Kehoe**, who was a knowledgeable and enthusiastic speaker and hands-on participant in all three conferences;
- » **Chris Donnelly**, who spoke with credibility and conviction about NATO expansion at the Hungarian Parliament;
- » **Dan McDonald** of the Potomac Foundation, an experienced security expert, a wonderfully patient teacher, who gave invaluable advice to us on many occasions;
- » **Former Foreign Minister Géza Jeszenszky** whose historic perspective and committed Atlanticism were important contributions to the conferences;
- » **Robert Gábor** who used his outstanding Hungarian connections to secure our Hungarian partner organizations for the conferences as well as the participation of President Göncz;
- » **Foreign Minister Ferenc Somogyi**, later U.S. Ambassador, who provided assistance at key moments of the Coalition’s efforts;
- » The Coalition Board Members (in addition to those mentioned) who attended high-level meetings, made countless phonecalls and wrote hundreds of letters: Rev. Imre Bertalan, László Hámos, George Dózsa, Andrew Ludányi, George Pogan, Jenő Megyesy, Ágnes and László Fülöp, László Papp, László Bőjtös and others.



**Rev. Imre Bertalan**  
HAC Chairman, 1991-1998

Rev. Imre Bertalan was a founding member and the first Chairman of the Hungarian American Coalition as well as a former President of the AHF and HRFA. Rev. Imre Bertalan was a respected member in the Hungarian American community, since working as a part-time pastor to the Hungarian Reformed Church on Staten Island and later becoming minister of the Hungarian Reformed Church of Washington, D.C. From 1980 to 1992, he served as President of HRFA. In 2000, Rev. Bertalan was awarded the Officer’s Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary by Hungarian President Árpád Göncz and in 2007 he celebrated 25 years of pastoral service. He passed away at the age of 90. His son, Imre Bertalan Jr., is President of the Bethlen Home in Ligonier, PA and a member of the Coalition Board.



I am deeply grateful for the friendship and support of Marilyn di Giacobbe, Director of the White House Office of Public Liaison, and of Dan Fried, who finally convinced me of the value of “little steps,” and never failed to return a phone call, even when the message was one he knew I would not like! I recall long conversations with Steve Flanagan, Jim Holmes and other members of the Clinton administration, whose understanding of the need for NATO expansion provided great help in our efforts.

I also remember with great respect our three wonderful Polish partners - Jan Nowak and Myra and Caz Lenard - who taught all of us a great deal, lived a life of service and devotion to Poland, and who today must be having a celestial commemoration above!

As I look back at those years of concentrated work on the issue of NATO expansion, I feel every moment was well worth it! We, Hungarian Americans, are indeed fortunate to have lived and worked in a moment of historic opportunity, of having been able to make a significant contribution to history coming full circle: After 50 years of great suffering and forced absence, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, through their membership in NATO, finally returned to the Western world.

Remarks delivered at the Hungarian Embassy on the 10th Anniversary of Hungary's admission to NATO

© Edith K. Lauer, March 10, 2009



Edith K. Lauer seated next to President Bill Clinton and Hungarian First Lady, Zsuzsanna Göncz at the White House dinner to honor Hungarian President Árpád Göncz in 1999. Courtesy of the William J. Clinton Presidential Library

As part of the nationwide effort around the issue of NATO, the Minnesota Hungarians helped create a local support group made up of Czech, Polish and Hungarian Minnesotans. This grassroots campaign yielded remarkable results.

*“In 1996 a group of the Minnesota Hungarians (MH) joined forces with fellow Minnesotans of Czech and Polish origin to promote the idea of NATO expansion, specifically to advance the inclusion of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. We got our informal name, “The Cookie Coalition,” because a group member brought in cookies decorated with “vote for NATO” to a meeting with Sen. Wellstone. We supported each other to reach our common goal, by writing letters to Senators, collecting signatures from our communities and giving TV interviews about the advantages of NATO enlargement. One member of each group was asked to testify before a Minnesota Senate Committee and a House Committee about this issue. We were proud that Minnesota and California were the only two states that expressed support for NATO expansion.”*

— Ágnes and László Fülöp  
Leaders of the Minnesota Hungarians, Coalition Board members



### Advocacy for the Continued Expansion of NATO

The Coalition has consistently supported the continued expansion of NATO to include new members.

The Coalition believes that NATO remains an important institution for promoting security, spreading liberty and protecting Europe. It was this principle that led HAC to support NATO membership for Romania (along with Bulgaria) despite serious reservations about Romania's unfulfilled promises to improve its minority and human rights policies towards its large historic Hungarian community.

On Oct. 24, 2008, Max Teleki attended the signing ceremony in the East Room of the White House of the Protocols of Accession of Albania and Croatia for NATO membership. Within the CEEC – Central Eastern European Coalition, representing 18 U.S.-based ethnic groups – there is much discussion about the aspirations of Georgia and the countries of the Western Balkans to join the Atlantic Alliance. In April 2012, in a letter to President Obama, Mr. Teleki wrote of his support for the admission of Macedonia:

*“On behalf of the Hungarian American Coalition, I am writing to urge you to consider the interests of the Euro-Atlantic community and express your clear support towards Macedonia by encouraging member-states of the Alliance to extend a formal invitation to the Republic of Macedonia to join NATO at the upcoming May 2012 Chicago Summit.”*

The upcoming 2012 Chicago NATO Summit will provide an opportunity to advocate for future enlargement. The next expansion would likely include Macedonia, Montenegro, Georgia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Macedonia has already met standards for membership, Montenegro has made significant progress in less than two years in the Membership Action Plan (MAP), which prepares candidates to become allies, and Georgia will soon be the largest non-NATO troop contingent in Afghanistan. In addition, Bosnia-Herzegovina is about to conclude a historic agreement to reestablish a federal military authority over a once divided state. All four candidates must strengthen democratic institutions and advance the rule of law. The Chicago NATO Summit will present an opportunity to encourage these candidates to make even greater progress despite economic challenges throughout the region.



2008 - President Bush signs the White House Protocols of Accession of Albania and Croatia for NATO membership.

**NATO cannot ignore the purpose and history behind the enlargement concept:**

A Europe whole, free, and at peace can only exist by integrating once vulnerable European nations into our Euro Atlantic community of democracies, and NATO is the proper vehicle to secure our future collective security and promote democracy.

The Hungarian American Coalition will continue to support a broad open-door policy for NATO membership until all countries of the European continent are formally part of NATO's Euro-Atlantic family.



Central and East European Coalition leadership pose in the State Dining Room after meeting with President Bush and members of White House Senior Staff.

**HAC as a Founding Member of the Central East European Coalition**

To continue to advocate for NATO expansion and other common policy objectives for the region, the Hungarian American Coalition was a founding member of the Central and East European Coalition (CEEC). First established in 1994, the CEEC is presently comprised of 18 organizations from 13 ethnic communities, representing 20 million Americans of Central and East European descent.

Through the years, the Coalition has taken a leadership role in organizing conferences, seminars and Congressional meetings where member organizations communicate their shared concerns to U.S. decision-makers about various policy issues. NATO expansion and the Visa Waiver Program to include CEE countries represent two major goals of the Coalition that are being successfully promoted through the CEEC.

**Some recent highlights of CEEC events are as follows:**

- » April 26, 2012: CEEC leaders and 35 constituents from throughout the U.S. met with White House, National Security Council's Senior Staff to discuss NATO Summit, U.S.-CEE policy and U.S.-Russia policy.
- » April 25, 2012 – Annual Advocacy Day included briefings, meetings with Members of Congress, an evening event on Capitol Hill and a reception.
- » July 26, 2011 - "20 Years: Three Perspectives on the Evolution of U.S. Strategic Engagement with Central and Eastern Europe."
- » July 5, 2010 – Capital Hill Seminar on Energy Security
- » September 22, 2009 – CEEC Meets White House Officials to Discuss Missile Defense Issue

# U.S. Visa Waiver Program

## Adding Hungary to U.S. Visa Waiver Program

One of the Coalition's most challenging – and successful – advocacy initiatives between 2005-2008 was the hard-won effort to extend the U.S. Visa Waiver Program (VWP) to the Republic of Hungary. This policy decision was not an easy one: after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the visceral reaction of both the American government and the public was that the U.S. could best be protected if its security, i.e. visa requirements, was greatly tightened.

Established in 1986, the VWP enables citizens of participant countries to travel to the U.S. for tourism or business for stays of 90 days or fewer without a visa. In order to qualify for the VWP, a country must offer reciprocal privileges to U.S. citizens; have a nonimmigrant refusal rate of less than 3% and a low number of illegal overstays; and fulfill various technical border security requirements. The VWP helps promote better relations between the U.S. and its allies, eliminates unnecessary barriers to travel, stimulates business and tourism and allows U.S. embassies to focus resources in other areas.



President Bush announces expansion of the U.S. Visa Waiver Program.

President Bush announced the program expansion in 2008 at a White House Rose Garden ceremony. In addition to Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Czech Republic, South Korea and Slovakia were also included in the 2008 expansion. For these CEE countries and Hungary, this was a major symbolic step to “tear down the remaining part of the Iron Curtain.” It sent a powerful message that “America is once again, open for business.”

The Hungarian American Coalition celebrated this legislative victory after nearly three years of intense advocacy.



Damon Wilson, Senior Director for European Affairs at the National Security Council, and Special Assistant to the President, Sally Painter, Chair, Visa Waiver Equity Coalition, and Max Teleki at the Visa Waiver Program White House Rose Garden Ceremony.

“HAC and its member organizations have expended significant effort on this policy initiative, and we are delighted that these efforts have brought us to this point,” said Max Teleki, HAC President. “This new program will make it easier for Hungarian citizens to interact with Hungarian Americans: these contacts are always enriching for both sides,” added Mr. Teleki. “And it’s great to know that we don’t have to rely on war or revolution to see an upswing in the number of Hungarians entering the U.S.”

The Coalition played a critical role in encouraging and facilitating Hungary and its regional partners to work with the Administration, members of Congress and in partnership with the CEEC on the issue. HAC wrote to members and community leaders, urging them to contact their Senators on behalf of the effort to include Hungary. HAC continues to support the further expansion of the VWP, to include, among others, Poland and other neighboring countries that fulfill requirements.

*“During the Visa Waiver campaign HAC, led by Max Teleki, was singularly the most important group that engaged in the debate. Max demonstrated an amazing insight into the legislative process and an ability to galvanize diverse interests on behalf of an important foreign policy. More than any other constituent organization, HAC organized and leveraged its membership to effectively educate and inform the executive and legislative branches of government.”*

— Sally Painter, Chair, Visa Waiver Equity Coalition and Founder and COO of Blue Star Strategies, LLC

# Congressman Tom Lantos

Tom Lantos, born and educated in Budapest, was a great Hungarian American: a man of deep conviction and a passionate champion for the human rights of the oppressed. He credited Raoul Wallenberg for saving his life during the Holocaust. In 1947 he came to the U.S., where he completed his education and became a professor of economics. In 1981, he became the first and only Holocaust survivor ever elected to the U.S. Congress; he served his district of San Mateo, CA, for nearly three decades. He was the Co-Founder of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, and in 2007, he became the Chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee. Upon his retirement in 2008, he said: "All my life I have attempted to advocate civil liberty and justice; I did so in my country and in the entire world." After his death, Congress established the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, a permanent body which continues the work of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus. Despite the difficult experiences of his youth, Tom Lantos never lost his deep love for his native Hungary, which he shared with Annette Lantos, his wife of nearly 60 years. Together, they passed their heritage on to their children and grandchildren. At the Hungarian America Coalition Mikulás Dinners, he clearly enjoyed reciting Hungarian poetry and songs.

During his years in Congress, Lantos spoke out forcefully against human rights violations against Hungarian minorities perpetrated over the years by the Ceausescu dictatorship in Romania, the Milosevic regime in Serbia, and the Meciar and Fico-led governments in Slovakia. The Hungarian Human Rights Foundation and the Hungarian American Coalition depended on his authoritative voice to right the wrongs that affected Hungarian minorities.

Tom Lantos's legacy of protecting human rights and individual freedoms continues. In the final weeks of his life, Tom asked his family that a non-profit be established to carry on the work he felt so passionately about. In New Hampshire, the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice was established to strengthen, through education and advocacy, the role of human rights in American foreign policy. In another tribute to his legacy, the non-profit Tom Lantos Institute was established in Hungary in May 2011, as a research institute with a particular focus on human rights in East Central Europe. The memory of his deep commitment and courageous acts is treasured by many Coalition members who were privileged to know him.



Congressman Lantos

*"One of the remarkable things about our beloved husband and father, Congressman Tom Lantos, was that despite the horrific trials he endured during the Holocaust, he never lost his profound and passionate love for his native Hungary. Hungary had no better friend in the United States Congress and the Hungarian American Coalition witnessed through the years, as we worked together on several initiatives, the tremendously positive impact that Tom was able to have on Hungarian-American relations.*

*This was particularly true during the years that Max Teleki has provided extraordinary leadership as the President of the Coalition. From the very beginning, Tom viewed Max almost as a son and, as with his own children, he expected a great deal of him. We are happy to say that Max always lived up to Tom's high expectations and in the years since his passing it has been a privilege and pleasure to work with Max and the Coalition on a host of important initiatives related to Hungary, human rights and strengthening the trans-Atlantic relationship.*

*Max played an indispensable role in helping to bring to fruition the establishment of the Tom Lantos Institute in Budapest in June of 2011 with Secretary Condoleezza Rice and Secretary Hillary Clinton, both in attendance. As our family celebrated this momentous occasion with our dear friend Max Teleki, we could all sense the spirit of Tom smiling down on us with approval."*

— Mrs. Annette Lantos, Mrs. Katrina Lantos Swett,  
Mrs. Annette Lantos Tillemann-Dick






# Preserving Human Rights

## **Supporting the Legitimate Aspirations of Hungarian Minorities**

Concern for the plight of Hungarians who live as national minorities is undoubtedly the most galvanizing issue among Hungarian Americans. In the Hungarian American context, “human rights” issues have come to mean, first and foremost, the human rights of Hungarian historic national minorities. At its 1998 organizational retreat the Coalition Board of Directors reaffirmed their commitment to human and minority rights advocacy.

Historic communities of ethnic Hungarians, numbering in the millions, became national minorities in Romania, Czechoslovakia, Ukraine, and Yugoslavia as a result of the 1920 Treaty of Trianon. These communities were targeted by official campaigns of forced assimilation under totalitarian Communist regimes. Until 1989, the state of Hungary could not advocate on behalf of these forcibly isolated communities, who had no one to speak for them.

Hungarian Americans have a distinguished history of advocacy on behalf of Hungarian minorities. The Hungarian Human Rights Foundation (HHRF) was founded in 1976 by young Hungarian Americans in New York to give voice to their plight. Over the past decades, HHRF, led by László Hámos, has remained the foremost U.S.-based professional source of information and advocacy on minority issues, and is a founding organizational member of HAC.



HAC’s human rights advocacy is rooted in support for the legitimate, democratically expressed aspirations of the Hungarian minority communities themselves.

Since 1989, Hungarian minority communities enjoy vastly improved opportunities to nurture their language, culture and institutions. Yet, they continue to face official roadblocks and discrimination by governments which often fail to give more than lip service to the protection of national minority rights, and which, in some cases, pass legal measures that overtly discriminate against minority citizens and communities.

HAC’s leaders and membership cooperate with and complement HHRF’s efforts to ensure that the continuing human rights concerns of Hungarian minorities remain at the forefront of international diplomacy concerning the countries of East Central Europe.

HAC’s human rights advocacy is rooted in support for the legitimate, democratically expressed aspirations of the Hungarian minority communities themselves. To this end, HAC:

- » sponsors visits and conferences to enable minority leaders to explain their situation directly to U.S.-based officials, diplomats and experts
- » provides up-to-date, credible information to U.S. officials, diplomats and non-governmental organizations
- » maintains active ties with the leaders and activists in these communities
- » meets with visiting officials and civil representatives from the region

**The following are highlights from HAC’s human rights initiatives over the past 20 years:**

### **U.S.-Based Conferences on Minority Issues**

#### **Coalition Co-Sponsors International Conference**

**“New Allies and the New U.S. Administration: Priorities for CEE–U.S. relations”  
(October 2, 2008)**

The topics of discussion included the threats of an “Expansionist Russia,” and “The Relationship between the U.S. and CEE States.” The Coalition participated on both panels and answered questions of representatives from both presidential campaigns.

HAC co-sponsored the conference along with the New European Democracies Project of the Center for Strategic International Studies and the Foundation for Democracy, Culture and Liberty of Romania.

**“Restoration of Vojvodina’s Autonomy: A Model of Multi-Ethnic Stability” – Washington, D.C. (June 28, 2001)**

Even as the extradition of Milosevic to the International War Crimes Tribunal at The Hague was underway, the U.S. Capitol was the scene of an international seminar co-sponsored by HAC and HHRF with assistance from the Hungarian Americans for Human Rights in Délvidék (HAHRD). The seminar highlighted the importance of restoring autonomy to the province of Vojvodina (the multi-ethnic northern province of Serbia, home to many ethnic groups including a historic Hungarian minority.)

The Vojvodina Seminar was attended by staff members of Congress, the State Department, the Washington NGO community, and representatives of the media. Invited speakers from the Vojvodina region were Dr. László Józsa, Vice President of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Vojvodina; and Nenad Canak, President of the Vojvodina Assembly.



László Hámos, Dr. László Józsa, Dr. Miklós Kovács, Edit Bauer, Bishop László Tőkés, Edith Lauer at the Minorities Conference in 1995.

**“Promoting Security and Integration: The Role of National Minorities”- Washington, D.C. (November 3, 1995)**

Approximately 150 people representing Washington’s policymakers, universities and Hungarian-American community attended this unique conference, organized by HAC on Capitol Hill, where Hungarian minority leaders and representatives of national minorities in Western Europe exchanged views and experiences with top U.S. experts and officials.

Key speakers included Bishop László Tőkés; Edit Bauer of Slovakia’s Coexistence Party; Mr. Miklós Kovács of the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Subcarpathia (Ukraine); Dr. László Józsa of the Hungarian Association of Vojvodina (Serbia). The Western European contrast in minority rights was provided by Dr. Christoph Pan, President of the Federal Union of European Nationalities; Mr. Joan Vallvé, former Head of the Catalan Autonomous Chancellery; and Prof. Chasper Pult, President of Lia Romantscha, the organization of Switzerland’s Raeto-Romansh minority.



**László Hámos**

**Coalition Chairman, 2003**

László Hámos was the founder and has served as President of the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation since 1976, promoting the betterment of social, economic and human rights conditions for millions of ethnic Hungarians outside Hungary’s borders. In 1991, HHRF was a co-founder of the Hungarian American Coalition, and Mr. Hámos has continuously served as Board and Executive Committee member since that time. He is Chairman of the Board of the Hungarian Reformed Federation and serves as President of the Hungarian American Library and Historical Society. He was elected the U.S. representative to the Hungarian Diaspora Council. In 2001, he was awarded the Commander’s Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary. Mr. Hámos currently lives in New Jersey with his wife Zsuzsa Erdélyi, and their children Júlia and Dániel.

*“Over 20 years, the Coalition has made valuable contributions to U.S.-Hungarian relations. Through outreach and special events, the Coalition galvanized political and public support for Hungary’s NATO admission in 1999 – along with Poland and the Czech Republic. Later, in view of the common interests of Hungary’s neighbors, it also advocated for Romania’s admission. The Coalition also made important contributions to a better understanding, in the United States, of the issues faced by ethnic minorities in the Carpathian Basin after the collapse of Communism. Intensive consultations by the Coalition and its member organizations with the State Department and National Security Council promoted the concept that indigenous minorities require a differentiated approach to support their reconciliation with other nationalities, a precondition for political, economic and social cooperation among countries along the Danube. It is worth every effort to support the Coalition’s commitment in these key areas, so central to the interests of both the U.S. and Hungary.”*

– Julius Várallyay, Coalition Board Member



First row, Left to right: Zsolt Szekeres, Christoph Pan, László Hámos, 2nd row: József von Komlóssy, Emese Latkóczy listen to the Minority Conference

### Human Rights Advocacy Towards U.S. Officials (some highlights)

#### Maintaining Contact with U.S. Ambassadors to Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Serbia and Ukraine (ongoing)

During the past 20 years HAC and HHRF leaders have maintained regular contact with U.S. Ambassadors serving in Hungary and the neighboring countries. In addition to in-country visits, HAC leaders have had discussions with them at the time of country mission meetings in Washington, D.C., and exchanged views often when an issue arose that required communication. Most U.S. Ambassadors were co-operative and quite interested in learning about the first-hand knowledge and perspective provided by HAC, HHRF, NCHS, HAHRD and others.

Jim Rosapepe, U.S. Ambassador to Romania (1998-2001) was particularly responsive to concerns about the human rights of Hungarians in Romania. He regularly advised the Coalition of his U.S. trips, and often sought meetings with local Hungarian Americans to discuss challenges faced by the Hungarian community in Romania.

### Briefings with Members of Congressional Delegation Prior to Their Visit to Belgium, Hungary and Slovakia (February 2012)

HAC participated in briefings with members of Congress and staff members of the Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs for their congressional delegation's trip to Brussels, Hungary and Slovakia. Congressman Dan Burton (R-IN), Chairman of the subcommittee, and ranking member Gregory W. Meeks (D-NY), led the delegates.

### Letter from Chairman of U.S. Foreign Affairs Committee Calls on Slovakian Prime Minister to Disavow Benes Decrees, Ensure Justice for Hungarian Minority (October 2007)

On October 18, 2007, Rep. Tom Lantos issued a letter to Prime Minister Robert Fico of Slovakia, requesting him to “publicly disavow the Benes Decrees and seek to ensure that ethnic Hungarians are treated as equal citizens in Slovakia.”

Rep. Lantos referred to the Slovak Parliament's vote to reaffirm the infamous Benes Decrees. In 1945, then-Czechoslovakia issued the Benes Decrees revoking the citizenship of ethnic Hungarians (as well as ethnic Germans) and confiscating their property, on the basis of “collective guilt.”

Rep. Lantos' letter also raised another “troubling” issue: the failure of the Slovak judicial system to prosecute a hate crime against an ethnic Hungarian citizen of Slovakia, Ms. Hedvig Malina. Ms. Malina was attacked on the street in August 2006 by two assailants who told her to speak “only Slovak in Slovakia.”

### Letter to U.S. Senate on Human Rights Issues in Romania and Slovakia (July 2005)

HAC sent a letter to members of the U.S. Senate asking the legislators to urge the Bush Administration “to require full compliance with human and minority rights standards before recommending NATO membership for Slovakia and Romania.” The letter voiced concern “about the failure of those governments to address minority rights issues” and that the mentioned countries show “a pattern of discrimination against ethnic Hungarians”.

As an attachment to the letter, the Senators received background materials including the Coalition's Resolution on NATO Expansion, and a statement related to Hungarian minority issues in Romania and Slovakia as presented by László Hámos, President of HHRE, at the hearing on The Future of NATO and Enlargement before the Subcommittee on Europe, Committee of International Relations, House of Representatives.



#### Charles Vámosy

##### HAC Chairman, 2002

Mr. Vámosy is a retired Information Technology executive in the Financial Services industry in New York. Born in Budapest, grew up in Leányfalu, he came to the U.S. in 1957. He attended Lafayette College, served in the U.S. Army and he was an early innovator in the computer technology field. Active in various Hungarian organizations in New York City, he served as President of the New York Hungarian House from 1992 until 2007. With his wife Barbara they were longtime residents of White Plains, NY until her stroke. Since then, they live in Peekskill, NY, staying active in local community affairs. His two sons, John and Stephen and their families live nearby, with their grandchildren Heather, Allison, Ashley, Andrew and James.



### Support for U.S. Congress Resolution Calling on Romania to Accelerate Property Restitution (May 2005)

On May 23, 2005, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution “urging the Government of Romania ... to provide equitable, prompt, and fair restitution” to all religious communities for property confiscated by the former Communist government in Romania.

HAC and its member organizations, especially the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation, together with Hungarian-Americans nationwide were instrumental in helping the Congressional offices to draft and popularize the resolution.

The Coalition made important contributions to a better understanding, in the United States, of the issues faced by ethnic minorities in the Carpathian basin after the collapse of communism... It is worth every effort to support the Coalition’s commitment in these key areas, so central to the interests of both the U.S. and Hungary.

— Julius Várallyay, Coalition Board Member

### Letter to Secretary of State Colin L. Powell Urging Pressure on Hungarian Minority Issues (October 2003)

The Romanian government has “failed to enforce its commitments to the Hungarian minority,” noted HAC in a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Colin L. Powell. The Coalition sent its letter in advance of a scheduled meeting between Secretary Powell and Romanian President Ion Iliescu during a Romanian government visit to Washington, D.C.

Along with the letter, HAC submitted a two-page statement summarizing the main areas in which the Romanian government has consistently breached its commitments to uphold the rights of the 1.5 million-strong Hungarian minority in Romania.

### Meeting with U.S. Ambassadors to Yugoslavia, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary (January 2002)

Coalition and HHRF leaders requested meetings with three newly appointed U.S. Ambassadors to Yugoslavia, Slovakia, and Romania. In each discussion, the Coalition group provided information on the current issues facing the Hungarian minority in each of those countries.

For example, at the meeting with the Ambassador to Yugoslavia, the major topic of discussion was the question of restoration of Vojvodina’s autonomy. The discussion with the Ambassador to Slovakia urged him to speak out against the language of hate and intolerance by Slovak officials that is too often directed against the Hungarian ethnic community. And with the Ambassador to Romania, the question of the long-sought restitution of church properties was foremost on the agenda. A list of 1,632 confiscated church properties was presented to the Ambassador and State Department officials by the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation.

### Meeting with James Rosapepe, U.S. Ambassador to Romania – Cleveland, OH (July 1998)

Eleven Hungarian-American leaders, including HAC Board Members and community leaders from Cleveland, Detroit and Toledo, met with U.S. Ambassador to Romania, James Rosapepe, in Cleveland during his U.S. visit.

Following Ambassador Rosapepe’s overview of the situation in Romania, the Hungarian American community leaders provided concrete requests – for example, that the U.S. Embassy staff include Hungarian-speakers both in Bucharest and Cluj; and that the Ambassador speak out, when appropriate, on issues such as restitution of church property and native-language education.

### Letter to Vice President Al Gore to Raise Issue of Hungarian Language Instruction in Ukraine (July 1998)

In a letter submitted to Vice President Al Gore on the eve of his trip to Ukraine, HAC called upon the Vice President to raise the issue of threatened curtailment of Hungarian language instruction with his Ukrainian hosts.

As the letter notes, “members of Ukraine’s ethnic Hungarian minority [comprising 12.5% of the population of Subcarpathia] justifiably fear that the [proposed legislation] will result in the elimination or substantial curtailment of the already limited Hungarian language instruction that is available to that minority.”



Former NY Governor George E. Pataki delivered a lecture to nearly 400 students and faculty members at the Selye János University, in Komarno, Slovakia. Mr. Pataki was accompanied by Coalition officers Max Teleki, Zsolt Szekeres, and László Hámos.

## Regional Trips and Meetings

An important part of the Coalition Presidents' job has been to gather first-hand, dependable information about the situation of Hungarian minority communities in the countries surrounding Hungary. To that end, Coalition leaders have travelled on fact-finding trips to Romania, Slovakia, Serbia and Ukraine at regular intervals, sometimes multiple times a year, and have held meetings with leaders of the historic minority communities in these countries. Here are some highlights:

### Visit of Governor George E. Pataki to New Hungarian University in Slovakia (October 2009)

Gov. Pataki visited Selye János University, a Hungarian-language institution in the town of Komárom (Komarno), Slovakia. Mr. Pataki's speech was attended by 380 students and the university's faculty. Mr. Pataki was accompanied by leaders from HAC and HHRF.

In his lecture, Mr. Pataki said that the language law adopted in Slovakia violates a fundamental democratic principle—the protection of minority rights—and emphasized that people can feel truly safe only in a state where they are allowed to speak the language in which they feel most comfortable. Mr. Pataki pointed out that European and American human rights organizations have turned their attention to Slovakia as a result of the law, and that the Slovak government in Pozsony (Bratislava) needs to be pressured to change the law.

Mr. Pataki then held a press conference attended by Slovak and Hungarian media, which elicited articles from publications including *The Wall Street Journal* and *Politics.hu*.

### Participation in Mass Protest Demonstration Against Slovak State Language Law (September 2009)

An estimated 12,000 people attended a mass meeting in Dunaszerdahely (Dunajská Streda), Slovakia, organized by the Hungarian Coalition Party (MKP) and several civic organizations to protest the discriminatory Slovak Language Law. The organizers invited Coalition Chair Emerita, Edith Lauer, to speak about Coalition efforts to inform U.S. decision-makers about the restrictive and discriminative aspects of the Language Law.

*"Even from far away, we, Hungarian Americans, follow the difficulties and challenges of the historic Hungarian community in Slovakia with sincere interest and great concern. It is our responsibility to inform U.S. decision-makers—the State Department, the National Security Council, and members of Congress—about the discriminative and punitive aspects of the Slovak Language Law, and its possible consequences."*

— Edith K. Lauer, HAC Chair Emerita

### Fact-finding Trip to Vojvodina (September 2005)

In September, 2005, prior to his visit to Vojvodina, HAC President Max Teleki met with Dr. Katalin Szili, President of the Hungarian Parliament. They discussed the legal situation of Mrs. Gabriella Ágoston and the efforts of HHRF and the Coalition to advocate for her release.

Congressman Lantos, ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, had written to Serbian President Boris Tadić earlier that September on behalf of Ágoston whose unlawful detention had been indefinitely extended without cause. Ágoston became a political target for the Serb authorities as a prominent attorney who defended ethnic Hungarians who were often targets of "hate crimes".

Dr. Szili was familiar with the Ágoston case and she offered her support for HAC's efforts on Ágoston's behalf. They discussed the joint project developed by the Hungarian and Serb Parliaments to alleviate inter-ethnic tension in the region. Mr. Teleki stressed the importance of supporting non-governmental organizations in their work, as often they can be very useful in raising issues that are diplomatically more difficult for governmental institutions to approach.

Mr. Teleki then left for Vojvodina, planning to visit Gabriella Ágoston in prison, and to forcefully advocate for her release. He also had plans to meet with her husband and attorney. But in a dramatic turn of events, due to the efforts of Congressman Lantos and the assistance of HHRF, Ágoston was released from prison just prior to Mr. Teleki's arrival in Szabadka (Subotica).

Mr. Teleki went directly to her home and had a joyous meeting with Ágoston and her family. The Coalition's willingness to visit her in prison apparently placed additional pressure on Serbian authorities to speed up her release. Ágoston and her family were deeply grateful to Congressman Lantos, HHRF and all those who had fought for her freedom. The Coalition credits this success to the unwavering efforts of Congressman Lantos and HHRF and the fortunate timing of Teleki's planned prison visit.

*"In September 2005, the day I left Washington for Budapest, Kay King arranged a last minute phone call with Congressman Lantos. He wanted to wish me luck and congratulate me for fighting for Mrs. Ágoston's release. I told him that I wasn't sure how it would turn out but I had planned to drive to Szabadka and try to see her in prison. He exclaimed, "TRY to see her in prison? Max, you have to demand to see her! If they say no then push harder!" I told him I would do my best, but evidently he was unimpressed and responded in a raised voice, "Max, you don't sound committed. You have to stand tall and chain yourself to the prison gate if that is what it takes! How would you feel if that was a member of your family? What if she was your wife? I am depending on you - as are others. Get it done! This is your job!!" And he hung up on me. This is the story of how I was baptized by Tom Lantos into his personal religion - human rights advocacy.*

*When I met Mrs. Ágoston in her apartment just three hours after her release, she hugged me so tight I thought I would fall over. Through my HHRF translator I listened as she cried and described the details of her detention. I told her that I had come with the support and blessing of Tom Lantos, and that is why she was free and at home with her family.*

*This is why I have to this day, a post-it on my desk with the letters WWTD (What Would Tom Do?)."*

— Max Teleki, HAC President

#### **Fact-finding Trip to Vojvodina (September 2004)**

Representatives of HAC and HHRF made a fact-finding trip to the Serbian province of Vojvodina, due to continuing acts of violence against Hungarian and other minorities there. The group met with representatives of Vojvodina's Hungarian community as well as members of the Vojvodina government and local civic groups. The meetings, which took place in three cities, provided first-hand accounts of the background and details of the recent and growing wave of violence against Hungarians. At the meetings, leaders of the Vojvodina community also put forth suggestions for obtaining legal redress for the incidents and for effective prevention.

#### **Participation in Bucharest Conference: "The Romanian Model of Ethnic Relations: The Last Ten Years, The Next Ten Years", Bucharest, Romania (July 2000)**

Prof. Andrew Ludányi, a HAC leader, was among those who spoke at a conference in Bucharest, Romania, devoted to the treatment of minorities in the Romanian political system.

Participants included Romanian Prime Minister Mugur Isarescu; U.S. Ambassador James C. Rosa-pepe; and representatives of the government coalition, significant opposition parties, the minorities of Romania, scholars and human rights activists from Western Europe and the United States, including two U.S. Congressmen.

Ludányi spoke on the panel focusing on the international context of Romania's policies toward its minorities. His presentation stressed that because Romania is home to two million co-nationals, the Hungarian American community has its own window of concern regarding Romania's treatment of its minorities. Ludányi stated that: "The leading elements of Romanian society must become more committed to defending the rights and the interests of all."

## Participation in Hungary-Based Conferences on National Minority Concerns (some highlights)

### The Standing Conference (MÁÉRT) - held annually in Budapest, Hungary

The Standing Conference is organized by the Hungarian government to address issues of common interest to the 15 million Hungarians worldwide. Hungarian minorities from Romania, Slovakia, Carpatho-Ukraine, Slovenia, Croatia and the former Yugoslavia are represented by their elected political leaders. Hungary's parliamentary parties also attend. Because HAC and HHRF leaders are invited delegates representing the conference's Western region, they have the opportunity to get to know Hungarian minority leaders and to learn from them about issues that affect each historic community.



Coalition representatives attend Hungary 2000 Conference at the Hungarian Parliament: l to r: László Hámos, László Papp, Edith Lauer, Andrew Ludányi, Zsolt Szekeres and Eugene Megyesy, Jr.

### "The Hungarian Status Law: Historical Perspective and Current Ramifications"- Budapest, Hungary (2002)

HAC and Duna Television co-sponsored a round-table discussion and press conference, where seven Hungarian minority leaders each spoke about the Status Law as it affects their respective communities. The audience included officials from eleven foreign embassies in Budapest, and members of the international and Hungarian press.

### Hungary 2000 Conference Series

These events, organized by the Hungarian government between 1997-2000, hosted political and community leaders of Hungarian communities from 28 countries, including a dozen Coalition members. The series focused on how the Hungarian nation can promote its common interests and reintegrate all Hungarians without the change of borders. Coalition representatives spoke to the conference about the challenges the dwindling Hungarian community faces in the U.S.; about ways to inform and promote Hungarian issues to American decision-makers and to the "attentive public;" and reiterated the importance of making Duna TV programs available through satellite to North America.

## Human Rights Advocacy Towards Regional Leaders Visiting Washington (some highlights)

### Questions to Former Romanian President Ion Iliescu – Washington, D.C. (September 2000)

Coalition leaders were on hand to pose questions to former Romanian President Ion Iliescu, at a roundtable organized by Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C.

The purpose of Iliescu's trip was to polish his image in Washington, promote Western investments, and posture Romania as a strategic partner of the United States.

Among the questions posed to Mr. Iliescu, three focused on issues affecting the Hungarian minority – including autonomy and discrimination issues, and the lack of progress on restitution of Hungarian church properties.

### Discussion with President Constantinescu on Hungarian Minority Rights – Washington, D.C. (July 1998)

During a reception at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C., representatives of HAC urged President Constantinescu of Romania to ensure that the rights of the Hungarian minority are fully respected. These relate to Hungarian language instruction, the reestablishment of an independent Hungarian university that was closed under Communist rule, the return of confiscated properties, and the strengthening of local self-government.





# Information & Advocacy

*“When Hungary first cut the barbed wire separating east and west ~ leading to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of Soviet communism ~ average Americans knew next to nothing about Hungary. And Hungarians knew next to nothing about how really to engage with America. That was the void that the Hungarian American Coalition so successfully filled: turning an artificially maintained “Cold War” into a genuine warmth among Hungarian and American people. And now that that hard-earned warmth is sometimes taken for granted, they are at it again ~ filling the void of ignorance with love.”*

— Ambassador Kurt Volker, Former U.S. Ambassador to NATO

Since its founding, a primary goal of the Coalition has been to provide Washington decision-makers and the general public with credible and timely information about issues of importance to its members.

**Every year, the Hungarian American Coalition:**

- » Operates an Information Office in Washington, D.C.
- » Maintains ongoing communication with U.S. Embassy officials in Hungary.
- » Stays in frequent contact with Hungarian community leaders in Romania, Slovakia and Vojvodina about events affecting the Hungarian communities of each region.
- » Coordinates activities and information with member organizations to stay abreast of human right issues and/or violations in Romania, Slovakia and Serbia.
- » Monitors news and media reports on matters of interest to Hungarian Americans to share and exchange with the community.
- » Organizes a December White House Briefing to acquaint members with officials of the Administration, the State Department and the National Security Council.
- » Holds an Annual Meeting and Board of Directors meeting in Washington, D.C. where it reports on the previous year's activities in its comprehensive *Projects and Accomplishments* and in the President's annual letter to Board Members.



Coalition members meet with Robert Hutchings, NSC Director of European Affairs, to discuss Hungarian minority rights issues in the region.

## Overview of Information Efforts and Publications

### Press Releases

A dozen or more times a year, the Hungarian American Coalition issues press releases on events of note. Archived on the HAC website ([www.hacusa.org](http://www.hacusa.org)), these well-researched media advisories remain a virtual library of historic events and information.

### Hungarian American Coalition Newsletters

The Coalition published its widely distributed newsletter 2-3 times per year between 1992 and 2009, until electronic communications became commonplace. The newsletters contained information about Coalition-sponsored activities, as well as programs and activities of individual members and member organizations.

### News from Slovakia

Between 1997 and 2004 the Coalition published a bimonthly report, *News from Slovakia*, to share critical, time-sensitive updates on the situation of Hungarians in Slovakia. Prepared by Prof. Ede Chaszar, Chair of the National Committee of Hungarians in Slovakia, the reports were disseminated to Washington decision makers, selected members of the Hungarian and U.S. media, and HAC members.



#### Ted Horvath

HAC Chairman, 2010

Ted Horvath was born and raised in Cleveland's historic Buckeye Road neighborhood, where his parents had a Hungarian bakery. He had a distinguished career as an attorney before his retirement. In addition to leadership positions in the Coalition and several local Hungarian organizations, such as the Magyar Club, Cleveland Hungarian Heritage Society and the Cleveland Hungarian Development Panel, Mr. Horvath has had a 54-year-long association with Rainey Institute, an arts center for Cleveland's low income families. Mr. Horvath was a member of the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus for 25 years, and the organization recently honored him. This spring he received the prestigious 2012 Lewis Hine Award for Service to Children and Youth, given in New York by the National Child Labor Committee. Mr. Horvath's son, Chris, composed the musical score for the documentary film, *Torn from the Flag*.

### Opinion Editorials, Feature Articles and Letters to the Editor

- » Articles by Professor Andrew Ludányi, a long-time Coalition Board member, have addressed minority human rights issues in general, and the situation of Hungarians in Vojvodina specifically. His articles have appeared in numerous publications including scholarly journals and *The Toledo Blade*.
- » Jenő Megyesy and Edith Lauer wrote articles and Op-Eds for *The Denver Post* and the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, respectively, on anniversaries of 1956, the Hungarian elections of 1998 and the Hungarian President's 2011 visit to Cleveland.
- » HAC members Andrew Ludányi, János Szekeres, Frank Koszorús, Jr, and Péter Kovalszki and others have consistently submitted Letters to the Editor to correct inaccurate or incomplete coverage of Hungarian issues in national newspapers including the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Times*.

*“My most successful letter-writing attempt was in January 2011, which marked the start of the international campaign against the new Hungarian media law. The Washington Post, in addition to a harsh editorial, published a very emotional and critical letter by Hungarian pianist András Schiff. I did not want to attack Schiff in person - the ad hominem criticism never works, and I still respected his artistic qualities. So I chose to doubt his dim prognosis, and suggested that fairness demands that Hungary be allowed time to complete its EU presidency and review its media law. To my surprise I received a call the next day, and after a thorough identity check, my letter was published in the next day’s edition. During that week, mine was perhaps the only small piece published in the international media in defense of Hungary’s stance. Somehow - more instinctively than consciously - my letter succeeded. I recommend this approach: be concise and logical, focus on just one fact in your rebuttal, don’t be shrill or abusive, and position yourself on the side of fairness.”*

— Péter Kovalszki, Coalition Board Member

### Statements and Position Papers

When matters of special significance arise, the HAC has issued Coalition Statements and Special Issues of its newsletter to keep members and public opinion apprised of the organization’s official position and perspective.

**2012** “Give Hungary A Chance” – an answer to widespread media criticism of Hungary’s new Constitution and cardinal laws

**2010** A statement on the 90th Anniversary of the Treaty of Trianon, expressing the commitment of Hungarian Americans to initiatives of the new Hungarian government that serve to achieve equality among the communities and citizens of a genuinely democratic Central Europe, including the “Day of National Unity”

**2009** A statement denouncing the anti-minority language law in Slovakia. It calls upon American policy makers to urge Slovakian leaders to repeal the discriminatory provisions of the State Language Law in conformity with Slovakia’s international obligations. The National Committee of Hungarians from Slovakia and the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation were co-signers of the statement.

**2008** A special-edition newsletter on the 2008 anti-minority language law in Slovakia

The Coalition published a special issue of the newsletter to summarize the presentations made at the Hungarian Americans Together Conference (HATOG) held on April 19. The follow-up meeting was held in Ligonier, PA, on June 26 and 27, 2008, hosted by the William Penn Association and the Bethlen Communities (see pg. 98)

**2007** A position paper prepared with the HHRF and the National Committee of Hungarians from Slovakia (NCHS) on the escalation of overtly nationalistic, anti-Hungarian actions and rhetoric by the Slovak government

**2006** A special-edition newsletter, reviewing the legal framework of the minority issues in Romania over the previous decade

**2004** A statement on the referendum in Hungary on whether to grant Hungarian minorities the right to vote in elections in Hungary

Statement in support of autonomy proposals by representatives of the 1.5 million strong Hungarian minority of Transylvania, Romania. It called for the establishment of autonomous institutions, in line with Western European models, including special autonomy status for regions inhabited in the majority by ethnic Hungarians.

Special issue on the effects of the Treaty of Trianon in view of Hungary’s and its neighbors’ membership in the European Union



1995 – Coalition member George Pogan talks with Asst. Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke.

- 2003 "Property Restitution and Majority-Minority Relations in Romania: A Case Study of the Restitution Struggles of the Kolozsvár Reformed High School"
- 2002 Special issue of the Hungarian American Coalition Newsletter on NATO's second expansion  
  
Special Kossuth Commemorative Issue – on the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Lajos Kossuth's visit to the U.S.
- 1999 Memorandum on the Situation of Hungarians in Yugoslavia. HAC called upon the U.S. government and its NATO allies to accept the autonomy aspirations of the Hungarian minority in Vojvodina, a formerly autonomous province of Yugoslavia.
- 1998 Special Issue on the first round of NATO expansion to include Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic Statement calling on all Hungarian political parties to support Hungary's membership to NATO
- 1995 Special Conference Edition – HAC Co-sponsors Minority Conference on Capitol Hill

### **Educational Resource Published by Coalition - *Education Program Directory***

Published in 1993, and updated in 1995 and 1999, The Education Program Directory has served as an essential resource for individuals, organizations, and institutions interested in learning about a wide range of educational, training, and exchange programs available to Hungarians in the U.S. and to Americans in Hungary.

### **"Noticed in the Press" – Electronic Press Review Service**

On a regular basis, the Hungarian American Coalition disseminates "Noticed in the Press" to interested subscribers. This free service, provided by János Szekeres, is a selection of articles from American and Hungarian newspapers on topics of interest to Coalition members and supporters.

#### **Highlights of information efforts and publications, by year:**

- 2011 Panel discussion at the Heritage Foundation on "Hungary's New Constitution: Prospects for the Rule of Law and Liberty in New Europe". Co-sponsored by the Common Sense Society of Budapest and the Coalition
- 2009 Presented information on Hungarian-related issues to the Obama-Biden Transition Team and to officials of the National Security Council, the State Department, and members of Congress
- 2006 Prepared, published and updated a "Calendar of Events - Commemorations for the 50th Anniversary of the 1956 Revolution"
- 2005 Continued to monitor the extremely slow progress of Hungarian church property restitution in Romania  
  
Gathered and disseminated information on the granting of U.S. visas to Hungarians, as well as on the topic of voting rights of Hungarian Americans in Hungarian elections
- 2003 Attended conferences in Hungary and Romania on minority-rights issues, including dual citizenship for Hungarians and the autonomy aspirations of Hungarian communities in Romania and Serbia
- 2002 Co-sponsored, with Duna Television, a Roundtable Discussion and Press Conference in Budapest on "The Hungarian Status Law: Historical Perspective and Current Ramifications." A panel of seven Hungarian minority leaders spoke about the Status Law as it affects their respective communities. Panelists included Miklós Duray (Slovakia), Bishop László Tóké (Romania), József Kasza (Vojvodina, Serbia), László Brenzovics



(Subcarpathia, Ukraine), Árpád Pasza (Croatia), and György Tomka (Slovenia). Coalition Chair Edith Lauer served as moderator of the program.

Initiated discussions in Washington, D.C. with newly appointed U.S. Ambassadors Michael Guest (Romania), Ronald Weiser (Slovakia), and William Montgomery (Yugoslavia). Provided ongoing information on developments affecting the daily life of the Hungarian minorities in those countries

Coordinated letter-writing campaign to the Romanian Prime Minister Nastase and U.S. decision-makers to focus attention on the unresolved issue of restoring communal properties confiscated from Hungarian Churches in Romania

- 2001 Participated in the Standing Conference of Hungarians, convened in Budapest in October to discuss preparations for implementation of the Hungarian Status Law
- 1998 Prepared material and participated in domestic and international conferences and forums dealing with various issues, including NATO expansion and minority rights  
  
Provided information, participated in briefings, and held regular meetings with government officials in the White House, Congress, State Department, Agency for International Development and U.S. Information Agency  
  
Organized ongoing consultations with U.S. Embassies in Budapest, Bucharest and Bratislava on issues of interest to the U.S. Administration and Hungarian Americans
- 1997 Testified before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on NATO enlargement and ethnic minorities
- 1996 Prof. Ludányi edited the 1996 issue of *Nationalities Papers*, a scholarly journal that contained 12 studies, five maps and 14 tables, all related to the Hungarian minority communities of East Central Europe. Since 1920, this was the first time that an American journal has devoted this much attention to the "Hungarian question."
- 1995 Co-sponsored the Human Rights Television Series, shown on Budapest-based Duna Satellite Television and seen throughout Europe
- 1994 Compiled the *Information Directory for Investment and Trade in Hungary*, a compendium of business information



### Zsolt Szekeres

#### HAC Treasurer, 1991-present

Zsolt Szekeres is a founding member of the Coalition, and has served as a Board member, President and Treasurer. In addition, he is Director of HHRF and has worked on behalf of Hungarian minorities for several decades. Fluent in Hungarian, Spanish, and English, Mr. Szekeres and his brothers founded Information for Investment Decision (IID), in the early 70's, with locations in both D.C. and Budapest. Due to the generosity of the Szekeres brothers, the Coalition shares office space with IID just blocks from the White House. He lives with his wife, Katika Avvakumovits, also an active member of HAC and HHRF, and their sons, Péter and János, in Budapest, Hungary. Mr. Szekeres received the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary in 2010.



**George Dózsa, HRFA**  
HAC Chairman, 2005

George Dózsa was born in Hungary, where he began his university studies at the College of Agriculture in Gödöllő. He escaped after the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, and after a few years in Austria, he arrived in the U.S. in 1959. He earned his B.S. degree at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ, where he worked as a chemist until his retirement in 1989. Over the years he has been deeply involved in both Hungarian church and civic activities as Chief Elder of the Magyar Reformed Church of New Brunswick, Vice President of the Hungarian Civic Association, Board member of both the Development Council of the American Hungarian Foundation and the Bethlen Home. For the last 36 years he has held different leadership positions at the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, including Chairman of the Board from 2002 to 2006.

### White House Briefings

A highlight of the Coalition's traditional December weekend has been the annual White House Briefing, where Coalition members and Honorary Consuls have a chance to meet Administration, National Security Council and State Department officials. This provides a unique opportunity to learn about the Administration's policies and to share with them Coalition members' concerns.

Since 1994 many briefing topics have changed, but some have remained the same. The early questions about Hungary deriving full benefit from U.S. government aid programs gave way to queries about requirements for Hungary's NATO membership, later about the Visa Waiver Program, the U.S.-Hungary bilateral relationship and similar issues. But what has remained the same are questions about U.S. policy regarding the continued discrimination of the minority rights of historic Hungarian communities in the countries surrounding Hungary.

*"In the mid 90's my good friend in New York, László Hámos, invited me to go to Washington and check out the workings of a new Hungarian American organization that was making a remarkable name for itself. I am not much of a joiner and was leery of tired old emigre organizations. But when I got to the White House briefing for the Coalition's members, my eyes opened wide. Here were people like Dan Fried and Sandy Berger, at the very top of President Clinton's National Security Advisor team, discussing with us the real issues affecting U.S. relations with both Hungary and the Hungarian minority in the Carpathian Basin. They were well informed. But when I heard Dan Fried say at one point 'now I know my friend László Hámos might have a somewhat different interpretation on this topic and heaven knows I've had Edith Lauer countless times in my office bringing me up to date,' I said to myself: damn, this is really something! Not only do these top policy makers know László and Edit very well but they actually remember what their positions are. The next day at the Coalition Annual Meeting Edit said, 'Maybe for the first time since Trianon, when they are discussing Hungary's fate, they're doing it with us at the table and not behind our back. We can't ask for anything more.' That visit convinced me to join the Coalition and contribute to its mission. It has been a very satisfying experience."*

– Charles Vámosy, former Coalition Chairman



Former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger speaks at the "Fall of Communist Dominoes" Conference in 2000.

Central to the Hungarian American Coalition's information and advocacy efforts is to offer Hungarians real-world opportunities to understand the United States and American policy. To that end, over a three-year period, HAC brought three groups of professionals – parliamentarians, local mayors and high school principals – to the United States on study visits. The participants were chosen as individuals who have a critical impact on Hungarian society at all levels. The initiatives were co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the U.S. Embassy in Budapest.

## Public Policy Seminar and Training Program for Hungarian Parliamentarians - 2003

In 2003, the Coalition hosted 22 members of the Hungarian Parliament in Washington D.C. for a three-week program. The initiative offered a unique opportunity for the parliamentarians – many of whom had minimal prior exposure to the U.S. – to explore public policy issues in the American context, build relationships within the United States government in their respective fields of expertise, and take part in intensive English-language training.

### The Seminar accomplished this through a range of activities:

- » Official briefings at government and non-governmental agencies;
- » Twice-daily English language classes to discuss the briefings, with special emphasis on the use of policy terminology;
- » Home stays with American families to further immerse the parliamentarians in the English language.

Topics included EU-NATO relations, U.S. defense and security policy, international trade issues, and the role of civic groups and independent offices in providing feedback and auditing of government policy.

Exchanges with non-governmental institutions, including the Heritage Foundation, the Brookings Institute and university centers provided insight on how Washington's policy community forms its views on Central Europe and Hungary. The program concluded with a visit to New York City, facilitated by HHRE, where the legislators toured the city and met with local Hungarian-Americans in a relaxed setting.



### Maximilian N. Teleki

HAC President, 2004-present

Max Teleki first became involved with the Hungarian American Coalition when he became the first White House intern in 1995. He serves on several Boards in the Central and East European region, among them: International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT), the Constellation Energy Institute, and the Executive Committee of the Tom Lantos Institute (TLI). Mr. Teleki also advises private equity funds and businesses in the region. Mr. Teleki is an Adjunct Professor at the Catholic University of America. He lives in Washington, D.C. with his wife Wendy, and their three children, Tibor, Ava and Naoma. Mr. Teleki was awarded the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit from the Republic of Hungary in 2009.

The project grew out of a request for assistance from parliamentarians serving in economic committees. The U.S. Embassy in Budapest supported the program and fit the seminar into existing frameworks, such as the Voluntary Visitors program and the Office of English Language Programs of the Department of State.

Parliamentarians who participated in the program received further training in Budapest through U.S. Embassy programs, and many have expressed appreciation for the experiences and relationships that continue to inform their service in the legislature.

The Coalition mobilized numerous members and supporters to ensure the success of the program, including the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, The Hungarian Consulate–New York, HHRF, the Bethlen Home, the William Penn Association, the Hungarian Cultural Club of Washington and the Potomac Foundation.

### Public Policy Program for Hungarian Mayors

Building on the success of the Policy Seminar for Parliamentarians, the Coalition launched a similar initiative for mayors from cities and towns across Hungary. Eight mayors visited Cleveland and Washington, D.C. to participate in a specially designed program sponsored by the Voluntary Visitors program of the Department of State.

The Hungarian participants represented all political parties and towns of various sizes: Borbála Bögre of Tiszatarján, László Dióssy of Veszprém, Nándor Litter of Nagykanizsa, István Mészáros of Bácsbokod, Imre Nagy of Eger, Miklós Szabó, Vice President of the General Assembly of Győr-Ménfőcsanak, and Erzsébet Udvardi, Mayor of Kiskőrös.



Hungarian Mayors Miklós Szabó, Nándor Litter, (Edith Lauer), István Mészáros, Béla Csecsei, Imre Nagy enjoy an American picnic in Cleveland.

*"I was so excited to introduce our visiting mayors from Hungary to America with a classic celebration of the Fourth of July – Independence Day – our version of Hungary's St. Stephen's Day. We prepared an American backyard picnic at my home, complete with hot dogs and hamburgers - and Hungarian foods, including 'zsíros kenyér.' The warm summer day turned into evening," Ted remembered, "and we drove to Lake Erie for a nighttime harbor cruise. With a box seat on the boat we were treated to Cleveland's lakefront Fourth of July fireworks festival – the best in the world, except for Gellért Hill on St. Stephen's Day. What a fantastic way for the mayors to get acquainted with each other, their host families and experience the celebration of freedom in America!"*

– Ted Horváth, Cleveland Hungarian Community Leader  
Coalition Board Member

The mayors' program allowed participants to explore policy issues, build contacts in their fields of expertise, and study the English-language. Policy briefings, English language immersion and home stays with American families again presented a framework for success.

Social activities and excursions rounded out the program. Activities included a day-long visit to Amish country, an open-air concert by the Cleveland Orchestra at Blossom, a baseball game, an all-day sight-seeing tour of Cleveland, a day-trip to Niagara Falls, two presentations on American social policy and Cleveland's novel efforts on nurturing high-tech economic development, a visit to Ashland, OH, for meetings with the Mayor, University leaders and the Ashbrook Foundation, a meeting with Cleveland's Mayor Jane Campbell, and an enthusiastic reception by more than 100 Cleveland-area Hungarian Americans held at the Cleveland Hungarian Heritage Museum.



Hungarian Members of Parliament during a rafting trip on the Youghiogheny River. The MPs who attended the 2003 public policy seminar now hold the following positions in the Hungarian government: Mihály Varga, State Secretary, Head of the Prime Minister's Office, Ilona Vigh, Mayor of Biharugra, Békés County, Csaba Öry, Member of the European Parliament, István Balsai, VP of the Fejér County General Assembly, Máriusz Révész, Member of Parliament, VP of the Education and Scientific Committee, László Kövér, President of the Hungarian Parliament.





### Sándor Krémer

HAC Chairman, 2012

Sándor Krémer was born in the Vojvodina area of what is Serbia today. He lost many family members to anti-Hungarian atrocities. He studied Interior Architecture-Design and was also an amateur actor before coming to the U.S. with his wife, Klára and their daughter in 1971. After settling in Chicago, Sándor joined the Hungarian (Magyar) Club and became its Vice-President, then its President within a few years. This is a well-organized and active group with many worthwhile projects, including a generous scholarship program. Mr. Krémer serves as spokesman as well as the leader since 1990 of the Hungarian Americans for Human Rights in Délvidék (HAHRD). This organization supports Hungarian culture and education for the Vojvodina region's large Hungarian population by providing college scholarships for Hungarian students.

*"For us, whose country started on the difficult road to democracy only 15 years ago, this experience in Cleveland has been invaluable, as we have seen a great deal that we can put into practice at home."*

— László Dióssy, the leader of the Mayors' group

### U.S. Secondary Education Program for Hungarian Principals - 2006

Nine high school principals and administrators completed a two-week study tour in the United States, visiting Washington, D.C., Pittsburgh, PA, Raleigh, NC and New York, NY.



Hungarian Mayors visit Cleveland Mayor, Jane Campbell - l to r front row: Borbála Bögre, Miklós Szabó, Mayor Campbell, Erzsébet Udvardi, Nándor Litter; back row: László Dióssy, Béla Csecsei, Imre Nagy and István Mészáros

Again with co-sponsorship from the International Visitors Program of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Embassy in Budapest, the Coalition modeled the program to allow visiting high school principals to learn about the U.S. education system, particularly secondary education.

The Washington program offered an overview of the U.S. education system and the role of the federal government in setting education policy. In the other cities, through meetings with teachers, administrators and students, the visitors observed teaching techniques and communications practices among teachers, students and parents. They also examined the role of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), student councils, and the involvement of local businesses and community members in both public and private schools.

#### Other topics highlighted during the study tour:

- » High schools for the disabled and for talented students;
- » Financing, fundraising, and development plans;
- » Hungarian-language teaching in the U.S., including programs for young Hungarian Americans.

*"I expected a much weaker educational system in the U.S. Instead, the flexible system of study is a useful model. And I have nothing but praise for the strong civil society in the U.S. and how it makes its way into the schools through the Parent-Teacher Associations – their enthusiastic work and their good cooperation with the schools are amazing."*

— László Tombor, Principal, Baár-Madas Reformed High School (Budapest)



Hungarian Ambassador Géza Jeszenszky, Foreign Minister János Mártonyi, Edith Lauer and U.S. Ambassador Mark Palmer at the conference, "Fall of the Communist Dominoes."

### Hungary and the Fall of Communist Dominoes

In June 2000, ten years after the first free elections in Hungary, the Hungarian American Coalition and the Hungarian Embassy co-sponsored a seminar at the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C., entitled "Hungary and the Fall of Communist Dominoes." Two panels, the first moderated by Coalition President Edith Lauer, the second by Coalition member Frank Koszorús, Jr., presented their insights.

Hungarian Foreign Minister, János Martonyi, former U.S. Ambassador Mark Palmer, and Hungarian Ambassador Géza Jeszenszky addressed the topic, "The Events of Transition to Democracy in Central Europe and Hungary, 1989-1990," while the second panel focused on "U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Central Europe and Hungary," with comments from Lawrence Eagleburger, former Secretary of State, Robert L. Hutchings, Director of European Affairs at NSC, Stephen J. Flanagan, Associate Director and Member of Policy Planning at the Department of State and Thomas O. Melia, Program Director of the National Democratic Institute.



### Peter Kovalszki, HAC Rising Chair, 2012

Péter Kovalszki came to the U.S. from Romania in 1986 with his wife Mária and their two daughters Anna and Katalin. As Assistant Professors at the School of Medicine and Pharmacy in Marosvásárhely (Tirgu Mures), they settled in the Detroit area and both established successful practices. After their arrival in the U.S., they joined Detroit-area Hungarian organizations. In 1989 they began attending the Itt Ott conference of MBK, where Dr. Kovalszki was elected to serve on the Board, and in 2012 he became President of the organization. He followed a similar path at the Coalition: after becoming an individual member, he was elected to the Board where he served on the Executive Committee, and in December, 2011 became Rising Chair of the Coalition Board. Dr. Kovalszki is an avid reader of U.S., Hungarian and Transylvanian newspapers and periodicals, and has been an active writer of Letters to the Editor.

# Special Visitors

## Hungarians traveling to the United States (some highlights)

- 2010 Organized the Washington, D.C. visit of Dr. Pál Hatos, Director General of the Balassi Institute, the organization responsible for cultural diplomacy of the Rep. of Hungary.
- 2009 Organized the Washington, D.C. visit of Dr. János Martonyi, Hungary's former (and now current) Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was also keynote speaker at the Mikulás Dinner.
- 2007 Co-hosted a presentation by Dr. Ibolya Dávid, President of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), together with the American Hungarian Federation and the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America (HRFA) in Washington, D.C.
- 2005 Organized the two-week tour of Dr. Otto von Habsburg and his family to Washington, D.C., Cleveland, and New York City. During his meetings with U.S. government officials, members of academia, and various non-profits and think-tanks, Dr. Habsburg spoke of the significance for the United States of the expanding European Union. Dr. Habsburg also met with leaders of the Hungarian American community, and was guest of honor at a Gala Dinner at the Cosmos Club in Washington, D.C., as well as the honoree of the Cleveland Council of World Affairs, and received a historic welcome by 300 people at the event organized by the Cleveland Hungarian Heritage Society. In New York, HHRF hosted the Habsburgs' visit, organizing several events at which Dr. Habsburg spoke about the importance for the Hungarian minority communities in the region of continued enlargement of the European Union.
- 2003 Underwrote and organized the U.S. visit of Rev. Béla Kató, Deputy Bishop of the Transylvanian Reformed Church District, President of the Illyefalva LAM Foundation of Romania, and President of the Board of Sapientia Foundation.
- 2002 Underwrote and organized the U.S. visit of Tibor Beder, President, Székelyföld Foundation, of Romania.
- 2001 Underwrote and organized the four-city U.S. visit of Sándor Milován, Vice President of the Hungarian Cultural Organization of Subcarpathia.
- 2000 Funded the travel expenses and participation of approximately 20 law students from Újvidék (Novi Sad), Former Republic of Yugoslavia, to study at the Eötvös Loránd University Summer Session in Budapest.

Archduchess Gabriela von Habsburg, Ambassador Georg von Habsburg, Archduchess Regina von Habsburg and Dr. Otto von Habsburg in Cleveland.



Sponsored the Washington visit of Dr. László Józsa, Vice President, leader of the Hungarian minority of Vojvodina. Dr. Józsa's week-long visit in December was jointly planned with HHRF, and included consultations with minority experts, U.S. policy makers, and members of the press in Washington D.C.

**1999** Sponsored the five-city U.S. visit of Ms. Ildikó Orosz, activist for Hungarian-language education in Sub-Carpathia; and established the "Friends of Beregszász Teachers' College" for ongoing assistance to this institution.

**1997** Hosted multi-city U.S. visit of Dr. József Halzl from Hungary and Dr. Árpád Duka-Zólyomi from Slovakia.

**1994** Sponsored visit and/or assisted in making U.S. arrangements for:  
 Kristóf Forrai (Dept. Director, Office of Hungarians Abroad)  
 Sándor Sára (President, Duna Television)  
 Gábor Fodor (Minister of Culture and Education)  
 József Debreczeni (former member of Parliament)



Coalition-sponsored guest, Dr. László Józsa, Vice President of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians, speaks with Coalition members László Hámos, Tibor Purger and János Szekeres.

### Coalition Leaders Visit Hungary and the Surrounding Region (some highlights)

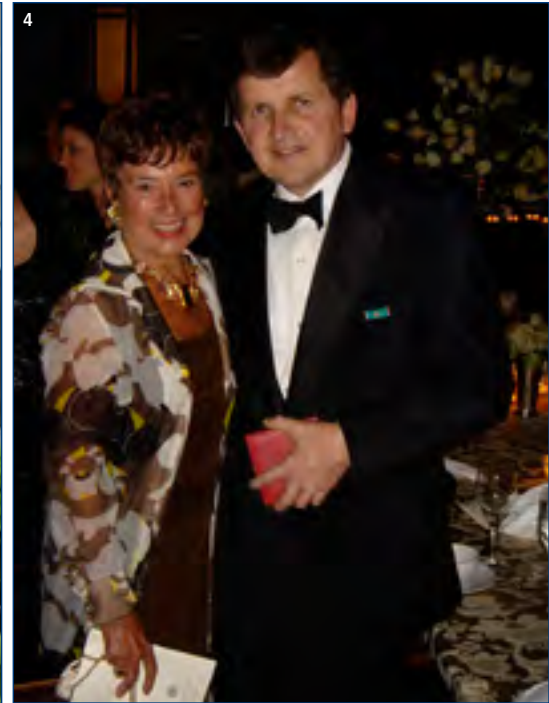
As has always been the practice with HAC's Presidents, Max Teleki makes several annual visits to Hungary and the region for meetings with government officials, members of Parliament, opposition leaders, civic groups and the media. He has also participated in events and meetings with Hungarian leaders in the surrounding countries. Whenever possible, Mr. Teleki met with alumni of the Congressional Internship Program who have returned to work in Hungary.

- » In 2012, Mr. Teleki made multiple trips to the region, including attending the following events: the annual TLI Human Rights Conference, the official opening of the "Wallenberg Centennial Year" and events at the National Museum and the Parliament. He met with civic organizations, government officials, members of Parliament and with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. János Martonyi.
- » In 2011, Mr. Teleki traveled to Hungary on five occasions for meetings as a Board member of the ICDT and TLI, and ceremonies for the inauguration of the Ronald Reagan Statue and the TLI, and Foundation Board Meetings.
- » In 2010, Mr. Teleki was received by Pál Schmitt, President of the Republic of Hungary.
- » In 2009, Mr. Teleki spoke at the Corvinus University of Budapest.
- » In 2008, the Coalition organized and co-coordinated the first visit to Hungary of Dr. Lee Edwards, President of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation.
- » In 2008, HAC organized the October visit to Hungary of former Governor of New York, George E. Pataki, who received the Commander's Cross with the Star of the Order of Merit from the President of Hungary, László Sólyom. Governor Pataki spoke up forcefully on behalf of the human rights of the Hungarian minorities.
- » In 2007, Mr. Teleki and Andrea Lauer-Rice were received by Hungarian President László Sólyom.
- » In 2006, Mr. Teleki made a three-week fact-finding trip to Hungary, Romania and Serbia.
- » In 2005, Mr. Teleki traveled to Romania, Serbia, and Carpathia Ukraine. In addition he traveled to Budapest, Debrecen and Pécs, Hungary.

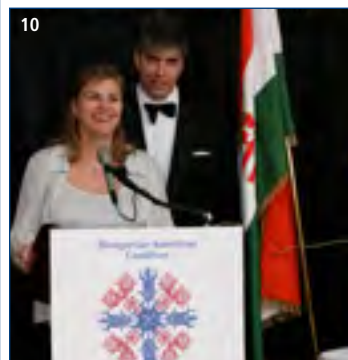


HAC arranged a meeting between Lee Edwards, President of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation (VOC), Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Member of Parliament, János Horváth to discuss future plans of the VOC.





1. Wendy Teleki, Ambassador April Foley, Max Teleki. Photo by Babette Rittmeyer 2. John N. Lauer and Governor Pataki 3. Group picture at the first HATOG conference at the Kossuth House in Washington, D.C. 4. Dr. Jenny Brown and Dr. Charles Simonyi 5. New Jersey HATOG conference in New Brunswick, NJ 6. Mrs. Carol Walker, U.S. Ambassador George H. Walker III, Dr. János Horváth and Mrs. Linda Horváth 7. Ms. Charity Tillemann-Dick, Wendy Teleki, Mrs. Annette Lantos, Richard Swett and Mrs. Katrina Lantos Swett 8. Max Teleki, Hungarian Ambassador György Szapáry, U.S. Ambassador Nancy Brinker



# HUNGARIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

*"The Hungarian American Coalition's more than two-decade-long contributions to Hungarian American relations have been invaluable additions to our diplomatic efforts to promote Hungarian interests in the United States and widen the scope of cooperation between our two countries. HAC has played an important role in promoting Hungary's Euroatlantic integration during the time of the NATO accession talks and through HAC's numerous charitable programs, Hungarians in and outside of Hungary were given a much better chance in life. The Coalition's tireless efforts to keep Hungarian minority rights issues on the agenda in Washington served the interests of millions of ethnic Hungarians. The outstanding individuals leading the Coalition are the best examples of civic engagement and citizen diplomacy – Hungary is fortunate to know not only good allies but great friends in the Coalition's leadership."*

– György Szapáry, Ambassador of Hungary



9. Ambassador András Simonyi, László Fülöp, Carol Walker, Ambassador George H. Walker III, Ágnes Fülöp, Max Teleki, Náda Simonyi 10. Andrea Lauer Rice and Max Teleki 11. Emese Purger, and HAC Board members Imre Lendvai-Lintner, László Hámos and Tibor Purger 12. Ambassador Kurt Volker, Max Teleki, Mrs. Beatriz Teleki, Mrs. Edith K. Lauer



# Mikulás Dinners

Since its founding in 1991, the Coalition has chosen to celebrate each year and thank its supporters in December while celebrating the Hungarian “Mikulás” tradition. To date Mikulás dinners have been hosted by six different Hungarian Ambassadors at the Hungarian Embassy and were held for two years at the German Embassy and the University Club. The tradition of the annual Coalition Mikulás Dinner began with a memorable feast held at the Kossuth House in 1990. Zsolt Szekeres, HAC Treasurer, recalls the story.

*“The first Hungarian Ambassador sent to Washington after the changes of 1989 was Peter Zwack, businessman and owner of the distillery that produced the legendary digestive “Unicum”. The newly elected Hungarian leadership thought that by sending an experienced businessman, they would send the right signal to U.S. investors and policymakers, showing that Hungary is eager to do business. At the time, Hungary’s treasury was empty and the country in dire need of capital and know-how.*



2011 - Hungarian President Pál Schmitt awards HAC Chair Emerita Edith K Lauer, the Officer’s Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary.

*Ambassador Zwack, who had his own ideas, engaged Kálmán Kalla as Embassy chef, a professional already well-known in Budapest for his innovative culinary artistry. Chef Kalla managed to create Hungarian dishes that would compete with the lightest and most refined French cuisine, thus making a big dent in the accepted belief that Hungarian food, while tasty, is necessarily heavy.*

*One of the first to notice Chef Kalla’s cuisine was Johnny Apple, the renowned Washington correspondent of The New York Times. He found Kalla’s creations so exceptional that he described them in a half-page article in the New York Times. The result: tout Washington became keen on getting invitations to Hungarian Embassy events.*

*Meanwhile, Coalition leaders were trying to come up with their own ideas on how to attract government and business people for Hungary. At that time, conferences and business breakfasts were so common that hosting one more event would not really appeal to anyone unless we could offer someone, or something, exceptional.*

*Benő Vajda, a Hungarian American pediatrician who hosted many Coalition discussions at his Virginia estate, came up with a brilliant idea. Benő, an avid hunter, offered his next deer to the Coalition, suggesting that Chef Kalla should prepare what we called “a dear dinner”. Dear to all who helped Hungary in those early difficult times.*

*The idea was embraced by Rev. Imre Bertalan, who offered the Kossuth House in downtown Washington as a lunch venue – he figured 30 people could fit.*

*Invitations went out for a “dear lunch” cooked by Chef Kalla. The invitees were government and business folks who, under normal circumstances, would be inaccessible to an unknown NGO; yet in less than a day we received over 50 confirmations, and had to turn some down. In the end, we squeezed in 45 guests for an elegant luncheon on Mikulás Day (December 6) of 1990. No one from the Coalition had a place to sit, but the event was a resounding success.*

*And thus a tradition was born. The yearly Mikulás Dinner no longer features fresh venison, but is still a “dear dinner” for those who help us help Hungary.”*

Through the years, the tradition has evolved. There have been piano concerts, book presentations, and Christmas carol singing. The Coalition has hosted a number of prestigious speakers, including the Hungarian President and Prime Minister on separate occasions. HAC has also honored Coalition friends and members.

### Some highlights include:

#### 2011 - 20th Anniversary Celebration

Hungarian President Pál Schmitt awarded HAC Chair Emerita, Edith K Lauer, the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of Hungary.

U.S. Ambassador Eleni Kounalakis, keynote speaker

In her keynote address, Ambassador Kounalakis highlighted the friendship and bilateral relations between the U.S. and Hungary and stressed the importance of the role of civic organizations, such as the Coalition, in maintaining and fostering cultural, economic and political ties between the two nations.

President Schmitt spoke about the vital role of the Hungarian Diaspora, especially at a time when Hungary is undergoing significant changes, as it enacts a new Constitution and passes cardinal laws that profoundly affect the institutional infrastructure of the country. He quoted several passages of Hungary's new Constitution. He also stressed the excellent relations between Hungary and the United States.



Coalition Honorees Ambassador Bob King and Dr. Kay King with Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur.

The evening concluded with an award ceremony for Mrs. Edith K. Lauer. In his laudation, Ambassador Szapáry introduced Mrs. Lauer by saying that "this award is a long overdue formal expression of a nation's sincere gratitude. Mrs. Lauer is a testament to selflessness, magnanimity and patriotism – both Hungarian and American – at its best." President Schmitt presented the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary to Edith K. Lauer, thanking her for more than twenty years of service to the Hungarian nation.

In her acceptance remarks, Mrs. Lauer stated:

*"When I accept this award on behalf of the Coalition, I am not merely being polite: I am utterly convinced that the excitement and deep desire I felt in 1989 of helping the newly democratic Hungary establish an effective network of contacts with U.S. decision-makers would have never been fulfilled without the institutional framework, the leaders and the members of our Coalition."*

#### 2010

Zsolt Németh, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, keynote speaker

Dr. Kay King, honored with the Coalition Award



Dr. Lee Edwards and Zsolt Németh, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In his speech, Mr. Németh emphasized the special bond that links Hungarian Americans to their motherland: historically, Hungarian Americans have displayed a keen sensitivity regarding minority issues, the state of democracy and economic development in Hungary. "We need to work together to advance these causes," he said.

Mr. László Hámos, President of HHRE, presented the Coalition's award to Dr. Kay Atkinson King, commending her years of service in the U.S. Congress, in particular her tireless work for the cause of Hungarian minority rights, Hungary's accession to NATO and her role in the House Foreign Affairs Committee under the chairmanship of the late Congressman Tom Lantos.



**2009**

Hungarian Foreign Minister, János Martonyi, keynote speaker

Prime Minister Gordon Bajnai, guest and speaker



2009 - Hungarian Prime Minister Gordon Bajnai and Foreign Minister János Martonyi.

In his keynote address, Foreign Minister János Martonyi, who was the Coalition's guest during five days of meetings and speaking engagements in Washington, spoke of the changing world; of Hungary's position in Central Europe; its role and responsibilities through its membership in the EU and NATO; and of his country's shared values with the United States. While he noted that Hungary is a small country, he also pointed out that size does not really matter, since "the most important things in life, such as honor, integrity, courage, love or patriotism cannot be quantified."

Prime Minister Bajnai whose visit unexpectedly coincided with the Mikulás dinner, reflected on his meetings with Vice President Joseph Biden, Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner, and leaders at the IMF. He described the importance of the U.S.-Hungarian relationship and reported on Hungary's increased commitment to NATO's multinational forces in Afghanistan. He compared the financial irresponsibility that caused the deep crisis in Hungary as the dare-devil action of a 20-year-old driving his car too fast toward a precipice, and managing to turn it around in the last minute before it crashes. He stressed the need to continue the reforms and austerity measures he introduced the previous spring, after becoming Prime Minister. He also thanked Coalition members for their many years of devoted service to Hungary and Hungarians.

**2008**

Dr. Robert R. King, Staff Director of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, was keynote speaker and received the Coalition Award.

Dr. King reflected on the eventful years he spent at Radio Free Europe and later at the office of Congressman Lantos, witnessing the remarkable transition of Hungary from drab communist satellite into a free and independent country, and the demise of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu during the revolution sparked by then Rev. László Tőkés.



2008 - Ambassador Bob King.

**2007**

U.S. Ambassador April Foley, keynote speaker

Ambassador Foley expressed great personal enthusiasm for her service in Hungary. She listed the areas in which Hungary made progress, such as structural reforms, the fight against corruption, attracting foreign direct investment, and advising societies in transition about democracy. She was very satisfied that a new NATO center for air freight would be established in Pápa, Hungary, and stated that this was a sign of Washington's recognition of Hungary's contributions in Afghanistan, Cuba, the Balkans and in NATO.

**2006 – HAC's 15th Anniversary; 50th Anniversary of 1956 Revolution**

Senator Chuck Hagel, keynote speaker

Former Governor of New York, George E. Pataki, speaker

HHRF and Rep. Tom Lantos received Coalition Awards



2006 - Max Teleki presents HAC Award to Hungarian Human Rights Foundation.

Sen. Hagel provided an overview of developments in foreign policy focusing on the common interests of Hungary and the United States. On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of 1956, he highlighted the bravery of the Hungarian freedom fighters of 1956 against Soviet tyranny. He praised the Coalition's work of the past 15 years, and the important role the Coalition plays in the Hungarian American community and the United States.

The Coalition presented an award to HHRF to celebrate its 30th Anniversary; and an award to Congressman Tom Lantos for 25 years of dedicated service in Congress and on behalf of Hungarian minorities in Central Europe.

The evening closed with beautiful performances by pianist Ms. Julia Hámos, daughter of Zsuzsa and László Hámos; and by Ms. Charity Tillemann-Dick, granddaughter of Congressman and Mrs. Tom Lantos, who sang Christmas carols in Hungarian and English.

## 2005

U.S. Ambassador George Herbert Walker III, keynote speaker

Ambassador Walker provided an overview of developments in Hungary in the areas of economic development, education and health. He gave high marks to the Coalition for its projects and accomplishments in 2005, that strengthen U.S.-Hungarian ties, and recognized the significance of the Coalition's wide-ranging role in coordinating next year's 1956 commemorative activities for its membership.

In preparation for the 50th Anniversary of 1956 in the coming year, all guests of the Mikulás dinner were presented with *56 Stories*, a publication of 22 personal recollections from the Hungarian Revolution collected through the [www.FreedomFighter56.com](http://www.FreedomFighter56.com) oral history website. All submissions came from HAC members or friends. It was a small sample of stories that would make up the larger book to be published in 2006.



2006 - Senator Chuck Hagel at the Coalition's 15th Anniversary.



Charity Tillemann-Dick, granddaughter of Congressman and Mrs. Lantos and an accomplished opera singer performs at the Mikulás dinner accompanied by talented pianist, Júlia Hámos, daughter of László and Zsuzsa Hámos.

## 2004

The Honorable Tom Lantos, ranking member of the House Intl Relations Committee, keynote speaker

Janet Garvey, Director of North and Central European Affairs, Dept. of State Receives Coalition Award

Mr. and Mrs. Lantos were accompanied by 11 members of their family. In an inspiring speech, Congressman Lantos, professed both his love for and pride in his Hungarian heritage, and also expressed his regret at anti-American sentiments in Hungary. He voiced his disappointment in the Hungarian Parliament's recent decision for immediate troop withdrawal from Iraq, and also gave voice to his deep disillusionment at the failure of European states such as France and Germany to stand with the U.S. in Iraq.

A Coalition award was presented to Janet Garvey, Director of North and Central European Affairs, Dept. of State, in recognition of her contribution to the improvement of Hungarian American relations during three years of outstanding service as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Budapest.

## 2003

Mr. Janusz Bugajski, Director, Eastern Europe Program, Center for Strategic International Studies, keynote speaker

Mr. Bugajski stressed the importance of having Hungarian political parties reach at least a minimum consensus necessary to making difficult decisions about Hungary's future.

## 2002

Mr. Daniel Fried, Senior Advisor and Assistant to the President, National Security Council, keynote speaker

Mr. Fried commended the work of Mrs. Edith Lauer and HAC in the NATO enlargement process, and thanked them for contributions in helping create a free democratic, and united Europe. Mr. Fried also recognized Mrs. Lauer's and the Coalition's untiring work to help Hungarian minorities, especially in the area of church property restitution.

### 2001 - 10th Anniversary

Dr. Ibolya David, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Hungary, special guest

In her remarks Dr. David presented an overview of the remarkable achievements accomplished by Hungary during its difficult transition to a democratic, free-market society. She highlighted the contributions of the present government, and acknowledged the role played by Hungarian Americans in general, and HAC in particular, in providing meaningful assistance to Hungary during its transition.

### 2000

Dr. Imre Boros, Minister without Portfolio of the Republic of Hungary, guest of honor

Dr. Boros spoke of the unifying effect of the yearlong millennial celebrations all over Hungary and of the awakening in the population of a sense of history and national accomplishment.

### 1998

The Coalition was honored by the presence of special guests Mr. Zsolt Németh, Political State Secretary of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Congressman and Mrs. Tom Tancredo, among other distinguished guests.

### 1994

Dinner held at the German Embassy

*"...This is an appropriate year for us to celebrate together, for 1994 marks a special anniversary shared by both Germans and Hungarians. It was five years ago this fall that Hungary made the conscious choice of opening her borders which allowed East Germans to gain entry to Austria. Everybody then knew the meaning of these words of vision: 'Europe's freedom will be decided on Hungarian soil.' These words were written not in 1989 but in 1849 in the Proclamation of the Peoples of Europe by Hungarian freedom fighter, Lajos Kossuth, 140 years before the Iron Curtain fell."*

– Greeting from the German Embassy

### 1993

Sándor Csoóri, President of World Federation of Hungarians, special guest speaker

### 1990

First Mikulás dinner – the "dear" dinner at the Kossuth House (pg 84)



Ambassador Pál Tar speaks at an early Coalition Mikulás Dinner.



### Andrea Lauer Rice

HAC Vice President, 2006-present

Andrea Lauer Rice is the Founder and CEO of Lauer Learning, a company that creates multimedia educational products to teach children about culture, history and language. To help commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, she created the following historically-accurate educational tools: *FF56!* computer game, *Freedom Fighters*, a graphic novel, the [www.FreedomFighter.com](http://www.FreedomFighter.com) oral history website and *56 Stories* and *56 Történet*, two coffee table books. She is an author, teacher, public speaker, game developer and website strategist. Mrs. Lauer Rice lives in Roswell, GA, with her husband Barton and children, Miklós and Jánoska, who both attend the local Hungarian school and are currently learning to folk dance and speak Hungarian.

# Governor George Pataki

George Pataki, the grandson of immigrants from Hungary, Italy and Ireland, represents a classic American success story. Raised in Peekskill, NY, he won an academic scholarship to Yale University, and later obtained his law degree from Columbia Law School.

Pataki gained national prominence as a Republican politician who served three consecutive terms as Governor of New York. Known for fiscal conservatism and his interests in renewable energy, climate change issues and foreign policy, Pataki continues his public service in many capacities.

Pataki's well-known pride in his Hungarian American heritage goes beyond nostalgia and gastronomy. He has an ongoing interest in Hungary today, where he is a regular visitor, and has worked together with the Coalition and HHRF in advocating for causes important to Hungarian Americans. In 2008, Pataki received the Commander's Cross with the Star of the Order of Merit of Republic of Hungary from President László Sólyom, in recognition of his role in preserving the Hungarian American identity and protecting the human rights of Hungarian minorities.

For years, Pataki has spoken out forcefully on behalf of Hungarian minority rights during numerous interviews and media appearances in Hungary and elsewhere. Most recently, in January 2012, Pataki visited Nagyvárad (Oradea), Romania, where he met with Bishop László Tőcs, Vice President of the European Parliament and head of the Transylvanian Hungarian National Council (THNC). In a public statement, Pataki took the opportunity to emphasize the importance of education rights for the 1.2 million-strong Hungarian community and the potential benefits of regional autonomy.

In 2009, accompanied by leaders of HHRF and HAC, Pataki delivered a lecture at the Selye János University, a Hungarian-language institution in the town of Komarno, Slovakia. In his speech, attended by 380 students and the university's faculty, Pataki pointed out that the language law adopted in Slovakia violates a fundamental democratic principle—the protection of minority rights—and that the Slovak government should be pressured to change the law. He emphasized that people can feel truly safe only in a state where they are allowed to speak the language in which they feel most comfortable.

In 2010, Pataki agreed to spearhead U.S.-based fundraising efforts to help victims of the red sludge environmental disaster that devastated several towns in Western Hungary. The Coalition's Red Sludge Disaster Fund has since implemented a number of grant programs. Pataki is also involved in support for the renovation of the historic Hungarian House in Manhattan.

In April 2010, the Hungarian American Coalition honored Mr. Pataki at its annual Gala Dinner in Washington, D.C. Coalition President Max Teleki lauded Pataki for his "success in the fields of public service, diplomacy and business...while remaining true to his Hungarian heritage."

*"As an American of Hungarian descent, I appreciate the Hungarian American Coalition's strong leadership, which has diligently cultivated relationships with well-connected political and cultural contacts in Washington, D.C. and throughout Central Europe and has actively supported strong social and economic ties between the U.S. and Hungary."*

— Governor George E. Pataki



Governor George Pataki



# Annual Gala Dinners

In 2005, the Coalition began hosting an annual Gala Dinner to formally honor outstanding Hungarian Americans and friends of Hungary, as well as to expand community outreach and raise funds for the Kiss Scholarship programs. In an effort to strengthen the remarkable achievement of some member organizations, in the past few years the Coalition has made sizeable contributions from the Gala Dinner proceeds to their programs.

The Gala Dinners have been held at such elegant venues as the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, the Decatur House, the Cosmos Club and the House of Sweden, all in Washington, D.C.



2011 – George Pataki, William Bero, of the William Penn Association and Andrea Lauer Rice.



2011 - Dr. János Horváth, Honoree, takes the podium.



2010 – Governor George Pataki is honored by the Coalition.

## **HAC Gala Dinners**

### **2012**

**Honorees:** U.S. Ambassador Nancy Brinker and the Hungarian Scout Association in Exteris

**Co-chairs:** Ambassador George H. Walker III, Ambassador April Foley, Michael F. Neidorff  
*Held at the House of Sweden, Washington, D.C.*

### **2011**

**Honorees:** Dr. János Horváth, Doyen of the Hungarian Parliament, and the William Penn Association (125th anniversary)

**Co-chairs:** Under the patronage of H.E. Dr. Pál Schmitt, President of Hungary and Dr. Tibor Navracsics, Deputy Prime Minister of Hungary; Coalition Gala Chair, Governor George E. Pataki  
*Held at the House of Sweden, Washington, D.C.*

### **2010**

**Honoree:** Former New York Governor George Pataki

**Co-chairs:** U.S. Ambassador April Foley, Michael F. Neidorff, U.S. Ambassador George H. Walker III, former Deputy Secretary of State John C. Whitehead  
*Held at the House of Sweden, Washington, D.C.*

### **2009**

**Honoree:** John C. Whitehead, former Deputy Secretary of State

**Co-chairs:** General Colin L. Powell, Governor George Pataki, U.S. Ambassador George H. Walker III  
*Held at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.*

*“In recognition of John C. Whitehead whose outstanding achievements and courageous initiatives in the fields of diplomacy, business, and philanthropy reflect the best American traditions, and who, in times of great need, gave a helping hand to the Hungarian nation, and earned the enduring gratitude of the Hungarian American community.”*

### **2008**

**Honoree:** Dr. August J. Molnár, President of the American Hungarian Foundation

**Co-chairs:** William Penn Association, John N. and Edith K. Lauer

**Honorary Chairman of Event:** Governor George E. Pataki

Donation of \$17,500 to support Coalition member AHF

*Held at the Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C.*

*"In grateful recognition of Dr. August J. Molnár, Founder and President of the American Hungarian Foundation, for his five decades of service to our community, his enduring contributions to preserving and promoting the Hungarian American heritage, his long and distinguished record of service, August J. Molnár has earned the deepest gratitude of Hungarian Americans."*

## 2007

**Honoree:** Ambassador George Herbert Walker III

**Co-chairs:** Michael Neidorff, Julius Joe Adorjan, Zsolt Rummy

Donation of \$15,000 to support Coalition member Hungarian Scout Association in Exeter  
Held at the Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C.

*"In appreciation of George Herbert Walker III, Ambassador to Hungary, 2003-2006, for representing the best traditions of the United States in supporting the forces of freedom, democracy and solidarity for the benefit of the American and Hungarian nations, and whose record of service and integrity has earned the enduring gratitude of Hungarian Americans."*

## 2006

**Honoree:** Dr. Charles Simonyi, software pioneer, philanthropist, future space explorer

**Co-chairs:** Ambassador-at-large to the European Union and President of the Hungarian Red Cross, György von Habsburg, Mr. John N. Lauer, Chairman of Diebold, Inc., and Mrs. Edith K. Lauer, Chair Emerita of the Coalition.

Held at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C.

Ambassador György von Habsburg delivered the keynote speech recognizing Dr. Simonyi's many accomplishments and philanthropic work both in the United States and Hungary. Dr. Simonyi was presented the Coalition's award, a silver medallion minted on the occasion of the 1100th Anniversary of Hungary.

In his acceptance speech, Dr. Simonyi recalled the many challenges he faced after leaving Hungary, first studying in Denmark and later in the United States. Dr. Simonyi told the captivated audience details about the challenges in developing and creating opportunity in the software industry and his deeply felt commitment to excellence both in his scientific pursuits and philanthropic endeavors. He expressed his excitement as he described the next stage of lifelong exploration that will take him into space in the coming year. Dr. Simonyi praised the work of Susan Hutchison, Executive Director of the Charles Simonyi Fund for the Arts and Sciences, commended the Coalition for its important work, and thanked all participants for being part of such a memorable evening organized in his honor.

## 2005

**Honoree:** Dr. Otto von Habsburg, European statesman, one of the initial architects of the European Union

**Co-chairs:** Anikó Gaál Schott and Philip W. Pillsbury, Jr.

Held at the Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C.

In his toast to Dr. Habsburg, Congressman Lantos remarked, "Otto von Habsburg has a Churchillian vision and statesmanship unprecedented in our time. [He is] a man who had fought the twin evils of Nazism and Communism with the courage of his convictions and brilliance of his intellect."



2009 - Governor Pataki, John C. Whitehead, Max Teleki, Andrea Lauer Rice and Ambassador George H. Walker III.



2008 - Dr. Balázs Somogyi presents Coalition Award to Dr. August J. Molnár at the 2008 Gala.

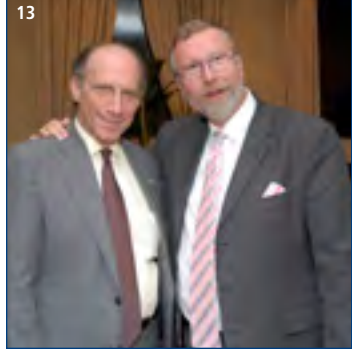
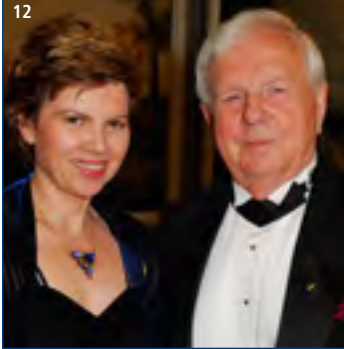
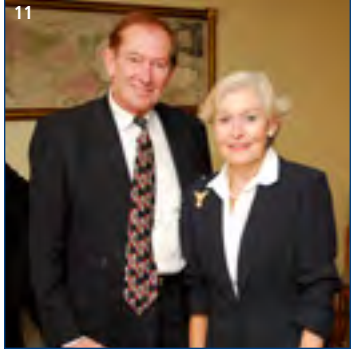
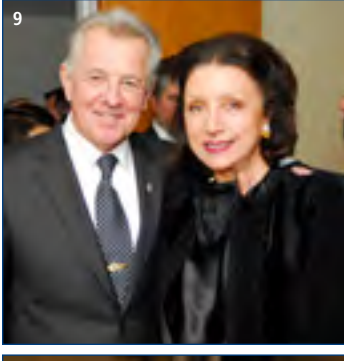
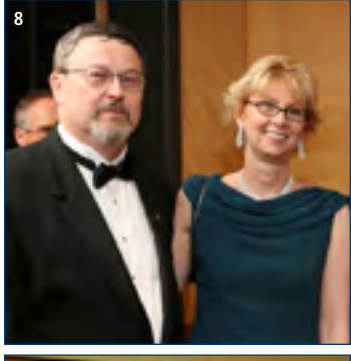
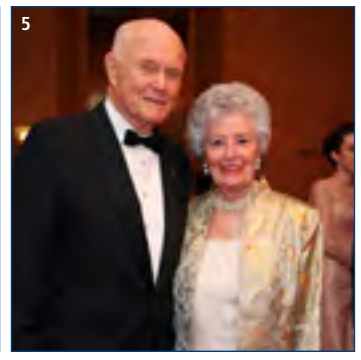
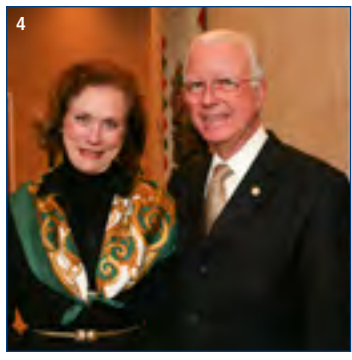
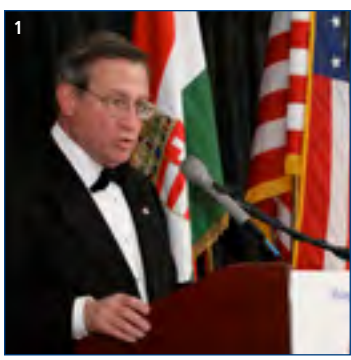


2007 - Ambassador George H. Walker III is proud to be honored in 2007 by Edith K. Lauer and Max Teleki.



2006 - Zsolt Szekeres, Max Teleki, Dr. Charles Simonyi, Edith K. Lauer and György Habsburg.

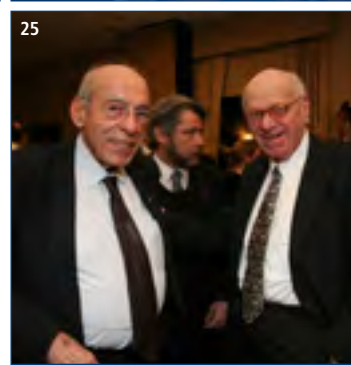
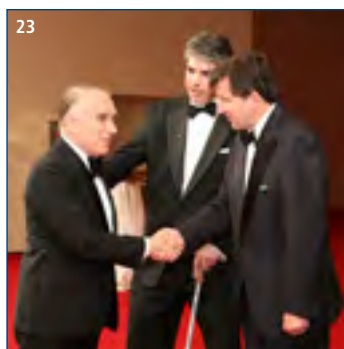
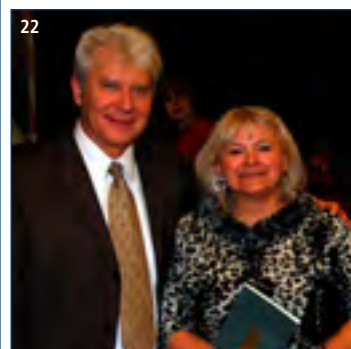
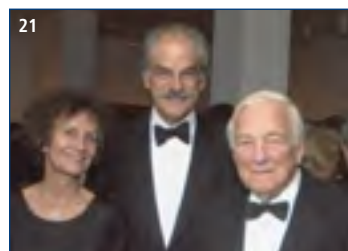






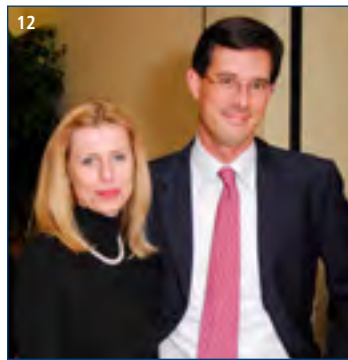
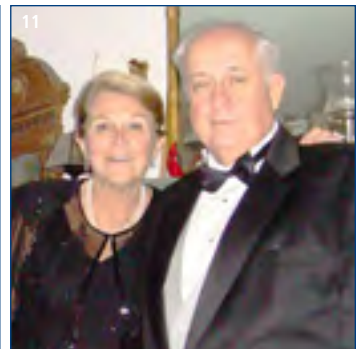
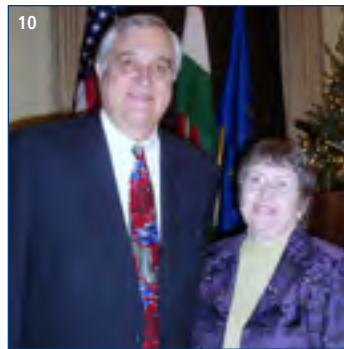
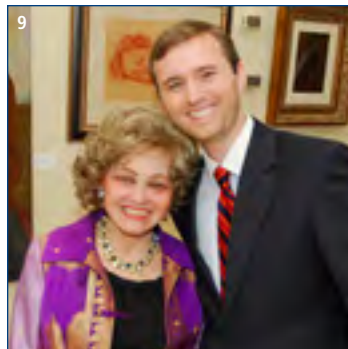
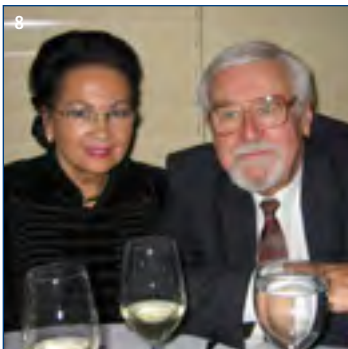
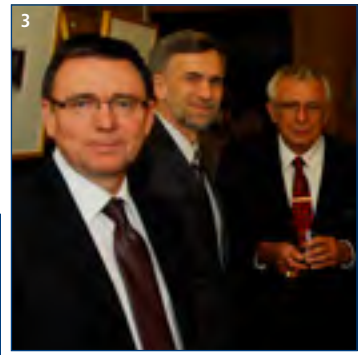


1. Coalition supporter Mr. Michael Neidoff 2. Coalition Gala at the National Museum of Women in the Arts 3. Mr. György Mátyásfalvi, John N. Lauer and Mr. János Mátyásfalvi 4. Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Bader 5. Senator and Mrs. John Glenn 6. Andrea Lauer Rice and Barton Rice 7. János and Judit Szekeres, Paula Olsavszky and Zolt Szekeres 8. Imre and Ágnes Lendvai-Lintner 9. Hungarian President Pál Schmitt with Anikó Gaál Schott 10. Daniel and Lee Odescalchi, Kriszta Lauer Nagy, Edith Lauer, Zolt Szekeres and Barton and Andrea Lauer Rice 11. Éva and Paul Voisin 12. Zsuzsa and Imre Tóth 13. Honorary Consul Dr. Phillip Aronoff and Ambassador Balázs Bokor 14. Les Megyeri and Mrs. Kathy Megyeri 15. Ambassador Szapáry and Pamela Quanrud, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State at the U.S. State Department 16. Andrew J. Hale-Byrne, Mrs. Annette Lantos, Ambassador Szapáry, Congressman Kucinich, Mrs. Katrina Lantos Swett, Zolt Szekeres 17. István and Beatriz Teleki, Károly and Kati Teleki 18. Mr. and Mrs. Max Teleki, Susan Hutchison and Governor Pataki 19. Dr. John Szablya and Mrs. Helen Szablya 20. Senator Maria Cantwell, Edith K. Lauer and Susan Hutchison 21. Mrs. Zsuzsa Lipsky, John Lipsky, Deputy Director, International Monetary Fund and Gala Honoree John C. Whitehead 22. Mr. and Mrs. István Fedor, American Hungarian Federation 23. Gyula Várallyay meeting Charles Simonyi with Max Teleki 24. Mary Mochary, Ambassador Boonie McElwaine Hunter, CEO of the Red Cross, Anikó Gaál Schott and John Jeppson 25. Gus Molnár and Ted Horvath 26. László Hámos, Deputy Foreign Minister Zolt Németh and Max Teleki



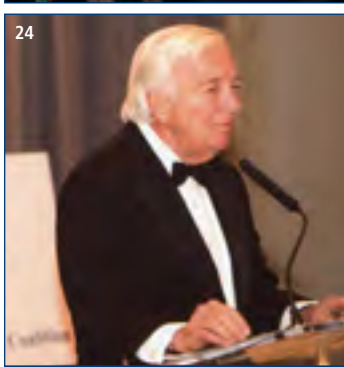
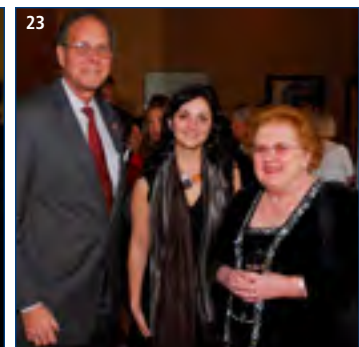
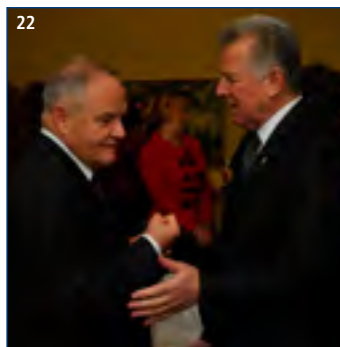
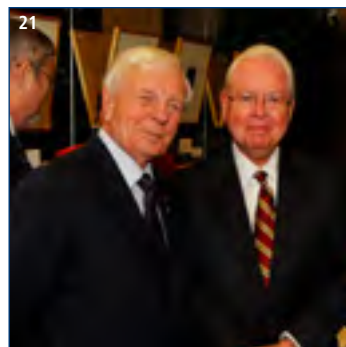
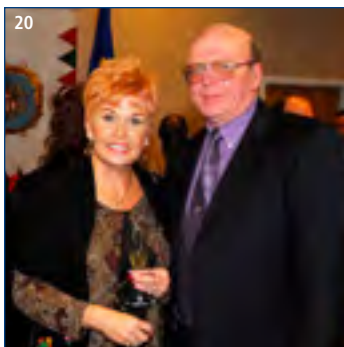
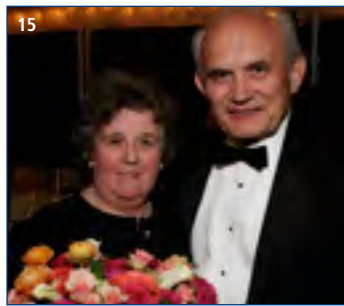


1. Mr. Michael Neidorff 2. William Bero, Endre Csoman, George Charles, Al Vargo and William Bero, Jr.  
 3. József Megyeri, Tibor Purger and Sándor Krémer 4. Mrs. Katrina Swett and Dr. János Horváth  
 5. Andrea Lauer Rice, U.S. Ambassador Eleni Kounalakis, Mrs. Annette Lantos Tillemann-Dick and  
 Consul General Balázs Bokor 6. Gov. George Pataki, Andrea Lauer Rice, John C. Whitehead,  
 Ambassador April Foley and Max Teleki 7. Ambassador Ferenc and Andrea Somogyi and Congressman  
 Dennis and Mrs. Kucinich 8. Hon. Consul László Bőjtös and Mrs. Györgyi Bőjtös 9. Mrs Annette Lantos  
 and Tomica Tillemann 10. George and Sandy Pogan 11. Barbara and Charles Vámosy 12. Lotti and  
 András Bácsi Nagy 13. Hon. Consul John Parkerson, Andrea Lauer Rice, Barton Rice and Dorottya Pap





14. Max Teleki, Dr. Pál Hatos, Amb. Nancy Brinker 15. Mrs. Matilda and Mr. George Dózsa  
16. Gov. Pataki 17. Mrs. Dianna and Mr. Joe Adorjan, Mr. Zsolt and Mrs. Mary Rummy  
18. Ambassador Kurt Volker, Peter Kurz, László Hámos 19. Max Teleki, Edith Lauer, Dr. Zsolt  
Harsányi 20. Barbara A. House, WPA Chair, and Bill Bero 21. Imre Tóth, Zoltán Bagdy  
22. Pres. Pál Schmitt with Dr. Péter Kovalszki 23. Frank Koszorús, Jr., Nadine Szablya, Mrs. Helen  
Szablya 24. John C. Whitehead 25. Mrs. Ina Ginsburg, Amb. András Simonyi 26. John N. Lauer  
with Ambassador Tom Robertson and Mrs. Antoinette Robertson



# HAC Community Initiatives

The Hungarian American Coalition has supported and partnered with a number of like-minded institutions over the years in an attempt to further promote Hungarian American interests. One such example is the strong link between HAC and the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation (VOCMF).



Zsolt Szekeres and Ambassador György Habsburg, traveled to Italy to personally visit Vatican officials in the Spring of 2010. They presented written statements by 30 organizations testifying to the viability of the Szent Imre church.

In some cases, the Hungarian American Coalition took the initiative to work on behalf of community-wide issues. Two examples of this are the campaign to include Hungary in the Visa Waiver Program (pg. 60), and the more recent attempt to try to help reverse the Vatican ruling to close the Szt. Imre (St. Emeric) Church in Cleveland, OH. Both efforts represent a great deal of behind-the-scenes work to bring about favorable results on behalf of the Hungarian American community.

## **HAC Joins Effort on Behalf of (Szent Imre) St. Emeric Catholic Church, Cleveland, OH**

The Cleveland Hungarian-American community was stunned by a decision by the local Bishop to include St. Emeric's Church (Szent Imre) among 52 ethnic churches slated for closure in the Diocese.

Since 1904, the Cleveland Hungarian community has celebrated Catholic Mass at Szt. Imre and the parish also served as the center of Hungarian Scouting and cultural activities of Hungarian life on Cleveland's West Side.

Like many of the affected congregations in Cleveland, the parishioners of Szent Imre, led by Miklós Peller, joined in a spirited grassroots fight to have their church reopened.

To support these efforts, HAC Treasurer Zsolt Szekeres and Ambassador György Habsburg, Ambassador-at-Large and President of the Hungarian Red Cross, visited Vatican officials in the Spring of 2010 to present written statements by 30 organizations testifying to the viability of the Szent Imre church. They also relayed a personal message by Otto von Habsburg underscoring the importance of the church to the Hungarian American community, which he had visited during the 1940's and again in 2005, during his Coalition-sponsored trip to the U.S.

In June, 2010, Zsolt Szekeres and Max Teleki travelled to Cleveland to meet with the Pellers to report on the Coalition's discussions at the Vatican. Mr. Teleki returned again in late June to attend the last Mass held at Szent Imre before its closing.

In March 2012, Mr. Peller received notification that the Vatican Congregation of the Clergy has overturned the Bishop's decision with respect to 13 churches, including Szent Imre! The church will be reopened this year.



Interior of St. Emeric Church, Cleveland OH.

*"During the past two years, local and national support for St. Emeric has been most impressive. Our appeal was supported by an extensive letter-writing campaign; our faithful parishioners held prayer-meetings outside the closed church every Sunday; and through the excellent contacts of the Hungarian American Coalition, high-level Vatican officials heard the compelling arguments for reopening our Church. We are thankful that in a few months we will again worship at the restored parish of St. Emeric church. We hope Father Siklódi will be able to resume his pastoral duties, and St. Emeric will once again serve as the center of Cleveland's Hungarian community."*

— Procurator Miklós Peller

### The Hungarian Americans Together (HATOG) Conferences

The goal of the HATOG conferences has been to build a network of communication and collaboration among Hungarian organizations in the U.S. and to develop a strategy for saving and strengthening Hungarian institutions to promote Hungarian heritage, culture and mutual interests. Bringing organizational representatives together in various locations across the U.S. proved an effective way to build good working relationships, and help organizations and individuals within the Hungarian American community learn about each other's needs and programs and find ways to work together. Coalition leaders attended all workshops and several Coalition interns facilitated the arrangements, presentations and follow-up reports.



2010 - HATOG conference held in Chicago.

#### Chicago, IL - October 12, 2010

*Held at the Norridge Church of Christ (Hungarian Reformed Church)*

**Hosted by:** Hungarian Club of Chicago, the Hungarian Society of Chicago, St. Stephen, King of Hungary Catholic Church, the Transylvanian Association, MBK, the Hungarian Cultural Advisory Council and HAHRD

**Co-chaired by:** Erika Bokor and László Varjú of the Magyar Club of Chicago, László Fulöp, Minnesota Hungarians, Max Teleki, HAC President

35 representatives from 22 organizations in eight different states

*"We at the Magyar Club of Chicago were very glad to take the lead role in organizing the fifth HATOG – Hungarian Americans TOGETHER – conference in Chicago, IL. The discussion centered on improving collaboration within the Hungarian American community, keeping Hungarian churches open, coordinating community efforts on Hungary's red sludge disaster and other topics. All participants thanked the Chicago organizations, the William Penn Association and the Hungarian American Coalition for their sponsorship of such a useful conference."*

– László Varjú, Financial Director, Magyar Club of Chicago  
Coalition Board Member

#### Cleveland, OH - September 17-18, 2009

*Held at the Cleveland Hungarian Heritage Museum*

**Hosted by:** William Penn Association

**Co-chaired by:** Gabriella Nádas, Hungarian Association, Andrea Mészáros, Cleveland Hungarian Heritage Society, László Bójtös, Honorary Consul General, HAC

**Moderator:** Edith K. Lauer, HAC Chair Emerita

35 leaders in attendance

Held at the Cleveland Hungarian Heritage Museum in downtown Cleveland, the 2-day conference brought the wider Ohio and Midwest community together. On Saturday there was a performance by the Csárdás Dance Group folk dancers before participants gathered for dinner.

#### New Brunswick, NJ - October 10-11, 2008

*Held at the American Hungarian Museum, library and archives facilities*

**Hosted by:** American Hungarian Foundation (AHF), HRFA, American Hungarian Federation, Hungarian Civic Association of New Brunswick

**Co-chaired by:** Dr. August J. Molnár, AHF Founder, Dr. Balázs Somogyi, HAC Chairman

**Moderator:** Imre Lendvai-Lintner, President of the Hungarian Scout Association in Exeter  
30 leaders in attendance



A traditional gulyás prepared for HATOG participants in Ligonier, PA.



*“HAC is to be commended on its cooperative mission to bring together national and local organizations for positive results through such efforts as HATOG. The New Jersey conference in our facility following the Washington, D.C. start up conference has not only inspired our Hungarian organizations in the United States to work together on common projects, but also has produced levels of new cooperation.”*

— Dr. August Molnár, President, American Hungarian Foundation

In addition to discussions on topics of common interest, participants toured the AHF exhibits at the museum; met the Mayor of New Brunswick, a sister city of Debrecen; heard a speech by Reformed Bishop Gusztáv Bölcskei, and saw an evening performance of the Debrecen Reformed Church Chorus at the N.J. Athletic Club.

### **Ligonier, PA - June 26-27, 2008**

**Hosted by:** Bethlen Communities, William Penn Association

**Moderator:** Steve Varga, WPA

The conference began with a gulyás pot lunch and a tour and history of the Bethlen facilities. The weekend discussions centered on strengthening Hungarian university programs in the U.S., outreach to young Hungarian Americans and other important community topics.

### **Washington D.C. - April 19, 2008**

**Hosted by:** HAC

The first conference entitled “Hungarian Americans Together” was a half-day symposium, held the day after the Coalition’s 2008 Gala Dinner. It provided an overview of educational and cultural programs of the Hungarian American community. Several Hungarian American organizations participated in the seminar and gave presentations on their programs. There was an open discussion on the future of Hungarian American organizations moderated by Maximilian Teleki. This topic served as a basis for each of the next meetings.

Detailed reports of all topics discussed at the HATOG conferences can be found on the Coalition’s website [www.hacusa.org](http://www.hacusa.org).

*“The Hungarian Communion of Friends (MBK) congratulates the Hungarian American Coalition on its 20th Anniversary! We find we have a shared mission and values with the Coalition. Founded in 1972, MBK was created to pass on the treasure of Hungarian culture and history in our new homeland. In the spirit of our shared goals, our two organizations have worked together on human rights workshops and organizing tours for invited guests from Hungary and the neighboring countries. Several MBK leaders have also played major leadership roles in the Coalition. Our shared mission connects us, and we look forward to continued cooperation for many years to come.”*

— László Bójtös, Honorary Consul

### **Reaching out to the Next Generation**

During the HATOG Conferences, a recurring theme of interest to all participants was how to reach out and engage the next generation of Hungarian Americans.

Andrea Lauer Rice, Vice President of the Coalition, discussed the topic of “The Will to Pass On”. Her strategy, first developed in 2007, centers on the development of multimedia educational tools for children of all ages, to teach culture, history and language, while, at the same time, finding ways to engage so-called “at risk” elements within our community. These include 2nd and 3rd generation adult Hungarian Americans who don’t speak the language and live in areas that lack Hungarian institutions; 3rd and 4th generation young Hungarian Americans who have not been taught about their Hungarian background; and non-Hungarian spouses who are not engaged in the community or in teaching their children about their Hungarian identity.



2009 - HATOG conference at the Cleveland Hungarian Heritage Museum.

One concept on how to reach the youth and gain their interest is through technology (video games, websites, social networking tools, graphic novels, etc.). Another is the introduction by HAC and Lauer Learning of [www.GulyasPot.com](http://www.GulyasPot.com), a community driven website, designed to serve as a clearing house and communication tool for the Hungarian American community. GulyasPot provides space for a community-wide calendar of events, to collect local Hungarian American history and stories and could be used to share educational resources used by member organizations. This is but one project in the works to address the challenge of “Passing It On.”

The Coalition has a number of member organizations with good examples of reaching out to engage the next generation in learning about their Hungarian ethnicity. In addressing this significant community issue, the Coalition will continue to support and participate in a number of these initiatives as we work together to pass it on...

*“Our organization, the Hungarian Society of Massachusetts and our Boston Hungarian School (Boskola) are the newest Board members of the HAC. Here in Boston we are very proud of our vibrant, active community: our large Hungarian school that teaches 100 students and our Scout Troops with 80 children. Our main goal and focus is to reach out to this talented, bilingual, enthusiastic young group of Hungarian Americans and their families. We have high hopes they will become the next generation of leaders in the Hungarian Diaspora. This is a goal we share with the Coalition.”*

— Dr. Ágnes Virga, Coalition Board Member

Several examples of Coalition member organizations successfully passing it on... **From top left, clockwise:** A lesson on the traditional cimbalom in Roswell, GA.; Boskola students celebrate Christmas in Lexington, MA.; 2009 - Cleveland Scouts at the annual summer camp in Fillmore, NY.





# Humanitarian Assistance

HAC has played a major role in humanitarian assistance projects to Hungary. These included:

## Red Sludge Disaster Fund – 2010

On October 4th, 2010, a natural disaster shocked Hungary and the world when the retaining wall of a sludge repository collapsed at the alumina factory of Ajka in western Hungary. The red toxic sludge flowed like lava through the surrounding towns and villages spreading 600,000 cubic meters of highly alkaline, corrosive industrial waste, virtually destroying the towns of Devecser, Kolontár, and Somlóvásárhely. The sludge flowed meters deep all along the streets of the towns, killing six people, injuring over 120, and displacing hundreds of residents. In addition, the entire surrounding region of over 40 square kilometers experienced a lasting ecological, social, and economic nightmare.



In October 2010, Coalition leaders Max Teleki and Zsolt Szekeres accompanied György Habsburg, President of the Red Cross in Hungary, on a trip to see firsthand the areas affected by the disaster

In October 2010, Coalition leaders Max Teleki and Zsolt Szekeres accompanied György Habsburg, President of the Red Cross in Hungary, on a trip to see firsthand the areas affected by the disaster. They met with local officials in Devecser, Kolontár and Veszprém County, visited a Red Cross logistical center and were briefed by the National Disaster Coordinating Agency onsite.

Following the disaster, Hungary's Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, called upon the Hungarian American community for assistance. New York Governor George Pataki was asked to coordinate fundraising efforts in the United States, and with his help the Coalition immediately established the Red Sludge Disaster Fund to collect donations.

Knowing that relief money must be spent wisely for long term benefits, the Coalition first commissioned a study to determine specific areas of need that would best profit from the relief fund. The independent European Business Polytechnic carried out the study, surveying past priorities and development strategies that had been proposed in the region over the past years. It then synthesized the views of the local decision makers based on interviews with regional leaders including mayors, regional development agencies, and school principals. The study provided an up-to-date evaluation of the economic and social environment of the affected area, and reviewed the labor market and the educational system as well.

Based on the needs expressed by local officials, the Coalition awarded five grants totaling approximately \$86,000 within a year of the disaster. The grants were used for immediate needs such as: co-financing the rehabilitation of the school roof, two years of funding for a school psychologist to



## László Bójtös HAC Chairman, 2008

László Bójtös came to the U.S. as a young architect after the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. He settled in Cleveland with his wife, Györgyi, and established a successful private architectural practice. He had a genuine interest in making a major contribution to Hungarian American organizations. In 1968 he was one of the founding members of MBK; he was former Chairman of the American Hungarian Federation; and the President of the Magyar Club of Cleveland three times. He has served on the Coalition Board since early 1990's. In 1993 he became an Honorary Consul, then in 1997 a Consul General of the Republic of Hungary. He was host to over 60 prominent Hungarian visitors in the past 30 years. In 2002 he received the Order of Merit Middle Cross of the Republic of Hungary. The Bójtös family has two daughters and three grandchildren who are active in Hungarian Scouts and folk dancing.



assist in therapy and long-term professional help for the traumatized schoolchildren and the purchase of new musical instruments for the Devecser music school.

Long-range help included funding a full-time internship program for two years, placing bilingual Hungarian American volunteers to help the Mayor's office in development to coordinate with the American Chamber of Commerce in Hungary, Rotary Club Hungary, and the Hungarian Red Cross. Funding was also provided for a full-time Roma social worker to help school teachers with mentoring and social services. The school has a 65 percent Roma population but does not have any Roma teachers.



Based on the needs expressed by local officials, the Coalition awarded five grants totaling approximately \$86,000 within a year of the Red Sludge the disaster.

### **Tisza Flood Victims' Relief Fund – 2000**

Springtime in 2000 brought enormous flooding of the Tisza river, bringing with it widespread damage and destruction.

The Tokaj region of eastern Hungary, famed for its wine production, was not exempt from this suffering. The town of Vámosújfalú's bustling public administration building, serving 900 residents, was completely devastated when the Tisza River crested. The town's mayor and its officials had to conduct business out of a makeshift tent and borrowed trailer.

HAC immediately sprang into action, setting up a Tisza Flood Victims' Relief Fund to help mitigate the suffering caused by the flooding. A major contribution from the Simonyi Fund for Arts and Science enabled the Coalition to administer an \$80,000 grant to rebuild the town's administration building. Hungarian flood relief officials recommended Vámosújfalú for reconstruction, and the project was quickly completed in under a year, with community leaders, schoolchildren, the local choir, folk dance groups, and local sports teams all celebrating the dedication of their newly rebuilt town hall in June of 2001.

In addition, the Coalition's grant acted as a catalyst to release \$800,000 in funds from the Hungarian government, which was used to build a floodwall to protect the town against future river flooding. Zsolt Szekeres and HAC worked with local authorities where the need was the greatest, to leverage resources and help where necessary.



Coalition funds helped rebuild the Town Hall of Vámosújfalú after severe flooding.





# Support for Other Institutions

Central to HAC's mission is providing support to a wide variety of institutions and initiatives. The Coalition's breadth of expertise, commitment to strong partnerships and rigorous review processes enable the sponsorship of diverse initiatives in the community.



Bishop Laszlo Tokes is congratulated by Coalition members Edith K. Lauer, John Lauer, László Hámos and Max Teleki.

## Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation

The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation (VOCMF) was established by an Act of Congress to build a memorial in Washington, D.C. commemorating the more than 100 million victims of Communism. The mission of the VOCMF is to educate future generations about the history and philosophy of Communism.

On June 27, 2007, the Victims of Communism Memorial was dedicated by President George W. Bush. The "Goddess of Democracy," a bronze replica of a statue erected by Chinese students in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, China in the spring of 1989, was unveiled as part of the dedication ceremony. Coalition members, Edith and John Lauer, Max Teleki and Les Megyeri were among the 400 invited guests at the Inaugural Dedication Ceremony.

June 16, 2009 - Bishop László Tőkés is awarded the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom.

*"In 1989, László Tőkés risked his life to challenge the power of Ceausescu, one of the most infamous dictators in Europe. In spite of being unarmed and inexperienced in this confrontation, he possessed two superior weapons: an abiding faith in God and the moral conviction that by resisting tyranny, he could make it fall."*

— Edith K. Lauer, VOCMF Board Member

June 12, 2008 - Mrs. Annette Lantos (wife of Congressman Tom Lantos) is presented the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom for her husband, posthumously.

*"Today, when the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation awards the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom posthumously to Congressman Tom Lantos, we honor a man whose lifelong commitment to freedom and human rights and passionate opposition to oppression all over the world can certainly be stated to have hastened the ultimate fall of communism. For that and much more, we remember Tom Lantos with our deepest respect and gratitude."*

— Edith K. Lauer, VOCMF Board Member



Edith K. Lauer presenting the Truman-Reagan Freedom Medal posthumously to Congressman Tom Lantos. His wife, Mrs. Annette Lantos accepted the award as Lee Edwards, Chairman of the VOCMF looks on.

Other Hungarians who have received this award over the past 10 years include Viktor Orbán in 2002 and János Horváth in 2007. The Coalition continues to work with and supports the mission and activities of Dr. Lee Edwards, the VOCMF Chairman and the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation.

*"I truly believe there is a special bond between Hungarians and Americans, founded on our mutual love of freedom and democracy and our staunch opposition to communism and all forms of tyranny. Whatever the project—the Victims of Communism Memorial, the online Global Museum on Communism, the Curriculum on Communism for high school students—we have always been able to call upon the Hungarian American Coalition for advice, counsel, and support. Long may the Coalition flourish."*

— Lee Edwards, Ph.D., Chairman,  
Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation

### Madách Posonium

In an effort to promote Hungarian culture in Slovakia, HAC provided annual support for the operation, publications and literary awards of the Madách Publishing House in Pozsony (Bratislava).

Madách has a long history of promoting outstanding Hungarian writers in Slovakia, starting with the 1960's publication of the works of Zoltán Fábry. Madách was the long-time publisher of *Szabad Újság*, the weekly newspaper reporting on political, economic topics and cultural events for Slovakia's Hungarian community. Madách's publications range from books and magazines to literary works, including *Tücsök*, a magazine for children, *Jó Gazda*, a journal for farmers, and the literary monthly *Irodalmi Szemle*. For 18 years Madách also operated Hungarian language book stores in nine Slovakian communities.

The Hungarian American Coalition's support of the publishing company has included support for operations and underwriting the prestigious "Madách Posonium Literary and Fine Arts Awards," founded by Edith and John Lauer of Cleveland, Ohio, in 2001 to honor outstanding contemporary Hungarian writers and artists. (pgs 35-36)

The publishing house is led by László Dobos, a renowned writer, publicist, and community leader, winner of the Kossuth Prize, the highest Hungarian cultural award, and also of the Pribina Cross, a prestigious Slovak state award recognizing his historic role as Minister without Portfolio in the Dubcek government of the late 60s.



László Dobos and Coalition supporter Barton Rice.

*"At a time when both Hungary and the Slovak state have cut back their support for Hungarian culture in Slovakia, we are grateful we can count on the Hungarian American Coalition's assistance."*

— László Dobos, President Madách Posonium

### International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT)

The ICDT is an international non-profit organization based in Budapest, which collects, analyzes and shares data from countries that have undergone recent democratic transitions. The organization hosts and organizes conferences, presents reports, and, most importantly, compiles data and experiences by conducting field projects in countries across Europe that have recently undergone a democratic transition. Their goal is to create a toolbox that other societies can use when going through a difficult transition towards democracy.

#### Some Noteworthy ICDT Events

- » The first Annual Conference on Democracy and Human Rights co-hosted by ICDT, the Tom Lantos Institute, and the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- » During his 2008 visit to Budapest, New York Governor Pataki, along with Coalition President Maximilian Teleki, attended the Annual Board Meeting of ICDT. The meeting was followed by a conference on the influence of globalization on the economy, security, and democratic transitions.
- » Underscoring the close working relationship between the ICDT and HAC, Max Teleki was invited to join the ICDT Board of Directors in 2007.

### Common Sense Society

The Common Sense Society (CSS) was founded in 2009 by American and European young professionals in Budapest, Hungary. CSS is a discussion group of young Hungarians active in public life, including many who have worked in Washington and New York under the Coalition's Congressional Internship Program.

As a recent example of their activities, in 2011, CSS co-sponsored with the Heritage Foundation and HAC a panel discussion on the draft Hungarian Constitution on the eve of the Hungarian Parliament's debate of constitutional drafts. This forum provided a historical moment when Hungarians

both in and outside of Hungary participated in a conversation about the drafting of Hungary's most fundamental, defining document.

Moderating the discussion was Common Sense Society President Marion Smith, Graduate Fellow, B. Kenneth Simon Center for American Studies, The Heritage Foundation.

Coalition President, Max Teleki and Chairman of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, Dr. Lee Edwards both serve on this Advisory Board. Former Coalition intern, Anna Stumpf, is a Founding Director of CSS.

Through the support of the Coalition, CSS recently established the Pannonius Leadership Fellowship. The Fellowship will provide a hands-on professional development opportunity for a young Hungarian to learn day-to-day management of a non-profit. In addition, this full-time, year-long position will involve original research and writing related to CSS's mission of promoting civic engagement, entrepreneurship and the ideas of responsible liberty.

This summer, CSS will also launch its first ever Summer Leadership Academy, a unique intensive week-long learning experience in the Hungarian countryside. The Academy will feature practical workshops, simulations and an impressive international faculty. CSS will select 25-30 young leaders to participate in what promises to be an incubator for future leaders in Hungary and the region.

### Civic Enterprises

Coalition Congressional Internship Program interns, Márton Aichelburg and Benedek Varsányi, co-founded Civic Enterprises, a Hungarian NGO, to provide tutoring by senior citizens to troubled youth.

The Senior Mentor Program, the signature program of Civic Enterprises, engages people over 55 to tutor and mentor elementary school students struggling to learn to read.

Because there is an overwhelming need for caring adults to work with children in the after-school hours, increasing volunteerism among older adults represents a special opportunity to support young people's academic and social development. The organization was founded in 2008.



Coalition CIP Interns Márton Aichelburg and Péter Wendl, members of Civic Enterprises, visit Vienna, Austria, as regional nominees for the SoziaMarie Prize for Social Innovation - 2010.



### Steve Varga, WPA HAC Chairman, 2009

Steve Varga has been active since childhood in the Hungarian American community. He was born and raised in the Hungarian Yorkville neighborhood of New York City where his grandparents were founding members of St. Stephen's of Hungary Catholic Church. In 1999 he was elected to the WPA Board of Directors, and became Chairman in 2003. His accomplishments included rededicating WPA's commitment to the Hungarian American community through increased sponsorship of cultural and educational programs; serving as the Chair of the Coalition, sponsoring HATOG conferences and other programs; serving in the American Hungarian Foundation and the AHF. After his successful 12-year commitment to the Hungarian fraternal community, he has returned to private practice as a recognized expert in the private security industry.



### The Tom Lantos Institute

The Tom Lantos Institute (TLI) was inaugurated in an official ceremony held in the Upper House of the Hungarian Parliament during a week of memorable events that began on June 28, 2011. The Institute's mission is to promote tolerance and support minority rights in Central and Eastern Europe and in the world. Participating in the inauguration were Lantos family members, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and her predecessor Condoleezza Rice, members of two Congressional delegations, friends of Ronald Reagan, members of the Hungarian government and hundreds of invited guests including Coalition members Max Teleki, Zsolt Szekeres, László Hámos, Julius Várallyay, Dr. László Varjú, Les Megyeri and Éva Voisin.

"This represents an important commitment on the part of the Hungarian government to advance human rights, protect minority rights, promote tolerance and strengthen trans-Atlantic relations," Lantos Foundation President Katrina Lantos Swett announced.

The First Annual Conference on Democracy and Human Rights was held on June 29th, co-hosted by the Tom Lantos Institute, the International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT) and the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Coalition President Max Teleki serves on the Executive Committee of the Board of the Tom Lantos Institute.

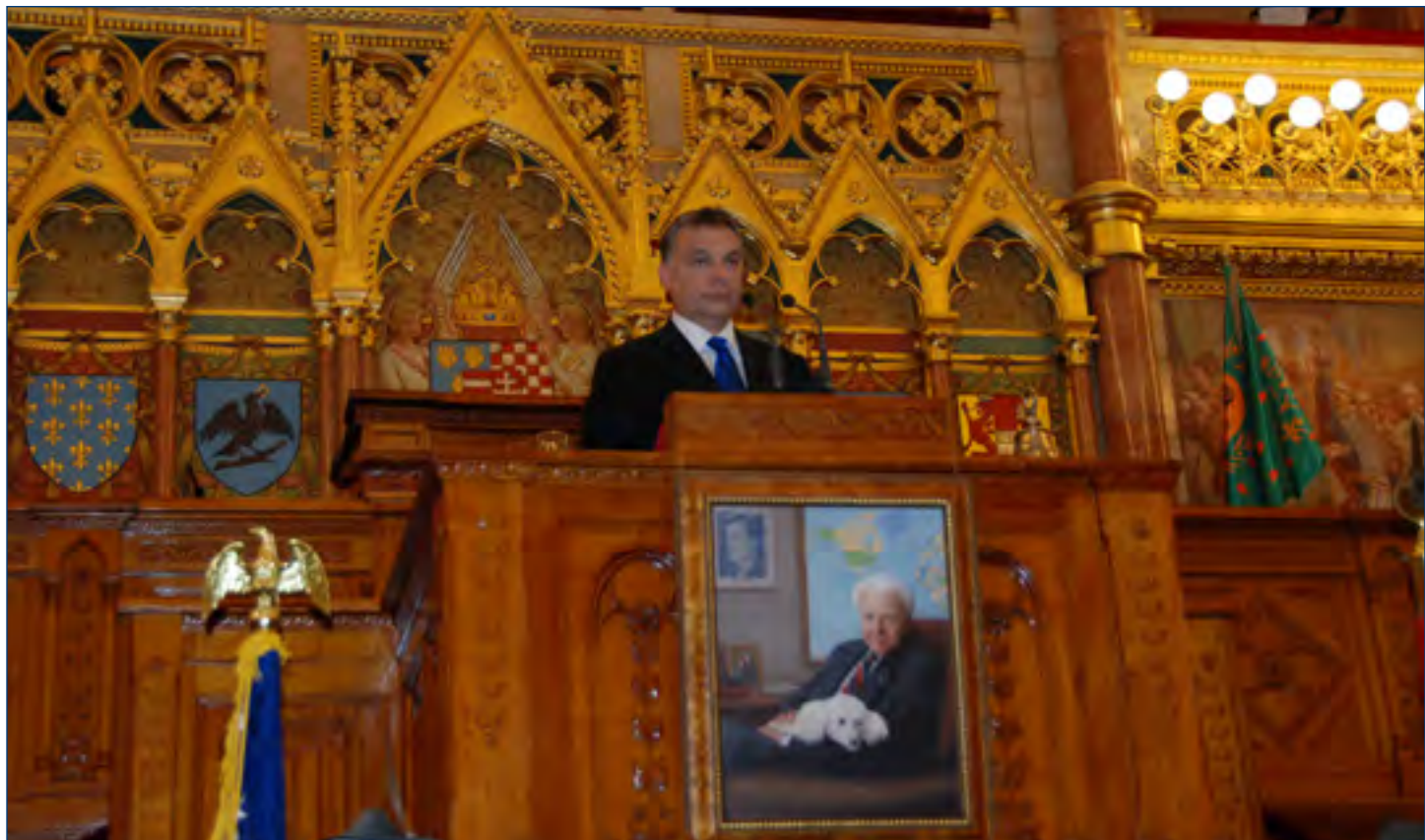
### TLI Takes Part in Historic Week for Hungarian American Relations in Budapest - 2011

Other historic events in Budapest that week included the unveiling of the statue of U.S. President Ronald Reagan on Freedom Square.

Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén, the Ronald Reagan Centennial Commission of Hungary, and The Ronald Reagan Foundation co-hosted a conference at the Hungarian Parliament to commemorate Ronald Reagan's legacy. Speaking were Representative Kevin McCarthy, U.S. House Majority Whip and Head of the Congressional delegation; Zsolt Semjén; Zsolt Németh, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs; and János Horváth, Hungarian American and Member of the Hungarian Parliament.



Statue of President Ronald Reagan in Freedom Square, Budapest. Photo by Babette Rittmeyer.



Prime Minister Viktor Orbán speaks at inauguration of the Tom Lantos Institute at the Hungarian Parliament in June, 2011. Photo by Babette Rittmeyer



A formal dinner in the Parliament's Hunter's Hall featured Mr. John Heubusch, Executive Director of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation, serving as Master of Ceremonies. U.S. Ambassador to Hungary Eleni Tsakopoulus Kounalakis gave welcoming remarks; the Honorable Edwin Meese delivered the keynote address. Mr. Meese recalled the profound impact of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 on President Reagan, who called on the public to "honor the memory of the brave Hungarian men and women who fought courageously to achieve the realization of their aspirations in the face of overwhelming military force."

Whatever the project...we have always been able to call upon the Hungarian American Coalition for advice, counsel, and support. Long may the Coalition flourish.

— Lee Edwards, Ph.D., Chairman,  
Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation

The Common Sense Society, a Coalition member, also organized a discussion with Ronald Reagan's special advisor, Attorney General Ed Meese, that was moderated by the President's speechwriter, Peggy Noonan.

### **Hippotherapy: Funding Horse Riding Therapy for Disabled Children in Hungary**

Twice in the past decade HAC extended grants from the Charles Simonyi Fund for the Arts and Sciences to support therapy for disabled children in Hungary. The grants benefitted the Eilika Habsburg Foundation, located in Söskút on the outskirts of Budapest.

The Eilika Habsburg Foundation is one of the most critical rehabilitation centers of its kind in Hungary. More than 100 disabled children and adults attend weekly sessions through the Foundation, managed by Eilika Habsburg-Lothringen, a professional therapist who donates her services and financial resources to help the disabled in Hungary.

The initial grant helped fund construction of an indoor riding course to allow the Foundation to provide year-round services. Several years later, a second award funded construction of an auxiliary building with changing and restroom facilities for handicapped children and a waiting area where parents can observe their children's hippotherapy lessons.

*"It is remarkable how much good can be done with the generosity of a few to help dedicated professionals like Eilika Habsburg-Lothringen. We encourage others to help the Foundation's mission to improve the life of the physically impaired."*

— Maximilian Teleki, HAC President



**Imre Lendvai-Lintner**  
HAC Chairman, 2005

Mr. Lendvai-Lintner's multi-decade commitment to the Hungarian Scout Association in Exteris began in 1956 in the Garfield, NJ Scout troop, continued in the central Hungarian Scouts organization, and led to his election in 1977 as President of the Executive Committee. He was chief organizer and commandant of the 1995 Scout Jamboree with 800 participating Scouts. Since 1997, he has served as President of the Hungarian Scout Association in Exteris. Mr. Lendvai-Lintner is a long-time member of St. Stephen's Magyar Roman Catholic Church in Passaic, NJ. He joined the Coalition Board in 2000, and served as its Chair in 2005. Before his retirement in 2006, Mr. Lendvai-Lintner was an engineer and later a manager in ExxonMobil's engineering organization for 33 years. He and his wife, Ágnes, have 3 children and 5 grandchildren.

# Michael Neidorff

Mr. Neidorff is President and Chief Executive Officer of Centene Corporation, a government services managed care company based in St. Louis, MO. He was elected the Chairman of the Board in May 2004.

His leadership is credited with one of the most successful HMO turnarounds in the health-care industry. Named to *Forbes Magazine's* list of America's Best Big Companies, Centene has expanded to eleven states and has become a publicly traded corporation that manages the healthcare of hundreds of thousands of individuals.

Mr. Neidorff is actively involved in community and civic affairs. He serves as Emeritus Trustee of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts serving as the Co-Chair of the International Committee on the Arts and also on the Boards of Directors of several arts and cultural organizations such as St. Louis Symphony, Boy Scouts of America and Grand Center, Webster University, the Opera Theatre of St. Louis, the St. Louis Science Center, Trinity University in San Antonio, TX, and the National Children's Cancer Society. In addition, Michael Neidorff has been a generous supporter of the Hungarian American Coalition.

His wife, Noémi Neidorff, is of Hungarian origin and is an active supporter of higher education initiatives, including the Hungary-Missouri Educational Partnership, a Coalition member organization. She also supports the George Kárpáti Lectureship at Drew University (NJ), which honors her father, the late George Kárpáti. The mission of HMEP is to provide scholarships for Hungarian students to attend graduate business school at a participating university in St. Louis, MO and to intern with U.S. companies after completing their studies.

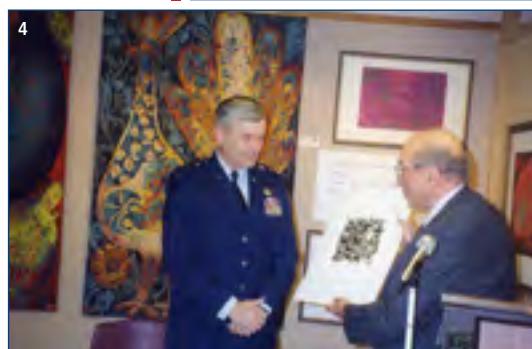


Michael Neidorff

In an interview with *St. Louis Commerce Magazine*, Mr. Neidorff advises readers: "Do the right thing for the right reason, regardless of the personal consequences... Doing this may not always seem like the most expeditious thing at the time, but you'll win in the long term."

*"I have a wonderful relationship with the Coalition and appreciate the work they do. I also have great affection for Hungary and central Europe, and it starts with their best export, my wife Noémi, and the people of Hungary who have suffered so much oppression and are still resilient."*

— Michael Neidorff



1. Hungarian Cultural Center of Northeastern Ohio dedicates its Székely Kapu in Hiram, OH in 2006 2. HAC Congressional interns pose with folk dancers at the Cleveland Hungarian Heritage Museum 3. HAC Board meeting at the Agoston Haraszty Winery in CA - Zsolt Szekeres, Otto Avvakumovits, Peter Pastor, Andrew Ludányi, Geza Kadar, Krisztina Újvági, Frank Koszorús, Jr., Edith Lauer, Gábor Szorád, Helen Szablya, Julius Várallyay 4. Prof. August Molnár presents Lt. Gen. Nick Kehoe a Hungarian etching 5. Coalition Chairman, Rev. Imre Bertalan, addresses members of the Board at the Kossuth House 6. Participants at the New Jersey HATOG Conference 7. Csilla Somogyi looks at early Bethlen Home calendar at the American Hungarian Foundation





# THE COALITION IN FACTS & FIGURES

*"I joined the Hungarian American Coalition (HAC) at its inception, because I felt the need for an umbrella organization to represent the interest of all Hungarian Americans in the U.S. The Coalition has raised awareness of many Hungarian American issues for the last 20 years. From advocacy for the U.S. visa waiver program, and Hungary's NATO membership, to philanthropic activities, such as fundraising for natural disasters in Hungary, like the cyanide or the red sludge spills, to educational outreach, like the White House and the Coalition internship programs, to the support of Hungarian human rights issues, in partnership with HHRF, HAC fulfills an important need for Hungarian Americans nationwide.*

*It takes an organization like the Coalition, with a presence in Washington, D.C., to advocate for us, to reach the right key decision makers, and to educate them about the priorities of the Hungarian American communities.*

*Based on several decades of activism, I know that we have many wonderful Hungarian American groups, mainly with local focus, interest and outreach. HAC offers national representation, even for those far away from the capital, like the West Coast... The future challenge for HAC, and other Hungarian American groups is to reach out to and involve the next generations, born or immigrating here... The task is to find and engage this generation, who may or may not speak Hungarian, to retain and foster their Hungarian heritage and culture, and give them representation in this umbrella organization.*

*Congratulations and best wishes for the next 20 years!"*

— Éva E. Voisin, Coalition Board Member  
Honorary Consul General, San Francisco





# Corporate Governance

## Articles of Incorporation (excerpts)

The Hungarian American Coalition is organized and will be operated exclusively for such charitable, educational, or scientific purposes as may qualify it as exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended (the “Code”).

**More specifically, such purposes include, but are not limited to:**

To identify and promote the aspirations, concerns, and interests of the Hungarian-American community.

To foster interest and appreciation in the United States for the history and culture of Hungary, including its literature, arts, and scientific achievements.

To promote the cooperation and communication among members.

To encourage cultural and educational interaction between the peoples of the United States and Hungary.

To protect and preserve the human and minority rights and cultural heritage of Hungarians throughout the world.

To support democratic institutions and economic development in Hungary.

The Corporation is empowered to exercise all rights and duties allowed under the laws of the District of Columbia.

The original incorporators of the Hungarian American Coalition were Rev. Imre Bertalan, Frank Koszorús, Jr. and Sándor Taraszovics.

## Governance of the Hungarian American Coalition

The Coalition is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization incorporated under the laws of Washington, D.C.

The organization is led by a 33-member Board of Directors comprised of organizational and individual members. Each year HAC holds an Annual Meeting for the general membership and a Board Meeting, which takes place in Washington, D.C. Between Board meetings, the Coalition is managed by a seven-member Executive Committee (EC), elected by secret ballot by the Board.

To have a valid Annual Meeting, the attendance of at least one half of all members plus one is required. Members can send proxies which are counted together with members in attendance to achieve the quorum.

The Board Meeting has more stringent requirements: to have a valid Board meeting, at least half of all board members must be present, plus one, and only 5 percent of the Board’s membership can use proxies in lieu of attendance. This is to ensure that Board decisions are made with the personal participation of the majority of the Board members.

The Executive Committee holds a minimum of four committee meetings (by teleconference) annually. After the EC approves its meetings’ minutes, a copy of the minutes as well as supporting documentation is sent to the entire Board. Any Board member can submit further opinions on any agenda item discussed by the EC.

EC meetings are open to Board members who wish to take part in the discussion, while EC members can also request the participation of outside experts even if they are not Coalition members or elected officers.

Since 1991, the Coalition has held 22 Board meetings and over 90 EC meetings.

The Board elects officers for two-year terms, except for the Chair, who is elected annually. The officers are: Chairperson, President, Vice Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, and Legal Counsel.

The Coalition's operations are maintained by membership dues of individuals and organizations, donations, fundraising activities and project-derived income. All projects are presented to the Executive Committee for screening and approval.

The Coalition's offices are located at 1120 Connecticut Ave. NW Suite 280, Washington, D.C. 20036. The Coalition's webpage can be found at [www.hacusa.org](http://www.hacusa.org). The administration of office work is supervised by Program Coordinators who in turn are directed by the Coalition's President and other officers.

Most of the Coalition's work is done by volunteers, while tasks requiring specialized expertise are outsourced or contracted based on the requirements of the given project.



John Betchkal moderates Coalition retreat in Cleveland, OH.

*"In the late 1980's, I was initially skeptical about the plan to form a new nationwide Hungarian American umbrella organization. Our experience had taught us to shun hierarchies, focus on substance over form, and work to promote the rights of Hungarian minority communities in Central Europe through influencing U.S. policymakers instead of advertising our own successes.*

*The positive experience of the past two decades has proved the skeptics wrong (myself included), as working with the Coalition has added value to HHRF efforts by pulling together diverse groups, resources, contacts and collective wisdom into joint action on minority rights.*

*Although the full realization of our joint efforts remains an elusive challenge, there is one success for which HHRF unabashedly takes credit. It is the discovery in the mid-1980s of a lady in New Jersey by the name of Edith Lauer, and the shameless luring of her talents, together with the formidable John, and later Andrea to join the good cause. My wish for the years to come is that we remain open and lucky enough to unearth similarly committed talents in our communities."*

— László Hámos  
HHRF President, Co-Founder of Coalition

# Coalition Board Members

## Current Coalition Board Members

In the preceding pages, we have presented a profile of our current Board officers as well as all of our Board Chairmen. In 2002 the Coalition made the decision to introduce the system of Rotating Chairs, to provide leaders of our member organizations the opportunity to chair the Coalition for a year and bring their experience, new ideas and special insight into the organization's leadership.

The following is a list of our current Individual Board Members, followed by our Organizational Board Members.

### Individuals

**Anne C. Bader** (1995-present)

Founder, CEO, The International Cybersecurity Dialogue; Visiting Programme Director at Wilton Park Conference Centre; Principal at Bader Resources, LLC .

**Péter Wm. Forgách, M.D.** (2008-present)

Ophthalmologist with subspecialty training in Vitreo - Retinal surgery; operates Amherst Retina and Vitreous Surgery Clinic in Buffalo, NY; founder of Calasancius Training Program

**Ágnes Fülöp**

Junior Scientist, University of Minnesota; Vice Pres., then Pres. of Minnesota Hungarians (1996-2006); MBK Board Member

**Geza Kadar Jr.** (1991-present), Legal Counsel (profile on pg. 24)

**Péter Kovalszki M.D.** (2000-present), Rising Chairman 2012 (profile on pg. 79)

**Edith K. Lauer** (1991-present), Chair Emerita (profile on pg. 22)

**Andrea Lauer Rice** (2003-present), Vice President (profile on pg. 88)

**Leslie Megyeri** (2007-present)

Board member of Central and East European Coalition, American Hungarian Foundation award recipient

**Gabriella "Kuni" Nádas** (2007-present)

Pharmacist, Coordinator of Calvin Synod School Fund since 1990; Executive Director of Hungarian Scout Fund; Chief Operating Officer of the Hungarian Association

**George Pogan** (1995-present), Secretary (profile on pg. 43)

**Tibor Purger** (2010-present)

Director of Integrated Information systems at Rutgers University of NJ where he is also pursuing his PhD in Political Science. For 16 years he worked as a Washington-based producer and correspondent of Duna TV, Radio Free Europe and *Magyar Szó* daily in Vojvodina, Serbia.

**Zsolt Szekeres** (1991-present), Treasurer (profile on pg. 74)

**Max Teleki** (2001-present), President (profile on pg. 76)

**Charles Vámosy** (1997-present) – Former Chairman (profile on pg. 65)

**Julius Várallyay** (2000-present)

International consultant, retired after 29 years' service with World Bank; author



HAC Board Member, Dr. Péter Forgách, with graduates Brigitta Bereczky and Bálint Csordás, Calasancius Training Program

**László Varjú** (1999-present)

International Business consultant; Special Advisor, Honorary Consulate of Hungary in Chicago; former General Manager of Autoflex USA; and former Director, Malév Hungarian Airlines

**Éva Voisin** (2001-present)

Attorney, Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Hungary

**Organizations****American Hungarian Catholic Clergy Association** (Fr. Barnabás G. Kiss, OFM)

The American Hungarian Catholic Clergy Association, established in 1974, provides its members with the opportunity for fellowship and cooperation, while identifying the goals of Hungarian pastoral work and enabling the Hungarian clergy in the U.S. to remain faithful to their language and religious traditions. (1991-present)

**American Hungarian Foundation** (Prof. August J. Molnár)

Founded in 1954, the American Hungarian Foundation is devoted to furthering the understanding and appreciation of the Hungarian cultural and historical heritage in the United States. The Foundation serves as a bridge between Hungarian and American cultural traditions in an effort to enhance a better understanding of the contributions of each. Its extensive Museum and Library are housed in a redesigned bakery in New Brunswick. Its exhibits and frequent programs provide an insight into the finest traditions of Hungarian culture and art. (1991-93, 2006-present)

**Calvin Synod of the United Church of Christ** (Rev. Béla Poznan)

Organized in 1939 as a Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church the Calvin Synod contains 41 congregations that constitute 4 classes (Eastern, Central, Lakeside and Western). The Eastern Classis was organized in 1896 and is considered to be the oldest Hungarian Reformed Church entity outside of Hungary. In addition to serving its parishioners' spiritual needs, the Synod provides extensive financial assistance to churches and educational institutions in Hungary and the Carpathian Basin. (1991-present)

**Cleveland Hungarian Heritage Society** (Mr. Theodore J. Horvath) (profile on pg. 71)

Founded in 1985, the mission of the Cleveland Hungarian Heritage Society is to preserve Hungarian culture and the history of Hungarians in Northeast Ohio, so that present and future generations can draw upon its collection for education, inspiration and enrichment. Its Museum in downtown Cleveland houses both permanent and temporary exhibits. It provides educational programs and the opportunity for research in its excellent library, and it operates a Gift Shop filled with Hungarian books, collectibles and gift items. (2001-present)

**Hungarian Americans for Human Rights in Délvidék** (Mr. Sándor Krémer)

Hungarian-Americans for Human Rights in Délvidék (HAHRD) was formed in 1991 with the purpose of protecting the human rights and cultural heritage of Hungarians living in the Vojvodina and Slavonia regions of the former Yugoslavia. Since its founding, the organization has provided educational assistance/scholarships to many Hungarian individuals and institutions in the region. (1992-present)

**Hungarian (Magyar) Club of Chicago** (Mr. Sándor Krémer) (profile on pg.78)

Established 90 years ago, the Hungarian Club of Chicago is one of the strongest Hungarian American organizations in the Midwest. The Club promotes Hungarian traditions and culture; it celebrates Hungarian national holidays; participates in and supports Hungarian churches and other organizations in Chicago. Its extensive college scholarship program with annual grants of \$7,000 has awarded more than \$100,000 in years past to young members of the community. Its Saláta Pál Scholarship alone provides \$2,500 to an outstanding student each year. (1994-present)



Coalition Co-founders: Pál Fekete, Edith K. Lauer and Rev. Imre Bertalan





Dr. Balázs and Csilla Somogyi

**Hungarian Communion of Friends** (Mr. László Böjtös) (profile on pg. 100)

Established in 1967, the Hungarian Communion of Friends (Magyar Baráti Közösség) is the organization known for its annual, week-long conference, Itt Ott (Here and There), held at Lake Hope State Park in Ohio. Before 1990, it provided a much-needed forum for famous writers and opposition politicians from Hungary and the neighboring countries. Its annual publication, entitled Itt-Ott, provides a public forum for various topics, including the content of the year's conference and questions related to Hungarians living outside the borders of Hungary. The organization has also funded scholarships and various projects in Hungarian-inhabited areas of Romania and the neighboring countries. (1991-present)

**Hungarian Cultural Society of Connecticut** (Dr. Balázs Somogyi) (profile on pg. 29)

(HCSC) is an association of citizens of Connecticut of Hungarian ancestry. The society's goal is to preserve the Hungarian cultural heritage in America. It has been a generous supporter of ethnic Hungarian minority populations through providing a large number of scholarships in Transylvania, Romania as well as general assistance to cultural institutions in the Carpathian Basin. HCSC funds its various programs through its annual fundraising dinner and other charitable donations. (2008-present)

**Hungarian Human Rights Foundation** (Mr. László Hámos) (profile on pg. 63)

Since 1976, the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation (HHRF) has been monitoring the human rights condition of the nearly three million Hungarians who live as minorities in the countries surrounding Hungary. In accordance with its purpose, HHRF regularly collects, translates, analyzes and disseminates reliable reports on the human rights conditions of these Hungarian minority communities. HHRF has an extensive internship program and has offices in Brussels, Budapest and Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca), Romania. (1991-present)

**Hungarian Reformed Federation of America** (Mr. George Dózsa) (profile on pg. 75)

The Hungarian Reformed Federation of America was founded in 1896 and chartered in 1907 by the Congress of the United States as a fraternal life insurance society. In December 2011, the Federation merged with GBU Financial Life, and all 10,000 members simultaneously joined two new entities:

1. the Kossuth Foundation of the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, a not-for-profit organization registered in the District of Columbia, which carries on the more than century-old HRFA mission: to support the cultural, educational, religious and social needs and aspirations of the Hungarian-American community. The Kossuth Foundation owns and operates the centrally located Kossuth House in Washington, D.C., where Coalition Annual and Board meetings are regularly held.
2. HRFA District 3000, a division of GBU Financial Life, a company with assets of more than 1 billion dollars, to serve the financial and insurance needs of its members, who maintain autonomous chapters in 11 states and the District of Columbia.

Reverend Imre Bertalan, former HRFA and HAC Chairman, is profiled on page 56.



Csilla Grauzer, President of Minnesota Hungarians and Dr. Ágnes Virga, President of Hungarian Society of Massachusetts at the recent Diaspora Meeting in Budapest.

**Hungarian Scout Association in Exeris** (Mr. Imre Lendvai-Lintner) (profile on pg. 106)

The Hungarian Scouts trace their origins to 1946, when a few dedicated scout leaders, refugees from war-torn Hungary, formed the first exile troops among the children in European refugee camps. With the ensuing emigration, the movement spread overseas and today counts a total of 5,049 members (boys, girls and adults) registered in 81 active troops in Western Europe, North and South America, and Australia. The goal of the Association has been to preserve and pass on to the scouts Hungarian culture and language while practicing the historically high standards of Hungarian scouting, and to represent Hungary in world scouting. (1991-present)

**Hungarian Society of Massachusetts** (Dr. Ágnes Virga)

Founded in 1964, the Hungarian Society of Massachusetts, Inc. is a non-profit, cultural organization that disassociates itself from partisan politics. Membership is open to individuals of

all ideologies, religions and ethnic backgrounds who abide by the Society's by-laws, and who desire to foster the Hungarian language and culture. In the mid-1960's the Society established a weekend school where volunteers taught 20-30 Hungarian children to read and write in Hungarian. In 2000, the school was reestablished as the Béla Bartók Hungarian School of Boston (Boskola), with 15 teachers and 100 students who are often also members of the Society's sizeable Scout troop. (2011-present)

**Minnesota Hungarians, Inc.** (Mr. László Fülöp) (profile on pg. 38)

The mission of Minnesota Hungarians is to nurture the Hungarian cultural heritage of its members; to represent it in American society and academia; to participate in the activities of other Hungarian-American organizations; and to organize Hungarian cultural and social programs. The group often welcomes Hungarian visitors and newcomers to Minnesota and assists them with local information and services. They also help Hungarian groups and individuals with their needs, and facilitate exchange programs of professionals with Hungary. Their charitable programs include scholarships and other assistance to Hungarian students in the Carpathian Basin. (1992-present)

**National Committee of Hungarians from Slovakia** (Mrs. Edith K. Lauer)

The National Committee of Hungarians from Slovakia was founded in 1947 by expelled Hungarian political leaders from Czechoslovakia after World War II, who took up residence in Hungary. When that country came under Communist rule in 1948, they fled to the West, and endeavored to work for the "liberation" of the 600,000-strong Hungarian minority in Slovakia. Since the fall of Communism, the Committee has promoted equal human and minority rights for Hungarians in Slovakia. Under the leadership of Dr. Ede Chaszar for many years the group monitored human and minority rights in Slovakia, and presented its findings to U.S. policy makers and international organizations. Dr. Chaszar also published the newsletter, *News from Slovakia*. (1996-present)



Dr. Ede Chaszar

**Seattle-Pécs Sister Cities Association** (Mrs. Helen M. Szablya) (profile on pg. 34)

The Association was founded in 1991, and is composed of individuals and organizations interested in promoting close ties between the people of Seattle, Washington State, and Pécs, Hungary. Its goals are to advance educational, cultural and commercial relations between both cities, and inform and educate the public about their sister city. (1996-present)

**The Bethlen Communities** (Rev. Imre A. Bertalan)

The Bethlen Communities in Ligonier, Pennsylvania, is one of the oldest Hungarian organizations to have joined the Hungarian American Coalition. Founded in 1921 as a residence for orphans, it evolved into a home for the aged, with a capacity of over 100 beds and twenty retirement cottages. The Bethlen Home is a church-related, nonprofit subsidiary of the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America. (1991-present)

**William Penn Association** (William Bero)

WPA, founded 125 years ago, is a Hungarian-American Fraternal Benefit Society serving the Hungarian American community. The Association operates on a non-profit basis providing life insurance and annuities to its members. The Association conducts fraternal and charitable activities for the benefit of their membership, including awarding a large number of university scholarships to the children of policyholders. WPA has a distinguished record of promoting Hungarian cultural heritage in the U.S. by assisting Hungarian American organizations with their various projects and programs. (2006-present)

Steve Varga, former HAC Chairman, is profiled on page 104.

**The Coalition's current organizational members who are not members of the Board:**

**Béla Bartók Hungarian School of Boston (Boskola), Massachusetts**

Boskola's mission is to enrich the Hungarian language skills and cultural appreciation of children ages 3-18. Classes are held on Saturdays with an all-volunteer teaching and administrative staff. Boskola was established in 2000 and is currently made up of over 100 students from 70 families, with the students grouped into classes taught by 15 teachers.

### **Civic Enterprises, Budapest**

The first programs established by Civic Enterprises are their Senior Mentor Programs in Hungary and Slovakia. They match volunteers age 55 and over to tutor and mentor elementary school students struggling to learn to read. These programs boost student academic performance, help schools become more successful and establish close bonds between tutors and students.

### **Common Sense Society, Budapest**

The Common Sense Society is committed to advocating the importance of civic engagement, entrepreneurship, and the ideals of responsible liberty among university students and young professionals in Hungary. It promotes these ideas through hosting regular debates, panel discussions, lectures, workshops, film screenings, and book events for its membership.

### **Hungarian American Cultural Center, Michigan**

In its large Hungarian Cultural Center opened in 1884, HACC organizes numerous cultural events throughout the year. It hosts visiting Hungarian dignitaries and artists from Hungary and the surrounding countries. It sponsors Hungarian picnics, dance performances and bake sales at Easter and Christmas. The Cultural Center also operates a Hungarian restaurant on weekends.

### **Hungarian Association**

This cultural organization, founded in 1952, has held its traditional Congress in Cleveland, OH each November since 1961. The 4-day meeting provides a forum for lectures by invited speakers in the U.S. and the Carpathian Basin on educational, historic, literary, and artistic issues that impact Hungarian Americans. The Association publishes its annual Chronicle while the Árpád Academy honors outstanding Hungarian Americans.

### **Hungarian Cultural Center of Northeastern Ohio**

The Geauga Magyar Cultural Society and St. Stephens Magyar Drama Club, both of which promoted Hungarian culture and customs in Ohio, merged to create the HCC-NEO. The organization holds picnics, celebrations and a Harvest Festival on its 40 acre property in Hiram. They co-sponsor and coordinate their programs with other Hungarian organizations in Cleveland. In 2006 they built a lovely traditional Székely kapu (wooden carved gate from Transylvania).

### **Hungary-Missouri Educational Partnership, Missouri**

This organization provides scholarships to outstanding Hungarian students to get their M.B.A. at a participating university in the state of Missouri. They also encourage graduates to participate in business internships before their return to Hungary.

### **Ilona Kiss Hooper Foundation, Virginia**

This Hungarian organization promotes comprehensive education for students in small towns and villages. In 2009 it established a high school in the village of Bercel in order to promote through education and extra-curricular experiences the qualities of positive thinking, self-confidence and encouraging young people to work for a successful future in Hungary.

### **Széchenyi István Hungarian School and Kindergarten, New Jersey**

For over 30 years this school has provided instruction from pre-school to 8th grade in Hungarian language and culture to children in the tri-state area. It also offers preparatory classes for Hungarian Scouts Leadership Exam and instruction for adults who wish to learn about the language and culture of Hungary.

### **Széll Kálmán Foundation, Budapest**

Founded in 2003, the Foundation has 250 members who are economic and corporate leaders and intellectuals who share a values-based commitment to Hungarian society. At monthly programs members hear expert speakers on various topics and discuss questions affecting the social and economic situation of Hungary, the European Union and the world.

## Past Board Members

The Hungarian American Coalition would like to acknowledge and thank all individual and organizational members who have contributed to our success over the past 20 years.

### Individuals

István Hargitai (2004-2009), Beáta Kovács Nas (2002-2004), Andrew Ludányi (1991-2005), László Papp (1997-1999), Dr. Géza Simon (2000-2002), Árvéd Teleki (1994-1996), Paul Teleki (1991-1994), Péter Újvági (1991-1996) and Dr. Ágnes Huszár Várdy (1998-2000)

### Organizational Board Members

American Hungarian Educators' Association (1993-1995), American Hungarian Federation (1996-1998), American Hungarian Federation of Metro Washington, D.C. (1991-2004), Atlantic Research Publications, Inc. (1991-1995), Cleveland Hungarian Development Panel, (1992-1997), Hungarian Alumni Association - Bessenyei Kör (1991-2006), Hungarian American Cultural Association (Kossuth Club), (1997-2009), Hungarian American Human Rights Council (1991-1993), Hungarian Club of Colorado (1994-2002), Hungarian Club of Toledo (1991-1999)

### The following organizations no longer exist

Committee for Danubian Research (1991-2000), Comprehensive Health Education Foundation (1994-1995), Hungarian Reformed Federation (1991-2011), Magyar Club of Cleveland (1992-2007), Manhattan Hungarians Network (2005-2010)

## In Memoriam

We recognize the major contributions and treasure the memory of our Board members who have passed on:

† Rev. Imre Bertalan	† Rev. Stephen Mustos
† Dr. Edward Chaszar	† Zoltán Nyeste
† Paul Fekete	† Prof. Károly Nagy
† Rev. Bishop Sándor Forró	† Prof. George Olgyay
† István Füzesi	† Dr. Paul Rupprecht
† Bishop Andrew Harsanyi	† Péter Soltész
† Miklós Kolumbán	† Sándor Taraszovics

An early Coalition Board Meeting. **Front row:** Ede Chaszar, Helen Szabalya, Edith K. Lauer, Clara Serraino, Péter Újvági, **2nd row:** Sándor Taraszovics, Ágnes Fülöp, Paul Fekete, Andrew Ludányi, Julius Várallyay, Imre Bertalan, Jenő Megyesy, István Füzesi, **3rd row:** István Jeszenszky, László Fülöp, Árvéd Teleki, László Bójtös, Frank Koszorús, Jr.







# The Coalition in Numbers

Following is an overview of the Coalition's most significant financial information.

The statement of expenses and following graphs cover the period May 1991 through September 2011.

## Income and Expense Statement 1991 – 2011

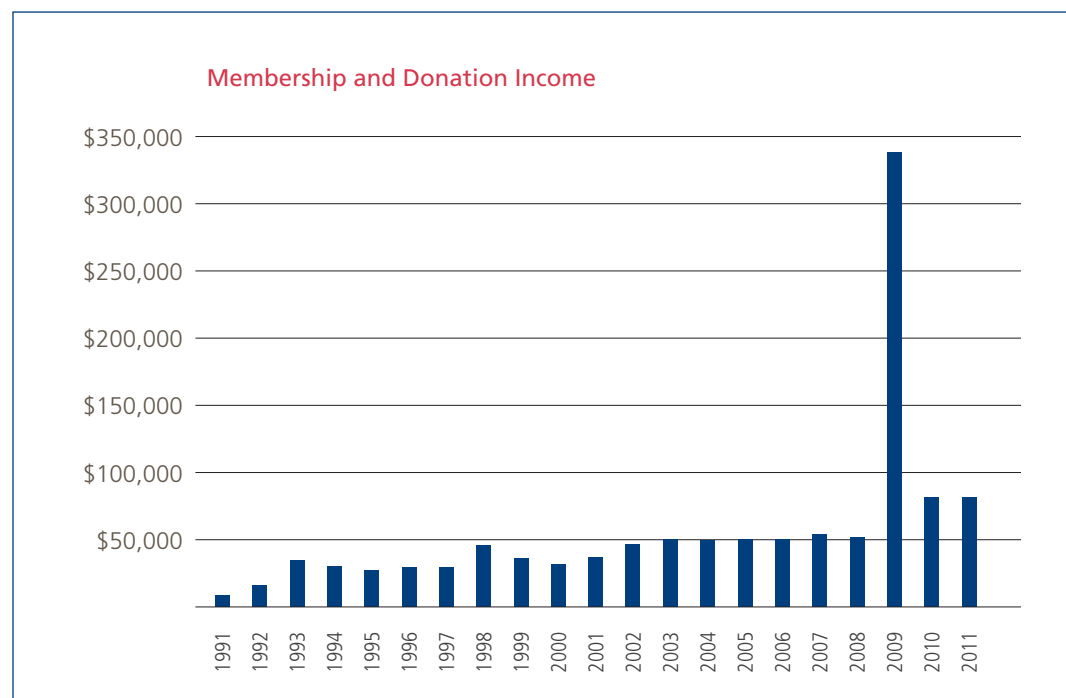
<b>Income</b>	<b>1991-2011</b>
Membership & Donation Income	\$1,205,409
Project Income	\$2,744,109
Investments, Advances and Fund balances	\$244,092
Total Income	\$4,193,610

<b>Expenses</b>	
Staffing & Administrative Expenses	\$436,286
Office Expenses	\$305,482
Communications Expense	\$104,335
Project Expenditure	\$3,277,045
Total Expense	\$4,123,148

<b>Total Income less Expenses</b>	<b>\$70,462</b>
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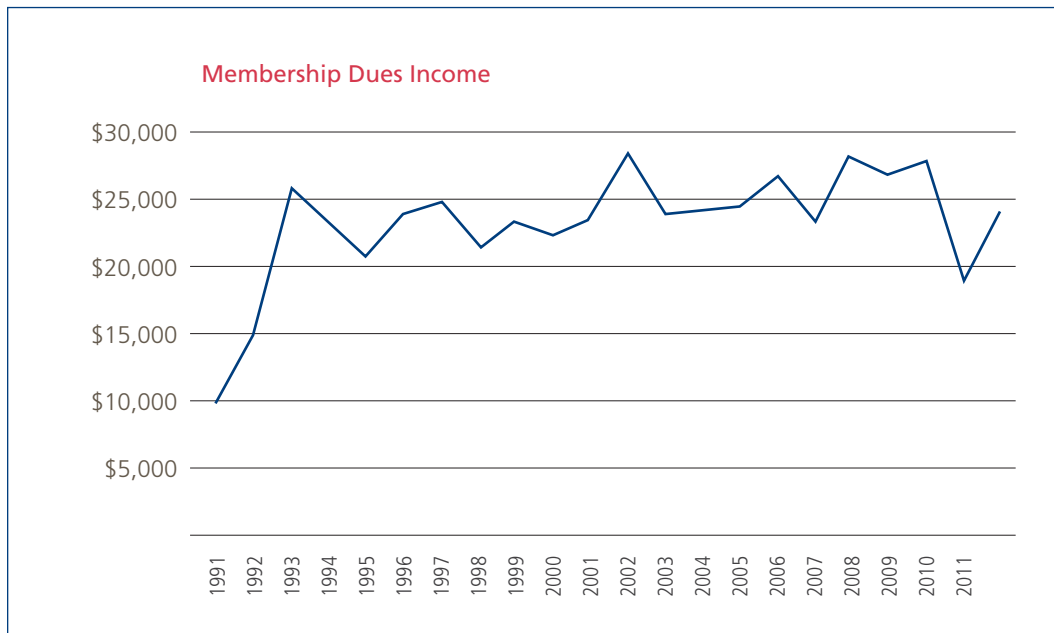
## Income

The Coalition derives its income from four major sources: membership dues, donations, revenues from fundraising events and revenues from projects. Over the 20-year period, the Coalition received \$1,205,409 in membership dues and donations.



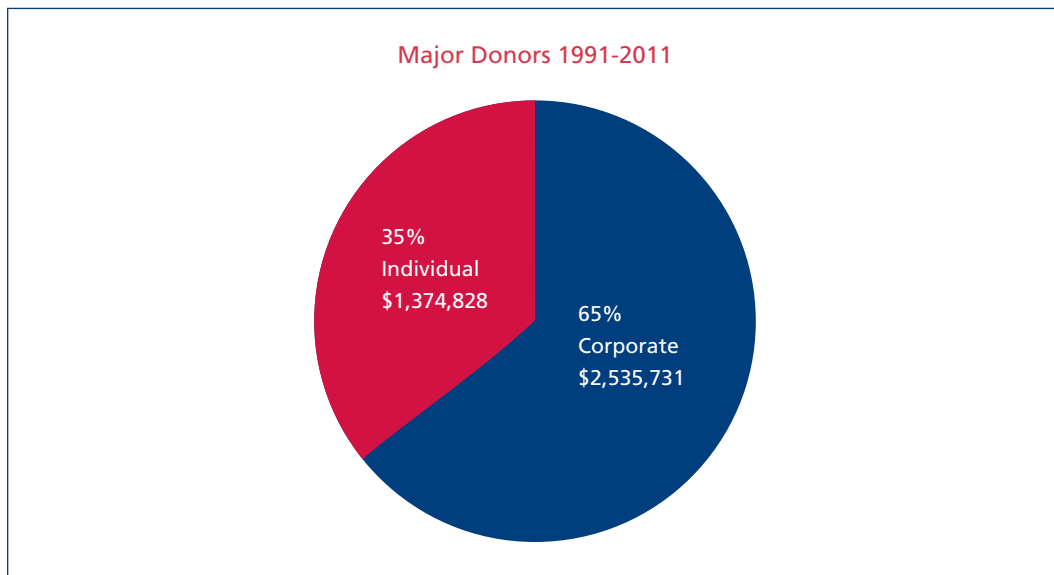
### Membership Dues Income

The graph shows that the Coalition's membership dues income has been about \$25,000 per year. The second graph shows the two categories of Coalition donors.



### Major Donors

The Coalition's Major Donors graph shows that corporate support plays a significant role in funding programs and activities.



### Expenses

The Coalition's expenses and overhead are very low since most of the work is done by volunteers and by officers of the Coalition who do not receive any financial compensation.

## List of Donors to the Hungarian American Coalition

The Hungarian American Coalition is grateful for the successful partnership sustained by the generous support of the Charles and Lisa Simonyi Fund for the Arts and Sciences. We sincerely appreciate the assistance and friendship of the Fund's Executive Director, Susan Hutchison. We are thankful to all our major donors whose contributions have enabled the Coalition to fulfill its mission through implementing many worthwhile projects.

The following list includes donations of membership fees, support for projects and proceeds of our annual Gala Dinners. The Coalition sincerely thanks all members and supporters for donations large and small! Thank you for investing in our organization, projects and our community!



Ms. Susan Hutchison, Executive Director of the Charles and Lisa Simonyi Fund for the Arts and Sciences

### \$1,000,000 and above

Charles and Lisa Simonyi Fund  
for the Arts and Sciences

### \$500,000 and above

Dr. Charles Simonyi

### \$250,000 and above

Pannonius Foundation –  
John and Edith K. Lauer

### \$100,000 and above

Centene Charitable Foundation

### \$50,000 and above

AMERITECH  
C. Barton and Andrea N. Lauer Rice  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
William Penn Association

### \$25,000 and above

Béla Bartók Choir and University Orchestra  
William Benter  
Olivia B. Carino  
Ilona Hooper  
Károly Kismartoni  
Ronald S. Lauder  
Light Sources, Inc.  
George Herbert Walker III

### \$10,000 and above

Joe Adorjan  
Boeing, Inc.  
Drs. Jeanette and Glenn Brown  
Cleveland Nephrology Foundation  
Diebold, Inc.  
Duna TV  
April Foley  
German Marshall Fund  
Goldman Sachs & Company

### \$10,000 and above continued

Hungarian Reformed Federation of America  
Joewood Holding, Inc.  
Dr. and Mrs. Elemér Kiss  
Leslie L. Megyeri  
Mary V. Mochary  
Nancy Brinker Charitable Foundation  
Potomac Foundation  
Pro Professione Foundation  
Charles and Catherine B. Rice Foundation  
SBC Corporation  
Zsolt Szekeres  
Max Teleki

### \$5,000 and above

András Ábrahám  
Anne C. Bader  
James T. and Hanna H. Bartlett  
Antal and Margit Bejczy  
Ildikó Butler  
Classic Cosmetics, Inc.  
Duna TV-ért Alapítvány  
Ernst & Young LLP  
George Fabian  
Fabó Imre Education Fund  
Barbara Lowe Fodor  
Péter Forgách, M.D.  
Anikó Gaál Schott  
General Electric Financial Services  
Zsolt Harsányi  
Theodore J. Horvath  
Geza Kadar, Jr.  
Anikó Kálnoki Trombitás  
Peter J. Kurz  
Imre Lendvai-Lintner  
Louis L. Loiczly  
Magyar Baráti Közösség  
Dr. Daniel F. McDonald  
National Committee of Hungarians from Slovakia  
George Pataki

Mark Pigott  
 George J. Pogan  
 Zsolt Rummy  
 János Szekeres  
 Szabolcs Szekeres  
 Árvéd Teleki  
 Pál Toldalag  
 Tom Lantos Foundation  
 Dr. István Tóth  
 Charles M. Vámosy  
 Whitehead Foundation

### **\$2,500 and above**

Géza Bánkuty  
 Bethlen Home  
 Chemical Manufactures Association  
 Cleveland Hungarian Development Panel  
 Cleveland Hungarian Heritage Society  
 Ferenc Darvas  
 George Dózsa  
 Farnham Charitable Fund  
 Federalist Society  
 Péter Fodor, M.D.  
 Róbert Gábor  
 Hungarian Alumni Association  
 Hungarian American Cultural Association  
 Hungarian Human Rights Foundation  
 Hungarian (Magyar) Club of Chicago  
 George A. Kellner  
 William Köteles  
 András Ludányi  
 Magyar Club of Cleveland  
 Ágoston Molnár  
 Gabriella Nádas  
 Robert L. and Kriszta Lauer Nagy  
 Blaise Pasztory  
 Seattle-Pécs Sister City Association  
 Balázs Somogyi, M.D.  
 Nóra Szabó  
 The Thomas Cholnoky Foundation, Inc.  
 Alfred and Mariann Tóth  
 Julius Várallyay  
 Stephen Varga  
 Ward Howell International

### **\$1,000 and above**

American Hungarian Catholic Clergy Association  
 American Hungarian Federation of Metropolitan Wash-  
 ington, D.C.  
 American Hungarian Federation, Inc.  
 American Hungarian Foundation  
 Atlantic Research Publications, Inc.  
 Otto and Elizabeth Avvakumovits  
 Zoltán Bagdy  
 John F. Barrett  
 Stephen Benkő, Sr.  
 Rev. Imre Bertalan

Donald Blinken  
 László Bójtös  
 Arnaud de Borchgrave  
 Walter and Terezia Boyne  
 Nancy Brinker  
 Richard B. Buchholzer  
 C.H.E. Foundation  
 Calvin Synod Conference  
 Edward Chaszar  
 Committee for Danubian Research  
 Jill Cooper  
 István Csicsery Ronay  
 Dr. Sigmund Csicsery  
 Ellenco, Inc.  
 Embassy of Hungary  
 EMLA  
 Stefan J. Fedor  
 Paul Fekete  
 Free Magyar Reformed Church  
 László and Ágnes Fülöp  
 Dr. Stephen Füzesi  
 Andrew Thomas Gábor  
 Bruce Gewl  
 Global Telesystems Group  
 Rezsoe Gracza  
 William and Éva Grady  
 Joseph Grand  
 Guardian Industries  
 László Hámos  
 Dr. János Horváth  
 Hungarian Americans for Human Rights in Délvidék  
 Hungarian Association  
 Hungarian Association of Lakewood Ohio  
 Hungarian Club of Colorado, Inc.  
 Hungarian Club of Toledo  
 Hungarian Cultural Center of Northeastern Ohio  
 Hungarian Cultural Society of Connecticut  
 Hungarian Reformed Church in America  
 Hungarian Retired Club  
 Hungarian Scouts Association  
 Hungarian Spiritual Society  
 Hungary-Missouri Educational Partnership  
 Leslie Iffy, M.D.  
 International Center for Democratic Transition  
 Thomas and Judit Jackovits  
 Albert B. Jankó, M.D.  
 John Carroll University  
 Dr. Geza Kadar  
 Paul J. Kellner  
 Mary Ann Kismartoni  
 Barbara E. Kiss  
 Éva Ibrányi Kiss  
 Miklos P. Koleszar, Esq.  
 Árpád and Éva Kovács  
 Péter A. Kovalszki, M.D.  
 Steve M. J. Kún-Szabó  
 Ilona Lang



**\$1,000 and above, continued**

Estelle Louise Lauer  
 Narcissza Layton  
 John Lipsky  
 Manhattan Hungarian Network  
 Frank Mayer  
 McMahan Fondation  
 Eugene F. Megyesy, Jr.  
 László Mészáros  
 Minnesota Hungarians  
 David J. Morrissey  
 Steven Myers  
 Ákos Nagy  
 National Review Institute  
 Judit Némethy  
 István Nyirjesy, M.D.  
 Elemér Nyárády  
 Dániel Odescalchi  
 Eszter Kandó Odescalchi  
 George Olgyay  
 László Papp  
 Margaret Bouslough Parsons  
 Peter Pastor  
 William Patient  
 Philadelphia and Vicinity Magyar Sports Club  
 Rákóczi Foundation  
 Andrew G. Rékay  
 Paul Rupprecht

Saint Stephen King of Hungary Church  
 Society for Propagation of Faith  
 Péter A. Soltész  
 Szablya Consultants, Inc.  
 Helen M. Szablya  
 Dr. C. Ákos Szabó  
 Széchényi István Magyar Iskola és Óvoda  
 Árpád A. Szürgyi  
 Huba Taliga  
 Alexander Tar  
 Sándor Taraszovics  
 Stephen Teleki  
 The House of Hungary, Inc.  
 The Hungarian Cultural Association  
 The Thomas Cholnoky Foundation, Inc.  
 Péter Újvági  
 Patricia Minar Vajda  
 Stephen M. Vajtay  
 Ágnes M. Várdy  
 George F. Varga  
 Paul P. Varga  
 Éva E. Voisin  
 Katalin Vörös  
 William Webster  
 David L. Witte

*“Congratulations to HAC and all its members for 20 years of great work.  
 Thank you for your invaluable contribution in making Hungary’s NATO  
 membership happen, anchoring us in the Transatlantic community.  
 Thank you for your support during my tenure as Ambassador in Washington.  
 Please continue your efforts to bring understanding and cooperation among  
 all Hungarians. A very special thanks to Edit Lauer and Max Teleki.”*

— Hungarian Ambassador András Simonyi



# Acknowledgements

American and Hungarian Ambassadors play an important role in the bilateral relations of the two countries. For the past 20 years during visits to Hungary and on many occasions Coalition leaders have continuously consulted with U.S. Ambassadors to Budapest. At the same time, a good working relationship has been established with Hungarian Ambassadors assigned to Washington.

## **U.S. Ambassadors to Hungary since 1990:**

Mark Palmer (1986-1990), Charles Thomas (1990-1994), Donald Blinken (1994-1997), Peter Tufo (1997-2001), Janet E Garvey (Charge d’Affaires 2001), Nancy Brinker (2001-2003), George H. Walker III (2003-2006), April Foley (2006-2009), Eleni Kounalakis (2010-Incumbent)

## **Hungarian Ambassadors to the United States:**

Zwack Péter (1990-1991), Tar Pál (1991-1994), Bánlaki György (1994-1998), Jeszenszky Géza (1998-2002), Simonyi András (2002-2007), Somogyi Ferenc (2007-2009), Szombati Béla (2009-2011), Szapáry György (2011-Incumbent)

We are grateful for the opportunity to work with each Ambassador in building a positive bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Hungary.

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*We apologize for any inadvertent errors in facts, dates, events or names of persons mentioned or omitted.*



Please consult the Coalition's webpage:

**[www.hacusa.org](http://www.hacusa.org)**

Find additional information about HAC's projects, leadership and how to join the Hungarian American Coalition. We hope to hear from you!

