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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE. Peter Petrusz, M.D., Ph.D.

As this is the second and last year of my presidency, I would like, first of all, to thank all members of the Association and the Board of Trustees for allowing me to serve you as President. This is an exceptional honor and privilege, which offers great opportunities and great challenges that can only be met through the dedicated support of our officers, Board members, and all the members of our Association. I would like to thank all of you for your hard work and support during these two years.

In my previous letter, about a year ago, I outlined very briefly the history of our Association and listed the major challenges we had to address in order to continue to grow and prosper. In particular, I asked your help in recruiting new members, improving our infrastructure, and strengthening our financial base. Your response was very gratifying. Under the leadership of Dr. Szabolcs Fejer, Membership Chairman, we signed up new members in unprecedented numbers and increased the total number of our US/Canadian members by 24%. Similarly, our Auxiliary, under the leadership of Denise Matolcsy-Cowden and her successor, Dr. Eszter Bodnar, has done an admirable job in helping us run our meetings more smoothly and make them more enjoyable through excellent social programs. The Bylaws Review Committee, chaired by Dr. Thomas Lajos, has done a tremendous job in updating our Bylaws; the proposed new version will be sent out to all members in time to be voted on at our meeting in October. Finally, our financial situation, although still far from perfect, has also

improved, thanks in part again to the Auxiliary, and in part to all those officers and members, especially Dr. Ivan Harangozo, Treasurer, who helped with our fundraising. As you may see elsewhere in this issue, a number of individuals have made generous donations to support the Association and its programs. Our heartfelt thanks go to all of them, and to all others whose active participation has helped make this past year a success.

My previous letter's theme was revolving around the things I asked you, our members, to do to help the Association. Now, paraphrasing the late President Kennedy, the motto of this letter is: *ask not what you can do for your Association but ask what your Association can do for you*. The Association's goals are laid out in several documents, starting with our Articles of Incorporation, our Bylaws, and our Mission Statement. The latter is available in our web site and is reproduced below:

"The Hungarian Medical Association of America is a voluntary organization of physicians and scientists of Hungarian heritage. Its goal is to preserve, promote, and foster Hungarian medical traditions and ideals.

The Association's first objective is to promote and disseminate knowledge of clinical medicine and basic medical sciences by annual scientific meetings, lectures, discussions, publications, and other means. We are dedicated to building friendship and cooperation among our members and providing a forum wherein our members can meet, exchange ideas, and participate in continuing medical education.

Our second objective is to provide scholarships and exchange programs for advancing the medical education of qualified candidates from North America and Hungary.

Our third objective is to encourage and assist in the establishment of professional interactions between individual North American and Hungarian physicians and scientists as well as between North American and Hungarian medical societies, universities, and institutions. All qualified persons who share these goals and ideals are welcome to join our Association.”

As you see, the three main activities of the Association are the Annual Scientific Meeting, the Student Exchange and Fellowship Programs, and various forms of support for Hungarian health care and medical education. Our Sarasota meetings are unique with their multidisciplinary, CME-credited scientific program, relaxed and friendly atmosphere, enjoyable social activities, and the very special opportunity they provide for American and Hungarian physicians and their families to develop professional and personal contacts. Although we don't have a formal placement service, it is well known that many young colleagues have found residency or fellowship positions through contacts established in Sarasota. Regarding our Student Exchange and Fellowship Programs, feedback from the participants and from others has indicated time and again that these programs fill important needs and provide valuable experience that the participants could not obtain otherwise. By offering their professional expertise, our members are dedicated to helping Hungary in its efforts to reform its health care and maintain a medical education system of the highest quality. The Association provides leadership, organization, administrative support, and substantial financial resources to carry out these programs.

Offering all these benefits, the HMAA is a special place that could and should be a “home away from home” for every physician working in the US or Canada who has ties to Hungary and is interested in preserving the rich traditions of Hungarian medicine. I am convinced that the benefits of being part of our Association are more numerous and more rewarding than those of most other professional organizations we may belong to. I should also point out that our goals and objectives have been constantly evolving and should continue to do so in the future; if you feel that the Association should modify its activities or embrace other objectives to satisfy your needs as a member, please don't hesitate to let me (or any other member of the Board) know.

I hope sincerely that you will all take advantage of these benefits by joining us again in Sarasota this October. If you have not sent in your abstract yet, I encourage you to do so after contacting our Program Chairman, Dr. Istvan Stadler, or checking our web site at www.hmaa.org for the most up-to-date information.



REPORT OF THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE.

Istvan Stadler, Ph.D.

The 32nd Annual Scientific Meeting of the Hungarian Medical Association of America, Inc. was held between October 22 and October 27, 2000 in Sarasota, Florida. The general title of the meeting was: "Medical Challenges of the New Millennium." The sessions were devoted to the following topics: 1./ Gáza Illyás Memorial Session: Latest Studies in Urology (celebrating the centennial of Gáza Illyás, who established and became the first Chairman of the Urology Department at Semmelweis Medical University, Budapest), 2./ Medical Technology in the Information Age, a session dedicated to the latest advances in medicine, 3./ Latest Advances in Immunology and Allergy, 4./ Recent Progress in Pediatrics, 5./ Traditional Multidisciplinary lectures from the field of biomedical and clinical sciences.

One hundred and seventy registered participants from different countries (USA, Canada, Hungary, Germany, Great Britain and Austria) were able to gain new information from fifty seven oral presentations. Twenty one of the lectures were given by invited, internationally recognized experts in their field. All the others were also highly qualified in their respective specialties. The meeting was conducted in an orderly manner and the audio-visual equipment supported the presentations without difficulties. Computer generated slides increasingly appear to be favored. The quality of the visual presentations was high and served the better understanding of the lectures.

The evaluation summaries handed in by the participants showed an overall high score for the meeting in each evaluation criteria (scores were higher than 4 for the categories of gaining professional benefits, new knowledge and achievement of educational goal). The additional comments were highly favorable and most of them requested continuation of the Scientific Meetings. The audience was satisfied with the topics and the new information they gained. The multidisciplinary topics benefited the participants (as it was pointed out in the comments) since it helped them to obtain new information not only from their specific field of expertise, but from many other different areas of medicine.

This year also, as in the past we were honored by the participation and lectures of well-known experts from different fields. Dr. Imre Romics (Dept. of Urology, Semmelweis University) and his group introduced us to the establishment and development of urology in Hungary and informed us about the latest studies in this field. Dr. Brian Jack from Boston University Medical Center talked about his extensive experience in developing a Family Medicine model in Hungary. In the session of "Medical Technology in the Information Age" information was

obtained on latest advances of molecular therapy (Dr. George Karpati, McGill University, Montreal) and on apoptosis and its clinical relevance (Dr. László Fásùs, Debrecen Medical University). Dr. Zoltán Nagy (National Stroke Center, Budapest) presented details on the recent status of stroke management in Hungary. Advanced computer application in surgery and radiology was the topic of a lecture given by Dr. Álmos Elekes. The immunology session was highlighted by lectures from Drs. Endre Cserháti and Ádrian Halász, (newest findings in the diagnosis and treatment of pediatric asthma), Dr. Julian Ambrus Jr. (gene involvement with immunologic memory) and an extensive review by Dr. Eموke Gomez (new treatment options in rheumatoid arthritis). One of our distinguished guests was Dr. Robert Klocke, Professor and Chairman of the Dept. of Medicine at SUNY/Bufalo, the sponsoring institution of our CME credit for years. His lectures covered the unique respiratory diseases in pregnancy and their treatment.

Excellent and very informative lectures were presented in the cardiology session by well known lecturers such as Drs. Peter Forbath, William Ganz, Thomas Lajos and Francis Robicsek. The session on "Recent Progress in the Pediatrics" was another highlight of the meeting, marked with the contributions from such well recognized experts as Dr. Gyûrgy Fekete (limits of genetic testing in pediatrics), Dr. Áva Oláh (primary health care organization for children in Hungary), Dr. Paul Szabolcs (cord blood transplantation for children with malignancies), Dr. Louis Underwood (problems in use of Human Growth Hormone), Dr. Gyûrgy Velkey (pediatric anesthesiology and intensive care) and last but not least Dr. Ágnes Cser (the importance and status of Selenium intake in children.). On the last day the Meeting was closed by the lectures of Dr. Adorjan Aszabos (FDA) on molecular mechanism of resistance to chemotherapy in cancer and by Dr. Joseph Sinkovics and his co-worker, Dr. Joseph Horvath on the controversy about viral contaminants of poliomyelitis vaccines.

The general response to our request for feedback from the participants as well as from the organizers and from members of the Board of Trustees was very positive regarding the meeting and its outcome. Suggestions for future topics and some change in the organization will be considered for the upcoming meetings.

Many thanks to all of you who contributed to the success of the meeting. It is my obligation to point out that the success of scientific sessions would not be achieved without the excellent work and effort of the moderators. Their work is greatly appreciated.

The Scientific Committee and myself want to express our special thanks and recognition to the Auxiliary for their tremendous work in organizing the social events and their untiring contribution and help in the registration.

Finally I would like to express our appreciation and thanks to Dr. Ivan Harangozo, the Treasurer of the Association for his effort in assuring the smooth progress of the meeting; to Dr. Kamill Gal, for his continuous work in editing and preparing the abstracts of lectures for publication. We also gratefully recognize the effort of Dr. Istvan Somkuti in obtaining financial support from medical supply and pharmaceutical companies and the yearly generous donation from Mr. and Mrs. Adam Magoss in memory of their father, one of our past presidents, Dr. Imre V. Magoss.

I believe that we are marching forward on our marked route towards our goal of maintaining an internationally recognized, well thought of medical society with Hungarian roots. Your contribution and efforts in the future will guarantee further successes.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 33^d ANNUAL MEETING.

We are pleased to announce that the 33rd ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING of the HUNGARIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA will be held from October 27 to November 2, 2001 in Sarasota, Florida. The general title of the meeting is: "2001: NEW LOOK AT OLD PROBLEMS". The meeting is Continuing Medical Education credited and sponsored by the Department of Medicine and the Department of Continuing Medical Education, State University of New York at Bufalo, and it is also AMA approved.

Sessions will be organized focusing on the following topics: Advances in Endocrinology; Recent Trends in Public Health and Health Care Management - an International Perspective; New Developments in Gastroenterology; Evidence Based Medicine; Traditional Multidisciplinary Sessions: Studies from Basic Biomedical Sciences and Clinical Medicine.

If you have any questions, please contact us via telephone, mail or e-mail:

1. Peter Petrusz, MD, PhD, President, e-mail: president@hmaa.org or petrusz@med.unc.edu
2. Istvan Stadler, PhD., Scientific Program Director e-mail: programchair@hmaa.org or Istvan.Stadler@viahealth.org Ph: 716-691-8296 (home) 716-922-5368 (work)

Mailing address: Hungarian Medical Association of America, 33rd Annual Scientific Meeting, 356 Denrose Drive, Amherst, NY 14228, USA



REPORT OF THE STUDENT EXCHANGE COMMITTEE. Ivan M. Krisztinicz, M.D.

Twenty three students submitted application forms for the available 24 slots for the 2001/2002 academic year. All four Hungarian Medical Universities are represented in this group. After a preliminary screening by representatives of the Association each student was interviewed by Prof. Dr. Szollár, assisted by Prof. Dr. Fekete. At the time of the application the students are in the 5th academic year.

We have noticed a decline in the number of applicants in the last few years and this raised the specter of difficulties in selecting qualified individuals for the available slots. Fortunately all applicants this year met or exceeded the standards we desire and we were able to accept all of them without reservations. We are told that the decline in the number of applicants may be due the increasing availability of other opportunities for the students in the Western world and we will have to share the relatively small number of students whose academic performance and proficiency in foreign languages qualifies them for study abroad.

After the interviewing committee made the recommendations (based on scoring), all application forms were sent to me for review and for selection as to Buffalo or Syracuse. I then forward the papers to the two American medical schools.

I have to share with you a few disquieting personal observations I made through my frequent contact with the students. While I find the students very intelligent, well prepared and world wise, there is a slight, but perceptible decline in the quality of the applicants. But what disturbs me more is, that they exhibit skepticism and certain disillusionment with the political, economic and social conditions in the mother country. Their frequent criticism against their country, their alma mater and their teachers seems to me to be more than what one would ordinarily expect from the younger generation. Some of the students purposely delay their graduation by postponing examinations in order to participate in study programs available for them abroad. These are new phenomena not previously observed by me during my involvement in our student exchange program from its inception.

The Buffalo and Syracuse Medical Schools report satisfaction with the student's performance, their theoretical and practical knowledge and with their proficiency in English. This gives a continuing source of pride for all of us.

The daily management of the student exchange program is not easy and a source of physical and mental stress for all of us involved. It is not an exaggeration on my part to say that without the devoted efforts on the part of Mrs. Ilona Csaba, our long time secretary in Buffalo, the

management of the many issues of the day, housing, supplies, personal complaints etc. would be overwhelming. We owe her our thanks.

The annual expenditure of the program is as follows: rent \$ 7,560, telephone \$ 360, expenses \$ 1,600, financial aid \$ 2,400, to a total of \$ 11,920 or \$ 12,000 in round numbers.

In summary, I feel that the Program achieved the objectives set out by the Association. It offers qualified Hungarian students the opportunity to participate in the American medical educational system at a decisive period of their own development as future physicians. The letters we get from the students upon their return to Hungary attest to the success of the Program.

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CONTRIBUTORS.

The Association gratefully acknowledges the following contributors to the Educational and Endowment Fund: Steven Bierman, Eszter Bodnar, Burroghs Wellcome Co, Jan Ertl, Anthony Gal, Andrea Harangozo, Allen Hanbury, Joseph Hansagi, Adam Magoss and Denes Roveti . Their generosity helps the Association in the Student Exchange and Fellowship Programs, so important to young Hungarians in the old country.



REPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE. Szabolcs I. Fejer, MD.

During the last two years our membership has been thriving. Most of our new members are young physicians either in training or just recently started in practice.

My estimate is that there are nearly two thousand physicians of Hungarian origin or graduates of one of the Hungarian medical schools residing in the United States. Our membership is only about one tenth of that number. I believe that each of us knows many who not yet joined us. I also believe that we could enroll about half of those physicians when each of us will encourage those whom we know to join. Let me have their name and address and I will invite them to join our membership.

New applicants should send their Curriculum Vitae, copies of the their diplomas and physicians in training a letter from their program director confirming their current status and the expected graduation time.

All membership related correspondence should be directed to my attention.

Szabolcs I Fejer MD FAAP, W1982 Rader Road, Marinette, WI 54142. Home: 715-732-4641, Office: 715-735-3998, Fax: 715-732-1606 or 715-735-0312. E-mail: sifejer@new.rr.com

REPORT OF THE AUXILIARY. Ester Bodnar, M.D.

As a new Auxiliary Board has been elected last October it is my great honor to get the opportunity to work as the President of the Auxiliary of the Hungarian Medical Association of America. I am pleased to introduce our new Board Members. Executive Board Members, Vice President-Secretary: Lilly Vamos, Ph.D., Treasurer: Agnes Stadler, Ph.D., Registration: Eva Farnsworth, Membership: Edit Fejer. Committee Chairpersons: Opening Reception: Susan Frater, Wednesday Night: Julia Borsos, Closing Banquet: Marta Kismartoni, Children's Program: Cornelia Harangozo, Cultural Lunch: Eva Mecs, Sports: Judit Balogh, M.D.

The Auxiliary has well-established goals, principals and an enthusiastic and qualified staff but as an organization we are still young so your support will be very much appreciated to achieve our goals and fulfill our tasks. We are looking forward to the challenging work. Our goal for the upcoming year is to benefit from the last year's experience and gain some improvement in most of our areas and continue the hard work in the registration process, social functions and fundraising.

I am happy to report that most of the social programs are already prepared for the October 2001 Meeting. We try to keep the social events diversified so everybody will find something they like. Besides the successful last year's programs a new program - the Sandcastle Building Competition - we hope will bring some unforgettable time for children and families. Regarding the registration we are hoping to be able to buy 2 laptop computers this year and significantly speed up the registration process especially the on-site registration. We will also continue with the well established fundraisers (Endowment Funds, Wednesday Night, Silent Auction) and we will try to improve our connection with the pharmaceutical companies as we think they represent great financial potential in the form of unrestricted educational grants. Last but not least we would like to maintain a warm hospitality, friendly atmosphere and a very memorable time for all the participants.

**THE HISTORY OF THE FIRST 25 YEARS OF THE HUNGARIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA. Kamill Gal, M.D.**

Memories fade, old friends depart this world and the history of the early years of the Hungarian Medical Association of America is in danger of being lost for the succeeding generations. Prompted by this fear I will try to summarize in the following the events and circumstances that led to the formation of the Association and its early years. This narrative will cover only the first quarter century and others, later will have to describe the many important events that followed.

Many immigrants to the US tend to settle in communities where they find others from the same mother country. The Hungarians who arrived in two waves in the second half of the 20th century were no exception. The first wave consisted of those who left Europe after WWII and the second group that arrived after the failed uprising against Soviet domination in 1956. The large population centers of the Eastern seaboard and the industrial Mid-West were the destination of most of our fellow countrymen. One of these places was Cleveland, Ohio where the steel industry attracted many Eastern European immigrants earlier this century, including Hungarians who by the 1950's constituted a sizable segment of the population of the city. There was a Hungarian cultural center and other elements of ethnic social life with support from all strata of the community, including the Hungarian physicians living and working there.

Medical education in Hungary had an excellent worldwide reputation in the 1920s and 30s. Many State licensing boards, including the one in New York State accepted the medical diploma issued before the Second World War by the Medical University in Budapest as equal to any American school. Hungarian medicine had a proud past indeed and some of the Hungarian doctors, alumni of the Hungarian Medical Universities felt a mission to maintain and nurture these traditions of medical excellence in our new country. These thoughts were expressed at some of the gatherings in the Cleveland Hungarian Cultural Center in informal discussions among the physicians present.

There were suggestions by 1968 of a Hungarian Medical Association and the initiative was finally taken by Gustav Batizy, who invited six other like minded colleagues to his house one day in the Fall of 1969 to thrash out the outlines of a Hungarian Medical Association of America. It is important to list these pioneers for posterity. They were - in addition to Gustav Batizy - Laszlo Bandy, Rudolf Bognar, Joseph Erossy, William Kovats, Zoltan Peller and Julius Prehal. They went ahead and filed the papers for incorporation as a non-profit, professional "association of physicians of Hungarian ethnic origin or graduates of Hungarian Medical Universities to promote the science of

medicine by discussions, lectures and dissemination of new material; to promote interest in the health and social problems of the community and provide accurate and reliable information regarding the same." The papers were filed with the State of Ohio on February 28, 1970 and the approval was received on March 9, 1970.

The first year in the life of the fledgling Association was spent on acquiring legitimacy in the eyes of the Hungarian medical community of Cleveland and the Mid-West. This was assisted greatly by the persona of the first President, Gyûrgy Vareska. He was a well known and highly respected Pathologist, Chief of Anatomic Pathology at the Cleveland Mount Sinai Hospital and a member of the teaching staff of the Case Western Reserve University. There is a surviving newsletter from April 1971 that lists Gyûrgy Vareska as President, Rudolf Bognar as Treasurer and Gustav Batizy as the Managing Secretary as well as the list of Vice Presidents and other dignitaries. It also mentions that the membership and the supporters approached one hundred, testimony to the acceptance of the Association. The newsletter announces the second scientific meeting on November 27, 1971, soliciting papers for the meeting.

One year later, Gustav Batizy was elected President and he was the first individual who served a full two year term, from 1971 to 1973. He was a psychiatrist, who served on the faculty of the Budapest Medical University as an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry before he came to the US in 1956. He continued in his specialty and was an active lecturer and a prolific author of papers in his field. He continued recruiting more members and firmly established the tradition of the Annual Scientific Meetings. The office of Secretary was taken by the outgoing President, Gyûrgy Vareska, who served from 1971 to 1977. The next President, serving from 1973 to 1975 was Laszlo Kaveggia. Kaveggia was a popular figure, always ready with a joke or a humorous caricature, since he was also a talented draftsman. He was a urologist in the Veteran's Administration system.

His most memorable achievement as President was to persuade his colleagues to move the Annual Scientific Meeting to Sarasota, Florida where he happened to have a condominium. This was no easy task since most of them were from Cleveland and environs. However the drab, rainy, windy Fall days in Cleveland helped persuade them to exchange that for the warm, sunny late October of Sarasota, for Lido Beach where they could gather in the morning to talk medicine and enjoy the afternoons with their family at the beach and the nights by meeting old friends. Also by that time others had also joined the Association from places outside of Cleveland, people like Imre Magoss from Buffalo, Arndt Peter Schimert from Philadelphia, John Ertl from Chicago, Peter Forbath from Toronto, Elemer Zsigmond from Ann Arbor and Richard

v.Rigler from Baltimore and others whose preference was clearly with Florida. This move proved to be decisive in the life of the Association and established a highly successful and popular Annual Scientific Meeting series in Sarasota unbroken from those early years.

The Annual Scientific Meeting in the beginning was a pretty informal affair. The bar of the Sandcastle Hotel in Lido Beach was empty in the morning and being a long, narrow room, it was eminently suitable to have a projector and a screen to project slides and the bar stools accommodated the audience. The speakers were members of the Association who spoke on recent advances in their specialty or interest. Since almost all of the various specialties were represented, the Meeting developed into a multi-disciplinary review of medicine. This profile had proven to be so successful that it was kept in all subsequent years.

In 1975 Imre Magoss was elected to the Presidency and he held this post for the next six years until 1981. These years were determinative for the future of the Association. He was an early arrival to the US and by the time he became President he was well established as a Professor of Urological Surgery at the State University of New York at Buffalo. He was a highly regarded urologist, active in professional associations, a President of the Western New York Chapter of the American College of Surgeons, a Chairman of the Urology Section of the New York State Medical Society. He was a beloved teacher, a recipient of the Distinguished Teacher Award of his Medical School. Early in his tenure he posed the following question to the members of the Association: should we remain a small group of friends, drawn together by our background and culture, discussing medical matters in a casual way or should we thrive to grow into a real, reputable professional organization? The question was answered by a resounding vote to grow and establish ourselves in the ranks of other, well known American medical associations. This decided another touchy issue, the language used at the meeting. In the first years many of the presenters spoke in Hungarian, a language of their birth and education. The decision was to make English the official language of the meeting, further emphasizing our permanence in the American medical scene and our desire to grow and attract even those who may be a generation or more removed from Hungary and no longer speak the language well. It was also decided to broaden the membership to those bio-medical scientists who don't have a medical degree but possess a Ph.D. One further step towards a more formal Annual Scientific Meeting was to appoint in 1976 an individual to be the Program Chairman, whose function was to organize the program, select the topics and the speakers and prepare the printed announcement of the upcoming event. By this time the meeting "graduated" from the bar to a proper meeting

room at the Sandcastle Hotel on Lido Beach. To prepare for the Fall meeting in Sarasota, a second, Spring Board meeting was initiated originally in Cleveland and later in Sarasota.

The first Program Chairman was Thomas Lajos, a young, energetic, up and coming cardiovascular surgeon, then serving as an Associate Professor on the faculty of the State University of New York School of Medicine at Buffalo. He continued to organize our scientific meetings until 1985 and under his leadership, the quality and professional standard of the meeting improved from year to year.

In 1977 GyÛrgy Vareska stepped down as Secretary and Richard v. Rigler was elected in his place. Richard Rigler performed another important function. He was the Master of Ceremonies of the closing Banquet and his wit and sparkling humor delighted the participants for many years to come.

The year 1980 was an important one. Two world class scientists of Hungarian origin accepted the Honorary Presidency of the Association: Hans Selye and Eszter Kokas. A Scientific Meeting was organized in the Auditorium of the famed Roswell Park Memorial Hospital and Cancer Center on June 30, 1980 to honor Hans Selye. He gave a lecture and several of our members also gave presentations. This was followed by a social evening with Hungarian music in the background where Selye joined with the participants in singing those old Hungarian songs. Eszter Kokas, the world famous physiologist who at that time, although in advanced age, was still teaching at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, was honored at the Fall 1980 Scientific Meeting. Thirty two of her former students and associates were present and each said a few words and brought a single red rose to her table. By the end there was a sizable bouquet in front of her. Her last appearance at our Meeting in 1989 was a memorable event when she gave a brilliant summary of her life work with intestinal hormones. These events were further evidence of the growing maturity and acceptance of HMAA in the expatriate Hungarian medical community. Although there were several organized Hungarian medical groups in the large cities of this country, none had the wide appeal and recognition our Association enjoyed. This was to a great extent the result of two factors: the growing scientific excellence of the meeting in Sarasota and the personal esteem in which our leaders were kept. These two factors had a practical consequence in the receipt of the coveted right to issue a Category 1 Continuing Medical Education Certificate for participation in our Scientific Meeting. This Certificate has great practical value to practicing physicians in the US since many State Medical Boards require evidence of continuing education in the annual licensing of physicians. Imre Magoss was kept in high esteem by his Medical School in Buffalo and

his presence at the helm of the HMAA gave the necessary assurances to that School to permit us to have our meeting under their auspices and thereby qualify for the issuance of the CME Certificate. After Imre Magoss stepped down as President in 1981 he continued to have an active role as Chairman of the Presidential Council. This body which consists of the Past Presidents and chaired by the immediate Past President, was created to ensure continuity in the affairs of the Association. His wise council and loving support was very important in the years to come.

The next person in line for the Presidency was Arndt Peter Schimert who served from 1981 to 1985. He came from a remarkable medical family. He and all his siblings, five brothers, sons of a physician, became physicians also. One brother, János, who changed his name to Szentágotai was an internationally known neuroanatomist and President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The four other brothers were also prominent in their chosen specialty, working in various parts of the Western world. Peter Schimert was a radiologist who was on the faculty of the Budapest Medical School before his emigration to the US in 1956. Here he worked in Philadelphia, attached to the Hahnemann Medical College where he was head of the diagnostic radiology department.

It was during his tenure that the Bylaws of the Association were revamped and made to conform to norms existing in other scientific societies. It was also during his time that a conscious effort was made to bring into the life of the Association younger physicians and entrust them with important functions. This was very important for the future of the HMAA. There was also an attempt made to enlarge the geographic base of the Association to California and the West. Eva Hardy who lived in Los Angeles organized a South California Chapter and expanded significant effort and energy to work on its permanence. Because of the distance and the lack of inducement to travel to balmy Florida for the Annual Meeting from the equally pleasant climate of South California, this effort met with only limited success.

1983 brought two young members into prominence. Irene Levay Krisztinicz became Treasurer, while Alexander Matolcsy took over the office of Secretary. Both of them were destined to play important roles later, when they became Presidents and we will return to them later. It is by way of illustrating the gradual development and maturation of the Association when we recall that when Irene Krisztinicz received the "books" from the retiring Treasurer, the sum total of the money in the bank account and the accounts payable was sketched out for her during dinner on a napkin. In a short time she brought the financial affairs of the Association in such order that we were able to apply to the Internal Revenue Service and receive tax exempt status.

During Schimert's tenure as President the winds of change started to blow in the Soviet Empire and we made the first tentative steps to reach out to our colleagues in the old country. It became evident in a very short time that this was premature and we had to wait a few more years before ties started to develop between us and our colleagues in the mother country. Peter Schimert served two terms and stepped down in 1985, followed by Tibor Doby. Doby, a graduate of the Medical University in Budapest remained in the service of his Alma Mater as a radiologist with the title of Assistant Professor. He and his wife joined the exodus in 1956 and in short order received an appointment to the faculty of Yale University in New Haven as a diagnostic radiologist. He was later appointed Director of Radiology of the Mercy Hospital in Portland, Maine. He was active in professional life, served as President of the Maine Society of Radiologists and was an active member of the New York Academy of Sciences.

When he assumed the presidency he had to deal with the resignation of Thomas Lajos as the Program Chairman. The selection of a new person to organize the meetings and assure high standards in the selection of speakers became a critical matter for the Association since the Annual Scientific Meeting evolved into the centerpiece of association life. As it sometimes happens, he found just the right man for the job in the person of Ivan Krisztinicz (husband of Irene Krisztinicz). Ivan Krisztinicz, who was an internist on the staff of the Buffalo VA Hospital and a member of the faculty at the Medical School was an inspired choice who can be rightfully credited with the gradual increase in the scientific standard of the meetings until the present day of high excellence. He served in this capacity until he himself became President in 1997.

Although we may mention this out of turn, we can not leave the reader with the impression that the activities of Irene and Ivan Krisztinicz in the interest of the Association confined only to being the Treasurer and the Program Chairman. They spent countless hours and a considerable, non-reimbursed sum of money in the support of the many varied activities of the Association both at home and later in Hungary. Their devotion to the Association had few, if any parallels.

It is the natural history of all ethnic organizations that with the inevitable aging of the founding generation, and in the absence of large scale immigration of new compatriots, they tend to wither. This danger led to a determined effort to identify and recruit as many younger (and the emphasis here is on "younger") Hungarian physicians as we could find. The Membership Committee compiled a mailing list of almost 1,700 physicians of Hungarian origin and sent out several large scale mailings. Prizes were awarded to resident physicians who delivered papers at our scientific meeting. All members of the Association were asked to recruit friends and acquaintances. As a result of all this,

there was an appreciable increase of young blood in the membership with important implications for the future.

The importance of this type of recruiting activity was driven home by the plight of a brother organization, the Semmelweis Society of New York. This Hungarian medical society was purely local, drawing from the physician population of New York City and its environs. By the mid-1980s they were in a decline and they were interested to merge with our Association. After careful study of the matter the Board decided not to proceed with this merger based on the problems with the tax exempt status, meeting place and many other issues but offered membership to all those who wished to join us. Needless to say these were difficult decisions but their wisdom was brought out by subsequent events.

Tibor Doby handed the presidency over to Elemer Zsigmond in 1987. Having finished Medical School in Budapest, Elemer Zsigmond immigrated in 1956 and completed a residency training in anesthesiology in the United States. He pursued an academic career, first at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and later, as a full Professor with the University of Illinois in Chicago. It is a tribute to him that he managed to spend so much time on our affairs despite his heavy load of research, teaching and clinical activities. He continued the work of his predecessors in elevating further the excellence of our scientific meetings and to encourage the growth of the Association in all respects.

The year 1989, when George Alker succeeded in the Presidency saw tumultuous political changes in east Central Europe. The hold of communist Russia over the region crumbled, the Iron Curtain was lifted and the countries of this region, including our mother country, Hungary started on the road to a peaceful, democratic existence. It has fallen on George Alker's shoulders to reinvigorate the effort abandoned some years before in renewing ties with our Hungarian brethren.

George Alker was born in Hungary but lived in Austria before coming to the US and completing a residency in radiology. He had a stellar academic career and became at an early age Professor and Chairman of the Dept. of Radiology and Nuclear Medicine at the State University of New York in Buffalo.

The NBC television in Western New York wanted to send a crew to Hungary in September 1990 to report on the situation there and invited George Alker to come along. Alker was joined on this trip by Irene Krisztinicz, who was by then the President-Elect. This visit turned out to be a great success. Alker and Krisztinicz were warmly received by the President of the new, democratic Hungarian Republic, Árpád GÛncz in his offices in the Parliament. They were interviewed by a number of newspapers and the Hungarian TV on the subject of cooperative ventures between our Association and

Hungarian organized medicine. These discussions were continued in the fall of 1991 in Toronto, where Árpád Gûncz was visiting the Hungary Reborn Festival. As a result of these contacts, Miklûs Râthelyi, President of the Semmelweis Medical University in Budapest and Gyûrgy Fekete, Professor of Pediatrics and the representative of the Alumni Association of that University participated in our Scientific Meeting in 1991 and attended one of the Board meetings. We also had other Hungarian visitors at that meeting whose trip was jointly funded by our Association with an American physician. One of the visitors wrote a detailed description of the meeting and our Association in the Orvosi Hetilap, the official journal of Hungarian medicine that made us widely known in Hungary.

Irene Krisztinicz had to shoulder the duties of the Presidency earlier than planned because of the untimely death of George Alker. She served with distinction until 1993. These years were exceptionally busy in developing and strengthening our ties with Hungarian medicine. The World Association of Hungarians was organizing a meeting for the summer of 1992 and Irene Krisztinicz was invited to participate. She was honored by the Prime Minister, Jîzsef Antal by inviting her to the dais at the meeting and have her seated next to him. Several other members of the Board also attended and participated in a round of conferences, newspaper and TV interviews.

Alexander Matolcsy, who served as Secretary at that time played a leading role in building and nurturing our ties with the mother country and her organized medicine.

While all this activity was going on, an internal problem arose within the Association. Several of our members, whose primary interest was in the basic sciences wanted to place greater emphasis on their interest than what the great majority of our members, who were clinicians wanted. It was a classic replay of the old "town versus gown" dilemma and the outcome was predictable. A new association was formed, the World Wide Hungarian Medical Academy that decided to go its separate way. This happened without rancor and with the understanding that we all serve the cause of Hungarian medicine abroad.

When Irene Krisztinicz became President, she relinquished the office of the Treasurer and Stephan Frater was elected to the post. He served with distinction for many years after that time.

The State University of New York at Buffalo was the home of several of our key members and the breeding ground for our first attempts to create a practical program of assistance to the younger generation of Hungarian physicians and medical students, who had no opportunity to be exposed to the achievements of American medicine. One of our young members, Laszlo Mechtler, who traveled to Hungary from his American home to attend medical school there, and who after graduation was on the

faculty in Buffalo, organized a program of assistance to young Hungarians in finding a Research Fellowship for a few month period in the area of their interest, in order to broaden their medical horizon. The first tentative steps were also taken on the road to the development of a senior medical student exchange program, where Hungarian students may come for a 3 months period to Buffalo as part of their clinical rotation and this will be recognized by their school. The program was envisioned as a two way street with the hope that American students will also travel to Budapest in the same fashion. Both of these programs blossomed into very important and greatly appreciated activities in future years, but received their start in 1992-93.

The year of 1993 brought the 25th Annual Scientific Meeting. This was envisioned as a special occasion and a number of luminaries were invited to participate. We had a professorial delegation from the State University of New York at Buffalo, headed by the Dean and the Associate Dean and a large official delegation from Hungary. The Prime Minister, Jîzsef Antal was our Honorary Chairman and he was represented by András Kelemen, M.D., Deputy Foreign Minister who read a gracious letter to the Meeting from the Prime Minister. The Minister of Health of Hungary was represented by András Jâvor, M.D., Deputy Minister who gave a paper on the planned reorganization of the Hungarian health care delivery system and handed over a plaque of appreciation to our past and serving presidents for their services to Hungarian medicine. Attila Nemes, the Associate Dean of the Semmelweis Medical University presented the Semmelweis Plaque to our Association, a gift of the University. This was indeed the high point of the existence of the Hungarian Medical Association of America and a tribute to those whose vision, support and years of hard work made all this possible.

The 25th Annual Scientific Meeting was also the occasion, when the Abstracts of all papers were published in the first issue of the Archives of the Hungarian Medical Association of America, the new official publication of the Association. This paper was born after a few years of fitful efforts to start such a publication. This was finally brought into fruition by me when I had the paper registered by the Library of Congress and thereby making it a quotable scientific publication. The importance of this was brought out by the subsequent years, especially for the younger participants whose need to be able to quote their published papers and presentations was helped by the Archives.

This narrative would not be complete without pointing out the fact that there were many others, members of the Board of Trustees and others, whose name was not mentioned, but who had an equally important role in bringing the Association to the esteem and prominence we

witnessed at the 25th Annual Scientific Meeting. It will not be possible to name all of them, but a few should be brought up because of their importance to the working of the Association. First and foremost, the two Vice-Presidents, John Ertl and Peter Forbath. Their quiet, behind the scenes work and support, their wise counsel were critical in many crucial issues. John Schuetz labored for many years on the Membership Committee, ably assisted by Karoly Kismartoni, handling all matters relating to recruitment, application for membership and acceptance. There were others also and it is not a slight that their name is not mentioned.

We would be remiss to omit the importance of the support the Association received from the spouses of the members and the ladies of the Hungarian community of Sarasota. The organization and management of the social functions, that contributed so much to the friendly, home like atmosphere of the meetings was on their shoulders. We should single out just one of the many, who graciously opened their hearts and homes to the attendees. This is Anna Sándor, whose semiannual dinner for the Board is also open to an ever increasing number of special guests, overflowing her Sarasota home.

The history of the first 25 years would not be complete without mentioning one other individual, who played an important, although sometimes unseen and therefore unappreciated role. The Association had very modest means and the administrative support necessary for the many aspects of the work was always, and still is parceled out to several Board members. However, we needed one central point of reference and this was Ilona Csaba in Buffalo, who filled the role of a part-time secretary since the late 1970s. Her exceedingly small remuneration was no compensation for her efforts which was more a labor of love for her than a job. She has an encyclopedic knowledge of the members, the events that took place in their life, changes in jobs, addresses, births and funerals. Those who are familiar with her work can attest to its importance.

And so we can understand those who look back at the first quarter of century of the life of the Hungarian Medical Association of America with a sense of satisfaction, a work well done. From humble beginnings in Cleveland, from a spark in the eye of those seven Hungarian doctors in the house of Gustav Batizy, the Association traveled a long distance to national and international recognition. It is now up to those who follow in these footsteps to carry it further.



GEORGE SCHIMERT, M.D.

George Schimert, who passed away recently was one of the younger brothers of one of our distinguished past Presidents, Arndt Peter Schimert. He had an adventurous life. Born in Switzerland, raised and educated in Hungary, he received his M.D. degree from the Friedrich-Wilhelm University in Berlin in 1942. After the war he made his way to the US via Denmark and Brazil, arriving in time to participate in the Korean War. He finished his surgical training with a Fellowship in Thoracic Surgery at Johns Hopkins. Upon completion of his training he joined the faculty of the State University of New York in Buffalo where he was instrumental in setting up modern cardiovascular surgery and served as the chief of that service for 25 years. Although we have rarely seen him in the last few years at our meetings because of illness, he remained a steadfast supporter of our Association. We will sorely miss him.



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