

Reflections



Front cover: Mount Randal, needle point by Márta Mihály.



White birch - *Betula pubescence* - my Grandmother's blessed "Nyírfá".
As she told me her story, a branch of this tree touched to the statue of Virgin Mary in the pilgrimage church of Csíksomlyó carries the miraculous presence of Virgin Mary and lays her blessing on all whom it touches.

“I have chosen man as the centre, and around him I have tried to establish a coherent order between antecedents and consequents.”

Teilard de Chardin:
The Phenomenon of Man

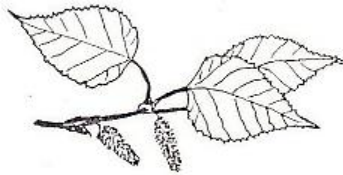


Márta Mihály, BSF, DFE 1978

In the book are my reflections which dissect events that Providence left on my path and my memory preserved over the years. Some are happy, which I embrace with pride and satisfaction. Others are sad, I would rather not have. But the choice is no longer mine. History cannot be undone.

MÁRTA MIHÁLY

REFLECTIONS



SCADA Publishing, London, Canada



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ISBN-13: 978-1534968172

v2016-07-16

Electronic book first published 2016

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laszlo.orloci@gmail.com

Prologue



In this book, I narrate my life through reflections that dissect the events, which Providence placed on my path and my memory preserved over the years. Some happy, which I embrace with pride and content. Some sad, which I would rather not have. But the choice is no longer mine. History cannot be undone. Its totality is responsible for the thought process that defines me, my relationship to people and everything in this world. Much of my life was spent away from my people and their culture. I had a life on the outside.

I emphasize “people” and I have a good reason for this. My ways were set firmly by nature’s ways of the endless forest, and the small village life on the forest’s edge, before I stepped out into the world of the “people” in large cities and in far-away countries. The Forest, the Village, and the World compete for equilibrium in me. Their competition can clarify but often blur the “I” in my identity. I struggle to regain balance, but do not always find success. My story reflects this I am told, which I accept.

I assume the good, I look for honesty, and start from right there when I interact with people. This trait is mine. Many see the value in it. Others see it as naiveté. From there, the response divides. Some leave it as such. Others see it an invitation to exclusion, deviant behaviour, and in the worst to defraud.

I like conversation. It comes from my past as a child, telling and retelling stories over long conversations about anything and everything in spontaneity. This was my family’s way to spend the long evenings in my home in the forest and in the village on forest’s edge. The discussion may meander from the uplifting to the depressing, from peace to war, from the correct to the wrong, from created stories for children to stories retold through generations from my peoples long past. I learnt to see right from wrong, truth from lie, real from imaginary as opposites. The statistical mode of seeing the moral essentials in shades of grey is not my peoples’ way.

Who am I? What made me to be the way I am? How I see my place in my adopted society? Why am I open about my feelings? I reach for topics at times that I know not only disinterest others in company, but cause some faces to drop. The reader will find answers to these and to many more questions in my “Reflections”.

What inspires me to open my soul and mind so wide for all to see the “I” in me? Age was an incentive. But more directly my granddaughters Kathryn and Ruth Orłóci-Goodison expressed interest in my family roots and especially in

me at my younger years. I felt elated that they want to know me better. The only possible way to fulfil their wish is to share my story.

It is a rare privilege to be alive at 83 and still be able to nourish a sensible mind. Life for me was sailing through turbulences of epic proportions. Perhaps I was born at a wrong time, or in the wrong place, but I survived the Second World War, two forced escapes through national borders, conditions in a hostile makeshift jail, a lost revolution, and immigration across the northern Atlantic in the height of winter. All these created incidents, and countless changes in my life, and handed me several citizenships, but basically they did not remake me. I am still the daughter of the Forest and the small village on the Forest's edge.

I spent my young years in Central Europe and then, at 23 headed to North America, not because I wished it that way. The circumstances of a lost revolution forced me into it. I found myself not once in impossible situations. Each time I picked myself up and went on with my head high, hoping for a better tomorrow. I was among those fortunate ones who survived and for whom life became better, and eventually most rewarding, in emigration. I did not become rich. I had a comfortable life in material terms, and more important, shared a quality life with László, whom I chose for myself in 1957.

Where should I begin? What way should I present my reflections? I certainly do not want to be strictly chronological, but not haphazard either. I have to be selective, yet I allow my memories to flow as their nature dictates. Come what may, I will be more detailed where I feel I should be; brief in other cases, and leave out events not because they were less important, just simply because of the limitations of the book format. I share facts, good or bad, and reflect on thoughts and experiences freely.

I want Kathryn and Ruthie not to miss that I am telling a story from my best recollection. I know it is not a typical one, but again, I am not a typical grandmother. I am writing these at 83 years of age, and I hope that my looking glass, through which I see the world in retrospect and myself in it, is not too blurred by time. I realise that there may always be someone else's point of view, but this is how I remember the past.



In the whirlwinds of change

In November 1956, the invading Soviet forces crushed the Hungarian peoples' revolution waged against the hated communist regime. Fearing brutal retaliation, many decided to leave the country. I was one among them.

This was the second time for me to face this huge and very consequential decision. It was a very painful mental and physical process for me when the ocean liner, the *Empress of Britain* left the docks in Liverpool for Canada at midnight on December 31, 1956 with me on board. Tears flooded my face. I waved goodbye to Europe, perhaps forever. I was terribly sad. I could not know my future. Where was I going and why? What was waiting for me on the other side of the Atlantic?

Leaving Europe was my second immigration. I had personal experiences of hardship and humiliation with integration into a new society. I left Transylvania, my beloved Székelyföld, my birthplace, in 1946. I was 13 years old at that time. Exactly 10 years later in November after having been an active participant in a failed revolution, I escaped from Hungary to Austria. A few months later my life saga continued with the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean. I arrived with the Sopron Foresters to St. Johns on the eastern shore of Canada on January 8, 1957, in the middle of a bitter strike which halted train service. We had to wait it out before we could continue west through the snowy and cold Canadian winter landscape. Our train must have looked from outside as the train pictured in David Lean's 1965 film *Dr. Zivago*: the train covered in a solid shield of accumulated snow and ice. But we travelled in "comfortable" Pullmans toward our destination, Vancouver, in British Columbia.

The farther away I went from home, my feeling of hopelessness intensified. I was lost, anxious and unhappy. Looking back, I know my feelings were justified. I had to start a new life in a new country under totally different circumstance with no English, and only a little French.

At customs, the immigration people tried to ease my anxiety. They welcomed and greeted me warmly. I even received some gifts from the Canadian people upon arrival - a warm nightgown, some items of personal hygiene, \$5 for postage, dictionary and a writing pad. I am still grateful for these. The mail I sent to my parents never reached home. The stamp on the envelop had the phrase

“Don’t wait for Spring, do it now”. The communist authorities regarded it provocative and discarded the mail. My parents did not know my whereabouts for several months.

Leaving Hungary was not an easy decision. We came to this lovely land of Canada, because it offered us refuge. We as the Sopron Foresters group had been invited by the Canadian government. We were not economic immigrants. We did not come for money. We wanted peace and personal freedom.

I am grateful to Canada for 59 years of peace, equal rights and above all, personal freedom. I found what I was looking for. It was not always easy, but I am very fortunate to be a Canadian.

My losses were gigantic when I left home. This was not a few weeks on holiday. I left my family, friends, my homeland and more. I had to leave a huge piece of myself behind. Not just my genetic roots, but the home where I spent part of my youth and enjoyed the love and security of my family. We were not rich, but we shared our “every days”. We cared for one another, and gave all the support we could, mainly our love, in good times and bad. My mother was always there for me and for my three brothers. She always had a comforting touch, a hug, and an encouraging word to cure all ailments. Home was happy; always safe refuge with her.

I missed my family, and all the other probably small, but important things: the pebbles, the grasses, the brooks, and my forest playgrounds. I felt I would never again hear the songs we hummed and played, the games we invented with my brothers in each other’s company, which I truly treasured.

I lost my trusted neighbourhood where I knew the people and they knew me. The grocer, the postman, the neighbours and the friendly barking dogs. I missed the streets, and the happy greetings of friends. I entered into a whole new foreign world. It was different, unknown and appeared less caring.

I changed my homeland but not my heart. I often went home in my dreams, and I still feel to be a daughter of my Székelyföld in many ways. My roots are very strong, reliable and well tested. They prepared me for the difficulties I had to overcome.

The first and second years in Canada, were not easy. Often I was barely hanging on emotionally. I wanted to go home, but I did not have that choice. The differences between the immigrant and society at large loomed enormous. The people appeared cold. I was at a loss. Every day presented several new problems. I do not claim to be unique person, or too different from other immigrants, but as you shall read later, it is not easy for any immigrant to adapt to the new ways.

When I left Hungary I had completed eight semesters of ten in the forest engineering program at Sopron. By then, for quite some time, I was going with László Orlóci, a classmate. We left Hungary together and I married him soon after arriving in Canada in 1957. We settled in Vancouver. The city was very different in those days. Not everybody welcomed us, but I knew that I brought riches to this Land. I was not empty handed. I was 24 years of age, with a solid education. I was healthy, stable, hard-working and very anxious to integrate into the Canadian way of life. I brought a sober brain to this land, full of European brain-ways, which dictated its own 24 year-old habits. I spoke Hungarian, an ancient, unique language, but my other linguistic training involved Latin, some French, Russian and ancient Greek. No English. I worked hard, learnt quickly, and above all, in time I integrated into Canadian society.

There are personal characteristics I grew up with. I came from the Transylvanian mountains, where I listened to the whispering of pine forest and often talked to the mushrooms. I grew up in the world of hidden, small villages, and very isolated hunting lodges, where my parents love and nature embraced me. These riches, engraved into my brain's neural pathways, during 23 years of a Transylvanian-Hungarian mode of life. Since 1963, I have been a Canadian citizen. This double take of characteristics uniquely defines the basis of my identity and personal dignity.

I have to illustrate this more closely. No matter where I am on this Planet, or how big or noisy a place is, if Hungarian is spoken, I hear my language instantly, it rings clearly, across the largest crowd. My heart beats faster and I have a feeling of joy. A happy virtual familiarity surrounds me and within seconds I become very attentive. This action, totally unconscious and natural, points to cognitive as well as biological change in me, when I react sharply to familiar and well known circumstances. The foundation of this wonderful feeling, after hearing my mother tongue spoken, is a part of who I am, my identity. It is not just the power of the mother tongue, it is more. Simultaneously it is a definite and sure link of my belonging. Accents or dialects, the way we speak any language, it is a strong and very characteristic marker of our tribal identity.

One cannot change personal identity. It just suddenly reappears, wanted or not. My identity marker is behaving as my petrified fossil. I am almost sure that the feeling of identity has a marker in our DNA, perhaps hiding somewhere, coiled up on the very long and countless carbon based double helix. It is just like a fossil, well preserved and it exactly identifies me. The potential of this marvellous and most times miraculous feeling of belonging stays with me and cannot be overruled. The foundation of this wonderful feeling, as I hear my mother tongue, is part of my identity and my brain registers it. This is not the only power of the mother tongue, it is much more, simultaneously a definite and

sure manifestation of my belonging. The particular way I speak, my accent or dialect, comes with the package. Strangely, the uninformed consider this manifestation of an immigrant's identity degrading. To me everyone speaks with an accent, and this is a strong, unique marker of the person's identity.

Sometime around the 1960s, I was called to the Emergency at the Vancouver General Hospital, to help an elderly Hungarian lady's language problem. She was very ill, did not speak any English. I bent over her face and asked: *Nénikém mi a baj, mit segíthetek?* - Auntie, what is the problem, how can I help? - She opened her eyes, so she was conscious. I saw a definite joy in her face, she said: *Ó, Szűzanyám, köszönöm, hogy eljöttél.* - Oh, thank you Virgin Mary for coming. - She spoke no more and passed on in a few minutes. I stood by her, looking at her face, and wondered: did my words helped her in her last moments to find her way to her Hungarian Heaven? I very much wished to believe that my Hungarian words have done that. Two of hospital's doctors were standing beside me. We talked about her, waiting for a Hungarian Virgin Mary in her very last moments. The doctors tried to reassure me that she was comforted. They experienced similar situations in their practice. The incident deeply touched me.



Reading my paper "The Sopron Saga" at the annual congress of Humanities and Social Sciences at York University in 2006.

A person's self-identity is not the same as his or her citizenship. One identity could fit into many kinds of citizenships, and they need not degrade one another.

To the contrary, I feel that a strong self-identity goes hand in hand with a good citizenship. I am paraphrasing our former Canadian prime minister, Stephen Harper, on immigrant identity. He suggested that any person speaking on the subject should have to ask him or herself "who am I to require a new immigrant to be like me"?

The circumstances of the Sopron saga are reaching from Hungary to Canada. I have written about it in detail in an earlier published essay¹. I read the original at the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada, Session "Remembering

¹ Mihály, Márta. 2007. Invited immigrants. The Sopron Saga. Hungarian Studies Review, Vol. XXXIV, Nos. 1-2, pp.143-151.

1956” at the 75th Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences with venues at York University in Toronto. I include the text in its entirety:

Hungarian Studies Review, Vol. XXXIV, Nos. 1-2 (2007)

Remembering 1956:

Invited Immigrants — The Sopron Saga

Márta Mihály

I am telling my story. I do not intend to speak for anybody else in my group, which numbered 289, the Sopron Foresters, with whom I landed on Canada's shores early in 1957. Memories fade and the narrative may change. There is one thing though I know for absolute certain: I never intended to leave my homeland. Yet I had to, under duress, first as a child from Székelyföld in Transylvania, soon after World War II, and again in 1957. I know also that the saddest day of my youth is the 4th November 1956, the day when the Hungarian revolution collapsed. Times, places and political regimes changed, but in my heart and in my tradition I remained a proud, Székely Hungarian, free and privileged as a Canadian citizen.

My father was a forester and in 1956 I was studying to be one, in the last year (5th year) of my studies in Sopron, just months before my diploma dissertation was due in forest engineering. The thought of freedom inspired me, which also sustained our Revolution. I was sure of our Revolution's glorious victory. I believed in the rebirth of a free and independent Hungary. I know too that the hopes of the Hungarian nation were similar to mine. But ours was the dream in 1956. Cast out from my country by force and landing on the Canadian shores were the reality.

In this paper I would like to tell my version of the Sopron foresters' saga as I remember it after 50 years. Most of it is engraved into my heart's emotions forever, even if the memory of the mind may fade. The Revolution and what followed for 50 years is a unique historical chapter in the annals of Hungarian immigration to Canada.

On the 4th of November, 1956, I walked across the border from Sopron into Austria. I was one of more than 500 from the same institution among over 80 of my classmates in the 5th year of Forest Engineering. The 500 were a mixed lot: students from three faculties (forest, mining, and civil engineering), a good number of professors, and family members. The Soviet tanks bearing down on us, the border unguarded from the Sopron side, the Austrians did not stop us.

A good number from the Sopron group was brought together by the Austrians and stayed together first near the border in Judenau in the hopes that

soon we shall go home. As the days passed, our hopes slowly began to fade. Soon, Dr. Drimmel, the Austrian minister of education, appeared with arrangements for us to move to a grandiose mansion at Ferienhort on the shore of picturesque St. Wolfgang Lake (the place is known from the *Sound of Music* film). Dr. Drimmel thought this was a good transitional environment for us wanting to study German and to rehash materials we covered in class before we returned home. As the weeks went by the political situation in Hungary worsened. Returning was a big risk that many tried with various successes. Slowly the news of our existence at Ferienhort become known practically all over the globe. Immigration agents from different countries started to appear. We were an ideal target, we were young and educated.

It was at that time, to be specific, the 4th of December 1956, that J.W. Pickersgill, Canada's minister of immigration, and a certain "Mr. Cox," a government representative, appeared. They brought a credible invitation. According to this, we were to be guaranteed by the Canadian government to continue our studies in Canada in Hungarian with our professors, during the period from 1957-1961, until all members of the group graduated. We would be the Sopron Division of the Faculty of Forestry at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. After graduation we were to receive an appropriate university diploma, so it would be acceptable, if we returned to Hungary. This last point was very important to me, still hoping for a return to my homeland. The invitation was many ways good news, but it provoked arguments for and against the move. Many opposed it, mainly my classmates in the 5th year; others thought that Europe would be better. Finally by ballot the Canadian offer won! I supported it.

All in all 30 of the 5th year students accepted Canada, some stayed on in Europe, and a good number returned home. A copy of our contract with Canada was sent back to the University in Sopron and an authenticated copy was placed for safekeeping in the Vienna Archives.

The Canadian government's invitation may have been a unique event in the history of their immigration, but it was a very definite stand also against the Soviets. This made us a global sensation. All the leading papers and journals sought the story, their way, hoping to create controversy and sensation. We were pestered by journalists and had to resist. The excitement did not fade until months later, it continued on well after we settled down in British Columbia.

Our decision was lauded by contemporary poets and writers. J. A. Michener, the well-known American writer, travelled to the Austrian border to witness the struggle of the freedom seekers, he felt sorry that the Sopron group did not go to America. "What a vital impulse Vancouver is going to get" he wrote in his book *The Bridge at Andau* in 1957.

After enjoying for almost two months the Austrians' gracious hospitality, on the 29th of December our Canadian journey began. 289 of us

left Salzburg and travelled across Europe by train to Liverpool, England. In the harbour the luxury liner *Empress of Britain* awaited us. It was New Years Eve and well-dressed citizens were everywhere on the way to parties. Liverpool was in very festive mood. Close to midnight I located my four-person cabin and settled in. Since I had very little to put away, the settling in was quickly done.

Mid afternoon on January 1st, 1957, we left Europe. I remember the small farewell celebration on the deck. These were highly emotional hours for me; I still find it painful to think of it.

We arrived in St. John, in New Brunswick on the 8th of January 1957. Most of us were seasick. It felt good to be on land. We received a welcoming cable from ministers Pickersgill and Sinclair. We were given \$8 per person and some toiletry. The city welcomed us and I felt very grateful. Exactly 10 years before there was another arrival for my family, as Székely refugees from Romania to communist Hungary. The Hungarian authorities did not want us in.

We boarded the train on the 19th of January in St. John on the east coast and began the journey west. We stopped for a warm welcome in Montreal, than in Ottawa where Pickersgill was waiting for us at the train station. He called our train, the "the freedom train". We crossed the snow-covered country with stops and other welcomes in Winnipeg, Saskatoon, and Edmonton and at our first destination, Abbotsford near Vancouver, in British Columbia. People, young and old of all nationalities came to the stations to greet us. The Salvation Army and the Red Cross were waiting for us at all stations. All with welcoming presents and smiles. I felt humbled and very grateful for the generosity.

After a month stay in Abbotsford we moved on, arrived on the 20 of February to Powell River where we spent six months. We were given housing by the local paper and pulp mill. Well kept and well fed, we had time to rest and start in earnest to learn English. Our cost was covered by the \$65 per month, the amount each person received from the Department of Immigration. This help lasted until the end of the year.

The community of Powell River was a small factory town located on one of the fiords of the British Columbia coastline, not very far from Vancouver. It was there that we had the first opportunity to see the famous coastal rainforest. What a magical experience it was. Very different from anything I saw before. The trees were very tall, as if reaching to the sky, covered with bryophytes attached to bark and branches, like a bridal veil, standing in the misty sunshine. The ground covered with heavy undergrowth of ferns and other luscious green plants and giant decaying tree trunks lying in a chance created pattern, made the forest appear impenetrable. This was virgin forest, a mysterious and secretive place. I knew it right away: the massive complexity

of this forest and enormous biomass, a true *dauerwald*, defies my understanding of silvics and silviculture.

We spent 6-8 hours a day learning English. It was very concentrated and most effective. We had the highly qualified personnel of the provincial department of education, who did not speak Hungarian at all.

Spring arrived, and it was time to look for summer jobs. Very few of us found any, the ones who did, were very lowly jobs, with a minimum pay. We were very disappointed and convinced that all the low-paying jobs were reserved for the Sopron group in B.C. But we did not know the ways of the Canadian students. They were in fact happy to get any kind of job for the summer, even with low pay. They were able to save up their tuition fees and more, for expenses, during the usual four months summer break. This was contrary to our experience at home, with much shorter summer breaks, including four weeks compulsory forestry training and another four in military camps. The State placed us into positions, set our wages, and gave directions as the bureaucrats saw it fit. This arrangement of total control robbed us from any experience useful in search for work in Canada. We did not know how to bargain and how to say no. Then another thing, we had absolutely no experience in the inner workings of the immigration system. This system automatically delegates everybody, who does not speak English or French sufficiently well to the same level, regardless of education or know-how. This is fine to a point, but there is more to the system I did not know, until I met professionals who came to Canada before me, which I considered then and consider now immorally predatory. People with high-level training are enticed to come, but then when they arrive the same system that brought them here prevents them practicing their profession in the most ridiculous ways of exclusion. So, when I started to search to pinpoint the roots of our problems in the early years, I started to think of Canada as the country of Ph.D. dishwashers and MD hospital orderlies. And I realized how much a mistake it is to encourage the brain-drain from other, much worse off societies outside, and wasting talent not utilized, once inside.

At the beginning of September we all moved to Vancouver, rented student accommodations near the university, and began classes in Forestry. Our professors spent the summer to prepare for the new curriculum, adapted to Canadian principles. It was a tremendous undertaking, requiring dedication to the profession and first of all to the students.

In spite of the lack of summer jobs, 210 of my fellow students enrolled in Forestry at the University of British Columbia. We all paid our tuition fee, exactly the same amount as any Canadian student, who took similar courses, and were given the same responsibilities and the same privileges. Nothing more and nothing less! Most of us had no money to pay the tuition fee, but we could apply and get a bank loan. I paid my loan back to the Bank of Montreal in two or three years. I remember once László, my

classmate and husband, and we ran out of money, and the electricity bill was due. László went to the manager in the Bank of Montreal for a \$10 loan. He gave him ten dollars.

In April, 1958 I graduated. I received my university diploma for studies that began almost six years before. I felt sad that my parents were not with me. But it was my investment and my own treasure. I was proud and happy. It was a very high achievement in Canada for a female in 1958. There were no female forestry students at U.B.C. or female graduates at that time. I was among the first female to graduate from the Sopron division in Vancouver. Nobody informed us of the non-existence of female foresters, before we came to Canada. It was a very sad discovery. Out of our 30 classmates, 27 graduated.

Life was a series of ups and downs for me and for all female graduates in those days in Canada. I could not get a professional position. So history was repeated: one more B.S.F. working in the lowest echelons on the job scale. It was a difficult beginning. Many of my classmates decided to continue studies for higher degrees out of dedication to the profession or perhaps due to the lack of proper professional opportunities. The others did all kinds of work, but we survived, until a better position came along. It was not easy, but we were young, totally free, and equal to all, full of hope for a better future.

The Sopron Division closed its doors in the spring of 1961. The total graduates numbered 140. From the 5th year 27 students graduated, the 4th 37, the 3rd 33, the 2nd 20 and from the 1st 23. 57 colleagues received their diplomas at other universities, 13 left for private business. Our professors had to start from the beginning after 1961. Most of the older ones retired, others had difficulty in finding reasonable positions.

I base some of my numbers on the reports of László Adamovich and Oszkár Sziklai,¹ my former professors, and Kálmán Roller,² the one-time dean of the Sopron Division. Their data are from 15 and 25 years after the Sopron Division closed its doors and about as far back from the time when I am writing this essay. The results I see are most impressive. I feel very proud, because what the Sopron foresters achieved is not from inherited wealth. It is coming from search for knowledge, from consistent hard work and perseverance against all odds. The achievements are the fruits of well-used time, well invested energy, and unwavering commitment. The higher the achievement the costlier it gets.

What kind of achievements do I talk about? Usually 10% of a typical Canadian class go for a graduate degree. In the Sopron Division 25% of the graduates got a master degree and 11% earned Ph.D. About 25% received different kinds of financial help for their studies. My own class procured many higher degrees: 10 M.Sc. and 6 Ph.D. degrees, in total 60% of 27.

But, in spite of the high academic achievement, the Sopron foresters had some unique difficulties on the outset of their forestry practice. They came from the European forestry tradition as practiced in a small country. They saw their role as protectors of the environment and frugal users of the forest resources. They knew a sustained yield silviculture that is intensive and continuity oriented. They were raised on the idea that the forest was there to nourish and protect in a conservationists sense, and take its products with a view to the consequences for the total environment. This view was not shared in the 1950s by the Canadian forest industry. They still operated on the basis of the 19th century doctrine, plainly speaking, they "mined" the forest as it were an inexhaustible supply of wood. The aim was to harvest as much timber as possible out of a forest and damn the consequences. This kind of logging operations was a total shock to me: high-grading with heavy machinery, leaving behind a devastated landscape. I could not understand the practice and all the waste of biomass disgusted me. They were not even willing to discuss what they were doing without painfully trying to point out our "naïveté" or outright lack of touch with reality. Thomas Berry (1990) explains better than we could at that time the dreadful reality which is now clearly manifested, after many years of abusive management:

In this disintegrating phase of our industrial society, we now see ourselves not as the splendour of creation, but as the most pernicious mode of earthly being. We are the termination, not the fulfilment of the earth process. If there were a parliament of creatures, its first decision might well be to vote the humans out of the community, too deadly a presence to tolerate any further. We are the affliction of the world, its demonic presence. We are the violation of earth's most sacred aspects.³

How right he is! Thomas Berry is the most provocative eco-theologian of our time. He dedicates his book, *The Dream of the Earth*, to nothing less of creation than "the Great Red Oak" beneath whose sheltering branches the book was written.

On balance, I feel the Sopron foresters passed through those early formative years with flying colours. I dare to say, that they were effecting changes in the system. Whatever the reasons, but I suspect their presence as leading administrators, research scientists and educators had much to do with it. Now we see a much more regulated reforestation practice, less destructive, supervised logging, and better waste management. Their influence also awoke the need for a better and healthier forest as an environmental protection.

The Sopron foresters' influence is easier to infer from the actual facts of their careers. Many of them are now retired from high position in government services, business, and academia. The Sopron foresters pointed the way to make the profession see lasting benefit in a colossal change:

opening up the forestry schools and professional practice to women. Browsing through the Forestry Faculty's and student lists at U.B.C., I am happy to see the change. Female forestry professionals are now in responsible positions in every field of this lovely profession. I like to think that we were pioneers and had shone light on possibilities.

We have well-known university professors among us. Several thousand of well regarded scientific articles, essays, and monographs that have appeared in recent decades were written by Sopron foresters. These are accessible in libraries and on the internet. I mention one example, my husband, László, whose work I know best, having been his research associate in many projects. His very early book of 1978 *Multivariate analysis in vegetation research*¹ and his rise to full professorship after seven years out of graduate school is not a unique case among the Sopron foresters who, quickly moved to the fore front of their fields. My classmate, Dr. L. Pászner, university professor (U.B.C.), now retired, left his mark on forestry wood science as an inventor with patents on cement bonding of wood, wood hydrolysis to sugars and novel pulping methods of wood. Many of my colleagues received highly meritorious awards and through recognition by peers moved up into the highest echelons of their profession.

The political situation in Hungary drastically changed after the Soviets left. People of the country began waking up to freedom, slowly coming into their life. The foresters at home were free to reach out. Many joint projects were proposed and consummated. Again I use László's case for an example, which I know best. In recognition of his contribution to theory and applications in his field, statistical ecology, he was elected into the ranks of academicians in the Hungarian Academy of Science in Budapest. Going to the induction ceremonies, Dr. Bálint Zólyomi of the Academy met us at main entrance. By a friendly hug, he said: Welcome home László, son of our native land. Dr. Gábor Fekete introduced László to the members of the Academy and to the invited guests. It was an emotional gathering and a supreme testimony to the times: the contributions to science by a Sopron forester, exiled by the communist regime and recognized at home. What an honour it was! I also spoke at the inaugural, as wife and research partner, not realizing that I am breaking an almost two century's tradition of the Academy. A few years later our adopted land's highest scientific institution, the Canadian Academies of Science (a division in the Royal Society of Canada) elected László to its community of fellows. It was immense honour and also memorable occasion for a Sopron forester to take chair among Canada's scientific elite, under pomp and ceremony at the Parliament in Ottawa.

We are students no longer, just retired foresters, but there is a fitting memento, to remember the time, long-long time ago, at the adopted university of U.B.C. It is an open gate carved of yellow-cedar, a native tree in the mountains overlooking Vancouver, in the Székely tradition. This magnificent

work of art is the creation of emeritus research scientist, a Sopron forester, László Józsa. It stands by the Forestry building of U.B.C., overlooking the memorial park honouring the life and work of another Sopron forester, a classmate, Gyula Juhász. Inscribed on the open gate, in three languages is: "Our future is rooted in our traditions". The open gate invites all to look back into their tradition and draw strength from it. This gate is a thank you gift to the people of Vancouver and to all Canadians for their generosity in time of our need, in behalf of a 140 Sopron graduates.

Another instrument well fitting to characterize the strength of Sopron tradition is a periodical that links the members of the group through a life time and promotes camaraderie, is the *Kapocs* newsletter. We are now spread over the globe, but we are connected by *Kapocs*, thanks to the hard work and good offices of its editor, László Rétfalvi, and his editorial board.

I quote the text of Pickersgill's final address to the Sopron foresters:

Most of the countries of refuge wanted to receive Hungarians who could start to work immediately, but we in Canada alone encouraged students to come here to complete their studies. We believed, in the long run, their additional qualifications would increase their contribution to their new homeland. I believed that the Sopron faculty by staying together to complete their studies could make an even greater contribution to the development of our forest industry and our national life. In the quarter century since 1957, Dean Roller and the professors and students from Sopron have exceeded my highest hopes. In every province and region of Canada graduates of the Sopron faculty are numbered among the leading citizens. The freedom fighters from Hungary... was as fine a group of immigrants as our country ever received. Among the very best were the foresters from Sopron.⁵

There is no need for further comments by me.

NOTES

¹ Laszlo Adamovich and Oszkar Sziklai, *Foresters in Exile: The Sopron Forestry School in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1970).

² Kalman J. Roller, "Hungarian Foresters in Canada," in *Sopron Chronicle, 1919-1986*, edited by the Sopron Alumni, U.B.C. (Toronto: Rákóczi Foundation, 1986), 1-177; see also the same author's *Mi is voltunk egyszer az Akadémián: Soprontól - Vancouverig* (Toronto: Pythagoras, 1996).

³ Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco, Ca.: Sierra Club Books, 1990)

⁴ László Orloci, *Multivariate analysis in vegetation research* (The Hague: W. Junky Publishers, 1978).

⁵ See Pickersgill's foreword to the *Sopron Chronicle, 1919-1986*. For more of his writings on the subject see "The Minister and Hungarian Refugees," in *Breaking Ground: The 1956 Hungarian Refugee Movement to Canada*, ed. Robert H. Keyserlingk (Toronto: York Lane Press, 1993), 47-51.



Meeting the Honourable Dr. Pál Vastag, Hungary's Ambassador to Ottawa, in 2008. The Ambassador and his wife Liza received me with warm hospitality. They knew my paper "The Sopron Saga" published in 2007.

Our saga to Canada was unusual, when considering the stories of other immigrants, not in the Sopron group, known to me. Many among

my fellow alumni, the Sopron Foresters, motivated with rich tradition as custodians of the forest, and with dedication and hard work, found their way into leadership positions. Their examples changed attitudes in the profession from a very much exploitative practice to sustainability oriented forest industry in Canada. I am a member of the profession and I am very proud of it. What the Honourable J.W. Pickersgill's believed of the Sopron Foresters has come through. The Sopron Alumni more than measured up to the good man's expectation.

The Canadian Constitution is written to uphold its citizens rights and outline their responsibilities. Unlike the constitutions of most countries, our Constitution guarantees multicultural rights, defends ethnic identities and encourages the upkeep of personal traditions. Most important to me, Canada's constitution is not just a piece of paper, but one that is binding for the state and the people.

Canada is a nation of immigrants, and it is blessed with visible ethnic diversity. Different nationalities build this country. Every person is allowed to contribute whatever his or her unique talent permits, by hard work and care. We are together building this lovely Land. I feel that every Canadian should be a proud contributor to and protector of this mosaic to the multi-ethnic Canadian kaleidoscope. How lucky we all are to live in such a humane and civil society.

In this chapter I am interpreting some new findings of brain science, which helped me to understand why integration of an immigrant into a new culture is a very difficult process. Surely, integration takes longer than a lifetime, possibly two or more generations. I learnt from my own experiences that the process shocks the brain, offends the ego, and more than just language difficulty being played out in small steps. I am a happy Canadian, but still integrating after 59 years.

In the last few decades grand efforts have been invested into brain research. Among numerous social problems, the research programs examine the hardships of the immigrant's brain during integration. We are fast emerging from ignorance into exciting new discoveries of the plasticity of the brain. For many decades the idea was that the brain stopped growing around age 2-3, then no new brain cells are created. This is false. Research activities are focusing on neuroplasticity. Plainly speaking, we are learning that our brain cells are modifiable, changed by cultural and physical activities we do in our everyday lives. Just by reading, studying music, or learning a new language, we change the organizations of the neuron cells, reorganizing the pathways of our senses, modifying the nerve-cell's pathways in our brain. The more we challenge our brain, the higher the change, due to its neuroplasticity. The higher the plasticity (moulding ability), more neuron-path ways and brain-images are created.

Just think of the huge amount of complex skills and life time experiences we collect, Doidge (2007) observes that:

“Each one of us can actually learn an incredibly elaborate set of ancestrally developed skills and ability in our lifetimes, in a sense generating a re-creation of this history of cultural evolution via brain plasticity.”² The discovery of neuroplasticity, the moulding ability of the brain, opened countless new ways to follow brain activity.

Just to illustrate the power of modification of our brain image, imagine a good musician playing Franc Liszt's (Sixth Paganini Etude) 11th variations. He does eighteen hundred notes/minute on the piano. It requires strong physical ability and a huge memory capacity of his brain. His efforts are easily recognizable on his brain image, the area of music creation on his brain image due to his super ability is much larger, than the less, or non-player's.

I should share the difficulties which my brain had to face and continues to face as a twice-immigrant person learns to adopt a second, very different culture. I am not alone, in this respect, my brain is similar to many millions of other people's brains. All of us, Homo sapiens, have to face the difficulties similarly,

² M. Merzenich in Norman Doidge, 2007, *The Brain That Changes Itself*, p.288. Penguin Books, New York.

when caught between two or three cultures. We are, in Canada, a nation of multi-cultural peoples. It is very timely to be informed about the difficulties of integrations. I shall quote some scientific truths and identify the difficulties of the process of learning a new culture's way. This happens by, building new neural connections, as an additive to old experiences, but each time we learn a new way, or build a new neuron connection, we are in a slow process of losing old ways. The brain's plasticity is very competitive.

The processes of the brain's function of adult immigrants is described as such by Doidge (2007):

“Immigration is usually an unending, brutal workout for the adult brain, requiring massive rewiring of vast amounts of our cortical real estate. It is far more difficult matter than simply learning new things, because the new culture is in plastic competition with neural networks that had their critical period of development in the native land. Successful assimilation, with few exceptions, requires at least a generation. Only immigrant children who pass through their critical periods in the new culture can hope to find immigration less disorienting and traumatizing. For most, culture shock is a brain shock.”

Doidge continues, pointing out that cultural differences are so persistent because when our native culture is learned and wired into our brains, it becomes second nature, seemingly as natural as many of the instincts we were born with.

This is one of the root causes of our many problems with full integration. Another is the fact that perception of the differences is closely tied to the cultural origin of the immigrant. Think of the European, or the Asian immigrants with very differing cultures. Westerners are raised in the handed down traditions of the ancient Greek culture, while the peoples of Asian origin tend to follow the Chinese traditions. Our ways of thinking likely to differ also. Westerners, being more analytical, divide their observations into individual pieces. The Asians are holistic, looking at the whole situation and try to find the interrelatedness in them. These are simplified generalities. Perhaps the differences are hidden in the reality of interpretations, or both see things differently?

More complications and a new kind of brain-image surface arise if we consider the problems of integration of the second generation immigrants. A fantastic variation of brain plasticity surfaces, they have to cope with both cultures, sometimes both languages by 3-4 years of age. The brain plasticity and image is very competitive. I listened to my daughter, who is totally bilingual. She had no problem to switch from one language to the other within seconds, even on the telephone, since she learned to speak as a bilingual person.

I hope that this short survey helps to see the difficulties and hard work of an immigrant's brain. It is not just a language, it is complex brain-work to accommodate the New World. I invite you to follow my brain's trials, as caught between (among?) three different cultures.

To start and stay alive in a foreign land, there are three basic requisites: the love of any kind of works that provide the daily bread, a steady supply of hope, and tons of tolerance against humiliations. I did not speak English, although I read French, so in the first couple of years I could not defend myself. My instant, constant smile was the singular, very strong shield. It covered a wide variety of hurt, confusion and humiliation. Most times it choked my tear-glands. Smiling is the best, safest and the cheapest defence to guard one's dignity. It is the least antagonizing and there is no translation required. Often a smile is misjudged, you are thought to be mentally slow or backward, but keep on smiling.

It was not an easy start in the New World, but I know that I made the best of it. I would like to share some of the difficulties, the multitude of happy experiences and the countless miseries of the new beginnings. I kept my eyes wide open all my life, while, like a good sponge, absorbed the new experience. I had ample opportunity to meet, to know and wonder about the great diversity of peoples around me. I shall share my good feelings as well as my dislikes about these experiences. Oh, I made my share of small and big mistakes, but I was passionate, deeply sorry if I made an error, and I formulated my "mea culpa" on my own terms.

Looking back, I feel I was a successful and, most times, a happy wanderer through life and places. I consider myself a greatest survivor and definitely a winner! I did it with passion and a grand curiosity. My ways were exquisite, and very much representative of the a pioneer spirit necessary for a woman of the last century entering into the New World with all the unknowns. Come along with me and enjoy my reflections touching a wide range of interesting wonderings in my 83 years.

The big problem for many newcomers is mastering the spoken language. Poor possession invites denigration, humiliation, and far too often, as I know it from personal experience during my first two years in Canada, and attempts of blatant exploitation in the work environment. The newcomer can become utterly dispirited and directionless, with hopes squandered away and choked in humiliation. At such times one feels for a moment or two as if one's cognitive functions are stressed to the limit. To me, similar experiences came as a brain shock

and frustration ruled me. But I smiled, with full of horrors inside. It took all my intellectual power and deep spiritual strength to recover.

How wonderful and powerful the smile is. No cost to it, no particular knowledge required, only plenty of intelligent, very private self-control. A smile is the best, safest and most tolerated action by the immigrant, in spite that the cause hurt deeply and all over!

The effects of denigration, humiliation and attempts of blatant exploitation are difficult to endure, and not pleasant to write about. To evaluate, or correct offending attitudes and wrongdoings, is almost impossible with a limited language capability when different cultural or educational backgrounds clash. As you read along you will be exposed to description of situations no immigrant should have to face in a civilized country. They left their mark, but made me stronger, and perhaps also more tolerant.

My upbringing makes me tell the truth. I am telling my story as I remember it. I just mention that creating memory is a miracle itself, a huge physical and chemical change in one's brain, involving a combination of several, difficult processes through which the brain evaluates and formulates what we experience, then stores the experience as a memory. This observation is not a disclaimer. I just want to emphasise the difference between memory and reality.

When I was growing up, most societies in Europe still followed the traditional practice and mistreating the majority of young ladies. Her future and emotional life was planned for her by her family, mainly by her father. It was a practice, somewhat similar to the method of Confucian philosophy, based on total obedience to father and later to husband. Father's goal was to marry his daughter to a financially secure, preferably older gentleman. Sounds great! With great expectation, she was to produce many, preferably male grandchildren. This was expected of her and it was the only marker of her esteem. It sounds "caring", but only for the fathers. This arrangement pleased him, thus fulfilled the goals of the family and it was also practical. No more worries of her upkeep!

Her wishes did not enter into the equation. If no child was produced, her life was in total ruins. His vital sexual capacity was never questioned. Luckily this idea changed in Hungary, but not world-wide. The importance of love, desires and free choices gained acceptance for the young ladies. No society today should tolerate male dominance, the exclusive desires of father.

In my early youth, it was very difficult to present opposing wishes. There were few options open for young women, beyond joining a nunnery, or becoming a secretary (but she had to be desirable, well built, preferably overly feminine),

or a teacher (not married), or a nurse in the war years. Many universities, even some secondary schools were not open to females. Ironically, it all changed for women during the communist regime.



Distant roots

The photograph on the left portrays the village centre of Lövete (Lueta) my birthplace in the Hargita Mountains. The village cemetery shares the high ground with some agricultural land.

My ancestors are Székelys, an ancient Hungarian speaking tribe, on both of my parental lines. The prolific writer of history from early in the 1st millennium, under the pan name Anonymus claimed: *Omnes siculi, qui primo errant populi Athilae*

regis - Székelys were the first people of King Attila.-

Anthropological findings, surfaced in the last few decades³, suggest that the Székelys populated the area for many centuries before Christianity. Paleo-linguistic research too brought forth new discoveries. For example, Mario Alinei places the beginning of Hungarian settlement in the Carpathian Basin, including Székelyföld where the Székelys live now under Romanian rule, to around 900 BC. He calls it the Villanova Culture.

Székelyföld is a tiny, but magnificent land. Its peoples are ancient settlers and proud inheritors of a very rich tradition. They are mainly in three counties: Udvarhely, Csík and Háromszék within the deep South-East bend of the Carpathian Mountains. The populations of these counties number about one million. They are ancient tribes, similar, but not identical regarding phenotypes, lifestyle and language dialect from the mother-land of Hungarians. Mostly, they live in the forested regions, among high mountains in deep valleys. Their spiritual life and imaginations are richly populated by fairy-tale images, droll, fantastical, mystical figures, ballads and music. The world of a Székely is in a good part reality, with plenty of poetry, but they nurture a huge and playful self-created mythology. They are always tête-à-tête with Nature. This is me, I am the daughter of the Székely people.

³ Fóthy, E. and E. Benkő. 2012. A középkori Székelyföld. (Székelyland in the Middle Ages.) Budapest, MTA, Régészeti Intézet.

It is easy to recognize this vivacious playfulness in the Székely folk-music. If you listen to Zoltán Kodály's composition for cello⁴ you will recognize the unique characteristic of a very playful, rich mythology of the Székelys. Listen well and you would understand the spirit of the góbé⁵. I feel that my Székely identity was and still is a driving force of my life. I am a very proud Székely. I grew up in the Carpathian forests. As a small child, I was a wondering, gathering "nomad" until I started school. I enjoyed and lived in harmony with all the wonders of the forest. I had no other children (my oldest brother was three and a half years younger), to play or dream with. I still feel that all living things are my close friends.

The region was a part of the Roman empire. The Romans named it Transylvania, meaning "across the forest". Romania acquired it in 1920 by the Trianon Treaty, by which Hungary lost 2/3 of her territory. The people by this act became an isolated ethnic minority with terrible consequences and they had absolutely no say in the matter. Simply, they were told that from now on they were Romanians. Ever since I was a young girl I wondered what motivated such a brutal treaty which, with a stroke of the pen instituted Romanian rules over one million Székely Hungarians. I like to believe that it was not intended as an evil act, but it became so out of the Western leader's deep ignorance-borne lack of foresight. Some of these politicians, who made decisions of the fate of the Székelys, did not even know the location of Transylvania. But they were drawing borders, having had no idea who lived on the two sides. I see great similarities in this border-creation today, drawing straight lines on continental scale by the British colonials in the Middle East during the 20th Century with consequences so obvious now.

The isolation by a mountainous geography of the Carpathian Range underlines the great genome variation in most villages in Székelyföld. They were in total isolation without a road systems for centuries.. The villages were self-sufficient, unique and very closed societies. Usually a big church was in the centre of the settlement and most activities were arranged around the faith. Everybody knew everybody. The young people did not marry outside of the village or their faith. Simply, it was not done!

This was the life of the village in the 1940's, when I lived there. Presently, my birthplace, Lövéte, as I hear has 3,700 Székelys and 5 Romanian (the village police). It continue to belong to the Magyars, with their language and centuries old, very ancient traditions. The village was a functioning municipality with its own church already in 1301, a part of the Telegdi Ecclesia.

⁴ Solo sonata by János Starker.

⁵ Clever, shrewd person.

The Székelys are unique, very ancient Hungarian people. They shared the land with many different tribes for at least 1500 years, but they kept their unique language. To the astonishment of the European language researchers the small Székely nation (about one million people) preserved 68 % of its ancient mother tongue (etymon – a marker of the remnant ancestral language), to this very day. The Székely-Magyar is very unique. There is no spoken language similar to Hungarian anywhere on our planet. No language is known to have a higher etymon. Just an example, the etymons in English 4 %, Latin languages 5 % and the Pacific Island's languages 7 %. The comparative etymon language studies were done at Sorbonne. The Hungarian language belongs to the Ugric family group (Dreisziger, 2007). Today about 15 million people speak Magyar.

Székely szülte a Magyart. - Székely begot the Hungarian. – was a frequently uttered phrase I heard in my childhood, as a reminder of the importance of the ancestral Székely tribes. Their language is very ancient, sounds wonderful. In spite of the Romanian government and strong anti-Székely language policy, the Magyar language is very much alive. The Székely-Hungarian people are resisting the linguistic pressure. They are concerned that it is intended to eradicate the Székely's mother tongue. The government should create multi-cultural and multi-lingual laws to protect and guard their national treasure, the cultural diversity in their country, just like in Canada. Presently this ancient tribal language (Magyar) is the purest Hungarian spoken anywhere, not yet polluted. It is a treasure and should be protected by law. Transylvania's Hungarian language struggle is continuous by the Székelys. It is the life and a backbone of the population, a very strong ethnic identity of their ancient traditions.

My mother tongue is Székely-Hungarian. I left my homeland in 1946, but all my life I nourished and have tried to enrich it, by reading and writing. I wanted to keep my language unpolluted by the vocabulary of foreign languages, which surrounds me for almost 60 years. I authored books, articles and took every opportunity to keep my mother tongue healthy and alive in me. I taught my daughter to speak and write it. Our private conversation with her is always special, instantly a private bridge is created between us. When she says Anyuci, for mommy, it sounds wonderful to me. It is like a magnet, drawing us together and it warms my heart, instantly, we are connected. Our shared mother tongue is so much more than an extra language. It brings traditions, family love and very precious intimacy into our life. To some people I might sound overly concerned about my language.

Lövete is an ancient settlement. It was already a village with a church in 1302, recorded in Monumenta Vaticana (I/103, 1332). Again it appears in the papal taxation report of 1333, the Timon codex registered it under the name Leveltum. The village lies in a deep valley, on the south side of the Hargita.



Lövéte village centre in the valley, cemetery on high ground. Photo: Google Map. Székely couple in traditional garment for the engagement ceremony in Lövéte. Note the elaborately carved Székely portal. Photo: József András.



Lövéte faces to the north a slide which brings to the surface a deep layer of salt which is mainly sodium chloride. The Romans had salt mines in the locality. The salt is not mined now. The locals use salt from the slide dissolved in spring water. Photo: József András.



Old row in the village. Photo: Google Map. My younger brother Csaba at the Mihály grandparents' home portal, the Székely kapu (portal) in Lövéte (1958).

For millions of years the region was covered by the Sarmata Ocean, which laid the sedimentary rocks and also gave salt, iron, and opal rich deposits. Already the Romans were surface mining the salt. The salt layer caused many problems for the villages. Every so often whole mountain sides slid into the valleys.

Post-volcanic activities are still going on and the region is full of mineral water springs, that supply the famous and delicious Borvíz, a natural mineral water. In and around Lövété there are more than 15 natural mineral water springs. It is an everyday drink. It tastes wonderful, especially when it is fresh. The village is about 700 m. above sea level. It has large deciduous forests of oak and beech around it. At higher elevation the tall and beautiful evergreen fir and spruce forest grows in abundance. András (2012)⁶ wrote a wonderful book about the village's traditions and vicinity.

The past two thousand years gave the village people more than enough time and occasion to cultivate, enrich and formalize their language. It evolved around the forest and farming life into beautiful dialect. Lövété is a village of famous weavers and carvers, very active and rich in folk-arts. The women were artistic wavers, created original and brilliant motifs. In my family the Balázs girls, my mother (Balázs Anna) and her five sisters, were well known for their artistic creations. Motifs created by my mother's family are in the folklore museum in Székelyudvarhely. They loved good times and celebrations, some were active part of the Catholic Church religious history. It was not a rich place, but provided a happy, well balanced environment for the people, spiced with their daily humour, and mystics. All problems were discussed, everybody gossiped and knew everybody else, but they always took care of each other.

The Székely people cultivated the ancient wedge or cuneiform writing (rovás írás), carved in wood. This had limited use, rather in a registry mode. Some are still seen on ancient sites, and some forms of it are still practiced. I remember that in the 1940's the shepherd registered the number of sheep they took for summer grazing from my grandfather. He did the wedge-writing with his pocketknife on his wooden stick. It was already full of wedge-markings, since he looked after many owners flocks. Once, or twice I was standing there, watching the intricate wedging with great interest. Not much was said. He kept good records, the villagers knew that. I hear that the young people are reviving cuneiform carving.

Among the men in Székelyföld, woodcarving was very common. Wood was the cheapest material available; the trees grew around the village. A good num-

⁶ András, Jozsef. 2012. Lövété a megtartó Székely falu. Romi-Suli. Lövété-Mogyoród, Romania.

ber of carvers possessed an artistic ability. Carving was practiced as a community event, with friends and neighbours. It was a useful entertainment for long winter nights. This artistry is still alive. Carving has its own spirituality among the Székelys. It begins in the forest with regrets, the carver feels for falling the tree, he keeps carving until he feels that he transferred his spirit into the wood (Beder, 2013)⁷. Therefore the carved piece represents the soul of the carver.

Székelykapu is Hungarian for the Transylvanian portal, a Székelys carved creation. It is a large richly-carved wooden portal, a front entrance into a the home. It has two sections: a wide one on the left opens up for domestic animals and carriages to get into the yard, the right one is a walking portal. The most decorated ones are in Máréfalva, I lived and went to school there in 1943 to 1944. Carving is a very old tradition in the village, that indicates wealth. Much personal artistic talent and pride is involved. Mostly ancient motifs are carved, such as stars, leaves, flowers and moon shapes- carved on the surface- reaching back long before Christianity arrived to the land. It is a wonderful feeling walking along the streets in the villages, lined with so much, colourful art. It is truly a festive sight. Sunday mornings were the best times to promenade along the village streets, swept clean, just before everybody was going to church, in their Sunday best. Colourful rokolyák⁸ and richly embroidered, lacy blouses highlighting the wearer's elegance as she walks past the strong, sensational and proud portals. It is like an elegant, very original fashion show, the eligible young men watching from the side. It is really a sight to appreciate this colourful, happy, romantic and a very ancient Székely village tradition. Sunday is the best time walking along and enjoying the show. Do walk along, if you have a chance, in this rich, artistic milieu and unique experience.

Kopjafák is singular kopjafa, an ancient long wooden spear. It was taken to the cemetery at burial to mark the tomb of the fallen warrior. Hence it is called kopjafa, an analogue of a tomb stone, but carved of wood, no longer retaining the shape of a spear. Personalised, decorated by carved motifs, or symbols of folk-arts. During the centuries, the mode of the burial changed in compliance with the Christian norms, but the use of the kopjafa remained.

There are hundreds of variation of the kopjafa style. They all represent the thoughts of the carver who with his motives creates legends, sometimes verses, by which a story, an accident remembered, a special occasion noted, or passes on a secret message is passed into posterity. We find the kopjafa widely used in the richly traditional, mainly protestant cemeteries of the Székelyföld. They

⁷ Beder, Tibor. 2013. *Egymásközött magyarul*. Csíkszereda. Proprint.

⁸ Wide skirts.

are decorative, one of a kind artistic treasures, recording of family and village history.

In our times the ancient spear as a *Kopjafa* became a fashionable marker of a special occasion, such as an important gathering, a grave site, and so on. It is always carved of wood, still carries the ancient folk motives, representing local, and personal legends. Their origin is the Székelyföld, artistically unique representations of the Székely-Hungarian native art.

Let me introduce a colleague, a former fellow student of mine from the Sopron Foresters and woodcarving artist, a painter and a forest engineer László Józsa. I believe his art was first inspired by the beauty of the wood's grain in dendro-anatomy classes. Perhaps the fascinating wonderments of the unique grain arrangements of the wood stimulated him to search deeper and find out what the wood's cells are whispering to him. Józsa carves his soul into the wood. His creations are telling stories, he re-erects ancient legends. He is among the best story-teller by using original motives and symbols. Come along to the University of British Columbia campus in Vancouver and have a stopover at the Forestry Building. There you will enjoy walking along the Sopron street, to the Székelykapu, called the Sopron kapu. It is an open portal, it welcomes you. Carved of Canadian yellow cedar, the motives are symbolic of my own roots.

The Sopron Foresters of U.B.C. presented the Székelykapu to the people of Vancouver, as a gift, a token of appreciation for giving us home, when we arrived in 1957. Next to the portal stands the Memorial *Kopjafa*. It celebrates the Sopron Forestry Group's 50th anniversary of their arrival to the University of British Columbia. It is a wonderful and unique creation, not seen anywhere else, you will enjoy the visit to these treasures when in Vancouver. Józsa's Sopron Portal and *Kopjafa* succeeded to revive, adopt and promote the beauty of this very precious folk-art form of Székelyföld. His carvings, seen in several towns, across Canada, are becoming part of the Canadian artistic heritage. I know that Józsa's carvings are inspirations to others, who desire to nourish their ethnic tradition. I feel pride of my schoolmate's contributions to the Canadian multicultural artistic heritage. I salute him for the very timely and original creations.

Most people were literate in my village. Record keeping, however, such as registering births, christenings, marriages, deaths and other significant events, was the work of the village priest. Besides serving God, priests were highly respected record keepers and guardians of the people in the village. They knew all the members of the congregation and they integrated into the everyday life of the community. They were truly fathers of the village people, and often official representatives in government affairs. The priest spoke two-three ethnic languages, including Romanian, German and Hungarian, and always Latin.

Birth certificates had entries in Latin and other languages of the region. All births, marriages and deaths were registered in the well-respected, official Church Registry. It was accurate. One is able to find the names of priest and significant events, that had taken place in Lövéte, dutifully recorded since 1705. These documents are the best history books and nationality registration of the village.



László Józsa's Székely Kapu at Thunderbird Crescent and Sopron Lane on Campus, the University of British Columbia. Raised in 2007, the monument commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Sopron Foresters' arrival to the University. Under the kapu, Márta with László Józsa, Julika Szász, Pista Szász, László, and Tibor Kocsis 2003.

I have to mention that this priestly-based support, in many different modes, was brought to Canada and to the USA from Europe and Asia by the early agrarian immigrants. Not much changed; immigrant communities prefer their own church and priest and want to pray in their own tongue.

All records from church registries are routinely reported by the churches to the civil authorities. With duplicate record submitted to the government authorities, the state decided in the 1950s to monopolize the records. This, as I was told, made it possible for the state to manage the archives without local cross-referencing. Strangely, from that point on, the statistics started to show dramatic reduction in the size of ethnic populations in Transylvania. Individuals can check their record if they go back to the church registry, few could verify the state archives overall truthfulness. The state's ethnic and cultural policies, particularly the closing down of educational institutions of higher learning, cannot be conceived any other way than as covert ethnic cleansing. We do not

have a trustworthy record of the Székelys' population size in their own homeland.⁹

My brother Árpád visited his birthplace, Lövété, with his wife Penny. He left the village when he was 10 years old, and returned at 75. They met the local priest, Árpád wanted to find out if his birth was registered. The priest was very helpful and happy to meet them. Sure enough a heavy registry book of 1936 appeared. There was Árpád's name, date and place of birth, parents name and their wedding date (1932, in the same church), and the names of the grandparents all recorded. Luckily, the church registry system is still alive and the Székelys prefer it. At their church, their children can be registered under Hungarian names, their ethnic identity correctly noted as Hungarian, and the place of birth given accurately in Hungarian. Of course all the records are forwarded to the civilian authorities and from that point on still exposed to arbitrary change. Both of my parents' families, the Mihály and the Balázs, were registered in the Roman Catholic Church Registry of Lövété, already in 1773 and 1776. The family's descendants are among the residents of the village and their numbers are growing.

The long past gave plenty opportunity for the people of Lövété to adapt to the local environment and created a well-balanced village existence. They were farmers who grew their food and their clothing. In the quiet of the winters they prepared hemp fibres and wools for spinning. Weaving was a very important, ancient and necessary craft. They made their clothing, wool blankets, the famous cserge¹⁰ and linens. They left us a rich repertoire of original music, lovely anecdotes and dances for all occasion.

They were literate, but did not write much. They kept and nourished all their traditions well. By sharing their daily life and narrating their past, they transmitted it all to the young generations. They have a trusted oral history, the product of village life, where almost everybody is a historian. It is mighty easy to go back three to four thousand years of a family history in Lövété. There are plenty of written records for historical or religious events, supplemented by the church records. through generations. I am fortunate to inherit the love of their music, poetry, ballads and anecdotes. I grew up with them and I learned and loved their way of life.

⁹ A hopeful sign: the Mormon administrative centre in the U.S. state of Utah, a world leaders of genealogical research, recently placed millions of entries into its database from church registries of Transylvania (<http://familysearch.org>).

¹⁰ Woollen blanket.

Mother had five sisters, though no surviving brothers, and grandfather was a farmer. He did not want my mother to bear more girls in the family. He wanted boys and to his great disappointment I came as the first surviving grandchild.

I was born in 1933, October 17th in the village of Lövete, in Székelyföld. As the story goes, my eyes were wide open at birth. *Anna! Szólt a bábasszony, a kislányod nagy kék szemei teljesen nyitottak, nézelődik, ritkaság ez az újszülöttnél, - Anna ! said the midwife to my mother, - your daughter's big blue eyes are completely open, looking around, very rare with new born.* – My alert, very blue eyes amazed my mother. She was mesmerized, as she was holding me, I filled her days with total joy. I was her firstborn and she told me that I was an absolute beauty and a most perfect gift of God. I have no picture of the event, or me as a baby, but I know what my mother told me is true. My father missed my arrival by two days and he registered me on the 19th. He and both of my grandparents wanted a boy.

It is very fortunate that I do not remember their disappointment. But somehow this feeling penetrates into one's subconscious mind. Unfortunately, girl babies are not wanted in many societies, even today. I wonder what those societies will do, when the ratio of man-woman gets lower, than a normal society is built on (more or less 50:50, or 51-49.). It seems that China is facing this catastrophe already (52:48 in 2012). I learned a few days ago, that the Chinese Government stopped enforcing the one-child rule.

My mother wanted me, guarded me, believed in me and loved me all my life. I always knew it, felt her love constantly. I was the luckiest girl to have had her deepest compassion. Her precious motherly love, like sunshine, filled every day of my life. Her love was everlasting. It gave me strength to cope with many, almost unbelievable hardships. I feel very fortunate to be her daughter. I hope I did not disappoint her. She is at all times in my heart, where ever I am, over the oceans and continents. She is still watching over me, I feel her love every day.

My mother and aunts were regular workers in grandfather's fields. Mother often talked to me about girls doing men's work and how it forced her to give up the dream of finishing high school. She was an A student, best in her class, but had to stop school at 14. She saw her lost opportunities being reborn in my higher education. Characteristically, after all four of us kids left home, she went back to school and got her high school diploma. I saw it, all glorious A's. We hugged, cried together, we felt happy.

With limited opportunities under old values very few of us young girls dreamed to pursue a profession. I mention that women's equality became the law in Hungary during the communist regime. This opened the doors of higher

education for me. The 1950's were the best times for any woman, young or old, who wanted to earn a higher degree and to join a profession. Without the government's financial assistance I could not attend to university. This timely solution was not an overnight success with the male population. It was somewhat frightening for us girls too. It was not easy for us to integrate into the world dominated by male chauvinists. My determination to receive a university education was solid as a rock! I was able to enrol into forest engineering in 1952. You'll find my detailed life story written in Hungarian in my earlier book (*Vándorlások* 2011).¹¹



My mother Anna Balázs (1911-1982) and father Dénes Mihály (1909-1990) in 1930. They married in 1932.

I spent some of my summers with Nannyó, my maternal grandmother Ágnes Szikszai, and Nagypapa, my maternal grandfather, Ferenc Balázs. She was an expert spinner, a decorated weaver. Nannyo taught me knitting when I was 5 or 6. Nagypapa was a rather towering man of work and discipline.

Their sheep flocks were kept out on the grassy slopes of the Hargita not far from the village. The sheep were tended by their shepherds, sheared by the men, in late spring. Then the hard and stinking work began, done mainly by the woman. The raw wool had to be well soaked and rinsed. I remember the millions of dead bugs, parasites and dried dung floating to the surface of the soaking water, as all surfaced I had to remove them by a pitchfork. It was an awful job and stinky. After a cold wash the wool is dried and prepared for spinning. This process guards the natural oils of the wool, protects its resiliency,

¹¹ Mihály, Marta. 2011. *Vándorlások*. SCADA Publications, London, Canada. Distribution: <https://www.createspace.com/3691045>

softness and insulating properties. Wool is still a wonder-fibre. I have learned the basics of weaving and spinning the silky, fine hemp fibres. I even attended the traditional “fonó”, the communal weaving and spinning event for fun and entertainment.



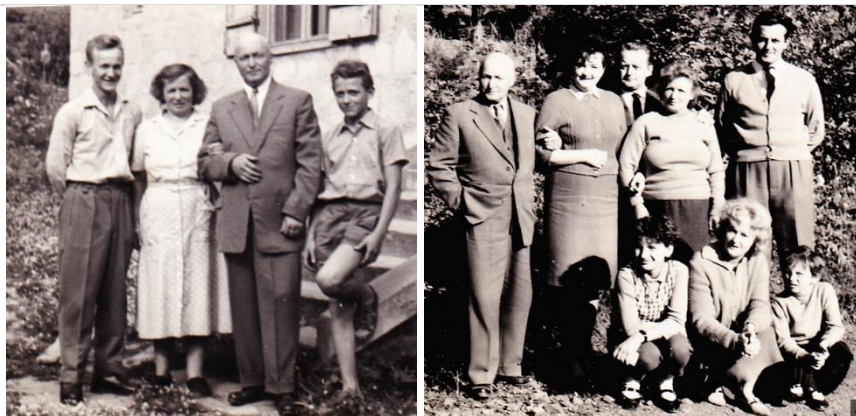
Left to right: Árpád and me (7,3), myself (11), Attila (11).



My bother Csaba and I Szentendre 1948, 1950.



At my university admission test 1952, 3rd year university Sopron 1955. My Mother in the 1950s.



Csaba, mother, father, Attila at the forester house 1961. My father, sister-in-law Kati Orlóci, László's brother-in-law Imre Bakorik, my mother, Kati's husband Dezső Szűcs, and three nieces at the Szűcs home in Abasár 1965.



My family in Szentendre 1978: brothers Attila, Csaba, Márta, Árpád, parents Anna and Dénes in 1978. Except for my mother, the five of us are professional foresters.



At the family house in Szentendre 1975: Penny, myself, father, Árpád and mother, Attila and his wife Teri, daughter Martha, Csaba and wife Eszter.



Top: Mihály family reunion at Szertesz on the Hargita 1996. Bottom: Arriving on my nephew's flat wagon to the family reunion. I am sitting facing the camera. Nephew László Mihály and family is behind me. The little girl between me and Joli Mihály is my grandniece Márta.



The forest - my playground

The forest in the high Hargita, where I grew up, was my magical kingdom. I carry a very rich Székely tradition in my cultural inheritance, almost all related to the forest. Details of it come to mind almost daily, some are in a hiding mode, behaving as reliable fossils do. The older I get, the more I realize their value. They are ancient, perhaps old fashioned habits and some of them are not very appropriate in our North American way of life.

My childhood summers were spent mainly in the beautiful southern Hargita of Carpathian Mountains, an almost sacred place for the Székely people. My father was a professional forester-hunter, so we lived mostly in faraway cabins, among very steep valleys, by small brooks, always embraced by the tall forest.

Cabins were our homes, most of the year, until I started school. After that we spent only the summer months in the forest. The cabins had an entrance store room for boots, rainwear and guns. The living quarter was one single, big room with a window and a huge cast-iron fireplace for cooking and heating. The fire was always on. Behind it we had shelves for dishes and containers for drinking water. The big room contained one wide bed (for my parents), with a pull-out second bed, which I shared with my brothers. At the foot of the bed was a small table with a washing basin, a towel above it, sometimes even a mirror on the wall. In front of the window we had a huge table, with chairs. No electricity, telephone or running water in the cabins. We used bedchambers. About twenty, or so meters away, outside was an outhouse. The style of the cabins did not change much from one place to the next. We moved often.



Kakukk-hegy (1558 m) in the southern Hargita, photographed from the south. Google map. The cabin on the left is similar to father's hunting cabins, where we spent many of the snow free seasons when I was growing up. This picture is published by permission of A. Dimitru: www.su-hard.com/Mountains_in_Romania/Pages/Harghita_Mountains_Pict_#27.

Obviously, we had no privacy, but we did not know what privacy was then, so we did not miss it. We learned to be very respectful toward each other, in our small quarters. Close by was always a small brook, or spring to collect water. We often had a bath there, or inside the cabin in a wooden tub. In dry periods water was scarce, then we hoped for rain, but we were not dirty. We learned to respect the scarcity of anything, and we loved to live in the cabins. These places were precious, not at all elegant, but all of them were cherished and well-remembered. They were our fantastic story-creation reservoirs. There were no neighbours to disturb the luxury of these heavenly, natural settings. No news came from anywhere. We lived in peace.

This milieu cultivated strong imagination in my mind. Silence, or rather mysterious whispering sounds of the forest formed and created its own magic for me, and inspired my daily games. It suggested and dictated the fabrications of my unique toys, using only whatever the forest offered. I was a master using tree bark, buds, pebbles, leaves and lost feathers. The rich diversity of the living trees and its creatures with their minutely changing characteristics inspired my early, naive, but artistic attempts. My mind painted the prettiest living landscapes I could see, hear or dream about. My own story books walked with the ants, bugs, snails and flew with gentle feathers. My best memories of cabin life are from Kakukk hegy, a wonderful and very wild area on South Hargita, at the elevation of 1558 m. We lived in a cabin below the summit, from which we could see the unique wild life of the area. Bears, elk, wolves, wild boar and others were marching at late evening to the creek to drink. It was daily amusement for us. Behind our camp we discovered a field covered by cranberries,



painting the terrain bright red. Unfortunately, we had very little sugar. These berries were pretty looking, but not edible.

The dotted line connects the villages and encloses the portion of the high Hargita Mountain where I spent the first decade of my life. I was born in Lövete (Lueta), spent the none winter months most years in my father's hunting cabins on Kakukk hegy (Vărfu Cucu), went on annual pilgrimages to Csíksomlyó (Șumuleu Ciuc), and attended school in Maréfalva (Siculeni).

Forests are still magical places for me. It is a milieu of true dreamers, a most diverse living environment altering every second in space and time, just like myself. Basically I am in unison with the magic of the living forest. The forest is free to visit, no time or weather limited my visitations, I felt a special welcome. To me, it was a territory full of excitement, real or imaginary spirits or friends were many, running and whispering around me. I listened well, I had dozens of them, my imagination created my infinitely rich, innocent and very happy life in the forest. I never lost this intimacy with the forest, a most complex collection of miraculous gathering of living creatures.

My spirit was nourished daily by my mother. We walked, talked and dreamed together. She led my thoughts and directed my eyes to see and know the surrounding beauty of trees, herbs, wild fruits, bugs and animals. The blue bells were tinkling for me, calling me to come closer. I listened and heard their music, and watched their bobbing blue, exquisite flowers. Our paths had no end, gathering, listening or looking for a new adventure, collecting wild onions,

herbs, wild flowers, fruits and leaves for tea. Along the way my mother told me about fairies and goblins, but mainly she told me real stories; things I could see, smell, taste or eat in the forest. Once while picking wild raspberries, I came face to face with a wolf, I thought it was a big dog. He was huge, silver grey, with big attentive eyes, his nostrils quivering, but no aggression shown. I looked and waited, hid my cup of berries behind my back, but my friend, after looking me over, just royally walked away. His fur was thick and elegant. It turned out that, my mother watched our meeting very nervously from the front of the cabin. I had a good sense not to go closer and stroke the lovely, silver grey mantle, nor to run away.

Mother and I walked around each day; my favourite walks were in the beach forest. I recall the robust and old silver-grey tree trunks, they, like straight, tall and elegant candles reached to the Heavens. I felt the fresh herbal scent under this shimmering, silvery-green canopy, in the coolness of beech-forest, walking and hunting for wild mushrooms. Our favourite was a white, quite acrid mushroom (*Lactarius vellereus*). It tastes best freshly grilled, with a chunk of sheep cheese on top.

It was great fun just to roam about. One day, my mother called: *Mártika, gyere gyorsan, nézd meg ezeket a gyönyörű virágokat, a levelek finom ízűek, a virágokat a napfény festi lila színűre, a szélben úgy táncolnak, mint a balerinák. -- Mártika come here fast, look at these delicate flowers painted violet by the rays of sun, dancing in the wind, just like ballerinas. --* I watched as she gently touched the violet beauties. They were wild bird's sorrels (*Oxalis acetosella*). Their leaves have a fine, refreshing taste, like lemon. It was a great treat.

Walking in the forest, often we came across rocks fully covered by shades of green, soft and cool mantle of mosses. Often I was tired, then my mother called: *Mártika látod azt a szép kis párnát, puha mohával takarva, téged vár, üljél le, a jó Isten Neked teremtette, hogy pihenjél. -- Mártika, do you see that small pillow, covered with soft mosses, sit down, God created it for you to rest.--* I have been blessed with a nature loving mother, she kept my eyes and ears open, always with attentive love. Even now, after so many years, I still stop and test the moss covered rocks, I sit down and think of my mother. László shares these special moments and he waits for me. Those years on the Hargita were my best years, growing up. I cherish the memories.

It seems, that very early in my life wondering about, looking and seeing all things around me became a physiological enigma with me. Perhaps, I inherited an urgency to go, to experience my world on my own ways. Instead of having a normal dose of stay-home hormones, I probably have an oversupply of the roaming, restless instinct, to go. The forest is still my magical world, where I always find beauty, peace and a feeling of perfect equanimity. It equilibrates my

whole being, it makes me a happier person and heals all my sorrows. To this day I have kept the old habit, I learnt and shared with my mother as I was growing up.

My magical world was shattered soon by World War II. I was too young to understand what was happening. My innocent world was fast collapsing around me, and the Trianon Treaty was the final act. I look on it with deep sadness. World War II, as any war, only created misery. We experienced true hunger, cold, humiliation and homelessness. All the young fathers were away fighting and I was not able to figure out why the fighting was going on. I still do not see any kind of gain, but we lost millions of innocent lives. In Europe a million and half children lost their parents in World War II. I was lucky to survive it. I cannot recall any peacemakers.

Not much changed, so many years later I still do not see any tangible betterment coming out of so much depravation, death, destruction, suffering and total degradation of the human spirit. It ruined our daily life and poisoned our most valuable years. In spite of all the turmoil, I completed my elementary grades, starting in Magyarhermány, moving to Szentkeresztbánya. Before the end of the school year my father was transferred again and I finished elementary school in Máréfalva in 1944. A famous village of the nicest Székelykapu, as the men of the village had mastered the art of the creation of such portals. It was here that I experienced the first earthquake. The chimney of the house collapsed, we run outside. It was very harsh, noisy and scary, but never came even close what I experienced years later in Hilo, Hawaii.

I spent some weeks during the summer with my maternal grandparents in Lövéte, it was never a holiday for me. My mother had five sisters with a fair number of small children, my uncles were drafted and fighting in the war. The women worked in the field during the day and I, the eldest grandchild, was their baby-sitter. Most days I had over 8 kids to mind. Some of my cousins were born-troublemakers, and my cousines were often challenging. Each day was full of new plays and very memorable interaction. In the summer of 1944 the Russian front was approaching, but life continued. One day, we were with my grandparents. I am not sure the number of kids I looked after on that day, but definitely in excess of 8, from ages 2 to 7. We were building a small dam in the creek, just behind my grandparent's house in the village. We worked hard to create a small pool. The creek had hardly any water, but the work kept everybody busy and within my sight. Suddenly I heard a terrible noise from above and explosions from nearby. The sky turned dark. The noise was frightening, obviously an aerial attack was going on. I collected the smaller kids, hollered for the older ones, and we ran to hide close to the stone foundations of the barn. Fighter aeroplanes appeared and volleys of shots were fired. We watched

as the bullets hit the ground at our dam and pebbles started jumping very close to us. The small ones screamed and had begun crawling up on me, terrified. When the air attack stopped I collected my charges. Two boys were missing, four kids had a terrible diarrhoea, some vomiting all over me. I found my brother Árpád and cousin Vince hiding under the giant pumpkin leaves, shaking. I spanked them both for not answering my call. Then I was 11 years old, trying to clean up the mess and settle down the nerves of the small kids.

My father was moved to Méréfalva in 1943. Our home was by a small river, close to the main square of the village, near to a bridge, in a friendly neighbourhood. I was looking after two bothers and some kids, playing with them at the river. Suddenly, I heard the village crier's drum calling from the main square. This was our only source of news at that time. I do not remember what he said, but running there, I saw all kinds of poorly dressed people herded like sheep by German soldiers, down on the main street of the village. We were told that they were captured enemy soldiers out of uniform; we believed it. We did not know about the atrocities going on, we just stood around and watched these poorly fed, tired looking people, as they passed by the hundreds on a dusty village road. Years later I learned that they were mainly Jewish people.

My mother was away, working in the field. We went home, but suddenly heard the village crier call again with urgency in the sound of his drum. We run to the square to find out what was going on. All of us wanted to hear that the war ended, and our fathers are coming home. But nothing of the sort was said. A group of people were standing around, close to the front door of the local butcher shop. We all knew the butcher and liked him very much. He was friendly, knew us well and he shared his smiles. He usually handed us bits of cold cuts, if he had any. Part of one of his legs was amputated. He was not drafted into military service. He was the only younger man in the village. We knew him well. My brother, Árpád who was 8 years old, and I moved close to the door, waiting to see what is happening. Within minutes the butcher shop door opened and our butcher was pushed out, followed by two fully armed German soldiers. His wife and several of his children were running after him, they all got on their knees, kissing the soldier's hands, crying loud, bagging for pardon. He was shaking, tears flooded his face. Suddenly one of the soldier lifted his gun and shot the butcher in the head. He fell. Red blood was gushing out of his head, bubbled forth on a grey, dusty path by our feet. I think, I stopped breathing. It was the biggest brain shock of my youth. My brother and the other children around me screamed loud of terror and horror. I shall always remember the following seconds of fear and loud sob bursting from my chest, I could not stop screaming. Our hearts were broken. We just stood there, did not moving, screaming of pain and waiting to be shot. We watched our friend, the man we liked so much, slowly bleeding to death.

We stood around with the other kids and some village women, as I remember it. It seemed as if time had stopped. Perhaps waiting for a miracle. His body was pulled into the house. We went home terrified. We could not help him, and did not comprehend the reasons for what happened to him. He was our friend, why did they kill him?

Years later I learned that the butcher hid several Jewish people in his home. In those days, hiding Jews brought summary execution. Later I questioned my parents about the butcher's murder. They told me that they knew the truth, but for the family's safety, it was not wise to talk about it with us. We did not know anything about the genocide of the Jews. These terrible events around us created our own ghetto. We children were full of fear, hungry and hopeless, not knowing what will come next. What a terrible, unjust and degrading time it was! I have remembered this awful killing all my life. It never faded in my memory over 70 years. I wished it had.

I often thought about the wonders and the uniqueness of creating one's memory. It is an image of what our eyes see, but the picture is processed by the brain, as true chemical and physical change, and it is stored in our brain. This highly complicated process collects and creates our memory. It drives our lives through our cognitive functions. I do not know what are the factors by which the brain selects and stores certain memories, or just forgets some, or sometimes tragically, keeps all of it intact. It took evolution a very long time to create such a fantastic functionality. No life exists, as we know it without memory. Certain memories we humans could do without, but we have no control over it.

The fighting front moved over Lövete. I noticed my grandmother, Balázs nan-nyó, going regularly to one of their small shacks in the forest, bringing home with her some honey and dried fruit she left in the hay during summer. I found out she was helping a wounded German soldier, hiding in the hay. A few times I went along with her; we took some food for him. He was in bad shape, covered with terrible sores and countless lice crawling all over him. He was barely alive. We hoped he would survive, although we did not have much food to offer. One afternoon some days later, we saw a horse drawn carriage driven through Lövete. A noisy crowd of people followed it. My grandmother and I went to investigate. We looked closer and to our horror we saw our German soldier in the buggy. The buggy was guarded by Russian soldiers. It stopped on the main square of the village. We all got very apprehensive. Suddenly one of the Russian soldiers bent over into the carriage and shot the man at a very close range with his hand gun. The buggy started moving again, as our soldier's blood dripped down onto the road. I was terror struck, holding tightly the hands of my grandmother.

We helped a German soldier, and we were in danger if somebody spied on Grandmother. I tried to make some sense of this terrible act and our helpless situation. Where was kindness, compassion for this sick, disabled man? I felt horrible, and unsure of my life. It took just a bullet to kill a person. All this at the age of 11. It was a brain shock. Later I thought of it and realised this open murder, committed on the helpless, half-alive soldier was a very sure mode of total intimidation of the population.

Russian and Romanian police were stationed in the village after the war ended, alternatively for a year or so and then the Russians left. Both police exercised heavy handed authority. The Romanians became rulers. They took my grandmother to the police station for interrogation. Somebody reported her, she was not supposed to help the enemy soldier. She spoke not a word, just sat in the corner at the police station. I visited her. All she wanted was her rosary and missal. She sat, turned toward the wall and prayed for forgiveness of the tormentors. She was let go after a week. The police decided that the old woman had dementia. She did not.

Before the war, my maternal grandparents owned a large property in a charming alpine meadow at a place called Kérolyfürdő. Ever since I could remember we went there for a few weeks, during July, to cut hay for winter feed. I knew the area well. On haying days it was my duty to carry fresh “borvív” (natural carbonated mineral water from post-volcanic activity) to the men cutting the hay with their huge scythes. Haying was a highly ritualistic, collective, and very hard work. I dug the fresh filled clay jug into the soil, at the corner of the hayfield, to keep it cool and fresh. I spent many hours watching the thick grass falling under the men’s scythe. I knew all of them, I felt sad, when the bluebells and the lush rye grass were mowed down by the men with their scythe. I could hear their cries of their pain. They were my friends, a part of my beloved landscape. Bugs, young rabbits and helpless baby birds were running away without their precious grass cover.

Along the way while fetching fresh mineral water, I often picked blueberries, and collected fresh mushrooms. In the evening I treaded the mushrooms and hung it up for drying. I dried the berries in the sun for winter. My grandmother baked fresh bread couple of times a week, we had fresh fish each day. My grandfather was an expert fisherman. All was fresh and delicious. It was a lovely, very busy and enjoyable summer holiday. We all loved the scent of the fresh hay. We spent hours playing in it. I still remember the lovely herbal scent.

Toward the end of World War II my father was relocated to the newly established forestry station in Kérolyfürdő. We were delighted, it is one of the loveliest valley in Transylvania, about 3 km away from grandfather’s property. We

knew the place well and moved into the forester's house for the season in this gorgeous alpine valley. I hear that the house is still there, being refurbished. Behind the house was a twin-peaked rock 300-500 m high, with a V-shaped split. Snakes, wild flowers and a couple of fir trees populated the crevices. It was the superb playground but we had to be cautious. In front of the house a fresh mineral water was bubbling up in a spring. We loved the place, most days climbing in the rocks, investigating the crevices for snakes, and doing what came to us from natural curiosity. The National Museum's biologists were collecting snakes and butterflies. They involved us, my brother knew all the snake pits and was a diligent collector. We did not know that the good times were very finite for us.

The fighting front moved to the west, but peace was very far away. The Russian and Romanian forces stayed on for mapping-up operations, hunting down and killing the encircled German units. My father was called up by the Romanian authorities and ordered him to serve as a guide. The Russian soldiers took him from home and we did not know his whereabouts for three weeks. He did not talk about with us about the ordeal, for many years.

We were staying in Kérolyfördő. Food was scarce anywhere, so my mother distilled some alcohol, from the sacks of rye my grandfather hid in the hay at their haying shack. This was her covert activity some distance from the house in the forest. She traded alcohol for sugar, oil and soap. The fermented leftover smelled terrible. We had to hide the smelly stuff. My mother and I carried it, bucket by bucket, to a small clearing. We went back the same evening, hoping the strong smell already evaporated. I wish I had a camera. It was a scene as the drunken wild deer, boar, hares, and others became licking friends, completely drunk, still feeding on the mash. Mother and I sat there, watching these drunken, mindless creatures. They ate the mush which certainly helped us. The following two days my mother's trade was a great success. She found sugar, oil and soap. We celebrated with pancakes with a little sugar on top, enjoying every bite of this treat.

The Russian soldiers were not supplied with necessities by their military units as in other armies. In order to survive they were pillaging the local population. They behaved terribly. Worst were the roaming, plundering, fully armed gangs detached from their regular unit. We had a very difficult ten months in 1944 and 1945.

One day my mother was about to leave on her trading route. I cleaned the mushrooms, Árpád (age 8) was cooking it, Csaba (age 3) was sitting on the chamber pot, and Attila a baby slept in the bed. We had half a loaf of rye bread

to eat with the mushrooms. This was all the food in the house. Suddenly we heard an accordion music from outside. It meant trouble. Sure enough a bunch of Russian soldiers were coming into the house. They were terribly drunk, but very happy, playing the accordion. We knew that great trouble was coming. We were very concerned about rape, and my mother quickly hid into the small cool-room. To this day I do not know how she could squeeze herself out of the tiny window of the cold-room, but she did and she fled into the forest. We did not hear her escape. The soldiers, all singing and happy walked into the kitchen, one of them pointed his gun at me, his eyes flaring, demanding and circling the gun about me, shouting. I shook and trembled, my brother Árpád screamed loud, Csaba got off the pot in a second and crawled up, with his arms around my neck, he quivered and cried, obviously very frightened of the pointed gun. Luckily I did not look much like a woman (11), thin, shaking and extremely afraid. They were searching for women and food. One of them opened the cool-room's door, at that point I think I almost lost control of my senses, worried that he finds my mother, and he would take her. But she was nowhere, this was a miracle. I kept hugging my two brothers and watched as the soldiers took our bread and the family's clock from the table. They searched all around, we had no food, no woman or anything useful to them. They left, happily playing music, tottering wildly toward the gate. We had a great mushroom dinner when mother returned. All of us were frightened and left with the terrors and experiences of the Russian soldiers. I was terror-stricken, it was a horrible military visit. But life went on, we survived.

I always remember the village of Magyarhermány. I got a slate-board to write on. Entered into 1st grade. I still recall my joy as I held the slate-board, tight, under my arm. I already read well; my mother taught me. The slate-board promised great fun, finally I could write as much as I liked. World War II was on, we were short of paper. It turned out that the slate-boards came to the school without its own chalk. I did not get any. I cried all the way home. It took several weeks to receive two pieces of chalk. How happy I was! These were hard and difficult years. But life went on, we survived.

In 1945 finally I started high school (Gimnázium) at 12 years of age in Széke-lyudvarhely. The school was established in 1593 by the Jesuit Order. The school's present name is Tamási Áron gimnázium (high school). In that system, high school starts after four elementary school years have been successfully completed. After eight successful years, followed by matriculation, a high school diploma is awarded. Matriculation is a comprehensive, very difficult examination.

My ancient school was, and still is, a highly respected Hungarian Institution, financially helped through the centuries, by the Székelys. It is still a prestigious Hungarian school, nurturing our mother tongue. Famous political leaders, artists, writers and scientists are counted among its alumni over the centuries. The school required good academic standing and hard work from its students to stay enrolled.

A totally new experience waited for me there, I went to a city from the life in small villages or forester's cabins. Very hesitantly, I walked on the outer edge of a sidewalk and wondered about the architecture, with the 3-4 stories. I felt dizzy and afraid to pass by. It was not easy to adjust. I felt lonely, I missed my family, especially my mother's nightly hugs. She could not tuck me in. I shared the bedroom with 11 girls of my age (six bunk beds). In about half a year, life started to get exciting and promising for me, I adjusted well and was cheerful and happy among about 200 girls, from ages 12 to 18. Now looking back I feel that it was the best, very disciplined environment to study and to become aware of the values of my traditions. The school taught me how to study, to tackle difficult assignment, while growing into my teens. I feel, the spirit of the Tamási Áron Gimnázium was a determining force in my life. I fell in love with going to school. My curiosity was infinite.

The city of Székelyudvarhely is not a large settlement, its population is 37,000 of which 35,000 are Székely Hungarian. It is a lovely, very ancient place, tucked between the foothills of the mighty Hargita, at an elevation of about 480 m. The town site was settled well before the Romans appeared. The remains of their *castrum*, military base, and a bath are at the centre of a present city. The name Székelyudvarhely is mentioned in the papal records of 1,333 and 1485. They call the town the "mother" of Székelyföld.

Székelyudvarhely is well remembered by its very artistic, beautiful and traditional Székely architecture. It is a proud city of schools, with 10,000 students. I returned in 1995. I touched the entrance bell of my school, I felt mystified and lucky. I survived and returned for a visit from Canada, after almost 50 years. I still recall moments of school life that I started so apprehensively at such a tender age.

Female boarding students were housed in a dormitory near the school run by Catholic nuns. I still remember almost everything I learned from them. Sisters Majella and Filoména taught classes on proper behaviour, arts and literature on Saturdays, I treasured every single one. The institution had a huge garden, with lovely plants, a tennis court and a big covered terrace, for singing and reading poetry. I learned tennis and some gymnastics. Every morning at 7, we attended

a mass in the chapel. School started at 8 am. Being on time was terribly important, I was not very good at it at the beginning. I could not handle my very fine hair in time.

The economic conditions were very poor at that time, right after the war, and money had little value. So the boarding fee had to be paid in kind. My grandmother, Balázs nanyo, helped a great deal. I am eternally grateful to her.

My grades were high, so I could continue into my second year. I spent the summer of 1946 in Lövete, helping in field work and did much babysitting. August came and I was more than ready to go back to school. But it did not happen that way. I did not know how disastrous the second half of 1946 will be for us.

My father lost his job. For what reason? Because he was not willing to renounce his Hungarian identity by birth. From there on he was subject to bullying and false accusation. Eventually he could not take it anymore and fled to Hungary. We did not know his whereabouts for almost three months.



Wandering homeless

After my father left for Hungary in August 1946, we lost our income and our home. I went back to school at end of August, hoping for some miracle. I was too naive. My mother and my three brothers moved back to Lövete to my grandparents. Our life changed. Adding to the difficulties, we had the constant surveillance by the Romanian police. They were looking for my father. Finally my

Mother received a verbal message through a third person that my father was in Hungary and started to work in a new position as forester at Szentendre. My mother decided that we should follow him, we could do it illegally. We had to keep our plans secret. Mother picked me up at school and after a few days of preparations we left for Hungary illegally. I was heartbroken leaving my school. This happened in late October, 1946, a few days after I turned 13.

My brothers were too young to understand the adversity and danger of the situation. It was time to leave, my mother could not support us. I remember it as the saddest and most uncertain farewell. Just to leave home we loved and to wonder into the unknown, based on a verbal message, it felt very unreal for me. The experience of parting was emotionally over whelming for all of us. My grandmother, held me tight, crying: *Márta, vigyázz magadra, tudom, hogy életbenmaradsz. Te a jégbátán is megélsz. Megkérem az Őrangyalomat, hogy vigyázzon rád az*

uton és életem során. – Márta, I know you shall survive. You would even do it on the surface of bare ice. I shall pray to my guardian angel to watch over you on the way and in all your life. -- Oh, I needed her Angel's mediation so often in my life and I remember Balázs nannyó with love, that she guarded me well.

We were facing great risks ahead, and I am sure grandmother knew it well. We did not know father's exact address so we aimed for Budapest and from there to Szentendre. We did not carry any identification papers. We split the money with my mother, carried some personal belonging and a pot in a cloth-bag, for the boys. My brothers did not know any details of our plans. On the way Csaba, only five at that time, was in my care. The ten year old Árpád helped me. Mother carried Attila who was not completely off nursing yet.

We took off from the village by horse and buggy, then got on the train at the station at Székelyudvarhely, travelling as close to the Hungarian border as possible. At Nagyvárad (Oradea) my mother located a guide. She made a deal with this very harsh, laud and terribly tall fellow. We met at his home, near a railway station. He insisted on following his orders, keeping quiet at all times and no questions were possible. My mother paid ahead in gold for his services.

We got on the train and were to go parallel with the border as he instructed. It was a dark night, foggy, near freezing, end of October, 1946. On the train we waited for the guide's signal to get off. The train slowed, but never stopped fully. My mother, Attila in her arms and Árpád got off, I was to follow with Csaba. I held his hand, but the train sped up, I wanted to jump, into the horrible black darkness, as the train sped, but suddenly a young man pulled me back in the last second. Csaba and I were not able to get off, the train fled with us into the night. I was in total panic.

Alone I was, with a 5 year old brother in the dark night, on a speedy train and having absolutely no idea where I was and where the train was going. It was a total brain shock. I had to come to my senses very-very fast. I decided that when the train stops I will just get off, turn around and walk back to the last station with my brother. I did exactly that. Walking along the railway line in total darkness, I just followed the silvery, parallel running rails, with my brother on my shoulder. He held himself with his hands around my forehead. Sometimes he dozed off. I knew that my grandmother's Angel helped me along, for 8 km. For many years this incident revisited me, but I never arrived in my dreams. Each time I woke up in cold sweat. Somehow my brain did not create a timely memory. In actual fact I arrived at the right station.

It was getting light, when I spotted the light on the railway station. My mother saw me coming, her crying voice called me. My family was hiding behind the tracks in the ditch. She knew that somehow I shall turn up. It was a miracle,

we hugged. I was worn out, got sick to my stomach. The fatigue overtook all my functions. I remember sitting there numb and feeling cold. No wonder! The prepaid guard obviously deserted us, due to the time delay of my missed landing.

Pretty soon we got arrested by two Romanian police and were locked up in an old wooden shed, which served as an overnight jail. Nothing to drink, or eat and having no idea where we were. My brothers went to sleep in the cold and damp shed. I was exhausted, miserable and hopelessly uncertain. Then, I saw my mother ripping out the bottom of a half-rotten wooden wall. My hope returned. Slowly, the hole enlarged to my size and instantly my mother pushed me through to the wet, rainy outside. I ran to the front of the shed and forced the old lock off the door. Within minutes we were out, free and running again as fast as we could.

With more pay mother hired another man to help us across the border to Hungary. At his place, we rested during the day and ate some potatoes. When it became totally dark we walked closer to the border with the new guide. At some point we faced a huge corn-field, not harvested. It was a splendid cover. The soil was almost frozen, icy or muddy, but we followed a strict order, bent as low as possible, crawling most of the time. The icicles on the corn stakes broke the silence, it was a scary serenade. At the end of the corn field was the new border between Hungary and Romania, a wide ditch, about 70-80 cm. deep. We quickly crawled over it to Hungary. I never knew how long it took to reach it. Time did not matter anymore.

Our border crossing was a nightmare. The memory of dragging ourselves through mud, pulling my brother Csaba by his hands on that early November night, haunted me for many years. Csaba had a terrible diarrhoea, he cried in pain. I kept my hand over his mouth. We had to be quiet, because border guards were around. It was our last chance!

It was getting daylight when we reached Nagykereki, a village on the Hungarian side. We saw an old barn standing solitary in the field. We hurriedly moved toward it, worn out, thirsty, cold and hungry.

We got inside the barn and laid down on the straw not yet freshened up after the animals. We were resting for some time when the big, old and rickety barn door opened. Three well-dressed younger men came in, arguing loudly. It was almost dark in the barn. My mother quickly pushed all of us under the manger. We were lying on top of each other, motionless and quiet. Attila was on top of me. I felt my mother's hand. She was pushing us further under the soiled animal hay, hiding us while she kept her arms around us. We waited in the darkness, listening to the very vulgar arguments of the three men in the middle of the barn. Suddenly, a huge suitcase was thrown. Its contents spilled out. Watches

and jewels were bouncing on the barn floor. Shouts and curses echoed around us. We pressed closer to the wall, holding on to my mother's hands. A shot was fired. One of the men fell.

We were terrified, listening and motionless, thinking perhaps we shall be the next one to die. Luckily, they did not discover us. Two left the barn taking the loot with them. Terrified and fatigued, we waited some time. Then we ran out and headed in the direction of the village in the early daylight. The people were not friendly. We were in the border zone where contact with strangers was a serious offence. But an old lady gave us some milk in exchange for mother's wedding ring. Mother put her arms around us, and we started walking in the direction of the railway station some kilometres away in Püspökladány, to find a train to Budapest.

We got on the nearest train at the village of Püspökladány direct to Budapest just over 200 km away. We had no identity papers, no food, no money, no tickets for travel. After great difficulties, but some understanding of the conductors and help from strangers we eventually reached Budapest. All the hardship fallen on us was not unique in that time. Massive numbers of people were still on the move, trying to find a home in the war-torn Europe.

We had been on the road for weeks, travelled without tickets or regular food, and under unsanitary conditions. We were poorly dressed. Our appearance only inspired pity and sometimes repulsion in others, but the whole country was not a pretty sight either. The bridges and much of the infrastructure was in ruins waiting for reconstruction. All bridges on the Danube had been destroyed. The people were worn out by the war and desensitised. We knew we would have to pull ourselves up from misery without much help. This was a difficult, illegal immigration. To this day I am amazed at the courage and love of my mother.

Miraculously we arrived in Budapest on November 19, 1946, then on to Szentendre. We were reunited with my father, the family was together once again, after almost four months. It was a most wonderful reunion, we settled down just outside Szentendre, in a house in the middle of forest, on the piedmont of the Pilis Mountains. My father was the forester in the district since he left his homeland. This place was a different world altogether. Our immediate neighbours, around us were ethnic Bulgarians, Serbs and Slovaks who settled in Hungary centuries ago. They kept their language and traditions. The city people were a mixture of ethnic nationalities and Hungarians, mostly commuting by train to the Capital City, Budapest, 14 km away, to work. Our immediate neighbours did not speak Hungarian, it was difficult to integrate into this society.

The old forester house, six kilometres from the city, was at Szabadság-forrás in the Pilis Mountains. It used to be a hunting lodge, so it was rather small with

two rooms and a kitchen. We had to share it with an old couple and their two grown sons. We had one room, for the six of us, they had the other room. We shared the tiny kitchen. When we moved in we had just the bare room. Getting food was a major problem. Bread, sugar and meat were on war-rations, and we were not issued coupons for a while. My family slept on the floor and used the outhouse. It was a difficult time, but we were alive and the family was together, and we were full of hope.

In two years a new forestry house was built, we did not have to share it.. It was a total luxury for us having two big rooms, a spacious covered veranda, and a big kitchen. There was no running water which we had to fetch from a deep well, and the electric power line did not reach us as yet. It took six years to get electricity. We loved our new home, and created a vegetable garden. The property had an old stable, a chicken coop and a pig pan. Slowly we populated the barn yard and became almost self-sufficient in many necessities. We felt free again, independent and happy. We created a well-balanced life style surrounded by tall forest with no neighbours in the vicinity. We had all the forest again for our playground. We built an ice rink in the winter, Árpád made wooden skates and skis. They looked very homemade, but we did not mind, we enjoyed ourselves. We were still very poor, but we did not dwell on it. We were free and with hope in the forest. It became my home until 1952.

The house is located on a lovely spot, on a quiet forest opening. Last time I saw it in 2007 it was still standing and looked very inviting. I walked up, filled with emotion, kissed the gate, with rolling tears. I could not believe it, but after four decades I, a wondering Székely-Hungarian-Canadian, returned home. The trees I planted with mother around the house in 1948 got old. Why did I leave and stayed away so long? I give my answer in this book.

I planned to go inside, knocked at the door and wanted to ask the resident forester if I could look around as a one-time first resident of the place. Nobody answered. In unbroken continuity the house is home for a forester family. There is now public transportation to Szentendre, which we did not have. We walked, sung, studied, and talked the 12 kilometres on nice days to school and back, from 1946-1952. I remember, we always faced the winds. The weather was rarely an excuse for me to miss school in any season. I loved school, it always inspired me. In later years I often went to the local university in London, Ontario, at the beginning of September. I just walked around the campus and adored the laughter of the vivacious young people, their excitement and bubbling happiness made me feel part of the new, young world. For me September, the start of school promised new beginnings and happiness.



László and I in 2007 at the forester house once I called my home. Mother and I planted the tall spruce trees around the house in 1948.

As I walked back from the forester's house to the car I felt a warm embrace by the very green lively forest, which was once my home so many decades ago. I took two tiny pebbles with me from the garden. I wished the cuckoo bird would call for me to stay a little longer. It did not.

Just as our life got somewhat organized in Hungary, we were told that we are illegally in the country and we have to return to Romania. We were told we have no Hungarian citizenship, we have lost it when Transylvania was attached to Romania in 1945.

We could not go back to Romania, we left illegally. We were marked as enemies of the Romanian government. For sure, my father would end up in jail for life. It appeared that we have only a few days left to make arrangement. We did not know what to do. We could not sleep much, we were waiting for the police, and deportation.

Then very early next morning my father's colleague, who knew the situation, knocked on our door. He suggested the easy and fast way out of this situation was for my father to go to the local communist party secretary, whom our visitor already spoke to, and apply for membership in the Communist Party. It worked. Within days we were called in to the internal ministry in Budapest, where we all swore allegiance to the State (1949). This was sufficient to regain our Hungarian citizenship. I still have the original document. I think the party secretary who supported us had the inroads to the upper echelons of the Communist Party.

So, I began life as a Romanian citizen in 1933, became a Hungarian citizen in 1941, Romanian in 1945, and Hungarian again in 1949. But my citizenship saga did not end there. In 1963, I applied, completed the examination, and became Canadian citizen, but my record indicated that I was born in Romania. I am now considered a Romanian-Canadian. Obviously, I am not a Romanian. I have been a very happy Canadian citizen for the last 54 years.

Our joys came in small doses in 1947. We got a thin, week old puppy dog, we named her Bobi. She shared our blanket on the floor and slept in my father's

boots. She whined a lot during the following nights, but slowly we adapted to each other and she became the 7th number of our family. She was smart, a mixture of all kinds of pedigree, a small dog, our playmate and faithful friend for 17 years. She lies under the left front window of the forestry house, under a yellow rosebush. I visited Bobi's grave. The rosebush disappeared, but I know she sleeps there, undisturbed, wrapped in our love.

The adolescent years were not an easy time for me. I grew up during World War 2, as the oldest child with three brothers in the family. Responsibility was my share each day, as we were growing up, for something or somebody. I never learned to think of me. I had no time. Looking back, my early years taught me to care for my brothers, it was a compulsory sisterly help, as they came along. Árpád in 1936, Csaba in 1941 and Attila in 1944. From these dates it is very obvious that my responsibilities continuously grew with them As I became a teenager myself. I knew their habits, their everyday life as babies, and growing young boys. I experienced only Árpád growing into a young man. Csaba and Attila grew up after I left Hungary, I hardly knew them as grownups. I missed this opportunity terribly. I loved them dearly and I always felt that they respected and loved me, as much as growing boys are able to show it. Always, we were a united family, kept together tightly by my mother's love, with compassion and respect for each other. Her last wish was: *Márta, vigyázz a testvéreidre, úgy, mint mindig tetted!* – *Márta take care of your brothers, as you always did.* – I did my very best. Unfortunately my brothers Csaba and Attila are no longer with us. The oldest one, Árpád, left Hungary after the loss of the revolution, he joined me in Austria in 1956. He fought actively during the revolution in Budapest. He was recognised for bravery by the Hungarian Government in 2001.

It is December 15th today in 2015 as I am writing these lines, Christmas is near in London. I have to introduce my brother Árpád, in 1946. He was 9 years old. It was the middle of December, living in the forester's house, shortly after we arrived from Romania as refugees. The house stood on a pretty spot, in the forest. Light snow blanketed the tree branches, the holiday was nearing, we were sitting on the floor talking and playing with beans. The room was warm. My two younger brothers, ages 5 and 2, were excited, waiting for the miracles of Christmas. We got no foodration tickets yet, had very little of anything in the house and we were six kilometres away from the nearest town. But we laughed and enjoyed our bean-game.

Unexpectedly, a loud knock was heard on the door, who could that be? We did not know anybody. All of us excitedly ran to the door. A warmly dressed lady appeared, as my mother opened the door. *Jó estét, maguk a Mihály család?* *She said.* -- *Good evening, the Mihály family, I suppose?* – She took out a large loaf of freshly

baked bread from her basket and handed it to my Mother, and introduced herself: *Tőzsér Kati vagyok, közeli szomszéd. Férjemmel Betlehembe muzsikálunk. - I am Kati Tőzsér, a nearby neighbour. My husband and I are playing music to our Bethlehem.* – By this time we kids lined up, closer to the door. She came in and looked around. No table, no beds. Mother introduced us. Some conversation followed. Later she invited my brother Árpád to join them. She and her husband played violins and Árpád was supposed to be the drummer. Árpád was not musical at all, did not know a thing about drumming, but gladly became part of the trio. They were going house to house, carrying the homemade Bethlehem scene, playing and carolling, spreading the Joy of Christmas. Árpád played the drum with all his might and sang. I do not know how he did it, but he was happy. At every house some foodstuff were given as a thank you gift. He collected all the goodies, and usually came home from each round late at night, full of smiles. We were sitting by the fireplace waiting for him. He provided the food for the family for over a week. On the evening of 24th of December, 1946, he arrived home with a nicest Christmas tree; he cut it in the forest. He reached deep into his packets, and took out some hidden candy for the two little brothers; sweets were rare for us after the war. He made a Christmas for us, which was a miracle for Csaba and Attila. We decorated the tree with popcorn and a few walnuts, no gifts were exchanged. We held hands and sung our heart out, going around the tree, finished with the Székely hymn. We were immigrants from Transylvania, full of love and nostalgia. We lit the single candle we brought with us, and in our thoughts we were again back home in Lovéte. We had to leave the Székelyföld, but saved our lives and regained our Hungarian citizenship.

My mother distributed some corn-mush. We were happy to be together, it was my best Christmas after the war. I do not know why, but my memory brought back Árpád, now far away near San Francisco in California, and I feel him as close to me now, as I did in 1946, the happy drummer boy, acting in a true, brotherly spirit.

In a few days after our arrival to Szentendre, mother looked for a school for my brother and me. They did not enrol girls into the local high school (Gimnázium), I ended up in the Polgári Iskola (girl's preparatory school), the last one, still run by the nuns. I did not like it there at all, probably, because I was a poor refugee and the city girls looked down on me and they did not want to be my friends. I never integrated into my class, but I had no choice. We were 46 graduating in 1948, only seven of us continued further on in school. In 1949 the communist government opened a new high school in town and they were admitting girls, I had to pass entrance examination of three subjects. I passed and continued on for the last four years before matriculation.

Our home was six kilometres from the school. I walked with my brother Árpád every school day, sunshine, rain, wind or snow. Some days it was difficult, but in good weather it was pleasing. Along the way we passed through a variety of agricultural country, full of grape plantations, orchards, and vegetables. On the way we met local people, we got acquainted with our neighbours. I just loved going to school, anytime, anywhere. I still do.

Two years later, my middle brother Csaba joined us on the march to school, Attila followed three years later. Csaba could not keep our tempo and I often carried him, almost half of the way home. In good weather it was a wonderful time to walk together, not in rain and snow. I often memorized Latin conjugations on the way to school.

To everybody's astonishment the Communist Government gave back only two old parochial schools to the Catholic Church. This opened an opportunity for me. The Franciscan Order ran one of the schools, named the Ferences Gimnázium (Franciscan high school) of Szentendre. At my time it was rated as the second best gymnasium in Hungary. It still maintains a high quality education. It was difficult to gain entrance into it. I felt welcomed by the members of the Order. I started the gymnasium with them in 1950.

The school was, a political showcase of the Franciscan Order. They could teach a full curriculum of their choice, enlarged with a couple of subjects in political science, which civilian teachers taught. But for graduates of the school it was difficult to get into university after matriculation. This was a case of the communist governmental machinations to keep the student numbers down in the parochial school. In another indirect way to undermine the school's success there were governmental attempts to reduce the student numbers. I was offered by the party secretary a chance to change to a state run school, into a the Academy of Lenin, in Budapest, with a good scholarship. I did not take the offer, I loved the Franciscan's approach to teaching, I experienced and respected their super qualifications and stood by the parochial school. This action was recognized by the school's authorities decades later in a lovely document to me, after the Soviets left Hungary. Our time in the school was fulfilling. We folk-danced, held literary afternoons, read poetry, had social dances on Saturday afternoons. The school offered excellent sport facilities which we used under the tutoring of Mr. Czája, a decorated wrestler himself and non-ordained faculty member.

Latin was a compulsory subject. A difficult language, its grammar is more than complex, but without any doubt, it gave me the foundation for French, later Spanish and Italian. Beyond this, I benefited from Latin in the sciences and humanities, and professional training as well to understand their technical terminologies. We had French language lessons, for six years, and Greek for a few

weeks, but no English. I was not the best student, but worked hard, enjoyed the school environment and finding friends. I was active in volley-ball. We were a very good team. I won and became “famous” in the long-distance run, which the local party secretariat organised for Stalin’s birthday’s in 1950. I was slim and very fit, represented my parochial school, my winning was announced to the city on the loudspeaker. I remember getting a good lunch.

In the last year of my high school I enrolled into a technical-drawing school, I completed the course, second in class, and was promised a position if I could not get into university. I did not need the trade, but benefitted from it later in some of the engineering courses at university.

Before my matriculation (baccalaureate) I began with university applications. I had no money, and no connections to help me along. But, I had determination and the strength to fight for my goal. I mailed out the necessary applications to several universities, including the Medical School in Budapest, to Forest Engineering school in Sopron, and sent an application to the National Folkdance-Ballet Company in Budapest. Forest Engineering was a five-year course and was the most difficult to get in. I kept my applications and plans to myself. I planned and planned and I had a spectacularly happy and busy summer. I worked full time during summer in the forestry office and outside in the forest-nursery.

I always loved the water, and swam a lot on weekends in the Danube, always with my classmates. We knew the river and the dangers it can offer. We felt safe. I have fond memories of swimming, boating and just playing around the shore of the Danube. I kept my love of swimming for life which originated from the happy times on the beach, by the Danube.

In 1996 I visited Lövéte, No less than 59 cousins, nieces and nephews welcomed me home. Ages from 60 years to 4 months. I was honoured and overwhelmed of their love and interest in me. They all knew my name. I was the wondering cousin, who returned from overseas after almost 40 years. They were all younger than me, I knew and met only two, cousin “Kicsi” Mihály Ferenc and his wife Joli. They invited me back for other visits. I was welcomed back with love, and they looked after me with much care. The visit was a highly emotional and memorable experience, lasting a lifetime. Love, devotion and the sanctity of the family spirit surrounded me. I felt overjoyed, wordless, sobbing a little. I hugged all of these loving people and felt the loss of having left them.



My nephew Ferenc Mihály (on my right), Joli Mihály, cousin Ferenc Mihály on visit with us in London 2012.

The importance of touch



Picture on the left is Leonardo's "The creation of Adam" by godly touch. The importance of touch is known to all. It did not have to be discovered by science. In my experience, touch is a most precious communicative mode. A touch may in deed speak for a thousand words. The mother's touch helps to dispel a child's feeling of insecurity, cast a spell on fear and is a sure aid to regain self-confidence. All my life I remember my mother's miraculous touch; how lucky I was to experience it.

The action of touch is, as they say expressive and suggestive, both at the same moment. Nowadays the action is often misinterpreted as a sexual pass, but it may just be an act that soothes the difficulties of introduction, a strange and unknown way to handle the humanly desires just to be acquainted. The touch out of love is a *sui generis*, no other feeling is parallel to it.

Compassion is the thread of our humanity, a good touch does not recognize colours, does not know borders. It agrees with all religious-political viewpoints and I know that a gentle touch creates miracles. Somebody famous once said

that loving a person is to see the face of God. Touching one lovingly can certainly heal hatred. Touch makes it



after she saw a person in distress in the sea at Waikiki 1972.

certainly heal hatred. Touch makes it easy to show compassion or convey understanding without sight or language.

Touch has no price, but requires good will and passionate intention. Of course there have been abusive attempts which I consider molestations. We can feel and recognize the difference.

Holding Martha's hand to comfort her

A few months after first wrote this section, I discovered from further readings that touch significantly affects our brain image. Touch is a brain-image stimulator and its effects are cumulative, starting at birth (perhaps before that?). As our brain neuron cells connect to each other and send messages through a chemical transfer (synapsis) after a touch, as we commit our self in love, the oxytocin's, the neuromodulator effect is activated in the brain, reinforcing the bonding. Obviously all these are complex chemical processes. In the female, oxytocin is released when lovers connect, during intercourse, breastfeeding and childbirth.¹² Even when a mother looks at her child's photograph, a certain region of the brain, rich in oxytocin is activated.



Instantaneous physical response to touch by Mimosa.

Perhaps most important, oxytocin mediates the attachment of children to parents. The level of the oxytocin has to reach a certain scale as we are growing into toddlers, provided by a close and loving care of our mothers. The scientific findings tell us, that children raised in orphanages, or with a lack of loving maternal touch and care, show less oxytocin in their brain-image. The shortage of loving, cuddling motherly care under the age of 2-3 years are very much limiting to the accumulation of oxytocin on the brain-image. These people shall find trouble bonding and often have

¹² A neuromodulator, vasopressin (similar to oxytocin) is released, as a bonding agent in the male. Walter J. Freeman develops good thoughts on this. See Doidge (2007).

difficulties to build permanence into their lives. Loneliness is frequently a problem, especially with older people. I came upon an advertisement selling dolls, 22 inches long that have a guaranteed ability to touch, by folding their finger around the owner's fingers, activated by battery power. A mechanical touch? I may be wrong. I do not believe it will trigger any oxytocin reaction, but I am sure it gives a touch, a desired company and perhaps a feeling of love.

There is nothing new in saying that in a young girl's life a girlfriend is very important. To me having a girlfriend was very precious and a wonderful discovery and a novelty. We spent summers in isolated forestry cabins, the rest of the time we moved around so much, that friendship with girls became rare, and very much a luxury. I grew up with brothers and with their few friends.

Boyfriends are different, and husbands are husbands (I have had one for 59 years, and sometimes I would trade him for a day or two for a girlfriend). No substitute ever of the shared intimacy of a girl's girlfriend. At its best, it is a precious, delightful, sincere and intimate relationship, not comparable to any other. Growing up with brothers is a very different type of friendship. Somehow there are certain territories in our thoughts where brothers never enter. I call it brotherly love, but not friendship.

I have to talk about my friendship with Hédya. She was my classmate, we met around 1950, both of us just 16, leaving a few years of difficulties behind. She was commuting from Budapest to my school to Szentendre. Our time together was limited, but we were well connected. I enjoyed her warm hospitality at school year's end. She straightened my broken heart and held my hand when I needed the most help. She led me out of a deep sorrow, with her friendship and care. I am very grateful for her gracious help. We lost contact after matriculation from gymnasium in 1952. She disappeared in Budapest, I left for university in Sopron, than in 1956 I immigrated to Canada. I did not forget her, she was in my thought very often, but I entered the New World with plenty of hardship.

Unexpectedly, sometime in the 1980's I received news of her from Montreal. We made arrangements, and we met after almost 30 years. Later on, I visited her in Upstate New York. We could not stop talking. Our old friendship was reawakened from decades of hibernation. She been the greatest friend, honest and great joy to be with. She was always there for me. Nowadays we cannot stop talking about our life and grandchildren. I learned that she has earned a Ph.D. in psychology, had a distinguished career in Hungary, and left for the USA, for family reasons. She published some seminal papers on "paver nocturnes" and the discovery of therapeutic effect of a child drawing. Her professional certification to practice in the U.S.A. was unsuccessful. She lives in Florida with her husband Karesz.

My late teens



I spent much of my teens in Szentendre. To me, Szentendre is most welcoming on first sight coming up on the Danube. On leisurely walks in the summer, one is charmed by the architectural ambience, looking old and provincial, set in a rich mixture of flowering trees, shrubs and many exotic flavouwering herbs. The streets are unusual, full of tight rows of Baroque houses, and colourful and exquisite churches with steep, tall towers. The city site has supported human settlement from pre historic times.

I think of Szentendre, the town of my teens, as a fine painting, with the attractive Pilis mountains in the background and several church steeples looking over the mighty Danube. Szentendre, with its very unusual past, and is well worth a visit. When we moved there in 1946 it was a small, quiet, and rather poor provincial town, loved by artists and writers, who wanted to get away from curious eyes of the communist party. Slowly it developed into an important centre of Hungarian art. Over the years a good number of the city's residents include famous painters, sculptors, and silver and goldsmiths.



Szentendre downtown from the Danube. Steep street of the artisans. Downloaded from: www.fbcdn-sphotos-d-a.akamaihd.net

The first known settlers were the Illyrians and the Celts around the 1st Century, then the Romans came. The Danube marked the border of their dominion Pannonia. From the 5th Century on Huns and Magyars, Avars and Slavs had

organised settlements. Szentendre is part of the Hungarian state for more than a thousand years. Turkey occupied the region in 1686 for 150 years. During that time the area depopulated. Several tribes found refuge from the Turks in the deep forests of the nearby mountains.

Many Serbs settled in the area, sharing the city with the original Hungarian population and still other ethnic groups who settled there after the Turks left. Szentendre became a centre of the Orthodox faith in Hungary, and still retains several active Orthodox Christian churches and a unique Serb icon museum. Both are famous for their icons. The creators of the icons are not known; the Orthodox faith suggests that the painter was inspired in the name of God. Most of the icons were created by masters from Kiev and the Ukraine in 1741. The Preobrazenska Church is my favourite. The church has a dividing screen, *pevnikas*; it exhibits rare icons, found only in Hungary. I was fortunate in my early teens, to experience the Orthodox services and enjoy the icons. It originates from Russia, an ancient and rare religious art form. The icons left a very memorable, deep impression on me.



I revisited downtown Szentendre with László, the last time in 2007. On the right, I pose with our good friend, Professor János Podani, László's one time Ph.D. student, who drove us up from Budapest.

Near our home, by the forester's house, was an open clearing in the blue-beech forest. The Serbs were allowed to hold their annual religious festival on this clearing every August 19. On this occasion they were celebrating the new vine. The hills were covered by vineyards. We were invited and I have attended the fiesta yearly, enjoyed the delicious food, sang and danced the "kóló" with the Serbs.

Sculptor Margit Kovács, a master of clay, used to give art lessons in our school in the 1950s. I adored her demonstrations, as the clay came to life in her hands.

Many years later I visited her wonderful art collection with my daughter Martha. She loved the collection, especially the pieces, portraying players in mystical Hungarian legends. Margit Kovács' art is well respected the world over.

I spent my summers working for the Forest Service in tree nurseries to earn money. Rarely, I had an opportunity to go to the Opera House or to the National Theatre at Budapest on standing student tickets. The year 1952 held a particularly busy summer for me. Life got exciting and very promising by the end of July. I was called to the medical school for an interview, the board was satisfied with my records. I was accepted and final registration was at end of August. The following week I was tested for the National Folk Dance Ensemble. I was accepted, the final decision was expected from me in August. I was a very proud, slim petite, natural blond girl, full of life and bursting of hope, but having no money or connections, being accepted? In a few weeks I received a letter from the Forest Engineering asking me to appear for interview and qualifying examination in three subjects.

I got three days off work to travel to Sopron and do my examination. I bought a night ticket, because it cost half. Travelling was difficult to Sopron, as the city is 5 km, from the Austrian border. The communist government created a special zone around the border, which began at Győr, a medium size city on the Danube, upstream from Budapest. A train transfer was necessary; only people who lived behind the zone could travel further. It took about 2 hrs to receive my permit to travel to Sopron. I got on the train around 4 am. It was dark, and I was all alone. Quickly I sat down in the corner. I felt scared. Just before the train pulled out, about a dozen fully armed Russian soldiers boarded, singing, with much laughter. They sat very close to me, sat around my feet on the floor and began singing. They carried on, I felt very nervous, soon the Hungarian conductor entered and asked for my ticket. What a relief for me. He came back often. He promised to keep an eye on me. That is how I travelled alone for 4 hours. It was a terrifying experience, I could not share details of this travel with my worrying mother. Arriving to Sopron, I walked to the university.

My examination was at midmorning. I felt I did well. To this day I remember the occasion as the best examination I ever had. I felt carefree, happy and relaxed. I spent the afternoon visiting the ancient city of Sopron. Late the same evening, I boarded the night train back home, and arrived in Budapest in the early morning. My mother waited for me at the station. She brought 2 hard-boiled eggs in her packet for my breakfast. She wanted to know all about the test, she worried about me competing in the world of men. She did not know that I was a single female, with near a hundred young men around me, taking the entry exams. My mother and I had a wonderful, happy time, travelling together, taking the tram to another station and boarded the electric train to Szentendre.

Within two weeks of the entry examination I received the letter of acceptance to the School of Forest Engineering in Sopron. The lectures started on September 1, 1952, and I was assigned to a dormitory room on the second floor at Dimitrov-tér 2. I was there in time, arriving in the early morning with the night train. I found the dormitory, my name was listed on the door, with three others. It was a very small room with a tiny water facet in the corner, two sets of bunk beds along opposite sides at the window and four narrow cabinets for personal belongings. I arrived first and wondered what kind of roommates I was going to have to share this small room with. They arrived one by one: Éva Delkin, Juci Dónáth, Aranka Csabai. They were the loveliest bunch full of ambition. We were determined to change the world! We spent the first year together, and became good friends. We had no arguments, and accepted each other. We kept in contact for life. Éva lives in Victoria, British Columbia. We are in touch, met several times, and spent a few days together in 2014 in September. Juci lives in Hungary. I visited with her a few years ago. Our visit was pure fun. Aranka married at the end of the first year, and moved to Budapest. We lost touch.

In the dormitory room I had an upper bed, on the left side of the room, with a small window to my right. Our walls were grey and decorated with portraits of the past and current tyrants. Above my head was Stalin, fixated to look in all directions, and on my side the spectre of Lenin's idealised picture kept guard. Both very stylized, saintly takes. On the opposite side of the wall, I could see the smiling Mátyás Rákosi's portrait, the then first secretary of the communist party. I have met the dreaded Rákosi before. He came by the forester house and I had to open the gate for his retinue on the road. My father had to go with them to show them a suitable place where Rákosi and his oriental wife could have tea in a pleasant, pastoral environment. It was a forest clearing covered by blooming flowers not far from our house. He smiled at me, but did not thank me for the service, shook hands with my father and they left. We knew the risks involved with providing service to him should something go wrong. On Rákosi's portrait's left on the wall hung Ernő Gerő's image. I remember the cold eyes of his disciplined intellectual face constantly looking at me from any position. He was Rákosi's hatchet man, the Minister of Interior at that time. What an intimidating decor for lively 18 years old girls. But we got used to the faces and after a few days we did not even notice anymore their ghostly presence. No other decoration was permitted.

Just to remind my readers, while we had to tolerate these portraits of old men, Elvis Presley's guitarist picture adored my generation, around the western world. We had no idea of his art, only as a "petit bourgeois", utterly decadent performer. I first heard him perform on TV in Vancouver 5 years later. Sadly, I realized the strength of the Iron Curtain. Not even the music of the west was able to cross into the terror world of communism.

We had, if we were lucky, a warm shower every Wednesday night in an awful basement, most times with very little hot water or even cold, because of insufficient pressure in the water main. But we could study in large, comfortable study rooms in the dormitory. The dining facilities were on the dormitory's main floor – a 3 km walk from the university. This meant that we had to walk this distance four times a day. The basic elements of food were on ration for the population of Hungary. We had a wonderful food manager, Uncle Tamás, but as much as he tried, he could not create good, nourishing food. The raw supply came from storage facilities where the first choice was for the members of the border guard units. Most times, Uncle Tamás had only poor quality food to bring back to the student “menza”, our dining rooms. Not once in four years did we receive fresh fruit other than apples that other others higher up in the communist system rejected.

Sopron is enclosed by the border to Austria on three sides. The whole area used to be closed for entry without special permits issued by the Interior ministry. And even with that, special permits had to be obtained for each occasion when we worked on field projects. The vicinity was packed by well-fed, armed soldiers of the AVH. Hungarians and Russians. We did not complain, and dared not to. It was the norm of life in the 1950's, under the communist regime in the country occupied by the Soviets. I knew my objectives and worked hard on my courses.

Early, September of 1952, I unexpectedly I become very popular. Several classmates, mostly good looking young men wanted to sit with me at the table of four. I was flattered, but soon I realized that it was not just about what I thought, it was a bit more. My classmates discovered that I did not eat too much, so more was left for them in the serving bowl.

A short story should be revealing of my dining room experiences. One day, to everybody's liking, we received a big bowl of beans with 4 small sausages on top. I took my beans and a single sausage. It was an awful quality, fat-ridden, thick skinned thing. I started to cut my sausage, the dull knife slipped and my sausage jumped out of my plate. A good friend, Pista Banadic caught it in mid-air! I looked at him with a questioning face. He said: *Márta, sajnálom, de a számba repült.* – *Sorry, Márta, it just flew into my mouth.* He devoured the whole thing. The “Márta's sausage” story was retold in different versions and different hues, until this day. So much for a sausage.

I spent the following eight and one-half semesters in the same dormitory, with different roommates. The last two years we were only two in the small room. Magda Link became my roommate. We got along well. The 4th year was pure joy. With my best friend, Márta Erdős. We had a wonderful time. We lost her a few years later in Canada in a head on collision with a drunken driver who

survived. The accommodation did not change, but we did, as we progressed toward our DFE. We had more and more liberties in the professional sphere, but increasingly less in the public political arena. We learned to keep our thoughts and ideas to ourselves, and kept our mouths shut. A wrong utterance in public would have finished our student career, and mark us for life under the communist system.

The professional courses were demanding full of hard work. Oral examinations were very difficult. The engineering courses were particularly hard. Descriptive geometry, taught by Professor Albert Stasney, was especially so. Professor Stasney's lectures were excellent, and his mastery on the black board was simply amazing. I worked very, very hard and passed his exam.

The program included colloquia which were held in all courses at the end of each semester. The colloquia kept us on our toes. There was, at the end of each course or streamed courses, a comprehensive. These were the tough ones. The materials could cover two, three or even more semesters. It was one of these, land surveying, which I failed. My practical was excellent, but I was not prepared enough for the oral examination. I was told by Professor János Shébor to come back prepared for a makeup examination.. I did and I passed with a good mark

A typical oral examination began by drawing a question in lottery style. From there on examining professor directed the conversation, probing for weak points which were usually pursued. The conversation went on as long as needed for the professor to find out the level of preparedness. It was sometimes intimidating just sitting in front of the professor, answering questions and conversing about the course material. Oral examinations are, for level of difficulty, comparable to combining multiple choice and essay type questions in a dynamic conversational context.

With oral examination it is impossible to pass just by chance. It has no fixed template format. The course of discussion is directed. I experienced basing student evaluations on computerized tests when I taught lab in biology myself at Western University, I realize that with student numbers as we had at Western, the oral examinations of my students would not be practical. We have to live with the real drawbacks of multiple choice tests with no opportunity for follow up questions to reveal in-depth the student's preparedness. Another drawback is the lack of opportunity for the professor to receive feedback on weak points in the lectures.

With many young men around at university, and young women in the proportion of 1 to 10, taking forestry, civil, oil and mining engineering on the same

campus, Sopron was an exciting milieu, a very lively place. Love was in the air. The university opened its doors for female students just a couple of years prior to my enrolment. It was in Sopron that I met a classmate by the name of László Orlóci (Laci for me) on the 2nd of September in 1952. His name was listed just after mine which put us into the same study group, which as an administrative unit, kept us together in all academic activities, such as laboratory work, field exercises, tutorial, examinations and even as table partners in the dining room. When Laci introduced himself the first day of lectures, I remember clearly to this day, that I saw a short fellow with way too much dark hair, rather poorly kept. I did not pay much attention to him. But we were into the same study group, lived in the same dormitory, and met daily.

He was a serious, studious looking young fellow. He did not have much to say, mostly quiet, acted scholarly, smart and most frequently he was alone. We did not wonder much about anybody's eccentric behaviour. The communist system taught us not to be too personal or inquisitive, keep our thoughts, and do not reveal much about oneself. All I knew that he came from the forestry technical gymnasium in Sopron. He brought his credentials with him. He was one of highest achievers in his graduating class.

Female students were a novel presence in a very mucho male student body. We were looked over and felt the boys did not exactly know how relate to us properly. László acted similarly. We were teamed up in shared assignments, usually he led the project. I was punctual, a good co-operator, enjoyed the assignments and loved to talk. He perhaps enjoyed my talkative nature, he always listened, I hardly ever disagreed with him. He was mostly quiet, in a serious thoughtful manner.

Our private paths did not cross much, beside our studies, for almost three years. I had friends, some serious ones. I was a popular, opinionated, talkative blond girl. I enjoyed all the attention. I felt equal, comfortable and happy. I was used to interacting with men. This was not anything too unusual, I grew up with brothers and worked among men before.

In spite all of this, it was not easy to fit into the world of men in the university environment, and to integrate when the profession is dominated by men and governed by strong traditions. Falling in love and maintaining professional integrity was difficult at the age of 19. The academic society was not quite ready for me, or any strong minded woman at my time. I stood the challenge. Women as equal partners in the profession was very far away from the world of men. Some thought I was there to marry. I was not! It is wonderful to find a good mate anywhere, but to share a profession in marriage has mixed blessings.

I did not plan to marry before graduation. I enjoyed my life and lived as free as a young woman should. I joined the choir, enjoyed social events, and participated in our theatre group. The last play we put on was a piece from Moliere. We, the “theatre group”, had a wonderful time taking the show to audiences in nearby villages. Almost every Saturday evening we danced to live music, provided by our classmates. On such occasions László asked me to dance. I loved dancing the tango and polka with him, he was a marvellous dancer.



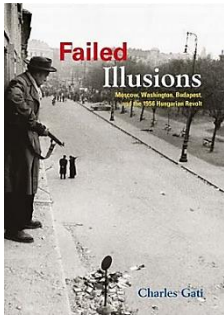
My Alma Mater in. A walk in the Sopron woods to the Károly Kilátó observation point, László and I loved to take. We were in love.

As time passed, the scholarly relationship with László gradually grew into a loving-sharing mode. He proposed by the end of the fourth year. I did not expect a proposal. I did not think of marriage, my goal was to get my degree first. We, just the two of us, began to go together, many times on long walks in the Lóvér forest.

László was not a talkative person, he was a thoughtful converser. There is a huge difference between the two types. His joy was the excitement of his own thoughts, new discoveries, timely ideas. I learned early in our student’s relationship that he worked very hard to fulfil his objective. I did not recognize it then, that it can develop into a total devotion to the profession which may spare no time for the social aspects of life. We were good friends. I respected his objectives and helped him to strengthen his determination. I loved him as a friend and as a man. He was a promising partner to spend my life with. We were together as students, arguing, but committed. We stayed together and after 59 years we are still disputing many topics. I was told it is insane to be with one man for so long! Of course there were and still are days, when I have temptation to change it.



Sopron Foresters' Class of 1958 at the University of British Columbia.



We chose freedom and failed

I still have regrets that nobody came to help us in 1956 when we rose against the tyrannical, Soviet-installed communist regime in Hungary. The whole world watched the destruction by the Soviet forces, which eventually subdued the people and re-established the communist tyrants. In the eyes of the western powers, Hungary's freedom fight was just another aberration. The real game was the Suez Canal.

Yes, I do have regrets about World War II which stole the best years of my youth. I was lucky. I survived. Yes, I regret the loss of the revolution because it threw my people under Soviet military occupation and limitless plundering for decades. It forced me into exile away from family and my beloved culture. Yes, 1945 and 1956 stole the hopes of millions of Hungarians, created misery, too often under the most barely conditions. I see these happening again to Hungary if the Hungarians allow others to be pushed into war alliances. No great power should assume the right to cause so much misery and loss of lives again. But they do it. They engage in new wars, for what reasons and at what cost?

I have to say again, I am happy and proud that I am Canadian. I am forever grateful for the peace and freedom I found and enjoyed for 59 years. How lucky I am to have landed here in 1957. I hope, my dear Kathryn and Ruthie, that you, the youth of this country, will guard the precious peace and freedom within the borders of this lovely country and nurture the well-balanced multi-cultural society.

Kathryn, Ruthie do come with me. I want to share with you the emotional turmoil, the total despair, and the miracles of spiritual recovery which I felt when returned to the site of my escape through the Iron Curtain to Austria 50 years ago. I discovered that memory is truly my most effective record keeper of my life.

We were crossing the border from Sopron in Hungary to Burgenland in Austria in November 4, 1956, with the Soviet tanks on our heels. Hundreds were leaving. László and I walked together. We were getting close to the minefield. Soldiers of the border guard unit joined us. They knew a place safe to cross. Walking along, a feeling of confusion came over me, I was very sad, in tears. I remembered my illegal border crossing and the following difficulties in 1946. We entered Austria, suddenly I stopped and I told László "I am not going with you. I shall not leave Hungary; I will go back to Sopron, let anything happen

to me”. I felt terrified thinking I may leave family and homeland for ever. I turned around and began walking back. He ran after me, held my hands and begged me to come to safety with him. He said that help should be on the way. He was telling me rest up and we will be back home next morning, once the turbulence settled. We held hands and walked on together, not realizing that many years would pass before I could return, and many more before (22 years) he would set foot on Hungarian soil again.



Half a century passed when I returned with László to the border crossing where we entered into Austria on a sunny November day in 1956. We found the border guards' barracks in ruins and a high oak forest in the place of the mine field. There was no trace left of the double iron fence.

László still had his handgun and as we crossed through an open section of the minefield. I asked him to get rid of the gun, feeling that if the Austrian border guards find it in his possession, they may not like it. Very reluctantly, with great care, he hid it in the bushes, thinking we might need it on our way back to Hungary. This reluctantly completed act saved him from arrest as all Hungarians with guns in their possession were considered combatants and had to be interned as prisoners of war until well after the fighting died down in Hungary.

We both were in the 9th semester of a 5 year program in Forest Engineering, a few months away from receiving our diplomas. And there we were out of Hungary, which we never intended to leave.

Yes, we returned to the same site together where we left hand-in-hand, 51 years ago on November 4, 1956. We stood together silently, as memories awakened. We held each other. Yes, finally we made it home. I just looked and walked around in a daze, feverishly looking for sign of danger. There was none. No border guard, no Russian, no guns; just the soft whisper of the forest which now covers the land where once the mine field existed. We found the border guard barracks, where we passed 51 years ago and expected resistance, but received none. Now peace shrouds the place.

I felt the beautiful oak forest was embracing me as September was already painting the foliage into early fall colours. Wild autumn flowers were peeping here and there, inviting me to walk into my home. I was free, in peace. A feeling of tranquillity settled in me in my cathedrals of trees. I felt the mystical transformation within my soul. This formal, frightful, merciless cemetery of many border crossers who tried to dash across it and laid down their lives for freedom. Each tree now appeared as a holy memorial. A heavenly oak forest cover mediated my thanks. There is peace now, no exploding mines or rapid guns firing. The forest is welcoming as a sanctuary and like living kopjafák (tombstones) guard the dreams of the fallen.

I stood there, among the trees, whispering *Te Deum* to all. Nature invited me to forgive the barbarous acts of the despotic leaders of a brutal regime. I am here, László too. The despots, their regime, the mine field and barbwire fences were long gone. I felt victorious.

In me the forests of my land always inspire feelings of hope and tranquillity. My life and Forest are entwined together. László and I came back home, not the next day, but 51 years later.

We responded to an invitation from our Alma Mater in Sopron for the 50th reunion of the class of '57 with our former classmates. The Alma Mater welcomed us with its traditional warmth. We received Golden Diplomas in Forest Engineering. It was a testimonial to well spent years and to ties that the years of forced isolation could not break.



I did not recognize many of my old classmates at the reunion. One hears the name and remembers the well-built, dashing young man, who was fun to be with. But reality kicks in, as a bald, roundish old man responds to the name. Luckily we do not see ourselves.

September 2014 we went back to the oak tree which we planted at the Biology building on the U.B.C. campus in 1957; it grew robust and beautifully in shape. We are with Sopron class mates Éva (Delkin) Viszlai, and Julika (Kubinyi) Szász. On the bronze plate we can read: - *Maganyos fa vagyok melyre villám szakad, melyet vihar tördel, the legalább szabad*

levegővel élbetek. – A lonely tree I am, lightening-strucked, battered by storm; but in an ambient free.”-

Now we were the accomplished sons and daughters returning to our Alma Mater. We were also told that leaving the country was a great loss for the profession in Hungary, half a century before. Mr. Pickersgill, the minister of Canadian Immigration, considered us the best professional investment in the history of his country’s immigration. Both of these were flattering without changing the fact that we tried our best, and did well on the world scene.



Tying the Knot

We had a stopover in Abbotsford, British Columbia, until the authorities decided on the sight of our intensive language training before the 1957 academic year began at U.B.C. It was the same year earlier in Abbotsford that László and I exchanged marriage vows in the old wooden church of the military barracks by a Hungarian priest came out to us from town. We did not have any special preparation. Our guests were friends and schoolmates right out of the Sopron group, travelling with us. It was a proper church wedding, my brother, Árpád, who joined us in Europe and travelled with us, walked me to the altar. We have a single picture of the event. A good friend, László’s classmate from gymnasium, Jóska Héjjas photographed us. We look happy, well dressed on the photograph. I shall share with you that we were penniless. Our wedding certificate was \$2. We could not pay, but somebody did. Thank you!





László and I married on Monday morning, February 17th, 1957 in Abbotsford, B.C. My brother, Árpád gave me away and our classmates were the witnesses. Anniversaries: 25th in London, 49th on Carnival's Spirit, 57th on Carnival's Rhapsody.

We were happy in love. It was a union for life, full of hope as we continued on the same morning of the wedding in high spirits into the future, heading to Powell River, just North of Vancouver on the British Columbia coast.

There we spent 1957 Spring and Summer in intensive language training. László went off for two months that Summer to work at Eliza Lake, in British Columbia. I remained in Powell River. We were ready in September to continue university in Vancouver in the Sopron Division of the Faculty of Forestry at U.B.C.

I recall the Sunday church service in Abbotsford where we were announced a week before the wedding. From there we were taken to a donation room in the community hall, just behind the church. Hungarian people who immigrated to the country several decades earlier were waiting for us. They were very kind, helpful and happy for us, acted like parents. They offered us to find anything we could use for the wedding from the donations. I located a black taffeta dress. It had a damaged underarm, but I fixed it. Recovered a small black hat and some silk flowers too. I discovered some bijou jewellery in a cardboard box, picked out the white imitation pearl strand. It took me about 10 minutes to plan my wedding outfit. I wore my old running shoes, I left Hungary in.

László's outfit came from the same donation room. That fact did not bother us in anyway in our very intimate, respectful, traditional and highly memorable Roman Catholic service.

I walked back from the altar and thought of my family, I so wished that I could hug my mother. My tears were of joy and sadness. I missed my family much more this time, than ever in my life. I made my wedding promise. It was a

promise to myself to be loving, faithful, passionate and help my man to achieve his goals. It was 59 years ago!

After the ceremony the enclosed picture was taken. We looked elegant, so we could send the picture home to the family. They never discovered the true story, it would certainly brake my mother's heart if she did. A white, beautiful wedding-dress was not my share. The only regrets I still feel is that I could not have my mother and family with me. No occasion is celebrated truly, without sharing it with the family. This is a very painful part of the immigrant's life.



Kathryn Orlóci-Goodison in 2001.

You can imagine the reaction of our friends and colleagues, 50 years later in London, when I told the story of the bridal-album: a single picture! One day, my elder granddaughter Kathryn spotted our black and white wedding picture on the bedroom wall. She was around six years old, asking me who were the people on the picture. I told her that it is our wedding photo, nagypapa (grandpa) and I. Her blue eyes opened wide, and said, nagymami (grandma), it cannot be, because brides are wearing white bridal gown. "We were very poor Kathryn", I explained.

"What does that mean, Nagymami?" - I told her that we did not have any money to buy a proper wedding gown. Instantly, her exquisite, large cornflower blue eyes flooded with tears. She felt sad for me. I kissed her forehead, saying that it is all right, it was a long time ago. She suddenly looked up and spoke to me with all her lovely innocence. "Nagymami don't you worry, when you get married next time, I am sure that you'll be wearing a white wedding gown. My mommy has a most beautiful one in the basement. We shall borrow it." Fortunately there was no need for that. Kathryn Orlóci-Goodison in 2001. Our honeymoon?. We continued with the Sopron group to Powell River, a small paper mill town in a picturesque setting on sea shore north of Vancouver. We were taking a crash course in conversational English.

We were on the road about three months, spent the summer in this seashore community, learning English with all the brain power we could master. It was not easy, but a very appropriate start under expert tutors of the Immigration Department. I remember the good hearted Lillian McIntosh, our study group's language instructor, the kindest Canadian lady. She often wiped my tears when I felt homesick, missed my family. She did wonders. By September, were ready to face the world in the English Language. We are eternally thankful to Lillian and husband Jim. They were guiding us with sure hands into the new life in Canada.

Fifty years later, my daughter Martha and son-in-law Tim gave us a lovely reception to celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary. We had friends, colleagues, young and old people celebrating us, and to our big surprise good wishers including the Prime Minister of Canada, the Honourable Stephen Harper. At one point our friends asked to see the bridal-album, wanting to share the happy moments of our marriage. We pointed to the photograph on the reception invitation. That was a one-picture album we had.



At our 50th wedding anniversary party: László, brother Árpád, Kathryn, Ruth 2007.



Martha, Kathryn, Ayumi Bailly, Pat Goodison



Martha, Trisha Campbell, Trisha's husband Dean Bennett, Joyce & Steve Hendry.



Trisha Campbell, Márta, Michel Campbell, Machell with Melissa Mukkattu, László.



Martha, Melissa Mukkattu, Márta, László, Maisy Mukkattu, Mathew Mukkattu. Right: with László and Martha.



Bev Goodison, László, Jim Phipps, son-in-law Tim Goodison, Joyce Hendry.



To marry or remain single?

Before I get too opinionated, I have to state that a happy marriage is not guaranteed by a licence. It is a relationship which requires serious and daily adjustment from both partners. My 59 years of marriage were based on a loving, faithful relationship, equality, integrity and professional cooperation. I made these promises to myself, when I married László. I kept these, in spite of the fact that our life together often tested my commitments. Relationships go through seasonal problems and aging difficulties. Marriages go through cycles, some good and some bad, created and recreated periodically by circumstances. A good marriage is not made by promises. The union requires careful renewal on a daily basis. Sometimes it is very challenging, and momentarily overshadows love. Equality has to be based on the acceptance of, or at least respect to, individualistic traits. It is a false idea that we should be able to change each other's personal characteristics once we married. That is impossible. Yet we change a great deal as we age, our differences widen, and sometimes it gets overly complex, bringing up individual behaviour barely familiar. It is difficult to cope with an aging self, then to handle the behaviour of our aging partner. Some natural processes of aging are unique, not possible to change. It needs a new approach to rekindle the love with much time and patience. Compassionate and respectful communications can override most difficulties. We have no handbooks, no mathematical formulae, or any guarantees for a loving married life. It is a daily challenge to handle the daily complexities.

I do not agree with marriage vows uttered to the other partner, in spite that in most civilized societies it is part of a lawful union of two people for the foundation of a family unit. We are constantly changing. So, what is the chance for a promise to survive 'till the end of time'?. Statistics show, that the chance of keeping the marriage vows till the end is not very good.

In my youth, we did not share bed-and-breakfast together, did not move-in before marriage. So, we considered entering into marriage a very serious contract. We hardly knew our partner's very ordinary, plain nature, the every-day manner of his or her behaviour. During our courtship we did not search for faults, nor did we show our not-so-impressive habits. It seemed that during the courtship we were integrating all the best qualities, and hid knowingly or unknowingly the not-so-promising, less attractive private packages, or habits, some of us more, than others carried. The lucky ones could open these packages, but some would not until after marriage. All the problems surface, sooner or later, usually at the most unforgiving moments. This tells me that in my

youth, perhaps most of us never knew the real person we wedded. We got acquainted with our husbands as days went by. I am sure that this is the cause of most failed marriages.

I feel somewhat supportive of the new generation's ideas. They test their relationships in time. This is a very useful discovery by experimentation. Few in my generation dared to enter into such an intimate pre-marital relationship. Rooming together could be a social disaster and if it failed, the lady, not the man, became a used person.

In spite of the wedding promise about 76 % of married men are unfaithful. Society still does not consider it seriously wrong. Through the ages it became a highly adored "manly" behaviour to have mistresses, and as such, it was accepted. The most famous affairs were even glorified in the arts.

Today, professional women has more independence, but still are searching for the excitement of love. About 30 % are not faithful to their wedded husbands. Most ladies of today know what they want, and most are able to look after themselves. They do not just have desires but also firm expectations. This is an important turning-point of society and not an entirely welcomed challenge for men. "Promises", as Webster's Dictionary defines this term, "give ground for expectation". Are we expected to keep the promise? I think in marriage it is a very uncertain expectation.

Evolution created women to be more adaptable, more resourceful, with better memories and perseverance than men. These characteristics emerged by the necessities of our ancient tribal life-form. Women were mates, hunted, gathered, but also bore, fed and raised the children.

Scientific studies suggest that right-handedness evolved in the brain of the hunting tribal woman. During hunting, gathering mostly the women carried the baby, on the left side of her. This freed her right hand for throwing objects in the hunt. The baby is better comforted on the left side of the mother. All mothers know that. Perhaps the baby finds the heartbeat on the left more soothing, similar as in the mother's womb. Obviously throwing an object, and aiming is a very complicated sight-brain-muscle function. It required a bigger brain, space for extra wiring in the hunting women's brain, to manage the process with only her right hand.

Over 90 % of the world population is right handed and almost all of us throws to aim with the right hand, above the shoulder. Just to illustrate the complexity, our fingers holding the stone have just milliseconds to release the stone for a perfect aim, which depends upon many complicated eye-brain-muscles cooperation. Men were hunters. Women hunted, gathered and bore the children..

These conditions bore down on women's DNA and a differently wired brain structure developed.

It was not in style to write, or take note of our superiority. Agrippa, who in the 16th Century discusses the intelligence and eminence of woman. Just recently a hand written book was found in England, near Manchester: *The values of woman*. It states, scientific findings show that women are superior to man. It sounds like a good and exciting read: *Eve is superior to Adam* (História, 2002, Vol.4. Budapest).

In 2013 timely research was published by Ragini Verma of the University of Pennsylvania. A sophisticated imaging system was used to show the variation between men and women in dominant connections in the cerebrum, a place where our thinking centre is. The goal was to find out why women tend to have better memories and are able to handle multitasking better than men. Daniela Weber and her colleagues of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Vienna suggested the reasons for this. They found that better memory is strongly tied to emotion. The brain remembers unconnected words by linking them to a memory or imagined situation. It is the emotion of the memory that supposedly helps the brain to remember the word. We know that societies always expected the woman, the principal child-nurturers to remember family matters.

Yes, there are differences between "Venus" and "Mars". The Gur report from the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine's reports new finding about our differences, from 949 maps of brain pathways of persons ages 8-22. It was discovered what we women always knew, that the man in our life think differently and handles problems a manly way. The man's brain is operating on a different wavelength than we women do. There are great differences and distinct disparities in how males and females process information.

It was a good learning experience for me to follow the new finding in science. My intuitions were confirmed. There are inherent differences between "Mars" and "Venus". Women always knew it. Ibsen, the great Dutch dramatist wrote in the Doll House¹³:

"There are two kinds of spiritual love, two kinds of conscience, one in man and another, altogether different, in woman".

I know well that László hates personal analysis, but this is my essay, and I choose to share facts and my feelings of a man, whom I love and respect and

¹³ Ibsen, Henrik. 1879. A Doll's House [Illustrated with photographs]. [William C. Archer](#) translator (1889), London, T Fisher Unwin. [OCLC 29743002](#).

have known for more than 62 years. His life is part of mine and our life together created Martha, our wonderful daughter. We built our days and forged our successes together. What I write is a kaleidoscope of him and me, not a psycho analysis, spiced with experiences. He is a well-known, successful scientist, but not an exemplary husband. There are great differences and strong connections between his two personalities. I have to say, his cool, mater-of-fact phlegmatic manner as a scientist often dominates in our every days.

I married László not for any other reason than love. Equality was given, we were classmates, both of us having a forestry engineer diploma. We started out in the New World together, we had no counsel from anybody. Nobody interfered. We created our lifestyle, almost exactly the way as we planned it. Our steady and hard work provided opportunities, by which we were able to plan and fulfill goals as we saw it fit. It was a first marriage for both of us. We had to learn about each other's personalities as husband and wife.

Life together has its many wonderful moments, and a fair number of disappointments. But as you will be reading later, we always had the strength and desire to reconcile. There was strength in our union, respect, cooperation and empathy. But, very early in our marriage, I had to accept that László's devotion to his profession was total, it took centre place in his life. This is not easy to handle. All through the 59 years together I did not adapt what we call at academia; academic widows syndrome. Absolutely not!

I created and recreated his "Bubble" in my mind, in lonely evenings, hundreds of times, as László's scientific hideaway from me, and everybody and everything else. I concluded that when a primary devotion is to a professional calling, a person must have a very private, isolated and an immensely engaged drive to satisfy his goals. This needs isolation. Such life is lived in the Bubble, where all the new thoughts and ideas of hard and concentrated efforts are born. The isolation of the Bubble's environment provides a proper milieu. Nobody is there to interrupt or to object at any time. Total concentration on the topic is insured. Only self-created, conceptual problems exist inside the Bubble, whose solutions kindle more happy new ideas. No contrary opinions exists in the Bubble, no outside hazards enter until they are chosen. I call this selfishness of a particular kind. Every attempt to enter into the Bubble is an inconvenient interruption for the person inside the Bubble. The everyday world outside required me to tend to family matters, to arrange dinner parties, making travel arrangements, paying bills, and keeping track of family needs. Living in the shadow of the Bubble created loneliness for me and our family. The Bubble still provides a life style for László, it is most private and isolated.

The Bubble lifestyle needs a well-equipped, very able caretaker, who runs and cares for the territory around the Bubble, and looks after the tenant. The secure

and disturbance free functioning of the Bubble became my responsibility. László wanted me to be near and to be part of his research and travels. I was raising our daughter, run the household, and taking care of the family. I entertained visiting guests, colleagues, graduate students and invited relatives.

The successful life-style of the Bubble is not, and never was, an independent environment. Its survival and success are totally dependent on a willing caretaker. It is self-deception to think of it any other way. My intention to interrupt this utterly isolated existence arose quite often. It did not work, and it appears the walls of the Bubble got thicker in time and harder to break through from either direction.

Such dedication and professional devotion of a man are highly valued in our society. They are lauded, but never the caretakers, who raise the children, run the house and keep the Bubble functioning. László never lost interest, or wavered in his scientific goals. He worked very hard all his life, blessed with a superior cognitive ability. So, for him his scientific performances does not count as hard work, rather as a hobby.

As he describes it, his life is “a piece of cake”. True, all fruits of his and my labour have given us a financially secure life and immense opportunities to travel, make friends in all corners of the world, who welcomed us, and whom we welcome. A living testament of his broad esteem is the immense number of courses he taught at institutions all over the world and the coveted honours he received. He values most his election to the Academy of Sciences of the Royal Society in Canada and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest.

Success is the strongest motivator for more work, and the right combination of circumstances generate new venues for more. László is not just a hard worker, but very original thinker. He loves what he is doing, and prefers to do it, above all other activities. I feel that in his mind it never occurred to him, that I was lonely and might not always liked life around or inside of his Bubble. His retirement did not change his devotion to his work. He just finished his 9th paradigm defining. He protests it, but I think he is one of the most prolific thinkers in his field Statistical Ecology.

Hiding in the Bubble was partly caused by my own naivety, I should have insisted on the first day of our marriage that I should occupy a primary spot on his brain, no full-time devotion to work should be in our marriage. Unfortunately we did not move in together. I did not know that his devotion would be a life-time hobby. I thought that together we will be creators of our professional life. But my treasured independence flew away, because in Canada the role of woman was at that time to mind the children and the house. Those were the closing years of dark ages of Canadian womanhood. Female foresters were not

known, the female professional working environments had not been created in my field. Only one of us could continue with further studies in graduate school. So, while László collected his postgraduate degrees, I helped with data-collection, but over six years I worked full time and supported myself.

I am not an angel, perhaps not the best wife either, I have an overabundance of drive for independence. I am very far away from the ideal, servitude-type of woman's life style. I always knew where I wanted to go and most time I got there, with hard work. I never hesitated to voice my own ideas or thoughts and never used my femininity at any time, for any reason. I inherited a wholesome, well built, female body; a natural blond. Early on in my life I was very much aware of my surroundings. Coming from an isolated family, in my young years, we were a conversing family in our daily life. Telling and listening to each other's stories was the only entertainment for us. Obviously I became talkative, I love to share the stories and ideas of my days. I know, that it was just the right thing to do and mostly a happy family time. Often it would have been better to keep quiet, but it is not my nature. I am happy with myself, I do not wish to change.

I feel that nowadays the overuse of cell telephones are poor substitutes for personal, verbal conversation. I see many busy, messaging thumbs working the miniature keyboards around me, everywhere I go. I cannot imagine myself doing it as a regular activity, not just for the arthritis in my hands, but in fear of forgoing the personal touch, the civility and the joy of personal conversation. I love to talk!

All my life I was looking for love and attention. Perhaps the desire goes back to the cradle. I am not able to discover the cause, but love was the most important factor in my life. This integrates into the relationship of my family and friends. I am happy with myself, I and me keep good company. I easily cry, of joy, or sadness. My tears comfort me. I easily forgive, but unfortunately do not forget that easily. None of us has control over the memory storage of our brain. Total forgiving should include forgetting the incidents altogether, or to keep quiet about it. I forgive, but unfortunately it is not in my nature to select my memories. Firstly, I am a mother, and I hope I did a good job raising our daughter Martha. All my married years I was my husband's research associate, gratis, on all support levels from field work to proof reading. To this day no correspondence of any sort leaves our home, without my conscientious reading. I took an active part in his publications and attended meetings with him. My life has become an adjunct of his professional life. We worked together, I shared his travels and the benefits and privileges of his success. I participated in countless invitations, honour ceremonies, and official receptions, often as an honoured guest, a few times my expenses paid by the hosts. This gave me

the opportunity to keep in touch with forestry and natural sciences first hand. But we all know that there are no free tickets to ballrooms.

For many years I taught laboratories in biology at the University of Western Ontario, only part-time. Those were the highlights of my own professional activities. I enjoyed every minute I taught and faced unique problems. About 60 to 70 % of the student body were foreign, 17-25 years of age, with ample diversity in their high school education. Last week, as I am writing this, I received a sweet letter from a former student of mine whom I tutored 30 years ago. He is a university professor now, telling me that discussions with me had a big influence in his choice of career at academia. What a marvellous birthday gift at 82. At the end of each semester we were evaluated by the student body on specific criteria. Based on maximum 5, my over the years average is 4.4 or 88 %. I include the last set of scores I received from the course director Professor Frank Cook in 1982:

Marta Orlooi

The scores are scale averages for classes of approximately 250 students. These are from my personal notes. Originals will be supplied as soon as they become available.

Sufficiently knowledgeable	4.9	Uses aids effectively	4.5
Presentation organized	4.7	Writing easy to read	4.2
Explains terms adequately	4.5	Speaks clearly	4.1
Answers effectively	4.4	Heard easily	4.2
Class availability	4.4	Purpose made clear	4.4
Uses time effectively	4.7	Answer useful	4.4
Encourages questions	4.2	Pre-lab lecture usefulness	4.2
Drawing comprehensible	4.5	Scale: 5-always; 4-usual; ...; 1-never	

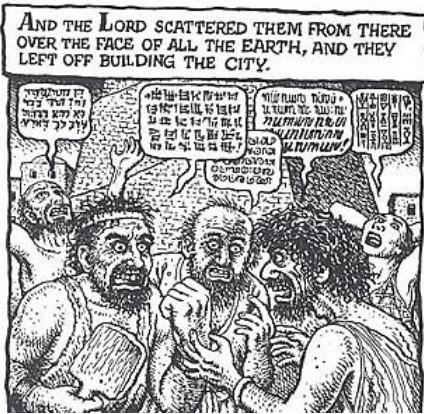
These are averages for three sections thought for classes of 250 students in a two semester course. I am very proud of having been valued by my students so highly. Ever since, I have missed the excitement to be with students and being the target of their high intellectual curiosity and spirits.

We entertained a great deal, so I managed to learn to be a culinary cook for guests of any nationality and the host of countless formal dinners. Now looking back, I think that often I gave too much and rarely thought of my needs. Most often our guests reciprocated in kind. But that is who I am, always a giver, growing up in a traditional Székely family, integrating my mother's modes. She used to tell me "Márta, I hope you'll be a giver all your life, it feels wonderful. Better to be a giver, than be a receiver". This is absolutely true.

After all the memorable and loving experiences we shared, and difficult problems we faced, László and I still argue a great deal, just as we did 60 years ago as students, but with still plenty of love and respect. I learned to be alone, I am happier, often prefer my own company, especially with a good book in hands. I discovered that I am able to tell my stories in a book, so I began writing many

years ago and wrote five books and numerous articles in Hungarian. This is my first English book. I trust myself and my sober senses. Now, I need my own time and space.

We still share, with all its drawbacks, the beauty and miracles of the exquisite profession we chose. Anywhere, we happened to be on the globe, we felt close to the forest. We were at home. The forest is still a shared magnet in our relationship. But we love too the rewarding cosmopolitan life our professions had handed to us, the uninhibited excitement we feel in the forest, the endlessly receding horizon of the prairie, and the challenge of the desert. These are our milieu where our spirits soar and joyous feelings embrace us.



Accents, accents everywhere

At the end of August 1957 we moved from Powell River to Vancouver and enrolled in Forestry at U.B.C. In 1958 we both received our B.S.F. degrees in forestry, almost six years after we started Forest Engineering in Sopron. I felt proud, and happy; my dreams were

realized. My head was full of plans to be a forester, a good caretaker of the Canadian forest. The only thing I regret, I was not able to share my joy with my family at graduation. We had no graduation celebration, but we were happy.



In front of the Erenberg home at 4079 W 15th Avenue Vancouver 1957, 1958.

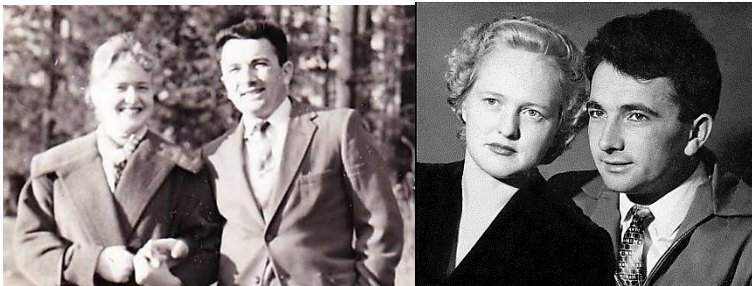
In Vancouver we rented living quarters, two rooms upstairs in a family home, walking distance (3-4 km) from campus. It had a small bedroom, a sitting corner with a hotplate and a toilet. We shared the bathtub and the refrigerator with the owner. Our landlady was a grandmotherly Russian immigrant, Mrs. Erenberg, a very kind Jew, had just lost her husband. He worked as a printer at the Vancouver Sun for decades and accumulated enough welt to live comfortably in retirement.

Mrs. Erenberg was a compassionate, loving person. Often she dried up my tears when a letter came from my mother, from Hungary. She called loudly for me, then instantly she put the kettle on for a tea just for the two of us. She sat down, and waited till I finished reading the letter, then she wanted to hear my news. She was very understanding and often hugged me when I cried and smiled with me when I felt happy. She understood that I missed my home terribly and had empathy for me when I was homesick. We spent over two years sharing Mrs. Erenberg house at 4079 W. 15th Ave, in Vancouver. It was a happy place and I am forever grateful to Mrs. Erenberg for helping me to make the place my home. The rent was \$60 for a month, all inclusive. My monthly income was \$132 that year (1958). We visited her in Vancouver in the late sixties again from London. By that time she sold the house on 15th avenue



and moved into an apartment. She kept in touch with me for a few more years and then I had my letters returned unopened.

Vancouver in 1958 as seen from W 16th Avenue and Camusín Street. We rented one block from here from the good Mrs. Erenberg on 15th Avenue.



Students in Vancouver 1958.

Life was very different for woman, particularly for immigrants in the 1950's in Canada. My English was not fluent, but I had been in Canada only over a year. The biggest problem was the lack of professional employment for a simple reason. Women foresters were not known in Canada. Even more to our misfortune, women who graduated in the Sopron division of Forestry at U.B.C., were not recognised by industry or the civil service for potential employment. We were pioneers, the first women granted forestry degrees at U.B.C.

My degree was in that respect quite useless. The idea prevailed that women should get married, produce children and mind the home and the family. Women were not considered as good prospects in the professions. Few employers were willing to accept the extra expense of offering fair employment to women. I was terribly upset. I considered changing profession. but to what? I worked for the forest engineering diploma for five years.



In Vancouver 1963.

Women had to hide pregnancy as long as they could in the work place in fear of being fired from work. Social development came slowly, starting from the Dark Ages from the women's point of view. For decades now Canada has the most coveted fair and universal social system in which employers are required by law to take their share of responsibility. The treatment of women which I considered aberrant and unjust in the 1950s, today would be viewed as unlawful atrocities.

As I looked back, woman were not at all treated as equals. To underline this I have two personal experiences which are characteristic situations. I wanted to buy a small sewing machine. I went to the Hudson's Bay, in Vancouver. I could pay half the amount in cash, so I applied for a credit. I filled out the application for it, and handed it in. After waiting a good while, I was told that I cannot get credit, without my husband's signature. I told them he is a student, and this credit application is mine, with my signature. I could not open a bank account either. I refused both; it was against my personal dignity.

A married woman was regarded as a financial liability, for a very long time, as you know the taxation system allowed our husband a tax exemption for us. Housework and child care were not recognized in Gross National Product.

Equal pay, for equal work was non-existent. The women were neglected in Canada, in spite that half of the population were female.

The country began a great social changes when Pierre Elliott Trudeau was elected as Prime Minister in 1968. We should remember those, who fought desperately for the changes of the state of women: Laura Sabia, Judy La Marsh, Doris Anderson and many others. They were bullied and humiliated, but they struggled to create the Royal Commission of Women. This achievement was an important step to create some basic rights for women. It was not popular with most of the male politicians. Slowly, we females crawled into the Twenty Century. We advanced a great deal, but our work is not done yet. I have full confidence of the total recovery. Our young women had shown their ability and brainpower to lead us to total equality. But remember Ibsen:

“to love an equal - it takes big man and big woman” (Doll House).

Coastal British Columbia was still very British in the 1950s. Immigrants of British Subjects found immediate employment in the civil service, not open for others. Mining and forest harvesting was the main employment possibility in the Province for male immigrants.

Often I felt a second rate citizen. I could not think any other logical reason for this than my fresh immigrant status, with “a strange accent”. I felt I was being pushed by the system into total conformity at the lowest common denominator. Multiculturalism was not the order of the day. An abusive melting pot mentality prevailed.

I had to study languages as a condition for my matriculation at the Franciscan Gymnasium in Szentendre. I spent much time on Latin, French, Russian and a few weeks in ancient Greek in high school. Years later in the 70's, I took Spanish at night school in Honolulu. I do not claim fluency in speaking any of these languages, but I am reasonably fluent in reading French, Spanish, and Italian. Latin laid foundations for this. When I meet someone with an accent I am sure that the person speaks at least one other language.

To be multilingual is now prerequisite in Canada, to a successful career leading to the high echelons of employment. But it was not so when I arrived in Canada. Poor possession of English or speaking with some foreign accent readily invited attempts of exploitation. These created much hurt and bitter feeling of humiliation in me. But I comforted myself by the thought that those who have a problem with others speaking with an accent, usually speak only the mother tongue. Is it an achievement to speak a single language? In human evolutionary terms, yes. But ever since humanity developed to that stage, children learn the mother tongue as a gift of Nature. Multilingualism is predicated on hard work.

Now it is accepted in Canada that languages bring enrichments into the culture of a nation, and multilingualism bridges the mosaic of cultural traditions, and promote harmony through understanding. It is hard work to learn another language, but it is worth the effort. It opens windows on an another cultural tradition and makes available the wealth of new information.

Life goes in cycles, nothing stay the same for ever. Change is with us. My own aspiration to be a practicing forester in Canada failed, but my idea and professional spirit stayed with me. It surfaced gloriously, in a most delightful manner. My granddaughter Kathryn is in her fourth year of the environmental management stream at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario. She likes her courses and I follow her progress closely, with much enthusiasm. Her choice to follow in that direction was hers alone. I had no influence, not even a sug-



gestion in her choice. But I am happy to see that our three-generation family tradition in the broader field of forestry continues. This lovely calling now finds much support in Canada. Perhaps my own dreams are coming to life in my granddaughter's plans. How wonderful life is!

With Ruth (17) and Kathryn (20) at our home in London 2015.

Ruth, our younger granddaughter has chosen Biology at Lakehead University. She is a Presidential Scholar completing first year with excellent results. Her heart is pulling her toward systematics, evolution and ecology with a minor in anthropology. But she is good in the physical sciences too, and especially in mathematics. We shall see what the many doors opening for her will do with her original plans. As Plato says in the Republic "Rhythm and harmony find their way into the places of the soul". I discovered this in both of my granddaughters' curiosity for different kinds of music and musical instruments.

I feel, I should share what I experienced as a fresh immigrant at the beginning of my Canadian life and how my experience represents the state of an overeducated immigrants life, who were just learning the English language in the late 50s. I would like my grandchildren to know that life was not easy for me, but with integrity, hard work, and some compassion from others, every immigrant can find success.

Dearest Kathryn and Ruthie, this is how it was for me in the New World. I was not singled out. My case is only one example of many. I never was without work, because I realized that I could not afford to be. I took anything, any kind of job, I could find in Vancouver. I began working in the St. Joseph hospital, which was managed by a Roman Catholic Order of nuns. Being a Roman Catholic myself I was expecting compassion, understanding and decency. I leave it to you to judge my integration, just to stay alive, with hard work and tonnes of humiliation.

I was hired as an instrument washer. Few things were thrown away in those days. Everything was reused after proper cleaning, like tests tubes, small jars (BM and urine samples), plates, tubes, needles, syringes and others. I washed and sterilized them. It does not sound too bad, especially when it provides your daily bread. I had no previous experience of employment in such a place, but realized the first day that for this work under the nuns direction, you had to be absolutely desperate. No choices. I sterilized what I washed every day, a person whom I did not know picked up the clean stuff and delivered it to the laboratory. Quickly the person returned with more dirty ones, thrown casually on a cart for me to wash.

I stood by a big stainless steel sink, facing the wall, with gloves up to my elbow and listening to the constantly running hot water, as I kept washing and washing. But, the nuns broke my day into two: 6-12 noon and 3-5 pm daily. Obviously it was a bad part time job, designed for exploitation for profits by those from whom I expected fair play, decency, and compassion. Working part-time, I had no paid holidays or benefits. My pay was 83 cents/ hour, that amounted to a monthly salary of \$132. My monthly bus tickets cost \$12, housing \$60, what was left over could not make me a spender. Considering that I did our cooking, cleaning and laundry at home, I learned to budget early. László was on a scholarship in graduate school. Those were terrible days for me on the job. I was humiliated to hear from the sister supervisors that I was slow and did not do my quota for the day. She must have known, even if I did not, that by trickery of a co-worker, the person who came to pick up the clean materials and deliver the soiled ones, I was doing the job for two. The laboratory was running short of glassware and I should do more, I was told. The dirty and smelly tubes, syringes, bottles were coming in. The supervisor sister appeared and was looking for more clean stuff. I was sweaty and could not even mop my brows, I was terrified of infections.

Most days I got totally worn out by heat and high humidity. The woman who was to work with me disappeared most of the day. But no one told me that I was being cheated. Then one day, another worker told me when no one was around what was going on. I felt shattered, but did not know how to complain

about her. I tried to tell this to the supervising sister, but she had no patience for my broken English.

One day a lively Italian lady came into my room and said “you stupid Marta” with a heavy Italian accent. She worked in the linen-room, looking after the supply. One morning she ran into my room, grabbed my hand and pulled me into the nearest chapel, for the 7 o’clock short mass. We sat in the last pew in the lovely chapel. The mass was on. She got out her breakfast of sausages and vegetables and was having a good meal, while the chapel’s service continued. It came to holy communion, quickly she ran up to receive it. I was sitting there in total disgust. What is going on at this place? I did not realise the fakery and dishonesty around me. Obviously, I never been a cleaning person.

After the service, holding my hand, she made sure, that we ran quickly, in front of sister superior, back to work. When I asked her about this totally hypocritical behaviour, she said that, “God see all”. I never returned to the chapel. She built her hardworking-prestige by regularly attending church. She was paid 95 cents an hour, but she was on part time as well. Slowly my eyes opened, and I began to understand that I was in a place where my norms of fair play, decency and truthfulness are not an asset but a disadvantage. She did not care about spelling, she had a good time! I decided to leave; but first I had to find a job. László’s scholarship was not enough to pay for a half decent accommodation.

A week or so later the Italian friend helped me into a new position to clean hospital rooms for the private patients, now for 90 cents an hour. With her help “I moved up” in what I thought to be the lowest work status on this planet.

We were four of us assigned as a cleaning team to do the mattresses, the night tables and wash everything touched by the former patients. It seemed an easier job, but I was wrong. The mattresses were immensely heavy; I was petite. My teammates were tall and very muscular. We had to turn the mattresses over to clean and disinfect. They pushed it and I slid with it, so I fell against the wall with the heavy mattresses, several times a day. I was full of bruises and very tired. They did not want to work with me. They were right. I tried my very best.

Sometime later my Italian friend ran after me and said, “Marta stupid, blind”. She was watching as my workmates, pushed most of the night tables out to the corridor, or into the corner, as soon as we entered into the dirty room. I did not know or understood why they were so anxious to handle the night tables first. They pocketed the tips, which could be substantial on private wards. They left the cleaning to me. When my Italian friend told me this, I knew that I was surrounded by common thieves. I had never been a cleaning lady before, I knew nothing of tips; perhaps I would have returned the money to the nurses desk, if I found it in the drawer.

But this was not all that made me feel totally out of place. László was doing fieldwork at a far point of the Province and came home to realize that I am at work. He ran to the hospital to see me. We met in the central lobby, and naturally we had an intimate hug and kisses. We were happy to be together. This meeting, I am sure did not take longer than 2-3 minutes, then he left. Almost immediately the supervising sister came into the laboratory and very deliberately she advised me that it was forbidden of the hospital workers to carry on with a date and create a tasteless situation with male friends. I told her, that he is my husband, whom I did not see for several weeks. It is a false story, she continued, I hear that every day, then she left with her nose up. I finally learned that these people had a secluded life, like robots, with whom a normal interchange is an impossibility. They had no normal life experiences, were not interested in the people whom they were directing, and did not have an ounce of compassion or civility. I wonder how it is now? All they were looking for was using every ounce of my energy, for a minimal wage. I still had no other choices.

After the cleanings were done, I became a nurses' aid, which at the time consisted of emptying garbage cans, to clean soiled areas, empty bedpans, but now for 93 cents an hour. No experience was required for this position.

One morning I was sent to attend the room of a private patient. In bed was a middle aged man, I said good morning. He looked at me and asked to pull the blinds up on the window, which was close to his bed. As I was slightly arched, looking for the pull-ring to do it, suddenly he reached between my legs and pinched my private part with such a force that I sounded a short scream. My previous experiences stopped me but the thought rushed to my brain. Was I, the one of the most attractive female on the floor, selected for this? He kept grabbing me, and would not let go. The private room was truly private, the door closed. I managed to free myself and fled the room. My heart was pounding fast, I knew that nobody would believe me, if I reported to any supervisor. Sore and humiliated, with tears in my eyes I ran straight to the personal office. There I threw my gloves on the table, and told them I had enough and left. I ran out of the hospital. Never returned.

I often think back to those experiences. I find it difficult to suppress those thoughts. I even attribute my break with everyday practice of my religion to my experience at St Joseph. Only my early contact with good and decent people of religious orders kept me believing that the Church I grew up with was not the same as the one which allowed to measure out so much humiliation on me at St. Joseph.

I know that it is a weakness to hold bitter feelings so long. But I cannot be in another way. I just hope that I am unique in this respect, and all the others who

had the same experience are different. I often wonder how could members of a religious order who swore to serve humanity could go so far afield to the edge of law in their everyday life. But I am afraid what I experienced may have been universal practice at that time. The stories that are aired nationwide (The unforgivable treatment of our Native children) on the highest levels of judiciary and government suggest, that my worst feelings may be not imaginary deduction from limited experience. It reflects on the sisters and brothers who were allowed to dispense their vocation without supervision on the widest scale.

Jobs, the kind I had at St. Joseph, were plentiful in town. This justifies saying one always can find a job, and I concur to this, if one needs a job to survive. Where and how would I ask for help? It was below my dignity, to beg I was a young person of 26, healthy and I believed that I should be able to support myself. All kinds of jobs should be valued; it should become an honour, if it gives a daily bread without common molestation. I never received any social assistance. But one has to love the challenges of a daily work and should feel the joy of productivity, usefulness. Pride is a must, but it does not buy anything, least the daily bread nor provide for rent

The following Monday I got a job as a waitress. Again I had no experience, but probably the owner liked my looks, when he hired me. I was a healthy, attractive, blond girl. The owners (a married couple) were happy with my service, no complaint from the costumers. My vocabulary was good by that time, but I did not spend my time entertaining costumers. Instead, I served, did the dishes and kept the tables spotless. On the fifth day of my work I reached up to a shelf above the counter to get a stock of clean plates, after the morning rush was over. As I reached for the plates the owner reached under my arm and grabbed my breasts. I quickly turned, dropped the plates and hit his face with my fist. Apparently I did a very good job, because his nose was bleeding profusely, the broken plates scattering all over. He yelled for help; his wife, who was working at the back, ran out to investigate. He told her that he was in terrible pain, knocked his face into the counter and dropped the plates. I quickly took my little handbag and walked off to the bus stop at the corner of Alma and 4th Avenue. It was in 1958, in Vancouver. I worked 5 days free, but I was very proud of my aim with my fist. After all these positions I sure gathered enough experience to survive.

As I was growing up with three brothers, and many school friends, I knew that I was alert, probably smart. From my parents I received a solid mind and a well-structured body, I was a good looking, natural blond. I never flirted to invited attention. I never had my privacy so blatantly invaded. I started to entertain the thought that I got myself into dangerous stratum of society. Where was I? Was it done only to any women at the work place. Can I do anything or just run away? Or is this my destiny just to allow me for daily upkeep. Do all

women have to face these humiliations? I could afford to run away, but millions of women cannot escape. This situation is supposed to be controlled by law (perhaps not in the 1950-s), but the law cannot control private events of humiliation with no witnesses and language difficulties.

I was very tired and confused. I loved my husband and kept the humiliating experiences from him. I was a proud young woman and I believed in my strength of working and creating a better life. I missed my Mother, never told her about the types of work I did and the people I had to work with. She also missed me, and worried a great deal about my life. I felt her love, care and her constant, never diminishing inspiration toward me. I could not disappoint her by telling her about the humiliating disrespect and thievery I was exposed to at work. It would have broken her heart. At one point it all felt unbearable and secretly I contemplated leaving and to go back to Hungary. In the mean time I applied to all kinds of advertised positions. I was called in for an interview with the head of the university cafeteria. I was hired on the spot. No tips, 85 cents an hour. This was a different world, a very busy place, but my costumers were students and respectful. Often the students asked me for a date, thinking that I was another single student. I did not have a wedding ring yet. I enjoyed to be around of the generation of my kind, who wanted to study and better their life. It was hard work, but in a true sense it was a civilised milieu. I worked in the afternoons, László, a graduate student, came in for a glass of milk or something every day. It was our short afternoon rendezvous; we loved it. We quickly shared our daily experiences. Unlike at St. Joseph, nobody objected. Those around me were happy to see him. I felt happier and I knew that I am slowly getting somewhere. In a few weeks I was offered the cashier position for 5 cents more. I did not take it.

László, a serious young man, worked equally hard in courses and on his projects. To improve his English he often memorized the important passages in textbooks and in his notes. He was doing well. His scholarship was about the same as my wages. The following July he was awarded a Canadian National Research Council's bursary in a very generous annual amount of \$2000. Our financial situation finally stabilised.

Every morning I was looking for a better position, in the local papers. One day I saw a research assistant position advertised in Paediatric Research at the Vancouver General Hospital. I called for an interview, I was called in to meet Dr. Sid Segal. I appeared, he received me kindly with a hand shake, took me around the laboratory, and introduced me to others. Then we went on a discovery tour. He said "Marta nod if you recognized the equipment and tell me the function or purpose of it". Some were familiar, others not. He shook hands with me again and told me that they shall call me back when the selection is completed.

This sentence was very familiar, mostly they never called. The atmosphere of the interview felt positive, the environment appeared very civil and highly cultured, my spirits were raised.

The very same morning I went to a bank, BM (on the 4th street), where they advertised for a bank clerk. I appeared with my diploma in hand. Filled out the simple application form (my high school French helped a lot) at the spot. A very tall man (not a gentleman!!) appeared. He first glanced at me, top to bottom twice, then without looking at my application he asked: “do you know how to add?” I got momentarily frozen, my brain got a shock, I could not comprehend this depth of unexpected insolence. He looked into my face and repeated the question. I said nothing, but he must have seen the level of disgust on my face. I turned around and left. This man was void of any trace of respectful social contact from the first moment he set eyes on me. And he represented a large national bank. I learned that that I have to reach down for strength to the most fundamental tribal survival instincts of my Székely ancestry if I am to carry on like this. I now look back on my St. Joseph experience, the one with this insolent man at the restaurant, and the despicable character at the bank as *exempla virtutis* in the portrayal of the job seeking, early immigrant days. I started my afternoon shift in the coffee shop at the University as scheduled. László came to see me as usual. In a few minutes of spare time I shared my morning experiences with him. He was disgusted to hear it. Seeing him calmed me down. It was a short rendezvous, but the loveliest and much needed at that time.

A week went by, after my interview with Dr. Segal at the Paediatric Research. I was at home, in a student housing 2329 Agronomy Place (1959-Sept.-1961 July), near the Campus. A very small, motel type accommodation at the back of a pasture on which cows were grazing. It was truly a countryside environment. We loved the place, our first home. I could walk to work each afternoon.

One morning the telephone rung. Joan, a most kind and gentle lady was calling from the Paediatric Research. She spoke slowly and clearly. She told me I got the position. I could start work the following Monday. I felt excited, she could not see my tears of joy. I went to work on my afternoon shift in the coffee shop. I could hardly wait for László to turn up for his afternoon snack. I told him I got a real research position. I never inquired about my pay. László did not ask me about it either. Somehow money for my work always relegated me into a subordinate position. I knew myself and I was raised to consider other aspects of importance, when I made significant decisions.

So, the most difficult years of adjustment to the new Canadian way of life at the bottom, where no experience was necessary, was over.

Dearest Kathryn and Ruthie, I feel that I earned to call myself really an experienced immigrant, albeit I would gladly not have experienced it. I learned a lot,

smiled often, cried in private, but now I felt somewhat integrated into the society of the New World, at a decent level; somewhat proportionate to my education.

A totally new chapter opened in my immigrant life when I reported to Dr. Sidney Segal for work. He welcomed me and took me around the laboratory. I was introduced to the office staff, three other research assistants, and 21 doctors, many of them were doing their paediatric internship training at the Institute. I was given a desk, signed the necessary papers. I was hired for an 8-month probationary period. The whole atmosphere delighted me. It was a professional treat for me, basically it was my environment.

We moved closer to work into a one-bedroom apartment at 1055 W. 12th Avenue. I furnished it with an elegant solid maple furniture. I felt settled, I had my own furniture. My home was extremely important for me at all times. I never stopped decorating, just like a bird feathering his nest. All my life I arranged and rearranged, improved and decorated my home with joy. I was very happy and well organized. My high school Latin helped me pick up the medical jargon quickly. In a few months, I was doing translation for emergency patients.

I became a team member in experiments with new-born rats, later on with new-born guinea pigs. I loved both animals, they were bred for research, clean and behaved well. I was doing tests, looking for neurological changes in their movement and their blood composition after being treated with different, mainly experimental drugs. I did the analysis of their blood and did the necessary testing of the changes in their neurological activities. Soon I was called upon to do statistical tests on the data, I have to say László was a big help in that. Medical research? It was a fascinating, but unknown territory for a forester engineer. But in Sopron we were taught to face the problems with self-confidence and perseverance. I read widely and asked for help when I needed it. I loved my assignments and tried to learn as much as I was able to do. My colleagues were very supportive and very helpful; some became good family friends. Dr. John Birback from Scotland was my volunteer English tutor. I appreciated all the help the good man John gave me. When we went on to take up László's post-doctoral position in the U.K., John knew we were going to attend the IX. International Botanical Congress that year in Edinburgh. He made us promise to visit his parents who were in retirement and had a home in town. We did, and we were received like close friends. His good father knew that postdoctoral students can always do with a little help. We protested but eventually had to accept a 5 pound bill from him, earmarked for the petrol on the way back to Bangor for our Volkswagen.

My position became permanent in paediatric research. After about three years in medical research, the question arose by my physician colleagues whether I

would consider to go to medical school. I was sure I would get all their help if I chose to go, but I was afraid and hesitant to start university all over again. I did not share this grand idea with László, I felt that my plans would interrupt his postdoctoral training in the U.K. But I never forgot the offer; it reinforced my self-confidence, and truly warmed my heart as a wonderful offer from friends.

László's doctorate research was progressing well. He was invited to Stanford in California to speak at a meeting. He wanted me to go with him. I was working, so I asked for a few days off work, immediately they gave me the whole week off. I sat in the first row, when László presented his first research work. It was not an easy assignment, every beginning is difficult. I suggested he should talk to me, if he felt pressure during his presentation. I tried to look relaxed and happy, hoping that my face shall inspire confidence. The idea worked. I discovered it, because he wanted me to be at the front row, at all times, at his many hundred presentations. This is how our life in Science started with us!

Stanford, in 1963 appealed to us and so did most of California. The Campus, was elegant, looked like a huge flowering garden, well taken care of. It heralded prosperity, a very inviting place.

I was earning over \$270 monthly in 1959. My salary was raised every year. I had four weeks paid holiday every July and had a pension plan, which was very unusual those days. I was willing to come to the lab at odd times, if my services were required, which happened quite often. But then I enjoyed extra freedom on my days off. The milieu was excellent in the laboratory, my work was progressing well, and I was eager to learn anything. After a few months I had no fear, felt comfortable even in the dissecting room.



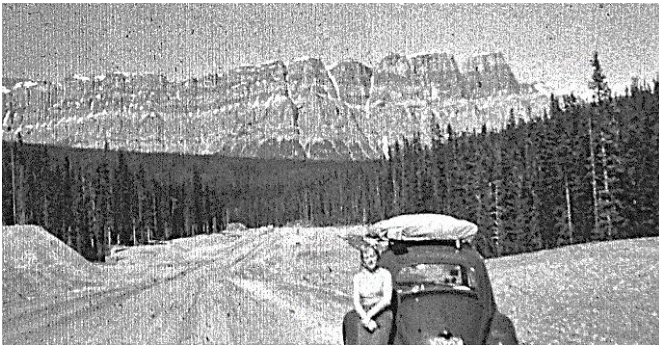
Vancouver downtown 2015.

These were the years of the polio. I took part in the tests of patients' blood-oxygen saturation. It was a very crucial test for these patients. They could not breathe, so the iron-lung took over the function of the lung. In 1963, I became a Canadian Citizen. Dr. Segal was my guarantor. In the lab I was celebrated for the occasion with a big party. They were wonderful people, compassionate, professional and very humane. I spent 5 memorable years in Dr. Segal's research laboratory, happy and successful. The memory of these happy years surrounded me all my life.



Mobility at last

By 1958 we had saved enough money for a used Morris Minor. It was a very bad deal, but served the purpose of learning to drive, and for László, to gain familiarity with a “car”. He put what he learnt on the Moris Minor to good use later when we owned better cars and took long trips on very bad roads far from the usual services. By 1960 we had enough of the Morris, and saved up enough money for a new green Volkswagen Beetle (\$850). This gave us much needed reliable mobility. Every July I took my holiday, and we travelled on a budget of one dollar a day plus gas: camping expedition into the Rockies. Being foresters and coming from a small, densely populated country, roaming freely over the vast and beautiful natural landscape of British Columbia on the way to and from our destinations in the Rockies made our holidays a truly unique experience. Camping opened a door for us onto the magical, astonishingly beautifully vistas of virgin forests, up to the timberline of the rugged high mountains, silvery waterfalls, fast flowing rivers, emerald blue lakes. We found almost fearless wide life around roads, campsites and even within the towns. All delighted us; we were young in love. I remember most the delightful evenings at the campfire, the cold nights huddled together in tents, solitary, all over the Rockies, in almost empty campsites. People had not yet discover the delight of camping, so we never faced crowds in the National Parks.



I am sitting on the fender at our overloaded Volkswagen in Banff National Park in 1960. In background: Mount Eisenhower. Approaching from Yoho National Park, long sections of the road were loose gravel and mud.

We travelled on bad roads, the paved highway system was just being developed in the interior under the flamboyant “Flying” Phil Gaglardi, the Highway Minister, who had no concept of the impossible. Travelling was slow and full of adventure. One day driving up in the Frazer Canyon from Hope, we reached a section of Trans-Canada highway not much more than a wilderness track, carved into the steep unstable slope. Flagmen directed the traffic. The man would signal when he decided no imminent danger of slides from the upper

slope which frequently blocked the highway. We trusted the flagman and sped through the open section.

Those were magnificent, adventure filled days. We were alone, young, and ready to take on nature in long hikes in remote places. We wandered around for days by ourselves, admiring this gleaming wonderland of British Columbia. Most of the time we met no one outside the camps some distance away on the



trail. We felt safe. László had his Winchester with him. In those early days it was legal to possess a gun in the parks, only the bridge had to be under lock by a light wire seal installed at the park entrance.

Martha feeding chipmunks at Moraine Lake Banff National Park 1968. The Ten Peaks in background.

It was a wonderful, intimate, spiritual experience for me to be back in an environment which I experienced growing up in Székelyföld. I felt at home, and the stillness of the forest overcame me. I could sit on the lichen and moss-covered rocks with white mushrooms here and there giving décor for the heavy moss cover under the spruce trees near the timber line.



On the shore of Lake Okanagan in British Columbia 1960.



Camping in the Okanagan near Peachland. I am cooking dinner...



... László studied for his comprehensive 1960.

Going farther up the trail we got within sight of the dripping icicles on the edge of the glacier ice. I still remember the splendour of the silver shine of the ice. The glacier melted into crystal clear water and created a small lake. I crawled over the huge colourful boulders and observed the gracefully swimming trout. Within minutes, birds, chipmunks, and a marmot appeared among the rocks. These creatures did not fear me. No photograph could capture this grandeur

and lavishly endowed diversity of forms, sounds and lights. I believe that Moraine Lake is the living cathedral of my spirit.

Throughout the decades we revisited these places which I consider my own art gallery. Unfortunately, as years went by, I could see the roads improved into multi-lane highways, tourist crowds grew ever bigger, the small camp sites disappeared, and mega commercialism had taken roots, slowly making low-budget tourists, like we used to be, priced out from recreational use of the parks.

One afternoon at Headwaters Lake in the Okanagan I decided to try fishing, perhaps 10 meters from our tent. I sat in the rented boat and caught about 6 trout in rapid succession. Most wiggled free from my hook, but four ended up in my bag for our evening campfire barbeque. My fishing equipment was rather primitive. I used a bent pin for hook, a pink sewing-tread, and worms for bait, which I picked on shore under the stunted aspens nearby. The trout were visible as they elegantly swam about in search of food, like co-ordinated swimmers, just a few inches from the surface in the perfectly clear, ice-cold water, ready to strike the bait as soon as it touched water. The colour pattern gave them away as rainbow trout. I cannot paint, but my memory saved the sight and kept all of these lovely creatures in full colour. How lucky I was to experience those happy, wonderful days in the Okanagan!



Fishing camp on the shore of Headwaters Lake 1250 meters above sea level. a short distance from Peachland. We did much fishing and identified plant species during our stay. László set up a tent for the night right on the open lake shore with unobstructed view to the far shores. The next morning we found ourselves in the spruce forest with no lake in sight. While we slept one of the forested floating islands was blown out to shore. Within hours the wind direction changed

and the island started to float out to the lake assuming one of its random positions.

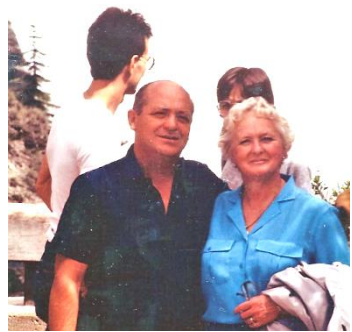
On some other visits we splurged and rented a cabin for 12 dollars a night at the foot of Mt. Edith Cavell. What a memorable night it was. As the sun was setting, it painted the glaciers pink, then silver and orange. Slowly the melting, transparent, variably shaped icicles small and large started to play their eerie concert that echoed on the facing rock wall; then the loud, sharp cracking and crashing sound was absorbed into the blue, cold water. The icicles appeared to be dancing with the wind rolling off the large glacial surface. I experienced a spectrum of tones, alternating, as crystal clear timbres, vibrating the air. It is easiest for me to characterise the total effect as concert by wind and ice, sometimes magnified in the echoes around me. Was it real? To me it was, an ice-

music, the wind doing the directing. It was my first ice-music experience. It mesmerised me, standing outside the wooden cabin with László. He heard it that way too. It remained with me as a life-time experience, an ice concert in sun-painted setting. Just recently I watched, on television, a musician demonstrating ice-music on Greenland, playing on blocks of thick, very old ice. It was a wonderful reminder of my own experience from the Rockies. The 12 dollar per night cabin turned out to be our first row seat in nature's ice-concert. The memories remain, even though the cabins are no longer standing. Nature's ice

concerts at Mt. Edith Cavell surely will go that way, if has not already in the current climate warming cycle.

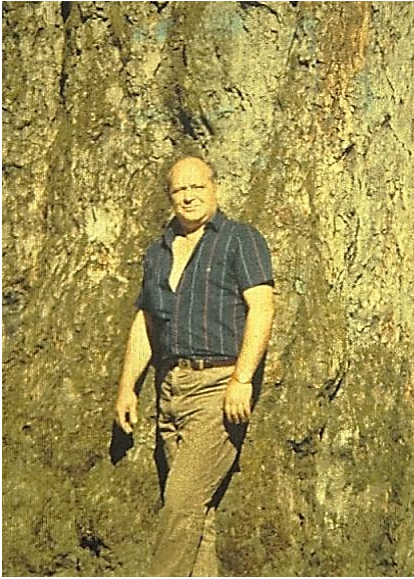
Last time we visited the Rockies was twenty or so years ago, we had my youngest brother Attila with us, a for-ester himself on his first visit over-seas. We travelled by air from London to Calgary then continued by rented car on the first class highways from Calgary through the Rockies to Long Beach at Port Tofino on Vancouver Island. Attila had the time of his life, and on several occasion was over-whelmed by joy. I never saw Attila again.

With Attila with at Morain Lake, Banff National park. 1980.



My brother Attila visited us in the late 1980s. He came with us on field research in the Rockies and on Vancouver Island. The picture was taken at the overlook at Payto Lake, Banff National Park.

This highly emotional tour for him culminated when he saw the gigantic Douglas-firs, Red Cedars, and Hemlock tress of unimaginable size in Cathedral



Grow at Port Alberni on Vancouver Island. We continued from there to see the white eagles circling in large number over the Bay at Port Tofino. We visited the unique coastal Sitka Spruce ecosystem at Long Beach nearby – and all these under clear skies in marvellous sunshine. He kept telling me how much he appreciated the two weeks he spent on the road with us in the Canadian forests. It was my special time to be with my “baby” brother.

My brother Attila, the forester, with us in Cathedral Grow on Vancouver Island. Having been used to trees of in the Hungarian forest, he was overwhelmed by emotion to se this giant Douglas fir.

At Angel glacier in Jasper National Park 1970s.

I was 15 when I first read a book in Hungarian about Death Valley, the desert basin in Eastern California. I have learned that the deepest basin in the state is almost 100 meters below sea level, the day temperature can reach +56°C. The local names such the Devil’s Cornfield and Furnace Creek, and the colourful history intrigued me. I dreamed of visiting Death Valley one day.



My chance came in July 1962. We packed up our Volkswagen for camping and drove to Bakersfield in California. From there we took aim at Death Valley on the shortest route. The next day we arrived in scaring heat around noon. It felt strange to be in this unforgiving environment which not just looked, but also felt hot at every breath I took. One should not tour Death Valley in July. We weathered it, but it was burning hot, a unique experience to be high up on the pass at Pyramid mountain and watch over the exquisite and rare kaleidoscope of colours down in the dry valley. We stopped for gas and final supplies before

descending further into the valley. The attendant started hosing down the hot tires, filled our fuel tank, and cautioned us not to wonder off the road, and if in trouble wait at the car for help. As I stepped out of the car a lively, small snake appeared with yellow bends on his body, winding up for water. We ate the melon for lunch, then placed the peel on the ground, some distance from us. Within seconds birds started to appear, fighting for the pieces of the juicy peel. It was there that we spotted a huge rattlesnake. No birds were in sight before we placed the peel down. I did not know that birds have the canning ability in the desert to discover available sources of moisture so readily.



The Devil's Cornfield with the Amagosa Mountains in background, Death Valley National Park.

We started our descent. At the low point on the highway at Devil's Cornfield the heat became barely tolerable, the air burned our throat.

We still made some

stops to photograph the sparkling crystallized salt, where rare salt tolerant plants created a unique landscape. By the time we

reached to turn-off to

Scotty's Castle, we be-

came concerned

enough to leave the

Valley at the best speed

the Volkswagen could

master uphill on the

long incline to Daylight

pass in the direction of

Ghost Town. It used to

be an active mining set-

tlement, I felt that for

the crumbling buildings

and surrounding geo-

graphical formations

"Ghost Town" was a

very proper name.



On one of the trips in the States we took a side trip to Salt Lake in Utah, and tested its buoyancy. I decided we leave bathing in that lake to others.

Every summer we packed our car and took off for camping vacations. They were glorious days, I loved the endless discoveries throughout Cordilleran Canada and the United States. I had four weeks paid holiday in July. We left Vancouver, full of plans and always camped on the way.



Four degrees and the World

In 1958 we both received a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry Science at the University of British Columbia. While I was working at different jobs, László was offered a Canadian National Research Council fellowship in Ecology which made it possible for him to continue in Graduate School for a Master of Science Degree 1961.



Four degrees done, but not yet ready to settle into a paying job.

I was happy for his successes, and looked forward to settle down somewhere and start a family. While I was happily contemplating of settling down, László was offered the possibility of yet another National Research Council fellowship to do a Ph.D. research in forest ecology,

at U.B.C under Professor Vladimir J. Krajina in the Botany Department. I knew that it would involve another 2-3 years of study. He was 29, I wanted him to get a job, settle down and have time for me and friends. This was a serious few months in my life. For weeks I was looking for a future for myself. I loved my medical research position, I seriously considered going to medical school, believing in my colleagues inspiration and offered help. I had nobody to discuss the problem with, but at some points I seriously felt to create my own future and professional identity. I almost left László, but discovered that unfortunately I do not have a selfish gene. Obviously my love for László was a huge factor. These were difficult times. Eventually, I could not stand in the way of László's unique opportunity to prepare for a academic career in his field of science. His financial support continued, he worked very hard and began to build a reputation as a scientist. He received a Ph.D. in 1964 after which we faced a decision. What to do next? A paying job or further study.

The spring of 1964 arrived in Vancouver, with all the glorious flowers in the English style gardens all over the city. László was nearing the end of his doctorate dissertation, I was in every sentence of his text, either helping with the research, collecting data, compiling tables or just proof reading it.

It was an exciting time, but not without my worries about the future. Around March an interesting and very promising offer came for a NATO Science Fellowship for Postdoctoral Research in quantitative ecology. The location was not restricted. The fellowship included his travelling expenses and comfortable sum for rental and food expenses. We did not have the best communication; I was looking for my professional advancement. He took the offer. One day he arrived home and asked me with a wide grin: *Márti howá akarsz nászútra menni? Most mehetünk majd, hogy akárhová. –Márta where would you like to go on a honey-moon, we can go almost anywhere.* For a moment I thought it was a joke, but it was a very real proposition. He as a post doctorate researcher joined Professor Peter Greig-Smith's quantitative ecology group at the University College of North Wales in Bangor, U.K.

It was an exciting time with a lot of organizing to do. I gave notice at my work, everybody was happy for me and László. Truly this was the greatest opportunity for a Hungarian immigrant forester, being in Canada only for 6 years. His doctorate thesis was very well received, and his research work was advanced and outstanding. He was prepared for a research position, anywhere in the world. It was a most joyful feeling of being acknowledged and a high honour to be chosen. I always felt that half of his degrees belonged to me. My steady support of six years and his hard work paid off.

I left my research position with a guarantee that anytime I could return if I wanted to. I received a lovely reference letter. Dr. S. Segal wrote: ... *"Marta was given a great deal of responsibility, which she used to the limit, doing her job impeccably well"*... truly I felt sad to leave. I had over 5 wonderful years. I learned and enjoyed a great deal of medical science, met a number of truly good friends.

By early April of 1964 all arrangements were completed and we were off, back to Europe for one or more years. We had three weeks for our delayed honeymoon, after seven years of marriage, in Paris.

I saved sufficient money to order a new Volkswagen in Vancouver (\$850), for pickup at the factory of Wolfsburg in Germany. I chose Paris to start our great self-propelled adventure for a real honeymoon which we could not have seven years ago. We spent a glorious three weeks of springtime in Paris. We rented a hotel room, near the Eiffel Tower, and the very next morning we went up to view the city. Clearly visible signs warned us to watch out for the pickpockets.



We settled into the Hotel Eiffel Seine, just a short walk from the Eiffel Tower. Right: At the Basilique du Sacré Coeur 1964.



On Montmartre 1964. Montmartre street artist's portrait of Martha in charcoal. 1975.

Paris has the typical layout of large European cities which they acquired in the late 19th Century. The masterminds of design probably intended to optimise access between points on foot by the radial and circular arrangement of roads. Walking is by taking the hypotenuse, rather than going around blocks. But what does such a design do to modern surface transportation? When I think of the

traffic at the focal points where radial roads meet, I see a great chaos. We quickly settled into the routine of visiting museums, galleries and famous landmarks. I spent countless hours at the Louvre and the Orangerie Museum trying to absorb by my senses as much of the classics as I possibly could. I still see in my mind Leonardo de Vinci's Mona Lisa, but I hurried to marvel at Monet's masterpieces, his creations are still one of my favourite, among the impressionist. On most days we just roamed by instinct during the day, enjoying the unique landmarks of Paris and in the late afternoon such parts of the city as Montmartre with its famous Moulin Rouge.

The streets of Montmartre were filled with artists, doing portraits, on request. It was a happy place, with a truly artistic milieu. One evening we tested some high spirited places, such as the Moulin Rouge's late evening program, the home of the can-can. These unknown and new entertainments for us, represented the passionate, vivacious, sexually driven night life of Paris, with lots of skin. Reaching high above all these, a white domed Basilique du Sacré Coeur, looking solid and elegant, proclaim God's presence, exactly as I learned during my high school French lessons.

I very much enjoyed the walk on Champs Elysé at night. Once we took a stamp-size table at a sidewalk coffee, a truly Parisian experience. It was a unique service. We paid with a bill to the waiter, he never returned with the change; simply disappeared. Upon complaining I was told that he did not work there. My high school French could not handle such situation. It was a good lesson. Only two kilometres is the distance between the Arc de Triomphe and Concord. The walk is well worth the time on the much noted, wide street, just to get the feel of Paris. My favourite was the Notre Dame Cathedral, with its a spectacular Gothic complexities. I spent many hours there, several times. Sitting inside this spectacular cathedral left a unique and memorable impression, a church of the past centuries coronations and a spiritual home of the French people and those, who love the Gothic architecture. I often think of the spectacular rose windows. Once, at my visit the sun light filtered true the painted panels of these beautiful windows, scattered on the walls of the cathedral, creating a surreal, inspiring colour unity. The amalgamation of colours well reflect the intensity of faith which inspired the artists of this 12th and 13th Century creation. It is a remarkable, giant house of God. I certainly felt privileged to be there. Take your time visiting, it is a treasury of Gothic arts.

We took a daytrip to visit the Palace of Versailles, the grandest, and most luxurious palace, built in 16th Century. Its architecture, sculptures, paintings and tapestry, including the famous garden around it, represent an exaltation of elegance, boundless energy and the utmost virtuosity of the Baroque style. I had

a grand time in the portrait room, looking at the famous faces of the 19th Century, idealised by the artist, probably to please his clients. To me, most of their main features, their nose and eyes, looked very much alike. I wondered about the basic model. Luckily, I did not need to identify anybody.

The Hall of Mirrors, perhaps the most unusual hall, must have represented a revolutionary idea in architecture. Instead of windows, mirrors cover the walls. I could not escape my own image, surrounding me at all times. It was too much for me.

The Palace of Versailles reminded me of how politicians mind can go astray among the luxuries of the environment. I knew that in one of its rooms, the Trianon Treaty was signed, in 1919. It not just dismembered the territory and populations of entire nation states, such as in the case of Hungary, but created agglomerate states of different ethnic populations, such as Romania and the now defunct Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. No wonder the peace all hoped for after the treaty did not last long. Millions of Hungarians, in large blocks, were forced under the rule of Hungarian-hater ultra-chauvinist regimes. My homeland Transylvania and millions of my people, the Székelys and Hungarians, were thrown under such a rule within the enlarged boundaries of Romania.



Versailles Palace and the Trianon Palace where the 1919 and 1921 treaties dismembered so many nation states and rearranged them into conglomerates. My Székely nation is among the victims.

In May 1964 we crossed the La Manche Channel to Britain at Calais. On the crossing, the water was very rough, which made the white cliffs of Dover an even more inviting shore. This time, we drove around London, and headed directly to Bangor, our destination in Wales. The picturesque greenness of the country side with grazing white sheep were all around us on the road, as we drove nearer to Bangor on the cold, rainy day. It felt as if we missed summer altogether. Judged by the daily weather it proved to be a true impression.

Wales has a fascinating history, the population is composed of well-experienced proud people of Celtic origin who settled the region around 500 B.C. The Romans occupied the land and kept the people under harsh control from the 5th till the 11th Century. After the end as a Roman domain, Wales was under

constant pressure from the Anglo-Saxons. They fought continuously for independence. The wish for independence and their national pride is an important marker of the Welsh people. Their ages-long resistance is truly admirable! There are only about three million Welsh people, 5% of the total population of Britain, and perhaps close to a million of them speak the ancient Celtic language. After centuries of fighting for independence, in 1997, Welsh voted to be governed by an Assembly in Cardiff.

Bangor, the city we headed to, is a small city on the mainland at Menai Strait. It is one of the oldest, monastic settlements, started in 525 A.D. The local Cathedral was built in 548 A.D. The city's activities are concentrated around the University College of North Wales. Its foundations, laid in 1907, was formally opened by King George V. We were to spend an entire year at the College in Professor Peter Greig-Smith's quantitative ecology lab.

The city did not have the kind of housing we wanted to rent at a price we were willing to pay. We located a small place on the Island of Anglesey, just across from the bay by Bangor. It was a delightful old village with the longest name. When I read the name I thought of the famous question of a Shakespeare's play: What is in a name? So, here is the total name and its meaning:

Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychnyrndrobbwillllandysilogogoch

Translated:

Church of St. Mary in a hollow of white hazel, near to a rapid whirl pool and to St. Tysillio's Church, near to a red cave.

Luckily, the short form Llanfair P.G. or Llanfer P.G. is sufficient to identify the village on the Isle of Anglesey, not far from the Menai Bridge which connects the Island to Bangor. It was in the village of Llanfair P.G. where we rented accommodation for one year.

Our home was a former office, what they called "surgery", of Lesley Jones, the good village physician, who just retired from practice. It had a small sitting-room, a tiny sleeping room, tea-kitchen and a shower with a toilet. No heating, except a small portable electric box. The floor was covered with several layers of Persian carpet, to keep it warm. It did not do it very well. The whole unit was cold and moist most of the time. The weather, a typical costal type, drizzled almost each day, we seldom saw the sun. I missed sunshine, when the mist cleared off Snowdonia mountain, the sun appeared, I was amazed by the greenness of the hills and the beauty of the Mountains.

Renting a recently retired physician's office we had visitors almost daily, unannounced; Dr. Leslie Jones's patients, whom he encouraged while in practice, to enter without first knocking on the door. It was our entertainment almost daily.

A few came unaware that the doctor retired and just casually walked in, looking for help. Very soon we become known by the locals. The owners were friendly, a wonderful Welsh gentleman and a pretentious English lady, both over 70 years of age. They had a local maid, Lydia. She did our laundry too and cleaning the place once a week. All by hand.

Being near the sea, the village was a very windy place. The temperature hovered around 10 °C. Lydia was hanging the laundry outside, the heavy linens and towels to dry. No washing machine or dryer was in the house. Her hands were blue, her nose red, and she looked cold and freezing; her overall image right out of Dicken's novel. One day I was sitting inside with my portable electric heater at my side. There was Lydia a short distance from the window doing her chores. What I did must have been a first time in her service: I invited her in for a cup of hot tea, to warm-up. She hesitated, but finally she entered and shared a quick tea with me. Later on the day, the landlady came to visit, she told me that in our circles we should not share tea with the maid! She was surprised when I told her such minor gesture is in no way goes against our Canadian norms. A few days later László was coming home from the university and on the way he spotted Lydia with a heavy baskets of vegetable walking on the side of the road, coming from the market. He stopped and picked her up to give her a ride to the house. Our actions spread in the village very fast.

I have to share the story of a hat. We all know that wearing a hat in England is a must, or used to be on certain occasions. I did not own one. My landlady learned that I was invited to the same lady's club for tea, a the wife of university professor. She suggested to me to visit her hat gallery in her wardrobe. I went for a visit, but I knew full well that I am not going to wear any fruit-plate, or flower bouquet on my head. She had a roomful of exquisite collection. I complimented on the variations, as I was having problems trying them on. I finally told her that I appreciate her offer, but I found none comfortable, and in any case as my hair is natural blond, I should not cover it. She was a caring lady, very helpful and kind, she was not ready to face the need to change her ways. She perhaps thought that she ought to teach proper English habits to someone from a far-away Dominion. I learned much from her, and we managed an excellent relationship. Located in the middle of this small village, everybody knew us and in time we earned the peoples greetings with a friendly smile.

I visited the well-known weaving-mills in the hills and did not stop enjoying the rich original creations from the famous Welsh wool. We regularly attended the village markets where one finds anything from antiques in sterling silver to special types of local cheddar cheese, which we both enjoyed. Of all things, we always ended up buying a piece of Welsh blood pudding, the kind László liked. I admired the finest collection of old sterling silver plates, bowls. I got a pair of candle-holders from the eighteen century.

Near Caernarvon within easy driving distance are the ruins of the Roman forth of Segontium, dating back to about 75 A.D. Not far, further down to the sea-shore, is located the Lower Roman Fort, from 350 A.D. The ruins provide a clear view of the of Menai Strait and Anglesey, which is a testimonial to its military importance.

I participated in László's project, working on the field research among the sand dunes of Newborough Warren on the Isle of Anglesey. It took about six weeks of hard field research. It was rather nice to be out on the sand dunes on days in sunshine with moderate winds to keep the insects down. But to our detriment, the drizzling rain, cool temperatures, and frequent gale-force winds were the norm. When the winds died down, the sand flies and horseflies appeared all at once in massive numbers, making the field work impossible.

The dune system lies directly to west of the Roman forth Segontium on the other side of Menai Strait. Doing the literature research I came across Latin text about Segontium, but the writer Plinius does not mention the sand dunes on the opposite side, a mere 4 kilometres away. It could be seen clearly in good weather. I translated and searched the literature, found that the sands of Newborough Warren were brought up to shore by the sea current and blown inland by winds more than a 1000 years after the Romans left the forth. Not mentioning the sand dunes was not an oversight from Plinius. Our work was published in 1965. It became an ISI Citation Classic. I enjoyed every moment of participation in the preparation of this significant paper. It was a first opportunity to exercise my secondary school Latin in a scientific project. My discovery is noted in the ISI citation article.

Very close to Llanfair P.G. is Caer Seiont, Caernarfon Castle, one of the famous coastal fortifications of Great Britain. It occupies about 3 acres. The walls are 7 to 9 feet thick and unusually high. The castle's construction began in 1283 under Edward I. The walls enclose a prowling group of partially reconstructed buildings. The castle is one of the main local attraction for visiting tourists for yet another reason. It is the place of great pomp and ceremony during confirmation by the ruling monarch of the first born royal son who bears the title of "Prince of Wales".

In February of 1965 I decided to go a two-week visit to Hungary the first visit since I left the country in 1956. I booked a return train trip from North Wales to Budapest. A very long trip on train, but turned out to be quite comfortable on first class. I was excited to see my family after nine years. I could not believe that I returned, I was home again. All-in-all we had a very emotional reunion and a most memorable time together. My brothers grew up, they were boys,

when I left. I did not know at first how to relate to them. There were so many questions to ask and so many stories to tell. Finally I could tell my family about our way of life, and our plans for the future.

It was a very quiet stay, the Soviets still occupied the country and the communist government ruled with an iron hand. I left illegally in 1956, I had to keep a low profile not to attract any attention. I spent my time at home, with the family, except for the daily obligatory reporting as visitor alien in person to the police.

My visitor permit expired after two weeks, I had an emotional farewell with family members at the Guar East in Budapest, boarded the train crying and began the return trip to Holyhead, the nearest station to LLanfair P.G. I must complement the English train service. They literally guarded me, a lady travelling alone. It was a fabulous treat.

In a few days after my return, we were off in our Volkswagen to attend the 10th International Botanical Congress in Edinburgh, Scotland. We took a friend, Pál Juhász-Nagy, with us. Pali, as we called him, was on the British Council's research fellowship in Bangor from Hungary. A true polyhistor, Pali was the best tour-guide and a delightful company. On the way up toward Scotland, we visited historic sites, and spent some time at the famous Durham Cathedral. It is an ancient building with an exterior not unique, but colour windows are spectacular. It was well worth the visit.

The city of Edinburg looked unique, with its famous castle on top of an ancient volcanic outcrop. With dark rainclouds behind it, the sight looking up from Princess street brought to my mind the gloomy, myth laden ballads of Scottish history. The people of the city celebrated some festival, perhaps the highland games, or something of the sort. They extended the rich cultural programs and offered it for the members of the Botanical Congress. It was the first time for me to watch a glorious Scottish-pipe marching band or to see folk dances by a lovely, vivacious Scottish ensemble. I felt the pride in both, but I cannot say that I reached the level that I could understand and interpret them. But I felt enriched by the experience. We had a good time at the Congress, met many old friends from Hungary, Canada and the USA. We gathered much experience from which we benefited on future occasions.

The wife of one of our former professors from U.B.C., Mrs. T.M.C. Taylor, asked me to be her sightseeing companion in and around the city. We did great shopping on Princess street, the showcase of the famous and wonderful Scottish woollens. All were well above my purse, but I had a grand time, just looking and chatting. The mohair felt soft and was excellent quality. I am a first class knitter, there I felt the real mohair between my fingers. Together we also visited

the famous crystal and china museums, and ended the day with a lovely dinner in a restaurant in full sight of the misty castle on Princes Street

We had an option to stay in Wales for another year or two, but I was expecting a baby and László had an offer of assistant professorship as of July 1, 1965, in botany from the University of Western Ontario in London, Canada. It was an opportune time to return home to Canada and settle down after the long student years, and a year in Europe. We never been to Ontario before. It was a new venture waiting for us.



At home in London in with László's maternal nephew Gáspár (Gazsi) Molnár and Gazsi's wife Éva 1975

We booked a cruise from Liverpool to Montreal, bringing our car and some books with us. We were by that time seasoned seafarers and knew how to make it a wonderful early June crossing. I felt happy and enjoyed the activities. Af-

ternoon tea time with classical music, formal dinners, evening dances, all appealed to me. I had a grand time, but cruising is my favourite holiday, it is designed for women. We disembarked in Montreal, spent a lovely week visiting László's cousin Gazsi and his wife Éva. We were just one good day drive from London on the grand, new freeway 401.

Mózes I. k. 11. fejezetének elbeszélése szerint Noé utódai, akik még mind egy nyelvet beszéltek, Sineír földjére mentek és ott egy várost, meg egy tornyot akartak építeni, amelynek csúcsa az égig érjen. Isten azonban megghiúsította törekvésüket és megbüntette elbizakodottságukat azáltal, hogy összezavarta nyelvüket, úgyhogy nem értették meg egymást és elszéledtek a földön.

Genesis 11:1-9

River on Arbour Glen Crescent. I found part-time position in the Herbarium, and worked there until the end of November. My pregnancy was going well. I

Our 'secret' language

Finding accommodation in London was not a problem. After a couple of days looking, we decided on a new two-bedroom apartment at a good location by the Thames

gave birth to a lovely, healthy little girl, Martha Barbara, on the 3rd of January, 1966. She was a beautiful baby. Holding her made me the happiest mommy and gave me a new feeling of intimacy, I cannot express in words. A whole new life opened for me. I became a mother of a girl I wanted in my dreams. She was perfect, with large, attentive eyes, and 10 miraculous little fingers and 10 perfect toes. All of us mothers count them with excitement and love. Hers was not an easy birth, but László was a good nurse, and I came out of the after effects sooner than predicted. He gave a bath every evening for his Mártika “arany csillag”, the name by which we referred to her. Mártika is diminutive for Martha and “arany csillag” is metaphor, expressing her exceptionality (a golden star) with feelings of warmth.

I did not know anybody, we were newcomers in London. She is our only child. We followed the instruction of Dr. Benjamin Spock, but increasingly my own instinct, in taking care of baby. I missed my mother; she was so far away. No telephone, the letters took 12-14 days, both of us wrote a lot. In spite of the snow and cold of winter, bundled up, we went outside for a short time. Our home was comfortable. The evenings were special, family times. László gave a bath to our baby each night, carefully following Dr Spock’s instruction. We always talked in Hungarian to be sure that Martha would master the language at an early age and use it without inhibitions.





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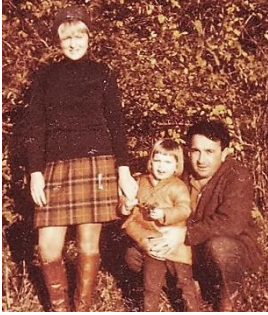


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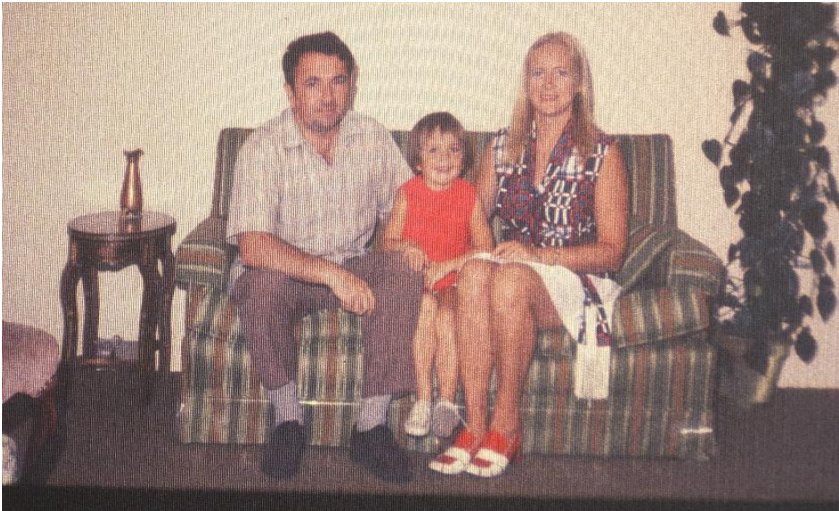




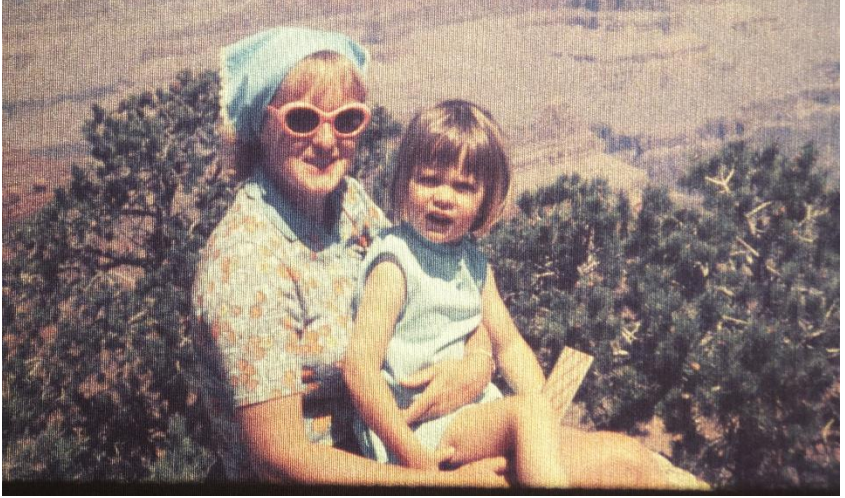
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Pictures 1 to 8. Martha growing up; the early years. From the time of gaining mobility, she liked to be outdoors. She was picking blueberries with me and chanterelles at age three in the Boreal forest at Elk Lake in Northern Ontario. She came with us on field trips, such as in the last picture taken at the Grand Canyon 1971.



In our living room at an apartment complex on Platts Lane 1968, 1969.

Martha was a good eater, so László got up in the early hours to change, feed and cuddle her, before he went to work. I missed my mother's presence. I wished she would see Mártika, and to have her advice and share our love.

I decided not to go back to work, raise my daughter myself. She was my happy company and my complete world. I talked and sung to her a great deal, she

enjoyed both. I was lucky to watch her thousand tiny changes as she developed. I often wondered about the fast progression inside her little head. Those happy days are still with me, she did something new every day and being with her convinced me it was a good decision not to take on a regular job. I did not have any choice, Ontario, or London did not have any professional day-care, or nursery those days.

I had some spare time. I knitted a great deal. Martha had the richest jackets, bonnets and boots collection. I created several petit point pictures, in the evenings I helped László in matters relating to his research. Martha grew, she began crawling early, and she loved discovery. She disliked the play-pen, screamed the second I put her in, stopped the minute I got her out. So, I let her roam freely, it was the best occasion to play together. She was about 7-8 months old, when one morning she crawled to the open magazine I left on the floor. She was intrigued by the picture of her favourite cookies, but she could not pick up any, and so licked the page and she started to cry.

Martha was the centre of my life. I truly was a happy mother, I loved her company, and now looking back over five decades, I feel those were the best days of my life. Her fast growing activities renewed and nourished my love and created a never ending stimulus to make every day the best for her and me. We always spoke in Hungarian. I was my own council and knew that I have to lay a solid linguistic foundation for Martha in the language which I possess at the best literate level of grammar and vocabulary. I can express thoughts precisely, emotional highs and lows appropriately, read stories fluently, impart the essentials of my culture in their full richness, express my moral values clearly, and play with words easily and freely. For me this was Hungarian, not English. I rejected as a misconception the idea that possession of a language is to the detriment of another to be learnt, and therefore I viewed the practice of teaching the child the language as important rather than mothering where my linguistic skills were weakest. To further Martha's power of expression, every day I told her stories, mainly about nature, rarely about peoples. We took long walks, along the river, and we conversed endlessly. We spoke Hungarian at all times, it was and still is a natural way for us. Martha learnt English as any other kid in an English dominated language environment. We kept Hungarian as a family language and shifted into English if circumstances required. I am proud that I did it my way. I just followed my path, with determination.

I value my mother tongue, and I considered it my most valuable inheritance, a pillar of my identity. I passed it on to my daughter. It is not only a language, but it is the only perfect tool and the easiest mode for me to speak as a mother. I feel an instant and happy connection. Until she was about 4, she thought that Hungarian was our secret, family language. The first time I took her to Hungary

she was totally surprised: *Anyu, ballottad, mindenki a mi nyelvünket beszéli? -Mommy did you hear, everybody speaks our language.* -

It is well known that children of immigrant parents have a difficult time integrating into two parallel societies, the Canadian outside and the ethnic in the home. Often they plead with their parents to be like those on the outside. They want to part with the ethnic habitude because they do not want to be different. An incident, albeit rather minor, illustrates the point. Martha decided that she will be picking strawberries on the nearby farm in the company of some school friends, to earn money. I packed her lunch for the day. I used my homemade rye bread, with some slices of salami and fresh green peppers. Today a rye-bread salami sandwich would not be unusual. In those days such a sandwich caught the eye of the children, who had exclusively a Canadian culinary experience. Surely her awful looking bread invited sarcasm intended to demean. She arrived home around six o'clock, looking upset, the rye bread sandwich untouched. I felt awful. She did not eat all day. She felt humiliated and gave me a definite order for another kind packed lunch. She did not want to be seen different.

In later years she realized that speaking another language is special; it widens one's cultural horizon, nourishes the intellect, and promotes feelings of empathy. I see that plenty of my tradition has been woven into the lives of her own daughters, Kathryn and Ruth. These girls are proud of their ancestral tradition, no longer inhibited expressing their individuality. But society has changed much since those early years. Multiculturalism is enshrined in an idea and practice as a distinctively Canadian trait. I secretly feel rewarded by the hidden compliment.



Left: In London 1971. Middle: With the playmates in Bayfield on Lake Huron 1974. Right: At uncle Árpád's cottage on Green Lake, Wisconsin 1975.



On Ala Moana beach in Honolulu 1976. In my garden on Cottonwood street, London 1976.



In Stanley Park, Vancouver 1979.



On a day excursion with János Podani and his wife Klári Kontra in Rondeau Provincial Park. János was working on his Ph.D. degree in László's lab at Western, 1982.



With my daughter taken at our Richmond Street home in London the early 1990s. With Martha at their home in Apr 2005.

The years have flown away mighty fast since 1966. The world has changed, We changed, but we kept our “secret” language, called Magyar, as the family language. I wanted Martha to know me as I am and know the culture in which I grew up. I fully realize that perhaps my action may have appeared to others as somewhat selfish, after all Martha is a born Canadian. I disagree with stamping my action as selfishness.. I hold it an absolute that teaching my child my mother tongue cannot be a selfish act. Since Magyar is different from the majority language, I consider handing it down to my daughter a most valuable practical present in this Canadian Babylon of multiculturalism.



Father and Daughter

I paid special attention to the precious relationship which Martha should have with her father. It happened that way. The photograph on the left shows this. Their relationship is a very special respectful intimacy, which has grown with the advancing years and created many happy and memorable moments for both.

I taught Martha from the very beginning to call László Apu, and made her conscious of this very special way of saying “father” in Hungarian. I recall her waiting with me at the apartment door inside, listening to the sound of László’s steps in the corridor coming home from work. She mastered to recognise the sounds very quickly and started crawling closer to the door saying Apu, Apu, pushing her little head against it in excitement. I had to remind László from inside the apartment to open the door with care, because she was on her fours, waiting. She jumped up to his arms, with a hug and a kiss and big, happy word Apu. What a glorious homecoming! She is now 50, but her love grew and became deeper and more caring. I know that her love is more precious now for

László, than ever was, and it is deepening with the years. I am very happy for both.

Martha and I often spent time together drawing images of animals or flowers. She was interested and quickly became good at it. We sang, danced together and played games. Perhaps all this contributed and inspired her to compose wonderful poems. Each creation by her was a special gift to me. She loved travelling, especially camping; she was ready to go anywhere, anytime on short notice. For years she kept her overnight bag under her bed, ready to be packed for the next trip.

We spent much time camping; she helped to put up camp, did chores while in camp and helped to pack up. We treasured her company. I knew that she felt lonely often, having no relatives, brothers or sisters, but I understood her feeling well, I missed my family also. She got a German shepherd puppy on her 10th birthday, named Betyár who became a family member, much loved and spoiled. She adored Martha, they spent many hours playing.





“March” -- fourth grade school assignment for Martha in 1977. She received 5/5 for it.

Needless to say that wherever we travelled, Martha was coming with us. We went with László wherever his multiplicity of research projects, speaking arrangements, short courses or full year sabbaticals called us. Martha travelled well. I am sure that travelling and meetings would be boring for anyone of her age, but it was our way of life and she saw a good part of the world, experienced contrasting cultures, and met many different kinds of peoples as she was growing up. On our travels I took her to the local playgrounds, to swimming-pools, botanical gardens, zoo's, noted cultural establishments and landscapes. She came with us to receptions and field excursions. She was an active force in our



László's right) led the excursions. Sandro Pignatti (on my left), the author of the *Flora d'Italiana*, interpreted the flora.

life, a participant in family discussions, and contributor in family decisions more and more as she matured. Perhaps, at many occasions she just had to put up having had no choice. I knew that the company of mature people was not her choice, she would have rather spent time with friends of her age.

In the field somewhere in the Moguelones of France. François Roman (on

Occasionally she found friends of her age who came to the meetings with scientist parents. Montpellier in 1975 was such a place. It happened that Duilio Lausi, a good friend from Italy brought his son Andrea to the Symposium in France. About the same age as Martha, they quickly reverted to playing, liber-

ated themselves from grownups. They came with us to the Moguelones to experience the viticulture which is thriving at almost sea level on surface soil on top of brackish ground water. It was a loveliest sea shore, with magnificent vineries and old, serene manor houses. Martha and Andrea went on with us to on a grand excursion to the Parc National des Cévennes (in France) and on the last day to the massive walled fortress city of Aigues-Mortes in the Camargue.

I remember a lovely story from another meeting, years before. We were attending a large scientific conference in Columbus, Ohio. Martha and I were sitting in the back row of the conference room, László was presenting his paper. As we listened to him, Martha fell asleep. She was about 3 years old, just having her afternoon nap. But then she wakened and sprinted to the podium, - Apu, Apu látlak! -Daddy, Daddy, I see you-, embraced him and started walking back to me with thunderous applause of the audience. She started conferencing very early in life, never had any inhibition in front of the public.



László in academic regalia at the University of Western Ontario in the 1980s.

László was moving through the ranks to associate professor in 1968 and gained promotion to full professor in 1972. His unparalleled rise was acknowledgement of his excellent performance. We had more income, we could move into our first home, with a lovely garden. The first thing I did was to forest the back garden, with eight trees. A few months ago we passed by the home and I marvelled of my pine tree patch and realized that they are grown, over 45 years old, still decorating the neighbourhood.

Martha completed kindergarten, and by the time she started school at 6 in Honolulu, Hawai'i, she was fluent in a proper English dialect. As Martha's English blossomed, her Hungarian also matured. We always spoke and still do speak Hungarian at home. A small example gave a tremendous uplift to her total bilingual ability. A day after we arrived to Honolulu in 1972, staying for a whole year, we went to the city beach of Honolulu, named Ala Moana. Before swimming I covered her with cream,

to protect her skin. She was in a great hurry to get into the water, we got into a big conversation about safety. An older lady took the seat next to us on a bench. Suddenly she turned to Martha and told her in Hungarian that her Hungarian is beautiful, perfectly spoken. She answered in Hungarian that my mommy taught me. You are lucky, answered the lady.



Martha in Honolulu 1980 and 1986.

I was amazed how effortless was Martha's transition to English. She loved school; we had a good playground around the corner, the river was very close also, and we spent the afternoons outside if weather permitted. I took her to the swimming pool, when she was 6 months old, she loved to play in the water.

She became a good swimmer very early, at the age of 5; then she had a chance to perfect it at Ala Moana and other beaches in Honolulu on László's sabbatical years.

It was customary for Martha's teacher to ask the kids first day in class, at the end of summer vacation to share their summer experiences with others. Martha's turn came, she appeared hesitating, and was asked if she did not have any story to tell? Yes, Martha said: I have, but our summer lasted more than a year. We were in Hawai'i on my father's sabbatical leave. After this on another occasion Martha was sharing her very special summer story from a year before about collecting *Phyllodoce* (alpine dwarf shrub) in the Colorado alps, with her father.

I recall another story. We watched on television in 1969 as the American astronauts landed on the Moon. So far it is still the biggest scientific adventure in my lifetime, a story told in pictures. Martha was sitting in front of the TV with us, I tried very hard to impress on her the importance of the occasion, but she was too young at 3 to comprehend.

After the famous drive in the rover on the Moon's surface, I thought of my maternal grandmother. I was about seven, when one night, in full moonlight, the two of us were coming home from the evening service at the village church. Suddenly she told me: "*Gyere csak ide. Nézz fel a holdra. Látod ott a Jezus arckéjét? Ma nagyon tisztán lehet látni.*" – *Come here. Look up on the moon. Do you see the*

face of Jesus there. It is so clear tonight. - Then she continued: Christ is everywhere, on the moon too. He lit up the sky for us. Holding grandmother's hand, I looked up and looked again, and I began to see the profile of Christ. My mind created an image as she suggested. Later years I could not find Him, but I saw a figure of a violin player, and the picture continued evolving. I knew my grandmother did not see the TV program. They had no television, and if they had, she would not accept the story's reality; one cannot walk on the face of Christ. This was a long time ago, but the youthful, innocent excitement is reawakens in me with my loving grandmother, each time I look at the full Moon.

Around this time I noted that some mothers in the apartment were looking at the little knitted jackets Martha wore that I had knitted for her. Several wished to learn to do it themselves. I started a very informal, knitting group in the common room. I told them they need just a pair of knitting needles, some yarn, or knitted worn-out pieces. Knitting is time consuming, but well worth it. To share the excitement of a finished garment was a wonderful way to meet and socialize with young mothers, while the babies slept. I taught them how to get usable yarn from old garment and create new pieces. They were all eager and some were very artistic. Years later I met some of the former knitters around town. They not only continued knitting, but discovered that it is a quiet time when their thoughts can roam free without bounds.

Martha was eager to be outside in Nature and doing her own discoveries. Just as in my childhood years, Nature was an endless playground for her. I learnt to like the moss cover on the smooth rock. She noted all creatures and inanimate things around herself. We spent several summers in the Rocky Mountains and the Coastal range, on the Canadian Shield and the Clay-belt. László and I were doing field-research, Martha stored in her little mind the experiences with the local ambient. I am sure some days were terribly boring for her, but many others were spectacular. She carried a bag of seeds to feed any animals we met, she was excited and happy, she thought that all squirrels were her friends, adored the blue jay's calls, she ran after them, *"Anyuci, ezek zabálnak, éhesek - Mommy, these are hungry, they are stuffing themselves.* - Martha loved school, eagerly participated in school activities at Emily Carr. Luckily we were in a friendly neighbourhood. I never missed the school special programs, the originality and innocent performances of their plays were my delight. I knew most of the neighbourhood kids. We had a good size garden, and spent many hours gardening. In later years Martha attended the nearby high school named after the discoverer of insulin, Sir Frederick Banting. Martha was a good student, very active in extracurricular activities, won an awards, and had a good number of friends. I enjoyed meeting them. I remember well one of the musicals, Brigadoon, in which she played. It was a great success with the general public, including us

At the 1984 commencement in Banting, Martha gave the valedictorian presentation and received several awards.

On the Columbia Ice field



Just recently, I was watching a TV program on the effects of Global warming. Geologists were explaining the quick melting of icefields in the mountains. As I was watching, my memory took

me back, right to the top of the Columbia Ice field in the Canadian Rockies on one summer day in 1958. I see the shrunken size of the glacier in recent pictures. Hardly anything remaining of the mighty Icefield that filled up the valley, up to the edge of the side moraine on my first visit.

The glacier was already retreating in 1958 from its maximum eastern extent (see on photograph left). The road was drivable up to the point on the south side where huge explorer vehicles descend through a wide ramp down onto the Icefield itself. We parked the Volkswagen there in 1958 and descended on foot for a closer look.



The Columbia Icefield in 1979 (László in corner) and especially today (on right) is a mere shadow of its mighty self in 1940 (public domain post card on top of the chapter). On our first visit in 1958, the ice mass extended far down to the terminal moraine seen in the picture nearest to the glacial lake.

We did not consider the dangers of walking on the glacial ice. We went far enough to observe deep gaps and high bridges over them. It was a very special experience to stand on ice. Looking west up toward the high peaks, I could not see the horizon, it kept melting into the glow, of the silvery blue shimmering endless, cold and windy ice surface. It was magnificent.

It was wonderful to go back, after more than a decade, with Martha to revisit the site. I like to think that these mountains are the most beautiful, exquisite places on our planet. We drove and were camping. Martha enjoyed weeks camping in the National Parks; and loved the campfire on cool evenings under the heavenly skies.

The place was already attracting tourists when we first visited the Columbia Icefield, probably in part by the advertised melting of the Ice Field increased at a considerable rate from the previous decades. The eastern extent of the Ice Field, where the melt water issues in volume to continue its descent down into Alberta. Park rangers indicated the age of the end moraines. It was so clear from the increasing distance between the markers that climate warming was already afoot at the site and its rate increased since earlier in the 20th Century.

Global warming was not yet a commonly used term in 1959. But I could clearly see the progressive melt, and the ever-increasing size of the glacial moraine surface. It created “terra nova” for the colonising alpine plants, they quickly invaded it. Tourism picked up and the number of site-seeing explorer vehicles descending on the Ice Field increased. Now I recognized the intensity of the melt and size of it, far back from the original markers. Watching it on the TV, I feel the visible arm of the Ice Field is quickly turning into torrential river. I am among those who was fortunate to see this natural wonder and walked across on its surface in the 1950’s. We could not afford the price of the career, so walked across, not knowing the hidden dangers of the deep precipices on the ice surface. But we made it.



The Mihály family in America

My paternal grandfather, Ferenc Mihály, had immigrated to America in the 1930s. He was marooned there by World War II. He died in New York in 1946, just before his planned return to Lövéte. After a long pause, a Mihály reappeared in the States, this time my brother Árpád, to study at a state college in California and then at Cornell University. After graduating in Hotel Management, he was offered

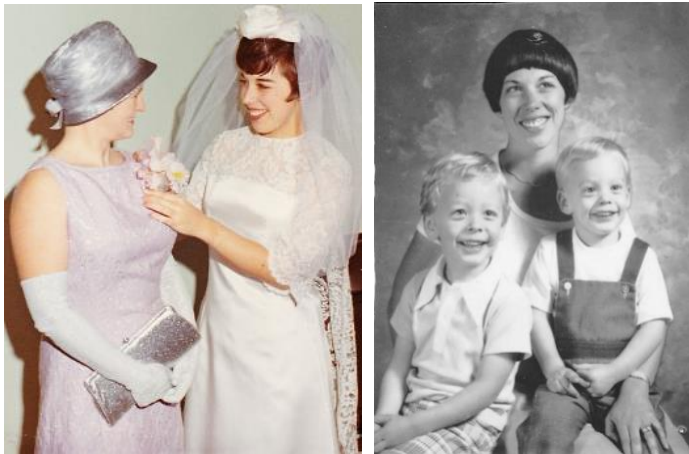
a position in catering by SAGA at Wheaton College, where the lovely Dorothy Smith was finishing her degree. She was from a church minister’s family in Vista, California.

It was time for Árpád to marry and settle down. He asked Penny to marry him and she answered ‘yes’. He brought her over to London to meet us, the only relatives of Árpád on this continent. We very much approved his choice. She carried a smile on her lovely face.

I flew to their wedding in her home town. The ceremonies were intimate and very lovely. She was a spectacular bride, elegant and very happy. They were wed in her father's church by her father the Reverend Dr. Graham Smith with Penny's mother, relatives, friends and members of his father's parish witnessing the happy moments. I was the only one present from our family. Not having been able to have our family from Hungary at the wedding was a great regret. We could not share our most precious moment with them.



With Penny and Árpád at the wedding as guest of the Smith family in Vista 1968.



With Penny at the wedding in Vista 1968. Mathew (5), Peter (3) and Penny 1976.

I planned to stay for some days but the next day László called that Martha fell and had to be taken to emergency to care for the bad lesion she suffered on her ear-lobe. He wanted me to come home, I rearranged my flight and flew

back.. During the following years we spent many happy Christmas holidays with Penny and Árpád and their two sons Mathew and Peter, several years younger than Martha. We drove to Wisconsin from London for Christmas and for other occasions many times. We had many memorable family times together. We have always been welcomed with love.



Mathew, Arpy, Penny and “Csinos” on the ranch in the Sierra Nevada, California 2005. Martha training kisasszony 1972.



I am with László, Árpád, and Penny. On Right: Penny with Attila, Árpád, and Csaba.



Eileen Munroe, Márta, Márta’s nephew Mathew Mihály, László, Árpád, Penny at the wedding of Eileen and Mathew, Marin County, California 2013.



Christmas with the Mihálys in Rippon, Wisconsin 1987. Martha with Árpád in Yosemite National Park 2002.



Eileen, Mathew, Márta, Árpád, László 2013.



View from Mihály's house high on the hill in Marine County. A stopover at the Golden gate on our way to the Airport.



PRAGUE 1968

On family visits in Hungary

In 1968 I took another trip to Hungary with Martha, at that time just over 2, to see my parents. They were still living in the for-ester's house just outside Szentendre. It was a marvellous experience, all went fine with

no indication that I could be caught up in yet another political turmoil of potentially disastrous consequence.

Martha was the first grandchild for my parents and they were waiting to meet her. They did all the preparations to create an optimal milieu for the visit. For st had never seen anything like that. She was exited. She took the basket and went to sleep in her crib with the chirping music. The following day my brother Csaba arrived home with a few-weeks-old white kitten with black patches on her. Attila brought her a poppy and a barn-cat with kittens. My mother had piglets and chickens in the back yard. She loved all, feeding them constantly. They got used to her, and the moment she appeared in the yard the animals were coming to her. She talked to them and chased them. The favourite was a big colourful rooster who waited for her under the window; when she appeared, he gave a glorious, loud crow, expecting the treats.

Those were wonderful days for all. We took long walks in the forest during the day, and we enjoyed the evenings with my whole family. My brothers arrived each day with special gifts, they enjoyed Martha speaking perfect Hungarian. We spent two weeks with my family, then I proceeded by bus to Nagyréde, where László's mother and a married sister lived. I was looking forward to introducing our daughter to her. I planned on a good visit. It was a beautiful, sunny day when we got off the bus, the local people offered to walk us to my mother-in-law's house. All the neighbours remembered László and wanted to see his daughter. It was the friendliest arrival. But, my mother-in law was not home, she did not wish to see us. I felt very hurt and terribly humiliated. We waited around for a while, I took the next bus back to my parents. Did she not want to meet us? I had no answers at that time. Obviously, I was hurt and terribly humiliated. I did not tell this to my parents.

We were having a joyful holiday with my family, but it suddenly became obvious that 1968 was the wrong year for our visit. About a week before we were to fly back to Canada, my father woke me up early in the morning with the news that revolution broke out in Czechoslovakia, the Hungarian borders closed, and I would have to find a safe and fast way out of the country. My

father heard the news on the shortwave from the Voice of America which he regularly but very secretly, listened to in the early hours of the day. .

I quickly packed my papers, some food for my daughter and myself, and we left with my parents by electric train, heading to Vörösmarty-square in Budapest where scheduled buses left for the airport to Vienna. It was getting to daylight when we arrived to find Russian soldiers everywhere and hundreds of nervous people waiting for any transportation to get out of the country. We were told the border to Austria was closed and no busses were leaving for Vienna. My parents were pondering to take us back home. We waited on the square for a little while, then I found a taxi which was willing to take us to the British Consulate which handled the diplomatic affairs of Canada. My parents were with us, utterly nervous. We arrived at the Consulate where we found fully armed Hungarian soldiers cordoning the entrance. It was a frightening scene. As I walked to the entrance one officer stopped me. *“Tilos a bemenetel. Mutassa a papirjait!”* – *“You are not allowed to go in. Show your papers.”* he shouted. *“Oh, én bemebegek, Kanadai állampolgárok vagyunk a gyermekemmel.”* – *“You cannot enter.”* *“Oh, yes I can go in, I am a Canadian citizen with my child. We are in distress.”* My force full definiteness seemed to make him hesitate. Before he could answer, I dashed up to the stairs to the door and rang the bell. I was holding Martha in my arms, she was getting restless and started to cry. I was very tired and I just wanted to get inside. The Consulate door opened, I turned back, waived good-bye to my parents and entered. These were terrible moments for them and for me. They had no news of my whereabouts for the next entire week.

I was warmly welcomed in the Consulate, Martha got her bed and usual bed-time milk. We were put at ease and I felt totally safe. I am forever grateful to these very fine people for their welcoming moments. Next day a cab took us back to the bus-station on Vörösmarty-tér. I telephoned László and my brother to Chicago that Martha and I were safe, but not out of the country yet. I could not say more!

I was given a front seat on the bus, Martha sat on my lap. Our driver was a kind Austrian gentleman. Normally it would take a few hours to reach Vienna from Budapest, but this trip went on the whole night. The bus was a wandering in search of open roads that were not blocked by the staging military forces taking up position to invade Czechoslovakia. The revolution that came 12 years after the Hungarian’s fight with the Soviets for independence and the national Dubcek government had to be deposed.

Our wondering saga took over 15 hours. It was a horrendous, dangerous and a very uncertain trip. The bus was over loaded, people were sitting in the walkways, on the floor. Everybody wanted to get out of the dangerous communist country. The bus was stopped every 15-20 minutes, a bunch of fully armed

Russian, or Hungarian soldiers entered, checked the documents and redirected the bus to some other side road. But we were coming closer to the Austrian border.

Martha finished her sandwiches, but she had nothing to drink. I told stories to her. Repeating some, but the milk bottle was empty, I promised more to come soon. She was getting worn out, and by some divine luck, she went to sleep in my arms for almost 4 hours. She hung on to me.

We did not know where we were, had no indication that we'll ever reach the border and get to Vienna. Finally, we arrived to the border in total darkness at Ágfalva just west of Sopron. The bus stopped at the gate under the eager eyes of fully armed soldiers. The bus became silent, waiting. I could feel the tension mounting. No one knew what to expect. I am not able to describe the feeling of nervous tensions, or a power of desire to be free. Finally a military jeep arrived with higher ranking soldiers. They boarded the bus, counted us, checked our papers, counted us again and left. The border gate opened. As the bus slowly rolled through into Austria; the passengers glum turned to celebration. We were free!

I have no words in my vocabulary of any of my language to share the feeling of freedom of this nature. In a couple of hours we were in Vienna's airport. I called László, told him that we were free in Vienna and that in due time we shall be in Toronto. We were not alone. Passengers brought out from Budapest were filling up the airport. We had to wait until extra flights were organised.

In a couple of days we landed in Toronto safe, happy and grateful to be together again. This experience brought back memories of incidences from 1946 and 1956. And now 1968. This was the third time in three decades that I ran for freedom with such precise cyclic regularity. How more ironic and impossible life could be. But we survived it once again.



I met László's father, István, the first time in 1965 and found the old professional soldier a kind, lovable man.

My parents were terribly worried, it took almost a week to find out, that we were home and safe. They missed us, my mother wrote that all the animals were looking for Mártika. For several weeks the rooster continued issuing its

wake-up call under the window, remembering the handout from his good friend.

I returned with Martha to a third family visit in Hungary in 1970. I tried one more time to see László's mother, but I failed. Martha, this time was old enough to comprehend the fact, but I could not explain such behaviour to her. She was an antithesis of László's father, whom I found to be a dear and very kind man. A warrior in WW I, with career as officer of the panzer, he became an outcast of the communist regime. For years he was not allowed to take on work other than day labour. I had long conversations with him on my first visit in 1964 in Hungary and again in Graz, Austria, where we met our parents in 1965. He thanked me for having been so helpful for László in his graduate studies, and he thanked my mother for raising me to be such a caring person. My father-in-law died as a worn-out, disappointed man in 1968.



László's sister Kati and Szűcs Dezső at their wedding 1967.

We spent almost two weeks there, enjoying the very sincere hospitality not only Kati and Dezső, but also Dezső's parents, who did everything to make us feel



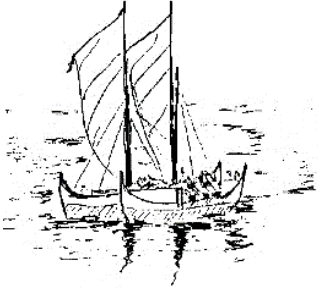
at home. We returned to my parents in the forest home just outside Szentendre for the same loving reception and care as before.

Kati (left), Martha (3) and baby cousin Katika Szűcs in Abasár 1968.

Leaving Hungary was at this time eventless

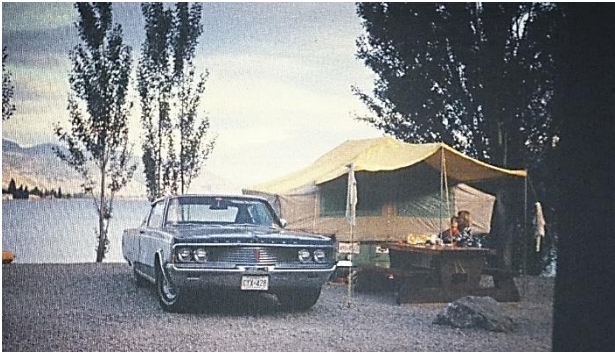
orderly matter. When we landed in Toronto László was waiting for us at the airport. "Apu, Apu", Martha exclaimed and she ran toward him for kisses and

a big hug. “Hogy van Orlóci nagymama?” *How is Orlóci Grandmother – László asked.* “Apu, nem láttuk nagymamát, elszökött, nem akart látni bennünket. -- “Apu, we did not see her, she left. She did not want see us.” It was this time that László found out what happened twice in succession. He felt hurt and disappointed.



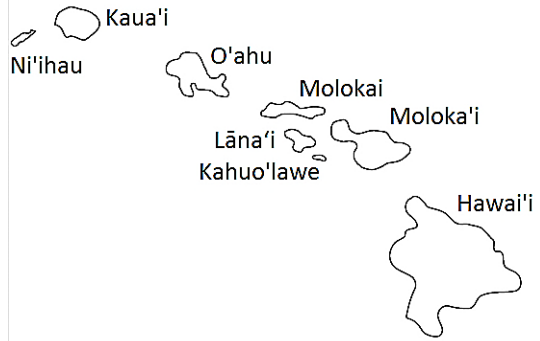
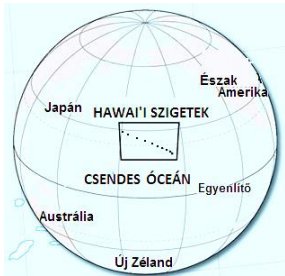
The Island years

At the time I was visiting relatives in Hungary in the Spring of 1972, László received permission to take a sabbatical year for reading and research at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa in Honolulu during the 1972-73 academic year. Just before we left, he has been promoted to a full professor. This is the highest academic rank in our university system. His promotion through the ranks to full professorship in a mere seven years was a record, as I was told, in the history of the University of Western Ontario. I was proud of him. I put everything tangible we did not need in Hawai‘i in storage, cancelled the rent on the apartment, packed 5 suitcases and left London, driving across the continent, heading to Vancouver.



The camping trailer and the big Chrysler to tow it gave us home-comfort for the trans-Canada sojourn with many detours from London to Fredericton, and to Vancouver. The large bench seat in the Chrysler was Martha’s paly room on the long drives.

On the way we were visiting sites along, historic places, and unique ecological sites. We camped whenever we could. Camping become more comfortable, we had a camping trailer of the kind which opens up into a large living quarter. After revisiting our favourite sites in the Rocky Mountains and the British Columbia interior, we stopped just outside Oliver on Okanagan Lake, stored our camper at the orchard of an old acquaintance, and headed back to Vancouver. We spent a few days with old friends, then we put the car in storage. After about one month on the trail, the three of us, with the five suitcases, boarded a Canadian Pacific flight for Honolulu.



The main islands of Hawaiian chain. The youngest ones, furthest south. The Island of Hawaii is a mere 750 thousand years old. Honolulu is the capital city located on Oahu.



Viewing the Oahu coastline from Diamond Head: Kapiolani park and adjacent Waikiki to Ala Moana, Honolulu, all the way to Pearl Harbour and beyond 2003.

It was early July in 1972, the beginning of many wonderful and exciting years for us in the Islands. Being on sabbatical leave is not a holiday for academics. László worked on a new book, did field research, and taught a graduate course in the second semester. Hawai'i sounds great, but not so good financially. I budgeted well and we did fine on 82 % of Laszlo's regular salary. I must add that the Hawai'ian Islands were 15-25 % more expensive, than the Continent.

This was my first exposure to the tropics. I felt happy and treasured the opportunity to go, to meet the people, see the wonders of the Polynesian culture, study its flora and experience the volcanoes in action. It turned out to be the

experience of a life time. Martha reached school age at 6, I registered her at the nearest elementary school at the University of Hawai'i Campus where we were renting an apartment in university housing, on Dole Street in Honolulu. Everything became part of an exciting adventure for her. Our settling in was greatly facilitated by help from Dieter-Mueller Dombois - a fellow professor in Botany and onetime fellow graduate students in ecology at U.B.C.

Hawaii's high volcanoes stratify the tropical climate by an annual rhythm into wet on the windward side and arid on the lee side; hot tropics near sea-level to alpine tundra which is capping the tops of the 4 km high volcanoes of the Big Island (Island of Hawai'i). The islands represented to me a vast field laboratory, without walls. The total experience had great influence on my professional interests thereafter. It was a year of a most joyful tropical family adventure. The experience lured us back to the Islands for five more sabbaticals, and later on annual winter visits until the present. I like to think of Hawai'i as another home for us.

The legendary Hawai'ian chants tell us much about their myths and history. According to these, the islands were created by Kumulipo. Interestingly, this happened a long-long time ago. The chants further specify that the islands were in the deep ocean, in the darkness of the sea. Kumulipo brought them up to the surface. The legend has yet another variation claiming that Maui, the superman of the Hawai'i-n spirits fished the islands up from the ocean floor. Both the ancient legends and chants are telling a partial truth that the Islands emerged from the depth of an ocean. What is seen are just the tips of a volcanic mountain range.

According to geologists, the building of these grand volcanic mountain ranges started about 70 million years ago. A rift opened in the Pacific Plate and from this rift the molten core of the Earth spewed hot magma on the ocean floor. The volcanic activity continued, layer upon layer, building mountain peaks to enormous heights, kilometres above the sea level. But as soon as the volcanic eruption ceased, the mountain erosion began. and eventually the mountains disappear from the sea surface. This process is perpetual, and so is the building of new mountains under the sea as the hot spot moves further South-East.

I spent many-many wonderful days on the Saddle road and its branch up to the top of Mauna Kea. I had the good fortune and opportunity to study the changing vegetation in progression with altitude and orientation relative to the main wind direction. The humid climate on the side exposed to the trade winds out of the North-East and the arid climate of the opposite side of the island is a most remarkable demonstration of how important a role the climate plays in the definition of our environment.

I have learnt much about the islands' ecology from our gracious hosts, friends and landlords - Annette and Dieter Mueller Dombois - during the time we spent with them over the years. I offer for those interested in island ecology Dieter's opus magnum "Vegetation of the Pacific islands" (Springer 1998) and career crowning monograph "'Ōhi'a lehua rainforest" (2013).



Mauna Loa (4169 m) in winter, viewed from the south. Mauna Kea (4207 m) in summer, as seen from Hilo. We have lived in the Bay Shore Tower while doing field work in summer 1993. Note snow cap covering the upper one fourth of the mountains, but only in winter.



Kilauea. "The smell of sulphur is strong, but not unpleasant to a sinner." Mark Twain, *Roughing it in Hawaii* (1875). The Kalapana thong of the 1982 Pu'u O'o lava flow crossing the highway.



Our Devastation Trail research site at the Kaenakakoi Crater in Volcanos National Park on the Big Island. The entire park is a World Heritage Site since 1987. Nene gees feeding on the berry of ohelo, a species *Vaccinium* on the research site.



ʻŌhiʻa lehua shrub (*Metrosideros polymorpha*) at the devastation area 2003. ʻŌhiʻa is noted for multiplicity of form and wide ecological tolerance. Black Sand beach at Kalapana 1979.



On the top of the lava flow in 1986 where Kalapana village still existed in 1979 when I visited the Black Sand beach.



Martha on visit with us on the Big Island during Christmas break from university 1986. Lava blocked highway in the Kalapana area 1986.



Standing on pahoehoe lava from the Kalapana thong of the Pu'u O'o flow where it crossed the highway into Kalapana. Professor Dieter Mueller-Dombois in background.



'Ōhi'a lehua and tree ferns (*Cibotium* sp.) regeneration is the first step to a forest cover.



'Ōhi'a lehua forest with tree fern understory in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Volcano village 1997.



Márta on the south side of the track to the cabin in Volcano. Dieter explaining the role of the invasive species, white ginger (*Hedychium coronarium*), in the rainforest.



László at the rented cabin in the rainforest, Volcano Village 1997.

I wondered about the unique island vegetation which existed elsewhere and migrated from island to island as one-by-one they came into existence forced by the parting of the tectonic plates through many millions of years. The process is a story of speciation by evolutionary adaptation, crowned by the local traits of the endemic 'Ōhi'a Lehua tree (*Metrosideros polymorpha*).

During the almost 8 cumulative years I spent on the islands, it was always a joy to return. Each island is very different, has its own characteristics. I loved the greens and freshness of a rainforest. The elegant tree ferns (*Cibotium* sp.) created an exotic, intimate and dreamlike world for me. It was a unique sensation to walk around or under their fronds, smell their herbal scent, a little like in a Jurassic park.

'Ōhi'a is able to grow under any conditions as a dominant light loving plant, and develop a root system from its trunk when cinder and ash bury the soil and partially the tree trunks. How do these species of trees adapt to survive the desiccating conditions on pumice and ash, and survive the freezing winter temperatures high up on the volcanic mountains? I saw them, they were thriving on the desiccated pumice or in severe winter conditions. I saw their fresh, green leaves, which do not wilt under extreme aridity nor die exposed to freezing temperatures, but continue on with photosynthesis and vital metabolic processes. I learnt from our good friend Guillermo Goldstein's research that *Metrosideros* leaves are storing nutrient-solution which does not freeze under the Hawaiian winter lows at high altitudes. The endemic 'Ōhi'a developed its own anti-freeze, millions of years before man stumbled on it in his mechanised age.

I spent several years working among such wonders. These happy and beautiful visual experiences, like engraved mementoes will be with me forever, as Georgia O'Keeffe, a painter of natural beauty, understood it,..."happiness goes like the wind, but what is interesting stays". I volunteered at the famous Aquarium of Honolulu on the shore in Kapiolani Park. The life of the coral-reefs and some of the endemic fish population interested me. There, I made presentations on the coastal vegetation and gave information to the visitors about its importance. I loved the interaction with visitors. I learned a lot about the coral-reef's beautiful and wondrous world. I went on field trips and participated in field work at Kaena point on the North-Western tip of Oahu island, concerning preservation of the endemic seals and endemic vegetation. I discovered a single plant species of the endemic *Sesbania tomentosa*, believed to be lost. It was a most joyful memorable coastal field trip. I was offered a fulltime position, but we had to leave for home to London, at the end of László's sabbatical leave.

Until recently the tops of Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea had a permanent ice cap, but the climate warmed and the ice started to melt. With the disappearance of the permanent ice, the species of the tropical alpine tundra moved into the highest elevation belt which used to be covered by permanent ice. This is the home of lichens, mosses, and some heavy grasses, which can withstand the arid climate, gale-force winds, and cold night temperatures. Directly below the tundra in the next elevation belt, the low shrubs dominate, which produce the berries, which feed flocks of the flightless Nene geese. I admired the struggling Hawai'ian ohelo shrub (*Vaccinium reticulatum*, a sister species of blueberries) for its hardiness. Very dry and terribly windy terrain, yet ohelo is full of red berries. I tasted it, but it was not edible for me. The Nene is not specific to the high altitudes it thrives everywhere where it finds food. Sometimes around people, begging for treat. Martha offered some grass to a Nene mother with 2 youngsters. They did not take the grass, slowly walked away.

I will always remember working among the volcanic rock outcrops, at high elevation, (about 3000 m, or higher) on the very steep mountain side of Mauna Kea, often testing my balance. Walking around, unexpectedly, in the shade of a large rock, I found life, a flowering specimen of the elegant, dainty pamakani (*Tetramolopium humile*). This rare plant is a marker of the high elevation, here hiding in the shade of a large rock contrasted sharply, with the enormity of the mountain behind it in the bright sunshine. I sat down, to do a quick sketch of its main characteristics. I looked down, below the shiny silvery coast was visible, lined with the clearly discernible palm trees which trimmed the majestic view. The sea was shimmering in blues, the waves, with a distinct silver ruffles, were coming to meet the mountain. It was an unforgettable, almost a spiritual experience. I felt overwhelmed with the setting. As I got up I spotted a huge,

circular wreath, composed from silvery clouds, halfway up, embracing and shading the spectacular Haleakala.

Descending further on the windward side, the road passes through a transitional belt where the yellow flowers of the mamane shrub (*Sophora chrysophylla*) attracted my attention. The site was teeming with birds, feeding on the small, shiny red mamane seed. A few 'Ōhi'a lehua trees (*Metrosideros polymorpha*), noted for its nectar rich bright red flowers, which is not more than sporadic, very stunted at this altitude.



High up on Mauna Kea, just below the elevation of 2004 m., near Haleakala.



... where I found a patch of pamakani (*Tetramolopium humile*), mamane (*Sophora shtysophylla*) and ...



With the Halekala native, ‘ahianahina (*Argyroxiphium sandwicense*).

The natural vegetation is still intact at higher elevations, but replaced by introduced species closer to the sea level. It is, to me, one of the marvels of nature which forces conformity with what the fixed generic trait of individuals dictate, but lucky for them, within fairly wide limits of plasticity. The invasive, introduced plant species have the capacity to dominate and take space away from the native species on the landscape scale. The introduced species in Hawai‘i evolved independently in sites, great distances, or even continents apart, from distinct generic stock. Yet, most remarkably, in their new world they could thrive and form distinct vegetation communities without undergoing a

long, adaptive evolutionary process.

The Hawaiian Islands are more than 3,500 km away from any land surface. It is an aesthetically beautiful, unique environment, a geological wonder, encompassing within its shores a very large variety of climates and a fantastic, very numerous, truly Hawai‘ian macro and micro ecosystems. The Pacific Ocean is warm (76 F), clean and the blue water is inviting. It is a land where “terra nova” (new land) is created every second. It is a place, where births and death dramas played out on a volcanic stage on which the land is created, recreated and destroyed. On the cooled lava, the newest land being born, on which propagules of organisms land and start to grow, notwithstanding the savage environmental condition.

Cases of fantastic life and death’s drama can be observed in reality. Just by walking around the volcanic craters, one is witnessing the planet’s constant renewing processes. I saw it, felt it, and these natural rebirths left an important mark in my nature-loving mind, touched my spirit, and as a result, greatly modified my view of life. Some cases of survival technique mesmerized me, being beautiful, amazing and very unique. A tropical vegetation starting in the crevices were colonisers of a new substrate not touched by life before, on a barely cooled lava, pioneering is a very special process in the amazing environment. It was on the Hawai‘i Islands where I, for the first time in my life, witnessed the beginning of life on a freshly cooled lava flow. It helped me to understand why for the native Hawai‘ian the Land is sacred, to be worshipped. The state

motto: *Ua mau ke ea o ka 'āina i ka pono-i!* This, in free translation: life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness.



Ferns are established early in the cracks on the lava substrate.

The people of Hawai'i are famous for their spirit of Aloha. Warmth, kindness, generosity, humility and patience are the characteristics of the Aloha spirit. Their Aloha makes one feel welcome. It is accorded to new arrivals. I experienced the Aloha spirit but I also learnt during our almost 8 years stay in Hawai'i that this spirit is often misplaced.

Hawai'i was my second home. The demography of Hawai'i best illustrates the Aloha spirit: all are welcome. There is no clear racial or ethnic majority in the island's 1.35 million residents. The incidents of intermarriages among the different ethnic groups is very high. This breaks down many social boundaries.

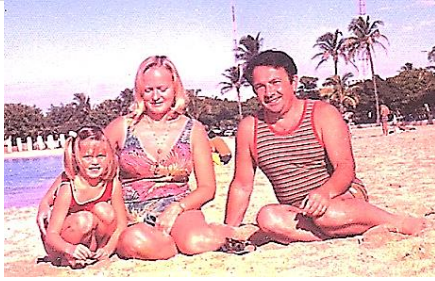
The racial diversification began with the arrival of Europeans. By the 1850's wealthy investors and large landowners managed to establish sugarcane and later pineapple plantations. Ranches started to appear. The native Hawai'ian people were too few in numbers to handle the manual work. Chinese, Japanese, and Portuguese labourers were brought in by the thousands. Intermarriages, encouraged by shortages of partners from the same race, started to increase demography variation. But ethnic groups remained intact. Many do not speak English, no probléma!

1972-73, we rented accommodation in the housing complex of the University, at 2640 Dole Street in Manoa. It was a very simple, but spacious apartment, a lovely spot at the foot of an old lava flow, overlooking Waikiki 2.5 km away. We loved the place, it was a heaven for children of academic parents from all corners of the World. The first night I opened the oven-door to investigate the possibility of a good supper. Then I opened the bottom drawer looking for a frying pan, it was full with huge brown bugs, and all appeared looking at me with huge, shiny black eyes. No cooked supper! I closed my eyes and shut the

door quickly. It got dark early, by 6:30. I put Martha to bed and I laid down in the bedroom. I looked up and around the light fixture on the ceiling, just above my head there were several fair sized, pale coloured lizards running around the light fixture. It looked to me that they were ready, just casually drop onto my face. Not experienced in these matters I was up half the night, worried and checked Martha's room several times. These were the delightful, harmless, and very useful, tropical geckoes. The gardener reassured me that the bugs in the drawer were harmless, tropical cockroaches. They live mainly outside, move very fast and are large, some reaching 5 cm, but they love to come into the houses for food, security and probably to find shelter away from the heat. The Hawai'ian think of cockroaches as friends, we are just sharing our Planet with them. Children play with them as we used to with the maybugs. I was never comfortable having them around me. The small lizards, the geckoes, are harmless, hard-working friends. They feed on cockroach, mosquito and centipede eggs. They did a super job, but we still had to use insecticide on the cockroaches.



Fresh in Hawaii, we are seen on Pali, overlooking Kaneohe and Kailua Bays 1972. On Waikiki beach 1973. Pictures reproduced from old faded diapositives.



On Ala Moana beach, Honolulu 1972. In that year Martha started school in Honolulu. Back to a VW to give us mobility around the island.



On Ala Moana beach. Right: at the Hilton Hawaiian Village 1972.



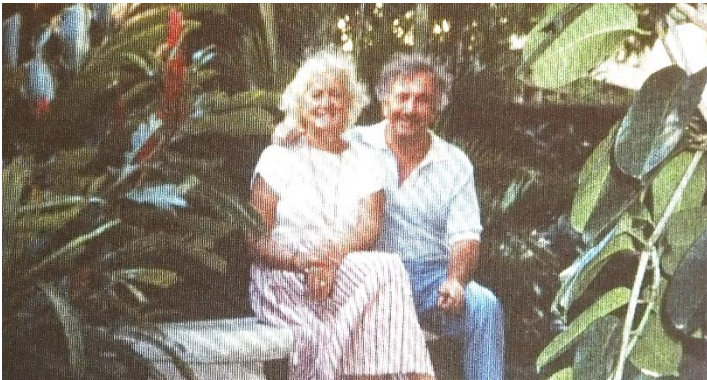
Myself, László, Gyurka Leskó and Martha, Ala Moana Beach 1979. Gyurka and Panni Leskó (photographer) were visiting from Edmonton. Martha was completing middle school in Honolulu.



President Richard M. Nixon arriving at Hickam Air Force Base in heavy rain in Honolulu 1972. We were allowed to walk up to Air Force 1 to welcome the president. A similar picture should be somewhere in the archives of CBS.



At the Waikiki yacht Harbour 1986.



Back in Hawaii for another sabbatical at the University of Hawaii at Manoa 1986,



Martha at the Thurston Lava Tube 1986.



Martha visiting new lava flow solidified on the top of the 1982 lava which blocked the highway in the Kalapana area 1986.



Martha in the "Toilet Bowl" at Hanauma Bay. The dramatic fall and rise of water and slippery walls make the in and out a challenge, but not dangerous for the age group.



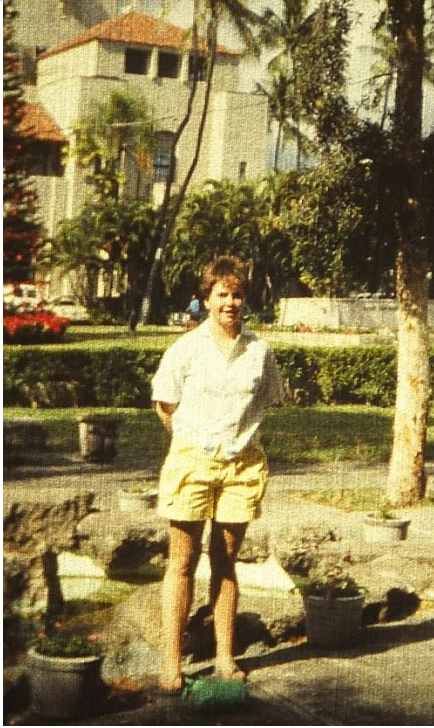
Tim Goodison and Martha visiting with us in Honolulu 1993.



Tim, Martha and László in Waikiki 1993. In background the famous “Pink” Hotel.



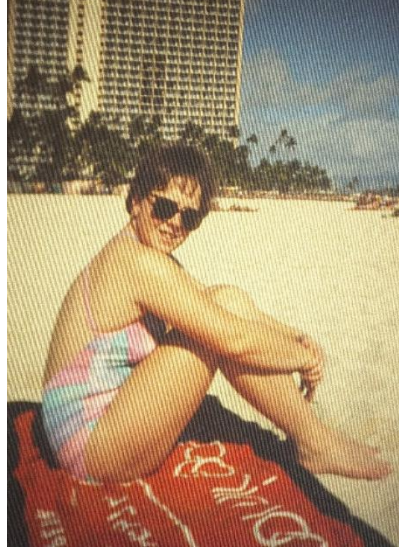
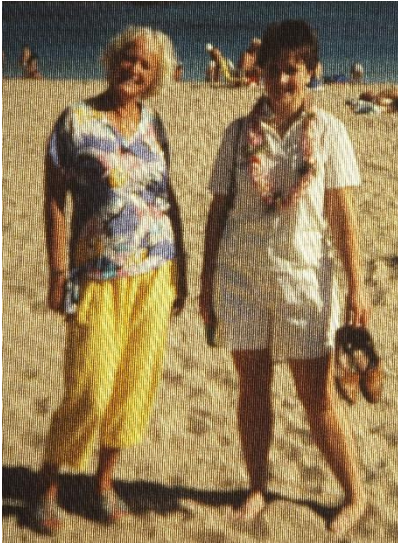
László at Makapu beach 1979. I am at the pool of our “Marko Polo” residence on Kapiolani in Honolulu 1980.



Left: Martha in historic Honolulu facing the Anglican church near Mission House. László and I on top of Diamond Head. Kapiolani Park and Waikiki in the background. We were on a full year sabbatical in Honolulu; Martha spent her Christmas break with us 1986.



László and Martha on the Royal Hawaiian Hotel terrace in Waikiki 1986.



Christmas day on the beach in Waikiki 1986.



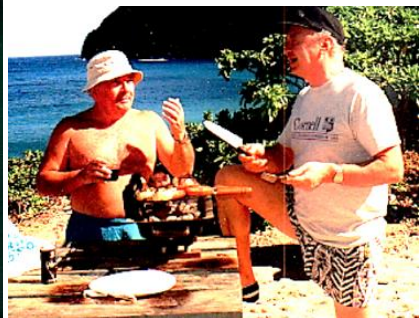
Martha and László, 1986 Christmas, Amana street, Honolulu.



Attending Spanish class at the Honolulu Community College on Dillingham, downtown Honolulu 1994



Iolani Palace on Queen street downtown Honolulu 2003. Standing on aa lava, Haleakala south flank near the La Perouse pakalolo gardens 1995.



Dinner on Mainstreet Lahaina 2002. Having a steak with my brother Árpád at Makapu'u Bay 1994.



The Hawaiian peoples' sovereignty movement was at a high point in 2003. We gave them our full support. The site of this demonstration is on the Iolani Palace grounds.



Afternoon refreshments with Annette and Dieter Mueller-Dombois at 949 N Kalaheo on Oahu in 2014. László is the photographer.



At home 949 N Kalaheo 2014, 2007.



Kihei (Maui) in 1995. A chance meeting with our one time professor, Miklós Udvardy (left), the first time in three decades after we left U.B.C. Professor Udvardy was doing avian research at the Kealia Pond National Wildlife Refuge (left) for which he was a principal proponent; we were doing field research on elevation related vegetation gradients on Haleakala. We think of him, our “Miklós bácsi”, with love and deep gratitude for his limitless help as advisor and friend during the U.B.C. years.



Dieter kept a rich tropical garden of fruit trees and bananas. The banana bunches hanging around me in this 2007 picture brings back the memory of the sweet Jamaican “Banana Boat Song” (Day-O 1956) I heard first from Harry Belafonte.



At the Winter White House of President Barack Obama, Kailua Beach. 2012. I walked from the ‘touch stake’ at the property limit on the beach long distances daily to the south end where I met László for lunch and a drive home or other destinations.



Kailua beach from the Obama Winter White House, just a short walk from home. My favourite beach, where I spent much time, offers kilometers of pristine sandy shore for recreation



Fruit stand on the Kamehaea Hwy near the Kahuku prows ponds 1994.



Behind me is the spectacular vista of Kaneohe Bay on Oahu.



At the Pu'u O Mahuka Heiau (Hawaiian temple) overlooking Waimea Bay 2003.



László body surfing at Kihei beach, Maui 1995.



Papaya orchard on Oahu 2003.



On Waikiki beach 1994. The Royal Hawaiian (Pink) Hotel in the background.



At The main entrance to the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. Right: Taking refreshment at the hotel's beach bar 2006.



At Turtle Bay February 17, 2012 ...



... On that day László and I were married for 55 years.



A day at lovely Turtle Bay 2012. More time in the Foster Botanical Garden in Honolulu 2012.



Turtle Bay 2012, my favourite destination on the North Shore in Oahu.

Martha started first grade in Honolulu, just across the street from our condominium. It was an experimental school, with a teacher-student ratio of 4/5 on average. She loved the class. There were only two Caucasian kids attending; the other classmates were from all over the planet. Her best friends were two little fellows, Higa Tokinabu from Guam, and Arnold Spatz from Germany, and a little girl Maya Masakien from Japan. Martha taught them English, while she was picking up words from their languages. This was the first time that my daughter realized the importance of knowing more than one language. She felt very much at home in the presence of the different languages spoken among playmates. They were having a grand time playing outside at all times, after school.

We visited daily our favourite beach at Ala Moana and quickly Martha became a confident swimmer. Her tutors were Red Cross volunteers, and the swimming lessons were free. On Saturdays, all of us attended swimming lessons. One of them Al, a retired navy seal, became a friend. He was waiting for our return over three sabbatical cycles' and then we lost touch.

The University housing is on the side of an old lava flow covered by dense, low bushes, including the lovely golden shower of ever blooming flowers (Cassia). The bushes have a rich avian fauna and mongooses are frequently seen. There are many kinds of tropical crawling insects, centipedes and even scorpions. Martha and friends loved to hunt for them. Kids from the tropics are familiar with poisonous arthropods and recognised them readily. Occasionally, Martha brought me sample specimens! It was a world waiting for discovery by the children.

László arranged another sabbatical at the University of Hawai'i at the Manoa campus for 1979/80. We crossed the continent by car, stopped in the Rocky

Mountains for a week, then flew from Vancouver to Honolulu. We rented accommodations at this time in Marco Polo on Kapiolani Blvd., walking distance from the district's intermediate school where Martha had to enrol, leaving no alternative.

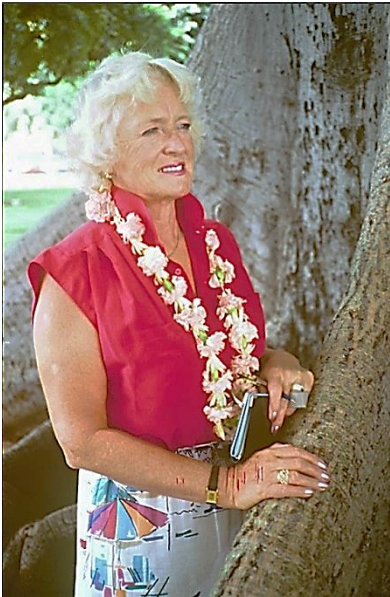


Washington Middle School street in Honolulu where Martha completed the 4th year in 1980.

Smaller schools were private places, with long waiting lists beyond the current academic year. Martha was not too happy going to Washington Intermediate school which was an inner city public school and had much to be desired. But she persevered, finished the year with high marks, and with new friends. She missed her best friend Trish. They exchanged letters almost daily. I felt sorry for her, but the option of not going to school for one year could not be accepted. Her schoolmates were local Hawai'iian kids, some from American Samoa, and Guam; only two Caucasian were in her class. She was doing her schoolwork well, but she did not care much for her schoolmates. Drugs were quite common, and I was worried. She was happy to see me at the gate of the school where I waited for her after school. We went to the beach for a swim, or shopping. She had a babysitting job, for a Philippines lady in Marco Polo, where we rented an apartment for a year. She befriended a nice Hawai'i-ni girl, but she lived at the other side of town.

The University of Hawai'i campus is surrounded by an exciting, wonderful tropical botanical garden, still well kept in the 1970s. The campus trees and plants have been identified and mapped with great care by Professor Vladimir Krajina, the Ph.D. supervisor of László in forest ecology, and his colleagues in the Botany Department. The tropical flora was unknown to me, which made it more exciting. I spent many hours on discovery, admiring the garden's more than 560 identified species. I was especially intrigued by the romantic orchid

tree, the majestic tulip tree, the unusual looking sausage tree, and the robust cannonball with its trunk covered by very colourful and unusual flowers. Some were ripe, with huge seeds, 18-20 cm. Exquisite, graceful palms by the hundreds guarded the walkways and provided shade in the hot tropical sun. Glaring, vivid greens, gigantic leaves, ripened fruits, similar to Rousseau's paintings, surrounded me. It was a wonderful, fragrant tropical experience. I walked and observed as much as I could. Among all this splendid greenery, hundreds of vividly dressed students graced the campus. The girls walked around in muumuus with flowers tucked in their hair and flower leis around their necks, enhancing their beauty and mysterious, tropical femininity. I loved the young men's longish shorts, with huge flower prints. Many wore shell jewellery around their neck. They were attractive well shaped Polynesian young men, beautifully fitting into this landscape, both full of natural beauty. The campus is in lower part of Manoa Valley at the foot of the rainforest covered, by a very inviting and very green Ko'olau Mountain range. It is a spectacular landscape.



I am standing at a gigantic Kapok tree (*Ceiba pentandra*) in Foster Botanical Garden, Honolulu 1979. Right: Standing at vafe distance from the Canon ball tree (*Couroupita guianensis*) 1986.

I wanted to know all about the origin of the Hawai'ian people, to identify the endemic vegetation, to learn the geography of the land, and to understand the mechanism which created the islands, and the works of tectonics and volcanoes. Coming from Hungary I knew not much about these, I became a student. I took courses at the university, and I have to say I enjoyed every minute in the

class room. I have appreciated the opportunity and was thankful to the professors who let me sit in. I met an elderly Hawai'i lady, coming to class covered with fresh tropical flowers. She was happy, a pure native elegant lady, wearing a long, stylish dress, a colourful "muumuus", with the loveliest flower lei. We became friends, sharing herbal tea in the shade. I was inquisitive. So was she. I have learnt much about the Hawaiians' traditional way of life.

Beside these courses I visited the multitude of Honolulu museums, art festivals and exhibits. Among all, I enjoyed the huge lava rock Bishop Museum, built in 1892. It is an exquisite show case of the Kamehameha dynasty and became the foremost museum of the Polynesian culture in the world. I enjoyed their programs of ancient Hawai'i.

My other favourite is Honolulu Academy of Arts. I spent afternoons in the Asian Galleries. I have been there when they opened the original Hiroshige pictures for viewing. The collection is a generous present to the museum by James A. Michener. It was a big celebration, with a lovely music and hundreds of us adoring the originals, fantastic renditions of early 19th Century life in Japan. In the 70-s Honolulu was opening new, small museum. Arts were in style,

and Waikiki had many of painting exhibition retail establishment. In any one I walked in, I was welcomed to adore the pictures without any pressure to by any. It was there, one morning that I found myself in a rather unusual collection of pictures. The artist, Salvador Dali appeared, with very heavy makeup on. We shook hands, I tried to find a proper compliment for his art, something like this: "so different from anything in my experience, yet so provocative". I was lucky to have visited his shop the right time. I enjoyed my visits.



At the very unique Painted Church on the way to Kailua Kona on the Big Island 1994.

While in Honolulu, I had been able to see in the Spalding House (Honolulu Museum of Arts) the original of what became my favourite painting of modern art, David Hockney's (1983): *L' Enfant et les Sortilèges*. My eyes and senses walked with the six most graceful children, all full of life, youthful as well as celebratory grace and elegance. The colours are vivid green-blues, with the artistic touches of gold. I learned in my readings that Hockney's painting inspired the Ravel's opera, staged in the New York's Metropolitan Opera House.

Every Friday we attended the free concert by the Royal Hawaiʻian Band in the garden of the Iolani Palace. We both loved the exquisite solos by the noted hula dancer Piʻilani Smith.



Behind me is the Vaipiʻo Valley on Maui. It is a sacred site for Hawaiians. The few inhabitants are devoted to the Hawaiian traditional way of life in harmony with the environment.

On the Big Island is a well-organized and beautifully illustrated Puuhonua O Honaunau National Historical Park. It is a sacred site, a place of refuge. I was fascinated by what I have learnt about the ways of the ancient Hawaiian people.



At Puʻuhonua O Honaunau National Historical Park on the Big island 1997. A depository of bones of the chiefs.



A day in 1986 Martha perched on a palm tree enjoyed the cool breeze from the sea at Punalu'u Beach Park a short ride from Volcano village. A decade later in 1997 on the same beach I met a large green turtle sunbathing. It did not care about me.



The carved ornamental Hawai'i prayer pieces held the bones of Hawaiian royalty at Pu'uho'oua point. Puako petroglyphs near Waimea on the Big Island. The carvings are records of significant events reaching back centuries.

People think of Waikiki, the minute Hawai'i is mentioned. It is an interesting, usually crowded, very friendly resort city with a long beach facing the coral reef and the open ocean. Attractive, it offers something to everybody, and has its own big-time resort atmosphere at a reasonable price. Anytime it is well comparable to any of the world's luxury beach resorts, but not expropriated for use by the rich social stratum. It has its own unique atmosphere, and its own super elegance without much garishness. Elegant stores and restaurants catering to tourists of any financial status, can be found by the hundreds, satisfying every taste on the globe. To be noted is the ABC chain of variety stores, and others like ABC, carry most things a tourist may need at a cut-rate price. Fast food chains sell their menu items at the same price as anywhere on the Islands. This is so unlike the resort cities of the European Riviera, where I have first-hand experience. In Waikiki, the beaches are free public places, open to all, rich or poor alike, with unrestricted access from any point through any resort hotel on Kalakaua Avenue and anywhere else. All beaches have drinking water, changing buildings, fresh water shower and life guards free for all users.

Waikiki beach is second to none for swimmers and surfers on all level of expertise. What Waikiki offers is taken granted by the locals and others from the United States and Canada. First time visitors from Europe wonder how could it be this way, but they get very quickly used to the Waikiki way. It is an experience to take a walk on Kalakaua Avenue, use the beach, sit in the sand or any beach bar, embrace your friend or mate, or just do nothing at all, just enjoy watching the world go by.

The sunsets are fabulous on Waikiki. Our favourite spot for the pre-evening hours is the beach bar of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. But anywhere on the beach is a good place to settle down and watch the rapidly progressing tropical sunset over the Ocean, unfolding in exploding colours of gigantic proportions. The sky is in flames as the increasingly larger sun is fast sinking into the ocean's horizon. The most dramatic display of colours lasts for a few minutes and then the sun sets, for soon darkness sets in, and romance arrive.

During the weekends we enjoyed the beach life. One day we decided on Sandy Beach Park, a place for strong surfers and rough ocean water swimmers. A very popular beach on the open ocean, and a wonderful, scenic part of Oahu island. It is about one kilometer long with wide, thick and very warm sand around it. A unique place, one of the best for master surfers and boogie boarders. I did not dare the waves. They tend to be large, irregular and permanent. The beach is always full of young people of heavenly muscles, perfect physical shapes, with sun-deranged yellow hair, and noisy, very bold behaviour. A greatest amusement is to sit on the sand and just watch the action, which is moving, continuous, fast, and at times so daredevil that it takes one's breath away.

Martha wanted to try the waves when she was 14. She brought a school friend along. They were paddling on their boogie board at the edge of the waves, among hundreds of others. László and I sat on the sand and watched them. It was a clear day and Molokai Island could be seen unaided 35 kilometres away. Between the Sandy Beach and Molokai, there is a fast moving ocean current called by locals Molokai Express. Martha and her friend negotiated the first wave and did what all others do: paddle out to catch the next wave and surf on it. But it was not that we saw them to do. They appeared drifting further and further out. Having heard about the Molokai Express, we thought they were caught up in it. We knew they did not have experience or strength to handle the strong current at Sandy's. Other surfers on big boards further out must have decided these two young girls went far enough and took them on tow. They came to shore, but protested the suggestion that they were drifting out. They were just enjoying themselves like other Hawai'ians.

On one occasion, in late November in 1986, the second place winner of the ongoing International Surfing Competition on that day passed by us on the way out. László politely greeted him and asked if he would answer a question. Of course, he said, and stopped. László told him that we saw him go under when a mountain of a wave collapsed onto him. Then asked "what did you do to survive". "Nothing", he answered, "just relaxed". It is best just be relaxed, he continued, and not to fight the water. He knew that usually, after less than 17 seconds, the water will bring the person up. But at that moment the person must be ready to take in a full lung of air. He warned, never fight the water. Let the water take you, and you survive. Neither of us tested his theory.

Surfers are masters of the big waves. It was exciting to watch them on the North Shore during international competitions which always attracts large crowds. We arrived early with plenty of supplies, cold drinks and sandwiches.



We stayed on the shore for hours and watched the surfers high flying acts.

Big guys coming in from the big surf. The second did not have luck that day. I can imagine, the wave collapsed on him, and I am

certain he knew the basic rules of survival: 1. Do not fight the water, relax, you will surface,

usually in not more than 17 to 20 seconds. 2. Be ready to take a deep breadth of air (not foam).
 Right: A young local boy entertained the onlookers near the beach on his boggy board. Waimea Bay 2012.

I should mention it is wise and safest to swim only at designated beaches where life guards are present. The water is lovely anywhere, but most sections of the shore is dangerous. Ala Moana, a city beach, is my all-time favourite for swimming. For walking and just enjoying myself, my favourite is Kailua Beach, running for many kilometres in a horseshoe shape. Most morning I walked the beach, at the edge of the water, where the gentle waves stroked my feet. The landscape was profuse, surface patterns changing with every step. Mostly alone, I could listen to the sounds of the beach like a concert. I had a grand time.

At Ala Moana beach, there is a 800 m long stretch of quiet water protected by the coral reef. The golden sand is hugging the blue ocean. I usually dashed into the water and swim the whole length of the Ala Moana. Always, it was a real treat. At Waikiki and Ala Moana the sand is replenished by periodic dredging. Ala Moana beach is part of a large treed park, well served with drinking water, showers, toilets, change facilities, and with lifeguards. These are regular conditions and free in all recreation beaches in Hawai'i.



Leaving Vancouver on board of Carnival's Spirit for Honolulu in 2003. Lyon Gates bridge and Stanley park in background. With fellow travellers at dinner on Carnival Spirit.



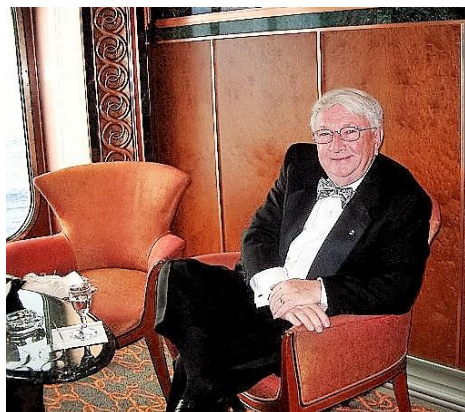
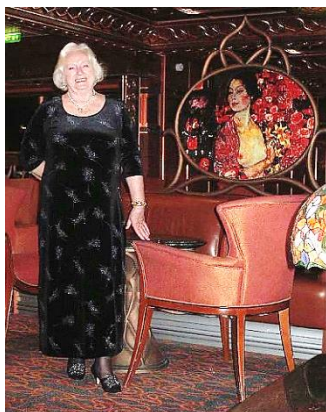
On the open seas on the way to Honolulu 2006. In Harbour at the Aloha Tower in Honolulu 2006.



At the Royal Hawaiian Hotel in Waikiki 2006.



Near one of the artwork on Carnival's Spirit on the 2006 cruise from Vancouver to Honolulu. Posing with the Italian Captain at Galla night onboard Carnival Spirit 2006.



Onboard Carnival Spirit 2006



Fellow travelers Tereza & Luciano Ferrari with us at Pu'u Ula'ula crater on Haleakala off Carnival's Spirit, Maui 2003. With our earlier neighbour and good friend, Bobby Lozaf on Main Street, Lahaina 2003.



László's nice Kati Szűcs visiting us in Lahaina. At Kapalua (on left) Beach and Haleakala crater (on right) 2002.



Royal Carribbean Rhapsody of the Seas anchored off Lahaina harbour, Maui 2014. Passengers commuted between ship and shore by the ship's tenders, running continuously.



Afternoon concert on board Carnival Rhapsody of the Seas 2014. On the left I am with the Hungarian chief of food services on Rhapsody and the Chief Shef 2015. This was the last run of Rhapsody from Vancouver to Sydney. The staff spared no effort to make it the best experience for the passangers. I found the Rhapsody giving us the friendliest cruise of my considerable experience.



On shore from Carnival Rhapsody on Maui. On board for dinner 2014.



Hilo Bay as seen from the deck of Carnival Rhapsody 2014. Note the shape of the majestic Mauna Kea in background. Its height tops 4000 meters. Vertical distortion applied to this photograph to enhance the finer topographic feature.. Note the “soldiere” type cloud formation.



I am at one of the giant fig trees on Main Street in Lahaina. The air was laden with vog and humidity. It was unbearably hot. Right: VOG! VOG! VOG! I sweated and came close to my body's tolerance for ambient heat and humidity in this sea side café on the Main Street of Lahaina 2014.



Breadfruit, the plant species about which the story of the ill-fated journey of the Royal Navy's HMS Bounty to Tahiti revolves. I tried breadfruit cooked. I gave up on it. Potatoes are preferred as a source of starch on my dining table.

After László's change of status to Emeritus Professor in 1995, our returns to Hawai'i became an annual event. We usually left before the 15th of December still in the low season for flights, and stayed on for months. Some years we arrived early by sea, taking cruise ships by which sailed out of Vancouver late in September. The cruise takes 11 to 12 days, 5 to 6 to reach the island and the rest to visit ports which usually include Hilo, Lahaina, Kahului, and Na-Willi Willi before docking at the Aloha Tower harbour in Honolulu. I loved the leisurely life on board, breakfast in the fresh breeze on deck, surrounded by the Pacific Ocean's rolling blue waves. During lunch-hour we ate at different dining facilities. The afternoon tea was a happy hour, with live classical music, played by a well-known musical ensemble. The tea was enriched with marvelous pastries. Dinners were formal. I adored the festivities and the entertainment which I could choose from the many different kind, offered to the two

thousands passengers on board. Wonderful music and a little dancing filled the evenings.

Priceless is the perfect winter climate of Hawai'i, the long walks on the sea-shore, swimming at my favourite beaches, and the rich concert and theatre life offered on the Islands. One of the musicals, 'Ulalena, which literally translated is the name of the soft wind taken from Kumulipo, an ancient creation chant of the Hawaiians. But the show is rather like a storm in social statements against the Hawaiian peoples oppression and exploitation by foreigners who take the islands away from them.

On our latest sojourn to Hawai'i in 2014 September, we sailed on Royal Caribbean's Rhapsody of the Sea, a medium sized cruise ship out of Vancouver. We disembarked in Honolulu 11 days later. The Rhapsody sailed on to Sidney with a replenished complement of more than 2000 passengers. The day we arrived, Honolulu was in the grips of the Kona weather, unusually hot and humid. The same weather continued with no relief day or night.

One day we went out to Turtle Bay, one of our favourite beaches at Oahu. We had lunch at the beach restaurant and went for a stroll around the bay. It was a mistake. The heat and high humidity got the better of me. I came to the point of total exhaustion. László sat me down under a palm tree and went back to get the car. By the time he came to pick me up a few minutes later he had to carry me back to the car. The cool air in the air-conditioned car helped to recover.



In the evenings in Lahaina Harbor, we would be sitting outside in the bar of Pioneer Hotel Inn, waiting for the spectacular sun set as the Molokai Princess untied itself from the docks departing from Lahaina harbour for the last run of the day to Molokai.

My medication failed to relieve my back pain.

Each day I felt more and more desperate. We decided to cut our stay short by four weeks and returned home for treatment.

The Hawaiian climate has changed. Global warming started to have its effect. The trade winds out of the North which accounted for the pleasant balmy climate weakened. The Kona weather which brings hot humid air, and Big Island vog (air polluted by volcanic fumes) brought new problems to houses that did not need air conditioning. Placing windows well positioned on opposite sides of the house made the flow-through perfect. The trade winds did the air conditioning. Even the local people are not prepared for such a dramatic change in the climate.



Montpellier

Early June in 1975, we flew to Paris, picked up a car and drove south to Montpellier for two weeks of scientific meeting and an extensive field trips through the Moguelones, the Les Cevennes, and Camargue. Martha came with us. Our ad hoc visit with Professor Braun-Blanquet at his estate in Montpellier was an unexpected event. He was in his 10th decade of life, famous for creating the science of phytosociology. László corresponded with him before, but never had a chance to meet the grand old man. He was kind, very inquisitive, even had questions from Martha, who earlier received from Professor Braun-Blanquet's elderly daughter fresh-picked figs just as we were walking up on the estates road, toward the mansion. We were asked to sign his visitor's book, and leave a photograph for him. We departed with a feeling of having been highly honoured.

We returned to Paris for winding down after the very demanding program. From there, László and Martha went back home to London. I took the train to Budapest. I very much wanted to see my mother. Her condition improved somewhat. She could walk short distances with aid.



New terms, old meaning

Not long ago I came upon the term “bio-protection”, a fashionable description of something old and well known to foresters: the forest protects the site. New interest in this came about by the discovery that the forest cover guards the ancient structures from rain, wind and sun damage. The forest cover protected the historical structures 10 times longer than those without it. For many years archaeologists thought that the root system of the trees penetrates into the structure of archaic buildings, by doing so, destroys the structure, therefore through decades they cut off the trees. It was easy to see this protection by observing a collapsed building, with

trees growing on top of it. Trees are holding the collapsed material together, creating a protective net with their ever branching crown and roots.

Temples and other structures build in the 9th and 14th Centuries at the Angkor UNESCO Heritage Site prove the important preservation ability of the forest cover. I am sure it works for us also. I am encouraged to suggest that the protective function of living trees is supremely important in the preservation of the environment at large. Hopefully enough people will see this and stand up against deforestation for the upkeep of the Planet's high biodiversity as well as preserving our civil heritage.



Home in Canada again

We moved to a bigger home in 1976 on Cottonwood Crescent in London. I created the flower garden in front of the house, dug a small vegetable garden, in the large backyard, and planted three fruit trees. I was successful. After two more years we started to have peaches, prunes and apples from the trees. In the following years we had more home-grown fruit than we could handle ourselves.

We received a lovely silver fir tree from our friends Dave and Carol Walden when we moved in. Dave was the professor of genetics in the same department as László and had been a friend since 1965. The silver fir is a giant tree now,



well over 30 years old, a reminder of our younger years. We sold the Cottonwood Crescent house some time ago.

Our house on Cottonwood in London.

We were a comfortable 200 meters from Emily Carr, Martha's elementary school,

and even less than that from a well-equipped playground. She got a puppy, named Betyár, a faithful friend, best playmate, and a guard at home. She understood commands on two languages. We all loved her, she was part of the family for 13 years.



In snowy winter on Cottonwood Crescent. Martha past ten. With Betyár, our bilingual *Canis familiaris*.



Martha's best friend Patricia Campbell. The two are fishing at Turkey Point on Lake Erie, Ontario 1978.



Under the peach tree which I have planted in the backyard of our Cottonwood house.

Our neighbours were young and pleasant people. Just from a few houses up the street Martha found a friend of her age, Patricia Campbell. They became friends for life. They met after school, often had milk and Oreo cookies for an afternoon snack, as they watched cartoons on the TV. They managed to spend a few hours together, almost every day. The two of them went on a European tour on the summer of 1983, visited relatives in Germany and Hungary and then continued on to Rome. By “coincidence” László was teaching a course at the Sapienza Università Roma at that time and they could stay with him while in Rome. I felt it was a life-time experience for both. Trish, is a much loved and treasured family friend. She is an optometrist and mother of two. Martha and Patricia still meet frequently and spend time together.



Statistical ecology

When László joined Professor Peter Greig-Smith’ quantitative ecology lab in Bangor as NATO Science Fellow, the use of the computer was in its infancy in Ecology. The College received its first computer, an ELLIOTT 803, shortly before we arrived. Having been the most active in multivariate analysis, the new computer was a virtual domain of the quantitative ecology lab. I spent much time with László creating tapes on the lab’s flexowriter for the Elliott 808 which had an optical tape reader for input and a tape punch for output. Occasionally the mechanism tore the tape or the punch holes were incorrect. I had learn how to make seamless repairs and restart the processing. We wrote application programs and performed all analyses on the Newborough Warren data on the ELLIOTT 803. Our paper, in which we published the results in 1965, became an ISI Citation Classic.

László published many scientific papers by the time of his promotion to full professor at the University of Western Ontario (UWO) in 1972. He was unusually productive and gained international reputation for his originality. His first overview of the field of statistical ecology, and a detailed account of his work on creating paradigm defining conceptual worlds, reached publication in 1978 under the title “Multivariate Analysis in Vegetation Research”. MAVR is considered a classic for its original ideas. I gave my help in all phases of the preparations of a definitive manuscript, which is acknowledged in the books Preface.

I drew figures, created the data tables and worked over a year, several hours daily. I gave it my best attention. I was not always enthusiastic, it was a huge, time and attention consuming work. Writing a book is a heavy professional

commitment, that demands time and total attention. Often it creates tension and a great deal of debates, with plenty of arguments. After a few weeks nothing else is left to talk about, nobody and nothing is as important as the book. But after so much work it was satisfying to see the results, years of hard work in print. With its publication, the news of László's novel ideas quickly spread. Bob Gittins, a visiting scientist with László, told me afterwards, the book's contents were way ahead of its time. Interests arose and expressions of intentions for co-operation with László proliferated. László's reach in his science have become truly global.¹⁴



New Mexico

László went on sabbatical leave and chose the Botany Department at New Mexico State University, in Las Cruces, to do research and graduate teaching for the winter semester in 1987. I was looking forward for the experience in this Latino dominated U.S. state on the border to Mexico.

The USA took formal possession of the territories of New Mexico, Texas and California and some parts of Nevada and Utah for a mere 18.25 million dollars in 1847. The sale was enacted as the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. The acquired territories were part of Mexico. Considered too arid, therefore worthless, and just a wasteland (which it is not), General Sherman wanted to give the territory back to Mexico.

New Mexico is an archaeologist's heaven. It had continuous human habitation for several millennia and at least for 1000 years by the Pueblo Indians. Spaniards and Anglos were just colonisers. New Mexico has an immensely rich cultural tradition, many types of life-modes flourish, many languages spoken, and a variety of religions cater to the diverse population.

Yes, New Mexico is an arid land in most parts, but to me it has the most picturesque landscape, fine forests, and unique types of biota. There are large tracks of grasslands and fertile soils suitable for agricultural use. The Rio Grande supplies water for large pecan plantations, the orchards are flooded each Spring. So much water is taken out that by the time the river enters into Texas very little water remains in the river.

To underline the decreasing water level, I witnessed several times, during daylight, that people, mainly women and children were walking across the Rio

¹⁴ The webpage <https://sites.google.com/site/statisticalecology/> contains concise review of our research and publishing activities.

Grande river, from Ciudad Juarez (Mexico), into El Paso (USA). Often the women walked, holding their skirt over their knees, with several children, sometimes heavily pregnant, hoping to deliver an American citizen, once they crossed the river into New Mexico.

Nature created mountains tall enough to display vegetation zones. The colours of the landscape are truly mesmerizing, endlessly changing with the hour of the day and the seasons.

The native peoples' reservations are mostly confined to the desert. I could not resist to enclose an excerpt from one of the 2004 issues of National Geography titled "Indian Country" in America:

"The U.S. government generally defines Indian Country as the roughly 56 million acres that lie within the boundaries of reservations and other lands it recognizes as belonging to American Indians and Alaska Natives. But the borders blur under a morass of multiple ownership and conflicts over sovereignty. Also complicating the picture, some 2.5 million people now define themselves solely as Indians or Alaska Natives, most of whom live beyond the confines of reservations. As they gain economic and political clout, they're changing the face of the nation".

Archaeologists believed for a long time, that the Native people came into North America across the Bering Strait from Asia, during the Ice Age a dozen thousand years ago when a dry land connection existed in Beringia. I thought this route was possible. The topic interested me and for a decade or so I was a volunteer in our local Neutral Indian Museum in London. I was involved in creating an educational program for school children and visitors to the Museum. One day the Elders of the Iroquoians came to visit the Museum. I took them around, showed the illustrations, drawings and maps, with the route drawn in on which their ancestors were supposed to have arrived from Asia into North America. They were turning their heads and made it obvious that they did not find the map to their liking. One of the Elders stood up and said "All lies, total lies, created by the white people". The another Elder added: "Our ancestors, or any tribes of the First Nations, were not immigrants. We knew for sure that we were on this Continent always, all the time, forever!" This is why we call them "First Nation". I love the term. They do not want to share, to any extent, the reasons of their being on this continent with the Europeans who invaded their land and stayed.

I was shocked, I had to act as a good host, and pacify them before they all would leave. I invited them to sit down with me and tell me their story. They just repeated: "We were always here." Then they left in disgust. This happened

in the 1980's. I felt troubled by the incident. I spoke about it with the archaeologists of the museum. They shrugged it off.

I am a firm believer of verbal preservation of history. One thing is sure, the Beringia story of their arrival is no longer fashionable in science. The story was not forgotten by me. I still remember their total frustration and my hopeless situation.

Some time ago, narrated in an issue of National Geographic¹⁵, divers entered a flooded cave, Hoyo Negro, in Mexico and what they found more than surprised them. A perfect skull of a 12 thousand year old little girl dubbed Naia lay on the sandy bottom in the crystal clear water among many bones of largely extinct animals. The remains were suitable for DNA identification and comparative study with Anzick, the 12 years old boy's remains, which were recovered from a 12.5 thousand year old grave in Montana. The DNA markers of Naia and Anzick identified a Paleo-American genome unquestionably ancestral to native peoples of the Americas.

Others discovered important differences between the Paleo-American Indians and the present Native Americans. From these, one can conjure a broader origin, some definitely Asian. There are unique DNA markers of our First Nations, the results of mutation which indicate isolation for much longer than 10 thousand years. These markers are present in Naia and Anzick and only in our Native Indians DNA. For sure they are not immigrants in the modern sense of the word, long-time inhabitants in the Americas.

The descendants of the Paleo-Indian tribes, in the South West (parts of Colorado, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico), are the native North Americans, still within their ancient home land.

Travelling in New Mexico state I saw often the amalgamation of ancient Indian mythological elements with Christian creationism. Both are well recognized, in the native art form of the South-West. We know that the Indians are descendants of the ancient population of the region. Their homes are telling much of their everyday life in ancient times. Their homes, paintings, potteries and weavings are unique national treasures.

Taos is the most famous of the Eight Northern Pueblos which is what they call the Ancestral Pueblos of the Four Corners (New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Colorado states). It is considered the oldest, continuously occupied settlement in the United States, looking back on more than a thousand years. The buildings are multi-story, adobe, in a unique construction style. The Taos Pueblo is standing proudly at the foot of a stunning Sangre de Cristo mountain.

¹⁵ Glen Hodges, "The first American", National Geographic, January, 2015.

The highlight of my visit to Taos was the visit to the Church of San Gerónimo. A spiritual, original, artistic wonderland. The religious symbols are mixing tribal and Christian motifs. The central theme appears to be about corn and sun. Corn is a prominent symbol in the Native's religion. It represents reproductive power. The sign of the sun is the secret element, not a deity of the Pueblo culture, but it is always present. Corn nourishes them and the Sun grows the corn. I feel envious when I compare this to the Baroque symbolic representations and the complex, convoluted, circular logic of my born religion.

Among many famous ancient sites to which I love to return to are the Gila Cliff Dwellings, well within comfortable one day outing from Las Cruces. It is approachable only on foot from the parking lot on a good climb in the hot day, but it is an archaeological site worth returning to see and contemplate. It was home of the Mogollon people, in the 12th and 13th Century. The Mogollons are another ancient group, who occupied a large section of the South-West.



“Kachina doll making today involves both tradition and artistry. Kachina dolls are traditionally carved from the roots of cottonwood trees which once were abundant on and near the Hopi lands. The Hopi word for cottonwood root is paako, which means water wood, and the cottonwood root's ability to seek and find abundant water mirrors the ability of the katsinam to do the same for the Hopi people.” Posted by Ed Conti, Long Island Wood Carvers Association.

Among my precious interests are the Hopi kachina dolls, which are the subject of Hopi ceremonies, storytelling, and creation myth. They tell all about the Hopi's Peoples' life. It can be an individual, specific secretive symbol of a

Hopi individual. They are faith-life-guides, given at birth. They are treated with respect as amulets, and definitely not toys.

Another place I like to return, now in my memories, is the Santuario de Chiyayo, a small, very exalted pilgrim church, to the north of Santa Fe in New Mexico. Built around the 17th Century, in the foothills of the majestic Sangre de Cristo Mountain, near Taos. It is an exquisite adobe pilgrimage church, with daily service and a museum. It is believed that the soil under the chapel has healing power. Perhaps because of this, the adobe church is very popular among the handicapped. I collected some soil from the healing crater, standing

in line for it. The whole visit is very vivid in my mind as a very solemn, spiritual experience.



The Sanuario de Chiyayo north of Santa Fe, New Mexico, dating back to the 17th Century.

New Mexico and the other South-Western States are well known for original pueblo pottery. Each pueblo (village) has its own styles and designs. The art is very old, very important, highly artistic, most are collector's items, and are also profitable.

The creation-method using earth, water and fire, emphasizes the importance of these three natural elements in their faith. I have a small singing, altar-boy statuette, done by Juan Sandoval, from Taos. It was \$60 many years ago. I could not resist it. Juan Sandoval's clay art became famous world-wide.



Altar-boy by Juan Sandoval and Francis of Assisi by Ben Ortega. I bought these pieces in Taos,

I hope my remembrances of this very unique state, its natural beauty and original artistic riches of N.M. entice you to visit. I loved all the natural and

manmade treasures of New Mexico. The desert, its vicinity and their settlers inspired me. If you read Hungarian, I wrote a short story about the Papago tribes of the South West: *"Papago Indiánok az óriáskaktuszok országában"* (1011), the title translated *"Papago Indians in the land of the Giant Cactus"*.



Yucca cross I bought in a bookstore directly off the wall in Mesilla, New Mexico.

Las Cruces is a university town in southern New Mexico, close to the Mexican border, in the middle of the Creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*) desert. Our colleagues, gave us a very friendly reception, and the department provided house trailer for us to live in. It faced the Organ Mountains in a picturesque site on the south edge of town. Soon after arriving we met with Marsha Stephens, one of the best botanists in the area. She helped us in our orientation. My daughter Martha came to visit us in spring-break from London, Ontario. She brought with her Grant Maltman, a friend. They

both were taking second year at the University of Western Ontario at that time. We took them around for site seeing along a thousand kilometre stretch of Interstate 10.



In the Chihuahua desert near Las Cruces 1986. The tall plants are yucca.

The art of silver smithing is well known in the Southwest, a number of small studios carried gem-stones, and beautiful local jewellery in Las Cruces. Santa Fe was my favourite city, a wonderful collection of native art and Spanish

architecture. Every morning the city posted a native art exhibit, by the walls of the city hall. These creations are originals, sold by the maker. I had never seen such a glorious collection of handmade jewellery and fantastic pottery. Affordable originals were shown in the weekly market, at Las Cruces. I was dazzled by the great variety of native creations, using turquoise and silver. I stood in line for several hours to attend the opening of the Georgia O'keefee

Museum. I loved most of her work, now I had a chance to see the originals. I spent a joyous day among her masterpieces.

Just on the west side of Las Cruces is a small Mexican settlement, Mesilla, on the old Mexican El Camino Royal. The population kept the Mexican adobe style on the central square, the city plaza is surrounded by stores, restaurants and a church. The old Post and Courthouse are there. The information poster points out Billy the Kid, the famous western bandit, was sentenced to death at the Courthouse.

We were frequent visitors on the plaza, dining at excellent restaurants, enjoying good wine with Mexican food. I felt at home, among these rustic, old Mexican buildings, was happy and relaxed. I spent many hours in the excellent, huge, used bookstore, it was treasure-hunting time, when one day I found a very old crucifix, handmade of straw and yucca shoots, hanging very lonely, above an old, dusty book shelf. I loved it! It reminded me of the straw folk arts I grew up with, in Transylvania. The old Cross was sold for me for \$5. It still hangs on my bedroom wall as a spiritual memento from the Mesilla days.



An esthetical outstanding desert plant, the Ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*). Fences of ocotillo are frequent, created by long cuttings pushed into the ground. The fence will bloom following substantial rain, even after a long dormant period.

Las Cruces is on a high plateau more than 1,500 m above the sea level in the northern corner of the Chihuahua Desert, which extends deeply southward into Mexico. There, innumerable rows of the familiar creosote bush grows, evergreen, a marker plant of the desert. It covers

waste territories. The shrub itself has small leaves and tiny yellow flowers. The crushed foliage smells like creosote, not very pleasant. Creosote is a rather short shrub on poor soils, but may grow to two meters high or higher. Its range extends over the Chihuahua, Sonoran and Mojave desert. Our main research site was a long belt transect from the arroyo up the piedmont into the rocky hill behind in the famous Jordana del Muerto. The true desert conditions make the name well-deserved. It is a hot desert with low precipitation, presenting a

beautiful landscape with yucca plants dominating the view. We spent many days out on the Jornada transect, always well outfitted for the desert conditions, and walked with a long stick, hitting the grass ahead of us to warn the snakes of our approach. One morning we started with the marking of the corners of the research plot in a rather open Creosote shrub community on the piedmont. We finished marking the four corners, then returned to the first which the warm morning sun was striking from the east. Luckily the rattler coiled up at the base of the nearest Creosote bush, hardly a meter from me. It is very likely it was there all along, but I did not notice it. We were lucky.



At the arboretum in Phoenix, Arizona 1977.

Jornada del Muerto is named properly, considering the environmental conditions over its entire extent of thousands of square kilometres. There is no drinking water anywhere and the daytime temperature is hot (35 C, or over) and sunny. But for the pioneers it offered a short cut, behind the mountains, in relative safety from the Apache attacks, compared the alternative route along the Rio Grande. Many of those who attempted the crossing of Jornada did not make it out of the unforgiving, hot desert.



Working at the Hornada el Muerto long-term ecological research site, New Mexico.

I usually feel comfortable in any type of natural setting, but I never made friends with the snakes. Well, I had my own experiences in New Mexico and Arizona. When we started our field work in January László got a large yucca stick and he knocked the ground and vegetation ahead of us to announce our presence. The place was full of snakes. Among others, the Mojave rattlesnake (*Crotalus scutulatus*), and Western Diamondback (*C. atrox*) were our company. They quietly rolled up and not once László had called out “*Marta, do not*

move” the snake is behind you, ahead of you, and like that - then I froze, until it was safe to move.

One morning we were travelling with 3 male European colleagues on Interstate 10 to Arizona. I asked László that when suitable bush or tree comes up on the roadside, please stop, I needed cover! There are not many bushes in the desert, but one was coming up, I went behind the bush. It was urgent. The minute I lowered myself, a loud rattle went off, signalling its owner’s frightful presence, about a meter away. I jumped, and run as fast as a trained sprinter. It is a very distinct, sharp sound, quite unforgettable. I should have known this, since every bush is a potential home for several creatures in the desert that can harm you, if not kill you. But I had no choice.

Months of field research in New Mexico was my introduction to the unique flora of the Southwest desert. I worked hard and my co-operation with László bore its fruit in the idea of edge detection by what became the methods of multiscale statistical trajectory analysis.¹⁶

The cacti were flowering for some time in the Spring. We drove down to Tucson to finish a vegetation transect in the Santa Catalina Mountains overlooking Tucson and took a side trip to the eastern part of the Saguaro National Monument. I remember the picturesque site walking on the trail among the giant Saguaro (*Carnegiea gigantea*), spaced out at a regular distance from one another, towering over the thicket of flowering yellow paloverde (*Cercidium microphyllum*). I marvelled, walking in the almost artistic, unreal beautiful giant cacti forest, each carrying numerous huge flower buds on top of their arms, looking

¹⁶ Orlóci, L. and M. Orlóci. 1991. Edge detection in vegetation: Jornada revisited. Kluwer Academic Publishers, London. Orlóci, L. and M. Orlóci. 1988. On recovery, Markov chains and canonical analysis. *Ecology* 69:1260:1265.

like a new hat, vivid tufts, ready to open. It was a fascinating landscape, escorted by the vivacious concert of the multitude of insects. It was very hot, 38 C in the shade. Snakes unseen or heard, only few birds were present feeding on cacti tufts. I met a fast running roadrunner with a long lizard held securely between its beak. The barren rocky slope of a mountain dominated the background, all under the hot sun, striking down from a vivid blue sky. I thought of the best impressionist landscapes and I wished I could paint this cacti forest.

Perhaps I said too much about New Mexico, but I could not resist to recall about the eventful and happy days I spent in that wonderful part of the world. In our wanderings later on, we frequently found ourselves returning to the Southwest. I feel as if the robust saguaro, the slender and exquisitely beautiful, ocotillo, the several ecotypes of the creosote bush, paloverde and others of those though, hardy plants of the desert became my new friends. Their images and colours are woven in my memories. I felt something I call spiritual, which I used to feel among the trees, shrubs and flowers of my forest home on the Hargita. I hope to return.

Northern Ontario



The best time to visit the North is in August when the days are still warm, but the nights are cold, and the mosquitoes are not so numerous and the black-flies are gone. A feeling of total freedom comes over me when I catch site of the flat, clay belt looking down from the edge of granite pavement of the Continental Shield on Highway 11. This is the place where, for me, the true North begins. What a grand landscape What an open, limitless vista, extending to the farthest horizon where the sky meets the flat Boreal landscape.



My photograph shows the landscape where the northern flat land, called clay belt, meets the granite shield to south near Seseikinika on Hwy 11 (58.2° N). Agriculture extended onto the southern portion of the flat land, called clay belt, after clearing land in the boreal forest. On right, the railroad station at Frazerdale (49.8° N).

Late summer in 1969 we drove up all the way to Frazerdale, north of Smooth Rock Falls where the Polar Bear Express has a station. The train comes from Cochrane on the way to its northern terminal in Moosonee (51.28° N, 80.63° W). The train has no regular stations after Frazerdale, except in Moosonee. Passengers who wish to get off have to request a stop at a particular km. Those who wish to get on the train have to flag the train down on the side of the tracks. We took the train to Moosonee and a large canoe to Moose Factory on an island in the river. The two sister settlements are within reach of James Bay by transport canoes. No highways exist through the vastness of the boreal forest, much of it a muskeg and other wetlands. We waited for the train at Frazerdale. It cannot keep to a refined schedule, since it stops anywhere for people and is often blocked by moose and other animals on the tracks. Martha was unusually restless, but I soon discovered the reason. Black flies found their way under her bonnet. Her ears and scalp were bleeding. I felt awful, but their numbers were growing very rapidly northward. The train arrived 2 hours late. We had a comfortable ride thereafter and had ample time to enjoy the fantastic scenery, rivers, lakes, and the vast, monotone boreal forest. It is a wild terrain. The train slow until it came to full stop. Some people wanted to get on or to get off.



Moosonee nestled on the Moose River in the boreal forest, a mere six kilometres from James Bay on the Moose River. The town is 10 meters above sea level.

Sometime later we stopped again, a big bull moose was standing on the rails facing the engine, elegantly posing with no intention to move, then

slowly he walked away.

Arriving to Moosonee we had to cross the river to get to Moose Factory. A young native gentleman took us across the Moose River in his water taxi. The water was rough, but we were safe in the boat. Moose Factory is an old settlement, with a distinctive wooden church, decorated by Native arts and many flags. All were made from animal hides, perhaps deer. Most were sporting motifs from the local environment, such as oversized butterflies, beautiful flowers and hand painted hide-pictures. The church wall inside was decorated.

The altar-cloth was made of animal hide, an exquisite piece of native art. Martha discovered the painted flags. Sitting in the back career of her dad, she gently touched all of them. She enjoyed being there, all of us felt happy and contented

in this simple, but wonderful spot in an otherwise unforgiving northern landscape. We took a long walk in the small cemetery, to learn the local history of this very isolated village, on the edge of James Bay. We discovered that the church was an active centre of the Natives, managed by Christian missionaries, a good number of whom were laid to rest in the church cemetery.



The Roman Catholic church and cemetery in Moose Factory. Its delicate interior of a northern theme was the highlight of my visit. The church has been sold recently to the Anglican diocese and renovated. It lost much of its native art.

The highlight of the visit was the shore of James Bay. The sun was painting the infinite waters of the ocean in vivid colours around me. A rock-outcrop appeared sculpted gently round, by the ice, water and time, still looking untamed, powerful as it was shining bright silver. This landscape never left my memory, but kept it as a very unique and marvellous experience. The landscape told me of gigantic forces and of never ending power. In fact, that landscape laid depressed under an ice sheet, kilometres deep, until as recently as three or so thousand years ago. At the time

of our visit, in Moose Factory there was no restaurant or overnight accommodation. We took our own food and left with the night train back to Frazerdale where we left our station wagon.



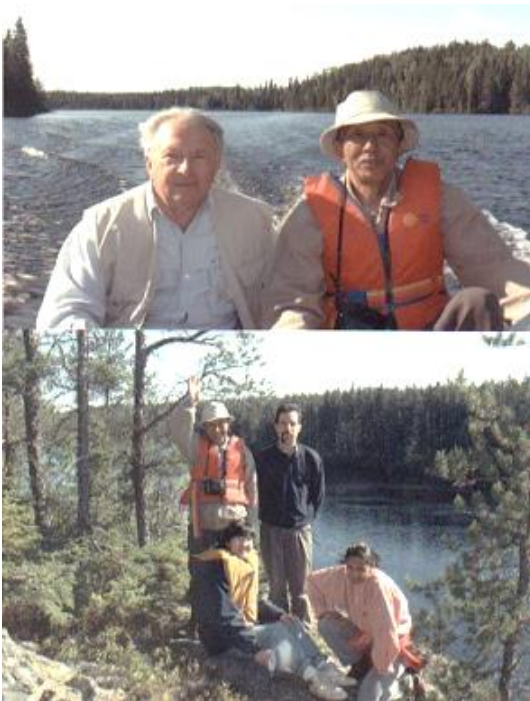
Martha loved the outdoors. On this picture (3) she was picking blueberries (*Vaccinium uliginosum*) in the pine clearing near Elk Lake on the sand flats of the Montreal River basin. On the right: sphagnum bog near the camp.

We drove back to Elk Lake, a guest camp on the edge close to the northern extremity of the Continental Shield. I loved the landscape with lakes and the

watery world of the Montreal River nearby among the giant rock outcrops projecting out of the sand plain. The ambience is definitely Northern where Red Pine and White Pine reach their northern limit and the vast Boreal Forest begins.



The Golden Eagle Camp at Elk Lake and vicinity revisited 2010.



In field research at Elk Lake 1996. In the picture: László, Professor Shauqa Nie from Harbin, China, Prof. Valério Patta-Pillar from Porto Alegre, Brazil, Ph.D. student Anand Madhur, Miss Chan, translator.

Elk Lake was our favourite summer place for many years as Martha was growing up. We spent 4-5 weeks in a small, rented cottage, usually in August, at Elk Lake (ON), enjoying the wild blueberry and raspberry season. The rock outcrops were painted blue, by a crop of wild, tasty and juicy blueberries, not far away from the Montreal River. Martha loved to roam the forest with us. She picked her own blueberries at age 3.

Close by were László's research plots. Italian, Hungarian, Chinese and Brazilian colleagues shared in the special research project there. I often treated our international friends to our local delicacies at the camp: chanterelle stew with dumplings and blueberry strudel. Martha learnt from me quickly what is edible in the forest. The two of us spent many hours picking wild berries and edible

mushrooms. Fresh wild berries and mushrooms are much tastier than the cultivated ones. We got fresh fish from the lakes served as a special Friday dinner barbeque by the camp owners. They were fabulous times, but we had to get used to whatever was left over of the mosquito and black fly populations on the site.



At home in London with colleagues. Left to right: László, myself, Prof. Nie from China, Prof. Otto Wildi from Switzerland, graduate student Madhur Anand.



Trieste to Palermo

I travelled to Italy alone and with László many times. I love the free spirit of the Italian people and their “no hurry” attitude. But to truly enjoy Italy nothing is better than to go “Italian” with Italian friends. We have a good number of them, colleagues and their family members. We were with them on a reciprocity basis. We hosted them in Canada, and they were hosting us in Italy. They gave us the opportunity to see and to truly enjoy the magnificence

of Italy close up.

Of the many places I visited I mention Venice first. Everyone know that Venice started as a place of refuge for the citizens of nearby cities in the coastal

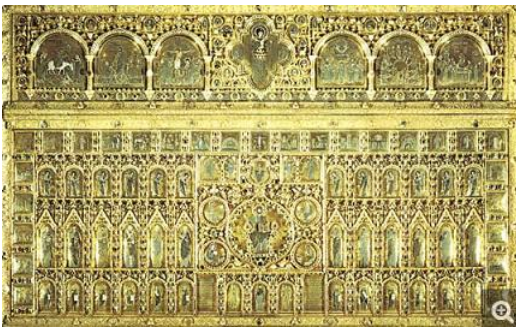
marshes from Germanic and Hun invaders. The place slowly developed into a major Adriatic city and maritime power of high finance and a collection of unique artistic creations acquired over a millennium. Its decline started in the 15th Century when the Turks occupied Constantinople and declared war on Venice.

The city is resting on limestone plates placed on densely set wooden pylons, driven deep into the ocean floor. Relatively recent subsidence of the pylons makes the seasonal high tide flood on the city streets. Then the people walk on boards or knee high in the water. One is able to see the flooding marks on the lower levels in the buildings.

The Piazza in Venice is the finest drawing room in Europe, said Napoleon. When there, I always made time to visit the Piazza at Basilica di San Marco. The Basilica was constructed to house the body of St. Mark, which they stole out of Egypt. The building of the Basilica started in the 11th Century in a Byzantine style. I was struck by its rich decoration, exquisite mosaics, a wonderful testament of its style. The front entrance into the Basilica is an architectural wonder, a mesmerizing Byzantine gate. It invites the visitors to enter from the large piazza.



Above: With László in a side café near San Marcos, Venice in the early 1970s. Right: I am standing among countless pigeons on the Piazza San Marco in the late 1980s.



Left: The Pala d'Oro in San Marco Basilica.

Behind the main altar of San Marco Basilica is my favourite piece: Pala d'Oro, a priceless, handcrafted jewel of Byzantine craftsmanship from the 10-12th century. It is gold, richly decorated with

Byzantine craftsmanship from the 10-12th century. It is gold, richly decorated with

silver and precious stones. I am amazed that such a precious object could survive so many over the disastrous centuries.

The sounds and sights make Venice a romantic city, but it is crowded and very expensive. On the piazza stamp-size tables welcome you to sit down for coffee and enjoy the special milieu. It is a splendid spot to sit, watching the strolling and talking peoples, with the Basilica and lagoon in the background, but be ready to pay an arm and a leg for anything you order. Once in the late 1980s, we were enjoying tea-time music and some beer with friends. At the very next table a Japanese gentleman was having his drink. He refilled his cup, he obviously enjoyed himself. The waiter came and presented a bill to him for 12 thousand liras (approximately \$12-13 for a tea-bag and a pot of hot water). He looked most puzzled, took out his spectacles and inspected the cup and then he turned the tea pot over. He appeared upset and confused. He might have thought, as I read it from his facial expression that he bought the china as well! Finally he rose and left while still looking at his bill while shaking his head with incredibility. Probably he framed the bill as a memento from San Marcos. Incidentally, going just a couple of blocks off San Marcos the prices dropped to a third for tea.

My favourite places around Venice are the nearby islands of Murano, Burano and Torcello. I visited these lovely villages the first time some 40 years ago. The locals were famous glassblower artists. They were creating originals, individual unique pieces, not mass produced jewels. I loved the rustic milieu, talked to the artists, as they created fantastic pieces. I still have a lovely hand-made pendant from Murano I paid \$30 for it then. It was expensive, a lovely original.

I went to Rome almost on each of my visits to Italy. To me this city is sumptuous in structure and adornment, carries a stately grandeur and lavishness all around. In Rome, as a rather good looking blond, I often felt myself in the centre of attention as young men were walking around me, while I enjoyed the aesthetic pleasures. Truly, I did not mind. I loved the lively, friendly, easy-going people. On each visit, meeting our wonderful friends and colleagues was a highlight of my stay.

Considering, that I spent much of my adult life in North America, when in Rome and in much of Italy, I could clearly see the sharply unique imprints of three great, creative cultures. One is the ancient, existing in ruins only, left to posterity by Greeks and others. The next is the very rich, powerful and grandiose Christian churches, and the third, the creation of the modern industrial age. In space, and not just in time, these cultures are sequential. When I entered into a famous church, arrived at a famous square, or observed some engineering marvel, I could be sure that the foundations of where I stood are resting

on something older, created by the predecessors. I felt the experience of continuity in creation, at the junction of the glorious past, and the unknown future.

My favourites are rather unusual when it comes to art. I love tapestries, perhaps because of my younger years when I was an excellent goblin-maker. I have several pieces that I have embroidered. The place which attracted me most to see this kind of art was the Vatican Museum. These pieces were probably done for the pope's enjoyment. Considering the details and expenses involved, only the pope could afford them. They are exquisitely done pieces, marked by stately grandeur. A favourite of mine is the school of Athens. These signature treasures are housed in the Vatican Museum private quarters, (not open to the public), I received a short admittance through a Jesuit friend.

I spent some time in the Sistine Chapel, the private prayer-room of Pope Sixtus IV, completed in 1473. Michelangelo's masterpiece of the Renaissance, the Creation group of frescoes took years to complete. Botticelli and other artist finished the Last Judgement, perhaps the most famous frescoes on the chapel wall. I am sure all visitors, like me, feel mesmerized and somewhat lost among the Sistine Chapel's giant frescoes and masterpieces.

I wanted to experience the Christian environment of worship in ancient Rome. Whatever remained of it, the early places of worship are characterised by utter simplicity. The earliest were secret places. These are the catacombs in Rome. I chose the one on Via Apia Antica and hired a guide. In the chapel I was shown the original Christian praying-corner, without an altar, no benches, no decoration. Only a simple wooden Crucifix standing in the corner marked the home of God. It was a humbling experience to realize that the first Christians only needed the presence of a Crucifix to feel close to God. No frills were possible nor needed. But as I learnt there was competition among the worshipping groups for places closest to the Crucifix.

In 1978, László, Martha and myself travelled by train from Hamburg to Rome. László came to teach a short course at the Istituto per le Applicazioni del Calcolo, in Rome, on quantitative ecology to computer scientists. We arrived a day before Easter Sunday, to a crowded terminal, lined with beggars. My daughter had never seen anything like this, she was giving small change to several. As we were waiting for a cab, she looked back at the beggars and saw the last one she donated to, had no legs minutes ago, suddenly jumped off and ran with a full set of legs. She could not believe the incident, but it ended her sympathy very fast. During this visit Martha wanted a horse-drawn carriage drive, around the famous monuments of Rome, creating quite a show, as the carriage arrived, but the shoes of the horses were sending out spars on the cobble stone surface. Well, my horse-loving daughter did not like the treatment of the horses. She refused the drive. She felt sorry for the horses all day.

László had a rented car and next day we went to the seashore for a good walk and some tasty ice cream in Ostia, the ancient port of Rome. It started as a happy, relaxing afternoon, a perfect family day. The sea was at its best. We went for a walk. On the way back to the parking lot he saw from a distance that the lid of the car's trunk was wide open. It was completely emptied. This time my handbag saved the family. I had, on me, the numbers of all stolen documents, traveller checks and plenty of cash. We went to the carabinieri (the Italian gendarme) to report it. We got a shrug of the shoulder from the officer and an address in Rome where these cases are handled. When we appeared, the place, the size of a metropolitan police station, was full of complainants, all tourists who were robbed in the same day in the region. We eventually received an official statement that we were robbed including the items we declared on a form. We had to visit the Canadian Consulate to get new passports which were quickly issued, thanks to having had the specifics which I had in my notebook. The Consul told us, that he just closes his own car's trunk lid with a light wire, to tell the thief there is nothing of value to be stolen. We never left anything of value in the car on subsequent visits.

In 1982, I was invited by our Italian colleges to join László on his lecture tour and field research in Italy. Enrico Feoli, a professor at the University of Trieste and long standing friend was our host. By that time mutual hosting has been established with him. He had research projects with László and a number of times visited Canada. They organised scientific meetings, or taught international short courses at universities and scientific research centres in countries on several continents.

The 1982 lecture tour took an enormous amount of work to prepare and required a special grant from Italian Government to complete. Activities were arranged at Universities in Trieste, Perugia, Camerino, Rome, Sassari, Palermo, and Catania, over the whole length of Italy. The highlight of the trip was hard science. My aim was to concentrate on some of the side trips and to visiting many universities, grand cities and enjoying the lovely Italian country side.

We took off from Trieste, a city at the head of the Adriatic Sea, where on Italy borders with Slovenia and Croatia. The city extends from lowland at sea level onto the steep slopes, and beyond onto the Karst Plateau. It traverses several floras of different climatic belts. The city itself has a very rich cultural and political history, but on the 1982 visit I was more interested in the natural environment around the city. There was much to be learned for one like me whose student and professional roots were strongly set in ecology. The Karst showed its very best for me; the weather was perfect, and wild flowers decorated the

white, marble-like outcrops and hills. I participated in the full day field excursions through the floristically very unique region. After the day's work was done social events followed. There were ample opportunities to get to know the local people and students from the university. We dined in authentic restaurants on the Karst, in the city, or at the picturesque sea shore village of Muggia. We enjoyed the hospitality of Enrico Feoli and his lovely wife Laura, and young daughter Lucia in Villa Opicina on the Karst. The Feolies had visited with us previously in London.

From Trieste, we headed south. Enrico hosted us and he did the driving. We took time out to see Perugia, the ancient city in Umbria, and the Etruscan caves near Orvieto. Perugia was a fortress city of a colony of Etruscan people founded around 300 B.C. The Romans used it as their garrison.

We had a side trip to old Florence, settled long before Christ. It gained power and attained the height of its splendour during the Medici's in the 15th Century. I could see the Duomo from far away. It looked as unreal as a painted page from a book. Getting closer, I discovered the romantic Renaissance quarter of Florence. The Duomo and vicinity is the most radiant Renaissance jewel of Italy. It was a home of the ecclesiastical and the Medici family. The Church and rich families were able to hire the giants, like Michelangelo, to translate their dreams into art. These artists created master pieces to order, imagining the mystical desires and dreams of their superiors. Much mysticisms were created, angels with wings were painted, as it was in the miraculous, imagined Heaven. I did not see any female angles anywhere, only ones with the male genitals, yet they are supposed to be free of gender. The Duomo is a harmonious fusion of forms, colours and mysticism. It is a place to see the true magnificence of Renaissance architecture, a great place, worth the time and money to visit.

My favourite was the Baptistery, just behind the Duomo, built on the site of a Roman temple, around 5th-7th Century. I loved its old Romanesque-style. I spent some time looking at the doors; they sumptuous in structure and strikingly brilliant creations in design. These urged me to go inside. I did and I thought that being baptized in such splendour shall insure a proper place in Paradiso. The Gates of Paradise by L. Ghiberti was my favourite on the north door, to my senses a truly artistic miracle!

The University of Camerino was our next stop. It is interesting to note that Camerino has the only University in Italy on the top a high mountain. There are peaks over 2,000 m. high around the village. László lectured on his team's ecological survey of the Alaska Highway in connection with an environmental feasibility study, mandated prior to the construction of planned gas pipe line by Foothills through the Yukon. Several Italian colleagues did independent studies along with László's team.

I should tell a little story about what I did, probably a first in Camerino's history. I went to the bank in the castle city to get some Italian lira. I used Canadian dollars. They instantly discovered me as a visitor, and we talked about Canada. They were pleasant, wonderful people. When I got back to the University, I realized that they calculated the American exchange rate. Promptly, I went back to the bank to pay back the excess I received. I was worried about the cashier, who might had to pay the difference. It took longer to fix returning the money, than I anticipated. They did not understand the action. When I got back the Campus, the colleagues and perhaps the whole village knew my story. They told me, that nobody ever returned money to the bank in Italy! Suddenly I was a talk of Camerino. Later I met some local people, I felt very much at home.

We headed toward Palermo, a capital of the semiautonomous island of Sicily. The island has a population of five million, among the poorest of Italy. Sicily joined Italy in 1948. The people has strong connection to the land. Due to its key location in the Mediterranean Sea, Sicily was an inviting target for invaders. All left their mark on the language, religion, life style, architecture, and of course, the genome itself.

We had a rather sobering arrival in the early afternoon in Palermo. As we got out of the car the police quickly led us into hotel room and ordered us to stay there until further notice. Strange moments, we could not have known that killings took place nearby just minutes before.

I opened the balcony-door and was shaken to see a crowd gathering on the square, around what appeared a huge blood stained spot, two bodies were covered and lying motionless, and one person being assisted. Later we were told by a hotel employee not to worry, it was just another Mafia killing. I saw no emotional outburst, or any behaviour changes in him, or among the spectators; all were silent. As it turned out, the victims included a high ranking officer of the carabinieri and two bodyguards.

We were guests of the Department of Botany at the University of Camerino. We were received with open arms as friends. Enrico had longstanding connections with our hosts. We had to get used to the hosts' daily rhythm, which included relaxed punctuality, the midday siesta following lunch, and early evening resumption of the work day. This is understandable in a hot climate like Palermo's. The late night dinner, which would last from eleven at night to two in the morning, fits well the diurnal life in the hot climate. Preference for night meals is for shore restaurants, in our case, on an artificial land spit in the ocean. In the balmy midnight ambient, dinners are occasions for socialising, reinforcing connections, and not the least with our friends, continuation of discussions in a jovial atmosphere that were left uncompleted during the formal program. We dined until 2 am, then the dean invited us all to taste the best "gelato" in

town. We walked to the place, in the balmiest sea-breeze. The ice-cream was absolutely delicious.

Palermo has a strange mixture of architecture. I would not call it Italian in the sense compared to the Renaissance towns on the mainland. Sicily had a different history. It used to be a Greek settlement, an Arab emirate, later on a Norman kingdom, and so on. Even the Vikings had their hold on the Island. The city has lovely Greek temples, graceful Norman Churches, decorative Arabesque styles and many Byzantine domes. This rich, spatial admixture of architectural monuments appeals to me by its diversity and unique, almost serene presence, defying a rather troubled past. Visiting around the city I realized that some sections of this historical city never recovered their golden age lost during the allied invasion in World War II.

I loved the market, listened to the different ways of bargaining for the best quality of fish. The sound of the heavy dialect spoken there fascinated me. They were offering samples. I took a piece of steaming-hot boiled octopus and a piece of eel. They watched my face, wondering about my reaction. I smiled as I tasted and said - *Delizioso, grazie mille!*

I had a quick visit from Palermo to Cefalu, noted for its Greek origins (3rd Century B.C.), destruction by the Roman's (2nd Century B.C.), and possession by powers of different cultural traditions through centuries until it become part of the Italian Kingdom in the 19th Century.

After Palermo we headed to Catania, the last stop on a László's program with one stop in Taormina, to take in the vistas of the Ionian Sea from among the blooming Bougainvillea on the high cliffs. The beauty of the Taormina cliffs is simply mesmerising. The different architecture is suggestive of a turbulent past. Some thick walls are still standing in guard of the coast.

The Catania landscape is dominated by Mt. Etna, a very active volcano rising from sea level to 3330 m. Far below is the spectacular sea shore hugging the city. The landscape is spectacular with the sea below and Mt. Etna backing the blue seashore. Opulence shows itself everywhere. The place is obviously for wealthy vacationers. Taormina is a unique city of Greek origin. I tested the old Greek theatre seats, they were hard marble, in superb condition. The audience is facing an azure sea. The program with the University took up one day. I had time to walk around the seashore and went into some very elegant boutiques, just glancing around the prices, spent time in a book shop. I found it all very elegant and super expensive.

We were taken for an ecological excursion around Mt. Etna. I noted the small villages that are dotting the slopes. In one of them, partly destroyed by a recent

eruption just before our visit. People had already started to rebuild. They may have done this as a community many times in their long history.

In late fall of 1988 while in Rome I received a personal invitation to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of Italian and Canadian Research cooperation in which László was a major player. It was a considerable gathering organised by the Canadian consul in Rome, a series of lectures on the shared topics. László was very much involved from Canada's Western University. He had research projects with Italian colleagues over many years. These involved research, joint publications, meetings, colloquia, and short courses organised by the Canadian-Italian team worldwide since 1975. I was part of the group de facto for having attended many of the programs as an active participant in field work.

My invitation for the dinner of the group, came from Professor Egmont Lee, Il Direttore at the del Centro Academico Canadese en Italia, at the famous Palazzo Cardelli. It was an elegant, outstanding Canadian-Italian affair, with an Italian touch. I shared a table with the Italian Ambassador to Canada, he tested my Italian and French, but reverted to English when the topic became more abstract. I met our Canadian Ambassador to Italy, and had a conversation about some interesting places at the Great Lakes. I still remember the good time I had. I felt honoured to be part of this outstanding event.



Palazzo Cardelli, aquarelle by Vasco Babone, an artist profoundly enamoured by the Eternal City. Source: Google. Public domain.



Sad news from home

Life went on. Conditions improved at home, and my parents could come to visit us in London. We had a short and precious time with them. They shared six weeks between us and Árpád's family in the States. At long last they could see how far we progressed with our lives and they were happy. The year was 1973. Shortly after my parents left for home, I received a telegram from my brother Csaba. My mother suffered a debilitating stroke. She survived the stroke, but her right side was paralyzed. She was only 63. I felt helpless and guilty. I was the only female child. My mother gave all her love, care and she was always there for me. I waited anxiously for all the news and hoped for her recovery. I visited her the following year.

I spent two weeks with her. Her mental ability was slow, but fine. Sadly half of her tiny body was paralyzed. She was not able to sit up. She needed help with feeding. She was such an active person all her life. She could not face this utterly



disabled mode of life. She talked about death. I could only listen. There was nothing else I could do. Nobody could help. I stayed with her longer than two weeks. I had my family in Canada. I left for home with a broken heart and in very low spirits.



Right and above: With mother, father and László at Niagara Falls 1974. Left: I visited mother in 1978 in Szentendre after she had her first stroke.

Toward the end of the 1979/80 sabbatical at the University of Hawai'i, I received another telegram from my brother in Hungary telling me that mother had a second stroke, and she was very ill. I felt terribly worried. Next day I took a flight to Hungary to be with her. She recovered somewhat, in a few days, to the point that we were able to communicate. I spent two weeks with her. It was a sad time, as I could not do anything to change her condition, just holding her hands and comforting her. I was not feeling well myself. My earlier case of trigeminal neuralgia resurfaced. I had to leave.



On my last visit with mother after she suffered the second stroke 1980.

My mother had yet another stroke in 1981 and left us, she was only 70 years old. I felt terribly pained. Martha made flight reservation for me to Budapest, where I arrived on a very cold January morning. There were much snow on the streets and the wind was blowing relentless. There are no words that would adequately describe my feelings.

I arrived nine hours late in Budapest. The next days I helped with the arrangement of the funeral. I went to the funeral home, to be with my Mother. I told her - *Hazajöttem Anyuci, - I came home Anyuci* - as I held her cold hand. I leaned against her face and sobbed for what appeared a very long time! Where was I, I asked myself when she needed me most? What use was I for her? Why did she go so soon?. Our conversation ended. My Anyuci was no more. We walked to the grave site with my father and two brothers at the head of the funeral procession, over a 100 people came to say good-bye to her. These were very difficult hours, I felt terribly lonely and very guilty being so far away, when she needed me most. Mother was no more.

I did the eulogy, remembering that she gave me all her love, care and hope. Her whole life was devoted to us. I wanted her to hear and others to know that she was the best mother in the world and I was very lucky to be her daughter. My energy was waning, but somehow I hung on. The eulogy was painful, but it created peace in my heart, I finally realised I could do no more. In the middle of all this the thought came to me that home was not the land in Hungary, home was where my mother was. Her regular letters kept up the link, reading her lines carried me home, I was with her in my heart. Those were precious and intimate moments in my life. With her death, a link was broken, and never replaced. I no longer thought to go to Hungary, my homesickness disappeared. My brother Árpád could not attend the funeral. He could not have his U.S. passport in time. It was in the mail.

I returned from Budapest to London the very next day after the funeral. I carried a handful of earth from her grave. I felt useless and wondered why I left my mother in 1956. One cannot go back, it hurts. I had a terrible, almost nervous urgency to reunite with my family “itthon” in Canada. The ‘otthon’ in Hungary was history. All I wanted was to hold my daughter and László very tight and never let them go!

On the flight home I thought of Mother's letters which were infinitely gentle, full of love, and encouraging. Her letters, the news from home, nourished me, and when she sensed sadness she always promised a happy tomorrow. She constantly wrote to me. "Márta, hurry home" was her singular, intimate message, over 26 years, to me in the far away New World. I went often to visit her, we could not stop talking. My youngest brother Attila often found us still talking after midnight and as a joke in his way he offered cold refreshments, just in case our lips were swollen by over use. Balázs Anna was the best mother. She helped me to realize my dreams, even the silliest ones.

Martha and László waited at the airport. It was a wonderful reunion, I felt loved and secure just to hold their hands, and be a family. I returned to peace, security and civility of our daily life home, "itthon" in Canada. For sure it is my home.



Rendez-vous in Madrid

In 1990 springtime found László in East Africa. He was involved in a joint Italian-Canadian-UNESCO ecological research project, hosted by colleagues from the University of Addis Ababa in Ethiopia and the University of Dar es Salam in Tanzania. László sent a message from Arusha, that he wanted to meet me in Madrid on the my way back to London from Budapest. He wanted me to accompany him for lectures at the Agricultural Research Station in Leon and in field research on the high Cordillera Cantábrica. I left Budapest in time to meet him at the appointed rendez-vous in Madrid. We met at Barjas airport at the appointed time.

I was not too well, my trigeminal neuralgia acted up, and I certainly was not a very good companion. I desperately needed rest and quiet. László went to meet colleagues in Madrid. I spent the day at the Museo del Prado. It is a marvellous, true Spanish collection, much of it bought or given by the Spanish royalty. I had a quiet time, nothing hurried me. It was a slow, peaceful treat to see the grand paintings of the three famous sons of Spain, such as Velazquez, El Greco, and Goya. Few visitors were around, so I could revisit specific pieces many times and enjoy the truly fantastic colours of the Spanish giants, in different light conditions. I spent the whole day there, I met László and colleagues for dinner. Next day, I continued my visit to Prado. I was truly lucky, because Picasso's famous piece, Guernica was shown in a special room. The picture was waiting for the opening of a new Picasso Museum. Composed of white and shades of grey on black emphasized the horrors. It is a picture, which

should be shown, all over the Globe, in protests against wars and in memoriam of the Basque country village of Guernica.



My trigeminal neuralgia acting up. I felt empathy for the state of mind in which this Picasso masterpiece was conceived.

My favourite in Prado was *The Descent from the Cross* by Rogier van der Weyden (1399-1464). It is a huge painting, with life size human figures, all of them show great pain over the death of Christ. I greatly admired the artist's ability to create such a perfect facial transformation in pain and grief. It is fantastic rendition of the horrors of pain and rivulets of tears on the agonized faces. I wondered what the artist must have felt, when recreating so realistically the emotional moments of the sufferers. How can the creator of such a piece of art internalise such deep feelings? It takes a real master of the facial anatomy to recreate it. Would you believe, the tears on the faces are so real, as if it were just happening, yet these faces and tears are almost 600 years old. I leaned very close and wondered about the paintings artistic freshness and its reality. A few months ago I learned that Google scientists are trying to create a photograph of the der Weyden masterpiece. I am anxious to see what their reproduction will be.

Travelling around Northern Spain I saw great variety of the peoples' facial forms and skin colour. A touch of the historical past highlighted my discovery. The first human crossed the Gibraltar to Europe well before 300,000 B.C., as archaeological research is telling us. They were hunting elephants in the mud-flats near Madrid. The Hamitic Berbers arrived around 3000 B.C. These people were dark skinned, small built, named as Iberians by the ancient writers. This civilization was well advanced by the time the Romans arrived, around 200 B.C. The German people settled in the place around 450 A.D. Later the Visigoths and Vandals took over. These populations were subjugated by the Moorish Muslims from Tangier. The Moors, an organized, studious and very advanced society in science, occupied for eight centuries most of the Iberian Peninsula known as al-Andalus or Islamic Iberia.

Every facet of the Moorish Muslim faith, art, science and their way of life infiltrated into the Spanish and Portuguese culture. The Moorish Muslim era is often referred to as a golden age of art, science and architecture. In all, under this well-balanced cultural atmosphere created by the Muslims governance of Iberia let the people live very well. It was a rare and very successful governing experience.

The inheritance of a very complex cultural past makes Spanish society today so unique. It seems that the Phoenicians brought trade, the Greeks created art, the Romans organized society by strict rules. The Moors have created art, science and benevolent government in Iberia. All transients left their genes, and the genome reflects this in the peoples' eyes, faces, and phenotype in general. All these wonderful attributes blended into the modern, multicultural, vivaciously amicable Spanish society. I loved being in Spain for this very reason.

We enjoyed walking in Madrid, visiting places and frequenting the authentic restaurants. On the fourth day we rented a car and headed north to León for lectures at the university and field research in the Cordillera Cantábrica. The road from Madrid to León crosses the arid Oak savannah. We stopped often, enjoyed this golden-brown vegetation cover, the extensive wheat fields here and there, coloured by the flowering Velazquez's red poppies (*Papaver rhoas*) and blue cornflower flower (*Centaurea cyanus*), which were inviting us for a closer look. I posed and László photographed me. He said he saw the wheat field come alive in nature's composition more beautiful than on any of the impressionist paintings, even more so with me in it.



On the way to Leon, we stopped several times on the Plain of Spain. At one stop I felt like sitting down in a wheat field sprinkled throughout with red poppies and blue cornflowers. It reminded me of the Hungarian Plain where red poppies (*pipacs*) and cornflowers (*buzavirág*) are common in the wheat.

It was a unique, vivid, intensely colourful landscape, much like an early impressionist gallery. It truly elevated my spirit. I sat among

these jewels of red and blue flower, framed by green trees and the blue sky. It was very hot, but not so unpleasant to stop me from enjoying the spectacular landscape.

I felt very lucky as I listened to a professor's dinner lecture on the historic importance of the Oak-savannah for the economy of northern Spain. For centuries until the present days, the Oak acorn and grass supported grazing by

mixed herds of sheep and “walking” pigs. During spring and summer the herd was grazing the forests of the high Cordillera Cantábrica, sheep consuming the new grass, and the pigs feeding on acorn, roots and ground insects. The two life forms co-existed without competition for food. As autumn approached, the herders would move the herd down onto the plain, in a slowly migration south through the Winter savannah and back. By the time Spring arrived, the herds would have turned north and have come back onto the mountain meadows to start a new cycle of perpetual migration. The animals mature in grazing, and demand a premium price on the market for the ham. The walking pig’s ham is world famous, very tasty and expensive.

The lecture was fantastic, well-illustrated, and absolutely entertaining. The illustrations showing the herders, individual animals, the colourful landscapes, and handlers, shepherds and sheepdogs, all were superbly done. We had “walking pig” sliced ham on the menu with huge white beans for an appetiser – a very tasty fare -- just to prove the point.

During the meetings in León we were invited by a young scientist couple, Florentino Bermudez, a veterinary sergeant and his wife Choni Asuncion Garcia, an ecologist invited us to one of their permanent research sites in the Cordillera Cantabrica at Picos de Europas. We went up to about 1,300-1,500 m to reach the site where we found a rich field of an alpine meadow largely enclosed to protect the site from grazers.

It was July, the best time to enjoy the blooming of the colour full alpine vegetation. As I waded along a small creek, I spotted some cows, grazing among the trees. A very skinny dog appeared and barked feverishly at me, while herding the cows into a tight group. With the cows grazing close together, the dog stood at the front of the herd as the sole shepherd of the herd, looking after the cows all summer long. I threw some food toward it, but the dog did not touch it. It was my first experience of a lonely dog being a shepherd for the whole summer. He looked very serious, I doubt that anybody could separate out one cow of its wards, without serious trouble.

We were about 25 km. from the Bay of Biscay, and we could clearly see the three gigantic peaks, some 2,400 m. high. For centuries they were the famous land markers for the sea voyagers sailing home from the far Atlantic fishing grounds. The endless seascape guarded by the high mountains created a unique and picturesque landscape, dotted by small rivulets of vivacious blues and lively greens. I was energised to walk all day.

One of the most remarkable places is the Cares Gorge, near the isolated village of Cain. A remarkable place, we walked this lovely canyon for its entire 7 or 8 kilometres length along the Cares wedged between the thousand-meter high

vertical walls. I loved every minute walking through this gorge. Its vegetation was spectacular and the fresh ambient air surrounded me. We headed to Oviedo for talks about research, and possible cooperation with colleagues at the University. We spent the second night in one of the ancient, very romantic fishing villages near Gijón on the Coast. The village people were friendly and welcoming. The fish dinner and wine were as good as I ever tasted.



On the Canary Islands

I had just finished the 1987 spring semester teaching biology labs at U.W.O. Unknown to me, the Canadian-Italian Scientific Co-operation Group was now planning meetings at the university at La Laguna and extensive field research on Tenerife, the highest volcano on Tenerife, in the Canary Islands.¹⁷ László's participation was expected. Totally unexpected, a thick envelope arrived from them, addressed to me. I received a personal invitation for a 2-weeks holiday in October on the Canary Islands coinciding with the groups research activities. Flights, car rental, and expenses were covered! It came as a gift from Professor Duilio Lausi and Dr. Pier-Luigi Nimis as their expression of their thanks for the hospitality I extended to them in Canada. I did not do much field-work at this time, rather I took a lavish holiday on the island of Tenerife. I visited places, walked around the lovely seashore, swimming several times, and sampled the tasty delicacies of fresh fruits. László, Duilio and Pier-Luigi were doing field research. On some days I joined them. We dined together; their company was warm, cultured and most entertaining. I had a wonderful time.

Tenerife is the largest island in the Canary Islands group. The seascapes are spectacular all around. Rugged volcanic rocks dominate the seashore, and only few places are safe for swimming. I enjoyed sitting out on top of these. It was the first time that I saw a dog, digging up clumps. It looked easy for him, the scent or air bubbles pinpointed the spot where to dig. The dog looked well fed, but not friendly.

The Canary Islands are Spanish possessions. Tenerife is a spectacular place, dominated by El Teide, the sleeping 3707 m high giant of volcanos in the Atlantic Ocean off East Africa. The Atlas mountains are visible from Tenerife in clear weather. The entire Island is a ecologists paradise.

¹⁷ Artwork by César Maurique, whose creations became symbols of the Island.

László on low-elevation lava field among the invading, cactus-like *Euphorbia canariensis*. The milky latex oozing out from the damaged stem or leaf gives this plant away of not being a cactus,



particularly not the organ pipe cactus (*Cereus thurberi*) from the southwest deserts in North America, with which this *Euphorbia* is convergent in form.

Our group took special interest in the fog belt higher up on the Teide in the subalpine zone. The Island flora is rich in endemic species. It was flowering time for wildpetti (*Echium wildpretii*) on the

Teide. I discovered a great similarity of this showy species, it looks very much the same as the Hawaiian endemic silver sword (*Argyroxiphium sandwichense*) on the island of Maui, near the peak of Haleakala crater. Both are excellent examples of the convergent evolution of form and function. They are not evolved from the same genetic stock, but adapted similar traits, obviously the best under very similar environmental conditions. I felt very lucky to observe this biological phenomenon in situ islands on the opposite side of the World. It was a great joy and exhilaration walking through such a spectacular endemic flora. Its virtual aquarelle is still vivid in my mind. Maybe the altitude and perspiration helped to fix the image in my mind so firmly as to withstand the passage of time.



Giant wildpettiis in a pine forest opening at high elevation of the Teide. On the right, *Euphorbia canariensis* on rough lava at almost sea level. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

All my life I knew the unique fragrance of bay leaf or bay laurel, the herb, which I use almost daily in my cooking. It is a vital ingredient for a tasty soup, sauces, and pickles. It was unthinkable in my early youth, that one day I would walk in a laurel forest, to which plant geographers refer as the laurisilva. I did, and not just once in different distant environs. I had pleasing experience with laurisilva in Italy, a forest of the tree species *Laurus nobilis*, and another also in Coastal California, near Santa Monica, where the dominant tree species of the laurisilva is *Umbellularia californica*. But I saw the best laurisilva forest on Tenerife for which the dominant tree's name is *Laurus azorica*. It was a wonderful treat in each case to stop and observe, and especially on Tenerife to stand in the laurisilva and be engulfed by the herbal scent of the humid air.

Driving up on the Teide, the strong scent of the Canarian pine (*Pinus canariensis*) engulfs the person. This is another endemic tree of the Canary Islands (except La Gomera). Its spicy odour is emitting from a considerable amount of resin, covering the tree trunks. Perhaps the overheated air causes the production of much resin from which turpentine and other scented substances evaporate, creating a perfumery forest. I investigated it, took a small sample, which I found to be ordinary resin, but very odorous in that case. I have never walked through in such a perfumery forest before. Jane Vessels explains the fragrant forest factor;

“The magical scents of a pine [or laurel grove] – less poetically –volatile organic compounds (VOCs) rising from the trees. VOCs react in the air to form aerosol particles, often in amounts that can increase how much sunlight clouds reflect, which reduces temperatures. A new study shows that this process is stronger than once thought, highlighting the value of forests in a warming world.” In National Geographic.

We drove around, up and down along the shore. At one point we descended down to sea level. Out of nowhere a small restaurant drew our attention with its wooden firma hanging loose in the gentle wind. It was a grey wooden board portraying the simple image of a plate with an oversized fish, half dozen potatoes, a bottle of red wine and an arrow pointing to the entrance. It turned out to be the restaurant's complete menu. We entered and in about 20 minutes we were served the real thing: one whole, extra-large fried fish, the exact number of small potatoes for each of us in a basket and a bottle of vine. It was a wonderful meal for a very modest price. The scenery was spectacular, a small bay, with tables at sea level, on the wet sand and just us alone. What could be more romantic?



Another tragic moment

It happened on one day in the summer of 1987. My brother Árpád called from Rippon, Wisconsin, sobbing. Their son Peter had died in an accident at age 13. I felt emotionally crushed by the news, and helpless. There was nothing I could do to lessen his pains. Peter was full of life, a wonderful boy with a sense of humour.

Next day we left by car to Rippon, Wisconsin. László drove. I thought of what my role should be as a sister. In my thoughts my mother's example appeared from distant difficult times. I wished I could create miracles. Short of that, I knew what is needed most is sharing the pain with all and giving spiritual support to Árpád, Penny and Mathew, to ease the loss. I worried a great deal how they will bear such pain and to what level normalcy would return in their home.

A few weeks before the tragic event I spent almost a whole afternoon with Peter. Often I thought that my Guardian Angel arranged the occasion at their Green Lake home at Wisconsin. We fished off their pier. Peter cleaned and grilled the catch. He was full of delightful fun, a joy to be with. I loved his stories. His laughter is still with me. I shared Peter's grilled fish at dinner. He smiled impishly and said: "Márta-néni (aunty Márta) ate my whole catch, just look at her stomach." Peter knew his dog, hiding behind us, got to the fish first and sampled the catch.



More about myself

Not long ago, in February 2016, we celebrated our 59th wedding anniversary - a life time together with László. I recognize that we are two very different, uniquely individualistic people in our thoughts and ideas. László tends to be professorial, speaks with carefully chosen words and meditated logic. I am the antithesis of him with my spontaneity in speech and writing. It would be disaster for him to contradict himself. He is still sitting within his intellectual Bubble of thoughts, but he is not secretive; he is ready to speak of what he does and informally communicate about his results with precautions. I feel free as a bird, and ready anytime to speak my mind. Conversation for me is not a studious development of form and content, but a rather spontaneous process.

For many years I always made notes of my experiences and travels. All were placed into an old folder. In some instance, I drew interesting illustrations, landscapes, or plants. I consider these my own private properties, mostly handwritten originals, Most of our field notes were done by me.

Some years ago I thought I should try some writing in Hungarian. I needed to nourish my mother tongue and register old memories, experiences and reflections of my travels for my family. My notes are my best sources. I believed, that in some strange way, in spite of Ceausescu's communist censors, my words in a book form would reach my Székely brothers and sisters in Transylvania. I started to write down my thoughts and discovered much enjoyment in my own story-telling. It was a grand idea, but it was not an easy beginning. I realized much later that writing was a most wonderful and precious time for me and it was very affordable. It took several years to hold my own printed book "Papago Indiánok az óriáskaktusz országában". The English title: "Papago Indians in the Land of the Giant Cactus". The book's topic is the history and the social life of the Papago Indian Nation from ancient times to present. The book's contents are based on library and field research. The Papago culture is presented the first time for the Hungarian readers. The level of presentation is 'popular science'. It was a small booklet about the Papago people of Arizona. The first draft was ready, in time to show it to Dr. Sándor Jabláczy, my former professor of sylviculture from Sopron. He responded with a lovely note, urging me to go on. I respected and trusted his advice. I never stopped. I began building my own Bubble.

My second, small booklet appeared under the title "Csíksomlyói zarándoklat". The English title is "Pilgrimage to Csíksomlyó". Csíksomlyó, a small village hidden among the Carpathian mountains, is an ancient pilgrimage site of Székely Christians in Transylvania. The book gives an emotion filled account of my return in 1996, 45 years after my last visit. I am tied to this holy site by the memory of pilgrimages with grandparents in my childhood. The pilgrims believe in the helping power of Virgin Mary to guard them and help the Székely nation survive the inhuman suppression by the Romanian regimes which was ruling them, with a short interruption, since the infamous 1921 Trianon agreement.

The site belongs to the Roman Catholic church, built where the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus, appeared to local peoples in the 15th Century. The pilgrimage attracts hundreds of thousands of people every year. This was not so when I was a child. It was a small, all Székely-Csángó event. It was unlawful under the tyrant Ceausescu's communist regime to keep pilgrimages. I witnessed this becoming worse by the year for the Székely-Csángó people as Ceausescu, aged and not recognising limits, instituted his heavy-handed, open ethnic cleansing

policies. Ceausescu's law was enforced by the Romanian regime for years after the tyrant's fall from power in 1989 at the hands of his own people.

The last time I visited Csíksomlyó was in 1996. I could get only a three-day Visa from Budapest. First at the Romanian consulate of Budapest the official refused my application, but then quickly changed his mind after a friend's intervention who came with me. I assume he gave the official a substantial "honorarium". I actually wanted to go on the pilgrimage to Csíksomlyó with a group of Jesuits from my old school. I have longed for reliving my spiritual and very personal experiences of my youth. I wrote about this in my book "Pilgrimage to Csíksomlyó" in Hungarian in 2011. It was the strongest tribal reawakening of my Székely origin. Gathering at the pilgrim's church was still unlawful, but when ten thousand people show up, the police could not do much to keep them away. This sea of people, praying and singing, flying large Hungarian and Székely flags, also outlawed by the Romanian government, to make it not uncertain how they feel about the suppressive ethnic policies of the regime!

I was among my own people, happy to be part of this unforgettable Hungarian-Csángó, forbidden by the Romanian state. The celebration is annual, religious, springing out of the peoples' deep Christian faith. The armed Romanian police were around. I felt uncomfortable. I had a Canadian passport, but I was born in Romania. Luckily nothing happened. I got back to Budapest, and flew home to Canada shortly thereafter.

Copies of "Csíksomlyói zarándoklat", earlier the manuscript and then the published book, have reached my people, and it became a much sought after read in Lövete. It felt over joyed that many readers of the story knew me, and liked the book. Similar news reached me from other libraries in the larger Székely towns. I felt encouraged and started to write about other experiences in my life. This led to the writing of my family saga "Vándorlások" (2010). The English title: "Wanderings".

This book narrates an epic story, of the Mihály family, forced into migrations by the great depression, a lost war and a failed revolution. The path leads from their ancient homeland in Székelyföld to Hungary and eventually to North America. Writing "Vándorlások" tested me. It was hard work, needed much preparation, and re-acquaintance of myself with the fine details of the family past. When I was told that "Vándorlások" became a most read book in my home town Lövete, I felt highly honoured.

Two major books followed. "Hawai'i - emlékezéseim" for which the English Title is "Remembrances of Hawai'i", I tell how I see the story of the land I consider a second home to me, the Hawaiian Islands, and its people. The story opens broad vistas of the natural beauty of the Islands and the history of its

inhabitants, weaving the story's tread from well before Hawai'i became an American possession. I used original pictures taken over 40 years to enliven the presentation. "Kina a Selyemúton" for which the English title is "On the Silk Road in China" is a favourite destination of mine. In the first part of the book I narrate the historical background on which the continuity of the imperial Chinese state is based. The second part speaks of the people and their cultures, focusing on the historical times on the Silk Road. The book is offered as a primer to the Silk Road and travel guide from Beijing to Ürümqi. László did not read the manuscript of my Hungarian books. This is entirely my fault, since he has a tendency to correct and rewrite, aiming for "precision". I am a story teller, I insist on my originality in spontaneity.

I am grateful for László's technical help. Perhaps it is payback time for the many proof readings I did for him with his books. But I know that my style, springs from my childhood when storytelling and talking about everything about us was a family pastime. Writing provides me with a useful and enjoyable time of my own. At the same time it distances me from some, rather unusual research problems or associates. It is my Bubble.

Oh, I did not become rich, but I had a wonderful time sharing and reflecting on places and events, with a high spirit and joy. Most of my writings were in Hungarian. All my books have copies in major libraries, including the Szécsényi Könyvtár in Budapest, the National Library of Canada in Ottawa, and the Library of Congress in Washington. They are also catalogued at the University Library in Sopron, and at several locations in Romania, including the municipal library in Székelyudvarhely and, of course, my home village, Lövéte.

Over 30 years I was a regular contributor to our alumni magazine, "Kapocs", published by the group of Sopron Foresters in Vancouver. It is mainly in Hungarian, a wonderful herald and at the same time a strong link between the Sopron Foresters in Canada. It has been for many years and still is edited, gratis, by a Sopron alumnus, László Rétfalvi. He works hard to co-ordinate us and our activities, and guards with care our use of the Hungarian language.



Last farewell to father and Csaba

László was in Beijing on invitation from the Academia Sinica, Martha away on a study trip to Cuba, and my brother took a hunting trip somewhere in Wisconsin. One day in September 1992 the telephone rang in the middle of the night. I woke with worries in my heart, thinking of my family. It was a call from a hospital in Budapest. I was told that my father was in terminal condition. His doctors wanted to know if I would like to have his life extended by artificial

means. I was alone with no body to consult. When I met him a few months back in Budapest he was well. How was I able to decide the life of my father on a long distance telephone call? That is how life ends? I promised the physician that I would call back in an hour. I did call back. He passed away by that time. He was 81. I was crushed emotionally and also physically. What a night it was! Later I was told my brother Csaba passed away the same day. He was 49. They followed my younger brother's passing by a mere four years and my mother's by ten.

It was September. My roses were still blooming, but already showed the approaching autumn. I felt they were sharing my grief. After all I was not entirely alone.

The Unforgettable Rio Grande do Sul



The recollections in this section are taking me back to the uplands and lowlands, countryside, and a large city near the Uruguay border, Porto Alegre, in Rio Grande do Sul which is the most southern state of Brazil. The bridge of my connection to this beautiful land and its culture is through our close friend, Professor Valério De Patta Pillar, and László's academic and research links with the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul.

Our connection dates back to the late 80s when Valério as a new Ph.D. student from Brazil joined László's lab at the University of Western Ontario. He came



with his lovely wife Marcia and young son Gabriel from Porto Alegre. The city is a major port 100 km from the Atlantic Ocean. Seagoing ships approach the inland harbour through a series of lagoons.

Thanksgiving dinner 1988. At the table: László slicing the thanksgiving turkey. On his left and right alternating: Mariza Gomez and her husband Valério De Patta-Pillar from Porto Alegre,

Brazil; toddler Gabriel De Patta Pillar and myself, Shi Xiao Yu from Guanzhou, China and Martha Valério, then a Ph.D. candidate had been doing graduate research in László's lab at U.W.O. Shi Xiao, a Ph.D. candidate at Sun Yat-sen University, elected to write his thesis in László's lab.



The Itaimbenzinho canyon at Aparados de Serra, Rio Grande do Sul. On left: typical Campos landscape at 1200m on the right. I loved the vistas and diversity that the Campos offers on the Rio Grande do Sul highlands.



Porto Alegre is called the “forest city”. Its streets are lined by palms and tropical flowering trees, many of them Jacarandas. Avenida Osvaldo Aranha shows this well. The traffic moves on six lanes, the two inner ones are preserved for high speed bus traffic. On the opposite side is a school, embedded into a huge civic green area, the magnificent Parque Farroupilha. This was the view from our hotel window.

The Pillars left for home after Valério's successful completion of his Ph.D. studies, but co-operation with László continued over the years in research projects and short courses at Valério's home institution, the Universidade Nacional de Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil and other institutions in Europe and the Americas. I was invited to join László in Brazil on several occasions, but I knew that I would spend weeks in the motel. Unfortunately it was not safe for me to travel alone. I had to rely on the help of friends to safely continue my usual inquisitive mode on visiting cities. László was heavily engaged and I did not fancy to stay in a hotel-room alone. So I declined. He loved the research work and his courses, isolated in their international environment. I faced the impenetrable walls of László's Bubble. He calls those times his most productive. I missed him very much, I never wanted to be in the way of his success. I always loved my home and enjoyed my family nearby. I took an exception in 2002 and joined László for four weeks in Porto Alegre.

The minute I arrived in Porto Alegre, I discovered the Brazilian spirit of pulsating energy. It was flowering season for Jacaranda trees. They were covered with bunches of vivid blue flowers. I have been warmly received with colleagues and their families. They spoke good English. I read Portuguese well,

but I did not and still do not speak it. Neither of the languages I studied helped me much to overcome the difficulties of Portuguese pronunciation. I wished I could. I like to talk with people and make my own arrangements. At this time I relied on help from friends who spoke English. I found Porto Alegre a beautiful city, enjoyed an ecological tour of the state of Porto Alegre in connection with the 2002 IAVS symposium, and took a tour of the Mission Sao Miguel with Gabriel De Patta-Pillar and László. I knew Gabriel as a young child from Valério's Ph.D. years, as a young teenager from Valério's sabbatical year at U.W.O., and as a university student in Brazil who spent some time with us on his return to tour his beloved Canada.



I loved the view on Parque Farroupilha from the hotel balcony in daytime and in a rainy night.





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Pictures 1,2. Parque Farroupilha is the site of weekend markets along Av. José Bonafacio on the opposite side from Oswaldo Aranha. The market is well organised and secure. Left: I am standing at Guarani vendor's stall. Right: "The girl from Bahia" by unidentified local artist sold at the Market. Bottom: Jaguar and kitten. Woodcarving by Guarani artist at his market stall.



My Portuguese verbal skills proved inadequate with this police officer on duty in the park when I said "Com o presente polícia me sinto seguro no parque". I did not give up, tried the same in Spanish "Con la presencia de la policía, me siento seguro en el park", which I find so much easier for pronunciation. He answered in kind: Gracias, dijo. Disfrutar de nuestra ciudad.



The Igreja Santa Terezinha on the Av. José Bonafacio side of Parque Farroupilha. The Jacaranda trees lining the street were in full bloom.

Indian tribes inhabited all of South America for endless times before the Europeans arrived in 15th Century. They were first chroniclers of the Indians' way of life, but they were largely illiterate. Estimates suggest about six million natives inhabiting the Continent at the beginning of colonization. Some tribes were cannibals, had never seen a white man before. A bishop and some others were eaten, it was a misfortune of some early missionaries and their mercenary escorts. Bad news travelled fast and far. The merciless killings began, driven by the Christian mercenaries' motto: the Indians are not human, they do not possess a soul! The tribes identities or ancient past are little known. Today their number is about three-hundred thousand. There is an estimate that presently over 50 unknown tribes live in the rainforest, and around the rivers, along the Amazonas.

The discovery of Brazil promised great richness for Portugal. King Manuel I. was quick to send Amerigo Vespucci to explore the territory further. The king himself selected the name "Terra do Brazil" and spent several months, visiting there. With Bible in hands, Manuel I named places and settlements, in total disregard that most of the places already had names used by the natives for unknown times.

Naturally the news of good opportunities travelled fast. The French, English, then Dutch boats arrived to the shores of the Continent. Land became a hot

commodity sought after by the immigrants who established huge “estancias”. But they required a workforce. Natives were on hand, just had to be caught, but few could bear the horrors of slave labour. The film “Mission” portrays well the brutal hunts and forcing the natives into slavery. Incidentally, I found the musical theme of the film a wonderful accompaniment of the introduction into a rich, native-religious musical culture of a pastoral Jesuit’s mission life.

The Christian God was brought to Brazil from Portugal, by the Jesuit Order in 1549. The Order was known all over Europe for its outstanding scholars and educators. They came into Brazil to convert the heathens to Christianity. The heathens were, of course, the native people. But the hundreds of different tribes, settled along the big rivers, in the ancient Brazilian forest had their own gods, a rich nature loving culture and mode of life governed by the forest.

The southern territories, where Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil met, were the homes of the Guarani Indians. The Jesuits befriended and converted these natives, by creating centres with living quarters with church, and gardens around them and taught them to grow food. The Jesuit principles emphasized peace, brotherhood and order. Led by these principles, they slowly created over 30 missions where the natives found relative protection. These missions each counted 1-5 thousand natives. The Jesuit God was accepted, because this God considered the natives as brothers. The missions were thriving, happy, self-supporting communities. They prayed and worked together in peace. But above all, the Jesuits provided security against the land owners, who were forcing the Indians to work for them, as slaves.

I listened and read several arguments about the activities of the Jesuits. Some think that the mission work was a very easy life for the Jesuits. They looked after the Indians spiritually, had plenty food for all, and were protected. But the settlers could not see the Jesuit’s theological as well as a secular struggle. They treated the Indians as Christian brothers, a totally alien concept for the landowners. It was not easy to create a new life style to convince the natives - very traditional people of the forest with multiple gods, secrets and hiding spirits - that only one, the Jesuit’s unseen God is enough to do it all. The arguments were created not by the Natives, but by the settlers, simply, because the Portuguese believed that the Indians had no souls and therefore could be treated as animals.

I have to mention the most remarkable defendant of the Indians and their rightful home, Antonio Vieira, who abandoned his position as an advisor to the king in Portugal, in order to become a missionary. He actively preached against the brutal treatment of the settlers toward the Natives with the help of the Crown. The Jesuit’s respect and power was growing, new Mission were

being built on the pampas and around Uruguayan border for the Guarani people, 31 in all. These became a strong, powerful Jesuit States, called the Mission Territory.

In 1752, in the Treaty of Madrid, the border issues were settled between Spain and Portugal. Much of the Mission Territories were given to Portugal. The Treaty ordered the Missions to be abandoned by the Jesuits. Those, who refused were mercilessly slaughtered. The settlers were free to move in and take the Guarani people for their slaves. Under Jesuit leaders the Guarani revolted. Obviously the super military power in the hand of the crown suppressed the uprising with bloody brutality. So the settlers won, the Jesuits lost and were expelled. Most of the Guarani ended up dead or taken slaves, God's work was forgotten. It is a familiar story from colonial histories. Squandering of lives, faith and treasures are the right term to characterize the colonisers. In the Mission territory the cathedral size beautifully appointed churches and the mission grounds were left in ruins and used as quarries by the new landowners.

Interesting to note that the many larger cities had their beginnings as Missions run by the Jesuits. They established universities, libraries and built magnificent churches still in use in modern times. The Jesuit's Baroque architecture found in Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, often is the restored ruins of former Missions, and has attracted many tourists to the historic Mission Territory.



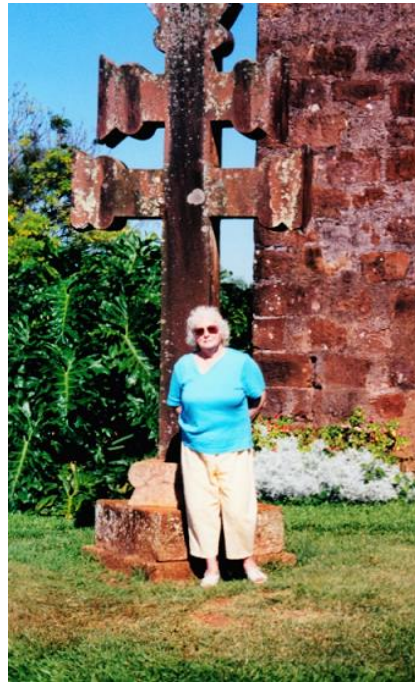
I have seen pictures and read the stories about these Missions, so, soon after I arrived to Porto Alegre, we travelled to see the Missio de Sao Miguel. Gabriel de Patta Pillar, son of Mariza Gomez and Valério, a university student in Brazil, escorted us in our travel. It was 4 days of rich, cultural experiences. Of course it was great fun to travel with

the budding reporter, Gabriel, whom we first met as a toddler with his parents coming to London, many years ago. It was a lovely trip across the state of Rio Grande du Sul to Sao Miguel Mission. In spite of long neglect and vandalism, the partly restored mission church shows ample evidence of the sophistication and elegance of Guarani Baroque architecture.

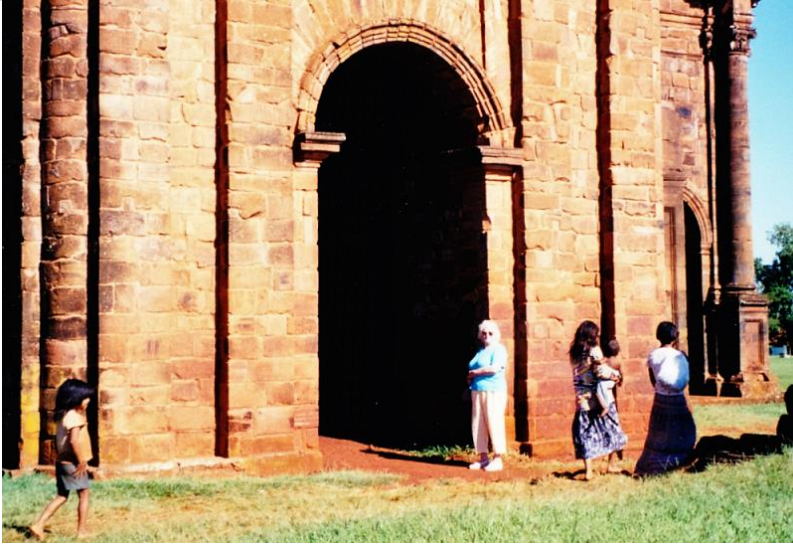
One catches sight of Sao Miguel Mission from faraway. It sits majestically on the fertile upland east of Salto Yacuma of the Uruguay river. Built in 1632 by Jesuits, following the design of Giovanni Battista Primoli. It functioned until

the Treaty of Madrid in 1752. The ruins are dominated by one high tower and the façade. The walls are in different degree of collapse. The woodwork is completely missing. The tower and standing walls are witnessing violent destruction after the golden days of peace and tranquillity. It was the home of the Christian God, worshiped by 5000 Guarani Indians and their Jesuit fathers. They worked and praised God, their prayers were heralded and sacred. The Native Guarani's songs echoed across the land. The Guaranis created their own musical instruments, had their choir and were totally devoted to the mission. They learned to grow their food and were safe in the Missions.

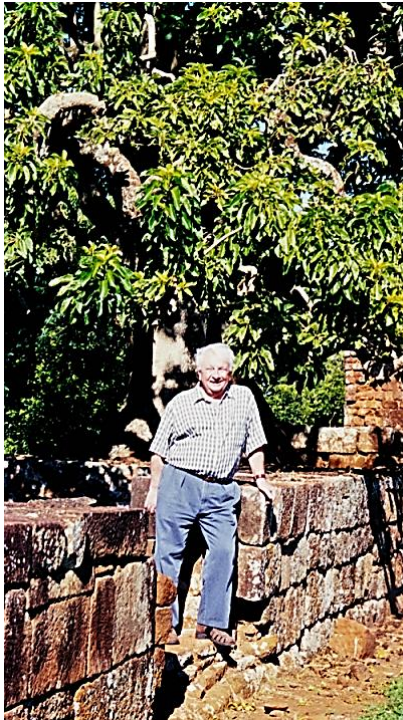
I stood inside the walls and looked out on the peaceful land. My mind heard the sounds of Guarani's prayer and their choir in this magnificent cathedral. I felt sadness when I thought that those native people - who gave up their ancient ways of life, their forest home, their traditions, and exchanged all their ancient deities for a single God – and at the end became commodities on the slave market run by the same European Christians who, in the first place, forced Christianity on them. Faith is a very private and personal treasure, it should be highly respected by all.



At the main entrance to the Sao Miguel mission with Gabriel 2002. Standing by the original Christian cross of the Mission.



At the side entrance of Sao Miguel cathedral. The Guarani, passing in single file ignored me completely. I would do the same to my race if I were them. Europeans did them terrible wrong.



László at the mission fence where the Guarani's reservation begins.

After sunset, we attended a wonderful program right in front of the Mission. There were no actors, only lights and sounds, and a singing choir, with some Portuguese narration. All was pre-recorded with the lights component of the show in real time. Understanding Portuguese is not necessary if one arrives prepared by reading the Mission history. The lights and the echoes on the old giant walls of the church made me feel the dramatic past. The choir and the music tells it all and the lights punctuate the play. The echo of the natives' love for the land - *nosso terra, nosso patria - nosso Cristo* – (our earth, our home, our Christ) unmistakably rang true. It shook the balmy air around me, echoed back from centuries ago, through boundless space in the darkness of the Highland's

night. Then as the drama continued to unfold, I saw Guarani families with their

children walking in single files across in front of the Mission in the twilight. Not knowing that their presence was unscripted, it seemed a ghostly presence among these secret, mute walls. It warmed my heart and soul.

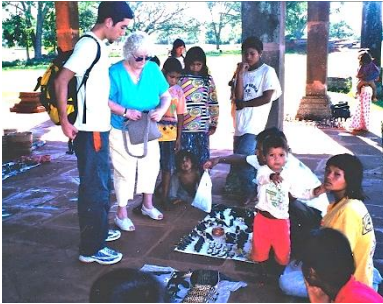
We met some of the Guarani people at the market, the descendants of those who populated the Mission. They are largely illiterate, and live in severe poverty in the reservation adjacent to the Mission. I could not explain to myself, why, after almost a 260 years, they still reside in the woods, albeit at the back of the Mission. They have an option not to. The state government offered a better reservation for them, but they chose not to move. Perhaps the tourist nickels and dimes are more profitable? But I like to believe that they still feel safe near the missions church, and the one God taught to them by the Jesuits. They are part of a totally discarded people, excluded from modern society of Brazil. Obviously, they do not trust the government, whose absolute priority is to serve the interest of large landowners.

We like to think in the West, that we live in an age of enlightenment. In reality, almost everywhere I saw thousands of people being uprooted by wars and hunger. It appears that we are entering into a new age of peoples' migration at scales that did not happen since ancient times. And this, by its enormous scale, appears to defy any practical and at the same time humane solution. I feel I can speak about this from experience. Its devastation never left my soul, it remained in my thoughts all my life, and it left me for ever searching for resolution for reliable guidance. The new migrants are arriving to Europe by the thousands, not realizing the leftover difficulties of two wars, revolutions, and a very different social and religious European population. Integration is not possible.

I have read Pope Francis' book "The church of mercy". The Pope is a Jesuit father. In his writings, he is giving us profound spiritual insights, a hopeful guidance to help, forgive and love refugees. He addresses, in chapter 27, those uprooted from life, the migrants and itinerant people (May 24, 2013). The chapter concludes "These people need special pastoral care that respects their traditions and accompanies them to harmonious integration into the ecclesial situations in which they find themselves." The Pope emphasize the fundamental principles of brotherly love, and the importance of hope for peace. I respect Pope Francis, the humble human being and great spiritual teacher of our time, and I try to follow his advice. My problem is that I have yet to discover how to do it. I see as a fact a massive migration process engulfing Europe, uncontrolled, undertaken by millions of souls, many for reasons of greed or purposes unknown. This gives qualitative and quantitative dimensions that defy effective pastoral care. Some used the term "Trojan horse" as a metaphor to emphasize a possible and dangerous aspect of the ongoing migration. Others suggested, most prominently the German chancellor Madam Angela Merker

whose utterings I have to take seriously, to show the migrants the Bible. Will this help? I do not know anyone in responsible position who would see the solution in that simple and magnificent Merkerian act. My feeling tells me that it may take some very brutal action to stop that Trojan horse.

Seeing the Mission of San Miguel is my most valued memento I brought home with me from Brazil. I had ample time to observe the Guarani native people at the outdoor market alongside João Pessoa on weekends in the magnificent Parque de Farroupilha. The natives' market stalls are grouped at the end João Pessoa near the emergency Hospital. Entire families, with their children and pets, selling artefacts they created. They are expert basket-makers, creating their designs out of local plants. The men are exceptionally talented wood carvers, creating marvellous animal figurines. Their carvings artfully capture movement and basic form. I bought many of their product for our grandchildren and for our house. One of my prized possessions, a beautifully done jaguar with her



young, is a permanent joy decorating our home. The Guarani's do not charge much for what they sell, and as I sensed they create and sell mainly for tourists.

The Guarani market on the mission grounds at Sao Miguel. Gabriel translated.

Heavy territorial claims and frequent frontier clashes between Portuguese and Spanish colonials characterized the early southern frontier of Brazil. The price was



the ownership of the choice Rio Grande do Sul territory, with its navigable rivers and lagoons with direct access to the Atlantic Ocean. The fights intensified after Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay gained independence as countries with ill-defined frontiers. Border lines were not fixed. The land-owners decided where the border is, and organized their own border guards who became known as the gaúchos of South America.

Giant statue of the gaucho in Porto Alegre, a cultural symbol showing strength and determination.

Alone, or in groups, the gaúchos patrolled the frontiers, guarded their land and live stock. Serious, hardy outdoor, unsettled peoples - mainly a miscegenation of Spanish, Indian, Portuguese and escaped slaves - the gaúchos lived off the land. They created their life-style, costumes, unique music and

original dances. As the twentieth Century came around the frontiers were well marked, and they were less and less needed, but the culture survived in Rio Grande do Sul province in part at the gentleman level and in the romantically elegant costumes, broadly wore by the gaúchos on special occasions.

I arrived in Porto Alegre just before the 2002 international IAVS symposium, the annual gathering of world scientists with common interest in vegetation ecology. The symposium had rich cultural components to break in the formal proceedings, for relaxation and for engagement of family members in the life of the symposium. One of these is was a real Brazilian barbecue, the churrasco. As the hosts presented the barbecue, it was a cultural celebration of the gaúcho tradition with their music, dances and a superb feast. We were in the land of the tastiest beef and finest lamb.

As a gaúcho's group began dancing, a tall, well-built very attractive gaúcho came off the floor, directly to our table and asked me for a dance. I felt honoured, but somewhat exposed by the attention and applauding we received. It was my first gaúcho dance, with an expert. He was a good looking, a super dancer, making me to follow was a breeze. I had a rather short but wonderful time with my gaúcho partner. I fell in love with their music. I often listen to it. It brings back a special, warm feeling, and the sensation of walking in the soft, tall grass of the pampas. The services of the gaúchos are no longer in need as border guards, but they are very much a part of the traditional culture of Rio Grande do Sul. I felt very fortunate to meet them and listen to their songs. I only said "muito obrigado" to my gaúcho partner. "Oh la la" was László's reaction, wondering how would my alter ego, the young beautiful blond university student have responded to the experience.



Visit to a cattle ranch in the Espinal on the Uruguay border. Shown: Gaúcho owner with me, Valério with László. The owner, tall gentleman standing on my left in the middle, facing Valério de Patta-Pillar (in rimed hat) encouraged volunteers to try out the saddle horses. Valério did, and

appeared quite practiced. It turned out that as a teenager he went on cattle drives with his uncle's herd.

I was invited to go on the across the state excursion and field research of a group of IAVS scientists who were having their annual symposium in Porto Alegre in 2002. It was the best opportunity to see the flora and the settlements of Rio Grande do Sul, totally new to me. Dr. Valerio D. Patta Pillar, professor of ecology, a good friend, a former doctorate student of László, and a close research collaborator, was in charge. It was a superbly organized excursion. All went like clockwork for an entire week. I saw much, met many fine people. I enjoyed the local hosts, who were accomplished scientists, yet easy going, helpful people. One afternoon we were treated to a fine barbeque with students treating us to superb gaúcho entertainment. The "asado" was fantastic, the Brazilian wine superb, but I treasured most the fine performance of the student singers, musicians, and dancers, all happening outdoors, under a starry tropical sky. Their songs were now familiar and even more enjoyable for me. I remember the feeling of peace, tranquillity and joy, all in a very serene and green environment just outside Santa Maria in Rio Grande do Sul. I felt lucky to be there.

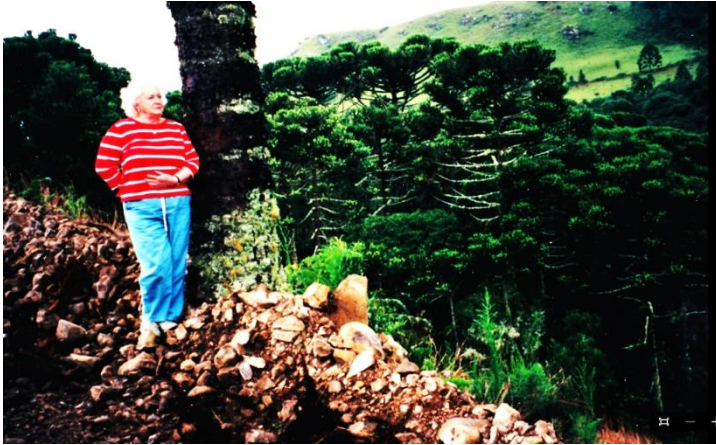


László and Brazilian colleague, wearing the gaúcho bombasha and high boots. He is holding a calabas gourd in hand from which he drinks chimarrão by the metal straw called bomba.

I was looking forward to seeing the famous Brazilian white pine (*Araucaria angustifolia*), very common on the high plateau of Rio Grande do Sul. With their flat tops and robust habit they looked to me as Nature's rugged centenarians in the land of the gaúcho. Some were giants, and as for lumber they are as good as the North American White pine. They were exploited by the lumber industry more than any other tree in the region. Specimens of *Araucaria* are living fossils. Their genus sheltered and perhaps their seeds fed the dinosaurs. I wonder how this species survived the geological ages, and especially the last century's era of mindless exploitation. But they did and thrived. *Araucaria* is now on the most protected species of the state.

For comparison, I mention that almost one third of Southern Brazil was covered by *Araucaria* pine forest, when the first European arrived. Somewhat similar harvests happened in Canada after the Europeans arrived. Slowly wholesale

cutting for lumber and easy profit almost led to the species extinction. Araucaria is now safe and spreading.



In an Araucaria forest on the Rio Grande do Sul Highlands.



With David Goodall at Itaimbenzinho canyon at Aparados de Serra, Rio Grande do Sul 2002. David is considered by László as one of the intellectual greats in his field. Our acquaintance with Dave, going back to the late 1960s, has been nourished by frequent meetings at scientific events in all parts of the World. David's wife, Ivy, and I got along very well. When we have ran into each other we rejoiced. This was my last meeting with Dave. He is now 101 years old. He lives in Perth, Australia. After long correspondence with Ivy from the U.K. her letters stopped coming a few years ago.

The Araucaria seed is a delicious treat, it highly sought after commodity. It is huge, 3 to 5 cm. long, arranged nestled in a cone, and traditionally an important dietary source for the Guarani, Kaingang, Kamaiura and other native tribes.

The maintenance of their diet, culture and lifestyle basically depended on a good pine seed crop.



In the Atlantic Rainforest of Rio Grande do Sul. I leaned against this scented tree. I was told not to do it again.

An evergreen shrub species, which I first saw used in the regular diet of the population of an entire continent, and native to the pine belt, is called maté or Paraguay tea (*Ilex paraguariensis*). The name maté comes from a

Guichua tribal language. It is widely used. The gourd in which the maté is made is carried on a string, around the neck. All one has to do is to fill it with the mixture of shredded maté leaves and add hot water to it. An infusion (tea) is produced, and sipped from the gourd by the bomba de chimarrão, a straw-like tube, with a small perforated ball at the tip. Chimarrão is Portuguese for maté. The communal use of mate by passing the gourd with the bomba from person to person is a tradition in Brazil. The people know and trust the leaves, and do not consider the communal use of the bomba unhygienic. I accepted a sip, the offer of a colleague, it was strongly herbal. It certainly helps conversation going, which as I observed Brazilians enjoy very much.



Martha's graduations

The years rolled fast. Martha graduated from Banting High School in London, 1985. She went on to university and four years later earned a BA degree in geography/ecology at the University of Western Ontario. She was hooded by her father at the Convocation.

We were happy and proud for her success. It was a splendid family occasion. A few days after the ceremony she went on for camping in the Canadian Rockies. She loved the adventure, the challenge of hiking the isolated trails in the mountain landscape and forest. I knew that she did not want any lifestyle tied to academics. She did not plan to earn a postgraduate degree. Martha learned to know and love the outdoors early as a toddler. Nature, the forests, lakes and wild rivers are still an important part of her life.

Shortly after graduation she obtained a position as regulations officer with the Conservation Authority. It was there she met Tim Goodison, a fellow scientist, in the late 1980s.

She left home, I missed her a lot, I found myself in her room often, only my heart knew the purpose of my visits. But I assured myself she will do well on her own. She was well adjusted and settled easily into her new assignments. She knew we were always there, if she needed any help. She could not take her dog Betyár, a loving family dog, who often wandered into Martha's room, checked her bad and looked into the corners. We both missed her attention and love.



Graduation pictures from Banting high school (1985) and the University of Western Ontario (1988), London, Canada. László Confirmed the degree on Martha at the 1988 convocation at U.W.O. Lately, the university's name have changed to "Western University".



A walk to the Academy

Around the time when Martha's career started to take off in the nature conservation in 1990, László was notified by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Magyar Tudományos Akadémia or MTA) of his election into the Academy.

Top: Lánchíd (Chain Bridge), one of 14 brides on the Danube that connect Buda and Pes. Bottom: View of the parliament area of Budapest. Bridge in foreground is Lánchíd. The MTA building faces the square from North at the bridge landing.



It was a big surprise. We were not consulted. It meant being elevated to the highly coveted rank of Academician in an institute whose president is ex officio member of the government in charge of the national science policy. László felt deeply honoured and rewarded. After all, there is nowhere higher to go

in the research line of an academic career. When we went for his inauguration one year later to the Academy of Sciences in Budapest. I found it a grand opportunity to invite Martha and Tim along for the occasion and for holidays in Hungary. It was a grandiose event, and a great homecoming for us.

It was a glorious homecoming, in deed, on a sunny morning in August 21, 1991. László and I walked, hand in hand on the Lánchíd, one of the magnificent bridges crossing the Danube from Buda to Pest. The institutional home of MTA is one of the landmarks since 1825 on the Pest side of the Danube, right at the landing from the bridge. We stopped half way through for a few minutes, looked and reminisced thinking of the long past when we first walked on the bridge hand in hand almost four decades before.



Academician János Gergely hands László the certificate of induction into the body of academicians of the MTA. Criteria to reach this point: nomination by sitting academicians, acceptance by committee, none of the sitting academicians raising objections.



Flags decorated the bridge for the Papal visit, the white gulls were flying at water's surface, and the light mountains of Buda added splendid decor to the morning ambient. We could locate the site on the Gellért Mt, where we last rendez-vous-ed in 1956 shortly before the capitol city became engulfed in the revolutionary war of independence against the Soviet occupying forces and the hated communist regime.

László selected a rather technical topic for his inauguration speech. I felt the semi-public nature of the occasion would have benefited from ready access to a lighter version.

It was a happy return. I wished that everybody knew that we were coming, home to Hungary, to the Academy. I felt touched and very proud of László and ourselves that we made it. It was a happiest homecoming ever, with honour, and acknowledgement! Kathryn and Ruth do not forget that after the revolution faltered and we left our homeland to Canada, we became 'dissidents' in the language of the re-installed communist regime and persona

non grata, in László's case for 21 years. Looking back, now it seemed just a bad

dream. Both of us were very much alive, and happy in a free Budapest. The communist regime was finally conquered and disappeared from Hungary.

As we walked to the entrance, the huge doors of the Academy opened. In the shadow I saw an elderly gentleman waiting. We recognised each other, the academician Zolyómi Bálint threw his arm around László and said *‘Isten hozott Lacikám, hazánk fia!’* - *God's welcome my László, our country's son.* I saw a warm embrace of the two and tears in their eyes. Four decades past since the famous plant geographer and the then 5th year forest engineering student met. These were magnificent moments of warmth and honest welcome, I will never forget. It was the grandest homecoming ever.

The new academician's induction into the Hungarian Academy is not pompous, yet still measuredly ceremonial. László's lectures was rather technical, bilingual, and a success.



Before the ceremony, we agreed that I should say a few words as his professional partner and about our life in Canada. When László completed his lecture, he asked the Chair if I could also address the Academy. He was obviously surprised, but consented and invited me to do so.

I made history by asking for the podium as a inductee's wife. I felt this would let the audience to know something more about us from a different point of view. Others agreed and as I was told afterwards I made the

induction a family occasion "Canadian style".

This is what I said, translated into English:

Mr. Chairman, Members, Colleagues, Friends, Relatives and Mártika!

Thank you Mr. Chairman for giving me this exceptional privilege. I am aware that my request is unusual. I was warned by members that they do not remember ever a spouse asking for a similar privilege to speak at the induction ceremony of their husband. I will be brief.

Our life with László crossed path not far from here. We were classmates in Forest Engineering in Sopron. We had our last rendez-vous on home ground not far from the Academy on the Gellérthegy shortly before we left our homeland in 1956. It took 40 years to make the way back, where we started from, the Gelléthegy, with many turns and twist, but we returned.

I should say, our chosen country, Canada, received us warmly, with understanding and help among its citizens, and let us progress on our own unhindered speed. As a starter Canada's Immigration gave us five dollars and subsidized our existence and studies as the Sopron Division of Forestry at U.B.C. for one year, and more important, Canada gave us freedom, treated us equals, and bestowed on us citizenship with limitless opportunities.

We were young, full of plans and a limitless optimism. We had confidence and were realist enough to see from the beginning that we have to create a Canadian existence our own way, and not let others do one for us. It was hard and steady work, sometimes very difficult. The burden of our backpack seemed too heavy, the foreign roads often confusing, but we never gave up. We trusted ourselves, and knew that we would succeed. We were always truthful, and had a commitment to hard work. We did not ask for help, rather we created an environment in which help came our way.

The years rolled on, we were too busy to take note, as László Mécs, a Jesuit's poet once wrote in Hungarian, "Nem gyalog jöttünk, hanem játszva karikáztunk".¹⁸

In our wanderings we often changed homes and countries, but never changed our commitment for exemplary citizenship in Canada, and national identity rooted in my Székely-Magyar roots. We still use Hungarian as the family language, pray in Hungarian, express love and articulate displeasure when unguarded in Hungarian. These are part of the reasons why we feel so honoured beyond appreciated by the Hungarian scientific community reaching out to us to extend academician status to László at Home in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. It is a recognition from Home for a life of science, which makes the celebration for us such an uplifting experience.

Many years ago my father-in-law secretly mentioned that it would have been the biggest joy for him, just once, to listen to his son lecturing on from what he called

¹⁸ Paraphrased: we came not walking, but walked *playing with [pushing] a wheel [with a stick]*. Magyar contracts *playing with [pushing] a wheel [with a stick]* into the infinitive *karikázni* which has past plural first person *karikáztunk*.

the academic cathedra. He never had his wish fulfilled. But I know his Spirit is with us.

I see many changes, new venues and exuberance in this new Hungary. They fill my heart with joy. I hope that the new ways will be nourished and find strength to create goodness, beauty, and abundance in the country.

I shall quote my favoured, immigrant Székelyföld's story teller, who speaks for me:

... My God, tell the wheat to grow twice the size. Teach the birds to sing to these people. Wipe all the



sadness from their forehead. Do not let any to die in vain. Let the precious mother tongue, as gold, shine on their lips. Let the Hungarian's virtues and strengths fortify. Stop all the injustice and bless all¹⁹

I hope that all will be well. Thank you for listening!

At the lavishly arranged reception after the induction ceremony.



Taking time off after the induction ceremonies, Klári Kontra drove me out to my Alma Mater in Szentendere. I am standing in the memorial garden of the Ferences Gimnázium.

I felt that my words were as kindly received as they were given. I felt elated by having been allowed to share my feelings at the famous intellectual forum. I created news at the Academy, I was the first wife ever to speak at this famous place. With daughter Martha, my brother Árpád from the U.S. and Tim, my future son-in-law from Canada, in the front row, the ceremony became a family event. The large room was filled to capacity. Friends and colleagues came from

near and far on the Globe to celebrate with us. We were guests of the Academy.

¹⁹ Nyíró József, A Havasok könyve.

László's onetime Ph.D. student at Western, Dr. János Podani from ELTE and his lovely wife Klári Kontra helped with the arrangements.

For the next few days the ancient city of Eger welcomed us for the IAVS symposium. The organizers reserved a suite for us in the hotel, which as I later discovered was the home of the local communist party's secretary, before the regime change. It was luxurious. We had a very rich program. Among others, I mention a very unusual and selective organ concert in the famous House of God, the cathedral of Eger. The highly spiritual milieu surged as a very proper site for my *veni sancte*.



Left: I am with Professor Duilio Lausi of the University of Trieste at László's induction to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences 1991. Right: With academician Pál "Pali" Juhász Nagy at the symposium banquet in Eger 1991. Pali co-nominated László's election for MTA membership.

I remember the farewell dinner, held in an underground wine cellar in Eger, with gypsy music and dancing. We partied 'till early hours. By the time we left, I felt totally worn out and desperately needed a quiet rest. Our friends planned all sorts of activities in Budapest, but I opted for Lake Balaton. We rented a small hotel room, in the country near Tihany, spent three glorious days, doing absolutely nothing, but eating, go sightseeing and catching up with sleep. The weather was splendid, I gorged on Kúrtőskalács, a Transylvanian pastry. László surprised me with a lovely hand embroidered blouse. We had a happy, romantic few days. The Tihany cathedral is an old, quite famous and attractive landmark of the vicinity. The restaurants were fabulous. After all the celebration and rest, we drove to Sopron, the city of our student years. I felt young, very happy in the city. Walking on the main square suddenly I hear – Anyu – Mommy. Our Martha and Tim were having some pastries on the terrace, we met totally unexpected. How small the Globe is getting, we celebrated the day together. They were on a holiday. The days rolled around very fast, it was time to come home to London. As our glorious summer homecoming in Hungary ended, a new

semester started at the university back home. We had returned home, to continue teaching and research.



Wedding rings for Tim and Martha

Good news awaited us at home in London. Martha arranged a transfer from Northern Ontario to a new position as a Regulations Officer closer to us at the Grand River Conservation Authority in Cambridge, Ontario. A few weeks later, we learned that her relationship with Tim was serious. Tim, a tall blue eyed gentleman, 32, and Martha, a lovely brunette, 27, both were certainly old enough to choose their partner. They decided to get married. We raised Martha to be well-balanced, good mannered, thoughtful and very independent. We trusted her choices of friends as she was growing up. She was the only child, we spoiled her with infinite love and respect and enjoyed her growing up years. Obviously we followed her activities, but she was always free to make her own decisions.

I imagined a partner for her, who adores and respects her. A gentleman, who loves to work, has a solid financial responsibility and takes his marriage commitment seriously. As all mothers do, I was very critical, but it was my last chance to speak, I only wanted the best man for my daughter. At the same time I hoped that my future son-in-law shall be a member of my family also, so I was looking also for a son. I wanted for Martha the best man, who would love and respect her for life. I am happy to say that my wish is fulfilled. Tim is a wonderful father, loves my daughter and a caring son in law. We take every opportunity to celebrate this peaceful and loving relationship. Tim's parents, Pat and Bev Goodison welcomed my daughter into their family with love. How lucky we are to love the same persons and celebrate together on family occasion. Adding to this fine family unit are a great uncle, David, and the caring Ayumi, the godmother of our two outstanding granddaughters Kathryn and Ruth.

Both Martha and Tim were working professionals. They did all the necessary arrangements for their wedding, exactly as they wanted it. We were invited to their wedding, set for on the 20th of February, 1993. My only contribution to the celebration was to help to select the wedding outfit for her. We had a snow storm a day before, but on their wedding day there was blue skies and sparkling, bright sunshine. I was told that it was the best omen for their happy future. I very much hoped for all the happiness for her and Tim.

It was a modest traditional, Christian wedding in a solemn church in Cambridge, Ontario. Martha's former schoolmate, the Rev. Dr. Stephen Hendry officiated. The reverend was wearing a Hungarian embroidered celebration stole. Martha was a very happy bride, joy radiated on her face as László walked her up to the altar. Patricia Campbell, her life-long friend was her bridesmaid. John Goodison, Tim's brother served as best man. Todd Wilkinson escorted me into the church. Ayumi Bailly, a school friend played Martha's favourite Mozart's arrangement, wearing a gorgeous Japanese kimono. Stephen delivered a very special wedding message to Martha and Tim about love, forgiveness, compassion and charity.



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Pictures 1-7 narrate the wedding ceremony 20 February 1992..



After the wedding, patiently posing at the church on a very cold February morning in Cambridge, Ontario.

The reception was hosted by László in a lovely village restaurant in St. Jacobs, Ontario. We were lucky. We could drive out to St. Jacobs under a blue winter sky on clear highways. We were about 50 people, gathered for the occasion. Martha looked radiant. Tim's brother, John, served as the master of ceremonies. His humour delighted all. Dr. Hendry's prayer opened the formalities. Tim's father, Beverly Goodison, addressed the bride and then László spoke at length.



Tim's father, Beverly Goodison, is toasting the newlyweds.



László speaking at the wedding reception.

I include the text of László's speech:

Cambridge
February 20, 1993

Could there be really anything more important than love, tolerance, friendship, and charity? - the key elements in the reverend Steve Hendry's homily, and I am quite sure the underlying emotions in Ayumi Bailly's beautiful clarinet music. These so well set the tone of this event.

I am elated to see you so happy, Mártika. I look at you and I see a quality, so obvious, yet so defying description:

"There is something in your face,
An air, and a peculiar grace,
Which boldest painters could not trace."

(William Somerville 1675-1742)

Your mother and I watched you grow and we took pride to see you

develop a kind disposition, moral qualities, trained competence, and mature beauty. Every day, there were new discoveries and each day with you was happy. But then you grew up, received your degree, took a job, and our life was transformed. You rapidly claimed complete independence. Although, today will make this condition final, we are consoled by your bringing into our life a fine, handsome, brilliant, hard-working Canadian lad.

To Tim I say "Welcome to the family". We get along well, which is not surprising, given your broad interests and engineering background. I appreciate that you came to my induction in Budapest, and I hope to have you in Italy and, of course, for a longer visit in Honolulu. I am touched by your avid interest in our Hungarian heritage. I also salute you for the extraordinary determination that you have demonstrated in the past. I wish you much success in your career and happiness with Márta.

You two are a link between two families of different national heritage: the Székely and Magyar on this side, and the Canadian on the other. Through this you bring to your union a unique background to be lived by, to be cultivated, and to be passed on to your children.

From family-to-family, may I extend our warmest good wishes and congratulations to you Bev and Pat, Dave and John, the grand parents and other relatives. Our house is yours, please do stop by when you are in London.

To complete my task I would like, on behalf of our family present - Márta, Penny, Árpád and myself - to thank all of you our dear friends for braving the winter to share this wonderful occasion with us. I extend special thanks to the Reverend Steve Hendry and Miss Ayumi Bailly.

I usually begin my undergraduate lectures with a quotation from somebody famous. One from the 17th Century mathematician-philosopher, Blaise Pascal, is one of my favourites:

"Things are always at their best in their beginning."

This is very true, but luckily, our notion of "best" evolves as we grow together and there can always be a new beginning.

With this thought, I wish the newlyweds:

"jó egészséget, boldogságot és hosszú életet".



Pre-wedding dinner hosted by Tim's father, Bev Goodison, for the immediate family and close friends.

The luncheon followed. We enjoyed the delicious food, good selection of wines, cheese, and pastry. We were family and friends, it was a happy affair. Martha and Tim left the reception for a skiing honeymoon.



Tim and Martha with: Tim's parents, Patricia and Beverly Goodison, László and me, ...



... with Tim's Goodison grandparents, Martha's uncle and aunt Árpád and Penny Mihály.



Left: With the Campbell family. Last row: Tim, Chester Campbell. Front row: Martha, Trish Campbell. Middle row: Michel Campbell, myself, Sylvia Campbell, László, Dean Bennett. Right: With Tim, Martha, my sister in law Penny Mihály, and brother Árpád Mihály.



Left: Penny Mihály and László. Right: Tim and Martha pose with Todd Wilkinson, Mary Makkattu, Mathew Makkattu, me, and László.



Tim's brother John Goodison, Tim (waving), Martha, Trish Campbell, Todd Wilkinson, Tim's second brother Dave Goodison.

At the wedding, or following the ceremony, usually very few words are said about the feeling of mothers. They mention that mothers always cry and talk about her outfit. What I feel is characteristic, is that at this point our motherly role is not diminishing, but shifting its centre of gravity. We are no longer in charge. I cried during the ceremony, perhaps as my last opportunity to recall

my own best times, when I had the centre of attention, young and beautiful. Every mother loves to recall those moments, but they stay in the past, usually not returning in our life time; now we think of it with tears. These are perhaps excusable selfish attempts to feel sorry for losing motherly power, over our brilliant, beautiful most precious child. Our part in the drama of motherhood of course goes on. So the mother's tears are expressions of mixed feeling of joy and worries. Basically we mothers never give our children away, we carry you and your fate in our heart, you are engraved in our brain and soul for life. You stay with us forever.



Chief Crazy Horse Monument

Early summer, in the late nineties, we were heading to the west coast. At this time we took Interstate 90 to the Black Hills in South Dakota and turned south at Rapid City, skirted Mt Rushmore, which we had visited earlier, and directly headed to the mountain-size rock carving in progress, just north of Custer, created in memoriam of Chief Crazy Horse, the legendary leader of the Oglala Lakota tribe.



I wanted to visit the famous monument in progress. Some years back I saw the sketched model of Crazy Horse; it seemed a unique way to create a memorial, to be carved out of the mountain. The carving began in 1948. The gigantic statue is larger than Mt Rushmore. The face of the rider was already done. The finished product would show the proud Lakota chief, Crazy Horse, on horseback, pointing ahead with an extended arm to be 80 m long, with a message: My land there is where my dead lie buried.

The Crazy Horse Monument is the brain child of sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski of Polish descent. Five decades passed from the first blast on the granite mountain in 1948 before carving of the face could began. When completed in a couple of hundred years, the statue will be the exact likeness of the model above scaled up 34 times.

The composition is being carved out of a huge mountain. Financed by the Sioux tribe, from donations and selling pieces of a granite mountain. It is a work of fine art, and a beautiful exposé of mountains and geological riches.

The carving began in 1948, as a family project by Ziolkowski Korczak, a Polish immigrant, and continues as a family project ever since. The family has turned down governmental help. The inspirer of the project was the then Lakota Chief Standing Bear who asked Ziolkowski Korczak to create a statue out of the mountain to prove that the red-skin people had tribal giants too. This is not a small, easy, or fast creation. It will take generations of the family to complete the enormous statue which, is still largely with the 180 x 200 x 100 m solid granite cube of the mountain. It will take almost the whole mountain, to carve out the walking horse from the solid granite. The head will be the highest point.

When I visited, carving was in progress. Several people were working with sledge hammers on the rugged face of the chief (at least 30 m wide). The workers looked smaller, than the pupils of the already completed eyes. They were hanging on long ropes 80-100 m high. It was quite a sight. I could see the rich coloured layers of the rock, and in some places the guiding chalk marks. These stay in my mind as a geological formation coming alive, after many millions of years in rest, only now becoming evident what was inside the solid rock which only the family carvers could imagine. I think of the Crazy Horse Monument among the Black Hills as a global level celebration of the Lakota people. It projects out from the granite mountain as if the rider's spirit finally managed to break free and reign again over the Lakota land.

If the project is retained as a family enterprise, many generations of hard work will be needed to complete the memorial as planned.

I marvelled at the almost complete face. I saluted the idea: a Lakota chief emerging out of the mountain on a horseback where it has been for geological times, waiting for the imagination of a Polish immigrant to remove the encasing overburden. I hope to visit the site again.



New York, New York ...

With my friend, Magda, we decided to go on vacation to New York city. We could not be longer than one week. Far too short to really see New York, but long enough to have taste of some aspects of it, on selective visits. I just wanted to experience its milieu focusing on Broadway. We ordered theatre and concert tickets ahead of arrival. We chose the Barbizon Hotel to stay on 63rd Street not far from Central Park. Once a favourite for women, now the hotel is permanently closed.

We enjoyed two musicals, “Chicago” and “Fiddler on the Roof”, visited the Museum of Art at Columbus Circle, and attended a Radio City spectacular show. I enjoyed those. In season one can see shows put up by freelancer entertainers on the side walk, walking along Broadway. Magda and I arrived a few hours before the shows started. I felt, walking along, as if I were taking part in a spontaneous parade of artists displaying their talent on the sidewalk. How lovely was the Lincoln Centre at night. In my ears, I had the pulsating of sounds like a dissonant musical master pieces, and I felt the spirit of a super New York. It was past midnight when we fell into bed in the highest spirits. I wanted to dine in Rockefeller’s Golden Boy’s Restaurant. It was a lovely milieu, super food and light dinner music.

Radio City Music Hall had an afternoon matinee, the famous choir-dancers were on. Of course it was sold out. As we were leaving the Hall, an older gentleman handed two tickets to me. I asked the price, he said they are free. I thought a few seconds, thanked him, thinking that not much danger can hide behind his generosity. Adventures in New York were on the horizon! This was a miracle, we were sitting in the second row, what a luck and a bargain. Soon after we were seated a second gentleman appeared, so we had 2 sitting escorts. I began to wonder, but the show started. It was a wonderful, truly professional performance. Right at the first 20 minutes break, we were escorted out, invited for a drink and a chat. They wanted to take us out for a night, but we did not want their company. They were about our age, well dressed, polite. I thanked them for the ticket. I offered again to pay for it. I told him that I am honoed by the invitation, but I have my own man. After the show we quickly hopped into a cab, disappeared. Did we behave like village girls in a big town? Probably.

I wanted to have a sandwich at Sardi’s, the “place” in New York. It has its own uptown clientele, fantastic food, at a price, of course. Our week in New York flew like a minute. We had to be heading home. What I learnt from this? Going on holiday with trusted girl friend, and leave our husbands behind. It was a fantastic idea.



Grandmother Me

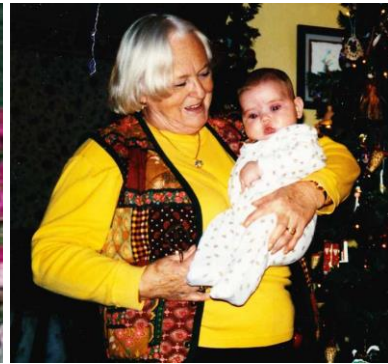
I begin this section with a picture of Ruth and Kathryn with me (left) which László took of us at their house on Ayr around 2010. My story goes back to the early 1990s at the time when my daughter and Tim were holding down fulltime jobs. They had an old house on Ottawa Street in Kitchener, almost exactly 100 km driving distance from us in London. They spent much time re-finishing it,

working feverishly to complete their plans during the summer. They transformed the property into a comfortable home, with a friendly garden.

In Early spring Martha told me that she was expecting a baby in August. We were happy and excited. To become grandparents intrigued us. The 1994 summer was very hot and humid, uncomfortable for Martha. She was in good health; we did not have to worry. A beautiful, healthy little girl arrived on 13th of August in 1994. Tim was with Martha during the birth. They named her Kathryn Elisabeth Orlóci-Goodison.

Kathryn Elisabeth's arrival changed life for the whole family. How else could it be? She was the first grandchild for us and for Beverly and Patricia Goodison. Both sets of grandparents, the Goodison great-grand mother, two Goodison uncles, Dave and John, gathered often in the garden of the old house. Kathryn was getting all the attention.

I felt much joy as a grandmother, in a very special way which broadened and generated new feelings in continuity as Kathryn grew. These were wonderful times, the years flew away fast and Kathryn became a beautiful young lady. I often think of those cheerful years as good times of laughter and play.



Tim and Martha's first born Kathryn Elisabeth Orlóci-Goodison 1994. Three years later came their second child Ruth Anne Orlóci-Goodison (I am holding her in 1997).



It took some time for Kathryn to accept her baby sister Ruth 1997.

Early fall in 1997 our second granddaughter, Ruth Anne arrived. It happened on September 28. She was a big, healthy newborn, an alert happy bundle of joy. We visited her in the hospital, when she was a few hours

old. Tim brought Kathryn along to meet her sister Ruth. It was a happy and

memorable family morning. I could hold my two wonderful granddaughters. I felt very joyful and lucky. They were wonderful babies and active toddlers, delightful to be with both as teenagers.

We were doing research on Maui that winter where we learned that Martha and Tim found a new home in the village of Ayr, about 20 km south of Kitchener. They liked the location and the large property. They sent us the details, we thought that it would be a good place for the two girls.

The girls had a peaceful and friendly time growing up in a very friendly community, a lake in the middle, forests and farming fields around, and a river flowing through it. Everybody knew them by name. They did their schoolwork well and still had time to share their talents in social work and other community matters.

We love to visit them. Many trees were planted which have now grown large and provide much shade. The garden is very large, and the trees they planted, all are tall with large crowns. Shrubs and flowering plants are aplenty, and the bird feeders attract many kinds of birds in all seasons. There, a golden Labrador, Murphy, always gives a special welcome for everybody.

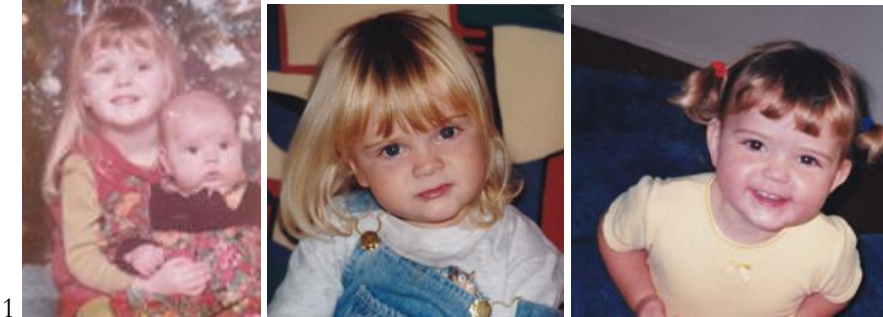


Tim and Martha have a large house and a beautifully kept garden where our granddaughters grew up in Ayr, Ontario. Ayr is an upper middle class bedroom community in southern Ontario's agricultural heartland.

To be a grandmother is a special gift. I love to be with Kathryn and Ruth. Their being is like a magic wand, they reawaken my youth, and loving them creates love in return. Somehow our home comes alive when they arrive, their presence breaks the day's monotony and brightens up even the dullest day. Their voices ring through everywhere and are always welcomed.



Great grandmother Goodison with Kathryn in centre and grandmother Patricia Goodison in the backyard of Tim and Marta, Kitchener 1995.



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The early years passed quickly with Kathryn and Ruth. Reciprocal visits were frequent events, often they stayed with us. They had ample opportunity to get to know our ways as we learned theirs. Slowly a close bond developed between us.

When I hear a grandchild described as a “bad brats”, I wonder who the grandparents are. Mine have been never in my way. They were attentive, and still are. Their response is exemplary when it comes to knowing limits. They never broke any of my china and always offered help when they saw it needed. They are observant, their minds analytical, and make their own inferences. I feel very fortunate to be blessed with them. They are a special gift for me.

Kathryn and Ruth frequently visited us. They felt at home with us, free to use László’s study and anything in it when they grew into it. It was a wonderland for Kathryn and Ruth, a place full of papers, pencils, rulers, computers of all vintage and kinds, books on many topics, and flash lights. As they grew, their

preferences matured and their interest in our working life also increased. They often imitated specific acts. They drew tables like the ones they saw on László's desk, constructed mathematical formulas, copying symbols used in scientific work, wrote imitation books, and became aware that they have their ideas worth noting down and to talk about them. Ruth was intrigued by earned symbols of academic rank and status, and created her own name card such as Dr. Ruth. Kathryn's interest moved early in the direction of singing. She created and hummed her own operatic areas.



Graduation pictures 2012 for Kathryn and 2015 for Ruth, Southwood High School in Cambridge, Ontario.

I liked to be with my granddaughters. I taught them drawing, knitting, and the three of us acted out roles they suggested, or created. We visited nearby playgrounds when they came to London, took them out to Lake Erie and Lake Huron to play on the shore and in the water. Sundays we swam at the university pool. They were good swimmers. Pat Goodison and I took our granddaughters for a Disney cruise to the Bahamas.

In the early years, Kathryn, Ruth, and I did story-telling before bedtime. The girls preferred me to tell them my own stories. I was practiced in this literary exercise from the time when I had to do the same with my younger brothers. It usually went on for quite long, I in the middle, Kathryn and Ruth on my sides on the king-size bed, until they fell asleep. Time moved fast.

The girls matured and story-telling changed to discussions. I had much fun and laughter with them.

All along they were in touch with our professional lives which, I am sure, made them realise that in their future preparing for university is natural. They are grown, young ladies now, but when they come to visit they still visit László's study and the shelves filed with books in the basement. They bring back the joyous times from the past. Looking back I am delighted that I spent so much time with them as they were growing up. We remain close, but, I realize that they have their own company. They are fully aware that I am always there to give them my love and help. I feel they are there for me too. Once I was told by my grandmother that to develop a close relationship with grandchildren, it has to start at the cradle. I started there and it worked.



In my dining room with Ruth and László. On left: Alex, Kathryn, Ruth, László, and Tim on László's birthday in 2015.

Early in June we drove up to Ayr for a short visit with Martha and Kathryn. Ruth already started her summer job with the Geological Survey of Canada. Tim was out of town on business in the States. We were sitting downstairs in the living room conversing with Martha. Upstairs on the large open landing Kathryn practiced a Mozart piece, Sonata #11, on the piano. Practice done, she surprised us with an ad hoc concert, playing Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata". It is one of my favourite, I saw a lot more: this piece was played with passion by a beautiful, talented young lady in love. A joyous time together.

I recognise in granddaughters a trait which I would describe as a drive for excellence. It appears almost limitless for them in anything they do. In school where they did very well academically, they too excelled in extracurricular activities. They took music lessons, played in different school bands, participated in plays, quires; they danced, organised activities, performed solo or duet in concerts, that we faithfully attended. Ruth and Kathryn never felt it that time wasted by volunteering for community service. This trait made them love the outdoors, help them pre-professional levels in skiing, skating and water sports. They saw value in channelling their intellect and energy by activities for the improvement of themselves and those around them. This drive put them at the

top of the class in school, and won them scholarly recognition and community awards. When they left for university they were well prepared. Kathryn entered university with a musical scholarship. Ruth did the same, but she went for the top when she applied for and received the Presidential Scholarship at Lakehead University for four years. She succeeded retaining it after completion of the first academic year by a close to 90 average, well over the required limit. We are very proud of our granddaughters and pleased with their progress. Our devotion and love to them goes beyond grandparents' unconditional attach-

ment and support. It is a response to a very positive feedback.



Ruth driving a government truck in field work. After completing two weeks of safety training at the assembly point in Sudbury, Ontario, the youthful geological survey team convoyed to Wawa, the site of their summer work. As a condition of participation in the field work, all members of the team had to show proficiency in wilderness safety, operation of canoes and heavy trucks.

I should mention the school activities we attended. Whatever, or whenever there was piano recital or choir entertainment in school, the four grandparents were always present. Tim's parents Patricia and Beverly Goodison, his brother Dave, godmother Ayumi enjoyed time together, we truly celebrated our granddaughters, Kathryn's and Ruthie's successes. They were special, happy times. We are a united family, celebrating family love.



At the Royal Society

László's retirement years began with a very special news from Ottawa. In November 1997 he was elected Fellow of the Academy of Sciences of the Royal Society of Canada. This was the highest acknowledgement of his scientific achievements from top Canadian scientists, the Fellows of the Royal Society, who nominate and elect the Fellows. For me and László, receiving such a distinction presented much more beyond science, a recognition from our adopted country. László's seminal ideas in statistical ecology were noted earlier by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and were lauded by those in Canada, who understood his ideas novelty and usefulness. Becoming a Fellow gives recognition of the fact that the scientist's career reached the top level in academia. The new Fellows' induction ceremony took place in the West Block of

Parliament hill in Ottawa. My daughter Martha, son-in-law Tim, two granddaughters Kathryn and Ruth, my brother Árpád and sister-in-law Penny from California, and my nephew, Ferenc Mihály and wife Florentina joined our inaugural celebrations. We filled a whole row of the seats in the wood-panelled, richly appointed historic room.

Ruth slept in the pram, at the side, she was just a few months old. Kathryn was standing up on her chair, so she could see her Nagypapa as he walked by on the red carpet to the head of the room to be inducted. Then the president of the Royal Society, Robert Haynes, performed the honours in the presence of other dignitaries, after the societies secretary read the induction paragraph.



Robert Haynes, President of the Royal Society, congratulates László on his induction to the Society as a new fellow in 1997. “Fellow” in the British system is equivalent by scientific status to “Academician” in the continental European systems.

A large music ensemble entertained the celebrants and guests. The milieu was festive, formal and elegant. Our spirits were high, toasts were offered, and the president of the Academy made his rounds after the formalities, expressing congratulations and exchanging pleasantries. I introduced him to Kathryn she responded with the outmost charm and confidence of a three-year-old. Just as I introduced Ruth, a few months old, in the pram, the brilliant lights from the chandelier played on her angelic little face as she was

just waking up. Then I said: “Dr. Haynes, this is Ruth, my granddaughter, a future Prime Minister of Canada”. The president agreed, saying that she certainly got an early start among the Fellows and has a parliamentarian experience too. She answered with an angelic smile, I am sure she suspected that we were talking about her. I can see now that she is well on the way for the predictions to come true.

The celebrations closed with a gala dinner at the Château Laurier a short distance away on the Rideau Canal. Our family filled a large table. It was a grand gourmet extravaganza. Happy times. We spent the following two days enjoying the Capital city. The Château Laurier is well located in town. Another time we stayed in the Château during summer. We could walk to most places of interest to us.



The Family gathered in the Château Laurier in Ottawa 1997 to attend László's induction into the Royal Society of Canada. Sitting: Martha holding baby Ruth, I am holding Kathryn. Standing: Florentina wife of Ferenc Mihály my cousin, Tim, Penny, my sister in law, László. My brother Árpád took the photograph.

Waikiki aquarium



Walking alone on the beach was my preferred pass time in Hawai'i. I loved the sound of the waves. My brain created music out of nature's pattern. The flights of seagulls with the currents intensified the experience. I always walked at the edge of the water, enjoyed the silky, wet sand under my feet. Most days my beach walks covered 5-6 miles. I frequently passed by the Sea Aquarium on the sea shore in Kapiolani park, on the Diamond Head side of Waikiki. One day I found out that they were looking for biologists to volunteer to show visitors around. I applied and was accepted. It was the best place to get to know Hawai'ian sea life. I enjoyed my work there. I introduced to the Aquarium visitors the endemic coastal vegetation, on request. I emphasized that the role of vegetation on the coast-line is many-fold, and indispensable in a healthy environment. I was offered a permanent position.



The aquarium site is directly on the shore in Kapiolani Park about 700 meters from the last Waikiki hotel on Kalakaua Avenue.

The aquarium is an exciting place to learn and to meet professional people totally dedicated to the idea of the conservation of the Island's aquatic and terrestrial biota. It is also a famous place to study for the large collection of endemic species. I felt very much at home.



Cruising around the Islands

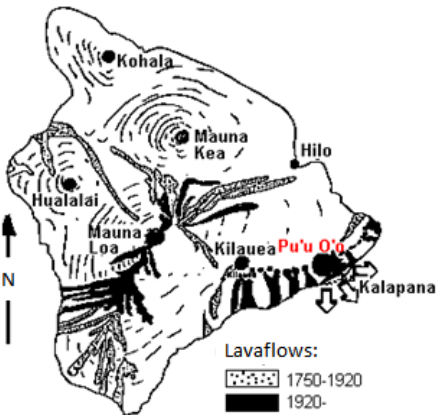
On our 1993/94 sabbatical we were renting an apartment on the 27th floor at 1717 Ala Wai Boulevard. From the unit I could see, on one side, the spectacular Kuliouou mountain Range. I watched the clouds floating over the mountain, bringing heavy rain to Manoa Valley, but slowly disappearing by evaporating in their descent thus leaving us dry in Waikiki. On the other side, the apartment (1717 on Ala Wai street) overlooked Waikiki and the Pacific Ocean. It has a tropical garden and a large swimming pool, which was the place for some to showcase the newest beach-wear and a glorious tan. The ocean was just a short walk away. I was swimming every morning in the pool and several times each day in the ocean. All beaches are public and free for all. Anyone can approach the marvellous sandy beach anywhere, through the hotel grounds or pathways in built up Waikiki with no hindrance. László and I often met at Ala Moana beach midday and went down to the Royal Hawaiian beach bar in the late afternoon where we stayed for the sunset. I swam regularly, long distances, but I felt happy just walking, or sitting around the ocean.

In the spring of 1994, László was invited back to Brazil on research. I thought that he should sail with me, as I planned, around the islands before we were heading back to Canada. I was not happy about him going away. László chose Brazil, he said, because his short course was already announced. He followed his plans and I followed mine. I made a reservation on a ten day cruise and went on by myself. It turned out to be a great holiday. The off-shore excursions were well organized. I participated in every group event. I never was alone, plenty of single people of my age travelled and I had no shortage of escorts. I met interesting people, danced each evening, and enjoyed the cruise and scenery without László.

Looking back, I am happy that I went on the cruise. As a surprise, one night on the cruise, the ship skirted the Kalapana coast line at the point where the red lava flow met the waters of the Pacific Ocean. Unexpectedly as the red lava flow came into view, a group of Hawaiian entertainers began a mythological chant and spiritual dancing. It was a truly unforgettable experience at the night light that painted silver the crests of the waves of the Pacific Ocean.

I was quite familiar with the village of Kalapana from visits way back in 1972 and 1979. The next time I visited the site in 1986 Kalapana was no more. I walked on lava which buried deep this coastal village. I knew that the slow flowing lava gave Kalapana time for orderly evacuation of the village and even to move the church to higher grounds. I visited the relocated church on the new site several times before.

I will always remember a sun-rise up on the edge of the Haleakala caldera 3300 m up above sea level where our cruise ship was encored at Lahaina. I relived the Hawai'ian legend that at sunrise the island god Maui is pulling the sun-rays over at the edge of the rugged caldera walls across the divine island so it will be warm and sunny to dry the baby's blankets. All sunrays sparkled on the icicles that formed in the freezing night on the small branches and leaves near the ground. I felt mesmerized, I wished to fly into this heavenly fantasia of reflected sunrays. Time flew fast and soon I had to part with my travel companions back in Honolulu. I still had a couple of weeks before flying back home to London.



The pre 1982 state of the lava flow at Kalapana.

One night, already back in the 27th floor apartment at 1717 Ala Wai Boulevard, the fire alarm sounded in the high-rise. Being so far up, I grabbed the bed sheet around me and ran to the fire exit. The ground was 27 floor below me, and the stair case was filling up with people further down. Somehow I managed to get down, sometimes over the top of some exhausted people, as they were meditating on their jewels

left in their room. I came to the ground and watched the smoke coming out from one apartment, high up as I stood among hundreds of people, some without much cover, in different degrees of panic. I ran to the swimming pool.

Some people had to be treated mainly for exhaustion. The alarm worked and my apartment was not affected.

László, on the way back from Brazil, had just a few days of stopover in Honolulu. By that time I was back in London. He closed down the apartment, put our car on Matson's transport ship to Seattle, and headed off to China. It was seven weeks later that he parked his car in our drive way in London. The family reunited.



Sopron Homecoming

In 1956, Hungarian revolution fail in November that year and immediately an unbelievably heavy handed retaliation began by the new communist government against the people in all segments of Hungary's population. This amounted to thousands of executions, imprisonments, deportations to labour camps in other communist countries, black listing, and brutal discrimination. The universities were hit doubly hard. We left but the majority of faculty and students stayed. They had to suffer the consequences for all, including us, who have been active in the revolution.

The terror slowly started to subside and by the end of the 1970s, the Kadar regime felt it beneficial to its objectives to declare general amnesty. It was then, two decades after we left Sopron that László felt safe to return for family visit.

The regime change came 1989, and in 1991 the Russian forces were withdrawn from the country. Hungary became a free democracy once more. The parliamentary system of government was reinstated. Old friendships were renewed and professional co-operation between the Alma mater in Sopron and the Sopron Foresters in Canada started to normalise, yet the complete reconciliation came only in 2007 at the UBC-Sopron 50th Anniversary Celebrations held at U.B.C. from the 14th to 16th June, and at the Golden Diploma awards to UBC-Sopron graduates at the Alma Mater in Sopron on the 9th of September

A Hungarian delegation at the U.B.C. celebrations was led by Rector Sandor Faragó of the University of West Hungary. A High-level political and academic delegation represented the government of British Columbia and the University of British Columbia. Special presentations were organised for June 15th.

László missed the U.B.C program. Long term research and teaching arrangements kept him in Brazil. I attended and read a paper at the special presentations for which I selected the title "From Sopron/UBC to two national academies". In it I discussed László's contribution to science.

The 50th anniversary celebrations continued in Sopron, Hungary with the awarding of golden diplomas to the class of 1957 (Sopron, Hungary) and 1958 (Sopron, U.B.C.). It gave me and László the opportunity to reunite with class mates and to meet members of the faculty and student body. It also gave us the opportunity to revisit sites to which we are bound by our student years.

I will let the photographs tell my story of the 2007 Homecoming:



At the Sopron Home coming 2007: Sitting with László, at the award ceremony of the class of 1957/58. My turn to receive the golden diploma.



Homecoming in Sopron (left) and Vancouver (U.B.C., right). In the pictures: myself, classmates Julika Szász, Anna Leskó, and István Szász.



In Vancouver. Left: I am with Babi and Panni Lesko at Homecoming the reception in Vancouver. Right: At Babi and Peter Csízársz's house in Vancouver: Babi, myself, János Viszlai, Julika and István Szász, Gyurka Leskó, Eva Viszlai.



With a group of my classmates at the Hejjas house in Victoria, British Columbia: Kati Héjjas, Julika Szász, Erzs Juhász, István Szász, myself, Jóska Héjjas, Éva Viszlai, János Viszlai, Miklós Kováts, and László.



Székely gate in László Józsa's home garden in Vancouver. He carved these and many other original pieces, including the large cedar memorial complex at the University of British Columbia. I was invited to visit their family house. I felt for a short while in their garden as if I were back home in my Székely's land in Transylvania. László Józsa is a Sopron alumnus. He is a forest engineer and a wood carving artist.



Sopron Foresters gathered at the Székely Kapu (Portal) facing the Forestry Faculty's building on the U.B.C. campus. The occasion is 50th anniversary celebrations of our arrival to the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. We completed our degrees (BSF) in the Sopron Division of U.B.C.'s Faculty of Forestry. I am in the celebrating crowd, centre second row.

Cruising the Caribbean



ian Islands.

By the time the new Millennium arrived we got used to a little bit of luxury. I decided in 2002 to spend Christmas on Carnival's Fascination cruising the Caribbean. Several cruises followed which took us to many islands in the Caribbean, others to the Hawaiian

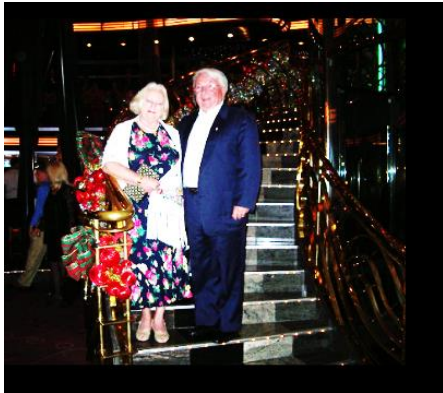
Life is wonderful for any woman on the cruise ships. It disconnected me from the day to day chores of running the house and fulfilling other responsibilities in my everyday life. I quickly got used to the luxurious lifestyle on cruise ships. It is totally based on the principle of having a good time. To me it meant choosing from an almost limitless offerings as I pleased, ranging from quiet library time or listening to classical live concerts at tea time, loud music in the casinos and bars, dancing, formal or informal dining, most of it delivered at an amazingly highly set of standards. I loved swimming in the pools on board, in the

ocean on the shore. I tried gambling, spending 25 cents, had wonderful evenings on the top deck with midnight hamburger and champagne, or anytime just sitting and watching the ever changing seascape, and especially the sunsets, and the unique cloud formations called “soldiers” over the tropical seas.

The ships motions did not bother us. We have become seasoned seafarers after we learned our lesson on our first crossing by ship the North Atlantic in January 1957. We never had any motion related problems thereafter on ferries crossing the English Chanel or on ships on the open ocean.



Leaving harbour in Miami, Florida, aboard Carnival's Fascination. .



Christmas cruise on board Carnival's Fascination 2002.



Carnival Fascination 2002. On shore leave at Tulum pyramids, Yucatan, Mexico.

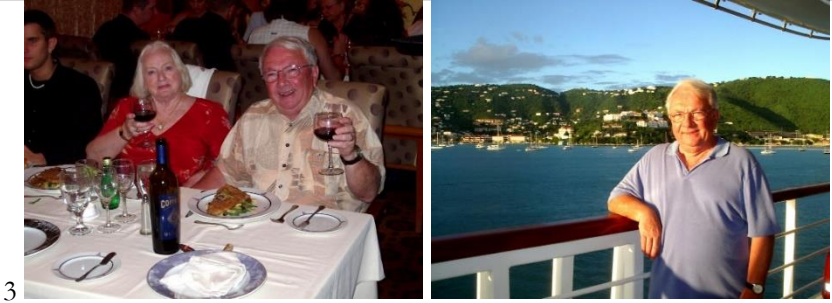


At Tulum.



Leaving Cape Canaveral on board Carnival Glory 2004.





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Pictures 1, 2, 3. On Carnival Glory 2004. Right: Passing by St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands.



Disembarking Carnival Glory (ship on right) at Port St. Maarten, Lesser Antilles.



The tropical North American and South American floras dominate the local vegetation. The port area offers endless opportunities to pay high prices at the myriad of duty-free shops.



We hired a driver for a day and went on siteseeing away from the port on San Marten and avoiding the resort areas. It was an interesting trip ecologically, but uninspiring. László characterises of the hinterland as totally inert and largely annihilated. The island has no capacity of any level of

sustained subsistence. Anything needed on a daily basis is supplied from outside.



Royal Caribbean's Freedom of the Seas, docked at Labadee, Haiti 2010. This was the most magnificent and also the biggest ship I ever sailed on.



On the inside promenade a lively mariachi band. Port at Labadee, Haiti.



Testing for similarities in beach life between similar environments in Hawaii and Labadee. With roadside vender on Grand Cayman 2010.



Sightseeing on Grand Cayman Island .



Long stretches of Grand Cayman beaches are reserved for turtle preservation research. Stakes on the right mark protected Turtle nests in the sand.



Roadside vendors in the hills on St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. Tim and I discuss a possible deal on a very hot day.



Shopping at a street vender on St Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands.



The family assembling for the gala dinner on Royal Caribbean's Freedom of the Seas in 2010. Left to right: Martha, myself, Ruth, Kathryn, Tim.



The Goodison and Orlóci families on aboard the Freedom of the Seas cruising the Caribbean 2010. Front row: Patricia Goodison, Beverly Goodison, László Orlóci, myself. Back row: Tim Goodison, Dave Goodison, Ruth Orlóci-Goodison, Martha Orlóci, the girls' godmother Ayumi Bailly, Kathryn Orlóci-Goodison.

A Cuban vacation

The year 2011 depleted our physical endurance and I thought it is time for us to have a real holiday. I chose Cuba for two weeks with no prearranged commitments, specifically Cayo Coco on the north shore, a mere three hours flight from home. I won! We left direct contacts with science at home: we had no internet service and no e-mails to respond to. We just enjoyed the pleasing January ambient, about 100 kilometres south of Key (Cayo) West. It was our second time at the same resort where we were earlier on a family vacation with family and friends.

The following pictures highlight our vacation:





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Pictures 1-14. 1 Main entrance to Tryp Club's Cayo Coco resort. 2 Community centre entrance. 3 The resort is a tropical park along the sea shore on the north side with a lagoon on the south side. There are within the park, 12 three story hotels and specialty restaurants logistically arranged. Chicken roosts keep down the small reptiles, scorpions and spiders. 4 Brackish water

supports the growth of mangroves. 5 Cuban workers tend to be well-educated, friendly and ready to help. 6 Buildings are numbered and identified by names such as Los Sinsontes or Mockingbird. Ours (# 10) was directly adjacent to the pool within the quiet section of the resort. 7 The pool photographed from the balcony of our unit in Los Sinsontes. 8 I am at the large community (noisy) pool. Right: BBQ and Grill adjacent to the Cuban restaurant. 9 Posing with gardener at the entrance of the Cuban restaurant. Right: In the La Barcaza we frequently stopped there on the beach for refreshments and meals. 10 László walking from the La Picua, a wonderful open-air fish restaurant. Right: the other side of the lagoon, oriental and Italian restaurants. 11 Open-air market place. 12 The endless sandy beach. 13 Site seeing in comfort



Márta in Cayo Coco 2011. One of the gardeners looking at her likened her to Queen Elizabeth II. László responded “Well now what else could you expect? Queen Elizabeth’s paternal grandmother is the granddaughter of Claudia Rhédey, a Székely descending from the same tribe as Márta.”

I have to add, I experienced sincere welcome and politeness among the people of Cuba. I felt totally safe and unhindered in any respects. The food was totally international, from all parts of the world, very tasty, and unlimited in the smorgasbord type

large eatery, and I should say classic and elegantly served in the speciality restaurants. The first time we went to Cayo Coco, it was in high summer. The pool and sea were invitingly warm. The second time we chose February. The weather was pleasing walks, but a bit cold for the sea. I still love swimming and can do long stretches in a pool, and still like to wander about on discoveries of Nature as a good naturalist. For the latter, the Cuban Summer is no longer an option for me. We swam several times a day and walked the beaches at my pace, always heading unplanned to the next interesting shell, live corral washed up to shore, or next unique plant. This was my kind of holiday, friendly people, sunshine, together with those whom I love.

I wandered on the shore, I thought of years past when I walked the beaches of Hawaii and Florida with my daughter Martha and then granddaughters Kathryn and Ruth collecting seashells. I wish those beachcombers days back. How wonderful they were.



In Hungary again

The turn of the first decade of the century was full of programs for us at faraway locations on the Globe. We have returned to our beloved Hawaii, spent much time in the Caribbean, and László went back to Brazil and Argentina for research and lectures. The late summer of 2010 we returned to Hungary for László's MTA related field research and colloquium. The visit turned out to become a pleasingly full and well-balanced "homecoming", thanks to László's niece, Kati Szűcs, her father Dezső, friends and colleagues. It was an opportunity for László to meet his brother István, as it turned out, the last time. Shortly after, István lost his life in a foolish house fire incident.



László's younger sister, Kati and I shortly before her death.. Kati's husband Dezső in his winyard 2007. He passed away three years after losing Kati.

I had mixed emotions throughout. I felt welcomed by all whom I met, yet I felt my ties to the country weakened far too much by the passing of all my family members in Hungary over the previous decades. For me, used to cultivating strong family ties, there was no longer any blood relative to go back home for.

I should mention that we were invited by Kati and her father Dezső for a short cruise down the Danube to see a Csikós horse show near Kalocsa. The csikós, frequently called in English a cowboy, was not that, nor is the gaucho. The thing he has in common with cowboys and gauchos is a life spent on horseback. But unlike them, the main business of the csikós is handling of the ménés (a herd of horses). After having seen the beautiful equestrians, the experience taught me why they call the csikós the best horsemen. When the csikós gets in the saddle, the horse becomes an extension of him.

Toward the end of our stay in Hungary we took Kati and Dezső for a week to a tanya (in this case a guest farm) on the Bugac. The landscape is called by locals a puszta, a parkland like portion of the sand belt with large patches of grassland far south of Budapest. The life of a tanya often idealised as life in a

pastoral environment. It seems that way at least for the visitor. But reality is not like that. The tanya life is hard, requires stamina and intelligence, discipline and knowledge to be successful on a small property as a rule. In most cases life for those people of the tanya revolves about caring for domestic animals and cultivating crops or orchards on the surrounding land. I enjoyed being there, and as a bonus, on the way home to Gyöngyös, I could experience a part of Hungary east of the Tisza which I have not seen before.

The following pictures commemorate this last visit of mine to Hungary:



At the Kalocsa boat landing on the Danube in 2010. We were on the way to the csikós horse show nearby. Sustained heavy rain marred the site and performance.



Csikós camp with a draw well and small shelter on the puszta. Riders attend to their business. Horses in background. Magyar longhorn hitched up to a wagon waiting in foreground..



Csikós riders lined up for a drink. Right: csikós acrobatics.



Practice makes perfect. Right: Our destination, the Gedeon Tanya in the Bugac Puszta.



Guest house. Brother in law Dezső at the entrance.



The old main house and draw well. Right: No tanya is complete without a guard dog, not always as docile as this kuvasz befriended by niece Kati.



Left: I think back with warm feelings to having been the guest of László's colleague, Gábor Fekete academician and wife Etelka on several visits to Hungary. Right: At the Budapest Operett Színház, a foremost theatre for musicals in Europe. János Podani took the picture. Sitting between two scientists highlighted my evening.



Left: With our dears friends, the Podani family. In the picture: János, Klári, myself, László, Moni and Zoltán. Their eldest daughter Dorka is the photographer.



With László, Jánosh Podani and János' wife Klári Kontra at the Citadella on Gellérthegy in Budapest.



The Vár (Castle) in Buda and the Waterfront at the Lánchíd (Chain Bridge) in Pest.



THE INVINCIBLE *

I did not know what they meant, but I now know that they did not know it either. I was intrigued where this “yellow peril” theory was coming from. I knew that nobody in the family circle or their friends have ever met any people from China.

*THE INVINCIBLE - a painting by Xi Huang

I thought this “yellow peril” was just a metaphor of some kind, perhaps coming from ancient times when Hungarians represented an aggregation of ancient, nomadic tribes of the vast steppes in the heart of Asia, known as the Hun nation, who had conflicts with the Han Chinese. It took me over 40 years to learn the origin “yellow peril” from a travel guide of San Francisco, which brought to my attention this term in reflections on the Californian society in the mid-19th Century. I had to dig deeper to find the exact source and its context.

It is a well-known fact that The Central Pacific Railroad system was built by Chinese immigrant labour in the early 1860s through the worst type of mountainous terrain eastward from California to Utah. The Chinese workers were called “coolies”, hardly considered human beings. They lived by the rail like moles, and worked in all seasons and weather. In winter it was not unusual that they had to tunnel through 12 m deep snow bank. When the spring thaws came,

China

False perceptions

Way back in Hungary, when my parents talked about China or the Chinese people, they spoke of the yellow peril.

many bodies were found, still holding their tools, only their frozen faces, in death, marked the horrors.

They were given the most dangerous jobs, no Caucasians would dare, hanging on a rope in wicker baskets, hundred meters down the side of sheer cliffs as they were drilling holes into the rock for dynamiting. Swinging to and fro above and along the solid rock walls, their baskets packed with dynamites. They were cutting through hard granite and shale. They carved out wide shelves, on which they laid the track. No machines were used, only Chinese coolies would dynamite through 809 m of solid rock, where the infamous Donner Tunnel was built. Think of their labour, when travelling this tunnel.

Completion of the railroad has been heralded as the achievement of 1869's state of California. Hundreds of Chinese workers died working on the project. Often the swinging basket was smashed against the rock-wall of the mountain by winds, workers froze to death, or the avalanches buried them in the valley below. They were not given time to find and return the deceased bones to China, which is a very personal and highly spiritual last right in Chinese tradition. The tradition holds that only from the Chinese earth shall the spirit of the deceased find eternal peace. It is a deep spiritual tradition. Many workers were not even registered by name. The possibilities to obtain work along the railways spread in China and massive numbers of Chinese labourers arrived. As a consequence or just coincidence unemployment rose in California. Newspapers started to write about the "yellow peril", blaming unemployment on the Chinese. Strangely enough, labourers were brought in from China because local workers were not available in numbers at the offered wage to take the job. The phrase spread through Europe. This is where my parents' "sárgaveszedelem", the equivalent of "yellow peril" in Magyar, came from.

The final spike was driven into the last tile of the railroad at Promontory Point in Utah in May 10, 1869. The East and West sections of the railroad system connected, celebratory speeches were in order. I include the keynote speech delivered by a Dr. Harkness of Sacramento, on presenting to Governor Stanford a spike of pure gold:

"Gentlemen of the Pacific Railroad: The last rail needed to complete the greatest railroad enterprise of the world is about to be laid. The last spike needed to unite the Atlantic and Pacific by a new line of travel and commerce is about to be driven to its place. To perform these arts, the east and the west have come together. Never, since history commenced her record of human events, has she been called upon to note the completion of a work so

magnificent in conception, so marvellous in execution. California, within whose borders and by whose citizens the Pacific Railroad was inaugurated, desires to express her appreciation of the importance, to her and her sister states, of the great enterprise which by your joint action is about to be consummated. From her mines of gold she has forged a spike, from her laurel woods she has hewn a tie, and by the hands of her citizens she offers them to become a part of the great highway which is about to unite her in closer fellowship with her sisters of the Atlantic. From her bosom was taken the first soil, let hers be the last tie and the last spike. With them accept the hopes and wishes of her people that the success of your enterprise may not stop short of its brightest promise."²⁰

No mention of the workers who built the railroad and the costs in human lives.

As a personal note I should add that I taught many hundreds of students over the years in my biology lab sections at the University of Western Ontario in London, and I do not remember a single Chinese student, who would have complained about the amount of work, or misused their time in class, or passed any opportunity for consultations. I have found them diligent, quiet, polite, exemplary students. I read volumes of the Chinese people. I could not explain the despicable behaviour toward them at large in the emerging California, by reasons other than the philosophical underpinning of an all-out drive for cheap labour with obligatory social responsibility toward the workers. I read John F. Miller, United States senator for California who dared to go to the maddening extreme in his speech at the passage of the 1882 Exclusion Act, saying:

"One complete man, the product of free institutions and high civilization, is worth more to the world than hundreds of barbarians. Upon what other theory can we justify the almost complete extermination of the Indians, the original possessor of all these States? I believe that one such man as Newton, or Franklin, or Lincoln, glorifies the creator of the

²⁰ As printed in the May 11th edition of the Salt Lake Telegram, describes the festivities involved and lists some of the important attendees. Following the article, the compiler offers a one-sided picture of the situation regarding pay for the Union Pacific's construction crews and details Samuel Reed's actions after the ceremony.

world and benefits mankind more than all the Chinese who have lived, struggled and died on the banks of the Hoang Ho." (13 Cong. Rec. 1,487, 1882).

Miller was chairman of the Committee to Revise the Laws of the United States (Forty-seventh Congress). I let the reader draw further conclusions of laws in which a person like Miller concurred, who also said of the marriage between a white person and a black person, mulatto or Mongolian:

"...it would be a lowest, most vile and degraded of our race, and the result of that amalgamation would be a hybrid of the most despicable, a mongrel of the most detestable that has ever afflicted the earth."

On China -- the second time

In 1995, László received an invitation to participate at the International Ecological Modelling Congress in Beijing. I planned to go with him and be just a tourist at this time for a couple of weeks. I prepared myself, read widely. I knew, more or less, where I wanted to go to, what I wanted to see, or what to find out in China. I paid my own expenses. I chose going along the Silk Road mainly by train as an after-congress excursion. Madhur Anand, a doctorate student of László, travelled with us. She presented a paper at the Congress. The excursion took us through the gems of the world's oldest civilization in continuity.

Now twenty years past, I reach back, the second time, and pass on to readers some of my personal experiences, still very vivid in my mind. Twenty years is a long time, if I think of it. Madhur, a dear friend, is now mother of three lovely children, a scientist, well known internationally, following in the footsteps of her mentors, with base at the University of Guelph, and activities worldwide. She just published a wonderful collection of her poetry.

I observe with full awareness that whatever the momentary condition at any point in time in China, they are just moments in the flow of history of a continuous civilization, which already created marvels before it became unmistakably Chinese around the 17th Century B.C. In this continuity China is reinventing itself as a modern state, without the society at large giving up the guiding Confucian principles.

What I have to say all filtered through my emotions as vectors, mainly of my visual and tactile experiences. My mood and functioning quickly show the effect of what I am observing. When I see wrong, and contemplate the remedies, I speak in the plural, suggesting that I feel responsibility for finding remedies.

I add further that experiences of the other type follow me through my adult life.

I attribute this, in good part, to my complexion, I am a very light and naturally blond. So, I was looked at in China, in some cases looked at again from close, and closer, sometimes too close into my face. Not once, my hair was touched and tested for real. I understood the reasons and responded kindly. Strangers are treated everywhere by inquisitive acts and suspicion, especially in smaller settlements. In 1995, foreigners were still news in most parts of the countryside in China. Women of my complexion may have never been seen by many. I hope some of the faces I saw among the onlookers did not reflect their association of me with the mythical light haired sorceress in local mystics. How could they know?

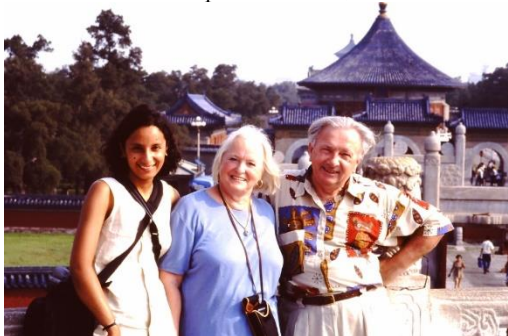
Beijing

We flew to Beijing from Toronto through Vancouver. Our flight skirted the Pacific coastline from Vancouver to the Aleutian Islands, crossed over into Siberia, and continued on the great circle to Beijing. We had a perfect clear sky during the entire flight.

We had reservations in the Huang Yuang hotel, where the five day Ecological Modelling congress was held. The Huang Yuang hotel was a huge, modern structure with clean and comfortable rooms. Two large thermal flasks of hot water, several tea-bags, and a tea-pot awaited us on the night tables. The bathroom was clean, but not fully functional. The food we were served in the hotel was excellent, in a traditional, elegant Chinese setting. The hotel was a showy, expensively appointed environment.

I should mention that Chinese food varies by region. The fare offered in restaurants is not the same as in Chinese restaurants in North America. Most items are tasty, but identity and origin of meat can become an issue for those who do not speak the language.

I attended László's presentation, and went to some others. The first day, I met



Jane, a wife of another scientist at the conference, from Montreal. She came to China with the same objective as mine. We wanted to experience life there as much as possible. We left our husbands to do science, and we teamed up, and planned the following

four days of the conference on visits to sites which I describe as historic Beijing. The three tourists: Madhur Anand, graduate student, myself, and László.

We were told not to leave the hotel without guides for our own security, but we ignored it. On one occasion, we sneaked out of the hotel and waved to a taxi, I gave the driver a Lamasery (Lama Temple) glass coaster from the bar of the hotel. We got to the temple, the driver stopped. We did not speak Chinese, so we could not inquire about the fare. So we showed paper bills to the driver and let him choose a proper fare! We hoped he was honest. We used the same mode of communication on the way back to the Hotel. That came out more or less the same. We concluded, we had an honest driver. We were very lucky to get back as we were told in the hotel. We refrained from such freelancing from that time on.



Left: Entrance to the Yong He Gong Lamasery. Right: I had some familiarity with historic Beijing from my readings. The Yong He Gong Lamasery was one of the sites I planned to visit. Indeed, I found it a most remarkable historic place which sheltered and educated monks of the Tibetan Buddhist faith for centuries.

The Lamasery is a compound of unimaginable cultural richness. When we arrived, a large crowd almost blocked the beautiful entrance, but we managed to get in. It was an entirely new world for me. The elaborately carved stone lions at the gate is indications of an imperial past. Outside and inside the buildings everything marked by stately grandeur and decorated by Buddhist lavishness. I have never seen such sumptuous structures and colourful adornment anywhere. I stood before a meticulously created mosaic. I felt comforted by what I saw and an inner harmony was overtaking me. The Yong He Gong Lamasery mission was a well-funded and highly respected centre of religious studies, as well as natural sciences. I missed the English explanatory signs. Prayers and information were in four languages: Chinese, Mongolian, Manchu and Tibetan.

As I walked around, carrying my shoes underarm, all of a sudden I found myself among a praying crowd. Listening to the sounds, and observing the people,

I could see the deep appeal for favours to Buddha, not any different then the Christians' prayer to God. My friend and I spent almost a whole day on the Temple grounds. Coming out hundreds of people covered the wide sidewalks. We managed to get a cab. We showed the driver the card of the Hotel. He took only the two of us and drove directly back to the hotel.

If one wishes to experience the traditional Chinese palace and architecture in its full opulence, the Forbidden City is the place to go to in the centre of Beijing, adjacent to Tiananmen Square. A visit to the palace was on top of my list of places I wanted to see. Madhur was my company. László and Huang Xi left us there and came back later to pick us up.

Tiananmen Guan Chang translated to the Square of Heavenly Peace. My feelings about this square are rather unique and my reflections are based on my own personal experiences. I am now recalling them with a heavy heart.

Tiananmen Square is a big empty place in crowded Beijing. There are usually many tourists and locals taking in the view from the square. On the day of my visit the air was very polluted, visibility rather poor, and the place teemed with tourists. What had attracted my first attention was the huge portrait of Mao Zedong on the north side in centre place on the brick wall of the Forbidden City. (Just above my head on the photograph on the next page).



László and I on Tiananmen square in 1995.

As I was looking at the portrait, I recalled a march of my student days still in communist Hungary in 1949. On the day of the march as all school days I was nearing the six kilometres mark from the forester house, almost at the school, the sole came off from one of my shoes. I dropped the shoes off at the shoe-maker's shop for repair and continued barefoot to the

school. Just as I entered the school gates, one of our teachers arrived with an armload of red flags, each with a Mao picture printed on it. He announced that the communist party wanted the young people of Hungary to march a mass in celebration of the Hungarian friendship with peoples of China and its leader, the comrade Mao Zedong. I was given a flag to carry. We were ordered to smile

and chant the party slogans, loud and clear: Hurrah! Hurray! Hail to our eternal friendship! Hail the Chinese people! Hail Mao Zedong! Hail his victory over imperialism! I marched, barefoot, quite hungry, but dared not to smile.

I followed the news in Europe and knew about China casually. But I well remember that much later I learned in school (in Hungary) that the Chinese communist system, under the direction of Mao Zedong invented a new economic plan, the Great Leap Forward, of the sort familiar to Hungarians as their communist leadership's the 5-year plan. The Great Leap Forward years, from 1958-1962 unfolded and failed. The number of people who died of famine in China as a consequence of such plans, according to government publications and other public archives, is estimated to be over 45 million (L. See, *Dreams of joy*, 2011, Random House).

Life is amazing. I travelled the Globe. I visited places in many countries where communist systems governed similar to ours in Hungary. They all failed. And it was a very expensive failure. My revolution for freedom failed, I fled. Millions



suffered; other millions died fighting or were forced to leave their native country, like myself.

Madhur Anand, László and myself with tourists from Inner Mongolia. I wished we could communicate.



Entrance to the Forbidden City.

As I kept walking in the direction of Mao Zedong's portrait, I could not erase from my mind the picture of a single, very courageous Chinese student walking where I was walking, then

stopped. He stood unarmed facing the tanks of his own country in 1989. What an irony. On the very square where Mao Zedong once offered freedom for the

liberated people in 1949, his successors turned on the granddaughters and grandsons because they asked for peace and freedom, the very thing that Mao promised for the people. What happened to the grand idea? I felt very sad. I looked over the square and I saw well-groomed young men in police uniform with expressionless faces. They guard the peace, but who guards the freedom on the square, named Heavenly Peace. Not Mao!

The Forbidden City was home for the 24 emperors in succession and their household since 1420 until 1912, the year when China's imperial system collapsed. The whole city is protected by tall walls and a deep, 52 m wide moat on all sides. The grounds are 72 hectares, a 753 by 957 m rectangle. Entrance to this enormous place of luxury and collection of the finest art treasures was forbidden for ordinary people.

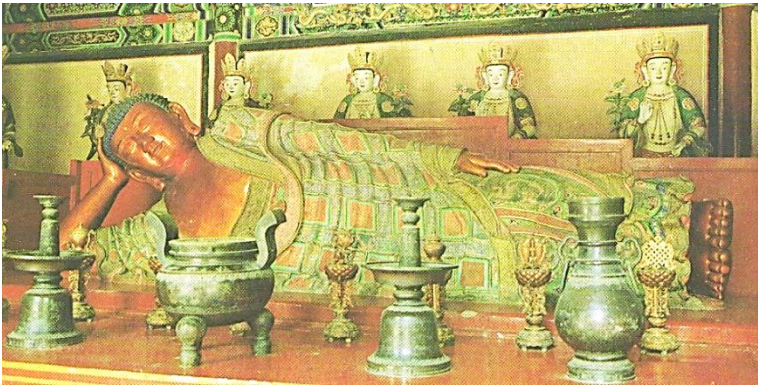
Entering through the Meridian Gate, my thoughts were captured by the grandeur of the place. The five white, richly decorated marble bridges in front on the Golden Stream urged me to move on, but at the same time, I often stopped and touched these white marble gates, beautifully carved. I had the feeling as I was walking forward, that the past was coming toward me. This past produced not just the tangibles - huge vases, large statuettes of lions, angry dragons and all the riches that the pavilions housed - but also the intangibles without which the absolute rule of the emperors could not have existed.

I entered between 2 huge bronze lions into the Tahia Dian Palace grounds, the centre of imperial celebrations. The square in front can easily accommodate 20 thousand people. In the palace, most inner walls are covered with painted silk, everything in place, waiting for the emperor to enter and greet his guests. The last time such a thing happened was more than a hundred years ago. The imperial throne and its surroundings are almost surreal. I made a note for myself, nowhere did I see any decor so well integrating colours and interior design. It was magnificent. I found the throne room, its ceiling 35 m high, breathtakingly beautiful, held up by 24 stately marble columns. Underneath these is the imperial throne, decorated by gold, mainly in traditional dragon formations. The throne is magnificently reconstructed. Like a magnet it brings all eyes to it where the ghost of the sitting Son of Heaven, the emperor, still resides.

I spent much time there thinking of the intrinsic message, intended by the creators of the art on exhibit. I counted 18 huge, decorative bronze candelabras around the room, which as I found out are representing the 18 districts of China. Huge, artistic crane birds and impressive turtle statues heralding forever the long life. In one corner I recognized a most magnificently carved Sun-clock, marking the truth. All done beautifully, rather simply in most cases, and there I found an artistically created harmony. I went around the room several times.



Left: Buddhist shrine. Right Niujie Qingzhen Shi temple, Beijing, 8th Century.



The sleeping Buddha, Wofo-shi, Beijing, 7th Century.

I enjoyed all the objects, they let me travel centuries back. It was a most exciting place. The ceiling above the throne was my favourite, the most impressive, artistic combination of narrow columns of different sizes arranged in circular formation. The décor was carved mainly of jade, other semiprecious stones, or just painted on wood. I loved the changing light among the circular gems. The natural, fusing light and colours, above the throne, simply amazed me and created the impression of quiet calmness.

The time for us was too short to see all the pavilions, but sufficient to experience the richness of the Chinese Imperial home. We ended our visit in the imperial garden, and took a little rest, away from the crowd, close to the Northern gate. Our good men, László and Huang Xi waited for us. There are so many things I have seen and could have seen in Beijing. What I narrated is a selection. In a few days we left for Xi'an, to pick up the trail called the Silk Road and to head west with several stops.

At the Great Wall

The four of us visited the Great Wall at Badaling, about 80 km from the Conference venue in Beijing. At this time Dr. Huang Xi, a well-known mathematician colleague of László from Nanjing came with us. We were to see the reconstructed part of the Wall. It is an immense sight to see this structure winding through the natural terrain far into the horizon. The total length with all of its branches is 21191 km. Of this, about 6300 km is stone.



Madhur Anand, myself and Huang Xi on the Great Wall at Badaling.

Construction of the Wall began in the 7th Century, B.C. It was done by sections. It connects a series of fortifications E to W on the historic northern frontier of China against the nomadic people of Eurasian steppe. To the Chinese, the Great Wall is a symbol of national pride.

We walked up to the highest point for a better view. Standing there, I wondered about its true usefulness. After all, the Mongols got over it in the 13th Century, they occupied China, and established their own rule under Kublai Khan's Yuan Dynasty. Looking around and seeing the ancient wall meandering into the distant horizon, I thought that this brilliant, engineering marvel guarded the country, but it isolated the Chinese people from the world for much of their history. With what result? It created a safe, undisturbed milieu to write, build, sculpt, paint or do anything Chinese, without any foreign influence. In these terms, I cannot think of anything as fundamentally instrumental for what China has become, as the Great Wall.

On the Silk Road

Trade was always the bloodline of China, and the Silk Road facilitated this through many centuries from ancient times. The road's history goes back at least to Emperor Han Wu Ti's rule around 100 B.C. In time the road became responsible for much commercial development and the spread of new ideas in China.



We flew from Beijing to Xian (see map on let) and from there we followed the Silk Road up to Tian Chi by train and vehicles.



We were mainly in the Gobi Desert from Lanzhou to Ürümqi. Only touched one short segment of the Takla Makan desert.

We have to remember, that this road system was the only overland mode of commerce between China and the world. It was well used by caravans, carrying commercial goods, such as silk, jewellery, gold, glass ware, gunpowder, coins and spices to many destinations. But, not just tangible. The Silk Road was the way for the new philosophies, arts and faiths spread through into China. The missionaries, travelling from India brought pictures of their gods, and discoverers arrived from elsewhere bringing new knowledge and looking for new ventures. A grand, expensive and dangerous voyage was possible for those who had the time (2-3 years from Italy) and the finances. The traveller had to face extreme hardship and insecurity.

The road became very dangerous and hardly used for some time. The Kublai Khan (Yuan Dynasty) revived it in the 13th Century. The road was closed in 1453 by the Ottomans for European merchants. Some sections, around the Taklimakan desert are still travelled by caravans of the wondering nomads.

We arranged the trip in Beijing through the travel agency, which operated as an administrative section at the Congress. We prepaid all expenses in full. This included travel, food, lodging and the guides, all prearranged. We did not count on barefaced corruption. But we were not alone. Friends, who dealt with the same agency on another occasion, suffered exactly the same humiliating experience. But unlike what I and László did, they obliged this despicable man in fear of the immediate consequences. This is the primitive crooks' modus operandi as it fully played out in our cases.

We were picked up at the hotel in Beijing by an attractive young female and taken to the airport. Just before boarding she handed László a sealed envelope and asked him to hand it to the tour guide, who waits for you at the airport in Xi'an. The guide, who waited for us was rather unfriendly, did not help with the bags, and did things to make us feel insecure.

It was terribly hot and the air was totally polluted. We sat in his car. László handed him the envelop. He opened it, inspected the contents, then emulating grave concern with his voice and facial expressions, he turned to László. With high pitched sharp voice, he told László straight: \$400 is missing. Then he demanded immediate payment or else! László refused. He told the guide he would bring his request up with the trip organizer at Academia Sinica in Beijing on the first possible occasion. I reminded him that his request was illegal. I said that he could not have any dollars. Chinese law required dollars to be exchanged at the bank. He cannot have any dollars! Slowly, he gave up.

The car started to move. We were taken to the new, clean Jianguo Hotel. Tired and fatigued, I just fell asleep, when the telephone rang. László answered it. A woman was offering her services. László threw the receiver down. In an hour or so, the woman called back, offering her services once again - just in case, if he happened to change his mind. Obviously, the day's events did not add up to a good beginning of our sojourn on the Silk Road. The ugly head of the same problem reappeared when we left Xi'an on train to Lanzhou.

I noticed quickly that our guide spoke in memorised phrases, but he rarely gave direct answer to questions. Perhaps he had not enough English. He may have been told what to avoid discussing with outsiders, or simply he did not care, because he did not get the \$400. But we carried on with our plans.

Xi'an is huge city and it was absolutely full of people wherever we went. It was difficult to walk on the side walk and the hot, city air was utterly polluted. We changed hotels, Jianguo did not have enough usable water. We took long walks in the neighbourhood, found a fruit market, with a fresh aroma, and we found friendly faces. Several young men were most anxious to show us their merchandise. The selection was large, the fruit was fresh. I made a bad mistake. I accepted an inviting piece of watermelon. I ate it. I carried its effects for a

week. We did not buy anything, because they did not have any potable water to wash the fruit.

Xi'an has its origin under the Han dynasty (206 B.C. - 220 A.D.). Parts of the ancient city walls are still visible in the centre of town. A main attraction to me in downtown was the Hui Muslim Quarters. The architecture was Chinese outside, but inside a lovely arabesque decoration covered the walls. The market street was crowded and everything was on sale. Not far from it, on the corner, stands a famous Great Mosque of Xi'an. I managed a short visit. I still remember the walls covered by the finest, mystical arabesque pieces about plants, flowers and small animals. The outer architecture of the mosque was typically Chinese, but inside everything expressed devotion to Allah, and ethnic identity.



Great Mosque of Xi'an.

Outside Xi'an is a place, Lintong where archaeologists unearthed an entire army of Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor. The construction started on his order in 246 BC. Each terracotta statue is life-size image of real soldiers.

Plans were drawn up before the actual sculpting began. These are all recorded in writing and drawings. The sculpted soldiers, as imagined and dreamed by the emperor at the age of 13 have many mystical elements. No expense spared, the clay-soldiers were created, one after the other, exactly as emperor Qin ordered. I was stunned when I entered into the arena of the soldiers. My greatest impression in the first few seconds was total amazement.



The exact images of Qin' individual soldiers preserved for eternity. Terracotta art from the 2nd Century, B.C.



Emperor Qin's obedient army in its eternal march.

The multitude is frozen into stillness as they march, so realistic, so lifelike. Every soldier is different. Each a wholesome, well-proportioned warrior, with unique personality. No two are exactly alike, yet there is in their faces and posture one common trace. They portray strong, self-confident individuals, ready to go into battle if so commanded. The uniforms differ by speciality and rank.

I still wonder how could so many perfect sculptures arise from soil, water and fire. How many artist are needed to bring into reality the mystical dream of a juvenile emperor. I asked this question within seconds as I caught site of the terracotta multitude. It boggles my mind to think of it, yet it has been done more than two thousand years ago in full realistic colour.

The clay army, discovered by a Chinese peasant, Yang Zhifa working on the water-canal in 1974, stayed in amazingly good shape after 2200 years, to watch over their emperor's resting place. Many of the military units, their horses, coaches and instruments of war are still waiting to be unearthed two to six meters underground. UNESCO declared the site the 8th wonder of our Planet.

The excavations left emperor Qin's grave undisturbed, deep underground, about a kilometre away. A detailed description of the grave exists, but in fear

of the damage that exposition to the air might cause destructions, it was decided not to open it. Qin Shi Huang may continue in eternal sleep in peace and security of her 12 thousand clay soldiers.

Close by is the emperor's mausoleum. Its collection of military antiquities is simply overwhelming. After a wonderful day with the marching column of terracotta soldiers, coming back to Xi'an, I noted a long column of people. They were lined up at the entrance of the local McDonald's – many for the convenient and clean washrooms-. I joined the line! This was still in 1995!



We smiled, they responded in kind.



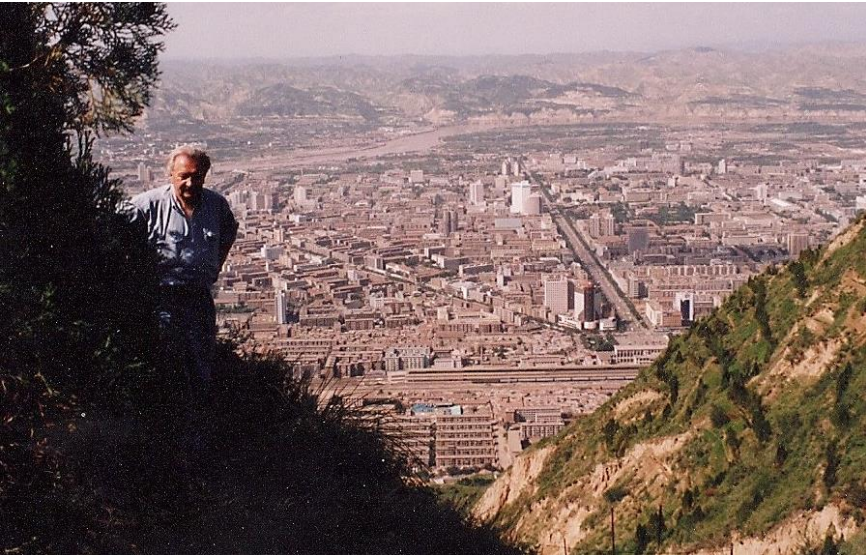
More smiles at a Bampo Museum in Xi'an

After visiting Xi'an, we took the train to Lanzhou. We travelled one day and a night. We slept in a comfortable compartment for 4 people. Our roommate was a young, very friendly and vivacious Chinese gentleman, full of smiles. He

did not speak English, and sadly, we did not speak Mandarin. Our roommate and László slept in the upper bunks, Madhur and I slept at seat level. He was opposite to me, upstairs, when suddenly he undressed totally, while naked, he ceremoniously hung his underwear on a ring, just above his face. It was hanging there, moving with the motion of the train all night. In the morning he threw all his cover off and put on his underwear totally unconcerned. We wondered about the message in all of his action.

We had a day stopover in Lanzhou, the capital of Gansu province, by the Yellow river. A huge industrial centre with 3-4 million people, surrounded on the south by high, snow covered mountain range 4-5 thousand meters high, almost on the edge of the Yellow River. The north of the city was faced with a fast moving, very high sand dunes system, sliding into the river. I enjoyed this unusual panorama, a rare and very different geological contrast on both sides of the Yellow river.

In the morning we were picked up at the station and we started the daily program with a visit to the sand dune stabilization project. We met some very knowledgeable biologists and first class botanists, truly dedicated to their work. They did a super job with the halting of the sand dunes from moving into the Yellow River and covering the city. They created vegetated barricades on the dunes along a 50 km stretch which allowed a rail way connection east to west across the Yellow River. The vegetated barricades saved settlements from the moving sand and protected the railway where it could not be built before.



Lanzhou, Gansu province. The Yellow River in background.

Our train journey continued west, along the Silk Road, heading to Dunhuang. A huge crowd was waiting to board the train at the station. I was looking for a female toilet. I could not read the signs. Finally in desperation I just walked into one, bad luck, it was a regular urinal for men. It was full. As I left the place half a dozen or so old men were standing by the door looking at me. As I walked between them, one gentleman stepped really close to me, grabbed my hair, crumbled it between his fingers, than pulled on it a few times, while getting closer and closer to my face. I smiled in total confusion. I wondered about the incident. I thought that these men had, perhaps, never seen anybody of my complexion and were testing the nature of my hair or maybe my being.

We had a driver and a guide with us, a young man and a lady. Their English was poor and their behaviour very strange. We had a first class reservation for a cabin, and asked them for the tickets, but they did not give us any. The train was arriving, we walked near to the standing train. For a couple of minutes our guides carried on a rather loud conversation with the conductor. We waited by the staircase and listened. Suddenly we were motioned to hurry on to the train, we did and within seconds the train moved on. It was full, all the compartment and benches were occupied, not a single seat was available. We waited for the conductor as since we paid ahead for a first class compartment, we were sure that soon we would be seated there. In some minutes he arrived, we were standing in the hallway, holding on to the window's edge, surrounded with our suitcases. The conductor wanted our tickets. We had none to show him. He did not understand English. No tickets, all compartment doors closed, no seats, no water or food available, and we had an 18 hours journey ahead of us. We stood by the windows, sometimes I sat down on the luggage. The conductor appeared every so often asking for tickets, he pushed, mainly me, arguing, motioned me to the door, indicating that we should get off. This area was part of the Gobi desert. How could we get off, where would we go? We could not communicate. I was afraid that we shall be forced to do something we do not want. After long deliberation, nature called! What I saw and experienced in the bathroom I cannot describe it, layers of solidified excrement covered all, with a big hole in the middle. No water anywhere.

As I was coming back from the "bathroom" I saw a Caucasian gentleman in the corridor. Honestly I was so lost and miserable that for a second I could not believe my sight. I asked him where he was from. He was one of a group of young Austrian travellers. I told him we needed help. We were not given our ticket by the last guide, and we fear that we shall have to leave the train. He said, "nonsense! The man wants dollars from you, the same as he wanted from us". So he told us their story. They were 11 people in their group and they were put on the train without tickets, just as we were. They forced one of the compartment doors open and they took over the cabin. After this, no doubt, the

conductor stopped bothering them. The young man assured me that if the conductor wants us to get off, I should just kick their cabin door and they will come to our help. I kicked their door only once, the occupants came out; the conductor never returned. It was a miserable night right for a horror story:

On train in night crossing the Gobi desert Villain conductor trying to extort money from blond, attractive Lady. She resists and calls for help. The villain is scared off by young, athletic Austrian travellers.

The next day we arrived in Dunhuang. Our new guides were waiting for us at the station with a new Chevrolet van. They seemed friendly and pleasant, as if they might have known about our terrible predicament. But we learned to be cautious. They took us to a clean hotel. The shower worked, we had good food and drinks, and to top minimum expectation, the air-conditioning worked. It was August and the ambient temperature hovered outside at around 40 C.





2



3

Picture 1, 2, 3 showing the desert region with a strip of arable land as we saw from the train's window. The wheat is harvested by sickles in a checker board pattern. The farmer cuts the ripe patches only, and leaves the rest longer to ripen. This way the loss of grain from over-ripe heads is minimized. When done, the harvested wheat is tied in bunches, stacked, and the field is swiped to recover as much of the grain as they can. Threshing is by hand or domestic animals in the field.



Dunhuang is the city in the shadow of the giant “singing” sand dunes. It is an ancient city on the river of Dang He. As most rivers in the desert environment do, Dang He is a dry wash, but have devastating floods after heavy rainfall.

Dunhuang has been and still is an important city on the Silk Road. It is at the junction point where the Silk Road ramifies. The caravans could go around the Taklimakan desert, to northwest toward Turpan, or go southwest to Kashgar. Available water made Dunhuang an ideal for the camel caravan drivers, they could exchange weather and security information about the Silk Road before they head out into the large sand dunes and the high mountains.

From Dunhuang we could reach many of the historic sites linked with the Silk

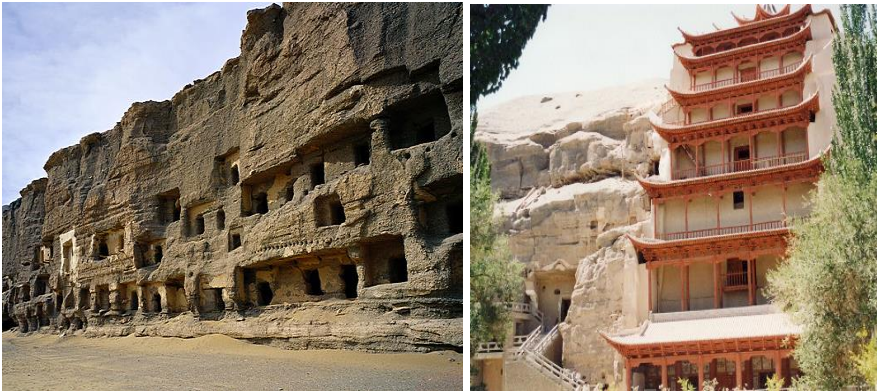


Road within reasonable distance. The most remarkable of these is known as the Mogao Grottoes, which intrigued me most since I first read about it many years ago. The history of the Grottoes spans 25 hundred years. There, are as told, 492 caves. The earliest dates back to 366 BC and the most recent to 1368 AD.

Cave dwellings near the city of Dunhuang.

The Mogao caves are manmade. They provided shelter for Buddhist missionaries who came in on the Silk Road from India, bringing the Buddhist faith into China. The caves near available water attracted regular travellers. The monks catered to them and spread the Buddhist faith. The monks were literate. Their scrolls, murals, and sculptures depict their daily life, deep spirituality, and the life of people on the Silk Road. The scrolls, cave-wall murals, and colourful sculptures are originals. These are indeed history books of the Silk Road, and probably the most complete ones up to about the 11th Century AD.

The frequently cited legend holds that Yue Zun, a Buddhist monk came to Dunhuang. He could not find any lodging in the village. He was wandering alone in the desert, tired, thirsty, hungry and hopeless. Suddenly a thousand golden, shiny rays showered down on him from the sky in the hot desert. They all turned into Buddhist monks, all came to help him in search for water and a home. Responding to their kindness, he began to excavate a prayer's cave in the side of the Mingsha mountain. This was the 2nd or 3rd Century A.D.



The Mogao Ku grotto. Right: The main entrance after renovations.

The Mogao Grottoes on the edge of the Gobi desert have been a stop-over site for trader caravans, for rest, to do trade, tell stories, and spread the news picked up at other places. The Caves are depositories of historic information. The Library Cave contains tens of thousands of manuscripts which tell stories about Mogao, contain Buddhist teachings, and everything else that touched life on the Silk Road over seven hundred years. To protect the contents, the Library cave was walled off by the monks centuries ago and became forgotten. The Abbott monk, Wang Yuan Lu discovered it in 1900 and it was foolishly opened for visitors. Europeans collectors visited, photographed, and plundered the contents before the cave was re-sealed in 1904.



The Big Buddha.

In all, the 492 caves contain thousands of painted sculptures and 42000 square meters of murals. It is impossible to give details of all that I have seen, but I can describe my impression of those pieces which affected me in a deep spiritual way.

They are abstract expressions of what the mind sees in deep meditation. To the Buddhist monk, deity in him is revealed. This is in total contrast of my own early spiritual experiences in which the mind is directed to find ways to an all omnipotent God, who resides outside of us, in heaven, through channels of mediation offered by organised religion.



Note the magnificent wall murals and stone carvings in this largest of the caves (# 130 cave).

As I was observing the murals, I felt in some grottoes that I was looking at a thousand Picassos and other modern masters in Europe. These paintings, rendered on cave walls, to me were very modern and sophisticated, but by artists who by their choice apparently remained nameless. They created a world of an old history book, with thieves, dancing girls, a vivacious Picasso like figures, all honouring time, history and Buddha. These artists were not hired, they painted or sculpted the joy of their faith. I felt elated, tiptoed around in total disbelief. These artists discovered cubism well over 15 hundred years ago! I was amazed by the variety, quantity and depth of the stories they want to tell. The experience deeply touched me and changed my idea of mysticism and realism in the arts. Now I see them as a total continuum.



1



2



3



4

Drawings 1, 2, 3, 4. Some of the "thousand Picassos" I saw is the wall paintings. The last (4) is from Picasso himself. Are drawings 1, 2, 3 not the same generic type? The Buddhist monks of the grottos certainly deserve my golden laurel wreath for originality. As I look at the angelic figure in the second last drawing (3), the presence of the water lily fixes the nature of the environment. The special foot ware and bloated lower dress assures floating, while the spectators above are observing the act and enjoying the accompanied music. This piece has been done 3 to 4 centuries A.D. in the driest desert. The angelic figure could easily pass for a female incarnation of Buddha the messenger? Why has she chosen to arrive in water?

I was told that the true artist's paintbrush is driven by the inspiration of his spirit, not one step removed from the direct visual impression. This brush has to be the finest to convey to the paper the spiritual experience. This could be the reason why the Chinese are the finest brush makers.

I picked up an interesting story on my visit to the Caves about the origin of the murals. As the story goes, in the 4th Century a very rich merchant stopped by the caves. He found several Buddhist monks were living inside. The walls were muddy, grey, which made it unpleasant to live and pray in the caves. He asked the monks to paint it. With plenty of time on their hands, the monks obliged. They painted the daily news, but the painter's hands obeyed the spiritual filter the faith creates. I loved all the rooms I visited, I understood the stories and wondered about the makers' message.

The wall paintings respond to activities, register the apparel people wore, juxtapose persons in argument, and capture things travellers do. In this way the murals are precious documents of the real-news happening in endless time. There I sensed all manners of “modern” painting. Some reminded me of Van Gogh, others of Monet, and many I could characterise as the Art Nouveau style of European artists, many Picassos of 20th Century cubism, all on the cave



walls. The ancient’s proverb “nihil sub sole novum” must be true.

Sculpting carried soft lines, utterly elegant, and refined. I had to remind myself that this art started 1500 years before our Renaissance, done by Buddhist monks, not in order to please the local oligarch, but for devotion to Buddha and life. All the creations, colours and multiple styles amazed me. It was an experience of my lifetime. I felt very joyous, that I had a chance to see all these original masterpieces.

The smiling Buddha (Cave # 275)

These grottoes are broadcasters of news from the far past.

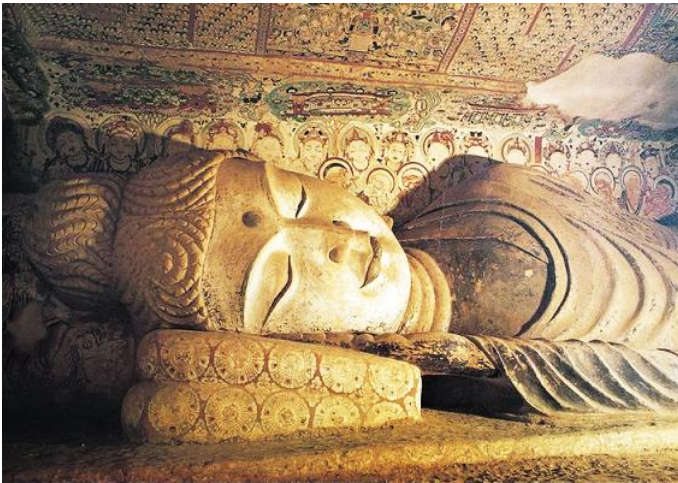
The music, the dances and daily life of bygone tribes are laid out on the cave walls. I felt I was meeting the people, the camel caravans and tasting their food, sharing their happiness and sadness from the debt of times. Active attacks of robbery and murders illustrated, buying and selling love shown, food, respect, power and every day needs, exchanged on wall. Now I understand the true purpose of those who created the caves. They were not interested in a museum to be just seen. They wanted to give the place the power to bring the observer closer to Buddha, inside and life in the outside.

Buddha is portrayed in many shapes and forms; as standing up, laying down, seated, male or female, mostly smiling. I should share a story about facial changes in Buddha’s pictures, since the first ones brought by the missionaries to China from India around the 1st or 2nd Century. The missionaries did not

speak the local languages, so they tried to bridge the communication problem in spreading a new religion by pictures of Buddha brought from India. But they got themselves into serious trouble. The Indian Buddha was thin and had a serious, transcendental look on his face. The Chinese people interpreted this as signs of hunger to come. They associate good life with a rotund body, doubled cheeked face with a happy smile. Thin, sad faces were unacceptable. They refused to see this type of god, and destroyed the pictures. The missionaries learned their lessons, and began to portray Buddha as a jovial, rotund, double-chinned teachers, the promise of the good life.

This transition of Buddha's image is seen in the art of the Dunhuang grottoes. With time's passing, the portrayed Buddha was getting rounder and rounder. I was amused by these changes at that time, but now I feel that the Chinese Buddha suits the essence of Buddhism better than the austere image imported from the Indian monks. The great variety of portrays of Buddha is the best reflection of many way in the believers imagination.

I stood for some time at the gigantic statue of the Sleeping Buddha in cave # 158. I tried to define my feelings about it. It is almost 16 meters in length, created by carvers during the Tang dynasty (6th-9th Century AD). The Buddha's rather feminine smiling face is resting on his right hand. All around the resting Buddha is a multitude of Bodhisattva apostles. Buddha's face is radiated total calmness, in a state of Nirvana.



The sleeping Buddha.

UNESCO declared the Dunhuang Grottoes a World heritage Site in 1987 placing it in the guardianship of China. In 1989 repairs began. Millions of people are visiting the site from all over the Planet.

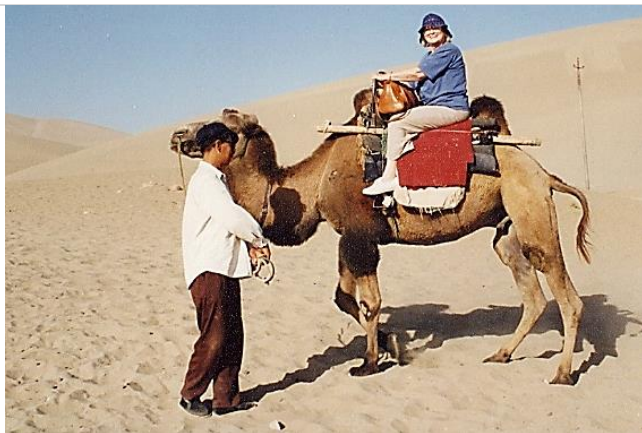
The singing sand dunes of Dunhuang provide the setting of the city limits. There are many things about the city that draw visitors in large numbers. One of these is a lake, a short 7 km from the city centre, much closer from the gathering point on the edge of the city. The place is called Crescent Moon Lake in the Mingsha Mountain. I decided to go out to visit Moon Lake, among the tallest sand dunes. I rode on a camel. László took the foot path to study the local vegetation. It was hot, with total sunshine.



On the way to the sand dunes in Dunhuang on a very hot day, yet the driver did not even sweat.



Crescent Moon Lake near Dunhuang.



First time on a camel. I enjoyed the ride and scenery.



László came on foot ...



... to meet me at destination. He thinks he was asked to pay twice for the refreshments, when served and when we left.

The sight is spectacular, only Georgia O'Keefe could paint the endless fusion of colours of gold, pinks and silky golden sands all around me. The intricate gigantic shapes mesmerized me, all created by the winds of tiny whispering, shiny particles of sand. At one point in my caravan I journeyed to a high point where the sand had no visual end; it fused with a very blue sky. The sand felt soft, almost silky, very hot on the surface and light in colour. I saw no horizon. Is this what infinity is?

The camel and its driver paid no attention to me. I thought of poor László sweating it out on foot. It was approximately a two-hour excursion and totally fantastic!

We left Dunhuang by a minibus and headed to Turfan in Xinjiang province of China. Just the three of us were the passengers. The tour guide and driver tried to please us, letting us select stops and sites to see.

We travelled westward in the Gobi desert, skirting the Taklimakan desert, in a wide valley, embraced by high mountain ranges to the north and the south, all with glaciers on top. These giants will not let any precipitation over their crest. The valley is bone dry, seasonally very hot, and windy. The substrate is sand or gravel. The annual precipitation is a mere 10-36 millimetres, or none at some places.

The Silk Road closely skirts the mountains wherever possible, in the so-called "greenbelt" alluvial soils, nourished by water from the melting glaciers. Most of the time there is some water and green plants available. Some sections of the green belt have been settled by hardy, not well known nomadic tribes who migrate in continuous search for water and available forage plants.

We spent half a day wandering and looking for changes in the exquisite, sculpted landscape of dunes and gravel flats. The colours and shapes around me were mesmerizing; this splendour created by the greatest artist, the desert wind. At one point I spotted what looked like a mole hill on the ground. I walked up to it with caution in fear of snakes or scorpions, and removed the sand by my boots. There was a plant, about 25 cm tall, with two large green basal leaves and fresh, cream coloured flowers. Let me believe that it was waiting to be found by me! László photographed it. I was sure this plant was beautiful flowering sorrel. Its identity become a point of argument, between foresters, a husband and wife. We turned to Gábor Fekete with the photograph, who consulted Dr. Kósa in Hungary, who happened to have recently conducted vegetation studies in the same area where I found this beauty. He readily identified it and was gracious to give me all the description of the plant, it has a new name, *Rheum nanum* a desert rhubarb, belonging to the sorrel family. "So, after all it was a sorrel" I told to László. He answered "sensu lato maximo".

That day it was very hot, the sand was unbearable. To this day I wonder about this hardy plant's water source? What helps it, I am sure, are the fleshy, deep roots, which penetrate deep into the soil and store the moisture it finds. The large basal leaves certainly help to reduce evaporation at the plant's base.

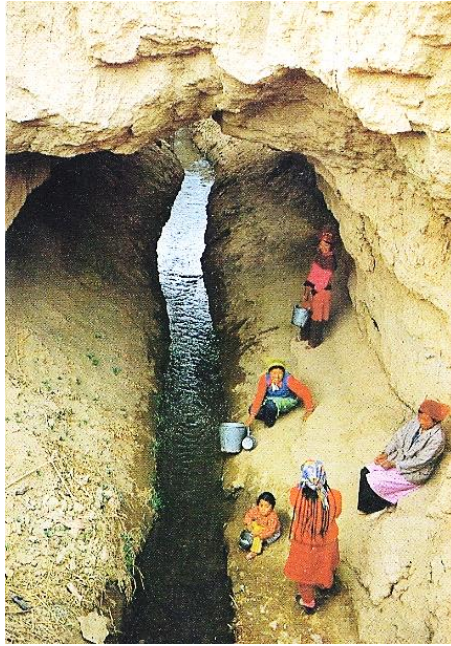


My beautiful desert rhubarb (*Rheum nanum*). I tested the white sand in the background. It had the silkiest tactile and it was burning hot.

Our guides drove us to Turpan, the Uyghur's historic capital in Xinjiang. The city is in the Turpan depression, 154 meters below sea level. It is considered the hottest place in China. Here the population is not Chinese; they are Muslim Uyghurs and other nationals from the neighbouring countries. The main language is Turkic, a Turkish dialect. Turpan is an ancient oasis settlement. Presently inhabited by about two hundred fifty thousand people. The city is very hot in summer and bitter cold in winter. The temperature topped 40 degrees Celsius when we visited. The sidewalks were shaded by the canopies of the trees which made the heat bearable.

The city is surrounded to the north by Tian Shan Mountains. The greenness of the place is made possible in this very hot valley by the fresh water it receives from the Tian Shan through the underground canal system, the karaz. This collects water from the melted glaciers. The karaz is 2-3 meters deep underground. Every so often there are 1-4 meter wide openings serving the peoples like underground wells. The karaz system irrigates vineyards and other orchards, and the famous watermelon fields. These are lively green gardens in the middle of the driest Gobi desert. They say the idea of the karaz comes from

the ancient Persian qanats. Who ever invented it, the underground canals which supply water to Turpan oasis did its work continuously unailing from as far back as 2300 years.



Karaz opening where people are resting and taking water from the underground canal.



An Uyghur orchard farmer.



Local family from the country side returning home after they sold their produce on the Turfan market.



Uyghur merchant selling raisins at the Turfan Market.

Dunhuang, Turpan and Ürümqi are the heart of the Uyghur country. The Uyghurs are handsome, friendly people. Their Muslim faith and cultural traditions segregates them sharply from the main stream Buddhist Chinese cultural tradition. The two ethnic groups are not on the best of terms. Another reason for this, as I learned, beyond the cultural differences as I see it, is the fact that the Uyghurs used to be an independent nation, now they want to be left alone in their land and want to practice their Islamic faith. This desire brings them into direct conflict with the Chinese authorities. The conflicts are occurring daily, often very brutally.

I loved the Xinjiang landscape, but I found most novel the Uyghur Mosques, which have their unique architecture. Seeing these architectural wonder was a great anticipation of my visit. The Muslim artists who created the Great Friday Mosque used the most subtle lacework ornamentation, without any human images, as their Muslim faith dictated the artists mind away from the objects of the real world to the dream world of colours and lacy fantasies. The design,

called Arabesque, is in whole a perfect harmony of colours and a world of geometry with the lacy softness of flowers in the desert sunlight.



Classical Arabesque art met me at the Great Friday Mosque in Turfan.

The Emin Mosque and Minaret in Turpan is an example of some very different mosques that are richly decorated. The name Emin comes from its builder (1777), the testament of wonderful harmony in geometry, in the middle of the Xinjiang desert landscape.



The simple elegance of the Emin Mosque and Minaret is in sharp contrast with the rich artwork I found in the Great Friday Mosque's exterior.



The pattern of geometric shapes and colour shades give exquisite elegance to Turfan's Emin Minaret.

Visiting the Mosques of Turpan meant a new and pleasing experience for me. My visit reinforced my thoughts that the biggest influence and the strongest directive of an artistic endeavour is faith, coloured by mysticism.

deavour is faith, coloured by mysticism.

The next stop was Ürümqi, the capital city of Xinjiang province in the endless desert. The Mongol name Ürümqi means “beautiful pasture”. It is a large industrial city built on an oasis on the Silk Road. We spent a night there and the next day we left for Heavenly Lake, the last stop of our excursion on the Tien Shan alpine meadows. As we drove through the city, we saw masses of people on the sidewalks. It was terribly hot, dusty and crowded.

After a relatively short drive, leaving the desert behind, we entered the alder gallery forest in the valley, travelled along an alpine river, and by midday we reached Heavenly Lake with the Bogda Shan mountain (5445 m) towering beyond the lake on the horizon.



The pastures were dotted with Uyghur yurts and grazing livestock. A quiet, pastoral landscape embraced me. I thought of the Hargita and its forests where I grew up, and I felt wonderful.

Heavenly Lake in Xinjiang.



On the ascent to Heavenly Lake, the roads use the valleys of sizable streams and passes. The landscape is spotted with yurts and grazing livestock on grassland patches.

The lake is at 1900 m. and was an unusual site, bordered by a rough alpine terrain, backed by snowy glaciers of Bogda Shan. The word “Shan” stands for mountain. I took a long walk on the shore; the air was very clean, and the glacier covered heights sparkled silver white. At the foot of the giant mountain the vegetation was spectacular, and huge rock outcrops were lining the shore, the alpine spruce forest was hugging the shore line. The glacier’s reflection was hanging into the still, blue water. My memory carries the image of this spectacular landscape .

The forest as always was comforting for me. Around me mainly Russian was spoken. One blue eyed young man asked “Vy ponimayete po-russki?” I answered “Ya ne ponimayu po-russki” and added Ya ponnimayu angliskiy,

vengerskiy i frantsuzskiy.” It was about all I could master right there in Russian. Probably it was his limit too. With that our conversation ended. They were friendly Uyghur people, smiling and pointing to my blue eyes. I felt that a peaceful, ancient landscape is embracing me. But how wrong I could have been as I now know in hindsight after 20 years. The situation that has come to a head in revolts and reprisals must have been fermenting for years among the Uyghurs.

I carry a beautiful, romantic memory of a full Moon in the hot desert night, with a sky full of stars. I could almost touch them from this land of the Uyghurs. The night was splendid, the toasty herbal air warmly caressed my face. I was listening to the local choir and orchestra. The dances and the songs appeared familiar, similar to those I used to see and hear among my people in the deep valleys of the Hargita. Their musical instruments were unfamiliar.

As I am writing this, László is narrating a recent encounter with the Uyghurs in a short segment aired on M1 TV in Budapest not too long ago, in which an Uyghur singer gave interview on her visit to Hungary. She was saying something really emotional. He paraphrased her: “I am so glad that the Magyars remember us Uyghurs as cousins from the far past. Now I know we are not alone in the World.”

My thoughts were homeward bound, our trip was ending. The guide and driver appeared, took us back to the airport to Ürümqi. We shook hands, and they quickly left. At the check in, we discovered that our airport taxes were not paid. No wonder that they left us so fast. We flew back to Beijing. Next day we took an Air Canada flight to Toronto. I was happy to be home again.

I discovered only a tiny part of China. Yet, I feel fully enriched by what I have seen of their great land and eternal culture. The impressions left in me are deep. I have fond memories of the desert landscapes, the site where I discovered that wonderful specimen of my sorrel, the ancient artifacts and the peoples who populate the desert. I am still excited when I think of the softness and fluidity of movement and the predilection of undulating, almost parallel lines, of the Chinese masterpieces in drawings. This mode of drawing and sculpturing are singularly Chinese arts. When I think of the elegance of the Mogao murals it imparts to me a sense of modernism in the present, like a thousand Picassos painted many centuries ago. But the artistic merits of the marching terracotta army at Xi’an comes coupled in my mind with the thought of force and steel determination. That is how I see the Chinese world.

I feel that the artists of Xi’an, Mogao, and Turpan mastered better than anyone else the very difficult, softly moving art form in their landscape. I felt their deep

spirituality, amazed by the relevance of their message. On close up, their art is rich in exact analytical details and substantial abstraction. Their brush is not a photographic instrument, but rather, it reduces reality to their essence in emotion free virtual images which the mind sees and Confucian principles dictates.

When I stood at the Magao murals and statues, I felt the force created by the Buddhist mode of viewing life. The images appear to have soft, undulating, natural lines. The soft lines are markers of how the artist sees reality. I was used to the classical western art in which the original Greek and Roman forms reappear over and over again. The unique Buddhist images and Arabesque pattern felt to me new and refreshing, so perfected by the artists of Magao and the Turpan mosques. I was surprised to observe the Buddhist and the Islamic way of being is so much alive in China. Believers line up at the temples and mosques to express their spirituality and honour the ancestors.

The use of potions made of herbs and animals part is immensely popular in China. The Chinese people believe in the power of Nature and the natural ways are well known to them. Coming from an ancient Székely tribe of Transylvania, the Chinese ways of using Nature's gifts were not new to me. I grew up with Nature and relied on medicine that grew around the homes in the forests on the Hargita.

Ancient life philosophies are foundations of their everyday existence. These ways are infused into the peoples' soul. The Chinese ways bend to changes, but changes are beautifully and quietly transformed into their own ways. The Chinese spiritual tradition remains intact. I felt that it is as a newly painted house. If one scrapes off the layers of new paint, one find original Chinese Confucianism in its vivid colour. Chinese women are still expected to follow the Confucian dictum: obedience for father, for husband and for the oldest son. As I saw it in rural China especially, it is still a madly male dominated society, still reigned by the old ways. How else could women be ready to give away a female child to please a husband who does not want one?

Women were in spiritual and merciless sexual servitude in China until just over a hundred years ago. H. Ibsen the playwright spoke for that kind of society in his *Doll House* in 1879 when he wrote "There are two kinds of spiritual love, two kinds of conscience, one in man and another, altogether different, in woman (H. Ibsen: *Doll House*, 1879). That kind of social view forced on women the custom of creating abnormal small feet by breaking the bones at the tender age of 5 or 6 years. This practice lasted for almost 800 years. It made women invalids for life, just too enhance men's sexual pleasure. Even today, the husband is empowered by tradition to make life-death decisions in gender selection.

The adversity made Chinese women strong and enable them to find ways to resist the man's dominance. The Nobel laureate writer, Pearl S. Buck, amplifies on this, writing in her *Letters From Peking*: "They [the Chinese] are the strongest women in the world. Seemingly always to yield, they never yield. Their men are weak beside them. Whence comes this female strength? It is the strength that centuries have given them, the strength of the unwanted."

Looking back

I travelled with László, and did research with him. In the course of the activities, I attended meetings and visited the highlights of our Planet's loveliest, unique biomes. It all was made possible by László's achievements in the field of ecological science. I am fully aware of my privileged position in this respect, but I have to add that all these not without a substantial financial burden and an independent career. He always wanted me to go with him. I was good company, always a trusted professional partner, and without financial honorarium. Universities do not pay the wife's expenses. Most of the time I was a professional mate, not just a spectator, or a tourist. Some circumstances were not at all pleasing, but most of the time I enjoyed that way of life. It was often complimented for it.

I know my friends will ask why did I chose a life of involvement in László's professional life, supporting him for 60 years, and why not my own profession career for which I was fully qualified. There are good reasons for this even though my choices could have pointed me in other directions. I had no viable alternatives. My professional career could not get off ground. Canadian forestry did not employ female professional foresters in that early time of forest management. My decision to go with László to the United Kingdom on his NATO Science Fellowship and my rather close involvement in his research prevented me from taking up other employment. Finally, shortly after we returned to Canada baby Martha arrived. I decided to give my time to her. She travelled with us where ever we went until she enrolled in university.

Kind reader, I hope that opening up my life and my "Reflections" made my preferences clear over a wide range. You may have considered it a mistake to so closely align my life with László's professional career. It is a logical question to ask: would I do the same if I could start over again? I think I would not, under the present circumstances. I would pursue my profession, and be an enthusiastic caretaker of the Canadian forests. Under what prevailed in 1960's in Canada, I would be forced to start out the same way. I would not be among just a few female graduates, the very first in the Dominion of Canada trying to find employment in the profession. This constraint no longer exists. After our

pioneering effort, now there are large numbers of female foresters and environmental management professionals graduating from universities all over Canada. Including my own granddaughters. Gender is no longer an accepted criterion to lock one out of the profession. The forestry profession was a family tradition with us. My father and three brothers were foresters. I never lost my love for the forest, my childhood playground. In my heart truly I remain a forester.

With the heavy work and travel schedule, the years passed very fast. László's sabbaticals were the principal markers of time in his overscheduled program of



research and international teaching. In every other respect life went on as usual. I kept track of family matters, arranging Martha's schooling taking care of household finances, correspondence, and everything else, wherever we were.

Left: With Judka Györfi 2005 at our condominium's garden gate. Judka, a dear friend, shared her realism, wisdom, and laughter with me. The Magyar language brought us together in the first place and kept us friends for decades.



Right: Ingrid van Huystee admiring the flowering mallow at her house. Ingrid came from Germany. With her we had similar interests for art, fashion, and limits of indulging in life. She was a best friend for me in London more than 40 years. Her husband Robert and László served as professors at the University of Western Ontario in the same department. I think of Judka and Ingrid often. I deeply miss them.



At the wedding of Mathew and Mary Mukkattu. Mathew was László's graduate student, settled down in London after graduation, and had a full career as professor of biology at Fanshawe College. They are our close family friends ever since.



Enrico Feoli and his wife Laura with me and Martha. They visited us from the Università degli Studi di Trieste in Italy, taking sabbatical in László's lab at U.W.O. in 1978. László and Enrico kept up contact and carried to conclusion many research and scholarly projects on global scale.



Early pictures of my pretty goddaughter Lilla Leskó at home in Edmonton.



Lilla Leskó, our goddaughter on left. Sitting with me in Lilla's Edmonton apartment is her mother, Sopron alumna Anna Leskó. It was a wonderful visit, unfortunately too far away.



Christmas in Ayr at my daughters house 2001. Kathryn sitting between two grandmothers, Pat Goodison and myself.



My darling Granddaughter Ruthie with me in our home in London 2002. Obviously, something happened that she had to explain.



Uncle Dave and Ruthie 2001.



Tim's father Bev Goodison is carving the Christmas turkey 2001.



Meeting fellow Sopron alumni at UBC, 2007.



Late night Dinner on the beach with our dear friends Doctora Maria Kuhna and her daughter Juliana in Jurerê on the island of Florianopolis, St. Katarina, Brazil 2003.



Taking refreshments on the Royal Hawaiian hotel's terrace in Waikiki with Juliana Kuhna on a visit with us from Porto Alegre (Brazil) 2006. I have most pleasant memories of her and her parents Maria and Miguel from my visit to Brazil in 2003.



With Professor and Mrs. Aino Jaques in Porto Alegre, Brazil 2002. Aino and Enilda were our gracious companion and culinary guide on several occasion. We think of them frequently, recalling the wonderful time we spent together in their beautiful city of the flowering Jaccaranda.

László returned several times to the Forest City. On the many field excursions with Aino to the Rio Grande do Sul highlands he became a great fan of the Campos' life-style. He still likes to put on his high gaucho boots smartly pushed down over his bombasha. We received this photograph from Aino and Enilda to remember my first visit to Rio Grande do Sul.



Our dear friends, Professor Valério De Patta Pillar, Mariza Gomes, and their son Gabriel from Rio Grande do Sul. We think often of the pleasing times we spent together. We saw Gabriel grow up and become a fine, exceptionally inquisitive intellectual. We were fortunate to have Gabriel stay with us in London on his last visit to Canada shortly before the mindless accident that cut short of his promising life in 2006. We grieve for him.



My dear friend Patricia Mowry and her husband Andris Szilárd, Christmas 2014. Andris is emeritus professor, a colleague of László, at the University of Western Ontario.



At the marriage of our dear friends Madhur Anand and Chris Bauch 2009. Madhur completed her Ph.D. in László's lab at U.W.O.



Andrea Mihály (3), her mother Florentina, grandmother Joli and grandfather Ferenc Mihály (my cousin) in Canada 2009. Nephew Ferenc Mihály is taking the photograph.



Epilogue

In my youth, conversation was a centre piece in our family life. I still enjoy telling stories and listen to narration of events, discussing things, and arguing about them, in a manner of definiteness in which right or wrong, good or bad, desirable or not all represent firm reference points. I write the way as I converse. I bring this trait of my Székely tribe from the Hargita. This time I faced plenty of difficulties with this trait of mine. I am using a second language. I had no ghost writer. So the reader gets it all from me. I know that my Hungarian syntax and linguistic training in languages that are not English, interferes with the English idiom. I hope this will not be a significant hindrance for my readers.

Dearest Kathryn and Ruthie, I hope from my Reflections you get to know me better as a young child, a happy single girl, a persevering fresh immigrant, a mature person, a wife, mother, grandmother, and a professional.

My “Reflections” celebrates your mother’s precious years with us. I loved each day spent with her, hoping that I would be raising the most loving mother for you, my granddaughters. How lucky we are to celebrate the continuity of love in our family. I enjoyed sharing my views with you, and I hope, not without setting up signals of caution as well as reaffirmation in your cheerful, yet brilliant contemplative approach to life. Remember that I am always here for you.

Both of you are in my heart; and I feel blessed having you. I thank your father and mother for raising you to be as loving and most wonderful, as you are.

My story is ended. I finish saying with W. Whitman “every hour of the light and dark is a miracle, every cubic inch of space is a miracle”. So is our life.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Dr. Sándor Vigh, who looked after the family’s health for decades. With him I delivered my daughter. He congratulated me in Hungarian for the healthy little girl. His caring words took me home to Hungary on each visit, just for a moment. I wish you Sándor good health in happy retirement.

Since Sándor retired Dr. Kathleen McCully is looking after mine and László’s health. She is a very kind and caring person who keeps up hope for the ailing and aging person in me. I am very grateful Kathleen for the high quality care.

My dear friend Patricia Mowry kindly volunteered to read the manuscript. I thank her for her expert comments and careful corrections. I know it was difficult and time consuming I am grateful, *Grazie mille Patricia.*

I am extending my thanks to my friend Mathew Mukkattu for kindly reading the manuscript and for penning remarks onto it from which the phrasing drew much benefit.

To my delight, granddaughter Ruth previewed the manuscript. Ruthie *köszönöm a szíves ségedet.*

To my husband, László, I say *bálás köszönet.* Without your practiced editing work I would have been left at a loss.



Molokai Princess leaving safe harbour. I know I am doing it too, but not the first time.

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