



EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES

# BUDAPEST NEWSLETTER

March 2008

## Recently at the Embassy

### Deputy Assistant Secretary Colleen Graffy Visits Hungary

Ms. Colleen Graffy, the State Department's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Diplomacy in Europe, toured Hungary March 9-12, to learn firsthand about the concerns of Hungarians and share the most up-to-date policy developments in Washington. Among her many activities, Graffy delivered talks at three universities, joined an Embassy-sponsored history program for high school students at the Táncsics complex, spoke via Skype to students at Tóth Árpád High School in Debrecen, discussed current affairs with youth representatives of five parliamentary political parties as well as young journalists of Cafebabel.com, the European online magazine, and visited the Parliament under the auspices of the Hungarian-American Friendship Caucus. [More with video and photo gallery](#)



### U.S. Election Speaker Draws Wide Spectrum of Hungarian Society [More](#)

Amy Walter, a veteran commentator on American elections, entertained and enlightened her Hungarian audiences during her March 25-26 visit. Introduced by Ambassador Foley to students, professors, and diplomats at Central European University, Ms. Walter ran 45 minutes over her allotted time because the audience would not let her go. Her program included a digital video conference with students at the American Corner in Debrecen, discussions at Budapest's Károli Gáspár University and Veszprém's University of Pannonia, and a media roundtable with representatives of the Hungarian media.

### Digital Video Conference on the Upcoming NATO Summit

The Public Affairs Section arranged for a digital video conference on March 26 between the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Volker and representatives of the Hungarian media as preparation for the upcoming NATO Summit in Bucharest. After laying out the Summit scenario and the U.S. position on a number of key Summit issues, Mr. Volker answered a wide range of questions from the journalists. [More](#)



### Ambassador Presents International Women of Courage Award

On March 18, Ambassador Foley honored Györgyi Tóth as the U.S. Embassy's nominee for the International Women of Courage Award. Ms. Tóth is the Director of NANE, a Hungarian Women's Rights Association that works to combat violence against women. During the ceremony, the Ambassador shared her thoughts on Women's History Month and encouraged attendees to follow in the footsteps of courageous women leaders, including Györgyi Tóth. [More](#) [Ambassador's Remarks](#)

### Memorandum of Understanding on Hungary's Participation in the Visa Waiver Program

The signing of the Memorandum on March 17 is a key interim step in making it possible for Hungarians to travel for tourism and business to the United States without obtaining a visa. The United States and Hungary will still need to sign implementing agreements on several areas of security cooperation, and both countries are working to complete these steps. [More about the Visa Waiver Program](#)

### Hungarian Creative Writers Win Opportunity to Study in U.S.



On March 14, Ambassador Foley opened the 3rd Annual English language Short Story Contest award ceremony with the best news yet: the Embassy would partner with Youth for Understanding to send at least one Hungarian winner for a year of high school study in the U.S. This creative writing contest, co-sponsored with the American International School, is open to both Hungarian and international students. In 2008, it attracted 300 entries with over 100 Hungarian English language learners from all over the country submitting stories. [More](#)

### Ambassador Addresses Hungary's Next Generation of Business Leaders

Ambassador Foley talked to 200 Hungarian business students on how the Embassy is working with Hungary to improve transparency in local tax and licensing regulations, in enforcement of anti-bribery laws, and in its support for competitive energy markets to avoid the economic distortions of monopoly control. The Ambassador's March 10th address was part of the Budapest College of International Management and Business Studies "U.S. Days." [More](#)



## Choral Music Exchange in Budapest Strengthens Mutual Understanding

The Clark University Choir concluded its European tour with a March 5 concert at Budapest's historic Matthias Church and a reception hosted by Ambassador Foley. At the reception, Ambassador Foley presented the Ambassador's Award for Music Diplomacy to Clark University Choir for presenting the best of American choral traditions and, in so doing, bringing together Hungarians and Americans in common appreciation of a musical genre that both countries cherish. [More▶](#)



## Harlem Globetrotters Receive Embassy Award

As part of their European tour, Harlem Globetrotters came to Hungary to mesmerize basketball fans in the Budapest sports arena on February 28. Although it was not their first visit to Hungary, the captivated audience was nevertheless spellbound by the bag of tricks the Globetrotters threw at them during the show. At half time, Public Affairs Officer Michael Hurley presented the team with the Ambassador's Award for Sports Diplomacy in front of an audience of 9,000 cheering people. [More▶](#)



## Ambassador Foley Joins the 100th Anniversary Celebration of ELGI

On February 28, Ambassador Foley took part in the 100th Anniversary Ceremony of the Eötvös Loránd Geophysical Institute (ELGI). Speaking at the opening session of the day-long event, the Ambassador commended ELGI for its long, distinguished legacy of achievement and its fruitful collaboration with American scientific organizations. [More▶](#) [Ambassador's Remarks▶](#)

## American Corners Celebrate Black History Month

During the month of February, the American Corners organized several events in honor of Black History Month. In Debrecen, the Embassy Press Attaché spoke to a group of university students and professors and local businessmen about the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. [More▶](#) In Pécs, Cultural Officer Mark Tauber opened the week of festivities in Café Dante, where Hungarian pianist and singer Kálmán Fekete presented his collection of photographs of African American blues legends, and played blues with his PMD Blues Band. [More▶](#)



## American Women Fencers Receive Ambassador's Award

On February 26, Ambassador Foley in presenting the U.S. Women's Foil Team and Sabre Team with the Ambassador's Award for Sports Diplomacy underlined their two vital contributions. First, for young women in America and Hungary, they are role models who demonstrate that women can compete and triumph in sports once thought to be the exclusive province of men. Second, as citizen ambassadors of the United States, they help to strengthen the ties of friendship with Hungary by bringing both American and Hungarian athletes and spectators together in the enjoyment of sports competition. [More▶](#)

## Embassy Staff Donates 1 and 2 Forint Coins to Charity

The Embassy staff was glad to donate the 1 and 2 Forint coins, withdrawn from circulation at the end of February, to a good cause. On March 4, Susan Gray of the Community Liaison Office delivered the bag of coins to the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service, which - through its "Built out of Tiny Pieces" program - will use the donations to support needy families. [Hungarian Maltese Charity Service▶](#)



## Looking Ahead

### American Novelist at the Budapest International Book Festival

[Book Festival web site▶](#)

Visit the 15th International Book Festival on April 24-27, where the American author, Bret Easton Ellis will be the guest of honor. Mr. Ellis' works include *American Psycho*, *Lunar Park*, and *Glamorama*.

## New Publications

### eJournal▶: *The Greening of U.S. Corporations*

U.S. corporations in recent years have embraced environmentally friendly ways of doing business.

### 2007 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices [Report▶](#)

The U.S. Department of State released its yearly report on March 11, 2008.

IRC Newsletters: [Health Issues▶](#) [Economic Issues▶](#)

