

## American-Hungarian reflects on why roots are important



Judith Savic is still haunted by her youth when she was forced to flee Hungary at the age of nine during the Budapest rebellion in 1956. (Staff photo by Charlie Kidd)

(Continued from page 4A)

re-enter Hungary for visits. Homesick tourists provide dollars the Hungarian economy needs, she explained. Ms. Savic has been back several times to visit relatives and childhood friends.

"They live a different life—small, closed, hopeless," she related. "They don't have much to look forward to." Travel is restricted and luxuries on which to spend earnings are scarce, so people tend to live for the moment, she said. "There is no sense of building a future, like we have here."

COMING TO America in the first place somewhat upset the immigrants' preconceived notions of what this country would be like.

"We had no communication with the west. The rumors were like 'the streets are paved with gold.' Reality was a rude awakening for some refugees, she said.

"It was like going to Never-Never Land and finding out that there are the same problems the world over."

Ms. Savic said there are still some ways in which her experience affects her viewpoint.

"What bothers me is seeing all this violence on TV," she commented. Violence is portrayed too casually and lightly, she thinks. "They make it look like fun."

Having done without so many things in childhood, she said, she also is more sensitive to things that Americans may take for granted and is appreciative of material advantages.

"I really get upset when I see kids taking everything for granted, and grabbing at everything." She fondly remembers a very tiny doll she received for Christmas the year of her escape from Hungary. "That was more of a thrill than getting the biggest dollhouse," she said softly.

Ms. Savic said she is glad her family came to America, despite the circumstances that brought them here.

"It was a terrible thing to go through," she said. "But I'm glad in a way. It's given me a wider spectrum of life."



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