

23-year search ends with 2 families' reunion

By Mary Rodrigue
editor

them home for something to eat." Language was a barrier, and a small Hungarian/English dictionary became the first order of business. "For every English word they

learned, I learned a word of Hungarian," she said. For the Matyas, escape from their homeland — they lived in a town 50 miles from Budapest — became inevi-

table once Tibor Matyas learned that military authorities were looking for him. As a student at the University of Budapest, he was involved in anti-Com-

munist uprisings, the stimulus for the October 1956 revolution that was quelled by Soviet troops. Nearly 200,000 Hungarians fled the country. The Matyas packed an overnight bag holding little more than diapers and a change of clothes for their 17-month-old daughter and rode a freight train 150 miles west to the Austrian border to make their escape.

For an hour Thursday, the three exchanged anecdotes: Hester teaching Matyas how to drive, he denoting a femur, the birth of the Matyas second daughter, Suzanne, who is Hester's godchild, and Matyas' job transfer to Richmond, Va., in 1959.



Betty Hester shares a laugh with Tibor and Maria Matyas. The two families were reunited recently after 23 years of separation.

They made their way to Vienna, where they registered with the American Embassy. "Coming to America was always a dream for me," said Matyas, who works as a design engineer.

Betty Hester recalls that they "arrived on Thursday and Tibor started working the following Monday."

Meanwhile, Mrs. Matyas recalled, "Betty taught us everything about America."

She remembers her first visit to the supermarket.

"It was so new to me," she said. "The fresh vegetables in the middle of winter were so amazing."

Both women laughed remembering how Mrs. Matyas loaded the grocery cart with green peppers.

That same year, Betty Hester moved to the Detroit area. Later, she moved to Petoskey for a decade before returning to Redford in 1978. Likewise, the Matyas family, which grew with the addition of two sons, moved to Plymouth, then Chicago, then Northville in 1978.

"I put ads in the personal columns of newspapers, I called the company that Tibor worked for when he left Louisville, I even called all the Matyas in the phone books in Michigan," Hester said.

Likewise, Tibor Matyas tried to reach Betty Hester, but to no avail. They finally hit the jackpot two weeks ago.

A party is planned at the Matyas' clubhouse on April 17 "to get all our friends together," said Mrs. Matyas, who plans to cook up a Hungarian feast for the occasion. "This party is going to be our thanks to Betty and her family."

"We're going to have a good time," Hester said.

CPA review class at OU May 1

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For registration information call the Continuing Education office at 377-3120 from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. weekdays. A CPA weekend program that provides up to 28 continuing professional education (CPE) hours toward relicensure will be conducted Friday evening through Sunday afternoon.

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