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Republican Party Claims Victory in Armenia's Parliamentary Elections

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) was on course to score a landslide victory in Sunday's parliamentary elections amid opposition allegations of vote buying and other irregularities.

The government-controlled Central Election Commission (CEC) said early on Monday that with about 75 percent of the ballots counted, the HHK won 49.2 percent of the vote. This should be enough for it to have an absolute majority in Armenia's new parliament and stay in power.

According to the preliminary vote results released by the CEC, businessman Gagik Tsarukian's alliance was a distant second with 27.6 percent, followed by the opposition Yelk alliance (7.5 percent) and the

Armenian Revolutionary Federation - Dashnaktsutyun (6.7 percent), the HHK's junior coalition partner.

The five other election contenders looked set to fail to pass the 5 percent and 7 percent vote thresholds for being represented in the National Assembly set for political parties and alliances respectively. They included former President Levon Ter-Petrosian's opposition Congress-HZhK alliance (1.6 percent) and the ORO alliance led by former Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian (2.1 percent).



At a voting precinct

Opposition forces as well as independent election observers reported various irregularities, notably vote buying, throughout Sunday's voting. The Citizen Observer, a coalition of Armenian civic groups that deployed over 3,000 monitors across the country, alleged numerous instances of electoral violation and manipulation. Those included vote buying, voter intimidation, and the presence of unauthorized persons inside polling stations.

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AG Maura Healey To Be State House Genocide Program Keynote Speaker

BOSTON – Each April for the past 32 years, members of the Armenian community along with state legislators and guests have come together at the State House to commemorate the Armenian Genocide. This year the commemoration will take place on Friday, April 21 at 10:30 a.m. in the House Chamber with a program of speakers, music, and honorees.

Following the ceremony, a reception will be held in the Hall of Flags.

House Speaker Robert DeLeo will provide welcoming remarks and Governor Charlie Baker has been invited to present the proclamations. Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey will deliver the keynote address.

Anthony Barsamian, James Kalustian, and Dr. Ara Nazarian, co-chairs of the Armenian Genocide Centennial



Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey

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A child in an Armenian orphanage

Human Rights Watch Urges Closing Orphanages in Armenia, Integrating Disabled Children and Orphans

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

NEW YORK – Human Rights Watch (HRW), the New York-based humanitarian organization, in February released a report on the fate of children in Armenian orphanages, especially those who are mentally or

physically handicapped.

The report pointed out two problems: first, many children end up in orphanages because of the parents' financial situation. Second, most children with physical or mental handicaps never get out of the system.

According to Jane Buchanan, the associate director for Europe and Central Asia for HRW, "Parents are often compelled to make a decision because they have no other option. Whether it is just with respect to a child with disabilities or basic social support, it is not available in the community. [They end up] behind the walls of these institutions. They [parents] make decisions they shouldn't have to make."

Buchanan said that the government is responsible for the care of those children and that they provide no alternatives for indigent parents.

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Cloak and Dagger in German-Turkish Relations

BERLIN – The news that the Turkish intelligence agency MIT was not only spying on German citizens in their home country, but had requested help in this pursuit from the German intelligence service BND, signaled a new low-point in Berlin-Ankara relations. Relations had already been poisoned by wild accusations made by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan against the German government and Chancellor Angela Merkel that she was "Nazi-like" and "using Nazi meth-

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

ods." The resulting controversy regarding whether or not to allow AKP politicians to campaign in Germany for a "yes" vote on the upcoming referendum ended in a decision, by Ankara, to cancel all such planned events. That seemed to lower the political temperature.

Then last week several German press outlets revealed the espionage activities. As reported, the MIT had given a list to its

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Armenians among Injured in Russia Suicide Attack

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The Foreign Ministry of Armenia said on Monday, April 3 that according to preliminary data Armenians were injured in an explosion at underground stations in St. Petersburg.

"Names of Armenians who suffered are currently being specified," spokesman Tigran Balayan said, adding that the Foreign Ministry is working to find out whether those affected are Armenian citizens.

The Interfax and RIA news agencies reported that at least 50 people had been injured.

The head of Russia's National Anti-Terrorist Committee said the blast hit a train between Sennaya Ploshchad and Tekhnologicheskyy Institut stations.

The committee said an explosive device was later found and made safe at another station nearby.

So far 14 people have been killed as a result of the explosions.

Images posted on social media showed a carriage in Sennaya station with its doors blown out with casualties nearby.

President Vladimir Putin was in St. Petersburg earlier on Monday, April 3 but left the city.

"I have already spoken to the head of our special services, they are working to ascertain the cause," he said, at a meeting with Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko.

Moscow metro officials said they were introducing extra security measures as a result.

Tekhnologicheskyy Institut serves metro lines one and two, with the first hall opening in 1955, followed by the second in 1961.

Celebrities Speak out For 'The Promise'

LOS ANGELES – Actor Dean Cain has joined an array of celebrities to #KeepThePromise to never forget the Armenian Genocide.

"I'm Dean Cain. In college I studied history, I learned about genocides, like the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust. There is genocide going on right now, here, today. I'm talking about Syria, Iraq, Sudan. I vow to keep the promise to relegate genocide to history books," Cain said this week in a Twitter video.

Cain had visited Armenia earlier this year and shared the impressions in an interview on Fox News.

Elton John, Barbara Streisand, Andre Agassi, Sylvester Stallone, Cher and others have also expressed support for the Armenian Genocide-themed film "The Promise," which hits theatres on April 21.

Set during the last days of the Ottoman Empire, "The Promise" is an epic human drama about a love triangle with the backdrop of the Genocide.

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News From Armenia

Armenia to Present Three Movies at Cannes Film Market

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenia will be represented for the first time in the Cannes Film Market (Marché du Film) in 2017 in the Village International/Pantiero section – N226 pavilion, which happens in conjunction with the Cannes Film Festival. The Ministry of Culture of Armenia discussed the participation bids for the Film Market of the 70th Cannes Film Festival.

The ministry said 12 film projects were presented. The following projects were selected by the jury: “Aurora’s Sunrise,” “Exchange” and “The Wounded City.”

The culture ministry had formed a special commission for the participation at the Film Market of the Cannes Film Festival, which is scheduled for May 17-28. The commission’s chairman is Arsen Baghdasaryan with members Guzh Tadevosyan, Hovhannes Galstyan, Vardan Abovyan, Arman Yeritsyan and Narine Mkrtchyan (director).

Armenian-Mexican Business Discussion Held in Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES (Armenpress) – At the initiative of the Consulate General of Armenia in Los Angeles, Mexico’s Consul General Carlos Eugenio Garcia de Alba Zepeda met with two dozen Armenian-American businessmen, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia reported. He presented the perspective directions of the Armenian-Mexican business field, as well as priority directions of Mexico’s economy, where business projects will enable to bridge the Armenian and Mexican communities and establish business ties between the two countries. Alek Baghdasaryan, president of the Armenian-American Business Council, participated in the discussion.

In his speech Baghdasaryan emphasized the significance of boosting relations between the two countries through Armenian-Mexican business ties. An agreement was reached to hold similar meetings regularly.

Report: Armenia Nearing Threshold of Authoritarian regime

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Armenia falls near the threshold for designation as a consolidated authoritarian regime in the Nations in Transit report prepared by the Freedom House.

However, the report said, Armenia retains a measure of political pluralism that prevents total domination by one person or group.

The Nations in Transition report covers 29 post-communist countries of the former Soviet Union and in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

In the report, Armenia is the only country to be identified as a semi-consolidated authoritarian regime, with Belarus, Russia and Azerbaijan characterized as consolidated authoritarian regimes.

Commenting on the referendum on constitutional amendments held back in 2015, the report suggests that those overhauls are seen as a way for president Serzh Sargsyan to preserve his power (and assets).

“In Armenia, aside from the shift of powers to the parliament, the most significant provision of the revised constitution was a new system for ensuring a “stable majority” following elections. This procedure grants extra seats to the party that wins a plurality in the general elections, strengthening its hand in government formation,” the report says.

“The parliamentary system is simply a mechanism for ensuring that the RPA will remain in power for the foreseeable future.”

Armenia’s democracy score declined from 5.36 to 5.39 in a scale of 1-7 (1=most democratic, 7=least democratic).

In the meantime, Azerbaijan’s democracy score declined from 6.86 to 6.93, Russia’s declined from 6.50 to 6.57, while Georgia’s remained unchanged at 4.61. Cyprus 4-8

First Anniversary of Azeri Surprise Attack Marked

STEPANAKERT (Combined Sources) – President of Armenia, Commander-in-Chief Serzh Sargsyan, visited Artsakh to mark the anniversary of the Azeri attacks last year. Accompanied by President of Artsakh Bako Sahakian, ministers of defense of Armenia and Artsakh and high ranking military officials visited one of the military regiments of the Army of Defense, he familiarized with the combat readiness of the troops and attended the concert organized for the servicemen at the drill ground of the regiment.

At the conclusion of the concert, Sargsyan handed a high state award – Combat Service Medal to a group of servicemen for their valor and courage in defending the borders of Fatherland, handed presents to them and parents of those soldiers whose families sent two or more soldiers to the Armenian Army and who carried out their duty with dedication.

The President of Armenia expressed gratitude to the defenders of the Homeland and wished them safe term of duty.

The Defense Ministry of Artsakh Republic on April 2 announced that the Azerbaijani forces violated the ceasefire regime more than 35 times across the Artsakh-Azerbaijan line of contact. The ministry issued a statement saying: “On April 1 and overnight April 2 the Azerbaijani side violated the

ceasefire regime more than 35 times by firing more than 330 shots from various caliber small arms at the Armenian positions in the Artsakh-Azerbaijan line of contact. The Defense Army forces of Artsakh are in full control of the situation in the frontline and continue confidently conducting the military service.”

Marking the anniversary, Arsine Khanjian, Serj Tankian, Atom Egoyan and Eric Nazarian visited Artsakh and urged artists and those in cultural fields from around the world to visit Artsakh and support the people there who continue to write, compose, play and paint even when they are isolated from the world because of the war.

They released the following statement: “On these days a year ago, the Artsakh contact line again flared up when the Azerbaijani armed forces – in a sudden offensive – fired not only the frontline positions but also peaceful residents, schools and unarmed residents. The Artsakh self-defense forces calmed this aggression for the twentieth time, the only result being new human and material losses on both sides. Since 1988 or the day when Artsakh or Nagorno-Karabakh people decided to create their own fate and exercise their right to free self-determination, having overcome the bitter spirit of the Soviet Union and international laws, Azerbaijan has been opposing

this by displacements, attacks and large-scale military actions. However, despite all this the Artsakh people have been able to defend its ancestral lands, organize an independence referendum and establish a state.

On this historical land parcel, where there is more news on ceasefire violations, victims and wounded than any other information, thousands of children are deprived of their fair right to create, since the country remains blocked, the ceasefire being fragile. Thousands of gifted people are obliged to take weapons instead of a pen and brush and go to the front to defend their homes and homeland. Because of the Azerbaijani attacks and these forced attacks, these youths are deprived of the right to create and discover their talents. Numerous pupils living in border settlements listen to the sounds of exploding bombs and firing instead of songs and music.

But despite this, there are lots of artists, who continue to write, create, play music and paint. They are in blockade because of the war, unfortunately having very little opportunity to communicate with their colleagues worldwide. The blockade and isolations reduce the mutual visits, communication and exchange of experience. The opportunities of opening themselves to the world and knowing each other are limited for these creative talents.”

Hayastan All-Armenian Fund Unveils Oncology Center in Stepanakert

STEPANAKERT – On April 2, the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund officially unveiled the newly built Oncology Center of Stepanakert. The ultra-modern facility was built with the financial support of French-Armenian benefactor Richard Ohanessian, in memory of his late parents Vartan and Koharig Ohanessian, with additional support from the government of Artsakh.

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Ohanessian, along with Bedros Terzian, chairman of the fund’s French affiliate and his wife, had traveled to Artsakh in order to participate in the unveiling of the Oncology Center. The opening ceremony was attended by Bako Sahakyan, president of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh; Arayik Harutyunyan, prime-minister of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh; Ara Vardanyan, executive director of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund; government officials; guests; and a large number of local residents.

The Oncology Center will serve patients from throughout Artsakh and Southern Armenia. The three-story facility comprises general and clinical-pathomorphology laboratories, X-ray and mammography sections, and departments of surgery and intensive therapy. The facility will have 35 patient beds. The in-patient ward is designed to accommodate day and overnight patients for surgical and chemotherapy services. Patients who require other types of care can be transported to the adjacent State

Hospital through a ground-floor connection. The ground floor of the Oncology Center also includes several reserve rooms, intended to accommodate large numbers of patients in case of a national emergency.

“It’s a joy to see Artsakh growing day by day, adding new and wonderful institutions, and the living standards of its

ment and prosperity.”

“Artsakh has long needed a modern oncology center,” said Dr. Armen Hayriyan, the republic’s top oncologist and executive director of the new Oncology Center. “Annually, some 650 cancer patients in Artsakh need specialized care. Since the 1960s, diagnostic and treatment services have been provided to such patients in an inadequate structure that falls far short of modern standards.”

The new Oncology Center will soon be provided with furniture and state-of-the-art medical equipment, through the support of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund’s French affiliate. To date, patient beds have been installed; and medical machinery and instruments will be delivered to the facility within the next few weeks. The fund and the government of Artsakh will continue to work together to make sure that the center has everything else it needs for its work. Currently, the Oncology Center’s medical staff is receiving advanced trainings in France. The trainings are being provided by the France-based Hi-Med organization, with the support of the fund’s French affiliate.

The new Oncology Center of Stepanakert is part of a large medical plaza that includes the Polyclinic (built in 2006 with the financial support of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund’s US Eastern Region affiliate) and the State Hospital (built in 2013 with the sponsorship of Russian-Armenian benefactor Samvel Karapetyan).



The Oncology Center opening

residents rising accordingly. I convey my gratitude to all those who have made this great center possible,” said benefactor in his remarks during the opening ceremony. For his great contribution to the Hayastan Fund’s projects in Artsakh, Richard Ohanessian was awarded with a Medal of Gratitude by the President Bako Sahakyan prior to the opening event.

“It’s no accident that the opening of this facility is being held on April 2,” said Bedros Terzian as he welcomed the attendees and added, “This is a symbolic day. It’s also a message to all, that we must continue to build on the soil of Artsakh and help empower its advance-



ARMENIA

Armenia's Republican Party Claims Victory

ELECTION, from page 1

"As a result, the issue of public trust in the elections has not been solved," the Citizen Observer said in a statement released on Sunday evening. It said the elections did not mark "an improvement of electoral processes in the country."

Levon Zurabian, a leader of the Congress-HZHK, charged that the Armenian authorities held "yet another disgraceful election." Zurabian accused the HHK of handing out vote bribes. He also claimed that government loyalists systematically breached the secrecy of the ballot to make sure that bribed or intimidated citizens vote for the HHK.

Aram Sargsyan, a Yelk leader, likewise alleged "disgraceful violations" and "widespread vote bribes in comments to lin.am. "We will probably make a statement in the morning," he said.

Armen Ashotian, a deputy chairman of the ruling HHK, insisted, however, that the elections marked a "leap forward" in Armenia's democratization. No more than 10,000 votes might have been rigged, he said, adding that this could not have had a serious impact on the election results.

According to the CEC, almost 1.58 million Armenians making up nearly 61 percent of the country's eligible voters cast ballots on Sunday.

Prime Minister Ebullient

Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan said on Tuesday, April 4, that his government has received a popular "mandate for change" and will strive to transform Armenia after winning Sunday's parliamentary elections.

"We are determined to put into practice the mandate for change given to us by the people," Karapetyan said in a message on the election outcome posted on his Facebook page.

"Consistent and hard work awaits us," he wrote. "Undoubtedly, a lot needs to be done but we are not afraid of the difficult path ahead."

"I promise that we will spare no effort to create a new Armenia so that every citizen of our country feels better than they did before," added the first deputy chairman of HHK.

Karapetyan personally conducted the HHK's election campaign, pledging to implement "serious reforms" and attract large-scale investments in Armenia's economy. He already unveiled an ambitious reform agenda shortly after being appointed as prime minister in September. Opposition leaders dismissed it as a publicity stunt aimed at facilitating the HHK's victory in the April 2 elections.

The HHK leadership has made clear that Karapetyan will continue to serve as prime minister at least until President Serzh Sargsyan serves out his final term and Armenia becomes a parliamentary republic in April 2018. Sargsyan, who is also the HHK's chairman, has still not clarified whether he plans to replace Karapetyan then. He has said only that he will continue playing a major role in "ensuring the security of our people."

Karapetyan indicated earlier that he would like to retain his post after April 2018.

The 53-year-old premier did not say on Tuesday whether his cabinet formed in October will undergo changes as a result of the elections. Sargsyan and the HHK have also not made any public statements to that effect so far.

Irregularities Reported

Despite irregularities reported by international observers, the official results of Armenia's parliamentary elections reflect "the overall will of the Armenian people", the European Union (EU) said late on Monday.

A spokesperson for Federica Mogherini, the EU's foreign policy chief, said that the EU will work closely with Armenia's "democratically elected new parliament and government."

In a statement, the official cited European observers' preliminary conclusion that Sunday's elections were marred by "credible information about vote-buying" and voter intimidation even though "fundamental freedoms were generally respected."

"The election result nevertheless reflects the overall will of the Armenian people," added the statement.

The statement insisted that electronic equipment installed in polling stations across the country prevented other, more serious irregularities. "Despite some minor technical problems, fewer irregularities concerning ballot box stuffing, double voting, counting and tabulation of results were recorded by observers," it said.

Earlier this year, the EU provided the Armenian authorities with more than \$7 million for the purchase of voter authentication devices and web cameras that recorded and broadcast through the Internet voting and ballot counting from the vast majority of polling stations.

There were serious problems with the online livestreaming during the first few hours of voting. Armenian officials attrib-

uted the disruptions to technical problems. Opposition politicians suspect political reasons for that, however.

The official EU reaction to the elections is a significant boost to the international legitimacy of the elections and the Armenian government. Most of the Armenian opposition election contenders have said that the ballot was not democratic because the ruling HHK won it through vote buying and abuse of its administrative resources. HHK representatives have brushed aside the opposition claims.

The EU statement also made clear that the 28-nation bloc will press ahead with the signing of a new agreement to deepen its political and economic ties with Armenia. The agreement was initiated in Yerevan two weeks before the elections.

"Once the electoral process has been completed, we look forward to working with the democratically elected new Parliament and Government to strengthen our political dialogue and continue our support to economic and social reform, including on the basis of the recently initialed EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA)," said the statement.

President Sargsyan said last week that the CEPA will likely be signed at the EU's next Eastern Partnership summit due in November. He claimed that his administration is committed to "building a European model of democracy" in Armenia.

The United States on Tuesday also gave a largely positive assessment of the conduct of the weekend parliamentary elections in Armenia.

"The US Embassy [in Yerevan] congratulates the people of

cent of polling stations visited by the European observers due to problems such as overcrowding and violation of the secrecy of the ballot. "In addition, large groups of people were present in the immediate vicinity of polling stations in 30 per cent of cases, with tension seen in 6 per cent of observations and intimidation of voters in 4.5 per cent of observations," it says.

The report also offers a negative assessment of 20 of 118 vote counts attended by the observers mainly because of "undue interference in the process" by unnamed party proxies. Also, it says, election officials in over a dozen polling stations "did not determine the validity of ballots in a consistent and reasonable manner."

On the positive side, the reports notes, among other things, that "fundamental freedoms" were generally respected during the election campaign and that Armenian state television provided "equitable coverage" of their pre-election activities.

Tsarukian Vague On Post-Election Moves

Businessman Gagik Tsarukian's alliance, the runner-up in Armenia's parliamentary elections, shed no light on its next political moves in its first reaction to the official vote results on Monday.

It also refrained from evaluating the Armenian authorities' handling of the ballot strongly criticized by other, more hard-line opposition groups.

According to the Central Election Commission (CEC), the Tsarukian Bloc came in a distant second, getting 27.3 percent



Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan on Tuesday

Armenia on their April 2 parliamentary election, following a period of widespread competition among various parties and blocs in an environment that allowed all viewpoints access to the media," read a statement released by the mission. "Election day was generally calm and orderly across Armenia and voters were able to freely exercise their right to vote."

The OSCE-led mission, which also included representatives of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe, did not report significant instances of multiple voting in its preliminary election verdict delivered on Monday.

The nearly 300 observers mostly deployed by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe monitored voting and ballot counting in polling stations across Armenia on Sunday. They also included representatives of the European Parliament and the parliamentary assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

"It is a pity that despite all of the legal and organizational changes these elections did not remove long-standing doubts about the reliability and integrity of electoral processes in the country," Liliane Maury Pasquier of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) told a joint news conference with other heads of the monitoring mission.

"Regrettably, the process was undermined by credible, recurring information of vote buying, intimidation of voters notably civil servants in schools and hospitals and employees of private companies as well as abuse of administrative positions," agreed Heidi Hautala, who led the observers from the European Parliament.

The mission was careful, however, not to name any Armenian party engaged in bribing or intimidating voters. It said only that these illegal practices, also reported by the Armenian opposition, media and observers, called into question Armenians' "ability to cast their votes free of fear of retribution."

The report assesses negatively the voting process in 12 per-

cent of the vote which should translate into 30 seats in Armenia's new 101-member parliament. President Serzh Sargsyan's Republican Party (HHK) is projected to control 55 seats.

Tsarukian declared just days before the vote that his bloc is headed to victory.

"We have received a vote of confidence from more than 400,000 of our compatriots," the bloc said in a written statement. "Rest assured that we highly appreciate every vote for us which obliges us to do everything within our power to move forward and develop the country."

"We are very conscious of the seriousness of challenges facing our country and will do everything to address them," it added.

The statement did not clarify whether the bloc will formally remain in opposition to Armenia's government or seek a coalition agreement with the HHK.

Some Tsarukian aides ruled out the possibility of a power-sharing deal with the HHK during the election campaign. The tycoon himself was more ambiguous on that score, saying that he is ready to team up with political forces that will embrace his campaign platform.

Tsarukian's Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK), the dominant force in the bloc, was part of Sargsyan's government from 2008-2012. It withdrew from the ruling coalition amid mounting tensions with the president that culminated in a bitter confrontation two years ago. Tsarukian was forced to retire from politics at that time.

Tsarukian announced his return to the political arena in January, fueling media speculation that his comeback is the result of a secret deal with Sargsyan. BHK representatives denied that.

Opposition groups that have failed to win seats in Armenia's new parliament on Monday condemned the authorities' handling of the weekend elections but stopped short of calling for anti-government street protests.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Catholicos Karekin II Gives His Approval to Bekjian in Istanbul Role

ECHMIADZIN – On March 30, Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, presided over a Supreme Spiritual Council meeting on the recent developments in the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople.

The Catholicos of All Armenians reflected on the current situation, and informed the members of a letter sent to Echmiadzin on March 24, by Rev. Yeghishe Uchqounian, chairman of the Patriarchate Clerical Assembly; and Rev. Drtad Ouzounian, through which they officially informed the catholicos on the election of Archbishop Karekin Bekjian as Patriarchal Locum Tenens in the Patriarchate on March 15.

At the end of discussions, he announced his decision to bless the choice of the Patriarchal Locum Tenens, which was welcomed by the members of the Supreme Spiritual Council.

On the same day, Karekin II sent a letter to the Chancellor of the Clerical Assembly of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople.

“From the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, we convey our Pontifical blessing to the elected Patriarchal Locum Tenens of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, the clergymen and all our faithful Armenian children from Constantinople. We urge you, that with the spirit of love and wisdom, to overcome the current problems and obstacles, and according to Church laws and rules, find better solutions to conduct the Patriarchal election, for the benefit of restoration of peace and solidarity for the Armenians of Constantinople,” he wrote.

Catholicos Aram I Asks ECHR to Declare Jurisdiction over Sis Suit

BEIRUT (Public Radio of Armenia) – Catholicos Aram I of the Great House of Cilicia recently asked the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) to declare it has jurisdiction over the Armenian Church’s claim against Turkey for the return of its historical Seat in Sis.

On March 22, the International Legal Team representing the Catholicosate of Cilicia wrote to the Registrar of the ECHR on behalf of Aram I to provide additional documentation on the admissibility of its case against Turkey for the return of its historical Seat in Sis. The new documents relate to the serious deterioration of the rule of law in Turkey, including purges among the judiciary, strengthening the assertion of the Catholicosate that having gone before the Constitutional Court of Turkey in 2015, it has no further remedies available before the Turkish courts.

According to the International Legal Team, the most recent reports of the Council of Europe Venice Commission, dated 13 March 13, and the Memorandum of the Council of Europe’s Human Rights Commissioner dated February 15, indicate the increasing systemic problems for the rule of law in Turkey.

Armenian Church in Paris Suburb Attacked

PARIS (PanARMENIAN.Net) – A fire erupted in the Armenian Evangelical Church of Alfortville, a suburb of Paris, at around 6 a.m. on the morning of April 2, in what is being described as an arson attack, the third such attack on the church in the past year, according to *Christianity Today*.

Eight days prior, stones were thrown at the church building, and its telephone system was damaged.

Pastor Léonian told the newspaper *Le Parisien* that the attacks were “a surprise in such a quiet neighbourhood,” but said that though concerning, they “do not make us feel angry.” The church community, which numbers about 30, didn’t cancel its Sunday service.

The mayor of Alfortville, Luc Carvounas condemned the attack.

The National Council of Evangelicals in France also offered their “compassion and prayers”.

The attack is the third arson incident on an evangelical church in France in 12 months.

Syria Conflict: ‘Chemical Attack’ in Idlib kills 58

DAMSCUS (BBC) – At least 58 people have been killed and dozens wounded in a suspected chemical attack on a rebel-held town in north-western Syria, a monitoring group says.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that strikes on Khan Sheikhoun by Syrian government or Russian jets had caused many people to choke.

Later, aircraft fired rockets at local clinics treating survivors, medics and activists said.

A Syrian military source denied the government had used any such weapons.

Russia’s defence ministry meanwhile insisted it had not carried out any air strikes in the vicinity.

If confirmed, it would be one of the deadliest chemical attacks in Syria’s civil war.

The warplanes are reported to have attacked Khan Sheikhoun, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) south of the city of Idlib, early on Tuesday, when many people were asleep.

Hussein Kayal, a photographer for the pro-opposition Edlib Media Center (EMC), told the Associated Press that he was awoken by the sound of an explosion at about 06:30 (03:30 GMT).

When he reached the scene, there was no smell, he said. He found people lying on the floor, unable to move and with constricted pupils, he added.

Mohammed Rasoul, the head of a charity ambulance service in Idlib, told

the BBC that his medics had found people, many of them children, choking in the street.

The Syrian Observatory (SOHR) quoted medics as saying that they had been treating people with symptoms including fainting, vomiting and foaming at the mouth.

An AFP news agency journalist saw a young girl, a woman and two elderly people dead at a hospital, all with foam still visible around their mouths.

The journalist also reported that the same facility was hit by a rocket on Tuesday afternoon, bringing down rubble on top of doctors treating the injured.

The source of the projectile was not clear, but the EMC and the opposition Local Co-ordination Committees (LCC) network said warplanes had targeted several clinics.

Pro-government journalists later cited military sources as saying there had been an explosion at an al-Qaeda chemical weapons factory in Khan Sheikhoun that was caused either by an air strike or an accident.

The SOHR put the death toll at 58, including 11 children, but Rasoul reported that 67 people had been killed and that 300 were injured.

One aid agency, the Union of Medical Care and Relief Organisations (UOSSM), put the death toll at more than 100 and said that the figure was

Chemical weapons expert Dan Kaszeta said that determining whether

Sarin was involved simply by examining video clips is problematic.

He added that Tuesday’s attack could have been the result of one of any number of chemical agents as they tend to “behave the same in terms of their physiological effects on the human body.”

Sarin is almost impossible to detect because it is a clear, colourless and tasteless liquid that has no odor in its purest form.

The government was accused by Western powers of firing rockets filled with Sarin at several rebel-held suburbs of the capital Damascus in August 2013.

President Bashar al-Assad denied the charge, blaming rebel fighters, but he did subsequently agree to destroy Syria’s chemical arsenal.

Despite that, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has continued to document the use of toxic chemicals in attacks in Syria.

A joint investigation with the UN concluded in October that government forces had used chlorine as a weapon at least three times between 2014 and 2015.

It also found Islamic State militants had used the blister agent sulphur mustard bombs over rebel-held Aleppo last year.

UN Syria envoy Staffan de Mistura said it was an “horrific” attack and that there should be a “clear identification of responsibilities and accountability” for the attack on the rebel-held town.

Cloak and Dagger in German-Turkish Relations

GERMANY, from page 1

German counterpart during the Munich security conference at the beginning of the year. The list had 358 names of people the Turkish secret services alleged were terrorists and/or linked to the Gülen movement which Erdogan holds responsible for the failed coup attempt last summer. The MIT was seeking help from its German counterpart in gathering information about these people. Instead, the list arrived on the desks of the government, the German Criminal Police BKA, the Office for the Protection of the Constitution and police. Interior ministries of the federal states then informed the individuals named, out of concern for their security. Among the names were political figures; Michelle Münterfering, wife of the former SPD leader Franz Münterfering, and Chairwoman of the German-Turkish Parliamentary Group was the most prominent.

Backlash

It was the proverbial straw that broke the camel’s back. Not only did the news become very public, but political figures took the gloves off. Televised talk shows on national channels have been focusing increasingly on Turkey and the growing tensions. During popular round table discussions hosted by Maybrit Illner or Anne Will on prime time shows, typically there are a couple of prominent German politicians, an intelligence expert or two, and one or two Turkish-Germans, one of whom will struggle to argue for the AKP position. On March 31, Parliamentarian Münterfering herself appeared, and said, though in that position she had always been open to dialogue even with difficult interlocutors, here a new limit had been reached with such methods. Sabine Leutheuser-Schnarrenberger, a former Justice Minister from the liberal party FDP, who had met with journalists in Turkey, denounced the list, stating, “There is no danger represented by these people. The list is a notion to the

German intelligence services [that they should] violate fundamental rights.”

The pro-Erdogan position ritually presented in these talk shows is that the Gülen crowd are terrorists, having attempted a violent coup, and that it is the duty of the Germans to hunt them down for prosecution. The most explosive response to this line of argument came during this show from Erich Schmidt-Eenboom, an intelligence expert, who exposed the charges of Gülen’s culpability as phony. “Turkish espionage was always known,” he said, “but it has gotten more aggressive since 2013.” Following the protests at Gezi park, he said that German-Turks came more under surveillance, “and then the pseudo-coup in July only increased Turkish paranoia.” When the term “pseudo-coup” provoked objections from Haluk Yildiz, from the Turkish side, Schmidt-Eenboom went on to say that the BND and CIA had concluded that it was “a pseudo-coup, staged by Erdogan, to prevent a possible real coup.” As for the Gülen movement, he said the BND shared the view that it “is definitely not the party responsible for the coup.” Commenting on the extent of Turkish espionage in Germany, he said, “Even the Stasi [Communist East German Security] did not manage to build such a vast network of agents in the Federal Republic of Germany.” (He also had pertinent remarks about “something like a jihadist highway,” that Turkey had until 2014, along which “it sent fighters from Libya and other countries over the border.”)

That the network is vast has been documented in recent weeks. In February, law enforcement agencies raided homes, mosques and offices of DITIB, the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs, the largest organization representing the Turkish community in Germany. It depends directly on the Diyanet (Presidency of Religious Affairs) in Turkey and came to the attention of German authorities after reports that its representatives, especially imams, were collecting information on persons

of Turkish background who had contacts to the Gülen schools or other entities. Teachers and imams were supposed to report such persons. DITIB has also come under scrutiny for allegedly promoting violence; since September 2016 all imams who tend to persons in prisons have been required to undergo checks by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, but the vast majority of DITIB imams in North Rhine Westphalia, for example, declined to do so. Thus, if 117 DITIB imams worked in the prisons in 2015, only 12 now do so.

The scandal of spying on German citizens suspected of links to the Gülen movement has generated fear among Turkish-Germans who are opposed to Erdogan and has created a serious conflict between the pro- and anti-Erdogan factions in the Federal Republic. Not only: as Zeit online, among other press reported recently, increasing numbers of Turkish citizens who fear for their safety at home are seeking asylum in Germany. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) has received 262 applications for asylum, presented by Turkish diplomats and military officials.

Spying in Turkey

Not infrequently, pro-Erdogan representatives in the talk shows will accuse Germany of spying in Turkey. Schmidt-Eenboom was blunt in his response. Yes, the BND spies in Turkey, and also in other countries, as other foreign intelligence agencies also do. In fact, the information about Turkish support for jihadists had been obtained through wiretapping of phones in the presidential palace, by the NSA among other western agencies. Schmidt-Eenboom justified the actions thus: “Erdogan is a neo-Ottoman. He is striving to establish a Eurasian Islamist state, with territorial claims vis-a-vis Greece, Bulgaria and northern Iraq.” That is something that needs to be monitored.

(The author can be reached at mirak.weissbach@googlemail.com)

Community News

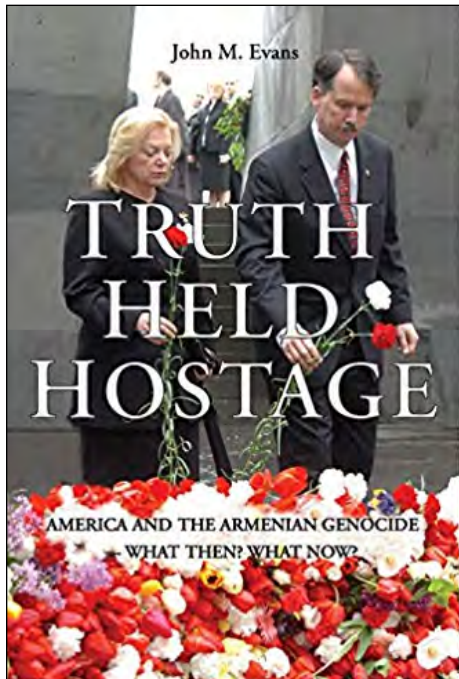
Former US Ambassador Evans to Speak at Holy Trinity Armenian Church

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston will present a series of events celebrating books and courage and legends. For its first event, and as we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Martyrs of the Armenian Genocide, Holy Trinity Armenian Church is honored to have the former Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia, John M. Evans, author of *Truth Held Hostage*, speak at Holy Trinity Church on Sunday, April 23, at 12:15 p.m., in the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall of the church complex at 145 Brattle St.

Evans' book, *Truth Held Hostage: America and the Armenian Genocide; What Then? What Now?* is being hailed as the most important work about the Armenian Genocide by a US diplomat since Ambassador Morgenthau's story in 1918.

All are welcome to attend. A complimentary light luncheon will be served.

Fr. Vasken A. Kouzouian, Pastor of Holy Trinity Church, said, "We are honored to welcome this heroic former United States diplomat to Holy Trinity. Ambassador Evans stood up for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide in ways no other diplomat has in recent memory. To hear his story first-hand will leave an indelible mark on the hearts and



minds of all ages. His personable and endearing nature comes through in his book, *Truth Held Hostage*. I hope copies of his important work are found in every Armenian-American home all across the country. I believe Armenians will find reason to respect Ambassador Evans by coming to Holy Trinity to hear him speak."

Evans, a Foreign Service Officer in the United States State Department for more than 35 years (1971-2006), served as United States ambassador to Armenia from 2004 to 2006, until he lost his job for using the word "Genocide" to describe the Turkish government's policy of extermination of Armenians in 1915. Over the course of his career, Evans served with distinction in diplomatic posts in Tehran, Prague, Moscow, Brussels (NATO), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, St. Petersburg and Washington, reaching the rank of Minister-Counselor. A native of Williamsburg, Va., Evans was educated at Yale and Columbia universities and is an avid student of Russian history.

In addition to *Truth Held Hostage*, he is the author of *Therefore God Must Be Armenian! Sixteen Talks Given on Armenian Issues* (2007-2012).

Following his talk, Evans will sign copies of his books. A limited number will be available for purchase. Those attending may bring their personal copies to be inscribed.



Making a fashion statement with the tricolor

Armenian Heritage Cruise XX Delivers On Fun

MIAMI – On a warm and sunny day, Armenian Heritage Cruise XX 2017 set sail for a nine-day getaway. On January 20, more than 1,300 Armenians boarded the Royal Caribbean's Navigator of the Seas. This most innovative ship features an ice skating rink, rock climbing wall, full size basketball court and much more.

By Barbara Haroutunian

Armenians came from all over the world including Australia, Armenia, Canada, England, France, Germany, Lebanon and more than 25 states within the United States.

Bishop Anoushavan Tanielian, Vicar General of the Eastern Prelacy, and the former Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Armenia, Ambassador John M. Evans and his wife Donna, were among those on board.

Twenty years ago, the first cruise started out with a few hundred guests. Over the last 20 years, family, friends, and new acquaintances have come together for non-stop Armenian entertainment and cultural events.

The cruise departed from Miami on Friday evening, and destinations included Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, and Labadee. The days started out with an Armenian service led by Tanielian. For those who needed a little help on the dance floor, Margo Kaftajian taught basic Armenian dance. Guests could register for backgammon and belote tournaments under the direction of Antranik Boudakian with John M. Jerikian and Hampar Vartanian. Maro Assadourian had a special table set up for the Armenian Heritage Tour 2017 to Armenia and Karabagh departing on September 17 - October 1.

Each day the ACAA Hospitality desk was open to assist passengers with all their needs. The Hairenik Bookstore returned this year, providing all kinds of unique Armenian merchandise.

The entertainment aboard the cruise featured Joseph Krikorian, Kevork Artinian, and Harout Khatchoyan. There was a concert by Antranik Mouradian featuring Salbi Mailyan, Harout Hagopian and Armen Hovhannissyan, a unique collaboration of musicians showcasing their different styles of Armenian music together.

From England, comedian, musician and actor Kev Orkian entertained the audience with a one man piano comedy performance that was truly spectacular. This is the third time he has performed on the Armenian Heritage Cruise. He is more phenomenal each time!

This year for the first time featured a special program: CME Seminar for medical health care professionals and dentists. The registrants were able to attend specific medical classes to obtain accreditation which was affiliated with Columbia University and the University of Michigan School of Dentistry. The lectures were conducted by renowned authorities in health care who have made major contributions to improve education and increasing the standards of health care in Armenia. The program featured Dr. John Bilezikian, Chairman Dr. Raffy Hovanessian as honorary chairman and Dr. Varduhi Petrosyan, Dr. Robert Bargranian and Dr. Laurence Najarian. The discussion included initiatives in health policy and Management, osteoporosis awareness, and delivery of eye and dental care.

The first night there was a welcome reception hosted by Maria Tavitian and Margo Kaftajian, all of the week's activities and highlights were announced.

The first two days were spent at sea, from sunrise to sunset one could be active
see CRUISE, page 11

Armenian Assembly Urges Investigation of Turkey's Attempts to Compromise US Institutions

WASHINGTON – This week Armenian Assembly of America Co-Chairs Anthony Barsamian and Van Krikorian sent a letter to the Senate Intelligence Chairman Richard Burr (R-NC), Vice Chairman Mark Warner (D-VA), House Intelligence Chairman David Nunes (R-CA), and Ranking Member Adam Schiff (D-CA) highlighting Turkey's activities attempting to compromise America's democratic institutions.

"Given recent reports about Turkey's attempts to gain surreptitious influence over US officials and media to the detriment of US national security, and as a follow-up to our March 13th letter regarding Azerbaijan and its influence buying in the United States, we are writing to urge your thorough investigation of President Erdogan's Turkey in an expanded review of foreign governments and their activities that compromise America's democratic institutions to allow massive human rights violations and work against the United States in ways that are totally out of legal or diplomatic bounds," Barsamian and Krikorian stated.

The Assembly's letter comes against the backdrop of revelations of former national security advisor Michael Flynn. "This week, even more developments related to this case were exposed. This abundant public record alone represents a disturbing pattern that compromises both our nation's security and constitutional government," they added.

Next week, an upcoming hearing in the House Foreign Affairs Committee entitled "Turkey's Democracy Under Challenge," promises to reveal further President Erdogan's disregard for US democratic values and human rights as Turkey nears a constitutional referendum that will vastly expand the powers of the president.

Earlier this month, the Assembly also expressed its concerns with Azerbaijan's potential violations of Iran sanctions based on similar reports. The Assembly Co-Chairs sent a letter to the Senate and House Select Committees on Intelligence noting Azerbaijan's human rights abuses and tactics to influence America's democracy and governance process through its corrupt caviar diplomacy.

Barsamian and Krikorian said: "We are writing to express our concern regarding the undue influence of yet another foreign government on America's democratic institutions, namely Azerbaijan. We are deeply troubled by recent reports about Azerbaijan's ties to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and its nexus to both the Mammadov family and the highest levels of the Azeri government. We therefore respectfully request that the congressional investigations of Russian influence be expanded to include Azerbaijan's influence peddling and any materials it may have potentially compromising US officials."

In a related matter, RFE/RL reported that the Ranking Members of the Senate's Foreign Relations, Banking, and Judiciary Committees wrote a joint letter to Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James Comey, Jr., US Department of Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, and US Attorney General Jeff Sessions for further investigation into Azerbaijan's possible violations.


COMMUNITY NEWS

Lara Setrakian to Speak at Hovnanian School

NEW MILFORD, N.J. – Lara Setrakian will speak at the Hovnanian School on Tuesday, April 11, at a program co-sponsored by the school and the Armenian International Women's Association. The topic of the evening, "Healing from the Armenian Genocide," has poignant significance since this April 24 will mark the 102nd Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide committed by the Ottoman Empire. After the presentation, there will be a question-and-



Lara Setrakian

answer session. The goal: to continue the dialogue of how Armenians in the Diaspora can evolve through the healing process.

Setrakian is an award-winning journalist, content strategist and entrepreneur. She spent the last five years in the Middle East reporting for television, radio and digital platforms for ABC News, Bloomberg Television, the *International Herald Tribune*, *Business Insider* and *Monocle* magazine. She is a Young Global Leader with the World Economic Forum and was recently named #20 on the Fast Company list of the 100 Most Creative People in Business. She is also the co-founder and CEO of News Deeply, a start-up that is dedicated to covering the world's most important and underreported stories.

Her team's inaugural site, Syria Deeply, launched in 2012 and won the 2013

Excellence in Online Journalism Award from the National Press Foundation. News Deeply's journalists and technologists build in-depth digital platforms that serve as a hub of news, information and analysis. By fusing rigorous reporting and cutting-edge information design, they make a complex world easier for their readers to understand. The News Deeply team went on to launch Ebola Deeply, Water Deeply, Arctic Deeply, Refugees Deeply and the Women & Girls Hub and will expand to cover new topics in environment, public health, geopolitics and social impact.

Setrakian said she believes in building innovative news platforms that are rooted in public service, that stand ready to engage, and explain the complexity of the world. In light of that work, *Inc.*, *Magazine* called her one of "8 Women Who Could Own the Future."

She grew up in Bergen County, NJ, the second daughter of Armenian-Americans who raised her to value grit, resilience, and resolve. She was an active member of the Armenian community including St. Thomas Armenian School, Sunday School, and Shushi Dance Ensemble. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from Harvard University with a degree in government. Her work at News Deeply has been featured in Fast Company, Mashable, Inc, TechCrunch, the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, ABC News, NPR and CNN.

AIWANJ, is a non-profit organization bringing together creative women of multiple generations, diverse in interests, and academic backgrounds to fulfill its mission: to promote and enrich the social, economic, and personal advancement of Armenian women worldwide through educational and other community activities that unite Armenian women and promote gender equity. To read more about AIWA visit: www.aiwainternational.org

Hovnanian School is a private, not-for-profit, non-sectarian, independent, early childhood, elementary and middle school offering a model mix of academic scholarship, unique multi-language experience, and other valuable programs from Early Learning Center through 8th grade in a safe, child-centered, multicultural environment.



The Primate blesses babies at Holy Trinity Church of Cambridge.

Primate Visits Holy Trinity Church In Cambridge, Blesses Babies

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – From March 17 to 19, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese, visited Holy Trinity Church. He spent the weekend visiting with various members and parish groups.

On Friday evening and Saturday, the Primate met with the parish council and Diocesan delegates, ACYOA Seniors, senior parish members, Armenian and Sunday School parents, and mixed-marriage and engaged couples. Accompanying the Primate on his visit was Arpi Nakashian from the Diocesan Department of Creative Ministries.

During the meetings, the Holy Trinity Church parishioners candidly shared their thoughts and concerns, including social and family concerns, and the challenges mixed-marriage families face in an ethnic enclave like the Armenian Church. The meeting participants were also introduced to the new initiatives produced by the Department of Creative Ministries, including the "Bread and Salt" video and podcast series.

The Primate expressed his appreciation for the openness of the dialogues he had with during the weekend and presented initiatives the Eastern Diocese was preparing to address the mentioned issues along with issues voiced by parishes across the Diocese.

On Sunday morning, Barsamian presided over the Divine Liturgy, offering the day's homily and participating in a "Blessing of Babies" service that followed after the Badarak.

"Whenever this kind of dialogue takes place, good and lasting changes and adjustments are made," said Rev. Vasken Kouzouian, pastor of Holy Trinity Church. "I am excited for what new programming will be coming in the months and years ahead from the Diocese based on the Primate's responses."

OBITUARIES

Adelaida Hoveyan Poet and Teacher

WATERTOWN – Adelaida Hoveyan died on March 28, 2017. She was 76.

She was a beloved teacher, a poet, a leader, mother, grandmother, wife and friend.

The daughter of Tamar Ghayfachyan and late Hrachya Hoveyan, Adelaida Hoveyan was born on January 6, 1941 in Gavar, Armenia. Being raised by two teachers influenced her entire life, and shaped her to be an ambitious woman. At the age of 17, she married Vanik Balagyozyan and had two children, Armen and Naira. She graduated with the highest academic excellence and earned a Red Diploma at school, college and Yerevan State University. She was a passionate teacher and educator with more than 50 years of experience of Armenian language and Literature and worked as a teacher at Ajharyan school. Her passion to teach was matched by her compassion for her students.

She received many awards from the Republic of Armenia, the Ministry of Education and was awarded as the most honorable teacher from the Government of Armenia. In June 2005, she left her beloved Armenia, and moved to America to be with her children and their families. While here, Adelaida continued to teach the Armenian language and history at Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Cambridge for 11 years and ingrained the importance of heritage, language and culture in her students.

During those years, she worked on many literary events dedicated to great poets such as Paruyr Sevak, Vahan Teryan and Avetik Isahakyan. She has written poetry books named *Im Khrchiti Luysere*, and *Siro u Karoti*

Bavighneroom which translates to "The Light of My House" and "In the Journey of Love and Nostalgia." She wrote hundreds of poems regarding her love to her homeland, nature, love and loss and dedicated many to her friends and family.

In addition to her husband, she leaves her children Armen and Naira Balagyozyan, their families, and grandchildren Amalia, Vahe, Naneh, and Adelaida.

Funeral services were held at St. James Armenian Church in Watertown on April 1. Arrangements were made by the Giragosian Funeral Home in Watertown.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Human Rights Watch Urges New Direction For Armenia's Orphans, Suggests Disabled Children Need Integration

CHILDREN, from page 1

"The situation of children with and without disabilities" is dire, she said.

Inclusive education for children with physical or mental disabilities is virtually unavailable in schools.

Buchanan and her team made four visits in 2016 and spent a total of four weeks in Armenia conducting research.

These findings and recommendations go beyond suggestions; the changes recommended need to be enacted to be in compliance with the United Nations Convention of Rights of People with Disabilities. The United Nations' Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities concluded its meetings with Armenia on March 30, providing its suggestions to Vigen Kocharyan, Deputy Minister of Justice of Armenia. Kocharyan said a draft law on the protection of persons with disabilities is now before Parliament, laying the ground for a transition to a rights-based model of disability and the participation of persons with disabilities in social and political life on an equal footing with others.

Armenia's ambassador to the US, Grigor Hovhannissian, speaking from his office in Washington recently, concurred with many of Buchanan's findings but added that the country has started addressing the issues, though

there is a long way to go.

Hovhannissian praised the international community for the detailed studies which have been conducted in the country. He said he found the Human Rights Watch full report to be a "moving and compelling account."

He noted that he is especially touched as in his "previous life" he dealt with humanitarian issues. Before joining the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hovhannissian served in different locations with the United Nations, including the Palestinian Territories, Jerusalem and Iraq, as well as serving in the office of the UN Commissioner for Refugees in Yerevan.

He agreed with Buchanan and HRW that the protection of children in orphanages could and should be improved.

"There have been tremendous strides to meet the standards" suggested, he said. He explained, however, that Armenia "inherited the Soviet system of institutionalized child care" and therefore it started off at a disadvantage both in terms of infrastructure and attitudes.

"The totalitarian heritage [from Soviet times] is based on the premises of isolation and taking children out of context to make society healthy," he said. "It is handling people with handicaps – or any type of dissidents – people outside the mainstream," the same way, which

is to edit them out of society.

He noted, "I had the opportunity to see some of the institutions first hand at age 17-18," he said, adding that he was affected by the way in which his "fellow countrymen" lived and the "total lack of resources."

Hovhannissian did defend the country to say that the number of children in institutions is "pretty small. There are fewer than 700 orphans," he said. Those included in that number are children that have no parents. There are, he said, about 3,700 children in institutions, a number that comprises "children with one parent as well as without any living parents [but a family member], in addition to children both with disabilities and without."

"Resources do exist but it is a matter of re-locating them from those closed institutions," Buchanan said. The parents, she said, need that money that is spent on institutions for "food support, transportation, services like rehabilitation, medical services, social work, etc."

"It is a matter of being sure they are set up," she said, as many of the families are financially and socially vulnerable.

Special Education Virtually Unavailable

Buchanan stressed the country needs "more inclusive education. Often, children with disabilities cannot be accommodated."

As things stand now, children with intellectual or psycho-social disability are often excluded, the report indicates.

Therefore, she noted, these disabled children, when they age out of institutions, because of a total lack of education, are virtually condemned to lead isolated, impoverished lives, one in which they cannot have any control over any decisions, including financial ones.

To make sure that disabled children have access to everything alongside their able-bodied peers is not only something Armenia is required to do, but "it is the humanitarian thing to do. It is good for society," Hovhannissian said.

He noted that while some schools in Armenia provide special needs education, they account for a fraction of the 1,400 schools in the country. He stressed that new special education teachers would need to be trained also to handle and help students who suffer from mental challenges and emotional difficulties.

In some cases where a school accepts a child who has a disability, one parent ends up having to stay with the child, Buchanan noted. "Parents stay with children in classrooms," she noted. "It should not be the responsibility of the parent to stay with the child" during the school day.

They may need to physically massage the child to ease their bodies or repeat the instructions of the teacher to try to make them understand.

Buchanan concurred, adding that existing attitudes need to change regarding children with disabilities, and that inclusive schools and families are the first and foremost ways to provide the best care. In addition, the community will see children who are different simply a part of society.

"A diverse peer set, parents seeing how children with disabilities are included in classrooms are key things," she said.

Otherwise, she said, myths and untruths about children with disabilities, such as that they are dangerous or that they pose health risks to others, can still continue.

She urged that the government provide "proactive messaging" and said that after talks with government officials, they indicated their support for HRW's findings.

Buchanan said they reassured her and her team that "there are equal rights for all."

"It is a long process and we have started," Hovhannissian concurred. He agreed that the entire system needs to change.

"We need to try to deinstitutionalize kids using schools," he said. "That is the next step."

Armenia should seek a higher level of development, he said, adding the country is "fully committed."

"It is a dramatic change [envisioned] and a massive effort," he said, noting the government has pledged its financial commitment.

"I spoke with our colleagues and there is an understanding and acceptance of the rights of children," he said.

He noted the deadline given by the United Nations for complying with the suggestions is 2021 and that Armenia intends to meet it.

"The Republic of Armenia was one of the early signatories to the charter on the protection of children's rights at the United Nations," Hovhannissian said.

Lack of Foster Care

One concern HRW wrote about is that almost all children who are considered orphans, whether because they are abandoned by one or both parents or have no one else, end up in orphanages rather than foster care. There are only about 25 foster families in the whole country. Adoption, be it domestically or internationally, is not encouraged nor made easy.

She added that the group urges the training of more foster families.

While the ambassador agreed the number of foster families should increase, "however equipped and dedicated they are, they don't replace [permanent] families."

"The findings are very productive. Some fundamentals [facts] are correct" and "we need to move to the next level to integrate the children," he said.

On a positive note, Buchanan said, the government has closed some orphanages and the overall number of children in institutions has decreased, but unfortunately the concentration of children with disabilities has increased, Buchanan said.

Said Buchanan "After we released our report, we met with all key ministers, including education and justice, as well as the Yerevan municipality, etc. and they are certainly aware of some of our conclusions."

She added, "There is still a lot of work to do, but we had a positive reception."

Minister of Education Levon Mkrtchyan, she said, released a statement that said parents are keeping children out of the education system.

"He misplaced the blame on parents rather than looking at what the government needs to be doing," Buchanan said.

"There are a lot of NGOs [non-governmental organizations] doing great work already on those issues," she added, recommending that the government start a constructive dialogue with local NGOs.

Hovhannissian admitted that in Armenia, the idea of adoption is not one that is readily embraced. "Public opinion is not that opposed to orphanages," he said. This, again, is a legacy of Soviet thought.

Buchanan said that one factor is that "adoption is underdeveloped domestically and certainly that of children with disabilities."

She also stressed there are parents who give up their children into institutions yet do not fully relinquish their parental rights. Therefore, the child cannot be adopted by other families and will be confined to institutions.

Hope Going Forward

"I am hopeful," Buchanan said. "I have a healthy dose of optimism for change. Hope translates into all this becoming reality."

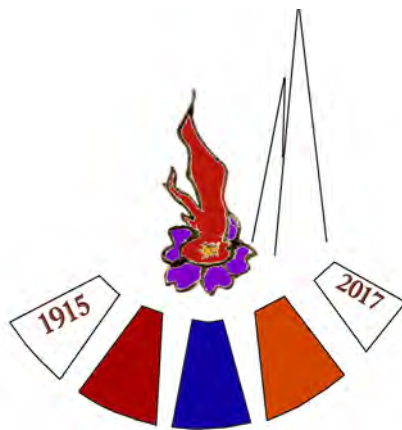
She added, "It is going to take very strong political will from the government to make it happen."

"We hoped our work will bolster and add a voice to those that are working. It is a matter of the government hearing it from a lot of different ones," she stressed, including disability rights and legal representation.

Other countries nearby, including Russia and Serbia, have the same issues and challenges, Buchanan added.

"Some fundamentals are correct and we should take those and move to the next level to integrate children," Hovhannissian said.

To access the report by HWR, visit (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/02/22/armenia-children-isolated-needlessly-separated-families>).



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at 617-722-2240 or at taylor.mccarthy@mahouse.gov

Logo by Jirair Hovsepian

Buses to the State House will leave from Watertown at 9 a.m. from St. James Church, 465 Mount Auburn Street, and St. Stephen's Church, 38 Elton Avenue. The buses will depart the State House at 1:15 p.m. and transport guests back to originating locations with an expected arrival in Watertown at approximately 2 p.m. The bus service is free, donated by the Knights of Vartan, Ararat Lodge #1.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Senators Ask for Investigation into Trump Dealings in Azerbaijan

WASHINGTON (New Yorker) – The ranking Democratic members of the Senate's Foreign Relations, Banking, and Judiciary committees have written a joint letter to several Trump Administration officials asking them to address the possibility that the Trump Organization violated several laws in its dealings in Azerbaijan. The concerns raised in the letter are based on an article I wrote in *The New Yorker* about the Trump International Hotel & Tower Baku, a project that was nearly completed but never opened.

By Adam Davidson

The letter, by Senators Sherrod Brown, of Ohio, Dianne Feinstein, of California, and Ben Cardin, of Maryland, was sent to the Attorney General, Jeff Sessions, the Treasury Secretary, Steven Mnuchin, and the FBI director, James Comey. The senators wrote, "It appears that the lack of due diligence by the Trump Organization described in the article exposed President Trump and his organization to notoriously corrupt Azerbaijani oligarchs, and may also have exposed the Trump Organization to the IRGC" – the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. "Even though the Trump Organization appears to have withdrawn from the Baku Tower deal, serious questions remain unanswered about the Trump Organization's potential criminal liability."

The article reports that the Trump Organization worked in partnership with companies run by Elton and Anar Mammadov on the Baku luxury hotel and residence, a project overseen by Ivanka Trump. Anar is the son of Ziya Mammadov, who was, until recently, the transportation minister of Azerbaijan. Elton was, at the time of the deal, a member of Azerbaijan's parliament. The U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act makes it a crime for American companies to provide benefit to foreign government officials in hopes of profiting from their power.

In their letter, the senators asked Sessions and Comey to assess whether the Trump Organization violated the law and whether it acted with "willful blindness," a legal term referring to a deliberate effort to avoid learning about potentially illicit activity.

The senators also asked Mnuchin to investigate "serious questions about whether the Trump Organization may have become entangled with an IRGC front organization in violation of U.S. sanctions." As the *New Yorker* article spells out, U.S. Embassy officials in Azerbaijan have expressed the belief that Ziya Mammadov had an ongoing business relationship with an Iranian construction company, Azarpasillo, which shows many of the hallmarks of being a front for the Revolutionary Guard. The senators asked the Treasury Secretary to work with the director of national intelligence to produce a briefing on the relationship between the Mammadov family and the Revolutionary Guard. The letter also asks for the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control to open an investigation into "whether or not the Trump Organization violated US sanctions law" by receiving funds from a group linked to the Revolutionary Guard.

The Trump Organization did not respond to a request for comment about this letter. However, its chief legal officer, Alan Garten, told *The New Yorker* earlier, "We had no equity. We didn't control the project. The flow of funds is in the wrong direction. We did not pay any money to anyone. Therefore, it could not be a violation of the F.C.P.A." At time of publication, representatives for the Republican committee chairs had yet to respond to the call for an investigation.



PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVIDE MONTELEONE FOR THE NEW YORKER
The Trump International Hotel & Tower Baku, a project overseen by Ivanka Trump on behalf of her father's company.

ACEF Announces Largest Distribution Payout in History

NEW YORK – The Board of Directors of the Armenian Church Endowment Fund (ACEF) met at the Diocesan Center on Friday, March 24, with Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presiding.

Board members analyzed strong 2016 portfolio returns and approved 2017 asset allocation

percentage points) and matched its longterm financial goal of returning inflation (CPI) plus 5 percent.

The board reviewed and agreed to the 2016 distribution to beneficiaries. The total distribution of \$4,189,360 is the largest in the 44-year



Melanie Dadourian and Gregory Zorthian

tions recommended by the Investment Committee. As of December 31, 2016, ACEF's portfolio returned a total of 7.1 percent for the calendar year, which exceeded its target benchmark (which returned 5.7 per-

centage points).

A total of \$2,586,038 in new donations was received in 2016. Melanie Dadourian and Gregory Zorthian were welcomed as new board members in 2016.

Holy Trinity Flock to Return to Their Sanctuary on Palm Sunday

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – "What better day to return to our beautiful Sanctuary than on Palm Sunday when we celebrate Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem," stated Fr. Vasken A. Kouzouian, pastor of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church. Since the beginning of January, church services have been held in the

Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall of the church complex as the Sanctuary had been undergoing refurbishment and painting.

The pastor and Parish Council invite parishioners and friends to join them on Palm Sunday, April 9, at 10 a.m., on the Garabed Baghdasar and Haiganoosh Hagopian Hollisian Plaza, weather permitting, for the beautiful Turnpatsek - Opening of the Doors Service for the return through the doors of the church after the reflective days of Lent. Normally conducted at the Altar with a drawn curtain, this service was originally meant to take place outside the door of the church.

Following the service, the Sunday School and Armenian School students, with palms, will lead the pastor, deacons, altar servers and the faithful back into the sanctuary for the first time since Armenian Christmas. Following the Divine Liturgy, the Holy Trinity ACYOA will host their traditional Palm Sunday Banquet.



The church's bronze doors

Imagine Armenia Forum in Boston

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – On May 20, for the first time in Boston, Repat Armenia Foundation, in cooperation with the Armenian Business Network, will host the "Imagine Armenia" forum to share the reasons for and the best ways to get engaged with Armenia.

During the forum, the Boston-based Armenian community will have the opportunity to learn about the experiences of different organizations/businesses, who have succeeded in Armenia. Representatives of these companies will share their tips for a strong start, vision of progress, as well as volunteer and professional opportunities for the youth to work and gain experience while they contribute to Armenia's development.

The keynote speaker of the forum will be Dr. Noubar Afeyan.

The forum will have two panel discussions. The first panel is titled "Because We Did," which will be about businesses, education, social initiatives and professional repatriation in Armenia. The moderator will be Avetik Chalabyan and the speakers/organizations are the following: Raffi Doudaklian - Tufenkian Foundation; Ani Sarkissian - ONEArmenia; Raffi Kassarian - Monitis / Repat Armenia Foundation; Tsoline Avedisian - Ginosi Apartels; Vartan Marshlyan - Repat Armenia and Magda Markosyan - MAROG Creative Agency.

The second panel, titled "Because You Can," will discuss the opportunities for young professionals to get involved with Armenia. The mod-

erator will be Vartan Marshlyan and the speakers/organizations are the following: Teny Avakian - Teach For Armenia; Linda Yepoyan - Birthright Armenia/Armenian Volunteer Corps; Arina Zohrabian - American University of Armenia; Araz Chiloyan - Birthright Volunteer / HDIF Volunteer; Tatev Babayan - Repat Armenia; Terez Sarkisyan - DEPOP Institute for Governance/ Birthright Volunteer and Aimee Keushguerian - Keush Wines.

The event will take place at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Room 10-250, 77 77 Massachusetts Ave. Start time is 2-6 p.m.

For questions or inquiries, contact promotion@repatarmenia.org



Dr. Noubar Afeyan

www.Efkere.com Documenting the history of Efkere, an Armenian village in central Turkey



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COMMUNITY NEWS

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Banner Unfurled at Bay Bridge to Commemorate Armenian Genocide

SAN FRANCISCO (*San Francisco Chronicle*) – Drivers headed into San Francisco over the Bay Bridge got a world history lesson without even asking on Monday, April 3, when a huge banner commemorating the 1915 Armenian Genocide was displayed above the mouth of the Treasure Island Tunnel.

For the third consecutive year, the 70-foot-by-10-foot banner was unfurled on the span about 9 a.m. to mark the anniversary of the genocide – a historical event that has yet to be recognized by many world leaders.

The “genocide is very personal to us. We are grandchildren and great-grandchildren of genocide survivors,” said Alex Bastian, a member of the Bay Area Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee. “It is something that has really wounded our soul, wounded our community, wounded our people.”

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Nearly 30,000 Armenians in the Bay Area contributed money for the hanging of the sign that read, “Armenian Genocide 1915” and “genocideeducation.org.”

“We want to have recognition for everyone coming across the bridge to understand our story,” said Kim Bardakian, also a member of the Bay Area Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee.

The banner will be in sight for westbound commuters on the bridge for the month of April.

For both Bardakian and Bastian, the banner is significant in holding world leaders accountable in recognizing the genocide.

An estimated 1.5 million people, nearly half the population of Armenia, were killed by the Ottoman Empire.

“The United States has, unfortunately, not acknowledged (the genocide) and that is why the recognition is something so near and dear to us,” said Bastian, who is also deputy chief of staff for the San Francisco district attorney’s office.

“We really feel very strongly that the recognition of the Armenian genocide is not something just for us, but something for all of humanity,” he added.



Professor Chilingarian to Speak about Armenia’s Scientific Strengths at Armenian Cultural Foundation

ARLINGTON, Mass. – Professor Ashot Chilingarian, the director of Armenia’s Cosmic Ray Division (CRD) and the Yerevan Physics Institute, renamed the A. Alikhanyan National Laboratory (AANL), the country’s leading scientific institution, will present an illustrated talk on Saturday, April 22, at 7 p.m. at the Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic St.

He will also offer comments on Armenia’s education system, which has suffered during the past few decades. His presentation will be in English.

In the aftermath of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the collapse of Armenia’s economy, funding for Armenian science nearly vanished. Previously science in Armenia was well-funded and Armenian physics institutions had highly qualified staffs and were well integrated with Soviet science.

Despite the lack of funding, world-class research continued at the Yerevan Physics Institute’s CRD. Not only were CRD’s high-altitude research stations kept running, but also two new scientific research directions were initiated in which CRD was a world leader. The worldwide network of SEVAN cosmic ray particle detectors was developed and deployed in five countries, making valuable contributions to Space Weather research. Negotiations are underway to install the next SEVAN node in the Czech Republic. Not only will this keep the development of scientific

instrumentation alive in Armenia, but it will also produce revenue; each SEVAN node costs \$25,000.

Eight years ago CRD scientists began research in a new exciting area – high-energy physics in the atmosphere. Observations at the Aragats Research Station detected hundreds of Thunderstorm Ground Enhancement (TGE) events – brief, very strong increases of radiation from the thunderclouds. Due to the sophisticated technical infrastructure at the Aragats Research Station atop Mt. Aragats, CRD was able to measure the TGE events in great detail, contributing greatly to the understanding of these phenomena. Research results were published in numerous high-ranking scientific journals and were reported at some of the largest scientific forums.

CRD’s permanent staff consists of approximately 50 scientists, engineers, technicians, and support personnel who provide 24 hours/day, 7 days/week continuous operation of CRD’s Aragats and Nor Amberd research stations. Local villagers also did what they could to support CRD’s research stations on Mt. Aragats, demonstrating the close ties between CRD’s scientists and the surrounding villages, the village schools, and relatives of CRD’s staff.

Chilingarian has authored or co-authored over 350 scientific research papers in the field of high-energy astrophysics, space weather, and more recently on the newly evolving field of high-energy physics in the earth’s atmosphere. This new focus includes research on poorly understood events such as the electrification of thunderclouds, the generation of high-energy particles from within thunderclouds, and lightning initiation. Five of CRD’s young scientists have conducted groundbreaking research in this field and have defended their PhD theses in recent years. As a major contributor to this field of research, CRD annually hosts the international Thunderstorms and Elementary Particle Acceleration (TEPA) conference at its Nor Amberd research station on Mt. Aragats.

A measure of the quality and relevance of scientific publications is the frequency with which such publications are cited by other research papers. Based on Armenia’s population, on a per-capita basis, citations of research papers from Armenia are among the



Professor Ashot Chilingarian, Director, AANL, head of Cosmic Ray Division

highest in the world - a testimony to the quality of Armenia’s talent and scientific research. Much of this is due to research conducted by the Cosmic Ray Division and the AANL.

Refreshments will be served after the presentation.

For more information call Dr. Ara Ghazarians at the ACF.



Prof. Ashot Chilingarian and graduate physics students, Artem Alikhanyan National Laboratory (AANL), Yerevan



Mt. Ararat from Aragats Cosmic Ray Observatory, Mt Aragats, 10,500 ft altitude



Armenian Heritage Cruise XX Delivers On Fun

CRUISE, from page 5

aboard the ship or one could just lay back and relax in the luxurious stateroom. Most spent the night dancing away until the wee hours of the morning to the sounds of Armenian music. During these Sea Days, there were Cultural Programs of Armenian interests. Wednesday evening there was an Armenian dinner along with complimentary wine. After dinner there was an ACAA Gala Cocktail Party sponsored by

pared by the ship.

Aruba is a gorgeous island full of colorful outdoor markets and historic sites. The day was spent relaxing and enjoying white sandy beaches or shopping in many of the Duty free stores. We are fortunate to enjoy this Caribbean beauty every year.

Curacao is a sophisticated Dutch island 35 miles off the coast of Venezuela, with its candy colored buildings Curacao looked like tropical



Dancing in the Caribbean

Travel Group International and the ACAA Armenian Cruise committee.

Friday morning Barbara Haroutunian and her committee organized the Armenian Festival Pool Party. Prizes were awarded for the best Armenian tri-color outfit red, blue, and orange. Along with face painting, Margo Kaftajian's dance class performed the Shourch Bar. The island of Labadee is on the north coast of Haiti and is privately owned by Royal Caribbean. At the end of this beautiful island the area was reserved exclusively for the Armenian Heritage guests where we enjoyed Armenian music, beautiful beaches, and an Armenian lunch pre-

Holland. Between the natural beauty of this island and the colonial treasures of its historic capital, Curacao is perhaps one of the wealthiest Caribbean destinations.

Bonaire is a "diver's paradise" and almost every day is perfect for diving and snorkeling. The island sits just 11 degrees North of the equator, where the sun shines for nearly 12 hours a day and the temperatures are in the 80's almost all year round. Each day there were speeches and programs about relevant Armenian topics, including :Cosmic Ray Division in Armenia presented by Anahid Yeremian, and a presentation by Ambassador Evans.



Among the speakers were Ambassador John Evans, center, and Dr. Raffy Hovanesian, right



Some of the many entertainers on board



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Arts & Living

Remembering the Armenian Genocide Through Survivor Memoirs and Historical Novels

By Alan Whitehorn

The Armenian Genocide and earlier massacres are defining aspects of the contemporary Armenian heritage and identity. By far the dominant literary mode of expression about the Armenian Genocide are those of survivor memoirs and historical novels, with the latter often greatly influenced by extended family histories. It is the literature of bearing witness and a key goal is to remember the Great Crime/Catastrophe. Lorne Shirinian's *Survivor Memoirs of the Armenian Genocide* (1999) was an early overview summary booklet of some of these works in English. More recently, pioneering academic volumes by Rubina Perroomian *The Armenian Genocide in Literature: Perceptions of Those Who Lived Through the Years of Calamity* (2012) and *The Armenian Genocide in Literature: The Second Generation Responds* (2015), with a forthcoming volume on the third generation in progress, provide a comprehensive account of Armenian writings on the massacres and 1915 genocide.

The first generation of genocide survivor authors had endured traumatic events and struggled to describe their horrific experiences. Many had little or no previous experience at literary writing, but given the terrible magnitude of what they had endured and witnessed, they felt an historic duty to pen personal accounts of what happened. Their primary audiences were immediate family members and later generations of Armenians. The authors not only sought to tell the family history to the next generation and the outside public, but also to combat ongoing Turkish denial and injustice. Many of these books were self-published. Sometimes the manuscripts remained in draft form, often untranslated into English, until significantly later. Even now, we do not have a full compendium list of these works in English, let alone Armenian and other languages. Nevertheless, these early accounts provided an important foundation and inspiration for later generations growing up in the diaspora. They also ensured that the mass deportations and massacres did not become a "forgotten genocide."

Amongst the memoirs printed in English, two of the most famous were penned early on within several years of each other in the United States. Genocide survivor Arshaluys Martikian/Aurora Mardiganian's autobiography *Ravished Armenia* (1918) was serialized in newspapers, then was turned into a popular book, and shortly thereafter became, what was probably, Hollywood's first genocide film. Sadly, the film only exists in fragments and in script form. American Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau's witness memoir *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (1918), also drawing upon consular reports, provided detailed accounts of the Turkish government's mass deportations and killings of the Armenians. It also noted American efforts to stop the Young Turk perpetrators and provide urgent assistance to the victims. *Grigoris Balakian's Armenian Golgotha: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide* (2009) is an epic 500-page account by a distinguished Armenian clergyman. While it was first published in Armenian in two volumes in 1922 and 1959, it was not available in English for almost nine decades. The lack of early translation into English was and remains a major challenge, preventing many memoirs from achieving wider readership sooner.

see REMEMBERING, page 15



Arlington watercolorist Mary Hilt poses before two of the genocide survivor portraits.

Award-Winning Artist to Hold State House Exhibit in Commemoration Of Armenian Genocide

BOSTON – Nationally exhibited, award-winning artist and Arlington native, Mary Hilt will be featuring a collection of her watercolor portraits titled, "Who Today Remembers? Portraits of Armenian Genocide Survivors" at a solo exhibit April 10 – April 17 at the Massachusetts State House, 24 Beacon St., 4th floor outside the House Gallery. The exhibit is free and open to the public during regular State House hours, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday – Friday. An artist reception will be held on Wednesday, April 12 from 3 to 4 p.m.

The exhibit commemorates the 102nd anniversary of the genocide of the Armenians by the Turkish government during World War I. In 1994, as part of a community history project done in conjunction with the Armenian Museum of America in Watertown, Hilt, along with a videographer, met with actual survivors



Bertha Dulgarian – Survivor of the Armenian Genocide; RIGHT: Survivor of the Desert March

of the Armenian Genocide who had settled in Watertown, Belmont and other surrounding cities in Massachusetts to interview them about their individual experiences.

"As the survivors began to share their stories, their lives became written on their faces," said Hilt. Hilt captured the images in photographs and over the past twenty years has been both inspired and challenged to bring their photographs to life. Last year, Hilt exhibited her watercolor portraits of the survivors at a solo exhibit at the museum.

The name of the exhibit, "Who Today Remembers?" is based on the infamous question asked in 1939 by Adolf Hitler, "Who today remembers the extermination of the Armenians?" Hilt's exhibit has ensured through her haunting collection of portraits that the voices, faces, and stories of many who survived the Armenian Genocide will never be forgotten. Each portrait tells a different story of not only unimaginable cruelty and horror suffered at the hands of the Turkish government

see EXHIBIT, page 13

Fresno Armenian Community to Host 'Women of 1915'

FRESNO – Central Valley audiences will get a chance to view the award winning documentary "Women of 1915," highlighting the various heroic and humanitarian roles played by women during the Armenian Genocide. The one-time showing will take place on Sunday April 30 at the Leon S. and Pete Peters Educational Center located in the west end of Save Mart Center. A reception will begin at 1:00pm, with screening to follow at 1:30pm. Filmmaker Bared Maronian will be on hand to answer questions after the film.

The documentary has received the Armin T. Wegner Humanitarian Award as well as three awards, including Best Documentary, at the Canadian Pomegranate Film Festival. Maronian also earned his fifth regional Emmy nomination as director of the film. In recent years, The Beirut native has directed and produced numerous works such as "The Wall of Genocide," "Orphans of the Genocide" and "Komitas Hairig," about the Genocide and related topics. *Women of 1915* focuses on the efforts of both Armenian and non-Armenian women, including poet and political activist Zabel Yessayan and American Red Cross founder Clara Barton.

The event is sponsored by the Fresno State Armenian Studies Program, the Women's League of the Charlie Keyan Armenian Community School, the local chapters of the Armenian Relief Society, the Armenian Cultural Conservancy of Fresno, and the local branch of the Hamazkin Armenian Educational & Cultural Society. Admission is \$25 in advance; \$35 at the door. For tickets, visit www.itsmyseat.com/freswmn1915.

ADAA, Antaeus Theatre Company Join Forces for Reading Events in Glendale

GLENDALE – The Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance (ADAA) is happy to announce two nights of events to be produced in conjunction with Antaeus Theatre Company at their new location, The Kiki and David Gindler Performing Arts Center in Glendale.

The first night of readings will be at 7 p.m. on Sunday, April 23 and will consist of three 20-minute excerpts from the finalist plays of the Karen Kondazian Award for Armenian Stories, followed by the announcement of the contest winner with a panel discussion and a reception afterwards. The finalists are "Ermeni" by Eric Sirakian, "Forgotten Bread" by Sevan Kaloustian Greene and "Wishing and Flesh" by Susan Kelejian.

The second event at 8 p.m., Monday, April 24, will consist of three 20-minute excerpts from the finalist plays of The Saroyan/Paul Human Rights Playwriting Prize. This will be followed by the announcement of the contest winner and a reception. The finalists are: "The Good Minister from Harare" by June Carryl, "Runaway Home" by Jeremy J. Kamps and "The Madres" by Stephanie Alison Walker.

Both readings will be produced by Antaeus Theatre Company and the ADAA.

The Saroyan/Paul Human Rights Playwriting Prize is sponsored by the William Saroyan Foundation and the Lillian and Varnum Paul Fund at the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America and administered by The Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance.

The Karen Kondazian Award for Armenian Stories is sponsored by Karen Kondazian and administered by ADAA.

Reservations for the readings are limited and are on a first-come basis. For information, email ADAA at armeniandrama@gmail.com, or visit www.armeniandrama.org.



ARTS & LIVING

ALMA Continues Collaboration with Museum of Fine Arts in 'Words' Exhibit

WATERTOWN – Pieces from the collection of the Armenian Museum of America (ALMA) have been making their way around to numerous exhibits in Boston over the past few months.

At the end of last year, ALMA was one of 19 institutions that took part in the "Beyond Words" exhibit, and this spring it has loaned an object from its Genocide collection to the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA).

This spring the Armenian Museum has an artifact included in the MFA exhibit, "I Must Tell You What I Saw: Objects of Witness and Resistance." Officially open to the public on March 30, this special installation in the Linde Family Wing includes objects and works of art that bear witness to the destruction and silencing of specific people groups, through violence, genocide, persecution and fear.

A twentieth-century chalk mold chosen from the Armenian Museum's collection is one of nine objects featured in the exhibit. Also included are: a painting by Armenian Genocide survivor Arshile Gorky, an ancient Assyrian relief depicting the deportation of the Babylonians, J.M.W. Turner's "Slave Ship" (1840), and a 19th-century Chinese vase that was painted over during the Chinese Cultural Revolution to protect it from destruction.

All the objects in the display are hauntingly connected by an excerpt from "The Dance" by Siamanto (Atom Yarjanian, 1910), an Armenian poet executed in a purge of intellectuals during the Armenian Genocide:

"Don't be afraid; I must tell you what I saw so people will understand the crimes men do to men"

The chalk mold in the exhibit on loan from ALMA was originally owned by Krikor Ouzounian, who persuaded the Ottoman army to spare him and his family during the Armenian massacres of 1894-96 by offering to make chalk for the Turkish Army. Ouzounian



Memories Unearthed

them as a reminder of their former life and the means by which they were able to escape execution.

In conjunction with this exhibit in the Linde Family Wing is "Memories Unearthed: The Lodz Ghetto Photographs of Henryk Ross."

Second in Jewish population only to the

Nazi-regime controlled departments running the city.

Unofficially, and at great risk to himself, Ross was able to capture more than the bureaucratic ID cards and propaganda shots that the Nazis had ordered. Through his lens, Ross captured the brutal everyday realities, including starvation and hard labor, of life in a Hitler-designed ghetto. In an effort to preserve his photographs, Ross buried the negatives in 1944. One of 867 survivors, Ross returned after the liberation of Lodz by Soviet troops to unearth his memories.

According to the MFA, "Memory

Unearthed' presents more than 200 of Ross's powerful photographs, comprising a moving, intimate visual record of the Holocaust. The images are accompanied by artifacts, including Ross's own identity card, and ghetto notices. An album of contact prints, handcrafted by Ross and shown in its entirety as the centerpiece of the exhibition, serves as a summation of his memories, capturing his personal narrative."

On display until July 30, these powerful MFA exhibits are a great visit choice during the month of April, which is Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month.



Chalk Mold

built a secret room when his factory expanded where he hid his family at the onset of the Armenian Genocide in 1915.

Ultimately, Ouzounian perished during the Genocide, but his wife and other family members survived. When they were able to escape to the United States, they brought the chalk mold with

Warsaw ghetto in German-occupied Europe, the Lodz ghetto in Poland was inhabited by more than 160,000 people when it was first occupied by German forces in 1939. Henryk Ross was one of those confined to the ghetto in 1940 and, as a photojournalist, was given role of bureaucratic photographer in one of the

Award-Winning Artist to Hold State House Exhibit in Commemoration of Armenian Genocide

EXHIBIT, from page 12

during the Armenian Genocide, but also one of courage, survival, and triumph of the human spirit. Hilt, who works by creating a mood or a story, said, "I wanted to make the pain they suffered as plain as possible in each portrait. I also wanted to tell an uplifting story, alongside the story of horror."

Hilt, a Signature Member of the New England Watercolor Society, one of the oldest and most prestigious watercolor societies in America, recently received the Marshall Joyce Memorial Award for her portrait of Bertha - Survivor of the Armenian Genocide at the New England Watercolor Society's Signature Members Show held in January at the Guild of Boston Artists.

Hilt painted the portraits in watercolor which was a surprise to many of her colleagues. "People often ask how I could have painted these portraits in watercolor when this subject matter is often heavy, intense and serious. Watercolor, through a process, can be just as dramatic as the subject of the painting," she said.

Hilt's work has been displayed all over the country. She has exhibited in such venues as the Allied Artist Show at the Arts Club in New York City, the New England Watercolor Society North American Open, and the Manheim Gallery in Cottonwood/Sedona, Arizona.

Hilt currently teaches art courses to special needs students at Arlington's Young Adult Vocational Program. "It's very rewarding teach-



Sarkis Bazarian

ing the students to express themselves and tell their own stories through art," said Hilt. "Art affects us in many ways. Sometimes it makes us sad, or it can happily transport us for a while. For me, art has great meaning and is inspirational."



ARTS & LIVING

Hrant Dink Oratorio Performed at St. Vartan Cathedral

NEW YORK – On Saturday, March 25, some 700 people gathered at St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral for a singular musical event in remembrance of the late journalist Hrant Dink on the 10th anniversary of his assassination.

The occasion also marked the 90th anniversary of the Constantinople Armenian Relief Society (CARS), which organized the concert and its related events.

The evening began with a grand choral concert piece by composer Majak Tshigian and lyricist Bercuhi Berberyan. The *Hrant Dink Contemporary Oratorio* was performed under the direction of Kris D. Kalfayan, with soloists Karin Cubukcuyan Bozkurt, Elie Berberian and Bogos Yeghazar.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), presided and made remarks about the legacy of Hrant Dink. "It is incumbent upon us to recommit ourselves to continuing the mission of Hrant Dink," Barsamian said. "That mission is to create awareness in Turkish society about the Armenian Genocide, and to seek ways to bring about a peaceful reconciliation with Turkey."

The Primate said that Hrant Dink succeeded in reaching Turkey's intellectuals and members



Bogos Yeghazar

you, our cultural organizations continue to serve our people in the diaspora and in our homeland. You are a true servant of the Armenian Church and an active participant in the life of the Eastern Diocese."

Barsamian expressed his appreciation to CARS for their work in the Armenian community. He recalled how he came to know the lead-

ers of the organization decades ago, when he first arrived in the United States as a young clergyman.

"I know CARS continues to carry out its mission with passion and dedication, and it gives me great joy to see the fruits of their labor," he said. "I congratulate Tamar for this well deserved honor."

CARS was founded in Istanbul (Constantinople) in the late 1920s to help the city's Soorp Pirgich Armenian Hospital, and soon expanded its mission to assist Armenian refugees in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide. In the wake of the 1988 earthquake in Armenia, CARS was active in the relief effort and later channeled its energy to rebuilding independent Armenia.

"The fact that CARS is still around after 90 years of functional existence and beyond the scope of its initial purpose," Kayserian said.

She added, "We are tremendously pleased with the outcome of this memorial concert, a huge crowd and a great enthusiasm."

The March 25 event was organized by the Constantinople Armenian Relief Society with the participation of 13 cultural, educational, and philanthropic organizations: AGBU Performing Arts, Knights and Daughters of Vartan, Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York, Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society, Armenian Missionary Association of America, Armenian-American Support and Educational Center, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Gomidas Choir, Esayan-Getronagan Alumni, Tibrevank Alumni, Armenian American Youth Center, Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America, and Armenian Radio Hour of New Jersey.



Elie Berberian

of the media, but noted that the seeds he planted must continue to be nourished by the Armenian community.

He referred to Raket Dink's message, which Dink's widow issued on the 10th anniversary of his assassination in January, in which she quotes from the Gospel of Matthew: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

A dinner followed in Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium, where some 450 people gathered to mark CARS' milestone. The organization's president, Tamar Kayserian, was honored with a Pontifical encyclical of blessing from Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians.

"For more than 10 years you have been leading CARS," the letter from the catholicos said. "Thanks to the tireless dedication of people like



Karin Cubukcuyan Bozkurt



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17th Anniversary





Since its inception in 2001, TCA's Sponsor a Teacher program has raised over \$607,000 and reached out to 6,027 teachers and school workers in Armenia & Karabagh.



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Yes, I want to sponsor teachers in Armenia and Karabagh to continue helping them to educate the children, our future leaders. I would like to have the teacher's name and address.

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5326 Valverde, Houston, TX 77056
Your donation is Tax Deductible.

Remembering the Armenian Genocide Through Survivor Memoirs and Historical Novels

REMEMBERING, from page 12

Amongst the memoirs available in English (listed by year of publication) are the following: clergyman Abraham H. Hartunian's *Neither to Laugh Nor to Weep: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide* (1968). Other memoirs include Kerop Bedoukian's *The Urchin: An Armenian Escape* (1978) reprinted as *Some of Us Survived* (1979), Alice Muggerditchian Shipley's *We Walked, Then We Ran* (1983), John (Hovhannes) Minassian's *Many Hills to Climb* (1986), Hovhannes Mugrditchian's *To Armenians with Love* (1986), Bertha Nakshian Ketchian's *In the Shadow of the Fortress: The Genocide Remembered* (1988), John Yervant's (Yervant Kouyoumjian) *Needles, Thread and Button* (1988), Ramela Martin's *Out of Darkness* (1989), Ephraim K. Jernazian's *Judgment Unto Truth: Witnessing the Armenian Genocide* (1990), Armen Anush's *Passage Through Hell: A Memoir* (2007), Shahan Derderian's *Death March* (2008), Yervant Odian's *Accursed Years: My Exile and Return From Der Zor, 1914-1919* (2009), and Karnig Panian's *Goodbye, Antoura: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide* (2015).

The next generations' writings were influenced by not only the 1915 genocide, but also their lives and experiences with their dual identities of emigre/immigrant family members in the global Diaspora. Their writings reveal that the wounds of genocide are deep and span several generations. The Diaspora writers described their alienation and profound separation from their ancestral homeland and from the many dead and displaced kin. Existential angst was a frequent and important theme.

From the 1960s onwards, particularly following the 50th anniversary in 1965 of the Armenian Genocide, awareness and writing on the subject increased. A growing number of Diaspora writers sought to explore their roots and tell of their fellow Armenians' tragic fate. The Greek-American Elia Kazan's *America America* (1961) was a novel, screenplay, and then acclaimed epic film that describes the terrible plight of the Christian Armenian and Greek minorities in the Ottoman Empire. Peter Sourian's novel *The Gate* (1965) also focuses on the Armenian Genocide. Michael Arlen's *Passage to Ararat* (1975) addresses the challenges of assimilation, the quest for identity and tells of an odyssey of ethnic self-discovery. Peter Najarian's *Voyages* (1971) and *Daughters of Memory* (1986) also recounts the Armenian story and the quest for identity in the Diaspora. David Kherdian outlines his mother's life in *The Road from Home: The Story of an Armenian Girl* (1979). Carol Edgarian's *Rise the Euphrates* (1994) shows that later generations of American-born Armenians continue to suffer from the lasting effects of genocide. In *Vergeen: A Survivor of the Armenian Genocide* (1996), Mae Derdarian confronts Turkish revisionist denial of the genocide. Dora Sakayan's edited and translated her grandfather's journal in *An Armenian Doctor in Turkey: Garadabed Hatcherian: My Smyrna Ordeal of 1922* (1997). Peter Balakian's award-winning and highly influential *Black Dog of Fate* (1998) outlines a complex existential journey that commences in the comfortable suburbs of America, but gradually reveals a past history of increasing layers

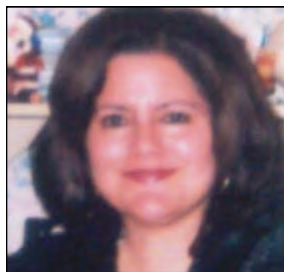
of violence and suffering of the Ottoman Armenian extended family. It resembles the descent into deeper levels of hell.

The dawn of the 21st century saw a continuation in literary writings on the Armenian Genocide. The potential list is substantial. Amongst the volumes are the following: Agop Hacikyan's *A Summer without Dawn* (2000) recounts his growing awareness of the magnitude of the genocide. The novel *Lines in the Sand: Love, Tragedy, and the Armenian Genocide* (2001) is by the genocide documentary film-maker Thomas Ohanian. Vickie Smith Foston's *Victoria's Secret: A Conspiracy of Silence* (2001) describes how her Armenian ancestors fled the Hamidian massacres of the 1890s. *Three Apples Fell from Heaven* (2001) is inspired by Micheline Aharonian Marcom's discovery of her grandmother's life story. Theodore Kharperian's *Hagop: An Armenian Genocide Survivor's Journey to Freedom* (2003) is an account of his father's ordeals. Sara Chitjian transcribed, translated and published her father's drafts of his memoirs in *A Hair's Breadth From Death: The Memoirs of Hampartzoum Mardiros Chitjian* (2003). Antonia Arslan's *Skylark Farm* (2004) is a historical novel about her family's suffering during the genocide and was later turned into the film "The Lark Farm". Henri Verneuil's (Ashod Malikian) *Mayrig* (2006) is a historical novel about an Armenian family's difficult conditions living in forced exile. The book was later turned into a film. Margaret Adjemian Ahmert's *The Knock at the Door* (2007) is the story of the survival of Margaret's mother amidst the mass deportations and massacres. Marcella Polain's *The Edge of the World* (2007) is a "fictionalized autobiography" that describes the fragmentation of an Armenian family by the genocide and forced exile.

In the lead up to 2015, the 100th memorial year of the genocide, an increased number of volumes appeared from another generation of Diaspora writers. Chris Bohjalian's *The Sandcastle Girls* (2012) is a romantic novel set amidst the genocide. Dana Walrath's *Like Water on a Stone* (2014), echoing a Greek tragedy's epic poem, tells a harrowing literary tale of two children surviving the ordeals of the genocide. Drawing upon his relatives' earlier attempts, Armen T. Marsoobian pens a family history in *Fragments of a Lost Homeland: Remembering Armenia* (2015). Maral Boyadjian's *As the Poppies Bloomed* (2015) is a romantic novel set amidst the genocide. Dawn Anahid MacKeen's *The Hundred Year Walk: An Armenian Odyssey* (2016) involves the intertwined autobiographies of a genocide survivor and that of his granddaughter, who retraces his perilous journey a century later.

The different generations of memoirs and historical novels on the Armenian Genocide reveal the ongoing suffering of Armenians throughout the world. The genocide has become a key defining part of the Armenian identity. As such, Armenian authors, even a century later, feel compelled to write accounts of the Armenian Genocide and, in so doing, ensure that it does not become a "forgotten genocide."

(Alan Whitehorn is the editor of The Armenian Genocide: The Essential Reference Guide.)



Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Lemon Chicken and Spinach Soup with Mint

INGREDIENTS

2 1/2 cups cooked, skinless chicken breast, shredded
8 cups low sodium chicken broth or turkey broth (more to taste)
2 cups wide egg noodles
1 cup fresh spinach (torn to about half-dollar size)
2 medium carrots, diced
2 stalks celery, diced
1/2 medium onion, diced
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons fresh mint, chopped
1 teaspoon Kosher or sea salt
1/2 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon each paprika, lemon pepper, and ground sage
Pinch each of oregano and thyme
Juice of one large lemon and zest
1/2 cup flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
Fresh chopped mint as garnish
Lemon slices as garnish
Olive oil

PREPARATION:

In a large soup pot, bring the chicken or turkey broth to a full boil; add the shredded chicken, carrots, celery, onion, garlic, fresh mint, spices, the juice of one lemon and the zest, and stir a few times until the soup boils again. Reduce heat to medium, cover, and cook for 25-35 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add the egg noodles, spinach, and parsley 10-12 minutes before serving, and stir. Garnish soup with chopped mint, thin slices of lemon, or a drizzle with olive oil, if desired. Serves 4-6.

*Christine's recipes have been published in the Fresno Bee, Sunset and Cooking Light Magazines, and at <http://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/> <http://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/>

*For Christine's recipes that have been published in Sunset and Cooking Light Magazines, go to: <http://www.myrecipes.com/search/site/Datian> <http://www.myrecipes.com/search/site/Datian>

Saturday, June 3, 2017
at 8:00 PM
Symphony Hall, Boston

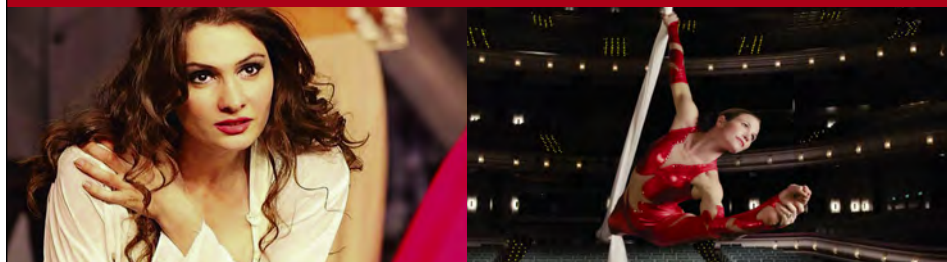
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66th Annual Armenian Night at the Pops

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with **BOSTON POPS ORCHESTRA - KEITH LOCKHART**, conductor
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ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

CALIFORNIA

MAY 27 — Broadway in LA ... Armenian International Women's Association-L.A. Affiliate present an Evening with Andrea Martin hosted by Seth Rudetsky, at El Portal Theater, North Hollywood; one-night comedy show honoring AIWA's 25 plus years. 7:00 pm. Reception and Armenian tapas; 8:30 p.m. Performance, followed by Dessert and coffee with the stars. Tickets: \$150; sponsorships available. For info and reservations call (909)-625-3413 or (310) 472-2454.

CONNECTICUT

APRIL 22 — Connecticut Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. Connecticut State Capitol, House Chamber. 11:00 a.m. Keynote speaker will be The Hon. John Marshall Evans, former U.S. Ambassador to Armenia. Reception in the Hall of Flags, following the commemoration.

FLORIDA

JANUARY 20-28, 2018 —Armenian Heritage Cruise XXI 2018, 8 night Caribbean Cruise aboard Royal Caribbean's Freedom of The Seas. Fort Lauderdale to: Labadee-Private beach Island / Puerto Rico / St. Kitts / St. Maarten. Cabin Rates from \$919 based on Double Occupancy, including Port Charges and ACAA registration fee. Government taxes of \$108.36 are additional. Armenian Entertainment, Armenian Cultural Presentations, Armenian Festival Day, Tavlou & Belote Tournaments and much more. Call TRAVELGROUP INTERNATIONAL @1- 561-447-0750 or 1-866-447-0750 Ext. 108. Ask for Kellie.

MASSACHUSETTS

APRIL 9 — Sixth Annual Reconfiguration of the Abstract Sculpture, a split rhomboid dodecahedron, made of steel and aluminum, Sunday morning, 7:30 - 11:45 a.m. A crane will lift and pull apart the two halves of the Abstract Sculpture, a split rhomboid dodecahedron made of steel and aluminum, and reshape the two halves into a new and different sculptural shape. The annual configuration of the Abstract Sculpture is symbolic of all who were pulled away from their country of origin and came to these shores, establishing themselves in new and different ways.

APRIL 9 — Concert at 3 p.m. at the Winchester Community Music School (407 Highland Ave.) with a pre-concert reception at 2:30; the program features a performance of the String Quartet no. 1 in C Minor by composer Vartan Aghababian; the work employs Armenian church hymns, religious chants and folk melodies throughout. Performing the piece will be the faculty quartet of the Winchester Community Music School comprising Leah Bartell, Judith Lee, Noralee Walker and Pamela Ambrose. Aghababian will speak about the work before the performance and admission is free.

APRIL 15 — The Armenian Museum of America Film Screening: "The Destruction of Memory," co-sponsored by the Armenian Museum of America and the Harvard University Semitic Museum. 2 p.m. Film screening will be followed by a panel discussion with film director Tim Slade, Andras Riedlmayer of Harvard University, and Joseph Greene, deputy director and curator of the Semitic Museum. This is a free Museum event.

APRIL 17 — Monday, 7 p.m.; Panel discussion on Lightning, Climate Change and Other Exciting Scientific Challenges featuring Prof. Ashot Chilingarian, Director of the Yerevan Physics Institute and its Cosmic Ray Division (CRD), two experts from MIT, two from UNH and one from the CRD. To be held at MIT, 70 Memorial Drive, Building E51, Room 315. For more information contact Alisa Stepanian at asteoanian@aol.com or 617-

501-1215. Admission is free."

APRIL 20 — Thursday, 10 a.m., in front of the Peabody City Hall located at 24 Lowell St., a flag-raising ceremony will be held to commemorate the Armenian Genocide. Led by Mayor Edward A. Bettencourt and the family of late Mayor Peter Torigian. After the Armenian and American National Anthems, the ceremony will continue inside. The keynote speaker will be Ann Goolkasian O'Donnell. Her memoir, *Holding the Armenian Genocide Up to the Light*, appears in the spring issue of *American Ancestors Magazine*. Prayers will be led by Rev. Khachatur Kesablian of Saints Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church of Chelmsford. All are invited.

APRIL 21 — Annual Armenian Genocide Commemoration at the Massachusetts State House at 10:30 a.m. Keynote speaker, musical program, reception to follow. Free transportation will be available from Watertown.

APRIL 22 — A Prayer Service for the Armenian Community. An Ecumenical Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, hosted by His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios and the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Boston. With the participation of His Eminence Abp. Khajag Barsamian - Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), His Eminence Abp. Oshagan Choloyan - Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Armenian Catholic Eparchy of the United States and Canada, and the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America. 2 p.m. Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral of New England. 514 Parker Street, Boston.

APRIL 22 — "Armenian Science and Science Education: Scientific Research in Armenia - Armenia's Young Scientists" presented by Professor Ashot Chilingarian. Learn about the future of science and science education, its promises and struggles. Sponsored by Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA), Armenian Cultural Foundation and NAASR. 7 p.m. Free and open to public. Refreshments provided. For info Alisa Stepanian at asteoanian@aol.com or 617-501-1215.

APRIL 22 — Annual Procession and Raising of the Armenian Flag at Lowell City Hall in commemoration of the 102nd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Procession to be led by the Lowell Armenian-American Veterans Honor Guard. Participants should meet at the corner of Merrimack and John Streets in Lowell at 9:30 a.m. Sponsored by the Armenian National Committee, Merrimack Valley (ANCMV) with the participation of all area Armenian Churches and Organizations.

APRIL 23 — 102nd Armenian Genocide Commemoration. Hosted by the Massachusetts Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee. The program will focus on four pillars; Art, Service, Science, and Commerce. Open to the public. Armenian Heritage Park on the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy at 3 p.m. Guests will include Middlesex County Peter Koutoujian, editor and publisher Judith Saryan, and more. Performances by Sayat Nova Dance Company and violinist Sammy Andonian.

APRIL 23 — Former U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, John M. Evans, Author of *Truth Held Hostage*, will speak at Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 12:15 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. For Feast of the Holy Martyrs of the Armenian Genocide, Holy Trinity Church is honored to have former Ambassador Evans whose ethics and principles enabled him to voice the words "Armenian Genocide." His book, *Truth Held Hostage*, is being hailed as the most important work about the Armenian Genocide by a U.S. diplomat since Ambassador Morgenthau's story in 1918. All welcome to attend. Complimentary light luncheon will be served. For further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632.

APRIL 28 — ArmComedy benefit featuring the comedy duo of Narek Margaryan and Sergey Sargsyan, Winchester City Hall, 71 Mount Vernon St., Winchester, Co-hosted by Armenia Tree Project and Armenian

Assembly of America. Reception 7 p.m., Showtime 8 p.m. Tickets are available online at www.ArmeniaTree.org/ArmComedy. First-ever U.S. performances in Boston (April 28), Glendale (May 4) and San Francisco (May 6).

APRIL 30 — The Armenian Museum of America Concert: Spring of Music Featuring Narine Ojakhyan, soprano; Thomas Shahbaghyan, violin; Levon Markosyan, cello; and Prof. Gregory Chaverdian, piano Program of Armenian and Classical Music and Songs. Sunday, 2 p.m., co-sponsored by the Composer's Union of Armenia. Funded by the Dadourian Foundation. Open to the public.

APRIL 30 — Lunch with Boston Celtics' Legend M.L. Carr, 12:15 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 12:15 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Sunday. The second in a series of events celebrating books and courage and legends, Boston Celtics' Legend M.L. Carr who will share his inspiring life story. All welcome to attend. For further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632.

MAY 4 — Book presentation by Nora Nercessian of The City of Orphans, on Gyumri Near East Relief orphanage after WWI. Sponsored by the Daughters of Vartan, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Tekeyan Cultural Association, Armenian International Women's Association and National Association for Armenian Studies and Research. 7 p.m. Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Complimentary admission.

MAY 6 — Celebrate Public Art! Park's Abstract Sculpture & Labyrinth during ArtWeek Boston. Join us on Saturday, 1:00 p.m. World Labyrinth Day: Walk as One in Peace & Harmony. At 12:45 pm, introduction to walking a labyrinth. 1:30 pm Reception to View the Abstract Sculpture. 2017 Configuration. Remarks: Jared Bowen WGBH Executive Arts Editor and Host, Open Studio. Tea & Desserts hosted by MEM Tea Imports & Eastern Lamejun Bakers

MAY 13 — Mother's Day Dance Featuring Tigran Asatryan & Band! To be held on Saturday, Hosted by The Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe ACYOA. Proceeds to benefit brand new Family & Life Center, 1280 Boston Rd, Haverhill, \$100 - VIP with Meet & Greet at 7 p.m., \$75 - General Mezze & Cash Bar, \$40, Students Under 24 - Standing Room. For reservations, please contact HyePointeACYOA@gmail.com or call Mike at 617-240-8266

MAY 15 — St. James Armenian Church of Watertown 18th Annual Open Golf Tournament. Monday, Oakley Country Club, Watertown. Register early.

MAY 19-20 — Armenian Memorial Church Fair, Friday 5-8 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., kebab dinners served Friday and Saturday (starting at 11:30 am). For info: Armenian Memorial Church, 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown 617-923-0498

MAY 25 — The Armenian Museum of America, Concert: John Hodian and Epiphany 3, featuring new blends of Armenian music from touring family trio, John Hodian, Bet Williams and Jack Hodian. Thursday, at 8 p.m. The group will perform music blending ancient and modern cultures and musical styles. Funded by the Dadourian Foundation. Concert open to the public.

JUNE 9 — Let's Party! At the KITCHEN, Boston Food Market — Benefit for the Park's Care in partnership with the Trustees of Reservations, Boston Food Market, with chefs presenting signature dishes we love and the generosity of so many, all coming together at the KITCHEN to support the Armenian Heritage Park's Endowed Fund for Year Round Care. 7-10 p.m. Advance reservations required. Space is limited. To receive the e-invite, please email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

JUNE 17 — The Society of Istanbul Armenian's of Boston will Honor Rev. Arakel Aljanian as the Father of the Year. Saturday at 7 p.m. Dinner at St. James Armenian Church Hall, Watertown. Donation \$50. For Tickets, call Krikor Shaboian at 617-489-0346.

continued on next page

TIMES SQUARE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE COMMEMORATION | SUNDAY APRIL 23, 2pm



ARTS & LIVING

Tiniest Patients with Biggest Problems Saved by Dr. Kris Guleserian

DALLAS – What is it like to hold the beating heart of a two-day-old child in your hand? What is it like to counsel distraught parents as they make some of the most difficult decisions of their lives?

Noted pediatric heart surgeon Dr. Kristine Guleserian has opened up her OR, and her career, to author Mark Oristano to create *Surgeon's Story: Inside OR-6 With One of America's Top Pediatric Heart Surgeons*.

Guleserian's life, training and work are discussed in detail, framed around the incredibly dramatic story of a heart transplant operation for a 2-year old girl whose own heart was rapidly dying. Oristano takes readers inside the operating room to get a first-hand look at pediatric heart surgeries most doctors in America would never attempt.

That's because Guleserian is recognized as one of the top pediatric heart surgeons in America, one of a very few who have performed a transplant on a one-week-old baby. Guleserian provided her expertise, and Oristano furnished his writing skills, to produce *A Surgeon's Story*.

at Children's Medical Center.

"We hear a lot about malpractice and failures in medical care," says Oristano, "but I want my readers to know that parts of the American health care system work brilliantly. And our health care system will work even better if more young women would enter science and medicine and experience the type of success Dr. Guleserian has attained."

Readers will find all the drama, intensity, humor and compassion that they enjoy in their favorite fictionalized medical TV drama, but the actual accounts in *Surgeon's Story* are even more compelling. One of the key characters in the



Dr. Kristine Guleserian, Author Mark Oristano



As preparation to write this stirring book, Oristano spent hours inside the operating room at Children's Medical Center in Dallas watching Guleserian perform actual surgeries that each day were life or death experiences. Readers will be with her on her rounds, meeting with parents, or in the Operating Room for a heart transplant.

Oristano is a successful sportscaster and photographer and has made several appearances on stage as an actor. He wrote his first book *A Sportscaster's Guide to Watching Football: Decoding America's Favorite Game*, and continues to volunteer

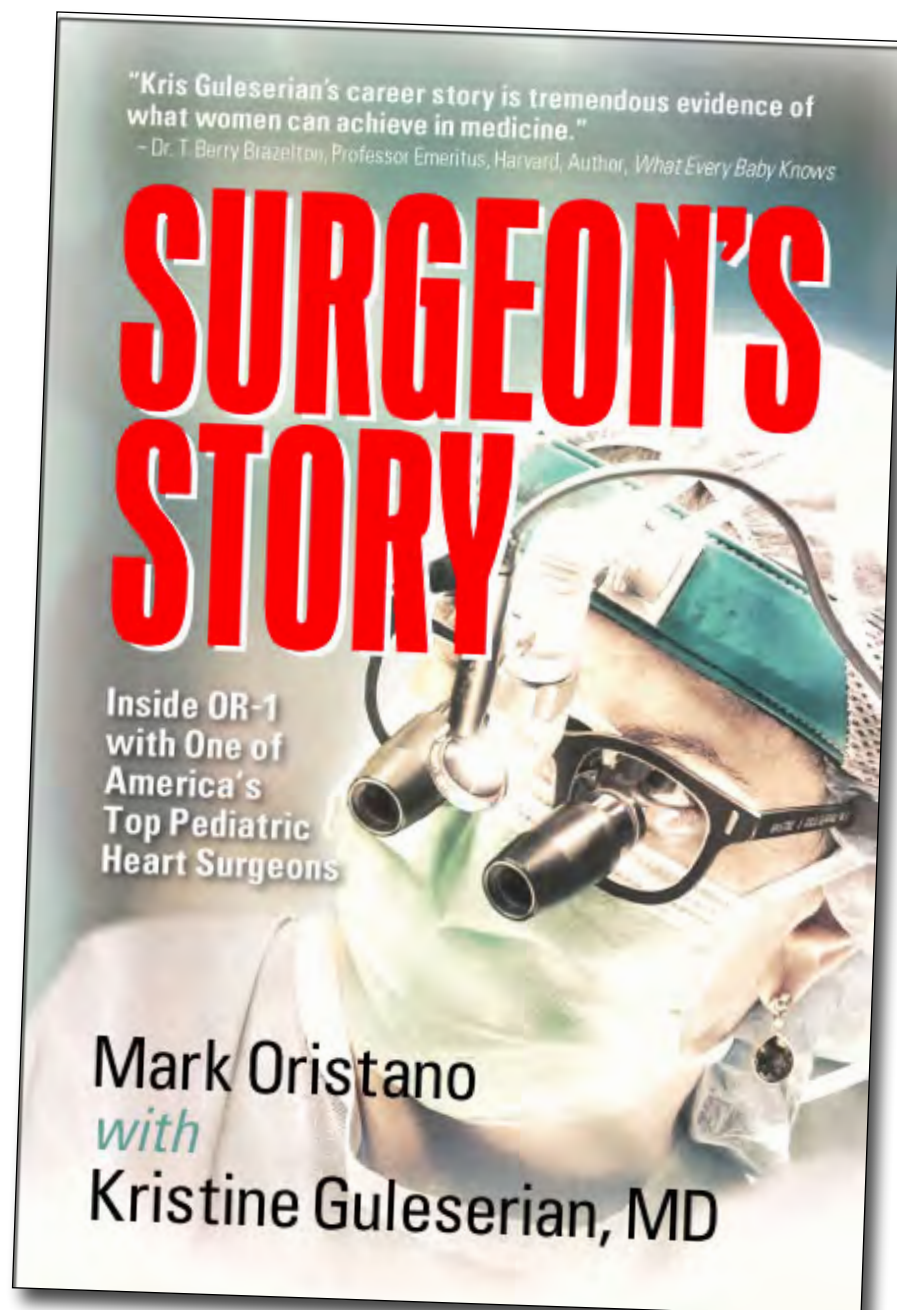
book is 2-year-old Rylenn who was born with an often-fatal disorder called Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome; she was successfully treated by Dr. Guleserian.

Oristano is a graduate of Texas Christian University with a communications degree. He worked with famed football broadcaster Verne Lundquist in Dallas, spent a year as a news co-anchor with Oprah Winfrey in Nashville, and then on the Dallas Cowboys Radio Network, Houston Oilers Radio Network, for NFL Films, and then in the Cowboys' public relations depart-

ment.

Oristano is a frequent public speaker giving talks on the game of football and his stories generated from his career.

Surgeon's Story: Inside OR-6 With One of America's Top Pediatric Heart Surgeons by Mark Oristano (ISBN 978-1-935953-77-7 March, 2017, 158 pages, \$19.95) is available on Amazon and on the author's blog <http://surgeonsstory.com/> View the book trailer here: <http://bit.ly/2jqHba5>



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JUNE 19 — The Gregory Hintlian Memorial Golf Tournament sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, at the Marlborough Country Club, 200 Concord Road, Marlborough. Monday. 9:30 a.m., registration; 11 a.m., "Shot Gun." All are invited for a day of golf or just for dinner and a social evening. Details to follow. For further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632.

NEW JERSEY

NOVEMBER 18 — Save the date. Gala banquet celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Tekeyan Cultural Association. At the Terrace at Biagios. Details will be forthcoming.

NEW YORK

APRIL 21 - Staged reading of DAYBREAK at Pan Asian Repertory Theatre, 520 8th Ave. betw. 36th & 37th Sts., New York, 3rd Floor, Bruce Mitchell Room, 7:30 PM. Armenian-American playwright Joyce Van Dyke's play about the repercussions of the Armenian genocide on two women friends (formerly titled DEPORTED / A DREAM PLAY), directed by Zoya Kachadurian. Free admission, limited seating. RSVP to info@panasianrep.org, or call 212-868-4030

APRIL 27 — A Celebration of Service. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, invites the public to a celebratory reception to congratulate the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan and the Very Rev. Fr. Simeon Odabashian on the

20th anniversary of their priestly ordinations. Vespers service at 7 p.m., at St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral. The reception and program will follow at 7:30 p.m. in Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium of the Diocesan Center (630 Second Ave.). To RSVP (by April 17) call (212) 686-0710 or email rsvp@ordination20th.org. Donations will be used to underwrite the publication of a revised, expanded edition of a church classic, Prayers for Healing. Contributions may be made payable to the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America with Memo: Prayer Book. Contributions can be mailed to the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, 630 Second Ave., New York NY 10016.

MAY 21 — A classical concert dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Tekeyan Cultural Association. "The Armenian Spirit" at Alliance Francaise in New York City at 3pm. With Ani Kavafian, violin, Ani Kalayjian, cello and Orion Weiss, piano.

JUNE 29 — The Freeport Memorial Library will have a lecture on the history of the Armenians, Thursday at 2 p.m. by Dr. Ronald Brown, professor of history and ethnic studies at Touro College and world religions at the Unification Theological Seminary in New York City. Free to the public. The library is located at 144 W Merrick Rd, Freeport, NY 11520, phone (516) 379-3274.

RHODE ISLAND

APRIL 22 — The Armenian Martyrs' Memorial Committee along with the Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence, will show the film, "Alter Ego" or "The Silence of a Priest." 6:30 p.m. The movie is in Armenian

with English subtitles. Producer Vigen Chaldranian from Armenia, will be present. Free admission and refreshments will be served following the movie. The public is cordially invited to attend.

APRIL 23 — North Burial Ground, Providence. On the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the Dedication of the Armenian Martyrs' Memorial Monument, and the 102nd commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, the clergy and choirs from the Armenian Evangelical Church, Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church and Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, will be present and well as federal, state and local officials to be part of the days program. 12:45 p.m. Guest speaker is Marc A. Mamigonian, NAASR's director of Academic Affairs. All are welcome to come and remember or Holy Martyrs and survivors of the 1915 Armenian Genocide.

APRIL 30 — Performance of the play "Women of Ararat" by Judith Boyajian Strang-Waldau based on her family's survival of the Armenian Genocide, at the Scottish Rite Auditorium, 2115 Broad St., Cranston. Sunday, 3 p.m. For tickets contact Dorothy Martiesian, 401-749-0269 or Naomi Thovmasian Marsh, 401-942-3886. Proceeds to benefit three Armenia-based organization helping women.

Calendar items are free. Entries should not be longer than 5 lines. Items will be edited to fit the space, if need be. A photo may be sent with the listing. Items should be sent no later than Mondays at noon. Listings should include contact information. Send items to editor@mirrorspectator.com.

COMMENTARY

No Surprises at Armenia's Parliamentary Elections

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The much-anticipated parliamentary elections in Armenia were carried out on April 2 without significant deviations from the anticipated results. This was the first election since Armenia adopted of a new constitution propelling the country from a presidential to a parliamentary system. One other change resulting from this switch is that the size of the legislature has been cut down from 131 to 105 members.

The election results impacted the country on two main dimensions: domestic and regional/ geostrategic.

Armenia is located at the political nerve center of the Caucasus region. Many countries are interested in its policies, if not its wellbeing. That is why the election process was observed dutifully by the West and Russia, with both camps projecting their conflicting interests in the region.

While Armenia is being considered within the Russian orbit, Western observations of those elections would be a priori negative.

One of the Western news outlets characterized the election results as a victory for the pro-Russian president. That image was reinforced by the early congratulations from President Vladimir Putin, who stated in his message: "The election results confirm the highest level of confidence which you and your party enjoy among the citizens of Armenia." That certainly did not reflect the general sentiment, necessarily.

A total of 1.58 million eligible voters cast their ballots, which amounts to 61 percent of the electorate.

Hrayr Thomasian, the head of the Central Election Commission, after votes were counted from 1,886 electoral precincts, announced 58 seats will be going to the ruling Republican Party. According to him, the election results pre-

named his wife vice president to perpetuate the family rule, yet he barely received a slap on the wrist from the West; instead, praise is lavished on him, and an image of a country tolerant to minorities and the media is perpetuated, nevermind that Talish and Lesqui minority leaders and a host of journalists are rotting in jails.

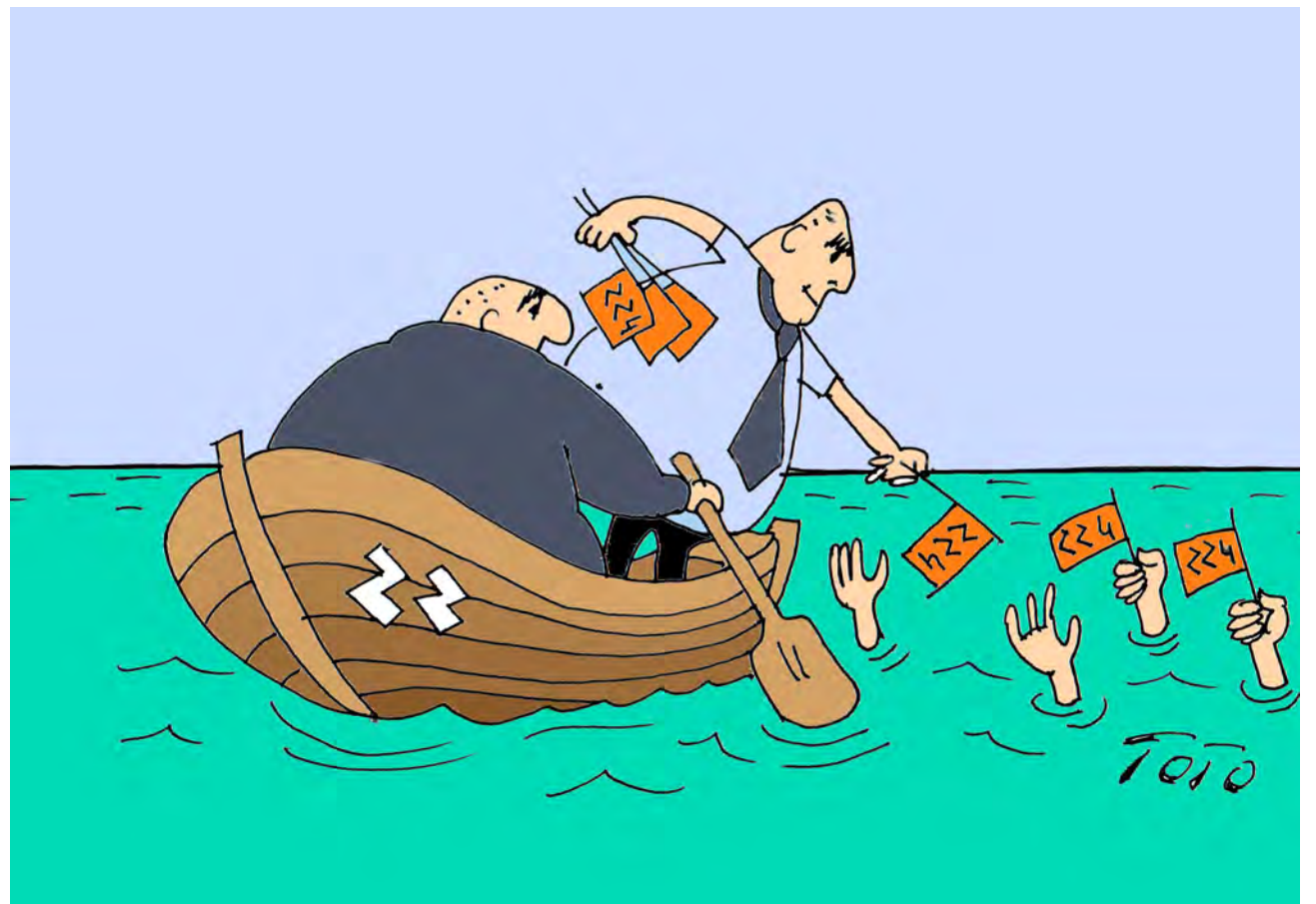
In general terms, improvements were marked in Armenia's election this time around compared to previous times. "It is a pity that despite all of the legal and organizational changes, that the elections did not remove longstanding doubts about the reliability and integrity of the electoral process in the country," said Liliane Maury Pasquier of PACE. "The election is not just what's happening at the polling stations on election day," added Ignacio Sanchez Amor, the mission coordinator representing the OSCE.

The latter hit the nail right on the head. Because it is not in the interest of the authorities to allow any disturbances on election day.

As the European agencies provide electronic equipment to better monitor the election process, cheating and fraud by the interested parties rises to a more sophisticated level. The observers could not provide much documentation of fraud on election day, but they were able to detect vote buying and institutional pressure.

Regional governors (*marzpets*) are tolerated despite the criminal conduct of many because they are a necessary evil on election day. They have to deliver the votes to the ruling party. Similarly, schools, universities, hospitals and government institutions become election machines to cater to the Republican Party. That is why there is little underhanded action left to be conducted on election day itself.

Besides the foreign observers, some criticism was expressed on the domestic front. Levon Zurabian, a leader of the Congress-HShK, charged that the Armenian authorities held "yet another disgraceful election."



sented the following picture: 49.12 percent Republican Party; 27.32 percent Tsarukyan Alliance, 31 seats; 7.77 percent Yelk (Exit), 9 seats; 6.57 percent ARF (Dashnag) Party, 7 seats.

Any party participating in the election had to cross the 5-percent threshold to be represented in the parliament. That percentage for alliances was raised up to 7 percent. Consequently, the following parties have been pushed out of the race: Armenian Renaissance with 3.72 percent; ORO (Ohanyan/Raffi Hovannissian/Oskanian) 2.08 percent; Armenian Congress-Armenian Popular Party Alliance (President Levon Ter-Petrosian-Aram Sargsyan) 1.62 percent; Free Democrats .93 percent and the Armenian Communist Party .74 percent.

There were 300 observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) across Armenia. Among them were representatives from the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe (PACE).

Predictably they were critical of the electoral process.

Azerbaijan, on the other hand, is not judged by the same standards. Ilham Aliyev inherited a petro-dynasty from his father and

Speaking to Azatutyun.am, Zurabian accused the Republican Party of handing out bribes. He also claimed that the government loyalists systematically breached the secrecy of the ballot to make sure that the bribed or intimidated citizens vote for the right people.

To counter all criticism, foreign and domestic, the Republican Party Spokesman Eduard Sharmazanov, declared at a press conference that the vote was "democratic, transparent and competitive." Citing the election results, he said that the party headed by President Serzh Sargsyan is well placed to again form Armenia's government. He said that the Republican Party is ready to extend its power-sharing arrangement with the ARF but would not draw on its other coalition partners.

Initially the ARF was trailing below the 6 percent level until it got a last-minute boost from the government election machinery to secure the election of seven members to the parliament.

Sharmazanov's caution to extend power-sharing to other parties is well understood in light of past experience with the

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COMMENTARY

Pro-Turkish Journalist Stephen Kinzer's Assault on the Armenian Genocide and Armenians

By David Boyajian

RECENT years have witnessed an increasing number of writers who blatantly favor Turkey and/or Azerbaijan and are hostile to Armenians. Some enlistees in this pro-Turkic brigade include Justin Amler, Richard Falk, Alexander Murinson and Brenda Schaffer.

Another such enlistee is American journalist Stephen A. Kinzer.

Throughout his career, Kinzer has not only diminished the factuality of the Armenian genocide committed by Turkey from 1915-23 but also misrepresented the Armenian people and their homeland.

He spoke at the Watertown Library on February 21. His presentation, titled "US Foreign Policy: Intervention or Restraint? What can we expect from President Trump?" focused on his new book, *The True Flag: Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Twain, and the Birth of American Empire*.

His previous books include *Crescent & Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (2001), *Reset Middle East: Old Friends and New Allies: Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Israel, and Iran* (2010), and *A Thousand Hills: Rwanda's Rebirth and the Man Who Dreamed It* (2008) about the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Kinzer himself is descended from Dutch Jews who perished in the Holocaust.

Watertown Citizens for Peace, Justice and the Environment and the Cambridge-based Massachusetts Peace Action sponsored his talk.

I attended and questioned him. More on that later.

Kinzer was the *New York Times* bureau chief in Istanbul from 1996 to 2000, and currently writes for the *Boston Globe*.

Once termed "Turkey's Goodwill Ambassador to the US," he's a Turkophile. Kemal Ataturk, says Kinzer, would have made a great United Nations leader today. At times Kinzer has, as its friend, criticized Turkey.

He has conceded that in the 1915 period – though not in the 1919-23 Ataturk period – Turkey committed massacres and atrocities against Armenians. He thinks Turkey should acknowledge these. However, he repeatedly explains away the murders, never recognizes them as "genocide," doesn't cite the voluminous evidence for that genocide, and often misrepresents Armenians and Armenia. He has visited the latter and eastern Turkey/Western Armenia.

Kinzer has written many thousands of words about 1915, Armenians, and Turkey. We have space to expose only a fraction of his countless distortions.

Diminishing the Genocide

"There are troublesome questions," Kinzer has written, "about the fate of Ottoman Armenians" in 1915. These events are, in his words, "debatable," "hotly debated" and "still unclear."

Kinzer never acknowledges that the vast majority of non-Armenian specialist historians long ago concluded that Turkey committed genocide.

He writes about an "orgy of ethnic violence" in 1915. Translation: Armenians were about as guilty as Turks.

Moreover, the "Ottoman atrocity" must be placed "in the context of other 20th massacres." Kinzer probably makes meaningless assertions like that to obfuscate the real issues.

Ottoman authorities "ordered the expulsion of Armenians from eastern Anatolia." Kinzer doesn't mention that central and western "Anatolia" and Istanbul were also the

sites of Armenian "expulsions" and mass murders.

Kinzer considers 1915 "highly emotional for Turks and Armenians." Translation: The victimizer nation's anger is as appropriate as that of its victims.

Genocide Resolutions

The US House is "foolish," wrote Kinzer in 2010, to consider an Armenian Genocide resolution. It would "harm US-Turkey ties." He won't admit that three successful House resolutions (1975/1984/1996) on the Armenian Genocide haven't harmed US interests.

Congress "has neither the capacity nor moral authority" to judge 1915. "Among all killers of the 20th century," the resolution "[singles out] Turks for censure." Congress must first "investigate other modern slaughters – [such as] the one perpetrated by the British in Kenya during the 1950s?"

Yet, one or both houses of Congress have officially recognized the "genocides" in Bosnia, Cambodia, Darfur, Rwanda, Ukraine, the present Christian ones in Syria and Iraq, and have approved considerable Holocaust legislation. Indeed, the "Uncompensated [Holocaust] Survivors Today Act" was just recently introduced in Congress.

I can find no evidence that Kinzer opposed any of that legislation.

Kinzer says no president has ever termed the Armenian episode "genocide." Actually, President Reagan did so in 1981 in Proclamation 4838.

Countless principled Jews have been in the forefront of those who have researched 1915 and acknowledged the Armenian genocide. Sadly, though, some Jews and Jewish organizations – notably the ADL, AJC, AIPAC, and JINSA – have a self-inflicted syndrome I call Holocaust Hypocrisy.

Holocaust Hypocrisy

Kinzer dedicated his book *Reset* to his Jewish grandparents, Abraham Ricardo and Jeanette De Jongh Ricardo, who died in Nazi Germany's Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in 1945.

Naturally, Kinzer approves of the US Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC. It "documents an effort to destroy an entire people ... the story it presents is beyond dispute." He disapproves, however, of the proposed Armenian Genocide Museum in DC because "the [Armenian] events of 1915 are still a matter of intense debate."

The title of Kinzer's 1998 article, "Armenia Never Forgets, Maybe it Should," perfectly expresses his belief that Armenians should put aside their past, especially their genocide. Yet the Armenian Genocide and Holocaust are separated by no more than 18 years.

Kinzer, you see, allows himself to dredge up the past – German concentration camps, the Holocaust, Kenya, Rwanda, America's sins going back to the 19th century, and more. Armenians, on the other hand, should simply "forget" and patch things up with Turkey. You decide if that's Holocaust Hypocrisy.

Employing a well-known Turkish tactic, Kinzer also attempts to split Armenia from the Armenian diaspora. In so doing, he contradicts himself.

Armenia vs. Diasporans

In *Crescent and Star*, Kinzer says Armenia's citizens "want to rebuild their country's relationship with Turkey and ... look toward a better future for both peoples."

In contrast, the genocide acknowledgment campaign "is waged not from Armenia itself but from Armenian communities abroad." Diasporan Armenians are "anti-Turkish" and some are "more nationalistic than most

Armenians in Armenia." They are motivated by "a long-delayed revenge" for the genocide, he claims.

His readers wrongly conclude that Diasporans are fanatics while Armenia is relatively non-nationalistic and cares little about the genocide.

Elsewhere, though, Kinzer declares that it's Armenia which clings to "ethnocentric nationalism." And "national thinking is the dominant and almost all-inclusive ideology" there.

Armenia, he claims, views the world through the "prism" of the genocide even though Kinzer had alleged that it was Diasporans who were genocide-obsessed.

"1915 has cut into the Armenian psyche" and "plays an emotional role" in keeping Armenia and Turkey "apart." Yet Kinzer previously asserted that Armenia was eager to rebuild its "relationship with Turkey."

Nationalism in Armenia, contends Kinzer, is quite "out of fashion" in the modern world. He doesn't tell his readers that every one of Armenia's neighbors – Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Russia, and Turkey (Kinzer's favorite) – is also highly nationalistic.

As you'd expect, Kinzer is also pro-Azerbaijani while giving short shrift to Armenian Artsakh/Karabakh.

In "Armenians, Bitter over Enclave, Let the Oil Boom Pass By" (*NY Times*, Dec. 6, 1998), Kinzer says that Armenians could have prospered had they simply agreed to Baku's proposal of an oil or gas "peace pipeline" and placed Artsakh/Karabakh back under Azerbaijan, supposedly as an "autonomous" region.

Kinzer does acknowledge that Armenians would never trade Artsakh for oil. But there is scant evidence that Baku and Ankara would ever have allowed their oil and gas pipelines to cross Armenia. Even had they been so inclined, they would probably have demanded a raft of concessions that Armenia could never agree to.

In other of Kinzer's writings that continually tout Azerbaijan, I can find only a few short references to Azerbaijan as an autocracy whereas its repression of Artsakh goes unmentioned.

Kinzer's Answers

I asked Kinzer two questions after his Watertown presentation.

Some Jewish American lobbying organizations – ADL, AJC, AIPAC, and JINSA – and Israel have long colluded with Turkey to defeat Congressional resolutions on the Armenian genocide yet have successfully pushed Congress to enact Holocaust legislation. Do you consider this hypocritical?

Appearing uncomfortable, Kinzer avoided the question. What Jewish groups do, he replied, is not his "business." Yet his writings have criticized "pro-Israel lobbies" and AIPAC. Maybe Kinzer approves of the Jewish lobby's Holocaust Hypocrisy but hesitated to admit it publicly?

Your writings express doubt about the Armenian genocide though it's been widely recognized by scholars, countries, and more. You also believe Congress shouldn't recognize that genocide. Do you still feel that way?

Kinzer replied that he recognizes the Armenian Genocide. That's inconsistent with his writings but didn't totally surprise me. His audience was, after all, composed of politically progressive activists in a town with a sizeable Armenian community. Watertown had also thrown out the ADL in 2007 because it wouldn't acknowledge the Armenian genocide and opposed its recognition by Congress. In any case, Kinzer's acknowledgement is now a matter of public record. Kinzer added that he still opposes Armenian genocide resolutions.

The lesson here is that Armenians must continually fight to ensure that their genocide and other issues are treated fairly and factually by journalists and media. And Armenians shouldn't shy away from confronting those who assault their rights and history.

(The author is a freelance journalist based in Massachusetts. Many of his articles are archived at www.armeniapedia.org/wiki/David_Boyajian.)

No Surprises at Armenia's Parliamentary Elections

ELECTIONS, from page 18

Tsarukyan group. Tsarukyan had formed a coalition with the Republican Party, until he began to veer off the script and into the opposition camp. When the tax authorities began inspecting his businesses, he was shaken and for a while withdrew from politics altogether; once burnt, twice shy. This time around, he is very cautious. Although he commands the second strongest contingent in the parliament, he has only made vague statements about his future plans.

Now the ARF enters into the coalition with the Republicans; it may never become a threat to its partner because of its size. It can only help.

This time around, Tsarukyan will remain under vigilant scrutiny not to veer off course again.

Yelk will remain the most vocal opposition in the parliament, though without too much clout. The alliance, headed by Edmond Maroukian, Sassoun Grigorian and Nigol Pashinyan, had proved to be the most vociferous critic of the administration. It serves as a safety valve for public discontent. Yelk will be the third largest group in parliament.

ORO, Congress, Free Democrats and the Communist Party have all been wiped out by design. The head of the Armenian Congress, former President Levon Ter-Petrosian, contributed enormously to the loss of his coalition by advocating, during the campaign, the return of territories to Azerbaijan to buy peace.

Political analysts Vigen Hakobyan and Aram Safaryan had been wondering what happened to the West-leaning voters during the election. It was estimated that 25 percent of the electorate favored a Western orientation for the country. Hakobyan says those votes were "pulverized." ORO in particular was perceived as West-leaning, featuring two former foreign ministers. They were eliminated from the political arena. That does not augur well for the complexion of the parliament, from the viewpoint of Western governments.

The Republican Party did not promise much to the citizens, except for some vague slogans. It won the election simply because it controlled the election machine. It is responsible for the past miseries of economic decline, depopulation and defeat in Karabakh. The only hope remains the pledge that Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan brought from Russian Armenian tycoons to invest heavily in Armenia. If that is not an election trick, Armenia can certainly benefit.

The parliamentary elections fared well. The potential for an explosion, however, looms down the road. Should Karapetyan's popularity continue to rise, he will be on a collision path with Sargsyan, who is looking for a comeback as prime minister after his presidential term ends in 2018.



Analysis: What's Next for Turkey in Syria?

By Birce Bora

ISTANBUL (Al Jazeera) – On March 29, Turkey's Prime Minister Binali Yildirim announced the successful completion of the "Euphrates Shield" military operation in northern Syria, but suggested the country may launch other cross-border campaigns in the future.

Turkish analysts told Al Jazeera that Yildirim's announcement was not surprising as it came after the operation reached its "natural limits" but insisted that they do not expect Turkey to leave the region anytime soon.

"Yildirim's announcement was merely an acknowledgement of the situation on the ground," Atilla Yesilada, a political analyst with Istanbul's Global Source Partners, told Al Jazeera. "At the moment Turkey has little room for manoeuvre in northern Syria – in both diplomatic and military terms."

At the beginning of the 216-day operation, which was launched against ISIL and Kurdish forces last August, Turkish forces took the border town of Jarabulus and cleared ISIL fighters from a roughly 100km stretch of the border.

In late February, Turkey announced that it also took control of Al Bab, an ISIL stronghold.

"In practice, the Euphrates Shield came to an end nearly a month ago, when Turkey's sphere of influence in Syria – the triangle between Jarabulus, Al Rai and Al Bab – was surrounded by American marines to its east, Russian soldiers to its west and the Syrian regime forces to its south," said Metin Gurcan, a Turkish security analyst and a research fellow at the Istanbul Policy Center (IPC), Sabanci University.

In early March, the US deployed a relatively

small force to the outskirts of Manbij – a town east of Al Bab – in what the Pentagon called a "reassure and deter" mission. This development, according to Gurcan, brought an end to Turkey's plans to clear Kurdish forces from this strategic Syrian city and expand its influence further east. "And when Russia announced that it was setting up a military base in Afrin to train Kurdish forces, Ankara realised it cannot move west either," he added.

Turkey's unsuccessful "transactional alliances" with these global powers drew the end date of the Euphrates Shield Operation forward, according to analysts.

The Turkish government formed transactional alliances with both Russia and the United States, but failed to pull either party completely to its side in Syria, Yesilada said.

Both the US and Russia are steadily deepening their ties with the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) and its Arab allies who operate under the umbrella of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

Ankara believes that they are doing so at Turkey's expense, and says the YPG is directly linked to the PKK, an armed group that has been fighting a four-decade bloody conflict in Turkey.

"So, Turkey is now in a situation where Russians control the west of the Euphrates River and the US controls the east – and neither party seems to be supportive of Turkey's needs and interests in the region," Yesilada said.

"The operation simply reached its natural limits," he said. "Turkey realised that it could not achieve anything more in that area without clashing with the US, Russia or the Syrian regime."

"But this does not mean that Turkey is ready to leave Syria completely," he added. "Turkey does not have the luxury to say it is now done with Syria."

According to analysts, Turkey is now at a crossroads and needs to decide whether it is going to keep its troops in northern Syria. "The Turkish government did not clarify this yet, but we have every indication to believe that Turkey is determined to stay in Syria, even after the end of Euphrates Shield," Gurcan said.

"While waiting for an opportunity for a second cross-border operation, Turkey is now going to start a post-conflict reconstruction effort in the towns that it took from ISIL."

Since September 2016, Turkey had been sending Syrian refugees back to Jarabulus and other towns that it captured. According to analysts, it plans to send at least 10,000 refugees – who are currently residing in the Turkish town of Kilis – back to their hometowns in northern

Syria by May this year.

"Turkey wants to send these people back, not only for humanitarian reasons, but also to consolidate its influence in the region by providing support and protection for these returnees," explained Gurcan. "But it all depends on what Russia is planning to do about Idlib."

In the near future, Russia and its allies are expected to turn their attention completely to Idlib, the country's last rebel-held province, according to analysts.

"If Russia decides to attack Idlib, it will need to determine a new area for it to transfer the rebel fighters and their families after the end of the battle," Gurcan said. "Putin may allow these people to move into the Turkey-controlled area between Jarabulus, Al Bab and Al Rai."

Kurdish Party Complains about Media Embargo in Turkey

ISTANBUL (ARA News) – The pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) has complained that there is a media embargo on the party by the Turkish media with a limited number of days left before the referendum to take place on April 16.

"As Referendum Day approaches, we are observing together how the hardened problems of the media impact upon the future of society in Turkey," Saruhan Oluç, HDP co-chair said.

"It is, of course, clear that we do not have the right to determine the editorial policies of media organizations, nor do we have such an intention. However, as a political party that received the vote of 6 million citizens, the grave media embargo that we have been placed under urges us to make a statement on the issue, and mark this instance in history," the official said.

"It is first necessary to underline a number of facts regarding the TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation), a 'public institution', which by law, must remain impartial. The data we have reveals that the TRT, while broadcasting the referendum campaigns of political parties, brazenly violates its own law, the RTÜK (Supreme Board of Radio and Television) Law and the principles of the Supreme Election Council of Turkey," the HDP official added.

"When we look at the distribution of live broadcast and debate programs on the TRT News Channel for the period from March 1 to 22, 2017, we observe that the Presidency was

allocated 1390 minutes, the AKP [the Justice and Development Party, the party in power] 2723 minutes, the CHP [the Republican People's Party, the main opposition party] 216 minutes, the MHP [the National Movement Party] 48 minutes, and no time at all, or 0 minutes, to the HDP. A similar picture exists for durations allocated in news bulletins and the distribution of guests on debate programs," the HDP official said.

Moreover, the Kurdish party complained about the coverage of private TV channels, which are also under the influence of the government and supported the ruling AKP party during the failed military coup.

"In the same way, while the President, Prime Minister, leaders of other political parties, members of parliament and political party representatives were invited many times as guests, not a single representative of the HDP was invited to a single TV program," the HDP added.

The HDP called on the international media and national media to raise attention to this issue. "As the party [HDP] experiences this embargo in the heaviest and most intense manner, during a critical process that will determine the fate of our peoples, we expect your contribution to protect the right to access information of each and every one of our citizens," Oluç concluded.

Reporting by: Wladimir van Wilgenburg / Source: ARA News

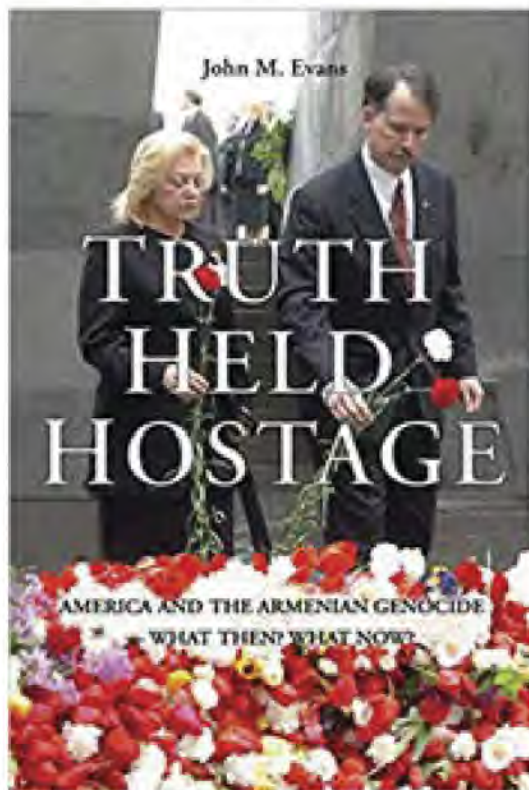
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AG Maura Healey to Be State House Genocide Program Keynote Speaker

COMMEMORATION, from page 1

Commemoration Committee, and Ambassador to the Vatican and former Boston Mayor Raymond Flynn will be recognized with joint Senate and House resolutions.

The late Speaker George Keeverian began the annual commemoration at the State House in 1985. His brother, Jack Keeverian, will offer an update on the George Keeverian Memorial Scholarship Program on behalf of the Keeverian family.

Music and the participation of youth are an integral part of the commemoration. Performing will be children of St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School, jazz guitarist John Baboian, and vocalist Mary Galstian. Members of the Homenetmen Scouts will also be attending.

The commemoration is hosted by State Sen. Will Brownsberger (D-Belmont), and state Representatives Jonathan Hecht (D-Watertown), Dave Rogers (D-Cambridge), John Lawn (D-Watertown), James Miceli (D-Wilmington) and David Muradian (R-Grafton), who will emcee the ceremony. The event is organized by a planning committee of pastoral and lay leaders chaired by Belmont resident Lalg Musserian.

"I am eagerly looking forward to the Armenian Genocide commemorative event as it is a way to recognize our heritage and teach others our history," said Representative David Muradian. "While this is the 102nd anniversary, we still feel the effects of such horrible heinous actions. Armenians are very proud people, and I am proud that we can host this commemorative event in the Massachusetts House of Representatives Chamber."

"The Armenian light still shines bright," said Musserian. "We do what we do best: move forward and not let anything stand in our way. We will always remember and honor our martyrs who have now been canonized. But it is uplifting to feel the energy and sense of resolve when we meet every year to commemorate our Genocide."

Buses to the State House will leave from Watertown at 9 a.m. from St. James Church, 465 Mount Auburn Street, and St. Stephen's Church, 38 Elton Avenue. The buses will depart the State House at 1:15 p.m. and transport guests back to originating locations with an expected arrival in Watertown at approximately 2 p.m. The bus service is free, donated by the Knights of Vartan, Ararat Lodge #1.

The food at the reception will be provided by Ani Catering.