



# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

Volume LXXXVIII, NO. 16, Issue 4510

\$ 2.00

The First English Language Armenian Weekly in the United States Since 1932

## NEWS IN BRIEF



President Serzh Sargsyan presents a medal to the young students.

### Armenian President Awards Creators Of Sign Language Mobile App

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan awarded five school girls from the Vahan Tekeyan School of the village of Karbi, in Aragatsotn province, who won in the Education category of the Technovation competition for the Armenian sign language mobile app. One of the girls, Vardanush Nazaretyan, said they came up with the idea suddenly.

“We came up with the idea when one of the relatives of our friends visited our school. After speaking with him we understood that he has hearing problems, and we set a goal to create an Armenian sign language app,” she said. The team was awarded with a \$10,000-prize, which they will use to develop the app, which will further be available for Google and iOS.

### Turkey Frees Some Hostages

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN – The news on October 26 that a Turkish court decided to release German human rights activist Peter Steudtner from prison, and even allow him to leave the country, was not expected and was greeted by sighs of relief. But it is by no means the end of the story. Although he and seven other political prisoners were liberated, the charges against them have not been dropped and the trial is scheduled to continue on November 22. If convicted, those accused of belonging to and supporting a terrorist organization could be sentenced to up to 15 years in prison. Green Party political leader Claudia Roth correctly commented that there was “no reason for calling off the alarm,” since the release did not mean acquittal. Although Steudtner would be tried in absentia (as it would be foolhardy for him to return to Turkey for trial), the policy of political persecution of perceived enemies of Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan has not ended. There are still ten German citizens sitting behind bars in Turkey on politically motivated charges, among them Deniz Yücel, not to mention the masses of other innocent prisoners with different passports.



Peter Steudtner

Although Turkish authorities denied that there had been any diplomatic mediation leading to the release, it was former Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder who reportedly intervened personally with Erdogan in September. German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel, who proposed the idea and got the backing of Chancellor Angela Merkel, stated officially that he was “grateful to Gerhard Schroeder for his mediation,” adding that it was an initial sign of relaxation of tensions. “The Turkish government had kept all its promises,” he said. “Now we have to work further for the release of the other prisoners.” Justice Minister Heiko Maas also called it an “encouraging sign” and pledged that Berlin would continue to pursue the release of all. Steudtner himself left no doubt that there see HOSTAGES, page 4

### Anthony Bourdain Is Banned From Ever Entering Azerbaijan

*He Is Probably (not) Crying In His Soup*

NEW YORK (Combined Sources) – Anthony Bourdain is a pro at getting

under people’s skin, but now he’s upset an entire government – the one in Azerbaijan. For an upcoming episode of his CNN show, “Parts Unknown,” where he travels to countries around the world to sample their food, he visited Armenia and later went to Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh).

Bourdain’s style isn’t to ignore issues central to the identity of the country he’s profiling, so naturally he got into a helicopter and flew to the region:

This was just ten days ago, so it’s not clear where else Bourdain visited, or what the Armenia episode will focus on, but it seems System of a Down see BOURDAIN, page 4



Anthony Bourdain and Tatul Hakobyan in Karabakh

### Aso Tavitian: A Life Full Of Grace and Giving

By Florence Avakian  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

reserved, thoughtful and polite man who has been a pioneer in the technology world, and a quiet generous benefactor to Armenian causes, he blossoms when he describes the many steps along his life’s journey, and talks about his vast art collection which adorns his spacious and elegantly furnished townhouse off Fifth Avenue.

His professional life has been a veritable who’s who in the computer software area where he was co-founder and the CEO from 1975 to 2008 of Syncsort Inc. (from Synchronized see TAVITIAN, page 8

NEW YORK – Meeting with philanthropist Aso O. Tavitian for first time is a surprise. A



Aso Tavitian receiving the Medal of Honor from the Armenian president.

### AGBU Issues Statement In Support of Domestic Violence Legislation

NEW YORK – The Armenian General Benevolent Union released a statement this which in which it said it “strongly supports legislation to criminalize domestic violence in the Republic of Armenia and to provide support for victims across the nation. Freedom from abuse is a fundamental human right to which a person is inherently entitled regardless of their nation, location, language, religion, ethnic origin or any other status. Violence in the home cannot be tolerated in any modern society. Strong families are the foundation of Armenian society and women are at the heart of families. When a woman’s safety and well-being is threatened, so is the safety and security of her family, her community and ultimately the nation. AGBU joins Armenians across the globe in standing together to enact legislation that speaks to these very values and beliefs.”

### EU, Armenia Poised to Sign Landmark Deal

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The European Union (EU) and Armenia will almost certainly sign an agreement aimed at significantly deepening their relations next month, a senior EU official said late on Thursday.

Johannes Hahn, the EU commissioner for European neighborhood policy, confirmed that the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) is due to be signed during or on the sidelines of an EU summit in Brussels scheduled for November 24.

“This agreement with Armenia will be signed, no doubt about it,” Hahn said at a meeting with civil society members from Armenia and other ex-Soviet states held in Estonia’s capital Tallinn.

“I think it’s pretty sure that this will be done around the summit or at the summit,” he added.

Hahn suggested that the EU’s and Armenia’s “neighbors” do not object to the deal. “At least they accept it,” he said.

Russian pressure exerted on Yerevan is widely believed to have scuttled a more ambitious Association Agreement which Armenia and the EU nearly finalized in 2013. President Serzh Sargsyan precluded that accord with his unexpected decision to join the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU).

The spokesman for Sargsyan’s ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK), Eduard Sharmazanov, made clear that Yerevan is “planning” to sign the CEPA in Brussels. “Had we seen any problems in the agreement we would not have initialed it [in March,]” he said.

The document commits Yerevan to “approximating” Armenian economic laws and regulations to those of the EU.

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### Celebrating 85 Years

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Marcus Miller Kicks off Yerevan Jazz Festival

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Bass player and composer Marcus Miller, a Grammy Award winning jazz musician, said jazz is the best means for self-expression.

He spoke in Yerevan, before his concert on October 26 at the Karen Demirchyan Sports and Concerts Complex as part of the Yerevan Jazz Festival.

“I have been hearing about this festival and your beautiful country for some years. When I got to know that I can participate in the jazz fest and spend one day here, I got very enthusiastic. Festivals are an excellent means to communicate with new audiences,” Miller said.

He is known as a one-man orchestra as he plays so many instruments.

“I love all the instruments. Each of them has its characteristic feature,” he said, adding that the bass is dearest to his heart.

Miller, 58, has worked with trumpeter Miles Davis, pianist Herbie Hancock, singer Luther Vandross, and saxophonist David Sanborn.

## Armenian, Kyrgyz Premiers Discuss Economic Ties

YEREVAN – Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan this week hosted Prime Minister Sapar Isakov of Kyrgyzstan.

Karapetyan expressed confidence that the ties of friendship between the two peoples provide a good basis for promoting political dialogue and implementing mutually beneficial economic projects. He noted that notwithstanding the low level of bilateral trade turnover, there is some positive dynamics and potential for development.

“The positive dynamics should be fostered, including through the intergovernmental commission’s activities. Indeed, there are many promising projects in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan that can be implemented jointly and which can be mutually beneficial,” the Armenian Premier said.

Isakov said he was ready to deepen cooperation, noting that economic relations between the two countries do not meet the current level of political dialogue.

“For our part, we stand ready to support the development of bilateral economic relations,” the Kyrgyz Prime Minister added.

Both agreed in that cooperation on the margins of the ongoing Eurasian integration process and the application of mutually agreed mechanisms would help benefit Armenian-Kyrgyz relations.

## Armenian Military Inaugurates New Facility

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Senior Armenian and US military officials inaugurated on Tuesday, October 31, the newly renovated training center of an Armenian army brigade that contributes troops to NATO-led missions in Afghanistan and Kosovo.

The main three-story building of the Zar Military Training Facility has been refurbished and equipped as part of the first stage of the renovation mostly financed by the United States.

Speaking at a ribbon-cutting ceremony, Defense Minister Vigen Sargsyan and Brigadier General Dawne Deskins of the US military’s European Command hailed the development as another milestone in US-Armenian defense cooperation.

The reconstruction work was officially launched in March this year in the presence of Sargsyan, US Ambassador to Armenia Richard Mills and high-ranking officers of the US Army Corps of Engineers.

The Armenian army’s Peacekeeping Brigade has received financial and technical assistance from the US and other NATO member states since it was set up in the early 2000s. NATO assigned a higher degree of combat readiness and interoperability to the brigade after monitoring a four-day exercise held by it at Zar in 2015.

More than 130 soldiers of the brigade are currently deployed in Kosovo, Afghanistan as well as Lebanon.

# Pontifical Divine Liturgy in the St. Leon Mother Cathedral of the Western Diocese

LOS ANGELES – On October 29, on the feast of the Discovery of the Holy Cross, Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians offered a Pontifical Divine Liturgy at the St. Leon Mother Cathedral of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America.

In his sermon addressed to the pious people, he reflected on the wonderment of the day, and the meaning of the cross in the past and present of the Armenian people and in the life of Armenian-Americans.

He stated in part: “Throughout history, the Cross of the Lord has been a sacred symbol. We lived and created, we overcame tribulations and hardships by putting our trust in it. The Cross became for us literature and culture, it became for us a weapon when others wanted to destroy us, it became power to conquer difficulties and to revive. It is through the Cross that we survived the Genocide and created our new resurrected life in the land of our ancestors in all the corners of the world. Against difficulties, we always gave great importance to the veneration of the Cross, in accordance to the words of the Apostle ‘May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ’ This church that bears the sacred name of St. Leon the holy martyr, also conveys to us the spirit and legacy of the faith of our forefathers.

Indeed, our identity, our existence and perpetuity, are based on our Cross-shaped faith and our Cross-anointed homeland and national heritage, which today as well, are the cradle of our national and spiritual-moral essence. Our courageous sons freed Artsakh by keeping the victorious power of the Cross in their hearts and souls, and by carrying the sign of the cross on their uniforms. It is with this same faith that we reestablished our independent statehood and now continue to rebuild our life with the

vision of progress and prosperity, to protect our borders and to safeguard the peace in our homeland. With the same spirit of faith our brothers and sisters in Syria and Iraq have overcome the calamities of warfare. Our people all over the world voice solidarity and join in prayers for them.”

His Holiness emphasized that existing difficulties and problems can be overcome through confidence in God, and the mystery and strength of the cross. The Catholicos of All Armenians also expressed his appreciation for the support provided by American Armenians to the Homeland, Syrian-Armenian and Iraqi-Armenian brothers and sisters, urging them to rely on the saving power of the Lord’s cross to stay firm in the mission of faith and national life, and faithfully observe the spiritual message and homeland treasures.

In the evening, an official dinner was held on the occasion of the pontifical visit, which was attended by clergy; Eric Garcetti, Mayor of Los Angeles; Grigor Hovhannisyian, Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the US; state officials; philanthropists and faithful Armenians.

During the dinner, a film dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the Armenian Church Western Diocese of the United States was shown, and a film produced by Shoghakat TV about the Harichavank Turpanjian seminary-high school.

During the official program, a musical performance of spiritual and folk songs was offered by the seminarians of the Gevorkian Theological Seminary who were alumni of the Harichavank

Turpanjian seminary-high school.

At the conclusion of the dinner, the catholicos conveyed his Pontifical remarks and message to the guests, expressing his happiness, congratulations, and best wishes on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the Western Diocese. The catholicos reflected on the passed way of the Armenian-American community and current successes. The Catholicos of All



Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II

Armenians assessed the efforts and contributions of the Armenian-Americans in overcoming the challenges facing the Homeland, the support to the programs of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, the support of devout Armenians to the mission of our Holy Church and urged to continue supporting the Homeland and Church with zeal.

Expressing his appreciation to Gerald and Patricia Turpanjian on the occasion of the official dinner, he reflected with satisfaction on their good initiatives and heartfelt donations for church-building and nation-building programs. Highly appreciating the great contribution of the Turpanjian family in the national-ecclesiastical life, the Catholicos of All Armenians awarded Gerald Turpanjian the High Pontifical order of “Knight of Holy Echmiadzin.”

# ANCA Engages Officials in US and Armenia To Launch Non-Stop Flights to Yerevan

WASHINGTON – The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) is continuing its efforts in both Armenia and the United States to establish non-stop flights between Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and Zvartnots International Airport (EVN) in Yerevan, Armenia with a US carrier.

Zanku Armenian, who is leading the ANCA’s effort and Zareh Sinanyan, Glendale, California City Council Member, recently travelled to Yerevan to discuss with officials the practical steps necessary to establish this proposed flight route. Pasadena Mayor Terry Tornek was also in Yerevan on an official visit at the same time, arranged by the ANCA Pasadena chapter. Tornek and Sinanyan serve together on the Burbank Hollywood Airport Commission, as President and Vice President, respectively. The meetings in Yerevan build on discussions ANCA officials had earlier this year with LAX CEO Deborah Flint.

Los Angeles is home to the largest concentration of Armenian-Americans in the United States. This ambitious undertaking to establish a global direct link between Los Angeles and Yerevan comes at a time when LAX is going through a massive \$14-billion makeover, turning it into a world-class airport – while the Southern California region also prepares to host the Olympic Games in 2028. LAX is already the number one destination airport in the country, with more flights

originating and ending there than any other airport.

“L.A. has strong and lasting bonds with the people of Armenia,” said Mayor Eric Garcetti. “Direct travel from LAX to our sister city of Yerevan would bring new opportunities for economic growth, cultural exchange, and family togetherness.”

“We see an eagerness on the part of all officials to work with the ANCA to explore this creative initiative,” said Mr. Armenian, “because linking the largest Armenian-American diaspora community in the United States with Armenia will boost tourism and business opportunities in both Los Angeles and Armenia.”

In Yerevan, consultations began with the chairman of the State Revenue Committee, Vardan Harutyunyan. He welcomed the positive economic impact this flight would have on both regions. In addition to pledging his support, Harutyunyan encouraged continued direct contacts with government officials in Yerevan, including helping to bring appropriate stakeholders in Armenia together to further evaluate the financial feasibility of this endeavor.

Discussions were also held with Sergey Avetisyan, director general of Civil Aviation for Armenia. Avetisyan reiterated that establishing non-stop airline service with the US has long been a goal, especially as passenger traffic to Yerevan continues to grow at a rapid pace year-

over-year. Avetisyan acknowledged that all the technical pre-conditions already exist for Armenia to accept the type of large aircraft it would take to make such a long journey. This includes the Boeing 777 aircraft which currently already lands at Zvartnots Airport. He also expressed confidence that any additional levels of security certification required by international and US authorities to allow for non-stop flights between Armenia and the U.S. could easily be met, as Armenia already maintains a high degree of security at its airport in Yerevan.

The group also met with Andranik Shkhyan, Deputy General Manager for Zvartnots International Airport, who was also enthusiastic about establishing non-stop US-Armenia airline service. He advised that he was also taking active steps to promote this effort by sharing relevant information with certain US carriers.

Lastly, a meeting was held with Zarmine Zeitountsian, chairperson of the State Committee for Tourism, which is part of the Ministry of Economic Development and Investments of the Republic of Armenia. Zeitountsian also welcomed the creation of non-stop airline service with the U.S. and offered the full support of her office in pursuing this effort, as it aligns with the Committee’s mission to promote increased tourism to Armenia.



## INTERNATIONAL

# AGBU Europe leadership Meet with President of Artsakh in Brussels

BRUSSELS – On October 19, AGBU Europe President Nadia Gortzounian and AGBU Europe Director Nicolas Tavitian met with President of Artsakh Bako Sahakyan in Brussels, Belgium. Artsakh's Minister of Foreign Affairs Masis Mailyan, Spokesman for the President David Babayan and

Ombudsman Ruben Melikyan participated in the discussion.

Sahakyan spoke of AGBU's projects in Artsakh, mentioning that AGBU x TUMO Center is a model of quality education. He also encouraged AGBU to develop new housing and educational projects – priority fields where aid is much needed. The discussion further centered around other needs of Artsakh's people.

Gortzounian and Tavitian gave details

presence in the area. "The safety and welfare of the people of Artsakh are a priority for us. We are looking forward to stepping up our work of and assistance to Artsakh," said Gortzounian.

AGBU runs diverse programs in Artsakh, ranging from culture and education to agriculture. Launched in September 2015, AGBU x TUMO Stepanakert provides children access to free after-school learning programs designed to enhance skills and nourish

## Poland Has Balanced Approach on Nagorno Karabakh Conflict, Polish President Says

WARSAW (Armenpress) – The official visit of the Armenian delegation led by Parliament Speaker Ara Babloyan to the Republic of Poland kicked off on October 18, press service of the Parliament told Armenpress. The delegation includes MPs Armen Ashotyan, Vahan Harutyunyan, Armen Rustamyan, Edmon Marukyan and Karine Poghosyan.

On the same day, the Armenian Parliament Speaker met with President of Poland Andrzej Duda. Speaker Babloyan said with satisfaction that the interstate ties based on the centuries-old friendship of the Armenian and Polish peoples have expanded and developed over the past 25 years.

"Visits on such levels are important for the development and deepening of bilateral relations," Babloyan said. He stated that Armenia attaches great importance to the role of parliamentary diplomacy and is interested in boosting dialogue between the legislative bodies of the friendly countries. According to the Parliament Speaker, the expansion of Armenian-Polish interparliamentary ties is an important base for deepening the interstate ties. Speaker Babloyan also attached importance to the development of active cooperation between the national delegations of Armenia and Poland within the frames of different international parliamentary assemblies.

Speaking about the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Babloyan said Armenia remains committed to the peaceful settlement of the conflict. Babloyan said the Armenia-EU relations have an important place in the Armenian-Polish cooperation agenda, adding that Poland plays an active role in strengthening the Armenia-EU ties.

The Polish president thanked Babloyan and the delegation for the visit. Duda attached importance to the inter-parliamentary cooperation between the two countries and expressed hope that these relations will further strengthen and deepen.

As for the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, he reaffirmed their balanced approach and expressed confidence that the conflict must be settled exclusively through peaceful means within the format of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group Co-Chairs.



The leadership of AGBU Europe and President of Artsakh Bako Sahakyan discuss AGBU projects in Artsakh.

about AGBU Europe's "We want EU in Nagorno-Karabakh" campaign which calls on the European Union to engage with the people of Artsakh and provide assistance. In June 2017, AGBU Europe launched the campaign to raise awareness of Artsakh's international isolation and encourage global humanitarian

talents of students. In collaboration with the American University of Armenia (AUA), AGBU launched a comprehensive Continuing Education Program in Stepanakert. Artsakh's Chamber Orchestra was also founded with the financial support of AGBU in 2004.

## Turkey Arrests Five Journalists Working for Kurdish Agencies

By Ari Khalidi

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region (Kurdistan 24) – Turkish police on Friday morning, October 20, arrested five journalists in Ankara working for the two Kurdish outlets of Jin News and Mezopotamya agency.

Jin News's editor Sibel Yukler, its reporters Duygu Erol and Habibe Eren, and Mezopotamya's Diren Yurtsever and Selman Guzelyuz were among the detained.

The all-women agency, Jin news said police told their staff that there was a complaint about them, without further elaboration.

Both news networks launched last month.

Progressive Journalists' Association, an Ankara-based NGO defending media workers and freedom condemned the arrests and accused the government of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of a concerted assault on freedom of the press.

"We are not surprised by the systematic pressure of the freedom of expression and press that has gained even more pace in recent years," read a statement on association's website.

The latest detentions followed a last week court ruling that sentenced the US

daily Wall Street Journal's correspondent, Ayla Albayrak in absentia to two years and one month in prison over a report she penned in 2015.

Albayrak, a Turkish-Finnish dual citizen, was charged with "engaging in terrorist propaganda" in support of the banned Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in a report she had written about the urban conflict between government forces and Kurdish rebels in 2015.

A government crackdown on the press has seen the closure of over 150 media outlets under a state of emergency since last year's botched coup attempt against Erdogan's rule, according to Human Rights Watch and Freedom House.

There are over 160 journalists in prisons across Turkey, according to the Turkish Journalists' Association.

Last month, Turkey's state regulatory body of media shut down the transmission of three Kurdistan Region-based news channels from the national satellite provider Turksat, among them Kurdistan 24, Rudaw and Waar TV the same day the people of Kurdistan's people went to a referendum on independence from Iraq.

A December 2016 report by the UN's Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression David Kaye described the crackdown as "the government decimation of Kurdish media."

## International News

### Erdogan Comments on NKR Conflict

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) – Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrived in Azerbaijan on October 30 to participate in the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. He once again made a statement about the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

This time he started cursing after exhausting his political vocabulary. In an interview to Azerbaijani media, Erdogan particularly said: "We damn Armenia's occupation policy."

He mentioned that "the NK conflict is a bleeding wound not only for Azerbaijan, but also for Turkey."

### Armenian Delegation Arrives in Tajikistan for Official Visit

DUSHANBE, Tajikistan (Armenpress) – Armenian delegation led by Speaker of the Parliament Ara Babloyan has arrived in Tajikistan on an official visit, press service of the Parliament told Armenpress. The delegation includes MPs Vahram Baghdasaryan, Sasun Mikayelyan and Romik Manukyan.

On October 30, the Armenian Parliament Speaker and delegation members met with Shukurdzhon Zukhurov, speaker of the lower house of the parliament, and Mahmadsaid Ubaidulloev, speaker of the upper house. During the meetings, the sides stated that the Armenian-Tajik relations are effectively developing.

Ara Babloyan said this year marks the 25th anniversary of establishment of Armenian-Tajik diplomatic ties and the cooperation which is based on traditional friendship and mutual understanding strengthens at various directions.

Babloyan attached importance to the mutual visits at state level aimed at further deepening the interstate ties and in this context highlighted the visit of Tajik President Emomali Rahmon to Armenia. The meeting touched upon also the cooperation between the legislative bodies of the two countries.

### President Aoun Praises Armenian-Lebanese Ties

BEIRUT (Armenpress) – An Armenian delegation led by minister of economic development and investments, Suren Karayan, met with Lebanese President Gen. Michel Aoun in Beirut.

Aoun praised Armenian-Lebanese relations, calling for strengthen them even more, particularly in the field of economy. "The Lebanese-Armenians play an important role on strengthening the relations between Lebanon and Armenia," the president said, calling on the businessmen of the two countries to actively cooperate with each other.

Karayan highlighted the importance of economic cooperation and the investment opportunities. "The Armenian delegation today is in Lebanon at the invitation of minister Michel Pharaon, and our main goal is to strengthen the cooperation with our partners of Lebanese economic institutions," Karayan said. "We believe that the economic cooperation potential between Lebanon and Armenia is still not utilized. We have agreed with minister Pharaon to develop the economic cooperation at directions where still a lot of works need to be done."

### NATO Warns Turkey About Consequences of Russian Weaponry

BRUSSELS (Armenpress) – The chairman of the NATO Military Committee General Peter Pavel has warned Turkish authorities of the consequences of acquiring S-400 anti-aircraft missile systems from Russia. According to the General, if that deal takes place, Ankara will not be able to integrate to the Union's unified air defense system.

"Of course, the principle of sovereignty is in force also when acquiring military equipment, but states are sovereign both when making decisions and when they have to encounter the consequences of those decisions," Pavel said.

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## INTERNATIONAL

# Turkey Frees Some Hostages

HOSTAGES, from page 1

had been a diplomatic intervention when he expressed his gratitude upon release to “all those who supported us legally, diplomatically and with solidarity.”

## Why Erdogan Backed Down

Although the official line from Ankara is that the release was merely proof of the independence of the Turkish justice system, there seems to be little doubt that it was the result of rethinking on the part of Erdogan. He had made clear in remarks at the July G20 meeting in Hamburg that he had designated Steudtner as allied to the forces behind the failed coup attempt last year, when he said the international seminar that the human rights activist was attending was a “continuation of July 15...” Later that month, Erdogan criticized Germany for not allowing himself and other officials to

regularly, asking his views on world political affairs, etc. The second conclusion is that Erdogan does “respond to pressure.” Here, the shift in German policy announced by Gabriel, regarding tightening travel advisories for Germans and especially economic measures affecting investments and trade, did have an impact. The overall lesson to be learned, according to the magazine, is that the German government should continue with a “combination of dialogue and pressure.”

This involves a delicate balancing act. If Germany can tighten the screws on economic cooperation and could even, as some parties are proposing, lobby inside the EU for cutting financial support associated with the process toward EU membership, or even explicitly terminate that process, that could undermine the anti-Erdogan opposition more than punish Erdogan himself. Furthermore, as has been reit-



Dogan Akhanli



Asli Erdogan

speak there in public, but charged that “your agents come here ... and divide my country.”

*Der Spiegel* magazine presented two conclusions to be drawn from the release. First, that, “Talking to Erdogan is worthwhile.” The reason, according to this analysis, is that Erdogan suffers from an inferiority complex and, despite domestic achievements, feels that he is not duly appreciated on the international stage. He needs to be stroked. The magazine points to French president Emmanuel Macron’s success in getting two French journalists freed, as a result of his having called the Turkish president

erated from diverse quarters, Turkey’s role in the refugee crisis has to be acknowledged and secured, out of humanitarian concerns for the millions of refugees.

## On the Personal Level

Anyone who saw Peter Steudtner on television, immediately after his release, thanking those who had supported him and then saw how, upon his return to Berlin, he was escorted out of the airport to join his family, without any contact with the press or well-wishers, could well imagine what emotional and physical stress those months in a Turkish prison had wrought.

Writer Dogan Akhanli, a German citizen of Turkish heritage, had been arrested while on vacation in Spain on orders to Interpol from Turkey and held there for two months, until the Spanish government officially rejected Erdogan’s demands that he be extradited to Turkey, for crimes he had never committed. Akhanli was allowed to return home to Cologne shortly before Steudtner and his colleagues were freed. In an interview with *Der Spiegel*, Akhanli provided a sobering account of what life is like for a freed suspect. The mood in the Turkish community in Germany, he said, “has become enflamed as never before.” When he arrived at the Cologne airport, he was verbally assaulted by a man who shouted at him in Turkish, accusing him of being a traitor to his homeland. The prize-winning author said the scene had been orchestrated so as to grab the attention of the press, and that he thought that the Turkish authorities might have been behind it, though he could not prove it. In his home town Cologne, he experienced hostility from taxi drivers of Turkish descent, who recognized his face and treated him with disrespect or scorn.

When he was hauled out of his hotel room while on holiday in Spain, he said he did not immediately realize how serious the situation was. As a German citizen, he thought he would be safe in Spain, but then after he saw the enormous press echo in Germany and the public statements made by German government politicians, he realized how serious the situation was.

Asked to explain why such charges had been brought against him, which included association with terrorists, even rape, he said, “I have given many speeches about the Armenian Genocide. This made me a state enemy of Erdogan. I fared like the writer Asli Erdogan and the journalist Deniz Yücel. It is well known that we sympathized with the Gezi Movement and that we are for non-violent resistance, for democratization. Erdogan persecutes us, to terrorize civil society.”

When asked what would have happened, had Spain extradited him to Turkey, Akhanli gave a distressing answer: “Another period in a Turkish jail? I would not have survived it.” Asked to clarify what he meant, he said, “To extradite me in these days would have been my death. Something might have happened to me in jail. I have a bypass, one could very easily make it look like a heart attack and then they would say: he is an old man, he didn’t take his medication correctly and he died.”

Asked whether something similar could happen to Yücel in prison, he said, “His case is very prominent, that protects him of course. But think of Hrant Dink,” he said, recalling how the Armenian editor of AGOS had been gunned down in front of his office and photos of policemen celebrating. “Someone who has grown up in a free country has no idea what kind of terrible things can happen.”

But, the interviewer asked, doesn’t he ever feel homesick for Turkey? Akhanli answered: “Not at all. You know, I have never warned peo-

## Anthony Bourdain Is Banned From Ever Entering Azerbaijan

BOURDAIN, from page 1

front man Serj Tankian, had a hand in setting some of it up.

He tweeted: Thanks @serjtankian for finally getting me to Armenia and making it awesome.

— Anthony Bourdain (@Bourdain) October 20,

Bourdain’s social-media posts apparently got the attention of Hikmet Hajiyev, a press official for Azerbaijan’s Foreign Ministry whose anger Bourdain probably could’ve predicted:

@cnni to present ethnically cleansed land of #Azerbaijan by #Armenia as travel show shameful and #immoral. It must be stopped!

This week, the Azeri government added Bourdain to this “persona non grata list” for his “disrespect of Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity and sovereignty,” Hajiyev tells Agence France-Presse.

CNN hasn’t issued a statement yet, and neither has Bourdain. Unless, of course, you count this tweet that links to an Armenian news outlet’s story on the ban, and uses a picture of him smiling ear to ear.

Currently the Azeri government holds a list containing more than 700 names of people banned from both regions because they entered Nagorno-Karabakh without permission. That list includes government officials, activists, journalists, and now, Bourdain.



Shooting “Parts Unknown” in the mountains of Karabakh

# Community News

## Knights of Vartan Grand Commander Zamanigian Visits Washington

WASHINGTON – The newly-elected Grand Commander of Knights of Vartan, Dr. Gary Zamanigian, paid an official visit to the Ani Lodge and Dickranouhi Otyag October 10-12.

On the same day, Zamanigian visited St. Mary's Armenian Apostolic Church, met with Rev. Hovsep Karapetian, and discussed with him topics related to the national and religious affairs of the community. The Daughters of Vartan, led by Matron Araxie Vann, organized a dinner reception in honor of the Grand Commander. Members gathered to meet and chat with the new leader. Former commander, 91-year-old John Kavookian and his wife, former Matron June Kavookian, had travelled from West Virginia to meet with the Grand Commander.

Ani Lodge Commander Kevork Marashlian welcomed the guest and presented him to the lodge. Zamanigian was born in Detroit and practiced medicine for 38 years. He has served St. John Armenian Church of Southfield, Mich., for 47 years, in various capacities, served on the AGBU Central Committee of America, and served twice on the Grand Council of the Knights of Vartan as Grand vice commander.

Zamanigian in his speech touched upon the priority of the brotherhood, which began in 1916, as a secretive service organization, and eventually became a charitable organization. He mentioned the excellent programs that the



Grand Commander Dr. Gary Zamanigian meeting the Ambassador

brotherhood has initiated in Armenia over the last twenty years. "It is amazing what we are accomplishing with a little budget," he said. He then outlined three organizational priorities of the Grand Council for the year 2017-2018. These are for each lodge to appoint a new membership committee to handle recruiting, and also publicity and ritual committees to perform these tasks.

This year marks the 64th anniversary of the Dickranouhie Otyag. Vann in her speech congratulated the sisters on the occasion. She also mentioned the names of former matrons and gave them commemorative gifts. A longtime member, Clara Andonian, presented the history of the sisterhood, and the many accomplishments of the Otyag during the last 64 years.

At the end, Southeast Grand District Representative Jake Bournazian, along with the Grand Commander, presented appreciation plaques to the Washington area participants of the First Convocation and establishment of the new Liaison office in Yerevan, Armenia: Vartiter Marashlian, Araxie Vann and Kevork Marashlian.

On October 11, the Grand Commander visited the Armenian Embassy for a two-hour meeting with Ambassador Grigor Hovhannisian. Zamanigian presented to the ambassador his views regarding the recent Armenia-Diaspora meetings in Yerevan, where the Knights of

see KNIGHTS, page 6



From left, Ashot Tevosian, Mayor of Nor Keghi and Richard Norsigian, President of the Nor Keghi Association

## Detroit Armenians Bring Together Old Keghi Traditions to Help New Keghi in Armenia

DETROIT – A fundraising project launched three years ago by descendants with a "living bond" linking them to old Keghi in Turkish-occupied Western Armenia will be capped with a Keghi III *Pagharch* feast in December to benefit school children of Nor Keghi in the Republic of Armenia.

In doing so, the life of students and residents in the Nor Keghi village of independent Armenia will benefit with the renovation and development of a multi-

purpose auditorium at one of three existing school structures. Activist Richard Norsigian, a motivating project member who conferred with officials in Nor Keghi in September,

said school and government leaders were elated on the enhancement project launched by the Nor Keghi Association of Greater Detroit. With the cooperation of the Ministry of the Diaspora, Norsigian, chairman of the association's steering committee, was also greeted at a Town Hall meeting in Nor Keghi, a community numbering more than 6,500 residents near Yerevan.

Nor Keghi Mayor Ashot Tevosyan escorted Norsigian on a tour of the town and two of its most recently built schools that service a full 12-grade education format. At the third school, Norsigian said it was evident there was a need for renovations in its auditorium.

"By concentrating on upgrading the multi-purpose auditorium to benefit students and the community our mission will foster a living bond between the DNA of old Keghi and Nor Keghi," said Norsigian, a retired public school administrator and professor at Madonna University.

This year's fundraising will take place on Saturday, December 2, at 6:30 p.m., at St. John Armenian Church Hall in Southfield. In addition to *pagharch*, a winter meal consumed by Keghitzees for centuries, a full menu also will be served, followed by Armenian folk dance music by an all-star band consisting of noted Armenian musicians.

In addition to being taken on a tour of Nor Keghi landmarks, Mayor Tevosian took Norsigian to the St. Hovhannes Church, the first church built in the community after its renaming in 1962 from Ashtarak to Nor Keghi by the Armenian government. At the church Norsigian and his son Shant dined with community leaders and school principals where their hosts also applauded Detroit's Keghitzees for reaching out to Nor Keghi.

In addressing the gathering the mayor said "we are pleased and elated to have compatriots in America who are concerned about our homeland and particularly Nor Keghi." Norsigian said Nor Keghi is also the base of impressive plum and apple orchards that help strengthen its economic base by reaching out to markets in Russia and Ukraine.

Attendees to the Nor Keghi event can also learn more about the continuing

see DETROIT, page 7

## West Coast News With Bryan Ardouny and Khachaturian Trio

By Kevork Keushkerian

PASADENA, Calif. – St. Gregory Armenian Church's Men's Forum invites a prominent Armenian once a month on a Thursday evening to speak about issues concerning the Armenian community. Bryan Ardouny, executive director of the Armenian Assembly of America, was the guest speaker on Thursday, October 12. Ardouny was introduced by Mihran Toumajan, the western regional director of the Armenian Assembly. The audience included Armela Shakaryan, consul of the Republic of Armenia in Los Angeles, Armenian Assembly of America Board of Trustee members and church parishioners.

Prior to his employment with the Armenian Assembly of America, Ardouny was a staff member on Capitol Hill, working for Rep. Michael Bilirakis, who was representing Florida's 9th District. In this fashion, Ardouny learned about the inner workings and the intrigues that go on in a Congressional representative's office.

Ardouny presented the programs that the Assembly cares about and pursues diligently in Washington, D.C. They include raising the number of Congressional Armenian Caucus members from 89 to 150 in order to gain more leverage on issues that matter to the Armenian community; lowering the number of members of the House Turkish Caucus; publicizing the fraudulent activities and secret money laundering operations of the Turks and the Azerbaijanis; and maximizing financial aid to Armenia and Artsakh.

Although Ardouny appreciated the show of force that the Armenian communities in Los



Bryan Ardouny at the Men's Forum at St. Gregory Armenian Church in Pasadena

Angeles and New York could display on April 24 of every year, he wished that the same could be done in Washington, DC, the seat of the American government.

Accordingly, he invited everyone to attend the next Armenian Advocacy Conference to be held in Washington, DC in September 2018. He said that the three-day conference, September 23-25, will make a big difference, if the number of attendees equal those of Los Angeles and New York generated every April 24.

### Khachaturian Trio in Glendale

The Khachaturian Trio presented a classical musical extravaganza on Wednesday, October 18, at the Salem Lutheran Church in Glendale. The event was organized by the Hi-Am Foundation.

The Hi-Am Charity Foundation was founded in May 2001 by Nshan Adjemian. Its mission is to foster cultural and educational growth through its programs and services.

The Khachaturian Trio was founded as the Trio Arsika in 1999. In 2008, the Trio took the

see GLENDALE, page 6



## COMMUNITY NEWS

### West Coast News With Khachaturian Trio

GLENDALE, from page 5

name of Aram Khachaturian, and together with the help of London-based philanthropist Assadour Guzelian, established the Classical Music Development Foundation, which helped the group to further its education and charity activity.

The Khachaturian Trio is composed of pianist Armine Grigoryan, violinist Karen Shaghaldyan, and cellist Karen Kocharyan. Grigoryan and Kocharyan both graduated from the Tchaikovsky School of Music and

Europe. Currently, Armine Grigoryan is a professor at the Yerevan State Conservatory and the director of the Aram Khachaturian Museum in Yerevan.

The program included Khachaturian's *Valse* and the drama *Masquerade*, piano trios from Rachmaninoff and Babajanyan, excerpts from Khachaturian's "Gayane" ballet and the Adagio from Khachaturian's "Spartacus" ballet. In response to the audience's lengthy standing ovation, the Trio concluded the program with a spectacular



The Khachaturian Trio in Glendale.

Yerevan State Conservatory. Shaghaldyan graduated from the Moscow Conservatory.

All three musicians have toured widely throughout Armenia, Russia, the US and

rendition of Khachaturian's famous *Saber Dance*.

The Khachaturian Trio was scheduled to travel next to Toronto and then to Moscow.

### Knights of Vartan Grand Commander Zamanigian Visits Washington

KNIGHTS, from page 5

Vartan participated with a 25-member delegation. He also outlined the charitable work that the brotherhood has accomplished during the last 20 years in Armenia, and possible new programs that will be undertaken after a meeting with Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobyan.

Hovhannisian gave a presentation of the actual political, economic and cultural situation of Armenia and thanked the brotherhood for its humanitarian programs in that country. Also in attendance were Marashlian and Grand

District Representative Jake Bournazian.

In the afternoon, Zamanigian visited the headquarters of the Armenian National Committee of America and met with Executive Director Aram Hamparian. Zamanigian praised the work of the ANCA, especially with the young generation and in the congress of the United States. Hamparian presented details of the recent movie: "Architects of Denial," which will be presented by the Knights of Vartan in Florida in March 2018.

On Thursday October 12, Zamanigian travelled to Philadelphia on a similar mission.

## OBITUARY

### Edwina (Jamgochian) Walsh

WATERTOWN — Edwina Walsh, née Jamgochian, of Watertown, formerly of Woburn, suffered a ruptured aortic aneurysm and passed away peacefully on the evening of October 27. Edwina was the daughter of the late Megerdich and Lucy (Kumjian) Jamgochian and wife of the late Daniel Walsh. She had been previously married to the late Henry Bogosian. Edwina was the mother of Eric Bogosian, married to Jo Bonney, and Denise Bogosian, married to Michael Casella. She was the cherished grandmother of Harris and Travis Bogosian and Nisa Thompson. Edwina is survived by her twin brother, Edward Jamgochian, who lives in Virginia with his wife Louise. Her close family members, sister Mary Kendall and cousin Hagop Jamgochian are deceased. She is also survived by many loving relatives in the Jamgochian, Bogosian and Walsh families.



When she was first married and after her children were small, Edwina worked as a professional hairdresser. In the 1970s she decided to pursue a college degree, graduating from Fitchburg State College in 1978. For more than 20 years, Edwina (as Edwina Bogosian) taught cosmetology and aesthetics as well as headed her department at Essex Agricultural and Technical Institute, beloved by her hundreds of students.

Edwina remarried late in life to Daniel Walsh and after his passing 10 years ago, enjoyed spending time with her children and grandchildren, still cooking her wonderful recipes for them as recently as last summer. Edwina was an avid painter, winning

a number of amateur awards. She enjoyed the company of a circle of close friends who shared her interests: yoga, painting and literature. Last summer, to celebrate her 90th birthday, a lavish dinner party was held in her honor at the Four Seasons Hotel Boston.

A funeral service for Edwina was held at Saint James Armenian Church, Watertown, on Friday, November 3, while visiting hours took place at the Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, the day before. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to Saint James Armenian Church.

Interment services were private.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

# Detroit Armenians Bring Together Old Keghi Traditions to Help New Keghi in Armenia

DETROIT, from page 5  
 role of Houshamadyan, a non-profit association to reconstruct and preserve the memory of Armenian life in the Ottoman Empire. Founded in 2010 in Berlin, Germany, its US branch was organized earlier this year in Michigan. An informational booth will be sta-

tioned at the December 2 event to fully introduce the project, answer questions and digitize up to three memory items if people would like to bring them, and to set appointments to digitize larger collections.

Ani Kasparian, an Armenian language lecturer and instructor at the University of



Sirvard Hamparyan, Ministry of the Diaspora, Richard Norsigian, Nor Keghi Assoc., Ara Simonyan, Minister of the Kotayk Ministry of Culture discussing the renovation of Multipurpose room in which they are standing



From left to right, Yeretsyan #2 School Principal Arayig Haroutunyan, Ministry of the Diaspora Representative Sirvard Hamparyan, Nor Keghi Assoc. President Richard Norsigian, Mayor of Nor Keghi Ashot Tevosyan, Richard's son Shant Norsigian standing with the faculty of the Yeretsyan School

Michigan-Dearborn, said the Houshamadyan Education Society seeks to cover all aspects

of the history of Armenian life in the Ottoman era, including social history and daily life – from music, literature and material culture. Of interest would be musical recordings, photographs, pictures, books, periodicals and old film history. Additional information can be obtained on its website: [www.houshamadyan.org](http://www.houshamadyan.org).

In reviewing the upcoming Nor Keghi *pagharch* fundraiser, Norsigian stressed “we will dine on a staple that helped our ancestors survive during the freezing winter seasons in mountainous Keghi, while emphasizing that by meeting our fundraising goal we will enhance the life of our fellow Hyes in Nor Keghi – especially the school children.” From its very beginning the project has been embraced by the entire Detroit Armenian community.

A donation of \$45 per person covers the event's traditional *pagharch* feast along with a full buffet menu and Armenian dance music.

Norsigian also stressed that his successful visit to Nor Keghi was aided by Sirvard Hambaryan of the Ministry of Diaspora and Ara Simonyan of the Kotayik Marz. The reputable Paros Foundation will govern the renovation project for the Detroit-based Nor Keghi Association

(Mitch Kehetian is a retired editor of the *Macomb Daily* and former board trustee at Central Michigan University.)

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Aso Tavitian: A Life Full of Grace and Giving

TAVITIAN, from page 1

Sorting). Since 2008, he has devoted his life to helping his fellow men in Armenia, Artsakh, and America with generous contributions to several educational, religious, artistic institutions and endeavors.

Aso (Assadour) Ohanes Tavitian was born in Bulgaria to parents who were survivors of the 1915 Genocide in Turkey. His well-to-do family had lost not only all its material possessions, but loved ones as well. After escaping to Bulgaria, they had rebuilt their fortunes, to only lose their material possessions once again to the Communists when the Communists took over Bulgaria at the end of the Second World War. Thus, Tavitian grew up in an environment where the loss of one's material possessions was not viewed as "the end of the world." "It

looking me over and taking into account that I was raised in Communist Bulgaria, he said that he would give me three hours per week, because he had promised his friend from Athens that he would teach me, but warned me not to raise my hopes. "I will examine your progress in six weeks and then will decide if it is worth continuing" he said. I worked very hard for six weeks, he was pleased, and we continued for another six weeks. In those twelve weeks, he had taught me enough to be accepted in college in September of 1959."

Sir's generosity left a significant impact on Tavitian. "Sir was not a rich man. He had the earnings of a high school teacher and did not even want me to know that he was funding my living expenses. That is the ultimate in giving." Years later when he became successful, Aso cre-

mind about being a scientist, and abandoned the doctoral program and became a participant in what was one of the first independent software companies. It was the late '60s and an innovative period in the technology world was just beginning to blossom. After becoming the CEO of Syncsort in 1975 he led the company through 32 years of steady growth and consistent record of profitability with "some of the highest profit margins in the industry." Syncsort's first product was a venture in an area where IBM had 100-percent market share. Within five years Syncsort had garnered 55 percent of that market, pushing IBM into a #2 position. In 2008, he sold a substantial portion of his 85 percent holding in the company to a conglomeration of, Insight, a private equity firm, Goldman Sacks, and a couple of other small investors. He retained about 15 percent of Syncsort and continued to be involved with a seat on the Board. "Syncsort was never just economics for me," he says. In 2013, he sold his remaining 15 percent when the company recapitalized for a second time.

## Tragedies

During the time from the 1970s through the beginning of the 2000s, both happiness and tragedy marred his life. He met his future wife, Arlene, a high school and college teacher in English, in the New York City subway and was happily married for 30 years. But 2002 became the "darkest, most disrupting" period in his life. In the span of six months in 2002, he lost his wife, his mother and a good college friend who

ing a western perspective to decision making, while staying scrupulously away from getting involved in any aspects of Armenian politics.

This program was initially launched with the cooperation of the then Dean of Fletcher, General Jack Galvin, a former Supreme Allied Commander of NATO. It has expanded and flourished with the next two successive Deans at Fletcher, Steve Bosworth, a highly respected American diplomat followed by another Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, Admiral James Stavridis. Both of whom became good friends. The Tavitian Foundation has sponsored several trips for both of these Deans to Armenia in order to further strengthen the links between Fletcher and Armenia. "Sadly, Steve passed away two years ago," Aso adds.

In June of this year, Tavitian handed out the coveted certificates at the most recent graduation at Fletcher of the 15 Tavitian Scholars. There are currently about 300 graduates of the various Tavitian Foundation programs currently in Armenia. Spread among different Ministries and Governmental Institutions, they refer to themselves affectionately as "The Fletcher Mafia," "The Tavitian Mafia," or simply "The Tavitians." "The Central Bank," Aso says, "is the most effective user of this program. There are about 50 or so Tavitian Scholars employed by the Central Bank."

Vigen Sargsyan, Armenia's current minister of defense, was the first student from Armenia to receive a full scholarship from the Tavitian Foundation as well as some support from the AGBU. His wife, Lucine Galadjian, was also a recipient of a Tavitian scholarship. They both completed a two-year master's program in international relations at Fletcher. As one of the Fletcher graduates, Sargsyan commented in an email that the Tavitian Foundation made it possible for him to attend the school of his choice, the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. After graduating from Yerevan State University and the St. Petersburg School of Public Administration, he "was very much interested in getting yet another perspective on issues of international law and organizations, and Security Studies," and though he had fully funded offers from other prestigious institutions, he chose Fletcher.

"Yet, more than receiving a full scholarship from the Tavitian Foundation, I have had the privilege of getting to know Aso and benefiting from his generous attention," commented the minister. "I have learned from our lengthy discussions on world order, the future of Armenia, the role of philanthropy, and of course his main passion, the arts. Every day I recall the great contribution that Aso Tavitian and the Tavitian Foundation has had in my life, and the lives of hundreds of young people from Armenia."

The constructive effect of the 300 or so Tavitian Scholars currently in Armenia on the governance of Armenia led to Tavitian being awarded Armenia's Medal of Honor by the President of Armenia in October 2017. "While I am the official recipient of the Medal," he said, "it is a reflection of the great work that the Tavitian Scholars are doing in Armenia. I feel I have accepted the Medal on their behalf."

## Think Tanks

Another focus of the Tavitian Foundation reflects his interests in international relations. He is a member of the Council of Foreign Relations and a trustee of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and supports and gets involved in various programs at these organizations. In addition to participating in the various discussions that the Council of Foreign Relations holds on international relations issues, Tavitian is very much involved with the Military Fellows that join the Council for a one year tenure every year. The Military Fellows, one from each branch, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Coast Guard, and the Marine Corp. are typically of the ranks of Captain or Colonel. They are on an upward trajectory of their careers and "are on track to be our future Generals and Admirals," he explained. "It makes one proud to be an American, when one is exposed to what these individuals do for all of us in civilian life."

see ASO, page 13



Aso Tavitian in Beirut with other college students  
Aso first row center

was understood," he says, that "you just get back on your backside and make it back again. Implicit was that anything is possible." When he reflects back on his professional career as an entrepreneur and businessman, he feels that this was an important component of the reasons for his success. "My company had one of the highest profit margins in the software industry," he says, "but I was never after the money, per se. When the money is not the primary objective, one's risk assessments and priorities take on different considerations. What turned me on was the building of an organization and creating an environment where intelligent people liked to work and create the best products that beat the competition decisively. And I think that this perspective was a direct consequence of the environment that I grew up in."

The "anything is possible" attitude has been helpful in many aspects in his life. Having moved from Bulgaria to Beirut, Lebanon, at the age of 19, he learned English in the span of three months in order to be accepted to college with a full scholarship. However, Tavitian still needed to somehow cover his living expenses. In the last minute, as he was considering the possibility of not being able to benefit from the scholarship, the school awarded him living expenses, as well. Eighteen months later, when he was leaving Beirut for the United States, he discovered by accident that his living expenses had been funded anonymously by his high school English teacher, Antoan Kehayian, referred to by everyone as "Sir."

With fondness Tavitian recalls his first encounter with "Sir," who came into his life through a distant relative in Athens, Greece. This relative was an academic and asked Sir to teach English to the young Aso. "I remember my first encounter with Sir very well," Aso says, "He was a very tall, slim man, dressed in a waistcoat and a bow tie, very much looking like a British academic. He was British educated. For a 19-year-old, he was almost intimidating," he said. "Sir was Armenian, but a Catholic and claimed that he was more Catholic than the Pope. He had a tremendous disdain for the Communists and felt that they destroyed the motivation and drive of people. After carefully



Aso Tavitian in Beirut with his brother and mother seated behind him

ated the Tavitian Foundation in 1985, which he funds himself, as a vehicle for providing financial assistance to talented young Armenians who do not have the resources to pursue a college education. "This was my way of paying back for the assistance I had received," he says. "I tell the story of Sir," he continues, "to every young person I have helped and stress that the only thing I expect in return is that someday, when they can afford it, they help somebody else. Sir was the symbolic element which inspired me later on in life to help my fellow men," he states reflectively, adding that his caring about people primarily came from his parents.

## Columbia University

Tavitian arrived in the United States in June of 1961, well past the time for acceptance decisions at colleges for that fall. But once again, in the spirit of "anything is possible," he applied late and was accepted at Columbia University with a full scholarship. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Nuclear Engineering in 1964, followed by a Master's degree, again in Nuclear Engineering, in 1966. He then enrolled in the Doctoral program at Columbia. "I thought I wanted to be in academia and be a scientist," he said.

He finished the required course and experimental work for his Doctoral studies by 1969, but while writing his thesis he changed his

had worked for him for more than 25 years.

While Tavitian continues to be in touch with the Syncsort group and follows their success, he now spends most of his time concentrating on the works of the Tavitian Foundation, which he continues to fund. "Life must go on," Tavitian said and explains how these tragedies reinvigorated his work through the Tavitian Foundation.

The principal focus of the Tavitian Foundation is the education of talented individuals of Armenian ethnic origin. However, the initial approach of providing financial assistance to talented individuals, has evolved into what he calls "the group programs." Each year one or two groups of 15 well-educated individuals (many with PhDs) who are midlevel employees at various Ministries or other Governmental Institutions of Armenia and Artsakh are carefully selected and brought over to the US for a very specialized training program at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. "When I sit down with them, at the end of each program and ask "What did you learn?," Aso reflects, "it is very satisfying that almost none of the participants talk about a particular subject matter. "A new way of thinking" or "analyzing problems differently" or "not accepting the truth as it is being taught or presented" are the kind of responses that I get," Aso concludes. This is all part of his drive to strengthen the governance of Armenia by bring-



# A Brief History of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator



The following introduction, written by Marc Mamigonian, now director of academic affairs at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, appeared in the program book for the 75th anniversary of *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator*:

*The Armenian Mirror-Spectator* is the oldest English-language Armenian newspaper in the world. It was during the late 1920s that the Armenian-American community in the United States became aware of the existence of the new generation that had grown up in this new world. The vast differences in geographical background, language and education had created a gap between the generations. In an attempt to bridge this gap, the Armenian Democratic Liberal organization (ADL), publisher of the *Baikar* daily, at its convention in 1931, on the recommendation of a committee composed of Elisha B. Chrakian, Kapriel S. Papazian and Vahan Churgents, resolved to establish an English-language Armenian weekly, the first of its kind. *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator* was first published on July 1, 1932 in Boston. Elisha B. Chrakian was its first editor.

From the beginning, the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* was dedicated to serving the entire Armenian-American community and to fill a need: to satisfy a readership of primarily English-speaking Armenian Americans. For three cents per issue, or a whole dollar for the year if you subscribed, the non-Armenian-language reader was given access to news and views on Armenian affairs. The price has gone up, of course, but the *Mirror-Spectator* is still fill-

in turn was succeeded in the late 1940s by Mardiros Sarkisian. Major coverage was given, of course, to war-related news, and after the war significant developments such as the proposed return of Kars and Ardahan to Soviet Armenia and the controversial "repatriation" of Armenian Americans to Soviet Armenia.

During the war, the ADL made an offer to Armenian-American servicemen that the paper would be sent to them free of charge which they did, despite the larger-than-expected demand!

Under Bob Vahan's editorship, the *Mirror-Spectator* moved to Shawmut Avenue in Boston, long the home of the Armenian-language *Baikar* daily where it remained until moving to its current headquarters on Mount Auburn Street in Watertown in 1961. Vahan would remember that "my whole time with the *Mirror-Spectator* was one of controversy. I always took a stand not always looked upon favorably by the hierarchy but I believed best suited for our constituency at the time."

The decade following the move to Boston was a tumultuous one in the Armenian-American community, but also one of accomplishments and advances. Vahan recalled that "some important stories where we boosted the programs" were the establish-

ment of NAASR and the recreation of an Armenian Studies chair at Harvard University, the building of St. Vartan's Cathedral in New York City, the *Mirror-Spectator's* move from New York to Boston, the growth of the AGBU in the US and the successful fundraising by urging "Will Writing" following the election of Alex Manoogian as president, the building of the new Baikar building in Watertown (Architect John Danielson), the death of Gevorg VI and the election of Vazken I as Catholicos of All Armenians.

Following a stint by Krikor Vosganian as editor in the early 1960s, Helene Pilibosian Sarkissian became the first woman to edit the paper. In the early 1990s she wrote that "Totally naive to the problems that could arise, I began the practice of journalism with enthusiasm." In this period, the paper distinguished itself with superb coverage of the unprecedented commemoration of the Armenian Genocide in April 1965. The editorial on April 24, 1965, contained these words: "On this, the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Great Crime, [the Armenians] remember that lives, homeland, and 35 billion dollars in savings and property were lost to the grace of the Turkish government and mob. They remember that the world has not yet recognized the need for restitution and that Turkey will never even admit its crime and its present distortions of history. These Armenians feel that the cause of justice is never outdated."

An era marked by the ethnic revival and the "rediscovery of roots" was reflected in the pages of the *Mirror-Spectator*, under Varoujan Samuelian's editorship, and articles on these themes frequently appeared. Samuelian's

column, "Juicy Tidbits," provided a forum for these thoughtful and provocative views. It was also an era that saw the proliferation of new organizations in the Armenian-American community such as the Armenian Assembly and the influx of Armenians from the Middle East, especially Lebanon.

Helene Pilibosian Sarkissian returned in 1976 to co-edit the paper with Barbara Merguerian. Merguerian would remain until 1985 and return to her post in late 1990s. A historian, she brought a refreshing perspective at a point in history when debates over the Armenian Genocide and its denial were escalating to previously-unknown levels.

At the time of the *Mirror-Spectator's* 50th anniversary, Merguerian wrote: "Although it is easy to chronicle the many ways in which our community has grown over the past five decades, what is remarkable is that so many problems remain unchanged. We continue to be frustrated in attempts to recover our lands; we see the desecration of our monuments and the denial by the Turks that the massacres of 1915 ever took place. We continue to search for a response to assimilation and intermarriage and we develop many new programs, many of them educational ... And we look for more effective ways to express our cultural heritage."

Ara Kalaydjian became editor after Merguerian left to take a position at NAASR in the mid-1980s and he steered the paper through another turbulent decade and more that was undoubtedly dominated by the rebirth of an Armenian nationalism in Soviet Armenia and the renewed and strengthened call for Karabakh to be freed from Azeri domination, the traumatic and devastating 1988 earthquake, Armenian independence in 1991 and the bitter war with Azerbaijan.

After Barbara Merguerian's return stint as editor for three years with the assistance of Dr. Suzanne Moranian, she handed over the editor's desk to Alin K. Gregorian in 2000. Gregorian has been faced with the challenges of a changing readership, the rapid rise of the Internet, and a



ing that need 75 years later.

As the editors of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* noted on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the paper in 1942:

"This new generation of Armenian-American youngsters attended American public schools, held their own as scholars and as athletes, in competition with their fellow American classmates, and spoke the King's English, not with the accent of the parents from Sivas or Harpoot, but as any authentic native 'Amerigatzi' ... Through living in the same country and often under the same roof, the immigrant parents and their American-born sons and daughters, in some respects, were as people from two different planets. Yet, whereas, the elders, through the force of circumstances, had acquired a fairly adequate knowledge of the English language and were making steady progress in their appreciation of the problems of America and their American children, the latter, deprived of the mother tongue and strangers to the cultural and historical background of their parents, found it difficult to understand the older generation."

Bedros Norehad served as editor at the time the two papers merged to form the *Mirror-Spectator*, which then had its offices in New York City. Many years later, he would write that "There are many areas, such as the partisan excesses of the party papers that an independent press can improve on: there are areas, commitment to principle, self-sacrifice, devotion, which an independent press can well emulate."

Jack Dreassian took over the leadership when Norehad entered the military during World War II, and he



multitude of complex issues facing the Armenian-American community, and indeed, Armenians worldwide. Many of the challenges faced by print media today.

Yet, the mission of the *Mirror-Spectator* to connect and inform its readership on issues, programs and events remains as vitally important today as it was in 1933. "With your support," comments editor Alin Gregorian, "*The Armenian Mirror-Spectator* will continue in its mission of shedding light on all that we think matters to the greater Armenian-American community."



## Robert Fisk

Robert Fisk is the multi-award winning Beirut-based Middle East correspondent for *The Independent*. He has lived in the Arab world for more than 40 years, covering Lebanon, five Israeli invasions, the Iran-Iraq war, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Algerian civil war, Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, the Bosnian and Kosovo wars, the American invasion and occupation of Iraq and the 2011 Arab revolutions.

Occasionally describing himself as an "Ottoman correspondent" because of the huge area he covers, Fisk joined *The Independent* in 1989. He has written best-selling books on the Middle East, including *Pity the Nation*, *The Great War for Civilisation* and *The Age of the Warrior*.

He is an outspoken proponent of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. In October 2016, Fisk published a moving article titled "A Beautiful Mosque and the Dark Period of the Armenian Genocide," bringing to light the construction of a mosque in Gaziantep or Antep on the former site of the 19th-century Armenian Holy Mother of God Cathedral.

He is a seven-time recipient of the British Press Awards' International Journalist of the Year and a two-time winner of the British Press Awards' Reporter of the Year. Based in Beirut, he has lived in the Middle East for more than 40 years.

A cross between a correspondent, writer, and historian, Fisk started his career reporting in Northern Ireland in 1972 as a Belfast correspondent for *The Times* of London. He then moved to the Middle East where he has lived and worked covering many of the wars there.

Fisk prefers to call the events that befell the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire and later the Republic of Turkey as "The Armenian Holocaust." In addition to renaming the Genocide, Fisk suggests that Armenians fight denialism following the Jewish tradition and honor the noble Turks who put their own lives and those of their families at risk by saving countless Armenian neighbors and friends.

He was born in Kent in 1946 and gained his BA in English and Classics at Lancaster University. He holds a PhD in politics from Trinity College, Dublin.



## Amberin Zaman

Amberin Zaman is a columnist for Al-Monitor's Turkey Pulse and has covered Turkey, the Kurds and Armenia for the *Washington Post*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Voice of America*. She served as *The Economist's* Turkey correspondent between 1999 and 2016. She was a columnist for the liberal daily Taraf and the mainstream daily Haberturk before switching to the independent Turkish online news portal Diken in 2015.

Zaman has been a supporter of minority rights in Turkey. She is a proponent of normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations and regularly discusses the Armenian Genocide in her columns. In 2014, she participated in a conference by the Hrant Dink Foundation that was dedicated to Armenian-Turkish reconciliation. Zaman, who recognizes the Armenian Genocide as fact, believes that the Turkish government must reconcile with its history concerning the Armenians.

Zaman states that she has been the target of a vilification campaign by pro-government media. In 2013, Zaman was sacked as a journalist for Haberturk because of columns that were considered unacceptable by the government.

Zaman was attacked on Twitter for reporting the Gezi Park protests.

In 2014, the Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, called Zaman "A militant in the guise of a journalist, a shameless woman... Know your place!" at two successive election rallies. Zaman wrote a column in the newspaper Taraf entitled "First be a human!"

Zaman is the daughter of a former Bangladeshi ambassador. Her mother is Turkish, from Istanbul.

She was born in New York City.

**85 Years**

**The Armenian Mirror-Spectator**

NOVEMBER 3, 2017 • BOSTON NEWTON MARRIOTT

*Evening Program*

**Welcome**  
Nicole Babikian Hajjar, *Gala Benefit Chair*

**Remarks**  
Anaide Nahikian, *Mistress of Ceremonies*

**2017 Excellence in Journalism Award: Amberin Zaman**  
Introduction by Alin K. Gregorian, *Editor, The Armenian Mirror-Spectator*

**2017 Excellence in Journalism Award: David Barsamian**  
Introduction by Aram Arkun, *Assistant Editor, The Armenian Mirror-Spectator*

**2017 Excellence in Journalism Award: Philip Terzian**  
Introduction by Anaide Nahikian

**2017 Lifetime Achievement: Robert Fisk**  
Introduction by Edmond Y. Azadian, *President, Tekeyan Cultural Association Central Board of Directors, Senior Editorial Columnist, The Armenian Mirror-Spectator*

**Honoring Ceremony**  
Kevork Marashlian, *Chairman, Baikar Association Inc., publisher of The Armenian Mirror-Spectator*

**Closing Remarks**  
**Dancing**

## Black Sea Salsa

The Black Sea is a world away from lands where Salsa music originated. But building a bridge connecting them is Black Sea Salsa, created right here and led by Dan Teager.

As the group's website says, the band offers "six horns, five rhythms, four vocals and one great sound."

The 15-piece band performs a mélange of music from Latin Jazz and Middle Eastern.

Teager began studying the trumpet at the age of 7 and still continues to be enthusiastic about the instrument and its capabilities.

After graduating from Princeton University, he went on to study electronic music composition at the New England Conservatory with Robert Ceely. Teager was introduced as a young artist by the Armenian Renaissance Association in 1989, and has performed as a featured soloist in venues ranging from the



Massachusetts State House to the historic 12th Baptist Church in Roxbury.

In addition to teaching at the Winchester Community Music School, freelance work, and Black Sea Salsa, Teager also directs the Youth Choir at the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church in Cambridge.

In 1996, he founded Black Sea Salsa with the idea of creating an original sound by fusing elements of Middle Eastern music with Latin Jazz and blues. Since its first concert, the group has gone on to establish itself as one of Boston's premier festival bands, performing up and down the East Coast. Black Sea Salsa has recorded two CDs, and played at venues such as Boston Harborfest, Steppin' Out Boston and Philadelphia's Arts on the Main Line. As its director, writer, and arranger, Teager has been recognized with awards from the Massachusetts Arts Council and the Armenian Foundation for Film Music and Art.

The band also features John Baboian on guitar with a five-piece rhythm section, Lance Martin on flute with the wall 'o sound horns, and Ron Murphy on vocals with the Salsettes.



## David Barsamian

David Barsamian is the award-winning founder and director of Alternative Radio, the independent weekly audio series based in Boulder, Colo., airing on more than 250 stations. One of America's most wide-ranging and respected independent journalists, Barsamian has altered the media landscape with his radio programs and books with Noam Chomsky, Tariq Ali, Howard Zinn, Eqbal Ahmad, Edward Said and Arundhati Roy.

He is the winner of the Media Education Award, the ACLU's Upton Sinclair Award for independent journalism, and the Cultural Freedom Fellowship from the Lannan Foundation. The Institute for Alternative Journalism named him one of its Top Ten Media Heroes.

He is the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center. In 2017, the South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy presented him with their Lifetime Achievement Award. He has collaborated with the world-renowned Kronos Quartet in events in New York, London, Vienna and elsewhere.

Barsamian was deported from India due to his work on Kashmir and other revolts. He is still barred from traveling to "the world's largest democracy."

His latest book, *Global Discontents: Conversations on the Rising Threats to Democracy (American Empire Project)*, co-authored with Noam Chomsky, will be out on December 5.

From escalating climate change to the devastation in Syria, pandemic state surveillance to looming nuclear war, Noam Chomsky takes stock of the world today. Over the course of 10 conversations with long-time collaborator David Barsamian, spanning 2013-2016, Chomsky argues in favor of radical changes to a system that cannot possibly cope with what awaits tomorrow.

Interwoven with personal reflections spanning from childhood to his eighth decade of life, *Global Discontents* also marks out Chomsky's own intellectual journey, mapping his progress to revolutionary ideas and global prominence.



## Philip Terzian

A native of the Washington, DC, area, Philip Terzian has been a journalist since the early 1970s. Reporter and editor at the *Anniston (Ala.) Star*; Reuters and *US News & World Report*; assistant editor of *The New Republic*; assistant editorial page editor at the *Los Angeles Times*; associate editor of the *Lexington (Ky.) Herald*; and editor of the editorial pages at *The Providence Journal*. During 1978-79 he was a speechwriter for Secretary of State Cyrus Vance.

For 20 years, he wrote a syndicated column, was a Pulitzer finalist for distinguished commentary, has reported from a dozen foreign countries, and been a contributor to the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New Criterion*, *Commentary*, *Harper's*, the *American Spectator*, the *Times Literary Supplement* and other publications. He has been a Pulitzer juror, media fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford, and is a member of the American Council on Germany. He has been Literary Editor of *The Weekly Standard* since 2005, and is author of *Architects of Power: Roosevelt, Eisenhower, and the American Century*, published by Encounter Books in 2010.

Married, and the father of two, he lives in Fairfax County, Va.

# 85 Years The Armenian Mirror-Spectator

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As of October 28, 2017

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## Nicole Babikian Hajjar

Nicole Babikian Hajjar, chair of the gala committee, was born and raised in Beirut, Lebanon, where she received her BA in economics from the American University of Beirut (AUB), followed by a Translator Diploma from Université Saint-Joseph. Before moving to the US in 1994, she worked as a sworn translator (being fluent in French, Arabic, English and Armenian) and a copywriter in advertising.



Upon coming to the United States, she looked to the *Mirror-Spectator* for access to the greater Armenian community.

"I view *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator* as a major voice in the Armenian press, a window to our greater community, and a platform to make our individual voices heard. *The Mirror* keeps us all connected and engaged, and often times inspired by the many stories and profiles it sheds a light on," she said.

Throughout years of volunteering and philanthropy, she has chaired fundraisers for numerous Armenian organizations including Armenia Tree

Project, Project SAVE Archives and Hamazkayin, in addition to her many years of service to St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School in Watertown and to the New England Chapter of the Worldwide Alumni Association of her alma mater AUB.

She has been leading the Board of the YerazArt Foundation for almost 10 years, supporting and promoting young, talented musicians from Armenia. "Whenever I asked the press to cover any of our concerts or other events," recounts Nicole, "the Mirror was always there for us. Not just for me, but for so many others who work hard at supporting charitable initiatives throughout our community. It therefore felt natural for me to give back and be there for the Mirror," she adds.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Aso Tavitian: A Life Full of Grace and Giving

ASO, from page 8

The Tavitian Foundation also focuses on the arts, another passion of his, Old Master paintings and sculptures. “My interest in the arts originally started from a decorative point of view related to the house I had bought in New York, but then I came to appreciate it and fell in love with it.” He has amassed a collection well known in the art world of more than 120 or so Old Masters, with most of them portraits, and more than 80 or so sculptures. They are split between his New York and Massachusetts houses. He often lends paintings and/or sculptures to museums for various exhibitions.

A major benefactor of the famed Frick Collection, located on Fifth Avenue between 70th and 71st streets in Manhattan, he is the Vice Chairman of the museum’s Board of Trustees and the Chair of its Acquisition Committee. While emphasizing that “the Frick is a jewel of a museum,” he stresses that “it is a house.”

“Aso’s involvement with the Frick Collection stretches back many years,” said Ian Wardropper, director of the Frick Collection, “for more than a decade, he has been a steadfast supporter of the museum and its mission. Since 2008, when he became

a trustee, he has funded activities across the institution, including numerous special exhibitions. In 2011, he served as co-chairman of our largest fundraising event, our Autumn Dinner.”

“Aso also serves as a member of many Board committees and is a discerning and knowledgeable collector, and on several occasions, he has – with his characteristic warmth and enthusiasm – opened his home to our top-level donors, and our Young Fellows in order to share his private collection,” Wardropper continued. “He has introduced many friends and colleagues to the Frick, several of whom have become active supporters. We are grateful not only for his leadership and generosity as vice chair of our Board of Trustees, but also for his passion for the institution and its programs.”

Tavitian has also been helping New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art with their exhibitions that touch on Armenia. A couple of years ago, the Met had a successful exhibit on Jerusalem and Tavitian was instrumental in getting the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem to lend several historical manuscripts. In 2018, the Met will stage a monumental exhibit on Armenian Art from around the world. Dr. Helen Evans, who was the co-

curator for the Armenian manuscript exhibition at the Morgan Library and Museum several years ago and is the curator for the 2018 Met exhibition says “Aso is offering much appreciated advice for The Met’s exhibition Armenia that will open on Armenian Independence Day, September 21, 2018, and close in January 2019 after Armenian Christmas.” She added that “The Republic of Armenia and major Armenian institutions elsewhere, the major lenders to the exhibition, are sending works that have never been shown in America.”

He is also a lover of opera, attending between 10 and 15 operas each season. Verdi is his favorite composer with Puccini a close second.

With a life full of extraordinary experiences and people, especially his mother and Sir, Tavitian forged ahead to become a pioneer in his industry and has never forgotten the life changing experiences that brought him to where he is today, a reserved, generous man to those around him and causes close to his heart. With an infectious sense of humor, he says “It is important to be able to laugh in life. I love life, like myself, and am an incurable optimist. After all the best way to get through life is to laugh.”

## Armenian Assembly Co-Chair Van Krikorian Receives Medal from Armenian President

WASHINGTON – The Armenian Assembly of America announced that its Board of Trustees Co-Chair Van Krikorian received Armenia’s Medal of Honor. Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan conferred the “Order of Honor” on September 29, pursuant to a September 15, decree recognizing Krikorian’s “contribution to strengthening Homeland-Diaspora ties, as well as his long-term patriotic activities.”

Van Krikorian began working with the Assembly in 1977, and served as its director of government and legal affairs between 1988 and 1992. A longtime board member, he served in multiple offices over the years, as chairman of the Board of Directors (1998-2001) and co-chairman of the Board of Trustees since 2015. He also serves as chairman of the Armenian National Institute (ANI) since 2011, and was Armenia’s counselor and deputy representative to the United Nations in 1992.

“This was a humbling surprise and I feel the honor reflects on everyone who shared in the efforts over the years to build an independent, democratic Armenia and Artsakh, to deal with the consequences of the Armenian Genocide, to enhance the United States-Armenia relationship, and to work for human rights around the world. That starts with my family and the Armenian Assembly and also includes the many community institutions and individuals here and around the world with whom I have been privileged to be associated,” Krikorian stated. “At the ceremony, my mind also went back to being in Nagorno Karabakh over 25 years ago when I first met President Sargsyan with Monte Melkonian and others fighting to pre-



President Serzh Sargsyan presents Van Krikorian with the medal.

vent a catastrophe in much worse times – how far we have come from those days.”

The Medal of Honor is awarded for “notable services in protecting state and national interests of the Republic of Armenia and establishment of independence and democracy, as well as for significant contribution to building, strengthening, and promoting friendship and reinforcing peace between peoples.”

Krikorian was instrumental in obtaining United States aid to Armenia after the 1988 earthquake and following independence as well as assistance to the Nagorno Karabakh Republic over the years. In 1991, Mr. Krikorian was appointed and served as a member of the US delegation to the Moscow Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) meetings.

He initiated several pieces of US human rights legislation, including Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act and the Humanitarian Aid Corridors Act. In the 1993 decision *Krikorian v. Department of State*, the District of Columbia Federal Court of Appeals acknowledged that United States policy historically recognized the Armenian Genocide. Mr. Krikorian was a member of the Turkish Armenian Reconciliation Commission, which began in 2001 and concluded in 2004, after the Commission jointly produced the International Center for Transitional Justice legal opinion on the applicability of the UN Genocide Convention to the Armenian Genocide as well as recommendations to concerned governments. He also was amicus counsel in the Federal District Court and Court of Appeals cases rejecting attempts to force denialist “contra” Armenian Genocide teaching in Massachusetts public schools.



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# Arts & Living

## Americana Hosts Private Screening Of Armenian Genocide Documentary

GLENDALÉ (*Glendale News-Press*) – Despite controversy over mall officials initially refusing to display an advertisement for the Armenian Genocide documentary “Architects of Denial,” local officials and others joined one of the film’s producers for a private screening at the Americana at Brand this week.

The documentary uses expert testimony and survivor experiences to explore genocides throughout history and how continued denial of the Armenian Genocide contributes to future atrocities.

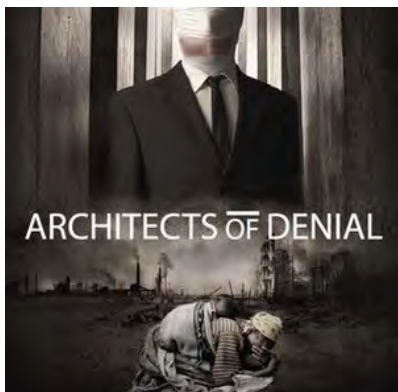
The screening was organized by the Glendale chapter of the Armenian National Committee of America, which in August, had a proposed billboard ad for the film rejected by Caruso management for being “too political,” based on subject matter.

After a backlash, Americana officials reversed their decision.

The film is produced by actor Dean Cain and television host Montel Williams, the latter of whom spoke before the film started to the more than 200 audience members packed into a screening room at Pacific Theatres.

Williams said he was “embarrassed” to admit that when he was asked to participate in the project, he had not heard of the Armenian Genocide and the film should be used as an education tool in schools.

“The Armenian Genocide and its denial for over 100 years is, I think, solely the reason why the world ignores the other genocides that have continued to take



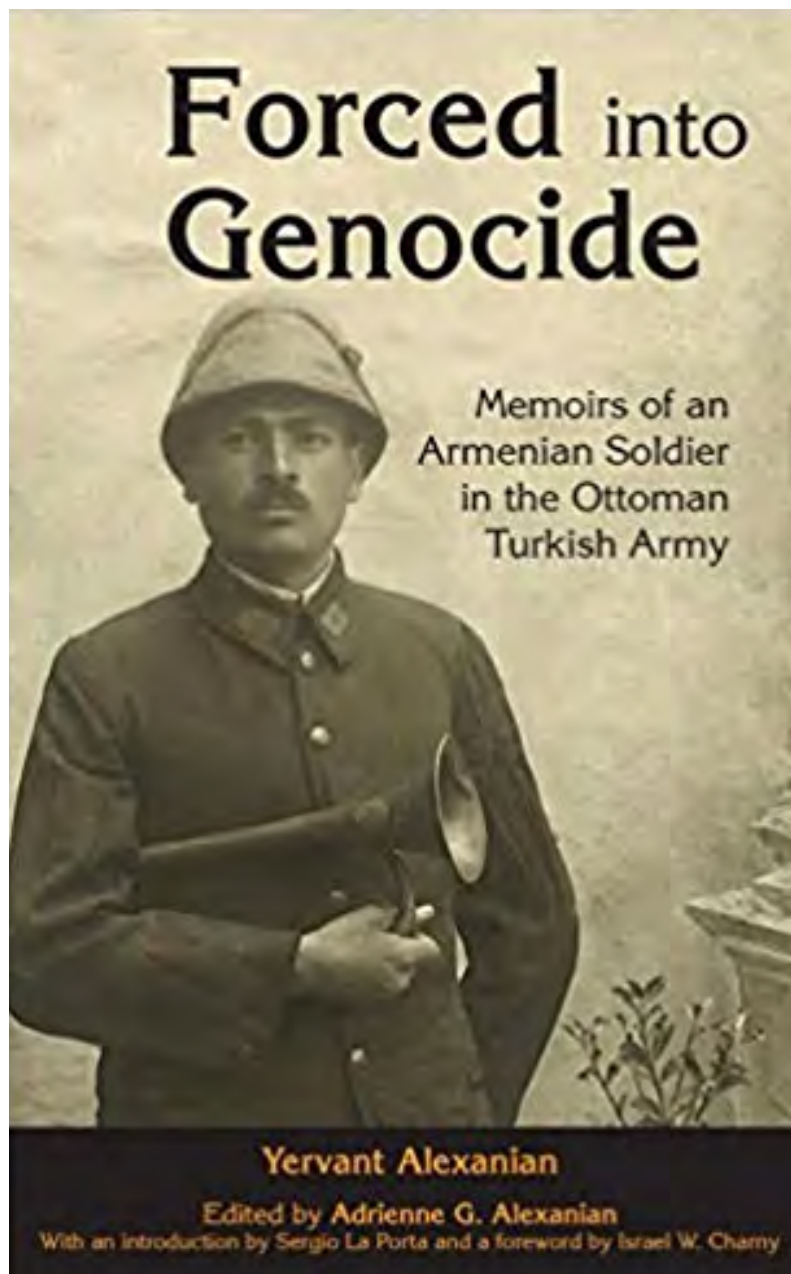
place, [and] those that are taking place right now that we hear about and read about and we hear whispers of because the world’s not talking,” he said.

Williams said all the money generated from movie sales will be donated to “Armenian causes” such as the Armenian National Committee of America.

Also in attendance were members of the Glendale City Council, state Assemblywoman Laura Friedman (D-Glendale) and state Sen. Anthony Portantino (D-La Cañada Flintridge).

Portantino, who joined the effort early to get the Americana to reverse its original rejection of the film’s advertisement, spoke briefly after the screening.

“It is tragic that we don’t have recognition when it’s appropriate,” Portantino said, according to a statement. “The role of the activist is to make government officials do better ... so let’s continue to fight for recognition [of the Armenian Genocide] and to do the right thing.”



## Adrienne Alexanian to Speak on Father’s Memoir at Fresno State

FRESNO – Adrienne Alexanian will present a lecture on her father’s memoir, *Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Empire*, at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 14, in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Room 191 on the Fresno State campus.

*Forced into Genocide* is a memoir written by her father, Yervant Edward Alexanian, and edited by Adrienne Alexanian. It features an introduction by Dr. Sergio La Porta, Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies at Fresno State, and a foreword by Dr. Israel Charny.

This presentation is sponsored by the Armenian Studies Program and the College of Arts and Humanities at Fresno State, and co-sponsored by the Armenian General Benevolent Union and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research. It is part of the Armenian Studies Program Fall Lecture Series and is supported by the Leon S. Peters Foundation.

Yervant Edward Alexanian was an eye-witness to the massacres and the displacement of his family and countrymen in Ottoman Turkey during World War I. His memoir is a one-of-a-kind insider’s account documenting the Genocide’s astonishing cruelty but also its rare, unexpected acts of humanity.

This edition, translated from Alexanian’s hand-written Armenian-language chronicle, includes never-before-seen documents and photos that the author preserved.

Adrienne Alexanian graduated from Hunter College with a bachelor’s degree in political science and a minor in education. She received a master’s degree in education from Hunter College.

She has been active in the Armenian community and served as a non-governmental organization representative at the United Nations for both the Armenian Diocese and the AGBU for eight years. In that capacity, she initiated, organized and moderated forums on the Nagorno-Karabakh War, the blockade of Armenia, landmine eradication and the Armenian Genocide.

Alexanian has coordinated earthquake relief for the Armenian Diocese and chaired numerous fund raisers and major events. In 2010, she received the Ellis Island Award for her decades of volunteer work and philanthropy for the Armenian community.

Copies of *Forced into Genocide* will be on sale at the lecture.

The lecture is free and open to the public.

For more information visit [www.fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies](http://www.fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies).

## Armenian Composer Gets US Debut in Charlottesville

By Sandy Hausman

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (WVTF) – Monika Chamasyan will perform a long lost concerto with the Crozet Community Orchestra November 11 and 12 by Arno Babajanian, a brilliant composer from Armenia – compared by his fans to some of the great composers of Europe. Under Soviet control in the late 20th century, he wrote film scores and popular songs for Russian crooners.

“Many composers, during the Soviet times, were hired to write music for movies and cartoons,” said Chamasyan, a concert violinist from Virginia who made her debut at Carnegie Hall in 2009. “Even composers like Shostakovich and Prokofiev were doing that.”

Chamasyan first heard this concerto in Armenia at a memorial service for Babajanian in 1983.

“During the 1960s and ‘70s, my teacher, Willi Mokatzian, was a respected soloist and a close friend to Babajanian,” she recalls. “This concerto was dedicated to him.”

They were so close that Chamasyan’s teacher sat by the composer’s bedside as he lay dying at



Monika Chamasyan

the age of 62.

“He visited him in hospital, and he was telling me how sad Babajanian was. He was telling him that his work is not done, he’s too young to die – to leave this earth without composing enough.”

Years later, after she had moved to America, Chamasyan met Phillip Clark, conductor of the Crozet Community Orchestra, and told him about the concerto.

“He said, ‘Let’s do it,’ she recalled.

But doing it proved more complicated than either one expected. It took months to find the score – a guide to what every member of the orchestra would play at once. That was of no use to the individual players.

“So you have to present a part specifically for a first violin that they can put on the stand,” Clark explains. “They don’t see any of the other music. They just hear it.”

And Chamasyan couldn’t find those individual scores.

“She said they’d got lost in the Soviet breakup,” he says. “Apparently, lots of people went into the music library and just took what they wanted. There’s was no structure – no policing.”

Clark decided to re-create those parts one by one.

see DEBUT, page 15



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## Charles Aznavour Receives Wallenberg Award in Israel

TEL AVIV (*Daily Mail*) – French Armenian singing legend Charles Aznavour was honored in Israel on Thursday for his family's efforts to protect Jews and others persecuted by the Nazis during World War II.

The 93-year-old known as France's Frank Sinatra still performs and is due to give a concert in Tel Aviv on Saturday.

He received the honor from Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, who spoke of his love of Aznavour's music, saying *La Boheme* was his favorite song.

Rivlin presented him with The Raoul Wallenberg Award, named for the Swedish diplomat who helped thousands of Jews flee Nazi-controlled Hungary during World War II.

Aznavour's family "hid a number of people who were persecuted by the Nazis, while Charles and his sister Aida were involved in rescue activities," Rivlin's office said in a statement.

The International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation, based in New York, presents the award and Aznavour chose to receive it in Israel, it said.

Aznavour, who was born in Paris, spoke of his Armenian origins on Thursday, referring to Armenian Genocide of 1915 orchestrated by the Ottoman Empire.

His parents fled to France to escape the massacres that more than 20 countries have recognized as a genocide.

"We have so many things in common, the Jews and the Armenians, in misfortune, in happiness, in work, in music, in the arts and in the ease of learning different languages and becoming important people in the countries where they have been received," he said.

"We have so many things in common, the Jews and the Armenians, in misfortune, in happiness, in work, in music, in the arts and in the ease of learning different languages and becoming important people in the countries where they have been received," he said.

## A Childhood Birthday Adventure Recollected in a Delightful Picture Book

LEVERETT, Mass. – Looking for subject matter for a children's book, artist and educator Stephen Saxenian found inspiration close to home in an autobiographical children's story authored by his mother, writer and poet, Lucy Saxenian. Using watercolor and pencil sketches Stephen brings back to life the story of Lucy's fourth birthday, a journey and misadventure in the streets of Lowell, MA, circa 1930. Stephen's illustrations capture his mother's simple, gentle tale that nevertheless contains wit and authenticity. The story as a whole pays tribute to this Armenian immigrant family and their heritage. Readers of all ages will delight in this tale.

Passing through the old neighborhoods of Lowell, *Lucy's Birthday* takes the reader into the heart of the city, up and down the snowy streets, past the park and mills, over the Merrimack River and into her father's tailor shop as Lucy and her sister go out on a quest for sugar for her birthday cake.

*Lucy's Birthday*, written by Lucy Saxenian and illustrated by Stephen Saxenian, was self-published and is available online via [www.blurb.com/b/7856502-lucy-s-birthday](http://www.blurb.com/b/7856502-lucy-s-birthday).

*Watercolors by Stephen Saxenian,  
from Lucy's Birthday*

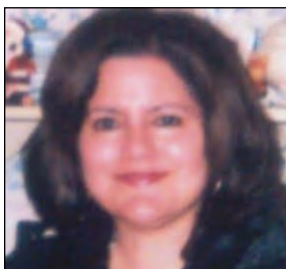


Aznavour's hits have included *She, Hier Encore* and *La Mamma*.

He is also credited in more than 60 movies, defying detractors who pointed to his unconventional looks to become one of France's most iconic singers.

Aznavour thanked Raoul Wallenberg Foundation for the award and the Israeli President for the reception. The singer also inquired when Israel will recognize the Armenian Genocide, stressing that Jews and Armenians have many similarities.

In response, Rivlin said that it's a political issue and the issue was raised at the parliament of Israel every year when he was a Knesset member and President. He noted that he talked about the Armenian Genocide of 1915 rather clearly at the UN in 2015.



## Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian

### Layered Middle Eastern Mazza (or Salad)

#### INGREDIENTS

In a deep, round, clear bowl, layer the following ingredients according to your taste:

- 2 cups tabbouleh (homemade or store bought)
- 1 1/2 cups hummus (homemade or store bought)
- 1 1/2 cups fresh diced tomatoes, seeded, drained, chopped
- 1 1/2 cups fresh Romaine lettuce or baby spinach, chopped
- 1 1/2 cups white or green onions, chopped
- 1 cup feta cheese, crumbled
- 1 (15-20 oz.) can garbanzo or white beans, washed, drained
- 1 cup red or green bell pepper, seeded, chopped
- 1 cucumber, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 cup plain white or Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup each chopped black or Kalamata olives and thinly sliced red onions
- 2-3 tablespoons toasted pine nuts (optional as topping)
- Lemon juice, olive oil, paprika, dried or fresh mint, Aleppo pepper, sea salt and black pepper (to taste)

#### PREPARATION:

Drizzle layered mazza with lemon juice and olive oil, and season with choice of spices. Cover, chill and refrigerate 2-3 hours before serving.

Serve with fresh pita chips, bagel chips or Armenian cracker bread, and assorted cheeses, olives, and pickles, if desired.

Serves 6-8.

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

## Armenian Composer Gets US Debut in Charlottesville

DEBUT, from page 4

"From a 230-240-page score, that's a lot of copying, and it did take me three years to do it," he says.

And that was with help from a computer program called Finale.

"Which is good, because I can't read my own writing anyway," Clark jokes. "I think about Mozart and Beethoven. They must have spent half their lives correcting proofs and stuff like that."

But he has no complaints.

"From my point of view, it was so much fun, because I got to know this wonderful piece."

And Chamasyan is equally excited, preparing to solo with the orchestra on what is likely the North American debut of Babajanian's concerto.

"I feel blessed that I'm going to be playing this long-lost concerto that was dedicated to my teacher, and I hope that I can give Babajanian



Arno Babajanian

some of the recognition that he deserves."

The orchestra will perform November 11th at Aldersgate Church in Charlottesville – a day chosen at random. It turned out to be the day the composer died. The following day, November 12, the Community Orchestra will play at the Baptist Church in Crozet. Admission is free.

Read News in Armenian at:





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## CALENDAR

## CALIFORNIA

**NOVEMBER 14 — Tuesday, *Forced into Genocide, Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army*** by Yervant Alexanian, presented by his daughter, Adrienne G. Alexanian. She has spent years preparing her father's manuscript for publication. She is an educator and recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor. Introduction by Sergio La Porta, Foreword by Israel W. Charny. Presented by the Armenian Studies Program, Fresno State, AGBU Greater Fresno Area and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research. Books will be available for purchase. Book signing during reception. 7.30 p.m., Fresno State University Business Center, Room 191, 5245 N. Backer Ave., Fresno.

**NOVEMBER 15 — A presentation of *Forced into Genocide, Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army*** by Yervant Alexanian, presented by his daughter, Adrienne G. Alexanian. She has spent years preparing her father's manuscript for publication. She is an educator and recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor. Introduction by Sergio La Porta, Foreword by Israel W. Charny. Wednesday, St. Leon Armenian Cathedral, 3325 North Glenoaks Blvd, Burbank. Presented by the Ladies Auxiliary of the Western Diocese. AGBU, Armenian International Women's Association, Ararat-Eskijian Museum, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Knights of Vartan. Book signing during reception. 7.30 p.m. RSVP (310)277-4490.

**NOVEMBER 18 — Join the Armenian EyeCare Project for its 25th Anniversary Gala** at 6:30pm at the Balboa Bay Club in Newport Beach. The organization will honor Founder Dr. Roger Ohanesian for 25 years of dedicated service to Armenia in the field of eye care. The fun-filled evening includes an authentic Armenian dinner, roving entertainers, a silent & live auction, Tom Bozigian & his band and Artur's Armenian Dance Troupe. To RSVP or for more information, call 949-933-4069, email [leslie@eyecare-project.com](mailto:leslie@eyecare-project.com) or visit [eyecareproject.com/25th-anniversary-gala/](http://eyecareproject.com/25th-anniversary-gala/)

## MASSACHUSETTS

**NOVEMBER 3-4 — 61st annual St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church Bazaar.** Friday and Saturday. Come with family and friends for delicious chicken, beef and losh kebab, kuftah and kheyma dinners, pastries and specialty gourmet items. Handmade arts and crafts, White Elephant table and ever popular silent and live auction items. Visit the church's website, [www.soorpstepanors.org](http://www.soorpstepanors.org) for menus, pastry and gourmet items. Armenian Cultural and Educational Center, 47 Nichols Ave., Watertown. Admission is free.

**NOVEMBER 3 and 4 — Annual Autumnfest Bazaar sponsored by the Armenian Church at Hye Pointe,** at our new location 1280 Boston Road, (Rte 125) Bradford MA, Friday 12 – 7 pm and Saturday 12 – 7 pm. Lamb, Losh, Chicken Kebab and Kheyma. Dinners served all day. Pastry table, Armenian cuisine, gift baskets, raffles for cash and prizes. For more info, visit [www.hyepointearmenianchurch.org](http://www.hyepointearmenianchurch.org) or call (978) 372-9227.

**NOVEMBER 5 — Sunday, Lecture: "The Legacy of Komitas as a composer and his influence on International and Armenian music."** Speaker: Dr. Mher Navoyan Musicologist, pro-rector of Komitas Conservatory, Yerevan, with Piano Performance by Prof. Lilit Shougarian of New England Conservatory, works by Komitas (arr. Prof. Villy Sargsyan), Armenian Museum of America, 65 Main Street, Watertown, 2 p.m. Cosponsored by the Art Institute of the Academy of Sciences (Yerevan, Armenia) and funded by a grant from the Dadourian Foundation.

**NOVEMBER 10 — Benefit dinner for Armenia Tree Project's 100th anniversary living memorial** to General Dro and the Battle of Bash Aparan, Friday, presented by ATP and the Kanayan Family. Armenian American Social Club, Watertown. 7:30 p.m. \$75 per person. Call (617) 926-8733 or [info@armeniatree.org](mailto:info@armeniatree.org) to reserve your seat.

**NOVEMBER 12 — From Armenia to Boston for the first time. Beloved singer RUBEN SASUNCI,** live in concert with the Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston (SNDP). Sunday, at 4 p.m. at Shaw Auditorium - Watertown High School, 50 Columbia St. Tickets: \$45 and \$35 to be reserved from front to back, in the order calls are received. For tickets and info, please call Mike Demirchian (617) 240-8266 or Vrej Ashjian at (339) 222-3429.

**NOVEMBER 13 — Trinity Men's Union Dinner and Meeting — Honoring All Veterans with Guest**



**On December 10, the Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra will hold its annual Christmas Holiday Concert, at 7 p.m., at the Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, in Cambridge, Mass., under the direction of composer and conductor Konstantin Petrossian. The program will also feature Madrigal Singers from Arlington High School. Traditional Armenian and Western sacred and holiday music will be performed. For more information, call Holy Trinity Armenian Church at 617-354-0632.**

**Speaker** Charles S. Sahagian, WW II Armenian-American veteran who was recently awarded France's Highest Military Honor, Monday, 6 p.m., Social Hour, 7 p.m., Dinner; Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Sahagian will talk about his experience in WW II, before, during and after the war. All are welcome! Open to the public. Donation for the losh kebab and kheyma dinner is \$15 per person. RSVP requested by November 12 to the TMU at [tmuhtaac@gmail.com](mailto:tmuhtaac@gmail.com) or call Dave Dorian, 617.501.4300.

**NOVEMBER 17 and 18 — Saints Vartanantz Armenian Church, Annual Food Festival and Fair,** 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford. Phone 978-256-7234. Armenian Food and Pastries, and Vendors, Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Live Armenian Music and Dancing, Friday - 4:30 - 7 p.m. Tours of the church sanctuary and complex - Friday, 11 a.m. and Saturday, 4 p.m. Tavloo Tournament - Saturday, 2 p.m.

**NOVEMBER 18 — The Armenian Women's Welfare Association's 41st Annual Luncheon/Auction** will be held at the Oakley Country Club, 410 Belmont Street, Watertown on Saturday, at 11 a.m. Ticket price is \$75. Proceeds benefit the mission of the AWWA, which include the Armenian Nursing & Rehabilitation Center in Jamaica Plain and the Hanganak NGO Clinic in Stepanakert, N-K, Armenia. For more information about this event, please call Stephanie Ciccolo at 617-522-2600.

**NOVEMBER 19 — The Westin Waltham Boston Hotel, Project SAVE will celebrate** with a Thanks Giving brunch event to honor Founder Ruth Thomasian's vision and 42 years of service and to acknowledge the many volunteers, photo donors and supporters who have contributed to Project SAVE. An event for the community to come together and celebrate as we look ahead to the future. For more information call 617-923-4542 or email: [archives@projectsave.org](mailto:archives@projectsave.org).

**DECEMBER 1 and 2 — Trinity Christmas Bazaar, Friday, 12-9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.,** Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Featuring delicious Armenian dinners, a la carte menu and take-out meals; booths and vendors — perfect for doing your Christmas shopping; Armenian gourmet foods, delicacies and pastries; raffles, and more. Activities for Children, Peter Adamian Hall: Friday, 7-9 p.m., All Aboard "The Polar Express" Pajama Party, recommended for children ages 5 and older; Saturday, 11 a.m., Children's Entertainment. Visit with Santa, Saturday, 1-2 pm, and have your photo taken too. Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall. For further

information, contact the church office at 617.354.0632, or log onto <http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/449/>

**DECEMBER 10 — Christmas Holiday Concert, Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra,** 7 p.m., Sunday, Church Sanctuary, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. This year's concert, under the direction of Composer Konstantin Petrossian, music director and conductor, will open with the Arlington High School Madrigal Singers and feature the vocal quartet the Bostonians. The program will consist of traditional Armenian and Western sacred and holiday music. The public is invited to attend this complimentary concert which is a gift to the community. For further information, call the Church office, 617.354.0632.

**DECEMBER 17 — Candlelit Labyrinth Peace Walk, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway,** Boston, 4:30 – 6 pm. Quiet holiday reflection and celebration. Tie a ribbon with your wish on the Wishing Tree. Hot Chocolate & Cookies, hosted by The Bostonian Hotel Boston All are invited. RSVP appreciated, please email [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

## MICHIGAN

**DECEMBER 2 — Nor Keghi Kef Time III Pagharch Dinner and Dance Fundraiser for Nor Keghi School in Armenia,** 6.30 p.m. St. John Armenian Church Hall, Southfield. Continuous music by an assembly of Detroit's All-Star Armenian Musicians will again entertain attendees to the third "Pagharch" feast that residents of the historic Armenian district dined on for centuries at the start of the winter season in mountainous Keghi district. The government of Armenia on Feb. 1962 renamed the region of Ashdarag to Nor Keghi to honor the history of Keghizees of historic Western Armenia. Funds raised will help in development of the school's multi-purpose auditorium.

## NEW JERSEY

**NOVEMBER 18 — Save the date. Gala banquet celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Tekeyan Cultural Association.** At the Terrace at Biagios. 299 Paramus Road, Paramus. Featuring Elie Berberian and his band from Montreal.

## NEW YORK

**NOVEMBER 16 — Join Armenia Tree Project and Paros Foundation** for a fundraiser to support kitchen renovations, beautification and environmental education at the school in Rind, Vayots Dzor. Featuring live performance by singer/songwriter Hooshere and silent auction featuring fine art and luxury gift items. Almayass Restaurant, 24 E 21st Street, New York. 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Donation: \$100 in advance, \$125 at door. For more information, [info@armeniatree.org](mailto:info@armeniatree.org).

## NEVADA

**NOVEMBER 10-12 — Association of Armenian Church Choirs,** 2017 Convention & Assembly, Las Vegas. Saint Geragos Armenian Apostolic Church, Contact: website: [www.aaccwd.com](http://www.aaccwd.com) • email: [events@aaccwd.com](mailto:events@aaccwd.com). The AACCWD is an organization of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America.

## RHODE ISLAND

**SEPTEMBER 13, 2017-MARCH 14, 2018 — Armenian Film Festival "The Nation's Past & Present"** Sponsored by Cultural Committee of the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, in Hanoian Hall, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence. Wednesday, October 11, , at 7 pm, "Garni, Geghard" Wednesday, November 15, 2017, at 7 pm, "Armenia" (Yerevan, Echmiadzin, Khor Virap, Zvartnots, Sevan, Dilijan, Lori) Wednesday, January, 24, at 7 pm "Country of Armenian Kings - 2" (Ani, Kars, Edesia, Musaler) Wednesday, February, 21, at 7 pm, "Country of Armenian Kings - 3" (Cilicia, Kharbert, Adana, Zeytoun) Wednesday, March, 14, 2018, at 7 pm. All presented in English, donation of \$10.

**NOVEMBER 4, 5 — Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, Annual Food Fair & Bazaar. Saturday,** 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m., Sunday, noon – 6 p.m. Shish Kebab, Kufta, Kheyma, Choreg, Yalanchi, Losh Kebab, Armenian Pastries, midia, Vosbov Kheyma, etc. Daily Raffle, Silent Auction Kids activities & Balloon Man, and much more. Cash, Check, Visa & Mastercard accepted. Call 401-272-7712 for further info.



ARTS & LIVING

From the filmmaker of "Paradise Lost" and "Metallica: Some Kind of Monster"



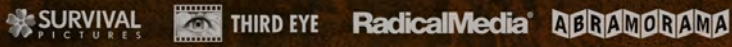
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## COMMENTARY

## A History 85 Years in the Making

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Armenians have a famous medieval fable writer called Vartan Aykeghtzi, one of whose fables has not lost its relevance today and may characterize Armenian life, or in this case, the mission of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.

It is the story of an able-bodied soldier scoffing at a handicapped one: "How are you going to run away when the enemy shows up? The other soldier responds: "I am not joining the army to run away. I am going to the front to stand up against the enemy, fight and win."

The founders of this paper were handicapped in many ways but desertion was not one of their options.

By the 1930s, the early wave of immigrants was coming of age and the next generation was forcing its way into the leadership ranks of the Armenian community life.

The founders of the *Mirror-Spectator* had a moment of soul searching: the community was getting organized and the youth were gradually taking over the leadership roles, while the Armenian language was lagging behind and hampering communication between the two generations. They were all proficient in the mother tongue and wondered for an instant whether they were betraying their heritage if they bypassed the language. But finally, the founders decided that language was only the means – the messenger – and that the message of history had somehow to be conveyed to the younger generation, even if it meant using English. They did not hesitate too long, especially in view that the sister publication, *Baikar* daily, published in Armenian, was still thriving.

Therefore, the *Mirror-Spectator* came to life in 1932 as the first Armenian weekly in the English language, and as they say, the rest is history.

My journey with the *Mirror* began exactly 50 years ago, when all the founders were still alive and active in the community. When making the acquaintance of the founders, I did not realize I was touching history at the time. In retrospect, I feel that I have to treasure those memories for posterity.

Of the founders, I was closest to Prof. Elisha Chrakian, a man who had all the physical traits of the philosophy professor he was: the beard, the pipe and the antique tie and vest. He spoke deliberately in a meticulous way, finding the most correct words for every situation. Most of the time, however, the last words of his sentences were lost in the smoke of his pipe. Every time I remember Professor Chrakian my nostrils tingle with the aroma of his pipe tobacco.

He was a classic intellectual. He used to teach philosophy at Northeastern University, where he also ushered my first steps into the broader world of literature, by urging me to enroll in English and American literature courses. I am indebted to him forever for this encouragement and guidance.

Professor Chrakian visited the *Mirror-Spectator* offices frequently to make sure that the baby he had helped bring into the world was still alive and kicking. His advice, doled out politely to the editorial staff, was always accepted respectfully and gratefully.

Bedros Norehad was settled in New York and was in charge of the English version of the AGBU Magazine. He was always proud to see that the publication was serving its mission.

Bob Vahan did not serve long as editor. As a member of the younger generation, he was coming up with fresh ideas but was frustrated that he could not implement them. The older guard in charge did not like change and therefore he quit.

Varoujan Samuelian was quite a character; he was hired and fired as editor several times. His world view was limited to Watertown. He never drove a car so that he could not wander too far from the city limits. He was forced to leave town only once, when he was drafted into the army. As he walked in the streets of Watertown, everybody knew him and he knew everybody. His inside jokes with a grocery store manager one week would feature in the editorial column the following week, although readers in New York or Philadelphia were probably baffled and left out of the joke. He was known for his column, "Juicy Tidbits," and the moniker stuck. He was liked by all, and his friends and acquaintances all would call him "Juicy."

Jack Antreassian was a human dynamo in his person and style. He served as editor twice and he rotated between the AGBU New York office, the Diocese and the *Mirror-Spectator*. He was a one-man committee, immensely creative and resourceful. He was a

mover and a shaker. Most of the innovations in the format and content of the paper were achieved during his tenure as editor.

Helene Pilibosian Sarkissian served both as an editorial assistant and later editor. She grew up in a household of dedicated Armenians and she had acquired her heritage through osmosis. She was a poet par excellence, creating works with unique imagery. She and her husband, Hagop Sarkissian, were very dedicated to the Armenian Democratic Liberal principles and values, which she made sure to reflect in the paper.

Barbara Merguerian was and is a powerhouse of knowledge. Her educational background and her community experience and connections were tremendous assets to the paper. She had strong views on women's issues and she certainly shaped many of the ideas of the readers regarding those. She was particularly interested in changing the male domination of the Armenian Church and cherished the day she could see Armenian women on the altar. Now, 85 years into the history of the paper, women still are not permitted to serve as priests. Perhaps, the paper's centennial will see that happen.

Ara Kalayjian was a monastic scholar. He was born and brought up within the walls of Jerusalem monastery, where he delved into serious scholarly research and publication. He was fluent in English and Armenian and his transition from a scholar to editor was beyond belief. He produced meaningful editorials quickly. He had an encyclopedic mind and was Google before there was Google. It took only a few minutes to recover any fact, name or date in Armenian history and literature. He maintained his monastic solitude to the end and I was always happy to connect him to the administration and to the readership. His phenomenal memory abandoned him at a relatively early age.

His illness and untimely death were indeed tragic.

During my six-year tenure as the executive director of *Baikar* Association, we had a high turnover of editors and the administration members, though we always assumed that somebody would step in and meet the deadlines. That is how I got my feet wet.

Arminé Dikijian never served as editor, but she was the heart and soul of the *Mirror-Spectator*, especially for New York readers. Her weekly column ran for almost 50 years. She was all over the New York Armenian life, covering Diocesan Assemblies, lectures, art exhibits, banquets and concerts. She was a music connoisseur and critic and never pulled any punches when she came across a mediocre performance. She also covered the lighter aspects of the community. That is why half the paper's subscription base was in the New York/New Jersey area.

When society ladies wore a designer dress, they made sure to be seen by Arminé at a function so as to have a description of "the bodice of the dress" or "the cascading chiffon" featured in the following week's column.

The paper entered its most stable period 20 years ago when Alin K. Gregorian joined the staff, first as assistant editor and later as editor. By incremental degrees, progress was achieved thanks to that stability. Alin proved to be the consummate professional, deeply rooted in her Armenian background but ever watchful to keep the paper's proper position along ethnic fault lines, not compromising in its professional standards and mission. That is why the *Mirror* anchored on its ethnic base, has always entertained a global perspective. Global developments and social upheavals do not recognize ethnic boundaries and they affect and shape the lives and destinies of ethnic groups as well as nations.

The 85th anniversary is not the moment to sit on one's laurels as the news industry is revolutionized practically every day. New technology takes over the old ways of doing business and presents us with new challenges.

With Aram Arkun joining the editorial staff, the *Mirror-Spectator* has weathered the technological waves comfortably and the paper is transitioning into the cyber era confidently. Aram is an erudite scholar and with his journalist skills at his fingertips has introduced a new dimension to the paper, taming the cyber world.

This is the time to remember and to give credit to all the pioneers who founded the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* 85 years ago and guided it through the decades.

As we face future challenges, trials and tribulations, we still have the indomitable spirit of Aykeghtzi.

So much love, tears and dedication went into building this 85-year history.

While I remember the founders, I still smell the aroma of Professor Chrakian's pipe.



## Mirror Spectator



Established 1932  
An ADL Publication

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ASSISTANT EDITOR

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The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is published weekly, except two weeks in July and the first week of the year, by:

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For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

## SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

|                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| U.S.A.          | \$80 a year  |
| Canada          | \$125 a year |
| Other Countries | \$190 a year |

© 2014 The Armenian Mirror-Spectator  
Periodical Class Postage Paid at Boston, MA  
and additional mailing offices.

ISSN 0004-234X

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The  
Armenian Mirror-Spectator, 755 Mount Auburn  
St., Watertown, MA 02472

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## COMMENTARY



## My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Delighted to Report That Azeri Officials Read My Columns and Follow My Advice

Back in August 2013 I wrote a column headlined: “Baku’s Blacklist of Artsakh Visitors Helps Armenia, Hurts Azerbaijan,” explaining the foolishness of Azeri officials blacklisting anyone who visits Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh) without Azerbaijan’s permission. I stressed that blacklisting visitors to Artsakh from around the world was a disservice to the interests of Azerbaijan in the first place, because the blacklist isolated Azerbaijan from the rest of the world. In fact, the larger the number of blacklisted people – many of them prominent individuals and high-ranking officials – the more Azerbaijan deprives itself of such important visitors.

In my 2013 column, after quoting several famous individuals who ridiculed being blacklisted by Azerbaijan, I suggested that my name be also added to the blacklist since I had gone to Artsakh and written a column about my visit. Amazingly, shortly after my suggestion, the government of Azerbaijan added my name to the blacklist: “Harut Sassounian, Syrian-American journalist of Armenian

descent.” Since then, I visited Artsakh again.

I must add that many years ago, while Papa Aliyev was the President of Azerbaijan, he invited me through intermediaries to Baku to meet with him and discuss the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Of course, I declined the invitation. I even turned down Pres. Heydar Aliyev’s offer to meet with him in a third country, such as the UK, if I did not want to come to Azerbaijan. I turned down that suggestion too. So, now that I am on the black list, Azerbaijan’s foreign ministry has deprived their President of the ability to invite me to Baku.

There are more than 700 names on the Azeri blacklist, including parliament members, businessmen, journalists, entertainers, elected officials and other celebrities. The latest visitor to Artsakh to be blacklisted is Anthony Bourdain, who is the host of a world-famous CNN food show. Last week, he went to Armenia and Artsakh to do a TV program on the Armenian cuisine in both countries, and Azerbaijan immediately declared him persona non grata.

Bourdain’s name was added to the blacklist “for his disrespect of Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity and sovereignty,” Hikmet Hajiyev, Azeri Foreign Ministry spokesman, told Agence France-Presse. “Filming a food show on Azerbaijan’s occupied territory is an insult to one million Azerbaijani refugees who were forcefully expelled from their homes,” Hajiyev added. This makes no sense. The only thing Azeri officials were able to accomplish is prevent Bourdain from going to Azerbaijan and prepare a CNN show on the Azeri cuisine, which would have provided a lot of publicity for the country.

Azerbaijan’s black list has several major shortcomings:

1) So far, there are only 700 names on the black list, whereas, over the years, several hundred thousand tourists have visited Artsakh from around the world. While the names of all vis-

itors to Artsakh are not publicly known, certainly much more than 700 visitors have gone to Artsakh. It appears that someone at Azerbaijan’s Foreign Ministry is sleeping on the job.

2) Why is it that of the 700 names on the black list, there is not a single citizen of Armenia? While the names of regular visitors from Armenia may not be known to Azeri officials, they surely know that the President, Prime Minister, and other high-ranking officials from the Republic of Armenia frequently visit Artsakh and their trips are well publicized. Could it be that Azerbaijan does not consider citizens of Armenia visiting Artsakh to be foreigners? Azerbaijan Foreign Ministry’s website acknowledges that “Nagorno-Karabakh” is “temporarily out of the control of the Republic of Azerbaijan.” Is it possible that Azerbaijan now considers Artsakh to be permanently “out of the control of the Republic of Azerbaijan?”

3) Very few of the blacklisted visitors have complained about not being able to visit Azerbaijan. On the contrary, many of them have expressed their pride that their names are on Azerbaijan’s black list. Even more shocking, several individuals, not seeing their names on the black list after visiting Artsakh, have asked that they be added to the black list because they consider being on that list a badge of honor.

To make matters worse, in recent months Azerbaijan has requested that other countries extradite their citizens to Baku for having visited Artsakh. In one case, a journalist from Belarus was shamefully arrested and sent to Azerbaijan where he was jailed for several months. He was finally released after international pressure on Azerbaijan and condemnation by the European Council.

This is an abuse of power and export of Azeri oppression and intimidation to third countries which must be ashamed for collaborating with a despotic Azeri regime.

# Why I Am Grateful to Erdogan, the Dictator of Turkey



By Ismail Akbulut

I am sure that the very title I chose for this article will enrage some of my readers. Why on earth would one be grateful to a dictator? Indeed, that is a legitimate question. My answer is that I am grateful to Erdogan, currently the president of Turkey, because he has made me a better human being.

I was born and raised in Germany to a Turkish immigrant family. At home, my family told me stories about the glorious and flawless history of the Turkish people, superior to others in every way. The heroic Turkish War of Independence in the 1920s, waged against the great occupying European Allies, was narrated to me by family members, through their tears of patriotic fervor. At every official meeting of the Turkish community, our national anthem was sung with the utmost pride.

At the time, I believed that I was related to a special group of people, the Turks, who throughout history endured oppression, envy and greed at the hands of other powers. Our enemies were all around us, yet we remained

standing. We Turkish people were always able to defeat them with God’s help, and establish the most beautiful country on earth, the Republic of Turkey.

Conveniently, I chose not to believe in the narratives told by minorities, such as the Kurds, Armenians, Greeks, and Jews, regarding their suffering under Turkish rule. I allowed myself to be blind to that which might contradict my idealized image of the homeland.

When I beheld Erdogan rising to power in 2002, I believed I was witnessing the glorious embodiment and manifestation of the collective Turkish people, in his rule. Then an underdog, and a victim of discrimination and bigotry against religious people, Erdogan defeated the powerful political secular elites who had long ruled Turkey while oppressing the pious, along with ethnic and religious minorities. He did this with the support and the trust of the majority

of the Turkish people who showed up to vote.

For people like me, that believe, as he did, in freedom of religion in the public realm, his success appeared like a beautiful romantic dream, similar to the stories my family told to me about the successes of the Turkish people.

A few years later, I woke up sweating and violently trembling from this dream. “Humble” Erdogan had transformed into a populist, oppressive and brutal dictator, even while pre-

Human rights violations, torture, abductions and displacements, now are a part and parcel of everyday life. The crime of many of those affected is simply being related to a person who does not share the same worldview as Erdogan.

For decades, Kurds were regarded in Turkey as a lesser Turkish tribe, “mountain Turks,” who were expected to assimilate into the larger Turkish identity, completely forgoing their Kurdish heritage, language, music, and culture. Whenever Kurds spoke up for social justice and equality, they were labeled as “separatist terrorists” and either jailed, deported or massacred. In today’s Turkey, representatives and members of Amnesty International, the pro-Kurdish political party HDP, the Gulen Movement, and other human rights groups, have been arrested, charged with collaboration with “an armed terrorist organization” that Erdogan argues tried to overthrow the Turkish government. Clearly, Erdogan has found that calling people “terrorists” effectively neutralizes them in society; it enables him to completely socially isolate them, and to justify all forms of violence against them.

So, how did Erdogan make me a better person?

Erdogan’s brutality raised my awareness of Turkey’s flaws, and my ability to be critical of Turkish history. It caused me to question nationalistic narratives that I previously accepted as facts. If many Turks are now conveniently unaware of (or unwilling to see) the human price of Erdogan’s rise to power, I see clearly now that all of those notions of Turkish superiority I used to believe in were just part of a grand, nation-building myth. The price of that “beautiful” myth was to deny the pain and oppression of Turkey’s ethnic and religious minorities. I can no longer pay that price; my own blinders have been ripped off by these events.

Erdogan helped me realize that it is incredibly important to listen to individuals and groups who feel neglected, humiliated and oppressed. I have realized that only through facing my mistakes and false perceptions, can I sleep in peace.

He also made me understand how important it is to live by a set of universal values, and not for my own material interests. When you are loyal to your values you will always be a person who can be trusted.

Therefore, I thank you, Mr. President Erdogan.

(Ismail Akbulut is board president of a Colorado-based non-profit, Multicultural Mosaic Foundation (Twitter @IsmailDenver))

## ERDOGAN’S BRUTALITY RAISED MY AWARENESS OF TURKEY’S FLAWS, AND MY ABILITY TO BE CRITICAL OF TURKISH HISTORY.

senting himself as one of the masses, a victim of “powerful forces,” despite the fact that his successful quest for increasing authority has made him the most powerful man in Turkey for decades.

This power corrupted Erdogan, and his fear of losing power has made him paranoid. This has resulted in his frequent use of violence and oppression to crush dissent. At times, he has blocked Twitter and Facebook. He has thrown hundreds of journalists in jail, and taken over media outlets. Today, he has arrested over 50 thousand people, and according to Amnesty International, torture and abuse are rampant in Turkish jails.

This power-poisoning made me think and question all those stories that I had learned about my Turkish heritage.

I started listening and reading about the stories that Kurds, Armenians, and other minorities in Turkey have told. I was flabbergasted to learn that, in fact, there are many parallels between what happened to them, and what is happening today to many innocent people in Turkey that have been fired, detained, or jailed by Erdogan.

I now recognize that hundreds of thousands of Armenians, including women and children were massacred, displaced or deported in 1915. The Armenians’ crime was merely being Armenian. Today, Erdogan, a man who claims to be a righteous Muslim, ordered the arrest of thousands of journalists, academics, public servants, teachers, business people, women, and children. Yes, you have not read wrong, almost 700 children (some are babies) are currently being raised in Turkish prisons, held there because of the “crimes” of their mothers.

## LETTERS

## Congratulations on *Mirror-Spectator’s* Anniversary

To the Editor:

Dear Alin, I am happy to know that your newspaper, our newspaper, the *Armenian Mirror Spectator*, has this year completed 85 successful years.

The Baikar Association has made this newspaper a popular one, and today it stands as the one of the best Armenian newspapers in all of North America, not only on the East Coast. It is indeed a cause for joy, especially for all Armenians who are English speaking.

The news from Armenia, Artsakh and the Diaspora is very interesting to all of us, while the editorial content is professional and well balanced.

You have the best team of commentators in the US.

And last but not least the *Mirror* is keeping abreast of all the current tendencies of communications, using all the web and social media. This is especially important for young readers who prefer to read stories online rather than in print form.

Congratulations to you and your team for this grand success, and may your newspaper reach greater heights in the years to come.

Yours Truly,  
Daniel Youssefian,  
Buenos Aires, Argentina



*Congratulations to the  
Armenian Mirror-Spectator  
for 85 Years of Service  
to the Armenian Community*



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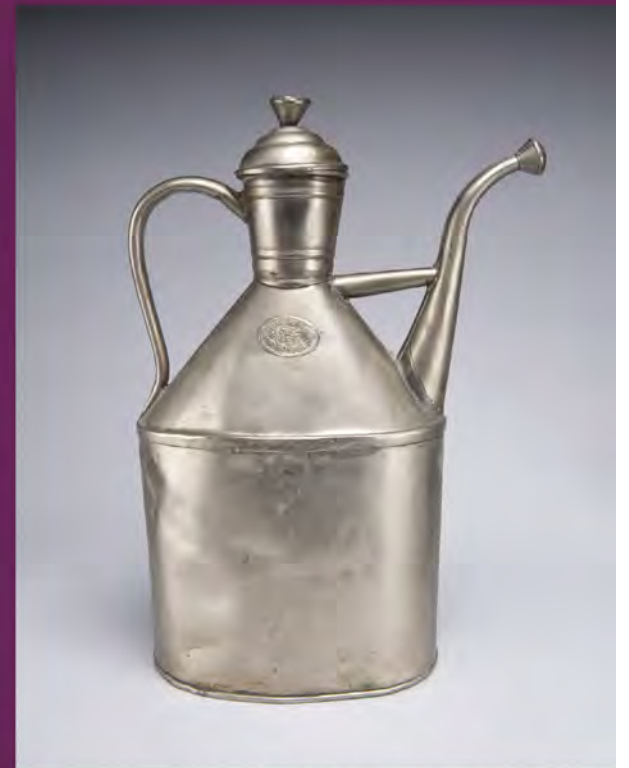
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