

# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

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## Philadelphia Community Leader Papken Megerian Dies

WYNNEWOOD, Penn. – Papken Megerian, vice chairman of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (Ramgavar) District Committee of the Eastern United States and Canada, publisher of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* and member of the Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) of the United States and Canada, passed away on December 25 at 5 a.m. at his

home after a long sickness. Born on April 15, 1939 in Aleppo, Syria, to Garabed and Elize Megerian, survivors of the Armenian Genocide, Papken was the oldest of four siblings, though he also had three older paternal siblings from Garabed's first wife, who died in an untimely fashion.

Papken initially worked with his father and older brothers. He married his wife, Anahid Derderian, on August 19,

1962. They met while volunteering as officers on the Giligian Elementary School Alumni Association. Their first child, Garo, was born in 1963. On July 4, 1968, Papken and his family emigrated to the United States and settled in Philadelphia, where son Aram and daughter Tanya were soon born.

Papken Megerian worked for Fidelity Bank and became see MEGERIAN, page 7

## Prof. Akçam Receives Upstander Award From World without Genocide

By Bonnie Russell

WORCESTER (*Telegram & Gazette*) – Clark University history professor Taner Akçam will be honored for the decades he has spent gathering historical evidence to document the 1915 Armenian genocide, the mass killings of 1.5 million Armenians that took place at the hands of the government during the Ottoman Empire.

Akçam will be honored with the 2018 Outstanding Upstander Award from the World Without Genocide organization.

According to its website, World Without Genocide, housed at the Mitchell Hamline School of Law in St. Paul, Minnesota,



Clark University history professor Taner Akçam

works “to protect innocent people around the world; prevent genocide by combating racism and prejudice; advocate for the pros-

ecution of perpetrators; and remember those whose lives and cultures have been destroyed by violence.”

Akçam, one of the first Turkish intellectuals to acknowledge and openly discuss the Armenian Genocide, holds an endowed chair at Clark's Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. An outspoken advocate of democracy and free expression since his student days at Middle East Technical

University in Ankara, Turkey, he is an internationally recognized human rights activist. see AKÇAM , page 5



The American Armenian Rose Float participated in the 129th annual Pasadena Tournament of Roses Rose Parade.

## American Armenian Float Takes Home Judges' Award at Rose Parade

PASADENA, Calif. (*LA Times*) – Three local entrants in the 2018 Rose Parade walked away with awards for their floats during the chilly annual New Year's Day parade.

By Anthony Clark Carpio

The Burbank Tournament of Roses, the La Cañada Flintridge Tournament of Roses and the American Armenian Rose Float received awards for their floats,

which impressed the thousands of parade-goers on Monday.

The American Armenian Rose Float's entry, titled “Armenia Roots,” received the Judges Award.

The entry is a tribute to Armenian women, whether they be mothers, daughters, grandmothers or aunts, who work tirelessly to be the foundation of their family, said Noubar Derbedrosian, a board member of the association.

“There is no one like the women in our lives – our moms, our sisters, our wives – that will give of themselves without asking for anything in return,” he said.

see FLOAT, page 20

## Piano Great Kissin Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (*Armenpress*) – President Serzh Sargsyan held a meeting December 28 with renowned pianist Evgeny Kissin, who was in the country for the 18th Yerevan Prospects music festival, the President's Office said.

During the meeting, the president welcomed Kissin and said that not only are his talent and masterful performances appreciated in the country, but that he is also beloved for his humanity, beloved as a friend of the Armenian people.

He noted that the Armenians would never forget Kissin's support during the 1988 earthquake, nor his participation in the New York concert dedicated to the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, and the unique performance of Komitas' Krunk, which touched the hearts of all Armenians.

Kissin said his love and honor for the Armenian people, who have centuries old culture and history, is mutual, and said that all his life he will return to Armenia.



Pianist Evgeny Kissin with President Serzh Sargsyan

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Musa Dagh Rescue Photos Unearthed

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (AGMI) has discovered 25 never-before-seen photos depicting scenes from the evacuation of Musa Dagh.

Musa Dagh was the site of a successful Armenian resistance during the Armenian Genocide. Allied warships, most notably the French 3rd squadron in the Mediterranean under command of Louis Dartige du Fournet, sighted the survivors, just as ammunition and food provisions were running out. French and British ships reportedly evacuated 4,200 men, women and children from Musa Dagh to safety in Port Said.

The pictures were taken in September 1915 by a French Navy officer. They portray the process of transporting the civilian Armenian population to French warships.

The photos will be available for public viewing in April, AGMI director Hayk Demoyan said.

### Lapshin Announces Plans to Visit Armenia

MOSCOW (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Russian-Israeli blogger Alexander Lapshin, who was released from a prison in Baku last month, has promised to visit Armenia very soon.

Lapshin was detained in Belarus at Azerbaijan's request for visiting Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh) and extradited to Baku where he was jailed for several months before his release in September.

### Armenian Military Most Trusted Institution

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The Armenian military remains the most trusted institution in Armenia, according to an opinion poll conducted recently.

The Armenian branch of the US-funded Caucasus Resource Research Center (CRRC) interviewed residents in more than 1,600 households across the country in November as part of its annual survey.

According to its findings released last week, 51 percent of Armenians “fully trust” and another 26 percent “rather trust” their armed forces. The CRRC's previous surveys found similarly strong popular support for the Armenian army

The latest CRRC poll shows that the Armenian Apostolic Church and other religious organizations in the country were the second most trusted institution, with 74 percent having confidence in them.

The poll found much lower degrees of public trust towards the executive and legislative branches of government. Only 18 percent of those polled said they trust President Serzh Sargsyan, according to the CRRC. Public confidence in the Armenian parliament was found to be even weaker.

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### Review of 2017

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Yerevan 2800th Anniversary Jubilee Commission Meets

YEREVAN – Chaired by Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan, the jubilee commission for preparation and coordination of events dedicated to Yerevan's 2800th anniversary met in late December in the Office of Government.

Deputy Mayor of Yerevan Aram Sukiasyan presented the program of events dedicated to the anniversary celebration, after which a number of organizational issues were discussed.

The Premier made a point of ensuring close cooperation between the Town Hall of Yerevan and the public agencies in order to organize and implement the planned activities properly and in a timely manner. The Prime Minister instructed the heads of government departments to submit to the Town Hall their proposals within the shortest possible time.

## Infant Mortality Rate Drops by half in 10 Years

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The infant mortality rate has been cut in half in Armenia, in the past 10 years.

According to a demographic, healthcare report of 2015-2016, stunting in children under 5 has twice reduced to 9 percent, while the rate of breastfeeding for up to 6 months of age has grown by 10 percent.

Several projects approved by the government seek to improve neonatal healthcare, strengthen the primary health care system, increasing the professional expertise of doctors, as well as raise public awareness on child nutrition issues.

A recent report by the United Nations revealed that the number of deaths among children under five has decreased from 50 for every 1,000 births in 1990 to 13 in 2016 in Armenia.

The neonatal mortality rate – probability of dying between birth and 28 days of age, expressed per 1,000 live births – stands at 7 as of 2016, the UN said.

## Probe of Reported Violence in Armenian Trial Still Not Over

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – An Armenian law-enforcement agency said on December 29 that it is still investigating reports that four arrested members of an armed opposition group were beaten up during their ongoing trial in Yerevan.

The high-profile trial stems from the July 2016 attack on a police base in Yerevan that was launched by members and supporters of a radical opposition group. The gunmen laid down their arms after a two-week standoff with security forces which left three police officers dead.

Eighteen members of the armed group went on trial in May. Four of them claimed to have been brutally attacked by police officers immediately after a tense court hearing on June 28.

During the hearing, two of them were removed from the courtroom after arguing with the presiding judge and security personnel. They as well as two other defendants told their lawyers afterwards that they were beaten up by police officers in the court building's basement before being transported back to their prisons.

Although the police denied the beatings, the Special Investigative Service (SIS) pledged to investigate the allegations. The SIS said that the inquiry is still continuing.

The defendants' lawyers earlier questioned the SIS's declared commitment to a fair probe.

"Do not expect a comment from the police at this point," said Alik Sargsian, the former chief of the Armenian police.

Sargsian, who is now a parliament deputy from the Republican Party of Armenia (HHK), dismissed suggestions that the policemen assaulted the jailed gunmen in retaliation for their colleagues that were killed and taken hostage during the 2016 standoff.

# Karapetyan Laments Economic Cost Of Armenian Political Limbo

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The lingering uncertainty over who will govern Armenia after President Serzh Sargsyan completes his final term in April is adversely affecting the country's economy, Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan said in an interview published this week.

"Unfortunately, that is the case," he told the newspaper 168 Zham. "We

stated in recent weeks that Sargsyan should stay in power as prime minister.

Also in April, Armenia will switch to a parliamentary system of government, meaning that most of the sweeping powers currently enjoyed by the head of state will be given to the prime minister. Karapetyan has repeatedly indicated his desire to retain his post.

Speaking to 168 Zham, the premier again said that the HHK leadership will decide in April "who will occupy what post." "Of course, individuals always play a [major] role," he said. "But the more the role of individuals is minimized ... the more predictable and promising that [government] system becomes."

Joined by key members of his team such as Finance Minister Vartan Aramian and Economic Development Minister



Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan

have to acknowledge that and ... ensure that there are not many [business-related] expectations based on those [political] factors. But the approach that 'let's wait for Monday and see what happens' is definitely having a certain impact on the economy."

Karapetyan referred to unnamed entrepreneurs who he said are delaying their planned investments until after April 9, the final day of Sargsyan's decade-long presidency.

The president, who holds a tight grip on the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK), has still not clarified what he is planning to do afterwards. Sargsyan said on December 15 that "the time has not yet come" for him to announce whether he will become prime minister or take up another state post.

The HHK spokesman, Eduard Sharmazanov, again made clear on Wednesday that Sargsyan will remain the party's top leader in any case. He said that nobody else can do a better job of dealing with security and foreign challenges facing Armenia. Several other senior HHK figures have openly

Suren Karayan, Karapetyan spent most of the extensive interview defending his more than yearlong track record. In particular, he argued that economic growth in Armenia is on track to beat a 4.3 percent target that was set by his cabinet for 2017. He also claimed to have significantly improved tax and customs administration.

"We are committed to creating the kind of a business environment in Armenia that will make it easy to do business ... so that our businessmen feel safe and secure, so that our domestic investors get buoyed and bring in many other investors," he said.

Opposition politicians and other critics say that Karapetyan's government has not eased socioeconomic hardship so far. They have also strongly criticized its decision not to raise public sector salaries, pensions and poverty benefits despite a sizable rise in public spending envisaged by the 2018 state budget.

Most of that spending increase will be channeled into infrastructure projects. Government officials say this, coupled with continued economic

growth, is a better way to boost living standards in the country.

"I think that by 2019 many more people will feel that we have moved and are moving the economy in the right direction," said Karapetyan.

The 54-year-old former business executive vowed to speed up economic growth through major reforms and a fight against corruption when Sargsyan named him prime minister in September 2016. The ruling HHK's governing board gave a largely positive assessment of his track record a year later.

## Armenia Raises Income Tax for High Earners

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenians earning more than 150,000 drams (\$310) a month will pay higher income taxes under new and comprehensive tax legislation that will come into effect in January.

The Tax Code was passed by the Armenian parliament in 2016 amid strong criticism from the opposition and even some pro-government lawmakers. It calls, among other things, for higher taxes on personal income, fuel, alcohol and tobacco. Critics said this will suppress economic activity and lead to more tax evasion.

The government denied those claims. The International Monetary Fund also strongly supported the code, saying that it will improve tax administration and lead to a badly needed increase in public spending.

In particular, the 800-page code raised from 26 percent to 28 percent the income tax rate for Armenians making between 150,000 and 2 million drams a month. The tax rate for those having higher income is set at 36 percent.

According to the State Revenue Committee (SRC), the tax rises will affect 30 percent of the national workforce. In a statement to RFE/RL's Armenian service (Azatutyun.am), the SRC emphasized that the tax rate for the other Armenian workers will be cut to 23 percent.

Vahagn Khachatryan, an economist affiliated with the opposition Armenian National Congress (HAK), again criticized these changes last week, saying that they will encourage private employers, who pay the bulk of the payroll tax, to underreport their workers' wages.

Khachatryan also alleged that the Armenian authorities are keen to stifle the middle class and even cause it to shrink in size. "This is politically motivated," he said, adding that high earners pose a threat to the government's hold on power.

Khachatryan noted that the year 2018 will also see the full entry into force of a Western-backed reform of the national pension system. It will require all employees born after 1973 to pay a higher pension tax.

The government's aggregate tax revenue has grown steadily over the past decade. Still, it was equivalent to just over 21 percent of GDP in 2016, a modest proportion highlighting widespread tax evasion and income disparity in Armenia. The government has pledged to raise that ratio to 23.5 percent by 2022 through a major reform of tax administration.

## Yerevan Shrugs off Azeri Offer Of 'Autonomy' for Karabakh

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – A senior Armenian official has dismissed as unserious Azerbaijan's latest offer to grant a high degree of autonomy to Nagorno-Karabakh.

A top aide to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev reportedly said this week that Karabakh could enjoy a greater degree of self-rule than it had in Soviet times if Azerbaijan regains control over the disputed territory. Ali Hasanov said Baku would also guarantee the security of its predominantly Armenian population.

"I think that they know much better in Azerbaijan that such statements are groundless and ludicrous," Eduard Sharmazanov, the spokesman for the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK), said late on Thursday.

"How can one state give some status to another?" Sharmazanov told reporters. "The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic is a de facto independent republic."

He argued that people's right to self-determination is one of the principles at the heart of international mediators' exiting proposals to resolve the

Karabakh conflict.

A framework peace accord originally drafted by the US, Russian and French co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group a decade ago calls for a phased settlement of the conflict. It would start from the liberation of virtually all seven districts around Karabakh that were occupied by Karabakh Armenian forces during the 1991-1994 war. In return, Karabakh's population would be able to determine its internationally recognized status in a future referendum.

Armenia's leadership says that this peace formula is largely acceptable.

President Serzh Sarkisian ruled out Karabakh's return under Azerbaijani rule immediately his most recent meeting with Aliyev held in Geneva in October. The two leaders pledged to intensify the peace process and ease tensions on the frontlines.

The Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers met in Vienna on December 6 for follow-up negotiations which they both described as "positive." They are expected to meet again in January.





## INTERNATIONAL

## Iran's President Visits Families of Armenian Martyrs

TEHRAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – President Rouhani visited the family of Armenian martyr Edwin Shahmirian on December 25, the President's Press Office reported.

In the visit that took place late on Sunday, Rouhani congratulated the birth of Jesus Christ and added: "The Iranian nation appreciates the devotion and self-sacrifice of the martyrs and their respectful families."

"These days are the days of happiness of all Iranian people and the world, especially our Armenian and Christian citizens, and I am happy that this visit is taking place in such a night," the President continued.

Rouhani also responded to the martyr's mother's happiness over his visit and said: "This is our duty and the least we can do for you dear families of martyrs. You have devoted your

son for defending the country and the Iranian nation and definitely have a high place beside the Almighty."

"The people of Iran are always grateful to their fellow Armenian citizens and consider them trustworthy, hard-working and honest, who love their country," President Rouhani added.

He also went on to say: "The people of Iran consider Prophet Jesus Christ, Prophet Muhammad and Prophet Noah, Prophet Ibrahim, and Prophet Moses as great prophets who have brought blessings and prosperity for the humankind."

A plaque of appreciation was given to the family of the martyr.

President Rouhani also visited the family of Armenian martyr George Keshish Harutun.

Saluting the patience and self-sacrifice of the families of the great mar-

tyrs, the President said: "The entire Iranian nation defend that blood of our dear martyrs who defended the Iranian land by giving their lives".

Rouhani also stressed that in Iran, all religions and ethnic groups stand by each other in happiness and sadness, saying: "Our people have always stood by each other and will continue to do so".

Referring the conditions of Christians in the Middle East, the President said: "Christians have suffered a lot of damages in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon from terrorists and this was also the case for Muslims. Therefore, terrorist created conditions that the fate of Muslims and Christians are now interwoven more strangely and this is necessary that we help each other more in this situation".

## MP Robert Walter at Center of Corruption Scandal Involving PACE

STRASBOURG (Panorama.am) – Former member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Robert Walter, whose controversial report, "Escalation of violence in Nagorno-Karabakh and the other occupied territories of Azerbaijan," was rejected at the Parliamentary Assembly plenary session in 2016, appeared to have been involved in "Azerbaijani Laundromat" corruption scandal.

In September, a consortium of European newspapers and the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) published reports on money laundering and slush fund scheme. The report revealed about \$2.9 billion laundering scheme operated by the Azerbaijani authorities, which was used to bribe high level EU politicians.

As reported by the European Stability Initiative, a think tank for South East Europe and enlargement, Robert Walter had a long history of defending autocracies in the Council of Europe.

"Whenever there was a debate involving Azerbaijan, he would speak out, taking the side of the regime. In January 2013, he voted and spoke out against a

resolution on political prisoners in Azerbaijan. In October 2013, he led one of the most scandalous election monitoring missions in the history of PACE, again to Azerbaijan.

He praised the "sound technical preparation" and "more open electoral debate" and concluded – against all evidence presented by long-term monitors of the OSCE-ODIHR – that the 2013 elections had been "free, fair and transparent," the Initiative writes in its recent newsletter, suggesting Walter had built a career in PACE on defending the human rights record of autocrats against criticism.

As the source reveals, Walter was later hired by the Macedonian government, receiving 7,000 Euro a month, plus expenses, to lobby for government interests. His service as the official documents suggest was "advising

Macedonian delegation on the election of Judge to the European Court of Human Rights and other matters under debate in the Parliamentary Assembly."



Robert Walter

Walter appeared to have lobbied for a government-backed Macedonian judge at the European Court whose candidacy didn't received the relevant Committee recommendation.

Walter, 69, is an English Conservative Party politician.

## Turkey, Russia Finalize Deal for S-400 Air System

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) – Turkey has finalized a deal with Moscow for the purchase of Russia's S-400 anti-missile system, Turkish defense officials announced Friday, December 29, despite concerns voiced by some of the NATO member's allies.

The deal, which would make Turkey the first member of the military alliance to own Russia's most advanced air defense system, comes amid strengthening ties between Turkey and Russia and Ankara's deteriorating relations with the United States and other western countries.

The Turkish Defense Industries Undersecretariat said in a statement Friday that Turkey would buy at least one S-400 surface-to-air missile battery with the option of procuring a second battery. The delivery of the first battery was scheduled for the first quarter of 2020, the statement said.

The two countries on Friday also finalized a financial agreement for the project, under which part of the cost would be financed through a Russian loan, the Defense Industries body said, without revealing details of the deal.

Turkish media reported Friday that Turkey would purchase four S-400 units at a cost of \$2.5 billion. Sergei Chemezov, head of Russia's state-controlled Rostech corporation, also told the business daily Kommersant in an interview published Wednesday that the contract was worth \$2.5 billion and that a Russian loan would account for 55 percent of the sum.

Chemezov said Turkey would buy four batteries and that the first deliveries would start in March 2020, according to Kommersant.

"It's the first NATO country to purchase our most advanced S-400 system," he said.

The reason for the discrepancy over the number of batteries Russia would supply Turkey was not immediately clear. The Defense Industries body would not disclose the cost of the project or other details, citing "principles of secrecy" agreed to by the two countries.

The S-400 has a range of up to 400 kilometers and can simultaneously engage multiple targets. It's capable of shooting down ballistic missile war-

heads along with aircraft and cruise missiles.

Russia deployed the S-400s to its base in Syria to deter Turkey when the two nations were on the verge of conflict after a Turkish jet downed a Russian bomber on the Syrian border in November 2015.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced in September that Turkey had signed a deal to buy the Russian system and made a down payment, drawing concerns from some of Turkey's NATO allies.

Some NATO countries have expressed worries that the S-400 system is not compatible with the alliance's weapons systems.

The Defense Industries agency said the Russian system would be operated under the full control of the Turkish military and "in an independent manner, without any links to any outside elements."

"The system's operation, management, and systems recognizing friends and foes will be undertaken through national means," the Defense Industries body said.

## International News

### Armenian GM among 10 Strongest at Saudi Tournament

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The King Salman World Rapid and Blitz Championships concluded in the Saudi capital of Riyadh on December 29.

In the women's event, 100 participants, including four Armenian chess players, started the campaign, with Elina Danielian collecting 9.5 points (9th spot), Lilit Mkrtchian 7.5 points (53rd), Maria Gevorgyan 7 points (66th), Lilit Galoyan 5.5 points (94th).

The 134 participants, including six representatives of Armenia, started the men's event and played 15 rounds.

With a total of 9 points, Levon Aronian took the 29th position, Hrant Melkumyan came in the 42nd (8.5 points), Gabriel Sargissian, Sergei Movsessian collected 8 points each (51st and 56th spots), while Tigran L. Petrosian and Zaven Andriasian were placed the 86th and 91st, respectively.

### Russian Business Tourists Interested in Armenia for Events

MOSCOW (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Russian business tourists have abandoned Sochi in favor of Armenia and Georgia for their corporate events in 2017.

The change is evidenced by the data provided by Aeroclub, which analyzed the purchase of air tickets by employees of the largest Russia-based corporations for 2017 and found out how prices and demand for domestic and foreign flights changed compared to 2016.

The research revealed that business tourists flew to Sochi 25 percent less often in 2017 than in the previous year, preferring Armenia and Georgia instead.

### NATO Chief Expects Increased Dialogue with Russia in 2018

BERLIN (Panorama.am) – NATO is likely to increase its dialogue with Russia in 2018, the alliance chief said in an interview with Deutsche Presse-Agentur (dpa).

"I expect there will be more meetings and also more use of these direct military lines of communication," NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said.

"So we are moving forward both on the political dialogue and the military lines of communication, and the whole alliance is behind that," he added.

Stoltenberg stressed the importance of keeping open channels of communication with Moscow.

"We need to address the fact that we see a more assertive Russia to the east," he said. "At the same time NATO's message is that we don't want a new Cold War."

### Armenia on Fodor's Go List 2018

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – Armenia is included in the list of top-10 travel destinations for 2018 compiled by Fodor's, the world's largest publisher of travel and tourism information. In the list of 52 countries, Armenia is ranked seventh.

"This tiny Caucasus country has an outsize wealth of history, culture, and hospitality," the publication wrote, calling on tourists to visit Armenia.

"Armenia's rugged mountains and fertile valleys, full of ancient monasteries and traditional villages, are an eco-tourist's dream, and new hiking trails and apps are making it easier to explore the country's great outdoors. ... Though it's nearly 3,000 years old, the capital Yerevan has a youthful energy, with new cafes, wine bars, boutiques, and restaurants opening by the day," Fodor's wrote.

They suggested spring and fall are best times for outdoor exploration and regional festivals, such as the autumn wine harvest in Vayots Dzor.



# Community News

## Society for Armenian Studies Holds Annual Membership Meeting In Washington, DC

WASHINGTON – The Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) held a series of activities and a conference to mark its 44th Annual Meeting, held this year in Washington, D.C. on Saturday, November 18. Members were welcomed by SAS President Barlow Der Mugrdchian (California State University, Fresno), who presented reports on various activities of the Society. Earlier that same day, the SAS Executive Council met to focus on strategic planning and to map out the future direction of the organization.

“The Annual Meeting is an opportunity for our members to provide feedback to the Executive Council,” stated Der Mugrdchian. “SAS utilizes this opportunity to meet to formulate new directions to discuss the upcoming year’s activities.”

A reception, hosted by Grigor Hovhannissian, Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the United States, was held at the Armenian Embassy in Washington DC, following the Annual Meeting.

“We were delighted to meet and greet the participants of the 44th SAS Annual Meeting at the Embassy of Armenia in Washington DC, among them Professor Richard Hovhannissian, one of the patriarchs of the Armenian Studies in the world, and the SAS President Barlow Der Mugrdchian,” said Hovhannissian. In his remarks the ambassador also noted the important role of the SAS in promoting research and publications in the field of Armenian Studies. Community members and SAS scholars mixed in a warm atmosphere and the Ambassador presented SAS with a beautiful art volume on the works of the artist Jean Kazandjian.

In addition to the Conference on “Transmitting Western Armenian to the Next Generation,” co-organized by the Armenian Communities Division of the Gulbenkian Foundation, SAS sponsored two panels as part of MESA.

The first panel, organized by Owen Miller and Ümit Kurt, and titled “The Great Fear of 1895: Armenian Reform, Rumor and Violence Across the Ottoman Empire,” took place on Sunday, November 19. Three papers were given: Owen Miller (Union College), “George Perkins Knapp of Bitlis and Massacres of 1895”; Emre Can Daglioglu (Clark University), “Reform and Violence in the Hamidian Era: 1895 Anti-Armenian Riots in Trabzon”; and Ugur Peçe (Harvard University), “The Year of Rumor: Crete in the Shadow of the Armenian Massacres of 1895.” The discussant for the panel was Edhem Eldem (Bogaziçi University).

The second panel, entitled “Humanitarianism in the Ottoman Empire During World War I” was organized by Stacy Farenthold and took place on Tuesday, November 21. It included papers by Melanie S. Tanielian (University of Michigan), “Nourishing Bodies and Souls: The Maronite Church’s Relief Effort in Mount Lebanon during the Great War”; Stacy Farenthold (California State University, Stanislaus), “American Relief and Émigré Politics in the Syrian Mahjar”; Asya Darbinyan (Clark University), “Can Refugees Speak? Humanitarian Crisis at the Ottoman-Russian border (1914-1917)”; and Khatchig Mouradian (Columbia University), “Not like a Lamb to the Slaughter: Humanitarian Resistance during the Armenian Genocide.”

The Society for Armenian Studies represents scholars and teachers in the field of Armenian Studies. It publishes the peer-reviewed Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies, available on its website: [societyforarmenianstudies.com](http://societyforarmenianstudies.com). For more information about the Society or membership, please contact SAS President Bedross Der Matossian at [bdermatossian2@unl.edu](mailto:bdermatossian2@unl.edu).



Executive Director of FAR’s Children’s Center Mira Antonyan opening presents with the children

## Christmas Party Brightens FAR Children’s Center

YEREVAN and NEW YORK – The young residents of the FAR Children’s Center in Yerevan, Armenia, received a memorable Christmas celebration filled with gifts, clothes and a special visit from Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, the Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, on December 22, 2017.

Warmly greeting Barsamian, the children performed a Christmas concert where they portrayed heroes from Armenian fairy tales and engaged in dialogue about Armenian history, language and the church. While receiving a tour of the center, Barsamian admired the new handicraft items made by the residents, including paintings and woodwork.

“These children are our children,” said Barsamian, president of FAR. “My wish for them is to grow healthily in their minds, bodies and souls and become the graceful children of our Armenian Church.”

The day’s biggest surprise was the arrival of Santa Clause, carrying bags of gifts while the children danced to the tune of the American classic, “Rocking Around the Christmas Tree.” They were overjoyed to receive Christmas presents and warm clothing for the winter.

The archbishop acknowledged the generosity of parishioners in the Eastern Diocese and the Friends of the FAR Children’s Center, whose efforts resulted in Christmas toys for the at-risk residents, who live at the center to seek a safe haven from difficult family situations.

“New Year and Christmas is the best time to show our love and respect to the others,” said Barsamian. “We must care for the needy because this is what Christ was preaching to us.”

Highlighting the importance of Barsamian’s visit, Dr. Mira Antonyan, executive director of the FAR Children’s Center, said his presence among the children “means joy and festivity and the chance for our residents to have an enjoyable enjoy Christmas.”

The holiday party for the children, which has become an annual tradition, was made possible by the dedicated members of the Friends of the FAR Children’s Center, based in the New York City metro area. Led by visionary honorary chair Sirvart Hovnanian and co-chaired by Nadya Garipian and Sylva Torosian, the aim of the group is to raise funds to provide Christmas gifts to the residents at the FAR Children’s Center. This year, the children received additional gifts, including warm winter coats, thanks to the Dadourian family. Through unified efforts, including working with local parish communities in the Eastern Diocese, the current residents at the center were able to unwrap gifts during the Christmas season.

“On behalf of the committee members and myself, we would like to extend our gratitude to Archbishop Barsamian for helping us give the children an enjoyable time during this festive occasion,” said Torosian. “It is our utmost pleasure to be able to help the children celebrate Christmas and the New Year.”

Since its inception in the year 2000, through the diligence of the Eastern Diocese and Fund for Armenian Relief, Armenia’s children and adolescents have been able to find protection at the FAR Children’s Center, leaving behind homes with a history of abuse, abandonment, homelessness, neglect or poverty.

The only national, full-service facility in Armenia that performs crisis intervention and rehabilitation, the center has served thousands of children in dire need of short-term shelter, rehabilitation and housing. After receiving these outreach services, the majority of the residents are eventually reunited with their families.

see CHRISTMAS, page 5

## Talk at NAASR by Armenia Peace Corp Volunteer Examines Grassroots Development

BELMONT, Mass. – Nick Pittman, a US Peace Corps volunteer in Armenia, will give a talk titled “Grassroots Development in Armenia: Challenges,

Opportunities, and Lessons Learned,” on Thursday, January 18, at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) Center, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, MA 02478. The program will

be the first in 2018 in the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) / Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues.

In this presentation, Pittman will discuss his experience working for the last year and a half as a US Peace Corps volunteer with a small grassroots NGO in rural Armenia. He will highlight the challenges engaging in such intercultural work (such as linguistic barriers and different conceptions of planning) and how they can be addressed; discuss opportunities for new community projects in Armenia; describe the lessons he has learned in the course of his work; and outline the various grassroots projects Peace Corps volunteers are assisting throughout the country.

Pittman grew up in Cambridge, studied economics at Reed College and worked for a few years in environmental and economic consulting before going to Armenia with the US Peace Corps in March 2016. He lives in a rural village in Lori Province and works with a small local NGO as a community and youth development volunteer, helping his coworkers develop and implement projects focused on youth empowerment and assisting the NGO in organizational development.

## Armenia Artsakh Fund Shipped \$5.6 Million Aid October-December 2017

GLENDALE – The Armenia Artsakh Fund (AAF) delivered more than \$5.6 million worth of humanitarian assistance to Armenia and Artsakh during the fourth quarter of 2017.

The AAF itself collected \$5.5 million worth of medicines and other supplies donated by Américas (\$4 million) and Direct Relief (\$1.5 million). Other contributors of valuable goods during this period included Dr. George Katcherian of California (\$99,000) and Birthlink of UK (\$29,000).

During 2017, the AAF shipped to Armenia \$25 million worth of humanitarian aid to Armenia and Artsakh. In the past 28 years, including its shipments under its predecessor, the United Armenian Fund, the AAF has delivered to Armenia and Artsakh a grand total of 766 million dollars’ worth of relief supplies on board 158 airlifts and 2,376 sea containers.

“The Armenia Artsakh Fund is regularly offered free of charge millions-of-dollars’ worth of lifesaving medicines and medical supplies. All we have to do is pay for the shipping expenses. We would welcome your generous donations to be able to continue delivering this valuable assistance to all medical centers in Armenia and Artsakh,” Harut Sassounian, AAF president, stated.

For more information, email [sassoun@pacbell.net](mailto:sassoun@pacbell.net).



Nick Pittman





## COMMUNITY NEWS

## Christmas Party Brightens FAR Children's Center

CHRISTMAS, from page 4

For those who are unable to return to their families, the Fund for Armenian Relief has partnered with the Armenian government over the past decade to develop the country's first foster care program. The organization continues to work hand-in-hand with UNICEF-Armenia to ensure these foster children are taken into good homes and are able to thrive in a positive family environment.

"We feel blessed that we are able to change lives for the most vulnerable children in Armenia," said Antonyan, who remarked on the importance of partnering with other organizations to become an even more viable institution.

Although the FAR Children's Center has made significant strides in its short history, they are continuously searching for ways to advance the progress of the center and the shelter, guidance and services they can provide to Armenia's children.

"Our plans for the New Year are ambitious but they are target-oriented," said Antonyan. "We are looking to find innovative ways to help individual children and strengthen protection systems."

"Together, we are changing Armenia and we are getting closer to our dreams."



Archbishop Barsamian spending time with the residents and staff at the FAR Children's Center

## Prof. Akçam Receives Upstander Award From World without Genocide

AKÇAM, from page 1

"We have long admired your bold and dedicated work to document the atrocities perpetrated by the Ottoman government against the Armenian people. You have persisted in speaking out about the genocide, despite being marked for death by Turkish ultranationalists," Ellen J. Kennedy, executive director of World Without Genocide, wrote to Akçam.

One example is Akçam's challenging of Article

301, a provision of Turkey's criminal code that permits the arrest of individuals who use the term "genocide" to describe the killing of about 1.5 Armenians during the Ottoman Empire. The European Court of Human Rights ruled in Akçam's favor stating that Turkey violated his right to free expression.

Akçam presented the case in 2007, following the murder of journalist Hrant Dink, who had been convicted under Article 301.

Akçam's most recent discovery, an Ottoman document that he states is "the smoking gun," which demonstrates the government's knowledge of and involvement in the systematic elimination of the Armenian population, was discussed in an article by Tim Arango published on April 22 in the *New York Times*.

In an email, Akçam explained that he had first discovered "a memoir of an Ottoman bureaucrat Naim Efendi, which is considered lost." The memoir includes about 52 telegrams belonging to the Ottoman Government regarding the deportation and extermination of Armenians.

"The second discovery is a different telegram sent by a central committee member of the Union and Progress Party (which organized the genocide). The telegram is a smoking gun and

includes the killing orders," he said.

Akçam's forthcoming book, *Killing Orders*, combines these two different areas of research to provide evidence that refutes arguments by Turkish denialists regarding the inauthenticity of the telegrams.

Previous recipients of the World Without Genocide award include Eli Rosenbaum, director of human rights enforcement strategy and policy at the U. Department of Justice; Claudia Paz y Paz, former Attorney General of Guatemala; and Magistrate Judge Peggy Kuo, former prosecutor at the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia.

Akçam will formally receive the award at the organization's annual gala in May 2018 in Minneapolis.

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## New Year's Eve Celebrations In Washington, DC

WASHINGTON – The Armenian community of Greater Washington and Baltimore ushered in the 2018 New Year at the ballroom of Hyatt Regency in downtown Bethesda, Maryland. Organized by the Armenian Community Events Planners (ACEP), this year's gala took place in a much larger venue than last year's. By early December, the inkling among the committee members was that it would be another "sold out" event.

With more than 400 guests, and against the back drop of festive holiday lights, the evening began with welcoming remarks by committee members, Sintia Petrosian and Garbo Afarian thanking supporters in advancing the group's mission of bringing both area churches and its parishioners together. Rev. Hovsep Karapetyan of St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church and Rev. Sarkis Aktavoukian of Soorp Khatch Armenian Apostolic Church were invited to offer their prayers and good wishes for the New Year and Soorp Dznount.

The evening's entertainer, Armen Aloyan and his band, who had arrived from Los Angeles the night before, took the stage to warm up the crowd with Armenian music while everyone enjoyed a three-course dinner. Not too long, the dance floor was filled with people taking selfies, dancing to Armenian rhythms and pop songs, selected by DJ Chris Habibian, and waiting in anticipation for the stroke of midnight cheer and champagne. With that came, platter of choreg and cheese for each table and dancing until 2 a.m.





## OBITUARIES

## Armenak Alajajian, Former Soviet Basketball Star

TORONTO, Canada (*Globe and Mail*) – While playing for the Soviet Union in the gold-medal basketball game at the 1964 Olympics, point guard Armenak Alajajian contested a loose ball, only to have a much larger American land on his back. At just that instant, a photographer caught the Soviet player being bowled over.

That image graced the sports pages of dozens, if not hundreds, of newspapers in North America, preserving a memorable if inelegant play involving one of the era's best players.

The Americans won the gold medal in the match, while Alajajian and his teammates settled for silver. For a decade, the ethnic Armenian point guard was a standout athlete for two of the better basketball teams in the world – the Soviet Union national team and CSKA, the Red Army team based in Moscow. A brooding, beetle-browed figure of intensity on the basketball court, Alajajian's great playmaking, including daring, no-look, behind-the-back passes at the Olympics, demonstrated less a flair for showmanship than a calculated deception to get a teammate in the open for a clear shot.

After winning European championships as both an athlete and a coach, Alajajian followed family members by immigrating to Canada, where he could only find work in Toronto as a parking-lot attendant. He was given entrée to the diamond and jewelry business after a fellow Armenian was startled to recognize so famous an athlete in so humble a position. At 44, he also became basketball coach of the Hawks at Humber College, where he registered in an English program to better communicate with his players.

Alajajian, who died at 86, played and coached amateur basketball in Toronto for two decades. The diamond merchant was known in the Armenian-Canadian community for his philanthropy. He was inducted into the Armenian General Benevolent Union Sports Hall of Fame in Toronto last year.

While his athletic prowess was little known in his adopted land, where he became a citizen, the athlete was honored both in the former Soviet Union, where a high school in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, bears his name, and in the independent nation of Armenia, where a postage stamp containing his likeness dribbling a ball was issued to commemorate the 2000 Olympics.

Alajajian was born on December 25, 1930, at Alexandria, Egypt, where his family settled in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide. According to a niece, his mother had been found by the Red Cross wandering the Anatolian countryside and was sent to an orphanage in Greece.

In high school, Alajajian played tennis, table tennis, soccer and racquetball, while also competing in track and field, though it was on the basketball court where he showed the greatest promise.

After World War II, his family heeded a call for repatriation, a movement known as *nergaght*, even if it was ruled by the Soviets and not the one from which they had fled. Later, disillusion would set in and many left again for foreign lands.

As a teenager in 1948, he enrolled at Yerevan State University in the Armenian capital, becoming captain of the basketball team. After graduation in 1951, he qualified for the club team SKIF Yerevan, which won the Soviet championship in Odessa that year thanks to his 43 points against Kiev.

After two seasons with Burevestnik Almaty in Kazakhstan, the point guard joined the Soviet Red Army, playing for its CSKA (Central Sports Club of the Army) team in Moscow. His determined play earned him a spot on the roster of the Soviet national team for nine seasons.

His club team won nine Soviet championships during his stint, while also winning four European championships. He wore No. 6 and was known as Alachachian, or Alachachyan, or Alatchatchan from the translit-

eration of his name from Russian.

Alajajian made his Olympic debut at Tokyo in 1964, scoring five points against Canada in a preliminary game. In the final against the United States, he sank three of eight shots, many of those coming from a distance in an era before the three-point shot. The United States maintained an undefeated record in Olympic play by prevailing over the Soviets, 73-59, in a chippy, physical game typical of such Cold War showdowns.

Afterwards, Alajajian, who spoke some English, told reporters the American victory was deserved, as they had "played a better game, with better rebounding, better shooting."

"We played good, very good, for the first eight minutes," he said. "But the Americans played good for 40 minutes. If we play bad for three or four minutes, that's all they need. They rebound well, they come up with the ball and get to take lots of shots."

The point guard acknowledged the physical play in the final. "Basketball is not tennis," he shrugged.

The Soviet Union recognized the Olympic silver medals by naming him and his teammates to the *Orden znak pocheta* (Order of the Badge of Honor).

Alajajian's stellar play, not to mention his command of English, at least as compared with the rest of the Soviet entourage, provided an opportunity for him to travel the world for exhibitions and competitions. He even got to tour the 1965 World's Fair in New York.

After retiring as a player in 1967, he became coach of CSKA, a position he would hold for five years, winning three Soviet titles, as well as the Cup of Europe twice. His coaching record with CSKA was an impressive 130-40.

A student of the game, Alajajian wrote basketball features for the newspaper *Sovetskii Sport* and the magazine *Sportivnye igry* (Sporting Games). He also wrote two books – a memoir, *Notes of a Basketball Player* (1965), and a coaching treatise, *Not Only About Basketball* (1970).

In Toronto, he served as head coach of the senior Armenian General Benevolent Union team. The group also benefited from his charitable giving, as did the Holy Trinity Armenian Church, where his funeral service ultimately was held.



Alajajian died at Scarborough General Hospital in Toronto on December 4 from complications after breaking his hip in a fall. He leaves behind his son, Arthur Alajajian; daughter, Karina Alajajian; four grandchildren; and sisters, Rose Whitehorn and France Kandaharian. He was divorced.

The American player who landed on Alajajian's back at the 1964 Olympics was Lucious (Luke) Brown Jackson, a 6-foot-9 power forward, who stood 14 inches taller and weighed 40 pounds more than the point guard he crushed. Jackson later played professionally in the National Basketball Association, winning a championship with Wilt Chamberlain and the Philadelphia 76ers in 1967.

Despite the passage of more than a half-century, Jackson, now 76, remembered his opponent.

"He and I were going for a rebound, or a loose ball. It was a battle," he said when reached recently at his home in Beaumont, Tex. He recalled Alajajian as a pesky rival. "He was a good player. He could shoot the ball."

The accolade did not quite match the greatest praise the athlete ever received, which came courtesy of cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space, who once said of the speedy guard: "He blasts like a rocket!"

## Dr. Sarkis Karayan

### Scholar, Physician

PORTER RANCH, Calif. – Sarkis Yacoub Karayan, 89, born on November 28, 1928 in Aleppo, Syria passed away on December 9, 2017. He resided in Porter Ranch at the time of his passing.

Karayan was the son of Yacoub and Zarouhi Ustakarayan. He graduated Aleppo College in 1946 and went next to Beirut's American University for his bachelor's degree. In 1952, he received his medical degree. He specialized in pediatrics and worked with the Swiss Dr. Hans Ulrich Zellweger for three years until he became director of the uni-

versity hospital's Maternal and Child Health Care Center. Two years later he was invited to be the university physician for the infirmary.

He continued in that position until leaving for the United States in 1979, where he received a fellowship in New York Medical College in the field of developmental disabilities and then went to the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Amherst as a member of the clinical faculty.

He moved with his family one year later to California, and became the staff physician at the Camarillo State Hospital. Soon he advanced to become chief of services in the Developmental Disabilities Center of the same hospital.

Karayan was always involved in Armenian community affairs. While still in Beirut, he was one of the founders of the Armenian Medical Association, which published the monthly *Pzhishg* [Doctor] and for which he wrote articles on pediatric topics. He also was a founding member and vice president of the Armenian Art Lovers Cultural Association of Lebanon, and the Cultural Association of Aintabtsis.

A medical doctor by day, in his spare time, he used his fluency in Ottoman Turkish, Modern Turkish, Eastern Armenian, Western Armenian,

Classical Armenian, French and German to compile a comprehensive list of 4,600 towns and villages that were home to Armenians in pre-Genocide Turkey. The result of his labor was

a four-volume tome called "The Extermination of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire." In 2016, his wife, Silva Karayan, donated a copy of his work to the University of Southern California's Shoah Foundation.

Karayan was a frequent contributor to the Armenian press, focusing on historical and demographic issues of the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire, especially after retiring

in 2003. He wrote in the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, *Nor Geank*, *Nor Or*, *Asbarez* and *Massis*.

Karayan leaves behind his wife, Dr. Silva Karayan, his children, Dr. and Mrs. Khatchik and Zella Ingrid Karakozian, and grandchildren Tamar and Patil, as well as three sisters and their families.

Arrangements were under the direction of Forest Lawn, Hollywood Hills, for the December 14 interment. Three priests participated in the services: Fr. Shnork Demirjian of St. Peter Armenian Apostolic Church, Fr. Haroutioun Tachejian of St. James Armenian Apostolic Church of Los Angeles, and Fr. Avedis Apovian of the Crescenta Valley Holy Apostles Church.

Aside from family members, Carla Garapedian of the Armenian Film Foundation and Sinan Sinanian, vice president of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), spoke, with the latter reading the letter of AGBU president Berge Setrakian. More speeches were given later at the Phoenicia Restaurant, including by bereaved widow Dr. Silva Karayan, Prof. Osheen Keshishian and Taguhi Arzoumanian of the Lark Conservatory.



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## OBITUARIES

# Philadelphia Community Leader Papken Megerian Dies

MEGERIAN, from page 1  
vice president in charge of international banking. He left Fidelity in 1968 to embark on a successful 35-year career of owning and operating various businesses, including beverage and beer distributors, a packaged food distributor, car washes and MRI centers.

In all his activities, whether work or Armenian community life, Papken's wife Anahid served as his unwavering confidante and supporter. He was very active in the Armenian Church, serving on the Parish Council of St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Church of Wynnewood as a member, treasurer and chairman, and as its Diocesan delegate for



Armenian Democratic Liberal Annual Convention, Watertown, MA, July 11, 2012. Papken Megerian is seated third from left.



As Ellis Island medal of Honor recipient

24 years. He was treasurer of the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern).

Megerian was one of the founders of the Philadelphia chapter of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada (TCA), and for many years was also a member of the TCA Central Board, including as its vice president. He was an active member and leader of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL), as mentioned above.

The Megerians supported many organizations and projects, including the Eastern Diocese, the Mother See of Echmiadzin, the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Armenian Mirror-Spectator, the Armenian Sisters Academy of Philadelphia, Our Lady of Armenia Boghossian Educational Center in

Gyumri, the Armenian Diocesan Center in Javakhk, Georgia, and the Philadelphia Art Museum.

He was a trustee of the Society of Orphaned Armenian Relief and a longtime member of the Armenian General Benevolent Union and the Knights of Vartan.

Since 2001, he visited Armenia 25 times for business, philanthropy, politics, culture and pleasure. His work did not go unnoticed, and he was given the St. Nerses Shnorhali Medal with a pontifical encyclical in 1998 by Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin I, and the St. Gregory the Illuminator Medal by Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II in 2009. On May 12, 2012 he received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor from the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations, and on September 28 of the same year the Armenian community of Philadelphia celebrated his award and service at a reception hosted by St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Church.

On September 21, 2013, Megerian was given the Anania Shiragatsi Medal by President Serzh Sargsyan at a ceremony in the presidential palace on the 22nd anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Armenia.

Papken Megerian was above all else a family man. He was a loving and supportive



During the Diocesan Convention in 2013

brother, brother-in-law, uncle and cousin. He loved, supported and helped all his family members with his whole heart. He leaves behind his wife Anahid; children Garo (Annette), Aram (Carla) and Tanya (Nerces) Bardakjian; and grandchildren Gregory, Cariné, Ariana, Haig, Lena, Lily, Sona and Seta. He is also survived by his two brothers Noubar (Anie) and Hrair (Ana), sister Silva Kailian and sister-in-law Rozaline Meguerian.

Papken's primary goal, above all else, was to raise his family to be proud of their Armenian heritage and their culture and to be leaders in their community. He taught them how to be proud, yet humble, compromising leaders, passionate workers and above all else compassionate individuals. He led by example and has left a legacy that his children and grandchildren will surely carry.

Sonia Kailian Placido, Papken Megerian's niece, shed some light on the personal influence that her uncle has had in her life. She, along with her two sisters and brother, was raised by a single mother. Her three uncles became surrogate fathers to them and "Papken Keri" was omnipresent in their lives as they were growing up. Her uncle, she said, "was a

Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), as the latter was in Echmiadzin, presided over the ceremonies, with the participation of ten local clergymen of different denominations of the Armenian nation.

There were many condolences, including from Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II (see the accompanying list) and internment was at Edge Lawn Memorial Park.

## Condolence Messages

Messages of condolence were sent from the following:

- Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, Echmiadzin, Armenia
- Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate, Diocese of the Eastern United States, New York City
- Very Reverend Bishop Haigazoun Najarian, Primate, Armenian Diocese of Australia and New Zealand, Sydney, Australia
- Tekeyan Cultural Association Central Board of Directors of the United States and Canada
- Vartan Nazerian, President of the ADL Supreme Council, Los Angeles, Calif.
- Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, Former Chairman ADL Central Committee, Montreal, Canada
- ADL Eastern District Committee of the United States and Canada, Boston, Mass
- Hagop Avedikian, chairman of Central Committee of the ADL, Yerevan, Armenia
- Maro Bedrosian, TCA Central Board and ADL Eastern District Committee of the United States and Canada member
- Panig Keshishian, TCA Central Board member
- Dr. Haroutioun Arzoumanian, former President, Tekeyan Cultural Association Central Board, Montreal, Canada
- Kevoork Tutunjian, Chairman ADL Toronto, Canada
- Rev. Bishop Mkrtich Proshyan, Primate Aragatsotn Region, Armenia



During the Armenian General Benevolent Union centennial in New York in 2007

## Sophie Komeshian Genocide Survivor

PEEKSKILL, N.Y. — Sophie Komeshian died on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, just shy of her 104th birthday at Cortlandt Healthcare in Cortlandt Manor, NY.

One of the last survivors of the Armenian Genocide, she was born in Everek, Turkey and immigrated to the US in 1921.

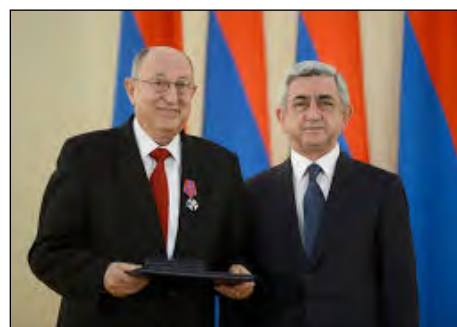
She married and raised her family in Yonkers, NY and was proud to say she had nourished countless children in the Yonkers Public Schools as she was their head cook. You could always find her in the church kitchen or preparing meals for the Seminary students. Her love of cooking was passed down through the generations and she is immortalized in her treasured recipes (including her Simit Cookies and Apple Chocolate Chip Cake).

She was an excellent card player, often winning at Crazy Eights or Rummy and

she was a whiz with dice as well, taking no prisoners when playing Yahtzee. Her knitting skills were exemplary and her beautiful creations included sweaters, dresses, hats and blankets for her family and friends. She also made beautiful baby clothes and christening outfits for newborns.

She leaves her children, Raffy Komeshian of Garrison, NY, and Sara Hatchadoorian of Mahopac, NY; grandchildren, Andrew Hatchadoorian, Caryl (Joe Fontana) Minard, Christina Komeshian, Laura (Daryl Birger) Komeshian, Danielle (Stephen) Rydberg; great-grandchildren, Ani, Tahlene and Axel Rydberg and Benjamin and Jack Birger.

She was preceded in death by her husband Harry Komeshian, son Stephen Komeshian, two twin children, great-grandchildren Tomas and Kristofer Rydberg and son-in-law Raymond Hatchadoorian.



With President Serzh Sargsyan

man who thrived on helping others. Call it good or bad, but he never said no."

His wake and funeral service took place on December 28 at a packed St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church. Kevoork Marashlian, chairman of the ADL District Committee and Hagop Vartivarian, TCA Central Board Secretary, were present as representatives of the two respective organizations. Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, representing Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the





# 2017

## IN REVIEW

### JANUARY

• Gladys Berejiklian has become the Australian state of New South Wales' 45th premier after being elected unopposed as Liberal leader on Monday, January 23. The 46-year-old Member for Willoughby was first elected to the NSW Parliament in 2003.



• An emotional program on Sunday, January 22, at the Keljik Hall of St. James Armenian Church paid tribute to the memory of Hrant Dink, a man whose death marked a definite shift in greater understanding about the Armenian Genocide and its ripples through the century. The three main speakers at the program were Turkish: Prof. Taner Akçam of Clark University; Gonca Sönmez-Poole, a television producer and writer, and Dr. Emrah Altindis, a scientist studying at



Harvard and a member of the Bostonbul Group. The tribute was done in the style of an Armenian memorial meal for the deceased, with traditional Istanbul food, as well as photos of Hrant Dink with candles lit in front of them.

• The United States called on Armenia and Azerbaijan to avoid ceasefire violations as it announced the appointment of its new chief negotiator in the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process on Friday. The US Embassy in Yerevan said that Richard Hoagland will replace another career diplomat, James Warlick, as US co-chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, next month "on an interim basis." "The permanent replacement for Ambassador Warlick will be announced at a future date," it said in a statement. Warlick, who has held that position for the past three years, said last month that he will resign at the end of December to work for a Russian law firm in Washington.

• Four British companies are alleged to have played a key part in a multimillion pound bribery scandal involving a leading Italian politician. Luca Volontè, a former member of the Union of the Centre party in Italy, has been accused of helping quash a human rights report criticizing Azerbaijan, one of the world's most authoritarian countries. One of the UK companies was allegedly linked to a scandal involving Russian organized crime.



Volontè, who is also president of the European People's party in the Council of Europe, is being investigated by the Milan public prosecutor's office for allegedly accepting 2.39 million euros in bribes. It is claimed that Volontè received the money in exchange for persuading the People's party to vote against a 2013 report by the council, Europe's leading human rights organization, that highlighted the plight of political prisoners in Azerbaijan.

• An event for author Dawn MacKeen to promote her book on the Armenian Genocide, *The Hundred-Year Walk*, was presented last October by the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA), the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, and Holy Trinity

Armenian Apostolic Church, with the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) as a cosponsor. During the event, donations were raised to support Syrian Armenian relief, and an auction was held. After the event, several substantial additional donations came to Tekeyan for this purpose. In all a sum of \$4,301.08 was raised and sent to the Save a Life program of the Aleppo Compatriotic Charitable Organization (ACCO) by means of the St. Kevork Armenian Church parish council. The ACCO reported that this sum enabled the 9 members of the Maranian, Jamgochian and Kehyeyian families from Aleppo to get a one-way ticket and travel to Armenia, and sent photos of their arrival in Yerevan. ACCO Founding President Ani Balkhian expressed gratitude for the aid donated by Boston area Armenians for this cause.

• Altogether more than 1,200 people attended events in Montreal and Toronto commemorating the centennial of the assassination of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, and featuring Cem Ozdemir, the co-chair of the Green Party in Germany, and a member of parliament there who was the main force behind the resolution which that body passed recogniz-



ing the Armenian Genocide. Among those attending were Armenian Ambassador to Canada Armen Yeghanyan, the German Consul Generals of Toronto and Montreal, Russian Consul General of Montreal, Armenian Consul at the Armenian Embassy, several members of parliament, and significantly, the Premier of Ontario Province Kathleen Wynne, who gave a passionate speech about Hrant Dink. Dink's widow, Rakel, sent a special video message to both audiences thanking the organizers and Ozdemir.

• A Montreal woman believed to have been the last documented Canadian to have survived the Armenian Genocide died on January 19, just weeks shy of her 108th birthday. Born in 1909, Knar Bohjelian Yemenidjian was only six years old in 1915 when the Ottoman Turks began their massacre. An estimated 1.5 million people were killed. The family fled to Alexandria, Egypt in 1928. During the Nasser era, the family again fled to safer lands. Yemenidjian ended up in Canada in 1971.



• Garo Paylan, an Armenian member of the Turkish Parliament, was suspended from parliament for three sessions by the authorities for mentioning "genocide against minorities" in a speech during a debate on constitutional amendments. Paylan is an MP for the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP). "A period of 10 years of chaos started and during that period, between 1913-1923, we lost four peoples: Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians and Jews. They were deported amidst large-scale massacres and genocides," Paylan said during his speech on Saturday, January 14. "Once we were 40 percent of the population, now we are as few as one in a thousand. Doubtless, something terrible happened to us.

I call it genocide, you can call it whatever you want. Let's name it together and move on," he said.

• Owner of the Tashir Group Samvel Karapetyan has been included in *Forbes'* list of real estate "kings" of Russia. On January 26, the Russian version of *Forbes* published an updated list of the country's top real estate moguls. Karapetyan is listed third in the ranking. The Tashir Group owns 33 shopping centers, 4 office complexes, and 8 hotels across Russia. In 2015 the group collected \$610 million in revenue from leased space. Born in Armenia, he moved to Kaluga, near Moscow, in the 1990s.

• Mike Connors, born Krekor Ohanian, who broke free of years of supporting roles when he found stardom in the late 1960s as a maverick private investigator on the CBS series "Mannix," which went on to enjoy an eight-season run, died on Thursday, January 26, in Los Angeles. He was 91. His son-in-law Mike Condon said the death, at a hospital, was caused by complications of leukemia, which had been diagnosed a week earlier, *The Associated Press* reported. In the series, which had its premiere in 1967, Connors played the darkly handsome Joe Mannix, a Korean War veteran of (like Mr. Connors) Armenian descent who sleuthed his way around Los Angeles with flashy cars and a penchant for citing Armenian proverbs.

• The Parliament of Denmark voted 89 to 9 with 11 abstention on January 26 to adopt an Armenian Genocide

• Two Glendale attorneys could face disciplinary action after the State Bar of California alleged they embezzled hundreds of thousands of dollars from a multimillion-dollar settlement relating to the Armenian Genocide. The state bar filed several disciplinary charges last year against Vartkes Yeghiayan and Rita Mahdessian, including misappropriation of funds and moral turpitude. They claimed the couple, who are married, had siphoned more than \$300,000 of settlement money stemming from a class-action lawsuit over survivor benefits from the Armenian Genocide. The two have denied the charges.

• On January 24, representatives of the Board of Directors of the Ramgavar Azadagan Party, known also as the Armenian Democratic Liberal party (RAG or ADL) visited the premises of the Greek New Democracy Party to meet with the group's president, Kyriakos Mitsotakis. Mitsotakis was briefed by the Board of Directors of RAG on the fraternity and liberal nature of the Ramgavar party, who has a very similar ideology to that of the Greek New Democracy Party. The general profile of the Armenian element in Greece, was described to the Greek leader. It was confirmed that it accounts more than 80,000 Greek citizen compatriots.

• The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada published two new literary volumes in Armenian at the end of 2016, Sarkis Vahakn's anthology of short stories called *Dzaghgakah badm-vadzknery* [Selected Stories], and Kevork M. Garabedian's collection of poetry titled *Siroy brismag* [Prism of Love]. Tekeyan has been publishing books for almost four decades, starting in 1978 in Boston with a celebration of the poet Vahan Tekeyan's birthday. It publishes both literary and historical works. The two new volumes have been printed by Michael Nahabet, president of Yearbook, Inc. His firm uses the latest technology and specializes in the publication of yearbooks for secondary schools. The Publications Committee members include Vatche Smerdjian, Edmond Y. Azadian, and Hagop Vartivarian.







## YEAR IN REVIEW

## FEBRUARY

• Armenia sent a fresh batch of humanitarian assistance to civilians in Syria suffering from the country's devastating civil war. The Armenian Foreign Ministry said a Russian transport plane delivered the 18 metric tons of relief aid – mainly canned food – to a Russian airbase in Khmeimim in north-western Syria. Photographs released by the ministry showed Russian military personnel there unloading it from the



Ilyushin-72 plane in the presence of Armenia's consul general in Aleppo, Tigran Gevorgian. The packs of relief supplies bore inscriptions in Armenian and Arabic: "With warm wishes for peace from Armenia to the brotherly people of Syria!"

• Vartan Gregorian, president of Carnegie Corporation of New York, was awarded the medal of Chevalier of the French Legion of Honor at a ceremony at the Cultural Services of the French Embassy here on February 9. The French ambassador to the United States, Gérard Araud, presented the insignia to Gregorian in recognition of his three-decade effort to strengthen Franco-American relations, advance links between French



and American institutions of higher education and promote the study of French culture and language. "Vartan Gregorian is a visionary and a living example of the modern man of letters, for whom education and knowledge is the key to opportunity and peace," said Araud.

• Banking giant Ira Stepanian died suddenly on February 13. He is survived by the family he loved – his wife Jacquie, his son Philip, daughter Alisa, son Steven and his wife Kate, and his three granddaughters: Sophie, Charlotte and Elizabeth. Born in 1936 in Cambridge, Mass. to Armenian immigrant parents, Stepanian graduated from Somerville High School and received a BA in economics from Tufts College and an MBA from Boston College Graduate School of Business Administration. He began his banking career with Bank of Boston in 1963 as a management trainee and worked his way to chief executive officer in March 1987 and elected chairman in March 1989. In 1993 the New England Council named him New Englander of the Year for his commitment and contributions to the field of banking and his leadership and impact on the New England region's quality of life and economy.

• Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev signed an order on February 21 appointing his wife, Mehriban Aliyeva, to the post of first vice president of the country, the Azerbaijani APA reported.

• Jemal Pasha's grandson Hasan Jemal, a Turkish reporter who has recognized the Armenian Genocide, has been sentenced to 1 year and 3 months' imprisonment for writing an article about Fehman Husseyn, one of the leaders of the PKK, *Hurriyet* reports. The court found him guilty for "propaganda for a terrorist group." Jemal denied the charges, saying his action is not a crime. The court decided to suspend the sentence.

• The nonprofit educational organization Facing History and Ourselves screened a new documentary, called "They Shall Not Perish: The Story of Near East Relief," to a small group of Armenian community leaders at the West Newton Cinema. This new documentary on the Armenian Genocide focuses on the role played by Near East Relief (NER), an important American philanthropic association. Award-winning producer, writer and director George Billard, and Near East Foundation (the successor organization to NER) board member Shant Mardirossian, the executive producer of the film, spoke at the event.

## MARCH

• Filmmaker Atom Egoyan was named a Companion of the Order of Canada earlier this month for his contribution to



Canadian culture. Created in 1967, the Order of Canada, one of the country's highest civilian honors, recognizes outstanding achievement, dedication to the community and service to the nation. Close to 7 000 people from all sectors of society have been invested into the Order. Their contributions are varied, yet they have all enriched the lives of others and have taken to heart the motto of the Order: *Desiderantes Meliorem Patriam* ("They desire a better country"). Appointments are made by the governor general on the recommendation of the Advisory Council for the Order of Canada.

• The Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) Supreme Council held a regular meeting on the weekend of March 24 to 26 in New Jersey with the participation of members from various far-flung corners of the world. Political party structural issues as well as achievements and plans were discussed. Progress in reorganizing the party, and in the field of the press and news media, was reviewed. The ADL Supreme Council is the highest body in the party, to which all party districts are subject.



Meeting of the ADL Supreme Council: seated, from left, Dr. Arshavir Gundjian (Montreal), Hagop Avedikian (Yerevan), Vartan Nazerian (Los Angeles), Dr. Hratch Kouyoumjian (London), Edmond Y. Azadian (Detroit); standing, from left, Kevork Marashlian (Washington, D.C.), Hagop Vartivarian (New Jersey), Khoren Kalinian (Cairo, Egypt), Daniel Yousefian (Buenos Aires, Argentina)

• Pianist and songwriter Avo Uvezian passed away on March 24, at 91, leaving behind over seven decades of musical history, and a legacy of cigars. He built a name for himself late in life as a jazz pianist who traveled the world playing with many of the greats, writing for one of them. He played for the Shah of Iran, and before that spent a year in Baghdad. His band, the Lebanon Boys, toured the Middle East until Uvezian found his way to America to attend Juilliard in the 1960s. Uvezian was living in New Jersey, but a friend



knew a singer from New Jersey who was looking for new standards. The man's name was Frank Sinatra. In 1966 Uvezian played a song he had written, *Broken Guitars*, for Sinatra, who fell in love with the melody, but convinced Avo to throw out the title and the lyrics. He wrote new ones, and gave it a new title. He called it *Strangers in the Night*.

• Sib Hashian, a former member of the rock group Boston, died after collapsing onstage on March 22. Hashian's wife, Suzanne, said the 67-year-old drummer collapsed while performing during the Legends of Rock Cruise. Hashian, who called Lynnfield, Mass. home, owned a record shop and a string of tanning salons in Boston. Hashian's sudden passing prompted an outpouring of social media tributes among the classic rock community – and one particularly poignant post from actor Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, who called Hashian his "second dad."



• Turkey's beleaguered pro-Kurdish bloc was dealt a further blow on February 21 when the parliament stripped its imprisoned co-leader of her seat. An appeals court upheld Figen Yuksedag's conviction of spreading terrorist propaganda. Yuksedag and fellow co-leader of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Selahattin Demirtas remain in jail together with at least nine other HDP deputies – their numbers keep fluctuating – on a wide array of often sketchily constructed terror charges. Yuksekdag lost her seat because she attended the funeral of a left-wing militant deemed to be a terrorist.

• Argentine-Armenian Daniel Youssefian, a philanthropist supporting the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund and a member of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party Supreme Council, donated four new incubators in all to Artsakh's Arevik Children's Health Center and the Mother and Child Health Preservation Center. Mesrop Margaryan, director of the Arevik Children's Health Center said that the hospital received two special incubators for premature newborns made by the German firm Dräger.



## APRIL



• For the first time, a big budget, wide-release feature film – complete with A-list, Hollywood celebrities and a renowned, Academy Award-winning director – depicted the Armenian Genocide. This monumental film, "The Promise," was released in mainstream theaters across the United States and Canada on April 21. Produced by Kirk Kerkorian's Survival Pictures and directed by Academy Award winner Terry George ("Hotel Rwanda"), "The Promise" features an outstanding international cast, including Oscar Isaac, Charlotte Le Bon, Christian Bale, Shohreh Aghdashloo, Angela Sarafyan, and many more. All proceeds from the film will be donated to non-profit organizations, a first for a film of this scale. In the film, it is 1914. As the Great War looms, the vast Ottoman Empire is crumbling. Constantinople (Istanbul) – its once vibrant, multicultural capital—is about to be consumed by chaos. Michael Boghosian (Oscar Isaac) arrives in the cosmopolitan hub as a medical student determined to bring modern medicine to Siroun, his ancestral village in southern Turkey where Turkish Muslims and Armenian Christians have lived side by side for centuries. Photo-journalist Chris Meyers (Christian Bale) has come only partly to cover geo-political news. He is mesmerized by his love for Ana (Charlotte Le Bon), an Armenian artist he has accompanied from Paris after the sudden death of her father. In addition to the all-star cast, acclaimed musician and activist Serj Tankian served as the film's executive music consultant and contributed a modern rendition of the Armenian folk song, *Sari Siroun Yar* to the soundtrack.

• Later, in August, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), in partnership with Survival Pictures, the production company behind "The Promise," and major Armenian organizations in North America, launched The Promise to Educate campaign to raise funds for the advancement of Armenian Genocide education across the United States.

The distribution of 'The Promise' DVDs, along with tailored study materials, provides access to trustworthy information about the Armenian Genocide, challenging the powerful forces of denial." Donations will allow AGBU to supply Keep The Promise Educational Packages to American public middle and high schools, higher educational institutions and libraries. Each package includes a copy of "The Promise" DVD, a letter from filmmaker Terry George, a tailored "The Promise" Study Guide and a reference of Armenian Genocide curriculum resources and contacts. The package was developed in cooperation with genocide education organizations, such as the Armenian National Institute (ANI), The Genocide Education Project and the Zoryan Institute.

• In addition, the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Law has received a \$20 million gift to launch a new institute that will serve as a national hub for human rights education and advocacy. The Promise Institute for Human Rights at UCLA School of Law will be supported by proceeds from the feature film "The Promise," as well as other donations and university resources. The donation is the largest gift to launch a new institute in the history of UCLA Law.





## YEAR IN REVIEW

• On April 24, in Istanbul, where the bulk of Turkey's shrunken Armenian population, numbering around 60,000, resides, small crowds gathered to honor the dead at organized events. They carried black banners reading, "Armenian Genocide: Recognize, Apologize, Compensate." Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan sent a message to the city's Surp Vartanants



Church, where a ceremony was held. Erdogan said, "Dear esteemed Armenian citizens, I salute you with love and respect. ... I offer my condolences to the grandchildren of the Ottoman Armenians who lost their lives in the harsh circumstances of World War I. ... We have zero tolerance for a single one of our Armenian citizens being ostracized, marginalized or made to feel a second-class citizen."

• Programs and strategies designed to break through the barriers that prevent Armenian women from full participation in the social, economic, and political spheres of society were explored at a two-day "Conference on the Empowerment of Girls and Women in Armenia," hosted by the American University of Armenia (AUA) on April 20 and 21. Keynote



speakers Arpine Hovhannisyian, Armenia's Justice Minister; Mary A Papazian, president of San Jose State University; and Veronika Zonabend, chair of the Board of Governors at Dilijan College in Armenia headed a full agenda featuring more than 50 presenters from Armenia and abroad who addressed current issues facing Armenian women. A large and enthusiastic audience made up of community activists, entrepreneurs, professionals, students, professors, as well as the general public participated in a series of plenary and parallel breakout sessions. In his opening remarks, AUA President Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian observed that approximately 60 percent of the AUA students are women, "many of them among our very best students," but wondered how many of them would end up in leading positions in the public or private sectors in Armenia.

• The Armenian community of greater Boston put together a solemn commemoration of the 102nd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide on April 21 at the Massachusetts State House, with Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey the keynote speaker. Massachusetts State Representative



David Muradian served as master of ceremonies. The commemoration began, as always, with a procession of the sergeant-at-arms, Massachusetts elected officials and clergy, led by the Homenetmen Scouts. Pastor Joseph Garabedian of the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Greater Boston (in Belmont) gave a powerful and eloquent invocation, calling for justice as well as recognition of the Genocide.

• As part of the 102nd Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the Fine Arts Committee of St. John Armenian Church hosted a retrospective exhibit of the artistic works of Nora Azadian. More than 100 people were in attendance during the gala opening reception at the church on Sunday, April 23. Dr. Raffi

Belian, Fine Arts Committee chairman, was the MC for the event. In his introductory remarks, Belian described Azadian as an anchor in the Armenian art and cultural community and a noted example of our rich Armenian heritage, stating, "She is truly an artist in every way, not only in the visual arts – creating oil paintings, charcoal drawings, and water color illustrations – but also in poetry, theater, design and music." Born in Egypt, Nora Azadian became the prize student of the renowned painter Ashod Zorian, and later was graduated from the ABC School in Paris.

• The Los Angeles and Glendale-Pasadena chapters of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) of the United States and Canada organized a talk and reception for Edmond Y. Azadian, the president of the association, on April 28 at the TCA Beshgetourian Center in Altadena. Azadian, together with TCA Vice Treasurer Kevork Marshlian and Executive Director Aram Arkun, was in Los Angeles to conduct a series of meetings with leaders of Armenian educational establishments con-



cerning the possibility of programs which will continue the legacy of the TCA Arshag Dickranian School and its supporters. These meetings were held in conjunction with the special Feasibility Committee. The TCA Central Board designated this committee to investigate areas in greater Los Angeles which have need of Armenian language and cultural programs and recommend appropriate measures to fulfill this need.

## MAY

• On May 2, Garo Paylan, an Armenian member of parliament serving in Turkey, representing the HDP party, paid a visit to the Diocesan Headquarters. Paylan was greeted by Bishop Abgar Hovakimyan, Primate, and the Parish Priests of the Montreal and Laval Armenian Apostolic Churches. The Primate introduced took Paylan to St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Cathedral of Montreal and invited him to meet with clergy and leaders of the Armenian Community organizations



of Montreal. Paylan's visit to Canada has been organized by the Union of Armenian Churches and Associations of Quebec and the Union of Armenian Churches and Organizations of Toronto.

• After 40 years in business, with 37 years at the corner of Walnut and Washington streets in Newtonville, the iconic Karoun Restaurant closed. The building that houses Karoun was purchased last year by Newton developer Robert Korff and will be torn down to make way for a new mixed-use property. Owner John Eurdolian and his family are indebted to the tens of thousands of customers who have loyally supported their family business over the years. In 1977 Eurdolian opened the first Karoun Cafe in a tiny subterranean space at the corner of Newbury and Fairfield in Boston. As the café became increasingly popular his family joined him.

• Creative Armenia was officially launched at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) recently with a mandate to discover talent and empower stories of impact in the digital age. The event was co-hosted by Teri Schwartz, dean of the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television, and Dr. Eric Esrailian, producer of "The Promise," who is also a founding member of Creative Armenia's advisory board. Grammy Award winning musician and activist Serj Tankian and documentary filmmaker Carla Garapedian introduced the organization's first initiative, a \$5,000 video challenge from the Oscar-winning director Terry George ("Hotel Rwanda" and "The Promise").

• On May 4 Dr. Mary Papazian was inaugurated as the 30th president of San Jose State University (SJSU). She is the first

Armenian woman president of a California State University and only the third woman president of SJSU. The inauguration event was filled with pomp and ceremony on the SJSU campus in the shadows of historic Tower Building and the Martin Luther King Jr. Library.

• The Turkish Foreign Ministry summoned the American ambassador in Ankara on Monday, May 22, to complain about the detention of two Turkish security officers outside the Turkish Embassy in Washington the prior week, a Turkish official said. The detentions occurred about two hours after Turkish government bodyguards were filmed assaulting several protesters outside the ambassador's residence, which is separate from the embassy. An official at the Turkish Embassy, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss details of a diplomatically tense case, said that the two Turkish guards were only briefly detained, and that they have since returned to Turkey.

In the episode on May 16, a demonstration outside the Turkish ambassador's residence in Washington erupted into a brawl that pitted Armenian and Kurdish protesters against Turkish officials, supporters of Erdogan and the bodyguards. Nine people were hospitalized.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee on May 25 unanimously adopted House Resolution 354 condemning the violence against peaceful protesters and called for measures to be taken to prevent similar incidents in the future. House Foreign Affairs Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) was joined by Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY), Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA), and Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD) in introducing H.Res. 354, requesting "the perpetrators to be brought to justice."



• US President Donald Trump visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem on Monday, May 15. Representatives of the Catholic, Armenian and Greek Orthodox church met the president. Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem Nourhan Manougian, Custodians of the Holy Land Fr. Francesco Patton, and Greek Orthodox Patriarch Theophilos III greeted President Trump.

• Music fans everywhere mourn the sudden loss of Soundgarden frontman Chris Cornell, 52, who was found dead on May 17 after a concert in Detroit. The Wayne County medical examiner's office declared his death a suicide by hanging. The Grammy-winning Seattle grunge rocker left behind a wife and three children. His song for the film, "The Promise," has been nominated for a Grammy award.

• The \$1.1 Million Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity was awarded on May 28, to Dr. Tom Catena, a Catholic missionary from Amsterdam, NY, who has saved thousands of lives as the sole doctor permanently based in Sudan's war-ravaged Nuba Mountains. The Aurora Prize, granted by the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative on behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors, was announced at a ceremony in Yerevan. He was selected as the 2017 Aurora Prize Laureate from more than 550 nominations



submitted from 66 countries. George Clooney, Academy Award-winning actor, co-founder of both The Sentry and Not On Our Watch, and co-chair of the Aurora Prize Selection Committee, commended Catena by stating, "As violence and war continue to threaten people's spirits and perseverance, it is important to recognize, empower and celebrate people like Dr. Catena who are selflessly helping others to not only survive, but thrive. Dr. Catena is a role model to us all, and yet another example of people on the ground truly making a difference."





## YEAR IN REVIEW



- Soft-spoken and discreet, impeccably dressed on the job and off, Norman Pashoian opened the door of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel to politicians and powerbrokers, actors and musicians, Brahmins and those buoyed by fortunes of a more recent vintage. He greeted visitors for 66 years, steadfast at his post as the Ritz became the Taj, until he retired at 85. Along the way, he unobtrusively became Boston's most famous doorman and a Back Bay institution. Pashoian was 89 when he died May 26 in Melrose-Wakefield Hospital of complications from congestive heart failure.

## JUNE

- On June 6 the Armenian Embassy in Austria and *Austrian Society* journal jointly organized the visit of Austrian members of parliament and heads of diplomatic representations in Vienna to the Mekhitarist Congregation church. The visit aimed at making the Austrian political and public figures, as well as the foreign diplomats get acquainted with the heritage of Armenian culture in Europe.

- Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II received Edmond Y. Azadian, president of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada, last week. The two discussed a series of issues pertaining to Armenian culture as well as the



forthcoming visit of the Catholicos to the US this autumn and possible solutions to the crisis affecting the Istanbul Patriarchate of Armenians. The meeting deliberated on the role of the Church of Armenia, and opinions were exchanged on the recent meeting of the Supreme Spiritual Council in Moscow. Certain questions concerning the reunification of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party were examined. Azadian remarked that they were ready for negotiations.

- It was a concert with gifted artists who ranked with some of the best in the world. And it celebrated an organization that has championed Armenian culture throughout its 70 years. On Sunday afternoon, May 21, the Tekeyan Cultural



Association (TCA) celebrated its 70th anniversary, presenting a piano trio concert at New York's Alliance Francaise titled "The Armenian Spirit." The performance featured internationally famed artists violinist Ani Kavafian, cellist Ani Kalayjian and pianist Orion Weiss. Warmly welcoming the large crowd, TCA Greater Committee Chair Hilda Hartounian noted that the event "brings to light the importance of upholding the Armenian culture in our community and beyond. Since its establishment 70 years ago in Beirut, Lebanon, the Tekeyan Cultural Association has been a leader in Armenian cultural programming around the globe.

- Armenia and Azerbaijan are closer to war over Nagorno-Karabakh than at any point since a ceasefire brokered more than 20 years ago, the International Crisis Group (ICG) said. Fighting between ethnic Azeris and Armenians first erupted in 1991 and a ceasefire was agreed in 1994. But Azerbaijan and Armenia have regularly traded accusations of violence around Nagorno-Karabakh and along the Azeri-Armenian border.

- On June 9, the Armenian Heritage Park brought together many in the community who like good food and also want to support efforts to maintain the Heritage Park. In a departure from the usual format of various local chefs offering a stand-



out food from their restaurants, this time, four chefs each got about 15 minutes each to demonstrate how to make a particular specialty. They did not disappoint. Master of Ceremonies Wendy Semonian Eppich, the publisher of the *Improper Bostonian*, was on hand to announce the chefs and keep time.

- The first school in Kashatagh, which connects Artsakh with the Republic of Armenia, was established in September 1994 in the district center of Berdzor with 25 students and dedicated teachers. Today, with a 23-year-history behind it, 200 students learn there at the hands of its 30 teachers. In 2008, a relationship was established between the school and the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) of the United States and Canada, and in 2009, the school was renamed in honor of the



renowned poet and public figure, Vahan Tekeyan. In March 2017, the TCA chapter of Montreal contacted Gayane Muradyan, the official representative of the TCA of the US and Canada in Armenia, concerning renovations for Berdzor's Vahan Tekeyan Middle School No. 1. After negotiations, the school's administration agreed to begin renovations with the classroom dedicated to Armenian language and literature. It sent

photographs of the classroom to donor Arto Manoukian and an estimate of the costs of the renovation. Work quickly began, and the entire staff of the school participated. Now the renovations have been completed, and at the entrance of the classroom a placard in Armenian has been placed stating "The Armenian Language and Literature Classroom has been renovated with the aid of the Saro-Armen Manoukian Fund of Montreal's Tekeyan Cultural Association."

## JULY

- A Turkish-Armenian intellectual out on a temporary pass from prison did not return at the appointed time, instead taking to social media to announce he had escaped. "The bird has flown," Sevan Nisanyan tweeted on July 14, changing his profile picture to an image of a bird. "The same wishes for the remaining 80 million." Nisanyan, 61, is a linguist and writer. He taught linguistic history at Istanbul's Bilgi University. He has since resurfaced in Greece. In his writings, "his targets have included Ataturk and Islam, two 'untouchables' of Turkish public discourse," it states on his website. He was jailed in January 2014 on nine charges related to illegal construction of a house in a heritage site in the town of Sirince, Izmir. He was sentenced to 11 years and six months.

- On Saturday July 7, the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) District Committee of the Eastern United States and Canada held a regular meeting at its headquarters in Boston

in the Baikar Building and reaffirmed its loyalty to the ADL Central Executive based in Armenia and the Supreme Council created through the latter body. The participants discussed the District Committee's reports on financial and political activities and took decisions concerning forthcoming political plans. The committee members thanked Edmond Y. Azadian for his decades of dedicated labor and wise leadership. They then unanimously elected Kevork Marashlian as his successor as chairman. Azadian will continue to serve as the liaison with the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* on behalf of the District Committee.



Seated, from the left, Dr. Armen Demerdjian, Edmond Y. Azadian, Apet Torosian, Ani Torikian; standing, Vartan Ilanjan, Shoghig Tutundjian, Kevork Marashlian, Kevork Tutundjian, Hratch Torikian, and Hagop Alexanian. Maro Bedrosian is missing from the picture.

- As part of a package of measures aimed to change internal procedural rules of the Turkish parliament, the legislature's constitutional committee approved a provision banning the use of the phrase "Armenian Genocide" from being used in legislative body. Also banned are the terms "Kurdistan" and "Kurdish regions." The bill, initiated by the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), stipulates a punishment for those lawmakers who break the rule by "insulting the history and common past of the Turkish people" that is, using the term "Armenian Genocide" while speaking about the "events of 1915." Members of the People's Democratic Party (HDP) walked out of parliament in protest.

## AUGUST

- Greco-Roman wrestler Olympic champion Artur Aleksanyan became the world champion for the third time, at the World Championships here, on August 21. Aleksanyan's rival was Musa Evloyev representing Russia. Aleksanyan is an Olympic Champion (2016) and bronze medalist (2012), a three-time World Champion (2014, 2015, 2017), and a three-time European Champion (2012, 2013, 2014). Aleksanyan is the



second Olympic gold medalist of Armenia since regaining independence in 1991 and is the most decorated Olympian of independent Armenia as well. He has been nicknamed the "White Bear" and is one of the most renowned Armenian athletes of the 21st century.

- On Thursday, August 17, leaders of the Armenian Democratic Liberal (ADL) Supreme Council, including President Vartan Nazerian (seated, second from left), Vice President Edmond Y. Azadian (seated, third from left), and member Vartkes Kourouyan (standing at far left), met with a group of Los Angeles Armenian youth at the Tekeyan Cultural



Association's Beshgetourian Center in Altadena, California to discuss various Armenian issues. ADL Central Committee member Kevork Halebian is seated, first on the left. Representatives of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada present included President Azadian and Executive Director Aram Arkun (seated, fourth from left)

- Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds issued a proclamation on





## YEAR IN REVIEW

Friday, August 25, commemorating the Ottoman Turkish Government's murder of over 2.5 million Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians and Syrians, making Iowa the 47th US state to properly recognize and condemn the Armenian Genocide.

## SEPTEMBER

- Russian-Israeli travel blogger Alexander Lapshin, who had been sentenced to three years behind bars in Azerbaijan, was released on September 12, Lapshin's lawyer, Eduard Chernin said, according to RIA Novosti. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev signed an order the previous day pardoning Lapshin. The extradition and persecution against Lapshin was widely slammed by international community as a gross violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of speech and movement. Israel's Foreign Ministry welcomed the pardon, saying it has carefully followed the case while Lapshin was incarcerated. "We look forward to seeing him soon in Israel and we will closely monitor the process of his return," it said.

- On September 17, Yerevan hosted the first Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL or Ramgavar) Youth Alliance Forum, attended by ADL members, Armenians from both the Diaspora and the Republic of Armenia, leaders of the ADL Central Executive Committee and the Supreme Council, as well as representatives of Tekeyan Cultural Association from around the world. The purpose of the Youth Forum was to present to the party members and guests the activities that the younger members of the party have been carrying out during the past months. It showcased future projects, raised questions and issues of concern for the young people. It also attempted to provide solutions together with implementation



methods. Opening speeches were made by Chairman of the Central Board of the Liberal Democratic Party of Armenia Hagop Avetikian, Chairman of the ADL Supreme Council Vartan Nazerian, and Edmond Y. Azadian, member of the Supreme Council of the ADL as well as Chairman of the Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada.

- On September 15, Hrant Dink's birthday, the Hrant Dink Foundation presented the International Hrant Dink Award this year to Eren Keskin from Turkey and Ai Weiwei from China. The award is presented annually to people who work for a world free of discrimination, racism and violence, take personal risks for their ideals, use the language of peace, and by doing so, inspire and encourage others. With this award, the foundation aims to remind all those who struggle for these ideals that their voices are heard, their works are visible, and that they are not alone, and also to encourage everyone to fight for their ideals.

- The Mekhitarist Congregation announced the official inauguration of the ceremonies for the 300th Jubilee of the Foundation of the Mekhitarist Abbey of San Lazzaro in the Venetian Lagoon. The official start of the jubilee year on September 8 was preceded by a series of events which included a performance by the renowned Tallis Scholars.

- US President Donald Trump praised Armenia for participating in NATO-led peacekeeping operations and military exercises on Thursday when he congratulated the country on the 26th anniversary of its declaration of independence from the Soviet Union. In a congratulatory letter to President Serzh



Sargsyan, Trump also expressed readiness to "continue our assistance" to Armenia's ongoing transition to a parliamentary system of government. He said his administration is also seeking to expand US-Armenian economic ties.

- The film "The Last Inhabitant" was screened at the Venice Film Festival under the patronage of the governor of Venice Luca Zaia, upon the initiative of the Italian partner Blue Art Association, Fisch Art Cultural Foundation, in association with Orietta Trevisanato Zampieri. The director of the film, Jivan Avetisyan, along with Lithuanian producer Kestutis Drasdauskas, American producer Adrineh Mirzayan, and

actress Sandra Daukshitte Petrule, were present at the festival earlier this month.

- For three days, Armenians, Artsakh residents and Armenians from around the world came together for meetings, concerts and reports, at Yerevan's Karen Demirchyan Complex, September 18-20. The sixth Armenia-Diaspora PanArmenian Conference, titled "Mutual Trust, Unity and Responsibility," was held on the threshold of the 100th anniversary of the declaration of the First Republic of Armenia, the 100th anniversary of the Battles of May 1918 and the 2,800th anniversary of the foundation of Erebouni/Yerevan.

## OCTOBER

- Haig K. Deranian, of Belmont, formerly of Worcester and Watertown, died on October 2. He was 75. Deranian served as commander of Ararat Lodge No. 1, Boston in 1984 and 1985 and served as Grand Commander of the brotherhood from 2008 to 2010. At the time of his passing he was a member of the Diocesan Board of Directors, Board Member of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, a and longtime Diocesan Delegate from St. James Armenian Church. His exceptional leadership in the Armenian Heritage Park Foundation was crucial for the success and eventual building of the Park, which officially opened in 2012. He leaves his wife, Donna (Pino) Deranian, children Gregory Deranian and his wife Adrienne, Jason Deranian and his wife Jennifer and Jennifer Granfield and her husband Mossey; grandchildren Nicholas, Christian, Sam and Sophia, sister Charlotte Eordekian and her husband Harry and cousin Diane Kouyoumjian.



- Michigan became the eighth US state to recognize the independent Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh), with the overwhelming bipartisan passage of S.R.99, spearheaded by Senator David Knezek (D - 5th District). The bipartisan measure calls upon the US to establish economic and cultural ties with the Republic and support peace and stability across the South Caucasus, reported the Armenian National Committee of Michigan (ANC-MI). "

- Rep. Dan Kildee (D-MI) joined the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues. An Armenian Assembly of America delegation met with Kildee last month and discussed issues of concern to Armenian American constituents living in Michigan's 5th Congressional district. Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny, Michigan-raised Western Region Director Mihran Toumajan, and Grassroots & Development Associate Mariam Khaloyan were joined by the Assembly's Michigan State Director John Jamian, St. John Armenian Church of Greater Detroit Pastor Very Rev. Aren Jebejian, and members of the ArmenianAmerican community. Kildee is also a committed supporter of religious freedom in the Middle East.

- Armenian Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan visited Iran on October 9 and 10, during which he discussed strengthening economic ties with Iran. Karapetyan noted that productive and constructive talks were held with the authorities of Iran that can give new impetus to bilateral economic cooperation and boost the volume of trade turnover. Karapetyan highlighted the cooperation and involvement in various projects by members of the Armenian community of Iran in Armenia. Karapetyan and Iran's President Hassan Rouhani met on October 10 in the Iranian Presidential Palace, the press service of the Armenian government noted.

- On October 8, 25 members of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group came to Laurence Technological University in Southfield from New York to perform Berj Zeytuntsian's "All Rise, Court Is in Session" upon the invitation of the Detroit chapter of TCA. This was the third premiere of the play, after New York, Yerevan and Gyumri. The play presents the trial of Soghomon Tehlirian in Berlin in 1921. Tehlirian had shot and killed Talat



Pasha, one of the chief architects of the Armenian Genocide. The play was directed by Parisian Gerald Papasian. As he was in Yerevan, by special arrangement Harout Chatmajian in his absence supervised the preparations for the play and the technical work. Harout Barsoumian once again proved his talents in the role of Soghomon. The role of Talat previously was performed by Karnig Nercessian, one of the founders of the acting company, but his untimely death led Harout Takvorian, an experienced and talented actor in his own right, to take over the role.

- The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan reportedly agreed to intensify the protracted search for a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and bolster the ceasefire regime in the conflict zone when they met in Geneva on Monday, October 16. "

- Nagorno Karabakh's army threatened "painful" retaliation on Monday, October 23, as it accused Azerbaijani forces of shelling its frontline positions for the first time in two months. The Defense Army claimed that they fired five mortar shells and one anti-tank rocket in northeastern Karabakh on Sunday. It released video footage purportedly showing two such shells exploding in a field and the Israeli-made Spike rocket flying over a Karabakh military facility and hitting the ground. In a statement, the Karabakh army warned that it would retaliate in a "disproportionate and quite painful" fashion if the Azerbaijani side continues such "deliberate provocations."

- Daphne Caruana Galizia, a journalist in Malta, died on Monday, October 16, when her car, a Peugeot 108, was destroyed by a powerful explosive device which blew the vehicle into several pieces and threw the debris into a nearby field. A blogger whose posts often attracted more readers than the combined circulation of the country's newspapers, Caruana Galizia was recently described by the Politico website as a "one-woman WikiLeaks." Her blogs were a thorn in the side of both the establishment and underworld figures that hold sway in Europe's smallest member state. Her most recent revelations pointed the finger at Malta's prime minister, Joseph Muscat, and two of his closest aides, connecting offshore companies linked to the three men with the sale of Maltese passports and payments from the government of Azerbaijan. No group or individual has come forward to claim responsibility for the attack. Malta's president, Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, called for calm.



- Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian was recently elected by his peers to serve as president of the Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association. "From Berkshire County to Essex County and beyond, each day sheriffs across the Commonwealth are making a difference in the lives of those we serve in our communities," Koutoujian said. Appointed sheriff by Gov. Deval Patrick in January 2011, Koutoujian won election to office in 2012 and re-election in 2016.

## NOVEMBER

- 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.

- French Armenian singing legend Charles Aznavour was honored in Israel 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 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."

- Friday, November 3, capped off the 85th anniversary commemoration events for the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*. The event raised a total of \$135,000. The event was short on speeches and long on fun and surprises. About 200 people attended the program, which included comments from and awards to the four guest journalists, Robert Fisk, David Barsamian, Amberin Zaman and Philip Terzian. Fisk received the lifetime achievement award from the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, while the other three received awards of excellence. Fisk joked while picking up his award from Edmond Azadian,





## YEAR IN REVIEW



the head of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada, and the senior columnist for the *Mirror-Spectator*, that the award is usually given to someone in the twilight of life and asked if the editorial board of the paper had spoken to his physician. Both Barsamian and Terzian spoke briefly using humor deftly to thank the newspaper for the award. Zaman also spoke briefly, but her remarks about her ailing mother, whom she could not visit because she cannot return to Turkey, elicited sighs from the audience. An accompanying seminar at Wellesley College took place on Thursday.

- The estate of the late Dr. Nubar Berberian bequeathed a sum of \$340,000 to the Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc. (TCA). The Central Board of Directors of the TCA decided to



establish the Dr. Nubar Berberian Trust Fund and carry out his wishes as expressed in his will by publishing a volume of Dr. Berberian's Armenian-language articles and editorials. It will also use the interest annually from the bequest to provide awards to college students of Armenian descent who major in either international law or political science and who are born or live in the United States, France,

Egypt or Armenia. Berberian, a noted journalist and Armenian activist, passed away on November 23, 2016, after a brief illness. He was 94.

- The year 2017 marks the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum. In honor of this

anniversary, as well as 2016 being the year when initial appointments were made to the Michigan Governor's Council on Holocaust and Genocide Education to provide guidance in developing an appropriate curriculum to be taught in Michigan schools, the museum embarked on a special exhibit featuring Jewish and Armenian artifacts from the collection of James and Ana Melikian of Scottsdale, Ariz. More than 200 people from both communities attended a preview of the collection at the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, hosted by the Museum and Chairman Richard Manoogian of the Armenian Apostolic Society.

- The Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) of Greater New York hosted a gala celebration of the 70th anniversary of TCA at the



Terrace at Biagio's with more than 250 guests. The evening was held under the auspices of Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) and the presidency of Nazar and Artemis Nazarian.

- More than 250 friends and supporters of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) on November 18, celebrated its 70th anniversary in grand style. The event was held under the auspices of Eastern Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian at the Terrace at Biagio's. Guests included Armenia's Ambassador to the United Nations Zohrab Mnatsakanian and his wife Irina Igitkhanyan, philanthropists and sponsors of this anniversary, Nazar and Artemis Nazarian, and TCA leaders Edmond Azadian and Hagop Kassardjian. Representatives of several organizations were present, including the Armenian Diocese, Armenian Missionary Association of America, Armenia Fund, the Armenian General Benevolent Union and the Armenian National Committee of America. Following a reception and the singing of the American and Armenian national anthems by Jeny Sarian, the Very Rev. Oshagan Gulgulian of Sts. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Church of Wynnewood, Penn., offered the invocation, adding, "I am also a Tekeyan member and a graduate of the Vahan Tekeyan School in Beirut." Jerry Misk, a TCA Greater NY

member, was master of ceremonies, offering insight and a unique style. In warm remarks, Hilda Hartounian, chairperson of the TCA Greater NY, welcomed all present and stated that members and friends had traveled from Armenia, Lebanon, Egypt, France, Argentina, Canada and throughout the US for this event.

- The Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) and its sister organizations held a consultative conclave on Saturday, November 18, at the TCA Center of Greater New York, and after long deliberations decided to form the Tekeyan Cultural Association World Council, which will coordinate the activities of different chapters and serve as their spokesman in pan-Armenian forums. To further this coordination, a convocation will be held in March 2018 in Yerevan. This initiative was taken by the TCA Founders Committee in Lebanon and the Central Board of the TCA of the United States and Canada, and supported by the representatives of the majority of the Tekeyan chapters.

- George Avakian, a record producer and talent scout who played a key role in the early careers of Miles Davis, Dave Brubeck, Keith Jarrett and Bob Newhart, among many others, died on Wednesday, November 22, at his home on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. He was 98. His death was confirmed by his daughter, Anahid Avakian Gregg. Over the course of a career that began when he was in college, Avakian was involved in virtually every facet of the music industry. He helped popularize the long-playing record; organized the first jazz reissue series, preserving the recorded legacies of Louis Armstrong and other pioneers; and introduced Édith Piaf to American audiences.



- Ten days before he was tapped as President-elect Donald Trump's national security adviser, Michael Flynn published an opinion column that immediately raised suspicions at the Justice Department. "We need to adjust our foreign policy to recognize Turkey as a priority," Flynn wrote in the Hill on November 8, 2016, the day of the presidential election. "We need to see the world from Turkey's perspective." He argued for a range of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's talking points, defending his ruthless crackdown on dissidents, calling for the extradition of Erdogan's rival, Fethullah Gülen, and calling Turkey "vital to US interests." What nobody knew then was that three days earlier, Flynn had received the third and last installment of \$530,000 in compensation for lobbying for Turkey's interests. He would not register as a foreign agent until March, a month after he was fired from the White House.

## DECEMBER

- Following a heated debate, the Armenian parliament passed on Friday, December 8, a government bill which is meant to combat domestic violence in the country. The government pushed the bill through the National Assembly despite continuing resistance from some deputies representing the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK). But it won over other, more senior HHK figures who openly criticized the initial version of the legislation circulated in September.

- The Hrant Dink Foundation was awarded the Chirac Prize for Conflict Prevention by the Chirac Foundation. On behalf of the Hrant Dink Foundation, the president of the foundation, Raket Dink, received the prize from the President of French Republic Emmanuel Macron last month. In his speech, Macron said, "On the ninth year of the prize, the awardees were announced following the meeting of the Chirac Foundation's Jury on September 27. The Chirac Foundation also presented its Culture for Peace Prize to Zoukak theater company, which has been contributing, through theater, to the rehabilitation efforts of refugees living in Lebanon camps. "The Chirac Foundation was established in 2008 by the former President of the French Republic, Jacques Chirac, with the mission to support efforts for prevention of conflicts, dialogue between cultures and increasing quality of access to health services."

- NATO's Deputy Secretary General Rose Gottemoeller insisted on December 19, that she has seen no indications that Russia has tried to prevent Armenia from forging closer ties with NATO. In an interview, Gottemoeller also again praised the "good and appropriate level of cooperation" between Yerevan and the US-led alliance. "I am really quite impressed with what Armenia has done over the years in terms of partnership with NATO," she said during a visit to Yerevan. Gottemoeller singled out the continuing participation of some 155 Armenian soldiers in the NATO-led security missions in Afghanistan and Kosovo. Armenia contributes more troops to those missions than any other member of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), she stressed.



### Knights and Daughters of Vartan

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# Arts & Living

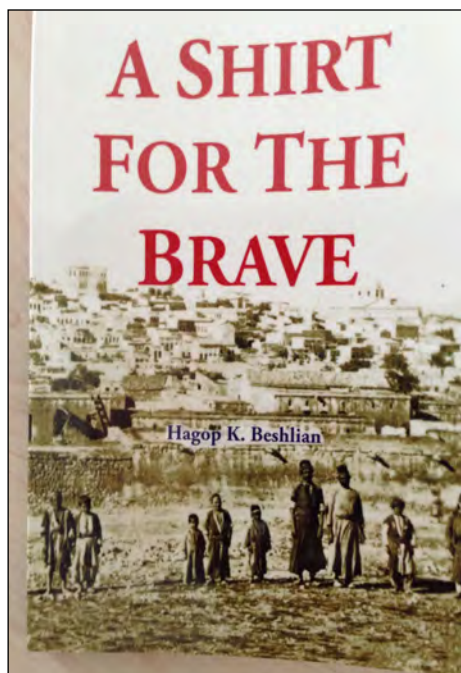
## BOOK REVIEW

### Beshlian's Memoir *A Shirt for the Brave* Recently Published

By Gary A. Kulhanjian

In the Introduction of this trim but powerful 100-page memoir, *A Shirt for the Brave* by Dr. Hagop K. Beshlian, I acknowledged my gratitude to Dr. William V. Beshlian one of the author's sons, for allowing me to read and use the manuscript while doing my preliminary research about Armenian immigrants who came to the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. In addition, I extended my appreciation to Bob Beshlian one of Dr. Beshlian's grandsons, for allowing me to write the Introduction, and the editor, Ara Sarafian of the Gomidas Institute, for its publication in 2017.

Dr. Beshlian wrote his memoir after his retirement as a physician in New Jersey, circa 1957. The text was based on his memory, and not the historical dimensions of all the events between the 1890s until his subsequent immigration to the United States. He described it in his own words as "a story of terror and bloodshed, of heartaches and setbacks, of strange and fear-rid-



den experiences." His memoir was intended to inform his children and family of his story for their knowledge and remembrance. He referred to his abiding fate as "Good Providence," which was the power of his survival.

The scope of the memoir was divided into 22 short, unnamed chapters. Beshlian included early photos of himself, his immediate family, and a hand-drawn map of the Ottoman Empire including areas of ancient Armenia occupied by the Armenians. The new publication does not include the original photographs due to their poor quality for reproduction. Bob Beshlian provided photos of his grandfather and members of the Beshlian family. The new publication included a timeline with some of the key events during Dr. Hagop Beshlian's lifetime in Turkey from his birth until his escape in 1922.

The writer gave a vivid description of the milieu in Turkey from his youth to his adulthood. He described the hostilities endured by the Armenian populous and mentions those who assisted him in very difficult situations. He referred to the crimes of the Sultan Abdul Hamid prior to the advent of the Young Turk revolution and their focus on removing the Armenians. During the Hamidian atrocities

see BOOKS, page 16



Chris Cornell

## UCLA Law School to Create Chris Cornell Scholarship with \$1-million Endowment Gift

LOS ANGELES (*LA Times*) – The Chris Cornell Scholarship, named for the late Soundgarden/Audioslave singer and songwriter, is being launched at the UCLA School of Law with a gift of \$1 million from a coalition led by the late musician's wife, Vicky Cornell.

"This endowment honors an influential musical artist who cared about human rights and enables others the opportunity to make a positive impact in the world," UCLA Chancellor Gene Block said in a statement.

Cornell was active in human rights issues worldwide, and wrote and recorded the song *The Promise* for the feature film of the same name. The latter told the story of the Armenian genocide in the early 20th century.

"*The Promise*" was nominated in November for a Grammy Award in the rock performance category.

He donated his proceeds from the song to the International Rescue Committee, while proceeds from the film have been used to create the Promise Institute for Human Rights at UCLA School of Law.

"My husband and I agreed that given the opportunity of education, people have the power to change the world," Vicky Cornell said in the same statement.

"UCLA School of Law is an institution known for its academic excellence and we are proud the Chris Cornell Scholarship will provide funding for future students and future leaders of the world," Vicky Cornell said.

Chris Cornell, who died in May at age 52, was saluted posthumously last month by the Los Angeles Committee of Human Rights Watch, at the group's Voices for Justice celebration.

"Vicky Cornell and all the people paying tribute to Chris Cornell's tremendous legacy are helping to ensure that the law school will extend and strengthen its commitment to our students and to the pursuit of justice," UCLA Law Dean Jennifer Mnookin said in the statement.

"Through the work of the Promise Institute and the scholarships that this fund will support," Mnookin continued, "Chris Cornell's influence will be felt at UCLA Law and beyond for generations to come."

The coalition that is giving the \$1-million contribution to the endowment includes several of Cornell's friends as well as supporters of the UCLA School of Law.

"This endowment honors an influential musical artist who cared about human rights and enables others the opportunity to make a positive impact in the world,"

–UCLA Chancellor Gene Block

## Constantine Orbelian Among Featured Artists At Isrotel Music Festival In Israel

YEREVAN – Conductor Constantine Orbelian, general director and artistic director of the National Opera and Ballet Theater of Armenia, will be among the featured conductors and artists at the globally renowned Isrotel International Festival of Classical Music, which will be held during January 3-6, 2018, in Eilat, Israel.

"It is an extraordinary honor to be a part of the Isrotel International Festival of Classical Music, especially given the fact that we'll be celebrating its 20th anniversary this January," Orbelian said.

The Isrotel International Festival of Classical Music, also known as the Isrotel Classicameri Festival, is an initiative of the Isrotel Hotel chain in Eilat, and will be held in cooperation with the Raanana Symphonette Orchestra, under the baton of Omer M. Wellber. On the occasion of its 20th anniversary, the festival will offer a multifaceted program combining beloved classical masterpieces and innovative new music. The festival will host acclaimed soloists, ensembles, and conductors from Italy, Armenia, the United States, Bulgaria, Germany, Spain, Poland, France, Russia and Switzerland.

Representing the Republic of Armenia, Orbelian will participate in the festival along with a number of Yerevan Opera House soloists, including Suzanna Melkonyan, Julietta Aleksnyan, Gevork Hagobyan, Armen Badalian and Hovhannes Ayyvazyan. Other famed artists participating in the festival will



Conductor Constantine Orbelian

include Italian pianist Davide Cabassi, soprano Anna Skibinsky, Russian pianist Tatiana Larionova, duo mandolin from Spain Yaki Reuven and Marie Carmen Simon, Polish folk ensemble Dikanda, Bulgarian Kaval player Theodosii Spassov, conductor Yaron Gottfried, singer and video artist Ofri Brin, and the Sesame band – an Israeli ensemble of Balkan, Gypsy and Middle Eastern music.

The Isrotel Classicameri Festival is dubbed "Masterpieces of the Classical Repertoire in a Cross-Borders Merging," reflecting the event's rich musical and thematic diversity. "A key aspect that sets the festival apart is that it functions as a marvelous platform for showcasing a veritable mosaic of cultures and musical traditions – thus celebrating cross-border synergies and providing audiences with deeply rewarding artistic experiences," Orbelian said.

The festival opened on January 3 in the grand hall of the Royal Beach Hotel in Eilat, with the participation of Israeli singer Ofri Brin. The program will offer a combination of

see ORBELIAN, page 16





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# COAF Raises \$3.6 Million for Villages of Rural Armenia

NEW YORK – The 14th annual Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) Holiday Gala held on December 16 at New York City's Cipriani 42nd Street, raised \$3.6 million in support of children in Armenian villages. Among the special guests were art-world legend Tony Shafrazi, Emmy and Tony Award-winning actress Andrea Martin, designer Michael Aram, chef Geoffrey Zakarian, and actress, singer and performer Vanessa Williams.

COAF's Humanitarian Award was presented to Emmy Award-winning costume designer and fashion icon Patricia Field ("Sex and the City," "The Devil Wears Prada"). Field, who is of Armenian and Greek heritage, has been a long-time supporter of COAF, sharing its vision of empowering people to realize their full potential, embrace originality, and achieve their individual greatness.

Vanessa Williams delivered a special performance of her Golden Globe and Academy Award-winning song Colors of the Wind and paid tribute to Field, with whom she worked with on the set of the TV series "Ugly Betty."

The evening also featured performances from two of Armenia's finest young musicians, 14-year-old saxophonist Aleksandr Avetisyan and 9-year-old vocalist Ani Margaryan, who travelled from Armenia for this event. Gala attendees also heard an inspiring speech from 16-year-old Nareh Galstyan, from the village of Lernagog, who spoke eloquently about how COAF has transformed her life and provided opportunities that would not have existed otherwise.

World-renowned auctioneer and collector Simon de Pury conducted a live auction of uniquely curated art to support COAF's mission. The auction included works donated by such notable artists as Ed Ruscha, Jeff Koons, Richard Prince, Kenny Scharf, and Patrick Demarchelier – as well as a rare piece by author



Garo Armen and Patricia Field



Andrea Martin and Vanessa Williams

and playwright William Saroyan.

One hundred percent of the \$3.6 million raised at the Gala will go directly toward COAF's education, health and socio-economic programs in the villages of Armenia, with a focus on its "SMART" initiative. "SMART" is a unique initiative designed to bring digital technology education, programs in music and art, sustainable agriculture training and more to rural Armenian villages.

The construction of COAF's first SMART Center in the Lori region of Armenia has been completed and will be operational in January 2018. Close to 150,000 individuals from the city of Vanadzor and 48 surrounding rural communities will benefit from the establishment of

the SMART Center.

For more information, contact Victoria Arakelian at [victoria.arakelian@coafkids.org](mailto:victoria.arakelian@coafkids.org) or visit [www.coafkids.org](http://www.coafkids.org) and [www.coafsmart.org](http://www.coafsmart.org).



From left, Aret Tikiryan, Michael Aram Wolohojian and Alice Saraydarian



Geoffrey Zakarian and Carol Haggerty



From left, Adrienne Alexanian, Marta Batmasian, James Batmasian and Irina Igithkanyan .



Zack Armen and Michael Merjian



Ani Merjian and Carol Haggerty

## 'Love on a Plate' Now Streaming

SUDBURY, Mass. – Lisa Kouchakdjian learned early on how to make traditional Armenian foods by watching her parents and grandparents. As time went on, Kouchakdjian found many who enjoyed the meals, but who had never learned how to make them. In 2014, Kouchakdjian launched "Love On A Plate - Armenia," dedicated to helping people maintain their Armenian identity through food. She developed a line of videos demonstrating how to make Armenian food.

Kouchakdjian has innovated traditional recipes by teaching time-saving techniques and by visually demonstrating how to prepare these foods, something that traditional cookbooks cannot provide. Kouchakdjian has now released a streaming version of the videos on her website [LoveOnAPlate.biz](http://LoveOnAPlate.biz).

Although "Love On A Plate" still sells the DVD versions of the videos on its website, the streaming version is a preferred option for many. Kouchakdjian stated that "streaming allows customers the ability to access any

recipe in the 'Love On A Plate' library anywhere and at any time." Customers are able to stream all recipes directly to their mobile device or computer by downloading a free App and subscribing on the "Love On A Plate" website. Monthly and yearly subscriptions are available. The App also allows customers to gift the subscriptions. Kouchakdjian has expanded the ways people can learn these traditional, healthy Armenian dishes by now offering cooking parties at private homes, conducting cooking demonstrations and teaching Armenian cooking classes. Kouchakdjian stated, "Love On A Plate' is more than just teaching people how to cook. We are celebrating and educating Armenians and non-Armenians about Armenia's beautiful culture and history. Helping grow and extend our culture has truly been a labor of love."

Kouchakdjian is a wife and mother of four children living in Sudbury, where she also sits on the town's School Committee.



Lisa Kouchakdjian



# Erevan Choral Society's Annual Christmas Holiday Concert

By Karine Halajian

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – The Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra ushered in the Christmas season with its Annual Christmas Holiday Concert on Sunday, December 10, in the Sanctuary of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston.

The collective, founded in 1966 by Very Rev. Oshagan Minassian, and directed by composer Konstantin Petrossian since 2009, is the only one of its kind in the diaspora, and is a great promoter of Armenian music. Thanks to the group's longstanding relationships with Armenian composers and performers, many pieces authored by Armenians were premiered and popularized outside of Armenia by this very collective.

The anniversary concert opened with a beautiful performance of Christmas carols by the Arlington High School Madrigal Singers, an accomplished a cappella choir. This group of young singers, founded in 1990 and directed by Madalyn Kitchen, has performed European tours. According to Petrossian, "the young singers demonstrated a very high level of musicianship, distinguished by their beautiful blending and expressiveness."

The concert continued with the Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra. In its usual style, the group's repertoire consisted of a wide and rich palette. The audience was treated to a high-level performance of Christmas carols, as well as traditional Armenian sacred music –



The Erevan Choral Society in performance on December 10

including *Krisdos Dsunav*, *Park ee Partzoons*, *Ee Horeh Dsaketzar* and *Aravod Looso*. The Erevan Choral Society dedicated its performance of *Yegeghetzin Haygagan* to the memory of its founder Minassian and Diramayr Sirvart Minassian. New arrangements of Christmas carols accompanied this repertoire, as well as *Aghotk* ("Prayer") by Aram Satian. The audience warmly welcomed the performance of *Christmas Song* by saxophonist Andrei Sobchenko.

The artistic excellence of The Bostonians vocal quartet infused the concert with a special flair. Members Nouné Karapetian (soprano),

Roselin Osser (mezzo soprano), Michael Calmes (tenor), and Philip Lima (bass-baritone) performed a series of songs with the Erevan

Choral Society, all of which were received very highly by the audience. Of special mention is Philip Lima's performance of *Hor-Hor*, which was an audience favorite.

Students of the Holy Trinity Armenian School participated with wonderful recitations intermingled in the program. Finally, the holiday concert came to a close with Handel's *Hallelujah*.

The evening maintained an elevated mood, as all performers brilliantly performed a varied and challenging program. The Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra worked on the repertoire for several months, which surely contributed to the success of the evening, as did the creative work and dedication of Petrossian and pianist Nune Hakobyan.

At the conclusion of the program, Fr. Vasken Kouzounian, pastor of Holy Trinity Armenian Church, expressed warm thanks to Petrossian and all performers of the Christmas Concert.

The Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra's Christmas Concert, presented annually as a gift for the community, is a monumental event in Greater Boston celebrating Armenian culture.

## Beshlian's Memoir *A Shirt for the Brave* Recently Published

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against the Armenians and the development of the *Medz Yeghern* (Catastrophe/Armenian Genocide), Beshlian focused on the place of his birth, the city of Urfa, where he was the first Armenian physician. Its name was changed to Sanliurfa in the second half of the twentieth century; however, it was known in the ancient world as Edessa. In the ancient world Edessa was where St. Thaddeus cured the Armenian King Abkar and his family converted to Christianity before the Armenians adopted the religion in 301 C.E. as the first Christian nation.

Urfa was where Hagop grew up as a boy and returned from medical college as a physician. He was orphaned together with other Armenian children and educated by an American missionary by the name of Corinna Shattuck. He wrote about how she assisted hundreds of Armenian orphans after the Hamidian massacres. Historians have not highlighted the humanitarian efforts of this heroine. She had witnessed the "cathedral holocaust" lauded by Hamid, during which Hagop's mother perished. The huge Armenian cathedral was named after the Holy Mother of God.

Hagop's father had been killed in the defense of his community while Urfa was pillaged by the Turks. Shattuck had great empathy for the orphans since she was orphaned as a child also. She was the "mother surrogate" of the children who were left without parents. A friend wrote about Miss Shattuck with great admiration that "the ascetic simplicity of her life would have surrounded her head with an aureole and her memory with legend..." She served as a missionary in the Ottoman Empire from circa 1873 to 1911 but departed due to personal illness.

This memoir has now become public, and others could gain insight from Dr. Beshlian's experiences and decisions. Some have not agreed with him or his views. He faced great dangers in his youth, and after he became a physician and while he was drafted into the Turkish Army. Moreover, he continually faced adversity from the Turks, especially Turkish officers in the armed forces. He came close to death several times. The record showed not many Armenian physicians, pharmacologists, dentists, or medical students survived during the Armenian Genocide or after it.

The memoir is a personal account of his experiences and is rare since he chose to reflect on them in English years later. He discussed the division of the Armenian political groups and their views in dealing with the Turkish triumvirate. Dr. Beshlian had chosen his course to survive with the "fate of Good Providence." He assisted and helped those in need of medical attention and to save his immediate family.

Historians who have written about the Armenian Genocide were able to rely on archives of several nations in World War I, missionary accounts, diplomatic correspondences,

world news articles, memoirs, and other sources. The memoir may be incomplete in its historiography, but it can lend more documentation to an understanding of the horrific treatment and hardships of a people who were the primary victims of the *Medz Yeghern* or Armenian Genocide. Dr. Beshlian reveals the names of those non-Armenians who assisted his survival and of others who are often forgotten.

*Kulhanjian is a social historian and educator. He specializes in Armenian immigration to the United States and Genocide/Holocaust education. He was appointed formerly by three New Jersey governors to the Commission on Holocaust Education representing the Armenian community. He has taught at several academic levels. Presently, he lives in California.*

## Constantine Orbelian Among Featured Artists At Isrotel Music Festival In Israel

ORBELIAN, from page 14

Brin's electronic pop and soul music with masterpieces by Sibelius, Holst, and Schubert under the baton of Keren Kagarlitzky.

The two main concerts on the third day of the festival will pay tribute to the lush intersection of cultures and traditions linked together through music. At the "Gala Opera – From Yerevan with Love," the Raanana Symphonette will host Orbelian and the soloists of the Yerevan Opera House under his direction. The concert will perform beloved arias and duets from major operas, alongside gems from the Armenian folk repertoire. The evening will continue with a layered musical encounter devoted to the deep connection between music and dance. The "Dancing" concert is dedicated to folk dances that have found their way to concert halls: from ballroom and folk to street dancing. Under the baton of David Sebba, the evening will be accompanied by the Raanana Symphonette Orchestra, including violinist Nitai Zori, the Sesame band, and the Polish band Dekanda.

The festival will conclude on Saturday, January 6, with a jubilant concert in which Orbelian and the Raanana Symphonette will host the festival's artists.

Also on January 6, Orbelian will appear as a guest on the "Cultural Shabbat" program, for a conversation with television broadcaster Yoav Ginai, Omer M. Wellber, David Sebba, and Orit Fogel-Shafran. During the program, Orbelian will reminisce about his 20 years of musical collaboration with the late opera giant Dmitri Hvorostovsky.



## Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

### Winter Lamb and Vegetable Stew

#### INGREDIENTS

2 pounds boneless lamb shoulder (cut into 1-inch cubes)  
1 cup white or red onions, diced  
4-5 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped  
3 cups low-sodium beef broth  
1 cup dry red wine  
1 cup water  
1 cup crushed, pureed, or stewed tomatoes  
2 tablespoons tomato paste  
2 medium carrots, peeled and cut into chunks  
2 medium stalks celery, diced  
2 medium russet potatoes, cut in chunks  
1 medium green, red or yellow bell pepper, seeded and diced  
1/2 pound whole or halved green beans  
1 bay leaf  
2 tablespoons roughly chopped fresh rosemary  
1 tablespoon roughly chopped fresh thyme  
1 teaspoon each ground cumin, dried basil, oregano, and sweet paprika  
1/4 teaspoon allspice  
Zest of one lemon and 1 tablespoon lemon juice  
Flour, olive oil, unsalted butter, sea or Kosher salt, and black or white pepper  
Fresh chopped mint, green onions, parsley, and crumbled feta cheese as garnish

#### PREPARATION:

To start, pat the lamb cubes dry, season with salt and pepper, and coat with flour.

Heat a few tablespoons of oil in a large Dutch oven and brown the lamb in batches until the lamb is browned. Transfer the lamb to a plate and drain excess oil on paper towels.

In the same pot, melt a few tablespoons of butter and sauté the onions, garlic, carrots, celery, potatoes and bell pepper together until the onions are slightly browned. Add the lamb back to the pot and sprinkle with a tablespoon (or a little more) of flour. Toss a few times until the flour is dissolved.

Stir in the broth, wine, water, tomatoes, tomato paste, lemon zest, and lemon juice, and bring to a full boil. Add the green beans and spices, and toss.

Add more broth or water if desired. Cover and simmer for 1 1/2 hours (or a little longer), tossing occasionally until the lamb and potatoes are tender. Remove the bay leaf and adjust seasonings.

Serve over Armenian rice, lentil, or bulgur pilaf with fresh yogurt on the side. Garnish with feta cheese and chopped mint, onions, and parsley, if desired.

Serves 6-8.

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





ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

**JANUARY 6, 2018 — Saturday family Armenian Christmas program for children of Neponsit Valley.**

10-11:30 a.m. Norwood. An un-pageant, pageant. A fun, interactive, and participatory account of Jesus' birth followed by an Armenian Christmas craft. Sponsored by Amaras Art Alliance. For location and additional details contact Neponsitvalleyarmenians@gmail.com. The program is free but registration is required.

**FEBRUARY 10, 2018 — Poon Paregentan Dinner Dance - Family Kef Night, Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church,**

180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford. Featuring Jason Naroian Ensemble: Jason Naroian – Vocals and Dumbeg, Joe Kouyoumjian – Oud, Ara Jeknavorian – Clarinet, and Dave Anisbigian – Guitar, and. Children Activities - 5 pm and Dinner/Dancing at 6 p.m. Paid in advance tickets must be received by February 6: Adults \$25, Students (6-12 years old) \$10, and 5 & under, free. At the door: Adults \$35 and Students \$15. For reservations, contact Maria Kazanjian (617) 240-3686 or Ria.tk@verizon.net. Tables of 8 can be reserved in advance with full payment Checks made payable to: Sts Vartanantz Armenian Church.

**MARCH 11, 2018 — "Jazz and Art for YerazArt" on Sunday, 5 p.m., at Anoush'ella Saj Kitchen, 35 W Newton St., Boston. More information will follow.**

WASHINGTON, DC

**JANUARY 9, 2018 — Knights and Daughters of Vartan program, co-sponsored by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Dinner and Public Discussion, guest speaker, Gregory Aftandilian. "The Impact of the Armenian Genocide on the Children of the Survivors." Tuesday, January 9, 2018, 7 p.m., St. Mary Armenian Church Cultural hall, 4125 Fessenden Street, NW, Washington, D.C. Reservation is a must. Please call Takuhi Halajian (301) 219-4041 or Jake Bournazian (202) 380-6948**



**On Tuesday, January 9, 2018, the Knights and Daughters of Vartan in Washington, DC, will present a talk by guest speaker, Gregory Aftandilian. The panel is co-sponsored by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research. The program is titled, "The Impact of the Armenian Genocide on the Children of the Survivors." The program, which will be held at St. Mary Armenian Church Cultural hall, 4125 Fessenden Street, NW, Washington, D.C., will start at 7 p.m. Reservations are necessary for the program, which includes dinner. Please call Takuhi Halajian (301) 219-4041 or Jake Bournazian (202) 380-6948.**



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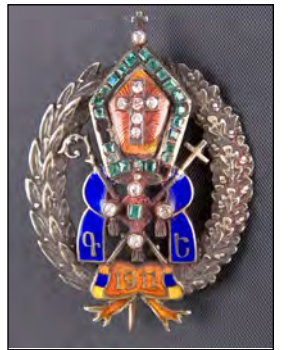
Lecture on Awards of Armenia and Armenian Church Presented by Nika Babayan

FRESNO – Nika Babayan, will present a lecture titled "Awards of Armenia and the Armenian Church" at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, January 19, in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Room 191. The presentation is part of the Fall Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program.

Armenian awards (orders, medals, badges, tokens, etc.) have been given since the 17th century. The awards can be divided into three groups: Awards of Armenia (First Republic, Soviet Armenia, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Artsakh); Awards of the Armenian Church (Apostolic, Catholic, and Protestant); and Armenia Diaspora Awards.

In this presentation, Babayan will discuss these awards, how they were established and how they are awarded today.

Examples of the various awards will be presented through photographs. Babayan has published two books on the topic: *Awards of Armenia, 1918-1939* (2011) and *Awards of the Armenian Church* (2016), 196 pages, 300



Cover of *Awards of Armenia, 1918-1939*

photos. Awards of the Armenian Apostolic Church including the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, the Cilician Catholicate, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Dioceses and Prelacies in Artsakh, the US, Syria and Lebanon can be seen as illustrations, included in the volume.

Both books, *Awards of Armenia, 1918-1939* and *Awards of the Armenian Church*, will be on sale at the presentation.

Babayan is a graduate of Yerevan State University. He has had extensive experience in the cultural and musical fields in the Republic of Armenia. He is currently the general manager of the Cadence Music Center and previously was general manager of the State Philharmonic Orchestra of Armenia. From 1990-1993 he was manager of the Armenian TV and Radio State Chamber Choir.





# Mirror Spectator



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## COMMENTARY

# Musical Chairs at the Istanbul Patriarchate

By Edmond Y. Azadian

There was a time when the nine-year-old crisis at the Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul was close to a resolution. But new developments have given a different spin to the problem, sinking the community back into a vicious situation. Nothing gives more comfort to the Turkish authorities than to see the Armenian community busy with internecine problems to the point of exhaustion. And they have been manipulating the Patriarch's election process just to create a such a perfect storm.

As the crisis enters its tenth year, we find the seat of the Patriarchate turned into a game of musical chairs, with two potential candidates dancing around it as the local Armenian press in turn dances around them. At this point, the initial stages of controversy are behind us, when different and contradictory proposals were presented to the government, one requesting the election of a new patriarch, and the other the election of a coadjutor Patriarch, to lead alongside the incapacitated incumbent holder of the seat, Archbishop Mesrob Mutafyan.

The new cycle of crisis was triggered by Archbishop Aram Ateshian, who continues to cling to the title of Vicar General, contrary to his pledge to give up that position upon the election of a locum tenens.

He was a candidate for the latter position, opposing Archbishop Karekin Bekjian. When the Conference of Clergy overwhelmingly voted to elect the latter candidate, Ateshian pulled out a letter from his pocket, signed by the deputy governor of Istanbul, which said that the election process was not authorized by the government, and therefore the election results were null and void.

Ateshian had colluded with the authorities to launch the theatrical brakes.

ate either candidate, fearing that they may end up living with the one who outlasts the other, the Armenian section of Agos weekly has taken the radical position of confronting Archbishop Ateshian. Agos editor Pakrad Eudokian, who does not mince his words, countered Ateshian's statements in an interview: "If Ateshian is claiming popularity in the Armenian community, he is talking about some twenty-odd people. On the contrary, the community is very enthusiastic about Garo Paylan's activities. Ateshian is on his last legs to justify his stand. He is a non-entity in the community. He is desperate to preserve his title. It does not make any difference in what capacity the authorities recognize him. We are not looking at a government employee to serve the Patriarchate. We are looking for a spiritual leader. As far as Ateshian's claim is concerned, he is free to offer his services to the government."

As a side note, on a different level, the issue of the Patriarch's election became a topic in international relations. When President Erdogan lost face with the Western countries, he launched a popularity contest by visiting less powerful countries such as Sudan and Chad. Making an incomprehensible political decision, the bankrupt Greek government also invited him to Athens so that the Turkish leader would insult the Greeks to no end. Incidentally, he requested the revision of the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, which had saved Turkey from the noose at that time, but today that revision meant ceding Turkey's littoral islands, which now belong to Greece, back to Turkey.

Among the insults that Erdogan hurled at the face of Greek leaders was blame for religious intolerance for not letting the Turkish community in Greece elect their Mufti. Garo Paylan took the opportunity to question Erdogan publicly about why he has not allowed the Armenian community to elect its Patriarch for the last 10 years, while blaming Greeks for the same thing.

Returning back to the public debate in Istanbul, we see a release by the Patriarchate which is in essence a rebuke to Archbishop Ateshian's statements.

In addition to the statement, Archbishop Bekjian has publicly discounted every single statement at Ateshian's press conference. Answering a question by news.am, Archbishop Bekjian has qualified Ateshian's statements as "manufactured fictions." Nowhere has the government stated that it does not recognize the position of the locum tenens. "We have appealed to the government to fix a date for the election. We have not yet received a response which may

arrive tomorrow or in February."

Both sides seem to be determined. If Ateshian did not have the government's backing, he would not dare to instigate the combat. On the other hand, Archbishop Bekjian seems confident based on the fact that his election by the clergy conclave does not require the government's approval. He is also banking on his popularity in the community. He has just decided to resign from his position as Primate of Germany.

The community is in despair. Ten years of confusion and nerve-wracking struggles have confused and exhausted everyone. From all appearances, the Erdogan government would like to impose a pliant member of the clergy on the Patriarchal throne, contrary to the will of the community. As Erdogan consolidates his dictatorial powers in the country, no one is in the mood to challenge him, except a few foolhardy opponents.

It would also be worthwhile to look into the clauses of the Lausanne Treaty if the Turkish government is allowed to micromanage minority religious affairs.

Meanwhile, claims and counterclaims are in public, as the two religious leaders continue their dance of musical chairs in the Patriarchate, to the chagrin of the community, as the world Armenian community follows the developments with deep apprehension.



After a lull, when Archbishop Bekjian began to act in his capacity as locum tenens, Archbishop Ateshian unleashed yet another crisis. Indeed, he took a trip to Armenia and gave a press conference in Yerevan on December 21, issuing an ultimatum to Archbishop Bekjian to resign. He also stated confidently that the Turkish authorities still continue to recognize him as the legitimate vicar general representing the Armenian Patriarchate.

Answering journalists' questions, he made other incendiary remarks, including the following:

- That he was not alone when the controversial letter to President Erdogan was drafted, condemning the German Bundestag's resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide;
- Many in the Armenian community have suggested in anger that he is Erdogan's brother. He said he was proud of that statement;
- Only a handful of people oppose him in the Turkish-Armenian community;
- Archbishop Bekjian's resignation will pave the way for the election of a new patriarch;
- Garo Paylan, a member of the Turkish Parliament, is an embarrassment to the Armenian community, which deplores his actions.

While most of the papers go to a great length not to alien-





## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## President Trump Gets Slapped Twice In One Week at the United Nations

President Trump added two new major mistakes last month to the long list of misguided foreign and domestic policy decisions throughout the year.

On December 18, 2017, the United States vetoed a United Nations Security Council resolution that called for the reversal of President Trump's announcement to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move the US Embassy to that city. All the other 14 members of the Security Council, including Britain and France, voted for the resolution which correctly asserted that "Jerusalem is a final status issue to be resolved through negotiations." It further called for all states to refrain from moving their diplomatic missions to Jerusalem.

The status of Jerusalem is a highly controversial and emotional issue for Jews, Muslims and Christians. Israel captured the eastern part of Jerusalem during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and annexed it in violation of international law. Israel considers Jerusalem its "undivided and eternal capital." Palestinians, on the other hand, consider East Jerusalem to be the capital of an eventual Palestinian state. Immediately after the UN vote, Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas announced his refusal to meet with Vice President Mike Pence during his upcoming visit to the Middle East. The trip was postponed to a later date. Thousands of protesters

demonstrated in many Islamic countries against President Trump's decision on Jerusalem. The Palestinian leadership announced that they will no longer consider the United States as an honest broker of peace between the conflicting sides.

During the Security Council session, UN Middle East envoy Nickolay Mladinov warned that President Trump's unilateral action lessens the chances of peace, "undermining moderates and empowering radicals."

President Trump justified his decision by basing it on a 1995 law passed by Congress to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem. However, all US Presidents since then have signed a national security waiver postponing the move every six months. They did not wish to undermine the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations and inflame the passions of the Arab and Islamic world.

The fact that Trump had made a promise during his campaign to transfer the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem cannot excuse his recent decision. As I wrote a year ago, Trump had made an unwise promise and keeping it could become dangerous.

To make matters worse for the US, the UN General Assembly, where the United States does not have veto power, overwhelmingly adopted a resolution on December 21, 2017, declaring President Trump's decision recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital as "null and void." It is highly embarrassing for a Superpower like the United States to have 128 countries vote against it, only 8 other countries supported it, 35 abstained, and 21 were absent. Thus, President Trump has made the United States the laughing stock of the world, particularly since the US and Israel were supported by tiny countries that most people have never heard of, such as Togo, Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, and Palau.

In contrast, many of the major countries voted against the US in the UN General Assembly: France, Britain, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Turkey, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, South Korea, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, and dozens of others.

As if this embarrassment was not sufficient, President

Trump and his UN Ambassador, Nikki Haley, proudly declared that the United States would cut off aid to any country that voted against the US. This is a ridiculous statement, as the United States is not going to eliminate aid from many of these 128 states. Furthermore, when a world power like the United States provides foreign aid, it does so to pursue its own interests. By cutting off aid, the United States would jeopardize its own national interests. Giving foreign aid does not mean that the United States automatically buys a country's sovereign right on how to cast its vote at the UN and try to intimidate it into submission.

Regarding the Jerusalem issue, there was much discussion in the Armenian press about the appropriateness of Armenia voting against the US at the UN on December 21. The fear was that Armenia would not receive foreign aid from the US and would antagonize Israel.

In my opinion, these points are not valid. I am confident that Armenia's many supporters in the US Congress would restore the aid against the wishes of the White House, in the unlikely possibility that President Trump would carry out his threat.

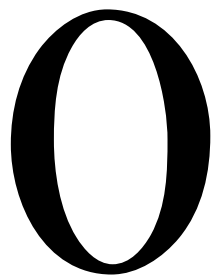
With regard to relations with Israel, Armenia does not have much of a risk as Israel has not been friendly with Armenia. It has no Embassy in Yerevan, has refused to recognize the Armenian Genocide, and has sold billions of dollars of lethal weapons to Azerbaijan to kill Armenians. Even Azerbaijan, despite its love-fest with Israel, voted against the US decision. Needless to say, Turkey also voted against it.

Furthermore, abstaining from voting at the UN or being absent would have isolated Armenia from the rest of the world, from Armenian communities in Arab and Islamic countries, and contradict the wishes of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem which has condemned the US decision.

Finally, Israeli leaders should not celebrate President Trump's decision on Jerusalem, as it is not in Israel's interest to antagonize the rest of the world and isolate itself. Israel needs to win over other countries, especially Palestinians, to arrive at a peaceful resolution through negotiations, not bullying or violence.

# Different Kinds of Hidden Armenians

By Raffi Bedrosyan



OVER THE YEARS, I have met many hidden Armenians from different regions of Turkey. Each one has a unique story which can become an article or even a book on its own. Some stories can be shared, most cannot. Some are funny, most are sad. Many hidden Armenians decided recently to return to their roots, culture and language after they discovered their Armenian origins and the forced Islamization/Turkification/Kurdification of their grandparents, who were orphans and the living victims of the 1915 Armenian genocide. As you know, I organized trips for dozens of them from Turkey to Armenia in 2014 and 2015, in cooperation with the Diaspora Ministry of Armenia. In past articles, I have shared the stories of some of these 'no more hidden' Armenians. In this article, I will tell some stories of the still-hidden Armenians, names withheld for obvious reasons.

Let me start with a memory from my days in the Turkish army. Although I was living in Canada at the time, I had to do the compulsory military service in the Turkish army, in order to be able to travel back to Turkey to take care of my elderly parents. On top of the drills and other military activities during the day, the conscripts were also required to attend lectures in the evening, with titles like "Who are the enemies of Turkey?" After discussing the assorted bad deeds of all the "enemy" neighboring countries such as Soviet Russia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Bulgaria and Greece, the instructor would inevitably conclude that the worst enemy was the Armenians, as they had massacred the Turks in 1915 and they were still after the Turkish diplomats. After these lectures, a few fellow conscripts with Turkish or Kurdish names, especially from the eastern Turkey provinces, would approach me and confess that their grandmother is Armenian, that they live in a house left behind by the Armenians, that their village was Armenian before 1915 but had converted to Islam...

When I started writing articles about the hidden Armenians and the Surp Giragos Church reconstruction project in Diyarbakir (Dikranagerd), an elderly Armenian lady from the United States made contact with me. She was an orphan of 1915, had found her way to the US but her brother had to remain in Turkey and ended up Islamized and Turkified. This brother prospered and became a suc-

cessful builder in Turkey, with cement plants in many provinces. After some research, I tracked his grandson in Turkey, a man in his early 30s, who had carried on the family construction business, building luxury condos in Istanbul. He was aware of his Armenian past, but obviously unable to reveal it publicly and risk losing his wife, business and status as a successful Turkish builder. But he made contact with his grandfather's Armenian sister in the US and visited her. "My grandfather's sister had one request when I travelled to the US to see her, to lie in bed with her, just as she had done with her brother when they were little, so that she can smell the scent of her brother..." he recalled. And that is what they did, the 85-year-old Armenian woman hugging a 30-some-year-old Turkish condo builder she had just met in her bed so that they could remember their long lost family ties...

There are many stories of orphans torn apart in 1915, some brought to orphanages under the control of the victorious Allies after the First World War, eventually finding their way to the diaspora or Armenia, while others were placed in Turkish orphanages and becoming Moslem Turks or Kurds. We witnessed a few happy reunions when hidden Armenians travelling with me to Armenia found their long-lost relatives for the first time. We brought together a 65-year-old hidden Armenian from Diyarbakir with his cousin, a 70-year-old villager from Armavir. One didn't speak Armenian, the other didn't speak Turkish, but they just held hands and hugged each other continuously for three hours during a dinner...

Hamshen (or Hemshin) is the name given to people living in the eastern Black Sea coastal region of Turkey. There is strong evidence that they are Armenians who have migrated to this region after Seljuk Turks captured the city of Ani in the eleventh century, followed by more waves of Armenians settling in the region in later times. Soon after the region was conquered by the Ottoman Turks in the 16th century, Hamshen Armenians were forced to convert to Islam. Most of them did convert, but interestingly enough, they kept the Armenian language – to this day. Although they still speak a dialect of Armenian, with constant indoctrination from the government they were made to believe that their ancestors migrated from Central Asia and their language is a branch of Central Asian Turkish. Until recently, most Hamshen people had strongly nationalistic even racist allegiance to Turkey. In conversation with a Hamshen woman, I was amazed to hear the following: "Yes Hay chem, yes Turk em," meaning "I am not Armenian, I am a Turk." But she is stating this in the Armenian language.

Since the early 2000's Hamshentsis have started to search for their real Armenian roots. Here is the story told by an

elderly Hamshentsi how people in the region first got the clue that the language they speak is Armenian, and not a Central Asian Turkic one. In 1982, ASALA commandos carried out an unsuccessful attack at Ankara airport. All were killed, except Levon Ekmekjian, who was captured, tortured and then put on trial. His trial was aired live on Turkish TV, with Levon giving his testimony in Armenian, which was then translated to Turkish. People all over Turkey, including the Hamshentsis, were glued to the television watching the trial. The Hamshen people were surprised to discover that Levon spoke their own language, kept wondering if he was a Hamshentsi, and eventually realized that their language is Armenian like Levon's. As a postscript to this story, the trial was just a formality and Levon was executed in January 1983, buried in an unmarked grave until 2016, when the heroic Turkish human rights lawyer Eren Keskin succeeded in having Levon's remains transferred to France to re-unite with his family.

On a happier note, one of the hidden Armenians from Hamshen who travelled to Armenia with me, met a hidden Armenian woman from Diyarbakir, and they are now married.

In the mid 1990s, I had joined Hayastan All Armenia Fund as a volunteer participant in reconstruction projects. One of the projects was the reconstruction of the Spitak church damaged during the 1989 earthquake, financed from an account in Switzerland administered by lawyers on behalf of an anonymous donor. The anonymous donor turned out to be the hidden Armenian grandmother of a very wealthy and high-profile Turkish family, with news and pictures about them regularly on Turkish TV and high-society magazines.

In 2013, I was fortunate enough to accomplish one of my "bucket list" items by climbing Mount Ararat with my son, Daron. The starting point for the expedition was a town named Dogu Bayazit, the former Daroynk in medieval Armenian Kingdom times, now entirely populated by Kurds, except for Turkish security forces. One of the roads is built with the contents of the Armenian cemetery, with Armenian scripted gravestones and bones still visible on the road shoulders. I will relate the family history of one of our Kurdish mountain guides. His grandmother was Armenian, and he fondly remembered how she kept praying as a Muslim five times a day, while still keeping a cross and Bible under her pillow. The guide had 18 brothers and sisters, most of them married to other Kurds with Armenian grandmothers and each brother and sister had at least five children themselves. He wished his children would go to a university on the other side of the mountain, in Armenia, instead of a Turkish university.

see ARMENIANS, page 20





# American Armenian Float Takes Home Judges' Award at Rose Parade

FLOAT, from page 1

Derbedrosian added that this is the third award the association has received out of the four float entries the organization has submitted. Last year, the group was given the Past President Award for its float titled "Field of Dreams!" in which the entry represented the American Armenian experience in literature, music and science.

"This is an honor for us," he said. "We're a small group of people that do this, and we're trying to represent all of the Armenian people, not just in Glendale, Pasadena or the L.A. area."

After not receiving an award for its float "Home Tweet Home" last year, the Burbank association bounced back and was given the Founder Award for its nautical-themed float "Sand-Sational Helpers," in which sea animals team up to clean a beach, coinciding with this year's Rose Parade theme, "Making a Difference."

Steve Edward, the Burbank association's vice president, said most of the pieces fell in the right place this year. The jump start on construction and decoration week going off without a hitch, he said, resulted in a solid float this year.

"Everyone pulled together and got this thing finished," Edward said before the start of the parade. "We got it decorated very well, and it looks great. And it's always a big break to have [an award] banner in front of our float."

Though the float came together smoothly, there were some mechanical issues with its animation components.

Jon Reeves, a longtime volunteer with the

Burbank association and former construction chair, said the wave mechanism that was created on the side of the float ended up not functioning the way it was designed.

Additionally, an arm of the octopus that was supposed to move up and down stopped working during the judging period over the weekend and was not functional for the parade.

"It's unfortunate that our two big camera-side animations are not working, but the float turned out great and looks fantastic," Reeves said.

Edward added that he is particularly proud of 14-year-old Catherine Glandon, the eight-year volunteer whose design was chosen to be this year's float.

"Now we have to add a new title to her name — she's now an award-winning float designer," Edward said.

The La Cañada Flintridge Tournament of Roses' float, titled "Panda-Monium," was given the Bob Hope Humor Award.

It is the second year in a row the association has received that particular award, which is no surprise to longtime volunteer Dwight Crumb, who said that the group's bylaws state that the



The American Armenian Rose Float participated in the 129th annual Pasadena Tournament of Roses Rose Parade and won the Judges Award with its entry titled Armenian Roots in Pasadena on Monday. (Raul Roa)

float must be humorous.

Crumb added that Monday's award marks the 30th time out of 40 entries that the association has been recognized by the Pasadena Tournament of Roses.

"So we have a 75 percent [award] banner record," he said. "I think that's a darn-good record."

Of the six self-built floats in the Rose

Parade, five of them, which includes the entries from Burbank and La Cañada, walked away with an award this year.

Crumb said seeing the self-built floats being recognized each year is a testament to the hard work and dedication that the thousands of volunteers put into their floats.

"Self-built [floats] are the heart of the parade," he said.

## Different Kinds of Hidden Armenians

ARMENIANS, from page 19

Hidden Armenians have complicated lives, full of emotional turmoil and psychological scars. They are shunned by Muslim Turks and Kurds on one hand, and by most members of the Armenian community in Istanbul and the Armenian Patriarchate on the other hand.

When the grandchildren of forcefully

Islamized Armenian orphans find the courage to come out and return to their Armenian roots and identity despite all the risks, discrimination and abuse that they will receive in their neighbourhood, at workplace, even within their own families who wish to remain Muslim Turks and Kurds, these people must be encouraged, not rejected. Sure, there may be opportunistic pretenders with Armenian claims for personal gain who should be investigated and scrutinized. But I have come to realize that through my network of hidden Armenians and their links, it is surprisingly easy to uncov-

er the pretenders. For example, when someone claiming to be Dersimtsi Armenian approached a cleric here in Toronto, I was able to determine the truth about him and after some questioning and investigation in his Dersim village. When I took hidden Armenians to Armenia and some of them wanted to become Christian by baptism, it was easy to determine through family ties back in Diyarbakir whether they really had Armenian roots. The obstruction of some clerics preventing them from becoming Christian Armenian is unreasonable when a trustworthy Armenian godfather (*Gnkahayr*) is

vouching for the truth. Being born as an Armenian is not a choice, and if someone chooses to return to his/her roots after discovering his/her Armenian origin, no one, no cleric, no government official has the right to prevent that. Whether someone adopts a new religion or not, is a choice that comes later. There are many differing viewpoints on the subject of "who can become an Armenian." Of course, there is freedom of thought and expression but if someone in power or influence makes a decision that infringes on others' freedom, this is unacceptable.



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