

## Pashinyan Meets with Putin, Former Soviet Bloc Leaders

SOCHI, Russia (Public Radio of Armenia) — Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan participated in the sitting of the Supreme Council of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) on May 9 along with the President of Russia Vladimir Putin, President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev and Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan Sooronbay Jeenbekov. President of Moldova and Chairman of the EAEU Board Tigran Sargsyan were present at the meeting.

Addressing the summit, Pashinyan congratulated everyone on Victory Day and thanked Putin for the warm welcome.

“We have already formed the government, which does not envisage changes in foreign policy vectors. I confirm my full see PASHINYAN, page 2



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan with Russian President Vladimir Putin

## Former California Governor George Deukmejian Dies

Leaves Legacy of Fiscal Conservatism and Bipartisan Cooperation

LOS ANGELES — Former Governor of California George Deukmejian died on May 8. He was 89.

George Deukmejian, a two-term California governor who was admired by Republicans and Democrats alike for his willingness to cross party boundaries, and who quietly shepherded the state through a period of rapid growth and sustained prosperity, died at his home in Long Beach, Calif.

see DEUKMEJIAN, page 6



Guests admiring the St. Vartan Cathedral 50th anniversary photography exhibit.

## St. Vartan Cathedral Marks Golden Anniversary

By Taleen Babayan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

NEW YORK — Half a century after St. Vartan Cathedral was consecrated in a special ceremony, marking a symbolic moment in Armenian-American history, the community gathered to toast its 50th anniversary in a cultural program featuring a photo exhibition and sacred music concert on Saturday, May 5.

Honoring the weekend’s celebratory theme of “Promise, Progress, Presence,” the historic photo exhibition, which was unveiled in Yerevan Hall of the Eastern see ANNIVERSARY, page 10

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Turkey Parliament Rejects Paylan Bill on Armenian Genocide

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) — The leadership of the Turkish parliament this week rejected the bill that had been submitted by lawmaker of the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) Garo Paylan which called for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, Agos reports.

On April 20, 2018, Garo Paylan submitted a bill to the parliament proposing to call the 1915 and subsequent events as an Armenian Genocide, remove the names of perpetrators from public places, and grant Turkish citizenship to the descendants of the Genocide victims or Armenians affected by it.

The rejection signed by Speaker of the parliament Ismail Kahraman says Paylan’s bill and statements “insult the country, the national dignity and oppose the history”.

The Speaker rejected the bill of ethnic Armenian lawmaker sending it back aimed at “making necessary corrections”.

### Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Calls Out Azerbaijan for ‘Daesh-Style’ Violence

BRUSSELS, Belgium (Public Radio of Armenia) — Violence in the Middle East has seriously harmed the Armenian communities of the region, Armenia’s Deputy Foreign Minister Ashot Hovakimyan said on May 15, addressing a ministerial conference on “Ethnic and religious violence” in Brussels.

He noted that many Armenians have been killed as a result of terrorist actions, a number of Armenian settlements, churches, schools and cultural establishments have been destroyed, forcing Armenians to leave their homes 100 years after the Armenian Genocide.

Hovakimyan noted that Armenia was one of the first countries to criticize the mass killing of the civilian population by terrorist groups.

He reminded the assembled that the Armenian Parliament officially recognized and strongly condemned the Yezidi Genocide in Iraq, thus reaffirming its commitment to keep fighting for prevention of genocides and other crimes against humanity.

Hovakimyan called Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov’s statements on Nagorno Karabakh false and unfounded and reminded about Azerbaijan’s Daesh-style crimes against Armenians.

He also pointed out that the Azerbaijani policy of justifying hate crimes and glorification of criminals, the patronage of violence and terrorism and bellicose rhetoric on the state level are strongly condemnable.

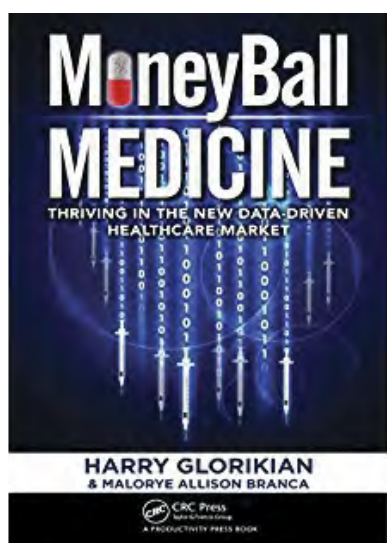
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## An App Could Be Just What the Doctor Ordered

By Alin K. Gregorian  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON — Harry Glorikian is focusing on the impact of technology on medicine and hoping to encourage closer ties between the two, thus resulting in better health care at a lower price point.

Glorikian is making his argument for this increased use of technology in medical care in his latest book, MoneyBall Medicine: Thriving in the New Data-Driven Healthcare Market.

The hardcover edition of the book was published in November and its initial runs sold out promptly on Amazon. Now, an elec-

tronic edition has been released as well.

The book, co-written by science writer Malorye Allison Branca, has found plenty of attention in the medical world.

For Moneyball, Glorikian interviewed dozens of healthcare providers, top healthcare executives, and entrepreneurs from organizations including many at Lahey Clinic, Collaborative Trajectory Analysis Project (cTAP) and Flatiron Health.

As he writes in the introduction, “A see MONEYBALL, page 9





## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Armenian PM Expects Fresh Elections in 2018

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan suggested on Tuesday, May 15, that fresh parliamentary elections sought by his political team will be held in Armenia later this year.

Predecessor Serzh Sargsyan's Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) holds the majority of seats in the current parliament. It is therefore in a position to block key bills drafted by Pashinyan's government.

The premier was asked by reporters about fresh elections as he walked from one ministry building to another. "I think this year," he replied when asked about possible election dates.

The idea of snap polls is supported in principle not only by Pashinyan's Yelk alliance but also the two other parliamentary minority factions: the Tsarukian Bloc and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation. Both groups have received ministerial posts in the new government.

The HHK's position on the issue remains unclear. Senior representatives of the formerly ruling party have only signaled that it will likely approve the Pashinyan government's policy program which will be submitted to the National Assembly by the end of this month.

Pashinyan seemed confident about the program's approval by lawmakers. But he at the same time warned: "I also think that nobody should succumb to a temptation to wrongly interpret the political situation."

Under the Armenian constitution, pre-term general elections will have to be called if the prime minister resigns and the parliament twice fails to elect a new premier.

## Bangladeshi Detainees In Armenia Probed For Possible Terror Links

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia's National Security Service (NSS) said on Monday, May 14, that it is investigating possible links with "terrorist groups" of six Bangladeshi men who were detained while crossing into the country from Azerbaijan last week.

The Armenian Defense Ministry reported the detentions on May 8. It said the men were spotted and caught by its troops deployed on the heavily mined Armenian-Azerbaijani border before being handed over to the NSS.

An NSS statement said the six entered Armenia from Azerbaijan's Nakhichevan exclave, which also borders on Iran and Turkey, under the cover of darkness.

"The individuals in question have testified that for the purpose of finding work they intended to cross into Turkey through Iran but lost their way and accidentally found themselves in Armenia," it said.

The security agency said it is now taking "investigative actions to establish the identity of the individuals and verify the credibility of their testimonies, real motives for the border crossing as well as their links with extremist and terrorist groups."

The NSS statement added that the detainees have so far been charged only with illegally crossing Armenia's border. All of them are now under arrest pending investigation, it said.

The Armenian-Azerbaijani frontier has long been closed because of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It is tightly guarded by the armed forces of the two neighboring states.

## Czech Airlines Resumes Flights to Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Czech Airlines will resume flights to Armenia from June 8, ATO.RU website reports. The airline said the absence of flights for four years was due to a fall in the foreign currency, which led to a decline in the demand for flights to the Czech Republic.

"Last year the markets of Eastern European and South Caucasian countries stabilized and in some sense returned to the situation existing before the crisis, leading to increase in the demand of flights. For that reason we decided to return to the Armenian market and resume regular flights", an airline representative informed.

Yerevan-Prague flight will take place twice a week with Airbus A319 planes.



Families celebrated the holiday and gathered for photos. (photo: Aram Arkun)

# Armenia Celebrates Triple May 9 Holiday After May 8 Jubilation

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

YEREVAN — After the jubilation created by Nikol Pashinyan's election to the office of prime minister, the next day, May 9, Armenians celebrated a triple holiday. This holiday originally was for the victory of the Soviet Union in World War II, which is called the Great Patriotic War here. Armenians made great sacrifices in this war. The commemoration was later broadened to include the liberation of the city of Sush, Artsakh, from Azerbaijan in 1992, and the formation of the Defense Army of the Artsakh Republic the same year.

Volunteer supporters of Pashinyan's movement cleaned the Republic Square on May 9, as they did after prior major demonstrations.

The primary celebrations take place in Yerevan and Stepanakert, the capital of Artsakh, during the morning. Nikol Pashinyan participated in the Stepanakert ceremonies. However, events and individual commemorations take place throughout the day throughout Armenia.

At Victory Park in the afternoon,

where the statue of Mother Armenia wields her sword in defense of the land, many families and representatives of organizations came to pay their respects to the soldiers who died protecting Armenia. Wreaths were donated by various organizations and state bodies. Pictures of the soldiers, named

as heroes and often bearing images of medals they earned, were carried there earlier in the morning on stakes and were left standing against a wall. Afterwards, many visitors went inside the Military Museum of the Armenian Ministry of Defense underneath Mother Armenia to view the exhibits.



During the afternoon of May 9, Armenian air force cadets march to Republic Square carrying pictures of soldiers killed in action

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commitment to Armenia's international obligations. We expect active cooperation with EAEU partners, based on the practical interests of free movement of goods, services, labor and capital, as well as the introduction of privileged regimes of economic cooperation, which is regulated by the Union law," Pashinyan said.

The Armenian Prime Minister expressed hope that the further cooperation of the Eurasian Economic Union member states would be aimed at development, creation of favorable conditions for entrepreneurship and investment, and improvement of the living standards of the citizens.

Putin received Pashinyan on the sidelines of the Eurasian Economic Union summit in Sochi.

Putin first congratulated Pashinyan on taking office.

The Russian President noted that "Russia sees Armenia as its closest partner any ally in the region. Putin reminded that Russia remains Armenia's main

trade and economic partner, and Russian investments make up 35 percent of all investments in Armenia."

Putin assured Pashinyan that "Moscow will continue to work with Yerevan as actively on international

arena and within the framework of international organizations, starting from the UN, where Armenia and Russia have always supported each other to regional security and economic integration frameworks."



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan with other Eurasian Economic Union member leaders





## INTERNATIONAL

# Hezbollah, Allies Score Major Gains in Lebanon Election

By Zeina Karam and Bassem Mroue

BEIRUT (AP) — The leader of Lebanon's Iranian-backed Hezbollah group declared "mission accomplished" Monday, May 7, after scoring major gains in parliamentary elections, as the main Western-backed faction headed by Prime Minister Saad Hariri lost a third of its seats.

The results of Sunday's election further bolster Iran's allies in Lebanon and neighboring Syria at a time when Tehran faces growing Israeli threats and the prospect of the United States pulling out of a landmark nuclear deal negotiated with world powers.

They also underline the growing clout of the group in Lebanon where it dominates politically and militarily.

Hariri acknowledged the losses at a news conference in Beirut on Monday, but said "it's not the end of the world." The international community, he said, should look at the results in a "positive way" because they reflect democracy in Lebanon. He blamed his losses on a new election law and a performance by his political party "that wasn't up to the standards."

"My hand is extended to every Lebanese who participated in the elections to preserve stability and create jobs," Hariri said in a televised statement. He said he would continue to work closely with President Michel Aoun, who is allied with the rival, Hezbollah-led bloc.

The official count, announced by Interior Minister Nouhad Machnouk at a news conference, shows that Hariri, a Sunni politician with close ties to Saudi Arabia, has lost at least five seats in Beirut, once considered his party's stronghold.

Hariri told reporters that his Future Movement won 21 seats in Sunday's vote, a decline of 11 from the last election, in 2009. Hariri would still have the largest Sunni bloc in parliament, facilitating his return as prime minister to form the next government.

Hezbollah and its political allies gained at least 43 seats, giving another boost to Iran's allies in Lebanon and Syria, where Tehran's influence has grown in recent years as it has provided crucial support to President Bashar Assad.

The elections were the first since war broke out in Syria in 2011, sending more than 1 million refugees fleeing into Lebanon, a small country with a population estimated at around 4.5 million. The war has divided Lebanon, pitting parties supporting Hezbollah's intervention in Syria against Saudi-aligned parties opposed to it. The divide reflects the region-wide rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Iran welcomed the initial election results, with Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi saying that his country will "support and cooperate" with any government that is elected by a majority.

The results indicated Sunni voters were losing faith in Hariri's party amid a declining Saudi role in Lebanon, a deteriorating economy and general exasperation over the civil war in Syria, which has further strained the economy to the breaking point. They also point to a Sunni constituency that is frustrated by what they see as weakness and compromises offered to the Hezbollah camp.

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said his party's gains would give "protection" to the group and declared "mis-

sion accomplished" after weeks of campaigning.

Hezbollah is considered a terrorist group by the U.S., but its political wing has long held seats in Lebanon's parliament and was part of Lebanon's outgoing coalition government.

Nasrallah did not say how many seats his group and its allies won, but the official results showed they took at least 43 of the legislature's 128 seats, giving them the power to veto laws. Hezbollah maintained its bloc of 12 members, like in the previous parliament. Other pro-Syrian factions made their strongest showing since Damascus ended a nearly three-decade military presence in Lebanon in 2005.

"There is a major political, parliamentary and moral victory for the choice of the resistance," Nasrallah said in a televised speech.

The daily al-Akhbar newspaper, which leans toward Hezbollah, described the election as a "slap" for Hariri on its front page.

Hezbollah supporters road through the streets of Beirut on scooters, honking their horns and waving the militant group's signature yellow flag as some shouted sectarian slogans. Some were attacked with clubs and sticks when they entered a predominantly Sunni district Monday night.

On Sunday evening, a group of men raised the Hezbollah flag over a statue of the late prime minister, Rafik Hariri, the incumbent premier's father, who was assassinated by a truck bombing in 2005. A U.N.-backed tribunal has indicted five Hezbollah members for the killing.

The next Cabinet, like the outgoing one, will likely be a unity government that includes Hezbollah. The two sides can hardly govern effectively without each other, something Hariri alluded to at his news conference.

Asked whether he would give up co-

existing with the group in a unity government, Hariri countered that the alternative would mean complete paralysis. "We tried that in the past," he said.

"The country needs stability. ... Lebanon needs jobs, development, tourism and electricity," he said.

The election, the first in nine years, was marked by a low turnout, especially in the capital, Beirut, reflecting voter frustration over endemic corruption and a political establishment that fails to deliver on basic services, such as waste management and electricity. Machnouk, the interior minister, put national turnout at 49 percent, compared to 54 percent in 2009. In Beirut precincts, the turnout was between 32 percent and 42 percent.

The drop came despite a reformulated electoral law designed to encourage voting through proportional representation. But many, including Machnouk, blamed the new, complex law for the tepid turnout, particularly in Beirut.

Official results showed one candidate from a grassroots movement of activists, journalist Paula Yaacoubian, won a seat in the capital, an area traditionally monopolized by establishment political parties.

Some of Hariri's Sunni supporters saw him as being too soft on Hezbollah, and the billionaire businessman also faced criticism after sacking dozens of employees from his companies in Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, largely due to Saudi spending cuts.

The new election law also allowed Sunni rivals to contest the elections.

"Clearly, the Future Movement no longer monopolizes the Sunni votes," said political analyst Ibrahim Bayram. He said that while Hariri is still likely to form the next government, he is now weaker and new conditions are likely to be imposed on him.

Another big winner was the right-wing Christian Lebanese Forces, which almost doubled its number of seats to 15. The group has vowed to combat the country's rampant corruption.

## Pashinyan Mobbed By Armenian Supporters in Russia

SOCHI, Russia (RFE/RL) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan pledged to strive for a "great repatriation" of Armenians living abroad as hundreds of them greeted him at the start of his first visit to Russia late on Sunday, May 13.

Pashinyan was mobbed by ethnic Armenian supporters after arriving in Sochi to hold talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin and attend a summit of five former Soviet republics. Many of them shook hands and took selfies with the 42-year-old premier in and outside a local Armenian church where he prayed and lit candles.

Pashinyan thanked many members of Russia's large Armenian community for supporting his protest movement when he addressed the jubilant crowd chanting "Nikol!" in the church courtyard.

He also said: "I want to thank brotherly Russia for having created such conditions for the Armenian people. But I also want to say that our aim is a great repatriation. Our aim is to concentrate a considerable portion of the human, financial, economic, spiritual and scientific potential of the [Diaspora] Armenians in Armenia and to ensure its

security and sustainable development."

"I am calling on Russian and Armenian businessmen from Russia to come to Armenia and invest and create jobs there because it's now a new Armenia where every investment will be protected and no investment will be at risk," he said in an impromptu speech.

"I am happy to see your happy eyes and proud of seeing your proud eyes," added Pashinyan. "I am serving each of you and let nobody doubt that our struggle will earn Armenia, the Armenian people and Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) new victories every day, every week and every year."

Pashinyan has repeatedly pledged to speed up economic growth in Armenia by breaking up de facto monopolies, separating business from politics and improving the broader investment climate. His newly formed cabinet is due to present a comprehensive policy program to the parliament by the end of this month.

Hundreds of thousands of Armenians have left their country since the 1990s in search of employment abroad and Russia in particular.

## International News

### Iran Restoring Three Armenian Sites

TEHRAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — Restoration work has commenced for three Armenian sites that stand adjacent to the UNESCO-registered Monastery of Saint Thaddeus in northwest Iran, Tehran Times reports.

"Sandoukht mausoleum and temple as well as Zakarius church are subject to rehabilitation work," said Hassan Sepehrfar, a provincial tourism official.

A budget of one billion rials (\$24,000) has been allocated to the projects that include flooring and strengthening as well, the official added.

Qareh Klise has always been a place of high spiritual value for Christians and other inhabitants in the region. Every summer, it hosts gatherings of pilgrims coming from Iran and Armenia to observe special religious ceremonies such as Holy Communion and baptism.

Together with St. Stepanos Monastery and the Chapel of Dzordzor, St. Thaddeus was placed on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2008 under the title "Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran."

### Czech Airlines Resumes Flights to Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Czech Airlines will resume flights to Armenia from June 8, ATO.RU website reports. The airline said the absence of flights for four years was due to a fall in the foreign currency, which led to a decline in the demand for flights to the Czech Republic.

"Last year the markets of Eastern European and South Caucasian countries stabilized and in some sense returned to the situation existing before the crisis, leading to increase in the demand of flights. For that reason we decided to return to the Armenian market and resume regular flights", an airline representative informed.

Yerevan-Prague flight will take place twice a week with Airbus A319 planes.

### Mammadyarov: Azerbaijan Is Ready for Intensive Negotiations

PARIS (news.am) — Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov met on Tuesday, May 15, with the co-chairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group and the personal representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office.

He spoke about the importance of continuing the negotiations in an intensive manner upon the completion of the elections in Azerbaijan.

Mammadyarov, for his part, expressed Baku's readiness to do this, Foreign Ministry spokesman Hikmet Hajiyev said. During the meeting, measures planned by the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group to advance the negotiation process were discussed.

### Kurdish Presidential Candidate Pledges to Open Armenian-Turkish Border

ISTANBUL (news.am) — The campaign platform of Selahattin Demirtas, who is nominated presidential candidate by the opposition pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) of Turkey, points to the need for normalizing of Turkey's relations with Armenia.

The program noted that if elected president, Demirtas will lift the embargo and develop economic and diplomatic relations with, Armenia, the Kurdish Firat News Agency (ANF) reported.

"We will open without preconditions the Armenian-Turkish border, which is unilaterally closed by Turkey," Demirtas's platform notes. "We will assist in the pacific settlement of the Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan."

Demirtas is charged with assisting the "terrorist organization," insulting the president of Turkey and with several other articles of the Turkish criminal code, and therefore he is imprisoned.

Turkey will conduct snap presidential and parliamentary elections on June 24.

# Community News

## Conn. Legislature Passes Law Mandating Genocide, Holocaust Studies

HARTFORD, Conn. — On May 7, the Connecticut House of Representatives unanimously passed Senate Bill 452 “An Act Concerning the Inclusion of Holocaust and Genocide Education and Awareness in the Social Studies Curriculum.” The Senate had previously unanimously passed the bill, fittingly, on April 24. The act mandates each local and regional board of education in Connecticut to include Holocaust and Genocide education and awareness as part of the social studies curriculum for the school district. The law allows boards of education to utilize existing and appropriate public or private materials, person-



Connecticut Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, left, with Jack Krikorian

nel and other resources and to accept in kind donations designated for the development and implementation of the education and awareness required. The bill was signed into law by Gov. Dannel P. Malloy on May 10, 2017.

The Connecticut Genocide Commemoration Committee had expanded its mission during the past several years to include both a public Genocide curriculum in public schools as well as to establish an Armenian Genocide Memorial.

Petitions were circulated supporting the Genocide and Holocaust education bill at the April 21 commemoration of the Armenian Genocide which was held at the state Capitol on April 21.

In addition the Committee submitted testimony in favor of the bill through its chairman Jack Krikorian.

## New Primate Presides Over Ascension Day

NEW YORK — On Thursday, May 10, the Armenian Church celebrated the Feast of the Ascension — the day marking the ascent of our Lord Jesus Christ to heaven, on the 40th day after his resurrection.

At the Diocesan parish named for the Holy Ascension, in Trumbull, Conn., a dozen clergymen gathered for a special badarak, celebrated by Fr. Mesrob Hovsepyan of the White Plains parish. Holy Ascension pastor Fr. Untzag Nalbandian hosted the gathering.

Presiding over the occasion was newly-elected Primate Fr. Daniel Findikyan. He expressed his happiness to be among his brother clergy on such a holy occasion, as one of his first acts as Diocesan Primate.

The Feast of the Ascension (*Hampartsoum* in Armenian) has been celebrated in the universal church since ancient times. Modern scholarship traces its observance to the 4th century. The Nicene Creed, chanted in the Armenian Church during every Divine Liturgy, asserts that Christ “ascended into heaven with the same body and sat at the right hand of the Father.”



From left, Dr. Sergio La Porta, Robert Saroyan, and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian

## Fresno State Armenian Studies Program Celebrates 30 Years

FRESNO (*Hye Sharzhoom*) — On March 18, more than 200 students, faculty, administrators and members of the community joined together at the Fort Washington Country Club for the Armenian Studies Program 30th Annual Banquet.

The event celebrated the more than 40 students who received Armenian Studies Program scholarships in 2017-2018. Students earning a minor in Armenian Studies, graduating seniors, and executive officers of the Armenian Students Organization were also recognized.

**By Claire Kasaian**

Special guests in attendance included Fresno State President Dr. Joseph Castro and Mary Castro; Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval; Kazan Visiting Professor Dr. Yektan Türkylmaz, Fulbright Visiting Scholar Dr. Hayk Demoyan; and William Saroyan Home and Museum Project Coordinator Avag Simoyan.

Armenian Studies Program Director Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian delivered the opening remarks of the Banquet, stressing the important impact the Program has on its students. “This academic year the Program awarded \$54,000 in scholarships to more than 40 students,” Der Mugrdechian remarked. “The scholarships make a meaningful impact by supporting deserving students.”

Haig and Isabel Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies Dr. Sergio La Porta welcomed the attendees and affirmed that the success of the Armenian Studies Program was based both on the strength of student involvement and through the support of the community.

La Porta introduced Jiménez-Sandoval and Associate Dean Dr. Honora Chapman, who spoke of the Armenian Studies Program’s influence on the community. “It took a thousand years and a lot of pain for you to be here as a community,” Jiménez-Sandoval observed. “One thing I have learned from the Armenians is to be aware and conscious of who you are, and then to take action.”

Fresno State President Dr. Joseph Castro highlighted the contribution that the program makes to the university by attracting Armenian students and providing

see FRESNO, page 8



Left to right: Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, Warren Paboojian and Lesa Paboojian, and Dr. Sergio La Porta

## Armenian Diaspora Survey Launches Pilot Study in Boston Area

ARLINGTON, Mass. — The Armenian Diaspora Survey (ADS) is beginning a pilot study, exploring the many connections tying Armenian communities and individuals to each other around the globe. The project began in Boston on May 17 with presentations by the team of researchers and pilot study leader, Dr. Susan Pattie, at the Armenian Cultural Foundation. The Boston team, Dr. Pamela Young, Dr. Vahe Sahakyan and Dr. Lisa Gulesserian, also explained ways in which volunteers can help with interviewing, distributing questionnaires, photography and other ways in which we will explore how Armenians in the Boston area think about identity and belonging in the 21st century.

Important changes have taken place around the Armenian diaspora and continue today but as yet we have no large-scale study of the Armenian diaspora. The ADS begins with a pilot study phase with teams of experienced researchers also visiting Marseilles, Cairo and Pasadena in order to test the tools the Survey is using in different environments. In each place, the teams will use questionnaires, interviews, observation, photography and video to question and record the views and concerns of people who identify themselves as Armenians.

In Boston, the ADS is supported by the National Association for Armenian Research and Studies (NAASR). Funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and administered by the Armenian Institute, London, the ADS aims to record the views of people who are active in these communities but also seeks the perspectives of people who may feel more marginal. The Survey explores different ways of belonging within the diaspora and also the connections between the diaspora and the Republic of Armenia and/or other forms of homeland, such as towns and villages in historic Armenia. In order to provide context for the study, the ADS also gathers information on different national social environments, how it feels to be an Armenian in, for example, France or America or Egypt, and how one becomes French, American or Egyptian as well as Armenian.

The ADS began in March 2017 with a meeting of researchers involved in studying Armenians, migration, and diaspora. In September 2017, the Pilot Study began to take shape under the leadership of Dr. Susan Pattie, working with Leon Aslanov as research assistant. With the regular assistance of the Advisory Committee, the ADS has developed a questionnaire and a list of open-ended questions to be used for interviews. Aslanov is also creating an extensive bibliography of primarily social science works about Armenians in different diaspora communities.

Visits to the four sites, Pasadena, Boston, Marseilles and Cairo, will take place over four weeks. Following data collection, the material will be archived and made available to scholars and researchers. The teams will also evaluate the entire process in order to move beyond the Pilot Study and begin further work around the diaspora. We expect to finish the Pilot Program in early autumn 2018.

The goals are the creation of an extensive bibliography of works about Armenian communities around the world, including doctoral theses, journalistic articles, scholarly works, etc. Thus far, the works listed are in English, Eastern and Western Armenian, French and Russian. The creation of the bibliography will continue in other languages and will be updated constantly.

A variety of other media including photo essays, short videos, exhibitions and presentations.

It is hoped that each four-week visit will end with a presentation for the local community, sharing some of the initial findings as well as the visual work done by the research team and volunteers together.

For further information contact: Leon Aslanov [armeniandiasporasurvey@gmail.com](mailto:armeniandiasporasurvey@gmail.com).





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Wellness Center Saving Lives of Mothers, Saving Families in Armenia

WASHINGTON – For the past two decades, saving the lives of mothers/women in Armenia through early and accurate detection of diseases with appropriate treatments has been the chief mission of the Armenian American Wellness Center (AAWC or Wellness Center). The Wellness Center is a humanitarian project of the Armenian American Cultural Association, Inc. (AACA). The AACA is an independent, non-partisan, 501 (c)(3) registered tax-exempt organization founded in February 1995 in the US. Its mission is to promote Armenian cultural, educational, and scientific endeavors and to sponsor health and humanitarian assistance projects for the people of Armenia. The Wellness Center was established in April 1997 as the first non-profit entity in Armenia to address breast cancer rates, which had reached endemic proportions among women in Armenia from the Soviet times. From one mammography screening department, the Center has turned into a six-story modern medical facility, with ten departments equipped with cutting-edge medical technology. With the introduction of Western technology and expertise, the Wellness Center has revolutionized preventive healthcare delivery in Armenia.

Every day, between 160 and 200 patients visit the Wellness Center. From April 1997 through December 2017, the center saved 7,779 lives of women. Overall, 530,254 medical services were provided to 417,498 patients. Furthermore, 22,036 patients from remote regions received free of charge medical services, during AAWC's Medical Outreach Missions in all 11 districts of Armenia. The Wellness Center has also been a teaching center for Armenian and international

medical students from the Yerevan State Medical University (YSMU). In addition, it provides a six-month Residency Program for Radiology Graduates from NIH of Armenia.

But, it is not only the women's lives that are being saved, but also the lives of mothers and grandmothers, who are the pillars of their families and the source of joy for their children."



AAWC Medical Staff

Karine Saribekyan, a cancer survivor, wrote, "I am one of those thousands of women, whose life has been saved by the Armenian American Wellness Center. On behalf of all mothers, I would like to thank Mrs. Rita Balian, who established this Center to save the lives of women.

On September 22, 2017, the Wellness Center celebrated its 20th anniversary in providing preventive healthcare services in a corruption-free environment to women and their families in Armenia. More than 200 guests, including US and Armenian government officials, donors, medical professionals, scholars, and cancer survivors treated at the Wellness Center attended the event. In his congratulatory letter on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Wellness Center, US Ambassador to Armenia Richard M. Mills, Jr., wrote: "I am proud that the United States government has been a strong supporter of this project. The Center stands as a great example of Armenian and American partnership and of our shared values and service, transparency, and accountability."

According to Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the United States of America Grigor Hovhannissian, "For the past two decades, the Armenian American Wellness Center in Yerevan has been growing to become a state-of-the-art healthcare facility, which is today a symbol of excellence for providing primary healthcare services to individuals and families in Armenia. The advancement of medicine relies largely on international cooperation and professional exchanges, and it has been impressive to watch over the years the outcomes of one of the brightest examples of Armenian-American cooperation."

Addressing the audience at the event, Keith Simmons, former USAID/Armenia Mission director, who also played an instrumental role in promoting AAWC-USAID partnership, stated: "In 2001, after meeting Rita and Vartkess Balian and Hranoush Hakobian in Armenia and witnessing the Wellness Center's great work, I realized that the Center would be a serious partner with USAID. Joining together with the AACA to support the Wellness Center was a win-win for USAID, the Diaspora and the Armenian people. It is one of the best and most successful examples of a public-private partnership (PPP)."

As part of the ongoing year-long anniversary celebrations of the Wellness Center, on April 7, the AACA together with the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia in Washington, D.C., hosted a presentation of awards to honor the US Medical Advisory Board Members of the AACA-

AAWC. For the past 20 years, the Medical Advisory Board Members have volunteered their time and expertise participating in 80 medical exchanges, organized by AACA, to train the AAWC Medical Staff, both on-site in Armenia and at their respective medical institutions in the US.

Since 2004, the AACA and AAWC have been a proud recipient of grant awards from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to renovate, expand, and equip the Wellness Center. In this regard, Anne Dix, Director of USAID American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) Program wrote: "The Armenian American Wellness Center exemplifies the values of USAID/ASHA. Our partnership has created an institution that strengthens the community and region, empowers Armenian women, promotes American values, and models global best practices. USAID/ASHA is honored to partner with the Armenian American Cultural



Keith Simmons

Association and the Armenian American Wellness Center."

Recalling his early involvement with the Wellness Center, former US Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia Peter Tomsen, wrote: "During our immensely rewarding period in Armenia in the mid-1990s, we were fortunate to be early witnesses of AAWC's accession to what it has become today – one of the finest health centers in Eurasia. Due mainly to Rita Balian's



[Front Row Left to Right]: Michelle Parsons, RT; Mohammad Latif, USAID Senior Engineer; Ann Archer, MD; Rita Balian, President of AACA and Founder of AAWC; Emma Zargarian, MD; Christine Avakoff, MD; John Poochigian, MD; and Vicken Poochikian, MD. [Back Row Left to Right]: Former US Ambassador to Armenia John Evans, Robert Aubrey Davis, Commentator of WETA and Founder of XM Radio Program; Amb. Grigor Hovhannissian, and Heros Noravian, Ph.D.



From left, Amb. Grigor Hovhannissian, Sona Van and Rita Balian at the Armenian Embassy



Anne Dix

herculean efforts, the then-Mammography Center has grown from one specialized medical department to ten specialized departments today. AAWC's provision of much needed health care to the population inside and outside of Armenia mirrors the friendship and cooperation between Americans and Armenians as symbolized by the two national flags flying together in front of the AAWC building."

According to Emeritus Professor of Surgery at Harvard University Dr. Ernest Barsamian, "As an oasis of medical excellence, the Wellness Center has become a positive example to emulate and improve the delivery of healthcare in medical clinics and centers throughout Armenia."

The evening at the Embassy on April 7, also see WELLNESS, page 8





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Former California Governor George Deukmejian Dies

DEUKMEJIAN, from page 1

His death was confirmed by Steve Merksamer, Deukmejian's former chief of staff.

As governor, Deukmejian appointed more than 1,000 judges, many of whom are still serving in California's courts.

In the 1982 race for governor, he defeated the mayor of Los Angeles, Tom Bradley, by about 90,000 votes out of nearly eight million cast, a victory so narrow that some news reports prematurely pronounced Bradley the winner.

Deukmejian served two terms, from January 1983 to January 1991. In each of his eight state budgets, education was the state's highest funding priority. In 1985, the California Legislature considered a bill introducing a human rights and genocide curriculum throughout the California public school system. Both the California State Senate and Assembly passed the bill in September of that year. Governor Deukmejian signed the bill into law on September 28, 1985, and the new curriculum was first printed in 1987.

The Armenian Assembly's 1987 tribute banquet in honor of George Deukmejian was joined by many political leaders from across the country. President (then-Vice President) George Bush, Sr., Senator Robert "Bob" Dole (R-KS), Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Senator Larry Pressler (R-SD), Rep. Robert Dornan (R-CA), Rep. Chip Pashayan (R-CA), Massachusetts Speaker of the House George Keeverian, New Jersey Assembly Majority Leader Garabed "Chuck" Haytaian, former California Assembly Majority Leader Walter Karabian, American diplomat Barry Zorthian, and presidential speechwriter Ken Khachigian, among other esteemed guests, were all in attendance. President Ronald Reagan and Governor Michael Dukakis offered special video messages of praise to Governor Deukmejian.

President Reagan noted: "The Armenian Assembly has made the right choice. This tribute

of an exemplary public servant. Past recipients include: Kenneth L. Khachigian in 2017; Charles "Chuck" Poochigian and Deborah A. Poochigian in 2012; former Senator Paul Sarbanes (D-MD) in 2006; former Canadian Parliamentarian Sarkis Assadourian in 2005; Congressional Caucus of Armenian Issues Co-Chairs Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) and former Co-Chair Rep. Joe Knollenberg (R-MI) in 2004; Rep. David Dreier (R-CA) in 2003; Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues Co-Chair Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA) and former Rep. John Sweeney (R-NY) in 2001; former Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian in 1998; and former Armenian Minister of Trade and Industry Garnik Nanagouljian.

George Deukmejian served from 1979 to 1983 as California State Attorney General. Prior to that, he served in the California State Assembly from 1962 to 1967 and in the State Senate for twelve years from 1967 to 1979, where he represented Long Beach and surrounding Southern California communities.

He was the recipient of nine honorary degrees and was Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Politics of the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. He was a Regent Emeritus of the University of California, and a former member of the Board of Trustees of California State University. During its 2013 dedication of the new Long Beach courthouse in the County of Los Angeles, it was officially named the "Governor George Deukmejian Courthouse."

In a 2005 memoir, David Gardner, who was president of California's university system in the 1980s, wrote of the governor's stand on apartheid in South Africa, "All of this killing and violence, directed mostly against blacks, reminded Deukmejian of the Turkish massacres of Armenians in World War I."



Senator Robert Dole (R-KS), Governor George Deukmejian, Gloria Deukmejian, First Lady (then-Second Lady) Barbara Bush, President (then-Vice President) George Bush, Sr., and Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) at the Armenian Assembly's 1987 tribute banquet in honor of George Deukmejian.

Deukmejian was known to be especially tough on crime. While governor, he presided over the building of more than a dozen prisons.

After leaving office in 1991, he became a partner in the Los Angeles office of Sidley & Austin, commuting from his house in Long Beach, which he and his wife had lived in since 1960.

He is survived by his wife, Gloria; their children, Leslie, George and Andrea; and six grandchildren.

One of the signal moments in Deukmejian's governorship came in 1989, after a gunman killed five elementary school children in Stockton, Calif., using an AK-47. Bucking his party, Deukmejian supported a Democratic-sponsored bill outlawing semiautomatic rifles, one of the first such bans in the nation.

Willie Brown, the former mayor of San Francisco, who was speaker of the State Assembly when Deukmejian was in office, said of the governor's support for the ban, "It was the right thing to do, not the politically right thing to do."

"Deukmejian was a registered Republican, but he elevated the level of governorship above his party choice," Brown said in an interview for this obituary. "I think his time in office will be seen

as the last the State of California actually had a bipartisan, working relationship between the governor's office and the legislature."

Considered a politician of great integrity, he was respected on both sides of the aisle and credited for his ability to work with members of both parties to enact legislation of great consequence to the state in the areas of transportation, law and order, gun control and public safety to name but a few. Many have said that the Armenian genocide informed his lifelong quest for justice and anti-violence.

"Today, another son of the Armenian nation joins the ranks of other extraordinary Armenian American public figures, including Kirk Kerkorian and our own former AGBU president Alex Manoogian. They have left an indelible legacy of hope and inspiration to those seeking to balance worldly success with giving back to their fellow Armenians," stated AGBU President Berge Setrakian on behalf of the worldwide organization. "George Deukmejian was a shining example of effective leadership to both his country and the community that shaped his character and world view."

(The New York Times contributed to this report.)



George and Gloria Deukmejian with President Ronald Reagan and his wife, Nancy

is truly well deserved. George has served his community, state, and nation with great distinction."

Reagan continued: "Duke, you've also made it clear how very much your Armenian heritage means to you. As we know, many Armenian-Americans immigrated to our land under very difficult circumstances, and often with little or no money. Yet few Americans have so exemplified the essence of the American dream. With hard work they have built a new life to be proud of, they accomplished great things, and never lost sight of their fundamental values. George Deukmejian is just this sort of man. He is strong in character and long in caring. These are just some of the reasons you're being saluted Duke."

At the Gala, Vice President Bush spoke highly of Governor Deukmejian. "Barbara joins me in extending warm best wishes to all of those gathered for the Armenian Assembly of America tribute banquet in honor of Governor George Deukmejian."

The following year, the Assembly honored Governor Deukmejian in Beverly Hills. In a congratulatory note, Bob Hope stated: "He's one of my favorite Californians and I think he's done a fine job as Governor."

In his honor, the Assembly created the "Deukmejian Award for Public Service," which is granted to individuals who embody the qualities

Recalling the episode in 2012, Deukmejian said, "My feeling was, there but for the grace of God go I."

Gardner had strongly opposed divestment, but at the governor's urging, the state pulled some \$3 billion in stock holdings out of South Africa. During a visit to California after his release from prison, Nelson Mandela said the action by the University of California – the first large public institution to take a stand – played a critical role in ending white minority rule in South Africa.

A staunch fiscal conservative, Deukmejian was a consistent opponent of new taxes and government spending increases, to the point where his Republican colleagues in the legislature nicknamed him "The Iron Duke" for repeated vows to veto spending bills.

Courten George Deukmejian Jr. was born on June 6, 1928, in Menands, N.Y., north of Albany. His parents had emigrated from eastern Turkey in the early 1900s. His father worked in a series of jobs – as a photographer, Oriental rug dealer and paper wholesaler. His mother worked in a necktie factory.

Deukmejian attended Siena College in Albany County, graduating in 1949 with a bachelor of arts in sociology. He received a law degree in 1952 from St. John's University School of Law in Queens.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

## AGBU New England District to Celebrate 110th Anniversary

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — On Saturday, June 2, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) New England District will be celebrating its 110th anniversary at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Samberg Conference Center in Cambridge. The gala, themed Excellence in Action, reflects the organization's longstanding commitment to the Armenian people through a wealth of cultural, educational and humanitarian programs.

AGBU New England District Chair Ara J. Balikian, Esq., and 110th Anniversary Co-Chairs Lindsey Hagopian and Houry Youssoufian, have joined forces with a team of community members to bring this significant evening to fruition. According to Balikian, "Started in 1908, the New England chapter was the first AGBU chapter in the United States and the third worldwide. We are delighted to have the opportunity at our gala to not only celebrate and recognize 110 years of successes, but also highlight our progressive vision of excellence with new activities that continue to uphold our heritage, reach out to our youth, and foster the expanded use of our beautiful center in Watertown. We are also honored that AGBU's Central Board of Directors will be joining us to celebrate this milestone."



The organizing committee of the AGBU New England District

The evening will kick off with a cocktail reception on the seventh floor balcony of the Samberg Center, overlooking the skyline of Boston and the scenic views of the Charles River, and will include a silent auction featuring a vast selection of unique items and experiences. A dinner and program will follow with insight on AGBU New England District past engagements and plans. Serving as Mistress of Ceremonies will be Lia Oganessian, Founding Partner of Protocol Investments, TED Speaker and Entrepreneur-In-Residence.

Two Global Excellence awards will be presented at the event. One is to Noubar Afeyan,

founder and CEO of Flagship Pioneering, AGBU Central Board Member, and co-founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative. The other is to renowned pediatric heart surgeon Dr. Kristine J. Guleserian, Pediatric Cardiovascular Surgeon and Director of Heart Failure and Transplantation at Nicklaus Children's Hospital in Miami, Florida.

A post-event reception will follow at Meadhall restaurant. For tickets and inquiries, visit the event website, email [rsvp@agbuNE.org](mailto:rsvp@agbuNE.org). Also see the Facebook website <https://www.facebook.com/AGBUNewEngland>

## Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Annual Meeting to Feature Fletcher Tavitian Scholars

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — On May 23, the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) will host its 32nd annual meeting at Johnson Hall at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church on Brattle Street. In addition to updates on programmatic activities, a panel discussion will take place including students from the Tufts Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy Tavitian Foundation Program.

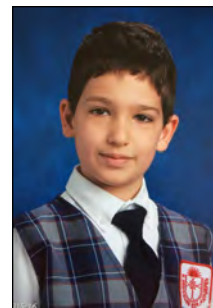
The students are in Boston for six months studying at Fletcher and will share lessons learned as well as plans to implement back in Armenia. Additionally, there will be discussion around the recent prime minister election and related matters. This meeting is open and free and refreshments will be provided. The business meeting starts at 7 p.m. and the panel at 7:30 p.m.

CYSCA was formed in 1987 by a group of concerned citizens of Cambridge, members of the Cambridge Peace Commission, who believed that a partnership with a Soviet city would promote world peace. They believed that people can build bridges of friendship, goodwill and cooperation on shared values, that often governments cannot. In the over 30 years since its formation, many activities have taken place, including citizens exchanges in diverse fields such as education, economics, environment, music, art, culture, public health, social work, and other community based services; youth exchanges; as well as financial aid to needy schools.

## St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School Student Ranks First Nationwide in Math Competition

WATERTOWN — St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School (SSAES) announced this week the outstanding achievement of one of its students in the Math Kangaroo International Competition. Grade 4 student, Vartan Arakelian, was ranked first statewide and nationwide in the March contest.

"This is a great honor for Vartan, his family, and St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School. We are very proud of his exceptional performance," stated Principal Houry Boyamian. This is the fourth year that students from SSAES have participated in this international math competition. Vartan also performed very well in 2016 and 2017, with 99 percentile both nationally and statewide."



Vartan Arakelian

The international Math Kangaroo originated in Australia in 1980. Not only has it spread from country to country, but also the various countries in which the competition takes place work together each year on choosing the problems for the contest. It also takes place at the same time throughout the world. However, the results are not compared between various countries.

In 2017, more than 28,000 students participated nationwide in the competition covering 12 levels, of which 4,748 were fourth graders. The number of students taking the level 4 exam in Massachusetts in 2017 were 626, according to the official math Kangaroo website. Top prize winners will participate in the Award Ceremony on May 19, at Bridgewater State University.

St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School was founded in 1984 and serves students from pre-kindergarten through grade five. To learn more about SSAES, visit [www.ssaes.org](http://www.ssaes.org).



# Sponsor A Teacher

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# 18th Anniversary

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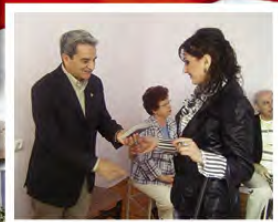
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## COMMUNITY NEWS



Students and faculty at the ASP Banquet

# Fresno State Armenian Studies Program Celebrates 30 Years

FRESNO, from page 4

them with a variety of services. “I want to express my gratitude to all of you for making this Program the best of its kind in the country.”

The Armenian Studies Program gave special recognition to Warren and Lesa Paboojian, for establishing the Warren R. Paboojian Award for Student Editor of Hye Sharzhoom and to Robert Saroyan for establishing the Robert V. Saroyan Family Scholarship.

Paboojian, who was a writer for Hye Sharzhoom, emphasized the importance of the paper. “Hye Sharzhoom provides a voice to students and I am pleased to be able to encourage students to continue to write for the paper.”

Rob Saroyan emphasized the importance of philanthropy and stated that he was motivated to establish a scholarship fund to give back to the university. “It is an inspiration for me to be able to invest in a program like the Armenian Studies Program,” said Saroyan.

Students shared reflections on their involvement in the program and what it has meant to them. “Participating in the Armenian Studies Program has enriched my college experience more than I could ever imagine,” said Shelbie Ohanesian, a liberal studies major minoring in Armenia Studies. “I owe many thanks to my 91-year-old grandmother, Florence Ohanesian, who is here tonight. I remember sitting down at her kitchen table years ago and listening to the stories of her mother and father escaping the

Armenian Genocide. Through the program, I was able to reconnect with my heritage.”

Michael Rettig is graduating with his Master’s Degree in History. The Armenian Studies Program helped him develop his thesis

topic based on his great-great-grandfather Thomas Mugerditchian’s career as Vice Consul in Diyarbekir. Rettig received the Outstanding Thesis Award from the Department of History.

“I grew up in Oakhurst, a small mountain

town, without a strong connection to my Armenian roots. As far as I knew we were the only Armenians in the world. When I moved to Fresno, I discovered there were more of us and became interested in my culture. It was really the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State that gave me the opportunity to dive into that history and background,” Rettig stated. “From the classes I took, to the friends I’ve made, to the places I’ve traveled, the Armenian Studies Program has been integral to my development as a student and as a person.”

Marine Vardanyan is graduating with a Master’s Degree in education in the Educational Leadership and Administration option. Her senior project was on “Identity, Belonging, & Armenian Studies: Exploring the Program’s Role in Students’ Lives.”

“The Armenian Studies Program gave me a purpose on campus and it allowed me to connect with my university beyond just attending classes and going home. It allowed me to build a network of friends who helped each other navigate through college.

It helped me learn more about our rich history and culture, it opened my eyes to the strength of our Fresno-Armenian community who supports our program and our students.”

The ASP Annual Banquet provided a warm atmosphere for all to enjoy each other’s company while celebrating the student achievements.



Left to right: Dr. Yektan Türkylmaz, Prof. Hagop Ohanessian, Lesa Paboojian, Dr. Honora Chapman, President Dr. Joseph Castro, Mrs. Mary Castro, Warren Paboojian, Robert Saroyan, Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdachian and Dr. Sergio La Porta at the ASP Banquet

# Wellness Center Saving Lives of Mothers, Saving Families in Armenia

WELLNESS, from page 5

featured Sona Van, Armenian poet and essayist, who was awarded the HOMER European Medal of Poetry and Art for her recent book, *Libretto for the Desert*. The book has been translated into 14 languages. Van was introduced by Stanley H. Barkan, American poet, translator, editor, and publisher from New York. The HOMER Award was presented to Sona Van by

Darius Tomas Lebiada, Polish poet, writer, translator, and editor, who especially traveled from Poland to Washington to present the Award.

In her concluding remarks at the event, Van noted: “I don’t know how it is done in Heaven, but here on Earth, the performers of miracles are seemingly ordinary people who hide their wings beneath their work clothes, from whose grace, some young boy will discover his right to

be born and a mother will win her battle against mortality and return to her family. The organizer of this evening’s event [Rita Balian] is just this type of Angel, through whose efforts the Armenian American Wellness Center in Armenia, has helped thousands of mothers and future mothers, to receive the necessary treatment.

Balian recalled, “We began this journey 22 years ago planning to take one mammography machine to Armenia. I never imagined then that we would establish a center with ten medical departments today and introduce modern preventive healthcare to Armenia. The many achievements of the Wellness Center would not have been possible without the support of individuals, institutions, and governments, including the Government of Armenia, the US Government through its USAID/GDA and USAID/ASHA grants for their contributions in making AACA’s humanitarian project possible and helping us save the lives of mothers and women and to create a Healthier Nation. I am grateful to Hranush Hakobyan for her steadfast support working with me to make this Wellness Center a reality. Khachanush Hakobyan, the center’s executive director, inspires and leads 106 remarkable staff members with grace and integrity. I am also grateful to my sister-in-law, Marie Balian, a breast cancer survivor, for her love and support throughout the years. Most importantly, without the unconditional love, generosity, and talents of my dearly departed hus-



Peter Tomsen



Richard Mills Jr.



Ernest Barsamian

band, Vartkess Balian, an architect, engineer, builder, and a philanthropist, we would not have been able to undertake this humanitarian mission.” Rita Balian added, “As we look back at our beginnings, we have accomplished significant results. Yet, as we look into the future, the journey seems to have just begun.”





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# An App Could Be Just What the Doctor Ordered

MONEYBALL, from page 1

revolution is transforming the \$10 trillion healthcare landscape, promising greater transparency, improved efficiency, and new ways of delivering care. This new landscape presents tremendous opportunity for those who are ready to embrace the data-driven reality. Having the right data and knowing how to use it will be the key to success in the healthcare market in the future. We are already starting to see the impacts in drug development, precision medicine, and how patients with rare diseases are diagnosed and treated. Startups are launched every week to fill an unmet need and address the current problems in the healthcare system. Digital devices and artificial intelligence are helping doctors do their jobs faster and with more accuracy."

"Data is really able to change medicine," Glorikian said in a recent interview, "and not just in one area."

It can lead to "staffing hospitals more efficiently."

One area he researched was doctor burnout. He said analyzing when patients typically come in can help staffing, as statistics show that there are specific times when a crush of patients come.

Next, once the patient is at the hospital, "What is the optimal way to treat a patient?"

One of the hospitals he cites as an example for optimizing health care is Geisinger Medical Center in Pennsylvania. "They use data to measure different things to lead to a healthier patient. If one optimizes the process with data, you should have healthier and happier patient" while reducing costs. As an example they offer a money-back guarantee on surgeries they perform.

As a result, "They [patients] are healthier so they don't come back."

According to Glorikian, the hospital did it by standardizing. They strengthened their odds by overriding their surgeons' individual operating styles with proven best-care guidelines that everyone, every time, has to follow. Even when a surgeon wants to something different – they have to justify their reason for doing so, selected from a previously agreed-upon list of acceptable justifications.

Another chapter takes on the treatment of cancerous tumors. "There is technology that allows us to investigate the genetic sequence" of the tumor, he said. That way, it won't be a one-size-fits-all solution but a specific type of treatment that works best depending on a person's genetic makeup.

"It is being developed really fast, faster than most people appreciate," Glorikian said.

Digital health is another area where the technology is driving healthcare innovation and starting to affect patient lives.

"The FDA [Food and Drug Administration] approved a watchband for EKG, for example he said. "AliveCor's KardiaBand, a device that detects dangerous heart rhythms, has become the first Apple Watch accessory cleared for medical use by the FDA. It can capture an EKG reading in 30 seconds, then detect problems like atrial fibrillation, a type of heart arrhythmia. In addition, the company launched a new version of the band in the US with a feature called SmartRhythm. That uses Apple's built-in heart rate sensor and AI algorithms to warn if the heart rate is elevated.

The new technology could not have been envisioned even as recently as two or three

years ago. "Not only how you can monitor a patient but change the business model used by healthcare," Glorikian said.

"The biggest driver is if we move to value-based payment system, which would make change happen faster," he explained. Currently, he explains, hospitals and medical care providers charge fees for services rendered. "Right now, the fee for service system gets paid for doing things right or wrong, whether the patient gets better or not" he said. Instead, he suggests incentivizing better care: paying doctors and hospitals for the treatments and procedures that lead to the best patient outcomes at the best possible price.

"It takes only a few to skew the system. If I say I only pay you for work that comes above a level or for patients that are healthier," then the system will change.

He cited the car market as an example of an industry that reacted to improvements at a better cost, in which Japanese cars took over the world market by delivering a higher quality and dependable car for the value.

Thus, with better patient care, the cost of insurance could also be lowered.

"We are trying to change a system that has been done this way for a long time. We are going to see what works and what doesn't," he said.

As he says, the system cannot change itself quickly, organically. Who or what can instigate that change?

"Until the value-based system is based on performance and outcome, I'm afraid most of that has to be driven by government," he said.

He stressed, "Insurance is the underlying problem," since "there is a lack of measurement



Harry Glorikian

for outcome. People pick on drugs for being super expensive. Those might be worth paying for, if they cure a rare disease or substantially lengthen a cancer patient's remission."

As he explains, much of the technology "allowing for higher-quality capability is not a major area. It is already in place."

Recently, he said, the FDA approved a new cancer test that is going to change the way oncology treats cancer.

"There are limitations in the system," he said. "But in the next decade or two, if we continue to go forward, there will have to be a value-based system."

Again, with an eye on the bottom line which can also provide the best possible medical outcome, Glorikian questioned doctors using three or four medical devices for one procedure. "What if we just had one?" He suggested a study could be done to find out which device is the best for treating a certain condition.

"Quite a few [in the field] say this is the way to go," he noted. There might be disagreements and the need further study to satisfy the concerns of those who might worry that patients might get shortchanged.

One new development, Glorikian said, is the launch of a medical school by Kaiser Permanente, the insurance giant, which is scheduled to open in 2019.

The Kaiser system works because they both provide care and offer health insurance plans. Glorikian says that that model allows them to analyze health data from millions of patients and members to strategize where health resources should be allocated, and which patients are at high risk for a disease and could benefit from an intervention. "They heather you are, the happier they are because they make money," he said. "It's a win-win situation where both patients' health and wellness and the health system's bottom line are improved."

Glorikian is a global business expert with more than three decades of experience building successful ventures in North America, Europe, Asia and the rest of the world. He holds four US patents in telecommunications, and has others pending.

He currently serves as general partner at New Ventures Funds. Before joining New Ventures, he served as an entrepreneur-in-residence to GE Ventures – New Business Creation Group. He currently serves on the board of GeneNews Ltd. (a molecular diagnostic company). He also serves on the advisory board of Evidation Health (a digital health startup launched with support from GE Ventures), and several other companies. He is also a co-founder of DrawBridge Health (a diagnostics startup launched with support from GE Ventures).

Previously he co-founded and was managing director of Scientia Advisors.

He holds an MBA from Boston University and a bachelor's degree from San Francisco State University.

He has written numerous articles for industry publications, appeared on "CBS Evening News" and been quoted regularly by Dow Jones, the *Boston Globe*, *BioWorld Today*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Independent*, *Science Magazine* and other media outlets.

His previous book was *Commercializing Novel IVD's: A Comprehensive Manual for Success*.

To purchase a copy of the book on Amazon, visit <https://www.amazon.com/MoneyBall-Medicine-Thriving-Data-Driven-Healthcare-ebook/dp/B077MKRN1X>



Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.

Dr. Nubar Berberian Annual Awards

Dr. Nubar Berberian, intellectual, journalist, activist and editor of many ADL daily newspapers for more than 50 years passed away at the age of 94 in November 23, 2016. In his Will, Dr. Berberian directed his Trust Fund managers to appropriate awards every year to college students of Armenian descent worldwide who major in either International Law or Political Science.

## ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Eligible recipients are college students of Armenian descent who major in either International Law or Political Science.
- 2) Applicant must be enrolled in a full-time graduate program in a fully accredited college or university in the world.
- 3) Applicant must provide all of the information requested on the application form.
- 4) Applicant must submit a copy of his or her most recent college transcript.
- 5) Applicant is to include a small head and shoulders self-portrait.
- 6) Application could be received by requesting from [Tcadirector@Aol.com](mailto:Tcadirector@Aol.com).
- 7) Applicants should submit applications electronically (via email) to: [Tcadirector@Aol.com](mailto:Tcadirector@Aol.com). The Paper submissions will be accepted by the deadline at:

Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.  
Dr. Nubar Berberian Trust Fund  
755 Mt. Auburn Street  
Watertown, MA 02472  
USA

but electronic application is preferred.

- 8) The deadline of receiving the applications is **August 30, 2018**.
- 9) The administrators and managers of the fund will vote the qualified winners in **October, 2018** based on the merits of each applicant.
- 10) The winner or winners will receive their awards in **November, 2018**. Applicants who were not selected will be notified in writing and invited to apply next year again, if they are eligible. .
- 11) Winning applicants are not eligible to apply again.
- 12) This announcement is published in Armenian, English, French and Spanish.

Watertown, MA, April 23, 2018





COMMUNITY NEWS

# St. Vartan Cathedral Marks Golden Anniversary

ANNIVERSARY, from page 1

Diocese, delivered a visual journey to guests and traced the cathedral's presence when the building was still a concept, all the way through its construction and memorable highlights of events and guests.

The exhibition, designed by the New York-

based Johanna Goldfeld, offered never-before-seen photographs and detailed informative footnotes, spanning through 60 carefully selected photographs by the organizing committee, including Sandra Shahinian Leitner, Melanie Dadourian and Shoghag Hovanessian. Their collective goal, to depict the cathedral's influ-

ential standing not only among Armenians, but also of the greater New York community and the world at large, was exemplified by the snapshots.

"Armenian Americans brought a dream of many decades to fruition," said Shahinian Leitner in her remarks, where she sketched a

the soldiers on the battlefield and the genocide survivors, who both protected the Armenian Christian identity, noting, "it was a symbol to genocide survivors that they too overcame powerful forces at great cost to retain their Christian identity."

She urged everyone to renew their commitment to the cathedral on its 50th anniversary and invited guests to peruse the photo exhibition and "witness the journey of our predecessors, become absorbed in their passion and commitment, and give thought to the ways of being part of this ongoing story."

The thought-provoking photo timeline educated and evoked nostalgia for visitors, who themselves had been present at significant religious and cultural events throughout the cathedral's history, from the One World Festival to pontifical visits by Catholicos, to famous names who entered the sanctuary doors, notably Aram Khatchaturian, Alan Hovhannes, Jesse Jackson and Mayor Michael Bloomberg. Above all, the exhibition demonstrated the strength of unity among Armenians as well as the ecumenical community, who together created 50 years of storied history and were present not only for momentous occasions, but also gathered on the cathedral grounds during more solemn times, including the Artsakh movement and Armenia's



The Nikolai Kachanov Singers



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian flanked by the cultural performers

portrait of the year 1968 and placed the cathedral's consecration into historical context. Among all the domestic turbulence, however, a symbol of Armenian Christian identity was erected, the first Armenian cathedral in the Western Hemisphere, which was dedicated on April 25, 1968 by the late Vasken I, Catholicos of All Armenians.

"From their early days in this country, the genocide survivors knew that an Armenian house of worship would be their home; their place of peace; and the emblem of centuries of faith that held them together as a community of believers," she said.

It was a dream that was brought to fruition after decades of determined fundraising. The millions of dollars raised were reflected in the quality craftsmanship and intricate design of the cathedral, modeled after the 7th century St. Hripsime Church in Armenia and named in honor of St. Vartan Mamigonian, who died defending Armenian Christianity during the 5th century Battle of Avarayr.

Shahinian Leitner drew a parallel between



Soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian

earthquake in 1988, as well as the Armenian Genocide centennial services in 2015, which were all shown through captivating images.

The exhibition also give viewers an interactive opportunity, through the writing of post-it notes on a creatively designed final panel, to share their thoughts on the cathedral's future, and how they could be part of that future by helping invoke changes they themselves wanted to witness.

The evening continued with the Sacred



Students singing Hayr Mer (St. Gregory the Illuminator Mission Parish)



Hovnanian School, Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School and St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian School singing as part of the youth choir





Guests admiring the St. Vartan Cathedral 50th anniversary photography exhibit.

Music Concert in the cathedral sanctuary in a program curated by pianist Sahan Arzruni and featuring award-winning performers, including clarinetist Narek Arutyunian, pianist Sahan Arzruni, soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian, concert organist Haig Mardirossian, conductor Hovhannes Mirzoyan, flutist Sato Moughalian and The Nikolai Kachanov Singers, under the tutelage of Nikolai and Tamara Kachanov (with special appearances by tenors Sergey Tkachenko and Jason Weisinger and baritone Vagharshak Ohanyan), who performed a range of sacred and liturgical works by Komitas Vardapet, Alan Hovhaness, Hampartsoum Limondjian and Baghdasar Thir.

The young voices of the next generation were also part of the program as students of the Hovnanian Armenian Day School, Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School and St. Gregory the

Illuminator Armenian School, sang the *Hayr Mer* and *Pontifical Ode* under the direction of conductor Khoren Mekanejian and organist



Sandra Shahnian Leitner, a member of the Photography Exhibition Committee, delivering her remarks

Louise Yardumian. “I don’t recall another occasion in New York when Armenian sacred music was featured exclusively in a concert setting,” said Arzruni, a

Steinway artist who has recorded over 20 albums, who was specially requested by Archbishop Barsamian to organize a special program for the 50th anniversary. “I wanted to present the material in its purest form, for the sharagans to be realized in a way that was done traditionally and to present the Komitas Divine Liturgy in a way that Komitas heard in his inner ear, by male singers only and without the accompaniment of organ.”

For some of the performers, the evening was more than a concert. A number of them had grown up alongside the cathedral and remember its founding, including organist Dr. Haig Mardirossian, Dean Emeritus at University of Tampa and American University, who was at the time of the consecration was “a young performing musician at the cusp of a concert and academic career.”

“I became keenly aware of the singular position of St. Vartan Cathedral from the beginning,” said Mardirossian.

In the late 1960s he accepted several invitations by the late Patriarch Torkom Manoogian, to perform at the cathedral, particularly for Armenian Genocide commemorations. Performing in the sanctuary again almost 50 years later, he felt that “the promise of St. Vartan Cathedral had been faithfully fulfilled.”

“To hear the poetic and fluent music-making of my compatriots and colleagues on the program was to understand that the cathedral had satisfied the dreams of its creators, patrons, and stewards to be the center of aspiration, expression, morality, and art to which one returns again and again for the reminder of the best of human experience and heavenly aspiration,” said Mardirossian.

In his remarks, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), congratulated the evening’s cultural programs and highlighted the cathedral’s “golden anniversary,” which was a “great opportunity to honor those who built the first Armenian cathedral in the United States.” He thanked the grand benefactors of the 50th anniversary, Nazar and Artemis Nazarian, as well as the support of the Dadourian Foundation, in addition to all of the committee members.

“We celebrate today as we look back and see all of the achievements of the past fifty years,” said Barsamian. “We also look forward to a great future with the leadership of our new American-born new Primate, Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan. May God bless you and all the souls of all those who built St. Vartan Cathedral.”



Flutist Sato Moughalian



Clarinetist Narek Arutyunian





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Grand Episcopal *Badarak* Honors 50th Anniversary of Cathedral

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – “I congratulate the 50th anniversary of this cathedral,” said Archbishop Khajag Barsamian in his message to worshippers who crowded every corner of New York’s St. Vartan Cathedral. “This is a place that has welcomed people from every walk of life, every background, who have come together here to pray, share our friendship, and learn the rich Christian heritage of the Armenian people.”

The occasion for those words was Sunday morning, May 6, as a grand Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Archbishop Barsamian to mark the golden anniversary of St. Vartan Cathedral. The monumental occasion began with three dozen priests and deacons from throughout the Eastern Diocese entering the cathedral in procession from the outdoor plaza.

The clergy escorted Barsamian in his final celebration of the *badarak* as Primate of Eastern Diocese. Alongside him was the newly-elected Primate, the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, as the column filed into the cathedral to the majestic hymn, *Hrshapar*.

An honored guest for the occasion was Archbishop Nathan Hovhannissian, who had arrived from Holy Echmiadzin to represent Karekin II, the Catholicos of All Armenians.

Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan and Bishop Abgar Hovakimyan also attended the service.

Among the dignitaries in attendance were Armenia’s Ambassador to the US Grigor Hovhannissian, Armenia’s Ambassador to the United Nations Zohrab Mnatsakanian, and the leaders of organizations including head of the Billy Graham Foundation, AGBU president Berge Setrakian, FAR chairman Randy Sapah-Gulian, Armenian American Health Professionals Organization President Dr. Larry Najarian, Armenia’s Honorary Consul in Chicago Oscar Tatosian, and chairman of the Cathedral 50th Anniversary Committee Richard Dabagian.

A special blessing came from having family members of the original cathedral godfathers attending the service. Chief among them was the family of Nazar Nazarian, his wife Artemis and children Levon and Seta and their families. Nazar Nazarian—one of the last surviving godfathers of the 1968 cathedral consecration—and Artemis had been honored the previous evening with the “St. Vartan Cathedral Golden Anniversary Medal,” and were distinguished as the Grand Benefactors of the cathedral’s 50th anniversary year.

The entire service was broadcast live over the Eastern Diocese’s Livestream channel.

Hovhannissian read a message of congratulations from the Catholicos of All Armenians, and presented as a special gift to St. Vartan Cathedral a framed icon of the Holy Martyrs of the Genocide. A special gift from the catholicos was given to Barsamian: a beautiful gold cross. In a moment of warm

friendship between the two spiritual leaders, Archbishop Barsamian accepted the gift as stepped away from the office of Diocese Primate he has held for 28 years, and the congregation seized the opportunity to express its appreciation and love for him.

Another memorable moment followed, as Hovhannissian offered a prayer for Findikyan, and presented him with a pectoral cross from the Catholicos, as the cathedral erupted into applause. An emotional Findikyan quietly vowed that “I give you all I have.”

Barsamian, in his inspiring sermon, expressed appreciation to Catholicos Karekin II for his “encouragement during my years as Primate, and to Archbishop Nathan.” He warmly welcomed all the dignitaries, and thanked “my spiritual brother Archbishop Oshagan, with whom I have worked, thought, and prayed together for many years.”

He added: “We also pray that the new leadership in Armenia will act wisely and unify and strengthen our homeland.”

Paying tribute to his successor in the role of Primate, he recalled ordaining Findikyan 21 years ago. “I have followed his wonderful work,” he said. “He brings new hope, and he will continue to strengthen this Diocese, especially among the youth.”

He reflected on the greater meaning of St. Vartan Cathedral — “an edifice built by the entire Armenian people” — recalling his first encounter with the cathedral in 1975 “when I came from Jerusalem, and first saw the cathedral’s beauty and inspiration.”

“It has been the greatest blessing in my life to serve as Primate here for 28 years,” he said, asking the faithful to turn around and view the image of St. Vartan illuminated in one of the cathedral’s towering stained-glass window. “May his spirit always inspire and lead us,” he said.

A combined choir of more than 50 voices — composed of members of the Gomidas Choir, the St. Vartan Cathedral Choir, and choirs from local parishes around the Diocese — sang the glorious Yekmalian *badarak* under the direction of the Gomidas Choir director Kris D. Kalfayan, with Louise Yardumian on the organ. The acclaimed soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian was the guest soloist.

The beautiful chalice used in the service—donated by James Kalustian of Cambridge, MA, in honor of the 50th anniversary of St. Vartan Cathedral—will travel to all the eastern Diocese’s parishes to be employed during local celebrations of the *badarak* as a symbol of the greater unity of the Eastern Diocese and Armenian Church.

## Blessing the Founders

The unique service concluded with a special *hokehankisd* (requiem) service for the souls of the many courageous, generous souls who built this spiritual home, including the cathedral consecration godfathers and the committee members

who served in the decades leading up to the construction.

Following the requiem, Primate-elect Fr. Daniel Findikyan paid tribute to Archbishop Khajag, whom he said “will set forth on a new path to serve our church and people.”

Following a final blessing by Barsamian on the faithful and on Findikyan, a procession of priests and deacons slowly filed through the cathedral to the stately strains of the Pontifical Ode, or *Hayrabedagan Maghtank*.

During the elegant reception that followed, many individuals expressed a strong emotional response to the occasion.

A deeply emotional AGBU President Berge Setrakian said: “The *badarak* is a reflection of an ancient people. Things come and go, but the church is eternal. Today, I saw all the departed cathedral founders living again beside us.”

Philanthropist Aso Tavitian said the occasion made him reflect on “our resilience and our survival. I felt proud to be Armenian, and proud of our valuable contributions not only for Armenians but to all people.”

Armenia’s Ambassador to the US Grigor Hovhannissian recalled traveling together with Archbishop Khajag to the parishes, promoting the idea of honorary consulates in the US “*Srpazan* is a man of mission; a mentor, a friend, and a confidante,” he said.

And Armenia’s UN Ambassador Zohrab Mnatsakanian related that the Primate reflected “the dignity and spiritual strength of our ancestry. Every effort must be made to sustain the Armenian identity,” he said.

For Diane Piranian — whose father Puzant Piranian “was there from the birth of the cathedral” on the original project committee—the 50th anniversary made her recall her father’s “continuous time, support, and drive to see an Armenian cathedral realized. It’s a special, exciting milestone for all of us whose parents and grandparents were involved. This place was their mark on the world.”

Dr. Sam Mikaelian — a longtime supporter of the Diocese and former executive director of the Diocesan Center — said he had traveled from Chicago because he “could not miss a second of the celebratory weekend.”

He called the photo exhibit a “masterpiece,” the concert “a gift to my Armenian soul,” and the *badarak* the “highlight of the weekend. It brought me tears of happiness, joy, and peace for our future, and personally strengthened my pride in my Armenian heritage.”

Finally, after spending the reception surrounded by well-wishers from throughout the Eastern Diocese, Archbishop Barsamian himself had a moment to reflect on the monumental week the Diocese had just experienced: a week equally balanced between honoring the past and looking to the future. The outgoing Primate said that he was “very excited that Fr. Daniel will be leading the Diocese. I see a bright future ahead, especially for the young generation.”

“And as for myself,” he said quietly, with a smile, “I’m at peace.”

# Archbishop Pays Final Visit in Office to Ordain New Britain Deacons

NEW BRITAIN, Conn. — The Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection of New Britain witnessed an historic visit on April 29, 2018 as the Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, ordained Deacon Matthew Cannata and Subdeacons David and Matthew Marottolo into the Diaconate. Father Kapriel Mouradjian hosted the visit and participated in the ordination sacrament.

The church was filled to capacity with parishioners and other well-wishers during the Ordination Sacrament.

Following the service, a reception was held with bountiful food and drink prepared and served by hardworking members of the committee led by chairpersons Jeanne Abrahamian and Jane Derasadourian and members, Henrietta Kallagian, Marge Litteral and Hasmig

Cannata.

Arthur G. Simonian served as master of ceremonies and gave introductory remarks following which Mouradjian addressed the group and warmly welcomed the Primate. He reminded the parishioners that Barsamian was completing his tenure of nearly three decades in early May and that he served as the 11th Primate of the Diocese, longer than anyone else in that position. Father Kapriel commented on some of

the milestones of the Primate’s service and on his many contributions.

Attorney Harry Mazadoorian offered a toast on behalf of the Parish recognizing first the Primate’s dedicated service and his many accomplishments, then Father Kapriel for his mentorship, patience and guidance in leading the new Deacons, third to the Deacons’ families for encouraging their service to the Church and finally to the Deacons for their unselfish com-

mitment and dedication in the face of so many competing demands on their time.

He then gave some poignant recollections of his longtime interactions with the New Britain Parish and made some inspirational comments about his vision for the future of the Church.

Deacon Matthew Cannata spoke with humility and humor on behalf of the Deacons with reflections upon some of his experiences on the path to ordination.

# Detroit Daughters of Vartan Host 19th Manti & More Fundraiser

By Gloria Korkoian

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. — On April 13, the Daughters of Vartan Detroit Chapter hosted its annual Manti & More dinner at St. John Armenian Church in Southfield. The well-attended event was successful due to the creative and dedicated committee chaired by the Terry Palaian and Denise Boyagian. In January, 21 Daughters of Vartan, Knights and guests under the direction of Palaian made the manti, which was to be served on February 9. Unfortunately, a severe winter snow storm caused the first cancellation of Manti & More in 19 years. It was quickly rescheduled for April 13.

The first Manti & More had a small attendance, but it has grown through the years through the hard work of the members. It is an

evening planned to gather friends and family to enjoy a meal together filled with friendships and camaraderie. This year manti was served to 200 members and guest.

The focus of the evening was manti, a traditional Armenian meal made and enjoyed by Armenians throughout the Diaspora. It is a cuisine handed down generation after generation.

Music was provided by The Kef Tones, a group made up of young Armenian musicians — Harry Kezelian III, Dikran Callan and Grigore Boyakjon.

The evening was dedicated to Past Grand Matron Anita Arslanian. Every project begins with a vision. Manti & More has been going strong for 19 years. How did it come about? It started with a walk in a park. Arslanian was pushing her young children in a stroller and walking with a friend. They talked about a fundraiser for Zabelle Chapter of the Daughters

of Vartan. They walked and brain stormed on a lovely summer afternoon. Manti & More was born that day.

The Daughters of Vartan is a service organization that inspires and encourages its members to support cultural, educational, religious and charitable organizations and activities on the local, national and international levels. On the local level, the Detroit Chapter presents educational and cultural programs, grants scholarships and participates and serves in various social, philanthropic, religious and educational activities.

The proceeds of this annual event support worthy organizations in Armenia, Artsakh, Jerusalem, Syria, needy families in our Detroit Armenian community, Forgotten Harvest and our Veterans to name just a few. The Daughters of Vartan’s Detroit Chapter has donated over \$180,000 from 2000-2018.



Subdeacon David Marottolo, Acolyte Mitchell Mouradjian, Deacon Matthew Cannata, Father Kapriel Mouradjian, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Subdeacon Matthew Marottolo,



# Arts & Living

## Homage to Infinity of Art & Creativity

By Tamara Hovhannisyan, PhD

With an amazing coincidence, almost before Christmas, Leonardo da Vinci's painting "Savior of the World" recorded an incredible result at an auction sale, causing amazement and confusion, leaving a new wave of worship towards art in the air. Just like any extraordinary phenomenon, this one too spread dual influence and gave rise to various causal interpretations, flooding periodical and professional press. As a result, old and new opportunists rushed to purchase cheap and dusty creative nonsense, which will come to the arena later, to feed human greed with probable disappointment.

Meanwhile, a new wave of public opinion and mass attitude was formed, a rise of unprecedented attention and respect towards creative individuals prompting universal forgiveness towards their daily living deviations. At the same time, a number of art lovers who have adopted sleepless nights and self-sacrifice as their true lifestyle, went out in search of their dreams, landing their ideas on canvas, hoping, that the eloquent silence entrusted onto the



"Spirit of Light"

stretched canvas will ensure their living, long after them...

It is not a secret, that the most delicate and rigid spectators of the complex process of creativity are not only experienced artists but also prudent and experienced entrepreneurs of the art market.

There are artists whose inner world was nourished by creative honesty enhanced with professional decency, giving me an enormous pleasure and undeniable privilege to know and work with them.

The first name is Armenian painter Gevorg Yeghiazaryan, who has already acquired a solid place in the international market.

During my lengthy experience in art business, I have witnessed a great number of sincere admiration and professional assessments of Yeghiazaryan's works, including eloquent comments from sophisticated collectors (whose feedback awoke a precious sense of national pride within me).

see HOMAGE, page 15



"Comedians" by Robert Elibekian

## 'The Mysterious Theater' of Robert Elibekian

LOS ANGELES — Stephanie's Art Gallery will present an exhibition by Robert Elibekian, organized by gallery director, Linda Stepanian and titled "The Mysterious Theater." The exhibit will open on June 1, and features 30 oil paintings on canvas. It is the first comprehensive look at Elibekian's engagement between the human body and theatrical scenes, music, symphony and movement.

Elibekian was born in 1941 in Tbilisi, Georgia; he has been a member of the Armenian Artist Union since 1970. For many years, he was successfully involved in stage design for theaters and film studios in Armenia and abroad.

As a modern artist, Elibekian breaks through and moves beyond the harmony of form and color, gathering inspiration from the Greco-Roman era, to Asian art and Egyptian art. Listening to the notes of an internal symphony, the palette of Elibekian brings "the fragrances of the East and the rhythms of the West" to create a space for which dancers and musicians come to life. Using the magic wand of his paintbrush, Elibekian "directs ballets of colors, creating at the same time ballerina, décor, and musical theme." The gesture of the dancers are in a moment of choice in their movements of ebbs and flows, moving from harmony to harmony, decomposing and recomposing in a spectrum of crystal clear poses. "They are images in a musical ocean in which the fusion of colors give rise to a theatrical show, with each syllable charming our senses." (Germak, Christian. Robert Elibekian, pp.4)

Elibekian's creative life was reflected in numerous personal exhibitions throughout the world. His art has been exhibited in several museums, including: The National Gallery of Armenia, Museum of Modern Art of Yerevan, Matenadaran Museum and the Tretyakov Gallery, the Museum of Oriental Art Moscow, the Cafesjian Museum see ELIBEKIAN, page 14



"Spectacle" by Robert Elibekian

## The Nation Announces Appointment of Senior Editor Abrahamian

NEW YORK — On May 11, *The Nation*, the progressive weekly journal, announced the appointment of Atossa Araxia Abrahamian as senior editor. Based in New York City, she begins work on June 14.

Abrahamian's interests are as varied as her previous essays and criticism for the *Nation*, which have ranged from the rock-star appeal of Modern Monetary Theory to the major foreign-policy questions facing the left today to an interview with current and former editors of *High Times* magazine. (Her most recent review, published in *The Nation's* Spring Books special issue, considered the question "Can Yanis Varoufakis Save Europe?"). In her new role, Abrahamian will expand *The Nation's* coverage of economics, business, technology, globalization, and culture, working with seasoned journalists and up-and-coming reporters both here in the United States and from around the globe. She will also continue reporting the occasional feature and writing for the magazine.

"Atossa is a compelling and sophisticated writer, editor, and thinker on the big ideas



Atossa Araxia Abrahamian

shaping the world," says *Nation* editor and publisher Katrina vanden Heuvel. "Her entrepreneurial spirit and grasp of fresh perspectives — whether towards a new economy or on the borders of the future — will help seed meaningful debates and conversations beyond the ephemera of Trump's latest tweet or temper tantrum. An accomplished reporter in her own right, Atossa has always been a welcome addition to *The Nation's* pages."

"I'm thrilled to be joining *The Nation's* brilliant team of editors after contributing to the magazine for several years as a freelancer," adds Abrahamian. "We're living in a period of global upheaval, which brings with it real opportunities for radical political ideas and new economic models. I can't think of a better publication than *The Nation* to bring these movements and initiatives to light through serious reporting and well-informed commentary."

Abrahamian has written for the *New York Times*, *New York* magazine, the *London Review of Books* and other publications. She has worked as an opinion editor at Al Jazeera America and a general-news and business reporter for Reuters, and helped launch the *New Inquiry*, where she is now editor emeritus. Abrahamian grew up in Geneva, Switzerland, and studied philosophy as an undergraduate at Columbia University, where she returned for a master's program in investigative reporting at the Graduate School of Journalism. Her first book, *The Cosmopolites: The Coming of the Global Citizen*, was a *New York Times* Book Review Editor's Choice selection.

Her parents, who are Iranians of Armenian and Russian descent, worked for the United Nations.

Born in Canada in 1986, she holds Swiss, American and Iranian citizenship and speaks English, French, Armenian and Russian.





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# 'The Mysterious Theater' of Robert Elibekian

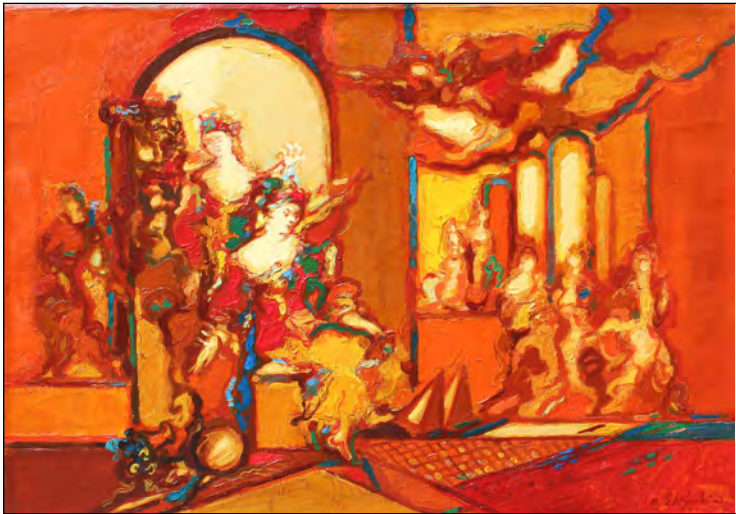
ELIBEKIAN, from page 13

of Art in Armenia, the Alex Manoogian Museum of Detroit, the White House and the Zimerli Museum in New Jersey.

He is the recipient of several outstanding honors, including: State Merit Prize of Armenia, the Movses Khorenatzi Medal in the field of national culture.

Stephanie's Art Gallery is located at 466 Ste. C., Foothill Blvd. La Canada Flintridge.

For general information, visit [www.stephaniesgallery.com](http://www.stephaniesgallery.com)



"Theater" by Robert Elibekian



"Dancer" by Robert Elibekian

## Rhode Island Armenian Exhibit In Providence Museum

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – The new exhibit of the Armenian Historical Association of Rhode Island is "Rhode Island Armenians: Discovering the Past and Looking to the Future." The exhibit will open on Saturday, May 19 with a program from 1 to 3:30 p.m., followed by a reception, all at the museum, 245 Waterman St., Suite 204.

The guest speaker will be Dr. Hayk Demoyan, director of the Genocide Museum and Institute in Yerevan, Armenia and currently a visiting Fulbright Scholar at Harvard University. His talk will start at 2 p.m., followed by a book-signing at 2:30 p.m.

Twenty large panels depicting Rhode Island Armenian culture, heritage and history of the Armenians in Rhode Island through public exhibitions, displays, artifacts and media will be on display.

For further details email [info@armenianhistorical-ri.org](mailto:info@armenianhistorical-ri.org) or [jmartha9@gmail.com](mailto:jmartha9@gmail.com)



Dr. Hayk Demoyan

## Recipe Corner

*by Christine Vartanian Datian*

### Summer Carrot Casserole

#### INGREDIENTS

1 pound medium carrots, washed, sliced or diced  
 3/4 cup milk or half and half  
 2 eggs, beaten  
 2 cups shredded or grated Provolone, Swiss or Fontina cheese  
 (or favorite cheese like Jack or cheddar)  
 2 medium cloves garlic, minced  
 1 medium onion, finely chopped  
 1/2 medium green bell pepper, seeded, finely chopped  
 1/4 cup green onions, chopped or sliced (including green part)  
 1/4 cup flour  
 1/2 teaspoon Kosher or sea salt (to taste)  
 1/4 teaspoon each dry mustard and dried dill  
 1/4 teaspoon black pepper  
 1 teaspoon baking powder  
 Dash of paprika  
 3/4 cup panko or coarse bread crumbs  
 1/4 cup chopped pecans or walnuts  
 1/2 stick unsalted butter, cut into pieces  
 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted  
 Chopped flat-leaf parsley and dill as garnish  
 Olive oil

#### PREPARATION

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees. Mix bread crumbs, one tablespoon melted butter, and nuts together in a medium bowl and set aside. Boil carrots until tender, drain, mash, and set aside. Sauté onions, bell pepper, green onions and garlic in 1-2 tablespoons of olive oil for 5-8 minutes, toss, and set aside. In a large bowl, combine the carrots, milk, eggs, cooked vegetables, cheese, and spices together, and mix well. In a separate large bowl, combine the flour, salt, dry mustard, and baking powder; add the carrot mixture to the dry ingredients, toss, and mix thoroughly. Turn into a buttered 9 X 13 baking dish and sprinkle with bread crumbs and nut mixture. Dot top of casserole with butter and bake for 35-45 minutes at 350 degrees or until bubbly. Garnish with chopped parsley and dill before serving. 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/>



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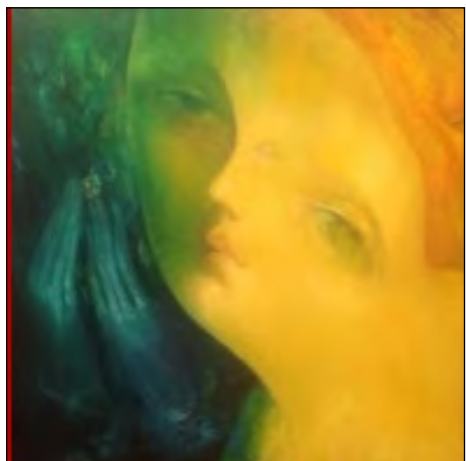


## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Homage to Infinity of Art & Creativity

HOMAGE, from page 13

One can be obsessed with Yeghiazaryan's art due to the soulfulness of it. The latest shared stunning collection proves that Gevorg is in the peak of his creative soul searching. In fact, credits of this narrative go to the artist himself, since it has been inspired just by observation of the collection which I introduce to the reader without additional exaggeration and an unedited verbal-



"Holding onto Innocence"

ization of his artistic insights. Yeghiazaryan's works are immortalized conversations with souls, spiritual confessions done with the honesty of a child and the wisdom of an old philosopher.

Yeghiazaryan's triumph of intelligence is shining in this remarkable collection.

Artist creates with thrilling honesty, and his works carry the unconcealed signature of his complicated personality, backed by sleepless

nights, absolute scrupulousness imposed by the presence of undeniable perfection. These latest creations either separately or as sensibly assembled unity are works that allure museum exhibits.

There is cosmic sorrow in Yeghiazaryan's characters, a silent concern for the world's intricate fortune. It seems that the characters have come down from above to carefully inspect unhealthy delusions of our times, and to weep for the loss of values. Unreal alien eyes watch humbly the world from above, innocent as the artist's soul, honest as his hand, and noble as his essence.

Probably, the irreversible reality that we encounter has resulted in the overwhelming toughness of concerns of our century. We are inclined to maneuver from realizing the consequences of our losses and are alienated from their artistic representations.

Meanwhile, it is necessary to perceive that valuable pieces of created art bear marks of deep thoughts and serious reflections.

Culture conveys personal as well as national affinities, and discussing precedents of their formulations is a topic for separate observations, again with a lot of secret unopened doors.

The national culture of the land of Armenia that nurtured and resulted in Gevorg Yeghiazaryan as an artist, was condensed in fables emerging from ancient times. Armenians withstood centuries-old sorrows by preserving the Light of Life through art. The indisputable existence of art inception in our national background, in our miniatures, in illustrations of our spiritual books and monastic inscriptions have become unlimited sources of inspiration for collective national artistic talent.

Yeghiazaryan's paintings are multifaceted. They tenderly manifest both the old and the new,



"Peaceful Metamorphosis"

the melody and the silence, the heaven and the earth, the life and the dream, the body and the soul – peacefully combining "life within the finished creations." Artistic visions like rescued icons with hearty softness find their place on a piece of canvas. They live thoughtfully lusting for continuity like an old love, walking peacefully like light-footed partridges, or like graceful brides, depicted by a creative hand that was blessed by the heaven and the earth. This giving a nation a rebirth of hope on a rising star of national identity crowned with independence.

In Yeghiazaryan's paintings the masterpiece of inception is revived. A human being is seen in all his powers and weaknesses, with tragedy of rushing between consequences of duality, yet

depicted thoroughly. He realizes the place and the role of an artist and with inner confidence of the enlightener.

Symbols dwelling in Yeghiazaryan's creations are carefully chosen. Seen are blooming lanterns, fine visualizations of the light of the soul. This seems to be created not with a brush but rather a soul, as if everything has been prompted from heavens. It radiates kindness, creative, and caring hands of the painter encompass sacred tenderness of his soul. Kissing souls in heavens resembling each other's spirits and plunging into each other's eyes; these are the symbols of the artist Gevorg Yeghiazaryan who himself can claim the embodiment of the creative spirit of the ancient nation of Armenia.



"Salvation of the Dream"

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*Ստանալու համար դիմել՝*

Tekeyan Cultural Association  
P.O.Box 1074  
Englewood Cliffs,  
NJ 07632-1074  
USA

Կամ՝  
hvartivarian@aol.com

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Կիւ Երբզի - 2018

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ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

FLORIDA

**JANUARY 20-27, 2019 — Armenian Heritage Cruise XXII 2019.** Western Caribbean Cruise aboard the Royal Caribbean’s Allure of the Sea. Traveling to Nassau, Cozumel, Roatan, Costa Maya. Cabin Rates, starting from \$949/person based on double occupancy, including port charges and ACAA registration fee. Government rates of \$137.45 are additional. Armenian entrainment, Armenian cultural presentations, Armenian Festival Day, Tavlou and Belote Tournaments and much more. Call Travel Group International at 1-561-447-08750 or 1-866-447-0750 ext. 108, contact person Janie.

MASSACHUSETTS

**MAY 18-19 — Armenian Memorial Church Annual Fair, Armenian Memorial Church,** 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown, Friday, May 18, 5-8 p.m., Saturday, May 19, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Armenian kebab meals served, Armenian delicacies, silent auction

**MAY 19 — Hai Guin Scholarship Association Annual Luncheon & Fashion Show,** Saturday, 11:30 a.m., at Montvale Plaza, Stoneham. Fashions by Soft Surroundings of Chestnut Hill, MA. Tickets: \$60 per person. Please call Lisa at 781-729-6333; Becky at 508-651-8893; or Marilyn at 978-818-9098 for tickets.

**MAY 21 — 19th Annual St. James Open Golf Tournament – Oakley Country Club, Watertown.** Scramble format. Raffle, Auctions and dinner following the tournament. For more information visit [www.stjameswatertown.org](http://www.stjameswatertown.org) or contact the church office at 617.923.8860 [info@stthagop.com](mailto:info@stthagop.com).

**MAY 23 — Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) Annual Meeting** with special guests Tavitian scholars from Tufts Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy who will speak about lessons learned from Fletcher and the recent election in Armenia. At 7pm at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, Johnson Hall, 145 Brattle St, Cambridge. Free and open to the public. Refreshments provided.

**MAY 31 — Annual Spring Dinner and Drawing sponsored by the Friends of Holy Trinity 1000 Club,** 6:30 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Open to all. You don’t have to be a member of the 1000 Club to join us for a delicious losh kebab and pilaf dinner, \$9.99 per person; tickets on sale at the door. Regular monthly raffle drawing at 8 p.m., plus 5 \$25 door prizes. “One-time” numbers will be sold on the night of dinner; special offer: purchase five “one-time” numbers for \$20, save \$5. For further info, contact the Holy Trinity Church office, 617.354.0632, or log onto [www.htaac.org/calendar/event/560/](http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/560/)

**JUNE 1-2 — Armenian Food Festival Sponsored by the Hye Pointe Church Women’s Guild,** 11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe, 1280 Boston Post Road, Haverhill. Chicken Kabob, Losh Kabob, and Kheyma Dinners, Armenian Delicacies including Lahmejoon, Cheese Beoreg, Spinach Pie, Tourshi, Cheoreg, Kataif, Paklava, and many more delicious items. For more information call the church at (978) 372-9227.

**JUNE 9 — The Friends of Armenian Culture Society will host the 67th annual Armenian Night at the Pops** on Saturday, at 8 p.m. at Symphony Hall in Boston. Talented violinist Haig Hovsepien, a winner of the 2017 Boston Symphony Orchestra’s Concerto Competition and

a rising sophomore at the Cleveland Institute of Music, will appear as soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra under the direction of Keith Lockhart. He will perform the Sibelius *Violin Concerto in D-minor*. The Pops will present Dance to the Movies with Dancing Celebrity Pros, So You Think You Can Dance top finalists, and singing stars from American Idol and The Voice. Tickets \$95, \$70 and \$35, available at: [www.FACSBoston.org](http://www.FACSBoston.org)

**JUNE 10 — St. James Armenian Church Festival Annual Picnic! Join us for a fun-filled festival!** Delicious Armenain food, live Armenian music, children’s activities with moon bounce, face painting, and more! Rain or shine. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Moutn Auburn St, Watertown. For more info, visit [www.stjameswatertown.org](http://www.stjameswatertown.org) or call 617-923-8860.

**JUNE 16 – Book presentation by Adrienne Alexanian** (editor) of her father’s memoir Forced into Genocide: Memoirsof and Armenian soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army Worcester Library – Saxe Room – 2 - 3:30 pm 3 Salem Square – Worcester MA – (508) 799-1655 ext. 3 Book signing will follow the presentation – proceeds will be donated to charity

**JUNE 18 — The Gregory Hintlian Memorial Golf Tournament,** sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston at the Marlborough Country Club, Marlborough; 9:30 a.m., registration; 11 a.m., “Shot Gun.” Join us for a day of golf - player’s fee: \$175 (includes hospitality, lunch, dinner, green & cart fees, prizes and gifts) – or just dinner and a social evening (\$50 per person). Limited to 128 players. Tournament and tee sponsorships available. RSVP deadline, June 11. To register or for further information, log onto [www.htaac.org/calendar/event/562/](http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/562/) call the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org).

**JUNE 20 — Tea & Tranquility, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Wednesday, 5-6:30 p.m.** Meet & Greet! Enjoy Tea & Desserts hosted by MEM Tea Imports and The Bostonian Hotel. Walk the Labyrinth. For first-time walkers introduction to walking a labyrinth at 5:30 p.m. RSVP appreciated. [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**JUNE 28 — Under a Strawberry Moon, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Thursday,** 8:30– 9:30 p.m. Meet & Greet! Moonlit Labyrinth Walk. Enjoy chocolate-dipped strawberries, hosted by Vicki Lee’s and Ice Teas, hosted by MEM Tea Imports. RSVP appreciated. [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**JULY 7 — Save the date! Armenian Church of Cape Cod second annual Kef Time dinner** and dancing at the Cape Club, 125 Falmouth Woods Road, North Falmouth. Leon Janikian Band with DJ and special appearance by Harry Minassian. Details to follow.

**JULY 18 — Tea & Tranquility, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Wednesday, 5- 6:30 p.m.** Meet & Greet! Enjoy Tea & Desserts hosted by MEM Tea Imports and The Bostonian Hotel. Walk the Labyrinth. For first-time walkers introduction to walking a labyrinth at 5:30 p.m. RSVP appreciated. [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**AUGUST 15 — Tea & Tranquility, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Wednesday, 5-6:30 p.m.** Meet & Greet! Enjoy Tea & Desserts hosted by MEM Tea Imports and The Bostonian Hotel. Walk the Labyrinth. For first-time walkers introduction to walking a labyrinth at 5:30 p.m. RSVP appreciated. [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**SEPTEMBER 16 — Sunday Afternoon at the Park for Families & Friends. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway.** 2-4 p.m. Enjoy Boston Hye Guys Ensemble with Ron Sahatjian, clarinet; Joe Kouyoumjian, oud; Art Chingris, percussion. RSVP appreciated. [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**NOVEMBER 14 — Najarian Lecture on Human Rights at Historic Faneuil Hall,** Boston Wednesday. Doors open at 6:45pm, Program at 7:30pm. Reception follows at The Bostonian Hotel An endowed public program of Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway. Details forthcoming.

NEW JERSEY

**SEPTEMBER 30 — Save the Date! Armenian Fund USA and Ardzagang Armenian TV are proud to present Artash Asatryan and band, guest singer Grisha Asatryan,** from Armenia! The concert is dedicated to Armenia’s and Artsakh’s independence celebration. Don’t miss the performance by the son and grandson of the legendry singer Aram Asatryan. Proceeds to benefit Fruitful Artsakh Project. 4 p.m. Bergen PAC, 30 N. Van Brunt St., Englewood.

NEW YORK

**APRIL 21 - MAY 13 — Off-Broadway production by Pan Asian Repertory Theatre of Joyce Van Dyke’s play, DAYBREAK:** the lyrical story of two Armenian women friends, survivors from 1915, who are transported with their families into the 21st century future. Performances at the Beckett Theatre (on Theatre Row), 410 W. 42nd St., New York, Tuesdays through Sundays; weekend matinees. Discount tickets for seniors, students and groups. For tickets and information: [www.telecharge.com](http://www.telecharge.com) or call (212) 239-6200. For discount tickets: [www.telecharge-offers.com](http://www.telecharge-offers.com) or call (212) 947-8844. Or contact the theatre: [info@panasianrep.org](mailto:info@panasianrep.org), (212) 868-4030.

RHODE ISLAND

**MAY 19 — Knights of Vartan Arax Lodge 100th anniversary Armenian Radio Hour of Rhode Island** 70th anniversary celebration fundraising dinner/dance. Sponsored by the Knights of Vartan Arax lodge May 19, 2018 at the Egavian Cultural Center of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian church, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence. Music by Joe Zeytoonian Ensemble. Dinner at 6:30 pm, dance beginning 8:30 pm. Admission for dinner and dance \$30, dance only \$20. Dinner reservation is required, please call Ann Ayrassian 401-529-5210. Sponsors are appreciated. Please contact Leonard Arzoomanian 508-958-7391 [arzoo623@webbrightservices.net](mailto:arzoo623@webbrightservices.net) All proceeds will be donated to the Armenian Radio Hour. Deadline for dinner reservation, and donations to be listed in the program book, is May 13.

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

Berklee College of Music President to Be St. James Men’s Club Speaker on June 4

WATERTOWN — On Monday, June 4, there will be a St. James Armenian Church Men’s Club dinner meeting at the St James Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center. The speaker will be Roger H. Brown, the president of the Berklee College of Music.

Since his appointment in 2004, he has pioneered the launch of a suite of educational institutes, including Africana Studies and the Berklee Global Jazz Institute, among others; overseen the creation of the world’s largest online music education system, and completed a merger with the Boston Conservatory to establish the world’s most comprehensive training ground for global careers in music, dance,

and theater.

Brown is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Davidson College and a graduate of the Yale School of Management. He cofounded Bright Horizons Family Solutions in 1986 with his wife, Linda Mason, and served as chief executive officer until January 2002.

A former co-director of the Save the Children relief and development effort in Sudan, he and Mason coauthored the book *Rice, Rivalry, and Politics*, which examines the management of emergency relief efforts. He has served as a management consultant for Bain and Company, was one of the founders of the Bright Horizons Foundation

for Children, and a co-founder of Horizons for Homeless Children, which serves the needs of homeless children throughout the Boston area.

Brown is an active member of the Bright Horizons Family Solutions board of trustees and the Boston Public School Arts Advisory Board.

This St. James Men’s Club dinner meeting will begin with a social hour and mezza at 6:15 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m.

Women are invited to the program, to be held at the church’s Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn St.



Roger H. Brown





## COMMENTARY

## COMMENTARY

## Iran Under Fire

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Three countries in the Middle East are in anguish, devastated by the “Arab Spring,” which has yet to offer any rewards for the region. In the process, Iraq, Libya and Syria have been devastated by foreign aggression neatly labeled as “civil wars.”

Millions have been killed and even more displaced internally. Yet, Messieurs Mike Pompeo and John Bolton are not satisfied with the existing bloodbath in the region and have convinced their unpredictable boss, Donald Trump, to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal signed by seven nations, including the US, signaling the beginning of a new war with Iran.

This initiative has emboldened Israel to bomb the Tartus military base in Syria, to invite Iran to retaliate in kind and to warrant Washington’s protective cover of its US ally. That is why Patrick Buchanan, a former presidential candidate, defines it as “Bibi [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu] wants the US to fight for Israel.”

Unfortunately, that is what is actually happening, never mind that the cost for the US is \$3 trillion, which could be put to better use.

suffer the consequences of the new sanctions against Iran, should they continue to trade with her. Turkey, a NATO ally, which had been superheating its economic relations with Iran to bring the trade between the two countries from the present \$9.7 billion to \$30 billion, will be first to suffer from the US actions.

The *New York Times*, in tune with the majority of the news media, has taken the initiative to publish a piece warning of the consequences of the president’s rash decision: “When it comes to danger of a nuclear arms race in the Middle East, there is no sign Iran or any other major powers in the existing and so far successful pact will simply fall in line with Mr. Trump’s new plan; more likely, his decision, announced on Tuesday [May 8], will allow Iran to resume a robust nuclear program, sour relations with close European allies, erode America’s credibility, lay conditions for a possible wider war in the Middle East and make it harder to reach a sound agreement with North Korea on its nuclear weapons program.”

But the Trump administration has been using just the reverse rationale – that strong pressure on North Korea forced that regime to come to the negotiating table and the same policy will be applied to Iran, expecting the same results. What the administration does not fess up to is that it does not intend nor afford to go to a nuclear confrontation



Now, more bloodbaths are on the way because of the insanity that has been unleashed. Susan Rice, former National Security Advisor to President Obama, wrote in an opinion piece in the *New York Times* this week: “President Trump’s reckless decision to withdraw the United States from the Iran nuclear deal will not force Iran back to the negotiating table, nor will it address serious concerns about Iran’s behavior in the Middle East. But, it will leave Iran’s nuclear program unconstrained and an inconsistent America isolated from its allies and far less safe.”

Had the consequence of Mr. Trump’s action been confined to what Ms. Rice described, it would have been more benign than what is yet to come.

As Mr. Buchanan predicted, “we appear to be at the beginning of a new war and how it ends we know not. But for Bibi and National Security Advisor John Bolton, the end always has been clear – the smashing of Iran and regime change.”

Iran is not Iraq, nor Libya. The conflict in the offing may prove to be more disastrous, with serious regional and worldwide ramifications, which may also ricochet back to harm Israel.

Iran has its political tentacles extended throughout the Middle East, which may render the conflict bloodier. Plus, Iran has learned, as the world has learned, that giving up its defenses like Iraq and Libya did, does not guarantee peace and security; it encourages even more aggression.

Mr. Trump’s unilateral actions leave the US allies and other signatories to the Iran deal in limbo. France’s President Emmanuel Macron’s trip to Washington yielded nothing except for a lavish banquet and Mr. Trump’s mock dusting of a spec from Mr. Macron’s shoulder.

The US allies have been put on notice that they may also

with North Korea and will be satisfied with a face-saving deal. However, when it comes to Iran, all the pretexts and excuses are intended to ignite a war. That war will not only reward Mr. Netanyahu, but it will also be in line with the general scheme of pressuring Russia, a neighbor and ally of Iran.

The prospect of such a war will have devastating consequences for Armenia since Iran is its only reliable outlet to the outside world. First of all, Iran is Armenia’s major trading partner, after Russia. Next, there are several economic plans on board with Iran that promise economic prosperity for Armenia. These plans will be the first casualties of war.

On the other hand, our Christian neighbor, Georgia, has played a duplicitous game with Armenia, arbitrarily closing the border, plus forbidding the transit of any armaments to Armenia for its self-defense. All arms have been reaching Armenia through a circuitous route.

A war with Iran will spill over into Armenia, which is just across the border. In such a scenario, Azerbaijan’s policy is obvious: it will serve as a launching pad for the US and Israeli forces, which will also pressure Armenia to play a similar role to demonstrate its sympathy towards the West. This action which will force the country into suicide.

At this point, the Velvet Revolution has taken over the country and people are intoxicated and euphoric, but they need to realize that a rude awakening may not prove to be too far.

The storm is gathering in the region and all indications indicated that Armenia needs to put its house in order in preparation of the calamity.

We do not have the luxury of savoring the people’s victory for long. As Armenia recovers from the revolution, it has to watch its borders and brace for harder times.

## Mirror Spectator



Established 1932  
An ADL Publication

EDITOR  
Alin K. Gregorian

ASSISTANT EDITOR  
Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR  
Marc Mgrditchian

SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST:  
Edmond Y. Azadian

CONTRIBUTORS:  
Florence Avakian, Dr. Haroutiun  
Arzoumanian, Philippe Raffi Kalfayan,  
Philip Ketchian, Kevork Keushkerian,  
Harut Sassounian, Hagop Vartivarian,  
Naomi Zeytoonian

CORRESPONDENTS:  
**Armenia** - Hagop Avedikian  
**Boston** - Nancy Kalajian  
**New York/New Jersey** - Taleen  
Babayan  
**Berlin** - Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Contributing Photographers:  
Jirair Hovsepian

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

**Baikar Association, Inc.**

755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472-1509  
Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

[www.mirrorspectator.com](http://www.mirrorspectator.com)

E-Mail: [editor@mirrorspectator.com](mailto:editor@mirrorspectator.com)

For advertising: [mirrorads@aol.com](mailto:mirrorads@aol.com)

## SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

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

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

ISSN 0004-234X

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

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1509





## COMMENTARY

# Lebanese Elections and The Lebanese Armenian Politics

By Ayda Erbal

BEIRUT – A first in nine years and deferred for 5 years for security reasons, Lebanese elections were held on May 6 and brought victory to Hezbollah party and its allies.

This was an election with many changes, challenges and novelties including the new electoral law which introduced for the first time, elements of proportional representation.

First proposed by then Interior Minister of the Najib Mikati's government Marwan Charbel in 2011, the new law was ratified in June 2017 and will also allow Lebanese expats to vote for the first time in the country's history. Even though there are up to a few million Lebanese citizens abroad, state-run news agency set the number of registered voters close to 83,000 with expat Lebanese registrants in Arab countries numbering approximately 12,600. They voted on April 27 and 29 – a week before their compatriots in the homeland.

Even though the Lebanese-Armenians form approximately 4 percent of the larger Lebanese population, Apostolic and Catholic combined, they make up 34 percent of the East Beirut electorate, which made them key in securing the seats in that district.

In light of the importance of the Armenian vote in one of the important districts in these elections, we had a conversation with Prof. Ara Sanjian of University of Michigan Dearborn, an Armenian-American scholar from Lebanon on the recent changes of the electoral law. Sanjian is working on a manuscript on Armenian political parties and electoral politics in Lebanon.

(Editor's note: The expanded version of this interview can be found on [www.mirror-spectator.com](http://www.mirror-spectator.com).)



Prof. Ara Sanjian

**Ayda Erbal:** What did change with last year's electoral law and how does it compare to the earlier law?

**Ara Sanjian:** The technical name given to the Lebanese system is called consociationalism. Basically, it gives the people communal rights in addition to individual rights. Lebanon recognizes 18 different religious communities and most of them have seats allocated to them in the parliament. Currently the Lebanese parliament consists of 128 deputies. This has been the case since the end of the Civil War in 1990. These 128 deputies are divided equally between Muslims (64) and Christians (64).

**Erbal:** Was it always like that? I remember that after the census of 1932 the ratio was 6 to 5.

**Sanjian:** Yes, from 1943 to 1990 the ratio was 6 to 5. After the end of the Civil War it's a 50-50 divide. But even within each religion we have the various confessions with a different number of seats allocated to each one of them. So, within the 64 Christian seats, for example, we have specific number of seats allocated to Maronites (34), the Greek Orthodox (14), the Greek Catholics (8), the Armenian Orthodox (5), plus one seat each for Armenian Catholics (1), Evangelicals (1) and to what we call the Minorities (1). Minorities include the people of Latin rite, plus the Syriac and Assyrian churches, as well as other 6 or 7 small communities. The 64 Muslim seats are divided into equal number of Sunni (27) and Shia (27) deputies, but also smaller allocations for the Druze (8) and the Alawites (2). All these are part of the electoral law and the seats are distributed in the various constituencies according to religion. For example, in a certain district, seats may be pre-allocated for, say, two Maronites, one Greek Orthodox, one Sunni and one Druze. Only people from those sects can actually nominate themselves for those seats in that specific constituency. However, everybody registered in the constituency can vote. So, it is possible, for example, that you may vote in a constituency where there is no seat for your own sect, but any winning deputy has to get as many votes as possible and so technically those deputies who can also get votes outside their religious group will be in a much better situation

to win.

**Erbal:** How were the community quotas were secured all these years since the last census was in 1932? How did the population figures compare and change across/within different Christian and Muslim sects?

**Sanjian:** This issue's history goes back to the Mutassarifate of Mount Lebanon created as an Ottoman Sanjak back in 1860/61. The Sanjak had its own elected council with seats distributed among different communities. And when the Lebanese territories were expanded in 1920, the French authorities kept the same kind of system and they roughly divided the seats based on the census they conducted in 1920-1921. Up until 1929, quotas in all elected councils were based on this census. In 1943 when Lebanon became independent, in order to keep internal peace, the numbers in the 1932 census were roughly taken into consideration. This is when they decided on the 6 Christian to 5 Muslim ratio since Christians outnumbered Muslims slightly, and there also was a very small Jewish community. Over the years, the percentage of Lebanese Muslims has increased. ... Christians have often complained since 1992 that a large number of Christian deputies, including Armenian deputies, are often being elected by Muslim votes. Some boundaries of districts have been changed to make small Christian ghettos where Muslim vote would not be that influential, leading to another anomaly.

**Erbal:** I also read about the citizenship laws, for example, Lebanese mothers not being able to pass their citizenship to their kids. Were you able to follow that discussion? How will this effect the population balance?

**Sanjian:** This is still being debated. This has been a major demand of the feminist groups. I must say that I also suffered from the same law until the end of the Civil War. It was only in 1994 that I became a Lebanese citizen, although my father had settled in Lebanon around 1957. My parents got married in 1967, and my mother was a Lebanese from the beginning of her life. Basically, I could not get citizenship because there was not such law. But, after the end of the Civil War, some foreigners living in Lebanon were given citizenship, and my father and I were among those who benefited from this law. Can you imagine a Lebanese diplomat, if she's married to a foreigner abroad, cannot pass her citizenship to her children? Of course, sometimes presidents bestow with special decree citizenship for some celebrities, but decrees do not replace the law. Christians are very sensitive, thinking that more Muslims will become Lebanese citizens and that this is the real reason why this is acted upon. Actually, this fear of affecting the population according to the census is hindering the development of Lebanese democracy and individual rights. Everybody recognizes that, but they say that there is some kind of *raison d'état* which needs to be held higher than individual rights. This is also a very acute issue. In return, the Lebanese parliament also passed a law a couple of years or so ago, which is valid for 10 years and it gives the right to former Lebanese citizens who were abroad and careless, and moreover did not register their kids and technically lost their citizenship to reapply and recover their citizenship.

**Erbal:** Palestinians are not given citizenship rights in Lebanon. They cannot work in certain sectors and hold certain degrees, but what is the current situation for Palestinians? I am assuming Christians will not be happy if citizenship is extended to Palestinians.

**Sanjian:** Not only Christians, but also Shias will not be happy because most of the Palestinian refugees are Sunni. The main political rivalry in Lebanon in recent years has been between Sunnis and Shias. The mainstream Sunni organization is backed by Saudi Arabia, and the mainstream Shia organizations are backed by Iran. So Lebanon has become an arena of, hopefully not a proxy war but, a proxy struggle between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Palestinians on the other hand are not given citizenship under the idea to which Lebanon remains subscribed that Palestinians have the right to return [to their homeland] according to a UN resolution passed in 1949. UNRWA, which takes care of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, has up to 400,000 names on its list. People always said that this number was exaggerated, given the fact that many of the people on the list of UNRWA have migrated to other countries. A few months back, the Lebanese government conducted a survey and the actual number of the Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon was put at 174,000. Some people think that the numbers have been brought down in order to reduce political sensitivities as much as possible, but there is no hope the Palestinians will gain anything out of this. The argument put forward will be: "if we give Palestinians Lebanese citizenship, the only country that will benefit from this will be Israel," in the sense that Palestinians will lose their right to go back to their own homes. And, of course, the argument will also be used in order not to effect the intra-communal balance among the Lebanese. By the way, there are some (Palestinian) Armenians as well who fall in the same category. Some of them are now getting Armenian citizenship, now that the Armenian government is giving Armenian citizenship.

**Erbal:** Do we know the size of the Armenian constituency in the 1932 census?

**Sanjian:** Sure. First and foremost, let me go a little bit back. There were few Armenians living in Beirut and even fewer living in the Mutassarifate of Mount Lebanon during Ottoman times. Probably the total number was not more than 1000 at the time. During the 1915 deportations of the genocide, Lebanon was not initially on the major deportation routes.

Some people went to Mount Lebanon [around 1915]. However, most of the [Armenian] refugees came [to Lebanon] in 1921. In 1918, as you know, the French took charge of the southern parts of today's Turkey after the Armistice, including Cilicia. And a lot of [Armenian genocide] survivors went to Cilicia. They included people both from Cilicia and from other regions of historic Armenia or the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire. They were hoping that they will return to their homes once there was final peace. But, after the Kemalists forced the French out through the Ankara agreement of 1921, signed by Franklin Bouillon and Kemal Ataturk, the exodus of Armenians from Cilicia happened and most of them ended up in either Syria or Lebanon. The [Lebanese] census of 1921-22 was being conducted as these refugees were coming to Lebanon. Most of them came by boat from Mersin to the Lebanese coast. Others came by road. Their numbers were not reflected in the [1921-1922] census. That's why during the elections of 1925 and 1929, Armenians did not have any [pre-allocated] seats. The Treaty of Lausanne gave everybody who was a former Ottoman citizen the right to choose the citizenship of a post-Ottoman country, and over 25,000 Armenians at that time chose to become Lebanese citizens. They received their IDs in early 1925 and, in the summer of 1925, they were allowed to register as voters in the election. However, they did not have any Armenian seats. In the 1929 elections, they tried to have one seat in the Parliament but the French authorities refused. The next elections were held in 1934. Armenians were now given a seat, because the refugees and their families had been included in the 1932 census. Since then, every new parliament has had at least one, and now more, Armenian seats. Prior to the Lebanese Civil War in 1975, there were about 200,000 Armenians in Lebanon, although that number included a few tens of thousands of Syrian Armenians as well, who had moved from Syria during Nasser's control of Syria and in the post-Nasser era but still did not have Lebanese citizenship. Many of those [Syrian-Armenians] became Lebanese citizens after the 1994 decree giving citizenship to people who lived long enough in Lebanon. However, there was also a very large exodus of Armenians during the Civil War, the reason why we do not know for sure how many Armenians live in Lebanon today. But, of course, we know how many Armenians are voting. They are now not as influential as they were before 1975 and this new law makes them even less influential because the introduction of the system of preferential vote. Now, Armenian votes are needed mainly to make sure that Armenian seats would go to deputies who represent well-established Armenian organizations and political parties.

For example, one very famous figure was Michel el-Murr, who was an engineer by profession and a contractor, but also a person very much involved in Lebanese politics. He basically had an alliance with the Tashnag party in the Metn district, where Bourj Hammoud with a large Armenian population is. It was a regular feature for the last 50 years, up until this election, for the Tashnags to vote for Michel el-Murr. Of course, he would then return that favor by trying to help Armenians whenever they needed. Now that ability is much less. For example, on this occasion, the Tashnags and Murr contested the elections separately, because they had calculated that running together on the same list would not now provide any additional advantage to either side. Other Christians are also having this problem, as I said before, because of the numbers. The Tashnag party is the strongest party among the Armenians in Lebanon. Even though we still don't have the full breakdown of the Armenian vote of the May 6th election, in the last two or three elections, 75% or more of the Armenian voters actually voted according to Tashnag party preferences. During the election campaign this year, however, the Party was very candid and open about its [limited] ability to gain all Armenian seats. Of the six Armenian seats, the Tashnag party had concluded that its voters were enough to guarantee the election of three candidates, while other factors, such as alliances, etc. would decide to whom the other Armenian seats would go. That's why the Tashnag party openly addressed the Armenian voters in its electoral rallies through the following statement: "we want you to vote for us. However, if for one reason or another you are not satisfied with us, we wish that you vote for the other candidates backed by the two other Armenian traditional parties: the Hunchakians and the Ramgavars." The party openly warned against voting for "one-day Armenians". This term has been coined very recently and is about those Armenians who do not actually participate in Armenian community life except on April 24 every year, when they also proclaim their allegiance and commitment to the Armenian cause.

This is a major problem that the community is facing because of assimilation. When Armenians came to Lebanon over 90 years ago, language was a big barrier because very few Armenians knew Arabic. They lived in clusters, and even today language is an issue for the middle-aged and above. But, gradually, these clusters have broken down, plus more and more Armenians are no longer attending Armenian community schools. They are instead going to foreign missionary schools, etc. and are becoming a more and more integrated group among the Christians of Lebanon.

**Erbal:** How do the Armenian parties form their candidate lists? Is there any difference among Armenian parties in terms of designating/ choosing their candidates?

**Sanjian:** Usually, Armenian lists are not single party lists. Supporters of various groups have come together, some because they traditionally work together, like the Free Patriotic





## COMMENTARY



## My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## American Lawyers Sue Turkey For Hundreds of Millions of Dollars

On May 16, 2017, during Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit with President Donald Trump in the White House, Erdogan's bodyguards, unprovoked viciously attacked Kurdish and Armenian protesters who had gathered outside the residence of Turkey's Ambassador in Washington, DC. Nine demonstrators were seriously injured!

According to the *Washingtonian*, "at a news conference on June 14, DC police chief Peter Newsham said that 'rarely have I seen in my 28 years of policing the type of thing I saw in Sheridan Circle.' The House of Representatives approved a resolution, 397-0, calling 'for perpetrators to be brought to justice and measures to be taken to prevent similar incidents in the future.'"

Last July, a federal grand jury charged with assault 19 members of Erdogan's bodyguards, most of whom had diplomatic immunity. As a result, they could not be arrested and were allowed to fly back to Turkey. Two Turkish-Americans were arrested and later sentenced to a year and a day in jail. Several months after this incident, the charges against most

of Erdogan's bodyguards were dropped on the eve of US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's visit to Turkey.

Fortunately, a group of Washington, DC lawyers were so outraged by the attacks and escape of Erdogan's bodyguards back to Turkey that they decided last week to sue the Turkish government, two Turkish-Americans and three Turkish Canadians for "violations of international law and hate crimes, as well as assault, battery and false imprisonment." On May 3, another American law firm filed a separate lawsuit by five of the protesters against Turkey.

The *Washingtonian* reported: "With the US government unable or unwilling to obtain justice for the Sheridan Circle victims, a group of DC lawyers set out to do so themselves. Douglas Bregman had little inkling of the riot, let alone what had provoked it. But what he saw on the news that night horrified him: 'This guy [Erdogan] gets to come to our country, speak to the President at the White House, then send his thugs to bloody up American citizens just for speaking out?'"

The *Washingtonian* added: "Bregman, 68, runs a civil-practice law firm in Bethesda. Originally from suburban Philadelphia, he got a law degree from Georgetown University in the 1970s and put down roots. He lectures there and at Columbia University law school. Having participated in protests during the 1960s, he sees a need to defend freedom of speech from threats 'like abuse of power,' he says. Bregman phoned one of his associates, Andreas Akaras, a litigator at Bregman, Berbert, Schwartz and Gilday. 'Did you see what happened today at Sheridan Circle?' he asked. Akaras had joined Bregman's firm after seven years as an aide to Maryland congressman John Sarbanes. He'd worked on a range of issues related to southeastern Europe and the Mediterranean and developed contacts in Turkey, Greece,

Cyprus, and Israel. Bregman asked him to investigate whether any legal restitution was available to the victims."

Bregman then contacted fellow longtime DC attorney Steve Perles. "I have this case that will rely on the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act [FSIA]," Bregman said. "You're the guy who can do it." Perles has a long experience successfully suing Germany for Holocaust reparations and Iran and Libya to pay for damages for "terrorist acts."

The *Washingtonian* reported: "working with Bregman and Akaras, Perles is preparing to file suit for hundreds of millions in damages from the Republic of Turkey. 'Any foreign head of state who unleashes his security force against US citizens exercising their lawful rights on US soil has no protection under FSIA,' Perles says. Other lawyers agree. A team headed by Agnieszka Fryszman of Cohen Milstein filed a victim-impact statement representing 13 victims of the Sheridan Circle attack, including Murat Yasa and Heewa Arya. The legal team has added Michael Tigar, who successfully sued the government of Chile for assassinating Orlando Letelier with a car bomb at Sheridan Circle in 1976.... Tigar says students at American University law school are putting together the case against Turkey. He's confident in its strength. 'It took 16 years, but we got to get \$4 million from Chile,' he says."

Bregman told the *Washingtonian*: "Somebody needs to be punished. We are willing to put in the time and resources to push back against a fascist government so our clients are vindicated. It is well worth the effort."

The *Washington Post* concluded: "under U.S. law, the Turkish government may fight, settle or refuse to defend against the lawsuits. In a refusal, a judge could enter a default judgment for the protesters."

# Armenia's People-Power Revolution, Russia, and the Western Bloc

By David Boyajian

As we write this, massive peaceful civil actions against Armenia's establishment have continued under the leadership of Nikol Pashinyan, a National Assembly (NA) member who is part of the opposition Yelk (Way Out) Alliance. Though widely unpopular Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan has been forced to resign, his Republican Party (RPA) still has a narrow majority (58 of 105) in the NA. Most observers believe that the RPA members were elected through fraud, bribery and intimidation.

The RPA's politicians and oligarchs are also generally blamed for stealing billions of the country's wealth; violating civil rights; debasing the judiciary and civil service; keeping the talented Armenian Diaspora at arm's length; and failing to successfully address Armenia's many problems: corruption, a less-than-robust economy, unemployment, outward migration, and more.

A bright spot: Landlocked Christian Armenia and its brother Artsakh/Karabakh Republic survive, even though blockaded by genocidal Turkey and Turkic/Muslim Azerbaijan who outnumber Armenians by 90 million people. This miracle is due to the tenacity of Armenia's people and armed forces.

As Armenia is a long-time friend and admirer of our country, we Americans need to understand it.

## Why Armenia Matters

The current revolution is home-grown and purely Armenian. Outside powers – whether countries or organizations – neither initiated nor control the revolution. Still, major nations definitely have strong opinions, usually unstated, about the present crisis.

Russia loathes the revolution. Russia wants Armenia to continue to be highly dependent on it for natural gas, the nuclear power plant and energy grid, investments, sophisticated weapons, and the right to travel to Russia to work and sometimes deposit stolen money. Ongoing corruption in Armenia makes it easier for Russia to bribe, intimidate, and blackmail dishonest leaders and oligarchs, represented mainly by the RPA. A Russian base guards Armenia's border with Turkey.

Why is Russia so intent on controlling its small ally? Because without Armenia, Russia would lose its grip on the Caucasus, Caspian Sea, and probably Central Asia. The US/NATO/European Union/Turkey ("Western Bloc") would then move in. Thus perched along the Russian Bear's soft underbelly, NATO would slice it open and have his insides for dinner. Thus, Russia needs Armenia far more than it cares to admit.

Georgia was coopted by the Western Bloc years ago. It has invested billions in Georgia, which desires NATO membership as protection against Russia.

Azerbaijan, corrupt and a virtual dictatorship, but flush with oil and gas income, has also expressed interest in joining NATO. Over 27 years, the Western Bloc has invested untold billions in Azerbaijan in such sectors as energy, banking, hotels, aviation, agriculture, and consulting. The Western Bloc has also constructed major oil and gas pipelines from Azerbaijan's Caspian fields through Georgia and into Turkey and beyond. More such pipelines (to supply Europe) are planned.

Interestingly, Israel receives around 40 percent of its oil from

Azerbaijan and sells it billions in weapons. Major Jewish organizations such as the American Jewish Committee provide Azerbaijan political support while, sadly, a coterie of Jewish writers constantly and unfairly berate Armenia in the US and international media.

## The Pan-Turkic Path

Turkey's long-standing dream is a pan-Turkic path from Turkey to Azerbaijan, then across the Caspian Sea to the four Central Asian Turkic countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The Western Bloc has implicitly bought into pan-Turkism in order to exploit the region's energy deposits and, as explained, perch along Russia's underbelly.

Georgia – predominantly non-Turkic and Christian – serves as the Western Bloc's door into the Caucasus. Of course, Georgia remains under Russian pressure. Witness not only Russia's support for Georgia's breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, but also Georgia's defeat in the 2008 Russian-Georgian war. All that pressure becomes meaningless, however, were Russia to lose Armenia to the Western Bloc.

Russia would then have no military or operational base in the Caucasus. Moreover, if Armenia got off its dependence on Russian energy and military equipment, Russia would have little ability to pressure Armenia, especially as the two lack a common border.

The Western Bloc's path to the Caspian Sea (which a NATO fleet would dominate) and Central Asia would be wide open. NATO would probably eventually sit along Iran's northern border.

Russia could also lose its mainly Muslim North Caucasus regions (Chechnya, Dagestan, etc.) to the Western Bloc.

'As Armenia goes, so goes the Caucasus, Caspian, and Central Asia' is a fair statement. For Russia, Armenia is vital – perhaps a matter of life or death. Russia needs Armenia far more than it will admit.

Unfortunately, many Armenians who see Russia as a Christian "big brother" don't realize that the Russian-Armenian relationship should be a two-way street.

Would Armenia ever join the Western Bloc?

## Armenia's Dilemma

To dissuade it from explicitly joining the Western Bloc, Russia is flattering Azerbaijan as a "strategic partner" (which it really isn't) and sells it weapons that it will use against Armenia/Artsakh. Russia is also cozying up to Turkey to pull it away from the Western Bloc. It won't work. Turkey and Azerbaijan ("One nation, two states") are historically and inherently hostile to Russia. But it makes Armenia nervous nevertheless.

Armenia's main concern is security. Armenians remember the Genocide of 1915-23 and numerous anti-Armenian massacres committed by Turks against Armenians in the last 150 years. Since 1991, Turkey has threatened several times to attack Armenia. In 1993, Turkey and the Muslim Chechen Speaker of the Russian Duma hatched a plan to invade Armenia while Russia stood aside. Turkey also arms and trains the Azerbaijani army.

And Azeris have long committed massacres against Armenians – as recently as the late 1980s, early 1990s, and cur-

rently against Armenians in Artsakh/Karabakh.

Armenians know this history very well. Western Bloc attempts to reassure Armenia that Turkish intentions are benign are understandably treated with derision. With Turkey's return to its traditional authoritarianism and repression, and its ongoing alliance with jihadists in Syria, even the Western Bloc is reconsidering its long-standing sycophantic treatment of Turkey.

However, Armenians know that Russia may go too far in accommodating Turkey and Azerbaijan and thereby betray Armenia.

After WWI, Turkey used weapons supplied by Bolshevik Russia to exterminate the former's remaining Armenian citizens and invade the independent Republic of Armenia. Russia also gifted Armenian territory, including Artsakh and Nakhichevan, to Azerbaijan. Russia prevented Armenia from retaking Western Armenia (now eastern Turkey), which Armenia was entitled to according to the Treaty of Sevres (1920) signed by the European powers. Russia could sell out Armenia to Turks and Azeris in similar ways today.

It's possible, therefore, that Armenia could turn to NATO as a protector. This is risky, however. NATO member Turkey far exceeds Armenia in military weight. Moreover, the West, though historically sympathetic to Christian Armenians for hundreds and even thousands of years, has generally helped Armenians only in humanitarian – not military – ways.

Still, it is possible for Armenia to switch sides if Russia continues to treat Armenia as little more than a pawn.

Indeed, Armenia has excellent relations with the Western Bloc (except for Turkey) and recently signed a partnership agreement with the EU. The Western Bloc, of course, silently hopes that the current revolution and possible internal liberalization in Armenia will someday turn it away from Russia.

## Shaping its Own Destiny

The RPA, Russia's favorite pin-up boys, is trying to depict Nikol Pashinyan as anti-Russian and thus a security risk.

However, Pashinyan has firmly stated that Armenia's alliance with Russia will not change, nor will Armenia drop out of the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and CTSO (Collective Security Treaty Organization) if he becomes Prime Minister.

The RPA claims that Pashinyan is anti-Russian because he once opposed his country's entry into the EEU and preferred an association agreement with the European Union. The charge is absurd. Until Russia twisted his arm in 2013, even then-President Serzh Sargsyan was set to sign an agreement with the EU.

Armenians appreciate Russia's help. But they refuse to be taken for granted and betrayed yet again.

Armenia's populace simply wants Armenia to become stronger and more self-confident in every way – for Armenians' own sake and so that Russia treats it equitably.

This is neither anti-Russian nor pro-Western Bloc. It's just the right thing to do.

(The author is an Armenian American freelance journalist. Many of his articles are archived at [www.armeniapedia.org/wiki/David\\_Boyajian](http://www.armeniapedia.org/wiki/David_Boyajian).)





# Poqr Mher Cadet School and the US Civil Air Patrol

## Regular Kids Are Leaders

By Mikhael Airumian

WASHINGTON — As I was contemplating my trip to Armenia to spend two weeks at the Poqr Mher Cadet School, I thought I had a pretty good idea of what to expect. Having visited the school for one day during the summer last year, this spring I conducted a fundraising drive to buy boots for orphans who attend the school. I also have been a member of the US Civil Air Patrol since age 13, and understand to a great extent what it is like to be a member of a military style organization. Because of my interest in military history and because what I have seen of this school is impressive, I became interested in finding out more.

There might be some obvious similarities between my familiar Civil Air Patrol and Poqr Mher, and there are clearly some big differences, so I decided not to make assumptions and that it would be more interesting to take a deeper look at Poqr Mher in its own cultural context. On my flight to Armenia, I began thinking up the questions that needed an answer: Why does Armenia need a military educational complex for 6th graders? What similarities does this school share with Civil Air Patrol and how is it different? How will this experience give me a better understanding about both of our countries’ ideas about the next generation? Preparing to leave for my adventure at Poqr Mher, I thought about my fundraising efforts over the past year. I want to make a difference in the lives of others and my stay at the school could help me improve my future fundraising efforts.

Much information about Armenia’s recent military history can be found to answer the question “Why does Armenia need this school?” According to Robert Avetisyan, who is the Permanent Representative of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic to the US, and someone I have met on numerous occasions:

“In 1988, Nagorno Karabakh (NK), a historically Armenian land and autonomous entity in the Soviet Union, petitioned the Central Government in Moscow asking to be reunited with Armenia. The Soviet Union and Azerbaijan denied Nagorno Karabakh’s appeal for self-determination. The situation escalated to conflict, as Azerbaijan resorted to pogroms and military aggression in an effort to suppress Nagorno Karabakh’s action. This violence was followed by the 1991-1994 Azeri-instigated war on the Nagorno Karabakh Republic (NKR), which claimed thousands of NK casualties and destroyed an estimated 80 percent of Nagorno Karabakh’s economy. In the summer of 1992 Azerbaijan placed about 50 percent of the NKR territory under military occupation. Since the cease-fire Agreement of 1994, the conflict awaits final, peaceful, and equitable resolution through direct negotiations.”

Right now, Azerbaijan, a country founded on racial segregation, war crimes and genocide, also happens to be an ally of the US, and has a military budget greater than the entire Armenian government’s budget. Almost every day, snipers from the Azerbaijan side break ceasefire treaties and open fire on Armenian soldiers and innocent civilians. In March, three soldiers who were the same age as my older sister were killed by sniper fire where they were guarding the border between Artsakh and Azerbaijan. It remains a dangerous situation for the sovereignty of Artsakh. Unfortunately, Azerbaijan is not the only worry for Armenia. Turkey, another ally of the US, is imposing an illegal blockade on Armenia and not allowing the country to prosper. I have learned a lot about one thing, that there are usually reasons below the surface that make governments decide on their choices, whether it is about education or military might or even basic survival.

One of my reasons for being so interested in this cadet school is because it ties in so nicely with my Civil Air Patrol experience. They both train and teach the youth valuable leadership skills, but that is just scratching the surface. I wanted to dig deeper to explore what the similarities and differences are between the Civil Air Patrol and Poqr Mher.

Civil Air Patrol is a program for kids aged 12-21 in the United States with three missions: to train members in aerospace education, cadet programs and emergency services. Last year, several graduating seniors earned scholarships to the Air Force Academy in Colorado. If a member decides to enlist in the Air Force, he or she can enter as a higher rank than a regular basic airman. Cadets also get hands-on training flying planes. According to the Civil Air Patrol website:

“In the late 1930s, more than 150,000 volunteers with a love for aviation argued for an organization to put their planes and flying skills to use in defense of their country. As a result, the Civil Air Patrol was born one week prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Thousands of volunteer members answered America’s call to national service and sacrifice by accepting and performing critical wartime missions. Assigned to the War Department under the jurisdiction of the Army Air Corps, the contributions of Civil Air Patrol, including logging more than 500,000 flying hours, sinking two enemy submarines, and saving hundreds of crash victims during World War II, are well documented. On July 1, 1946, President Harry Truman signed Public Law 476 incorporating Civil Air Patrol as a benevolent, nonprofit organization. On May 26, 1948, Congress passed Public Law 557 permanently establishing Civil Air Patrol as the auxiliary of the new US Air Force.”

Our weekly Civil Air Patrol meetings try to capture the ideas that the original members had as they created our group from the beginning. We do focus on development of knowledge, teamwork, leadership qualities and physical fitness, but the most important thing we do is practice acting in public service. The program is all about shaping future leaders of the Air Force and the world.

Poqr Mher, on the other hand, is a military-style boarding school located on the outskirts of Yerevan. It was established by the Armenian government in 2001 and is funded by the state, but it is a private, non-profit organization and is not run by the government. All of the usual school classes are taught, along with military education and development of leadership skills. All students participate in martial arts and physical training and they are extremely good at it. This training includes strategy, com-

bat, leadership and much more. Over 265 6th-12th-grade students attend school at Poqr Mher. Approximately 20 percent of the students are orphans. 109 boys graduated from the complex during 2005-2009 and 53 of them entered college. Their mission is to train excellent sergeants and to prepare these cadets in several ways to be officers in the Armenian Army. But the school is not only important to the kids, but also to the country. Right now, Armenia is in desperate need of good, well-trained officers to defend its borders.

So the two-week session is ending and I have some thoughts that I have brought back from my experience. The main reason for going to Poqr Mher this year was to have a firsthand experience at a place where everyone works hard and adapts to the environment, and to better understand one piece of this Armenian life. As I made my way into Armenia, and then to the school, I did not want to have too many ideas about what was the “right way of doing things.” Through traveling and living with a host family for the past two summers I’ve realized that things will never be the same way twice. When you think you have it all figured out is when you could not be more wrong. I thought it best to do a lot of watching and listening to see if I could catch on quickly.

The best part about preparing to visit the school was coming up with the questions to try to answer. I can say that it overall was not too surprising. The school is a very special school. Students do go there to learn, and the students are regular kids. The difference is that is clear that there is a lot of discipline that goes into being really good at what they do.

My adventure at Poqr Mher has led me to keep asking the question, “What can we do to help?” It has strengthened my wish to help the school however I can. I know that sometimes as a kid I may not be taken as seriously as an adult, but I will continue to take my power point presentation to more groups. Even if there are not many donations, at least the Fresno Armenian community will know about this school and the hard decisions that Armenian citizens and even kids have to make to continue safeguarding their borders. My hope is to do our part to improve the school so that they can turn out even better and brighter students than ever before.

Seeing all this firsthand now leads to an even bigger question. Reading books and discussions in our family made me think about Armenia’s place in world politics. In order for a nation to protect itself, it needs to be strong in many ways, not just military power. Armenia needs to stay strong by having allies, having a population large enough to keep an army, having a good economy, holding on to territory and not letting the borders get taken, and having good political leaders. The conclusion that is easily made is that Armenia needs to put plans in place to get rid of the old corrupt politicians. It also should not ignore the fact that it is especially weak in some of those other areas that are listed above and the politicians now in power need some of that training for themselves. It is always strange to be an observer in another culture, but I can say that I am confident about this and that my impressions of Poqr Mher make it easy to believe that the new generation of leaders will succeed because of the leadership training they are receiving in this school today.

*(Mikhael Airumian was born in Silver Spring, Md. He attends high school at Waterford Kamhlaba United World College in Mbabane, Swaziland and expects to graduate in November 2018.)*

# Lebanese Elections and The Lebanese Armenian Politics

LEBANON, from page 18

Movement and the Tashnags since 2005. I’m sure all factions calculated how much each one of them would bring in votes. The Free Patriotic Movement usually does not touch on the Armenian slot, so the Tashnag party nominated its own candidates in both Beirut I and Metn. Meanwhile, the Tashnags do not say much about the Free Patriotic movement nominating their candidates for the non-Armenian seats.

**Erbal:** Are all Armenian parties like this?

**Sanjian:** The Tashnags, for example, have nominated Hagop Pakradouny, who is the general secretary of the party’s Central Committee in Lebanon and an incumbent deputy, to run again in Metn. In Beirut I, they had three candidates. One of them, Hagop Terzian, is a party member and the other two, Alexander Matossian and Serge Tchoukhadarian, are close to the party. In Zahle, they also sponsored, but in a lower key manner, another candidate. Hunchakians are small and nominated just one person, who was also an incumbent deputy, and they worked for that end. The Ramgavars actually nominated three. All the other Armenian candidates did run as independents and they did not get any coverage in the Armenian language press since all the newspapers are controlled by the respective parties. The Independent Armenian candidates used the Lebanese television stations in order to talk to general voters.

**Erbal:** This would have been a strong indicator for intra-party democracy.

**Sanjian:** To some extent, yes. In Lebanon the Tashnag party used to win almost all elections after the end of World War II until 2000. Since 2000 the Tashnags have always gotten most of the Armenian votes but ended up with only two seats among six. That was in 2000, 2005 and also in 2009. However, that has not affected at all internal Armenian community affairs. The Tashnag party continues to control all church bodies etc. in the Armenian Orthodox community. People have come to know that it’s not very important who the Armenian deputies in the Lebanese Parliament are. So there’s not as much interest in that process as it used to be.

**Erbal:** I know it’s still very early given the fact that you don’t have access to the detailed results but what happened in these elections? Any surprise for Armenians?

**Sanjian:** Armenian political parties, especially the dominant Tashnag party, appear surprised and unhappy with the low percentage of Armenian participation – less than what it was in 2009, during the last elections. The reasons behind this drop are not analyzed yet, and we should not jump into conclusions at this early stage. The Tashnags officially had four candidates, and three of them were elected – of the three Hagop Pakradouny is a Tashnag party member, whereas Hagop

Terzian and Alexander Matossian are only party supporters. That raises the number of members of their parliamentary bloc from two (in 2000, 2005 and 2009) to three. They also lent support to a fifth Armenian candidate, George Bouchikian, in the district of Zahle (where the Armenian village of Anjar is situated), but he was not elected because his list overall could not pass the threshold in that constituency. The Hunchakians had one, and the Ramgavars had three candidates, and all lost. Therefore, only three of the six Armenian deputies in the new chamber are representatives of traditional Armenian organizations. The other three elected Armenian deputies – Paula Yacoubian, retired General Jean Talouzian and Eddie Demirjian, have no established links with community institutions and organizations and can be classified among those who were pejoratively described as “one-day Armenians.” Demirjian got elected with only 77 votes in his favor, when another Armenian candidate who got 3,000 votes in the same constituency, Marie Jeanne Bilezikjian, lost. This was because they were on different lists and seats are distributed according to the percentages received by the various lists in general. On the other hand, the only seat won by what has become known as the civil society in Lebanon (a group of people outside established political parties and demanding radical changes from outside the established system) is Yacoubian.