

# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

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## Former President Kocharyan Arrested For Using Deadly Force in 2008

YEREVAN (RFE/RL and Armenpress) – Lawyers for former President Robert Kocharyan said on Monday, July 30, that they will appeal a Yerevan district court's decision to allow law-enforcement authorities to arrest the former Armenian president on coup charges which he denies as

politically motivated. One of them, Aram Orbelian, said that they expect Armenia's Court of Appeals to start considering their petition this week.

Kocharyan was arrested late on Friday, July 27, one day after being charged with "overthrowing the constitutional order" in the wake

of a disputed presidential election held in February 2008, two months before he completed his second and final term. The accusation stems from the use of deadly force on



Former president Robert Kocharyan interviewed by Yerkir TV

March 1-2, 2008 against opposition supporters demonstrating against alleged vote rigging.

Security forces broke up those protests on March 1-2, 2008. Eight protesters and two police servicemen died as a result.

see KOCHARYAN, page 2



Lawyers for Robert Kocharyan at a press conference on Monday, July 30

## Russia in Rare Diplomatic Spat With Armenia After Arrest of Former Military Official

MOSCOW (RFE/RL) – Russia has criticized Armenia, its main regional ally, in unusually blunt terms following criminal charges brought by law-enforcement authorities in Yerevan against Yuri Khachaturov, the Armenian secretary general of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

Khachaturov was charged on Thursday, July 26, with involvement in what an Armenian law-enforcement agency now considers an "overthrow of the constitutional order" that followed a disputed presidential election held in February 2008.

The vote sparked opposition demonstrations in Yerevan which were quelled by security forces on March 1-2, 2008. Eight protesters and two police personnel died as a result. Khachaturov was Armenia's deputy defense minister at the time.

The Special Investigative Service (SIS) levelled the same criminal charges against former President Robert Kocharyan. He was arrested late on Friday after angrily denying the charges as politically motivated.

Khachaturov served as chief of the Armenian army's General Staff from 2008- see ARREST, page 3



Yuri Khachaturov



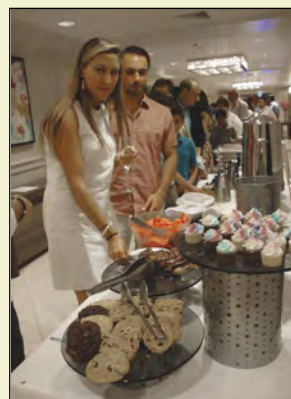
Dancers of all ages enjoy the DJ music.

## Hye Spirit Prevails at Armenian Church of Cape Cod July Dance

By Nancy Kalajian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

FALMOUTH, Mass. – Spirits and supporters were *Hye* for the Armenian Church of Cape Cod's 2nd Annual *Kef* Time Fourth of July Weekend held at the Cape Club in North Falmouth. From Armenians living in the greater Cape Cod area to visitors from as far off as California and Florida, with a baby in her mother's dancing arms to a woman holding the hands of her mom to lead her into a *Sebastatsee* dance, from the sun-deprived to the weathered, from those dressed casually or to the hilt, revelers came, began or renewed acquaintances, and shared in an Armenian ambiance and experience that can only be matched by warm memories made years ago at east coast summer *Kefs* on Cape Cod. The twist was that this event was also a fundraiser in support of the Armenian Church of Cape Cod.



Julia Herosian and Robbie Sacco at the dessert table.

see KEF, page 11

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Armenian Companies To Take Part in Japan Tourism Expo

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Seven Armenian tourism companies will participate in Tourism Expo Japan 2018, from September 20 to 23, in Tokyo, the Small and Medium Entrepreneurship Development National Center (SME DNC) foundation announced.

On July 27, SME DNC executive director Arshak Grigoryan, president of the Tourism Committee, Hripsime Grigoryan, and executive director of the Tourism Development Foundation of Armenia Ara Khzmalyan signed a memorandum of cooperation for properly preparing and successfully participating in the expo.

According to the document, the sides will exchange their experience, knowledge and information with each other.

The Tourism Development Foundation of Armenia will provide financial aid for the formation and equipment of the Armenian national pavilion at the expo.

### Ombudsman Issues Appeal over Azeri Arrest of Armenian

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Human Rights Defender of Armenia Arman Tatoyan has appealed to international structures over the case of Armenian citizen Karen Ghazaryan who is currently in Azerbaijani captivity, the Ombudsman's Office told Armenpress.

On July 15, the Azerbaijani defense ministry announced that it pushed back, with the formulation of the Azerbaijani media, a sabotage group of the Armenian Armed Forces in the direction of Qazax region, and one of the group members was taken captive.

Immediately after this statement Armenia's defense ministry announced that that person is Karen Ghazaryan, a resident of Berdavan village in Tavush province, who has mental problems and has never served in the Armenian Armed Forces.

The next day after the incident Ghazaryan's parents and relatives applied to the Ombudsman of Armenia. Based on these applications, the Ombudsman's representative on July 17 visited Berdavan. The parents insisted their son didn't serve in the army and provided documents proving his health problems.

In recent days Ghazaryan's parents have expressed their concern that they have received no information about the location of their son. They asked for the Ombudsman's support for information.

Tatoyan has drawn the attention of international human rights organizations and asked for support to receive information about the location and safety of Ghazaryan, as well as his return.

## INSIDE

### Nothing Fishy Here

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Russian, Armenian Foreign Ministers Confer

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan on July 27 held a telephone conversation during which they discussed the relations of the two countries in integration unions, the Russian Foreign Ministry announced.

“Issues relating to the bilateral cooperation and mutual partnership within common integration unions were discussed”, the ministry’s statement says.

The phone conversation was at the initiative of the Russian side.

## Golden Apricot among Best European Film Fests

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – The Golden Apricot Yerevan International Film Festival has been included on the list of the Best European Film Festivals of 2018, the festival said in a Facebook post.

The list of best festivals published on flightnetwork.com says that European film festival scene is one of the most coveted in the world, as it attracts an international audience of celebrities, filmmakers and cinephiles.

The list features both completed and upcoming film festivals, festivals of full-length and short films, as well as film festivals about nature, sports and youth.

Armenia’s Golden Apricot and six others are among the festivals of “Special Interest”.

The 15th edition of the Golden Apricot was held from 8 to 15 July this year.

## Armenian MP Tenders Resignation Application

YEREVAN (Arka) – An Armenian parliament member from the Prosperous Armenia party Vardan Bostanjyan has notified the parliament speaker Ara Babloyan of his intention to resign.

According to local media stories, Bostanjyan was forced to resign by his party’s leadership after his comments on the arrest of former president Robert Kocharyan. In particular, in an interview to factor.am, he argued that there was no need for Kocharyan’s arrest, noting also that the arrest looks like fulfillment of an order and is more like a political persecution.

In accordance with the regulations of the National Assembly of Armenia, if within a week Bostanjyan submits a written application revoking his resignation application, the speaker of parliament disseminates a relevant statement.

## Lydian Armenia Fires Back at Investigative Bodies

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Lydian Armenia has expressed “confusion and anger” over the manipulation of its name in the official statement of the Investigative Committee on launching a criminal case on “intentional concealing of environmental pollution”, as well as the distortion of the information by certain media outlets.

“We hereby announce that Lydian Armenia has nothing to do with the criminal case and the individuals involved in it and it will seek that the people who are defaming the company’s name and business reputation are held accountable for under the law,” Lydian Armenia said in a statement.

It said that it views the Investigative Committee’s mentioning of its name in the statement to be an intentional black PR campaign. It says that it views the reports of certain media outlets who “presented the criminal case against officials of the nature protection ministry to be a criminal case against Lydian” to be also intentional disinformation.

“Lydian Armenia has never concealed any information from authorized bodies, and individuals involved in the management bodies of the company are certain that the company has adhered to all environmental requirements under Armenian legislation,” the statement said.

# Former President Kocharyan Arrested For Using Deadly Force in 2008

KOCHARYAN, from page 1

Kocharyan angrily rejected the accusations in televised remarks on July 26. He defended the legality of his decision to declare a state of emergency and order Armenian army units into central Yerevan late on March 1, 2008. He also said that the coup charges ran counter to the decisions of Armenia’s Central Election Commission and the Constitutional Court that validated the official election outcome.

“This is an absolutely fabricated accusation,” Kocharyan told the Yerkir Media TV channel in an interview.

“This is clear political persecution, a vendetta by the ‘velvet revolution,’” he said, adding that Armenia’s new government wants to “neutralize” him ahead of parliamentary elections expected in the coming months.

Orbelian and the other defense lawyer, Ruben Sahakian, echoed that denial at a joint news conference with Kocharyan’s spokesman, Victor Soghomonian, held on Saturday. They also condemned his pre-trial arrest as illegal, saying that the Special Investigative Service (SIS) did not present any compelling evidence to the lower court.

“This is a [political] order and they are going to execute it,” charged Sahakian.

The lawyers also insisted that Kocharyan enjoys immunity from prosecution in line with Article 140 of the Armenian constitution. The article says: “During the term of his or her powers and thereafter, the President of the Republic may not be prosecuted and subjected to liability for actions deriving from his or her status.”

Kocharyan’s arrest was condemned as politically motivated by the former ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) of Serzh Sargsyan, who succeeded him as president following the 2008 election and the ensuing unrest. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaksutyun), a political party represented in the current Armenian government, also expressed

serious concern about it.

The former ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) on Friday condemned as politically motivated coup charges brought against former President Robert Kocharyan.

“The accusation leaves the impression of purely political persecution and is ludicrous from the legal standpoint,” the HHK said in a statement.

“We consider the existing situation

Pashinyan, former President Levon Ter-Petrosian, who led the 2008 protest movement, as well as some human rights activists and relatives of protesters killed in the post-election violence. They have for years accused the Sargsyan administration of covering up the killings.

Shortly after he swept to power in May, Pashinyan named a new head of the SIS and told the law-enforcement



Then Parliament Member Nikol Pashinyan and his wife at the Levon Ter-Petrosian rally in 2008

to be a threat to Armenia’s democratic development and a blow to efforts to build a full-fledged rule-of-law state,” added the party headed by Serzh Sargsyan, who succeeded Kocharyan as president in April 2008.

Dashnaksutyun’s governing body in Armenia described the accusations levelled against Kocharyan as “extremely concerning.” It said that “they can be interpreted as political persecution.”

In a statement, the Dashnaksutyun leadership also warned that the case could undermine “national unity” and “faith in the Armenian army.” It cited a prominent role played by Kocharyan in the 1991-1994 war in Nagorno-Karabakh.

By contrast, the arrest was hailed as a triumph of justice by political allies of Prime Minister Nikol

agency to finally complete its protracted investigation into what was the worst street violence in Armenia’s history.

He played a key role in Ter-Petrosian’s 2007-2008 opposition movement. In particular, he was the main speaker at a rally held in downtown Yerevan late on March 1, 2008 as security forces clashed with some protesters several hundred meters away. He subsequently spent about two years in prison for organizing “mass disturbances,” a charge he denied as politically motivated.

Kocharyan has repeatedly defended the post-election crackdown, saying that it prevented a violent seizure of power by the Ter-Petrosian-led opposition. Earlier this year, he blamed Pashinyan for the bloodshed.

## Hospital Chief Sacked, Accused of Extortion

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – In a move that sparked protests by medics, the Armenian Ministry of Health sacked on Friday, July 27, the executive director of a Yerevan hospital, who is related to former President Serzh Sargsyan, after alleging fraudulent practices there.

Health Minister Arsen Torosian said last week that an audit of the Surb Grigor Lusavorich Medical Center found that its management embezzled government funds allocated for free examinations and treatment of civil servants.

Torosian’s ministry put the alleged damage caused to the state since 2016 at around 545 million drams (\$1.1 million). In a statement, it said it has asked prosecutors to look into the allegations and decide whether they warrant a criminal investigation.

Torosian announced on his Facebook page later in the day that Ara Minasian, the hospital director, has been fired due to “the enormous scale of the violations.” A new hospital chief will be chosen on a competitive basis, the minister wrote.

The sacking was condemned by several dozen doctors and other medical staff who demonstrated outside the hospital in support of Minasian. The protesters also included Samvel Farmanian, a parliament deputy from Sarkisian’s Republican Party.

Farmanian demanded that Torosian visit the hospital and give more detailed explanations.

considerable political and economic influence in Armenia until nationwide mass protests brought down Sarkisian



The director of Surb Grigor Lusavorich Medical Center, Ara Minasian, on April 2

A statement released on behalf of the Surb Grigor Lusavorich Medical Center staff earlier this month likewise voiced support for Minasian. It accused the Ministry of Health of waging a “political campaign” against Minasian.

A prominent doctor, Minasian is the father of Serzh Sargsyan’s son-in-law Mikael Minasian. The latter enjoyed

in late April. He continues to serve as Armenia’s ambassador to the Vatican.

The new Armenian government has promised a tough fight against corruption. Among those targeted by its ongoing criminal investigations are individuals linked to Sarkisian, including his brother Levon, two nephews and former chief bodyguard.



## ARMENIA

# 'Heaven-Guided' Underground Maze Proves Armenian Tourist Draw

ARINJ, Armenia (AFP) – When Tosya Gharibyan asked her husband to dig a basement under their house to store potatoes, she had little idea the underground labyrinth he would eventually produce would prove to be one of Armenia's major tourist draws.

Their one-story house in the village of Arinj outside the capital Yerevan may not look like much but today it brings in visitors from all over the globe after a 23-year labor of love by Tosya's late husband, Levon Arakelyan.

In the cold and quiet, Tosya leads tourists through corridors that connect seven chambers adorned with Romanesque columns and ornaments like those on the facades of mediaeval Armenian churches.

"Once he started digging, it was impossible to stop him," she said of the project that began in 1995. "I wrangled with him a



The elaborate cave system carved by Tosyan Gharibyan's husband.

lot, but he became obsessed with his plan."

A builder by training, Levon would toil for 18 hours a day – only pausing to take a quick nap and then rush

back to the cave, confident that he was being guided "by heaven."

"He never drew up plans and used to tell us that he sees in his dreams what to do next," his widow told AFP.

Over more than two decades he hammered out the 280-square-meter space, 21 meters deep into strata of volcanic rocks – only using hand tools.

"My primary childhood recollection is the loud knock of my father's hammer heard at night from the cave," said his 44-year-old daughter Araksya.

At the start he had to break through a surface layer of black basalt, but at the depth of a few meters Levon reached much softer tufa stone and the work progressed.

He pulled out 600 truckloads of rocks and earth, using only hand-held buckets.

Levon died in 2008 at the age of 67 from a heart attack after destroying the last wall that separated two tunnels.

A decade on from the project's completion, Tosya also runs a small museum commemorating her husband's work in the village of some 6,000 people.

The underground complex has several analogues in the world.

An eccentric man named William Henry "Burro" Schmidt spent more than three decades digging a half-mile tunnel to transport gold through a granite mountain in California, beginning his work in the early 1900s during the state's gold rush.

In Ethiopia a man named Aba Defar began carving churches on a mountainside after claiming divine inspiration from years of dreams.

Today the Armenian cave features prominently in travel brochures, regularly drawing busloads of visitors.

Milad, a 29-year-old Iranian tourist, called the maze an "amazing place."

He said it made him realize just "how boundless the spiritual and physical capabilities of a person can be."



Lighting candles underground

## Russia in Rare Diplomatic Spat With Armenia After Arrest of Former Military Official

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2016. Russia, Armenia and four other ex-Soviet states making up the CSTO appointed him as secretary general of the Russian-led defense pact in April 2017.

A spokesman for the Armenian Foreign Ministry said on Saturday that it has formally asked the other CSTO members to "start a process of replacing the secretary general."

The move seems to have irked Russia. The official Russian TASS news agency quoted an unnamed "high-ranking diplomatic source in Moscow" as calling it "amazingly unprofessional."

"It is all the more strange to hear such statements given that the changes that occurred in Armenia did not reflect on the staff of the [Armenian] foreign ministry which only recently submitted Khachaturov's candidacy to the CSTO," the source said, adding that Yerevan must formally "recall" the Armenian head of the alliance before asking the other members to replace him.

In a separate report, TASS said Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov made the same

point in a phone call with his Armenian counterpart Zohrab Mnatsakanian on Thursday. "In particular, it was pointed out that in accordance with CSTO rules and procedures, the Armenian side must officially recall its citizen from the post of CSTO secretary general if such a decision was made in Yerevan," it cited the Russian Foreign Ministry as saying.

The Armenian side dismissed the criticism later on Saturday. The Interfax news agency quoted "a highly placed source in Yerevan" as saying: "We regard as ineffective public discussions and explanations regarding the statutes, procedures and other documents of the CSTO which we know well."

"We are committed to and respect the provisions of the CSTO statutes," the Armenian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Tigran Balayan, insisted on Monday. "And during our presidency of the CSTO we have done everything to strengthen the CSTO."

Speaking to RFE/RL's Armenian service (Azatutyum.am), Balayan would not be drawn on who could replace Khachaturov. "We have to wait for the decision on replacing him," he said.

Russia has rarely made public statements critical of Armenia in the past. The two nations have maintained close political, military and economic ties ever since the break-up of the Soviet Union.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has repeatedly pledged to maintain this "special" relationship since he swept to power in a wave of mass protests in May. But he criticized it when he was in opposition to Armenia's former leadership.

Moscow signaled its concerns shortly after the SIS charged Khachaturov and asked a court in Yerevan for a permission to arrest him. "We are closely monitoring what is happening on this issue," Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin told TASS on Friday.

The district court agreed to grant Khachaturov bail a few hours later.

The SIS bases its case against Kocharyan, Khachaturov as well as for Defense Minister Harutiunian on a secret order that was issued to the Armenian military during the post-election demonstrations organized by Levon Ter-Petrosian, the main opposition candidate in the

2008 ballot. It says that military units were told to move into Yerevan before Kocharyan declared a state of emergency late on March 1, 2008. According to the law-enforcement agency, that violated constitutional provisions guaranteeing the political neutrality of the Armenian armed forces.

Kocharyan insisted on Thursday that the army was simply put on high alert in order to prevent some of its soldiers and officers from heeding Ter-Petrosian's repeated calls for top military officials to join his opposition movement. The ex-president also argued that army units were not involved in vicious clashes between security forces and protesters which were followed by the introduction of emergency rule.

Pashinyan, who played a key role in the Ter-Petrosian-led movement, was the main speaker at a March 1, 2008 rally held several hundred meters from the scene of the deadly violence. Pashinyan subsequently spent nearly two years in prison for organizing "mass disturbances" in the Armenian capital. He denied the accusations as politically motivated.



## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## Sochi Fire Claims Armenian Lives

SOCHI, Russia (Armenpress) – There are 4 Armenians among the fire victims in Sochi's Adler region, the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs informs, citing the Armenian Consulate in Sochi.

“The Armenian Consulate in Sochi informs that there are 4 Armenians among the victims of the fire in Adler. Another Armenian is injured. The Consulate tries to check if they had citizenship of the Republic of Armenia,” reads the press release.

Eight people were killed in a house fire in the Russian city of Sochi overnight on July 30. The Sochi City Hall informed that three people were injured in the fire.

## Mkhitarayan at Home in Arsenal

LONDON (Armenpress) – Armenian national football team captain, London's Arsenal midfielder Henrikh Mkhitarayan commented on the difference between Arsenal, his current team, and Manchester United, where he played before.

“When I came to Arsenal, I felt the warmth. Arsenal always played offensive football, but under Jose Mourinho Man United is playing differently. I am not criticizing him. It was just a different philosophy. But I am enjoying myself more at Arsenal than at United,” Mkhitarayan said.

Currently Arsenal is holding a training camp in Singapore.

Mkhitarayan transferred from Manchester United to London's Arsenal in January.

## Armenia Concerned with Slovakian Arms Supplies To Azerbaijan

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – Armenia continues to follow the issue of illegal arms supplies from Slovakia to Azerbaijan, Foreign Ministry spokesman Tigran Balayan told reporters at a briefing on July 31.

“Apart from the bilateral channels, the Armenian side has raised the issue within the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe], given the fact that Slovakia is set to take over the international organization's presidency next year,” he said.

## Armenian Officers to Join Noble Partner 2018 Drills in Georgia

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – A group of four Armenian army officers will join the Noble Partner 2018 military exercises set to be held in Georgia August 1 to 15, the Defense Ministry said in a statement on Tuesday, July 31.

The Armenian officers will hold various command positions during the drills, the ministry said, detailing the positions are namely related to tasks undertaken by the Armenian units in international peacekeeping and stability missions.

Noble Partner 2018 will be held jointly by the Georgian Armed Forces (GAF) and US Army Europe at the Vaziani and Camp Norio Training Areas in Georgia.

Armenia's Defense Ministry says that the drills are not organized by NATO, with military staff or units from the NATO member and partner countries invited to take part in them.

The Armenian army representatives are to take part in the exercises at the invitation of Georgia's Defense Ministry.

In 2017, a 40-man field group of the Armenian Armed Forces took part in the same training. However, the hospital deployed and being trained with the U.S. assistance cannot take part in the Noble Partner 2018, since it was involved in the international evaluation exercises in Armenia from 22 to 27 July and its relocation within several days is impossible.

The format and conditions of the Armenian officers' participation in the drills have been agreed upon with Georgian partners during a conference on planning the military exercise held in early June, the ministry said.

# Italian President Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President Sergio Mattarella of Italy arrived in Armenia on July 30 for a two-day state visit at the invitation of President Armen Sarkissian.

The welcoming ceremony was followed by a private meeting of Presidents Armen Sarkissian and Sergio Mattarella. Thereafter, an extended format meeting will be held with the participation of the delegations of the two countries. The two Presidents will hold a joint press conference.

During the visit the Italia president met with Armenia's top leadership and was hosted by Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians.

The Italian delegation also visited the Armenian Genocide Memorial.

The opening ceremony of the center for protection of the Armenian-Italian cultural heritage also took place during the visit.

The relations between Armenia and Italy are on a high level and there is readiness to further deepen bilateral cooperation in various spheres, Mattarella said in a briefing.



President Armen Sarkissian greets President Sergio Mattarella.

“I am grateful for the very warm reception. I am happy for this visits that takes place in the period when Armenia marks the 100th anniversary of the first Republic of Armenia and the 2800th anniversary of Yerevan. The links between our peoples date back to ancient times and are based on trust. My visit is a good opportunity to further develop the bilateral relations and deepen friendship,” he added.

He mentioned that Italy will support the peaceful settlement of Nagorno Karabakh conflict. “We will do everything so as the peaceful negotiations resume and will try to find ways for a



President Sergio Mattarella, left, and President Armen Sarkissian at a press conference

political settlement but not a military one, which will be lasting, only through the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] Minsk Group and based on all the principles of the international law,” Mattarella said.

The Italian President noted that Armenia and Italy successfully cooperate in a number of directions, particularly, the servicemen of Armenia and Italy work together in Lebanon. There is active cooperation in the spheres of trade, economy, culture and science, but, according to the Italian President, there is potential to further develop them.

“I am glad to note that tomorrow the opening ceremony of Armenian-Italian heritage protection center will take place. It will foster the strengthening of cultural relations and will be a support to Armenia for preserving historical heritage”, the Italian President said.

“Armenia and Italy have the opportunity to develop cooperation in other spheres as well, and Armenia can rely on Italy's support and friendship,” Mattarella said.

Sarkissian said that the talks were fruitful. “We agreed that extra efforts should be made to give a new, dynamic impetus to Armenian-Italian relations

both in bilateral and multilateral formats, including in the format of Armenia-EU cooperation. We recorded that Italy, being the OSCE chairing country this year, will continue supporting the only international format of Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement – OSCE Minsk group Co-chairs' format. We referred to Armenia-EU cooperation. This is also an area where there is a great potential for deepening the Armenian-Italian relations. In this context I hoped that Italy will soon ratify the Comprehensive and Enhanced



Laura Mattarella, the daughter of the Italian president, greets Armenia's First Lady, Noun Sarkissian.

Partnership Agreement,” Sarkissian said.

Mattarella was accompanied by his daughter, Laura Mattarella, when he visited Matenadaran Scientific Research Institute of Ancient Manuscripts.

At the end of the visit Mattarella was presented with two books.

## Yerevan State University Students Capture 3 Golds, 1 Silver at Math Competition

Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria (Armenpress) – The team from Yerevan State University (YSU) took part in the 25th International Mathematics Competition in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria July 22-25.

YSU was represented by four students, three of whom – Arsen Hambardzumyan, Gevorg Mnatsakanyan and Albert Gevorgyan – won gold medals. Vahagn Altunyan won silver, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

The competition had both individual and team events.

The YSU team captured fourth place – an unprecedented achievement for the team, with the previous top result being the seventh place.



Members of the Yerevan State University team that took part in the Bulgarian math competition



## INTERNATIONAL

# Pashinyan Participates in Eurasian Summit in St. Petersburg

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia – Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan participated in the session of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council here. The closing meeting of the heads of member states was followed by a joint photo session, after which the prime ministers of the member states participated in the expanded composition of the council.

During the meeting, the Prime Ministers of the YPC member-states discussed issues related to the deepening of integration cooperation in economy, customs, energy, transport and other areas. In particular, they touched upon the group's digital agenda, industrial co-operation and customs cooperation, as well as on the improvement of legal-regulatory cooperation. Issues related to the establishment of the Aviation Investigation Body and the formation of a common gas market were also discussed.

The Council has decided to set up a high-level working group to deal with integration cooperation and the replacement of import substitution in the industry.

The Eurasian Intergovernmental Council has decided to hold the next meeting of the Council in Belarus in autumn 2018.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had a meeting with Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev in St. Petersburg within the framework of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council.

“Dear Nikol Vova, I am glad to continue the meeting with you, we have recently met in football. Today, during the five-hour discussion within the framework of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council, we managed to successfully discuss not only the issues of our union, but also the issues of bilateral agenda, as we have always discussed things,” said Dmitry Medvedev.



Leaders participate in the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council.

For his part, Pashinyan said: “Dear Dmitry Anatoly, it is nice to have this opportunity. I think that in the context of the present situation in Armenia and in general in our context, our fre-

quent meetings are very good and useful for us to have the opportunity to discuss all the nuances of our relations and the issues that exist, the issues that may exist even in the issues who do not exist, but they talk too much about them. In practice, these issues do not exist and I think that I have said many times that our relationship strategy and general idea are understandable, there are not many things to discuss here, but I think our meetings are very useful to discuss how to raise our relationships new level. And I think Moscow, and Yerevan is sincerely interested in it. I am glad that during the last 2.5 months we had different opportunities to discuss all the issues. It's obvious to me that our relationships are developing very efficiently and I have no doubts that this nature will not only continue, but will be more effective.”

The two discussed a number of issues related to the Armenian-Russian strategic relations, including the development of economic cooperation, touched upon the programs implemented jointly in different sectors of the economy and future plans. Pashinyan and Medvedev empha-

sized the importance of expanding the bilateral trade turnover and touched upon issues related to the expansion of cooperation in different spheres.



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan speaks at the summit.

## Pashinyan's Wife Signals Launch of Women For Peace Campaign in Moscow

MOSCOW (Armenpress) – During her visit to Moscow, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's wife, Anna Hakobyan, visited the State Tretyakov Gallery on July 24 and met with its director Zelfira Tregulova.

At the meeting, Hakobyan and Tregulova discussed a number of issues concerning cooperation with the gallery, including issues related to the possible opening of the Tretyakov Gallery's Yerevan branch.

Afterwards Hakobyan met with a number of women figures of different Russian sectors.

Hakobyan informed the participants of the meeting about her Women For Peace campaign, asking them to accept her speech exclusively as a speech of a woman and a mother.

Noting that the main mission of the initiative is to contribute to the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Hakobyan particularly said: “I actually think that it isn't important how this conflict originated. What matters is the human lives, the young human lives which are paid before this conflict.”

Hakobyan recalled the 2016 April War, when she was an executive of a news media, and followed both Armenian and Azerbaijani news, watched all coverage.

“Believe me, when looking at Azerbaijani soldiers, their [faces], I was noting that these children aren't different from our soldiers with anything, the expression in their eyes was the same – fearful and anxious,” she said.

“I would like to say that no politics and no political interest can justify the violent death of children who are newly entering their lives, the pain of the parents and the longing of orphaned children,” Hakobyan said.

Hakobyan called on the political decision-makers of all sides to do their best to bypass the cannons, and asked the participants of the meeting to join the campaign aimed at establishing peace for the sake of preserving the young lives standing at both sides of the border.

## Two-Week Immersive Armenian Course Big Success with German Students

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN – Young people engaged in Armenian studies who want to learn about the country first-hand can take advantage of one of the many programs offered by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) (<https://www.daad.de/en/>).

The DAAD, founded in 1925, is the largest German organization providing support in the field of academic cooperation. This year they are again offering an Armenian Summer School for two weeks, with language study, lectures on the country and field trips to significant sites. The program came into being some years ago as a collaborative effort among scholars in the fields of German and Armenian language studies, in both Germany and Armenia, with the participation of the Yerevan State W. Brusov University for Languages and Social Sciences.

By staying with guest families in Yerevan, the students will enjoy full immersion in the language. In addition, they will have Armenian classes every morning, followed by lectures presented by experts. As detailed in the program, these talks deal with Armenia, its history, culture and politics, as well as the language. For example, subjects range from Armenian History, the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Armenian Media Landscape, to A Comparison of Armenian and German Grammar, the Comparative Use of Personal Names,

Courtesy in Armenian and German, etc.

Prof. Stefan Rabanus treats comparative grammar as a fascinating theme that allows one to gain insights not only into the second language, with its unique solutions for conceptual tasks, but also, by reflection, into one's own language. Eliza Ghazaryan's subject is Courtesy, which has become a favorite theme in scientific discussion recently, especially in the context of intercultural communication. Anahit Avagyan will present an overview of the Armenian Apostolic Church, not only historically, but also its role in the 21st century.

Lectures will also deal with current events: Armenia between Russia and Europe, Armenia and the European Union, the economic situation in the country, its biodiversity, and the most explosive recent developments, Armenia's Experience in Democracy in Spring 2018. Richard Giragosian, who is founder and director of the Regional Studies Center, will discuss Armenia's relations with Russia and the Eurasian Economic Union, and the EU, as well as Armenia's role in the Southern Caucasus. The Regional Studies Center is a leading Armenian thinktank involved in political and economic reforms as well as conflict resolution.

Lectures on the church and Armenian literature will be enhanced by visits to Echmiadzin and the Matenadaran. Field trips are also planned to the Genocide museum, Khor Virap, Noravank, Areni and Dilijan national park.

The program runs for two weeks but promises to provide young academics a unique learning experience in Armenia.

# Community News

## St. Leon Women's Guild Celebrates 90th Anniversary In September

FAIR LAWN, N.J. – The St. Leon Armenian Church Women's Guild will celebrate its 90th anniversary with a commemorative luncheon on Sunday, September 23, following Divine Liturgy (1 p.m.) in the Abajian Hall located behind the church. Honorees are women whose years of membership range from 45 to 69, many of whom are octogenarians and nonagenarians still active in church functions today.

St. Leon Armenian Church first planted its roots in Paterson, NJ and in 1965, moved to



St. Leon Armenian Church was established in 1932 at 135 Bloomfield Avenue in Paterson, New Jersey.

its current location at 12-61 Saddle River Road in Fair Lawn. Originally known as the Ladies Aid Society, then the Ladies Auxiliary, the Women's Guild was established in 1928. Boasting a membership of 143, the Women's Guild is known as "the backbone of the church." The hard-working and dedicated members put their hearts and souls into all they do. Their example helps to insure the continuation of our Armenian cultural and gastronomic identity. Some of the yearly activities include the Annual Church Picnic in early June and the Annual Food and Arts Festival in mid-October, both of which are open to the community at large. Through its many activities, the Women's Guild also contributes financially to the church on an annual basis.

The honorees this year are listed in descending order with the number of years following each name: Lucy Dabagian (69), Yeretzgin Violet Kasparian (67), Emerald Noorigian (66), Edna Tungrian (66), Margaret Jerrahian (64), Grace Pinajian (64), Shaka Shahinian (62), Sonia Tashjian (61), Violet Voskian (61), Lillian Chapian (56), Anne Kachigian (53), Arline Dadekian (51), Margaret Minassian (51), Anne Bchakjian (50), Rose Kirian (50), Berjuhi Varjabedian (50), Marian Kahaumjian (49), Ruth Bedevian (48), Seta Jessourian (48), Satenig Loughhead (48), Gloria Tomasian (48) and Dikris Malool (45).

Reservations for the Luncheon are requested by September 15, and can be made by contacting Margaret Ajamian at [ajamian@aol.com](mailto:ajamian@aol.com) or Lynn Beylerian at [lynnbeylerian@gmail.com](mailto:lynnbeylerian@gmail.com). Tickets are \$30 per adult and \$15 for children 12 and under. Checks made payable to St. Leon Women's Guild can be sent to Lynn Beylerian at 823 Peachtree Lane, Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417.

– Donna Donelian Hortian



Supporters gathered at the Republic Square to welcome Ara Khatchadourian who completed Run for Peace in Yerevan.

## Mountaineer Ara Khatchadourian Completes His Cross-Continent Run in Yerevan

YEREVAN – Eleven countries, 500 towns and cities, 4,550 kilometers and an empowering message from mountaineer Ara Khatchadourian: peace and inspiration for "young people from 5 to 105" to turn their dreams into reality. Khatchadourian himself fulfilled yet another dream, as he set out from Marseille on April 7 and reached Yerevan 105 days later, having run the equivalent of one marathon every day.

He arrived in Armenia via Georgia marking his first stop in the city of Gyumri, where he was greeted by provincial and city officials on July 18. Three days later, Khatchadourian – accompanied by around two dozen running enthusiasts, including members of the Arm Marathon Foundation, TriClub Yerevan and the French ambassador – ran the final six kilometers of his incredible journey, crossing the finish line in Yerevan. In the meantime, Deputy Minister of Diaspora Aramays Grigoryan, media and a crowd of supporters gathered at Republic Square to give Khatchadourian a heartfelt welcome. The emotional welcome culminated with a dazzling performance on the traditional dhol by the Armenner Drumming Ensemble comprising students of the AGBU Children's Center in Nork.

"Running is not only a physical achievement, but a human achievement. To run and cross borders with such universal principles is symbolic. We can be inspired by Ara, even if we don't run all the distance he did," French Ambassador Jonathan Lacôte said.

For Khatchadourian, this athletic challenge bears a higher meaning – promoting peace through sports and not only. "This is a run for peace for the whole world. Over the past century alone, 170 million people have died in wars and massacres. My grandmother went through the Armenian Genocide. My mom and dad experienced the Second World War. I grew up during war in Lebanon. The cycle has to stop," Khatchadourian said. "My principle is to transmit values other than violence and to tell people that, through work, it is possible to achieve goals together. I visit schools and tell students that if they have dreams, they can be realized – but it takes work. Without making an effort, it is impossible to achieve what you desire."

see MOUNTAINEER, page 7



In Yerevan, Khatchadourian was joined by around two dozen running enthusiasts for the final six kilometers to Republic Square.

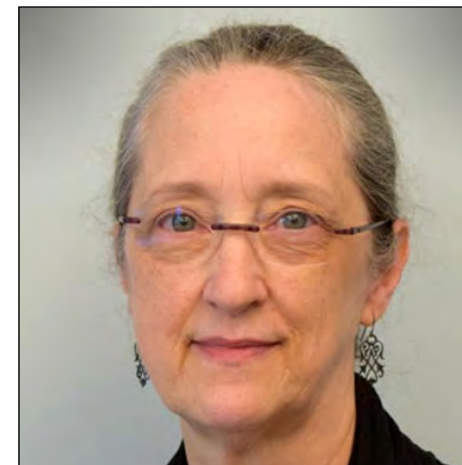
## Battling HIV Among Adolescents and Young Adults at Tulane

By Keith Brannon

NEW ORLEANS (*Tulane Med Magazine*) – Tulane pediatric research is also connected to the New Orleans community. It's home to one of the largest NIH studies aimed at finding better ways to protect high-risk teens and young adults from contracting HIV.

Section chief of adolescent medicine Sue Ellen Abdalian, MD, leads one of two major sites for Adolescent Medicine Trials Network's Comprehensive Adolescent Recruitment & Engagement Strategies (ATN-CARES) study, a community intervention in New Orleans and Los Angeles that targets high-risk youth between 14–24 years old.

New Orleans has one of the highest rates of HIV infection in the country. In 2015, youth aged 13–24 accounted for 32 percent of all new HIV diagnoses in the city, according to state health officials. Abdalian's team is recruit-



Dr. Sue Ellen Abdalian

ing 750 at-risk HIV negative youth, particularly young men who have sex with men and transgender women. The study offers free sexually transmitted disease screenings every four months and HIV tests. Study counselors check in with participants periodically via text messaging. They also get automated texts that offer health and wellness tips. Each week, participants are asked seven text questions about illnesses and risky encounters. If answers raise a red flag, a counselor will reach out and may ask them to come in for a new test.

Participants are randomly assigned to groups that get a mix of other support such as a life coach, a peer support group or both between testing visits. They are also offered referrals for services like pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), a daily HIV medicine that can significantly reduce the chances of HIV infection. The goal is to test which supports can best prevent new infections.

Should a participant become HIV positive, they will be offered immediate treatment, health care and enrolled in another study to test the impact of early antiretroviral therapy. Current HIV therapies can knock viral levels down to undetectable, but the virus hides in reservoirs in the body. These allow HIV to roar back if patients stop taking their medication.

"Our hypothesis is that if we can find adolescents who have been infected with HIV and diagnosed within three months of their infection—and we treat them with just the standard of care—that they will not establish this viral reservoir," says Jasmine Fournier, program manager for ATN-CARES. "Then maybe they could go off of medication at some point and not have a viral rebound. So it would be like a remission, or perhaps in the future with new technology they could be completely cured of HIV."

see TULANE, page 7



## COMMUNITY NEWS



Minister of Diaspora Mkhitar Hayrapetyan tours the Armenian-American Museum.

## Armenian-American Museum Welcomes Diaspora Minister

GLENDALE – Armenian American Museum officials welcomed Republic of Armenia Minister of Diaspora Mkhitar Hayrapetyan to Glendale on his first official visit to the Los Angeles community on July 30.

The meeting began with a presentation on the Armenian American Museum's mission, program, and design by Museum Executive Chairman Berdj Karapetian and Architect Aram Alajajian. Karapetian discussed the Governing Board's vision for a cultural and educational center that will be a community asset honoring the past, recognizing the present, and building the future. Alajajian discussed the inspiration for the Museum's iconic design and its message of unity for the global Armenian community.

"We are honored to welcome the Minister of Diaspora to the City of Glendale and have an opportunity to present the Armenian American Museum project," stated Karapetian. "The museum is going to play a vital role in empowering our next generation, building our community's future, and strengthening our Diaspora."

Hayrapetyan discussed opportunities for collaboration and how the Museum and Ministry can work together to strengthen ties between the Diaspora and Armenia. The Minister expressed his excitement and support for the project and recognized the cultural and educational center's importance for the community.

"It makes me truly proud to see such a beautiful project and vision for the community with the Armenian American Museum," stated Hayrapetyan. "The ministry is excited and looking forward to collaborating and working together with the Museum to strengthen ties between the Diaspora and Armenia."

The meeting concluded with a tour of the future site of the Armenian American Museum in Glendale Central Park.

## Mountaineer Ara Khatchadourian Completes His Cross-continent Run in Yerevan

MOUNTAINEER, from page 6

This achievement has propelled Khatchadourian into a new commitment: the Bridge for CSOs project's Goodwill Ambassador for the Arm Marathon Foundation which would host the first-ever Yerevan Marathon in October

well as to AGBU Plovdiv and AGBU Sofia communities. "Each country had its own beauty," he said. "I was received very well everywhere. In Greece, the soldiers greeted me at the border and the next day, they accompanied me until the Turkish frontier. I also had an excellent welcome



Ara Khatchadourian becomes Goodwill Ambassador for the Arm Marathon Foundation which will host the first-ever marathon in Yerevan in October 2018.

2018. A capacity-building project for Armenian civil society, Bridge for CSOs – funded by the European Union and implemented by AGBU Armenia – has this time linked a diaspora sports talent to a local non-governmental organization to advance a major undertaking. In his new role, Khatchadourian will help promote Yerevan Marathon and continue to inspire sports enthusiasts to work together for the common good.

"We intend to bring together not only runners in Armenia, but Armenians all over the world. So, it is with great pride that we welcome a man who inspires so much with his example to represent us," executive director of the Arm Marathon Foundation Sona Nahapetyan said. "We aim to encourage health in society, not only through an annual marathon, but also with other running events throughout the year, also directing our revenue toward charitable projects. Running brings people together – people who have never met, who have nothing in common, suddenly unite and run together. Harnessing that kind of enthusiasm and inspiration for the sake of some common project creates a culture of public service."

Throughout his run, Khatchadourian reached out and inspired many. He made visits along the way, including to a French school in Serbia, as

in Gyumri, where a police car came to escort me all the way to Vartanants Square."

A consummate athlete driven to push himself to the limits, the Lebanon-born Khatchadourian moved to France in 1983 and at the age of 40, he began exploring mountaineering. His list of successful climbs includes Mt. Ararat, Mont Blanc, Kilimanjaro and Mt. Everest, where he displayed the Armenian flag when he reached the summit in 2016. His long-time friend and supporter, Alain Boyadjian, of Marseille, made a poignant observation on his admirable past and current achievements, "Everest was a vertical climb while this run covered almost the same distance horizontally, thereby forming a cross."

Khatchadourian refers to himself as a citizen of the world. But he does not have only himself in mind. "We are all citizens of the world. Being Armenian is secondary, being Christian is secondary, being born in Lebanon is secondary, living in France is secondary. But above all, in order to say that we are all equal, that we are all born on the same soil, we must say to each one of us – from wherever we may be – we are citizens of the world," he said. "France accepted me, Marseille adopted me, while Yerevan is the motherland. I wanted to run from the city of my adoption to the city of my roots."

## Battling HIV Among Adolescents and Young Adults at Tulane

TULANE, from page 6

The team is also working on another text message intervention aimed at youth who have been HIV positive for a while but have been suppressing the virus. Often they aren't taking their medication regularly or have other complications, Abdalian says.

"We send them messages about taking care of themselves in every way including eating well, reducing stress, taking medication and protecting themselves and others if they're sexually active," she says. "They're all sorts of different kinds of health messages. It's not just about HIV."

One of the biggest health obstacles is often youth's sense of invincibility. The idea that HIV/AIDS is something that happens "to other people" or that "it can't happen to me" is still a common refrain, Abdalian says.

It makes it particularly painful when a patient she's worked with for months to prevent infection still ends up testing positive.

"It breaks my heart every time," she says.

Worse are the rare cases when they lose a patient who develops AIDS from stopping their medication. It happens at least once a year, says health services manager Leslie Kozina, RN, CCRC,

health services manager for the New Orleans Adolescent Medicine Trials Unit at Tulane.

"We work with them for a long period to try to do the right thing for their own bodies. And for whatever reason, they just can't do it," she says. "There's no reason to die from HIV at this point. But if you don't take your medicine, you get sick ... eventually."

While those are the hardest parts of working in HIV prevention, there are triumphs as well. Tulane participated in the two federal studies to test the safety and efficacy of PrEP for youth between the ages of 15-22. Kozina recently counseled two participants and let them know that the data from those studies were going to the Food and Drug Administration in an effort to make PrEP the standard of care to prevent HIV in high-risk young adults.

She explained to them that they were helping move medicine forward – and protecting other teens like them across the county.

"They did something important. I was happy to tell them this and they were really happy. We were jumping up and down," Kozina says. "And, you know, the thrill of that is ... I think that's the best reward I've ever gotten in my 20 years here."

The Ministry of Diaspora of Armenia and the Embassy of Armenia to the United States cordially invite you to

COMMUNITY TOWN HALL WITH  
ARMENIA'S MINISTER OF DIASPORA

**MKHITAR  
HAYRAPETYAN**



**AUGUST 4 | 7:00 PM**

The Armenian Cultural and Educational Center  
47 Nichols Avenue, Watertown, MA 02472



## OBITUARIES

## AGBU Hye Geen and Young Circle Present Debate on Sexual Harassment

LOS ANGELES – The Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Hye Geen and the Young Circle are organizing a public awareness debate to combat sexual harassment. Recently-collected data confirm that tolerance for sexual harassment and similar misdeeds has nose-dived and collective action is needed to punish such behavior.

The event will take place on August 18, at Vatche and Tamar Manoukian Center, 2495 East Mountain Street, Pasadena. Registration will start at 10 a.m., the public debate is due at 11 a.m. and a complimentary lunch will be served at 1 p.m. The adult admittance fee is \$30, students with I.D. pay \$10.

Participants of the day's event are Alene Tchekmedyan, staff writer for the Los Angeles Times who covers breaking news in California.

Then Rouman Ebrahim, a veteran deputy district attorney, Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, Cyber Crime Division will speak about the legal aspects in the investigation and prosecution of sexual assault cases.

Finally, Shaheh Shabanian, a prevention specialist at Strength United Men C.A.R.E. (Creating Attitudes for a rape free environment) will speak about educational work-



Alene Tchekmedyan

shops on topics related to sexual assault prevention on campus.

In view of the principle of gender equality enshrined in legal codes as well as the premise that women's rights are human rights, AGBU Hye Geen and the Young Circle hope that its scheduled event will arouse public awareness and promote community well-being.



Shaheh Shabanian



Rouman Ebrahim

### OBITUARY

## John Vigen Manuelian Art, Research Benefactor

WATERTOWN – John Vigen Manuelian died on July 16. He was the husband of the late Armane (Aghababian) Manuelian and the late Takouhie (Chorbajian) Manuelian.

He was the father of Shahan Manuelian and the late Dr. Kenneth Manuelian; grandfather of Shant; brother of Lucig Der Manuelian and the late Haig Der Manuelian; brother-in-law of the late Virginia and James Tashjian; uncle of Mark, Mathew, Michael, Martin and Peter Der Manuelian, David and Margie Sidman and Douglas Tashjian and Godson of Ashod Fedfadjian.

The Armenian Research Center in Michigan issued a statement, mourning him as a longtime benefactor.

Born in 1922, Manuelian, a life-long Massachusetts resident, was at the center of a number of significant events concerning the Armenian Diaspora. In addition to his active involvement with many Armenian organizations and institutions, like the Armenian Museum of America, the Armenian Relief Society and others, Manuelian was also a fervent supporter of the Armenian Research Center ever since the latter was established in the mid-1980s through the fundraising efforts of the Knights of Vartan, including a generous

donation from the late Edward and Helen Mardigian.

The purchase by the center of a major portion of Manuelian's personal library in the late 1980s was an important milestone in the growth of our books, periodicals and audiovisual collection. Manuelian later refunded the money he had received from the center, leading to these books being classified as donations and the Center's research library being named after him. Thereafter, he regularly made monetary and other donations to the Center, and in 2008, he placed his extensive personal archives at the Center.

In the words of Dr. Dennis Papazian, the center's founding director, "he was a complex person who contributed a great deal to the Armenian community." "John Vigen Manuelian was a person who from moment one believed in the potential of the Armenian Research Center for growth," added the center's current director, Ara Sanjian. "We would not have reached where we are today without his encouragement and support during the Center's early years."

Funeral services were held at the Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, on Wednesday, July 25

Interment will take place at Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge at a later date.

The Ministry of Diaspora of Armenia and the Embassy of Armenia to the United States cordially invite you to

COMMUNITY TOWN HALL WITH  
ARMENIA'S MINISTER OF DIASPORA

**MKHITAR  
HAYRAPETYAN**



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COMMUNITY NEWS

# AMAA Sets \$20,000,000 Goal Toward Centennial Campaign

By Phyllis Hamo

LOS ANGELES – While celebrating 100 years of faith, love, and service, the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) will pay tribute to three long-time West Coast supporters who will be honored on Saturday, October 20. The Stephen Philibosian and the Conte Foundation, the Sheen Family Trust, and the Gerald and Patricia Turpanjian, TF Educational Foundation, will receive tributes at the event.

The AMAA has set a goal of \$20 million toward its 2018 Centennial Campaign in support of churches, schools and camps in Armenia, the Middle East and worldwide, while still maintaining its Endowment Fund designed to help those in need. The West Coast Centennial Banquet will take place on Saturday, October 20, at the Downtown LA Biltmore Hotel, 506

S. Grand Ave. The co-chairs of the West Coast Centennial Banquet are Lori Muncherian, Arsine Phillips, Esq., Helga Sarkis and Tina Segel.

During the past year, centennial celebrations have been held worldwide in Teaneck, NJ, Sydney, Australia, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, Montreal, Quebec/Canada, Beirut/Lebanon, Paris, France and the last one to take place in Yerevan, Armenia.

Zaven Khanjian, executive director/CEO of the AMAA, officially based at the national headquarters in Paramus, NJ, has attended all of the Centennial celebrations and has consistently kept contact with the worldwide branches.

The West Coast office is located at 1101 N. Pacific Ave., Glendale, CA 91202. The West Coast Executive Director is Levon Filian.

The organization was founded in 1918 in



AMAA West Coast Centennial Banquet Committee members

Proceeds from the fundraisers are being used for the Annual Operating Fund, Capital Projects, and Endowment Funds.

Worcester, Mass. Its aim is to serve the physical and spiritual needs of people around the globe.

# Flagship Pioneering Unveils Inari Agriculture

Led by Experienced Team of Scientists and Agricultural Leaders, Company Brings Unique Science and Data Platform to Transform Plant Breeding

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – Flagship Pioneering, a unique life sciences innovation enterprise, today unveiled the firm's latest agriculture company: Inari Agriculture. The company's mission is to transform agriculture and its impact on society and the environment by developing new plant breeding approaches.

Formed in 2016, Inari is the newest member of Flagship's family of agricultural companies that aim to feed and fuel the world. "We are committed to building our agriculture life sciences platform at Flagship Pioneering to help the world solve one of its most pressing problems: how to grow crops while also taking care of the planet," said Noubar Afeyan, founder and CEO of Flagship. "The Flagship team conceived, capitalized, and grew Inari within our enterprise for over two years, and we are proud to see it spun-out today."

Inari aims to substantially reduce breeding time and cost. The company unites biological and data sciences to provide its scientists and plant breeding partners with unprecedented capabilities to breed new crops better suited for local environments. The approach will allow growers and other partners to use less land, water, and other inputs to produce food and feed.

Inari's roots at Flagship began in 2016, when the firm's team of entrepreneurial scientists began to imagine opportunities in plant breeding as part of explorations Flagship was performing in human health. The company grew in stealth under the leadership of Flagship general partner Ignacio Martinez as founding CEO and general partner David Berry as co-founder. Ponsi Trivisvavet, who was formerly chief operating officer at Flagship Pioneering company Indigo Agriculture, was named CEO in April 2018.

"We are very proud of the past 24 months of progress," said Martinez. "Our scientists have developed breakthrough technologies in multiple scientific areas, while developing a growing portfolio of intellectual property. We are equally excited about the unique and experienced team of scientists and scientific advisors that we have brought on board."

Since its founding, Inari has recruited more than 80 leading research scientists and academic advisors with diverse backgrounds in the sciences, from plant biology to medical research.

"I am thrilled to be working with exceptional people at Inari focusing on transforming plant breeding technologies and applying them to address innovation challenges," said Trivisvavet. "We have assembled a world-class team to execute on Inari's mission and believe we have a unique opportunity to change the culture of agriculture. Over the coming months our priority is to accelerate the deployment of our technologies into crops while increasing our cutting-edge technology and patent pool. Our future is going to be exciting – we look forward to empowering our partners and growers by giving them more choice and access to our technologies."

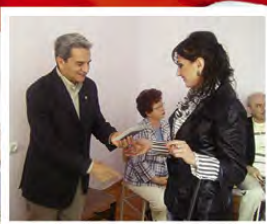


# Sponsor A Teacher

In Armenia and Karabagh

# 18th Anniversary

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# After Nearly 60 Years, Derderians Selling Downtown Detroit's Legendary Anchor

By Allan Lengel

DETROIT (*Deadline Detroit*) – Vaughn Derderian, a schmoozer extraordinaire, recalls the FBI raid in May 1971 at the Anchor Bar his dad Leo ran. Agents rounded up about 150 people around Michigan, including Leo and 16 Detroit cops, as part of a \$15-million-a-year gambling ring run out of the Anchor. The news even made the New York Times.

“That’s probably one of my favorite stories,” says Derderian, 71, who has plenty more from where that came from.

Now, Derderian and his son, who operate the popular dive bar are writing their final chapter at 450 W. Fort St. They’re cashing in on the downtown comeback and will sell the bar and building to Zaid Elia, whose Metro Detroit properties including Parc in Detroit’s Campus Martius and 220 Merrill in Birmingham. The deal is expected to close in late September.

The price for the site, including retail and office space, isn’t disclosed. It’s likely to be in the low seven figures, based on commercial real estate values downtown lately.

Fortunately, Derderian says, the new owner wants to preserve the legend of the family-owned bar – a magnet for journalists, cops, federal agents, office workers and Wings fans – and its countless stories, some of which will be displayed on walls and menus.

“When he buys something, he wants the history with it,” he says.

Says Elia: “When you meet Vaughn and all the people going to the place you start to realize this place is filled with rich tradition and history. The stories he has are awesome.”

“Honestly I’ve never been more excited about a project. When you see what this restaurant stands for and you hear every story Vaughn tells, it’s like sitting in a time machine.”

“My goal is to keep the integrity of the bar,” he says, adding that he plans to change very little and remodel just areas worn with age.

As for the menu, he says: “We’ll keep the most popular items, but definitely bring some culinary twists.”

In 1959, Leo Derderian, who was operating a grocery downtown that doubled as a horse racing parlor for gamblers, bought the Anchor Bar and moved it from Third and Howard Streets to Fourth and Fort. In 1975, it landed on Lafayette Blvd., a block from the *Detroit News*. Then in the 1990s, it moved around the corner to its current spot in the Mercer Building.

Leo was a character out of a Damon Runyon book. He worked the crowd and could connect with anyone from politicians to priests to gangsters. His son, Vaughn, started helping his dad run the joint full time after he graduated from Oakland



Vaughn Derderian

University in 1970.

“He treated his good customers like they were members of the family, and you almost were,” veteran sports reporter Mike O’Hara says of Leo Derderian. O’Hara was a pallbearer at his funeral 24 years ago and remains a close friend of Vaughn’s.

“Vaughn picked up the business from his father and ran it the same way, with a little different style,” O’Hara says. “Everyone was welcome as long as you acted like a family member.”

Leo passed away on January 2, 1994, shortly after the Fort Street site opened in December 1993.

Now, Vaughn’s son, also named Vaughn, has been running the joint along with his dad.

Droves of journalists have called the Anchor Bar home over the decades. It was a place to celebrate retirements and new jobs and departures, and mourn deaths and life’s setbacks.

In the old days, some reporters and editors would drink their lunch or dinner. Some ran up tabs, some of which the elder Vaughn Derderian would forgive and tear up.

When I was a reporter in the Lansing bureau of The Detroit News, I sometimes had to call my editor at the Anchor at the end



The wall above the bar includes dead journalists, cops and politicians.

of the day to get him to return to the office and finish editing my story so I could go home. By then he’d probably polished off a Manhattan or two or three.

One day I was having a beer and an FBI agent I knew was having a pre-wedding, bachelor party in the backroom. I was invited back by one agent, only to be asked to leave after one of the agents in attendance, who I had once written an unfavorable story about, insisted I go.

When I was on strike at the *News* from 1995-97, we often went to the Anchor for lunch where Derderian offered lunch specials for strikers. For a stretch of time, the upstairs was headquarters for the strike.

In March 2017, I was a “guest chef” on a Friday and made matzo ball soup for the lunch crowd.

Derderian has a place up north, where he plans to settle full-time.

“I enjoyed it,” he says of his long run at the bar. “I made some very close friends and that’s a pretty key thing in getting by in the world.”

“I still like messing with people and schmoozing with people and making people laugh,” he says. “I’m going to miss that. I’m not going to miss the constant headaches of managing the bar and people.”

He notes that he’s fortunate over the nearly 25 years at the Fort Street location, that there’s only been about five or six serious bar brawls, and he’s grateful for his workers, whom he plans to distribute bonuses to from the sale’s proceeds. The workers are expected to stay on board.

His son, Vaughn, 41, says he’s interested in becoming more politically active, and in the short term, at least working on a current campaign.

“I feel like owning a bar with my dad is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, but I also think this sale is another once in a lifetime opportunity,” he says.

“As much as I love working in Detroit and being a part of the city, there’s been a lot of times it’s been really hard. People underestimate how hard it is in the bar business.”

What he’ll miss most isn’t really there anymore.

For decades, the Anchor was considered a pre-game destination for Red Wings fans. The place was often packed, elbow-to-elbow with customers in red jerseys, drinking beers, eating burgers, grilled chicken sandwiches and wings. But last year, when the Red Wings moved to Little Caesars Arena, most of the that business vanished.

As downtown has flourished, other customers have filled the void.

“What I really loved was the connection we had with the Red Wings hockey fans,” he says. “That was really a special part of my life for a long time.”

About 100 photos of dead customers hang on the wall, above the bar. Many are reporters from decades ago, along with cops and crooks. Leo Derderian is also up there along with his close friends, the late Monsignor Clement Kern and Detroit Mayor Jerome P. Cavanagh. Separately, near the entrance, is a photo of a smiling Mayor Coleman A. Young sitting inside the bar.

Elia says Derderian will take some of the photos, and he’ll put some of the others on the wall.

Derderian and Elia admire each other, having gone through negotiations for the past seven months or so.

“He’s fantastic, I really believe in him a lot,” Derderian says. “We always had a very congenial relationship and he likes to hear my stories.”

“He wants me to write down my 10 favorite stories about the



The exterior of The Anchor Bar

bar and he wants to characterize them on the wall. The raid (in 1971) is the greatest story.”

In fact, a little history of that raid can be seen on the paper menus that are placemats:

On the morning of May 6, 1971, two pool players at the 4th Street Anchor broke off their game, jumped over the bar and announced: “This is a raid!” Thus began the most cockeyed fight in Justice Department history.

Hundreds of Detroit Police and 400 FBI agents assembled that morning at Cobo Hall to collect and indict 150 civilians and 16 police officers. Leo (Derderian) and Chickie Sherman were accused by the Feds of running a \$40,000-a-day gambling ring. Access to the basement bar was aided by the *Detroit News*, which owned the building, in exchange for scooping the *Detroit Free Press*. After three years of court battles, the entire case was thrown out because the Nixon Justice Department had forged wiretap authorizations.

Lead government attorney David Cook later became friends with Leo, and in 1996 held his retirement party at the Fort Street Anchor. He said: “If I knew then what I know now, there never would have been a raid.”

The Derderians won’t vanish from the scene, at least not completely. The younger Vaughn will stick around after the sale for a while to help with the transition. His father says Elia has agreed to help him continue raising money for those in need through the Most Holy Trinity Church in Corktown, a passion that began with Leo Derderian and was passed on.

Besides that, the older Vaughn says, Elia “wants me to come around. If he calls, I’ll come by.”



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Hye Spirit Prevails at Armenian Church of Cape Cod July Dance

KEF, from page 1

The elegant clubhouse surrounded by a golf course provided an interesting juxtaposition of two types of seemingly endless Armenian-themed musical experiences with traditional Kef Time style music played in a rotunda-style room by Leon Janikian on clarinet, Harry Bedrossian on *oud*, Charlie Demenjian on *dumbeg*, Kenny Kalajian on guitar with special guests: *oudist* Harry Minassian and *oudist*/violinist Johnny Berberian sitting in for a few numbers; at the same time at the other end of a long hallway was the more modern style of contemporary music popular in Armenia today, played by DJ Shaeen of New Pulse Entertainment. In



Andrea Barber, Chairperson of Armenian Church of Cape Cod's second annual Kef, with her husband, David

between both rooms was a food station, and a bar area where hors d'oeuvres and colorfully packaged raffle and auction items were set up. The wide-ranging raffle items included handmade crafts and even a handsome roster of Cape Cod and Watertown restaurants and retail establishments. With dining, hugging, dancing, conversing and auctioning aplenty, there seemed to be something for everyone. With music playing in the background, the advantage of such a large space was that you could easily move to various other event spaces or corridors to chat and network if you wanted to converse



Rev. Fr. Khachatur Kesablyan and David Barber



Artak Sahakyan, Parish Chairman of Armenian Church of Cape Cod, with wife Meri

in between dancing.

This well-planned event was the brainchild of Andrea Barber, a resident of North Falmouth, who for years frequented the extremely popular Fourth of July Kef weekends formerly held at the Sea Crest at Old Silver Beach in Falmouth that were organized by Charles Krikorian. With the old Kefs in mind, along with the great financial needs for the church to grow and flourish, this fundraiser to benefit the Armenian Church of Cape Cod seemed a good fit for a popular summer weekend. Some of the food served during the evening even had an Armenian flare. Andrea Barber reports that this year's event was very successful as was the inaugural Kef last year. Word of mouth even drew some first time participants like Lucine Bahtiarian of Bedford who was pleased with the event. She said, "We heard so many good things about it."

Artak Sahakyan, chair of the Cape Cod Parish, was enjoying Armenian pilaf and chicken with his wife, Meri, and daughter, Nareh. Sitting with his family as the DJ played, Artak Sahakyan, a builder by profession, shared his thoughts on this "awesome, very successful event. Andrea Barber came up with this idea. The Armenian community makes sure everyone knows and supports each other, to keep our culture together, to know Armenians in the community and learn from the older generation and preserve our culture and language. We've created an Armenian Sunday School with Eliza Gevorkyan working



Dancers of all ages enjoy the DJ music.



Nurses Zeytoonian and friends dance then night away.

lot of people said they listen to my records and that's why they wanted to come down for this event." Upon further chatting, Minassian shared how he learned from the greatest oud master from Turkey. "I took lessons from Udi Hrant when I was in

my 20's. We spoke to each other in Turkish and Armenian. He did things on the oud that no one else did." After a little digging and a warm admiring twinkle in his eyes, Minassian further explained, "It was his way of playing, his finger-



Families dining together.



Leon, Johnny and Harry perform in the rotunda room.



Sam Kapreilian, Michele Kapreilian of Sarasota, Florida and Lauren Belekian of California

with eight kids. There are about 10-15 families here from Yerevan and about 100 families from the older (earlier) generation."

Reflecting in a quieter spot outside on the balcony bordering the room where kef-style music was playing, Harry Minassian shared, "A

ing. He'd come (to the US) months at a time."

During a musical break in the course of the evening, Artak Sahakyan spoke to attendees, warmly thanking Andrea and David Barber, and Rev. Khachatur Kesablyan, mission pastor, for their support, and "for keeping the community together." He invited people to come to the Sunday School and Badarak held the first Saturday of each month, and to continue to eat and enjoy the plentiful food available during the evening. Organizer Andrea Barber spoke of support from her family, her husband David and appreciation of her volunteer committee of Janice, Andy, Amanda, Mary and Pattie as well as Wendy from the Cape Club. Kesablyan spoke next and expressed appreciation to the organizers, Parish and supporters, and encouraged community, financial and spiritual involvement with this important mission church. Two years ago when the Parish Council met and reviewed their budget, parishioner Andrea Barber said, "Der Hyr, I will help you" and the first successful Cape Cod church event was planned and

later executed under her direction. Addressing Andrea Barber, Kesablyan expressed "appreciation for your tireless efforts." Kesablyan, the pastor of Saints Vartanantz Church of Chelmsford, had driven to the Cape immediately after he finished directing a session with 80 campers at the Diocese's St. Vartan Camp in New York. He was so delighted to share the exciting news that six campers from the Cape Cod mission church were able to come to St. Vartan Camp this year and that with the community support "doors of the Armenian mission parish are open for generations to enjoy."

As one of the oldest mission parishes in the Eastern Diocese, services are held the first Saturday of each month at the St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Osterville. "They are very welcoming to us," shared Der Khachatur. Visiting clergy participate in the summers and deacons from St. Vartanantz, or more recently Deacon Shant Broukian who is working on the Cape, have assisted the pastor. "One day God willing, we'll have a small chapel or church where we can have our *badaraks*. One challenge this mission church faces is that not so many Armenian live here year round, and many that are on the Cape keep their memberships with their home parish. (Our focus) to keep the Armenian spirit, culture and language alive – most important is to pray together."

"We all loved the *Kefs* at the Sea Crest; it was a nice way to see everybody. Unfortunately that came to an end. Thanks to Andrea Barber and her committee, this is an awesome way to get everyone together again to kick off the summer. It's like a reunion and an excellent way to get together for the church, and at the same time, we are doing this for the church," remarked Pamela Gechijian of Falmouth and Lincoln. Her husband Ara added, "The most important thing is exposing the youth to the Armenian culture and environment. No youth, no future. The youth will be perpetuating our future." Hailing from Gyumri (Leninakan), Armenia's second largest city, about 12 years ago, Vahagn Arakelyan reflected, "We need to get together more often to have a stronger community and know and help each other."

(Photos by Nancy Kalajian)

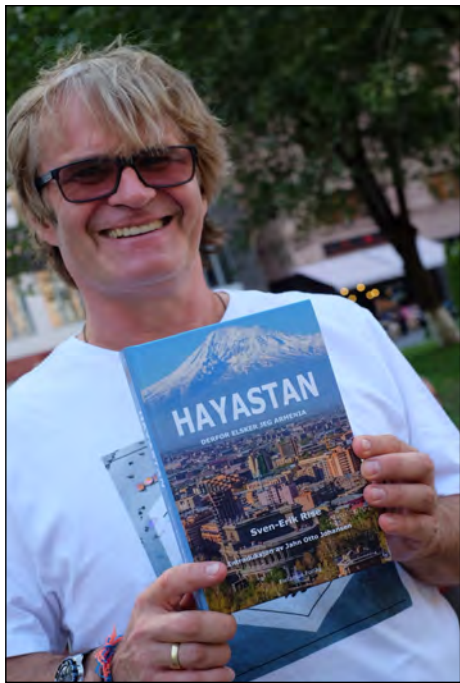
# Arts & Living

## Norwegian Author Releases English version of his book *Hayastan – Why I Love Armenia*

OSLO – Oslo-based Sven-Erik Rise, a Norwegian friend of Armenia, who has even picked an Armenian name for him – Tigran Van – has published the English version of his book, *Hayastan – Why I love Armenia*, a love letter of sorts to this beautiful country and its people.

Rise is an Armenia expert who has written articles and opinion pieces about the country, and the Armenian Genocide in Norway's national and local newspapers. He has led numerous public lectures about Armenia for varied audiences. He has also been a tour leader for numerous tour groups from Norway to Armenia. Rise proudly calls himself an "Armenian-by-choice" and dreams of having an Armenian passport.

One cold Norwegian December evening in 2016, after he had visited Armenia and spent a lot of time there, he came up with the idea to write down the feelings and stories from Armenia that overwhelmed him. He had previously been studying the Genocide and the denial thereof, and had for many years gone to lectures, studies documents, read academic literature and interviewed genocide scholars all over the world in several foreign languages. After only two short months, but many long nights he submitted his Norwegian-language first-ever book to the publisher in Oslo. The book was warmly accepted inside and outside Norway, and after many letters of interest from



Sven-Erik Rise with a copy of his book

non-Norwegian speakers, the book was translated into English and is now available for purchase online. It has been translated by an authorized translator.

The content and message of this book draw upon a combination of years of reading and studying, as well as real-life interactions with peoples, cultures, and languages.

The book is a story of Rise's love for a country and its people, presented in an intimate, humorous and personal manner. In the book, the author takes the reader on a tour in Armenia, where he and his Turkish friend explore the country, meet many exciting people who have many good stories to share.

Among other things, the author also discusses the Armenian Genocide, compares it with the Jewish Holocaust, analyses the denialist industry and discusses the Artsakh conflict (Nagorno Karabakh conflict).

The introduction of the book is written by



Bared Maronian

## Cultural Impact Foundation Inaugural Gala Supports Filmmaker Maronian

LOS ANGELES – The Board of Directors of Cultural Impact Foundation, Inc. (CIF) announced recently that its Inaugural Gala at the Taglyan Cultural Complex in Hollywood on September 7. CIF is a non-profit foundation established in 2017 which commissions and supports unique cultural projects that improve the understanding of historical events, and reveal acts of human kindness and heroism in the face of adversity.

The first two projects are "Titanic Love" and "Bloodless." "Titanic Love" is a documentary film that tells the powerful story of Armenian passengers who set sail for the US aboard the RMS Titanic to escape the massacres in their homeland.

"Bloodless" tells the story of the successful and peaceful revolution that took place in Armenia in the summer of 2018 that was organized and led by Armenia's

youth. In so doing, they have provided the world with a blueprint of how to create sociopolitical change without bloodshed. This was true democracy in action.

CIF has commissioned the production of both projects to four-time Emmy Award-winning filmmaker, Bared Maronian.

"This exclusive gala is being planned and executed by a team of community leaders and proponents of Armenian causes" said the Chairwoman of the Gala, Kohar Mardirossian Pelter. The team members include Dr. Anait Alabyan, Nayiri Attarian, Liza Bagamian, Lena Basmajian, Hasmig Demirdjian, Anoush Sarkisyan, and CIF executive board members, Dr. Hrair Koutnouyan and Kohar Mardirossian Pelter.

Cocktails begin at 6:30 p.m. and includes a musical performance by flute and harp duo, Salpy and Sossy Kerkonian, and a surprise appearance by an international celebrity. A dinner reception will follow with a presentation by Maronian on his two upcoming film projects. This will be followed with live entertainment by Allen G. and dancing. Throughout the evening, you will get the chance to bid on extraordinary and rare LIVE auction items.

For additional details about the gala, sponsorships and tickets, email [http://www.culturalimpactla@gmail.com](mailto:http://www.culturalimpactla@gmail.com).

To know more about Cultural Impact Foundation, visit [www.culturalimpactfoundation.org](http://www.culturalimpactfoundation.org)

## Having a Good Time for a Good Cause in Worcester

WORCESTER – On Saturday, September 29, the Armenian Churches of Worcester County will hold their seventh Annual Benefit Dance. From 7:30 p.m. to 1 a.m., guests will enjoy live Armenian, Arabic and Greek dance music.

The evening is dedicated to raising funds for Syrian Armenian resettlement in North America and the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR).

Since the start of the crisis in Syria in 2011, thousands of Armenian families have fled to other countries to avoid the atrocities of the ongoing war. In most cases, these families have spent their finances for their travel and by the time they arrive to a safer haven, they are left with hardly any financial resources. Since 2015, the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal has helped hundreds assimilate to their new surroundings. Last year's dance efforts helped more than 300 families start a new life in Canada and that number is expected to be matched or grow this year.

There are currently 8.4 million Syrian children residing as refugees in neighboring countries. That is 80 percent of Syria's children. And now, more than 22,000 Syrian-Armenians have resettled in Armenia.

Talented local musicians, led by Mark DerMugrditchian, will entertain guests. Everyone is invited to the dance that will include a cash bar, deluxe mezze of delicious Armenian and Middle Eastern delicacies, dessert and coffee.

The dance will take place at the Armenian Church of Our Saviour, Cultural Center, 34 Boynton Street, Worcester.

Additional volunteer and giving opportunities exist.

For over 100 years, the Armenian Churches of Worcester County have been leaders and contributors for the advancement of the Greater Worcester community through their faith, fellowship and Armenian culture and values. They are The Armenian Church of the Martyrs, Armenian Church of Our Saviour, Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, and Soorp Asdvadzadzin Armenian Apostolic Church.

FAR, based in New York City, with satellites in Armenia, concentrates its efforts on humanitarian aid, social and economic opportunity and development, child protection, healthcare and education. Since its inception, FAR has implemented more than 290 relief, social, educational and cultural projects. Learn more: <http://farusa.org/>

The First Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal is collaborating with the "Hay Doun" organization in conjunction with the Canadian Government to obtain immigration rights for Syrian refugees. Since 2015, over 1,000 families have arrived in Montreal, and another 300 families arrived in 2017. The Church welcomes the Syrian Armenian families who arrive in Montreal and offers moral, spiritual and psychological support; provides temporary housing in the Church complex or at homes of families within the Church and the Armenian community at large; pays for hotel rooms; orients the families to integrate in the city life, such as administrative support, transportation, schooling, learning the language, finding jobs, helps them to find affordable housing and in some cases provides the rent of initial months; and provides all kinds of basic furnishing and warm clothing. The Armenian Missionary Association of America is also assisting the Church financially to continue this ministry.

Tickets are \$35 in advance, \$45 at the door. (\$20 teens 13-18yrs. Children 12 & under free.)

RSVP: For tickets contact Jay Kapur at 508-740-4464 or [jkapur@aimtek.com](mailto:jkapur@aimtek.com) or Eva Kopoyan at 508-757-6195 or Henri Bahnan 508-740-0948



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# The Petrossian Family – The First Sellers of Black Caviar in Europe and America

NEW YORK (Art-a-Tsolum) – In a quarter from the entrance to the Central Park, on the corner of the 58th Street and the 7th Avenue, in the historical building Alwyn Court is situated one of the most fashionable restaurants of New York, Petrossian.

The 12-story residential house was built in the 16th-century Gothic and Renaissance style prominent in contemporary France by architectural bureau Harde & Short in 1909. It would be difficult to find a better place for an expensive restaurant in New York.

The restaurant is run by the Petrossian family. It offers French dishes with an accent on fish dishes: lobsters, red crabs, salmon, sardines, oyster, and smoked sturgeon. The restaurant also serves foie gras, as well as famous French cheeses. However, the main delicacy is black caviar, which is included in many dishes. There are in total 16 kinds of black caviar served in the restaurant. Why, you may ask? That's because the Petrossian family were the first to introduce black caviar in France, Western Europe and America.

"My father was the one who introduced Russian caviar in France," says Armen. His father Mikael Petrossian along with his brother Melkum had moved to France from Russia in 1920. One year after their settlement in Paris, the Petrossians met César Ritz, the owner of the famous Parisian hotel Ritz. Initially, Ritz refused to participate in the caviar business and even discouraged the brothers from it.

"Ritz considered the idea completely unpromising, calling caviar an excessively exotic product," says Petrossian, "Though as a friend, he promised to take some caviar for selling." With some help from Ritz, the brothers began their successful journey.

In 1940, Mikael Petrossian managed to win the heart of Irina, the daughter of El Mailov, the owner of the company "Lazar Mailov and Sons," which was one of the largest manufac-

**"I HAVE WORKED MY WAY UP FROM THE BOTTOM: I USED TO BE A JANITOR, A CARRIER, AND A SELLER"**

-ARMEN PETROSSIAN

turers of caviar in Russia. The successful cooperation allowed the brothers to expand their business. By the early 1950s, their company became nearly a monopolist in the Western European black caviar market. They also sold salmon and Far Eastern crabs.

By 1980, the Petrossian company had been



Armen Petrossian and his son, Alexandre

grown into a large corporation. The son of Mikael, Armen Petrossian, graduated the faculty of history at Sorbonne and started his career in his father's company as a laborer in 1971. Shortly, he would build his first own factory of

fish products on the outskirts of Paris. "I have worked my way up from the bottom: I used to be a janitor, a carrier, and a seller," recalls Armen Petrossian.

Now, sales of black caviar constitute 35 percent of the company's revenue. The Petrossian family reigns over caviar market. Having a 25-percent share of the world market, they become the largest supplier of caviar in France and the US. Recently, Armen Petrossian opened a large facility for breeding sturgeons and manufacturing black caviar in Sacramento, Calif., to supply the US buyers of black caviar.

Apart from New York, Petrossian owns



A tin of the good stuff



The exterior of the New York store

restaurants in Hollywood and Las Vegas. The latter is housed by the fashionable casino Bellagio, which used to be owned by Kirk Kerkorian.

Now, the company awaits the third generation of its owners. Currently, it is headed by Alexandre Petrossian, son of Armen Petrossian. In the meantime, Armen teaches his grandson the delicacies of the caviar business.

"My father was a big philosopher and a believer. I inherited his philosophy. He thought that an idea plays a big role in his business. I base my philosophy on an Armenian foundation, which implies a priority of certain concepts. I inherited all this from my Armenian roots, which for me means to be generous, keep my word, trust people, and not lose my identity.

"All these features are a part of the collective Armenian conscience. And today, when you meet and communicate with big Armenian entrepreneurs, you see that they (in most part) aren't ready to walk over corpses and keep their word. Most Armenians keep their word regardless of their field of activity. They value their reputation. People are proud that they are Armenian, pride their families and everything connected to them. They would never want to disgrace them," says Armen Petrossian.

# Secret Nation Review: Insight into Invisible Armenians in Turkey

By Martin Doyle

If you've ever visited Turkey, you will have encountered people you assumed were Turkish but who could well have been Armenian. Avedis Hadjian, author of *Secret Nation: The Hidden Armenians of Turkey*, spent three years travelling round eastern Turkey, the historic Armenian homeland, meeting those mountain people who keep a low profile in a country accused of murdering or deporting about 1½ million of their people. The account of these horrendous times is littered with euphemisms such as "forced migration" or "forcibly minoritised." Though always denied by Turkey, the word soykurum – Turkish for genocide – encompasses the whole sorry story.

Hadjian is part of that story. A journalist, born in Aleppo and educated in Buenos Aires and Cambridge, he bears an Armenian family name and, of vital importance, speaks Hamshetsnak, the almost-forgotten dialect of western Armenia which is now part of



Avedis Hadjian

Turkey. During his travels, he seeks out people in the villages and towns of that most mountainous part of Turkey, chatting with anyone who will talk to him.

Generally, he is welcomed courteously, guided along perilously steep mountain paths, offered lifts from one village to the next often with someone phoning ahead to introduce him. But nearly always there is the denial: No, we're not Armenian. We are Turkish and we are Muslim. But your name, Hadjian will say having done his research, is Armenian. At this they shake their heads. Maybe many years ago but not now. Some see him as stirring up trouble for them and on one occasion are angry enough for him to beat a hasty retreat.

## Ottoman Defeat

But why the denial? One explanation is that after the defeat of the Ottomans and their 300 years of Sunni rule, people wanted a united Turkey, some wanting it at any price. Turkey for the Turks was the call. Villagers tell Hadjian stories their grandparents told them of Armenian villages laid bare, of Armenians hunted, hounded and pushed off bridges into the Euphrates or dying during forced marches across the Syrian desert. (In eastern Syria, in the Armenian church in

Raqqa, I saw pictures of Armenian women against whom the most evil of sexual crimes had been committed.)

Some Armenians, hoping to pass as Turkish, survived by adopting Islam, freely or otherwise, the latter process known as Islamicisation. Coincidentally, Hadjian introduces us to a bus driver who explains the policy by holding up his index finger: one country, one flag, one language. No room for minorities there.

When survival is paramount, the denial of their origins by some Armenians is understandable though Hadjian is puzzled by the reaction of people to whom he has shown documents proving they are Armenian. Many respond with amazement, wanting to know more about their supposed Turkish origins or their suggested Armenian background. And despite the evidence, they maintain that though they may indeed be Armenian they remain Muslim even though before going to the mosque to have Iftar they might deviate to the Armenian Orthodox Church to light a candle or two.

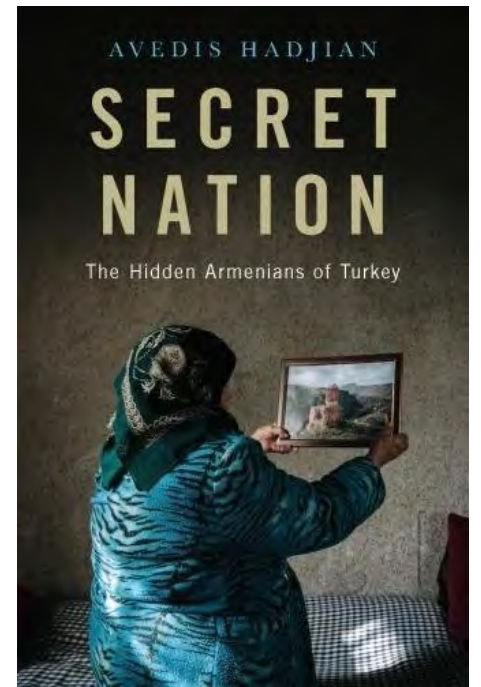
## Persian saying

Some Armenians actually designated themselves Turkish – which meant remaining silent about the genocide – because they invested their hopes in Kemal Ataturk and

his post-Ottoman dream of a united secular Turkey.

Though teetering towards information overload – so many villages, so many people – this doorstep of a book gives us a fascinating if challenging account of present-day mountain life in Turkey: the annual tea harvesting done by the whole family, sheep herding, hoeing in the shadow of Mount Ararat. There's the big family meal and the get-together which ends in fisticuffs. As the Persian saying goes: "They hate each other like cousins."

Whatever you say, say nothing is the order of the day. Armenians distrust the Kurds, suspecting they collaborated with Turks to carry out the 1915 genocide. The Turks see the Christian Armenians as infidels and the Christian Armenians denigrate those Armenians who became Muslim. Distrust casts a shadow over everything. Occasionally, however, Hadjian shines a light into the darkness when Vartan tells his story. Vartan's Armenian father, orphaned when his family was murdered, was taken in by a kindly Turkish family who brought the child up as a Muslim. Vartan was 25 before he learned he was actually Armenian. But, married to a Kurd, their children Muslim, he lives in a desolate place not of his making: "I feel alone and cold," he says.



For those dispossessed of their past, the Armenia story is one that has yet to reach its ending.

(This review by Martin Doyle initially appeared in the *Irish Times* on July 21.)

## Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

### Asparagus, Potato, and Papaya Salad with Green Onion Dressing



#### INGREDIENTS

1 pound fresh asparagus, rinsed and cleaned  
1 pound thin-skinned red potatoes (about 1 1/2 in. wide), scrubbed  
1 large firm-ripe papaya (about 1 lb.), peeled and seeded  
4-5 cups salad mix, rinsed and crisped  
1/2 cup Kalamata olives, pitted  
Green onion dressing (below)  
Sea or Kosher salt

#### GREEN ONION DRESSING INGREDIENTS

8 large green onions  
1/4 cup seasoned rice vinegar  
2 tablespoons dry white wine  
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard  
2-3 tablespoons olive oil  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint leaves  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil leaves  
White pepper

#### PREPARATION

For the dressing: Rinse and trim ends from green onions; cut into 2-inch pieces (including tops). In a food processor or blender, purée the onions, rice vinegar, wine, mustard, oil, parsley, mint, and basil until smooth. Stir in white pepper to taste. Scrape into a small bowl; if making up to one day ahead, cover and chill.

Snap off and discard tough asparagus ends. In a 3- to 4-quart pan over high heat, bring 2 quarts water to a boil. Add asparagus; cook until barely tender when pierced, 3 to 5 minutes. With tongs, lift out asparagus and immerse in ice water. When cool, about 3 minutes, lift out and drain.

Meanwhile, add potatoes to boiling water. Cover and simmer over medium heat until they are tender when pierced in thickest part, 20 to 30 minutes. Drain potatoes and immerse in ice water. When cool, about 10 minutes, drain and cut into halves. Cut papaya lengthwise into 1/4-inch-thick slices.

Line a tray or platter with salad mix. Arrange asparagus, potatoes, papaya, and olives on greens. Add dressing and salt to taste to individual portions.



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



ARTS & LIVING

# Christies Hosts Los Angeles Affiliate of AIWA For Exclusive Showing of Rockefeller Jewelry

BEVERLY HILLS – It was a once-in-a-lifetime event for members of the Los Angeles Affiliate of the Armenian International Women’s Association (AIWA-LA) to be hosted by acclaimed international auction house Christies to view the magnificent jewelry collection of Peggy and David Rockefeller. On May 31, members and guests were invited to an exclusive tea at Christies in Beverly Hills, to view their collection of jewels traveling



Lily Balian, Diyana Danielian and Louise Arklin



Cate Koch, Cindy Norian and Shelia Stern



Guests enjoying tea



Peggy Gottlieb, Vice President, Director of Jewelry, Christies, and Amanda Quinn

ing our Scholarship Fund, the Women’s Support Center project which provides a safe haven for abused women; the Women’s Entrepreneurship program at the American University of Armenia for women to start and run their own business, and the publication of books by and about Armenian women.”

After a warm welcome by Nishanian and Joan Agajanian Quinn, executive board member and AIWA’s UN representative, guests were greeted by Sonya Roth, West Coast director of Christies, and Lisa Hubbard, senior jewelry consultant. Guests viewed an informative video, narrated by Peggy Gottlieb, vice president and director of jewelry, sharing a memorable presentation about the life of Peggy and David Rockefeller. The video focused on their penchant for recognizing and purchasing magnificent jewelry as well as collecting many famous paintings and sculptures. After their passing, it was their wish that proceeds from the sale of their jewelry and artistic treasures

be donated to charity.

Although this special event was announced as a tea, guests were treated to champagne during the reception and as they viewed the magnificent display of jewels. The tea was prepared by the Kitchen for Exploring Food, LLC, and overseen by Brant Sherman and Alex Mashigian. Guests enjoyed a variety of special teas, assorted sandwiches, flatbreads, crackers and the usual miniature deserts, including chocolate éclairs, tartlets and scones. Guests lingered after the tea, visiting with the gracious staff members of Christies, and to take another look at the astounding jewelry collection.



Nicole Nishanian, President, AIWA-LA and Joan Agajanian Quinn, AIWA-LA Board member and UN representative



Sonya Roth, West Coast Director, Christies, and Joan Agajanian Quinn



Some of the guests assembled with a few items from the Rockefeller Collection

from Hong Kong back to New York, but stopping in Los Angeles for one day.

Nicole Nishanian, president of AIWA-LA, stated “This exceptional viewing was made possible by our Executive Board member Joan Agajanian Quinn. Approximately 60 of our members and guests filled their showroom to capacity and had the rare opportunity to personally view this amazing collection before being auctioned in New York City, June 6 to 14. We are not only grateful to Joan for arranging this private showing, but our thanks and appreciation to the managers and staff at Christies for honoring AIWA and for their warm and generous hospitality. Proceeds from this event benefitted the major programs that AIWA supports, includ-

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MHER MEGERDCHIAN THEATRICAL GROUP

20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Banquet

20

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MARIE ZOKIAN 201-745-8850 / TALAR SARAFIAN 201-240-8541

## Norwegian Author Releases English version Of his book *Hayastan – Why I Love Armenia*

NORWAY, from page 12 author and veteran journalist of the state broadcaster NRK, Jahn Otto Johansen.

The book has got many good reviews. “Riveting, and brimming with knowledge. In this book, Sven-Erik Rise takes you on a journey you won’t want to end—and that you will never forget.” Stein-Morten Lier, author and TV personality. For orders see author’s own online book-

store at [www.armeniabook.shop](http://www.armeniabook.shop)

The Armenian Cultural Association in Norway is devoted to promoting Armenian culture and traditions in Norway, and to strengthen bonds between the two countries, cultures and peoples. For further information on the Armenian Cultural Association in Norway and its activities check [www.armenia.no](http://www.armenia.no) or email: [info@armenia.no](mailto:info@armenia.no).



Sven-Erik Rise in Armenia



## ARTS &amp; 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

**AUGUST 4 — Ministry of Diaspora of Armenia and Embassy of Armenia in the US are holding a Community Town Hall** with Minster of Diaspora Mkhar Hayrapetyan. 7 p.m. Armenian Cultural and Educational Center, 47 Nichols Ave., Watertown.

**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

**AUGUST 23 — Under an August Moon, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston,** Thursday, 7:30 - 9:30 pm. Meet & Greet! Berklee All-Star Jazz Trio! Enjoy signature tastings, hosted by anoush'ella say kitchen; creative mocktails, hosted by The Bostonian Hotel; luscious ice teas hosted by MEM Tea Imports. RSVP appreciated. hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

**AUGUST 26 — Armenian Church at Hye Pointe Picnic, 12 to 5 p.m., to be held at our new Family Life & Cultural Center,** 1280 Boston Road (RTE. 125) Haverhill. Music by the fabulous Jason Naroian Ensemble. Menu includes Lamb Shish, Losh, & Chicken Kebab Dinners, Kheyma, Pastries, & Beverages. Raffles for Cash Prizes & Gift Certificates. Air Conditioned Hall. Bring your lawn chairs for sitting outside. For more info visit [www.hyepointearmenianchurch.org](http://www.hyepointearmenianchurch.org) or call (978) 372-9227. Take RTE. 495 N to exit 48, bear right at the end of the ramp and follow the signs. Additional parking at Osgood Landing, 1600 Osgood Street, North Andover, with free shuttle bus to the picnic grounds.

**SEPTEMBER 9 — Trinity Family Festival, 12-5 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston,** 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Sunday. Delicious Armenian food — shish, losh, and chicken kebab — paklava, khadaif, and more with take-out available. Armenian music for your listening and dancing pleasure featuring The Greg Krikorian Ensemble with Greg Krikorian, oud and vocals; Mark Der Mugrditchian, clarinet; Kevin Magarian, guitar and vocals; Charles Dermenjian, dumbeg; and Seve Surabian, tambourine. Lots of activities for children including the Moonwalk. Blessing of the Madagh at 4 p.m., followed by raffle drawing for cash prizes. For further information, log onto [www.htaac.org/calendar/event/575/](http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/575/), contact the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org).

**SEPTEMBER 10 — Holy Trinity Men's Union welcomes Boston Celtics' Great Sam Jones,** Monday, 6 p.m., Social Hour, 7 p.m., Dinner. Holy Trinity Armenian Church

of Greater Boston, Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge MA. Everyone Welcome for this unique opportunity to meet a Boston sports legend. Book signing following talk. Donation for losh kebab and kheyma dinner: \$15 per person. RSVP required, call the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email [trmuhtaac@gmail.com](mailto:trmuhtaac@gmail.com). For further information, log onto [www.htaac.org/calendar/event/584/](http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/584/).

**SEPTEMBER 16 — Sunday Afternoon at the Park for Families. Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway,** 2-4 p.m. Cindy Fitzgibbon, WCVB TV5, Emcee; Boston Hye Guys-Ron Sahatjian, clarinet; Joe Kouyoumjian, oud; Art Chingris, percussion; ADD At 2:30pm "Match the Pair": Game for all ages! Face Painting: For Kids by Kids, Hoodies RSVP appreciated. [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**NOVEMBER 4 — Celebrating the Life and Work of Diana Der Hovanesian,** Organized by the Armenian Cultural Foundation and co-sponsored by Amaras Art Alliance, Armenian General Benevolent Union-New England, Armenian International Women's Association, Hamazkaine-Boston, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, New England Poetry Club, Tekeyan Cultural Association. Sunday, November 4, at 4 p.m. Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic Street (Route 3), Arlington.

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

**SEPTEMBER 21 — St. James Hye Café. Join us for delicious food and fellowship!** Kebab, Falafel, Imam Bayeldi, and more. Doors open at 6:15pm. For more information visit [www.stjameswatertown.org](http://www.stjameswatertown.org). St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown.

**SEPTEMBER 23 — "Lights, Camera, Stories!" An evening with award-winning filmmaker Bared Maronian,** Sunday, 5 p.m. Take 1) Screening of Women of 1915; Take 2) Exclusive footage of Armenia's recent Velvet Revolution; Take 3) Reveal of Bared's Titanic Love. Co-sponsored by AIWA & AWWA, proceeds to benefit the Women's Support Center in Yerevan, and Hanganak Elderly Clinic in Stepanakert. Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library, 33 Marrett Rd., Lexington. Tickets: \$75 - Reception to follow.

**SEPTEMBER 29 — The 7th Annual Benefit Dance to benefit Syrian Armenian Relief and Fund for Armenian Relief.** Saturday, Armenian Church of Our Saviour, Cultural Center, 34 Boynton St., Worcester. Dance to the music and vocals of the Mugrditchian Ensemble with local favorites Mark Der Mugrditchian, Kevin Magarian, Arthur Chingris, with special guest artists Greg Krikorian and George Reghellis. Sponsored by the Armenian Churches of Worcester County: Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, Armenian Church of Our Saviour, Armenian Church of the Martyrs, Soorp Asdvadzadzin Armenian Apostolic Church. Doors Open at 7.30 p.m. For tickets, reservations or information contact Jay Kapur (508) 740-4464, Eva Kopoyan (508) 757-6195, Magdy Faltalous (508) 278-3805 or Donna Barsamian (508) 769-3279. Donation \$35 in advance, \$45 at the door. Deluxe Mezze, coffee and dessert, with cash bar.

**OCTOBER 12-13 — St. James 71st Annual Bazaar. Delicious Armenian Food and Pastries.** Silent Auction, Attic Treasures, Booths and Vendors. Raffles, Children's Activities, and more. Details to follow. St. James

Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more information contact 617.923.8860 or [info@stthagop.com](mailto:info@stthagop.com) or visit [www.stjameswatertown.org](http://www.stjameswatertown.org).

**NOVEMBER 30 and DECEMBER 1 — Trinity Christmas Bazaar, Friday, 12 noon-9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.;** Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge MA. Save the date; details to follow. For further information, contact the Church office, 617.354.0632 or email [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org).

**DECEMBER 9 — Christmas Holiday Concert — Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra,** 7 p.m., Church Sanctuary, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Save the date; details to follow. For further information, call the Church office, 617.354.0632 or email [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org).

**DECEMBER 16 — Candlelit Labyrinth Peace Walk, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway,** Boston, Sunday, 4:30-5:30 p.m., Walk the Candlelit Labyrinth. Tie a Ribbon on the Wishing Tree. Hot Chocolate & Desserts, hosted by The Bostonian Hotel. RSVP appreciated [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**SEPTEMBER 18, 2019 — SAVE THE DATE! InterContinental Hotel, Boston.** Extraordinary Benefit for Armenian Heritage Park's Endowed Fund for Care

## NEW JERSEY

**SEPTEMBER 23 — St. Leon Armenian Church Women's Guild hosts a 90th anniversary celebration** on Sunday. With a commemorative luncheon following the Divine Liturgy, at 1 p.m., in Abajian Hall. Honoring 22 Women's Guild Members with between four and six decades of service. Reservations by September 15. Contact Margaret Ajemian, 201-914-0354 or [lynnberberian@gmail.com](mailto:lynnberberian@gmail.com). Send checks to Lynn Berberian at 823 Peachtree Lane, Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417. Cost is \$30 per person, \$15 for children 12 and under. St. Leon Armenian Church, 12-61 Saddle River Road, Fair Lawn.

**SEPTEMBER 30 — Armenia Fund USA and Ardzagang Armenian TV are proud to present Artash Asatryan and Band, guest singer Grisha Asatryan,** from Armenia on Sunday, 4 p.m. Don't miss the performance by the son and grandson of the legendary Armenian singer Aram Asatryan! Proceeds will benefit Fruitful Artsakh Project. Location: Bergen PAC, 30 N Van Brunt St, Englewood, NJ. Tickets: \$50, \$70, \$90. Please call Box Office 201-227-1030 or visit [www.bergenPAC.org](http://www.bergenPAC.org)

## WASHINGTON, D.C.

**SEPTEMBER 24-25 — Armenian Assembly of America's National Advocacy Conference** will take place in Washington, D.C. Join us on Monday for the conference and welcome reception, and on Tuesday for the advocacy day on Capitol Hill, cocktail reception, and gala honoring Annie Simonian Totah. Special hotel rates are available at the Marriott Marquis. Visit [www.aimhye.com](http://www.aimhye.com) for tickets and more information.

*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.*

## New Jersey Association of Verismo Opera to Hold Auditions for Chorus to Perform in Bellini's 'Norma'

ENGLEWOOD, N.J. — The New Jersey Association of Verismo Opera's Artistic Director Lucine Amara announces the Verismo Opera Chorus will hold open auditions for singers in August and September. Professional, amateur, and retired male and female singers may apply.

Auditions take place at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, located at 840 Soldier Hill Road in Emerson, NJ, on August 22 and 29 and September 5 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

The Verismo Opera Chorus performs in the New Jersey Association of Verismo Opera's new production of Vincenzo Bellini's "Norma" on October 28. The company presents this dramatic work at 3 p.m. at the Bergen Performing Arts Center, located at 30 North Van Brunt Street, in Englewood.

Under the direction of Associate Conductor/Chorus Director Michael Wittenburg, the

Verismo Opera Chorus performs live singing in Italian. Preparation includes instruction in the pronunciation of the text in Italian, vocal warm-ups, learning and memorizing the words and music and following detailed staging. The opera is fully staged, and the cast performs in costume accompanied by an orchestra led by Principal Conductor/Music Director Maestra Lucy Arner.

Male singers, representing all vocal ranges and ages, are especially needed. Adult applicants require a rudimentary working ability to read music and experience singing. Teenagers, ages 17 to 19, may also audition for the Verismo Opera Chorus and must read music and have some prior vocal experience singing with a school, choir, or another performing group or organization. Previous stage experience and foreign language study are desirable,

but are not a necessity. Preference is given to applicants with these skills and experiences.

During the audition process, a pitch matching and range exercise assesses each singer's appropriate placement within the chorus. Applicants may bring a short song to perform for the audition. Vocalists accepted to the Verismo Opera Chorus stay for the rehearsal that evening as a trial basis. Singers invited to join the chorus pay a nominal fee of \$60 to cover costs for the production.

The audition site is handicapped accessible and designated handicapped parking is available in the parking lot. Restrooms are available for wheelchair access. Vocalists requiring a special accommodation or with specific questions about the physical features of a facility where Verismo Opera performs may call at least two

weeks prior to the audition.

For all auditions, singers must make an appointment in advance by contacting [info@verismoopera.org](mailto:info@verismoopera.org). Applicants complete and submit an application located at <http://verismoopera.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Verismo-Opera-Chorus-Application.pdf>.

The New Jersey Association of Verismo Opera, a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization headquartered in Fort Lee, has been an integral part of the region's classical music culture. Led by Metropolitan Opera luminary Lucine Amara, Verismo Opera is the Bergen Performing Arts Center's house opera company. Verismo Opera provides performing opportunities for artists, directs an international vocal competition drawing artists worldwide, and organizes opera workshops and master classes.



## COMMENTARY

## A Time of Reckoning

By Edmond Y. Azadian

At one Armenia-Diaspora convocation in Yerevan long ago, where more than 3,000 participants were attending, a dramatic incident took place. Prime Minister Vazgen Sargsyan, who had just returned from the US, had announced his determination to eradicate corruption in Armenia. He was a larger-than-life figure with a booming voice commensurate with his physical presence. As he delivered his speech, he tried to reassure his diasporan audience that Armenia would establish more transparent laws to secure foreign investors. Then, he added, "Some officials in the highest levels of our government have been pleading to provide personal guarantees to foreign investors. There is no such thing as personal guarantees. We have to apply the laws rigorously." And he looked at President Robert Kocharyan seated on the dais. At that moment, I saw Kocharyan visibly shrinking on his seat, since he had been running around and giving personal assurances to the investors.

At that moment, I felt that Kocharyan's destiny was doomed.

Little did I know that the roles would be reversed when on October 27, 1999, the parliament massacre took place and Vazgen Sargsyan and Speaker of Parliament Karen Demirchyan were among the first victims.

All along, people viewed the three powerful statesmen, namely Demirchyan, Sargsyan and Kocharyan, as a trio that worked in tandem.

The October massacre came to prove that they had been contenders for power and one had to eliminate the others to inherit that absolute power. The person emerged to be Robert Kocharyan.

The head of the terrorists, Nairi Hounanyan, summoned Kocharyan to the parliament to negotiate a deal for his surrender. Kocharyan reached the parliament and had a one-on-one discussion with Hounanyan. No one, to this day, has been aware of the content of that discussion. But since October 27, 1999, a cloud of

Kocharyan is accused of "overthrowing the constitutional order" in the aftermath of the disputed presidential elections held in February 2008, which was alleged to have been won through vote rigging.

Since then, the opposition has refused to recognize the legality of Sargsyan's election. And ever since, tension has been building up, which eventually resulted in the Velvet Revolution of last May.

Kocharyan's lawyers insist that he enjoys immunity from prosecution by virtue of Article 140 of Armenia's constitution. The article specifically states: "During the term of his/her tenure, and thereafter, the president of the Republic may not be prosecuted and subjected to liability for actions deriving from his or her status."

Kocharyan himself has repeatedly defended the post-election crackdown, saying that it prevented a violent seizure of power by the opposition, led by Ter-Petrosian.

There is a sigh of relief in Armenia. People believe that finally the day of reckoning has arrived.

There is a confluence of legal channels and the public mood. People are so angry that they demand the prosecution and punishment of Kocharyan with the full weight of the law.

Of course, there are dissenting voices. Understandably, Serzh Sargsyan's Republican Party was not happy with Kocharyan's arrest and it has published a statement accusing the government of taking the action because of political motivations. The ARF (Dashnaksutyun) leadership of Armenia has also issued a statement of protest.

The party had been the beneficiary of Kocharyan and Sargsyan's largess. Kocharyan had released from jail the Dro plotters who had intended to overthrow Ter-Petrosian's government. Later on, the party was revamped and joined Serzh Sargsyan's coalition government only to jump ship and join the Velvet Revolution on the day Pashinyan was elected prime minister.

At this point, Kocharyan stands accused of crimes on March 1, 2008 but people have been demanding the government to unlock the secrets of the October massacre.

Kocharyan is also answerable for amassing his reported \$4-billion fortune. Some people put the value of his family's net worth at around \$10 billion.



suspicion has been hanging over Kocharyan's head. A proper prosecution was not conducted but the fact that Kocharyan benefitted from the outcome of the crime unofficially made him the main suspect. He did not allow the due process of law to take its course, which in a way, confirmed those suspicions.

Last Friday, July 27, Kocharyan was arrested at the Yerevan District Court for another crime, one he allegedly had committed on March 1, 2008. Huge rallies had followed the February 2008 presidential election, contesting the result which had brought Serzh Sargsyan to power.

The transfer of power had not taken place yet and technically Kocharyan still called the shots. After long and persistent protests, Kocharyan ordered the army to clear out Freedom Square. In the ensuing melee, eight citizens and two policemen were killed. Then, Sargsyan ascended the throne, marching through the blood of those victims. The rallies had been organized by the former President Levon Ter-Petrosian, with Nikol Pashinyan at his side. People never forgot nor forgave Kocharyan for that crime.

His accusers have been figuratively asking how he came from Karabakh with two shirts and now he is sitting on a huge pile of cash, when half of Armenia's population is suffering in poverty or abandoning its homeland to find jobs elsewhere.

He has been the most arrogant and insensitive public official.

The Velvet Revolution brought not only justice and unity to Armenia but hope for recovering economically and reversing the emigration trend.

Citizens are aware of the threat of impending war and ironically they are asking the war to come today rather than tomorrow because there is such solidarity between the citizenry and the army. Of course, no one wishes for the disasters and ravages of war, but today, people in Armenia stand united to confront the enemy.

Although Pashinyan promised no vendetta against prior office holders when he started his revolution, the people are angry at Kocharyan, thinking he does not deserve mercy.

As due process of the law is applied, people will be vindicated and gratified as justice is served and a day of reckoning greeted.

## Mirror Spectator



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## COMMENTARY

# A Toxic 'Brotherhood': Inside Incels' Dark Online World

By Jesselyn Cook

This week I received several angry messages after writing an article about involuntarily celibate men, or "incels," and the misogynist forums where they talk about "looksmaxing."

Most came from members of these forums, including a man who sent me a sarcasm-riddled email suggesting I could use "some information firsthand." So I called him.

On the phone, he spoke softly and repeatedly apologized for seeming anxious. "I don't talk to people often," he said, asking that I refer to him only as "Eric," which is not his real name.

Eric, 19, has never had sex. Asked whether he's ever kissed a girl, he laughed. Like so many other dejected men who populate incel groups, he believes he will be alone forever an inescapable fate he blames on his perceived ugliness. He says he feels hopeless, unwanted and deeply angry at women and society for rejecting him.

Currently unemployed, Eric spends most of his time on incel message boards, including Lookism.net, where he's known only by his username: "I Already Know I'm Ugly." Many of his posts there are rife with self-hatred and despair. Others are laced with racism and misogyny.

"I'll admit that I have gotten very bitter and angry," he said. "I've said angry things, but I've never actually wanted to do anything violent."

Violently misogynist rhetoric is widespread in incel groups, where members routinely talk about a movement to "strike back" at women for depriving them of sex something to which many feel entitled. Thousands of lonely men like Eric are drawn in by the allure of camaraderie. But the distorting, echo chamber quality of the internet can fuel radicalization within these networks.

"You feel like brothers to me," one man wrote to the forum Incels.me in April. "Never before have I felt so loved, or surrounded by people like me." As is common in the group, his posts became angrier over time shifting from queries such as "How do I make friends online?" to lurid descriptions of violent and sexually depraved fantasies, and a threat to commit mass murder. According to his posts, he's 18 years old. He could not be reached for an interview.

Incels websites are attractive to these men for many reasons. For Eric, they offer access to an empathetic community that he can visit from inside his own home, where he feels most comfortable because no one can see his "subhuman" face.

While not all men who join incel groups appear to hate women, experts say their toxic forums instill and perpetuate misogyny, self-pity and rage. There, in what can seem like a collective murder fantasy, the idea of an "incel rebellion" or "beta uprising" is pervasive.

After a man went on a rampage in Toronto on Sunday, killing a young woman and a 10-year-old girl, incel groups erupted in excitement over the possibility that he was a fellow incel.

"Another hERo?" one man asked the forum Incels.me, emphasizing "ER" in reference to Elliot Rodger, a self-proclaimed incel who killed himself and six others in 2014. "ERs need to get lessons from ISIS on how to kill a ton of people at once," said another, apparently critiquing the Toronto shooter's "low" death toll. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack, but police said there's no evidence to support that claim.

Rodger, who was 22 years old at the time of his murder-suicide in Isla Vista, Calif., spent his short adult life dreaming of ways to punish women for inflicting his "sexual starvation." He belonged to multiple misogynist forums that, he said, "confirmed many of the theories I had about how wicked and degenerate women really are."

Rodger is a virtual martyr among radical incels, who cheer each other on as they fantasize about raping and killing women, and emulating his massacre. So far, at least three men who reportedly described him in glorifying terms online have gone on killing sprees. Extremism experts warn that as incel groups proliferate, the threat of another mass murder grows.

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), which tracks hateful ideologies, added "male supremacy" groups including incels to its hate map earlier this year.

"We saw how many of the individuals in the groups that we traditionally track white nationalists, neo-Nazis and so

on were coming through male supremacist groups," said Keegan Hankes, a senior research analyst at the SPLC. "Incel forums tend to have more violent rhetoric than I'm used to seeing on even white supremacist sites."

Hankes warned that these message boards can "play a very large role" in the radicalization of incels. "For [new members] who weren't articulating violent sentiment before, they're getting exposed to a very heavy dosage of it," he said.

In April, a man rammed a van into a crowd of pedestrians in downtown Toronto, killing eight women and two men. Shortly before the attack, the suspect, 25-year-old Alek Minassian, posted a message online that celebrated Rodger and the "Incel Rebellion."

Soon, he too was lauded as a source of inspiration by incels online. "Perhaps we can get a new hero inspired by Alek Minassian, no?" wrote a member of Incels.me, which is one of the largest and most extreme incel groups. Others suggested he didn't go far enough: "I hope the next [assailant] throws in a rape or two ... I'm tired of the same ol death count."

Just as ISIS members and sympathizers often eagerly claim responsibility for attacks the terrorist group may not have committed as a way to promote their ideology, incels are generally quick to celebrate mass murders as incel killing sprees even before the perpetrators have been identified. And just as researchers have identified "the innate need for camaraderie" as a key reason why young men join jihadist groups, incels' desperation for a sense of belonging can drive them into radical misogynist networks.

These are only two of many similarities between incels and jihadi sympathizers, said one longtime incel observer who spoke on condition that he'd be known by his alias "Reformed Incel." A self-described celibate man in his late 30s, he first joined incel forums as a teenager but later distanced himself from the community as it grew and became more toxic.

"I'd say the trend of the 'average incel' is getting more extreme," said Reformed Incel. "The more moderate voices, the ones who reject the rising extremism and the ones who become successful [in pursuing romantic or sexual relationships] will eventually leave ... What's left are the more extreme voices and the ones who tolerate the hate."

## 'People Need To Pay'

The nearly 6,900 members of Incels.me have exchanged well over a million messages since the website's creation in November. Many are strikingly similar to those written by Rodger and other misogynists-turned-terrorists, and focus on one fantasy in particular: Vengeance.

Typical posts on the forum describe not only a desire to have sex with women but also to hurt, humiliate, control and punish them.

"I don't see women as human. All they are, or should be, is slaves to men," one member of Incels.me, who says he is 25 years old, wrote in April. "Let's start beating women again."

This man, whose username is "CopeWithTheRope," frequently argues that violence against women is justified. He also writes about ending his life in a dramatic way to "put on a show," because he's convinced women reject him due to his baldness and smaller-than-average penis. Fellow incels have rallied around him and the many others who express suicidal and homicidal desires there, often encouraging them to "go ER" a reference to Rodger's murderous rampage to seek revenge against women and their chosen sexual partners.

"There will be a lot more incels that will go ER as the situation for all man gets worse... as modern feminism pushes society to ruins," one man, whose profile displays a picture of Rodger, wrote on Incels.me. "I can actually see it happening," another agreed.

"I hope it does," responded CopeWithTheRope, who declined to be interviewed. "People need to pay for how they treat us. Examples need to be made."

Radical incels also debate less extreme ways to punish women and "inflict some psychological damage" without "getting into trouble."

They talk gleefully about molesting women on crowded buses, harassing them on social media and catfishing them on dating sites to obtain naked photos for blackmailing purposes, among other things. What emerges in a lot of these discussions is what Hankes describes as "cheerleading," as

men compliment each other's ideas with comments such as "I salute you for taking a stand against the bitch" and "I have the utmost respect for your way of thinking."

## Monitoring Radical Misogyny Online

Most speech is, of course, protected by the First Amendment, and federal agencies such as the FBI cannot surveil or investigate someone "based solely on one's membership of a group or their exercise of First Amendment rights," an FBI spokesperson told HuffPost.

Private companies such as Facebook and Twitter can decide what content is allowable on their sites but have generally failed to keep toxic misogyny off their platforms, despite repeated pledges to combat extremism. In the European Union, lawmakers have taken an interventionist approach by threatening social media companies with new legislation if they fail to crack down on hate speech and extremist content.

Successful efforts to eradicate a hateful online community can often lead to the creation of one or several new hate groups, resembling a game of whack-a-mole.

PUAHate.com, where Rodger wrote "Women are the enemy" and said he wanted to "empower all incels of the world to take action against those who would oppress us," shut down after his killings. But new incel groups quickly popped up, and continue to appear today, including massive pages on Reddit and forums hosted on separate websites.

## A Downward Spiral

Incel forums started out as supportive places for lonely people men and women to talk about struggles with romance and dating. Discussions mostly centered on building confidence and helping each other make connections.

"These online communities didn't used to be so violently misogynistic and as obsessed with violence as they are now," said David Futrelle, a journalist who has studied male supremacists online for nearly a decade. He believes the problem is only getting worse, something he attributes in part to the rise of the alt-right and intermingling of hate groups online, which has "ramped up the viciousness to a whole new level."

Today, incel forums are populated almost entirely by men, and discussions of extreme violence against women are commonplace.

As HuffPost recently uncovered, an incel who is also a white supremacist and a self-proclaimed pedophile is running for Congress. On various incel websites, including one he created, he argues that women and girls should be "rape-slaves" for men who can't find willing sexual partners. Such sentiments, though extreme, are not uncommon on incel pages.

Incel networks took a turn for the worse "as the hateful side of the Internet grew," said the woman who coined the term for involuntary celibacy. Alana, who asked to be identified only by her first name, created the first online incel community in 1997. Known as the Involuntary Celibate Project, her group began as a mailing list for others like her who had struggled with dating. It drew in men and women from around the world, including Reformed Incel.

Back then, Alana recalled, subscribers "were giving each other some advice, and it was very positive in that way." She said they "felt that they were getting support and they were feeling a little bit better, they had a little bit of hope."

As Alana, Reformed Incel and Futrelle have observed, these communities that once offered encouragement and validation now portray women as evil and incels as victims.

"They essentially magnify these guys' negative feelings and encourage them to feel hopeless," Futrelle said. "If a guy doesn't feel like there's much point in living, he knows that if he goes out and does something violent, he's going to be celebrated by all these people on these message boards ... I've been expecting more [incel attacks] for a long time."

## A Toxic 'Brotherhood'

Incel forums are particularly toxic for young men and teenage boys who can more easily get "sucked into" a vision of a bleak and hopeless future, said Reformed Incel.

"You could be like I was a teenager who doesn't have any luck with girls," he said. These men "resort to toxic online forums where they feel better since they are relating to people who understand their struggles."

Many on incel forums appear to be quite young. HuffPost found individuals claiming to be just 14 years old on Incels.me. The group recently surveyed its members and found that almost 10 percent say they are under 18 years old. An additional 35 percent say they are 18 to 21, according to the study, which could not be independently verified.

Like Eric, many incels say they are mainly seeking friendship in their networks, which they sometimes refer to as "brotherhoods." New members are often embraced by other incels.

## Leaving Is the Hard Part

"Praying that this site goes down and stays down," Eric wrote on Lookism.net in June. He said he's tried to leave incel forums before, but he always ends up coming back.

Someday, he told me, he hopes he'll be able to quit the incel community for good.

"They're very toxic and not good for the mind," he said. "But it's a place for outcasts like me. The only place I belong."

(This article originally appeared on the Huffington Post.)



## COMMENTARY



## My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## The Cult of Personality in Azerbaijan: Idolizing Former President Heydar Aliyev

The Worship of former President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev is so exaggerated that an American blogger Andreas Moser on his visit to Baku and Ganja encountered the “great leader’s” monuments and buildings everywhere he went. Moser wrote in his blog a satirical report, excerpts of which are reproduced below for our readers’ great amusement!

Moser started his sarcastic article as follows: “Before I went to Azerbaijan, I was like you: I didn’t know Heydar Aliyev. But then, I had already gotten sick and tired of him by the second day.... Whether you want it or not, Heydar Aliyev will be your guide and constant companion in Azerbaijan. When you fly to Baku, you arrive at Heydar Aliyev Airport. When you arrive by train, you travel on the Heydar Aliyev Express, get off at Heydar Aliyev Station and walk along the wide Heydar Aliyev Boulevard to Heydar Aliyev Square, past Heydar Aliyev Foundations, Heydar Aliyev Schools and Heydar Aliyev Institutes. If you want to take a break from Heydar Aliyev and thus prefer to travel across Azerbaijan by car, you will still see a photo of the ex-president at every intersection, every turnout and every roundabout.”

Moser started his journey by visiting a park, naturally named the Heydar Aliyev Park, which was “larger than some independent states.... When you have crossed the widest street in the world [12-lanes] after a march of ten minutes, you have reached the parking area. A car park like the one in

front of the Olympic stadium. It was planned big enough that all cars in Azerbaijan could park here simultaneously. But it is empty. The public squares in the city were already overdimensioned, but this here is megalomania at a North Korean level.... Once you have walked through the triumphal arch (as big as in Paris and, for the avoidance of any doubt, adorned with the name of Heydar Aliyev), which is the actual entrance, you have to traipse for another mile to reach the Heydar Aliyev Museum. Just like people had to walk through a long hall in the royal palace before meeting the king.”

Making his way through the Park’s army of cleaners and scrubbers, “cleaning maniacs,” Moser came across an oversized statue of the “great leader” with his name engraved on it in golden letters, in front of the Heydar Aliyev Museum. Moser discovered that “the museum is three floors high, with a glass dome, much marble, much gold and white leather armchairs. Typical dictator kitsch. If you have ever visited the Gaddafis, the Husseins or the Trumps, you are familiar with it. I am the only visitor, which startles the man behind the desk so much that he turns off his YouTube video, jumps up and henceforth follows my every step, always four to five meters to my side and always looking at his phone when I look at him. We are the only two people in the whole building.”

While the massive building of the Heydar Aliyev Museum is highly impressive, there is not much in it, except for some propaganda about the “great leader.” The Museum “only has dozens of display boards about the life of Heydar Aliyev with hundreds of photos of him. Protected by glass, there are a few books about and by him. Two-meter wide TV screens are ready to show biopics....” Moser was also impressed by Heydar Aliyev’s vast collection of photos: “Heydar Aliyev in a field with farmers, Heydar Aliyev with soldiers, Heydar Aliyev with children, Heydar Aliyev as an archaeologist, Heydar Aliyev with a water melon, Heydar Aliyev at a busy market.”

Moser presented Heydar Aliyev’s background by quoting prize-winning Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski who wrote: “At first, Heydar Aliyev was head of the KGB in Azerbaijan, then, in the seventies, First Secretary of the Communist Party of the republic. He was a disciple of Brezhnev, who appointed him Deputy Prime Minister of the

USSR. He was fired from that post by Gorbachev in 1987. Heydar Aliyev was part of Brezhnev’s circle – a group standing out for deep corruption, preference for any kind of luxury and overall debauchery. They displayed that corruption with provoking openness, not ashamed in the least.”

Moser stated that the Polish journalist’s description “could be the motto for the museum, actually the whole park or indeed for the whole country. For someone who was already famous for open corruption under communism, an independent Azerbaijan with gushing oil wells must have been the mother of all dreams. Thus, it comes as no surprise to meet the whole Heydar Aliyev family in the Panama Papers [offshore secret accounts].”

Moser concluded his humorous article by remembering other Heydar Aliyev Parks in Podgorica, Montenegro, Tbilisi, Istanbul, Ankara, Bucharest, Kiev, “and maybe soon in your hometown. You simply have to talk to your city council about it. Azerbaijan will pay for everything.”

In his last sentence, Moser described Azerbaijan “as a strange country. But at least I don’t have to visit North Korea anymore.”

In addition to Moser’s article, Wikipedia has a whole section titled, “Heydar Aliyev’s Cult of Personality” as follows: “Every city and town in Azerbaijan has a street named after Heydar Aliyev, including one of the central avenues of capital Baku. According to official information, there are 60 museums and centers of Heydar Aliyev in Azerbaijan.”

Furthermore, there are statues of Heydar Aliyev in over a dozen countries around the world. However, Azerbaijan suffered a major embarrassment in Mexico City when its sensible City Council decided to remove the massive statue of Heydar Aliyev from a park on the city’s main avenue that Azerbaijan had paid to have renovated. “Human rights activists had objected to the statue and pointed to the repressive nature of Mr. Aliyev’s rule,” according to BBC News.

My advice to Azeri worshippers of Heydar Aliyev is to worry more about the fate of their current President, Ilham Aliyev, rather than the deceased Heydar Aliyev, because Armenia’s recent ‘Velvet Revolution’ may soon spread to Azerbaijan, which might be more bloody than velvety.

# Finding Common Ground between Random Mass Violence and Armenian Genocide

By Jack Sarmanian  
EdD, LICSW, LCSW

Shortly after the mass shooting at the Las Vegas Harvest Music Festival on October 1, 2017, at which 58 people were killed and 851 people were injured, I and many other mental health workers went to volunteer with the Red

Cross, to provide intensive support to the families of those killed and injured.

Reflecting on this tragedy, I thought about the randomness of the shooting, which is in total contrast to the experience of the Armenians which took place during the mass killings and massive deportations from their homeland in 1915, perpetrated by the Ottoman government, and which came to be known as the first Genocide of the early 20th century. The Armenian

of state to begin the process of impacting the chaos that ensued. The support involved many agencies of local, state and federal government: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Homeland Security, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), law enforcement, etc. The FBI was in charge coordinating the entire response and invited the Red Cross as well as many other health, mental health, and social agencies to participate.

We worked in teams, first in the community, beginning with hospital visits to work with the families of victims and to provide intense support to the families of the deceased. Within the Las Vegas Convention Center, a Family Assistance Center was established, which became the central facility offering maximum support to those who were affected by the chaos and tragedy they experienced. Our primary task as Disaster Mental Health Workers was to help these people regain their sense of self and feeling of safety and control. The goal was to help them gain composure of their lives and day-to-day activities.

You could only imagine the impact on the concert-goers in Las Vegas; the disbelief, shock, sadness, anxiety, fear, depres-

sion, so different from the Las Vegas I had just left. It must be our goal to provide care and protection to all our neighbors by reflecting concern, tolerance, patience and involvement in our communities. We must appreciate our community interveners such as first responders, firemen, emergency management and police to assure we engage, care for and provide safety and protection to all our neighbors to prevent the “heartbreak” as experienced in Las Vegas. It seems to me that fewer nations have experienced that “pathway” as have the Armenian people. They struggled with the havoc and chaos of the Genocide perpetrated by the Turkish Government of 1915 in order to establish themselves as they assimilated into the American community. Their goal to establish family, neighborhood, community and the church was paramount for them to begin the grieving process and deal with the loss, chaos and separation of family members. Their “heartbreak” was necessary to begin the goal of survival – taking control to work, develop communities and instill the Armenian values into each facet of their lives.

The chaos I witnessed in Las Vegas was a reminder of the savagery and madness that still exists – hatred, racism, abuse and destruction of values and families, neighborhoods and institutions which place tremendous pressure on law enforcement, first responders, firemen and government. We must never forget our “Pathway to Heartbreak,” which has given us the strength, courage and endurance to build what we have in America today. We must teach our children the need to care for and protect all people in our present culture through the values of American Culture and the essence of the Armenian Heritage.

Also, we must continue to appreciate the struggles of present day refugees who seek asylum from the oppression and chaos of their homelands.

We must always remember our continuous struggles and the Armenian Genocide that altered our existence forever.

THE CHAOS I WITNESSED IN LAS VEGAS WAS A REMINDER OF THE SAVAGERY AND MADNESS THAT STILL EXISTS — HATRED, RACISM, ABUSE AND DESTRUCTION OF VALUES AND FAMILIES, NEIGHBORHOODS AND INSTITUTIONS WHICH PLACE TREMENDOUS PRESSURE ON LAW ENFORCEMENT, FIRST RESPONDERS, FIREMEN AND GOVERNMENT.

Genocide was a tremendous mass casualty event causing the death of nearly 1.5 million Armenians. I thought about our forebears, who witnessed and experienced the killings and chaos inflicted by the Turkish Army.

From the moment I arrived on October 5 at the Mandalay Bay Resort, I recognized the morbid feelings of chaos, panic, loss, intense anxiety, shock, disbelief, depression and grief. It was our role as Disaster Mental Health Workers to engage the survivors of “the deadliest mass shooting committed by an individual in the United States”

The vast majority of the Red Cross volunteers came from out-

side and guilt was massive for the thousands at the event. Their struggle would be a long and arduous process, involving the grieving process to deal with losses and to continue with their lives. As Poet Wesley McNair stated, “Heartbreak, however hard it is to go through, is one of the main avenues of humanity.” We cannot overlook and need to acknowledge the tremendous resiliency noted by the many individual acts of courage, bravery and commitment to their fellow concertgoers by patrons, first responders, police, security and staff of the hotels as they sought safety and security from the chaos of the shooting.

I certainly could appreciate returning to my home State of

(Jack Sarmanian EdD, LICSW, LCSW, is a selectman in Edgcomb, Maine. He has also been an American Red Cross volunteer since 2010 serving as a Disaster Mental Health Specialist. Sarmanian spent 28 years in Massachusetts and New York counseling youth and families involved with drug addiction and domestic violence issues. In 2010, he was recruited by the American Red Cross to serve as a disaster mental health counselor. Sarmanian specializes in helping victims deal with pain and depression associated with a tragedy.)



# Armenian Folk Dance Main Feature at International Festival in Scotland

FINDHORN, Scotland – Armenian folk dance was the main theme of the international Findhorn Festival of Sacred Music, Song and Dance, held July 14-20, at the Findhorn Park in Scotland. The festival, now in its 27th year, celebrates the transformative and healing power of circle dance and brings hundreds of people together every July to dance in Scotland.

Shakeh Major Tchilingirian, an acclaimed solo dance artist, choreographer and teacher, was the special guest teacher at the festival, where she conducted daily workshops for nearly 100 participants, accompanied with presentations on Armenian history, culture and folk dances.

Laura Shannon, known worldwide for her pioneering work with women's ritual dances, said: "Shakeh teaches with great awareness of the sacred dimension of Armenian dances and their capacity for personal transformation, as well as historical context." She explains that the "motifs and patterns" of Armenian dances "are very ancient, forming a nonverbal language of movements which are deeply symbolic, powerfully evocative and profoundly spiritual."

Tchilingirian brought traditional Armenian dance to the festival for the first time. The repertoire included a mixture of folk and lyrical style dances. Her program was designed to give the participants an opportunity to experience, as she put it, "the living and blossoming culture of the Armenians in the homeland and the Diaspora." Particular dances and music were chosen to create a sense of spiritual connection with the land, with nature, and human roots that continue to flourish. "This was a journey of discovery, connection and reflection through dance," she explained.

London-based musicians Tigran Aleksanyan (*duduk, zurna*) and Ara Petrosyan (*dhol*) accompanied her with exhilarating live music. Resident teachers at Findhorn, including long-



Shakeh Major Tchilingirian and dancers

standing community members Barbara Swetina, Peter Vallance, Rory O'Connell and friends, Sheila Pettit (choir) and Maya Buckley (orchestra) shared their knowledge and experience with a series of master classes. The Festival Choir and Orchestra provided music for the final night's celebration.

Laura Shannon, who has travelled widely to research Greek, Armenian, Balkan and Roma traditional dances in their original settings, taught deeply meditative circle dances. Kostantis Kourmadias and Nikolas Angelopoulos accompanied her classes with

exquisite live music, as well as played with the Armenian musicians on two special occasions.

Sacred dance in Findhorn serves as a spiritual practice and combines traditional circle dances with modern choreographies. It took

root in the Findhorn community in 1976, when visiting dance master Bernhard Wosien shared a collection of traditional circle dances and modern meditative choreographies as tools for group connection and inner work.



Shakeh Major Tchilingirian, fourth from the left in the front row, with musicians and dancers

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## Pashinyan Introduces Government's Economic Priorities to Russian-Armenian Businesspeople in St. Petersburg

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia (Armenpress) – Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, on a working visit here on July 26, touched upon the government's economic priorities during the meeting with dozens of Armenian businessmen in St. Petersburg. He said one of the priorities is the development of high technologies.

"Our overall priority is to make Armenia a country of high technologies, our goal is to promote the establishment of productions based on high technologies. Today there is a great interest, for instance, towards the production of solar power plants. We will do everything for these factories to be constructed. The second priority, which is at the examination stage, is the diamond production, diamond cutting which previously was quite developed in Armenia. At this stage we are studying the opportunities. The next priority is agriculture. We need new understanding in this field: establishment of greenhouses, intensive gardens, production of anti-hail networks are very important. The development of sectors directed for export plays an important role. Tourism is the next direction. In this case we need to pay specific focus on Armenia's nature protection: providing ecologically clean environment and food is very important for becoming a tourism center," Pashinyan said.

Pashinyan stated that investment, rather than charity, should be encouraged. "Let us try

to invest money so that they won't be spent with a consumption logic, but will create an added value. We need to change the logic of charity. The glorification of charity should be replaced by the glorification of work," he said.

Pashinyan expressed confidence that the Armenian government will not fail. "Today Armenia has firm positions in foreign policy, the leadership has the people's complete trust in the domestic policy which we will definitely exercise. I guarantee that Armenia's PM is not involved in any corruption deal and will not be, we will ensure equal rules of the game for all, it's your choice to use this or not."

"I want to invite all businessmen to Armenia to conduct an economic activity, for which all previously existing obstacles are eliminated. Another emphasis is also worth mentioning: among these obstacles, perhaps the most important has been and somehow still remains corruption, although generally speaking it is said that there is no corruption in Armenia anymore, there are just some remnants. I assure you that there is an active fight against corruption which will continue," Pashinyan said. "For us it's important to clearly draw that line that our fight cannot be against the business. We guarantee the security of investments," he said, adding that the government has only one condition for investments: it is expected that the business activity should be legal.