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Macron, Pashinyan Meet in Paris

PARIS (RFE/RL) — French President Emmanuel Macron met with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Paris on Friday, September 14, for talks focused on an upcoming summit of Francophonie nations to be held in Yerevan next month.

According to the Armenian prime minister's spokesman, Macron and Pashinyan also discussed issues pertaining to the business forum to be organized within the framework of the Francophonie summit in the Armenian capital.

Greeting Pashinyan, Macron reportedly highlighted the importance of the Armenian leader's visit to France, expressing conviction that "it will promote and give a new impetus to the further development of friendly relations between the two countries."

The French president underlined that his country is ready to continue the efforts aimed at "expanding close cooperation with friendly Armenia in different spheres."

The French leader reportedly expressed confidence that the upcoming Francophonie summit in Yerevan will be held at a high level. The Armenian prime minister, for his part, said: "I am convinced that our meeting will give a new quality to



French President Emmanuel Macron with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan

our privileged relations based on centuries-old historical friendship." He stressed the importance of Armenia's hosting the 2018 Francophonie Summit, describing it as one of the most important events in Yerevan since the South Caucasus country gained independence in 1991. Pashinyan reaffirmed his government's commitment to

ensure a successful holding of the summit and expressed confidence that "it will contribute to the further rise of the reputation and influence of the Francophonie."

The French president is due to visit Yerevan for the events on October 11-12.

During the meeting at the Elysee Palace see MACRON, page 2



Gathering of Boston-area Armenian Legionnaires, August 27, 1922

Remembering the Armenian Victory at the Battle of Arara, September 19, 1918

With so many events to commemorate this year — the centennial of the first Armenian Republic and the 30th anniversary of the massive Spitak earthquake, to mention a few — it is important not to forget other milestones that left a significant imprint on the modern history of the Armenian people.

By Barbara Merguerian

One of these is the Battle of Arara that took place on September 19, 1918, during which a contingent of Armenian volunteer soldiers serving as a special unit of the French Army known as the Armenian Legion (or Gamavors) defeated a combined Turkish and German Army in the opening salvo of the Allied offensive that led a few weeks later to the complete surrender of the Ottoman Turkish Army and the end of World War I in the Middle East.

The victory at Arara took place at a time when the Armenian nation was in a desperate condition, reeling from the savage deportation of its people from their native villages and towns in Western Armenia to deserts in the south that left them homeless, impoverished, and almost without hope for the future. The situation was not much better for Eastern Armenians, struggling to maintain a small republic only a few months old that was facing dangerous enemies on all sides.

see ARARA, page 10

Schiff Seeks Re-Election as National Profile Rises

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

WASHINGTON — Until a couple of years ago, Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA 28) was known well to those in Washington and those in California in his district, as well as Armenians around the US.

Schiff represents the most Armenian district in the country — Glendale, Burbank, Hollywood — and his presence is felt there.

Plus, as a longtime member of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues and its current co-vice president, he has often spoken out about and sought recognition for the Armenian Genocide as well as US aid to Armenia and Artsakh.

However, since April 2017, as the ranking member on the House Select Intelligence Committee which conducts inquiries on Russian interference in the 2016 elections, he has often appeared on television programs to offer his analysis of possible collusion. And he often has disagreed with the see SCHIFF, page 20



Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA- 28th District)



NEWS IN BRIEF

Azeri Forces Break Ceasefire more than 250 Times

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Azerbaijani armed forces have committed nearly 250 individual ceasefire violations from September 9 to 15, according to the Defense Ministry of Artsakh.

The ministry Artsakh forces maintains full control at the frontline and confidently continue carrying out their mission.

The Azerbaijani armed forces have opened cross-border gunfire at the village of Chinari in Armenia's Tavush Province. Chinari official Samvel Saghoyan said the situation has been tense since September 14, and that Azerbaijani troops opened a sustained volley of gunfire at the village at night.

"They were firing large caliber heavy machine guns," he said.

No one was injured in the shooting.

Pope Praises Mekhitarist Order

VENICE (Public Radio of Armenia) — Pope Francis on Sunday, September 16, praised the Armenian Mekhitarist Congregation for its tradition of theological humanism and prophetic ecumenical openness and urged members to continue to provide precious witness, Vatican News reports.

A letter from Pope Francis was read at the conclusion of celebrations marking 300 years from the foundation of the Armenian Mekhitarist Congregation in its Monastery in Venice.

In a letter addressed to Archbishop Boghos Levon Zekian, apostolic administrator of the Armenian Mekhitarist Congregation, the Pope said the congregation "is called to preserve and deepen its charism for the good of all Armenian people."

Francis' message was read in the presence of Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches during celebrations of the Divine Liturgy on the Island of San Lazzaro in Venice.

The Pope said that together with the Mekhitarist Monastery of Vienna, the island of San Lazzaro where the Congregation is based, has become its beating heart.

"Despite a general reduction in numbers, each monk is called, there and everywhere, to keep his horizons open and wide and the bond of communion strong" he said.

The Mekhitarist identity, the Pope continued, consists above all in being entirely consecrated to God.

"Your vocation, he said in conclusion to the monks, cannot be realized without real communion with your brother monks and without a total and joyful respect for your vows of poverty, chastity and obedience" which are an evangelical source of true renewal and strength in the face of the trials we face today.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

'Spitak' Film Trailer Released

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – System Of A Down front man Serj Tankian has shared the first trailer of for “Spitak,” a drama film about the devastating earthquake that struck Armenia in December 1988.

This film, directed by Alexander Kott, was scheduled to open in theaters across Armenia on September 20. The film will premiere in Russia in December accompanied by the soundtrack release. Tankian wrote the musical score for the film.

New Director of Armenian Genocide Museum Appointed

YEREVAN (PanArmenian.net) – Professor Harutyun Marutyan has been elected as the new director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (AGMI), acting director Hayk Demoyan announced in a Facebook post on Friday, September 14.

Demoyan was also running for the post.

Demoyan first became the director of the AGMI in 2006, then took a hiatus to pursue academic career in the United States.

He came back recently and was involved in a public dispute with Minister of Education and Science Arayik Harutyunyan.

Van Damme in Yerevan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Belgian martial artist and movie star Jean-Claude Van Damme was scheduled to visit Armenia over this weekend.

Van Damme, 57, will arrive to make an appearance in the Armenia series of Comedy Club, the Russian stand-up TV show. The filming of the series will take place September 15-16, sponsored by Tashir Group of Companies. Van Damme is best known for his martial arts action films.

The series will also feature Russian show business stars.

Armenia Representatives Discuss Direct Flights from China

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The chair of Armenia's Civil Aviation Committee, Tatevik Revazyan, arrived in Guangzhou, China at the invitation of her Chinese counterparts on September 15.

Revazyan will participate at the World Routes 2018 event in the city, the Foreign Ministry said.

On September 16, the Armenian aviation official took part in the inauguration of the event. Revazyan held a brief meeting with Wang Zhiqing, deputy administrator at the Civil Aviation Administration of China. After the meeting she signed an agreement between the Armenian and Chinese governments on air communications.

During the meeting the sides expressed the opinion that this agreement will serve as the legal basis for establishing direct air communication between the two countries, which in turn will strengthen and develop bilateral relations in various fields.

Revazyan is also expected to meet with executives of Chinese airline companies to discuss the possibilities of establishing direct flights to Armenia.

Wine Festival in Artsakh

STEPANAKERT (Armenpress) – The fifth annual Wine Festival of Artsakh took place September 15 in the village of Togh in the country's Hadrut region.

The traditional fest was organized by the Artsakh ministry of culture, youth affairs and tourism.

Twenty-four winemaking companies from Artsakh and Armenia, as well as individuals engaged in wine production presented their products at the festival.

Travelers from Armenia and abroad visited the event to taste the wine products of Artsakh.

Artsakh's President Bako Sahakyan visited the festival, together with top government officials.



A group photo of participants from 2017

Silicon Valley Heads to Armenia: Top Leaders and VCs Participate in 4th Annual Tech Summit

YEREVAN – HIVE Ventures, the leading venture fund focused on investing in Armenian entrepreneurs, is hosting its fourth annual HIVE Tech Summit in Yerevan, Armenia on Saturday, October 13, at the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies.

HIVE Ventures serves as a bridge between Armenia and Silicon Valley. The fund provides Armenian startups with investment, mentorship, and access to Silicon Valley resources and network. In addition, HIVE helps US-based companies open offices in

Armenia.

To date, HIVE has invested in more than 30 startups across the US and Armenia, including ServiceTitan, Gecko Robotics, Embodied, and CodeFights. HIVE has co-invested with leading venture capital funds including Y Combinator, Iconiq Capital, Bessemer Venture Partners, Founders Fund, Intel Capital and Amazon.

The HIVE Tech Summit will include meetings with startups and investors, and panels and presentations from some of the most successful Silicon

Valley entrepreneurs and investors.

The event will feature speakers from many venture capital funds and companies including Kleiner Perkins, Y Combinator, Base10VC, Founders Embassy, Gecko Robotics, ServiceTitan, Hoodline, Benchmark, Amazon, Pinterest and Slack.

HIVE Ventures was founded in 2014 by Nina Achadjian and is backed by the Hirair and Anna Hovnanian Foundation.

For more information about the Tech Summit, go to <http://www.hiveventures.co>.

Macron, Pashinyan Meet in Paris

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the two leaders also addressed the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, the spokesman, Arman Yeghoyan, said.

Along with the United States and Russia, France co-chairs the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) Minsk Group, an international format promoting a peaceful resolution of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.

According to the information posted on the prime minister's official website, Pashinyan praised the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairing countries, including France's efforts aimed at ensuring peace and stability in the region. The prime minister underlined that Armenia is committed to continue

negotiations to reach a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

“The Armenian prime minister and the French president attached importance to a peaceful settlement of the problem through the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs,” Pashinyan's spokesman added.

The two leaders reportedly agreed to discuss the agenda of the French-Armenian relations in more detail during Macron's state visit to Armenia next month.

During his two-day visit to Paris the Armenian prime minister also held meetings with representatives of the French-Armenian community as well as with business circles of France.

Addressing members of the French

Enterprise Movement today, Pashinyan, in particular, called for French investments in the Armenian economy.

“I want to assure you that all investors will have dialogue-based relations with the Government of Armenia within the limits of honesty and legitimacy. Those who engage in economic activity will not have competitors in the government, since business and politics should be separated, and those who are engaged in politics should not engage in business. The Armenian government has been able to enforce this condition within a short period of time because it enjoys full confidence of the Armenian people,” Pashinyan said, as quoted by his press service.

Converse Bank sponsors Yerevan International Music Festival

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – Converse Bank is the general sponsor of the 12th Annual Yerevan International Music Festival that kicked off on September 10. This year the festival is dedicated to the 2800th anniversary of Yerevan.

Supporting the International Music Festival, Converse Bank makes another contribution to the development and promotion of the cultural sector, the bank said in a press release.

“This is the most important event within the framework of Converse Bank's 25th anniversary events. We are convinced that culture and art are the very important sectors that educate and

mold generations, shape individuals. In this regard, we are confident that the format of society-business cooperation in terms of popularizing culture and art is one of the most effective formats, and with this understanding we have been participating in different projects promoting culture and art for above two decades,” said Artur Hakobyan, the bank's Chief Executive Officer.

The most distinguished cultural initiatives of Converse Bank include Montserrat Caballé's visit to Armenia and Artsakh, a performance of Astor Piazzolla's famous tango opera “Maria de Buenos Aires,” and Yerevan concerts by Barboza trio.

The program of the annual festival features seven symphonic and two chamber concerts, one opera performance, and two solo concerts. Among many works, the Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra will also perform world premieres. Classical music evenings will be held. The festival will close on October 25, with performance of G. Puccini's opera “Madama Butterfly,” which will take place at the National Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet.

All concerts of the festival will be headed by Eduard Topchyan, artistic director and principal conductor of the National Philharmonic Orchestra.



ARMENIA

Australian Chess Master Arianne Caoili to Bike Throughout Historic Armenian Lands in Support of COAF

NEW YORK — Arianne Caoili, wife of Armenian Chess Grandmaster Levon Aronian, will embark on a two-week cycling tour throughout Cilicia, Anatolia and northern Iran this month to raise money for and awareness of Children of Armenia Fund (COAF).

Caoili will start her journey from the medieval Armenian port city of Ayas in Cilicia

on September 21 and will finish the trek in the town of Agarak, located on the Armenian-Iranian border.

Born in Manila, Caoili moved to Armenia in 2013 and has been engaged in various entrepreneurial and philanthropic initiatives. The Australian chess player, born to a Dutch mother and Filipino father, was awarded the title of Woman International Master (WIM) by FIDE and has competed in seven Women's Chess Olympiads.

COAF is an organization dear to Caoili's heart since it is committed to improving the lives of children throughout rural Armenia by giving them opportunities for advancement. She has always been passionate about helping children, especially with regard to education, music and disabilities. The biking tour's fundraising goal of \$5,500 will allow COAF to expand its athletic programs for youth living in six villages of Armenia's Tavush region. Funds will go toward establishing clubs and much needed sporting equipment and salaries for coaches. Tavush, located on the border with Azerbaijan, is prone to sporadic attacks and is in vital need of programs aimed at revitalizing the region and giving youth newfound opportunities and health-oriented activities.

Caoili has utilized her professional background in public and private sector consulting as an advisor to the Armenian government. In 2015, she established Armenia's first boutique



Arianne Caoili at the chessboard



Arianne Caoili with the Armenian tricolor while training in Armenia

strategy consulting firm, Akron Consulting, which specializes in business and public policy advising. She is also owner and editor-in-chief of *Champord*, the only free, mass-distributed newspaper in the Caucasus region, with the largest print run in Armenia. She serves as chairman of the board for the Champord Fund, an organization invested in the development of civil society and the training of young Armenian journalists.

In addition, Caoili is currently the CEO of one of Armenia's largest alcohol distributors, 40 Degrees, a fast-growing, unique and novel start-up which she founded three years ago.

Her cycling expedition will be documented by GoPro action cameras and journalists who will accompany her. Converse Bank has agreed to cover some of the expenses she will incur on her trip. COAF will regularly share footage of Arianne on the road via its social media outlets. Stopping points on the route include Adana, Sis, Gaziantep, Tarsus, Urfa, Diyarbakir, Van, Dogubayazit, and Maku. "I am excited to explore the rich history and amazing culture of medieval and ancient Armenia. Throughout the cycling tour I will encounter the vestiges of Hellenistic and Roman empires in Armenia. Further afield we will discover ancient cultures and temples that predate recorded history," stated Caoili in a recent interview.

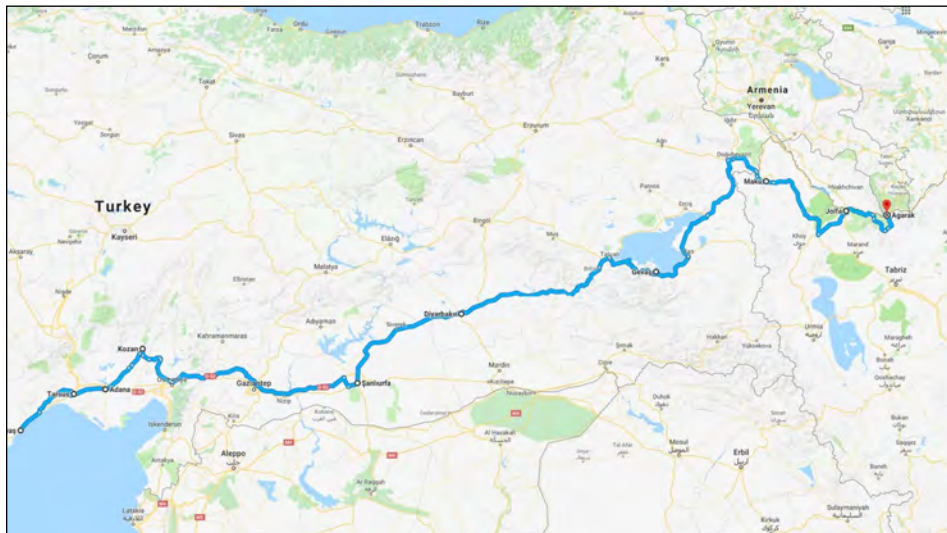
COAF has been active in rural Armenia since

2003, impacting the lives of 75,000 people. Its strategic programs in education, healthcare, child and family services, community engagement and economic development help Armenian village youth access the resources to achieve and, in turn, give back to their communities and the world. COAF believes the new generation of Armenia, together with their families, have the potential and opportunity to revitalize the fabric of community life, and combat the rapid emigration plaguing the country since its independence from the Soviet Union. The organization has dramatically improved the quality of life in 44 village communities over the past 15 years.

COAF SMART is the organization's newest initiative designed to jumpstart the advancement of rural communities by connecting them to the world by use of advanced communication and information technology.

Prominent supporters of COAF's mission include Serj Tankian, Leonardo DiCaprio, John Stamos, Andrea Martin, Tigran Hamasyan, Vanessa Williams, Sean Hayes, Tom Hanks, Jennifer Aniston, Patricia Field, Victor Garber, Ariana Grande, Conan O'Brian, Alexis Ohanian and Usher.

You can support Arianne Caoili's biking tour for COAF #bike4coaf by visiting: <https://www.gofundme.com/arianne-caoili-bike4coaf>



Route to be taken by Arianne Caoili

Letters for Peace Launches First Workshop in Yerevan and Baku

Students Articulate Vision for a Peaceful Future

YEREVAN and BAKU — The youth of Armenia and Azerbaijan believe in the possibility of a peaceful future despite protracted conflict between their governments. At the intersection of creative writing and conflict resolution, the first Letters for Peace (LFP) workshops were held in Yerevan and Baku with the aim of sparking dialogue driven by a spirit of mutual respect and a belief in peaceful coexistence despite ongoing physical, narrative, and ideological conflict.

In July, a two-week workshop took place in Yerevan with eight students from regions throughout Armenia and one diasporan student. The workshop culminated in each student preparing a letter articulating hope for a peaceful future between Armenia and Azerbaijan. These letters were translated into Azerbaijani Turkish and sent to Baku where a two-day response workshop was held in early August. The students in Azerbaijan received the letters and used group exercises to unpack topics of conflict resolution before penning response to their counterparts in Armenia. The letters have all been translated and are available in English, Armenian, and Azerbaijani Turkish at www.lettersforpeace.org.

"I am of course not so naïve to think that a few letters and a few people who think like us will change anything today or tomorrow or next week," wrote Anais, a participant in the Yerevan workshop. "But I do believe that what we represent certainly has the power to do so."

Turan, an economics student who participated in the Baku workshop, reflected on the financial manipulations of war, and the higher quality of life inherent to peace.

"This conflict has been too expensive for both countries," he wrote. "If the resources allocated for the army were spent on education, medicine, and for the increase of welfare, our citizens would have a higher standard of living."

Experts from academia and the nonprofit sector delivered guest lectures that provided relevant details on conflict transformation, regional engagement, and history of the South Caucasus. Workshop discussions and activities encouraged students to explore notions of nationhood, the foundations of their belief systems, and the ideological tensions and functions of war and peace.

"We want to question the world around us, to stand up and say no to conflict and animosity," said Anais. "Through these letters, we are already making a change."

"I want peace as much as the Armenians,"



Participants in Yerevan

said Turan. "I want this game between our two countries, which has caused much loss and expense, to end."

The Letters for Peace pilot project was made possible with support by Davis Projects for Peace and Eurasia Partnership

Foundation. Additional institutional support was provided by Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation, Impact Hub Yerevan, International House New York, and AGBU Armenia. Collaborators are being sought for future iterations of the workshop.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Azeri Billionaire Charged with Attempted Kidnapping of Singer

BAKU (Armenpress) — Russia-based Azerbaijani billionaire businessman Telman Ismailov has been charged with the 2004 attempted kidnapping of pop singer Avraam Russo. Ismailov's cousin Zaur Mardanov is also charged, Meydan reports.

A criminal investigation has been launched against Ismailov and Mardanov.

The two allegedly attempted to kidnap Russo in 2004 to force him into signing contracts for joint concert collaboration. Ismailov and Mardanov deny the charges.

Until 2009, Ismailov owned Europe's then-largest marketplace, Cherkizovsky Market, located in Moscow, Russia.

The court was expected to set bail for the defendants on September 18.

Azeri Human Rights Activist

WARSAW (Armenpress) — Azerbaijani human rights activist Emin Huseynov attended the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Annual Conference on human rights, the rule of law and democracy that kicked off on September 10 in Warsaw, reported Azerbaijani pro-governmental media outlets.

Huseynov, who is famous for regularly criticizing the Aliyev regime, met in Warsaw with the representatives of the Armenian community of Poland and had consultations with the Armenian NGOs.

After the meeting Huseynov had dinner with Armenians at an Armenian restaurant.

This became a reason of wrath among the Azerbaijani pro-governmental circles, reflected in media.

This shows that the "tolerance" propagated by Azerbaijani leadership in international arenas is a complete falsehood.

It's not ruled out that Huseynov may be persecuted by the Aliyev regime, even be accused of "state treason" like what happened to Azerbaijani human rights activist Leyla Yunus who voiced for interactions between the Armenian and Azerbaijani publics.

Cairo Armenian Cemetery Renovations Near Completion

CAIRO (Reuters) — Renovation work is nearly complete on an Armenian cemetery in Cairo whose graves reflect 100 years of the community's history in the Egyptian capital.

Workers have fixed and cleaned up tombstones, statues and busts that sit on top of graves.

The site dates back to 1924, when the Armenian community was granted a piece of land adjacent to an older one. It fused Egyptian, Armenian and European architectural designs.

"There was a period when this place was neglected, and the renovation project was a great initiative because the area was restored to what it once was," said Nairy Hampikian, an archaeologist and conservation specialist who has overseen the renovation project.

"The first thing we did was remove the dirt from all the pathways inside the cemetery. After that the signs that you see over there that were mostly scattered on the ground and covered in dust appeared when we cleaned up."

Armenians began settling in Egypt in the Fatimid era from the 10th to 12th centuries and were given a piece of land by Mohamed Ali Pasha in 1844 in an area now known as old Islamic Cairo.

The size of the Armenian community in Egypt would fluctuate, driven by the country's political and economic situation. A large number of Armenians fled to Cairo after the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

"We found tombstones that date back to the 1830s, '40s, and '50s," Hampikian said.

Restoration work began in 2014 and is scheduled for completion at the end of 2018. The Armenian Patriarchate of Cairo, with help from donations from the Armenian community, funded the project.

Physician, Yemeni Human Rights Organization Receive 2018 Hrant Dink Award

ISTANBUL — The 2018 International Hrant Dink Award were given this month to Murat Çelikkan of Turkey and the Mwatana Organization for Human Rights from Yemen.

Mwatana conducts independent, impartial documentation work and prepares reports in its struggle against human rights violations in Yemen, in a time when cities of this country are being bombed and thousands of civilians are losing their lives in civil war. On behalf of the organization, Radhya al-Mutawakel received the award from jury members Albie Sachs and Rakesh Dink.

In her speech, el-Mutawakel said, "We choose Human Rights to be our road toward accountability, justice and peace. Documenting violations, providing legal assistance, and doing lots of advocacy seems like digging the wall in a middle of a horrible war. However, we feel that our honest work can shake the wall of



Murat Çelikkan

International Hrant Dink Award laureate Eren Keskin.

In his speech, Çelikkan said "It is the struggle for human rights that will light the torch of hope against hopelessness, not only in Turkey but in the entire

forming mixed-gender teams in which men and women can develop the practice of struggling together

* La Patronas from Mexico for distributing food and water to migrants trying to reach the United States

* Vida Movahed and Masih Alinejad from Iran for protesting the mandatory hijab

* 'The School of Life' from Turkey, an alternative academy formed by Academics for Peace

* Umoja Uaso Women's Village formed by Samburu tribe member Rebecca and fifteen rape victims for providing shelter for women

* Thousands of Jews and Arabs from Israel for gathering in Habima Square to protest 'Jewish Nation State Bill'

* #FamiliesBelongTogether people in the United States, who protested separating the immigrant children from their families

* The people of Armenia who demonstrated demanding democracy, justice and transparency in a celebratory atmosphere of non-violence;

* Syrian doctor Amani Ballour, for running a hospital in North Guta

* Swedish student Elin Ersson for refusing to take her seat in the plane, until the deportation order of an Afghan migrant is rescinded

* The UpSendrom project for bringing volunteer specialists together with families who cannot get a medical certificate for their Down Syndrome child

* The Environmental Protection Association from Egypt for teaching women to read and write, and to make items from factory refuse

* Osman Kavala, who has brought together countless people and organizations working for human rights, cultural rights, and peace

On the occasion of the decennial of the International Hrant Dink Award, human right activist and Harvard University faculty member Douglas A. Johnson gave a speech focusing on envisioning the future of human rights, as well as new approaches in the field. Co-founder of the International Nestlé Boycott Committee, Johnson is also among the founders of New Tactics, an organization that supports human right defenders.

The award ceremony featured the musical performances of Vomank, Collectif Medz Bazar and Sahakyan Children's Chorus.

The 2018 Award jury comprises Eren Keskin, Ai Weiwei, Albie Sachs, Ayse Kadioglu, Ercan Kesal, Özlem Dalkıran, Ronald Grigor Suny, Sarkis, Serj Tankian, Zainab Salbi and Rakesh Dink.



Radhya al-Mutawakel of Mwatana Organization for Human Rights from Yemen

war and one day it will collapse. Peace will come one day and Mwatana will keep working for a society where justice and full access to rights is guaranteed to everyone."

For years, Çelikkan has striven to create peaceful, democratic and pluralistic solutions to several ongoing heated issues in Turkey. Aware of the many different risks, he nonetheless speaks out in the defense of human rights. He fights for the establishment of freedom of expression and association, the exposure of human rights violations and torture, and recognition of the rights of those who were 'disappeared.' Contributing to the strengthening of collective memory, and raising awareness in this area through his writings on coming to terms with the past and dialogue, Çelikkan received his award from jury member Ercan Kesal and 2017

world. 'There is a crack in everything; that's how the light gets in.' In the name of hope, I accept this award."

As part of the ceremony, people and organizations from Turkey and from around the world, who raise hope for the future with their actions were saluted with the video of people who offered inspiration this year.

Those included:

* Female workers of Flormar for taking advantage of their constitutional rights and unionizing

* High school students from the United States for launching the 'March for our Lives Campaign' to demand restrictions on firearms

* Dr. Gamal Albinsaid from Indonesia for creating Garbage Clinical Insurance which enables the poor to obtain health services

* Sicilya Demirspor from Istanbul for

Armenian Gravestones Found in Tbilisi during Renovation

TBILISI (Public Radio of Armenia) — Gravestones with Armenian inscriptions have been unearthed during the renovation of Baratashvili Ascent next to Tbilisi's Armenian district of Havlabar, Aliq Media reports.

Part of the stones have been saved from becoming construction waste and transported to the pantheon of Armenian writers and public figures of Khojivank.

Director of Hayartun Center of the Armenian Diocese of Georgia Levon Chidilyan says those are the tombstones of Khojivank that have been used as construction material since 1930 upon Lavrentiy Beria's instruction.

According to him, many Armenian churches went victim to the reconstruction plan of Tbilisi worked out in 1930s.

"Architects didn't see the Khojivank cemetery in the city's development plans. The Friendship Park was built on its place and functioned until 1991. Tombstones from the destroyed pantheon were used as construction material," Chidilyan said.

According to him, this is not the first time Armenian roots has been uncovered during reconstruction of different parts of the Georgian capital.



Armenian gravestones found in Tbilisi during renovations.

Community News

First AUA Alumni Scholarship Established in California

By Taleen Babayan

LOS ANGELES — For students of the American University of Armenia (AUA), graduation is only the beginning of their relationship with their alma mater.

Carrying their positive experiences as undergraduate and graduate students at AUA, alumni in Southern California — upon finding professional stability and success — have chosen to give back through the AUA California Alumni Scholarship. The 25 participants, who studied in various AUA programs, have raised more than \$3,500 to support students.

“The alumni scholarship provides an opportunity to reward AUA students for being committed to their futures with the hope that they go on to make great contributions to their communities,” said Anahit Baghdasaryan (Master of Laws - LL.M. ‘16).

While the Los Angeles and Orange County areas of California are currently home for these alumni, Armenia remains close to their hearts and contributing to the country remains a priority for them. By creating the scholarship, they give two students at AUA a chance to receive quality education and become part of Armenia’s development and advancement.

“AUA equipped me for success in my professional career in the US, which helped me start a software development company in Armenia that currently employs 50 IT professionals,” said Ana Acton (MBA 1996) who currently runs and operates Altacode, based in Yerevan.

Throughout her career she has worked with many Ivy League graduates and says with confidence that “the education we received at AUA shines in that company.”

As a scholarship recipient, she feels “the time has come for me to do the same for the next generation” and stresses that all of AUA’s student body should “use their knowledge and skills to benefit Armenia without compromising the historical, moral, and cultural values our country stands for.”

As alumni born in the homeland, they see a significant need to support the education and students in order to “create a rotation that makes everyone victorious,” said Ruzanna Mkhitarian (Master of Public Health 1997).

Arsen Aydinian (Master of Engineering in Industrial Engineering and Systems Management 1999) noted that the scholarship is a “concrete way to give back to the community.”

Like many others, he states AUA helped him excel in his career, particularly while working abroad, where his colleagues were impressed with his academic background and credentials.

“I proudly mention that AUA prepared me well for the future by giving me holistic knowledge in many areas including language, business and engineering,” said Aydinian, who supports giving the new generation opportunities to pursue their education without financial burdens. “We want the AUA alumni family to grow and contribute to Armenia’s well-being.”

For Dr. Karen Baghdasaryan (MBA 1998), life had become a predictable routine until he opened the doors to AUA, which “uplifted my spirit and opened up so many possibilities.”

Baghdasaryan found deeper meaning and fulfillment in himself and the world around him at the school.

“I graduated AUA as a new person, better qualified for steering through and tackling the challenges of life,” said Baghdasaryan. “Suddenly everything assumed different shapes and I started to succeed in everything I applied myself to.”

“I am eternally grateful to AUA for giving me
see AUA, page 6



Archbishop Hovnan Derderian with Rev. Fr. Sarkis Petoyan

Fr. Petoyan Celebrates 20 Years of Ordination

PASADENA, Calif. — More than 600 faithful gathered for a special service and luncheon marking the symbolic 20th ordination and consecration of Archpriest Rev. Sarkis Petoyan, the parish priest of the St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church of Pasadena on Sunday, September 9.

By Taleen Babayan

Mirror-Spectator Staff

Marking the milestone occasion of Petoyan’s 50th anniversary of service to the Armenian Apostolic Church, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of America,

presided over the divine liturgy, where he reflected on the ministry of the honoree, “a good and faithful servant.”

“He is a brave shepherd who has remained true and loyal to carrying out the mission of the Armenian Apostolic Church,” said Derderian.

In recognition of Petoyan’s commitment, which traces back to his childhood, Derderian announced that a cross-stone khachkar will be mounted to the facade of the St. Leon Armenian Cathedral in Burbank. Praising Yeretzgin Talin Petoyan’s dedication as a Sunday School teacher and superintendent over the last 30 years, Derderian presented her with an icon of the Holy Mother of God and acknowledged her as a genuine partner to Fr. Sarkis in their pastoral mission. He gifted their daughter Grace Shnorhig, a student at St. Gregory-Hovsepian School and St. Gregory Sunday School, with a wooden cross from Armenia.

see SERVICE, page 7



Grace Shnorhig Petoyan, Yn. Talin Petoyan, Rev. Fr. Sarkis Petoyan, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, and Godparents Chris and Margaret Yaldezian

Armenian Bar Association and American University Of Armenia Launch Legal Clinic

By Taleen Babayan

GLENDALÉ — The American University of Armenia (AUA) and the Armenian Bar Association joined forces to sponsor a new Technology and Innovation Legal Clinic at AUA’s campus in Yerevan through two receptions in California, led by David Balabanian, Esq.

The Golden State Bank in Glendale hosted the Los Angeles metro area gathering and the law offices of Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, LLP in San Francisco, with Balabanian as host, served as the engaging settings for legal professionals, AUA leadership and supporters who came together to learn more about the association’s partnership with Armenia’s leading university and its innovative projects for current and future students.

Balabanian, the first chairman of the Bar Association, welcomed guests and highlighted the significance of raising dialogue about the role of legal education in Armenia by creating stronger ties between the Diaspora and the homeland. Through his work with the group, Balabanian has brought continued awareness to critical legal issues in Armenia, which is now at a crossroads thanks to the Velvet Revolution and a newfound respect for the law.

“We are experiencing a new era in Armenia,” said Balabanian, who practices commercial litigation. “We hope to expect rule of law and as lawyers we have a special obligation to ensure



Dr. Larry Pitts, Lilia Mamikonyan, Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian, David Balabanian, Esq. and Suzy Missirian Antounian at the law offices of Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, LLP in San Francisco, CA

the safeguarding of the legal system.”

Launching in Fall 2018, the Technology and Innovation Legal Clinic, whose operating costs will be sponsored by the Armenian Bar Association, will be made available to the student community through AUA’s Master of Laws (LL.M.) program.

The clinic, which Balabanian noted as a “valuable resource,” will be the first in Armenia to address the needs for professional legal counseling in rapidly growing fields, including technology, which is experiencing a 20-percent growth in Armenia. Selected AUA students will gain hands-on experience working and providing counseling to IT and engineering startups in relation to a wide range of legal issues, from company registration to contracting to intellectual property rights protection.

The legal clinic is one of the many projects Balabanian has spearheaded for the legal community over the years. In addition to his work with the association, he has served as chairman of the California State Bar Conference of Delegates, lawyer delegate to the Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference, trustee of the Practicing Law Institute, and a member of the Harvard Law School Visiting Committee. As an instructor, he has taught more than 150 continuing legal education courses and written extensively on law-related topics.

see ABA, page 8



COMMUNITY NEWS

Harvard Panel to Look at ‘Velvet Revolution’ in Armenia at Six Months

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — A panel discussion entitled “Armenia’s Velvet Revolution After 6 Months: Beyond the Headlines,” will take place at Harvard University, Fong Auditorium (Boylston Hall), on Thursday, September 27, at 7:30 p.m.

The panel will be moderated by Dr. Lisa Gulesserian, lecturer on Armenian in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, and will feature a panel including Anush Hambaryan (Harvard Kennedy School, Master in Public Policy Candidate), Harout Manougian (Harvard Kennedy School, Master in Public Administration Candidate), and Dr. Anna Ohanyan (Richard B. Finnegan Distinguished Professor of Political Science and International Relations, Stonehill College).

The event is organized by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) / Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues, with the co-sponsorship of AGBU-YP Boston, Electoral Reform Society (a student organization of the Harvard Kennedy School) and the Harvard Armenian Students Association.

Armenia’s Velvet Revolution, though the result of years of pent-up anger and frustration, unfolded in spring 2018 with dizzying speed. One moment it appeared that Serzh Sargsyan and the Republican Party would continue their grip on power and all that goes with power in an Armenia dominated by oligarchs; then, practically before anyone knew what had happened, the Armenian people asserted their will, and, incredibly, without violence, power passed from Sargsyan to the people’s choice, Nikol Pashinyan. At a time when many democracies are drifting towards authoritarianism, Armenia stood as a bright exception.

Almost six months later, inevitably, the realities of governing, of addressing the problems of the past and of the future, and building the new Armenia, have created challenges. In this panel discussion, we will attempt to move beyond the headlines to discuss some key fundamental issues including systemic and structural changes that must take place to strengthen Armenia’s democracy; changes to Armenia’s electoral code; the complexities of Armenia’s foreign relations; efforts to combat institutionalized corruption; addressing gender inequality; and more.

This event is free and open to the public. A reception and refreshments will immediately follow the program and question-and-answer session.

For more information about this program, contact NAASR at hq@naasr.org.

Man Arrested for Molesting Boy; More Victims Sought

GLENDALE — Police in Glendale are seeking additional possible victims after a man was arrested for allegedly molesting a boy at a Glendale music school.

Harmik Haghverdian, 48, was arrested August 8 for “inappropriately touching” an 11-year-old boy during a guitar lesson, Glendale Police Department spokesperson Tahnee Lightfoot said in a news release. The arrest followed an investigation into the incident that started Aug. 3.

Haghverdian was booked for lewd and lascivious acts on a child under 14, but police fear there may be more victims.

Anyone with information is asked to call GPD Detective Suzanne O’Brien at 818-548-3106 or email her at sobrien@glendaleca.gov.

First AUA Alumni Scholarship Established in California



AUA Southern California Alumni

AUA, from page 5

the opportunity to be the best I can be and providing the platform with immense opportunities to succeed in life,” he noted.

Irina Sarkisyan Vardanyan (LL.M. 1999) concurred. “AUA changed all aspects of my life in the most wonderful way. I know many deserving young people in Armenia who cannot afford to study there, and I would love for us to provide the chance for others to pursue

their dreams and become professionals in order to serve our country,” she said.

Participating alumni in the AUA California Alumni Scholarship include: Ana Acton (MBA ‘96), Arsen Aidinyan (ME IESM ‘99), Lusine Arsenyan (ME IESM ‘99), Anna Badalyan (MBA ‘95), Anahit Baghdasaryan (LL.M. ‘16), Karen Baghdasaryan (MBA ‘98), Lilit Baghumyan (ME IESM ‘03), Tigran Baiburtski (MS EE ‘94), Samvel Darbinyan (MS CIS ‘11), Sargis Galstyan (MBA ‘03),

Anush Gevorgyan (MPH ‘03), Arman Gevorgyan (MBA ‘94), Yulia Ghazaryan (MPSIA ‘99), Tatevik Hakobyan (ME IESM ‘08), Vahan Karapetyan (MBA ‘16), Vladimir Kolosarian (MBA ‘94), Areg Margarian (MS EE ‘95), Shushanik Margarian (LL.M. ‘16), Edwin Mehdikhan (ME IESM ‘05), Ruzanna Mkhitarian (MPH ‘97), Arayik Sargsyan (MPH ‘03), Irina Sarkisyan (LL.M. ‘99), Simonyan (MBA ‘16), Aren Voskanyan (MBA ‘02), Lusine Yepremyan (ME IESM ‘99).

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Marc A. Levin, Esq

Vice President of Criminal Justice, Texas Public Policy Foundation and Right on Crime

Founder, Foundation’s Criminal Justice Program

Moderator: **Middlesex County Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian**

President, Massachusetts Sheriffs’ Association

Founding Member, Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime & Incarceration

Reception follows at The Bostonian Hotel

Free and open to the public, The Najarian Lecture on Human Rights, a public program of Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, is endowed by George K. and Carolann S. Najarian, M.D. in honor of Dr. Najarian’s father, Mr. Avedis Albert Abrahamian as “he taught so many about the need to pay attention, spot injustice and speak out wherever and whenever it occurs”.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Fr. Petoyan Celebrates 20 Years of Ordination

SERVICE, from page 5

"Fr. Sarkis is a wonderful pastor dedicated to his community," said Derderian. "He has given his love and dignity to his parish and to our church life."

An informative and celebratory program followed services in Geragos Hall, where Deacon Armand Yerjianian served as master of ceremonies, welcoming guests alongside Deacon Vahe Charkhutian. Diocesan Council Chairman Joseph Kanimian, Esq. remarked during his toast that Petoyan is a compassionate role model who is loved and well-respected.

Reflecting on his childhood growing up in the San Fernando Valley as one of the first Armenian families there in the 1960s, Petoyan recalled the significance of the church during his youth.

"Since birth my parents brought me to church every single Sunday where I was very active in parish life," he said. By the age of 7, he recalled, he was serving on the altar and became heavily involved in the Armenian Church Youth Organization, among other Diocesan programming. "So it was a very natural progression for me to take an interest in the priesthood."

Despite embarking on a career in banking after graduating from college, Petoyan felt unfulfilled and knew he had to pursue his calling.

"I knew by the time I was 29 years old that I wanted to fulfill my dream of becoming a priest," said Petoyan, a third-generation Armenian-American who studied at Echmiadzin to learn the



Group shot of Rev. Fr. Petoyan's 20th anniversary of Ordination with special clergy in attendance

Armenian language. "I have neither job nor career, but a calling."

He went on to receive his Master of Divinity degree from St. Nersess Armenian Theological and St. Vladimir Orthodox Seminary in 1995. After marrying Talin Mermerian, he was ordained to the priesthood in 1998 by Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian, then-Primate of the Western Diocese, under the guidance of his godparents, Chris and

Margaret Yaldezian, who were present at the luncheon.

Following his ordination, Petoyan served as parish priest of the St. John Armenian Church of San Francisco for 11 years and for the last decade has been ministering the St. Gregory Armenian Church of Pasadena. Although based in California, the honoree and his wife actively aid Armenia, having led 10 pilgrimages there while

raising and distributing more than \$400,000 for a variety of charitable projects, including assistance to impoverished parish priests in remote corners, building homes for homeless families with Habitat for Humanity, providing direct aid to Warm Hearth, a home for special needs orphans, as well as supporting the Kavar Orphanage and Echmiadzin Children's Fund, among many other noteworthy projects.

Petoyan said he sees himself as a representative of Christ within his parish and society as a whole, remarking that priests play a "critical role" in maintaining both the Armenian and Christian identity.

"The world is changing, society and culture are changing and America is changing," he said. "I'm called to preach, teach and live a Christ-loving life before the faithful in my charge."

In addition to serving Armenia and their flock, the couple strongly supports the Western Diocese. They have written a four-year, age-appropriate curriculum for the Diocesan Summer Camp, prepared service books for rituals celebrated in the Armenian Church, including Holy Week, and produced three professional documentaries on the Armenian Church.

"We do not need golden chalices, we need golden priests," said Derderian in his concluding remarks. "And Fr. Sarkis is a golden priest serving our Diocese."

"It's impossible to separate an Armenian from an Armenian Church," said Petoyan. "I became a priest because I love God and I love people and I love the Armenian people."

'Costco Story' Topic of Talk at St. James Men's Club Meeting

WATERTOWN — On Monday, October 1, there will be a St. James Armenian Church Men's Club dinner meeting at the St. James Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center. This meeting will be a Family Night. In addition to regular members and attendees, wives and children who are teenagers and older are invited.

The speaker will be Alex Cohen, marketing representative for Costco Wholesale. The title of his presentation will be "The Costco Story." He will discuss the history of Costco including marketing strategies, Costco Business Centers, the development of the Kirkland Signature brand, Costco expansion into international markets, and Costco grocery on-line sales.

Cohen has been married for 32 years and is the father of two daughters, 29 and 21. He is a graduate of Sharon High School, Springfield Community College and Fairleigh Dickinson University. In addition to his 27 years at Costco, he has also been employed by Allied Aerospace and the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health.

This St. James Men's Club Family Night dinner meeting will begin with a social hour and mezza at 6:15 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. Traditional Armenian dinner is \$16 per person.

The Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center is located at 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Bar Association & American University of Armenia Launch Legal Clinic

ABA, from page 5

During his remarks, AUA President Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian shared with attendees important updates about the University, including the recently signed bill that provides free law school tuition to the University of California, Hastings College of the Law for AUA graduates who are residents of California.

"The signing of this bill by Senator Anthony Portantino shows the confidence that the state of California and UC Hastings have in the American University of Armenia," he said.

He elaborated on the positive changes occurring in Armenia, including the election of a government and a Prime Minister "who respects the law in Armenia and adheres to the principles of fairness and democracy."

Der Kiureghian noted that the student body and faculty were involved in the Velvet Revolution, choosing to exercise their civic duty and rights. He spoke of the work of AUA's Entrepreneurship and Product Innovation Center (EPIC), which will work in tandem with the Technology and Innovation Legal Clinic, as well as AUA's partnerships with USAID and plans to start an AUA press.

"We have matured as a university," said Der Kiureghian. "And we maintain our promise of selecting students based on merit and not financial capacity, making sure we attract the brightest minds."

As the director of one of the most creative and effective centers at AUA, EPIC, Dr. Michael Kouchakdjian elaborated on the activities of the ecosystem, which provides AUA's emerging entre-



Gerard Kassabian, Esq., David Balabanian, Esq., Zaven Sinanian, Nelly Der Kiureghian, Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian, Lara Kayayan, Esq., Robert Philiposian, Dr. Michael Kouchakdjian and Saro Kerkonian, Esq. at Golden State Bank in Glendale, CA

preneurs with a collaborative space consisting of programs, events and a network of mentors, advisors and investors. In relation to its partnership with the Technology and Innovation Legal Clinic,

workshops and seminars will be organized for EPIC and other IT and engineering enterprises and teams. In addition, thanks to the Armenian Bar Association's sponsorship, top quality legal professionals will supervise the activities of the LL.M. program students in order to ensure consistency and quality of service. Touching on the synergy between the Center and AUA, Kouchakdjian said that through EPIC, the community at large can engage in the startup venture ecosystem, which is becoming increasingly popular in Armenia.

Dr. Lawrence Pitts, Chair of the Board of

Trustees and former Provost of the University of California system, said AUA has become a transformative university in Armenia and through the support of benefactors, it can become the best in the region.

"AUA is a superb investment in Armenia, like the University of California is a great investment for the state," said Dr. Pitts. "Our students are the future of the country, and AUA works hard to prepare them successfully as employees, researchers and engaged citizens, which is the best way for Armenia to grow and prosper in the coming years."

OBITUARY

Virginia 'Ginny' Ohanian Supporter of Armenian Causes

BELMONT, Mass. — Virginia "Ginny" (Talanian) Ohanian 93, of Belmont, Boca Raton, Fla. and Osterville, Mass. died on Thursday, September 13.

She was the wife of the late Michael Ohanian. She is survived by her son, M. Bruce Ohanian and his wife Lu Ann, and daughter, Veronica Ohanian Heath and her husband Donn; grandchildren Jill Buck and her husband Ron, Michael Heath, Mark Ohanian and Zachary Heath and great-grandchildren Brendan and Thomas Buck. She is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

She was the daughter of Geragos and Veronica Talanian. She was the sister of the late Evelyn Mukjian and the late James D. Mukjian, the late Charles Talanian and his wife Nevart, and the late Albert Talanian and his wife Ann.

She lived the life she loved and loved the life she lived. She will be missed by all who knew her.

She and her late husband Michael were staunch supporters and core members of the Armenian Assembly of America from the beginning. They were close to Stephen Mugar and actively participated in all of the Assembly's work. In 2013, she was honored, alongside Ann Hintlian and Nevart Talanian, with the Assembly's Distinguished Humanitarian Award.

"Ginny was a remarkable individual with a sparkling sense of humor who cared deeply and passionately about Armenia and its people. Her generosity and commitment to Armenia and the Armenian Assembly served as an inspiration to us all. She will be missed greatly. This is a loss to the entire Assembly family," Assembly Co-Chairs Anthony Barsamian and Van Krikorian said.

After visiting Armenia and Artsakh as part of the Assembly Mission Trip in 1999, Ohanian became committed to the reforestation of the country. Of the thousands of supporters of the Armenia Tree Project no one individual has given as many "tree gifts." She took it beyond just planting trees.

She had said: "I saw for myself the need for trees, jobs and education. I thought this was a fitting way to memorialize Michael's and my ardent devotion to the Armenian Assembly," thus giving the funds to open the Michael and Virginia Ohanian Environmental Education Center at the Karin Nursery in Armenia.

Ginny Ohanian, her sister, daughter, and daughter-in-law were at the ribbon cutting in 2004. In

2011 the Michael and Virginia Ohanian Center for Environment Studies was opened in Margahovit, Lori province. This center trains students, teachers and professionals in best forestry practices and conducts environmental education lessons with students from all regions of Armenia.

Her son Bruce is a long-time Assembly Trustee, and her daughter-in-law, Lu Ann Ohanian, is also a Life Trustee and a member of the Assembly's Board. Mrs. Ohanian's daughter Veronica Heath and husband Donn have been members and supporters of the Assembly and the Armenia Tree Project.

She was a life-time member of the Holy Trinity Church in Cambridge where she was an ardent supporter and a member of the Women's Guild. She was very active along with her husband in the Armenian General Benevolent Union. Michael was an excellent golfer, winning the



Massachusetts Amateur. Mrs. Ohanian thought it only fitting after he passed that she establish a college scholarship through the Ouimet Society named the Michael Ohanian Scholarship. Her other philanthropies include: Armenian Heritage Park, Berkshire Hill Music Academy, Bentley College, the Belmont Hill School, and Massachusetts General Hospital.

Services were held at Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge, on Wednesday, September 19, with wake services at the church from 10 to 11:30 a.m. and funeral services following.

Arrangements were made by Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home.

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Donations

The Vartkess and Rita Balian Family Foundation, Inc., donated \$1,000 to the Tekeyan Cultural Association.

Anoush Matheviosian of Great Neck, NY, donated \$500 to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Retiring Surgeon Has Been More than a Doctor to Patients

By Peter Jackel

RACINE, Wis. (*Journal Times*) — Retired Racine orthopedic surgeon Myron Mikaelian credits baseball legend Sandy Koufax for his decision to both pursue a career in medicine and retire from it.

Photo courtesy of Myron Mikaelian

RACINE — A remarkable career in medicine by a beloved Racine orthopedic surgeon had its origin nearly 50 years ago, when 12-year-old Myron Mikaelian was reading *The Baseball Life of Sandy Koufax*.

The Scholastic paperback told the story of the legendary left-hander for the Los Angeles Dodgers, who was forced to retire at the age of 30 after the 1966 season by arthritis in his pitching elbow. And, as a young Mikaelian read about the pills and monotonous treatments Koufax had to endure just to make his next pitching assignment, he was captivated.

“He was having multiple orthopedic issues and he sought the care of Dr. Robert Kerlan, who was the orthopedic surgeon of the Dodgers,” Mikaelian said. “It spiked my interest in orthopedic surgery and sports medicine and how a doctor could have a relationship with athletes.”

After 29 years of practice in Racine, Mikaelian retired from Ascension All Saints Hospital on August 2, with Koufax again influencing that decision. Mikaelian, who turns 61 in September, simply wanted to leave when he was on top of his game, just as Koufax did when he won his third Cy Young Award in 1966.

“I always felt in regard to people’s careers that you only have relevancy for a certain period of time,” Mikaelian said. “And I always respected people who could get out on top — people like Sandy Koufax.”

What a body of work this kind, giving man is leaving behind as he moves into the next chapter

of his life (plenty of golf for now, numerous options later). He was recognized by his cohorts as being among the best of the best, but his gift for giving patients a new pain-free life with his skilled hands might have been secondary to the man he is.

“I used to make the rounds with my dad at the hospital when I was a young girl,” said Alexis Mikaelian, the eldest of Myron and Nori’s four children. “What struck me the most when we’d go from room to room is that my dad was able to make deep personal connections with so many of his patients and colleagues.

“He’d greet patients with more than just questions about their condition. He would also discuss family updates, how their kids were doing and, of course, sports at length — especially the Cubs.”

Mikaelian estimates that he performed 8,000 joint replacements and 6,000 other procedures during his career, but on the other end of that spectrum were the number of days of work Mikaelian missed. He said he cancelled surgery just twice in his career because he was ill.

A strong influence

There was a reason for that determination. One of Mikaelian’s grandfathers, Sarkis, went to work for Racine Steel after emigrating to the United States. As Alexis explains: “My father always reminded us that in 50 years of working at Racine Steel, his grandfather had only missed five days of work and three of those were because he had cut off parts of two fingers in a factory injury.”

And so it was with Mikaelian, who attended the Medical College of Wisconsin in Wauwatosa and started his practice in Racine July 5, 1989. He was always there, with perhaps the most memorable example being his first day on the job.

“The first time I was ever on call in Racine, there as an accident where somebody got hit on a motorcycle by a truck,” Mikaelian said. “So my first call was on a real foggy night and the helicopter couldn’t come because there was too much fog.

“This guy had multiple life-threatening orthopedic injuries and we ended up operating on him for like 18 hours. And he was in a coma for like seven weeks, but he survived. And for years and years and years, his mother used to send me a Christmas card.”

It’s a safe bet there are numerous other Christmas cards from grateful former patients being addressed to Mikaelian every December. Because this is a man who didn’t know the meaning of the word, “no,” even on the morning of April 25, 1991, which is one of the most memorable days of his life.

“I did a knee replacement on the morning of the birth of my first child (Alexis),” Mikaelian said. “I saw the woman about a year ago and that knee is still working.”

There are so many stories of Mikaelian’s benevolence that are making the rounds now that he has retired. One of the most powerful comes from Dr. Goran Jankovic, an orthopedic doctor in Racine.

“This was a good eight years ago,” Jankovic said. “He was planning on going on a vacation, there was a patient he had operated on and he was a little concerned about the patient’s well-being afterward.

“He sent his family off, cancelled his flight and stayed behind. He could have had someone else cover him, but I remember him telling me, ‘This is my patient and this is my responsibility.’ He effectively cancelled his vacation and stayed behind to take care of the patient. When he felt the patient was stable two or three days later, he met up with his family.”

Dr. Michael Martinez, a Racine anesthesiologist whom Mikaelian considers his closest friend — the feeling is mutual — remembers a remarkably patient man during numerous intrusions on Mikaelian’s privacy.

“I’ve been with him 50 times when this has happened,” Martinez said. “We’re golfing somewhere



Dr. Myron Mikaelian

and someone will come up and say, ‘Oh Doctor, can you just take a quick look at my knee?’ Or we’ll be in a restaurant and people will do that. He’ll get up and press on their arm or whatever! I’m not kidding. He does that all that time.

“People feel that comfortable with him where they’ll go up and ask for a consult in a restaurant. He’ll never say no.”

That’s the caliber of man the Racine medical community is losing.

“He’s the best human being you could meet,” family friend Pat Rooney said. “He should have been a priest. He cares about so many people.”

And Mikaelian will continue to do so in his retirement. He wants to work with his wife in many of her local charitable causes, such as soup kitchens and HALO. But there’s something else he has in mind.

“My main thing is to, possibly with Mike Martinez, go to another country and operate on people for free on a mission and then enjoy the countryside for a couple of weeks,” he said.

Armen Aroyan Collection at USC Institute of Armenian Studies

LOS ANGELES — The first time Armen Aroyan took a group of Armenians to visit the villages of their ancestors was 1991. At that time, he wasn’t sure if this was a one-time visit, but it came after a few trips he had undertaken with a small group of friends.

“I recognized that visiting these places had special meaning for me. And I thought, why not help others experience the same satisfaction,” says Aroyan, now 74, whose family is from Aintab.

Armen Aroyan has deeded the approximately 400 hours of video recordings to the USC Institute of Armenian Studies to be digitized, indexed, and made available to researchers worldwide.

Aroyan, an engineer by profession, planned that first trip with seven travelers, whom he began to call pilgrims. Over the next 27 years, there were around 100 more trips and 1,480 travelers.

Each trip was recorded in meticulous detail, on videotape. Throughout the years, the quality and accessibility of video developed and Aroyan’s recordings underwent format changes. But the content remained the same: individual travelers reciting, singing, crying, telling stories, sharing bits of Armenian history, and conversing with the local population.

“Given the immense transformation within the Diaspora over the last half century, and the inevitable changes in memories and attitudes, the content of these video recordings — the expressions of emotion, of expectation, of response to loss, of reclaiming belonging — become extremely useful as primary source material for those studying evolving narratives about the Genocide, about Turkey, about the Diaspora, about the transmission of trauma, and about individual transformation,” said Salpi Ghazarian, director of the USC Institute of Armenian Studies.

The differences in how Turks and Kurds in the villages recount their stories, and the changes in how Armenian travelers interact with each place of memory is stark in these videos. “There is an evolution that can be fol-

lowed, studied and that must be understood. There were many repeat travelers and there are distinct differences in how the same traveler responds to the same places during each trip. The varying responses of travelers of different generations are also valuable. All in all, this is a very specific way of studying inherited memory. It is also a window into understanding relationship to places with which so many identify, but which are unknown and unfamiliar,” said Ghazarian.

Aroyan’s own interpretations of the responses is interesting. “I would tailor each trip itinerary according to the needs of the participants,” he explains. “It was interesting how people’s responses changed over the years — from fear and hesitation, to anticipation and emotional connection. There were pilgrims who came two or three or as many as eight times, and brought along their friends, their adult children. They each took away something different, but they were all ready to share their responses.”

As Turkey’s domestic political situation evolved, so did the nature of the interaction with officials, drivers, local residents. “I knew some Turkish,” Aroyan explains, “And I learned more each year. We could tell when people were hesitant to speak with us, when they felt comfortable acknowledging the history they knew to be true. That progression has also been very useful to observe. They went from curiosity about our motives, to quite straightforwardly talking about the stories they had heard. Much had changed over those three decades.”

The USC Institute of Armenian Studies is dedicated to studying the contemporary Armenian experience, both in the Republic of Armenia and in the Diaspora. Digitizing and providing access to Armen Aroyan’s collection is one piece of the larger Diaspora Documentation & Digitization initiative. The Institute has also begun to create and collect documentation of the World War II Displaced Persons experience. The Institute will also embark on creating and collecting documents and records that depict the building of the Los Angeles Armenian community.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Remembering the Armenian Victory at the Battle of Arara

ARARA, from page 1

At this low ebb in their fortunes, the combatants at Arara demonstrated that Armenians were not always passive victims of war and genocide, but were able to take action in their own defense and to make an impact on their destiny. Though in the end, Great Power politics intervened to destroy the hopes and dreams of the volunteers at Arara, their victory was a cause for celebration and signaled the fact that, despite recent tragedies there was a future for the Armenians.

Formation of the Armenian Legion

Following a series of negotiations, the French and British governments, who were allied in World War I, and Boghos Nubar Pasha, president of the Armenian National Delegation representing the Western Armenian interests, agreed to form an Oriental Legion (Légion d'Orient) made up of Armenian and Syrian volunteers, led by French officers, to assist in the war effort against Turkey.

As part of the accord, the Armenians were promised “autonomy” (which was not clearly defined) in central and southern Turkey, an area that had been allocated to France according to the terms of the secret Sykes-Picot agreement to partition the Ottoman Empire among the Allies. It was understood that after the war the Legion would form the nucleus of an Armenian army to keep peace in the area of the Ottoman Empire known as Cilicia, which had been the home of a large Armenia population.

The core of the Legion consisted of about 500 able-bodied men from Musa Dag, an Armenian village in Cilicia that had managed to hold out against Turkish attackers during the Genocide until its inhabitants were rescued and evacuated by the French Navy to Port Said, Egypt. Recruitment took place in late 1916 and 1917 in Armenian communities around the world, as a result of which over 4,000 Armenian men were accepted into the Legion, more than 1,200 of them from the United States and others from Europe, South America, Egypt, and Australia.

Following months of training at a military camp in Monarga, Cyprus, and war maneuvers in Ismailia, Egypt, the men were marched north through the desert to join the Allied forces on the Palestine front.

Allied Forces on the Offensive

The Egyptian Expeditionary Force, established by the British and French governments to conduct the war against the Ottoman Empire, had stalled, until the British General Edmund Allenby was appointed to head it. Arriving in Cairo in June 1917, the general planned and executed a brilliant military campaign that resulted in a series of victories in Syria and Palestine that culminated in the capture of Jerusalem in December. Although the Holy City was hardly a strategic location, its occupation gave a tremendous psychological boost to the Allied effort in the Great War.

General Allenby's campaign came to an abrupt halt, however, when instead of receiving the expected additional men and supplies to continue his campaign, he was ordered to transfer large numbers of his troops to the European front, to counter a major German offensive in the spring of 1918. Only with the arrival of reinforcements in late summer, including units of the French Foreign Legion and the Armenian Legion, was he able to resume the offensive.

Finally, on September 18, 1918, Allenby launched a major attack northward. As a first step, the Armenian Legion was ordered to seize a key front-line position at the heights of Arara, located opposite Rafat and south of Nablus, in Palestine (present-day Israel). The Legionnaires faced strong artillery bombardment from the Turkish Seventh Army, firmly entrenched on the heavily fortified heights and commanded by General Mustafa Kemal (later Atatürk), under the overall command of



Armenian Legionnaires in World War I

that position and achieve a successful conclusion for the battle of Palestine.”

General Allenby was well satisfied with the victory. “The Oriental Legion, or Armenian Legion, played an important role in the great attack which took place on September 19, 1918 on the Palestinian front,” he reported the next day. “Of this I am proud.”

The victory did not come without losses. On the day after the battle, the Legionnaires gathered together and in a simple but solemn ceremony buried their 23 comrades who had fallen in battle. An additional 65 men had been wounded. (In 1925, the bodies of the 23 Legionnaires buried at Arara were re-interred in the Armenian Cemetery in Jerusalem, where a monument was erected over a common grave.)

The Turkish Army was now in full retreat, and General Allenby's forces met little resistance in their advance north to Aleppo, Damascus, and finally Beirut, which they entered on October 20, 1918. There the Syrian troops were separated and the Oriental Legion was renamed the Armenian Legion (Légion Arménienne).

Turkey withdrew from the war, according to the terms of the Mudros Armistice, signed on October 30, 1918. Soon after, World War I came to an end with the Armistice of November 11, 1918.

The British and French now took steps to bring about the partition of Turkey according to the terms of their secret agreements. As a ready force familiar with the territory, the Armenian Legionnaires were sent immediately to occupy strategic positions in Turkey.

Over the next several months, with General Allenby in overall command and serving under French officers, the Armenian Legionnaires occupied the major population centers of Adana, Aintab, Marash, Urfa and Hajin. An estimated 120,000 Armenian civilians who had been forced out of their homes during the Genocide now returned, feeling safe under the protection of the Allied forces. The Armenian Legionnaires believed that they had finally realized their dream of defending and safeguarding part of the Armenian homeland.

Postwar Settlement

After the war, however, the Allied governments were unable to translate their brilliant military victories in the Middle East into a just settlement. Exhausted by their heavy losses during the war, they were unable to reach agreement on the peace terms. British troops withdrew from Cilicia in the fall of 1919, leaving French forces in control. Finding itself overextended in postwar overseas commitments, France did not adequately supply these forces, and the Turkish Nationalists were quick to take advantage of the situation and mount armed opposition to foreign occupation.

As Turkish attacks intensified, French forces began to withdraw, beginning in Marash in February 1920. As the French withdrew, often with heavy losses, they also began to disband the Armenian Legionnaires in a process that was completed by September 1920. Finally in October 1921 France signed the Ankara Accord with Nationalist Turkey and agreed to the final withdrawal of French troops from Cilicia, leaving the Armenian population to the mercy of the Turks. Armenians were either

massacred or forced to depart in this savage continuation of the Genocide.

Bitter, disillusioned, and disappointed, the Legionnaires gradually resumed their lives. Yet the ultimate failure of their hopes and dreams does not diminish their valor, sacrifice, and devotion to their nation. Their brave action offered a vivid demonstration that Armenians could successfully take their destiny into their own hands and make meaningful gains on their own behalf. The ideals that had inspired the Armenian participation in the Legion were never lost, and the Armenian quest for freedom and independence continued.



Arara Battle Description By a Participant

The following description of the Battle of Arara was written by Armenian Legionnaire **Dickran Boyajian**.

There was no position on the entire Palestine front, from the Dead Sea to the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, which was as difficult to cross and was perhaps as impregnable as the position on the western side of Arara that was assigned to the Armenian Legion.

The 600 soldiers of the Armenian Legion's first line of attack were facing an enemy army of 1,600 men, 600 of whom were German and the rest, 1,000 Turks. The artillery of the enemy forces was disproportionately immense, and the German Tommy guns used by them were incomparably better than ours. Meanwhile the artillery of the Armenian soldiers consisted of a few French 35 millimeter and English stock cannons, which had been turned over for their use only on the evening of September 18.

The cannons roared, the bombs exploded with frightful blasts and opened huge craters on our positions. Nevertheless the Armenian soldiers walked ahead undaunted.

It was already seven o'clock in the evening when the fighting stopped, and the cannons fell silent on both sides, with preparations being made to rumble again at dawn. The rays of the morning sun had barely begun to illuminate the battlefield when our group of scouts brought word that the enemy had left its position and fled.



British General Allenby entering Jerusalem after the surrender of the Ottoman Turkish Army, December 1917

the German General Otto Liman von Sanders. The Armenians fought brilliantly and achieved their objective on the first day of the attack, September 19, 1918.

Legionnaire Manoog “Khan” Baghdasarian afterwards described the significance of the battle as follows: “According to the English, by their own confession, they had made three attempts to capture Arara, but had failed.” He continued, “Finally, it was destined for the Armenian Legion to capture



COMMUNITY NEWS

Sonya's Makes Its Mark on Oaklawn Ave.

By Thomas Greenberg

CRANSTON, R.I. (*Cranston Herald*) – Sonya Gasparian-Janigian has been in the clothing business for “35 years of busy,” as she said Thursday, September 13, during the kickoff to her open house celebration.

Those 35 years include 27 in Cranston, where she has built up a client base ranging from high school students to 90-year-old wedding guests.

She said she's been so successful because the store has had unique products and great customer service, which is why she thinks people keep coming back. She also battled through the tough early years to come out on top.

Now, Gasparian-Janigian has built up a profitable clothing store selling formal/cocktail wear and sportswear, and she's also opened up Sonya's Deli on Park Avenue, which is run by her son and daughter and has 18 employees.

Gasparian-Janigian's story starts with a musical theatre education in college. It wasn't her passion for theatre that got her into the clothing business, but rather that she began working in a clothing store to pay her bills, and eventually became a manager for a store in Providence. The manager of the Arcade then approached her and suggested she open up her own store there, and so she did.

In 1983 she opened a store selling leather goods, shoes, and accessories, which she said were “very unique” to the Arcade and downtown Providence.

She expanded twice while there, but the city went through a banking crisis and she decided to move to Cranston in 1992, when Garden City was “taking off.” She said this was an important transition for the store, going from an urban to a suburban-type store.

She then moved over to Oaklawn Avenue where she rented a building prior to moving into her current location in 2005, a building that she built and owns on the corner of Garden Hills Drive and Oaklawn Avenue. Gasparian-Janigian said Oaklawn has been good to them because it is so well-traveled, and she thinks it's the most accessible location for people living in Western Cranston, who she said are some of her best customers.

Her customers hail from across Rhode Island and are “cross-generation,” she said, with high schoolers getting their prom and formal dresses there, then older women getting their sportswear, everyday outfits, or formal wear as well.

With the sportswear, Sonya's prices range from \$18 to \$500,



Sonya Gasparian-Janigian, the sole owner of Sonya's Clothing on Oaklawn Ave., reminisces on 35 years of business in Rhode Island.

she said, while the formal wear can be anywhere from \$100 to \$1,000.

“We're connected to the community, people around here know us, we're definitely a staple,” she said. “People travel from all over to come see us. We have a very good reputation.”

She said that the golden rule is to treat the customers well and listen to them so she can make the right decisions about merchandise. Part of her job is to buy the merchandise online, since Sonya's doesn't design any of it. She said she tries to purchase clothing made in the United States, in markets including California and New York, because her customers want to see a tag that says made in America, she believes.

Though she has solely run the business side of the store for the past 35 years, she likes to spend most of her time out on the sales floor, interacting with the women she's built up strong relationships with. This helps her business prosper, but also has helped her form friendships that has built up a strong network for her.

A challenge she's faced in recent years has been adapting to the online shopping explosion. She said that her older customers still like to come into the store most of time, but she's had to build and maintain an e-commerce website to expand her sales. She said her younger staff keep her up to date with social media fashion trends so she can buy the right merchandise for high school and college aged customers.

She's also had to be flexible with the economy, she said, adjusting her prices and negotiating with her vendors to “give her customers the best deal possible.”

She advises anyone looking to start a business to not “get scared of entrepreneurship.”

“I worked like a crazy person for 5 years,” she said. “70 to 80 hours a week, and there's no guarantee you're going to make money after you pay your expenses. Being a business owner doesn't mean the money's rolling in. You have to pay your dues and put money back into the business to sustain it through the lean times.”

She also said that for a business like hers, you have to love the customers because “you're nothing without your customers or your staff.”

Mayor Allan Fung, who visited the store during the open house celebration on Friday, commended Gasparian-Janigian for the business she's brought to the city.

“Sonya's is an example of one of the locally-owned family businesses that make up the backbone of Rhode Island's economy,” he said. “I'm honored to recognize their 35 years of excellent service in the community. I congratulate them and wish them continued success for many years to come.”

Gasparian-Janigian said that the store has taken on a personality of its own, and that's part of why she's been successful.

“Loyalty factor is big with our customer base,” she said. “They'd be very sad if the store wasn't here. It's not me, it's bigger than me. The store is its own entity, it has its own personality.”

She's now 58 years old and has no plans for retirement anytime soon. Rather, she hopes to open a satellite store somewhere in Rhode Island to expand her operations.

For now, she's gearing up for a new school year, which brings with it homecoming and winter ball. Some of her older customers, however, might be taking off to Florida for the winter, and she'll be able to provide clothes for that as well.

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or www.bergen.edu/pjr/events



The traditional village dances were as characteristic of Armenian culture as the language, food, songs, and other ancient customs. Susan Lind-Sinanian, Textile Curator at the Armenian Museum of America in Watertown, MA will introduce and teach line dances that she has collected over the last forty years from immigrants and survivors of a lost generation from western Armenia. Come join us in the footsteps of our ancestors to learn and celebrate this heritage. Wear comfortable footwear. Appropriate for all ages.



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Arts & Living

Comedy Program Kicks Off LA Tekeyan Metro Programs

By Taleen Babayan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

PASADENA, Calif. — The new Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles chapter will hold its inaugural event, an “Evening of Comedy,” on Saturday, October 27, at the Rococo Room.

Featuring performers from the greater Los Angeles community, the program aims to bring together all generations through laughter, camaraderie and insight. Headliner Harout Soghomonian will convey his signature wit and everyday observations while openers Maro Ajemian and Narine Avakian will perform selections from their respective one-woman shows.

As an artist whose ties with the TCA go back generations, Soghomonian emphasizes the importance of comedy for everyone, particularly Armenians who “worry too much about their families and their work.” He draws inspiration from daily life, always keeping an eye open to his surroundings.

“Every day I watch situations from a different point of view and whenever I see something funny or wrong, I like to address that back to the people so they can correct it through comedy.”

His influences include his uncle, Kevork Soghomonian, a longtime actor and member of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Vahram Papazian Theater Group in Lebanon. Soghomonian followed his footsteps onto the stage, and remained an active member of the theater scene in Beirut and Los Angeles. Throughout his career, he has always maintained his own brand and style.

A member of the TCA for more than 35 years, Ajemian’s first exposure to comedy was through her mother who always told jokes. Over time Ajemian honed her own comedic skills and recognized the significance of comedy, especially for Armenians, “who are very reserved and may not always know how to show affection.”

“We are shy in public but should remember to be more open and laugh freely,” said Ajemian, who has performed in many Armenian plays through the AGBU Ardavazt Theater Company and now the AGBU Krikor Satamian Theatre Group.

Fellow stage actress Narine Avakian, who has also worked alongside Krikor Satamian, remarked on the ability of comedians to comprehend people and situations, allowing them to connect with their audience members. She, too, finds inspiration from her surroundings, including “something as vague as observing a crowd, or a sharp underlying thought that crosses my mind when I am in the midst of plucking my unibrow.”

Tying the need for laughter with the transgenerational effects of the Armenian Genocide on mental health, Avakian said it’s the “civic duty of comedians to help combat such predicaments by the daily introduction of humor, *tchikeutfeh*, *oghi* and *tabbouleh* if you’re vegan enough.”

The program will be the first of many cultural and educational events sponsored by the chapter.

“I’m really happy that we have a new chapter of the Tekeyan Cultural Association in Los Angeles with a fresh new energy,” said committee member Arno Yeretizian. “Tekeyan has always been a home away from home and I look forward to continuing its tradition of fostering a cozy environment for people from all over to come together and experience our rich Armenian culture and heritage.”

The Rococo Room is at 70 W. Union St. Cocktails start at 7:30 p.m., dinner at 8 p.m. and the program at 8:30 p.m. Tickets are \$60; checks can be made payable to Tekeyan Cultural Association. For reservations contact Shahnour Hovsepian at 818.730.1100 or info@TekeyanLA.org. To stay up to date on the chapter, visit www.tekeyanla.org, email info@tekeyanla.org or follow on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/TekeyanLA, Instagram@TekeyanLA and Twitter @TekeyanLA.



An enamel piece by Mary Aroian

Worcester Gallery of Enamel Art Opening Showcases Mary Aroian’s Works

WORCESTER — The opening of the Gallery of Enamel Art with the exhibit “Mary Aroian, 40+ Years of Color,” took place on September 14 and 15. Artist Aroian and her two sons Raffi and Mihran hosted approximately 200 visitors over the two days, according to the gallery’s website, in the one-room space.

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

Mary Aroian has a long history as an artist. She was born in Sultanabad, Iran in 1931, and moved with her parents to Tehran. Her father was an Iranian-Armenian rug dealer, while her mother came to Iran from Istanbul. As a young child, Mary used to go around and sketch what she saw in a sketchbook. Her parents, seeing this, encouraged her to develop her artistic talents as a child by hiring tutors for her. She submitted her dossier to the Vesper George School of Art in Boston and was accepted there, she said jokingly, 500 years ago. It was actually in the early 1950s, and she studied there two years, receiving an associate of arts degree. She later went to Boston University for graduate studies in art. She got married to Van Aroian in 1957 and had two boys.

Mary continued to do oil painting but developed an allergic reaction which led to her hospitalization and forced her to stop in the late 1950s. Instead, she switched to enamel (glass-on-metal) painting. She tried it at someone’s house and then took lessons at the Worcester Center for Crafts (<https://www.worcester.edu/WCC/>), where she began creating in the early 1970s. Dating back to 1856, this center is a nonprofit community-based arts organization which provides crafts education and supports artists/artisans. It has been affiliated with Worcester State University since 2009. Aroian also studied enamel art making in Maine at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts.

Aroian, despite her age, continues to bring her fifty-pound tool chest to the Center for Crafts in order to realize her creative work and feels at home in its friendly environment. Initially, she said that at her house, “I go downstairs in the basement, and draw the designs for my artwork on paper. I spend two to three hours a day there.” Afterwards, she redraws the design at the Worcester Center, which has its own kiln.

Honee Hess, executive director of the Worcester Center for Crafts, commented recently about Mary Aroian, “It is our good fortune at the Worcester Center for Crafts that when Mary Aroian had to stop oil painting she decided to try her hand at enamels! She is a talented, hardworking enamel artist who loves to tell others about her love of enamels. She uses the intensity of enamel color to its best and her work is a testament to her love of color.”

Mary has traveled to Italy and London to learn more about classical art. She said that she particularly enjoys the works of Impressionist artists. Prior to her marriage she studied art at the Istanbul college Notre Dame de Sion for a year and a half. She also went to China to study enamel art several decades ago.

see ARONIAN, page 13

Nora Armani Takes On Pirandello in New York

NEW YORK — Actress, filmmaker, festival director, writer and translator: these are just some of the roles that Nora Armani plays in her everyday life. In fact, Armani was recently labeled “Wonder Woman” by noted European critic Natja Igney for the many different hats that she wears in the theater and film worlds. Born to an Armenian family in Egypt, the multilingual and multi-talented New Yorker divides her time equally between her home city, Paris and Yerevan. For the past several years Armani has concentrated much of her efforts on successfully launching and producing the New York-based SR Socially Relevant Film Festival, which has become a fixture on the New York festival circuit. Now she returns to her first love — acting — with a lead role as “The Mother” in a stirring showcase production of “Raison d’être: an Evening of Pirandello,” adapted from selected works by Italian Nobel Prize Laureate Luigi Pirandello.



Nora Armani

The play, which runs at the renovated Theatre 71 at Blessed Sacrament on Manhattan’s Upper West Side from September 20 to 29 combines Pirandello’s renowned work “Six Characters in Search of an Author” with two of his lesser-known one-acts, “Chee Chee” and “The Man with the Flower in his Mouth.” Produced by Jennifer Jewell (Goblin, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Henry V) and adapted by noted director Patrick Mulryan (Into the Woods, Jack), the stellar cast includes Mickey Abbate (as Chee-Chee), Lucie Allouche (as Stepdaughter), Carleigh Chirico (as Girl), Jennifer Jewell (as The Man with a Flower in His Mouth), David Klein (as Son), Alex Might (as Boy), Rachel Lauren James (as Nada), Brian Linden (as Father), Ed Malone (as Stage Manager), Melissa Eddy Quilty (as Madame Pace), R David Robinson (as Producer), Robert Charles Russell (as Commuter), and Giovanni Villari (as Commander Squatriglia). This contemporary interpretation of Pirandello’s classic work examines questions of personal identity, zeroing in on the often troubling battles that individuals wage between their true inner selves and the personae imposed on them by rigid societal structures and dictates.

Armani’s own stage creations, “Sojourn at Ararat,” “Nannto Nannto”, and “On the Couch,” have earned accolades for her performances around the world including at the Sydney Opera House, The Metropolitan Museum, Joe’s Pub, The Cairo Opera House, Paris Cartoucherie and Yerevan’s National Theatre. Armani has also starred in a plethora of films including “Deadline in Seven Days,” “The New Eve,” “Voisin Voisine,” “Last Station” and “Hungry.” She has twice been rewarded with Drama-Logue Awards for performance and creation and won two Best Actress Awards in Armenia. Armani is particularly thrilled to be playing the role of “Mother” in “Raison d’Être,” a woman who “is tormented when her husband takes her son away from her and forces her to go away with another man with whom she has three other children. Pirandello shows his characters to be victims of circumstance as well as of one another. It is particularly rewarding to play such a rich role,” said Armani.

The play runs from Thursday, September 20 to Saturday, September 29. (There are no performances on September 24.) Link to purchase tickets: <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3597340>



ARTS & LIVING

Award Winning Documentary about Armenian Genocide to Screen in Watertown

WATERTOWN — In a regional premiere, the award winning documentary “Crows of the Desert: A Hero’s Journey through the Armenian Genocide” (“Crows”) will play at the Mosesian Center for the Arts in Watertown, on October 7, at 4:30 p.m.

The screening will be followed by a question-and-answer with Levon Parian, an acclaimed photographer whose work frequently focuses on genocide related issues. He is the grandson of the documentary’s hero, Levon Yotnakhparian, and published his grandfather’s memoirs upon which “Crows” is based.

The screening is the featured “kick-off event” for the upcoming Arlington International Film Festival. “Crows” director, producer and writer is Emmy Award winner Marta Houske who is recognized for her historical documentaries. Houske labored for years to find materials to bring the “Crows” story to life as a film. Executive Producer Paul G. Turpanjian is the grandson of genocide survivors and upon reading the Memoirs was led to tell the story of the Armenian Genocide through the story of one man: Levon Yotnakhparian.

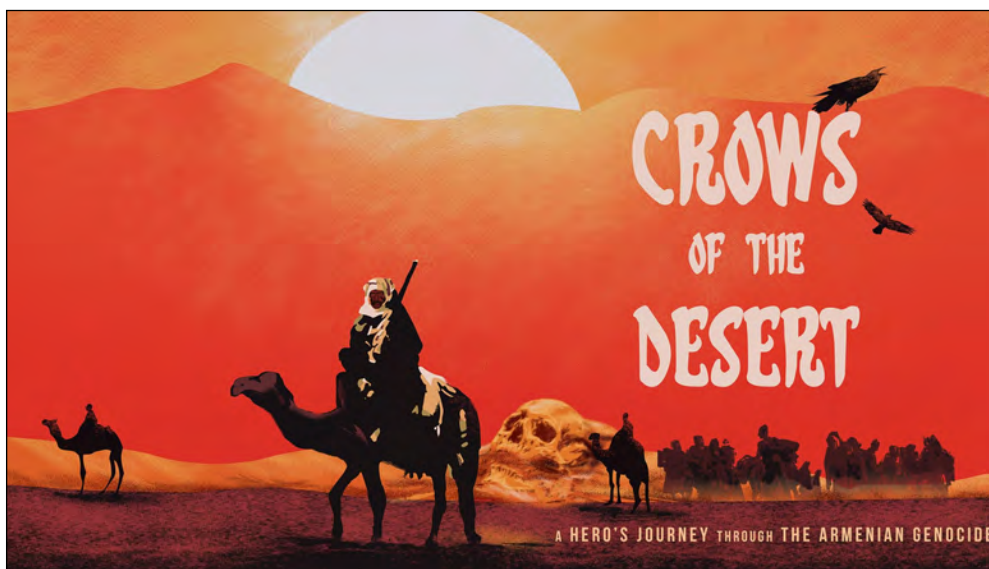
“Crows” has been the “Official Selection” of more than 20 film festivals to date wherein it won 9 times with 3 additional nominations. It frequently plays to sold-out audiences with many people returning to see it a second and third time. It fea-

tures extraordinarily rare film and photographs as well as recently-discovered documents which have been gathered from archives around the world. The documentary is unique in that there are no on-camera interviews.

The film is made up nearly entirely of archival materials so as to transport the viewer into the events of a century ago. This year in London, “Crows” won a prestigious Focal International Award for “Best Use of Footage in a History Production” in a competition which recognized the “Crows” production company Matrix Communications as well as: National Geographic Studios, HBO Documentary Films, Ken Burns’ Florentine Films, BBC Arena, and the British Film Institute. As Focal states: “These awards are without doubt, the leading and most complete set of awards for archive footage in the world today.”

The musical score was created by composer John Massari whose team included many of the finest musicians in Los Angeles.

The production elements artfully combine to reveal the terror and heroism in this incredible true story which took place a century ago in the Syrian desert. “Crows” tells of one man’s brave struggle to not only stay alive, but to help save his fellow Armenian survivors from near extinction in the 20th century’s first genocide. World War I was raging in the Middle East, as Britain’s Lawrence of Arabia fought side by side with the Arabs against the Ottoman Empire. Caught up



in the chaos, Levon barely escaped with his own life, time and again. Risking extreme peril, he returned to this dangerous realm to lead a small expeditionary group to rescue the scattered, destitute survivors of the Armenian Genocide. Along the way, the rescuers risked their lives countless times, endured unimaginable hardships, and crossed paths with some of the 20th century’s most legendary figures, including Prince Faisal, Lawrence of Arabia, legendary spy Sarah Aaronsohn and the El-Attraches (al-Atrash). The story reveals how individuals from a variety of different cultures and faiths stepped forward to help the Armenian refugees.

The Mosesian Arts Center and Arlington Intl. Film Festival wish to ensure that people are able to see “Crows” so tickets are discounted if bought in advance, or as groups, seniors, students and under 18.

View the documentary preview trailer on the website www.CrowsOfTheDesert.com and social media is available at [Facebook.com/CrowsOfTheDesert](https://www.facebook.com/CrowsOfTheDesert) and [Twitter.com/CrowsOfDesert](https://twitter.com/CrowsOfDesert)



Armenian survivors in Aqaba, Levon Yotnakhparian 2nd from left bottom row (Nubar Library photo)

Worcester Gallery of Enamel Art Opening Showcases Mary Aroian’s Works

ARONIAN, from page 12

Mary explained that the sources of her inspiration always come to her spontaneously and that she does not have a preferred type of subject. On the website of the Gallery of Enamel Arts, images of her art are divided into the primary categories of birds, people, animals, jewelry, flowers and landscapes. Her son Raffi said he noticed a Middle Eastern inspiration in nearly everything she creates and though his mother called her work folk art, he felt it was closer

Armenian General Benevolent Union once. However, in general, she has been very private and protective of her work. Raffi Aroian said jokingly that she will only allow her art works out of her house under armed guard so that to make his mother comfortable, he arranged for an ex-Navy Seal colleague of his who normally transports weapons-grade uranium, to handle the transportation of her works to the new gallery, where high tech security was installed beforehand.

ARAM ARKUN PHOTO



Mary Aroian next one of her works on the wall and wearing jewelry she created

to fine art. He added that his mother talked about Armenian illuminated manuscripts in the past, and said, “I think it has influenced the colors and images in some of her artwork.”

In fact, the opening exhibit included a piece which had an Armenian king in it, an Oriental carpet depicted in enamel, and an elegant motif with two birds which appeared similar to those in Armenian manuscripts.

Aroian has contributed pieces to various exhibits over the years and had an exhibit at the

Aside from the larger pieces, which resemble paintings, Aroian creates enamel jewelry, a sample of which she was wearing on opening day. Special display cases for such smaller pieces of enamel work have been ordered for the gallery.

Neither of Mary and Van Aroian’s sons are artists professionally. Raffi is a professor at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and runs a research lab dealing with infectious diseases. His brother, Mihran, is an entrepreneur and teaches at the McCombs College of Business

at the University of Texas at Austin.

Raffi explained what motivated him to create the gallery: “The general concept is that everyone — my brother, my dad and myself — feel that my mother is a museum-quality artist who has never wanted to exhibit her stuff. We wanted to provide her with a safe and secure place to do that. In the process of doing this, I discovered that there is really very little for the enamel arts in the United States. Consequently, it would be great to share not just my mom’s artwork but enamel artwork in general with the world.” He added that it was different in Europe and China, where there were museums dedicated to this field.

Raffi said that in the future, “This space will be open to other enamel artists, and it would be phenomenal if other Armenian enamel artists would take advantage of this opportunity.” Every show or exhibition will have a few pieces by Mary Aroian in addition to the works of other artists.

Raffi hopes that Armenian enamel artists, as well as others, will contact the gallery.

The Gallery of Enamel Art is in downtown Worcester, which is becoming a vibrant area for the arts. Its expenses are at present being managed by the family, but eventually it will start fundraising.

The next opening of the Gallery of Enamel Art will be on October 12 and 13, 12-2 pm, and feature “Cajun Color: Enamel Art with Cajun Spice Color Theme.” On October 13 there will also be Cajun music provided by Deux Amis in Concert.

The gallery, located at 340 Main St., Suite 505, will generally be open on the second Friday and third Saturday of each month from noon to 2 p.m. There is no cost for exhibiting or visiting the gallery. For more information, see <https://www.enamelgallery.org/>



An enamel work with a motif similar to that in Armenian art



Embracing Saroyan on His 110th Birthday

LOS ANGELES – His Armenian identity was a paramount force in writer William Saroyan’s life, his stories and pages filled with characters, dialogues and themes that reflected his cultural values, mores and history. For the first time ever, Saroyan’s never-before-seen plays revolving around the Armenian national identity were staged for the public in a world premiere production by Elly Award-winning playwright and director Aram Kouyoumdjian on the occasion of the Pulitzer Prize winner’s 110th birthday at the Los Angeles Central Library’s Taper Auditorium on Saturday, September 15.

Spirited scenes from “The Armenian Play (or Opera),” “Home to Hayastan,” and “Ouzenk Choozenk Hai Yenk (Like It or Not, We’re Armenians),” were performed by Vista Players, a non-profit theater company committed to staging contemporary works of social relevance. The feature cast of five performers, including Jade Hykush, Will Maizel, Bailey Sorrel and Robert Walters, portrayed 30 dynamic characters throughout a brisk 75-minute performance.

Each scene was interwoven through narration that shed further light on the writer’s life and the themes he expressed through his plays, including immigrant life in the Diaspora, the Armenian Genocide and the idea of repatriation.

“The selection process and how to select and order the scenes presented were probably the biggest challenges of this whole project,” said Kouyoumdjian, in an exclusive interview. “I wanted the overall production to have a through-line and for there to be a progression in terms of the audience’s emotional experience.”

Kouyoumdjian, who was granted special permission by Stanford University (where Saroyan’s manuscripts are housed) to stage the



Will Maizel, Robert Walters, Jade Hykush, and Bailey Sorrel performing a scene from “The Armenian Play (or Opera)”

with these works is also important and how we are engaging on stage with these pieces.”

Bridging together excerpts from the various plays, Kouyoumdjian created a running com-

20th century, Saroyan was a reputable and groundbreaking writer in contemporary American literature, winning a Pulitzer Prize for his play, “The Time of Your Life,” which was published in 1939. Other notable works by him include the critically acclaimed collection of short stories, “My Name is Aram” and The Human Comedy, a novel Saroyan adapted for the silver screen, leading to an Academy Award. He wrote in all genres and forms, from short

stories to novels to plays and memoirs over his five-decade career.

“Saroyan’s writing is both timeless and in some ways ahead of his time,” said Kouyoumdjian, who noted that Saroyan’s writing had elements of absurdism in the 1930s even before the label existed. “Many of the themes that I brought to the forefront, such as immigration, are issues we contend with today in our lives.” *(See story on next page)*



Will Maizel, Robert Walters, and Bailey Sorrel play various characters and share the role of narrator in “William Saroyan: The Unpublished Plays in Performance”

excerpts from these plays, struck a balance between Saroyan’s dramaturgy and lighter comic touches throughout the performance.

“This is supposed to be a journey for the audience,” said Kouyoumdjian. “Our dialogue

mentary and established a larger historical and cultural context for the motivations and emotions driving Saroyan’s work to further engage the audience with the theatrical experience.

Born and raised in Fresno at the turn of the



Will Maizel and Bailey Sorrel portray young Willie and his mother, Takoohi, in “William Saroyan: The Unpublished Plays in Performance”



Embracing Saroyan on His 110th Birthday

from previous page

Drawn to Saroyan's work early on, Kouyoumdjian knew he wanted to focus his master's thesis on drama that related to Armenian-American literature, digging deep into Saroyan's works and "learning that there was this treasure trove of unpublished works I thought needed to be explored."

A recurring theme that coursed through the unpublished passages that resonates with Armenians today is the relationship between the Diaspora and the homeland and the hand it plays in shaping national identity. The production brought to life scenes of Saroyan's family on Ellis Island after having left their ancestral home in Bitlis, their aching for home after settling in Northern California, and contending with the death of Saroyan's minister father when the writer was just a toddler, forcing his mother to place him and his two siblings in an orphanage until she found work.

"Armenians have sort of developed a rather Jingoistic version of Saroyan but as these unpublished works show, there are a lot of conflicting thoughts he grapples with in terms of identity, the impact of the genocide, attitude towards Turkish denial and notions of repatriation," Kouyoumdjian said.

Saroyan's voice is one that transcends to the present day and continues to be discovered by individuals of all generations and backgrounds who maintain a connection with him as he himself unearths his own self and thoughts through his words.

"Saroyan is encountering and facing these rather difficult topics and not necessarily coming up with easy answers," said Kouyoumdjian. "Because of this, audiences can find another side to him through his works."

The production, which was underwritten by the George Ignatius Foundation and donors from the Armenian community, was presented as part of the Central Library's "L.A. Made" series and was co-sponsored by Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Krekorian, who was in attendance with his wife, Tamar.

"William Saroyan: The Unpublished Plays in Performance" will perform at the UC Center in Fresno, on September 28; at the University of California Irvine in Orange County on October 6; and at the Ararat Eskijian Museum in Los Angeles on October 7. All performances are free and open to the public.

-Taleen Babayan

Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian Datian

Squash and Carrot Soup with Toasted Walnuts and Blue Cheese

INGREDIENTS

6-7 cups yellow and zucchini squash, peeled and cubed
3-4 cloves garlic, minced
2 cups carrots, peeled and diced
1 1/2 cup onions, chopped
1 large potato, peeled and diced
6 cups reduced sodium chicken or vegetable broth (to taste)
1 cup heavy cream (to taste)
Kosher salt, black or white pepper
1/2 teaspoon rosemary
1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
2-3 tablespoons unsalted butter
Juice of 1/2 lemon
Minced parsley and mint for garnish
Toasted walnuts, pecans, almonds or pistachios and crumbled blue cheese or goat cheese for garnish

PREPARATION

In a large pot, sauté garlic in butter; add the carrots, onions, and potatoes, toss, and cook until vegetables are tender. Add the squash, broth, spices (except the nutmeg), and lemon juice, and bring to a low boil; reduce heat and simmer for 25-30 minutes or until vegetables are cooked through.

In a blender or food processor, puree soup in batches until smooth, for about 2 minutes. Return to pot, add the cream, stir, and check seasonings. Add the nutmeg and heat to simmer, adding more broth or cream to taste.

Serve in bowls garnished with minced parsley and mint, and top with toasted nuts and crumbled blue cheese or goat cheese.

Serves 6-8.

Note: When blending hot liquids, remove the liquid from heat and allow to cool for 5 to 6 minutes. Transfer liquid to a blender or food processor and fill it no more than halfway. To toast nuts, toss with melted butter (or olive oil) and sauté in a pan or toast in toaster oven for 5 minutes; lightly sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon, if desired.



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

TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION
MIHER MEGERDCHIAN THEATRICAL GROUP

20th Anniversary Banquet

20

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ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

FLORIDA

JANUARY 20-27, 2019 — Armenian Heritage Cruise XXII 2019. Western Caribbean Cruise aboard the Royal Caribbean’s Allure of the Sea. Traveling to Nassau, Cozumel, Roatan, Costa Maya. Cabin Rates, starting from \$949/person based on double occupancy, including port charges and ACAA registration fee. Government rates of \$137.45 are additional. Armenian entainment, 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.

CALIFORNIA

SEPTEMBER 28 —Tekeyan Cultural Association Los Angeles chapter will host a literary presentation titled “William Saroyan at 110: The Man and the Writer,” featuring speaker Prof. Osheen Keshishian. Followed by artistic program. Friday, 7.30 pm. Glendale Central Library, 22 E. Harvard St., Glendale.

NOVEMBER 17 — Join the Armenian EyeCare Project for its Annual Gala at the beautiful Balboa Bay Resort in Newport Beach, CA. The fun-filled evening will begin at 6:30pm with a cocktail hour and silent auction followed by a delicious Mediterranean-inspired meal, live music and dance entertainment, and an exciting live auction. Tickets are \$500 per person and for those 35 and under, \$250 per person. To RSVP or for more information, please call 949-933-4069, email leslie@eyecareproject.com or visit eyecareproject.com/gala

MASSACHUSETTS

SEPTEMBER 23 — “Timeless Classics,” Music of J.S. Bach, performed by Sargis Karapetyan Quartet with Victoria Avetisyan, mezzo-soprano; Deanna Johnson, flute; and Nune Hakobyan, piano and organ; 1 p.m.; Holy Trinity Armenian Church Sanctuary, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge MA. Event is free and open to the public. For more information, call the Church office at 617.354.0632, or e-mailoffice@htaac.org.

SEPTEMBER 23 — LIGHTS, CAMERA, STORIES! An Evening with Award-Winning Filmmaker BARED MARONIAN. Screening of “Women of 1915,” exclusive footage of Armenia’s Velvet Revolution, reveal of Maronian’s “Titanic Love.” Reception to follow. Proceeds to benefit Women’s Support Center (Yerevan) and Hanganak Elderly Project (Stepanakert). Co-sponsored by AIWA and AWWA. 5:00 PM. Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library – 33 Marrett Road, Lexington, MA Tickets: \$75 (Students with ID \$25). For tickets: E-mail:lightscamerastories@gmail.com or Online: aiwainternational.org/lightscamerastories

SEPTEMBER 27 — Annual Fall Dinner and Drawing sponsored by the Friends of Holy Trinity 1000 Club, Thursday, 6:30 p.m.; Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church,145 Brattle St., Cambridge MA. All are invited, and you don’t have to be a member of the 1000 Club to attend and enjoy a delicious losh kebab and pilaf dinner. Tickets are \$9.99 per person and are on sale at the door. The dinner will be followed by the regular monthly raffle drawing at 8 p.m., for monthly prizes of \$2,000, plus 4 \$25 door prizes. “One-time” numbers will be sold on the night of the dinner. Special offer: purchase five “one-time” numbers for \$20, save \$5. For more information, contact the Church office at 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

SEPTEMBER 29 — Armenian Children’s Singer Joelle, from Montreal, will perform on Saturday at 4 pm. At the Armenian Cultural and Educational Foundation, Hovnanian Hall, 47 Nichols Ave., Watertown. Tickets \$20 per person, children 2 and under free. Organized by St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School PTO. For tickets, event@ssaes.org or 617-926-6979.

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.

SEPTEMBER 30 —Holy Trinity Armenian Church welcomes Susan Osman, television and radio anchor and host, including almost 20 years with the BBC. Author and screenwriter. 12.15 p.m. in Johnson Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Her talk, “I Heard God Laughing” Hafiz will address how God often has different plans for us than we have for ourselves. For more information, contact the church office at 617-354-0632 or email office@htaac.org.

OCTOBER 1 — “What Attracted HFB Lynch to Armenia? Origins and Influences,” public lecture by Christopher Young, Crown Court Judge (retired), England. Boston University Modern Armenian History and Literature Lecture Series, organized by the Charles K. and Elisabeth M. Kenosian Chair in Modern Armenian History and Literature. Lynch was the author of a two-volume magnum opus, Armenia: Travels and Studies, in 1901, the final product of his extensive journeys and research in the historic Armenian lands in the Ottoman and Russian Empires. Monday, 7 p.m. Center for Integrated Life Sciences and Engineering, Colloquium Room 101/106A, 610 Commonwealth Ave., Boston University, Boston. Open to the public. Free admission. Reception to follow.

OCTOBER 1 — St James Men’s Club Family Night Dinner Meeting - social hour, and mezza at 6:15 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m., St James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA. On Monday, October 1, 2018 there will be a St James Armenian Church Men’s Club Family Night dinner meeting. In addition to our regular members and attendees, we invite wives and children, who are teenagers and older. The speaker will be Alex Cohen, marketing representative for Costco Wholesale. His presentation title will be “The Costco Story”. Mezza and Losh Kebab & Kheyma Dinner \$16/person. For additional information call the St James Church office at 617-923-8860 or call Hapet Berberian at 781-367-6598

OCTOBER 7 — “CROWS OF THE DESERT: A Hero’s Journey through the Armenian Genocide,” Film by Marta Houske. Sunday, 4.30 p.m. A documentary based on the Memoirs of Levon Yotnakhparian, a brave man’s struggle to not only stay alive, but to help save his fellow Armenian survivors from near extinction in the 20th Century’s first genocide. Screening of the film (62 min) followed by a Q&A (45 min). This film contains depictions of carnage and difficult situations. Parental discretion advised. General Admission \$15. Students with valid ID and Seniors (over 65) \$10 Group of 4 \$12 per (use promo code: CROWS4) Group of 10 \$10 per (use promo code: CROWS10) Group of 20 \$8 per (use promo code: CROWS20). Mosesian Center for the Arts, Watertown, Arsenal Center.

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 or visit www.stjameswatertown.org.

OCTOBER 19 — The Armenian Museum of America will embark on a bus trip to The Metropolitan Museum of Art on Friday to see their new exhibition “Armenia!,” which explores the arts and culture of Armenians from the 4th-17th centuries. Two illuminated manuscripts from the Armenian Museum’s collection will be among the incredible objects on display. Tickets are \$175 and for members only. The bus will leave Watertown at 7 am, and tickets include round-trip transportation to The Met on a coach bus with WiFi and restrooms, admission to The Met, an Armenian continental breakfast on the bus, and a guided interpretative tour from Christina Maranci, PhD, Professor of Armenian Art and Architecture. The group will leave The Met at 6 p.m., and an evening snack will be provided on the bus before arriving back in Watertown around 10 pm. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.armenianmuseum.org or call 617.926.2562, ext. 4.

OCTOBER 20 – Hye Kef 5: Onnik Dinkjian Performs at

DoubleTree by Hilton in Andover, MA, with Ara Dinkjian and local ensemble, for Armenian Friends of America, 7 pm to midnight. All proceeds benefit the Armenian churches of the Merrimack Valley. For tickets: John Arzigian – 603-560-3826; Lucy Sirmaian – 978-683-9121; Peter Gulezian – 978-375-1616; Sharke Der Apkarian – 978-808-0598; Kathy Geyer 978-475-8309.

OCTOBER 21 — 5th Annual Trinity Tailgate, New England Patriots vs. Chicago Bears, sponsored by the Trinity Men’s Union of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 12:15 p.m., Sunday, Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. All are invited to a tailgate party to watch the game, 1 p.m. kick-off, on a 12 foot high-definition screen. Lots of food, beverages and snacks. For further information, call the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632 or email office@htaac.org.

OCTOBER 28 — Reception Celebrating the 57th Anniversary of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston and Honoring Parishioners of the Year Nancy D. Kasarjian and Carol Krikorian on their Retirement, following Church Services, Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge MA. Save the date; details to follow. For further information, call the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

NOVEMBER 4 — Celebrating the Life and Work of Diana Der Hovanessian, Organized by the Armenian Cultural Foundation and co-sponsored by Amaras Art Alliance, Armenian General Benevolent Union - New England affiliate, Armenian International Women’s Association, Armenian Museum of America, The Friends of the Longfellow House, Hamazkaine Armenian Educational and Cultural Society - Boston, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, New England Poetry Club, and Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada. Sunday, 3 p.m. Armenian Cultural Foundation (441 Mystic Street, Arlington). Admission free and open to the public.

NOVEMBER 14 — Najarian Lecture on Human Rights at Historic Faneuil Hall, Boston. Wednesday. Doors open at 6.45. Program at 7.30 p.m. “INCARCERATION Untangling the web of injustice.” Speakers: Secretary Andrea J. Cabral, former Massachusetts Secretary of Public Safety, Author, Enforcing and Defending Chapter 209A Restraining Orders in Massachusetts; Marc A. Levin, Esq, Vice President of Criminal Justice, Texas Public Policy Foundation and Right on Crime; Founder, Foundation’s Criminal Justice Program Moderator: Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian. 30th Sheriff of Middlesex County. President, Massachusetts Sheriffs’ Association. Founding Member, Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime & Incarceration. Reception follows at the Bostonian Hotel. An endowed public program of Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway. Advance Registration is appreciated. hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.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.

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.

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

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.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



ARTS & LIVING

Laurel Karabian Fund Supports Smithsonian and Met Projects

LOS ANGELES — The Armenian International Women's Association announced this week the distribution of two significant grants given out to perpetuate Armenian art and culture through the Laurel Karabian Fund for the Arts.

The first of these grants was donated to the Smithsonian Folk Life Festival which took place in July at the National Mall in Washington DC. The Festival, launched in 1967, is an international exhibition of living cultural heritage presented annually in the summer in Washington, D.C. The grant sponsored the performance of the a cappella group, Zulal, a trio of Armenian-American women who perform ancestral folk songs in unique harmony. Tens of thousands attend the event every year and it is sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution.

The second grant to the Metropolitan


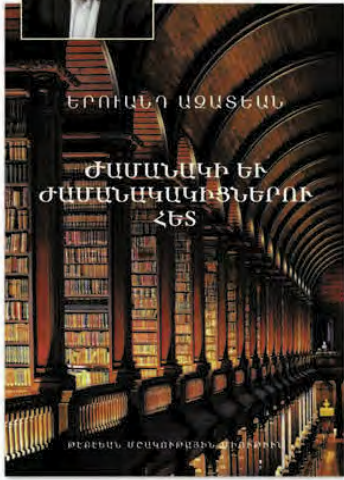
Museum of Art in New York was earmarked for the restoration and preservation of two historic textiles. The Gonfalon of St. Gregory the illuminator (circa 1448) and the oldest Liturgical Curtain (circa 1689), both from the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin will be on display during the Armenia! exhibit, opening on September 22, 2018. The Met will return the textiles in its restored state to Echmiadzin at the end of the exhibit which runs through January 13, 2019.

The Laurel Karabian Fund for the Arts is a memorial fund established to honor Laurel Karabian, the first president of the Los Angeles affiliate of AIWA. The Advisory Council consists of Carla Garapedian, Greg Hosharian, Madeline Karabian, Karen Kondazian, Vatche Mankerian, Karin Mushegain, Cindy Norian, and Caroline Tufenkian. For more information, please visit aiwainternational.org and click on "about us", then "affiliates" and "Los Angeles."



AIWA ladies in Washington DC at a reception during the Folk Life Festival: Front row (L to R) Elizabeth Agbabian, Savye Tufenkian, (special honoree of the Armenian government), Hermine Janoyan; Back row (L to R) Houry Aposhian, Arsine Phillips, Victoria Hovhannissian (wife of Armenian Ambassador to the U.S.), Dr. Lisa Karamardian, and Nicole Nishanian, President of AIWA-LA.



Հայաստանի Թեքեյան Մշակութային Միությունը սիրով հրավիրում է Ձեզ մասնակցելու գրականագետ Երվանդ Ազատյանի հեղինակած «ԺԱՄԱՐԱԿԻ ԵՒ ԺԱՄԱՐԱԿԱԿՅՆԵՐՈՒ ՀԵՏ» գրքի շնորհանդեսին,

որը տեղի կունենա 2018 թվականի սեպտեմբերի 19-ին ժամը 15:00-ին Թեքեյան Կենտրոնի մեծ դահլիճում (Խանջյան 50):

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CALENDAR

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

NEW JERSEY

Contact Margaret Ajamian 201-681-7671, ajamiann@aol.com or Lynn Beylerian 201-914-0354, lynnbeylerian@gmail.com. Send checks to Lynn Beylerian 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 29 – TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group 20th Anniversary Banquet Celebrating 20 Years of Theater at 7 p.m. at the Palisadium, 700 Palisadium Dr. Cliffside Park, NJ. Featuring Special Entertainment by Krikor Satamian. Master of Ceremonies Gerald Papisian. Presentations by past and present MMTG Directors. Special Musical Performance by Hovhannes Babakhanyan. Donation: \$150 pp. For more information and tickets please call, Marie Zokian (201) 745-8850, Talar Sarafian 201-240-8541.

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

NEW YORK

SEPTEMBER 22 - January 13, 2019 – ARMENIA! at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Armenia! is the "first major exhibition to explore the importance of Armenians and their remarkable achievements in a global context..." <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2018/armenia>

SEPTEMBER 30 – "Armenia Way" Official Street Co-Naming Ceremony. Fr. Abraham Malkhasyan and the Parish Council of the Armenian Church of the Holy Martyrs are happy to announce that the official ceremony to co-name 210th Street between Horace Harding Expressway and 58th Avenue in Bayside, New York as "Armenia Way" will take place on Sunday, at 12:30 p.m. Please join us as we celebrate this historic occasion with the participation of politicians and community leaders. Special celebratory fellowship will follow the ceremony.

OCTOBER 13 – Concert: "Armenian Songs From My Heart." On the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Consecration of Holy Martyrs, Ruthann Turekian (soprano) dedicates this concert to Dn. Onnik Dokmeciyan, Dn. Edward Karnikian and Mary Selvinazian, for their support of her musical pursuits and to her late mother, Margaret Bedrossian Turekian. Concert includes works by Gomidas, Alemshah, Hekimian, Suni, Khachaturian and others. Concert in Holy Martyrs Church sanctuary to start at 7:30pm (doors open at 6:45pm). Tickets \$40 (advanced purchase), \$45 at the door. For tickets, please call (718) 225-0235. Reception to follow concert in Kalustyan Hall.

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 for tickets and more information.

CANADA

OCTOBER 5 – Montreal book presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian on her father's memoir, *Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army*, Friday, 7:30 p.m. AGBU Montreal Center – Demirdjian Hall, 805 Manogian Street Saint Laurent, QCH4N1Z5. Reception and book signing to follow. (All proceeds from the sale of the books will be donated to the AGBU). RSVP – info@agbumontreal.org (514) 748-2428

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.



COMMENTARY

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COMMENTARY

Bittersweet Observations on Independence Anniversary

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Until September 21, 1991, the last Armenian independent state was in Cilicia, which fell victim to the Mamelukes in 1375. Its ruler, King Leo VI, was taken as a captive to Egypt. Ever since then, Armenians had been seeking to re-establish a sovereign homeland, with many leaders advancing the idea of Armenian liberation.

Israel Ori (1675-1711) was one of those extraordinary leaders with military, diplomatic and business skills who knocked on the doors of European powers and Russian czars, giving his life on the road towards his dream.

Joseph Emin was another statesman (1726-1809) who pursued that dream. They were followed by the founders of the political parties, beginning in 1885, when the first organized political party was founded in Van, inspired by the ideas of Mugurdich Terlemezian, a freedom fighter, Khrimian Hayrik, a writer and religious leader and Mugurdich Portukalian, an intellectual and journalist. But the dream remained elusive.

Armenians lived under foreign domination for almost six centuries. They never gave up on the hope or struggle.

In the meantime, they developed the power of self-preservation in their genes to challenge the forces of adversity, alienation and assimilation. Otherwise, how can one explain the phenomenon that a people living for centuries under foreign domi-

Thus, our first brush with independence, after six centuries, came at a time when it was least expedient.

It was a time of internal, regional and international turmoil. New and competing empires were emerging on the ruins of the old ones. It was a time of nationalism and ideological warfare. Armenia was caught in that melee; inexperience in self-rule, combined with ideological conflict plagued a small nation of refugees huddled on a sliver of land.

The first year of independence was guided by a spirit of collaboration, where different factions came together to form a national government. But within a year, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) wrested control, throwing down a challenge to the other parties, particularly the communists, who were backed by Moscow. The polarization became so intense that it shot the foundations of the republic. After two and a half years, Armenia lost its independence. Independence had come about involuntarily and it disappeared in the same manner, leaving in its wake pain, hunger and bloodshed.

In 1920, Armenia was incorporated into the Soviet Empire and eventually became one of its 15 constituent republics.

For 70 years, Armenia survived under Soviet rule. The Soviet Union was a social experiment which resulted in a high body count: Stalinist terrors, war ravages and Siberian exiles became the destiny of the Armenian people, as well as those from the other republics.

However, despite all adversities, Armenia experienced its most prosperous period in modern times under the Soviet yoke.

Culture, industry, technology and science flourished. And because the Iron Curtain did not tolerate travel or emigration, Armenia's population hit 4.5 million. In a way, the Soviet restrictions served as a blessing in disguise.

This contradiction raises an existential question: Should Armenians live under foreign rule in order to thrive?

After 70 years of terrorizing its own people and the world, the Soviet empire collapsed. Levon Ter-Petrosian's Pan-Armenian



nation continued to preserve their language and religious faith against all odds?

Armenians were always comfortable with the idea of independence as long as it remained an abstract idea. They would cherish it, shape it along their desires and pursue it relentlessly. But they did not know how to cope with independence once it became a reality.

The first time Armenia became independent was in 1918. There was a clash of empires and a collapse of empires. The Russian and the Ottoman empires collapsed as the majority of Armenians were living under the rule of those two empires. Out of the ruins of those empires, a small territory of Armenia emerged. Armenians fought for their self-defense as they took a last stand against the Ottoman forces at the Battle of Sardarabad. But independence came as a result of other developments. Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan had formed a federation to withstand the overwhelming forces of the powers in the region. The federation was called the Sejm. Under Turkish pressure, Georgia and Azerbaijan declared independence, which brought about the demise of the Sejm. Armenians had no alternative but to follow suit.

An odd situation had developed: the Armenian National Council (*Azkayin Khorhurt*) was headquartered in Tiflis (modern Tbilisi), the capital of Georgia. The Council declared itself to be in control of Yerevan and its environs, which could be swallowed up by the neighboring nations, if left unattended, as happened to Javakhk, now occupied by Georgia, and Karabakh, later occupied by Azerbaijan.

Armenia became independent almost involuntarily. Independent Armenia's last prime minister, Simon Vratzian, wrote in his book, *The Republic of Armenia*: "People were sad. They were crying as if a mother had given birth to a sick child."

Movement would believe that the Karabakh movement caused the collapse of the empire. Yet, in reality, it was the interaction of geostrategic forces which caused the implosion of a domestically weakened system. Thus, 15 independent nations emerged from the ashes of the once-mighty empire. Once again, independence arrived at Armenia inadvertently, involuntarily. Although the West hailed the 15 emergent republics as democracies, in fact, they were 15 mini-potentes ruled by former communists who had simply changed their hats.

For 70 years, the system strove and educated the Soviet masses. But with the collapse of the system, the greedy classes whose appetite for plunder had been frustrated by the system, somewhat, got a free hand.

In each and every republic, a class of oligarchs emerged to exploit their own people. From Belarus to Kazakhstan, from Tajikistan to Azerbaijan, one-man rule was established in each state and Armenia was not immune from that malaise.

Armenia's independence came with authoritarianism. The ruling elite did not bother that their kin was abandoning the country because of the misery their usury had caused.

The famous Armenian painter, Harutune Galentz, had a great sense of humor. He used to say during the Soviet period: "If you like the revolution that much, let's make another one."

Lo and behold, Galentz's revolution came after the first revolution. And that was the Velvet Revolution, which in fact came to Armenia voluntarily, unlike the previous periods of independence which were thrust upon Armenians.

This revolution has pledged to bring an end to the corruption. Should that happen, Armenia's economy may revert to a positive mode to give hope to people to live in Armenia and help the country thrive.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Trump and Bolton Undermine The International Criminal Court

Many Americans and others around the world have been following with great concern the irrational statements and destructive decisions made by President Trump ever since his election.

Some of the President's policies on national and international issues have made the United States the laughing stock of the world. The latest such example is the announcement by the White House National Security Adviser John Bolton that the United States will not cooperate with the International Criminal Court; will not allow the Court's judges to travel to the United States; will sanction their funds in American banks; and prosecute them in US courts.

According to Wikipedia, "the International Criminal Court (ICC) is an intergovernmental organization and international tribunal that sits in The Hague in the Netherlands. The ICC has the jurisdiction to prosecute individuals for the international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. The ICC is intended to complement existing national judicial systems and it may therefore only exercise its jurisdiction when certain conditions are met, such as when national courts are unwilling or unable to prosecute criminals or when the United Nations Security Council or individual states refer situations to the Court. The ICC began functioning on 1 July 2002, the date that the Rome Statute entered into force. The Rome Statute is a multilateral treaty which serves as the ICC's foundational and governing document. States which become party to the Rome Statute, for example,

by ratifying it, become member states of the ICC. Currently, there are 123 states which are party to the Rome Statute and therefore members of the ICC."

John Bolton, the National Security Adviser of President Trump, in a highly critical speech on Sept. 10, 2018, rejected the jurisdiction of the ICC, especially in cases involving accusations against the United States and its allies, particularly Israel.

Bolton and his boss were incensed by ICC's investigation of possible crimes committed by US soldiers in Afghanistan and charges brought by the Palestinian National Authority against Israel. To prevent any legal action against American forces, the United States has signed binding agreements with 100 countries not to surrender any US personnel to the ICC. Furthermore, the United States shut down the representative office of Palestine in Washington, D.C., because of the latter's intention to file charges at the ICC for alleged Israeli violations. This comes on the heels of the White House decision to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem, thus eliminating all possibility for the United States to serve as an honest broker between the Palestinian Authorities and Israel.

Bolton gave five reasons for the US refusal to cooperate with the ICC:

The first reason is Bolton's claim that the ICC "threatens American sovereignty and US national security interests. The prosecutor in The Hague claims essentially unfettered discretion to investigate, charge, and prosecute individuals, regardless of whether their countries have acceded to the Rome Statute." Bolton's claim is not accurate. First, all international treaties ratified by the United States supersede national sovereignty, such as the Genocide Convention and many others. Secondly, the ICC has jurisdiction over US citizens only in cases where the UN Security Council authorizes the Court to do so. While the United States is not a member of the ICC, it is a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council and as such it has veto power over its decisions. Thirdly, the ICC does not get involved in cases where the home country takes legal action against its own citizens.

Bolton's second objection is that "the International Criminal Court claims jurisdiction over crimes that have dis-

puted and ambiguous definitions, exacerbating the court's unfettered powers." Bolton is concerned that ICC judges would bring charges against the United States, in cases such as the US bombing of Syria in 2017 for its alleged use of chemical weapons. As in any other trial, if the evidence proves that the United States acted illegally, there should be an appropriate verdict. No country is above international law. The US is already protected from such Court actions as a non-member of the ICC. It is ironic that the United States, after preaching for decades to the rest of the world about upholding law and order, is now flouting the very principles that America was founded on!

Bolton's third concern is that "the International Criminal Court fails in its fundamental objective to deter and punish atrocity crimes. Since its 2002 inception, the court has spent over \$1.5 billion while attaining only eight convictions." Contrary to Bolton's assertion, the eight convictions prove that the Court is very deliberate in its judgments and does not pursue every little case around the world, allowing member states to charge their own accused citizens.

Bolton's fourth complaint is that "the International Criminal Court is superfluous, given that domestic US judicial systems already hold American citizens to the highest legal and ethical standards." This is an easily dismissible issue. If the ICC finds that US courts have dealt with a particular crime, it will not interfere. The ICC is a court of last resort. This is one of ICC's main guidelines.

Bolton's fifth criticism is that "the International Criminal Court's authority has been sharply criticized and rejected by most of the world. Today, more than 70 nations...are not members of the ICC." While 70 countries are not yet members of ICC, 123 countries are members! Over time, more nations will join the ICC, as is the case with other international conventions.

Rather than argue against the rule of law, the United States should be the first to join such international legal institutions. By rejecting the ICC and considering it to be "dead," as Bolton described it, the United States is simply encouraging the impunity of brutal regimes and dictators around the world!

Marking the 50th Anniversary of Theft of 23 Parchment Manuscripts from Jerusalem

By Rev. Father Zaven Arzoumanian, PhD

On the seventh year of the reign of Archbishop Yeghishe Derderian as patriarchate of Jerusalem, 50 years ago in March 1967, news spread all over that 23 Armenian manuscripts were stolen from the vaults of the monastery of St. James Armenian Patriarchate and were taken to London for sale by the Sotheby Auctioning Center. Those parchment manuscripts were stolen and taken to London to be auctioned and sold on March 14, 1967. The shameful and notorious action was truly a great scandal and disgrace for the Armenian nation and Church, revealed from the detailed catalogue of the 23 precious manuscripts, all Gospel Books, dated from the 13th to the 18th centuries including the most famous Gospel of King Hetoum with illustrations by Toros Rosslin. The "Catalogue of 23 important Armenian illuminated manuscripts" was published by Sotheby for the use of those interested. The catalogue announced the possible sale and the scholars who knew about the manuscripts raised their prompt condemnation and claimed their return to Jerusalem at once.

Theft an Internal Case

The first and foremost responsible persons for the theft would be naturally those high-ranking clergymen in office, namely, the Patriarch, the Grand Sacristan, and the Chancellor. Besides, the Grand Sacristan headed a standing Committee of three elected by the Brotherhood to oversee closely and protect the ancient artifacts of the Patriarchate, all three together and not individually. Intolerably, the Committee did not exist in those days and with the expression of the Patriarch during an interview, "it was not significant, being an obsolete body." This open confession indeed prompted the hidden theft. The 23 manuscripts were in held hostage in London for five months from November 1966 until they returned to Jerusalem on March 11, 1967. The theft reflected the indifference and the negligence of those three responsible members of the clergy who were reprimanded by the public as inapt and indolent guardians of national and religious treasures.

Both Armenian and international media blamed those responsible for the treacherous action to sell those ancient manuscripts estimated at the time to be worth 500,000 pounds sterling.

Scholars from Armenia and Paris, who frequently visited Jerusalem for reading those manuscripts as they did their research, recognized the ancient books and witnessed the original place they had been kept for centuries.

Reprimand and Interference of Holy Echmiadzin

His Holiness Vasken I Catholicos of All Armenians was deeply concerned hearing about the unwarranted sale, and sent strong reprimand to Patriarch Yeghishe Derderian of Jerusalem to take immediate steps to stop the sale without any delay, saying "they should immediately return to the Jerusalem Armenian Patriarchate at any cost in the name of the Armenian people." The Patriarch as if moved and concerned, responded to the Catholicos of All Armenians, saying, "we are in deep trouble and we will do the best we can to rescue the manuscripts." With no further delay the Pontiff assigned a commission of five scholars, headed by the President of the AGBU and philanthropist Alex Manoogian, to travel to London and meet with the chancellor Bishop Shahe Ajamian, the real responsible for the theft and the deal, to cancel any deal for the sale with the Sotheby. Ransom was needed and Mr. Manoogian was willing to meet with the payment with one condition, requiring the letter of the person who had given the valuable Gospel manuscripts for sale. Sotheby was unwilling and rejected to provide any document, but only to receive the 50,000-pound ransom, revealing another proof of the identities of the persons who made the infamous deal. Mr. Manoogian out of his unlimited kindness and concern gave the ransom and the manuscripts returned to Jerusalem on March 11, 1967.

Interference of the Jordanian Court

Had the notorious deal ended right there, the Armenian Church and nation would be satisfied with the return of the treasures and turn the page to end the scandal. This was not the case however. Out of the blue sky the same Patriarch Derderian and his cohort Bishop Ajamian committed yet a most stupid and condemnable treachery. They appealed to the Jordanian court to blame fraudulently two respected high-ranking clerics, the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople Archbishop Shnork Kaloustian and the elderly Archbishop Souren Kemhajian for commissioning, as if, the manuscripts for sale a decade earlier when holding offices in the Patriarchate. This lie spoke for itself in simple words that the books were comfortably resting in London for a decade, and now were ready for auction.

The government of Jordan based the false accusation on a fraudulent letter signed by the elderly Archbishop Kemhajian, fabricated by the treacherous chancellor Bishop Ajamian, who made him sign a false letter due to the near blind Archbishop who could not read the false letter as he answered the questions of the media the next day. He told the public that "on February 18, 1967 Bishop Ajamian entered my room and made

me sign a false letter, and because of my poor eyesight I could never read what the letter said, and I am suspicious my signature will be abused." Archbishop Kemhajian had learned about the theft of the manuscripts only the day before.

Patriarch Shnork Kaloustian Of Constantinople

Patriarch Shnork Kaloustian ignored the Jordanian verdict which had canceled itself and turned into pardon due to an amendment on the court rules of 1965, if anyone believes. The Patriarch took his valuable time to compile and publish in Istanbul a large volume called "The Scandal of the Theft of Manuscripts" with ample evidences and witnesses to officially condemn those three archbishops, Yeghishe, Hairig, and Shahe of Jerusalem "as guilty sinners in the act of the theft." Likewise, he refuted the shameful accusation based on the following facts:

The allegations of the Jordanian government were an outright lie, a "clumsy lie indeed."

A decade had passed since Archbishop Kaloustian's office as the Grand Sacristan of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, and one should imagine the present chief officers didn't realize that so many manuscripts were missing for so many years.

Archbishop Kaloustian was never summoned by the government as the guilty one.

The verdict said "it was guilt committed collectively" that canceled itself "according to an amendment in the rules of 1965 granting blanket pardon." Based on this ridiculous verdict Patriarch Kaloustian said it was all fabrication of lies, and that he would return such pardon back to the government since he did not need falsehood and mockery.

Years later in 1985, when a major dispute broke between Patriarch Derderian and his cohort Ajamian, the latter was expelled from the brotherhood of the Patriarchate, and the Patriarch confessed that the allegations against Patriarch Shnork Kaloustian were formulated by Bishop Ajamian, saying: "The accusation against Patriarch Shnork was prepared by him." In revenge, Ajamian made public those two letters related to the sale of the manuscripts between the Patriarchate and Sotheby, stating the Patriarch as the sole responsible person of the whole scenario.

Here I conclude the dark page of our recent history happened 50 years ago that shadowed the credit of the Armenian Church, at least for a short time. The tragedy was that clergy were responsible for it. For sure the safe return of the manuscripts was of prime importance for which our nation is grateful to His Holiness Vasken I Catholicos of All Armenians, to Patriarch Shnork Kaloustian, and to our Great Benefactor Alex Manoogian. The rest is shameful history.



Schiff Seeks Re-Election as National Profile Rises

SCHIFF, from page 1

committee's Republican chair, Rep. Devin Nunes, a fellow Californian.

In return, he has seen his national profile skyrocket as one of the most vocal critics of the president and has earned pejorative nicknames from Trump.

"It's brought about a dramatic change and most of it very positive," Schiff said in an interview earlier this month from his Washington office. "People thank me. More than a few shout at me from halfway down the block or come up to me virtually in tears" about "rule of law [being] under assault."

He continued that the judiciary and the free press "all are at risk."

Schiff has taken Trump to task over his attacks on the media. "He is attacking our own press as 'fake news.'"

Schiff has also been outspoken about financial ties between Trump and Russian cash of dubious origins, before Trump entered politics directly. He cites circumstantial evidence which can point to money laundering.

While he opposes much of what the president does, in opinion pieces in the New York Times and the Washington Post, he has suggested that Democrats should not focus on impeachment efforts because there is little chance they will succeed.

During the interview, Schiff also spoke about the explosive anonymous opinion piece that appeared in the New York Times, purportedly by a senior staffer, who suggested that the president is immature, uninformed and impulsive and was being controlled by staffers who knew better.

For Schiff, what was interesting, he said, was that "no one seems to question the accuracy of the op-ed," instead only concentrating on the identity of the writer, noting that the president is "essentially amoral. He has no agenda apart from himself."

Schiff said the writer should resign rather than continue on the job. "The underlying facts," he said, are mainly that "we have a president that can't be relied upon" in the job.

As a result, he said it is important that the Democrats take back the House of Representatives in the mid-term elections this fall. "We can't afford to have a Congress that is merely a rubber stamp for him," he said.

Schiff is now running for his 10th term as a member of Congress. He is being challenged by Republican Johnny Nalbandian (<https://mirror-spectator.com/2018/07/19/political-outsider-johnny-nalbandian-gets-himself-on-ca-november-ballot/>).

In 2000, Schiff challenged Republican incum-

bent Jim Rogan and defeated him in the most expensive House race ever at the time. During the 18 years he has been in Congress, he said, his district has changed a great deal.

"All the seats were Republican, but now most are Democrats," he said. "It still remains very ethnically diverse" and is very "fun."

He rattled off some of the gems in the district, home of movie and television studios, the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory and the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

His district is also home to the largest concentration of Armenians in the US.

"From the very beginning, they welcomed me like I was part of the family," he said. "It is such an interesting and talented community."

He praised the presence of Armenians in the fields of finance, science, medicine, law, politics and education in the district.

Being Jewish, he said, he has empathy for Armenians' history with the Genocide.

"I know what it's like to be part of a people with affinity for a distant country," he said.

On a lighter note, Schiff praised Armenian hospitality. Before he adopted a vegan diet, he was a fan of the kebabs and cheese. Now, he said, he fills up on the vegan appetizers. In fact, he recalled during one of his first meals hosted by people in the community, he didn't realize that the full table with various salads and appetizers was simply the beginning, with full dinner to follow.

Congressional Actions

Schiff has long served on the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues. In addition, he has served on the House Select Committee on Benghazi, co-chaired the Congressional International Anti-Piracy Caucus, co-founded the Democratic Study Group on National Security and co-founded the Congressional Caucus on Freedom of the Press, among others.

"We have not been able to get a hearing on the Genocide bill," Schiff said. "I hope that will change" when the Democrats become the majority party, he noted.

He added, however, that the Trump administration has correctly taken to the task the government of Turkey, led by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, for its increasingly dictatorial actions.

"There is also an opportunity with the administration and given the degree with which Turkey ... descends into authoritarianism," he said, might make the administration more amenable to recognize the Genocide "and not say that Turkey is an ally."

He added that it is hard to see the future in

terms of Turkey. "It has been moving in a really worrying direction for the past decade," Schiff said.

As part of that wrong direction, he said, Erdogan is systematically getting rid of his opposition, even jailing them, while coalescing his powers. One opposition candidate running in the June elections was Selahattin Demirtas, the head of the HDP party, campaigning from his prison cell. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/20/opinion/president-turkey-elections-demirtas.html>)

After Erdogan won the general election, Schiff put out a tweet: "Erdogan 'won' reelection in Turkey this weekend only by decimating the opposition through arrests, violence and squashing freedom of the press. Turkey's descent into autocracy is another reminder that democracy is under assault worldwide. DO NOT CONGRATULATE."

Schiff said he got an immediate response from Erdogan's spokesman. "President Erdogan certainly does not need YOUR @RepAdamSchiff congratulations. Turkish people have spoken up. You need to shut up," said Ibrahim Kalin in a tweet on June 26.

The attack on a member of the US Congress made news in Turkey and beyond.

Again, Schiff said that he was disappointed with the response of the US president to news of Erdogan's victory.

"Instead of urging Erdogan to be more devoted to the rule of law, the president gives the signal that he admires" his election and power consolidation, Schiff said.

Armenia Pre- and Post-Velvet Revolution

If there is a change in the House, he said, there is much more of a chance that the Democrats would increase appropriations to Armenia and Artsakh.

Schiff said that Armenia has always had good relations with the US, both the previous and the current regime. The relations, he said, transcend party or governments on both sides, he noted.

Now, however, he said, with the new government and new prime minister in Armenia, "there might be opportunities we did not have before."

As for the shaky ceasefire in Artsakh, Schiff said he would love to see increased pressure on the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Minsk Group tasked with bringing about a lasting solution to the issue.

Solving the very real hot war in Karabakh is "one of my significant issues," he said. "It is one match away" from explosion, he noted.

One of the notable changes on the part of the US government post-Velvet Revolution will be the reinstatement of the Millennium Challenge Corp. (www.mcc.gov), which had been stopped by the Obama administration in the wake of inaction on large-scale corruption in Armenia.

"There should be baseline commitment to the rule of law," he said. He also praised the anti-corruption efforts.

"Armenia had fallen below that," he explained. "Now it's in a different position."

Post-Velvet Revolution, Schiff added, Armenia might be in a position to have a parliamentary exchange program with the US.

He is also supports modernizing the Double Tax Treaty between the US and Armenia.

The revolution in Armenia this spring caught him off guard.

"When the arrests happened, I thought I knew where it was headed," but "I was stunned" when instead the government resigned and the demonstrators won.

"There is a new optimism. It is a great challenge but also a great opportunity," Schiff said. "We have to look at it as a fresh opportunity."

Armenia, he said, has the means to "be the Silicon Valley of the Caucasus and become less dependent on Russia."

Syrian Crisis

One of the quagmires in which the US is finding itself is Syria and its disintegration in the wake of a civil war. The intervention of the US forces started on September 22, 2014, during the administration of President Barack Obama.

"I don't want to see us get mired in another Muslim country," Schiff said, adding, "I think we have a powerful moral interest in Syria."

He added, however, the US has an obligation to the Kurds in the region.

"They have worked with us, side-by-side," he noted. "We have an obligation and interest in protecting Kurds." He cautioned, however, "We don't want to become an occupying power."

He defended Obama for his handling of Syria. "There has been tremendous criticism of how President Obama handled Syria. I don't think there were any easy answers in Syria. We couldn't betray" the civil disobedient movement there, he explained.

The US, in essence, he said, had to choose between supporting the Islamic State versus supporting President Bashar al-Assad of Syria.

"There were a lot of bad options and the outcome has been a terrible one," Schiff said.

He noted, "We can't stand by and watch someone gas their own people," he said, referring to the Syrian leader, who has been accused of committing that very crime.

"It was a vexing problem," he said, "and then the Russians and the Iranians intervened."

Now, as a result of the collapse of Syria, among other countries suffering from debilitating political and economic situations, there are many refugees trying to flee to the West.

A the same time, President Trump has made the dramatic reduction in the number of refugees admitted to the US a centerpiece of his domestic policies.

"We are trying in the Democratic Caucus to push back against efforts against refugees," Schiff said. "It is a priority of the president to ban people coming from Syria. He has shut off the flow of refugees."

The US, he said, has an important role to play in accepting refugees. "We can't [just] say it is the responsibility of other nations," he said.

Roots in Massachusetts

Schiff might have the glow of a Southern California resident yet his roots are across the country, in Framingham, Mass. His family moved to California when he was 9. "I feel like I have a foot on both coasts, but I am very much a Californian."

After graduating from Monte Vista High School in Danville, Calif., he attended Stanford University, followed by Harvard Law School.

With his presence and recognition skyrocketing, it is easy to assume he has his eye on even higher office. However, he said, he has not made any decisions yet.

"I really don't know what my future plans are," Schiff said. "I don't know beyond the next two months."

The elections will be held on November 6.

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