

During Visit to Armenia Sarkozy Urges Ankara to Admit Genocide

YEREVAN (Combined Sources) – During his first visit to this nation, French President Nicolas Sarkozy urged Turkey to recognize the 1915 Armenians Genocide by the Ottoman Turk government, thus thrilling Armenians worldwide and riling the Turkish government.

“The Armenian Genocide is a historical reality. Collective denial is even worse than individual denial,” Sarkozy said Thursday, October 6 in Yerevan.

“Turkey, which is a great country, would honor itself by revisiting its history like other countries in the world have done,” Sarkozy added.

Sarkozy also hinted that Turkey's refusal to recognize the Genocide would force France to change its law and make such denials a criminal offense. “If Turkey does not do this, then doubtless we will have to go further,” he said without elaborating.

Sarkozy urged Armenia to continue efforts towards normalizing relations with Turkey and finding a durable peace with its other neighbor, Azerbaijan.

On the second day of his visit to Yerevan as part of a broader South Caucasus tour that also included stops in Baku and Tbilisi, Sarkozy urged the parties to the protracted



Many people turned out to see the French president during his first visit to the nation.

Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabagh to resolve their differences by peaceful means.

“I have told the president of Armenia to continue his way towards peace with Azerbaijan, which meets the interests of both countries,” Sarkozy said at a joint press conference with his Armenian counterpart.

France is one of the three countries along with Russia and the United States

jointly heading the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) that spearheads international efforts to broker a solution to the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict.

Sarkozy traveled to Baku later on Friday to carry a similar message of peace before visiting Georgian capital Tbilisi on the last leg of his South Caucasus tour.

Speaking about the Karabagh conflict in see SARKOZY, page 20

Armenia Remembers Steve Jobs

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – Apple fans mourning the death of company founder Steve Jobs last week gathered at the Apple store here, to express their condolences. Jobs died on Wednesday, October 5 in California.



Steve Jobs

“Since early this morning numerous Apple users and ordinary citizens have been calling the store to express their condolences over Steve Jobs’ loss; everybody is shocked by his untimely death,” the Apple store representative Edik Mardoyan said.

Jobs, passed away at the age of 56, of pancreatic cancer. He was the adopted son of Paul and Clara (Hakobyan) Jobs, of Mountain View, Calif.

A private funeral took place on Friday, October 7. Apple will hold a special memorial in his honor on October 19 at the company headquarters in Cupertino, Calif. He leaves a wife and four children.

Soccer: A Cinderella Story Goes on for Armenia

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – From an underdog that trembled at the sight of virtually any opponent and often played anything but soccer, Armenia has transformed itself into a legitimate object of Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) respectability.

The latest victories achieved by Armenian players this week as part of an ongoing UEFA Euro-2012 qualifying campaign may have come as a surprise to outside observers, but

anyone who has watched the rise of commencing coach Vardan Minasyan's team will see a great effort and work as the well-applied formula behind the success.

The statement by Armenian Football Federation (FFA) President Ruben Hayrapetyan before the start of the campaign, that Armenia would seek to qualify for European Championship finals, was taken with considerable skepticism by local see SOCCER, page 2

Sarkis Soghanalian: Cold War ‘Merchant of Death’ Dies in Miami

By Lowell Bergman

MIAMI (PBS Frontline) – Sarkis Soghanalian, the Lebanese-born arms dealer who sold weapons to rebels and autocrats, including Saddam Hussein, died of natural causes on Tuesday, October 4, in Miami. He was 78.

Featured in the 1990 documentary, “The Arming of Iraq,” Soghanalian spoke candidly about how, with secret support from the US government, he became the former Iraqi dictator's major arms supplier during the peak of the Iran-Iraq war. Once fabulously wealthy, with a vast fleet of jet cargo planes and homes in a dozen countries including luxury villas in Miami and Palm Springs, and a horse ranch in Fort Lauderdale, he died virtually broke, his family insists. see SOGHANALIAN, page 6



Sarkis Soghanalian

NEWS IN BRIEF

Catholicos Arrives In US

ECHMIADZIN – On October 7, Karekin II Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, arrived in the US to pay a pontifical visit to the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America.

During the visit, he held meetings with the benefactors of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin to discuss their current projects.

The Armenian pontiff was accompanied by Rev. Aris Tonoyan, a member of the Brotherhood of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin.

Italian Town Recognizes Armenian Genocide

CERCHIARA di CALABRIA, Italy (Aysor.am) – The town council of the town Cerchiara di Calabria voted to recognize the Armenian Genocide on September 24. It is the sixth town in Italy to recognize the Armenian Genocide this year.

In April, the Armenian Genocide was recognized by the following town councils of Italy: San Giorgio, Padova Province, Bolano, La Spezia Province, Sermede, Province Mantova, Dorgali, the Province of Nuoro and Isola del Liri in Frosinone Province.

A total of four provinces and 59 towns of Italy have recognized the Armenian Genocide, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs press office said.

Armenia's Defense Minister Fires Senior Officers over Accident

YEREVAN (tert.am) – Armenia's defense minister has fired senior military officials over the incident during military exercise that claimed a life.

A source close to the Defense Ministry said that upon his return from Brussels on October 7, Seyran Ohanyan signed a decree firing several high-ranking military officers, including the commander of the Baghramyan Education Camp, over the incident.

Several other high-ranking military officers were reprimanded.

The accident took place at around 6 p.m. on October 3 when a vehicle in a military convoy hit the roadside mound, lost control and slipped off the road, killing one conscript and injuring six others.

It comes a week after Ohanyan said during a visit to a military unit in Nagorno-Karabagh that non-combat deaths in the army are unacceptable and that those in charge will be strictly punished in accordance with the law.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Romania Developing Relations with Armenia

YEREVAN (Mediamax) – Romania is interested in developing relations with Armenia both on a bilateral basis and within the EU and NATO, Romania's Ambassador to Armenia Krina Prunariu said this week at a press conference held in the NATO Information Center.

Prunariu said that the two countries' presidents have held nine meetings over the past 20 years. There have also been numerous meetings of foreign and defense ministers of Armenia and Romania.

"Armenian and Romanian Defense Ministries maintain good relations. At one time, Romania offered Armenia support in elaboration of Military Doctrine and the process of reforming the military budget and military servicemen training," said the ambassador.

Prunariu said that an event devoted to the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Romania will be held in Bucharest on December 17.

Premier Receives Lebanese Speaker

YEREVAN (Noyan Tapan) – On October 4, Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian received Lebanese Speaker Nabih Berri.

Greeting the guest, Sargsian expressed confidence that Berri's visit to Armenia would give a new impetus to the development of relations between the two countries in different directions. Sargsian noted that mutual economic relations, especially trade circulation volumes don't correspond to the level of Armenian-Lebanese high-level political relations.

The two men considered light industry, pharmaceuticals, jewelry and tourism in the fields of prospective cooperation.

Berri said that in the near future Lebanon's president, prime minister and foreign minister would visit Armenia.

Architect Israelyan's House Is Demolished to Make Room for Hotel

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The house of a well-known Armenian architect, Rafael Israelyan, designer of the Sardarapat (1968) and Mother Armenia (1951) complexes, is being demolished.

Israelyan's house, located in Saryan Street, was constructed by the architect himself in 1954, with many of the decorations carved by his own hand.

According to reports, a hotel construction onsite is planned. Architect Sarat Petrosyan stated, the construction of a hotel has not been envisaged by Yerevan Municipality zoning project, and consequently, runs counter to it.

Architect Arsen Karapetyan, said, "You could count the buildings retaining the memory of the old city on one hand. With Israelyan's contribution to Armenian architecture, his house was more than worthy of preserving. The building could be turned into a museum, instead of another faceless hotel. Yerevan is turning into a city without memories."

Lake Sevan Level Rise Creates Eco Problems

YEREVAN (news.am) – The level of Lake Sevan is 1,900.34 meters as of September 1, due to which problems have risen with respect to cleaning the lakeshore's forest-covered under-water areas, notes Armenian Ministry of Nature Protection. The large amount of organic material, which has remained under water, is polluting the water. Numerous constructions and infrastructure, which have likewise remained under water, are causing serious problems, too.

Non-purified wastewater is spilling into the lake, changing the lake's biodiversity and severely reducing its stock of fish. And reduction in the number of fish species has resulted in an intensive accumulation of organic material in the lake's ecosys-

Soccer: A Cinderella Story Goes on for Armenia

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specialists and the media. But less than two years down the road a reverse situation has emerged when cautious statements by soccer functionaries about the chances of qualification are already taken as an expression of modesty.

The Friday spectacle at Yerevan's Republican Stadium, in which Armenia humiliated FYR Macedonia 4-1 – the fifth victory for the team as part of the ongoing qualifying tournament and third in a row – laid to rest skeptical attitudes that still existed after similarly spectacular displays against established European teams such as Slovakia.

During the match, President Serge Sargsian and other leaders of the country couldn't check their emotions and jumped for joy like teenagers in their VIP section, as did 15,000 ticket-buying fans. After the victory, a rare outbreak of football fever spread in spontaneous jubilant scenes in Yerevan, with people driving around in cars, waving national tricolors, singing and dancing.

Hayrapetyan could not check his emotions, either. "This is one of the happiest moments of my life. Beautiful soccer, goals, excitement in the field – this was my dream. Now it came true," said the official who took over soccer affairs in Armenia in the early 2000 when even draws were few and far between for the badly underperforming team.

A whole generation of young players like Henrikh Mkhitaryan, Gevorg



Soccer fans rejoice after the team's latest win.

Ghazaryan, Edgar Manucharyan, Karlen Mkrtchyan, Yura Movsisyan and others have risen since then to give the national team an entirely new quality and vigor it had lacked before.

Ahead of Tuesday's 10th and final match in Euro-2012 qualifying Group B against the Republic of Ireland in Dublin in which Armenia needs a win to go into playoffs coach Minasyan says he won't break his rule, which is "taking one step at a time." (The game is taking place after press time.)

"We are still on our way. We don't have the task of qualifying from the

group by all means, our task is to raise the quality of our play," said Minasyan in an interview with online sport portal Armsport.am. "Before the game I ask the players not to pay too much attention to the passions and remain focused on our path and keep going."

The modest comments of the coach are unlikely to lower expectations of the Armenia fans for whom TV screens and computer monitors will serve as umbilical cords to Team Armenia when maybe – just maybe – there will be no midnight struck on this Armenian Cinderella.

Tekeyan Centre Chair Ouzounian Visits School in Artsakh

YEREVAN – Since 2011, the Vahan Tekeyan School in Berdzor (Artsakh) has been included on the list of beneficiaries of Tekeyan Centre Fund of Armenia, and, like the other four Tekeyan Schools in Armenia (Yerevan, Gumri, Garpi and Stepanavan), it has been participating in all the projects of

the fund. The school was named three years ago after Vahan Tekeyan through the efforts and contributions to the teachers of TCA Board of Administrations of USA and its chairman, Maro Bedrosian.

On September 19, the chair of Tekeyan Centre Fund, Vartan

Ouzounian, who had arrived in Yerevan on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Tekeyan Centre, left for Artsakh to visit Berdzor School No. 1, now named for Vahan Tekeyan.

In his welcoming speech, Ouzounian warmly congratulated the Tekeyan School on the new academic year. The chairman wished the pupils a successful year and new achievements, and he wished the teaching staff great enthusiasm to do their important and patriotic duty.

On behalf of Tekeyan Centre Fund, Ouzounian praised the teachers' outstanding contribution to the development of the Armenian nation, and he thanked them for educating generations in very difficult conditions and for performing their mission with high sense of responsibility.

Principal Anahit Kosakyan thanked Ouzounian for supporting all Tekeyan schools. Various projects of the fund and Tekeyan Cultural Association of United States and Canada inspire not only Tekeyan schoolchildren but also teachers and help to make friendship and to unite all Tekeyan members in a big family, she said.

During his visit to school, Ouzounian inquired about the school's achievements and successes as well as the problems. In fact, the school faces many problems that should be solved urgently.

Ouzounian walked around the school and saw its terrible state (i.e. the leaking roof, destroyed staircases and floor, no asphalt road to school and the most important issue: no running water).

According to the teachers, the school library needs to be enriched (there is a lack of dictionaries, encyclopedias and literature). The school also needs laboratory equipment that will enable children to make chemical, physical and other experiments.

Ouzounian promised that Tekeyan Centre Fund would do its best to improve the Berdzor School.

On the same day, the chairman visited another school in Artsakh, a school in the village of Vank, to make a comparison. Fortunately, not all schools in Artsakh are in terrible state.



Vartan Ouzounian, fourth from left, standing, and guest with teachers and students

Ter-Petrosian Ends Nonstop Protests

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Opposition leader Levon Ter-Petrosian ended late on Saturday more than weeklong nonstop demonstrations staged by his Armenian National Congress (HAK) in Liberty Square despite failing to secure any concessions from the government.

Addressing thousands of supporters rallying there, Ter-Petrosian said the HAK leadership has decided to "temporarily stop" the protests because it believes that they have already served their purpose.

"The current activation of the popular movement has made more visible and deepened cracks within the government camp as well as the already existing widespread public distrust and contempt towards it," he claimed, presenting a statement adopted by the bloc.

The announcement provoked cries of discontent from sections of the crowd that demanded that the round-the-clock sit-in continue until the administration of President Serge Sargsian agrees to call early presidential and parliamentary elections.

Ter-Petrosian rejected the objections.

"As I said, the success of our struggle depends only on discipline and the unconditional execution of decisions by the congress leadership. He who doesn't behave in this way helps Serge Sargsian," he said, prompting applause from other demonstrators.

The HAK set up a tent camp in Liberty Square on September 30 in hopes of stepping up pressure on the Armenian authorities. It at the same time offered to resume talks with Sargsian's ruling coalition without preconditions.

Ter-Petrosian's bloc previously made their resumption conditional on the release of an opposition activist arrested in August.

Coalition representatives have made clear that they will not negotiate with the HAK until the "illegal" protests are over. In another sign of its self-confidence, the Sargsian administration has still not responded to another, more far-reaching offer made by Ter-Petrosian.

Ter-Petrosian also announced that the HAK will hold its next rally on October 28.



INTERNATIONAL

UK MP on Intelligence Committee Paid by Azerbaijan Lobby Group

By Rajeev Syal and Solomon Hughes

LONDON (*Guardian*) – A conservative member of parliament who sits on the committee that scrutinizes the security services is being paid £6,000 (\$9,400) a year by a pro-Azerbaijan lobby group.

Mark Field, member of parliament (MP) for the Cities of London and Westminster, has joined the advisory board of the European Azerbaijan Society. Azerbaijan's government has been criticized this year by the Foreign Office and Amnesty International for torturing protesters campaigning for political reforms. Labour MPs have questioned whether Field's new job is appropriate, given the sensitive nature of the work of the intelligence committee.

Field, 46, is the youngest ever member of parliament to serve on the committee, which reports directly to 10 Downing Street and oversees the UK's intelligence and security services.

The committee is unique because it consists of nine parliamentarians appointed by – and reporting directly to – the prime minister. It has greater powers than a select committee of parliament, being able to demand papers from former governments and official advice to ministers, both of which are not open to select committees. His new advisory role began in June. He is also the chairman of the all-party group for Azerbaijan.

Field flew to Azerbaijan to meet senior Azeri politicians in May on a five-day trip that cost around £3,500 (\$5,500) and in July 2010 he spoke in the country's capital, Baku, at a NATO conference.

In March Prince Andrew met Field at Buckingham Palace and asked for support in parliament and Whitehall for

British investment in Azerbaijan.

The European Azerbaijan Society was launched in November 2008 to promote Azerbaijan to international audiences, according to its website.

Tale Heydarov, a 26-year-old businessman whose father is one of Azerbaijan's ministers, is the society's main funder and director.

A former student at the London School of Economics, he has been described as the "Abramovich of Azerbaijan" after pouring millions of pounds into his local football team – including £1 million (\$1.5 million) a year in wages to recruit the former England captain Tony Adams as manager.

Azerbaijan is ruled by the authoritarian president Ilham Aliyev and, according to the Foreign Office, the country's human rights record is poor. Journalists in the country have been harassed and jailed, opposition candidates disqualified and voters intimidated.

In March Amnesty International called upon Azerbaijan's authorities to end their crackdown on activists preparing for a protest inspired by recent events in the Middle East and north Africa. Detainees said they had been water-boarded and threatened with rape while in police custody.

A spokesman for the Foreign Office said human rights remained a crucial issue in the country. "We and the EU have raised our concern over the slow progress in improving human rights in Azerbaijan on many occasions. These concerns still exist."

The society has increased its profile in Westminster over the past year. It pro-

vides secretarial services for the all-party parliamentary group on Azerbaijan, which has 20 members.

It has organized high-profile meetings and receptions at all three of the main party conferences.

The society also founded "Conservative Friends of Azerbaijan" this year, which has 25 Tory parliamentarians as members. Robert Halfon, member of parliament, is vice chair and Chris Pincher, member of parliament, is treasurer. Other members include the deputy speaker Nigel Evans and the 1922 Committee chairman, Graham Brady.

Approached this week, Field said it was "absurd" to claim that he should not have taken up his new position. He said he had met Heydarov on a couple of occasions.

"The reason that I have been out there [to Azerbaijan] on two occasions is because the country is trying to develop its financial services sector. There is no question of a conflict of interest," he said.

"I have signed the Official Secrets Act and I will not be divulging any secrets to the Azerbaijan government or anyone else connected to any of the other organizations or all-party committees I am involved with. It would be absurd and would be quite improper to think that anyone on the security and intelligence committee could not have any other outside interests," he said.

A spokesman for the society said the Heydarovs were not its only funders and it was an independent organization, entirely separate from the Azerbaijan government.

John Mann, the Labour member of parliament for Bassetlaw, said: "This shows how wrong it can go when an member of parliament takes a second job. It is an obvious conflict of interest."

Young CRD Scientists at International Cosmic Ray Conference in China

BEIJING – The 32nd International Cosmic Ray Conference (ICRC 2011), hosted and organized by the Institute of High Energy Physics and the Chinese Academy of Sciences, was held August 11 to 18. Following the tradition of past conferences, the ICRC 2011 dealt with a broad range of topics covering cosmic ray physics, gamma-ray astronomy, solar physics and high-energy phenomena in the atmosphere.

Armenia's delegation from the Cosmic Ray Division (CRD) of the Artem Alikhanyan National Laboratory (Yerevan Physics Institute) included Bagrat Mailyan, Roman Martirosov and Levon Vanyan, who reported on the research being conducted at the Cosmic Ray Division.

Bagrat Mailyan, a recent PhD recipient, presented two papers on CRD's research: "Thunderstorm Ground Enhancements (TGE-s)" detected at CRD's Aragats research station and "The energy spectra of the thunderstorm correlated electron and gamma ray fluxes measured at Aragats." Both talks described research into the new field of

gamma rays generated within the earth's atmosphere by thunderstorms.

Romen Martirosov's talk was titled, "Energy spectrum and mass composition of primary cosmic radiation in the region above the knee from the GAMMA experiment."

Vanyan discussed "Simulations of the Relativistic Runaway Electron Avalanches (RREA) in the thunderclouds above the Aragats Space Environmental Center (ASEC)."

Medical Diagnostic Consortium In Armenia

In further news about physics in Armenia, on September 2, a memo-

randum was signed between Armenia's National Center of Oncology (NCO), the Institute of Informatics and Automation Problems (IIAP), the Institute of Physical Research (IPR) and the Artem Alikhanyan National Laboratory (AANL) represented by their respective directors: H.M. Galstyan, V.G. Sahakyan, A.V. Papoyan and Prof. Ashot Chilingarian.

AANL's director Chilingarian, in his opening remarks, presented development perspectives for medical diagnostic systems; namely radioactive isotope production for scanners and digital X-ray image detectors for diagnostic imaging.

Galstyan, citing the importance of medical physics research being done at the AANL, outlined the necessity of upgrading currently used X-ray diagnostic devices with modern digital imaging systems.

Clinical tests of the detector are to be performed at the National Center of Oncology, using scintillation crystals which are grown in Armenia's Physical Research Institute.

A memorandum was signed confirming the intention of jointly developing a 3D digital image registration system for mammography. A newly-formed working group of representatives from participating organizations will prepare a development proposal within two months.



Levon Vanyan (left) and Alexander Lidvansky (right) at the Beijing Cosmic Ray Conference

International News

Misha Aloyan Wins Gold For Russia in Baku Tourny

BAKU (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Armenian boxer Misha Aloyan (52 kg), representing Russia at Baku-hosted AIBA World Championships scored a victory versus Andrew Selby of Wales to win the gold medal at the championship.

David Hayrapetyan (49 kg), also representing Russia, won the bronze medal.

Kuwait Asks for Share In Iran-Armenia Railroad Project

TEHRAN (FNA) – Kuwait's finance minister voiced his country's eagerness to have a share in a railway construction project which would link Iran to Armenia.

"Our country believes that the transportation sector is of much importance, and that construction of Iran-Armenia railway would serve the interests of Kuwait and Armenia," the Kuwaiti minister said in a joint press conference with the Armenian deputy prime minister in Yerevan.

The Armenian deputy prime minister mentioned that Kuwait has also voiced its interest in participating in the North-South Corridor Construction project as well.

According to early estimates, \$2 billion of investment is needed for the construction of the Iran-Armenia railway.

The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have already voiced interest in the project.

The total length of the railway is 540 to 560 kilometers on Iranian territory and 480 kilometers in Armenia.

Feasibility studies came to an end earlier this year.

Armenian Transport and Communications Minister Manuk Vardanyan stated last October that discussions of the project are moving forward step-by-step; the first step being the feasibility study and an assessment of the finances needed.

Meantime, Russian Transport Minister Igor Levitin also stated last October that a research institute in Russia is working on a feasibility study for the project.

A working group has been created consisting of specialists as well as deputy Ministers of Transport of Armenia, Iran and Russia.

Armenia, Honduras Establish Diplomatic Relations

UNITED NATIONS (armradio.am) – Permanent Representatives of Armenia and Honduras at the UN, Garen Nazarian and Mary Florence, signed a joint statement on establishment of diplomatic relations between Armenia and Honduras, this week.

Following the signing ceremony, the parties discussed developing relations between the two countries, in particular, in the fields of education, science and tourism.

Armenian Students Win Four Medals in Astronomy Olympiad

ALMATI, Kazakhstan (Tert.am) – Armenian students have won one gold and three bronze medals at the Astronomy International Olympiad held here September 22-30.

According to a press release by the Ministry of Education and Science, a total of five Armenians were taking part in this Olympiad.

The gold medal went to Levon Stepanyan of Yerevan. The winners of bronze medals are: Vardges Mambreyan, Karen Hambardzumyan and Virab Gevorgyan.

The Armenian delegation to this event was headed by Marieta Gyulzadyan and Tigran Nazaryan.



INTERNATIONAL

AGBU FOCUS 2011 Welcomes over 400 to Paris

\$40,000 Raised for Armenian Virtual College

PARIS – From August 4-7, AGBU FOCUS was in Paris for its sixth biennial celebration with close to 400 participants, from 25 countries. Since this year's affair marked the first time FOCUS took place outside North America, the location attracted new energy and faces from even more countries than ever before.

Tailor made for young professional Armenians from around the globe, FOCUS is the world's largest gathering of its kind. The four-day gathering was headquartered at Hotel Lutetia.

The FOCUS 2011 Paris committee was chaired by Aurélie Deyirmendjian, who helped to orchestrate the festivities and all its thrills. "We were all very excited to welcome for the first time so many Armenian young professionals in Paris. They arrived from all over the world. From Hong Kong to Argentina, Denmark to Egypt and even Mexico, and it was great that everybody had the opportunity to exchange views and experiences," she said.

"It was great to see many members of the Parisian-Armenian community join us in our efforts to make FOCUS 2011 into a unique experience. Everyone contributed their own personal touches to the events, which resulted in a truly original weekend. The outpouring of support by numerous donors and sponsors allowed us to realize our vision and for this we are grateful. FOCUS was a fantastic opportunity to mobilize, gather, surprise and unify Armenian young professionals, while raising funds for a great cause," Deyirmendjian said.

Through pre-event fundraising efforts, the FOCUS Committee in Paris and New York was able to raise \$40,000 for AGBU's Armenian Virtual College program. The state-of-the-art



YP groups and partner committees convened for the AGBU Young Professionals conferences.

school is an unique online resource that allows students of all ages from around the world to take credited classes or audit courses in Armenian language, history, culture or music. Offered in six, soon to be seven, languages – Eastern and Western Armenian, English, French, Spanish, Russian and in the near future Turkish, the school shares with FOCUS a global vision to unify Armenians and reach out to communities everywhere.

First initiated in 2001, FOCUS was created not only to unite alumni of AGBU's various youth programs but to bring together young Armenian professionals from all walks of life to share their perspectives on a variety of important issues. The weekend also showcases the notable contri-

butions and achievements made by AGBU's high-quality programs that appeal to Armenians of all ages. Over the years, this affair has become the most highly-anticipated event with more than 2,500 participants, setting a standard for other gatherings of its kind and cultivating a new generation of AGBU members.

The Weekend Begins

FOCUS 2011 kicked off on Thursday, August 4 with the networking evening known as Perspectives. Guests arrived at Crystal Lounge in the city's Eighth arrondissement to listen to a moderated discussion about the greater role the community can serve in the outside world. The topic quickly transformed into a lively debate.

Friday's daytime program was dominated by custom city tours allowing smaller groups the opportunity to discover Paris. From visits to the Armenian landmarks of Paris, including the Komitas monument in Yerevan Park and the Armenian cathedral, to French-Armenian fashion boutiques, perfumeries and restaurants, participants enjoyed the sights and sounds of the city with the help of local French-Armenian guides.

"It was a unique experience, particularly at Francis Kurkjian's perfumery, to see other successful Armenians. As a young entrepreneur and businesswoman, it was inspiring and very special to meet with him," said Ani Minassian, who originally hails from Los Angeles, but currently resides in New York.

Friday night, hundreds of people traveled to the 1979 Club in the Second Arrondissement, which offered a window into the city's hip and off-the-beaten-path nightlife.

FOCUS also serves as the setting for the Young Professionals (YP) Assembly, where the worldwide leadership of 17 YP Groups and YP Partners from 10 countries (Armenia, Bulgaria, Canada, England, France, Germany, Lebanon, Russia, United Arab

Emirates and the US) convened Friday to discuss collaborative efforts and establish groundwork for continued future success. A testament to the ongoing growth and popularity of the YP Network, more than 40 attendees participated, representing the largest and most diverse attendance for the AGBU YP meeting ever.

"This was my first time attending FOCUS and the YP Assembly, and I was excited to represent YP Boston," said Irina Nanagoulou. "Listening to the presentations during the Assembly was both stirring and inspiring. I particularly enjoyed learning more about the vast efforts and dedication of the YPs across the globe."

The meeting included sessions on professional development, community outreach, sustainability and the development of new regional and global initiatives. Presentations were conducted

by YP Liaison Kim Yacoubian, Sarine Karajerjian from YP Lebanon, Aurélie Deyirmendjian from YP Paris, Lilly Grigorian from YP Los Angeles, Aline Markarian from YP Greater New York and Gayane Ghardyan from YP Yerevan. Also presenting were members of the AGBU Strategic Advisory Council, who provide guidance and assistance to AGBU youth programs and took the opportunity to hear the ideas of YP leaders.

Elegant Highlights

Saturday began at Galerie Matignon, where two art exhibitions, one by French-Armenian artist Jean Jansem, and another by photographer Antoine Agoudjian, welcomed guests to FOCUS on Art. The displays offered an opportunity for visitors to discover Armenian culture and speak to the son of Jansem, who offered insights into his father's work and welcomed questions from attendees.

The show raised proceeds for this year's FOCUS-highlighted cause, the Armenian Virtual College, through the sale of artworks.

Unbeknownst to gallery goers, the daytime activity was only a taste of the elegance to follow. When FOCUS guests arrived at Saturday night's gala, they were impressed with the Old World charm of the Cercle de l'Union Interalliée, a former Napoleonic-era home that has since become a private club in the Faubourg-Saint-Honoré neighborhood. A few steps away from the French presidential residence, Elysées Palace, the venue surrounded by a lush park invited guests explored to the sounds of Armenian instruments and an ambience reminiscent of a 1920s cabaret.

Special displays encouraged people to explore the grounds of the Parisian villa. They were transported during the course of the evening from one surprise to the next, including a macaron-making workshop, a pop-up photo studio, a ti'punch island and a cabaret performance.

The festivities continued with entertainment by a local disc jockey, DJ Kourken, who entertained the crowds.

Bonds of Friendship

On the final morning, guests came together one last time for a Sunday brunch at Alcazar restaurant in Paris's Sixth Arrondissement. The gathering was an opportunity for everyone to say their goodbyes with promises to reconnect at future gatherings.

To date, pre-event fundraising efforts for all six FOCUS weekends have raised more than \$200,000 for AGBU programs, including the three AGBU-funded Children's Centers in Armenia, the American University of Armenia's



Buenos Aires City Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Santiago Chotsourian, performed for thousands of spectators.

Argentina Celebrates Armenian Anniversary with Food and Music

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (*Clarín*) – Armenians say that the secret of Armenian food is in the capable hands of its women and the success of its dishes is due to the commitment and attachment to tradition. Last week, thousands of people came to the Avenida de Mayo to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Armenia and the 100th anniversary of the AGBU Buenos Aires chapter.

The event brought together different generations of descendants of Armenian immigrants. There were children of Armenians, such as Alice Berberian, who worked selling cookbooks, and even grandchildren, such as Natasha, a girl of 10 who came to Avenida de Mayo accompanied by her grandmother and mother, eager to sample the food that her great-grandmother had made.

Celebrate Buenos Aires, the segment of the city government which pays tribute to the communities that form Argentina, organized a concert by the Symphony Orchestra of the City, conducted by Santiago Chotsourian, with the Armenian composer Ara Gevorgyan and his orchestra of traditional instruments also performing. Another guest was the minister of culture of Armenia, Hasmik Poghosyan, who was received by his counterpart of Buenos Aires, Hernán Lombardi, to publicize the activities of the Buenos Aires World Book Capital. In 2012, Yerevan, Armenia will hold the same title.



Guests enjoyed a private exhibition and tour of artwork by Jean Jansem hosted by his son, Jany Jansem, held at Galerie Matignon.

Digital Library, the New York Summer Intern Program, the Generation Next Mentorship Program of Southern California, Camp Nubar in upstate New York, the organization's Scholarship Program, the Hye Geen Pregnant Women's Centers and now the Armenian Virtual College.

Aided by AGBU offices in Paris and New York, the group of 15 volunteers who worked on the committee were FOCUS Committee Chair Aurélie Deyirmendjian, Gary Aharonian, Carol Aghajanian, Sabine Bachian, Alexia Deyirmendjian, Grégory Guerguerian, Vanessa Ketchedjian, Vadim Krisyan, Sandrine Muradian, Angelina Najarian, Rafi Papazian, Stéphane Petrossian, Geraldine Seuleusian, Achren Verdian, Tamar Wartabetian and FOCUS coordinator Lusiné Kerobyan.

Community News

Academic Conference To Discuss Issues of Restitution, Reparation After Genocide

WORCESTER, Mass. — The Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University is sponsoring an interdisciplinary conference, “Beyond The Armenian Genocide: The Question of Restitution and Reparation in Comparative Review,” organized by Taner Akçam, the Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marion Mugar Professor of Armenian Genocide Studies. The conference is presented in partnership with the Belmont-based National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and Eric Weitz, the Arsham and Charlotte Ohanessian Professor at the University of Minnesota. NAASR’s participation is supported by the Ethel Jafarian Duffett Fund.

The conference opens on Thursday, October 27, at 7:30 p.m. with a public keynote address in Tilton Hall on the Clark University campus. John Torpey, professor of sociology at the Graduate Center, CUNY, will give the opening address, “A Comparative Perspective on Reparations for Historical Injustices.” Torpey is the author of *Making Whole What Has Been Smashed: On Reparations Politics* (Harvard University Press, 2006). “Reparations,” says Torpey, “can be symbolic, such as apologies or the creation of memorials and museums. They can also be economic, such as financial compensation to individuals or collectivities, or material redress, such as settlement of the land claims of indigenous peoples. These measures can reflect cultural or legal claims to reparations or both.”

The conference continues throughout the day on Friday, October 28, with a series of panels for participants and invited guests. Leading scholars will examine questions of post-conflict justice in a comparative review of the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust and the Native American Genocide. The participants will consider different aspects of compensation including the return of stolen art and artifacts; the restitution of personal and communal property and how post-war agreements and treaties shape discussions about compensation. The Holocaust case offers a model for restitution and reparation that has achieved significant success but also frustrating disappointments and delays. The Native American case provides a valuable example of the importance of pursuing justice at home and for all peoples. Discussions about the Armenian case will consider why efforts to secure compensation emerged so late and the influence of developments in securing justice for victims of the Holocaust.

Turkish recognition of the Armenian Genocide has been an enduring goal of Armenian communities at home and internationally. Yet, the political, financial and legal consequences that might emerge in the wake of recognition have not been fully articulated. Recently, scholars and lawyers have pursued concrete efforts to secure reparation, restitution and compensation; they are proceeding independent of groups lobbying governments to acknowledge the Genocide. These initiatives demonstrate that the pursuit of justice through financial means can progress without necessarily resolving the complicated politics of Genocide recognition.

Recent court cases against American and French insurance companies have resulted in reparations and they have given encouragement to newly filed lawsuits in the US. These developments demonstrate that financial redress for the Armenian community may be possible on a broader scale. New lawsuits addressing theft of artifacts, properties and bank accounts have been filed against the Turkish government and private Turkish companies. They seek compensation for both individual and collective losses suffered during the genocide.

For more information, contact the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies (chgs@clarku.edu) or NAASR (hq@naasr.org).



One booth featured Armenian gifts

Richmond Armenian Festival Dishes out Food And Fun to Kick-Start Fall

RICHMOND, Va. — The Armenian community here held their 53rd annual food festival September 15 to 18 outside of St. James Armenian Church. Considering that there is only a small number of Armenians living in the area, the size of the festival is impressive.

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

The festival included Armenian folk music, provided by the Hye Keys. Perouz Manougian and Paul Mardigian are the two leaders of the seven-member band. Children from the St. James Armenian Dancers gave folk dance performances. Jewelry, crafts and arts, largely from Armenia, were displayed and sold at a booth, and information on Armenian history was posted on a tent wall.

The main focus was food, of course. Cheese and spinach *böregs*, *kebab*, the famous “Hye burger” (a mixture of ground sirloin and lamb with spices), rice *pilaf*, string beans, *hummus* and stuffed grape leaves (*dolma*) were accompanied by Armenian coffee, Kotayk Armenian beer and Armenian red, white and pomegranate wines, along with soft drinks. Desserts included paklava, bourma, simit and kourabia cookies.

John Baronian, the senior member of the Planning Committee for the festival, moved to Richmond in the 1930s from Detroit as a young boy. He explained that 53 years ago, when the festival was started, it was held indoors as seated dinners: “Originally it was the Women’s Guild that started it in a small kitchen. I was involved as I was on the Parish Council of the church. The ladies ran it until I became chair. As the festival grew, we decided to have a food festival committee instead of just the Women’s Guild committee, but the ladies are still the backbone of it.”

The first three or four years, the festival only was intended for Armenians, but, Baronian explained, “when I got involved I had a small advertising agency and started advertising. This was in the 1960s. Our main purpose was to get Armenians better known in the Richmond community.”

Virginia native Chuck Ashjian handles the programming and advertising for the festival. He said that the festival expanded further to an outdoor format (in 2006) partly in order to meet the financial needs of the parish: “I was on the Parish Council for a number of years, and looking at our budget deficit, we needed to do

see RICHMOND, page 7



St. James Armenian Dancers dazzle young audience members.

Lantos Foundation to Honor Humanitarian Paul Rusesabagina

WASHINGTON — The Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice said that Rwandan humanitarian Paul Rusesabagina will be the 2011 recipient of the Lantos Human Rights Prize. The formal presentation of the award will take place here on November 16.

Rusesabagina is widely hailed as a hero of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. As a hotel manager during the time of the conflict, Rusesabagina was able to provide shelter to 1,268 people, both Hutus and Tutsis, ultimately saving them from certain death. His efforts were chronicled in the 2004 Academy Award-nominated film “Hotel Rwanda” and his autobiography, *An Ordinary Man*. Today, Rusesabagina continues his efforts for truth, reconciliation and sustainable peace in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region of Africa through his work as president of the Hotel Rwanda Rusesabagina Foundation (www.hrrfoundation.org).

“We are so proud to award this year’s Lantos Prize to Paul Rusesabagina. I was raised on the idea that we are all our brothers’ keepers, and Paul is the living embodiment of that idea,” said Katrina Lantos Swett, president of the Lantos Foundation. “My father, Rep. Tom Lantos, survived the Holocaust in one of Raoul Wallenberg’s safe houses and understood all too well that the actions of one man can change the arc of one’s life story. Nearly 50 years later, Paul Rusesabagina’s heroic efforts to shelter those in harm’s way changed the life stories of more than 1,200 Rwandans. We look forward to honoring his historic humanitarian actions.”

The Lantos Foundation established the Lantos Human Rights Prize in 2009 to honor and bring attention to heroes of the human rights movement. It is awarded annually to an individual or organization that best exemplifies the foundation’s mission, namely to be a vital voice standing up for the values of decency, dignity, freedom and justice in every corner of the world. The prize also serves to commemorate the late Lantos, the only Holocaust survivor ever elected to the US Congress.

Former recipients of the Lantos Prize include the Dalai Lama and Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel.

House of Armenia Is Established in Calif.

GLENDALE, Calif. — An all-inclusive, Armenian-American Organization, House of Armenia, dedicated to the Armenian Diaspora of Southern California has been established. The House of Armenia is a non-profit California corporation with the vision of promoting the profile of Armenia and Armenians in the diaspora as well as advancing the rich cultural heritage of Armenians worldwide. The House of Armenia is in the process of applying for a tax-exempt status as a non-profit public benefit corporation. “The House of Armenia will continue to blossom as individuals and organizations collectively take part in this noble mission” said Sinan Sinanian, chairman of House of Armenia. “This is a unique opportunity for the Armenian-American Community of Southern California and its organizations to embrace and share resources for the common excellence of our diaspora.”

In an effort to showcase the presence of Armenia and its rich cultural heritage, among its first steps, the House of Armenia has secured a permanent location in the very heart of the Armenian-American community. “The presence in the heart of Armenia’s emerging capital in the diaspora is our biggest and most powerful step forward,” said Grigor Hovhannissian, consul general of the Republic of Armenia in Los Angeles. “We salute the energy and vision of those who have implemented and established the House of Armenia and our very best wishes for this organization to serve and exemplify Armenia in the heart of all Armenian-Americans of our diaspora.”



COMMUNITY NEWS

Sahag-Mesrob Students Adopt Wild Cat at Yerevan Zoo

ALTADENA, Calif. — Under the guidance of science teacher Ivette Babikian, the fifth-grade class at Sahag Mesrob Armenian Christian School (SMACS) here, adopted a caracal at Yerevan Zoo in Armenia.

Given a choice of six animals, the students voted for the slender, long-legged, short-tailed, muscular cat, with a most conspicuous feature — long black-tipped ears. Caracals are known for being the fastest of all the small cats. This is one of the reasons the fifth graders voted for adopting the caracal. Twenty-two students gathered the money needed to sponsor this animal.



A caracal is marked by its speed and long ears

The SMACS fifth graders are now the proud parents of one of Yerevan Zoo's caracals for next year. They named their caracal, Havatk ("faith," in Armenian), since they have faith that more animals at the zoo will be sponsored and helped.

Eager to meet Havatk at the Yerevan Zoo (www.yerevanzoo.com) one day, they are happy for now to consider Havatk an honorary member of their class.



The children of the fifth-grade class at Sahag Mesrob Armenian Christian School

OBITUARY

Sarkis Soghanalian: Cold War 'Merchant of Death' Dies in Miami

SOGHANALIAN, from page 1

Capable of negotiating in eight languages, Soghanalian was a Lebanese citizen of Armenian descent, who proclaimed he was also a "patriotic American." For several decades, he had a close working relationship with the CIA and US military intelligence services. But eventually, these relationships soured when his weapons sales began running counter to US policy. Nor did he pay taxes on his arms-dealing: documents show that by the late 1990s, he had accumulated a massive IRS judgment nearing a billion dollars.

In his heyday, Soghanalian forged a close alliance with the Reagan administration, particularly with the office of then-Vice President

George Bush. That alliance snapped when the US went to war with Iraq in 1991, and he was prosecuted for the sale of helicopters to Iraq during its war with Iran. Soghanalian always insisted that his sales to Iraq were done with Washington's not-so-secret blessing.

Soghanalian also supplied Saddam with billions of dollars in weaponry from France, Brazil, Chile and Austria, in violation of a United Nations arms embargo. All this was done with the knowledge of the US government, according to Soghanalian, whose testimony was corroborated by officials interviewed for the documentary.

Publicly, the US maintained it obeyed the United Nations embargo of the combatants in

the Iran-Iraq war. But privately, Washington wanted Iran's theocratic regime to be bludgeoned by the eight-year conflict with Saddam.

Like so many other things about Soghanalian, he was not what he seemed. The rotund gunrunner was also a philanthropist, donating generously to Armenian earthquake victims. He professed to be a staunch anti-communist, yet he had no qualms about turning to the Soviets to provide weapons for the Christian militias in Lebanon's civil war. During the Falklands War he armed Argentina with French-made Exocet missiles used to sink a British cruiser. He later acknowledged he "regretted" that transaction, saying it happened before war broke out with Great Britain.

Soghanalian was finally sentenced in 1993 to six-and-a-half years in prison for conspiring to smuggle 103 combat helicopters to Saddam, breaking the UN embargo. He wound up having his sentence reduced to two years by trading intelligence on the secret location in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley where the Iranians and the Hezbollah were printing counterfeit US \$100 bills. Known as "Supernotes," these \$100 bills were so authentic-looking that they were deemed a threat to US national security.

Soghanalian landed in trouble again with US

authorities when he was indicted in 1999 for wire fraud and held without bail. His sentence was reduced to 10 months after US authorities intervened on his behalf claiming he had provided "substantial assistance to law enforcement." As part of the deal, Soghanalian turned over to US officials details of a sale of 50,000 AK-47 assault rifles he made in 1999 to the former Peruvian intelligence chief, Vladimir Montesinos, an erstwhile American ally, that ended up with leftist Colombian rebels. Soghanalian was allowed to leave for Amman, where he had close ties with the Jordanian monarchy.

Soghanalian traded information for favors from the US government for decades. He maintained an ongoing relationship with the FBI after he became estranged from the CIA. Overweight and in poor health, Soghanalian finally returned to Miami to be with his family. At first, he was held in custody, but as his health worsened, leaving him crippled, he was allowed to stay with his family.

"He lived large and he played hard," says his former attorney, Mark Geragos, who defended him in the Peruvian arms-running case. "Until I met him, I never believed one-half of 1 percent of the things he was supposed to have done. But they all turned out to be true."

Nevair Shahdanian, 98

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — Nevair Shahdanian, nee Gulbenkian, died on Monday, September 26. She was 98.

She was predeceased by her husband of 41 years, Hampartoum (Harry) Shahdanian and her brother, Dr. V. Richard Gulbenkian of Euclid, Ohio, and Pompano Beach, Fla. She is survived by her son, John Lawrence Shahdanian, Esq. and his wife, Ustinjya, of Old Tappan, NJ, and her daughter, Bonnie Lynn Fitch and her husband, Clyde J. Fitch, of Las Vegas; five grandchildren, John Lawrence

Shahdanian II, Esq. and his wife Kelly Ann, Diana Shahdanian Cascone and her husband J. Scott Cascone, Mark Harry Shahdanian, James Andrew Fitch and Thomas William Fitch and six great-grandchildren, John Lawrence Shahdanian III, Alexander Richard Shahdanian, Gabriella Michelle Cascone, Nora Rose Cascone, Sofia Ann Cascone and Lauren Maggie Shahdanian.

Shahdanian's knack for story-telling was legendary, as were her skills as a cook and seamstress. Shahdanian was an amateur artist, sculptor, poet and pianist, and was an avid tennis player into her 80s. She worked many years as a legal secretary.

Shahdanian was a member of Holy Cross Armenian Church, New York, where she was a charter member and officer of the Holy Cross League and was the superintendent of the Sunday School for several years. She was a member of the Order of the Eastern Star in Westchester, NY, and a Sister of Seranoush Chapter of the Daughters of Vartan, in South Florida.

The daughter of Gulabi Gulbenkian and Emma Turabian Gulbenkian, she grew up in Ohio and moved to Washington Heights, NY, when she got married.

Later, she was a resident of Larchmont, NY, Brookfield, Conn. and Boynton Beach, Fla., before moving to Las Vegas to live with her daughter.

Donations in lieu of flowers may be made to the Daughters of Vartan through her son, John Shahdanian, 1051 Westwood Ave., Old Tappan, NJ 07675.

Harry Senanian

WATERTOWN — Harry Senanian died on October 6. He is survived by his wife, Joyce; children, Laurene (Senanian) Allen of New Hampshire, Lisa (Senanian) Leger of Waltham and David Senanian of Waltham; grandchildren, Kimberly (Allen) Holman of Boston, Jennifer Allen of Boston and New Hampshire, Madeline Leger of Waltham, Nathalie Leger of Waltham and niece Kohar (Karlozian) Zakarian of Braintree and nephew Vahe Karlozian of Watertown. He also leaves family members in Canada and Lebanon.

Funeral arrangements were made by the Bedrosian Funeral Home, Watertown. A memorial service will be held on Sunday, October 16, at 2 p.m., at First Armenian Church, 380 Concord Ave., Belmont.

Donation in Senanian's memory may be made to the First Armenian Church.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Richmond Armenian Festival Dishes out Food and Fun to Kick-Start Fall

RICHMOND, from page 5
something to improve the situation in order to keep a fulltime priest here. A few of us got together and came up with a plan and suggested that we take it outside since the Greek and Lebanese festivals were successful outdoors."

When the festival moved outdoors, Ashjian felt "business picked up and our name is out there in the community as far as a quality festival. More people know what an Armenian is. We estimate we have around 7,000 people on average go through during a four day period." The numbers of visitors have increased annually, with the exception of this year due to poor weather. Six or 700 people can be seated outdoors with tents and an outdoor stage, and many more wander about on foot.

Food preparation begins months before the

the festival committee last year and serves as the link between the festival committee and the Women's Guild.

Leiza Bouroujian became part of the Planning Committee six years ago when the festival expanded into an outdoor function. She is involved in the financial side of operations. Bouroujian feels that the festival has had an important impact on Richmond's non-Armenian community: "I think Richmond is really hungry for these types of events, cultural as well as food. The media gave us a lot of attention, so that really helped us grow, and I think that people just love the music, food, wine and the environment in general. Richmond is not as diverse as other parts of the country but they are looking for these kinds of cultural activities and that really helped us. It brings a lot of attention to Armenians." Bouroujian pointed out that unlike many other East Coast-Armenian festivals, the Richmond one "attracts non-Armenians, and in fact, most of the people that attend are non-Armenians."

St. James Armenian Church has only 500 members. Thus, what is impressive is that this small community is able to find 50 to 60 volunteers during the four-day event, as well as during the preceding months, 20 to 25 women to work in the church baking, and eight to 10 men to work on meat.

To find out more about the festival, see www.armenianfoodfestival.org, and follow the Twitter handle @ArmenianFoodRVA for updates next year.



The Hye Keys band

event. The Women's Guild starts meeting weekly in late June or early July. The men start working on the chicken and pork kebab from the middle of August for four or five weekends, coordinated by the efforts of Planning Committee member Rob Norris.

Lilly Bouroujian Thomas, involved for many years in the past through the Women's Guild in food preparation, became the fifth member of

Colorado's Congressional District 3 Creates Controversy on the Armenian Genocide

DENVER, Colo. — Colorado's investment in Armenians began as news of the Armenian Genocide filtered back to the Rocky Mountain High state as it was taking place. Leaders in the community, motivated by a strong desire to help Armenians, established Colorado's Near East Rescue Committee then. Colorado's dedication to this tragic historical backdrop remains firm today. Every April for the last decade, Colorado's General Assembly has affirmed the Armenian Genocide. Governors from both parties issue commemorative proclamations. A consecrated *Khachkar* designed by Western Slope (Congressional District 3) architect, Varouj Hairabedian, is further testament to Colorado's commitment to commemorating the Armenian Genocide. It is an exclusive tribute officially installed on Colorado's State House grounds.

Colorado's Congressional Delegation includes seven House members, as well as, of course, two senators. The efforts of Rocky Mountain Hye Advocates (RHMA) have resulted in five House members backing the Armenian Genocide resolution, [H.Res.304]; five Armenian Caucus members and one member on the Freedom of Religion Resolution H.Res. 306. This April, RMHA solicited Delegation Commemoration statements. Both senators and five House members released testimonials to RMHA.

Within this highly-positive environment, Rep. Scott Tipton (R-Third District) has otherwise distinguished himself. A first term member of Congress, the *New York Times* headlined his victory: "The Tea Party Triumphs in Rural Colorado" (November 3, 2010).

Prior to his election to Congress, Tipton served one term in Colorado's State Legislature. For two April votes he joined his colleagues in unanimously adopting resolutions commemorating the Armenian

Genocide. However, upon reaching Congress, his position took another direction.

Population numbers should be influential. The United States Census reports Tipton's District 3 is home to more Americans of Armenian descent than those of Turkish descent.

Campaign contributions may be persuasive.

Tipton's current financial report offers a possible nexus as it records significant contributions from two member corporations of the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA). AIA actively lobbied Congress on behalf of the Turkish government's effort to thwart an adoption of the Armenian Genocide resolution.

Tipton has generated repeated press coverage over ethical snafus in his brief time in office — less than a year. A recent *Denver Post* article questioned his ethical equilibrium: "...Tipton criticized for 'missteps.'" The most recent ethical lapse forced the Congressman to write an apology to the House ethics committee."

Tipton is Colorado's only delegation member who has failed to counterbalance his Turkish Caucus membership by co-sponsoring the Armenian Genocide resolution. Rocky Mountain Hye Advocates' Pamela Barsam Brown reported that she was personally advised by Tipton's chief of staff that he would not co-sponsor H.Res. 304 (October 5).

Further, Tipton is the only Colorado House member of Congress who has failed to take a positive position on current issues of interest to his American-Armenian constituents.



Rep. Scott Tipton

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Ararat Redux

Abovian, Prof. Parrot and First Ascent

By Philip P. Ketchian

The history of Mount Ararat abounds with accounts of explorers and adventurers taking up the challenge of scaling its fabled summit. Absent, however, are any signs of abatement in the interest and the controversy surrounding its first ascent that would dog Prof. Friedrich Parrot and Khatchadur Abovian to the end of their days, as evidenced by Edward Peck's article, "Ararat: Another Controversial First Ascent," published in the *British Alpine Journal* (2002, Vol. 107, pp. 207-215). I would like to take this opportunity to introduce some additional information that may inject some clarity into the subject from sources that exist only in the Russian and the Armenian languages. It will be seen that the long-forgotten account of the Russian adventurer Spassky-Avtonomov confirms Parrot's successful pioneering first ascent of the peak.

As is well known, it was only on their third attempt on October 9 (September 27, by the Old Style Julian calendar), 1829, that University of Dorpat (presently Tartu, Estonia) physics professor, Friedrich Parrot, and Khatchadur Abovian, together with two Armenian villagers from Agori on Mt. Ararat, Hovannes Aivazian and Murat Boghossian, as well as two Russian soldiers, Alexei Zdorovenko and Matvei Chalpanov, successfully ascended the western summit of Mt. Ararat at 16,854 feet (5,937 meters) above sea level.

Parrot had met Abovian at Echmiadzin, the seat of the Armenian Church, where he was employed as a clerk and translator to the catholicos, the head of the Armenian Church.

Parrot's report of the successful ascent was first published on October 30 in the Russian-language weekly, *Tiflis Chronicles*. The full account of the expedition appeared in his book, *Reise zum Ararat* in 1834, translated into English in 1845 as *Journey to Ararat*.

In his book, Parrot writes that the controversy was given credibility by an article appearing in 1831 in the *Tiflis Chronicles* in which "... a man belonging to the educated European public, a man of merit in his way ... was the first to cast a stone against me, and in a published commentary to insist on the impossibility of the fact asserted by me." Parrot did respond in writing to the charges in the *Tiflis Chronicles* and also initiated an action to take sworn depositions from the members of his sumitting party and from the Agori village chief Stepan Khojiant, who had accompanied Parrot on his unsuccessful second attempt a week earlier where they had reached a respectable altitude of 16,028 feet, and where they had erected a wooden cross bearing a lead plaque.

The deposition from Melik Stepan Aga (Stepan Khojiant) was taken on October 24, 1831. His statement was mostly inconsequential to the matter at hand, since he did not participate in the third attempt. However, his second-hand comments on the cross erected during



View of Ararat and the Monastery of Echmiadzin.

[To face p. 15.]

A sketch by Parrot of Ararat and Echmiadzin

the third attempt being placed "...in respect to distance not higher than the first," was only partially correct and contributed to setting a negative spin. That cross was deliberately not placed on the actual summit pyramid by Abovian, but somewhat lower in a location to be better observed from Agori.

Villager Murat Poghosian was questioned three days later. He stated, "We were not on the very summit, and could not get there, because further on there is no snow lying, but only ice; and besides, the steepness of the slope allows no further progress." This statement reaches us after being translated from Armenian into Russian, into German and finally into English and is what doubters cling to as proof of their arguments. Nevertheless, it appears that Aivazian was uncomfortable with the turn of events but reluctantly concurred with Poghosian. Hovannes Aivazian's deposition is said to be "simply confirmatory of his comrade's."

Be that as it may, Abovian had noted in his diary that some days following the successful ascent, Aivazian and Boghossian had approached him to voice their concern regarding the disbelief and harassment that they were being subjected to by some officials and clergymen for claiming to have climbed to the summit. They also mentioned being concerned for their safety, insisting that if this continued, they could be pressured to renege on the truth if they did not receive adequate protection from

the authorities. It is not clear whether Abovian related these concerns to Parrot, although it appears not. Thus the stage had been set for what eventually occurred.

The two Russian soldiers Zdorovenko and Chalpanov, however, were under no such pressure and did confirm the fact of reaching the summit. On November 2, 1831, Chalpanov stat-

ed, "I was, in fact, with Professor Parrot on the top of Mount Ararat in the month of September, 1829." Zdorovenko's statement was "...exactly similar in all points to that given above."

Ultimately, it is Abovian's statement that is of prime importance to the matter at hand, for he

continued on next page

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Ararat Redux

from previous page

was highly intelligent and educated, as well as the one in a position to provide the authorities with a credible and factual account of the events of the day. Abovian presented himself at the courthouse in Dorpat, where he was studying, on August 30, 1831. Asked whether he had personally been on the summit of Ararat with Parrot on October 9, 1829, Abovian emphatically answered, “Yes.” To the second question, asking from where the expedition started, Abovian responded that they had set out from the Monastery of St. Jacob, which was located at an elevation of 6,375 feet, and reached the top of the summit on the following day. Another question asked was at what time they had been on the summit; to which Abovian replied, “In the afternoon.” Finally, he was asked what they had done on the summit. Abovian related that he had erected a cross while Parrot, standing on the very top of the peak, took measurements with his scientific instruments. It is, however, unclear why Abovian’s official deposition was not included in Parrot’s *Reise zum Ararat* in 1834, for they were both in Dorpat and had close personal relations at the time. He thereby missed an opportunity to put an end to the quibbling that would follow. Abovian’s deposition was eventually published in *St. Petersburgische Zeitung* in 1835.

Soon after the climb, Abovian would write about the final push as follows:

“We had been mercilessly suffering such various difficulties that when the pinnacle of the mountain appeared not far from us, each one of us, one after the other, headed in that direction, not taking any notice at the moment of any difficulties and not considering their exhaustion, they were hurrying and hastening to see the spot desired by so many. It appeared as if we were winging up the slope to the sky, toward where the summit was. Our hopeless legs and wobbly knees had gained momentum and were soaring upward, toward the astonishing aerie. Wonders came to view, in addition to our joyous desires that led us to rejoice, towards the birthplace of the entire world. Our souls were enveloped with happiness and were overcome by unimaginable gaiety; we began to run about in this and that direction to view the lower-lying valleys and ridges. One was amazed by the height of the mountain, the other was attempting to observe faraway places, and words of gratitude and blessing were pouring forth in our dialect from their mouths.”

Abovian’s first and repeat ascents of Ararat, in addition to his subsequent first ascent of 13,435 ft. (4,095 meters) Mt. Aragats while

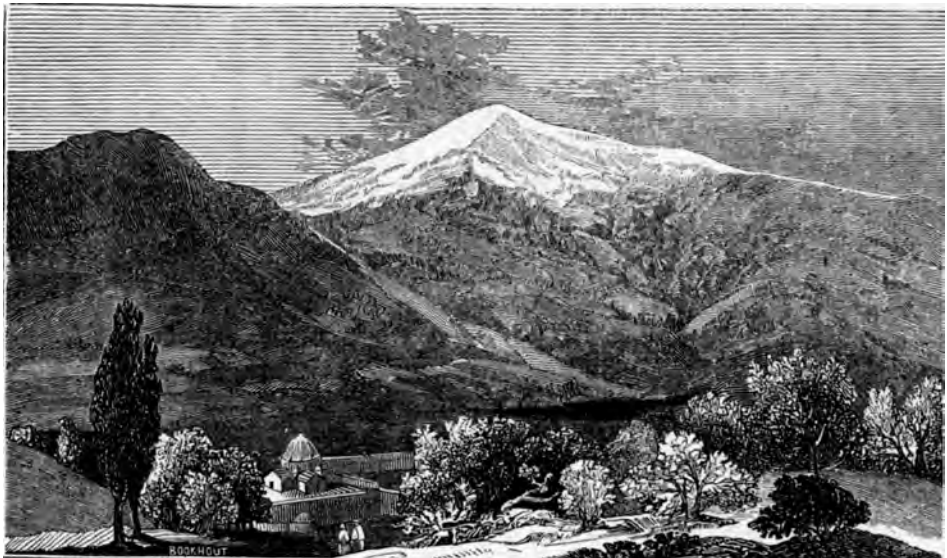
accompanying University of Munich’s Prof. Moritz Wagner, firmly establish him as the father of Armenian mountaineering. After returning to Armenia from his university studies in Dorpat, Abovian established himself as a progressive educator and the premier national man of modern letters.

Parrot had met the young Khatchadur Abovian at Echmiadzin. It is interesting that later in 1844 Abovian also accompanied Herrmann von Abich, a professor of mineralogy at the same University of Dorpat as Parrot, to Ararat. They made three unsuccessful attempts together, having been turned back by violent storms just short of the summit. During one of the attempts, they erected a cross short of the summit. The following year, however, Abich, accompanied by Peter Sharoyan, a student of Abovian’s, and two other Armenian guides, was successful in ascending the eastern summit. One of his guides was Simon Sarkisian.

Abovian was, nevertheless, destined to successfully ascend Ararat once more. This time he did it together with the Englishman Henry

Englishmen Maj. Robert Stuart and Walter Thursby on their way up to the summit on August 14, 1856. Three of their companions had summited two days earlier. “About 1,200 feet from the summit, we came upon an oak cross that had been fixed by Professor Abich,” Stuart wrote. He speculated, “Professor Abich made several attempts, but failed in all, as is proved by the position of the cross...” Not being familiar with the history of the mountain, Stuart mistakenly assumed that they were the first.

To shed more light on the matter one must seek out the Russian and Armenian sources. One such invaluable source is an article by E. G. Weidenbaum, “Greater Ararat: and Attempts to Climb Its Summit,” published in the *Transactions of the Caucasus Branch of the Imperial Russian Geographic Society* (vol. xiii, 1884). According to Weidenbaum’s account, one year after Parrot’s ascent, Ivan Shopen, the chairman of the Incomes and Properties Department of the Province of Armenia, expressed doubts concerning the veracity of Parrot’s announcement of reaching the summit



A sketch by Parrot of Ararat and Echmiadzin

Danby Seymour and Simon Sarkisian on September 30, 1846. Sarkisian was a survivor of the 1840 Agori avalanche and would summit for the third time with the massive 68-member expedition organized by the Russian Army topographer, Col. Iosif Khodzko, in 1850. His fourth attempt at ascending was in 1878, while guiding another Englishman, George Percival Baker. This time the now 90-year-old Sarkisian was forced to turn back short of the summit. Baker continued on to successfully ascend the peak on August 7.

It is also of interest that a dozen years later Abich’s cross was discovered by the

of Ararat. Thus we learn the identity of Parrot’s principle tormentor, whom he had described as “... a man belonging to the educated European public, a man of merit in his way – one who on account of his long residence in those countries possesses undoubted claims to confidence in his local knowledge.”

Weidenbaum also mentions Karl Kokh, a noted botanist, who was personally acquainted with both Parrot and Shopen. Kokh opined that “jealousy was the principle reason for Shopen to question the veracity of Parrot’s statements, in view of the fact that he himself had made two attempts at climbing Ararat, and

both times experienced total failure.” He continues to say that Shopen’s portly body was hardly suited for such an endeavor, in contrast to the athletic build of Parrot.

Another such skeptic was the postmaster of Yerevan, Artem Kalantarian. He was to hound Abovian into agreeing on a wager to climb Ararat once again to prove it possible. Before that could take place, regrettably, one day in April of 1848, Abovian left his home and mysteriously disappeared. No trace of him has ever been found.

In any event, the most conclusive evidence of Parrot’s achievement is to be found buried in the pages of a book by Kozma Spassky-Avtonomov, *The Ascent of Ararat*, published in Moscow in 1839. Spassky-Avtonomov’s was only the second expedition to successfully summit Ararat in 1834. His account also dispels the mistaken notion of most chroniclers that Spassky-Avtonomov may have only ascended the lower eastern summit pyramid or even not reached the summit at all. As a matter of fact, he climbed both summits. In that endeavor he was fortunate to be assisted by two Armenian guides from Agori, Hovannes Aivazian who had also accompanied Parrot on his successful third attempt and proven so helpful to him, and Yeghdaer Ghougassian. The Armenian village of Agori was situated at an elevation of approximately 4,000 feet above sea level at the base of the Agori Gorge on the northern slope of the mountain. This was prior to 1840 when a powerful earthquake violently shook the mountain, triggering a catastrophic avalanche that totally destroyed the village and the monastery, and buried all its inhabitants under a massive layer of rock and ice. I believe that the Turkish name Agri Dag for Mt. Ararat is derived from the name of this Armenian village.

Aivazian confidently guided them to where Parrot had bivouacked on the first night of their third attempt. The following morning Aivazian directed them to the cross on the dome plateau that Parrot had erected at 16,028 feet, the high point of his second attempt. The trio continued to climb atop the snowcap toward the eastern summit pyramid, which they soon successfully ascended. Following a relaxing lunch break in the saddle between the two summits, they headed toward the western summit. As the climbers ascended the higher western summit pyramid, Aivazian suddenly shouted out to Spassky-Avtonomov that this was where Parrot had stood. Thereby prompting him to write, “for myself at least, it became clear why the guide Aivazian initially had stated to me that the professor had not been on the summit, but later began to insist that he had been; he, as all Agori residents, considered the main summit of Masis (Armenian for Ararat) to be the eastern peak. Therefore, for Aivazian the professor had not been on Masis, when he had been only on the western peak.” The eastern summit is a mere 50 feet lower than the true western summit; however, Agori villagers and, in fact, all observers from the north side of the mountain view the closer eastern pyramid to be the higher of the two due to the trick played by perspective on observers some 14,000 feet below. Having seen the mountain from the north, I too had been under that impression. But my July 19, 2003, successful summiting up the southern route with a British expedition dispelled the confusion and also exposed me to Ararat’s unique beauty and the spell it casts upon its admirers.

A mere five years had separated the first two ascents. Spassky-Avtonomov had been fortunate to share the able services of Parrot’s guide Aivazian, who was a participant and eyewitness of both successful summit ascents. His spontaneous, unsolicited declaration atop the true summit must be accepted as proof positive that Parrot and his party did indeed summit Ararat in 1829. The proof had been there for all to see, but inaccessible to most chroniclers on account of the rarity of Spassky-Avtonomov’s text.

It is my firm belief that this information should lay to rest any lingering questions and doubts surrounding Parrot’s truly spectacular achievement, for his ascent was one of the highest of any human to date.

(Philip Ketchian is a retired physicist, who climbed Mount Ararat with a British Expeditionary Group and his wife, Elsa Ronningstam Ketchian, in July 2003.)

Sponsor a Teacher in Armenia and Karabagh 2011



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COMMUNITY NEWS

San Diego Armenians Raise \$200,000 at Memorable Bridge to the Future Gala

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — More than 300 guests attended the Bridge to Future Gala at the Grand Del Mar Resort on Saturday, October 1, raising \$200,000 for a new church campus in San Diego.

The gala was chaired by Kathy Kassardjian and organized by the Trust Fund Committee of St. John Garabed Armenian Church, led by Rev. Datev A.K. Tatoulian.

The event featured Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, as the guest of honor, and Mark Geragos, Esq. as the guest speaker. Distinguished dignitaries and officials were Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian, former Primate of the Western Diocese; Hranush Hacobyan, minister of the diaspora for the Republic of Armenia; Grigor Hovhannissian, consul general of the Republic of Armenia in Los Angeles; Brian Bilbray, US House of Representatives (California's 50th District) and his daughter, Brianna; Mel Millstein, representative for City Councilwoman Sherri Lightner; Joe Kellejian, deputy mayor of the city of Solana Beach and Fr. Nerses Hayrapetyan.

The evening began with guests treated to champagne and appetizers, donated by Ani's Best Gourmet Delights, and a silent auction.

Inside the elegantly-appointed ballroom, Steven Kradjian opened the evening by welcoming guests and dignitaries: "We are here — each of us — to do our part as God may use us, to embrace our children in love and enthusiasm for an Armenian Church and community center unlike any our region has seen, for the future of all Armenian families in San Diego."

The event's program included the singing of the American and Armenian national anthems by acclaimed soloist Anahit Nersesian, accompanied by Alex Mirolyan; opening remarks and prayer by Archpriest Datev Tatoulian; an official welcome by Gala Chair Kathy Kassardjian; the presentation of a congressional proclamation by Rep. Brian Bilbray; a live auction and a message by Hacobyan.

Kassardjian shared, "On behalf of tonight's organizing committee, I would like to welcome you to the Bridge to the Future's Gala Dinner and Dance celebration. Tonight's event would not be possible without the dedication of my co-chair, Ani Lanuza, and a very hard-working committee. We have a God-centered vision. It's a vision to bring us all together and build a new church campus. God is the foundation of our project but you, my dear guests, are the cornerstone."



Guests helped raise \$200,000 for the new church in San Diego.

Geragos stated, "I am flabbergasted that there are this many Armenians in San Diego and impressed by the magnitude of this event. We are here to raise money for a new church campus, and I am happy to do what I can to help you reach that goal." After his speech, Geragos circulated the room encouraging guests to donate generously and sign pledge cards.

The guest of honor, Derderian, greeted the packed room of supporters with a heartfelt message:

"Tonight, we are celebrating the living mission of the Armenian Apostolic Church. We are launching a new milestone in the life of the Armenian community of San Diego with the implementation of a larger church complex to better serve the community. You have embarked on a challenging journey. Throughout this journey, your Christian faith will be your source of spiritual energy and inspiration in guiding you to complete this glorious task. You will secure the sanctity and be

enlightened by the mighty and glorious presence of our church," said Derderian.

The funds raised at the gala support the first phase of the Bridge to the Future campaign, whose goal is to raise a total of \$2 million for consulting, planning and permit expenses as well as final land acquisition. Since the purchase of 14 acres of land by the Trust Fund in 2008, more than \$600,000 (including the proceeds from the October 1 event) has been raised in donations and pledges for the First Phase. The property is located at 13860 El Camino Real in San Diego.

To make an online donation, go to www.stjohngarabedtrust.org. To make a cash donation, establish a bequest, donate a vehicle, contribute securities or real estate, transfer ownership of an insurance policy, or create an endowment, contact Gary Takessian, Trust Committee Fundraising chair, takessiang@yahoo.com. All contributions are tax-deductible.



Guests enjoyed the reception.



Fr. Nerses Hayrapetyan, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Alan Yaghdjian, Jack Hachigian, Nina Hachigian and Ani Lanuza



Mr. and Mrs. Jack Kalaydjian, Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian and Mark Geragos

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(Մահուան Ա. Տարեկից)

«Մեծարանք
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Կիրակի
Հոկտեմբեր 16, 2011
Երեկոյեան ժամը 6:00ին
First Baptist Church of Glendale
209 N. Louise St.
Glendale, CA 91206

A Commemorative
Concert Dedicated to
HAROUT YERETZIAN
On the occasion of the first
anniversary of his passing

"Homage to Giants"
VATCHE MANKERIAN
Pianist

Dikran Mansourian
"Ars Poetica"
LARK Chorus
Conducted by
VATSCHE BARSOUMIAN

Sunday, October 16, 2011
6:00 PM
First Baptist Church of Glendale
209 N. Louise St.
Glendale, CA 91206

Please RSVP (818) 243-4112

Santa Monica Boulevard



COMMUNITY NEWS

Birtheright Armenia's Chicago 'Brigade' Launches Itself with Community Event

CHICAGO – On Saturday, September 17, 45 individuals, representing a cross-section of the Chicago-Armenian community came together to support the mission of Birtheright Armenia.

In an elegant party room at NAHA, a hotspot restaurant owned by cousins Carrie and Michael Nahabedian, guests enjoyed live Armenian music by the Hye Vibes Band, wine bar, hors d'oeuvres and presentations by local area alumni. Ani Maral Grigorian of Racine, Wis., and Sarah Wilkinson, who traveled to Armenia to perform community service under the sponsorship of Birtheright in 2011 and 2004 respectively, shared short anecdotes about what the experience meant to them,



Birtheright Armenia participants from the summer 2011, Crystal Densmore and Ani Grigorian, were eager to share stories about their experiences with attendees.

as artwork from Armenia and signed White House memorabilia only added to the fun and success of the evening. "The evening's goal was to raise awareness and contributions, and we succeeded on both fronts. The Chicago community can now proudly say that they helped send another five young diasporan adults on their life-changing experience to Armenia," shared Linda Yepoyan, executive director of the non-profit organization, based in Philadelphia.

"Our heartfelt thanks go out to the BR Brigade members Christina Markarian, Greta Doumanian, Ric Gazarian and numerous other individuals within the community who were instrumental in getting the word out to others about our work in Armenia and the event itself. Without their on the ground volunteer support, this night would have not been possible," she added. "This fundraiser will be an excellent example to share with the numerous other brigades we are hoping to establish city by city across the US."

Christina Markarian, who chairs the brigade in Chicago, sums up what motivated her to take on volunteer work with Birtheright Armenia, "When I went to Armenia in 1992, I stayed for five months and I believe the extended stay produced a more meaningful experience for me. I am so excited about Birtheright Armenia because it creates and funds the opportunity for young people to travel to Armenia and stay for a longer duration."

Birtheright Armenia's mission is to strengthen ties between the homeland and diasporan youth by affording them an opportunity to be a part of Armenia's daily life and to contribute to Armenia's development through work, study and volunteer experiences, while developing a renewed sense of Armenian identity. For more information, or to make an online donation, visit www.birtherightarmenia.org.

and how it changed their perspectives, affected their professional goals, and strengthened their Armenian identity. Wilkinson told the group of attendees, "I climbed down into St. Gregory's pit at Khor Virab, listened to the extremely moving Sharakan music being sung down there, and for the first time in my life, I truly felt and became an Armenian."

A silent auction table, with unique items such



Attendees bid on the silent auction table items.



Mark Gavoor on oud

'Pride and Honor Flight' Takes Detroit Veterans to Washington

WASHINGTON – On Friday, September 23, the "Pride and Honor Flight" organization invited a group of World War II veterans to visit the World War II Memorial here. Within this group of veterans were six Armenian American veterans: Nick Derderian, Carl Kalayjian, George Keurajian, Jack Kojamian, Lee Laktzian and Harry Kems.

Prior to leaving from the Detroit Metropolitan Airport the group was given t-shirts displaying the American flag, which identified them as WWII vets. In addition, Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson supplied the group multi-colored WWII Veteran's pins, which they wore along with the t-shirts.

The group left Detroit at 7 a.m. and arrived

by building a memorial meeting hall. This cadre of men in the AAV organization wanted a building of their own and, more importantly, to honor their fallen comrades. Once a decision was made to build the facility, they immediately started to raise the necessary funds. After years of arduous solicitations, there building was going to become a reality.

Fourteen years of fund-raising culminated in securing enough money to purchase a parcel of land. At the same time, St. John's Armenian Church was aware of AAV's efforts. The church surprised them by granting a large piece of land on church property – a location that would be more accessible to the youth of the Armenian community. This offer on the part of the church



American-Armenian Veterans of Michigan visiting World War II Memorial Washington DC, from left, Nick Derderian, Dr. Harry Kems, Lee Laktzian, Jack Kojamian, Carl Kalaian; seated center, George P. Keurajian

in Baltimore several hours later. Upon arrival, they were met by approximately 100 sailors, WAVES and naval officers, all clad in white uniforms. Each thanked the veterans for the service they had rendered the country. It was a heart-warming reception. After fraternizing with them for a brief period, they group boarded a bus and headed to the WWII War Memorial. The memorial was beautiful and breathtaking. There were water fountains and huge columns with plaques representing every state.

Later in the afternoon, the group was invited to a sumptuous meal at an elegant restaurant – again compliments of the Pride and Honor Flight Organization.

On the return trip, to their surprise, family members and friends had taken time to secretly write notes of appreciation to them. These notes were distributed to everyone via a "military mail call." Reading the notes of thanks, was a humbling experience and provided an unforgettable closure to the day.

For those readers who do not have a historical knowledge of the Armenian American Veterans of Detroit here is a brief history. In 1946, a small group of Armenian military veterans joined together to form an organization to honor Armenian American Veterans (AAV)

was gratefully accepted. In the meantime, the original property purchased increased in value and was sold for a handsome profit. The proceeds from that sale became a financial windfall for the new building.

Some time around 1960, several members of the AAV persuaded the organization to include a recreational center in the building plans in addition to the meetings facilities. The idea of constructing a small gym for the youth was readily accepted by the AAV members and the Armenian community. With the addition of the recreation center, funds became more readily accessible. Construction for the new building began in 1961 and was completed the following year. It was so successful the St. John's eventually built a new building with a full-size regulation basketball court.

Over the ensuing years attrition has depleted the ranks. The few who remain were rewarded on September 23 by paying tribute to fallen comrades in arms and having the opportunity to view the WWII Memorial. The AAV thanks those who sponsored this event as well as all of the "Pride and Honor" flights. Also, they wish to extend deep gratitude to L. Brooks Patterson and his staff for providing members with WWII Veteran's pins.

– Dr. Harry Kems

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New York METRO

2011 AGBU Yerevan Summer Intern Program Creates Bonds

NEW YORK — From June 25 to August 5, 21 interns from four countries — Canada, Russia, Syria and the United States — came together to participate in AGBU's Yerevan Summer Intern Program (YSIP). For the fifth consecutive year, YSIP has allowed diasporan Armenian college students to connect with their cultural heritage while working and participating in a program of cultural, social and professional activities. Participants develop closer ties with their homeland and a better understanding of their roots.

Participating students spent their summer internships at a number of leading institutions and organizations throughout Yerevan, includ-

This year's AGBU Yerevan Summer Internship Program was supervised by YSIP coordinator Anna Aghajanian and activities coordinator Aline Zorian. The students were housed at a private residence in Yerevan during their six-week stay.

In addition to gaining professional experience, the interns also participated in numerous cultural activities, attended weekly Armenian-language and folk-dance classes, visited historic monuments and got acquainted with the programs carried out by AGBU throughout Armenia and Karabagh. Interns had the opportunity to meet with a number of Armenian political and social figures, including the Republic of



YSIP participants during their visit to the monastery of Geghard

ing ArBes Medical Center, Armenian Center for Contemporary Experimental Art, *Azg* daily newspaper, Deem Communications, Global SPC Law and Consulting, Hetq Online, Lagir Online, the Republic of Armenia Finance Ministry, St. Nerses the Great Hospital, Storaket Architectural Studio, United Nations Development Program and Yerevan Hospitals No. 1 and 8.

Armenia's Diaspora Minister Hranoush Hakobian, Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian and former Foreign Minister of Armenia (and current chairman of the Heritage party and parliament member) Raffi Hovannisian. YSIP participants also met with young Armenian entrepreneurs, including Hayk Vardanyan, the co-founder of Wise Business LLC, and George Tabakian and Talar Kazanjian, two Diasporan



YSIP participants having lunch in a village outside of Garni

Armenians who have both moved to their homeland and are currently running successful businesses in the country.

The offices of the AGBU Armenian Representation and Armenian Virtual College (AVC) hosted the YSIP participants for an introductory presentation and a video chat with Yervant Zorian, the chairman of the unique online school.

This year's participants also spent three unforgettable days in Karabagh, touring Stepanakert, Shushi and Gandzasar. During their time in Karabagh, they were treated to a performance by the students of the Naregatsi Art Institute in Shushi.

On July 24, interns visited the AGBU Antranik Scout Camp in the Lori region of Armenia and spent an unforgettable day with Armenian scouts from all around the world. YSIP students were also given the unique opportunity to attend a performance of "Anoush" at the Armenian National Opera and Ballet Theatre. This year's group also took part in a unique scavenger hunt activity, together with Birthright Armenia volunteers. Together the groups were divided into several teams and

sent to explore the Armenian capital in an effort to create camaraderie and familiarize them with the city and its residents.

On August 3, before the conclusion of the six-week program, a farewell reception was held at the Yerevan Museum of Folk Art, in honor of the interns, YSIP staff, intern supervisors and AGBU staff. The evening celebrated the once-in-a-lifetime journey experienced by YSIP and their unforgettable summer experiences.

"No matter what you expect, you will be wrong. Armenia and YSIP will impress you from day one to the day you have to leave," said Samuel Armen, who was a 2011 participant from the United States.

Fellow YSIP intern Nicole Saglamer, also of the United States, shared Armen's enthusiasm about her summer. "Being an AGBU intern for the past six weeks has made me understand what it really means to be a Diasporan Armenian. I have acquired an even greater affinity towards my Armenian heritage and identity and know now for sure that coming back to Armenia to support and help my homeland is a huge passion of mine," she said.

AAHPO Members Complete First Medical Mission in Armenia

By Taleen Babayan

TEANECK, NJ. and YEREVAN — In an effort to continue to contribute to the improvement of the healthcare system in Armenia, the Armenian American Health Professional Organization (AAHPO) organized its first medical mission that took place in conjunction with the Third International Medical Congress in Armenia last summer.

During the month of July, AAHPO members visited hospitals and clinics throughout Armenia — ranging from Hospital #8 in Yerevan to the Armavir Medical Center, 30 miles outside the capital.

The mission allowed participants to become familiarized with and gain a better understanding of the medical system in Armenia. Components of the program included direct patient care, learning how the healthcare system in Armenia functions and networking with local physicians. Returning to the US, AAHPO members concluded that two areas most in need are medical training and the allocation of resources.

"I found the doctors to be knowledgeable but lacking the medical technology we use here in the US," said pediatrician Dr. Garbis Baydar, who noted that there is not a single MRI machine in the entire country.

One highlight of the mission was when the group visited a new 60-bed, pediatric hospital in Yerevan, which provides both general pediatric and intensive care. While there, the head of the Neonatal and Pediatric Intensive Care Units provided the AAHPO group with a detailed tour of

the hospital and its laboratories, and each member met with doctors in their fields of specialty.

"The doctors in Armenia know the capabilities of Western medicine but they just don't have the resources," said gastroenterologist Dr. Greg Koobatian. "They don't have the tools to do more advanced things such as endoscopic ultrasounds."

While participants in the medical mission saw the limited resources in the hospitals in Yerevan, they saw even more of a disparity in the rural villages. Two other Armenian humanitarian organizations, including the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) and the Children of Armenia Fund (COAF), worked with AAHPO to allow them access into hospitals and clinics in the rural villages.

In one of the hospitals they visited, they learned that only one ambulance covers the needs of six villages, some of which are up to half an hour away.

"Some of the villages weren't as affected by the medical system," said Dr. Alicia Demirjian, a pediatric infectious disease doctor. "It was a striking difference, but it was important to see these kinds of things."

While it became evident that vast changes need to be made to the healthcare system in Armenia, something as basic as continuing medical development is a positive first step.

"If the doctors in Armenia could receive continuing medical education, it will have a high impact on the medical system," said Demirjian.

To this end, AAHPO has been working with FAR to help train physicians in Armenia through the Continuing Medical Education Program (CME), which brings doctors throughout Armenia to



Group photo of AAHPO medical mission participants

Yerevan for one month of intensive training.

"AAHPO's support of the Continuing Medical Education Program is helping doctors in Armenia learn new techniques, treatments and medications," said Koobatian. "This approach is more efficient than sending doctors over from the US for a week or two for patient care."

Reflecting on their time in Armenia visiting various hospitals and clinics and meeting with healthcare professionals as well as patients, participants are happy they were part of the mission and are looking forward to building on the rela-

tionships they developed while there. They also invite other healthcare professionals to join the initiative.

"I encourage every Armenian healthcare professional to pitch in," said Baydar.

"AAHPO is doing a great job in making a connection between Armenians in the diaspora and in Armenia," added Koobatian. "I hope going forward we are able to make more of an impact."

AAHPO is hosting a gala fundraiser on Saturday, October 15, at the Marriott Glenpointe in Teaneck, NJ.

Arts & Living

Balakian to Speak at Columbia

Genocide Expert Frieze also To Address Memory and Genocide

NEW YORK — The Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies (MESAAS), Columbia University, in conjunction with the Armenian Center at Columbia University and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) presents two events open to the public in conjunction with the on-going graduate seminar, “Memories of the Armenian Genocide: An Exploration through Memoir, Literature and the Arts.”

A public reading and talk by writer and poet Peter Balakian will take place on Tuesday, October 25, at 7:35 p.m. Balakian's talk is titled, “The Transmission of Trauma Across Generations: Literary Memory and the Armenian Genocide.” The talk will take place in room 501 of Schermerhorn Hall on the campus of Columbia University (116th Street and Broadway). Balakian is the Donald M. and Constance H. Rebar Professor of the Humanities, Professor of English and director of Creative Writing at Colgate University. He is the author of many books including the memoir, *Black Dog of Fate*, winner of PEN/Albrand Prize for Memoir, *Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide, America's Response*, winner of the Raphael Lemkin Prize and a *New York Times* Best Seller, and co-translator of Grigoris Balakian's *Armenian Golgotha: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide 1915-1918*. His books of poems include *Ziggurat* and *June-tree: New and Selected Poems, 1974-2000*.

On Thursday, November 3, at 7:35 p.m., Dr. Donna-Lee Frieze of Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia, will present a talk titled, “Silence, Memory and Sacred Drama: Ravished Armenia in the Memorialization of the Armenian Genocide.” The talk will take place in room 501 of Schermerhorn Hall, Columbia University. There will be a screening of the short surviving fragment of the film, “Ravished Armenia,” in conjunction with the talk.

Frieze has taught a graduate unit on genocide studies for 10 years at Deakin University. In 2009 she was joint consulting scholar for a conference on Raphael Lemkin and sole consulting scholar for a six-month exhibition on Lemkin, both at the Center for Jewish History in New York City. She is part of a research team publishing a history of the Jewish Holocaust Centre in Melbourne and is the editor of Lemkin's autobiography (Yale University Press, forthcoming).

Both talks are in conjunction with an on-going Columbia University graduate seminar, “Memories of the Armenian Genocide: An Exploration through Memoir, Literature and the Arts,” taught by Armen T. Marsoobian, Nikit and Eleanor Ordjanian Visiting Professor of Armenian Literature, Columbia University and professor and chair of the Philosophy Department at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven. For more information about these events and the seminar contact am3766@columbia.edu.



From left, Sonja Magdevski, Martin Sheen, Emilio Estevez and David Alexanian at the Chicago International Film Festival in August

David Alexanian Shows ‘The Way’ with Estevez And Sheen

NEW YORK — “The Way,” a new, heart-warming family film, is written and directed by Emilio Estevez, and produced by David Alexanian and his company, Elixir

By Florence Avakian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Films. Now showing in most theatres from coast to coast, the film is the story of a life-changing trip bonding a father and his son, and emphasizes the difference between the life we live, and the life we choose. It stars Estevez' own

father, Martin Sheen, whose California life is transformed during a trek.

When Sheen, a well-to-do ophthalmologist, hears that his only son (played by Estevez) has died during a storm in the Pyrenees while hiking along the famed Way of St. James, also known as the Camino de Santiago, he flies to France. To better understand himself and his bohemian son from whom he has been estranged, and to complete his son's journey, he decides to make the pilgrimage himself, a trek of hundreds of miles from France to Spain.

Using his son's gear, he starts out picking up a motley group of trekkers, including an overweight Dutchman (Yorick van Wageningen), a surly chain-smoking Canadian (Deborah Kara Unger), and an Irish author (James Nesbitt) suffering from writer's bloc, all of whom hope to find a way out of their personal dilemmas. Along the way, Sheen quietly scatters his son's ashes.

Though there isn't much insight on how the grouchy Sheen is changed by the odyssey, the film does afford some hints at healing through arguments as well as friendship with his teammates (all fine actors) and hilarious moments with the local villagers on the journey, especially an innkeeper who alone puts on a side-splitting show acting out a conversation between a man and a woman.

Probably the most impressive parts of the film portray the history, culture and picturesque panorama of the countryside, Sheen's moving, understated performance and the character development of the other three lead actors. There is also the spiritual element, especially when the four pilgrims finally reach their destination at the Spanish cathedral where St. James is reputed to be buried.

Producer Alexanian grew up in Pennsylvania and has been involved with film and theatre production for more than 10 years. He is especially fascinated with subjects of geographical and inspirational journeys. He co-founded Elixir Films with his sister, Alexis Alexanian.

His association with “The Way” started in 2008 when writer and director Estevez asked him to produce it after attending Alexanian's 2007 production of “Long Way Down.” Both Estevez and Alexanian flew to Spain and journeyed on the Camino de Santiago de Compostela ancient trek. Along the way they hired crew and cast from the local population, and worked on the production.

However, “The Way” was not the first of Alexanian's films. In 2001, he filmed Eric Bogosian's one-man show, “Wake Up and Smell the Coffee,” for the Independent Film Channel. He has also filmed “The Good Thief” by Conor McPherson at a run in a Los Angeles theatre, and the 2003 production of “Where the Red Fern Grows.”

This was followed in 2004 with “Long Way Round,” which he directed and produced. It was the 20,000-mile motorcycle journey of Ewan McGregor and Charley Boorman from London to New York through Europe, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Siberia, far eastern Russian and North America.

He recalls that his mother was terrified of motorcycles, when he was growing up. “I used to sneak out to ride dirt bikes against her stern warnings,” he says. Working with his sister, Alexis, he became the head of Elixir Films, and has instilled that love of motorcycles into films, such as “Long Way Round” and “Long Way Down” which he produced in 2007.

“Long Way Down” details a ride from the Northern tip of Scotland, down through Europe, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, see THE WAY, page 17

Jack Kevorkian's Paintings Go on Sale in New York

NEW YORK (*Daily Mail*) — He was nicknamed “Dr. Death” for helping dozens of people commit suicide in the 1990s and spent eight years in prison for second-degree murder.

Now, the late Jack Kevorkian's paintings, writings and iconic blue sweaters are being sold in an auction in New York this month.

Many of the 20 paintings by the pathologist, who died in June aged 83, depict death or dying, and are often intended to provoke or disturb.

One of those up for auction is titled “Genocide” and features a bloody head being dangled by the hair and held by the hands of two soldiers.

One wears a German military uniform from World War II and the other a Turkish uniform from World War I to depict the mass killings of Armenians and Jews during World



“Genocide” by Jack Kevorkian

I and World War II, respectively.

Kevorkian painted the frame with his own blood and wanted to have a skeleton with an IV flowing through it next to the painting, according to Suburban Detroit art gallery owner Anne Kuffler.

Kuffler, who had previously exhibited the pathologist's work, put him off the idea however.

“He said: ‘I want to show how horrible it is, I want people to be upset by it,’” she said.

“I said: ‘If you haven't portrayed it in your painting, then you haven't succeeded.’”

The gallery owner revealed there had already been interest in the paintings up for auction.

Kuffler, who sells signed and numbered lithographs of six of his works for \$500 apiece, said she was offered \$100,000 for one of his original paintings in 1994 and believes the value of work would have increased since then.

Kevorkian's lawyer, Mayer Morganroth, said he didn't know the value of the collection but most of the proceeds will go to the doctor's sole heir — a niece — and the charity Kicking Cancer for Kids.

Morganroth said the timing was right to sell the items, since there was interest from several auction houses and the broader art world, as well as a desire to settle the estate.

Many of the paintings have been hanging at the Armenian Library and Museum of America in Watertown, Mass., which also has a collection of his compositions and writings.

Kevorkian was also a keen musician and composer.

“I think the legacy is showing the many facets of him and his capabilities,” Morganroth said. “He was a multi-talented man.”



Shushi Dance Ensemble Makes History Come Alive through Dance

TENAFLY, N.J. — Each Monday and Friday evening, a rehearsal here is filled with the sounds and dance steps from the mountains and plains of Armenia. Who's stomping and making this ruckus? A group of New York/New Jersey youth of Armenian descent ages ranging from Kindergarten through post-college grads.

The imagination of these 120 dancers, male and female, is captured through the passion and dedication of founder, artistic director and choreographer of the Shushi Armenian Dance Ensemble, Seta Paskalian-Kantardjian.

The Shushi Armenian Dance Ensemble was founded in 1992 by Seta Paskalian-Kantardjian, a Cresskill resident, who had directed the group for 20 years, all on a volunteer basis. Through the medium of dance, she instills Armenian identity and pride in these youth while also exposing diverse audiences to Armenian heritage through the arts.

She says, "Armenian dance is part of my essence. It's who I am. I find no greater joy in life than sharing my talent and passion for Armenian music and dance with each generation for the past 20 years."

Throughout its two-decade history, Paskalian-Kantardjian has led the Shushi Armenian Dance Ensemble and produced concerts and dance performances all over the world, across Europe, the Middle East, North America (including the White House) and of course the Republic of Armenia. The group will conclude the 20-year celebration with a trip to South America with performances in Buenos Aires, Argentina and Montevideo, Uruguay in July 2012.

On October 30, the Shushi Armenian Dance Ensemble will celebrate its 20th Anniversary by performing in an event, "Independence," dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the independence of Armenia and Karabagh. With 150 performers, including vocalists and musicians from Armenia, Los Angeles and New York accompa-



*Im Love, Im Love at
the Opera House*

Senior members mesmerized the crowd as they perform to the choreographed Im Love, Im Love celebrating the 15th anniversary of the ensemble at the Opera House in Yerevan on July 3, 2008.



Hosted by the AGBU AYA Aleppo chapter and Friends of the Citadel of Aleppo, Shushi performed at the historic Citadel (Pert) with more than 4,000 audience members, including 200 AGBU boy and girl scouts.



Shushi Dance Ensemble members performed to a sell-out crowd in White Plains, NY on March 27, 2010, sponsored by St. Gregory Armenian School of White Plains.

nying the young dancers. The October 30 event will be held at Felician College in Lodi.

In spite of dark periods within their history, most prominently the Genocide of 1915, Armenians all over the world continue to strive to perpetuate their identity and their culture. Shushi's celebration of the independence of

Armenia and Karabagh is a testimonial to the drive of our New York/New Jersey youth to keep their history and lineage alive.

For further information, photos and video profiling Shushi Armenian Dance Ensemble and its upcoming Independence event, visit www.shushidance.org.

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ARTS & LIVING

YerazArt Event Raises \$17,000 for Young Musicians

WINCHESTER, Mass. — The home of Raffi and Nina Festekjian was the venue for a fundraiser for YerazArt on Saturday, September 24. The gathering raised about \$17,000, with the attendance of 75 guests.

After a performance by several members of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, Nicole Hajjar, chair of the YerazArt board, gave an overview of the organization’s goals and philanthropic efforts.

In previous years, along with supporting individual musicians, money was spent to bring to the US a group of young musicians from Armenia, so that they could get experience performing in diverse venues. This year, the YerazArt board has decided to send the funds raised to young music students there who are eager to pursue higher education in Armenia. In fact, she said, the annual tuition cost of the education of a young opera singer and a young pianist, has been fully subsidized by YerazArt.

In addition, she said, the Brutyan School in Gumri, also known as School No. 4, received a set

of new musical instruments from YerazArt. Similarly, the Karakeravan Art School received an oud, guitar and kanon.

The group has been able to cultivate young musicians. Hajjar announced one young pianist, Aleksandr Iradyan, 20, has been accepted to the graduate program of the Florida International University. YerazArt will pay for the schooling. Another recipient of funds is Nara Avetisyan, who has been admitted to the Cleveland Institute of Music, to study with Prof. Sergei Babayan. She will receive \$4,000 annually from YerazArt’s Anais Afeyan Foundation, started by Noubar and Anna Afeyan.

The Executive Board of YerazArt includes Anna Afeyan, Nina Festekjian, Vahe Ghahraman, Avak Kahvejian, Sargis Karapetyan, Sylvie Zakarian Meguerditchian, Seza Seraderian, Apo Ashjian and Yeghishe Manucharyan.

For more information about the group, visit www.yerazart.org.

— Alin K. Gregorian



Clarinetist Tom Hill and Raffi Festekjian



From left, Michele Semourian, Julia Mirak Kew and Mary Ellen Margosian



Anna Afeyan, left, with Katrina Menzigian



Board Chair Nicole Hajjar speaks as Dr. Viken Babikian looks on.



From left, Nicole Hajjar, Boston Philharmonic associate principal cellist Velleda Mirangias, principal violist Lisa Suslowicz and Nina Festkjian



From left, Nicole Hajjar, Lisa Sedrakian and Katrina Menzigian



ARTS & LIVING

Singer Nerkararyan a Stranger in Paradise

By Tom Vartabedian

BILLERICA, Mass. — Growing up in the foothills of Armenia, with Ararat beckoning her call, Knarik Nerkararyan spent her younger days listening to the music of Lusine Zakaryan, hoping one day to emulate the talented soprano.

The diva's lyricism made such an imprint on the young teenager's life, hardly a day went by when she didn't persist in her dream.

"Keep in mind that it was the Communist era," recalled Nerkararyan. "No lights. No fuel. No freedom. There were no recordings of her to be found anywhere. Would I ever have the voice to follow her as a singer?"

Two years later, at Soorp Hovhaness Church in Yerevan, Zakaryan was performing solo when they were reunited, shortly before the singer's death.

"It was the last time I had any connection with her," added Nerkararyan. "Because of her voice and the way she could interpret Armenian spiritual music, it changed my life."

Nerkararyan held true her promise to become a star in a similar galaxy. She graduated with honors from Komitas Yerevan State Conservatory with a master's degree in vocal arts and classical singing.

In 2006, she received a scholarship to continue her studies in America. Two years later, she received another master's degree in vocal performance from Azusa Pacific University in California.

In 2007 and 2008, Nerkararyan was granted AGBU scholarships as a gifted young Armenian singer and wound up taking second place at the Los Angeles International Liszt Competition for Vocalists.

She has introduced audiences to Armenian

medieval spiritual music and performed lead roles in many prominent operas, including that of Mimi in Puccini's "La Boheme" only this year after winning the American Educators of Italian Origin United 41st Annual Opera Auditions. Also this year, she was applauded at an AGBU Performing Artists Concert at Carnegie Hall.

A most recent appearance found her singing the role of Tatiana in Tchaikovsky's "Eugene Onegin."

These days, she lives in Billerica and conducts the choir at St. Gregory Church in North Andover, where she arrived three months ago. Her voice fits the operatic mode and gives the congregation a reason to attend Holy Badarak.

"I want to break down the barriers that choirs are just for old people," she points out. "Hopefully, I can recruit some new voices and get younger singers involved."

Nerkararyan is combing the area in search of a teaching position at some school or conservatory. If concerts and recitals come her way, more power to the performer. She's prepared to take the quantum leap toward stardom.

The image of Zakaryan still persists but it shares the heart with Hasmig Hatsagortsyan, her voice teacher from Armenia and soloist with the Yerevan State Opera Company. As for another role model apart from her heritage, that would be Mirella Freni, an Italian soprano who sings an exquisite Mimi.

Knarik leaves the professional photography to her fiancé, Mardo Kevorkian, who operates a studio in Lexington.

"I find the Merrimack Valley to be most welcoming," she says. "The church has erased any strange feelings and opened doors to new relationships. My goal is to reach out to people with the power of music. It changes my mood and brings hope, faith and goodness to others."

Spicy Southwestern Tabbouleh

Christine Datian's Recipe Republished from *Cooking Light*

Inspired by friends who adore Mexican flavors, Christine Datian decided to reinvent traditional Middle Eastern tabbouleh with Southwestern spices. After substituting cilantro for parsley and adding peppers, cumin and chili powder, she knew she had a unique dish that was quick and easy to throw together. "If you're working, you can do a lot of prep before, when you do have time," she says. Datian recommends buying pre-chopped vegetables from the grocery store for a fast weeknight meal. If necessary, one can even soak the bulgur overnight.

Ingredients

Three-fourths cup uncooked bulgur
One-and-one-fourth cups boiling water
One-and-one-half teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
One cup chopped fresh cilantro
One cup vertically sliced red onion
Three-fourths cup diced, seeded tomato
Half a cup of sliced green onions
Half a cup of diced yellow bell pepper
Half a cup of chopped peeled avocado
One-fourth cup diced, seeded and peeled cucumber
One-fourth cup (one ounce) crumbled queso fresco
One-fourth cup extra-virgin olive oil
Two tablespoons fresh lemon juice
Two tablespoons fresh lime juice
Two teaspoons diced, seeded, jalapeño pepper
Three-fourths teaspoon dried oregano
Half a teaspoon salt



One-fourth teaspoon ground cumin
One-fourth teaspoon ground red pepper
One-fourth teaspoon paprika
One-fourth teaspoon chili powder
One-fourth teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
One-eighth teaspoon ground allspice
One garlic clove, minced
Dash of hot pepper sauce (such as Tabasco)

Preparation

Combine bulgur, one and one-fourth cups boiling water and one and one-half teaspoons oil in a medium bowl; cover and let stand 20 minutes. Drain bulgur through a fine sieve; place bulgur in a medium bowl. Add cilantro and remaining ingredients; toss well.

Books



Avik Deirmenjian during the signing

Poet Derimejian's Latest Effort Published In Both Armenian and English

ARLINGTON, Mass. — On Saturday, October 8, at the Armenian Cultural Foundation, the Armenian Independent Broadcasting of Boston presented the English and Armenian editions of the latest book by poet Avik Deirmenjian, *Gleam of Hope*.

Deirmenjian, who resides in Lexington, writes in Armenian; his poems express defiance, love of the homeland and longing for Ararat, as well as celebrating love, justice and faith. He is published in most Armenian newspapers in the diaspora, and lately, he has been gaining exposure in Armenia.

Garbis Zerdelian made the opening remarks. Master of ceremonies was Rouben Souranian. Tatoul Sonentz has translated the poems by Deirmenjian capably. Performing at the event were mezzo-soprano Victoria Avedisian, pianist Levon Hovsepian and Elizabeth Der Mesrobian.

At the end, a ceremony of *kinetson* or book-blessing ceremony took place and the author signed copies of his book for the public.

Dr. Sebouh Aslanian to Speak About his New Book at Fresno

FRESNO — Dr. Sebouh Aslanian will speak about his new book, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa*, at 7:30 p.m., on Friday, October 21, in the Grosse Industrial Technology Building, Room 101, on the Fresno State campus.

Aslanian's presentation is the second of the Fall 2011 Armenian Studies Program Lecture Series and is co-sponsored by the Department of History and the Armenian Students Organization at Fresno State.

Drawing on a rich trove of documents, including correspondence not seen for 300 years, Aslanian will explore the emergence and growth of a remarkable global trade network operated by Armenian silk merchants from a small outpost in the Persian Empire. Based in New Julfa, Isfahan, in what is now Iran, these merchants operated a network of commercial settlements that stretched from London and Amsterdam to Manila and Acapulco. The New Julfan Armenians were the only Eurasian community that were able to operate simultaneously and successfully in all the major empires of the early modern world — both land-based Asian empires and the emerging sea-borne empires — astonishingly without the benefits of an imperial network and state that accompanied and facilitated European mercantile expansion during the same period.

This book brings to light for the first time the trans-imperial cosmopolitan world of the New Julfans. Among other topics, it explores the effects of long-distance trade on the organization of community life, the ethos of trust and cooperation that existed among merchants and the importance of information networks and communication in the operation of early modern mercantile communities.

Aslanian received his PhD (with distinction) from Columbia University in 2007. He is the Richard Hovannisian Term Chair of Modern Armenian History (established by the Armenian



Dr. Sebouh Aslanian

Educational Fund) at the department of history at UCLA. He has taught at the department of History at CSULB as an assistant professor in the fall of 2010 after serving a year at Cornell University as a Mellon Foundation Postdoctoral fellow in world history.

Aslanian specializes in early modern world and Armenian history and is the author of numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals such as the *Journal of World History*, the *Journal of the Social and Economic History of the Orient*, the *Journal of Global History* and *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*. His book, titled *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa, Isfahan, 1605-1747*, was recently published by the University of California Press. It was selected by the Committee of the California World History Library as the first book to appear in their new series, "Author's Imprint," that celebrates and recognizes "exceptional scholarship by first-time authors."

Admission is free to the lecture.



ARTS & LIVING

ADAA Boston Film Festival to Take Place Nov. 12-13

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The fourth annual Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance (ADAA) Boston Armenian Film Festival will take place at the Fresh Pond Cinemas, on November 12-13. The event aims to provide a forum for the works of new Armenian filmmakers.

This year's line-up includes more than 10 films from around the world, beginning with an interesting new film by French-Armenian filmmaker, Serge Avedikian, called "Dogs of Istanbul," a follow-up to his short film last year, "Barking Island."

From fellow French-Armenian filmmaker Levon Minasian comes the award-winning short film, "The Piano," a charming look at a 13-year-old in Leninakan (Spitak) who longs to play a piano that doesn't fit in her tiny home.

Comes Chabazian, a filmmaker from Belgium, presents "Ici Bas" (Down Here), an abstract look at life in Armenia.

From South Africa, ADAA presents Shareen Anderson's "Charents: In Search Of My Armenian Poet." This full-length film explores the life and works of one of Armenia's best-loved poets, Eghishe Charents, through a literary travelogue from Armenia to the poet's birthplace in Kars, Turkey.

"Son of the Olive Merchant" is a charming film by Mathieu Zeitindjioglou, who travels to Turkey on his honeymoon with his Polish wife to confront Genocide denial.

The Film Festival Committee this year includes Roset Atinizian, Samuel Vartan and Alfred Demirjian. The films were curated by Janice Keuhnelian and Bianca Bagatourian.

The 2011 ADAA Film Festival is sponsored by Roy Shahan and John Vigen Der Manuelian, in memory of Manuel, Armenouhy, Armane (Aghababian), Takouhi (Chorbajian), Kenneth Shant Der Manuelian.

For more information on the festival, visit www.armeniandrama.org. For tickets, call the Fresh Pond Cinemas.

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CALIFORNIA

NOVEMBER 19 — The Armenian EyeCare Project will hold its ninth Annual Newport Gala, honoring Gov. George Deukmejian, on November 19, 6:30 p.m., at the Balboa Bay Club, Newport Beach. For info and reservations, call (949) 675-5611.

FLORIDA

The Armenian Cultural Association of America, Inc. presents: Armenian Heritage Cruise XV. Leaving January 21, 2012. 15th Anniversary Celebration. For more info, visit www.ArmenianHeritageCruise.com.

MASSACHUSETTS

OCTOBER 20 — The K. George and Carolann S. Najarian, MD Lecture on Human Rights. Endowed Public Program of Armenian Heritage Park. Faneuil Hall, Boston. 7 p.m. Keynote speaker, Paul Rusesabagina, human rights activist; US Presidential Medal of Freedom (2005); president and founder, The Hotel Rwanda Rusesabagina Foundation; author, An Ordinary Man, Penguin 2006. The Hotel Rwanda Rusesabagina Foundation was founded in 2006 by Rusesabagina, the real life hero of the acclaimed film "Hotel Rwanda." Portrayed by Don Cheadle in the film, Rusesabagina saved the lives of more than 1,200 people during the Rwandan genocide and has been honored internationally for his heroism. Charlie Clements, executive director, Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, Harvard Kennedy School of Government will introduce Rusesabagina.

OCTOBER 22 — Fall Harvest Bazaar, noon-8 p.m., First Armenian Church, 380 Concord Ave., Belmont. Great food, fun and the marketplace. Lamb, beef, chicken and losh kebab dinners grilled fresh all day with pilaf and salad, enjoy in our Fellowship Hall or packed for home. Yalanchi, cheese boreg and falafel. Home made manti, kufta, choreg, string cheese packaged for the freezer. Handmade pastries, dried fruits, nuts. Marketplace includes books, children's items, "attic treasures" and more. Handicamp ramp and MBTA train and bus line. For info, visit www.FACBelmont.org or (617) 484-4779. All welcome.

OCTOBER 27 — "A Journey to Historic Armenia," by Ed and Mary Ann Kazanjian. Andover Library Memorial Hall, 2 North Main St., Andover, 6:30 p.m. Admission free. Presented by the Merrimack Valley Lodge of the Knights of Vartan (www.knightsofvartan.org). Contact Vahan at kovlodge35@gmail.com.

NOVEMBER 4-5 — Annual Bazaar sponsored by Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe, 110 Main St., Haverhill, Friday, 12-8 p.m.; Saturday, 12-7 p.m. Armenian cuisine served all day. Pastry table, Country Store, Gift Basket Raffles and Raffles for cash and prizes. For more info, visit www.hyepointechurch.org or call (978) 372-9227.

NOVEMBER 6 — Preview of "Deported/ A Dream Play," a new play about the Armenian Genocide, with award-winning playwright Joyce Van Dyke, director Judy Braha and actors reading scenes from the play that premieres next March in Boston. Armenian Library and Museum of America, 65 Main St., Watertown, 3-5 p.m. Free and open to the public.

NOVEMBER 11 — The Knights of Vartan Ararat Lodge Number 1 annual ceremony at the Renaissance Waterfront Hotel on Long Wharf, Boston, Friday. Guest speaker, Primate of Artsakh, Archbishop Pargév Martirosian. Reception, 7 p.m.; dinner, 8 p.m. Man of the Year is Aurelian Mardiros, Community Leader Award to Registrar Rachel Kaprielian and the Faithful Knight Award to John Peterson.

NOVEMBER 12-13 — Save the date. ADAA Fourth Annual Boston Armenian Film Festival. Fresh Pond Cinemas, Cambridge. See www.armeniandrama.org.

NOVEMBER 17 — Party at the Other Park! Benefit for the Armenian Heritage Park Endowment. Fenway Park, Boston. Advance reservations only. For details and reply form, visit www.ArmenianHeritagePark.net.

NOVEMBER 19 — Holiday Kef, featuring Richard Hagopian, and his Kef Time Ensemble. Saturday, 8 p.m.-1 a.m. Adults, \$45, students, \$25. UMass Lowell Conference Center, 50 Warren St., Lowell, (978) 934-6920. Cash bar only. Mezza, coffee, dessert. For info, call Mike (978) 682-3946 or Richard (978) 374-0687.



On October 27, Ed and Mary Ann Kazanjian, pictured above, will give an illustrated presentation, titled "A Journey to Historic Armenia," at the Andover Library Memorial Hall, 2 North Main St., Andover, Mass. at 6:30 p.m., presented by the Merrimack Valley Lodge of the Knights of Vartan. Admission is free. For info, contact Vahan at kovlodge35@gmail.com.

FEBRUARY 11, 2012 — The Armenian Sisters' Academy 30th Anniversary Gala, Saturday, at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel, Boston. Additional details to follow.

NEW JERSEY

OCTOBER 21 — St. Leon Armenian Church & Tekeyan Cultural Association present A Photographic Journey Through Western Armenian and the Ararat 11 climb, 8 p.m. St. Leon Armenian Church Charles & Grace Pinajian Youth Center, 12-61 Saddle River Road, Fairlawn. For info, call Shoghig Chalian at (201) 803-0240.

NOVEMBER 13 — St. Stepanos Armenian Church Women's club invites you for an Armenian concert by the AREKAG Children's Choir, conducted by Vago John Ohanyan. Following church services, 1184 Ocean Ave., Elberon. Thanksgiving Lunch will be served. Tickets: \$30, adults; \$10, children, 10 and under. Call Linda Patruno (732) 449-5249, Norig Buchakjian (732) 929-0776.

NEW YORK

OCTOBER 22 — The Chelsea Room presents Hovnanian Alumni & Friends fall night out. Music by special DJ Finesse. 22 W 23rd St., New York City. For advance tickets, call Bernard Y (201) 741-9196 or Shant M (201) 362-6617. Proceeds will be donated to the Hovnanian School.

OCTOBER 28-30 — The annual symposium weekend of the Women's Guild Central Council. At the St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral Complex and Diocesan Center, New York City. For information, contact Rita Oscherician at (201) 398-0153 or margherita@optonline.net.

OCTOBER 30 — Shushi Armenian Dance Ensemble of St. Vartan Cathedral, New York City, presents Independence celebrating the 20th anniversary of Armenia's "Independence." Twentieth anniversary of Karabagh and 20th anniversary of the Shushi Armenian Dance Ensemble. 150 Performers. 5 p.m., Felician College, 262 Main St., Lodi. Donation: \$100, \$50, \$40, \$30 and \$25. For tickets, call Marie (201) 745-8850, Sossy (201) 779-9007, Diocese (212) 686-0710. Purchase tickets online at www.shushidance.org.

MAY 19, 2012 — HMADS Gala Dinner Dance. Details to follow, June 25. HMADS 30th Commencement Exercise at 8 p.m., Kalustyan Hall.

Alexanian Shows 'The Way' with Estevez, Sheen

THE WAY, from page 13

Malawi, Zambia, Namibia and ending in South Africa, covering virtually the whole African continent.

Following the completion of the \$5-million

production of "The Way," Alexanian again flew to South Africa and directed and produced a documentary film with the sons of the legendary singer Bob Marley, when they traveled across the country during the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The film depicted them

playing with local musicians and organizing a charity concert in Soweto which promoted Marley's legacy of African Unity. Titled "Marley Africa Roadtrip," a six-part series which was completed in August, the documentary will be aired in November.



COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Sarkozy's Visit to Armenia — A Message in Many Directions

By Edmond Y. Azadian

France's President Nicolas Sarkozy is a different kind of political animal, capable of any and every controversial political move. During his tenure as his country's interior minister, his harsh treatment of France's Muslim immigrant population was severely criticized, yet it helped to boost his popularity and catapult him to the office of president. Equally controversial was his policy of packing up the Roma people and shipping them to their countries of origin.

Less than a year ago, Mr. Sarkozy was offering warm accolades to Libya's Muammar Gaddafi and today he is on the forefront of the NATO bombing raids trying to unseat his erstwhile friend.

Last week he was on another mission to the Caucasus. He was on a whirlwind tour of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. His longest stay in the region was in Armenia, perhaps thanks to the diplomatic skills of Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian and Charles Aznavour, the latter accompanying him on the trip. That, in itself, was a message to the region.

We have to remember that following the war between Russia and Georgia, he was designated by the West to rush to Tbilisi in support of the Georgian position.

He also conducted shuttle diplomacy between Moscow and Tbilisi to salvage whatever was possible in that relationship.

Of course, Abkhazia and South Ossetia could not be reintegrated back into the Georgian territory, but the latter was solidly won for the West. Today, the West has a strong strategic position in the Caucasus thanks to Saakashvili.

Incidentally, Armenians have every reason to complain about the Georgian government's policy with regard to the minorities, but the West has touted it as a showcase of economic recovery for the rest of the region to emulate if they wish prosperity. And contrary to all adverse publicity, Mikheil Saakashvili has apparently stemmed corruption overnight.

All these developments set the stage for the upcoming changes in the Caucasus. Vladimir Putin's announced comeback in Russia, with its anticipated strong-handed tactics for tighter control of the region, make this spectacular visit to the region by a major world leader seem like a pre-emptive strike by the West in order to make inroads in the region.

The fact that Sarkozy spent more time in Armenia than in the other Caucasus countries was a message to half a million Armenian voters in France, who had been hurt more than once before by him. First, during his presidential campaign he had promised to appoint Patrick Devedjian the interior minister; instead, he named him the head of Sarkozy's conservative Union for a Popular Movement Party, a rather powerless post. The

other offense by Sarkozy was his direct intervention in order to stop in its tracks the Genocide Resolution, which was headed toward approval by the French Senate, after sailing through the parliament.

Now comes the bittersweet comeback when Sarkozy, standing in the heart of Yerevan, makes a spectacular statement about the Armenian Genocide, of course without any reference to his earlier position. Indeed a historic statement which is quoted below:

"Collective negation is a more serious problem than an individual problem, unless Turkey follows the example of other great nations in recognizing the Armenian Genocide. Before year's end, France will take serious steps, including the criminalization of Genocide denial."

He also evoked the historic ties between Armenians and France, which had lent a helping hand to the survivors after the Genocide. Of course it was not the opportune moment to remind him that France directly contributed to the slaughter and expulsion of the Armenians when it abandoned Cilicia, after drafting Armenians into the Armenian Legion to be used as canon fodder during World War I.

Sarkozy also reiterated his position regarding Turkey's plans to join the European Union:

"My position has not changed in this case and will not change. Situated in Asia Minor, Turkey has a great role to play for France and for the world. Turkey is a bridge between Europe and Asia. It has a great role but that role is not in the European Union."

He also made a reference to the intolerable policy of closed borders in the 21st century.

Ankara has been angered by Sarkozy's statements and has decided to lodge a protest through a special delegate. There is no word of severed diplomatic relations or canceling arms contracts, which have proven to be empty threats in the past.

Of course, more current issues on the table were lost in the media shuffle: the economic agreements, France's interest in rehabbing the atomic energy plants, the Karabagh issue and several others.

President Sarkozy certainly had his uphill re-election bid at home on his mind when he planned this trip to the region, with rising discontent about his economic policies.

By the same token, he has taken center stage in Europe, in cooperation with Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel, trying to help the economies of failing European countries.

Besides the euphoria he created in Armenia, Mr. Sarkozy's visit certainly helped President Sargsian's election plans. A very uncertain future reigns in Armenia regarding next year's parliamentary elections and 2014 presidential election.

Thus, President Sarkozy's tour of the Caucasus, other than being self-serving, sent many messages in many directions, of which Armenia will be one of the beneficiaries.

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Suppressing Kurdish Identity Has Failed: Turkey Must Take a New Approach

By Fazel Hawramy

In 1991, a 30-year-old woman was sworn in as a parliamentarian in Turkey's National Assembly. After reciting the oath of allegiance, she added a sentence in her own language. As a result, she was removed from the building, stripped of her parliamentary immunity and sentenced to 15 years in prison. Her name was Leyla Zana, Turkey's first Kurdish female member of parliament.

She served 10 years of her prison sentence and, last Saturday, Zana — now a diminutive 50-year-old woman — entered Turkey's grand national assembly as a Kurdish member of parliament again. During the time she was in prison, not much had changed for those trying to represent Kurds in Turkey. Even today, teaching of the Kurdish language in primary and secondary schools is not allowed.

In its second congress in Ankara last month, Zana's party — the Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) — produced an eight-point roadmap that centered around the democratic rights of Kurdish people, including the cultural, linguistic and civil and political rights that

the Kurdish population of Turkey need to become equal citizens of the state. The denial of Kurdish identity through assimilation and continued repression of successive Turkish governments lies at the heart of the Kurdish question, which has gone unresolved for more than 90 years.

In recent months, the Turkish prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has been given a hero's welcome in the Middle East for standing up for the rights of downtrodden Arab people and promoting Turkish democracy as a model for Arab societies.

Back home, the civil rights of 20 million Kurds in Turkey have been gradually eroded. The EU acknowledges this is "a serious cause for concern" in a country where more than 3,000 Kurdish activists are in detention. The EU has called on Turkey this week to bring its justice system into line with international standards and amend its anti-terrorism legislation.

On Tuesday, under the same anti-terrorism legislation, more than 120 members of the BDP, including the party's deputy leader, were arrested.

So sensitive is Turkey to anyone acknowledging the plight of the Kurds that the novelist and Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk was charged and tried for "public denigration of Turkish identity," after mentioning in a 2005 interview that

"30,000 Kurds and a million Armenians were killed in these lands and nobody but me dares to talk about it."

Challenging Turkey's approach to the Kurdish question and other human rights issues within the country is all but impossible. The International Press Institute has expressed "serious concern" at the continued imprisonment of at least 64 journalists and named Turkey as the country with the "highest number of journalists in prison in the world" — surpassing Iran and China.

In the west, coverage of the Kurds in Turkey is limited to the activities of the PKK — an organization that was set up in 1978 by a group of Kurdish and non-Kurdish university students who decided to take up arms and resist the assimilation policy of the Turkish state.

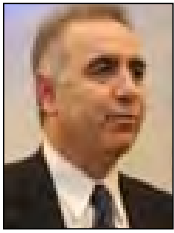
This conflict has continued for 27 years, costing the Turkish economy about \$300-\$400 billion. More than 30,000 Kurds have lost their lives and the economy of the Kurdish region in the South East of the country is in tatters, leaving thousands of Kurdish youth unemployed.

Many people in Turkey, who are tired of this futile war in the Kurdish region, hoped that the

continued on next page



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

President Sarkozy Says ‘Tseghasbanoutyoun,’ A Word Obama Has Yet to Utter

Flying to Armenia, French President Nicolas Sarkozy confided to his top aides last week: “I am going to toss a live grenade!” He was revealing his readiness to act firmly if Turkey continued to deny the Armenian Genocide.

Shortly after arriving in Yerevan, President Sarkozy courageously declared before journalists assembled at the Armenian Genocide Monument: “The Armenian Genocide is a historic reality that was recognized by France. Collective denial is even worse than individual denial.” When asked if France would adopt a law to prosecute those who deny the Genocide, the French president stated: “If Turkey revisited its history, faced its bright and dark sides, this recognition of the Genocide would be sufficient. But if Turkey will not do that, then without a doubt it would be necessary to go further.”

As presidential candidate in 2007, Sarkozy promised to support the Senate’s adoption of a law criminalizing denial of the Armenian Genocide. The French Parliament had already approved such a bill in 2006. Yet, despite his pledge, President Sarkozy’s ruling party blocked the bill’s adoption last May. While the French government banned

denial of the Holocaust in 1990, it did not take a similar action on the Armenian Genocide, even though France had recognized it in 2001.

French-Armenians were incensed by Sarkozy’s betrayal. Singer Charles Aznavour publicly warned him that he would lose the support of 500,000 French-Armenians in next year’s presidential elections. Last month, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) of France endorsed the probable presidential candidacy of Socialist Francois Hollande after he promised that his party, which had recently gained the majority of seats in the Senate, would vote for the bill banning denial of the Armenian Genocide. Hollande is currently far ahead of Sarkozy in opinion polls.

During his visit to Armenia last week, President Sarkozy conveyed several important messages: He reassured Armenians of his intent to keep his initial pledge on the Genocide denial bill; warned Turkey to stop denying the Armenian Genocide and indicated his clear sympathy for the Armenian position on Artsakh (Nagorno Karabagh).

The French president’s trip to the three Republics of the Caucasus was clearly lopsided in favor of Armenia — where he stayed overnight, while spending only three hours in Azerbaijan and Georgia. His brief stops in these two countries were simply an attempt to display a semblance of impartiality. Sarkozy’s first ever visit to Armenia was filled with festive events and dramatic gestures of friendship — planting a tree in memory of Armenian Genocide victims; laying a wreath at the Genocide Memorial, where he wrote in the Book of Remembrance — “France does not forget;” warning Turkey to acknowledge the Genocide by the year’s end; uttering the Armenian word “tseghasbanoutyoun” (genocide) which President Obama has declined to use; lighting a candle in Echmiadzin; rejecting Turkey’s membership in the European Union and opening the

Aznavour Museum overlooking Mt. Ararat and donating a priceless Rodin statue to the Republic of Armenia.

Finally, a world leader has dared to put Turkey’s bullying rulers in their place. Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu reacted angrily by telling the French president to confront his country’s colonial past and not to teach Turkey a history lesson. Azerbaijan’s President, Ilham Aliyev, gave a cold shoulder to the French leader during his visit to Baku. An aide to Aliyev declared that his country does not share Sarkozy’s views on the Armenian Genocide. Davutoglu’s condescending words against France could well incite the French Senate into adopting the new Genocide law.

French Armenians are now in a win-win situation. Both leading presidential candidates are committed to supporting not only the law criminalizing denial of the Armenian Genocide but also backing other pro-Armenian initiatives. No matter which one of the two candidates wins in next year’s French presidential elections, Armenians stand to gain!

However, given politicians’ long trail of broken promises, French-Armenians should not trust their word. They should make it clear to both candidates that Armenians would support whoever helps pass the genocide denial bill before next April’s presidential elections. It would be ideal if both candidates instructed their party’s Senators to vote for the bill now, leaving the French Armenian community with the pleasant dilemma of choosing between two supportive candidates in the presidential elections.

French-Armenians and American-Armenians may want to reverse the long-established but failed approach of supporting candidates first by trusting their promises, hoping that they would come through after the election. The new strategy should be: Once the president is elected and carries out his promises, only then the community would reward him with its support.

Turkey Must Take a New Approach

from previous page

result of this year’s general election for both the Kurdish BDP and Erdogan’s AKP would offer an opportunity to make serious progress towards solving the Kurdish question. But the refusal of Erdogan’s government to let the five Kurdish members of parliament imprisoned on trumped-up terrorism-related charges to take their seats in parliament was a serious setback.

In return, and under enormous pressure from the Kurdish electorate,

BDP was left with no option but to boycott the parliament. Not long afterwards, 13 Turkish soldiers were killed and seven wounded in a suspicious fire which was blamed on the PKK. The PKK, which is usually quick to take responsibility for the operations it carries out, denied any involvement but Turkish journalists who are scared of being thrown in prison for “treason” if they question the military version of events ignored the PKK denial and blamed it on the organization anyway.

Turkish bombs started raining down on Iraqi Kurdistan and in the Qandil mountains where the PKK fighters are based. Ironically, while Erdogan was demanding an official apology from Israel for the flotilla incident in 2010, in which nine Turkish citizens were killed, Turkish planes dropped a bomb inside Iraqi Kurdistan, hitting a car carrying seven civilians, in violation of international law. All the passengers, including four children under the age of 12, were burnt to death instantly. Amnesty International called on Turkey to investigate the killings, but, unsurprisingly, no investigation has been launched.

It should be clear to current Turkish leaders that the nine decades of militaristic policies in suppressing and denying Kurdish identity have failed. Turkey must realize that the Kurdish question requires a more nuanced approach. Leaders in Europe should put more pressure on Turkey to deal with the systemic discrimination that fuels Kurdish support for the PKK.

If negotiations between Kurdish parliamentarians and the Turkish government are to have a chance of success, the Turkish government and the PKK need to declare an immediate ceasefire. The AKP government should engage with the Kurdish political parties and the PKK’s current leadership in order to make progress towards solving the Kurdish question. Ending this conflict and affording equal rights to all its citizens should be a precondition for Turkey’s membership of the EU.

(This commentary originally appeared in the October 6 issue of the *Guardian*.)

Excessive Negativism and Constant Attacks Jeopardize Armenia’s Development

By Benon Sevan

It is truly disheartening to read the ongoing negative reports and columns in some news outlets in the diaspora and Armenia regarding the current political, economic and social conditions in the Republic of Armenia, as well as the constant efforts by certain personalities and political parties to denigrate the government of Armenia and its record.

Of all the hundreds of negative reports, is not there at least a single positive development to report on? Contrary to the ongoing politically motivated negativism, there are indeed many successes and improvements achieved in Armenia, which deserve to be congratulated and encouraged. One gets tired of reading what is being said by all these so-called pundits, rabble-rousers, including self-serving former government officials pursuing their own personal agenda to bring about a regime change not through the ballot box but through encouraging a mob culture. Unfortunately, what we have been witnessing is indeed tragic with the potential of dire consequences to the stability of the young Republic that recently celebrated its 20th anniversary.

No country has become democratic right away. It is categorically wrong and naive to measure democracy in Armenia, which gained its independence only 20 years ago, with the same measuring stick used for democracies in other countries, such as France, the United Kingdom and the United States, which took centuries to reach their current stage of democracy. I ask all those who have adopted a negative attitude to read history. It was not the Armenians who invented the guillotine; it was not the Armenians who hanged their opponents from the Tower of London; and it was not the Armenians who practiced slavery and/or segregation based on color or race. How long did it take for some of Europe’s democracies to give their women the right to vote?

In as much as one can understand the

impatience and frustration expressed with regard to the current situation in Armenia, we have no alternative but to be patient. One cannot simply bring about democracy through legislation alone; nor can it be imported or imposed through the barrel of the gun or by rousing the mob. We must fully bear in mind our history: over 70 years of communist rule, preceded by about two years of a most fragile independence and by over five centuries of Ottoman rule.

We simply cannot divorce ourselves from the burden and dire consequences of having lived under occupation for so many centuries. Regardless of our impatience and desire to witness a truly democratic state of Armenia, we have no alternative to being patient, because it takes time to develop democracy, economic and social development and civil society, as well as true democratic reforms. We need to develop, among other things, political maturity, change of mentality and outlook, which take time and cannot be achieved through legislation alone. Nor can they be achieved through the mob.

Undoubtedly, the Republic of Armenia, similar to many other countries, has its own share of serious difficulties, compounded by the current political and economic crisis and uncertainties worldwide and its geographical location in a rather dangerous neighborhood, blockaded by Turkey and Azerbaijan and with an ambiguous relationship with Georgia. Undoubtedly, there is much to be desired with regard to the prevalent political, economic and social conditions in Armenia. There are, among others, corrupt practices, inconsistencies in the application of the justice system, as well as poverty and unemployment that forces many Armenians to emigrate. Are these conditions unique only to Armenia? How about the current high unemployment figures and the deteriorating social conditions in some of the strongest democratic states as well as their financial difficulties requiring massive bail outs, and facing possible defaults?

It is long overdue for Mr. Levon Ter-Petrossian, the first president of the Republic of Armenia, to stop his corrosive

activities pursuing his personal agenda through endless rallies to bring about a regime change. He should look into the mirror and remember what went on during his own administration and should review his own record and legacy before throwing stones at others. Some of the current practices, which he has been so critical of, started during his own administration. Mr. Ter-Petrossian, if you want to become the next president of the Republic of Armenia, organize yourself peacefully and put your candidacy during the next election. Let the people decide who should be the president through their ballots. Stop your divisive and destructive actions, calling constantly for demonstrations, which might get out of hand with very serious consequences.

Irrespective of the negativism prevailing among certain circles, both within Armenia and the diaspora, Armenia has indeed a considerable number of talented and fully committed professionals, both within the government, the ministries and the private sector, as well as in different segments of the society. We should recognize and give credit where it is due for all the progress being made. We should all unite and spare no effort in supporting and encouraging them to speed up the development of democratic institutions, as well as strengthening the economy and raising the living standards.

In conclusion, I appeal to all political leaders, political pundits and the media, both in Armenia and the diaspora, to refrain from any action that may incite violence. I should also like to appeal to all my compatriots to concentrate their efforts and energies towards the strengthening of the young Republic. All Armenians should unite because we complement each other; our survival as Armenians is truly inter-dependent. The strengthening and the security as well as good governance, economic and social development of the Republic of Armenia should be the primary objective of all of us, above all other interests.

(Benon Sevan is the former under-secretary-general of the United Nations. He lives in Cyprus.)



France Urges Ankara to Admit Genocide During Visit to Armenia

SARKOZY, from page 1
Yerevan, Sarkozy stressed that Armenians and Azerbaijanis must continue their negotiations as part of the OSCE Minsk Group and that it is both nations that need peace.
Sarkozy also urged Armenia to continue its efforts on a rapprochement with Turkey that effectively ground to a halt last year, with both

sponding bill.
Sarkozy angered Turkey ahead of his election in 2007 by backing a law aimed at prosecuting those who refused to recognize the massacres as genocide.
The French lower house of parliament later rejected the measure, infuriating the French-Armenian community, estimated at around 500,000 people.

Furious Turkish Response

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu described the French president's comments as "political opportunism" aimed at gaining votes from French-Armenians at elections. "Unfortunately whenever there are elections in Europe, this type of opportunism arises," Davutoglu said.
He added France had no right to criticize Turkey because of the country's colonial past.
In 2004, then-President Jacques Chirac told Turkey it would have to recognize the mass killings as genocide if it wanted to become a member of the EU, insisting the French would otherwise vote Turkey out in a referendum.

Visit to Georgia

Seeking to portray himself as a peacemaker during the three-nation trip, Sarkozy – who brokered the deal to end the 2008 Georgia-Russia war – told thousands of cheering Georgians that Moscow was still intimidating its defeated neighbor.
"France sees Russia as its friend, as a strategic partner. But to restore confidence, threats, intimidation, threats and attempts to destabilize (the situation) are fully unacceptable," he told the receptive Freedom Square crowd.



President Nicolas Sarkozy planted a tree at the Armenian Genocide Memorial in Yerevan.

sides blaming each other for the failure. France was one of the states that supported the normalization effort.

The French president said that if Turkey did not make this "step towards reconciliation," he would consider proposing the adoption of a law criminalizing denial of the killings as genocide.

Still, Sarkozy noted that "it is not up to France to give an ultimatum to anyone."

"I do not mention any time limits because I hope that the Turkish society and leadership will respond appropriately. In any case, I think that all this will take place during my time in office," said Sarkozy, whose first term as French president expires in 2012.

France recognized the Armenians Genocide back in 1998 as its parliament passed a corre-



From left, Charles Aznavour, President Nicolas Sarkozy and President Serge Sargisian

Georgia accuses Russia of violating the peace agreement by not pulling its troops back to pre-war positions and "occupying" the rebel provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which Moscow recognized as independent states after the 2008 conflict.

In comments likely to irritate the Kremlin, which says its troops in the provinces are there to protect them from Georgia, Sarkozy said Russia must withdraw its forces and fulfill its "word and honor."

"Against all strategic logic and contrary to undertaken commitments, significant military forces are still stationed and were reinforced at your (Georgia's) door, on the other side of the dividing lines," he told the flag-waving crowd.

Using firm language that echoed the recent split with the Kremlin over action in Libya and Syria, Sarkozy said that Russia must stop the Soviet-era practice of bossing sovereign territories that once answered to Moscow.

"Everyone must admit that the Soviet Union does not exist anymore and that a policy of spheres of influence is not intended to succeed it," he said, adding that Georgia should be able to express its aspirations to join the EU and NATO.

(Reports from the Associated Press, Agence France Presse, *Globe and Mail*, Reuters and



President Nicolas Sarkozy was greeted by President Serge Sargisian upon his arrival in Armenia on October 7.

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President Nicolas Sarkozy, left, and President Serge Sargisian visited the Armenian Genocide Memorial in Yerevan