



Paul Rusesabagina receives a standing ovation.

Rusesabagina Brings Message of Justice to Heritage Park Audience from Rwanda

BOSTON – A large and diverse audience gathered at Faneuil Hall on Thursday, October 20, to hear Paul Rusesabagina, the Rwandan activist whose life story was dramatized in the award-winning movie, “Hotel Rwanda,” based on his autobiography, *An Ordinary Man*.

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

The lecture was the second K. George and Carolann S. Najarian MD Lecture on Human Rights, an endowed program of the Armenian Heritage Foundation, which is the sponsor of the city’s Armenian Heritage Park, currently under construction.

Charlie Clemens, the executive director of the Carr Center for Human Rights at Harvard Kennedy School of Government, praised Rusesabagina as the “hero of ‘Hotel Rwanda,’ not a label that he has chosen for himself.”

He also noted that Rusesabagina has fallen out of favor with the current regime and has incurred the president’s wrath, but is not letting either fact hinder his activism on behalf of the oppressed.

“He continues to do so at great risk to himself,” Clemens said.

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Quake Causes Cracks in Surb Khatch Dome

ISTANBUL (Anatolia and AFP) – The 10th-century Armenian Church of the Holy Cross (Surb Khatch) on Akhtamar Island in Lake Van has a crack in its dome as a result of the magnitude 7.2 earthquake that struck there last week.

Officials said their initial observations show that there is no other serious damage to the church but they are waiting for the aftershocks to end before evaluating the whole structure of the church.

The Armenian Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross occupies a special place in medieval Armenian art and architecture. In September 2010, 95 years after religious services ended, the church was reopened as a museum and operated by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Religious service is allowed only once a year at the church.

Meanwhile, the death toll has reached 600.

With temperatures dipping to below freezing the biggest problem now facing survivors in Van province was a lack of tents and heaters, media reports said.

Health officials in Ercis, which bore the brunt of the 7.2-magnitude quake, warned survivors against drinking tap water due to fears the supply had been contaminated with sewage, the Anatolia news agency reported.

Many survivors were still camped out in tents or makeshift shelters, fearing further building collapses with rain and snow adding to their misery.

Some whose homes were damaged had tried to find new accommodation only to discover that unscrupulous landlords had hiked rents.

More than 4,150 people were injured in the quake that shook Van province near the Iranian border on October 23, the government’s emergency unit said in a statement on its website.

The toll on Sunday rose to 601 from an earlier figure of 596, it said.

Search and rescue work ended on Saturday in Van city centre, but emergency crews continued working at two locations in Ercis, officials said.

Yerevan Mayor Confirms Resignation

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Yerevan Mayor Karen Karapetian confirmed on Friday reports that he has decided to resign after less than one year in office.

He attributed the unexpected decision to “personal reasons” and his “transfer to another work.”

“I took the decision with great difficulty and am stating with all responsibility that there is no subtext of political or intra-governmental disagreements as is claimed by some,” said Karapetian.

“At the same time I feel sorry for unfilled tasks and obligations as well as those



Karen Karapetian

Armenia Sends Aid for Turk Quake Survivors

ISTANBUL (*Today’s Zaman*) – Armenia has sent a plane carrying goods to Turkey to help with the aftermath of the Van quake last week.

Gagik Kostandyan, an official from Armenia, said at Erzerum’s airport, where the aid plane had landed on Friday afternoon, that President Serge Sargsian had called President Abdullah Gül and expressed Armenia’s readiness to send aid.

Kostandyan said the Armenian government had sent 111 tents, 4,345 blankets, 36 beds and 474 sleeping bags.

The Armenian official said Turkey did not accept food aid but asked for tents, recalling that Armenia had also sent aid to Turkey after the 1999 earthquake but that this was the first time that Armenians had come to Turkey with aid. “We are ready to offer every kind of support if needed. We would like the two countries to enjoy good relations. This is a humanitarian aid. We are two neighboring countries,” Kostandyan stressed.

Knesset Speaker Working to Boost Genocide Recognition

TEL AVIV, Israel (*Haaretz*) – Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin said Monday that he wanted to convene an annual parliamentary session of the full Knesset to mark the Armenian Genocide at the hands of the Turks. “It is my duty as a Jew and Israeli to recognize the tragedies of other peoples,” Rivlin said, speaking to an Israeli-based Armenian action committee.

Rivlin added, “Diplomatic considerations, important as they may be, do not allow us to deny the disaster experienced by another people.”

In recent years the Prime Minister’s Office and the Foreign Ministry have applied heavy pressure to head off such sessions of the Knesset out of concern that relations between Israel and Turkey would be harmed.

Since 2008, the full Knesset has allowed the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee to hold sessions that have been closed to the media about the Armenian Genocide. Last week, for the first time, the full Knesset approved the convening of an open, public session on the issue by the Education, Culture and Sports Committee, at the request of Meretz Knesset member Zahava Gal-On. This represents a complete change in approach on the issue.

In October 2008, in an unprecedented move, the Knesset voted to have a parliamentary committee convene on the Armenian Genocide at the initiative of then-Meretz Chairman Haim Oron, paving the way for the sessions in the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. Over the past two years, however, after relations between Israel and Turkey deteriorated, the Foreign Ministry’s opposition to the issue abated, though Rivlin’s latest move was at his own initiative.

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Zarakolu among Dozens Arrested On Charges of Aiding Kurd Rebels

ANKARA (Associated Press) – A Turkish court on Tuesday pressed separatism charges against 23 suspects, including a university professor and a publisher, on suspicion of membership in a separatist Kurdish rebel group, state-run television reported.

The court in Istanbul said the suspects included Prof. Busra Ersanli and Ragip Zarakolu, founder of Belge Publishing, according to the state-run TRT channel. They were among about 50 suspects detained over the weekend in a crackdown on the autonomy-seeking Kurdistan Workers’ Party or PKK.

Zarakolu’s publishing house has published several books on the Armenian Genocide in Turkey, at great risk to himself.

Ersanli, a member of the Peace and Democracy Party’s (BDP) Party Council and

Constitutional Commission, Zarakolu and 48 others were interrogated by a prosecutor. The prosecutor referred 47 of them to court late on Monday, requesting their arrest.

The KCK is accused of attempting to establish an alternative governing system and terrorizing locals in the country’s predominantly Kurdish areas. Most of the accused face charges of membership in and/or aiding and abetting a terrorist group.

Ninety-six people were arrested as part of another operation against the KCK in Istanbul earlier this month.

A group of Turkish academics launched a petition campaign to protest the detention of Ersanli and to call for her release. A joint statement by the group said the detention of Ersanli, who has for years been working for sustainable peace and a new constitution in Turkey, led to outrage among all circles in the country that believe in the democratic state of law.

“The detention of Prof. Büsra Ersanli is a heavy blow dealt to Turkey’s efforts towards a real democracy with equality, peace, social justice and academic and political freedoms. We demand the immediate release of Prof. Büsra Ersanli and all other jailed politicians, academics and journalists who work for peace, democratic rights and freedoms in our country,” the statement said in part.

(*Today’s Zaman* contributed to this report.)



Ragip Zarakolu



ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Armenia Honors Birth of (Possible) 7 Billionth Child

ARTIK, Armenia (RFE/RL) – A baby boy born into the Voskanian family, at 12:20 a.m. on Monday, was declared by Armenia's office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to be the 7 billionth living person on Earth.

The United Nations has apparently decided to allow every country to pick its own honoree.

The baby in Artik, who was named Vahram, was born two weeks prematurely. He weighs 2.9 kilograms (or about six pounds and six ounces) and is now under the supervision of local doctors. Vahram's parents are residents of the nearby village of Pemzashen.

His father, Garik Voskanian, was not in town to celebrate the occasion with his family. Like many in this economically-depressed area he had gone to Russia as a migrant worker. His close relatives say, however, he will come back soon to see his son.

The UN office undertook to provide Vahram with all essential items in the postnatal period, while the maternity hospital in Artik issued a special certificate to him and the town's mayor gave him a letter of gratitude.

The maternal hospital in Artik was chosen for the symbolic celebration as an establishment that by its level of equipment and the number of recorded births yields to other similar centers in Armenia. The UN office on Monday donated a mobile echoscope to the center.

Karekin II, Heffern Discuss Karabagh Settlement

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II met with the new US ambassador to Armenia, John Heffern.

At the meeting, the catholicos called the Heffern's attention to the Organization for the Security and Cooperation of Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group and their work toward the preservation of peace and stability in the region.

Karekin II briefed the ambassador on the activities of the Armenian Church and its role in the establishment of regional peace.

The ambassador then thanked the catholicos for a warm welcome and congratulated him on his 60th birthday.

Govt. Vows Heavier Tax Burden on Rich

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The Armenian government will primarily target large companies and wealthy citizens in its drive to improve tax collection next year, Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian announced on Sunday.

"We have come up with a package [of legal amendments] whose goal is to collect more taxes from high earners," Sargsian said, referring to a bill finally approved by his cabinet last week.

The bill, which has still not been made public, reportedly contains a long list of draft amendments to Armenian laws regulating taxation. The government says they are essential for ensuring a more than 13-percent increase in tax revenues predicted by its draft budget for next year.

Sargsian said more than a dozen of the proposed changes would simplify taxation for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). "That means our intent is to ease the tax burden on small and medium-sized business and shift that burden to sectors where there are high earnings," he said.

The premier has repeatedly identified big business in the past as a key source of widespread tax evasion in the country. Some of those companies enjoy a de facto monopoly on imports of basic goods and other lucrative activities.

Samvel Avagian, an independent economist, warned that they are in a position to respond to a heavier tax burden with price hikes. "The more taxes you collect from them, the more they charge consumers by exploiting their dominant positions," he said.

Armenian Police Chief Sacked

By Ruzanna Stepanian, Irina Hovhannisyan

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Lt-Gen. Alik Sargsian, the chief of the Armenian police, was unexpectedly sacked without an official explanation on Tuesday amid reports that President Serge Sargsian is planning major personnel changes in the state apparatus.

Sargsian was quick to replace him with Deputy Defense Minister Vladimir Gasparian.

A statement by the presidential press office gave no reason for the dismissal. It said Sargsian would now serve as an adviser to the head of state. The Armenian president also did not explain motives behind the sacking as he introduced Gasparian to senior police officials later in the day.

"I believe that today, the police of the Republic of Armenia need a leader like Vladimir Gasparian and I am convinced that he will accomplish tasks set before him with honor," he said. "I am convinced that our people will feel more protected and that reforms in the police will continue."

"This is a very normal development," Alik Sargsian said by phone before that meeting. "Nothing is eternal and I will continue to serve the country, the country's leader and our people till the end. Nothing will change in my life."

That Alik Sargsian was set to be sacked was first reported by Armenian media late on Monday.

The police general said he was informed about President Sargsian's

decision only the next morning. "I see nothing strange in this fact," he claimed.

Alik Sargsian, who took over the national police service in 2008, insisted that he was fired not because of his track record. "My indicators are very good," he said. "The situation with crime is under control and public order is maintained."

Asked why he was relieved of his duties, the 54-year-old said, "It's up to the president to decide."

Gasparian, the new police chief, headed the Armenian military police for more than a decade before being appointed deputy defense minister last year. A native of Soviet Estonia, he served in the police in the early and mid-1990s.

Addressing the senior police staff in his new capacity, Gasparian, 53, pledged to uphold "the supremacy of the law" during his tenure. "It's time to move from words to action," he said. "I think that we will bring ongoing reforms in the police to their logical conclusion in a very short period of time."

Neither Alik Sargsian nor Gasparian gave details of those reforms.

Meanwhile, representatives of Armenia's leading opposition forces suggested political reasons for Gasparian's appointment and other high-level personnel changes in the government which a leader of the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) said are possible in the coming weeks and possibly days.

Aram Manukian of the Armenian

National Congress (HAK) portrayed Alik Sargsian's removal as a sign of government turmoil. "They themselves don't understand what they are doing," he said. "Alik Sargsian doesn't know why he was sacked. Nobody in the Republican Party knows why [Yerevan Mayor] Karen Karapetian was sacked."

"All decisions are made by one person and that person is confused," Manukian said.

According to Armen Martirosian, a leader of the opposition Zharangutyun (Heritage) party, President Sargsian is keen to install in key government positions more loyal individuals who will help the HHK win the May 2012 parliamentary elections at any cost.

"I have no doubts that this is connected with the forthcoming elections," said Martirosian. "The authorities do not enjoy the people's trust and so they will try to reproduce themselves in less than legitimate ways."

But HHK spokesman Eduard Sharmazanov denied any connection with the elections. "The state system is a live organism and one should not be surprised with such developments," he said.

Sharmazanov also dismissed suggestions that Serge Sargsian is getting rid of individuals that could back his predecessor Robert Kocharian should the latter decide to return to the political arena.

Some media outlets claimed on Tuesday that one such individual, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Local Government Armen Gevorgian, will also lose his job. A spokeswoman for Gevorgian's ministry denied those claims, however.

'Brain Drain' in the South Caucasus: A Deadly Cycle

YEREVAN (Hetq) – According to an article in this week's The Financial regarding emigration trends in the South Caucasus, 64 percent of Armenians would leave Armenia for a certain period, while fewer Azerbaijanis, 52 percent, and Georgians, 47 percent, would do the same.

The article focuses on the phenomenon called the "Brain Drain" – when the more skilled people emigrate to a more advanced country.

Muhammad Asali, ISET professor, PhD, Columbia University, 2008, believes that it really does hurt local economies.

"Not only is this a harmful phenomenon, but it is also self-sustained; the vicious circle goes as follows: skilled workers emigrate because there are no good opportunities for them in the country of origin: no job offers, low wages, high unemployment, job possibilities not matching their skills and abilities. Once they leave, however, all these problems become worse – because the potential driving force of development (skilled and educated workers) are not there anymore, infrastructure and opportunities deteriorate

– rendering additional waves of out migration," added Asali.

The data, compiled by the Caucasus Barometer (compiled by The Caucasus Research Resource Centers) CRRC also shows that Armenians are more willing to permanently leave their country – 29 percent, than the Azerbaijanis, 17 percent, and Georgians 7 percent.

Ethnic Armenians within Georgia alone are also more likely to permanently emigrate from the country than the other internal ethnic groups. Forty-two percent of the ethnic Armenian population in Georgia reported desire to leave Georgia forever compared to 7 percent of ethnic Azerbaijanis and 6

percent of ethnic Georgians within the country.

Additionally, there is a pattern in which people who have traveled abroad are more inclined to emigrate in all three countries. Nearly eight-in-10 Azerbaijanis, 78 percent who have once traveled abroad, would temporarily leave the country followed by 71 percent who traveled abroad twice or more, and 48 percent for those who have never traveled abroad. Similarly, 71 percent Armenians who have been abroad at least once are more interested in temporary migration than their compatriots who have never traveled, 48 percent, outside Armenia.

Yerevan Mayor Confirms Resignation

RESIGNATION, from page 1 expectations and programs which the country's supreme leadership and the public had in connection with my tenure," he added.

According to some newspaper reports, Karapetian, who previously managed Armenia's national gas distribution company, received a lucrative job offer from Gazprom or another Russian energy conglomerate.

In a separate interview with the Armnews TV channel, Karapetian confirmed that he is likely to work in Russia but did not elaborate.

Announcing the mayor's impending resignation on Thursday, the Armenian press also speculated that President Serge Sargsian is unhappy with Karapetian's controversial policies that have sparked angry demonstrations by street traders and kiosk owners in the capital.

Another theory suggested by commentators is that Sargsian regards Karapetian as a potential backer of his predecessor Robert Kocharian who is allegedly keen to resume political activities and challenge the current president.

Karapetian insisted, however, that he has enjoyed "unlimited" support from the president throughout his short tenure. He also dismissed as "absurd" media claims about his uneasy rapport with the presidential administration.

Under Armenian law, Yerevan mayors are chosen by a municipal assembly elected through universal suffrage. Sargsian's Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) holds the majority of seats in the Council of Elders.

Derenik Dumanian, the leader of the HHK faction in the council, claimed earlier on Friday to be unaware of the mayor's resignation plans.

"Under the law on Yerevan, if the mayor wants to step down he has to appeal to the Council of Elders and the council will then make a decision," Dumanian said. "The faction and the council have received no official application to that effect as yet."

One of Karapetian's likely successors is Deputy Mayor Taron Markarian. His late father, Andranik Markarian, served as Armenia's prime minister from 2000-2008.

Correction

A story in last week's edition of the *Mirror-Spectator* incorrectly gave the name of the pope who had used the phrase "Medz Yeghern" to refer to the Armenian Genocide. The cleric in question was Pope John Paul II.

Also, a caption for a photo from the Diocese-sponsored pilgrimage in last week's edition, left out the name of Kevork Atinizian.

We regret the errors.



ARMENIA

ATP Starts Fall Tree Planting Season with Partners Engaged In Corporate Citizenship and Community Building

YEREVAN — Armenia Tree Project (ATP) started its fall planting season partnering with Synopsys Armenia, a world leader in software and IP used in the design, verification and manufacture of electronic components and systems. ATP staff joined approximately 600 employees of Synopsys Armenia CJSC, their families and students to plant more than 600 thuya (arborvitae) evergreen trees in the area surrounding the European Regional Educational Academy and the Chess Academy of Armenia.

“Armenia Tree Project has been planting trees with Synopsys for almost seven years now. We started our partnership in 2005 and annual tree planting events became a unique tradition of the two organizations,” said Arthur Harutyunyan, manager of ATP’s Community Tree Planting (CTP) program.

The arborvitae trees were grown in ATP’s nurseries in the refugee villages of Karin and Khachpar. Before the ceremonial event, the planting plots were prepared by ATP, and the trees will be constantly monitored to ensure the highest possible survival rate.

“As a global company, Synopsys recognizes the responsibilities that US businesses have abroad. We were humbled to be among the 12 companies selected by the US Department of State for our corporate citizenship, innovation and exemplary business practices in Armenia. We continue to partner with and give back to the local community by voluntarily planting

trees in Yerevan and contributing to the prosperity of Armenia,” stated Chi-Foon Chan, Synopsys president and chief operating officer.

tions.”

“Synopsys employees view tree planting as a way to give back to our community by reducing



Community Tree Planting Program Manager Arthur Harutyunyan distributing ATP trees to Synopsys President Chi-Foon Chan, CEO Rich Goldman and hundreds of company staff and their families for planting at the European Regional Educational Academy and Chess Academy of Armenia



ATP started its fall tree planting season with partners engaged in corporate citizenship and community building including Synopsys Armenia and KPMG, with public tree-planting events at the European Regional Educational Academy, the Chess Academy of Armenia (pictured here) and a women’s support center in Musaler.

“On behalf of ATP, I sincerely thank Dr. Chi-Foon Chan and the employees of Synopsys for their remarkable leadership in demonstrating corporate social responsibility in Armenia. As part of our ongoing collaboration, more than 600 participants planted trees and greenery at the Chess Academy, honoring Armenia as 2011 World Chess Champions,” said Jeff Masarjian, ATP executive director. “In addition, we planted trees together at the European Academy to mark its 10 year anniversary. I cannot think of a more fitting tribute to these institu-

air pollution and helping to renew Yerevan’s commitment to a healthy environment,” said Rich Goldman, Synopsys Armenia CEO. “It’s heartening to see our employees plant trees with their families. It helps cultivate a lasting culture of taking care of the environment in which we live and work.”

ATP and Synopsys have planted thousands of trees in the different communities of Yerevan, including Viasphere Technopark, Victory Park, Tsitsernakaberd Park, on a hillside of Nor Nork district, near the Holy Trinity Church in the Malatia Sebastia community, and along one of the main routes leading to the Genocide Museum and in the public park next to the Pyunic Association for the Disabled.

In November, ATP is partnering with KPMG, a network of member firms offering audit, tax and advisory services, to plant 300 trees and shrubs in Musaler. The site is a shelter and support center for abused women operated by the Paros Lighthouse Charitable Foundation in Ptghunq Village.

Tax Breaks Planned for Armenian Church

By Sargis Harutyunyan

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — In a further boost to the Armenian Apostolic Church, Armenia is poised to introduce major tax breaks for hundreds of worship sites and other properties belonging to the ancient institution.

The Armenian parliament approved this week in the first reading a set of government-drafted legal amendments that would exempt them from property and land taxes.

The exemptions will apply to a list of 286 specific properties drawn up by the government. It includes not only churches and religious seminaries but also other residential buildings, charity institutions, shops and even a football stadium.

The National Assembly passed the amendments despite serious misgivings voiced by some of its members. They questioned the wisdom of extending tax breaks to non-religious sites owned by the church’s Mother See in Echmiadzin and dioceses in Armenia.

Fr. Vahram Melikian, the chief Mother See spokesman, defended the measure. “After all, those structures cater for our people,” he said. “The Church is not a private entrepreneur. The Church is a social struc-

“There is nothing inappropriate about exempting the church from property taxes because I think that in return the church brings quite a lot of other, non-material benefits to the Armenian people.”

ture that has existed for centuries and naturally has certain properties, churches, shrines, infrastructures used for those shrines.”

“There is nothing inappropriate about exempting the church from property taxes because I think that in return the church brings quite a lot of other, non-material benefits to the Armenian people. It serves only the interests and the well-being of the people,” said Melikian.

The cleric also argued that despite legal requirements the Armenian authorities have not actually collected property and land taxes from the Apostolic Church since the Soviet collapse. “It is simply important to formalize this so that there are no problems in the future,” he said.

The Apostolic Church, which has made Armenia the first country in the world to adopt Christianity as a state religion in 301, is the oldest institution uniting Armenians scattered around the world. More than 90 percent of them are believed to nominally belong to it.

While stipulating the separation of religion from the state, the Armenian constitution guarantees a privileged legal status for the church in view of its “exceptional mission in the spiritual life of the Armenian people” and the “maintenance of their national identity.”

Successive Armenian governments have sought to uphold that status by trying to limit the spread of non-traditional religious organizations in the country. The current government drafted controversial amendments to an Armenian law on religion for that purpose in 2009. They would make it a crime for such groups to proselytize on adherents of the Apostolic Church.

Could a Forest Be Worth More than a Gold Mine?

By David Braun

YEREVAN (*National Geographic Daily News*) — As Armenia was celebrating twenty years of independence in September, local and international experts came together to discuss youth, maturity, and transitions at the TEDx Yerevan event on September 24, 2011.

The twenty speakers came from diverse backgrounds, including a former U.S. ambassador, a correspondent for Bloomberg and ABC News, renowned artists, photographers, and intellectuals.

Among them was Jason Sohigian, Deputy Director of the Armenia Tree Project (ATP). National Geographic NewsWatch profiled ATP in 2010.

Sohigian’s presentation raised the question “could a forest be worth more than a gold mine,” which was intended to stir some controversy because the country’s economy is heavily dependent on extractive industries like copper and gold mining.

According to recent valuation estimates, the answer may be yes. Sohigian focused on forests and didn’t go into specifics for mining, presumably because of the emphasis on short ten minute talks for the TEDx format, but his point came through and got a few of the invitation-only guests asking for more information.

Forest cover in Armenia has declined from 25 percent at the turn of the 20th century to less than 8 percent today based on satellite data, and the country’s Red Book of Endangered Plants and Animals is two volumes and more than 950 pages long, noted Sohigian. In addition, the South Caucasus region is one of the world’s most endangered “hotspots for biodiversity,” which makes the region worthy of such global attention.

This issue is of particular importance because of the vast range of values a forest can provide to this small landlocked country. Here, forests provide building material, food products, firewood, scenic beauty, protection of topsoil, and habitat for plants and other wildlife including the endangered Caucasian Leopard.

Furthermore, Armenia relies on hydropower for more than a third of its energy, and Sohigian pointed out that a nation’s strategic water resources can be protected by improved forest management strategies.

While forests are still often undervalued and overexploited, Sohigian emphasized, the concept of sustainability has evolved and gained momentum in the business community. *Harvard Business Review* summarized these developments on three fronts: “First, ‘prices’ are now being calculated for many things that had been considered priceless; second, capital is flowing into companies known to manage those

costs well; and third, indices are being established that allow disparate contributors in a supply chain to converge on sustainability standards.”

As prices are now being calculated for things formerly considered priceless, UNEP’s program on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, or TEEB, recently estimated that temperate forest have a range of values between U.S.\$30 and \$5,000 per hectare per year. This estimate would make Armenia’s forests worth between \$7 million and more than \$1 billion per year.

If the value of Armenia’s forests could be worth more than \$1 billion a year, is this worth protecting? Sohigian ended his presentation with a call to “redefine our economic systems” to do three things: understand the true value of “natural capital” and forests; understand our relationship with nature, at both the individual and at the economic level; and finally, save money by investing in natural like forests, especially in places like Armenia where it can be critically endangered.

He quoted from the environmental advocate Robert F. Kennedy Jr.: It’s really a matter of thinking in the long-term about our national wealth, rather than of treating the earth and its resources as if it’s “a business in liquidation.”

Keywords: <http://newswatch.nationalgeographic.com/tag/armenia/>



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Exhibition of Armenian Artists in Germany

HALLE, Germany (Armenpress) – An exhibition of works by 11 Armenian modern artists opened October 20 in Talstrasse Gallery.

The press service of the Armenian Foreign Affairs Ministry said that Armenian Ambassador to Germany Armen Martirosyan and head of the Culture Ministry's department Sona Harutyunyan welcomed the participants of the opening ceremony. Harutyunyan read the welcoming speech of Armenian Culture Minister Hasmik Poghosyan. Manager of the exhibition Seda Shekoyan spoke about the presented works and their authors. The exhibition will be open until December 4.

Turkey Fears Volcano Eruption

BITLIS, Turkey (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Turkish seismologists fear that the earthquakes that hit the province of Van on October 23 can cause eruption of Nemrut volcano located northwards of Lake Van.

Mt. Nemrut is near Tatvan, a small town in the eastern Anatolian province of Bitlis. The mountain rises from the southwestern shore of Lake Van and enters the district of Ahlat to the north.

More than 1,000 people are feared killed in the earthquake.

Another magnitude 6.1 earthquake, which was the second to rock the country in the past 24 hours, was registered about 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the city of Van at the depth of some 10 kilometers (6.2 miles).

'Grandma's Tattoos' World Tour Continues But not in Armenia Yet

STOCKHOLM, Sweden (Panorama) – The launch of the film "Grandma's Tattoos" by Suzanne Khardalian, a Swedish-based director of Armenian descent, took place here nearly a month ago. The film deals with the cruel fate Armenian women experienced during the Genocide where they were forced to wear tattoos on their bodies. Through her personal story, the director tackles this difficult subject.

Khardalian told Ermenihaber.am, "The film's tour continues. We have already received invitations to participate in various festivals. The United States shows a particular interest in the film. 'Grandma's Tattoos' will be screened in a range of cities in the US from mid-November to mid-December," the director said.

According to her, the film will also be screened in Swedish schools, as part of the UN anti-racism projects.

It remains unknown when the film will screen in Armenia since Khardalian said she has not yet received an official invitation from Armenia.

Moscow Warns of Retaliatory Measures on NATO Missile Defense

MOSCOW (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Moscow reiterated its warning on Tuesday, November 1 that it would take "retaliatory measures" if the United States and NATO continue to ignore its position on a missile defense system in Europe.

"We are ready to continue the missile defense dialogue with the United States and NATO," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in an interview with Serbian newspaper, Vecernje Novosti.

"However, if our partners continue to ignore our position, we will have to ensure our own security interests using other methods."

"Forced retaliatory military-technical measures may be needed," Lavrov said.

Moscow was not pleased with US plans to deploy missile defense elements in Europe.

Russia proposed a joint missile defense system, an idea that many experts both at home and abroad dismiss as unviable and unrealistic.

AGBU Helps Organize 'Buenos Aires Celebrates Armenia' Festival

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina – On Sunday, October 9, more than 15,000 people strolled along Avenida de Mayo for the "Buenos Aires Celebrates Armenia" Festival. Attendees explored the festival booths that sold handmade crafts, books, music and Armenian food for the all-day event – the latest by Buenos Aires devoted to the numerous nationalities that call Argentina home.

Dedicated to the centenary of AGBU's Buenos Aires Chapter and the 20th anniversary of the Republic of Armenia, the Armenian festival was officially organized by the Cultural Ministry and the General Executive Committee for Inter-Organizational Relations of the Buenos Aires Municipality, in partnership with AGBU.

As one of the highlights of the day, the Diaspora Ministry of the Republic of Armenia, the embassy of the Republic of Armenia in Argentina and the Cultural Ministry of the Buenos Aires Municipality sponsored a concert by composer Ará Gevorgyan and his ensemble.

Festival celebrations kicked off with performances by local rock groups Sin Clase and Los Armenios and the popular band Nor Arax. Local dance troupes



Lori Antounian, Davit Gevorgyan (center background) and Ara Gevorgyan take their bows during the daylong Armenian festival in Buenos Aires.

the AGBU Marie Manoogian Educational Institute carried the flags of Argentina, Armenia, AGBU and the city of Buenos Aires onto the stage. The Argentinean national anthem was played by the symphony orchestra under the direction of Valle, while the Armenian anthem was performed by soprano Alla Avetissian and pianist

ambassador to Argentina; Archbishop Kissag Mouradian, Primate of the Diocese of Argentina and Chile of the Armenian Apostolic Church; Hernán Lombardi, cultural minister of the Buenos Aires Municipality; Claudio Avruj, general director of the general executive committee of the Committee for Inter-Organizational Relations; benefactor Shahé Khatchadourian, one of the founders and principal supporters of Kohar Ensemble; Sevag Seropian and thousands of Armenians and non-Armenians, for whom the entire festival, and the concert of Ara Gevorgyan and his musicians, was an unforgettable experience.

Once the headliner, Gevorgyan, took the stage, the audience was enthralled by the musician as he performed together with the symphony orchestra, which was led by young Armenian-Canadian conductor Lori Antounian, who had flown in for the occasion. A number of dance ensembles captivated the audience as they interpreted Gevorgyan's compositions with grace and vitality. The participating dance troupes were the Kaiané of the Armenian-Argentine Cultural Association, Masis, sponsored by the Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Nairi of the Armenian Relief Society and Narek of the Armenian Catholic Church, which performed on a three-level stage outfitted with two large screens.

The following guest artists also contributed their talents: Gagik Gasparyan (duduk and other wind instruments, musical director); Prof. Alicia Antreassian, director in charge of the dance ensembles; soprano Alla Avetissian; conductor Santiago Chotsourian; violinists Aída Simonian and Rubén Hovsepian and bandoneón player Adolfo Gómez.



Nairi Dance Ensemble's performance during the "Buenos Aires Celebrates Armenia" Festival

took part in the program and presented a myriad of folk dances for the audience. Before the headliners began, the local Aida Victoria Mastrazzi School of Folk Dance performed for an audience of nearly 8,000 people. The folk dance show was followed by the performance of the Municipality's Symphony Orchestra, which played the tango and other compositions under the direction of Lito Valle.

To mark the beginning of the main portion of the program, students from

Santiago Chotsourian.

AGBU Buenos Aires Honorary Chairman Vahram Hairabedian and AGBU Central Board of Directors member and Buenos Aires Executive Committee Chairman Rubén Kechichian invited the mayor of Buenos Aires, Mauricio Macri, to the stage and thanked him for his support of the city's Armenian community with a small token of appreciation.

Other guests in attendance were Vladimir Karmirshalyan, Armenia's

AGBU Melbourne's Annual Camping Trip Attracts Old and Young

MELBOURNE, Australia – From September 23-25, the AGBU Melbourne Chapter ran a weekend camping trip at Don Bosco Camp in Safety Beach. This year's event was the 10th annual camping trip organized by the AGBU Melbourne and the second year at the Don Bosco Camp. More than 20 families took part in the trip.

The annual camping trip weekend serves as a key tool in teaching children, as well as adults, about teamwork, community spirit and discipline. Committee members, along with volunteer parents, worked together to run the kitchen and prepare meals for everyone in attendance. The camping trip coordinators included Berdj Tchakerian, Hovig Chahinian and Hovnan Torosoglu.



Children participating in one of the many team sports and games held throughout the AGBU Melbourne camping weekend

Community News

Pallone Emcees Celebration of 20th Anniversary Of Armenian Independence

WASHINGTON — The Congressional Armenia Issues Caucus Tuesday joined the Armenian Embassy and Armenian-American groups in honoring the 20th Anniversary of Armenia's Independence. Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr., co-chairman of the Caucus, emceed the event and honored the progress the Republic of Armenia has made towards democracy over the past 20 years. Pallone stressed the need for continued US support of Armenia in the form of foreign assistance and the need for the House passage of the Armenian Genocide Resolution.

"The people of Armenia continue to suffer under the difficult circumstances of a devastating dual blockade of Turkey and Azerbaijan, illegal action that costs Armenia approximately \$720 million annually," said Pallone. "As a result it remains vitally important that the United States play a strong role in helping Armenia meet the challenges it faces."

The event also honored Medal of Mkhitar Gosh awardees Representatives Howard Berman and Adam Schiff, who were recognized for their work as champions of the Republic of Armenia.

Pallone said that the caucus has been helpful to Armenians in the years since independence but wants to do more.

"Armenia still needs significant help developing its infrastructure. Funding provided by the Millennium Challenge Corporation has been successful and made a difference with irrigation projects for example," Pallone added. "We want the Millennium Challenge to renew its commitment to Armenia so that vital funding will continue well into the future."

St. Gregory the Enlightener Celebrates 40th Anniversary

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. — On Sunday, December 4, St. Gregory the Enlightener Armenian Church will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the founding of its Sunday and Armenian Schools. Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian will preside over a celebratory banquet in Tutak Hall. The program will include performances by both Sunday and Armenian School children, a video presentation on the 40 years of activities, congratulatory messages from the Primate and the Catholics of All Armenians and a few brief addresses.

In the morning, Gizirian will celebrate Divine Liturgy and will ordain three young men to minor orders. They are: Paul Derderian and Arsen Yeleghian as sub-deacons and Andrew Kayaian as thir. The choir, under the direction of Deacon Mirijohn Givlekian, will sing the Badarak, with John Wolohojian at the organ.

The pastor, Fr. Karekin Kasparian, and his intern assistant, Father Arakel, will assist the archbishop.

On Sunday, November 6, the congregation will see the video footage of the Diocesan Youth Pilgrimage to Jerusalem and hear additional comments by Prof. Abraham Terian, who is on a brief visit to St. Nersess Seminary.

On November 27, the Culture Committee will have its Annual Book and Gift Sale following services.



At the start of the walkathon at Glendale Memorial Hospital and Health Center, the ribbon is cut by a leukemia survivor, standing next to ABMDR President Dr. Frieda Jordan.

Walk of Life 2011 Rallies Broad Community Support In Fresno and Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES — For the first time, the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR) held a Walk of Life event in Fresno, in addition to its annual walkathon here. Walk of Life 2011 took place on October 15 and 22 in Fresno and Glendale, respectively. Both events received extensive media coverage.

In an interview with "We Are Fresno," co-host Stephanie Booroojian (seen on NBC Fresno affiliate KSEE 24), ABMDR President Dr. Frieda Jordan commented on the significance of the registry's first-ever Fresno walkathon. "I think it's extremely important for Fresno's community at large to be aware of the registry's work," she said.

"Fresno is among areas in California which may face higher-than-normal health risks due to industrial pollution, particularly in terms of the use of pesticides," Jordan continued. "These risk factors can be responsible for a prevalence of life-threatening diseases such as leukemia, which has already claimed the lives of many Armenians in Fresno. By registering as potential bone marrow stem cell donors, our supporters can actually save the life of a fellow Armenian who might need a bone marrow transplant."

Walk of Life 2011 kicked off on the morning of October 15 at Fresno's Eaton Plaza Amphitheater, as teams of supporters from various local organizations gath-



A scene from the walkathon in Los Angeles

ered to take part in the event. The teams represented the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Fresno Chapter (led by chairperson Zaroohi Der Mugrdchian), the Armenian National Committee (ANC) of Fresno (led by Chairperson Hygo Ohanessian), the Armenian Relief Society (ARS) Fresno Mayr Chapter (led by Chairperson Angele Ohanessian), the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) Fresno Kevork Chavoush Chapter (led by Chairperson Rita Costanian) and

see WALK-A-THON, page 7

Creating New Families And Leaders at Assembly Program

WASHINGTON — The age-old question "so how did you two meet?" is typically what everyone wants to know as they look upon a happy couple in love. The answer often leads to the most captivating stories, and no matter what stage in life, the audience wants to know what circumstances brought these two people together.

For Leslie Azarian and Alex Karapetian, the opportunity arose on a warm sunny day in Washington, DC, on June 5, 2002. The cherry blossom trees around the tidal basin and Lincoln Memorial lived up to their reputation and there was a buzz of excitement in the air. The Armenian Assembly of America's annual Thomas-Terjelian Summer Internship Program was set to begin. Over 20 young Armenian-Americans from all over the world would embark on a journey that, for these two in particular, would be life changing.

Karapetian of Easton, Penn., and Azarian of Old Tappan, NJ, had just finished their sophomore years in college and were thrilled to be Assembly interns for the summer. Azarian, who attended George Washington University in Washington, DC, was ecstatic to spend the summer living in Georgetown and intern on the Hill for New Jersey Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr.

Karapetian, who hailed from Lafayette College, could not wait to take part in the political process and meet fellow



Alex Karapetian and Leslie Azarian with Armenian Caucus Co-chair Frank Pallone, Jr. (center) in 2002

Armenians his age. He interned for his congressman, Patrick Toomey, who is now the US senator from Pennsylvania.

The Armenian Assembly of America was not something new to Karapetian and Azarian. Karapetian's family, the Acopians, have been longtime supporters of the Assembly. Following the devastating earthquake in 1988, the late Sarkis Acopian and his wife Bobbye donated over \$1 million toward the Assembly's earthquake relief efforts. That following year, Sarkis Acopian led an Assembly delegation to Armenia aboard his private aircraft to discuss earthquake rehabilitation efforts and continued to financially support the organization throughout his lifetime.

Azarian's maternal grandparents, Sam and Barbara Hagopian of Sugar Land, Texas, have also been longtime supporters and activists of the Assembly. They were fellow trustees of the organization and Sam Hagopian was on the Board of Directors. He was also the first-ever Regional Council chair for the Southwest. Both the Hagopians and the Acopians were among the first participants of the Assembly's Mission Trip to Armenia in 1991.

see INTERNS, page 8



COMMUNITY NEWS

A Worthy Tribute

GLENDAL, Calif. — The one-year anniversary of the passing of Harout Yeretdzian was commemorated by a concert on Sunday, October 16, at the First Baptist Church.

Yeretdzian was a longtime member of both Tekeyan Cultural Association's Board of Directors and Tekeyan Cultural Association's Los Angeles Chapter. He was also a longtime member of the Executive Committee of the Armenian General Benevolent Union's Ardavazt Theater Group in Pasadena.

Yeretdzian will also be remembered for his bold act of launching *Abril* monthly magazine in April 1977. This one-of-a-kind literary and cultural magazine evolved into a tri-monthly magazine, but it was unfortunately discontinued in December 1984, due to huge financial strains. Many notable figures in the Armenian political and cultural arenas had been subjects in this once sought-after magazine.

By Kevork Keushkerian

Yeretdzian's Abril Bookstore had become a modern version of the Vernadoon, where Armenian intellectuals regularly met and discussed current affairs that concerned the homeland and the diaspora.

Yeretdzian was also instrumental in opening up his bookstore to serve as a forum for promoting young writers to present their poems, short stories and essays. Seasoned writers would also present their newly published books, creating an environment conducive to literary growth.

The tribute-concert was appropriately titled "Homage to Giants." Participating in the concert were acclaimed professionals from the community: Vatche Mankerian on the piano and the Lark Musical Society's Chamber Choir, conducted by Vatsche Barsoumian.

The invocation was conducted by Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, assisted by Very Rev. Baret Yeretdzian and Archpriest Manoug Markarian.

Yeretdzian's son, Arno Yeretdzian, made the opening remarks. He characterized his father with three distinctive features: his everlasting smile, his addiction to cigarettes and his passion for classical music. He then walked the audience through the memories, recalling fun moments with his father's best friends and colleagues.

The first part of the program was dedicated to classical music. Award-winning pianist Mankerian rendered musical selections from Yeretdzian's favorite composers: Frederic Chopin's *Fantaisie-Improvisation* and *Necturne*, Johann Sebastian Bach's *Chaconne*, Arno Babajanian's *Ellegie in Memory of Aram Khatchaturian* and Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Prelude*.

The second part of the program presented solo and choral works, with Barsoumian conducting and Victoria Simonian accompanying on the piano. Soprano Alenoush Yeghnazar's selection was *Raise Your Voice, O Crane* and tenor Raffi Kerbabian's selection was *You are a Poplar*, both from Komitas.

The Lark Chamber Choir's selections were more elaborate. They presented *Three Autumn Songs* from Tigran Mansourian's *Ars Poetica*, three songs from Komitas, including his *Lullaby*, and Johann Sebastian Bach's *Ruht Wohl* (Rest in Peace) from *St. John Passion*.

Arno Yeretdzian then thanked all the artists for their excellent performances and promised to commemorate the anniversary every year with an artistic program.

This was a worthy tribute indeed for a person who had dedicated his life for the advancement of the Armenian art and culture in this far away land, where material wealth is unfortunately more of a priority among our compatriots.

Holy Ascension Church Celebrates 80th Anniversary

TRUMBULL, Conn. — On Sunday, October 23, the Armenian Church of the Holy Ascension here capped a year-long series of successful events marking the 80th anniversary of its consecration with an Episcopal Divine Liturgy followed by a gala banquet with 150 parishioners and friends in attendance. Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian, one of the most senior princes of the Armenian Church, celebrated mass assisted by Archpriests Rev. Untzag Nalbandian, longtime Trumbull pastor, and Rev. Karekin Kasparian, the four-decade-long spiritual leader of neighboring St. Gregory the Enlightener Church of White Plains, NY. During the appropriate part of Badarak, Gizirian ordained altar server Garo Kalfayan as sub-deacon. On Saturday, Kalfayan's ordination as clerk (thir) took place in the church sanctuary followed by a reception in its Agahagian-Sherinian Hall. The newly-ordained is the son of one of Holy Ascension's former pastors, Rev. Guregh Kalfayan and Yeretdzgin Shake, both of blessed memory. His three siblings were all present to witness this occasion.

The banquet was held at the Race Brook Country Club in Orange. Linda McGann, coor-



Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian ordains Garo Kalfayan.

in pictures, at the people and events that have shaped the mission of this small but vibrant parish. The presentation was produced and narrated by Dottie Bengoian.

Nalbandian, who will be celebrating his 28th year as the parish priest in January 2012, performed two selections at the piano after which he presented the annual Holy Ascension Awards for 2011 to three couples who exemplify "responding to the call" of the church through their time, talent and treasures: Elisa and Paul Marotollo, Adrienne and Alexander Ziemkiewicz and Scott and Lauren Paklaian. Linda McGann reviewed the five major religious, educational and social events of this milestone year and thanked all her committee members. Nalbandian thanked the three members of the 80th Anniversary Fund-Raising Committee, Dr. Robert Badrigian, Heather Tarpinian and Edward Gulbenkian, who were charged to raise \$80,000 relative to this special anniversary year. He proudly announced that the goal has been met and the final figure is nearly \$100,000. Nalbandian thanked all prior and present generations for their beneficence through the years.

Gifts of appreciation were presented to: 100-year-old George Krikorian, who was present at the consecration on Sunday, June 14, 1931; Mortgage Burning Committee Chair Edward Jevarjian, one of the senior members of the parish, and to the other members of the committee; Ray Bagdasarian, who has brought the community into the 21st Century with his supervision of all on-line news and communiques as well as several other deserving members.

Gizirian's poignant message and benediction concluded the gratifying day. A colorful commemorative book containing 100 pages of pictures and names chronicling the rich history of



Fr. Untzag Nalbandian

dinator of the 80th anniversary events, and her committee members greeted the guests upon their arrival. After a cocktail hour and Gizirian's invocation, Diocesan Delegate Deacon Thomas Dabakian offered a toast to the past and the confident future of the parish which has been serving Armenian-Americans in southern Connecticut since the 1920s. After Parish Council Chairman Dr. Robert Badrigian's words of welcome and before the dinner, the microphone was turned over to the emcee of the day, Ani Nalbandian. Presently a working professional in the Washington, DC, Nalbandian was born and raised in Trumbull and clearly represents the younger generation upon which the church will grow. Her impressive "lay-ministry" resume includes, but is not limited to, organist, Junior Choir Leadership Program graduate and volunteer teacher at the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem's St. Tarkmanchatz School.

The afternoon's program moved briskly and smoothly, highlighted by a historic, 80-year look

OBITUARY

Awadis Bamoukian

BELMONT, Mass. — Awadis Bamoukian, 85, died on October 26, when he was on a visit to the US. He succumbed to injuries he suffered during a house fire.

He was the husband of the late Zewart (Ekmekjian) Bamoukian. He is survived by children, Arpi Boynerian and her husband Rev. Avedis Boynerian of Belmont, Ani Salbashian and her husband Dikran of Jordan and Sona Kazenji and her husband Simon of Dubai. He also leaves grandchildren Mgo and Aren Salbashian, Antranig and Arek Boynerian and Arev and Moses Kazenji and siblings Hagop and Zabel Pamboukian.

Funeral services were held at the Armenian Memorial Church, 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown on Wednesday, November 2.

Expressions of sympathy may be made in his memory to the Armenian Memorial Church.



Awadis Bamoukian

Donation

Mr. and Mrs. Kevork Tutundjian of Toronto, Canada, encouraged by the quality of journalism of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, have donated \$100 to the newspaper.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Walk of Life 2011 Rallies Broad Community Support in Fresno and LA

WALK-A-THON, from page 5

the Fresno State Armenian Students Association (led by Vartush Mesropyan).

Following Jordan's welcome remarks and the invocation by Fr. Vahan Gosdanian of the Western Prelacy, the participants walked to the historic Statue of David of Sassoon at the Courthouse Park and on to the landmark Saroyan Theater. Subsequently they returned to the Eaton Plaza Amphitheater to enjoy a day-long celebration featuring music and food. Participants also had the opportunity to join the ranks of ABMDR by inquiring at information and recruitment booths set up throughout the venue.

"What a profoundly rewarding experience this has been," said Dr. Karoline Rostamiani of the ABMDR Board of Advisors, who co-chaired the Fresno and Los Angeles events with fellow Board member Dr. Stella Baghdasarian.

Baghdasarian expressed her "profound admiration for all those who participated in the walkathon, particularly youth groups."

Los Angeles: Powerful Expression of Solidarity

A week later, on the morning of October 22, the Armenian community of Los Angeles in turn rallied in support of Walk of Life 2011. Hundreds gathered outside Glendale Memorial Hospital and Health Center, where the event's opening ceremony was held.

Dignitaries included US Rep. Adam Schiff, California state Sen. Carol Liu, Glendale Mayor Laura Friedman, Burbank Mayor Jess Talamantes, Glendale Unified School District Board of Education President Greg Krikorian and Glendale Community Development Department Director Hassan Haghani.

After she thanked the walkathon's two main corporate sponsors, Glendale Memorial

Hospital and Health Center (an ABMDR Partner for Life) and Karoun Dairies, Inc., Jordan also acknowledged the many teams participating in the event, particularly youth teams from area universities, Armenian schools, Glendale Unified District schools and various community organizations.

Next to take the podium was Schiff, who stated, "You can imagine the trauma of a family whose child's life depends on a bone marrow transplant. The Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry brings hope to such families, by matching potential stem cell donors to patients suffering from life-threatening diseases."

Friedman, a cancer survivor, praised the work of the registry and thanked all participants for their unflinching support of its mission.

The walk started following the invocation, which was delivered jointly by Fr. Vazken Atmajian of the Western Prelacy, Fr. Hovhannes Maroukian of the Western Diocese and Rev. Joseph Matossian of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America.

Passing through central Glendale, the almost four-mile walkathon concluded in Verdugo Park, where the success of the event was celebrated well into the afternoon in a festive community atmosphere featuring food, live music as well as several donor-recruitment and health-information booths.

Following congratulatory remarks delivered



A US Army Armenian veteran (left) walks next to the father of a patient.

by Liu, who is a longtime advocate of breast-cancer awareness, Rostamiani thanked all participating schools and Armenian Student Associations for their involvement. She also conveyed special gratitude to the US Army Armenian Veterans for taking part in the walkathon.

In addition to Liu, dignitaries attending the festivities included Grigor Hovhannisyan, consul general of Armenia in Los Angeles.

The registry received a Certificate of Achievement from the office of Mike Gatto, a

member of the California State Assembly who represents the 43rd District.

Commenting on the growing Armenian-youth presence within the ranks of ABMDR, Dr. Vergine Madelian, the registry's outreach officer, stated, "Over two-thirds of our donors are below 35 years old and 27 percent are under 25. The younger the donors, the longer they stay active in the registry and the higher their chances of matching a patient somewhere down the line. This is youth power in the best possible sense."

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honoring

Man of the Year - Aurelian Mardiros
Community Leader - Rachel Kaprielian, Registrar
Faithful Knight - John Peterson

with guest speaker

Archbishop Pargev Martirosian
Primate of the Diocese of Artsakh

on the evening of

Friday, November 11, 2011

at the Renaissance Boston Waterfront Hotel
606 Congress Street, Boston, MA

with performances by

Victoria Avetisyan, mezzo-soprano
Yeghishe Manucharyan, tenor
and DJ Chris Habibian

Reception at 7 o'clock
Dinner at 8 o'clock

Tickets - \$125 per person
Black tie optional

Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance

2011 ADAA BOSTON ARMENIAN FILM FESTIVAL NOV. 12-13

SATURDAY

12:00 King of the World by Stephane Kazandjian - Mocumentary about fictional business tycoon Michel Ganiant. He has the power, he has the money, he has the woman. And now he has a film crew on his back

2:00 Charents: In Search Of My Armenian Poet by Shareen Anderson - 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

4:00 Ici Bas (Down Here) by Comes Chabazian - Abstract realist look at life in Armenia: Loss of family space, workspace, urban space and memory space

5:00 The Piano by Levon Minasian - A look at a 13 year old in Gyumri who longs to play a piano that doesn't fit in her tiny home

6:00 Histoire de Chiens (Dogs' Story) by Serge Avedikian- A follow up to his short film last year, **Barking Island**, which will follow the above

SUNDAY

12:00 Keepers of Memory by Eric Kabera - Personal accounts of survivors of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, watching over the sacred burial sites, keeping memories alive

1:00 Un Juillet a Leditap by Khajag Soudjian - Portrait of an Armenian village that still suffers from the breakup of the USSR. A French relief group visits for several weeks, enthusiastically renovates buildings and organizes activities

2:30 Here by Braden King - Chronicles a brief but intense relationship between an American satellite-mapping engineer and an expatriate photographer who impulsively decide to travel across Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh together

5:00 Son of the Olive Merchant by Mathieu Zeitindjioglou. A road film through Turkey on the filmmakers honeymoon where he confronts genocide denial

This festival is sponsored by Roy Shahan and John Vigen Der Manuelian, in Loving Memory of Manuel, Armenouby, Armane (Aghababian), Takoubi (Chorbajian), Kenneth Shant Der Manuelian

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Creating New Families and Leaders at Assembly Program

INTERNS, from page 5

Further, Azarian's uncle, Sam Hagopian Jr., was part of the first Assembly internship program in 1977. Her cousin, Raffi Manoukian, was an intern in 1996 and was later the internship program manager. Her younger brothers, Michael and Adam Azarian, were also summer interns in 2006 and 2008, respectively.

Due to their family's involvement and encouragement, both Karapetian and Acopian applied to the internship program and were accepted. "Leslie was the first person I met on the program. She was my next door neighbor and we became friends instantly," said Karapetian. "Quickly we developed a nightly after-work ritual," Azarian chimed in, "where we would sit on our shared patio overlooking the Potomac River and discuss the day's

events while listening to our favorite music." It was the beginning of a relationship that would grow between these two over the next few years despite traveling abroad, remaining college years, starting off careers and living in different cities.

Both often reflect on the Armenian Assembly program, which exceeded their expectations in a number of ways. Each has cherished the excitement and stimulation of living and working in the nation's capital. For Azarian, she found great value in her experience, despite being a former marketing student and pursuing a career in the financial industry where she is currently a Director of Operations at Morgan Stanley: "Seeing firsthand how our government works is knowledge you'll always take with you, on whatever path you choose. I immensely enjoyed corresponding with constituents, attending briefings on behalf of the Congressman, working on projects with the legislative assistants, and learning what legislation the Congressman was supporting."

For Karapetian, the program provided even more career opportunities, as he was offered the assistant grassroots director position with the Assembly during his senior year of college: "I still keep in close contact with members of my internship class and fellow alumni. Without my summer internship experience, none of this would be possible." Although Karapetian left the Assembly to join his family at Acopian Technical Co., he still lends his support as the current Pennsylvania Armenian-American Action Committee (ARAMAC) state chair and helps organize Young Professionals events in New York.

Despite differences in their experiences, both agree it was also an amazing opportunity to learn more about their Armenian culture and heritage. "The Assembly organized a number of educational and social events outside of the workday to engage the interns in current affairs. We even took a field trip to the future Genocide Museum and met with various US ranking officials who supported the organization," Karapetian commented. "We both

credit the Assembly internship program as a game-changing experience and we are forever grateful for the experiences we've had, as well as our family's encouragement to participate in the program," Azarian added.

To show their appreciation, these former interns, who are set to marry on November 19 in Manhattan, have decided to donate to the Assembly's Terjman-Thomas Internship program on behalf of all of their guests. They believe this is

a fitting tribute to a program that will celebrate 35 years of service to the Armenian American community in 2012.

"I wish other Diasporan Armenians could have the wonderful experience Leslie and I did in Washington, both professionally and socially." "The Assembly not only helped pave my career path, but I found the love of my life. Not too bad for an eight-week program," added Karapetian with a smile.

Zohrab Center Organizing Armenian Youth Scholars Conference

NEW YORK— The Zohrab Center is currently organizing an Armenian Youth Scholars Conference and invites all undergraduates and/or recent graduates to present a paper related to Armenian Studies, including but not limited to the fields of history, literature, economics, art and religion.

The day-long conference, which is planned for Saturday January 21, 2012 and will take place in the Diocesan Complex, will also feature the participation and attendance of established scholars and academics.

To be considered as a presenter, e-mail a proposal and abstract to Taleen Babayan at zohrabcenter@gmail.com no later than December 15. The participants and program will be finalized by the end of December.

Armenian Professional Society Announces Five Scholarship Recipients

GLENDAL — On November 5, at the Armenian Professional Society (APS) Professional of the Year Banquet event, the scholarship chair, Dr. Seta Khajarian, will present the awards to the five 2011 scholarship recipients.

The APS scholarships are open to students who have been accepted or enrolled in a graduate school in the United States. Selection is based on financial need, scholastic achievements, faculty recommendations and involvement in the community.

Numerous applications were received but five applicants demonstrated excellence in the applicable areas noted above. As such, this year's scholarship recipients are: Nelli Martirosyan, Ara Rostomian, Sharlene Gozalians, Hovhannes Kulhandjian and Armen Derian.

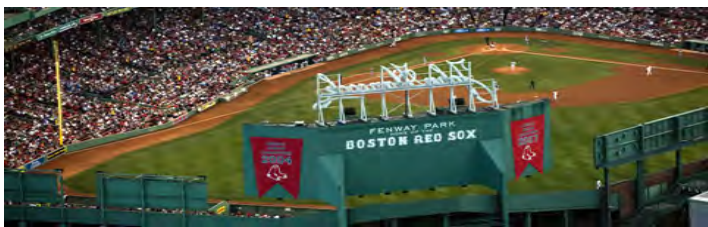
Martirosyan, of Glendale, Calif., is enrolled in a doctoral program in education and informational studies at UCLA. She has extensive local and worldwide volunteer service including NGOs.

Rostomian, of Glendale, attends UCLA Medical School, pursuing a medical degree. He has high scholastic achievements, impressive letters of recommendation from scholars in the field and is involved in community service.

Gozalians, of Glendale, Calif., attends Loma Linda University, working towards a doctoral degree in public health. She has an extensive portfolio in service and research and involved in community service.

Kulhandjian, of Williamsville, NY, attends the State University of New York at Buffalo, working towards a doctoral degree in electrical engineering. He has high merits coupled with community involvement, especially through church.

Derian, of Mission Hills, Calif., attends UCLA Medical School in pursuit of a medical degree. He has received numerous prestigious honors due to his scholastic achievements and is involved in community service.



Party at the Other Park!

Benefit for the Armenian Heritage Park Endowment



Thursday, November 17, 2011
7:30 - 9:30pm

Fenway Park

State Street Pavilion
Boston, Massachusetts

Armenian Heritage Park in Lights
John Baboian Quartet
Informal Sports Talk with Bob Lobel
Open Bar & Hors d'oeuvres

Tour of Fenway Park at 7pm for Party Supporters of \$1,000 and above
Brief Program: Extending Thanks to former Transportation Secretary Jeff Mullan
Casual Business Attire
Lots of Fun!

RSVP by November 12, 2011
Advance Reservations required.
For a Reply Form, please e-mail
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Funds raised support the Endowment for Armenian Heritage Park under construction on the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway, Boston. The Park commemorates lives lost during the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923 and all genocides, and celebrates the immigrant experience and contributions made to American life and culture.
www.ArmenianHeritagePark.net



ON
DECEMBER 13
**Vote For
Jon Hecht**

Representative Hecht Launches Campaign for Senate Seat

Representative Jonathan Hecht, a friend of the Armenian community of Massachusetts and sponsor of the Armenian Genocide Commemorations in the State House, announced his candidacy for the Senate seat of Senator Steven Tolman, who has resigned.



The 2nd Suffolk and Middlesex Senate district in Massachusetts includes **Watertown, Belmont and parts of Cambridge, Allston-Brighton, the Fenway and the Back Bay.**

For more information contact State Representative Jon Hecht at

electhecht@gmail.com
617.320.8905

Armenia Fund USA



Thursday, Thanksgiving Day, November 24, 2011

U.S. EASTERN REGION :: CHANNEL GUIDE

State / Station	Cable Channels	Satellite Channels	Time
MICHIGAN WMYD TV 20	Charter Communications Ch. 10, 20 Comcast Cable Ch. 3, 20, 235 Brighthouse Networks Ch. 6, 206 Wide Open West — Detroit Ch. 20, 206	DirectTV Ch. 887/20 Echo Star Ch. 8034/20	12PM–6PM
MASSACHUSETTS WBIN-TV	Comcast Cable Ch. 18, 25, 79 Charter Communications Ch. 26 Verizon FiOS Ch. 6 RCN Ch. 18	DirectTV Ch. 50 DISH Ch. 50	12PM–4PM
NEW YORK WMBC 63	Verizon FiOS Ch. 18 RCN Ch. 19 Cablevision Ch. 20 Time Warner Cable Ch. 10, 18, 21 or 63	DirectTV Ch. 63/895 EchoStar Ch. 63/8115	12PM–6PM
NEW JERSEY WMBC 63	Verizon FiOS Ch. 18 Cablevision Ch. 20 Comcast Cable Ch. 17, 19, 20, 23, 24, 32, 63 Time Warner Cable Ch. 21 or 63 US Cable of Paramus Ch. 10 Service Electric Ch. 18	DirectTV Ch. 63/895 EchoStar Ch. 63/8115	12PM–6PM
EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA WMBC 63	Blue Ridge Cable TV Ch. 18		12PM–6PM

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New York, NY 10038

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Email: info@armeniafundusa.org

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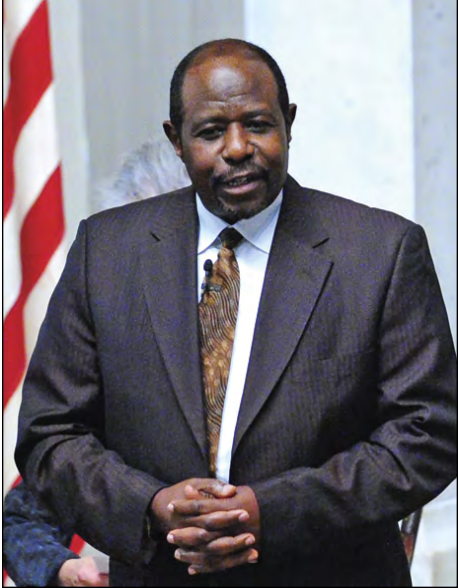
COMMUNITY NEWS

Rusesabagina Brings Message of Justice

LECTURE, from page 1

Rusesabagina, when he took the stage after thunderous applause and a standing ovation, appeared comfortable and conversational. His hosts' story was not lost on him and he started by putting the events in Rwanda in context. He said, "We are gathered here to remember a sad story about a genocide — the Armenian Genocide." During that genocide, he noted,

JIRAIR HOVSEPIAN PHOTO



Paul Rusesabagina

"the whole world was watching and [yet] the world closed its eyes." He continued that once again, in the 1940s, it happened, this time with the Jews. "It happened again and again."

The Rwandan Genocide, which took place in 1994, led to the deaths of approximately 800,000 people. Over the course of approximately 100 days, from the assassination of President Juvénal Habyarimana and Cyprien Ntaryamira, in April through mid-July, more than 500,000 people were killed, according to a Human Rights Watch estimate. It was the culmination of longstanding ethnic competition and tensions between the minority Tutsi, who had controlled power for centuries, and the majority Hutu peoples, who had come to power in the rebellion of 1959-62 and overthrown the Tutsi monarchy.

The assassination of Habyarimana in April 1994 set off a violent reaction, during which Hutu groups conducted mass killings of Tutsis (and also pro-peace Hutus, who were portrayed as "traitors" and "collaborationists").

Hutus and Tutsis were forced to use ID cards



From left, Paul Rusesabagina, Dr. Carolann Najarian, Charlie Clemens and James Kalustian

which specified an ethnic group. These cards served as symbols that the Interahamwe could check via the threat of force. In addition, the media was used to incite hatred.

The film "Hotel Rwanda" documents Rusesabagina's acts to save the lives of his family and more than a thousand other refugees, by granting them shelter in the besieged Hôtel des Mille Collines.

Rusesabagina said that before the genocide and the start of the civil war, he could not imagine that some former friends would turn against him. From 1992 to 1993, when the campaign for the genocide was beginning, "People, instead of doing something, just closed their eyes."



Charlie Clemens, left, with James Kalustian

During the early 1990s, Rwanda slowly descended into a place where enmity and chaos made everyday life nearly impossible.

JIRAIR HOVSEPIAN PHOTO

Rusesabagina said, "The capital was so dangerous. Armed people were coming, throwing grenades."

At first, he and his wife and family stayed at the Sabena Belgian Airlines' Diplomat Hotel, which he managed. He was able to travel with his family for a while in Europe and get away in

JIRAIR HOVSEPIAN PHOTO



Dr. Carolann Najarian



Paul Rusesabagina enters the hall, with Charlie Clemens and Dr. Carolann Najarian following him.

the early days of unrest, but needed to go back. "We trusted the UN that it had come to Rwanda to make peace," he said.

Once they were back in Rwanda after a few months in Europe, things were not better. At this point, he was the manager of the Hotel Des Mille Collines in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. It was by chance that his wife found out about the attack on the Rwandan president's airplane, as she was headed in the direction of the airport. In the immediate aftermath, what little order there was completely evaporated and rampant killing became the order of the day.

"It was the most scary time of my life," he said.

Several neighbors decided to come to the Rusesabaginas' house for safety. In a few days, he and his group, eventually to number about 1,000, took refuge at the hotel. To get to the hotel, the family and their neighbors had to walk over many dead bodies on the streets, he recalled. He stressed that in the immediate period before the killings

continued on next page



COMMUNITY NEWS

from Rwanda to Heritage Park Audience

JIRAIR HOVSEPIAN PHOTO



From left, Dr. Barbara Merguerian, Paul Rusesabagina and Dr. Joy Renjilian-Burgy

JIRAIR HOVSEPIAN PHOTO



Doctors Paul and Joyce Barsam

from previous page began, a process was initiated to dehumanize the Tutsis.

"I have faced evil. I learned how to deal with evil," he recalled.

He and his family and ragtag group which he was hiding were occupying rooms that were not taken by the soldiers. He recalled that he was trying to get in contact with his friends in Europe, in order to ask them for help and let them know about what was happening in their country. Thus, on April 23 he fell asleep at 4 a.m., after talking to friends in Europe, only to be awakened at 6 a.m. when he felt the barrel of a gun on his head.

"I started negotiation [but] for the first time, I lost heart," he recalled.

He managed to find a way to send his wife and children out of the country and stayed put himself, thinking he would never see them. He stayed for another two years and finally, in 1996, went into exile.

"People who couldn't run away were killed," he said bluntly.

In addition to using guns and machetes, the fighters used rape as a weapon. The use of sexual violence, he noted, is still happening.



James Kalustian

"It is my obligation to start to talk about it," Rusesabagina concluded, "to talk for the voiceless."

James Kalustian, the president of the Armenian Heritage Foundation, closed the program by noting to the audience that the lecture is a gift to the city of Boston from the local Armenian community and thanked the city and state for their help in getting the project off the ground.

A reception followed at the Old State House.

Reparations: Different Meanings for Different Cultures

By Daphne Abeel

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

WORCESTER, Mass. — On Thursday, October 27, an audience of 200 braved snow to attend the opening of a two-day conference at Clark University, titled "Beyond the Armenian Genocide: The Question of Restitution and Reparation in Comparative Review." The featured speaker was Prof. John Torpey, professor of sociology at the Graduate Center of City University of New York (CUNY).



Prof. John Torpey

After welcoming remarks by Deborah Dwork, director of the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark, Taner Akçam, who holds the Robert Aram, Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marion Mugar Chair in Armenian Genocide Studies and organized the conference, began the evening with the announcement of his victory in the European Court of Human Rights, which ruled the Turkish government's prosecution of him for speaking about the Armenian Genocide,

under Article 301 of its Criminal Code, which bans such speech, had violated his freedom of expression in Turkey.

In his address, Torpey sketched a broad canvas regarding the subject of reparations, making the point that reparation can mean something different depending upon the culture and the circumstances. In spite of these differences, there are some commonalities amongst groups, including European Jewry, the Armenians, Native Americans and African Americans, all of whom have asked for reparations for wrongs done to them, he explained.

Reparations commonly involve coming to terms with the past, an expectation that financial recompense will be made responsibly, reconciliation between the parties, financial compensation and the promise that wrongs will not be repeated, said Torpey. Not every reparation settlement involves a financial factor, as in the case of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, which brought groups of blacks and whites together to talk out their conflicts and differences.

In the case of African-Americans who seek reparations for slavery, the monetary factor has been more important. While reparations have not been made to individuals, the issue of reparation has been addressed, in part, by the building of hospitals and schools in disadvantaged black neighborhoods and by building the National Museum of African-American History in Washington, DC.

On the other hand, he continued, reparations to the Japanese who were interred in camps in the US during World War II involved only a payment of \$20,000 per person, "not enough to change the circumstances of their lives," said Torpey, but "a way to address past wrongs."

Native Americans have sought and received reparations in the preservation of certain tribal lands, artifacts, burial grounds and the granting of casino licenses.

In the case of the Armenians, said Torpey, the issue of reparations from Turkey for the acts of the Armenian Genocide has focused primarily on the insistence of recognition of the Genocide by Turkey. And it remains the primary issue as

Turkey "remains opposed to the recognition," he said.

He pointed out that the Armenians have received some reparations through successful lawsuits against insurance companies, such as New York Life, that have awarded compensation to the descendants of policy holders who were denied the benefits of their policies. "These, however, have reached only a very narrow group of plaintiffs," he commented.

He added, "Turkey's refusal to apologize is a continuing open wound to Armenians. The Turkish government doesn't seem to realize the world won't fall apart if it acknowledges the Genocide, and it would increase its chances of becoming a part of the European Union."

Further acts of reparation by the Turks could include acknowledging the contributions of the Armenian community to Turkish life and also a

major revision of history textbooks.

"Many Turks support these measures," Torpey said.

The primary aim of reparations, said Torpey, "is to ensure that all members of society enjoy equal rights, opportunities and mutual respect."

Germany, as a successor state to the Third Reich has been able to acknowledge the Holocaust, whereas, in contrast, Turkey, a successor state to the Ottoman Empire, has not.

"Ultimately," said Torpey, "the issue of responsibility is more important than guilt."

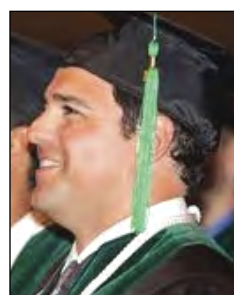
The conference, which included workshops on Friday, was sponsored by the Strassler Center in conjunction with the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and Eric Weitz, the Arsham and Charlotte Ohanessian Chair at the University of Minnesota.

Krikor Garo Arman, II Receives Medical Degree with Distinction from UMich

WEST BLOOMFIELD, Mich. — Krikor Garo Arman, II was born in Royal Oak, on March 8, 1978. He grew up in Livonia and later attended West Bloomfield High School where he graduated with honors in 1996. He earned his bachelor's in psychology from the University of Michigan in 2000. He played on the varsity ice hockey team at Michigan, and during his four years, was part of three Central Collegiate Hockey Association (CCHA) championships, along with the National Championship in 1998. Upon graduation, he continued his hockey career, playing professionally in the United and East Coast Hockey leagues, prior to retiring due to lingering injuries.

He then returned to the University of Michigan to attend medical school. Prior to medical school, he conducted scientific research in the Department of Plastic Surgery, publishing numerous journal articles and presenting them at two national conferences. He graduated with honors from the University of Michigan Medical School on May 17. He is currently a general surgery resident at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak.

He is the son of Kerope and Zmrukhd Arman, and brother of Varujan Arman, of West Bloomfield. He is married to Anita (Atamian) Arman. A talented musician, he plays the piano, clarinet, saxophone and drums. He also speaks Armenian and Spanish fluently.



Krikor Garo Arman



New York METRO

Armenia Fund's 14th Thanksgiving Day Telethon Celebrates Water

NEW YORK – Armenia Fund launches its 14th International Thanksgiving Telethon campaign set to air on November 24, in all major Armenian-American communities in the US and across the globe.

In early October, Armenia Fund unveiled the 2011 Telethon logo, an image of water underneath a growing plant with the slogan, "A Gift of Water, A Gift of Life."

The slogan for Telethon 2010 was "Water is Life," and Armenia Fund has continued the theme of water in this year's telethon. Water is a central component to the overall viability of a community and instrumentally affects the health and livelihood of every citizen. Throughout the rural communities of Armenia and Artsakh, the lack of accessible water has been significantly hindering the lives of many. On average, each family throughout Armenia and Artsakh spends 40



percent of their daily lives carrying water from a source two to five miles away.

Along with the Telethon campaign, Armenia Fund USA said they are now accepting text donations in support of this year's "A Gift of Water, A Gift of Life" Telethon. To help bring clean water to people in Armenia, donate \$10 by texting the word Armenia to 80088. By replying with yes to confirm donations, \$10 will be charged to the caller's cell phone bill.

Once the donation is confirmed, callers have the chance to opt in, by replying yes to the automated text.

Armenia Fund has constructed more than 175 miles of water treatment and supply systems across Armenia and Artashk over the past 19 years. Thanks to those who contributed to last year's telethon, Armenia Fund was able to give 26,880 residents of Artsakh a supply of clean drinking water in their households.

Because of such dire conditions in the homeland, Armenia Fund has made it its mission to construct reservoirs, wells, pumps and new inner systems and water pipelines across the region. Within one year, 14 water projects were either initiated and/or completed through Armenia Fund's programs, bringing clean water to more people everyday.

By supporting Armenia Fund's Telethon efforts, people from all over can become a part of its collective strength to revive the economies in the rural communities abroad. Every call makes a difference and will contribute to the shared objective of achieving an economically independent and prosperous Armenia and Artsakh.

Clean drinking water is undeniably imperative, which is why Telethon 2011 will address this issue for the second year in a row and continue to make water more accessible to every Armenian community.

The live broadcast of the Thanksgiving Telethon will be available online on the Armenia Fund USA website.

Volunteers are being accepted in New York the day of the telethon. For information on volunteering, visit www.ArmeniaFundUSA.org.

Talk on Ararat Climb Brings Historic Armenia within Grasp of Audience

By Shoghig Chalian

FAIR LAWN, N.J. – On October 21, an audience of more than 100 congregated for a "journey" at St. Leon Church's Pinajian Youth Center, which was organized by both the church and the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) of greater New York. Audience members were transported through history to their ancestors in Western Armenia, through the photographic eyes of Hrair "Hawk" (Baze) Khatcherian. The program started with a joint welcome from Ara Araz of St. Leon Church and Dr. Vaghenag Tarpinian of the TCA, who introduced the photographer/author and one of the climbers of Ararat 11, Saro Hartounian, with a brief biography.

Khatcherian was born in Lebanon and, at age of 23, moved to Montreal, Canada. He and his wife, Lena, have two daughters, Lori and Palig. His first visit to Armenia was in 1993 and since then, he has been a voracious traveler, having visited 44 countries.

Hartounian, an established businessman who resides in Franklin Lakes, with his wife, Hilda, and three children, was one of the 11 climbers of Mt. Ararat. He was born in Lebanon as well, educated in the American University of Beirut (AUB) and later came to US and attended the University of Chicago.

Khatcherian transported viewers through the most distinct destinations in Historic Western Armenia and Cilicia, such as Zeytoun, Sis, Dikranagerd, Van as well as Ani, where Armenian monasteries and churches once stood intact. He also compared the original picture slide of the past along with the present. The photographs in his new book, Yergir 2, captivate and transport the reader into ancestral time and place, each time one visits the book.

A significant scene was the Badarak taking place at the Holy Cross Church on Lake Van's Akhtamar Island, where the sun, seeping through the window inside the church, seemed like an incensed light of the Holy Spirit.

Khatcherian has it made his mission to revisit these places and investigate more destinations of the monasteries and churches, with a subsequent book. It is a grand project that he plans to pass on to the next generation.



Father and son climbers, Masis and Greg Parseghian

Ararat 11 refers to the 11 men who climbed Mount Ararat in July 2010. The group included cyclers from California and two from the New York-New Jersey area. The actual climb was videotaped and photographed by Khatcherian as well.

The videotape of the climb captivated the audience as they watched the group's journey and their determination to reach the summit of Mt. Ararat. The attendees seemed as if they were joining these 11 courageous men in their pursuit. When the 11 reached the summit, they proudly held up the Armenian and Karabagh

flags. Mount Ararat has been the symbol of Armenia for 3,000 years and is the "Constant reminder of the home of the Gods."

Present at this event were the father and son team of Masis and Greg Parseghian, who climbed the mountain about 25 years ago. They shared their experience, along with Hartounian and Khatcherian, and answered questions from the audience.

A wine-and-cheese reception followed and magnets of Mt. Ararat, which were handmade by 88-year-old Anna Yeshilian of Boston, were much appreciated.

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Arts & Living

Mark Mustian's *Gendarme* Draws Crowd In New York

MANHATTAN – Mark Mustian, author of the critically-acclaimed novel, *The Gendarme*, presented his book on October 12, at the Diocesan Center.

The event, hosted by the Armenian Network of America (Greater New York Region), Armenian Students Association and the Zohrab Center, started with an introduction by Talene Kachadourian, president of the Armenian Network of America. She spoke of Mustian's background as a lawyer and as city commissioner in Tallahassee, Fla., where he currently lives with his wife and three children.

Published last year, *The Gendarme* quickly created a buzz and was the winner of the 2010 Florida Gold Book Award for General Fiction. It is a finalist for the 2011 Dayton International Literary Peace Prize. The book has been translated into eight foreign editions in Brazil, Bulgaria, France, Greece, Israel and Spain, among others.

Mustian's novel follows the story of a Turkish gendarme officer who once led the Armenians on the death marches of 1915. Following an



Mark Mustian signing copies of *The Gendarme* at the Diocese

injury at Gallipoli, he was sent to an Allied Hospital where he met and married an American nurse and eventually settled in the United States – having lost all recollection of the Armenian Genocide. Almost a century later, the officer, now 92, suffers a brain tumor and begins to recall the story of his youth and to seek redemption before it is too late.

Following Kachadourian's introduction, Mustian discussed his book, which touches on many themes within the larger context of the Armenian Genocide, including the role of memory, politics, religion and human relationships.

Mustian also talked about the process of having the book published, which required perseverance and determination on his part. Seven years after perfecting his manuscript, the reputable Putnam imprint published the book to positive reviews, including in the *Sunday Book Review* of the *New York Times*, which wrote that Mustian "tells a story that probes a timeless array of life's general adversities," and noted that "Mustian refuses to flinch when describing the grim realities that resurface in Conn's [the protagonist's] thoughts of the past."

Following his presentation, Mustian answered questions from the audience and signed copies of his books. A reception followed where guests had the opportunity to speak with Mustian further. For more information about *The Gendarme* and its author, visit www.markmustian.com.

– Taleen Babayan



Peter Sourian receives a gold medal from Hasmik Poghosyan, Armenian minister of culture

Writers Assembled from Around the World in Armenia in October

YEREVAN – The Fourth Annual Conference of Armenian Writers in Foreign Languages took place in Armenia this year from October 10 to 15. Sessions took place at the Writers Union centers in Yerevan and Tsaghkadzor. Writers, translators and editors from at least 10 countries (Armenia, Canada, France, Georgia, Germany, Iran, Romania, Turkey, Ukraine and the United States), as well as from the Republic of Mountainous Karabagh, participated in the sessions. The Ministries of Culture and Diaspora were organizers of the conference, together, of course, with the Armenian Writers Union, and the sponsors, the World Armenian Congress and the Union of Armenians of Russia.

An opening press conference on October 10 in Yerevan presented the outlines of the conference's activities to the media. The first official session was opened on October 11, again in Yerevan, by Levon Ananyan, chairman of the Writers Union of Armenia. Ananyan pointed out that the activity of Armenian translators in a sense allows many writers of Armenian origin abroad who write in other languages to take their places in the ranks of Armenian literature. Armenian independence has facilitated this process. Many of the writers abroad deal with issues of importance to the Armenian people such as Armenian culture and the Armenian Genocide.

A letter from President Serge Sargisian of Armenia, read by Hranush Hakobyan, minister of diaspora, valued the contributions of the participants and stressed the contemporary importance of the complex issues of Armenian identity. Hakobyan then welcomed the conference participants on behalf of her ministry and awarded the William Saroyan Medals, granted by the Diaspora Ministry in recognition of efforts toward the dissemination of Armenian culture in the diaspora, to Mari-Antoinette Varténie Bédanian (France), Madeleine Karacashian (Romania) and Aram Arkun (US), as well as certificates to Khachik Khacher (Iran), Natella Lalabekyan (US) and Levon Osepyan (Russia).

Conference patron Ara Abrahamyan, who is president of the World Armenian Congress and the Union of Armenians of Russia, gave a speech of welcome to the conference participants. Abrahamyan felt that the present conference was one of the various positive results of the independence of Armenia, whose 20th anniversary had just been celebrated.

The winners in various categories of the World Armenian Congress' literary contest, "Twenty-first Century Armenian Prose," conducted together with the Union of Armenians of Russia and the Armenian Writers Union, were then announced: Kurken Khanjyan (novel), Husik Ara (short story) and Eduard Khachikyan (short story series), while a special diasporan writer's award was given to Boghos Kupelian.

Levon Ananyan then bestowed Abrahamyan with the award Literary Benefactor.

Hasmik Poghosyan, minister of culture of the Republic of Armenia, spoke of the importance of October for Armenian culture. She awarded Peter Sourian (US), Migirdiç Margosyan (Turkey), Peter Cowe (US), Alan Whitehorn (Canada), Alexander Bozhko (Ukraine) and Raffi Kantian (Kebabciyan) (Germany) with Gold Medals of the Ministry of Culture.

Three papers were then delivered on a variety of topics in a session chaired by Ananyan. The first speaker was Prof. Souren Danielian, who is the founder

see WRITERS, page 16

Barooshian Exhibit Piques The Imagination

By Tom Vartabedian

WATERTOWN – Martin Barooshian is the kind of artist whose work needs to be seen in order to be appreciated and understood. Sometimes it takes awhile.

Barooshian's work is currently on exhibit at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA), where 50 of his selected pieces of impressionistic art are on display through January 20. More than 100 guests turned out October 2 for a grand opening and reception.

Titled "Pointillism to Surrealism," the gallery covers various mediums and approaches spanning years of intense creativity and technical finesse, taking the viewer down a path of mystery, humor, eroticism, lyricism, line and color and into the depths of an unconscious mind.

"It definitely calls for interpretation," said Barbara Sohigian of Middleton. "You can look at it one way and get a different meaning another way. Martin's art is diverse in every sense, forging him into the best of his class."

The work invites the viewer into a contemplative spirit and takes them into an unpredictable world filled with surrealist fantasies and joyous abstract design.

One eye-catcher is the "Twin Towers," dedicated to the 10th anniversary of 9/11 terrorist attacks. It shows the two buildings intact prior to their destruction. Another work devotes itself to music, essentially Bach and Beethoven, two of the artist's favorite composers, done in oil.

A still life with fish features a mixed media approach while an ink painting of a disengaged ballet dancer requires further scrutiny.

"Though this is primarily a show of my newest paintings spanning the last decade, some other influential prints and drawings are also included," Barooshian points out. "To my surprise, I realized that ideas from such drawings have been germinating in my mind for years and have found their way into my new style 50 years later."

Barooshian commended the ALMA staff for posting what he called "a museum-quality show," which ironically coincides with the opening of a Karsh exhibit on the ground floor. Visitors to the museum got a double treat at the grand opening.

"ALMA is one of our valuable treasures both inside and outside the Armenian community whose potential hasn't been fully realized," he said. "Hopefully, many more artists and photographers will take advantage of this facility."

Born in 1929 in Chelsea, Barooshian has distinguished himself as an artist whose great vitality and willingness to explore is matched only by his technical finesse. He is regarded as a superb and accomplished printmaker having innovatively produced in every graphic medium including woodcuts, etchings, engravings, lithographs and silk-screens.

Over the past 55 years, Barooshian has been fascinated by what he calls fantastic art and surrealism. He cites the work of Miro, Matta, Dali and, in particular, Arshile Gorky as contributing to the development of his style.

He shares with them an artistic commitment to exploring the subconscious mind. Imagination, fantasy and freedom of thought are of paramount importance to this philosophy.

With his technical expertise firmly established, Barooshian created many fine and compelling works, including the "Alice in Wonderland" series, a successful venture that rekindles several memorable scenes and characters from the Lewis Carroll classic.

"To me, painting with oils on canvas go hand-in-hand with printmaking," says the spry

see BAROOSHIAN, page 15



Something Armenian In Portugal

By Taleen Babayan and Karine Abalyan

LISBON – Portugal does not have a sizeable Armenian community nor an Armenian Church. But it is here, in Europe’s westernmost country, that the philanthropist Calouste Gulbenkian’s esteemed private art collection accidentally found its home.

Surrounded by a vast property featuring stretches of lawn and bamboo gardens, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and Museum is a centerpiece of Lisbon’s cultural life. On a warm day last summer, tourists and Lisboans took in the splendor of the peaceful landscape, pausing to appreciate one of the city’s most visited sites.

Inside, schoolchildren and art enthusiasts browsed Gulbenkian’s extensive collection, which is composed of more than 6,000 pieces dating from antiquity to the early 20th century. These include works by Rubens, Van Dyke, Rembrandt, Renoir, Manet, Degas and Monet, as well as Persian rugs, Chinese pottery and jewelry by Rene Lalique.

Gulbenkian began acquiring artwork at a young age. Born in Istanbul in 1869, he was the son of a wealthy merchant who had holdings in the oil fields of the Caucasus. After earning a degree in engineering and applied science at King’s College in London, Gulbenkian was encouraged by his father to get involved in the oil business.

Earning British citizenship in the wake of the 1895 massacres of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, Gulbenkian established valuable networks with leading European and Russian oil businessmen.

In 1907, he helped found the Royal Dutch Shell Group, and five years later was influential in the development of the Turkish Petroleum Company, of which he owned a 5-percent share. Gulbenkian’s insistence on securing this fraction with subsequent projects eventually earned him the epithet “Mr. 5 Percent.”

During World War II, Gulbenkian planned to emigrate to America. But a brief visit to neutral Portugal – where he found a welcoming and hospitable atmosphere – changed his course. Gulbenkian spent the last 13 years of his life at the fashionable Hotel Aviz in central Lisbon.

During this time, he decided to establish an international foundation to showcase his art collection and to bring together different cultural values and interests. After Gulbenkian passed away in 1955 at the age of 86, his vision was realized with the opening of the Foundation and Museum in Lisbon in 1969.

Building on Gulbenkian’s artistic vision, the foundation added a Modern Art Center to the property in 1983. Dedicated primarily to 20th-century Portuguese artists, the center also serves as a depository for other modern pieces.

Known for its leading efforts in restoration and preservation, the Modern Art Center attracted the attention of Vartoosh Mooradian,

the sister of the artist Arshile Gorky, and her son, Karlen. The Mooradians placed their collection of Gorky works here in 1985.

In her will, Mooradian left the artwork to the Eastern Diocese, which has continued the partnership with the Gulbenkian Foundation. The works have been exhibited at various times in Lisbon and thanks to this unique collaboration, the Gorky paintings have been exhibited at museums worldwide. In 2007, the Paris branch of the Gulbenkian Foundation worked with the Centre Georges Pompidou to display Gorky’s works as part of the “Year of Armenia” in France. In addition, Gorky’s works have been shown at the Tate Modern in London, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and most recently at the Gagosian Gallery in New York City.



Statue of Calouste Gulbenkian based on a photograph taken of the philanthropist during his travels

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Special Guest Star Ara Dinkjian



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ARTS & LIVING

ARPA International Film Festival Celebrates its 14th Year

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — The 14th annual Arpa International Film Festival, presented by AT&T YP.com, captivated audiences over three days at the Egyptian Theater here. Arpa Foundation for Film, Music and Art's (AFFMA) signature event kicked off with the opening night Los Angeles premiere of Braden King's "Here," on September 22. The film, starring Ben Foster and Lubna Azabal, was shot entirely in Armenia.

The festival's centerpiece film, "My Uncle Rafael," headlined the program on Friday, September 23. Writer/producer/actor Vahik Pirhamzei, director Marc Fusco, co-screenwriter Scott Yagemann, actress Missi Pyle and other cast and crew attended the sold-out showing.

This year, the festival screened more than 30 films from 15 countries. The closing night featured the North American premiere of Mahsun Kirmizigul's action drama "Five Minarets in New York," which drew a record crowd over three days.

The festival's prestigious Armin T. Wegner Humanitarian Award was presented to Bryan Single for his documentary, "Children of War," which was filmed in Uganda and tells the story of a group of former child soldiers as they escape the battlefield and undergo a remarkable process of trauma therapy and emotional healing. Two of Wegner's grandchildren, Giulia and Fiammena, were on hand to co-present the annual award.



Actress Missi Pyle, with actors Anahid Avanesian, Vahik Pirhamzei and Sage Ryan



Actress Mercedes Masohn, second from left, and cast and friends of the winner of best film, "Three Veils"



AFFMA Committee Members Lisa Tutunjian, Talia Tanielian and Annetta Babakhanie



Sylvia Minassian, founder with board members Dr. Zaven Khatchaturian, Dr. Navasart Kazazian and Maral Kazazian



Dr. Zaven Khatchaturian, AFFMA Board, Sylvia Minassian, AFFMA founder, and Giulia and Fiammena Wegner (granddaughters of Armin T. Wegner)



Fiammena and Giulia Wegner, granddaughters of Armin T. Wegner, festival director Alex Kalognomos, founder Sylvia Minassian, board member Zaven Khatchaturian and filmmaker Bryan Single

The AT&T's Award for Environmental Conservation and Stewardship was awarded to Susan Edwards for "Marion Stoddart: The Work of 1000," a documentary short about a remarkable woman who transformed herself from a 1960s housewife to a citizen leader and environmental hero honored by the United Nations.

Other notable award recipients included Eric Nazarian, Best Short winner for "Bolis," Arman Yeritsyan and Inna Sahakyan, Best Documentary winners for "The Last Tightrope Dancer in Armenia," screenwriters Vahik Pirhamzei and Scott Yagemann and director Marc Fusco for "My Uncle Rafael" and Ahmad Zahra, producer of Best Feature Film winner, "Three Veils."

Pirhamzei was also awarded the festival's 2011 Breakthrough Artist Award. During the festival, the international distribution company Slater Brothers acquired the rights to distribute "My Uncle Rafael."

The jury consisted of industry veterans Ara Keshishian and Jeff Speich, both motion picture talent agents at Creative Artists Agency, and Owen Ward, producer and marketing executive.



Sylvia Minassian, founder, Alex Kalognomos, festival director, and Marc Fusco, director

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Barooshian Exhibit Piques The Imagination

BAROOSHIAN, from page 13
octogenarian. "Frequently, a print image will trigger off a painting idea and quite the reverse. There's no doubt that painting for me has the greater amount of problems necessary to solve than printmaking. I try to be good in both. When one tires of painting for a few days, one can switch to prints."

No portraits. Nothing to do with landscapes. Forget the bowls of fruit and flowers. Barooshian derives his pleasure with mystery art.

According to one critic, Barooshian's prominence has been somewhat subdued because his paintings and prints have always gone against the grain of the art scene.

Yet, by reinventing a new approach, he reinvents himself. In the process has come a glorious world of great storms, mythological heroes and Faustian love affairs with an impeccably bold color sense.

Judging by the ALMA works, a kaleidoscope of color matches any foliage seen in season.

"I'd be bored to tears if I wasn't involved with art," Barooshian says. "It's been my obsession for decades and continues to build self-esteem. My art is designed to make people think."



Artist Martin Barooshian with ALMA exhibit



ARTS & LIVING

Writers from around the World in Armenia in October

WRITERS, from page 13

and director of the Diaspora Scientific-Educational Center, which focuses in particular on Western Armenian language and literature. His talk was titled “Armenian Destiny in Modern American-Armenian Literature” (for the text of his speech, and Armenian-language reports on the conference, see <http://spyurk-center.am/am/news/79>). Davit Gasparyan presented a report examining which works of writers of Armenian background writing in non-Armenian languages were included in the curriculum of schools and universities in the Republic of Armenia. Finally, poet and writer Artem Harutyunyan spoke about Peter Balakian’s poetry and its reflections of Armenian and American realities. Harutyunyan, who had spent several months in Balakian’s home, presented some personal reminiscences as well.

The day concluded with two symbolic and emotionally-laden trips. First was a visit to Echmiadzin, where the group was received by Bishop Arshak Khachatryan, chancellor of the Holy See. Khachatryan spoke about the role of intellectuals in Armenian society and answered questions from the writers about the activities and positions of the Church of Armenia. Second was a visit to the Genocide Memorial, where the writers placed flowers next to the eternal flame in honor of victims of the Armenian Genocide and a wreath next to the monument itself.

Moving to Tsaghkadzor

The group then departed for Tsaghkadzor, where the next sessions took place on October 12. Ananyan started the day by pointing out that in a sense, reports would be given about the creative activities of the participants in various countries and the effect that they have had.

A panel of four prose writers presented their thoughts on “Armenian destiny” in their works in a session chaired by Aram Arkun, who translated where necessary in this and later sessions. First, Arkun noted the passing of first-generation American-Armenian writer Dr. Nishan Parlakian and spoke briefly of his literary and editorial work. Everybody in the room stood up to honor Parlakian’s memory. Then Arkun pointed out how the panel’s speakers were from very different environments and each had struggled in his own way to deal with the 20th century’s tribulations of the Armenians, overcoming them in a sense through literature that presented the Armenian destiny, if there was really such a thing, to the world.

The first speaker, Peter Sourian from New York, is one of the important representatives of the first generation of American-Armenian writers, who has over the decades played an important role as a literary critic, novelist and short story writer in the United States, while supporting the Armenian-American community. Sourian spoke about how his grandfather Missak Sourian sent his son Zareh to America to learn journalism in order to serve Armenia. Though Zareh did not do this, Peter, his son, felt that perhaps unconsciously he transmitted the same hope to him, to “try to bear humble witness to the ‘incomprehensible destiny’ of the Armenians.” Peter Sourian then read an excerpt of a short story, published in the *Spectator* (which later turned into the *Mirror-Spectator*) by his father, who, it turns out, did dabble at least a bit in writing, too. The moral of the story, as interpreted by Peter Sourian, was that one important role of the writer was to bear witness.

Levon Osepyan, vice chairman of the Union of Russian [Armenian] Writers, editor-in-chief of two literary magazines, *Aragast* and *Metsenat i Mir* (as well as of the monthly *Armyanski Pereulok* from 1996 to 2002), and author of six volumes, then spoke about his own literary work, as well as his attempts to represent Armenians, together with Seda Vermisheva, in Russian cultural and intellectual circles. Osipyan also is a photographer and has provided illustrations for various works, including Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Raven,” in Russian translation. Osipyan spoke in Russian and his words were translated into Armenian by Lilit Hovsepyan.

Raymond Boghos Kupelian, now of Los

Angeles, spoke of the difficulties of his childhood in the Middle East and his experiences in Africa, which he turned into literature. He later began writing about the American-Armenian immigrant experience in Los Angeles, and his son Roger, in turn, became a filmmaker who has attempted a film about Vartanantz. Kupelian, vice president of the Armenian Writers Association of California, has published three novels and a number of collections of short stories.

The fourth speaker, Migirdiç Margosyan, is considered one of the last representatives of Western Armenian literature of the provinces. His works on Dikranagerd in the post-Genocide period show what had been preserved of the past and the price paid to do so, as well as the nature of human relations in Turkey. He has written them in Armenian and Turkish versions, while Kurdish translations of his short stories have also appeared. Margosyan pointed out that the Turkish editions of his works sell many, many more copies and are republished much

cussed at the conference.

Khacher of Iran, an engineer by profession, is a writer by vocation. He primarily writes poetry and prose in Armenian and Persian. He also is engaged in much translation, in order to make Armenian culture better known in Iran. He related that his volume of Zahrad’s poetry translated into Persian garnered much attention in Iranian cultural and literary circles. He helped organize the commemoration of William Saroyan’s centenary in Iran recently, and writes in Iranian newspapers periodically.

Araz Barseghian, a young writer from Iran, then commented about the importance of a variety of other Iranian-Armenian writers. Zoya Pirzad for example has sold millions of copies of her Persian-language novels to Iranians. Barseghian himself is the author of several published works.

Translator and writer Aram Arsenyan’s newly-published translation of Peter Sourian’s Armenian-themed novel *The Gate* (Darpas) was presented that afternoon at the conference.



Dr. Raffi Kantian at one of the sessions in Tsaghkadzor

more frequently than the Armenian versions of the same works. He noted that ironically, though he received a medal last year from the Armenian minister of the diaspora, he is not a diasporan writer, having been born in Western Armenia. However, he did not learn Armenian until he was an adolescent.

That afternoon, Los Angeles-based Lalabekyan’s book of poetry and short stories, *Road to Yourself* (translated into Armenian by Artem Harutyunyan), was presented to the conference with praise from Ananyan. The author herself spoke about her views on life and then read some samples in Russian from her work, while translator Harutyunyan read some of the Armenian versions.

The following day Davit Muradyan chaired the morning session. Alan Whitehorn of Canada, a grandson of an orphan of the Armenian Genocide, presented his poems as well as his activities in Canada toward the recognition of the Genocide. Whitehorn professionally is a political scientist teaching at the Royal Military College of Canada since 1978, and genocide and human rights are important themes in both his academic work and his poetry.

Raffi Kantian of Germany spoke next. He has published a number of volumes of short stories in Armenian using his family name of Kebabciyan, and one collection of his short stories has been published in Turkish. He declared that his preferred writing style is realism. Born and raised in Istanbul, the September 6-7, 1955 riots had a great effect on him, and he later dealt with them in a short story. Kantian is also the Hanover-based editor of the German-Armenian Society’s literary and research publication *Armenisch-Deutsche Korrespondenz* (ADK).

Kantian suggested that working groups be created for the future to make presentations on various topics to the conference. Collective translations or other types of workshop activities could be conducted. Also, a website could be used to present the materials that would be dis-

Arsenyan last year translated a collection of Sourian’s short stories into Armenian, but Darpas is the first of Sourian’s novels to appear in Armenian. Arsenyan’s labors have turned Sourian into part of the corpus of Armenian literature, as well as a senior writer in the American-Armenian literary canon. Arsenyan spoke about how he became acquainted with Sourian’s work.

Olexander Bozhko, former ambassador of Ukraine to Armenia, then introduced Levon Osepyan’s collection of short stories, *Telephone Call*, to the audience, and praised it highly. It was translated into Armenian from Russian by Hovhannes Ayvazyan.

Bozhko at one point noted about himself that he had helped create a radio hour in Kiev which both offered folk music like that of Komitas to the Ukrainian public, as well as information about topics such as the Armenian Genocide. He has translated a number of Armenian literary works into Ukrainian and at present is working on a late medieval Armenian work about Kamenets-Podolsk.

After this, various members of the audience presented their own works, especially poetry, to the conference. For example, young Armenian poet and university Prof. Vahe Arsen (son of Aram Arsenyan) read some of his poems, including a piece translated into English recently by Diana Der-Hovanessian.

The assembled group of writers had the opportunity to visit Armenian monasteries and churches in several parts of Armenia and also were pleasantly surprised to be part of the 65th birthday celebration of Levon Ananyan on October 13. Delegations from various Armenian government ministries, as well as Russia, Georgia and Iran made various presentations on this occasion, and Ananyan was granted the Garegin Nzhdeh Medal from the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Armenia. President Serge Sargsian sent Ananyan a special letter. This was also approximately the 10th anniver-

sary of Ananyan’s active leadership of the Writers Union, and many writers and others congratulated his accomplishments during this period of time.

Perhaps not totally by coincidence, two works of Ananyan were published and presented to him on his birthday — a bilingual Armenian-German children’s book, *Anna and Armen*, which he prepared with German writer Yurgen Yankovski (with Hermine Navasardyan as translator), and *Wild Tulips*, a Georgian-language anthology of Ananyan’s works published in Tbilisi.

On October 14, further writers spoke about their works under the chairmanship of Margosyan. Jaklin Çelik of Istanbul (but born in Dikranagerd) presented a paper in translation from Turkish about questions of cultural identity. She examined the relationship of religion, land, nationality belonging and destiny and concluded that in the Armenian case, destiny was the migration of the heart.

Cathy Salibian (Rochester, NY) explained the background of Genocide and immigration which impelled her to travel in search of her ancestors’ homes in Turkey and formed an important foundation of her literary work. Moved, Margosyan on the spot invited her to visit him in Turkey.

Mari-Antoinette Varténie Bédanian of France spoke of the sorrow of the internal division and quarreling of Armenians in France over many decades and added that she was forced to publish her own works in non-Armenian publishing houses because Armenians did not want to consider her writings. However, she pointed out that the conferences of foreign-language writers of Armenian origin in Armenia have created new connections and together though they were from so many different countries, the participants managed to serve as a conduit of Armenian culture and heritage that almost was destroyed as a result of the Genocide.

Khosrov Khajavian of Iran spoke about his own writing in Persian, including translations.

Karacashian spoke about her decades of work as a journalist in Romania. She worked 18 years for the newspaper *Nor geank*. She also is a translator and member of the Romanian Writers Union. Her fourth volume of *With the Armenians, About the Armenians* was just published a few months ago in Romania. This series, the fruit of her publications in periodicals, serves to better inform Romanians about the Armenians. She has translated both prominent Armenian writers of the past and contemporary Armenian writers into Romanian. The Romanian state fortunately sponsors works by minority nationalities like the Armenians.

That afternoon, Ananyan introduced Aram Arsenyan’s third volume of *Contemporary American-Armenian Short Stories*, largely based on pieces translated from the printed version of *Ararat* quarterly. This volume includes works of Peter Najarian, Sourian, Mark Arax, Aris Janigian, Nancy Krikorian, Aram Saroyan, Mary Kandilian-Aslanian, Jack Aslanian, Cathy Salibian, Vonnice Madigan, Michael Minasian, Nancy Agabian and Alan Whitehorn. A number of writers present praised Arsenyan’s efforts.

In the closing session on October 15, Ananyan explained that a chief goal of such conferences has been to unite foreign-language Armenian writers around the idea of the homeland. Professor of philology Davit Gasparyan suggested that in the future, foreign-language Armenian writers join Armenian-language writers in conferences. Ananyan felt the idea was a good one but perhaps the time for it had still not yet come. Margosyan pointed out that previous such conferences have led to useful work such as his Aras Publishing House’s publication of the Turkish translation of Iranian-Armenian writer Zoya Pirzad’s novel, and this year too there no doubt would be similar results. Khosrov Khajavian’s offer to financially support the publication of the presentations of the present conference as a separate book was enthusiastically accepted by the participants.



ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

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

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 13 — Nine Armenians Presented by Wellesley College, at the Ruth Nagle Jones Theatre, in the college, at 6:30 p.m. Dedicated to the Nish Boyajian Memorial Foundation, which will receive the proceeds from tickets sales. For ticket info, contact Richard Boyajian (617) 328-6881 or Peggy Hovanessian (781) 863-6273.

NOVEMBER 17 — Party at the Other Park! Benefit for the Armenian Heritage Park Endowment. Thursday, 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m. Fenway Park. State Street Pavilion, Boston. The event will feature John Baboian Quartet, informal sports talk with Bob Lobel and open bar and hors d'oeuvre. Tour of Fenway Park at 7 p.m. for Party supporters of \$1,000 and above. RSVP by November 12. Reservations required. For a reply form, e-mail fenway@armenianheritagepark.org or call Charles Guleserian (617) 484-6100.

NOVEMBER 19 — Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston presents 25th anniversary performance, "Journey Through Time," with new choreography and music. Robinson Theater, Waltham High School. For tickets,



Richard Hagopian and his Kef Time Ensemble will be the feature of a Holiday Kef at UMass Lowell Conference Center, 50 Warren St., Lowell, Mass., on Saturday, November 19, 8 p.m.-1 a.m., sponsored by Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe. For info, call Mike (978) 682-3946 or Richard (978) 374-0687.

www.itsmyseat.com/sayatnova or Apo: (339) 222-2410. www.sayatnova.com.

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. Sponsored by Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe. For info call Mike (978) 682-3946 or Richard (978) 374-0687.

DECEMBER 2-3 — Trinity Christmas Bazaar, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge, Friday, 3-9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Lunch and dinners offered. Booths include: farmer's market, country store, candy, gourmet, pastries, wreaths and poinsettias, jewelry, second-time around, sports silent auction and more. Santa's Playland, Saturday 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

DECEMBER 11 — Christmas Holiday Concert: Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra, 3 p.m., church sanctuary, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Conductor Konstantin Petrossian. For further info, contact the church office at office@htaac.org or (617) 354-0632.

MICHIGAN

NOVEMBER 16 — Armenian Genocide Recognition: A New Approach, a free lecture by international lawyer and former diplomat Sandra L.B. Livingstone, PhD. St. John Armenian Church, St. Vartan Room, Wednesday. Refreshments, 7:30 p.m.; program, 8 p.m. RSVP to Pam Coultis at (248) 646-7847 or Hagopian@aol.com.

NEW JERSEY

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

DECEMBER 3 — The AGBU/NYSEC presents the fourth annual AGBU Performing Artists in Concert, at 8 p.m. Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. 154 W 57th St., New York City. Tickets, \$65. For info, call AGBU at (212) 319-6383, ext. 124. To purchase tickets directly through the Carnegie Hall Box Office: carnegiehall.org. Carnegie charge: (212) 247-7800. Box Office: 57th Street and Seventh Avenue.

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

One Life, Three Cultures: An Iranian-Armenian Odyssey

A New Autobiography by
Elma Hovanessian

By Nora Vosbigian

Elma Hovanessian decided to write her memoirs after the success of her first book, *Under the Blue Dome*. Whenever she gave book presentations people were interested in her personal background as an Iranian-Armenian.

Book Review

They were fascinated by her family life in Iran, descriptions of her grandfather's caravan trips to India from New Julfa, life in the beautiful Armenian quarter in Isfahan, the occupation of Iran by the Allied Forces in WWII, student days at Tehran University... All fodder for her autobiography.

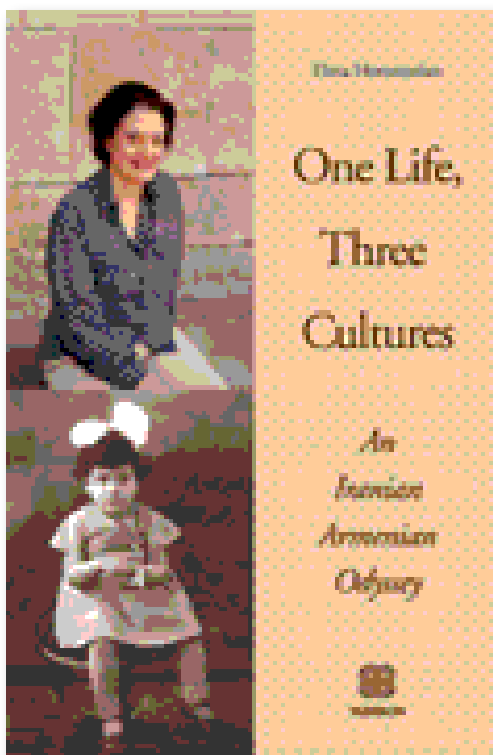
The hardest part of writing her story was the first chapter. Once started, the rest was easy. Memories started to flow from the recesses of her mind, as she remembered her childhood, adolescence and beyond. Then came the exploratory stage of her book, as she gathered additional information to flesh

out details. She interviewed friends and relatives with incredible memories.

Hovanessian grew up in a multi-cultural Iran. She attended Iranian schools and Tehran University. All of her classes were in Persian (Farsi). Her classmates included students of various ethnic and religious minorities, such as Armenians, Assyrians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Baha'is and Turks from Iranian Azerbaijan. They were all part of Iran's rich tapestry of people.

For young Armenians, there were the Ararat Cultural Center and the Armenian University Students Society where they were introduced to the Armenian culture and a sense of ethnic identity. The Armenian Church played an important part in acquainting them with their religious traditions through annual activities and festivities, such as Easter Sunday, Tiandarach, Vartavar and Hambartzoum.

While living in Iran, Armenians felt themselves to be Iranian citizens of Armenian origin. The sense of being Iranian-Armenian actually grew when they left Iran and came face-to-face with other



Armenians, such as those from Cyprus, Lebanon and Soviet Armenia.

Hovanessian lived in London at different times in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, and then moved to Los Angeles. In those days, the Armenian community in London was dominated by Armenians from Cyprus. Los Angeles was different, with its large Iranian and Iranian-Armenian community. She felt more comfortable there.

What did Hovanessian miss about Iran? The Caspian Sea in the summer, with its warm waters and the soft sandy beaches; her home in Tehran with its balcony overlooking the busy, noisy Naderi Avenue; her youth spent in that country, with its wonderfully uncomplicated life, surrounded by her extended family and friends. She misses the Armenian cultural and social life, a remarkable community that had flourished and refined throughout hundreds of years of existence.

One Life, Three Cultures is a beautifully-written work, which gives a fascinating glimpse into one of Iran's oldest communities.

A free sample chapter of *One Life, Three Cultures* is available at www.gomidias.org.

One Life, Three Cultures: An Iranian Armenian Odyssey. London: Taderon Press. 222 pages, 19 photos. ISBN 9781903656389. US\$22 / UK£ 16



COMMENTARY

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COMMENTARY

Prospects of a Kocharian Comeback

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Armenia's electoral atmosphere is heating up as the parliamentary election date gets nearer. Next May, Armenia will hold parliamentary elections, which will prove to be a litmus test for the presidential election in 2014. Speculations abound in the news media about possible realignments in the political spectrum.

One major question is hanging over all the discussions and speculations: Would former President Robert Kocharian throw his hat into the ring? Before completing his second term as president, Mr. Kocharian had indicated that he did not wish to become the youngest retiree in Armenia, leading to wild speculations. After all, politics and politicians in Armenia walk in lock-step with Moscow. Kocharian's master, Vladimir Putin, made his future political plans all too obvious when he handpicked Dmitry Medvedev to succeed him. As the latter's term was nearing its close, Medvedev himself proposed Putin as candidate for the next presidential election.

Robert Kocharian certainly wishes to emulate Putin in Armenia. That is why he was very frank when asked about his future plans. He cited three conditions for his comeback: "1. Should economic stagnation continue to deteriorate the prospects of improving the social conditions, which, in turn, further increases emigration; 2. Demand by different strata of society for my return to big politics and 3. My personal conviction that I will be able to bring radical change to the situation."

These are broad prospects to be able to measure in any meaningful way, and therefore they are open to various interpretations.

Since the number of votes still do not determine the outcome of the elections in Armenia but only the plans of the people counting the votes, Kocharian certainly may have a chance for a comeback. Only the interaction of political forces and the formation of coalitions may frustrate his plans.

That is why when asked if Kocharian can run as a presidential candidate in the upcoming election, the head of the Prosperous Armenia Party (Parkavaj Hayastan) Gagik Zaroukian, answered bluntly that Mr. Kocharian has all the moral right to run. Since that party has served as a front for Kocharian's power base, news media began to speculate that the ruling coalition is falling apart. The Prosperous Armenia and Republican parties together control the current parliament.

Arthur Baghdassarian's Country of Laws Party (Orinats Yerkir) is a minor partner in the ruling coalition. Baghdassarian has a cozy place in the present coalition, since he has no chance to be re-elected if his party tries to run independently. During the last elections he duped the electorate, running as an opposition candidate and he split the opposition votes, and after the election he switched sides and joined the ruling coalition. You cannot deceive people all the time.

To dispel rumors and speculations, Mr. Zaroukian recently came up with a clarification that the agreement signed between the Republican and Properous Armenia parties last February 17 was still in force, and he blamed the media for manufacturing artificial crises between the coalition partners, whereas high-place officials in his party made public statements about the party's plans to run independently in the elections, fueling those speculations.

As far as Kocharian candidacy is concerned, the former president comes with a heavy baggage of liabilities, the least among

them being the rumors that during his presidency one of his sons built a personal fortune of \$10 billion. Even if the figure is 90-percent exaggeration, it is still a tremendous amount of money to amass in a poor country like Armenia.

Mr. Kocharian may be convinced that he can bring radical change to the plight of the people, but the voters may ask, why didn't he use that magic during his presidential tenure of 10 years?

Also, heavy clouds hang on Mr. Kocharian's credibility. One is the October 27 massacre in the parliament 10 years ago, which was not fully investigated, and whose direct beneficiary was Kocharian himself. The other case is the March 1 incident, which claimed 10 victims. That was a liability that he bequeathed to then President-Elect Serge Sargisian.

The greatest handicap of course for a Kocharian comeback is the incumbent president, who does not seem willing to yield his position.

Former Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian has been testing the ground for a possible return of Mr. Kocharian.

The political group which benefited most during Kocharian's presidency was the Dashnak (ARF) party, which is positioning itself in Armenia's political spectrum with obvious nostalgia.

Raffi Hovannisian's Heritage Party (Jarangoutioun), which flirted last time with Levon Ter-Petrosian's HAK opposition coalition without joining in the end, is gravitating towards the ARF.

Ter-Petrosian certainly still holds a grudge against Hovannisian for his inconclusive political flirtation last time.

Ter-Petrosian himself and his lieutenants are still calling for early parliamentary elections and for President Sargisian's resignation, which do not seem likely to happen. Even the opposition is convinced that those are slogans to lull the opposition block during the rallies.

In one of his recent speeches, Ter-Petrosian extended an olive branch to Gagik Zaroukian, who did not take the bait.

In the meantime, the president is struggling to keep his coalition in tandem, sometimes even trampling on certain established principles, like extending the same rank and courtesy to the Supreme Spiritual Head of the Church and Catholicos Aram I. It looks like every aspect of Armenia's life is being politicized. The principles trampled today for political expediency may not be restored tomorrow.

Prime Minister Tigran Sargisian's remark drew fierce reactions from different parties; he had indicated that those who do not side with the Republican Party, will be on the losing side.

The president has certainly an uphill battle in front of him and recent shocks are not helping that struggle; within a week two key resignations shook the political stability of the government. The first one was the Yerevan Mayor Karen Karapetyan, who they say has received a lucrative offer from Russia's Gazprom.

But the rumor is that he was asked to resign because the authorities did not believe the mayor could deliver their expectations during the parliamentary elections.

On the heels of the first resignation the chief of police, Alik Sargisian, was also asked to resign after running a scandalous police department. He is believed to be unable to hold together warring factions within his department.

In view of this turmoil the US has been sending a message that nothing less than perfect elections will be acceptable.

The parties and coalitions will continue realigning themselves. The government will try to project a picture perfect image, yet the starving people will vote for the party who hands them 5,000 drams under the table.

LETTERS

Facing History Should Face the Facts

To The Editor:

Sometimes it takes friends to tell a friend that the latter has a problem.

The friends who must do the telling, in this case, are Armenian Americans, particularly those of the San Francisco-based Genocide Education Project (GEP) whose main mission is teaching about the Armenian Genocide. The friend with a problem is the Brookline, Mass.-based Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO), the Holocaust and human rights organization whose curriculum includes the Armenian Genocide.

GEP collaborates with FHAO and makes use of the latter's teaching materials. More importantly, two top FHAO executives are advisors to GEP, while two famous Armenian American academicians are advisors to both organizations.

The problem is that FHAO is cosponsoring an Anti-Defamation League (ADL) panel on "The New Anti-Semitism: A Contemporary Discussion in Historic Faneuil Hall" in Boston on November 7, 2011.

Abraham Foxman, ADL National Director, will be a panelist.

Mr. Foxman and his ADL have denied the factuality of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923 committed by Turkey and, to this day, have failed to unambiguously acknowledge that genocide. They have also immorally and actively assisted Turkey in defeating Armenian genocide resolutions in the US Congress. A political agreement two decades ago among Turkey, a few top groups such as the ADL, and Israel formalized this arrangement. This contrasts with the principled Jewish American groups and individuals who

support recognition of the Armenian genocide.

It is clearly wrong for a genocide education organization such as FHAO to affiliate itself with Foxman as long as he and his organization remain foes of Armenian genocide acknowledgment.

Foxman continues to oppose passage of the Armenian genocide resolution, contemptuously terming it a "counterproductive diversion."

My October 24 "open letter" asked FHAO to withdraw its partnership with Foxman for the November 7 event.

Since that letter, scores of Armenian Americans have emailed and called FHAO, and posted online, to express their dismay at the FHAO-Foxman pairing.

FHAO's response has been a disappointment. FHAO has said, against all evidence, that

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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Azerbaijan Wins Security Council Seat, While Armenians Remain Idle

President Ilham Aliyev was celebrating last week his country's historic victory at the United Nations. With an overwhelming number of votes, Azerbaijan was elected for the first time to the prestigious UN Security Council for a two-year term.

This column shall address three questions: 1) How did Azerbaijan manage to get elected to such an elite body? 2) What will Azerbaijan accomplish with its newly-acquired seat? 3) What actions did Armenians take to counter Azerbaijan's candidacy?

Azerbaijan, Hungary and Slovenia were competing for a non-permanent seat reserved for the Eastern European region in the Security Council. Normally, Azerbaijan would have no chance of getting elected to such a distinguished body, since it is the least qualified of the three countries in fulfilling the requirements of the UN Charter, due to its failure to contribute to international peace and security, as well as lack of participation in the work of UN agencies.

According to knowledgeable sources, Azerbaijan made up for its deficiencies by offering tour packages and mone-

tary incentives to UN delegates and economic inducements to financially strapped nations in return for their votes at the UN General Assembly, which elects the 10 non-permanent members of the Security Council. By hook or by crook, Azerbaijan acquired the support of Islamic countries, the Arab League, the Non-Aligned Movement and CIS (former Soviet) countries, including Russia. Yet, despite these unusual lobbying tactics, it took Azerbaijan 17 rounds over a two-day period to garner the necessary votes, and only after Slovenia, its main rival, withdrew in protest from the race. Slovenia's Foreign Minister Samuel Zbogar complained that his country "did not approve the way this campaign was held." Although he did not elaborate, he was referring to Azerbaijan's lavish gift-giving spree.

Naturally, gaining a seat on the powerful UN Security Council accords Azerbaijan international prestige and a new venue to pursue its incessant Armenophobic campaigns. Nevertheless, there is little chance that Azeri officials will be able to succeed in their announced objective of placing the Karabagh (Artsakh) conflict on the Council's agenda. The Minsk Group co-Chairs — France, Russia and the United States — as three of the five veto-wielding permanent members of the Security Council, have made it amply clear that this matter will be handled by the Minsk Group, outside the UN framework. Hence, Azerbaijan's leaders risk disillusioning their people, having reassured them that the Security Council will take up the Karabagh issue. Azerbaijan could also get entangled in precarious situations, being forced to take sides when voting on confrontational issues involving Iran, Israel and Syria, among others.

While the Aliyev regime was turning the world upside down to come up with votes for its Security Council bid, what were Armenians doing to counter Azerbaijan's efforts?

Opponents at home criticized the Armenian government

for not declaring Armenia's candidacy for the Security Council, arguing that this would have taken away votes from Azerbaijan. Such a strategy, however, may not have been in Yerevan's best interest, because Armenia could not compete with Baku's vote-buying spree and would have drawn votes away from Slovenia, assuring a bigger victory margin for Azerbaijan.

In an earlier column, I had suggested that Armenian organizations and prominent individuals in the diaspora, in consultation with Armenia's Foreign Ministry, launch a global campaign to counter Azerbaijan's candidacy. I had urged Armenians around the world to ask their respective governments not to support Azerbaijan's Security Council bid.

Regrettably, neither the Armenian Foreign Ministry nor the diasporan leadership initiated such a coordinated effort. Two months ago, when delegates from 50 countries gathered at a Pan-Armenian Conference in Yerevan, Foreign Ministry officials should have taken the opportunity to strategize with activists and heads of organizations on how to counter Azerbaijan's candidacy. Ironically, one of the topics on the conference agenda was "mechanisms for the development of Armenia-Diaspora partnership." Such discussions are only useful if they are followed up by concrete actions.

Fortunately, a mechanism for global Armenian coordination is in the works for the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. For this purpose, a preliminary meeting was held in Yerevan several months ago. Turkey has already announced its UN Security Council candidacy for 2015, at a time when Armenians will be commemorating the centennial of the Genocide. The question is: Will Armenians be better prepared to counter Turkey's candidacy in four years than they were Azerbaijan's this year?

Many 'Firsts' Accomplished in Turkey this Month

By Raffi Bedrosyan

In just a few days during the third week of October 2011, several "firsts" were accomplished in Turkey, with respect to the future Turkish-Armenian relations, the significance of which will become more apparent in the coming months and years. Naturally, every precedent setting event is the result of many years of hard work and determination in overcoming equally hard circumstances and mindsets.

The largest Armenian church in the Middle East, Surp Giragos of Dikranagerd/Diyarbakir, became the first Armenian church in Anatolia to go through a complete reconstruction after willful destruction and neglect since 1915. This was the first "first."

The consecration of the restored church took place on Saturday, October 22, and the first mass conducted on Sunday, October 23, in the presence of nearly 3,000 Armenian worshippers from Europe, North America, Armenia and from within Turkey. The moving ceremonies were attended not only by Armenians, but also Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin who are the majority population in the southeastern Turkey, as well as several prominent Turkish intellectuals who traveled from Istanbul, all together praying for dialogue, peace and empathy, rare spiritual commodities mostly absent among the three peoples. This was another "first."

Due to the absence of these precious spiritual commodities, untold numbers of Armenian individuals and families had stayed hidden among Turks and Kurds since 1915. Recently, many of these individuals have started "coming out," declaring themselves Armenians. Some decide to be identified as Muslim Armenians, some go one step further and become Christian Armenians. A few of them even went ahead and became baptized in the newly-consecrated church, which has already become a beacon for all Armenians within Turkey. This was also a "first."

There are more than 200 deeds recently discovered, showing church ownership of many properties around Diyarbakir prior to 1915; legal processes and negotiations have started to recover these properties, which is another "first."

A group of about 25 Armenians traveled from North America to witness these historic events, led by two prominent religious leaders, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic

Church of America, and Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, President of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the US. This group included professionals such as doctors, lawyers, engineers as well as businessmen and retired people. The one thing common to the individuals in the group was the recognition of the significance of this church reconstruction project for all Armenians worldwide, not only for Armenians originating from Diyarbakir or Turkey.

They had become acutely aware that this is not just another church, but a historic reminder of thousands of years of Armenian presence in Anatolia, as well a future pilgrimage destination for all Armenians worldwide. These individuals had also recognized that financing its reconstruction would be much more meaningful than any church reconstruction in the United States and even in Armenia. That is why these individuals donated significant funds for a far away church in southeastern Turkey, spent funds to travel there and also promised to act as fellow fundraisers toward shortfalls in the project budget. This was also a "first" for the Diaspora Armenians.

In a spirit of cooperation, the local Diyarbakir municipal leaders decided to participate in the church reconstruction project and they financed one-third of the project costs. They acknowledged the role of their forefathers in the 1915 evil deeds and considered their present assistance in this church reconstruction project as a means of 'making up for the past events'. They greeted the Armenians with Armenian signs "welcoming them to their own home" — another "first."

Back in Istanbul, in a similar spirit of cooperation, the mayor of Istanbul welcomed the American Armenian group and the two Archbishops, providing a snapshot of the accomplishments and challenges of running one of the great cities of the world. He was specifically asked what steps he is taking in promoting the Armenian built and owned buildings sprinkled all over Istanbul, and he responded very positively in terms of correcting all guidebooks, inserting plaques and audio messages at prominent Armenian buildings, describing the significant contribution and legacy of Armenians in architecture, arts and theatre. This was another "first."

In another meeting in Istanbul, the group had the opportunity to meet one of the most influential corporate leaders of Turkey, with interests in

media energy, transport, mining, construction and banking. Members of his corporate team, and a member of the Turkish parliament representing Istanbul accompanied him. There were useful discussions regarding opening the Turkish Armenian borders, increasing trade, jobs and investments on both sides of the border. To his comment that "we are ready to cooperate with the Armenians, once the politicians resolve their differences," the

group suggested that "people vote in the politicians, especially influential people like him can sway politicians." The member of parliament also responded favorably to the questions from the group regarding issues facing the Istanbul Armenian community and the impact of the current task of rewriting of the Constitution on the minorities. This dialogue was another "first."

And yet, despite all these positive "firsts" and precedent setting events, we also experienced multiple negative "usual" events that we are more accustomed to. The undeclared civil war between the Turks and Kurds intensified. Kurdish militants murdered 24 Turkish soldiers, the Turkish army responded by killing several Kurdish militants. Turkish jets flying from the Diyarbakir military base bombed several Kurdish targets within Turkey and in northern Iraq.

Then the earthquake struck Van and prevented our group from traveling to Van and Akhtamar. The predominantly Kurdish population of Van complained about the Turkish state for not helping them. Ultra-nationalist factions of the Turkish media rejoiced that the earthquake was a "divine punishment" meted by God upon the Kurds. These were not "firsts" unfortunately and a continuation of decades old practices.

But the most negative incident experienced by our group during this historic trip was an article written by an ultra-nationalist Armenian in an Armenian political party publication, accusing the group for mixing business with pleasure. This unfortunate writer stated that meeting Turkish government or business leaders is tantamount to falling into a "trap set up by the Turkish government," and that any dialogue with Turks about culture, academic cooperation and trade is merely following Ankara's narrative, which requires that Armenians set aside their quest for truth, justice and security, in the name of just doing business. The twisted logic of this writer further claimed that by engaging in this "damaging dialogue," Barsamian had allowed himself and the church to be manipulated by Turkish business

interests, for the personal gain and profit of his Armenian businessmen parishioners. The article is the ultimate example of defamation, lies and conjecture, blaming everyone involved, including American Armenian businessman Oscar Tatosian, Turkish-Armenian journalist Vercihan Ziflioglu, but most significantly, Barsamian. The writer blames the Turks for dividing the Armenians into good ones and bad ones, and yet, he feels himself justified to pass judgment on who the bad Armenians are — the ones who engage in dialogue.

After reading such an article, one can conclude that yes, there are good Armenians and Turks, as well as bad Armenians and Turks. My late friend Hrant Dink's statement is a timely reminder, who had said: "Both Armenians and Turks are clinical cases. Armenians are suffering from trauma (of the 1915 events); Turks are suffering from paranoia (of what the consequences would be of accepting the 1915 events). Who will cure them? What is the prescription? The Armenian will be the Turk's doctor, the Turk will be the Armenian's doctor. The prescription will be dialogue."

Although still few in numbers, there is an increasing number of Armenians and Turks engaging in dialogue, in academia, media, arts, sciences, law, business and other professions, which has started to produce real results in improving Turkish Armenian relations. And yes, at the beginning, the dialogue need to be about today and tomorrow. The dialogue about the sensitive past can only happen after today and tomorrow can be discussed.

Without dialogue, the Surp Giragos Church could not have been achieved.

Without dialogue, none of the "firsts" described above could have been achieved.

(Raffi Bedrosyan is a civil engineer as well as a concert pianist, living in Toronto, Canada. For the past several years, proceeds from his concerts and two CDs have been donated toward the construction of school, highway, water and gas distribution projects in Armenia and Karabagh, in which he also participated as a voluntary engineer. He is involved with the Surp Giragos Dikranagerd Church Reconstruction project in organizing fundraising activities in Canada, as well as promoting the significance of this historic project worldwide to Armenian communities outside Turkey, on behalf of the Church Foundation Board and the Istanbul Patriarchate.)



AGBU's Young Professionals of Toronto Hosts Leadership In Organizations Panel Discussion with Top Executives

TORONTO – On Sunday, October 16, more than 60 Armenian young professionals attended a panel discussion titled “Leadership in Organizations: Experiential Strategies for Success,” hosted by the AGBU Young Professionals of Toronto (YPTO) at the AGBU Toronto Center.

The “Leadership in Organizations” panel discussion was led by business leaders from various industries and backgrounds, including Silva Basmajian, executive producer of the National Film Board of Canada - Ontario Centre; Tanya Khojajian, senior manager of Accenture; Berge Papazian, who is secretary of the AGBU Board of Directors and a founding partner of Papazian, Heisey, Myers, Barristers & Solicitors and Jack Stepanian, formerly of Rogers Communications and CIBC bank.

During the course of the discussion, which was moderated by YPTO Steering Committee member Talar Sahsuvaroglu, panelists shared their insights and experiences on personal and strategic leadership and engaged in a question and answer with audience members. The discussion was motivating and encouraging and offered attendees valuable tips and secrets for success. The panel discussion was followed by a networking reception providing YPs an opportunity to meet and connect with each other as well as with the guest speakers.



A member of the audience of the October 16 event asking a question during the question-and-answer session, which followed the YPTO-organized panel discussion

The AGBU Young Professionals of Toronto, a volunteer-run organization, has been offering Armenian young professionals a diverse calendar of events since 2006. YPTO is dedicated to bringing

together like-minded young professionals, and offering resources to help promote talent, self-development, and personal and professional success. For more information about YPTO, email yptoronto@gmail.com or visit www.ypto.ca.

Aronian Maintains Third Position on FIDE Rating List

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – Armenia's top grandmaster, Levon Aronian, has maintained his third place standing among the world's best chess players in the latest rating released by the game's international governing body FIDE.

The November 1, Top 100 players list (released every second month) shows Aronian with a rating of 2802 and trailing Norway's Magnus Carlsen (rating 2826) and India's Viswanathan Anand (rating 2811).

The latest Top 100 player rankings of FIDE (www.fide.com) also include Armenian grandmasters Sergei Movsesian (position 34; rating 2710), Vladimir Akopian (position 63; rating 2681) and Gabriel Sargissian (position 73; rating 2671).

The FIDE Top 100 female players list includes three Armenian grandmasters. The highest rank among them is held by Elina Danielian (position 16; rating 2507), followed by Lilit Mkrtchyan (in 29th place, rating 2469) and Lilit Galojan (in 78th place; rating 2383). Hungary's Judit Polgar tops the rankings with a rating of 2710.

In the list of 145 chess nations ranked by the average rating of their top 10 players Armenia is sixth.



Discussion panelists, from left, Berge Papazian, Talar Sahsuvaroglu (moderator), Silva Basmajian, Tanya Khojajian and Jack Stepanian

Facing History Should Face the Facts

LETTERS, from page 18

Foxman has acknowledged the Armenian genocide. In fact, he has done no such thing. Though Foxman's statement of August 21, 2007 used the “G” word, it also employed evasive language that implied, for example, that Armenian deaths may have been merely a “consequence” of Turkish “actions” rather than having been intentional. Article II of the UN Genocide Convention specifically requires “intent” for an act to be considered genocide. Foxman and the ADL know that.

A dozen Massachusetts cities and the Massachusetts Municipal Association, which represents every city and town in the state, did not buy Foxman's rhetorical gymnastics. They cut ties with the ADL's “No Place for Hate” program even after Foxman's statement.

Astonishingly, FHAO's response did not even attempt to address Foxman's and the ADL's past and present opposition – hand in hand with the Turkish government – to the Armenian Genocide Resolution. There is a failure to recognize that Foxman and his ADL have not even begun to undo the damage they have done to Armenians.

It is difficult to understand why or how the FHAO-Foxman partnership for this event came about. One hopes that ADL members among FHAO's donors and its treasurer, Elizabeth Jick, an ADL Executive Committee member, did not

unduly influence its decision. The FHAO is unnecessarily and gratuitously lending its prestige to Foxman. This is offensive to Armenians.

Four years ago, Armenian grassroots activists, including those from the Armenian National Committee of America and the Armenian Assembly of America (AAA), and others, were the movers and shakers behind the campaign (www.NoPlaceforDenial.com) against the ADL's anti-Armenian actions. With very limited exceptions, however, Armenian-American academicians – genocide specialists and historians affiliated with the GEP, remained uninvolved.

Even as the issue moved to New York, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and San Francisco in 2007 and 2008, these academicians largely remained silent.

Journalists and grassroots activists in Los Angeles and on the East Coast often take the lead on this and similar issues while academicians fail to add their own voices.

The GEP, its staff, board, and advisors are friends of FHAO, as they should be. And as friends, they are obligated to urge FHAO to withdraw from its partnership with Foxman for the November 7 event.

When credibility hangs in the balance, silence is not an option.

–David Boyajian
Belmont, Mass.

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