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NEWS IN BRIEF



President again Avoids Saying 'Genocide' in April 24 Statement

WASHINGTON — On April 24, President Barack Obama issued a statement in honor of the day, yet again, he refrained from using the phrase "Armenian Genocide." Instead, he used the Armenian term "Meds Yeghern," which translates into the Great Calamity.

Armenians used the phrase primarily before the coining of the word "genocide" by Raphael

Lemkin in the 1940s.

Said Obama in his statement, "We solemnly remember the horrific events that took place 96 years ago, resulting in one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century. In 1915, 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their death in the final days of the Ottoman Empire.

see OBAMA, page 12

Belmont Board Of Selectmen Issue Genocide Proclamation

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BELMONT, Mass. — The Board of Selectmen here read a proclamation into the official record at their April 25 meeting, in which they commemorated the Armenian Genocide.

Several local Armenian-Americans attended the meeting at Belmont High School's auditorium.

Selectmen Chairman Ralph T. Jones read the proclamation: "Whereas the month of April commemorates the tragic history of the Armenian Genocide of 1915; and whereas over one-and-one-half million Armenians were killed or uprooted from their homeland during this horrible event; and whereas the Genocide represents an atrocity against humanity which we must be continually reminded of; and whereas surviving Armenians have relocated around the world



Jirair Hovsepian reads his statement at the meeting.

to begin new and productive lives; and whereas a significant and proud population of people with Armenian heritage make their home in Belmont, Massachusetts," the board recalls "the Armenian Genocide to remind society of this tragic event in the course of human events."

The resolution was brought about thanks to a core group of residents, led by Jirair Hovsepian. Hovsepian, a Town Meeting member, read a statement into the record giving a brief history of the Genocide and the plight of the survivors and quest for reparations.

see PROCLAMATION, page 9



Thousands of people march to the Armenian Genocide memorial in Yerevan.

Armenia Marks Genocide Anniversary, Slams Turkish Denial

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Hundreds of thousands of people silently marched to a hilltop memorial in the annual remembrance of some 1.5 million fellow Armenians slaughtered by Ottoman Turks.

An incessant stream of people passed through the Tsitsernakabert Memorial to the Genocide victims throughout the day, laying flowers by its eternal fire surrounded by 12 inward-bending basalt columns.

The day-long procession began in the morning after a traditional prayer service held there by the leader of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Catholicos Karekin II, in the presence of President Serge Sargsian and other top state officials.

see ANNIVERSARY, page 8

Genocide Commemoration to Include Holocaust Remembrance on May 1

NEW YORK — Thousands of Armenians, Jews and their supporters will gather in Times Square to commemorate the Armenian Genocide and Holocaust Remembrance Day on Sunday, May 1, from 2 to 4 p.m.

The theme of the Armenian Genocide Commemoration is "Turkey is Guilty of Genocide: Denying the Undeniable is a Crime."

Dennis R. Papazian, PhD, national grand commander of the Knights of Vartan and founding director of the Armenian Research Center at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, and Mary A. Papazian, PhD, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at Lehman College,

CUNY, will preside over the ceremonies.

Commemoration participants will include Armenian Genocide survivors, elected officials, humanitarian, cultural, religious, educational and community leaders. Presenters include Richard G. Hovannisian, PhD, holder of the Armenian Educational Foundation Chair in Modern Armenian History at UCLA, and Joan Rivitz, EdD, associate director of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education and commissioner and commission chair of the New Jersey Commission on Civil Rights. Other presenters include Attorney Mark J. Geragos, who helped lead groundbreaking federal class-action

see TIMES SQUARE, page 13

Turkey-Armenia Friendship Symbol Being Demolished

KARS, Turkey (BBC) — The demolition of a huge Turkish statue devoted to reconciliation with Armenia has begun, months after the prime minister described it as a "freak."

The 30-meter-high statue — depicting two human figures facing each other — was erected on a mountain in Kars, near the Armenian border.

Artists had tried to save the statue, which could take 10 days to dismantle.

The company carrying out the demolition has already cut down one of the figures using a crane, witnesses said.

The work, called the "Statue of Humanity," was the creation of Turkish artist Mehmet Aksoy.

When finished, it would have had one figure extending a hand to the other.

"I am really sorry, sorry on behalf of Turkey," Anatolia news agency quoted the sculptor as saying. "They can demolish it, we will re-make it."

On a visit to Kars in January Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan reportedly described the monument as a "freak," and an affront to a nearby 11th-century shrine.

Education Minister in Vienna April 24 Demo

VIENNA, Austria (Hetq) — While in Austria on April 24, Armenia's Education Minister Armen Ashotyan met with students from Armenia studying in Vienna and joined them in a demonstration, calling for recognition of the 1915 Armenian Genocide.

Ashotyan also attended Easter services at the Saint Stefan Cathedral in Vienna.

Rakel Dink: Turkey Is a Country Where Nobody Ever Apologizes

ISTANBUL (Vatan) — Rakel Dink, the widow of Agos' late founder and editor-in-chief, Hrant Dink, said recently that Turkey is a country where the powers-that-be don't apologize for past mistakes. She made her remarks at a Peace conference which kicked off in Turkey earlier this month.

"To express myself in Kurdish is politically banned. To be a Christian is another obstacle in this country. And, generally, a few of us know how the Christians are called and treated everyday," she said.

She added she was one of the Turkish citizens to cope with various social and political discriminations because of her Armenian nationality and Christianity.

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Covering Genocide

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Government Makes Another Concession to Opposition

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — The Armenian authorities on Tuesday formally allowed the Armenian National Congress (HAK) to hold a rally in a key Yerevan square this Friday, fulfilling another demand voiced by the opposition alliance.

Reversing its own decision announced earlier this month, the Yerevan municipality said it has accepted the HAK's written application to stage the demonstration in the city's Liberty Square.

The municipality had rejected numerous such applications filed since the March 2008 break-up of anti-government protests staged there by HAK leader and former President Levon Ter-Petrosian. The HAK defied the ban and rallied supporters in the square on March 17 and April 8.

As recently as on April 13, the municipal administration refused to allow Ter-Petrosian's bloc to hold the next rally in the same location on the grounds that it had already planned to organize a "cultural event" there on the same day.

The announcement came four days after President Serge Sargsian ordered law-enforcement authorities to conduct a "more meticulous" investigation of the March 2008 violence that left 10 people dead.

Such a probe as well as opposition access to Liberty Square are among the three main demands voiced by Ter-Petrosian. He has also demanded that the authorities free by April 28 his loyalists remaining in prison or face a new opposition push for power.

Armenia's Prosecutor Asks for Russian Help in Saribekyan's Case

YEREVAN (news.am) — Armenia's Prosecutor General Aghvan Hovsepyan sent a letter to his Russian counterpart, Yuri Chaika, requesting assistance in Manvel Saribekyan's case.

The letter seeks mediation by the Russian side between the prosecutors of Armenia and Azerbaijan, the prosecutor's office reported.

Saribekyan, a shepherd and a resident of the village of Ttu Jur in Armenia, had drifted into Azeri lands in the fog and was taken into custody in September. Though he was a civilian, Azerbaijan persistently called him an Armenian saboteur. Later, it was reported he allegedly hanged himself on October 5. The Armenian side claims he was either killed or forced to commit suicide. As evidence they cite the fact that the Azeri side refused to return his body for a month. On November 4, Azerbaijan handed his body to the Armenian side under an agreement reached by Armenian, Azerbaijani and Russian leaders during their meeting in Astrakhan last October.

Criminal proceedings were instituted under Article 104 of RA Criminal Code (murder committed with extreme cruelty due to national, racial or religious hatred or religious fanaticism).

Results of a forensic examination revealed Saribekyan's death was caused by mechanical asphyxia by compression of the neck, which means he hanged himself or was hanged. Signs of torture and violence, inflicted in the days immediately before his death, were found on his body.

Another Death; Another Suicide?

YERVAN (hetq) — Another death has been reported in the ranks of the Armenian Army and the military's Investigative Service (IS) has labeled it a suicide.

The IS reports that on April 21, an army private, Artur Ghazaryan, was shot with his own weapon and died while being transferred to hospital. A criminal case of suicide has been initiated.

Mari Sargsyan, the press spokesperson at the IS, reported to Lragir that no one has yet been charged and that she as yet does not know the form or extent of the injuries inflicted on the soldier.

Ghazaryan joined the army in fall 2010, staying at the Hrazdan army base.

Georgian FM Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Georgia's Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze paid a working visit to Armenia on Tuesday, which his Armenian counterpart, Eduard Nalbandian, described as a further indication of "truly friendly relations" between the two neighboring nations.

Neither minister made any public statements after their talks which the Armenian Foreign Ministry said touched upon "a broad range of issues," including regional security and the implementation of agreements reached by the Armenian and Georgian presidents. A ministry statement gave no further details of the talks.

"The first four months of this year have already seen visits to Armenia by the president and the prime minister of Georgia," Nalbandian was quoted by his press office as telling Vashadze. "The [Georgian] ministers of internal affairs, defense and transport have also been here recently."

"This intensity of visits testifies to ... truly friendly relations existing between Armenia and Georgia," he said.

It was not clear if Vashadze discussed in Yerevan the Georgian parliament's April 19 decision not to renew an agreement that has allowed Russia to use Georgian territory for making shipments to the Russian military base in Armenia. Georgian Defense Minister



Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian meets with his visiting Georgian counterpart Grigol Vashadze, April 26.

Bacho Akhalaia visited Yerevan the day before that decision initiated by President Mikheil Saakashvili.

"I don't exclude that Vashadze's visit is somehow connected with the annulment of that document," Levan Urushadze, a Georgian political analyst said.

Sergey Minasian, deputy director of the Yerevan-based Caucasus Institute,

suggested that the issue was hardly high on the agenda of the trip. "I think that the issue has already been discussed before, perhaps at the presidential level," he said. "It was discussed in greater detail during the [Georgian] defense minister's visit."

The Armenian Defense Ministry last week expressed confidence that Tbilisi's decision will not lead to any "change in Armenia's security environment" or weaken the country's military capacity.

Minasian agreed, saying that the Russian-Georgian agreement on military transit effectively stopped working during the August 2008 war in South Ossetia.

The Russian military base is a major element of Armenia's national security strategy. A Russian-Armenian agreement signed last August upgraded its mission and extended Moscow's lease on the base it by 24 years, until 2044.

Visiting Yerevan in October, Vashadze made no secret of Tbilisi's concerns about the Russian military presence in Armenia and elsewhere in the South Caucasus.

Iranian, Armenian Convicted on Espionage Charges in Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — A court in Yerevan has found an Iranian citizen guilty of spying in favor of Azerbaijan and his alleged Armenian accomplice of committing high treason.

Both men were given lengthy prison terms on Monday following a trial that lasted several months behind closed.

Behnam Bagheri, a citizen of Iran whom the judge identified as an ethnic Azeri in the verdict, was sentenced to 10 years in prison for trying to smuggle out of Armenia some footage that contained "anti-Armenian propaganda that could be used to discredit Armenia's international prestige."

According to the prosecution, Bagheri received a disc with the video in question in September 2009 from retired Armenian Lieutenant Colonel Gevorg Hayrapetian.

The Iranian was arrested by Armenia's National Security Service late last year when he was crossing the Armenian border into Iran and was later charged with spying for Azerbaijan.

Hayrapetian, 47, a decorated veteran of the 1991-1994 Nagorno-Karabagh

war with Azerbaijan who worked in the Armenian Defense Ministry system from then until 2007, was convicted of high treason and illegally keeping weapons and sentenced to a total of 12 years in jail.

Both men denied the charges throughout the trial.

Their lawyers said no evidence had been found during the investigation and trial to convict their clients. They said they would appeal the verdicts.

Bagheri's brother Javad who attended the trial in Yerevan along with his mother said that his 30-year-old brother had attended school for only five years, would make his living as a sheep herdsman in a predominantly Azeri-populated region of Iran and was visiting Armenia for the first time to see his girlfriend and not for any other purpose.

And Hayrapetian's lawyer Seda Safarian said that after receiving the verdict the defense counsel will start making public the evidence based on which her client was convicted.

"You will see that there is nothing in this evidence," she said on Monday.



Gevorg Hayrapetian (left) and Behnam Bagheri (right) in court

Intl. Law Scholar Otto Luchterhandt Speaks at Karabagh Parliament

STEPANAKERT, Karabagh — German international law scholar Otto Luchterhandt participated in an international symposium held in mid-April here, titled "International Legal Guarantees as the Basis of Resolution of the Mountainous Karabagh Conflict."

Luchterhandt is a professor of international law at the University of Hamburg. His presentation was titled "The unacceptable co-existence of a National Minority in a Foreign State as a Definitive Criterion for the Right of Self-Determination."

Luchterhandt makes a strong case that Azerbaijan has forfeited its right for the subjugation of the Armenian ethnic group of Karabagh.

In 1993 The ADL Armenian Rights Council published — through Baikar Association Inc. of Boston — Luchterhandt's dissertation on the same subject. The booklet served as a source backing the legal rights for Karabagh to claim self-determination and sovereignty.



ARMENIA

Tekeyan Holds Olympiad in Armenia

YEREVAN — For the second time the Tekeyan Centre Fund organized a scholastic competition, titled “Tekeyan Olympiad” for the eighth-grade students of Vahan Tekeyan schools in Yerevan, Gumri, Stepanavan and Karbi.

The Olympiad has become more popular. Based on the two-year successful experience,

enjoyed the show, which had dolphins and North American seals. The trained sea animals entertained both the children and the grown-ups.

Then the whole group visited Komitas Park, known as the Pantheon, where many prominent representatives of Armenian culture, literature and art are buried. Among them are Komitas Vartabed, Composers Aram Khachaturian, Arno Babajanian, writers Avetik Isahakian, Hovhannes Shiraz, William Saroyan and many others.

While the participants of the Olympiad were enjoying the program provided by the Fund, the jury members were checking the tests and finalizing the winners.

A greeting and congratulatory note was sent from London by Vartan Ouzounian, the chair of the Board of Trustees of Tekeyan Centre Fund, who opened the Tekeyan Olympiad award ceremony. Ouzounian emphasized the importance of education in preserving and strengthening the Armenian nation. He also hoped that such kinds of scholastic events could contribute to Armenian schools and the education of younger generations.

At the ceremony, the director of the fund, Armen Tsulikyan, made a speech on the great event and praised the teachers and the principals for their devotion to school.

Another guest was Papken Megerian, a mem-



Participants during the Olympiad



Winners of the Olympiad

the project is expected to expand both its geography and the number of participants.

The Tekeyan Olympiad 2011 took place at the Tekeyan Centre in Yerevan on April 13. Sixty participants from various regions of Armenia competed with each other in the Armenian language, literature and mathematics for the honorable prize of the Tekeyan Olympiad.

After the competition, the fund hosted a reception for all the participants and their teachers, which included entertainment. This time the students visited the newly-opened aquarium for dolphins in Yerevan where they

ber of the Central Board of Directors of Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada, a share holding member of Tekeyan Center Fund; he characterized the Tekeyan Olympiad as a unique bridge joining Tekeyan members.

The representatives of all the schools praised the fund's initiative to support Tekeyan educational establishments. They expressed their gratitude to the fund both for financial and moral support which is so important for schools in such difficult times.

At the end of the ceremony the judging commission announced the names of the winners who were awarded certificates and valuable prizes.



Papken Megerian and Armen Tsulikyan during a press conference

ATP and UN Plant Trees to Celebrate Earth Day and International Year of Forests

YEREVAN — Government officials, ambassadors and representatives of the international community planted 420 trees at an event on April 8, organized by the United Nations Department of Public Information, Armenia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Armenia Tree Project (ATP) and the Avan administrative district of Yerevan. The tree planting was in honor of Earth Day and the International Year of Forests.

The initiative was intended to support Armenia's efforts to strengthen the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests for the benefit of current and

future generations.

Dafina Gercheva, the United Nations resident coordinator, said: “Every citizen has a right to live in a safe and healthy environment and it is our obligation to protect the environment. Protection and sustainable use of natural resources is the main objective of many UN projects aiming at environmental protection in Armenia through broader involvement of local communities and promoting connectivity in productive landscape and forests management.”

“I am happy to join our Armenian partners and plant trees, thus contributing personally



Government officials, ambassadors and other representatives of the international community planted 420 trees in Yerevan at an event organized by the United Nations, Armenia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Armenia Tree Project to celebrate Earth Day and the International Year of Forests.



Resident Coordinator Dafina Gercheva outlines the UN's commitment to environmental protection in Armenia at a tree-planting event on April 8; also pictured are Manvel Javadyan, head of Avan community, Arman Kirakosyan, deputy minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergio Karapetyan, minister of agriculture, and Areg Maghakian, ATP associate director.

to the restoration of the green areas in this beautiful country, and protecting natural resources,” she added.

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2011 as the International Year of Forests in an effort to raise awareness on sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. Areg Maghakian, ATP associate director, stated, “Our goal is to assist the Armenian people in using trees to improve their standard of living and protect the global environment. Although our tree planting activities are ongoing, we are extremely honored to part-

ner with the UN, the MFA and the Avan administrative district to demonstrate our commitment to the environment and be a part of global Earth Day celebrations by contributing to the creation of more green spaces in Yerevan.”

“The United Nations will continue its cooperation with the government and civil society on projects aimed at sustainable development of Armenia, protecting the environment and natural resources, thus contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals,” noted the UN, in a press release after the event.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Genocide Marked by Tbilisi Procession

TBILISI, Georgia – Traditional torch procession in the memory of the Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Turkey took place here on April 23. The procession concluded their route at the Embassy of Turkey in Georgia, where the participants expressed their protest against the Turkish gag rule on the issue of the Armenian Genocide.

The event was initiated and organized by the Armenian Community of Georgia non-government organization. The Armenian Cooperation Centre of Georgia, Armenian Student's Union of Georgia, Armenian Youth Association of Georgia and the Armenian Pupils' Union of Georgia joined the torch procession. Other Armenian organizations also joined the protest rally at the Embassy of Turkey.

Around 100 people were present at the event.

Azeri Attack Planes Conduct Maneuvers at Karabagh Border

BAKU (PanARMENIAN.Net) – During the past week, Azeri armed forces conducted military exercises over the contact line with Nagorno Karabagh. Four battle planes and nine helicopter gun ships conducted maneuvers five to 15 kilometers from the border.

Artsakh air defense forces took control over the republic's airspace. No violations on behalf of Azerbaijani air forces were reported.

In addition, more than 17 instances of ceasefire violation at the line of contact between the Nagorno Karabagh and Azerbaijani armed forces were reported on April 10-16.

Turkish Writer Apologizes for Genocide

BRUSSELS (News.am) – A Turkish writer has apologized to Armenians for the Genocide.

In his speech delivered at the conference in Brussels, Turkish writer Kemal Yalçın addressed the participants in Armenian, Assyrian and Turkish. He said there would be 15 million non-Muslims living in Turkey today had the Genocide not happened, the Turkish Atilim website reports.

"History will never forgive the crimes against humanity. Let our grief become basis for peace and justice. As a Turkish writer I apologize to Armenians and Assyrians. I wish that Silk Bridge on the border between Armenia and Turkey (the historical bridge in Ani) was renovated and became a symbol of brotherhood between the Armenian and Turkish nations," he said.

Yalçın, who resides in Germany, has written a story describing Armenian Genocide survivors who had to call themselves Kurds.

Islamic Extremists Arrested in Turkey

ISTANBUL (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Turkish police detained 40 suspected members of al Qaeda and Hezbollah in raids on April 12.

State-run TRT channel said among the detainees was Halis Bayancuk, whom the channel identified as the head of al Qaeda's branch in Turkey. State-run Anatolian news agency said operations were under way in a number of Turkish provinces.

Turkish police often arrest suspected Islamist militants and describe them as having links to al Qaeda, though details seldom emerge.

Turkish Hezbollah has no links to the Lebanese Shi'ite group. It was broken up and its leaders were arrested in 2000 after police unearthed the bodies of more than 60 people the group had tortured to death in raids across the country.

But after a series of delays to their trials, 18 Hezbollah members were released in January this year after the introduction of new regulations limiting the period the accused could be imprisoned without convictions. It was not clear if any of those freed were among those detained on April 12, Today's Zaman reported.

Turks Commemorate Armenain Genocide

ISTANBUL (RFE/RL) – Hundreds of Turks rallied in downtown Istanbul on Sunday to remember more than one million Armenians massacred in the Ottoman Empire nearly a century ago.

Kneeling on the ground in the city's central Taksim Square, they silently lit candles and held red carnations to the accompaniment of Armenian melancholy music played through loudspeakers. They then laid the flowers on a big banner that said "This pain is our pain."

Speakers at the rally organized by Turkish intellectuals and human rights campaigners read out the names of more than 250 Armenian political leaders, intellectuals and artists in Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul) who were rounded up by the Ottoman government on April 24, 1915 and subsequently executed.

Earlier on Sunday, several dozen Turkish intellectuals gathered outside an Istanbul museum that served as a prison for the arrested Armenians.

It was the second public commemoration of the Genocide anniversary ever held in Turkey's largest city. The first such gatherings in April 2010 drew a considerably smaller crowd challenging



Hundreds gathered at Taksim Square to commemorate the Armenian Genocide, though the word itself was not used.

the official Turkish version of the 1915 events.

As the Taksim rally went ahead a smaller group of Turkish nationalists rallied at the other end of the square to condemn the remembrance ceremony

and deny that the last Ottoman rulers sought to wipe out the Armenian population of the crumbling empire.

Riot police were deployed between the two crowds to prevent possible clashes between them.

Cypriot President to Inaugurate AGBU Armenian Cultural Center in Larnaca

LARNACA, Cyprus – The Larnaca Chapter of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) announced that Demetris Christofias, president of the Republic of Cyprus, will inaugurate the Armenian Cultural Centre here on Thursday, May 5, at 12:45 p.m.

The center is a new home for Armenian culture, ethnology and art. The center will present and promote the history and culture of the Armenian nation in general and the Armenian

tives, the center will organize conferences, seminars, symposia, workshops, exhibitions, artistic and musical performances, as well as joint inter-communal activities with other Cypriot organizations. The center already has a rich library of rare books, maps and journals, including several 19th-century publications.

The center is of paramount importance not only for the Armenian community of Cyprus but also the city of

Sarkisian of Limassol. The construction of the building began in January 2010 and was completed early this year. The building's main hall can accommodate up to 80 persons, and the roof garden, which will be the venue for outdoor events and gatherings, can accommodate up to 100 individuals.

The Armenian Cultural Center is located opposite the Larnaca Archeological Museum and the ruins of the ancient city of Kition.

The ambitious project to establish the center was made possible due to the encouragement, support and substantial contribution made by the AGBU Central Board, as well as contributions received from the AGBU Larnaca, Limassol and Nicosia Chapters. Furthermore, from its inception, the project received the full support of the Kalaydjian Foundation in Cyprus, as well as a number of Armenian-Cypriot families and Armenian benefactors from abroad, who with their generous sponsorship and guidance helped the project reach a successful conclusion.



The newly-constructed AGBU Armenian Cultural Center in Larnaca, Cyprus

community of Cyprus in particular, with the aim of deepening the understanding and appreciation of the cultural heritage that bonds all Armenians. It will also disseminate information with regards to the positive contribution of the Armenian community to the economic, social and cultural development of Cyprus.

In order to achieve the above objec-

Larnaca. The establishment of the center has been encouraged and welcomed by the authorities in Cyprus, as well as by leading members of the Greek Cypriot community, a fact reflected in the gracious agreement of the president of the Republic to personally inaugurate the center.

The building housing the center was designed by architect Merouzhian

Turkish Flag Might Be Reason For Clashes in Russian Town

TVER, Russia – Armenians and Azeris clashed in the town of Tver, law enforcement officials say, possibly because of the commemoration or denegration of the Armenian Genocide. On April 24, several Azeris drove along the streets in Tver with Turkish flags, which might have provoked a violent outburst with the local Armenians.

Of the 60 people involved in the melee, 23 were detained and seven were hospitalized with various degrees of injuries. Police are preparing to launch a criminal case.

Community News

Two AGBU Schools Host 12th Annual Student Exchange Program

LOS ANGELES and BUENOS AIRES — This February marked the 12th year of a unique student exchange program that AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School (MDS) in Los Angeles and AGBU Marie Manoogian Institute in Buenos Aires started in 1999. This educational program was initiated with the vision of bringing Armenian youth from different countries closer together and to expose them to the common values that bind all Armenians together.

Program coordinator Miriam Tabakian chaperoned the group of 17 Argentineans, who arrived in California to participate in a rich, diverse educational program tailored by the Manoogian-Demirdjian School's faculty. Visiting students took part in classes in English conversation, writing and literature, Armenian, art, computer, dance and sports. They enjoyed several outings to popular tourist attractions, including Disneyland, Universal Studios, the Norton Simon Museum and Magic Mountain and visited various AGBU landmarks, including the AGBU Pasadena Center and AGBU Vatche & Tamar Manoukian High School. The group also vis-



Students from AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School in Canoga Park, Calif., and AGBU Marie Manoogian Institute in Buenos Aires gathered in Southern California for the 12th AGBU student exchange program.

ited the Western Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church and met with the Primate, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian.

The three-week visit was capped off by an awards ceremony, led by MDS Principal Hagop Hagopian, Vice Principal Anahid Nalbandian, and program coordinator Vartouhy Kojayan. Prior to the awards ceremony, a *kochary* dance was presented, choreographed by students from the Marie Manoogian Institute. During the farewell event, MDS business manager Levon Keshishian reminded students of the message embedded in the AGBU anthem, stating, "Dear students both from Los Angeles and Buenos Aires, look around you here tonight and see how true the words of our beloved AGBU anthem are. All of you are the good news, there is no more sorrow, you are the new sun that has risen on our nation, and you and us holding hand in hand are rebuilding our nation and establishing new relationships."

After 21 educational and fun-filled days, the students from Buenos Aires returned home, having shared with their host students and families an experience that is sure to last a lifetime. AGBU Marie Manoogian Institute students will be reciprocating the exchange by hosting their AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School counterparts in the summer of 2012.



Participants in the Sainly Women's Day program at St. James Church of Watertown, Mass.

Across the Eastern Diocese, Women's Guilds Gather to Honor Sainly Women's Day

WATERTOWN, Mass. — Women's Guild chapters throughout the Eastern Diocese observed Sainly Women's Day earlier this month, with special services and programs commemorating the life of Lydia, a Biblical figure described in Acts 16, and of Sahagtookhd, the eighth-century Armenian poet and musician.

Women's Guilds members gathered from Pennsylvania to New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts and Wisconsin for a series of events on Saturday, April 2.

At the annual gatherings in five locations, the participants discussed how the lives of the saints can inform present-day life in the Armenian Church and society in general. These saintly examples are especially noteworthy as the Diocese prepares to inaugurate a yearlong focus on Lay Ministry.

St. James Church hosted a program for the New England region. The Rev. Arakel Aljalian, parish pastor, invited Laura Everett, the associate director of the Massachusetts Council of Churches, to offer the day's sermon.

Everett spoke about how Lydia and her followers became "the foundation of the church in Philippi." Lydia was a seller of dyed goods who converted to Christianity after hearing Paul preach outside the city of Philippi, and later offered her home as a place of worship and fellowship.

Turning to the life of Sahagtookhd — the sister of Bishop Stephen of Siunik, who lived in a convent, composed hymns and taught other women the music of the Armenian Church — Everett said that "the witness of her life shows a woman whose whole life was centered on God. There is no singular way to be a holy woman in the church. We are given many models for a holy life."

She also encouraged women to think about how they can spread the Christian message.

Also during the April 2 service at St. James Church, parishioners Nancy Kassabian and Hasmig Maserejian read the English and Armenian biographies of Lydia and Sahagtookhd, and Carol Babikyan offered a prayer to St. Mary.

A luncheon followed in the church hall, featuring remarks by Geri Denterlein. Denterlein is an executive consultant for businesses, non-profits and colleges. In the past, she served as the editorial director at WBZ News Boston, communications director for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and associate press secretary for former Gov. Michael Dukakis.

The diocesan vicar, the Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian, closed the afternoon with remarks and a benediction.

The day's program was organized by Yn. Natasha Aljalian, Carol Babikyan, Gail Boroyan, Liz Falzone, Lyn Kapilian, Nancy Kassabian, Janice Kavjian and Denise Takvorian. Participating churches included the Church of Our Saviour of Worcester, Holy Trinity Church of Cambridge, Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church of Providence, RI; Sts. Vartanantz Church of Chelmsford and the Armenian Church at Hye Pointe of Ward Hill.

Honoring the Ministry of the Faithful

In New Jersey, Holy Cross Church of Union City hosted a program, which drew some 135 people. The Very Rev. Vasken Karayan welcomed guests and offered a message about women's contributions.

Nubar Dorian, a longtime columnist and author, spoke about the importance of women in the Armenian Church and the Armenian home. He emphasized their role as the teachers to countless generations of young Armenians.

Linda Harutunian spoke on behalf of the Women's Guild Central Council. She said that each year during Sainly Women's Day commemorations, the various parishes collect funds, which help finance various diocesan projects. Past contributions have made possible the installation of a stained-glass window dedicated to St. Santoukht at St. Vartan Cathedral, the purchase of vestments for clergy, the publication of books and other initiatives.

AGBU's Antranig Dance Ensemble performed a series of traditional Armenian dances.

Participating parishes included St. Leon Church of Fair Lawn, NJ; St. Mary Church of Livingston, NJ; St. Thomas Church of Tenafly, NJ and St. Stepanos Church of Elberon, NJ.

In Racine, Wis., St. Mesrob Church hosted 120 women from the Diocese's Midwest regional parishes. The Rev. Hovhan Khoja-Eynatyan, pastor of St. James

see WOMEN, page 7

Armenian Assembly Salutes Hovannisian For Contributions To Scholarship

LOS ANGELES — The Armenian Assembly joined Los Angeles City Council President Eric Garcetti and Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Krekorian as they honored Dr. Richard G. Hovannisian on the occasion of the 96th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Aline Maksoudian of the Assembly's Western Region office was invited to deliver remarks on the occasion.

Speaking on behalf of the Assembly, Maksoudian noted that: "Dr. Hovannisian was a founding member and director of the Armenian Assembly. His daughter, Ani, and his son, Raffi, also served as directors of the Assembly. In addition, when the Assembly formed the Armenian National Institute, Dr. Hovannisian served as chairman of its Academic Council."

Hovannisian is the Armenian Educational Foundation Chair in Modern Armenian History and a professor of Armenian and Near Eastern History at the University of California, Los Angeles. Hovannisian is the dean of Armenian studies in the United States and is recognized nationally and internationally as one of the leading specialists in the field of Armenian history.

Maksoudian also hailed Hovannisian's many accomplishments, including more than 20 volumes covering the history of the Armenian Republic, the Armenian Genocide and the historic Armenian communities around the world.

In concluding her remarks, Maksoudian stated that "the Armenian Genocide is no longer the forgotten genocide of the 20th century and



From left, Los Angeles City Controller Wendy Greuel, Los Angeles City Council President Eric Garcetti, Dr. Richard Hovannisian, Los Angeles City Councilman Paul Krekorian

that is in no small part due to Prof. Richard Hovannisian."

Armenian Assembly Board of Trustees Vice Chair and Counselor Aram Kaloosdian stated: "This honor is well deserved and on behalf of the entire Armenian Assembly family I extend our heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Hovannisian, a truly remarkable individual who has enriched us all with his pioneering work."

Maksoudian attended the Los Angeles City Council session, wherein the council unanimously approved a resolution affirming the historical fact of the Armenian Genocide, and calling upon the Republic of Turkey "to end its decades-long campaign of Genocide denial."

"The history of the 20th century has shown the consequences of the world's failure to learn the lessons of genocide," Krekorian said. "Too often, we have seen that the world will continue to suffer genocide until we emphatically reject hate in all of its forms and hold accountable the perpetrators of all crimes against humanity. Today, Los Angeles recognized the 96th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and I was proud to stand with my colleagues on the City Council to honor the legacy of UCLA's Prof. Richard G. Hovannisian. Though he is a world-renowned scholar, Dr. Hovannisian's contributions are not just academic in nature. The insights he offers allow us to better understand our collective history and remind us all of the need to combat genocide and other human rights violations whenever and wherever they occur."



COMMUNITY NEWS

Stem Cell Donor Recruitment for Steve Bodozian Mobilizes Community Support

LOS ANGELES — On the evening of March 31 the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR) held a special recruitment drive in Glendale, seeking to find a bone marrow donor match for leukemia patient Steve Bodozian. The event took place at the Glendale Memorial Hospital Auditorium.

Bodozian, 26, suffers from acute myeloid leukemia (AML), a potentially-fatal bone marrow disorder. He is in critical need of a stem cell donor for saving his life through a bone

marrow transplant.

The Armenian community responded swiftly to the ABMDR's appeal for registering as stem cell donors and making monetary contributions. At the March 31 recruitment drive, more than 100 people registered as potential stem cell donors. The process was facilitated by a team of volunteers headed by Recruitment Officer Fimi Mekhitarian. Throughout the evening, they provided information and collected donor samples following a simple, non-

intrusive screening. The event was attended by Bodozian, his family and a large number of supporters from all walks of life.

"This was one of the most successful recruitment drives we've had in the recent past," Mekhitarian said. "Steve Bodozian's plight has moved the community into action, and we're all very gratified by the unflinch-

ing dedication of the youth."

The recruitment drive came on the heels of a similar event, held earlier in March in Orange County, as well as two fundraising events in Glendale. All of these previous events were likewise organized in support of Bodozian.

For more information, visit abmdr.am.



Steve Bodozian (third from left) with Glendale Memorial Hospital staff members and ABMDR volunteers

OBITUARY

In Memoriam: Alice Antreassian

(1922-2011)

Alice Eksouzian Antreassian, wife of the late Jack Antreassian, who gained fame among both the Armenian and American public as the pioneering author of Armenian cookbooks, died on April 14, after a long illness. She was 88.

Antreassian was born in New York on May 26, 1922, to Garabed and Esther, both from Peri in historic Armenia. Her mother was a Genocide survivor who lost most of her family in the deportations.

Once Esther and Garabed reunited in America, they settled in Hell's Kitchen, where their children were born: first Mary, then Alice, Simon and Johnny. The family later moved to Washington Heights.

Alice was introduced to her husband, Jack, by

loose-leaf binding and orange cover, was released in 1976 to a rave review by *New York Times* food critic Mimi Sheraton, who interviewed Alice personally and honored the book as one of the 10 best cookbooks of the year. Radio interviews with Patricia McCann and Joe Franklin followed, along with cooking demonstrations at the New York department stores Macy's and Lord and Taylor's.

Antreassian also made visits to parishes throughout the Diocese, lecturing and demonstrating. The "orange cookbook" became a staple on every Armenian family's bookshelf and gift list. Through several printings, it has raised tens of thousands of dollars for the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church.

She wrote a second cookbook, *Classic Armenian Recipes: Cooking Without Meat with Diramayr Mariam Jebejian*, and later *The Forty Days of Lent*, a compendium of Lenten meals and customs. Antreassian taught cooking at the Diocesan Cultural Center; during that time she served as chair of the Food Committee of the Diocesan Grand Bazaar and volunteered at the Friday Night Open House dinners.

She is remembered by all as an adventurous, modern woman with infectious energy. She was a young working mother long before it was common. At home, she loved being with her children, whether baking Armenian bread or planting in the garden. She enjoyed traveling and toured Armenia, Jerusalem, Lebanon, Iran, Europe and cross-country through America a few times, keeping detailed journals of each trip.

When her husband launched Ashod Press, a publishing program of Armenian literature, she worked side by side with him as consultant, proofreader, typist and even mail clerk. Antreassian was a feminist before it was a movement, and a devoted, hands-on grandmother. She was known for her great, sunny smile — the outer expression of an exuberant heart that so warmed all who knew her.

Tragically developing Alzheimer's disease, which incapacitated her during the last 15 years of her life, Antreassian was cared for by her entire family, especially her doting husband, first at her daughter's home and eventually in the New York Armenian Home and Ozanam Hall, a Catholic nursing facility.

She is survived by her sister, Mary, daughter, Elise, and son-in-law, Papken, son, Michael, and daughter-in-law, Brenda, and grandchildren, Kohar, Aris, Vahan and Adam.

In one of many poems he dedicated to her, her husband wrote of a joyous reunion after death: "the door is open let us go / enter now and I will follow / whispers not of sullen sorrow / only syllables of joy."



Alice Antreassian

his sister, Anne, a co-worker. Recalling it as love at first sight, they married in 1943 when Jack was on a military furlough, and after the war settled in Queens, where their children Michael and Elise were born. She worked at Fort Totten in Whitestone, and eventually as a legal secretary and then law office manager in New York City before retiring.

Throughout these years, Antreassian was an active member of the Armenian community, locally at her parish church of Holy Martyrs in Bayside, NY, and at the AGBU and the Diocese, supporting her husband's service in both organizations.

But it was when they thought of producing an Armenian cookbook as a Diocesan fundraiser that Alice found a new vocation as cookbook author and public speaker.

Armenian Cooking Today, with its hallmark

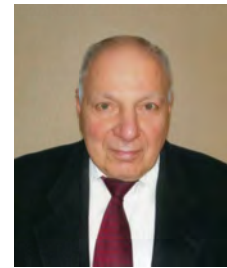
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COMMUNITY NEWS

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NAASR 57th Annual Assembly on May 14 To Feature Lecture by Taner Akcam

BELMONT, Mass. — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research will hold its 57th Annual Assembly of Members on Saturday, May 14, at the NAASR headquarters, 395 Concord Ave. The assembly will be convened at noon and lunch will be served at 12:15 p.m.

Following lunch, there will be a lecture by Dr. Taner Akcam, the Robert Aram & Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen & Marian Mugar Professor of Modern Armenian History and Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University. Akcam will speak on the subject of “The State of Armenian Genocide Research and Needs for the Future.”

Akcam has held the Kaloosdian/Mugar Chair at Clark since 2008. He is the author of 10 scholarly works of history and sociology, including *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* and *A Shameful Act: the Armenian Genocide and Turkish Responsibility*, as well as numerous articles in Turkish, German and English.

In 2010, Akcam partnered with NAASR and the University of Minnesota’s Ohannessian Chairholder Eric Weitz to organize the workshop “The State of the Art of Armenian Genocide Research: Historiography, Sources, and Future Directions” at Clark University’s Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. In the fall, the same organizers will present the one-day conference “Beyond the Armenian Genocide: The Question of Restitution and Reparation in Comparative Review.”

Following the luncheon and lecture, those attending the 57th Assembly of Members will be informed about NAASR’s ongoing efforts to further Armenian studies, research and publication. Reports will be presented by the Board of Directors on organizational, informational, academic and financial matters; and the election of directors will be held. In addition, there will be reports by the Assembly’s special committees on Nominations, Constitution and Rules, New Business and Resolutions and Auditing.

The chairmen of the special committees are Charles Sahagian of Needham, Nominating; Dr. Aram Karakashian of Waltham, Constitution and Rules; Lillian Etmekjian of Newton, New Business and Resolutions and Joseph Dagdigian of

Harvard, Auditing. The assembly will be chaired by NAASR Board Chairman Raffi P. Yeghiayan of Lexington, and Stephen Kurkjian of Manomet will serve as secretary of the assembly.

The assembly sessions are open to all NAASR members in good standing. Non-members may attend as observers.

The luncheon and subsequent program are open to the general public. However, luncheon reservations should be made by May 9 by calling NAASR or e-mailing hq@naasr.org.

Rev. Koop to Lead Seminar at Armenian Memorial Church

WATERTOWN, Mass. — The Armenian Memorial Church will host its eighth annual Christian Education Seminar on Saturday, May 7, with Rev. Dr. Normal Koop of the First Congregational Church of Woodstock, Vt. leading the discussions. He will discuss the topic “The Problem of Indwelling Sin – What God Has to Say” in two sessions. The program will go from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. with coffee served before the first session at 10 a.m. There will be a break with lunch served in the social hall followed by the second session.

The public is invited to attend. Admission is free, although donations will be appreciated.

This is the second year that the church has brought Koop to lead the seminar. Those who attended last year were moved and inspired by his presentation. He trained at the Stony Brook School, Eastern College, Eastern Baptist Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary, from which he earned degrees of Master of Divinity and Master of Theology. His expository writings bring a contemporary insight into the trusts of scripture.

Koop served as pastor of Deerfield Presbyterian Church in New Jersey and is presently pastor of the First Congregational Church of Woodstock.

The Armenian Memorial Church is located at 32 Bigelow Ave.

Women’s Guilds Gather to Honor Sainly Women’s Day

WOMEN, from page 5

Church of Evanston, Ill., delivered the day’s sermon.

“In this year of Lay Ministry, we focused on ways in which women could further the mission of the Armenian Church. Many profound results came out of those sessions,” said Meline Zeytoonian Grigorian, Women’s Guild Central Council advisor and Sainly Women’s Day coordinator, who also serves as the vice chair of the St. Mesrob Women’s Guild chapter.

Participating parishes included St. Gregory the Illuminator Church of Chicago; Sts. Joachim and Anne Church of Palos Heights, Ill.; St. George Church of Waukegan, Ill.; St. James Church of Evanston, Ill.; Holy Resurrection Church of South Milwaukee, Wis. and St. John the Baptist Church of Greenfield, Wis.

At Holy Trinity Church of Cheltenham, Penn., the local Women’s Guild chapter prepared a luncheon and welcomed guest speaker Maria Bakalian. Bakalian told the participants that

like Lydia and Sahagtookhd, everyone has a special gift to share with their church communities and larger society.

Holy Trinity’s sister parish, Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church of Wynnewood, also participated in the events, as did parishes representing the broader Armenian Christian community in Philadelphia: St. Gregory the Illuminator, Church of the Armenian Martyrs and St. Mark Church.

In upstate New York, parishioners at St. Peter Church of Watervliet took part in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and read the biographies of Lydia and Sahagtookhd on Sunday, March 13. They also sang the hymn *Antseenk Nuveeryalk*, which is dedicated to the fourth-century martyrs St. Hripsime, St. Gayane and their companions. A luncheon followed in the church’s Gdanian Auditorium.

St. Gregory the Enlightener Church of White Plains, NY, is planning to hold a special program on saintly women in the autumn.



Participants in the Sainly Women’s Day program at Holy Cross Church of Union City, NJ



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenia Marks Genocide Anniversary

ANNIVERSARY, from page 1

The stark memorial, perched on Tsitsernakabert Hill overlooking central Yerevan, is the focal point of the annual Genocide commemorations in Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora communities around the world.

"The Ottoman Empire implemented at the state level the program of elimination and expulsion of the Armenian people," Sargisian said in a traditional written address to the nation issued on the occasion.

"Throughout the process, at its every stage the murders, deportations, conversions and enslavement of the Armenians were viewed as routine trifles," he said. "As for foreign interventions, they failed to stop the perpetrators and in some instances pushed them towards even more gruesome acts."

Sargisian praised Turkish intellectuals and other prominent public figures who increasingly challenge the official Turkish version of the events of 1915.

Sargisian, however, condemned the denial of the Genocide by Turkey as a "a direct continuation of the Armenian Genocide. The official policy of Turkey carries on with the course of denial," he said. "Moreover, that policy becomes more 'sophisticated,' becomes more, so to speak, 'flexible,' and



President Serge Sargisian and other top state officials attend a prayer service led by Catholicos Karekin II at the Armenian Genocide memorial in Yerevan, on April 24.

World Council of Churches Releases A Statement on Armenian Genocide

NEW YORK — On April 14, the World Council of Churches (WCC), comprising 349 churches, released a message commemorating the Armenian Genocide, which is memorialized worldwide on April 24. The message, which appears on the WCC's website, marked the first time the WCC has officially made a public statement on the subject.

The Armenian Church has long been a member of the WCC and Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, ecumenical director at the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, and former president of the National Council of Churches, led the efforts in encouraging the WCC to comment publicly on the Armenian Genocide.

Remembering and honoring the 1.5 million victims, the WCC addressed the need for public recognition of the Armenians Genocide. Citing their own efforts at encouraging the world to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide, the World Council of Churches said, "Forgiveness does not mean forgetting but to look back with the intention to restore justice, the respect for human rights and relationships between perpetrators and victims."

Urging its member churches to remember Armenian Martyrs Day, which for the first time ever fell on Easter this year, the WCC said, "As we approach Easter Sunday this year, we call upon all brothers and sisters of faith in Jesus Christ to join with the Armenian people in offering prayers for Armenians and other victims of genocide."

Under the auspices of Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, Archbishop Vicken Aykazian along with Bishop Hovakim Manukian (director of Inter-Church Relations at Holy Echmiadzin) worked with leaders of the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches (CEC) on the Armenian Martyrs Day message.

The statement is cosigned by Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the WCC, and Rev. Viorel Ionita, interim general secretary of the Conference of European Churches. Visit www.oikoumene.org to read the full statement.

from time to time makes singular, formal propaganda steps."

"Any attempt to erase the tracks of a crime is a new crime," he added.

In a separate statement, Parliament

Speaker Hovik Abrahamian called on Ankara to "eliminate all legal, political and other impediments that do not allow the Turkish society to examine its past in an uninhibited manner." He also urged more foreign govern-

ments and parliaments to officially recognize the mass killings as genocide.

More than two-dozen nations, including France, Canada and Russia, have already done so.

Armenian Assembly Commends Congressman Engel and His Continued Efforts to Combat Denial of the Armenian Genocide

WASHINGTON — This week, Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY) raised the issue of the Armenian Genocide during the first oversight hearing held by the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia titled "Overview of US Policy toward Europe and Eurasia," reported the Armenian Assembly of America.

Engel cited the "hostile" nature of Turkey's relationship with Israel and highlighted numerous double standards by Turkey, including its demand for an apology from Israel, when we "can't get Turkey to apologize for the Armenian

Genocide."

"We commend Congressman Engel for his steadfast support for US affirmation of the Armenian Genocide," stated Assembly Board member Annie Totah. "Congressman Engel continues to speak out for truth and justice, and we look forward to working with him and his colleagues to ensure that the Armenian Genocide is never forgotten," added Totah.

Engel's remarks were made during the question-and-answer session with assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian Affairs, Philip H. Gordon. In his written remarks,

Gordon stated the following with respect to Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh: "In the Caucasus, we will continue with the Europeans to encourage normalization between Turkey and Armenia, and increase our engagement through the Minsk Group to help Armenia and Azerbaijan find a peaceful settlement to the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict. We believe that the United States and Europe must work together to avoid further conflict in Europe and help the countries in the region move towards a democratic future that includes peace and greater prosperity."

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Assembly Discusses Impact of Armenian Genocide on Descendants

Florida Atlantic University Libraries Host Month-Long Armenian Genocide Exhibit and Events

WASHINGTON — As part of the ongoing Armenian Genocide exhibition at the Florida Atlantic University (FAU) Wimberly Library, last week two South Florida community activists discussed the impact of the Armenian Genocide

ily's experience in Turkey and the effects of the Armenian Genocide on her family. Assembly Grassroots Director Taniel Koushakjian, an FAU alumnus, discussed the formation of Armenian-American identity and the post-genocidal effects felt in the Armenian community in the United States.

"It was overwhelming to see the high level involvement of the South Florida Armenian community in support of Armenian and human rights issues," stated Batmasian.

"The Armenian Genocide" film and panel discussion was sponsored by the Center for Holocaust and Human Rights Education (CHHRE) at FAU in conjunction with "The Greatest Crime of the War: Armenian Genocide During World War I," an exhibition on display through Wednesday, April 27, at the FAU Wimberly Library.

The exhibition displays the systematic murder of 1.5 million Armenians in Anatolia during the middle of World War I, between 1915 and 1916. The story is

told through 21 free-standing panels that showcase photographs, quotes from witnesses and the history and legacy of the genocide. The events and the exhibition, which is on loan from the Florida Holocaust Museum in St. Petersburg, are being hosted by FAU Libraries as part of Genocide Awareness Month, an observance during April to increase awareness and prevention of genocides. The Armenian

Genocide, the Holocaust, the Bosnian, Rwandan and Darfur genocides occurred within the last 100 years and are all commemorated in the month of April.

"It is important for our community to learn about and memorialize the victims of the Armenian Genocide just as we memorialize and educate about the Holocaust," said Rose Gatens, PhD, director of the FAU Center for Holocaust

and Human Rights on FAU's Boca Raton campus. "Remembering strengthens our commitment actively to prevent and intervene against the continuing scourge of genocide today."

The exhibit closed with a special guest lecture by Dr. Mary Johnson, senior historian with Facing History and Ourselves and curator of the Armenian Genocide exhibit, on Monday, April 25.



From left, Marta Batmasian, Taniel Koushakjian and Dr. Rose Gatens

on descendants of survivors, reported the Armenian Assembly of America. A capacity crowd attended the panel discussion, which followed the screening of a 30-minute excerpt from the PBS documentary, "The Armenian Genocide."

Marta Batmasian, a member of the Florida Department of Education Commissioner's Task Force on Holocaust Education, shared her fam-

Belmont Board of Selectmen Issue Armenian Genocide Proclamation

PROCLAMATION, from page 1

"It was 96 years ago on April 24, 1915 that the Turkish Ottoman government, premeditatedly and systematically began the genocide of the Armenian population on their native land of several millennia. It was orchestrated by Enver Pasha, Talaat Pasha and Jemal Pasha,

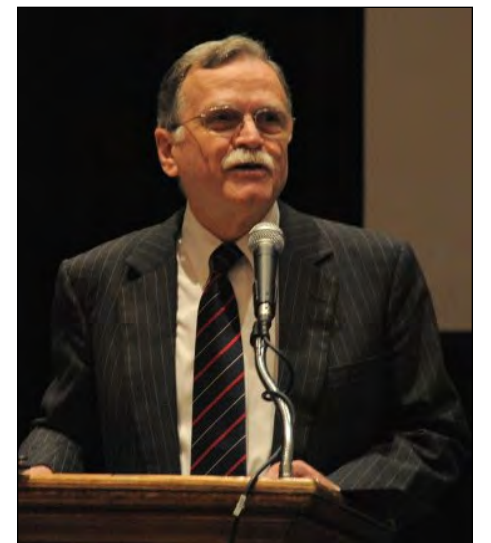
imize such tragedies, but maybe obviate them."

He then went into modern history, suggesting that Turkey, which espousing a Western-style democracy, still has laws such as Article 301 of its Penal Code, which makes punishable any denigration of Turkish history, including suggesting that a genocide had been committed. He also said that Turkey is currently subjugating its Kurdish citizens.

"We, as descendants of Armenian Genocide victims, believe that injustice done to our nation was not merely the genocide itself, but compounding and prolonging its denial for almost a century. It is a shame that in the 21st century, when atrocities of dictators and governments in Rwanda, Darfur and elsewhere are



Rev. Gregory Harutunian



Board of Selectmen's Chairman Ralph T. Jones

who ruled the Ottoman Empire and were the masterminds of this policy of extermination of the Armenians," he said.

He added, "It is known that today there is an Armenian apostate population in Turkey, whose ancestors accepted Islam rather than death or were converted when very young. This is another form of genocide, as stated during the recent lecture in Belmont by Dr. Taner Akcam," he said. "One of the Genocide survivors and a former pastor of the First Armenian Church of Belmont, Rev. Vartan Hartunian, said in an interview, 'The world is going through hell. Armenians have gone through hell and they know how to deal with it. Our story has to be known and when our story is known, it will help the world not only to min-

acknowledged and condemned, while the Armenian Genocide is still denied by the Turkish government."

Finally, the Rev. Gregory Harutunian of the First Armenian Church offered a prayer in which he thanked God for the Armenians' faith and courage.

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St. Mesrob Armenian Church to Observe Genocide Anniversary on May 1

RACINE, Wis. — St. Mesrob Armenian Church will observe the 96th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide on Sunday, May 1, beginning at 9:30 a.m. with a solemn Divine Liturgy and Requiem Service for the souls of more than 1.5 million Armenians who perished from 1915 to 1923. The blessing and sharing of the traditional memorial meal called "madagh" and a program will follow the services in the church hall.

The commemoration program will include the showing of the film, "The River Ran Red," written, directed and produced by the late filmmaker J. Michael Hagopian. The film, the last of a trilogy about Genocide, was voted Best International Historical Documentary by the New York International Film & Video Festival in 2009.

"The River Ran Red" is the epic search for survivors of the Armenian Genocide of 1915 along the Euphrates River. From his archives of 400 testimonies of survivors and eyewitnesses, Hagopian weaves a compelling story of terrifying intensity, taking the viewer from the highland waters of the river to the burning deserts of Syria and to the final resting place of those whose blood made the Euphrates run red.

Hagopian himself was a survivor of the Genocide. He dedicated his life to the visual documentation of the Turkish extermination of the Armenians in 1915. He established the Armenian Film Foundation in 1979 as a non-profit, educational and cultural organization dedicated to the documentation in motion pictures of Armenian heritage and life. In April 2010, the Foundation signed a historic agreement with the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Institute for the preservation and dissemination of the Genocide testimonies on the Internet.

He made 17 documentaries about Armenian heritage, culture and history. Among his films are "The Forgotten Genocide," for which he received two Emmy nominations, and "Where Are My People."



COMMUNITY NEWS

Dr. Rita Kuyumjian Presents Trilogy to Detroit

By Betty Apigian Kessel

DETROIT – Who better than a specialist in the field of mental health to research and write about the events of the Armenian Genocide?

The Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA), Detroit Chapter on Saturday, April 9, hosted Dr. Rita Kuyumjian, assistant professor of psychiatry at Montreal's McGill University to do her presentation of her three-volume work titled *Trilogy: April 24, 1915 Before and After – The Lives of The Survivors*. The event was held at the Hagopian World of Rugs Showroom in Birmingham.

Kuyumjian was introduced by Edmond Azadian, who asked for a moment of silence for Edgar Hagopian, the recently-deceased owner of the showroom which hosts many literary and musical events for the local Armenian commu-

Ottoman Turks planned to put an end to the matter of the Armenian Question. We know it as the Armenian Genocide. There were so many writers, lawyers, statesmen, intellectuals of every ilk, the cream of the crop as they are referred to, that perished at the hand of the Turks.

It was appalling that individual Armenians had been observing, spying on the activities of their fellow countrymen, compiling lists of their names and handing these lists over to the Turks for the roundup and eventual killings of hundreds of Armenian intellectuals. When Kuyumjian was asked by an audience member what happened to the Armenian traitors, she said they were killed by the Dashnags. A thin ripple of approval from the audience was audible.

That is another tragic part of Armenian history, how the Turks instilled fear in Armenians by promising them safety if they tattled or spied



Edmond Azadian and Dr. Rita Kuyumjian

nity.

Azadian also made a profound statement, saying, "Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan is always asking for proof of the Genocide and now it is here in Dr. Kuyumjian's books."

Allah himself could tell the Turks to acknowledge their crime against mankind and they still would persist in denying their culpability.

Regrettably, much of Armenian recorded historical information be it literary, musical or religious has been lost, destroyed or displaced. Kuyumjian's scholarly research has unearthed information enhancing our view and understanding of the ghastly events that took place before and after April 24, 1915.

We all have heard of the round up of Armenian intellectuals in Istanbul as to how the

on their own brethren.

Kuyumjian described the victims thusly: "These men were intellectuals, better educated than you or I." Many of them had attended the finest universities of Europe.

So what were they doing in Istanbul? Did they know their lives could be endangered? Someone during the question-and-answer period posed the question whether the Armenian intellectuals knew their drive for human rights for the Armenians could lead to their demise. She replied they surely did but as the intellectual leaders of their people they had a mission and bravely faced the consequences and we all now know what their fate was.

It is appropriate. Kuyumjian came to Detroit prior to the annual commemoration of April 24.



Student Olivia Kurajian reads from Dr. Rita Kuyumjian's book

She opened our eyes and ears to before unheard details of that period.

Kuyumjian's work is a valuable addition documenting Armenian history. Those of us who are born in this country can no longer complain not enough of our history is written in English for us to consume. We are fortunate we can avail ourselves of researched material, educating us and giving us a sense of reality of what

our people experienced during that period.

It is of utmost importance that we support all authors who take on the tedious task of doing translations into English by buying their books. It is another way of remaining vigilant against the denying Turks. Books written in English are vital for succeeding generations of youth of Armenian heritage to give them a proud sense of who they are.



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Armenian Genocide



Sunday, May 1, 2011

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Dr. Rita Kuyumjian presented her talk in Montreal.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Kuyumjian Trilogy Presentation in New Jersey on Andonian and Teotig

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

FAIR LAWN, N.J. — Dr. Rita Soulahian Kuyumjian presented her three new books concerning the Armenian Genocide at St. Leon Armenian Church here on April 13 in an event cosponsored by the church and the Tekeyan Cultural Association. This was one in a series of book presentations she has been making recently in the US and Canada. The trilogy of books was co-published by the Tekeyan Cultural Association and the Gomidas Institute in 2010 and dedicated to the 95th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

The annihilation of the lives of the victims of the Armenian Genocide, remembered each year by the Armenians and others, can easily be reduced to platitudes. Our knowledge of the Armenian Genocide often does not extend beyond a basic outline of events, combined with an instinctive revulsion and desire for some kind of justice to be seen on this earth. The few survivors that are still with us were children in 1915 and their personal memories are consequently restricted by their age at the time. Yet there are other resources that can help us better understand what the true nature of this event was. Memoirs written by adult survivors are among the most important, and luckily for those who do not read Armenian, one by one, many of the most important ones are being translated into English. In recent years, for



Dr. Anie Kalayjian introduces Dr. Rita Soulahian Kuyumjian.

example, the memoirs of Bishop Grigoris Balakian, Mikayel Shamdanyan and Patriarch Zaven Der Yeghiayan have been made accessible to a larger group of readers in new English-language publications.

Kuyumjian's efforts have contributed several more "classics" to this group of important works with the publication of Aram Andonian's memoirs on the arrest and exile of the Armenian intellectuals of Constantinople, and Teotig's collection of short biographies of the deported and murdered leaders of the Ottoman Armenians, accompanied by an introductory biography of Teotig. She also has written a short biography of Aram Andonian.

Dr. Anie Kalayjian, a trauma expert and psychologist who has spent much effort dealing with issues concerning the Armenian Genocide, introduced Kuyumjian to the audience. Kuyumjian is a graduate of the Yerevan State Medical Institute who continued her studies at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, and became an assistant professor of psychiatry at the latter institution. She is also director of the Psychiatric Outpatient Department of St. Mary's Hospital in Montreal. Her volunteer work with children after the 1988 Armenian earthquake led to her 1990 Armenian-language book *Hayasdanean husher hokepoyzhi orakren* [Memories of Armenia from the Diary of a Psychiatrist], which chronicled her experience working with children after the 1988



Dr. Kuyumjian with daughter-in-law, Taline, on the left

Armenian earthquake. She also is the author of a 2001 psychobiography of the composer Komitas Vartabed, titled *Archeology of Madness: Komitas, Portrait of an Armenian Icon*.

Kuyumjian accompanied her presentation with slides of maps and pictures of the individuals and places being discussed in order to facilitate understanding of sometimes complex series of events. She attempted to give the audience a basic understanding of the lives of Andonian and Teotig (and the latter's wife Arshagouhi), as well as the fate of the Armenian intellectuals of Constantinople.

Kuyumjian's interest in Komitas led her to discover 25 articles published by Aram Andonian in the newspaper *Arevmudk* between 1946 and 1947 in Paris about the arrest and deportation of Komitas and the other intellectuals of Constantinople in 1915. As Andonian himself was among those intellectuals, his testimony was vital. He described the beginning of the mental breakdown Komitas experienced.

Readers asked him to give a broad picture of those events, and he did. Like many Armenian periodicals, a full set of *Arevmudk* is not available in any one library, so Kuyumjian had to collect the articles from Beirut, Paris and Yerevan. The translation and editing of these articles turned into the volume *Exile, Trauma and Death: On the Road to Chankiri with Komitas Vartabed*. I can say as a historian that this is an extremely important source on the early period of the Armenian Genocide. It also makes for riveting reading, and is leavened with black humor. Many of the great names of the Ottoman Armenians are mentioned in this work (and for those unfamiliar with this period, Kuyumjian has provided basic identifying information in footnotes).

Kuyumjian pointed out in her talk that the deportation and death of the Armenian intellectuals was not only a big blow to Armenian society, but it was also a great loss to the Ottoman Empire. Many of these men had made great contributions to democracy and constitutionalism in the Empire, and were internationally renowned experts in various fields of knowledge.

In order to identify many of the Armenian intellectuals mentioned in Andonian's work, Kuyumjian turned to a work prepared by Teotig, *Memorial to the Martyred Intelligentsia*, which was published in 1919. This useful and readable work gives concise biographies in a paragraph or two of 763 of the intellectuals and leaders arrested on April 24, along with their pictures. It is a valuable reference work, and includes short eyewitness accounts of the fate of the intellectuals by Piwzant Bozajian and Mikayel Shamdanyan, and several other essays. Kuyumjian published this work, which was translated by Ara Stepan Melkonian, along with a biography of Teotig himself that she wrote, as a two-part volume titled *Teotig: Biography & Monument to April 11*.

Teotig, born Teotoros Labjinjian, dedicated his life together with his wife, Arshagouhi, to educating the Armenian public, as they felt this

was the proper path to Armenian liberation. He is best known for a series of yearly almanacs called *Amenun daretsoyts* or Everyone's Almanac, which appeared between 1907 and 1929, and have recently been republished in Aleppo. Teotig missed being arrested on April 24 because he was already in jail for two pieces he had published in his almanac for 1915. Not long after his release, he was rearrested and sent into exile. His wife, an accomplished author herself, kept the family together through these difficult years, but after Teotig's return, she died of tuberculosis. Teotig himself suffered not only from this and the torments of what he had witnessed and endured during the Genocide, but also from difficulties in finding suitable employment and poverty. He died in 1928 in Paris, and as there was no money to maintain his cemetery plot, it disappeared over the years and the exact site of his remains are unknown.

Kuyumjian's third volume is called *The Survivor: Biography of Aram Andonian*. Andonian was a sharp-tongued journalist and prolific writer and satirist. Not only was his own survival of the Genocide a veritable epic, but he was responsible for preserving some important documents on the Armenian Genocide obtained from an Ottoman official in Aleppo, Naim Bey, which he published in *Medz vojire* [The Great Crime]. Interestingly, Kuyumjian feels that the original Naim Bey materials collected by Andonian must have been stolen from the Armenian General Benevolent Union's Nubarian Library in Paris sometime after the first half of the 1960s. Andonian was the found-

ing curator of that library, and defended it when the Germans had occupied Paris during World War II and seized some of its volumes.

Andonian assembled many contemporary eyewitness accounts of the Genocide from Armenians after the British-occupied Aleppo. These are held at the same Nubarian Library, and are an invaluable resource for researchers. Andonian also published a collection of short stories in 1919 based on his experiences during the deportations called *Ayn sev orerun: Badgerner* [During Those Dark Days]. Kuyumjian includes one short story from this collection translated into English by Aris Sevag as an addendum to Andonian's biography.

While Kuyumjian's presentation was in English, she answered some questions from the audience in Armenian. She hopes that a new generation of Armenians will use these works as the raw material for new artistic creations. After the talk, Kuyumjian's daughter-in-law, Taline, read some excerpts from the books.

The evening ended with Hagop Vartivarian, chairman of the Greater New York branch of the Tekeyan Cultural Association, thanking Kuyumjian for her work, and Sarkis and Ruth Bedevian for their support of Armenian culture and the Armenian heritage. The Bedevians were among the financial supporters of the publication of Kuyumjian's trilogy, along with the Tekeyan Cultural Association and the grandchildren of Fr. Stepan Kuyumjian.

Kuyumjian made her presentation also in Toronto, Chicago and Montreal, each organized by the local Tekeyan chapter.



Rita Kuyumjian with Toronto Tekeyan Executive Committee members, from left, Azniv Salibian, Silva Benedict, Kuyumdjian, Elizabeth Ouzounian and Vazken Deukmedjian



COMMUNITY NEWS

President again Avoids Saying 'Genocide' in April 24 Statement

OBAMA, from page 1

"I have consistently stated my own view of what occurred in 1915, and my view of that history has not changed. A full, frank and just acknowledgement of the facts is in all our interests. Contested history destabilizes the present and stains the memory of those whose lives were taken, while reckoning with the past lays a sturdy foundation for a peaceful and prosperous shared future. History teaches us that our nations are stronger and our cause is more just when we appropriately recognize painful pasts and work to rebuild bridges of understanding toward a better tomorrow. The United States knows this lesson well from the dark chapters in our own history. I support the courageous steps taken by individuals in Armenia and Turkey to foster a dialogue that acknowledges their common history. As we commemorate the *Meds Yeghern* and pay tribute to the memories of those who perished, we also recommit ourselves to ensuring that devastating events like these are never repeated. This is a contemporary cause that thousands of Armenian-Americans have made their own.

"The legacy of the Armenian people is one of resiliency, determination and triumph over those who sought to destroy them. The United States has deeply benefited from the significant contributions to our nation by Armenian Americans, many of whom are descended from the survivors of the *Meds Yeghern*. Americans of Armenian descent have strengthened our society and our communities with their rich culture and traditions. The spirit of the Armenian people in the face of this tragic history serves as an inspiration for all those who seek a more peaceful and just world.

"Our hearts and prayers are with Armenians everywhere as we recall the horrors of the *Meds Yeghern*, honor the memories of those who suffered, and pledge our friendship and deep respect for the people of Armenia."

The statement did not make all Armenians happy.

"Words do matter, and today's statement on the eve of Easter and the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide was a missed opportunity to help heal the open wounds of the past," stated Armenian Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. "Genocide and its denial are pernicious, and the US needs to squarely address the consequence of genocide denial through unequivocal affirmation of this historical truth."

The Assembly's statement suggested that some have urged Obama not to use the term Armenian Genocide under the misguided belief that this will help promote normalization between Turkey and Armenia. "Last year, Turkey had every opportunity to honor its public commitments as embodied in the Protocols signed between Turkey and Armenia, but instead consistently undermined and derailed normalization efforts," the statement read.

Also unhappy was the Armenian National Committee, whose chairman, Ken Hachikian said in a statement, "Despite his repeated, detailed and unambiguous pledges to recognize the Armenian Genocide, the president offered only euphemisms and evasive terminology to describe the murder of over 1.5 million men women and children — effectively keeping in place the gag rule imposed by the Turkish government on the open and honest discussion of this crime. In refusing, under foreign pressure from Turkey, to his honor his pledge, he again fell far short of his own view, as voiced during his campaign, that America deserves a president who uses the term 'genocide' to convey the full factual, moral, legal and contemporary political meaning of this crime against all humanity."

While the Armenians were not happy, neither was Turkey, whose foreign ministry issued a statement condemning the use of the term "Meds Yeghern."

(Today's Zaman contributed to this report.)

Thousands Join in Protest Calling on Obama To Honor Armenian Genocide Pledge

President Obama's Trip to California Comes on the Eve of April 24, the International Day of Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide

LOS ANGELES — More than 1,500 Armenian-American and anti-genocide activists flooded the streets of Culver City on Thursday, April 21 to protest President Barack Obama's failure to honor his pledge to recognize the Armenian Genocide, reported the Armenian National Committee of America-Western Region (ANCA-WR).

The protest, which took place in front of Obama's campaign fundraiser at the Sony Picture Studios, was organized by the



Holding a sign urging the US to recognize the Armenian Genocide

Armenian Genocide Community Task Force and included Grammy Award-winning artist Serj Tankian along with Armenian-American community leaders and activists, young and old, from throughout the Southland. Armenian-American TV icon Kim Kardashian alerted her 7.2 million twitter and blog followers about the



Singer Serj Tankian participated in the rally.

demonstration and encouraged them to participate in Easter Sunday's National Day of Prayer commemorating this crime.

"As President Obama embarks on his re-election campaign, the Armenian American community, anti-genocide activists and people of good conscience are still waiting for him to demonstrate Presidential leadership to fulfill his 2008 promise by reaffirming the Armenian Genocide," stated ANCA Western Region Chairman Andrew Kzirian.

Tankian led the energized crowd in chants of "As president, I will recognize the Genocide," referencing Obama's January 18, 2008 statement pledging to call this evil by its rightful name. With the international day of commemoration of this crime just days away on April 24, protesters called on the president to visit the Armenian Genocide Martyrs Memorial, located just miles away in Montebello.

One demonstrator made a powerful statement without uttering a word by coming dressed up as the Statue of Liberty with a Turkish flag covering her mouth and holding a sign urging President Obama to "End Turkey's Gag Rule over America - Recognize the Armenian Genocide." The costume and the sign reference the unspoken gag rule Turkey has placed on the United States Administration, through threats and intimidation, from speaking publicly and honestly about the Armenian Genocide.

In a series of letters and statements issued as senator and candidate, Obama pledged to clear-

ly and unequivocally end US complicity in Turkey's Genocide denial and properly recognize this crime against humanity. He has yet to honor that pledge, resorting to euphemistic language to describe the murder of over 1.5 million Armenians by the Ottoman Turkish government from 1915-1923. The complete set of then-Senator Obama's statements on the Armenian Genocide are can be found at: http://anca.org/change/docs/Obama_Armenian_Genocide.pdf.

The protest was part of a series of events commemorating the Armenian Genocide in the Southland. On Saturday, community members gathered at the Armenian Genocide Martyrs Monument at Bicknell Park in Montebello for a commemorative event, which was followed by a candle-light vigil and concert at the same location.

On Easter Sunday, Armenian-Americans gathered for a protest at the Turkish Consulate on Wilshire Boulevard to participate in a National Day of Prayer in celebration of Easter and in honor of the Armenian Genocide.

For the first time in 150 years, Easter and April 24 fell on the same day, and people of faith all over the world are being asked to pray with Armenians as a part of "Resurrection and Recognition: National Day of Prayer on April 24." The Conference of European Churches and World Council of Churches have called on their member churches to pray with Armenians this Easter for the resurrection of the Armenian people from the ashes of Genocide.

Haverhill Observes 96th Martyrs' Day

HAVERHILL, Mass. — Representatives of the Greater Haverhill- and Southern New Hampshire-Armenian community turned out April 12 for a traditional Martyrs' Day commemoration at Church at Hye Pointe.

By Tom Vartabedian

New pastor Der Vart Gyozaian conducted a memorial service before the *khachkar* as gatherers bowed their heads in prayer before a whiff of holy incense that filled the air.

Father Vart, as he's affectionately known, welcomed the modest crowd and stressed the importance of commemorating such an anniversary. He commended the city for promoting genocide awareness.

Mayor James Fiorentini issued a proclamation giving thanks to the martyrs who gave their lives toward the foundation of a better society and religious freedom.

"The Armenian immigrants who settled in Haverhill paved the way toward a more productive community in every facet of life," he brought out. "They have lived in dignity and followed democratic principals while strengthening the ethnic fabric of our economy."

The commemoration was organized by City Council secretary Barbara Arthur.

A reception followed in the mayor's office.



The City of Haverhill conducted its 96th annual Martyrs' Day commemoration with a memorial service and mayor's proclamation April 12 at Church at Hye Pointe. Taking part were Rev. Vart Gyozaian, the church's new pastor, with Yeretskin Lusine holding 8-month-old daughter Mari, and Mallory and Meredith Amirian, both 5, with their father City Councilor Sven Amirian. (Tom Vartabedian photo)



COMMUNITY NEWS

Rep. Niki Tsongas Reaches out to Armenians

By Tom Vartabedian

LOWELL, Mass. — US Rep. Niki Tsongas was faced with a dilemma April 16. She had accepted an invitation to address a gathering of Merrimack Valley Armenians commemorating the 96th anniversary of the Genocide.

A day before, she received word that the

remains of a World War II veteran were being shipped to her city with a funeral and fly-over planned.

She managed to meet both commitments, choosing first to march with a contingent along downtown Lowell and issue a citation before rushing off to the military call.

In a prepared statement, Tsongas pledged her full support to the Armenian community of America as a third-term representative of the Fifth Congressional District.

"As a member of the Armenian Congressional Caucus, I look forward to continue promoting the mutual interests of our two countries and celebrate our rich shared history," she pointed out. "I will continue to work to see that the mass murders by the Ottoman Empire against the Armenians are appropriately recognized as genocide through the passage of the long-overdue Armenian Genocide Resolution in Congress."

The resolution calls upon the United States to "accurately characterize the systematic and deliberate annihilation of 1.5 million Armenians as Genocide and to recall the proud history of United States intervention in opposition to the Armenian Genocide."

Tsongas said she will also support US investments that have helped spur Armenia's economic growth and advance the development of Armenia's democratic institutions while also helping the people of Armenia survive, despite Turkish and Azeri blockades.

"It is critical that the United States demonstrate appropriate diplomacy and pressure to improve relations between Armenia and Turkey," she added. "I'm hopeful that with American leadership, normalization may soon take place. Commemorating this solemn anniversary help makes the Merrimack Valley a more enriched ethnic community."

The observance kicked off with a downtown procession, led by a color guard from the Sam Manoian Post, Armenian-American Veterans of Lowell. Children from Sts. Vartanantz Church and St. Gregory Church held banners and took a pro-active role at the flag-raising ceremony, which culminated the program.

Mayor James Milinazzo announced plans for a Genocide memorial to be erected by the flagpole as a tribute to the 1.5 million martyrs as well as the many who escaped the Genocide and immigrated to Lowell.

"They became an asset to the growth of our economic and social fabric," he pointed out. "The



US Rep. Niki Tsongas (second from right), and, from left, Rev. Khachatur Kesablian, Mayor James Milinazzo, City Councilor Rita Mercier and Rev. Karekin Bedourian, march along with Merrimack Valley Armenians in downtown Lowell during a Genocide observance April 17 conducted by the Armenian National Committee of Merrimack Valley.

growing Armenian community developed diversity that promoted the formation of churches, social and political organizations, promoting healthy religious values and strong civic pride."

Stephen Mesrobian, Eastern Region vice-chairman, Armenian National Committee of America, said declaration of the Armenian Genocide must be a bigger issue in the 2012 elections.

"Armenian-Americans need to be extra vigilant," he said. "Genocide unrecognized and unpunished will only lead to genocide repeated."

Mesrobian noted that for the first time since 1915, April 24 falls on Easter Sunday, making matters more offensive. He called for the three R's: recognition, restitution and reparations.

"Only by getting back our historic lands illegally confiscated by Turkey and paying restitution to the Armenian nation will we be able to close this dark chapter in human history and move on," he concluded.

Two student speakers represented their generation with class.

Representing the North Andover AYF was Olivia Barberian, who compared the Genocide to everyday tribulations in our society.

"Why do bad things happen to good people?" she questioned. "We all share a common burden.

To be Armenian means so much more than having the same heritage. We lean on each other more than ever before in this generation to fight for those before us.

"The next time something bad occurs, never think there isn't a reason to come back 10 times stronger. The past may be gone but until it is settled, we won't stop fighting toward a brighter future," she continued.

Taleen Kalajian spoke on behalf of the ACYOA of Sts. Vartanantz Church, pointing to the devastation suffered by her own family in 1915.

"The Genocide and its atrocities were not able to crush the passion of being good Christian Armenians," she brought out. "It is up to the youth of today to take on this challenge of creating a new Armenia by living our identity through faith, language and culture.

"We must be staunch protectors of Armenian rights and the rights of our martyrs — to be remembered with dignity and know that the truth of their suffering will be our cause forever," she resumed.

Prayers were said by Rev. Khachatur Kesablian and Rev. Karekin Bedourian. A reception followed inside City Hall, organized by the Lowell ARS and Sts. Vartanantz Women's Guild.

NY and NJ High School Students Win Armenian Genocide Commemoration Essay Contest

NEW YORK — High school and college students across the country were invited to address the question, "How can International Recognition of the Armenian Genocide Help Prevent Future Crimes Against Humanity?" in the fourth annual Armenian Genocide Commemoration Contest co-sponsored by the Knights and Daughters of Vartan and Facing History and Ourselves.

A panel of judges selected first-place winner, Jeremy Majerovitz, Brooklyn, Stuyvesant High School, NY; second-place winner, Gerald Nelson, Brooklyn, Stuyvesant High School; third-place winner, Samuel Levine, Riverdale, Stuyvesant High School and honorable mention, Katrice Karanfilian, Oradell, NJ, Bergen County Academies in Hackensack, NJ.

The winners will receive their awards and be recognized at the 96th Anniversary Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide and Holocaust Remembrance Day event to be held in Times Square on Sunday, May 1, from 2-4 p.m.

In his conclusion, first-place essay winner Majerovitz declares, "Finally, recognition of the Armenian Genocide would bolster international human rights law. At the moment, various countries refuse to recognize the Armenian Genocide due to individual state interests. Turkey refuses to recognize the Genocide because it would reflect poorly on itself; the United States does not recognize the Genocide because it desires access to Turkish airspace. By failing to recognize the Armenian Genocide, states place their own national interest above the interests of international law and human rights, and in doing so, undermine the entire

Genocide Commemoration to Include Holocaust Remembrance on May 1

TIMES SQUARE, from page 1

lawsuits against New York Life and other insurance companies for policies issued to Armenians living in Turkey prior to the Armenian Genocide; Rep. Anthony Weiner (D-NY) and New York City Comptroller John C. Liu.

Rivitz, daughter of Holocaust survivors, said, "As descendants of survivors, we all suffer the insult of the deniers. It is critically important to commemorate the millions of people that perished during the Armenian Genocide and the

Holocaust and listen to the survivors' first hand accounts since they are a precious dwindling resource. Time must not be allowed to dim memory, through this remembrance those who perished shield the living. It is also essential for young people to get involved and learn about the histories of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust in order to strengthen their cultural identities and make certain never to let history repeat itself."

The 96th Commemoration is organized by the Mid-Atlantic chapters of Knights &

Daughters of Vartan and co-sponsored by Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Armenian Assembly of America, the Armenian National Committee of America, the Armenian Council of America and ADL-Ramgavars. Participating organizations include the Diocese of the Armenian Church, the Prelacy of the Armenian Church, the Armenian Missionary Association of America, the Armenian Catholic Eparchy for US and Canada, Mid-Atlantic Armenian Church Youth Organization of America and the Armenian Youth Federation.

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Arts & Living

Florence Avakian, Dennis Papazian on CUNY TV Program

NEW YORK – Prof. Dennis Papazian and journalist Florence Avakian were interviewed about Armenia on the popular “Independent Sources” City University Television program, sponsored by the City University of New York. The program, which was shown several times in March on Channel 75, has an audience of over two million.

Producer and host Vianora Vinca focused the discussion on the creation of a new house for Armenia’s parliament with representatives of the Armenian Diaspora, a concept that was revealed recently by Armenia’s Minister of the Diaspora Dr. Hranoush Hagopian during her trip to California.

Avakian pointed out that the idea is still very new, and that a constitutional amendment would be needed, approved by at least one-third of Armenia’s voting citizens in a referendum. She also explained that several constitutional amendments had been approved in 2005, including one taking away the ban on dual citizenship.

There are many questions to be resolved on this new proposal, continued Avakian, including who would be the diasporan representatives of this new house; how would they be selected; would it be necessary for them to live in Armenia; would they need to become citizens of Armenia and, very importantly, how would the people in Armenia feel about this concept?

Papazian briefly explained the history of the Armenian Diaspora as a result of the Genocide, as well as its current strength and importance. He pointed out the precarious position of Armenia today, a small country without natural resources landlocked between Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Papazian pointed out that this newly-proposed parliamentary body would have little power unless the members had a power base in Armenia and were prominent in their home countries. He reiterated the problem of selection of these representatives. Would they be a sounding board of diasporan opinion, adding that the Armenian lobby in the United States is powerful, and Armenia needs the Armenians of Russia and the US.

Papazian is professor emeritus and founding director of the Armenian Research Center at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. He is also the founding director of the Armenian Assembly and was chairman of the Board of Directors of the Alex Manoogian cultural foundation.

Avakian is a United Nations journalist, an accredited member of the UN Correspondents Association (UNCA), and a freelance writer based in New York. At the UN, she has interviewed several world leaders, and has had her articles published in the top American newspapers, including *The New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Christian science Monitor*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Baltimore Sun*, Hearst Feature Service, among many others. She is also the English-language news reporter on the Armenian Radio Hour of New Jersey.

Jon Voight Presents Parajonov-Vartanov Award To Jean Vigo’s Daughter

LOS ANGELES – Oscar-winning actor Jon Voight presented the 2011 Parajanov-Vartanov Institute Award honoring French cinema icon, Jean Vigo (1905-1934), to his daughter and Paris-based film critic Luce Vigo at Beverly Hills Film Festival’s closing awards ceremony held at the Four Seasons Hotel, on Sunday, April 10.

Oscar-winning film director Martin Scorsese sent a letter to the Parajanov-Vartanov Institute on the occasion of the institute’s Jean Vigo retrospective at the University of California Los Angeles with words about Jean Vigo, Sergei Parajanov (1924-1990) and Mikhail Vartanov (1937-2009), all of whom were non-conformists, struggled with censorship, left a brief filmography, remain underrated yet revered by leading international intelligentsia, media and cineastes.



Nazig Tchakarian

AMAA Benefit Concert To Feature New York-Area Musicians

NEW YORK – Nearly 9,000 children in Armenia and Karabagh, who attend summer camps, organized and sponsored by the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), will once again benefit from the proceeds of a Spring Concert to be presented by the AMAA’s Armenia Summer Camp/Christmas Committee. Since 1992, the AMAA has operated two overnight summer camps in Armenia and Karabagh and 46 day camps in various towns throughout Armenia and Karabagh. Most of the campers come from impoverished households and are able to enjoy some fun and relief for free, as the AMAA does not charge for the camps.



Hayk Arsenyan



Natalie Aroyan

In 2008, she completed a four-year post-graduate diploma in opera at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. In the fall of 2009, Aroyan commenced her professional see AMAA, page 15

Pianist Miniona Petrosyan Delights Her Audience

By Tatoul Badalian

ARLINGTON, Mass. – On Palm Sunday, Boston’s music lovers were delighted when Miniona Petrosyan, a young pianist visiting from Geneva, took to the stage. She began with Haydn’s *Sonata in E Minor Hoboken XVI*, and by the time she was half way in the first movement of Sergey Prokofiev’s *Sonata, Op.14*, I felt the extraordinary gift of Petrosyan. Her choice of Babadjanian’s *Elegie* followed by Chopin’s *Ballade 3* made this recital one of the best musical experiences I have had.

Organized by the Amaras Art Alliance, this free recital was held at the Armenian Cultural Foundation and attended by more than 100 music enthusiasts.



Pianist Miniona Petrosyan

Amaras, under the heading of “Young Performers Series,” holds these concerts annually to promote young and talented musicians.

Born in Yerevan, Petrosyan began studying the piano at a very young age. She started attending the Tchaikovsky Music School at age 5 and is a graduate, with honors, of the Komitas State Conservatory in Yerevan, receiving her master’s in piano with distinction. Petrosyan continued her studies with Dominique Weber at the Geneva Conservatory, where she obtained her teaching degree with high honors. Currently, she is preparing her master’s interpretation at the Haute Ecole de Musique of Geneva. In 2009, she received the Gabriel de Agostini Award in Geneva.

This program began with Komitas’ *Garuna* on the piano, performed by Nicholas Orchanian, a senior at Waltham High School, who will also perform on Sunday, May 15, as part of Our Young Stars presentation, which Amaras organizes annually. This year’s performance, dedicated to music teachers, will be held at the Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, 200 Lexington Ave., Belmont. As in last year, proceeds will benefit art programs at the high school in Aregnadem, a village near the Turkish border in Armenia. In addition to 15 to 18 children performing, the Serenade String Ensemble and the Armenian Sisters’ Academy Children’s Music Ensemble will also perform.

To find out more, visit AmarasOnline.com or AmarasArt@aol.com.



ARTS & LIVING

Armenian Artist Exhibits at Milwaukee Gallery

By David Luhrssen

MILWAUKEE (ExpressMilwaukee.com) – The members of Milwaukee's Armenian community who gathered for the April 8 opening reception of Arpig (Kalenjian) Weitzer's exhibit at one of the city's major galleries, DeLind Gallery of Fine Art, were not surprised to find flowers everywhere. Her exhibit, called "The Artist's Garden," is a collection of 25 floral watercolors. Many patrons were already familiar with Weitzer's work from her mural of Armenia in the culture hall of St. John the Baptist Armenian

Church, which depicted a landscape blooming with flowers in the foreground of Mount Ararat. Weitzer also executed the church's stained-glass windows from traditional iconography and incorporated flowers into the designs.

An Armenian from the Black Sea coast, Weitzer grew up in a place of citrus groves and, yes, many flowers. "We always had flowers in our garden," she recalls. And though some people discouraged her interest in pursuing art as a career, creative expression was all around her. "Papa always liked to draw but he never went to school for it – he was told it wasn't a real profession," she says. "My grandma was always weaving and

sewing and taught those things in school. She was an inspiration for me."

An elaborate network of art schools starting at the junior high level, flourished during the Soviet period, providing excellent art training. Weitzer was a product of that system, graduating from Moscow's College of Applied Arts in 1991 just as the Soviet Union dissolved. Her brother, Artur Kalenjian, also an artist, immigrated to the US and established a business in Milwaukee and Chicago for custom crafting and building. He encouraged her to follow him. While applying for her visa at the US embassy she met her future husband, Joe Weitzer, an American traveling in Russia. The years

since have been spent in the Milwaukee area, where she taught art at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and accepted commissions for art projects. "I like watercolors because they are more challenging," she explains. "With oil painting you can go over it again and again. With watercolors you have to get it right from the beginning."

And why always flowers? "I get great comfort from them," she says. "They make me happy when I'm frustrated or angry. When everything looks gray, I can go to the park, or in the middle of winter go to a book and look at pictures of flowers. They give me peace."

The Artists Garden will be on display through April 30.

AMAA Benefit Concert To Feature New York-Area Musicians

AMAA, from page 14

studies diploma at Mannes College, NY. While at Mannes she performed the role of Amelia in an Opera Studio Scenes Production of "Un Ballo in Maschera" by Verdi, the role of Fiordiligi in their main stage production of Mozart's "Così fan tutte" and in her final year she played Annina in Menotti's "The Saint of Bleeker Street" and Alice in Verdi's "Falstaff," under the baton of Colaneri.

New York-based pianist and composer Arsenyan, a native of Armenia, is a laureate of numerous international piano and composition competitions. He has appeared in recitals in the United States, Europe, South America and in Armenia. Currently Arsenyan is on the faculty at the New York University Tisch School of the Arts. He holds a doctorate in musical arts in piano performance and pedagogy from the University of Iowa and a master's degree from the Russian Gnssin Music Academy in

Moscow. In 2007, he received a full-tuition Yevgeny Kissin Scholarship for the Professional Studies performance certificate at the Manhattan School of Music.

Arsenyan also studied piano at L'Ecole Normale de Musique et Danse de Paris / Alfred Cortot, and Conservatoire National de Région D'Aubervilliers La-Courneuve in Paris. In 1993, Arsenyan became a member of the French Society of Authors and Composers (SACEM) and two collections of his original works were published in Paris. In 2000, he became a member of the Ararat International Academy of Sciences in Paris, and he currently serves as the representative of the academy in New York. Several of his original works have been choreographed by the dance departments of the University of Iowa and New York University.

Nazaryan emerged onto the classical music scene with his debut recital at the Weill Hall, Carnegie Hall as a soloist and a chamber musi-



Amber Docters van Leeuwen

String Quartet and Emerson String Quartet. She is currently a doctoral candidate at the Stony Brook University, where she studies with Philip Setzer and Soovin Kim.

Docters van Leeuwen began to study the cello at age 8. In 1992, she began her cello lessons at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague with Monique Bartels and later continued her studies at the Conservatory of Amsterdam with Maarten Mostert. In 2003, she started her bachelor studies under the guidance of Dmitry Ferschtman at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague. In 2007, she finished her bachelor's degree with honors and with the help of the Fulbright Foundation, continued her studies in New York at Stony Brook University on a full scholarship. Docters van Leeuwen received her master's degree from the Manhattan School of Music where she studied with David Geber and received the President's Award twice. She has been awarded the Pablo Casals Award and the Van Lier Fellowship by the Manhattan School of Music. On February 13, she had her debut concert at Weill recital hall. She is a prizewinner of several solo and chamber music awards and has been named a recipient of the 2010 Samuel Mayes Memorial Cello Award by the Tanglewood Music Center.

For more information or to purchase tickets, contact Louisa Janbazian (AMAA), Shakeh

cian in March 2008. Other solo engagements after that include a solo recital in McAllen, Texas and concerts in Lincoln Center. Chamber music experiences include a Middle Eastern tour with a piano quartet, concerts in Las Vegas Music Festival, the Steinway Hall, the United Nations, Chautauqua Music Festival and Singapore. He returned from Mexico in September 2007 where he was a guest violist at the Chihuahua Symphony Orchestra. He has also been a member of the Chamber Orchestra of New York since January 2008. He has performed with the Juilliard School Orchestra in Carnegie Hall, in Avery Fisher Hall and in Spoleto Music Festival in Italy. He has also completed the Suzuki Violin Teacher Training program at the School for Strings in New York City and has taught Suzuki Violin at the Brooklyn College Preparatory Center and the Music Institute of Long Island. In May 2006, Nazaryan received a bachelor of music degree and in May 2009, a master of music degree from the Juilliard School where he studied with Samuel Rhodes.

Tchakarian has given recitals throughout Europe and the United States. She made her Carnegie Hall debut in May 2008, and also performed there in October 2009 and December 2010. An award winner of national and international competitions, she has participated in music festivals, as well as in master classes. She is currently on the faculty of the International Festival-Institute at Round Top and performs as concertmaster of the Texas Festival Orchestra. Tchakarian has performed as a soloist with several orchestras in Europe and the United States. She holds a master's of music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music and a bachelor's of music degree from the Louisiana State University. Her principal violin and chamber music teachers include: Paul Kantor, Kevork Mardirossian, Peter Salaff, Cavani



Aleksandr Nazaryan

Kadehjian (Armenian Evangelical Church in New York), Elizabeth Aynilian, Lily Babigian Rosemarie Ashbahian or Tamara Shamlian or e-mail amaa@amaa.org.

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ARTS & LIVING

Young Talents at Providence Music Series

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — As part of the Music Appreciation Series, the Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church, under the direction of conductor and composer Konstantin Petrossian, presented the debut of several talented performers. This performance took place on April 9, in the Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson St.

Zachary Haroutunian is a student of piano at the New England Conservatory of Music. Haroutunian has an ambitious schedule which has him performing throughout the region. Listening to him play the *Brahms Rhapsody* in

already won several competitions. He melded with his violin so that it was difficult to discern the artist from the instrument. Hovsepien will certainly go on to win many more competitions.

Sevag Khatchadourian is an exciting vocalist of diverse genres. His pleasant, easy crooning style was very relaxing and enjoyable. He also gave a beautiful performance of Petrossian's *Hayastan*. He performs in the greater Boston area. He has a love of singing and songwriting as part of his musical expression.

Nelli Balian and Alexandra Martirosian were the surprise debut performers of the evening.

Their rendition of Rossini's *Cat's Duet* was extremely enjoyable. Although this amusing performance was presented with ease, it is quite challenging. Balian is a seventh grade student whose interests are varied. They include music, arts, design and gymnastics. Martirosian is a seventh grader who not only studies voice and piano, but also she excels in math having won several awards.

Levon Hovsepien, piano accompanist, is an accomplished musician. He graduated from the Komitas Conservatory. He has received widespread acclaim abroad as well as being lauded in the United States. He has also made many well-received appearances as a piano soloist.

This festive evening ended with the members of the audience and the musicians mingling over refreshments provided by the Cultural Committee.

— Shirley Ventrone



Haig Hovsepien (violin)

g minor was reminiscent of rain falling upon a pool of still water. There was an indescribable fluidity felt as his fingers merged with the piano. He will be performing, this spring, at Jordan Hall. This young man has a bright future.

Haig Hovsepien is a 12-year-old, multi-faceted musician who, along with the violin, plays the piano, *shvi*, clarinet and saxophone. This young man is an immensely gifted individual who has



Nelli Balian and Alexandra Martirosian accompanied by Levon Hovsepien



Sevag Khatchadourian sings, accompanied by Levon Hovsepien.



Author Garin Hovannisian visits the academy's second-grade classroom before speaking to the 4th - 8th grade students.

Young Hovannisian Talks about *Family of Shadows* at ASA

RADNOR, Penn. — Author and journalist, Garin K. Hovannisian, discussed his book, *Family of Shadows: A Century of Murder, Memory and the Armenian-American Dream*, with the Armenian Sisters' Academy's students in grades 4 through 8.

Hovannisian explained that while the book covers a century of his family's history, it is in many ways the larger story of the Armenian people. He chronicles how his great-grandfather, grandfather and father all needed to leave their environments (one forcibly, two voluntarily) to fulfill their dreams. Hovannisian also explained that in writing the book, he realized his childhood wish to be a detective and magician.

His educational presentation engaged the students who had numerous questions for him afterwards. To learn more about the Academy, visit www.asaphila.org, or for more on *Family of Shadows*, see www.familyofshadows.com.



Garin Hovannisian addresses the academy's older students.

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Շաբաթ, Մայիս 21, 2011

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Books

Middle Eastern
Conflicts through
The Eyes of a Child

NEW YORK – In a remote Turkish vil-
lage, young Hanna’s days are filled with
merry adventures fueled by his father’s
tales of wonder and heroism. Mean-
while, his nights are spent in
frightful vigil with his mother, as squads
of brigands stalk the village defended by
only his father and fellow villagers. De-
spite this precarious existence, Hanna
can imagine no other home until an
unimaginable tragedy strikes and life
as he knows it abruptly ends.
As his family splinters apart, Hanna is
thrust into an odyssey of lurking dan-
gers, dashed hopes and thwarted ambi-
tions. He finds refuge in a seminary in
Jerusalem, where, now known as Jonah,
he can cherish his heritage and new
identity. Yet this sanctuary is also
snatched away when Jonah finds himself
caught in the crossfire of the Holy City’s
unholy wars. Banished back to Istanbul,
Jonah narrowly escapes a campaign of
purges by the feared Turkish secret ser-
vice.
Resorting to a fugitive subsistence in
foreign lands, a despondent Jonah is
recruited by his former rival to join a
clandestine group. With the specter of a

Gray Wolves and White Doves
By John Balian
ISBN/EAN13:
1439267618/9781439267615
LCCN: 2009912830
Page Count: 426

hellish existence in a Turkish prison as
a constant threat, Jonah must choose
between abandoning his principles to
carry out a barbaric mission to exact
revenge, or find a new path to pursue
an improbable dream in the New World.
Steeped in ancient rituals, Middle
Eastern traditions and modern intrigue,
Gray Wolves and White Doves is a
unique, captivating story of a child’s
search for self amid rekindled feuds and
the turmoil of a changing world. This
novel is a riveting story of true life with
a panorama of colorful characters, exot-
ic locales and situations that jar the
senses. The engaging style and effort-
less writing vividly illustrate how com-
plex societal and religious rivalries,
shifting alliances and sinister deeds are
woven into modern-day experiences.
This book is an object lesson for those
who would lose hope in the face of
adversity. Never give in, never give up –
everything is possible.
Whether it is the bombing of the air-
port in Moscow, the ascendancy of
Turkey in the Middle East, the attack of
Israeli troops on a flotilla of Turkish
ships approaching Gaza, the arrest of
journalists in Turkey, the brutal crack-
down in Libya, the Sudan genocide, the
turmoil in Egypt, the Palestinian/Israeli
conflict or the simmering conflicts in
the Caucasus region of the former
Soviet Union, this novel educates and
sheds a light on these protracted and
never ending cycles of conflict.
Balian, MD is a graduate of Columbia
University and Tufts University School
of Medicine. Balian currently works as a
senior executive for a US-based global
corporation. Though his writing has
been widely published in trade journals,
Gray Wolves and White Doves is his
first novel.
To obtain a copy, visit johnbalian.com.

Voices of the Genocide

BY RUTH AROIAN

An echo I heard
From Euphrates River at first
Now it reverberates in a thunderous voice

Don’t forget us thrown here.
In bundles of six to die
Before we reach the age of five

Horror it was for worshippers
At the services in churches
As they were drenched with kerosene
And torched with fire to die

My grandfather along with others
Was hanged in the town square
When he was in his prime

They beheaded men
With bayonets, swords or knives
And stacked them
To show all
Of the pyramids they formed

On the death march
Many were ordered to take
That led most to die
In the deserts they walked
Including ma’s family of four
Who never made the border in time

Most lost their lives
And all they owned
Like my mother’s family
A silk mill, their mansion
And one filled with gold
And the orchards of a mile or so
They use an airport now
As I was told

Turkey, are you
Of the human race
As you caused Armenians to die
More than a million and a half
On the land you stole that they belonged?

Spring Lute

BY RUTH AROIAN

Are you listening
To the whispers of the spring
In the mornings
The dewy mornings
When the birds do blithely sing
Every bough sways a melody
Blades of grass shed tears
And I listen right along
Forgetting life and all its fears

C A L E N D A R

MASSACHUSETTS

- MAY 7 – **Spring Dance sponsored by the AWWA to benefit the Armenian Nursing Home.** Featuring the Jason Naroian ensemble at the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center, 47 Nichols Ave., Watertown, from 8 p.m. to 12 a.m. Tickets are \$25. For tickets, call Melanie Khederian at (617) 694-1057 or e-mail mkhederian@gmail.com
- MAY 21 – **“Hiking in Armenia’s Mountains, Valleys and Villages,”** an illustrated talk covering the Siunik area of Southern Armenia, given by Joe Dadgigian and Dik Dagavarian of Merrimack Valley, 6 p.m., ARS Community Center, 142 Liberty St., Lowell. Presented by the Lowell ARF Committee; dinner and program, \$20 adults, \$10 students.
- JUNE 4 – **Armenian Memorial Church Annual Fair and Silent Auction,** (rain or shine), meals served all day, delicacies table, 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown.

NEW JERSEY

- MAY 21 – **Tekeyan Cultural Association’s Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group presents comedy master, Krikor Satamian,** from Los Angeles, in a one-man stand-up comedy show, at 8 p.m. at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of St. John the Theologian, 353 E. Clinton Ave., Tenafly. Donation: \$65. For reservations and more info, call: Marie Zokian (201) 745-8850 or Noushig Atamian at (718) 344-5582.

NEW YORK

- MAY 1 – **Armenian Genocide Commemoration at Times Square.** Be There. Turkey is Guilty of Genocide, Denying the undeniable is a Crime. Sunday, 2 p.m., 43rd and Broadway, New York City. Sponsored by Knights and Daughters of Vartan, Inc. Co-sponsored by AGBU, Armenian Assembly of America, Armenian National Committee of America, ADL-Ramgavars, Armenian Council of America with the participation of: Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), Prelacy of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), Armenian Missionary Association of America, Armenian Catholic Eparchy for US and Canada, AYF, Armenian Youth Organizations, Armenian University and College Clubs. For free bus transportation to and from Times Square, call Diocese (212) 686-0710; Prelacy (212) 689-7810; NJ, Sona (201) 746-0409, (551) 427-



Joe Dadgigian, pictured above, and Dik Dagavarian will give an illustrated talk, titled “Hiking in Armenia’s Mountains, Valleys and Villages,” covering the Siunik area of Southern Armenia, on Saturday, May 21, at 6 p.m., at the ARS Community Center, 142 Liberty St., Lowell. Dinner and program are \$20, adults; \$10, students.

8763; Holy Martyrs, John (781) 631-2247; St. Sarkis, Ruben, (917) 992-8501; Vartanantz, Kostan, (201) 741-9789; Paramus, Andy, (201) 368-2791; Holy Cross NJ, Very Rev. Vazken Karayan (201) 865-2790; Queens Armenian Center, Raffi, (646) 288-6769 and Brooklyn, Tigran, (978) 945-9548 or visit www.knightsofvartan.org, click April 24, <http://april24nyc.com>, www.armenianradionj.com or www.theforgotten.org.



COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Message from President Obama Once Again Causes Trauma

By Edmond Y. Azadian

American-Armenians were anticipating the failure of the use of the word “genocide” in President Barack Obama’s annual statement about the Armenian Genocide, and they were proven right once again. Despite the repeated calls from the Armenian Assembly, the Armenian National Committee and some legislators, President Obama did not deliver what he had promised during his election campaign. Not only had the president made the pledge, so had one of his most trusted advisors, Samantha Power. Yet both reneged on their promise, angering large masses of American Armenians, who, at this time, are working against his re-election.

The president has extremely difficult challenges ahead of him in his re-election campaign. And in view of those challenges, he chose to take this seemingly calculated risk.

The Armenian media and the public are so incensed that it will be a very difficult task to analyze objectively the political causes behind the president’s stand.

As we carefully review the president’s message, we are convinced that it is a very powerful one, yet he has substituted the word “genocide” with its Armenian equivalent, “Medz Yeghern.”

The message seems to have been crafted by Power, who is more knowledgeable on the issue than many scholars. By the way, the use of “Medz Yeghern” was concocted by Pope John Paul II during his visit to Armenia. As a spiritual leader, he did not need to resort to political diversions. On many controversial issues he had been more blunt, but in our case, he chose to be more political, because he could get away with murder, given Armenia’s weak position on the power chessboard of world politics.

President Obama’s reasoning could not be any more different than the Pope’s. But the president’s message contains every element to make a powerful case for the cause of genocide, except for the use of the actual word. (That is the reason why Turkey’s ambassador to Washington Namik Tan acted angrily, denouncing the president’s message as one-sided.)

In assessing the president’s message, we should also bring into perspective his earlier public stand and especially his reference to Turkey’s past history. In his address to the Turkish parliament, he chose to urge Turkey to come to grips with its dark history. He had a long list of topics to choose from and yet he chose to deal with the Genocide issue, though, of course, again without using that word. Once elected, Obama faced the entrenched State Department personnel who prevailed upon him to not fulfill his pre-election pledges, like many other elected officers.

The president this year has de-emphasized Armenian-Turkish relations, which had always been a convenient cop-out to avoid the main issue. Almost all presidential messages in the past focused on Armenian-Turkish relations, or ongoing negotiations between the parties. But this time around, in view of the Protocols’ fiasco, the president has avoided that topic; instead there is a tacit reprimand to Turkey that “contested history destabilizes the present and stains the memory of those whose lives were taken.”

Turkey and its apologists always maintain that a reference in a presidential message may jeopardize relations between Armenia and Turkey. Since there are no relations nor ongoing talks, that excuse can be safely shelved.

Also, not using the “G” word has not brought Turkey any closer to the US. Turkey defied the US during the Iraq war by banning troop movements through its territory. And today Turkey is

a major dissenting voice in NATO Alliance’s policies in Libya. Therefore, non-usage of the G-word has not made anyone grateful to the US and the opposite may not antagonize or alienate Turkey any more than Turkey has chosen its independent course of action.

The very same reason that forbade the Pope from using the word “genocide” applies to the president’s position, too.

There are two components in the administration’s policy towards Armenians: one is domestic and the other one international.

We pride ourselves that we command a million votes in the US. The administration has more effective and correct methods of assessing our voting power. Many Armenians are indifferent and not active politically. Whether the president makes a reference to the Genocide or not, that will not motivate those people to vote. There are also staunch Republicans among Armenians who vote with their pocketbooks and don’t give a damn about the Genocide issue. Therefore, the Obama camp can easily write them off. There is only a hardcore, politically-active force, which is motivated by the president’s position and actions. Unfortunately that is not a critical mass to scare the election planners, who seem to have decided to take the risk.

The other component is Armenia’s strategic value in the Caucasus. Despite all the sweet talk in diplomatic circles, Armenia is considered a strategic liability for the US, because it is firmly in

Russia’s camp, unlike its neighbors, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Additionally, Iran provides an economic lifeline to the outside world for Armenia, much to the chagrin of US policy makers. Those are all reasons why our threats and bravado do not carry much weight in the president’s camp.

While the Genocide issue is a matter of principle, there are more pressing life-and-death issues, which can affect Armenia’s well being, and Washington has been treating them in a cavalier

manner. The US Embassy recently discontinued extending Millennium Challenge grants to Armenia, disrupting agricultural projects meant to develop rural areas. That is a blow to Armenia’s economy as well as the rural areas, which can expect to lose more population. This is supposed to be in response to Armenia’s lack of progress towards democracy, whereas Azerbaijan gags the press, jails opposition leaders, yet receives more assistance from the US than Armenia. Additionally, President Obama continues his predecessor’s policy of ignoring Chapter 907 of Freedom Support Act to give military aid to Azerbaijan.

Had Armenia been in a stronger position, none of this would have happened.

Returning back to the president’s Martyr’s Day message, we can view it in the general scheme of American-Armenian relations and see that the president is a hostage to the system. The Genocide pledge is not the only one he did not fulfill. He had also pledged to close down the Guantanamo detention camp, which had given a black eye to the legacy of the Founding Fathers, and he failed. Additionally, he allowed his progressive stances on healthcare, as well as the budget and other major issues to be watered down and compromised.

To hold rallies and protests to drive home a case are legitimate; to hurl insults is not. After all, the president delivered more than half of his pledge and Samantha Power is waiting in the wings to replace Hillary Clinton and to deliver the other half of the message, should a second term be realized.

As much as President Obama’s message causes us trauma, we have to understand the overwhelming causes behind that stance.

“...non-usage of the G-word has not made anyone grateful to the US and the opposite may not antagonize or alienate Turkey any more than Turkey has chosen its independent course of action.”

LETTERS

ADL Programs Are Not Credible

(The following letter to the editor was sent to the *Watertown TAB* on April 5.)

To the Editor:

The Anti-Defamation League’s billboards that have been advertising its version of an “anti-bullying” program are no different than its discredited “No Place for Hate” program that the Mass. Municipal Association and a dozen cities across Massachusetts cut ties with.

As the ADL continues to fail to unambiguously acknowledge the Armenian Genocide, hurt Armenian-Americans, work against US recognition of that genocide and damage the cause of Genocide prevention, the ADL and its programs are not credible.

I agree with others that the ADL is a bully and a hypocrite.

Genocide is the worst crime in all of humanity. That means that the ADL’s work against genocide recognition is a hate crime. The word

genocide was coined by Raphael Lemkin, a lawyer of Polish-Jewish descent, to describe the annihilation of the Armenians.

I know that the ADL’s “anti-bullying” billboard in Watertown has been taken down. But there are a lot more of those billboards in other cities. They should be taken down too if the anti-bullying movement is not to make a joke out of itself.

— Berge Jololian
Watertown, Mass.

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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Mr. President, Armenian-Americans Reject Your Offensive Word Games on Genocide

Despite Armenian-Americans' persistent admonishment of President Barack Obama to refrain from substituting "Meds Yeghern" (Great Calamity) for the Armenian Genocide in his annual April 24 statement, he has continued to do so for three years in a row.

Apparently, henchmen of the denialist Turkish regime and their American cohorts have been able to compel the president of the United States to avoid any reference to the "genocide" or "tseghasbanoutyoum" — its Armenian equivalent. Otherwise, why would the president of the United States address the American public in a foreign language known only to a few? Armenian substitute words such as "Meds Yeghern" are simply meant to fool some gullible Armenian-Americans. This is a cheap trick that is beneath the dignity of the presidency.

Over the past three years, rather than mending his ways and discontinuing the use of "Meds Yeghern," President Obama has done the exact opposite. Incredibly, he is using that term in this year's April 24 statement not once, not twice, but three times. The president shamefully continues

the silly and offensive word games of his predecessors — whom he had severely criticized — reducing genocide to "horrific events," "atrocities," "massacres" and "devastating events."

Earlier this month, President Obama declared his candidacy for reelection and asked Americans to reelect him for another four more years. In my view, anyone who so blatantly breaks his promises on both Armenian and non-Armenian issues, including acknowledgment of the Genocide, does not deserve to be reelected. It is hard to imagine that any self-respecting Armenian would vote for him again.

To show how offended they are by President Obama's broken promises, over a thousand Armenian-Americans held a spirited protest at Sony Studios in Culver City, at the site of his major fundraiser on the eve of April 24. Their anguished message was carried far and wide by the assembled local, national and international media. Just about every news outlet highlighted the protesters' mistrust of President Obama, casting a shadow on the celebratory atmosphere of the hiss reelection campaign.

Helping to amplify the protesters' message was vocalist Serj Tankian of System of a Down whose presence and fiery remarks electrified the crowd, attracting considerable media attention.

Another major boost for the demonstration came from TV celebrity Kim Kardashian who sent a Twitter message to her 7.2 million fans around the world, along with a link to her blog: "Today, thousands of Armenians will come together in Los Angeles to protest against the denial of the Genocide and urge the United States government to recognize the Armenian Genocide. I hope that I can bring some attention to this today."

During my recent appearances on ABC-TV and FOX-TV, I explained that the purpose of the protest was not to beg

President Obama to use the word "genocide." It was rather to let him and other politicians know that Armenian-Americans would no longer remain silent when an elected official makes lavish campaign promises to get their votes and money, only to ignore them after the election. These officials should be made to pay a political price for their hypocrisy. To make democracy work, citizens should ensure that dishonest politicians are not reelected. It is bad enough to be fooled once, but allowing ourselves to be fooled twice is truly unforgivable.

Using the Culver City rally as a precedent, Armenian-Americans throughout the United States should hold protests at every campaign appearance of President Obama in the next 18 months.

Furthermore, Armenians do not really need President Obama to repeat what President Ronald Reagan stated 30 years ago by referring to the Armenian Genocide in his Presidential Proclamation of April 22, 1981. By breaking his campaign pledge, President Obama compromises his moral and political standing as the leader of the free world.

Let us not forget two other major culprits in this deplorable affair. Where is Vice President Joe Biden hiding these days? Does he recall that he delivered dozens of strongly-worded speeches on the Armenian Genocide during his long years in the Senate and as presidential candidate? What about Hillary Clinton? How quickly did she transform herself from a champion of Genocide recognition as senator and presidential candidate, into a secretary of state who hides from the media while placing a "personal" wreath at the Genocide Monument in Yerevan, and lobbies congressmen to vote against a Genocide resolution?

The 2012 elections present an ideal opportunity to settle scores with all those who have betrayed the trust of the Armenian-American community.

Komitas Vardapet, Forgotten Folk Hero

By Michael Church

Sunday, April 24, was Easter Day, but for Armenians it is also Genocide Remembrance Day. This is when Armenians all over the world will gather to commemorate the anniversary of the 1915 Genocide in which 1.5 million Armenians in Turkey were either slaughtered, or died on forced marches into exile. For Armenians, music is memory. And whenever they gather to honour their dead, the songs they sing are by the composer who speaks for the soul of their nation, Komitas Vardapet. He himself was a victim of the 1915 persecution and though he survived physically, he was driven into madness by it. Outside Armenia he, too, has been swept under the carpet of history.

Komitas's output was modest: 80 choral works and songs, arrangements of the Armenian mass, and some dances for piano. But as his better-known compatriot, Aram Khachaturian, acknowledged, he single-handedly laid the foundations for Armenia's classical tradition. And as a collector and arranger of folksongs, he did for Armenia what Bartók did for Hungary, turning simple material into bewitchingly sophisticated polyphony. After a Komitas concert in Paris, Claude Debussy declared that on the basis of a single song, he deserved to be recognized as a great composer. Yet many classical musicians barely recognize his name.

I first became aware of Komitas's existence when recording the Armenian Chamber Choir in Yerevan in 2001. I was intrigued by the songs' vibrant strangeness: folk melodies so deftly arranged that the raw beauty of the originals glowed the more brightly.

Soghomon Soghomonian — his original name — was born in 1869 to Armenian parents in Turkey, where the Christian minority endured routine discrimination. His parents (who both died when he was young) were noted singers: he inherited their gift and was talent-spotted at 12 by an Armenian bishop and enrolled at the Echmiadzin seminary near Yerevan. There, he was the class comedian who could mimic the songs he found in villages on the slopes of Mount Ararat: even in his teens he was a pioneer ethnomusicologist. Using the notation he had learned in the Armenian liturgy, he wrote down what he heard, devised three-part arrangements and formed a student choir to sing them.

Soghomonian's appetite for songs was voracious — one day, he noted with pride, he collected 34. His account of the ploughing song he found in the Armenian village of Lori reflects a remarkable ear: in his transcription, music, movement and complex social relationships are seamlessly interwoven. In another village, he observed a girl singing to her dead mother: her plangently disordered song, he wrote, "expresses the sadness of her lot and her inner world. If other orphans had heard it, they would have joined in. But after a while, that song would be forgotten. Because for the peasant, creating a song is as ordinary and natural as casual conversation is for the rest of us." As an encapsulation of the essence of folk music, this could still not be bettered.

Meanwhile, he was trying to crack the code of "neume" notation, denoting changes of pitch, used in Armenian liturgical chants in the early middle ages. Altered in oral transmission over the centuries, Soghomonian was determined to rediscover their original form.

At 25, Soghomonian was ordained a Vardapet — a celibate priest — and renamed himself Komitas after a seventh-century religious poet. But Echmiadzin was a small world and he needed to spread his wings.

He went to study in Berlin, then moved to Paris, where he founded a choir and began to attract big audiences for his folksong recitals. Regarded as the musical voice of Armenia, he was now a European celebrity, but his secular performances of sacred Armenian music put him on a collision course with his church. He also courted trouble through his relationship with Armenian singer Margaret Babayan, with whom he snatched an improbable holiday on the Isle of Wight. It will never be known if they had a love affair, but his letters suggest as anguished a wrestle with his soul as over his never-ending battle with the church traditionalists. He was at once a sensualist and an ascetic: he wanted to submit to discipline, but couldn't deny his artistic calling.

Komitas went on to found expatriate Armenian choirs in Alexandria and Constantinople, where even Turks began to celebrate him. This was grimly ironic, for in 1913, when Komitas and a group of fellow intellectuals were embarking on an oral-history project to celebrate the Armenian community in Turkey, Turkish Muslims were encouraged by politically-insecure rulers to loot Christian Armenian villages and murder the inhabitants. Turkey's Armenians were ghettoized, disarmed (even of kitchen knives), and finally, on April 24, 1915, deported en masse. Komitas was among 291 prominent figures trucked off into the mountains. When the secret police came for him, he submitted to his arrest with a Kafkaesque fatalism.

The rest of his story has terrible pathos. At first he was the comforter of his friends as they were shunted from one town to another, with word filtering out that they were destined to be shot. One day he was brutalized by a guard, and something in him snapped: from that point on, though he was among the few who were reprieved (after intervention by the American ambassador, one of his fans) he retreated into a paranoid world, spending his remaining 20 years in an asylum.

Post-traumatic stress disorder was clearly the trigger for Komitas's breakdown, but his biographer, Rita Souhalian Kuyumjian, argues that its real roots lay in his doomed struggle to "preserve" his dead parents through the songs they sang, and to do the same for two ecclesiastical father figures by cracking the code of the neumes. Dr. Vrej Nersessian, priest at the St. Yeghiche Armenian Church in Kensington, agrees: "Komitas's real tragedy was the loss of his research. His will was broken." In Nersessian's view, it would be an insult to Komitas's memory if he were consigned, as he often is, to a box marked "Armenian Genocide victims."

Komitas claimed to have cracked the code of the neumes, but his key is lost. Scholars still search for what could open a fascinating window on remote musical history. Meanwhile, by refusing to recognize any divide between the folk musics of Turkey and Armenia, Komitas showed a way in which the antagonism between the two could be dissolved. But his choral works are his monument.

Armenia's leading composer, Tigran Mansurian, recently wrote a cello concerto with the richly symbolic title, *Where Is Your Brother Abel?* As a child of Armenian Genocide survivors, Mansurian is still pursuing closure, and his guide in this pursuit is Komitas. "His garden of sounds," says Mansurian, "covers a vast territory in time, stretching across millennia." But where, in the garden of western classical music, is Komitas? Isabel Bayrakdarian's "Gomidas Songs" is on the Nonesuch label.

(This column by Michael Church originally appeared in the *Guardian* newspaper on April 24, 2011.)

St. Nersess' 50th Anniversary Celebration Signifies Hope

By Suzanne M. Akian

In 1961, St. Nersess Armenian Seminary was launched, mostly as a vision, with optimism for the future, and a considerable reliance on the hoped for generosity of the Armenian community throughout the United States.

Since then, about three-dozen priests and thousands of young people have been educated and instilled with our culture and heritage.

Now, with St. Nersess celebrating its 50th anniversary, a significant fund-raising campaign is about to be launched to safeguard the future of this sole Armenian Seminary in the United States. This campaign will send our Seminary forward on a new decade of growth and service, helping to ensure that a new generation — and generations to come — will remember our past and our traditions, and continue our beliefs into the future.

Certainly, many will join in this effort. Some, however, will take this opportunity to do something more. They will create a legacy for themselves and their families.

Of course the longevity of that legacy necessitates an understanding of the "ins and outs" of philanthropy, be it from a tax or investment perspective. Achieving this understanding can help meet the omnipresent need for charitable giving in our community and throughout the world.

Caution to Start

Committing to philanthropy can be an incredibly rewarding experience, emotionally but also financially. Indeed, strategic management of one's giving can actually improve financial stability, and of course reduce tax liability. However there are a couple key points to bear in mind, as the necessity of giving does not diminish its attendant complications, particularly when dealing with the regulatory aspects. see CELEBRATION, page 20



AVC Launches Teach Program to Help Improve English-Language Learning in Armenia

YEREVAN – On the occasion of its 10th anniversary serving Armenia through volunteerism, the Armenian Volunteer Corps (AVC) has launched Teach, its most ambitious program to date, helping to improve the quality of education in Armenia through English-language learning.

Teach provides native English-speaking volunteer teachers to middle and high school students to complement the existing curriculum with a concentration in conversation, creative and academic writing skills and creating a globally aware and active community.

Teaching English is not new to AVC. Over the last decade many of AVC’s 339 alumni have taught English as the primary or secondary focus of their volunteer service. English language teaching occurred in both formal and informal settings, in public school and universi-

ty classrooms, in English language “clubs” for adults and children, at NGOs for staff and during after school and summer programs.

Sheila Terjanian was a retired economist when she took one year off in 2002 to volunteer through AVC. She had spent 30 years in public policy with the Canadian federal government. After she retired, she received a diploma in teaching English as a Foreign/Second Language, and prior to volunteering in Armenia she taught English as a volunteer in her community.

“As with every volunteer commitment, you always get back many times over what you give,” says Terjanian. “What I remember most about our classes was the laughter we shared together.”

Not all volunteer teachers come to Armenia with a background in teaching. Therefore the

AVC Teach program provides necessary training covering a range of topics, including an introduction to the local curriculum, teaching theory, as well as practical skills such as classroom management and lesson planning.

“The training was really useful because prior to coming to Armenia I had no teaching experience,” said Talin Aghanian, from the United Kingdom. Aghanian, a graduate of Durham University, is currently serving for one full year teaching English to students in Grades 6-11. “I think they [the students] like talking with me because not only am I a native speaker but I’ve brought with me a whole different culture that they ask a lot of questions about.”

The program will also provide professional development for local English-language teachers, focusing on thematic and cross curricular lesson planning, use of media in the classroom,

cooperative teaching (including using volunteers in the classroom) and the periodic use of native English speakers.

Joseph Hakoopian, a Cornell University graduate with a degree in English literature, is teaching English to middle and high school students at the Anania Shirakaty Lyceum. “Before coming to Armenia, I had taught literature to students in Brooklyn and I had helped international teaching assistants improve their English-speaking skills on Cornell’s campus. I had not, however, been able to work with students who were interested in improving their speaking skills.”

Hakoopian also added that learning from native speakers provides a valuable benefit. “Students in Armenia have a different language learning experience than students in the United States. I don’t think you can find many American teachers of foreign languages who haven’t spent time abroad in the countries where the languages they teach are spoken. Unfortunately, most English teachers in Armenia have not had the chance to study English abroad. The presence of a native English speaker encourages a fluidity of speech to which most Armenian students have not yet been exposed.”

Hakoopian came with experiencing teaching SAT preparation classes and is putting that experience to good use, preparing some students to take the SAT exam in May.

Teach utilizes volunteers to provide a complement to the existing curriculum while providing professional development for existing English-language teachers.

To apply to participate in the AVC’s Teach program, individuals must be native English speakers, at least 21 years of age and have a college degree.

For more information, visit the website www.armenianvolunteer.org or email info@avc.am.

Russian, Armenian Regions Discuss Closer Cooperation

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – President Serge Sargsian and a top Kremlin official called for the strengthening of Russian-Armenian relations on Tuesday as they opened a conference in Yerevan that discussed closer economic cooperation between various regions of Russia and Armenia.

The conference, the first of its kind, brought together government officials, businesspeople and non-governmental activists from over 20 Russian regions and all Armenian provinces. The chief of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev’s staff, Sergei Naryshkin, as well as the Russian ministers of transport and local government also arrived in Yerevan on the occasion.

Medvedev welcomed the event with a written message read out by Naryshkin. He said closer interregional links will make a “substantial contribution to the friendly Russian-Armenian relationship.”

Addressing participants of the forum, Sargsian said it highlights “the special allied character of Russian-Armenian partnership.” “There are around 1,400 enterprises with Russian-Armenian or fully Russian capital operating in Armenia,” he said. “Their investment portfolio is approaching the \$3 billion mark.”

Sargsian urged regional leaders and entrepreneurs in both countries to set up more joint

ventures. He said the Armenian government is ready to assist in their operations with tax privileges and simpler “administrative procedures.”

Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian delivered a more extensive speech that detailed Yerevan’s economic reform agenda. “Last year alone we abolished about 30 percent of all [government] licenses,” the Armenian premier said in an apparent bid to woo Russian investors. “Enterprise registration can now be done in 15 minutes.”

“Today the Russian Federation plays an exceptional role in Armenia’s economy,” he added. “Russia is Armenia’s leading trading partner. It plays the key role in those sectors that are related to the development of Armenia’s infrastructures.”

Russia’s Transport Minister Igor Levitin told the forum that Russian-Armenian cooperation has reached a “principally new level” in the last several years. He welcomed a 40-percent rise in bilateral trade recorded last year.

Levitin and Tigran Sargsian chaired Monday, April 18, a session of a Russian-Armenian inter-governmental commission on economic cooperation. The two men also inaugurated an industrial exhibition displaying the production of more than a hundred Russian and Armenian firms.

The first day of the conference was marked by

the signing of a plan of joint actions to be taken by the Russian Federal Agency on Tourism and the Armenian government in 2012-2013. The government also signed cooperation agreements with the administrations of two Russian regions.

President Serge Sargsian told Naryshkin at a separate meeting later on Tuesday that the conference testifies to the “high level” of bilateral ties. “It stems from our national interests and reflects friendship between our peoples,” he said.

“Indeed, the conference has showed what interests the regions of our countries have,” Naryshkin said. It will therefore “further strengthen the partnership of Russian and Armenian,” he added, according to Serge Sargsian’s press office.

St. Nersess’ 50th Anniversary Signifies Hope

CELEBRATION, from page 19

First, with respect to giving in general, mind the limits and what they mean for tax liability. For instance, the lifetime federal gift tax exclusion amount is currently \$5 million (for the next two years). However whatever portions used will reduce dollar for dollar the estate tax exclusion amount available at death.

Second, mind the importance of documentation when assessing the benefits of philanthropy. Many choose to work through existing organizations such as non-profits or international NGO’s when starting philanthropic work. However the beneficiary organization needs to meet the qualifications under the IRS code, and must provide proof that the funds are used for charitable purposes.

Third, and more than anything, the beneficiary organization must be reputable. IRS regulations are in place to guard against corruption, but also protect philanthropists themselves, by ensuring that charitable gifts are put to good use, and done so in a transparent fashion.

Assuming the regulations have been tended to, and the beneficiary selected, there are a wealth of options on structuring philanthropic giving.

Charitable Trusts are one such option, which allow a philanthropist to donate to a worthy beneficiary (and provide for one’s family), as well as potentially defer capital gains and income taxes while doing so. Charitable remainder trusts, for instance, allow for a fixed period of charitable giving, after which the remaining funds are distributed to the family.

Also, life insurance policies are another option, as they can actually replace estate and gift tax liabilities, thus providing a significant

benefit for an often-small cost. Additionally, the proceeds from these policies are typically income tax free for the beneficiary.

Finally, dynasty trusts represent an additional strategic choice for philanthropists, and can be useful in the preservation of a lasting legacy. Through them, the donor funds the trust up to the lifetime gift tax exclusion. Once established, all growth in the fund is free of federal transfer taxes (i.e. estate and gift) so long as they remain within the trust.

Preparing for the next 50 years – and beyond – will require many of us to follow in the footsteps of the most generous members of our community. Clearly, that will often be a hard act to follow when it comes to establishing a long-term philanthropic legacy. Nevertheless, establishment of such a legacy is within the means of many, provided it is done so strategically.

Fortunately, a wealth manager can provide advice on a multitude of options and at the very least, point anyone in the right direction.

The Seminary currently sits on nine acres of land in this Westchester County.

St. Nersess is the only Armenian seminary in the Western hemisphere.

It is estimated that more than 5,000 young people have benefited spiritually and culturally from the summer conferences since its inception in 1963.

More than 60 St. Nersess Summer & Winter Conference alumni are currently serving on Parish Councils or as delegates in the Eastern Diocese.

(Suzanne M. Akian is senior vice president and Financial Advisor with the Global Wealth Management Division of Morgan Stanley Smith Barney in New York, NY.)

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