

Hillary Clinton Discusses Karabagh, US-Armenian Ties with Nalbandian

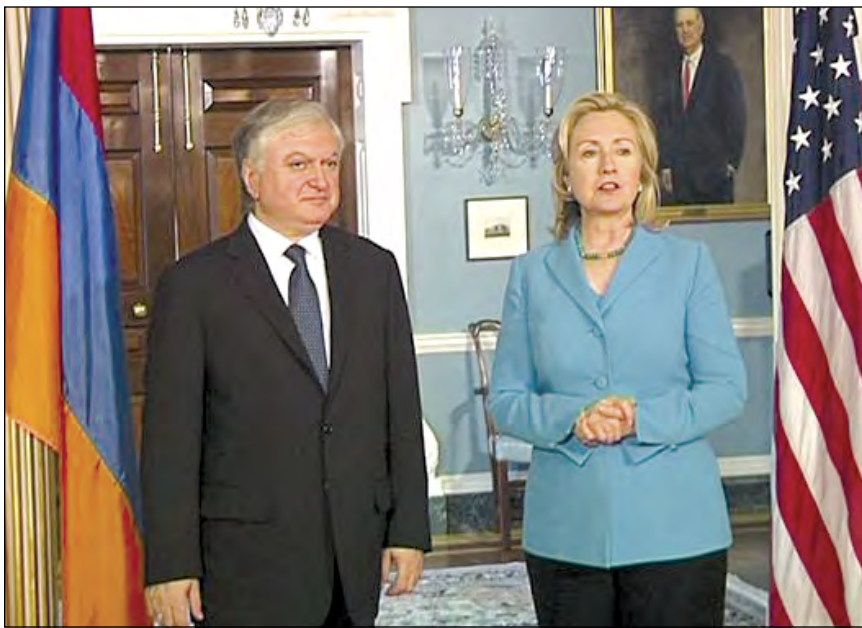
WASHINGTON (RFE/RL) — US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian held talks in Washington late on Thursday, May 19, with the unresolved Nagorno-Karabagh conflict apparently topping the agenda.

They made no public statements after the meeting, which the Armenian Foreign Ministry said touched upon “a broad range of issues” of mutual interest.

“The United States and Armenia have many connections and relationships that span politics and go into family and so much else that is very important to us,” Clinton said as she greeted Nalbandian at the State Department. “And we have many, many important issues ahead of us, and I look forward to continuing the important conversation that we’ve been carrying out.”

“The frequency of our meetings proves our commitment to deepen and to strengthen Armenian-American relations,” Nalbandian said, for his part. “Due to our joint efforts, we elevated our relationship to a qualitatively new level during the last years.”

In a statement on the meeting issued on Friday, Nalbandian’s press office singled out the two officials’ discussion of “recent developments” in international efforts to broker a resolution of the Karabagh conflict. It quot-



Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

ed Clinton as saying that the dispute can be settled only by peaceful means.

According to the statement, Clinton assured her Armenian counterpart that the United States will continue to lend “full support” to Armenia and Azerbaijan in

their search for a compromise settlement.

Philip Gordon, the US assistant secretary of state for Europe and Eurasia, told a US congressional panel on Wednesday that Washington plans to “increase our see CLINTON, page 20

Armenian Amnesty ‘Will Ease Political Tension’

By Anush Martirosian

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — A general amnesty initiated by President Serge Sargsian is expected to lead to the release of all opposition prisoners which will further stabilize the political situation in Armenia, parliament speaker Hovik Abrahamian said on Monday.

Abrahamian also made clear that the

Armenian authorities do not intend to meet other opposition demands, chief among them being the conduct of snap national elections.

“The president’s step was taken at the right time and dedicated to the 20th anniversary of our independence,” he told journalists. “It will ease tension existing in our country.”

“The public must be glad that the president of the country is doing everything to see AMNESTY, page 20

AUA President Dr. Bruce Boghosian Reflects upon Path Of Higher Education

By Melania Badalyan

YEREVAN (Azg) — The current president of the American University of Armenia (AUA), Dr. Bruce M. Boghosian, assumed the post on September 1, 2010. He is the third president of the AUA since its establishment 20 years ago. He sat down for an interview with Azg recently.

His experiences in major universities and his background of scientific research represent the work of a specialist that has made valuable contributions to science, in addition as being an administrator.

Boghosian received his bachelor’s degree in physics and master’s degree in nuclear engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology see BOGHOSIAN, page 3



Dr. Bruce Boghosian

Obama’s Nominee for United States Ambassador to Armenia Named



Ambassador to Armenia nominee John A. Heffern

WASHINGTON — This week, President Barack Obama nominated John A. Heffern to serve as the next ambassador to Armenia, reported the Armenian Assembly of America. The Assembly expects a rigorous Senate confirmation process in the months ahead.

Current US envoy to Armenia Marie L. Yovanovitch, nominated by former President George W. Bush, will conclude her three-year mission in June.

In the mid-1990s, Heffern worked for former Rep. Doug Bereuter (R-Neb.) who was consistently one of the most pro-Turkish and anti-Armenian representatives to serve in Congress.

Without pre-judging Heffern, the Assembly in a statement suggested he would have a steep hill to climb in explaining and distinguishing his views from those of Bereuter. For example, in 1995-1996, when

Heffern was on the International Relations Committee staff, Bereuter voted against several measures aimed to promote not only Armenia’s interests, but human rights interests around the world.

see AMBASSADOR, page 20

NEWS IN BRIEF

Yovanovitch Says She Will Have Great Memories of Armenia

YEREVAN — On May 23, Armenian Vice Prime Minister Armen Gevorgyan met with outgoing US ambassador to Armenia Marie Yovanovitch, who will complete her mission in June.

Gevorgyan thanked the ambassador for her cooperation.

Yovanovitch said her work in Armenia was interesting and productive. She added Armenia gave her great memories. She expressed hope for continued cooperation between Armenia and the US.

Focus on Kochari, not Eurovision

YEREVAN (PanArmenian.Net) — Ethnographer Gagik Ginosyan said the state’s obsession with the Eurovision song contest is pointless. According to him, the state should finance Armenian art rather than focus on Eurovision.

Though Armenia won the Karabagh war, now it suffers defeats in peacetime, Ginosyan, the art director of Karin Fold Dance Ensemble, said.

“We suffer defeats in the cultural policy. Audiences should have understood the fact that Kochari is our national dance. We should not have transferred the dance into the Eurovision realm to be blamed by Azerbaijanis for lifting the dance from them,” said Ginosyan.

Azerbaijan won the 2011 Eurovision contest.

Israeli MP Urges Genocide Recognition

TEL AVIV (news.am) — Israeli Knesset member Zahava Gal-On believes it is Israel’s obligation to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

A member of the New Movement Meretz party, Gal-On said she supported the decision to discuss the Genocide. She noted that this year’s debates are important as they are held in open Committee on Education, Culture and Sports.

“In the last two years the Knesset has decided to discuss the Armenian Genocide issue in one of the committees but they never in the education committee, which is open. We can invite many people to participate in the discussion. It is very important from this viewpoint,” she said.

Gal-On stressed every year representatives of Meretz party raise the issue on the Armenian Genocide in the parliament. This time the Israeli government was more receptive.

The committee accepted the proposal to discuss Genocide recognition in the parliament. Meretz submitted the issue for discussion in the committee. The proposal to discuss the recognition of the Armenian Genocide was adopted by majority vote.

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French Sunflower

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Bomb Threat at Zvartnots Airport

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — On May 22, Armenian police received a bomb threat at Zvartnots Airport.

Deputy head of the Public Relations Department at the Republic of Armenia police, Armen Malkhasyan, said that representatives of the Armenian National Security Service and Ministry of Emergency Situations arrived in the airport to search for the bomb, but it was a false alarm.

This was the second false notice about a bomb at Zvartnots in one week.

Former Armenian Prisoner to Sue Azerbaijan

YEREVAN (news.am) — A Vanadzor-based attorney will sue Azerbaijan for the illegal two-year custody and torture of an Armenian citizen. The office will file the case with the European Court of Human Rights next month.

In May 2010, Azerbaijan handed over to Armenia Arthur Badalyan, 32, a native of Haghartsin village in the Tavush region, who lost his way in a forest and accidentally crossed the border, where the Azeri authorities detained him.

The lawyers claim that Azerbaijan violated the third article of European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms which asserts that nobody must be subjected to torture, inhuman and deprecating treatment or punishment.

Before sending the complaint to European Court of Human Rights, the attorney will have to contact Azerbaijani authorities from a third country, to ask them to provide information on the conditions of the custody. This is the general procedure to apply to European Court.

Actors to Give Performance Based on Werfel Novel

STEPANAKERT (Noyan Tapan) — On May 21, president of the Artsakh Republic, Bako Sahakyan, received a group of cultural workers and actors from the Republic of Armenia and the US who will organize here a literary-musical performance based on Franz Werfel's novel, *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*.

The president noted the importance of combining the efforts of Armenia, Artsakh and the diaspora for mass coverage of the pan-national events, which is part of the national education of the younger generation, as well as introducing the history of the Armenian people to the international community.

According to the office of the Artsakh Republic President, it was mutually stressed that such events should be organized periodically in different centers in Armenia, Artsakh and the diaspora.

Minister of Culture and Youth Affairs Narine Aghabalyan and head of the NKR Writers' Union Vardan Hakobyan participated in the meeting.

Director of Construction Company Charged with Embezzlement

YEREVAN (ARKA) — The Armenian prosecutor general's office has charged A. Petrosyan, director of the Erkada Astgh construction company with gross embezzlement and tax evasion, the office's press service reports.

Petrosyan failed to renovate the building of the first-instance court in Vardenis, Gegharkunik province, and pocketed the 39 million drams he received from the government budget and compensated by Griar Insurance company as prepayment for the reconstruction, according to the charges.

In addition, the company has submitted incomplete accounting reports on procurement without VAT data in them to tax agencies, the government said.

Bread Matters: Experts Discuss 'Unhealthy Additions' in Armenian Staple

By Siranuysh Gevorgyan

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) — Bread production technologists and a consumer rights activist expressed their concerns about the quality of bread in Armenia, at a press conference in Yerevan on Monday.

The speakers said that unhealthy additives for the faster leavening of bread as well as various dyes are often used especially in the production of black and brown breads.

Consumers' Association NGO head Armen Poghosyan said he is particularly concerned about the discrepancy between the weight and size of loaves on sale at the baker's.

"Using different tricks they inflate the bread loaves, making them bigger in shape, but as a result we buy 30 percent of air," said Poghosyan.

Poghosyan also spoke about the

problem of rye bread. He said they "have reasonable suspicions" that most of what is advertised as rye bread (which is considered to be healthier than wheat bread) in Armenia is fake, and, in fact, it is the same wheat bread that gets its dark color with the aid of some dyes. He also noted that rye is not grown in Armenia, but is mostly imported from Russia.

"The body that is supposed to exercise control over this process, the food quality inspection, is now under reorganization. We wait for this structure to start working," said Poghosyan.

Candidate of technical sciences, Aram Nazaryan, who needs to eat rye bread because of his diabetes, does not quite agree with Poghosyan's opinion. He thinks that while some companies making rye bread indeed fake their production, there are also honest producers. Nor does

Nazaryan consider additives to be unsafe. According to him, all of them are materials permitted in food production.

Biotechnologist Alexander Selimyan also thinks that the yeasts and additives used in bread production in Armenia are unhealthy. Like others, he advises using black or brown bread. It has been six years that the scientist has produced bread with the use of his own yeast, called hatsatan. Among the main consumers of the bread and lavash baked by Selimyan are the United Nations Office in Armenia, the United States Embassy, a number of hotels. His products are also sold at stores of two supermarket chains. The hatsatan yeast, according to Selimyan, also has a fast fermentation quality but has a natural composition.

Selimyan says that for many years he has unsuccessfully tried to promote his bread in Armenia.

Ailing, Famished, Caged: Animals in Armenian Zoos Face Survival Problems

By Siranuysh Gevorgyan

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) — Problems of animals kept in zoos in Armenia have been highlighted in recent days as veterinary personnel from abroad have paid a visit to the Yerevan Zoo to check the state of health of its pawed, beaked, hooved and other inmates.

Also, the owner of a private zoo in Armenia's central Hrazdan town gave a press conference last month to complain about his poor budget that he said was nowhere near enough to keep the caged canine and feline friends happy.

Armenak Avetisyan said his call for help was also precipitated by the harsh winter that dozens of animals in his zoo had to endure. In particular, the zoo director said as many as 10 guinea-pigs died in poor conditions and he had to take some of the animals to his own house to help them live through the winter.

Avetisyan complained about the difficulties in finding enough forage for animals as the zoo exists mostly on charity and sometimes gets assistance from the municipality of Hrazdan, about 50 kilometers to the northeast of Yerevan.

The zoo, which late last year appeared in the news after a lion there mauled a young zoo worker, was founded in 1993. Today it is home to 40 heads of animals representing 20 species. Before, it used to have some 80 animals of 30 species during the early years of its existence.

Avetisyan feeds the animals with whatever is available, such as leftovers from feasts and funeral parties, etc. Sometimes, he says, someone from the supermarket helps with "expired" sausages and sandwiches.

(In the wild a healthy adult lion may eat up to 18 kilograms of meat at a time that would keep it more or less satisfied for four to six days. A wolf will also normally need to eat a minimum of two to four kilograms of meat a day.)

"I wake up in the morning with this animal feed problem in my head and so on till 10 o'clock in the evening. If I had a monthly budget of one million drams (about \$2,600), I'd make a huge redevelopment in the zoo, would build cages, would improve the conditions for the ani-

mals," said Avetisyan.

Zoo entrance tickets in Hrazdan are priced 200 drams (about 55 cents), but according to Avetisyan, sometimes a group of five may enter and buy only one ticket.

"I've decided to write at the entrance to the park — 'give whatever you can,'" he says.

Avetisyan says he has sought assistance from the government, the National Assembly and Prosperous Armenia Party leader Gagik Tsarukyan, who, himself, has a private zoo and has, on different

elephant, Grand, who had suffered from a toothache for four years after breaking its tusks and developing abscesses. The zoo's panther also experiences health problems after having spent an uneasy winter. The foreign specialists noted that the animals were being kept in cages that were too tight for them and reduced to resting on concrete floors.

Environmentalist Silva Adamyan also described the conditions at all zoos in Armenia as inappropriate for keeping animals and well below decent standards of living.



A tiger at an Armenian zoo

occasions, described himself as a big animal lover. The Hrazdan zoo director says he has not heard any response from Tsarukyan yet.

The Hrazdan Zoo is not the only one that experiences difficulties. Conditions are almost the same at the zoo in Armavir, about 50 kilometers to the west of Yerevan, where recently they also have experienced difficulties with finding sufficient forage for the animals, as the nearby military unit refused to provide the zoo with its food leftovers twice a week as it had done before. The association of young biologists warns that these animals also face the danger of starving to death.

The Yerevan Zoo experiences no problems with finding enough food for its animals, but has other kinds of problems. Earlier this week veterinarians from abroad were at the zoo to administer medical aid to animals in need of such assistance. In particular, they helped the

"Especially the predators are kept in such cages that do not correspond to their dimensions. Their daily food rations do not correspond to international standards either; there are also problems with animals receiving vitamins and vaccinations," said the environmentalist, adding that it was unclear to her why zoos had been created in Hrazdan and Armavir in the first place when even the zoo in Yerevan was struggling to create proper conditions for its animals.

But the director of the Hrazdan Zoo says he does not want to close his park and give his animals to someone who would provide better conditions for them. He says Hrazdan must have its own zoo for kids to visit it in order to get first-hand experience of animals from the wild.

Meanwhile, Adamyan also highlighted the problems that animals in Armenia experience in the wild, as even endangered species are hunted in places where they should not be under law.



ARMENIA

AUA's President Boghosian Reflects Upon Needs of Higher Education in RA

BOGHOSIAN, from page 1
(MIT). He received his PhD in applied science from the University of California, Davis.

For the past decade, before moving to the post at AUA, Boghosian was a professor in the Department of Mathematics at Tufts University in Massachusetts, and he served as chair of that department since 2006. He served concurrently as adjunct professor in the Departments of Computer Science and Physics. Earlier, he was employed as a senior research scientist at the Thinking Machines Corporation in Cambridge, Mass., and at the Center for Computational Science and Department of Physics, Boston University.

Boghosian's research has been devoted to developing a fundamental understanding of the nature of turbulence in fluid dynamics, and he has used both theoretical and computational methods on some of the largest supercomputers available in the US. Pursuant to this research, he has held visiting professorships and research positions at a number of well-known universities, such as École Normale Supérieure in Paris; Peking University; University of California, Berkeley; as well as University College London, in the UK.

Boghosian has more than 80 publications to his credit and has given upwards of 150 talks at various universities. He is a member of the editorial boards of a number of international-monthly journals (*Journal of Computational Science*, *Physica A*, *Computing in Science and Engineering* and *International Journal of Modern Physics C – Physics and Computers*). He is the recipient of many awards and honors in the United States as a scholar and teacher, including Tufts University's Distinguished Scholar Award in 2010. He has been a foreign member of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia since 2008.

The AUA was founded in the first year of the independence of Armenia, and with its Western methods and standards of teaching, it has been a significant phenomenon in the Armenian educational system. In a short space of time, the limited programs of the university were expanded and vastly developed.

This interview was conducted as part of the series of interviews with rectors of the most important universities in Armenia.

Azg: Dr. Boghosian, after seven months, what are your observations at the American University of Armenia, and what new developments are expected?

BMB: The university, which opened on Armenia's Independence Day, September 21, had only two academic programs and 101 students. Now it has expanded and has seven colleges (Business and Management, Industrial Engineering, Computing and Information Sciences, Political Science and International Affairs, Public Health, Law and English).

In addition to this, each department has a research center, and there is also the Acopian Center for the Environment; every AUA student is required to take at least one course on environmental studies, considering the many serious challenges in environmental protection in Armenia.

Today, the total number of AUA graduates stands at 1,900. Following meetings with many of them, I have a strong impression that there is a positive appraisal of the university's activities. Many alumni are involved in business, banking and other areas; the university's results are tan-

gible in our country's economy.

Azg: Do you think the underdeveloped economy of Armenia can provide sufficient work for all these graduates? Or do you think this will add to the incentives of these educated young people to emigrate?

BMB: Recent statistics show that 75-80 percent of our graduates remain in Armenia, while 20-25 percent move abroad. Of the ones that move abroad, a part of them do so to pursue PhDs, and we hope for their return.

Azg: Can you tell us about the university staff?

BMB: The academic staff consists of 48 people, among them foreign and local specialists, whose interaction creates a very dynamic environment. This is a great example of Armenian-American cooperation. An important part of our mission is to conduct training courses, to introduce American teaching methods and standards to the Armenian teachers and to prepare professors.

Azg: As far as I know, there is a working mechanism at the university that ensures work for the graduates.

“...my experience shows that many Armenians in the diaspora are not fully aware of AUA's existence, particularly about its importance and results produced in Armenia.”

BMB: Yes, the Alumni and Career Development Office actively works to ensure that the graduates are always connected electronically and are well informed of relevant news and job announcements. I've met them in person and offered advice on being well-prepared for interviews, etc. I hope the university and its alumni will have closer mutual ties to ensure that they all feel part of the university family. We also try to keep the University in contact with those students who are now abroad. A significant number of them are in New York, Washington and California, and they would also like to stay in touch with the university.

Azg: Naturally, the university has financial difficulties. We assume that the increase in tuition fees has not been enough to overcome the difficulties caused by the economic crisis and other contributing factors. What are your plans to cope with this economic downturn?

BMB: Indeed, the economic crisis has affected university procedures. Our material resources come, in part, from the interest and income gained on our endowment funds. Due to the economic crisis, returns have declined. Even prior to the 2008 crisis, there had always been a budget deficit necessitating fundraising. Of course, this is not an ideal solution; it would be better to add the donated funds to the endowment. The difficulties of recent years have forced the university administration to make some reductions that have affected salaries, i.e., pay freezes.

Usually in such situations there are two main options: to reduce all programs in order or to take a more aggressive approach, or to expand programs to attract new investment.

Azg: It is clear you have chosen the latter option. And what percentage of the budget do tuition fees make up?

BMB: The university's student pay approximately one-third of the cost of his/her education, which amounts to \$2,550 for in-country students and it is \$8,800 for out-of-country students. The most important policy of the university is not letting down any of our students who have financial need. It is the responsibility of AUA to procure the necessary financial aid to allow these students to continue. Admissions at AUA are carried out on a “need-blind” basis – that is, we admit students solely on considerations of merit, and we do not look at their financial need at the time of admission.

Azg: And what percent do students from abroad comprise?

BMB: They are not many, about 40 out of 400, and most of them are ethnically Armenian. I think this number should be increased. It is important to involve students from Iran, India, China and other countries. This changes the university's environment, makes it international, which helps to increase the institution's profile

and diversity. An international environment was very important for me during the years of my study. It is especially important in Armenia because the country itself is 97.9 percent ethnically homogeneous and these contacts and relationships create further opportunities.

I would like to speak about another important issue – the university is accredited in the US. This is an important factor in attracting students as they are given an opportunity to receive a truly American education at a lower price than in the United States.

The mission of the American University of Armenia is to help Armenians and the Armenian government by importing new academic methods, and including them in the general educational system thereby getting better results. These new programs and methods are in addition to those already in place, and they are not and will not be in direct competition. The institution is unique in its structure and general approach. As an American university, it is at the same time the American University of Armenia, the meaning and sense of which is the collaboration with the government of Armenia, Armenian business circles, educational and other institutions, intellectual and cultural environments.

By being original and unique, we should not remain closed off, but rather respond to the requirements of the National Academy, Ministry of Science and Education, other ministries, and effectively cooperate with them.

In addition, my experience shows that many Armenians in the diaspora are not fully aware of AUA's existence, particularly about its importance and results produced in Armenia. Appropriate work needs to be carried out in cooperation with Armenian academics, business people and donors from the diaspora to increase awareness of the importance of the AUA.

Azg: Such projects require human labor, environmental resources, volition, assistance, etc.

BMB: This is a challenge: we are organizing fundraising in the US and hope to ensure further developments through other worthy projects. This is not to say that it will be easy; we have to work hard. We have limited resources but great desires and plans.

Azg: Since day one, the university has received support from the Armenian General Benevolent Union. Are there more expectations?

BMB: Over the years, as a founding body, the AGBU has always assisted the university and been one of its major benefactors. The University of California provides academic consultations, experts and support in exchange programs. Approximately half of the AUA Board are the leaders of various departments at the University of California, and the provost, chief academic and operations officer is the vice president of the University of California.

We need to strengthen ties between the AUA, University of California and the government of Armenia to ensure a higher quality of education.

Armenia's future economy will be knowledge-based. That is the general tendency. We do not have enough natural resources; we are not located on a natural trade route. We therefore need to invest in the minds of our people. And creation of an excellent educational system is the main precondition to the development of a knowledge-powered economy. It is clear that great strides are being made in this direction. The Ministry of Education and Science pays more attention to educational effectiveness, different projects and new ideas are brought to light in order to directly connect education and the economy.

I hope that the coming years will be very inspiring for education. The most important thing is that it will develop our economy and will provide our people with jobs which will keep them in this country.

Azg: Yes, it is a very critical situation. AUA provides education on graduate level. Are changes possible in this regard?

BMB: The AUA's goal is to enhance the quality of education in Armenia. Such fundamental changes should be considered within the framework of the general educational system. There is no such decision as of yet, it is an issue to be considered in the future.

Azg: Consideration was given to turning the Paramaz Avedisian building, which was built with the donations of a benefactor from the diaspora, into an academic-scientific center. There is also an adjacent park, which was to be renovated after the construction. At what stage is this?

BMB: Construction in the original Bagramian building is in progress now; we improved the new building's interior, completely renovated the old building: floors and windows, which were not insulated, were replaced by new ones. Next year, the library will be expanded; modern kitchens will be installed. As for the park, many trees have been planted; we have a gardener who takes care of the garden. We have close ties to the district administration and municipality. Our architect has many fine ideas. But the question of water supply is still unresolved, if the district administration solves the problem of irrigation, the completion of the garden would pick up speed.

Azg: Lastly, had you been in Armenia previously and what are your impressions now?

BMB: In recent years I had visited Armenia on a number of occasions, the longest visit lasting three weeks, with my family. It is a very pleasant place. I am enjoying my time here immensely. Yerevan has a very intimate atmosphere; the people are warm and welcoming: the city center – Opera, Philharmonic Society and cafes – creates a very good impression. Whenever I return, I urge my friends in the diaspora to go and see Armenia. I have many friends and relatives in different countries, and it has been my privilege to have had the opportunity to see many cities of the Armenian diaspora. And if you see all of these cities and do not see Armenia, it is comparable to seeing all the planets in the universe and not seeing the sun. When I return from Armenia, I give this message to everyone.

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INTERNATIONAL

International News

Turkey, Azerbaijan Plan To Send Meshketian Turks to Javakhk

TBILISI (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The Turkish element is getting active in Javakhk, said Shirak Torosyan, a member of the ruling Republican Party of Armenia and head of Javakhk Compatriots' Union.

"Turkish and Azerbaijani companies are buying lands in Javakhk to secure the return of about 13,000 Meskhetian Turks in the region, a signal alarming not only for Armenians but for Georgians as well," Torosyan told journalists on May 24.

"The goal of this campaign is to disseminate anti-Armenian propaganda and cut Javakhk off from Georgia," he stated.

Argentinean President Receives Karekin II

BUENOS AIRES (RFE/RL) – Argentinean President Cristina Fernandez Kirchner received on Monday Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II in the course of his visit here.

During the meeting the president appraised the role of the local Armenian community in political, economic and social life of the country.

Karekin II expressed his gratitude to leadership of Argentina for their warm attitude towards the Armenian community, expressing hope relations between the states and nations will strengthen.

Later the same day, Karekin II awarded Argentinean-Armenian businessman and philanthropist Eduardo Eurnekian a medal.

Turkish Speaker Calls Swedish Recognition of Genocide 'Bad Luck'

ANKARA (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The Swedish Parliament's adoption of the Armenian Genocide resolution is a mere unlucky coincidence, according to Turkish parliamentary speaker.

As Mehmet Ali Shahin stated during a meeting with his Swedish counterpart, Per Westerberg, parliaments must not assume the role of historians, leaving analysis of 1915 events to the experts.

Westerberg expressed his support for Shahin's position, the Turkish AA news agency reported.

On March 11, the Parliament of Sweden recognized the Armenian Genocide after a long debate with a vote of 131 to 130. The resolution mandates Sweden to officially describe the large-scale murders of Armenians and other ethnic groups in Turkey as genocide.

Beirut Hosts Event Dedicated to Armenia

BEIRUT (PanARMENIAN.Net) – On May 23, St. Joseph's French University in Beirut hosted an event dedicated to Armenia. The event was initiated by the Armenian Embassy in Lebanon.

During the event, Armenian Ambassador to Lebanon Ashot Kocharian briefed those present on history of Armenia and the Armenian nation, economic tendencies and proprieties of the country, investment possibilities, Armenian culture and heritage.

Sex Tapes of Turkish Nationalists Leaked

ISTANBUL (news.am) – Six top members of the Turkish Nationalist Movement Party (NHP) have resigned due to a scandalous sex tape.

Sex tapes associated with a number of top members of the Nationalist Movement Party remain relevant. Two videos containing scenes from Nationalist Movement Party members' private life were uploaded to Turkish nationalist-owned "different idealism" website. After the incident six of them resigned, reports *Milliyet*.

Vice chairman of the NHP declared that he renounces party membership as well as MP mandate and asks for people's forgiveness.

Iranian Envoy Visits Armenia, Again

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – A special envoy of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad visited Armenia and held talks with its leaders for the second time in less than three months on Friday, May 13.

Official Armenian sources said Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad-Reza Sheibani discussed with President Serge Sargisian and Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian the current state of Armenian-Iranian relations as well as regional security.

Sargisian was cited by his press office as telling Sheibani that frequent negotiations held by senior Armenian and Iranian government officials testify to "high-level relations existing between the two neighboring states."

According to the Armenian Foreign Ministry, Nalbandian welcomed the "dynamic development" of those relations at a separate meeting with the visiting Iranian diplomat. A ministry statement said he stressed the importance of bilateral economic cooperation on energy, transport and "a number of other areas."

Both sources said the talks touched upon the implementation of agreements reached by Ahmadinejad and Sargisian. They gave no further details.

The Armenian and Iranian presidents most recently met in Tehran in late March during official celebrations of the ancient Persian Nowruz holiday.



Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad-Reza Sheibani, left, and President Serge Sargisian

Ahmadinejad was reported to have told Sargisian that Tehran "has placed no limits on the development of cooperation with Yerevan" and wants to deepen ties between the two "friendly neighbors."

Both leaders reaffirmed their governments' plans to press ahead with more joint energy and transport projects. Those include the construction of two hydro-electric plants on the Arax river marking the Armenian-Iranian border and a pipeline that will ship Iranian fuel to Armenia.

Sheibani reportedly discussed these projects during his previous visit to Yerevan that took place in mid-February. Sargisian's office said at the time that unspecified "regional issues" were also on the agenda of his talks with the Armenian president.

Sheibani's latest trip came 10 days after another senior Iranian official, Deputy Defense Minister Reza Mozafari Nia, met with Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian in Yerevan. Few details of that meeting were made public.

Russia Sabotaged Iran Nuclear Program

JERUSALEM (AFP) – Then Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the sabotage of Iran's nuclear program in 2006, according to WikiLeaks documents published by Israeli daily, *Yediot Aharonot*, on Thursday, May 19.

The leaked documents purportedly detail talks between the head of Israel's Atomic Energy Commission and then-US ambassador to Israel, Richard Jones.

During a February 2006 meeting, Gideon Frank told Jones "at length about the results of his secret meetings with top figures in the Russian security establishment and intelligence community," *Yediot* reported.

Among the officials he met were then Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and the chairman of the Russian Atomic Energy Commission, Sergei Kiriyenko.

He told Jones that Putin had personally ordered measures to delay progress at Iran's Bushehr nuclear plant. Under a 1995 deal, Russia agreed to complete the plant and provide the fuel, with Iran committing to return the spent fuel.

"Frank said that Kiriyenko had told

him that he intended to delay the process of sending the nuclear rods to the reactor in Bushehr for an extended period of time and that he had no intention of supplying the reactor with 'fresh fuel' at the current stage," *Yediot* reported.

Kiriyenko told the Israelis "the Russians intended to explain the deliberate delay by means of 'technical problems,'" adding that "Putin had personally ordered that deliberate delay in delivery," according to the newspaper.

Frank also said the Russians had told him "they had made changes to the hardware that they were supposed to send to the Bushehr reactor so as to slow down the Iranian nuclear program even further."

Russia, which has been a long-standing nuclear partner of Iran, voted in favor of UN sanctions against the Islamic republic last June.

Israel and much of the international community fear that Iran's nuclear program masks a push to develop nuclear weapons. Tehran denies the charge, saying the program is for civilian energy purposes only.

Israel Sells Spy Camera to Turkey Despite Risk

TEL AVIV (*Today's Zaman*) – Israel's defense establishment has approved the sale of a sophisticated intelligence system to Turkey even though the Knesset has decided to debate a resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide, Media Line, a news portal on Middle East issues, has claimed.

The news portal said Israel's Ministry of Defense earlier last week approved the sale of a sensitive spy camera to Turkey, despite fears that the technology could find its way to hostile, third-party elements.

According to the report, the system is the Long-Range Oblique Photography pod (LOROP), built by Israel's top defense companies. It is considered the pinnacle in Israeli technology, one of the reasons why the Israeli Ministry of Defense was hesitant to see it in foreign hands.

"All Israeli weapons sales must be approved by the Defense Export Department, or Sibat, a branch within the Ministry of Defense. According to Israeldefense, an Israeli website with close ties to the defense establishment, Sibat approved the transfer of the system in order [to] improve the strained ties with Turkey," the report said.

The once close Turkish-Israel alliance has greatly deteriorated, particularly since last May's assault by Israeli commandos, on a Turkish ship, participating in a flotilla trying to break Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip. Eight Turks and one American of Turkish descent were killed in the raid.

Turkey has recently asked Israel to provide it with the identities of soldiers involved so it can prosecute them. Israel has warned that it will meet flotillas planned for next month with an iron fist.

Turkey to Build Bosphorus Straits Bypass

ISTANBUL (*The Independent*) – Turkey will build a new waterway to bypass the heavily congested Bosphorus Strait, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has announced; the Bosphorus Strait divides Europe from Asia.

He said the 150 meter-wide (492 feet) Canal Istanbul would link the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara that opens to the Aegean Sea via the Dardanelles.

Erdogan said the canal would be about 45 kilometers long (31 miles), describing it as "the greatest project of the century."

He did not disclose the exact location.

"We are rolling up our sleeves for Canal Istanbul, one of the greatest projects of the centuries that will outshine the Panama and Suez canals," Erdogan said.

He said the waterway would have a depth of about 25 meters and would afford the daily passage of up to 160 ves-

sels.

He said the canal would be completed by 2023, without revealing the cost of the project.

The prime minister stressed that the waterway should be built to protect some 2 million people living on the banks of the Bosphorus from millions of tons of hazardous materials being transported through the 30 kilometers strait every year.

"One of the main objectives is to reduce traffic through the Bosphorus and minimize the (environmental) threat," Erdogan said.

The announcement was made during campaigning ahead of June's parliamentary elections.

The Bosphorus is the world's narrowest strait used for international navigation. Its shores are heavily populated as Istanbul straddles it.



INTERNATIONAL

AGBU Montevideo Grung Choir Performs in Yerevan and Gumri

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay – At the initiative of the AGBU and the Diaspora Ministry of the Republic of Armenia, the Grung Choir of AGBU Montevideo, Uruguay, gave two concerts in Armenia. The performances launched a series of concerts dedicated to the 20th anniversary of Armenia's independence. Established in 1993, Grung Choir is headed by Alvaro Hagopian, who is also the principal conductor of the Montevideo Philharmonic Orchestra. After touring South American cities with substantial Armenian populations, the choir headed to Armenia for its first-ever performance in the homeland.

The first concert of the tour, titled "To the Homeland," took place at the Arno Babajanian Concert Hall in central Yerevan on April 26. Many art figures, government members, representatives of diplomatic missions and members of the intelligentsia were present at the concert. In her opening remarks, Republic of Armenia Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobian said, "My warm and cordial greetings to our compatriots from Uruguay. We are grateful to Grung for preserving Armenian roots, Armenian identity and Armenian culture. This is the result of the unification of the Armenian communities of South America. Symbolic is the fact that Uruguay was the first country in the world to recognize and condemn the Armenian Genocide, and certainly the Armenian community of Uruguay played a major role in this. For decades, Grung Choir has been singing about Armenians and Armenia and their heart is, indeed, in Armenia." Hakobian thanked the choir members and conductor Hagopian, and awarded them with a certificate of appreciation for the proliferation and development of the Armenian culture, preservation of the Armenian identity and continuous creative activities.

The concert program presented by the choir included pieces by Komitas, Tigranian, Hekimian, Avetissian, Goosan Sheram, Goosan Ashot, Goosan Shahan, Kotoyan, Tamatian and others, as well as various interpretations of famous folk and patriotic songs. After a standing ovation at the packed hall, the choir performed several additional songs.

The second concert by Grung took place at the Gumri Art Academy on April 28, opening



Grung Choir of AGBU Montevideo performs in Yerevan, under Alvaro Hagopian.

the Renaissance third International Contest-Festival of Musician-Performers. The concert was attended by town officials, public and art figures and students.

The choir members also visited various landmarks in Armenia. On April 24, together with AGBU Armenian Representation staff, AGBU scouts and the Yerevan YP team, the choir visited the Armenian Genocide Memorial in Tsitsernakaberd to pay tribute to the victims of the Armenian Genocide. On April 29, choir members visited the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin where they were received by Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians. On April 30, Grung was hosted by the AGBU Armenian Representation, where Ashot Ghazarian, AGBU Armenian representation director, made a brief presentation on the organization's activities in Armenia. The guests also got acquainted with the activities of AGBU's Armenian Virtual College. Choir members also attended an unforgettable concert at the AGBU and Holy Echmiadzin Nork Children's Center. On May 2, Armenian Assembly Board of Trustees Chairman Hirair Hovnanian and his wife, Anna, organized a farewell reception for the Grung Choir members at their Yerevan residence.



Republic of Armenia Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobian gives her opening remarks before the April 26 concert in Yerevan.

AGBU YP Lebanon Holds its Third Event on 'Entrepreneurship and The Challenges of Youth in Lebanon' with Architect Bernard Khoury



Two hundred and fifty attendees listen to world-renowned architect Bernard Khoury at the AGBU Demirdjian Center in Beirut, Lebanon.

BEIRUT – On May 5, AGBU's Young Professionals of Lebanon hosted world-renowned architect Bernard Khoury as a guest speaker for its third event, titled "Entrepreneurship and the Challenges of Youth in Lebanon." The lecture and reception were held at the AGBU Demirdjian Center, with 250 guests in attendance.

Khoury engaged the audience during his hour-long lecture, during which he spoke about his career as an architect and the role of architecture in his life. He started the talk by telling the audience that his mother, who was in attendance, is Armenian. He illustrated his presentation with extensive multimedia materials that gave the audience the breadth of his architectural projects, which have established his reputation as an expert in both the entertainment and residential sectors.

He emphasized that each project has been a unique journey of discovery and experience in itself, involving many challenges and requiring the utmost perseverance. He believes that architecture and design are political, social and cultural fields, and he spoke about how the complexities in Lebanon are reflected in his work.

The lecture was followed by a 30-minute question-and-answer session and a two-hour reception, during which the guests were given the opportunity to meet and talk with the speaker.



Community News

Michigan to Armenia Aid Group Grows with Perseverance and Persistence

DETROIT — There are many opportunities to help Armenia. A group from Michigan can attest to that.

From November 2009 to March 2011 a cadre made up of Bob Kachadourian, Shakeh Basmadjian and Armen Topouzian have sent to Armenia several containers of medical equipment.

Networking is the key to it all. There are many relief organizations, charities and other entities vying for the material that would help Armenia.

However, Kachadourian finds a way to learn about it first. Then he goes with Basmadjian and Topouzian to see the potential usable items.

Kachadourian can be found most any day on the phone, emailing, faxing or doing whatever it takes to locate items that otherwise wouldn't find their way to a nation in need of medical equipment.

Then Basmadjian and Topouzian arrange to have the equipment picked up often going with Kachadourian to meet the pick-up crew. The items are packaged, inventoried and put in a central location.

For example, along with many medical tools, 60 hospital beds were sent to Armenia in late 2009. The beds, donated by Dr. Shukri David of Providence Hospital, Southfield, were observed by Basmadjian, already in use at a Mother's Care Hospital in Armenia, while she visited there several months ago.

This year numerous panoramic X-Ray machines,



From left, bottom row, Armen Topouzian, Bob Kachadourian, H. Manoogian

dental tools and many related items were sent, that are too numerous to list here. The same could be said for optometric equipment.

We would be remiss if we didn't acknowledge the following faithful volunteers. Hovaguim Manoogian, Levon Kesishian, Ralph Garabedian, Ed Garabedian, Bob Jacobs, Thomas Arakelian, Ken Kezarhian and others behind the scenes helped get the health care equipment on its way.

Kachadourian states, "People must talk to their friends, relatives, physicians, dentists and indeed call up suppliers of health care equipment." He adds, "Hospitals are another source."

Kachadourian goes beyond the Michigan area as well. Last year he contacted UCLA Hospital through a relative of his wife.

Adrineh Poulatian was very helpful. Through the local ARS office and Basmadjian, many items were picked up.

The rest as they say is history. It just takes a little effort to reflect on useful contacts to begin networking for aid to Armenia.

Kachadourian works tirelessly at any project that serves Armenia. From the YMCA in Armenia, to fundraising for Baroness Cox and many projects he has been involved in over the years; passion is what describes his commitment to whatever he does.

Yes, the trio know how to get it done with their indispensable volunteers. However, it's all about networking.

The challenge is now for others to emulate the Michigan to Armenia Aid Group.



First-place winner Julia Palaian with committee member David Terzibashian and Angela Hagopian Snow

2011 Armenian Genocide Essay Competition Winners Announced

BIRMINGHAM, Mich. — The Armenian Genocide Committee of greater Detroit has announced the winners of the fourth annual essay competition.

Awards were presented to the winning students at the Hagopian showroom in Birmingham, before a crowd of students, educators, family and friends. The presentations were made prior to a lecture that same evening to be presented by historian and author, Raymond Kevorkian.

The competition funded by the Hagopian Family Foundation and conceived and initiated by the late Edgar Hagopian, recognizes and awards Michigan high school students who have written a successful essay on the Armenian Genocide.

This is the fourth year that the statewide competition has been offered to students with the hope that it will stimulate study of the many aspects surrounding the Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Turkey, 1915-1923. David Terzibashian, committee member, and Angela Hagopian Snow, representing the Hagopian Family Foundation, presented the 2011 awards as follows: first place (\$500), Julia Palaian, 10th grade, Farmington High School; second place (\$250), Allie Lisner, 10th grade, Andover High School and third place (\$150), Tim Zobel, 11th grade, Andover High School.

In addition, each teacher of the student submitting a winning essay was given a \$100 appreciation award.

This year presented a unique problem for the essay judges: there were so many excellent submissions that honorable mentions (\$50) were awarded to five additional students: Olivia Ann Kurajian, Seaholm High School; Raha Richardson, AGBU Manoogian School; Ari Sagharian, AGBU Manoogian School; Brianna Schwarcz, International Academy and Siddhartha Jean, International Academy.

The Armenian Genocide Committee of Greater Detroit, a group committed to bringing awareness of the Armenian Genocide, is made up of members of the Detroit-Armenian community including educators, former educators and business leaders: it was founded by the late Edgar Hagopian. Members are Ray Boujoulian, Corinne Khederian, Paul Kulhanjian, Richard Norsigian, Shirley Sarkisian, David Terzibashian and Madeline Thomasian.

The winning essays can be read at www.annualessaycompetition.com.



Second-place winner Allie Lister with David Terzibashian and Angela Hagopian Snow



Third-place winner Tim Zobel with David Terzibashian and Angela Hagopian Snow

Armenian Caucus Urges Robust Aid to Armenia and Karabagh

WASHINGTON — This week, members of the Armenian Caucus, led by Co-Chair Rep. Frank Pallone Jr. (D-NJ), sent a letter to House Appropriations Subcommittee Chairwoman Rep. Kay Granger (R-Texas) and ranking member Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY) urging "not less than \$60 million" in economic assistance to Armenia and "not less than \$10 million" in humanitarian aid to Nagorno Karabagh for FY 2012, reported the Armenian Assembly of America.

The letter to the Appropriations Subcommittee outlines key policy objectives regarding funding to Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh that are essential to the development and security of the Armenian republic. Those policy objectives were submitted in "public witness testimony" by the Armenian Assembly last month.

In addition, Armenian Caucus members urged Congress to uphold Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act and cease military assistance to Azerbaijan pointing to Azerbaijan's enormous military expenditures, continued cease-fire violations along the line of contact of Nagorno Karabagh and vitriolic war rhetoric from top government officials.

"In light of the ongoing dual blockades and repeated war rhetoric from Azerbaijan, US funding is indispensable to Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh's continued development," stated Assembly Congressional Relations Associate Bianka Kadian-Dodov. "We hail the caucus's efforts to ensure that adequate levels of assistance are maintained, and remain dedicated to Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh's security," said Kadian-Dodov.

Signatories to the letter included Congressional Armenian Caucus members Gary Ackerman, Joe Baca, Shelley Berkley, Howard Berman, Bruce Braley, David Cicilline, Jim Costa, Joseph Crowley, Eliot Engel, Anna Eshoo, Chaka Fattah, Barney Frank, Elton Gallegly, Rush Holt, Jim Langevin, Daniel Lipinski, Stephen Lynch, Edward Markey, James McGovern, Grace Napolitano, Gary Peters, Charles Rangel, Steven Rothman, Loretta Sanchez, John Sarbanes, Brad Sherman, Jackie Speier and Henry Waxman.

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs is scheduled to consider the measure on July 27.

Amaras Offers Summer Camp for Children

WATERTOWN, Mass. — Amaras Art Alliance of Watertown is offering a summer program for children. During the first two weeks of August, Amaras will offer the Arvest Summer Camp, a summer day camp for children ages 7-12 at the Lowell Elementary School, 175 Orchard St., from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays. Children may register for one or both sessions.

The goal of Arvest Summer Camp is for youngsters to have fun, in a safe and friendly atmosphere, while also learning about Armenian culture through food, music, arts and crafts, sports and dancing. A number of special guests, including writers, singers and scientists will visit during the week to share stories and engage the children in activities. Additionally, children will learn new games and learn some Armenian recipes.

The camp is open to all children with an interest in having fun.

For more information and registration, including prices, go to amarasarvestcamp@gmail.com.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Holy Trinity Church Hosts Diocesan Assembly

Gathering Ideal Way to Mark 50 Years of Parish Life

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — “Our parish and community has been working two years to put the 109th Diocesan Assembly together, and we are thrilled we had a really positive experience,” said Rev. Vasken Kouzouian, pastor of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church, host parish of this year’s assembly.

“It was great for our community in our 50th anniversary year to bring parishioners together and work for the greater good of the Diocese.”

The Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Cambridge hosted the annual gathering of clergy and lay delegates representing the Eastern Diocese’s organized and mission parishes. Most meetings and events convened at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel, but Holy Trinity parishioners also organized activities for the visiting delegates and their families, including a tour of the city on the famous Boston Duck Tours.

“Everyone who contributed participated in lay ministry together,” said Kouzouian. “It was a wonderful experience for us to become one body and minister to the greater body of our church.”

After the Diocesan Assembly adjourned on Saturday, April 30, delegates had the opportunity to take a tour of the city steeped in American history. On Sunday, May 1, delegates attended the Divine Liturgy at Holy Trinity Church, where the guest celebrant was the Very Rev. Vardan Navasardyan, from Holy Echmiadzin, who offered his sermon on the meaning of “New Sunday” and renewing one’s lives in the light of the Resurrection.

While most clergymen had departed to be at



The host parish’s Diocesan Assembly Committee was led by Fr. Vasken Kouzouian and co-chaired by Janice Dorian (at podium) and Nancy D. Kasarjian.

their home parishes on Sunday, a number remained and took part in the service, with the Holy Trinity altar servers and choir also participating.

Following Divine Liturgy, a new 50th Anniversary gold chalice – a gift to the Holy Trinity Parish from longtime parishioner and current Diocesan Council member James Kalustian – was blessed by Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian. The chalice

depicts images of the Holy Trinity Church, Holy Echmiadzin, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Two years ago, Kalustian made a similar donation to St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral to mark its own 40th anniversary.

New choir and deacons’ robes were also blessed during the May 1 liturgy.

To conclude the services, students of Holy Trinity’s Sunday School led the clergy and the faithful out to the front of the church, where a khachkar monument stands as the gathering place for the parish’s annual Armenian Martyr’s Day requiem service. With Easter falling on April 24 this year, the Holy Trinity parish scheduled its Martyrs Day observance for May 1, when the Primate and visiting delegates would be present.

Afterwards, during a reception in the host parish’s Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, the Primate offered his appreciation to the Holy Trinity Church for undertaking the responsibility of hosting the 109th Diocesan Assembly.

“We are happy this year’s Diocesan Assembly went well, and that excitement was built in our community,” said Kouzouian. “Now we are ready to start a new chapter and dream new dreams.”

The host parish’s Diocesan Assembly Committee was led by Kouzouian and co-chaired by Janice Dorian and Nancy D. Kasarjian. Members included: Linda Abkarian, Maral Ayanian, Seta A. Buchter, Barbara Dorian, Daniel K. Dorian, Lisa Dorian, Kalustian, Cynthia Kazanjian, Arlene Kasarjian, Yeretzgin Arpi Kouzouian, Richard Kratlian, Carol Krikorian, Deacon Gregory Krikorian, Lois Malconian, Karen Martin, William H. Martin, Catherine Minassian, Bruce Newell, Carlene Newell, Gail B. O’Reilly, Cheryl Scaparrotta, Debra Stevens, Barara Tellalian and Albert Zouanjian.

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Delegates gathered in Boston for the 109th Diocesan Assembly last month.

Susan Kouzouian Derderian Admitted To US Supreme Court Bar



Susan Kouzouian Derderian

WASHINGTON — On Monday, April 4, Susan Kouzouian Derderian was admitted in open court to the Bar of the United States Supreme Court, during a ceremony before all nine sitting justices. Derderian has also been admitted to the First Circuit Court of Appeals (1989) as well as the Massachusetts Bar (1985).

Having graduated in 1981, from Tufts University, Medford, Mass., and in 1984, from Suffolk Law School, in Boston, Derderian began her career as assistant district attorney in Middlesex County, serving during Scott Harshbarger’s tenure as district attorney. She has a solo practice in Cambridge, Mass., in criminal defense litigation, as well as providing services in residential real estate closings, wills and trusts and estates.

Derderian is the daughter of the Rev. Mampre A. and the late Yeretzgin Nuvart R. Kouzouian, of Boston, former pastor of the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church of Greater Boston.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Naomi Armen Honored as Mother of the Year at Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center

By Lalig J. Musserian

JAMAICA PLAIN, Mass. — Every year, the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center (ANRC) celebrates Mother's Day with a special luncheon honoring a "Mother of the Year." On May 7, Naomi Armen was the recipient of this honor, surrounded by her family and friends. Very Rev. Dajad Davidian, pastor emeritus of the St. James Armenian Apostolic Church, was the guest speaker.

The afternoon began with the luncheon in honor of Armen, followed by remarks by Siran Salibian, activities director. Vera Armen, the honoree's daughter, spoke about her mother's childhood and escape from the Armenian Genocide. She also spoke about her mother's dedication and commitment to St. James Armenian Church for almost 50 years, where she worked tirelessly with the Senior Ladies' Auxiliary Committee. Along with cooking and planning scores of bazaars, dinners and functions, the committee was instrumental in producing plays which Naomi Armen translated, staged, costumed and often starred in, usually as a man, since many men were shy or not available and the show had to go on. Vera Armen spoke passionately about her mother's guiding hand in her family's life, her positive attitude and how she inspired kindness in anyone she met.

Naomi Armen's story is a story of survival against all odds. She was born in 1910 in Marzivan, (now called Phazemon), in northern Turkey and she was just 5 when the Armenian

Genocide was launched. Along with her aunt and her brother, she started the forced march into the Der ez-Zor desert, where she was separated from the rest of her family and later taken away as a household servant into a Turkish family in a nearby village. There, she lived with her "Turkish dad" and his two wives, one wife Turkish, the other Armenian. As part of her household duties, she was sent to the well in the village to fetch water; one morning, she went to the well as usual, and in a stroke of fate, she ran into her brother, who was also fetching water! Apparently, he had been taken in by a Turkish family as well.

Some time later, when World War I ended, the Turks were instructed to return Armenian children to the city of Sebastopol. From there Naomi Armen and her brother were sent to a local orphanage, both aware that they had a father somewhere out there, praying that he was alive. One day, she was playing with her doll in the orphanage's courtyard. There was a girls' school next door and a young girl there recognized her. The girl told her that her father was looking for her. Within a short time, brother and sister were reunited with their father, beating incredible odds in finding each other.

Naomi Armen and her brother moved to Hamburg, Germany with her father and tried to pick up their broken lives. She was then sent to a boarding school in Bulgaria, where she learned and mastered no less than seven languages fluently. She and her family eventually journeyed to the United States when she was approximately 20.

Davidian spoke of Armen's love and passion for her church and her unwavering loyalty to



Naomi Armen with her daughters Carol Theoharous (left) and Vera Armen

her friends and family. He spoke about her presence at his ordination in 1960, in Worcester. She was a close friend of the late Yeretzgin Rosemary Davidian, whose mother was also from Bulgaria. Davidian thanked the honoree and told her how proud St. James was to call her a parishioner and a "daughter" of the church. He spoke emotionally about his own mother and blessed all the mothers for the sacrifices they make for their children.

Mary Galstyan, a fifth-grade student at St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School in Watertown, charmed the audience with two

proud to be Armenian."

A cake-cutting ceremony and reception, organized specially by the staff of the ANRC, brought the afternoon to a close.

The ANRC is an 83-bed Nursing and Rehabilitation facility which has consistently garnered top rankings and reviews from the state. The ANRC was recently declared to be 100 percent in compliance with over 180 federal and state regulations by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

For more information, visit ANRC at www.armenianhome.org.

Memorial Held for Dr. Antranig Chalabian (1922-2011)

By Betty Apigian Kessel

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. — The book is one of my most prized possessions and sits prominently on my bookshelf because of the subject matter contained therein. It is titled *General Andranik And the Armenian Revolutionary Movement* by Antranig Chalabian.

It is the 588-page English translation about the hero of the book and what he represented to the Armenian Nation. In it the author has written the message "To Serpouhi Apikian Castle With Best Wishes: A Chalabian, 3-26-89." To me it is too precious to ever be available for loaning to anyone.

With his remains already resting in Kessab, Syria, the pews in late afternoon of Saturday, April 30, of the Armenian Congregational Church in Southfield became filled by respectful admirers to attend a memorial service for a long-time respected community member, noted author, teacher and father, Dr. Antranig Chalabian.

My first meeting with Dr. Chalabian came many years ago when he had briefly been my Armenian School teacher at this same church on Saturday mornings when I wanted to brush up on my reading and writing skills.

On that day Antranig Chalabian was being remembered by more than 175 members of Metro-Detroit for his invaluable worldwide literary contributions. He was a visionary who realized the importance of an English translation book for non-Armenian reading Hyes and others as well to recount the heroic exploits of the legendary Antranig. The importance of this cannot be underestimated.

With this book in particular he reawakened pride in our national hero and his soldiers allowing younger generations of Armenians to learn their ancestors fought bravely, with valor to defend their homeland in the quest for freedom and justice against the oppressive Turks.

He was predeceased by his beloved wife, Siran. He leaves his children Annie (and Tom) Hogland, Dr. Jack and Gayle Chelebian and Karine and Hovsep Koundakjian.

Dr. Chalabian was born in Kessab, Syria, and graduated from the local Armenian Evangelical School. He studied at Aleppo College then

taught in his local school in Kessab for a year. From 1944 to 1949 he returned to Aleppo College teaching English and arithmetic.

In 1949 he moved to Beirut where his family had settled in 1945. He taught English for one year at the AGBU Hovagimian-Manoogian High School. Then he took a position in the physiology department of the American University of Beirut, where he remained for 27 years. While there, he worked as a free-lance medical illustrator, illustrating almost entirely three medical books and thousands of research papers.

The multi-talented Chalabian was simultaneously contributing articles to Djanasser, Spiurk and Nayiri papers.

Chalabian settled in Detroit in 1977 with his family, assuming the position of public relations director of the AGBU Alex Manoogian School. He regularly contributed articles to *Baika*, *Nor Or*, *Abaka*, the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* and the *Armenian Observer*.

He was eulogized by Pastor Makarios Darawi and Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian, pastor emeritus of the Armenian Congregational Church, describing the deceased as an intellectual. "He liked to learn and to teach," Tootikian said.

Tootikian also told of Chalabian's human side: "He could have a disposition similar to a stormy sea but quickly would settle down and was soft as cotton. When asked if he could be born again what nationality would he like to be, his quick response was Armenian!"

Badveli Tootikian told him many times what a fortunate person he was.

Dr. Chalabian's mother was an important factor in molding his character. He also had other mentors who played an important role in his life.

Daughter Karine (Karen) and husband Hovsep who lived nearby Dr. Chalabian along with grandson Garo were always there to care for him. Garo commented how much he loved his grandfather and how proud he was to be his grandson.

There was a unison reading of Psalm 23 by the congregation. Special music was provided by Gayaneh Kachadourian who sang *Soorp*, *Soorp* and *Der Voghormya*, *Der Voghormya*. Prelude and Postlude was by Susan Harrison. It was a fitting memorial for a man who contributed to the educational and literary life of the community.

Dr. Chalabian launched into the writing of

several volumes on Armenian history and historical figures, but he is best known for that immense accomplishment, the biography of General Antranig, which went into four printings. It was with the defense of this volume in Armenia in the History Department of the University of Armenia that he was awarded a doctorate in history. He donated the proceeds from the sale of this book to the Karabagh freedom fighters.

He was the recipient of many awards and accolades and became a popular lecturer being invited as guest speaker in different states. In 2005, the mayor of Southfield designated a day as Dr. Antranig Chalabian Day, a true honor for a deserving individual who both lived and taught in that city.

Memorial services were followed by an impressive dinner buffet prepared by the Ladies of the Congregational Church. Afterwards a film presentation of Chalabian's life was shown.

Long-time friend and community leader Edmond Azadian also spoke of Dr. Chalabian's

many contributions to the community and literary world.

Detroit may have lost all too soon another of its leading intellectual leadership components but Dr. Antranig Chalabian has left an indelible mark on a community who has shown admiration and appreciation for his lifetime body of work. This community was blessed by his presence.

A quote from the General Antranig book: "The Armenian Revolutionary Movement would not have its 'raison d'être,' and the Armenian political parties probably would not have been formed during the last quarter of the 19th century, if the Turks had treated the Armenians more humanely. The Armenian Revolutionary Movement was the direct consequences of Turkish misrule, evidenced by their persistent policy of persecution, oppression and finally exterminating the Armenians inhabiting their 3,000-year-old homeland in eastern Turkey."

Amen.

Giragosian

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LARRY BEDROSIAN



COMMUNITY NEWS

ATP Presents Building Bridges Education Program at Ari Guiragos Minassian Armenian School

SANTA ANA, Calif. — Earlier this month, Southern California representatives of Armenia Tree Project (ATP) were hosted by the Ari Guiragos Minassian Armenian School here. Anahit Gharibyan and Hermine Mahmoudzian



The Ari Guiragos Minassian Armenian School in Santa Ana hosted a presentation by Armenia Tree Project about its Building Bridges education program to connect diasporan students with their environmental heritage.

were greeted by Principal Kohar Zaher and Armenian teacher Ani Geloian, along with students from the fifth- and sixth-grade classes. The school recently celebrated its 25th anniversary and the visit was part of ATP's Building Bridges education program to connect diasporan students with their environmental heritage.

Anahit Gharibyan — new to California but a long-time ATP employee in Yerevan — spoke with the students about the reasons behind the founding of ATP in 1994 and some of the early experiences of the organization, as well as some of the environmental challenges facing Armenia today. Each student was presented with a copy of ATP's colorful *Building Bridges* newsletter for children.

"The Minassian School students were very knowledgeable about Armenia and quite enthusiastic in their questions and answers about ATP and environmental issues," noted Gharibyan after the school assembly.

The sixth-grade class will be traveling to Armenia in June and will be met by ATP staff in order to plant tree seedlings and spend time meeting peers of the same age from a local school.

ATP's mission is to assist the Armenian people in using trees to improve their standard of living and protect the environment, guided by the need to promote self-sufficiency, aid those with the fewest resources first and conserve the indigenous ecosystem.

ATP's three major programs are tree planting, environmental education and sustainable development initiatives.

For more information about ATP and hosting a visit by ATP at a school, contact ATP's Watertown Office.

ASA Journalism Program to Sponsor Aspiring Journalists, Facilitate Internships

WARWICK, R.I. — This month, the Armenian Students' Association, Incorporated (ASA Inc.) announced its sponsorship of two internships in journalism. Working in partnership with the Armenian Weekly and Armenian Mirror-Spectator, the ASA Inc. announced that applications for the first internship class are now available. Applicants for the inaugural session of the program must have completed their sophomore year of college by May 30. Currently-enrolled graduate students are also eligible.

"The ASA is proud to make these internships available," said Brian Assadourian, chairman of the ASA Inc. Board of Trustees. "This program honors the spirit of the ASA's mission of providing financial assistance and professional mentorship to qualified students of Armenian heritage."

Participants in the six-week internship program will receive a weekly stipend of \$150. Interns will work either under the supervision of Khatchig Mouradian, editor of the *Armenian Weekly*, or Alin K. Gregorian, editor of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*. The internship program will take place at the offices of these newspapers, located in Watertown, Mass.

"It is important to provide opportunities for Armenian-American students to pursue careers in journalism," noted Dr. Michael G. Mensoian, a member of the ASA Inc. Board of Trustees who will oversee the program on behalf of the organization.

"The Armenian Weekly and The Armenian Mirror-Spectator are two of the leading English-language newspapers in North America keeping our community informed of developments locally as well as in Armenia through their print and online editions," he added.

Interested students may request an application for the ASA Inc. Journalism Internship by contacting the ASA Inc. national office at headasa@aol.com.

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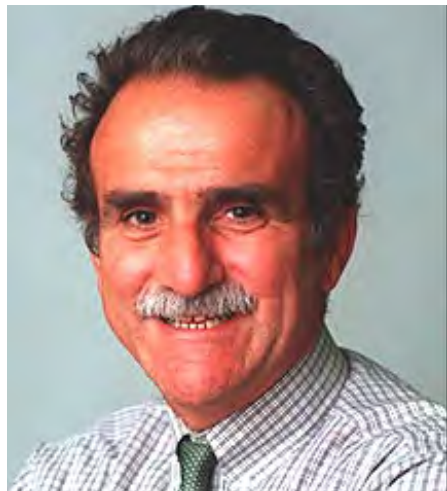
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COMMUNITY NEWS

ArmenBar Annual Meeting in San Francisco Reaches New Heights

SAN FRANCISCO — More than 150 Armenian-American lawyers, judges and community leaders gathered in the city by the bay from April 29 to May 1, for a breakthrough convention of the Armenian Bar Association (ABA).

“This has been the most fantastic convention of the Armenian Bar Association,” Chairman Edvin Minassian said. “We now return to work with high spirits and a renewed dedication to justice — before our country, our homeland and our history.”

The weekend was officially opened at the California Supreme Court, where Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye received the members of the ABA, first at a meeting of the California Judicial Council and then at a private luncheon reception. Drawing from her own background as a Philippina, Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye said that she shared with the ABA a deep faith that a dedication to the national heritage “translates directly to our commitment to the rule of law and the strength of our community.”

The chief justice also expressed her gratitude for the contribution of so many Armenians, especially Gov. George Deukmejian, both to her professional career and to the law at large. It was fitting, then, that several Armenian-American legal luminaries were in attendance. Supreme Court Justice Marvin Baxter, a guiding member of the ABA, presided over the afternoon meeting and later led a tour through the Supreme Court building. Retired Supreme Court Justice Armand Arabian and Court of Appeal Justice Charles Poochigian delighted the crowd with short, sweet reflections.

The convention was reconvened in the evening, this time at the rooftop hall of the Union Square Marriott Hotel, where Ann Lousin, a celebrated professor of commercial law at the John Marshall Law School in Chicago, presented the weekend’s first public service award. The recipient was David Balabanian, a premier civil litigator with the law firm Bingham McCutchen, who spoke of the complex controversies surrounding the 103-foot concrete cross on San Francisco’s Mount Davidson, the tallest monument ever dedicated to the Armenian Genocide. With signature wit and passion, Balabanian told the compelling tale of how the Armenian community — represented pro bono by his law firm — was able to crush a Turkish-funded lawsuit launched against the memory of 1915.

A night of festivities gave way to a serious and sober morning, with the first of two extensive panels, titled “Armenia on the Road to Judicial Independence and Legal Reforms.” The Republic of Armenia’s newly-appointed minister of justice, Hrayr Tovmasyan, led the discussion with an eloquent and candid survey of the problems plaguing the post-Soviet country’s legal system. “The elimination of corruption, the independence of the judiciary, the protection of human rights, the supremacy of law — these are problems that we must face together, if Armenia is ever to become the land of our dreams,” Tovmasyan said.

The minister’s general comments were complemented by the detailed accounting presented by Yerevan State University Prof. Ruben Melikyan, who addressed specific problems —



Presentation of the prestigious Public Service Award to Armen Hovannisian by the chairman joined by former chairs and founder of ArmenBar, Raffi Hovannisian

spective, were Antranig Kasbarian, director of the Tufenkian Foundation, and Garin K. Hovannisian, author of *Family of Shadows*.

The second panel, “The Armenian Genocide’s Legal Significance in Recovery Litigation,” was powered by a panel of experts on international law: Harut Sassounian, columnist and political scientist specializing in international law; Steven Dadaian, lawyer, advocate and leading draftsman of legislation that governs genocide litigation in the United States; Prof. Lee Crawford-Boyd, chief architect of genocide litigation ongoing in the California courts and Federico Hairabedian, Argentine-Armenian lawyer who recently won a historic lawsuit against Turkey in Argentine Federal Court, which issued a verdict recognizing the Armenian Genocide and the murder of his family by Ottoman Turkey.

“We set a landmark in which we took the genocide, which is an international crime, into a federal court, but we did this without considering the next step,” Hairabedian said. Indeed this was the panel’s original goal and ultimate success: to serve as the foundational discussion about that “next step” — how to organize the disparate efforts of Armenians across the world into a clear and comprehensive international campaign to seek justice for the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

Tucked between the Saturday deliberations was the gala luncheon. After an elegant and heartrending introduction by founding member Vicken Simonian, Garo Ghazarian took the podium to deliver the keynote lecture. Drawing from his friendship with Simonian, who was his athletic adversary and best friend on the racetracks

freedom fast at Liberty Square.

Hovannisian himself, who had made a surprise appearance in San Francisco, followed Ghazarian to address the members of the Armenian Bar Association, the organization he founded in 1989. “Our nation is not lost,” he said. “We still have a cause to deliver on — to

the tears and laughter of a hundred lawyers and judges, Hovannisian spoke about his grandmother, Siroon Hovannisian, and grandfather, Hovakim Kotcholosian, who represent for him the different faces of the Armenian Genocide, as they do the common formula of his service to his community and country.



California Supreme Court Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye, Justice Marvin Baxter with Armenian Bar leadership

make Armenia the land of liberty, sovereignty and the national interest that we all expect it to become.” Hovannisian also expressed his appreciation to Balabanian, Walter Karabian and all those who nourished the ABA from its humble beginnings, and fueled its evolution into a pioneering force of justice in the United States.

“I’m not one of those people who can leave a mark,” he said. “I’m somebody who carries the marks of others.”

The convention, which was the 22nd annual convention of the Armenian Bar Association, was interspersed with social events, long walks through San Francisco and a concluding dinner in Little Italy, where the lawyers and judges offered toasts and sang Armenian songs.

In attendance throughout the weekend were Zaven V. Sinanian, Los Angeles County superior court judge; Amy Hoogasian, federal immigration law judge; Garo Mardirossian, immediate past president of Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles; Frederick K. Ohlrich, clerk of the court, California Supreme Court; Debbie Poochigian, Fresno County supervisor; *Metropolitan News* publisher and editor-in-chief Roger M. Grace and President Jo-Ann Grace and many others.

On Sunday, ArmenBar held elections for its 17-member board, including the most recent class of Michael Amerian, Ara Babaian, Garo Ghazarian, Armen K. Hovannisian, Laura Karabulut, Edvin Minassian and Gary Moomjian.

The executive officers for the 2011-2012 term were also elected: Edvin Minassian, chairperson; Garo Ghazarian, vice chairperson; Harry Dikranian, vice chairperson; Sara Bedirian, treasurer and Hovanes Margarian, secretary. Sonya Nersessian will continue in her role as chairperson ex-officio.



Justice Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Hrayr Tovmasyan along with co-panelists Prof. Ruben Melikyan, Garin Hovannisian and Antranig Kasbarian

such as the lack of a system of precedent in Armenia — and offered specific solutions toward reforming the judicial culture in Armenia. His proposal, that diasporan lawyers and judges be invited to take on official, legally-binding roles in the administration of law in the republic, was met with particular enthusiasm. Also on the panel, and contributing to the diaspora’s per-

of Southern California, Ghazarian inspired the crowd with his larger-than-life story of failure and redemption in America. He concluded with a fascinating chronicle of his recent mission to Yerevan, where he monitored the progress of civil rights and visited Raffi K. Hovannisian, the first foreign minister of Armenia and present-day leader of the Heritage party who had declared a

The gala luncheon was closed by Raffi Hovannisian’s brother, Armen K. Hovannisian, who had organized and presided over the weekend’s many events and festivities, and who now stood before the crowd to receive the Armenian Bar Public Service Award for decades of dedication to law and community. In a powerful and deeply-moving acceptance speech, which incited

Blindness Is No Barrier to Lynn Black-belt Holder

By Terry Weber

LYNN, Mass. (*Boston Globe*) – Imagine the challenge of your first black-belt test in the martial arts: the years of practice, the nerves and the questions about your opponent’s skills. Now, imagine putting on a blindfold just before the test.

Such was the challenge facing Serguei Vassiliev, 43, of Lynn. Vassiliev is blind and recently tested for his black belt in the Japanese martial art of aikido.

The test took place at the Shodokan Dojo, a martial arts training facility in Beverly. Three highly-ranked instructors, acting as judges, sat alongside a mat with other aikido students in observance. Students were prepared to act as “ukes” (attackers) to test Vassiliev’s skills.

To begin, instructor Bernie Mulligan selected Vassiliev’s primary opponent: John Murphy of Derry, NH. Murphy is 6 feet, 3 inches, 230 pounds, and Vassiliev is 5 feet 10, 150 pounds. Both have more than 15 years of aikido training. At the

judges’ commands, Murphy launched attacks against Vassiliev, and each time Vassiliev subdued him with wrist locks, throws or arm pins.

Next came a series of attacks with Murphy wielding weapons: a knife, a sword and a wooden staff. Each attack ended with Murphy disarmed and restrained. Then two other students attacked Vassiliev simultaneously. He flipped and threw both.

“Serguei Vassiliev has a great awareness of movement around him,” said Murphy. “Normally, students practice with their opponents for months. But we never practiced together, so his skills are real and extraordinary. He has incredible strength in his body and mind.”

How does Vassiliev defend himself without vision?

“It is not magic,” said Vassiliev. “It is work and practicing the moves. The attack must start and then I respond. In the movies, perhaps a blind man seems to know when and how the enemy will attack. It is extraordinary but not because they are blind. It is because they are great masters. Anyone, blind or not, can repeat move-

ments, but for mastery of aikido, you must believe its philosophy.”

Aikido is a Japanese martial art created by Morihei Ueshiba in the early 1900s. Ueshiba’s philosophy focuses on peaceful resolution of conflict. Aikido students learn to neutralize and redirect the energy of an opponent without causing serious injury. The desired result is harmony between peaceful and hostile energies.

According to the US Aikido Federation in New York, no statistics are available on the number of blind aikido students who have attained their black belt. “In my 40-plus years of martial arts experience, I have never trained another blind person,” said Mulligan. “I call it rare.”

Mulligan, 83, recently reached the rank of shihan, or master teacher, from the Aikido World Headquarters in Tokyo. He has trained Vassiliev since 2002.

“I am happy to say that Serguei Vassiliev passed his black-belt test and demonstrated his skills superbly,” said Mulligan. “Vassiliev is a teacher amongst the students; he has faced many of life’s challenges with peace.”

Vassiliev’s challenges started when he lost his vision as a young boy in his native country of Armenia.

“When Gorbachev was in power in the late 1980s, censorship was lessened,” said Vassiliev. “I openly attended martial arts schools and met my first great martial arts teachers.”

In 1988, a devastating earthquake struck Armenia, and Vassiliev’s family home was destroyed. Soon Vassiliev’s family joined him in Russia. But even while personal freedoms were improving in the late 1980s, the economies in both Russia and Armenia were unstable, and eventually the Vassiliev family immigrated to America in 2002. They relocated without Vassiliev’s father, who died in Russia.

Shortly after settling in Lynn, Vassiliev underwent eye surgery at Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary in Boston. The surgery improved the sight in his left eye by 10 to 15 percent.

“It was good to see better in my left eye, but the improvement only lasted a few years,” said Vassiliev. “For a short time I enjoyed nature and seeing my loved ones, but now I am completely blind in both eyes. I must say, blindness is inconvenient, but I am grateful to my friends who help me with the inconveniences.”

Vassiliev now lives on a state-funded stipend. His circle of friends includes fellow aikido students, members of the Russian and Armenian community in Lynn and fellow musicians.

“People often ask me how I spend my time,” said Vassiliev. “When I am not practicing aikido, I am listening to audio books and learning how to play the drums, piano and guitar. I want to record my own music because music brings harmony and joy to my life, just like aikido.”

Upon hearing he successfully passed his black-belt test, Vassiliev smiled.

“Of course I am pleased I passed the test,” he said. “But do not congratulate me. Every day I face unseen challenges. Through aikido I learn to bring harmony to whatever life has coming next.”



LOS ANGELES — Andrea Fehring, Lily Ring Balian, Joan Agajanian Quinn and Barbara Poladian surround author Sue Ann Jaffarian during the recent Westside Guild Luncheon at Wilshire Country Club. Jaffarian’s engaging presentation, motivated by hopes and dreams, kept the sold-out audience interested in how she applied her fervor to achieving her goals. Jafarian autographed books from her *Granny Apples* and *Odelia Grey* mystery series and participated in a silent auction with the proceeds going in support of the Ararat Home.

“I consumed a bottle of about 150 vitamins when I was 4,” said Vassiliev. “My grandmother noticed a red rash on my face and rushed me to the hospital believing I may have the measles. A doctor gave me a measles vaccine, and I had a severe allergic reaction, which damaged my vision.”

Vassiliev then suffered from painful headaches, nose bleeds and diminishing vision. Further treatments only worsened his condition and left him blind. Frantic for better medical attention, Vassiliev’s family traveled to Moscow, where he was admitted to a hospital for six months. In Moscow, doctors were able to restore only partial sight in Vassiliev’s left eye.

Despite his impaired vision, young Vassiliev had a desire to learn English and a thirst for knowledge about life outside the Soviet Union. At the time, Armenia was a Soviet republic and the government censored alternative reading materials.

“Growing up in the Soviet Union, we could not openly learn martial arts or even yoga,” said Vassiliev. “But I went to a Russian school and some of my friends’ fathers were highly-ranked military officers. They owned books about advanced military fighting and when I was 8, one of them gave me a book called *This Is Karate* by Masutatsu Oyama. From this book and others, I taught myself English and began my training in the martial arts.”

Vassiliev completed high school in Armenia and moved to Russia to take advanced courses.

Jack Kevorkian In Hospital with Kidney Problems

By Shaun Byron

ROYAL OAK, Mich. (*The Daily Tribune*) – Dr. Jack Kevorkian, the renowned assisted-suicide advocate dubbed “Dr. Death,” has been hospitalized for reported problems related to his kidneys.

“We took him in last night,” said Kevorkian’s attorney Mayer Morganroth. “He was in a couple weeks ago, but he was out of the hospital and now he is back in.”

Kevorkian, a long-time Royal Oak resident, became a well-known figure during the 1990s for his views on assisted suicide and actions.

He was on the cover of news magazines, featured on national news shows and the subject of late-night comedy routines. Throughout the 1990s, he dodged criminal convictions despite several high profile arrests and trials. He helped his attorney, Geoffrey Fieger, achieve national fame.

However, the pathologist’s luck turned after he appeared on “60 Minutes,” pushing the issue further than before.

In 1999, he was convicted of second-degree murder in the death of 52-year-old Thomas Youk and sentenced to a 10- to 25-year prison term.

Kevorkian was found guilty of administering the substance used to kill Youk, a Waterford Township resident. The killing was videotaped and played on national television, prompting newly elected Oakland County Prosecutor David Gorceyca, who had run under the promise of no more prosecutions against assisted suicide cases.

He was paroled in 2006 after agreeing not to assist with any more suicides.

Kevorkian is reputed to have assisted in 130 suicides.

In 2008, he ran unsuccessfully for Congress in the 9th District as an independent.

Kevorkian was also the subject of an HBO film called “You Don’t Know Jack.”

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New York
METRO

Live Armenian Music, Food Will Add Flavor to St. Nersess Father’s Day Picnic

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. — St. Nersess Armenian Seminary will once again hold the annual Father’s Day Picnic on Sunday, June 19. This traditional Armenian-style picnic will feature live Armenian music by a talented, all-star ensemble including Dick Barsamian, Harold Hagopian, Sevan Simonian and Jim Dardouni. Armenian cuisine will be served under a tent on the grounds of the seminary.

“The St. Nersess Father’s Day Picnic has turned into an anticipated family tradition, celebrating all fathers while supporting our Seminary and its efforts to prepare future spiritual fathers,” said Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, dean. “We expect hundreds of people to enjoy an afternoon filled with fellowship, good food and lively activities for all.”

The day will begin with Divine Liturgy cele-

brated at 10 a.m. in the seminary chapel, followed at noon by picnic festivities. There will be activities held throughout the afternoon for children and teens, along with a variety of vendors selling an array of items. A White Elephant sale will also take place on the grounds. People are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and tavloo boards.

Merchant and general sponsorships are being secured to help underwrite the cost of this event so that all proceeds on the day of the picnic will directly benefit the ongoing mission of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, which is to prepare leaders in ordained and lay ministries through graduate degree and continuing education programs.

Additionally, the seminary has launched a Super Raffle with winners being announced the

day of the picnic. Only 300 tickets are available for this raffle, with each ticket costing \$50. The three cash prizes awarded will be \$3,000, \$1,500 and \$500. To purchase tickets, call the

seminary office. For more information, visit www.stnersess.edu. Parking and admission are free for this event, to be held rain or shine.



Last year, dozens of college-aged students and young professionals volunteered their time to staff the St. Nersess Father’s Day Picnic.



Hundreds feasted on kebob and enjoyed the sounds of Armenian music with an all-star ensemble.



A variety of activities for children and teens will be held throughout the day during the St. Nersess Father’s Day Picnic.

Birthright Armenia NYC Alumni Share the ‘Love’

NEW YORK — With its mid-February jumpstart in Philadelphia, the “I Love Armenia” campaign moved in March to the nation’s capital of Washington, DC, then Toronto, Canada and most recently in New York.

Excitingly, for every month of 2011, the regional committees within Birthright Armenia’s alumni network are hosting a series of events, presentations, socials and fun promotional activities as part of the yearlong “I Love Armenia” campaign. These events highlight the shared love the alumni have for Armenia by introducing the mission of Birthright Armenia to youth across the globe while encouraging their peers’ participation in volunteerism in the Homeland.

This past April the baton was passed to Birthright Armenia’s New York metro area alumni, who hosted two outreach and recruitment events. The first event on April 13 was a panel discussion, titled “Moving Mountains” held at Fordham University and run in conjunction with the Fordham Organizational Leadership Program. The panel, made up of eight Birthright Armenia alumni, consisted of Christopher Gasparian, Yetvart Majian, Hasmig Tatiosian, Hovig Shamamian, Edward Casabian, Inna Djanians, Anoush Tatevossian and committee head Ani Jilozian. The participants shared insight about volunteering as they highlighted their personal and professional experiences in their various fields of interest, which included finance, art, peace-building, education, filmmaking and public health. Casabian (2005) noted of his professional experience, “It was very much like a start-up environment, with some of the brightest Armenians in the country working there. It was exciting to be around

those kinds of people.”

The panelists also spoke in depth about the profound cultural exchange they were able to experience as Birthright Armenia volunteers. Shamamian (2007) said of his homestay parents, “They told me before I left that they felt like I was given to them as a son while their other son left to serve in the army. Hearing that really touched me.” Tatiosian (2008) succinctly tied together the sentiments expressed by all of the panelists as she passionately urged those in attendance, “Just go!”

The Birthright Armenia alumni of New York/New Jersey concluded the “I Love Armenia” campaign for the month of April with a celebration at Mezzo Mezzo in Astoria, Queens. Guests had the opportunity to socialize with the NY Birthright Armenia community while enjoying a full buffet and musical performances by Elias Sarkar (violin/vocals), Chris Marashlian (bass), Robert Boghosian (oud) and Charlie Dermenjian (tabla/percussion). Part of the proceeds from this event supported the MaMaSyu Fund in an effort to raise money for women in Armenia in need of breast cancer treatment. More information about this cause is available at www.mamjan.blogspot.com.

The next several steps of the international “I Love Armenia” campaign will be in the Los Angeles area. Buenos Aires alumni and those down under in Sydney, Australia, are excited to host their own events within their local communities. Those interested can follow the “I Love Armenia” campaign on Facebook and Twitter to find out when events will be held. Visit www.birthrightarmenia.org for more information.

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New York
METRO

Andreas Roubian's Lecture on Aivazovsky at Sotheby's in New York Concluded Exhibition of the Artist's Masterworks

By Aram Arkun
 Mirror-Spectator Staff

NEW YORK – The New York headquarters of the international art auction firm Sotheby's hosted a talk by art collector Andreas Roubian on the 19th-century painter Ivan Konstantinovich Aivazovsky, famous for his seascapes, on April 11. Roubian, one of the world's leading Aivazovsky experts, displayed 10 masterworks of the artist from his own collection during the exhibition for Sotheby's Russian art auction, April 7 to 11. Roubian, an entrepreneur in the field of international trade and logistics, received his bachelor's and master's degrees from New York University's Stern School of business and worked in several financial institutions. He became the chief financial officer of Danzas, an international logistics provider, in the 1980s, and then founded his own firm called FDS International. When Roubian was in his late twenties, FDS became one of the first software firms to implement paperless processes for the US Customs and related government agencies. After the first Gulf War, FDS provided the international logistics software for Kuwaiti reconstruction in the early 1990s.

Roubian taught finance and management sciences as a visiting lecturer and an adjunct professor at Pace University and the City University of New York for approximately 10 years in the 1980s. He has a large art collection including the works of many other Armenian artists like Hovsep Pushman and Mardiros Sarian.

Sonya Bekkerman, head of Sotheby's Russian Paintings department in New York,



Aivazovsky's "Caravan before the Pyramids," 1871

Roubian was the benefactor for the large cathedral of Shushi in Karabagh, the reconstruction of which he funded in the memory of his parents. Today he continues to be active in Armenian affairs, and supportive of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Mountainous Karabagh. He frequently hosts benefits in his home.

Roubian presented a brief biography of Aivazovsky (1817-1900). He was born to a poor Armenian family in Theodosia in the Crimea

and painted directly from nature, as an academician. In the 1840s, he strove to find his inner strength and moved away from painting directly from nature towards a free hand, painting from imagination. His brush stroke gradually evolved. He also moved away from Romanticism towards Realism. In the 1890s he began to deviate from the latter and flirt with Impressionism, but ultimately he remained true to Realism.

In the late 1870s or 1880s Aivazovsky became more of a Russian nationalist, as evidenced by paintings of the tsar or other Russian themes. He was always also loyal to his Armenian roots. When the Russians conquered Kars from the Ottomans, Roubian illustrated, Aivazovsky was overwhelmed as a Russian and as an Armenian, and went to meet Lt. Gen. Arshak Ter-Ghukasov, one of the Russian commanders who was of Armenian origin. He immediately began work on his painting of the

ings. Furthermore, many Armenian artists were influenced by him and visited him in the Crimea. At the same time, not all of his works were masterpieces, and so there are many Aivazovsky's of inferior quality. Nonetheless, Roubian said, "If you understand his brush-stroke like Sonya or I does, you can tell in a heartbeat what came from his hand."

The select group of Aivazovsky paintings on display included "Stampede of Sheep during the Storm," which was painted in 1861. Aivazovsky considered this to be one of his important works, and displayed it in a London exhibition. He loved sheep and owned many. In the painting, the sheep exhibit individual expressions of fear.

In the 1860s, Aivazovsky went to the Caucasus, intending to visit Armenia and the Catholicos in Echmiadzin. He never made it there because of terrible weather, but he painted his first "Mount Ararat" in 1869 in Tbilisi, which Roubian was exhibiting. Aivazovsky had never seen the mountain, but the details are excellent. There is even a monkey on a camel in the foreground. This was one of Aivazovsky's favorite paintings.

Among the other masterpieces exhibited, "Alexander II Crossing the Danube" (1878) is one of the rare surviving paintings depicting this tsar, which was painted for Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich to commemorate the Russian victory in the recent war against the Ottoman Empire. Nearby, "Caravan before the Pyramids" was displayed in the same room. Painted in 1871, it is considered by some critics to be one of the best Aivazovsky paintings in the world.

Bekkerman asked what it meant to Roubian to be a collector, and why in particular he chose Aivazovsky's works. The answer was that, "Collecting of art for an intellectual or somebody who is exposed to the finer elements of life, is inspiration. You can just look at art, and see something new each time....I never bought a single painting for money. I bought for my own satisfaction. I am an Armenian activist. I'm very American too. Similarly, Aivazovsky being Armenian, as well as Ukrainian and Russian, showed that one can be a great Russian, Ukrainian and Armenian, all at the same time."



From left, Ambassador Garen Nazarian, Honduras Ambassador to the UN Mary Elizabeth Flores Flake and Andreas Roubian

hosted Roubian's talk. In her introduction, Bekkerman said, "I met Andreas over 10 years ago. He invited me to his home to see his collection. Andreas played a critical role in my first sale of Russian paintings in 2004 and I'm very grateful to him for that. Since that time, I've been in many homes in many continents but have yet to see a collection of Aivazovsky of this magnitude, this quality and breadth and I am sure that I will not come across such a collection again."

Bekkerman said that Roubian's passion for art and collecting began when he was a teenager, instilled by his mother. Roubian is a leading authority on Aivazovsky who is writing a book focusing on the latter's artwork. He often loans works from his private collection to museums, but this was the first time a small part of his holdings were displayed at Sotheby's. Roubian is also an activist on behalf of his fellow Armenians. He served as the chairman of the Karabagh Committee in the late 1980s and early 1990s, helping both the soldiers of Karabagh and providing humanitarian aid to the rest of the population of the region.

(today Ukraine, but then, in the Russian Empire). His early drawings on walls with charcoal caught the attention of the chief architect of Theodosia, who was Aivazovsky's father's friend. Many local dignitaries also noticed him. This attention led to a full, six-year scholarship to the St. Petersburg Academy of Fine Arts. Tsar Nicolas I came to love his work and asked him to accompany the Russian navy together with his son. Roubian declared, "This was a match made in heaven and Nicolas I became Aivazovsky's best patron, buying all of his art."

Bekkerman interjected that Aivazovsky painted more than 6,000 canvases. Roubian clarified that by 1962 or 1963, there were only around 620 or 650 of his paintings extant in Soviet museums, so that many did not survive. Some of his paintings were cut, painted over (e.g., over 80 percent of those in Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul), or only were fragments. Exposure to sea water also damaged many of his works.

Aivazovsky, like many other artists, has different periods characterized by different styles in his work. In the 1830s, he was a pupil of Romantic landscape painter Maxim Vorobyov



Andreas Roubian and Sonya Bekkerman facing, in the first row, Aksotan Atayeva, UN ambassador of Turkmenistan; second row from left to right, Nana Nazarian, Byrganym Aitimova, UN ambassador of Kazakhstan, UN Director-General at Geneva Kasym-Zhomart Tokayev, UN ambassador of Ukraine Yuriy Sergeyev with his wife Nataliya Sergeyeva and Garen Nazarian, UN ambassador of Armenia

victory.

In the 1890s, interestingly for Americans, Aivazovsky became mesmerized with Columbus and the discovery of America. He painted many paintings on this theme, and visited the United States. He actively exhibited in his last decade of life all over the world.

Aivazovsky was a very successful entrepreneur in his own way and did not participate much in group exhibitions. This led many other artists to become envious of him. He did not have a studio with people working for him, but he did encourage amateurs to copy his paint-

Roubian emphatically concluded, "Aivazovsky is one of the best painters of mankind, unequivocally."

The large and distinguished audience at Sotheby's included many diplomats such as Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Director-General of the United Nations (UN) Office at Geneva; and the permanent representatives to the UN of Armenia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Honduras and Russia, respectively Ambassadors Karen Nazarian, Byrganym Aitimova, Yuriy Sergeyev, Aksoltan Atayeva, Mary Elizabeth Flores Flake and Vitaly Churkin.



Arts & Living

Met Avoids Brush With Mogul Larry Gagosian

NEW YORK (*New York Daily News*) – Is the Metropolitan Museum of Art engaging in the age-old sport of blaming the victim?

In March, British collector Robert Wylde made headlines when he sued the Gagosian Gallery for selling him a \$2.5 million Mark Tansey painting, “The Innocent Eye Test,” which, it turned out, had been promised to the Met.

Wylde had purchased the painting through the gallery in 2009 from former art dealer and *Artforum* magazine publisher Charles Cowles – only to be informed in spring 2010 that the Met owned 31 percent of the painting. Cowles’ mother, Jan Cowles, owned the remaining 69 percent and the museum had been promised it would eventually own the work in full.

According to Wylde’s complaint, had the Gagosian gallery properly done its “due diligence,” it never would have given Wylde “clear and unencumbered title” to the artwork.

Wylde, who still has the painting, is seeking \$6 million in compensatory damages, but now he has to battle the Met and Jan Cowles in a related suit filed Tuesday at the US District Court in Manhattan.

The complaint, not surprisingly, seeks the return of the Tansey painting. But what is interesting about the suit is the kid-gloves approach it takes regarding the Gagosian Gallery, which is owned by silver-haired billionaire Larry Gagosian – one of the most powerful art dealers in the world.



Larry Gagosian, left, pictured with Elton John

erful art dealers in the world.

The gallery is not named as a defendant in the suit. The complaint notes that “simple searches of publicly available information” – including the Met’s website – would have revealed that the Cowleses had promised the painting to the museum.

The complaint also points out that neither Gagosian nor Wylde “ever contacted” the Met or Jan Cowles “prior to the sale of the painting.”

That last allegation is also curious, given that Charles Cowles told the *New York Times* that “he considered the whole dispute his mistake.” He said he sold the Tansey because he “could use the money” and “didn’t even think about whether the Met owned part of it or not.”

Lawyers for all sides of this legal brouhaha either declined to comment or did not respond to requests for comment by deadline. A representative for Gagosian also declined to comment.



Mark Tansey’s “The Innocent Eye Test”



Gerald Papasian at the Quatuor Arévadzaghiq cultural program in Montreal

An Extraordinary Armenian Cultural Presentation by Quatuor Arévadzaghiq

MONTREAL – A group of French professional artists from Paris – led by the non-Armenian French quartet Quatuor Arévadzaghiq and internationally-renowned, multi-talented artist Gerald Papasian, patronized by the minister of culture, communications and feminine condition of Quebec, Christine St-Pierre, with the participation of noted conductor and educator Raffi Armenian sponsored by the Armenian General Benevolent Union and the Tekeyan Cultural Association and driven by a dedicated organizing committee – was the perfect blend for a unique, authentically-Armenian cultural program, on April 15, at St. Georges Anglican Church.

The dual emcee’s who animated the program were French TV and radio personality Patrick Masbourian and a young lawyer from Montreal, Raffi Yeretsian, acting exceptionally as a talented host at this event. Welcoming remarks and words of appreciation and encouragement were offered by the event’s organizer, Karine Véhouini, who conceived the innovative concept of a trilingual event by combining the vocal aspect by a concert (in French and Armenian) with recitative interpretation of legends and poems by Papasian (Armenian and English) and the leadership of conductor Armenian.

In his speech, Armenian reminded everyone that Armenians encompass with pride the standards which form a nation: their Christianity, history

and culture. More importantly he stressed the vital necessity to save that rich Armenian cultural heritage – to be able to bequeath it to future generations. After succinct praise of the role of the patrons of the arts who support and defend cultural heritage, he invited all organizations to unite and join their efforts together to preserve the Armenian cultural and artistic assets as Armenians have fallen behind in this mission.

Soprano Aline Kutan could not attend the program but had fully supported and endorsed the celebration. The speakers commended the efforts of the organizers who intend to garner interest generated by this program for the eventual staging of “Gariné” in Montreal in the near future.

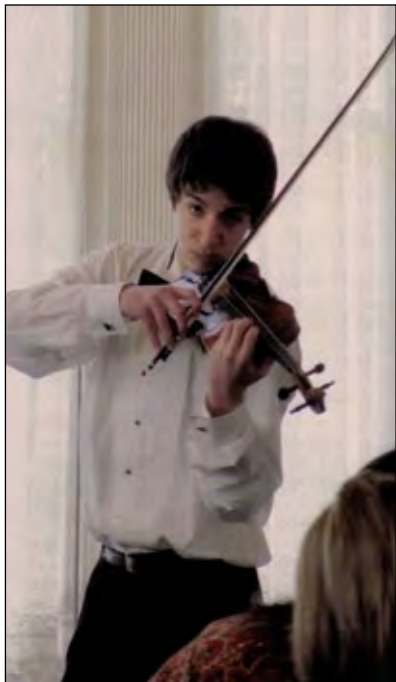
This presentation can be considered another ring in the golden string of Papasian’s lifetime mission of introducing the rich Armenian cultural heritage to the non-Armenian public. The program’s first part was an homage to Armenian songs, divided into liturgical and medieval chants, patriotic songs, folkloric music and songs based on Armenian poetry with lyrics by Arévadzaghiq’s conductor, Vincent Bonzom. Before each category of songs, Papasian read his own translations of poems by Hovhannes Toumanian (“Legends of Doves’ Abbey” and “Akhtamar”), Gevorg Emin (“Ararat”) and Vahan Tekeyan (“The Language I Write in”) in English or French. Though the rendering of poems was somewhat lost in the church’s echo, nevertheless, the audience could follow the poems published in three languages in the program booklet.

see MONTREAL, page 15

Arec L. Jamgochian: Revelation of An Artist

WASHINGTON – Since the age of 8, Arec L. Jamgochian has gathered an impressive number of first prizes and scholarships and continued to study at the Levine School of Music, here, which enabled him to perform with prestigious symphonies and symphonettes, such as the Waterford Concert Series “Next Generation” Concert in Lucketts, Va.

In some of the orchestras, Jamgochian was seated as principal second violin for Young Artists and Symphony. He has studied as part of master classes with world-renowned violinists: Vadim Repin, Jonathan Carney and Igor Yuzenjovich. As part of his Levine School scholarship, he was granted a special privilege, the



Arec L. Jamgochian

use of 1912 Joseph Gorretelli Grade three copy of Stradivarius.

On February 6, at the Glenview Mansion conservatory, within the historic Rockville Civic Center in Maryland, Jamgochian made a solo appearance with that same violin. The regional paper, *The Gazette*, wrote: “The violin and the student made a good team.” And indeed they were. With Irina Kats on piano, a dazzling virtuoso performance enchanted the standing room crowded audience. The program selections were demanding and the 15-year-old master met the challenge head on, with confidence and masterful handling of the works of Beethoven, Edouard Baghdasarian, Edouard Lalo, Komitas Vartabed and Fritz Kreisler.

It was a revelation indeed – one that brought the crowded hall to a standing ovation.

On the same day was the opening exhibition of his father’s artwork: painter, printmaker and sculptor Levon Jamgochian, an accomplished artist, who had 200 of his recent creations on display.

The day was a triumph for the father-and-son artistic team. The triumph may also be shared by his mother, Mariam, a native of Armenia.

– Rev. V. Kalayjian, pastor emeritus
St. Mary Armenian Church



ARTS & LIVING

Van Dyke's New Play Focuses Layered Lens on Genocide

By Daphne Abeel

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BOSTON — About a third of the audience of 80 or so who came to hear a staged reading of “Deported: A Dream Play,” by Joyce Van Dyke were Armenian. And this should be viewed as a good thing by the Armenian community; it means the message about the Genocide is reaching those who still don’t know.

The play, Van Dyke’s newest work, was given a barebones presentation on Saturday in a rehearsal space at the Stan Calderwood Pavilion on Tremont Street in Boston, and sponsored by the Boston Center for the Arts and The Publick Theatre Boston. Directed by Judy Braha, it will receive a full production next year at the Modern Theater, also in Boston, and will run from March 15 to April 8.

Seven actors, dressed soberly in black and reading from scripts, played 22 parts, and Saturday night’s presentation lacked many ancillary elements — music, dancing, video — that will be part of next year’s full-blown run. The absence of these elements was compensated for by the reading of stage directions by Ali Kerestly.

Although Van Dyke, of course, controls and shapes the final form and content of the play, “Deported” is still a work in progress and it is very much a result of collaboration. The story focuses on the memories of the Genocide of two women, Victoria, played by Bobbie Steinbach, and her friend, Varter, played by Paula Langton.

The character of Victoria is based on Van Dyke’s grandmother, while Varter is based on another real person — the mother of Martin Deranian of Worcester, who has made his own contribution to Armenian-American history in his book, Worcester Is America: The Story of the Worcester Armenians: The Early Years. In real life, Deranian’s grandmother and Van



Joyce Van Dyke

Dyke’s mother were best friends.

Deranian’s research on his mother’s life contributed important content to the play and Van Dyke credits him with substantial assistance. The play has also undergone a process of revisions and changes in response to workshops with actors and the director. Van Dyke says that further changes may be in the works before the play is performed at the Modern next year.

What is unique about Van Dyke’s treatment of the Genocide is the multiplicity of points of view that she develops throughout the course of the play, which covers several decades. Victoria, who lived through the Genocide, lost her children and husband and was deported to Syria, remains the focus of the play from 1915 until the present. But Turkish characters also play a part, notably Zulal, a Turkish woman, who offered to save Victoria’s baby and the Turkish sergeant from Ourfa, who protects Varter.

Van Dyke also introduces the issue of how the Genocide is treated differently from the

Holocaust with the depiction of a young, Jewish reporter, who comes to interview Victoria in her old age.

Van Dyke touches on feminist themes, especially in the portrayal of Victoria’s marriage to Harry, a gruff misogynist, who prefers “silence and obedience” from his wife, in contrast to her outspoken and assertive demeanor.

The later scenes of the play are set in California, because Victoria, who carries the play, is able to emigrate from Syria and marry, to Harry, who arrived in the United States prior to the Genocide.

When finally, there is talk of reconciliation, and the members of a younger generation, both Armenian and Turkish, seem eager and open to finally bridging the gap of two terrible histories (a young Turkish man comments cheerfully, “I have an Armenian dentist”), Victoria says adamantly, “You’re not going to say ‘reconcile,’ you’re not going to say ‘forgive.’ What reconciliation?”

And Victoria’s viewpoint must be taken with utmost seriousness, because, for her, it is impossible to erase the past. The damage and the horror were too great. Her feelings remain,

although the play ends on a hopeful note. “Our work begins,” are the final words, and stage directions note that the stage is showered in rose petals.

It is not possible to give a full account of all that is present in this play. For one thing, it was put on with no props, the actors simply read their lines and there were visual elements that would play an important part in the complete production, such as a red, beaded curtain. These props and videos would all round out what is a complex and many-faceted approach to the Armenian experience of the Genocide.

Audiences already familiar with Van Dyke’s work, “A Girl’s War” and “The Oil Thief” will want to see this production and bring their friends, both Armenian and non-Armenian.

Van Dyke is now working on a new play, which, she says, has nothing to do with Armenian themes.

As a Huntington Playwright Fellow, Van Dyke won the Elliott Norton Award in 2009 for outstanding new script, and has been a fellow at the MacDowell Colony. Her rising reputation should ensure the growing audience she deserves.

Van Dyke’s Work Ethic: Change and Collaboration

BOSTON — Following Saturday’s reading of her new play, “Deported: A Dream Play,” playwright Joyce Van Dyke pronounced herself, “...encouraged. I think the changes I’ve made are good and that a lot of this is working. The first reading we did was with Sayat Nova, and then we did another reading at the New Repertory Theater. In the original version, there were many more characters — 30 — and now I have it down to 22.”

The idea for “Deported” surfaced several years ago when Martin Deranian attended a performance of another of Van Dyke’s plays, “A Girl’s War.”

“I had never met Martin, but I knew my mother knew him. He told me about the friendship between his mother and my grandmother and said he thought I should write a play about them. I was too busy at the time, but Martin is indefatigable. He’s very sweet, very determined and very patient. He kept calling me and talking to me. It took a few years, but I finally agreed.”

In the meantime, Deranian had collected everything he could — documents, records. He spoke to relatives who had known his mother.

“By searching out eyewitnesses, Martin came across some amazing stories — one about Turkish soldiers, who were so starved that when they smoked, they would cup the ashes in their hands and lap them up,” said Van Dyke.

She continued, “I was pleased tonight that two-thirds of the audience was not Armenian. My ideal has always been a mixed audience. I never wanted this play to be just for an Armenian audience. The Genocide happened, and it’s a mistake to think something similar can’t happen again.”

Looking forward to the full production of “Deported” next year, Van Dyke said she will be preoccupied with the play until it is put on at the Modern Theater next spring.

“We want those performances to be more than just the play. We’re planning panels to discuss the issues raised in the play and the panels will include Turkish participants. We’re also planning exhibits to go along with the play,” she said.

“I believe the theater is the ideal place to have a conversation about the Genocide,” said Van Dyke. “First of all, I hope the play gives people an amazing, theatrical experience, that it opens people’s eyes and hearts and minds. Some people who see it will know the story intimately, other people will not have heard of it. I believe something electrical can happen in the theater that can bring about change.”

Cultural Presentation by Quatuor Arévadzaghi

MONTREAL, from page 14

Sixteen songs in all were presented by the four singers of Arévadzaghi: Amélie Robinault (soprano), Claire Gascoin (mezzo soprano), Matthieu Justine (ténor) and Vincent Bonzom (baritone and musical director). All songs of part one of the program were a cappella. It was impossible to discern whether the singers were Armenians or non-Armenians, who have only been exposed to the Armenian culture recently.

Part two of the program was an homage to the Armenian operatic art. It started with a surprise piano rendition by the Quatuor’s pianist, Célia Bocquel, who played a piece composed by Papasian at the age of 6. Quatuor Arévadzaghi was joined in this part of the program by the rising opera star, soprano Sasha Djihanian, of Montreal. Arias from Armen Tigranian’s “Anoush” and Dikran Tchouhadjian’s “Arshak II,” followed by Tchouhadjian’s “Gariné,” all accompanied on piano by Bocquel, were brilliantly interpreted by the three sopranos. This part of the program was topped by William Saroyan’s famous “A New Armenia” poem, converted to a song by Bonzom, bringing the audience to a prolonged standing ovation at the end of the program.

Between the two parts of the program a brief homage was also paid to Armenian painters, such as Aivazovsky, Sarian, Karzou, Minas and others.

A creation donated by Montreal artist Berge Missakian, titled “Harmony,” was displayed in the church and was later auctioned to the benefit of Gariné’s production in Montreal in French.

Papasian, a successful director, winning producer, captivating stage and movie actor, was raised in a family of artists in the once flourishing Armenian community of Egypt. He has accomplished his artistic talents and knowledge of Armenian culture in Armenia, and later moved to the US and to Europe. He has not only a firm grasp of the Armenian, French and English languages, but also a first-hand expertise of Armenian culture. For more than 30 years he has established in Paris his own institute of research of Armenian art named after Dikran Tchouhadjian, and has staged “Anoush” opera in Detroit (in English and in Armenian), “Arshak II” (in Armenian) in the opera house of San Francisco and “Gariné” (in French) in Paris and Marseilles, beside performances such as “Sojourn on Ararat” and many other performances in different languages to introduce the age-old Armenian culture to the non-Armenian public. A by-product of “Gariné’s” staging in Paris resulted in the establishment of Arévadzaghi, a group of two-dozen, all-French performers for an all-Armenian popular and classic songs repertoire.

— H.A.

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ARTS & LIVING

The Lamppost Diary Tackles Lives and Loves of Armenians Post-Genocide

By Edmond Azadian

The Lamppost Diary

By Agop J. Hacikyan
Interlink books publishers

This is the fifth novel by the prolific and popular writer, Agop Hacikyan. It comes through the experience and mastery of a novelist weaving together an eternal love story and a particular social order between World War I and World War II Istanbul, where minorities are restricted to a code of conduct of fear and persecution.

The author confesses in an interview that “every novel is autobiographical in that the author chooses his words according to what he has seen, lived or even imagined...Fiction partly comes from experience and imagination – both merge and then suddenly that experience turns fiction. In *The Lamppost Diary*, there is a lot of fiction as well as many episodes based on reality.”

This book does not have the traditional structure of his previous novels. It is more fluid and it reads like an actual diary, although without losing its focus.

The narrative revolves around three axes. The first is the loss of a sister at a very young age, bringing home the finality of death, which becomes a permanent obsession for the hero Tomas to grapple with. The other theme is the hero's love story with a White Russian immigrant girl, Anya, within the context of coming of age of a young man, with sexual fantasies and frustrations. All these personal and family interactions take place within the broader theme of Turkish society where the minorities are terrified with the history of the genocide in their past and are harassed with an uncertain future imposed on them at the time.

The lamppost itself remains as a symbol – or a talisman – for young Tomas who has to turn around it every time he passes by. It may also stand as a source of light to illuminate the rather dark life of a segment of society, which tries to survive within the government-imposed parameters. Racial discrimination has been and continues to remain state policy in Turkey.

For an era early in the last century the love story is audacious in its development and sexual context. It seems that as the author grows older his sexual imagery becomes bolder. Here Anya is always perceived through the eyes of Tomas who becomes the focus of the couple's relationship in a narcissistic perspective.

Any novel which is structured along a predictable climax loses interest for the reader who needs some food for thought. A little room must be left for the reader's imagination. The novelist's technique must lead the reader to a point where the latter's imagination takes flight. In that sense, the love story of Tomas and Anya is inconclusive. There is no happy ending where the reader would be left with no issue to ponder.

Anya leaves for America and Tomas settles in Canada and the rest of the story is anyone's guess.

The broader framework of the story is the structure of the society and the plight of the Armenians in that society. They are already terrified based on what their families had experienced during the immediate past in deportations and killings. The trauma has not gone through a catharsis and continues to persist silently in their subconscious and in their collective lives. The probability of a repeat performance is always in the air.

Hacikyan, using that historic element, has not tried to write an ideological story which would have damaged the artistic quality of the narrative. Instead he has woven the social upheavals into the family lives of his characters.

There is not yet a comprehensive history of the wealth tax (*varlik vergisi*) era, which targeted the minorities – and particularly the Armenians – for extinction through taxation.

Kemal Ataturk has been hailed as modernizer of Turkey. He indeed eliminated the traditional Muslim garb and veil, radically changed the alphabet but he continued the racist policies of the previous regimes, by dumping Greeks in the sea at Smyrna, deporting Armenians from Cilicia and massacring the Kurds in Dersim.

Varlik Vergisi was the continuation of that policy to destroy the minorities to further Turkify the country. The government, which imposed exorbitant taxes on Armenians, Greeks and Jews, had a specific goal in mind. Turkish leaders knew full well that even the richest

among them could not afford the taxes levied on them. After bankrupting them, they were sent to Ash Kale labor camps, to suffer and die under the harshest conditions.

We find in Hacikyan's novel many families going through the ordeal and losing loved ones quietly.

Although the novel was written and published after Orhan Pamuk's novels, it focuses on the period immediately before the Pamuk era. In a way Pamuk's story in his monumental book titled *Snow* becomes an indirect sequel of *The Lamppost Diary*, especially in its socio-political contexts. Both in Hacikyan's and Pamuk's novels, a totalitarian regime has an ideological axe to grind. In the first one, Armenians, Christians and Jews are the target, while in the second one the Kurds and left wing groups are the target. They are killed or quietly eliminated and life continues as business as usual.

A British columnist, Ashley Perks, writes, “What is the connection between Agop J. Hacikyan and Orhan Pamuk, the 2006 Nobel Laureate?...His book is easier to read than Pamuk's densely lyrical novels...Hacikyan's whole treatment of characters [are] interspersed with historical details.”

Tomas grows up in the stifling atmosphere of Turkey. He even tries his hand at journalism and publishes a successful literary magazine, but he is gradually disillusioned. There are no particular sequence of events leading him towards the decision to leave the country. But the pervasive sense of insecurity which may put anyone's life in jeopardy is hanging in the air. Perhaps one particular incident came to break the camel's back: the assassination of one of the contributors to his journal.

Hacikyan is an accomplished stylist and can cast characters in a few lively brushstrokes and render them as unforgettable living individuals.

The heavy and dark atmosphere of this novel is compensated by humor, which balances the mood and propels the narrative forward in an effortless pace.

The Lamppost Diary is a significant novel, not only for its artistic and literary value, but also because it brings into focus a different dimension of Armenian-Turkish conflict, which is not documented properly, nor studied fully. Besides the confines of Armenian-Turkish relations, it has also global resonance, which focuses on one of the dark pages of Turkish history, which denialists would have wished forgotten.

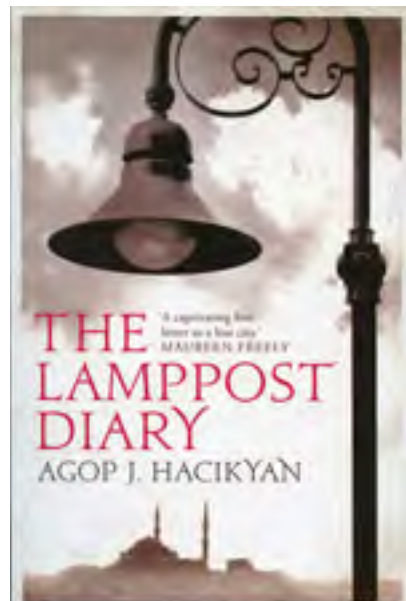
A review in an online European magazine (*Café Babel*) has the following to say about that broader aspect of this book: “Throughout the novel there is a sense of Europe knocking on Turkey's door and Turkey resisting this approach trying to maintain its neutrality and at the same time, stifling Turkish ethnic minorities.”

We have to acknowledge grudgingly that Turkey is a rising power in the Middle East and its cultural influence has been spreading throughout the region like a conflagration. The Islamists are proud of Turkey's achievements, which may serve as a role model to the rest of Islamic world. The West and Europeans have their own wishful thinking that Turkey is modernizing along European standards, while Turkey itself is pursuing its own nationalistic agenda with new Ottomanist dreams.

In short, any event or development relating to Turkey is a topical issue, which will attract attention these days.

The Lamppost Diary was released at the most opportune time to claim its fame as the next best-seller by Hacikyan's prolific pen.

Hacikyan complains that he is afflicted with the disease of depression. I have always begged him to borrow some of his depression, which has triggered his creative impulses, which have made him a compulsive writer with 30 volumes to his credit.



Film Review: 'Hotel Rwanda' in Blu-ray

By Ian White

LOS ANGELES (bigpicturebigsound.com) – If there was any lesson learned from the Holocaust (although I'm not entirely sure that all of its lessons were truly internalized), it was that mankind can no longer remain silent in the presence of genocide.

The world was deadly silent during the Holocaust and not a finger was lifted to combat the genocides in Armenia, Cambodia, Liberia, Tibet, Syria, China and many others.

The world showed a perplexing amount of interest in Bosnia, yet could have cared less when 800,000 people were slaughtered in Rwanda under the watchful eye of the United Nations (UN). The massacre of Rwanda's Tutsi population was intentionally swept under the rug by France, the UN and the United States, and only because of media pressure did the world act – even though it was far too late. “Hotel Rwanda” (in a manner similar to “Schindler's List”) does not attempt to explain the Rwandan genocide, but instead how one man, Paul Rusesabagina, decided to save as many people as he could.

Don Cheadle has proven on more than one occasion that he's a very fine actor (“Boogie Nights,” “Devil in a Blue Dress,” “Picket Fences”), but a different side of him emerged in “Hotel Rwanda.” He became Paul Rusesabagina on many levels, and the film ultimately succeeds because Cheadle figures out how not to preach; his character simply reacts to the utter horror that surrounds him

and his family and does something quite unnatural – he gets involved even though he knows he's likely to pay the ultimate price. We would all like to think that there is a Rusesabagina or Schindler inside of us.

Rusesabagina's actions saved over 1,200 people (who he hid inside the hotel he managed) and it is a startling tale to watch unfold, but as I watched the film, it kept gnawing at me that something was amiss. The film is certainly powerful, but the story seems like it was toned down to not rattle the powers that be. I hate to use the term “whitewash,” but director Terry George could have been even more explicit with the violence and I don't think it would have diluted the story one bit.

Steven Spielberg got away with it (although he also didn't go as far as he could – based on my conversations with my grandparents who survived Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen) and George could have as well. It is an excellent film that could have been even more powerful and illuminating – although after watching the events in Libya, Syria, Afghanistan and Darfur, it is obvious that mankind hasn't learned a damn thing.

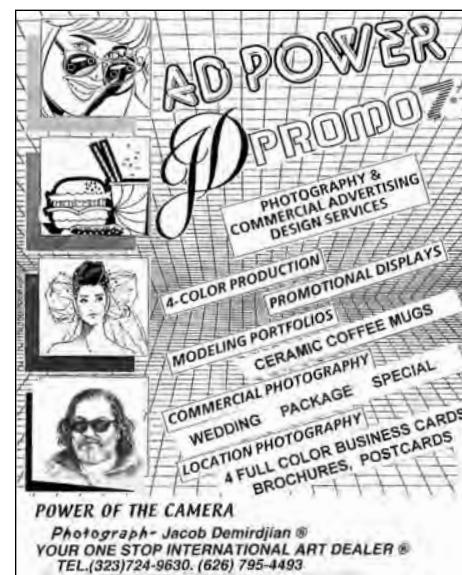
MGM has been “hit or miss” with some of its recent catalog Blu-ray releases, but “Hotel Rwanda” might be the best of the bunch with spectacularly deep blacks, fantastic color and one of the sharpest looking images I've seen on a Blu-ray release this year. The film's organic film-like structure looks exceptionally clean and crisp. The 1080p transfer (which is offered in the film's original 2.35:1 aspect ratio) has no visible noise or compression artifacts and offers a tremendous amount of detail. Reference quality is included in every

respect. Nice job MGM. Too bad “The Manchurian Candidate” didn't look as good as this.

Final Thoughts

“Hotel Rwanda” may not pack the same punch as “The Killing Fields,” but this tale of heroism in the face of untold barbarity and genocide was one of the best films of 2004 and was unfortunately lost in the shuffle of Clint Eastwood's “Million Dollar Baby” and Martin Scorsese's “The Aviator.”

There is no excuse now to avoid this film because the Blu-ray transfer is exceptional on all levels, and well worthy of a place in your film collection – and the price is right to boot. This film is highly recommended.





ARTS & LIVING

Boston Student-Conductor among 10 Selected for Memphis Competition

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Boston native Aram Demirjian, a student-conductor who has led the Boston Pops, is one of 10 young conductors selected among 226 applicants worldwide to participate in the Memphis International Conducting Competition here May 25-27.



Aram Demirjian

Demirjian received his undergraduate degree at Harvard, is completing his masters

at the New England Conservatory and served as a conducting fellow at the Aspen Music Festival. He also participated in the Dimitris Mitropoulos International Competition for Conducting held in Greece last year.

Contestants will compete in up to three rounds at the inaugural competition hosted by the Memphis Symphony Orchestra (MSO). Judges include Mei-Ann Chen, MSO music director; Anthony Fogg, Boston Symphony Orchestra artistic administrator; Aaron Jay Kernis, composer and Yale School of Music professor and Robert Spano, Atlanta Symphony music director. MSO musicians will have a collective vote.

The other nine selected contestants are Ken Lam, of the United Kingdom; Mihaela Cesa-Goje, of Romania; Tae-Jung Lee, of South Korea; Stefano Sarzani, of Italy; Andrew Franco, of Columbia; Mikhail Agrest, Russian-American and Americans Robert Trevino, Roger Kalia and Sarah Kidd. Two alternates also were selected in a sophisticated system of rankings by Chen and representatives of MSO musicians.

Ararat-Eskijian Museum Presents Program on Komitas CD-Rom

MISSION HILLS, Calif. — Garegin M. Chugaszyan, executive director of the Information Technology Foundation, Yerevan, Armenia, will make a series of visual/interactive presentations of a recently-produced multimedia CD-ROM, titled "Komitas Vardapet: His Life and Works." He will make a presentation at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum on Sunday, June 5, 4:30 p.m., 15105 Mission Hills Road.

This presentation was debuted in Paris in December 2010.

Chugaszyan's earlier interactive CD-ROMs, produced in 2005, present: 1) "The Armenian Genocide, 1915-1923" — through more than 500 photographs, documents, eyewitness accounts and interactive timeline; 2) "Aram Khachaturian: The Life and Works," through his letters, archival documents, contemporaries' memories, more than 400 photographs, video materials, as well as in 35 musical fragments. Both DVDs were recognized for their innovative approach by the World Summit Award 2005 Grand Jury as the world's best cultural CD/DVD multimedia product of 2005.

The main mission of the Information Technology Foundation is to assist in the diffusion of Information Communication Technologies in the spheres of economy, culture, education etc. It assumes cooperation with state authorities, private sector, other NGOs as well as local and international donors. For this purpose, the foundation develops and implements various programs and projects, carries out consultations, organizes discussions, seminars and conferences, issues publications and publishes websites.

For more information contact the museum at mgoschin@mindspring.com.

Abaka Celebrates Mother's Day with Recital

WATERTOWN, Mass. — It was Mother's Day when the Armenian School for the Performing Arts (Abaka) celebrated its 16th annual recital with 154 students at Watertown High School.

Apo Ashjian, the director and choreographer of the school, made the opening remarks welcoming all and congratulating all the mothers on this happy occasion. He mentioned that at the end of the program all the children will be carrying flowers donated by him to all the mothers of the students. He explained the decision for having the recital this early in the season and on Mother's Day was due to the availability of this perfect venue that can accommodate such a group while being "at the mercy of Watertown High School."

Ashjian congratulated all the parents of this year's six graduates of the school and thanked all the parents for their dedication to the school throughout the years. He explained the naming of this recital as "We Are the Children" due to Catholicos Aram I naming 2011 as "the year of the children."

On a sadder note, Ashjian remembered Mary Kostikian, a former Abaka student, who had died tragically 40 days prior at age 20, offering his condolences to the family and observing a minute of silence honoring her memory. Her picture was displayed on a large screen in the background on stage.

This two-hour celebration ended with the finale of the entire school, former students and teachers overcrowding the stage to the dynamic cheers of the audience and students alike.

(Story and photos by Jirair Hovsepian)



CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

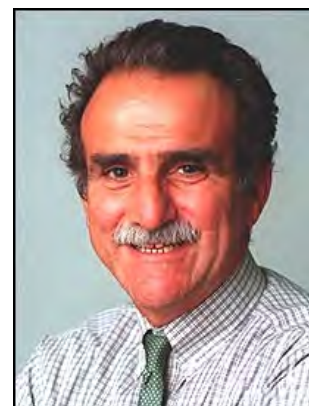
JUNE 4 — Armenian Memorial Church Annual Fair and Silent Auction, (rain or shine), meals served all day, delicacies table, 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown.

NEW JERSEY

JUNE 4 — Anniversary-Banquet in anticipation of the 80th anniversary of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator newspaper, the first English language Armenian newspaper in the world, organized by the Friends of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of New Jersey. Saturday, 7 p.m., at Teaneck Marriott at Glenpoint, 100 Franklin W. Burr Blvd., Teaneck. For tickets, call Shoghig (201) 803-0240 or Sirvart (201) 739-7775.

NEW YORK

JUNE 19 — St. Nersess Armenian Seminary's annual Father's Day Picnic, from noon to 5 p.m., at Stratton Road, New Rochelle. Delicious kebob meals and desserts, live Armenian music, children's activities, vendors. Free parking and admission. Visit www.stnersess.edu or call (914) 636-2003.



On June 4, an anniversary banquet, in anticipation of the 80th anniversary of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator, will take place at the Teaneck Marriott at Glenpoint, 100 Franklin W. Burr Blvd., Teaneck, NJ. Keynote speaker at the

event will be former Boston Globe journalist Stephen Kurkjian. For tickets, call Shoghig (201) 803-0240 or Sirvart (201) 739-7775.



COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

Established 1932

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COMMENTARY

Jerusalem in Limbo

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Armenians have a knack for living in or placing their major national treasures in troubled spots around the globe. The Caucasus and the Middle East have been historically volatile regions, where rival political forces have clashed and Armenia and Armenians have often constituted the collateral damage.

Following the Genocide, large masses of survivors settled in Middle Eastern countries, which served as a safe haven, only to deteriorate in time one by one, undermining the lives of well-established communities.

Thriving Armenian communities in Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon have shrunk into mere skeletons of their former selves. Today, it is the turn of Syria, where a vibrant Armenian community lives.

In most of those countries – perhaps except for Egypt – Armenian presence dates back to the Genocide era. The only spot that the Armenians have been anchored for almost 2,000 years has been Jerusalem. Archeological excavations have proven that Armenians have lived in the Holy Land even before the Christian era. And Patriarch Abraham of Jerusalem traveled to Mecca in the seventh century to secure special privileges for the patriarchate from the prophet Mohammed himself.

Jerusalem being the land of miracles, the survival of the Armenian Patriarchate can be defined as one of those miracles. Our historic experience has given us good reason to vilify the Ottoman rulers for their treatment of their minority subjects, but at times, for their own good, they have supported the Armenian interests, indirectly. One being Fatih Sultan Mohammed, who conquered Constantinople in 1453. He encouraged the establishment of the Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul as a counterweight to the Greek Patriarchate.

Another instance in Jerusalem is where the conflicting interests of Greeks, Latins and Russians were counterbalanced by the Ottoman sultan's support of the Armenian Patriarchate, which was, any way, under the tutelage and control of the Istanbul Patriarchate, until the end of the World War I.

The 19th-century "Status Quo" agreement had granted rights and privileges to the Christian churches in Jerusalem. Armenians benefited from that status and they maintained their control of one quarter of the Christian Quarter for centuries. But today they stand to lose that position for internal and external reasons.

Under President Bill Clinton, parameters laid down at Camp David in 2000 stated that the Christian and Muslim sectors were to remain under Palestinian control in case East Jerusalem becomes the capital of the Palestinian state. The agreement also guaranteed full access for Jews to reach and pray at the Wailing Wall, through the Armenian Quarter.

Despite recent pronouncements by President Barack Obama, the formation of a Palestinian independent state remains an illusory political dream while the Israeli government continues to create "facts on the ground" at the expense of Christian Churches. Occupied Palestinian territories have suffered the brunt of that policy for too long, as a consequence of the Jewish settlement expansion, underwritten by international outcry or UN resolutions.

That policy is also creeping into the Christian Quarter as time passes. As long as the Israeli-Palestinian issue continues to drag land grab in the territories and in Jerusalem itself will become a fact of life.

In 2005, the Greek Patriarch Irineos sold a piece of prop-

erty at Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem to Israel, creating a firestorm in Greece and Greek communities around the world. In fact the deal was a lease for 198 years. Other deals are for 99 years. For all practical purposes, these deals are, in effect, final sales. It is any one's guess what happens to the destiny of those properties at the maturity date of the deal.

Armenians have also become victims of such suspicious deals and the only explanation given by the patriarchate authorities was that they were duped to sign the deal.

Armenians have churches and other property at prime locations, which are easy target for future "deals."

At this crucial period in history when the entire Armenian existence in Holy Land is in jeopardy, the patriarchate and the brotherhood are in disarray. The public agenda of the Armenians is composed of the ailments of 94-year-old Patriarch Torkom Manoogian, rather than his achievements or the good deeds of the St. James Brotherhood.

At its heyday, the Armenian population in Jerusalem numbered at 25,000; today it has been reduced to less than 1,000. The large Armenian presence would only amount to moral support to the patriarchate, which runs its own affairs without outside interference, with the authority granted to the brotherhood by the Status Quo agreement.

Greeks, Russians and the Vatican have always interfered and supported their respective patriarchates in Jerusalem. Only the St. James Brotherhood savors to the full extent of its independence granted by the Status Quo, so much so that during the last conclave of the brotherhood, high-ranking clergy from Echmiadzin were not accorded the courtesy of being invited to attend the conclave and the message of the Supreme Patriarch Karekin II was handed to the brotherhood to be read.

On top of the Israeli-Palestinian rivalry, which affects Armenian interests, there is a tug of war behind the scenes between Echmiadzin and Antelias forces, all compounded by the personal ambitions of individual members of the clergy.

March 15 was the deadline to elect a co-adjutor patriarch to help the frail patriarch in running the affairs of the brotherhood. The deadline passed and no action was taken, despite the fact that with the passage of time, the patriarch is only becoming more feeble.

In view of potentially dangerous prospects, there is foot-dragging, which can produce catastrophic results.

The internal by-laws of the patriarchate was supposed to be amended to allow for the election of the co-adjutor. No communication was made public to that effect.

Over the long centuries Armenians around the world have sacrificed to build the present wealth in Jerusalem, but since 1914 when Patriarch Ormanian was dispatched from Istanbul to inspect the irregularities in the patriarchate, public accountability has not been the policy of St. James Brotherhood.

The recent Israeli government policy of taxing the Christian church properties will further erode the tenuous situation of the Armenian patriarchate, but that threat does not even compel the brotherhood to put its house in order.

Horse trading continues between the potential candidates. The high-ranking clergy who can secure the stability of the patriarchate are shunning the responsibility, while all other members in their presumptions feels competent to serve as co-adjutor patriarch and eventually the patriarch.

Personal and partisan rivalries dominate the scene, while Israeli-Palestinian confrontation threatens our vital interests and stands to give away our much coveted properties.

There seems to be no sense of urgency, while everything is behind a veil of mysterious secrecy.

The Jerusalem Patriarchate is in limbo.

But not for too long.

Notice to Contributors

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* welcomes articles, commentaries and community news from our readers. In order to assure the accurate and timely publication of articles submitted, please note the following policies:

- All articles submitted should be typed, double (or triple) spaced and printed in a type size large enough to be clearly legible (10 point or larger). Submissions that do not conform to these specifications will be assigned lowest priority.
- Articles sent by fax are acceptable, and e-mail submissions are encouraged.
- All submissions should include the name of a contact person and a daytime telephone number.

– Deadline for submission of all articles and advertising is 12 noon on Monday of the week of publication.

– Photos will be published without charge at the discretion of the editors and art director. Photos will be returned only if a self-addressed and stamped envelope is included.

– The *MS* will publish only one article about an upcoming organizational event. For major special events, exceptions may be made only by special arrangement with the editors.

– Telephone numbers, ticket prices and other details (at the discretion of the editors) will not be included in press releases, but should be reserved for calendar listings and advertisements.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Council of Europe Not Deceived By Erdogan's Double-Talk

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan made an embarrassing appearance before the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) last month.

Erdogan was invited to the podium after lavish praise by Mevlut Cavusoglu, who was acting more like a Turkish lobbyist than president of PACE. Cavusoglu is a founding member of the ruling AKP party and member of the Turkish parliament.

In his lengthy speech, the prime minister shamelessly lectured European parliamentarians about democracy and freedom. Given his country's dismal human rights record, Erdogan should have not raised such issues! Claiming that Turkey's accession was "vital to the European Union," he described as "foolish" those who opposed Turkey's EU membership "for populist or artificial reasons."

Making a series of dubious and inflated claims about his government's accomplishments, Erdogan asserted that: "Turkey has achieved historic reforms, especially in the area of democratization.... The government has also worked to lift restrictions on freedom. Freedoms have been strengthened in the last decade, and many issues

are now discussed freely that could not have been discussed a decade ago. There is zero tolerance of torture, and barriers to freedom of expression have been removed. Some have alleged that there are restrictions on freedom of expression, but this is wrong.... The press is free, and freely criticizes anyone and everyone.... In Turkey, 26 journalists have been detained or arrested, because they are criminals, not because they are journalists." These incredible words are uttered by a prime minister who does not hesitate to sue newspapers simply for publishing a cartoon likeness of him!

When Erdogan finished his speech, Cavusoglu shielded him from further embarrassment by allowing only a handful of parliamentarians to ask 30-second questions.

Erdogan was displeased when Swiss Parliamentarian Andreas Gross reminded him about "the dark side of Turkish history," asking him why Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk was being persecuted for exercising his right to free speech.

In response to Parliamentarian Anne Brasseur's (Luxembourg) question about censorship in Turkey, Erdogan claimed that the Turkish "judiciary is independent and is entitled to conduct its investigations as it saw fit."

Armen Rustamyan, chairman of the Armenian Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee, asked Erdogan what was the point of signing the Armenia-Turkey Protocols, if Turkey is not going to open its border with Armenia until the Karabagh (Artsakh) conflict is resolved?

The prime minister responded that Turkey could not let Armenia "usurp the rights of Azerbaijan" and would indeed keep the border closed until the Karabagh issue is resolved. Erdogan then made a series of outlandish statements. He inadvertently reminded his European audience of the Turkish deportations of Armenians during the 1915 Genocide by stating that even though Turkey could, it would not deport the 40,000 undocumented Armenian workers! He also complained that

Armenia is not sufficiently pressuring its diaspora. The prime minister seems to have forgotten that millions of Turks living illegally in Europe could also be deported! Erdogan carefully avoided responding to Rustamyan's question about his personal order to dismantle the "Armenian-Turkish Friendship Statue" in Kars!

The most embarrassing part of the PACE meeting was Erdogan's rude answer to French Parliamentarian Muriel Marland-Militello who asked about the protection of religious minorities in Turkey. Erdogan insulted the lady by pointing out that in the Turkish language an ignorant person is described as someone from France, which she clearly happens to be! He invited her to Turkey, so she could learn about his country. To Erdogan's chagrin, Marland-Militello turned out to know much more about Turkey's minorities than the prime minister himself. As she disclosed during a subsequent press conference, Marland-Militello is a descendant of an Armenian family that had escaped from Turkey during the Genocide! Erdogan also falsely claimed that the Armenian Holy Cross Church on Akhtamar Island is "now open for worship." The fact is that the Turkish government converted the church into a state museum, allowing Divine Liturgy to be performed there only once.

Another member of PACE, Naira Zohrabyan, having been blocked by Cavusoglu from asking a question, chased Erdogan down the corridor after the session and pushed her way past his bodyguards to hand him a photo album of murdered Armenian children during the Genocide.

While the prime minister may easily impress his devout followers at home, he completely embarrassed himself during his appearance at PACE in Strasbourg. In view of his blatantly deceptive statements, one would hope that Erdogan would appear more frequently in front of European audiences so he could help convince them that Turkey does not belong in Europe!

LETTERS

Stronger Promotion of Armenian Cause Needed before 2015

To the Editor:

As the saying goes, "living well is the best revenge." No words rang truer than witnessing the tribute to Charles Aznavour during the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the independence of Armenia at Cipriani on May 20. The room was filled to capacity with successful first-, second- and third-generation Armenians, most of whom had ancestors who were either massacred in the Genocide or who survived having lost the majority of their families and all of their worldly possessions. The large list of honorary committee members included the names of giants in the fields of government, religion, entertainment and the diplomatic corps all of whom lent their names to a milestone in Armenia's history.

Garnik Nanagoulian, executive director of Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), and the able staff deserve a standing ovation for organizing a spectacular event. Whether it is events such as this one or the Ellis Island Awards

honoring those Armenians who have given back to our people and country one can only think — "out of the ashes..."

Success takes many forms and the above are only two examples of Armenian victory over adversity. God willing the next victory will be universal recognition of the Armenian Genocide followed by reparations. We have a huge window of opportunity to advocate for our cause when we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Genocide in a few short years. However, business as usual will no longer "cut it." I'm sure that Turkey is working 24/7 in its attempt to counter anything we might do. Therefore I feel strongly that it's incumbent upon our organizations, both religious and lay, to not only form a think tank NOW to plan for 2015 but also to include others from the non-Armenian community who are sympathetic to our cause, or who we can entice to be sympathetic, to look at our cause with fresh eyes. This should also

be a coordinated international endeavor whose mantra is "speak with one voice." Success is at hand if we work "hand in hand."

— Adrienne Alexanian
New York City

What Is a Liberal Armenian to Do in Presidential Election?

To the Editor:

Lately, we keep hearing from Armenians that we should punish President Barack Obama for reneging on his promise to use the word genocide when referring to what happened to the Armenians of Anatolia. This poses a dilemma for those Armenians of the liberal persuasion, who I believe are the majority. I have no problem with Armenian businessmen voting Republican. They are just voting with their pocketbooks. But, should the rest of us vote against that which we believe is best for America, or for the narrow issue represented by the genocide.

If we vote against Obama, we'd be voting for the Republican candidate, and which one of the current crop has actually come out forcefully acknowledging the Genocide, like Obama did, I might add? Even if one of them did, what makes us think he won't disappoint us also?

The Armenian Genocide promise wasn't the only one Obama broke. The trouble with Obama is the same as for all politicians. They don't tend to be profiles in courage, so they will take the easiest way out. And it's easy to be principled when campaigning, but once in office and what you do and not what you say becomes important, a politician will revert to his usual expedient self.

A president will use the word genocide only when he perceives he has more to gain than not by doing so, and we'd better get used to that.

— Berge Tatian
Stoneham, Mass.

More Courageous Members Are Needed in Congress

By Mitch Kehetian

Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama share a common flaw — lack of honesty.

All three US presidents lied in fulfilling their campaign pledges they would recognize the 1915 Genocide of the Armenian people at the hands of the Ottoman-Turkish government.

But there's more. Twice when a House vote on a Genocide resolution was headed for a floor vote, the then Speakers of the House Dennis Hastert, a conservative Illinois Republican, and Nancy Pelosi, a liberal California Democrat, scuttled a vote that was certain to prevail on the genocide issue during their leadership terms.

In his successful run for the White House in 2008 Obama assured Armenians "he would be the kind of president to recognize the 1915 genocide of 1.5 million Armenians." Yet when he issued his subsequent April 24 tributes to the Armenian people, he played a word game by not mentioning genocide — instead coughing up an old term that expresses a massive tragedy long before the term "genocide" was defined by the United Nations Commission on Genocide.

In the aftermath of Obama's latest retreat to the Turkish lobby in the US State Department, and Pelosi's shameful capitulation after pledging to California Armenians she was on the side of truth, should we just abandon the genocide issue? Emphatically no.

If we do, as individuals or organizations, then shame on all Armenian Americans. As the descendants of the survivors we must not quit in our efforts. While a distinguished array of supporting Democrats and Republicans in Congress addressed the 97th observance of Ottoman Turkey's crime against humanity, one such person was Michigan US Sen. Carl Levin.

see CONGRESS, page 20

Congratulations on 80th Anniversary

To the Editor:

I feel privileged, as the Grand Commander of the Knights of Vartan, to write this letter praising the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* on its 80th anniversary. The *Mirror-Spectator* has a long and illustrious history of providing accurate news, cultural articles and observations on international affairs for the Armenian people in the United States, thereby enriching their intellectual, religious, social and political lives. It is a record of which it, and its sponsors, can justly be proud.

As the Armenian people settled in America, and the new generation was no longer master of the Armenian language, it became necessary to reach the younger generation through a English-language publication. The great success of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* over these many years proves that its founders, and

their successors, have been engaged in a worthy enterprise of great patriotic value. It is appropriate that we celebrate this important milestone of its rich and varied history.

The Armenians people are noted for their love of learning and eagerness to keep abreast of events taking place in their local communities, the nation, the homeland and, indeed, around the world. Accordingly, they have produced not only a plethora of manuscripts, books and pamphlets, but are also renowned for the numerous newspapers, which they have published for over 20 years. The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, to its credit, has become a vital part of this noble tradition.

— Dennis R. Papazian, PhD
Grand Commander of the Knights of Vartan



Armenian Amnesty ‘Will Ease Political Tension’

AMNESTY, from page 1

ease tension in the country and start dialogue [with the opposition,]” he said.

Abrahamian referred to an amnesty bill that was drafted by the presidential administration and sent to the National Assembly on Friday. The parliament’s committee on legal affairs swiftly met to discuss it, reportedly proposing some changes in the text.

Sources said that the still unpublicized bill, if approved by lawmakers, will lead to the immediate release of some 400 prisoners. It is expected that they will comprise all six members of the main opposition Armenian National Congress (HAK) who were arrested following a disputed 2008 presidential election and are still in prison.

Asked to comment on this, Abrahamian said, “We are working. Everything will be clear in two days.” He added that the full National Assembly will likely start debating the amnesty bill on Wednesday.

Among the jailed oppositionists are former parliament deputy Sasun Mikaelian and Nikol Pashinian, editor of the opposition daily Haykakan Zhamanak. HAK leader Levon Ter-

Petrosian expressed confidence late last month that both men will be free before the next HAK rally scheduled for May 31.

Abrahamian did not confirm this, saying only that the oppositionists could be set free at any moment before September 21, which will mark the 20th anniversary of Armenia’s independence from the Soviet Union.

The release of the individuals regarded by the opposition as political prisoners is the HAK’s main precondition for starting a dialogue with Sargisian. HAK leaders also say that they would negotiate with the Armenian government only on the holding of fresh presidential and parliamentary elections.

Like other top representatives of Sargisian’s three-party governing coalition, Abrahamian ruled out such polls. “Every fresh election, be it presidential or parliamentary, has a negative impact on a country’s image,” he said.

“Are they ready to contest pre-term elections?” the speaker asked, referring to the HAK. “As for us, we are preparing for regular [parliamentary] elections that will take place in May 2012.”

Obama’s Nominee for United States Ambassador to Armenia Named

AMBASSADOR, from page 1

These measures included, most notably, the Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act, which prohibits US economic assistance to any country that impedes or restricts the transfer or delivery of US humanitarian assistance to another country. Heffern’s former boss also voted against an amendment to cut \$25 million in aid to Turkey, which was proposed in reference to Turkey’s human rights violations and ongoing blockade of Armenia. Further, the Congressman voted against an amendment to cut aid to Turkey until it had “taken all

appropriate steps to honor the memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide.”

Heffern is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and currently serves as the deputy chief of mission at the US Mission to NATO in Brussels. Prior to his current post, Heffern served as executive assistant to the Undersecretary for political affairs and deputy chief of mission at the US Embassy in Indonesia. Heffern’s career has also included overseas assignments to Japan, Malaysia, Ivory Coast and Guangzhou, China.

More Courageous Members Are Needed in Congress

CONGRESS, from page 19

I first met the Detroit Democrat in 1969 when he won a seat on Detroit’s city council. Through the years our paths crossed often in my role as a newspaper reporter covering local politics. By 1978 Levin was on his way to the United States Senate – and he retained his quest of justice for the Armenian people.

Last September 10, after reading a copy of the memoir about the search for my Aunt Parancim and my family roots in the Keghi, Erzeroum and Moush regions of Turkish-held Armenia, the senator wrote a letter that I treasure for its motivating message.

In his personal expression, the chairman of the Senate Armed Forces Committee wrote: “Mitch, thanks for sending me Giants of the Earth. “It is a compelling, deeply moving, honest memoir – a tribute to Armenians lost in the genocide. I intend to refer to it when I speak in support of a resolution recognizing and memorializing the events you recount for what they were – a genocide. Best, Carl.” Though the Senate was in recess for Easter Week and the April 24 observance, Levin was a man of his pledge when he issued his May 9 Armenian Genocide statement on the Senate floor. The senator said: “We also remember the Armenian genocide when Turkish Ottoman authorities ordered the rounding up and detention of hundreds of Armenian intellectuals. What followed between 1915 and 1923 was an organized campaign that resulted in the deaths of over 1.5 million Armenians.”

Journalist Tom Mooradian, author of The Repatriate, a chilling account of 13 years he spent exiled behind the Iron Curtain, says the massacre of Armenians during the genocide actually resulted in the “potential population growth loss of more than seven million. We should be a nation of 10 million Armenians by now. But our national birth rate was stunted by the genocide.”

Levin also stressed that “while the horrific

abuses suffered by the Armenians have been described as the first genocide of the 20th century.” he added that the Ottoman Turkish regime’s systematic engagement in the killing and deportation of the Armenian population cannot be denied.”

While he points out that “these acts were not committed by the present Republic of Turkey,” the truth-seeking senator emphasizes “some have sought to deny that these events constituted genocide.”

Levin’s position on denial of the 1915 genocide is a clear message to Presidents Clinton, Bush and Obama – and the pro-Turkish lobby in the US State Department.

By the 100th observance of the April 24 Genocide, Armenians worldwide need to rally under one banner of justice to force Turkey to admit to its past crimes against the Armenians – and a US president who will speak truthfully for justice and uphold his or her pledge on the April 24, 1915 Genocide.

Why does present-day Turkey still deny the truth? The United Nations Commission on Genocide ruled that penalties on the crime of genocide are not bound by a time limit. For Armenia that means reparations and territory illegally seized during the genocide and deportations.

That’s why Turkey refuses to admit it was genocide.

So-called modern Turkey’s greatest allies in denying the Genocide have been the last three liars to occupy the White House.

When Time Magazine named Levin one of the 10 best senators it cited the “senator’s respect from both parties for his attention to detail and deep knowledge of policy.”

We need more Carl Levins in Congress.

(Mitch Kehetian is the retired editor of The Macomb Daily, and author of Giants of the Earth a recently published memoir on his 1969 mission into barren Turkish-held Armenia.)

Clinton Discusses US-Armenian Ties with Nalbandian

CLINTON, from page 1

engagement” in the Karabagh peace process through the OSCE’s Minsk Group, which it co-chairs with Russia and France.

“In that regard, we strongly believe that the time has come to finalize and endorse the Basic Principles [of a Karabagh settlement] and move to the drafting of a peace agreement,” Gordon said, echoing a joint statement issued by the Minsk Group co-chairs last month.

Later on Thursday, Nalbandian held separate meetings with Gordon and Robert Bradtke, the group’s US co-chair. An Armenian Foreign Ministry statement said he discussed with the latter a fresh visit to the region planned by Bradtke and his Russian and French opposite numbers. No further details were reported.

The three co-chairs last month spoke of “positive momentum” created by the Armenian and Azerbaijani president at their most recent meeting held in Russia in March. The two leaders are expected to meet again in June or July.

International hopes for a breakthrough in the long-running Armenian-Azerbaijani peace talks, a key US policy goal in the region, are called into question by continuing ceasefire violations in the conflict zone and bitter accusations traded by the two warring sides.

President Serge Sargisian said earlier this week that Yerevan and Baku have differing interpretations of two key principles that are at the heart of a framework peace accord proposed by the US, Russia and France.

In addition, Nalbandian met with Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (NJ-06) Thursday to discuss the continued aggression perpetrated by Azerbaijan towards Nagorno Karabagh.

“Foreign Minister Nalbandian and I had a productive meeting where we found agreement on issues important to Armenia and the United States. I believe a continuing dialogue between our two countries at the highest levels is vital to continuing our strategic relationship,” said Pallone.

Pallone and Nalbandian discussed the recent deaths that have occurred as a result of Azerbaijani aggression and Azerbaijan’s refusal to withdraw snipers from the line of contact despite international calls for such action. The foreign minister expressed Armenia’s continued support and dedication to a peaceful resolution of this conflict through the Minsk Process.

Concern over the impact of continued violence and rhetorical references to war by Azerbaijani officials was also discussed. Pallone expressed that finding a lasting solution to the conflict should be a US priority and committed to continuing his calls for official recognition of Nagorno Karabagh by the United States government.

Nalbandian thanked Pallone for his continued efforts to increase foreign assistance to Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh. Pallone is currently circulating a letter to the chairwoman and ranking member of the House State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Subcommittee requesting that economic and military assistance to Armenia be increased. The letter also calls on the Appropriations Committee to ensure funds are used to promote confidence building measures between Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabagh and requests that foreign assistance to Azerbaijan be cut off in light of their continued aggressive and violent action in the region.

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