

New Jersey Banquet Celebrates *Mirror-Spectator* Anniversary



Keynote speaker Stephen Kurkjian

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator

three New York area intellectuals who were important in its history.

TEANECK, N.J. — More than 200 guests assembled here at a banquet on June 4 to raise funds, support and celebrate the work of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, and commemorate

see ANNIVERSARY, page 9

Ahmadinejad Visit to Armenia Cancelled at Last Minute

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad cancelled a visit to Armenia just hours before his planned arrival on Monday, May 30, for reasons that were not immediately clear.

The visit was announced by the Iranian government late last month and confirmed by President Serge Sargisian's office on Saturday, June 4. The latter gave no details of its agenda, though.

In a short statement issued on Monday, the Armenian presidential press service said the trip has been put off "by mutual consent," adding "it will be undertaken in due course," without elaboration.

The official Iranian IRNA news agency quoted a spokesman for Ahmadinejad, Mohammad-Hassan Salehi-Maram, as saying that the Armenian side "did not prepare documents" that were due to be signed in Yerevan. The official did not specify what those documents are.

According to another Tehran-based agency, ISNA, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast gave a similar reason for the delay. Mehmanparast expressed confidence that the unspecified documents will be finalized and the Iranian leader will visit Armenia "in the near future."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran and Armenia enjoy friendly relations and good neighborliness and authorities of the two countries are continuously in contact," he reportedly said.

Ahmadinejad was due to fly to Yerevan one week after a regular session of an Iranian-Armenian inter-governmental commission on economic cooperation that was held in Tehran. The meeting was co-chaired by Iranian Foreign Minister Ali-Akbar Salehi and Armenian Energy and Natural Resources Minister Armen Movsisian.

Salehi and Movsisian signed a memorandum of understanding to boost cooperation on oil, gas and electricity, and expand overall economic ties between the two neighboring countries. A key element of that cooperation is joint Armenian-Iranian energy 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

see AHMADINEJAD, page 20

Mediators Meet Azeri Leaders, Travel to Karabagh

BAKU (RFE/RL) — International mediators met with Azerbaijan's leaders and proceeded to Nagorno-Karabagh on Tuesday during their latest round of shuttle diplomacy coming amid fresh hopes for a breakthrough in the Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiating process.

The US, Russian and French diplomats co-chairing the OSCE Minsk Group made no public statements after holding talks with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov.

They entered Karabagh later in the day. Military officials in Stepanakert said they used the occasion to monitor the ceasefire regime at a section of the Armenian-Azerbaijani frontline northeast of the disputed territory.

The mediating troika is scheduled meet with the ethnic Armenian leadership of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic (NKR) on Wednesday. It will end the regional visit in Yerevan on Thursday with talks with President Serge Sargisian and Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian.

The co-chairs' latest tour of the conflict zone comes less than two weeks after the presidents of the United States, Russia and France urged Sargisian and Aliyev to finalize a framework peace accord on Karabagh at their upcoming meeting. "Further delay would only call into question the commitment of the sides to reach an agreement," they warned.

Aliyev and Sargisian are expected to meet in Kazan, Russia at the end of this month. The summit will be hosted and mediated by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

Mammadyarov said on Monday that he and Nalbandian will hold a trilateral meeting with their Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, in Moscow on June 11. He said they will prepare for the next Armenian-Azerbaijani summit.

'Dr. Death' Jack Kevorkian Dies at 83

By Sindya N. Bhanoo

ROYAL OAK, Mich. (*Washington Post*) — Jack Kevorkian, 83, the zealous, straight-talking pathologist known as "Dr. Death" for his crusade to legalize physician-assisted suicide, died June 3 at a hospital here.

He had been hospitalized since last month with pneumonia and kidney problems, close friend and attorney Mayer Morganroth told the Associated Press.

Kevorkian spent decades campaigning for the legalization of euthanasia. He served eight years in prison and was arrested numerous times for helping more than 130 patients commit suicide from 1990 to 2000, using injections, carbon monoxide and his infamous suicide machine, built from scraps for \$30. Those he aided had terminal conditions such as multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and malignant brain tumors.

see KEVORKIAN, page 6



Dr. Jack Kevorkian

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mirror-Spectator Annual Vacation

WATERTOWN — The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* will close for a two-week break in July, as part of its traditional summer holiday.

The last issue before the break will be that of July 2. The first issue back will be that of July 23.

Press releases on events between July 2 and 23 should be submitted as early as possible for inclusion in issues prior to the break.

The office will reopen on July 18.

Swedish MP Refutes Azeri Media Story

STOCKHOLM (PanArmenian.Net) — Swedish member of parliament Desire Petrus refuted the words ascribed to her by Azerbaijani media that recognition of the Armenian Genocide "is a historic mistake."

In a letter addressed to the representative of the Armenian community of Sweden, Vahagn Avetian, Petrus wrote that she has not made such a statement.

"I said that, taking into consideration the stance of the Christian Democratic Party, recognition of genocides by parliaments is not a correct step as a whole. Similar decisions should be adopted by international courts. It would have been correct to recognize the Armenian Genocide. There are not any doubts with respect to it," Petrus wrote.

Armenia to Modernize Electrical Substation Near Turkish Border

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia will start modernizing later this year an electrical substation and a high-voltage transmission line stretching to the Armenian-Turkish border with a \$21-million loan provided by Germany.

The two facilities are located in the northwestern Shirak province bordering Turkey and are a major component of the local power distribution network.

The transmission line underwent minor repairs in 2009 during Turkish-Armenian negotiations that raised the prospect of Armenian electricity exports to Turkey. But the subsequent collapse of the rapprochement all but ruled out such possibility.

"The substation remains prepared to supply electricity to Turkey," its director, Gagik Avetisian said, on Thursday, June 2. "It will be even more prepared after the reconstruction."

Preparations for the project began shortly after the German bank KfW allocated the loan late last year. The project will be implemented by French companies chosen after an international tender.

Avetisian said the modernization process will get underway this autumn and take more than two years.

INSIDE

The Art of Sumbat

page 14

INDEX

Armenia	2,3
Arts and Living	14
Calendar	17
Community News.	5
Editorial	18
International	4



ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Catholicos Karekin II Defrocks Rev. Manukyan

BERN, Switzerland (Lragir.am) — By the Patriarchal Verdict dated June 1, Rev. Abel Manukyan of Switzerland was defrocked.

The spokesman for the Holy See this week dwelled on the history of the attempts to establish a diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Switzerland. In his words, the diocese was established *de jure* but was not brought into being due to the efforts of Manukyan.

Manukyan said he is going to challenge the order.

Ani Amiraghyan Wins Turkey Tennis Tournament

YEREVAN (PanArmenian.Net) — On May 30, the leading tennis player of the Armenian team, Ani Amiraghyan, participated in two international tennis tournaments in Turkey. From May 23 to 29, she participated in the Gaziantep tournament, which she won, tying with Basak Erday. She won a \$10,000 prize.

She also participated in the ITF Futures tournament in Izmir but lost in the semi-finals round.

Salary of High School Teachers to Increase

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Starting in the new academic year this fall, the financing of schools will be put on a new level, Education and Science Minister Armen Ashotyan said at a meeting with high school principals this week.

He also said the teachers working in high schools will also get higher salaries. “Though it may be viewed as encouragement, together with it we will put in front of them more strict qualifying demands,” Ashotyan said.

Khachaturian Contest Kicks off in Yerevan

YEREVAN (armradio.am) — The seventh Aram Khachaturian International Contest kicks off here this week. The contest will be held under the aegis of First Lady Rita Sargisian. It has been organized by the Armenian Ministry of Culture, the Aram Khachaturian Competition Cultural Foundation and the Komitas State Conservatory.

The chief partner of the competition is the CIS Interstate Humanitarian Cooperation Fund. The fund's executive director, Armen Smbatyan, presented the details of the event to be held in Yerevan June 6-13. Tribute to the memory of the great composer on his birthday on June 6 marked the start of the seventh Aram Khachaturian International Contest.

Forty-seven musicians from the Commonwealth of Independent States, Europe, the United States, Canada, China and other countries participate in the contest this year.

The awarding ceremony and gala-concert will take place on June 13 at Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall.

Dalma Gardens Evictees Protest

YEREVAN (Hetq) — People who once worked the land in the Dalma Gardens outside Yerevan staged the latest in a spat of protests outside the Presidential Palace on May 27.

They had been prohibited from utilizing the land due to a directive from the Yerevan Municipality. Multi-story buildings have literally decimated this historic green space.

About three weeks ago Yerevan Mayor Karen Karapetyan met with a group of the protestors and promised to resolve outstanding issues with 48 of the evictees. EcoLur reports that to date no steps have been taken in this direction.

Courts in Armenia have refused to hear their cases.

Experts: Armenian Nuke Plant Risk ‘Acceptable’

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) — According to the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) ad hoc Operational Safety Review Team (OSART) for Armenia, Gabor Vamos, the level of risk at the Armenian Nuclear Power Plant is acceptable and there are technical possibilities to extend the terms of the facility's operation. But he said at a press conference in Yerevan on Thursday that the station has not yet made such an initiative.

IAEA experts arrived in Armenia in mid-May to find out on the spot how safety of the Metsamor nuclear power plant is organized. In 18 months IAEA experts will conduct a second monitor, said the director of the Metsamor NPP Gagik Markosyan.

After the earthquake and tsunami in Japan in March and the accident at the Fukushima-1 nuclear power plant caused by the natural calamity the IAEA carries out stress tests at all nuclear power plants around the world. The Armenian NPP is the first on the list.

The Metsamor facility is the only nuclear power plant in the region. None

of Armenia's neighbors — Azerbaijan, Georgia, or Turkey — have nuclear stations and the newly-built Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran has not yet been put into full operation.

The OSART commission acting under the auspices of the IAEA cited a number of examples of good practice at the Armenian station, as well as voiced a number of recommendations to improve this practice. The group, consisting of 11 experts from eight countries, conducted monitoring in the following areas — state of the equipment, the process of work. Vamos noted that during the inspection 16 recommendations and 14 suggestions on how to improve the nuclear power plant's work were made to the Armenian side.

The final OSART report on the results of the work done will be submitted to the Government of Armenia within three months.

Armenia is in the highest, third zone of seismic risk, and in this connection Turkey and Azerbaijan have repeatedly demanded that the Metsamor nuclear station be closed. But the facility produces energy not only for Armenia's domestic consumption but also for

export, and Armenia cannot abandon its use. Moreover, the country is beginning the construction of a new reactor.

A few days ago Germany renounced the use of nuclear energy and pledged to shut down all nuclear power plants by 2022. Seven nuclear reactors in Germany built before 1980 were suspended in Germany in March amid the news of the nuclear catastrophe coming from earthquake-hit Japan. Safety inspections began at all 17 nuclear power plants operating in Germany. As a result, only four of them continued their operations.

Germany's decision caused mixed reactions in the European Union. For example, France and the United Kingdom took Berlin's policy in the field of nuclear energy as “hysterical.” In the European Commission they believe that Berlin will face financial problems because it will have to invest a huge amount of money into the development of alternative energy sources.

About 20 nuclear power plants operate in Russia. Most countries still believe that atomic energy must be developed, but with strengthened security.

Opposition Parties Warn of Secret Deals between Sargisian, Ter-Petrosian

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Two major opposition parties critical of the Armenian National Congress (HAK) have suggested that there are ulterior motives behind its decision to embark on a dialogue with President Serge Sargisian's government.

According to the Zharangutyun (Heritage) Party and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaksutyun), the two sides may be intent on cutting secret deals that would make it easier for the government to make more concessions to Azerbaijan and Turkey.

“If that dialogue leads to fresh elections ... we will only welcome that extraordinary solution,” Zharangutyun leader Raffi Hovannisian said as he addressed several dozen supporters in Yerevan's Liberty Square on Saturday.

“But if there is a different agenda leading to deals, containing other issues — regular solutions, unacceptable concessions on the Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabagh) issue, the continuation of the unacceptable policy on Turkey-Armenia relations — then I think the people will say no to that collusion,” he warned.

Hovannisian claimed that the government and the HAK might also go as far as to agree on a mutually-acceptable cover-up of the March 2008 violence in Yerevan.

ARF's parliamentary leader and former presidential candidate, Vahan Hovannisian (no relation), voiced similar misgivings about that dialogue at a news conference on Monday. He questioned the HAK's commitment to attaining its most important stated goal: fresh presidential and parliamentary elections.

Hovannisian argued that Ter-Petrosian opted for the dialogue despite the fact that government officials and loyalists have categorically ruled out the possibility of such polls. “That means one of the parties accepts that there may be a change in the agenda of discussions,” he said.

Hovannisian claimed that the two sides are also increasingly united by their “hysterical” attacks on the ARF.

Like the Zharangutyun leader, Hovannisian implied that Ter-Petrosian and Sargisian have similar views on how to resolve the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict and normalize

Turkish-Armenian relations.

The ARF and Zharangutyun favor a harder line on both issues. In particular, they both reject the basic principles of a Karabagh settlement proposed by the US, Russian and French mediators. Official Yerevan has repeatedly described the proposed settlement as largely acceptable.

Other leading members of the two parties have similarly speculated that the HAK is now ready to let Sargisian hold on to power in return for government guarantees that it will have a solid presence in the next Armenian parliament.

Ter-Petrosian denounced such “malevolent gossips” at the last HAK rally held on May 31. He insisted that his alliance will seek to achieve “regime change” in Armenia through the dialogue.

Serge Sargisian Receives Sam Simonian

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — President Serge Sargisian met this week with the president of the Simonian Educational Foundation, Sam Simonian, the president's press service reported.

During the meeting, Simonian spoke to the president about the Educational Center for Creative Technologies, the future programs targeted at the development of the IT sector in Armenia and the implementation of youth educational programs.

Sargisian hailed the foundation's initiatives in Armenia, describing them as a necessity for the country.



Sam Simonian with President Serge Sargisian

Composer Edward Mirzoyan Pleased With Birthday Celebration

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — On June 4 a ceremony dedicated to the 90th birthday of Edward Mirzoyan took place at the Aram Khachaturian concert hall. Works by the composer were performed at the event.

Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, First Lady Rita Sargisian, Prime Minister Tigran Sargisian, Culture Minister Hasmik Poghosian and other guests attended the concert.

The composer, accompanied by his wife, was also present at the event. He joked that he is a 90



Edward Mirzoyan

year-old youngster. “I have reached this age not thanks to mind but fate,” he joked, adding that he was very pleased with his anniversary events.

Poghosyan said it is difficult to find words to describe Mirzoyan's art, as words cannot do it justice. “He is the embodiment of intelligence, morality, spiritual beauty,” Poghosyan said, adding that his talent and attraction are infectious. “Your presence will always give strength,” she pointed out.

During the event, a film by Vigen Chaldryan about the composer was presented. He said composer has grown up but never became old. “He grew up but thanks to his works he will live very long,” Chaldryan said.



ARMENIA

Stranger by Looks, Not by Heart:

An American in North Carolina Sees Armenia as His Adopted Home

By Gayane Mkrtchyan

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (ArmeniaNow) — An American named Dan Hensley approaches me after a Sunday liturgy at St. Sarkis Armenian Church in Charlotte, NC, and asks me to give his regards to the editor of ArmeniaNow, John Hughes, upon my return to Armenia.

“You know John?” I asked, surprised.

“Only from his articles and essays. In one such essay he wrote that he missed American ‘bagels and cream cheese.’ When I come to Armenia I’ll bring some with me, for John,” says Hensley with a broad smile and then comments on my recent writings.

Living in the distant state of North Carolina, thousands of miles away from Armenia, Hensley has been an active fan of ArmeniaNow since 2001. He knows all the staff reporters by names and can quote fragments from various stories written by them.

“I am interested in Armenia. Any event happening in Armenia interests me. And that was the reason why I married an Armenian,” he says, using some Armenian words every now and then in his speech.

He was born and grew up in Western Virginia, then moved to North Carolina. He is an engineer at the Sevan Electrical Services company.

Before meeting his wife-to-be, Astghik Vardanyan, in 1999 he took a 21-day trip to Armenia.

“I traveled all over northern Armenia, visited a lot of places. In Geghard [a medieval monastery complex Geghardavank — the Monastery of the Spear] I had a very peculiar experience — God told me I was going to marry an Armenian woman, and so I did. I really heard those words,” remembers Hensley and introduces his approaching wife.

“My sister and brother lived in Charlotte with their families, and so in 1999 I came to visit. I met Dan at a party. I would never have imagined that I wouldn’t return to Armenia. But, I married Dan and settled in Charlotte,” says Astghik, who is now 45.

Dan Hensley says that Armenian women are special to him, he can see qualities in

them that, he says, women of other nationalities lack.

“In the past, 25 years ago, I had an Iranian-Armenian girlfriend — Marish — but it didn’t work between us and we split up. Later I married an American woman and had two children with her, but then we got divorced.

So I decided, if I marry again that would have to be with a non-American woman,” says Hensley. “I really liked the families of my Armenian friends in Charlotte, their lifestyles.”

Marrying Astghik, Dan Hensley created his model of an Armenian-American family. Their daughter is a blonde with blue eyes. Astghik says their daughter’s name was her husband’s choice.

“Ha, ha [yes, yes],” says Dan Hensley, using common Armenian interjections to confirm his wife’s words. “She doesn’t look Armenian, but, when asked what her name is, she says ‘Hayastan’ [meaning Armenia], so people would know at once that she is Armenian,” Hensley says with pride.

Today, Dan Hensley and his family live in a small town of Kings Mountain not too far from Charlotte that they visit every Sunday for an Armenian Church liturgy there.

“I really like the Armenian liturgy. I am an American, but I am also a ‘converted’ Armenian. The Armenian Church and culture have become very dear to me. My wedding ceremony was Armenian, my wife is Armenian, I’ve got a house in Yeghvard [Kotayk province]. One day we will return to Armenia and settle down there,” said Hensley.

“I can’t speak Armenian, but can understand. I know random words. Armenian is a difficult language to learn, it has many hard consonants,” he said.

Astghik and Dan Hensley spend days plan-

ning their return to Armenia, how they are going to live in their Yeghvard house, despite the country’s social and economic difficulties. Being well aware of the political situation in Armenia, Dan Hensley has his own opinion in this regard.

“It is regrettable that Armenian youth or

ues in the country — it took the United States more than two centuries to reach that goal.

Hensley confesses that he has adopted Armenian customs, culture and lifestyle.

“The most beautiful phenomenon is that I am a stranger, but Armenians have accepted



Dan Hensley and his family

elderly people want to leave their homeland and move here. And the puzzling part about it is that Armenians are able to integrate well in foreign countries, easily adapting to unfamiliar lifestyles and cultures, but fail to do that in their own country,” he says. “There is no freedom there, people are not granted opportunities. Of course, things are not perfect in my country, wrong decisions are made sometimes, but people do have a choice.”

He says, though, that he sees progress in Armenia, and believes that “with God’s help things will get better.” Twenty years of independence are not enough, in Hensley’s opinion, for the establishment of democratic val-

me as one of them. My looks are foreign, but not my heart,” he says. “And one day I will definitely return to Armenia and live in my house in Yeghvard, flanked by Arai Ler [Ara’s Mountain] (on the right) and Mt. Aragats (on the left) and facing Biblical Mount Ararat. What else do I need in life...” says Hensley, gently stroking Hayastan’s hair.

(Gayane Mkrtchyan was in the United States in April/May as part of a journalism program organized by the Washington-based International Center for Journalists. On the sidelines of her project she also explored the life of an Armenian community in the city of Charlotte, NC.)

Yerevan Daily Fined for ‘Slandering’ Kocharian Family

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — A court in Yerevan on Monday ordered a pro-opposition newspaper to pay the family of former President Robert Kocharian 3 million drams (\$8,000) in damages for what it called slanderous reports that attributed extensive business interests to his relatives.

In a ruling reflecting an upsurge in libel suits against Armenian media, the court at the same time refused to force *Zhamanak* daily to pay another 3,000 million drams for legal expenses, which the plaintiff claims to have incurred.

The case stems from a series of articles that were published by *Zhamanak* last fall. The paper linked Kocharian’s wife Bella with trade in medicines and claimed that his older son, Sedrak, owns diamond mines in India. It also accused Sedrak Kocharian of defrauding an Armenian businessman.

The Kocharian family said these reports are untrue and amount to defamation of character as it took *Zhamanak* to court last December. The paper denied that before offering an out-of-court settlement to the family earlier this year. The two sides failed to agree on settlement terms, however.

Nikolay Baghdasarian, a lawyer for *Zhamanak*, denounced the ruling as “political” and said his clients will appeal against it. “This verdict is far from jurisprudence,” he said.

Baghdasarian also scoffed at the court’s decision to slap half of the fine sought by the ex-president’s family. “If the plaintiffs were right, they should have also been compensated for their expenses,” he said.

Kocharian lawyers refused to comment on the verdict as they left the courtroom.

The ex-president, who governed Armenia from 1998-2008, is also locked in a court battle with another newspaper highly critical of his legacy, *Hraparak*. He took the independent daily to court and demanded 6 million drams in damages in February after it labeled him as a “blood-thirsty” individual who is also notorious for his “particularly brilliant foolishness.”

The number of libel cases against media outlets critical of the current and previous Armenian governments has increased significantly since the passage of controversial amendments to Armenian defamation legislation in April 2010. Those amendments decriminalized libel but drastically toughened financial penalties for such offences.

Armenian press freedom groups recorded 12 such cases in the first quarter of this year alone, describing this phenomenon as a serious threat to press freedom. Their concerns have been echoed by Western watchdogs such as the Paris-based Reporters Without Borders.

Jewish Center in Yerevan Re-Opens after Renovations

YEREVAN (Hetq) — The Mordechai Navi Jewish Community Center, located on Nar-Dos Street, has been re-opened after major renovations to the building and installation of new office equipment.

Sponsoring the project was local Armenian businessman David Galstyan.

Those attending the opening ceremony included the assistant to the president of Armenia, the head of the Department of Religious Affairs and National Minorities of Armenia and Armenia’s minister of culture.

From Moscow, Rabbi Dovid Karpov of the Darkei Shalom Synagogue in Otradnoye was the representative. He was also the representative of Chief Rabbi of Russia Berel Lazar, who is also the head of the Board of Rabbis of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Countries, who was unable to attend.

In his speech, Chief Rabbi of Armenia Gershon Burstein — who is also a Chabad-Lubavitch emissary serving in this region —

highlighted the enthusiasm and professionalism demonstrated by the builders under the direction of Nikolai Khachaturov, a busi-



Armenia’s Jewish Center

nessman in the field of construction and a friend of David Galstyan.

There are an estimated 1,000 Jews residing in Armenia today. The Jewish community of Armenia dates back almost 2,000 years, to the time of King Tigranes the Great.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Stuttgart University Pulls out of Genocide Event

STUTTGART, Germany (Hetq) — Prof. Wolfram Ressel, rector of the University of Stuttgart, appears to have broken his promise made on April 5 to allocate an auditorium for an event scheduled for May 28, titled “Persecution, Eviction and Extermination of Christians in the Ottoman Sultanate from 1912-1922.”

Ressel said that the decision to cancel the event was a result of protest from a Turkish organization, as well as his own desire to remain neutral on the matter.

Turkish Government Arrests Hamshen, Laz Protestors

ANKARA (Times.am) — Hamshen-Armenians and members of the Laz community in Hopa city, met Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan with protests on May 31. Turkish policemen used water-cannons, tear gas and stun guns against the protestors. According to the witnesses, Erdogan’s bodyguards shot with combat guns as well and caused the death of a former teacher, Metin Lokumchu. The protestors hit Erdogan’s bus with stones and wounded one of the bodyguards.

Turkish police have arrested more than 40 Hamshen and Laz citizens. The arrests took place both in Hopa and in Ankara.

Erdogan Labels OSCE Minsk Group ‘Useless’

ANKARA (Today’s Zaman) — Turkey’s Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has labeled the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) “useless,” while he reiterated Ankara’s well-known position that normalization of relations with Yerevan is tied to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict.

To date the OSCE Minsk Group has failed to find a solution to the territorial conflict between neighboring Armenia and Azerbaijan, Erdogan was quoted on Monday as saying in an interview with Azerbaijan’s ANS TV. The Minsk Group, the three co-chairs of which are from France, Russia and the US, has striven to resolve the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict for almost two decades.

The dispute may be solved, if Armenia and Azerbaijan make moves in a positive direction, Erdogan said, adding: “Otherwise, I do not see any solution to this issue. Though the Minsk Group has been operating for about 20 years, it has failed to achieve any results. I wonder what the Minsk Group can do today, if it has failed during the past 20 years.”

“Unless Azerbaijan and Armenia find a solution to the Karabagh problem, relations between Ankara and Yerevan will not be normalized,” he said.

Italy’s Lamberto Zannier May Become New OSCE Secretary General

ROME (PanARMENIAN.Net) — After Turkey’s opposition to the nomination of former Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik for the post of secretary general of the Organization for Security and Cooperation Europe (OSCE), Lithuania, which holds the rotating chairmanship in the organization, has nominated the head of the UN Mission in Kosovo, Italy’s Lamberto Zannier, to the post.

The election requires a consensus among members, while Lithuania is trying to reach an agreement before the French Marc Perrin de Brichambaut’s second three-year term as OSCE secretary-general ends June 30.

Other candidates included Portugal’s Joao Soares, the former head of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and Turkish diplomat Ersin Ercin.

Russian General: We Will Intervene To Protect Armenia

By Joshua Kucera

MOSCOW (Eurasia.net) — A few weeks ago there was some back and forth between Armenians and Azerbaijanis about whether Russia would come to Armenia’s defense in the case of a war over Nagorno Karabagh. Well, now a top Russian general has weighed in, and he sounds pretty certain that Russia would get involved. General Andrei Tretyak, the Chief of the Main Operations Directorate of the Defense Ministry, discussed the Russian military’s future plans with some analysts, and this is from Dmitry Gorenburg’s account:

In a discussion on the situation in Karabagh, Tretyak agreed with a participant’s assessment that the possibility of conflict in that region is high, but argued that it is gradually decreasing as a result of Russian efforts to reduce tension in the region. He disagreed with the suggestion that Russia’s relationship with Armenia is eroding and made clear that Russia will carry out its promises to that country. No one should see Russia’s refusal to intervene in Kyrgyzstan last summer as a precedent for Karabagh, as that was a very different situation.

Tretyak also weighed in on Central Asia, and suggested that the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)



General Andrei Tretyak

could help fill the security vacuum that will be created by the US leaving Afghanistan. And he seems to acknowledge that the CSTO kind of dropped the ball on Kyrgyzstan last year, when it did nothing to stop the pogroms that took place there in what many saw as the first big test of the collective security group.

He also felt that what he saw as the inevitable US withdrawal from the region will have a negative effect on stability.

In this context, the CSTO may come to play a more important role in the region. Tretyak pointed out that CSTO reforms are continuing. The major Russian military exercises in the summer and early fall will include CSTO states. The Russian military has looked

at the issues that arose in conjunction with the Kyrgyzstan crisis and know how to act if a similar situation arises in the future; according to Tretyak, there are no disagreements on this with Russia’s CSTO partners. The general further noted that the forces assigned to the CSTO are the best prepared of Russia’s forces, because Russia wants to increase the organization’s military effectiveness. Tretyak reiterated the Russian position that it would like NATO to recognize the legitimacy of the CSTO and establish cooperation with it.

This seems to be a pointed message that the CSTO is learning from its mistakes in Kyrgyzstan — and that those who expect it to stand aside in the future should think again.

US to Offer Turkey Major Role in Mideast Talks if it Stops Gaza Flotilla

JERUSALEM (Haaretz) — According to the Turkish daily *Hurriyet*, the US may offer Ankara a chance to host major Israeli-Palestinian peace talks if it mends its ties with Israel and prevents an upcoming Gaza-bound flotilla.

The US government is considering offering Turkey a deal in which Ankara would stop a second Gaza-bound flotilla that is due to depart later this month in exchange for the opportunity to host an Israeli-Palestinian peace summit in Ankara, *Today’s Zaman* reported, Friday, June 3.

Israel has been preparing to block the second aid flotilla sailing from Turkey to Gaza, one year after the Israel Defense Forces’ deadly raid on the first Gaza flotilla in which nine Turkish activists died. Turkey has demanded Israel apologize for the raid in order to restore Turkish-Israeli ties.

Today’s Zaman quoted the Turkish *Hurriyet* daily as reporting that the US was due to officially ask Turkey to host a major peace conference in return for mending its ties with Israel and preventing the second Gaza-bound flotilla. The proposed peace summit would be similar to past major talks such as the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference and the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords.

According to *Hurriyet*, US officials have been trying to get a sense of how Turkey would react to such a proposal, and one US official said that Ankara seems unlikely to accept the offer without Israel apologizing for the IDF raid.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said Israel prefers a diplomatic move to thwart the flotilla expected at the end of June, but if necessary would exercise force against anyone who tries to disobey the navy’s orders and head to Gaza’s shore.

The Israel Navy has held takeover drills and mobilized reserve combatants, on the assumption the large number of vessels (about 15) planning to take part in the flotilla will require reinforcements. The preparations include intelligence surveillance, based mainly on open communications and Internet sites.

AGBU Swiss Chapter Gala Dinner Raises Funds for Baghdad School

GENEVA — Recently the AGBU Swiss Chapter held a series of events. On April 8, the Paris-based Nairi Quintette performed pieces by Komitas, commemorating the 75th anniversary of Komitas Vartabed’s death. The concert was held in a Geneva-based Art Gallery, belonging to François Chabanian, called Bel-Air Fine Art Gallery. The idea of holding the concert in the gallery was original and while listening to the beautiful music of Komitas, the audience was able to admire the art in the gallery.

On April 10, the chapter invited four of Armenia’s academicians, who were in Geneva on holding talks concerning the rights of Armenian claims for the future formation of the Diaspora National Council, and on the same occasion, to give a conference to the Geneva public. They were Roupen Safrasyan, Vladimir

Vartanyan, Gagik Haroutunian and Roupen Melkonyan.

On Saturday, May 14, the AGBU Chapter held its annual dinner, and on the same occasion, celebrated the 20th anniversary of Armenian independence. To be a little different this time, it was held at a golf club not far away from Geneva. The chapter had decided that most of the proceeds of the evening would go to the only Armenian school still existing in Baghdad, Iraq. Archbishop Avak Asadourian was notified and seemed satisfied with this decision. The Armenian school in Baghdad has 187 students, of whom half cannot pay their tuition.

This was not the first time that the Swiss Chapter was helping in the funding of schools in the diaspora. Previously, they had also helped the AGBU school in Beirut, Lebanon.



From left, Vartan Sirmakes owner of Franck Muller watches, Taline Avakian, Satenig Abgaryan of the Armenian Embassy, UN Mission Plenipotentiary Minister and Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Viken Bayramian, a guest and Arden Shellefyan



Community News

AAMSC Honored Visionary Health Care Leaders

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — On Saturday, May 21, the Armenian American Medical Society of California (AAMSC) hosted its 26th Anniversary Gala at the Renaissance Hotel.

The evening's proceeds benefited the AAMSC's Pediatric Epilepsy Clinic in Armenia with a sold-out crowd of more than 500 guests. The AAMSC thanks all who made this event and the AAMSC's vision possible through tireless efforts, commitment and kind donations

Proceeds from Hollywood Gala to Benefit Pediatric Epilepsy Clinic Project Of AAMSC in Armenia

toward ensuring the preservation and sustainability of health services in Armenia.

This year, the AAMSC honored two extraordinary healthcare professionals who have provided exceptional leadership and commitment to public service: N. Simon Tchekmedyan, MD, FACP, and Zarmine Naccashian, PhD, GNP, RN, CDE.

The evening's festivities began with hundreds of guests assembling for the cocktail reception in the halls outside the Renaissance Hollywood Ballroom. Guests networked with fellow colleagues and congratulated the honorees. They also had an opportunity to place bids on several silent auction items that were donated by Le Papillon by Naz. Hrag and Dr. Serineh Melidonian and Pristine Diamonds also donated a one-carat brilliant, round diamond that was later raffled off.

The president of the AAMSC Ladies Auxiliary introduced Kev Orkian, renowned pianist and comedian and the evening's master of ceremonies.

The evening's program commenced with an invocation presided by Archbishop Vatche Hovsepien, the former Primate of Western Diocese. The program continued with AAMSC president, Dr. Vicken Sepilian, first welcoming the AAMSC dignitaries, past presidents, members, sponsors, supporters and guests. The dignitaries present were Hovsepien, Larry Zarian, four-time mayor of the City of Glendale; Raffi Manoukian, Glendale Council member; Ron DePompa, chief of police, Glendale Police Department; Harold Scoggins, fire chief, City of Glendale; Ardy Kassakhian, Glendale city clerk; Aja Lesh, dean of School of Nursing, Azusa Pacific University; Michael Rembis, CEO of Cha Hollywood Presbyterian; Morre Dean, CEO of Glendale Adventist Medical Center and, Mark Meyers, CEO of Glendale Memorial Hospital and Medical Center.

Sepilian highlighted AAMSC's achievements throughout the years toward advancing healthcare in Armenia and the Diaspora. Dr. Sepilian thanked past and present executives, members and supporters for their hard work and commitment to AAMSC's mission and projects. The AAMSC continues to provide quality education to its members and community through its accredited continuing medical education program and its weekly educational television program, "Your Health," which airs every Monday night on USArmenia. Sepilian further note that 1,500 individuals received

see AAMSC, page 7



Kristina Avakian, fourth-grader, with her experiment on volcanic eruptions

Budding Scientists Shine at Armenian Sisters' Academy Annual Science Fair

LEXINGTON, Mass. — On Friday, June 3, the Armenian Sisters' Academy (ASA) held its 2011 science fair, an annual event highlighting the scientific understanding and creative works of its elementary students.

On the final day of the fair, everyone gathered to tour the exhibits and experiments developed and presented by the students. This year the fair involved students from the second, third and fourth grades.

"Our science fair targets several goals," stated ASA's science teacher, Jayanthi Rangan. "You see young students very excited about science, they have the chance to show results from their own experiments and they begin working with the fundamental principles of scientific methods."

The budding scientists tackled a range of concepts and disciplines, including magnetism, density, chemistry, civil engineering and physics. Examples of the experiments on display include a study comparing the pull of the earth's gravity against the pull of magnetism. Another experiment used a tabletop shake-table and Lego blocks to study how structures of various heights withstand the impact of earthquake-like movement.

Each student was responsible for selecting a topic appropriate for the fair, conducting experiments that adhered to scientific methods and then presenting their findings using both exhibits and visual aids. Students were judged on how well they followed the required scientific process in conducting their experiments. Equally important was how well the student could document and describe both the experiment and their findings. For each participating class, individual students were recognized for notable work.

see SCIENTISTS, page 8



From left, Alek Kebabjian, Nishan Glorikian, Garen Meguerditchian, fourth graders, Jayanthi Rangan, science teacher

AGBU Young Professionals Partner With ABA for Young Adults Considering Career in Law

By Aleen L. Khanjian

PASADENA, Calif. — On Thursday, May 19, more than 75 young professionals, including some college and high school students, gathered at the AGBU Pasadena Center's Boyajian Hall for a panel discussion featuring members of the Armenian Bar Association (ABA). The panelists discussed how they entered their practice areas, their experiences in private and government practice, as well as ethical aspects of the legal profession.

The panel was moderated by federal prosecutor of violent and organized crime, John Lulejian. Lulejian is an assistant US Attorney and member of the Board of Governors of the ABA. He ably presented the panelists and brought each of their areas of expertise and past experience to light. The panelists included Edwin Minassian, who is also chairman of the ABA. He was joined by renowned criminal defense attorney, Garo Ghazarian, who is vice chair of the ABA and dean of the People's College of Law. Attorneys Sara Bedirian, treasurer of the ABA, Hovanes Margarian, secretary of the ABA, Deputy Public Defender Victoria Ourfalian and Assistant US Attorney Tamar Kouyoumdjian also offered their advice about the profession of law as well as their personal experiences in utilizing their law degrees.

Event organizer, Theodore Khachaturian, Esq., of Callanan, Rogers & Dzida, LLP says, "We are proud to partner with the Armenian Bar in accomplishing the AGBU Young Professionals' goal of familiarizing yet another generation of young Armenians to the achievements of professionals in our community. I was pleased to see so many young adults come out who were eager to hear about the different career paths in the law." In fact, this is one of many partnerships that the AGBU YPLA has taken advantage of in furthering the mission of the group. Khachaturian adds, "Our distinguished panel emphasized that regardless of the path you choose, success is only achieved through honesty, integrity and a sense of social justice. Overall, it was a lively and inspiring presentation."

Minassian said, "It was our pleasure to partner with AGBU-YPLA. They are a great group of energetic and vibrant professionals in our community. We were very impressed with the caliber of the attendees and the enthusiasm they showed for a potential career in law. Just as the diversity of the specialties of our panelists was important to make this an effective program, the active engagement of the audience was equally important. We look forward to future programs with AGBU-YPLA."

YPLA is the Los Angeles Chapter of the AGBU Young Professionals — a growing network of individuals, between the ages of 22 and 40, who individually and collectively mirror the AGBU's mission to preserve and promote Armenian identity and heritage by adding dimensions to the lives of young professional Armenians through educational, cultural, social and humanitarian programs.

For more information on how to get involved with YPLA, contact agbu.ypla@gmail.com.



OBITUARY

'Dr. Death' Jack Kevorkian Dies at 83

KEVORKIAN, from page 1

When asked in a 2010 interview by CNN's Anderson Cooper about how it felt to take a patient's life, Kevorkian said, "I didn't do it to end a life. I did it to end the suffering the patient's going through. The patient's obviously suffering — what's a doctor supposed to do, turn his back?"

Dying, he believed, should be an intimate and dignified process, something that many terminally-ill people are denied, he said.

He garnered a fair amount of support from other medical practitioners, although most thought he was an extremist. In 1995, a group of doctors in Michigan publicly voiced their support for Kevorkian's philosophy, stating that they supported a "merciful, dignified, medically-assisted termination of life."

Shortly after, a study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that many doctors in Oregon and Michigan supported some form of physician-assisted suicide in certain cases.

One of his greatest victories occurred in March 1996 when a US Circuit Court of Appeals in California ruled that mentally competent, terminally-ill adults have a constitutional right to die with the aid of medical experts and family members. It was the first federal endorsement of its kind.

But ultimately, Kevorkian's impact was not in the US legal system but in raising public awareness about euthanasia and the suffering of the terminally ill.

In the 1990s, the peak of his time in the lime-light, he notoriously tried publicity stunts of all sorts to draw attention to his cause. In one instance, he showed up at trial dressed in Colonial attire. He also taped one of his patient's deaths and gave the video to CBS's "60 Minutes" for broadcast.

During this period, his face was frequently on television and in newspapers, and he gladly agreed to a barrage of news media interviews so he could share his views. His crusade and antics were documented last year in an HBO movie, "You Don't Know Jack," in which Al Pacino portrayed him as a passionate, but intolerably single-minded crusader.

"He was involved in this because he thought it was right, and whatever anyone wants to say about him, I think that's the truth," said Arthur Caplan, a professor of bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania. "He didn't do it for the money, he didn't do it for the publicity, he wasn't living a luxurious life — he wanted change."

Despite his best efforts, Kevorkian was, for the most part, a lone soldier who had an abrasive personality. Although he was the best-known figure in fighting for euthanasia's legalization, the legislative results of his efforts were largely unsuccessful, if not counterproductive.

His goal was to make it legal for a doctor to actively help a patient commit suicide. But to date, no state has made this legal and only three states, Washington, Oregon and Montana, have

legalized any form of physician-assisted suicide. To the contrary, the state of Michigan, where Kevorkian did much of his work, explicitly banned physician-assisted suicide in 1993 in direct response to his efforts.

"I think Jack Kevorkian was like a flare on the battlefield — he lit up the issue and everyone paid attention," Caplan said. "He got to absolute center stage, but he didn't have the nuance to take it forward the way he wanted to."

Kevorkian's path to becoming a doctor was not as unusual as his career that followed. Born on May 28, 1928, in Pontiac, Mich., he wanted to be a baseball radio broadcaster, but his Armenian immigrant parents encouraged him to pursue a more practical path. He graduated from the University of Michigan's medical school in 1952 and began a residency in pathology.

It was about this time that his obsession with death began. In the 1950s, he first received the nickname "Dr. Death" when he began photographing patient's eyes to determine the exact time of death. He also campaigned to use the bodies of death-row inmates for medical experimentation.

Seeing the faces of terminally-ill patients as a pathology intern, he became convinced there was a place in medicine for euthanasia.

"Euthanasia wasn't of much interest to me until my internship year, when I saw first hand how cancer can ravage the body," he wrote in his 1993 book, *Prescription Medicine: The Goodness of Planned Death*. "The patient was a helplessly immobile woman of middle age, her entire body jaundiced to an intense yellow-brown, skin stretched paper thin over a fluid-filled abdomen swollen to four or five times normal size."

His life after this was devoted to the cause. Kevorkian, who lived alone in a small apartment in Michigan, never married and had no children. The people most closely associated with him were his defense attorney Geoffrey Fieger, who represented him without a fee, and one of his faithful, longtime assistants, Janet Good.

When, on one occasion, Good backed out of letting Kevorkian use her home for an assisted suicide, he temporarily turned his back on her.

To help a patient commit suicide, Kevorkian often used a homemade machine that sent a saline drip into the person's arm. When ready to die, the patient could press a button that would trigger the release of a potent chemical that would bring sleep. One minute later, a timer on the machine would send a dose of potassium chloride into the patient's body, causing the heart to stop.

Kevorkian faced trial four times in Michigan for his actions but was acquitted in three instances because of then-unclear laws on whether physician-assisted suicide was illegal. His fourth trial was declared a mistrial.

Unlike Michigan, most states do not have explicit laws banning physician-assisted suicide, and nearly always, Kevorkian was careful not to

administer the fatal medication himself, although it was his hope that within his lifetime, the law would allow him to do so. He was thus able to escape jail for a long time.

But after he recorded his assistance in the death of Thomas Youk and allowed the recording to be aired on "60 Minutes" in 1998, Kevorkian was arrested and convicted of second-degree murder in Michigan.

Youk, who was in the final stages of ALS, known as Lou Gehrig's disease, was too ill to administer the drugs himself, so Kevorkian had done it for him.

During the trial, Kevorkian vehemently denied any wrongdoing.

"He calls it a murder, a crime, a killing," Kevorkian said, referring to the prosecutor. "I call it medical science. Tom Youk didn't come to me saying, 'I want to die, kill me.' He said, 'Please help me.' There was medical affliction. Medical service is exempt from certain laws."

Kevorkian was sentenced to 10 to 25 years in prison but was paroled in June 2007 for good behavior after promising not to assist in any

more suicides.

"It's got to be legalized. That's the point," he told a Detroit TV reporter shortly after his release from prison. "I'll work to have it legalized. But I won't break any laws doing it."

Ultimately, Kevorkian's said his belief regarding a patient's right to die had a simple premise: It was in the Constitution, unwritten but guaranteed by the Ninth Amendment, which states that Americans are not excluded from rights that are not specifically enumerated in the Constitution.

"There have been many constitutional scholars over time that have believed that the Ninth Amendment deserves more respect, but Kevorkian took it further than most lawyers and most constitutional scholars would take it," said Alan Dershowitz, a Harvard professor and lawyer who was an adviser in several of Kevorkian's legal battles, and corresponded with him while he was in prison.

"He was part of the civil rights movement — although he did it in his own way," Dershowitz said. "He didn't lead marches, he didn't get other people to follow him, instead he put his own body in the line of fire, and there are not many people who would do that. In the years that come, his views may become more mainstream."

MARTUNI REGIONAL HOSPITAL

NAMING OPPORTUNITIES

There may be no better way to honor or memorialize someone special to you than to help restore the health of many in need—the residents of Martuni province in Karabakh. With Armenia Fund USA's construction of a new multi-faceted Martuni Regional Hospital, naming opportunities abound for individuals, families and organizations alike, starting at \$25,000. However, various options are available for \$5,000–\$20,000 donations. For more information, please contact Irina Lazarian at 212-689-5307 or email irina@armenianfundusa.org

\$300,000 COMMITTED	First Floor: The new Diagnostic and Imaging center and patient rooms for infectious diseases, including thoracic and pulmonary, will be named after: ARMENIAN MEDICAL FUND USA Donation is made in 3 annual installments of \$100,000
\$200,000 AVAILABLE	Second Floor: Surgical / operation suites A pledge of \$200,000 may be made in 2 annual installments of \$100,000
\$150,000 AVAILABLE	First Floor: Polyclinic outpatient center, adult care A pledge of \$150,000 may be made in 3 annual installments of \$50,000 First Floor: Polyclinic outpatient center, pediatrics A pledge of \$150,000 may be made in 3 annual installments of \$50,000
\$100,000 AVAILABLE	First Floor: Emergency Room (ER) A pledge of \$100,000 may be made in 2 annual installments of \$50,000
\$100,000 COMMITTED	Second Floor: OB-GYN, including delivery / neonatal care unit A pledge of \$100,000 is made.
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COMMUNITY NEWS

Scholarship Established in Honor of Marilyn Arshagouni

NORTHBRIDGE, Calif. — The Arshagouni Family Trust announces the establishment of the Marilyn Arshagouni Scholarship in honor of Marilyn Arshagouni for her long-standing commitment and service to the education of high school-aged Armenian students.

This scholarship will be a tribute to a person who has devoted her life to education and to Armenian causes. Her legacy has been passed on to generations of students who attended Holy Martyrs Ferrahian Armenian High School in her 28 years of teaching.

To underscore both her interests in the humanities and the arts and her association with Ferrahian High School, the scholarship of up to \$2,000 will be presented annually to a qualifying graduate from that school who has achieved junior status at an accredited four-year college or university in the United States with a minimum GPA of 3.3.

Preference will be given to students interested in pursuing careers in any of the humanities, fine and performing arts, social sciences and education. Students in graduate schools are also eligible.

Marilyn Arshagouni began her teaching career at Ferrahian High School in 1970, when the school was in its infancy. She taught English to students in grades 7-12, including English literature, American literature and World literature, as well as US history until she retired in 1998. She also served for many years as the school's college counselor and the senior class advisor.

Her interest in sharing the essence of Armenian history with others can be seen in

her yearlong weekly contributions in the *California Courier* through her column "Whispers of Armenia" and in the book she co-authored with her husband Hagop, *Armenian History Timeline*. In 2000, she and her husband established a successful competition — the Armenian History Timeline Quiz Bowl — at the Ararat Home of Los Angeles for teams of eighth-grade students from the many Armenian schools throughout California.

She served as a member of the Armenian Monument Council that oversaw the building of the first monument on public land outside of Armenia that is dedicated to the victims of the Armenian Genocide. She participated in the Armenian Assembly of America during its formative years in the 1970s.

Born in Los Angeles, she graduated summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa with a bachelor of arts in English from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where she nearly completed her master's degree. She married Hagop Arshagouni in 1956, and together they had four children — Robert Arshagouni, MBA, MBT; Mary Arshagouni Papazian, PhD, MA; Michael Arshagouni, PhD, MFA and Paul Arshagouni, MD, JD, MPH — all of whom graduated from Ferrahian High School.

Applications for the Marilyn Arshagouni Scholarship can be requested by e-mail at marshschol@gmail.com. They will be sent to the candidates by postal mail and should be submitted by July 15 for the 2011-2012 academic year. The scholarship recipient will be determined by August 15.



AGBU YPLA volunteers meet Los Angeles City Council member Paul Krekorian during their April 30 efforts to clean up a stretch of the Los Angeles River.

AGBU Young Professionals Clean the LA River

LOS ANGELES — On April 30, volunteers joined AGBU's Young Professionals of Los Angeles (YPLA) to help clean the neglected and highly-polluted Los Angeles River. After an early morning start and a brief orientation by the site leader, the volunteers worked to revitalize the waterway, which is littered with trash and recyclable materials.

By Aleen L. Khanjian

The three-hour cleanup effort involved volunteers from Disney, Baxter and Boy Scouts of America, among other organizations. Los Angeles City Council member Paul Krekorian addressed the volunteers and acknowledged their joint effort. "I always look forward to the opportunity to help clean the river, a historic waterway that continues to show significant potential that I and others have worked hard to restore. I also want to thank AGBU for pitching in so willingly," Krekorian said. "I worked side by side with them and others to better our community — a true example of what we can collectively accomplish to protect open space and make our neighborhoods more livable."

YPLA event organizer Angela Karaguezian expressed her delight at being able to help the local community. "Our volunteers are pleased that YPLA is organizing events that provide an opportunity to give back to the Southern California community. Last year, we partnered with Heal the Bay to clean up Southern California beaches. These events are especially important as they allow YPLA to partner with non-Armenian, non-profit organizations in a highly tangible way," she said.

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AAMSC Honored Visionary Health Care Leaders

AAMSC, from page 5

critical health education and services at AAMSC's successful 2010 Glendale Health Festival that was formed in collaboration with the City of Glendale, Glendale Adventist Medical Center and Glendale Memorial Hospital and Medical Center. And with over 60 new members that joined the AAMSC in 2010-2011, the AAMSC continues to see a bright future for this organization and healthier lives for those the AAMSC aims to provide care.

Sepilian updated the AAMSC members and supporters of the project benefited from last year's 25th anniversary gala. The AAMSC was able to establish the Juvenile Diabetes Educational Summer Camp Program in Armenia from the proceeds of last year's gala. This summer program will provide critical medication and lifestyle education to children affected by juvenile diabetes and lead them toward living full and productive lives. Sepilian extended his "deepest gratitude" to those who contributed toward the Juvenile Diabetes Project. The summer program will open this summer.

This year's gala also supported the Pediatric Epilepsy Center in Armenia, which was established in 2003 through the efforts of Dr. Armen Cherek. This center provides essential care and medication to thousands of children suffering from pediatric epilepsy. Sepilian saluted Cherek for his "foresight and action."

Sepilian then presented Tchekmedyan with the 2011 AAMSC Lifetime Achievement Award. Tchekmedyan graciously accepted and thanked the AAMSC for his award. He praised the "talented and vibrant" AAMSC for their achievements and was "proud" to be part of such an organization. With regard to the Pediatric Epilepsy Project in Armenia, Tchekmedyan believes that the "focus must always be on children." Tchekmedyan believes that "every child, is our [your] child — no matter their name or location."

Following Naccashian's brief documentary, Sepilian presented her with the 2011 President's Leadership Award. Naccashian graciously accepted and thanked the AAMSC for her Award. With regard to the AAMSC and its leadership, Naccashian stated that "an organization must bind together first, in order to form the bridge to communities." Naccashian stated that an organization's "credibility is built upon its transparen-

cy." And with this, Naccashian commended the "vision and leadership of past and present Executive Board members."

Orkian continued the evening's program with his energetic and enthusiastic performances. From his comedy to his medley of classical piano compositions, Orkian was a crowd pleaser. The ballroom shook with the energy of the crowd's laughter, applause and chants from Orkian's engaging performance. Orkian then shared with the guests a phrase said to him once by an elderly Armenian woman years ago that also left a strong impression on the night's audience. Adding to Orkian's appreciation and respect of how the Armenian culture and people have survived for countless generations, the elderly woman once said to him, "I have contributed and fought for my Armenia. You must continue for your Armenia." Orkian left the audience with a display of images accompanied with his own piano composition as a heartfelt tribute to "my [his] Armenia" and the Armenia we must continue to protect and serve.

Sepilian and Serineh Melidonian then presented commendations to AAMSC supporters and sponsors for their support of the Pediatric Epilepsy Clinic in Armenia.

This year's benefactor was the AAMSC Ladies Auxiliary. Platinum Sponsors included: Cha Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center, Chevy Chase Surgery Center, Glendale Adventist Medical Center, Glendale Memorial Hospital and Health Center and Hrag and Dr. Serineh Melidonian.

Gold Sponsors included: Glendale MRI Institute, and Valley Presbyterian Hospital. The Silver Sponsor was Calstar Motors. Bronze Sponsors included: Dr. and Mrs. Norik and Ramella Markarian and Cha Fertility Center.

With closing remarks by Orkian and a Benediction by Hovsepian, the evening's night of dancing started with entertainment by Sako DJ Uneek and with Tchekmedyan's dance of the Argentine Tango with his wife, Seta.

As Dr. Vicken Sepilian emphasized, "the AAMSC will continue to work in a collaborative manner toward all accomplishments, with an acknowledged respect for the past, and a renewed hope for the future."

—Ara Janoyan



COMMUNITY NEWS

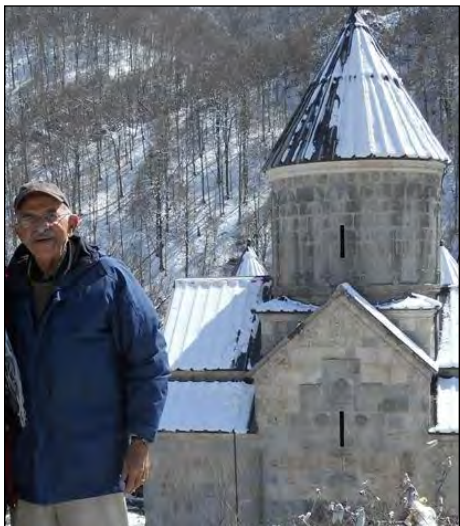
Khantzian Fulfills Rare Mission in Armenia

By Tom Vartabedian

HAVERHILL, Mass. — Dr. Edward Khantzian is nowhere near retirement. At 76, he serves as a clinical professor of psychiatry at Harvard University, consults at a hospital and still plays a mean game of tennis.

He has spent more than three decades studying psychological factors associated with drug and alcohol abuse and just returned from Yerevan where he was a keynote speaker at a regional meeting of the World Psychiatric Association.

The experience left an indelible impression upon him, being his first visit to Armenia and see-



Dr. Edward Khantzian near Hagharitsin Monastery near the village of Teghut

ing the impact of his presentation upon his prominent peers.

“Being aware of our history as a ravaged culture and country with recurrent disasters and national upheaval through most of the 20th century, I had expected to witness many indications of remorse,” he indicated. “Instead, I was repeatedly struck by many examples of national pride and resilience.”

The professional meeting attracted more than 250 international psychiatrists, including a heavy representation from Eastern Europe. The event was launched by a gala reception at the Opera House, featuring extraordinary performances by an ensemble and renowned opera singer Anna Mayilyan.

The group was housed at the Armenia Marriott Hotel over three days, where keynote speakers were presented inside the large ballroom.

The theme was: “Mental Health in a Changing World.” Special attention was paid to the worldwide impact of disasters. A special symposium was devoted to the Armenian Genocide, including the effects of denial and trauma. Almost without exception, the presentations were in English.

Khantzian spoke about addictive disorders such as opium, which, he says, remains a growing concern in that part of the world.

“The problem of alcoholism is very prevalent in Armenia and associated with a lot of other prob-

lems, including domestic violence,” he notes. “I was informed there is an emerging addiction to opium. One solution is the use of drug methadone which was emphasized in my presentation.”

Khantzian has a distinguished resume in his field. After working as a technical writer at Raytheon for one year, off he trekked to the medical side. The doctor was born and raised in Haverhill to parents from Malatia, Turkey. Both parents were shoe workers. His mother was a Genocide survivor.

“She did not hide or protect me from that segment of history — a grim folklore of sorts,” said Khantzian. “Her stories were full of resourcefulness.”

He and his wife Carol have been married for more than 50 years and have four children and 13 grandchildren while living in nearby Groveland.

An Armenian-Iranian psychologist at the University of Southern California was familiar with his work on addictions and recommended him to the organizing committee for this conference. It didn’t take much convincing for him to attend.

“One of my goals was to explain how the substitution of a legal medication such as methadone in place of illegal opium works best,” he explained. “My hope is that such a perspective will help clinicians appreciate the enormous suffering involved with addiction and how individuals try to self-medicate such pain.”

During his stay, Khantzian visited numerous museums and monasteries, including Echmiadzin, as well as a day trip to Lake Sevan. He got to sample the very best Armenian cuisine and took advantage of the finest hospitality shown.

The trip served another purpose for Khantzian. It brought him back to his roots.

“Being married to a non-Armenian, I had grown apart from the Armenian community,” he admitted. “But I never denied my proud ethnicity. Although I had seen pictures of the monasteries, visiting these historic sites made a tremendous impact upon me. I was deeply touched by the genocide memorial at Tsitsernakabert and that eternal flame.”

Two examples of trauma, which remain indelible in his mind, are the Genocide and the earthquake of 1988, which took nearly 30,000 lives in and around Gumri and Spitak.

“Through all this suffering and human/natural catastrophes,” he says, “Armenians have remained ambivalent, even during their years under the Soviet regime. The landmarks, lore and historical sites mark the important role Armenians have played toward the development of Western civilization.”

Among the other speakers were Dr. Armen Soghoian, president, Armenian Psychiatric Association, who directed the conference; Dr. Armen Goenjian, professor of psychiatry, UCLA; Dr. Samvel Torossian, chief psychiatrist, Republic of Armenia; Dr. Hagop Akiskal, professor of psychiatry and internationally-recognized expert on mood disorders; Dr. Vahe Simonyan, psychiatrist; Kristine Torossian, psychologist and Dr. Louis M. Najarian, professor of psychiatry at Hofstra North Shore-LU School of Medicine, who was part of a symposium covering two decades of rehabilitation work following the earthquake.

AUA President Visits UCLA

LOS ANGELES — On Thursday, May 19, the president of the American University of Armenia (AUA), Dr. Bruce Boghosian, visited the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) during his recent trip here.

Boghosian, a distinguished mathematician and former chair of the Mathematics Department at Tufts University, met with UCLA faculty and colleagues whose research and scholarly interests overlap with those of the faculty at the AUA, with the goal of initiating potential collaborations and building interactions between the two institutions. The visit was sponsored by UCLA Chancellor Gene Block and coordinated by Interim Vice Provost Randal Johnson and Gohar Grigorian of the UCLA International Institute.

The scholarly areas of particular interest are computer and information sciences, industrial management, civil engineering, finance, energy generation and distribution, public health/health sciences and political science and international affairs. Boghosian also spoke with colleagues about the AUA digital library, one of the most extensive in the world containing Armenian documents.

A luncheon was held so that Boghosian could meet with UCLA’s Interim Associate Vice Provost Roger Waldinger, along with a number of other scholars from UCLA and other academic institutions in the greater Los Angeles area. During the luncheon, Boghosian spoke about AUA’s past accomplishments, its recent growth and its future development. He noted that, while no firm decisions have been made, AUA is now studying the possibility of instituting an undergraduate program. “I would like to see a great number of well-trained Armenian civil engineers in our country who will be able to participate in the construction of the projected North-South Highway from Georgia to Iran, passing through Armenia,” said Boghosian.

AUA and UCLA have long had close ties. The AUA Department of English Programs was designed by UCLA faculty, under the leadership of Prof. Russell Campbell, a well-respected scholar, who served as professor in the Department of Applied Linguistics at UCLA for many years and who was the founding director of the UCLA International Institute’s Language Resource Center. “AUA is delighted to explore opportunities for developing even closer ties with UCLA in the years ahead, including possible summer programs, internships, faculty exchange and curriculum development,” said Boghosian.



Attendees at UCLA luncheon with AUA President Bruce Boghosian. Seated, from left, Prof. Ann Karagozian, Boghosian, Interim Associate Vice Provost Roger Waldinger; standing, from left, Founding AUA President emeritus Prof. Mihran Agbabian, Dr. Shant Shekherdimian, Prof. Claire Panosian-Dunavan, Nursing Director Salpy Akaragian, Prof. Peter Cowe, AUA President emeritus Prof. Haroutune Armenian, Prof. Richard Hovannisian, Fulbright Coordinator Ann Kerr and Prof. Eric Esrailian

Budding Scientists at Sisters’ Academy Science Fair

SCIENTISTS, from page 5

“It’s wonderful to see how excited these students are to conduct their experiments and to show off their work to their classmates, their teachers, and their parents. I can clearly see how students are progressing in their work from one year to the next,” stated Jacqueline Kebabjian, the mother of a fourth-grade student at the ASA.

The science experiments will be on exhibit at the Armenian Sisters’ Academy science lab for the next two weeks.

The Armenian Sisters Academy is open for children of both Armenian and non-Armenian heritage and focuses on nurturing each student to motive their learning of the Armenian language and culture. It is located at 20 Pelham Road.

Assadoorian Receives Two Promotions at Lynn Univ.

BOCA RATON, Fla. — Malcolm O. Asadoorian III, PhD, the son of Malcolm O. Asadoorian II and the late Rose Asadoorian of Worcester, Mass. recently received two promotions at Lynn University.

On May 12, the Board of Trustees approved Asadoorian’s promotion to the rank of full professor. A week earlier, Lynn President Kevin M. Ross approved the promotion of Asadoorian to associate dean of the university in charge of academic affairs.

Vice president for academic affairs, Dr. Cynthia M. Patterson, has served as a long-time mentor for Asadoorian. Patterson proposed the creation of this new associate deanship as a result of his contribution to and dedication this

academic year as the university underwent its decennial re-accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

Asadoorian is an economist with more than 15 years of teaching experience at the college/university level, as well as extensive academic administrative and research experience. He has published numerous textbooks and journal articles in economics and statistics. Prior to Lynn University, Asadoorian served as a post-doctoral research associate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Asadoorian earned his bachelor’s degree in economics and computer science from Assumption College and master’s and PhD degrees in economics from Clark University in Worcester.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Banquet Celebrates Mirror-Spectator Anniversary

ANNIVERSARY, from page 1

Guests were initially greeted at the Teaneck Marriott at Glenpointe with classical music performed by violoncellist Elizabeth Kalfayan and violinist Orlando Wells

After Shoghig Chalian, co-chair of the event together with Betty Salbashian, welcomed the guests, Vagharshak Ohanyan and Lena Chilingirian, accompanied on the piano by Dr. Meroujan Maljian, sang the national anthems of the US and Armenia, and Bishop Manuel Batakian, Eparch of the Armenian Catholic Eparchy of the US and Canada, gave the invocation. Salbashian then introduced Dr. Raffy Hovanessian, the master of ceremonies, who introduced the various speakers.

Nerses Babayan, who was close to the Housepian family, spoke about Dr. Movses Housepian (1876-1952). He described his service to the Armenian community as a physician in the United States, and his efforts in serving the Armenian volunteer movement during World War I. Later, Housepian became one of the leaders of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) and a supporter of the *Mirror-Spectator*. Babayan exclaimed, "Dr. Movses Hovsepian belongs to a phalanx of dedicated Armenians who readily answered the supreme call of their people."

Novelist and critic Peter Sourian was unable to participate in the evening due to illness, but



Alin Gregorian and Hagop Vartivarian during cutting of the anniversary cake

behalf of the Armenians deserve to be honored and remembered, he added.

Journalist Florence Avakian expressed her

She served two decades in the Brooklyn Public Library and several further decades as a head criminal justice librarian. Avakian concluded, "This is a woman whose great legacy continues until today and there are many of us who are still inspired by her example and her motivation."

Dr. Edgar Housepian, son of Dr. Movses Housepian then responded on behalf of the families of the honorees, including Armine Dikijian's niece, Andrea Halejian, who was present in the audience. Housepian related his longstanding admiration for his father's work. Aside from his Armenian-related work, as a young man, his father had many adventures which became fodder for wonderful bedtime stories for his children. For example, he took a job as a ship's doctor and went down the Amazon River.

Also in the program, was jazz singer Datevik Hovanesian, accompanied by jazz pianist Bob Albanese, bass player Phil Palombi, and drummer David Meade. She sang versions of two Sayat Nova songs, two Komitas pieces, a song by Antonio Carlos Jobim, and an Armenian folk song, all with her inimitable style, backed by her tremendous trio.

*continued on next page
from previous page*



Benefactor Nazar Nazarian with Prof. Dennis Papazian on the left and Prof. Mary Papazian



Shogag and Dr. Raffy Hovanessian are in the forefront, with Edmond Azadian, to the right

sent his talk on Jack Antreassian to be read by Dr. Vagheanag Tarpinian, member of the Tekeyan Cultural Association's Greater New York Chapter Committee. Sourian pointed out the duality of Jack/Ardavast as an Armenian in America and his dedication to the advancement of Armenian literature and culture, declaring, "He chose to deploy his considerable gifts not for his own advancement in the world of personal possibilities that America offered, but rather to serve the wounded Armenian nation," Tarpinian read. His sacrifices on

admiration for Armine Dikijian as one of her three role models, calling her "gutsy and very stylish." Avakian had read Dikijian's writings from the time she was in elementary school and continued to do so for many years. Avakian observed, "This was a woman with a rare communicative ability, a sense of observation that was so keen. People were attracted to her, her smiling face....She was also a fearless woman, who was not afraid to go home late at night after covering events, in the subway to Brooklyn."

Assembly Board Chair Hovnanian Notes Anniversary

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the Armenian Assembly of America, I congratulate the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* on the occasion of its 80th anniversary.

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator's* quality and consistency over these many decades has made it one of the premier publications of the Armenian-American community and set a standards to emulate for the Armenian media. Its informative and insightful articles on a variety of topics of interest to our communities and organizations continue to appeal to Armenians of all ages and professions. Its outlook and philosophy show deep respect toward all in Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora.

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* has also been fortunate to have had in its ranks individuals with distinguished careers in journalism and backgrounds in community activism who contributed greatly to its success as a newspaper. I am pleased to join you in honoring their service.

On this landmark anniversary, we wish to congratulate again all those who contributed to the success of the first English-language Armenian community newspaper in the United States.

— Hirair Hovnanian
Chairman of the Board of Trustees
Armenian Assembly of America



Most Reverend Manuel Batakian



COMMUNITY NEWS

Banquet Celebrates

Keynote speaker Stephen Kurkjian, the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, then took the podium and said, "I know firsthand the importance of this paper for the Armenian community. For much of its history, it has been a mainstay in my home...my grandmother never wavered. The *Baïkar* Armenian paper was there every morning, and the *Mirror-Spectator* for me and my sisters, and it was required reading." Like other good newspapers, "It informs its readers. It challenges them. It illuminates the world around us." Kurkjian continued, "It continues to provide excellent coverage of Armenia's place, and Armenians' place, in the world. ... It provides depth of coverage on the issues of the day that we all care about."

Kurkjian noted that with the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide approaching, the responsibility of passing on the knowledge of our history and the pride that comes with it is all the more important. He described his current project of researching a group photograph of Armenians from Gesarea (Kayseri) who were victims of the Genocide. He called on the present Turkish government to make at least one act of reaching out to the Armenians as an initial step before the 100th anniversary: "invite us back, not because we are going to stay, but so that we can honor the memory of those lives that they [the Ottomans] took." In this way, funeral services could be held for the victims of the Genocide. Meanwhile, he concluded, "when the 100th anniversary comes, we will be in the streets, we will be on the front pages, we will be on every broadcast and telecast," celebrating our survival and success, not just our losses.



TCA New York Chapter committee members from left standing, Dr. Vagheenag Tarpinian, Tsoler Baboudjian-Panossian, Vartan Ilanjan, Hagop Vartivarian, Meline Khekoyan, Shemavon Atamian, Harout Chatmajian. Seated, from left, Krikor Markarian, Betty Salbashian, Sirvart Demirjian, Dr. Svetlana Amirkhanyan and Shoghig Chalian



Edmond Azadian



Master of ceremonies Dr. Raffi Hovanesian

Meanwhile, after the banquet guests had finished the main course, Alin Gregorian, the editor of the *Mirror-Spectator*, and Hagop Vartivarian on behalf of the Tekeyan Cultural Association, cut a special anniversary cake. Vartivarian thanked the organizers of the banquet, and pointed out that the *Mirror-Spectator* would be a source for future historians studying the Armenians, and the Armenian Americans in particular. Gregorian thanked all the supporters of the newspaper.

porters of the *Mirror-Spectator*. He said that the Armenian media, including the *Mirror-Spectator*, played a vital role in providing correct information about Armenia, and correcting errors in other media outlets, including misinformation deliberately propagated by Azerbaijan. Nazarian declared that the *Mirror* can also play an important role in the resolution of the issues connected with the Armenian Genocide. He concluded that "just as a mirror is an indispensable item for putting



Florence Avakian

Hovanesian then read letters of congratulations from Osheen Keshishian, editor of the Armenian Observer, Baydzig Kalaidjian, editor of *Zartonk* daily of Beirut, Lebanon and Asbed Artinian, editor of *Arev* newspaper of Cairo, Egypt on the occasion of the *Mirror-Spectator's* anniversary.

Ambassador Garen Nazarian, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations, congratulated the Tekeyan Cultural Association and the sup-

porters of the *Mirror-Spectator* an indispensable paper for exploring the understanding of our inner selves and the world around us. And as we introspect, we become a more open and prosperous nation, and a stronger democracy."

Edmond Azadian, co-chairman of the ADL Eastern District Committee of the US and Canada, began collaborating with the *Mirror* *continued on next page from previous page*



COMMUNITY NEWS

PHOTOS BY ROBERT KARPETIAN

Mirror Anniversary



Ambassador Garen Nazarian offered remarks in honor of the anniversary.



Nerses Babayan



Dr. Edgar Housepian

AGBU President Offers Congratulations

Dear Mr. Vartivarian:

On the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, the pioneering English-Armenian newspaper in the United States, I salute the timely initiative of the Tekeyan Cultural Association for celebrating this noteworthy benchmark in our community's history.

I congratulate you for having organized this beautiful banquet that brings together an appreciative crowd and a group of meritorious individuals and talented artists, to celebrate the longstanding valuable service of the *Mirror-Spectator* to the Armenian-American community, as well as our diasporan communities worldwide, through its global outreach.

Since the publishing of the first Armenian newspaper more than 200 years ago, away from our homeland, the Armenian media has played a crucial role in educating our communities, promoting ideals, values, awareness and national pride. It has been the primary vehicle that has helped cultivate our literary and spoken language in its Eastern and Western branches. In the United States, the fact that the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* has come about as early as 1932, and accompanied successive generations along tumultuous events of the world, our country and homeland, over the past 80 years, is a testament to the unique insight and vision of the leaders of its founding organization, whose commitment to provide intellectual guidance and articulate a national outlook, with unequivocal dedication to public service, is a monumental achievement.

Newspapers have also played an important archival role, as repositories of events and chronicles of community life that have shaped our history through the years and which are at risk of being forgotten due to the fast and global changes that have impacted our lives and young generations. Yet we are living in the age of information and it is heartening to see that the *Mirror-Spectator* continues being the best newspaper it can be.

The fundamental reason for the success and achievements of the *Mirror-Spectator* is, beyond any doubt, the intellectual integrity, the commitment to vision and the excitement of the staff. I therefore commend the initiative of the organizers of the event, who in the same spirit of appreciation are honoring three dedicated and worthy individuals, Jack Antreassian, Dr. Movses Housepian and Armine Dikjian, whose exemplary service to the *Mirror-Spectator*, as well as to the AGBU, is being duly recognized and appreciated.

I joyfully join you in celebrating the 80th anniversary of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, wishing continued success and many more years in its worthwhile service to the Armenian-American community.

— Berge Setrakian,
President of AGBU

as early as 1966. He pointed out that the founders of the *Mirror-Spectator* converted tragedy into triumph. Though the Western Armenian language, as the poet Vahan Tekeyan pointed out, might have been falling gradually into oblivion, the *Mirror* still allowed for the survival of elements of the

Armenian heritage and spirit. Armenian journalism, from the very start founded outside of the homeland, worked in favor of the homeland. The *Mirror* worked to bond Armenians together, and build bridges.

He declared that the print media is not yet defunct and the *Mirror* has a role in propelling

its 80-year legacy into the future while sharing in the progress of electronic media. It now has a global readership in cyberspace. It provides a forum for free intellectual discourse.

A Hovsep Pushman lithograph was given as a present by art connoisseur Andreas Roubian to TCA's Hagop Vartivarian, who

decided to put it up for silent auction in order to aid the *Mirror-Spectator* this evening. Saro Hartounian, the chief executive officer of Harco Industries, was the winner of this auction. Moved by Vartivarian's dedication
continued on next page
from previous page



COMMUNITY NEWS

Banquet Celebrates Mirror-Spectator Anniversary



Dr. Vagheenag Tarpinian



Co-chair Betty Salbashian



Some Members of ADL District Committee of Eastern US and Canada and chapter chairmen who participated to the even

tion, Roubian gave a second copy of the lithograph to Vartvarian, but the latter promised to use it at a later occasion to again support the Armenian cause.

Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian gave the closing prayer. As a faithful reader of the *Mirror*, he wished that it could continue its work and soon celebrate its centennial. He pointed out that everything in this world is transitory, and said “only writing and literature are lasting and useful.”

Present at the banquet were a number of important benefactors, such as Nazar and Artemis Nazarian, Edward and Carmen Gulbenkian, Dr. Raffy and Shoghag Hovanessian, Hratch and Suzanne Toufayan and Ruth Bedevian (Sarkis Bedevian was in Armenia). Representatives of organizations included Dr. Dennis Papazian, Grand Commander of the Knights of Vartan; Peter Kougasian, vice president of the Armenian Missionary Association of America; Van Krikorian, trustee of the Armenian Assembly of America; Alex Sarafian of the Central Committee of the Eastern Region of the US of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation; Nazareth Festekjian of the Central Board of the Armenian General Benevolent Union; Papken Megerian, ADL Eastern District co-chair and treasurer of the Diocesan Council of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) and the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, dean and professor of liturgical studies at St. Nersess

Armenian Seminary, as well as Aram Arkun, the *Mirror-Spectator's* associate editor.

On this occasion a colorful and first-class booklet was published which included historical facts, photos and biographies of all editors of the *Mirror-Spectator*, list of donors and many congratulatory letters among which were from Berge Setrakian, president of AGBU and Hrair Hovnanian, president of the Armenian Assembly. The list of donations will be published separately.

Congratulations on a Milestone for The *Mirror-Spectator*

What a milestone! Eighty years of service and still going strong. I sincerely and wholeheartedly congratulate the administration of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* for being a pacesetter in Armenian journalism. I have met all the editors except Krikor Vosgianian and Helene Pilibosian Sarkisian (although I have communicated with them), and even I became a reporter from Los Angeles when Jack Antreassian was the editor. Accolades to all the editors — from inceptor, Yeghishe Chrakian, to all the dedicated intellectuals, including Bedros Norehad, Bob Vahan, Varoujan Samuelian, Barbara Merguerian, my classmate Ara Kalaydjian and Alin Gregorian.

The newspaper mirrors the history of Armenian and Armenian-American life of the past 80 years. What a service! Kudos to all the writers, reporters, advertisers and particularly the readers and supporters, without whom the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* could not have lasted. Bravo, bravo, bravo.

— Prof. Osheen Keshishian,
Armenian Observer weekly editor/publisher



Edward and Carmen Gulbenkian



Treasurer Sirvart Demirjian at the helm

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Longtime Reader Marks Anniversary

I am 94 years old and have been reading the *Mirror* for 75 years. Please accept my \$25 donation and my sincere congratulations.

Anne Zarookian
Scarsdale, NY



COMMUNITY NEWS

Mkrtich Ksachikyan Graduates From St. Nersess Seminary

By Florence Avakian

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. — Outside, on Sunday, May 22, the weather was cold and cloudy, but inside St. Nersess Armenian Seminary located in the verdant landscape of Westchester, the spirit was warm as family, friends, clergy, instructors and students came to celebrate the graduation of Deacon Mkrtich Ksachikyan.

The event began with a service in the Seminary chapel officiated by Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian, visiting clergy and seminarians, followed by a procession led by the clergy and instructors who joined the guests underneath a large tent for the graduation ceremony. The Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, dean of St. Nersess Seminary, welcomed the large crowd, including the parents of the graduate, Alysa and Hovhanness Ksachikyan, and brother, Sarkis, who had traveled from their home in Los Angeles.

Members of the clergy included Rev. Fathers Arten Ashjian, Mardiros Chevian, Karekin Kasparian (member, St. Nersess Board of Directors), Untzag Nalbandian (St. Nersess instructor), Stepanos Doudoukjian, Shnork Souin, Diran Bohajian and Gomidas Zohrabian. Instructors present were Professors Edward



Deacon Mkrtich Ksachikyan poses following his graduation from St. Nersess Armenian Seminary.

father,” Gizirian, the instructors which also has included Prof. Abraham Terian, to St. Nersess Administrator Deacon Levon Altiparmakian, office manager Michelle Gonzalez, the benefactors and volunteers Megan Jendian (alumna), Zovig Ashjian and photographer Deacon Diran Jebejian who were present.



Deacon Mkrtich Ksachikyan is flanked by Archbishop Yeghishé Gizirian, St. Nersess faculty members, his parents and brother.

Matthews and Roberta Ervine, St. Vartan Cathedral choirmaster Khoren Mekanejian and Solange Merdinian.

Calling the graduate “a wonderful student,” Findikyan, in an eloquent address, said the graduate’s calling and inspiration had started “in his heart and with his parents. I met him 10 years ago as a thin, shy, fearful, young man, and during the last decade, he has blossomed like a flower, personally and as a student. He has become like an *avak* (big) brother to his fellow seminarians. We have witnessed his transformation, his growth in his faith, knowledge and self-confidence. And in this journey, he has never lost his humility.”

Before giving his “message from the heart,” the 26-year-old graduate was presented with his diploma from Gizirian. “I want today to be important for me and you, because it’s because of you that I’m here,” said Ksachikyan to the assembled. Paying tribute to his fellow seminarians, he thanked them for being “great examples” and teaching him how to “forgive and love as Christ did.”

Ksachikyan, who revealed that he started attending church for the first time as a 17-year-old, and has been a St. Nersess student since 2007, cited the great value of the seminary’s education and stated, “I hope this seminary will live forever.” A congratulatory letter was read from Western Diocesan Primate Archbishop Hovnan Derderian.

Treasurer of the seminary’s Board of Directors Steven Mekenian, expressed his appreciation to the seminary’s “spiritual

St. Nersess alumnus and past Dean Rev. Mardiros Chevian, dean of St. Vartan Cathedral, in addressing Ksachikyan noted, “You are being inducted into a body of people that has really accomplished and continues to accomplish.” These include the Primates of Great Britain and Iraq, the vicar of the Diocese and all of the clergy members of the Eastern Diocesan Council.

Seminarian Levon Asdourian, a close friend of the graduate, in an heartfelt message, described Ksachikyan as “patient, humble, spiritual and a bright star that gets brighter. God’s path is narrow,” he said. “Mkrtich guides those who are thirsty, hungry, exhausted. This place will darken a little when you leave.”

Gizirian, in wishing success to the graduate, recalled starting on his own spiritual path in Damascus in 1940. “From then until today, this has been my life. There has to be a reason why this *gochoom* (calling) is born and enhanced. During the Genocide, we lost thousands of priests. In their place, we need soldiers in the church to continue. We have to follow the examples of our forebears,” he declared passionately, before concluding the ceremony with a prayer and the singing of the *Hayr Mer* by all present.

Ksachikyan, who before enrolling in the seminary was an accomplished boxer, plans to further his education in Echmiadzin, on his journey to priesthood.

“It’s not a small thing. It’s about serving God. It’s the difference between knowing and living. It’s knowing that God is propelling you. This is very difficult to do, so you don’t lose your humility.”



James Melikian, second from left, at the graduation ceremonies

‘Popcorn Man’ James Melikian Delivers Convocation Address at Fresno State

FRESNO — James L. Melikian of Palos Verdes, owner of The Popcorn Man, a food-vending company, was the keynote speaker for the Mass Communication and Journalism Department (MCJ) convocation just prior to the 100th commencement at his alma mater, California State University.

Melikian, a 1969 journalism graduate of Fresno State, shared with the graduates advice and lessons he has learned in business since he founded The Popcorn Man in 1977.

An active alum, he was recognized by the College of Arts and Humanities as one of its distinguished alumni during the college’s Centennial Celebration last fall. Melikian and his wife, Connie, started Popcorn Man Scholarships at Fresno State five years ago to support the public relations program and to recognize the creative spirit of the students.

“Having successful alums like Jim Melikian share his time and support for Fresno State students means a great deal to our program,” said Dr. Tamyra Pierce, chair of the MCJ Department. “We treasure our special connection with him.”

Arvest Press Celebrates its 25th Anniversary

WALTHAM, Mass. — Arvest Press of Waltham marked its silver anniversary in April. The company officially opened its doors as a commercial printing company in 1986. Harout Chaprazian named the company after the Armenian word for art, *arvest*, as a tribute to his heritage and because he takes great pride in the craft of creating a finished product from raw material.

Harout Chaprazian was 19 when his family moved to the United States from Syria. He was a machinist, but once his family emigrated and settled in Watertown, he started working at a printing company. He started in the bindery department; moved up to the pressroom, then bought his own press and set it up in his parent’s basement, where he handled small print jobs. When he moved his small press from the

in the family business.

A quarter of a century later, Harout and Mayda Chaprazian still own and operate Arvest Press as a team. In 1997, the Chaprazians purchased a new plant in Waltham, which is where the company is based today.

Working together on a daily basis hasn’t always been easy for the couple. Along with the demands of running the business, the Chaprazians have had to find the time and energy to raise their three children; Aline, Natalie and Alexan. There were many days when after school time was spent at Arvest, and the kids did their homework in the conference room until their parents were ready to end their day. Both Mayda and Harout Chaprazian say they are grateful for the lifestyle Arvest Press has



Harout and Mayda Chaprazian

basement to a new plant in Watertown, Arvest Press was born.

His wife, Mayda, arrived in the US from Lebanon when she was a young girl. Her family lived in the Midwest initially, but later moved to Massachusetts to be near family and friends. She and Harout Chaprazian met, and eventually married in 1989. She spent the early years of the marriage working for New Balance and Biogen, but eventually she joined her husband

provided for them.

The Chaprazians consider their employees like family too, and have built a loyal and tight-knit group through the years.

The Chaprazians said they are proud to be part of the Armenian communities in Waltham, Watertown and the surrounding towns. They also appreciate the work they have received from that community, including work for many Armenian churches, schools and non-profits.



Arts & Living

Armenian Sisters' Academy Hosts Meet-the-Author With Susan Pattie

LEXINGTON, Mass. — The Armenian Sisters' Academy (ASA) continued its spring visiting speaker series by hosting Dr. Susan Pattie on May 31. Pattie spoke about her recent children's book, *Who are the Armenians?* She is an anthropologist and educator who currently holds the position of senior research fellow at the University College London and is the director of the Armenian Institute in London.

"I wanted to write a book that teaches children of all heritages and backgrounds about being Armenian," she said. "In this one book I try to introduce elementary-age readers to many of the aspects of Armenian life, such as history, culture, language, the diaspora, the Republic of Armenia and our traditions."

While presenting *Who are the Armenians?*, Pattie engaged students in a lively discussion.

Together they explored the history of the Armenian language and how it is used today, and the connections and traditions that bind Armenians together. An interesting point to the discussion focused on how varied and different the "Armenian experience" can be across the world.

Students discussed that many of them spoke several languages, have family living in different countries and grandparents who speak different versions of the Armenian language.

"There are many ways to be Armenian. We follow different paths that all belong to the Armenian experience. As Armenians we have done a very good job of adapting to the countries we live in while also retaining a connection to our own heritage," said Pattie.

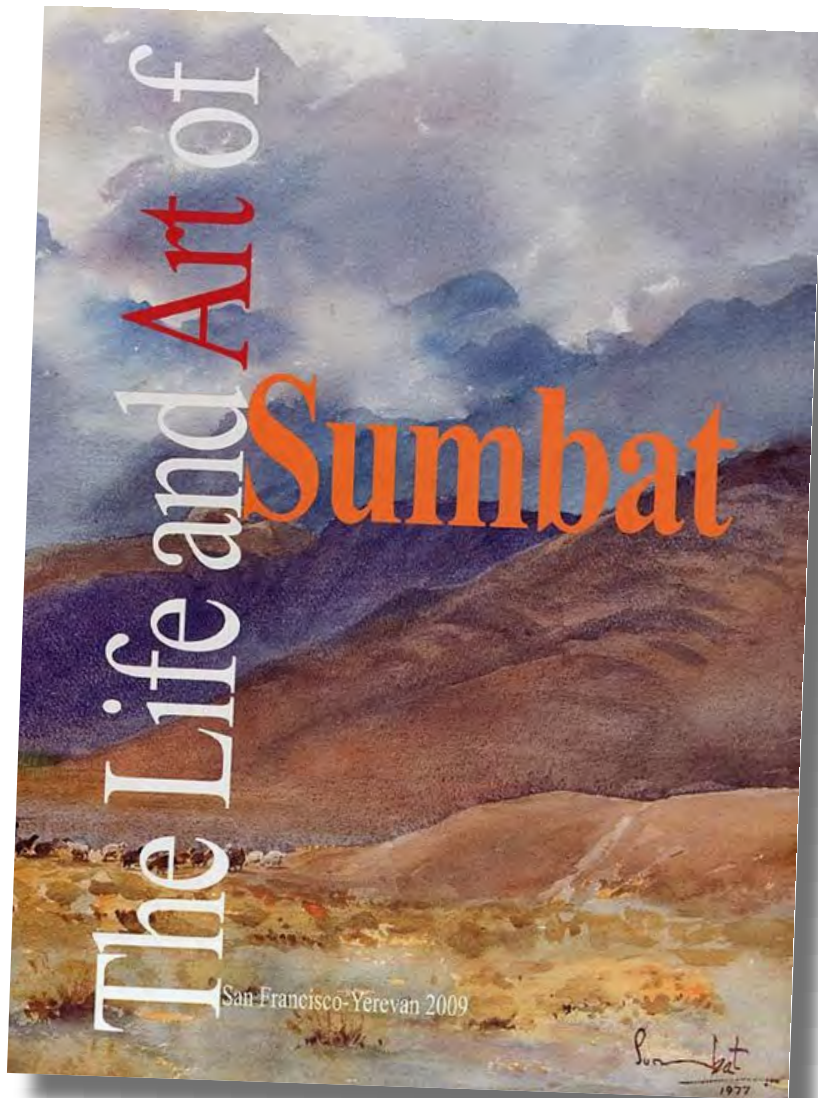
During her discussion with students, Pattie pointed out that her visit to the ASA is the first time she has made a school visit to present a book to a group of students. In fact, she noted that two of the children featured in her book are currently enrolled at the ASA.



Dr. Susan Pattie visits the Armenian Sisters' Academy in Lexington.

Filled with photographs, illustrations and maps, the book provides a broad introduction to Armenian music, art, dance, history, language, religion, games and sports, and legends and stories are covered using actual interviews and examples. Pattie added, "The book includes interviews with children from around the world sharing their experiences of being Armenian." A CD illustrating the music, poetry and languages described in the book is also provided. The book is on sale at the National Association of Armenian Research and Studies (NAASR) in Belmont.

The ASA spring series includes chemistry instructors from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), musician Mari Bertizian, meteorologist Chris Lambert from WHDH and presentations on Colonial America by Diane Douglas of the Billerica Historical Society.



Sumbat

A Son's Tribute to His Father's Unique Style, Creativity

WATERTOWN, Mass. — Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian is the Taisei Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of California, Berkeley, and the winner of numerous awards and patents. He is also a dedicated son and art lover, who wants to shed light on the legacy of his late father, painter Sumbat Der Kiureghian.

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

His efforts have culminated in a beautiful coffee-table book, *The Life and Art of Sumbat*, filled with the paintings of his father, which often captured Iranian village

life, as well as traditional Armenian life. The book was published in Armenia, where, incidentally, Der Kiureghian was the founding member of the Board of Trustees of the American University of Armenia.

The younger Der Kiureghian was at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) on Wednesday, May 25, at a program jointly sponsored by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), where he discussed the genesis of his father's art.

The artist, who is generally known by his first name, Sumbat, was born in New Julfa, the old Armenian quarter of Isfahan, Iran. Armen Der Kiureghian stressed that by writing the book, he was not claiming to be a historian or art historian, "but my credentials are my intimate knowledge of the artist."

He added, "I admired Sumbat as a man and as an artist. Sumbat's art was an integral part of his life."

Der Kiureghian explained the history of his family, which was typical of Isfahan Armenians. He said his father was descended from the 17th-century Armenians who were forcibly brought to Iran by Shah Abbas, the Persian king, from Jugha, in Nakhijevan, Armenia. The reasons were many for this forced migration, but mainly, they were for bringing the silk trade in which many took part (and thus the Silk Road) to Iran. Many settled in the Iranian cities of Hamadan and Arak but the majority went to Isfahan, Peria and

see SUMBAT, page 15



Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian

Vartabedians Wow Watertown Audience

By Nancy Kalajian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

WATERTOWN — Sonya Vartabedian "learned the valuable gift of telling a good story" from her father, Tom Vartabedian, and both top-notch journalists shared their distinct experiences with a captivated crowd at a recent St. James Armenian Church Men's Club Dinner in Watertown. Hearing real stories from real people encountered every day and writing up their fascinating stories regional newspapers north of Boston, has been a common denominator for these two committed and gifted members of the press.

St. James Men's Club monthly meetings give attendees the opportunity to socialize and lavish in a lovingly-made *losh kebab*, *kheyma* and *pilaf* dinner, and hear an outstanding speaker or presentation. May's meeting, titled "Keeping Journalism in the Family," was no exception as Tom and Sonya Vartabedian reflected on their experiences and changes that have occurred in their profession, partly due to economics and the ease of accessing instant news using the latest technologies.

Tom Vartabedian worked at the *Haverhill Gazette* for 40 years and won awards from the Associated Press, United Press International and New England Press Association. He is also an active and popular correspondent for Armenian newspapers in the diaspora. Though "retired" for five years from the *Haverhill Gazette*, he reports that he is busier now than he has ever been. With a laid-back, off-the-cuff style that has been a hallmark of his writing, he reflected on his field and the most difficult stories he's covered. One of the toughest stories was the tragic loss of three Haverhill-area residents on September 11. "It hit us. It blindsided us...the crashes...we didn't know what to expect. When we found out that it was an act of terrorism, I was dispatched to the homes of the people who had died to try to find out all I could about them," he shared. "One of the hardest things we have to do as the media, honestly, is to make a pest of ourselves by going to the homes of the deceased and trying to get a story. It's not an easy thing to do." Another "heart-breaking story" was covering the death of Christa McAuliffe, a teacher from Concord, NH, who was one of seven crew members killed in the Space Shuttle Challenger explosion. On this sad occasion, the elder Vartabedian visited the schools where she taught and talked to the students.

In 1965, Tom Vartabedian started working at the *Haverhill Gazette*, a daily local newspaper that serves the Haverhill community of about 60,000 people. During those early years, there were 20-25 people on the news team with an active press corps, advertising, printing and dispatch departments. The paper had a circulation of about 20,000 and he estimates that about 100 people were involved in its operation. Lots had changed when, five years ago, he left his job of 40 years. The paper had changed to a weekly "with only five of us putting it out because everything was electronic. I could see the handwriting on the wall. I was the last one to leave the paper out of all those that were hired 40 years ago."

Though his early ambition was to be a baseball player, he was majoring in accounting and studying chemistry at Boston University when he received an opportunity to study in Austria for a year at the Mkhitarist Monastery, founded in 1749 in Vienna. Editor Jimmy Tashjian, who became "a second father to me," he said, asked him to write some articles about the monks and the monastery. It was writing about that first visit with the Mkhitarist fathers in Vienna that

see VARTABEDIAN, page 17



ARTS & LIVING

A Son's Tribute to His Father's Unique Style, Creativity

SUMBAT, from page 14

Charmahal. In return for the violent uprooting, the government treated them fairly liberally as far as the practice of their religion or the maintaining of their culture was concerned.

Many of Sumbat's early paintings involve those of the old Vank or church in New Jugha, which Der Kiureghian explained, because of the cultural juxtaposition particular to that city, had vaguely Islamic architectural features, as well as traditional Armenian elements. Because of the Armenians' travels for trade all over

as a painter when in the 1924-25 school year, he won a painting competition. A painter, Sarkis Kachadourian, mentored him. He also received a medal from the king, Reza Shah, for his efforts in promoting Iranian art.

Eventually, Sumbat dropped out of school and opened an art studio. His business thrived, and he produced many paintings for a seemingly-insatiable clientele. He met and married a young woman in Isfahan, Arax Aftandilian, and the young family eventually moved to the port city of Abadan. He organized an exhibit of his paintings there and

one of the people attending it was Stanley F. Foster, a Briton who was touring Iran. He was so impressed with Sumbat's style that he asked for lessons from him, in return for funding travel to Europe. They left for almost a year, during which Sumbat taught and created many paintings.

Sumbat was not only an artist, he was also a family man. Armen Der Kiureghian recalled that his father started a tradition of taking actual pictures of his family and then transposing the pictures of their faces onto other scenes that he would paint. For example, the family members — father, mother and three children — are on a

man. Armen Der Kiureghian recalled that his father started a tradition of taking actual pictures of his family and then transposing the pictures of their faces onto other scenes that he would paint. For example, the family members — father, mother and three children — are on a



Christmas card from 1952, featuring Sumbat, his wife, Arax, and children Siroush and Armen Der Kiureghian

Europe, there were even influences from as far afield as Venice in the churches there.

Sumbat's father, a watch repairman, died fairly young, leaving his mother, Takouhi, a widow with several children. "Sumbat was exceptionally likeable" and already showing signs of talent



"Roadside Teahouse, Iran," watercolor, 1962

canoe, as a Gypsy family, etc. Many people, he said, clamored to receive the cards and in fact asked for them.

In addition, Sumbat would create colors and textures of his own, giving particular warmth and affability to his works. For example, the younger Der Kiureghian said he used coffee grounds from traditional Armenian coffee.

Another of his innovations, his son said, was painting on newspapers ("Sumbatism," as Der Kiureghian called them). The newspaper paintings on either Armenian- or Persian-language newspapers, which eventually became one of the hallmarks of Sumbat, started out, Der Kiureghian explained, as a means for Sumbat to clean his brushes in between colors.

Afterwards, when the colors would make patterns, he would take his time and add just the right shapes to transform the random colors into a cohesive picture.

What interested Sumbat was village life and he would often leave for a few days at a time, taking only a few essentials, including his easel and paints, and just paint.

He also visited Armenia and painted many villages there. In fact, his paintings are in the collections of the Armenian National Gallery and Echmiadzin.

Sumbat moved to the US in 1980.

For more information on the book, the artist or to see a collection of his paintings, visit www.sumbat.com.

St. James Armenian Church

Armenian annual picnic Festival

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ARTS & LIVING

Melikian's Novel among Top in Comedy/Humor Category by Indie Book Awards

NEW YORK — At the Next Generation Indie Book Awards, held on May 24 in the Plaza Hotel, Armen Melikian's novel, *Journey to Virginland: Epistle I*, was recognized as one of the year's best three works of humor/comedy.

The award, which includes a medal of honor for winners in various categories, is administered by the nonprofit Independent Book Publishing Professionals Group. It recognizes the year's most outstanding English-language books released by independent publishers and university presses worldwide.

"I never intended to write a book of comedy per se," Melikian said following the award ceremony. "My focus has always been literary fiction, although I do see the world through the lens of humor, treating it as a grand theatrical stage, and my writing certainly reflects that."

"I thank the judges for considering my book in the challenging humor/comedy category," the author continued. "By pointing out the humorous aspects of *Journey to Virginland*, they have encouraged me to continue to pay special attention to the comedic aspects of my writing."

In addition to the Next Generation Indie Book Award, Melikian's novel recently won the Pinnacle Book Achievement Award for Best Fiction and was named a Book of the Year Finalist in Literary Fiction by the ForeWord Reviews.

At turns heartbreaking and diabolically funny, *Journey to Virginland* is a tour de force delivered by a master storyteller.

The protagonist, a loutish and uber-cerebral anti-hero known simply as Dog, takes on the challenge to navigate the perilous paradigm shifts of our age, determined to find his proper place under the sun. Is he doomed to failure? Or will he pull it off by heeding his own irreducible voice, given the ebb of the old certainties?

Dog pursues the answer unrelentingly, through an impassioned quest for identity and meaning. He revisits his relationships with women, family, literature and homeland, in the process illuminating his journey with commen-

taries on history, religion, politics and culture that unravel our very fabric.

The judges' panel of the Next Generation Indie Book Awards included: Lou Aronica, former publisher of Avon Books and deputy publisher of Bantam Books; Joan B. Sanger, senior editor at Simon and Schuster, New American Library, and Putnam; Beth Bruno, book editor, author of hundreds of articles, past president of the Connecticut Authors and Publishers Association; Hope Clark, author of 12 books and a recognized publishing professional; Sandi Gelles-Cole, founder and president of Gelles-Cole Literary Enterprises, former senior acquisitions editor at Random House; Charlotte Cook, publisher, author, story and acquisitions editor; Richard Cook, managing partner at Sunrise Bookshop in Berkeley, Calif.; Emily

Courtney, writer and freelance editor; Peter Cyngot, art director, designer, photographer for several agencies and instructor in principles of design; Gareth Esersky, book reviewer for *Publishers Weekly*, formerly editor at major trade publishing houses for 30 years; Mary Ellen Gavin, writing instructor at NOVA Community College, founder of *The Writers of Chantilly* in Virginia that publishes themed anthologies yearly; Tag Goulet, Canadian author and publishing industry professional; Danelle McCafferty, former senior editor at Bantam Books; John M. McDougall, publishing professional, poet and co-founder of the Independent Book Publishing Professionals Group; Brenna Pearce, publishing professional and a judge of the Next Generation Indie Book Awards each year since inception of the awards

program; Sheila Seifert, instructor of English and literature at various colleges and Myrsini Stephanides, an agent at the Carol Mann Agency, who collaborated on projects with *The Smithsonian*, *Archaeology* magazine and *Yankee Magazine* and was a contributing writer to the fifth edition of the *Hammond World Atlas*.

For more information, visit www.JourneyToVirginland.com

Melikian holds a master's degree in international relations from American University in Washington, DC. He has also studied mathematics at a number of universities, including Harvard. Abandoning both politics and science, he has instead devoted himself to literature. *Journey to Virginland* is his debut novel. Melikian lives in Los Angeles.

Jebejian Essays Published in New Book

BEIRUT, Lebanon (*Azad-Hye*) — Hrayr Jebejian is a noted personality in the Middle East and worldwide. He has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Haigazian University and a master's degree in agriculture economics from American University of Beirut. He founded his mission in community and church service. An active member of the Bible Society, he has been serving since 1993 as executive secretary in the Gulf region. Jebejian managed to reorganize the Armenian Evangelical Church in Cyprus after a gap of more than 25 years, following the Turkish invasion of the island.

Jebejian has been traveling in many countries, involved in inter-church relations, local and regional religious conferences and assignments. He is married to Dr. Arda Jebejian and has two children.

His articles cover a wide spectrum of social, national and religious subjects. His name appears frequently in Armenian and non-Armenian publications in Lebanon and other countries.

An anthology of his articles over 30 years was recently published in Beirut, edited by Dr. Arda Jebejian. The articles have appeared in Armenian newspapers and magazines in Lebanon and other diasporan communities, highlighting the subjects that have been the core of Jebejian's activities for the past three decades: national, cultural, socio-political and economic challenges and realities of the Armenians.

The book is titled *The Armenian's Path of Struggle for Existence* (Beirut, 2010, Hamazkayin Vahe Setian Press, 464 pages) and composed of five headings: National thinking, Diaspora perspective, Christian

identity, Belonging to Lebanon and Denominational understanding. The topics cover dozens of Armenian communities stretching from Lebanon to China, from Gulf countries to South Africa. Jebejian writes about the aspirations and challenges of these communities and their struggle for preserving the national identity and faith in a global environment.

Although wider in perspective, the majority of articles deal with the Armenian community in Lebanon, where Jebejian lived until 2005, before moving to Cyprus.

The book is forwarded by testimonies by Rev. Dr. Manuel Jinbashian, Archbishop Dr. Goriun Babian (former Catholicos Vicar of Kuwait and Arabian Gulf Countries) and Monseigneur Antarnig Granian, member of Bzoummar Armenian Catholic Patriarchal Congregation.

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Vartabedians Wow Watertown Audience

VARTABEDIAN, from page 14

launched Tom Vartabedian's career in writing; he switched careers taking a "360 degree turn to journalism."

His best guess estimates he has written about 30,000 stories, taken thousands of photographs, with an average of 12-13 stories per week as a features writer or columnist. "Every day was a learning experience. And I've told my daughter, if you can't learn on the job, if you can't have fun on the job, it's time to find another line of work," he stressed, "I love my work."

With a fatherly and professional nod to his daughter, he described his daughter, Sonya, as pretty daring, for she, like her dad, has amassed many years in a field that she also adores.

Sonya Vartabedian spoke eloquently and described the experience of growing up as



Tom Vartabedian surrounded by fans after the talk

"Tom's daughter." Sonya Vartabedian credited her dad with giving her the experiences and tools at a young age that would influence her future career. For example, Santa gave her a working kid's manual typewriter and she learned the four-finger typing method as she sat next to her father and observed his typing style as he worked on stories. Becoming fascinated with chronicling people lives, she said, "I saw how people opened up to my father as a reporter, and how he was able to tell their stories and often be the voice of people who many

times wouldn't have a voice of their own."

Starting out as the high school correspondent for the *Haverhill Gazette*, where her dad worked, she earned 15-20 cents an inch per story. Her experience in the Armenian community included writing the Juniors page in the *Armenian Weekly*, and she did stories on the AYF Olympics and Camp Hayastan.

After she accompanied her father to cover a story about the loss of her high school classmate, "they [his family] were so grateful through tears mixed with some laughter that they were able to give a lasting tribute to Jimmy and share memories," she wrote a tribute in his memory which fueled her desire to make journalism her career of choice.

Her mom, a teacher, encouraged her not to be a writer due to the profession's long hours and limited financial compensation, but Sonya Vartabedian went to Northeastern University to study journalism. After working at the *Haverhill Gazette* for about a year, a competing paper offered her a job and though it was a hard decision, her father wished her luck; she's been at the *Newburyport Daily News* for 21 years. Her stints have included that of beat reporter for Newburyport and Amesbury, features editor and arts reporter. She has covered stories on individuals connected to Haverhill, ranging from author Andre Dubus to Boston chef Christopher Myers. Now as city editor, she assigns and edits stories, works on budgets, might receive and answer up to 300 emails per day and even fields phone calls. "Scandals and dogs sell papers," she shared.

A few years ago, she was named editor for the newly-launched *Newburyport Magazine*, a quarterly glossy lifestyles magazine; Sonya Vartabedian was thrilled it recently received an award from the parent company.

Just like her dad, she has seen huge changes in the field. Like all newspapers, "we are trying to stay relevant in a high-tech age," she explained. Though there are fewer full-time reporters nowadays, the print circulation of about 11,000-12,000 has remained steady and on-line traffic is up 57 percent. "One million viewers [were] on our website during last month alone," she said, including Boston and worldwide readerships.

The challenges in the industry include rising publishing costs and with a struggling economy, there's a decline in advertising so new ideas are developed to help out. Many newspapers are increasing their on-line presence and, in the future, may even charge for content on-line.

The preferences of your readership must be kept in mind: one likes "to hold the newspaper in their hands every day and one wants the news fast, on the go; both readers want



Sonya Vartabedian and Tom Vartabedian

demanding, engaging, comprehensive content ...," Sonya Vartabedian said.

Often asked why she hasn't worked for a larger paper, her response is steadfast, "I strongly believe in the value of the community newspaper and writing about the neighbors, kids who go to school in the community, people that work in the bank, people that perform on stage... things that shape who they are and give life to each and every community."

Speaking of a strong photo of a tragic crash of an elderly woman that was put on-line as deadline approached, she expressed how grateful she was for the opportunity to later speak with the deceased woman's family member to find out more about the life of this remarkable woman and to write a front-page article that appeared in the next issue. In taking the steps to give this woman proper respect, she was "following in my father's footsteps."

With the speakers receiving a resounding applause, the program was followed by a question-and-answer period. Based on his personal experiences, Tom Vartabedian spoke about the importance of supporting the Armenian press in the diaspora, and listed five "well-calibrated" Armenian newspapers by name. He complemented the *Improper Bostonian*, a bi-monthly periodical. "There is room for Armenians in journalism," he stated.

"There are 150 people in this room and there are 150 stories," he commented. Looking around, he commended Project SAVE, and founder Ruth Thomasian, for their impeccable work in documenting and archiving historical Armenian photographs. One story often may

lead unexpectedly to another, and he gave an example of a recent article he wrote on Susan Lind-Sinianian, an Armenian dancer, textile curator and longtime employee at ALMA. "Many people may not know that for 40 years, she has been teaching the blind at the Perkins School. She goes out one door and in the other. She teaches her students Armenian dance since it teaches them mobility and they get to touch and feel the artifacts at ALMA," he explained.

"The best stories in the world are not about VIPs; they are about common everyday people." At Wilmington High School, during a recent presentation on the Armenian Genocide, the veteran journalist learned that students designed postal stamps connected to the Armenian Genocide and hopes their ideas become reality for the centennial of the Armenian Genocide. "Do something for the betterment of the Armenian community," advised Tom Vartabedian.

Roger Hagopian enjoyed the evening's presentation and remarked, "I only have good things to say about Tom and Sonya Vartabedian. I like the fact that their work is about people first, the personal touch."

When Tom Vartabedian met William Saroyan at the Mkhitarist Monastery many decades ago, he asked, "Mr. Saroyan, how do you become a good writer?" To which, the elder writer replied, "I can sum it up in two words: when you write, be yourself. Write like you are talking to someone, keep it personal, keep it up front and interesting."

Clearly, this is advice that both Tom and Sonya Vartabedian have taken to heart.

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St. James Armenian Church will hold its annual picnic on June 12, starting at noon, featuring Armenian music by Jay Baronian, Leon Janikian, Ken Kalajian and Bob Raphalian, Armenian cuisine and children's games and contests, etc., at 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. Rain or shine. For more info, call the church at (617) 923-8860.



COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

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COMMENTARY

From Memory Lane to Cyberspace

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The year 2012 will mark the 80th anniversary of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*. However, The New York/New Jersey Chapter of Tekeyan Cultural Association, joining a group of friends of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, fired the opening salvo of celebrations by organizing an elegant banquet on Saturday, June 4, in Teaneck, NJ, at the Marriott Hotel. In attendance were diplomats, high-ranking clergy, representatives of organizations — an elite crowd of writers, intellectuals and community leaders and benefactors.

The evening was saturated with nostalgia as former editors and major contributors were remembered and honored. Dr. Movses Hovsepian, Armine Dikjian and Jack Antreassian, who had been the pillars of the community and they had become part of *Mirror* history. A tastefully-designed program booklet had highlighted all the previous and current editors who were as if in attendance that evening.

The affair afforded the opportunity to reflect on the history of the publication and its role in shaping community life and direction.

The booklet appropriately included a poem by Vahan Tekeyan, which helped define the dichotomy faced by the founders of the paper as they embarked on a new venture. It was a watershed event because they had to separate language from the mission. Until then, Armenians had not faced that kind of situation; language had always served as the vehicle of the mission.

The dilemma was either to forgo the mission or forgo the language. Abandoning the mission would automatically lead to the demise of the language anyway.

Poet Tekeyan lamented the decline and the eventual demise of the Armenian language by writing:

“The language I write is read but by a few.

With time, even those few readers slowly decrease...

A hundred years from now, our speech though old, still new

With its smooth and harsh sounds,
will have to come to cease.”

It is unfortunate that the poet's prophecy is becoming fact of life in the diaspora. It is a pity to lose the beautiful Armenian language. However, it is not a pity when we can cross the language barrier and carry the spirit and the mission of our ancestors to the next generation and to posterity. That was the nature of the venture that the founders were embarking on, in 1932, when they saw the handwriting on the wall and were alarmed by the alienation of the new generation. While agonizing over the demise of the language, they undertook the task of having the legacy transcend from one generation to the other through the publication of the first English-language Armenian paper in the US. They tried to convert tragedy into triumph.

My personal association and the collaboration with the *Mirror*

dates back to 1966, almost 45 years. Through my association with the editors and the major contributors, I came to realize that they were the incarnations of the very same founders as they carried on with their sacred mission through the paper's history; they had the same dedication, vigor and vision.

The destiny of the Armenian people has an ironic twist. Indeed it was destined to have Armenian journalism to be born and flourish outside our homeland, but for the homeland.

The first Armenian newspaper, *Azdarar*, was published in 1794, in Madras, India. It was edited by a priest named Rev. Harutune Shemavonian. The editor and a group of patriotic intellectuals had a dream to achieve; they aspired to see Armenia free and independent. They even had outlandish plans to purchase historic Armenia from the Ottoman Sultan, similar to Theodore Herzl's plan to carve a homeland for the persecuted Jews.

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* was also founded in Boston, Mass., away from Armenia, certainly with tamer ambitions and with the rather more modest goals of bonding Armenians together, building bridges from one city to another, or even one country to another.

In our fast-moving world and in the era of globalization, some people have come to believe that print media is something of the past, as electronic media takes over and progresses at a dizzying pace. Despite the bankruptcy of the Borders bookstore chain, the print media is still with us for the foreseeable future and the *Mirror* has a role to play for that future; it has to propel 80 years of legacy into that future while beginning to share the progress of the electronic media.

Initially half of the *Mirror* subscription base was in the New York/New Jersey area. Initiatives, like the 80th anniversary celebration, will mark a healthy comeback for it into this market.

Through the Internet, the *Mirror* has been able to reach its global readership, as it has ventured into cyberspace.

We do not and we should not underestimate the contributions and the achievements of other publications. As we compete, we learn from each other and we are destined to carry the same mission for the Armenians around the world.

There is a pervasive bias that publications sponsored by political groups tend to be partisan and closed to open flow of views and ideas. Through its persistent policy, the *Mirror* has tried to dispel that bias, because the publication has been a forum for free intellectual discourse, at the same time never losing sight of popular sentiments. Indeed it has retained and maintained its touch with the general public throughout its history.

Had Rev. Harutune Shemavonian been alive today, he would certainly have blessed the endeavor and venture of the *Mirror*.

As the 80th anniversary celebrations take off, the publication moves from the memory lane into cyberspace, for future ventures and adventures.

New York Times Writer Displays Bias for Azerbaijan in Article

(The following letter was sent to the *New York Times* in protest of a recent article on Nagorno Karabagh.)

To the Editor:

The *New York Times* is a pacesetter in responsible journalism, yet that very same vocation pre-empts it from undermining its own standards and journalistic standards.

The article published in your May 31 issue by Ellen Barry constitutes disservice to your readers and to people in general.

Under the title, “Frozen Conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia begins to boil,” the writer covers the bellicose mood in Azerbaijan, freely subscribing to views and statements of the Azeri side.

It is not for us to remind any journalist tackling a topic to do his or her homework. Ellen Barry has allowed herself to use blanket statements without heeding history. She writes: “Since the early 1990s, Azerbaijan has been trying to regain control of Nagorno-Karabagh, a predominantly Armenian enclave within its borders, and secure the return of ethnic Azeris who were forced from their homes by the war.”

There is more than one falsehood in the above statement. Why should a *New York Times* writer endorse freely what the Azeri government has been harping along that Karabagh is within Azerbaijan's borders, when even in the harshest Stalinist period it had a special status as a autonomous region (oblast) similar to the Nakhichevan exclave, which was an autonomous republic, both brought under

Azeri rule by a ruse of Stalin? During the Soviet period, 60 percent of Nakhichevan's population was Armenian, but the region was depopulated through the “brotherly” conniving of KGB colonel and Politburo member Heydar Aliyev, who eventually became the leader of Azerbaijan and was in turn succeeded by his son, Ilham, in a democratic nation (irony intended).

Your correspondent dwells at length on Azerbaijan's refugee problem, noting some heart-wrenching cases, which sound very tragic when taken out of historic context.

First, the refugee problem was the outcome of the war, which the Azerbaijani government launched against the Armenians in Karabagh.

Second, while the Aliyev dynasty and its minions reap the nation's vast oil wealth, living at an obscene level of opulence, i.e., residences in Dubai and Paris shopping blow-outs, they keep the refugees as political pawns to make a case vis-a-vis the international community on the cruelty of Armenia.

It looks like your writer's heart has been bleeding when writing about the Azeri refugee problem.

The following quote covers only one side of the refugee problem, which intentionally leaves out the other phase: “Among the forces driving Baku refugees who have spent nearly two decades in limbo. The United Nations says there are 586,013 — 7 percent of Azerbaijan's population, which is one of the highest per capita displacement rates in the world, according to the International Displacement Monitoring center.”

Your writer must be commended for resorting for reliable sources to preserve the integrity of her fact-finding statement, but why does she not employ the same due diligence in reporting what happened to the Armenian refugees of Sumgait and Baku in 1988 and 1990, after the pogroms were launched against them by the Azeri government?

During the Soviet period, an affluent community of Armenians lived in Azerbaijan, numbering 450,000. They were killed or deported. Those who believed they have found a safe haven in Armenia were killed in the 1988 earthquake. I would like to leave the math to you to figure out the percentage of 450,000 Armenian refugees over a population of 3 million.

Last but not least, Barry writes: “Azerbaijan, by far the richer of the two, has increased defense spending twenty-fold since 2003, according to the International Crisis Group.”

Rather than using the petrodollars for gearing up for a new war, the Azeri government could solve its refugee problem, which is its own doing and compensate the Armenian refugees who left their properties behind in Azerbaijan.

By playing up to the conscience of the world, your writer is adding fuel to Azeri intentions of launching a new war.

A balanced and comprehensive coverage would have contributed to the just settlement of this thorny crisis and consequently contributed to the cause of responsible and fair journalism.

— Edmond Y. Azadian

Chairman,

Armenian Rights Council of America



COMMENTARY

Spectacular *Spectator*

There is no need to rely on the force of eloquence and flattery in celebrating the 80th anniversary of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*. It is indeed a huge honor to recognize the years of service of the best English-language Armenian weekly in America, which has gained highest marks for being the first such publication. The very fact that under extremely trying times the *Mirror* visited Armenian homes for over 4,000 weeks offering nonstop news, views and editorials which shape, organize and shepherd the Armenian community is extremely honorable.

This remarkable publication has done a magnificent job in acting as a platform to respond to the needs of our diaspora. It has vehemently championed the glorification of Armenian heritage. Through its pages it has offered testimony to the idealism, endurance and pursuit of Armenian traditions, values and worth.

By Nubar Dorian

While the *Mirror* is the official voice of an Armenian political party, its influence never diminished in creating a platform for honest debate shaping the community. This is especially notable since we have come to expect that the world, with its nations and people, live and breathe politics as a way of life. To assume that the Armenian Diaspora should give up Armenian politics is utterly absurd and ungainly. It leads only to indifference, ignorance and disinterest in community life.

Presently our community is viable, visible and more vigorous which is a tribute to the role that the *Mirror* has played in creating this atmosphere. It is regrettable to note that a large number of Armenians continue to believe that weekly Armenian newspapers have no place in America. This thinking is obviously a travesty. The contributions of the *Mirror* must be given recognition within the Armenian community.

No one will free the Armenian-American from change, dreams or death. We are not born with any rights. We make or should make our own destiny. It is well to remember Walt Whitman's words, "It takes fight in life to make strength. It takes fight for principle to make fortitude and it takes crisis to give courage and enlightenment of purpose to reach objectives."

The *Mirror-Spectator* continues to follow the tenants of Whitman and needs the love, caring and support of the entire community. Shouldn't we, the uninvolved, support the *Mirror-Spectator*, which has struggled for years to advance platforms and viewpoints geared entirely for the welfare of the community? It should be our duty to praise and be grateful to this spectacular work of community news.

It is an axiom that inadequate knowledge is dangerous and no knowledge is contemptible. We owe to ourselves and the coming generation to spread knowledge of our origin, heritage, religion and culture. One important avenue is to invite the *Mirror-Spectator* to your home every week.

Most of us are not involved in our community life, which is our collective shame. How can our community with organizations such as the Armenian church, AGBU, Armenian Assembly, Armenian National Committee, AMAA and others all exist without listeners of their mission? Newspapers like the *Mirror-Spectator* in English provide this venue and deserve wholehearted embrace.

It would be a shame to continue this indifferent journey. If it continues a few more decades, we will be able to place diaspora Armenians on the point of a needle. The community would surely break like eggshells against rocks. Let us wholeheartedly extend real gratitude and praise to the *Mirror* and thank those who sacrifice much to spread the Armenian gospel for over 80 years. It should be our one precious avenue to fight against total assimilation. Please let the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* act as your surrogate conscious to cling to your pride in being an American-Armenian.

(Nubar Dorian is a Diocesan delegate representing Holy Cross Armenian Church in Union City, NJ.)

LETTERS

Sassounian Wrong on Assembly vs. Cafesjian

To the Editor:

In response to Harut Sassounian's recent commentary, titled "There Is a Time to Sue and a Time to Settle," while we agree there is a time to settle, that time was years ago. We know first-hand the Assembly sought to resolve this matter amicably and without public fanfare. The fact is the Assembly did not seek litigation. The fact is the Assembly did not initiate the lawsuit in Federal Court. The fact is on more than one occasion the Assembly agreed to settlement terms, only to have them rejected or changed at the last minute by Mr. Gerard Cafesjian. None of these facts are even mentioned in Sassounian's commentary.

Harut's article mistakenly indicates this case resulted from "an attempt by Armenian Assembly leaders to take control of the multi-million dollar museum buildings..." This is simply not true. The fact is the Assembly transferred the properties to the Armenian Genocide Museum and Memorial (AGMM), a separate organization. What Harut also doesn't say is the judge awarded all the properties to Mr. Cafesjian and his foundation without any requirement whatsoever to actually build a Genocide Museum. The judge also made it a point on page one of her decision to say she was not expressing any opinion about the Armenian Genocide and instead described it as controversial.

Despite what Sassounian's article says, Assembly leaders did not attempt to "exclude Cafesjian from any decision-making powers as a Board member of the AGM&M" as asserted in the article. It is simply not the case. The fact is Mr. Cafesjian presided as chairman of AGMM from 2003 to 2006 and controlled AGMM.

The article also mistakenly indicates that the grant agreement required the Assembly "to develop the museum by December 1, 2010." Again, this is simply not the case. The fact is it was AGMM's role to develop the project.

It is also an indisputable fact Mrs.

Mathevosian's major gift was due to her allegiance to and friendship with the Armenian Assembly of America, and was not the result of any relationship with Mr. Cafesjian. This is important and completely overlooked by Harut Sassounian.

Also, the article makes absolutely no mention of the serious and disturbing conflict of interest we feel exists and has been established between Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly and Mr. Cafesjian through their collection and promotion of contemporary studio glass art, including their joint contribution of a Libensky piece (the same artist Mr. Cafesjian testified about at trial) to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Is it any wonder the judge gave preference to her fellow art collector and connoisseur who shares both a passion and has a stake in the same field of modern art, and decided in Cafesjian's favor? This is an important material fact and its omission from Sassounian's article is glaring.

Unlike many of us who have been life-long activists for the Armenian cause, to us, Mr. Cafesjian was an unknown until he approached Hirair Hovnanian, and indicated he would like to become involved, initially in Armenia. It was Hirair Hovnanian who introduced Cafesjian to the leadership in Armenia. Then, having received some degree of recognition, he turned on Hirair; and instead of partnering and participating with the Assembly, Cafesjian went out on his own. The final act of ingratitude was Cafesjian's lawsuit. Cafesjian, by the way, continues to sue the Assembly, the latest lawsuit filed in Florida earlier this year, while the DC litigation was pending before the judge. Talk about a "Time to Settle" and a "Time to Sue." Harut Sassounian should have been clear on who was suing and who was seeking settlement.

—Joyce Philibosian Stein

—Joe Stein

Indian Wells, Calif.

Egregious Misrepresentation in the *New York Times*

To the Editor:

As a concerned citizen I must bring this article to your attention, "'Frozen Conflict' Between Azerbaijan and Armenia Begins to Boil," written by a two-time Pulitzer Prize nominee and *New York Times* Moscow Bureau chief, Ellen Barry. This slanderous article has unprofessional bias all over it, corrupt journalism, with a one-sided approach. If this were written by a small-time publication, I could perhaps ignore it, however being that it is published in the *New York Times*, we as people cannot sit idly and ignore such a egregious misrepresentation.

Writing such articles is dangerous and borderline war-mongering. The *New York Times* needs to write a retraction and Ellen Barry needs to be told that her style of writing is unworthy of a Pulitzer at best and detrimental to a peace process at worst. As members of the Armenian Press, I strongly urge you to bring this issue forward for exposure.

To view the article, visit www.nytimes.com/2011/06/01/world/asia/01azerbaijan.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1.

— Rose Nemet Davis, Calif.

Turkey: Kurds Boycott Mosques For Language Rights

By Dorian Jones

Tens of thousands of Kurds are taking part in an increasingly potent act of civil disobedience that has become a focal point of an increasingly bitter election contest between the governing Justice and Development Party and Kurdish nationalists in Turkey's restive Kurdish southeast.

In Diyarbakir, the region's main city, every Friday since March, Muslim worshipers have boycotted prayers at state-controlled mosques to hear sermons in their native Kurdish, conducted in front of the city wall.

"We are Kurds. This is our native language, the language that our parents taught us. Let us speak this language in the courts, in the mosques," one worshiper said. "Until we are no longer forbidden to speak Kurdish in our mosques, we will do our prayer on the street."

A crowd of exuberant worshippers applauded the man. Those attending represented a cross-section of society: young, old, rich and poor. In a region where acts of civil disobedience are rarely tolerated, dozens of police, backed by armored vehicles, looked on, but did not intervene.

Kurds make up an estimated 20 percent of Turkey's 70-million population. Until the late 1980s, the Kurdish language was banned. Under successive governments, restrictions have slowly been eased in education and broadcasting, but Turkish remains the only official

language in mosques.

Diay-der, a group of retired Kurdish imams and Islamic scholars, launched the boycott to change that status. Diay-der leader Zahit Cirtkuran says that the protest started after Diyanet, the state body that controls and administers the Islamic faith, including the appointment of Turkey's imams and the writing of sermons, ignored their appeals for reform.

"Instead, the government sent 10,000 new imams to this region who have no connection to this land," Ciftkuran charged. "So, it's a kind of religious assimilation."

The protests appear to have enraged Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, whose Islamic-rooted Justice and Development Party (AKP) presents itself as the defender of religious freedom. But the AKP is engaged in an increasingly bitter battle for votes with the country's Kurdish rights movement.

Erdogan devoted most of his speech at a June 1 rally in Diyarbakir to lambasting the protest.

"They refuse to pray behind an imam appointed by the state. But they are not religious. They see Apo [Abdullah Ocalan, the jailed leader of the banned PKK or Kurdistan Workers' Party] as a prophet," said Erdogan. "They are cheating you. Let's teach them a lesson."

The ferocity of the attack can be explained in part by Erdogan's bid to secure the support of Turkish nationalist voters, who are deeply opposed to Kurdish rights. But it caused dismay among many Kurds, including some senior Kurdish members of the AKP.

see BOYCOTT, page 20

COMMENTARY

A Point of Clarification

It has come to our attention through the news media that on Monday, May 26, the representatives of three traditional parties met in Yerevan, Armenia, at the headquarters of the Hunchakian party.

Setrak Adjemian, representing the Social Democratic Hunchak Party and Hrant Markarian, representing the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) Bureau, attended the above meeting, which also included Michael Kharabian, claiming to represent the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL).

Kharabian at best can represent himself or a few disorganized and dissolved regions of the ADL. He certainly cannot represent our organization, nor assume any responsibility on our behalf.

The central committees of the participating parties have been notified that their interlocutor does not enjoy the legitimacy and authority in the ADL structure, as they do in their respective organizations.

Any commitment or statement by Michael Kharabian does not engage the ADL as a whole, and the other parties may be deceiving their members or the general public if they believe the ADL is legitimately participating in the above meeting.

— ADL District Committee



Turkey: Kurds Boycott Mosques for Language Rights

BOYCOTT, from page 19

“I think the prime minister was wrong. I personally support the protest. I think it is positive as [using Kurdish in mosques] is a basic right,” said Muhammed Akar, deputy head of the AKP in Diyarbakir.

Akar is an influential member of Diyarbakir’s powerful religious community, and related to Sheik Said, the leader of a failed Kurdish Islamic revolt in the 1920s against the Turkish republic. In this traditional and conservative society, such lineage carries weight.

Akar argues that while the fight for Kurdish rights was dominated in the 1980s and 1990s by the PKK’s Marxist ideology, a profound change has since occurred. Religious movements are now championing the Kurdish campaign for expanded rights, he notes.

“Four or five years ago, I was fearing that there would be a clash between secular nationalist and religious Kurds, but, instead, for the first time Kurdish nationalism has come together with religion,” Akar said. “There is now a resurgence in Kurdish religious demands and the state and mosques cannot keep up.”

The synthesis is most obvious in the parliamentary candidates supported by the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP). In the 2007 general election in which the party was defeated by the AKP, many BDP candidates were linked to the PKK. This time, the BDP has diversified its selection, including liberals and key religious Kurdish figures.

In Diyarbakir, two out of six BDP-supported independent candidates are powerful members of the religious Kurdish movement. One of those candidates, Altan Tan, a longtime Kurdish activist and rival to the PKK, says that Kurdish politics have finally caught up with the

times.

“Yes, they say they are socialists, but they also say that we don’t think like we did 20 to 30 years ago,” Tan said of the BDP. “All the world has changed. The Soviet Union has gone. So we should change. Now we are thinking as a Kurdish nationalist movement.”

Erdogan has committed himself to introducing a new constitution after the June 12 election, but has given few details about it or whether the changes would address Kurdish concerns.

In the meantime, the Diyanet is believed to be under pressure to head off ethnic Kurds’ Islamic demands, including by allowing the use of Kurdish in some mosques. Last week, an illuminated mosque ceremony (kandil) celebrating the conception of the Prophet Mohammad was conducted in Kurdish in Diyarbakir’s main mosque, the Ulu Cami.

“It was a beautiful evening. Some of the old men were crying, as it was their first time to hear mevlid [poems about the Prophet Mohammad’s life] sung in their language,” recounted muezzin Omer Kilic, who sang the ceremony. “It’s a start.”

Local AKP official Akar, however, warns that any post-election failure to address Kurds’ concerns could put Turkey’s long-term political stability at risk. “If there is a disappointment, the whole idea of integration will end. Separation and conflict will come to the fore,” he said. “If I am seeing this, the prime minister, the state should see this as well. The danger that is lying ahead is a nightmare.”

(Dorian Jones is a freelance journalist living in Turkey. His article originally appeared in EurasiaNet’s Weekly Digest.)

UAR Sochi Branch Leadership Resigns after Demolition of General Andranik Monument

SOCHI, Russia (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The Sochi branch of the Union of Armenians of Russia (UAR) held a meeting with the participation of UAR Vice President German Ananyants, to deal with the demolition of the monument to Gen. Andranik Ozanyan, in the Volkonka settlement of Sochi, by the Armenian community.

According to Ananyants, the conflict is settled – Lazarevsk region’s leadership of UAR has admitted its mistake and resigned. Currently all legal documents are being prepared, while the monument to Ozanyan will be set in Adler soon.

President of UAR, Ara Abramyan, was expected to participate in the meeting. Earlier Abramyan condemned the monument’s demolition, saying he was unaware of the incident and promised to clarify its details and make radical decisions, if the reports are confirmed.

Armenia’s Consul General to the southern part of Russia, Ararat Gomtsyan, representatives of the ARF Dashnaktsutyun and Heritage party, as well as leaders of Javakheti and Hamshen communities of Russia also condemned demolition of the monument, youtharmenia.ru reported.

Ozanyan is Armenia’s national hero. He is one of the leaders of the Armenian national liberation movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He is also a national hero of Bulgaria. He was one of organizers of Sasun and Zangezur defense.

On August 31, 1927, Ozanyan passed away in Fresno, Calif. His body was transported to France, and buried in the French Pere Lachaise cemetery. In 2000, the government of the second independent Armenian Republic decided to relocate Ozanyan’s remains to Armenia, where he received an honorable military reburial at Yerablur Pantheon.

Consultations between Armenia and Italy Held

ROME, Italy (Armenpress) – The Foreign Ministries of Armenia and Italy held consultations on June 3. During the talks, Republic of Armenia Foreign Deputy Minister Arman Kirakosian discussed with his Italian counterpart, Alfredo Mantica, issues regarding Armenian-Italian relations and regional cooperation.

An Armenian Foreign Ministry official said that during the meeting Kirakosian emphasized the importance of high-level mutual visits, the necessity of establishing an inter-governmental committee and making the trade-economic cooperation more active. He also detailed the unique exhibition which is scheduled to be

organized under the auspices of the presidents of Armenia and Italy in December, in three museums in Venice on the 500th anniversary of Armenian publishing.

Mantica expressed Italy’s readiness to deepen the relations with Armenia in all the spheres and organize corresponding mutual visits, as well as Italian Foreign Ministry’s support to establishing mutually beneficial cooperation with the region of Veneto in the spheres of jewelry, wine-making and tourism.

Within the framework of the visit Kirakosian delivered a lecture on the South Caucasus security issues at NATO Defense College (NDC) in Rome.

Ahmadinejad Visit to Armenia Cancelled at Last Minute

AHMADINEJAD, from page 1

Armenia. The two sides also plan to start building soon a third high-voltage transmission line connecting their power grids. It is not clear whether these projects require the signing of additional Armenian-Iranian agreements.

Vahan Hovannisian, a senior parliamentarian and a leader of the opposition Armenian Revolutionary Federation, suggested that the visit was postponed because of other issues. “In all likelihood, some issues requiring the clarification of the Armenian side’s position were added to the agenda of the Iranian president’s visit at the last minute,” he told journalists. “My words are not based on mere assumptions.”

Hovannisian would not be drawn on those issues. He said only that Ahmadinejad will travel to Armenia after Yerevan clears up its position on them.

Alexander Arzumanyan, another opposition politician who served as Armenia’s foreign minister from 1996-1998, linked the trip cancellation with the latest developments in international efforts to end the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict. He specifically cited a recent joint statement by the US, Russian and French presidents that raised fresh hopes for an Armenian-Azerbaijani peace accord.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran has always been jealous about not being represented in

processes going over the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict,” Arzumanyan said. He argued that Iranian officials have repeatedly voiced strong opposition to the possible deployment of a Western-led peacekeeping force in the conflict zone, which is very close to Iran’s northwestern frontier.

Sargisian and Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev are expected to meet again later this month for what could prove to be decisive peace talks.

Arzumanyan noted at the same time that domestic Iranian politics may have also been a reason. Ahmadinejad is increasingly locked in a power struggle with the Islamic Republic’s clerical leadership.

The Iranian president is facing a deadline to name an oil minister and OPEC envoy ahead of a meeting of that oil-exporting group scheduled for June 8. His attempt to take over supervision of the Oil Ministry and lead the Iranian delegation to OPEC himself was thwarted by the Guardians Council vetting body and parliament.

Ali Geranmayeh, a former Iranian diplomat who now teaches international relations at the SOAS University in London, agreed that this uncertainty might have forced Ahmadinejad not to leave the country for the time being. “But there may have also been external reasons, including Turkey’s approaches to Armenian-Iranian relations,” he said.

Norway Prince Makes Controversial Visit to Azerbaijan

OSLO, Norway (Norway Post) – Crown Prince Haakon is on Monday visiting Azerbaijan, at the head of a Norwegian delegation to the opening of the annual International Caspian Oil & Gas Exhibition. The royal visit has been criticized.

Through Statoil, Norway has heavy oil interests in Azerbaijan.

Human rights organizations say it is wrong for the Norwegian Crown Prince to visit what they call “one of the most corrupt dictatorships in the world.”

However, prominent Azerbaijani newspaper

editor and regime critic, Eynulla Fatullayev who was just released after he was imprisoned in 2007, says it is positive that Norway has oil interests in his homeland, and he looks forward to meeting the Crown Prince.

“I will make the Crown Prince aware of the human right situation in this country. At the same time I will thank Norway for having supported and defended the freedom of expression in this country through many difficult years,” he said.

Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Store has welcomed the release of Mr. Fatullayev.

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