

## Medvedev 'Frustrated' with Karabagh Impasse

KAZAN, Russia (RFE/RL) — Russian President Dmitry Medvedev is frustrated with the failure of his Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts to reach a framework agreement on Nagorno-Karabagh and could stop organizing regular talks between them, one of his senior aides reportedly said last Monday.

"If Azerbaijan and Armenia fail to display soon a readiness to solve the accumulated problems, then we will consider this mediation mission to be over," a leading Moscow daily, *Kommersant*, quoted a high-ranking Kremlin source as saying.

The unnamed official commented on the outcome of Medvedev's latest trilateral negotiations with Presidents Serge Sargsian and Ilham Aliyev that were held here last Friday. Despite facing strong international pressure, the two leaders failed to agree on the basic principles of ending the Karabagh conflict put forward by Russia, the United States and France.

The Kazan meeting was the ninth Armenian-Azerbaijani summit hosted by Medvedev in the last three years, a fact highlighting the Russian president's central role in the Karabagh peace process.

According to the Kremlin source, Medvedev told Aliyev and Sargsian that he will organize another summit only if they "firmly express their readiness to sign up to the principles of the settlement."

The conflicting parties blamed each other for the failure of the Kazan talks that lasted for more than three hours. In particular, Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian claimed that Aliyev scuttled an agreement by demanding "about a dozen" last-minute changes in the latest version of the basic principles.

*Kommersant* cited an unnamed diplomat involved in the negotiating process as say-



From left, Azeri President Ilham Aliyev, Armenian President Serge Sargsian and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev

ing that the Kazan summit "unexpectedly rekindled disagreements which were long deemed settled by the mediators." Some of them related to "the determination of Nagorno-Karabagh's future status," said the diplomat.

"But the problem is not so much these disagreements as the fact that the parties have repeatedly changed their positions. And that's unacceptable," he added.

The official may have referred to practical modalities of a future referendum on self-determination in Karabagh. The holding of such a plebiscite is a key element of the peace framework advocated by the three mediating powers.

The *Kommersant* source also down-

played the three presidents' statement, saying that Aliyev and Sargsian reached a "mutual understanding on a number of issues whose resolution would help to create conditions for the approval of the basic principles." He said the parties simply "once again confirmed the remaining contentious issues."

## Azerbaijan Warns Armenia With Show of Military Might

BAKU (AFP) — Azerbaijan paraded thousands of soldiers and hundreds of military vehicles through its capital on Sunday, in a show of force two days after talks failed to resolve a bitter territorial dispute with Armenia.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, who has overseen massive increases in defense spending, warned in his speech that he was ready to take back Nagorno Karabagh, which was seized from Azerbaijan in the 1990s by Armenian separatist forces.

"The war is not over yet," Aliyev said at the showpiece parade in the center of Baku, vowing to end what he called the "occupation" of Karabagh.

"The territorial integrity of Azerbaijan must be restored and the territory will be restored," he said.

Six thousand troops marched in the parade, accompanied by tanks, armored cars and rocket launchers, as fighter planes and combat helicopters roared overhead and warships lined up in the nearby Caspian Sea bay.

In his speech, Aliyev also spoke approvingly about the increases in defense spending financed by the energy-rich state's huge revenues from oil and gas exports.

"Azerbaijan has fulfilled the task that I set, which was that Azerbaijan's military expenditure must exceed the entire state budget of Armenia," he said, noting that defense spending reached \$3.3 billion this year.

Military hardware manufactured in Azerbaijan, including unmanned drones,

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## Sargsian Addresses PACE

### Karabagh Status, Genocide And Peace with Neighbors Addressed

STRASBOURG — President Serge Sargsian, on the eve of the Kazan summit in Russia, addressed the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) on June 22.

Among other topics, Sargsian stressed that Armenia was trying to become a more democratic country, while acknowledging stumbling in the past. He also stressed that Armenia shares much with Europe historically.

"The people of Armenia have made their historic and irreversible choice. Our road to becoming closer to Europe has been unique in a natural way. However, there have been obstacles, which are not natural, such as the artificial and unlawful blockade imposed on Armenia by our two neighbors. However, in spite of all the difficulties, our society knows precisely where it is going."

"In 2008, our country experienced serious problems and challenges. The steps taken by the government to over-

come the consequences of the tragic events of March 2008 have been discussed in detail with all of our partners, including those in the Council of Europe. We have sometimes had serious discrepancies and have respectfully disagreed with each other's assessments. We have, however, benefited from the exchange, the wisdom of the experience and the



President Serge Sargsian speaks at PACE.

constructive dialogue.

"We are determined to continue the reforms. We recognize that Armenia cannot develop without further fundamental improvements that will perhaps be no less painful than the ones implemented in the past."

see PACE, page 16



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### New Hotel Complex to Be Built in Jermuk

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The municipality of Jermuk is going to see the construction of a new hotel, expected to be completed by next year. With the new hotel, the town is expected to be better able to handle increased tourism and become a more inviting place for visitors.

The Urban Ministry's press department reported that construction documents for the hotel complex have been approved. The complex will have two buildings, one of which will have a spa center.

### Visitors Flock to Genocide Museum

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute had more than 120,000 visitors during the first five months of the year. Deputy Director Arpine Bablunyan said that among the visitors were foreign delegations, students, school groups and tourists.

During the five months, about 25 foreign top officials put notes in the Commemoration Book.

The museum presents permanent and changing expositions, documents connected with the Genocide and photos.

The museum is in cooperation with institutions in Germany, France, the US, Austria, Italy and Russia.

### RI Gov. Signs Genocide Education Bill

PROVIDENCE — Rhode Island Gov. Lincoln D. Chafee on June 23 signed legislation passed by the General Assembly earlier this month instructing the state Department of Education to help local schools teach about genocide as a critical component of civic education.

The legislation, sponsored by state Sen. Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28) and state Rep. Anastasia P. Williams (D-Dist. 9), directs the state Department of Education to post on its website materials to help schools teach students about genocides, including the Holocaust and those in Armenia, Cambodia, Iraq, Rwanda and Darfur.

In 2000, the General Assembly passed a law requiring the Department of Education to develop materials on genocide and human rights issues and guidelines for teaching them.

"Genocides and human rights violations carried out by governments are ugly chapters of history, but students are future leaders and voters and they need to learn about mistakes of the past to keep them from being repeated," said Williams.

Said Miller, "Making the curriculum on genocide available to Rhode Island teachers online will make it much more likely that students will learn about these subjects."

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Banking Sector in Armenia, Georgia Shows Growth

TBILISI, Georgia (PanArmenian.Net) — In Armenia, about 1 million bank cards have been issued, alongside 3,195 POS terminals and 778 ATM units installed.

The number of POS terminals in Georgia totals 10,286 units: ATM stations, 1,512, and bank cards, about three million.

Azerbaijan, a country with a population of over 8 million, shows the following results: it has 7,988 POS terminals, 1,992 ATMs and slightly over 4 million credit cards.

Despite the difficult post-crisis period, the banking sector shows good growth rates in Georgia and Armenia, on average 15 percent.

## Parliament Discusses VAT Exemption of Imported Agricultural Machines

YEREVAN (Arka) — On Wednesday, the Armenian Parliament adopted the amendments in laws relating to value added tax (VAT), proposing to exempt imported agricultural machines and fertilizers from VAT. Agricultural Minister Sergho Karapetian said the amendments will increase the accessibility of imported resources used in agriculture, including mechanization of production process.

Particularly, the amendments propose to exempt the imported agricultural machines, spare parts, fertilizers, pesticides, seeds, and especially wheat and barley.

## Consumer Advocate Complains about Yerevan Public Transport

YEREVAN (Hetq) — Armen Poghosyan, president of the Consumers' Association, has penned an open letter to Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian and Yerevan Mayor Karapetyan, complaining about the dismal state of public transportation in the capital.

Poghosyan pointed out that the current aging fleet of minibuses in Yerevan is inadequate to handle the transportation needs of passengers given their run-down condition and cramped quarters. (Some of these "mashkrutakas" are so tiny that people are forced to bend their hands and perform other feats of physical contortion just to fit in.)

He states that increasing the number of regular buses is a stop-gap measure at best and that inefficient gas-guzzlers will not resolve the issue of exhaust fumes released into the atmosphere.

Poghosyan called on the government to devise a long-term transportation strategy that centers on electric vehicles.

## School for Diasporan Journalists Opens in Armenia

YEREVAN (PanArmenian.Net) — The opening ceremony of a school for young journalists from the diaspora took place on June 27, at Yerevan State University.

The Armenian Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobyan, Yerevan State University (YSU) Rector Aram Simonyan, as well as the head of Education department at Yerevan municipality, Gayane Soghomonyan, participated in the event.

As the press office of the Republic of Armenia Ministry of Diaspora reported, having greeted the students, Hakobyan wished for success for the initiative. She also emphasized the importance of presenting Armenia in the world properly. The minister of diaspora called on young journalists to join in the formation of a strong state.

The resolution to open the school was made in Karabagh during the fifth congress of the Armenian journalists, organized by the Armenian Ministry of Diaspora, in 2010.

# Tax Reprieve Touted as Successful

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — The Armenian government has attracted 61 billion drams (\$163 million) in business investments as a result of its 2009 decision to offer a temporary tax reprieve to companies importing industrial equipment, Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian said last Thursday.

The decision made at the height of the global economic crisis allows the government to delay by up to three years the collection of a 20 percent value-added tax (VAT) from such imports. They have to exceed 300 million drams and be delivered to manufacturing firms with export potential.

The government has granted such tax privileges on a case-by-case basis. According to Sargsian, 17 companies have benefited from the scheme since it was introduced in early 2009.

"As a result, we have had investment projects totaling 61 billion drams," the premier said at a weekly session of his cabinet. "As of now, about 1,000 new jobs have been created and it is expected that a total of 1,700 jobs will be created during the implementation of this scheme."

"Thus, this legal instrument that was given to the government [by the National Assembly] is producing positive results," he told ministers.

Sargsian spoke as the government approved a VAT payment delay for a company that plans to build a flower greenhouse in a village in the central Kotayk province. A government statement said the company called Ecotomato will invest 2 billion drams and create 30 jobs there.

The government raised questions

about the fairness of the tax reprieve in September 2009 when it rejected a similar application from a prominent entrepreneur whose son was charged with plotting to assassinate Gagik Khachatrian, the controversial chief of Armenia's tax and customs service.

The businessman, Albert Yeritsian, planned to construct a new bread-making factory in Yerevan and imported \$6 million worth of equipment from the Czech Republic for that purpose. Yeritsian reportedly sent it back to the supplier after the rebuff.

VAT has long been the single largest source of Armenia's tax revenues. More than 60 percent of the government's VAT proceeds comes from imported goods, commodities and equipment.

# Industry 'Key to Armenian Growth in 2011'

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Industry will be the main driving force of Armenia's ongoing economic recovery this year, having already grown by over 10 percent, Economy Minister Tigran Davtian said last Friday.

Industrial production has been greatly helped by the increased international prices of copper and other base metals, Armenia's number one export.

Davtian insisted that this was not the only reason for the strong performance of the manufacturing sector. He said there has also been robust growth in diamond processing, machine building and light industry.

Speaking at a news conference, the minister forecast that industrial output will be up by more than 10 percent in the first half of this year. The government therefore stands by its earlier projections that the Armenian economy will grow by at least 4.6 percent in 2011, he said.

"I think that [GDP growth] will be a

little faster," added Davtian.

Armenia's GDP increased by 2.6 percent last year following a more than 14-percent slump registered in 2009 because of the global recession. The NSS has still not released collated GDP data for the first quarter.

Davtian claimed that the Armenian government deserves credit for renewed growth in the domestic economy and industry in particular. He pointed to government efforts to improve the country's business environment and spur manufacturing activity.

Davtian also stressed the importance

of government plans to open three "free economic zones." The Armenian parliament approved a relevant government bill in May.

Yerevan's Zvartnots international airport will house one of the tax havens. It will mainly cater for domestically-grown agricultural produce to be exported abroad.

According to Davtian, another tax-free zone will be located in Yerevan's Mars electronics factory that was handed over to Russia in 2003 as part of a Russian-Armenian equities-for-debt agreement.

# Pentagon Praises Armenia for Growing Defense Ties with US

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — A senior Pentagon official praised Armenia for contributing troops to the NATO-led missions in Afghanistan and Kosovo and broadening military ties with the United States during a visit to Yerevan last Monday.

Celeste Wallander, the US deputy assistant secretary of defense for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia Policy, also promised continued US assistance to an ongoing reform of the Armenian military aimed at bringing it into greater conformity with NATO standards.

Wallander met with Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian and Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian to discuss what she described as an "extensive list" of issues on the agenda of US-Armenian military cooperation. "I commented to the minister [Ohanian] that each time we meet we have more and more to discuss," she told a weekly television program produced by the Armenian Defense Ministry in an interview.

"President Obama has made very clear that the US continues to be committed to providing stability and security by supporting the development of the Afghan security forces," Wallander said. "So we are very grateful to the [Armenia] Ministry of Defense for making that commitment and contributing to that mission."

Armenia sent an additional 81 soldiers to Afghanistan a week ago, almost tripling its presence with the NATO-led multinational force stationed there. Another 80 Armenian troops have been serving under NATO command in Kosovo.

"It is very important for people to remember that Armenians are also serving in Kosovo as part of the KFOR mis-

sion," said Wallander. "We tend to forget about it because it's so successful. But I think it's important for everyone to understand that the reason it is successful is because so many partners have been willing to be there and contribute to this post-conflict situation."

The US official added that the Pentagon will continue to support a special peacekeeping brigade of the Armenian Armed Forces that has provided military personnel for the Afghanistan and Kosovo missions as well as the US-led occupation force in Iraq.

# Yerevan Genocide Museum to Host Program on Related Books in 2012

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — As part of the events connected with the declaration of Yerevan as World Capital of Books, the Armenian Genocide-Museum Institute will organize on April 23, 2012 a special exhibition of books titled, "Book as Testimony of the Genocide."

Director of the museum, Hayk Demoyan, said that exclusive ancient samples of literature have been acquired for presentation at the exhibition.

"It will be a grand exposition where we will present the Armenian Genocide through books," Demoyan said, adding that books printed during the past 150 years will be presented, offering the whole history of genocide.

# Opposition Party To Continue Parliament Boycott

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — One of the two opposition parties represented in Armenia's parliament said on Monday that it will continue boycotting National Assembly sessions in protest against what it sees as President Serge Sargsian's efforts to tighten his grip on power.

The five parliament deputies representing the Zharangutyun (Heritage) party demonstratively walked out of the 131-member assembly on February 28 following Sargsian's new power-sharing agreement with his junior coalition partners, the Orinats Yerkir and Prosperous Armenia (BHK) parties.

The agreement commits Orinats Yerkir and the BHK to supporting the incumbent president in the 2013 presidential election. It also states that the two parties as well as Sarkisian's Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) will have an even greater representation in the next National Assembly to be elected in May 2012.

Like other major opposition forces, Zharangutyun condemned this provision, saying that it effectively predetermines the outcome of the 2012 parliamentary elections. Its lawmakers have since refused to attend parliament debates and votes.





## INTERNATIONAL

# Russian Symphony Conductor Apologizes For Insulting Armenian Cellist

MOSCOW (Epress.am) — Armenian cellist Narek Hakhnazaryan has accepted the apology from conductor Mark Gorenstein for insulting remarks made during the 14th International Tchaikovsky Competition in which Hakhnazaryan is a participant. Hakhnazaryan conveyed this news himself to Russian news agency Itar-Tass.

“All is well. My head, my thoughts are now only on the competition. I am concentrating on the music for my upcoming performance in the finals,” he said.

During the recital on June 25, artistic director and chief conductor of the State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Russia (Svetlanov Symphony Orchestra), Gorenstein, told the orchestra: “Don’t let it concern you at all what this talent, this *aui* [someone from a small village in the mountains; meant to indicate lack of respect] presented to us is playing. Your task is to play what is written there in the score and to do it with me.” This statement offended journalists who were at the recital, after which the story gained public attention.

Since then, an official statement has appeared on the competition website, which reads as follows: “The Organizing Committee of the XIV International Tchaikovsky Competition regards as insulting the statements addressed by Artistic Director of the Svetlanov State Symphony Orchestra of Russia Mark

Gorenstein to competition participant Narek Hakhnazaryan.

“We consider that words reflecting on an individual’s dignity do damage to the creative atmosphere that we have worked so hard to establish. The purpose of the Tchaikovsky Competition is to support young musicians, and every



Cellist Narek Hakhnazaryan

one of the competition’s organizers and participants is obliged to treat its competitors with the utmost respect.”

“I would like to explain my position regarding the incident,” Gorenstein told Itar-Tass. “First, it was a conversation within the team. Second, I assure you, I

neither conveyed nor did I wish to convey any nationalist undertones in my remarks, since that is totally foreign both to me personally and to our team.”

According to the chief conductor, the orchestra he conducts is a multinational group, which employs Armenian, Bashkir, Belarussian, Georgian, Jewish,



Conductor Mark Gorenstein

Russian, Tatar and Ukrainian peoples and “never during my leadership has there been conflict on ethnic grounds.”

“I am very sorry about what happened and I offer my sincere apologies to all those whom I hurt with my words,” said Gorenstein.

## Gul Defends Turkey’s Plans to Filter Internet Access

ISTANBUL (*Today’s Zaman*) — Turkish President Abdullah Gul has defended Turkey’s plans to filter access to some websites, saying at a meeting with Google Executive Chairman and former Chief Executive Officer Eric Schmidt that it is meant to protect families.

Schmidt, who had a meeting with Gul at the Cankaya Presidential Palace on Tuesday, June 21, spoke against the planned filtering system, saying at a meeting with journalists earlier in the week that it was a bad idea. But Gul said in the one-hour meeting that the filtering system was not a restriction on Internet access. The meeting was closed to the press.

Cihan news agency quoted Gul as saying that he valued Internet freedom but that the family, which he said keeps a society alive, was also valuable. Schmidt, for his part, reiterated that he was opposed to Internet restrictions.

On August 22, all Internet subscribers

will be required to sign up for one of the four levels of filtering, with the “standard” option allowing subscribers to access all available websites, according to the government. Turkey’s Information Technologies and Communications Authority (BTK) has not revealed the exact details on which websites would be restricted under the three other filtering options.

Gul also said advancements in information technology contributed signif-

icantly to the strengthening of democracy, adding that revolutions in the Middle East are a good example of how the Internet has helped spread democracy. Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter have been major tools in the spread of pro-democracy demonstrations across the Middle East.

Gul also asked Schmidt to take steps to reinforce Google’s presence in Turkey through its office.

## French-Armenian Presidential Hopeful Says Turks ‘Are Very Close’ to Him

PARIS (PanArmenian.Net) — The youngest contender for the French presidency in 2012 has said he is already well-acquainted with Turkey thanks to family roots that go back to eastern Turkey.

Maxime Verner’s mother is Armenian, and her family is from Erzurum, while the 21-year-old candidate’s father is ethnic French.

“I know Turkey very well; I am interested [in Turkish] history also. I feel [that the] Turks are very close to me. They are open-minded. I want to build a bridge between Turkey and other countries. I would like to tell them that the world of tomorrow is ours. We have responsibilities to conquer and obtain solidarity,” Verner said in an interview with *Hurriyet Daily News*.

“I am not expecting any support [from] the French-Armenian community; I am French. But lots of Armenians and Turks do support me,” Verner said.

The candidate also said he attended Istanbul’s Galatasaray University as an exchange student recently.

Verner, whose father was a taxi driver, said his interest in politics began while he was working in his father’s cab in the village where he was born. “Today, I do not belong to any party; my family has never belonged to any [parties either.] I

became popular [through the support of] the working class,” he said.

“I want to change the future, the



Maxime Verner

young generations, the long-term perspectives, the world. I want to help France open itself to the world. I would like to free society where anything is possible for anyone. I believe emotions can change the world,” he said and added that he made extensive use of modern technology during election campaigns.

Verner also said he was a member of the Association des Jeunes de France (The Association for the French Youth) and said the youth wanted to earn the trust of the French people.

“We want to elucidate [people on] how great the potential of young people is and what we can do,” he said.

## Azerbaijan Warns Armenia with Show Of Military Might

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was on show for the first time to highlight the country’s expanding defense industry.

The parade in Baku was the third in the country’s post-Soviet history and also marked this year’s 20th anniversary of independence.

It was shown live on state television in a broadcast preceded by a series of patriotic songs accompanied by images of troops in action and Aliyev wearing camouflage fatigues.

The parade was held after the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia failed to agree despite strong international pressure to a roadmap document that would have been a significant step towards a Karabagh peace deal.

## International News

### Cyprus’ Ethnic Split Stops Player Joining Practice

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — A Greek-Cypriot club said on Tuesday that a Turkish-Cypriot player from the breakaway north of divided Cyprus was prevented from joining a team practice session in a development seen as sports being influenced by politics.

Alki FC spokesman Michalis Markou said that Turkish-Cypriot authorities stopped forward Mustafa Yasines on Monday from crossing into the internationally-recognized Greek-Cypriot south to join the session.

Turkish-Cypriots playing for Greek-Cypriot teams is rare on the island, which was split in 1974 when Turkey invaded after a coup by supporters of a union with Greece.

Yasines recently signed a four-year deal with Alki in the coastal resort of Larnaca, making him only the fifth Turkish-Cypriot player to join a Greek-Cypriot club since a ban on crossing a United Nations-controlled cease-fire line was lifted in 2003.

“From what we know, the player was due to arrive on Monday for a training session but never turned up,” Markou said. “We were later informed that he had been denied permission to cross at the check point by the Turkish-Cypriot administration.”

Markou said the club would unveil their new signings next week and is “concerned with the latest developments.”

Yasines, 23, played in the unrecognized Turkish-Cypriot football league before signing with Alki.

Ali Basman, the chairman of his former team, reportedly said that his club would never give their consent to Yasines joining Alki.

### Interpol Extradites Romanian Wanted in Armenia

BERLIN (Tert.am) — A Romanian national who has been accused by the Armenian police of committing several crimes in Armenia was arrested in Germany and extradited to Armenia.

Dragos B., 33, was on the wanted list since February 2009. He was arrested in Germany and was flown to Armenia, accompanied by Armenian police officers.

### Armenia, Azerbaijan Separated in 2014 World Cup Draw

ZURICH (AP) — Russia and Georgia will be separated in the draw for the 2014 World Cup, as will Armenia and Azerbaijan, in a bid to limit potential political problems.

Armenia and Azerbaijan, which have no diplomatic relations, were drawn together in Euro 2008 qualifying, but the matches were never played.

### Gerard Depardieu Stars In Ad for Armavia

PARIS (Tert.am) — French actor Gerard Depardieu has starred in a Russian commercial for Armenia’s national air carrier, Armavia, Itar Tass reported.

The actor watched the new Sukhoi SuperJet-100 fly at the Paris Air Show and appeared to be quite impressed, the United Aircraft Corporation (UAC) told the agency on Wednesday, June 22.

Armavia received its first Sukhoi SuperJet-100 on April 19. During the first month of operation, the plane flew for over 168 hours and transported 2,885 passengers, traveling a distance of about 85,800 kilometers.

The second plane was handed over to Aeroflot on June 9. The plane to be operated by Aeroflot made the first regular flight on June 16. The plane flew from Moscow to St. Petersburg to bring passengers for the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, including officials from the federal government, the Transport Ministry, and Aeroflot.

Aeroflot has ordered 30 such planes.





# Estonia, Belarus Put on Human Trafficking Watch List

WASHINGTON (AFP) – The United States on Monday put Estonia and Belarus on a human trafficking watch list, alleging they failed in the last year to step up efforts to fight prostitution and forced labor.

In its 2011 annual Global Trafficking in Persons Report, the State Department also maintained Russia on the list for the eighth consecutive year for the same alleged failures.

“Estonia is a source, transit and destination country for women subjected to forced prostitution, and for men and women subjected to conditions of forced labor,” the State Department said.

Not only are Estonian women from the countryside forced into prostitution in the capital Tallinn, they also end up in the sex trafficking trade in Finland, the Netherlands, Britain, Germany and Italy, it said.

Both men and women from Estonia are also “subjected to conditions of forced labor” in Spain, Sweden, Norway and Finland, according to the 2011 Global Trafficking in Persons Report.

“The government of Estonia does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so,” the report said.

“Despite these efforts, the government did not demonstrate evidence of increasing

efforts over the previous reporting period,” it added, placing Estonia on the Tier-2 watch list.

Belarus was put on the list for the same reason, with the report charging that the government in Minsk “demonstrated decreased law enforcement efforts” while the report was being conducted.

The report said women and children are sold into the sex trade in Russia, Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Spain, Greece, Belgium, Turkey, Israel, Lebanon, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates.

There were also continuing reports of women from poor families forced into prostitution in the capital Minsk.

“Belarussian men, women and children are found in forced begging, as well as in forced labor in the construction industry and other sectors in Russia and Belarus,” it said.

The State Department also reprimanded Russia once again.

Citing the Migration Research Center, it said around one million people in Russia are exploited by business leaders who withhold their documents, fail to pay for services, physically abuse them and deny them proper living conditions.

Abuses occurred in the construction, manufacturing, agriculture and domestic services industries, it added.

“There are reports of many men and women from North Korea subjected to conditions of forced labor in the logging industry in the Russian Far East,” it said.

“There are also reports of exploitation of children, including child prostitution in large Russian cities and forced begging,” it added.

“Russian women were reported to be victims of sex trafficking in many countries, including in Northeast Asia, Europe and throughout the Middle East,” it said.

It said that because it had a written plan, Russia was not dropped to the lowest Tier-3 group, countries which are deemed not to be making significant efforts to meet the minimum standards of fighting trafficking.

“Russia is devoting sufficient resources to implement that plan,” it said.

Tier-3 countries may “be subject to certain sanctions, whereby the US government may withhold or withdraw non-humanitarian, non-trade-related foreign assistance,” the State Department said.

The State Department’s report characterized Armenia as a source country for women and girls subjected to sex trafficking, as well as a source and destination country for women subjected to forced labor and a source country for men subjected to forced labor.

“Women and girls from Armenia are subjected to sex trafficking in Germany, the

United Arab Emirates and Turkey. Armenian men and women are subjected to forced labor in Russia, while Armenian women are subjected to forced labor in Turkey. Armenian boys are subjected to forced labor and Armenian women and girls are found in sex trafficking within the country. Women from Russia are subjected to forced labor in Armenia,” the report said.

As the department noted, the government of Armenia does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. In 2010, the government provided partial funding for an NGO-run shelter for victims of trafficking and pursued partnerships with NGOs to provide training to hundreds of officials. The government continued to ensure that all convicted traffickers were appropriately sentenced and that those sentences were enforced.

In March, the government enacted amendments to the Criminal Code that further strengthened its anti-trafficking statutes. However, of particular concern was a precipitous drop in the number of victims identified during the year, as well as the absence of investigations of forced labor offenses.

(PanArmenian.net contributed to this report.)

## Opposition Lawmakers in Turkey Boycott Swearing-in Ceremony

ISTANBUL (CNN) – Opposition boycotts marred the swearing-in ceremony of Turkey’s newly-elected parliament on Tuesday.

The contentious session took place less than three weeks after Turkey’s incumbent Justice and Development Party (AKP) won a resounding victory in national elections.

Led by two-term Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the party captured 327 seats in the 550-member body.

But the main Kurdish nationalist party and the largest secularist opposition party both objected after they saw several of their newly elected candidates barred from entering parliament.

More than 30 lawmakers from the Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) boycotted

Tuesday’s session.

They protested a decision by Turkey’s electoral board last week, which disqualified Kurdish candidate Hatip Dicle for “not meeting the requirements for being elected into parliament.”

The board cited Dicle’s 20-month prison sentence after he was convicted of “making propaganda for a terrorist organization,” Turkish official-speak for the separatist rebel group known as the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, or PKK.

The electoral board replaced the disqualified Kurdish candidate with the runner-up, a member of the ruling political party. The replacement AKP candidate was sworn into parliament on Tuesday.

## Mother See: Georgian Church Is Intolerant

ECHMIADZIN (a1plus.am) – At a press conference this week, Bishop Arshak Khachatryan, head of the divan of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, said that the Cahtolicos of All Armenians Karekin II respects the age and experience of Georgian Patriarch Ilya. The comment was in response to the Georgian’s suggestion that Karekin II was too inexperienced to conduct diplomacy.

He had said, Karekin II is “an inexperienced youth who rushes to get everything.”

Overall, Khachatryan gave a positive assessment of the supreme patriarch’s five-day inter-ecclesiastical and pontifical visit to

Georgia, however, he regretted to mention that the Georgian Church’s recent intolerance toward other churches and religious organizations impedes the speedy solution to existing issues facing the sister churches to a certain extent.

According to him, the Mother See does not object the granting of legal status to the Georgian Church by following the example of other religious organizations registered in Armenia. The clergyman says Georgia is obliged to do its part by showing the same attitude toward the Georgian-Armenian community and the church diocese.

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# Community News

## Genocide Studies Focus of New Institute

By Sarah Platanitis

AMHERST, Mass. (*The Republican*) — In April 2009, the traveling exhibit of “A Reason to Remember: Roth Germany, 1933-1942” made its way to the Herter Gallery at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

Two years later, the teacher exhibition is a permanent fixture at the university’s Institute for Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies that officially opened in late March at 758 North Main St.

The institute space includes an audio-visual equipped exhibition hall, program office and research library where it is hoped researchers and visitors will be able to learn from the past to prevent future genocide.

“We opened exhibitional approval for the institute in Fall 2009 and raised money through private donations and gifts,” said James Young, the institute’s director and distinguished university professor whose specialty is the Holocaust and memory studies.

“Two generous founder families in Springfield and Washington DC have given gifts for endowment and operating expenses. A friend of the project and local philanthropist bought the house outright and put it into a private, non-profit foundation and rents it to us for \$1 a year.”

Deborah Roth-Howe, of Amherst, the daughter of Roth-native Herbert Roth, was instrumental in creating “A Reason to Remember,” which was housed at the Hatikvah Holocaust Education Center, from 2004 to the center’s closing in September 2010, on the campus of the Springfield Jewish Community Center.

Roth, was a small village of 500 residents, about a quarter of whom were Jews, when Adolph Hitler became Germany’s chancellor in 1933.

The exhibit tells in detail through original artifacts, photos and documents, the destruction of its Jewish community during the Nazi era.

The Hatikvah center whose last executive director, Rabbi Robert Sternberg, was instrumental in developing curriculum, programs and tours around the center’s resources, was under the umbrella of the Jewish Federation of Greater Springfield.

“The Hatikvah Center approached the university and asked if they would be interested in housing the permanent exhibit,” Young said. “They felt it was time it had a new life.”

Lara Curtis, the institute’s assistant director, said she was a doctorate student at the university when she approached Young about the project.

Others consulted about the possibility of an institute dealing with the Holocaust and genocide were Donald Maddox, professor emeritus of French studies, and Dean Joel Martin of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts.

Organizers said Michael F. Malone, vice chancellor of research and engagement, gave his approval if those involved could raise the money for a site location.

Curtis, Young and Hatikvah center members were said to have walked through many potential houses before finding the former site of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts in March of last year.

Those involved said they easily envisioned space after renovation work at the site for the installation of the Roth exhibit.

“It was uninstalled, packed, moved and re-installed in November,” said Curtis of the exhibit. “James and I are very grateful to the Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts for their gift.”

The exhibition room will also house photographs from Young’s work, “The Texture of see UMASS, page 7



Sharing some patriotic songs and getting some help from older students, the youngest children from Holy Trinity help set the mood for the Armenian Nursing Center residents

## Garden Creates Special Connection between Nursing Home Residents, Holy Trinity Kids

JAMAICA PLAIN, Mass. — There is a rose garden at the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center (ANRC) and the Sunday School and Armenian School children at the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church in Cambridge are primarily responsible for this gift to the center.

For almost 40 years, the children of Holy Trinity Sunday and Armenian Schools have visited the Nursing Center and donated rose bushes in honor of the residents and staff. Seta Buchter, the superintendent of the Sunday School for the past 25 years, is excited about this annual tradition, which is also a mandatory part of the Sunday School and Armenian school curriculums. “It is important for our students to stay connected with the elderly at the Nursing Center,” she says, “we need to honor and respect them since they paved the way for our generation and should not be forgotten.”

When this tradition was started almost 40 years ago, students presented a program and were given juice and cookies before their departure. Twenty years ago, the parents and teachers from Holy Trinity expanded this tradition to also include a cookout. Students recite poetry and sing religious and patriotic songs. The children make an effort to engage the residents. Following the program, these students have a “meet and greet,” where they introduce themselves to the residents and try to learn about their lives and their stories. The older students also help the younger ones interact with the residents, so that they, in turn, will learn the leadership and communication skills that Buchter feels is important.

“Our students develop a relationship with God and our church, and it helps make religion relevant to our children through practical, not theoretical means,” said Buchter. “We try to emphasize the importance of God, family and Church and we try to raise the sensitivity level of our youth. We are so fortunate to have our Parish Council, our parishioners and our pastor, morally and financially supportive all the way.”

Rev. Vasken Kouzouian, pastor of Holy Trinity, is committed to the ANRC and celebrates liturgical services for the residents and staff on a regular basis. “The work of the Nursing Center is a continuation of our church’s work,” reflected Kouzouian. “We are taking care of Armenian seniors and needy members of our community; it is part of our Armenian identity and where our faith and heritage come together.”

This year, more than 55 students, their families and teachers attended this event, held on Sunday, May 22. Alexis, a first-grade student at the Holy Trinity Sunday School, perhaps said it best: “The residents look at the children and remember when they were that age.”

For more information, visit ANRC at [www.armenianhome.org](http://www.armenianhome.org).

— Lalig Musserian

## Bike-a-thon Raises Money For Children In Armenia

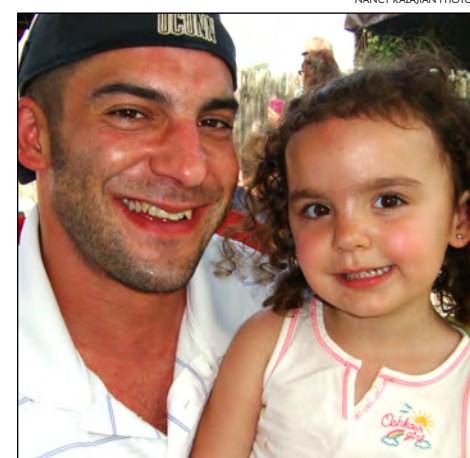
By Nancy Kalajian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

QUINCY, Mass. — On Memorial Day weekend, Isabella Boyajian, 3, sat in a borrowed trailer attached to her dad’s bike and rode from Cambridge to Lexington on the Minuteman Bike Path, all to benefit her peers in Armenia. Joining them were a dozen other bikers, many of whom have made repeated annual rides to support the Nish Boyajian Memorial Foundation whose mission is to help the children of Armenia.

The Bike-a-thon was started by Richard Boyajian of Quincy, a retired barber, nine years ago in memory of his brother, Nish, who died about 16 years ago from cancer. Since 2000, Boyajian has raised money for playgrounds and other school-related projects in Armenia, with a focus on rural schools.

After the Bike-a-thon, bikers and other supporters attended a traditional Armenian BBQ held at the home of Richard Boyajian near Wollaston Beach. About 100 people stopped by throughout the afternoon to enjoy the BBQ



Douglas Boyajian and daughter Isabella after the bike ride

and support the cause. “It’s a great community activity and a great cause,” said Houry Youssoufian, a guest who has long supported the group’s mission. So far, more than \$5,000 has been raised after this year’s bike-a-thon.

“I ride every year and usually get my friends to join me. It’s a very reasonable bike ride. My uncle’s been doing it for years. Some of my cousins race to support my uncle and what he believes in,” shared Melissa Boyajian, hailing from the Lowell area. “I’ve been to Armenia three times; two times was with my uncle so I’ve helped him with this project as videographer (documenting the) before and after, and made a promotional video for the Foundation. The foundation is getting bigger and bigger every year. They really needed the help, with bad plumbing and terrible classroom facilities.”

During the BBQ, Douglas Boyajian, Richard’s nephew, said this was his young daughter’s second race, the first being when she was 6 months old. This time “she wanted to ride her own bike” to help. “This is something we look forward to every Memorial Day Weekend,” he said. “We don’t have enough exposure to the Armenian culture, music and food so this event gives us that opportunity.”

Of course, no traditional Armenian BBQ would be complete without some good old-fashioned Armenian music and many talented musicians donated their talents to the delight of the audience including Garo Papazian, Harry

see BIKE-ATHON, page 9





## OBITUARY

# Marguerite Amirian, 100, NAASR Founder

BROOKLINE, Mass. — Marguerite Amirian, wife of noted structural engineer and Armenian community leader, Thomas T. Amirian, died on May 25 at the age of 100. She was living in her home in Brookline until her hospitalization two weeks before her death.

She was born in Lynn, the first of four children of Melkon and Satenig Noroian, both immigrants from Kharpert, Armenia. A sister, Lily, was born one-and-a-half years later, and a brother, Krikor, four years later. Tragically, he died after being accidentally scalded. His death left an indelible impression on 8-year-old Marguerite.

When Marguerite was 3, the family moved to Shawmut Avenue in Boston, where her father opened up a grocery store. The family was involved in the establishment of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church on Shawmut Avenue, the first Armenian church in Greater Boston. She proudly talked about how she met General Antranig there when he was visiting on a fund-raising mission for the defense of Armenia.

The family eventually settled in Dorchester. When Marguerite was 16, her mother had another son. He was named Krikor after the first son, but was known as Jerry, or Gerald. Unfortunately, her father became blind from glaucoma that same year. Her mother had to go to work and Marguerite, her sister, Lily, and their grandmother took care of the baby.

She attended Roxbury Memorial High School for Girls, graduating in 1929. After graduation, she worked for an insurance company, then as a secretary for a lawyer. When the Depression affected the lawyer's business she helped him get a WPA job and she went to work for Dr. Golden as a dental assistant.

She met her husband at a Boston branch meeting of the Armenian Students' Association (ASA). Thomas, or Tzolog as he was known to everyone in those days, was already very active in the organization. After his graduation from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he made it known that his intentions were serious, but that he needed time, because, having lost his father during the Genocide, he was supporting his mother and putting his younger brother through college. Marguerite was in no hurry; she was attending Portia Law School at night.

As soon as his brother graduated college, Tzolog Amirian presented her with an engagement ring and they married the following September. As it was wartime, in October Tzolog Amirian was sent away from Boston to work on the Manhattan Project. Marguerite Amirian stayed behind to help her sister prepare for her wedding. When his part of the project was finished they settled in the Fenway area of Boston. They had two children, Thomas Tzolog Amirian Jr. and Adrienne.

Marguerite Amirian was always supportive of

her husband's involvement in the Armenian community and their home was an open house. When he and two of his ASA friends founded the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), she became one of the founding members.

Tom Amirian died in 1993, after 51 years of marriage. Her sister Lily died two years later.

Marguerite Amirian was known for her memory of family history and stories of the old days. She also amazed people with her health, because at the age of 92, she had not been to a doctor in 50 years. However, at the age of 94, she had an episode of some unknown cause that led to a hospitalization and then to rehab to regain her strength. She came home from rehab walking again, but she had lost those precious memories and from then on needed to be taken care of by family members.

However, in September she fell and broke her hip. Although her heart was strong enough to undergo a reparative operation, and she was walking again in the rehabilitation program, she no longer had the strength to walk safely. Her lack of mobility led to a decline of health over the last six months, until she was hospitalized three weeks ago with aspiration pneumonia.

She was one week away from her 101st birthday.

In addition to her two children, Thomas T. Amirian, Jr. of Brookline and Adrienne Amirian, of Watertown, she leaves her three nephews, Ronald Krekorian, Russell Krekorian and Roger



Marguerite Amirian

Krekorian. One brother, Gerald Norian, predeceased her, in addition to her husband and sister.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, June 1, at the Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Cambridge. Burial was in Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge in the family plot.

Expressions of sympathy may be made in her honor to the Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge, the Armenian Students' Association, 333 Atlantic Ave., Warwick, R.I. 02888 or the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, 395 Concord Ave, Belmont, MA 02478.

# Dr. Vahaken Ohannes Tachdjian

WYNNEWOOD, Penn. — Dr. Vahaken Tachdjian, a noted doctor, who in addition to practicing medicine, wrote several volumes, died on June 11, at home.

Tachdjian was born in Ourfa, Turkey, on February 28, 1921, to Ohannes and Shoushan Tachdjian, the oldest of six children. Since he was born in the years immediately following the Genocide, he and his family suffered from the consequences of deportation and upheaval. By 1922, the family had moved to Beirut, Lebanon and become the owners of Oriental Rug Company.

Tachdjian attended high school at the Armenian Evangelical College in the western part of the city, and then the American University of Beirut (AUB) Medical School. It was at AUB that he received multiple honors for his efforts, including the Bayard Dodge Medal. Tachdjian was also offered the opportunity to expand his expertise in the United States at medicine, at Massachusetts General Hospital in gastroenterology, at New York University and the University of Pennsylvania. He came to be well-known as a pre-eminent internist, teaching and practicing in his specialty, gastroenterology.

Throughout his medical career, Tachdjian distinguished himself not only as a practicing internist, but also as a researcher, writer and assistant professor. His research can be read in a now-rare edition of the encyclopedic textbook on gastroenterology. Other research can be found in the *Journal of the National Academy of Sciences* and he was named as author of many other articles in scientific journals. His professional memberships and associations were numerous, including Bockus International - Society of Gastroenterology, founded at the University of Pennsylvania. Tachdjian and others recognized the importance of having a forum for Armenian doctors and he was instrumental in establishing the work of the Armenian Medical International Committee (AMIC), for which he served as its first president at its formation in Montreal in 1990. AMIC began to sponsor the fledgling Armenian Medical World Congress and Tachdjian was named its honorary president.

In Pennsylvania, he was named Doctor of the Year (2002), was the Commonwealth's

Commissioner of Medical Education (from 1996) and was given the Key to Philadelphia by then-Mayor Frank Rizzo.

Tachdjian's efforts on behalf of Armenians extended beyond the medical field. He was one of the founding members of the Armenian-American Medical and Dental Association (AAMDA) here and abroad and served as president. He was a participant in the Inter-Communal Committee of Philadelphia, which sponsors events at the five local Armenian churches. The Inter-Communal Committee partnered with the Armenian Missionary Association of America to present Tachdjian with a special award for his ecumenical service. The Catholicos Aram I of the Great House of Cilicia also named him as a Knight of Cilicia in April 2004. At one time he was also president of the Association of Armenian Doctors of the American University of Beirut. Tachdjian was also consulting physician to many dignitaries, including Catholicos Sahag Khabayan, Papken Gulserian, Bedros Sarajian, Karekin Hovsepian, Khoren Paroian, Karekin Sarkissian, Zareh Payaslian and Vazgen Baljian. Other notables included King Faisal of Iraq, the Shah of Iran and King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia.

For the Tachdjian family, however, it was Tachdjian's design of an Oriental carpet that brings the greatest pride. At the lowest point in Armenian history, the period following the Genocide, Ohannes Tachdjian took in the Armenian orphans who had come to Beirut and taught them the trade of Oriental rug making. Tachdjian, then a young man, designed a carpet as a gift of thanks which the orphans at his father's business wove in tribute to the United States and sent during President Calvin Coolidge's term. In the 1950s the carpet's origins were researched and confirmed; the carpet now resides in the Coolidge Collection at the Forbes Library in Northampton, Mass.

An indefatigable servant of the people, Tachdjian retired from active medical practice in 2007. His health declined in recent years and on June 11, Tachdjian died at his home.

He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Asdghik (Der Bedrossian); daughters Ashkhen Setrakian and her husband, Aram, Houry, Maral Tekirian and her husband, Steven; five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, as well as by a brother, Ishkhan Tachdjian, San Francisco, Calif.; a sister, Mary Henne, PhD, Columbus, Ohio; two brothers and one sister predeceased him.

The family requests that gifts in lieu of flowers be made to the Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church (AMCC), or to the Armenian Sisters' Academy in Radnor toward a special scholarship fund established in Tachdjian's name.



Dr. Vahaken Ohannes Tachdjian

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Heating the Cold War: Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Celebrates 25th Anniversary

CAMBRIDGE — At the May 11 annual meeting of the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA), former mayor and longtime city councilor, Frank Duehay, recounted the origins of the association, which was founded 25 years ago.

He described the roots of the project in the Cold War. When President Ronald Reagan came into office, the Cambridge City Council reacted to his bellicosity towards the Soviet Union by initiating a search for a sister-city somewhere in the Soviet Union, as a vehicle for citizen-to-citizen contact and discussion. In 1982 the Cambridge City Council created the Cambridge Commission on Nuclear Disarmament and Peace Education, thereafter known as the Peace Commission, with a small budget and staff, which was given the mandate (among many others) to find such a city.

A committee formed by the Peace Commission researched several cities and settled on Yerevan, since there was an Armenian-American community in Cambridge and adjoining towns in which individuals were already traveling back and forth. In addition, it became apparent there would not have been a supportive political climate in which to choose among cities in various other republics.

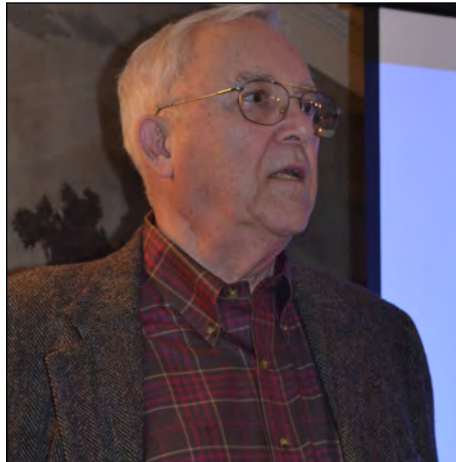
At the time it was unclear what the reception in Cambridge would be, but a great deal of programming was done in advance to introduce Cambridge citizens to culture in the Soviet Union, and once Yerevan was chosen, to encourage children in Cambridge schools to write letters and make art to share with students there. Letters of support were obtained from a huge range of city organizations and officials and institutions, which were then taken in a thick bound book with this first delegation. Duehay noted that “This whole initiative really came from a large number of activists — really kind of a grassroots movement.”

Supporting the idea was Eisenhower’s initiative in 1956 to promote many sister-cities between US

and foreign cities. In the early 1980s, there was only a handful of US-Soviet sister cities, and mid-1980s Cambridge became one of the first of a newly-approved round of partnerships.

Duehay recalled “I got involved because I had just been mayor and the current mayor, (Walter Sullivan) thought I would be a good one to lead the first delegation. Although the delegation was

ELSA RONNINGSTAM PHOTO



Frank Duehay addresses CYSCA’s Annual Meeting.

really originally a grassroots group, the council had to vote on it and approve it and designate an elected official to lead it.” He recalled with some amusement, “The delegation had to accept me.” An 11-person delegation was formed, with Peace Commission Director Jeb Brugmann and other commission members playing major organizing roles. Duehay recalled, “We wrote the committee who had to approve this venture in Moscow and got no answer. Finally, a prominent journalist and MP from Yerevan who was here doing research met with us and said, ‘You have just got to go. I’ll help you anyway I know of.’”

The group made the trip in late May 1986. Duehay continued, “Here we are in Moscow. We were told we were going in to the office of the head person who establishes Sister City relationships. The first thing we presented was the bound volume of support letters. The first one was from member of the US House of Representative Tip O’Neill, the second from Sen. Ted Kennedy. I think that made an impression: showing that we were in the business of trying to improve relationships — in our own tiny way to thaw the ice between both countries. There was of course a great deal of suspicion — not only there but in our country too. They listened to us, liked what we said, but when we left the next day we were on the way to Yerevan, and I realized we knew nothing — didn’t know what we would be doing.” He recounted an amusing incident. “I realized I might have to say something formal. When the plane came in there was a crowd of hundreds of people and I thought ‘I’ve got to get on my toes for this one.’ But everyone got out of the plane and it turned out the crowd was there for a bunch of rock stars who were on our plane!”

“But soon we encountered the people who were there to meet us, including the vice mayor, who was grinning ear to ear. They were delighted to greet us and had an incredible itinerary planned with meetings and visits to cultural or social sites throughout Yerevan. It was a wonderful introduction to those (most of us) in the delegation that were not of Armenian background. We were stunned at what we saw and who we met. It was incredible, almost a life-changing experience for all of us.”

Duehay said he particularly remembered visiting Yerevan State University. “There was a huge crowd of people there to meet us in the auditorium. It was my job to explain why we were there — why our City Council and our community seemed to want to reach out to Yerevan. I did it to the best of my ability. They seemed quite interested — then all of a sudden I thought I would do something. There was only one way out of the auditorium: when I got finished speaking, I stood by the door and shook every hand of every person as they left the room. Some knew English, so we had a chance to chat and one young man said to me, ‘Are you going to be president?’ A lot of college and graduate students didn’t know much about this country. It was really striking how we ran into friendliness and hospitality everywhere.”

Summing up, he said, “The accomplishments of the sister city committee are really quite extraordinary, and I know it’s not easy for non-profits to do these things. It’s the enormous amount of time that people have put into it. And it doesn’t end — the wonderful Community Connections programs that are going on, helping schools — what you’ve spent money on.

This is what the sister-city thing is all about. Who knows who is affected by these university administrators who visited last fall? This is the people-to-people thing at its very best.

## Rev. Boynerian Receives Doctorate

NEWTON, Mass. — The Armenian Memorial Church of Watertown’s pastor, Rev. Avedis Boynerian, was awarded a doctorate of ministry from Andover Newton Theological School on May 21. Andover Newton is the oldest theological seminary in the country.

Boynerian earned this degree in a program designed for ministers who have been serving a church for a period of seven to 10 years. He completed the program in five years while serving the church full time. After completing the nine-course program, he wrote a dissertation, titled “Whose Church Is It?,” focused on the challenges of the Armenian Evangelical Church in North America emphasizing solutions and the role of leadership. The dissertation received high honors.

His studies were made possible by a bequest from the late Dr. Edward and Lucy Karian of Watertown, who were members of the church.

He holds a bachelor’s from Haigazian College (now University) in Beirut, Lebanon, a master’s in theology from the

Near East School of Theology in Beirut and Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey. He has held numerous leadership roles in the Armenian Protestant Community in Syria, where he was pastor for 16 years in Aleppo.

Boynerian has been pastor of the Armenian Memorial Church since October 2003. He served as president of the Watertown Ministerial Association from 2005 to 2006. He has held numerous positions in the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA) including chair of the Ministry Committee from 2006-2008, member of the Board of Directors from 2006-2010 and moderator from 2008-2010. In addition he has broadcast Armenian sermons on the Armenian Independent Radio of Boston from 2004 through the present, as well as co-authoring a book and publishing several articles.

Boynerian lives in Belmont with his wife, Dr. Arpi Pamboukian, and their two sons, Antranig, 12, and Arek, 10. He played soccer with Homenetmen, a first division Armenian soccer team in Beirut, Lebanon, from 1977-1981 and co-coached the Belmont second soccer team in the 2004-2005 season.

## Genocide Studies Focus of New Institute

UMASS, from page 5  
Memory” and smaller exhibits of freestanding walls.

The first planned temporary exhibit will be from The Haiti Jewish Refugee Legacy Project, chronicling the little-known story of Jewish refugees taken in by the Haitian government during World War II and how their families later raised money after the 2010 earthquake to repay their gratitude.

Young has given his 5,000-book library and thousands of photographs to the institute that has also received the book donations from other sources.

Donations of furniture and other necessities will allow graduate students to travel and stay at the institute while they do research.

“We want all middle and high school groups to visit because there is no exhibit like this anywhere. It is community based with universal teaching possibilities,” said Curtis, who is building a Holocaust curriculum for the state of Massachusetts and educational programs for visiting groups.

“The extraordinary part of this whole project is being able to work with so many different programs, departments at the university and the community,” Curtis said.

“Seeing how Holocaust, genocide and memory studies cross discipline and converge in these different places is what makes this so special for me.”

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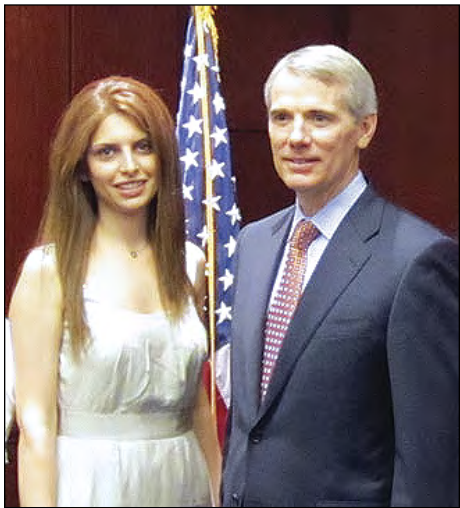




## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Armenian Assembly Interns Arrive in Washington

WASHINGTON — Now in its 34th year, The Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program welcomed 20 college-aged students hailing from seven US states as well as Armenia, Canada and the United Kingdom.



Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) and Giselle Davidian

They join the ranks of more than 900 alumni and will spend the summer living, learning and working here.

The Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program is made possible by the Memorial Fund established by Aram Terjenian, Annie Thomas and Florence Terjenian of Belmont, Mass. Additional support comes from the Richard Tufenkian Memorial Fund, the John Hanessian Scholarship Fund, the Armen Astarjian Scholarship Fund, the Ohanian Memorial Fund, James and Connie Melikian and the Knights of Vartan.

This year Giselle Davidian is the recipient of the Richard Tufenkian Memorial Fund scholarship, while Sonya Babayan and Yelena Mayilyan received scholarships from James and Connie Melikian. The 2011 Knights of Vartan scholarship awardee is Michael Daniell.

Participants are gearing up for an active summer schedule of meetings, lectures and events that has already included: Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA); guest lecturer Kathryn Porter, president of the Leadership Council for Human Rights; Bryan Ardouny, executive director of the Armenian Assembly; Taniel Koushakjian, the Assembly's grassroots director and Dr. Rouben Adalian, director of the Armenian National Institute.

"The Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Internship Program has been outstanding in providing its interns a demanding mix of a professional workplace experience, an intellectual challenge, aca-



Terjenian-Thomas Assembly Interns with Kathryn Porter, president of the Leadership Council for Human Rights (center)

## Armenian Assembly Thanks McCotter as Momentum on Genocide Resolution Grows



From left, Raffi Nersessian, Rep. Thaddeus McCotter (R-MI), Taniel Koushakjian and Bryan Ardouny

WASHINGTON — This week, Executive Director Bryan Ardouny, Grassroots Director Taniel Koushakjian and Wayne State University student and Government Affairs intern Raffi Nersessian of the Armenian Assembly of America thanked Rep. Thaddeus McCotter (R-MI) for his renewed support of the Armenian Genocide resolution.

Meeting in his House Rayburn office, McCotter told the Assembly that the Armenian-American community can "continue relying upon my steadfast support." First elected in 2002, McCotter represents the 11th Congressional District in Michigan and currently serves on the House Financial Services Committee.

"We appreciate Congressman McCotter's standing commitment in support of Armenian-American issues," stated Ardouny.

"It was an honor to meet Congressman McCotter," added Nersessian.

Also this week, a dozen members of Congress on a bipartisan basis joined as cosponsors of H.Res. 304, the Armenian Genocide Resolution introduced by Representatives Robert Dold (R-IL) and Adam Schiff (D-CA) along with Armenian Caucus Co-Chairs Frank Pallone (D-NJ) and Ed Royce (R-CA).

The newest cosponsors to the bill include: Representatives Karen Bass (D-CA), Robert Brady (D-PA), Ken Calvert (R-CA), Dennis Cardoza (D-CA), Lloyd Doggett (D-TX), Bob Filner (D-CA), Cory Gardner (R-CO), Steve Israel (D-NY), Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), Edward Markey (D-MA), Ed Perlmutter (D-CO) and Jared Polis (D-CO).

democratic seminars, and social events," said Davidian, who is particularly excited about all of the upcoming educational opportunities and events. "I am truly relishing the unique opportunity to interact with key figures influencing our global future and to foster what will inevitably become lifelong friendships with bright fellow interns."

In addition, Representatives Ed Royce (R-CA) and Brad Sherman (D-CA) will kick off this summer's Capital Ideas Lecture Series. Interns will also tour the White House, US Department of State, Library of Congress, US Bureau of Engraving and Printing and the Armenian Embassy. Additional presentations from local

academics and professionals speaking on a range of topics from current events to issues of community interest will fill out the summer schedule.

Ardouny noted the success of the internship program. "For more than three decades, with more than 900 college-aged students from virtually every state and eight countries, the Terjenian-Thomas Assembly's Internship Program in Washington has cultivated the next generation of leaders. The Assembly's pioneering internships represent one of the organization's flagship programs that would not have been possible without the generosity and support of our donors and members."

## Graduation Ceremonies Held at St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School

WATERTOWN, Mass. — In June, St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School (SSAES) concluded its 27th academic year. Graduation ceremonies were held on June 16 for kindergarten students and June 17 for elementary students in the presence of parents and friends of the school as well as the pastors of St. Stephen's, First Armenian, Armenian Memorial and St. James churches.

On June 17, 12 students graduated from SSAES. They are: Sena Changelian, Sepahn Chiloyan, Mary Galstian, Anastasia Gouloupoulos, Saro Karaguesian, Anoush Krafian, Liana Nalbandian, Rita Orchanian, Sonia Ourfalian, Daniela Rizza, Rubina Vosbigian and George Yeghyayan.

On June 16, 24 students graduated from Kindergarten. They are: Taleena Anserlian, Taline Antoine, Chris Ashjian, Haig Atinizian, Nicole Babyan, Alexa Balian, Alec DerSirakian, Vanessa Goebel, Sophia Gouloupoulos, Alique Haserjian, Sophia Kahvejian, Vana Karaguesian, Hovanes Kehyeian, Levon Markosyan, Alexander Nalbandyan, Andrew Sarkissian, Philip Sarkissian, Robert Sohigian, Sevan Soukiasian, Aris Stefanis, Alique Stepanian, Sevana Stepanian, Benjamain Surenian and Izabell Tenekedzhyan.

On both days, the principal, Houry Boyamian, focused on the school's recent achievements, especially the graduating class trip to Armenia and the results of the Comprehensive Test of



Grades 4 and 5 students perform on Graduation Night. (Mardo Kevorkian photo)

Basic Skills. This year, students in the fourth grade scored in the top 12 percent nationwide in language skills and in the top 24 percent in mathematics. Students in the second grade scored in the top 23 percent in reading and in the top 15 percent in math computation.

Boyamian thanked the faculty, the administrative staff, the PTO, parent volunteers, the school board and committees, St. Stephen's Church board of trustees, Rev. Archpriest Antranig Baljian, Rev. Karekine Bedourian, as well as all the organizations and individuals that contribute to the advancement of the school.

During the elementary program, Boyamian honored with a special plaque Krista Aslanian, who has been one of the school's staunchest supporters since 1995. Aslanian has wholeheartedly donated her time serving as a member and then as chair of the Education Committee.

The preschool director, Maral Orchanian, had chosen the theme of "community helpers" for the younger students' program. Through song and dance they paid tribute to various professions serving the community.

The elementary program was dedicated to the Armenian Child. Elementary students pre-

sented the theme with poems, songs, dance and drama followed by a video presentation of the fifth-grade trip to Armenia coordinated by Armenian teacher Ardemis Megerdichian.

After the presentation of the diplomas the following awards were given:

Awards for Excellence in Armenian Studies from the Prelacy went to Prelacy Award: Mary Galstian, Liana Nalbandian, Rita Orchanian, Sonia Ourfalian, Anoush Krafian and George Yeghyayan; Armenian Relief Society Award, Rubina Vosbigian; St. Stephen's School Award, Sepahn Chiloyan and Daniela Rizza; St. Stephen's Education Committee Award: Saro Karaguesian; Certificate of Recognition for Interest in Armenian History, Anastasia Gouloupoulos; Certificate of Recognition in Armenian Heritage, Sena Changelian; Presidential Award for Academic Excellence, Anastasia Gouloupoulos, Liana Nalbandian and Rita Orchanian; Presidential Award for Academic Achievement, Mary Galstian, Anoush Krafian and Saro Karaguesian; Citizenship Award, Sonia Ourfalian and Rubina Vosbigian; Nishan and Arshalouys Najarian Scholarship (\$200 each) for interest in music, Sanan Maroukhian; for Interest in the Arts and Music, Narek Sahakian, Sam Sagherian and Karyl Ashjian; ARS Essay Contest, Anoush Krafian; Perfect Attendance Award, Vanessa Goebel (K), Shant Karamousayan (Gr. 2), Ara Changelian (Gr. 3), Sena Changelian (Gr. 5).





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Bike-a-thon Raises Money for Children in Armenia

NANCY KALAJIAN PHOTO

BIKE-ATHON, from page 5

Papazian, Mal Barsamian, John Berberian, Hagop Garabedian, Joe Kouyoumjian, Mike Gregian, Costa Maniatakos, Richard Boyajian and Gregory Smyrlian. Some other musicians and guests couldn't resist, and grabbing a spare dumbeg, tambourine or oud, joined in on the musical fun. Others danced Armenian style, encouraging other guests to join their snake-like line.

And it wasn't just Armenians enjoying the BBQ. Majid Bensellam, originally from Morocco but now residing in Boston, has been a friend of Richard Boyajian for 16 years. "I am sympathetic to this cause. It was a pleasure to do the bike ride early in the morning," declared Bensellam.

Echoing the sentiment was Nancy St. John of Cohasset. "We think what he is doing is great and we like to support it." She heard about the benefit event through her husband, who makes flags, including ones representing Armenia.

Boyajian thinks of every little detail in planning for the annual event. Indeed, he even goes to a local farm in the western suburbs to procure meat so that it's freshly killed "like you'd find in Armenia," he says. Boyajian not only prepares his home and outside yard for the days leading up to the event, but procures and cooks much of the food served at the post-ride BBQ.

Twenty-four hours before the event finds Boyajian with a volunteer team making dozens of *yalanchi*. Then there is a huge salad to put together as well. The next day, the finished products are brought outside and laid out on a long table next to the hugest, deepest platter of



Guests enjoy sitting in the garden.

capital of Armenia, "Deagin Frina, the archaeologist, asked me, Peggy Hovanissian, a member of my Board of Directors, and her dad to meet the mayor of a nearby bordering village. The mayor said, 'We don't need a playground. We need help

the Foundation has raised around \$25,000 for this Hnaberd project. The building, named the Mary Boyajian Parechanian Kindergarten, is in memory of Boyajian's late mother. The sign on the playground acknowledges the donation by the Nish Boyajian Memorial Foundation for its creation.

All the monetary donations received go directly to each project. Boyajian himself pays for his plane fare and hotels.

For this summer's trip to Armenia, Boyajian will take quilts made by a group of senior volunteers from the Beech Street Center in Belmont, to be used by the children when they take naps. "Not one of the quilters is Armenian," said

Boyajian, "It transcends nationalities. It's just human beings helping other human beings with their needs." Some of the quilts were displayed and admired by guests at the BBQ.

Besides helping across the Atlantic, the foundation has also worked to help children locally. Through contact with Precision Fitness's CEO David Aykanian, a life cycle was donated for use by children attending the Abaka Armenian School for Performing Arts. Apo Ashjian, Abaka's founder, was grateful for the gift as it helps the dancers prevent injury.

The foundation's website ([www.boyajianmemorialfoundation.com](http://www.boyajianmemorialfoundation.com)) has pictures of some of its projects.



Musicians play at the BBQ.

hummus that I've ever seen. And of course, no Armenian meal would be complete without pilaf. One really busy place is the BBQ pit where chefs Ara Ghazarian and Ben Der Torosian are constantly moving, flipping and turning the meat, serving an admiring crowd.

Boyajian has tackled numerous projects, often playground-related, in various parts of Armenia, including Sissian, Gumri, Zeitoun and Nor Marash. The foundation's latest project is in the village of Hnaberd in the Ararat Valley. He said this is the first time they have taken on the responsibility of rehabbing an entire building. How he found Hnaberd is the story of one connection leading to another. After he visited a treasured archaeological site at Dvin, an ancient

with this building!" recalls Boyajian.

On a future trip, Peggy Hovanissian represented the board and oversaw the construction in purchasing the materials from local sources and hiring the local skilled labor to put a roof on the building, add doors and windows, remove the outhouse and redo the plumbing. Half of the building is now used as a community center, and the other half is used as a teaching and napping area for Kindergarten age children. Hopefully, cots, a stove, refrigerator and cabinets will soon be added — essential when the staff must prepare meals since the children stay there half the day and need to nap while their parents are working long hours in the fields and farms to earn a living. In three years,



More music entertained guests at the BBQ.

## Armenian Sisters' Academy Gets Closer Look at Colonial New England

LEXINGTON, Mass. — On June 13, the Armenian Sisters' Academy (ASA) completed its spring visiting speakers series with a presentation on colonial New England by members of the Billerica Historical Society.

The elementary classes at the ASA have on many occasions read about colonial life in small New England towns, the dynamic presence of historical actors and their demonstrations brought history to life.

Among the demonstrations the students saw up close included an antique foot-pow-



Volunteers from the Billerica Historical Society demonstrated tools used by Colonialists for the students of the Armenian Sisters' Academy of Lexington.

ered toaster and candle-making tools. These demonstrations left students with a stronger sense of how past generations appreciated each and every item in their homes since in most cases these were grown, built or made by families themselves — the concept of reduce, reuse and recycle really hit home.

"Students loved learning about the daily lives of children in colonial America," stated Cathy Izzo, social studies teacher at the ASA. "After the presentation, students were able to compare their lives to children living in colonial times."

Topics covered this spring by the speakers included world geography with the EarthView Project out of Bridgewater State University; chemistry with graduate students from the MIT Department of Chemistry; classical Armenian instruments with musician Mari Bertizian; meteorology with Chris Lambert of WHDH TV and sociology with Dr. Susan Pattie, author of *Who are the Armenians?*





## New York METRO

# Summer Interns Begin New Projects in Zohrab Center

By Taleen Babayan

NEW YORK – The Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) has been a hub of activity in the summer weeks, as

further the vision of the Zohrab Center and to make its resources more accessible to individuals interested in Armenian studies around the world.

The interns have been tackling a range of responsibilities this summer, including cataloging books and digitizing the center's holdings to make them available for the general public.



Armen Bandikian organizing the Zohrab Center's 18th- and 19th-century Armenian book collection



Jennifer Manoukian and Nicole Saglamer assist at a Zohrab Center-sponsored event.

While the interns' contributions have indeed been valued in the center, they too come away with a newfound appreciation for Armenian literary traditions and culture.

"For me, working at the Zohrab Center has been more than a job, but rather an experience that allows me to leave work each day having learned something new," said Saglamer, a sophomore studying chemistry at NYU, who is interning in the center for the second consecutive summer.

In fact, it was the center's materials on Zabel Yesayan that created Manoukian's ties to the Zohrab Center. While working on her thesis paper on the author, she found useful one-of-a-kind resources for her research.

"I relied heavily on the Zohrab Center's periodical collection for my project," said Manoukian who studied Middle Eastern studies and French at Rutgers University. "While doing my research, I realized how valuable and unique it is to have such a vast collection of Armenian-language resources open to everyone."

Echoing Manoukian's sentiments, Bandikian, a senior studying information systems at Stony Brook University, said he felt "compelled" to

intern in the center for another summer.

"After working here for two years I am still amazed to see the types of books I come across while doing my work," he said.

The Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center was founded in 1987 by Dolores Zohrab Liebmann, in honor of her parents, Krikor and Clara. Her father, Krikor Zohrab, was a prominent lawyer, author and Parliamentarian in the Ottoman Empire, who was arrested and killed during the Armenian Genocide.

The Zohrab Center serves as a research library and has a rich and diverse collection ripe with books relating to Armenian history, literature and religion. It also serves as a cultural center, hosting conferences, lectures, film screenings and book presentations among many other events tailored to the local Armenian community.

Saglamer notes, "Interning at the center has given me the opportunity to meet other Armenian youth and most importantly, it has allowed me to stay connected with my Armenian identity."

For more information, visit [www.zohrabcenter.com](http://www.zohrabcenter.com).

the library's doors have opened to its summer interns.

The dedicated interns, including Armen Bandikian, Jennifer Manoukian and Nicole Saglamer, have been working hands-on to help

Last summer, with the help of the interns, the center's online catalog was launched. More than 15,000 books in the library's collection can now be accessed around the world by visiting [www.zohrabcentercatalog.com](http://www.zohrabcentercatalog.com).

## AGBU Camp Nubar First Session Sold Out, 48th Summer Poised to Start

CATSKILLS, N.Y. – On Saturday, July 2, AGBU Camp Nubar's 48th summer season will kick off and the first session is officially sold out. Campers from near and far are getting ready for an exciting summer with fellow campers hailing from the United States (including New York, New Jersey and Michigan), Canada (Montreal and Toronto), France and Turkey. A handful of spots remain for the second and third session, so parents are urged to sign up before it is too late.

This year, Camp Nubar will be introducing a great addition to its Armenian Program as they welcome two instructors from the AGBU Children's Centers in Armenia. From July 16 to August 6, ballet master Arman Julhakyan and art instructor Ella Pepanyan will conduct classes for the youth in traditional Armenian dance, arts, crafts and pottery. The Armenian Program is an integral part of Camp Nubar's outstanding classic activities, such as archery, ceramics, boating, sports, tubing, horseback riding, arts and crafts, digital media technology, photography and much more.

While Nubar staff will be arriving at the camp shortly, they have been hard at work on this season's calendar. Led by director Jennifer Omartian, the camp staff create an unforget-

table learning experience that encourages friendships and community. Omartian has been a member of Camp Nubar for the past 18 years and her dedication and love of AGBU's camp ensures a nurturing and fun environment for the campers and staff.

Omartian has a strong team of head staff working together throughout the summer. Returning for his fourth year as assistant director is Daniel Antreasyan, whose passion for Camp Nubar and the Armenian community is evident year round in his work at AGBU, where he serves as the manager of the organization's University Outreach Program. Jackie Distasi will be the waterfront director for the third summer. Taking on the role of girls' head and boys' head counselors are Tamar Merjian and Armen Shamamian, who together will motivate their staff and keep campers smiling each day.

If a child is too young for camp, they can still be a part of Camp Nubar. On Saturday, June 11, Nubar Kids enjoyed a day at Alley Pond Environmental Center in Flushing, Queens. Twenty children, ages 1-8, took part in play time, an outdoor nature hike, arts and crafts and a bagel brunch. They were joined by Camp Nubar alumni, parents and friends.

To enroll online, visit [www.campnubar.org](http://www.campnubar.org).

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**New York**  
**METRO**

# Kirikian Armenian School Celebrates 50 Years

## Students Participate in End-of-Year Hantes

By Taleen Babayan

TENAFLY, N.J. — This year the annual *hantes* at Kirikian Armenian School was like none other. Not only did it mark the school's end of the year cultural program, it was also a time to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the school and to pay tribute to its historic past.

As alumni, parents and teachers gathered on Sunday afternoon, June 13 at St. Thomas Armenian Church, they were greeted by more than 100 Armenian school students who entered Saddler Hall to the patriotic song, *Garmeer, Gaboyd, Dziranakoy*n. The students, from nursery to the seventh grade, took their



The graduating class of Kirikian Armenian School

places on the stage, which was flanked by two large banners of every Armenian school graduate's favorite characters, "Ara" and "Maral."

The afternoon also paid homage to long-time Armenian educator Sylva Der Stepanian, the mastermind of the Armenian school curriculum now widely used in Armenian schools around the world, which in the 1970s introduced the popular "Ara" and "Maral" characters. Serving as the first principal of Kirikian Armenian School, Der Stepanian's efforts and dedication laid a strong foundation for educating generations of Armenian-Americans over the next five decades.

Siblings Shahe and Katia Jebejian, emulating "Ara" and "Maral" in dress and character, welcomed everyone to the program — to much fanfare — promising an afternoon of song and dance and many other Armenian cultural elements.

In her welcoming address, Ani Capan, principal of the school for the past 25 years, said it was a memorable day for the Kirikian Armenian School community. She noted the most-recent successes of

the school, with its record-high enrollment of 130 students — vowing to "double this number" in the future. She credited the teaching staff's hard-work in providing quality Armenian instruction to the students week after week.

Commending Capan and the teaching staff for their dedicated service to the school, Very Rev. Papken V. Anoushian, pastor of St. Thomas Armenian Church, said, "they are all deserving of our applause and our respect, because they have given respect and love to our church and to our school."

"Before they leave Kirikian, our students have to be proud of the Armenian Church, language, culture, history and of our mother Armenia," he added.

A testament to Anoushian's words was the 50th-anniversary reunion committee, whose members had been preparing for this milestone since last year. Sarkis Jebejian, chairman of the committee, said the members were proud to contribute to this memorable occasion.

"We realized that we had very important memories of our childhood here," he said. "We didn't just learn to read and write or dance here. We learned to be good Armenians and to be good people."

He expressed his gratitude to Capan and to all the teachers for their continued support and commitment to the school.

"I was so proud watching a committee of former students, full of enthusiasm, helping the school to organize this 50th anniversary," Capan later said. "They made us feel young again and look to the future with renewed hope."

Throughout the afternoon, each of the grades presented various aspects of Armenian culture, including poem recitations, dance, song and theater. Graduation ceremonies for the kindergarten and seventh-grade classes also took place. In her farewell speech, seventh-grade graduate Carla Sabbagh reflected on her and her classmates' time as students at Kirikian Armenian School and the lessons they learned that they would carry with them in their futures.

Another highlight of the afternoon was a video presentation tracing Kirikian Armenian School's history from its beginnings to present-day, filled with footage and photographs of students and teachers from the past 50 years.

Following the *hantes*, the celebration continued in the adjacent atrium. Rose-filled vases adorned with Armenian letters served as cen-

terpieces, reminding former students about their lessons of the "ayp, poo, pen." A life-size cut-out board of "Ara" and "Maral" was also on display where many children posed for photographs with the beloved characters.

As different generations of alumni, teachers and students gathered together, they enjoyed conversation, Armenian food and the cutting of



Sarkis Jebejian, chairman of the reunion committee

the celebratory cake.

"A success of 50 years does not come to realization by itself," said Capan. "Unity with one single goal and working hand in hand is the secret of all success."

## Claire Kedeshian Receives Henry L. Stimson Medal

NEW YORK — Claire S. Kedeshian, a federal prosecutor in New York, received the 2011 Henry L. Stimson Medal from the City Bar Association on behalf of the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York, Civil Division.

The medal is awarded annually to outstanding assistant US attorneys from both the Eastern and Southern Districts of New York, one from the Civil Division, one from the Criminal Division, who exemplify the characteristics of integrity, fair play and superior commitment to the public good. The US Attorney's Office for the EDNY is one of the largest and most active offices in the country and represents the government in federal cases throughout New York City and Long Island.

Kedeshian is a two-time recipient of the Attorney General Director's Award for her work on civil racketeering and international narcotics forfeiture cases. She has also been honored with the Department of Justice's John Marshall Award for outstanding achievement in asset forfeiture.

A graduate of Barnard College, Columbia University and Brooklyn Law School, Kedeshian has served as an elected member of the board of directors for the Armenian Bar Association and numerous other non-profit organizations. She has been a guest lecturer to law enforcement communities and at educational institutions throughout the United States, including West Point Academy, as well as internationally in Armenia, South America and Mexico.



From left, Dr. Levon Capan, Junior Choir director and St. Thomas Parish Council chairman; Ani Capan, principal of the Kirikian Armenian School; Artemis Arslanian, Executive Committee member and pianist and Very Rev. Papken V. Anoushian, pastor of St. Thomas Armenian Church



Kindergarten graduation students



Students performing a traditional Armenian dance during the hantes





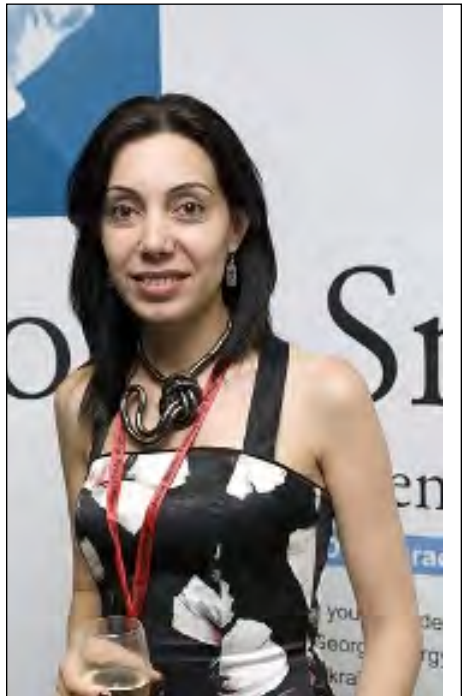
# Arts & Living

## Photographic Exhibition: Greeks Of Armenia

NEW YORK – The Association of Greek American Professional Women (AGAPW), under the auspices of the Greek General Consulate and Ambassador Aghi Balta, recently organized a photographic show and presentation by Dr. Marina Mkhitarian, titled “Greeks of Armenia: In Memory of My Mother,” on Greeks of Armenia, which is dedicated to the memory of her Pontic mother and in celebration of the mothers of the Greek diaspora. The event took place at the Greek Consulate May 2-16.

Each year AGAPW celebrates mothers of Greek descent by featuring the body of work of artists or other professionals inspired by and dedicated to Greek mothers and mothers of the Greek diaspora.

Born and raised in Yerevan, Armenia, to an Armenian father and a Pontic-Greek mother,



Dr. Marina Mkhitarian

she has done extensive photographic research on the Greek community in Armenia. Her collection of archival family photos, together with her own original photographs of Greek Armenians in their homes, communities and classrooms, where the Greek language is being taught, records the community's rich history and accomplishments, their contributions to their homeland and continuous efforts to preserve the Greek language and culture and connect to the motherland.

Mkhitarian has dedicated her work to the memory of her mother, Nina Lazareva (Lazaridou) and to all Greek mothers.

For more information, visit [www.greeksofarmenia.com](http://www.greeksofarmenia.com).

## Three Generations Sing Together in Michigan

MIDLAND, Mich. – On June 16, three generations performed *Carmina Burana* by Carl Orff with the Midland Symphony Orchestra. Participating with 300 singers on one stage were Sarah Dergazarian, her daughter, Annette Mamassian, and Annette Mamassian's daughter, Anna Mamassian.

Dergazarian, a retired public school music educator and choral director of the Midland Youth Honors Chorus, which she founded in 1981, is recognized in the music society throughout Michigan. Upon graduation from the University of Wisconsin, she became the director/organist of the Armenian Church in Greenfield, Wis. As a resident of Midland for 52 years, she has established herself as a driving

see MICHIGAN, page 13



Arax Mansourian, left, with Karen Shahgaldyan

## Khachaturian Trio Perform Outstanding Concerts in Sydney

SYDNEY, Australia – From their first performance as guest artists during the April 24 commemoration to two sell-out concerts at The Independent Theatre, the Khachaturian Trio captivated audiences with their mesmerizing performances of International and Armenian masterpieces.

The members of the Khachaturian Trio are Armine Grigoryan (piano), Karen Shahgaldyan (violin) and Karen Kocharyan (cello), who are not only distinguished virtuoso performing artists individually, but as an ensemble have managed to successfully create an almost perfect musical trinity through interweaving their profound sense of harmony with brilliant technique and craftsmanship.

Although a trio should have only three members, the group has adopted a fourth member, Sona Barseghian, who is in her own right a virtuoso pianist and a laureate from many distinguished international competitions. Barseghian accompanies the trio and performs with her mother, Armine Grigoryan, pieces written for two pianos or for four hands.

The trio's tour of Sydney was the brainchild of Avo and Jacqueline Tevanian, who heard the trio perform in Yerevan earlier in the year at a special concert organized by Assadour Guzelian. Upon hearing the Khachaturian Trio perform, Avo Tevanian was so inspired that he decided to sponsor their trip to Australia so they could perform in Sydney as well. He contacted Toros Boghossian, chairman of the AGBU Sydney Chapter, and requested AGBU's collaboration in organizing the trio's tour and concerts in Sydney.

The AGBU Special Events Team was formed in 2006 to organize events to mark the 100th anniversary of the founding of the AGBU. The team successfully stage-managed the performance of Tigranian's "Anoush" Opera, with Arax Mansourian in the lead role.

Since then, the team has been involved in organizing many artistic and cultural events presented by the AGBU.

It is rare to find a team like theirs that can successfully work together over five years with absolute unity and camaraderie – each one of the members bringing their own special talents into the group.

The members of the team are (in alphabetical order) Sylvia Aghabekian, Lucy Aroyan, Nora Bastajian, Tatar Bedikian and Sylvia Jancotchian. The team was ably supported by members of the AGBU Executive Committee: Arto Karagelinian, Hovhanness Kouyoumdjian, Dikran Dikranian and Sarkis Manoukian with the leadership of Toros Boghossian. A large production such as this takes months to coordinate and requires a lot of support from the community.

On Tuesday, May 3, the trio gave a master class in Sydney open to Armenian advanced-level music students and performers. It was an unprecedented event (probably the first event of its kind in the community) attended by talented young musicians. The master class was held at The Theme and Variations Showroom in Willoughby courtesy of Ara and Nyree Vartoukian who opened their studios late in the evening to accommodate the event. All the performers, including their parents and teachers who were present, benefited from the opportunity to attend.

The Khachaturian Trio had a busy 10 days in Sydney. Their first performance was during the commemoration ceremony of the Armenian Genocide, which was held on April 29. The trio was also invited to join the panel for the auditions to the upcoming Armenian Community Performing Arts Concert (taking place in Sydney in early June). The trio was invited by many organizations in the community and attended many cultural events, graciously performing wherever the opportunity presented. The trio members also took time to tour the city, meet local Armenians and non-Armenians and left great impressions on everyone they met.

The highlight of the Khachaturian Trio tour was their two concerts held on May 6 and 7 at the Independent Theatre in North Sydney. Both events were sell-out

see KHACHATURIAN, page 13

## Record Number of Young Adults at Aznavour Tribute

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – The Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) tribute to international legend Charles Aznavour on May 20 is still very much on the minds of many of the attendees. The banquet at the Wall Street Cipriani was unique in several ways, including being one of the largest attended Armenian events ever – more than 600 present – and for the great attraction it had for young adults who attended in impressive numbers.

“Inspired,” gushed lawyer Martha Mensoian, one of the many young professionals in attendance. “FAR is one of the few Armenian organizations I am absolutely committed to supporting. And Aznavour is an icon, both in and outside the Armenian community. To combine the two in one event made attending a non-issue,” she commented.

Melanie Dadourian, a producer of documentaries for the Fox News Channel, and also a strong supporter of FAR development programs, felt that “it was important to honor someone like Charles Aznavour who has given so much to Armenia.” Dadourian added that she was “especially moved” that despite Aznavour's fame, success and busy schedule, he still devotes time and money to the Armenian people. “On that warm May evening, I walked away from Cipriani feeling so much hope and pride that the tradition of giving continues,” she said

For Alex Topakbashian, a financial analyst, FAR has been the vehicle by which he and his wife, former ACYOA members, had the opportunity to travel to Armenia with the annual trip that FAR sponsors. While in Armenia, the Topakbashians “experienced firsthand the kind of work that FAR is doing and the contributions it is making to the development of Armenia.” Since then, they have felt a strong connection to FAR “as the primary vehicle for making a difference in Armenia.”

He called the tribute “fabulous. The venue, the atmosphere and the experience were exquisite. With Charles Aznavour as the honoree, who is quite possibly the greatest example of an Armenian individual who has an impact on a global scale, this was an evening we knew we would remember.”

Topakbashian related that seeing so many people at the event that he has interacted with over the years, he was left thinking about “how Armenians can leverage the strength of our community, and what kind of impact it would have on Armenia, if we did.”

Marine Vorperian, a criminal justice investigator, found the Aznavour tribute “flawless and magnificent. The organizers planned it to perfection,” she said. “It was wonderful to see so many people of all ages, attending.”

Since childhood, Vorperian related that she has been a “great fan” of Aznavour's music. “I have always found him inspirational, and have loved the passion and energy he puts into his performances. He is second to none. So when I had the opportunity to attend this event, there was no hesitation.”

Project Manager Aline Markarian, who is also the chairperson of the AGBU Young Professionals of Greater New York, also was inspired to see “the immense contribution” that Aznavour has made towards helping Armenia which she said was shown with particular poignancy during the video portion of the tribute.

Markarian, whose mother was a member of the evening's planning committee, noted the “incredible energy” among the attendees, and the notable showing of young adults. “The event was even more special for who was being honored, this incredible legend, Charles Aznavour, a humble man who has made such a great impact on this world, not only for Armenians, but also for the world at large. In such a beautiful space with its impressive grandeur, one could not help but feel how special the occasion was,” she declared. “This was an event that I will always remember.”





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## Ode to Many Forms of Love in Der-Hovanneisan Book

**Dancing At the Monastery.** Poems by Diana Der-Hovannessian, Sheep Meadow Press, Box 1345, Riverdale, New York, 10471 103 pages 16.50

**By Susan Pahigian**

These poems may be telling a true story about a lost love, or they may be a series of imagined dancing adventures, either way they are heart-wrenching and filled with surprises. They are interspersed with the small touching poems, referring to the poet's Armenian heritage.

This is Diana Der-Hovannessian's 12th collection of her own poems and 24th book, counting her translations, which have been called "works of genius" by the *New York Times* critic Nona Balakian. The *Times Literary Review* called her a "brilliant poet who has opened up the book of her people to the English-speaking world."

In this new book we find many love poems, many to a boy drowned in the Tyrrhenian Sea, some to dancers in the hills of Sassoun, to musician friends such as Maro Ajemian and mountains, especially for "the one mountain that lies in clouds and snows across the border, Ararat, that like a dream comes and goes."

There are poems about her university days in New England, others about New York, and still others based in Armenia where she was a Fulbright scholar and teacher of American poetry. The thread that ties them together is the music of the Armenian dance.

In "Dancing With the Dead" she writes: The best waltzer I ever danced with was a Russian in a Moscow café. Next best was my college friend Lindy. I wonder if his mother had sent him to dance lessons too. We always had so much to say to one another we talked even when we danced. Except now when there is a great Strauss waltz on the radio, we dance without saying a word.

Some of the strongest poems are connected to her inherited background:

I have come to Yerevan;  
My father earned for me the right.  
My father earned more than the right.  
He shed his blood and spent his life  
wanting to return to Yerevan.

In the battle where General Murad died  
my father also left for dead  
rose with a bullet in his head  
that like this ache always remained.

I have inherited his pain.  
I have inherited his claim.  
I have inherited his fight.  
I have inherited his right  
to return to Yerevan.

There are many, prosy poems, telling stories such as "The Horse Whisperer," about her father's horses in Armenia and poems about her friendship with other poets, such as Frances Minturn Howard.

The volume also contains poems in form, sonnets and villanelles, all well suited for dancing on paper.

## Khachaturian Trio Performs in Sydney

KHACHATURIAN, from page 12

performances attended by Armenian and non-Armenian music loving audiences. Playing a different program each night, the trio presented a well-selected group of works – challenging but at the same time enjoyable works for all to appreciate.

For the Saturday concert, audiences were delighted when the local prima donna of Australian Opera, soprano Arax Mansourian, joined the trio. Mansourian was one of the leading sopranos of the Armenian National Opera before moving to Australia in 1994. Since her arrival in Sydney, she has achieved more than any other Armenian soprano, landing leading roles with the prestigious Opera Australia and receiving acclaim from critics, who have praised her for her exquisite timbre, broad vocal range and fine acting ability. The nostalgia expressed when Mansourian sang Ganachian's *Oror* and Komitas' *Garun-a* was so overwhelming that one could see tears flowing from some of the audience members.

What sets the Khachaturian Trio apart is their gift of generosity. Having found success and fame not only in Armenia but also on the worldwide stage, the trio members have been

on a quest to identify and nurture new talent. Technology and globalization have shifted interests in many young children away from classical music and the arts to spending time on computers playing games. Many parents in the villages and regions in Armenia lack the financial means to support their children's musical development. Recognizing this problem, the trio tour Armenia and give master classes at music schools in order to identify gifted young musicians and provide them



From left, Karen Shaggaldyan, Armine Grigoryan, Sona Barseghyan and Karen Kocharyan

with the opportunity to further develop their musical education. With the help of Assadour Guzelian of London, they have formed a special fund called "Young Talent Quest" to help support the musical education of these young children and already the fund is supporting many gifted Armenian children to continue their music studies in Yerevan.

All good things come to an end and the trio have returned back to Yerevan to continue with their busy schedule of tours and concerts. The organizers thank Mr. and Mrs. Tevanian and the AGBU Sydney Chapter for inviting the trio, whose music will remain vivid for years in the memory of those who attended the concerts.

— H. J. Sebouhian

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## Three Generations Sing Together in Michigan

MICHIGAN, from page 12

force in youth choral music and continues to mentor young vocal students. In 1989, she was named Musician of the Year by the Midland Symphony Orchestra and Music Society and in 1999, she received a special tribute from the governor of the Michigan. She has conducted workshops at the University of Michigan Midwest Music Conference and at numerous Michigan colleges. In the Armenian Church, she has conducted workshops for the St. John Church Komitas Choir in Detroit, St. Mesrob Church in Racine, Wis. and for the Choir Association of the Western Diocese in California. Dergazarian and her late husband, Thomas, have an education endowment for St. Nersess Seminary, and she also has an endowment with the Midland Area Community Foundation providing scholarships to students majoring in vocal music education.

Annette Mamassian, a University of Michigan graduate, has sung with the U of M Arts Chorale, Michigan Opera Theater and currently sings with the Madrigal Chorale of Southfield, where she has performed twice at the White House. She has been a member of and soloist t St. John Armenian Church Komitas Choir of Detroit for more than 25 years. Having performed this cantata many times, she was invited by the director of the Midland Music Society to sing in this production.

Anna Mamassian, a junior at Central Michigan University, is a member of the University Concert Choir and is pursuing a double major in music education in instrumental and vocal. A graduate of Detroit St. John Church School, in 2007 and 2008 she participated in the Eastern Diocese Junior Choir Leadership Program. Upon completion of her training, she conducted parts of the *badarak* in New York and with the St. John Komitas Choir.

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## COMMENTARY

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## COMMENTARY

## Time to Contain Georgian Arrogance

By Edmond Y. Azadian

His Holiness Karekin II had been planning to visit Georgian Armenian communities for a long time. His visit would be only the second one since Khirmian Hairig, Catholicos of all Armenians, visited more than a century ago. On again and off again, the visit finally happened when Georgian Church authorities, and especially Georgian Patriarch Illya II, extended the invitation, when all his traps and plots were in place to intimidate his Armenian counterpart.

Georgians are known to be fun-loving people, always at the expense of others. During the last several centuries, Armenians built their capital, Tbilisi, which in the 19th century had become the Paris of the Caucasus. When the Soviet revolution came to be, it was a very handy excuse to get rid of the capitalist class — mostly Armenian — and they took over what that class had built in terms of culture, architecture, material wealth and religious institutions.

Georgia is the only other Christian nation in the Caucasus, but it has always been envious of the Armenians and thus is always plotting against Armenia, in collusion with its enemies.

It turns out that that competitive envy had also permeated the Georgian religious order, beginning from their Patriarch Illya II down to the ordinary priests usurping Armenian churches, all along and trampling human and minority rights.

In Georgia, Armenians are mostly concentrated in the capital Tbilisi and the Javakhk region. During the Soviet period and subsequent independence years, Georgians have repressed Armenians into becoming a docile community.

Although the Armenian government tries to help fellow Armenians in Georgia, it has to do so with kid gloves, because Armenia's economic lifeline to the world beyond goes through Georgia. In addition, gas and oil from Russia pass through the Georgian territory. The Tbilisi government has deftly used those factors every time it has decided to exert political pressure on Armenia.

Javakhk is an Armenian territory, which has fallen under Georgian administration by an accident of history, during the 1918-1920 period. The Georgians have used tacit and not-so-tacit methods to depopulate the region of Armenians.

The catholicos's visit this month brought out the true colors and intentions of the Georgian clergy.

To begin with, the Georgian Patriarch accompanied Karekin, under the pretext of hosting him on Georgian land, but in reality, he tried to steal the show, because Armenians all over that land gave a warm reception to the Armenian pontiff. His Holiness also raised some outstanding issues between the churches: confiscation of Armenian monasteries and places of worship and above all the status of the Armenian Church in Georgia. As of today, the Armenian Church does not have a legal status in that country. The government gets away with murder, thumbing its nose at Armenian demands.

It is ironic that the European Union, the US State Department and human rights groups are at Armenia's back to accept and register all kinds of esoteric sects which wreak havoc in Armenia, undermining the authority of the Armenian Apostolic Church and infiltrate the military to incite soldiers to give up arms against the enemy. Armenia is criticized as being a partially free country, whereas Georgia enjoys impunity though it has refused to recognize any church as a legal entity, because Georgia is the West's spoiled brat in the Caucasus.

During His Holiness Karekin's visit, a joint communiqué surfaced in Tbilisi, with preposterous demands. The Armenian side was quick to clarify to the public that it has not signed such a communiqué. The outrageous demand in that communiqué claimed parity between the two churches, meaning, whatever status the Armenian Church enjoys in Georgia, the same status should be accorded to the Georgian Church in Armenia.

Georgian clergy have confiscated Armenian churches in their country, whereas no Georgian churches exist in Armenia, even if the Armenian clergy harbored the same intensions versus their Georgian counterparts.

Despite this fact, the Georgian Patriarch announced a few years ago the formation of the Diocese of the Georgian Church in Northern Armenia, where very few Georgians live and no churches exist.

Adding insult to injury, the Georgian Patriarch made some derogatory remarks about our Catholicos, dispensing advice that he should wait to have more experience and that change cannot be brought overnight, forgetting that he needs to learn some common courtesy and religious conduct and not to behave like a Georgian *guindo*.

Although the Catholicosate rebuked the remarks of the Georgian pontiff, further action is needed to tame the Georgian arrogance.

In the first place, the European governments who request compliance from Armenia must be alerted. If necessary, legal action needs to be taken.

Armenians in Javakhk have limited resources and the Armenian government is in a precarious situation and realizes the cost of rocking the boat. Therefore, it is incumbent on diaspora organizations — and especially religious institutions — to assume the responsibility and to meet the challenge.

Washington, the patron saint of Georgia, has to be apprised of the religious intolerance and abuse of human rights rampant in that country. In this instance, since the issue is mostly religious in nature, both the Diocese and the Prelacy can come together to draft a position paper and appeal to our legislatures who have become so generous in spoiling Georgia in order to spite Moscow.

In addition, letters, e-mails and phone calls should inundate the State Department and congressional offices.

Sitting idly will not change the desperate situation of the Armenians in Georgia.

This boundless arrogance has to be contained.

## LETTERS

## Tekeyan Fund Chairperson Congratulates Mirror-Spectator on Anniversary

To the Editor:

Tekeyan Centre Fund congratulates you sincerely on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, the newspaper that has been a bridge between the Motherland and the diaspora for many decades.

Due to the great efforts of editors and journalists devoted to the *Mirror-Spectator*, the

newspaper not only has survived in such difficult times but also has prospered and gained more and more supporters. Through its intelligent policy the newspaper has made a great contribution to the integration of Armenians with the American society while preserving and developing the Armenian language, traditions, culture and religion. Vote of thanks to the *Mirror-Spectator* for educating our

younger generation with the Armenian spirit.

Once again, our wholehearted congratulations to you all! Wishing you great enthusiasm and aspiration that will help you continue serving to the benefits of our nation. Further success and best wishes in your endeavors.

— Vartan Ouzounian,

Chair, Board of Trustees of Tekeyan Centre Fund

## Notice to Contributors

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

— All articles submitted should be typed, double (or triple) spaced and printed in a type size large enough to be clearly legible (10

point or larger). Submissions that do not conform to these specifications will be assigned lowest priority.

— Articles sent by fax are acceptable, and e-mail submissions are encouraged.

— All submissions should include the name of a contact person and a daytime telephone number.

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

— Photos will be published without charge at the discretion of the editors and art director.

Photos will be returned only if a self-addressed and stamped envelope is included.

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

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





## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Hanging Armenia's Dirty Laundry in Public

President Serge Sargisian made an important appearance at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in Strasbourg last week. In a whirlwind 30-minute speech, he covered Armenia's internal and foreign affairs, presenting his country in the best possible light before a distinguished foreign audience.

On the domestic front, President Sargisian spoke about fighting corruption, holding "fair and transparent elections," and overcoming "the consequences of the tragic events of March 2008."

The President then reminded the European Parliamentarians about Armenia's "shared historical and cultural legacy" with Europe and discussed the ongoing negotiations to resolve the Artsakh (Karabagh) conflict. He condemned "the extreme level of Armenophobia and racism" in Azerbaijan, and spoke of the difficulty of making "a concession to the side that is looking for a convenient excuse to shoot at us."

President Sargisian went on to accuse the Turkish government of undermining the "normalization" of Armenia-Turkey relations "by setting preconditions and failing to honor its commitments, which rendered the ratification of the signed Protocols impossible." He called on Turkey and Azerbaijan to end the "unlawful blockade imposed on Armenia" and accused Turkey of "not only failing to

recognize, but also engaging in a policy of blunt denial of the genocide of Armenians committed in the Ottoman Empire in 1915." He pledged that Armenians and all those concerned with crimes against humanity "will henceforth remain focused on the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide."

After his speech, President Sargisian spent another 30 minutes answering questions from PACE delegates representing Lithuania, France, Switzerland, Russia, Moldova, Holland, Armenia and Ireland. Five Azerbaijanis had placed their names on the list of parliamentarians to ask questions, but none of them did so. The delegates from Turkey had also made a unanimous decision not to question the Armenian president, as reported by *Hurriyet* Turkish newspaper.

The question that attracted most attention was the one asked by Parliamentarian Zaruhi Postanjyan from Armenia, a member of the opposition Heritage Party. She asked President Sargisian: "Since an authoritarian regime has been established in Armenia and all elections from 1995 on have been rigged," wouldn't it be preferable if he organized special and fair elections and then "resigned?"

As the Turkish president of PACE, Mevlut Cavusoglu, snickered at the question, President Sargisian calmly responded that he was well aware of Postanjyan's views, which she had freely expressed in the Armenian parliament, on the street and in the media. He added that he was not prepared to hold special elections because it is neither necessary nor constitutionally feasible to organize such elections. He urged Postanjyan to participate in the next regularly-scheduled parliamentary elections.

Not surprisingly, President Sargisian's PACE speech was welcomed by his supporters and criticized by his opponents at home. The most important issue for all concerned should have been whether the President's impressive words would translate into action in the near future. However, the immediate controversy revolved around the

appropriateness of Postanjyan's criticism of the President, while on foreign soil.

Some Armenian politicians were of the opinion that it was improper for Postanjyan "to attack" President Sargisian in the chambers of the European Council. Others felt that her "harsh words" inadvertently made the president look good, because in a truly "authoritarian regime," she would have been excluded from Armenia's delegation, stripped of her parliamentary immunity and prosecuted. In fact, some European Parliamentarians wondered whether Turkish or Azeri delegates would dare to criticize their president at PACE?

American politicians use the expression "politics stops at the water's edge" to indicate their willingness to set aside internal disputes for the sake of presenting a united front to outsiders. Applying that adage to Armenia, one could question the wisdom of making such disparaging comments before the Council of Europe, regardless of whether one agrees with the President or his policies. Since Armenia is routinely attacked by Turkish and Azerbaijani delegates in international forums, it is unwise to add one's voice to those tarnishing Armenia's reputation.

This issue also comes up when some Armenians try to pressure their authorities by taking their internal disputes to foreign governments and international courts. While their frustration is understandable, dragging a foreign entity into an internal dispute detracts from Armenia's image overseas. In such cases, however, the blame must be shared by the Armenian government for failing to ensure the integrity of domestic courts, thereby forcing citizens to turn elsewhere for justice.

Before making critical comments about Armenia's leadership outside the country, especially by parliament members who have ample opportunity to express their views at home, one must weigh the benefits of pressuring the authorities to respect the people's rights with the damage caused to the country's international reputation.

# Why Do Pontic Greeks Seek Separate Recognition?

They say that genocide is "the deliberate and systematic destruction, in whole or in part, of an ethnic, racial, religious or national group." So why is it then that Pontic Greeks continue to seek in some cases a separate recognition for the genocide that occurred in the historic region of Pontus? They were not a separate ethnic group — they were Greek. They were not a separate racial group either — they were of the same race as the Greeks. Or so they tell us. They were not a separate religious group — they were Greek Orthodox. And they were not a national group since Pontus was merely a region of the then Ottoman Empire — it was not a nation.

Most would be aware of the resolutions passed in US parliaments acknowledging or at least commemorating the day of May 19 as a day that genocide occurred in the Pontus region. Most of these resolutions would have come about as a result of efforts of Pontic associations, which are mostly run by ordinary citizens. As a result of the lack of well-informed personnel, most if not all of the resolutions contain factual irregularities. For instance most of them differ in the naming of the genocide, the number of victims, the inclusion or omission of other Greeks, which also were victims of the same genocide (Greeks of other parts of the Ottoman Empire) and a general lack of uniformity.

Mistakes have continued in other parts of the world namely in Australia where Pontic Greeks sought a separate recognition and placed the other Greek victims (which by the way outnumbered the Pontic Greeks) into a category of "other minorities." It must be stressed that more Greeks perished during the Greek Genocide of 1914-1923 outside of Pontus than within it. So why do Pontic Greeks do it?

In Sweden last year a resolution was passed which only recognized the genocide of Pontic Greeks. The resolution was adopted

after additional information (which pointed to the genocide in regions outside of Pontus) was used. It was a result of efforts by a politician of Pontic descent who resides in Sweden. So we can see a clear pattern here.

Pontic Greeks are only concerned about their own people. They have little or no concern for the other Greeks that lived outside of Pontus and who also died in the same circumstances as their own people. In other words, the Greeks who were sent on death marches, massacred, raped and left to die in regions such as Smyrna, Nicomedia, Constantinople, Eastern Thrace, etc. are not worthy of recognition. This behavior is certainly worrying. A genocide is certainly a dreadful act. But recognition should encompass all the victims and not just those from one region. After all, if we look at the definition of the term genocide as mentioned above, the Pontic Greeks are acting outside of the definition of the term. They are not a distinct race, ethnic group, religion or national group.

Aside from pride in their own separate culture (they danced and spoke Greek differently) there is another reason why they seek separate recognition. And that is, because they can do it and get away with it.

In much the same way as the Turks committed genocide and thought they could get away with it, the Pontic Greeks too are behaving in much the same way. If a Pontic Greek was to read for instance *The Blight of Asia* by George Horton or an article in the *New York Times*, which talks of massacres of Greeks in the former Ottoman Empire, he or she immediately uses that information to say that a genocide occurred just in Pontus. Which is not true. Pontic Greeks have filtered out information detailing the genocide of all Greeks of the former Ottoman Empire to support their own case. And this must stop.

If Pontic Greeks are in fact Greek as they insist they are, then they must behave so. Seeking recognition for a genocide based on just one region is immoral. My efforts to highlight this injustice has got me into a lot

of trouble. I have tried to bring this injustice to the attention of Pontic Greek organizations in Australia and around the world, and I have been treated with utmost disrespect. I have been verbally abused by Pontic Greeks who consider me a troublemaker. But how so? Are these the actions of a civilized race? Why can't Pontic Greeks accept someone else's opinion? Why must they resort to violent means to silence me? How can I be a trouble maker when I am seeking the recognition of all the Greeks who perished due to genocide? Is this such a bad thing? In effect, according to Pontic Greeks, people who seek recognition based on the true meaning and definition of genocide, are simply getting in their way.

Pontic Greeks will continue to get in the way of the international recognition of the Greek Genocide if they continue this path. Their continual insistence in using the fallacious term "Pontian Genocide" will only delay worldwide recognition. The term "Pontian Genocide" means nothing to a non-Greek. Most people would have no idea what a Pontian actually is. In fact a Pontian is simply someone from Pontus, in much the same way as an Indian is someone from India. The term doesn't define if that person is Greek, Turkic, Armenian or a Laz.

Which brings another issue to light. Many Pontic Greeks insist that Pontus was a Greek state and it should be returned to its rightful owners meaning the Greeks. This is nonsense. Pontus was a region in which many races of people lived. When Greeks first set foot in Pontus, they found other races already living there. And throughout history the region was always inhabited by other races. Pontus was always a region where people of many races resided.

As Greeks we can only hope that the efforts of Pontic Greeks in seeking separate recognition stops. Exclusivity of suffering should have no place in genocide recognition or even memorial. Which brings in the issue of the separate dates of commemoration. There are currently two official days

approved by the Greek state, and one unofficial commemoration date for the genocide. For the Pontus region it is May 19, for the genocide of all Ottoman Greeks, September 14, and for the Thrace region, April 6 (this date is unofficial meaning it is not recognized by the Greek state). The Greek state should be held accountable somewhat for assigning May 19 as a day of commemoration for the Pontic Greeks. This occurred in 1994. In doing so, albeit under pressure by Pontic Greek politician Michalis Charalambidis, they have given Pontic Greeks belief that the genocide in Pontus was a separate event. Which it wasn't.

The existence of so many dates of commemoration only adds to the confusion. However September 14 should be adopted by all Greeks as being the date of commemoration for the Greek Genocide as attested by Greek Law 2645/98. It was on this day that Smyrna was set afire by the Turks, a vital date for all Ottoman Greeks. And the fact that Greece officially made this day a day of commemoration in 1998, four years after assigning May 19 as a day of commemoration for the Pontus region, only serves to highlight that the Greek state believes recognition of the genocide should be more inclusive than exclusive.

We can only hope that common sense will prevail and that Pontic Greeks will put aside their ego and join with all Greeks in commemorating the Greek Genocide on the one day. Having said that, there is nothing wrong with Pontic Greeks or other Greeks mourning on a separate date and in private if they so wish. But if we are to take the Greek Genocide seriously, a single day of mourning must be put aside for all Greeks to mourn together.

There is currently no country in the world that has officially recognized the Greek Genocide. The Armenian Genocide, however, has been recognized by over 20 countries worldwide.

(This commentary originally appeared in the May 24 issue of *Pontos World*.)





# AGBU Young Professionals of Philadelphia Host Cultural Events and Announce Summer Mixer

PHILADELPHIA – The Philadelphia committee of the AGBU Young Professionals (YP Philly) has marked this year by hosting major cultural events and collaborating with local Armenian organizations to better provide a broad range of events for the young professional community.

On February 17, together with Philadelphia-area Birthright Armenia alumni, YP Philly hosted “I LOVE Armenia” at Plays & Players Theater and Bar in Rittenhouse Square. Organized as an opportunity to share, mingle and get informed about travel and volunteerism in Armenia, the event drew 55 young professionals and guests. The evening served as a platform for performers to share stories, poetry and photography from their travels and discuss their volunteer experiences in Armenia and Karabagh. In turn, attendees were given information about how they can make the most of their own visits.

Colette Seter and Karina Ambartsoumian served as co-chairs for the February event.

Others who participated in the evening’s activities were emcee Vicken Bazarbashian and the performers and photographers, including YP Philly Chair Meredith Avakian, YP Philly Vice-chair Julie Paretchan, Paul Sookiasian, Armen Bazarbashian, Birthright alumni Ani Jilozian, Taleen Khoury Moughamian, Ross Norian and Vicken Kazanjian.

On April 6, together with the University of Pennsylvania Armenian Student Association (ASA), YP Philly hosted a film screening for “Finding Zabel Yessayan,” a documentary by Lara Aharonian and Talin Suciyan. The screening, which was chaired by Julie Paretchan, Nubar Dailarian, Tina Hagopian and ASA President Alexis Williams, attracted more than 40 individuals of various ages and backgrounds. “It was a privilege to have [the filmmaker] Talin join us on her first American film tour and visit to Philadelphia. We appreciated the strong support and audience engagement around a grassroots film and look forward to creating more unique cultural event opportunities for the

community,” said Paretchan.

This summer, YP Philly is hosting their third annual “Coast in the City” at Positano Coast (212 Walnut St.) in Old City, Philadelphia, starting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 11.

The AGBU YP Philadelphia officers and committee meet monthly to plan social, professional, cultural and community service events. Committee members include Karina Ambartsoumian, Meredith Avakian, Vicken

Bazarbashian, Nubar Dailarian, Gina Ekmekjian, Tina Hagopian, Julie Paretchan, Colette Seter, Jackie Santerian, Paul Sookiasian and Gina Terkanian. YP Philly is proud its events attract a cross-section of people from the five Armenian churches and various Armenian organizations throughout the Greater Philadelphia area and the Northeastern US. For more information about the chapter, contact Meredith Avakian at agbuypphilly@gmail.com.

## Sargisian Addresses PACE

PACE, from page 1

Sargisian spent a great deal of time speaking about the problems of Nagorno Karabagh and relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan. He complained about the warmongering by Azerbaijan and the fruitless peace process with Turkey.

“Peaceful and just resolution of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict remains the most important issue for us. The negotiations are conducted in the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group. We are grateful to the co-chair states for their efforts.

“I believe you would agree that the most important current and potential contribution of the Council of Europe to this process is the promotion of tolerance. To this end, we note with pain and concern that hotbeds of racism and xenophobia still exist in the territory of the Council of Europe.

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, in its recent regular report on Azerbaijan, reconfirmed the extreme level of Armenophobia and racism prevailing in that country. We regret this fact, because it is hard to imagine such a situation in a member state of the Council of Europe. We regret, because we clearly understand that the poison of intolerance strikes most heavily the society bearing such poison.

“Even under these circumstances, we travel to Kazan in anticipation of progress, as we attach great importance to regional stability and development, to securing a safe future for the generation growing up in Armenia, Nagorno Karabagh and Azerbaijan, and to demonstrating good will and a constructive approach. However, we all should realize that an agreement can be finalized and effectively implemented only when the patterns of Armenophobia and racism are eliminated in Azerbaijan and an atmosphere of trust is formed. Naturally, no one may question the inherent right of the people of Karabagh to live freely and safely on their land and to be the masters of their destiny.

“Regardless of different visions for the final resolution of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict, one thing is certain. Karabagh has been, is, and will remain a part of Europe, albeit unrecognized. Do we realize that society in Karabagh today is a part of European society, a part of the European family regardless of the de-jure status of Karabagh? Has the time not come for the Council of Europe to engage directly with Karabagh in terms of its primary functions of protection and promotion of human rights, formation of civil society, democracy, tolerance, and the like?”

Regarding Turkey, he said, “Two years ago, we initiated a process of normalization between Armenia and Turkey, which would have allowed, through the establishment of

diplomatic relations and opening of the border, to gradually overcome the divide that had existed for almost a century. I would like to note that, throughout the process, we greatly appreciated the inspiration and permanent support of not only the mediator states, but also the international community more broadly, including various senior officials of the Council of Europe. Unfortunately, in spite of this support, Armenia-Turkey normalization process ended up in a deadlock.

“The sole reason was that Turkey reverted to its practice of setting preconditions and failing to honor its commitments, which rendered the ratification of the signed protocols impossible.

“It is important to emphasize that Armenia initiated the process with good intentions, true to the 21st-century imperative of peaceful coexistence of nations and peoples, all on the backdrop of Turkey still not only failing to recognize, but also engaging in a policy of blunt denial of the Genocide of Armenians committed in the Ottoman Empire in 1915. Meanwhile, Armenians worldwide are expecting an adequate response. Our tireless efforts, and hopefully also the efforts of those concerned about crimes against humanity, will henceforth remain focused on the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

“However, we are determined not to leave this problem unsolved for generations to come. The normalization of relations between Armenia and Turkey is important not only for Armenians and Turks, but also for the whole region, I believe even for the whole of Europe in terms of creating an atmosphere of peace, stability, and cooperation. The unlawful blockade of Armenia must come to an end.”

Interestingly, the only aggressive question for Sargisian after the speech came from Armenia’s delegate to PACE, opposition member Zaruhi Postanjan, who in her question suggested Armenia was a dictatorship and far from democratic.

“The idea that Mrs. Postanjan is a member of PACE delegation is speaking for itself. That is to say, we are not an authoritarian country, for the representative of the opposition in an authoritarian country cannot be included in a delegation of international organization and to pose such a question to the head of the country,” said the Chairman of the Republic of Armenia National Assembly Standing Committee on Defense, National Security and Internal Affairs Hrayr Karapetyan.

For the full comments of Sargisian, visit [www.president.am/events/statements/eng/?id=91](http://www.president.am/events/statements/eng/?id=91).



Filmmaker Talin Suciyan discusses her recent documentary, “Finding Zabel Yerssayan,” on April 6.

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