

Soprano Papian Dazzles at Armenian Night at Pops

By Nancy Kalajian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BOSTON – The 60th annual Armenian Night at the Pops featured world-renowned soprano Hasmik Papian, who did not disappoint.

The Friends of Armenian Culture Society, Inc. (FACS) is the sponsor of this annual event, one of the most anticipated Armenian cultural events in the Greater Boston community. This year, more than 450 tickets were purchased through FACS; during program intermissions, guests were seen greeting each other with warm embraces and sharing their thoughts on the unique program.

Held in the majestic ambiance of Boston's Symphony Hall, this year's programming was eclectic. "Triple Crown," the first part of the program, centered on horses and included the premiere of Randy Newman's *Selections from Seabiscuit*. Actress Paula Plum narrated a film on horseracing and "horses' mystical relationship with man." Though occasionally she seemed to be drowned out by the music, she nonetheless did an admirable job in a challenging role.

After a long intermission, conductor Keith Lockhart welcomed the Armenian community with an Armenian greeting and expressed admiration for FACS' ongoing support and commitment to this annual event, now in its 60th year. "This is one of my favorite nights at the Pops," shared Lockhart. Most of the audience – including many non-Armenians – stood up solemnly as



Lilit and Rouben Shugarian with Hasmik Papian at the post-concert reception

the Boston Pops Orchestra performed the *Hayr Mer* (the Lord's Prayer).

As in previous FACS events, the Armenian talent held the audience spellbound.

Lockhart introduced Papian, a "distinguished classical artist" and later admiringly remarked, "It's an honor to work with someone of her international stature." In a glittery blue gown, the soprano had great range without a microphone and showed poise and solid voice in performing a variety of pieces.

The mystical *Aria-Vocalise* by Babadjanian was followed by the well-known *Kilikia* by Yeranian-Yekmalian. Catalani's *Ebben? Ne andro lontana*, from "La Wally" was a dramatically expressed piece that drew huge applause and contrasted with Puccini's *O mio bambino caro*, which she sang in a delicate, sensitive man-

ner. *Drinking Song*, an upbeat and eclectic work by talented young composer John Sarkissian, premiered that evening to favorable review. Listeners gave him a big hand when Lockhart acknowledged him in the audience.

During the evening, Lockhart also acknowledged Ara Arakelian of FACS, the 20th anniversary of the independence of see POPS, page 13

Armenian Assembly Reserves Judgment On John Heffern Nomination

WASHINGTON – John Heffern, the administration's nominee to serve as ambassador of the US to Armenia, faced a series of questions on a range of issues during the recent Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing chaired by Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), reported the Armenian Assembly of America.

Presiding over the hearing, Foreign Relations Subcommittee Chair on European Affairs, Shaheen began the round of questioning and touched on the Protocols between Armenia and Turkey, the current status of the Nagorno-Karabagh talks and prospects for peace, as well as the importance of democracy and free and fair elections, especially in the context of the upcoming national elections in Armenia in 2012 and 2013. Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY) emphasized the importance of democratization and queried Heffern about the steps he would take to assist Armenia's development.

In response to Shaheen's questions, Heffern indicated that the United States strongly supported the Protocols signed between Armenia and Turkey in October of see NOMINATION, page 16



Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ)

TCA Board of Directors Meet in California



Pictured above are members of the TCA Board of Directors. Seated, from left, TCA Arshag Dickranian School Trustees Arpi Avanesian-Idolor, Gia Aivazian, George K. Mandossian (president and TCA vice president), TCA President Dr. Haroutiun Arzoumanian, Vice President Edmond Azadian and Treasurer Maro Bedrosian; Standing Trustee Parsegh Kartalian, Vartkes Kourouyan, (principal) TCA Board members Arsen Demirdjian, Papken Megerian, Hagop Vartivarian, Vatche Semerdjian, Rouben Terzian and Kevork Marashlian (executive secretary). See story on page 16.

TCA Dickranian School 2011 Commencement

LOS ANGELES – Marking the school's 30th anniversary, the commencement ceremonies of the fifth grade (elementary), eighth grade (middle) and 12th grade (high school) graduates of the Tekeyan Cultural Association Arshag Dickranian School took place on Saturday, June 25, at the school's Walter and Laurel Karabian Hall.

Very Rev. Dajad Yardemian, Archpriest

Manoug Markarian, benefactresses Eleanor Dickranian and Laurel Karabian, members of the Tekeyan Cultural Association Board of Directors were amongst the honored guests, joined by members of the school board of trustees, faculty and a capacity audience comprised of jubilant parents, relatives and friends.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Armenia, Greece Promote Cooperation

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – On July 19, consultations were held between the Foreign Ministries of Greece and Armenia in Yerevan, according to the Armenian Foreign Ministry.

On the Armenian side, talks were led by the head of the ministry's European Union division, Armen Liloyan, and on the Greek side by the director of the Department for CIS states, Ambassador Karlos Gadis.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral and economic ties.

Armenia Recognizes South Sudan

YEREVAN – Armenia recognizes the newly-created Republic of South Sudan, Armenia's Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian announced.

"The declaration of independent statehood in South Sudan is an exercise of legal equality of nations and an inalienable right to self-determination and another example of civilized settlement of conflicts," said Nalbandian.

The Republic of Sudan officially recognized the new state on Saturday. The Republic of South Sudan declared independence early in July, following a decades-long civil war with North Sudan.

Ambassador Complains To UN Chief on Azeri Propaganda

YEREVAN (Armradio.am) – Armenia's Permanent Representative to the UN Garen Nazarian has addressed a letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Calling the secretary general's attention to the cases of violation of the ceasefire regime at the line of contact by the Azerbaijani armed forces, he noted, in part, that "such provocative actions contradict the ongoing negotiations in the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group, the statements of the heads of co-chairing countries, the UN Statute and the Helsinki Final Act."

Nazarian expressed concern over Azerbaijani leadership spreading anti-Armenian propaganda, which is becoming a major aspect of Azerbaijan's foreign policy.

"Armenia is committed to continuing the negotiations on the settlement of the Karabagh conflict within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group, which is an effective and the only legitimate format for mediation. It's time for Azerbaijan to understand that it should stop hampering the activity of the mediators and concentrate on the negotiation process instead of disseminating groundless and offensive information," the letter reads.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Armenia's Population Declining; 44 Percent See No Future in Homeland

YEREVAN (Tert.am) – The world population will top 4 billion in November, but according to demographic projections, Armenia's population will shrink by 2050, Garik Hayrapetyan, the executive representative of the UN Population Fund's Yerevan office, told a news conference earlier this week.

A UN study conducted in 2009 shows that only 16 percent of the respondents in Armenia have said they are ready to have another child in the three years to come; 68 percent ruled out such a possibility. The number of children born to young families stands at 1.5, while 2.1 is needed for a simple reproduction.

Some 44 percent have said they don't see their future in Armenia.

Commenting on the numbers, Vanik Babajanyan, the head of the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry's Demographics Division, said some of the reasons include issues like dwelling, employment, health care and lack of resources to start families among other difficulties.

He, however, shrugged off allegations that emigration numbers have hit threatening levels in Armenia.

Government Body Reports Surge in Illegal Logging

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenia's state forestry agency reported on Tuesday a sharp increase in the scale of illegal logging in the country, blaming it on the increased cost of natural gas.

Martun Matevosian, director of the Hayantar agency, said some 1,700 trees in various Armenian forests were illegally cut down in the first half of this year, an almost 100-percent increase from the same period of last year.

"This increase in the scale of illegal logging was observed already last fall," Matevosian told a news conference. "It's connected with the rise in the price of gas."

The official said the mostly rural residents living in or close to wooded areas find it increasingly hard to pay for the gas and use firewood for heating and cooking purposes. "We are actively working with law-enforcement structures to identify those engaged in illegal logging," he added.

Environmental protection groups agreed that the illegal destruction of trees across the country is on the rise. But Inga Zarafian of the Ecolur non-governmental organization said that the official figures cited by Matevosian are not credible and that the real scale of logging is higher.

Half of Orphans in Armenia Are Disabled

YEREVAN (a1plus.am) – Half of the children living in Armenian orphanages are disabled, says Lala Ghazaryan, head of the Family, Women and Children Affairs Department at the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

"In comparison with foreign countries, parents in Armenia have a biased approach to disability and want to adopt a healthy child," said Ghazaryan.

She dismissed the information that foreigners adopt children more easily than locals.

"Interstate adoption is a much more complicated process than you can imagine," she said.

There are seven orphanages in the republic with 800 children. About 120 children were adopted in Armenia in 2010; another 551 children were placed into foster care. "However, these children continue to remain orphans and if they are subsequently adopted by their guardians, they are unable form a normal family in the future," she said.

Only married couples can adopt, but only when they have a permanent place of residence and steady work.

AGBU President Visits Armenia

YEREVAN – AGBU President Berge Setrakian paid a visit to Armenia from May 28 to June 3, to participate in the first session of the state committee coordinating events dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and the 20th session of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund's Board of Trustees.

As part of his visit, Setrakian had a number of meetings with important government officials, including president of the Republic of Armenia, Serge Sargsian, chairman and speaker of the National Assembly, Hovik Abrahamian, Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian, Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, Minister of Defense Seyran Ohanian, Minister of Education and Science Armen Ashotyan and Diaspora Minister Hranoush Hakobian.

During the meetings, Setrakian was accompanied by AGBU Central Board member Yervant Zorian and director of AGBU's Armenian Representation, Ashot Ghazarian.

On May 29, along with the Pontifical retinue of Karekin II, the AGBU president left for Rostov-on-Don (New Nakhijevan) in Russia to attend the consecration and the Divine Liturgy at the



Berge Setrakian met with Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian

newly built St. Harutyun Church. In his speech, Setrakian congratulated the local Armenian community and all those present. Since he had been present at a similar ceremony in the United States, Setrakian drew parallels between the two events, noting that the Armenian traditions, rituals and atmosphere are always the same, whether in Armenia or abroad. He welcomed the unification of the Armenians around the Church and praised the fact that Armenian communities in the post-Soviet territory are becoming increasingly organized. On behalf of AGBU, Setrakian presented an organ to the congregation on the occasion of the consecration.

On May 30, accompanied by the AGBU delegation, Setrakian participated in the first session of the Armenian Genocide 100th Anniversary State Committee, established and presided over by President Serge Sargsian.

On June 1, Setrakian took part in the 20th session of the "Hayastan" All-Armenian Fund's Board of Trustees. That evening, Setrakian attended the 90th anniversary celebration of the Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Foundation, which was held at Yerevan's Arno Babajanian Hall. President of the board of directors of the Karagheusian Foundation, Michael Haratunian, and the executive director, Walter Bandazian, were both in attendance, as were many other board members, chairmen, and friends of the corporation's offices in New York, Lebanon, Syria and Armenia.

In his speech, the AGBU president spoke about the wide scope of national and humanitarian activities of the Karagheusian family, particularly focusing on Arshak Karagheusian's activities as AGBU President (1942-1953) during World War II and the years that followed. During Karagheusian's presidency, AGBU had undertaken the mission



Second right, Berge Setrakian, Hranoush Hagopian, Jirair Tanielian and KOHAR Khatchadourian at the Tekeyan Cultural Association of Armenia

of holding national fundraisers to support war survivors, organize repatriation and help Armenia.

Setrakian praised the devoted national activities of the members of the Karagheusian family – Arshak, Mihran and Leila – and underscored their role in the construction and improvement of AGBU's Middle East schools, contributing profoundly to humanitarian activities in the past decades. He also mentioned the lasting cooperation and historic warm relations between AGBU and the Foundation.

The Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Foundation was established in 1921 in New York by Mihran and Zabel Karagheusian, brother and sister of Arshak Karagheusian, for the purpose of caring for, healing and educating orphaned children. In honor of the anniversary, Setrakian visited the Karagheusian office, dental clinic and the Karagheusian Museum in the Nork district of the Armenian capital.

That same day, Setrakian had a meeting with Armenia's Education and Science minister, Armen Ashotyan, to discuss cooperation between the Ministry and AGBU in the field of education. Following the meeting, he was received by Ohanian. Prospects of AGBU's educational assistance in the form of scholarships to army officers pursuing their education in such fields as law, management, and international relations were discussed. Setrakian went on to participate in the jubilee

event dedicated to the 70th birthday anniversary of Jirair Tanielian, a prominent linguist, editor, bibliographer, educator and social figure. The celebration was held at the Tekeyan Cultural Association. In his speech, Setrakian praised the honoree's active role in education and in his activities as the long-time principal of AGBU Tarouhi-Hovagimian Secondary School and thanked him for the generations of Armenians that he helped cultivate.

On June 2, Setrakian was received by the National Assembly chairman and speaker, Abrahamian. The two discussed strengthening Armenia-diaspora relations, preservation of the Armenian identity, and possible projects between the Ministry and AGBU. They also went over the results of the recent international conference titled "Prospects of Diaspora in a Globalizing World." Later in the day, Setrakian had a meeting with Diaspora Minister Hranoush Hakobian to discuss the joint projects of the Ministry and AGBU.

On June 3, Setrakian was hosted by Karekin II at the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin. Both discussed the process of joint educational and faith-based projects of AGBU and the Mother See. Karekin II expressed his gratitude to the AGBU president for the continued support for Holy Echmiadzin by the members of the organization. Setrakian emphasized the importance of the established cooperation between AGBU and the Mother See.

Golden Apricot Selects 'Nader And Semin, the Separation' by Farhadi for Best Feature Film

YEREVAN (Arminfo) – The winners of the eighth Golden Apricot Yerevan International Film Festival were announced this week.

In the International Feature Film Competition, the Golden Apricot prize for the best feature film was bestowed upon "Nader and Semin, the Separation," by Iranian director Asghar Farhadi. The Silver Apricot prize was awarded to "The Journals of Musan," by Park Jungbum. The Special Jury Prize was given to "The Prize," by Paula Markovitch.

In the International Documentary Film Competition, the Golden Apricot prize was awarded to "The World according to Ion B.," by Alexander Nanau; the Silver Apricot prize went to "Summer Pasture," by Lynn True, Nelson Walker III and Tsering Perlo and Special Mention was given to "Magnificent Nothing" by Ahmad Seyedkeshmiri.

In the Armenian Panorama Competition division, the Golden Apricot prize for Best Armenian Film and Best Short film was awarded to "Loading My Life," by Haroutyun Shatyan; the Silver Apricot to "The Spaceship," by Emil Mkrtchian and Special Mention was given to "The Last Hippie of the Pink City," by Anastasia Popova.

In the Golden Apricot Stone Competition for Short Films, the Golden Apricot prize was awarded to "Glasgow," by Piotr Subbotko; Special Mention to "Bicycle," by Serhat Karaaslan and the FIPRESCI Jury Prize was given to "Mandoo," by Ebrahim Saeedi. The Hrant Matevosyan Prize went to Emil Mkrtchian for the film, "The Spaceship."

The British Council established a prize, which was awarded to "Loading My Life," which also won the Nvard prize.

The Special Prize of the Armenian Film Academy "Unique Artistic View" went to "The Prize," by Paula Markovitch.



INTERNATIONAL

Clinton Presses Turks to Honor Accord with Armenia

ISTANBUL (RFE/RL) – US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton pressed Turkey to unconditionally comply with its normalization agreements with Armenia during a weekend trip to Istanbul.

A senior State Department official said Turkish-Armenian relations were on the agenda of her talks with Turkish

“She encouraged Turkey to support and move the [Turkish-Armenian] Protocols, which have been stuck in the Turkish parliament, but more generally to reach out to Armenia with confidence-building measures and do whatever possible to strengthen that relationship, leading ultimately to restored diplomatic

Armenian foreign ministers in Zurich in October 2009. They committed the two neighboring nations to establish diplomatic relation and open the Turkish-Armenian border, which Ankara closed in 1993 in a show of support for Azerbaijan.

The Turkish government has repeatedly made clear that it will not ensure the Protocols’ ratification by Turkey’s parliament before a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict, acceptable to Baku, is reached. Yerevan rejects this linkage, saying that it contradicts the letter and the spirit of the US-backed agreements.

Citing the Turkish precondition, President Serge Sargisian suspended the process of Armenian parliamentary ratification of the Protocols in April 2009. But he stopped short of formally annulling them.

Clinton welcomed this stance as “very statesmanlike” when she visited Yerevan in July 2010. “The ball is in the other court,” she said, urging the Turks to drop the Karabagh linkage.

Nevertheless, Erdogan and other Turkish officials have continued to make normal relations with Armenia contingent on Karabagh peace. In a sign of Yerevan’s growing frustration with this stance, Sarkisian threatened to scrap the protocols altogether earlier this year.

The normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations has long been a US policy goal in the region. The State Department official who briefed US journalists on Clinton’s talks in Istanbul described it as a “historic project.”



US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmed Davutoglu

President Abdullah Gul, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu.

ties,” the official told journalists.

The two protocols were signed, in Clinton’s presence, by the Turkish and

AGBU’s Buenos Aires Chapter Celebrates Its Centennial Anniversary

BUENOS AIRES – On Saturday, May 14, nearly 500 people gathered to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the founding of AGBU’s Buenos Aires Chapter.

The celebration took place in the AGBU Buenos Aires Center’s Nazarian Hall, which was filled to capacity. The evening was honored with the patronage and presence of Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, who was on a pontifical visit to South America.

Teacher and chairwoman of the Armenian Department at the Buenos Aires’ Marie Manoogian Institute, Rosita Yousoufian, acted as the evening’s emcee. Buenos Aires chapter chairman and AGBU Central Board member, Ruben Kechichian, welcomed Karekin II and all attendees and then went on to give an overview of the organization’s benevolent activities, particularly for the benefit of the church and nation, and stressed that this direction has characterized AGBU’s whole mission since its founding. The Buenos Aires Chapter, which was founded in Argentina prior to the 1915 Genocide, has consistently served the Armenian people for the past 100 years. “Words are insufficient to express our admiration and appreciation for the founders, the successive chairmen and the committees. They truly knew how to interpret Boghos Nubar’s message, making the Buenos Aires Chapter one of the most active and enterprising chapters,” said Kechichian.

There were numerous speeches during the evening, including words by Armenia’s ambassador to Argentina, Vladimir Karmirshalian, and AGBU vice president, Sinan Sinanian, who conveyed his message on behalf of the AGBU leadership who were not in attendance. “The Buenos Aires Chapter of AGBU, with its fervent and diverse activity and the Marie Manoogian Institute,

joins the youths and young adults with the Armenian senior citizens, being a natural right of succession of generations and simultaneously maintaining the organization’s vitality,” said Sinanian. “In this sense too, through collective effort and uninterruptedly for more than 30 years now, the successive graduating classes have visited Armenia, where the Armenian education they receive becomes firmly rooted through their immersion in the Armenian environment.”

AGBU President Berge Setrakian sent a message in which he expressed AGBU’s gratitude to the Armenian Catholicos in Echmiadzin, Armenia, who “encourages us with his presence and participation in the celebration, stressing the mutual and inviolable attachment existing between the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin and AGBU.” Setrakian’s message also stated his deep conviction that the Buenos Aires Chapter will continue to provide a rich array of services to the coming generations.

Karekin II delivered his own message of appreciation and praise, emphasizing the invaluable presence of AGBU in the lives of Armenians around the world and expressing the Mother See’s gratitude to all the chapters and members of the world’s largest Armenian nonprofit organization, who consistently support Holy Echmiadzin and back its mission and programs. “It is our wish that the marking and celebration of the worthy 100-year-old mission of the AGBU Buenos Aires Chapter gives you new inspiration and incentive to continue your service to the Argentinean-Armenian community with the same love, care and zeal and to make your good contribution to the realization of the hopes and aspirations of our people,” he said. At the conclusion of his remarks, Karekin II decorated

Yousoufian, Dr. Roberto Malkhassian and longtime executive committee member Haroutiun Sarafian, with medals in appreciation for their service.

Antonio Sarafian presented Karekin II with one of the first stamps that the official Argentinean postal service issued in tribute to the centennial anniversary.

Among the guests for the evening were Armenia’s ambassador to Argentina, Karmirshalian, and his wife, Anahit; ambassador of France to Argentina, Jean Pierre Asvazadourian; Primate of the Diocese of Argentina and Chile, Archbishop Kissag Mouradian; Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian; Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church of Brazil, Archbishop Datev Gharibian; AGBU vice president, Sinanian; Argentinean-Armenian entrepreneur and philanthropist, Eduardo Eurnekian; benefactor, Berdjuhi Emirian; AGBU Buenos Aires Chapter chairman and member of AGBU’s Central Board of Directors, Kechichian, and his wife, Elsa; AGBU Buenos Aires Chapter vice chairman, Hampartsoum Hallajian and honorary chairman of the Chapter, Vahram Hairabedian.

Also in attendance were AGBU Sao Paulo Chapter chairman, Krikor Manukian; AGBU Montevideo Chapter chairman, Dr. Gustavo Zulamian; AGBU Montevideo secretary and committee members, Valeria Momdjian and Patricia Koharian; AGBU Cordoba Chapter vice chairman, Christian Yacoubian; honorary Armenian Counselor in Brazil, Diruhi Burmaian; honorary member of AGBU, Leon Carlos Arslanian; founders of Buenos Aires Youth League, Nicholas Hermes and Bautista Kuyumdjian and other honorary and benevolent members and friends of AGBU.

International News

US Senators Worry over Radar Deal with Turkey

WASHINGTON (AFP) – Two key US senators expressed concerns Tuesday about a possible agreement to base a missile-shield radar in Turkey, citing the NATO ally’s strained ties with Israel and relations with Iran.

Republican Senators Jon Kyl and Mark Kirk wrote Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton seeking reassurances on the possible deal, which was described in a news report last week.

The lawmakers asked for “written assurances” that data collected by a so-called X-band radar “will be made available, in real time” to staunch US ally Israel to be “fully integrated into its battlement management and control.” They also sought a guarantee that “Turkish entities are not engaged, or suspected of engaging” in activities that fall afoul of various US laws aimed at curbing suspected nuclear weapons programs in Iran and Syria and keeping sensitive know-how from North Korea.

And President Barack Obama’s administration must also certify that the powerful radar will only be operated by US personnel, and for 24 hours a day, seven days a week, except for maintenance breaks, the senators said.

Kirk and Kyl, the number-two Senate Republican, also questioned whether the reported decision to locate the radar in Turkey would “ensure the best defense of the United States against the Iranian long-range ballistic missile threat.”

They cited a US Missile Defense Agency study that found the South Caucasus to be “the optimum placement” if the system is designed to defend against an eventual Iranian ballistic missile attack.

“The administration’s plans for missile defense will require the cooperation of the Congress; the prospects for such cooperation are jeopardized if the Congress is not provided the information it requests,” they warned.

Woman Accused in Theft Of Aivazovsky Painting

MOSCOW (epress.am) – Moscow police have detained a woman on suspicion of stealing a painting by seascape painter Ivan Aivazovsky that she was reportedly restoring, a police source told Itar-Tass news agency last Friday.

According to the source, the bank director who owned the painting told police that he had given the woman Aivazovsky’s painting, “Seashore Calm, A Landscape with a Carriage and a Boat,” estimated to be worth about \$640,000. He notified the authorities after he was unable to get the painting back.

So far the man has not produced any documents confirming the painting’s authenticity.

Police are attempting to find the painting.

Tehran May Invite Armenia to Meeting of Foreign Ministers

TEHRAN (PanArmenian.Net) – Iran is organizing a meeting between Foreign Ministers of Turkey, Iran and Azerbaijan in the near future.

It is not yet definite if Tehran will invite Armenia to participate in the trilateral meeting between foreign ministers, as it is based on a unilateral agreement among the parties involved, according to the Iranian Embassy in Baku.

However representative of Azeri Foreign Ministry kept from commenting on the initiative of Iran and stressed that the Iranian party’s proposal needs to be studied.

The meeting in the trilateral format between the foreign ministers of Turkey, Iran and Azerbaijan was first organized in Istanbul at the beginning of this year. Later, on April 16, the parties held a meeting in the Iranian city, Urmia.

The meeting resulted in signing a joint declaration consisting of nine provisions. The declaration states that it is necessary to boost political, economic and security cooperation among the three countries as well as to enhance ties in the fields of tourism, science and culture.

It was decided to hold the next meeting in October, in Nakhijevan, according to lnews.az.



Community News

Ruth Allukian Named Boston Educator of The Year

BOSTON — Ruth Felice Allukian, RN, received the 2011 Educator of the Year Award from Mayor Thomas M. Menino on behalf of the City of Boston and the Boston School Department on June 20, at the Shubert Theater.

Allukian is the first Boston school nurse to be selected as educator of the year. This award is given to an individual who has been extraordinary in their work and has been exemplary in their efforts on behalf of the students of the Boston Public Schools.

Allukian began her career as one of the first adult nurse practitioners in New England working for the Massachusetts General Hospital at the Bunker Hill Health Center in Charlestown in the late 1960s. She then received her master's degree in public health (MPH) from the University of Michigan and went on to Boston City Hospital, where she became director of nursing in the Outpatient Department.

After her second child was born, she stopped working as a nurse, had four more children and then went back to work as a



Caption: Ruth Allukian with Boston Mayor Thomas Menino

nurse when her sixth child began going to school. Allukian then worked as a school nurse at the Carter School, which had the most severely disabled children in the city. In 1998, when she received the William P. Doran Award for Excellence as a school nurse from the Massachusetts School Nurses Association, she stated that one of her greatest challenges at the Carter School was when she was able to teach an 18-year-old disabled boy how to eat with a spoon for the first time in his life.

Allukian has been working for the past 13 years at the middle school at Tech Boston in Dorchester, which was recently visited by President Barack Obama. Upon receiving the award from Menino, she stated that of significant importance to her in receiving the award was the recognition that healthy children were able to learn better than sick children and that health must be an integral component of learning and the educational system. Allukian thanked her principal, Mary Skipper, the keystone to Tech Boston and her colleagues at work, a dynamic group of teachers and staff members who bring passion, patience and perseverance to the school every day. Allukian also expressed her appreciation and thanks for their support to her husband, Dr. Myron Allukian Jr., and their six children: Myron III, Kristin, Alison, Jason, Alexandra and Nathan, all of whom went through the Boston public schools, K-12 and are college graduates.

The evening ended with a reception at the Wang Center.



Dr. Haroutiun Arzoumanian, president of Tekeyan Cultural Association, hands the TCA acknowledgment to his brother, Rev. Dr. Zaven Arzoumanian.

Worthy Tribute to Archpriest Zaven Arzoumanian in Los Angeles

BURBANK, Calif. — Tekeyan Cultural Association's Los Angeles Chapter organized a tribute honoring Rev. Dr. Zaven Arzoumanian's 60 years of service to the Armenian Church. It was held under the auspices of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church, with the Primate, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian presiding. It took place at the Zorayan Hall of St. Leon Cathedral here on Sunday, June 26.

A cross section of the prominent figures of the Armenian community of the Greater Los Angeles had filled the hall to capacity. Among the attendees were the former Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian, Primate of the Armenian Church in Iraq Archbishop Avak Asadourian, eight members of Tekeyan Cultural Association's Board of Directors of the United States and Canada, parish priests and church members who had known and worked with the honoree.

Tekeyan Cultural Association's chairman of the Los Angeles Chapter, Vatche Semerdjian, made the opening remarks. He portrayed the honoree as a prolific writer, who had written 11 books in the last 30 years. Most significant among these books were the last three, which were the continuation of Archbishop Maghakia Ormanian's famous tri-volume publication of the Armenian Church History, *Azkabadoum*. Semerdjian then passed the baton to the Master of Ceremonies, Hratch Sepetjian, to proceed with the program.

Sepetjian invited one by one the following clergymen and laypeople to deliver their remarks about Arzoumanian, the inquisitive person, the beloved parish priest and the erudite historian of the Armenian Church: Very Rev. Baret Yeretsian, Edmond Yervant Azadian, Archbishop Yeprem Tabakian, Dr. Haroutune Arzoumanian and Derderian.

Tabakian had the difficult task of presenting Arzoumanian's 11 publications, which had immensely enriched the bibliography of the Armenian Church. Two of those publications, noted Tabakian, were written in English about the rituals and sacraments of the Armenian Church, thus making the non-Armenian speaking parishioners understand and grasp the essence of the first Christian nation in the world.

The last three publications, continued Tabakian, were the all important extension of Ormanian's tri-volume publication of the history of the Armenian Church, from its inception until 1909. Arzoumanian's three-volume publication covered the church history from 1910 until 1995 and its last volume was dedicated to Catholicos of all the Armenians Vazken the first of blessed memory.

Dr. Haroutune Arzoumanian, the honoree's younger brother, described his older brother's personal characteristics. He noted that his brother loved to read, loved his church and had a keen memory that distinguished him from his two brothers and three sisters.

Daniel Arzoumanian went to the Seminary of Antelias at age 16, was ordained a celibate priest in 1954. Thereafter he went to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to serve as a parish priest. He received his initial theological education in England, then in the United States, where he graduated from Columbia University with a doctorate. He served as parish priest first in Philadelphia, then in Montreal, and later still in Boca Rotan, Orlando and St. Petersburg, Fla., and finally in Pasadena.

Sepetjian read congratulatory letters sent by different colleagues of the honoree from all over the United States, among who was Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian, the

see TRIBUTE, page 6

Armenian Assembly Interns Meet with Genocide Resolution Sponsors

WASHINGTON — This week, as part of the Armenian Assembly's Terjenian-Thomas Summer Internship Program, participants met with Representatives Adam Schiff (D-CA) and Robert Dold (R-IL), the lead sponsors of the Armenian Genocide resolution, H. Res. 304.

Schiff spoke with this year's intern class about the efforts and challenges involved in moving the bill through Congress, and reaffirmed his commitment to the passage of this important human rights legislation. Schiff also spoke with the group regarding the importance of safeguarding the rights of minorities in Turkey and discussed H. Res. 306, introduced by his colleagues, Armenian Caucus Co-Chair Edward Royce (C-RA) and House Foreign Affairs Committee Ranking Member Howard Berman (D-CA). H. Res. 306 urges "the Republic of Turkey to safeguard



2011 Interns with Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA)

its Christian heritage and to return confiscated church properties."

"The preservation of history and culture is a deeply rooted value among Armenians and so I was very encouraged to hear first-hand how members of Congress are seeking to protect what remains of the little Christian heritage in Turkey," said Araksya Mikaelyan, who hails from Armenia and is pursuing a business degree at Hope College in Michigan.

Dold also addressed the group, stressing his commitment to US affirmation of the Armenian Genocide. Dold provided the class with a behind-the-scenes view of inter-party politics on the issues of the day, including the current budget negotiations process.

"Congressman Dold provided revealing perspective on the politics involved in and hurdles to passing hot-button legislation, like the current debt ceiling fight," stated Michael Daniell, an intern with Blue Star Strategies, a local lobbying firm.

As part of the "Capital Ideas" lecture series, throughout the summer Assembly interns have the opportunity to meet face-to-face with elected officials to hear their views on the issues facing the nation.

"As we advance both H. Res. 304 and H. Res. 306 through Congress, the Armenian Assembly will continue to train the next generation of community leaders to ensure that Armenian-American issues remain at the forefront of future policy discussions," stated Assembly Grassroots Director Taniel Koushadjian.



COMMUNITY NEWS

AIWA Luncheon Features Kathy Smith, Leader in Fitness and Health Industry

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles Affiliate of the Armenian International Women's Association are planning a luncheon to be held on Wednesday, July 27, at 11:30 a.m. at the Wilshire Country Club, 301 North Rossmore Ave. Guests are invited to enjoy an afternoon with Kathy Smith, a well-known leader in the fitness and health industries and noted spokesperson for the International Council on Active Aging.

Feed Muscle Shrink Fat Diet and *Moving Through Menopause*. She has also contributed her expertise on health and wellness to countless media outlets, including the *LA Times*, *USA Today*, "The Today Show," "Oprah," "The View" and more.

Smith is a recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from IDEA, the world's largest organization of fitness professionals, and a member of the Video Hall of Fame. Each of her

more than 35 titles has reached gold or platinum status. In 2011, the LA County Commission for Women named her "Woman of the Year" for her work educating communities.

"We are not only fortunate to have our guests hear from a world renowned celebrity in the health and fitness arena," stated Cabraloff, "we are also pleased to announce that our luncheon will be hosted by Arous Hanna. We are grateful for her generous donation and thank her for her friendship and

support of AIWA."

Proceeds from the luncheon will benefit AIWA's forthcoming sixth international conference to be held at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco, October 6 to 10. The goal of the con-



Three members of the Working Committee for the AIWA Luncheon: Jessica Vartougian, Joan Agajanian Quinn and Ani Aivazian

Diane Cabraloff, president of the AIWA Los Angeles Affiliate, reports that Smith has stood at the forefront of the fitness and health industries for more than 30 years, selling more than 16 million exercise DVDs, and is an accomplished author, with best-selling book titles, including



Joan Agajanian Quinn (right) and the two other members of the Working Committee for the AIWA Luncheon, Elizabeth Agbabian and Cynthia Norian

ference is to bring together a strong and active network to address critical issues that will advance the position of Armenian women worldwide. The theme is "Armenian Women: Sharing-Inspiring-Advancing." Presentations will be organized along four major subject areas: media and technology, women's rights, leaders and entrepreneurs and cultural identity.

Invited speakers include Rep. Jackie Kanchelian Speier; Mary Ellen Iskenderian, president and CEO, Women's World Bank; Anna Magzanyan, vice president of Advertiser

Marketing and Events, Los Angeles Times Media Group; Gasia Mikaelian, newscaster, KTVU-Channel 2, Bay Area; Lara Setrakian, reporter, Bloomberg TV, Dubai; Eliz Gazarian Semerjian, director of Sales, Telemundo, LA; Dr. Arda A. Ekmekji, dean of Arts and Sciences, Haigazian University, and Shakeh Havan Karapetian, owner, Artbridge Cafe, Yerevan.

To make reservations for the luncheon and further information regarding the sixth International Conference, visit the AIWA website: www.aiwala.org.

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Hagop Manjikian Presents Armenian Genocide Library Series at Fresno State

FRESNO — Community leader Hagop Manjikian spoke on *The Armenian Genocide Library Book Series* to an audience at Fresno State University on Wednesday, May 4.

Manjikian had conceived of and executed the series together with his wife, Knar Manjikian.

The presentation was sponsored by the Armenian Studies Program as part of its Spring 2011 Lecture Series.

Armenian Studies Program Director Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian introduced two guest speakers for the evening: Mark Arax, speaking in English, who read excerpts from three of the volumes in the series, and Hagop Manjikian, who spoke in Armenian about his motivation to create a book series on survivor testimonies from the Armenian Genocide.

Journalist and author Arax, who returned

to Fresno State this semester to teach a graduate writing course as the Tatarian Chair in the Department of Mass Communications and Journalism, discussed the significance of the series. He movingly read excerpts from three of the memoirs, commenting on them as he read. The memoirs have been translated from Armenian into English, thereby making them accessible to the English-speaking world.

Der Mugrdechian then introduced Manjikian, who had heard the stories of the deportations and massacres of his people while growing up. Those stories left an indelible mark on his memory, so much so that he dedicated his life to the preservation of that memory.

Recognizing the need to present the written eyewitness accounts of the Armenian Genocide in English so that Armenian youth and English-speaking people could understand the scope of the tragedy, Hagop Manjikian and his wife began publishing English-language translations of memoirs of the horrific events of 1915 written in Armenian in the decades immediately following the Genocide. The first book in the series was, *Passage Through Hell* (2007) by Armen Anush, followed by *The Fatal Night* (2007) by Mikayel Shamtanchian, *Death March* (2008) by Shahan Derderian and *The Crime of the Ages* (2010) by Sebuhan Aguni. All of the books were translated from Armenian into English by Ishkhan Jinbashian.

Manjikian spoke passionately about his project and about his dream to see the books placed in libraries throughout the English-speaking world. Over the years he has been to Fresno many times, since most of the headquarters for Armenian community institutions were once located in Fresno.

He directed the project to build the Soghomon Tehlirian Monument in Fresno and has supported the *Asbarez* Armenian newspaper as an occasional contributing writer.

A large contingent of Fresno State students and community members were present and were visibly moved by Manjikian's words.

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COMMUNITY NEWS



2011 Assembly Interns with Ambassador Tatoul Markarian (center right, back row)

Assembly Interns Meet with Armenia's Ambassador to the US

WASHINGTON — Last week, the 2011 Armenian Assembly Terjenian-Thomas Summer Intern class had the opportunity to meet with Tatoul Markarian, ambassador of Armenia to the United States. Markarian briefed the group on a range of issues of importance to the US-Armenia bilateral relationship, as well as gave an overview of the key issues facing the Republic of Armenia last week.

"The Armenian Assembly has a remarkable record of service to the homeland and its internship program is just one of the ways that the Assembly provides opportunities and helps train the next generation of leaders," stated Markarian.

Markarian fielded questions from the intern class on the major issues of the day, including the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict, relations with neighboring states and the Turkish and Azeri blockades of Armenia, US assistance and US affirmation of the Armenian Genocide.

Philadelphia AGBU Young Professionals to Host Third Annual 'Coast in the City' and Introduce New Board

PHILADELPHIA — AGBU Young Professionals of Philadelphia is hosting the third annual "Coast in the City" at Positano Coast here on Thursday, August 11, 5:30-9:30

p.m. This event is an after-work networking mixer that continues to be co-chaired by Meredith Avakian and Jacqueline Santerian. "Coast in the City" has been so successful in the past that we've decided to host it again this summer. The event provides excellent networking opportunities and serves as a fun way to introduce our new board and get to know new members," adds Avakian.

The AGBU YP committee thankd and bids farewell to treasurer Nubar Dalerian, secretary Gina Ekmekjian and board members Santerian and Gina Terkanian for their service and time on the YP Philadelphia board. They have left an important imprint on the YP Philly family.

In addition, they congratulate and welcome Colette Seter as vice chair, Karina Ambartsoumian as publicist, Tina Hagopian as secretary and Avakian and Julie Paretechan sharing chair duties.

The AGBU YP Philadelphia officers and committee meet monthly to plan social, professional, cultural and community service events. Committee members include: Ambartsoumian, Avakian, Vicken Bazarbasian, Hagopian, Paretechan, Seter and Paul Sookiasian.

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 Avakian and visit their Facebook page.

Friends of Holy Trinity 1000 Club to Host Hot Dogs and Beans Dinner

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The Friends of Holy Trinity 1000 Club of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church is hosting an "All American Hot Dogs and Beans Dinner" on Thursday, July 28, in the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall of the church complex at 145 Brattle St., beginning at 6:30 p.m.

The 1000 Club, established in 1976, holds a monthly drawing on the last Thursday of each month, awarding \$2,000 in cash prizes. The drawing will be held following the dinner on July 28. "One-time" numbers will be sold the night of the dinner at \$5 per number or five numbers for \$20.

Armen Skenderian, co-chair of the 1000 Club, says, "Everyone is welcome. For only \$4.99, you'll get two hot dogs, beans, cole slaw, dessert and watermelon. And," he continues, "if you have a 1000 Club number or buy one that night, you'll have a chance to win \$1,000."

Dinner tickets will be on sale at the door. For more information, contact the church office or email office@htaac.org.

Tribute to Archpriest Zaven Arzoumanian

TRIBUTE, fom page 4

former Primate of the Armenian Church in England, who now resides in Philadelphia. He also invited Salpi Kerkounian, a graduate of the University of Southern California, for a musical rendition on the flute, accompanied by her mother on the harp. The performance included two pieces from composer Khatchadour Avedisian.

Sepetjian then invited Rev. Zaven Arzoumanian to the podium. The humbled honoree thanked the Western Diocese for providing the venue, the Tekeyan Cultural Association for organizing the event, the many presenters for

their kind remarks and finally the audience.

Arzoumanian ventured to say that schooling starts at home, and he owes his love of books to his father. He then noted that his task in life has been to learn and to teach and expressed gratitude that his 57 years of service to God has included both teaching and writing, besides being a parish priest.

Derderian, the Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church, delivered the closing remarks and asked Arzoumanian to offer the benediction. Reception followed the impressive ceremony.

— Kevork Keushkerian

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Nine Students Graduate from Sisters Academy of Radnor, Penn.

RADNOR, Penn. — Graduation, by definition, is the conferral of an academic diploma marking the completion of one's studies, and the Armenian Sisters Academy (ASA) honored this momentous occasion for the eighth-grade Class of 2011 with a June 17 ceremony.

Most of these graduates had been together for 11 years, and as graduate Alex Ayrapetyan commented, the academy had become his "second home and his classmates had become his extended family."

The class of 2011 is the first class to graduate under Principal Sister Emma Moussayan's leadership and is also the same class she welcomed, nurtured and taught as young Montessori students. On this occasion, she encouraged them to take what they have learned at the academy and build upon its foundation. "Be your own person, trust your own voice and conscience and always follow your heart," she advised.

For these nine graduates, their time at ASA had been one of growth in many ways: academic, spiritual and social. Through the years they have become, as Christopher Andonian alluded, like an NHL hockey team and he gave thanks for his teammates (fellow students), his coaches (the sisters and teachers) and his fans (parents and family). Whether these students were the first in their family to graduate, or the last of many siblings, each reflected on the impact the Sisters made on their journey through ASA. Anie Avedissian credited the sisters with teaching that it is "choice, not chance, that determines destiny," while Michael Knudson came to realize that the sisters were not only teachers and disciplinarians, but also messengers of God



This year's graduates include Julie Arthin, George Ambartsoumian, Davit Stepanyan, Christopher Andonian, Michael Knudson, Evan Mazmanian, Armen Ewing, Alex Ayrapetyan and Anie Avedissian.

preparing them for the next phase of their lives.

Throughout the years, the friendships and bonds formed among these students grew to last a lifetime. As George Ambartsoumian commented, his time at the ASA was akin to a car ride — sometimes an easy drive and other times one requiring the help of friends to navigate the large bumps. As the son of a graduate, Armen Ewing expressed how he understood why his mother looked back on her ASA years with fondness.

Many students credited the ASA with providing the skills and background necessary to succeed in high school. Both Davit Stepanyan and Julie Arthin were proud to join the ranks of ASA graduates; Stepanyan credited the acade-

my as giving him his sense of independence while Arthin felt the challenges she had overcome had given her strength for the next step. When Evan Mazmanian reflected on his academy experience, he commented that he only hopes "the rest of the book will be as good as the first chapter." Each student delivered eloquent bilingual speeches where they thanked their own families, Sisters, faculty, and entire ASA family for making their time at the school memorable.

Zareh Zohrabian, an Academy alumnus (1991)

and cousin of graduate Christopher Andonian, gave a commencement address in Armenian as he reflected upon his own ASA graduation with pride. Speaking from experience, he relayed to the graduates, "The tools you've gained here will serve you well as you write the rest of your life story." Zohrabian is an accomplished leader in the aerospace industry and currently serves as senior manager of Networked Tactical ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) for Information Solutions (IS), a division of The Boeing Company's Network and Space Systems Business. Through his leadership role at Boeing and his desire to help the Academy, Zohrabian secured and presented Boeing Company's \$7,500 charitable donation for the fundraising

efforts of the Class of 2011. Moussayan graciously thanked him for the efforts he put forth to help the Academy by obtaining a donation from a multi-billion dollar corporation, but most importantly for the example he set for the graduates showing how they, too, can one day give back to their school and communities. This donation, along with other contributions and a year's worth of fundraising activities, allowed the Class of 2011 to raise a record-breaking \$37,000. The Class of 2011 has chosen to apply these funds to a much needed renovation of the lower playground for the enjoyment of the younger students.

Vahan Janjigian, chief investment officer of Greenwich Wealth Management, LLC in Connecticut and editor of the *Forbes Special Situation Survey* investment newsletter, delivered a commencement speech in English. Having learned from his own experiences, he advised the graduates to live by three principles: keep your options open, surround yourself with good people and let God be your guide while utilizing your Christian values. Good advice, indeed.

A new twist this year featured alumnae handing diplomas to their children; Sibelle Arslanian to her son, Armen, and Liz Mazmanian to her son, Evan.

Dr. George Avetian, chairman of the Board of Directors, closed the program encouraging the graduates to aim high and work hard while following their hearts and their dreams. He hoped they would learn from their mistakes and be respectful of others. The school will miss the members of the class of 2011 and hope they will visit from time to time.

TCA Arshag Dickranian School 2011 Commencement Ceremonies

COMMENCEMENT, from page 1

The processional entry of the three graduating classes was followed by the school choir's rendition of the national anthems of the United States, the Republic of Armenia and the hymn of the Dickranian School.

Acting as the master of ceremonies, Vice Chairman of Board of Trustees Parsegh Kartalian delivered the opening remarks of the event, introducing and welcoming guests and graduating students alike. "We are gathered here today to graduate 16 students into the next chapter of their lives," said he. "They will leave this school and pursue higher education in prestigious universities and make us all proud."

Following Kartalian's remarks, Principal Vartkes Kourouyan presented awards of excellence to fifth- and eighth-grade students. He then invited Board of Trustees Secretary Gia Aivazian to present the fifth graders with their diplomas as Ashley Kirakossian, their homeroom teacher, called their names. Respectively, the eighth graders were then called one by one by their homeroom teacher Alvard Uzunyan to receive their diplomas by their one time teacher Vatche Semerdjian.

Board of Trustees chairman, George K. Mandossian, and TCA Board of Directors chairman, Haroutiun Arzoumanian, were then called upon to jointly present the 16 graduates of the Class of 2011 with their diplomas as Soukiassian read their names, thus calling on: Lusine Aleksanian, David Aghabekyan, Rozi Demirtchian, Lusine Zeitountsian, Khachik Haladjian, Alex Garibyan, John Gukasyan, Mariam Meliksetyan, Anahit Mestchyan, Harout Mishikyan, Ani Nercessian, Hykouhi Shamlyan, Grace Chilyan, Shake Dzhulfayan, Vardan Vardanyan and Gevork Keshishyan.

Valedictorian Mestchyan, recipient of Eleanor Dickranian's coveted \$1,000 "Arshag Dickranian Award" and Salutatorian Hykouhi Shamlyan, recipient of the \$500 Armenian Educational Foundation "Arshag Dickranian Memorial Award," presented their speeches in Armenian and English, reflecting upon their experiences and memories of their school days.

Aside from the awards received by the valedictorian and salutatorians, Board Treasurer Angine Garibyan presented monetary prizes in the total amount of \$2,800 to winners in vari-

ous intramural competitions such as recitation, composition, arts and sciences. The prizes were donated by respective sponsors

The keynote speaker of the event was school alumna Mariam Danielyan, Esq., (Class of 2002). She was introduced by the emcee as a graduate of UC Berkeley and University of San Francisco School of Law. One of the highlights of her career was attending the 13th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva where she presented a three-minute intervention to the Council and delegates on the Right to Food. Danielyan began her address by memorializing her days at ADS. "I began my life with tears as I enrolled in



Class of 2011



Principal V. Kourouyan receiving recognition plaque from TCA Chair Dr. H. Arzoumanian and school board chair George K. Mandossian

Kindergarten and left with tears when I graduated" she said, "Later on, during my four years

at UC Berkeley, I found out that Arshag Dickranian School had given me a solid foundation to face my challenges."

The congratulatory message of the School Board of Trustees was delivered by Mandossian. "Tomorrow, as you start attending the college of your choice, you will not find your current teachers there," said he addressing to the Class of 2011. "Hence, it will be your sole duty to safeguard your mother tongue and heritage." Apart from addressing the graduates, Mandossian expressed the board's appreciation to the faculty and working committees for their dedication and hard work and to the benefactors for their continued support. Mandossian then acknowledged Kourouyan for his 30-year service at the school and presented him with a plaque of recognition.

Kourouyan then gave his message bidding farewell to the graduates of the Class of 2011, most of who were enrolled as kindergarten students.

The program ended with Yardemian's remarks and benediction, after which the graduates, parents and friends all gathered at the school grounds for carousing and picture taking.

For more information, visit www.dickranianschool.org.



New York
METRO

Khrimian Lyceum Graduates Seven Students in New York

NEW YORK – Khrimian Lyceum held its annual graduation and cultural program on Saturday, May 21, at the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern). The seven graduates, accompanied by their *azkahayr* and *azkamayr* (heritage-honoring godparents), pledged to continue their Armenian Christian heritage in a memorable graduation ceremony at St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral officiated by Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian.

This year’s graduates – Anna Akopian, Vani Apanossian, Anna Boyadjian, Alex Calikyan, Christina Haroutunian, Peter Oundjian and Lara Ozdemirci – each prepared farewell speeches reflecting on their time as students at Khrimian and the valuable experiences they have had over the course of five years.

The Diocese’s Armenian Studies coordinator, Gilda Buchakjian-Kupelian, congratulated the graduates’ parents, as well as Khrimian Lyceum’s students and teachers. She spoke about the dedicated involvement of the graduates in the Armenian Church and in various aspects of Armenian cultural life.

In his remarks, Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian encouraged the graduates to continue to learn and honor the language of their ancestors and to research the hidden treasures of their cultural heritage. Fr. Mardiros Chevian, dean of St. Vartan Cathedral and Deacon Vahagn Azizian were also in attendance.

The graduates received their diplomas and graduation gifts from Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese. The gifts included Hagop Nersoyan’s *New Faith to New World* and Armenian coins from Hirant Gulian. They also received the newly-published *Armenian Heritage Dictionary* and a compilation of Maro Partamian’s music.

A cultural program dedicated to the 20th anniversary of Armenia’s independence took place in Kavookjian Hall following graduation ceremonies. Guests enjoyed an afternoon full of Armenian cultural traditions, including recitations, song, music and dance commemorating the centennials of Alan Hovannes and Khachig Tashdents. The program opened with choral music sung by the Khrimian Lyceum students conducted by Maro Partamian, with piano



A performance by Khrimian students of the Armenian opera “Anoush”

accompaniment by Florence Avakian.

A photo and art exhibit by Khrimian students, under the guidance of the Lyceum’s art teacher Susan Kirby, was also on display. The artwork drew on the styles of renowned Armenian artists Yousuf Karsh, Toros Roslin and Ivan Aivazovsky.

The highlight of the program was a performance by Khrimian students of the famous Armenian opera, “Anoush,” which was adapted for the young group and directed by Vartan Garniki. It was choreographed by Naira Mkrtchyan. Music and electronics were provided by Berch Manukian.

The Khrimian Lyceum is a five-year program of cultural literacy developed for graduates of Armenian schools. In addition to Armenian language instruction, Khrimian Lyceum students enhance their knowledge of their Christian-Armenian faith, traditions and culture through field trips and lectures. In addition to the staff mentioned earlier, Janet Demirozu, Shakeh Kadehjian, Lucia Vorperian and Talin Manukian are the language teachers at the New York Khrimian Lyceum. While the Khrimian Lyceum format has its foundations at the Eastern Diocese in New York, the program has also been implemented in



Khrimian Lyceum graduates with the Diocese’s Armenian Studies coordinator Gilda Buchakjian-Kupelian

Massachusetts, Michigan and Texas.

One of the components of Khrimian Lyceum is its service to the Armenian Church and to the larger Armenian community. During services on Christmas and Easter Eve, readings are done by the students. Annual visits are made to the Armenian Home in Flushing. Educational field trips have included visits to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to view the Armenian *khachkar* and the Philadelphia Museum of Art for the “Gorky Retrospective.”

“In addition to linguistic and faith literacy, Khrimian Lyceum students are encouraged from year one to hone their skills in public speaking, civics, writing, debate and engaging with lecturers in their field of specialization,” said Buchakjian-Kupelian.

“Attending Khrimian brought me back to my Armenian roots by meeting fellow Armenians, learning about my culture and history and singing the songs our grandparents and great grand-parents once sang,” said Khrimian alumni Melissa Nazar. “Khrimian allowed me and will continue to allow me, to be the Armenian I am today: proud of my heritage and culture.”



Alex Calikyan at the Khrimian Lyceum graduation ceremony at St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral in New York, with Fr. Mardiros Chevian and Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian

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New York METRO

Actor Hrach Titizian Speaks about Broadway Debut, Career to NY/NJ Armenian Community

NEW YORK — The plaza of St. Vartan Cathedral served as the stage for Broadway actor Hrach Titizian, who recently starred alongside Robin Williams in the acclaimed play, “Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo.”

The Los Angeles-based actor spoke to a group of enthusiastic Armenian-Americans on Monday evening, June 20, at an event hosted by the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America and the Armenian Network of America, Greater New York Region.

In New York City since last February, Titizian has been busy performing for sold-out audiences twice a day, six days a week. The



Guests Karine Abalyan and Aleen Tovmasian at the event

play, written by Rajiv Joseph, takes place shortly after the fall of Baghdad in 2003 and examines the meaning of life amid destruction and despair. Titizian — very convincingly — played Uday, one of Saddam Hussein’s sons who was killed during the war. The play completed its

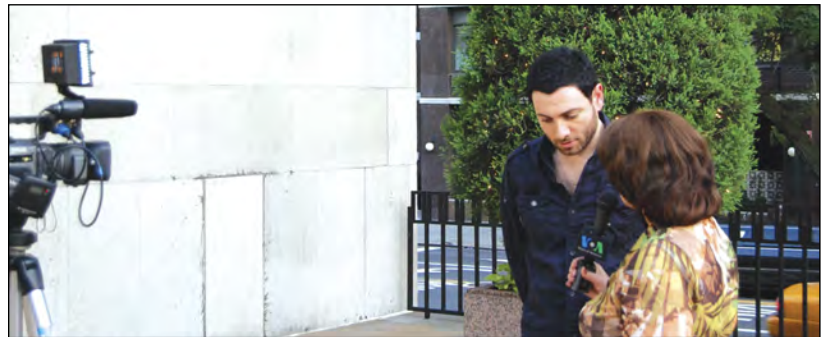


Hrach Titizian speaks about his acting career and role in the Broadway play “Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo.”

run on July 3.

Titizian, 32, spoke about his role in “Bengal Tiger,” as well as his acting career, which includes roles in the hit television series “24,” “NCIS” and “Alias,” among many others. Talented and humble — a rare mix in the entertainment industry — Titizian spent time after his talk signing autographs and greeting guests. The evening also featured traditional Armenian music by the John Vartan Ensemble and a wine-and-cheese reception.

— Taleen Babayan



Actor Hrach Titizian was interviewed by Karine Kocharyan of the Voice of Armenians news program

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ATOP Meaningful World Humanitarian Mission In the Democratic Republic of Congo: Post-War Rehabilitation and Recovery

CLIFFSIDE PARK, N.J. — Few countries have seen the amount of violence that the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has seen in the past decades. Since 1996, the fourth largest African state has seen wars with its neighbors, civil wars and other forms of violence that have proliferated immense poverty and famine, an AIDS/HIV epidemic, increasing rape rates and gender intolerance. The International Rescue Committee estimated that more than 5.4 million people have died from the prolonged conflict, that Nicholas D. Kristof of the *New York Times* says is being “ignored” by the international community. The vicious cycle of hate and fear seems almost unbreakable for the citizens of the DRC.

The Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention (ATOP) of Meaningful World, a New York-based international humanitarian charitable organization (501 c (3)) affiliated with DPI of the United Nations, devoted to fostering a, just, peaceful and meaningful world, has collaborated with many organizations to bring rehabilitation programs to Sierra Leone in March 2009 and more than 29 other humanitarian empowerment, educational and rehabilitation programs around the world, including Haiti. The mission to the DRC will focus on the city of Bukavu, home to nearly half a million people, including 500 displaced children. They are collaborating with the Peace Center there, as well as Université de la Paix, refugee centers and hospitals in the area and working with traumatized women. With the experience and expertise to make a difference, they will be working with vulnerable groups of children, women who were raped in the war, refugees and older adults. ATOP will

also be part of the opening of the Ruzizi Peace Market collaborating with Rotary Club of Montecito, District 5240, Santa Barbara, Calif. ATOP team members that will be traveling to Congo are: Dr. Ani Kalayjian, founder and president of ATOP (Kalayjian has devoted her life to bringing healing to those who have survived the devastation of disaster) and David Pressley, Meaningful World ambassador, retired Correction Officer from New York City Department of Corrections with expertise in Digital technology, filming, editing and transferring slides into digital media.

ATOP’s goals are to help survivors heal their emotional and psychospiritual wounds resulting from years of armed conflict, poverty, discrimination, and displacement. They aim to help surviving communities understand the impact of the past on their present through education, healing groups and self-healing. ATOP will train psychologist, social workers, nurses and other health care practitioners. This helps create educated and healthy communities that are able to transform generationally-transmitted trauma by cultivating a new world view, train and educate high school teachers and students to nurture non-violence in their respective communities, and foster communal dialogue for conflict transformation and peace-building through practicing forgiveness. ATOP also plans to help mobilize communities, facilitating healthy partnerships that build bridges of diversity through common values centered on the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The first team is departing July 1 to 12. Tax-deductible donations can be made via check or Pay-Pal (see www.meaningfulworld.com for more details).



Arts & Living

Armenian Youth Talent Shines in New York

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – For the third consecutive year, more than 25 young Armenian musicians who had been selected after rigorous auditions, performed to great acclaim on Sunday afternoon, May 29. The Armenian Youth Talent (AYT) concert held at Merkin Concert Hall was organized by “Direct Help for Armenian People” (DHAP) and dedicated to the 20th anniversary of Armenia’s independence.

With its aim of promoting the Armenian heritage and culture, the event drew a crowd of more than 200, including guests of honor, the Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Armenian Catholic Exarch, Bishop Manuel Batakian, Armenia’s Ambassador to the United Nations Garen Nazarian, United Nations high-ranking official Dr. Movses Abelian and Metropolitan Opera diva Lucine Amara.

One of last year’s AYT finalists, Eugenia Sarian, who had the distinction of being born the same year as the independence of Armenia, welcomed the large crowd. The program was replete with captivating melodies by such beloved Armenian composers – Komitas, Sayat Nova, Khachaturyan, Kanachyan, Tigranian, Babadjanyan and Hovhanness Melikian, among others.

The finalists in the voice category included Arman Abelian, Zovinar Aghavian, Ani Manvelyan, Julia Naldjian, Serena Tchorbajian, Shoushig Tenguerian and Irene Vilgorin. Instrumentalists were flute soloist Sareen Nairi Balian, viola de gamba soloist Lucine Musaelian and violin soloist Lilith Vahradyan.

Piano finalists were Shushan Aghavian, David Antabian, Nareg Stepan Balian, Ryan Chan, Vahe Kafafian, Vatche Kafafian, Nicole Khrimian, Daniel Manucharian, Ani Mouradian and Katherine Sadaniantz.

The 2011 Armenian Youth Talent guest performers from the winners, finalists and participants of the first, second and third AYT competitions included Merydel Ambre, Aram Balian, Ani Djirjirian, Mila Gak, Niree Kaprielian, Lily Kijyan, Nicole Mark, Elen Ohanyan and Sarian.

Another part of the program was the performance of the 31-member Hamazkayin Arekag Choir, the members of which range in age from 7 to 15. They performed rousing renditions of *Azg Parapants* and *Azat Hayastan*, under the artistic direction of Vagharshak Ohanyan who also accompanied them on the piano.

Following a standing ovation by the enthusiastic crowd, Dr. Svetlana Amirkhanian presented each finalist with an honorary certificate accompanied by a financial gift and a flower bouquet. “These gifted young people are our future and enhance the spirit of Armenia,” she said, speaking in Armenian.

The inspiring event concluded with the audience singing *God Bless America*.

Judges for the 2011 competition included noted musicians soprano Anoush Barclay, baritone Vagharshak Ohanyan, pianist Lusine Badalyan, composer and pianist Karen Hakobyan, violinist Diana Vasilyan and singer Anahid Boghossian.

Members of the AYT Executive Committee were Amirkhanian, Marina Bagdasarova, Angela Kazarian and Melik Kazarian. The Artistic Advisory Panel included Hakobyan, Khoren Mekanejian and Ohanyan.

Among the sponsors were the AGBU, Doctors Karen and Irina Kakosian, Amirkhanian, Arpine Aynilian, Bagdasarova, Harry and Suzanne Toufayan, Saro and Hilda Hartounian, Rita Balian and Nazar and Artemis Nazarian.

With Armenian organizations celebrating the 20th anniversary of Armenia’s independence, the gifted young finalists of the Armenian Youth Talent presented their tribute in the way they know best – through music and song to promote the Armenian heritage and culture.



Andrea Martin

Children of Armenia Fund Summer Soirée In Manhattan

NEW YORK – The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) held a fundraiser on the evening of June 22 at New York City’s Standard Hotel in the Meatpacking District. Armenian-American actress and comedienne Andrea Martin, artist and designer Michael Aram and fashion boutique chain founder Khajak Keledjian served as hosts to a crowd of some 230 people.

The event was aimed at attracting a younger crowd than COAF’s annual banquet, and it seems to have succeeded. Despite the early evening thunderstorms, the hotel room and surrounding terrace were packed by fashionably-dressed guests enjoying the view, cocktails and hors d’oeuvres. More than \$20,000 was raised, permitting COAF to build a wing on one of the schools it is renovating in the large village of Miasnikian.

The formal portion of the event was fairly brief. Martin, a steadfast supporter of COAF, pointed out the importance of the organization’s work. She spoke both at the start and the end of the event with humor and charm. She said that five years ago when she was first approached to serve as the entertainment for a COAF event, she asked for money, a car, a dress and “this and that,” but when she became familiar with the work that COAF did, she no longer could ask for any payment. She said that once any audience member would go to Armenia and see for himself the impact of the extraordinary work being done on people’s lives, “You will sell your house and give it to COAF.”

see COAF, page 12



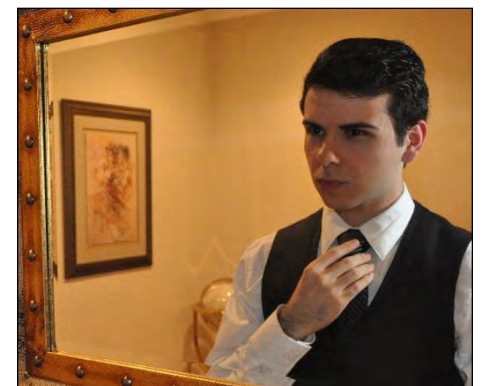
COAF supporters mingle at the Standard Hotel

ADAA Announces Lillian and Varnum Paul 2011 Screenwriting Award Finalists, Judges

LOS ANGELES – The Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance (ADAA) announced recently the three finalists of the third Biennial Lillian and Varnum Paul 2011 Screenwriting Award: “Bluebeard” by Kraig Kuzirian (US), adapted from the novel *Bluebeard* by Kurt Vonnegut; “Fading In and Out of Love” by Missak Artinian (US) and “The Florist” by Jeff Kalousdian (US).

Screenplay submissions were received from across the United States, Europe and Armenia. Entries were required to be full-length, unproduced film scripts written in English and based on Armenian themes. More screenplays were submitted this year than in previous years. The screenplays submitted were of high quality, which made the selections difficult for the first round judges, all of whom are industry professionals.

The three finalist screenplays will now be evaluated by an honorary jury: award-winning screenwriter Steven Bagatourian (“American Gun”); actor David Alpay (Atom Egoyan’s “Ararat,” Showtime’s “The Tudors,” Fox’s “Weekend at Bellevue”) and French writer and director Stéphane Kazandjian (“Modern Love”).



Missak Artinian, “Fading In and Out of Love”



Finalists Jeff Kalousdian, “The Florist” and Kraig Kuzirian, “Bluebeard”

The winner of the \$10,000 grand prize will be announced at a private ceremony in Los Angeles in October. This year’s ceremony will feature a VIP reception and special performance. Tickets will be available for this exclusive event by invitation only.

The ADAA’s mission is to make the Armenian voice heard on the world stage through the dramatic arts of theatre and film. The organization accomplishes this mission by supporting playwrights and screenwriters and providing production opportunities, research tools, networking resources and writing awards.

In addition to the \$10,000 Lillian and Varnum Paul Screenwriting Award, ADAA administers the \$10,000 William Saroyan Prize for Playwriting, the deadline for which is February 15, 2012.



ARTS & LIVING

Soprano Papian Dazzles at Armenian Night at Pops

POPS, from page 1

Armenia and the passing of Dr. Keran Chobanian, a FACS founder and supporter. "The Armenian Community, the BSO and Pops lost a great friend," expressed Lockhart.

The final part of the program had an unexpected variation with bluegrass pieces performed by the talented Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder. Skaggs explained the personal significance in the touching pieces he and his fellow musicians performed with great skill. The audience seemed energized by the grand songwriting, immense talent and fantastic acoustics during this set.

A new twist this year was that the post-concert reception was held at the nearby Colonnade Hotel, instead of a hall in the Symphony building. Though a bit challenging to access by foot because of a heavy rainfall, most of those who purchased a ticket attended the reception and seemed happy to meet fellow patrons and supporters and even meet the evenings' stars, Papian and Sarkissian.

During the elegant champagne and desert reception, Arakelian, president of FACS, welcomed the guests and encouraged the participation of the younger generation in future cultural events. "Armenians and Armenian culture have many undiscovered gems and presenting our heritage adds its own unique color to the cultural mosaic of this world," Arakelian reflected.

Special recognition was given to Chobanian for his decades-long strategic work with FACS. Appreciation was given to FACS supporters, organizers and volunteers including Raffi Yeghiayan, Karen Ucuz, Jessica Manguikian and Robert and Sandra



The Marderos family with Hasmik Papian

Aghababian.

Eating a delicate sweet, Haig Babaian of Brighton felt the reception was a good place "to chill out after the concert and meet people." Countless conversations at the reception revolved around the evening's diverse content.

Sarkissian discussed the creative process in composing *Drinking Song*. "I worked on it 10 years ago and recently finished it precisely for this occasion," he said. Joan Sadyan of Connecticut shared with her friends, "I thoroughly liked Hasmik."

Estrellita Karsh of Boston was just as

impressed with Papian and felt, "the spirit on and off the stage was infectious. Papian caught the mood. Each rendition was perfectly done in a way the composer would have wanted it."

Indeed, FACS supporters look forward to future memorable events.



Linda Kasparian, Violet Ohanian, Joan Sadyan and Lucia Ohanian



Diane Matevosian, Rose Tufenkjian, Louise Hekimian, Joyce and Paul Barsam

AIWA and NAASR Present Talk by Memoirist, Journalist and Poet Helene Pilibosian

BELMONT, Mass. — The Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA) and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will present a talk by Helene Pilibosian titled "From Journalist to Poet and Memoirist," on Thursday, August 11, at 8 p.m., at the NAASR Center, 395 Concord Ave.

Helene Pilibosian was born in Boston to Armenian immigrant parents. She graduated from Watertown High School, Katharine Gibbs

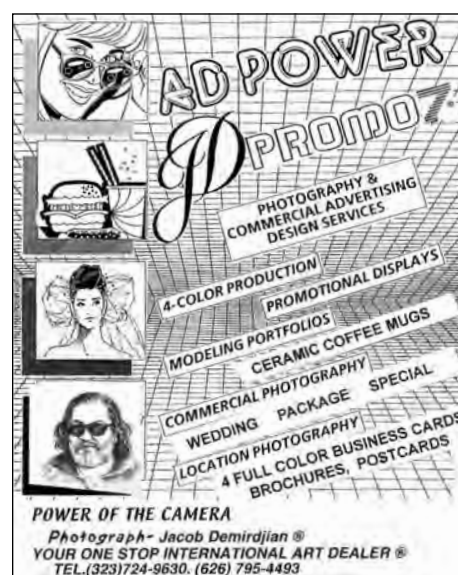
School and Harvard University with an ADA (bachelor equivalent) in humanities. In 1964, she became the first woman editor of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* and later served as a writer/editor there for many years. After traveling widely in Europe and Lebanon, she now owns and operates Ohan Press and has published poems in such magazines as *North American Review*, *Weber: The Contemporary West*, *Journal of the Society for Armenian*

Studies, *Poetry Salzburg* and many others. Her early poetry has been cited in the *Greenwood Encyclopedia of Multiethnic American Literature* and she has received a first prize from *Writer's Digest* for her collection *At Quarter Past Reality: New and Selected Poems*, and an honorable mention from that magazine for *History's Twists: The Armenians*.

Pilibosian, who recently published her memoir, *My Literary Profile*, presents her journey from



Helene Pilibosian



being a child of survivors of the Armenian Genocide to fighting depression, immersion in the Armenian-American community and literary explorations in later years. *My Literary Profile* is a valuable contribution to the literature on first-generation Armenian-American life. The book is available at the NAASR bookstore and will be available for purchase and signing by the author the night of the event.

Admission to the event is free. More information about the lecture is available by contacting NAASR at hq@naasr.org, or AIWA at aiwainc@aol.com.



ARTS & LIVING

California Man Donates Grandfather's Paintings To Presidential Libraries

SAN PEDRO, Calif. (*Daily Breeze*) — His grandfather's 1962 oil painting of President John F. Kennedy hung on the family's dining room wall during all the years John Saroyan was growing up in San Pedro.

By Donna Littlejohn

Later this year, he plans to send another canvas portrait — this one of a young Richard Nixon when he was still in Congress — to the Richard M. Nixon Library in Yorba Linda.

"They belong in the right place," Saroyan said of his decision to donate some of the works by his artist grandfather, Jay Meuser. "It seems for me to hold on to them really doesn't do much. ... They have to have a home."

September 28 will be the 100th anniversary of Meuser's birth. Saroyan's donations aren't the only means by which the self-taught artist, who spent the last part of his short (Meuser died in 1963 of a heart attack at the age of 51) but varied life in San Pedro, is getting some new recognition.

On Thursday, the San Pedro Arts Association — a group Meuser led in 1953 — dedicated a plaque in Meuser's honor on space donated by Linda Jackson and her brother, Charles Barsam, the owners of property at 343 W. Seventh St.

Meuser, born in San Francisco, packed plenty of adventure into his years. His biography includes stints as a teenaged Vaudevillian performer, sailor, shipyard and sheet metal worker, baseball pitcher and instructor at the San Francisco Art Institute.

At 31, he was the youngest chief of police in Marin County.

But in his later years, living in San Pedro with his wife and daughter (who married a cousin of American playwright William Saroyan), it was his artwork that consumed his time and passion.

Classified as an abstract expressionist, Meuser also painted classical portraits of prominent people through the years. His portrait of Franklin D. Roosevelt, done in the late 1930s, hung in the White House for a time and the artist received a personal letter of thanks from the president.

The JFK painting "wasn't done from a sitting or a photo, it was by memory, maybe a series of shots," said grandson Saroyan, a Rancho Palos Verdes resident and psychologist who has a practice in San Pedro.

The family still owns a number of Meuser's paintings, but it was still difficult to

On Friday, Saroyan, 49, packed up the 24-by-30-inch canvas and shipped it off to what will be its new home — the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston.



The late Jay Meuser, works on his painting of Gen. Douglas MacArthur in 1950.

part with the heirloom.

"I have to admit it was [difficult], it was part of our family history," Saroyan said. "Taking it out of the frame was kind of hard."

His grandfather's body of artwork, Saroyan said, "was quite eclectic. Being an abstract impressionist painter in the 1950s was quite a challenging thing, it wasn't that acceptable."

Many of Meuser's works today are in private collections, Saroyan said, but a few can still be seen in public places, including his award-winning painting titled "Spirit of the Fisherman" that hangs at Dana Middle School in San Pedro.

No one is sure what happened to the Roosevelt portrait, but it is believed to be still with the former president's family.

When it's ready to go on permanent display, Saroyan and his family plan to visit it in Boston.

Children of Armenia Fund Summer Soirée In Manhattan

COAF, from page 10

Aram said that the poverty levels he saw in Armenia after the fall of the Soviet Union were extreme. Students had to go to schools with no heat, crumbling walls and holes in the floors. Aram continued, "Living conditions and study conditions were among the worst I have ever seen in my life, and I have lived in India for 20 years of my life." One COAF Board member was visiting a school in Armenia, and some students passed out from hunger at that time. Aram asked for the help of those present to improve this tragic situation.

Businessman Dr. Garo Armen, who founded COAF in 2000, introduced two short videos. One was prepared by children in Armenia who

had received the necessary equipment and training through a COAF grant funded by the Paul Newman Fund. They showed how buildings and the environment affecting their lives had changed in a two-minute video. The video ended with the children all saying thank you to their COAF donors.

The second was an unfinished draft begun some eight days ago, showing what COAF does in a broader sense through animation. It was the work of a young group of Armenian college students from Boston.

Armen provided the audience with basic information about COAF, recommending that they visit their website for more details (www.coafkids.org). Approximately 30 people



Michael Aram addresses the COAF crowd



Khajak Keledjian speaks, with Andrea Martin and Garo Armen to the right

work in the Armenia offices. Everything is directly done by COAF in Armenia to avoid corruption. Armen said that in the 11 villages in which COAF works, there are some 25,000 people, of which some 6,000 are school-age children. Economic conditions are worsening there; thus more than 10 percent of the population cannot afford the most basic things. Though the schools are free, books, equipment and personal items such as clothing and meals are not, therefore poor families sometimes cannot afford to send their children. It takes approximately \$350 per year per child to provide what is necessary. Approximately 500 of the 6,000 children depend on COAF for these necessities.

Keledjian said that COAF staff members are paid their salaries through board members, so

that all donations go directly to the children in Armenia. He gave the example of his own birthday present to his brother Haro, who was in the room. He went with Haro to Armenia, which allowed them to see the difficulties Armenians there are facing. However, despite all their talk and plans, they did not do much until Keledjian joined COAF. Keledjian pointed out to the audience that Larry Feinberg, the biggest donor to COAF, was not even Armenian, and that made him feel even more motivated to participate. So Keledjian donated the presents from his 38th birthday to COAF. He urged those present, lucky to be living in New York, to help Armenians in the Republic of Armenia who are living without the same opportunities.



ARTS & LIVING

Annual Talent Show Held in Providence, RI

PROVIDENCE — It is not just America that has got talent; anyone present at the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church on Saturday, June 4, would have agreed that Providence Armenian kids are replete with talent.

The program was the 17th annual children's talent show sponsored by the Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church.

Konstantin Petrossian, director of the Cultural Committee, has been the guiding force

of the talent show, with Irene Eranosian as chairperson for 17 years. Plans are already underway for the 18th season.

Many of the more than 40 performers are students in the Cultural Committee's Arts

Education Program, which is open to all youngsters in the Greater Providence area. It offers classes in art, music, song and dance. Janna Guegamian has chaired this unique program since its inception 12 years ago. Many of the students are multi-talented, performing on two or more musical instruments as well as participating in song and dance.

The appreciative audience listened to guitar solos and ensemble, violin, flute, clarinet, piano and the Junior Choir under the direction of Petrossian. The Nazeli Dance Group, both children's and junior groups, dressed in beautiful colorful costumes delighted the crowd with their authentic Armenian dances, choreographed by the teachers Lusine Ovanesyan and Narine Amroyan.

A stunning art exhibition of the students enrolled in painting, drawing and sculpture was displayed in the Egavian Cultural Center. Ann Ovanesyan is the teacher.

Other teachers in the Arts Education Program are Oxana Izyumoff, piano; Nana Gazaryan, piano; Vahan Grigorian, guitar; Meghan O'Connor, violin; David Griego, flute and Apkar Lefian teaches clarinet.

In addition to teachers in the Arts Education Program, private teachers are also invited to have their students perform in the Talent Show. Piano teachers Aurora Emdjian and Rouzan Gevorkian had several students playing the piano beautifully.

At the close of the evening the Rev. Gomidas Baghsarian of Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, Providence, complimented Petrossian, Guegamian and Eranosian for another successful show and for giving the opportunity for our youngsters to showcase their talents.

A reception followed in the Hanoian Hall, hosted by the Cultural Committee.

— Marilyn J. Wolooohojian



Some of the children's paintings

Pattie's Book Asks: *Who Are the Armenians?*

By Nancy Kalajian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Dr. Susan Pattie, author of the newly-released paperback, *Who are the Armenians?*, has produced a contemporary, colorful and informative guide and accompanying CD to introduce Armenian history and culture. When she recently spoke about the book to a full house at NAASR in Belmont, Mass., nearly 50 copies of the book were sold that evening alone.

Aimed at children aged 5-12, the format and design of the book easily engages readers of all ages; there are 16 sections or mini chapters, and each section makes good use of background color, font color changes, captions and highlighted words, to share and distinguish related information.

Information is usually presented within a few paragraphs on each page, or occasionally on lists, for example, on traditional Armenian instruments or letters of the Armenian alphabet.

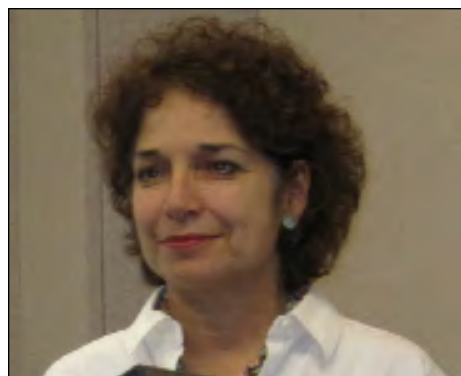
The readability level and font size might be a bit challenging for an early elementary age student, though the spacing between lines of print is generous, which can make it easier for younger readers to access.

For those youngsters who may have difficulty reading it on their own, an older sibling or adult could easily read it to a child who could follow along looking at the attractive visual information. Indeed, the wonderful family photographs, illustrations, friendly and simple captions and wealth of information will likely capture the interest of readers of all levels.

Many of the sections include an "activity," whereupon the reader can reflect on a personal connection and then think of that connection outside the box, for example in a global

context. In the diaspora, for instance, the reader is asked to trace their roots, where they have lived and changes that have taken place there. Then it asks the reader to discover "famous" Armenians living in their country or perhaps other diasporan countries. In religion, the activity focuses on the *Jashagestzouk* prayer said before a meal; not only are the words there in transliteration but can be heard by a group of people, perhaps a family, in the accompanying CD.

In one of the last chapters, Armenian Children around the World, you can meet children of Armenian descent who live throughout the diaspora, like Anush and Felipe in Buenos Aires, Sarine and Garen in Boston (both attend the Armenian Sisters' Academy), Dzovinar and Chouchane in Paris, Noemi in London, Mikel in Beirut and Eduard, Monika and brothers Vilen and Hakob in Yerevan. Living in the diaspora, many of the featured students seem to attend Armenian, parochial or private schools and it would have been interesting to



Dr. Susan Pattie

also include an example of a student who attends a public school in the US and goes to Sunday School and Armenian School on weekends, as I did. But the main focus here is on chil-

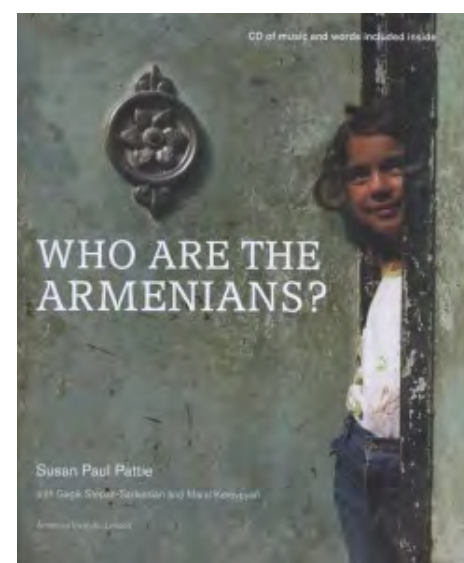
dren in the diaspora and how, through learning the Armenian language and culture, or connecting with their friends, families and especially grandparents, students can learn and keep their unique heritage alive and be proud of who they are and where they have come from. Through their words, photographs and games shared, we learn of their passions and commonality with peers around the world, an effective approach to multicultural understanding.

The Armenian language section describes its connection to the Indo-European language family. You can open the book to the section and use the CD to learn how to say in Armenian the numbers 1-10, the recited alphabet as well as an alphabet song, and most importantly, how to say and respond in both Eastern and Western Armenian to, "Hello. How are you?"

Reading this book took me down memory lane, especially when I read about *yadess* and the custom of breaking a chicken bone; decades ago, this game was as common an occurrence around our Sunday lunches with our grandparents as was the bulghur pilaf I always looked forward to. Here, the game of *yadess* was explained along with *nardi* (tavloo/backgammon), *ashik* (jan) and *Havgitakhagh* (cracking colored eggs during Easter).

The section titled Food Customs is one of my favorites; a recipe for *Anooshaboar*, sweet soup, is included, as well as a description of reading coffee cup grinds. The layout of Dance includes a photo of immigrant families dancing at a picnic in the 1930s in Pennsylvania, contrasting with a contemporary picture of women doing an Armenian line dance in Paris. There's even a pocket guide with the CD that describes step by step how to do the Tamzara line or circle dance, that "originated in the Gagharounik region near Lake Sevan in Armenian." Tamzara music is even included in the CD.

At her talk at NAASR, the audience seemed genuinely interested in the subject matter dis-



cussed in the presentation, thanking the author for her careful research and well-written book. When the author discussed writing a second children's book on a similar theme in the future, she was receptive to audience members' feedback and some ideas she might consider in the next go-around.

In summary, this book is a grand discovery and can meet the needs of diverse audiences of all ages, whether you are "new" to Armenian culture, need to be refreshed on the somewhat familiar, or simply love to learn and want to experience *Who are the Armenians?* answered in an uncomplicated, informative and enlightening manner. *Who are the Armenians?* was published by the Armenian Institute in London and is being sold and distributed in the US through NAASR.

Pattie is the director of the American Institute in London and has a PhD in cultural anthropology from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Her previous book, *Faith in History: Armenians Rebuilding Community*, was published in 1997.



COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

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COMMENTARY

The Kurdish Fait Accompli in Turkey

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Turkey's Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan is considered a political wizard who can play any dirty trick and come out on top. These credentials have more takers in the West than anywhere else in the world.

Emboldened by his bravura, the prime minister has developed such a degree of confidence that he believes he can dupe or mesmerize the West through his democratic reforms while keeping the genie of democracy in the bottle. But since the June parliamentary elections in Turkey — where his AK party won a majority — the prime minister is suffering the predicament of the sorcerer's apprentice, because the genie is already out of the bottle and he is between a rock and a hard place. He cannot undo the reforms, which will certainly offend the West, and he cannot control ethnic minorities and those in opposition, which have broken the chains of repression. The prime minister and his ruling Islamist party will be facing further challenges as they undertake the promised amendments in the Constitution. Beginning with President Abdullah Gul, and all the way down to the military brass, the powers-that-be are opposed to the proposed changes in the constitution. Already, many highly-ranked members of the military are in jail or in the process of ongoing investigations of the Ergenekon conspiracy, creating a very volatile situation in the country.

But events are moving faster than Mr. Erdogan and his ruling party can act. To begin with, the opposition parties boycotted the oath-taking ceremony in the parliament, because some of their elected party members had been jailed under different charges. Erdogan used his negotiating tactics — coupled with some threats — to convince Kilicdaroglu's Republican party to return to fold. Similarly other parties followed suit, except the Kurdish party, which had a surprise in store.

The Kurds were already complaining that Turkey is too vast a country to be ruled by one prime minister, and on July 14 the Kurdish party called Popular Collective Convention (with the Kurdish acronym DTK), declared Kurdish autonomy in Diarbekir.

This declaration came on the heels of a major bloody confrontation between the army special units and PKK militants, claiming 13 victims from the army and seven victims from the Kurdish ranks. Seven other soldiers were also wounded. The prime minister, who was flying to Istanbul diverted his flight to Ankara, and after consulting with army, police and interior ministry chiefs, he flew to Diarbekir to fire his threats to the restive Kurds.

The Kurdish convention lasted for six hours and was attended by co-chairs Ahmed Turk and Aysel Tugluk. Following the declaration of Kurdish autonomy, the latter further commented on the move by adding: "The basic Kurdish problem can be resolved only when Kurds are given recognition as a distinct ethnic group and enjoy the same rights exercised by the Turks in the country. There are no other people in the world whose rights are trampled more than the rights of 40 million Kurds...We are declaring autonomy on behalf of the Kurdish people based on the principle of sharing a common homeland. We are pleading the Turkish people to be in peace with us." He further clarified that "the declaration of autonomy does not mean to undermine the Turkish state. This is not a state apparatus. The autonomy will be exercised by accepting Turkey as a

common homeland and by remaining faithful to the unity of all nations in Turkey."

Then he appealed to his fellow Kurds to consider themselves as citizens of the "popular autonomous Kurdistan."

Currently, the Kurds are populating most of historic Armenia. Now that the Kurds are planning their future homeland in historic Armenian territories, what does that mean for the site of the Armenian case in history? We should have built a bridge with the Kurds a long time ago. Maybe it's not too late, yet.

This will shake the foundations of the Turkish state as has been feared for a long time. Erdogan faced the challenge head on, first castigating the perpetrators of violence by saying, "No one should expect concessions from us by committing such acts. I feel sorry for the loss of 13 soldiers, but I speak very frankly that no one should expect tolerance and understanding [if they are committing] these acts of terror. These people have only one option: giving up their arms. The military operations will continue as long as militants have not given up their arms."

He was equally categorical in answering the Kurdish declarations of autonomy: "There is no Kurdish problem in this country. There is only a PKK problem."

This bold Kurdish initiative does not have only domestic ramifications for Turkey.

The issue should rather be analyzed on the broader chessboard of the Middle East politics. For a long time, Turkish leaders, especially Erdogan himself, were fighting tooth and nail to preserve the territorial integrity of Iraq, because the partition of that country would inexorably lead to the creation of an independent Kurdistan, fanning the aspirations of the 15 million Kurds in Turkey. Although Iraq's territorial integrity was preserved, in part by having a ceremonial president of Kurdish heritage (Jelal Talebani), in fact the country was partitioned because Israel was seeking a firm foothold in that country. Israel armed and trained the Kurdish army, contributed to its administration and stability and pacified the region. Much of Erdogan's anger and frustration against Israel is derived from their conflicting interests in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Now Kurdish aspirations of autonomy — and eventual independence — have spilled over into Turkey.

But today, there is an irony in the political developments of the Kurdish issue. For the declaration of Kurdish autonomy, Turkish leaders are blaming Iran, which is reacting to the Turkish initiatives to topple Syria's President Beshar Assad, Iran's only ally in the region. If the accusations prove to be true, whatever Israel began, its Moslem enemies are bringing to its culmination.

Turkey had hardly mended its fences with Syria, by eliminating the visa regime with great fanfare, it soon turned its back to its newly-won ally and began plotting against Syria at the urging of the West.

Hosting Syria's "government in exile" on its territory constituted the straw that broke the camel's back.

Additionally Turkey threatened to invade northern Syria, under the pretext of "protecting" the refugees. Therefore it is not inconceivable that Syria and Iran may react in a manner to destabilize Turkey by inciting the Kurds.

Erdogan was caught by surprise, believing that his Kurdish initiative had gone far enough to tame their aspirations.

Now that the genie is out, the world is watching Erdogan's wizardry, to see if he can put back the genie in the bottle.

Meanwhile the Kurds have created a fait accompli and will not retreat unless they face a bloodbath in traditional Turkish style.

Schiff Writes to AG Holder Concerning the Murder of Mike Yepremyan

WASHINGTON — This week, Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA) sent the following letter to Attorney General Eric Holder concerning the murder of 19-year-old Mike Yepremyan from North Hollywood and the primary suspect in the case, Zareh Manjikian:

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

I am writing to bring to your attention a case of great concern to me and my constituents, and to respectfully request your assistance. In November 2009, Mike Yepremyan, a 19-year-old college student was murdered in a North Hollywood parking lot. The senseless and brutal killing occurred over an argument about a text message that he had sent. His killers lured him to a parking lot, assaulted him, and shot him to death from close range.

Since the murder, the Los Angeles Police Department has aggressively investigated the case. After an 18-month investigation, a

Urges Holder to Use the Full Powers of His Office to Assist in the Recapture of Suspected Culprit

primary suspect was identified and located in Puerto Rico, where he had apparently fled after the murder. The suspect, Zareh Manjikian, was captured by US Marshals in May, and placed in Puerto Rican custody to await an extradition request by the Los Angeles District Attorney.

Incredibly, just when it seemed justice would be done, Mr. Manjikian appeared before Puerto Rican Judge Gloria Maynard. The Judge set bail at the extraordinarily low amount of \$50,000, meaning the suspect needed to post only \$5,000 in cash to make bail. Not surprisingly, Mr. Manjikian posted bail and fled once again. His location is currently unknown. A suspect in a premeditated

murder who had already fled from California and actively evaded attempts to capture him should never have been released from custody, much less so on such a low bail.

I understand that the US Marshal Service has worked diligently in close collaboration with the LAPD to locate Mr. Manjikian. I ask you to use the full powers of your office to assist in the recapture of Mr. Manjikian, wherever he may be, and to bring him to justice. Additionally, I ask that you, in cooperation with Puerto Rican authorities, investigate the circumstances that led to his release from custody and pursue any leads that could lead to his recapture.

Thank you as always for your service and your assistance in this important matter.

Sincerely,
Rep. Adam B. Schiff



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Professor Akçam Reveals Turkish Plan to Pay Scholars to Deny the Armenian Genocide

Professor Taner Akçam dropped a bombshell during a lecture at the Glendale Public Library last month, when he revealed that a confidential source in Istanbul had informed him about the Turkish government's scheme to bribe American scholars to deny the Armenian Genocide.

Dr. Akçam, holder of the Kaloosdian/Mugar Chair in Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University in Worcester, Mass., stated that "the Turkish government is following a very systematic and aggressive policy in the US," by attempting to cast doubt on the veracity of the Armenian Genocide. Ankara's grand scheme is to make Turkish denialist claims as widely acceptable as the belief that the events of 1915 constituted genocide. Moreover, through a series of lawsuits in US courts, Turkey and its proxies are trying to present any criticism of denialist scholars and exclusion of revisionist materials from university programs as suppression of "academic freedom."

Professor Akçam, one of the first Turkish scholars to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide, related to his audi-

ence that during his visit to Istanbul last December, he had a private conversation with a person who had "inside information" regarding the Turkish Foreign Ministry's activities in the United States on subject of the Armenian Genocide. Dr. Akçam's confidential source told him that sometime in 2004-2005, an American university professor had met with "authorities connected with the Turkish Foreign Ministry." At that meeting, the professor told his Turkish hosts that "Turkey didn't have a systematic program on the academic level with which to counter the claims of an Armenian Genocide," and that "the Genocide claim is well established at this point," telling them that "there's very little" they can do "by trying to confront it head on."

Dr. Akçam was privately informed that the American professor made the following recommendation to Turkish officials: "The thing you need to do is to dig a ditch in front of all the Genocide claims; you need to create doubt by writing scholarly works which will awaken that doubt."

Dr. Akçam interpreted these words to mean that "by producing and encouraging new academic works," American scholars could "normalize the idea that 1915 was not genocide, just as the belief that it was genocide has become accepted."

While it is commonly assumed that the Turkish government provides financial incentives to scholars worldwide to publish articles and books denying the Armenian Genocide, this is the first time that a knowledgeable Turkish insider has confirmed these assumptions. The confidential source told Dr. Akçam that the Turkish Foreign Ministry accepted the American scholar's proposal and "transferred large sums of money to the US."

The informant revealed to Dr. Akçam the names of American academics who received funds to write books denying the Armenian Genocide, and disclosed that "there are doc-

uments signed by their own hand and that these receipts are now in the files of the Foreign Ministry's records."

In his lecture, Dr. Akçam stated that he did not want "to put any academic under a cloud of suspicion." However, when he connected the information received from his Istanbul source to some recent publications, "a disturbing picture emerges as far as Armenian Genocide research is concerned."

Dr. Akçam then referred to Michael Gunter's recent book, *Armenian History and the Question of Genocide*, as a possible "example of this approach." The website of the book's publisher, Palgrave Macmillan, stated: "Although as many as 600,000 of them [Armenians] died during World War I, it was neither a premeditated policy perpetrated by the Ottoman Turkish government nor an event unilaterally implemented without cause. Of course, in no way does this excuse the horrible excesses that were committed."

Professor Akçam further observed that the four academics — Hakan Yavuz of University of Utah, Guenter Lewy of University of Massachusetts, Jeremy Salt of Bilkent University, Ankara, and Edward J. Ericson of Marine Corps Command & Staff College, Virginia — who praised Gunter's book, "are well known for their denialist position and works regarding the genocide of 1915." Although Professor Akçam did not wish to make "an accusation against the book's writer," he stated: "the strange similarities between what I was told in confidence in Istanbul and what appears on the jacket cover of that book gave me pause, that's all."

While no one should accuse academics of receiving funds from the Turkish government or its proxies without solid evidence, it would be enlightening if any of them would voluntarily come forward and disclose whether they have been funded by Turkish sources.

Volunteering Changed my Life

The Armenian Volunteer Corps (AVC) changed my life.

Life is funny and unpredictable and expectations are often realistic. So after a four-year career as a television reporter in the United States, I quit to find salvation...in a developing country with a serious migration problem. Everyone told me to bring an open mind and no goals; I said OK and then wrote down all my goals.

By Greg Bilazarian

AVC placed me with the Civitas Foundation in their new online media project. It sounded like a perfect fit to everyone except me. I forgot to tell you I quit media because I hated it, passionately.

Day 1 at Civitas was challenging, so was day 10, same with whatever day today is. But that's why I love it. Civitas is the best foundation in Armenia. It was founded by Armenia's former Foreign Minister, Vartan Oskanian. Salpi Ghazarian is the most dynamic leader I have ever worked for (I'm not kissing up and she's too busy to read this anyway). Civitas works in many sectors including microfinance, diasporan relations and now media. But here's why it's great...

It's full of young, intelligent, multi-lingual professionals from Armenia. And if you have an entrepreneurial idea, you can implement it. So I'm helping develop an online media outlet while training reporters because a good story is a good story in any language. Most of the reporters are very inexperienced and we still need more infrastructure; but I have no doubt we will succeed.

Quick story about startups and challenges; I developed a Google Docs system to help organize the newsroom's script writing. Change is not always easy and the first day we tried it things did not go smoothly. So we had a meeting and since my Armenian is not exactly great, I had a translator. In the beginning everyone was calm, so she translated. By the end, people were screaming, I occasionally heard my name, and then she stopped translating. But most good stories have good endings right? We're still using the script-writing program (with fewer struggles). One of the people most opposed to it told me the other day how much she now enjoys the program. Change is difficult but worthwhile.

You will read many posts about how impossible the job market is here. And many more posts detailing diasporan struggles to find work. All those stories are probably true. But so is mine. Armenia is a country with its challenges, but you can help conquer them.

I came here speaking no Armenian. On the first day I was asked, "What is your favorite Armenian food?" I had no answer because I did not know the names of any of the foods. The vast majority of my friends in the United States are not Armenian.

And yet I came with huge expectations and a willingness to work. I have put in multiple 60-hour weeks (because Civitas lets me and I want to) and have missed a few excursions to work on the weekends. Hard work pays off everywhere.

This is my first and last blog post as an AVC volunteer because I recently agreed to become a full time employee at the Civitas Foundation. My title is producer; it might as well be "dream job." Oh yeah, I don't hate media anymore. AVC changed my life.

(Greg Bilzerian is from the US and volunteering at Civitas Foundation in Armenia.)

Turkish Embassy in Washington Counsels 'Civility' to *Mirror-Spectator*

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* has received a protest letter from the Turkish Embassy, dated June 28, 2011, regarding the publication of the obituary of the late Vergin Mazmanian, who was a vocal witness of the Armenian Genocide until her last breath at the age of 103.

It seems that one statement in that obituary has touched some raw nerves at the Turkish Embassy, as evidenced in the letter, which we have reproduced here below. Rauf Alp. R. Denktas, counselor and spokesman for the embassy, finds "reckless and irresponsible" the statement in the obituary that at one point Ms. Mazmanian had been harassed by the Turkish Embassy.

It is very good news that Turkish Embassy monitors Armenian publications by paid staff members and reacts immediately to statements which contain "falsehoods" in their judgment.

Ms. Mazmanian is no longer alive. Common sense dictates that criminals have more reason to falsify facts than their victims. But, Mr. Denktas goes further to counsel us "to promote civility."

Turning back the tables, we are entitled to ask how much of that "civility" did the Turks exercise in murdering Ms. Mazmanian's parents, along with 1.5 million Armenians?

They certainly may regret that Vergin was left alive to embarrass the Turks for the rest of her long life.

Counselor Denktas goes one step further from "educating" us on "civility" and opens a more loaded issue by stating: "It [the statement] could further frustrate efforts by Turks and Armenians to reconcile their complex relationships and reignite the open hostilities some Armenian activists committed in the past against Turks and their representatives in Massachusetts and around the US."

The reference is transparently directed to some frustrated Armenian youth who had taken the

law in their hands to avenge the Genocide through some individual acts of violence.

We stand far from endorsing terrorism in civilized countries, but on balance, what the Turks committed against Armenians in murdering an entire nation and usurping its historic homeland, far outweighs the understandable acts of some young people.

Thirty five nations and counting have hurled the accusation at present-day Turkey. "That you committed a genocide against Armenians and

To the Editor:

Your June 23 obituary of Vergin Mazmanian paints a vivid picture of a woman, born in Amasya, Turkey, who was obviously vibrant and much loved by her family and community. Turkey is also saddened by her passing.

I was struck that the obituary offered an utterly false accusation that the Turkish Embassy had once harassed Ms. Mazmanian. Including this falsehood in the story is reckless and irresponsible. It could further frustrate efforts by Turks and Armenians to reconcile their complex relationship and reignited the open hostilities some Armenian activists committed in the past against Turks and their representatives in Massachusetts and around the US.

The best way to honor the memory of remarkable people like Mazmanian is to promote civility. Unfortunately, this article falls short of that principle.

— Rauf Alp. R. Denktas
Counselor, Spokesman
Embassy of the Republic of Turkey
Washington, DC

there is still blood on your hands."

President Barack Obama himself advised Turkey, right in the Ankara Parliament, that it has to face its dark pages of history.

Therefore, rather than dispensing "civility" advice to us, it is incumbent upon official representatives of Turkey to initiate the promotion of "civility" themselves by admitting the heinous crime that they perpetrated against Armenians.

Below is Mr. Denktas' letter, reproduced verbatim, in tradition with the *Mirror-Spectator's* tone of civility.

TCA Board of Directors Meet in California

ALTADENA – The Tekeyan Cultural Association Inc. (TCA) Central Board of Directors of the United States and Canada held their regular meeting in California on the weekend of June 24-26 to discuss all the issues of a full agenda regarding the Association, its chapters, schools, Armenia projects, media and cultural centers.

Chaired by Dr. Haroutiun Arzoumanian, members had a private meeting on Friday at the residence of Board member Rouben Terzian. The board conducted its business the next day at TCA Arshag Dickranian School, where commencement ceremonies of the school were taking place on the same afternoon and the board members were invited to preside over the heart-warming ceremonies. Before the commencement, the TCA board met with members of TCA Arshag Dickranian School Trustees and discussed issues related to the school.

During its regular meeting, the board reviewed the state of the Association and heard the encouraging reports of the Arshag Dickranian School Board, the report of the TCA Board of Administration, the Treasurer’s report, and appraised the situation of the unfounded litigation against the Association. A report was also presented about its active chapters in US and Canada.

On Sunday, at the TCA Beshgetourian Cultural Center, board members met with the members of the Executive Committee of TCA Los Angeles and Pasadena/Glendale chapters, as well as members of the Beshgetourian Caretaking Committee, headed by Kevork Keushkerian. A constructive discussion of current events and issues were openly discussed and recommendations were noted.

The same night, Tekeyan Cultural Association’s Los Angeles Chapter organized a tribute honoring Rev. Dr. Zaven Arzoumanian’s 60 years of service to the Armenian Church. It was held under the auspices of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church, with the Primate, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian presiding. It took place at the Zorayan Hall of St. Leon Cathedral here on Sunday, June 26.

Separate press releases and reports have been issued regarding the school commencement ceremonies and related activities of the weekend.

Armenian Assembly Reserves Judgment On John Heffern Nomination

NOMINATION, from page 1

2009, and indicated that the administration remains “committed to doing whatever we can to encourage the two parties to get the protocols back on track.” Heffern also stated that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton “has made it clear” that “the ball is in Turkey’s court.” With respect to the Nagorno-Karabagh peace process, Heffern noted that President Barack Obama and Clinton have been “deeply involved” and “remain committed” to the OSCE Minsk Group process to find “a lasting, peaceful and just solution to this conflict.”

On the democracy front, Heffern noted a series of positive steps that the Armenian government has taken in the last six months and indicated that if confirmed he would continue to build on this progress and the work of former Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch.

In Heffern’s opening testimony, he indicated that “the Obama Administration has strengthened US relations with Armenia,” and noted that last April the presidents “of our two countries held their first bilateral meeting in 10 years, and when Secretary Clinton visited Yerevan last year, it was the first visit by a Secretary of State to Armenia in 19 years.”

Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ) welcomed Heffern’s opening statement which reiterated Obama’s position on the Armenian Genocide: “President Obama has recognized and deplored the horrific events that took place in the waning days of the Ottoman Empire. He has publicly called the massacre of 1.5 million Armenians at this time one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century. The president has urged Turkey and Armenia to work through their painful history to achieve a full, frank and just acknowledgement of the facts. If confirmed, I will do my best to fulfill the president’s vision.”

Menendez outlined the facts and discussed several historical documents pertaining to the Armenian Genocide, including various cables from US officials serving at the time of the Genocide, as well as Article II of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Menendez asked Heffern if he disputed any of the facts presented, of which Heffern did not. Menendez also asked if Heffern believed that

the facts presented, including those in Heffern’s opening statement fit the definition of Article II of the Genocide Convention. Heffern responded in the affirmative, but indicated that the characterization of the events was a policy decision as reflected in the president’s April 24 statement.

In closing, Menendez expressed his continued frustration with Administration policy by stating that this is “an inartful dance that we do. We have a State Department whose history full of dispatches cites the atrocities committed during this period of time. We have a Convention from which we signed on to as a signatory that clearly defines these acts as genocide. We have a historical knowledge of the facts, which we accept that would amount to genocide, but we are unwilling to reference it as genocide. And if we cannot accept the past we cannot move forward, and so I find it very difficult to be sending diplomats of the United States to a country in which they will go, and I hope you will go, as some of your predecessors have, to a Genocide commemoration and yet never be able to use the word genocide. It is much more than a question of a word. It is everything that signifies our commitment to saying ‘Never Again’ and yet we cannot even acknowledge this fact and we put diplomats in a position that I think is totally untenable.”

“The Armenian Assembly welcomes the continued efforts of Senator Menendez to ensure that the facts of the Armenian Genocide are brought to the forefront and not denied. We concur with the Senator that the Administration’s current policy is untenable. The Assembly strongly believes that America’s long-term interests would be better served by speaking the truth and squarely affirming the Armenian Genocide,” said Armenian Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny.

Also attending the hearing were the Assembly Terjenian-Thomas 2011 Interns, including Evelina Beknazaryan and Aram Bagrazyan.

The next step in the confirmation process is to allow senators to submit questions in writing to the nominee. After the Senators have an opportunity to review the nominees’ responses, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will hold a business committee meeting to vote on Heffren’s candidacy.

Kurdish Group Declares Democratic Autonomy within Turkey’s Borders

ISTANBUL (Azg) – The Democratic Society Congress (DTK) of Turkey, a platform that brings together Kurdish non-government organizations, met and declared “democratic autonomy” within Turkey’s territorial integrity in Diyarbakir on Thursday, according to Today’s Zaman.

The source reports, pro-Kurdish independent deputy Aysel Tugluk said in a declaration after a six-hour meeting of the DTK on Thursday that the Kurdish people declare democratic autonomy while remaining loyal to the national unity of Turkey under the country’s territorial integrity and based on democratic national principles. She also referenced international human rights documents that allowed them to do so.

Tugluk, who is also chairwoman of the DTK, delivered a positive message regarding the centuries-long friendship of Turkish and Kurdish people in this land and warned that a continuing deadlock in the Kurdish issue will keep people in a situation of violence and conflict. The DTK’s declaration came at a time when outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) members killed 13 soldiers and wounded seven others in an ambush in Diyarbakir, escalating already high-running tensions.

Tugluk stated that the solution to the Kurdish problem could only be solved if Kurds are recognized as a nation based on equal status. The Kurdish deputy also called on the international community to recognize the democratic autonomy her congress has declared.

The DTK, which describes itself as a local organization of Kurds in eastern Turkey comprising intellectuals, representative from civil society organizations, pro-Kurdish politicians and some members of the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), presented the first comprehensive draft of its “Democratic Autonomous Kurdistan Model” at a conference in Diyarbakir in December of last year.

Abdullah Ocalan, the imprisoned leader of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), is known to advocate the idea of democratic autonomy, a term no one can clearly define. The DTK argues the term refers to strong local government, but the government and other parties are suspicious that it would lead to the use of a separate language and flag, which they argue is out of the question.

Yerevan Trade House To Be Opened in Saint Petersburg

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia (Aysor.am) – At the invitation of St. Petersburg Gov. Valentina Matvienko, a delegation led by Yerevan Mayor Karen Karapetyan paid an official visit July 6 to 8.

During the meeting, Karapetyan and Matvienko focused on cooperation between the two cities.

The Yerevan mayor’s office and the St. Petersburg mayor’s office signed an agreement on trade and economic, agricultural and humanitarian cooperation for 2011-2014.

The two sides also agreed to open the Yerevan trade house in Saint Petersburg and a St. Petersburg counterpart in Yerevan, the press service of Yerevan mayor’s office reported.

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