

Armenian Official Vows ‘Unprecedented’ Elections

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia’s next parliamentary and presidential elections will be “unprecedented” in terms of their transparency, Garegin Azarian, the chairman of the Central Election Commission (CEC), said on Tuesday.

Azarian said the integrity of the electoral process in the country will improve markedly already during the parliamentary race scheduled for next spring.

“The openness of these elections will be unprecedented compared with previous elections,” he said.

Azarian based his stated optimism on fresh amendments to the Electoral Code



Garegin Azarian, chairman of the Central Election Commission

that were enacted by the Armenian authorities in May. He singled out a new provision that requires the CEC to publicize every hour data on voter turnout from all of Armenia’s 2,000 or so polling stations.

President Serge Sargsian likewise stressed the importance of those amendments when he addressed the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) in Strasbourg last June. He pledged to “spare no effort” to ensure that the next Armenian elections are widely recognized as democratic.

Armenia’s leading opposition groups dismiss such statements, however. In particular, they point out that the CEC continues to be headed by Azarian, who was in charge of the last parliamentary and presidential elections marred by fraud reports.

The disputed presidential ballot held in February 2008 also led to deadly street clashes between opposition protesters and security forces.

Azarian claimed last month that elections are perceived as fraudulent by many Armenians because of opposition parties and candidates unjustly crying foul after see ELECTIONS, page 2



Serj Tankian gives a concert in Yerevan.

US-Armenian Rocker Tankian Calls for Change in Armenia

By Emil Danielyan, Elina Chilingarian

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Serj Tankian, renowned American-Armenian musician, on Monday, called for boosting the rule of law and combating corruption in Armenia, saying that is key to addressing the country’s fundamental problems.

Speaking after his latest solo concert in Yerevan, the lead singer of the California-based band System of a Down also criticized a controversial mining project fiercely opposed by local environment protection groups.

He at the same time emphasized his belief that Armenia has done “pretty well” since gaining independence two decades ago.

“I think we need to establish the rule of law in this country,” Tankian told a public discussion organized by the Civitas Foundation, a Yerevan think-tank, and the local office of Counterpart International, a US civic development agency.

see TANKIAN, page 16

Plaintiffs Score Early Victory against Turkish Banks in Armenian Genocide Lawsuit

LOS ANGELES — On August 2, a US federal district court in Los Angeles handed Armenian plaintiffs an early victory in a difficult legal battle over reparations for land seized from Armenians in Turkey during the Armenian Genocide (Alex Bakalian et. al vs. Republic of Turkey, the Central Bank of Turkey, and T.C. Ziraat Bankasi et. al, Case Number 2:10-CV-09596, December 15, 2010).

Nearly eight months after the complaint was filed, the court determined that all three defendants, in a first-of-its-kind lawsuit in the United States, had been lawfully served.

The lawsuit, filed by descendants of Armenian Genocide victims, accuses the defendants of stealing and then profiting

from land that was illegally seized during the Armenian Genocide, when the Ottoman Turks drove Armenians from the Adana region of southern Turkey. The property at issue in the lawsuit is currently part of a strategic US airbase in southern Turkey.

Representing the plaintiffs are the Yeghiayan Law Firm in Glendale, Schwarcz, Rimberg, Boyd & Rader, LLP in Los Angeles and Michael Bazylar from Chapman University School of Law in Orange.

The plaintiffs have spent recent months attempting to serve all the defendants and then to have the court affirm their service efforts. In the August 2 order, the court denied the Central Bank of Turkey’s and see LAWSUIT, page 16



Sam and Sylva Simonian

Tumo Center Opens in Yerevan

YEREVAN — On Monday, August 14, the Tumo Center for Creative Technologies officially opened to the public, but on, Friday, August 12, the public got a taste of the state-of-the-art facility during the opening ceremonies, which were streamed live on the center’s website.

Founded by AGBU Central Board member Sam Simonian and his wife, Sylva, Tumo is located in Yerevan’s Ajapniak neighborhood and it is designed to introduce students, ages 12 to 18, to a professional level of instruction in animation, web development, video game design and digital

video/audio through extensive after-school programs.

Designed to serve 1,000 students a day, the 75,000-square-foot facility will offer students in Armenia access to the latest technology and a universe of innovative ideas.

“Teamwork, communication, Internet literacy, analytical thinking, initiative — these are the skills that will be taught at Tumo,” says Sylva Simonian. “Sure, the kids may come to learn how to create a video game, or build a better website — and have fun in the process — but they’ll leave with so much more.”

see TUMO, page 3



NEWS IN BRIEF

Ani Ruins May Be Put On UNESCO World Heritage List

ISTANBUL (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Turkish authorities announced its intention to apply to put the ruins of the medieval Armenian capital, Ani, on the UNESCO world heritage list.

The head of the Turkish Culture Ministry’s Hakan Doganay said that the main standing church there will be reconstructed with the funds raised from tourism, *Nouvelles D’Armenie* reported, citing the Anadolu Agency.

About 23,000 tourists, mostly from France, UK and Japan, visited Ani in the first six months of this year.

“Uartians, Seljuks and Ottomans lived in Ani,” he said, neglecting to mention that Ani was the capital of Armenia in the 10th century.

Yerevan Will Have E-Guides for Tourists

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Special electronic devices will be installed near historical monuments and buildings in Yerevan within the framework of the Electronic City program, thanks to which the residents and guests of the capital will have an opportunity to receive online information on historical monuments, reported the press office of the Yerevan city administration.

Clinton Discusses ‘Wilsonian’ Borders With Davutoglu in Turkey

MOSCOW — “We the United States and Turkey owe Armenia what was promised them by President Woodrow Wilson,” the Moscow-based Regnum news agency quoted Secretary Hillary Clinton as saying during her meetings last month in Turkey, according to the news agency’s source in the region.

According to the same Regnum source, during her meetings with Turkish officials last month, Clinton also allegedly outlined a new Middle East and Caucasus map after an envisioned end to the Karabagh conflict. This map, which supposedly not only includes the deployment of peacekeeping forces to the Karabagh conflict zone, also envisions exchange of territories and transport routes.

The Regnum source indicated that the aforementioned discussion was about granting Armenia a corridor to the port of Trabizon, following a possible ratification of the Turkey-Armenia protocols.

Regnum also discussed a possible territorial exchange with Azerbaijan, to be overseen by US ambassador to Baku, Matthew Bryza. The Regnum source said that process would be the creation of a Greater Azerbaijan.

INSIDE

Memories of Erzinga

page 10

INDEX

Arts and Living	10
Armenia	2, 3
Community News.	5
Editorial	14
International	4



ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Couple Appointed UK Ambassadors to Armenia

LONDON (News.am) — Jonathan James Aves and Katherine Jane Leach, a husband and wife team, have been appointed as the United Kingdom's joint ambassadors to Armenia in succession to Charles John Lonsdal.

Aves and Leach will take up their appointment in January 2012. Both will be permanently residing in Yerevan and alternate in exercising the functions of ambassador on a four-monthly rotation, the UK Embassy in Armenia said.

Together they have many years' experience and knowledge of the history, languages and culture of the South Caucasus and the wider region.

Most recently they had a joint posting to Tokyo where Aves coordinated the UK's political input into Japan's 2008 G8 Chairmanship, and Leach coordinated UK and Japanese positions in advance of the UN climate change summit in Cancun and worked with UK and Japanese businesses to promote low carbon prosperity.

Armenian Wrestlers Win In Europe Tourney

WARSAW (news.am) — The Armenian team won two silver and one bronze medals during the last day of Cadet European Wrestling Championships.

Armenian wrestlers Albert Vardanyan (46 kilograms) and Karen Aslanyan lost to Azerbaijani sportsmen in the finals, whereas Armen Hakobyan (63 kilograms) won bronze.

Sargis Kocharyan (69 kilograms) won gold, defeating Russia's Dmitry Kesopulo. Gevorg Gharibyan (50 kilograms) and Karen Abgaryan (85 kilograms) gained bronze medals.

Armenia is ranked fourth in the standings preceded by Russia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Karabagh Airport 'Nearing Completion'

STEPANAKERT (RFE/RL) — The longer-than-anticipated reconstruction of Nagorno Karabagh's sole airport is proceeding rapidly and will be over by the end of September, a senior Karabagh Armenian official said last Friday.

It remained unclear, however, just when the first commercial flights to and from Karabagh in two decades will start.

Karabagh officials said early this year that a regular flight service between Stepanakert and Yerevan will be launched in May. However, those plans were put on hold last spring amid an outcry from Azerbaijan.

US Envoy Questions Armenian, Azeri Commitment to Peace

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Robert Bradtke, the chief US negotiator in the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process, has reportedly cast doubt on Armenia's and Azerbaijan's stated commitment to hammering out a compromise peace deal.

"We [the United States, Russia and France] share the wish that there be no war. But do the parties have the political will?" Bradtke was on Thursday quoted by *The Washington Post* as saying.

Bradtke co-chairs the OSCE's Minsk Group on Karabagh together with fellow diplomats from France and Russia.

In a joint statement issued in late May, the US, French and Russian presidents urged their Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts to finalize the basic principles of a peaceful settlement. "Further delay would only call into question the commitment of the sides to reach an agreement," they warned.

Despite this pressure, Presidents Serge Sargsian and Ilham Aliyev failed to iron out their differences at their June 24 trilateral meeting in Kazan with Russia's President Dmitry Medvedev.

AUA Graduation: 20 Years of Advancement

YEREVAN — "Twenty Years of Advancement" was the slogan as the American University of Armenia (AUA) celebrated its 20th anniversary year and held its 19th graduation and commencement ceremonies during the last week of June.

Festivities began on Friday, June 24, with a graduation party at Ashtarak Dzor, where AUA faculty and staff congratulated the Class of 2011, and celebrated the occasion of their graduation with dinner, music and dance. The party brought together about 300 graduates, alumni, past and present faculty and staff.

On Sunday, June 26, AUA held its commencement ceremony in the large auditorium of AUA's main building on 40 Baghramyan Ave. in Yerevan. The gathering of well over 1,000 included parents and spouses of the graduates and many distinguished guests, all assembled to honor the graduating Class of 2011.

The commencement exercises began with the ceremonial procession of the Class of 2011, the president of AUA, the deans of the colleges and the faculty. This was followed by the anthems of the Republic of Armenia and the United States of America. An invocation was then given by Bishop Nathan Hovhannesian, director of the Publishing Center of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin and representative of Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians.

AUA President Dr. Bruce Boghosian then welcomed the graduates, their families, faculty and many guests. In the course of his address, Boghosian stated, "Remember that the highest expression of your patriotism is your willingness to help your fellow citizens. This means that, even as you begin your careers, you should find ways to volunteer your time and energy to help this country's public institutions grow and thrive. This is what we mean by 'active citizenship.' Civic engagement is the glue that binds a country and its people together and that makes the whole greater than simply the sum of its parts. AUA has always and will always endeavor to create 'active citizens' who will make a difference in the future of Armenia."

Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian, Taisei Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of California, Berkeley, founding dean of AUA's College of Engineering and member of AUA's Board of Trustees, then conveyed greetings to AUA on behalf of the University of California. AUA has been an affiliate of the University of California since its inception in 1991. Indeed, the University of California is one of the organizations that founded AUA, along with the Armenian Ministry of Education and Science and the Armenian General Benevolent Union.

Commencement addresses were delivered by Deputy Minister of Justice of Armenia, Emil Babayan, and Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of the US, Bruce Donahue.

During his address, Babayan stated, "We no longer have the right to again abuse God's favor and treat our independent republic with the same lack of attention. Dear graduates, the responsibility to maintain our independence, bought at the price of our people's sacrifices, is now also yours."

During his address, Donahue stated, "My message is simple. I challenge you today to become active citizens, to make your communities and workplaces better, to make a difference. You will face

ues its efforts on the goal of a tobacco-free Armenia.

The Department of Law held the first Intellectual Property Moot Court for law students throughout Armenian here at AUA.

School of Business and Management, in cooperation with the University Curriculum Committee reviewed, completed and implemented a new business curriculum, designed to accommodate the needs of working professionals, including a new 2.5-year professional



AUA Graduates express their joy at the commencement exercises.

decisions at every step of your professional and personal journey — hiring choices you make at your business, the values you teach your children, how you treat the disadvantaged, whether you put integrity above gain — and they all conspire to create the world you live in."

Valedictorians Nonna Kamalyan and Addeh S. Hovassapian then spoke on behalf of the students of the Class of 2011.

After this, 202 men and women were presented by their respective deans and called to the stage to receive master's degrees in business administration, political science and international affairs, public health, English programs, law, industrial engineering and systems management and computer and information sciences. These new graduates join AUA's 1,928 alumni for a total of 2,130. Seventy-four of them now have two master degrees from AUA.

The graduates concluded the exercises by throwing their caps in the air. Warm words of congratulations were exchanged during an open reception that followed.

AUA graduates now occupy important leadership positions, such as deputy minister of justice, deputy minister of defense, ambassador to India, as well as many high-level directors and leaders of private corporations and international organizations.

AUA Accomplishments

College of Health Sciences was selected by the Ministry of Health, USAID and other international organizations to evaluate the nationwide child health care state certificate program. It also contin-

MBA program with evening classes.

The Department of Political Science and International Affairs, together with the US Embassy, launched a new cycle of the Mentoring Program for Women that pairs professional women with AUA students.

The Acopian Center for the Environment developed, implemented and is in the process of publishing a Biodiversity Monitoring System as a tool for monitoring the exploitation of natural resources, such as forests, open grasslands and wetlands in Armenia.

A team of cryptography researchers and students from the computing and information sciences program in the College of Engineering initiated collaborative research projects with NTX Research and the Volkswagen Foundation in Hanover, Germany.

A team of computer-aided design students, led by an Industrial Engineering and systems management faculty member, carried out a collaborative design of a novel wind turbine, together with colleagues at Florida State University.

The Department of English Programs convened a successful conference on language assessment and research methods in May, including scholars from UCLA and California State University Los Angeles. The conference had 130 attendees, all of whom were English teachers in Armenia.

The Turpanjian Rural Development Program through its field offices in Shirak and Tavush Marzes and in Nagorno Karabagh has so far trained over 675 rural entrepreneurs and helped over 145 businesses in villages.

Through a donation from the Turpanjian Family Foundation, the digital Library of Armenian classics and Western Armenian literature developed a marketing program that is having implications to the marketing of digitized Armenian cultural artifacts.

Founded in 1991, the American University of Armenia is affiliated with the University of California system and is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, one of the six regional accrediting bodies recognized by the US Department of Education. Through teaching, research and public service, AUA serves Armenia and the region by supplying high quality education in seven different major fields, encouraging civic engagement and promoting democratic governance.

Armenian Official Vows 'Unprecedented' Elections

ELECTIONS, from page 1

their poor performance shown by official vote results. Sargsian, the disputed winner of the 2008 vote, similarly complained earlier in July about the unwillingness of opposition forces to accept those results.

The main opposition Armenian National Congress (HAK) says that only pre-term elections held this year could be more democratic. The conduct of such polls is the main issue on the HAK agenda.

Azarian insisted on Tuesday that the CEC and lower-level commissions, many

of them still not formed, would be physically unable to hold snap elections. He also argued that some of the amendments to the Electoral Code will take effect on January 1.

The CEC chief at the same time did not explicitly rule out the possibility of the HAK and the government agreeing on fresh polls in their ongoing negotiations. "If they reach agreement and it will be necessary to hold pre-term elections, the Central Election Commission will find appropriate solutions together with the National Assembly," he said.



ARMENIA

Organization Offers Armenian Eco-Carpets

By Gayane Mkrtchyan

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) — Eco-carpet weavers with the seven natural colors of wool are a novelty in the modern Armenian carpet-weaving industry.

This is due to the Cross of Armenian Unity (CAU) organization in Echmiadzin, Armavir region, the 14 carpet weavers, of which, have woven 24 eco-carpet within 10 months, using patterns taken from Armenian cross-stones and churches, as well as images from miniature gospel paintings.

CAU, officially operating since 1990, has been implementing various educational, social, cultural, health and public awareness-raising projects in Echmiadzin.

“First of all, we studied the sheep flock, took the wool, started processing it, separated seven or eight shades. For the designs we used patterns from church and cross-stone carving arts, meaning we copied the pattern onto the carpet,” said CAU founding President Grigor Babakhanyan.

The sketches are done by his brother, artist, Gevorg Babakhanyan.

Carpet weavers process the wool by traditional methods.

“It is much harder to work with this thread, than with a painted kind.

We patiently clean the thread from remaining fleece tangles in the weaving process. Then the weaving itself starts; with each row — fragment by fragment — the whole picture slowly comes to life,” said 46-year-old Vehanush Grigoryan, who weaves 8-10 centimeters of carpet per day.

CAU’s Eco-carpet project is implemented with the support of Armenian Caritas NGO, as part of its Aramazd program.

“It’s a social-educational project, implemented at refugee settlements of Gegharkunik and Shirak provinces with the main objective of community development. CAU is part of this project as a mediator, meaning that by his order Armenian refugee women from Azerbaijan with carpet weaving skills got employed and, in their turn, helped to revive this almost forgotten carpet weaving craft,” said project coordinator Zara Aghayan.

The project founders say they have researched and proved that the sheep wool from those regions contains lanolin, useful for a human body.

Armenian Caritas Project Manager Anahit Gevorgyan said that their cooperation with CAU can create employment opportunities.

“We are paying to all the workers, those who hackle, comb, weave, etc.

The carpets will be displayed at an exhibition-sale. Some of the profit from the sale will be allocated to implementation of social projects in the same regions, which are very poor, and the rest will be used to continue the project,” said Gevorgyan.

Eco-carpet project was launched in 2010 and will be completed by the end of July.

Representatives of the Armenian Caritas are convinced that it will be resumed, if CAU submits a long-term project proposal.

“Our expectations have come true and even more. As a result we have incredibly powerful pieces of art depicting fragments from our monasteries and cross-stones, and conveying a great symbolic message,” said Aghanyan.

“The idea of eco-carpet is very important, it is not only an expression of our Christian essence, or our women’s craft, but also represents an important social issue — transfer to eco-friendly environment.”

One of CAU volunteers David Grigoryan, who has also worked on the sketches of the eco-carpet, explains that one carpet repeats patterns from church column capital and wall carvings, as well as images from gospel manuscripts preserved in Armenia and dating back to different epochs.

“We combine them in many different ways. Here, for example, we have taken a distinct fragment from a cross-stone, expanded it into a large ornament and spread all over the carpet. We have used five to 16 decoration patterns. Here you can see the famous fisherman of the Akhtamar Monastery (915-921); as well as images from a 1315 gospel,” said Grigoryan.

With a well thought-through combination of colors, the “Kings” eco-carpet depicts the Armenian kings, as well as ox, eagle, lion and tiger heads, these animals traditionally symbolizing might and power.

“These carpets have received a surprisingly positive feedback; surprising because people are used to bright colors in Armenian carpets. Even we couldn’t have imagined that something quite like this could be achieved with non-contrasting colors, but the results are amazing,” he said.

Grigor Babakhanyan recalls the Jinishian Memorial Foundation with a deep sense of gratitude, because it was due to this foundation’s support that, in 1996, a carpet-weaving workshop was founded at their organization.

“We received a total of \$1,000 funding, which was very little, but highly important for launching the process. As years went by, we kept the workshop going by our own effort, exhibition-sales of carpets, individual benefactors’ support. It survived, and today it is even able to produce eco-carpet painted by God, without human interference, hence these carpets will not fade for centuries,” he said.

One of the CAU-produced eco-carpet carrying the organization’s emblem is now in New-York attached to Jinishian Foundation’s main entrance door. Another one will soon reach the France-based club of Yans (carriers of Armenian surnames ending in -yan).

“Eco-carpet is first of all a good solution to a social-economic issue and an effective way of advocating historic and eco-ideological values, as well as the best way to present Armenian culture to foreigners. People are showing new approaches to the ‘eco’ idea,” said Grigor Babakhanyan.

Tumo Center Opens in Yerevan

TUMO, from page 1

“Creativity is a key component in the success of any endeavor,” Sam Simonian says. “Kids attending Tumo are likely to be working in fields that don’t even exist yet. But the skills, and creative ways of

solving problems they’ll learn at Tumo, will serve them well as they make their own contributions to the world in the years ahead.”

To learn more or watch the opening ceremonies, visit tumo.org.



The Tumo Center in Yerevan



Volunteers hard at work

Land and Culture Organization Historical Renovation Projects 2011

YEREVAN — This summer, Land and Culture Organization/Organisation Terre et Culture (LCO/OTC) volunteers headed off to two different campaign sites. One group of volunteers went north to the Shirakamut village, near the epicenter of the 1988 earthquake, to work on the renovation of the historic seventh-century Tchichkhanavank Monastery. Another group of volunteers went south to Yeghvard, on the border of the liberated territories of Artsakh, to finalize work on the 17th-century Sourp Astvatzatzin Church project.

Throughout July and August, over 60 volunteers were in Shirakamut, Yeghvard as well as in Goris.

OTC is participating in a joint venture



Cleaning out around the church

project with the sister cities of Vienne, France and Goris, Armenia renovating the 18th-century Sourp Astvatzatzin Church near the pagan era caves in Old Goris. Non-Armenian and Armenian volunteers from the Vienne community and local youth from Goris have committed themselves to this project.

The volunteers from Armenia, Canada, England, France, Nagorno-Karabagh, Syria and the United States were hard at work at these different sites clearing, digging and excavating, including discovering several ancient artifacts and human remains at the Tchichanavank site which were turned over to the archaeological experts for review.



Conducting a dig at Tchichkhanavank

Historian Raymond Kevorkian Receives 2010 Armenian Presidential Award

YEREVAN — On May 30, renowned historian Raymond Kevorkian was awarded the 2010 Armenian Presidential Award at a ceremony that took place at the Presidential Palace. Kevorkian, along with world-renowned genocide expert Dr. Israel Charny, was honored for his contribution to the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

The book, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History*, by Kevorkian, a lecturer at the Institute Français de Géopolitique, University of Paris, and director of the AGBU Nubarian Library in Paris, gives an authoritative account of the origins, events and consequences of the Armenian Genocide. It has been embraced in European academic circles as providing a new understanding to many previously unexamined sources on the Armenian Genocide. In it, Kevorkian considers the role played by the Armenian Genocide in the construction of the Turkish nation state and Turkish identity, as well as exploring the ideologies of power, rule and state violence. Crucially, he examines the consequences of the violence against the Armenians, the implications of the deportations and the attempts to bring those who committed the atrocities to justice. Following the book’s recent translation into English, the author embarked on a North American

book tour, which began on May 3 and continued until May 13, with stops in Toronto, Montreal, Los Angeles, Silicon Valley, Detroit and New York. All the lectures were given in Armenian, and over 600 people came to hear Kevorkian speak during the tour.

In his address to the honorees of the 2010 Presidential Awards, Serge Sargsian stressed that their scientific and artistic achievements represented the achievements of Armenia and the Armenian people. “People should know about deserving individuals and deeds through this kind of high esteem. By giving awards we, as a state and as a society, demonstrate our standards, expectations and our value system,” he said. “Our public at large should learn about accomplishments and worthy people through the signs of recognition.”

Sargsian went on to single out Kevorkian’s achievements. “Time constraints don’t allow me to mention one by one the merits of all winning works submitted and the individuals behind each one. However, I ought to speak about works, which have political significance and resonance. I am talking particularly about the works aimed at the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide and those which confront its denial, activities of the scholar of international standing Israel Charny and of Raymond Kevorkian,” he said.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

155th Birth Anniversary Of Ekmalian in India

KOLKATA, India – On July 31, the Armenian Church of India celebrated the 155th anniversary of the birth of the Armenian composer Makar Ekmalian at the Armenian Holy Church of Nazareth.

The evening began with Ov Hayoc Astvats, a song by the Armenian College and Philanthropic Academy choir, which was followed by a number of other compositions from the invaluable repertory of the great musician.

Following the concert, Very Rev. Khoren Hovhannisyan, pastor of Armenians in India and manager of Armenian College and Philanthropic Academy, discussed Ekmalian's biography, the beauty of his works and the role that the composer played in the spiritual and the lay art of singing.

Hovhannisyan concluded his speech by quoting Komitas Vardapet's note of appreciation for Ekmalian. "Dear Musician, Mr. Makar Ekmalian sowed the first harmony in the desolate musical phase of our nation. We are indeed happy that we, Armenians can now proudly say that we have not been left behind from the advancement and growth of universal professional and artistic music."

Situation for Armenians In Damascus Calm

DAMASCUS (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not received information about injured Armenians in Syria. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson, Tigran Balayan, said, the Armenian embassy in Syria has not experienced difficulty yet.

For her part, member of the Armenian community of Syria, Nora Arisyan, said that the situation in Damascus has not changed much and remains calm for the community. "There are no clashes in the Latakia districts where Armenians live," she said.

According to media reports, gunfire and shelling rang out across Syria's coastal city of Latakia early Tuesday, August 16, amid reports of Palestinian refugees fleeing a restive and impoverished enclave there. The humanitarian situation deteriorated amid the government's offensive in the city. Shops and bakeries were closed and at least two mosques were damaged.

Turkey to Buy Six Boeing Helicopters

ANAKARA (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Turkey has signed a deal with the United States government to buy six Boeing CH-47 military transport helicopters, the first such weapons in its inventory, a senior procurement official said over the weekend.

The deal is worth up to \$400 million, the official said.

The Defense Security Cooperation Agency, or DSCA, the Pentagon's body coordinating weapons sales, notified the US Congress of a potential sale of a total of 14 CH-47F helicopters for \$1.2 billion in December 2009. Congress gave permission for the sale later that month.

The six CH-47F Chinooks will be the first heavy-lift helicopters in the Turkish Army's inventory. The deliveries are expected to begin in 2013 and end in 2014, Hürriyet Daily News reported.

Turkey Plans Transport Base in Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES (Anatolia News Agency) – Turkey plans to establish a large logistics center at the port of Los Angeles, the country's economy minister, Zafer Çalayan, said during a meeting Sunday.

"During our previous visit to the United States [last year], I told TM [Turkish Exporters' Union], that we could store Turkish exports to the country in a warehouse at the port of Los Angeles," said Çalayan, who was accompanied by representatives of the information technology and defense industries, as well as Turkish businessmen.

"If TM cannot do it, we can do it," Çalayan said.

"We can have a logistics center based in Los Angeles to overcome the transportation difficulties between the two countries," Çalayan said.

Armenia Tree Project Debuts in Russia at Community Gathering in St. Petersburg

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia – Hamlet and Svetlana Airapetyan hosted a benefit for the Armenia Tree Project (ATP) at Kuznechny Dvor (Blacksmith's Yard) here on July 7. The gallery/restaurant has a unique atmosphere with hand-made ironwork by Airapetyan. The event was attended by 30 Armenian

"During long discussions people were exchanging ideas and offering new ways of promoting Armenia Tree Project in Russia."

Hamlet Airapetyan – a businessman with a great sense of humor – recalled the Russian saying "Don't have a hundred rubles, have a hundred friends," and suggested a competition to sponsor trees with ATP in honor of friends to see whose forest will grow more rapidly. "The largest forest will indicate how many friends one has made and also the generosity of the person," he declared.

In anticipation of the visit, Nalbandyan published an article about

ATP titled, "If You Want To Change the World, Start With Yourself" in the local Havatamq newspaper. The piece describes the author's personal experience with ATP during her visit to Armenia in May, along with an impressive series of before-and-after pictures of several tree-planting sites. "I am making a commitment to inform the Armenian community about all the news from ATP," announced Armen Meruzhanyan, the editor-in-chief of Havatamq.

"We left our country. We all had our reasons. The founders of ATP weren't born in Armenia. We are all responsible for Armenia's future. Now we have no excuse not to plant trees in our country. I am grateful to have this opportunity to reach my homeland through the friend



ATP volunteer Astghik Nalbandyan (left) presents a tree-planting certificate to Hamlet and Svetlana Airapetyan, who hosted a benefit event for the organization at Kuznechny Dvor in Saint Petersburg.

businessmen, writers, artists, philanthropists and journalists.

Hamlet Airapetyan welcomed guests and his long-time friend Astghik Nalbandyan, who was visiting from the United States to give a talk about ATP and share her personal impressions about the organization. Nalbandyan described ATP's tree planting, environmental education and poverty reduction programs and screened the "Every Tree" film released in 2009. She also presented a slideshow of photographs taken by ATP Executive Director Jeff Masarjian during last spring's tree planting season in order to illustrate the scale and scope of the organization's work.

"The reaction of the audience was very positive and enthusiastic," noted Nalbandyan after the presentation.

Armenian College of India Sends Her 'Ambassadors' into the World

KOLKATA, India – This year, under the sponsorship of the Armenian Church of India and the guardianship of Very Rev. Khoren Hovhannisyan, pastor of Armenians in India and manager of Armenian College and Philanthropic Academy, four Armenian young persons graduated from various renowned colleges and universities of India.

Having completed their secondary education from Holy Echmiadzin's Armenian College and Philanthropic Academy, Kolkata, India the four students continued their higher secondary education in Kolkata with excellent results, under the sponsorship of the Armenian Church.

Vahe Shirinyan of Vagharshapat, Armenia, graduated from the Indian Institute of Planning and Management, Mumbai, with an MBA in finance and marketing. Tatevik Tadevosyan of Yerevan, Armenia, graduated from Loreto College of University of Calcutta with a bachelor's degree in political science. Arthur Marusevich of Vanadzor, Armenia graduated from IIHM, Kolkata, a branch of Edinburgh Napier University, UK, with a bachelor's degree in hospitality management. Jessica Milne of Kolkata, India, graduated from Loreto College of the University of Calcutta with a bachelor's degree in education.



The young graduates with the Very Rev. Khoren Hovhannisyan

that I trust, through the organization that impressed me so much," added Airapetyan.

Nalbandyan presented ATP tree planting certificates to several guests that evening. The first was given to a young member of the community, Angelika Airapetyan, in honor of her taking the first place in the Saint Petersburg Chess Championship last April. Angelika and Milena Astaturyan also received copies of ATP's colorful Building Bridges newsletter, which was designed to connect diasporan youth with Armenia's environmental heritage.

Trees were also sponsored in honor of others who actively support the Armenian community and are prominent citizens of Russia including the Airapetyan family, Garamyan family, Rouben Harutyunyan, Armen Meruzhanyan, Maria Safaryants, Alina Sahakyan and Zhan Tatlyan.

Guests participated in making donations to Armenia Tree Project during the evening, and businessman and philanthropist Hrachya Poghosyan was on the top of the list. An auction donation of Armen Meruzhanyan's book, Armenia in Historical Pictures, Traditions, and Legends, also took place, in which books were signed by the author. Donations were made by Hrach Airapetyan, Eduard Astaturyan, Ferdinand Grigoryan, Gor Harutyunyan and Serzh Martirosyan.

Dutch Foreign Minister Avoids Using 'Genocide' In Comments

THE HAGUE – The Dutch Parliamentary factions of Christian Union (ChristenUnie), Socialist Party (SP), Reformed Political Party (SGP) and Party for Freedom (PVV) have submitted written questions to Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Uri Rosenthal. In a letter to the Dutch Parliament, Rosenthal spoke about the "terrible events that took place in 1915" and the necessity for "Turkey and Armenia to start a dialogue on this question." He also avoided the term "genocide" in his letter.

For many years, both in Dutch politics and media, the term "Armenian Genocide" is commonly used. Also previous foreign ministers, including the current Vice Prime Minister Maxime Verhagen, use this term. It seems that the new Dutch government, under pressure from Turkey, is turning back the clock.

Representatives from the Christian Union, Socialist Party, Reformed Political Party and Party for Freedom sent a letter to Rosenthal, asking him whether these "events" fall in the category of "genocide" as defined in the Convention on the Prevention and The Punishment of Genocide, or if not, they would like to know why.

The parties point out to the minister that at the submission in 2004 of the "motion Rouvoet" his predecessor Mr. Bot has qualified the content of the motion as support for his policy. The motion, which then was adopted unanimously by the Parliament, urges the government to put "the recognition of the Armenian Genocide constantly and expressly on the agenda" in the context of negotiations on possible Turkish accession to the EU. The parties ask the minister whether indeed a policy change has occurred and if so, what are the reasons for this.

Community News

AIWA Hosts Program In Los Angeles with Kathy Smith

LOS ANGELES – The Wilshire Country Club was the setting for “An Afternoon with Kathy Smith,” on July 27, as approximately 125 women gathered to discover the secrets to losing weight and staying fit. Members and guests of the Los Angeles Affiliate of the Armenian International Women’s Association (AIWA) heard Smith share her secrets on how to keep muscles strong and active by eating the right foods and doing the right combination of exercises.

Guests received a copy of her book, *Feed Muscle Shrink Fat Diet: 6 Weeks to the Best Shape of Your Life*, a practical, empowering guide with a diet and workout plan for a happier and healthier life. Guests also participated in a lively question-and-answer session with the effervescent author, sharing old ideas and learning new ones for a healthy lifestyle.

Diane Cabraloff, president of the AIWA, Los Angeles Affiliate, expressed her thanks and appreciation to board member Arsine Phillips for her help in bringing Smith to Los Angeles to address the membership.

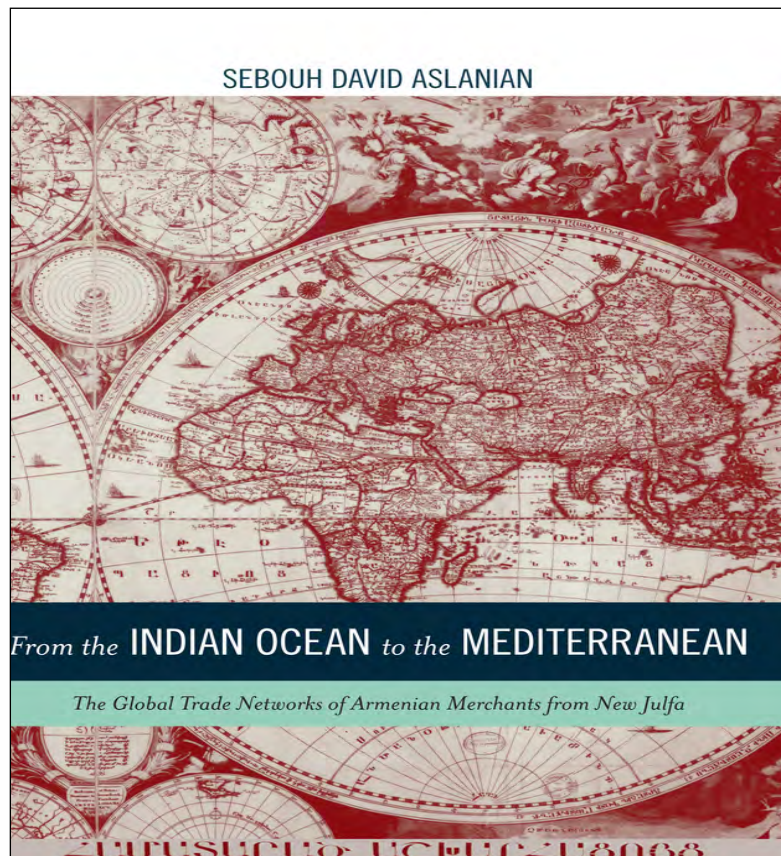
The luncheon prepared and served by the Wilshire Country Club was hosted by Arous Hanna. To acknowledge special thanks to Smith and Arous Hanna, Cabraloff presented Smith with the best selling book, *Simply Zov, Rustic classics with a Mediterranean Twist*, containing international recipes from the acclaimed restaurateur, Zov Karamardian and to Hanna, along with a bouquet of flowers, a lifetime membership in AIWA.

Proceeds from the luncheon will benefit AIWA’S forthcoming sixth International Conference, to be held at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco, October 6-10. Silva Katchiguan and Lily Balian, co-chairs of the Program Committee, reported that the goal of the conference 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.” The committee selected four major subjects which would be of interest to everyone; where organizers are witnessing transformation, facing challenges, subjects that are under scrutiny today and impacting daily lives: Media and Technology, Women’s Rights and Issues, Leaders and Entrepreneurs and Cultural Identity. They have invited acclaimed and recognized women in each of these fields to provide insight, knowledge, education and an opportunity for attendees to participate in the discussions and come away with a broader knowledge and understanding of the topics.

Confirmed speakers include: Mary Catherine Bateson, author of *Composing a Further Life*, New Hampshire; California Congresswoman Jackie Kechelian Speier; Swanee Hunt from the Harvard Kennedy School and former Ambassador to Austria, a specialist on women in politics; Adrienne Barbeau, actress and author; Mary Ellen Iskenderian, president and CEO of Women’s World Banking; Cristina Schirinian, Argentina and Armenia, chief executive director of Fruitful Armenia, president of Armenia International Airports; Silvia Tirakian, president, Harvest Song Ventures, NY; Zara Ingilizian, senior VP of marketing of vodkas and rums, Diageo International, NY; Keri Tombazian, the voice of WAVE, 94.7 FM Los Angeles; Lara Setrakian, Reporter, ABC TVi; Stephanie Adrouny, KGO-TV, San Francisco; Gasia Mikaelian, KTVU-San Francisco; Eliz Gazarian Semerjian, Telemundo national sales, Los Angeles; Anna Magzanyan, VP, advertising, marketing and events, Los Angeles Times; Susan Antounian, World Affairs Council, San Francisco; and Lianna Zakarian, Senior Editor, Yerevan Magazine.

Women from Armenia include: Shakeh Havan Karapetian, owner, Artbridge Cafe; Mary

see AIWA, page 7



Cover of his book, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa*

Dr. Sebouh Aslanian to Speak At Harvard University on New Julfa Armenians

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – Dr. Sebouh D. Aslanian, the newly-appointed Richard Hovannisian Term Chair of Modern Armenian History, established by the Armenian Educational Foundation at UCLA, will speak on Wednesday, September 14, at 8 p.m., at Harvard University’s Center for Government and International Studies, Auditorium S010, 1730 Cambridge St.

Aslanian’s lecture, “From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa,” will draw on his recently-published book of the same name, issued by the University of California Press.

Aslanian’s lecture is co-sponsored by the Mashtots Chair in Armenian Studies at Harvard University, the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard, the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard, the Harvard Armenian Society, the Zoryan Institute for Contemporary Armenian Research and Documentation and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

The lecture will be Aslanian’s first since his appointment to the Hovannisian Chair at UCLA.

Drawing on a rich trove of documents, including correspondence not seen for 300 years, Aslanian’s groundbreaking study, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean*, explores the emergence and growth of a remarkable global trade network operated by Armenian silk merchants from a small outpost in the Persian Empire.

Based in New Julfa, Isfahan, in what is now Iran, these merchants operated a network of commercial settlements that stretched from London and Amsterdam to Manila and Acapulco.

Aslanian brings to light the trans-imperial cosmopolitan world of the New Julfans, the effects of long distance trade on the organization of community life, the ethos of trust and cooperation that existed among merchants and the importance of information networks and communication in the operation of early modern mercantile communities.

Prof. George Bournoutian of Iona College has praised *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean* as “the most researched and original work” on the subject that “exceeds, by far, all previous scholarship on the Armenian merchants of New Julfa.”

The book has been selected by the Committee of the California World History Library as the first book to appear in their new series, Author’s Imprint, that celebrates and recognizes “exceptional scholarship by first-time authors.”

Aslanian has previously taught in the department of history at CSU-Long Beach as an assistant professor in the fall of 2010 after serving a year at Cornell University as a Mellon Foundation Postdoctoral fellow in world history.

see ASLANIAN, page 7

Americans for Artsakh Completes Summer Humanities Program for University Students

WASHINGTON and STEPANAKERT – Americans for Artsakh (AfA) announced recently the completion of its first summer humanities program for university students. Participants gathered together in Stepanakert from Artsakh State University, Mesrob Mashtots University and Yerevan State University for a two-week intensive academic course that offered classes in a range of social science-related subjects. The program was sponsored by the Armenian General Benevolent Union and took place at Mesrob Mashtots University and the VITA Center.

Academic Coordinator Asbed Kotchikian, as well as local coordinators Arshak Balayan, Hamazasp Danielyan and Gayane Vardanyan, brought together leading scholars from Armenia, the United States and Canada for this unique pilot program. Courses were taught in political science methodology, anthropology, gender studies and other related subjects. In addition, visiting specialists gave lectures in media, art and art theory, civil society, Armenia-Diaspora relations and conflict resolution. Local representatives from the Halo Trust landmine removal organization, the Armenian Relief Society and the Naregatsi Art Institute provided overviews of their programs in Artsakh.

Beyond the theoretical aspects of the program, workshops were held in résumé and application writing, social networking and other practical skill-building techniques. At the end of the program, the students were divided into four groups and gave presentations on select topics, after which they were



Hamo Danielyan and Gayane Vardanyan with participants

challenged in question-and-answer sessions about the details of their work.

The students’ final evaluations indicated great satisfaction with the program as a whole and especially with the instructors. Several participants noted that they wished the course had been longer and hope that similar projects will be organized in the future. “The program was very useful and we learned a lot,” remarked Astghik Baldryan, a participant from Armenia. “We could not have imagined a better organized and implemented curriculum.” Nare Avagyan, a participant from Artsakh, said that “The instructors were excellent and I hope more of my classmates will participate next time.”

Students and faculty also had opportunities to socialize outside the classroom. The group organized excursions to the village of Khndzoresk, as well as Tatev Monastery in Southern Armenia and were able to experience Tatev’s new aerial tramway. Towards the end of the program, students had an opportunity to meet with participants of previous AfA projects to share their experiences and discuss ideas for further cooperation.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Daughters of Vartan Announces Scholarship Recipients

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – The Knights of Vartan and its counterpart, Daughters of Vartan, are Armenian fraternal service organizations that play an important role in cultural, educational, religious and charitable activities within the Armenian-American community.

The intellectual development of Armenian women is one of the basic achievements of the Daughters of Vartan. Arpi Otyag of Cambridge was formed in 1945. During its 66-year history, it has championed this ideal. Their monthly

High School in Florida. She has a younger sister, Colette, who is currently attending Park Vista. She decided to move back to Massachusetts after being accepted to Suffolk University on scholarship. She will major in sociology with a concentration in crime and justice studies.

Moushigian, 19, is the daughter of Toros and Zavart Moushigian of Watertown. She is a sophomore in the interior design program at Mount Ida College in Newton. She graduated from



Ani Moushigian



Rebecca Shahverdian

meetings are filled by different issues from Armenian communities in the US and Armenia but also Artsakh and Javakhhk. In addition to their daily obligations, members also contribute to community projects. One of their activities every year is to provide scholarships.

This year's recipients of the scholarships are Ani Moushigian and Rebecca Shahverdian.

Shahverdian, 18, of Cambridge, the daughter of Sofia and Khachik Shahverdian. She began her education at Armenian Sisters' Academy in Lexington. About eight years ago, she moved to Florida. She attended and graduated from Alex and Marie Manoogian Armenian Sunday School. She recently graduated from Park Vista

Watertown High School, where she was on the honor roll and served as president of the Armenian Club during her junior and senior years. She has also been actively involved in ACYOA (juniors and seniors) and served on the executive committee for three out of her five years active in ACYOA juniors. All her life Moushigian attended Sunday school, where she became Valedictorian of her graduating class in 2009.

Moushigian has been passionately interested in interior design since the age of 8. She now peruses her passion at Mount Ida College, where she has made dean's list for both semesters of her first year. She often speaks there about her heritage.

House Ethics Committee Rules Rep. Jean Schmidt Must Repay Lawyers

CLEVELAND, Ohio (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*) – The House Ethics Committee ruled last week that a Turkish-American group improperly paid roughly \$500,000 in legal bills that US Rep. Jean Schmidt amassed in lawsuits against a political rival and ordered the Republican to repay the lawyers herself.

The committee determined that Schmidt did not knowingly violate House ethics rules because she had no idea that the Turkish Coalition of America paid bills she accrued in disputes with an independent candidate who ran against her in 2008.

David Krikorian, who is of Armenian descent, distributed campaign literature in 2008, which alleged the Turkish government bribed Schmidt to deny the genocide of Armenians in Turkey during World War I.

Lawyers paid by the Turkish group subsequently filed lawsuits on Schmidt's behalf that claimed Krikorian made false statements and defamed her.

Last year, Krikorian filed complaints against Schmidt with the Office of Congressional Ethics, which questioned whether Schmidt's improperly accepted legal services from the

Turkish group.

The Ethics Committee found the lawyers hadn't sent Schmidt any bills and did not tell her they were being paid by the Turkish group. Because Schmidt didn't know she was receiving a gift from the group, the committee decided not to sanction her. It suggested she create a legal expense fund to pay the bills and ordered that she amend her financial disclosure reports to disclose the past gifts.

Schmidt and Krikorian each released statements that claimed the decision vindicated them.

"As I've stated publicly before, I neither sought nor intended to accept free legal services," Schmidt's statement said. "I have been waiting for the Ethics Committee's advice as to the best way to pay these bills. Now that I have that advice, I look forward to continuing to work cooperatively with the Committee to ensure that these bills are paid appropriately."

Krikorian's statement said the decision proved he was "right all along." He said he finds it "laughable" that Schmidt "did not know the facts regarding her own attorneys in legal actions which she commenced in her own name."

Turkish Club Claims to Be in Talks with Kobe Bryant

ANKARA (Associated Press) – Turkish club Besiktas is in talks with Kobe Bryant's representatives about the possibility of the Los Angeles Lakers' star playing in Turkey during the NBA lockout.

"It is a fact that Kobe Bryant's managers have contacted us," coach Ergin Ataman said Thursday, a week after Besiktas signed New Jersey Nets point guard Deron Williams.

Ataman said Bryant was waiting for an offer from Besiktas. The club, however, said it would need a sponsor to be able to pay for Bryant's contract.

"Our board will evaluate that," Ataman said.

Bryant, who has won five NBA titles with the Lakers and is a 13-time NBA All Star, has been on a tour of China, including a stop in Shanghai on Wednesday. He said he would consider playing overseas during the lockout and mentioned China and Turkey as possibilities.

Representatives of other NBA players also have contacted Besiktas, Ataman said, without identifying any of them.

The Turkish League season starts in October.

Besiktas signed Allen Iverson [stats], the NBA's MVP in 2001, last year but his time in Turkey was cut short due to injury.

Another NBA player, New Jersey guard Sasha Vujacic, signed last week with the Turkish club, Anadolu Efes. The 27-year old Slovenian guard agreed to a one-year deal with an optional second year.

Nets draft pick Bojan Bogdanovic also signed with Fenerbahce of the Turkish League in June.

Orlando Magic star Dwight Howard, a five-time All-Star, has said he would consider playing in China or Europe if the NBA lockout doesn't end.

Talks between the NBA and the union broke down June 30, and the owners decided to impose the league's first lockout since the 1998-99 season was shortened to 50 games. Both sides say there are significant differences between their proposals, raising the possibility that all or part of next season could be canceled.



Kobe Bryant

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OBITUARY

Robin (Jeghelian) Theriault

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. – Robin Anoush (Jeghelian) Theriault of Scottsdale, formerly of Sharon, Mass., died suddenly on August 4.

She was the wife of Douglas Theriault, daughter of Janet and Haig Jeghelian and sister of Armen and Tina Jeghelian. She is also survived by many aunts, uncles, nieces and cousins.

A memorial service was held at St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church, Watertown, on Saturday, August 13.

Memorial gifts may be made to Saint Stephen's Armenian Church or the Armenian Heritage Foundation, 25 Flanders Road, Belmont, MA 02478, Attention: Charles Guleserian.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

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Bedrosian Gets Top Judicial Post in Rhode Island

By Tom Vartabedian

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — In a history-making turn, Rhode Island Gov. J. Joseph Cardieri appointed Haiganush Bedrosian as chief judge of the Rhode Island Family Court. Bedrosian not only becomes the first Armenian-American to receive such an appointment but the first woman as well.

In her new role, Bedrosian will handle an array of deeply personal issues from divorce to adoption to termination of parental rights and domestic abuse. The state's growing emphasis on leaving troubled or at-risk children in their homes instead of placing them in residential programs is a big concern with the judge.



Haiganush Bedrosian acknowledges her appointment as chief judge of the Rhode Island Family Court.

She also plans to consult with the Bar Association, judiciary and other statewide organizations about what improvements are needed in the court system.

"One of my first priorities is to create a mediation program for contested divorces," she pointed out. "That will be my biggest move."

Armenians throughout the Narragansett State celebrated the move with many attending the ceremony in Warwick, where she was joined by Mayor Scott Avedisian.

During the induction ceremony, Bedrosian promised to carry out new reforms to bring greater efficiency to the court system. She recit-

ed some of Robert Frost's poetry and also quoted her parents, both Armenian immigrants.

Both her father and mother found refuge in Rhode Island after fleeing their homeland to escape the "terrors of the times" — a reference to the genocide and persecution of Armenians in 1915.

"Follow your dreams," she told the gathering. "This is America where all things are possible. My parents always believed in this."

Bedrosian is a homegrown Cranston girl with strong Armenian roots, growing up in the Providence AYF and active with the St. Vartanantz Church community. Only days before, she had committed to making food for a church bazaar.

The governor credited Bedrosian as being instrumental in creating statewide standards for guardian ad litem in Family Court cases.

As for Bedrosian, she was thrilled by the nod, claiming it was a dream come true — not something you necessarily plan for. Just prior to that, Beverly Najarian was named director of administration for the State of Rhode Island — the first female to ever assume that role.

"I know there can be great changes," Bedrosian said. "Everything we do will be done with a great deal of measured thinking."

House Speaker Gordon D. Fox characterized

Bedrosian as a sweet Armenian woman who does her job with "a grace and steely determination in getting to the facts."

Others like Anahid Varadian recalled how her late husband, Haig, persuaded Bedrosian to enroll at Brown University while he served as an assistant guidance director and she a student at Cranston High East. She later served as a law clerk to the late Supreme Court Justice Thomas J. Paolino.

"You would not believe her curriculum vitae, which is 12 pages long," said Varadian. "Several Armenians were among the 500 who turned out to applaud Haiganush at her swearing-in ceremony in Warwick. Only a few days before, she had given Mayor Avedisian his oath of office for a seventh term. Armenians are well-liked in Rhode Island."

Included in the crowd were a large group of friends, family, professional colleagues and state officials.

The 67-year-old Bedrosian replaces Jeremiah S. Jeremiah Jr., who retired after 23 years. Jeremiah had beat out Bedrosian for the top spot in the mid-1980s when few women were in the field.

Before taking the bench, Bedrosian worked in private practice, specializing in family law after a stint as assistant general counsel to the Providence & Worcester Railroad Company. She also worked as a prosecutor in the early 1970s after earning a law degree from Suffolk University in Boston.

Bedrosian founded the Rhode Island Trial Judges Association and served as its president for several years. She lost the "love of her life" five years ago with the death of her husband, Vincent Izzo. Bedrosian has a stepson and daughter-in-law, two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Aslanian to Speak on New Julfa Armenians at Harvard University

ASLANIAN, from page 5

He received his PhD (with distinction) from Columbia University in 2007.

Aslanian specializes in early modern world and Armenian history and is the author of numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals such as the *Journal of World History*, the *Journal of the Social and Economic History of the Orient*, the *Journal of Global History* and *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*.

From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean will be on sale at the talk and available for signing by the author. Limited free parking will be available at Harvard's Broadway Garage (7 Felton St.) from 7 to 10 p.m.

More information on Aslanian's lecture may be had by calling NAASR or e-mailing hq@naasr.org.

AIWA Hosts Program in LA with Kathy Smith

AIWA, from page 6

Lou Papazian, Tumo Center for Creative Technology; Gohar Shahnazaryan, director of Women's Center; Dr. Mary Khachikyan, executive director, Family and Health, Pan-Armenian Association; Anahit Ordyan, AUA, director of administrative affairs; Jacqueline Kara-Aslanian, education executive director, Luys Foudation; and from Beirut, Arda Ekmekji, PhD, dean, Arts

& Sciences, Haigazian University.

Plans are also underway to invite Armenian women authors to attend and participate in a Book Exhibit where they will be afforded an opportunity to feature their books.

For information and reservations regarding the International Conference, email: Anitaa2at@aol.com, or contact the AIWA website: www.aiwala.org.



COMMUNITY NEWS

TCA Arshag Dickranian School: 30 Years in Retrospect

By Salpi Asayan

LOS ANGELES — The TCA Arshag Dickranian School marked its 30th anniversary during the 2010-2011 scholastic year with curricular and extracurricular activities. This milestone was also highlighted by the major steps teachers took to improve their instruction skills in order to provide students with a more conducive educational environment and to stay aligned with the school's mission.

In the area of mathematics, middle and high school mathematics teacher, Vergine Harutunian, had great success in the improvement of students' results in the Stanford Test Results, a nationwide test issued by the state of California. "Since my tenure at the school in 2009, the test results improved 8 percent in 2010 and 10 percent this year," she said. "My goal is to improve this in the upcoming year by fostering a fun learning environment, motivating my students and helping them achieve higher educational standards."

Harutunian holds a master's degree in mathematics from Yerevan State University and has completed the Eisenhower Intensive Staff Development Program for Secondary Mathematics Teachers. She participates in the California Math Council-Southern Section Conference in Palm Springs every year and is a member of Golden Key Math and Science Honor Society and the Mathematical Association of America. She has served as a mathematics teacher at Yerevan Community College from 1977-1984 and at AGBU High School from 1989-2009. During her tenure at the university and AGBU, she implemented lesson plans for at least five classes annually in basic math, pre-algebra, algebra, geometry, algebra II, pre-calculus, math analysis and calculus. This experience has provided her with the ability to explain complicated mathematical concepts in an effective manner, engage students of



The class of 2011

location. Creative Communication is selective and students can consider it an honor if their work is accepted. Half of my second graders' works were selected to be published."

Asatryan currently holds a bachelor's degree in liberal arts studies from CSUN, a Preliminary Multiple Subject Credential and will obtain a master's of education in Education Leadership from Grand Canyon University in February 2012.

Another interesting educational journey middle school students made this year was with their Armenian teacher, Alvard Uzunyan, and their English teacher, Jose Castillo.

With a master of arts in pedagogy from Yerevan State University and an associate of arts degree in public speaking from Glendale College, Uzunyan dedicates her time to enrich the students at ADS with Armenian arts, language and literature by involving them in several projects. This year, the students participated in recitation and various cultural contests. Uzunyan also accompanied the eighth-grade students on a six-day educational trip to Washington DC and New York in March. Uzunyan also composes articles for a range of Armenian newspapers such as *Asbarez* and *New Armenia* and writes book reviews and critiques for Tekeyan Cultural Association.

As a graduate of Azusa Pacific University with a master's degree in education, Jose Castillo focuses on teaching ADS students English literature and improving their language-arts skills. This year Castillo encouraged students ranging from sixth to ninth grades to participate in a poetry contest in which an impressive number of 44 students were selected to have their individual poems published by Poetic Power, a website that circulates outstanding students' writings. Castillo also engaged sixth through ninth-grade students in drama presentations as a final project at the end of the year, an activity designed to prepare students for next year's Drama Fair. "Overall, students showed great growth academically, emotionally and spiritually," said Castillo. "Other teachers have noted improvements in students' reading, writing and speaking abilities."

In order to improve his skills as a teacher, Castillo recently attended seminars and workshops at LAUSD headquarters to improve lesson quality and effectiveness while accommodating to students' individual strengths and weaknesses.

The high school English department also experienced some positive developments this year. English Department Chairman head, Ricardo Rocha, saw that all English teachers at the school attend LAUSD's Title III Private

Rocha. "Their performance brought the social political and psychological truth of Tennessee William's characters to life."

Rocha holds a master of arts in comparative literature from University of Milwaukee and recently received a PhD in comparative literature from the University of Wisconsin. He is currently trying to complete and publish his dissertation called *Latin American Literary Adaptations for Stage and Film in the US*.

In the area of sports, the Arshag Dickranian varsity team, otherwise known as the Dickranian Lions, won first place in the CIF Mulholland League and second place in the CIF Championship in March 2011. They also participated in the Double Pump Tournament held in Las Vegas in April, winning two games and losing one, whereas the Dickranian Lions Junior-Junior Boys Basketball Team won first place in the AGBU Basketball Tournament held at the AGBU Pasadena Center in June. All of these were victories for the school teams, proving to be challenging teams to play against.

Head coach Rudy Rameh attended the training session at Michael Jordan's Camp at University of California Santa Barbara in July taking six ADS student along for training to improve their playing skills.

Beside the improvements made in the academic and sport programs at the school, the school also focuses on the Armenian cultural arts education as well. The school held special celebrations this year for its 30th anniversary, one of which was the 30th anniversary Cultural Extravaganza which took place in May at the school's Walter and Laurel Karabian Hall.

These were some of the developments that took place this year at Dickranian School and plans for more improvements are already in progress in preparation for the upcoming year.

Visit www.dickranianschool.org for more information.



The Arshag Dickranian faculty members with the school board

different learning abilities and support struggling students in learning.

Second-grade students had a noteworthy experience in the past months as well, in which they took a field trip to the California Science Center, where students were able to tie their knowledge to actual experiments. "California Science Center is a great way to get students excited about science," said second-grade home-room teacher, Lusine Asatryan. "It allows them to move out of the classroom and experience the hands-on exhibits, from the shaking Earthquake Room to Tess, the 50-foot body simulator."

Second-grade students also visited the Travel Town Museum, which is located on a nine-acre site at 5200 Hollingsworth Dr. in Griffith Park in Los Angeles City Recreation and Park Department and has a unique display of vehicles representing many modes and eras of conveyances. The youngsters enjoyed and were interested in the historical development of transportation.

"Other than our field trips, this year I encouraged my students to write poetry which was later sent out to a poetry contest. The purpose of the poetry contest was to bring recognition to student writers. Entries of high merit were accepted to be published in anthologies. With the publication being regionally based, students compete against their peers in both age and

20th Anniversary of Armenia's Independence

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New York
METRO

AGBU Camp Nubar Holds its 31st Annual Open House

NEW YORK — On July 24, AGBU Camp Nubar opened its gates to parents, grandparents, alumni and friends at its 31st annual Open House. The Catskill Mountains offered a spectacular backdrop for families to visit campers and for alumni to reminisce about their time at the camp.



One of the many families in attendance at the Open House, which brought together three generations of Camp Nubar attendees

The day started with Archbishop Khajag Barsamian celebrating the Divine Liturgy in the Nazarian Center with campers and staff in the morning. Following the church service, campers participated in horseback riding and waterfront shows and played the finals of the camp-wide tennis tournament. Campers, staff and guests were also treated to an Armenian lunch prepared by a group of volunteer alumni and parents, led by Jeff Zoraian.

Throughout the day, Armenian-inspired ceramics and art projects — created under the guidance of Ella Pepanyan, from one of the AGBU Children's Centers in Yerevan — were on display. Parents watched campers of all ages perform Armenian dances and songs under the direction of Arman Julhakyan, who is also from one of the AGBU Children's Centers.

Camp Nubar is experiencing a successful 2011 camp season with record enrollment. To learn more about Camp Nubar, visit www.campnubar.org.



Campers performing for parents and friends at Camp Nubar's well-attended Open House on July 24



Campers and Nubar Kids enjoyed face painting and playing games throughout the day.

Ararat Center Celebrates Armenian Independence Anniversary

GREENVILLE, N.Y. — On Saturday, July 23, Armenian-Americans from throughout the Diocese came together to meet and mingle, at the eighth Annual Festival of the Ararat Center here. Hundreds gathered together under the pavilion to break bread, feast on Armenian fare and visit with friends and family as they paid tribute to their brethren in Armenia to commemorate the restoration of the Republic of Armenia in September 1991.

"There was an abundance of food, fanfare and fun," commented Pam Talanian McGrath, festival chair. "This year the festival was open to the public. It was so nice to meet the locals. They were awed by the beauty of the Center and happy to meet the Armenian community."

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Diocesan Primate, welcomed festival participants and thanked the Ararat Center Board of Directors and the many volunteers who help make the festival and the Center so successful year after year. "Serving on the Ararat Center Board, I have seen firsthand how committed and hard working each of its members [are]," said Fr. Mardiros Chevian, dean of St. Vartan Cathedral, "the Ararat Center serves as a beautiful gathering place for people of all ages to experience Armenian faith, culture and fellowship. We are truly blessed in our Diocese to have it and I am pleased to be part of it."

The pavilion provided shade as well as a performance venue for the Shushi Armenian Dance Ensemble of St. Vartan Cathedral. Under choreographer Seta Paskalian-Kantardjian's direction, 45 of the 130-member troupe danced exquisitely and in full costume in spite of 100-degree temperatures.

"Two flags...two nations...side by side; that caught the breeze in double pride...Midst mountains at St. Vartan's site, Where campers gathered with delight..." Sosy Krikorian Kadian penned those words in her poem, titled, "Between Two Flags," after being inspired by the

setting of the Ararat Center site during her 2005 visit. Granddaughter Lucine Beylerian was on hand Saturday to recite the poem written by her grandmother, and she did so with pride and love. Both Kadian and Beylerian are members of the St. Leon parish in Fairlawn, NJ.

The Eastern Diocese acquired this 65-acre site in 2004. A scenic property which sits on the edge of the Catskill Mountains, the Ararat Center is now the permanent home of the St. Vartan Camp program.

Armenia's Ambassador to the United Nations Garen Nazarian relayed his thoughts to the crowd on the subject of Armenia's independence.

Throughout the afternoon festival attendees were also treated to a tour of the facility, Armenian music and swimming in the center's pool. During the tour many newcomers were able to view the buildings; each building is named after an ancient Armenian city — Adana, Aintab, Ani, Bitlis, Dikranagerd, Erzerum, Gesari, Kharpert, Malatya, Marash, Sepastia and Van.

Bob Karanian of the St. George parish in Hartford, Conn. summed up the day's experience by commenting that "it was amazing to be a part of something that not only my family could share in but all Armenians as well from throughout the Diocese. The center brought all attendees together in fellowship and love. I pray that the center will be here for generations to come so that our children's children will know the joy that all of us felt when we departed the center on Saturday, July 23."

"In spite of the very warm weather," said Rose Najarian Kedeshian, chairman of the Ararat Center Board of Directors, "we were successful getting our message out to the participants that the Ararat Center is a place to call home...where memories are created, shared and cherished for generations to come and that is what took place on Saturday, July 23 at our eighth annual Festival."

Diocese Releases New Sunday School Textbook

NEW YORK — The Diocese's Department of Youth and Education (DYE) announces the release of the seventh Sunday School textbook in the brand new We Believe series. Titled, *The Heart of the Matter: Who Am I? What Do I Believe?*, the book is part of the Grade Eight curriculum.

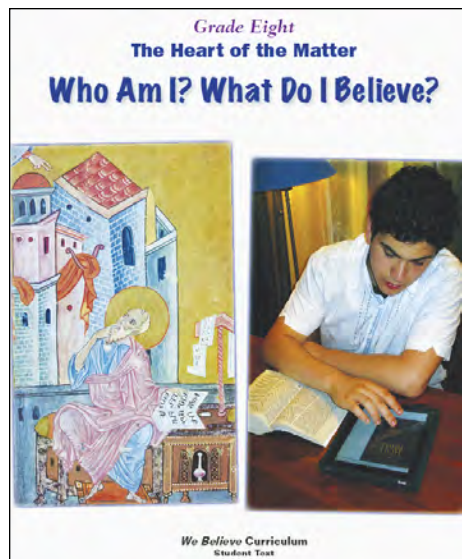
The new textbook focuses on a close study of the Nicene Creed. Students learn the Creed line by line and explore the related historical and theological background.

They also delve into personal issues of faith and are challenged to answer the deepest of questions: What does it mean to me that God created the world? How did Jesus save me, and why do I need saving? What is the church? What happens after death?

A beginning unit on comparative religion surveys the three major Christian families, as well as Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. Finally, students engage in a summary of thought, content and plan and participate in a service project for four weeks.

Written by Christian Education coordinator Elise Antreassian, the textbook will be followed by the publication of grades three and four — which are currently in the editing phase — in summer 2012, and grades two and seven in 2013. During that time, a new Cradle Roll and pre-K curriculum will be installed as well.

Curriculum development is a collaborative process, with a draft writer taking the vital first step of fleshing out DYE course outlines into student text and teacher instructions. Then begins the back-and-forth of editor and writer, clergy reader, readers who check Scripture references, language, key concepts and whether all objectives are met in the right chronological order.



The new Grade Eight Sunday School textbook focuses on the Nicene Creed.

Once the text is finalized, the task of layout and design commences. One of the greatest challenges has been to find photos of Sunday School children in study, play, worship, school, church and family life to give the textbooks authenticity and relevance. The DYE has been reaching out to superintendents who have, in turn, sought help from students' parents.

The six new textbooks already in circulation have been enthusiastically received. And revision for the next series has already begun. This may very well be the last set of textbooks produced in classic print form. The makeup of parish communities and Sunday Schools 15 years from now will determine the character of the next generation of teaching materials.

Dr. Armen Marsoobian Appointed Ordjanian Visiting Professor at Columbia University for Fall

NEW YORK — Dr. Armen Marsoobian has been appointed the Nikit and Eleanora Ordjanian Visiting Professor in the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies at Columbia University for the fall 2011 semester. He is a professor of philosophy at Southern Connecticut State University and chairperson of the Philosophy Department.

Marsoobian holds a PhD in philosophy from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. His primary areas of research are American philosophy, aesthetics, Peircean semiotics, metaphysics and genocide studies.

Marsoobian will be teaching a graduate-level, seminar-style course, titled "Memories of the Armenian Genocide: An Exploration through Literature and the Arts." It is often remarked that art is about memory and this course will use art to explore memories of the Armenian Genocide. The course will be held on Tuesdays, 2:10-4 p.m., beginning September 6.

There are many approaches to the study of genocide. While the historian's methods often rely upon an examination of the archive, both for official documentation and eyewitness testimony, this is not the only approach that is wor-

thy of undertaking. Genocide is a highly complex human phenomenon that engenders complex responses on the part of individuals — both by those who were directly affected by the violence and by those in the generations that followed. Literature and the arts — both visual and performing — have tried to make sense of this most evil of crimes.

In the case of the Armenian Genocide, the response has the complicating factor of denial. Historians attempt to respond to the state-sponsored official denial of the Genocide through evidential refutation; artists create works of art that create new meaning for audiences and readers. While answers may be sought in these works, they often raise new and troubling questions.

The visiting professorship program is made possible by an endowment established by the late Dr. Nikit and Eleanora Ordjanian in 1998. Previous visiting professors have included Levon Abrahamian, Vardan Azatyan, George Bournoutian, Seta Dadoyan, Helen Evans, Roberta Ervine, Rachel Goshgarian, Arman Grigoryan, Robert Hewsen, Ara Sarafian and Khachig Tololyan.



Arts & Living

Armenian Coin Exhibits Garner Gold Awards

MILWAUKEE — Three displays of Armenian coins, medals and paper currency were recently honored with gold prize awards in competitions held in Chicago and Milwaukee.

The exhibits were prepared by numismatic expert Dr. Levon Saryan. Saryan is a member of the Armenian Numismatic Society, the Society for Armenian Studies and an overseas member of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences.

“Armenia’s Agony: Commemorative Medals of the 1915 Armenian Genocide,” received “Best in Show” honors at the April 2011 South Shore numismatic show held in Milwaukee. This display presents the history of the Armenian Genocide through the medium of numismatic monuments. The prize award, a 1/10th ounce pure gold coin, was presented at the annual club banquet on May 21.

Rare Cilician Armenian silver coins were featured in the display entitled “A Medieval Armenian Coin Hoard,” which garnered second in class for ancient coins at the highly competitive Central States Numismatic Society convention held in Rosemont, Ill., in late April. Featured in the display was a hoard of over 250 medieval silver coins dating circa 1200 AD from the kingdom of Cilician Armenia. The prize, presented on April 30, was a 1/4 ounce pure gold coin.

“Armenia 1919: The Artistic Banknotes,” received third in class for foreign paper money, also at the Central States show. Presented are the attractive banknotes designed for the Republic of Armenia in 1919 by noted artist Arshag Fetvadjan. The award was a 1/10th ounce pure gold coin.

“In the hobby world, enthusiasts enjoy showing off their material to the public and other collectors,” said Saryan. “People who rebuild classic cars enter their cars in shows, the cars are judged competitively, and the winners receive fancy prizes. It’s the same in numismatics. Designing a competitive display is kind of like being a museum curator.”

Saryan’s displays are on Armenian subjects, each with a unifying theme. “To assemble a winning coin display,” he explained, “you gather material related to the theme, do basic and detailed research, prepare careful written descriptions and explanations and design the display. On the day of the show, you lay out your display attractively in locked glass museum cases.”

Competing displays are graded by independent judges. Criteria typically include technical accuracy, background information, concept originality, attractiveness of presentation, effective use of color, completeness of a collection and condition and rarity of the material, graded on a 100-point scale. Results from three or four judges are tallied to determine the winner.

“Preparing an attractive, educational display is a great way to promote our heritage and history to others,” Saryan said. “It’s a learning pro-



One of the exhibit displays

cess for the viewer and also for the exhibitor who prepares the display. Numismatic exhibiting combines scholarship and concise presentation of facts with a sense of aesthetics and design. As far as we know no one else in America is preparing Armenian numismatic displays and being recognized for them.”



Actors in a scene from “Night in Erzanga”

Golden Thread Theater To Premiere Play on Genocide Experience

SAN FRANCISCO — Golden Thread Productions announces the world premiere of “Night over Erzanga,” a powerful and soul-stirring play by award-winning playwright and actor Adriana Sevahn Nichols. Sevahn Nichols is the first recipient of the Middle East America: a National New Plays Initiative, a commissioning project founded and managed by three national organizations: the Bay Area’s Golden Thread Productions, New York’s Lark Play Development Center and Chicago’s Silk Road Theatre Project.

Sevahn Nichols’ “Night over Erzanga” is a moving story about the immigrant experience in the US and the endurance of the human spirit. The central characters, Ardavazt and Alice, build a new life in the US in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide but the past comes to haunt them in very different ways. Inspired by Nichols’ personal heritage as a Dominican-Armenian-American, this story explores how a man can lose two families in one lifetime, but not lose his heart; and how a grandmother can reach through time, to unearth the untold story and bring her children “home.”

This tender epic spans two continents and three generations, from Western Armenia of 1913, to 1930s Massachusetts, to 1960s New York. The magical story reunites ancestors with the living, as they each search for solace and a way to make peace with the past. Nichols’ poetic and comic language incorporates the world of symbols and icons, spirits and the invisible, along with the everyday concerns of survival and keeping a family together.



Making it in the New World, in a scene from “Night in Erzanga”

see ERZINGA, page 11

Premiere of ‘Lost and Found in Armenia’ Scheduled for Christmas

YEREVAN (news.am) — “Lost and Found in Armenia,” the bilingual movie predominantly shot here, is ready for the next stage of production, editing.

The producers, Maral Djerejian (“Sideways”) and Valerie McCaffrey (“American History X,” “Neo Ned”), said they had been planning to shoot a movie in Armenia for a few years, but that there were constant financial problems.

“This is an entertainment film, a really awesome piece for laughing. I guess the actors managed to put into life all the great scenes elaborated in the scenario,” said Djerejian, adding that they managed to involve young but established Hollywood actors.

Angela Sarafyan (“On the Doll,” “Kabluey,” “The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn”) and Jamie Kennedy (“Bug,” “Malibu’s Most Wanted,” “Sol Goode,” “Son of the Mask,” “Extreme Movie,” “Spring Break ’83,” “Bending the Rules”), are the two lead actors. Sarafyan, born in Armenia, had moved



Angela Sarafyan

to the US and not visited Armenia for 24 years.

“Both of them fell in love with Armenia and Armenians. I must say that for Hollywood

actors the filming conditions are at least unusual. They are accustomed to comfort, but found none of that here. They had a really difficult first week, but at length both Angela and Jamie fell in love with Armenians and their hospitality, said the producer, giving a



Jaime Kennedy

short account of the film.

According to Djerejian, several American youngsters go to Turkey for a vacation and while enjoying their stay, decide to try parasailing. Their strong resolution, however, dwindles as a storm batters their boat but the Turkish captain’s encouraging words prevail upon common sense. As a result of the parasail mishap, the son of a US senator, Billy, finds himself in a small village in Armenia, where at first he is taken for a Turkish spy.

“We did not work to preserve geographical accuracy. It’s evident that one cannot reach Armenia from a Turkish seaside and that probably will not worry a comedy lover who looks for informal, funny moments,” said Djerejian.

According to the producer, Armenian actors Mikael Poghosyan and Hrant Tokhatyan also participated in the film.

“There are many talented actors in Armenia, there are many experts but they lack the experience of working in modern cinema. The problem will be solved if people engage in film production in Armenia,” said Djerejian, adding that a single film could greatly promote general knowledge about Armenia worldwide.

“We did not make ‘Lost and Found in Armenia’ for Armenian audiences only. It is just a comedy and that is the precondition of its success, I guess. The film is based on a universal story that is applicable everywhere in the world. It was merely our wish to make it in Armenia. We could have shot the film elsewhere because of the poor level of technical equipment in Armenia but the producers of the film are Armenians, the director, Gor Kirakosian, is also Armenian and we wanted to make it here,” said McCaffrey. “We have a huge potential for boosting the local film industry. A great number of

see PREMIERE, page 11



ARTS & LIVING

Golden Thread Theater to Premiere Play on Genocide Experience

ERZINGA, from page 10

The playwright's Armenian grandparents immigrated to the United States from Erzinga and Shabin-Karahisar (part of Turkish Armenia) in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide of 1915. Nichols' grandfather, Ardavazt Oghidanian, was the sole survivor of his family. Nichols' reflection on her grandfather's experience launched a three-year journey to develop "Night over Erzinga."

Nichols described the play's origin as a way "...to discover my roots; to write my way home. To ancestors I never knew, but feel in my heart. And to find a way to belong to a history and legacy that, up until that point, in my life, was missing. As a writer, I feel called to tell the stories that will inspire, move and enrich people's hearts. We are all on a collective journey, as a global family, and I believe theatre, at its best, has the potential to initiate transfor-

Proposal" (Egyptian Chekhov) and "The Review" (via skype) both by Yussef El-Guindi and in 2006, the Ikhwan al-Safa's fable, "Island of Animals."

Prior to working with Golden Thread, Karmali was a teaching fellow at Harvard University, directed plays in London and served an apprenticeship at the American Repertory Theatre where he assisted internationally renowned directors Robert Wilson and Andrei Serban.

Golden Thread Productions is a nationally recognized non-profit organization acknowledged as the leading theater company devoted to Middle Eastern voices and experiences. Founded in 1996 by Yeghiazarian, Golden Thread's mission, to give voice to Middle Eastern writers, is made more urgent and vital with all that is currently happening in the Middle East.



Another scene from "Night over Erzinga"

mation and healing. Although the play I have written is deeply personal and specific to the Armenians, it has been my intention that this play transcends that specificity and become universal in creating dialogues among those who see it?"

Torange Yeghiazarian, Golden Thread Productions' artistic director, adds "Night over Erzinga" is a courageous play that brings together the Armenian and Latino communities. Adriana's unique voice and rich language is a welcome new addition to the cannon of American theater and Golden Thread is proud to introduce this important new play and playwright to Bay Area audiences."

During its development, "Night over Erzinga" had two enthusiastically-received public readings in New York and San Francisco.

Sevahn Nichols is an award-winning actress and playwright who has developed and performed her work at the Sundance Theater Lab, South Coast Repertory, Mark Taper Forum, The Goodman, LA Theatre Works, Stages Theatre, The Fountain, INTAR and The Lark. Her plays have been published by Samuel French and Smith & Kraus. Sevahn Nichols' critically acclaimed solo show, "Taking Flight," garnered her a San Diego Theatre Critics Circle Award, a Los Angeles Women's Theatre Festival Award, and the CD was a finalist for a 2008 Audie Award.

"Night over Erzinga" is scored with original music by Bulgarian composer, Penka Kouneva and directed by Hafiz Karmali.

Karmali is an accomplished theater director familiar to Golden Thread audiences. He directed three new plays at the ReOrient Festival in 2009: "Abaga" by Yeghiazarian; "A Marriage

"Night over Erzinga" will run September 15 through October 9, at South Side Theatre at Fort Mason Center. Previews are September 15-17. Opening night for the general public and press is Sunday, September 18, at 5 p.m. The opening night performance will be followed by a reception catered by La Mediterranee.

Premiere of 'Lost and Found in Armenia' Scheduled for around Christmas

PREMIERE, from page 10

Armenians work in Hollywood nowadays, but most of them do not pay attention to the media. The parents consider medicine, law and economics as serious professions for their children, forgetting that we raised many famous writers and art people."

McCaffrey noted, "When I visited the Armenian Genocide Museum, I got astonished that so many renowned people have touched upon and condemned the Genocide. Nobody actually knows about that, meanwhile each of those stories could make a splendid film scenario," to have the same effect as Steven Spielberg's "Schindler's List."

The premiere of "Lost and Found in Armenia" is anticipated to take place around the Christmas season. The producers plan to submit the film to mainstream film festivals, and Sundance.

To watch the trailer, visit <http://news.am/eng/news/69573.html>.

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ARTS & LIVING

Children’s Book Author Armenianizes Traditional Tales

By Daphne Abeel
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BEDFORD, N.Y. – In September, children’s book author Talene Dadian White will add two new titles, *The Three Little Karmeees* (The Three Little Pigs) and *Voski and the Archoogians* (Goldilocks and the Three Bears) to her series of Armenianized traditional tales, which includes *Little Red Hood and the Kesh Kayl* (Little Red Riding Hood), *The Gurabia Man* (The Gingerbread Man) and *Hagop and the Hairy Giant* (Jack and the Beanstalk).

As the titles indicate, White has interpolated Armenian words for English words and she has done that throughout the texts. Thus the grandmother in the Little Red Riding Hood tale becomes *Medz Mayreeg* and the cow in Hagop in the Hairy Giant becomes *gov*. The Armenian words are printed in italic script and there is a little dictionary at the back of each book that gives the translation.

White, who was trained as a lawyer at City University in New York, and is the mother of two children, ages 4 and 8, said, “When I started to look for good children’s books in Armenian, I couldn’t find very much, and so I had this idea of



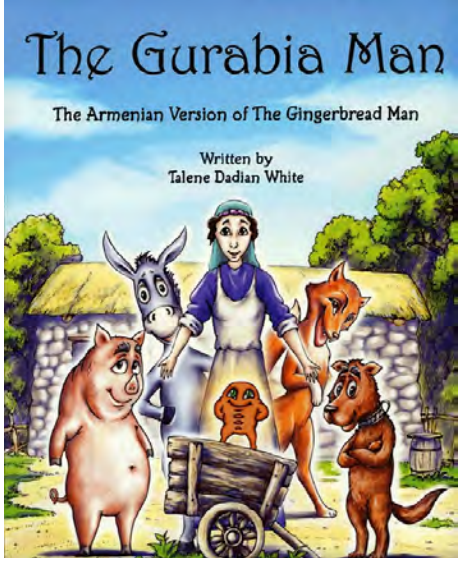
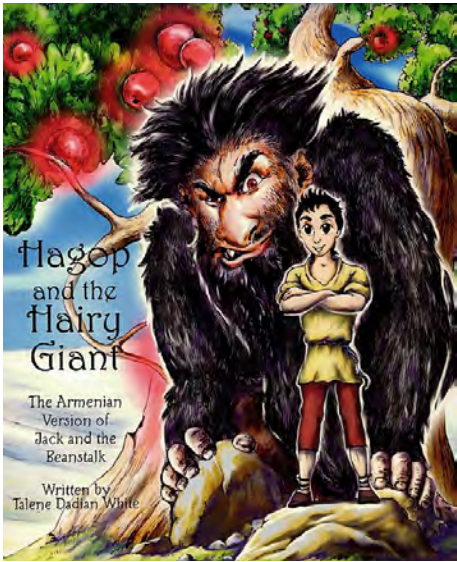
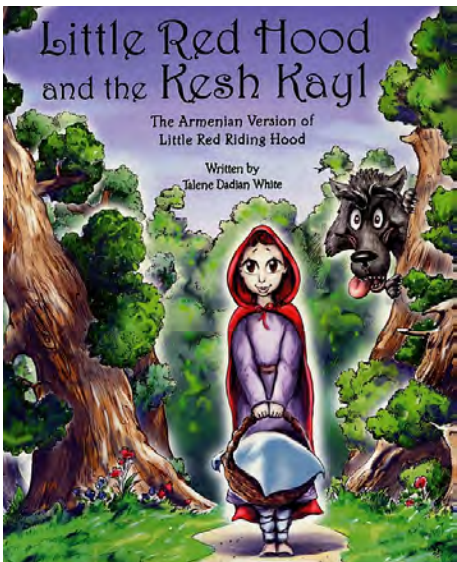
Author Talene Dadian White

taking traditional children’s stories and giving them an Armenian flavor.”

The books, printed in paperback with laminated, waterproof covers, are illustrated in such a way that they emphasize the Armenian approach to the stories. The characters, almost without exception, have dark, deep-set eyes and are dressed in Armenian peasant fashion.

“I especially love the drawings of the Hairy Giant,” said White. “He looks so fiercely Armenian.”

White, who is married to a lawyer, practiced personal injury law for 10 years, first for a large



The covers of the three books by Talene Dadian White

law firm and then on her own, before deciding to give up her legal career and become a writer.

“I ran the New York marathon and that was a very empowering experience. It gave me the feeling I could do anything I wanted to. Once I had children, I had less time for the law and I had always wanted to write. So, I made the decision to become a writer.”

White’s father, whose family was originally from Turkey, was born in the United States and her mother was born in Aleppo, Syria. White was baptized at Holy Martyrs Church and now attends St. Gregory’s in White Plains.

“I don’t speak Armenian fluently and neither do my children. But they do go to Saturday School and they are learning Armenian there,” she said.

“As for the Armenian words I choose to use in the texts of the story, I try to pick out the most common ones and I even use some funny ones like the word of buttocks, for example. I space them out in the text.”

In addition to inserting Armenian words into the stories, White has somewhat changed some of the stories. In the original version of Little Red

Riding Hood, the people who kill the wolf are hunters. In White’s version, they are lumberjacks, “because I put them in an Armenian forest,” she explained.

White’s illustrator, who is Russian (but whose name does not appear on the books) has helped her with the book design, as has Abril Books in Glendale, Calif.

Soon, all her titles will be translated into Western Armenian with the help of the services at Abril Books.

White has been able to achieve a fair amount of success in the marketplace, although she self-publishes her work and does not enjoy the distribution and marketing services of a traditional, commercial publisher. She works with a subsidiary of Amazon, createspace.

“All the books are available through Amazon and the listings are linked to my website. I’ve also had a lot of success marketing through Armenian bookstores, libraries, schools and churches. I am pretty well connected to the Armenian community and I’ve sent out a lot of emails about my publications,” she said. “I really think self-publishing is the wave of the future, and especially if you are writing for a niche market you can have a lot of

success. I am doing a lot of readings in schools and I have even started to sell the books in Canada.”

White also plans another marketing strategy – packaging her books in a gift box set.

“I think these will be quite popular for children’s birthdays and other celebrations,” she said.

White’s next book will be a cookbook and she hopes to have that published by a mainstream publisher.

“I think there is a lot of interest in Middle Eastern food, and after all, Middle Eastern cuisine is eaten in a lot of different countries and cultures, not just in Armenia.”

She concluded, “Publishing in Armo-English is an idea whose time has come. Most Armenian-Americans who are born here speak English and I think that introducing these words into stories that are familiar is something that works very well. It is a good way for Armenian children to stay in touch with their language and culture.”

White will be giving a reading and book signing on Sunday, August 28, in Glendale.

For more information, visit ArmenianKidsBooks.com.

Book Review

Little Red Hood and the Kesh Kayl. By Talene Dadian White. TDW Publishing LLC. 2011. ISBN 13:978-4565-8325

Hagop and the Hairy Giant. By Talene Dadian White. TDW Publishing LLC. 2011. ISBN: 13:978-4564-77882

The Gurabia Man. By Talene Dadian White. TDW Publishing LLC. 2011 ISBN 13: 978-4565-20939

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Newton Person Of the Week: Bob Sarkissian

By Chloe Gotsis

NEWTON, Mass. (*Newton Tab*) – Bob Sarkissian, 40, has a new book of poems, *The Wind Coughed at Dawn*, detailed on amazon.com. The interview considers his previous book of satire, *Squibbed!: Satire and Other Oddities*.

Chloe Gotsis: When did you start writing?

Bob Sarkissian: In about 1994, when I was 23, I decided to try writing poems. And I was surprised that I could write fairly well, being trained as an engineer.

CG: What made you decide to put together the book, *Squibbed!: Satire and Other Oddities*?

BS: I had started writing satirical news stories in 1995, and fortunately I kept most of them. I found the writing process cathartic, but I had no intention at the time of writing a book. Eventually I realized that I had about 200 pages of material by 2009, and I decided that I would take the best material and try to publish it because I wanted to share my gift with others. I decided to self-publish because the process of trying to find a publisher seemed daunting.

CG: How did you come up with your “squibs” or witty sarcastic sayings?

BS: It’s a spontaneous process of letting my mind wander really. It seems to be related to my moods. Sometimes I’ll try to come up with an idea and nothing comes to me. Other times I’ll just be inspired with an idea based on the news or some event when I’m not trying, and I’ll jot it down and get to it later if I’m busy.

CG: Are your squibs ever based on anything in real life?

BS: They are all based on people, ideas or experiences that get exaggerated to an extreme. For instance, my conversations with someone at a cable company that shall remain nameless led me to create a multiple-choice “cable company representative qualification examination,” which asks questions like: “What is the best way to greet the customer?” – answer: “Hello, my name is Guido, how may I break your face?” That’s not actually in the book *Squibbed!*, but it will be in the planned sequel.

CG: You are a technical writer in your professional life and also write poems and satirical stories on the side. Do you ever combine the two and write satirical stories about high-tech?

BS: I did write a poem once about using technical language about a GPS system to locate the woman of my dreams. It generally doesn’t work well. I seem to keep them separate pretty easily. I also keep poetry and satire separate. They come from the same source, but my poetry tends to be quite serious.

CG: Your parents are both publishers; did they encourage you to pursue a career in writing?

BS: They knew I wanted to be an engineer when I was younger and were surprised when I showed interest in creative writing. I’m sure their writing inspired me at least subconsciously. They knew I had a sense of humor, so satire seemed pretty natural.

CG: Have any of your stories been about life in Newton?

BS: Not specifically, but I’m sure I could write a book on that.

CG: How long did it take you to write the book?

BS: It really was a process of 15 years, from 1995 to 2010, of writing occasional pieces and editing the best ones. It took about a year to format it, come up with a title and have it printed.

C A L E N D A R

MASSACHUSETTS

SEPTEMBER 16 and 17 – Save the dates: A weekend of Art and Renewal with The Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA), featuring the works of Yousuf Karsh.

- September 16 – ALMA will host a gala celebration at the Fairmont Copley Plaza, Boston, honoring the life and works of world-renowned Armenian-Canadian photographer, Yousuf Karsh, and the permanent collection of his portraits gifted by his wife, Estrellita Karsh. Reservations can be made online by visiting the ALMA website at www.almainc.org or calling (617) 926-2562, ext. 31.
- September 17 – Opening reception of the exhibition “Karsh: Celebrating Humanity,” in ALMA’s newly-designed Bedoukian Gallery, 6:30-8:30 p.m., 65 Main St., Watertown. Celebrate the new face of ALMA and the many faces of Karsh. For further details please visit our website at www.almainc.org or call the administrative office at ALMA (617) 926-2562, ext. 31.

SEPTEMBER 18 – Trinity Family Festival, 12-5 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Delicious dinner; moonwalk for kids; children and family games, starting at 1:30 p.m., Armenian music by the Greg Krikorian Ensemble. Yalanchi cook-off. Blessing of Magdagh, 4 p.m. Raffle drawing for cash prizes, 4:30 p.m. For information, contact the church office at (617) 354-0632, e-mail office@htaac.org or visit www.htaac.org.



On September 18, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge, will hold its Trinity Family Festival, from 12 to 5 p.m., featuring a delicious dinner, children and family games, as well as Armenian music by the Greg Krikorian Ensemble. For information, contact the church office at (617) 354-0632, e-mail office@htaac.org or visit www.htaac.org.

‘Salute to Armenia’ to Take Place in Rhode Island

PROVIDENCE – Armenia declared its independence on September 21, 1991 and thus, 2011 marks the 20th anniversary of its independence.

For this occasion, the Armenian Music Festival of Rhode Island Inc., supported by the Armenian Euphrates Evangelical Church, Saints Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church, Saints Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church and Armenian organizations of Rhode Island, will present “Salute to Armenia.” This special program, dedicated to the 20th anniversary of Armenia’s independence, will be held on

Saturday, September 10, at 7 p.m. in Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral, Providence.

The Republic of Armenia’s ambassadors to the United States and the United Nations have accepted invitations to participate in the program. Federal, state and local dignitaries will also be invited.

The commemorative concert will include performances by Yegishe Manucharyan, Victoria Avetisyan (Massachusetts), Garo Nichanian (Canada), Kate Norigian, Joanne Mouradjian, David Ayrian, Debra Takian Pjojian, David Gevorkian, Gohar Manjeliikian, David Alexander, Mher Saribekyan, Alexan Tokatlian (New York),

the Armenian Chorales of Rhode Island and Greater Worcester and the Philharmonic Community Symphony Orchestra of Rhode Island.

Konstantin Petrossian is artistic director and conductor. Guest composers from Armenia, Martin Vardazaryan and Levon Chaushyan, will also be in attendance.

In addition to traditional Armenian music, the program will premier songs composed especially for this event by Armenian composers.

Admission is free and open to the public and all are invited to a reception following the concert.



KOHAR releases “All Time Armenian Favorites 3”

KOHAR Releases ‘All Time Armenian Favorites 3’

NICOSIA, Cyprus – HAYASA Productions LTD releases KOHAR’s, “All Time Armenian Favorites 3.” The three DVD’s feature over six hours of live concert at the Opera Theater of Damascus and the citadel amphitheater of Aleppo in 2009.

The production is in PCM Stereo and DTS 5.1 Surround. The video boasts highly-professional camera work that includes for the first time a Spidercam. This is evidence of why HAYASA’s productions are considered one of the greatest Armenian cultural releases which offer not only the enjoyment of watching the concert live but by also including lyrics of the songs on screen in Armenian and transliterated.

The second DVD also includes 30-minute live documentary footage of KOHAR on their tour of Damascus and Aleppo in 2009. The documentary material portrays the process of building the stages in Damascus and the citadel of Aleppo with some short interviews, including the executive producer, director, sound and light engineers. Sebouh Abcarian also depicts some of the heroic past associated with his father and the citadel.

The package comes with a 128-page song booklet that includes the lyrics of the songs in Armenian and transliterated.

For more information, go to <http://hayasashop.com/>.



COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Where Is the Enemy?

By Edmond Y. Azadian

When Alexander the Great – who was not yet great at the time – inherited the throne from his father, Phillip II, the first thing that he did was to distribute his entire wealth to the people. When he was asked what was left to him after that act of generosity, he answered with one word: “hope.” And that hope gave him enough vision and strength to conquer the old world.

This brings us to the days when Armenia gained independence 20 years ago. There was no power, no water, no bread, no heat, but the population was full of anticipation, because there was hope. And hope propelled the Armenians to win the Karabagh war and liberate Shushi.

Today the situation is almost reversed: the country enjoys 24 hours of electricity a day; only some rural areas complain about the scarcity of water; there is an abundance of bread, if one can afford to buy it and Yerevan has become a bustling city alive with cafes, nightclubs and casinos. Yet people are leaving in droves. Why? Because there is no hope. It is almost ironic that people were ready and willing to endure the hardships and continue holding on to the land, yet today, in relative comfort, they are leaving the homeland, which we had dreamed of for centuries. And if we dare to ask the emigrants why they have decided to leave Armenia, the cynical answer is ready: “We held on to the land and we suffered too much to preserve the homeland for you. Now it’s your turn to come and keep the country alive.”

The value system has turned upside down. During the Soviet period, people were sent to Siberia as punishment, while today the Russian government is inviting Armenian families to settle in Siberia as a reward, by providing homes, jobs and citizenship.

During the Genocide, honorable Armenian women jumped to their deaths in the Euphrates River, to avoid being raped by Turks. Today, young Armenian women are crossing the same river into Turkey for prostitution.

Recently, Prof. Gerard Libaridian published an in-depth article in the Armenian press, sounding an alarm over the population decrease in Armenia. It was titled “Appeal: Critical Moment in Armenian History.” It is no secret to anyone where Libaridian stands in the administration-opposition equation. Hopefully, his alarm will not be viewed within that context, because his voice comes from the very depth of our history. His theory is that Armenians can survive dictatorships, genocide, earthquake, war and any other calamity, but they cannot survive after the depopulation of the homeland.

The precedents he has cited in his article are bitter, yet succinct. The fall of the Bagratuni Kingdom was accelerated when the Arzunis began a side show in Akhtamar, causing the depopulation of the mainland. He also theorizes that the Genocide became a feasible option for the Young Turks when the Armenian population was reduced into minority status in historic Armenian provinces, while the self-defense war in Vasbouragan was successful because Armenians were a majority in that region, during World War I.

Today, with brain drain and depopulation, Armenia has reached a critical point, after which it will not be able to sustain a government nor defend its borders.

Of course, there are objective reasons for this ominous state of affairs; Turkey and Azerbaijan are continuing their genocidal policies in an entirely different form, by blockading Armenia into economic strangulation and possible extinction. The Georgians are no lesser enemies.

Recently Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili openly

declared that “Azerbaijan’s enemy is our enemy.” No one has any doubts that the target of that announcement was Armenia.

These are our external enemies that cannot behave otherwise, based on their own national self-interest. But we have internal enemies who are more detrimental. Those are the very same people who have created a caste of oligarchs to stifle Armenia’s economy for their own selfish interests.

When government functionaries – and even one minister – plundered the help that was sent to Armenia for the destitute survivors of the earthquake, we were all appalled by how much degeneration was caused to the Armenian character by the Soviet rule. But the trend continues. Recently, diasporan benefactor and businessman Vahakn Hovnanian cited some examples in an interview. He says he tried to get involved in the wheat business, but he received threats that his wheat field would be burnt down before the harvest, although, Armenia is a net importer of wheat.

He has tried to import timber from Russia, but his Russian counterparts have even refused to deal with him, because timber is the monopoly of certain oligarchs. He has encouraged some Diaspora Armenians to do business in the homeland, but the government apparatchiks have scared them away.

Any Armenian who has had business dealings can cite at least five or more similar instances.

Any foreign investor seems to be at risk. The bodies of several foreign nationals who were engaged in business were discovered in Armenia and even before the police investigation, stories were planted in the media about the characters of the assassinated people who were not able to defend themselves any more.

The same hostile policy is applied against the local people. Currently there is a huge controversy, pitting the mayor of Yerevan against street vendors who have put up primitive structures to make a living. And of course, they have paid exorbitant bribes to city functionaries to get illegal permits to build those kiosks. Rather than going after the corrupt functionaries, the mayor is evicting the vendors, of course, for a good cause. Who does not wish Yerevan to be beautiful? But before that, an answer must be found to the question: who will feed the families of those vendors?

While oligarchs live in obscene opulence, the majority of the people have to struggle for survival, and if they can find a way to secure that survival in any other country, they will not hesitate for one moment.

Even those still living in Armenia cannot contribute to the population growth as indicated by a sociologist study. The statistics are as follows: 68.3 percent of the families do not wish to have a child; 16.4 percent plan to have only one child and 13.6 percent have no answer. Among the reasons cited, economy is rated first.

Citing a historic precedent, Libaridian writes: “Our numbers had fallen below a certain threshold, to a level that had made Armenian revolution against the state of the Ottoman Empire impossible and successful self-defense against the Genocide by and large, hopeless. ...Nearly a century later, we may now be reaching a similar threshold in the Republic of Armenia, where the decreasing level of population closely linked to the unresolved conflicts with the neighbors that is threatening the viability of the economy and national defense.”

Turks, Azeris and Georgians are Armenia’s enemies and they wish to wipe out Armenia from the map. Armenians have withstood that pressure for 20 years now, and maybe they can resist longer. But what about the enemy within?

We cannot confront the enemy across the border without killing first that enemy within.

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

daytime telephone number.

- Deadline for submission of all articles and advertising is noon on the Monday of the week of publication.
- Photos will be published without charge at the discretion of the editors and art director. Photos will be returned only if a self-addressed and stamped envelope is included.
- The *MS* will publish only one article about an upcoming organizational event. For major special events, exceptions may be made only by special arrangement with the editors.
- Telephone numbers, ticket prices and other details (at the discretion of the editors) will not be included in press releases.



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Senators Should Reject President Obama’s Appointee as Ambassador to Turkey

President Barack Obama has an endless number of problems these days. Late last year, when senators blocked several of his ambassadorial nominees, including the one to Turkey, the president resorted to the rarely-used tactic of appointing ambassadors without Senate approval, while Congress is in recess.

Unfortunately for President Obama, his unconventional fix could be short-lived. If by the year’s end the Senate does not confirm his “recess appointments,” these ambassadors must abandon their posts and return home in ignominy.

President Obama’s nominee to Turkey, Ambassador Francis Ricciardone, was in Washington on August 2, to see if the Senate Foreign Relations Committee would confirm his appointment. During his appearance before the Committee, he antagonized several senators by making statements that were replete with Turkish propaganda. When confronted with Turkey’s deplorable policies on human rights, its occupation of Cyprus and denial of the Armenian Genocide, the ambassador gave a series of evasive and dubious answers.

In response to a question from Sen. Robert Menendez

(D-NJ) as to whether the United States had ever denied the Armenian Genocide, Ricciardone regurgitated his poorly-memorized talking point: “I stand behind President Obama’s characterization of the ‘Yedz Meghern’ [sic], as the Armenians themselves call it....” Unfortunately, he mispronounced “Medz Yeghern” by reversing the first letters of the two words, making it clear that he had no idea what he was talking about. If he really wanted to use an Armenian word, he could have simply said “tseghasbanoutyou,” which means genocide!

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee will reconvene in September to consider Ricciardone’s nomination after reviewing his written responses to questions submitted by the senators following the August 2 hearing. We have obtained copies of the six responses Ricciardone sent to Senator Menendez last week. The questions covered such issues as Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s “authoritarian tendencies,” the return of Christian churches to their rightful owners, Turkey’s refusal to remove its troops from Cyprus, Turkish banks circumventing US sanctions on Iran, Turkey’s blockade of Armenia and US policy on the Armenian Genocide.

Ricciardone avoided responding to just about every question he was asked. The one time that he did give an answer, he got himself in big trouble by making the following patently false statement:

Menendez: “To the best of your knowledge, approximately how many of the more than 2,000 Christian churches functioning prior to 1915 on the territory of present-day Turkey are still operating today as churches?”

Ricciardone: “Most of the Christian churches functioning prior to 1915 are still operating as churches. Some churches of significance operate as museums. The remaining have fallen into disrepair or were converted to mosques for lack of use.”

This is simply an incredible answer from a seasoned ambassador who is supposed to be extremely knowledgeable about Turkey, since he has had several postings in that country and speaks fluent Turkish. Ricciardone’s problem is that he identifies himself too closely with Turkey. A year ago, Sen. Sam Brownback (R-KS) placed a “hold” on Ricciardone’s nomination, accusing him of “quickly adopting the positions and arguments of his Egyptian diplomatic counterparts,” during his posting in Cairo. “Given these questions, I am not convinced Ambassador Ricciardone is the right ambassador for Turkey at this time,” Brownback advised Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in his August 16, 2010 letter.

Ricciardone is now making the same mistake in his new posting in Turkey. He has actually become the mouthpiece of the Turkish government rather than the official representative of the United States in Ankara. Unfortunately, Brownback is no longer in the Senate to place a new “hold” on Ricciardone, but there must be other senators who will do so, to make sure that an American Ambassador upholds US interests overseas rather than do the bidding of the host country.

How could anyone explain, let alone justify, Ricciardone’s nonsensical and false assertion that most of the Christian churches in existence prior to 1915 in Turkey are still functioning as churches? In fact, the exact opposite is true! Only a handful of Christian churches are still functioning as churches in Turkey today, not counting the few dozen Armenian, Greek and Assyrian churches of Istanbul. Ricciardone’s vulgar attempt to justify the conversion of churches into museums or mosques is a supreme insult to all Christians.

Ricciardone has clearly disqualified himself from serving as US ambassador to Turkey. One or more senators should place a new “hold” on his nomination to keep him away from doing any more harm to US national interests.

Inclusion Should Be Our Aim

By Nubar Dorian

It never fails. Every time we hear or read of a plan to have a community leader celebrate a special occasion or commemorate a milestone, we are certain it will be held in a most prestigious, most luxurious, most exclusive banquet hall or hotel. It naturally follows that only the wealthiest and most affluent among us could or would attend. =

The gift of fortune, position, intelligence and power are made possible for them to see and be seen at these affairs. They really require no recognition or praise. Their names are clearly at the top, praise craves no popularity or acclaim. They have already reached heights. We have and should have nothing but respect for them for helping the community and willingly attending these special events, nor should we envy them or deny them all possible acclaim for being active participants.

The organizers of these affairs are the ones who always forget that mistakes are for learning. They seem never to consider the welfare of the community or that these affairs are for all, and not just a few. For instance, why make a welcoming banquet for the supreme patriarch or the most recent celebration of the anniversary of the Mirror-Spectator with a melange of haute couture and haute cuisine? The affair no longer becomes viable and valuable, but only leaves out the low pursers.

It may seem heretical or petty to bewail a system of perpetually doing the same thing again and again. The comfort of the familiar is strong. Power banquets have always been organized as a symbol of love and respect for the occasion or person. But, it is a mistake. The event, or the honoree, is not, and should not be, for the few. The precious coin that buys experience is mistake, after mistake, after mistake, goes an old saying. Unfortunately, we fail to learn from our mistakes. In spite of these power banquets, they remain unpopular, ineffective, with very poor attendance, because “the price is not right.”

Beneath the mountain of activity, rhetoric, bravado and emotion, the community is not getting stronger. We keep on boasting the increase of our numbers in America, without realizing that it was at the expense of reducing the num-

ber of Armenians in the Middle East and regrettably in Mother Armenia. Don’t we know that the source is now dry and dead, simply depleted?

We must stop our pretense and illusion. We are sending to heaven, every day, so many devoted, reliable, passionate and dedicated Armenians, and fail to replace them. Deep-seated cynicism, unwarranted hope and pronouncements of strength and progress are not substitutes for the truth and reality. They merely are substitutes, palliatives and other panaceas.

The aim of all of us is the preservation of our heritage, culture and community here in our beloved America. Through our churches, organizations, banquets, bazaars, picnics, publications, seminars and services, we try to keep the community alive and active. We can achieve our aim only by involving the uninvolved in our community affairs. This happens to be the biggest problem that remains to be solved. We must put our actions and thoughts together to make certain that love and service for the community is indeed a viable, visible and enviable position to take. We have to create the atmosphere to make the common involved in Armenia affairs fashionable, visible, viable and enviable.

A lesson from Genesis is worth repeating, “assemble the people,” said Moses, the Biblical prophet, “assemble them all, the men, the women and strangers at the gate, that they may hear, they may learn.” So assemble they did, and hear they did and Jewish people never let go of this vision of the promise land. We, too, now have an independent promise land and we have the people, more than one million in America; unfortunately, we fail to have them hear and learn.

When, the big question is, to succeed in having our people hear and listen? We continue to have discord, disunity and division. There seems to be no solution to the problem, except to suggest that our leaders, religious and lay, of all political and religious factions, come together to find ways to include all the uninvolved. God knows we have one hundred fold, or possibly one thousand fold, of them who can help the community from the danger of extinction in the near future. This is our major problem that awaits solution.

(Nubar Dorian is a resident of Cliffside Park, NJ. He is active in the community, including as a Diocesan Delegate.)

A Theme Park for Diasporan Armenians

By John Greppin

I must urgently make remarks on Prof. Jirair (Gerard) Libaridian’s long commentary piece of August 13, on the weakness of Armenia. The situation in Yerevan is disastrous. The corruption is unprecedented and economic collapse is well underway. The citizens are leaving, suffocated by a business system controlled by a small coterie who, if they want another Armenian’s property, can take it, paying only a pittance.

Recently, an American Armenian who had opened a successful mining operation, was spontaneously accused of an odious sex crime and exiled without due process, his mine confiscated. Just now, up to 10,000 street vendors and kiosk owners have been banished by the power of the conglomerates which control Main Street Armenia. Even under Brezhnev’s communist government you could buy roses on Prospect Lenina. Now on the newly-named Mashtots Boulevard, it is impossible.

Even education is corrupt: a substantial bribe will ensure you a medical degree; no one’s home or apartment is secure, if the location is desirable. What Westerner would dream of investing in Armenia?

With the coming of democracy and capitalism in the early 1990s, the first elected president, Levon Ter-Petrosian, was swallowed up by the forces of entrenched Soviet corruption that brought an end to further democratic processes. The failure of positive negotiations concerning Turkey and Karabagh, hated by the Dashnaks but vital for the economic survival of independent Armenia, brings Armenia near to the end of its 2,500 years of history. The youth are fleeing, leaving a country to the dispirited middle aged and helpless pensioners who are the bulk of those remaining.

The American-Armenian columnists and commentators celebrate only the disaster of the Turkish Genocide and enjoin all patriots to ignore the Armenian government and remember the immediate past which might be all the Armenians have ahead of them. Over a quarter of the country has fled. Libaridian worries that the viable Armenian state is near its end, empty of the young and able-bodied, a “theme park for Diasporan Armenians.” The banishing of street vendors is what brought the end of the Tunisian government this spring. Now it happens in Yerevan. The people must stand up and say something. The alternative is continuing economic and cultural strangulation. The Armenians tried in 1990; they’ll have to try harder this time.

The end is the loss of a unique and ancient language, the glories of the Bagratids ignored, the grandure of Ani forgotten, the heroic triumph over the Mongol hoards dismissed. From what the American Armenians are teaching their children today, they will have only the memory of their slaughtered grandparents and the ability to say “inch pes ek” and “shnorhakalutun.”

(John A. C. Greppin is a specialist in the history of the Armenian language and has studied and lived in Armenia since the Brezhnev era.)



US-Armenian Rock Star Calls for Change in Armenia

TANKIAN, from page 1

"I think having a rule of law in the country from top to bottom will alleviate a lot of concerns, whether it's traffic tickets or taxes or wages or how many hours someone should work. It's all connected to this one thing of enforcing the rule of law," he said. "And the efficiencies created by the lowering of corruption will actually really spur productivity in this country ... and that will make it easier for foreign and local investment."

Tankian drew rapturous applause from the audience when he singled out the need for a strict separation between business and politics. "In Armenia we have business and politics in the same seat," he stated. "So one of them has got to get off the seat. You know, they can't be sitting in the same space."

The rock star, who has mainly performed as a solo artist in recent years, addressed more than 200 at the end of a nearly weeklong visit to the country of his ancestors. The highlight of his trip was an open-air concert late on Sunday dedicated to the inauguration in Yerevan of an information technology education center set up by a US businessman of Armenian origin.

Tankian met with President Serge Sargisian

at the sprawling Tumo Center for Creative Technologies ahead of the concert attended by some 10,000 fans. He received a medal from Prime Minister Tigran Sargisian at a separate meeting on Friday.

An Armenian government statement cited Tigran Sargisian as praising his vocal campaign for an official US recognition of the Armenian Genocide. It said the premier also pointed out that Tankian's visits are important for promoting rock music in Armenia.

Tankian said on Monday that he discussed with Sargisian plans by an Armenian mining company to develop Teghut, a massive copper and molybdenum deposit in the northern Lori region covered by a 357-hectare forest.

The Teghut project, if implemented, will lead to the destruction of 128,000 trees. Critics say that would wreak further havoc on Armenia's green areas that have already shrunk dramatically since the 1990s.

Tankian heaped praise on Armenian environmentalists campaigning against the project. "I think they are doing a great job," he said. "I fully and firmly agree with their stance. I think open-pit mining is very dangerous in this country and everywhere else. I think we'll be poisoning our lives by opening up that mine in the

Teghut forest."

The outspoken singer revered by Armenians around the world went on to advocate Armenia's transformation into "a lot more self-sufficient" country because of its geographic location and uneasy relations with neighbors. He called, among other things, for more government subsidies to farmers and a strict ban on genetically modified agricultural products.

Tankian, who will turn 44 next Sunday, cautioned, however, that Armenians should be "patient" in expecting positive changes in their country. "We are a 20-year-old country and in retrospect, if you look at the whole situation, I think we are doing pretty well, despite everything that we talked about," he said. "It's a beautiful country with beautiful people. There is a lot of potential, there is a lot of energy."



Prime Minister Tigran Sargisian presents a medal to Serj Tankian in recognition of his efforts toward Genocide recognition and innovative art.

Tankian was also "really excited" by the ecstatic and mostly young crowd that turned up for his concert broadcast live by an Armenian TV channel. "It was something I'd never experienced before ... It was a level of high that I'd never had before," he said.

Turkey Warns of 'Steps' if Syria Continues Crackdown on Protests

By Anthony Shadid

BEIRUT (*New York Times*) — Turkey's foreign minister demanded yesterday that the Syrian government end its crackdown on a five-month-old uprising "immediately and unconditionally," warning that unspecified steps would be taken otherwise.

The comments by the minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, who visited the Syrian capital, Damascus, just last week, were the latest addition to a semantic exercise in diplomatic ambiguity, as the United States, European countries, Turkey and Syria's Arab neighbors have sought to condemn the violence while giving President Bashar Assad the chance to change his response to the protests.

The Syrian government has ignored the condemnations. Just days after the visit by Davutoglu, who says he has visited Syria more than 60 times, the government sent military and security forces into the port of Latakia, the third city to fall target to a crackdown that activists say killed 260 people this month.

Since the beginning of August, government forces have retaken control of Hama, in central Syria and Deir al-Zour, in the east, both of which witnessed demonstrations by hundreds of thousands of people earlier this summer.

In Hama, a Western official said security forces used anti-aircraft guns against civilian buildings. The same tactic was used in

Latakia over the weekend, activists said, as well as gunfire that originated from ships off the coast. The Syrian government denied that ships fired at Latakia.

Activists say 31 people have been killed since the beginning of the Latakia assault.

"This is our final word to the Syrian authorities: Our first expectation is that these operations stop immediately and unconditionally," Davutoglu told a news conference in Ankara, Turkey. "If the operations do not end, there would be nothing more to discuss about steps that would be taken," he said, without saying what that action might include.

Diplomats have said that they believe Turkey, during Davutoglu's visit with Assad, gave the Syrian government two weeks to introduce sweeping changes. The precise nature of those changes remains unclear, but the window came amid a flurry of conversations between President Obama, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey and King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia.

No less apparent are the Syrian government's intentions. It has continued to insist that it is facing a rebellion by armed Islamists funded from abroad. It described the violence in Latakia, where the crackdown began Saturday, as an issue of security forces pursuing men armed with machine guns, grenades and explosive devices.

Some analysts have criticized Davutoglu's visit to Syria, arguing that it only bolstered the credibility of the Syrian government at the very time the United States, European

countries and others were trying to isolate Assad's leadership. The escalation in violence seems to have embarrassed Turkish officials, who had only last week urged at least a measure of patience in seeing whether Assad would act.

The Syrian military and security forces pressed on with raids in Latakia on Monday, August 15, especially on a southern neighborhood inhabited by Palestinian refugees and poor Syrians, but the violence appeared less pronounced than over the weekend.

KOHAR All Time Armenian Favorites 3

After much anticipation, HAYASA Productions LTD releases KOHAR's, "All Time Armenian Favorites 3." The three DVD's feature over six hours of live concert at the Opea Theater of Damascus and the citadel amphitheater of Aleppo.



The documentary material portrays the built up process of the stages in Damascus and the Citadel of Aleppo with some interview with conductor Sebouh Abcarian, who depicts the heroic past associated with his father and the citadel.

The "must own" KOHAR — All Time Armenian Favorites three package comes with a 128-page song booklet that includes the lyrics of the songs in Armenian and transliterated.

For more information, go to

<http://hayasashop.com/>.

Plaintiffs Score Early Victory against Turkish Banks in Armenian Genocide Lawsuit

LAWSUIT, from page 1

Ziraat Bank's motion to dismiss the complaint for insufficient service of process. The court acknowledged that the plaintiffs presented "credible evidence that their process servers made several attempts to serve the bank defendants at addresses in 'New York City... [and] were repeatedly denied access to the buildings and [were even]...misdirected as to Ziraat Bank's actual location.'"

The court further found that the banks' security guards had "engaged in behavior apparently designed to thwart service of process." The banks did not deny having actual knowledge of the pending lawsuit, and thus the court ordered them to serve a responsive pleading to the com-

plaint by August 19.

The court additionally recognized that the Republic of Turkey had also been recently served with the complaint through diplomatic channels — a lengthy process involving high-level contacts between the US Embassy in Ankara, Turkey and the Turkish Foreign Ministry — and must also file papers responding to the complaint by August 19.

"From the outset, the banks have sought to make it as difficult as possible to litigate this lawsuit," says Vartkes Yeghiayan with the Yeghiayan Law Firm. "Finally, after months of maneuvering and numerous attempts to evade service, the US federal court has required all three defendants to respond to the Armenians' complaint."