

## Artists Launch Creative Fundraising In Istanbul

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

ISTANBUL – People with autism require very special care, and there are precious few facilities providing adequate facilities and personnel to deal with their needs. Armenia is fortunate to have one such establishment; however, being the only one, not only nationally but in the entire Transcaucasus region, it is limited in resources to meet the actual needs of the community. Located in Yerevan, “My Way” Socio-Rehabilitation Day Care Center for Children and Teenagers with Autism provides education, care and therapy for youngsters all day every day during the week and for free. (See Armenian Mirror-Spectator, June 17, 2017, and <http://www.m-w-stiftung.org/English/News/MyWay/MyWay.html> for additional photos.) The socio-rehabilitation unit offers custom-tailored



From left, Hayk Arslanyan, Lilit Soghomonyan and Hasmik Margaryan

vocational training classes for almost 190 beneficiaries, up to the age of 35. There are 72 dedicated, trained staff members working in small groups or in a one-on-one basis, to develop students' skills and support their further integration into society.

With a growing waiting list of persons who want to take part in their programs, the board members decided to expand their physical facilities, in order to provide the logistics for a broader range of activities. This meant launching a major building proj-

sect to renovate a second building on the premises. The idea is to dedicate the first building, which has been fully renovated, to children and the second to young adults seeking vocational training, to learn skills that will allow them to find meaningful employment and thereby provide the basis for an independent adult life.

The renovation work has been proceeding over the past year and a half, with the help of the John Mirak Foundation, and when my husband and I were there in April, we saw that the finish line was in view. The whole structure had been refurbished, with spacious rooms and modern utilities, but what remained were the finishing touches. Inside the building the floors and walls still needed work, windows, doors and the relevant fittings.

The sum required to finance the last stretch was not astronomical, but still beyond the means of the group with its current budget. What was required was a creative approach, and “My Way” is well known for its creative spirit. Not only does it place great emphasis on creative work – painting, ceramics, handcrafts, music – in its therapeutic work, it also has artists among its founders and directors.

Lilit Soghomonyan, for example, the mother of a child with autism and a founding member, is a well known artist, married to Gagik Ghazanchyan, also an artist. Lilit's see ISTANBUL, page 5

## Judge Declines to Deal With Kocharyan's Immunity Claim

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The chairman of Armenia's Court of Appeals, Vazgen Rshtuni, accepted on June 3, prosecutors' demand that he recuse himself from hearings on immunity from prosecution claimed by former President Robert Kocharyan.

Kocharyan and his legal team cite an article of the Armenian constitution which stipulates: “During the term of his or her powers and thereafter, the President of the Republic may not be prosecuted and subjected to liability for actions deriving from his or her status.”

Earlier this year they asked a district court in Yerevan to free the ex-president and throw out coup charges brought against him in connection with the 2008 post-election violence in Yerevan.

The court ruled on April 12, however, that Kocharyan cannot be protected from prosecution. It thus accepted prosecutors' claims that the constitutional provision does not apply to him because his actions in February-March 2008 were illegal.

Kocharyan and his lawyers appealed see KOCHARYAN, page 2

## Great-Granddaughter Wants to Give Diana Apcar Her Due

By Alin K. Gregorian  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

more intimate as well as intimidating.

Mimi Malayan, the great-granddaughter of Diana Apcar, has made a film about her famous relative, which she hopes will restore her rightful place in history as a faithful servant of the Armenian people as well as a trailblazing diplomat.

Malayan's documentary, “The Stateless Diplomat: Diana Apcar's Life,” brings attention to the countless selfless gestures of Apcar during her fascinating lifetime which coincided with many historic events, including the Armenian Genocide, World War I, the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and the creation of an independent Armenia.

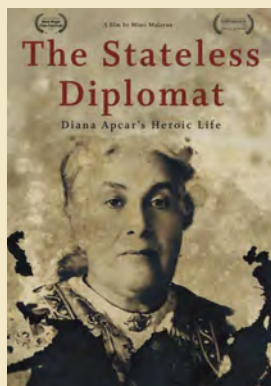
Connecting with her great-grandmother's legacy humbled Malayan. The filmmaker said she had not realized the full range of her great-grandmother's efforts to help refugees of the Armenian Genocide.

see APCAR, page 14



Mimi Malayan

SAN FRANCISCO – For many of us, delving into history is interesting, but when that history involves a family member, it is that much



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Mirror-Spectator Annual Summer Break

WATERTOWN – The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* will close for two weeks in July as part of its annual summer break.

The last issue published before the vacation will be that of June 29, and the first edition back would be that of July 20.

The office will be closed July 1 through 12.

### Sarkissian Hosts Meeting of Physicists

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian hosted a group of Armenian and foreign physicists from different countries of the world who are participating in the outgoing conference of the International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Yerevan on June 4.

During the meeting the participants discussed the current issues of science and the prospective areas which have a demand in the future. They also touched upon the prospects and opportunities of science development in Armenia.

### Foreign Ministry Calls Out Azeri Attack

YEREVAN – Armenia's Foreign Ministry issued a statement on June 3 responding to the Azeri attack on the border of Artsakh (Karabakh).

“Armenia resolutely deplores deliberate steps by Azerbaijan in the past three days to increase tension, which manifest in dissemination of false information about its own casualties, direct calls for physical threats to the leadership of Armenia, publicly voiced by representatives of the ruling party in Azerbaijan's parliament, and significant increase in ceasefire violations, which resulted today in a killing of private Sipan Melkonyan of the Defense Army of Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan's recent actions take place against the background of the appeal of May 30 from the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] Minsk Group Co-Chairs to exercise maximum restraint to avoid escalation,” the statement read.

The statement continued, “The deplorable actions of Azerbaijan, if not urgently addressed, may represent a serious obstacle to next steps in the settlement process. They also question the credibility of Azerbaijan and their capacity to remain faithful to commitments, as agreed in Dushanbe in September 2018 and reaffirmed in Vienna in March 2019, to observe and strengthen the ceasefire. Armenia strongly urges Azerbaijan to demonstrate genuine political will expressed in concrete and effective measures to observe the ceasefire. Azerbaijan will bear full responsibility for the risks of further escalation.”

The statement added that Armenia seeks to resolve the stalemate peacefully.

## INSIDE

### ACYOA Weekend Coverage

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Two Arrested Over 'Political' Shooting in Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Two men have been arrested in Armenia on suspicion of opening fire on supporters of Samvel Babayan, Nagorno-Karabakh's former military leader.

An Armenian police statement released on Friday, May 31, said police and National Security Service (NSS) officers identified, tracked down and detained the suspects, Alexey Balayan and Roland Aydinian, in Yerevan in a joint operation conducted on Thursday.

The statement added that the shooting incident, which reportedly occurred on a highway in Armenia's eastern Gegharkunik province on Wednesday, resulted from a personal dispute between two groups of men. It did not elaborate.

Babayan's office alleged on Thursday political motives behind the gunfire, which apparently did not wound anyone. It said the retired Karabakh general's supporters were attacked by "gangs" controlled by Arayik Harutyunyan, Karabakh's former prime minister and one of the main candidates in a presidential election that will be held in the Armenian-populated territory next year. Babayan is also seeking to run in that ballot.

Harutyunyan again flatly denied any involvement in the shooting when he spoke to RFE/RL's Armenians service on Friday. "Let us respect the information provided by security services and be guided by it," he said. "I'm sure that there were no political motives. Those guys had no issues with Samvel Babayan."

Harutyunyan admitted having ties to the arrested suspects. He said one of them, Aydinian, served as mayor of a Karabakh town when he was prime minister.

## Parliament Adopts Anti-Trafficking Bill

YEREVAN (Armenpress) –The Armenian parliament adopted at the final hearing a bill on introducing new mechanisms in combating human trafficking in the existing law, on May 23.

The new law provisions a lump sum financial support to underage victims of trafficking.

The bill was passed unanimously.

The law also provisions a regulation that creates the foundation for developing a guidance procedures for child victims of human trafficking and a clear circle of cooperation between regional and state governmental agencies.

The single financial support will be 250,000 drams for victims of abuse who are under the age of 18.

## New Stamp Dedicated to Henrikh Mkhitaryan put Into circulation

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – A new postage stamp depicts the famous Armenian footballer, the captain of the Armenian national football team Henrikh Mkhitaryan, wearing the uniform of the Armenian national football team. The portrait of Mkhitaryan was created by Vahagn Mkrtchyan.

The postage stamp was cancelled this week by Deputy Minister of High-Technological Industry of the Republic of Armenia Gegham Vardanyan, captain of the Armenian national football team Henrikh Mkhitaryan, Chairman of the Board of HayPost CJSC Juan Pablo Gechidjian, President of the Union of Philatelists of Armenia Hovik Musayelyan.

Mkhitaryan was born on January 21, 1989, in Yerevan to Marina Tashchyan and Hamlet Mkhitaryan. Mkhitaryan currently plays in the English Premier League club Arsenal FC as a playmaker. In 2012 Mkhitaryan was awarded the title of Honorary Citizen of Yerevan. In 2017 Mkhitaryan was awarded a medal of "Services to the Motherland" by the President of the Republic of Armenia.

Mkhitaryan has become the Armenian Player of the Year eight times (in 2009, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). He is the top goal scorer of the Armenian national football team with 27 goals in 82 games.



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and the members of the visiting delegation

## PM Meets with Council of Europe Mission to Discuss Judicial Reform

YEREVAN – Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had a working breakfast on May 31 with members of the Council of Europe high-ranking mission led by Christos Jakakopoulos, CEO of the Council of Europe Human Rights Affairs.

The visit of the delegation headed by Jacquesopoulos took place in connection with radical reforms in the judicial system of the Republic of Armenia. On May 22, 2011, as a result of the agreement reached between the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjorn Jagland for the purpose of rendering assistance to the judiciary in Armenia.

Pashinyan attached importance to the delegation's visit to Armenia and bilateral cooperation in the implementation of reforms in the judicial system of our country. The prime minister underlined that radical changes in judicial-legal sphere are a priority process and agenda for the government, which must guarantee the existence of a fully independent judicial system in our country. The head of the government underlined that as a result of the democratic elections in Armenia, the Armenian government and the parliament have received full trust and mandate of the citizens.

"After a revolution in politics, a simple question arises: and who is represented by the judiciary in the Republic of Armenia, from whose power the government exits, who is the power of the judiciary in Armenia? I say this because the second and unchangeable article of the Constitution of Armenia states that in the Republic of Armenia the power belongs to the people, the people exercise their power through free elections, referendums, other state and local self-governing bodies envisaged by the Constitution. And here, in this series, the courts are the state bodies prescribed by the Constitution. And the problem is that, in essence, because of the political realities of the past year, we, in contrast to the government and the parliament, will not suffer the people's trust.

Pashinyan said, adding that the time has come for the judiciary to enjoy the trust of the people. He expressed his belief that the government will succeed in establishing a reliable judicial system with close cooperation with

international partners.

Jakopopoulos reaffirmed the Council of Europe's full support for the reform agenda of Armenia's judiciary system. He underscored that the Council of Europe welcomes the steps of the Armenian government to implement radical reforms in the judicial sphere and noted that they have come to Armenia to discuss future steps and actions of bilateral cooperation in their implementation. Jakopoulos added that the Council of Europe is ready to cooperate closely with the Government of Armenia in the process of reforms by investing in the entire potential of the Council of Europe expertise.

Emphasizing the fact that Armenia is a member of the Council of Europe, the Prime Minister has proposed to the

Council of Europe not to help but to be involved in the reform of the judiciary.

Both sides noted that the fight against corruption in Armenia and the judicial system reforms should correspond to the RA Constitution, international standards and the commitments undertaken by Armenia as a member state of the Council of Europe.

The delegation comprised key executives of the Council of Europe, GRECO Executive Secretary Gianluca Esposito, Venice Commission Secretary Thomas Markert, Head of Justice and Legal Cooperation Department at the General Directorate of Human Rights Affairs of the Council of Europe Hannah Junker, political advisor Maxim Longgang, Natalia Vutova, Head of the CoE Office in Yerevan, also attended the meeting.

## Judge Declines to Deal With Kocharyan's Immunity Claim

KOCHARYAN, from page 1  
against that ruling before the case was assigned to Rshtuni.

Hrach Musheghyan, a senior law-enforcement official leading a probe of the 2008 violence, said last week that Rshtuni cannot be impartial because he publicly approved of another Court of Appeals judge's decision in August to free Kocharyan from custody and uphold his immunity from prosecution. The prosecution backed Musheghyan's demand.

But one of Kocharyan's lawyers, Samvel Khudoyan, objected to it. "In my view, the consideration of our appeal has nothing to do with the opinion expressed by [Rshtuni,]" Khudoyan said on June 3.

Nevertheless, Rshtuni agreed to have another judge consider and rule on the appeal. He argued that "one of the parties to the trial lacks trust in me."

Rshtuni also pointed to media allegations that he was instrumental in the May 18 decision by a district court judge, Davit Grigoryan, to order Kocharyan released from prison pending a verdict in the high-profile case. Rshtuni, who has strongly denied the allegations, said he wants to be exonerated by "relevant bodies."

Grigoryan also controversially decided to suspend Kocharyan's trial which began on May 13. He cited a "suspicion of discrepancy" between the Armenian constitution and the charges. And he suggested that the constitution does give the ex-president immunity from prosecution.



Judge Vazgen Rshtuni holds a court hearing in Yerevan, June 3, 2019.





## ARMENIA

# Christina Ahmadjian: 'If Armenians Remain Optimistic, Energetic, And a Bit Patient, We Will See the Armenian Miracle'

**By Artsvi Bakhchinyan**

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN/TOKYO – I met Dr. Christina L. Ahmadjian last April 3 at the Armenian State University of Economics, while attending her lecture titled “Japanese Miracle: Challenges and Lessons Learned.” The lecturer, who is a professor at Hitotsubashi University in Japan, presented two economic “miracles” from Japanese history, in the early 1900s and after World War II, and showed the origin, growth and peculiarities of the modern Japanese economic system.

Ahmadjian has been an associate dean (and professor) at Hitotsubashi University Graduate School of International Corporate Strategy since September 2008. She joined the Mitsubishi Electric Corporation in September 1982 and then joined Bain and Company in September 1987. She served as an assistant professor at the Columbia University Graduate School of Business from January 1995, then began working as an assistant professor at Hitotsubashi University Graduate School of International Corporate Strategy in October 2001, where she became full professor in April 2004.

Ahmadjian is a director at Sumitomo Electric Industries, Ltd. She has been an Outside Director of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. since June 2012 and serves as a member of its Audit and Supervisory Committee. She has been an Independent Outside Director at Japan Exchange Group, Inc. since June 2014. Ahmadjian also served as an Outside Director of Eisai Co. Ltd. since June 2009.

For me, a researcher for many years of Armenian-Japanese connections, it was a nice surprise to meet a professor from a Japanese university with an Armenian name...

**How did it happen that you, an American student, went to Japan?**

When I was an undergraduate university student, I majored in East Asian Studies, specializing in Chinese language, history and society. I was very interested in foreign cultures and languages, and China had just opened up to the US. But one of my professors wrote a popular book called Japan as Number One. He told us

that Japan was the future, and encouraged us to visit Japan, to study Japanese society and business. Also at that time, the US economy was in a recession, and there were not that many job opportunities in China. So, when I graduated, I moved to Japan. I taught English for one year, and then found a job with a Japanese company.

**Wasn't it a shock for a Westerner like you to be in such a different world?**

Yes, it was a very big shock. The biggest shock was the low status of women. On my first day at my job at a Japanese company, I was asked to wash ashtrays! I also had to serve tea and coffee to my co-workers and to guests who came to our office.

Also, I was very surprised and shocked by the low standard of living at that time. Homes were small and badly heated. Home appliances were primitive. Telephone service was so expensive. Travel within and outside of Japan was so expensive. It was interesting, but not so easy to live there. Also, people were friendly but not so comfortable around foreigners.

After a few years, I realized that Japan was not a good place to live for me, and I returned to the US.

**But you went back there and now you speak and read Japanese. How much are you integrated into Japanese society?**

In 2000, I received a fellowship to stay in Japan for a year and study corporate governance. I only intended to stay for one or two years, but the situation in Japan had changed so much. The status of women had increased, foreigners were more common and better accepted, and the standard of living was so much higher. These days, I feel like the standard of living in Japan is much higher than in the US (except that homes in Japan are still small).

Of course, I will never be Japanese, because the only way to be considered Japanese in Japan is to be ethnically Japanese. But, I work at a Japanese university, I am on the boards of Japanese companies, and to be honest, I spend most of my time with Japanese friends, col-



Christina Ahmadjian visiting Yerevan

## Parliament Panel to Investigate 2016 War in Karabakh

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The pro-government majority in Armenia's National Assembly has set up an ad hoc parliamentary commission tasked with investigating the April 2016 war in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan called for the creation of such a commission on May 20 as he lambasted the Armenian judiciary and accused it of having ties with the country's former leadership.

Pashinyan claimed that “specific forces representing the former corrupt system” are also “using their corrupt connections to carry out false propaganda” against him in Karabakh. He suggested that they are intent on provoking a war with Azerbaijan, losing “some territories” to the enemy and blaming that defeat on his government.

Pashinyan did not name anyone involved in the alleged conspiracy. He announced instead that “the time has come to form an investigative parliamentary commission to examine circumstances of the April 2016 war and find answers to a number of questions preoccupying us.”

Some opposition politicians and other critics of the Armenian government denounced Pashinyan's statement, saying that the prime minister is playing the Karabakh card for domestic political purposes.

The commission was formally set up late last week after 47 deputies representing Pashinyan's My Step alliance signed a petition in support of its creation. It will be headed by

Andranik Kocharyan, the pro-government chairman of a standing parliament committee on defense and security, and also comprise 10 other lawmakers.

The commission, which was scheduled to host its first meeting on June 4, is specifically tasked with scrutinizing the Armenian military's response to an Azerbaijani offensive in Karabakh that led to the four-day hostilities, which left around 80 Armenian soldiers and volunteers dead. It will not only be able to question senior government and military officials but also have access to classified documents.

Four of the commission members are supposed to be named by the opposition Prosperous Armenia (BHK) and Bright Armenia (LHK) parties.

Naira Zohrabyan, a senior BHK parliamentarian, hit out at the parliament majority on June 3, saying that it did not consult with her party before setting up the special panel.

“Nobody from My Step approached us,” Zohrabyan said. “Moreover, we learned from the media that the investigative commission has been created by the signatures of 47 My Step deputies. I regard this as [a manifestation of] a non-businesslike atmosphere in the parliament.”

My Step's parliamentary leader, Lilit Makunts, dismissed the criticism. She said that the parliament majority has followed legal procedures and requirements regulating the formation of such commissions.

leagues, and business associates. There is a big foreign community here, but I am not really part of it, though I do have friends from all over the world.

**Armenians meeting one other usually ask about their roots. Where are your roots?**

My grandfather was from Pazmashen, in Kharpert. His father emigrated to the US in around 1890, leaving his family behind. My grandfather emigrated to the US in about 1910. My grandmother's family was from Kharpert, though I'm not sure if they were also from Pazmashen. My grandmother came to the US around that time, I think, and it seems that her father arrived earlier than that. Actually, our family history is not so clear, because my grandparents did not talk about it so much, and they kept few records, as far as I know. My grandparents settled in Whitinsville, Massachusetts, and had 6 sons, 5 of whom survived into adulthood. Though they had almost no education themselves, and my grandfather never learned English, they managed to send their sons to top US universities including MIT, Harvard, West Point, University of California at Berkeley, Clark, and Babson. My father was the youngest of the family, and did not learn too much Armenian growing up. My mother was not Armenian, but the Armenian side of my family loved and welcomed her.

**There is a very small Armenian community in Japan. Are you in touch with them?**

I know Ambassador Pogosyan. In fact, I knew him when he was a university professor before he became Ambassador. I have not met many other Armenians here, but I would very much like to have more contact with the Armenian community.

**After the revolution of last year, the new government often speaks about the economic revolution. Even if you are not a specialist of Armenia's economy, do you think that some kind of “Armenian miracle” might happen?**

Yes, I think it is the time for an Armenian miracle. I was so impressed by the determination, energy and optimism of the young Armenians who I met during my visit. And the many pro-

grams to foster new ventures, and encourage cooperation with US and European businesses impressed me. I think that Armenia could become a very important partner for Japanese businesses. Japan is experiencing a declining population, and although education levels are high in general, young people are not seeking advanced training in technical fields. Companies are struggling to find engineers, especially in areas like AI, cyber security and fintech. I think Armenia could help the Japanese fill this growing gap in human resources.

**You were in Armenia for the first time recently. Was this a regular trip for you or something special?**

I met Prime Minister Pashinyan at the World Economic Forum at Davos this year, and I was so excited to learn about the Velvet Revolution, exciting economic and social policies, and the power of the Armenian people. The year before at Davos, I had also met former Prime Minister Karapetyan, and was also impressed by his description of exciting policies to invigorate the Armenian economy. To be honest, I had never thought of visiting Armenia, and imagined it only as a place for tourism and brandy. After learning about the new Armenia, I was determined to visit. PM Pashinyan's office kindly assisted me in arranging meetings and university lectures. Ambassador Pogosyan also gave me some great advice on where to visit.

I can't wait to return. Next time, I hope to bring some Japanese students with me. The beginning of the Japanese miracle was over 100 years ago, when young Japanese overthrew the samurai dominated government and brought back the emperor. Young people travelled abroad to learn about best practices from the west, and returned to Japan to create a new society and economy. Today, Armenia feels like Japan in that period, when people were building a new country, a new economy, and a new society. We can see now how successful Japan was in doing that. I believe that if the process is managed carefully, and if Armenians remain optimistic, energetic, and a bit patient, we will see the Armenian miracle.





## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## Armenia Airways to Have Regular Flights to Tehran from June 15

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Armenia Airways will start having Yerevan-Tehran-Yerevan regular flights from June 15. The announcement was made on the official Facebook page of the company.

The flights will be every Monday, Thursday, and Saturday and since June 24 daily flights will be available. One way ticket will cost at least AMD 69,000.

Armenia Airways currently also offers regular flights to Tehran.

## Putin and Medvedev Congratulate Pashinyan On His Birthday

MOSCOW (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The President of Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin sent a congratulatory message to Armenian Prime Minister, Nikol Pashinyan on his birthday, on June 1.

“Dear Nikol Pashinyan, please accept my sincere congratulations on your birthday. I wish you good health, happiness, prosperity and success in public activities. I would like to reiterate the readiness to continue constructive dialogue on development of allied relations between Russia and Armenia as well as our close cooperation in addition to the partnership within the framework of Eurasian integration processes,” said Putin.

Russian Prime Minister, Dmitry Medvedev also congratulated Pashinyan with an official message.

“Dear Nikol Pashinyan, in the name of the Russian Federation and me personally I want to congratulate you on your birthday. I would like to highlight your constant attention to the development of friendship, partnership and alliance between Russia and Armenia.

Trade-economic and investment cooperation between our countries strengthens, joint projects are successfully implemented in the fields of energy, industry, infrastructure, science and culture. Integration in the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union is deepening. I am certain that intergovernmental active work will promote further expansion of practical cooperation, promotion of new mutually beneficial initiatives in different spheres. This fully corresponds to the long-term interests of our countries,” said Medvedev.

## France Is Committed to Peaceful Settlement of Karabakh Conflict

PARIS (PanARMENIAN.Net) — France is committed to the idea of peaceful settlement of Karabakh conflict said Emmanuel Macron in a message to President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev on May 28, in honor of Azerbaijan’s national day.

“Allow me to highlight one more time a decisive, complete and impartial approach of France as a co-chairing country of the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] Minsk Group to the commitment of a fair and long-term settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through negotiations,” reads Macron’s message as reported by Minval.az.

The French President also assured Aliyev that he is even more determined to “strengthen the Baku, Paris, and EU relations.”

## Flights between Armenia And Jordan to Get Underway

YEREVAN (Arka) — The government of Armenia approved on May 23 a proposal to ratify an agreement with Jordan on establishment of air traffic between the two countries.

The agreement is under the aegis of the government’s open sky policy.

# Lord Ara Darzi Receives Japanese Government Award

TOKYO (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Lord Ara Darzi of Denham on May 21 received the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon, in recognition of his contributions to global health and the development of medicine in Japan, the website of the Imperial College of London says.

Darzi is a prominent Iraqi-British, Armenian doctor and Labour politician.

One of the nation’s oldest and highest national decorations, it is awarded by the Emperor of Japan to non-Japanese citizens who have made outstanding contributions to their field.

Lord Darzi said: “It is a great privilege to receive this honor from Japan, a country I hugely admire.”

Darzi has served as director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation at the Imperial College of London since 2010 and has transformed it with a focus on driving innovation in healthcare. His career has focused on achieving best surgical practice through innovation in surgery and enhancing patient safety and the quality of healthcare.

He is globally renowned for leading the development of minimally-invasive surgery, as well as pioneering the development of robotic techniques to facilitate medical operations. Through this field of work he has worked to enhance the scientific partnership between Japan and the United Kingdom with his

involvement with a number of academic institutions and the Ministry of Health.

Darzi hosted the first Global Ministerial Summit on Patient Safety at Imperial in 2016, which placed patient safety high on the global agenda. In 2018, Lord Darzi opened the third summit in Tokyo, hosted by the Government of Japan, and ministers signed the Tokyo Declaration committing to “high level political momentum” towards the delivery of safer care everywhere.

Lord Darzi has previously been recognized for his efforts in global health, having been awarded the Qatari Sash of Independence in 2014 by Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and the Order of Honor by the President of Armenia in 2017.

Darzi is the executive chair of the World Innovation Health Summit, an initiative dedicated to capturing and disseminating the best evidence-based ideas and practices in global healthcare.

In 2002 he was knighted for his services



Lord Ara Darzi

to medicine and surgery he and has been a member of the House of Lords since 2007. He served as Labour minister of health from 2007-9. Darzi served as the UK’s Global Ambassador for Health and Life Sciences from 2009-13. In 2014 he was awarded the Order of Merit by the Queen.

Recently, he helped negotiate the release of two Reuters journalists in Myanmar, who had been held since December 2017 after they reported on the ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims.

## Dr. Hratch Tchilingirian Appointed Director of Armenian Diaspora Survey

LONDON — The Armenian Communities Department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, in partnership with the Armenian Institute of London, announced, recently the appointment of Dr. Hratch Tchilingirian as the director of the Armenian Diaspora Survey (ADS) project.

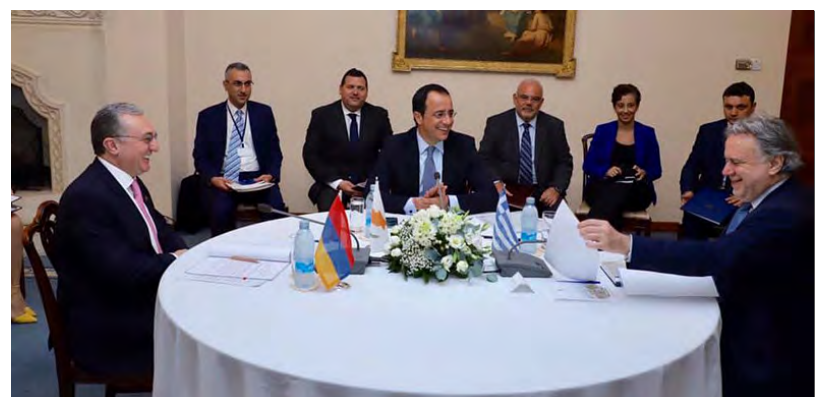
This initiative, launched and funded by the Gulbenkian Foundation, is implemented by the Armenian Institute.

Tchilingirian, who has been leading the project since February 2019, is a sociologist and an associate of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Oxford University, specializing in Armenian and Middle Eastern Studies, with a particular focus on identity politics, religion and homeland-diaspora relations. He is the author of many studies and publications and has lectured internationally.

The first phase of the Armenian Diaspora Survey, which was completed earlier this year, was led by Dr. Susan Pattie. Under her guidance, more than 1,000 Armenians in four cities in the Diaspora took part in a first ever survey led by a team of academics, researchers and experts.

“We are delighted to have Dr. Tchilingirian lead this important project. We have collaborated with him previously on other initiatives, such as the ‘Western Armenian in the 21st Century’ project in Oxford and ‘Armenians in 2115’ seminar in Lisbon,” said Dr. Razmik Panossian, director of Gulbenkian’s Armenian Communities Department. “We are looking forward to continuing our fruitful collaboration with the Armenian Institute and the team in London,” he added.

The Armenian Diaspora Survey will continue in 2019 with a new set of selected cities. The results of the pilot survey will be released to the public in June.



## Foreign Ministers of Armenia, Greece and Cyprus Hold Trilateral Meeting in Nicosia

NICOSIA, Cyprus (Panorama.am) — The Cypriot government on June 4 hosted the first trilateral meeting of Foreign Ministers of Armenia, Greece and Cyprus Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, George Katrougalos and Nikos Christodoulides, respectively, as seen above.

In a post on Facebook, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Anna Naghdalyan said the meeting started with an interesting agenda.

## Armenian President Visits Mekhitarist Congregation of Venice

VENICE (Panorama.am) — President Armen Sarkissian of Armenia and his spouse Nouneh Sarkissian paid a visit to the Mekhitarist Congregation on Saint Lazarus Island of Venice during the weekend.

Sarkissian shared a photo on Instagram, captioning it: “Weekend with the Mekhitarist monks on the Armenian island St. Lazar.”

The Mekhitarists are a congregation of Benedictine monks of the Armenian Catholic Church founded in 1717 by Abbot Mekhitar of Sebaste.

They are best known for their series of scholarly publications of ancient Armenian versions of otherwise lost ancient Greek texts and their research

on classical and modern Armenian language.

The congregation was long divided



President Armen Sarkissian and his wife, Nouneh, with several monks at Saint Lazarus

into two branches, with the respective motherhouses being in Venice and Vienna. In July 2000 they united to form one institute.





## INTERNATIONAL

# Around 760 Sheets of Valuable Documents Restored at Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem



Staffers from the Matenadaran are restoring the parchment.

JERUSALEM (Panorama.am) — The Archive (Mayr Divan) of Decrees and Documents of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem has started work on the establishment and furnishing of its Restoration Department.

The department announced on May 31 is continuously provided with necessary equipment (presses and other tools) and materials. The works, initiated and supervised by Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem Archbishop Nourhan Manougian, are managed by Director of the Archive Arshak Banuchyan.

The stage of processing, disinfection, and repair of archival materials has kicked off, the Matenadaran (officially the Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts) said in a Facebook post.

A working group sent on a mission to Jerusalem, including Matenadaran's Senior Restorers Susanna Kirakosyan and Emma Sarkisova, as well as Gayane Eliazyan, Head of Matenadaran's Restoration Department, has started the restoration and conservation of archival materials. About 760 sheets of valuable documents have been restored, including the edicts and letters of Patriarchs Grigor the Chainbearer (Grigor Shghtayakir, 1715-1749) and Theodoros Vanetsi (1800-1818).

The repair of the extremely valuable parchment ferman of Salah ad-Din (1174-1193) is almost finished. Gayane Eliazyan has prepared a professional summary of the manuscripts' monitoring and restoration. On May 18, during the restoration process, the patriarch visited the department. Manougian praised the work of the specialists from Matenadaran and expressed hope that the cooperation between the Patriarchate and Matenadaran would continue.

# Artists Launch Creative Fundraising In Istanbul

ISTANBUL, from page 1

mother and father, Nona Gabrielyan and Van Soghomonyan, are both artists, living and working in Wiesbaden, Germany. Lilit's son, Guy, is a painter and daughter, Yeva, who has been attending art therapy classes in the center, has produced remarkable works.

Why not organize an exhibit and sell works by artists associated with "My Way" to finance the last phase of the building project? The idea arose during a visit to Yerevan by Ani Kurdian, Ani Pekkucuk and Talin Merti of Istanbul. Ani Kurdian her husband, Grikor Kurdian, are active members of the Armenian community in Istanbul, and good friends and supporters of the "My Way" center. They suggested having a fundraising exhibition in Istanbul, featuring art works of the well-known Armenian painters Lilit Sogomonyan and her husband Gagik Ghazanchayn, along with art works of Ani Pekkucuk, Talin Merti, Gulizar Artuchi, Ita Gahramani and Garin Jinjinoglu. Hayk Arslanyan, a leading member of the community who had visited the center in Yerevan, was instrumental in bringing the idea to fruition.

After lengthy and detailed preparations, in April 2019 Autism National Foundation Board Members, Lilit Sogomonyan, Sona Petrosyan, Hasmik Margaryan and Marine Ginosyan joined "My Way" Director Lilit Atajanyan on a trip to Istanbul to organize the initiative.

The exhibition opened on April 13, 2019 in the Karagezian Armenian School Hall with works by the painters from Armenia and Istanbul. But it was not only the professional Armenian painters who showed their creations: some of the students from "My Way" were able to demonstrate their talents in paintings. These are children and young adults who have been working in art therapy sessions at the center. While the guests were wandering around, enjoying and discussing the art works, Karo Pekleian, a young, talented member of the community, officially opened the event.

Pekleian gave an enthusiastic account of the history of the "My Way" center, and its current mission and invited members of the audience to participate by purchasing some



My Way representatives and supporters

of the art works on display. All the income, he said, would be donated to "My Way" to finance the completion of the renovation. He elaborated on the function of the new addition, whose premises are dedicated to vocational training classes for youths and adults, to enable them to develop the various skills that will allow them to seek job opportunities and integration into society.

At the end of the ceremony, Lilit Atajanyan and board member/parent Sona Petrosyan spoke on behalf of the children, their parents and staff, expressing their deep appreciation to all those who initiated, organized and implemented this wonderful event. Supporters were recognized, one by one, personally. The initiative was crowned with considerable success; through the generosity of members of the Armenian community in Istanbul, a large number of art works found new owners, and the "My Way" team returned to Yerevan, with the means to push the building project that final step forward.



My Way Building



# Community News

## A School Without Walls

New Projects at St. Vartan Cathedral

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK — At a recent teacher's meeting with his staff, St. Vartan School Principal Hovannes Khosdeghian emphasized his continuing goal of a "school without walls," where students follow their interests, and where learning is a pleasure.

As the youngsters enter the school held at the Eastern Armenian Diocese, Khosdeghian is there to greet them with a wide smile and warm hug. The school session begins and ends with a prayer.

During the beginning "socialization" period, the children played excitedly with each other. "They miss each other," explains the principal. "They love the school, and the teachers, and don't feel embarrassed to go to the teachers when they are in trouble."

The school which has 23 students, from ages two to the early teens, who come every Saturday from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M., not only learn the Armenian language, but also partake in Armenian songs and dances.

"The music is related to Armenian historical periods," he explains. "Their ears which are not used to it, get used to the tonality."

Since his own leadership at the St. Vartan Armenian School, he has instituted a strong set of "musts" which include teachers observing the physical needs of the children, especially for those who may have visual, hearing, or speaking difficulties.

A child's home environment must also be evaluated, he emphasizes. From the age of 5, it is crucial that the sounds of the Armenian letters are understood. "A child cannot speak if he or she does not have the vocabulary," he explains.

A child should know a thousand words after being in the school a year. After one to three years in the school, the goal is 7,500 words, and for a three to eight-year old, the goal is 12,000 words. By age 10, "the learning gap between children who can learn vocabulary quickly and those who do not is different. Even when a child is sleeping, the brain is working," he explains.

"A child needs the complete culture, including history, music, art, dance, not just vocabulary," he continues. "There has to be an integration of words, pictures, environment. A child can express oneself when she or he can understand."

This integrative approach is based on the student's age, knowledge, school and home environments, background, and delivery. Communication by the teachers must be based on the needs of the children," he stresses.

In a surprise statement, Khosdeghian stated, that "the child governs the school, sets the school's pace. The child should be engaged, not overwhelmed. It should not be a system of a power relationship. My job is to teach the teachers who give voice and academic skills to the children."

This detailed system of teaching is based on Khosdeghian's training for the priesthood when he studied in Rome for six years. His pedagogical training emphasized an educational environment.

In 1980, Khosdeghian graduated from Rome's Saint Thomas Aquinas Pontifical University. Appointed Academic Dean in the Mkhitarian Seminary in Venice, he "saw that what I learned there was the theoretical, not the practical."

At the Mekhitarist Fathers' Armenian School from 2009 to 2010, in Tujunga, California, he applied the methodology and new techniques for grades two to eight. "In addition to the teachers, parents were also involved, and the results were very successful."

In 2016, Hovannes Khosdeghian was appointed the principal of the St. Vartan Armenian School, much to the delight of parents and children.

During the time of this writer's visit, a parent who was leaving at the end of the school day, said emotionally, "I started crying last week in the car when my children, ages five and seven, started singing the Armenian songs they had learned in school."



Board members and staffers of the Armenia Tree Project in Los Angeles

## Celebrating 25 Years Of Tree Planting In Armenia

LOS ANGELES — It was 25 years ago that Carolyn Mugar, an Armenian-American activist from the Boston area, visited Armenia during the difficult time after the 1989 Gyumri earthquake and the energy crisis when she witnessed people cutting down trees in city parks to heat their homes. Her immediate thought was if the country were to survive this crisis that they would do so but have an environmental crisis to then deal with. That was when the idea of the Armenia Tree Project (ATP) was born. It began with Community Tree Planting programs in churchyards and school yards, while engaging local community in planting and taking care of trees. The first nursery was established in Karin village where the UN High Commission of Refugees provided homes to those who had fled Baku and Azerbaijan. Those villagers became dedicated planters and produced the most trees, and thus, the ATP established their first nursery there.

Since then, the Armenia Tree Project has planted close to six million trees and over a thousand hectares of new forest. They maintain four nurseries, two educational centers, with over twelve hundred community tree planting sites throughout Armenia. They grow over fifty species of trees native to the region with over 30 percent fruit and nut trees. Today, the largest nursery is still in Karin village, having created many jobs in that community. Visitors are invited to the Ohanian Center for Environmental Educational where over 2000 students per year visit and participate in hands-on activities like planting a tree, and where the high-tech work of seed testing and in-vitro testing of production of trees that are replanted all occurs.

A big part of the mission of Armenia Tree Project is engaging and revitalizing the community and teaching the next generation to be better stewards of the environment. They also provide environmental education in the United States in over 100 predominately Armenian schools. When schools have a trip to Armenia, they are invited to spend a day with the Tree project, where they are paired with local students and have a lesson, tour and plant trees together.

The Armenia Tree Project also provides jobs for local community. During planting season, 150 temporary workers are hired during spring and fall planting seasons to help with forestry planting. They run four nurseries as well as the "Backyard Nursery Program" where seeds are given to families in remote villages, who then plant the seeds in their own backyard. When the trees are ready to be transplanted, ATP buys them back from the villagers. This helps people stay in their homes in an area where employment is hard to come by.

To celebrate their success, ATP kicked off a year-long celebration with a beautiful fundraising event at the Pasadena home of David and Margaret Mgrublian. In attendance were Founder, Carolyn Mugar; Anthony Barsamian, Armenian Assembly of America and Co-Chair of the Board; Bryan Ardouny, Executive Director of Armenian Assembly of America; Anahit Gharibyan, the first ATP employee; ATP West Coast Operations Manager, Sarah Hayes; and Sevag Ajemian who was the Keynote Speaker that evening and an avid supporter.

"The idea for our 25th anniversary was to take a low-key approach. We didn't want to do big banquets and galas, we wanted to do smaller, more intimate house parties and more of them to reach the many places where we have

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## USC Hosts 'Innovate Armenia'

LOS ANGELES — Innovate Armenia, the festival of ideas and innovation, took place at the University of Southern California on May 18. Organized by the USC Institute of Armenian Studies, the program featured 50 participants from six countries, and nearly 4,000 attendees. This is the fourth time in five years that this unique event has been staged by the institute.

"Innovate Armenia is an inclusive, fun, provocative platform that tackles the greatest challenge of any homeland-diaspora relationship: how to better understand each other. Following the critical, radical changes in Armenia's politics last year, a discussion of policy remains crucially needed both in Armenia and in the Diaspora. This was a part of that discussion. The rest — music, beer, coffee, storytelling, chess — that's all an authentic, but light, reminder of who we are and who we can be," said Salpi Ghazarian, director of the Institute.

The day-long festival had multiple intersecting parts.

In the morning, scholars inside the USC Bovard Auditorium delved into topics of identity and memory. George Aghjayan's "Genealogy as Identity," Heghnar Watenpaugh's "The Tangible Past," Mehmet Fatih Uslu's "Identity: It's Complicated," Matthew Karanian's "Landscapes of Memory," and Avedis Hadjian's "How to Forget," all explored identity as a changing and shifting force, and memory in regards to cultural heritage, genocide, and land.

At noon, Element Band, in collaboration with the Institute, presented a different type of musical performance, entitled "Sound Stories: The Songs You Know, with the Stories You Don't Know."

Following the musical production, government officials from Armenia, policymakers, and scholars from around the world tackled the most urgent issues facing the Armenian nation.

Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan addressed the standing-room-only audience by Skype.

Secretary of Armenia's Security Council Armen Grigoryan, Deputy Foreign Minister of Karabakh Armine Aleksanyan, Former Prime Minister Vache Gabrielyan, Deputy Minister of Nature Protection Irina Ghaplanyan, Deputy Minister of Education Arevik Anapiosyan, Minister of Healthcare Arsen Torosyan spoke about security, policy, statehood, the environment, and the economy.

Zaré Baghdasarian, chairman and CEO of Avata Intelligence, spoke as part of a panel on Armenia's IT policy choices. Having also participated at Innovate Armenia in 2015, Baghdasarian commented on the diversity of the event as well as how it had grown in popularity over the past four years. "I see people that I know from different corners that are showing interest, they are coming to see what is happening. The crowd has definitely grown, it is much bigger, has more diversity, which is what you need to be able to pay attention to innovation and growth in Armenia."

With a diverse array of topics ranging from education to healthcare to questions concerning the diaspora, Bovard auditorium was abound in intellectual spark that extended into the many organizations represented outdoors. This year's participating exhibitors included the Armenia Tree Project, Caucasus Research and Resource Center, CivilNet.am, HALO Trust, Hrant Dink Foundation, IMAGINE Center for Conflict Transformation, and VLUME.

Innovate Armenia attendees had the chance to speak to representatives of these organizations, learn about their work, ask questions, and foster potential relationships. One of these exhibitors, Haig Norian from VLUME, a technology company that seeks to inspire generat

see INNOVATION, page 7





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# St. Nersess Graduates Three Seminarians

ARMONK, N.Y. — The 2019 St. Nersess Graduation served as a beautiful reminder of the seminary's everyday mission – to educate future clergy and lay leaders of the Armenian Church.

On Friday, May 18, more than 100 guests celebrated the graduation of Deacon Alex Calikyan, Deacon Albert Hambardzumyan and Johnny Chadoyan who received their diplomas from St. Nersess Seminary.

Officiating at the graduation was Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate of the Eastern Diocese and President of the St. Nersess Board of Directors, who began the ceremony with the consecration of two new icons in the St. Hagop Chapel. The recently installed icons, the Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ and St. James of Nisibis with Marooleh the Hermit, were donated by an anonymous donor.

The Rev. Mardiros Chevian, dean, opened the graduation program by welcoming the guests and recognizing Vardan Gasparyan, the artist who took up residency at the seminary for six weeks to paint the vivid depictions in the icons. Next, the Rev. Krikor Sabounjian, representing the Board of Directors, addressed the graduates. He reminded them to “remember St. Nersess Seminary is a part of your family forever.”

Next to speak was the Very Rev. Dr. David Mezynski, director of Residential Life and Admissions at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, who asked the graduates “to remember to pray for the seminarians and provide your time and talent to support the seminary.”

Chevian then introduced Arpi Nakashian, a 2015 St. Nersess graduate and president of the alumni association. She briefly outlined the history of the alumni association and said that each member brings his or her own essence to the Body of Christ. “Our gifts are given to us by the Holy Spirit,” she exclaimed.

Representing the faculty, the Rev. Karekin Kasparian recalled his time as a young deacon when the seminary opened its doors in Evanston, IL, and how he tried to find new students and fac-

ulty to carry out the vision of Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan. He went on to name each graduate and their individual attributes.

Speaking to the graduates as a fellow classmate was Armen Terjimanian, who represented the students. “You have been pushed and pulled

to speak and read Armenian. Johnny thanked his St. Nersess family for all their support during his studies.

Deacon Alex Calikyan addressed the crowd in Armenian, saying the church rejoices in these kinds of celebrations when we are united in one

of gratitude, to all the people who helped me to get to this point.”

Before handing out the diplomas, Findikyan offered personal reflections on each graduate. “Today brings me nothing but joy and pride to be here at my alma mater,” he exclaimed. “Johnny, I have known you the longest, as a boy of 13 years old at the Deacons' Training Program. You recently passed your Deacon's exam with flying colors.”

Findikyan continued, “Deacon Alex, I met you when you were 16 years old and you had many questions about the vocation. I am proud to have been your professor.”

“And Deacon Albert. I met you in Jerusalem. It has been a great joy to observe what you have brought to St. Nersess. There is a critical connection between Jerusalem and St. Nersess,” proclaimed Bishop Daniel.

He also recognized two former students, Deacon Narek Garabedian and Deacon Arman Galstyan, who he will ordain to the holy priesthood in June and July, respectively – his first ordinations as a newly ordained bishop.

Bishop Daniel concluded the ceremony by awarding each graduate with his diploma. Johnny received a Certificate of Studies while Deacon Alex and Deacon Albert completed the Armenian Church Studies Program. The following day, Deacon Alex and Deacon Albert were among the 14 graduates at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary to receive a Master of Divinity degree.

The guests moved from the chapel into the lobby of the Theological Center where they enjoyed a bountiful reception.

In the fall, Hambardzumyan will begin a parish internship at St. Hagop Armenian Church in Pinellas Park, Fla., while Calikyan will further his higher education in pastoral work and enroll in a chaplaincy residency program. Chadoyan will continue with his studies at the University of Richmond in the Master of Liberal Arts Program with a concentration in public history and will be ordained a deacon this summer.



Deacon Alex Calikyan, Fr. Mardiros Chevian, Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Deacon Albert Hambardzumyan, and Johnny Chadoyan

in many directions...and now your work here is finished. This was the easy part!” Armen exclaimed. He reminded his fellow classmates to take their lessons with them in their ministry.

Chevian invited each graduate to address the attendees. The first to speak was Johnny Chadoyan, who recalled his first Armenian class with Kasparian. “There is a long mountain to climb and we will do it together,” Chadoyan remembered Kasparian telling him three years ago when he saw his determination to learn to

voice and one mind. “These connections show that today is not just about me and my fellow graduates, but in the Body of Christ, we all share in the illumination of this day, and the warmth, joy, and excitement that radiate forth from it.”

The final graduate to speak was Deacon Albert Hambardzumyan, who spoke about the diploma he received at the Theological Seminary of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem five years ago. “God called me two years later to return to my studies at St. Nersess Seminary. Today is a day

## World Bank Employees Establish AUA Scholarship Fund to Honor Late Friend

WASHINGTON – Kathy Lalazarian, a senior public sector specialist at the World Bank, was a talented leader and professional who tragically passed away in 2018. As the lead for World Bank-supported public sector reforms in over a dozen countries in regions across Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, and Central Asia, she made a great impact on many across the world. On a personal level, she was a caring and beloved friend to many. Following her untimely death at the age of 46, friends and colleagues approached Lalazarian's relatives and shared their desire to honor her memory in a meaningful and lasting way. Family members Raffi and Ani Zargarian proposed the idea of

the gift of education, which ultimately led to the creation of the Kathy Lalazarian Endowed Scholarship Fund at the American University of Armenia (AUA) in her honor.

For Lalazarian, an American national of Armenian descent, her ancestral homeland of Armenia held a special place in her heart. From 2005 to 2010, she led the World Bank's program supporting public administration reform in Armenia. This involved assisting the government with strategic planning of governance reforms, building institutional capacity for policy formulation, service delivery, civil service training, human resource management, and other related reform efforts. It is notable that “a

good portion of her career was spent leading programs in one of her homelands, Armenia,” says her cousin Ani Zargarian.

Zargarian recalls the overwhelming enthusiasm of Lalazarian's colleagues and friends to honor her life. Zargarian and her father had proposed the idea of creating scholarships for Armenian students and this had resonated with the group and seemed right to pursue. They approached AUA, initially intending to make a donation of several one-time scholarships. These preliminary discussions led the group to consider the option of creating an endowed scholarship fund that would remain in perpetuity, keeping Lalazarian's memory alive through the gift of education to generations of AUA students.

“Beyond the fact that AUA is among the leading higher education institutions in Armenia, our choice was also motivated by the fact that Kathy was an American national and the daughter of an Armenian father,” said Davit Melikyan, a friend of Lalazarian's from World Bank, Armenia.

The endowment is meant to also create opportunities for women. Although both male and female students will be eligible for the scholarship, the group proposes that female candidates be given priority to help to ensure that women receive a competitive education and succeed in the modern world.

“Kathy's tenacious, vivacious and vibrant spirit will live on in our hearts but also transcend and flourish through the many young women this scholarship will benefit,” states Zargarian.

The group who initiated and donated funds to this scholarship comprises friends and colleagues from the World Bank, most of whom do not have Armenian heritage, but respected



Kathy Lalazarian

Lalazarian so much that her cause became theirs. They expressed the impact Lalazarian had on their lives. “Being a professional mentor, Kathy was also a good friend who made a tremendous impact on my value system and showed me what it means to live a meaningful life,” said Maya Gusarova, a close friend and colleague of Lalazarian.

“Her trust and respect have contributed a lot to my professional self-esteem. They gave me the confidence to lead projects and teams.”

Zargarian adds: “My cousin Kathy was a special, brilliant individual who impacted and influenced everyone she encountered in her life whether academically, professionally, personally or spiritually.”

She poignantly describes Lalazarian's strong-willed fight against breast cancer: “Kathy was diagnosed with breast cancer a day after she wed the love of her life, Edward Castillo Morera, in August 2014. In true Kathy fashion, she valiantly and gracefully took on a monster, endured it, overcame it, then endured it again. Watching her navigate her illness with a positive warrior attitude, with such strength, courage and optimism will forever remain a source of inspiration to me... I tried to learn and embrace her positive energy and appreciation for life at its simplest and purest forms. She taught me the importance of finding a state of unconditional happiness.”

Lalazarian's memory will remain dear not only to her friends and family but also to all those students who will be able to benefit from a quality education at a leading university thanks to the Kathy Lalazarian Endowed Scholarship Fund.

For more information about AUA visit [www.philanthropy.aua.am](http://www.philanthropy.aua.am).

## USC Hosts ‘Innovate Armenia’

INNOVATION, from page 6

ions through reading and storytelling, reflected on the event. “It's a fantastic event that brings all these new ideas together. A major problem in the Armenian community is that ideas tend to stagnate, but events like this give us the ability to rejuvenate ourselves and to come together; to bounce ideas off of each other and to keep things fresh.”

Another exhibitor that made its way from Armenia was CivilNet.am, an online platform featuring news-based, research-based, and data-driven video reports and articles, led by young citizen journalists practicing advocacy journalism. The CivilNet team not only presented their work but also documented the program on location and via a LIVE broadcast of the auditorium talks with simultaneous Armenian translation.

Chess games featuring local Armenian chess masters, craft beer from Armenia and Los Angeles, coffee tastings from Kavat and Henry's House of Coffee, were all part of the outdoor programming. Journalist Liana Aghajanian held podcast recording sessions entitled Dialects of

Coffee, where attendees were asked to share their noteworthy memories related to the drink.

A full day of music was provided by three groups. Garabala, whose members play a combination of folk, jazz, and tzigane music, came from Beirut. The Nur Qanon Ensemble consisting of three young girls and their instructor, presented what can be done with a diatonic stringed zither known as “qanon,” a traditional instrument dating back to the 10th century. The great oudist and master musician Richard Hagopian and his Family Quartet rounded out the eclectic stage.

Innovate Armenia is part of the Institute's larger mission to bring academics and their work to policymakers and the community at large. The enthusiastic response from the university and the Southern California community is a testament to the Institute's mission. This September, the USC Institute of Armenian Studies will celebrate its 15th anniversary, marking years of impact and growth, but looking forward to establish a solid foundation for the next 15 years. The 15th anniversary gala will take place in Los Angeles on September 29.





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Scholarship Fund Supports Students Attending Armenian Schools

LOS ANGELES – The significance and value of education was championed among dedicated philanthropists in the picturesque setting of Mr. C Beverly Hills on Sunday, May 19, during the Donors' Appreciation Dinner for the Archbishop Hovnan Derderian Scholarship Fund.

The backbone of every nation, education has been key in not only the survival, but the growth and cultivation of Armenia, a country that has weathered many storms yet emerged with strength and prowess. The emphasis placed on education throughout its history has allowed for the social and economic development of its citizens in the homeland and the Diaspora, creating a symbiotic relationship necessary for the

dren to keep them in Armenian schools."

"I'm a product of an Armenian School and you just can't beat it," she said.

Highlighting the transparency and accountability that takes precedence within the Archbishop Derderian Scholarship Fund, Saro Kotoyan, board member of the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian Armenian School Finance Committee, reiterated Derderian's "vision and mission that no Armenian school student should be left behind due to financial restraint."

"Their vision became a reality thanks to all of you," he said, elaborating on the fair and transparent approach to managing and disbursing

"Enriching a mind is a wonderful mission and this investment often exceeds our expectations," said Michael Pratt, Head of School of the AGBU Vatche and Tamar Manoukian School in Pasadena, California, that has received a total of \$51,000 from the Archbishop Derderian Scholarship Fund. "The grants have served our most worthy need-based students, making their collegiate ambitions a reality."

Donor Heidi Kavoukjian saw first-hand the positive impact of scholarships when a family friend passed away, leaving the future of her daughter, who was enrolled in an Armenian school, uncertain.

"Thanks to the financial assistance she

Organizations have also come on board to back this endeavor, including the AGBU Asbeds, who put education at the forefront of their agenda.

"AGBU has always believed in education so the Archbishop Derderian Scholarship Fund is a very important cause that ensures the future of our young people," said Chairman Harry Sinanian. "The Committee has done a tremendous job of promoting our youth's education and giving them the chance to keep their culture and heritage alive."

Donors Dr. and Mrs. Gabriel and Nirva Aslanian were among the first to contribute to the Scholarship Fund.

"We have great respect for Hovnan Srpazan and we have seen him help our community prosper," said Nirva Aslanian, who stressed the selfless and hard work of the Committee. "The Scholarship Fund is a good cause that we are happy to support since it gives students the chance to receive an education in a private Armenian school and provide a solid foundation for their futures."

Current main recipients of the Archbishop Hovnan Derderian Scholarship Fund include: AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School (Canoga Park, CA); AGBU Vatche & Tamar Manookian High School (Pasadena, CA); St. Gregory A. & M. Hovsepian School (Pasadena, CA); the C&E Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School (Sherman Oaks, CA); the Armenian Sisters Academy (La Crescenta, CA); and the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America Saturday Schools (Burbank, CA).

Under the auspices of the Derderian, members of the Scholarship Fund Committee include: Rev. Khajag Shahbazian; Alice Chakrian chair; Diran Avagyan, Diocesan Advisor; Eileen Keusseyan, Esq. Vice Chair; Ann Anahid Andreassian, Endowment Funds Manager; Armine Bedrossian, funds manager; Roy Boulghourjian, senior advisor; Angie Garibyan, advisor; Vicki Grigorian, advisor; Peggy Kankababian, Media Relations; Silva Katchiguan, advisor; Angela Parseghian, secretary; Silva Sepetjian, Advisor; Maggie Sumian, recording secretary; Silvana Vartanian, treasurer; Leadership Council, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Dr. Ellie Andreassian, Alice Chakrian, Hagop Hagopian.

—Taleen Babayan



Archbishop Hovnan Derderian and the members of the Archbishop Derderian Scholarship Fund

endurance of its people.

This belief in education as a major force in the security of a nation was the impetus for the establishment of the Archbishop Derderian Scholarship Fund, founded in 2012 with the mission to provide Armenian students in the Diaspora with financial aid in order to attend Armenian schools. To date, over \$200,000 has been donated to needy families both within the United States and abroad. The Donors' Appreciation Dinner, in a buoyant and jovial atmosphere, provided the platform to thank donors for their contributions and to outline future plans, ensuring that the advancement of the Scholarship Fund reaches new heights.

"We believe that not one child should be left behind," said Alice Chakrian, chair of the Archbishop Derderian Scholarship Fund. "Because of all of you, our dream became a reality and we have changed lives, realized hope and answered the prayers of parents."

Looking towards the future, Chakrian announced that \$100,000 was raised that evening, which will help strengthen the endowment fund, allowing the scholarships to become more sustainable and increase the number of students who can benefit from this initiative. As a special thank you to its contributors, a donor wall will be erected at the Western Diocese, listing the names of supporters, in honor of the upcoming 10th anniversary celebration.

"Please continue believing in our mission and supporting us so we can realize our promise to the Armenian schools," said Chakrian. She recognized the Fund's faithful board members and welcomed new individuals who have come on board to assist in fundraising. Chakrian thanked Derderian for his yearly contributions as well as for his ongoing encouragement and support.

"You lead by example and you work harder than anyone we know," she said. "You have exceptional love for children and the elderly and you work nonstop to make your vision a reality."

She referred to Derderian as an "exemplary spiritual leader" and expressed gratitude to him for "changing our lives. Everyone sees the hard work you put forth for the betterment of our lives," she said. "We are all doing God's mission by answering the prayers of parents."

Following the invocation by Rev. Khajag Shahbazian, parish priest of St. Leon Cathedral and an entertainment segment by George Ghougasian, Vice Chairlady Eileen Keusseyan, Esq., thanked the donors for their contributions and expressed her appreciation for their dedication to provide aid to "deserving and needy chil-

drun. In total, AGBU-MDS has received \$68,000, providing "much-needed financial assistance to 25 families so their children can continue to attend an Armenian school."

Diran Avagyan, project manager at the Western Diocese, said it was "an honor" to serve on the board with "talented and dedicated individuals."

"This fund has made a tremendous philanthropic impact on our community," he said. "It has enabled young people to achieve their dreams and we look forward to expanding exponentially."

He noted the collaboration with the Glendale Unified School District Flag Dual Immersion Program, where students who don't have the opportunity to attend a private Armenian school, can earn a strong bilingual education. The Scholarship Fund also broadened its horizons by becoming a Pillar of the American University of Armenia, donating \$50,000 to defray tuition costs for students currently studying in the homeland.

"Thanks to Archbishop Derderian's capable leadership, we have reached our goals and have huge potential for growth," he said. "We pledge that we will always pursue our objectives and we will continue the good work of God."

In his remarks, Derderian traced the short history of the Scholarship Fund that provided a swift and powerful effect on the community.

"Vision has been our motivating strength," he said. "We should put our faith and trust in this most important mission for our children who strive for an Armenian education."

He spoke of the ancestral legacy of education and how it is a "moral duty" to collectively fortify the Scholarship Fund. In the spirit of altruism, Derderian doubled his pledge for the upcoming school year, from \$5,000 to \$10,000. He encouraged those present to invite friends who seek to support a noble cause with the intention of living a "meaningful and sacrificial life."

"We can and we should commit our lives to our churches and our schools as they are one entity that cannot be separated," he said. "Because of your active participation, we have progressed and advanced and we will continue to do so."

Over the course of seven years, 11 schools and a legion of students have been the recipients of the Archbishop Derderian Scholarship Fund. Through the distribution of scholarships, the notion of Christianity and the development of leadership is reinforced in each of the students.

received through scholarships, she was able to remain as a student in her Armenian school and excel academically and professionally," said Kavoukjian. Inspired by the beneficial outcome, Kavoukjian's brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Karo and Sirvart Kavoukjian, decided to establish the Harutun Kavoukjian Memorial Scholarship Fund to help other students whose families may find themselves in financial predicaments.

"I have witnessed what scholarships can do for a child who wants to study in an Armenian school and I fully support it," she said.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Hope and Gratitude at Seminary Event

TAPPAN, N.J. — On May 18, more than 360 guests filled the grand ballroom of the Old Tappan Manor in New Jersey to honor two individuals who have supported St. Nersess Armenian Seminary: Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Bishop Daniel Findikyan.

The Rev. Mardiros Chevian, dean, who served as the emcee for the evening, welcomed everyone and explained the meaning behind Hope and Gratitude. “Hope for the future as we begin a new chapter with Bishop Daniel as our primate of the Eastern Diocese and president of the St. Nersess board of directors; and gratitude for our accomplishments, in particular a debt of gratitude for Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, who as our former primate and president of the board of directors, had the confidence and the foresight to save our institution from possible closure,” Chevian exclaimed.

Khajag Srpazan, who now serves as the Representative of the Armenian Church to the Vatican and Pontifical Legate of Western Europe, then gave the invocation.

Chevian introduced Varuzhan Nersesyan, the Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the US, who offered a few words. “Bishop Daniel, may you be blessed as a bishop and as you embark on your new journey... and with humility we thank you Khajag Srpazan for your years of service here and wish you well in your new role.” Also in attendance was Mher Margaryan, Armenia’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

Chevian recognized the main benefactor for the evening, Aso Tavitian, who graciously



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, left, receives an award from Primate Bishop Daniel Findikyan.

underwrote the cocktail hour and dinner for all the guests. Also present were the Very Rev. Dr. Chad Hatfield, president, and Dr. Alexandru Tudorie, academic dean, from St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, and the Very Rev. Kurt Dunkle, president and dean, at the General Theological Seminary.

After dinner was served, the seminarians sang a selection of Armenian hymns and popu-

lar songs under the direction of the Very Rev. Mamigon Kiledjian, Diocesan Instructor of Sacred Music. Then a moving video entitled Hope and Gratitude was presented to the guests on multiple screens around the room. It detailed a day in the life of the seminarians and how the honorees have helped to make St. Nersess a success story.

Archbishop Barsamian, who spoke next, proclaimed, “I believe that St. Nersess Seminary is one of the most important institutions in North America.” He continued, “many clergy and lay leaders who are serving in the Eastern and Western Dioceses today are St. Nersess alumni, and Bishop Daniel is an example of the important mission of the seminary.”

He concluded his thoughts by speaking to the current seminarians and saying, “you need to understand that God has made us all different, but we can still respect and learn from one

another. And that you need to understand these differences in society to be successful in your ministry.” His suggestion and recommendation were based on his 48 years of being a clergyman, 40 years of which were spent in the United States including 28 years as the Primate of the Eastern Diocese.

Findikyan presented a special gift to the former primate, a beautiful artist rendering of the archbishop with the campuses of New Rochelle and Armonk in the background to depict his 28 years of service as the president of the St. Nersess board of directors.

Before inviting Bishop Daniel to give his message and benediction, Chevian recognized the event co-chairs — Margaret Kachigian Ajamian and Lynn Pinajian Beylerian — who gave of themselves and did a phenomenal job in making the event a huge success.

He also recognized the Rev. Fr. Karekin Kasparian, who received a standing ovation for his contribution to the seminary and to celebrate the anniversary of his ordination, wedding, and birthday (all on May 18!).

Findikyan, who a week earlier was consecrated a bishop by Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians in Holy Echmiadzin, offered his parting words. “My story is St. Nersess,” he proclaimed. “St. Nersess is the birthplace of my vocation. Fr. Kevork Arakelian, my priest in Binghamton, saw something in me as a 14-year-old and sent me to the Deacons’ Training Program during the summer. Then Fr. Mardiros cultivated my faith...” He went on to say, “And now as primate, bishop, and president of the board of directors, I can offer even more support to the seminary, more than I could as a professor.”

He also thanked Fr. Mardiros, who is serving as seminary dean for the second time, for his leadership, undying support, and contributions to the student body over the years. Bishop Daniel concluded, “We have much work to do as a diocese and as a seminary. That’s why you are all here tonight to support us and help us... we need your assistance.”



The current and former Primates with the Ambassador to the UN Mher Margaryan and Ambassador of Armenia to the US Varuzhan Nersesyan

## Celebrating 25 Years of Tree Planting in Armenia

TREES, from page 6

We have events planned year round in Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles, Lake Arrowhead, Fresno, New York and Philadelphia. Each event is different with different hosts to celebrate our 25 years of success together. Our goal is to raise four million dollars, a majority of which will go toward our Forestry Fund and the forestry program, to keep those and all our other programs going for another 25 years,” states Executive Director of the Armenia Tree Project, Jeanmarie Papelian.

Instead of a black-tie gala, Armenia Tree Project will host a Forest Summit in Armenia from October 20-23, 2019. The Acopian Center for the Environment will be co-sponsoring the summit, bringing together regional and international experts to talk about some of the challenges of reforestation, afforestation, and challenges to the environment and how Armenia can meet those challenges, and how other countries can meet similar challenges as well.

Many countries are facing issues of insufficient forest cover which can have negative impacts on the environment, economy and culture. Without forests, habitat for animals decrease and groundwater dries up. Forests act as a filtration system for air and water, so with insufficient cover, there isn’t enough clean water. Forests provide fruits and nuts and if trees are harvested responsibly, they can be used for paper and building. Currently, Armenia has about 10-11 percent forest cover which is considered low, and therefore has committed to the ambitious goal of doubling the forest cover to 20 percent over the next 30 years as part of the Paris Climate Agreement.

“Now that we’ve committed to this goal, we have to figure out how to do it, so we thought we would invite governmental agencies and NGO’s from other countries to share ideas. You can’t plant seeds and walk away, you need to figure out how to get the land, sources of water, who is going to plant the trees etc. We feel like we’re well placed to participate in that conversation through expertise and knowledge we’ve gained. We know how to grow healthy trees as our survival rate is above international standards, and we grow a lot of variety of trees. We’re certainly not the only experts, but we wanted to take the initiative along with the Acopian Center to talk about this.”

“For a tree org what a better way to celebrate then to talk about trees. We’ve had some public plantings to celebrate 25years, and now we’re going to have a conference. We’re a grassroots organization made of individual donors. Thousands of people have given us money and we want to celebrate with them because we wouldn’t be here without them. We have a Certificate program where if it’s your friend’s birthday, you can donate \$25 and have a tree planted in Armenia in honor of your friend. It’s the people buying these certificates for small dollars who have added up to the six million trees planted. We appreciate all those people.”

“We all have a responsibility to take care of the environment, and even though Armenia is no longer in crisis like it was 25 years ago, we’re at a crucial point where the whole world is in an environment crisis. It’s easy to feel hopeless, but what you can do is plant trees, and the simple act of planting a tree can truly make a difference.”

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Milwaukee Welcomes ACYOA Assembly & Sports Weekend

By Arsen Yelegen

MILWAUKEE — Following the General Assembly on Friday evening, participants of the weekend gathered at Glass and Griddle for a night of fellowship and socializing.

On Saturday, team and individual sports competitions were held at the Milwaukee Sports Complex. During sports competitions, three different presentations were given under the theme of “Mind Body and Soul.” The first speaker, Dn. Eric Vozzy gave a talk about Armenian spirituality, followed by a



Three young participants in the ACYOA weekend



Assembled youth and members of the clergy in Milwaukee

talk by Sarah Derderian about her life working in Armenia, and finally a talk by Dr. Christopher Sheklian about the Armenian Church and the environment.

In addition, Fr. Yeprem Kelegian led a group of participants in “ACYOA Acts of Kindness” which involved making sandwiches for the homeless and greeting cards for the elderly. Approximately 25 young adults

participated in this outreach highlighting a significant meaning of the ACYOA.

That evening, the participants gathered at the Harley Davidson Museum for an evening of music, dancing, and games. Participants were entertained by Armenian music by the Mid-East Beat and Armenian dancing by the Armenian Dance Company of Chicago.

On Sunday morning, Findikyan celebrated

the Divine Liturgy at St. Mesrob Church, Racine, WI. He gave the sermon at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, and formally installed the newly-elected ACYOA Central Council. Participants also enjoyed a brunch graciously prepared by the St. Mesrob parishioners.

Later on Sunday, the sports finals took place (see the results below). At the gym on Sunday, Dr. Charles Hijinian had an impressive display of Armenian antiquities from his personal collection, to share with all those present.

On Sunday evening, participants gathered in the hotel ballroom for the sports competition awards ceremony. Following the ceremony, participants, ACYOA alumni, family, and friends enjoyed a night of music and dancing featuring the Kef Time Legacy Band. The weekend concluded on Monday morning.

## First American-Born Bishop Presides Over ACYOA Weekend

By Harry Kezelian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

MILWAUKEE, Wisc. — The youth convention in January, 1946 at which the Armeian Church Youth Organizaiton of America (ACYOA) was founded, was presided over by a clergyman born in Aintab, Historic Cilician Armenia — the late renowned theologian and administrator Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan. Nersoyan’s dream was to transfer the beliefs, theology, history and spirit of the Armenian Church to a generation born in America to parents who fled here after the Armenian Genocide. That dream has long been realized and Nersoyan’s legacy has been the Armenian-American community of today with its values and ideals.

St. Vartan Cathedral was one realization of the dream, and St. Nersess Armenian Seminary was another, along with the many American-born clergy that it has produced. But perhaps the ultimate culmination of Nersoyan’s dream was realized this past Memorial Day weekend, in Milwaukee, as the Annual General Assembly and Sports Weekend of the organization he founded, the ACYOA, was presided over for the first time by an American-born bishop and primate, Bishop Daniel Findikyan of the Eastern Diocese.

Findikyan was born in Fort Worth, Texas, and raised in Binghamton, NY. His father was from Istanbul, but the future bishop grew up in the atmosphere of the Armenian-American community that the ACYOA had given birth to, with an early mentor being Fr. Kevork Arakelian, the first American-born priest to graduate from St. Nersess. But one did not need to know that backstory to appreciate the passing of the torch that took place on Memorial Day weekend. Fr. Avedis Kalayjian, pastor of the host parish, St. Mesrob Armenian Church of Racine, is himself an American-born graduate of St. Nersess, son of a priest, and within recent memory was an ardent member of the ACYOA. His Yeretzgin, Karen

Khatchadourian, born in New Jersey of Dikranagerd lineage, was an equally ardent ACYOA member at the same time, if not more so. They were two of the most important mentors to the next age group of ACYOA members, who led the organization up to this year, when a new generation became fully ensconced in leadership roles.

Emily Janikian and Alina Grigorian of Racine did a splendid job as co-chairs of the weekend, with the General Assembly held at the Milwaukee Airport Crowne Plaza Hotel, the basketball and volleyball tournaments, the mixer held at a popular Milwaukee brewery, the dance held at the Harley-Davidson Museum and the spectacular banquet-dinner-dance held at the hotel ballroom. Grigorian, a third-generation ACYOA member was elected for the first time to the ACYOA Central Council and inducted with proud parents Avak and Meline Grigorian looking on, along with very proud grandmother “Medzmyrig” Naomi Zeytoonian, organizing committee member of the 1956 ACYOA Convention in Washington, D.C., and contributor to this newspaper. Sona Dagley (daughter of the late Fr. Haroutiun and Yn. Patricia Dagley) and Melissa Mardoian (daughter of Diocesan Council member Paul Mardoian and ardent ACYOA alumna, wife Susan Mardoian) were re-elected to Central Council, with Sona being chosen as the next chairwoman of the ACYOA. If one could possibly need more proof of the torch being passed to the next generation, it was fully in evidence at the Sunday night banquet.

After an emotional Badarak in Racine celebrated by Bishop Daniel — his first as ordained bishop in one of the parishes of his diocese — the events continued as participants got ready for the main event, the banquet and dance on Sunday night. All ACYOA Alumni and local Armenian community members were invited to this very special event, and many of the alumni and parents buzzed during the cocktail hour as they waited for the “kids” to arrive. Once the banquet began, a surreal aura enveloped the room as Fr. Avedis Kalayjian presided, an individual who not too long ago was known as Deacon

Saro and was an outspoken delegate at ACYOA General Assemblies. His wife, Yeretzgin Karen, got up to speak and it was hard to believe that this woman who had spent so much time as a representative of the “youth” was now the queen of the evening. The crowd cheered as it was announced that co-chair Emily Janikian had been engaged to be married only a few months ago yet had resolutely continued to work to plan the successful weekend. Newly elected Central Council member Grigorian, radiant in a long-sleeved red evening gown, thanked the attendees and participants. With parents, alumni, friends, and ACYOA members filling the room, looking at leaders who emerged from their own ranks to preside over the organization in the love of Christ, a feeling of familial togetherness filled the room.

And finally....the dancing began! And what dancing! Whoever said that young people didn’t appreciate traditional Armenian music anymore would have been stunned at the sight. The band was composed entirely of fellow ACYOA members with the youngest musician being a senior in high school. But this was a very special group of people. ACYOA alum and Chicago resident Shant Paklaian kept a steady beat on the dumbeg, and 18-year old blossoming talent Michael Kamalian of Wisconsin wailed away on the clarinet. But the heart and soul of the band were brothers Phillip and Andrew Hagopian from Fresno playing oud and guitar and taking turns with their spirited Armenian vocals. These two young men in their early 20s have learned their art, and learned it amazingly well for their age, from their grandfather, legendary Armenian oud master (and California ACYO alumnus), Richard Hagopian. The driven music of this group of 4 young men, billed as “the Kef Time Legacy Band” had the group of some 300 or so of their peers dancing all night long, with only one very short break, including folk dances not seen at Sports Weekend since the last millennium. It would not be an exaggeration to say that they played better and with more authenticity and soul than most musicians twice their age.

### 2019-20 ACYOA Central Council

**Chair:** Sona Dagley (Holy Translators Church, Framingham, MA)

**Vice Chair:** Nora Knadjian (St. Gregory the Illuminator Church, Chicago, IL)

**Secretary:** Nick Tashjian (St. Leon Church, Fair Lawn, NJ)

**Treasurer:** Rafael Grigoryan (Armenian Church of Jacksonville, FL)

**Communications:** Arsen Yelegen (St. Gregory the Enlightener Church, White Plains, NY)

**Ministries and Outreach:** Melissa Mardoian (Sts. Joachim and Anne Church, Palos Heights, IL) and Alina Grigorian (St. Mesrob Church, Racine, WI)

### Sports Award Winners

#### Co-ed Volleyball

**1st Place:** St. Sarkis Church “A” Team, Dallas, TX

**2nd Place:** Chicagoland “A” Team, Chicago, IL

#### Women’s Basketball

**1st Place:** St. Leon Church, Fair Lawn, NJ

**2nd Place:** Chicagoland, Chicago, IL

#### Men’s Basketball

**1st Place:** St. Garabed Church, Hollywood, CA

**2nd Place:** St. John the Baptist Church, Greenfield, WI

#### Chess

Hovsep Nahapetyan, St. Sarkis Church, Dallas, TX

#### Tavloo

Davit Avetisyan, St. Sarkis Church, Carrollton, TX

#### Sportsmanship

St. Leon Church Men’s Basketball, Fair Lawn, NJ





COMMUNITY NEWS

# ACYOA Juniors Meet for Hye M’rtsoom Weekend

WATERTOWN – ACYOA Juniors gathered over Memorial Day weekend at St. James Church of Watertown, MA, for the 44th annual Hye M’rtsoom program. The parish hosted 229 participants from 17 parishes across the Diocese for a weekend of worship, sports, and fellowship.

The Rev. Arakel Aljalian, pastor of St. James Church; Yn. Natasha Aljalian; and St. James youth minister Maria Derderian worked alongside dedicated community members to ensure the success of the weekend. Events were held at the St. James Church’s Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, and participants were housed with local families. The Very Rev. Fr. Simeon Odabashian, Diocesan Vicar, and Kathryn Ashbahian, of the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, visited throughout the weekend.

On Saturday morning during morning service, the participants gathered in the chapel and heard an inspiring message by Odabashian. He shared his joy in being present with the Juniors and passed on the blessings of the primate, Bishop Daniel Findikyan.

Based on the weekend’s theme–“Ain’t No Mountain Hye Enough”– Odabashian encouraged participants to grow closer to each other and to God as they overcome struggles and find

community within the church. Throughout the day, participants created a photo collage on the youth center’s wall, which included a selfie of each participant and a description of their talents and favorite activities.

Halfway through the sports, participants gathered in the kitchen to make hundreds of sandwiches for Pine Street Inn, a Boston shelter that serves the area’s homeless population. Once the sports concluded for the day, participants headed home for dinner with their host families, and then returned to St. James for an evening dance and activities.

On Sunday, May 26, Aljalian celebrated the Divine Liturgy and gave an inspiring message to the youth who filled the pews. While afternoon sports were taking place, participants also learned about the Dogs of Gyumri, a donation-based animal welfare and adoption center based in Gyumri, Armenia. Using old T-shirts, participants made dog toys with the organization’s

founder, Sarah Derderian.

On Sunday evening, participants gathered at St. James Church for dinner and an awards ceremony and enjoyed dancing to Armenian and American music.

Monday morning, everyone gathered for a farewell breakfast before heading back to their parish communities.



Participants of the 2019 Hye M’rtsoom weekend

### ACYOA Central Council Awards

The “Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan Service Award” was given to Sarah Babikian of St. Gregory the Illuminator Church in Chicago, IL, as an ACYOA Junior who has served the Armenian Church with the same humility and compassion as the late founder of the ACYOA.

The “Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan Leadership Award” was given to Shant Danadian of St. Paul Church in Syracuse, NY, as an ACYOA Junior who has taken on leadership roles within her ACYOA chapter and has approached those roles with Christian love, understanding, and patience.

The “Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan Vision Award” was given to Emma Daw of St. Gregory the Enlightener Armenian Church in White Plains, NY, as an ACYOA Junior who has established programs that incorporate one or more of the five circles of the cross (education, worship, service, witness and fellowship), and who has made a lasting impression on his ACYOA chapter.

The ACYOA Junior “Chapter ‘A’ Award” was given to the St. John Church (Southfield, MI) chapter for its work as an ACYOA Junior organization that has done its best to create an atmosphere conducive to Christian love, education, and service.

### INDIVIDUAL SPORTS AWARDS

#### Beginner Tavloo

Allan Kevorkian (Providence, RI)–1st place  
Michael Connors (New Britain, CT)–2nd place

#### Beginner Chess

Apig Jamgotchian (Tenafly, NJ)–1st place  
Daniel Karamanougian (Tenafly, NJ)–2nd place

#### Advanced Tavloo

Ryan Kozak (Fair Lawn, NJ)–1st place  
Marianna Lilla (St. James - Watertown)

#### Advanced Chess

Chris Gigian (Watertown, MA)–1st place  
Artash Oganessov (Cambridge, MA)–2nd place

#### Girls Ping-Pong

Adi Najarian (Fair Lawn, NJ)–1st place  
Lauren Dadekian (Fair Lawn, NJ)–2nd place

#### Boys Ping-Pong

Shahe Jebejian (Fair Lawn, NJ)–1st place  
Michael Nargizian (Fair Lawn, NJ)–2nd place

### TEAM SPORTS AWARDS

#### Girls Basketball

St. Leon “A” (Fair Lawn, NJ)–1st place  
St. Leon “B” (Fair Lawn, NJ)–2nd place

#### Boys Basketball

St. Leon (Fair Lawn, NJ)–1st place  
St. Leon (Fair Lawn, NJ)–2nd place  
Volleyball  
St. Leon “B” (Fair Lawn, NJ)–1st place  
St. Leon “A” (Fair Lawn, NJ)–2nd place

#### Sportsmanship Awards

Boys: Aren Antranik (Providence, RI)  
Girls: Melina Asslanian (Wynnewood, PA)

#### Overall Champion

St. Leon ACYOA Chapter, Fair Lawn, NJ



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# Arts & Living

## Boyadjian Compositions to Be Performed at Three Concerts

LEXINGTON, Mass. — Lexington Grammy Nominee composer Hayg Boyadjian's compositions will be performed at three venues in the month of June 2019. The first performance will take place at the Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 West 69th St., New York, on Tuesday, June 18, at 8 p.m. by the North/South Consonance Chamber Orchestra conducted by composer Max Lifchitz. The concert will include Boyadjian's composition *Fourth Canticle* for flute and string orchestra, and will also feature works by composers Teresa Carreno, Fererico, Ermirio, Max Lifchitz, and Julia Mermelstein.

For more information visit: [www.north-southmusin.org](http://www.north-southmusin.org)

The second concert will take place at the Wellfleet Library, Wellfleet, Mass., on Cape Cod, on Friday, June 21 at 7:30 p.m. The performers will include two virtuoso musicians: pianist Constantine Finehouse from the New England Conservatory Faculty, and violoncellist Mickey Katz, member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, they both perform frequently in chamber music ensembles. They will perform Boyadjian's solo piano piece *Kaleidoscope*, written for and premiered by



Composer Hayg Boyadjian

Georgian pianist Yelena Beriyeva, and *Third Canticle* for piano and cello. The concert will also include Beethoven's *Cello Sonata No. 3 in A major* and another classic work to be announced.

For more information call Jennifer Wertkin at the library.

The third concert will take place at the 34th Symposium of Contemporary Music Saturday, June 29 at 8 p.m. at the Auditorium of the Faculty of Humanities and Arts of Rosario, in Rosario, Argentina. Boyadjian's composition *Triaco* for flute solo will be performed and works by Kees Arntzen (Amsterdam), Marisol Gentile (Argentina), and the late Astor Piazzolla (Argentina) famous innovator of the tango form. Boyadjian at the request of the director of the Rosario Chamber Ensemble, Marisol Gentile, has written a new work for the ensemble to be premiered in June 2020. The Rosario Ensemble has performed in the past other works by Boyadjian.

Visit Boyadjian's web site: [www.haygboyadjian.com](http://www.haygboyadjian.com)



John Hodian and members of the Naghash Ensemble

## Mystical and Modern

### The Naghash Ensemble Launches Fundraising Bid for New CD

YEREVAN/NEW YORK — After five years of touring throughout Europe, the Naghash Ensemble of Armenia is returning to the recording studio to finish their "Songs of Exile" trilogy, a project that has been described as "a deeply moving mix of Armenian spiritual folk and new classical music" by Germany's most prominent classical music radio station, BR Klassik.

Based in Yerevan, the Naghash Ensemble features three female vocalists and some of Armenia's finest instrumentalists on duduk, oud, dhol and piano, playing new music by American-Armenian composer John Hodian. The music is based on texts by the medieval Armenian mystic poet and priest, Mkrtich Naghash, and is a profound meditation on man's relationship to God from the perspective of a monk forced to live in exile for many years.

"The concept of living in exile is something that many Armenians can relate to and through our performances, we are able to share part of Armenia's cultural heritage with European audiences many of whom have little idea of Armenia's history," says Hodian.

Composer Tigran Mansurian has called them "the sound of Ancient Armenia reinvented for the 21st Century."

Now the Naghash Ensemble has launched a fundraising campaign to complete their "Songs of Exile" trilogy. "All of our work is funded by our audience and it's been gratifying to see people from all over the world coming together to support the new recording by donating to our Kickstarter."

The new CD, "Lamentations & Benedictions," will be the final volume of The Naghash Ensemble's cycle "Songs of Exile" and features some of Mkrtich Naghash's most haunting poems set to music with a broader emotional and musical range than ever before. The CD will be accompanied by a 65-page book in English, German, French and Armenian with extensive information on the group's history, Naghash the poet and translations of the poems.

Kickstarter is the largest fundraising platform in the world and the new recording will be an important step as the ensemble continues to gather international attention. A video of the Naghash Ensemble's campaign can be found at <http://kck.st/2wfAT2V>

The Naghash Ensemble upcoming tour will take them to 11 European countries and in October 2020, they will be coming to the US and Canada for the first time.

A preview of the ensemble performing one of the new pieces live in Belgium can be found here: <https://youtu.be/6fIRUS1mH2o>

For more information about the Naghash Ensemble, visit: [www.naghashensemble.com](http://www.naghashensemble.com)

Sound files and video files upon request: [wiebke@naghashensemble.com](mailto:wiebke@naghashensemble.com)



John Hodian

## BOOKS

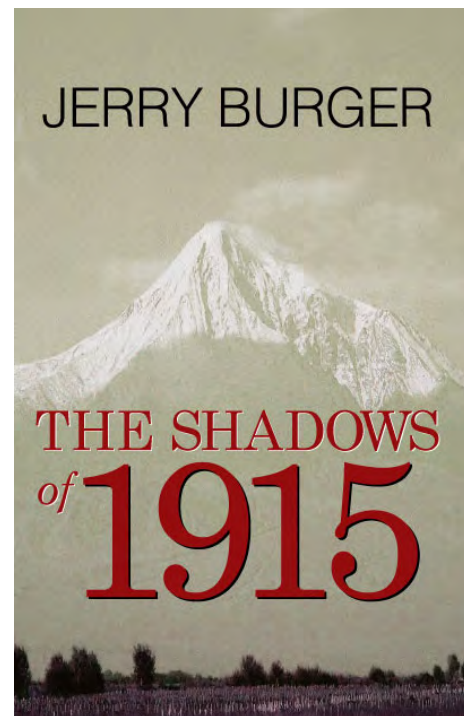
### Jerry M. Burger's New Novel *The Shadows of 1915*

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

FRESNO, Calif. — Fresno is one of the oldest and most identifiable Armenian-American communities and consequently it has been the setting for the literary efforts of a number of works dealing with Armenian-American life, most famously including the writings of William Saroyan and more recently the novels of Aris Janigian. Dr. Jerry M. Burger, a psychologist who retired last year after some four decades of teaching at Santa Clara University and prolific publishing in his field, has thrown his hat in the ring with his novel *The Shadows of 1915*, published by Golden Antelope Press this May (<https://www.amazon.com/Shadows-1915-Jerry-Burger/dp/1936135728>).

Set in 1953, it examines how the legacy of the Armenian Genocide poisons the life of the descendants of the survivors. The hero, Mihran Saropian, however, unlike his brother Arak, manages to struggle to overcome the memories of the past to find grounds for common humanity with contemporary Turks. Burger combines



this theme with a love story between an Armenian and a non-Armenian, raising issues of identity and gender roles. There are also questions of the roles of immigrants, as the Saropian family, themselves refugees from another country, run a farm which employs largely Mexican labor, and many moral dilemmas.

While initially slow-moving, the interest of patient readers is rewarded in the latter part of the novel, as events move toward their climax. There are a few minor errors an Armenian speaker could have corrected, such as using "myrut" for mother ("mayr/myr"), and using phrases pronounced in Eastern Armenian when in 1953 probably most of the Armenians in Fresno were Western-Armenian speakers.

Burger grew up in Fresno, which provided him some first-hand knowledge for writing the novel. He did not grow up on a farm, but as a teenager, he would make some money by picking grapes at the end of the summer, and even scarred his left hand through a careless accident with a knife once. He also knocked almonds off trees.

Like everyone else growing up in Fresno at that time, he had a Saroyan encounter. Burger see BURGER, page 15





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Great-Granddaughter Wants to Give Diana Apcar Her Due

APCAR, from page 1

“The depth of her commitment and energy were overwhelming. She committed her life to his cause, helping Armenians however she could,” Malayan said.

In addition, she said, later as an ambassador for the First Republic in Japan, Apcar served a government whose legacy was not embraced by Soviet historians.

Malayan complained, however, that few remember her now.

“Armenian society is very patriarchal and I don’t know if women are given their due,” she said.

“There is a bias to tell men’s stories. It wasn’t included in history. There was no information, no resources,” Malayan said. “Doing research on her is not all that easy.”

Lucky for Malayan, Apcar was a keen correspondent, regularly writing to David Starr Jordan, the founding president of Stanford University. Her letters to Jordan are at the Stanford archives.

In addition, as a manager at the American Red Cross, in charge of the Vladivostok, Russia and Harbin, China, branches, and later as regular correspondent with the United Nations’ Geneva office, her letters can be found in even more archives.

## Life in the Far East

Diana (nee Gayane) Agabeg was born in Rangoon, Burma (now Yangon, Myanmar) in 1859, to a family that hailed from New Julfa, Persia. She grew up in Calcutta and 1889 married a fellow New Julfa descendant, Michael Apcar. The couple moved to Japan fairly soon after their wedding, where he had established a business. The couple had six children but only three — Lionel, Diana and Vanick — survived. Michael Apcar died early as a result of an accident, leaving Diana alone to raise the children, as well as resuscitate the business, which he had managed to get in so much debt that during the birth of her sixth and last child, creditors were removing furniture from the Apcar home.

Apcar had lived a comfortable life, born into a successful family, but her heart and mind were dedicated to her suffering fellow Armenians halfway around the world.



The walls felt like they were literally closing in on Apcar because she could not help all the people who needed assistance.

sionaries, politicians.”

She was initially spurred into action because of the Adana Massacres in 1909. “It drew her into becoming an activist. She was so horrified by that event,” Malayan said. Not only was she horrified, but the deeper she read about the events, it became clear to her that without intervention, a bigger calamity would befall the Armenians living on their historic lands. Of course, she was right.

She felt her need to help others was a calling from God.

But first, Apcar had to educate herself to rescue her husband’s business, while taking care of her family and campaigning for justice for Armenian refugees.

According to Malayan, it was “hard work and establishing a reputation as a responsible

what I have done,” Malayan said. At the very least, then, if 600 arrived in the US through Apcar’s efforts, then she is responsible for the survival of thousands. Yet, she is not remembered as someone who has saved as many.

She died in 1937 in Yokohama; her children eventually left Japan for the US.

## Bringing Diana Apcar to the World

Malayan was born in San Francisco but lived all over the world, as her father, a designer of hydroelectric plants, took jobs in Holland, France, Germany, as well as all over Asia and South America.

“San Francisco was always home, especially as grandma was here,” she said.

She attended George Washington University and lived on the East Coast for a decade before getting married and moving around the country, including Chicago, Detroit, Atlantic City and Atlanta. She came back to San Francisco fulltime in 1983.

She recently retired as a landscape architect.

Malayan knew growing up that her great-grandmother was special. However, she did not think about collecting material on her or trying to bring more attention to her.

That all changed when Mesropian contacted Malayan and came to San Francisco for a visit.

“Her research is all in Japanese and it is about

the book of short stories, titled *1000 Tales*, in 2004.

Once she got involved with her great-grandmother’s story, Malayan recalled, she got a “haunting feeling” that there was so much more about her that had to be revealed. She started to delve into the research in earnest in 2010 and by 2012 decided that the best way to bring attention to her grandmother was through making a documentary. “The largest audience can be gained through the visual medium,” she said in a recent interview.

She met filmmaker Arthur Muradyan in San Francisco and worked with him to put together a storyline, which she later developed and expanded.

“We needed to tell much more than the interviews could provide,” she noted. After much thinking and weighing options, they decided to include graphics to amplify the words. The result was the black-and-white animation resembling a Japanese scroll by digital artist Lu Ke.

“The Stateless Diplomat,” was shown at the Toronto Pomegranate Film Festival in November 2018, as well as at the San Francisco Public Library on April 24, 2019. It will be shown on July 21 at the New Hope Festival in Pennsylvania.

The documentary won two awards at the Pomegranate Film Festival: Audience Choice Award for Best Documentary and Honorable



Illustration for Apcar’s preoccupation with Armenians in Adana

When asked about the depth of her empathy, Malayan said, “she was born with it.” She referred to Apcar’s first book, *Susan*. “I interpret it to be autobiographical. She was growing up in India, but she was different from the girls who wanted pretty dresses and to attend balls. She was drawn to a suffering animal or a child that was ignored.”

Apcar, the author of nine books, wrote letters frequently in support of peace and against imperialism. She was not alone in those sentiments, Malayan said. There were several organizations dedicated to peace and opposing imperialism was part of that movement.

On Malayan’s website, we read, “Diana’s goal was set: her people needed her, and she committed her passion and idealism to their cause. She wrote a book a year, appealed to peace societies and sent her articles to major European and American newspapers, pleading her case: Armenians’ right for “security of life and property on the soil of their own country.” She corresponded with Stanford University founder David Starr Jordan, President of Columbia University, Nicholas M. Butler, US Secretary of State Robert Lansing, and dozens of others — journalists, mis-

entrepreneur” which led her to be a success in business.

She added, “That reputation was one reason she was so successful in gaining asylum for refugees.”

The refugees for whom she vouched and whose fare she paid through her own resources as well as raising money, made their way from Vladivostok to Yokohama and then on to the US. As long as that route seems, Malayan said it was the most direct one for many refugees from the Armenian Genocide.

“The Japanese government was not accepting of the refugees. It was truly Diana’s name and reputation that gave them the authority to come to Japan. It is just immeasurable,” Malayan noted. “Where would they have been without that?”

Malayan said she puts the number of people saved from the Armenian Genocide through Apcar’s efforts conservatively at 600, but Melanie Mesropian, a young woman from Armenia who was getting her PhD in Japan with her thesis on Apcar, puts the number at closer to 2,500.

The number 600 is arrived at by going through ship manifests. “The search needs to go beyond



Illustration that pairs with *Home Stories*, a book by Diana Apcar about Japanese soldiers returning home after war

to be published as a book,” Malayan said.

The two women were put in touch through Grant Poghosyan, Armenia’s longtime ambassador to Japan.

One stroke of luck was finding the papers kept by Lionel Galstaun, a nephew of Apcar and an uncle of Malayan. “At the time of his death, there was a lot of material in the closet, everything that pertained to Diana.”

Among those papers was a manuscript by Apcar that had not yet been published. Lucille Apcar, Diana’s granddaughter, helped publish

Mention for Documentary Feature.

And her story is not yet finished.

“Having spent time with Melanie, we need to pursue more research on Diana,” Malayan said.

Malayan said that she grew up knowing there was a towering figure in her family, but, she said, she did not realize the “extent of accomplishments. It always went beyond what I assumed. It is mind boggling. I am overwhelmed.”

To see a list of Apcar’s books, or to find out more about the film or Apcar herself, visit [www.dianaapcar.org](http://www.dianaapcar.org).





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Review: 'The Stateless Diplomat' Captures Essence of Diana Apcar

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

The documentary "The Stateless Diplomat" brings attention to the legacy of Diana Agabeg Apcar, the first female Armenian diplomat and possibly one of the first female diplomats ever.

And with its gentle, artistically gorgeous approach, it succeeds.

One problem facing historical documentaries is how to flesh out a story without the benefit of film clips. In "Stateless," the filmmakers use Japanese-style pen-and-ink drawings, by digital designer Lu Ke, to strike just the right note.

The images match the narration, often dissolving from one frame into another, creating an almost graphic novel look to the story of this venerable hero.

The film makes it clear that Apcar truly discovered her strength when she was pushed to the limit. The film opens with the sequence of Diana, a recent widow, in labor with her sixth child, while creditors seize her furniture in another part of the house. Her simultaneous joy over this the baby and despair over how to provide for her children create a whiplash effect for her and of course the viewer. Her late husband, not a great businessman, had run his company into the ground and Diana had to rescue the business in order to keep a roof over her head, all the while being tormented by the stories of the slain Armenians in Adana.

The film also interviews several historians and diplomats to shed light on this underappreciated Armenian heroine.

Among many scholars, Dr. Ara Ghazarians of the Armenian Cultural Fund in Arlington, Mass., Grant Poghosyan, the Republic of Armenia's ambassador to Japan, as well as Prof. Keith Wattenpugh provide background information on Apcar.

Meline Mesropyan, a doctoral candidate in Japan focusing

on Apcar at Tohoku University in Japan, speaks in a heartfelt manner about a woman whom she has never met but has fleshed out with her words.

The documentary follows the timeline of Apcar, her family and her dedication to her people at the time of the Armenian Genocide and later the creation of the Armenian Republic.

In fact, she was so worried about her fellow Armenians that she sold the jewelry which she had hidden soon after her husband's death as an insurance policy. She helped pay the fare for many refugees to and from Japan and helped them live while in Japan. In addition, we are shown her endless letter-writing campaigns to find the survivors sponsors in the US.

Also interviewed in the film are her family members, including Lucille Apcar, her granddaughter. In addition, the descendants of Armenian Genocide survivors who were rescued by Apcar, pay tribute to a woman without whom they would not exist.

The documentary taps into the sense of urgency as well as helplessness that Apcar felt, using the texts of several of her letters. Not only was she in despair about her people, but she had a family and business to take care of. And she did all of these as a woman in a world that did not take women seriously.

The film also notes that Apcar was well appreciated in Japan as a volunteer, diplomat and businesswoman.

Apcar's increasing sense of despair and her nervous breakdown are illustrated in the documentary, creating a sense of empathy in the viewer.

We see that her prayers were answered when the first Republic of Armenia was created in 1918 and her despair when it folded after only two years. She was racked with guilt that she had encouraged many survivors to go to Armenia.

"The Stateless Diplomat" captures the dignity of a woman who knew that her destiny propelled her beyond an ordinary life. It also shows what difference one person with good intentions and intelligence can make.

## Jerry Burger's New Novel *The Shadows of 1915*

BURGER, from page 13

said, "He was kind of a local hero when I was growing up. When I was about 10-years-old, I was at a kite flying event. There was a very large kite — everybody made their own kites and they went out to this event — that a smaller kite had gotten tangled up with, so the small kite was being carried around by this larger kite. I was standing next to this man looking at this and the man started talking to me. He started giving human characteristics to the kite, how the large kite had these attributes and was thinking this and the small kite was... I thought the man was kind of crazy, so I went up to my mother later and said, you know, the man up there is kind of crazy and she said, no, no, he is not crazy, he is a writer." Later, Burger's cousin worked for Saroyan as a gardener. Burger collected many of Saroyan's books, and now has around 50 of them.

Burger had many Armenian friends as a boy. There were two things about them that really stood out to him. He said, "The first was that every family, it seems, had a story, a story which of course tied back to the Armenian Genocide, and slowly I would find out that they all had lost relatives and loved ones. I found that fascinating. ... The second thing that I learned was that the feelings toward Turks that all of my

A r m e n i a n friends and every Armenian I encountered had were intense. ... That it was a very strong emotional, I don't know if hatred is the word, but it was in that realm. That fascinated me."

He found the aftermath of the A r m e n i a n Genocide to be a compelling topic through which he could explore



Dr. Jerry M. Burger

issues related to family and justice. He said, "I would also add to that—to my way of thinking there is not nearly enough fiction related to the Armenian Genocide. When I tell people about the book, many people I know who are well educated, well informed—they read the newspaper daily, knew nothing about it. ... I think this is something that needs more presentation."

Though Burger is a prolific writer in his own field, this is his first novel. He has written some short stories. He said, "Fiction writing is something that I have always wanted to have the time to do. There probably is a connection to my interests as a psychologist. I went into social psychology because I was always interested in questions of justice and those sorts of things. A lot of my research was focused on why otherwise good people sometimes do very, very horrible things." He reexamined, for example, Milgram's research, which was motivated by Milgram's interest in understanding the Holocaust. However, he has not directly worked on the broader aspects of genocide.

To prepare for writing the novel, Burger did some interviews with Fresno Armenians to get the context right. He said that he avoided modeling characters after specific individuals so that he would not be limited. However, the one exception was a true personal story he attributed to one character in the book. Burger said that his wife was a reporter for the San Jose Mercury News in 1985 and interviewed survivors from the Armenian Genocide for an article. One woman told a story that parallels a lot of what happens in his book, particularly the anecdote about her daughter being ripped from her arms and thrown into a river. Burger said, "It was so haunting that I used that. I thanked her in the acknowledgments in the book, an anonymous individual whom I never met, but my wife taped the interview and I heard it and it was chilling."

Burger plans to give book talks both on the West and East Coasts, including in Fresno, Glendale and other areas with large Armenian populations.

# Recipe Corner

Guest Recipe



by Christine Vartanian Dalian

## Bulgur with Eggs and Tomatoes (Havgitov Kufta)

Contributed by Der Hayr Guiragossian.

Both of these recipes are courtesy of *Adventures in Armenian Cooking*. This outstanding collection of 200 recipes was originally published in 1973 by St. Gregory's Armenian Apostolic Church of Indian Orchard, Mass. as a fundraiser.

### INGREDIENTS

3 cups tomatoes, fresh or canned  
1 cup fine bulgur  
1 medium onion, chopped fine  
4 large eggs  
6 tablespoons butter or margarine  
3/4 cup fresh parsley and green onions, chopped  
Salt, pepper, paprika to taste

### PREPARATION

Cook tomatoes and add bulgur. Remove from heat. Let stand 10-15 minutes.

Meanwhile scramble eggs in butter in frying pan.

Cool slightly and stir into tomato mixture. Add onion, salt and pepper and toss.

Sprinkle with parsley and green onions. Serve warm or cold.

Serves 6.

NOTE: If fresh tomatoes are used, peel; cut up and cook until sauce-like.





# Society for Armenian Studies Awards Travel/Research Grants To Five Graduate Students

FRESNO – The Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) established the “Graduate Research and Conference Grants Program for MA and PhD Students” in 2019. The aim of the grant program is to provide resources for graduate students to conduct research and present papers at conferences. Grants of up to \$500 are awarded semi-annually to eligible graduate students. The inaugural group of applicants were chosen by a selection committee composed of members of the SAS Executive Council.

Pauline Pechakjian, an MA student at the University of Irvine, applied for a travel grant to conduct research in Armenia. Pechakjian’s MA thesis is entitled “Rethinking ‘Repatriation’: A Social History of the Mass Migration of Diaspora Armenians to Soviet Armenia, 1946-49.”

“I am appreciative of the funding that will facilitate my travel to Armenia this summer,” said Pechakjian. “As a young scholar, it is an honor to have my research aims recognized and supported by one of the most important academic organizations in the field of Armenian studies, and I look forward to sharing the findings of my research with the SAS community.”

Julia Hintlian, a doctoral candidate at Harvard University, applied for a grant to participate in the “New Research on Ancient Armenia: Second Geneva Workshop for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Researchers” at the University of Geneva, May 31-June 1, 2019.

“The conference is significant to my scholarly career for two reasons,” stated Hintlian. First, it will allow me to engage with Armenian Studies in a cross-cultural, trans-linguistic look forward to finding common ground with my international colleagues. Second, my presentation is fundamentally theological in nature, and as an aspiring scholar of religion, I will seek to highlight the value of theological lenses to original research in Armenian Studies.” Hintlian will present a paper entitled: “Homegrown Flock: Rethinking the Delayed Emergence of the Lamb of God in Armenian Manuscript Illumination,” at the Geneva conference.

Nora Lessersohn, a doctoral student at University College London, is working on a doctoral project, preliminarily titled “Ambitions of an Ottoman Armenian in America (1834-1895).” By studying the life and intra-communal encounters of Ottoman Armenian American Christopher Oscanyan, Lessersohn’s research seeks to complicate “monolithic portrayals of the past” and demonstrate “the com-

plex range of attitudes, ideas, and norms within historical Armenian, American and Ottoman societies.” Her dissertation will focus on Oscanyan’s publications, including an “Oriental Album” of photographs he produced during the American Civil War.

“This inspiring initiative of SAS is bound to make a significant contribution to young scholars’ careers as future professional specialists,” said Baldaryan. “It will provide them with financial assistance to carry out their own projects in a wide range of academic institutions and promote Armenian studies around the world.”

Ani Yenokyan is a doctoral student in Art History and Theory and is a junior researcher at the Mesrop Mashtots Matenadaran, in Armenia. Yenokyan’s doctoral thesis is entitled “Armenian Printed Book Illustrations in the 16th-18th Centuries.” The SAS grant will provide support for Yenokyan to attend the conference “New Research on Ancient Armenia: Second Geneva Workshop for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Researchers” at the University of Geneva, May 31-June 1, where she will present a paper on “Armenian Printing as a Bridge Between Late Medieval and Early Modern Armenian art.”

“This workshop tends to give an opportunity for young researchers working in the field of Armenian studies to present their work in progress,” commented Yenokyan. “For me, it is more important because this year’s Geneva workshop is giving preference to subjects relating to pre-modern issues and practices.”

“This is the first time that SAS has established such a grant,” noted SAS President Bedross Der Matossian. “We are glad that we are able to help young scholars in the field, whether by assisting them in their research or helping them to travel to conferences. We hope that in the future we will be able to fund a larger pool of applicants.”

The SAS congratulates the first recipients of the SAS Graduate Research and Conference Grants for MA and PhD students and wish them much success in their research and academic careers.

The next application cycle will have a deadline of September 1.

The SAS Graduate and Research Grant was made possible through the generous institutional support of: the Armenian Studies Program, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; the Armenian Research Center, University of Michigan, Dearborn; the Meghrouni Family Presidential Chair in Armenian Studies, University of California, Irvine; the



Ani Yenokyan, Julia Hintlian, Nora Lessersohn, Pauline Pechakjian, Sargis Baldaryan

Hovannisian Chair of Modern Armenian History, University of California, Los Angeles; the Arthur H. Dadian and Ara Oztemel Chair of Armenian Art & Architecture, Tufts University; the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR); the Armenian Communities Department, Gulbenkian Foundation; the Armenian Studies Program, California State University, Fresno; the Robert Aram, Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Chair in Armenian Genocide Studies, Clark University; the Armenian Studies Program, University of California, Berkeley; and the Institute of Armenian Studies, University of Southern California.

For more information on the Society for Armenian Studies, visit the SAS website at [societyforarmenianstudies.com](http://societyforarmenianstudies.com).

## Velvet Revolution Photo Exhibit At United Nations

NEW YORK – The Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations hosted a reception and a photo exhibition on May 28 entitled “Armenia’s Velvet revolution” at the UN headquarters. The event displayed photographs showcasing the progress of the peaceful civic movement, marches and demonstrations that took place in Armenia in spring 2018.

Attended by a large number of ambassadors and delegates of the UN member states, representatives of the UN Secretariat, as well as members of the Armenian community, the event featured remarks by the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the UN Mher Margaryan.

In his welcoming remarks, Margaryan pointed out that the events which took place last year marked a new chapter in the history of Armenia, highlighting the important symbolism of holding an exhibition dedicated to the Velvet Revolution and celebrating the First Republic of Armenia at the United Nations on 28 May. Noting that democracy, promotion of human rights, empowerment of women and youth in the political and social life are important priorities for the Government of Armenia, Margaryan recalled Armenia’s candidacy for the membership of the UN Human Rights Council for the term 2020-2022.

Ruben Rubinyan, Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Relations of the National Assembly of Armenia, briefed the guests on the evolution of the events depicted in the exhibit as well as on the parliamentary activities in the field of foreign relations.



Armenia’s Ambassador to the UN Mher Margaryan opens the photo exhibition.



Guests at the photo exhibition

TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF GREATER BOSTON & ARMENIAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION PRESENT

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OR  
Email: [tekeyanboston@gmail.com](mailto:tekeyanboston@gmail.com)

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE PROGRAM WILL BE IN ARMENIAN





ARTS & LIVING

C A L E N D A R

ARIZONA

**NOVEMBER 2-3 — ARMENIAFest at St. Apkar Armenian Apostolic Church.** Weekend food and cultural festival featuring traditional Armenian foods, beverages, exhibits, music and dance performances. 8849 E. Cholla St., Scottsdale.

**NOVEMBER 16 — SOAR (Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief) Annual Golf Tournament.** Saturday 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Stonecreek Golf Club, 4435 E. Paradise Village Pkwy, Phoenix. This is a fundraising event for Armenian orphans. For more information, contact Dr. Alan Haroian, 603-540-1961.

MASSACHUSETTS

**JUNE 9 — St. James Armenian Festival Annual Picnic!** Join us for a fun-filled festival! Delicious Armenian food, Live Armenian music, children’s activities with moon bounce, face painting, and more! Rain or shine. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more info visit [www.stjameswatertown.org](http://www.stjameswatertown.org) or call 617.923.8860.

**JUNE 12 — Tea and Tranquility. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston.** Wednesday from 4:30 p.m. -6 p.m. Meet & Greet. Walk the Labyrinth. Enjoy refreshing Ice Teas, hosted by MEM Tea Imports and dessert. Introduction to walking the labyrinth, mindful and meditative walking at 4:45pm. RSVP appreciated [hello@armenianheritagepark.org](mailto:hello@armenianheritagepark.org)

**JUNE 13 — Screening of documentary, “Motherland,” 7 p.m. screening in the Armenian Museum of America** Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor. Directed by Emily Mkrtchian and Jesse Soursourian. In this eloquently crafted film, women in Artsakh courageously work to clear land mines in the wake of a brutal war, combating traditional gender roles and forming close bonds in the process. Thursday. Co-sponsored by the Armenian International Women’s Association (AIWA). Reception and moderated Q&A to follow screening. FREE to Members or FREE to non-members with Museum admission.

**JUNE 14 — The Friends of Armenian Culture Society presents the 68th annual Armenian Night at the Pops,** featuring cellist Laura Navasardian as soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra. Symphony Hall, Boston. 8 pm. For tickets and information, visit <http://www.FACSBoston.org>.

**JUNE 15 — Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater Boston and the Armenian Cultural Association** present an Armenian book singing. The Tales of Beardo by author and poet Sarkis Gavlakian. 6 p.m. Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic Street, Arlington. RSVP 559-801-3392. The program will be in Armenian.

**JUNE 17-AUGUST 16 — Abaka Dance Academy, Summer Program for ages 5-12, with principal/director Apo Ashjian** at 101 Bigelow Ave., Watertown. Arts and crafts, Indoor games, Sports, Music, Dance, Free T-shirts, Friday pizza and more. Weekly sessions at \$250/week, begin June 17 - August 16, 8 am - 3 pm. Late stay available. Register at [www.abakadanceacademy.com](http://www.abakadanceacademy.com). For more information, email [abakadanceacademy@gmail.com](mailto:abakadanceacademy@gmail.com) or call 617-283-2010.

**JUNE 17 — Gregory Hintlian Memorial Golf Tournament, sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church** of Greater Boston at the Marlborough Country Club, Marlborough. Monday. 9:30 a.m., registration; 11 a.m., “Shot Gun.” Join us for a day of golf – two player fee options: \$180 (includes hospitality, lunch, dinner, green & cart fees, prizes and gifts), and \$200 (also includes \$40 worth of raffle tickets) – or just for dinner and a social evening (\$50 per person). Limited to 128 players. Tournament and tee sponsorships available. RSVP deadline, June 10. To register or for further information, call the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, log onto [www.htaac.org/calendar/event/653/](http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/653/), or email [office@htaac.org](mailto:office@htaac.org).

**JUNE 27 — Under a Strawberry Moon. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston.** Thursday at 8:30 p.m. Meet & Greet. Moonlit Labyrinth Walk. Luscious Chocolate Dipped Strawberries, hosted by vicki lee’s and refreshing Ice Teas, hosted by MEM Tea Imports and the fabulous Berklee Jazz Trio. RSVP appreciated [hello@armenianheritagepark.org](mailto:hello@armenianheritagepark.org)

**JUNE 22 —Armenian Food Fair, 11 a.m. -7 p.m., St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church Ladies Guild.** Jaffarian Hall, 158 Main Street, No. Andover. Serving all day. Lamb Shish Kebab, Chicken & Losh Kebab, Kheyma,

Vegetarian plates. Pastry, Boregs, Choreg, Khadaif, Paklava, Gift Table, Country Kitchen, White Elephant, 50/50 Raffles and much more.... Take out available. Call the Church @ 978-685-5038 Ann @978-521-2245 or Sossy @ 978-256-2538

**JUNE 27 — Reading of “Zabel in Exile.”** 6 pm reception followed by 7 pm reading in the Armenian Museum of America Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor. Reading of a new play “Zabel in Exile” based on the life and writings of early 20th century Armenian writer and political activist Zabel Yessayan. The play, written by R. N. Sandberg and directed by Megan Sandberg-Zakian, will feature six actors live in the Museum’s newly renovated Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor. Tickets are free, email or call to reserve a seat (Email or call to reserve a free seat: [info@armenianmuseum.org](mailto:info@armenianmuseum.org), 617.926.2562 ext. 101). Co-sponsored by the Armenian Museum of America, Armenian International Women’s Association, and National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, also supported by Project SAVE.

**JUNE 28 – July 10 – St. James Armenian Church 7th Pilgrimage to Armenia.** Led by Fr. Arakel Aljalian. Join us and Discover the Land of our Ancestors. All are welcome. Registration deposits due March 1; Full Payment due April 1. For full details visit [www.stjameswatertown.org/armenia](http://www.stjameswatertown.org/armenia).

**JULY 5 — Armenian Church of Cape Cod presents Third Annual Kef Time** - Dinner & Dancing Friday, 6 to 11:30 p.m. at The Cape Club, 125 Falmouth Woods Road, North Falmouth. Chicken Kebab & Losh Kebab dinner Leon Janikian band with special appearance by Harry Minassian and a DJ \$65/person, children 7 to 14 \$15 For tickets/tables contact Andrea Barber (617)201-9807

**JULY 17 — Tea and Tranquility. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston.** Wednesday from 4:30-6 p.m. Meet & Greet. Walk the Labyrinth. Enjoy refreshing ice teas, hosted by MEM Tea Imports and dessert. Introduction to walking the labyrinth, mindful and meditative walking at 4:45pm. RSVP appreciated [hello@armenianheritagepark.org](mailto:hello@armenianheritagepark.org)

**AUGUST 6 — Book presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian editor of her father’s memoir** Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier In the Ottoman Turkish Army, 7 p.m. Falmouth Public Library, Herman Foundation Meeting Room, 300 Main Street, Falmouth. Book sale/signing following the presentation. For information: Sue Henken (508) 457-2555 ext. 7 or [www.falmouthpubliclibrary.org](http://www.falmouthpubliclibrary.org)

**AUGUST 14 — Tea and Tranquility. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston.** Wednesday from 4:30-6 p.m. Meet & Greet. Walk the Labyrinth. Enjoy refreshing Ice Teas, hosted by MEM Tea Imports and dessert. Introduction to walking the labyrinth, mindful and meditative walking at 4:45pm. RSVP appreciated [hello@armenianheritagepark.org](mailto:hello@armenianheritagepark.org)

**AUGUST 22 — Under the August Moon. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston.** Thursday from 7:30– 9 p.m. Delightful evening for supporters, partners & friends featuring fabulous signature dishes, hosted by anoush’ella and the Berklee Jazz Trio. RSVP appreciated [hello@armenianheritagepark.org](mailto:hello@armenianheritagepark.org)

**SEPTEMBER 16 — Registration is now open for the 2019-2020 sessions of the Abaka Dance Academy,** 101 Bigelow Ave., Watertown, MA. Principal/director Apo Ashjian. Classes begin September 16 for grades Nursery II - Grade 10 students. Check the schedule and enroll today at [www.abakadanceacademy.com](http://www.abakadanceacademy.com). For more info, email [abakadanceacademy@gmail.com](mailto:abakadanceacademy@gmail.com) or call 617-283-2010.

**SEPTEMBER 18 — Celebrating Contributions of Our Nation’s Immigrants – Gala Benefit for the Endowed Fund for Care of Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway** Honoring Dr. Noubar Afeyan, Leader & Philanthropist Recognizing Organizations Serving Immigrants & Refugees InterContinental Hotel Boston. Advance Reservations only. For information, [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

**SEPTEMBER 22 — Sunday Afternoon for Families and Friends.** Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. 2:00pm-4:00pm. Wonderful afternoon with The Hye Guys Ensemble featuring Ron Sahatjian and Joe Kouyoumjian. Hoodsies, Face Painting and more RSVP appreciated [hello@armenianheritagepark.org](mailto:hello@armenianheritagepark.org)

**OCTOBER 3 — Cigar Night sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston,** 6 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Save the date; details to follow. For further information, contact the Church Office, 617.354.0632.

**OCTOBER 19 — The Vosebikians are coming to the**

**Merrimack Valley.** The Armenian Friends of America proudly present their Annual HYE KEF 5 Dance, featuring The Vosebikians. The DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, Andover, MA. Tickets Purchased before 9/13/19 will include the Great Venue, Outstanding Buffet, The Vosebikian Band and 5 Free Raffle Tickets Adults \$75.00 & Students 21 & under \$65 Specially priced AFA Rooms available through 9/17/19. For Tickets and more information, Contact: Lu Sirmaian 978-683-9121 or Sharke’ Der Apkarian at 978-808-0598 Visit [www.Armenia-FriendsOfAmerica.org](http://www.Armenia-FriendsOfAmerica.org)

**NOVEMBER 1,2 — NAASR Grand Opening and Gala. Friday, November 1 – Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting,** NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, at NAASR’s new world headquarters, 395 Concord Avenue, Belmont, MA. Saturday, November 2 – NAASR 65th Anniversary Gala, at the Royal Sonesta Hotel, Cambridge. 6 pm Reception, 7 pm Dinner and Program. Honoree Dr. Vartan Gregorian, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York; Master of Ceremonies David Ignatius, columnist for the Washington Post and novelist; Featuring renowned soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian, accompanied by the Borromeo String Quartet, performing a program of songs by Komitas. Further details to follow.

**NOVEMBER 16 — St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School 35th Anniversary Celebration.** 6:30 PM Cocktail Reception, 7:30 PM Dinner and Program. The Westin Waltham - Boston, MA \$150 per person.

**DECEMBER 6 and 7 — Friday and Saturday, Trinity Christmas Bazaar, Friday, 12 noon-9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.;** Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. For further information, contact the Church Office, 617.354.0632.

MICHIGAN

**JUNE 12 — The Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum and Richard A. Manoogian will host Dr. Helen C. Evans,** at St. John Armenian Church Cultural Hall, on Wednesday, at 6:30 p.m. Slide-lecture program based on the recent Armenia! Art, Religion, and Trade in the Middle Ages exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. She is the Mary and Michael Jaharis Curator for Byzantine Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art. For the occasion, Sylvie Merian, a contributor to the Armenia! catalog, and also one of the editors and contributors to A Legacy of Armenian Treasures: Testimony to a People – Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, will read a specially written colophon. Free. Complimentary Reception following program. For more information: [www.manoogianmuseum.org](http://www.manoogianmuseum.org). To RSVP for the event, call by June 7: Gloria Korkoian, 313-730-6698.

NEW JERSEY

**JUNE 23 — Summer Picnic, Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to ??? St. Stepanos Armenian Apostolic Church,** 1184 Ocean Avenue, Long Branch. Chicken, Lamb Kebab, Dolma Dinners. Armenian Cuisine featuring Cheese Beoreg Pastries, Paklava and more. Armenian Music and Children’s Games.

**OCTOBER 25 — Banquet Honoring Dr. Taner Akcam Abajian Hall St. Leon complex Fair Lawn,** NJ Sponsored by Knights & Daughters of Vartan- Under the Auspices of His Grace Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate. For Reservations please call Sona Manuelian 551-427-8763. \$125 p.p. early reservations recommended.

PENNSYLVANIA

**JULY 21 — Special viewing of the award-winning “The Stateless Diplomat,” a film about Diana Apcar,** a 19th century Armenian writer living in Japan who became the de facto ambassador of a lost nation. Historical documentary done by her great-granddaughter Mimi Malayan. 2-4.30 p.m., at the Phillips Mill Theater, a mile outside of New Hope, Penn.

RHODE ISLAND

**JUNE 23 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church (Providence) will present the first in a series of talks, “Meet with Armenian Doctors,”** on Sunday, June 23, at 12 noon, in Hanoian Hall of the church complex. ( 70 Jefferson St., Providence, RI ). Dr. Stephen S. Kasparian, obstetrician-gynecologist will speak and take questions. Admission is free and open to the public.





COMMENTARY

Mirror Spectator

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Turkey Will not Go Back on Russia Air Defense Deal, Says Erdogan

By Laura Pitel

Turkey will not halt the purchase of a Russian air defense system, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Tuesday, June 4, ramping up the pressure in a dispute that has put Ankara on a collision course with Washington. Speaking in the wake of suggestions that Turkey could seek to delay the arrival of the S-400 system, Erdogan said the plan was going ahead. “The steps we have taken are clear,” he told reporters after attending prayers for the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr.

“We have made an agreement and we are determined. There is no question of taking a step back.”

The president reiterated that he had offered to form a technical committee to examine US concerns that the S-400 would compromise the security of the F-35 fighter jet that is being adopted by a number of NATO member states. He made no comment as to whether or not the US had accepted the offer, despite reports that President Donald Trump had agreed to the idea during a phone call with Erdogan last week.

US officials want Turkey to abandon the purchase. They have warned that the NATO member state faces punishing sanctions if it takes delivery of the Russian technology, one of the world’s most advanced air-defense systems.

Sanctions would not only pile pressure on the Turkish economy but would plunge Turkey into its worst crisis with NATO allies in decades.

Ankara and Moscow have previously said the Russian equipment could begin to arrive in Turkey as early as this month. If and when that happens, the US Congress is expected to remove Turkey from the F-35 jet program and mandate Trump to impose punitive measures under the

Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act. In that scenario, the Trump administration would be required to choose at least five of 12 possible measures set out in the legislation. They range in severity, from milder steps such as denying US visas to people targeted by sanctions to banning all banking and foreign exchange transactions that involve any interest relating to those individuals.

Analysts warn that sanctions could inflict severe pain on the Turkish economy at time when it is highly fragile. The country is still reeling from the after-effects of a currency crisis last summer, which itself was triggered by sanctions imposed by Trump in a bid to free an American pastor detained there.

Turkey’s high external financing needs leave it vulnerable to sudden switches in investor sentiment of the kind that an escalating US-Turkey dispute could cause.

Moody’s, the rating agency, warned in a recent analysis that fresh geopolitical tensions “could lead to a repeat of last year’s currency crisis or more challenging conditions altogether.”

The S-400 issue has weighed heavily on the Turkish lira in recent months. A phone call between Erdogan and Trump last week raised hopes of a breakthrough, causing the currency to rally to its highest level in weeks.

The unexpected release of Serkan Golge, a Turkish-American NASA scientist jailed in Turkey, following the call was seen by some analysts as a sign of goodwill by Erdogan.

A few days earlier, Hulusi Akar, Turkey’s defense minister, had said that the S-400 delivery schedule could be delayed, although that claim was later contradicted by the Turkish ministry of foreign affairs and by Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

Some analysts and investors believe Erdogan may be seeking to postpone delivery of the Russian system until after the repeat of a critical Istanbul mayoral election scheduled for June 23. That could avert the danger of a new currency crisis that would risk alienating Erdogan’s supporters in the run-up to the vote. But Erdogan must balance the desire to avoid US sanctions with a need to maintain a good relationship with Moscow.

Russia is a key regional power and the most important backer of the Syrian president Bashar al-Assad. A shaky Russian-Turkish agreement has become vital to avoiding a full-scale offensive by the Syrian regime in the opposition-held province of Idlib – a scenario that Turkey fears would cause a humanitarian catastrophe and could send hundreds of thousands of displaced people towards its southern border.

(This column originally ran in the *Financial Times*’ June 4 edition.)

China Set to Increase Its Influence in Georgia

By Emil Avdaliani

China-Georgia relations since the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991 have been positive in both the economic and overall political sense. However, they are often overestimated by analysts in Georgia and elsewhere. Bilateral trade growth as well as a gradual increase in Chinese investments in Georgia have oft been hailed as exceptional and a marked sign of increased Chinese influence over Tbilisi.

True, economic growth has been taking place, but this has been but a small portion of the real potential. In fact, despite analysts’ positive views, Georgia and the South Caucasus transit corridor has yet to feature in official versions of the Chinese Belt & Road Initiative (BRI). Overall, China has been cautious. Russia’s factor too might have been at play when Beijing only minimally involved itself in the economy of Georgia. But the biggest obstacle has been geographic barriers such as the Caspian Sea, the Caucasus range, difficult Georgian terrain as well as the Black Sea.

Still, in a number of articles for *GT*, I have suggested that the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) is not static in nature and, like any other trade routes in ancient or medieval periods, it does respond to rising challenges and opportunities. Another suggestion was that Georgia, if it improves its railroads, roads and ports infrastructure inside the country, will become more attractive to China and its BRI.

Indeed, there are signs proving this scenario. On May 24, the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Georgia. This is crucial as it is the first official visit of a Chinese foreign minister to Georgia in 23 years. According to the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the focus of the minister’s visit was to understand more about Georgia’s future and its potential as an important transit state.

The visit to Georgia came as a part of the Chinese delegation’s regional trip. China and Armenia on Sunday signed an agreement for mutual visa exemption for ordinary passport holders.

The Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the visit to Georgia confirmed the “clear vision” of China regarding Georgia and its role in China’s plans for large-scale projects. Here, most likely BRI was meant, a clear emphasis on Georgia’s potential as a transit state. “Trade, investments, transport, as well as partnership within the frames of international organizations, were set as the major priorities for future cooperation,” states the Georgian Foreign Ministry.

The Chinese Foreign Minister said that “China is implementing a foreign policy which is based on the principles of peaceful coexistence. We are ready to develop friendly relations between our countries further. We have a firm position that all countries are equal, regardless of their size. We respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and other countries.”

China’s interests in Georgia are also intricately linked to the latter’s territorial problems with Russia. For Tbilisi, it is important that China supports it on the issue of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali. Indeed, the issue of the Georgian occupied territories was also raised during the meetings and Georgian offi-

cials mentioned the “high importance” of Chinese support for Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Chinese delegation’s visit follows the Georgian Minister of Infrastructure and Regional Development, Maya Tskitishvili’s, trip to Beijing, where she attended the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. More importantly, she signed an agreement on cargo and passenger transportation with Chinese Minister of Transport Li Xiaopeng.

Overall, the Chinese Foreign Affairs Minister’s visit to Tbilisi has been important, but attention in the Georgian media was only paid to official statements; no analysis has yet been made. However, what is crucial is the timing of the visit, as China and the US are locked in a geopolitical battle over influence in the Indo-Pacific world. Since Georgia is close to the US in terms of military and political cooperation, it will be interesting to see how far China-Georgia cooperation will go. One thing is likely to happen: Beijing will try to increase its influence in Georgia through economic and various political moves.

‘(This column was first published in *Georgia Times*.)

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## COMMENTARY



## My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Azerbaijan May be Expelled from Council Of Europe for Violating Court Ruling

All members of the European Council had agreed to comply with judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). However, Azerbaijan has violated that commitment ever since 2014, according to the unanimous ruling of ECHR's Grand Chamber of 17 judges, including the judge representing Azerbaijan, on May 29, 2019.

The case involves Azerbaijan's imprisonment of political activist Ilgar Mammadov who was charged with criminal offenses and placed "in pre-trial detention in 2013 without there being any reasonable suspicion that he had committed an offense. [The European] Court considered the circumstances indicated the actual purpose of those measures was to silence or punish Mammadov for criticizing the Government [of Azerbaijan]," according to a press release by ECHR.

ECHR "found in particular that the Government [of Azerbaijan] had taken only limited steps to implement the judgment, which had not amounted to Azerbaijan acting in 'good faith' or in a manner which was in accordance with the 'conclusions and spirit' of its ruling in Mammadov's case. It concluded that Azerbaijan had failed to fulfill its obligation under the Convention to abide by the judgment," according to ECHR's press release.

On December 5, 2017, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, which is responsible for supervising the enforcement of the ECHR's judgments, referred Azerbaijan's violation back to European Court to determine whether that country had failed to abide by its 2014 judgment by not releasing Mammadov unconditionally.

After ECHR's Grand Chamber ruled on May 29, 2019 that Azerbaijan had indeed violated its 2014 judgment, ECHR referred the case back to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for consideration of further measures to be taken.

The Committee of Ministers stressed that there were fundamental flaws in the criminal proceedings against Mammadov and "called many times for Azerbaijan to release Mammadov as an essential step towards redressing the violations the [European] Court had found. However, he remained in detention for almost four years after the ECHR's judgment had become final on 13 October 2014, until his conditional release on 13 August 2018, following the initiation of the infringement proceedings. In March 2019 [Azerbaijan's] Supreme Court, after reducing his sentence, found he had served his time in full and set aside the probation order and other conditions on his release," according to ECHR's Grand Chamber.

Here is the background of Mammadov's case as described by ECHR's press release: He was born in 1970 and lives in Baku. He is a political blogger and activist who had also announced his intention to run as president of Azerbaijan in 2013. He was placed in pre-trial detention in February 2013 after writing on his blog about disturbances in Ismayilli. Mammadov said, among other things, that people there had been reacting to the "corruption and insolence" of public officials. He was subsequently charged with organizing or actively participating in actions causing a breach of public order, and later he was accused of stirring mass disorder and resistance to or violence against public officials, posing a threat to their life or health.

Mammadov applied to ECHR on February 25, 2013, alleging that he had been arrested and detained without a "reasonable suspicion" of a criminal offence; that his right to be presumed innocent had been breached; and that he had been prosecuted for his political views and the threat he had presented to the regime as a potential presidential candidate. In March 2014, Azerbaijan's court convicted and sentenced him to seven years in prison.

In the Grand Chamber's judgment of May 22, 2014 (the first Mammadov judgment) ECHR found violations of his right to liberty and security, right to judicial review of detention, presumption of innocence, and limitation on use of restrictions on rights. The ECHR also ordered the government of Azerbaijan to pay him 20,000 euros in compensation.

The Committee of Ministers first examined the case in December 2014. It took numerous decisions and interim resolutions, highlighting the State's obligation under the Convention to adopt individual measures to put an end to any violations that had been established and to erase their consequences so as to put Mammadov in the position he would have been in if his rights had not been violated.

In October 2017, the Committee put Azerbaijan on formal notice that, in its view, it had failed to fulfill its obligation under the Convention, the first step in an infringement procedure. The Committee of Ministers in December 2017 also referred a question to ECHR on Azerbaijan's fulfillment of its obligation.

Mammadov was freed on probation in August 2018. In March 2019, Azerbaijan's Supreme Court reduced his sentence, found he had served his time in full and set aside the conditions on his release. In November 2017, ECHR found that Mammadov's trial on the same criminal charges as those criticized in its 2014 judgment had also violated his rights (the second Mammadov judgment).

If Azerbaijan continues not to comply with ECHR's judgments, it may eventually be expelled from the Council of Europe.

## Kurdish Cinema Captures the Diaspora in Film

By Jano Rosebani

THE majority of today's successful Kurdish directors learned their craft in other lands, some in Iran, but most in Europe, some with formal education in cinema, others self-taught.

Collectively they have stories to tell the world with a burning desire to be heard and a passion that exceeds the artistry of the medium. As a result, one can hardly watch a Kurdish film and not shed a tear.

The Kurdish filmmaker in essence is the ambassador of his/her people, opening a window to the world through which one can get a glimpse of the daily life, history, culture, and the suffering of the Kurds. As film critic, David Rooney, in a *Variety* review of "Jiyan" states, "Jiyan gives a human face to the massacre [of Halabja]."

Being the face and the voice of a nation are the driving force behind the passion for the cinematic art in Kurdistan.

Aside from shooting in Kurdistan, many have also seen success in turning out films in cross-cultural settings in diaspora, some with Kurdish subject matters, such as Hisham Zaman's "Winterland" (2007), a Kurdish love story set in Oslo, Norway; Hiner Saleem's "Vive la Mariée... et la Libération du Kurdistan" (1998), a romantic comedy about arranged marriage set in Paris; and Sahim Omer Kalifa's "Zagros" (2018) about a Kurdish woman finding refuge in Brussels after being accused of adultery.

Other films involve non-Kurdish stories, such as Saleem's "Beneath the Rooftops of Paris" based on true events during the heatwave that perturbed many of the elders of that city; my debut feature "Dance of the Pendulum" (1995), a parody of Hollywood B movies set in the Hollywood Hills, California; and most recently, Karzan Kader's "Trading Paint" (2019) about a racecar driver starring John Travolta. Inversely, in "Chaplin of the Mountains" (2013) I brought foreign actors to Kurdistan, where Kurdish, American, and French characters roam the Kurdistan countryside.

As for films on Kurds by other than Kurds, "Zaré" by Soviet Armenian director Hamo Beknazarian (also known as Hamo Beknazarov and Amo Bek-Nazaryan) (1927) tops the list.

In the first installment of this series I identified "Yol" as being the first Kurdish film to gain international recognition (Cannes, 1982) albeit being in Turkish language. "Zaré" actually carries the title of being the very first Kurdish film.

It was made in the silent screen era in Tbilisi, Georgia. It depicts a Kurdish Yazidi love story between Zaré (Maria Tenaz) and Seydo (Herashia Nersisyan) who struggle for their right to a happy life.

"Zaré" was followed by another silent film, "Kurds-Yazidis" (1933) by Amasi Martirosyan about the establishment of a collective farm in a Kurdish village in the Soviet Armenia. Both films are preserved at the National Film Archives of Armenia.

There have also been a handful of films about Kurds in Iran in the 1960s and onward, among them "Dalahoo" (Siyamak Yasami, 1967), lensed in the Dalaho mountain of Kermanshah.

Other films include "Sadeq The Kurd" (Naser Teghviri, 1972), "Abu Jasim the Lor," "The Kurdish Girl," "Husain the Kurd," and "Kurdistan Horsemen." These films, like most other films out of Middle East, are either cheap thrills, B-movie actioners, or inflated melodramas.

The most peculiar among them is the Bollywood flick "The Lor Girl" (1933) lensed in Bombay by Khan Bahadur Ardashir Irani. It depicts the Kurdish province of Loristan as a place of thugs and robbers.

Interestingly, although made in India, "The Lor Girl," also

## BEING THE FACE AND THE VOICE OF A NATION ARE THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE PASSION FOR THE CINEMATIC ART IN KURDISTAN.

known as "The Iran of Yesterday and the Iran of Today," was the first sound film ever to be produced in the Persian language.

Contrary to those early B-movies, more recent arthouse Iranian films of the past two decades place Kurds in a better light, such as Abbas Kiarostami's "The Wind Will Carry Us" (1999) and Samira Makhmalbaf's "Blackboards" (2000) among others.

As for films from the West, aside from occasional television documentaries, the only feature film that surfaces is Germany's "Wild Kurdistan" (Franz Josef Gottlieb, 1965) — a war actioner that builds on exoticism and parades Kurds and other oriental groups of the Ottoman Times/WWI era as what the title alludes to.

Meanwhile Kurd artists have contributed a good deal to the cinemas of the ruling states, especially in Iraq and Turkey. Despite not owning a cinema industry of her own, Iraqi helmers have had their share in spewing melodramas of their own along with a few propaganda pics.

A handful of the films were produced by Kurds in the 1960s and 70s, albeit in Arabic and with no relation to Kurds — as Kurdish art and literature was commonly suppressed by the Baath regime.

Among the films spawned by Kurds are "The Rose" (Yahya Faiq, 1956); Kamiran Husni's "Saeed Afandi" (1957) and "The

Marriage Project" (1960); Hikmet Labeeb's "Basra at 11 O'clock" (1963) and "Autumn Leaves" (1964); and Abduljabar Wali's "Regret" (1954) among others.

Notwithstanding, there were also some attempts at Kurdish production, such as Yahya Faiq's flirt with the saga of "Mem and Zin" and a film about the legendary "Kawa, the Blacksmith" by Georgis Yusif. However, neither of the films came to fruition due to road blocks by the regime.

The one Kurdish film that saw the light of day is an obscure "Nergiz, the Bride of Kurdistan" by Jafar Ali. Reportedly its short-lived production began on the day Saddam entered Kuwait in August 1990, then resumed later in the liberated part of Kurdistan to be completed in 1993.

Notwithstanding, like their Iranian and Turkish counterparts, the Iraqi titles in general were no ground-breakers. They are rather over-acted parochial melodramas.

Other films worthy of note made in the dawn of Kurdish cinema are the award-winning "A Song for Beko" (Nizamettin Aric, 1992) lensed in Armenia, and "Tunnel" (Mahdi Omed, 1993), made in Tajikistan.

In Turkey as well many of the homegrown films of the past century were helmed by Kurds and Kurdish films had to be made in the Turkish language. Filmmakers included Yilmaz Guney, Yilmaz Arsalan, and Serif Goren among innumerable others.

Today many if not most Kurdish films of the North continue to be recorded in Turkish for discernible reasons, and only those in exile have the luxury of using their mother tongue in their motion pictures without getting into hot water. However, for reasons inexplicable, some diaspora directors continue to script and record their films in Turkish.

Another astounding fact is that a few of our colleagues from various regions of Kurdistan avoid presenting their works with the Kurdistan label in spite of being financed by and produced in Kurdistan. Though their reasoning is often related to marketability, I find it bewildering, inexplicable, and inexcusable.

I find it imperative to close this segment and my take on the short history of Kurdish cinema series with an issue I faced in 2015. When the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) selected "One Candle, Two Candles" as a runner for the Golden Globe Award, they listed it as an Iraqi film. I struggled to have that changed to a 'Kurdistan selection' and after considerable back and forth they agreed to the change.

By doing this I am in no way being anti-Iraq, but rather giving my work its righteous identity. In fact all films made in the Kurdistan Region, mine included, are listed as Iraqi films on Wikipedia, and appropriately so, but as Kurd filmmakers representing an oppressed nation it is crucial that we stand cool-headed, for promoting the Kurdish identity is one with, and inseparable from, promoting our right to live as a distinctive nation.

(Jano Rosebani is an American-Kurdish scriptwriter, director, producer, and editor associated with Kurdish New Wave cinema. This is the third part of a four-part series about the history of Kurdish cinema. This commentary originally appeared in the website Rudaw on June 2.)





# 8 Residents of Los Angeles Arrested in Check-Kiting Scheme that Allegedly Defrauded Banks Out of Nearly \$1.5 million

LOS ANGELES – Federal authorities on May 30 arrested eight people named in a federal grand jury indictment that alleges check-kiting schemes that used hundreds of altered Armenian passports to fraudulently open bank accounts and steal nearly \$1.5 million from Bank of America and Wells Fargo. A ninth defendant in this case is currently being sought by authorities.

The investigation led by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) found that the defendants obtained genuine Armenian passports issued to other people, altered the passports to include the photos of the defendants, and used the fraudulent documents to obtain other identity documents and to open bank accounts at the victim banks.

The 36-count indictment unsealed on May 30 alleges that the defendants used the bank accounts, which were opened in the names that appeared on the altered passports, to write bad checks to other fraudulently obtained bank accounts. The defendants allegedly exploited bank rules that allowed them to transfer money from one account to another, and then to immediately withdraw funds at ATMs in Las Vegas casinos and other locations before the checks bounced.

The indictment alleges that the defendants used 331 fraudulently altered Armenian passports to steal, or attempt to steal, \$1,556,336 from Bank of America. They actually

obtained approximately \$1.12 million.

Three of the defendants were also charged with perpetrating a similar fraud scheme against Wells Fargo that resulted in a loss of approximately \$370,000.

The defendants arrested this morning are:

- Ara Malkhasyan, 48, of Winnetka;
- Smbat Khechumyan, 38, of North Hollywood;
- Sveta Khechumyan, 45, of Winnetka, who is Smbat's sister and the wife of Malkhasyan;
- Harutyun Petrosyants, 30, of Van Nuys;
- Artur Harutyunyan, 34, of Encino;
- Khachatur Chobanyan, 38 of Van Nuys;
- Jivan Hakhnazaryan, 49, of Van Nuys; and
- Arman Grigoryan, 37, of North Hollywood.

The ninth defendant in this case – Artak Okhoyan, 29, of Burbank – has agreed through his attorney to surrender to federal authorities tomorrow.

The defendants were arraigned on the indictment in U.S. District Court in downtown Los Angeles.

The indictment charges all of the defendants with conspiracy to commit bank fraud, a charge that carries a statutory maximum penalty of 30 years in federal prison. Additionally, all of the defendants are charged in at least one substantive count of bank fraud and aggravated identity theft.

# Diocese's Khrimian Lyceum Holds Its 2019 Graduation

NEW YORK – More than 120 guests—including students, alumni, and families—attended an Azkatroshm ceremony at New York's St. Vartan Cathedral on Saturday, May 11, during which five students graduated from the Khrimian Lyceum: the "Armenian cultural immersion" program of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.

Cathedral Vicar Fr. Mesrop Parsamyan led the service, where talented graduates pledged to continue their educational journeys in the Armenian Christian tradition.

Faculty member Diramayr Shakeh Kadehjian led the formal Azkatroshm procedure, whereby each graduates, accompanied by a sponsoring azkahayr and azkamayr, was "sealed" in the Armenian national identity. The Khrimian Lyceum chorus sang sharagans conducted by Maria Sahakyan, accompanied by Jeanette Chirikdjian on the organ.

On behalf of Diocesan Primate Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Parsamyan presented each graduate with special gift: a copy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's "Armenia!" exhibition catalogue. In his accompanying remarks, Parsamyan spoke about the precious value of one's mother tongue, and underscored the importance of the Khrimian Lyceum as a way of "immersing" young Armenians in their inherited culture and identity.

Armenian Studies department director Gilda Buchakjian Kupelian presented diplomas and awards to the graduates.

## Treasure of the Diocese

Following the ceremony, students and guests adjourned to the cathedral's outdoor plaza, for a Dagho Dagham cultural program dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the births of Komitas Vartabed and Hovhannes Toumanyan. Khrimian students sang songs by Komitas and Charles Aznavour, and performed a Toumanyan play directed by Vartan Garniki.

The Khrimian students also put on a dance exhibition choreographed by Naira Mkrtchyan, presented literary pieces, and displayed their artwork celebrating Armenian women artists. The program, as well as the students' self-published yearbook, were done under the guidance of teachers Ani Essayan, Sirvart Arakelian and Lucia Vorperian.

The day's guest of honor, author Vehanoush Tekian, addressed the students as the heirs of Komitas and Toumanyan, and advised them to uphold their Armenian Christian identity, to continue learning, to be discerning, judicious, and well prepared to serve the community and mankind.

After congratulating the students and commending the teachers for their efforts, Gilda Kupelian spoke about the spiritually and culturally enriching mission of the Khrimian Lyceum, calling it "one of the treasures of our Diocese." The program is designed specifically for teens, and meets once a month at the Diocesan Center.

Khrimian Lyceum's 2019-20 academic year will begin on Saturday, September 28. For information, e-mail Gilda Kupelian at [gildak@armeniandiocese.org](mailto:gildak@armeniandiocese.org).

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