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NEWS IN BRIEF

Armenia's Eurasian Accession: Security Guarantee the Game Changer

By Pietro A. Shakarian

YEREVAN (Hetq) – On October 10, Armenia officially joined the Eurasian Customs Union. It was more than a year ago that the country made its fateful decision to join the Moscow-backed union and

to turn down a potential association agreement with the European Union (EU).

The decision by the Armenian government has sparked debate in Armenian society about the respective benefits of the two rival blocs. It is true that Armenians have long sought to integrate their country with Europe and, like their northern neighbors the Georgians, they

point to long historical associations with Europe. These include their shared Christian roots, the left-to-right directionality of the Armenian alphabet, contacts between the old Armenian kingdoms and the West, and even the very personality of Charles Aznavour. In fact, to an Armenian or Georgian, the idea of possibly joining see EURASIA, page 2

Baku Furious Over French Karabagh Visit

BAKU (RFE/RL) – Azerbaijan is irate over a French mayor's visit to the breakaway Nagorno-Karabagh region.

The Foreign Ministry in Baku said the October 4-6 visit by the mayor of the French town of Bourg-les-Valence, Marlene Mourier, was a "provocation" ahead of a meeting between the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia in Paris later this month.

The ministry's spokesman Hikmat Hajiyev said the visit, and the signing of a Friendship Declaration between Bourg-les-Valence and the town of Shushi in Nagorno-Karabagh, ran "contrary to French laws and the mediation activity of France."

Artsakh and Belgian Universities Sign Cooperation Agreement

STEPANAKERT (Hetq) – On October 13, the Artsakh State University and Belgium's Catholic University of Leuven signed a Declaration of Cooperation in Stepanakert.

The Declaration was signed in the NKR by Rector of the Artsakh State University Manush Minasyan and in Belgium, by Rector of the Catholic University of Leuven Rik Torfs.

The Catholic University of Leuven was represented in Stepanakert by Bernard Coulie, the university's honorary rector, professor and member of the Europe-Armenia Advisory Committee.

Armenian Killed in Azerbaijan Buried

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Karen Petrosyan, the 31-year-old who had been taken hostage and killed the next day by Azerbaijan last month, was buried on October 13 in his home village Chinari. The head of the Chinari community Samvel Saghoyan told Armenpress that the entire village attended the burial ceremony. He added that the members of Petrosyan's family are experiencing severe psychological trauma.

"They seem to have suffered the death of their son for the second time," said Saghoyan.

Petrosyan, who lived in a border village in Armenia, was taken captive on August 7 after mistakenly appearing in the territory of Azerbaijan. Shocking images of him being dragged by masked soldiers were distributed to the media by authorities in Azerbaijan, in which Petrosyan was being forced to beg for forgiveness from the president of Azerbaijan. The next day, the Defense Ministry announced that he had "suddenly" died of "heart failure." The circumstances surrounding the death raised serious doubts as to the cause of the death.

On October 10 Azerbaijan returned his body.

New Wave of Opposition Protests

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – For the third time in three years, the Armenian opposition has announced the start of a nationwide campaign to bring about regime change, or at least wrest significant political concessions from the country's leaders. Whether this attempt to bring about what one leading figure termed "a velvet revolution as a result of peaceful popular pressure" will succeed where the previous two failed is questionable, however.

At the height of the "Arab Spring" of 2011, the Armenian National Congress (HAK) headed by former President Levon Ter-Petrosian convened a series of four protest demonstrations in Yerevan to demand pre-term parliamentary and presidential elections.

Ter-Petrosian never recognized the legality of the presidential ballot three years pre-



An opposition rally held in the town of Abovian is just one of several Armenian antigovernment protests planned in the coming weeks.

viously, in which, according to official returns, he polled just 21.51 of the vote compared to 53 percent for then Prime Minister Serge Sargsisian.

The 2011 protests mobilized up to 35,000 people. But, for reasons that were never clarified, Ter-Petrosian failed to capitalize on that manifestation of mass support: He advocated "caution" rather than "pushing the authorities into a corner." The talks the HAK subsequently embarked on with representatives of Sargsisian's Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) ended in deadlock.

In the spring of 2014, a year after Sargsisian's re-election for a second term, see PROTESTS, page 16

President Participates in Erebuni-Yerevan 2796 Celebration

YEREVAN – President Serge Sargsisian, accompanied by the mayor of Yerevan Taron Margaryan, on October 12 toured the capital, which is celebrating its 2796th anniversary. He watched a number of events devoted to the celebration held in different administrative districts of Yerevan and talked to the people participating in the celebration. The Armenian president attended a solemn opening ceremony of a park located between Nalbandyan and Hanrapetutyun Streets on the capital's main avenue. The president was presented the works implemented in a territory that has been neglected and dilapidated for decades, as a result of which about 13200 sq. km. of entertainment area has been put in good order. The entrance of the entertainment area has been accommodated for residents with disabilities and ramps have been built. The entertainment area has been fully equipped with a new outdoor lighting system and fountain systems, has been landscaped and is furnished with new benches, pavilions and attractions.

see CELEBRATION, page 2

YerazArt Artists Soar on Belmont Hill

BELMONT, Mass. – The quiet of Belmont Hill was shattered on Saturday, October 4, not by a wild party, but by two musically gifted performers from Armenia and an enthusiastic crowd at a fundraiser and concert for YerazArt.

Soprano Mane Galoyan and classical guitarist Lilit Mardiyan thrilled the more than 80 supporters of YerazArt, who had gathered at the home of Ani and Nelson Stepanian. The two were accompanied by pianist Nune Hakobyan.

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

Ani Stepanian added, "Being from Gumri, I appreciate the work YerazArt does for young Armenians in the provinces. We are happy to support these musicians."

YerazArt Executive Board Chair Nicole Babikian Hajjar thanked the members of the committee and the guests for attending. She also told the audience about the success of the previous year's soloist, Diana Adamyan, who has attended master classes thanks to YerazArt and has been invited to participate on a full see YERAZART, page 12



Lilit Mardiyan performs while Katrina Menzgian and Araz Arslanian listen.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Bako Sahakyan and Ara Abrahamyan Participate In Opening of School

STEPANAKERT (Armenpress) – On October 14, President of Artsakh Republic Bako Sahakyan met with the delegation of the Armenian Union of Russia headed by its president, Ara Abrahamyan.

Issues related to the implementation of different projects in Artsakh were discussed during the meeting.

Sahakyan praised the role of the Armenian Union of Russia and the World Armenian Congress in strengthening the Motherland - Diaspora ties, developing Artsakh and maintaining Armenian national identity.

Sahakyan and Abrahamyan participated in opening ceremony of the new building of N 6 School of Stepanakert.

Araks Mansuryan's Gift To Her Brother for His 75th Birthday

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – On the occasion of the 75th birthday of composer Tigran Mansuryan, Greek, Chinese and Australian performers will take part in the concerts in Yerevan and Stepanakert. They will perform in Armenian the Mansuryan's vocal series with the lyrics of the writers Kuchak, Teryan and Sahyan.

His sister, noted opera singer Araks Mansuryan, made the announcement about the concerts at a press conference this week. All the performers will be her former students.

"I wanted that on the occasion of my brother's birthday, my pupils perform. For me it was a great idea," she said, adding that for her foreign pupils it was quite hard to learn Armenian but nevertheless they accepted the proposal with great pleasure.

President Welcomes Serbian Counterpart

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – At the invitation of President Serge Sargisian, President Tomislav Nikolic of the Republic of Serbia arrived in the Republic of Armenia on an official visit on October 10. The official welcoming ceremony of the Serbian president took place on October 11 at the Armenian Presidential Palace, followed by a private meeting between the two countries' presidents.

Welcoming the dignitary, Sargisian underscored the deep roots of Armenian-Serbian friendship, which are the basis for deepening and strengthening present interstate relations. Sargisian expressed the hope that the visit of the Serbian president will give a new stimulus to promoting political dialogue and bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

Nikolic thanked Sargisian for the warm reception and noted that since his election as president of Serbia, he has attached great value to developing Armenian-Serbian relations, the current level of which, according to Nikolic, is unsatisfactory. The Serbian president assured that his country would make the maximum possible effort to strengthen Armenian-Serbian interstate ties and deepen cooperation. At end of the meeting, Sargisian awarded Nikolic the Order of Glory, while Nikolic reciprocally awarded Sargisian the Order of the Republic of Serbia.

Stepanakert Hosts Harvest Festival

STEPANAKERT – The Harvest Festival that took place over the weekend of October 11-12 in Stepanakert's Renaissance Square was a big success by anyone's standards. Organized by the Artsakh Ministry of Agriculture, some 400 vendors plied their wares to hundreds of visitors. More than half the vendors were from the district of Kashatagh. The ministry allocates free diesel fuel to farmers to transport their produce to the market. Meat was a big seller this year.

Armenia's Eurasian Accession

EURASIA, from page 1

the EU represents the culmination of a centuries-long quest for Europe.

However, even though an Armenian or Georgian nationalist would never admit this, it was the Russian Empire in the 19th century that effectively reconnected both Georgia and, at least, eastern Armenia with Europe directly for the first time since the Middle Ages.

Today, Russia continues to play a major role in Armenia's economic and energy sectors. However, the most significant factor in the Russo-Armenian relationship is security. Russia maintains a military base in Gumri and it guards the country's borders with Iran and Turkey. It was Russia that served as a deterrent against a possible Turkish incursion against Armenia during the war over Nagorno Karabagh in the 1990s.

Russia's position as Armenia's security guarantor remains. It continues to act as a deterrent to Turkey, but perhaps even more significantly, to neighboring Azerbaijan as well. Baku, and its authoritarian leader Ilham Aliyev, continue to threaten Armenia's national existence on a daily basis.

In fact, the arrangement is beneficial not only for Armenia, but for Russia as well. Moscow needs Armenia as part of its security structure and views both Armenia and Georgia as its traditional pillars in the Caucasus as fellow Christian countries. With the recent turn of Georgia toward Western structures, the significance of Armenia in the region has only increased, though Moscow hopes to also lure back Tbilisi. Ongoing concerns regarding Islamic rebels in the North Caucasus and ISIS in Iraq and Syria, combined with Western efforts to expand NATO, have only increased Moscow's need for a regional security strategy. Armenia plays a key role in this.

In contrast, even though the EU offers Armenia infrastructural improvements and institutional reforms, it is not a "magic bullet" for Yerevan. In fact, the EU is still struggling in its recovery from the Eurozone crisis and cannot afford to over-expand itself without threatening the very viability of the European project.

The economies of its newest East European member states - Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia - have performed horribly since the financial crisis began.

All of this indicates that the EU is no guarantee for the automatic improvement of Armenia's state institutions. Simply joining the EU does not make a society "democratic." It must ultimately go through this process on its own. Consequently, democratization does

not depend solely on outside forces like Brussels as much as it ultimately does with the people of Armenia.

There are demographic concerns with the EU too. Since joining, many of the new Eastern European member states have experienced massive emigrations to the more developed Western countries. Proponents of the EU point to earlier examples, such as Ireland, and argue that such a phenomenon is merely temporary.

However, since the Eurozone crisis, there are indications that these emigrants are not returning, especially because there are so few employment opportunities in their native countries. The emigration rate has been particularly high in the Baltic states, especially Latvia, which is facing a demographic crisis. A common joke among Latvians is that when "the last Latvian leaves Riga International Airport, he or she should not forget to turn off the light." Birthrates are also low in much of Eastern Europe, while in Russia they are actually on the rise.

Even more alarmingly, the Eurozone crisis and the major rise of unemployment have triggered a mass emigration of southern Europeans from Greece, Portugal, Spain and Italy to the more prosperous West and North, again, without any immediate signs of return. For Armenia, a country already experiencing a problem with emigration, it is difficult to imagine how opening the door to Western Europe will help the country. Large numbers of Armenians would pack their bags and leave for the West, many never to return to their homeland.

Most significantly, the EU lacks security mechanisms to help Armenia in the case of an attack by its neighbors. Even if it did, Brussels is too far away, whereas Russia is not only ready and willing to protect Armenia's security, but is also in a geographic position to do so. In the end, while faraway Western Europe may have a marginal interest in Armenia, Russia and its President Vladimir Putin would be willing to pay any price to keep Armenia in its security structure.

Therefore, it is increasingly clear that given Yerevan's geopolitical position, its simultaneous pursuit of both the EU Association Agreement and the Moscow-backed Eurasian Union was likely a gambit by President Serge Sargisian in order to secure the best possible terms for Armenia.

Judging by the body language at Sargisian's Moscow meeting with Putin, at which his decision to join the Eurasian Union was initially announced, this seems to be the case.

Indeed, it is far more likely than the standard narrative by the Western media and pro-Western Armenian oppositionists who claim that Putin simply "pressured" Armenia to join its Eurasian project.

Instead, it is more probable that Moscow put forward a deal of enhanced security guarantees for Nagorno Karabagh, which along with Armenia itself is constantly being threatened by Azerbaijan. This would explain why Sargisian, himself a Karabagh native, was grinning at the Moscow meeting, as if he had won concessions from Moscow. He did not appear to be a man under pressure and, in fact, seemed quite pleased.

After Yerevan made its initial announcement in September regarding its decision to pursue the Eurasian Union, six days later, Georgia's Bidzina Ivanishvili announced too that Tbilisi may consider joining the Eurasian Union, provided that it be "advantageous for our country." His statement was followed by a promising thaw in Russo-Georgian relations.

However, interrupted by the crisis in Ukraine, that summit was postponed indefinitely.

Meanwhile, officials in Yerevan moved quickly to ensure the rapid accession of Armenia into the Eurasian Union. However, the process was slowed by the fact that Armenia does not share a common border with the Customs Union and thus had to seek special economic concessions from Moscow. Additional complications arose when Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev raised concerns about the lack of a clear boundary between Armenia and Karabagh, insisting that a customs post had to be erected. Primarily concerned with maintaining and securing its position in the Caucasus, Moscow acted as the chief advocate for Armenia in its Eurasian accession process, compromising with Astana and ensuring that Yerevan would ultimately enter the union.

Yet, this saga is not over. If the Caucasus is to find peace and stability, then Russia and Georgia need to come to the table and begin talks. Only after Tbilisi and Moscow are reconciled can there be real security and stability in the region, not just for Moscow, Yerevan, and Tbilisi, but for the international community as well.

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President Participates in Erebuni-Yerevan 2796 Celebration

CELEBRATION, from page 1

Afterwards, the Armenian president attended an opening ceremony of the memorial complex of St. Mary the Virgin Church and the Fridtjof Nansen Museum, named after the Norwegian polar explorer, scientist, diplomat, prominent humanitarian and Nobel Prize laureate. The memorial includes about 30 monuments and cross-stones dedicated to the heroic and tragic pages of the Armenian history, eminent Armenians and friends of the Armenian people.

In the course of this holiday, Sargisian toured the area next to the Alexander Spendiaryan State Academic Opera and Ballet Theater, watched the photo pavilions "Three times," the national dances at the "Yerevan Round Dance" in Freedom Square and talked to celebrators in Northern Avenue. In the evening he and his wife were to attend the gala concert "Yerevan My Home" held within the framework of the same Erebuni-Yerevan 2796 celebration in Republic Square.



Performances took place at the celebration.



INTERNATIONAL

Anadolu Group Launches \$200 Million Hydro-Electric Plant in Javakhk; Electricity Destined for Turkey

By Kristine Aghalaryan

TBILISI (Hetq) – The Turkish-based multinational Anadolu Group officially launched the operation at its \$200 million Paravani hydro-electric plant in the Armenian-populated Javakhk region of Georgia.

On hand at the official opening of the 87-megawatt plant, the energy of which is to be exported to Turkey, were Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili and Turkish Energy Minister Taner Yildiz.

The Paravani hydro plant is the largest built in Georgia in the past 35 years.

In his remarks Garibashvili noted that the plant is yet another example of the close cooperation between Georgia and Turkey.

Anadolu Group's official website also praises the opening of the plant noting - "In the history of Turkish Republic, this is the first investment that uses the natural resources of a neighboring country to fulfill energy demand of Turkey."

Georgia Urban Energy LLC, based in

Tbilisi, and which operates as a subsidiary of Anadolu Endüstri Holding A.S., constructed the Parvani power plant (located on the river of the same name), located between the settlements of Ahalkalak and Khertvisi about 30-40 Km from the Turkish-Georgian Border in the southeast of Ahaltsikhe in the west of the Tbilisi in Georgia.

According to the Georgian State registry, Georgia Urban Energy is 90-percent owned by the Anadolu Caucasus Energy Iatimlar (a company of Anadolu Group) and the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development owns the remainder. The bank loaned the money for the plant's construction.

The Georgian government signed a Memo of Understanding with Georgian Urban Energy on May 29, 2007. Construction commenced in 2010.

In addition to the potential environmental impacts during the construction phase, the Report lists the following potential environmental risks during the plant's operation - soil pollution, water pollution, impact of fish movement, impact on terrestrial vegetation, decrease of fish species due to reduced flow downstream of the weir, damage to surrounding fauna (birds/bats) due to noise generated by transmission line and the creation of an electromagnetic field by the transmission line.

During the public hearings held in 2009 in Aspindza and Akhalkalaki, company representatives gave assurances that the plant would not pose any threat to Lake Parvani, since it was 56 kilometers

downstream, and that the plant would ensure an environmentally sustainable outflow.

As for the potential socio-economic impacts, on the plus side the Report notes a steady power supply, the possibility of employment, and a possible reduction use of local wood resources.

The Report does not conceal the possible negative health effects of the transmission line to neighboring communities.

When an Akhalkalak community leader asked if local residents would be getting cheaper energy rates due to the plant, Georgian Urban Energy Executive Director Nodar Kurtanidze responded the plant would be connected to the Georgian electricity grid but that the company had nothing to do with setting utility rates.

In his remarks at the official opening, Garibashvili also noted that Turkey was one of the largest investors in Georgia, especially in the hydroelectric plant construction sector, adding that such development would bring jobs to the region.

But the number of new jobs is tiny. According to the initial plan, 20 full time and 10 security jobs were promised. Jobs as engineers would go to professionals brought in from Turkey. This is a drop in the bucket for Javakhk with a population of 208,000.

In effect, a Turkish multinational has been given the green light to utilize the natural resources of Javakhk for a huge hydro-electric plant that poses real health and environmental risks, and in return local Armenians might get a job or two.

Turkey Won't Embark on Adventure in Syria: PM Davutoglu

ANKARA (*Hurriyet*) – Turkey will not embark on an "adventure" in Syria without certain agreements from the international community, Prime Minister Davutoglu said, reiterating Ankara deems establishing safe havens and no-fly zones in northern Syria as a must for Turkish participation in the international coalition.

"Turkey will not embark on an adventure [in Syria] at the insistence of some other countries, unless the international community does what is necessary and introduces an integrated strategy," Davutoglu told his ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) parliamentary group on October 14. His remarks came as Turkish and US military officials are scheduled to launch talks on Turkey's contribution to the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Turkey is under pressure to allow the coalition forces to use its military bases and airspace, but Ankara has placed a number of conditions on giving this permission.

"We don't approve of one-dimensional policies," Davutoglu added, again underlining the government's position that permanent peace in the region will only be brought if the Bashar al-Assad regime is toppled. He said Turkey could only contribute to the international coalition if the coalition agrees to establish a safe haven and a no-fly zone in Syria.

"It should not be misunderstood, we are not talking about a buffer zone in the military sense, but a security zone in which those who flee violence, bombs and chemical attacks can find shelter," Davutoglu said, urging the international community that the number of refugees could increase as a result of air bombardment. "Turkey is not seeking to establish a buffer zone for its own interests, but a security zone for civilians and humanitarian purposes," he stressed in a joint press conference with visiting Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

President hosts Catholicos and Patriarch Of Syriac Orthodox Church

YEREVAN – President Serge Sargsian this week hosted Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians and Moran Mor Ignatius Aphrem II, the leader of the Syriac Orthodox Church and Patriarch of Antioch and All the East.

Welcoming the Patriarchs of the Armenian Apostolic and the Syriac Orthodox Churches, the Armenian President attached importance to developing relations between the two sister churches and promoting cooperation. Sargsian expressed hope that the visit of the Patriarch of the Syriac Orthodox Church will give a new stimulus to conducting constructive dialog between the two sister churches.

The interlocutors agreed that rooted in the same Christian tradition, the Armenian and Syriac sister churches have been operating side by side for centuries, making a unique contribution to strengthening ties between the two friendly peoples. They attached great value to further reinforcing friendly relations between the Armenian and Syriac

peoples and churches having deep historical roots and considered the visit of the Patriarch of the Syriac Orthodox Church as a mutual desire to enhance ties.

The Patriarch of the Syriac Orthodox Church said he was happy to be in the country as he has always enjoyed a close friendship with the Armenian people and the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Touching upon the difficult situation in the Middle East, particularly in Syria, the participants noted that both the Armenian and Syriac peoples feel despondent because Syria is a second homeland to numerous Armenians and Syriacs.

Sargsian said that since the beginning of the crisis, Armenia has hoped for a rapid peaceful resolution based on nationwide dialogue and it is doing its best to make a modest contribution to that by permanently speaking out against the barbarities of Islamic extremists towards religious and national minorities as a result of the crisis in the Middle East.

Germany Follows What Turkey Will Do on Armenian Genocide

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – German Ambassador to Armenia Reiner Morell this week said that his country is preparing for the commemoration of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide on April 24, 2015 and discussed how and where to take part in the events.

Morell said: "At the same time Germany follows with interest what steps Turkey will take on this occasion. The president of the Republic of Armenia, Serge Sargsian, has already sent out invitations to participate in the events devoted to the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide on April 24,

2015. Germany has not yet decided with what format, where and how it will take part in the events. Discussions are being held on this. I would like to mention one more thing. Recently Serge Sargsian highlighted the issue of the Genocide at the United Nations General Assembly and expressed gratitude to the countries which have recognized the Armenian Genocide. I would like to note that 10 years ago the Bundestag adopted a special bill on the Armenian Genocide. If you read that bill, you will see that the historic events are thoroughly presented there and that is quite an in-depth report."

International News

Armenians Wounded in Aleppo

ALEPPO (Armenpress) – Militants threw a barrel with gas in the Armenian New Village (Nor Kiugh) district of Aleppo at midday on October 1, according to Kantsasar Weekly, the official newspaper of the Armenian Prelacy of Peria (Aleppo). The barrel fell near an Armenian school. As a result a young Arab man was killed and two Armenians, Shahe Shahinian and Avedis Solakian, were wounded. Fortunately, they are expected to survive.

Javakhk Armenians Want Georgian Residency

TBILISI (Hetq) – A group of Javakhk Armenian intellectuals residing in Akhalkalak has sent a letter to Armenian National Assembly President Galust Sahakyan (now heading a delegation to Georgia) complaining that recent changes to Georgian residency laws have prevented many Javakhk Armenians from leading normal lives.

They point to changes that now only allow foreign citizens in Georgia to apply for a residency visa, good for just 90 days, after a three month hiatus.

In essence, the authors of the letter argue that thousands of Javakhk Armenians who renounced Georgian citizenship and received either Armenian or Russian citizenship instead (in order to travel to Russia for seasonal work after the 2008 Russo-Georgian War), can now only legally reside in Georgia for six months out of the year.

They claim that contrary to Georgian assurances that individuals in such a predicament will be easily afforded permanent residency status, thousands have had their applications rejected.

They have called on Galustyan to negotiate with Georgian authorities on the matter so that all Javakhk Armenians may be granted permanent residency.

Memorandum Signed Between Yerevan and Qazvin, Iran

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Yerevan Mayor Taron Margaryan met on October 9 with an official delegation headed by the mayor of the Iranian city of Qazvin, Masoud Nosrati. Nosrati was in Yerevan to participate in the Erebuni-Yerevan 2796 celebrations.

Yerevan's mayor thanked Nosrati for accepting the invitation to participate in the Yerevan festivity, and highlighted the centuries-long friendship between Iran and Armenia.

Defense Minister Complains about Tensions Caused by Azeri Forces

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The tension on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border is triggered by the visit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group Co-Chairs to the region and by the upcoming visit of the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Paris at the end of October, Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Ohanyan stated at a meeting with lecturers and students of the French University of Armenia.

"Tension has been observed on the border prior to different-level meetings within the negotiation process. There are snipers on the front line from the side of the opponents, who violate the ceasefire regime. We should realize in this situation we deal with a neighbor which does not fully realize that the only way to deal with the issue is the peaceful, diplomatic way and there is no alternative. It strains the situation instead of creating an atmosphere of dialogue and trust. It is more unacceptable for us when that tension is on Armenia's border, as the conflict is in the Nagorno Karabagh Republic," said Ohanyan.



Community News

Visiting Armenian President Addresses Global Tech Conference

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – With the world embracing dramatic progress in technology with each passing day, Armenia is not only sitting at the forefront, but also advancing with its many programs.

On Friday, September 26, an all-day conference took place in New York City at the TKP Conference Center, with 120 in attendance and 33 speakers. This eighth annual meeting of high tech specialists highlighted Armenia's growing global high-tech industry. The organizers were the Republic of Armenia, the World Bank and the Incubator Foundation; sponsors included D-Link, the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) and Cronimet; partners were Mentor Graphics and PicsArt; and, supporters were the Armenian Development Agency, Armenia Fund USA (eastern), Viasphere, Digital Pomegranate and Agnian and Fainberg.

Among the attendees was President of Armenia Serge Sargisian, with an entourage of ministers and ambassadors from Armenia, including Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian, Ambassador to the United States Tigran



President Serge Sargisian at the Tech Conference in New York

Sargisian and Ambassador to the United Nations Zohrab Mnatsakanian.

Opening the discussion and reporting on recent developments was President Sargisian, who related that 11,000 people in Armenia are employed in the technology field, with the government in support of this important endeavor. He reported that Armenian IT products are purchased by foreign companies.

"A number of organizations have established their research centers in Armenia. Of greater importance for Armenia, he stated, is cooperation with the diaspora. "This year, diaspora Armenians can influence our products worldwide with new business links. Our economy is competitive. Armenia is on the map," he stated.

He said that "a small country like Armenia" has become successful because of the country's talent. "We are relying on our talent to advance in this sector." Though the tech industry has grown by 10 percent, it needs more people in order to increase this percentage, he said. "We have the demand and the interest," he noted.

The US Ambassador to Armenia John Heffernan noted that the "American role in the private sector has been critical. We are trying to find institutional linkages to deepen the Armenian work force and push it to the next level," he related. This includes digitizing other sectors in the economy which will lead to a more effective market, and changing and innovating certain areas such as banking, travel, etc. An

see ARMTECH, page 6



Hokedun, Aleppo (photo courtesy Semerdjian)

Glorious Past, Uncertain Future

Semerdjian Lectures on The Armenian Presence in Aleppo

BELMONT, Mass. – The terrible torment of the Syrian Armenians is frequently in the news, at least in the Armenian media, recently, but few know much about the history of the Aleppo Armenian community. Dr. Elyse Semerdjian, a specialist

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

in early modern Ottoman history and Syria, recently attempted to change this situation. She presented a PowerPoint lecture on October 9 at the Belmont, Mass., headquarter of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), providing background to the history of the community starting in the early modern period. Marc Mamigonian, NAASR's Director of Academic Affairs, introduced her, and approximately fifty to sixty people were in attendance.

Semerdjian is Associate Professor of Islamic World/Middle Eastern history at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington, and in spring 2013 she was the Ara and Edna Dumanian Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies in the Department of Near Eastern Cultures and Languages at the University of Chicago. Semerdjian is the author of "Off the Straight Path": *Illicit Sex, Law, and Community in Ottoman Aleppo* (Syracuse University Press, 2008) and several articles on gender, non-Muslims, and law in the Ottoman Empire. With a PhD in history from Georgetown University (2003), Semerdjian has received a Fulbright award twice. She has spent some eleven years working in the Syrian archives. Currently she is writing on the collective memory of the Armenian Genocide in Turkey and Syria.

Semerdjian pointed out that most Armenians think of the Aleppo Armenians as immigrants from the twentieth century. This is because some 100,000 Armenians came by 1925, so that the majority of the Aleppo Armenians indeed are relative newcomers. However, the Armenians have had a presence in Aleppo for many, many centuries. When some Syrians declare that the Armenians are newcomers to the region, it is important to remind the world that this is not true—and this is where knowledge of earlier Armenian history can come in handy.

The period in Armenian history between the 14th century collapse of the Cilician kingdom of Armenia and the rise of Armenian nationalism from the late 18th century on has remained comparatively unexplored, as, Semerdjian feels, Armenians tend to be more interested in modern history and issues that appear on the surface to be immediately relevant. This in fact was the period of Semerdjian's own research.

see ALEPPO, page 5



Dr. Elyse Semerdjian at NAASR

Cellist Elizabeth Kalfayan Brings Music and Musicians to Appreciative Audience at TCA Center

By Shoghig Chalian

ENGLEWOOD, N.J. – On Sunday afternoon, September 14, cellist and author Elizabeth Kalfayan presented an audiovisual lecture and concert to a delighted and appreciative audience, at the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) center in New Jersey.

This music program, organized by the Greater New York TCA Chapter, was introduced by Shoghig (Chalian) Tarpinian, whose opening remarks eloquently highlighted Kalfayan's achievements.

Elizabeth Kalfayan's presentation of the life and works of three Armenian musician-educators and authors – the first of its kind for the New Jersey TCA center's enthusiastic audience – left everyone wanting more.

The lecture first highlighted Constantinople-born cellist Diran Alexanian (1881-1954). Alexanian, a renowned musician and pedagogue, received his musical education in Europe's most distinguished centers. He was a prominent force in establishing a new school of cello playing in the United States, under the patronage of Pablo Casals. His book, *Technique of Violoncello Playing: A Theoretical and Practical Treatise of the Violoncello*, is considered the encyclopedia for cello playing.

Alexanian's teaching has influenced a new generation of prominent cellists throughout the world.

Iranian-born violinist Ivan Galamian, (1903-



From left: Dr. Vaghenag Tarpinian, Sirvart Demirjian, Vartan Ilanijian, Shoghig Chalian, Elizabeth Kalfayan, Hagop Vartivarian, Sarkis Paskalian and Alexander Kalfayan

1981), was raised and educated in Russia. He moved to France and taught at the Russian conservatory of Paris, where he blended the Russian school of playing with the French style of violin. In the US, Galamian was the head of the Violin Department at the Juilliard School of Music and, also taught at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. His two books, *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* and *Contemporary Violin Technique* are still guiding sources for performers and teachers. Among his notable students have been Glenn Dicterow, concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic, Ani and Ida Kavafian, Joshua Bell, Itzak Perlman and Pinchas Zukerman.

Kalfayan, introduced the audience to her two Multi Touch interactive eBooks, titled *CELLO/Play Smart From The Start, A Handbook for Advancing Virtuosity* for both intermediate and advanced players. The books constitute a complete curriculum for learning to play the cello, with detailed video instructions and more than 200 techniques to improve virtuosity and musicality. It includes original exercises and teaching techniques that Kalfayan has developed from her many years of teaching and performing experience. The eBooks are sold in 52 countries.

The program culminated with a vibrant performance of Adamian and Khachadourian compositions by Kalfayan on cello and Olga Stepanova on piano.

Having experienced this well received lecture concert, the Greater TCA New York chapter is inspired to continue to bring such high quality musical programs to our community. This center has never presented such high quality music program as this one before.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Elyse Semerdjian Lectures on 'The Armenian Presence in Aleppo'

ALEPPO, from page 4

While preparing her first book, she encountered Armenians in archival documents who had applied to *sharia* (Islamic law) courts in the early modern period. They were buying, selling and registering property, contesting the poll tax (*jizya*), appearing in criminal cases such as breaches of public morality, and in conversions to Islam. They were buying and selling slaves, silk and broadcloth.

Though some historians like Dickran Kouymjian characterized the 15-16th centuries the dark age of Armenian history, others like Avedis Sanjian called the 1550-1700 period an Armenian golden age in Syria. Sanjian focused on economic ascendancy and cultural activities such as a scriptorium in Aleppo. His study was published in 1965.

Semerdjian thought that after nearly 50 years it was time for the mantle to be picked up again, and wanted to see if she could build on Sanjian's work. She primarily has used Syrian and Ottoman archival sources, the latter from the Prime Ministry Archives in Istanbul. Though she has used some archival and published Armenian sources, she expressed her disappointment that Armenian archives, including those held by the Armenian Church, were not more accessible. She said, "I look for regional push and pull factors bringing Armenians to Aleppo in the early modern period." Economic opportunity, including trade in silk, clothes, textiles, and slaves, attracted Armenians from both the north and the east.

Semerdjian found that in fact there were six major waves of immigration to Aleppo from the early modern era to the twentieth century. The first was in the late 16th century due to climate change (the "little Ice Age" from the 1590s to 1610) and crop failures in Asia Minor/Western Armenia. Then the Ottoman-Safavid wars and in particular the fall of Julfa led Armenians to immigrate from the east. The Julfan merchants often have Persian names not easily identifiable as Armenian. At one point, they had such power that the archbishop of Aleppo was a Julfan, and even the Armenian catholicate was moved briefly to Aleppo. A third wave began in the 18th century from Ottoman Cilicia and Asia Minor. The fourth wave was due to the late 19th century massacres and persecutions under the Ottoman sultan Abdul Hamid II, the fifth due to the Armenian Genocide and its aftermath, and the sixth due to the withdrawal of the French from the district of Alexandretta (the Sancak of Iskandariya) in 1939.

When Armenians began to come in increasing numbers in the early modern period, Aleppo's Christian quarter was rapidly expanding. Semerdjian said that the city's architecture itself shifted to accommodation of trade. Institutions were established to increase the possibility of sociability inside the Christian quarter. Greek Orthodox Christians and Jews were also coming to Aleppo from Iran and Asia Minor.

Soon, Armenians from Sasun immigrated to Aleppo. They were known for breadmaking, and had their own guild, which was the sole guild named after an ethnic minority there. Arapgir Armenians became commercial agents and bankers, serving over 100 caravanserais or khans in the city. Cilician Armenians also left their mark.

Semerdjian described how Armenians in particular settled in the Judayda Quarter in relatively large numbers. It was composed originally of two neighborhoods which merged into one. Outside of the walls of the city, it was not that well protected, unlike the places where affluent Muslims lived, but Judayda became a bustling commercial zone by the sixteenth century, and by the 16-17 centuries when Armenians were there, it rivaled the inner Muslim quarters as a zone of influence and affluence.

Armenians began to play key roles in leadership in Aleppo. They were in charge of collecting the poll tax for all Christians, not just Armenians, and for 30 years, they dominated the lucrative position of customs chief. They had their own churches, including the 15th century Forty Martyrs Cathedral. According to one story, when Sultan Murad IV was passing through Aleppo in 1616, he was invited to dinner by Khoja Bedig, a wealthy Armenian merchant. The food was served on fine china plates, and after the dinner, the plates were smashed. The sultan, upset that such plates were being wasted, asked why. The answer was that no one was more worthy than the sultan to eat on them. This impressed the sultan so much that supposedly it led to the granting of permission for the brother of the host, Khoja Sanos, to renovate the cathedral. It was these two brothers who, at different times between 1610 and 1640, controlled the office of customs chief.

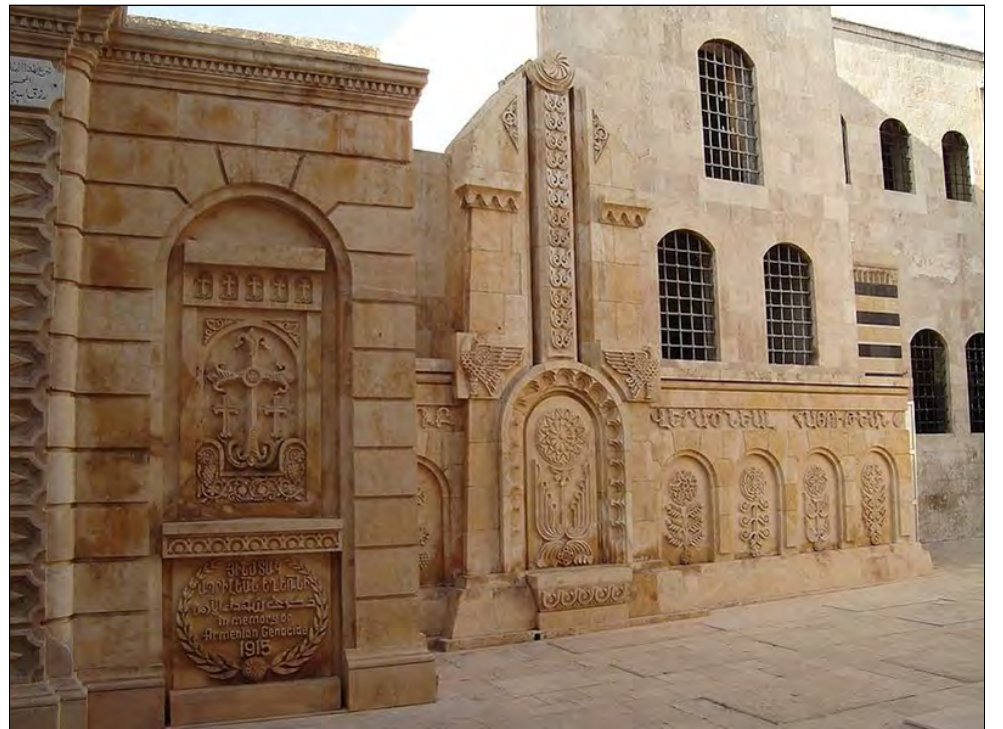
Despite all their successes, the local Armenians were still subject to the religious and social constraints of Ottoman Arab society.

Semerdjian illustrated this during the question and answer session at the end of the talk through a court case from the 17th century. Apparently, Armenian men and women had been gathering around the entrance door of the Forty Martyrs church before and after ceremonies, talking. Some Muslims complained that these mixed gender gatherings were offensive, and tried to force the Armenians to make a second door of the church to be opened so that men and women have separate entrances. The Armenians were able to obtain a fatwa or legal opinion from a mufti or qualified jurist saying

prior to the recent war that there were 100,000 Armenians in Syria. Historian Simon Payaslian estimated that in fact there were only some 57,000 Armenians prior to the 2011 uprising. Though they generally were well off, many had already left due to the oppressive regime, stagnant economy, and a desire to avoid the draft.

Semerdjian described the loss of life and structures due to rockets, bombs and attacks, and said that many neighborhoods have formed self-protection groups.

She showed a picture of the Armenian Catholic Church of the Martyrs in Raqqa, which



Armenian Genocide Memorial, Forty Martyrs Church, Aleppo (photo courtesy Semerdjian)

that the Armenians can continue to use a single door. However, the judge overruled this and sided with the Muslim neighbors. Thereafter, Armenian men and women had to use separate doors.

Semerdjian showed slides of parts of the city either named after Armenians or built by Armenians – for example, the Hokedun ("Spiritual House"), a place of rest for Armenian pilgrims going to Jerusalem, belonged to the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem and was donated by a prominent Julfan Armenian in the 17th century. Sisi Street was named after the Catholicosate of Sis. Sisi House was gentrified into a fine dining facility and hotel relatively recently, while across the street remains an Armenian orphanage run by the prelacy.

Before World War I, there were only approximately 5,000 Armenians, who were mainly Catholics and assimilated with the local Arab population. The huge influx of 100,000 due to the Genocide led to the creation of new buildings and quarters with an Armenian nature.

Semerdjian said that all these historical Armenian sites are at risk due to recent events. The Armenian Prelacy of Aleppo estimated

the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria confiscated and turned into its headquarters. When she showed a slide of the Armenian Genocide Memorial Church of Der Zor in ruins, Semerdjian exclaimed, "I'm not someone who is usually speechless, but this leaves me speechless."

Semerdjian said that there was a new suburb of Yerevan called Nor Haleb (New Aleppo) being developed by the Armenian government for Syrian-Armenian refugees. So far 16-17,000 have come to Armenia according to the government, but already at least 6,000 have left Armenia for other countries.

Semerdjian ended by raising concerns of what will happen to these new emigrants, who may not be able to stay in an Armenian environment due to the various difficulties of life in Armenia. Aleppo like Beirut is one of the major centers of the production of literature in Western Armenian. These places also produce teachers for Western Armenian. Without Aleppo, and with only Beirut, what will happen to Western Armenian in the future? Semerdjian said, "It is an emotional, tough conversation, but there is a lot at stake."

AMAA Exec. Director/CEO Khanjian, Haigazian President Haidostian Will Address Celebratory Banquet

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. – The newly-appointed Executive Director/CEO of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), Zaven Khanjian, and the President of Haigazian University in Beirut, Lebanon for the past dozen years, Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, two articulate leaders, have been asked to address the audience at the November 15 Celebratory Banquet of the AMAA and Haigazian University scheduled to take place at the Beverly Hills Hotel. The event will pay tribute to Dr. Mihran Agbabian and George R. Phillips, Esq. All four of the above-mentioned leaders have promoted education in their personal and philanthropic efforts and through their support of both institutions.

Khanjian, a businessman, author and speaker, who recently relocated from California with his wife, Sona, will travel from Paramus, NJ. Haidostian, a Haigazian graduate himself, received his Master of Divinity degree from the Near East School of Theology and Master of Theology and Doctor of Philosophy degrees

from the Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, NJ. He will come from Beirut.

Agbabian, the founding president of the American University of Armenia (September 21, 1991) and president emeritus of the same institution, and Phillips, veteran Los Angeles attorney, have served on the Boards of both the AMAA and Haigazian University. Agbabian is a world-renowned authority in seismic engineering, while Phillips specializes in tax law and estate planning.

The evening's two honorees will be introduced by Saven Tufenkian and Joyce Stein, both recipients of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor and long-time colleagues of Agbabian and Phillips through their joint affiliation with numerous philanthropic organizations.

The AMAA is directed by Zaven Khanjian from the Paramus. The West Coast director is Levon Filian and the Armenia representative is Harout Nercessian. The current President of the AMAA is Dr. Joseph Zeronian of Pasadena.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

AEF Supporters Raise \$140,000 to Build New School in Arevadasht Village

GLENDALE – The Armenian Educational Foundation (AEF) held its Donor Appreciation Dinner on September 7, at the home of Armen and Silva Golnazarians. This year, the funds raised will be used to construct a new school in Arevadasht Village in the Armavir Region of Armenia. Arevadasht is near the Turkish bor-

Cabraloff also recognized Neshan Peroomian, Armenia Projects Chair, for his hard work and effort in successfully leading AEF's school renovation projects for the last 15 years.

Peter Baghdassarian, AEF Board member, presented a short overview of the Arevadasht School and its current deplorable and unhealthy condition. An emotional video, produced by Christina Shakarian, showed the heart wrenching conditions the students of Arevadasht School currently attend classes in, and how important the new school will be for the students and staff.

In addition, George Jorjorian was honored for his support of AEF and the education of students in Armenia, Artsakh and Anjar, and for establishing a \$250,000 endowment fund to provide full

tuition scholarships to 24 students graduating from high schools in Gumri, Alaverdi, Spitak, Etchmiadzin, Dilijan, and Stepanakert.

In closing, Melody Petrossian thanked the Golnazarians for opening their home for this event. She also thanked the fundraising committee for their hard work and all the donors for their part in the success of the evening.

For more information or to make a donation, email aef@aefweb.org.



Armen & Silva Golnazarians (left) with Melody Petrossian, 2014 Fundraising Chair, and Al Cabraloff, AEF President

der and is located a few kilometers from Sardarabad.

AEF President Al Cabraloff opened the evening by thanking the Golnazarians and those present for their support. Cabraloff gave a brief update report on AEF. Some of the highlights included the completion of over 200 school renovation projects, most recently village schools in Darbas, (Lori Region), Nngi, (Artsakh) and Issakyan (Shirag Region).

Wisconsin Hye Notes

BY NAOMI BASDEKIAN ZEYTOONIAN

Wisconsin weather is so very unpredictable. We did not have much of a summer, and fall is speeding by and we are already heading for winter. The good part is we had no real high temps in the 90s and were able to stay pretty cool this summer.

In August (always the first Sunday in August) St. Mesrob hosted their annual Armenian Fest downtown at festival hall on beautiful Lake Michigan. The fest was a complete sell out this year with standing-room-only the entire day. So many items to sell and of course the food and pastries were so delicious. To add to that there were many children's games and of course live music and dancing under the big top outside. Even the boaters docked their boats and joined us for lunch etc.

Unfortunately we missed the other great picnics in the Midwest for one reason or another; St. Hagop's in Racine because we were in Boston at the time, Evanston's St. James Street Fair and Chicago's St. Gregory Armenian Church, all of which are fantastic events.

Congratulations go out to Stan Sheridan and his lovely bride, Macrina Aivazian. the wedding was performed at St. Gregory Armenian Church in White Plains. Stan attended St. Nerses and is a sub-deacon in the church and Macrina is the daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Aivazian.

Life's moments – some are happy and some are sad. We have lost several parishioners in the Racine and Milwaukee communities. We offer our sincere condolences to the families on the loss of their loved ones, Trudy Kaprelian in South Milwaukee; Katherine Kaprelian in Racine, Nazareth Kaprelian, from Racine, but more recently in Florida. Our sympathies also to our New Jersey family on the loss of their mother, sister, aunt and grandmother on the loss of Armine Sapah-Gulian. To Randy and Corrine and the entire Markarian and Sapah-Gulian families – our prayers are with you all. Here in Racine we have lost dear friends, Mary Kalashian and Anne Samuelian. Mary was the wife of the late Nazar and a real fun lady and will be sorely missed by everyone who knew her.

Anne Samuelian was the previous owner of Kelly Services, an avid golfer and former ambassador for Wisconsin for the Armenian Heritage Cruise. Our deepest sympathy to her husband, Sam, and her children Jason and Jodie and her family.

Our choir director and matron of the Daughters of Vartan, Terry Hadjinian Peterson passed away in June and she will be missed by all her otyag sisters and her many friends and family. Our sympathies to her father and brother.

St. Mesrob will sponsor a book fair at the Barnes and Noble store on October 25 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and again in December. This is a fundraiser and scrip cards can be used which earn 9 percent for the church. We have a great scrip program which is a good means of income for our parish.

While I am writing this I am looking out on Lake Michigan. It is a beautiful afternoon and the sailboats are out on the lake like a mini-flotilla and in their midst I see a pontoon boat as well. It's a gorgeous day for a sail. Oh, if only I had a boat!!

Speaking of sailing, with the forecast of a brutal winter ahead, I'm going to garage my car, pack my bag and set sail for the Caribbean on the Armenian Heritage Cruise.

The MSC Divina is a beautiful ship and there is sure to be lots of fun and great entertainment for us Hyes on board. The more the merrier and remember to find me on board !!

So come on everyone hit the high seas with the AHC.

Happy birthday and happy anniversary to all the October people and a happy fall, y'all!!!!

Visiting Armenian President Addresses ArmTech Conference

ARMTECH, from page 4

example of this, he said, is civil aviation, with flights and passengers up by 30 percent. "More jobs will be created. Though Armenia is small, diasporan Armenians can make a difference," he declared.

In addition to this first panel, other groups focused on regional development, and innovation. Levon Grigoryan, Chief of Staff of the Artsakh Republic, pointed out that IT in the country is based on its local conditions, geography and environment. It seeks to have IT development for its infrastructure, and access to international markets. Education is crucial, he said, with an IT Center founded in Artsakh to establish start-up companies and create new jobs.

The business, environmental development, tax system and the economic situation are becoming more viable, he said. The most important question for Artsakh is the military sector, he stated. "We seek your active collaboration, and we hope to host the ArmTech Congress in Artsakh in 2015," Grigoryan said.

During the panel discussion on educational research and professional development, Amalya Yeghoyan, executive director of the Gyumri Information Technologies Center

(GITC), detailed G-tech solutions with high-tech service offers.

At its launch in 2005 there was a large pool of talent in Armenia, but there was no reliable internet or computer access, as well as no qualified instructors, or concept of IT use for business, education or social life. The main priority was to build a new school and culture, she said.

Today, the achievements of GITC are plentiful, she recounted, including 140 specialists with diplomas from GITC in soft and hardware, and almost all graduates getting jobs in the industry. In Gumri alone 70 percent have been employed. Even before they graduate, 130 GITC students have found work in IT companies.

In 2013, a spin-off was opened with GITC opening its own business called G-Tech Solutions. Its goals is to find and select clients in Armenia and the U.S., and bring outsourcing businesses to G-Tech. To promote the G-Tech's potential, a "mass marketing campaign has begun in the US," she revealed. (See Armenian Mirror-Spectator, October 11 issue, page 1)

For those interested in contacting GITC/G-Tech Solutions, the address is www.gitc.am.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Altar Servers Ordained in Bayside

BAYSIDE, N.Y. — Parishioners at Holy Martyrs Church of Bayside, N.Y., welcomed Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Diocesan Primate, on Sunday, October 5, who traveled to the church to ordain young altar servers.

Barsamian celebrated the Divine Liturgy, with the Rev. Abraham Malkhasyan, parish pas-

Archbishop Barsamian also ordained nine parishioners as acolytes: Brandon Ajamian, Christopher Cetin, Armen Demirjian, Vartan Esenyan, Andrew Halajian, Gregory C. Manuelian, Robert Naldjian, Stephen Sirounian, and Andrew Yenicag.

He blessed the veils of four choir members — Hilda Haroutunian, Tamar Kayserian, Hilda Sheshedian and Meline Yaziciyan — and blessed the vestments of the parish's new choir co-director, Ruthann Turekian Drewitz.

"Beginning our quest to serve the Lord together, I never thought we would all be rewarded with the honor and responsibility of serving the Armenian Church as sub-deacons," said sub-deacon Armen Arsenian, reflecting on the training he and the other parishioners have undergone in preparation for their new vocation.

Fr. Malkhasyan has been meeting with the altar servers weekly over the past year to familiarize them with the services of the Armenian Church and to help them learn the appropriate parts of the badarak.

"I am very proud of all our altar servers and choir members," he said. "They are all dedicated individuals who have worked hard to learn our ancient rites and to continue the rich legacy of the Armenian liturgical tradition here in America."

He went on to emphasize the importance of parents encouraging their children to participate actively in the life of the church community. "These young people have accomplished so much, in part because of their parents' commitment," Malkhasyan. "They have instilled in their children our Armenian Christian values, and have served as strong role models for them."

At the conclusion of services, two longtime deacons, Hagop Sason Demirjian and Hagop Yaghiyan, received encyclicals from Karekin II,



The ordination of acolytes at Holy Martyrs Church.

tor, assisting.

Master pianist Sahan Arzruni rendered the sacred music on the organ during the Divine Liturgy.

Two parishioners — Alexander Calikyan and Karnik Kiliciyan — were ordained to the diaconate. Five others — Ara Arsenian, Armen Arsenian, Nicholas Calikyan, Vahe Gemdzian, and Arthur Ipek — became sub-deacons.



Karnik Kiliciyan (left) and Alexander Calikyan were ordained to the diaconate.

the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, in commendation of their service to the Armenian Church.

Barsamian congratulated all the parishioners who were ordained and honored on Sunday. "Today, we have been blessed to witness these young men become servants of the Lord's altar. Each has spent many months studying, practicing, and praying for this moment," Archbishop Barsamian said. "It is my humble privilege to ordain them, and I pray that their young souls will continue to grow in service to the Holy Altar."

A celebratory luncheon followed in the church's Kalustyan Hall. Among those in attendance were a number of young people from sister parishes who gathered to congratulate their friends on their ordinations.

Deacons Kiliciyan and Calikyan expressed their gratitude to the entire community for supporting them in their journey to the diaconate. Dn. Kiliciyan recently moved to the Bayside area, and has been serving on the altar for the past two years. Dn. Calikyan has spent the last few summers interning at the Diocese's Krikor

and Clara Zohrab Information Center, and has taken part in the Deacons Training program at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary.

"In the weeks leading up to my ordination, I realized that being a deacon is not just about holding a prestigious position within the



Dn. Hagop Yaghiyan receives an encyclical issued by Catholicos Karekin II.



Dn. Hagop Sason Demirjian receives an encyclical issued by His Holiness Karekin II.

Armenian Church. It also involves representation outside of the Armenian community," Calikyan said.

The Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, director of the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center, spoke about the significance of ordination. "Being ordained is not gift, but rather a responsibility to serve God, the church, and our people," he said.

Jennifer Morris, director of the Diocese's Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, was a special guest at the luncheon and spoke about the impact of the Diocese's youth programs. From summer camps to ACYOA retreats, she said that such programs help nourish the spiritual growth of young people across the Diocese.

To conclude the program, the newly ordained altar servers presented Malkhasyan with a hand cross in appreciation of his guidance.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Cheltenham Parish Marks 80 Years

By Jeanette Der Hagopian

CHELTHENHAM, Penn. — Holy Trinity Church of Cheltenham, Pa., marked the 80th anniversary of the parish's establishment last Sunday, September 28.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), celebrated the Divine Liturgy and ordained two young men to the diaconate.

Antranig Garibian and Krikor Andonian have been serving at Holy Trinity Church for years. Both grew up in the parish and are now raising their own families in the church community.

"It was a very emotional moment for me as I accepted the call to service in front of a community whom I love very dearly, and has given me so much more than I will ever be able to give back," Andonian said.

Garibian, who also serves on the Diocesan Council, said "being ordained as a deacon meant that my community was giving me a sacred trust. I felt the souls of my grandparents and loved ones with me and guiding me. It is an honor — but more so, an enormous responsibility."

Sunday's diaconate ordination was the first one at the church in 25 years, and parishioners said they look forward to seeing other young men take up the vocation in the coming years.

Archbishop Barsamian was assisted on the altar by the parish's young and energetic pastor, the Rev. Hakob Gevorgyan. Also participating in services was Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, the Diocese's Ecumenical Director. Taking part in the subsequent activities was the Very Rev. Oshagan Gulgulian, pastor of St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Church of Wynnewood.

Later that afternoon, some 400 parishioners and guests gathered for a festive banquet in the church hall. They reflected on the history of Holy Trinity Church, honored longtime parishioners, and commended the young generation of Armenians who are carrying forward the founders' vision.

Barsamian presented the St. Nersess



Clergy and altar servers pose for a group photo following services.

Shnorhali medal to Dr. Garo Garibian for his years of service to the parish and the Diocese, as well as to Holy Echmiadzin and the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

An encyclical from His Holiness Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of all Armenians, was read by Gevorgyan.

True to his humble spirit, Dr. Garibian said he was accepting the honor "on behalf of all those who have helped build and serve our church throughout the years, as well as the two newly ordained deacons."

He went on to speak about the three defining periods in the life of the parish: the arrival of the young Very Rev. Torkom Manoogian in 1946; the leadership of the Very Rev.

Haigazoun Melkonian in the 1980s and 1990s; and the new chapter begun by the parish's current pastor.

Dr. Garibian also reflected on the life of St. Nersess Shnorhali, the 12th-century Armenian catholicos who instituted major reforms in the Armenian Church, and encouraged parishioners to take inspiration from his life and work.

A second award — the St. Sahag and St. Mesrob medal — was presented to Nancy Basmajian. She currently serves as the director of Adult Christian Education at Holy Trinity Church. Prior to that, she served the Eastern Diocese for more than three decades in various capacities, including as co-director of the Department of Religious Education, program

director of St. Vartan Camp, and executive secretary of the ACYOA Seniors.

The honor was bestowed at the initiative of the Primate, and took the honoree by surprise. "If I think of myself as a symbol of all the women of faith who came before me—teachers, choir members, the women who nurtured and fed our communities, literally and figuratively—then I feel truly blessed to be able to share it with them," Basmajian said.

The program continued with the presentation of the Diocese's St. Vartan Award to five parishioners who were involved in the church since its earliest years. Harry Andonian, Albert Kapeghian, Harry Mirijanian, Jack Vishab and

continued on next page

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FEATURING
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COMMUNITY NEWS



Antranig Garibian (left) and Krikor Andonian were ordained to the diaconate by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian.

from previous page

Berj Yeretizian have all served on the parish council, as well as a number of other church committees and organizations.

Archbishop Aykazian, who visited the parish in the years when Holy Trinity Church did not have a permanent pastor, spoke about the warm and hospitable spirit of the community. He said he felt at home among the Armenians of Cheltenham, and enjoys returning to the church on various occasions.

Another highlight of the celebration was the screening of a short video overview of the parish's past and its vision for the future.

Holy Trinity Church was established in 1934, when the Armenian community of north Philadelphia first began to make plans for a permanent house of worship. The first church, located in Philadelphia, was consecrated in 1942.

Four years later, parishioners welcomed the Very Rev. Torkom Manoogian, a young priest who injected new vigor into the parish in the years following World War II. (Manoogian went on to lead the Eastern Diocese as its Primate, and later became the 96th Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem.)

In 1964, the church in Philadelphia was destroyed by fire. Services were held at the Odd Fellows Orphanage while the parish's building committee drew up plans for a new house of worship. Land was purchased in the suburb of Cheltenham, and in September 1966, the present church building was consecrated by the parish's former pastor, by that time Bishop Torkom Manoogian.

The community continued to grow in the ensuing years. Under the guidance of the late Very Rev. Haigazoun Melkonian, the ACYOA was re-energized



The day's honorees, from left, Albert Kapeghian, Harry Mirijanian, Fr. Hakob Gevorgyan, Nancy Basmajian, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Dr. Garo Garibian, and Berj Yeretizian.

Recipe

Potato and Lamb Moussaka

By Christine Vartanian Datian

"Sometimes I top this casserole with crumbled feta or diced Jack cheese before baking. I like serving it with a simple Greek salad, pita bread, and a great red wine."

Yield: 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds peeled baking potato, cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices
 1 cup chopped onion (about 1 medium)
 2 garlic cloves, chopped
 1 pound ground lamb
 1/2 cup chopped green bell pepper
 1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper
 1 cup no-salt-added tomato sauce (more to taste)
 1 teaspoon sea salt
 1 teaspoon ground cumin
 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper and dried oregano
 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 1/2 cup finely chopped fresh flatleaf parsley
 1 cup 1% low-fat milk
 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
 Feta or Jack cheese (optional)

PREPARATION

1. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Add one-third of potato slices to pan; cook 3 minutes on each side or until lightly browned. Transfer potato to bowl. Repeat procedure with cooking spray and remaining potato slices.
2. Preheat oven to 350°.
3. Recoat pan with cooking spray. Add onion, garlic, and lamb to pan; cook 3 minutes or until lamb begins to brown. Add bell peppers, tomato sauce, salt, cumin, black pepper, oregano, cinnamon, and parsley; cook 10 minutes.
4. Arrange half of potato slices in a 13 x 9-inch baking dish coated with cooking spray. Arrange lamb mixture over potatoes; top with remaining potato slices. Combine milk and eggs in a small bowl; pour over potato mixture. You can top with chopped Feta or diced Jack cheese, if desired.
5. Bake at 350° for 30-35 minutes or until top is golden and set. Remove from oven; let stand 10 minutes before serving.

This recipe by Christine Vartanian Datian originally appeared in *Cooking Light's* September 2008 issue.

and young people became increasingly involved in parish life.

Gevorgyan, who became the parish pastor in 2010, described Holy Trinity Church as a place where "our faithful find love, comfort, peace, joy, and hope." He spoke about the perseverance of the church's founders, and stressed that a new generation of Armenians must now "provide the oil—our time, our talent, and our treasure" to keep alive the flame lit 80 years ago.

"This was a day that will long be remembered

in the life of our church," said parish council vice chair Jeanette Der Hagopian. "Our parish is multi-generational and we are working together to grow in our faith and follow the teachings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

The anniversary committee was comprised of Ara Shakarjian, Nancy Basmajian, Jeanette Der Hagopian, Barbara Harmon, Leslie Movsessian, Merle Santerian, Anne Terkanian, and Lisa Viarengo. The banquet was co-chaired by Pauline Chapjian and Margo Silk.

ST. JAMES 67TH ANNUAL BAZAAR

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2014 (11 am - 9 pm)
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2014 (11 am - 9 pm)

<p>DELICIOUS ARMENIAN FOOD! (Served from 11 am to 8 pm)</p> <p>Shish, Chicken and Losh Kebab, Kheyma and Etch! Boereg, Manti, Yalanchi, Porov Kufte, Tourshi & more!</p>	<p>FABULOUS DELICACIES & PASTRIES! Choereg, Cream & Nut Khadaif, Baklava, Tahin Hatz, Simit & more!</p>
<p>BOOTHS AND VENDORS! Including the Farmer's Market, Silent Auction, Attic Treasures, Jewelry, Armenian Handcrafts, & more!</p>	<p>APPLE® RAFFLE! Win a MacBook Air, iPads, iPod Touch and more!</p>
<p>CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES! Clowns, Games, and More!</p>	<p>\$100 RAFFLE! Prizes—\$5,000, \$1,000, \$750 and three \$500 prizes! Purchase by September 26, 2014 to enter an extra \$500 early bird drawing at the September Hye Café!</p>

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3rd Annual

ARMENIAN DANCE

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- **Onnik DINKJIAN**
- **John BERBERIAN**
- **Leon JANIKIAN**
- **Bruce GIGARJIAN**
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Also featuring local sensation DJ Argishti playing Modern Armenian Pop and Techno music!

Tickets: \$40 per person (\$25 for students)
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This year's Armenian Dance is held in loving memory and honor of Mer Doon's founder, **Julie Ashkian**.

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Tables of 10 can be reserved and tickets can be purchased by calling Mark Kashgegian at **(617) 256-5358**

Arts & Living

'We Sing Church Songs' Album to Be Released

NEW YORK – Award-winning artist Nvair Kadian Beylerian, who is known professionally as Nvair, will release her latest album, "We Sing Armenian Church Songs (Badarak Hymns for Children)," on October 18.

Her latest compilation teaches the hymns of the Armenian Divine Liturgy to the younger generation. Produced by Beylerian, creator of the HYEfamily children's song series, and co-produced by educational consultant Andrea Arpiarian Carden, superintendent of the St. Leon Armenian Sunday School in Fair Lawn, NJ, the album serves to make the Armenian Divine Liturgy more accessible to children and their families. Each song is recorded in both Armenian and English and includes liner notes explaining the significance of each hymn during the church service.

"This album is about bringing our Armenian Church life into our daily lives," said Beylerian, who has a master's degree in education and has been involved in "edutainment," combining both education and entertainment elements for children, since 2001. "It's a reminder of who we are."

"We want the kids to feel comfortable in church," said Carden, who holds a master of arts degree and is a special education specialist in the New Jersey Public School system. "Feeling that connection and experiencing that familiarity gives them a reason to want to be there."

The album consists of seven hymns including *Hayr Mer/Our Father*, *Hamenaynee/In All Things*, *Soorp Soorp/Holy, Holy*, *Marmeen Deroonagan/The Body Of The Lord*, *Kreesdos Ee Mech/Christ In Our Midst*, *Amen Yegheetsee/Blessed Be* and *Ohrnetseets Uz Der/I Will Praise The Lord*, are sung in both English and Armenian by the HYEfamily Children's Chorus. The singers, most of whom are students of the St. Leon Armenian Sunday School, and whose ages range from 4 to 10 years old, include Sophia Ashbahian, Victoria Ashbahian, Alexa Siran Farah, Liana Sarine Farah, Arpineh Halajian, Devan Vartan Regas and Nickolas Ara Regas.

"These children brought remarkable focus, almost no self-consciousness and a wonderful sense of fun. They're an example for performers of all ages," said Joseph Halajian, recording engineer of the album. "The sound they make together is truly uplifting."

"We Sing Armenian Church Songs" is the product of a 10-year journey Beylerian and Carden embarked upon when they began collaborating together to teach primary-grade Sunday School students spiritual, Christian music along with Armenian church hymns. After observing how well the children grasped the hymns and their interest in knowing what the songs meant, Beylerian and Carden decided to dedicate an album solely to Armenian hymns so that it could be used as a learning tool in Sunday School classrooms and at home, placing a teaching tool directly in the hands of parents and grandparents who can sing along not only in Sunday School but any day of the week.

"Once again Nvair has understood that the continuation of our culture and faith depends upon our youth's involvement," said Dinkjian, a renowned musician who arranged *Kreesdos Ee Mech/Christ In Our Midst* and played the guitar, lafta and oud on the track with a solo accompaniment from Nvair. "We Sing presents our Armenian youth singing Armenian sacred music, for the first time in Armenian and English. For my ears, there is very little which is more pure, innocent, and sincere as a child's voice."

Following the album's release, Beylerian and Carden are scheduled to make interactive educational presentations to Sunday Schools across the Eastern Diocese as well as to Armenian communities throughout the country. Their first

see ALBUM, page 11



Ambassador Hovhannisyan signing his book, *The Mandylion*

Armenians Make a Strong Showing at Frankfurt Bookfair

FRANKFURT, Germany – Frankfurt plays host to the most important and the oldest book fair in the world. This year 7,400 exhibitors from more than 100 countries joined to present their most recent publications and other cultural products.

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Finland was the guest country this year. The Republic of Armenia could not be absent. With a large stand exhibiting books from Zangak, the Cultural Ministry hosted several events, among them the presentation of a new Armenian cookbook in German. Their special guest was Armenia's Ambassador to Germany Vahan Hovhannisyan, who launched his new book, *The Mandylion*, published in Armenian, English and Russian.

The author, a historian and archaeologist, has created a work of 450 pages which, though in the form of a novel, is embedded in the "history of the Armenians and peoples of the eastern Mediterranean, intertwined with the history of Christianity and the struggle of Christian people of the region for their freedom."

It is an "intellectual thriller, spanning several centuries" and recounting the "quest for an ancient secret, full of dangers and adventures."

Though the first version appeared two years ago, obviously the current crises in the region make this book, which depicts threats against the ancient local Christian civilization, all the more relevant.

Concluding the program organized by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs was a roundtable discussion "Literature and Humanity" on the role of literature in preventing genocide. The two main speakers were Turkish writer Gulcicek Gunel Tekin, a Kurdish author who has written on the Armenian Genocide, and Ragip Zarakolu, a leading publisher in Turkey who has been imprisoned several times for having put out books on the same theme.



Bea Ehlers-Kerbekian reading from the orphan rug book

Tekin gave a short, moving account of how she as a Kurdish child was traumatized by cultural oppression, not being allowed to speak her native language, then, as an adult, by her learning about the Armenian Genocide and the role that Kurds had been forced to play. By visiting Kurdish villages and interviewing their inhabitants, she documented and published 126 stories on the Genocide.

Zarakolu, a human rights activist since the 1970s, said his publishing house did not bother to deal with the question "if" the Genocide occurred or not, but rather concentrated on the proof, issuing books on the factual history and individual stories.

But this is not enough, he said; one must learn about the culture – the art, the literature, the architecture – of the Armenians, to show what the Turks themselves lost through the Genocide; the Armenian contribution to Ottoman culture was immense, and if they succeeded in destroying it and its traces in Anatolia, they could not do so in Istanbul. He ended by citing the role literature has played, as in Franz Werfel's *Musa Dagh* saga, and stressed the importance of the fact that there were now Turkish intellectuals fighting to ensure that the truth win out.

Not far away, in another pavilion of the Frankfurt Book Fair, SchilerVerlag hosted informal readings from the book by Dr. Hagop Martin Deranian, *President Calvin Coolidge and The Armenian Orphan Rug*, which it has published in German.

Bea Ehlers-Kerbekian, the Armenian-German actress from Berlin who has starred in the play, "Anne's Silence," by the prizewinning German-Turkish writer Dogan Akhanli, read passages from the book, against a backdrop of a huge poster reproducing the beautiful Ghazir rug.

Julia Zerounian To Bring World Cabaret Magic to Regattabar Bar

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – Julia Zerounian and the Zerounian Ensemble will perform familiar and exotic songs from around the world on October 21 at the Regattabar.

According to the *Boston Globe*, "The soulful vocalist is a one woman United Nations of Cabaret," singing in French, Italian, Armenian, Russian, Persian, Yiddish and Latin in addition to American Songbook classics. She will perform alongside her husband, pianist Sarkis Zerounian leading the versatile and talented ensemble of musicians. Featured performers will include Menuhin competition winner from China, Angelo Xiang Yu on violin; from Macedonia Goran Daskalov on saxophone and accordion; the seasoned Klezmer music specialist Grant Smith on percussion; and from Argentina, Berklee College of Music professor Fernando Huergo on bass.

With her evocative voice, she transcends language and culture to express



Julia Zerounian

music from a multitude of cultures. She takes on all the different musical genres of these countries performing with her warm personality and making her truly a "world music singer."

Julia Zerounian began her singing and acting career at an early age in Armenia, later performing with various professional ensembles and theatrical groups throughout the former Soviet Union. Since her move to Boston, she has become well-known to audiences as a great interpreter of international and contemporary songs performing in many cities in the United States and Canada.

The combination of her soulful singing and mastery of musical styles has not only gained a large and loyal following, but garnered rave reviews from prominent musicians and music critics. Media personality and author, Christopher Lydon, commented after her 2013 spring concert at the Regattabar, "Bravo! Brava! ...earlier in your show I pinched myself thinking: We're in Cairo, we're in Beirut, we're in Paris, we're in Jerusalem. And Julia feels at home in each of the great capitals – and seems to embody them when she sings. I can't do justice to the power and beauty of your show, and your ensemble. You transported us, almost literally. This was story-telling and musical art of a very high order, and chops and style and vast humanity."

For reservations and information, contact www.regattabarjazz.com



ARTS & LIVING

Filmmaker Aims to Bring Genocide Documentary to PBS

By Tom Vartabedian

PHILADELPHIA — Stephanie Ayanian is developing what she calls “A New Armenia” and just in time to commemorate the Armenian Genocide centennial next year.

She is working with her partners at Story Shop Films on a one-hour documentary that she hopes will be finished in time to be shown on PBS stations as well as around the country.

However, before the film has a chance to be finished, she needs to raise funds. For that purpose, she has started an online fundraising campaign on Kickstarter to raise seed money, which ends October 20 with a target goal of \$45,000. The entire budget is expected to be \$500,000.

“Right now, we are searching for unique stories of five Armenian-American families, across the generations, and fund-raising to develop the project,” she says. “We’ll travel to meet the potential five families and begin filming with the older generation. This will help us put together a short film to seek larger financial donations.”

With the plethora of films, books and events marking the centennial, Ayanian sees this as being different from the rest. It is more of an opportunity to celebrate what Armenian Americans have achieved, she said, and that they are thriving.

“As with all films, the challenge comes in finding the right stories,” she points out. “We’re working diligently to seek out stories across the country and across generations to make this a rich experience for the public. And, of course, we need to get foundations and individuals aboard for financial support.”

The mission is two-fold: to increase American public awareness of Armenian heritage and culture, along with inspiring Armenians about the strength of their culture.

“We lack a film that documents and celebrates the joys, struggles and values of these Armenian-Americans,” she confirms. “We’ll peek into kitchens while grandparents impart thousand-year-old recipes. We’ll share social and religious traditions with laughter and solemnity, huddle with business leaders as they bring honor and financial security to their families and communities.”

The audience will be introduced to the Genocide for a foundation of understanding, then meet five survivor families and see their lives, accomplishments and how the culture (language, music, cuisine, customs) are still

alive and being celebrated a century later.

“Last April, I questioned if someone was making a project of this scope on such a topic,” she added. “Where are we now, 100 years after the genocide? We are thriving. But what does



Stephanie Ayanian

the future hold? No one was tackling these questions in this way. So my partners and I started developing ‘A New Armenia.’ We will look at what it means to be a survivor and the challenges we face in America generations after arriving here.”

The definition of “Armenianness” is also one that interests her. She said the community should be proud that now, almost 100 years after the Genocide was launched, she is “watching elementary school children leaving

their classrooms or attending summer caps for teens.”

She and her partners have made multiple films that have been screened across the United States on PBS, internationally at festivals, and have won awards.

“After we successfully finance the Kickstarter Campaign, we will be meeting with foundations for major gifts to fund the feature documentary,” she plans. “We want to raise awareness about our rich culture. PBS gives a well-respected national platform for television distribution in the United States.”

The anticipated timetable is to broadcast the film on PBS stations across the country beginning next fall — six months after the genocide commemorations — to continue with the anniversary year and bring back stories into the public’s consciousness.

Helping her with the project are author, professor and poet Peter Balakian, Armenian-American historian Anny Bakalian and Australian historian Donna Frieze.

Ayanian holds an undergraduate degree in Film & Video from Penn State University and a Master of Fine Arts in Film & Media Arts from Temple University. She is a former member of AGBU-Young Professionals in San Francisco and Philadelphia, where she met her husband and settled down after graduate school.

She previously worked as a Senior Producer/Director for Penn State Public Broadcasting where she was a Producer and Director of Liquid Assets.

As an independent producer, her film “Kinderwald” was an Official Selection of the

Munich International, Seattle International, Slamdance and Napa Valley film festivals.

One surprising element to this filmmaker is her athletic prowess. She played basketball in the Pan American Games in Yerevan in 2001 with a team from San Francisco. It was an unforgettable experience to say the least.

“To be welcomed by the masses of fans in that stadium during opening ceremonies with people shouting ‘San Francisco! San Francisco!’ was totally unreal,” she recalled. “And to have the opportunity to experience Armenia at that time, in that way, was truly amazing.”

(To contribute to the project, visit www.kickstarter.com/projects/1290524964/a-new-armenia)

— Alin K. Gregorian contributed to this report.

Arpa Foundation Announces International Film Festival

LOS ANGELES — The Arpa Foundation for Film, Music, and Art (AFFMA.org) announces its 17th annual Arpa International Film Festival (ArpaFilmFestival.com), to be held November 14-16, at the Egyptian Theatre.

Arpa received hundreds of submissions featuring the films of up-and-coming writers, producers, and directors from more than 15 countries. With award winning films including: “As it Used to Be” and “Sombras de Azul,” along with SXSW nominated, “I Believe in Unicorns,” the Arpa Film Festival is attracting viewers and tastemakers from all over the world.

“We’re thrilled about this year’s festival lineup, which includes both domestic and international films and filmmakers, ready to showcase their work,” said Festival Director Michael Ashjian. “It’s our goal to stay true to our mission in cultivating awareness of important topics that affect our society through the medium of film. We can’t wait to share these films with everyone!”

Each night includes featured premiers to be announced in the coming weeks, and all three premiere nights feature a red carpet and after parties. Arpa will close out the festival on Sunday, November 16 with an awards ceremony celebrating Best Feature Film, Best Documentary Film, Best Short Film, Best Music Video, Best Director and Best Screenwriter. Other recognitions will include the Lifetime Achievement Award, AFFMA Foundation Award, and the Armin T. Wegner Humanitarian Award, presented each year to a filmmaker whose film deals with subjugated peoples, ethnic cleansing, forced deportation, massacres and genocides.

The panel of judges includes Marc Bienstock, Angus Sutherland and Campbell McInnes of Lotus Entertainment as well as Daljit DJ Paramar of Original Entertainment, and Emmy Award-winning producer Stan Brooks.

“Over the past 17 years I’ve seen the change and development of independent film and their respective filmmakers. Arpa tries to garner the talents of these new filmmakers, those who are at the forefront of the newest and best filmmaking techniques, in order to present their work to the world,” said AFFMA Founder and head of Arpa Board of Directors, Sylvia Minassian. “This year’s festival represents a culmination of a years work for our committee in selecting what we think is our most varied and interesting program yet.”

Minassian and Ashjian are joined by Executive Producer Alex Kalognomos. Also serving as co-producer of the festival, indie filmmaker Sev Ohanian, co-producer of 2013’s indie phenomenon “Fruitvale Station” and recently named one of TheWrap’s 11 Thought Leaders Who Are Changing Hollywood — alongside Angelina Jolie and Jimmy Fallon.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit <http://www.itsmyseat.com/affma/> Premiere night festivities and weekend program will be announced in the coming weeks.

‘We Sing Church Songs’ Album to Be Released

ALBUM, from page 10

presentation will be held in their home parish during the St. Leon Food & Arts Festival in Fair Lawn, NJ on Sunday, October 19 at 2 p.m.

Nvair Kadian Beylerian holds a BA in History and a Master’s degree in Education.

She is a third-generation Armenian American who has had the privilege of growing up within a culturally rich, Armenian-speaking household rooted in the active and energetic Armenian-diasporan community of the NYC region. She has been on stage performing Armenian song and dance with her family since childhood. Nvair continues in that vein, performing for children and their

families across the country, connecting them to their roots with joy and laughter.

Since 2001, Nvair has released three children’s CDs in Armenian (“2Mayrer,” “Donadzar” and “Ari Mer Doon”). She performs interactive bi-lingual concerts for Armenian and non-Armenian children and their families in the US and Canada. Each CD has been nominated for the Annual Armenian Music Awards in their respective years. “Donadzar” received a Big Apple Music Award in 2003, in the Best Children’s Album category. For more information and updates, please visit www.hyefamily.com.

Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York Hamazkayin Armenian Educational & Cultural Society of New York Essayan-Getronagan Alumni of New York

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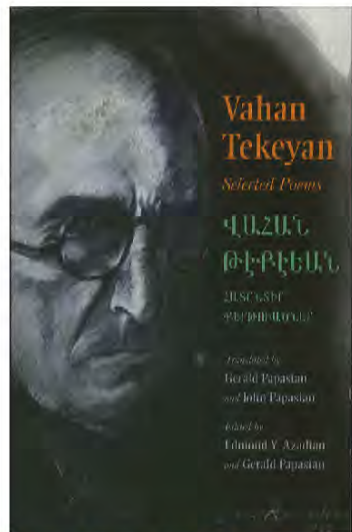
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Selected Poems of Vahan Tekeyan
Translated by John Papisian
and Gerald Papisian



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Edited by Edmond Azadian

Friday, October 31, 2014 at 8:00pm

Tekeyan Hall

560 Sylvan Ave., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey

For information please call: Diana Mkhitarian (201) 793-0397

Reception - Light Refreshments



ARTS & LIVING

YerazArt Artists Soar on Belmont Hill

YERAZART, from page 1

scholarship at the 16th Annual National Arts Centre Summer Music Institute, Young Artists Program to be held in Ottawa, Canada, in June.

There she will be working with Pinchas Zukerman, music director of the National Arts Centre Orchestra, along with 70 other gifted students from Canada and abroad who were all chosen through a highly competitive selection process.

Hajjar also spoke about other success stories, including musicians from a couple of years ago, Nara Avetisyan who is studying with Prof. Sergey Babayan for her master's at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

"None of this would have happened without you," Hajjar told the audience. "Our needs are so tremendous that we have to make hard choices and help with one instrument, one school and one talent at a time."

Board Member Sylvie Zakarian, a classical percussionist and a faculty member of the Longy School of Music of Bard College, then spoke about the aims of YerazArt in Armenia. She recently presented workshops and gave master classes in Yerevan for Sistema Armenia to help them with ensemble chamber music, where she taught students ages 14-19. The classes, she said, "were some of my longest days in music studios as well as some of the most satisfying. The students asked countless questions."

She said that often in Armenia, students have difficulty with access to certain instruments, such as bassoons, trombones, French horns. Major orchestras in the country lack wind musicians, and often resort to importing them from Europe. In addition, she spoke to the students about collaboration and performing in orchestras, rather than only as soloists. "Such work relationships are essential in building any community," she explained.

She lamented the fact that the best-equipped studio at Yerevan State Conservatory, where the sessions were held, was a pop studio where future stars were trained.

Zakarian noted happily that she is still in touch with many of

the students, who often send her videos of their performances for input.

Soprano Mane Galoyan performed at the Houston Grand Opera Studio by invitation this summer. She was a prizewinner at the Hans Gabor Belvedere International Singing Competition earlier in the year as well as the International Young Opera Singers' Competition in St. Petersburg in 2013. She was also one of the participants in the YerazArt-sponsored North American concert tour of 2009. She has also won other competitions in Russia and Kazakhstan. In addition, Hajjar announced, two days before the reception, Galoyan received an invitation to submit an audition for Juilliard for the master's program.

Classical guitarist Lilit Mardiyan is currently pursuing her Master of Music studies on a full scholarship at the Yale School of Music. A former student at Yerevan State Conservatory and USC Thornton School of Music, Mardiyan has garnered multiple



From left, Ani Stepanian and Anna Afeyan

awards and performed extensively in Russia, Armenia, Greece, Germany and the United States.

The two musicians, accompanied on some songs by pianist Nune Hakobyan, performed both Armenian and Western classical pieces.

Galoyan's voice was clear and sharp, entrancing the audience. Mardiyan also performed several pieces, some Spanish while others from South America. Her speed and dexterity, as well as capability to create so many sounds from the guitar, including by using it as a drum, thrilled the audience.

According to Hajjar, the event raised about \$20,000 for YerazArt's instrument program. "I am very happy. It is always great to see new fresh faces. But what I am happy about is that we have a faithful following year after year. We must be doing something right!"

She added, "Fundraising is our mission hear after year for us to better serve the young musicians."

She noted that the organization fine-tunes its mission regularly to better serve its targets.



From left, Nina Festekjian and Dorothy Keverian

One very good problem the group has now, she said, is who to bring here to perform as the bar has been raised every year.

Among the programs that YerazArt hosts in Armenia are master classes, sponsoring young performers to take part in international competitions and helping them network. In addition, the Instrument Donation Program (IDP) donates instruments to select musical institutions and students, both in Yerevan and



Margaret Atamian and Robert Avakian

in remote areas throughout the country.

Scholarships

YerazArt's need-based scholarships provide financial aid to talented students seeking a higher musical education in Armenia. YerazArt also offers a limited number of scholarships to enable exceptional students to audition at renowned conservatories abroad.

Concerts

YerazArt offers talented young musicians the opportunity to travel and perform in the United States, allowing them to engage with a diverse audience of music enthusiasts and to connect with music professionals in the States.

Donations to YerazArt can be sent to YerazArt, P.O. Box 79133, Belmont, MA 02479. With questions, those interested can contact nbabikian@rcn.com or yerazart@gmail.com

Russo-Iranian Relations and the Formation of Modern Armenia



George A. Bournoutian, Ph.D.

Join renowned historian George A. Bournoutian as he explores the fascinating historical episodes covered in his latest book and its enduring relevance to modern Armenia, Russia and Iran.

Following the second Russo-Iranian War (1826-28), Russia annexed the regions of Yerevan and Nakhichevan from Iran and called it the *Armenian Provinces*. Armenians from Iran were encouraged by the treaty to repatriate to the historic homeland, and thousands did. The region became the foundation of the present-day Armenian Republic.

Discover what transpired when Russia sent its ambassador to Iran to ratify the treaty. No one could have foreseen the events that would follow, which included sanctuary for three Armenians and the subsequent murder of the ambassador along with all, but one, of the diplomats at the embassy.

George A. Bournoutian is a professor, historian, and author. He is a Senior Professor of History at Iona College and the author of over 28 books.

Friday, October 17, 2014 @ 8:30 p.m.

St. Leon Armenian Church / Charles and Grace Pinajian Youth Center
12-61 Saddle River Road, Fair Lawn, NJ
For information call 201-791-2862

This event is jointly sponsored by

Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU),
Armenian Network of America- Greater NY, Knights of Vartan Bakradouny Lodge of NJ,
National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR),
St. Leon Armenian Church and Tekeyan Cultural Association

The event is free and open to the public. A reception will follow the presentation and book signing.

Journey Into the Past

An illustrated presentation by
Professor Richard Hovannisian



Armenian Kesaria focuses on the history, religion, and economic, cultural, educational, and political developments among the Armenians in the city of Kesaria and its many outlying villages, such as Talas, Ewerek, Fenesse, Tomarza, Chomakhlu, Injasi, Efkere, and Germir. Contributors to the volume include New Jersey's Vartan Manossian and former St. Leon parishioner Tina Demizian.

Armenian Communities in Asia Minor presents the thriving Armenian communities near Constantinople, stretching from Ismid, Adabazar, Bardizag, and Bursa inland to Esli-Shehi; Kutahia, and Afion-Karahisar. The ten contributors to the volume provide a glimpse into the lives of these industrious people before the massacres and death marches beginning in 1915.

IN ADDITION: Film segments on the *Last Armenians of Dikranagend* and the *Armenian-speaking Hamshen people of the Black Sea*

Thursday, October 30, 2014 @ 7:45 p.m.

St. Leon Armenian Church / Abajian Hall
12-61 Saddle River Road, Fair Lawn, NJ
For information call 201-791-2862

This event is jointly sponsored by

Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), Armenian Network of America- Greater NY,
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A reception will follow the presentation and book signing.



ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

CALIFORNIA

NOVEMBER 15 — SAVE THE DATE: AMAA-Haigazian University Celebratory Banquet in honor of Dr. **Mihran Agabian** and **George R. Phillips, Esq.**; Saturday, November 15, 2014, 6 pm, Beverly Hills Hotel, \$200; Information: Julie Aharonian 818-368-5266; Katia Kermoyan 818-242-5064.

NOVEMBER 22 — Armenian International Women's Association, Los Angeles Affiliate present Luncheon honoring Lily Ring Balian, recipient of the 2014 Ellis Island Medal of Honor, Beverly Hills Hotel, 9641 Sunset Blvd., 11:30 a.m. Reception; 12:30 Luncheon. Donation: \$100.00. For RSVP and info contact Houry Aposhian (818)957-7020 or Cindy Norian (310) 277-4490.

CONNECTICUT

OCTOBER 22 — Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven will hold a joint presentation by Asena Gunal and Nayat Karakoseoglu, titled "To Stick Your Neck Out: Projects in Armenian-Turkish Reconciliation," 7:30-9 p.m. The scholar-activists from Turkey will speak on the current state of human rights, minority rights, democracy, pluralism and the Armenian Question in Turkey today. Engleman Hall A120. Program open to the public. For info, visit calendar.southernct.edu/index.php?elD=1181

MASSACHUSETTS

OCTOBER 21 — Julia and the Zerounian Ensemble Concert, 7:30 p.m., Regattabar, Charles Hotel, Cambridge. An all new repertoire from around the world, including the exciting young violinist Menuhin Competition winner from Mongolia, Chinese violinist Angelo Xiang Yu, from Macedonia versatile young musician Goran Daskalov on saxophone and accordion, and seasoned Klezmer specialist Grant Smith on percussion, Sean Farias on bass and Sarkis Zerounian on piano. For reservations, www.getshowtix.com/

OCTOBER 23 — Najarian Lecture on Human Rights at Faneuil Hall, Boston. 7:30 p.m. Topic: Truth to Action: Media Freedom - Protecting Human Rights Globally. Introduction: Courtney Radsch, PhD, Advocacy Director, Committee to Protect Journalists. Speakers: Ray Suarez, Host, "Inside Story" on Al Jazeera America and "America Abroad" on Public Radio International; Stephen Kurkjian, founding member and former chief, Investigative Spotlight Team of the *Boston Globe* and editor of its Washington Bureau; and Thomas Mucha, Editor, GlobalPost. A reception follows at the Millennium Bostonian Hotel for all who attend the lecture to continue the discussion with the speakers and the lecture's leadership. Free and open to the public. An endowed public program of Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway. www.ArmenianHeritagePark.org

OCTOBER 25 — St. Gregory Church of Merrimack Valley annual fall fair, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Jaffarian Hall, 158 Main St., North Andover; shish, losh & chicken kebab dinners, lentil and kheyma, vegetarian dinners; pastries, gifts, raffles; further details, call church, (978) 685-5038; Ann Apovian, (978) 521-2245, or Sossy Jeknavorian, (978) 256-2538.

OCTOBER 25 — Fall Harvest Bazaar, First Armenian Church, 380 Concord Ave., Belmont, noon to 8 p.m. Handmade choreg, manti, Armenian pastries and more. Grilled kebab all day. Marketplace treasures. All are welcome, rain or shine. MBTA and handicapped accessible. Call 617-484-4779 or visit www.facbelmont.org/ for more info.

OCTOBER 25 — Ararat Center Boston Cruise on the Odyssey, 30 Rowe's Wharf, Boston. Embark at 7 p.m. Return 11 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres, dinner, complimentary bar, live Kef. Adults - \$175; Under 21 - \$100; Purchase tickets at araratcenter.org or contact Pam at 617-645-2781

OCTOBER 26 — Fr. Vasken Kouzouian's 20-Year Pastoral Journey — Join us as we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of our Pastor's Ordination, immediately following church services, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Dinner Tickets: \$40 per person; \$20 for ages 10-21; babysitting services available, ages 3-9, at \$5 per child (includes pizza lunch and supervision). Seating by advance paid reservation only;



Radio host Ray Suarez, above, will be one of the speakers at the annual Najarian Lecture on Human Rights at Faneuil Hall, Boston, on Thursday, October 23, at 7:30 p.m. The program is titled "Truth to Action: Media Freedom-Protecting Human Rights Globally." Also featured will be Courtney Radsch, PhD; Stephen Kurkjian, and Thomas Mucha. A reception will follow at the Millennium Bostonian Hotel. Free and open to the public.

RSVP deadline October 15. Payment for dinner reservations may be made online at www.htaac.org, or by contacting the church office, 617.354.0632.

NOVEMBER 1 — Third annual Mer Doon Benefit Dance, in loving memory of Julie Ashekian, 8 p.m. Featuring Onnik Dinkjian, John Berberian and more. midnight dessert table. St. James Armenian Church Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, 465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown. Adults \$40 Students \$20. Please call Mark Kashgegian to reserve tables of 10 and purchase tickets at 617-256-5358.

NOVEMBER 2 — "Musical Benches," an organ and piano concert presented by Glenn "Ananian" Priest and Christopher Garven on the occasion of the dedication of the recently restored sanctuary of the First Armenian Church of Belmont, at the church sanctuary, Sunday, 3 p.m.

NOVEMBER 3 — Trinity Men's Union and St. James Men's Club Joint Dinner Meeting, Monday, Speaker: Dan Shaughnessy, sports columnist for the Boston Globe. Losh Kebab and Kheyma Dinner Social Hour (mezza) 6:15 p.m. Dinner 7 p.m. \$14 per person. St. James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural & Youth Center - Keljik Hall 465 Mt. Auburn St.

NOVEMBER 6 — Avak luncheon, sponsored by St. Gregory Armenian Church, noon, 158 Main St., North Andover; speaker, Sonya Vartabedian, "Diary of a Community Editor," reflections from Sunday School student here to award-winning journalist and editor of the *Andover Townsman* and *Andover Magazine*.

NOVEMBER 7 — Public Lecture on "The Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Church" by the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, professor of liturgical studies at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary and director of the Zohrab Information Center of the Diocese of the Armenian Church (Eastern). He will offer an engaging presentation on the basic elements of the centuries old, most prominent worship service of the Armenian Church. Buffet dinner to precede the lecture. Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford. 6:30 p.m. For further information and reservation, call 978-256-7234, or email Father Khachatur at terkhachatur@yahoo.com.

NOVEMBER 7-8 — St. Stephen's Armenian Church will hold its 58th Bazaar, from 10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., at the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center, 47 Nichols Ave, Watertown. Meals served from 11:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Take-out available. Delicious meals, Armenian pastries, gourmet food, arts and crafts, books, raffles and

attic treasures. Friday and Saturday. Auction starts at 7 p.m. For info call the church office at 617-924-7562.

NOVEMBER 7 and 8 — Annual Autumnfest Bazaar sponsored by the Armenian Church at Hye Pointe, 110 Main St., Haverhill, Friday, noon to 8 p.m. and Saturday noon to 7 p.m. Lamb, losh, chicken kebab and kheyma. Diner served all day. Pastry table, Armenain cuisine, gift baskets, raffles for cash and prizes. For more info, visit www.hypointearmenianchurch.org or call 978-372-9227.

NOVEMBER 8 — Armenia Tree Project 20th Anniversary Celebration Dinner and Reception. Special guest Actor David Alpay. Cocktails 6:30 p.m. Dinner 8 p.m. John Joseph Moakley US Courthouse, Grand Atrium. One Courthouse Way overlooking the Boston Harbor. Art Sale & Live Auction. Artist Arthur Hovhannisyan. Visit www.ArmeniaTree.org or call (617) 926-8733.

NOVEMBER 15 — The 39th Annual Luncheon/Auction of the Armenian Women's Welfare Association at the Burlington Marriott Hotel, Burlington, MA @ 11 AM Mistress of Ceremonies: Cindy Fitzgibbon, WCBV-TV5 Auctioneer: Jordan Rich, WBZ 1030 News Radio Funds raised at this event support programs at the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Jamaica Plain, MA and the Hanganak NGO Health Clinic in Stepanakert, Nagorno-Karabagh for seniors in need. Founded in 1915, the A.W.W.A. Inc. will soon be celebrating its 100th year of service to Armenians. For more information about the event or for tickets, please call Karen Hovsepian @ 617-898-8619 or e-mail awwaauction@gmail.com

DECEMBER 5-6 — Trinity Christmas Bazaar, Friday, 12-9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Featuring delicious Armenian dinners, a la carte menu and take-out meals; booths and vendors; Armenian gourmet foods, delicacies and pastries; raffles, and more. For further information, contact the church office at 617.354.0632.

DECEMBER 14 — Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra, Christmas Holiday Concert, 7 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Save the date; details to follow.

NEW YORK

OCTOBER 19 — ARS Mayr Chapter of New York hosts An Afternoon of Food and Dance to benefit the Armenian Community in Syria. 2 p.m. Performances by David Antabian (piano) and Lusine Musaelian (vocalist), followed by dancing and music by Khajag. St. Illuminator's Armenian Apostolic Cathedral, 221 E. 27th Street, NY, NY. Donation: \$50 adults; Children under 12: \$20 (includes full lunch, wine and soft drinks). For reservations, call Anais at 718-392-6982 or Rachel at 415-336-4962. All proceeds will benefit Syrian-Armenian relief efforts.

OCTOBER 28 — Sip on French wine, nibble on delectable hors d'oeuvres, meet talented artists and cinematographers, and network with kindred spirits, all in a cozy salon at "Château Village," Alouette's home in Greenwich Village. This soirée will benefit SR Socially Relevant Film Festival New York. 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. 1 Minetta St., 2E (STREET, not Lane, NE corner of Bleecker St & Sixth Ave, W 4th St subway stop). Donation: \$60 Early Bird, \$75 Regular. SR is a film festival that focuses on socially relevant human stories and raises awareness to social problems by offering positive solutions through the powerful medium of cinema. SR believes that through raised awareness, expanded knowledge about diverse cultures, and the human condition as a whole, it is possible to create a better world free of violence, hate and crime.

DECEMBER 7 — 8th Annual ANC Eastern Region Banquet, Ritz-Carlton Battery Park, NY. Freedom Award Honoree: former Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau and the Morgenthau family; Vahan Cardashian Award Honoree: ANCA activist Alice Movsesian. Tickets \$250. For reservations and information, visit www.anca.org/erbanquet or 917.428.1918.

RHODE ISLAND

NOVEMBER 8-9 — Saturday and Sunday, Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church, 70 Jefferson St., Providence, will hold the 84th annual Armenian Food Fair and Bazaar.



COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Armenia Reoriented or Disoriented?

By Edmond Y. Azadian

October 10, 2014 will become an important date for Armenia, since on that day, two significant events took place, not necessarily coincidentally. The first event was the signing of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) by President Serge Sargsian in Minsk, and the second one was the opposition rally at the Republic Square.

Since Armenia broke off negotiations with the European Union in September 2013, it has been waiting at the door of the Russian-led Customs Union, which Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan had formed.

Although Armenia was coerced into relinquishing its economic ties with the European Union, it could not become a founding member of the Customs Union; instead, Yerevan was kept waiting for 13 more months to join the Customs Union, with dubious benefits in the prospect. Despite those intimidating circumstances, the speakers at the opposition rally recognized that it was an unavoidable act to which Armenian had to commit itself.

That was the reorientation of Armenia away from Europe and further into Russia's embrace.

Armenia's destiny is locked in place by certain determinants, which no administration – new or the status quo – can change; the Russian geostrategic position is one determinant which is forced by historic relations and geographic proximity. The other determinant is the economic blockade by Turkey and Azerbaijan stifling the country to compromise its future. A third determinant may be the sending of funds by Armenia's citizens abroad to their families in Armenia. That is in steady decline and one day it may be reduced to catastrophic levels.

The last determining factor is the corruption endemic in all former Soviet republics and any single country cannot stamp it out because the entire region is engulfed in the system.

Mikhail Saakashvili tried to uproot corruption in Georgia while he was president and today he is a wanted man by the Tbilisi authorities. Therefore, as unsavory as it may sound, corruption cannot be controlled, especially in a poor country. This does not mean that the country should give up hope in fighting corruption. But it means one thing: that no opposition can deliver it overnight, no matter how loudly it may claim it can.

Armenia's foreign policy is reoriented by outside forces, but its domestic policies could be directed through the interaction of political forces. That interaction, however, thus far has only led the country to disorientation.

During the last presidential and parliamentary elections, Sargsian's Republican Party was able to decimate the opposition and come out on top. The election was also approved with reservations by international observers. The method was all too familiar – an election system that every previous administration has implemented and perhaps, every future political force will continue as well.

A case in point is the reappointment of Syunik governor Sourik Khatchatryan, despite claims he has criminal ties. Similar appointments were made in Shirak and elsewhere. As long as these kingpins deliver votes, they can break any law with impunity.

The opposition can rightfully cry wolf and call the current regime criminal and oligarchic, but how many political assassinations were committed during Levon Ter-Petrosian's watch?

The time in office of Robert Kocharian, who is waiting in the wings to throw his hat in the presidential race, was marred by the massacre at the parliament, as well as the March 1 killings at Freedom Square.

Both during and after the last elections, many defections took place in the ranks of Ter-Petrosian's HAK coalition, weakening it significantly. But he did not give up hope. He continued courting the Prosperous Armenia Party and its leader Gagik Zaroukian, a prominent oligarch who was in the coalition with Sargsian's Republican Party. He gradually shifted towards the

opposition and October 10 could become a victory day for LTP because that day Zaroukian joined him on the podium at the opposition rally. He also was able to lure Raffi Hovannisian's Heritage Party to form the "magnificent" trio of opposition parties in the parliament. That trio may become the "magnificent quartet," if the ARF (Dashnag) party eventually decides to join. The ruling party has offered ambassadorial posts and other lucrative position to keep the ARF on a short leash. That is why the party did not participate in the October 10 rally, where Ter-Petrosian announced that "we understand and respect their position," although during his presidency, he jailed the ARF leadership, harassed their members and destroyed their publication facilities.

The October 10 rally and the rallies preceding it in the provinces were well attended and were conducted in an orderly manner. One truth was proven at the rally, that contrary to claims, there was no tyranny in Armenia. Otherwise, 10,000 people could not gather in one place and harangue "the criminal oligarchy" to give up the rule or chant "we want an Armenia without Sergik."

The other topics were poverty, corruption, emigration and lawlessness, which are on the minds of every citizen.

Ter-Petrosian vowed to continue the campaign in an orderly fashion, based on the constitutional rights of the citizens.

Aram Manukyan provided statistics about the dire situation in the country and cited the causes which were driving citizens to leave the country in droves.

The opposition has submitted a list of 12 demands to the government for reform.

It would benefit the country if a healthy opposition is formed to fight on political grounds to take over the rule. But the irony in this case is that one of the presidential candidates is a prominent oligarch, Gagik Zaroukian, a kind-hearted benefactor with a wrestler's demeanor. One could argue why not Zaroukian as president, if a former wrestler, Jesse Ventura, was able to become the governor of Wisconsin?

Recap the EEU Treaty, there are at least two caveats which will concern every Armenian, regardless of their political affiliation. One is economic prospects in joining the Customs Union with Russia. The former director of Armenia's Central Bank, Bagrat Asatryan, sees a 2-3 percent decline in transfers from Russia while Armenia needs a 10-percent increase in transfers for growth. But a more ominous concern, according to Asatryan is "In case of a 3-percent economic growth, no social problems can be solved. Three percent-growth will even serve as stimulus for emigration. To preserve this situation in Armenia a 6-8 percent economic growth is necessary. And unfortunately, there are no prerequisites for the situation to improve in 2015, 2016, and 2017."

Asatryan mentioned that Armenia's major partner, Russia, to which we turn nowadays, will have 0-percent growth, since sanctions will have a negative impact.

Under the above conditions, it looks like Armenia is linking its economic fortune to a sinking ship, unless a political development comes to rectify the situation.

Another caveat is the issue of Karabagh. Kazakhstan's President Nazarbayev delayed Armenia's participation in the treaty, arguing that Armenia should join the union with its "internationally recognized boundaries," excluding Nagorno Karabagh, to satisfy President Aliyev in Azerbaijan. No such condition hampered Russia's role questioning the inclusion of Crimea.

As the treaty is signed by Armenia, there is no explanation whatsoever, if customs system will be implemented on Armenia-Karabagh border. Only Mr. Aliyev is elated that if and when Azerbaijan joins the Customs Union, the signatories may admit Baku with Nagorno Karabagh as part of its territory.

As we can see the problems are way above the power of any party to resolve. Unity and concerted efforts by the ruling party and opposition may yield some results. Otherwise, no one can safely identify Armenia's course, whether its reorienting or disorienting.

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Is There a Plan B? The Futility of Bombing ISIS

By Robert Fisk

Is there a "Plan B" in Barack Obama's brain? Or in David Cameron's, for that matter? I mean, we're vaguely told that air strikes against the ferocious "Islamic State" may go on for "a long time." But how long is "long"? Are we just going to go on killing Arabs and bombing and bombing and bombing until, well, until we go on bombing? What happens if our Kurdish and non-existent "moderate" Syrian fighters – described by Vice-President

Joe Biden last week as largely "shopkeepers" – don't overthrow the monstrous "Islamic State"? Then I suppose we are going to bomb and bomb and bomb again. As a Lebanese colleague of mine asked in an article last week, what is Obama going to do next? Has he thought of that?

After Alan Henning's beheading, the gorge rises at the thought of even discussing such things. But distance sometimes creates distorting mirrors, none so more than when it involves the distance between the Middle East and Washington, London, Paris and, I suppose, Canberra. In Beirut, I've been surveying

the Arab television and press – and it's interesting to see the gulf that divides what the Arabs see and hear, and what the West sees and hears. The gruesome detail is essential here to understand how Arabs have already grown used to jihadi barbarity. They have seen full video clips of the execution of Iraqis – if shot in the back of the head, they have come to realize, a victim's blood pours from the front of his face – and they have seen video clips of Syrian soldiers not only beheaded but their heads then barbecued and carried through villages on sticks.

continued on next page



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

The West Must Offer Armenia Incentives Rather than Decry its Ties with Russia

On October 10, after lengthy heated debates, Armenia signed a treaty to join the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), composed of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia. The agreement goes into effect on January 1, 2015, subject to ratification by parliaments of the four countries. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have also expressed an interest in joining the Union.

The intended objective of forming EEU is to facilitate the free movement of goods, services, capital, and labor across member states, and to implement a coordinated policy in the energy, industrial, agricultural and transport sectors.

Views of analysts on the merits of Armenia's membership in EEU diverge depending on whether they are proponents or opponents of the country's leadership. The arguments advanced by opponents of EEU include the possible loss of Armenia's independence and isolation of Artsakh

(Karabagh) through the establishment of customs checkpoints at the border. EEU proponents, on the other hand, are stressing Armenia's geostrategic and economic interests. It remains to be seen which of these arguments will eventually prevail.

Meanwhile, there are some basic facts that are self-evident. Armenia has had long-standing and multifaceted links to Moscow going back to the Tsarist era, the Soviet Union, and today's Russian Federation.

It is imperative to recall that the livelihood of hundreds of thousands Armenian migrants in Russia will be impacted by Armenia's EEU membership, in terms of their ability to reside and work in that country. Furthermore, Armenian businesses would be able to expand their small domestic market, exporting their products with favorable tax terms to over one hundred million potential consumers in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia. Armenia would also serve as an easy gateway for foreign investors interested in entering the vast and complex EEU markets.

In the final analysis, three essential questions need to be raised on Armenia's membership in EEU:

1) Given the ongoing Artsakh conflict and Azerbaijan's multi-billion dollar military spending spree, which country has sold and will continue to sell Armenia advanced weapons to mitigate the growing threat from Baku? Not the United States, Great Britain or France, but Russia!

2) Which country can provide Armenia with desperately-needed natural gas at any price, let alone at subsidized prices? Russia and Iran to a lesser extent through a small pipeline.

3) Since Russia is Armenia's largest trading partner, it

makes more economic sense to have favorable tax terms with that country than with Europe. Not joining EEU would place Armenia at a serious tax disadvantage with devastating economic consequences.

While these are compelling reasons for Armenia's decision to join EEU, no one should conclude that Yerevan has to remain exclusively in the Russian economic zone. Clearly, it is in Armenia's interest to develop multilateral ties with the rest of the world, including Western Europe, North America, Middle East, and Asia. Armenian officials have repeatedly stated their interest in developing closer economic, political, and even military relations with Western countries, but not at the expense of Armenia's historical ties with Russia.

Meanwhile, it would be far more productive if Western countries, particularly the United States, rather than urging Armenian leaders to cut off vital relations with Russia, would actually offer tax privileges and other incentives to their investors in Armenia, thus reducing Yerevan's exclusive dependence on Russia. Similarly, U.S. criticism and warnings issued to Armenia for its commercial ties with Iran are manifestly counter-productive. It would be far more helpful if the Obama administration could muster the courage to press Turkey and Azerbaijan into lifting their joint blockade of the Armenian Republic which has been in effect for over 20 years.

In the light of the foregoing existential strategic and economic realities, Western countries would be better served to use carrots rather than sticks to help steer Armenia toward a more balanced relationship between East and West.

The Futility of Bombing ISIS

from previous page

Understandably, Alan Henning's murder didn't get much coverage in the Middle East, although television did show his murder video – which Western television did not. But it didn't make many front pages. Mostly the fighting between jihadis and Kurds at Ein al-Arab (Kobane) and the festival for the Muslim Eid – and the Haj in Saudi Arabia – dominated news coverage. In general, the Arab world was as uninterested in Henning's murder as we have been, for example, in the car bomb that killed 50 Syrian children in Homs last week. Had they been British children, of course...

But I'm struck by friends who've asked me why we are really carrying out air strikes when we won't put soldiers on the ground. They have noted how the families of American hostages – fruitlessly seeking mercy for their loved ones – keep repeating that they cannot make Obama do what they want him to do. Yet, don't we claim that our democratic governments can be influenced by individuals, that they do what we want?

And watching David Cameron on my Beirut television last week, I asked myself why it was really necessary for the RAF to bomb the "Islamic State." He knows very well that our four – or is it two? – clapped-out Tornados are not going to make the slightest difference to any assault on jihadi forces. Indeed, he was prepared to delay RAF strikes until the Scottish referendum was over. If so, why did he not defer them altogether to save British lives?

But it was obvious at the Tory party conference that Cameron's greatest threat came not from a man in Mosul called Abu-Bakr al-Baghdadi, but from a man in Bromley called Nigel Farage. Thus he waffled on about how Britain would "hunt down and bring to justice" Henning's killers and do "everything we can to defeat this organisation in the region and at home," using "all the assets we have to find these [remaining] hostages." By "all the assets," he must mean ground troops – because the RAF is already being used – and this we are not, I think, going to do. "British troops held hostage by Islamic State" is not a headline he wants to read. Thus I fear we are going to do nothing except bomb. And bomb. And bomb. Farage can't beat that.

Like all Western leaders faced with a crisis in the Middle East, Cameron does not want to deal with it – or explore why it happened. He wants to know how to respond to it politically or, preferably, militarily. Our refusal to broadcast the "Islamic State" beheading videos is understandable – absolutely in the case of the actual murders – but by preventing Brits from actually seeing these horrors, the Government avoids having to respond to the public's reaction: either a call for more air strikes or to demand their annulment.

This secrecy means the hostages do not exist in our imagination; they only emerge from the mist into the horrible desert sunlight when that grisly video arrives. In the region itself, hostages become public property at once, relatives giving interviews and demanding action from their governments. As I write, the families of 21 captured Lebanese soldiers faced with beheading are blocking the main Damascus-Beirut highway. A Qatari envoy has arrived to help (presumably with lots of cash).

Perhaps we need to reframe our understanding of the "Islamic State." British Muslim leaders have said, quite rightly, that Muslims show mercy, and that the "Islamic State" is a perversion of Islam. I suspect and fear that they are wrong. Not because Islam is not merciful, but because the "Islamic State" has nothing at all to do with Islam. It is more a cult of nihilism. Their fighters have been brutalised – remember that they have endured, many of them, Saddam's cruelty, our sanctions, Western invasion and occupation and air strikes under Saddam and now air strikes again. These people just don't believe in justice any more. They have erased it from their minds.

If we had not supported so many brutal men in the Middle East, would things have turned out differently? Probably. If we had supported justice – I hesitate to suggest putting a certain man on trial for war crimes – would there have been a different reaction in the Middle East? In the Syrian war, they say that 200,000 have died; in Gaza more than 2,000. But in Iraq, we suspect half a million died. And whose fault was that?

The "Islamic State" are the real or spiritual children of all this. Now we face an exclusive form of nihilism, a cult as merciless as it is morbid. And we bomb and we bomb and we bomb. And then?

(Robert Fisk writes for the Independent, where this column originally appeared.)

Happy 23rd Birthday to Armenia

By Mary A. Papazian, PhD

I am pleased to join you today on this significant occasion celebrating the 23rd anniversary of the free and independent second Armenian Republic. I am also here to represent the Knights and Daughters of Vartan. My husband, Past Grand Commander Dr. Dennis Papazian, who generally speaks here on behalf of the Knights and Daughters, is in Armenia today, participating with Grand Commander Steve Kradjian and 300 representatives from Armenian organizations all over the world in a planning meeting for the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the Armenian Genocide on April 25, 1915. He is regretful he could not join us today, and he sends his warmest wishes.

Let me take you back for a moment to those early days of 1991. To many of us it seems only yesterday, but we can recall our thrill having witnessed in our lifetime our newly emerged free and independent Republic take its place among the family of nations. But to a new generation of Armenians growing up in Armenia, America, and in communities around the world, there has always been a free and independent Republic of Armenia – a homeland – that albeit small, is distinct and readily identified on a map, and that participates fully in the international arena.

This new generation has never been stateless, roaming in a diaspora without a home, unrepresented in the United Nations and in capitals around the world. In Armenia, these young people have always had a country they could call their own, where self-government and self-determination were the rule – and even the dark days of the early 1990s are a distant memory. Here in America and for young Armenians throughout the diaspora, there has always been an Armenia to visit, led by an Armenian president, with its own flag and national anthem, an Armenia for which they could feel pride as Armenian athletes carried the flag during opening ceremonies in Olympic games.

But for the rest of us, prior to 1990 the concept of a free and independent Armenia was a dream – something we held on to, imagined, hoped for, but we had no roadmap for how it would be achieved.

And then in the early days of spring 1991, the leader of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev called for a final referendum to preserve the Soviet

Union. And while 75 percent of the population in the Soviet Union supported its preservation, five republics, including Armenia, rejected the referendum. And thus, the path toward full independence was launched.

Months later, on September 21, 1991, Armenia held its referendum on independence. It was a day like today, full of celebration, excitement, and enthusiasm for the promise of the future. Almost 95 percent of eligible voters participated, and they voted almost unanimously in support of independence. Armenia's next era was launched.

And while it was launched with hope for the future, it was also launched with recognition that this Armenia indeed is the sprout that grew out of the rubble of the most calamitous event in Armenian history, the Armenian Genocide, and as a re-iteration of that first, short-lived Armenian republic of 1918.

I just reread Michael Arlen's award winning book, *Passage to Ararat*, first published in 1975, for an Honor's Course on the Armenian Genocide and Jewish Holocaust in Art and Literature being taught this semester at my university, Southern Connecticut State University, and I was taken back to my first trip to Soviet Armenia in 1974, now 40 years ago. What a long time ago that was. Arlen's journey to discover his roots as an Armenian and to understand his father was filtered through his deepening understanding of the Armenian experience through the centuries, and especially the events of the 1870s and the early 1900s.

As he reflects on the long, convoluted, challenging history of the Armenians through the ages, Arlen writes: "For some years Armenian dreams were in a most dreadful tangle. The kings of Nairi enmeshed in liberal political adventures. The kings of Nairi dreaming dreams of grandeur, adrift in foreign courts. Mountain kings with crowns of branches and palaces of rock...But this much seems to be also true; there is a good chance now that the clearheaded, impatient young will begin to set their fathers free."

And so my friends and compatriots, Armenia dreams again. And every September 21st we are reminded that dreams—however impossible—can indeed come true. But we are also reminded that dreams need to be nurtured and cared for, that for our Armenian homeland to thrive, all of us will need to ensure it is supported, that it has the resources at home and abroad to grow, and that we do not undermine it by indulging in our petty politics and immediate personal desires.

This is not a trivial issue. Armenia needs peace with its neighbors; it needs economic stability, rule of law, investment in its future, green sustainable industry, education, and a healthy politics that is free from corruption and forward thinking, if it is to thrive in the twenty-first century.

My family and I recently spent two weeks in August travelling from one end of Anatolia to the other – from the west in Istanbul (formerly Constantinople), truly a city of Empire, to see BIRTHDAY, page 16



New Wave of Opposition Protests in Armenia

PROTESTS, from page 1

four of the five minority parties represented in the parliament elected in May 2012 set aside their long-standing mutual distrust and jointly planned new demonstrations in support of their efforts to force a vote of no confidence in the government. That initiative collapsed when Prime Minister Tigran Sargsisian (no relation to Serge) stepped down unexpectedly.

Then, in June 2014, the four parties in question – the HAK; the Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK) headed by wealthy businessman Gagik Tsarukian, which had been part of the ruling coalition until the May 2012 parliamentary election; the Zharangutian (Heritage) party headed by US-born former Foreign Minister Raffi Hovannisian, Serge Sargsisian's main challenger in the 2013 presidential ballot; and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation – Dashnaksutian (HHD) – issued a list of 12 demands to the Armenian leadership, and set a deadline of September 30 for meeting them.

Most of the demands focused on the socio-economic situation. They did not include President Sargsisian's resignation, which the BHK and HHD have stopped short of calling for. HHD parliament faction head Armen Rustamian explained that "Serzh Sargsisian's removal alone would not save the country" in the absence of radical changes to the political system.

Specifically, the opposition called for:

- The suspension of the pension reform that requires mandatory payments by all employed persons under the age of 40 into two state-controlled pension funds.
- The revision of legislation governing the use of roadside speed cameras

- A three-fold reduction of the trade turnover tax and the abolition of VAT payments at the border

- Doubling agricultural output
- The conversion of agricultural subsidies from foreign currency into Armenian drams

- A program to revive the country's flagship Nairit chemical plant, and the payment of wage arrears to its work force

- A ban on the sale or privatization of hydro-electric power stations on the Vorotan river

- A ban on raising public transport tariffs

- The adoption of legislation banning economic monopolies

- Amending the electoral code to ensure that the next parliamentary election (due in May 2017) is held exclusively on the basis of party lists.

- Granting the opposition oversight functions
- A ban on the signing of any document that could pose a threat to the continued existence of Nagorno-Karabagh Republic.

HKK parliamentary faction head Vahram Baghdasarian initially responded by hinting that the Armenian leadership took the "rational" demands seriously and would discuss those they considered "acceptable," but the authorities ultimately failed to meet any of them.

It was that failure that served as the catalyst for the planned new wave of demonstrations.

How effective the new push for regime change will be is not clear. As indicated above, there are fundamental differences among the four parties.

The BHK and the HHD do not support the insistence by the HAK and Zharangutian that Sargsisian and the government of Hovik Abrahamian should resign.

Moreover, the HAK, the BHK and

Zharangutian oppose planned constitutional amendments floated by Sargsisian that would transfer some presidential powers to the prime minister, while the Dashnaks support them.

And Zharangutian is the only one of the four parties that unequivocally opposes Sargsisian's decision one year ago to commit Armenia to membership of Russian President Vladimir Putin's planned Eurasian Economic Union.

In a clear allusion to BHK Chairman Tsarukian, HHK spokesman Eduard Sharmazanov dismissed the opposition alignment as "a merger of revanchism and oligarchy."

Veteran political scientist Aleksandr Iskandarian, for example, was quoted as opining that, despite their growing cooperation, the four parties lack "the potential" to bring down the government. "And everybody realizes that," Iskandarian said. "Not just you and me, but also the authorities and the leaders of the [opposition] quartet."

Possibly reflecting a lack of public confidence in the quartet's potential, just 2,000 people turned out on September 25 for the first of its new series of rallies.

That figure would, however, most likely have been higher had the meeting been held in Yerevan's Freedom Square, rather than in the town of Abovian, 15 kilometers north of the capital.

Further rallies are planned in Gumri, Vanadzor, and six other towns, culminating in a protest demonstration in Yerevan on October 10 at which the decision will be taken whether and how to intensify pressure on the country's leadership.

– Liz Fuller

Happy 23rd Birthday to Armenia

BIRTHDAY, from page 15

Kayserie, Cilicia (and my grandparents home village of Sis), and east across the Armenian plateau to Aintab, Urfa, Diarbekir, Bitlis, Van, Kars and Ani.

To stand in the ruined city of Ani under the shadows of the great Cathedral Surp Asdvadzadzin and look across the Arax river at the hills of modern Armenia is a feeling I can't describe: pride in what we created as a people centuries ago, awe at the natural beauty of the river and hills that surround it, and lament that there is no bridge connecting old Ani with modern Armenia, no way to connect the past with the present and the future, or even an explicit reference to Ani's Armenian past in the material posted in the entrance to the ruined city.

This is our challenge today: to find a way to connect the past with the future, to find a way as Armenians to live fully in our time, and to ensure that the future is one that is worthy both of the strength of our forbearers who created beauty and survived tragedy and of our celebration, hope, and optimism when we joined the community of nations twenty-three years ago.

I am confident we are up to the task, and I look forward to celebrating our many successes with you and our fellow Armenians and friends here, in Armenia, and across the globe, in the years ahead.

So let us enjoy the celebration today, but remember that tomorrow we wake up and the hard work begins once more.

Thank you.

(Dr. Mary Papazian is the president of Southern Connecticut State University New Haven, Conn. She delivered this speech on September 21, at the Independence Day Celebration at the Armenian Church Diocese New York.)

NAJARIAN LECTURE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

AT FANEUIL HALL

Truth to Action

MEDIA FREEDOM

Protecting Human Rights Globally

"Everyone has the right to seek, receive and impart ideas without fear and interference. Yet throughout the world, journalists, bloggers and others face harassment and imprisonment for exercising their right to free speech...Freedom of expression is essential to the attainment of all other rights...and is closely linked to the right to hold opinions and the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion..."

–Amnesty International 2014



Mayor's Remarks
Martin J. Walsh
Mayor, City of Boston



Introduction
Courtney Radsch, PhD
Advocacy Director, Committee to Protect Journalists



Ray Suarez
Host, *Inside Story* on Al Jazeera America and *America Abroad* on Public Radio International



Stephen Kurkjian
Founding member and former chief, *Investigative Spotlight Team* of The Boston Globe and editor of its Washington Bureau



Thomas Mucha
Editor, GlobalPost

**Thursday
October 23
2014
7:30pm**

Free and open to the public

**Faneuil
Hall
Boston,
Mass.**

A reception follows at the Millennium Bostonian Hotel.