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Community Gathers to Pay Tribute to Gulian at Celebratory Banquet

DIRAN JEBEJIAN PHOTO



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presents Hirant Gulian with the St. Nersess Shnorhali Medal.

FAIR LAWN, N.J. – On Friday, October 5, more than 400 friends and admirers of longtime community activist Hirant Gulian paid tribute to him during a celebratory banquet sponsored by the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern).

By Florence Avakian

Along with attendees from throughout the New York-New Jersey region, well-wishers from six foreign countries and 10 US states participated in the tribute. To accommodate the overflow crowd at St. Leon Armenian Church, a large tent was set up outside the parish's packed Abajian Hall, where additional tables were laid out for guests. The Diocesan Primate, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, presided over the occasion.

see GULIAN, page 9

Ellis Island Medal Of Honor Recipient Papken Megerian Honored in Penn.

WYNNEWOOD, Penn. – On Friday, September 28, the Armenian community of Philadelphia came together, at a reception hosted by St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Church, to honor Papken Megerian, one of the 2012 Ellis Island Medal of Honor recipients, acknowledging their pride in an immigrant whose service to the Armenian community, in the US and abroad, spans several decades.

Parish Council Vice Chair Mark Gulasarian welcomed the 200 guests gathered for the occasion and expressed his appreciation to Megerian for all of his efforts on behalf of the parish. He shared some highlights of Megerian's devotion to the Armenian community and acknowledged both Papken and his wife, Anahid, reflecting back on their 50 years of marriage as an inspiration to the community and stating, "If



Papken and Anahid Megerian

Papken could, he would cut the medal in half and give the other half to Anahid."

Sonia Kailian Placido, Papken Megerian's niece, shed some light on the personal influence that her uncle has had in her life. She, along with her two sisters and brother, was raised by a single mother. Her three uncles became surrogate fathers to them and "Papken Ker" was omnipresent in their lives as they were growing up. He was always ready, willing and able to give of his time. Her uncle, she said, "is a man who thrives on helping others. Call it good or bad, but he never says no."

"It wasn't until I got older and had my own family that I was really able to appreciate the true generosity of my uncle . . . and that of his wife and children for their willingness to share him. His involvement in numerous organizations and philanthropies still boggles my mind – how does he make time for it all? Passion. Simply put, see MEGERIAN, page 7

Late Patriarch Manoogian Laid to Rest

By Arthur Hagopian

JERUSALEM – The epic odyssey of the boy Avedis, from the sandstorms of the Iraqi desert, to the golden throne of St. James in Jerusalem, wound down to its inevitable close this week, as the coffin slowly descended into the grave. The heavens themselves seemed to blaze forth the death of the prince, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, 96th in line of succession from Abraham, the first leader of the Armenian Church in the Holy Land.

Shirvanian Named Locum Tenens

In a hauntingly solemn ceremony, his fellow princes had led Manoogian to his final resting place in the Armenian cemetery of St. Saviors, a stone's throw from the bullet-riddled Zion Gate, one of seven that punctuate the 500-year-old Walls of the Old City. Thousands of people, some of whom had flown in expressly for the occasion, watched the funeral or accompanied the cortege, the narrow streets of the Old City and the confined space within the cemetery making it impossible to accommodate more than a fraction of their number.

see FUNERAL, page 16

Newly Discovered Photograph Links Germans to 1915 Armenia Genocide

The photograph – never published before – was apparently taken in the summer of 1915. Human skulls are scattered over the earth.

By Robert Fisk

They are all that remain of a handful of Armenians slaughtered by the Ottoman Turks during the First World War. Behind the skulls, posing for the camera, are three Turkish officers in tall, soft hats and a man, on the far right, who is dressed in Kurdish clothes. But the two other men are Germans, both dressed in the military flat caps, belts and tunics of the Kaiserreichsheer, the Imperial German Army. It is an atrocity snapshot – just like those pictures the Nazis took of their soldiers posing before Jewish Holocaust victims a quarter of a century later.

Did the Germans participate in the mass killing of Christian see PHOTOGRAPH, page 16



The newly discovered photo shows German soldiers at the scene of Genocide murders.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Serj Tankian and Arto Tunçboyacıyan in Charity Concert for Syrian-Armenians

PASADENA – A fundraising concert will take place, organized by the Foundation to Help Syrian-Armenians, at the Pasadena Civic Concert Hall, on November 11.

Armenpress reported that the concert will feature many celebrated Armenian musicians from around the world, such as singer and composer Serj Tankian and percussionist Arto Tunçboyacıyan. Other musicians participating in the concert will be Rouben Hakhverdyan, Lilit Pipoyan, Armen Movsisyan, Element Band, Dirty Diamond, Adis Harmandyan and Michael Avetisyan.

For tickets visit (www.itsmyseat.com/hyeaid).

Armenian Woman Among Dead in Beirut Blast

BEIRUT – Georgette Sarkisian, a 42-year-old Armenian woman, died as a result of a car bomb that exploded on Friday, October 19 in the Christian Ashrafieh neighborhood. She was a member of the Armenian Democratic Liberal party in Lebanon. She was an employee of Bemo Bank, near her home. She was killed around noon, when she was headed home to prepare lunch for her three children.

Lawyers Call upon US To Issue Visa Waivers For Syrian-Armenians

LOS ANGELES – Four prominent Armenian-American lawyers, all former or current public officials at the federal, state and local level, have called upon the United States Government to issue visa waivers for Syrian-Armenians. Vartkes Yeghiayan, former assistant director of the Peace Corps, Walter Karabian, former Democratic Majority Leader for the State of California, William Paparian, former Mayor of Pasadena, and Vatche Tashjian, commissioner on the Status of Women for the City of Glendale, have sent a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano requesting a "Temporary Visa Program" for Syrian Armenians to come to the United States and remain without work authorizations.

"The unfolding catastrophe in Syria has prompted us to take this action," said former Pasadena Mayor William Paparian. "We cannot remain silent as we witness the dire situation that confronts our brothers and sisters in Syria and hope that the United States Government responds promptly to our request."

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

67th Anniversary of UN Celebrated in Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The 67th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and the 20 years of its cooperation with Armenia were marked in Armenia last week. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted in a message issued on this occasion, “We shall prepare a certain and practical agenda of development for the period after 2015. We must continue to fight against intolerance, save the people engaged in the conflicts and establish lasting peace.”

Davina Gercheva, United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Armenia, highlighted on October 23 that the strategic cooperation with the private sector, educational sector and civil society was aimed to show the role of impartial and promoting supporter on the way to the practical democracy and to market economy for Armenia during the breakthrough.

“We have promoted the development of the goals during these 20 years through legislative reforms and strengthening of social ties” noted Gercheva.

According to the Deputy Foreign Minister Ashot Hovakimyan, the activities of the UN are reaching every corner of Armenia.

A photography exhibition was launched during the event.

‘Help Your Brother’ Initiative Will Help Syrian Armenians in Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The “Help Your Brother” initiative to aid Syrian-Armenians is also assisting the Syrian-Armenians who have settled in Armenia. In the near future, the food aid will be provided to the Syrian-Armenian families settled in Armenia, according to the National Foundation.

On October 15, 14 tons of humanitarian aid were sent to Syria. Cargo for the second stage of humanitarian aid to Syria from “Help Your Brother” organization is already ready. They will soon be transported to Syria the aid weighting more than 45 tons.

Dozens of citizens, Armenian intellectuals, political and business figures continue moral and financial assistance to the Syrian-Armenians. Civilitas Foundation donated 3 million drams and Deno Gold Mining 1 million drams.

St. Anna Church Consecrated in Aghavnatoun

YEREVAN (Hetq) – A festive spirit permeated the village of Aghavnatoun in Armenia’s Armavir Province on Sunday.

After three years of construction, the Saint Anna Armenian Apostolic Church, financed by former village resident Vahan Avagyan who now lives in Russia, was consecrated.

The courtyard of the new church was also festooned with Armenian stone crosses sculpted by Rouben Nalbandyan, a gift from other former Aghavnatoun residents who have found financial success abroad.

Swiss Businessmen Impressed by Armenia Visit

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenian National Assembly speaker Hovik Abrahamian received a Swiss business delegation on October 23. Abrahamian welcomed the guests and expressed his delight that they had chosen to visit Armenia.

He praised the high level of political discourse and expanding cooperation between the two nations.

Dwelling on the recent activation of relations Abrahamian highlighted the role of inter-parliamentary cooperation.

The Swiss visitors stated that an Armenian-Swiss parliamentary group is also launching their activities.

Nalbandian Travels to Mexico for Talks

YEREVAN (news.am) – Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian’s Latin American tour kicked off with a visit to Mexico on Monday.

In Mexico City, Nalbandian met with his Mexican counterpart, Patricia Espinosa, Armenian MFA press service informs.

Espinosa noted that her country sees Armenia as friendly and wishes to expand interaction. In his turn, Nalbandian said he knew his visit would deepen relations between the two nations.

They agreed to expand bilateral legal and contractual domain and to look into opening an Armenian Embassy in Mexico.

Nalbandian, however, expressed bewilderment over the fact that the previous Mexican parliament had adopted resolutions that misrepresents the reality of the Artsakh conflict. He stressed that these resolutions are flagrantly contrary to the international community’s stance, they harm the conflict settlement process and the regional security, and adversely affect Armenian-Mexican relations.

He also stressed that he shares the Mexican human rights advocates’ view that the erecting of a “Khojaly” monument in Mexico City is an insult to the memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide and that he agreed with universal reaction against placing of the



Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian’s and his Mexican counterpart, Patricia Espinosa

former Azerbaijani president’s statue in a Mexico City park.

Espinosa noted that all these points had received negative reactions from the Mexican public.

Nalbandian briefed his Mexican counterpart on the Karabakh peace process, and the Mexican FM reaffirmed her government’s full support to the conflict’s solely peaceful resolution and on the basis of the proposals offered by the

OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

On the same day, Nalbandian also met with members of the Mexican Senate and noted that, even though this year marks the 20th anniversary of diplomatic ties between both countries, not everything is carried out to develop relations. During their discussion of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the senators stressed that negotiations are the only way to resolve this matter.

Labor Migration Program Causing Yerevan-Moscow Friction

By Marina Grigoryan

YEREVAN (Eurasianet.org) – Armenia is pressing to terminate a Russian government program that encourages legal labor migration to Russia. But the Russian Federal Migration Service shows no sign of abandoning the initiative.

In operation since 2006, the Compatriots program is intended to assist up to 300,000 voluntary labor migrants per year from former Soviet republics in finding work in under-populated regions of Russia. The Russian government covers travel expenses for program participants, provides jobs and accommodation and guarantees the migrants’ right to Russian citizenship.

Precise data on the number of Armenians who have gone to Russia under the Compatriots program is not publicly available. Some estimates put the number at only a couple of thousand. But given the overall outflow of an estimated 1.1-million Armenians since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, the program nevertheless has been a target of criticism in Yerevan.

In the past, the Armenian government has tended to look the other way. But Armenia’s February 2013 presidential election, along with a September decree issued by Russian President Vladimir Putin, is forcing Armenian leaders to change tactics.

The program was initially expected to wrap up on December 31. But the Putin decree made the program permanent, and extended eligibility to the grandparents and adult brothers and sisters of migrants. That change means entire families can now easily move to Russia.

With the Armenian presidential election just four months away, incumbent authorities do not want to be seen as tolerating an exodus of working-age citizens. “Russia is trying to solve its demographic problems this way, but, in Armenia, the demographic situation is every more alarming,” commented Yerevan-based ethnographer Hranush

Kharatian.

In 2011, Armenia’s official population stood at just over 2.87 million, marking roughly a 4.36 percent decline since 2001. This year, between January and September alone, migration increased by 8 percent to 97,100 individuals, according to the State Statistics Service. Adding to that outflow now would do little to enhance the government’s popularity with voters.

On October 3, Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian told parliament that the program’s “format” and “implementation in other countries” are “not acceptable for us.” Sargsian did not respond to a EurasiaNet.org request for comment.

Just over a week later, at an October 12 session of the Armenian-Russian intergovernmental economic commission, Deputy Foreign Minister Shavarsh Kocharian reinforced Sargsian’s message, telling his Russian counterparts that “only Armenia decides what to do on its territory. And since we have spoken against the program, obviously, it cannot be implemented here.”

Yet the program has remained in place. Representatives of Russia’s Federal Migration Service (FMS) declined to respond to questions. FMS representatives administer the program, operating out of offices in Yerevan and in Armenian regions.

Russia has been the major destination of illegal Armenian labor migrants for decades, with tens of thousands making the trip to support their families. During the first half of 2012, Russia accounted for more than 80 percent of the bank transfers to Armenia, worth roughly \$707.4 million; a 12-percent increase since 2011, according to the Central Bank of Armenia.

Given that financial impact, Kharatian argues that the Armenian government should focus more on eliminating the reasons for migration to Russia – estimated unemployment runs well into the double digits – than on ending the program itself. “I think closing down the program is not viable. It will look like closing the borders,” Kharatian said.

With or without the Compatriots program, if Armenians want to leave the country to work abroad, they will do it anyway, she added.

Russian Ambassador Vyacheslav Kovalenko on October 10 took a similar line. Responding to Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian’s criticism, he underlined that “no one forces Armenian citizens to go to Russia.”

Kovalenko went on to claim that the number of Armenians who have left for the United States by receiving a Green Card via a government-run lottery surpasses the number who have left for Russia under the Compatriots program. According to the US embassy in Yerevan, in 2012, 998 Armenians received a Green Card via the lottery.

Kovalenko did not address the question of why, despite Yerevan’s objections to the program, Russia has not moved to phase out the Compatriots in Armenia.

While the Armenian government long has touted its efforts to discourage labor migration by stimulating economic growth – the government claims a 7-percent growth rate so far in 2012 – the results have not been immediate.

Faced with meager job options at home, many Armenians have no choice but to venture abroad, commented one Yerevan retiree, whose son, daughter-in-law and three grandchildren used the Compatriots program to move to Russia’s Far East. “My son works at a construction site. They have a house and lead a normal life, while in Armenia he couldn’t find a permanent job for years,” recounted 65-year-old Tigranuhi Hambardzumian. “Many people don’t know about this program; if they did, they would immediately apply for it.”

A school guard working near the Federal Migration Service’s office in Vanadzor, Armenia’s third largest city, agreed: “They move there because they don’t see their future here.”

Short of an economic miracle, most likely little can change that.

(Marianna Grigoryan is a freelance reporter in Yerevan and the editor of MediaLab.am.)



INTERNATIONAL

London Tekeyan Cultural Association Is Revitalized

LONDON – The Tekeyan Cultural Association London Chapter was established in 1975 and is affiliated with the Tekeyan Trust, a registered charity in the UK. Like its parent organization, it is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Armenian cultural identity and to furthering links between the Armenian Diaspora and Armenia.

In its early years, the TCA London organized numerous cultural events including performances by the Armenian State Dance Company in Sadler's Wells, the Armenian State Folk Song and Dance Company at the Royal Albert Hall, the Armenian State Choir.

The TCA London Chapter has revitalized this year to further its mission – to promote Armenian culture by organizing public events, cultural exhibitions, lectures, workshops, etc.

In order to reintroduce the TCA London, an official dinner reception was held in March. It celebrated the new beginning of the major cultural organization with the newly-appointed President Vartan Ouzounian, Chairman Hratch Kouyoumjian and the new Executive Committee: Sevag Arevian, Sossi Yeretzian (secretary), Garen Arevian (treasurer), Gayaneh Cherchian, Dalila Heath, Violetta Kaydan-



In the picture the TCA Committee members, from left to right: Sevag Arevian, Sossi Yeretzian (Secretary), Hratch Kouyoumjian (Chairman), Garen Arevian (Treasurer), Vartan Ouzounian (President), Gayaneh Cherchian and Dalila Heath.

Barzankian, and coop member Anita Manoukian, as well as supporter Rosette Ouzounian, who contributes greatly to the realization of the TCA London functions.

The exhibition of 45 contemporary paintings by 25 well-known Armenian artists was the first major cultural event organized by the TCA London after its rebirth. The range of cultural events

was continued with the performances by the 50-strong, award-winning and internationally renowned Sahak-Mesrop Armenian Choir of Marseille (see below). The TCA London is planning a number of cultural and social projects involving younger generation, among them is the New Year Eve Dinner Dance in collaboration with Nor Serount Association in London.

Sahak-Mesrop Choir of Marseille Debuts in the UK

LONDON – The Armenian community of London enjoyed a memorable weekend of Armenian culture and music on October 6-7. For the first time ever in the UK, the Sahak-Mesrop Armenian Choir of Marseille, performed popular Armenian choral songs at St. Yeghiche Armenian Church in Cranley Gardens, London.

The renowned and award-winning Sahag-Mesrob Choir of Marseille has been led by its director, Khatchig Yilmazian, for more than 35 years. Since its creation in 1977 at the initiative of the Holy Translators Church in Marseille, France, a city with a large Armenian population, it has played an important role in the general cultural landscape of the city. The choir has given numerous concerts of Armenian secular and choral music all over Europe and in Armenia.

The concert on October 6, was organized by the London Chapter of the Tekeyan Cultural Association on the occasion of the 65th anniversary of the association. The idea of inviting the choir was the brainchild of the president of TCA Vartan Ouzounian and was enthusi-

astically supported by the Executive Committee of the London Chapter. It was one of a series of activities in order to revive the TCA local chapter and bring it up to its formal glory.

Present at the concert were Bishop Vahan Hovhannessian, Primate of the Armenian Church in the UK and Ireland, the Armenian Ambassador Karine Kazinian and the Ambassador of the Palestinian Delegation to London Mr. Manuel Hassassian, in addition to councilors and other civic and religious dignitaries.

In his welcoming statement, the chairperson of the TCA, Dr. Hratch Kouyoumjian, said, "The TCA is proud to present the choir to our community. As Armenians we need to sustain our deep historical roots and embellish our quality of life by activities such as this concert."

The program presented traditional and classical Armenian songs: Guiliguia, finale of the "Anoush" opera, Yerevan-Erebouni, Hoy Nazan Im, etc. Yilmazian, together with pianist Juliette Yilmazian and soloists Ani Conquet, Antranig Minassian and Noubarig Derminassian, excelled in their render-

ings of the songs to a mixed audience of Armenians and non-Armenians. The great hall of St. Yeghiche was filled to capacity with over 500 people that had come from all corners of the UK to assist this concert.

At the end of the concert, Ouzounian was invited to the podium, and Yilmazian was presented with a certificate of appreciation and was thanked for their dedication and contribution to Armenian culture and music.

This was followed by words of thanks from Yilmazian who thanked the Association for their hard work in making the concert a success. It was finally the turn of the Primate who thanked and praised the choir and the Tekeyan Cultural Association for having organized this concert. He said he was pleasantly surprised to see so many people joining together to hear Armenian songs.

The following day, on October 7, the Sahag-Mesrob Choir sang the hymns and the melodies of the Divine Liturgy (Gomidasian Badarak) celebrated by Bishop Vahan Hovhannessian at St. Yeghiche Church.



The Sahak-Mesrop Choir of Marseille conducted by Khatchig Yilmazian

International News

Over 100,000 Syrian Refugees in Lebanon Now – UNHCR

GENEVA (Reuters) – Lebanon has become the third of Syria's neighbors after Turkey and Jordan to register more than 100,000 refugees from Syria's civil war, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) said on Tuesday.

In all, more than 358,000 Syrians fleeing the 19-month-old conflict have registered in four neighboring states, including Iraq, and tens of thousands more have fled but not sought international assistance, it said.

Lebanon has seen its own Syrian-related unrest, exacerbated by the assassination last week of a senior intelligence officer who had pursued evidence of Syrian attempts to destabilize Lebanon.

"In Lebanon, we have not seen, despite the recent turmoil, a decrease in people crossing," UNHCR chief spokeswoman Melissa Fleming told a news briefing in Geneva.

Jordan now has 105,737 registered Syrian refugees, followed by 101,834 in Turkey, 101,283 in Lebanon and 42,661 in Iraq. The UNHCR has forecast that a total of up to 700,000 Syrian refugees may have fled abroad by the end of the year.

Fleming called for international support for countries hosting the refugees. "These nations should not be expected to carry the entire burden alone," she said.

Some 6,815 Syrian refugees have registered in North Africa, nearly all in Egypt, but the Egyptian government has said that there are up to 150,000 Syrians in the country, who may still seek refugee status if their money or visas run out, Fleming said.

She also urged European countries to keep open their borders for people fleeing Syria and grant them asylum.

Some 16,474 Syrians sought asylum in the European Union, Norway or Switzerland between January 2011 and August 2012, according to the UNHCR's latest figures.

Armenian Ambassador Meets Cairo Governor

CAIRO (News.am) – Armenia's Ambassador to Egypt Armen Melkonyan met with the newly-appointed governor of Cairo, Osama Kamal, on Tuesday.

The two discussed development of relations between Yerevan and Cairo, in particular, concluding legal documents between the two cities and issues on activating mutual visits and joint events, the Armenian Foreign Ministry reported. The sides also considered promising cooperation in the fields of tourism and culture.

The two stressed Egyptian Armenians' centuries-long contribution to Cairo's culture.

Russia to Block UN Bid For Military Action Against Iran

MOSCOW (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Russia will scuttle any United Nations (UN) Security Council resolution that could be interpreted as allowing military action against Iran, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Tuesday, October 23, according to RIA Novosti.

"As the Libyan experience has shown, sadly, a military scenario is possible," he said in an interview with the daily Rossiiskaya Gazeta when asked whether Israel or the United States could start military operations in Iran.

Russia will therefore exercise an extremely cautious approach at the UN Security Council, he said.

"We won't allow any more such disingenuous interpretations. We will see to it that no resolution is open to interpretation like the one on Libya," he said.

The West, led by the United States, suspects Iran of pursuing a secret nuclear weapons program, but the Islamic Republic says it needs nuclear power solely for electricity generation.

There is "absolutely no evidence" that Iran has decided to include a military component in its nuclear program, Lavrov said.



Community News

Appreciation:

Loss of a Valiant Shepherd: Rev. Papken Maksoudian

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The task of a parish priest is a daunting one; he has to please every one in his flock and still remain true to himself and his vocation. That is why most of the time, parish priests are bogged down in their daily responsibilities and they end up experiencing “clergy burn out.”

This, of course, precludes the priest's leadership role in the general scheme of church matters.

In these days of clergy shortage, people have to acknowledge and appreciate the calling of parish priests and the role they play on the popular level in sustaining and nurturing the foundations of the Armenian Church.

Rev. Papken Maksoudian, who passed away on October 15, 2012, at age 103, was not your ordinary parish priest. He had the aura and allure of an archbishop, a prince of the church, and he conducted himself as such. He had a commanding personality and he emanated the message of the Armenian Church in his



Rev. Papken Maksoudian

words and deeds, both before and after entering the order of priesthood. He was not only a man of God, but one who at heart was an activist intellectual.

After completing his religious education at the Seminary of Antelias, he embarked on a publishing career, publishing and editing the scholarly and religious journals of *Hask* in Antelias and *Sion* in Jerusalem. He also edited the ADL daily *Zartonk* in Beirut.

His love affair with both publishing and writing editorial commentaries remained with him to the very end.

He was an inspiring leader and orator. After he was ordained a priest in 1949, he moved to Boston, to become the pastor of Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Cambridge (1951-1974), enlisting the talents of a prominent architect Zaven Baikar, who designed the new building's edifice in the traditional spirit of the Armenian architecture.

At that time, Holy Trinity Church became one of the most popular houses of worship on the East Coast.

He was a fundraiser, preacher, builder and effective spiritual leader. To say that his tenure as a priest was peaceful would mean to state only half of the truth; he

see APPRECIATION, page 7



Dr. Steven Copp and Dr. Philip Balikian with their patient during rounds

On a Mission To Heal

SAN DIEGO, Calif. and YEREVAN – Doctors often remark that practicing medicine and healing others is their mission in life. For Doctors Anna Kulidjian, Philip Balikian and Steven Copp, all orthopedic surgeons from San Diego, the concept of a mission can be taken literally.

Early in September, these dedicated physicians took time off to go on a medical mission to Armenia. Over the course of a week, they performed 24 hip-replacement surgeries. It was a yearlong effort to select eligible patients who needed surgery but did not have the financial means or access to specialized surgeons. These hip replacements were performed, at no cost to the patient or a hospital, for patients with untreated and debilitating arthritis. They had lost their mobility and could not afford these procedures. Patients who thought they would never walk again are now standing and functioning in a way they never dreamed possible.

The Scientific Center of Traumatology and Orthopedic in Nork Marash was identified as the local teaching hospital in Yerevan where these complicated cases were performed. Working with Dr. Armen Aivazyan, chief orthopedics of joint replacement at the center, Kulidjian, Balikian and Copp worked around the clock to teach the Armenian surgeons and residents the latest techniques in joint arthroplasty.

Stryker Corporation, the manufacturer of the hip implants, donated the hip prostheses and equipment necessary for the procedures. Stacy Lang, from Stryker, coordinated this donation. She accompanied the doctors on their trip to Armenia and coordinated the efforts in the operating rooms. More than \$1.5 million of product was donated by Stryker for this particular mission. Walkers and canes and other therapy-related devices were also donated by Doctors Petros and Karine Taglyan of Hye Pharmacy.

Some members of the team hiked to the highest peak of Mt. Aragats as a fundraising effort to raise money for items such as pain medications and other necessary supplies.

Team San Diego as they were known included, Kulidjian, who was born in Armenia and is assistant clinical professor in adult joint reconstruction and chief of orthopedic oncology at University of California, San Diego. Balikian is chief

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From left, Stacy Lang, Dr. Anna Kulidjian, Dr. Philip Balikian and Dr. Steven Copp – Team San Diego – visit the Armenian American Wellness Center in Yerevan.

NYSIP Interns Make Program's 25th Anniversary Year To Remember

NEW YORK – Every summer, participants in the AGBU New York Summer Internship Program (NYSIP) tap into an expansive network of industry experts, add a top Manhattan organization to their resumes, and form lifelong friendships with young Armenians from across the diaspora. This year, the NYSIP interns also helped make AGBU history by celebrating the program's silver jubilee. Whether they were working, attending educational and cultural events, or exploring the city, every day of NYSIP's 25th anniversary summer was unforgettable.

In 2012, institutions such as Merrill Lynch, Mirrorball, the New York Resident, the New York University Medical Center and numerous others, benefitted from the enthusiasm and talent that the 30 NYSIP students brought with them from their hometowns in Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Russia and the UK, as well as across the US.

NYSIP supervisor Craig Avedisian, who hosts interns at his law office, discussed why he joined the program, stating, “It is immensely satisfying to impart knowledge, and hopefully wisdom, acquired from years of working in the field, to young adults starting their journey. I am confident that the NYSIP interns learn from this experience and will have more successful and fulfilling careers because of it.” The interns, in turn, took advantage of the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of their chosen professions, working under the guidance of specialists who helped them realize their career aspirations.

The students' hours in the office were complemented by a professional lecture series, which gave them the chance to meet both as a group and one-on-one with leaders in different fields to discuss strategies for job hunting and ways to advance themselves following graduation. Guest speakers included NYSIP Co-Chair Raffi Balian, a foreign service officer with the US State Department; Anna Bruno, a NYSIP supervisor and financial consultant for AXA Advisors; and NYSIP alumnus Serge Kassardjian, a strategic partner in mobile commerce at Google. An interactive entrepreneurship panel organized by NYSIP alumnus Taleen Mangassarian, which featured Hamilton Colwell of Maia Yogurt, Joe Hallett of Company Connector and Nil Sen of Examville, was one of the highlights of the series, leaving interns with insiders' knowledge of how to establish a start-up company. NYSIP participant Areni Shahinian of Los Angeles reflected on those seminars, and the program as a whole, commenting, “The AGBU Summer Internship Program not only gave me the tools I need to become a successful professional but gave me the confidence and inspiration to strive to be better, as well. It was inspiring to see so many successful Armenians giving back to the community and I look forward to the day when I can supervise my own AGBU intern. Also, thanks to NYSIP, I now have friends around the world who have become my family.”

When they weren't working, the NYSIP interns could be spotted all across the city taking in New York's famous landmarks and sites. Picnics in Central Park, tours of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, and a celebratory gathering for the 4th of July fireworks were just some of the planned activities that kept the group busy on their weekends and every day in between. While the students immersed themselves in the culture of New York City, they also stayed connected to their Armenian cultural heritage. An invitation from the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America brought the interns to see the church headquarters. There, they dined with Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, the Diocesan Primate.

Community service is a key component of NYSIP, and in keeping with an annual tradition, the interns visited the Armenian Home for the Aged in Queens, where they brightened the residents' day with a talent show. The community

see NYSIP, page 5



COMMUNITY NEWS

Glendale Health Festival to Take Place November 3

GLENDALÉ, Calif. – The third annual Glendale Health Festival will return to the Pacific Edison Community Center, 501 S. Pacific Ave., on November 3, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. This festival is free and open to the entire community.

The health festival will include free medical screenings and health education for the whole family on conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity and proper nutrition, heart disease, cancer awareness, and more. Breast and cervical cancer screening will be offered to the appropriate patients. There will be on-site multi-lingual medical staff to provide health-related information and advice. In addition,

the festival will feature free food, entertainment, and activities for the entire family.

This year's health festival comes at the heels of President Obama's Affordable Care Act, which will expand health care coverage to many who have been unable to secure health insurance for themselves or their families. "We are excited about the prospect of having more insured patients in the near future," said Manuel Momjian, MD, who is heading the planning committee, which comprises civic leaders and health care professionals. "We will continue to provide free screening and education for those who are less fortunate in our community. Last year, more than 1,500 members of our

community participated in the Glendale Health Festival and we believe that this year we will have even more."

The Glendale Health Festival is a community service of the Armenian American Medical Society (AAMS) in collaboration with the Office of State Senator Carol Liu, Los Angeles County Department of public health, Community Services and Parks Department, Glendale Adventist Medical Center, Glendale Memorial Hospital and Health Center, Northwest Glendale Lions Club, and the Armenian American Nurses Association.

For more information, write to info@aams.com.

Marathoner Michael Goolkasian to Speak at St. James Men's Club

WATERTOWN – On Monday, November 5, Michael Goolkasian, national sports advisor, will be the speaker at the dinner meeting of the St. James Armenian Church Men's Club. The topic will be "Health and Healthy Lifestyles."

Since 1980, Goolkasian has competed in more than 350 races, including 164 marathons and nine Ironman competitions. He placed first in the Montreal Ironman competition and in Arizona's Grand Canyon Marathon. He's a member of the 50 State Marathon Club, having completed marathons in all 50 states, and is a guidance coach for the Big Brother Association. He has also run four ultra-marathons of distances up to 100 kilometers.

The social hour starts with *mezza* at 6:15 p.m. followed by a complete traditional dinner at 7 p.m. The dinner meeting will be at the St. James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center – Keljik Hall, 465 Mount Auburn St. Women are welcome.

NYSIP 25th Anniversary

NYSIP, from page 4

service project, known as "Sunshine for Seniors," is organized by the AGBU Young Professionals of Greater New York (YPGNY) and is just one of the YP group's many initiatives that have strengthened the internship program over the years. Since 1999, YPGNY has annually sponsored student scholarships for NYSIP and since 2000 has coordinated Mentorship Night, an evening of professional exchange between local young professionals and visiting interns. The success of Mentorship Night prompted the launch of a mentorship program in 2007, which pairs interns with accomplished professionals who offer guidance and



Residents at the Armenian Home enjoy a performance by NYSIP.

advice during regular meetings throughout the summer. Interns and mentors establish a relationship that they often maintain long after the pro-

gram has concluded, which is a testament to NYSIP's lasting, positive impact.

At the NYSIP 25th anniversary weekend celebration, the interns saw the ways that, decades from now, they will continue to reap the program's benefits. The weekend festivities, which kicked off on Friday, July 20, at the anniversary mixer and continued with the Saturday night gala, reunited hundreds of NYSIP alumni and supporters. The alumni who were present have risen to the top of their fields and they continue to stay active and give back to the AGBU community.



Michael Goolkasian



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On a Mission to Heal

MISSION, from page 4

orthopedic surgeon with Arch Health Partners, affiliated with Pomerado Hospital in San Diego. Copp is head of the Division of Orthopedic Surgery at Scripps Clinic in La Jolla. Lang is a joint replacement representative for Stryker Corp in Southern California.

Copp, who is not Armenian, was touched by many of his patients on this mission. "When we were making rounds after the operations one of my patients held my hand for 10 minutes and expressed her gratitude. It was wonderful and very meaningful and gratifying," he said.

This experience positively changed the lives of all involved. There is a real need for specialized medical education and orthopedic surgical training in Armenia. "Efforts like this can truly change the course of health care. It was a successful mission that has given both the Armenian surgeons and patients more power

and opportunity for a better future," said Kulidjian. "We all look forward to returning again and helping our colleagues and people."

Balikian was inspired by family and friends and many Armenian philanthropic organizations who have given back to his homeland, Armenia, over the past few decades. "Medical projects such as the Armenian American Wellness Center, spearheaded by Rita and late Vartkess Balian, the efforts of renowned orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Vartkes and his wife, Mary, Najarian, medical missions by Dr. Harout Mekhjian, Dr. Hrayr Hovaguimian, Dr. Garo Tertzakian, Dr. Roger Ohanesian, Dr. Levon Nazarian and countless others have paved the way for our mission," stated Balikian. "We hope that our generation of physicians will continue to be inspired by those who preceded us and hope we can inspire others to organize similar missions."



The Orthopedic Team of Yerevan's Traumatology Center in Nork Marash

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OBITUARY

Krikor (Kirk) Gulezian, World War II Veteran, Liberator of Metz

WATERTOWN — Krikor (Kirk) Gulezian, 95, known as one of the “Iron Men of Metz,” during World War II, died on September 27 after a brief illness.

Known as “Hardword” because no one in the US Army could pronounce his Armenian name, Gulezian was a Sergeant in Gen. George S. Patton’s 807th Tank Destroyer Battalion, Headquarters Company. He earned four Battle Stars in WWII.

Born in Bridgewater, Mass., on March 6, 1917, he was the son of the late Armenoohie and Nishan Gulezian of (Vehree Taghuh) Kharpert and Arapkir in historic Armenia. He was the brother of the late Hovaness (John), WW II US Navy casualty of war on the USS Meredith DD434.

He was a resident of Arlington prior to enlisting in the US Army in 1941, where he saw action in the European Theatre, France, Germany and Austria. Under the command of Col. Carlton K. Smith (Ret.) the unit played a major role in the liberation of Metz, France in 1944.

In an oral history recorded by Gregory H. Arabian, Major, USAF (HD), he noted that he was transferred from the 3rd Army to the 15th Corps of the 7th Army during the battle. He said, “We were moving so fast, we paid no attention where we were assigned. We were on the go all the time, servicing units of all the units on the front lines anywhere and everywhere.”

On November 15, 1944, with the Third Cavalry Group, he drove south along the East Bank of the Moselle River to defend and liberate Metz. He

said, “It was a tough fight into Metz. I was in Headquarters Company but I had to get out into the field, through the mines, and we had to repair the vehicles on the grounds. We were both fighting and repairing the tanks. The place was loaded with mines.”

The 807th was assigned to the 95th Infantry Division and against heavy resistance, captured the forts surrounding Metz, France and then the city on November 22, 1944. Maj. Gen. Walton H. Walker then reported to Lt. General Patton that Metz was completely secured. The 807th and 95th liberated the city and share the title, “The Iron Men of Metz” and were both honored 40 and 60 years later for their heroism and acts of bravery in Metz by the city.

Gulezian didn’t talk about the war apart from Arabian, Roger Hagopian, who produced a WWII documentary, and close friends except during the movie “Band of Brothers,” when he yelled out after seeing an episode that his unit was involved in, “It didn’t happen that way!” He said the war was something he preferred to forget. However, one thing that he didn’t forget was from December 18 to 23, 1944, he was in the Ardennes when the Battle of the Bulge broke out. The Division received a commendation from their commanding officer that describes what the 807th did. “In August 1944 you launched a drive through Northern France which must rate as one of the most spectacular coups of this war.”

“How did I feel about the war? I had to defend my country,” Gulezian said. “I took it seriously. I was loyal. I was gung ho... I was brought up that

way... I have seen my share of action in the front lines of World War II and would hope we would not repeat it.”

He worked at General Electric, in Everett, Mass., following the war, and later was the sales manager of Dodge cars at Crawford Motors, Watertown and operations manager of the European Health Spa, West Newton.

He was a member of the First Armenian Church, Belmont, for more than 60 years, where he served as a deacon and head usher for many years. He started the Junior Usher Program at the church to involve young people in the life and service of the church. He was Santa Claus at Christmas for the church for more than 10 years and at Masonic Christmas parties. He owned his own Santa Claus suit.

He visited the sick, confined and hospitalized throughout his lifetime and was resident “Grandpa” at the Craigville Family Camp for 29 years, both up until his death.

He was a Freemason for 65 years, Mystic Valley Lodge, Arlington.

He graduated from Arlington High School, attended Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and later Rindge Tech to gain expertise with automobiles and motors and also attended training at General Electric for the work he did on the aircraft under their contract.

A man is known not only by the company he keeps, but also by the contents of his wallet. Besides the photos of family, in his neat penmanship he kept the names and phone numbers of his friends, a prayer given to him by General Patton,

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King’s famous “I Have a Dream” statement, and the following sayings: “Any society that would give up a little liberty to gain a little security will deserve neither and will lose both;” and “Today is a time to be grateful for all God has done in our lives, and a time to remember not to take anything for granted, not a single gift, or any person, or even one moment in time, for when God gives it, it is precious.”

He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Elizabeth (nee Ananian) of Watertown, where they lived throughout their marriage; his children; John and Colleen (McDade) Gulezian, West Newton and Rev. Joanne (Gulezian) and Dr. Nelson Hartunian, Belmont; and is a grandfather and a great-grandfather of the Gulezian, Hartunian and Lundbohm children. A Service of Resurrection and Celebration of Life along with recognition of his military contribution in WW II will be held on Sunday, November 10, at 1 p.m. at the First Armenian Church, 380 Concord Ave., with Masonic Rites followed by a memorial luncheon with a display of his military memorabilia.

Visiting hours at home by appointment. Memorial gifts may be made in his memory to First Armenian Church, 380 Concord Ave., Belmont, MA 02478; 807th Tank Destroyer Battalion Newsletter; 140 Hillcrest Ave., Fayetteville, GA 30214; Craigville Retreat Center, Scholarship Fund, 39 Prospect Ave., Centerville, MA 02632; Armenian Library and Museum of America, 65 Main St., Watertown, MA 02472; National Association of Armenian Studies and Research, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, MA 02478.

Arlene Boghossian

Wife of Armenian Reporter Founder

PARAMUS, N.J. — Arlene Boghossian, wife of founder and former editor of *The Armenian Reporter*, Edward K. Boghossian, died on September 8, after a month-long battle with pneumonia. She was 84.

She was born in the Bronx, NY on July 23, 1928 to Leon and Nuvart Harutunian, immigrants from Tokat, Turkey. She attended New York University for a period of time, and later went to secretarial school.

Although born in the United States, Arlene and her younger brother Albert stayed true to their Armenian roots and were very involved in the Armenian community in the New York area. At one of the Armenian lectures in New York City in 1954, Arlene met a young man named Edward K. Boghossian who was born in Aleppo, Syria and had recently immigrated to the United States via Beirut, Lebanon. They met and shortly after became engaged on Valentine’s Day. They married four months later and went on to be married for 52 years.

Arlene and her husband opened up a pillow factory early on in their marriage, but in 1967, Arlene stood by her husband’s dream

and closed the factory and started the first independent American-Armenian newspaper in the New York Tri-State area.

She worked tirelessly alongside her husband to help make *The Armenian Reporter* a leading Armenian publication. She wasn’t afraid of hard work, and put her needs last in order to ensure that her family was taken care of.

She was a free spirit and always spoke her mind no matter what anyone thought. She was direct and honest, and was often referred to as a “tough cookie.”

She and her husband had a love for travel, so much so that they opened a travel agency called Hye Travel, while still publishing weekly editions of the Reporter. They mostly did guided tours to Moscow and Yerevan where one or both of them would play the role of tour guide.

In 2006, they sold *The Armenian Reporter Int’l* to the Cafesjian Foundation, and within weeks, Edward Boghossian passed away after a year-long illness.

During the past decade, her Parkinson’s Disease had started to progress, which made the normal daily functions very difficult for

her. But she never let the disease control her and she fought very hard to keep her independence. Most importantly, she didn’t let the Parkinson’s diminish her joy and enthusiasm for life.

After losing her parents, brother, husband and sister-in-law, she was the lone survivor of her family, with the exception of her only child, Sylvia. The single most important thing in Arlene Boghossian’s life was her daughter. Her mission on earth was complete the day her dream came true when she watched her daughter walk down the aisle to marry Brian Baker almost two years ago.

She is survived by her daughter, Sylvia



Arlene Boghossian

Boghossian Baker, son-in-law Brian Baker, step-grandson Reid Baker, in-laws Martha and Gerry Baker, and several nieces and nephews.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Ellis Island Medal of Honor Recipient Papken Megerian Honored in PA

MEGERIAN, from page 1

he is a passionate man – passionate for each and every aspect of his life, whether it be family, church, work, or charity.”

Her biggest thanks were reserved for Papken Megerian's efforts on behalf of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*. “My husband Jeff, I think, holds the title for the non-Armenian who reads the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* front to back, inside and out, each and every week, throughout the year. In fact, were it not for Jeff pointing out the latest pictures or stories of Papken in the paper, I wouldn't be aware of half of his accomplishments.”

She concluded her remarks by congratulating him on his award: “The Ellis Island Medal of Honor is awarded to distinguished American citizens who exemplify a life dedicated to community service; people who preserve and celebrate the history, traditions and values of their ancestry and who dedicate themselves to creating a better world for us all. Such powerful words, and I couldn't think of a more deserving man.”

Guests were then treated to a performance by 14-year-old Elise Dadourian, a member of the parish Sunday School and an aspiring singer. Dadourian has just released a new single, *American Made*, written by her manager/mentor Dan May, who joined her on stage to perform the song, which is about the important contribution immigrants made to 20th-century America.

Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian, former pastor of the parish and longtime friend of the Megerian family, shared his feelings on the occasion and the Very Rev. Oshagan Gulgolian, parish pastor shared his feelings as well. “The community is very proud to have such a distinguished servant as Papken Megerian in our midst and we congratulate both Papken and Anahid Megerian on the celebration of their golden anniversary this past year.”

Papken Megerian grew up in Aleppo, Syria and is the son of Armenian immigrants who escaped from the Genocide. He came to the United States in the early 1960s, where he began a career in international banking, later moving on to purchase and operate several businesses. Though semi-retired, he is presently

the managing partner of a real estate investment company, 3 MB Partnership L.P., as well as a shareholder and treasurer of Four Meg Inc.

Philanthropically, the couple supports many Armenian and charitable causes in the US, Armenia, Javakhk (now part of Georgia), Karabagh and Jerusalem through the Papken-Anahid Megerian Family Foundation. Over the years, they have devoted many resources to the Diocesan Center in Javakhk, the Our Lady of Armenia Boghossian Educational Center in Gumri, the Armenian Sisters' Academy of Philadelphia, ICAN (the International Children's Anophthalmia Network) and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Megerian is also the benefactor of the Diocese of Arakatzotz, where the parish's former pastor, Archbishop Mkrtich Proshyan is the Primate. The Megerians have committed themselves to building a museum in the city of Oshagan, dedicated to Mesrob Mashtots and the Armenian alpha-

bet. They have also financially supported countless cultural, educational and religious programs and organizations, including Birthright Armenia, the Guiliguan Educational Association and the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, frequently hosting events in their home.

Megerian is the co-chair of the ADL (Ramgavar) District Committee of the Eastern US and Canada, and serves on the Central Committee of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada. He is also a trustee of the Society of Orphaned Armenia Relief and a longtime member of the AGBU and the Knights of Vartan. His involvement in the Parish of St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Church spans 44 years and includes positions as chairman and treasurer of the Parish Council and his representation as a Diocesan Delegate of the parish for 24 years. He is currently the treasurer of the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of the

Armenian Church of America (Eastern).

In the last 10 years, Megerian has visited Armenia 25 times for purposes of business, philanthropy and culture. In recognition of his support, Catholicos Karekin I decorated him with the St. Nerses Shnorhali Medal and a pontifical encyclical in 1998. In 2009, Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II awarded him the St. Gregory the Illuminator Medal and encyclical, the highest honor of the Armenian Church.

They have three children, Garo Megerian (and wife, Annette), Aram Megerian (and wife, Carla) and Tanya Bardakjian (and husband, Nerces) and grandchildren Gregory Megerian, Carine Megerian, Haig Megerian, Ariana Megerian, Lily Megerian, Lena Bardakjian, Sona Bardakjian and Seta Bardakjian. This year, the two are celebrating their golden anniversary.

Megerian was one of eight Armenian-Americans who received the 2012 Ellis Island Medal of Honor in May.

The Loss of a Valiant Shepherd: Rev. Papken Maksoudian

APPRECIATION, from page 4

had to weather many storms and guide his parish wisely.

Most of the conflicts with church leaders arise when well-meaning parishioners volunteer to serve the church and if they have been successful in business, they try to apply those business models to the ministerial course of the church. If the priest is mindful of his salary and the overall well-being of his parish and decides to be pliant in the face of outside intrusions, of course conflicts will be avoided and peace will be established at the cost of compromising principles. But Reverend Maksoudian was not that kind of priest. He defended his turf, he defended his principles, in the mold of the model priest in Arpiar Arpiarian's epoch-making book, *Garmir Jamootz*.

Besides his calling as a spiritual leader, he believed in education and the role of Armenian schools in the diaspora. He embarked on an educational endeavor with unmatched dedication and zeal when he organized Tekeyan School auxiliary groups on the East Coast to raise funds to build a

Tekeyan School in one of the poor neighborhoods of Beirut and then continued the fundraising to help the school continue its mission for many years. He had the unconditional support of Yerezguin Azadouhie Maksoudian, in keeping the auxiliaries alive for many years.

Maksoudian was also a prolific writer. He regularly contributed to *Baikar* daily, maintaining under his byline, “The Biblical Reflections” (Avedarani Tsofker).

These were articles inspired from the *Scriptures* that carried topical messages. What was not reflected in his articles and activities, he brought to the editors. He had the pulse of the community and he reflected the community reaction to any article and policy statement by the *Baikar* daily and the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*. In my six years serving at the *Baikar* Association, I took him as my mentor and the guiding light for our entire team.

Reverend Maksoudian and Yerezguin Azadouhie touched my life in many personal ways that I can never forget.

Having been born in Adana, Cilicia,

Reverend Maksoudian was a childhood friend of my mother's brother, Uncle Levon Nordikian. After Levon died at age 20 in a car accident, Maksoudian provided moral support for my mother's family.

After I moved to Boston in 1966, the same caring treatment was also extended to me. This loving couple did everything to make me feel that I was part of the family, beginning with the lavish dinners that *Adanatsi* families can serve so well, all the way to my work and career. They also supported my positions, which sometimes, admittedly, were not very popular.

I truly feel fortunate to have enjoyed the continued support of such experienced people.

Reverend Maksoudian was a person bigger than life. Someone must have wished him a long life, that is why he counted his 103 years, full of blessings and achievements.

His loss does not simply mark the death of an individual; it marks the end of an era, an era populated by legendary leaders.

May God rest his soul.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Volunteers' Program Continues to Heal the Inhabitants of Artsakh

By Inga Petrosyan

WASHINGTON – The Village Medical Assistance program has been conducted in Mountainous Karabagh for about 10 years now by the Armenian American Health Association of Greater Washington. Alis Marashlian is the vice president of the association and one of the volunteers of this program. This year she volunteered also in the Tekeyan Cultural Association's Sponsor a Teacher program, which assists all the teachers and workers of the Vahan Tekeyan schools in Armenia and Artsakh.

The Village Medical Assistance program connects the central hospitals of Karabagh's districts with the hospitals in surrounding villages. The inhabitants are provided with medical care at no cost. The ambulances allotted by the program, already five in number, go to the surrounding villages and also transport groups of doctors in order to provide aid to the sick.

Marashlian, who recently was in Armenia and also visited Artsakh, relates that the program has already been introduced in Askeran, Shushi, Martuni, Hadrut and Martakert. The programs were implemented after organizers signed an agreement with Artsakh's Ministry of Health.

Marashlian relates that at first this was a pilot program of the United States Agency for



Mobile unit with doctors and nurses in Martuni, Karabagh



A group photo of the members of the Armenian American Health Association of Greater Washington (taken from the website)

International Development (USAID). When it was nearing its conclusion, one of the physicians of the Armenian American Health Association proposed that the association continue its work.

Marashlian says that the financial means of the association are not sufficient to continue its humanitarian program without constant fundraising. "All financial donations are used solely for philanthropic purposes," she stresses.

Marashlian is a specialist in public health who teaches in a hospital for immigrants in Washington, DC.

The German-Armenian Doctors Union joined the program only in the Martakert district. Marashlian says that they provide medicines free for the sick. The Armenian American Health Association obtains its medicines from Holland and ships them to Karabagh.

Over the years, the work of the doctors and volunteers has succeeded not only in curing numerous sick people, but also has inspired the population with confidence in members of the medical profession. After encountering residents of Artsakh, Marashlian stressed that people trust the program and the treatments which their doctors prescribe. The visits of doctors to the villagers take place in groups, including physicians of various specializations, including an internal medicine specialist (internist), gynecologist, pediatrician and a physician's assistant. The doctors taking part in the program are from Armenia and Artsakh.

The Armenian American Health Association periodically receives reports about the work being carried out and the state of health of the population. "We organize our forthcoming work and fundraising campaigns accordingly," says Marashlian.

The experience of the program has shown that the following sicknesses are most widespread in Mountainous Karabagh. They are high blood pressure, respiratory illnesses, diabetes,

and, as Marashlian noted, back pain, which everybody seems to have.

Taking into consideration the health needs of the population and the necessity of aiding them, the Village Medical Assistance program will be ongoing. "More-

over," added Marashlian, "over time it will expand. We intend to also put into practice telemedicine."

The Armenian American Health Association of Greater Washington (AAHAGW) was established in 1991 as a non-profit, independent association by a group of

health professionals from Maryland, Virginia and Washington D.C. to promote health and medicine in Armenia and Karabagh.

Since its inception, the AAHAGW has established the first Maxillofacial Prosthetics Clinic in the Central Military Hospital of Yerevan, upgraded the Blood Bank facilities in the Central Military Hospital of Yerevan, sent 100 beds to different hospitals and clinics in Armenia, supported the medical needs of a foster home in Nork, Armenia, established a children's clinic at Camp Siranoush in Yeghegnatzor, Armenia, transferred medical and health literature to medical libraries in Yerevan and now implements the Village Medical Assistance program by sending mobile health units to the Martuni, Hadrut and Askeran/Shushi regions of Artsakh.

(Translated from Armenian)



Alis Marashlian is at the left with the medical staff in the Askeran district

Sponsor a Teacher in Armenia and Karabagh 2012



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New York METRO

Community Gathers to Pay Tribute to Hirant Gulian at Banquet

GULIAN, from page 1

In the course of the evening Gulian received three honors: an encyclical and medal sent from Karekin II, the Catholicos of All Armenians; a medal from the Republic of Armenia's Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian and an award from Artsakh's President Bako Sahakian. A special proclamation from New York Senator Charles Schumer was also presented to the honoree.

Among the special guests at the tribute were Archbishop Aram Ateshian, Vicar of the Armenian Patriarchate in Constantinople; Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian; Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, the Diocesan Legate and Ecumenical director; Bishop Mikael Mouradian of the Armenian Catholic Church, clergy from throughout the region as well as Barsamian.

Dignitaries included Dr. Movses Abelian, the United Nations Security Council director; Ambassador Garen Nazarian, Armenia's Ambassador to the United Nations; and Robert Avedissian, Artsakh's representative in Washington, DC. A special letter was read from Armenia's Ambassador to the US, Tatoul Markarian.

Gulian, who has organized the Times Square Martyrs Day gatherings for 30 years, is a leader and supporter of numerous Armenian causes. And for this tribute, it seemed as if every major community organization had sent a representative: the Knights and Daughters of Vartan (with several and past Grand Commanders and Matrons present), the AGBU, Hamazkayin and Tekeyan cultural organizations, the Armenian National Committee, Constantinople Armenian Relief Society (CARS), the Essayan-Getronagan and Tibrevank alumni associations, the Gomidas Choir, Shushi Dance Ensemble and Hye Doon.

Following the invocation by Aykazian, the honorary co-chairs of the banquet, Harry and Suzanne Toufayan, in a toast to "our amazing friend for many years," congratulated the honoree who "will do anything for the Armenian cause."

Masters of Ceremonies were Vartan Abdo, director of the Armenian Radio Hour, and Karen Toufayan Nargizian. "Tonight we are saying thank you for the many decades of service you have given to the Armenian-American community, to Armenia and to Artsakh," they said.

Ateshian recalled that his friend of many years came to America "to love and to be loved."

While finding a home in America, Gulian felt "he still had work to do in Dikranagert," Ateshian recalled – and in recent years he fulfilled that work by becoming instrumental in the restoration of the ancient St. Giragos Armenian Church of that city.

Calling the honoree "an exemplary individual," Nazarian recalled that an early fundraiser of Armenia's United Nations mission was held at the Gulian home.

Artsakh Representative Robert Avedissian paid tribute to Gulian's dedication to the soldiers and cause of Artsakh. "Since the first days, he was in the forefront of the Artsakh struggle."

Keynote speaker Dr. Mary Papazian, speaking after a video presentation of her inauguration



From left, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Hirant Gulian and Archbishop Aram Ateshian

last month as the new president of Southern Connecticut State University, noted the "brilliant record" of Gulian's life: from his earliest days as a young church deacon "with a beautiful voice,"

heart, which includes Hye Doon, the Armenian Diocese, the Knights of Vartan, the Artsakh movement, earthquake relief, Armenia Fund USA, Armenia's UN Mission, congressional



Hirant and Ruby Gulian hold up the pontifical encyclical as Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Fr. Apgar Hovakimyan look on.

to his present leadership of the Armenian Jewelers Association.

She recited a long list of causes close to his

fundraising events and his leadership of the Times Square Genocide memorials.

A heartfelt video prepared by Gulian's daughter, Anoush, and son, Haig, revealed both the familial and community life of the honoree, with many of his friends and Armenian community representatives extolling his many virtues. These included past Knights of Vartan Grand Commander Haig Deranian, Gomidas Choir director Kris Kalfayan, and Gulian's niece, Christine Kuchukian, who related some sweet personal memories.

In his remarks, Barsamian reflected on how the honoree is present at nearly every Armenian function and is a supporter – often behind the scenes – of every worthy endeavor.

"What strikes me most," he said, "is that in all of our community activities, Hirant is always at home. His home is anywhere our people come together, to celebrate our culture, to advance our cause, to pray to our Lord. That's where Hirant Gulian belongs; that's where he feels most at home. And our community life over the past generation has prospered because of his presence."

The Primate made special mention of the honoree's wife, Ruby, calling her "the perfect partner for his life," and noting that the two "perfectly complement each other, and bring out the best in the other." He expressed his satisfaction at

seeing their children carrying on the family legacy as they embark onto adulthood.

Commenting on "the other pillar of Hirant's character: his devotion to our church and people," the Primate spoke of the honoree's vocation as a deacon, and "the love Hirant devotes to his service on the altar – for which all the other deacons look up to him and respect him."

On behalf of Catholicos Karekin II, Barsamian presented Gulian with the St. Nersess Shnorhali Medal, in whose accompanying encyclical the catholicos commended Gulian as "a servant of the Lord's Holy Altar," who has "been helpful to our nation and church, thus earning the Lord's blessings for yourself, your family, and our entire people."

To start his own message of appreciation, Gulian stated simply: "I am humbled."

"You all are part of my life," he said; "I stand on the shoulders of giants." He paid a poignant tribute to his parents, and to his great-aunt who taught him Armenian history "in secret." He noted the vital role of the Armenian Church in his life, calling St. Vartan Cathedral and the Diocesan Center "my second home."

Reflecting on the challenges facing Armenians in the Middle East today, he said: "We will not allow our brothers and sisters to experience 1915 again." He went on: "They tried to destroy

us almost 100 years ago, but today we are alive. Armenia and the diaspora are moving forward; our commitment to Armenia and Artsakh is forever," he declared to thunderous applause.

He paid special recognition to his family, and especially to his wife, "who has been the accomplice in my community crimes."

"But we must pass on the torch to the next generation," he added. His final thought – "Let us unite under the umbrella of Armenia" – brought another ovation from the crowd.

In the course of the evening, Hratch Kaprielian presented the honoree with one of his famous watches and artist Rudik Petrosyan presented him with a painting.

The audience delighted to musical performances from pianist Sophia Melikyan; the brothers Shant and Raffi Massoian, who gave a spectacular presentation on duduk; and soprano Solange Merdinian who sang the American and Armenian national anthems.

Among the international benefactors of the event were Mr. and Mrs. Nazarian, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Toufayan, Mr. and Mrs. Sarkis Bedevian, Mr. and Mrs. Raffi Hovanesian, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Gulbenkian, Mr. and Mrs. Nishan Atinikian and Mr. and Mrs. Kevork Atinikian.

The benediction by Gizirian concluded this memorable evening.



Hirant and Ruby Gulian with their children, Anoush and Haig



New York METRO

St. Nersess Reception Brings Generations Together

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. — In late September, more than 100 friends of St. Nersess Armenian Seminary dined on hors d'oeuvres and cocktails while enjoying good conversation and company during the 5th annual "Evening Under the Stars" benefit reception and silent auction.

"I look forward to this event every year," shared Board member Steve Mekenian regarding the St. Nersess Armenian Seminary's annu-

ference alumni in attendance.

For the past five years, Greg Guroian has been tasked with gathering these volunteers. "Each volunteer I secure are all peers I have met during the Summer Conferences and all of whom are willing to give of their time and effort to see this great institution succeed and continue to change people's lives as it has changed ours," said Guroian, explaining. "As volunteers, we are always further inspired at the actual event when we realize that many of the reception attendees had been part of the summer conferences at one time like us. And also like us, made many close friends who they still keep in touch with to this day. The Evening Under the Stars is a great venue that brings together people of all ages who have been impacted by St. Nersess and want to assure that the seminary continues to succeed and light the way for future generations."

Prior to the main event, a champagne reception was held for Guardians and Shepherds of the seminary. These annual pledge givers mingled with Board members and were the first to hear the details of the new property purchased in Armonk, NY, 16 miles from the current New Rochelle location. This 5.5 scenic, tree-adorned property will serve as the new home of the seminary and will boast the Karekin I Theological Center, St. Hagop chapel, library, classrooms, offices, student housing and a dean's residence.

"This compelling site will be an all-inclusive and fully functional campus for the continued and more effective spiritual nourishment of our



V. Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan addresses the attendees and talks about the future plans for the Seminary as seen in the schematic in the foreground.

al fundraising reception. "The beautiful candle-adorned tent always sets the stage for a lovely evening with friends while the overall event allows the perfect opportunity to support a place we all love and believe in."

College graduates and young professionals who have attended past conferences, once again volunteered their time to organize the event, greet and serve attendees and share their recent experiences of St. Nersess with guests while learning the similarities from early con-



More than 100 people gathered to support St. Nersess during the annual 'Evening Under the Stars' Benefit Reception and Silent Auction.

people and parishes," said Board member Suzanne Akian, elaborating. "Our future generations will also flourish in their faith and culture while creating similar memories as generations past, because the same spirit of St. Nersess will live on within the walls of this new campus." This new facility, along with the ultimate sale of New Rochelle, will provide a more sound financial foundation to build upon the institution's already renowned theological program. The seminary will soon launch a fundraising campaign for the new site, specifically including naming opportunities for the renovated buildings. Additionally, the board will begin the process of selling the New Rochelle location.

St. Nersess, founded in 1961 and originally located in Evanston, Ill., is the only Armenian seminary specifically serving the Armenian Church and meeting the unique needs of the Armenian people across North America. Dozens of clergy and numerous lay leaders have graduated from St. Nersess and actively serve in the North American Dioceses. Additionally, the youth conferences continue to touch the lives of hundreds of teens and college-aged students each year. It is estimated that more than

6,000 youth have benefited from these conferences over the past five decades, with many — now as adults — serving their parishes in a variety of capacities.

The Evening Under the Stars reception is one of the seminary's major annual fundraising events. During the evening, a silent auction was held with 12 items up for bid ranging from Alex and Ani bangles to a Tufenkian oriental rug. A live auction was also held with an exclusively designed cross pendant by Michael Givelekian of Royal Jewels of Rye, NY, owned and operated by Mirijohn and Anoush Givelekian. Michael Givelekian, a former conference attendee, was inspired by the seminary's stained-glass entry door as the sterling silver cross pendant was inlaid with colorful, hot enamel.

In addition to the guests who attended the festivities, many others supported this event through sponsorships. All proceeds from the reception and auction directly benefited the seminary's Youth & Vocations programs. To learn more about these and other programs and activities of the seminary, as well as the exciting plans for relocation, visit www.stnersess.edu.



Rev. Fr. Mardiros Chevia is surrounded by those he mentored during his tenure as director of the Seminary Summer Conferences in the 1980s.

Bible Study Classes

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We Would Like To Invite You To Come And Join With Us and Attend Our 'Excellent' Bible Study Classes.

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Friday, November 9, 2012

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Reception at 7 pm – Hors D'oeuvres
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Tickets - \$125 per person
 Complimentary Parking
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Arts & Living

ALMA's New Director Seeks New Ways to Connect Visitors to Cultural Heritage

By Gabriella Gage
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN – After several years of collaboration, Dr. Susan Pattie recently joined the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) as its new director. When she found out she would be relocating to the Boston area from London, working with ALMA seemed like the perfect choice for Pattie.

As the new director, Pattie hopes to build upon ALMA's history of community outreach, saying, "What interested me most is outreach and making the heritage come alive, and also making it relevant to the contemporary world. ALMA does an amazing job of preserving cultural treasures and bringing people in to show them how to connect to their history and heritage."

Pattie, a Washington DC native, received her undergraduate degree from Hope College and worked as an artist/craftsperson before earning her doctorate in anthropology from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She served as the senior research fellow at University



Dr. Susan Pattie

College London and later was a founding director of the Armenian Institute in London. Her academic research has focused on the Armenian Diaspora and preservation of Armenian culture.

She is also the author of *Faith in History: Armenians Rebuilding Community*.

Pattie worked on several education-based projects during her time as director of the Armenian Institute. She said, "We did it because there wasn't another organization there using mixed media arts to bring history to a contemporary context. We wanted to have an exchange of ideas – a forum for presenting ideas among each other."

In 2011, Pattie and Armenian Institute colleagues published a children's educational guidebook (available at ALMA) titled, *Who Are the Armenian People?*

"The project grew out of a conversation with a parent in London who wanted to talk to children about Armenian history, but wasn't sure how to go about it," Pattie noted.

The book also tackles the difficult subject of explaining the Genocide to children, Pattie said. "We discuss the history of the Armenian people. We also need to explain what genocide is so that children will understand. That section took a long time to write. It talks about survivors as well as those Turkish people who helped some survivors escape – how the diaspora of today



"The Hye Legion – The Gamavor Story" production at St. Gregory Church

Gamavor Play Inspires North Andover Audience

NORTH ANDOVER, Mass. – Hourig Papazian-Sahagian has the perfect formula for success. As the linchpin for a musical ensemble called, "The Way We Were," she feels enamored by nostalgia, especially if the storyline is meant to enhance the Armenian heritage. She believes that what the Armenian community is in need of is better and more provocative ways of sharing its heritage and history.

By Tom Vartabedian

This rich history was retold recently with the play, "The Hye Legion - The Gamavor Story," staged at St. Gregory Church. The crowd of more than 100 guests represented three generations of Armenians, most of whom had little or no prior knowledge of the Gamavors story.

The event was sponsored by the Ladies Guild and took place inside Jaffarian Hall with an elaborate setting and authentic period costumes.

More than just a play, this production served as a history lesson adapted to music and script, conceived by an eighty-something cultural guru who continues to create timeless productions.

"You can take the teacher out of the classroom but not the classroom out of the teacher," said the former executive director of the Prelacy's Armenian National Education Committee (ANEC). "My troupe loved learning about the Gamavor history as I loved teaching it along with the songs."

The story, adapted by director-playwright Papazian-Sahagian, recounts actual tales of daring search-and-rescue missions by Armenian-American volunteers (Gamavors) during the Genocide years of 1915-1923.

At that time, an alarm sounded throughout the US, calling for volunteers to answer a call for help in their ravaged land. Many returned to the Turkish killing fields, only to suffer the ultimate sacrifice.

While the play is filled with intrigue, adventure and romance, it also features a dozen songs, many of which were familiar to viewers.

"The Merrimack Valley is replete with Gamavors who left the comfort and security of their homes to serve in battle," said Sossy Jeknavorian, Guild chairwoman. "Several people in the audience could relate to that era. Although the production carried a strong message about hope and survival, it was also meant to entertain and inspire. People were singing along with the songs and applauding loudly."

Papazian-Sahagian was presented with a bouquet of flowers after taking a bow with the cast. The ensemble made its way from the Mid-Atlantic region that same day. Members represent a cross-section of over three generations, born and raised in the United States.

"They derive their inspiration from the enduring soul of the survivors, who are their cultural and spiritual mentors," added Papazian-Sahagian. "The story must take its place in the pages of human history as a brilliant display of extraordinary courage."

Among the crowd was Steven Mahlebjan, whose sister, Lynn, portrayed Soseh, the Fedayee girl. "I never knew about the Gamavor history," he said. "It just continues to underscore the passion and dedication of our people. The patriotic songs bring back memories of those I used to sing during my AYF days and really brought tears to my eyes. It's so nice to see a cultural event that is both educational and entertaining."

The piece, *Hratch Nahadag*, composed by Parsegh Ganachian solely for the Gamavor movement, proved to be one of the crowd's favorites. Other songs like *Dalvorig* and *Cilicia* also captured the spotlight.

This marked the second appearance by the troupe to Merrimack Valley, having staged "Hello Ellis Island" two years ago at this same church.

Project SAVE Calendars Pave Way beyond 2015

by Tom Vartabedian

WATERTOWN – Like a true visionary, Ruth Thomasian believes in looking ahead.

It isn't enough that the executive director of Project SAVE prepares one calendar for 2013. She's also got the next three years well in mind, leading to the Armenian Genocide centennial and beyond.

In some ways, she is four years ahead in her planning stages. Should all go according to plan, this will bring the number of historic calendars her organization has issued to 30, touching on a variety of subjects that include dancing, rugs, music, women, military and Hye hats, hair and hands – last year's theme, which proved extremely popular.

The 2013 calendar, "Armenians a Century Ago: In the Homeland and Diaspora," gives collectors a diversified glimpse of lifestyles which Armenians have experienced during the pre-genocidal years.

"You will be astonished to see the faces of our people in such a variety of circumstances," said Thomasian. "Our next three calendars are leading up to the 2015 commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. The year that follows will concentrate on the personal histories of Armenians who lived during these culture-shattering years."

Of particular interest happens to be the December photo of missionaries belonging to Holy Savior Monastery (Soorp Purgich Vank) of Ourduz, which is 10 miles from Malatia.

Another illustration for May shows the Modern School for Girls in Smyrna. One of the subjects in the photograph is identified as Marguerite Abroyan (Hazarian) who, at age 16, fled Smyrna for America in 1921 – one year before the city was reduced to ashes.

Closer to home is July, which depicts the Armenian July 4th float in Newburyport, a small seaport town north of Boston. Early in the 20th century, there was a relatively large Armenian population working in the town's many shoe foundries and shipyards.

With each photograph come hours and days of research and corroboration by Thomasian and her team of archivists and researchers. Emphasis is also put on the lives and works of Armenian photographers. Many photo donors have also been documented orally.

For 2014, Thomasian has chosen the working title "A World Left Behind: Armenians in the Ottoman Empire," which will feature images depicting Armenians in the old country.

The 2015 theme will focus on Armenian life a century back to honor those whose lives were taken so mercilessly while 2016 will present a look at the relief efforts that helped survivors create new lives for themselves.

"Our aim is to have each one read like a book," Thomasian points out. "We strive to combine the visual and verbal into history that touches the heart and mind."

Renewed contacts are made with photo donors when possible to gain more insight into the chosen images. Ever since its formation in 1975, Thomasian has made the project a mission, resulting in more than 35,000 images dating back to 1860.

In and out of basements and attics she has meandered in search of forgotten images – a veritable scavenger hunt for lost treasures.

"In this way, history comes alive and revitalizes our understanding of who we are as a people, as a community and as individuals," Thomasian added. "Through photographs, new meaning is brought to our collective lives."

Calendar sponsors are being sought. For further information, e-mail: archives @project-save.org.



ARTS & LIVING

Margaret Ajemian Ahnert to Speak On her book *The Knock at the Door*

FRESNO — Author Margaret Ajemian Ahnert, will speak on her book, *The Knock at the Door*, at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 1, at the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Room 191, on the Fresno State campus.

This Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation lecture is part of the Armenian Studies Program Fall 2012 Lecture Series and is co-sponsored by the Armenian General Benevolent Union, Greater Fresno Chapter.

In *The Knock at the Door*, Ahnert relates her mother Ester's terrifying experiences as a young woman during the Armenian Genocide. Ester was separated from her foster family at the age of 15, during a forced march away from her birth town of Amasia. She narrowly avoided kidnapping, faced unspeakable horrors at the hands of soldiers and was forcibly married to an abusive Turkish wagon-driver. Throughout her ordeal, she reminded herself that "this, too, will pass," a mantra which enabled her to survive these nightmarish experiences. Eventually, she escaped captivity and was able to make her way to America.

The book has been translated into Armenian, Turkish, Spanish, Italian and French, with Russian, German and Polish translations in the works. It was named the Best Historical Memoir of 2008 at the New York Book Festival, as well as one of the Best Books of 2007 by USA Book News.

Ahnert received the Distinguished Humanitarian Award in 2009 and the Ellis Island Medal of Honor in 2011. In July 2010, she established the Margaret Ajemian Ahnert Scholarship Program that aims to support and empower female journalists in Armenia.

Copies of *The Knock at the Door* will be available for purchase after the lecture.

The lecture is free and open to the public.

Local Student in Wonder Woman Costume Tackles Genocide Denial

By Tom Vartabedian

High School student, Wonder Woman has become a symbol for the battle for recognition of the 1915 Armenian Genocide.

High school senior Kim O'Dea first appeared in full Wonder Woman costume on Wilmington High's spirit day, amidst a stoic display of Armenian Genocide signs. With the Armenian tricolor gracing the school walls, the school also displayed striking and painful images of the costs of the Armenian Genocide.

It is all part of a world history curriculum on human rights being taught by teachers Lisa Joy Desberg and Maura Tucker. Armenian Genocide recognition — or lack thereof — is one of history's most tainted observations.

With a Facing History and Ourselves book in hand, O'Dea posed as the female superhero in recognition of the atrocities that demand justice. The posters served as a poignant backdrop of Armenian history with striking artwork showing genocide victims and words of remorse.

One poster showed two Nazi gendarmes addressing a distraught family with Hitler's words: "Who, after all, talks now of the annihilation of the Armenians?"

Another was a call for affirmative action with the words "Mobilize and Coordinate," capturing a more unified approach.

Others bore the words "Stripping the Armenians of their moral rights," showing families being violated. And "Genocide — a systematic, deliberate extermination of a specific group."

It's not all classroom orientation, either.

The two instructors have taken their students to Armenian lectures in Boston and students recently attended Joyce Van Dyke's production of "Deported — A Dream Play." Students have also visited the Armenian Heritage Memorial on the Rose Kennedy Greenway, in conjunction with a visit to the Holocaust

Museum in Boston and they have attended other Genocide events in the area to better acquaint themselves with Armenian issues.

After taking part in these programs, these Wilmington High students have become budding activists for the Armenian cause.

Through education and outreach, the students hope to become ambassadors in the fight to gain appropriate recognition of the Genocide in Washington.

For O'Dea, the image of a woman wandering through the desert, with children in hand in order to escape turmoil and death, was a powerful one.

Before viewing such images, the harsh realities of the Genocide seemed inconceivable to students entirely unfamiliar with it. O'Dea and others are now trying to spread the word through outreach and public displays such as the Wonder Woman protest.

When neighboring Peabody High released plans to host a panel discussion on genocide without mentioning the Armenian Genocide, many local residents were outraged. Many wondered if this oversight was intentional. For decades, Peabody was among the Merrimack Valley communities hosting regular genocide commemorations at City Hall. The late Mayor Peter Torigian was often castigated by the local Turkish community for using municipal grounds to condemn his constituents.

Like Torigian, all Armenians should demonstrate their dedication to the cause, whether it be through their words or actions. Just imagine O'Dea strolling through the halls of her high school in her red, white and blue costume and fighting for our rights.

"We'll be there with our students," said Desberg. "And when the opportunity

comes, we will mention the Armenians. Students should be taught true events in history. Everyone should be given the right to be educated about a defining moment in history that has affected a world's population."



Wilmington High senior Kim O'Dea fights for Armenian Genocide recognition while portraying superhero Wonder Woman.



CULTURAL SOCIETY OF ARMENIANS FROM ISTANBUL
Detroit, Michigan

INVITES YOU TO A SPECIAL PRESENTATION

History of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem

Lecture and Slide Presentation
by
David Terzibashian

Mr. Terzibashian will speak about the history of the Armenian Patriarchate from Apostolic times to the present.

Presentation in English

Friday, November 9, 2012 at 7:30 pm

A.G.B.U. Alex & Marie Manoogian School
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The entire community is cordially invited

Reception following the lecture

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Moving Stories

1 written, directed and produced by
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2 at the conclusion of the film meet filmmaker
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Thursday, November 1st at 7:30 pm
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Refreshments

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ARTS & LIVING

Combined Primer and Dictionary Teaches Armenian

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK — A first-ever book has hit the literary market, titled *Tutoring Dictionary & Conversation*, which guides the interested individual and student to learn Armenian words and conversation in an easy and understandable manner. The 766-page tome is a learn-it-yourself classroom for the English-speaking individual.

The book has been prepared by Sylva L. der Stepanian, a noted educator whose methodology can be found in many Armenian-language textbooks and volumes, and Nubar Kupelian, also a recognized educator, editor and administrative assistant to Diocesan Primate (Eastern) Archbishop Khajag Barsamian. The dictionary, with a cover designed by Armen Edgarian, has been printed in Canada and published by St. Vartan Press, the publishing arm of the Armenian Diocese.

The self-teaching resource contains more than 30,000 entries, with each word clearly presented in English, English transliteration and Armenian. The multi-syllable words are hyphenated to help the user pronounce them properly. There are many new and everyday

words, as well as modern terms in numerous fields, including science, medicine, education, history, religion, the arts, business and even sports.

In addition to the extensive dictionary, there is an expansive section covering basic grammar and fundamental phrases to practice. This is an essential do-it-yourself guide for anyone interested in learning, as well as advancing his or her knowledge of spoken and written Armenian. It enhances conversation between two persons, and even between several people.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian has stated that this dictionary “truly enriches the reference and teaching resources currently available. Unquestionably, our mother tongue remains a primary link uniting Armenians scattered in communities across the globe. The book’s simple system of usage, transliteration, and conversation will surely prove beneficial to that end.”

Irma der Stepanian has funded the publication of 1,000 copies of the book in memory of her parents, Mihran and Alice der Stepanian, and donated them to the Diocese. The book is available from St. Vartan Bookstore, 630 Second Ave., New York, NY 10016, and can also be ordered on line.



NEW YORK — Pianist Armen Donelian has scheduled a series of pre-view shows for his forthcoming recording of Armenian songs. Accompanied by bassist David Clark and drummer George Schuller, Donelian will perform on the following dates: Saturday, November 17, 7:30 p.m. at the Castle Street Café in Gt. Barrington, Mass.; Sunday, November 18, 5:30 p.m. at the concert to benefit the music programs at the Bromfield School and Hildreth Elementary School in Harvard, Mass. and Monday, November 19, noon at the Lunch Concert at MIT’s Lincoln Laboratory in Lexington, Mass. Donelian will also lead the Sonny Rollins Ensemble at the New School Jazz Performance Space, New York, on Wednesday, November 28, 7 p.m.

CALENDAR

CALIFORNIA

NOVEMBER 17 — Haigazian University Trustees Banquet in Honor of Joyce Philibosian Stein, Ellis Island honoree, Sheraton Universal Ballroom, Los Angeles. Social hour, 6 p.m., dinner, 7 p.m. For more information, call (323) 456-8031 or joyceabdulian@gmail.com.

MASSACHUSETTS

NOVEMBER 1 — An Evening with the AUA Administration Team, American University of Armenia (AUA) president, Dr. Bruce Boghosian, to speak, along with top university administrators to review AUA’s academic and institutional accomplishments during its 20 years of operation in Armenia and the strategic plans that will shape the future of the university. Armenian Library and Museum of America, Contemporary Art Gallery, 3rd floor, 65 Main St., Watertown, 7:30 p.m. For additional information, contact events@aua.am or 617-480-3191.

NOVEMBER 9 — 10th Annual Bazaar sponsored by the Armenian Church at Hye Pointe, 110 Main St. Haverhill. Friday, 12 to 8 p.m., Saturday, 12 to 7 p.m. Lamb, losh, chicken kebab and kheyma dinners served all day, along with your favorite Armenian cuisine. Pastry Table, Country Store, Gift Basket Raffles and Raffles for Cash and Prizes. For more info, visit www.hyeptechurch.org or call (978) 372-9227.

NOVEMBER 16-17 — Fall Food Fest at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, 635 Grove St., Worcester. Join us on Friday from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturday from noon to 4 p.m. for shish kebab, losh kebab, chicken kebab or kheyma dinners. Visit our country store and bake stable. Stock up on katah, choreg, manti, porov kufita, simit and much, much more.

NOVEMBER 30 and DECEMBER 1 — “Trinity Christmas Bazaar,” Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge, Friday, 3-9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Delicious Armenian cuisine; farmer’s market, country store, candy, gourmet foods, pastries, wreaths & poinsettias, jewelry, second time around, silent auction, sports silent auction and more. Santa’s Playland, Saturday 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

MICHIGAN

NOVEMBER 9 — The Cultural Society of Armenians from Istanbul of Detroit will present a program titled “History of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem,” a lecture and slide presentation by David Terzibashian on the history of the Armenian Patriarchate from Apostolic times to the present. The presentation will be in English. 7:30 p.m. at the AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School, Multipurpose Room, Southfield. The entire community is invited and a reception will follow.



Dr. Bruce Boghosian, president of the American University of Armenia (AUA), will speak on Thursday, November 1, during An Evening with the AUA Administration Team event, to be held at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) at 7:30 p.m. In addition to Boghosian, several other top university administrators will review AUA’s academic and institutional accomplishments over the past 20 years of operation in Armenia, as well as the university’s strategic plans for its future. ALMA is located at 65 Main St., Watertown.

NEW JERSEY

NOVEMBER 17-18 — Musical theater presentation by TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group, Yervant Odian’s “Love and Laughter” (Ser yev Dzidzagh), directed by Krikor Satamian, with more than 20 actors participating. Dwight Englewood High School, Englewood Cliffs, 8 p.m. on Saturday and 4 p.m. on Sunday. \$25, \$35, \$50. For tickets, call Marie Zokian or Noushig Atamian.

NOVEMBER 18 — Join the TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group Cast Party to celebrate “Love and Laughter.” Special honoree, Karnig Nercessian, one of the founding members of the TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group. St. Thomas Armenian Church, East Clinton Ave. & 9W, Tenafly. 8 p.m. Donation: \$30. BYOB. For tickets, call Marie Zokian (201) 745-8850, Maro Hajakian (201) 934-3427 or Noushig Atamian (718) 344-5582.

began. What is important is that they [children]

see PATTIE, page 13

ALMA’s New Director Seeks New Ways to Connect Visitors to Cultural Heritage

PATTIE, from page 11

understand that not only were lives lost but a way of life was lost.”

In addition to educating children, the book serves as an introduction for adults unfamiliar with Armenian history and culture.

Pattie was also one of the authors of *Treasured Objects: Armenian Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire*, which served as part of an exhibit at the Armenian Institute in London and even includes descriptions of objects brought over by Pattie’s own grandmother during the Genocide.

Combining her artistic background with her anthropological research has given Pattie a deep appreciation for Armenian material culture and media — one that she hopes to pass on to ALMA visitors. Pattie explained, “I think use of multimedia — such as performing arts as well as crafts — is very important. It allows visitors to understand that Armenians didn’t just survive; they regenerated themselves and continue to create and thrive. I want them to leave ALMA thinking, ‘What an amazing past, but also, what an exciting future.’”

So far, Pattie has enjoyed getting acquainted with ALMA and with the thriving Boston-area Armenian community.

“The people [at ALMA] are great and very welcoming, and supportive. People have emailed me their ideas for the museum [...] I love hearing what people think and [their] ideas. We try to incorporate them,” she said, adding with a smile, “The Watertown community has been so welcoming.”

In addition to several larger projects in the works, Pattie shared that there will be an ALMA lecture on November 15, featuring, Nora Lessersohn, a Harvard University Divinity School



COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN Mirror- Spectator

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COMMENTARY

Why Georgia Matters

By Edmond Y. Azadian

While Azerbaijani dynastic rule continues its repressive policies against the opposition and while Armenia is engaged in a witch-hunt and the decimation of the opposition in preparation for the forthcoming presidential election, Georgia has been moving credibly towards democratic rule, as a role model in the Caucasus region.

Mikhail Saakashvili's United National Movement, which swept to power in 2003 through the Rose Revolution, acceded defeat to Bidzina Ivanishvili's Georgian Dream Coalition, in the last parliamentary election held on October 2. As Ivanishvili forms his cabinet as the new prime minister, Georgia enters into an era of cohabitation between the ruling Georgian Dream and Saakashvili's team, who will continue his term as president for another year.

A very familiar political setup in Europe, but it is a novel experiment for the nations, which gained independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

During his nine-year reign, Saakashvili transformed Georgia at a rapid pace, with the help of the West. He virtually ended corruption, reintroduced the rule of law and reformed the economy by moving towards prosperity. The West invested \$10 billion to turn Georgia into a showcase, to demonstrate to the other nations in the region that siding with the West has its tangible rewards. Russia did not learn the lesson to emulate Western approaches in the region. Moscow instead hardened its grip on Armenia's economy without sensitivity to the economic polarization in the country, helping the rich to get richer and driving the rest of the population to destitution.

But in Georgia, Saakashvili's reforms were achieved at a stiff cost domestically and regionally. Indeed, his hostile policies with regards to Moscow resulted in territorial amputation; during a 2008 war with Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia were snatched from Georgia, most probably forever.

Georgian rulers, including former leaders Shevardnadze and Gamsakhurdia, have been insensitive towards the ethnic makeup of their country, conducting a xenophobic policy against them. The new emerging ruler Ivanishvili does not seem to be any different, as one of his first pronouncements was directed towards Armenians. He is reported to have said, "Why do ethnic Armenians live in Georgia when their own homeland is next door?" The statement demonstrates an obscene level of insensitivity towards history; most of the Armenians living in Georgia, except for those in the capital Tbilisi, have been in Georgia because portions of historic Armenian territories were incorporated into that country during the murky years of 1918-1920. If Javakhk Armenians one day decide to leave Georgia, they have to move their native land to Armenia as well.

Domestically, Saakashvili's fall came as a consequence of his zero-tolerance policy, which sent minor offenders to jail for unusually long terms. A video of prison tortures was released at the most convenient political period before the parliamentary elections. The video undermined the president's tough policies. That, coupled with his fallout with the spiritual leader of Georgia, Patriarch Ilia II, brought about the demise of Saakashvili's regime.

The Patriarch wields a very strong political influence in the country. He also symbolizes Georgian nationalism. In his haste to reform the country and to please his patrons in the West,

Saakashvili passed legislature to recognize the legal existence of other religious denominations in the country, especially giving equal rights to the Armenian Church, which touched a raw nerve in Georgia. Particularly, it irritated the Patriarch, who was already enjoying the lavish contributions of the billionaire tycoon Ivanishvili. The Patriarch influenced the electorate to side with the rising opposition. From now on, no political leader can ignore the Patriarch's power in the country.

Unfortunately, the Armenian Church and the Catholicos do not enjoy similar clout in Armenia, courtesy of the opposition and Mr. Levon Ter-Petrosian, who insulted the Catholicos and his docile press unleashed an indecent campaign against him.

The new leader, Bidzina Ivanishvili, is an enigmatic figure, a reclusive billionaire, whose net worth is estimated by Forbes to be \$6.7 billion, mostly from business dealings in Russia. He has no record of earlier political involvement and his rash political pronouncements are blamed on his inexperience. Upon his victory, he called for Saakashvili's resignation before his term is up. That alarmed capitals in the West. He has retracted his statement since; he has also retracted his statement about the Armenians, which some political observers attribute to Javakhk Armenian voting patterns favoring Saakashvili's party out of fear of reprisals.

His political credo seems simple and simplistic: "It is Europe, Euro-Atlantic integration and NATO. There is no substitution," he said in a recent interview. In the same breath, he plans to improve relations with Russia. These two are mutually exclusive propositions, which can lead nowhere, as NATO's advances in the Caucasus are anathema for the Kremlin.

Armenia and Georgia are strange bedfellows. Christian Georgia has always sided with Turkey and Azerbaijan in UN votes. Tbilisi's government has also cooperated with Baku and Ankara in isolating Armenia politically, economically and militarily by building pipelines for energy transportation and rail infrastructure in the Caucasus by bypassing Armenia.

Yet, Georgia remains our main trade route with the outside world as the US continues its sanctions against Iran, rendering Armenian-Iranian relations into a risky political business.

Georgia's ruptured relations with Russia continue to affect Armenia's relations with Moscow, Armenia's strategic partner. Any improvement between Moscow and Tbilisi will impact favorably on Armenia's relations with the outside world.

Of course, we should not pin our hopes for an early easing of tensions in the lives of Armenians in Georgia. With the Patriarch fanning the flames of nationalism to continue holding Armenian churches hostage and the repressive measures against Javakhk Armenians, the immediate future does not seem promising.

Mr. Ivanishvili's reckless statement about Armenian presence in Georgia can only aggravate the plight of Armenians in Georgia.

Sooner or later, the Georgians will realize that the friendship with Turkey and Azerbaijan will contribute to the demise of the Christians in the region.

Turkey, by giving a contemporary spin to its historic rivalry with Iran, is actually not contributing to the West's interests. Using the West's interests as a cover, Turkey and Azerbaijan are trying to revive the old dreams of Pan-Touranism, extending Turkey's power to Central Asia. At that time, Armenia will be at risk as well as Georgia. Souring relations at the point will be too late for Georgia.

Our love-hate relations with Georgia have to be addressed through a policy of political realism.

That is why Georgia matters.

In Memoriam: His Beatitude Archbishop Torkom Manoogian

REFLECTIONS BY ARCHBISHOP KHAJAG BARSAMIAN

On Monday, October 22, 2012, the funeral service was performed for His Beatitude Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, of blessed memory, the late 96th Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, and former Primate of the Eastern Diocese, who passed away on October 12. On the prior evening, the casket was carried in a procession from the Jaffa Gate to Sts. James Armenian Cathedral, where the Divine Liturgy was celebrated on Monday morning. The Patriarch was subsequently interred at the Holy Savior Monastery at the Zion Gate.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Diocesan Primate, has been in Jerusalem this week, to pay his final respects to Patriarch Torkom. What follows is his reflection on the Patriarch's life and ministry.

In the Holy City of Jerusalem today, after a procession through the streets once walked by Jesus Christ, and having observed the ancient rituals of the Armenian Church – we laid to rest the mortal remains of the 96th Armenian

Patriarch: His Beatitude Archbishop Torkom Manoogian.

It has been a day to reflect on history: the history of Jerusalem itself; the history of the Armenian Patriarchate; and the history of a single man's life, spent in humble, devoted service to our church, our people and our risen Lord.

One moment of history I envision happened almost a half-century ago. It was 1968, and His Holiness Vasken I, the late, great Catholicos of All Armenians, was departing from America, having recently consecrated St. Vartan Cathedral in New York. In a parting statement to the community, Vasken Vehapar had this to say:

"We convey our affection to Archbishop Torkom, who is a youthful and energetic asset, a ray of hope for you and for us. We see that his task is difficult: a heavy responsibility weighs upon his shoulders. Help him, gather round him – hand in hand, clergy and laymen alike – so that in an atmosphere of solidarity

and a spirit of unity you may accomplish even greater things than you have thus far."

The Catholicos (Vehapar) spoke to the Armenians of America as a proud father giving encouragement to his children. And chief among those children was the talented leader of the Diocese: Archbishop Torkom Manoogian (Srbazan).

In the years – the long years – that followed, that relationship grew and became deeper. To Vasken Vehapar, Torkom Srpazan was like the son whom a father relies on to uphold the family honor and name. And the Archbishop was more than a son to the Catholicos: he was his close advisor, his loyal champion in the field, his strong right arm who always lifted up the Catholicos and the dignity of our church.

I personally saw this relationship expressed again and again: during the Karabagh crisis; at the time of the earthquake and in countless moments behind the scenes.

continued on next page



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Neither Obama Nor Romney Deserve Armenian-Americans' Votes

During my recent trip to Armenia, journalists repeatedly asked which US presidential candidate I supported in the November 6 elections. My answer was clear and unequivocal: I supported neither President Obama nor Governor Romney. Upon my return to the US, I was pleased to learn that the Armenian National Committee of America had made the same decision by not endorsing either candidate.

This was not a difficult decision. Both candidates have been disappointing. The president has not kept his word on many Armenian and non-Armenian issues, while his rival has not shown the slightest interest in the Armenian-American community and its issues.

Here is President Obama's long list of unkept promises on Armenian issues:

1. During the 2008 presidential campaign, he repeatedly pledged to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide and broke his promise after the election.
2. Furthermore, the Obama administration opposed the adoption of a congressional resolution on the Armenian Genocide.
3. President Obama significantly reduced the amount of

foreign aid to Armenia and Artsakh (Karabagh). Moreover, his administration did not spend the full amount of aid Congress had allocated to Artsakh.

4. He pressured Armenia to sign the infamous "Protocols" with Turkey in 2009.

5. He did not press Turkey to lift its blockade of Armenia.

6. He remained silent in the face of repeated saber-rattling by Azerbaijan's President against Armenia and Artsakh, and ignored his campaign pledge to support Artsakh's self-determination.

7. In late December 2010, circumventing the "hold" placed by US Senators, President Obama unilaterally appointed Matt Bryza as ambassador to Azerbaijan. Bryza's candidacy had been overwhelmingly opposed by the Armenian-American community.

8. Breaking another promise, President Obama failed to promote trade with Armenia.

9. He and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton did not respond to repeated requests to meet with Armenian-American community leaders to address their concerns.

Armenian-Americans do not need to beg President Obama to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide, since President Ronald Reagan had issued such a statement in his Presidential Proclamation of April 22, 1981. By not acknowledging the Armenian Genocide, President Obama simply undermined his own credibility. Most Armenian-Americans trusted him in 2008. They no longer trust him in 2012! As the popular saying goes, "fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me!"

Those who think that such an assessment is too harsh and too narrowly focused on Armenian issues should be advised that President Obama has not kept 86 other promises on national and international issues, according to politifact.com.

Governor Romney has not fared any better with Armenian-Americans. He has avoided any contacts with

the community, making no attempt to seek their support and votes. The concern is that if he shows such callous disregard when he desperately needs every single vote to get elected, he will most definitely not pay any attention to Armenians and their issues after the election!

Clearly, it is unwise for both presidential candidates not to court the support of Armenian-American voters in crucial swing states, at a time when the race is so tight that a handful of votes could mean the difference between victory and defeat. However, it is still not too late for the two candidates to sit down with the leadership of the Armenian-American community and address their concerns. This will not be an easy conversation. As it would be practically impossible to trust President Obama's new promises, his only credible response would be to take a positive step on an important Armenian issue before November 6! Governor Romney, on the other hand, has more of an uphill battle. Being a candidate, he can only make promises that would not be taken too seriously at this late hour.

To avoid being fooled again by false promises, the Armenian-American community needs to adopt a new election strategy. Only those candidates who have fulfilled their campaign promises during their first term in office should be supported for reelection. Promises made by new candidates or those with no solid record of accomplishments on Armenian issues should be simply ignored.

Finally, not voting for either presidential candidate does not mean sitting out the elections. One third of the US Senators are up for reelection as well as all 435 House Members. Armenian-American voters should reward candidates supportive of their issues by voting them back into office, and should punish their opponents by voting them out of office! Please consult the ANCA's ratings of all congressional candidates on www.anca.org.

His Beatitude Archbishop Torkom Manoogian

from previous page

I recall these matters because they show that Archbishop Torkom, throughout his ministry, was not merely a talented priest, an energetic Primate, or a distinguished patriarch. He was one of the very few churchmen of his generation to carry the weight of our church on his shoulders.

To be sure, he shared that weight with others. But even in that small group of indispensable figures, Torkom Manoogian was the one who stood out: who shined and who seemed to combine all the grace and dignity of the Armenian past, with all our fondest hopes and aspirations for the future.

He came out of the deserts of Baghdad, a boy with the name of Avedis. And when he chose to answer our Lord's call to become a priest, it was indeed a medz avedis for an Armenian Church which bore the fresh scars of the Genocide.

From the positions of authority he occupied – whether at St. Vartan Cathedral, or the Throne of St. James – he was a man of towering stature in religious and national life. He was a fixture in ecumenical and interfaith circles, who built enduring relationships and friendships with his fellow religious leaders.

To thousands of people across our Diocese – not only in our parishes, but in the surrounding society – Archbishop Torkom was the compassionate face of the Armenian Church of America: vigorous, spiritual always impressive.

His was the beautiful, poetic voice of our people – advocating forcefully for our rights and aspirations, while always exemplifying the great Armenian civilization that had bestowed works of profound art and spirituality on world culture.

Above all, Archbishop Torkom insisted on the dignity of the Church, as the foremost institution of the Armenian nation: the greatest expression of our national genius. It was through the church, he reminded us, that the Armenians had produced a Vartan, a Nersess Shnorhali, a Krikor Naregets, a Gomidas Vartabed.

Now today, we bury Torkom Srpazan alongside figures of similar stature: the Armenian Patriarch's of ages past. We remember his name with theirs: Koushagian, Tourian – all the way back to Abraham the Chain-bearer. And we affirm that, surely, this is the company in which Patriarch Torkom belongs for all eternity.

Now, in death, they are all together – along with our other great figures like Gomidas, and Vasken Vehapar, and others too numerous to name. From the perspective of the world, they are all together in history. But to us as followers of the risen Christ, they are alive, and merely sleeping; waiting for the day when they will join in that heavenly chorus of the saints – to which Torkom Manoogian aspired his entire life, and where his strong, powerful, inspirational voice will be heard once again.

Today we cherish and bless his memory, and express gratitude to God, as we pray for the soul of His devoted, princely servant. Amen.

Creativity Is Divine Gift from God

By Father Bedros Shetilian

In our effort to understand God's will, it can help to look to God from our side – from a human being's perspective. If we are created by the image and likeness of God, there is a similarity between our deeds and God's deeds. This does not mean that God and man are equal. We have to take into consideration, that when we are talking about similarities, we have to consider only our positive sides. Our imperfectness, our sinfulness, our sexuality cannot help us to understand God's will. Only our positive sides can help us to understand God and His works.

Creation: Creativity is one of the greatest gifts given us by God. It is an ability that has not always been appreciated by average people. The supreme creator gave to us the ability to be creative. This is obvious when we see people who have extraordinary abilities like great artists or scientists. Geniuses and talented people are the result of God's grace. For this reason Russian philosopher Berdyaev (1874-1948) says that there is nothing more foolish when people become proud, because their extraordinary abilities were given to them as a gift from above. Berdyaev continues saying that saints may have the right to be proud, because to be a saint requires great effort besides receiving God's grace. Even though this is true, it will be very hard to find a saint, who is proud of his/her sanctity, because humility is one of common characteristics of saints.

We may ask a question here. Can we have any masterpiece of art or any new breakthrough in science without requiring a great effort?

It is well known that if there is a genius being, then grace pushes him/her to work hard. There are many famous artists who were lazy by their nature. One of the obvious examples is the Italian composer Rossini, who was so lazy, that many times he was locked in a room in order to force him to finish composing operas that were ordered by different opera theaters. The other example is Beethoven, who especially in his last years lived a very unorganized life, but in this same period composed his two monumental works, Missa Solemnis (Solemn Mass) and Ninth Symphony.

Beethoven understood the importance of the arts and especially the role of music in our lives, so he said, "We musicians are as close to God as man can be." This is true, and it is not a coincidence that music plays a major role in the ritual of the church.

Among the different kinds of art, music has the ability to create a spiritual atmosphere and to uplift us to be connected with the Divine. We can see how big the role of arts and creation are in our lives. And our Armenian sacred music is one of biggest proofs of this great truth. By being one of the highest achievements of whole Christian arts, our sacred music, if

it's performed and listened to as it is required, has the ability to transfer us there, to the transcendent world, which is nothing else than divine reality.

On this point, we can refer to Archbishop Zareh Aznavorian words: "Sacred hymns have a huge inspirational ability, and can take our souls and deliver them to the heavenly reality and by doing that we can taste spiritually the sweetness of the Kingdom of God." In other words, our sacred music can help us to foretaste the Kingdom of God in this world.

Berdyaev goes on further to say, "Today, any European can taste the Kingdom of God for certain time, by attending any concert which includes one of Beethoven's Symphonies."

Coming to science we can say that progress in that field also happened mainly because of the ability to create. All achievements in that field happened, because of the ability to imagine and because of the creativity of human beings.

When the renowned Armenian composer Arno Babajanian was asked why he is composing, he replied, "It couldn't be any other way." This is a genius and a very true answer. I am sure, if any great artist was asked the same question; the answer would have been very similar. I am not talking about average artists, but about ones who are geniuses. Such artists create, not because they have a contract, not to get paid, not to be glorified, but mainly for one reason – because creation is coming from their essence, because creation is mandatory for them, because creation for them is as important and crucial as breathing or eating, in other words because, "They can't be any other way."

If for a genius human being, creation is a crucial thing, so for God who is the reason for the existence of genius people, creation is one important part of His work, it is an important part of his "business." And the result of this creation is man and the universe. The Armenian scholar Shahan Berberian writes about this in his book, Esthetics and Arts.

How beautiful is the fact that God gave us the ability to create. He did that not only for genius and talented ones. Let us also quote Berdyaev: "Creation heals our sick nature." We know very well how sick our nature can be, how imperfect we are and our weaknesses and predisposition to sin. Here our creativity can be a strong weapon in the struggle against our negative sides and weaknesses. Any creative act can improve our psychological mood, uplift us from depression and help us in order to overcome our sins, even deadly ones.

By using the ability to be creative, let us try to find new ways in order to achieve any good goals in life even if they are difficult to achieve. Let us try to make life more interesting by bringing new things into it. Let us try to find our happiness by making others happy. We can do all these things, because we have the ability to be creative and to be extraordinary people through a positive understanding of this word. All this tells us that the ability to create is a great gift that has been given to us by God.



Armenian Evangelical Churches Offer Prayers for Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry

LOS ANGELES – During morning worship on Sunday, October 7, Armenian Evangelical churches throughout Southern California offered special prayers for the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR).

The Call to Prayer was requested by Rev. Joseph D. Matossian, minister to the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA) and a longtime supporter of ABMDR. In his call to prayer addressed to Evangelical pastors, Matossian urged them to “offer a prayer for God’s special touch, as well as for divine guidance for the leadership of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry and its great endeavors.”

During his sermon at the United Armenian Congregational Church, in Hollywood, senior pastor Rev. Ron Tovmassian spoke eloquently about the life-saving mission of ABMDR. He urged members of the congregation to register as potential bone marrow stem cell donors, “as there are hundreds of patients who are in critical need of a donor match,” he said. Tovmassian also informed the congregation that he himself had joined the ranks of ABMDR, and went on to encourage everyone to participate in ABMDR’s upcoming Walk of Life in Los Angeles.

Walk of Life, the annual walkathon of ABMDR, took place on Saturday, October 20, in Glendale. Among those in attendance at the United Armenian Congregational Church morning worship on October 7 were Dr. Frieda Jordan, president of ABMDR, and Diana Artunian of the ABMDR Board. Following the service, Jordan and Artunian further familiarized congregation members with the activities and goals of the registry.

“It is so wonderful to have the support of Rev. Matossian and Rev. Tovmassian,” Jordan said. “The Armenian Evangelical Union of North America continues to play an instrumental role in securing our community’s solidarity with our mission.”



Rev. Joseph D. Matossian with members of the ABMDR Board.

Late Patriarch Manoogian Laid to Rest

FUNERAL, from page 1

Putting aside their differences for a brief spell, leaders or representatives of practically every house of God in Jerusalem, and of every political affiliation in the country, marched in the mournful funeral procession, from the Convent of St. James, seat of the Armenian Patriarchate, to the Armenian cemetery.

Those attending included a special envoy from the Lebanon-based Armenian Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia and former Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Michel Sabbah, who emerged from self-imposed retirement, to join the funeral procession.

Within days of the death of Manoogian, the brotherhood of Armenian priests in Jerusalem met in general assembly to elect a new locum tenens, giving the nod to Archbishop Aris Shirvanyan, director of the Patriarchate’s ecumenical and foreign relations.

It will be his job, among his other caretaker responsibilities, to pave the way for the election of Jerusalem’s 97th Armenian patriarch.

In one of the highlights of Manoogian’s funeral mass, celebrated in the ornate Cathedral of St. James, Shirvanyan bent to bless Manoogian’s body, dipping his finger in a receptacle holding the holy chrism, and anointing the late patriarch’s forehead and right hand.

The gesture is a tacit affirmation of the link of patriarchal succession and points to the symbolic importance of the right hand of an Armenian priest (this is the hand he uses to bless the congregation and offer communion) as evidenced by the fact that relics of Armenian saints are usually housed in golden molds or replicas of the right hand.

Before coming to Jerusalem, Manoogian had held, reportedly to popular acclaim, the prestigious position of Primate of the Eastern Diocese of America, a mandate that gave him spiritual jurisdiction over tens of thousands of Armenians living on America’s east coast. But he gave all that up to go and act as shepherd to a mere handful, in the city of Christ.

And Jerusalem turned out to be one mammoth challenge, a fact acknowledged by the Armenian church, as conceded by the late Catholicos of All Armenians, Vazken I, who said of Manoogian: “We see that his task is difficult: a heavy responsibility weighs upon his shoulders.”

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Manoogian’s successor as Primate, echoed the same sentiments in a eulogy: “He was one of the very few churchmen of his generation to carry the weight of our church on his shoulders. He stood out . . . and seemed to combine all the

grace and dignity of the Armenian past, with all our fondest hopes and aspirations for the future.”

Like Manoogian, Barsamian is a member of the Brotherhood of St. James, and his name has cropped up as a potential candidate to succeed, a prospect he shares with half a dozen others, each no less impressive in his credentials.

Among the front-runners of the eligible candidates among the Brotherhood, two stand out: Archbishop Aris Shirvanyan, the locum tenens, and Archbishop Nourhan Manoogian, the Patriarchal Vicar. The former primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of Australia and New Zealand, Archbishop Aghan Baliozian, who died recently, had also been among the undeclared runners.

The Armenians of Jerusalem know that it is not going to be easy to replace Manoogian, the reformer.

“Manoogian was a visionary, an idealist, and despite his foibles, he was able to inspire and consolidate the local Armenian community which had been wrung out to dry during the previous administration,” as an observer remarked.

“Under his tutelage, division lines blurred and people began to feel once more a strong sense of unity, of belonging,” he added. “Repercussions of the unhappy, traumatic age of Manoogian’s predecessor lost their poignancy. Here was a man who could deliver, who cared for his flock and showed it.”

Jerusalem’s legendary mayor, the late Teddy Kollek, held Manoogian in high esteem and would call on him from time to time.

And as Manoogian’s secretary and press officer, I accompanied him on a visit to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in Gaza. As Arafat dwelt at length on the problems and tribulations facing him in the Strip, Manoogian would nod in understanding.

As we were about to leave, Arafat pulled me aside and whispered: “He is a good man. Deuru balkom ‘aleh (take good care of him).”

Manoogian will be mourned long and lovingly, for behind the sorrow at his loss there is joy and pride that this reformer was able, despite all his foibles, to set the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the second most important spiritual fount for all Armenians, back on a solidly sound and secure course.

An old widow, who had cause to remember Manoogian’s beneficence, summed it up with the traditional Armenian wish for the departed: “May the earth lie gently and lightly on your tomb.”

Newly Discovered Photograph Links Germans to 1915 Armenia Genocide

PHOTOGRAPH, from page 1

Armenians in 1915? This is not the first photograph of its kind; yet hitherto the Germans have been largely absolved of crimes against humanity during the first holocaust of the 20th century. German diplomats in Turkish provinces during the First World War recorded the forced deportations and mass killing of a million and a half Armenian civilians with both horror and denunciation of the Ottoman Turks, calling the Turkish militia-killers “scum.” German parliamentarians condemned the slaughter in the Reichstag.

Indeed, a German army medical officer, Armin Wegner, risked his life to take harrowing photographs of dying and dead Armenians during the Genocide. In 1933, Wegner pleaded with Hitler on behalf of German Jews, asking what would become of Germany if he continued his persecution. He was arrested and tortured by the Gestapo and is today recognized at the Yad Vashem Jewish Holocaust memorial in Israel; some of his ashes are buried at the Armenian Genocide Museum in the capital, Yerevan.

It is this same Armenian institution and its energetic director, Hayk Demoyan, which discovered this latest photograph. It was found with other pictures of Turks standing beside skulls, the photographs attached to a long-lost survivor’s testimony. All appear to have been taken at a location identified as “Yerznka” – the town of Erzinjan, many of whose inhabitants were murdered on the road to Erzerum. Erzinjan was briefly captured by Russian General Nikolai Yudenich from the Turkish 3rd Army in June of 1916, and Armenians fighting on the Russian side were able to gather much photographic and documentary evidence of the genocide against their people the previous year. Russian newspapers – also archived at the Yerevan museum – printed graphic photographs of the killing fields. Then the Russians were forced to withdraw.

Wegner took many photographs at the end of the deportation trail in what is now northern Syria, where tens of thousands of Armenians died of cholera and dysentery in primitive concentration camps. However, the museum in Yerevan has recently uncovered more photos taken in Rakka and Ras al-Ayn, apparently in secret by Armenian survivors. One picture –

captioned in Armenian, “A caravan of Armenian refugees at Ras al-Ayn” – shows tents and refugees. The photograph seems to have been shot from a balcony overlooking the camp.

Another, captioned in German “Armenian camp in Rakka,” may have been taken by one of Wegner’s military colleagues, showing a number of men and women among drab-looking tents. Alas, almost all those Armenians who survived the 1915 death marches to Ras al-Ayn and Rakka were executed the following year when the Turkish-Ottoman genocide caught up with them.

Some German consuls spoke out against Turkey. The Armenian-American historian Peter Balakian has described how a German Protestant petition to Berlin protested that “since the end of May, the deportation of the entire Armenian population from all the Anatolian Vilayets [governorates] and Cilicia in the Arabian steppes south of the Baghdad-Berlin railway had been ordered.” As the Deutsche Bank was funding the railway, its officials were appalled to see its rolling stock packed with Armenian male deportees and transported to places of execution. Furthermore, Balakian and other historians have traced how some of the German witnesses to the Armenian holocaust played a role in the Nazi regime.

Konstantin Freiherr von Neurath, for example, was attached to the Turkish 4th Army in 1915 with instructions to monitor “operations” against the Armenians; he later became Hitler’s foreign minister and “Protector of Bohemia and Moravia” during Reinhard Heydrich’s terror in Czechoslovakia. Friedrich Werner von der Schulenburg was consul at Erzerum from 1915-16 and later Hitler’s ambassador to Moscow.

Rudolf Hoess was a German army captain in Turkey in 1916; from 1940-43, he was commandant of the Auschwitz extermination camp and then deputy inspector of concentration camps at SS headquarters. He was convicted and hanged by the Poles at Auschwitz in 1947.

We may never know, however, the identity of the two officers standing so nonchalantly beside the skulls of Erzinjan.

(Robert Fisk is the Middle East correspondent for the daily Independent. This article appeared in the October 21 edition of that newspaper.)

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